



Passages

s/y Nine of Cups

A Holiday Newsletter from Sea

Volume 10
Kiwi Holiday 2010 Edition



Letter from the crew....

We left Opuia and the Bay of Islands just after New Year's Day 2010 for more exploration of New Zealand's North Island. We had visits from our friends the Grimms as well as an old friend from our days in Wisconsin.

We managed some time on the northern part of the South Island, but as usual, we ran out of time and instead of heading further South, we coast-hopped back up the North Island's east coast to ready Cups for our departure to the western South Pacific thus completing a circumnavigation of the North Island. When it came time to leave for Fiji in May, we received word that David's Mom had been hospitalized and we were needed back in the USA to help out a bit. We secured a mooring for Cups and left within a few days.



David, Marcie & friend, Peter Glocker,
Kahurangi, South Island, NZ

Though we missed the SoPac cruising season we had planned, we had a unique opportunity to spend time with David's mom, Becky, and sister, Mary in Las Vegas. Once Becky recovered, we did a cross-country land "voyage" back and forth across the US visiting friends and relatives along the way and discovering America again...what a surprise! The time flew by.

So here we are back in New Zealand for our second summer season. All is well as we finish up our 11th year living aboard. As always, our wish to family and friends in 2011 is health, wealth, love and the time to enjoy them all. We really love hearing from you, so please keep in touch.

Highlights of 2010:

- ★ *Circumnavigation of NZ's North Island*
- ★ *Cross- Country USA*
- ★ *US National Parks...absolutely addictive*
- ★ *Birds, Butterflies and Wildflowers*
- ★ *Visitors in Kiwiland*
- ★ *A Season for Sisters*

Detailed stories follow

Cross Country USA...Not Once, but Twice!

In addition to seeing family and friends during Summer 2010, the highlight of our trip was the opportunity to travel cross country in the USA. We bought a car on Craig's List...what a treat to have wheels after so long...and off we went.

From our base station in Las Vegas, we headed to Denver via Utah's fabulous national parks. From Denver, we headed east on I80 through the plains states with lots of stops along the way ending up near Boston, Massachusetts where we reunited with Marcie's family. We detoured south a bit to Maryland to visit friends, John Santic and the Grimms, then I70 west back to Denver. A detour south through New Mexico provided a chance to see niece, Gentry, and family and finally back through Arizona to Las Vegas where we sold the car...again on Craig's List and didn't lose any money on the deal!

In all, we traveled about 11,000 miles which included a roundtrip to Marysville, CA with Becky earlier in June. The chance to rediscover America was absolutely wonderful and reinforced for us the enormity, diversity and beauty of our United States! Our website has loads of photos from each place we stopped. Check it out.

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Circumnavigating NZ's North Island

The plan was to circumnavigate the entire country...that would include the South Island as well as the North Island, but alas, we didn't manage it. "Why", you ask? We got a taste of Abel Tasman Park and the Marlborough Sounds on the northern tip of the South Island and just couldn't leave the area without more exploration. Before you know it, the summer was gone and we needed to get moving north. We did, however, manage some "tramping" (that's hiking in Kiwi-speak) and some land trips by car on the South Island which has convinced us to return this year, if at all possible.

From tiny Opua in the Bay of Islands, we headed north around Cape Reinga and then weather forced a fortuitous stopover in New Plymouth, one of the west coast's few harbors. We stayed longer than necessary after meeting some very friendly Kiwis and finding lots to see and do in the town. From New Plymouth due south across the infamous Cook Strait (which lived up to its reputation) and on to lovely Nelson on Tasman Bay at the tip of the South Island. We couldn't resist the Abel Tasman National Park nor the lure of the Marlborough Sounds, which we found very comparable to the Patagonian canals.

East to Picton, where Cups waited patiently while we took a land trip to Christchurch to get our chain and anchor re-galvanized and to Mt. Cook National Park. Back aboard, we crossed the Cook Strait again to NZ's capital city of Wellington which we absolutely loved despite it being the windiest place we've ever visited (with the possible exception of Cape Town). Time was marching on and we headed north to Napier and Gisborne, around East Cape and the Bay of Plenty and back to the Bay of Islands. About 1,800 nm traveled and a terrific adventure ...what a way to see New Zealand. The plan is to return to the South Island in summer 2011 (that's Jan/Feb/Mar here) to see all we missed the first time around.

