

January 10, 2012

Dear Pops and Mom,
Hope you had a fabulous Christmas and you are doing well. My holiday was very busy and very fun. But first I believe my last letter ended just before Thanksgiving. I cooked a huge turkey in my little oven on Thanksgiving and moved "Talion" across the bay to tie up with two other boats. We invited about 20 people to the pot luck dinner and had quite the feast.

Elliot came to visit in December with his friend Phil. He comes to La Paz every winter to kiteboard in La Ventana about 45 minutes away. As you can see from



Elliot is becoming quite the kiteboarder.



the photos he has gotten very good! They spent quite a few days in La Paz and even volunteered to train the Mexican kids at sailboat racing. The kids racing group is new in La Paz and

*These are the little boats the Mexican kids are learning to sail and race on.
The same style Elliot learned on.*

they have very few teachers so Elliot and Phil were very welcome. Then they took the van off to La Ventana to kiteboard and camp. Another group of young cruisers on boats in La Paz drove over to take some lessons so the boys got to spend some time kiteboarding with new people too. Mid December there was a sailboat race from outside La Paz down the channel and into the bay. There were about 15 boats



I was happy to be in front of the boat with the yellow sail. He's the guy who thinks "Talion" is not competition!

signed up. One of the boat owners had said to me a couple weeks before that he will miss my friend Craig on "Adios" because this year he will have no competition on the races. That made me

We went so fast we found ourselves neck and neck with the very fast "Pantara"

cringe. What about "Talion"? So I felt challenged and made sure to put together a rock star crew including Elliot and Phil. Also aboard was Dave from "Stargazer" I met Dave and his wife on the Ha-Ha as they were rafted up next to us for our sit down dinner for 12. Dave is a former collegiate winning sailor and it really showed. Between the three of them and Mike from La Paz Yachts on the foredeck we were fast! We had enough other hands to make sail changes easily and keep the sails trimmed.



My rock stars Dave, Elliot and Phil kept the boat moving.



We beat the guy that had made the comment and we even passed my friend Bob on "Pantera" the really fast catamaran. Bob doesn't have a spinnaker and just couldn't catch us no matter what he tried.

We were a happy team with "Pantera" behind us and a 1st place overall for the race!

Unfortunately about that time the generator started dieing after running about 5 minutes. I was bound and



Re-bedding the entry slider was a huge task but it is all sealed up now.

Lugging jugs of fuel was no fun either. Can't wait to get that fixed!



determined to fix it myself and not call Colin. It is so easy to call him every time I have a glitch but he is so expensive! I decided it was not getting fuel. I replaced fuel lines, changed the place it gets it's fuel, tightened all the fittings, and fixed a bunch more stuff that was not broken. The generator runs just fine if it sucks it's fuel out of a jug that is up high but it will not pull the fuel from the tank. It's not the fuel filter, it's not the fuel lines... so it has to be the fuel pump. I didn't



know where to get one in La Paz so I called Colin. He said it can't be the fuel pump and must be something else. He has been having heart problems and just had surgery and can't work for a month.

So I gave up and just ran the generator from the jugs which created a new task. Loading empty jugs into the

3 weeks at a desk was fun and I learned a lot but it wasn't very profitable.

dinghy, taking them to the gas station, hefting them back up into the boat, and down in the engine compartment. I went through one jug about every 4 days keeping the refrigerator cold and the batteries charged.



Sure was fun spending so much time with Andrea.

My other major December endeavor was working at La Paz Yachts. Shelly took her parents to Hawaii for their

50th wedding anniversary and I held down her desk for her. Unfortunately the job was probably the lowest paying thing I have ever done. It was strictly for commission and while I did manage to sell one boat it was only a \$12,000 boat and my share of the commission was \$400. For 3 weeks of working from 9-5 yikes! But it was fun and very different to sit at a desk again.

Mid December I headed to Colorado for Christmas. My sister's family, Paul, and Denise had expressed an interest in spending Christmas skiing in Aspen so I asked Tim if we could invade his house. "No problem", was the reply so I got to Aspen early to get the place set up for the group. That was not an easy task I had to get beds and move out a lot of Tim's storage and river rafting gear to make it a guest house. He's a lonely widower and needs a little diversion... don't you think? Ha Ha.

