

Bryan & Jamie 2009 Volume 2

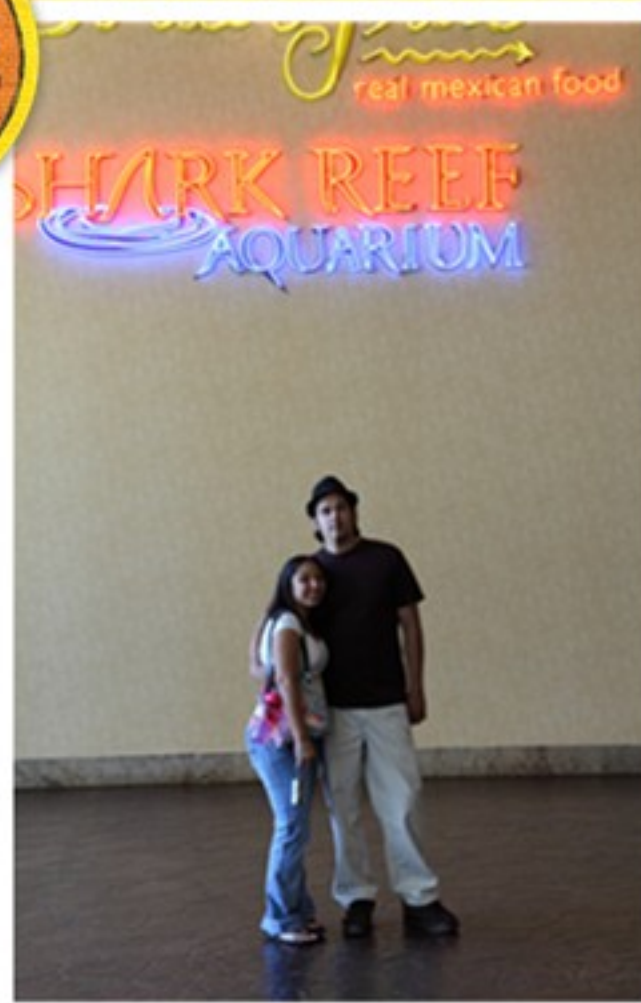


The second half of 2009 brought a lot of changes to our lives. In late July, due to a series of unfortunate events, Bryan lost his job at Loss Mitigation Services, a place he had been working at for the last two years. Although Bryan had some consultant work here and there he wouldn't find a full time job for another four months. Meanwhile in mid-August, the company I worked for; Refractec closed down it's manufacturing office in Irvine and I was also out of work. However, I got lucky enough to get hired immediately by another place called Anchor Printing. In early November we lost our family dog Mimi who we had been dog sitting since early August. A couple weeks after Mimi's passing Bryan was hired by Rubber-Cal as their marketing assistant. Because we were both gainfully employed we decided to get a dog of our own. We ended up adopting Pearl, a white German Shepherd, a couple days after Thanksgiving. About a week after adopting Pearl I was laid off from Anchor Printing due to their financial problems. Yes, there certainly were a lot of changes at the end of 2009 but we made it through the year and have a lot of hope for what 2010 will have in store.

LAS VEGAS



In late June we drove out to Las Vegas. Since we got there late on Friday night and left on Sunday morning we really only got a full day to do stuff. We gambled, we ate, we watched a movie, we ate, we hit up the jacuzzi and we ate some more but one of the highlights of the trip was the Shark Reef Aquarium at Mandalay Bay. We took our friends Claudia and Jimmy along with us which was cool because they had never been to that aquarium before. This aquarium is smaller than some of the aquariums we've been to in California but don't be fooled by it's size because it's main attraction, the shark exhibit, is a 1.3 million gallon tank and the whole place has over 2,000 animals inside. Even though our trip to Vegas was short we all had fun walking through the aquarium and taking our awesome group photo (see below). Of course no trip to Vegas would be complete without a visit to Dunkin' Donuts, Bryan ended up buying a great souvenir T-shirt.





Shark Reef





Jamie and I started out our Independence Day at our new Tustin place of residence by having Red, White and Blue French Toast. If you know the history of how this country was founded you'll understand why that isn't a contradiction. As you can see in the photo the Red was provided by strawberries, the White by powdered sugar, and the Blue by blueberries. Jamie and I then proceeded to spend the rest of the daylight hours filing my old mail in preparation to move it to our new place. This was the height of excitement let me tell you.

Luckily we broke away from that extremely exciting task to do something that was actually fun. Jamie booked us for an evening hike at Bommer Canyon which is in the South Preserve of the Irvine Ranch though the Irvine Ranch Wildlands website. The hike started at 7:30 PM and went on a 3 mile loop up near the 73 Toll Road and paused at the top of the ridge for a spectacular view of at least eight different fireworks shows all over Orange County. I took the camera along and attempted some shots of the shows below. Only after the hike did I realize I truly needed a zoom lens but I think the shots I captured were pretty spectacular nonetheless. Besides the long exposure night shots of the fireworks I also bumped the ISO up to 25,600 and took some shots lit only by moonlight. This is extremely difficult since you have to manual focus and it's quite impossible to do anything except estimate distance since it's dark out. Through trial and error I was able to get these shots somewhat in focus.

The hike was fun and just difficult enough to be challenging. Jamie and I look forward to doing more hikes like this in the future.

