

Travels with Floyd (and Clyde) 2002 - Preface

Well, here it is Wednesday and we leave for Madera to invade Diane Whitehouse and her Country Casual Poodles tomorrow.

I suppose we will be ready to leave but it is going to be close. I think I have enough clean sox for the ten days and the last load of laundry is in the machine as we speak.

Today we have two agility classes that it is important to attend. One is at 9:30 this morning and the other is at 7:00 tonight. It is important because we have two weekends of trials while we are in Madera and I will be making my debut as Floyd's handler again after a long hiatus. While I was on hiatus, Floyd was running with our good friend Katie Herbers and was learning and growing. During this time I was getting rusty and out of shape. When I returned to handling him in class, I found I had a much different dog. As I said, due to Katie's patience, Floyd had progressed and, due to my absence, I had regressed. We have a lot of catching up to do. Floyd has been a very patient instructor.



While I am gone, the condo management is going to construct a badly needed new patio fence. That meant I had to clean out the patio and trash all the pack rat things I had stored there. Also, I had to bring in all the things I did not want trashed or paint spilled on. There is some semblance of a small path to walk through the condo but it is close.

Floyd was at the roomer's yesterday and might, just might, still be handsome for a few minutes when we arrive at Diane's place. I hope he does not stay that way because that would mean that he is not out running and rolling around with her poos in the great country air. Diane has assured me that the weather is in the 80s and it is sunny. I kind of hope it will cool down for the trials on the weekend as both Floyd and I perform better in the cooler weather.

Well, off to get the clothes out of the dryer and see if they all fit into the duffel bag. Talk to you later. I will try to write from Diane's computer while we are there but if not, we will catch up when we get back.

Jacqui, Clyde and Floyd

Lovingly dedicated to Bonnie, 1989 – 200

Travels with Floyd (and Clyde) 2002 - Day 1

Thursday, October 17, 2002

The day started out at 4:00am with both Clyde and Floyd dancing all over the bed knowing there was something exciting in the air.

We had a lot to do before an estimated time of departure of 10:00 am. First we had to finish clearing out the patio so the condo management could build a new fence and take all the designated trash out to the dumpster. This should all be finished when we get back....Let Us Pray.



Things went well and the final things got packed, all the doggie treats were put in the cooler and we had just a couple of stops to make before hitting the freeway. Grocery store for a bottle of wine and a six pack of Mike's Hard Lemonade to give our hostess...well, not all for our hostess...I intend to share. ATM for money. Gas station to top off the tank.

We hit the freeway at 9:57 am so we were a little ahead of schedule. Mapsonus said it was 277 miles from our place to the Country Casual Poodles. This should take about 4 hours if everything goes well. As it turned out, a couple of glitches were thrown into the pudding. First was the predictable stop and go at the LA airport, then an accident on the infamous grapevine. These ate up about an unexpected half hour. By this time I had a couple of guys that were telling me that a potty stop might be a wise option. I was also getting a little hungry as some of that early start was due to a lack of breakfast. At this point lunch seemed most appropriate and there in Gorman was a Carl's Jr. Don't ever go there!!! Service was slow and the place was a pit. Anyway, I digress.

Anyway, back on the freeway and running now about an hour behind estimated travel time. From here, it was smooth sailing and we enjoyed the rest of the trip. The weather was a perfect 72 and a slight cloud cover. Several areas were displaying some show of fall color and we were a happy group of travelers.

We get off the freeway on the last leg to Diane's house at 3:30 and it is just about five more miles. The directions Diane supplied were excellent and we drove into her driveway about 10 minutes later.

All three of us (me, Floyd and Clyde) charged into her house enmass and encountered her poodle pack of five. It seemed to be an instant take on friendship and the playtime began. My two were in heaven as they could freely go in and out of a doggie door to

romp in her back yard and to stare at the horses she has in the back.

After about six hours of constant, non-stop chatter, all of us were ready to hit the sack.

All of us slept like babies in this fresh country air.

Tomorrow, we have been promised a early morning hike in the pistachio orchard.

Floyd, Clyde and Jacqui

Travels with Floyd (and Clyde) 2002 – Day 2

Friday, October 18, 2002

Today is Friday and we woke up at about 6:00 am (which is late for us) with most of the seven dogs bouncing off the bed. What a great night's sleep we had.

