

Dear Pops and Mom, March 16, 2011
I hope you are both doing well. I am just fantastic and up to the same old stuff. At the end of February Colin still had more work to do in the engine room finishing the exhaust on the main engine and replacing the exhaust on the generator. He is so frustrating. Some days he showed up as planned and other days I sat and waited. It was very hard especially since I was paying marina fees while I waited. My girlfriend Carolyn came down at the end of February to see a little of La Paz, help me get the boat across the Sea of Cortez, and to do the Banderas Bay Regatta. Finally Colin finished in time for



Headed out to the islands with Carolyn for a night



The Paradise Village Marina is truly a paradise

mine! So he took off the electrical part of the generator and will get it fixed while I am gone. He had it re-wound last year and hopes he can convince the motor repairman that he wound it wrong. Carolyn and I left on the first of March with Marv as our crew and had an uneventful crossing to Puerto Vallarta. The wind was from the north as predicted so we zoomed right along and into Puerto Vallarta right on schedule. During the regatta

Carolyn and I to spend one night out at the islands off La Paz. Not only did I want to show her the islands but I wanted to give the boat a bit of a shakedown. The engine worked just fine but the regulator would not function unless I gave it a whack with a wrench. This has been an intermittent problem for months so this time I called Colin and he suggested it was time to get a replacement. I quickly ordered one so it could be brought to Puerto Vallarta with a Banderas Bay Regatta crew member. We returned to the marina and Colin tweaked the engine and finished the generator. When he started the generator it smoked and squealed. I am glad it happened when his head was in the engine room and not

The ocean is on one side of the peninsula, hotel in the middle and the marina is on the other side. Perfect!



the slip fees at Paradise Village Marina are half price so we pulled into the most fabulous marina I know of. It is part of the Paradise Village Resort and being a marina customer allows the use of the facilities at the 5 star resort. We arrived on Friday which gave us time to rest up and give the boat a good clean for the crew that started arriving on Saturday. Some of the guys stayed on Talion but most people took advantage of the half price hotel rooms at the resort. It is a great way for my sailing friends from Portland to get a break from the cold and



Talion crew takes over a taco stand



Jack Fawcett... sizing up the competition



Tim Morris and Dale Davis sorting out how we will make it all work.

rain and to enjoy some of the best sailing there is. We spent Sunday, Monday and Tuesday exploring Puerto Vallarta and the area, doing boat tasks, and getting provisions for the week of racing. To lighten up the boat we take off



Tim brought his nephew Zack. He said he had a great time but I think he was the only person under the age of 45 in the entire regatta!

as much heavy stuff as we can especially the bow anchor and it's 300' of chain. Also fuel jugs, the dingy, and anything else that is reasonable comes off. We also changed the oil, replaced the failing regulator, and fixed some minor wiring issues. I love it when these guys come to visit!

As I spend more and more time in Mexico I am continually running into people I have met. In La Cruz (about 15 miles north of Puerto Vallarta) we ran into Doug and Carla Scott. They had spent a few years in La Paz



I'm going to miss the ever smiling Carla!

getting their boat ready for cruising and even crewed on Talion on a race out of La Paz last year. For the past year they have been exploring the mainland of Mexico. They are preparing to take "Moondance" across to the South Pacific next month. We had intended to race with fewer crew than last year and invited Doug and Carla to come along on practice day. Because Talion is a cruising boat and not set up for "Round the Buoys Racing" it takes more people and a lot of coordination. Doug and Carla were so much fun and such a big help during practice we invited them to do the entire regatta.



On the way out of the harbor for the first day of racing there is a boat parade complete with an announcer broadcasting the skipper, crew, and boat information. We flew flags down the forestay and backstay and a 50' streamer from the top. We were very festive!



Boats circling waiting for their turn in the parade



This is a classic boat from Portland named "Vagabundo" the owner has been racing in the Portland area since the late 60's



Remember my friend Eugenie? She is the sailing instructor who's boat hit a whale and sunk during the Baja Ha Ha 2 years ago. She is skippering this sailing school boat for the regatta.