- Bryan Sheasby



4th ★
OF
JULY





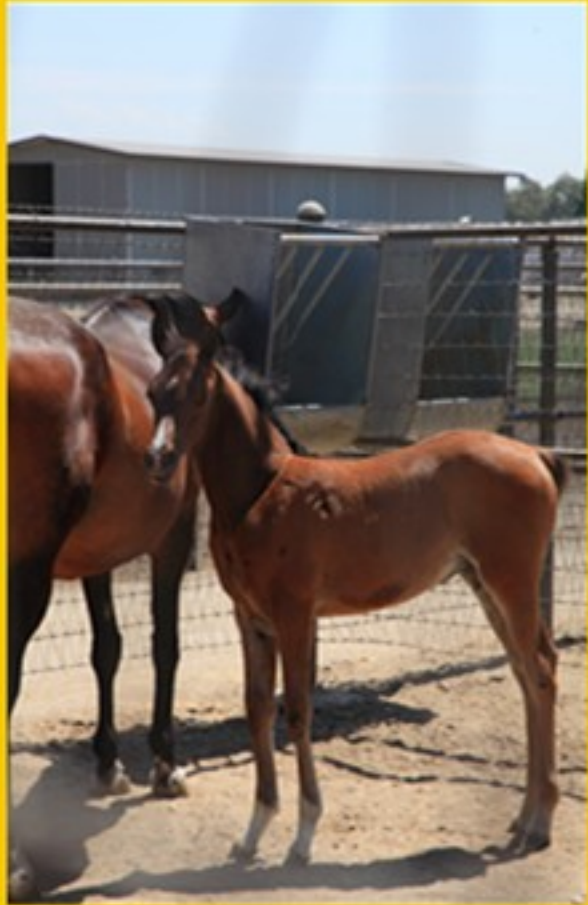
Cal Poly Pomona

I graduated from Cal Poly Pomona in 2004. The year after I still frequented the campus since Jamie was still going there.

Since she transferred I have only been back on campus a hand full of times. In July Jamie and I spent some time photographing there and chronicling the changes and the foundations. Jamie started by photographing the Arabian Horses. This is one thing which is both always changing but yet always a constant. The Arabian Horses have to be kept on campus you see as part of the deal Kellogg made to allow the ranch to become a university campus. Jamie photographed some of the newest additions to the campus; the young foals. Then we photographed the horses which sit in the triangle plot of pasture near the 10 freeway exit. Next Jamie drove to the top of the new parking structure. I guess it's been in use for a while but it is new to us. The structure is massive and probably is only dwarfed by the structure at Disney Land, California. From the top I photographed many buildings old and new. The familiar CLA building with the triangle shaped point sits near the library which recently got a face lift. The library is now a juxtaposition of old and new all in one. The original building remains intact with a new fascia on one half, a new entrance, and more room.

Most memorable of all are the Dorms where I spent many many nights with friends since gone off to lead separate lives but not forgotten. The buildings look exactly as they did the day I moved in during the Fall of 1999. I remember making the walk many times between Montecito where I lived and Cedritos where most of my friends were. I remember the long nights not studying but instead just hanging out or playing Counter Strike. Oh, those were the days. I also remember LosOlivos . A place called "the olives" can't serve good food and it didn't. I even worked there for a while. At least you could get a bowl of cereal and know it would be a constant. All Kellogg's brands too... I wonder why? After driving around the entire campus, Jamie and I crossed Temple Ave. and visited the Farm Store. There we bought some Faygo soda at one of the few locations where it is sold. I also picked up an awesome shirt which says "There are two Cal Polys: Pomona and the other one". I actually like what they've done with the place. A lot has changed in five years but even more has stayed the same. I've got to say I like the parking structure. Parking was always a nightmare on campus (and I lived there and had a separate lot). I can't help but wonder what the next five years will bring. I hope it's more of the same; improving the campus while paying homage to it's history. - Bryan Sheasby







Farm Store

CRYSTAL COVE





HDR

San Diego

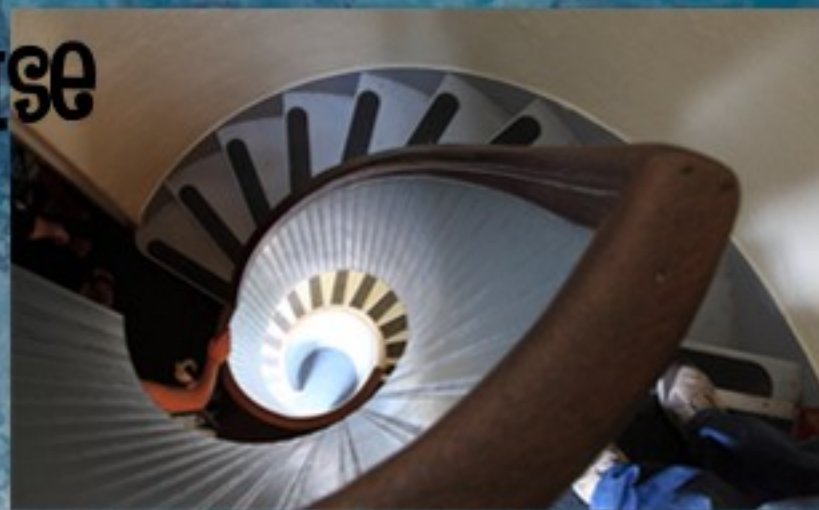
In August we went with our friends down to San Diego for a day long photo trip. We first visited the Cabrillo National Monument. While waiting for our friends to arrive I took many photos of the view of San Diego from the visitors center. We also ran into some sort of miniature sea explorer man who graciously took a photo with me. I wonder if he scowls at all the tourists photos or if I irked him in some way. Our main purpose for visiting was to see the old Point Loma Lighthouse. It was nice but nothing spectacular, it probably would have been more fun to photograph at dawn or dusk. After exploring the lighthouse we drove down to the Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá. I had a lot of fun photographing this site, especially all the colorful flowers.





