

Stanley's plane ride was cancelled to help stop the spread of coronavirus germs. He didn't mind traveling in an envelope; Ruby had made it cozy, he had a book, and he figured California sunshine was in his future!

Sure enough, I opened Stanley's envelope on a gorgeous day.

Did you know? Santa Cruz has 262 sunny days each year. The average city in the United States has just 205, so it's like we get two more months of sunshine.

Here's a screenshot of Stanley giving last week's weather forecast:



Santa Cruz & California History

Flat Stanley loves to travel... by plane, envelope, horseback, whatever. Whenever he visits someplace far away, he imagines who has been there before. For example, he was *super* excited when we visited Boston. He said, "Here's the street where Ben Franklin grew up! I bet he played right where we're standing!"

So when he visited Santa Cruz, Flat Stan asked about local history. First I told him about Native Americans who lived here.

"Santa Cruz was home to the [Awaswas](#)," I said. "They lived in villages here along the ocean... so what do you think they ate?"

"Fish?" Stanley guessed.

"That's right!" I said. "Also they ate lots of blackberries, hazelnuts, and acorns. And up in the mountains they hunted deer for food and used the fur as clothing."

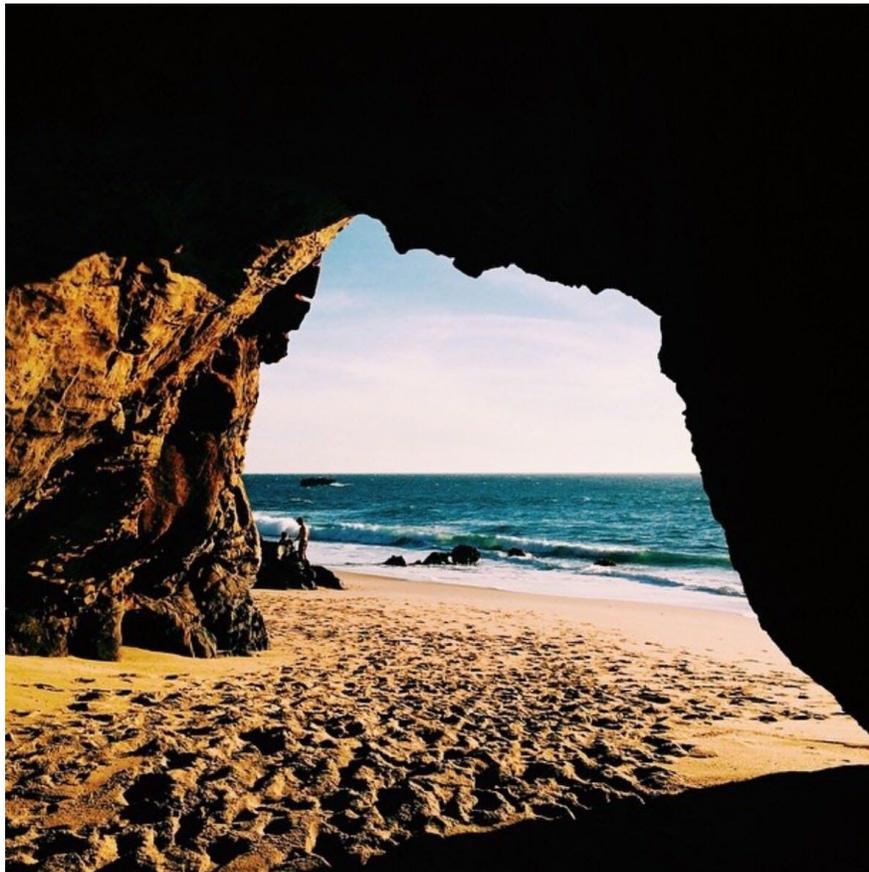
"What else did people wear?" Flat Stanley asked. He didn't know how to make any of his clothes.

"I don't know," I said. "But the men pierced their ears and [the women had tattoos](#)."

Flat Stanley didn't like the idea of piercing his ears, and he knew his mother wouldn't want a tattoo. But he loved the idea of living here long ago. "It would be so cool to be a Native American in Santa Cruz!" he exclaimed. "I'd build a home near a waterfall in the [Santa Cruz Mountains](#), and have a hangout in a beach cave."

