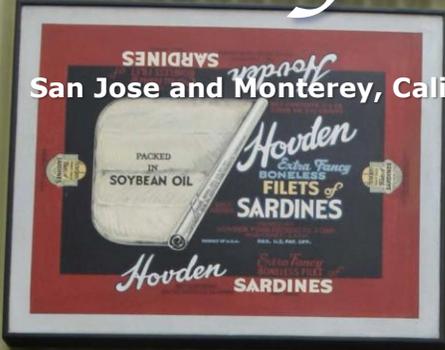


California Dreamin'

San Jose and Monterey, California

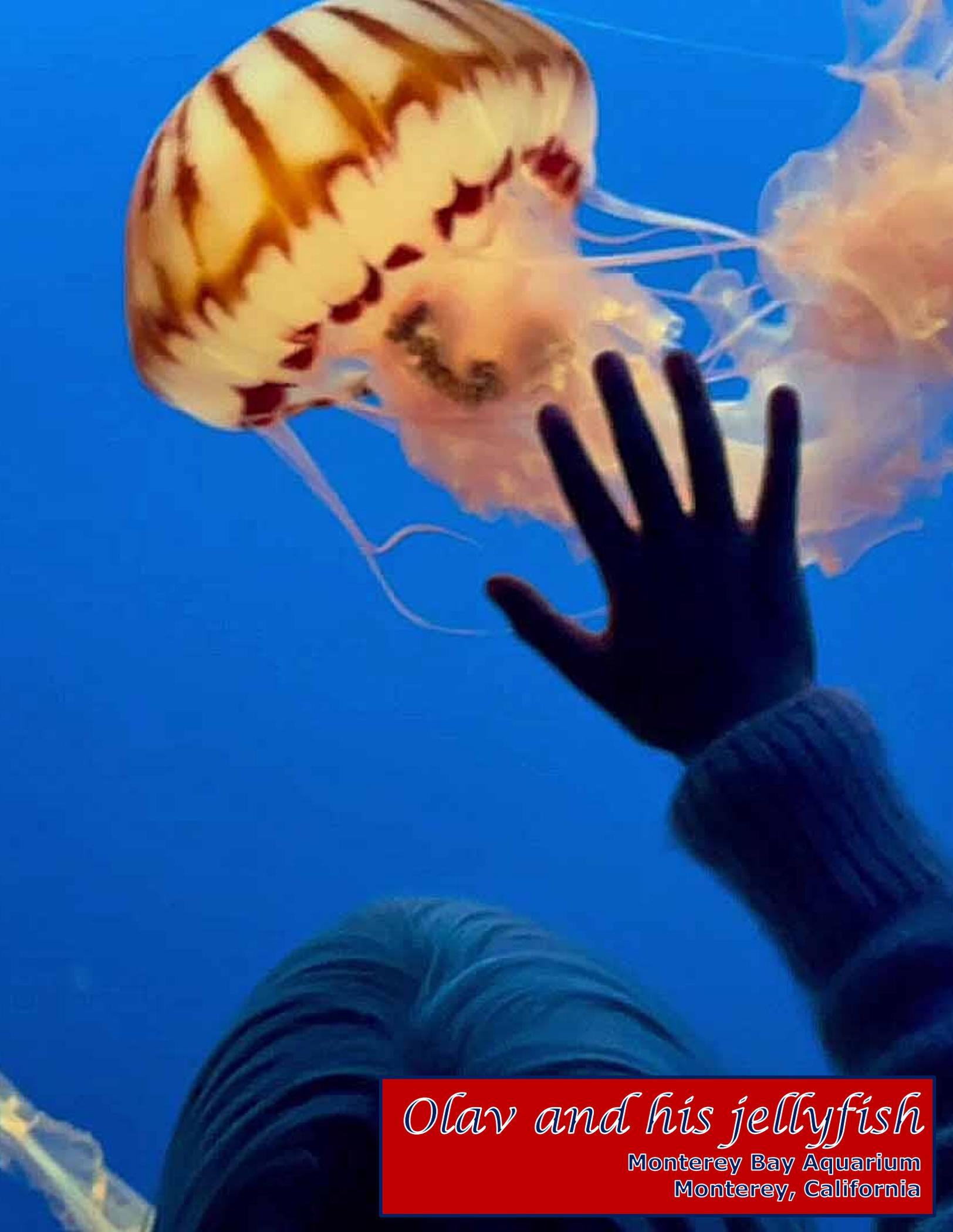
8-9 October 2022



HOVDEN CANNERY



"I have never seen my family name on a building outside my home country."



Olav and his jellyfish

Monterey Bay Aquarium
Monterey, California

A sense of place and family

When Hanne Hovden made the statement that I quoted on the cover of this newsletter, I felt I understood something of the feeling she was trying to describe as we stood where you see her.

