

March 30, 2010

Hi Pops & Mom,

Yippee... I just received my invite to "Save the Date" for another Verhoeven gathering. It sounds like a blast and a great way to spend your 90th birthday. If all goes according to plan I will have the boat in San Diego by then so it will be easy for me to get there.

Update on the engine! Colin got it in and running just in time for my friends Chris and Mike Quigley to arrive from Portland for our trip across to Puerto Vallarta. Every year I take the boat over for the Banderas Bay Regatta (I gave you a magazine article about last year's race). This year I had a crew of 14 planned.



Most were friends from Portland plus Denise, Paul & Andrea, my sister Sue and her husband Jon, another couple from Portland that are in Mexico on their sailboat, my long-time real estate friend Nadine that now lives in Puerto Vallarta, her boyfriend, and their poodle! It was very important for Colin to get the engine finished because these people had plane and hotel reservations all lined up and some of them had never even been to Mexico before. The trip usually takes 2 ½ days to motor across but Colin was only allowing 50 hours of motoring for the break-in until back to La Paz where he could torque the head, adjust the valves and change

the oil. To tell you the truth I could have cared less about the limited engine hours... all I wanted to do was leave the dock!

First we were plagued by too much wind on the nose (trying to sail directly into the wind is very slow). In addition to the wind direction problem we were only allowed 1200 to 1400 rpm on the motor – our usual cruising rpm is 2600. Later we had no wind or very little wind but at least the break-in period finally allowed motoring at 1600 to 1800 rpm so we managed to make 4 knots. It took about 3 ½ days to get there and we arrived on the Saturday. Denise, Paul and Andrea greeted us at the dock. Sunday I took a day for family and the four of us went off on a snorkeling tour. Great to have family time somewhere warmer than Denver in December!



On Monday more of the crew started showing up so we spent half the day redoing how some of the spinnaker gear is rigged, duct taping the required number "50" on the bow for the regatta, removing the anchor and chain (the boat goes much faster without the 2000 lbs of anchor and chain up front), and then a trip to the very touristy area in downtown Puerto Vallarta for a taco dinner. Tuesday was again a day to

prep the boat and get it out of live-aboard cruiser mode and into the best (and safest) race boat mode we can get out of "Talion". That afternoon some of us headed for the local Costco to provision the boat with beer, water, and lunch food for 14. Wednesday started with the skippers meeting in the morning for race instructions, rules, questions, class divisions, boat ratings (boats are all handicapped according to their predicted possible speed) and meeting the other racers. A Portland friend Tim Morris and his girlfriend went with me. Tim and I have raced in many races on

many different boats... he is a very good racer, planner, and group organizer. He also went on the last Baja Ha-Ha (San Diego to Cabo San Lucas in October) with Morgan and me. That afternoon we took the boat out into the bay with the full crew to practice setting the sails, tacking, setting the huge spinnaker, and gybing. When you gybe it takes quite a bit of choreography. When the spinnaker is up the fastest way to sail is with it behind you on one side of your back or the other. You can only go so far with it on that one side before you need to turn to make the wind come off the other side of your back. There are 6 lines and a 20 foot aluminum pole connected to the sail and they all come into play for the turn. If it is really windy it can even be quite dangerous so Tim wanted to be sure that each person knew their role during a practice gybe situation. We got great at it and only had one little problem. When we took the spinnaker down one time we put a log tear in one corner. That evening was the opening party/ceremony complete with authentic Mexican dancer show.

The racing started Thursday at noon so I got up early and got out the sewing machine and fixed the tear in the sail (this poor sail has so many patches and sewn spots). Then it was out on the race course for a 3 hour race with 60 boats in 8 different divisions. What fun we had plus it is great exercise, competitive, and a beautiful bay of water. We finished second in our division but were very close to the first place boat. The next day the racing was on a very long course across the bay. That course is much better for our type of boat so we managed to beat our competition and come in first in our division. On the third and last day of racing it was a course very similar to the first day which was a better course for the design and rating of the other boat. "Talion" took second place in class for the regatta. Not bad for a bunch of old worn out racers, a 6 year-old, a poodle, and a boat with a washing machine and microwave. We decided that we got a first place in fun!



Sunday was spent cleaning up, turning the boat back into my home, putting back the chain, dinghy, anchors, and other modifications we had made... and getting it ready for the trip back to La Paz. Some crew flew out, others spent the day at the pool, and some were here and there and everywhere. A Portland friend Mike Horner had planned to help me get the boat back to La Paz but on Saturday he nonchalantly mentioned that he wouldn't be able to make it. Yikes! How will I get back to La Paz all by myself? Ah... once

again my sister saved the day and this time loaned me (instead of loaning her daughter Morgan) her husband Jon for the trip. Then Nadine, her boyfriend and the poodle said they would like to go too! So we were 4 and a dog for the Monday morning departure.

The trip home had days of going no place in very little wind, one day of way too much wind, a very seasick

brother-in-law, and then we finally arrived on the peninsula... but way south of where we were originally going. So we just relaxed and took our time getting back north anchoring out every night along the way. We hadn't planned on that many days at sea so I had to become quite creative with meals. No one starved but when we got to La Paz the first thing everyone wanted to do was go to a restaurant for a steak! It took one week to get back but Colin is very happy with how we treated the engine. He was over this morning just for coffee and to talk about how things went. He is scheduled for tomorrow to do his torque, tweak, and oil change thing.

So I am happy to be back in La Paz and ready for my next adventure. Everyone flies out tomorrow morning, I get a day of rest, and then the next day another Portland couple arrives. We are going on a sailing regatta to the islands just outside of La Paz for one week. This is a fund raiser for the school children of La Paz and I am the coordinator, organizer, and head honcho for the event. I have a lot of stuff to do before the Thursday morning start!

OK – need to get to my tasks before the next group shows up. Sometimes I wonder about this lifestyle I seem to have fallen into. But I love to sail and can't do it alone. Family and friends are always so grateful for the chance to go sailing in such beautiful conditions and I love having the company. So for now this seems to be my life... I'm not complaining!

Love,
Patsy



ps: Forgot the best news... after spending 10 days in the sunshine Paul and Denise have decided to look for work in San Diego again. Yippee!