

# *Sacramento*



*December, 2010*

*Molly and Bob Hillery*

*This weekend trip to California was to celebrate Samantha's Second Birthday (a little late) and Christmas (a little early). As always, it was lovely to see Christopher and Cyndi again and to see how much Samantha has grown and developed.*

*This time she really seemed to remember us from our last meeting (on the cruise in early October) and she was happy to spend time with us - with or without the presence of her parents. Once again we were impressed with the progress she has made in all facets of her growth and she continues to be a most sociable little girl. In addition, of course, she is beautiful!*

# Sacramento, December 2010

## Thursday December 9

We left home about 4pm for our 7pm flight to Salt Lake City. Traffic through Cincinnati was moving well so we had over an hour in the Lounge before we left.

Dinner was served on this first leg and then we both slept for the best part of two hours. The flight was just a few minutes late into Salt Lake City but that meant a 30 minute connection once we were off the plane. Luck was on our side, however, as the next flight left from a gate just 50 yards from our arrival gate.

The flight to Sacramento was again just a few minutes late but – as usually seems to be the case at this airport – we had a long wait for our bags. They did arrive, however, so we were soon on our way in the rental car to the Natomas Courtyard. It was about midnight (PST) when we arrived so we unpacked, read for just a little while and fell asleep.

## Friday December 10

We were both wide awake by 6am despite a very late night and were up and on our way by 7:45. We had a light breakfast at the local Starbucks and then drove to Christopher and Cyndi's home for our babysitting session. Cyndi was ready for work but Samantha was still asleep and had to be wakened before Cyndi left. Despite being taken from her bed before her sleep was out and with a cold still bothering her, Samantha was bright and cheerful and eager to start playing with Grandma and Granddad. She barely looked up as Cyndi said goodbye!

We played with various toys and enjoyed a visit to the local park on an overcast but warm morning. When Christopher got up and joined us around noon we all went to the Round Table for a pizza and salad lunch. Samantha was then taken to her other grandparents for the afternoon and Molly and I returned to the hotel.....to sleep!

We got a call from Christopher around 7 suggesting we meet for dinner at Chili's, about a ten minute drive from the hotel.

We had a very pleasant 1 ½ hour meal and then went back to Cyndi and Christopher's home where we were asked to make a selection from a series of formal pictures taken of Samantha in her Halloween costume and in her birthday outfit. We chose a beautiful selection of five photos and were also given a set of three taken at Samantha's school when they were paid a visit by a pony.

We left to return to the hotel about 9:30.

## Saturday December 11



We were up around 7:30 and drove to the local Starbucks for a coffee and pastry. We then picked up our gifts to take to Samantha's second birthday party at Chick-Fil-A, about 5 miles from the hotel. The party, attended by about 25 family and friends, started around 10am and included breakfast (surprisingly good), cupcakes, a bingo game, gift giving and many favors. As with all Cyndi arrangements, everything was coordinated, in this case around the "cow" theme that is Chick-Fil-A's trademark. Even Samantha's dress was patterned with the familiar black and white.

## *The Party Room*

Everyone had a good time – especially Samantha when it came to the gift opening part of the event. She appeared to appreciate everything she received and, while wanting to play or hold each as it was unwrapped, was quite accepting when told to put that one aside until later so that another could be opened and acknowledged. She said “Thank you” to each giver as that person’s gift was opened and admired.



The staff at Chick-Fil-A were extremely friendly and accommodating and the party was a big success with everyone. Following the meal we were invited to re-group at the carousel in a nearby shopping mall where an optional ride was made a part of the celebration. When we left (the last of the guests to do so), Samantha was in line for her third ride!

We returned to the hotel and I went for a walk in on the paths and sidewalks in the neighborhood. My new GPS unit calculated a walk of 4.75 miles in 82 minutes. This was followed by a trip to Starbucks for a late afternoon coffee and cake. Then we relaxed until called by Christopher with the evening dinner arrangements.

Tonight we ate Italian at a small strip mall café not far from the hotel. The ambience (small, red check table cloths) was quite Italian and the food was very good – as, of course, was the company.