We had just entered the doors of the Monterey Bay Aquarium, one of the premiere tourist stops in my corner of the world. But the aquarium is located on the street author John Steinbeck called “Cannery Row” in his Monterey-focused novel of that name. The aquarium is built within walls erected 106 years ago to house the Hovden Cannery, the largest and most successful sardine cannery on the city’s waterfront.

It was the cannery’s sign that hung over her, Per and Olav’s heads where I shot the cover picture.



Knut Hovden / www.santacruztrains.com

Knut Hovden may or may not be related to Hanne, but he was Norwegian. Born in 1880, he was a graduate of what his [Wikipedia entry](#) cryptically refers to as the “Norwegian school of fisheries,” noting in its link that Wikipedia contains no entry for such a school, which also did not show up in a Google search. Knut’s [story on the website “Santa Cruz Trains”](#) refers to him simply as an “educated Norwegian fisherman” with a degree in fisheries engineering.

Whatever, there’s no doubt that his expertise translated into success in Monterey, where his and brother Ole’s technological innovations included mechanical drying and cooking machines for sardines, soldering machines for can lids and a pipeline system that delivered sardines from fishing boats anchored offshore to the cannery. He was one of the first to advocate for a local aquarium, although that didn’t happen in his lifetime.

I felt I understood where Hanne was coming from because last year, my sister and I visited an isolated dot on the Oregon state map named Meacham. I wrote about it in [this newsletter](#). A little web research showed Alfred Meacham, like me, was the son of North Carolina Meachams, although I can’t say we’re related. I can say he did enough good work with indigenous peoples across the Midwest and West in the mid- to late-1800s that some folks thought the Oregon dot should carry his name.

Two guys, perhaps related to us, who left home for far-away lands where they made names for themselves that are also Hanne’s and mine. It’s gratifying to find even the most tentative connection to yourself out there in your travels.



Sea creature spotted

Monterey, California



Boys in a tree

Our backyard
San Jose, California



Back porch breakfast

Our house
San Jose



Halloween party

Willow Glen
San Jose



Limes by the driveway

Willow Glen
San Jose

Notes on photos

Cover — Animals of all types — from sheep when they had a family farm to ants to the [moose that Hanne photographed in their back yard when I visited in 2019](#) — are part of Per and Olav's lives. In advance of their visit, I described the types of wildlife we might see in the various places we traveled. At the aquarium, sharks, bat rays (which they could touch) and sea otters were all hits, although everything they saw, from octopuses to schools of sardines to penguins, got plenty of attention.

Olav and his jellyfish — One of many jellyfish that pulsate through the waters of Monterey's smaller aquariums, the one Olav is reaching toward is a purple-striped jelly whose tendrils can stretch farther than he is tall. The [aquarium's website](#) says their sting can be particularly painful.

Sea creature spotted — While eating in the cafeteria at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Per spots what looked to me to be either a small whale or a sea lion. I go with the former because I believe I saw a dorsal fin.

Boys in a tree — Tree climbing crosses many cultures, but this tree had a special appeal. The forests across southern Norway are adapted to a winter of deep snow. Mostly they are various kinds of softwoods — tall and slender trees that are flexible in the wind with short, thin, flexible limbs that shed the weight of snow and ice by bending down to release it. But what's good for a tree's winter survival is not so good for its value as a place for a short person who needs a lookout tower, a rocket ship, or a hideaway. Whatever the age of our backyard tree here in the Bay Area's Mediterranean climate, it hasn't borne the weight of a single snowflake in my lifetime. Its thick, widely spreading limbs so close to the ground are quite capable of holding a few boys.

Back porch breakfast — Two of Per and Olav's four daily meals, the first and last (at bedtime) were usually yogurt, raisins, blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, honey and oats mixed together. I may have forgotten another berry or two. But American jam did not suit their palates.

Halloween party — Hanne said Halloween is a relatively recent addition to Norway's holiday calendar but increasingly popular. Norwegians don't decorate for it in early October, though, so the boys enjoyed the early enthusiasm in our neighborhood. They will be carrying Star Wars light sabers this year and want Hanne to dress as Ahsoka Tano.

Limes by the driveway — On our walk around the neighborhood, the boys also encountered oranges, avocados and palm trees, documenting everything they discovered on GoPro cameras.

Snow-capped peak — This rock along the Wood Road Trail in Almaden Quicksilver County Park that we hiked is near the old rotary furnace atop Mine Hill. It was used to separate mercury from the reddish cinnabar ore that was mined there for 135 years. About 1,800 miners and their families once lived in the park, named for Almadén, Spain, [once the world's largest source of the silver-colored liquid metal](#) for 2,000 years. Almaden comes from the Arabic word meaning "the metal." Mercury from San Jose's mines was used in chemical processes to separate gold and silver from ore dug in the Sierra Nevada. "Mercury," "cinnabar" and "quicksilver" are frequently used in place names and business names here — San Jose's newspaper, the Mercury News — as an example.



Snow-capped peak

Almaden Quicksilver County Park
San Jose