Denise and Andrea showed up early to help with the holiday prep. We spent one day

tromping through the forest finding and cutting down what we determined to be the best tree. When we got it to the house it turned out to be huge. Not too tall but way too wide! I think when it thawed out it opened up. So we cut off one side and put it against the wall. Half a Christmas tree and it looked great. When the Drakes arrived we had a total of 9 people and 4 dogs. Sue, Jon and Elliot brought their



"Nana, will you buy me this bear?"



Going out to the woods to chop down the Christmas tree sounded easy and fun... I guess it was good exercise.

large golden retriever Berkeley, Tim has a large dog and Denise and Paul have two little ones. It was quite crowded but fun. The house isn't really set up for a crowd as the kitchen is up in Tim's studio apartment style upstairs area. But there is a bathroom downstairs and the former kitchen (now utility room) is downstairs. That made a perfect place to serve meals. His tiny apartment refrigerator wasn't close to big enough so we used a cooler on the back porch for drinks and the boys beer. Ice Cold!

We spent our days skiing, sightseeing, watching football, sledding, and shopping. I actually went skiing 3 times. My skill level is just a bit better than Andrea and I don't like the steep hills nor do I like to go fast but it did come back to me somewhat and Andrea and I had a great time racing down the hills.

The mountains and ski resorts in Aspen are just beautiful and the view from the top of the mountain is beyond breathtaking. Unfortunately this year Aspen has not had much snow so we had to choose our runs carefully and spend most of our time on runs with man made snow. It didn't make



I gave Paul and Denise gift certificates that were locked into plastic mazes. They had to roll a little ball around to solve the maze before the box unlocked and they got their presents. Apparently it was very hard. Ha ha ha!



Berkeley the horse.

any difference to us. It was still better skiing than that in the Pacific Northwest and everyone was thrilled..

One night we went to Snowmass and the torchlight parade. Elliot and Andrea skied down Snowmass mountain with glowing red flashlights in their hands along with a hundred or so others. It was quite a sight and Andrea loved skiing in the dark. Finally the fireworks show started which got her off the hill and back to our cozy fireside table.



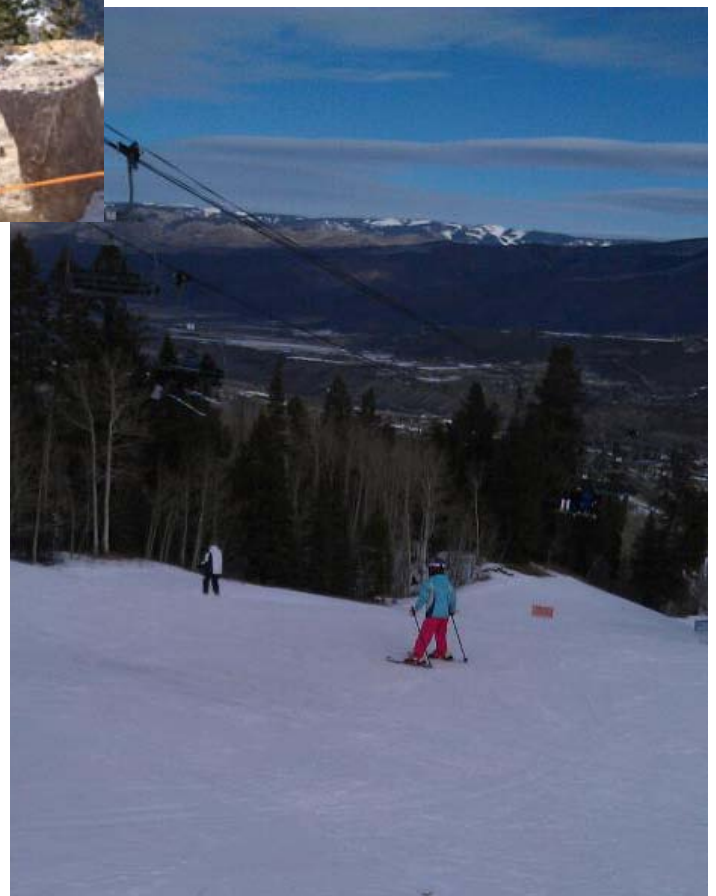
Jon came up with all kinds of excuses to not go skiing. He liked sitting on the deck with his dog watching the snowplows go by.



Sue skied a lot but not as much as Elliot.

New Years Eve was spent first with a sledding and snowball fight excursion and then dinner at the Woody Creek Tavern. One of Dale's favorite writers Hunter S. Thompson used to spend his time at this tavern and he put the tavern on the map. It was a very fun place for an early New Years dinner. Then it was back to Aspen for two fireworks shows. At 8 pm we

Andrea skies better without her parents but a little more reckless and fast.