Cabrillo National Monument

Old Point Loma Lighthouse







Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá





Sea World

After thoroughly exploring the mission we went to Sea World. Yes, I know, this day was jam packed. While at Sea World we got to see the Clydesdales, the Beluga whales and the shark aquarium. But of course no trip to Sea World is complete without seeing Shamu perform. I'm still not sure which whale Shamu actually is, there seems to be many Shamu's. They all performed an awesome show and after that we called it a day.







SHAMU

SAN GORGONIO ADVENTURE HIKE

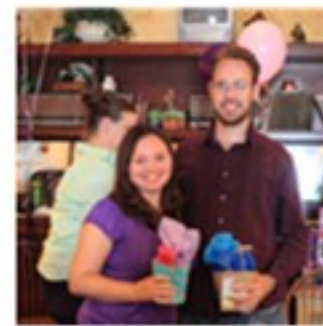


A good friend of mine, Jay started what he terms "Adventure Friday". See, he works Saturday but always gets Friday off. He already completed one major hike a month before and was looking to go on another. I took him up and we applied for a permit to hike the Vivian Creek trail which leads eventually to Mount San Gorgonio. As we set out on the trail I was excited and about as prepared as I thought I should be. I carried two liters of water plus an 8 oz chocolate Silk soy drink. Jamie made me two sandwiches and packed me trail mix, dried fruit, Shot Bloks, and Gu. Jay was even more prepared. He packed a full U.S. gallon of water plus he had trekking poles and a water filtration pump. More importantly, Jay is in much better shape than I am. So we set out on our hike at a few minutes past 7AM. The trail starts flat, crosses a riverbed for Mill Creek and then shoots up into seriously steep switchbacks and loose rocky terrain. Jay and I were both feeling great as we crossed Vivian Creek and continued on a slight uphill. As we were going I mentioned to Jay that I smelled smoke but he couldn't smell it at the time. We kept going and even though it was some seriously steep and technical hiking I was feeling great. We passed Half Way Creek feeling good. We continued up to another switchback which took us around to a great view of the valley. It was then that we could see the typical thermal inversion layer in the atmosphere and below it this cloud of thick black and orange smoke. This spooked Jay and concerned me as well. My first thought was "let's get away from the smoke". I wanted to summit and then decide which side of the mountain to come down. If there was fire nearby we would see it and we could go down the other side. Jay reminded me that this would make it a 23 mile hike. "Good Point" I said and so we went down. We got about a mile and a half down or almost 1200 vertical feet and we happened across the first hikers we had seen on the trail so far. They didn't know where the smoke came from but were not concerned. Then another couple came up and continued on. Jay and I decided it must be safe to continue so we went back up. The second time doing that ascent took it's toll on me. We went slightly above where we turned around the first time and stopped to eat lunch. Then we continued on past High Creek. By this time I was really feeling it. We got a few hundred feet vertically above High Creek when I decided to call it quits. We could have reached the summit but we would have gotten back to the car around 7PM and I had no cell service to tell Jamie I would be late. It felt really good to be going downhill and we made great time. Then my body just hit a wall and every step was a major effort. I had forgotten how steep the switchbacks above Mill Creek were. Jay lent me his trekking poles and that helped me get down. Then we crossed the creek and made it to the car. I was never happier to see a car in my life and I thought for a moment about kissing it's steel skin; then I decided not to. -Bryan Sheasby

Grandma Donna's 80th Birthday



In September, Grandma Adams turned 80 years old and to celebrate this milestone my aunt planned a surprise party at an Italian restaurant in Monrovia. Many family members who haven't been together in years came together to celebrate my grandmother. To say Grandma surprise was an understatement. She cried. We ate good food and passed out presents and had a great time. It was nice to see Grandma Donna celebrated by so many people.