Wellington...Well Above Expectation

New Zealand's capital city, Wellington, was a pleasant surprise for us. We stayed downtown at Chaffer's Marina which was so centrally located, we were a 10-minute walk from just about everything. The highlight of the city... Te Papa, the country's premiere museum. We visited three separate times and left each time with our minds boggled over what we had seen. We visited Sunday's fresh market and came home laden with produce; did self-guided walks through historic districts, toured the Botanical Garden and rode the cable car up to an overlook of the city. The most memorable thing, however, was the wind...it never stopped howling.



Our route around NZ's North Island

Tramping...a whole new meaning

"Tramping on the tracks"...a woman of ill repute at the railway station? a hobo hitching a train ride? Neither. That's Kiwi for hiking on the trails. New Zealand is rich in well-maintained trails and we made use of as many as possible. There are several very well known tracks such as the Queen Charlotte Track, part of which we tramped. However, each little island seemed to have its own well-marked trails from one side to the other, offering breathtaking views, great exercise and great beachcombing.



A typical track on Urupukapuka Island, Bay of Islands

Visitors Hit the Toilets



Grimms visit the Kawakawa Toilets...no inside shots allowed

We were fortunate enough to have visitors aboard *Nine of Cups* this past year. As we get farther away from the US, it's more of a commitment for folks to visit. Our old friends, Fay and Doug Grimm, made it from Maryland and stayed with us 10 days in early February in the Bay of Islands. We cruised between islands and saw some of the sights and generally just enjoyed each others' company. Then at the beginning of March, Peter Glocker, an old friend from Wisconsin, joined us on the South Island while en route from Indonesia to Australia on a business trip...that's on the way, isn't it?

A visit to the local area is incomplete without a stop in the little town of Kawakawa where the rather unusual Hundertwasser toilets are a tourist attraction.

Birds, Butterflies and Wildflowers



New Zealand Sacred Kingfisher in a coral tree

Birdwatching is great in New Zealand. As we traveled throughout the country, we had the opportunity to view lots of birds we'd never seen before. Many escaped the camera, but we got a few stellar shots like the kingfisher above. The kiwi is still eluding us though. We photographed innumerable flowers here in NZ as well as in the US and then added butterflies to our list. Check out the website www.nineofcups.com for lots of cool photos.

Boat Chores Reduce Crew Boredom

Leaving *Cups* on her own on a mooring for the winter season left her a bit sullen and definitely in need of some major repairs. The biggest tasks on the ever-present "to-do" list was pulling the mast for painting and rewiring. Work on the foredeck will end up being a much bigger chore than intended...but isn't that always the way? Hauling for the annual bottom job must be added to the list so all in all...very time-consuming. Hopefully all will be complete and *Cups* will be ready for a South Island trip in early January. Then... points north and west next May through November... like Fiji and who knows where else? Boredom on a boat...NEVER!



Hauling the mast at Ashby's Boatyard in Opuia, NZ

Southern Hospitality...Kiwi Style

We met Claire, Pat and family aboard *Manaroa III* back in Puerto Montt, Chile and saw them throughout our South Pacific passage. Whoever thought we'd end up visiting them in their home in Nelson? But we did and enjoyed everything from use of their berth and their car, to dinners at their home and fresh veggies from their garden. Throughout our travels in New Zealand, we were warmly welcomed, invited to dinners, offered fish, shellfish and fresh produce, rides and use of cars. Kiwi hospitality is the real thing.

Toting up the Miles

With the cruising season spent in the US, we didn't add many miles under *Cups'* keel this year.

Total Nautical Miles Sailed 2010: 1,815

Total Nautical Miles since 2000: 61,151



New Zealand...No Place to Play Possum



A typical NZ advertisement for possum pelts.

Different than the opossum of the US, these furry critters are considered major pests here in New Zealand, causing significant defoliation of trees. We visited Possum World in Napier to get the full story (definitely not from the possum's point of view) where Marcie succumbed to a new pair of possum fur gloves, but yarn, socks and scarves were also available.

Kiwiana

Remember that Buzzy Bee pull-toy from decades ago. Originally created in New Zealand, it has become an icon of Kiwiana. Akin to Americana, where Route 66, apple pie and baseball are considered sacred, Kiwiana includes those things which are distinctly New Zealand like gumboots, Hokey Pokey flavor ice cream, paua shells and jandals (we call them flip-flops).



