

Hi Mom & Pops,

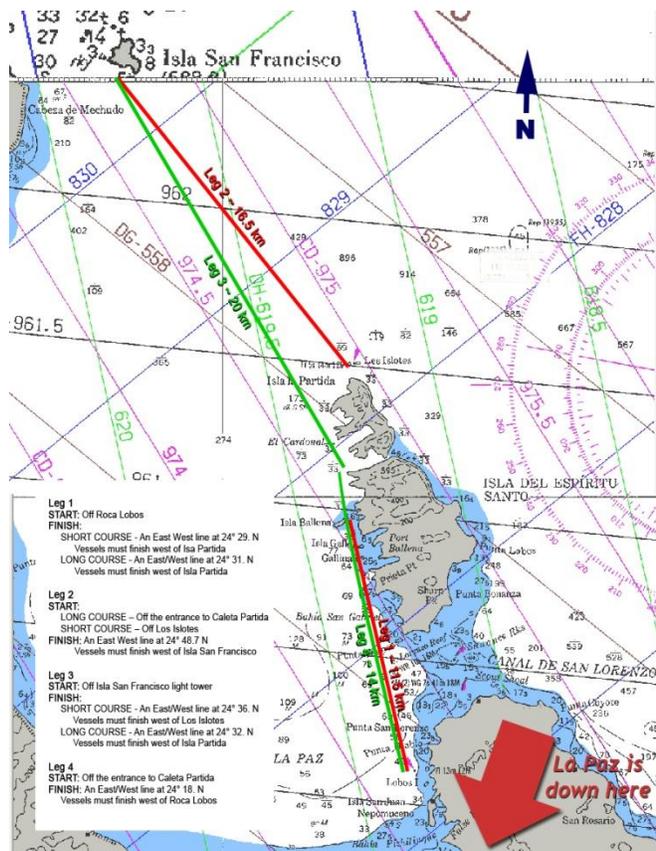
May 5, 2010

I am writing you from a very quiet cove on an island just off Bahia Escondido south of Loreto. How did I get here you may say... well here is the story.



Sea of Cortez Sailing Week is a fundraising event held the first week in April every year and I am the organizer. This means I need to communicate with everyone, get t-shirts (how do you like the logo? I designed it!), order trophies, reserve facility for pre and post functions, choose the courses, print sailing instructions, coordinate with the charity, and anything else I can think of. Cheryl and Mike McNaughton flew in from Portland to crew with me. The start was the next morning so we had to get groceries in a hurry. We would be gone for a week without stores or restaurants so food planning is important. Mike and Cheryl have done lots of racing on the

Columbia River and we have done many ocean races together from Astoria up to Canada and another race that goes from Victoria out to the ocean and back. It was good to have them on the boat because all I have to do is drive while they set the sails and do all of the deck work. This week is not a race but just about sailing. We sailed out to the islands, played volleyball in the sand, and had a pot luck dinner on the beach. The next morning we sailed another 20 miles up to an island called Isla San Francisco. It is a beautiful little island with a great hike up to a spectacular view, a beach where you can find agates, a salt flat where holes have been dug and you can get the dried to sea salt, and a spectacular bay that is very well protected from the wind. That evening we all climbed aboard my friends Richard and Donnas' huge catamaran and went on a sunset cruise around the island. Dolphins escorted us for part of the way... fabulous. The next morning it was time to sail back to our first stop and have a last gathering on the beach for a pot luck dinner. The final day was a beautiful sail back into La Paz. Unfortunately the engine stopped on the way down the channel. Bummer... it had been working so well! Mike and Cheryl sailed while I got my head into the engine room. Seems to be not getting fuel... change fuel filter... add fuel... bleed engine... it started (YAY Patsy - High Fives) for a minute or two and then died again... bumper. So we



anchored just off the marina and called Colin. He decided it had to be the fuel lift pump since it was the only thing we didn't rebuild or replace. The next morning the marina boys came out with tow boats and moved Talion to the dock. Colin came down and confirmed his diagnosis. Unfortunately the mechanical lift pump cannot be fixed so he installed an electric fuel pump and had me get a spare just in case it breaks down.

On the Sea of Cortez Sailing Week we managed to collect over \$2,000 for charity through t-shirt sales and donations from the sailors. My friend Elizabeth and I wanted to see what the donations went to so we went to the Colonias Marquez de Leon neighborhood on the outskirts of La Paz which is one of the poorer neighborhoods in La Paz.



*Mary is looking at the produce donated by a local grocery store. The produce is divided between the families in the community.*



*The kids first meet in the church. It's a Catholic church but kids of any religion may receive breakfast.*

The area only recently received power, has no running water or sewer, and many of the houses are only one room and built from cardboard or tarpaper. Today, Mary Shroyer of Marina de La Paz, Elizabeth and I were bringing groceries and helping to serve breakfast to 35 children.



*Next the kids must stand in line to wash their hands. Yours truly couldn't resist... after soaping the gal pours a cup of warm water over your hands for the rinse.*

*After their hands are clean they sit down and are served beans, tortillas, eggs & ham with a traditional drink of warm runny milky sweet oatmeal stuff eeeeww*



The government pays for the school for all kids until 6<sup>th</sup> grade but without food in their stomachs the children do not do very well in their studies. These families have little or no money for food. The Fundación Ayuda Niños (Foundation Helping Children) feeds breakfast to almost 100 and lunch to as many as 150 children in this and other poor La Paz neighborhoods. For many this is their only meal of the day. After 6<sup>th</sup> grade it is up to the families to pay for the children's schooling. That is out of the question for these people so the foundation steps in and helps as many kids as they can with scholarships to pay for school, clothing, supplies, and even bus fare to get to and from school. This is a great group of gringos and locals working together for the community. I was impressed and the kids are soooo cute ☺

*They take their plates to be washed and then return to the dining room where they get their choice of fruits and pastries which they take to school with them.*

It was a great experience and I am proud to be a part of this group and proud to be contributing something to the community.



