

STEPPING OFF THE EDGE

travels of a reluctant retiree

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The Far North, an Old House, and the Advantages of Walking Around Naked...

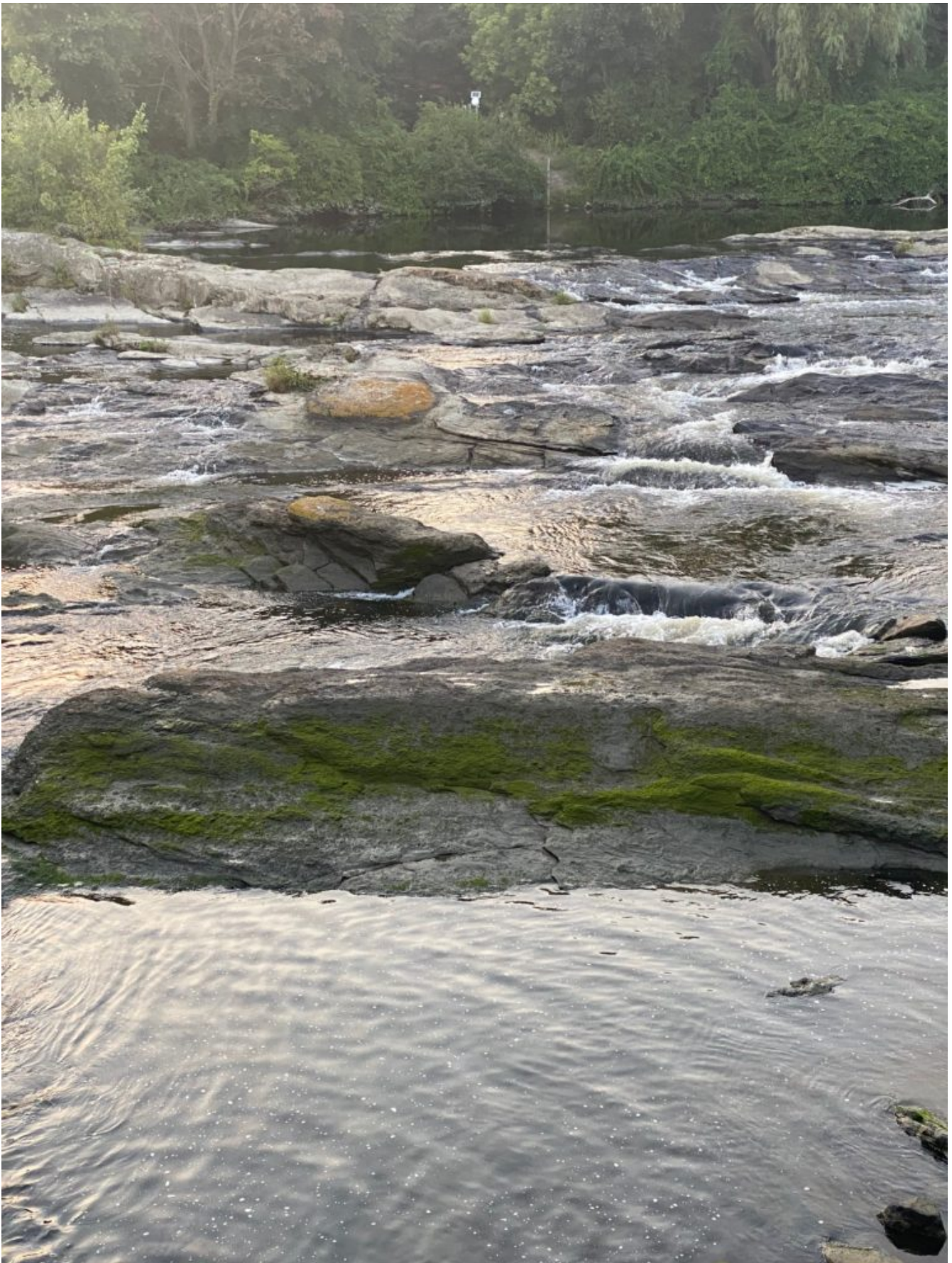
I must confess that despite growing up only five hours away I had never been to Maine. While perusing the maps I was surprised to find how close to the Canadian border we were staying. Less than a 90 min drive and we would be free! Sorry, couldn't help myself there. Maine is beautiful, the air is fresh, the water clear, and the residents painfully friendly. Now I have attributed this to their proximity to Canada and, more important, to Canadians. If you have never been to Canada you are in for a treat. Not that the country is not spectacular, but it is in the locals that you will find joy. If you want to kill an hour or two just ask someone for directions while filling up with gas. Yes, I said an hour or two, but it is surprisingly not an imposition. You will get your directions, well, after many many maps are spread over the hood of their car, but you will also receive the following: local gossip, the history of the province you are in, the best and worst restaurants to go to and, if you are lucky, an invitation to dinner.