Thursday was the first race day and we were very concerned about one boat from Portland named "Vagabundo". He has raced for many years and with the handicapped rating he was given we thought he would be our fiercest competition. It turns out we were completely wrong. Even though we sailed our fastest three boats sneaked by us to give us a forth for the day. The first place trophy for the regatta is given to the winning boat of the average of three of days racing. With two more days to go we felt confident that we could make up for day one.



On the second day of racing just before the 8 am net the harbormaster for Paradise Village Marina came on and said there was a tsunami warning and the harbor was closed. In fact, the Port Captain had closed all the ports and there was a \$4,000 fine for leaving or entering. That seemed strange to me because if there is a tsunami warning I have been told that boats are supposed to go out to deeper water. Soon after we heard they were predicting the tsunami to cause a 6' rise in the water level in early afternoon. High tide was around 2 pm and the piling holding our dock in place barely had 8 feet left on top of it. If the water went up 2 feet because of the tide and then another 6 feet for the tsunami the dock would float right off the top of the piling. People on the radio started to question the Port Captains decision. An hour or so later someone came on and said the port was not closed to recreational boats. There was quite a debate around the marina about leaving or staying. I called my friend and professional skipper of the 65' sailing yacht Gan Eden, Scott Cary. Gan Eden was in Marina Vallarta about 5 miles south. Scott said at first he was planning to go out but changed his mind when they closed the port. I texted my friend in Newport, Bill Lily (ex Coast Guard) who said I should go out to 200' of water, the crew on Talion were split, the harbormaster was recommending people stay, and the guy in charge of the regatta had already



There were over 60 boats in the regatta divided into 8 classes. Each class starts 5 minutes apart. This is a class of smaller boats. You can see the committee/start boat (power boat) on the right. It is very confusing with boats going everywhere. Thank goodness for Jack.



Here we are trying to get into a good starting position. The committee boat is the power boat on the right. There are many, many rules about who has rights and how you cannot get into each others way.

taken his 55' boat out and into deeper water. My friend, crew, and former captain from Portland Jack Fawcett arrived and said "If it was my boat I'd go out". That was enough opinion collecting for me so we put the dingy on the davits, packed up the crew, and out we went. On the way to the deeper water we listened to horrific reports of Japan, more earthquakes, tsunamis, nuclear reactors, and an earthquake in Nicaragua. For a while I was a little worried I would have to spend the next few years sailing around with 11 people on Talion while Colorado was established as the new Pacific Coast. We fished, we ate, we watched whales, we sunned, and we just goofed around all afternoon until about 3 pm when we started to hear reports of the water level rising in



Again, jockeying for a good position at a start. We ended up starting very well both days. Of course not without the boys yelling rules at the other boats and getting all riled up. Great Fun!



We are trying to pass "Vagabundo" before turning one of the marks of the course. We are the red, yellow and green spinnaker. Sadly the beautiful and very fast blue and pink one is too ripped to repair.

dock lines. Adios and Talion are Portland boats and are used to the Columbia River currents but not like this. Once in the marina the current was gone so we secured our boats for the night. During the night the water level continued to rise and fall and the docks creaked and groaned. In the morning the current was still surging in and out of the harbor. On the morning net the harbormaster said that the Paradise Village Marina and Nuevo Vallarta harbor were dangerous to enter with currents running up to 12 knots. He recommended boats do not enter or leave. The crew taxied back to Marina Vallarta and Talion went out for a second day of racing. Upon our return to Paradise Village Marina the current was still running in and out at 4-5 knots and the water was very dirty, silty, and muddy with trash floating. Our slip was down the estuary almost to the end and even that far away from the entrance the current was still running fast. An amazing thing water is. The next day we ended up having to race with the dingy on the back of the boat. Not a fast way to sail!