So now it is only one week into April and I have already had a busy month. Next on the agenda is the La Paz Bay Fest. This is an annual event put on by the local cruisers yacht club and includes competitions for volleyball, bocci ball, dominos, bridge, and classes on anything from jewelry making to fishing lure



tying. My friend Shelly and I volunteered to conduct man-overboard training classes on Talion. Shelly was a sailing instructor for many years in San Diego and Talion is the perfect platform because (unlike most cruising boats) there is very little stored on the deck leaving lots of space for people. On Friday we did morning and afternoon sessions and took over 60 people out. Shelly taught everyone how to rescue someone at sea and how to rig the necessary tackle to get the person back into the boat. Shelly is a great instructor and makes it fun.

The Sunday of Bay Fest is a sailboat race from outside La Paz down the channel with the finish just off the restaurant that is the center of the Bay Fest activities. Yep Patsy cannot resist a sailboat race so I invited about 10 people to crew and headed out. We had a great time and crossed the line second but with our handicap got the first place trophy in the Spinnaker class.



There are a lot of people from the US living in La Paz and most of them live in condos, motor homes, and houses. These people are quite active in the Yacht Club which makes the clubs activities lean towards land based events such as functions at local restaurants, bridge games, dominos, etc. A new group has started a sailboat racing club and by this time they have had 4 or 5 races around La Paz. Talion has not joined them for one. With the engine out, then the Banderas Bay Regatta in Puerto Vallarta, and the Sailing Week there was no time. On April 15 they are sponsoring is a 4 day regatta out of La Paz, up to the islands, and back again. Yikes... I really feel like I need a break but this will be the only opportunity I have to show my support for the group. I found three people to join me and it was back out on the water again. They divided the race into two events – one up to Isla San Francisco and one back – we got second on the way up and first on the way back. The couple I had on board were great crew. After going on the Bay Fest race with us on Sunday they decided they needed to learn more about sailing so they were my students. The bad thing was she is a really good cook and I think I gained 10 lbs!

OK now it is April 19 and I need to work! I spent the next 5 days working on websites and publications, catching up on emails, cleaned out the van, cleaned the boat, all while living on the mooring buoy. Living on the mooring is a little difficult right now because Colin still needs to work on and install the generator. So to charge the batteries I can only use the solar panels. The refrigerator runs on AC power and uses 40 amps per hour. The solar panels don't make enough power to run the fridge all day so it gets pretty warm in there. It has always been in Talion's master plan to add a 12 volt refrigeration system which would only use 14 amps per hour. Big difference! But for now I need that generator to make AC power so until Colin can get it done I need to buy ice and live with it. I can run the fridge when the engine is running so that helps but I promised Colin I would not idle the engine to charge the batteries. Apparently that is very bad for the engine. Enough on that... jeez this letter is a long one!



*Lori, Patsy, Marv and Ardy*

We stopped at an island called Coyote which is a tiny little island with houses on it. It is inhabited mostly by fishermen and their wives who sell handmade jewelry and fish tacos to boats that stop.

*Talking to people who live on the island of Isla Coyote*

Once a year my girlfriend Alison comes down for a visit. This year she arrived April 24 with her sister-in-law Lori. The three of us took the boat up to Puerto Escondido just south of Loreto for the Loreto Fest and so I could leave the boat there for June and July. The trip up is 120 miles and we took it slow and stopped in 3 places along the way. We traveled with another boat "Odyssey" owed by Portland friends Marv and Ardy Dunn.



At the island of Los Islotes I motored around while Alison and Lori jumped into the water and snorkeled with the sea lions. We also anchored off a town called Nopolo which can only be reached by boat. Ardy speaks perfect Spanish and spent quite a bit of time that afternoon talking to the locals. That night we had a great dinner on Talion of marlin the fishermen had given her.



*Marv & Ardy hooked their anchor on a huge submerged log. It took over an hour to finally get it off. We could not be much help from Talion but that didn't stop us from shouting constant suggestions. Finally a fisherman came out in his boat and got it off.*

Loreto Fest is a lot like Bay Fest with the classes and competitions... but no sailboat race. It gets so hot down here in the summer months most cruisers leave their boats and head home until October or November. So it is good to see everyone for a final time.

*Girl's day in Loreto... Patsy, Lori, Ardy, Alison*



*Patsy and Alison learning to juggle. We can only juggle with two balls but we are learning!*



After the event the girls and I took the boat across to a very remote island where they have been snorkeling, we hiked, and we have played many games of hearts. Today we go back to Puerto Escondido and tomorrow they fly home.

My future plans are to empty everything out of the van (mobile storage unit) and put it into the boat, leave the boat on a mooring in Puerto Escondido (\$300 per month vs. the \$700 per month marina in La Paz) drive up to Arizona and raft the Grand Canyon (yep... you heard that right), drive to Portland to work and play for July, drive back to get the boat, take the boat and the van to La Paz in August, get Colin to install the generator, take the boat up to San Diego, hang out in California September and October, come back down to La Paz at the end of October... with a few visits with Mom & Pops in there someplace!

Wow this is the longest letter ever! Hope you guys are doing well.

Patsy