waterfall of the Royal River near our home



along the Royal







shot from one of our canoe trips



And as fine as the scenery was at our home, we were painfully close to the freeway. No effect inside but sitting on the deck did not lend itself to conversation.



There is plenty of opportunity to observe the wildlife. We had a resident bald eagle, goldfinches, cormorants a plenty and the occasional stork.









our canoe landing, low tide so the shore is a great distance away but I promise, it did come up to shore twice a day

Yes, this Jersey boy was just chock full of nature. Well, at least I was not being foolish. We could have been camping, perish the thought. Our days still filled with the occasional geocaching, which in Maine proved to be challenging. We were actually skunked three times, completely unable to find the cache. We did score, three which is not a bad average for a couple of newbies.



a nifty cache hidden in a guardrail at the old mill park.

We have made several trips into Portland Maine for outdoor restaurant events, which are a treat after the last six months. I have not only had my fill of wonderful fish and chips using haddock, but I am actually sweating butter from all the lobster rolls. Oysters are plentiful and we have had our fill of those as well.



The oysters are local and go for \$1 each at the local fish market. I picked up a couple dozen in honor of our first house guest since we left Capitola, Dana, Alexa's niece.



working the town with Dana

By now you know that one of the first things I do in a new place is find a proper bakery. It was easier than usual in Portland, where we discovered the Standard Baking Company. First class bread shop but as always I must condition that comment with, “Well, it was no Gayles.”



The home we are staying in was built in 1750 and it shows. If you emptied a bag of marbles in the living room they would promptly roll out the front door. Our first morning workout

had us sliding across the floor on our mats. Entertaining but a bit disorienting when you have had a couple of cocktails.

The town is nothing short of precious. Quaint farmers market, little grocery store with the most amazing fresh fish and cheese selection and long happy canoe rides in the bay where the harbor is not the kind I am accustomed. It is definitely a working harbor with just about all the boats stacked high with nets or lobster pots. I did feel rather Lewis and Clark paddling down the river into the bay. I must also mention that EVERYONE wears masks in public. Even the group of teenagers we passed on one of our walks had them on. Perhaps this says something about the startlingly low infection rate in this state?

We seem to be traveling from right to left on our journey, going from Trump land in Salem Ohio to 50/50 in Caldwell NJ to lovely Yarmouth Maine, where the election signs are far more Democrat and there is a BLM sign on every other lawn... feeling a bit better...

Well, we are off to Connecticut in a bit. We have found a home on a lake so the watersports seems to have become a theme. Not bad for a kid who by the time he was 25 had never been on the water except for a short stint on a tug and the Hoboken ferry.

Oh wait, you were waiting for the naked thing weren't you? Ok, well, it seems one tends to go for long periods these days sans clothing. It occurred to me that there are many benefits to this: no laundry, no time wasted picking out an outfit, never worrying about spilling soup on a favorite shirt, all over tan, and naturally there is the pure joy of laying on someone else's couch naked. The drawbacks? Well, spilling that same soup directly onto your lap, the startled postman asking for postage due on a letter he is delivering to you, and horror of horrors, catching a glimpse of yourself in an unflattering pose as you pass a full length mirror... ah, the joys of attaining a ripe old age.

We are currently preparing for the ultimate Shawshanking adventure. It seems we must go back to California and we have decided to drive... more to come on that...



farewell Maine...

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