

Earl's Diary - Monday - April 28, 2014

Greetings to all my Loyal Readers;

The Peanut and I are off on another adventure. This time I will be staying within the boundaries of California where my two ultimate destinations are located near each other. The first stop will be at Pinnacles National Park. I have never been there before so it seemed like a natural place to visit. The second stop will be in King City at San Lorenzo County Park. There will be a "cult" gathering. You remember the "cult"? We fiberglass RV people are enthusiastic about our little "egg" trailers, although some aren't so small anymore.

I spent all of last week getting The Peanut ready for its travels by washing and waxing. Of course, that didn't happen all in one day. A little bit each day was my motto. By today I was ready to take off. By 8:15 I was leaving Galt.

Just south of Stockton, I-5 heads a little east to join with I-580 coming from the Bay Area. I-5 heads south along the west side of our great Central Valley past areas of farming lands - mostly tree crops such as almonds, peaches, cherries and nuts. Flowing back and forth over the rolling hills, we crossed over the California Aqueduct and the Delta Mendota Canal carrying its many water feet of our northern California water to the south - and they still want to dig those tunnels under our Delta? Oops! There goes that editorial again. 'Nuff said!

About eighty miles from home, the interstate arrives at a major crossroads at the community of Santa Nella. Ever since I-5 came through the area many years ago, Santa Nella has been the place to stop for feed and fuel with every chain outfit supplying those needs. I noticed there's even a housing development that has grown up in the area.

From these crossroads, State highway 156 heads west across Pacheco Pass. Just west of the pass, as the road enters Santa Clara County, is the ultimate in rest stops AND tourist traps - Casa de Fruta. Now, understand, Casa de Fruta is

a good place to stop IF your Impulse Buying Filter is firmly engaged! My Filter was engaged, although it slipped a little. I wandered through the fruit part of Casa de Fruta. I found those wonderful Cara Cara oranges that I was introduced to on my last adventure. I thought "what the heck. I'm on a trip. Go for it - even if they are \$1.99 per pound." I purchased four pieces (two pounds) - that comes to \$1 each! Talk about

my filter being lowered - it was smashed to the ground! I will surely enjoy them for breakfast.

Casa de Fruta has been at this location for many, many years. It offers a little something for everyone - young and a little older. I wandered around taking in all of the sights. (It was my major rest stop for the trip.) Here, let me show you: They have Casa this -and Casa that for everything imaginable.







Sorry, the Casa de Choo Choo was not running at the time I was there. The empty station was the best I could do. The Casa de Sweets was open however, and willing to sell me decadent treats!



It's a good family stop with something to entertain the kids (and spend money) while Mom and Dad do other things (like spending money).



Something for the kids to climb up and down on.



Fruits and all kinds, Jams, Jellies, Barbecue Sauce, Dry fruits, Candies, and more -- all at premium prices. Make sure your Impulse Buying Filter is firmly engaged!







It looks like one of the newest attractions is an actual working antique double decker carousel.

Something for the older crowd - rows upon rows of retired antique equipment.



Grounds are well landscaped and maintained. They are joy to just walk around and enjoy - and spend money, of course. There's plenty of free parking. There's even an on-site RV park if you want to stay a couple days and spend more money.



I'm not in the business of promoting this place but I thoroughly enjoyed spending a couple hours photographing. Now it's time to continue on. The drive at this time of year is gorgeous with the surrounding hills so green. You can't say that for many more weeks until they turn a golden brown.





Back on the road again, it was only about 12 miles until the town of Hollister appears. Just before entering Hollister, State Highway 25 bisects the road into town. Highway 25 now goes around the town and is labeled as "Pinnacles National Park Highway". The sign in Hollister indicates the distance to Pinnacles to be 32 miles. That sign also warns that the next services would be 72 miles.

It's a beautiful country drive along those 32 miles. Ranches dot the landscape as the road meanders up, down and around the narrow valley as it follows the San Benito River. There were even some vineyards along the way. It also passes through the very small communities of Tres Pinos, and Paicines. The curvy road doesn't make

for hurried driving. All of a sudden State Highway 146 cuts off the the right and you are now in Pinnacles National Park.

Two miles up the road is the small Pinnacles Visitor and store. The Visitor Center is open every day from 9 to 5. The store is open ??? sometimes.

The campground has one loop (Loop D) that has electric hookups (no water hookups). Other loops have no hookups. I took a few photos of Loop D. It's inhabitants are mostly RV's with a few tenters

scattered under the trees. The campground is typical of any National Park campground - - rustic! It is nice to have the electricity though! Campers sure need to be self contained -- The restrooms and showers are located about quarter mile away, near the Visitor Center!

It's been a busy day for me and time to crawl into bed. Tomorrow it will be exploration time. Thanks for coming along with me today. Bye for now - - Earl

