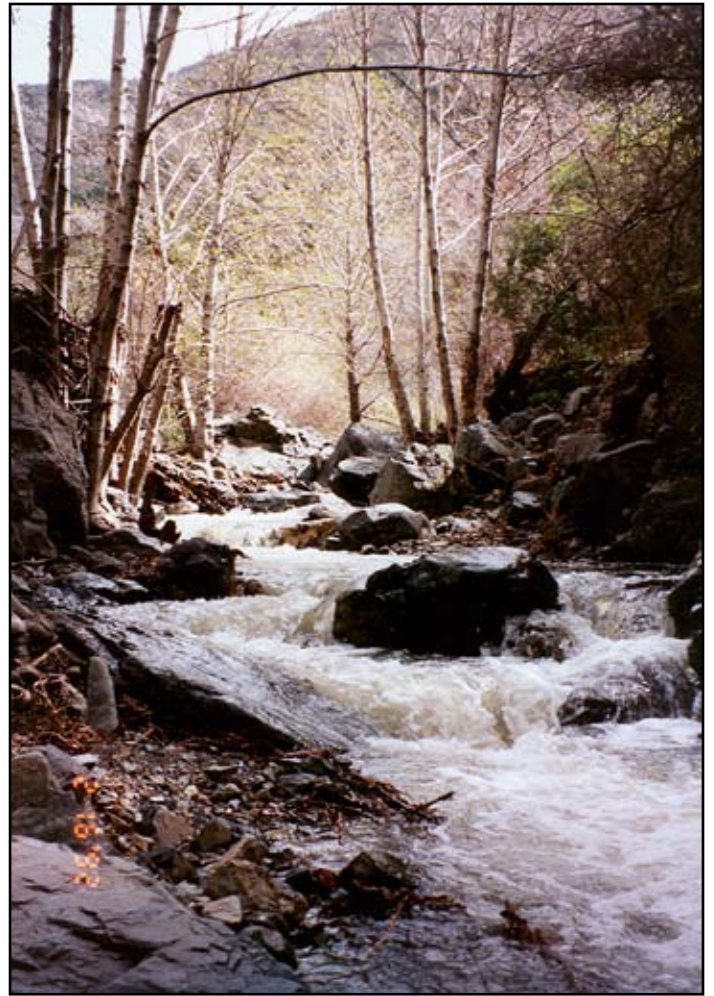


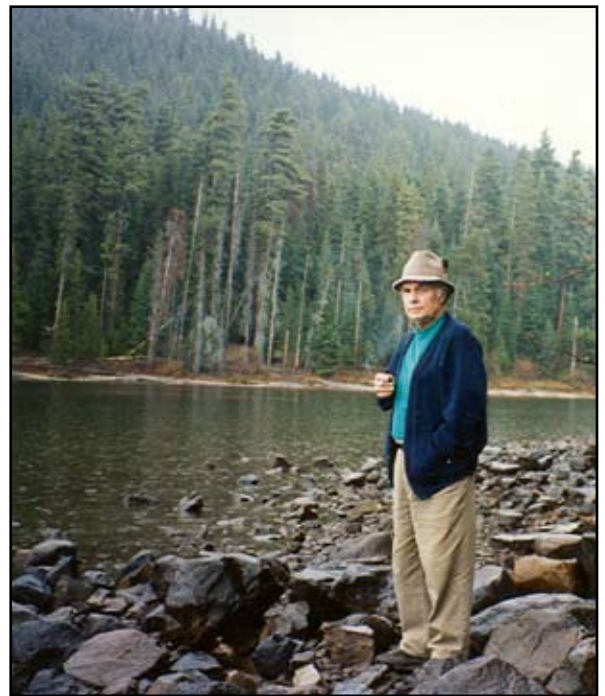
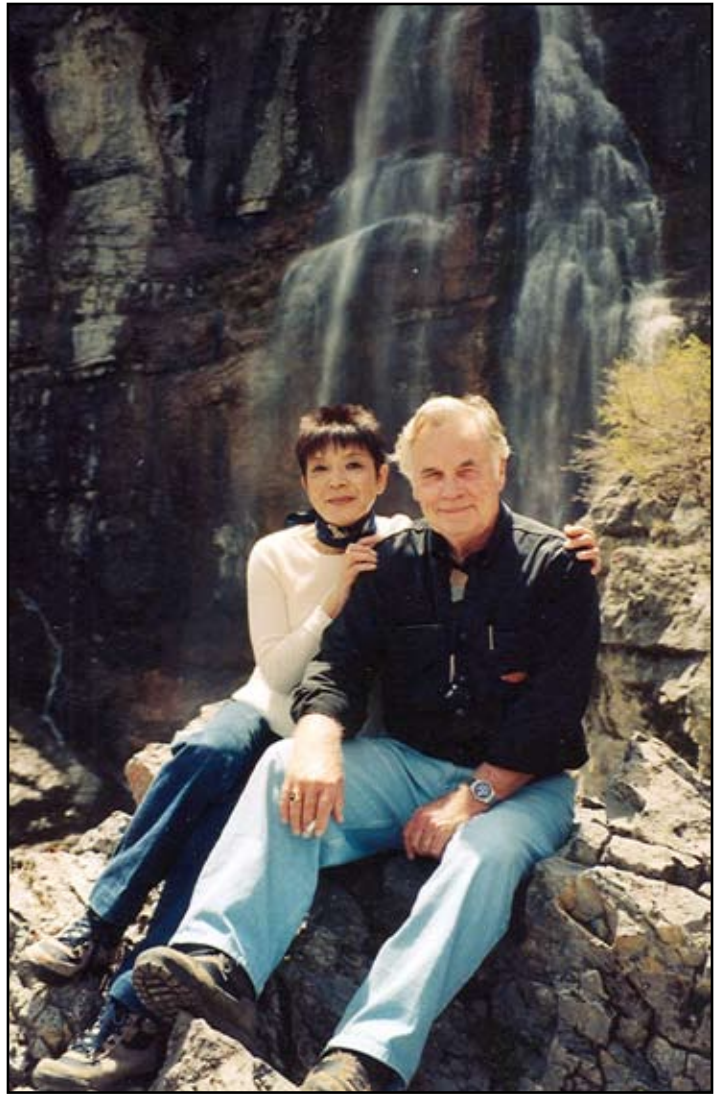
Castoffs

They lie forsaken in drawers, cookie tins and shoeboxes, photographic castoffs, never organized in a way helpful to those who might discover them after the picture-taker has died. It should be a mortal sin, or at least against secular law, to allow a photo to exist without some identifying scribbles on the back. For one reason or another, these photos were not put away in formal albums, which, too, might be inadequately captioned. The photo at right deserves better, because it's a rare image. It shows white rapids in the normally dry Santa Ana Mountains that form a backdrop to my Lake Forest, California, home. All photos here were taken in the early 1990s with a 35-millimeter film camera, a gift from Japanese in-laws, as all of my cameras have been. I never buy cameras. I wait for somebody to give them to me. The photo below, of Keiko our only child and Belle the white cat, was painful to encounter again, many years after the deaths of both. I'm not sure why that should be. Maybe it's because this one seems fresh and immediate. Belle lies buried in the backyard, and Kei's ashes fill an urn in the house, waiting for our urns to join hers.



Not Young but Fit

It's not so bad when I look at my image from the early 1990s. Yoshi never changes, but my face and physique, both almost 75 years old now, have deteriorated over the past decade or so. I was south of 65 when we were photographed at right near a Utah waterfall. And again, at lower right, as I stood on the rocky shoreline of an Oregon lake. Look closely and you'll see cigarettes poking out of the fingers of my right hand. I still have the same bad habit. The Oregon trip was a vacation, but my two weeks in Utah weren't. I was working and Yoshi flew in to spend the weekend with me. The *Los Angeles Times* had sent me to a computer school operated by the developer of an early pagination system at the newspaper. Ostensibly, I was an editor in training like everybody else. In fact, I was there to find out why the system had the world's worst spell-checker. I finished the schooling, but within a few days, before Yoshi joined me that weekend, I knew what was wrong. The spelling program was designed by programmers who knew more about computers than they did about the English language. Their logic was flawed. To them, a valid prefix or suffix, attached to a valid noun, makes a valid word. That's not always true. Yoshi could probably teach them a lot about propagating azaleas, too. She poses below with a bumper court-yard crop. They still bloom profusely every spring.



Jackson Sellers, Lake Forest, California, September 2006