

Katie & Jim's California Trip Aug. 13-23, 2016

Katie had decided to move to California after her boyfriend Didi got a Music Teaching job in Antioch, CA, and he invited her to share an apartment together. After much planning, and a short window between my musical calendar, we made the trip.

Sat. Aug. 13:

Fortunately I had a gig rained out this evening, and was able to pick up our 10-foot U-Haul Truck here in Ithaca. I loaded the truck with the things from Katie's room here in the Ithaca house. It barely covered the floor of the truck, so we had plenty of room for her things from Asheville, NC. Carol helped my load the truck, and it looked like this:



Sun. Aug. 14:

I drove halfway down to Harrisonburg, Virginia, where I stayed in a Motel. I wanted to conserve energy for the next day.

Mon. Aug. 15:

I arrived in Asheville around noon, and we packed the rest of Katie's things with help from her roommate. The truck had enough room for everything, and we also packed her Prius with things we'd need access to at our Hotels. I slept on Katie's futon couch for the night.

Tues. Aug. 16:

We got up early and headed to the U-Haul location in Asheville to pick up the Auto Transport that would tow Katie's Prius behind us. The place was on a very steep hill, and it was a challenge to hook up the transport to the truck, but we did it after pulling off to a side road with a flat surface. One thing we found out was that once we drove the Prius onto the transport, we could not open the doors! So we figured out a plan to pull the Prius up on it to the side as much as possible, and then Katie (being skinny) would roll down the driver's window, crawl out, and then auto-up the electric window and locking the car.



Once we were ready, we drove to a Red Roof Inn in West Memphis, AR - going all the way across Tennessee. We had a small cat carrier that we were able to put her cat Jack in, and set it on a storage tub in the front of the cabin of the truck, so we could talk to him and see how he was doing. I had read a lot of things about travelling long-distance with a cat, and the main things I learned were:

- Only feed the cat at dinner time**
- Give it anti-anxiety drops before leaving each day**
- Spray the inside of the carrier with motion-sickness spray**
- Set up 2 large carriers in the hotel each night; one for food & water, the other for a small litter box**
- Don't let him out of the carrier**
- Keep a sheet over the carriers at all times to minimize stress**

This worked like a charm, and Jack was the most well-behaved cat during the whole trip. He never once went bathroom anywhere other than his litter box. He did meow at times, but was able to sleep most of the trip. What a relief!

That first night we did let him out of the carrier, but he just hid under the beds, so we decided to keep him in the carriers from then on. Here was Jack's Hotel setup:



Wed. Aug. 17:

Drove to Oklahoma City today, saw lots of flat land. We've been driving on Route 40 which goes pretty much from NC to CA. (about 2,700 miles) For eating we would just stop and get drive-thru food, and then sit in the truck and eat lunch. We'd get to our Hotel in the late afternoon, and then settle in Jack's setup, and then I'd go out and pick up dinner & bring it to the hotel room.

Thurs. Aug. 18:

Drove to Albuquerque, NM today. It was wonderful seeing the changing landscape of the USA. We'd go from the flat plains to the desert-like panhandle of Texas (we drove through Amarillo). Then we started seeing large red rocks and mesas and buttes.

A lot of the scenery looked like this:



We stayed at a nice Econolodge in Albuquerque. We just got there and got caught in a big downpour, and Katie got Jack in the hotel room just in time. I stayed in the truck until the rain passed. A janitor was out sweeping the rain water away from the parking lot. I found a nearby deli to get sandwiches for dinner.

Fri. Aug. 19:

Today we drove through Flagstaff, AZ, through the Kaibab National Forest, and stayed overnight in Kingman. Lots of pine trees & large rock formations and beautiful scenery.

Sat. Aug. 20:

Today was the last day of driving. We started by driving through the Mojave Desert, where gas spiked at \$3.79 per gallon. We had gotten it as cheap as \$1.59 in TN. It averaged around \$2.79. We saw our first palm trees. After the desert, we drove through hundreds of miles of southern California agriculture.



We noticed a lot of water shortages in some of the farmland. But there were also thousands and thousands of rows of orange trees, lemon trees, etc. We got to Antioch and I dropped off our U-Haul auto transport so Katie could have her Prius to drive.

We arrived at Didi's apt at Twin Creeks, and we got Jack inside to his new home. He seems very happy there. Didi made us dinner. I got a Motel 6 room just 10 minutes away, and we all went to bed for the night.