After a couple of cups of coffee and some early morning conversation, we loaded the poos and Clyde into the cars and were off for a romp in the almond orchards and raisin fields. Clyde decided that he wanted to ride with Diane and her poos so all I had was Floyd. Floyd is still a little stand offish with all the activity and sticks pretty close to me.



On the way out of Diane's driveway, I manage to knock down and run over her mail box and paper box. I did a real number on it and it is totaled. We owe her a mail box.

Diane lets her four standard poodles run free but we kept the minis and Clyde on leash because of the coyotes that roam that area. The big dogs will scare off the coyotes but the little ones just might look like breakfast if they run too far from the pack.

It was back home and an hour or two of some more non-stop chatting, mostly about poodles.

Clyde has really made himself at home and is having a ball going in and out the doggie door and romping and rolling in the dust and he also found some burrs to pick up in his long fur and fuzzy feet.

Around noon, we decided to drive over to the Madera Fairground which is about 10 miles away and is where the agility trial will be held. The point is to get a good spot to set up our gear. Last year at this same trial, we got there a little before 4:00pm and it was already so crowded that we had to settle for a so-so place.

When we got there, the club was already there and had a good start at setting up equipment but we did get a wonderful set-up place close the the center of all activity. Madera is a great site as you are able to back your vehicle right into the set up site.....no need for wheels to haul "stuff" from a distant parking lot.

It was a quick set up so after socializing for awhile, Floyd, Clyde and I were back in the truck and headed back to Diane's. Had to stop at Wal-Mart first to buy a mail box.

Home again and Clyde is overjoyed to get back into that back yard. I am going to leave him here tomorrow so he can play with his friends all day. He will be much happier than going to the trial with Floyd and I where he will have to sit in a crate most of the day.

Got to bed early as tomorrow will be an early rise as check in time is 6:30 and first dog on the line is 7:30 am.

Well, I just hope my legs hold out for three runs tomorrow.

Floyd, Clyde and Jacqui

Travels with Floyd (and Clyde) 2002 – Day 3

Saturday, October 19, 2002

Trial day is here. Actually it is an USDAA event and they call them tests. The alarm is set for 4:00 am but we are awake before it goes off. Check in is at 6:30 am and the site is about 15 minutes away but I have to have a lot of lead time to get the old body up and operating.

We shower and get dressed, the dogs are fed and all necessary items (treats, water and poopy bags) are packed and setting by the door. We still have time to yak a little with Diane who is up and awake already. It is decided that Clyde will be a lot happier staying here and going for the romp in the orchard and playing with the Casual Country Poodles than sitting in a crate at the test site so he is left here.

We get on the road at 5:45 and get there at 6:00.....want to be sure we get the parking by our set up. No problem...the entire site is still asleep (they allowed tent camping) and it is still dark. It is also COLD, at least for us thin blooded So. Californians. It is in the high 40s. Floyd has on his body suit and his horse blanket but still is reluctant to leave the

warmth of the cab of the truck. I have on my down parka and agree with him completely. It is still totally dark.

At 6:30, lights go on and the coffee and donuts arrive. Also the check in table is up and operating. Shortly the sun decides to peek over the hills and it warms up a little.....just enough to convince Floyd that he can do "Hurry Up"....his poop command.

Now everything is starting to buzz and people are bustling around. The rings are almost ready for walk-thrus. Our first run will be a Master's Pairs Relay. We requested to have our partner drawn as we had no previous partner that we requested. We drew a friend with a Cocker Spaniel (Liz Doyle and Katie...our life seems to be filled with Katies.) This is wonderful news for us as they already have their title so they will not be depending on us for a leg. We decide that they will run the first half as it is a little trickier and has 11 obstacles and ours will have only 9 obstacles. Being that will be my first time in the ring for over a year, I appreciated this break. Well, Katie dropped the next to last bar on her half of the run so the pressure was really off of us. We took the baton and we were off on our return from retirement run. Jump, jump, teeter, OOPS, wrong end of tunnel....get Floyd into the right end of tunnel and finish the rest without disaster. Well that went pretty well and we had a lot of fun so we celebrated.

