

5-4-11 A Health Agent on Vacation

A respite from work-related worries has been in order for some time now, with court cases, some people needing immediate attention, others requiring attention and research as soon as possible and others simply wanting attention. I recently tried to take a day off by staying home to attend to my own list of concerns and I'll admit that it wasn't easy. When I wasn't receiving calls, I kept calling in just to ask questions and mention ideas while they were fresh in my mind. I became convinced; it had been way too long since I had really taken a vacation and I needed one! And so it was that I decided to fly to California where I could visit my daughter, Joanna, her boyfriend Jeremy. The long Memorial Day weekend would be the only one off for her for many months to come, since her job was new. To my delight, I was even able to see my oldest, Marty, while he was in the San Francisco area on business trip.

visit to the Frisco Bay area, there is now a very visible public health campaign on Lyme Disease, with posters of deer ticks seen frequently. Eleven years ago, I did not see a single sign or notice on Lyme Disease, but I did contract my second case while hiking through the Muir woods! The redwood forests are always worth seeing again and again but leaving with a deer is something to be avoided! I've made peace with the idea that nature is worth experiencing and that conducting a tick check each day makes the experience possible.

This time around, we decided to avoid the tourist spots and mosey on over to some lesser known sights. My daughter lived in the East Bay area and worked in the town of Hercules. (Gotta love that! My daughter is a Goddess, after all.) The business park and her place of business, a soil science laboratory, were very classy. Everywhere you look, there are hills and trees, flowers and more hills.

Where she lives is a simple town of modest houses but she has city sewerage, water and trash pick up. These are luxuries to many back home! There are three different colored rubbish barrels, with brown for rubbish, blue for recyclable and green for compostable. The green and blue are picked up every other week alternating the two. This is curbside pickup, where the barrel is hoisted by the reaching mechanical arms of the truck. Picking up compostables is the way to go. I wonder how long it will take to reach the east coast.

And lemons grow in the backyard. Real lemons. Great lemons! I could get used to that. And the refreshing air, cool breezes and sunshine. Pleasant air makes for pleasant people. That, along with readily available vitamin C, is an amazing public campaign in and of itself.

Then, there's the beauty. Even small bits of beauty are everywhere. Orange juice colored California poppies where in bloom everywhere, even in cracks of the pavement. Garden and parks abound even in "ordinary" areas. We visited the Tilden botanical garden where my eyes soaked up the tiniest succulent in pebbly soils to waves of oxalis under the redwoods. I witnessed a wedding in that beautiful setting on that shining day.

The next day we drove out to the coast to eventually arrive at Point Reyes in Marin County. There isn't a boring or ugly spot along the way. We traveled through tiny charming towns, sampling "Cowgirl Creamery" cheese and shopped at a small flea market. I love to peruse the local wares when I'm away from home. What they see as common might be unusual to the traveler. I bought some delicate colorful earrings from Israel. They were a bargain at five dollars and I loved them. On the road again, my eyes kept drinking in the rolling hills, the

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pastures of cows, steers, and horse ranches. Then the land stretched out as far as the eye could see, in front of the car and to the back, with amazing surf on our right and the occasional peek at more cliffs and ocean far to the left the left. We were traveling along a peninsular of pristine land and shore with a micro-ecosystem hardy enough to survive and thrive the high winds. Small deer were seen here and there, traversing the rocks with the confidence and ease of mountain goats. I could not help but be reminded of the western coast of Ireland; rocks, cliffs, green grass and winds so fast and strong, it is a wonder that anyone ever landed there in the first place, let alone stay and settle in. On the day we visited, the stairs leading down and out to the light house were closed due the high winds. People told us we were vey lucky to see this whole area in sunlight, though. Others have travelled there before, only to have the view completely shrouded in fog.

We were lucky, indeed; family, nature and beauty. It was a brief visit and a brief respite. I could not ask for more, though.

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