

CHANGES

ampo, Mazatlan, and finally La Cruz for a few weeks. La Cruz was one of our favorite stops as it has such a welcoming cruiser community.



Among the cruising pals Stacey and Eli (in white) made this season are Donnie from 'September Song' (left) and 'Bow Tied' guys Will, Dan and (kneeling) Kim.

After New Year's, it was time to head back to Cabo to prepare for the Bash back to Oakland. Only we got "bashed" before we even got going. On the three-day passage from La Cruz, *Shastin* flew so fast that she blew apart her port-side spreader. Fortunately, the welder at the boatyard in Cabo was able to repair the spreader for us.

Our time spent in Cabo was longer than we'd anticipated as we waited and waited on a weather window to open so we could start our Bash back north.

"It's amazing how many friends manage to dinghy over to say hi after you've just pulled a pie, quiche or flan of the oven," says Stacey.



While waiting for the storms to pass, I was thrown into a different turbulent situation when my father unexpectedly fell ill. Between the weather and my father's untimely passing, our only option was to take *Shastin* to La Paz and leave her on the hard to wait out hurricane season. As difficult as it was to leave our whole life in Mexico for nine months, the positive is that we now have an excuse to return to and continue our cruising adventure — even if it is only the Bash back north to Oakland. Until October!

Among our most rewarding experiences in cruising were the friends we made along the way. Some we met through the Ha-Ha and others were familiar faces that we kept bumping into along the way and quickly befriended. Swapping sailing stories and sharing swims at the beach, dinners, beers, boat advice and laughter were regularly enjoyed with the cruising friends we met — and that includes locals. One, Pancho, took hours out of his day to drive us around Bucerias and PV in search of boat parts, simply because "that's what friends do." Our cruising experience was so enriched from the amazing people we got to share it with.

Having a culinary background (*Stacey earned a culinary degree in Denver 15 years ago — Ed.*), another enjoyable part of cruising for me was cooking on the water. Every day of meal planning became the ultimate chef's challenge. What will we catch while underway? What local ingredients will we find in the *mercados* when provisioning? What won't we find but desperately miss from the States? Nothing stopped me from cooking the full spread of Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners, all from scratch, with daily meals in between. It's amazing how many friends manage to dinghy over to "say hi" after you

have just pulled a pie, quiche or flan out of the oven! Needless to say, we hosted several dinner parties. *Shastin* was quickly and affectionately nicknamed the "Busting Seams Barco" because anyone who crewed on our boat gained weight from all of our good eating. There was no plate left unfinished on our cruise!

— Stacey 7/8/19



Reality Check — Island Packet 420 Chris and Janet Michaelson The Trauma of the TIP Seattle

Readers — If you're headed to Mexico this fall, getting a Temporary Import Permit might take longer than you thought. Follow Janet and Chris as they navigate the process . . .

We bought our 2002 Island Packet 420 *Reality Check* in San Diego in 2012 and had it trucked to our home port in Seattle, from which we sailed in Washington and British Columbia waters for the next six years. We knew that the boat's previous owners had sailed it to Mexico for extended stays at least three times. And in our preparations for sailing it back to San Diego last summer to join the 2018 Baja Ha-Ha, we knew we needed a TIP — a Temporary Import Permit — to take the boat back into Mexico. We had read that the procedures for getting one were fairly straightforward and could be done upon arrival in Cabo San Lucas. We missed the small print that mentioned it would be more complicated if your boat had previ-



Eli and Stacey on Christmas Day in La Cruz. They later hosted dinner for six.

ously been to Mexico.

The significance of the latter point hadn't really registered with us until a casual conversation in a bar with a former Island Packet dealer after we arrived in San Diego. When we mentioned the TIP, and that our boat had been to Mexico before, he laughingly warned us we were "hosed!" At which point we realized we really didn't know how to proceed.

We found out that you could not do the necessary paperwork on arrival in Cabo San Lucas because there is no Banjercito there — the official Mexican government bank that you need for this situation. After many frantic Google searches, phone calls, missteps and dead ends over the next several days, a plan slowly evolved.

First, we learned that no TIP could be issued if there was still an old one in existence. And the old one exists until it is *canceled*. It doesn't matter if the previous one is past the 10-year expiration date. It still has to be canceled. And for it to be canceled, you have to present the original of the old one, or provide documentation

from the previous TIP holder that it has been lost.

Here is the (not terribly) short version of the documents that we collected:

1. Fortunately, we had contact information for the previous owners, who were on the East Coast. They sent us a "statement under oath" that they had discarded their old TIP, which had technically expired in 2017, when they sold their house and moved that year.

2. All of the usual documents: bill of sale, vessel documentation (including documentation on your dinghy), insurance documents, etc. You also need your engine ID number and the number on your dinghy and its outboard.

3. A "Form 1300" from the Customs Office (USCBP) in San Diego. This is the document the Mexican government accepts as "proof" that the boat left Mexico.

(In trying to cover all our bases, we also gathered invoices for six years of paid moorage at a marina in Seattle, although those weren't needed.)