Next we are scheduled to run Floyd's Advanced Standard run. The timing is great as the course was ready for walk-thru soon after we were through in the first ring. So far I seem to be holding up pretty well and am raring to go again. The standard run goes much better than the pairs run and it is clean. Floyd is really doing his job but he is adjusting his speed to his disabled handler. We are very slow and 14 seconds over time. We had a ball and we celebrated.

We decide to scratch in the Gamblers to save the handler's (me) legs and a little because Floyd does not do four runs a day happily.

Our next outing is the GP qualifier. This is a joke and we will be doing it as just a training run. Actually, it went quite well but Floyd back jumped a jump at his handler's direction and missed another jump entirely for the same reason but we had fun and we celebrated.

The debut day was over and we are back in the thick of things. It is about 2:00 and we could go home but we decide to hang out a little and socialize. After all, isn't that what we came for? Diane came to watch but her timing was just when we had nothing going for some time and she went home to tend the herd before our next run.

The club hosting this event (Fresno Canine Agility Team) uses a local Boy Scout Troup as helpers and they also have the food concession. This weekend it was a choice of veggie lasagna or tri-tip sandwiches. I chose the lasagna today and will have tri-tip tomorrow. Great food. One of the helpers (William) was helping at the same event last year and was attracted to Floyd. He helped us tremendously by holding, walking and warming up Floyd. He also acted as my keeper, always returning things like hats, chairs, treat bags that we left lying around the rings. I kidded him that I really liked having our

own personal slave. What a great kid. We met his father last year when he came to pick up William and he sought us out this year when he picked up his boy. These are the things that are more valuable than titles.

Well, we are back at the ranch and it is early to bed as we are both totally wasted (hmmm, maybe it is the results of a Mike's Hard Lemonade.) Clyde greets us with exuberance and you can tell he had one heck of a great day too. Feed the dogs and hit the sack at about 7:00pm.

Got another early call in the morning. We will write more tomorrow.

Jacqui, Clyde and Floyd

Travels with Floyd (and Clyde) 2002 – Day 4

Sunday, October 20, 2002

Oh, OWW! It is 4:00 am and the alarm is going off. The bones are so stiff I am having trouble turning over to shut it off. Floyd doesn't seem too spry either. Clyde on the other hand is ready to roll. It is good to have extra time to put all the bones back into their proper places. After coffee and a shower, things look a little better. Actually, they are now looking better than I really expected.

We hang around the house chatting with Diane for an extra half hour this morning. We don't leave until 6:15 because we do not have to check in this morning and we are pretty sure that the parking will be there as everyone has settled into their respective spaces for the weekend.

First run is our Advanced Standard run. Because it is the second run in its ring we do not run until about 8:30. The weather is warming and is in the 60s. A great temp to run in. The weather has been great all weekend with the temps not getting above the mid 70s. It is partly cloudy with a slight breeze.

We have a clean run but again we are overtime due to handler speed (or lack of). But this time we were only 8 secs overtime. This is an improvement of 6 secs over yesterday. At this ratio it will take us two more standard runs to make time. We had great fun and we celebrate.

Next run is Master's Jumpers. It looks like a good run for Floyd. Diane has arrived with Pshanel and will get to see us run.

We're off. Jump, jump, jump, right turn, jump, tunnel, left turn? No, wrong, Floyd takes jump he is directed to; unfortunately it is the wrong one. Stop, regroup, turn right and continue on the correct course and finish with Floyd jumping three jumps in front on me. What a wonderful time. We celebrate.

It is getting warmer and both Floyd and I have just about one more run left in us. The next one is Master's Snooker and it is tricky but looks like fun. We rack up 23 points in the opening and are hoping to get through at least the #5 in the closing but it is not to be. We are just poking our head out of the last #5 tunnel when the whistle blows and we don't get credit for it. We had a blast and we celebrate. We celebrate big time because mom made it through the entire weekend.

Go get that tri-tip sandwich on a French roll with grilled onions and socialize a little before packing up the gear to complete a perfect weekend.

Back to the ranch and a solemn vow to get the legs working before the AKC trial the next weekend at the same site.