I agreed that it would be awesome. For me, being in nature is like being in a synagogue. I feel peaceful and connected to the universe.

Here's a picture of Stanley's favorite Santa Cruz cave:



“Anyway,” I continued, “it seems that the Awaswas lived here for about 10,000 years. That’s like 40 times as long as the USA has been around! But then, just a few hundred years ago, some men from Spain came to Santa Cruz. They were sent by a European king, and they made the Awaswas work for them – growing crops, making bricks, and building places for them to live.”



Flat Stanley frowned. “How rude!”

“It was worse than rude,” I said. “But the good news is that eventually a pirate chased them away!”

“A pirate?” he asked.

“A pirate from Argentina,” I told him. “Soon after that, **Mexico** took charge of the area. But then Mexico and the United States had a war, and the US took the land.”

“California used to be part of Mexico?” Stanley asked.

“Yes,” I said. “Now there are three Californias! There’s the California where you are right now, plus Mexico has states called Baja California and Baja California Sur.”

“Three Californias?” Flat Stanley didn’t believe me until he looked at a map:



Then he said, “Wow. So many people wanted to live here, they even had wars about it! I’m lucky to visit.”

What a sweetie! I’m grateful for Flat Stanley’s company. I’ve been a bit lonely since the virus hit California. Until Stanley arrived, I’d only spent time with the cats, Mary, and my best friend Dustin.

Mary & the Cats

I rent the top floor of a house that has pretty flower gardens.



The house is owned by **Mary**, who lives downstairs. She's about 70 years old and so much fun! Mary used to be a police officer. Now she is retired. She loves having lots of time for [yoga](#), gardening and music.



Did you know? It can be hard finding a place to live if you have a pet! People worry that your pets will ruin the home. But Mary knows that cats can be cleaner than humans. When she was a police officer, cats followed her home and she let them stay. Lots of kitties have found safety here.

My cat's name is **Victoria**. She's called a **tuxedo cat** because her fur is patterned like a fancy black-and-white suit.



For comparison, here's a man in a **tuxedo**:



At first Victoria was nervous around Stanley. It wasn't personal; she's just a scaredy cat sometimes. He gained her trust with a seaweed treat.

"Ruby sent those treats for Hanukkah," I told him. "And look, there are more kitties too!"

From my balcony Stanley could see Mary's cats in the yard.

"Are those catnicorns?" Stanley asked. "Ruby likes catnicorns!"

"They're regular cats," I said. "They wear unicorn headbands."

I pointed to each furry friend and gave introductions. "The red cat **Frankie** climbs walls, so his nickname is Spiderman. The black cat **Sharky** got his name because he loves to splash water. And the little grey cat **Sade** [sha-day] is sneaky! If you aren't careful she'll run away."

"Where does she want to go?" he asked.

"That's a good question," I said. "But I feel cooped up too. Let's get out of here!"

Dustin

We visited my best friend **Dustin**. He works alone in a clean laboratory, so I figured he wasn't germy.



Dustin is very smart. For example, he can solve a Rubik's cube in 20 seconds. Even better, he's kind. And the last time Stanley visited, Dustin took us to a farm full of miniature horses!

Now, because of social distancing, we can't spend much time away from home. We visited the Santa Cruz Boardwalk but quickly left when we saw a dog getting a \$1,000 ticket...