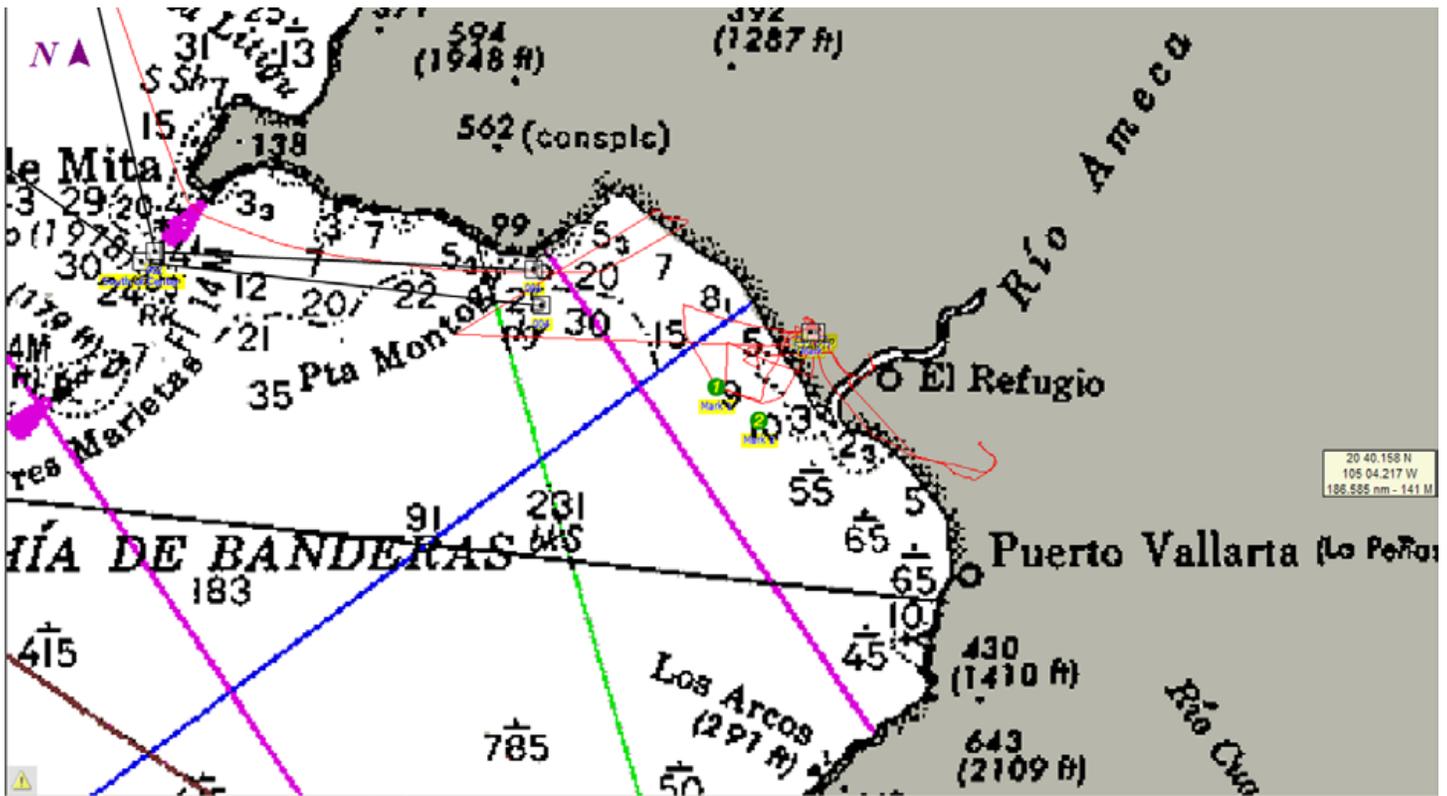
the marinas. It went up 4 feet, down 3 feet, up, and down again. Then we heard reports of the currents going in and out of the Nuevo Vallarta harbor reaching 12 knots with whirlpools and swirls everywhere. The harbormaster came on the radio and said that Paradise Village Marina was closed and boats should anchor for the night. True, we had taken off our primary anchor and chain for racing but I wasn't concerned as we carry 3 spare anchors with chain. My worry was where would I sleep 11 people and what was for dinner! So I called skipper Scott Cary. He reported (after giving me a bad time for leaving the dock) that the current at the entrance to Marina Vallarta was a manageable 3-4 knots and told us of an empty slip near the Gan Eden. With Craig Shaw, Jennifer, and the crew of Adios (including Craig's 80-something-year-old parents) following we went for it. It was a little frightening going in with the muddy silty water, floating trash, churning currents, and listening to boats straining on their