Jacqui, Clyde and Floyd

Travels With Floyd (and Clyde) - Day 5

Monday, October 21, 2002

Last night we almost had a catastrophe! Diane's Cassie who has seizures got into Clyde's food bag and ate great quantities. The only way we know who the culprit was, was that Cassie had a very bulging stomach. It was serious enough that Diane had to take her to emergency. I will let Diane fill in the details but it amounted to them having to pump her stomach and keeping her overnight. Fortunately, Cassie is back at home and getting back to normal activity.

Today is devoted to rest and relaxation but we do start the day with the run in the orchards. Did you know that they plant raisin vines in rows from east to west so that when they pick them and they put them on paper on the ground, the east/west rows allow the sun to reach them all day and shorten the drying time? Just a bit of agriculture information that I know will enhance your life. Try that one at your next cocktail party in New York.

I am really attracted to Diane's mini, Mandy, but she is rather stand offish with me. I am determined to change this. First I take her leash on our walks in the orchard and then we work with treats at home. Come, Mandy...treat....GOOD MANDY! It is getting there. She actually came to me on her own a couple of time but still is very cautious.

Diane asked if there was anything I would like to do while I was here. I immediately thought of my early years when I taught skiing at an area just out of here in the mountains. We would go to Fresno and eat at Coney Island Hot Dogs. I asked if it was still there. This is 40 years later and sure enough it is. We decided to go tomorrow. On Wednesday we will take a trip to Yosemite and eat at the Ahwanee hotel. Lots of past memories in these events.

Got some reading in and an afternoon nap. That is about it for recuperation Monday.

More tomorrow.

Jacqui, Clyde and Floyd

Travels with Floyd (and Clyde) 2002 - Day 6

Tuesday, October 22, 2002

During the morning run in the orchard, Floyd ran off leash and is getting really used to it. I am also walking further and further each morning and trying to put a few little jogging steps in now and then. I am hoping that maybe we can make course time at the coming up trial this weekend.

Not much going on this morning except to clean out the back of my truck. I am donating my big wheeled garden wagon to Diane. I thought that it was going to be the perfect thing for all my doggie stuff that I take to trials but found that I seldom used it and it was just taking up room in the back of my truck. Diane will be able to use it to haul things around her property and save her back.

This noon we went to Coney Island in Fresno and had chili dogs. They were still just as good as I remembered forty years ago. It seems this place nearly went out of business a few years ago when they built a new stadium next to them and eliminated some of their parking. There was such an outcry from the Fresno natives that some agreement was reached and they are still in business with the same family owning it. They have, however, gotten rid of the high back wooden booths. What fun! I almost thought I was 33 years old again.

The rest of the day was just spent relaxing and reading and relaxing and reading. Tomorrow we will visit Yosemite. Again, it has been at least 35 years since my last ski trip to Badger Pass in Yosemite. I suppose it has changed a lot. We will see.

Until tomorrow.

--

Jacqui, Clyde and Floyd

Travels with Floyd (and Clyde) 2002 - Day 7

Wednesday, October 23, 2002

This is to be a big day. After our morning romp in the orchard, we are to drive to Yosemite for lunch at the Ahwanee hotel.

Floyd is getting really good at this romping with the standard poodles. It will be a shame to have to stop it in a few days. I can see that he could adapt to it in a short time. Clyde, on the other hand, if let off leash, would be in the next county, never to be found again. He would, of course, pick out a good home and be treated well because he is an artist at schmoozing people.

We had planned on leaving here a little after 9:00 but the way things turned out, it was about 10:30 before we were on our way. The canine crew was left at home because they would have to stay in the car while we ate. As an afterthought, Diane and I thought we could have taken the two minis and had a walk with them in the woods. It just seemed quite odd to be making more than a grocery run without a poodle in the car.

October in Yosemite is slightly off the tourist season so the traffic was rather light. As we started to ascend on Route 41, we hit the alpine country and the evergreens and other conifers were just as I remembered them. You drive through what almost seems like a tunnel cut through the trees. As we got to higher elevations, the frost had started to turn the deciduous trees into their fall costumes of red, wine, gold, yellow and brown. These, mixed with the pine trees, are an awesome sight. The air was filled with the autumn fragrances of pine, fall leaves and wood smoke from cabin fireplaces in the distance. As we got closer to the actual entrance to Yosemite, these sensory delights intensified.

