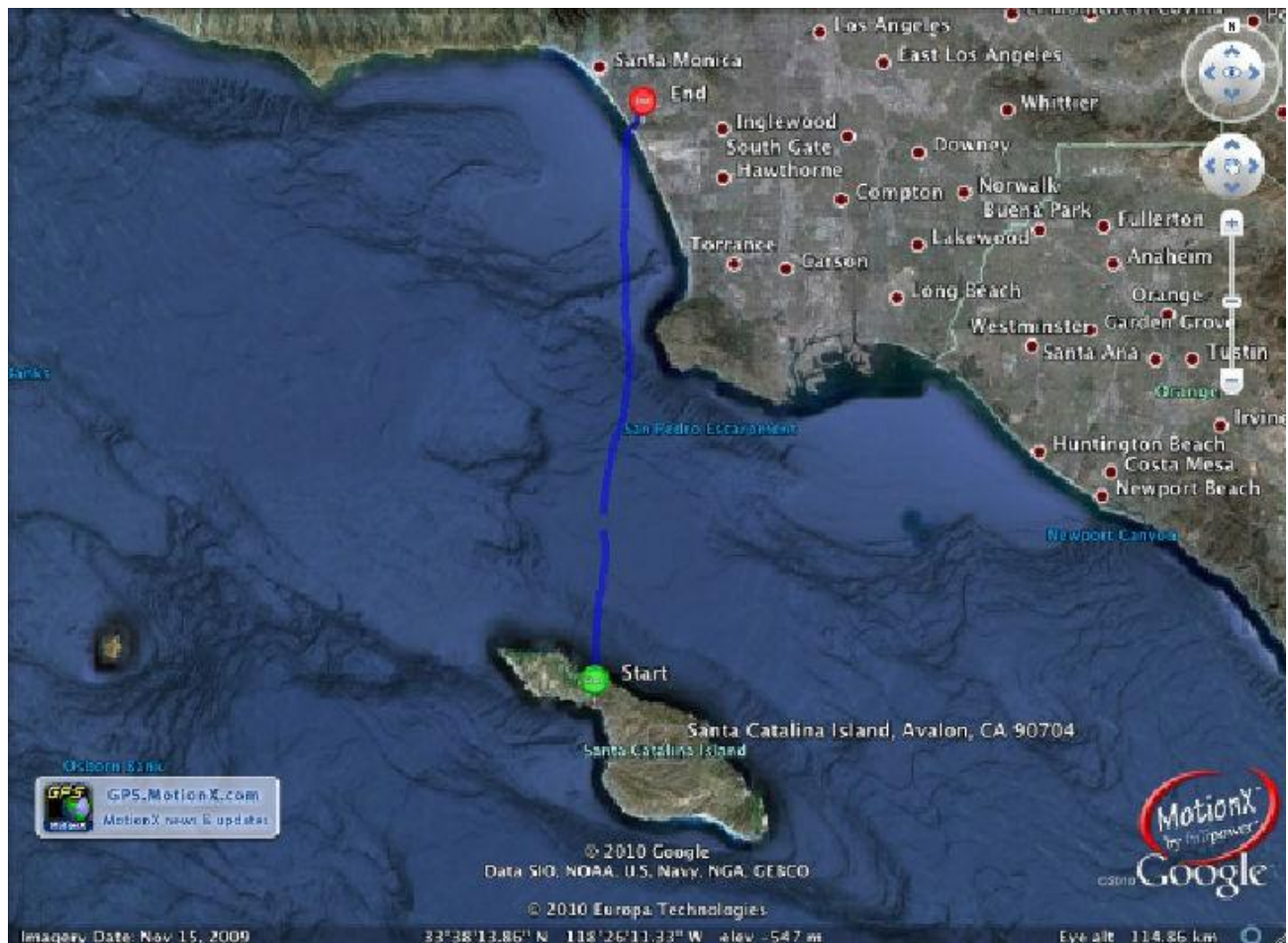


Since we have a toddler running around the house, getting some "adult time" has been difficult lately. So, my wife and I decided to gift each other "voyages of solitude". Four days alone for each of us, to go anywhere we want, while the other half stays with our daughter. Nice, huh?

Robin chose four days at a posh spa in Palm Springs. Room service, massage, cocktails by the pool.

I chose a cruise to Catalina on Robin Lee. So I packed up some food and gear, and headed off for my first significant single-handed trip. My destination was Fourth of July Cove, a small anchorage adjacent to Isthmus Cove on the north side of Catalina Island. From our home port in Marina del Rey, it's a 30.1 NM passage. Here's a Google Earth GPS track showing the route:



The course from Marina del Rey is almost due south, with the Palos Verdes peninsula abeam to port for about half the trip, then on into the busy shipping lanes of the open channel. The little island due west of Catalina is Santa Barbara Island.

Here's a blow up of the Isthmus of Catalina Island:



At the isthmus, Catalina narrows to about 3/4 miles across. On the north side is Isthmus Cove and the village of Two Harbors. There's a fuel dock there, a restaurant and lively bar, a well stocked (but expensive) grocery store, and a small village of turn of the century clapboard cottages. To the south is Catalina Harbor, long and deep, one of the best all-weather refuge harbors in California.

My destination was Fourth of July Cove, the small cove just to the west of Isthmus Cove. Here's a closer view:



I left the harbor at 8:00 am, and almost immediately caught a nice 6-8 knot westerly. Very lucky to have breeze that early. This would be a quick passage. I quickly passed the oil tankers anchored off the refinery at El Segundo.





I had a nice long encounter with an enormous pod of dolphins heading north. That's Palos Verdes Peninsula in the distance.



Here we are about 1/3 of the way across the channel. Rain threatened but never materialized. About 10 knots breeze now.



Self-portrait. 😊 When I single hand, I'm always wearing a PFD with harness, and always clipped in to jacklines running the full length of the deck.



Island getting close now. Here's a shot looking toward the west end, from about 2 miles away.



And, finally, at mooring... cocktail hour. Passage took 5-1/2 hours. Not bad.



Dinner time!





Next morning, sunrise.



I went kayaking a lot while I was there. Beautiful still water, and lots to explore. Here's a shot of Robin Lee at mooring from a distance, off the point which separates Fourth of July from the Isthmus Cove. I was nearly alone in the anchorage for most of the four day trip.

A couple of shots of Robin Lee at mooring, from my kayak:





I ran across this beautiful 1020's vintage motor sailer at anchor. I couldn't take my eyes off it. Incredible bright work.





The trip home was a beautiful sail. Nice clear weather, and a moderate breeze on the beam all the way home. Another 5 1/2 hour passage, and I was back to reality. The voyage of solitude was a grand success. Next step: a solo circumnavigation of Catalina, and then perhaps a two week tour of all the Channel Islands. That may be expensive though - two weeks for my wife at the spa will set me back a bundle. 🤔