

California Journey 2011-12 -- Part IX-B – Joshua Tree Continued

Before leaving Key's View, I have to throw in one picture and remark. I think this photographer didn't have enough lens. What do you think?

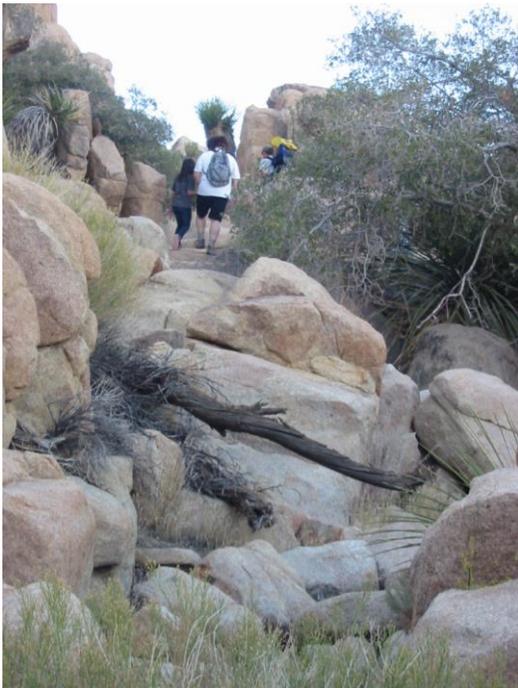


Back on the road, we drove back to Hidden Valley. It's nature trail was another rocky mile. Our guide book describes: "The trail climbs a short way to a well-concealed entrance, and slips through a narrow passage between huge boulders into a pocket canyon surrounded by granite. ... Legend says that Hidden Valley was one of Jim McHaney's secret corrals for stolen horses and cattle in the late 1800s and early 1900s." (Jim was last heard to be in jail for counterfeiting.)

I had better begin with a shot of one of several narrow spots. I am not certain which was the "narrow passage" mentioned above. Let's pretend that this is it.



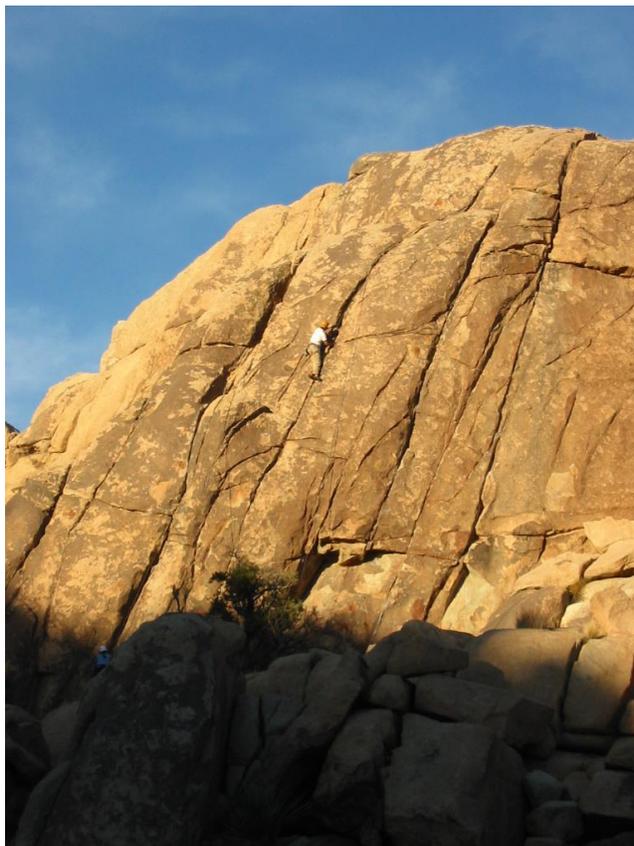
Or could it be...?



Another comment in the guide book says that expert climbers come here for practice because of the wildly varied outcrops here. One climbing mecca was the Big Burrito as seen midway through the jaunt.



I followed this gentleman with a couple pictures. Here he is at “mid-rock”. We did see him at the top before we left the canyon. He still had to come down!



Notice that the shadows are creeping in. It was probably 3 PM or later. Beverly takes a rest near a yucca plant.

It was a nice walk. It was a circuit such that the return trip was much better marked than at the Backer Dam.



On the way out of the park, we went through a forest of yuccas in a stretch of road that was not in the shadows. The sun was setting quickly. Before reaching Hwy 62, we were marveling at the pink in the eastern sky. My photography didn't do it justice so I didn't add that shot.

We did enjoy the color on the way back.