Just after the entrance you come to a view point that exposes a panorama of El Capitan and Half Dome in a frame of alpine and autumn splendor. Then shortly after you go through a tunnel in the mountain and the next thing you see is a similar diorama of the same icons and the valley floor. Now we start to descend a little into the Yosemite Valley. This is where the Ahwanee hotel is located. The Ahwanee hotel was built in 1927 which means it is two years older than me. (How could that be? I didn't think that there was anything older than me!) It was a very elegant hotel and only the elite could afford to stay there. During the depression of the thirties and WWII it was allowed to go into a state of disrepair and few people wanted to spend their time there. It has since been refurbished and is back to its glory days. Its elegance is beyond description and anything original that could be refurbished or repaired has been lovingly attended to. Some things were beyond repair such as some of the Native American rugs and upholstery fabrics but samples of these were saved and framed to decorate the lobbies and hallways.

The dining room was uncrowded at this time of year and we were immediately seated.

We were dressed in jeans and tee shirts but were attended to as though we were Queen Elizabeth, who, by the way, has visited the Ahwanee in the not too distant past. The dining room is a two story high room with a natural log beam ceiling. The windows go from the floor to the peak of this tremendously high ceiling and open up a view of all the magnificence of Yosemite.

Lunch was very special. I had a grilled ruben sandwich with german potato salad. Sounds a little mundane? Think again. Every bite had a special subtle flavor that left you wondering just what it was. Diane had a turkey sandwich with a side of cranberry/horseradish sauce for dipping. Again the flavors were unique and subtle.

We finally left the dining room about 1:30 and attacked the gift shop in the Ahwanee. I saved some money here because they did not have a sweater that was to die for, in my size. I had determined that I wanted a sweatshirt but all they had there was ones with the Ahwanee on them and I wanted one that had Yosemite on it and I did not want to pay \$60 for it. After we had OOOOOOed and AAAAAAed over all the lovely things that were out of our budget reach, we left and I attacked the gift shop in Yosemite Village. This was in my category. Diane was wise. She remained in the car and took a short nap. I found the sweatshirt in my price range and just what I was looking for but they did not have my size on the rack. I was smart enough to ask a sales associate if they might have one in back stock and sure enough he was able to produce one. On my way to the checkout, I snared a coffee mug for Diane and a disposable camera (dummies as we are, we forgot to take a camera).

OK back on the road and through all the splendor of Yosemite again. We stopped several times to take pictures and they will probably be available for viewing on a web site in the near future. The remainder of the film will be used to take doggie pictures.

We got home at around 5:30 to a welcoming committee of hungry poodles and a Clyde, who is hungry no matter what time of the day.

Tomorrow, is a day of laundry and other chores that need more than one person to accomplish.

Until tomorrow.

--

Jacqui, Clyde and Floyd

Travels with Floyd (and Clyde) 2002 - Day 8

Thursday, October 24, 2002

Today was again one of those days where chores like laundry and changing light bulbs got done.

Of course it all started with a run in the orchard and with me going further with the dogs. Looks like we may be in a little better shape for this trial than for last week's runs. We have one more day to test our legs before the weekend.

About the only thing we decided to do today was to go back to Coney Island for chili dogs.....actually, I had just chili and french fries. They have a choice of chili with or without beans and I really like beanless chili and of course everyone around me appreciates it too.

Got more reading done and a little more bonding with Mandy, the mini poo. She is getting to where she initiates the play or petting sessions. Diane says she is going to bring her to the agility trial this weekend. It will do her a world of good to be out where there are other dogs and people. Although she has been living with four other poodles and has had my two as house guests, she really has not encountered the real world a whole lot. She remains a little shy but is a real sweetie once she warms up to you. She is a real ball of fire and can hold her own in the rough and tumble play with the four standard poodles and can run her heart out with them in the orchard.

Not much more to relate today as the afternoon was spent reading with a short nap stuck in there too.

Until tomorrow.

--

Jacqui, Clyde and Floyd

Travels with Floyd (and Clyde) 2002 - Day 9

Friday, October 25, 2002

Today was another of those R & R days that my body appreciates a lot. It started, of course, with the runs in the orchards. We were a little later this morning and the workers were in the fields already. The days are getting shorter so we are sleeping in longer in the mornings.