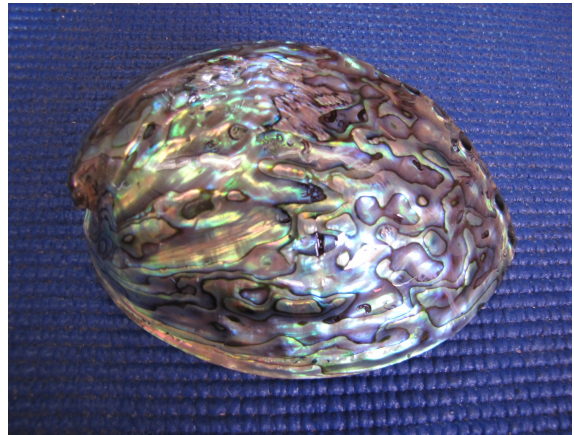
NZ's famous Buzzy Bee...real Kiwana

Captain Cook Slept Here

Whenever we read about Captain Cook's adventures and explorations...especially in the South Pacific, we're thrilled when we have the chance to anchor in the places that he did. Here in New Zealand one of his favorite spots is called Ship's Cove. When we explored the area as his crew must have done, we marveled at the fact that we were there sharing the very same space he had centuries ago.

Paua Power

Each place we visit has its own "collectibles". French Polynesia had its black pearls and Cartagena had its emerald. New Zealand has two very distinct items... paua and greenstone. Paua, a specific type of abalone found here in New Zealand, is considered quite a delicacy. The paua shell is a beautiful iridescent blue-green and used for making jewelry and decorations. Nephrite jade called "greenstone", has been collected at the southern end of South Island for centuries by the Maori and carved into traditional, meaningful designs. Maori tradition states that greenstone is never purchased for oneself...it's always given as a gift to protect the wearer.



Paua Shell

A Kiwi Christmas

This will be our second Christmas holiday season spent in New Zealand and it's markedly different from Christmas in the US. First of all, it's a summer celebration. It's warm and sunny and as such, a BBQ on the beach is the usual way to spend it with the family. There are no huge displays of Christmas decorations in the stores and gift-giving is certainly not as lavish here. A sure sign of the holiday season is the pohutakawa tree known fondly as the New Zealand Christmas tree which blooms profusely in December.



New Zealand Christmas tree (pohutakawa) in bloom

Crew Can't Overcome Addiction

David turned 62 this past summer while we were crossing the USA. We stopped at Homestead National Monument in Beatrice, Nebraska on his birthday where he purchased, for a mere \$10US, a National Parks Gold Pass entitling him (and his younger wife) free entry into all US National Parks for the rest of our lives! How great is that? We took advantage by stopping at every National Park, Monument and historic site we came across. We admit it...we were and are addicted! We were so impressed by how well the system works and just how wonderful the National Parks are. There are 392 sites covered by NPS and eventually we plan to see them all.



Wagons Ho! at Nebraska's Homestead Monument

New Mexico Snake Charmer

When we took off for the day with niece, Gentry and her husband, Eric, to hike around at Petroglyph National Monument in Albuquerque, New Mexico, I kiddingly said to Eric, "I hope we see a snake so I can photograph it." I had seen several "Watch out for Rattlesnake" signs as we walked along the trail and wasn't really sure I'd like a close-up view of a rattler after all. Eric, however, took me at my word and delivered a 5-foot-long bull snake about five minutes later. No rattles...we were safe and Eric had no qualms slowing down the snake so I got my shot...from a distance.



A Season for Sisters

One incentive for Becky's recovery from her hip replacement surgery was the chance to visit her "big sister" in Marysville, CA once her doctor approved. At 93, you might wonder just how old is her "big sister"? Well, Aunt Edna turned 105 this past May and she's still going strong. We made the trip by car in June...a wonderful reunion.



Becky (left) and Aunt Edna

That wasn't the only sister reunion, however. We took Marcie's Mom, Bea, to see her older sister, Jeannette, while we were in Massachusetts. And, of course, the pièce de resistance for Marcie...two weeks of non-stop chatting, thrifting, game-playing, wine-drinking sister time with Lin in July. Ain't sisters wonderful?

Jelly Fan Club Remains Strong

Probably the most frequently asked question about living aboard *Nine of Cups* we hear is "So how's Jelly and where is she?". Hmm...sail half way around the world and the cat still steals the show! And in answer, we reply, We saw her this past summer. She's fat, happy and sassy living with Grandma Bea in Massachusetts where she now weighs in at a Reuben-esque 12 pounds and spends her time eating, napping and keeping Grandma Bea company. Some things just don't change.

Merry Christmas and
Happy 2011!

(yikes...a new decade!)

Marcie and David