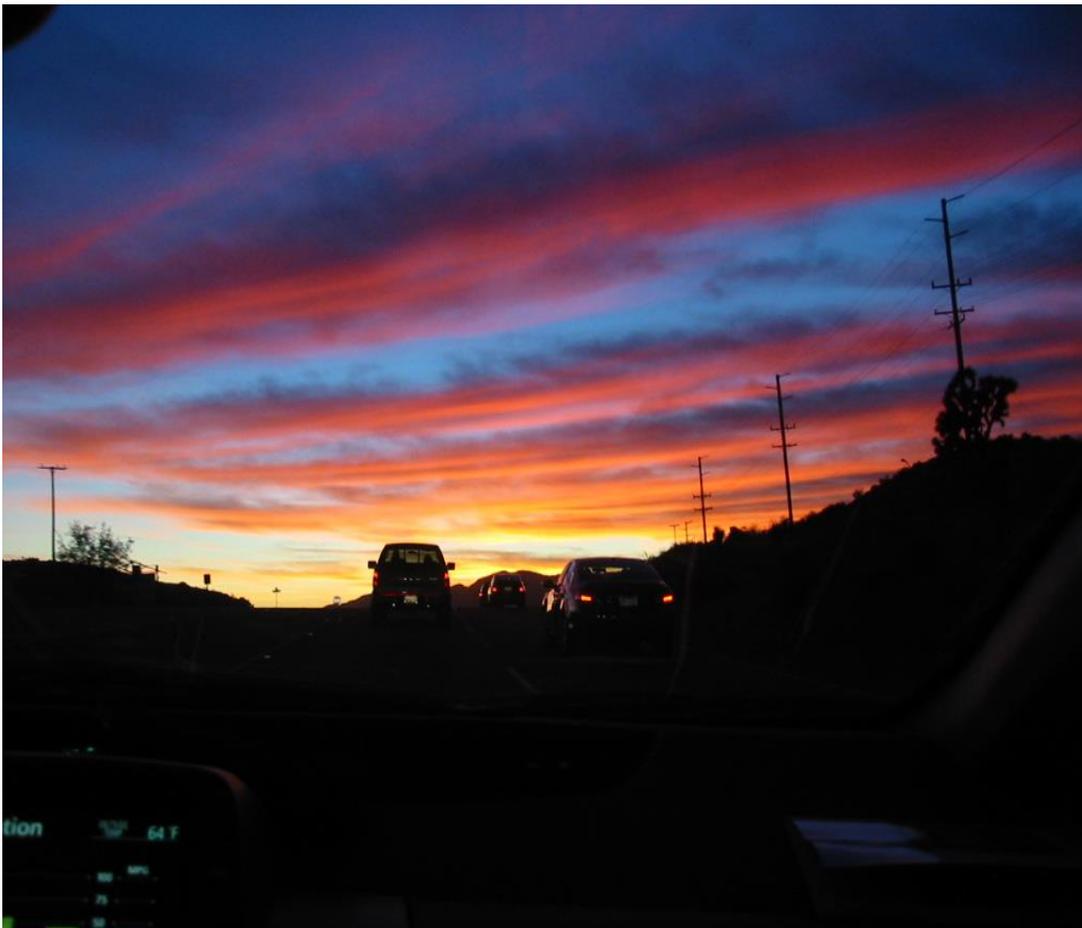


The anniversary celebration was tonight, but we had plenty of time even getting to Palm Springs just after complete darkness had set in.

Cleaned up and dressed, we drove the short distance to Billy Reed's Restaurant for the Anniversary Dinner. We got there and settled in

as the party slowly assembled.

The total dinner served about 75 people. As I recall, there was a couple at our table from Crystal, MN. They had married on the same date but different year than Pat and Frank. (The couple had met on a cruise and after the man's first wife died. Pat said they would attend his new wedding if it was on Pat's anniversary. We were out of town when Kastamas came here for that



wedding a few years back.) There were relatives, friends, people who worked with Frank as programmers, and neighbors. Right next to me was an interesting woman who was raised in Mishawaka, IN. So we had a lot of things Indiana to talk about. Plus, she had worked at some college teaching English literature. At her retirement from there, she passed tests, took training, and entered the State

Department. She was stationed in lots of foreign countries in her 9 or 10 years in that capacity. (I believe she took the eligibility test as a sort of joke with her son. He failed. She passed. With his academic background in political science, he still isn't in that field. Go figure.)

We ate dinner. Again, very good. Pat and Frank had picked a good place. Then it became time for the dessert. At that point, Pat chose to play "musical chairs." Most of us had to get up and move to a new table next to another guest. It worked very well. I enjoyed my dessert talking to a brother-in-law of Pat's. I was surprised to find that he was 85. Our conversation hinged on his recommendation that we should get a motor home for traveling the country. He had owned several and deemed it the only way to go. (He also was having troubles with a condo residence – not because of his doings, but people were leaving the association maybe through foreclosures and that was stressing the association. I believe he felt his motor home was a safer place for a residence.)

The party broke up relatively early and I believe we were back in our hotel by 10 PM. So ended the big 50th celebration. I think the Kastama planning had worked out fine.