Sue & Jon snagged us the perfect table (with a fire pit in the center) to watch the torchlight skier parade and the fireworks.

watched them from the deck of Tim's house where they were so huge and so close. For the midnight fireworks we all bundled up and went downtown (5 blocks) to the bonfire in the park and watched them overhead with a crowd of others.

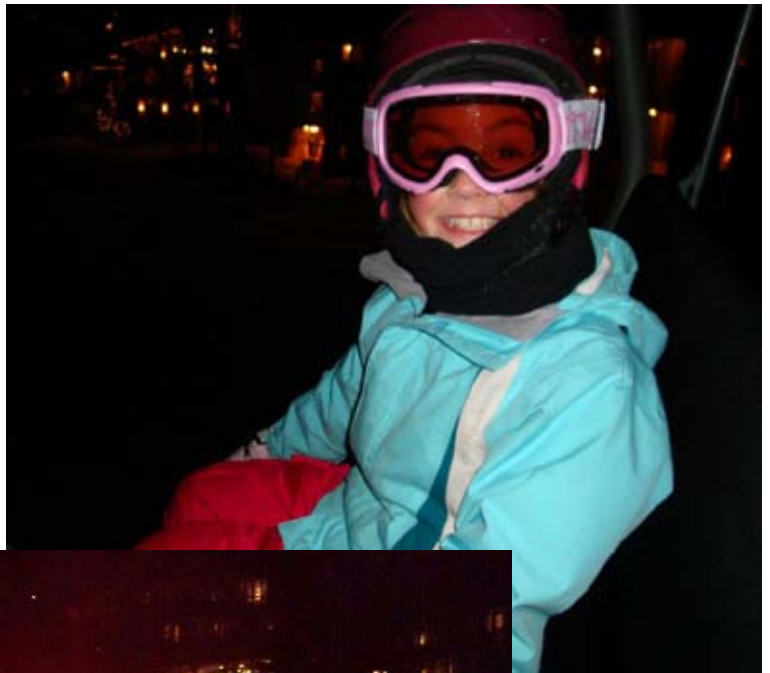
We were all thankful to Tim for sharing his house with us. It had been a long time since my family got together for Christmas. It was also cool to see my work of last summer put to use. The house was funky but it was perfect for the week.

Paul flew back to California to work and Denise, Andrea, and I went to their house. Paul's new company had given them money for moving expenses. I volunteered to pack up



My girls

their stuff for the amount the moving company would charge. My pay was to be \$800 less packing expenses. To save on the packing expenses I searched the internet and found some free boxes downtown. I drove Denise's mini cooper to pick up everything they had. Well, the boxes alone filled the little car and then there were the two large boxes of packing material I didn't want to pass up. So I stuffed



Thank goodness the fireworks started or we would never have gotten Andrea off the hill.

the car full of paper and drove back to the house. If I would have gotten in a wreck I would have been just fine as I was packed in there tight. My next thought was liquor store boxes. The neighborhood store would only give me 3 per day. Then I called Bed Bath and Beyond. They gave me a few and I was back to the house to get started. In one day I used up all those boxes so the next day I headed out for more. When I was done it had taken me 36 hours to pack 117 boxes. All in all I made \$700. Not bad for a couple days of work.



Denise is leaving in two weeks to drive from Denver to Los Angeles (via the Grand Canyon and numerous other tourist stops) with Andrea and the two little dogs in the mini. I can't wait to hear how that goes!

My greatest news this month is an invitation to do the Grand Canyon in April! Al Kookla (I went on a rafting trip with him last summer) has a permit for 23 days down the river. The regulations only allow 16 day trips on the Grand Canyon. But if your trip starts before May you can spend 23 days. It looks like Tim and Mike will be able to go so it will be the first Grand Canyon trip for the big boat. I'm pretty excited about spending that much time exploring and hiking the canyon. I'm also excited about riding in the comfort of that big boat and having the luxury of bringing all the stuff I want!

At the end of the month I fly back to Mexico. I am really anxious to get that generator running and spend time working on the varnish. My 3 weeks at La Paz Yachts put me a little behind in my maintenance.

I hope your Christmas was just great. I am really looking forward to spending time in California this summer and forward to spending time with you two.

Love,

Patsy



Happy New Year cousins!



The fireworks from the house are awesome!