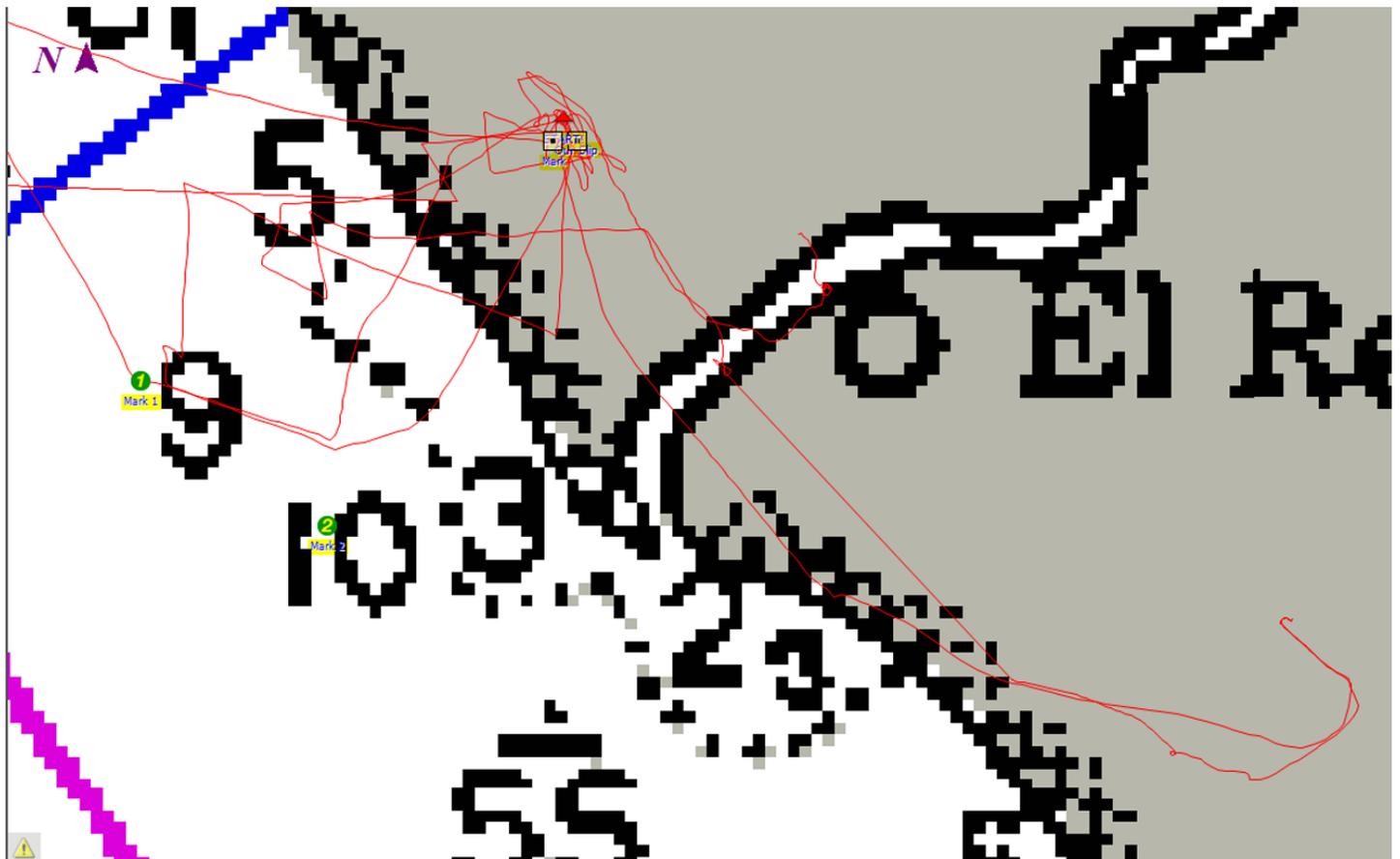
Guys on our boat are yelling "Mast Abeam", "We have rights", while the other boat is trying to ignore us and then yelling more rules right back at us. Meanwhile I am driving my house yelling to Jack "Are you sure about this?"



