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Cover – East Cuesta Ridge as viewed from the West Cuesta Ridge. Scene captured in late March during California's Green Season. Outing with the retired men's hiking group. The Matte photo paper does not truly represent how neon green the hills were.

January – Dormitory building at the Mission La Purisima at Lompoc, CA. Regarded as the best restoration of any of the famed California missions. The restored buildings and grounds include extensive water capture, treatment and distribution systems, working gardens, livestock and other functional facilities.

February – Coastal wildflowers growing in Nipomo.

March – Brown Pelicans on the beach where Oso Flaco Lake seeps through the sand dunes and drains into the Pacific. What is not seen in this picture is about 300 more pelicans to left hanging around a pool created by the water seep.

April – Hollister Peak at Morro Bay. Hollister Peak is the mount on the left, mount Cerro Cabrillo is in the middle, and famous Morro Rock is seen partially on the right of the image. All these mounts are ancient volcano cores collectively known as The Morros. Extending from just east of San Luis Obispo, nine of the more significant Morros can be seen marching west off into the sea. Hollister Peak is part of the Hollister Ranch, a preserve currently closed to the public. This photo

was taken at the Cuesta Botanical Area, at the top of the west side of the Cuesta Ridge during a hike in March.

May – Pacific Ocean coast at Cayucos, CA. Cayucos is just north of Morro Bay. The coastal access is excellent and mostly flat with the cliffs averaging about 16 feet above the high tide level. The virtually perpetual fog bank is hanging off the coast.

June – Pismo Beach as shot from the Pismo Pier. A typical day in June; fog hugging the beach, with bright sunshine a block off the ocean. The temperature is close to the water temperature of 59F. This is the only drivable beach in California stretching 22 miles from Pismo Beach south to Point Sal.

July – California Lilac in bloom. Specifically this is Ceanothus Concha a commercial hybrid blooming in our yard. Ceanothus is a California native with numerous species that grow extensively along the central coast of California. Whole hillsides turn blue for months during the rainy season. Very drought tolerant, it's a popular landscaping plant as well.

August – The Pacific Ocean to the South as viewed from Ragged Point. This is a natural barrier along the coast where to the South the land is flatter and mostly dry scrub, but to the North it becomes steep mountains with Monterey Cypress and pines eventually becoming Redwood Forests at the Big Sur not too far to the North. The mountains capture more rain and moisture from the fog allowing for more lush growth to the North. Driving the Pacific Coast Highway I from here to Carmel is an adventure even in good weather.

September – The Blacksmith Shop at the Mission La Purisima. On many weekends the mission has docents dressed in traditional period garb performing the daily tasks that early settlers did to survive in the early 19th Century.

October – Oso Flaco Lake at Guadalupe–Nipomo Dunes Preserve. Located on the eastern side of the coastal dunes between Guadalupe and Nipomo, this lake is created by the drainage from the Santa Maria River basin that is prevented from reaching the ocean by the drifting sand dunes. The area is biologically diverse and a great place to visit any time of year. This photo was taken near sundown, capturing the reflections of the clouds on its surface.

November – A rare thunderhead to the east of Nipomo. This photo was taken out front of our house at sundown. Along the coast our storms come off the cool ocean and we rarely see lightning or hear thunder. The thunderheads develop only after moving east picking up the heat from the inland valleys. Sometimes they move back over us.

December – Dunes and Scrub at the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Preserve. This photo was taken in October near sunset. The extensive dunes along the coast are home to many rare and endangered plant and animal species. Just to the north of the preserve the dunes are open to ATVs, Sand Rails, and other off-road vehicles where thousands of them race pell-mell most weekends. Accidents, injuries, and death are common.

General Comments

Many of you know that for the prior 6 years this calendar has been exclusively Orchids. I must admit that photographing Orchids is far easier than capturing local events and landscapes, while one just happens to be there. Orchid photography is basically still life, where I can control the lighting, breezes, etc. Photographers have no control over Mother Nature.

Picture selection must evaluate the qualities of the image and then the subject matter. In an Orchid photo, it's clear what the photo is attempting to portray to the viewer with no distractions. Landscapes or event shots are a more difficult subject matter to convey to a viewer without supporting context.

All these photos mean something to me, because for most of them I had to hike in somewhere to take the picture. I want to thank Kristin and Kathy for helping me evaluate and select images. They weren't with me when most of the images were captured, so I hope that if they found the images compelling, so will others. As the pictures are mostly images not available from your car or easily accessible public areas, I hope I am providing views of the region that you would otherwise not have the opportunity to see.

Greg