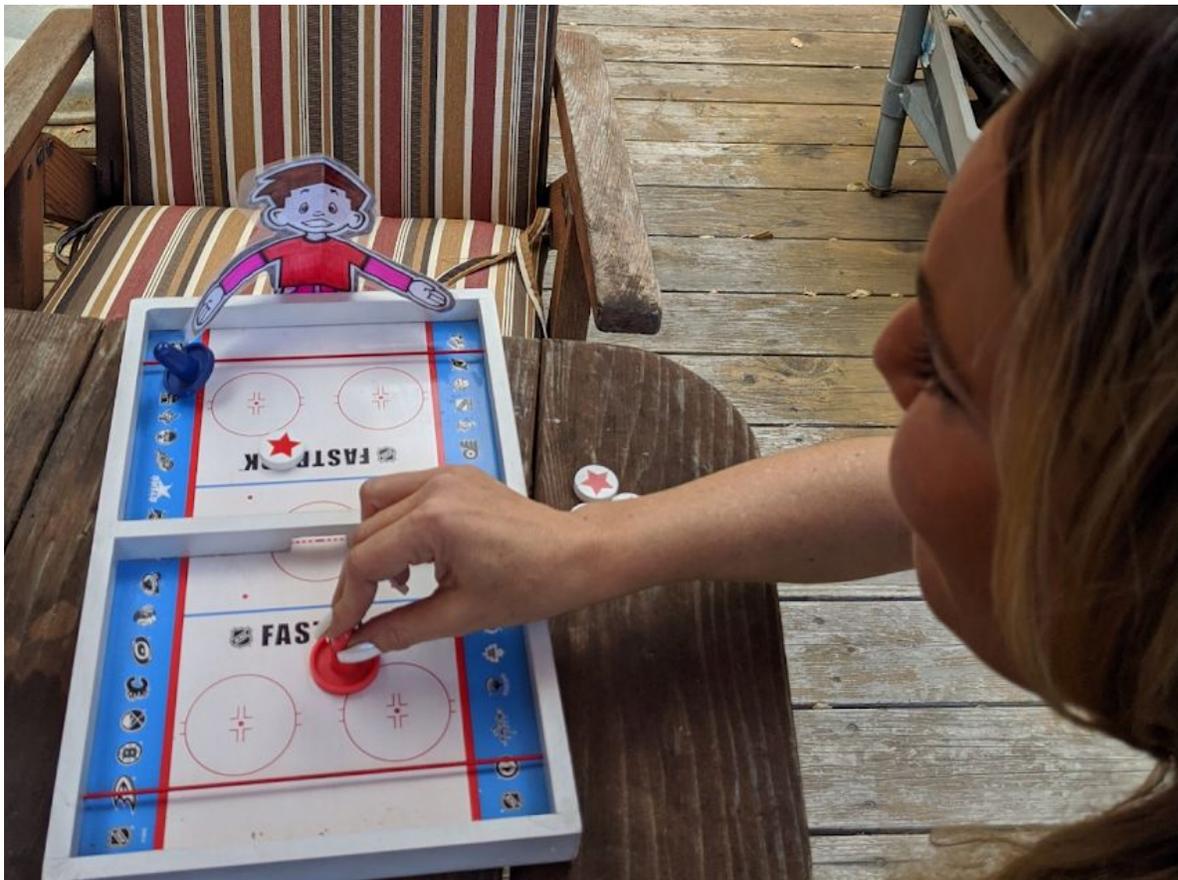


The dog had been taking rides without permission.



So we sat on Dustin's deck and squeezed lemons into lemonade, and Dustin made yummy food on the grill. He made us laugh with jokes about flat people and non-flat people. And he impressed us with magic tricks!

We also had a great time playing a Stanley-sized hockey game. Stanley won most of the games and was a good sport.



Then we headed home to feed the kitties and make our dinner.

We've visited Dustin a few times since then. Flat Stanley likes visiting for three reasons. First, he likes the vegetarian sausages that Dustin makes on the grill. ("They're perfectly spicy!") Second, he hopes Dustin will explain his magic tricks. Third, there's almost nowhere else to go.

Gardening

Stanley helped me plant a garden. And he's been here so long, he's literally seeing the fruit of his labor. (It's an expression.)

Strawberry buds are noticeably bigger every day! We've adored watching the plants change.



How do strawberry plants grow? As Stanley explains it, “First it just looks like a bunch of dirt. But then little white flowers pop out! In the middle of the petals you see a yellow-green circle. Then the petals fall away, and the circle bulges into a berry.”



Over the next few weeks the berries will keep growing and change from green to red.

Miscellaneous

Stanley's visit has been slow-paced. We like not needing to rush around! Here are a few more pictures from his trip.

Stan made a pizza! It was slightly burned but still tasty.



We played hide and seek...



We hiked in redwood forests...



To finish up, Stanley took a picture of this license plate. He loves California!



Thank you for sending Stanley to visit. He says it's been a blast despite the lockdown. I hope that Ruby will visit soon too!

Love to everybody at MJDS,
Ruby's Aunt Jorie