We ended up not getting around him in time before we rounded a turning mark... but we did pass him later.



Mexico can be extremely frustrating at times. In Puerto Vallarta and Banderas Bay it is the charts that are frustrating. The chart above is zoomed out and you can see our red track where we entered the bay and sailed. The grey is the land and the white is the water.



Zoomed in above you can see how incorrect the charts are. It shows the boat was over land a lot of the time. The red line going down and to the right is where we went into the Puerto Vallarta Marina on Tsunami night.



Here we are approaching and rounding a mark. This rounding just required adjusting the course and trimming the spinnaker. Sometimes it means we need to take the spinnaker down and put out the headsail. That requires crew that works well together as many things happen at the same time.



up and down the coasts of Oregon and Washington and up to Canada. Jack is a great friend and has taught me a lot about sailing. It was very strange having him crew with me for the regatta. We had never been in these rolls before with me the skipper/driver. Bridget came to Puerto Vallarta too and spent each day shopping or lounging around the pool while we went out sailing. After a bit of an adjustment Jack and I got into a groove

and he pretty much called the shots while I drove the boat as fast as I could. It was a perfect combination. Jack is so good at the rules and the tactics it kept us very competitive during the starts and on our mark roundings. We didn't let anyone get by us and did a good job of passing some. But with all of our efforts the best we could do was a second place