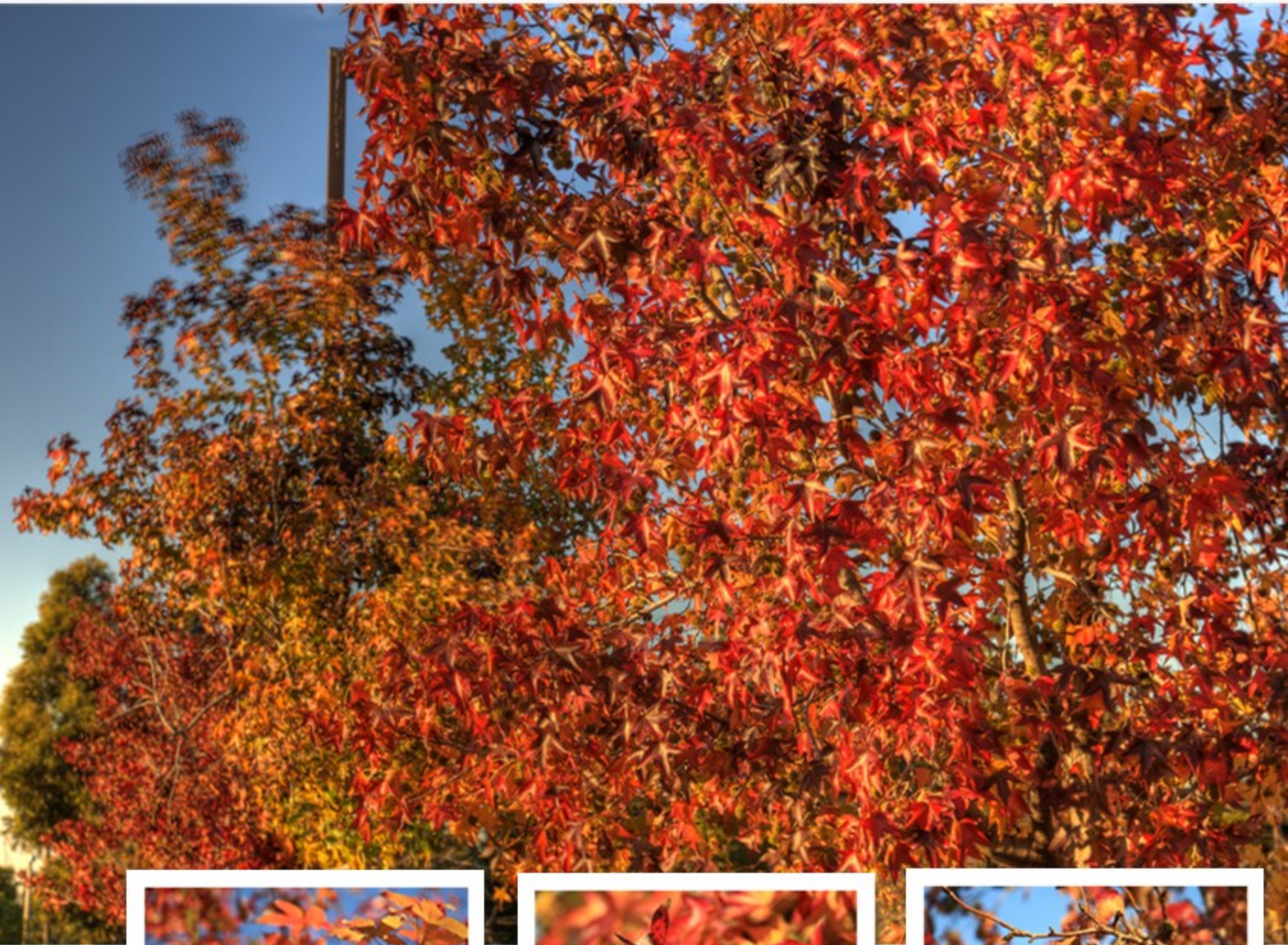






PETERS CANYON

FALL LEAVES





MIRAMAR AIR SHOW



In October we went to one of my favorite events of the whole year the Miramar Air Show. We decided to rent photo equipment this year to get the best shots possible. We brought along our 5D Mark II which I paired with our 70-200mm lens but we rented a 50D along with a 400mm 2.8L lens for Bryan to shoot with. Let me tell you something about this lens, it's huge and heavy. We honestly had no idea just how big this lens was before renting it, probably something we should have researched because it was a lot of effort to carry it around. Plus going to the air show requires a lot of walking even though we got a good parking spot this year (more on that later). After going through the security check point we made our way to the grand stand and found a seat at the very top. Sitting at the top was important because we wanted to be able to set up the huge lens without bothering anybody behind us. However, I'm sure the people to the immediate right and left of us weren't very happy. Bryan set up his camera plus the huge lens on our mono-pod, this limited his range of motion but he took some really great shots. It almost looked like he was flying right next to some of the planes. Because I had the Mark II I ended up shooting a lot of videos.





There were many of the same performers as last year such as the Patriots, the Oracle Challenger and the Blue Angels. There were also a few new performers, such as the Canadian Snowbirds. The Snowbirds are very much like the Blue Angels as far as the way they perform except that their formation is larger; they use nine planes, and their planes are older. One notable absentee performer was the F-22 Raptor. I am actually really disappointed that they did not bring back this amazing jet, it really was a crowd pleaser last year and my favorite performance I've ever seen at an air show. I assume it wasn't there because of the recent developments over the fate of the F-22 which is really too bad because it truly is a sight to see.





Canadian Snowbirds



The weather last year was very mild which was nice but this year it was just sunny and hot. Even though we wore hats and drank lots of fluids we couldn't handle the heat and we walked back to our car before the show was over. We ended up missing the Blue Angels but we were exhausted. One thing we noticed when we got back to our car was the amount of people who sat in the parking lot just watching the show. We got up at 5am so we could get to the show early and get a good parking spot which was located at the West Gate of the base and also right on the runway. Last year we got parked out in the boonies, in a gravel lot. The spot we got this year was perfect for watching the show, plus it's free. So next year we will probably not even buy tickets, just drive into the parking lot, have a tailgate party and watch the show. Hopefully the F-22 will make a triumphant return.



magT7 DEMO









In October we planned a five day, four night trip to Zion National Park. This was our first time visiting this amazing place so we made the most of our time there. The cheapest way to visit Zion is to camp so we packed our car full, and I mean it was really full, of all of our camp gear. Everything we could possibly need was stuffed into our little hatchback; tent, sleeping bags, clothes, a stove, propane, blankets, food, cameras, the kitchen sink. Okay not the last thing but we were pretty well prepared. We left Orange County at 6am, we stopped in Las Vegas for gas and Dunkin Donuts, because if you are leaving California you have to stop at a Dunkin Donuts while you are out of state. We ended up getting to Zion at 1pm mountain time which means we managed to get to Utah in six hours which included a one hour stop in Vegas. Not bad. We used the rest of our day to set up our camp site. We also discovered the excellent shuttle system that is provided by the park.