Diane made "to-die-for" spaghetti for lunch today and I ate enough that supper will be very light.

Floyd and I went to the site of this weekend's AKC agility trial to get a good spot and get set up early. We got there about 3:00 pm and it was quite a difference from last week's trial. Last weekend, it was at the same site but was a USDAA trial with 600 dogs. This weekend there are less than 300 dogs. The first dog on the line is not scheduled until 8:00 am and walk-thrus are at 7:30. This means we do not have to get up until 5:00 am. This is like sleeping in for those of us that do agility on a regular basis. Because the site is the same as last weekend, we were able to back our truck right into our set up and unload directly from the back of the truck. What a Joy! We were set up in five minutes, did a little socializing and were back home by 5:00 pm. Of course this included a stop at the local AM/PM market for a quart of soft ice cream for me and the pups. Got home and doled out ice cream to any poo and Clyde that was interested.

To bed and dreams of clean runs.

Until tomorrow.

--

Jacqui, Clyde and Floyd

Travels with Floyd (and Clyde) 2002 - Day 10

Saturday, October 26, 2002

We tried to sleep until 5:00 am but old habits took over and we were awake at 4:00 am and stared at the ceiling until we decided to get up and start the shower ritual.

Got to the site about 6:45 and the sky was just beginning to brighten. The host club (Fresno Dog Training Club) already had coffee started and muffins, bagels (with a toaster to heat them), sweet rolls, juice, quartered oranges and grapefruits. The hospitality group was very gracious and friendly.

Things moved along at a leisurely pace and it was reminiscent of trials in days past. The Excellent ring was ready for walk-thrus at 7:30 and there was no need to split the walks by ExA and ExB or by jump height because of the small number of dogs. The first dog on the line was promptly at 8:00 am and they ran the dogs, small to tall. This meant that we were through with our Standard run shortly after 8:30. We had a good run but Floyd decided he had to stop and smell the exciting scents on the edge of the pause table before getting up on it. Then he had to sniff the entire top of the table to make sure it was suitable to lie down on. This must have cost us at least five seconds. The rest of the course went well but again, I was not running fast enough to make course time. We had fun anyway and we celebrated.

The Jumpers with Weaves course was ready to walk when we finished our run and would be ready to run in just a few minutes. Because the 8 and 12 inch dogs had to run first, it gave us just enough time to catch our breath before walking up to the start line. This time we had a clean run although we did do a couple of tangle foot dances at some of the tricky spots. I was really proud of Floyd for saving my butt a couple of times and then when we entered the final sequence. It was a modified serpentine and a right turn to another modified serpentine to the finish. I was at least two jumps behind Floyd and he was working smoothly on voice commands all the way through this section. We were still a few seconds overtime but we are getting closer. We had a ball and we celebrated.

Our runs were over by 10:15 and we could have gone home but we decided to stay on and cheer on the Open and Novice classes. I love to do this and sometimes we spot a really up and coming star. This time it was a little sheltie named Zuess, handled by Kera Holm. What a little pocket rocket. He did not Q in the standard run because he was so hyped up but he has all the talent and speed to set us all back on our haunches. He did Q in the Jumpers run and was a joy to watch. Diane is a real trooper and was there at 9:00 to cheer us through our Jumpers run and stayed with us until all dogs had run. We saw a couple of new Standard Poodles on the scene and they have a lot of potential too.

Diane brought Mandy, her mini poo, along and she was quite interested and attentive to all that was going on in the rings. She also liked visiting with the other poodles at the trial.

We finally left and made a soft ice cream stop at the AM/PM market at our freeway off ramp.

When we entered the house, Clyde and the Casual Country Poodles were right there to greet us and help us celebrate another fun day.

Well, after feeding the gang, it is time to make an early to bed commitment and be ready for another fun day tomorrow.

Until tomorrow.

Jacqui, Clyde and Floyd

Travels with Floyd (and Clyde) 2002 - Day 11

Sunday, October 27, 2002

This is the last day of trials in Madera for Floyd and I. We are having such a great time; we wish it would not end.

