

The next 8 weeks

Sunday, December 10, 2000 – February 12, 2001

Puerto Vallarta

Jessica has been busy scouting out our location – where to go swimming (it's 90 degrees and about 70% humidity), where to have school (mechanics are wandering on and off the boat at all hours so class in the salon is impossible), where to do laundry (have someone else do it for \$3 a load), where to shop (two well stocked supermarkets close by) etc. Life is sometimes about limited success. The water in the marina pool was about 70 degrees and our kids stuck their toes in, looked at us like we were nuts and announced that they, being members of the 84 degree heated pool club, would not be swimming. Classes are conducted at the tables around the marina pool for the first week, then the second week, then the third week...while Tony Teapot works on the engine and Greg works on the generator. Tony Teapot fixed the engine and it seems fine, but the generator is another story. Greg is the distributor for Northern Lights, manufacturer of the generator, so he ostensibly knows how to fix it but his initial advice upon hearing about our fuel debacle and taking a look and listen was "why don't you just buy a new generator"? We uncomfortably laughed at his suggestion but it turns out we should have taken his advice.

Greg wore these filthy big black running shoes that sat on the dock announcing his presence aboard. As three weeks became four and four became five with a generator that still wasn't right, we talked about taking a picture of those shoes sitting on our dock to put in our scrapbook. Those shoes unfortunately came to sum up our stay in Puerto Vallarta and we never did take the picture because we came to hate those shoes. Every afternoon we'd walk back from school and the pool and the beach and pray that those shoes would be gone and the generator repaired. One day Cole shared this with Greg, saying "Greg, we don't want to see your big dirty black shoes on our dock anymore!" The next afternoon when we returned from our forced absence there were no big black dirty shoes on the dock. We were greeted instead by a pair of spiffy brand-new size 10 Nikes. Greg had apparently heard what Cole was saying, but not really, and bought new shoes. A very definitely mixed message I guess.

After eight weeks – yes you heard that right – EIGHT WEEKS ! - of tearing apart, rebuilding, tearing apart, and rebuilding yet again Sean had had it. I, of course had "had it" weeks

before and packed up the kids and Jessica and escaped to Colorado for a few weeks of skiing. It wasn't quite as bratty as it sounds. Sean wanted us off the boat so that work could continue without putting all the tools, the parts and everything else away every day and I simply obliged. It was the middle of the tourist season in PV and I didn't see the point of spending a fortune staying in a beach resort for 2 weeks when we had spent the past two months at the beach so I headed to CdM, worked at the QW for a week or so, packed up our ski gear, headed back to PV, collected the kids and departed for Copper Mountain. For the few days in between we got a lot of weird looks from people strolling the docks in bathing suits when they looked at the foredeck of our boat which was stacked with skies, snowboards and snow gear.

Sean finally gave up on Greg, called his friend Doug, the sales mgr at Northern Lights, related our sad story and Northern Lights sold us a new generator at cost and flew a mechanic down from Seattle to install it. What had taken eight weeks to not fix was fixed in one short week. We had arrived in Puerto Vallarta for a two-week stay and departed sixty-four days later at 2:15 pm on Monday, February 12. Who's counting ?

I realize no one is getting out the violin to play a sad commiserating song for us. We weren't stuck in a terrible place, everyone was well, we had the money to fix what was wrong, but we were desperate to start our adventure and were frustrated that we couldn't. In retrospect Puerto Vallarta was a lesson. Throw the schedule overboard. We'll get there when we get there. Resist defining this new life with the parameters of the old one. What you expect might not be what you're going to get. Stop defining the adventure and allow it to define you. Embrace the experience. That's the key. Embrace the experience or you're destined to resent it. You'll resent it because you'll miss it. It's what's happening while you are concentrating on making it be what you want it to be or what you think it should be or lamenting what it isn't. The whole cruising experience mostly exceeds what you imagined in ways hard to describe, but not always. Learn to live in a "Be Here Now" Timothy Leary moment, without the LSD of course.

Embrace the experience. Sounds like a commercial.