



# On the road again

## Trip to California leads self-illumination

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As the congress of the United States busily posted the Ten Commandments in public schools and the Nebraska Unicameral debated whether Creationism should be taught in science classes, I was crossing my own Dead Sea, choking on million-year-old dust in the great nowhere of Nevada, ancient sea floor, along Highway 50, the "Loneliest Road in America."

The sun, pinned to the sky, seemed stationary as we raced it westward in the lengthening days before the Solstice, Laura and I, her mother's little Honda slouching toward San Francisco.

Laura was going to interview for jobs. I was on a mission of even greater importance: to discover, in the wilds of the Bay Area, the pinnacle of God's creation. I was stalking the perfect burrito.

Little did I know what else the fates had in store.

We'd had a rough time of it already; breaking down in Ogallala we'd learned first hand the contempt in which Western Nebraskans hold the Japanese automobile — a contempt matched only by the bald antipathy they feel for the Federal Government.

Patrick, the saintly tow truck driver, had even regaled us in song:

"Cause I'm proud to be an American, where at least they say I'm free/ and I'm proud to fight the government, who takes my rights from me!"

Then there was the infection along my gumline that boosted me from the driver's seat in Uinta, Utah. A prescription of antibiotics eased my increasing Ambesol addiction and we hit the road again.

There were to be other tragedies, large and small, not the least of which was Laura's stubborn insistence that we sleep in separate motel beds or that one of us take the floor.

(I retained at least enough of my manhood to allow her one night on the floor, herself, in Fallon, Nev., just to see how she'd like it. She slept, unperturbable, the sleep of the virtuous.)

Nevertheless, California would open her golden gate to us; the fruit inspector at the border throwing down a bit of his stand-up routine and waving us through.

And it seems like just minutes later that we pulled into the parking lot of the Best Western of San Jose and collapsed on the bed (my turn on the floor) consciousness fading with the throb of the road in our heads.

The next day, Berkley, and the \$200 burrito.

At that price (figuring in travel to and from the restaurant) a burrito better be good. This one was heavenly and came with a choice:

Avocado salsa, Pineapple salsa, Macho salsa (hot), Strawberry salsa, Mango salsa, et al. A paradise of salsa, a whole salsa bar. I sat down and tried them all, each more fantastic than the other, and when I was done, I wiped my mouth on the napkins of contentedness, all the more pleased to have eaten my prize in the beautiful town of Berkley.

Berkley is like the cutest little houses of Lincoln all pushed up against the hillside — eccentric, almost vertical gardens, endlessly multiplied.

It feels like somebody's home town overrun with hippies and intellectuals and you cannot get a bad salad or a mediocre burrito in all the city limits, probably in the whole Bay Area.

Californians eat well. Produce there is fresh, plentiful and cheap. You can hardly get food in Lincoln for any price that compares to the regular grub of low-end dives in Berkley, if my experience is any indication.

Laura fell in love with this homey burg, as I had, on first sight, and we drove aimlessly for some time, day dreaming.

Fortunately for our reverie, houses and apartments do not usually display their rental values in screaming neon dollar signs and we were left to imagine Berkley in peace.

San Francisco, the next day, was another matter. Dirty, overdeveloped, confusing and cold, its property val-

ues seem etched in invisible numerals above every block.

Yet this world class city retains an echo of its former innocence. People on the street are friendly and relaxed enough to make you think you are in a much smaller town, but the traffic convinces otherwise.

With a million things to do and see Laura and I spent an idle afternoon on Fisherman's Wharf, pier 45, with the other tourists. I put a penny into a machine, which squashed it without ceremony into an oblong copper cameo of the Golden Gate Bridge, a rollicking trolley pictured at an improbable angle in the foreground. The rest of the time I wandered longingly among the exotic musical instruments at Lark in the Morning, a great place with a legendary catalog. What little cash I had left was zipped safely in my money belt and I was wise enough to leave it there, fool that I am.

Then to dinner with mutual friends, Mark and Melanie, former Lincolnites, now confirmed San Franciscans. Like all inhabitants of great cities they were eager to seduce us, to inspire in us, as visitors, the love they feel for a place they are, themselves, too busy to enjoy.

Sushi fresh from the Pacific piled our table and we waded in with gusto and chopsticks. Mark and Melanie, as usual, tried to convince me I'd find ready work in the area as a "content provider" but I resisted pretty well

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until ...

(Here I have to break in and explain: You ask a Californian what they do for a living, they tell you and you *still don't know*. Right now, you are reading content which I provided. Get it? Not the most glorified term for "writer" but there it is.)

... I bit down on something hard in my otherwise squishylicious oyster.

I thought it was a tooth, at first. I had half expected to lose a tooth

sometime this trip, antibiotics notwithstanding. Mark saw me react and also thought it was a tooth.

It was not a tooth.

And what it was changed everything for me, made me re-think the stupid assumptions of my life and really consider, for the first time, the immense possibilities open to me.

I fished it out and held it up for everyone to see:

It was a pearl.

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## Outdoor Recreation -- It's what's for summer!

### A. Adventure Challenge Ropes Course

The Adventure Challenge Ropes Course is located near Milford, NE. Groups use the course to improve their communication, better their working relationships, and have a great time! To schedule your group, contact Jon or Stephanie at 472-4777.



### B. Indoor Climbing Wall



The Indoor Climbing Wall is located in the Campus Recreation Center, court 5. A safety class is required to use the wall (\$20) but thereafter members have unlimited use of the wall. Classes are scheduled throughout the summer. Contact 472-3467 to register for the next class!

### C. Outdoor Adventures Trips

The Outdoor Adventures Trip Program offers outdoor recreation trips in Nebraska, the U.S., and around the world. Currently, there is an OA trip in Australia. A trip to Greenland is planned for 2000. There is still space on the Niobrara Canoe trip July 9-11. Information session: 6/30, 7pm, CRec. Sign up deadline is July 6. 472-4777.



### D. Outdoor Adventures Rental Equipment



Outdoor Adventures Rental Equipment (OARE) offers a great variety of outdoor recreation equipment to rent. Equipment includes: golf clubs, tents, backpacks, lanterns, canoes, and much more. Location: east side of the Campus Recreation Center. 472-4777.