

Roots in Ripon

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Chuck Roots

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A Weekend Jaunt

By definition, a jaunt is usually understood to mean a short journey meant for pleasure. Thus, jaunt is the exact word I would use for this article.

This weekend foray came about after we learned of a friend's illness in El Cajon (ka-hone) which is just east of San Diego. Gary has been struggling with a debilitating sickness for some number of months, and is currently in a nursing facility. Isaura and I looked at our calendars and decided this past Friday thru Sunday would work best for us to make a drive to see Gary.

Isaura reminded me that some dear friends we have known since before we were married had just moved back to Azusa (near Pasadena) from their home in Cincinnati, Ohio where they have lived the last twenty-two years. I used to sing in a Gospel group with Ed and Dolly when we all lived in San Jose. We called ourselves, The Redeemed. We absolutely had a blast traveling around the Bay Area and Central Valley of California singing at a plethora of events and venues.

On Friday after playing a round of golf with my friends at Spring Creek, Isaura and I hopped in the car and headed for our *rendezvous* with Ed and Dolly, arriving in time for dinner. Ed's dad (also goes by Ed) joined the four of us at a Mexican restaurant in Azusa called, Max's. We sat around stuffing ourselves with massive portions of food and drink. I have never seen such serving sizes, literally covering the entire platter. And the drink mugs were more like the size of a beer stein. I could not finish my meal!

We spent a delightful evening with our friends, with Ed pulling out his six-string guitar and leading us in singing a couple of the songs we used to do. We finished up with, I'll Fly Away! After a restful night in their guest room, we had breakfast in the kitchen before Isaura and I headed for San Diego. It was such a joy to catch up with these friends whom we have not seen in at least a half-dozen years.

Another part of our trip while in southern California was to visit with our niece, Emily. She is the daughter of Isaura's youngest sister, Judy and her husband Greg. Emily is now working in San Diego and is dating, Alex, an active duty Marine who is stationed at Camp Pendleton. We met them for lunch on Saturday at Seaport Village, which is a fun place to visit. There are numerous stores and shops of various kinds all along the waterfront. One of our favorite restaurants there is the Greek Islands, known for its great Mediterranean style food. Of course, I was

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curious about Alex. I was very impressed with him. The four of us talked over our food for a couple of hours, learning that Alex has been in the Marine Corps for eight years, and has every intention of making this his career. Before we left Emily and Alex in the parking lot, we took the obligatory pictures which the rest of the family was dying to see.

Next stop was a visit to Gary in the nursing home. He was in fine spirits even though he has a trache which certainly limits communication. However, I learned they have a device now that allows the person with the trache to still be able to speak, and it was surprisingly clear. Gary also spent twenty-five years in the National Guard, so we have a military connection as well. We chatted with him for a time, and then I read a number of passages to him from the Scriptures. I then anointed his forehead with oil followed by prayer from Isaura and me. It was, indeed, a special moment!

After saying goodbye to Gary, we drove to Camp Pendleton where we were booked in the Inns of the Corps lodging for Saturday night. But first we stopped in the Marine Corps Exchange (MCX). This is one of Isaura's favorite things to do when we visit any military base. There are a lot of good deals and no sales tax! I usually wander over to the sporting goods to see what they have in golf equipment. Aha! To my great delight, I found a putter I had wanted, and it was the last one. It cost all of \$25.00! I snagged it right quick and will have an opportunity to try it out this Wednesday morning.

While stationed at Camp Pendleton in the mid-80s, we had found two favorite restaurants which we always try to patronize when we are in the area. So we drove to the Armenian Café which serves the best lemon soup you'll ever have. To our great shock and dismay, the building was gone! The area was encircled with construction barriers, but nothing to indicate what had happened. So we drove two blocks over to the Vera Cruz Fish House, which also was vacated and a new sign indicating who the new business was to be. Both of these places are wildly popular, so we were stunned, to say the least. I had the phone numbers for both in my phone, so I called. The Armenian Café is under totally new construction and will open again, however the date is unknown. As for the Fish House, it is in a new location. All is right with the world again!

I've been asked if I miss the military life, and my answer is always, no. Thirty-four years was enough. But as Isaura and I stood outside the Ward Lodge at Mainside on Camp Pendleton this morning, I looked at her and said, "This is what I miss." There is a quietness on a military base that is very calming. You can almost feel it. I explained what I meant, and she agreed.

Our drive back to northern California was uneventful. But it did include a stop at our youngest daughter's home in Turlock for a birthday party for granddaughter, Brooklyne who is nine.

It was truly a weekend jaunt, full of delight!