Zion National Park

Watchman Campground





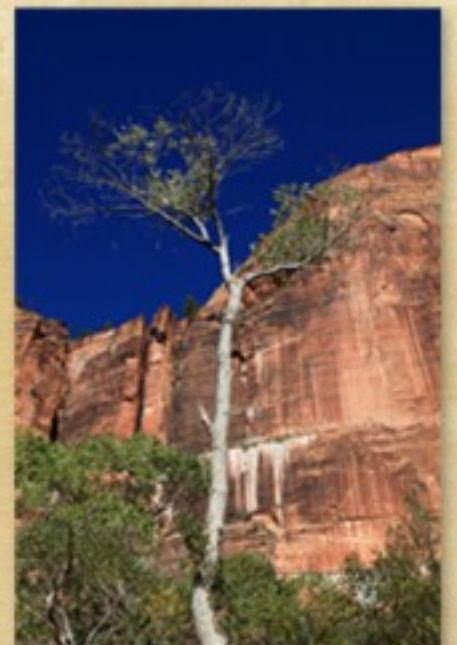
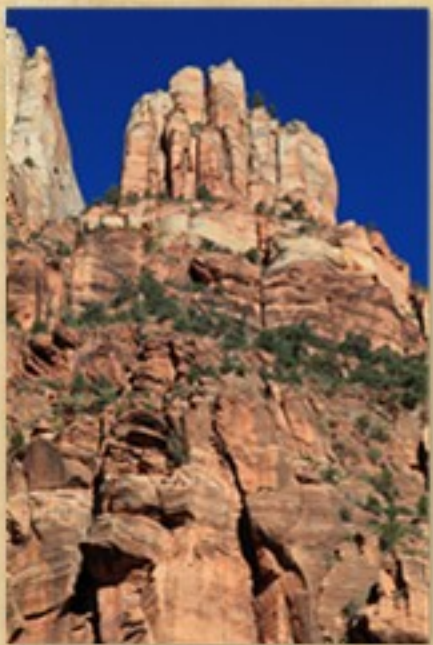
Emerald Pools Trail



Because Zion can get really crowded the park does not allow cars to drive up in the canyon during March through October. They provide a free shuttle that starts at the Visitor's Center and goes all the way up the canyon and stops at various trails and scenic spots along the way. The other shuttle also starts near the Visitor's Center and goes through the little town of Springdale which is just outside the park. Mostly Springdale is full of gift shops filled with useless trinkets. There are a few restaurants, a gas station and other specialty shops. Just outside of the entrance into Zion is a little market where we bought firewood. We didn't use our fire pit to cook but we did build a fire every night and roast marshmallows. We ended up using our little propane stove to cook our meals, which were mostly soup and foods that required us to add water. It was pretty high class. The temperatures in the canyon did dip down during the night to low 50's to high 40's but it was the high winds that were the worst. Other than being cold at night we also have an air mattress that loses air so in the morning we were pretty much laying on the ground. Good times.



Virgin River





The weather in Zion was perfect during our whole trip. The sun was shining, the sky was blue, and the clouds were puffy when they were present. It made for absolutely stunning scenery. The mornings, however, were the worst part of the day. Not only was it still freezing, and by freezing I mean in the 40's because I'm from California and anything below 70 degrees is freezing, the winds had not died down yet so doing anything was nearly impossible. We could hardly boil water to make coffee or open bags of cereal because our fingers were too cold to have any sort of dexterity. I couldn't wait to start hiking so I could warm up.







For our first full day at Zion we decided to go to the Emerald Pools trails. We hopped on the park shuttle and made our way up the canyon. We stopped at the Zion Lodge which is where the Emerald Pools trails start. When we got off we saw a bunch of wild turkeys hanging out by the lodge. I proceeded to do a photo op with them and tell them how delicious they looked. I'm sure that's the kind of compliment you give a turkey. We then made our way to the trail head just across a bridge that overlooked the Virgin River. As we hiked up the trail we made our first stop at the Middle Emerald Pools. They are called the Emerald Pools because of the amount of algae that grows in them. We then hiked up some more to get to the lower pools. That's right you hike up to go lower, I'm not sure exactly how that works but it does. We ended up at a small waterfall which had a walkway just behind it. We stopped just after the waterfall for a snack and then headed back the way we came from to go to the Upper Emerald Pools. The trail for the upper pools was much steeper, full of rocks, narrow at points with drop offs. More good times. We took many breaks, mostly because of me but also because the trail was pretty crowded. After arriving at the pool we rested a little longer. The pool was in a nice shady area and the breeze felt really nice after the sunny ascent. After a while it was time to go back which was much harder for me. I'm really good at climbing but I'm horrible at descending. Bryan had to help me a lot by holding my hand and guiding me down. When we finally got down the trail it was time for lunch so we walked across the street to the lodge and ate at the Red Rock Grill. I find food is even tastier after you just hiked 2+ miles. Bryan decided after witnessing how difficult it was for me to hike down a trail that I should get trekking poles to help me with my balance. So after lunch we took the shuttle back down the canyon and got on the other shuttle into Springdale. We found an outdoor sporting store and found some really great carbon fiber trekking poles. They were a bit pricey but totally worth it as they were light weight and easy to carry. We decided to use the rest of our day visiting the famous tunnel. There are actually two tunnels on the Zion-Mount Carmel Highway but the largest is the 1.1 mile tunnel which was completed in 1930. It is one lane in each direction, has no lights but does feature a "gallery" which is just a large opening that looks out to the rocks. It is so narrow inside the tunnel that most of the time, due to RV's and tour buses, they will stop one direction of traffic so a few cars can go on one side and vice-versa. After passing through the tunnels we stopped at Checkerboard Mesa Overlook and took a few shots before turning around and driving back to the campsite.





