**Camping (Mis)Adventures**

Adventure-16, REI, and Sport Chalet are your friends

Chris was a Girl Scout leader, so one of the main activities was camping. Louis is civilized; his idea of camping is Holiday Inn; rooms have a solid roof with climate control and a comfy bed; the bathroom is adjacent and not far away across the campground near the rocks/desert/trees/wilderness.

Agua Caliente Hot Springs is in the San Diego County desert. The tent was a large Coleman Tent with a high ceiling. The campground was quite closely packed. The wind came up in the middle of the night, something snapped and the tent started to blow away and collapsed. I stayed in the sleeping bag to provide ballast, while Chris went outside to see if she could provide some better anchors for the sides of the tent. After some effort, she fixed the problem and came back into the tent. She said that there were a lot of people outside to help and they were really friendly. I said, “of course they were friendly, you are not wearing anything on top”. She went out and bought a Marmot Orange Tent with greater wind stability for future use. On that same trip, I was driving through the desert on a dirt road trying to get to the San Diego and Arizona Eastern Railroad train in the distance. There was a sand pile across the road that I tried to drive through slowly and got stuck. There were no other cars on the road. Several hours of placing brush under the tires, putting on snow chains, and cascading sand all over the place finally got the 1971 Hornet out of the trap. Dirt roads with sand across them became disallowed.

Font’s Point in Anza-Borrego State Park is named after an early California explorer who was responsible for naming the types of calligraphy used in printing. After driving to the view above the desert, it was decided to take the 1989 Van and a 4-wheel drive Toyota down a narrow road to the desert floor. The van went first; the narrow road barely was wide enough for the van to make it. The road continued onto a wash on the desert floor. There appeared to be a small sand drift across the road, so the driver accelerated to get through it. The drift was on a curve and much larger than it appeared; the van was securely stuck up to the oil pan in sand. Attempts to dig out failed as the sand fell into any depression. Paul went off to get help, and dropped Louis off at a nearby intersection where he sat on the pavement and attempted to flag down any vehicle with a substantial winch. The only result for this activity was several calls to the local sheriff about the crazed guy at the stop sign. The officer finally showed up with a 4-wheel drive truck and a really large winch. He locked me in the back seat jail and proceeded to the trapped van. After a long lecture about city folks coming out to the desert unprepared and unknowing, he pulled the van out of the sand. It turned out there was a detour just before the sand trap that went up the side of the wash to a stable dirt road. Afterwards, Paul was given a heavy duty tow cable.

Black Canyon is on the Colorado River below Hoover Dam. For several years, the Girl Scouts arranged with Jerkwater Canoe to put in several canoes at the dam and go downriver to Lake Mojave. The group stopped at Buffalo Bills in Primm and then embarked on a two-day river trip with an overnight camp halfway. There is a private maintenance road at the dam for the group to go down the canyon side to the river. This is a really interesting trip at the bottom of a very deep canyon with thermal features on the side. The only difficulty is attempting to get to the campsite. The river becomes quite fast near the edge here and capsized our canoe that became sideways to the current. Without warning, I was now in a very cold moving bath. I grabbed the rope to the canoe and struggled to shore. Fortunately, the contents of the canoe were in waterproof bags netted into the bottom. After getting everything to the camp, I had to change clothes (behind a rock) and attempt to get unfrozen. There was a hot spring up the canyon for me to get cooked in; we brought a shovel and sand bags to make it bigger.

San Simeon State Park is up the coast near Hearst Castle. We went camping there to visit Katy and her family who had come down from Carmel. The first night had the ocean fog roll in and was quite cold at night especially near the ground. The second night the fog arrived earlier and colder. I went to the bathroom, returned to the very cold tent, and decided to abandon them and head for a motel in Morro Bay for the night. What a great decision! I stayed warm, and I got an early start back the next day.