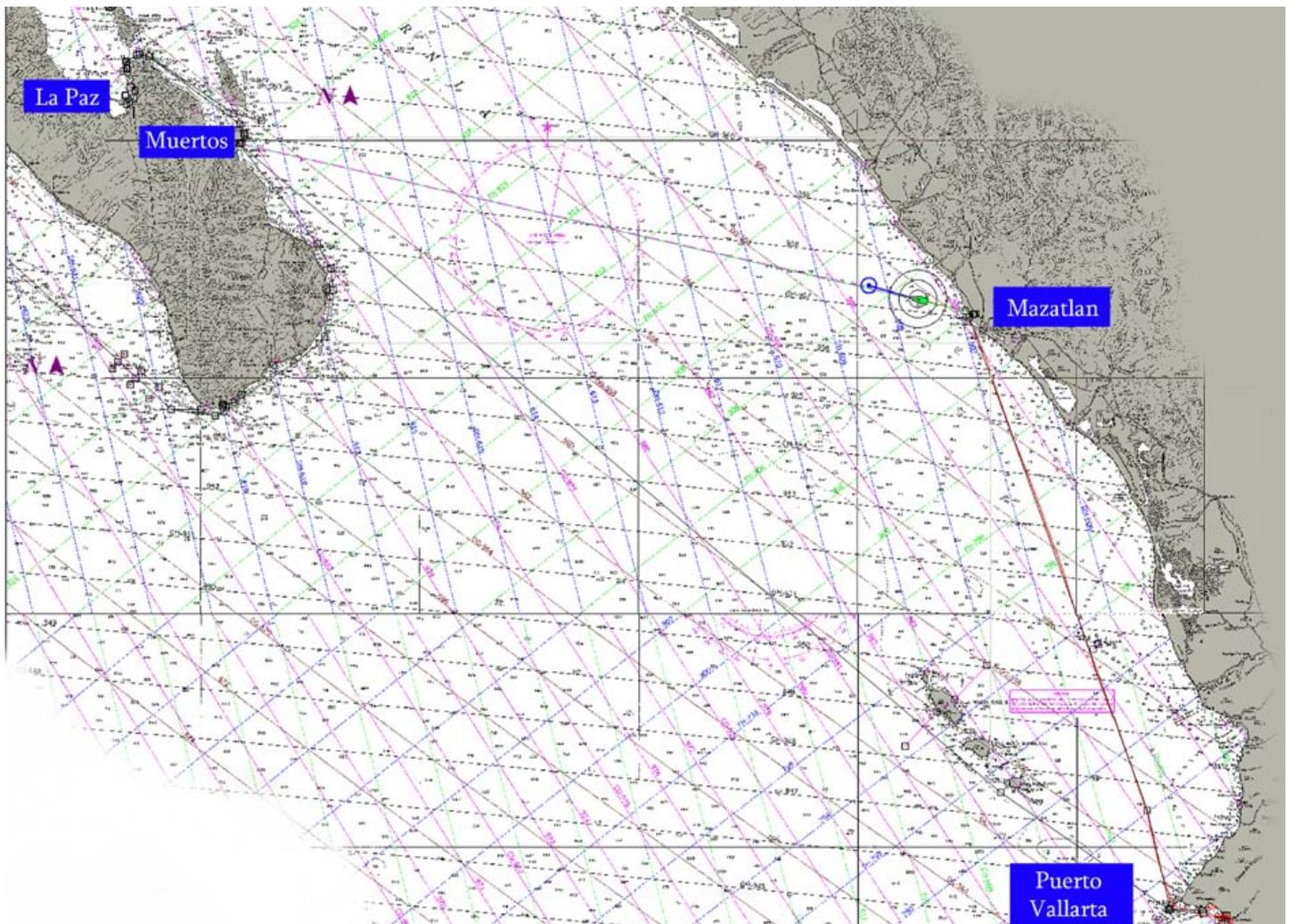


All that for this???

on the second and last day of racing. We could really have used that day the tsunami took away from us. That night was the awards ceremony which is on the beach between the hotel and the ocean. It is a great party with music and a Mexican buffet. We got a trophy for third in class for the two days racing. The next morning the entire crew showed up really early to clean the boat before the next crew arrived. Not only did we need to clean but we needed to turn the boat from racing mode back into cruising mode.



And here we are on our way to the finish.



Our downwind route to Puerto Vallarta took us on a course straight from Muertos.

To avoid wind on the nose we went to Mazatlan on the way back. So far, however, we have had no wind!

The crew going across to La Paz includes Alison, her husband Dave, Dave's brother Brian, and his wife Lori. You might remember Alison and Lori as they went up to the Loreto Fest with me last April.

The trip across the sea from La Paz straight to Puerto Vallarta takes 2-1/2 days. If we leave La Paz in the morning we arrive at Puerto Vallarta in the late evening just after dark. Paradise Marina doesn't let you check in after 5 pm so I always end up racing across the sea only to have to anchor and wait. This year Carolyn, Marv and I left in the morning and anchored in Bahia de Los Muertos the first night. The next morning we got up early and it was just over 48 hours to Paradise Village. Perfect timing! The wind usually blows from the north so the way home is a little trickier to determine. If the wind is blowing strong it could slow us down considerably. So we decided to go from Puerto Vallarta to Mazatlan giving us a better angle on the wind to La Paz. The 24 hours to Mazatlan was as predicted. We got a slip, showered, and took a taxi to town for dinner. Then we went to bed early so we could leave at dawn for the 35 hour run from Mazatlan to Muertos. It was foggy in the morning but we could see pretty good so we turned on the radar and left the dock. When we got to the harbor entrance we were told the harbor was closed due to fog. So we waited 3 hours until the fog lifted. So much for plans!

When I return to La Paz I will drive Alison and family to the airport in Cabo San Lucas and pick up my next guests all on the same day. My Colorado friend Celeste and her son Eli are coming for Eli's spring vacation. I have never met him but when I was there this winter Celeste said that Eli (16 years old) wants to go to school on a sailing ship and has shown a huge interest in sailing. Sounds like a perfect person to spend some time on Talion. I will let you know how it turns out.

Hope this letter finds you both well...

Love, Patsy