Riverside Walk

The next day we started out another freezing morning by taking the shuttle all the way to the end of the scenic drive. The stop was called the Temple of Sinawava and the trail was called the Riverside Walk. The trail was two miles round trip, it was completely paved and it paralleled the Virgin River. At the end of this trail the river continues up the canyon. There is a very challenging hike that goes up the river to a place called The Narrows which is one of the most frequently photographed places in Zion. You have to get back country permits to do this hike and they recommend you do it as a day hike. I hope to one day come back and do that hike so I can get a look at The Narrows. Even if you don't do the full hike you can still walk up the river and we wanted to try it too. We weren't prepared at that time but we vowed to buy some water shoes and return the next day. Since the Riverside Walk was fairly short we decided to take the shuttle down the canyon and stop at all of the shorter trails. The first we stopped at was Weeping Rock which is a half mile round trip hike up a paved walkway to a rock that drips water. The most fascinating thing about this rock is that it takes 1200 years for the water to drip down to where we could see it from the point where it lands on the top of the rocks. Our next stop on our trip down was to the Court of the Patriarchs which is an overlook to three huge cliffs that stand side by side. The Patriarchs are named Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Our final stop was to the Zion Human History Museum where we watched a short film about the history of Zion and the Mormon settlers who lived there. There is also a photo spot right behind the museum that features three distinct rock formations. One is the West Temple which is the tallest peak in Zion and another is rust stained and called the Alter of Sacrifice which is pretty much the most awesome name for a rock. After lunch we walked from our camp site to a trail called Watchman. This trail is considered moderately difficult but for me it was pretty strenuous. It's a very steep, rocky trail which seems to go on forever but it has a great view of the park from the top. I can say I had a lot more fun going down the trail than going up, it was also a lot easier thanks to my shiny new trekking poles.