Sun. Aug. 21:

We had a beautiful day to move everything. They are on the 2nd floor, so we worked out a "fireman's carry" line where I would get stuff from the truck to the stairs, and we'd split up the stairs by handing stuff off halfway up. It got warmer by afternoon, but we got it all out fine. Didi has been working really hard at his new Music Teaching job at Antioch High School and Middle School. He is setting up a new music program there, and doing both schools as well as Marching Band, Pep Band, and other things. The apartment is in a really nice complex, that is like a "separate campus" in that there are no neighboring houses right next to it. They have a nice main office, with a swimming pool, hot tub, workout room, and is nearby a long hiking

Twin Creeks Pool:



trail that goes through some grassy hills nearby. There are palm trees, and tall poplar trees in the area. I took Katie & Didi out to dinner on the East Bay, where we had a nice meal by the water. There was a Maharachi band playing nearby.

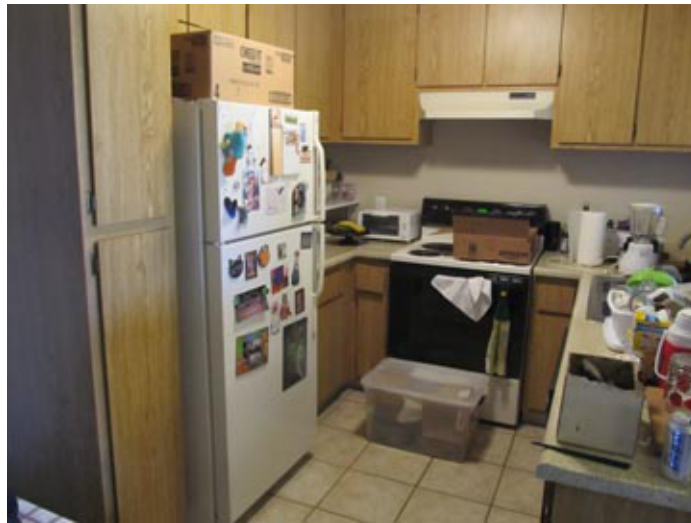
Here is their apt. at Twin Creeks and its view:



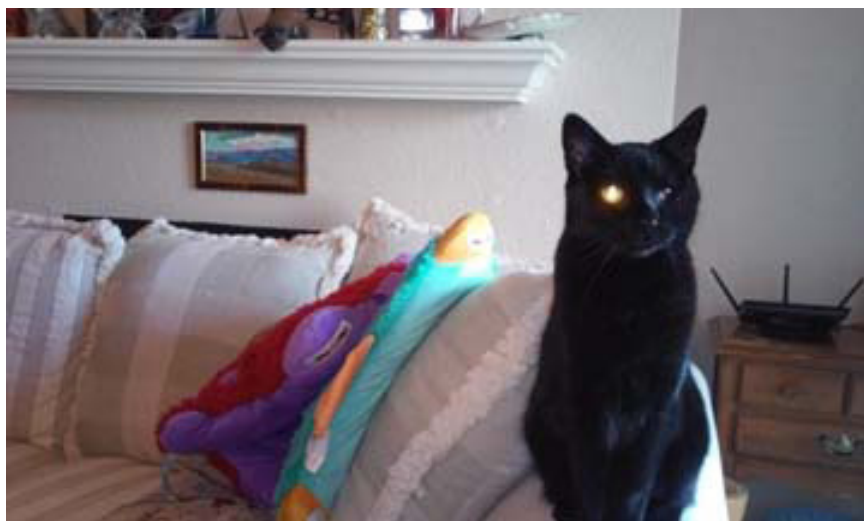
Mon. Aug. 22

Didi went to work, and Katie worked really hard all day unpacking her things and getting settled in. I helped by flattening cardboard boxes, and taking out trash. We also took a few boxes of things to Goodwill.

Katie did a remarkable job, and here are some results:



Here's One-Eyed Jack, happy in his new home:



Tue. Aug. 23

Katie drove me to the Oakland airport, where I got my flights to LA, and then Detroit, and then Ithaca.

I couldn't have asked for an easier trip. When I tell people I drove 3,500 miles, and from NC to CA with a cat and towing a car, people don't believe it. But I enjoyed it, especially the time I got to spend with Katie.



Katie's address then was:

**1111 James Donlon Blvd.
Antioch, CA 94509**

**Lots of love,
Jim**