
"The Worst Weekend"

In June of 2006, Denise and I were invited to a weekend wine event on Orcas Island where we could stay for free in a house and enjoy time together in one of the greatest places in the US. On a Friday we loaded up the truck with everything necessary to haul a 2-year-old Olivia and a five-month-old Keegan to Orcas. We brought all the wine for the event, and I brought my bicycle.

On the ferry Olivia started getting sick. By the time we reached our rental house we were starting to get concerned. She was having diarrhea and not feeling well at all. It was a challenge. Was this a 24-hour stomach flu and she would be better soon or something more serious? Denise was calling the local on-call physician as well as our pediatrician while I decided to go for a quick ride up to the peak of Mt. Constitution.

On the decent I slid on some pine needles and crashed badly. Fortunately, I bailed off my bike before I hit a tree head-first. I remember screaming and then hearing a call of "are you ok?". Being majorly embarrassed and frustrated I "yes I am ok" but I was not, and my bike was not. My cycling jersey and shorts were torn up and my face was scarred up.

BRETT'S TALES FROM THE PAST
NO. 5

The bicycle and I gingerly rode back to the rental and Denise did not notice my condition. Olivia was getting worse. She now had bloody diarrhea, we were running out of diapers, and she was losing weight before our eyes. The on-call island doctor still believed Olivia would be fine by the morning, but our pediatrician was really concerned she had something more serious. We decided to leave Orcas and drive Olivia to Children's Hospital in Seattle. There was only a single departing ferry in one hour. We frantically packed everything and drove like hell to make it to the terminal. Fortunately, we made it before the ferry left Orcas at 11 pm. However, Denise and I both felt awful that we could not attend the wine weekend events on Orcas.

Late in the night, we arrived at Children's Hospital ER. Olivia was admitted and given IV fluids. Denise and Keegan stayed with Olivia, while I collapsed on an empty bed.

In the morning, I left Children's to stay at a friend's house in Seattle. Olivia, Denise, and Keegan were in quarantine as Olivia was considered infectious. After two days of tests, we found out Olivia had a campylobacter infection, probably caused by duck deposits in our local park. A quick course of antibiotics and Olivia and Denise were released from Children's Hospital and we beleaguered drove home to Walla Walla.

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