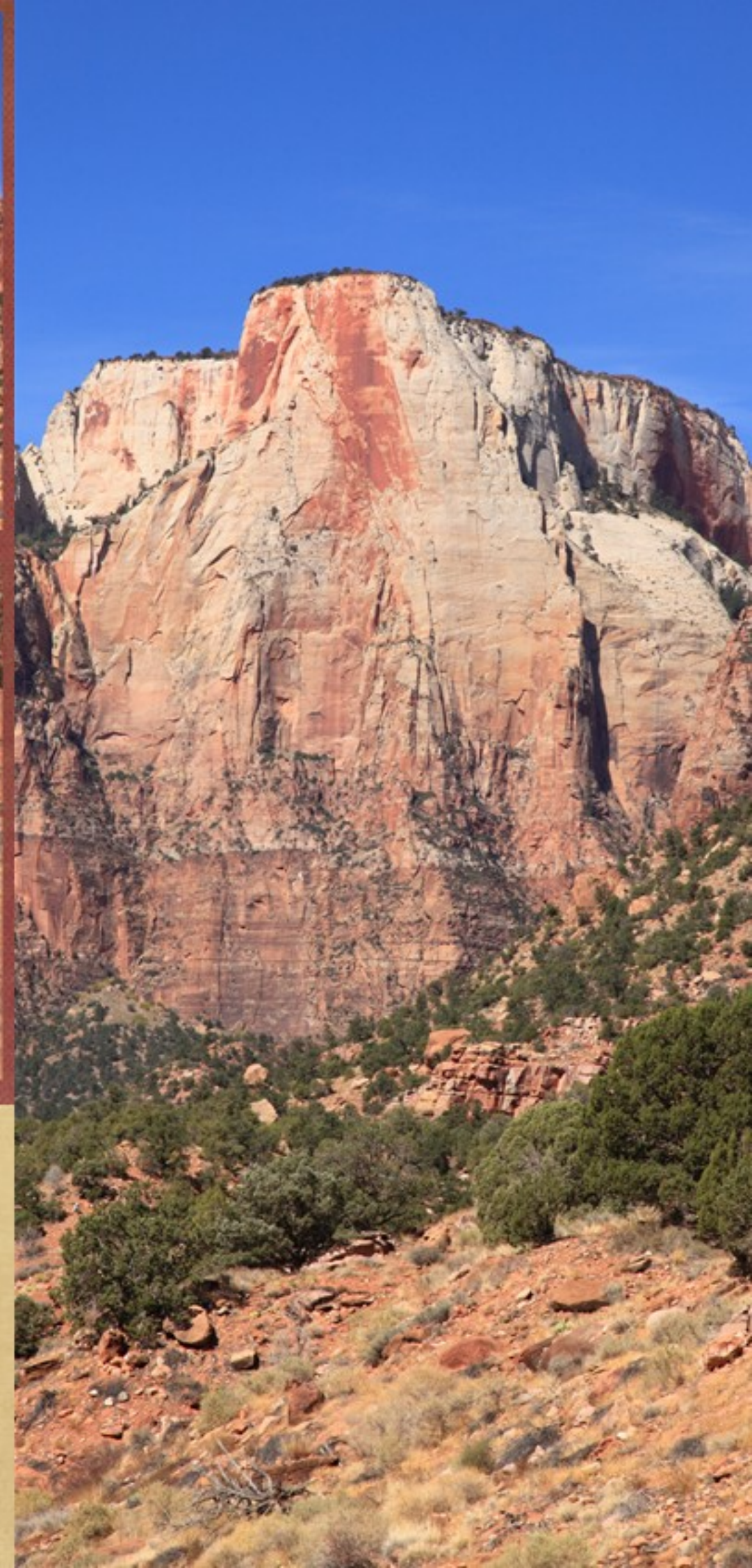


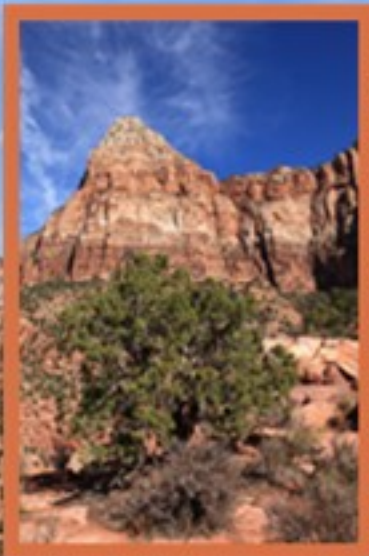
Court of the Patriarchs





Altar of Sacrifice





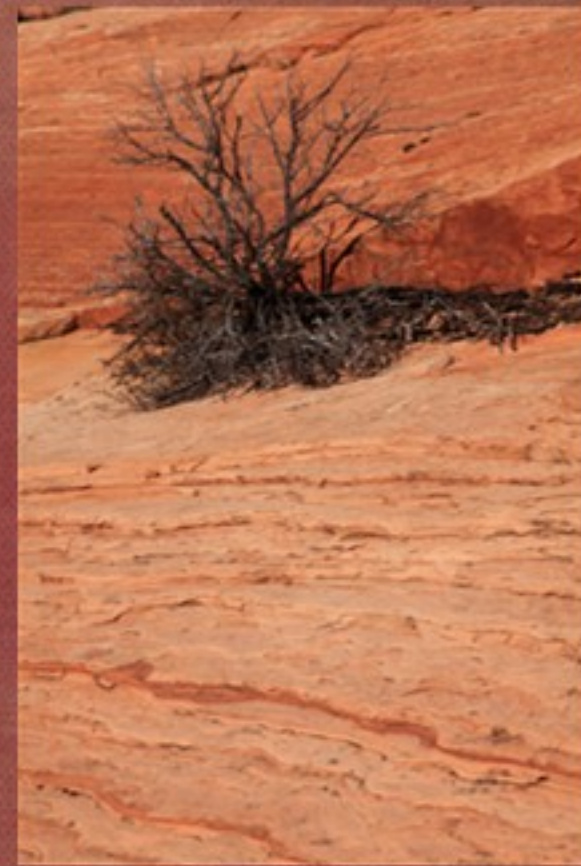
Watchman Trail





On our final day we took our car out and drove to the other side of the tunnel. Our plan was to go on the Canyon Overlook trail but unfortunately the parking situation made it impossible. We instead drove to a neat sandstone formation off the road. This was probably one of my favorite things to photograph since I love texture and lines.







Canyon Overlook

We got back in our car and drove back towards the Canyon Overlook trail, luckily we found a place to park this time. This trail was also steep and rocky with a few drop offs (I think this is a theme of all the trails) but I found it easier than the Watchman trail and of course it had an spectacular view of the canyon at the end.



