

Dear Pops & Mom Sept. 1, 2011
As always I hope you two are doing well and having a great summer. I am happy to report I did not require stitches or break an important piece of electronic gear all month! This month started out with the yard sale. We only made \$250 but figure we sold over 1,000 items at 25 cents each. People just are not buying large or expensive items but it all worked out as Tim had made the decision to get rid of everything. As soon as the sale was over we loaded the rest into his two trucks and donated it to charity. The work was done and time to go rafting.



We were invited to go on a trip down the Gates of Ladore Canyon on the Green River which is a tributary to the Colorado. It is a river Dale and I did every year in March because it was Spring Break from school and because permits were always easy to get. The bad part was it was always extremely cold with snow blowing sideways and

The put in was completely different than years past as the river had shifted and we had to drive out on this huge sand bar past the boat ramp to the river.



ice on the sides of the river banks. We always had a propane heater for the tent and Dale and the boys (not too many women were interested in going on those trips) would play frisbee golf all day



The kids were on a paddle boat and very entertaining!

just to keep warm. What a difference it is to see the canyon in the warm sunshine. Green grass, hot hikes, and even some swimming.

We had a very large trip with over 20 people but the best part was that 7 of them were under 20 years old! It is great to see young people enjoying the sport. It is not something you see very often in rafting or in sailing unless the youngsters are hauled along on the trip by their parents. Two of the kids on this trip are even river guides in Colorado.



We went on hikes I never was able to in the freezing cold spring months. As an added plus it seemed there were big horn sheep around every corner.

It was a new experience for me rafting with so many people. It was hard to find any privacy for a tent site let alone my afternoon shower. On the other hand there were always new people to meet





and to enthral with my stories of life on the sailboat in Baja. Something that seems to be on almost everyone's "to do someday list". I had a great time meeting new people and seeing an old familiar canyon. After Ladore I went back to Tims to help clean up the rafting gear and pack my bag for my visit to Portland and on to California. I took one of Tims trucks to Denver so I could return the outboard motor we had borrowed to do Desolation Canyon a few months before. This time I chose to drive the short cut over Independence Pass. Yikes! I felt like I was driving the road to Machu Picchu in Peru with its narrow passages and steep cliffs off to the side.

Ah Mike...

You successfully negotiate a particularly difficult rapid and while all of your compadres are celebrating their success you get stuck on a rock right in front of them. Ha Ha Ha!

I arrived in Denver in time to spend a couple days with the Ogiers. Andrea skipped school one day (second grade!) and we spent a fabulous day at the pool. We spent lots of time working on her underwater handstands. Ah to be seven years old!



I flew to Portland where my friend (who came down for the Sea of Cortez Sailing Week last May) Cheryl McNaughton picked me up at the airport and gave me a ride to the "after the sailboat race" tavern in Portland. Yippee there had been a race that evening and I had lots of old friends to visit with. Then it was out to my sisters where

I even managed to get in a little river floating time on my air mattress.





I had a couple days to myself before heading up to the San Juans. I drove the Drakes car up to Anacortes, took the ferry to Friday Harbor, and then a shuttle/bus to Roach Harbor where their boat is.

I spent many summers with my parents in the San Juan Islands and Roach Harbor is particularly memorable so I was excited about visiting. I couldn't believe how much it has not changed. There are a few new houses but I remember everything else about the place.

It was good to visit with Morgan. Not only did she have great stories to tell about her adventures in Germany but Elliot had just returned from studying in China. He loved it there and was very full of stories.

The Drakes 32 foot sailboat was a little crowded with the 6 of us. I had a couch about 2 feet wide and slept next to their huge golden retriever "Berkley".

The next day we headed out to the other side of the island to Friday Harbor. Along the way we ran across a huge pod of killer whales (Orcas). We motored around watching them for hours. A boat came up to us and gave us some literature. He explained that it was J Pod which is a group of almost 30 whales that hang out on this side of San Juan Island. Very interesting and fun to follow and watch them. Then it was on to Friday Harbor. Another memorable place from my childhood and another place that has not aged.



The ferry ride brought back memories. When I got to Friday Harbor I had a half hour until my shuttle to Roach Harbor so I sat down outside this coffee/chocolate store. The legs on the chair immediately gave way and I fell right on my butt. After a few minutes I got up to take a picture of my plight. I guess the owner of the store saw me take the photo and brought me a big box of fancy chocolates in apology!



Once there Morgan and her German boyfriend Klaus got on the ferry to Anacortes to pick up the car I had driven up. They were headed to California, the Redwoods, and the Golden Gate Bridge. Good for me as I upgraded to a big bed instead of a skinny couch! The next day after provisioning for the trip down the coast friends Martha and Dave arrived and Sue and Elliot left to drive all the cars back to Portland. After fueling up we headed out towards the Straights of Juan de Fuca for our trip down the Washington coast to Portland. We had a good calm afternoon and were making good speed until about 4:30 when we saw a huge fog bank in the distance. Instead of heading directly to the ocean (and into the fog) we turned towards the Washington side and ran parallel to the fog. The boat does not have radar so better to be safe than sorry. We also wanted to get out of the middle of the straights and off

The paddle board was fun but I am going to stick to my dingy and motor for transportation.

