

Dear Friends,

Greetings from **Missoula, MT.**

Current

Today is our 24th wedding anniversary. We had hoped to take the motorcycle into Missoula and go out for an early dinner at "Famous Dave's." In our opinion, this BBQ chain has the finest pork ribs on the planet. Unfortunately, the temperature this afternoon is only 62 degrees and it's raining, so no bike ride today. Oh well, we'll go to bed early and watch a recorded version of the last two days of bicycling's greatest race, i.e., the Tour de France. If you are not aware, Lance Armstrong is back racing and could just possibly win the Tour de France for the 8th time. He's 37 years old, has had cancer, and has been out of racing for the last 3 years. It would be a miracle if he could pull this off, but Lance IS a miracle worker.

Yesterday afternoon, our friends, **Harry and Lois**, invited us to their Missoula home for dinner. Five years ago they left Weaverville, California, to pursue their long held dream of building a home in the woods in the mountains of Montana. It was amazing to see what they had accomplished. A beautifully designed and constructed large home on 33 acres of wooded property at 4,000 feet elevation. It is always a treat for us to be with people who have a dream and the courage to make it come true. We had wonderful conversation and a great dinner. This part of Montana is absolutely beautiful and certainly deserves another trip here and a much longer stay.

Travel Plans

Tomorrow morning, July 14, we head north for a two day stay at **Glacier National Park**. If the weather cooperates, it should be a very beautiful area. From Glacier, we will pick up Highway 2 and head east into **North Dakota**, and then down into **South Dakota** for a few weeks. There's lots to see in South Dakota in addition to the great **Sturgis Bike Rally**. No doubt you will be hearing more about that in the future.

More Catch-up

We finally left Pahrump on May 13 and headed straight to **San Diego** for a two day class at **Tim Larkin's Target Focus Training School**. We think Tim has the best school in the nation for teaching bare handed self defense. Very worthwhile, but not a lot of fun unless you like getting thrown to the mat hundreds of times in a weekend. If you want to know more about this organization check it out at:

<http://www.targetfocustraining.com/>

From San Diego, we went to **Huntington Beach** to visit with our wonderful friend, **Dena**, in **Newport Beach**. Chuck first met Dena on a motorcycle tour around Europe in 1972 and they have been life long friends ever since.



Diamond factory in Amsterdam, Holland. 1972.

In the above photo, Chuck is wearing a brown leather jacket, Dena is directly in front of him looking at a large diamond and Dena's daughter, **Jan** (now deceased,) is on the right.



Joe's Crab Shack in Newport Beach, CA. 2009.

Perhaps it's not a great surprise, but Dena and Chuck appear slightly older 37 years later. It's pretty amazing, but they both get around pretty darn well. At any rate, we had a great visit with Dena and stuffed ourselves on crab, shrimp, and clams. It doesn't get much better than that. Well, fair is fair. Below is a picture of Donna's sister-in-law, **Janet**, taking care of baby Donna at Huntington Beach in 1964.



Donna and Janet, Huntington Beach. 1964.



Huntington Beach. 2009.

Tim was also in the area visiting his aunt, but hooked up with us again and started the trek north. On May 20, we convoyed with Tim to **San Luis Obispo** to visit more old friends, **Paul, Marie**, and their son, **Galen**. We camped in their pasture for a week and have no idea where that week went. We had fun, that's for sure. We ate a lot, we're positive of that.



Paul and Marie's pasture. May 2009.

When we left San Luis Obispo, Tim headed for Windsor, California, and we drove to the Elks Lodge in **Gilroy**, California. The lodge was spectacular, the parking was great, but the dinners were way too expensive. The next day we drove to **Napa** as Chuck's cousins were planning a birthday party for him. We spent four nights at the Napa Elks. It was a darn nice stop. Great lodge.

On the morning of May 29, Chuck's birthday, cousins **Paul, Ellie**, and **Betty**, picked us up before breakfast at the Elks Lodge and took us to lhop for a Swedish pancake breakfast. Great fun. Next they announced that we were going to visit and tour a castle. A what? Yeah, a castle.



Castello di Amorosa.

No kidding. This is an authentic Italian castle. Each individual stone came from Europe. The mortar was not modern cement, but rather the same mix that was used in medieval times. All of the furniture is hand carved and of the period. It took 13 years and more than \$30 million to recreate the castle which is also an interesting winery. By all means, if you get to the Napa Valley in California, take the castle and wine tasting tour. If you would like to know more, go to: <http://www.castellodiamorosa.com>



Main dining hall at Castello di Amorosa.



Betty and Chuck on the left, Paul and Ellie on the right.

After the castle, we drove to another winery, bought a bottle of wine and had a picnic lunch.



Picnic lunch at a Napa Valley winery.

After the picnic lunch, we drove to Mum's winery for a champagne birthday toast. This was one busy and festive day, but it wasn't over yet. Next, we went back to the old section of Napa for a birthday dinner at Celadon. Excellent food, fun atmosphere, and reasonable prices.



Donna and Chuck at Celadon restaurant in Napa, CA.

Chuck's cousins are absolutely amazing. Past 80 years of age and tough as nails. They partied us into the ground, but that still wasn't enough. The next day, Paul and Ellie again picked us up early and this time we drove to **Larkspur** to pick up the ferry to the **Port of San Francisco**. It was a fun ride across the Bay and on the weekend, the Port of San Francisco has a very large farmer's market. It's quite a big deal. We walked for a couple of hours, had lunch on the wharf, and grabbed another ferry

back to Larkspur. Paul drove us back to Napa and then we all went to Betty's place for another dinner. See what we mean? These Scandinavian relatives are tough as nails.



S.F. Bay Bridge as seen from Port of San Francisco.

Finally we escaped Napa and drove to **Redding**, California, and stayed as usual at Green Acres RV Park. While in Redding, Tim took us to Dry Creek Station for dinner where we also met **John and Shari**. One way or another, we managed to stay in Redding more than two weeks. A lot of partying with friends and another birthday dinner at John and Shari's house.

We had lost all DC power to the inside of the coach which means no lights, no furnace, no water pump, no hot water, no air conditioners, etc. Okay, for you technically inclined, you might want to ask why the AC appliances also failed. They failed because all of their control circuitry is DC. Fortunately, Chuck got right on it and accurately diagnosed it as a bad solenoid. After a lot of chasing around, we found the part, installed it, and lo and behold, it all worked again. Out of curiosity, we mailed the bad part to Paul in San Luis Obispo, who cut it open and found manufacturing debris shorting out the points. He cleaned it up and reassembled it, and now we have a spare.

Finally Caught Up

At last, we are caught up writing newsletters that should have been completed weeks ago.

Until next time, home is where we park it.

Chuck & Donna
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