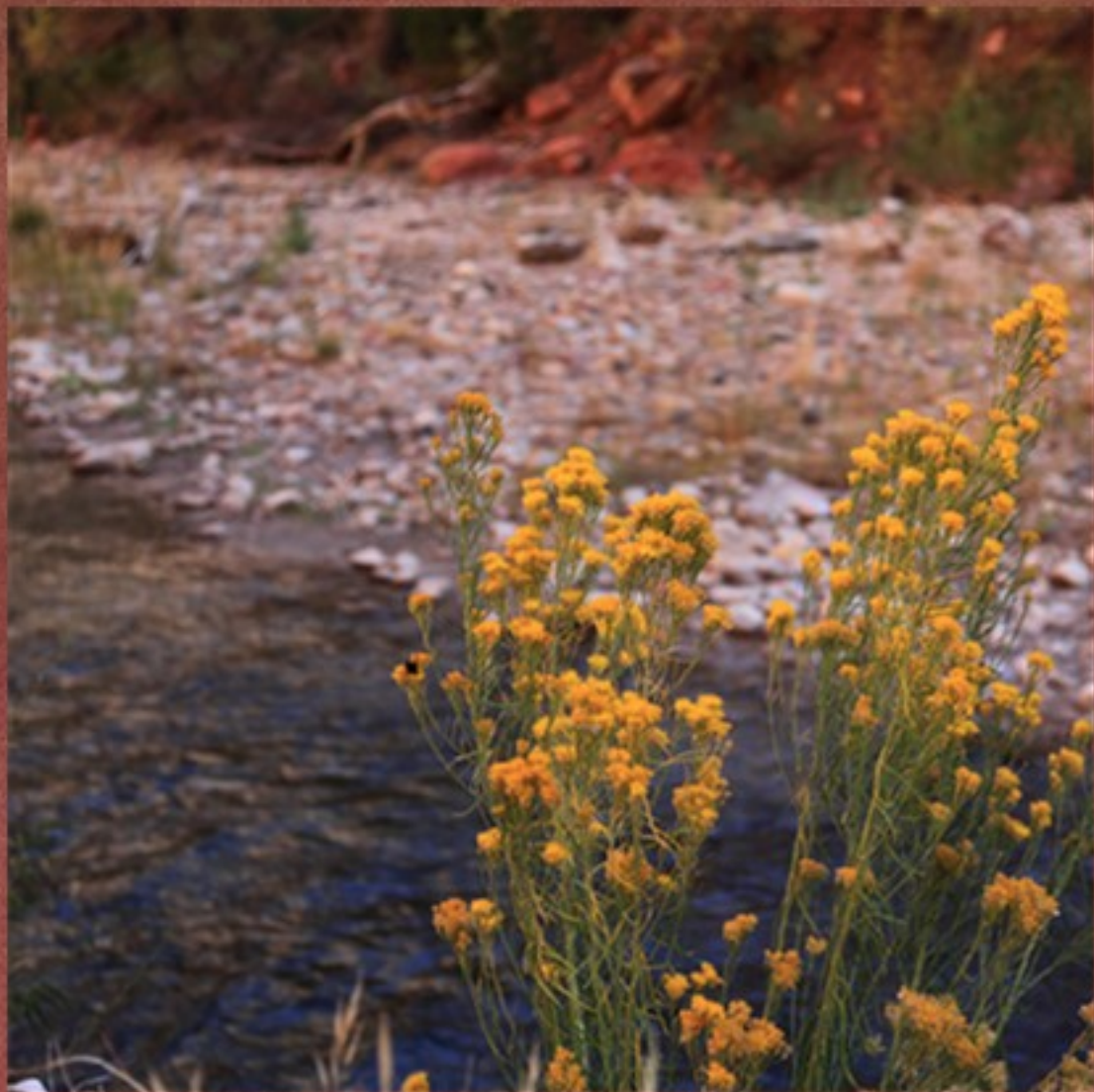


After lunch we decided to end our Zion trip with a walk up the Virgin River as we had vowed the day before. We purchased some cheap water shoes from the market and off we went down the Riverside Walk to the rocky shore of the river. Hiking in the river was difficult to say the least. The water was freezing, I know I use that word a lot but when I stepped in the water it hurt, it was that cold. There were a lot of smooth rocks in the river which made it hard to balance on top of the fact that we were walking upstream. I saw Bryan having a hard time and since he was holding our Mark II whilst in knee deep water I handed him one of my trekking poles. We made it about a quarter mile up before we decided to turn around. Apparently just a few feet up from where we turned around the river got very steep and I wasn't about to get all waste deep in that icy water.





We went back to camp and Bryan built our last fire and we toasted our trip with multiple servings of s'mores. While sitting next to the fire a family of deer happened by our campsite, we sat and watched quietly as the mothers and babies grazed. It was a perfect ending to an even more perfect trip. Yes, it was perfect, even though it was cold in the mornings, windy at night, there were no showers and a squirrel ate our trash. It took us a lot longer to get home than going out there, we traveled a total of 878 miles, but it was absolutely worth it to get to visit such a perfect place.





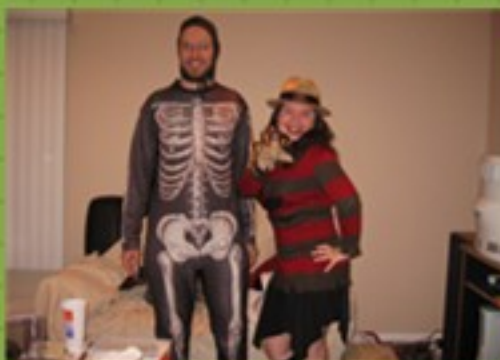
Pumpkin Patch





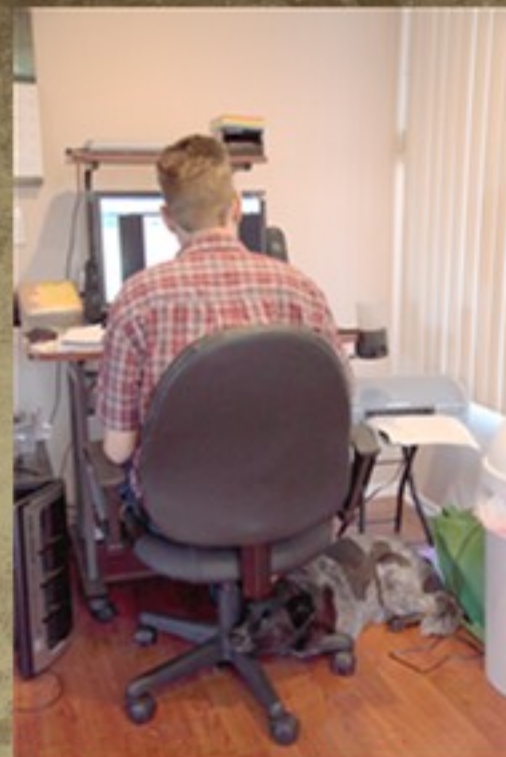
Pumpkin Carving



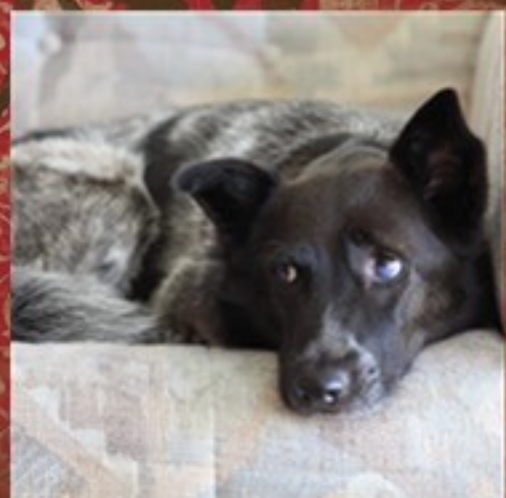




mimi



On November 9th we lost our family dog Mimi. At the time of Mimi's death we had been watching her for Bryan's mom for about 4 months. Her illness came on suddenly and took her from us even faster. Saying goodbye to her was one of the hardest things we ever had to do but we knew we made the right decision. We are so blessed that we had the privilege to love and care for Mimi. In the short time she was with us she brought so much joy to our lives and we will never forget her.





A few weeks after Mimi's passing I found Pearl, a white German Shepherd, on a rescue website. On November 28th we adopted Pearl from Coastal German Shepherd Rescue. She was a nervous dog from the beginning, she even ran away from us on the second day we had her. She ended up bonding with me very quickly but it took awhile for her to warm up to Bryan. She has been an amazing addition to our family.



MERRY CHRISTMAS





Rubber-Cal Christmas Party



Fountain Valley Christmas Lights



The Sheasbys





The Neanders



Peters Canyon