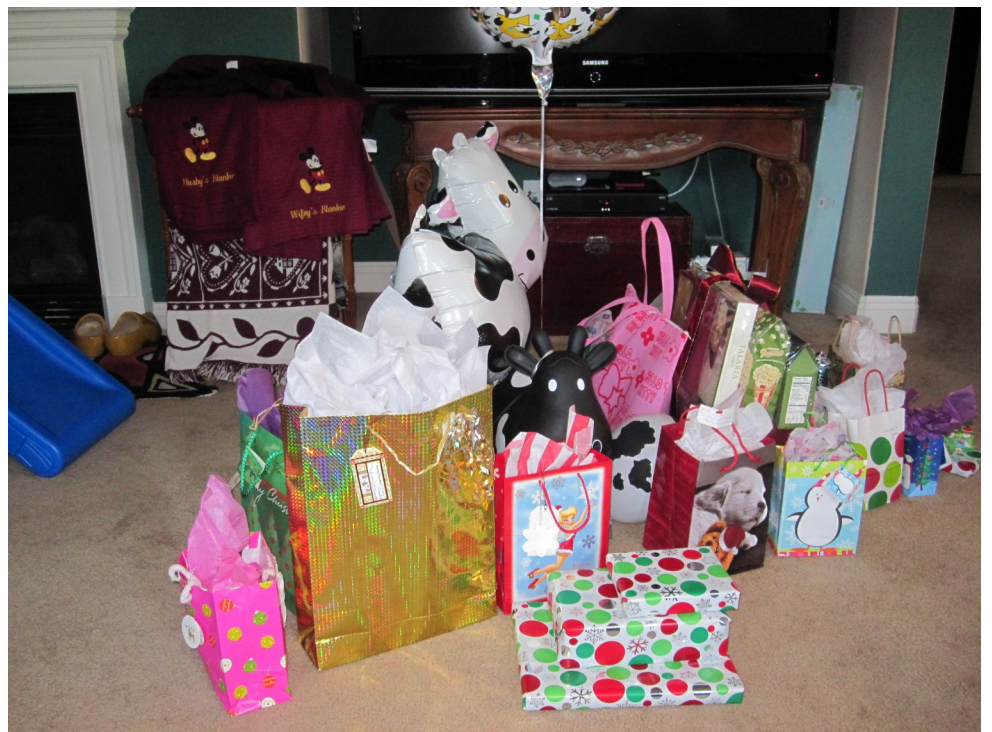
### Sunday December 12

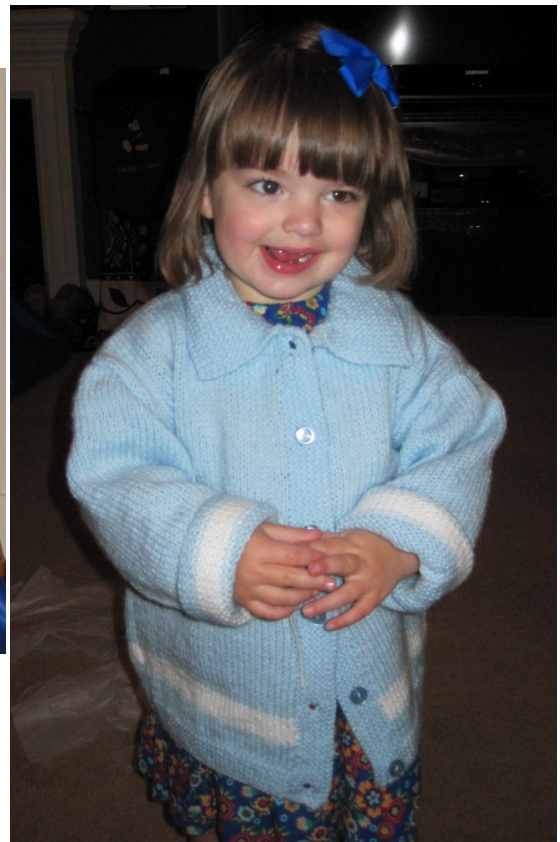


We were up at eight and went to Starbucks for a very light breakfast as we were meeting Christopher, Cyndi and Samantha at Mimi's for an eleven o' clock meal. Molly spent the morning wrapping Christmas gifts for our exchange later today.

We met for brunch at *Mimi's* and then Samantha took her nap for the afternoon while Molly and I returned to the hotel. I went for another (somewhat shorter) walk and at 4pm we all met up again at Christopher and Cyndi's home for "Christmas". Shirly and Bill were also there and we spent about two hours exchanging gifts, with Samantha doing a wonderful job as Santa.

*Gifts ready  
for  
"Christmas"*





*Christmas*

Bill and Shirl left after the gift exchange while the rest of us went to Sizzler for a farewell dinner. It was about 9:30 when we returned to the hotel.

### **Monday December 13**

We were up at eight, packed our bags and drove to iHOP for breakfast. We then returned the car and checked in for our flight to Minneapolis. With the extremely bad weather over that region of the Upper Midwest we were a little concerned about the return journey but the flight was scheduled to leave on time.

We left Sacramento about 15 minutes late but made up the time en route, so were in frigid Minneapolis and at our onward gate with over an hour to spare. The blizzard had passed further east but it left behind over two feet of snow and below zero temperatures.

The flight to Cincinnati was also a little late leaving but the time was made up and we were in Cincinnati at 10:15 and back home an hour later after another lovely trip to see our children and grandchild.