Form 1300 is designed for commercial vessels leaving US ports. For some reason, it has been adopted by the Mexican

government to document that a boat is in US waters at this time — meaning that it left Mexico. Fortunately, the form is simple to complete.

The next problem is where to take all this to apply for the TIP. You have to go to a Mexican consulate. And there isn't one in San Diego. Or to a Mexican port of entry, which Cabo is not. We were actually looking at taking the boat to Ensenada and applying there because we found out about a friendly English-speaking port captain, Fito Espinosa at Marina Coral, whom we had contacted and who was prepared to walk us through the process. The idea was we would then return to San Diego to leave again with the Ha-Ha, except there were hurricanes swirling around at the time and we were afraid that even if we got there, we weren't sure the weather would allow us to get back.

While we were still grappling with this issue, we received an email from the Baja Ha-Ha notifying everyone that Mexican officials would be at the Mexican consulate in Sacramento for a special two-day "event" to assist people who had boats with old TIPS. Hallelujah!

That was the good news. The bad news was that it required a round-trip plane ticket from San Diego to Sacramento and a night in a hotel. But Mexican officials were indeed there, and they met with each boat owner there to assist with canceling the old TIP.

Chris and the new TIP. Finally getting one of these things is only slightly less gratifying than finding the Ark of the Covenant.



REALITY CHECK

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But there was a catch. After your old TIP is canceled, you need to apply for a new TIP. And you need an appointment to

time to work through all of this. But I don't know if the Mexican government schedules these special events every year.



REALITY CHECK

'Reality Check' did get TIPed in time for the Ha-Ha. The boat is currently in La Paz while Janet and Chris split their time between Oaxaca and Seattle. They'll be back in October for more Mexico cruising.

do that. You have to apply for an appointment online. And the computer won't give you an appointment for the same day. Even though the people issuing the new TIPs were right there in the same room with you, available, at that very moment. So, reschedule the return flight. Check back into the hotel. Return the next day. Get the TIP.

We were lucky in the sense that we were in San Diego for six weeks and had

If that hadn't happened (we were well into the process when we learned about it) we might still be in San Diego.

One more tip about the TIP: What if you don't know if your boat has been to Mexico before? One way you can find out is to try to apply for a TIP online. If there was an old one, it will say so when you put in your Coast Guard documentation number. At that point it won't let you proceed any further — and you can start your own version of this journey. (Note: If there was no previous TIP, don't proceed with the online application. Better to do it in person. *Buena suerte!*

— Janet 7/2/19

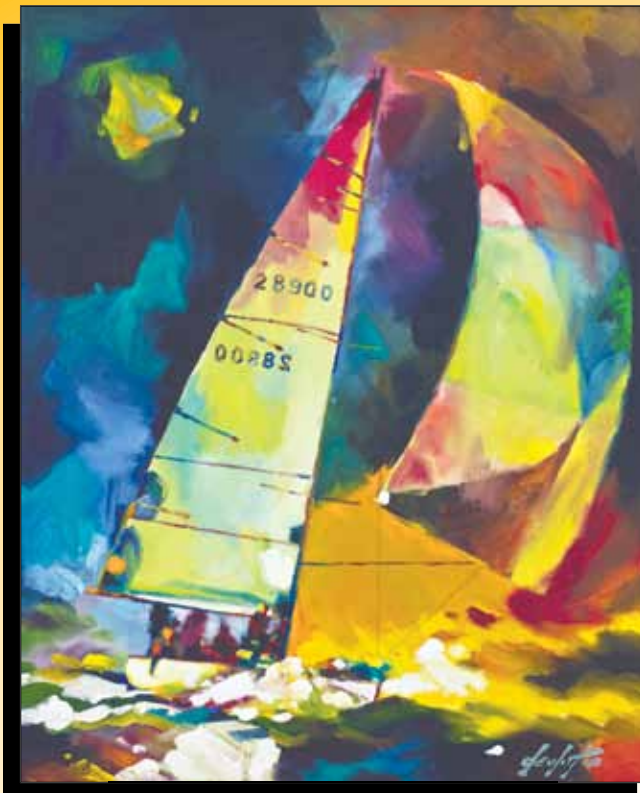
PS — When we got the Form 1300 at

the USCBP office, we were told we needed to return it if we did not leave port within three days, which we had no plans to do. But when we dutifully went back to the USCBP office to return it, the (un)friendly official took it from us without a word, and without even looking at it — threw it straight in the trash! Grrrrrrr. By the way, you don't need this form when you actually do leave.

Cruise Notes

• 2018 Baja Ha-Ha crew aboard the San Francisco-based Catalina 38 **Thira** were owners Ray and Debbie Torok and their adult kids, Garrett and Dana. The latter had to fly home from Cabo, leaving Ray and Debbie "empty boat nesters" from then on. They quickly fell into the rhythms of the Sea, making their way to La Paz via Los Frailes and Los Muertos, and making friends with other Ha-Ha boats. The end of November found them back in Cabo awaiting a weather window for the Bash home. And that's where their story took an unusual twist.

Due to using modern weather apps — the Toroks really like *Windy* — their



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