Daylight savings time ended last night so we had an hour's more sleep this morning...well, not really because old habits are hard to break and we were up at the usual time of 5:00 am daylight savings time (now 4:00 am). It was great to be able to have the sun already appearing before we were on the road. When we got there, the coffee, rolls, bagels, etc. were out to be eaten. The Fresno Dog Training Club is a wonderful host. A lot of its member does not do agility but they were there in force to help keep things running smoothly.

First run for us is our Standard run. The course looks like a lot of fun. We start off a little slow but the fourth obstacle is the dogwalk and that always wakes up Floyd. Unfortunately the weave poles were the next thing and I am not sure who was to blame here but Floyd missed his entry so there went our hopes for getting that last Q for his MX title. Actually, that was not in the plans for the weekend. We were just out to have fun and get reacquainted on the course. When we knew that we had blown the chances of a Q, we went on experimental mode. Lots of send outs and distance work. We got a great teeter from a far distance and that was something to write about. Also got Floyd to go on for three jumps ahead of me. These are all things to make me happy. We had a fun run and we celebrated.

Our Jumpers with Weaves was going clean until the third from last jump and I pulled him too far out and caused him to jump too early and he landed right on the jump bar. Floyd rarely knocks bars and you can probably count all of them for his career on one hand but when he does you have no doubt about it. We still had fun and we celebrated.

The debut of mom running Floyd again is over and we are coming home with much more than ribbons. We are celebrating the greatest feeling on earth....that of a bond between a

dog and its partner.

Until tomorrow.

Jacqui, Clyde and Floyd

Travels with Floyd (and Clyde) 2002 - Day 12

Monday, October 28, 2002

We had initially planned to leave Madera and Diane today but several things got in the way. First was the awful thought of missing that morning romp in the orchards. Second was the fact that Diane was willing to make another trip to Yosemite for lunch and the third was the thought of having to round up all the things we had scattered around Diane's property.

The morning inspection of the raisin vines and the pistachio trees was again a fitting start for the day. My muscles were telling me that just a light walk was what they wanted today so the dogs got to run free and get their exercise. Diane's two brown standards, Angie and Pshanel run over two miles each day so you can imagine what kind of muscles tone they have. Cassie gives it a good try but her seizure meds sometimes slows her down a bit. Sadie is the dignified senior lady and does about a leisurely 1/2 mile walk each day. The little ones are pretty much kept on leash so that they do not become coyote bait. We let Floyd off leash because he does not run off out of sight.

We started for Yosemite a little after 9:00 am and we loaded up Mandy (her black mini poo) and Floyd for the trip this time and Diane decided to take another route to the park. This time we went in the more northern entrance that is called El Portal. This entrance does not have the dramatic view at the entrance but does give one a different perspective of the park. The road follows the Merced River most of the way. Sometimes the river is completely out of view down a very steep canyon. We also followed the remnants of the old Yosemite Valley Railroad. This railroad had its heyday in the early 1900s and had a life span of only 38 years when the automobile became the mode of transportation when all weather roads were built into the park.

After a potty stop for Floyd and Mandy (yes, we picked up our poop), we proceeded to the Ahwannee for lunch. The menu has remained the same for many years except for the daily specials. I was torn between a BBQ sandwich on the daily specials, the portabello mushroom burger and the chili rubbed ribeye steak. After conferring with our table attendant, the ribeye won out. Diane had the portabllo mushroom burger and when it arrived, I wondered if I had made a mistake. I always seem to prefer what is on the other person's plate. However, when my steak arrived, I was more than content with my selection. At first glance, I thought that probably Floyd and Mandy were going to share this with me. After diving into it, I forgot entirely about Floyd and Mandy. They would have to do with the liver treats that I still had in my right pocket.

In a conversation with our table attendant, we found that she was a permanent resident

and has lived in Yosemite for 22 years and has a 14 year old daughter that snowboards there in the winter. I asked after a friend that used to be the ski school director in Yosemite at Badger Pass. It seems he now has a job as an ambassador for the park. He is older than me so I think it would put him somewhere in his 80s. It was good to hear he was still in good health and that the park service was still taking advantage of his wonderful charismatic personality.