to the side away from ship traffic. It worked very well as we skirted along with pretty good visibility. We were headed directly for Port Angeles and making our trip a few miles longer but much safer. The



Roach Harbor is very picturesque.

wind started to kick up out of the west making the ride on this little boat quite uncomfortable. A half hour from Port Angeles the engine died. The engine is only 2 years old and has never had a problem. John restarted it and it seemed fine. Then Dave got seasick and things were not that comfortable. We tried putting a reef in the main and it didn't seem to be trimming correctly. It was easy to come up with an unanimous decision to go

into Port Angeles. Once there we decided the problem was most likely a fuel filter issue and only had one spare on board so the next morning we set out to find more. Unfortunately we could only find one in the whole town. We took off that afternoon and the engine died again 2 hours out. We restarted and in a half an hour it again died. It was rough out there, people were not feeling well, and I wasn't looking forward to changing the filter in those seas. So once again it was an immediate unanimous vote to return to Port Angeles.



Brother and sister together!



We decided we could not go with only one filter and the only place they were available was Seattle. It was too late in the day to make it to Seattle that night so we got up early and were at the rental car agency before it opened. A 2 hour drive through Puget Sound, across a ferry, down I-5 and we were at Fisheries Marine in Seattle picking up 8 fuel filters. It was 1 pm before we got back and at this point our

provisions were too low to head out so some went shopping, some returned the car, some got the boat ready and we were at the fuel dock by 3 to top off the tank and fill with water. That night we headed out and it was calm. No wind, no waves and no swell. A perfect evening. As the night went on the wind picked up and by the time we got to the ocean it was very choppy and uncomfortable. It is such a different ride on this little boat than on Talion. I am glad I don't get seasick because this would have been the time! Dave had finally settled on some medication that kept his seasickness down, Martha



seemed OK, but Jon was very sick that night. To make matters worse the autopilot would not steer a straight course. We had to hand steer the entire trip. A very tiring job. Luckily Martha and Dave took that task over and did most of the steering all night YAY!

The next day the ocean was still not that smooth so it was spent napping, driving, snacking, and just basically existing. We were going a lot faster than we expected. The boat usually motors at about 6 knots and I calculated that we



The boat will be great on the Columbia River but is not really set up for ocean voyages.

would arrive at the Columbia River Bar the next morning. Well that was not true at all. With the wind behind us and 2 knots of current going our direction we were going closer to 8 knots. The Columbia River Bar can be very dangerous and the best time to cross it is just after the ebb tide. There were two ebb tides that day one ending at 10 am and the other ending at 10 pm.

My little bunk on the back side of the table and all my mess!

I wanted to do a 10 am crossing in the daylight but with our speed it was going to be 10 pm. In addition to the darkness the Coast Guard was broadcasting that the bar was closed because of rough conditions. After the ebb I expected the Coast Guard to change their broadcast but they didn't. They continued to say that the bar was closed to vessels smaller than 42 feet. I checked the weather and they had removed the high seas



MY FORECAST

Oregon

COLUMBIA RIVER BAR-

238 PM PDT TUE AUG 30 2011

SMALL CRAFT ADVISORY FOR ROUGH COLUMBIA RIVER BAR IN EFFECT UNTIL 8 PM PDT THIS EVENING SMALL CRAFT ADVISORY FOR ROUGH COLUMBIA RIVER BAR IN EFFECT FROM LATE TONIGHT THROUGH WEDNESDAY MORNING

▶ **IN THE MAIN CHANNEL COMBINED SEAS BUILDING TO 9 FT BY WED MORNING. HOWEVER...SEAS BUILD TO NEAR 10 FT WITH BREAKERS LIKELY DURING THE STRONG EBB AROUND 630 PM THIS EVENING...AND TO 8 FT WITH BREAKERS LIKELY DURING THE STRONG EBB AROUND 645 AM WED MORNING.**

and breakers warning and reported 4-6 foot seas on the bar. I called the Coast Guard on the phone and talked to the Commander. He said that their new policy was to broadcast the last visible conditions until the morning light when they can see the conditions again. Well that is just dumb! We went ahead with extreme caution as we were still not certain it would be doable. As it turned out the bar was quite smooth and our biggest hurdle was making out all of the lights from land, navigational buoys, and other boats and ships. The current was coming into the river very fast and we were once again seeing speeds of around 8 knots. So we made the decision not to stop in Astoria for fuel but to go on about 25 miles up river to a little town on the Washington side called Cathlamet. Again we were having a challenge keeping the buoys and ships

I could bring up the bar prediction on my iphone. Wish I could get this kind of information in Mexico.

straight but we eventually pulled into Cathlamet at 4:30 am. After a few hours sleep the fuel dock opened at 9 and we filled up. We motored out and were in 2 knots of current against us. We had over 60 miles to go and 4



Finally Portland was in our sight!

knots of boat speed is just too slow so we spent the day driving to the sides of the river to get out of the adverse current. We arrived at Portland Yacht Club at 8:30 pm. I am staying at my sisters for a week, Denise will be here with Andrea tomorrow. Should be a great family get together! After the Portland visit I will be at your place for another reunion. Family stuff is the best! See you soon. Love,

Patsy