Next stop is the Ahwannee gift shop and a check to see if they had possibly gotten in the sweater that I fell in love with in my size. Sure enough, there it was, right in front on the rack. Now I knew that it was meant for me to give this sweater a loving home. It is a Woolrich sweater and I know John Rich that owns the Woolrich Knitting mills and he is known for his product quality and reasonable prices. It is a dark green heather with a beige snowflake on the front and all the exposed edges are finished in a blanket stitch in beige.....Yummmmmmyyy. Diane was looking for a cookbook that might have the recipes for the items served at the Ahwannee but she had no luck in her quest. I guess that means that when the urge for a portabella burger hits, she will just have to make the trip to the park. I am so jealous of her to have these wonders in her backyard. Diane has lived in this vicinity all her life so I am sure she does not fully appreciate her environment.

Next stop was at the Yosemite Village store and picked up a couple of items for friends which I will not describe as they are getting this letter also. Katie, Janine, you will just have to wait. It isn't much but it does mean that I was thinking of you.

Back in the car to greet the poos....we had put Floyd's soft crate in the backseat and he was put in it when we went to lunch. There were a couple of times when Floyd and Mandy had some minor arguments and we did not want this to happen and tear apart Diane's new Honda Civic. Everything was fine and we decided that on other stops that we would not have to contain Floyd. They were both lying contentedly in my lap and getting along just fine. I think given enough time, they would become play buddies. Now Clyde, on the other hand, made immediate friends with the entire gaggle of Diane's poos and they were all off and running in her back yard from the time we walked into the property.

We went back by the original route that we had taken last week and stopped for one last look at the panorama of El Capitan, Half Dome and Bridal Veil Falls surrounded by the magnificent fall color of the Yosemite Valley. I etched this securely in my mind to pull up and dream about at future dates when I need a nature fix.

Back home and after a toast of Beringer White Zinfandel, it was early to bed to get an early start on the morning romp as that will be our last for some time to come.

Until tomorrow.

Jacqui, Clyde and Floyd

Travels with Floyd (and Clyde) 2002 - Day 13

Tuesday, October 29, 2002

Well, we can't put it off any longer. We do really have to leave today....of course after the morning run in the orchards for the last time.

After Diane and I scour the entire 10 acres for all the Webster "Stuff", we think we are packed up and ready to leave. The only one who seems anxious to go is Floyd and we believe it is only that he does not want the truck to go anyplace without him. Every time I would take something out to the truck, he would sit by the door and shriek. What a spoiled brat!

After being accused of trying to steal Mandy (I would if I could get away with it), we pull out at 10:20 am.

After 3 hours and 40 minutes and a burger and fried zucchini in Bakersfield we pull into the carport at the condo in Santa Ana. The trip was rather uneventful but pleasant. The weather was sunny and in the low 70s. No need for the air conditioner today. We pass a lot of trucks carrying the harvest of the San Joaquin Valley to market. This valley is responsible for growing a large portion of the country's agricultural products. As I have stated we romped in the vast raisin and pistachio orchards. This valley also produces cotton, lettuce, almonds, grapes for California wines and many other products.



We are at home again after a fabulous 13 days. WE HAD FUN AND WE CELEBRATE!!! Yes, we are shouting.

Until next time!

Jacqui, Clyde and Floyd

Travels with Floyd (and Clyde) 2002 - Epilogue

It is over and we just would like to share some thoughts with all of you. As you all know, I have had a bout with cancer and it seems to be under control as of now. What

did I learn from these last several months?

Life is one thing you will never get out of alive. Appreciate every moment you have of it. Work diligently at filling every moment with memorable experiences. These moments are not all necessarily joyful. For instance: my Bonnie Poo died suddenly this year. We worked at making her life memorable. We have documented the happy, the silly and the sad times of her life. She will be in our hearts forever.

We are busily creating as many happy experiences as possible.

There was a lady who was the heir to the Winchester fortune. She had the belief that as long as she kept building on to her mansion, she would not die. Most people consider her a slightly crazed eccentric; however, I think she was on to something. As long as you have something to look forward to and enjoy, you will be happier and put some of your troubles in the background. I can't help but feel that this might prolong life; at least it will make it more fun.

Even if you have never had an event to be a wake up call for you, view this as your reminder that every moment is precious.....enjoy them.

Until the next trip.....CELEBRATE

Jacqui, Clyde and Floyd