

## Baja Voyage(cont'd) Day 12 & 13

Funny, John Steinbeck never described a dawn as “slowly there is a faint glow, then an aroma of cotton mouth followed by an explosion of blinding light as you open your eyes to the noonday sun, while you lay in the cockpit covered in sweat and flies.” Oh well.

Brad had invited a couple of the Chico RV guys to go for a sail. It was something they had never done, but had wanted to do for several years. As we were leaving, an American fishing boat about 25' long came in and was getting ready to tie up. We asked him



**Santo Domingo Bay (site of the infamous lost Geocache) looking east toward Mulegé**



**That's me a few weeks later at Brad's 2<sup>nd</sup> geocache site; you can just see the black ammo box down and to the left of the orange flower.**

how the water was and he said “rough, *dangerously* rough, it beat the crap out of us.” This caused the Chico guys some concern, but I assured them that there was only a 15 to 20 knot wind and the boat would be fine. We did have to pound into the waves under motor to get out of the mouth of the river, but when we unfurled to sails with a modest reef, the boat settled down to a smooth and joyful ride for the next 5 miles. We had fun at the “lost cache beach” diving and laying about, and then sailed a fast run back to our base in Mulegé. Now Brad still had one more geocache to “hide”. After much thinking he decided to place it in a location with

a beautiful view, shade and even emergency sources of cooling liquids, a contrast to the first location. Only one place met all criteria, Bar El Patron.

That evening, we caught a ride with the boyfriend of the owner of Bar El Patron. He was a hard drinking, retired counselor, a good ol' Swedish farm boy from northern Minnesota. You betcha. We asked how he ended up down there living with a nice Mexican bar owner. He admitted that she was a real beauty, a Mexican cutie he said, but how he got there hadn't a clue. (hmm sounds like the makings for a good song). We enjoyed another nice meal in town, but still too cheap for a taxi, we started walking back to the boat. We did bring a flashlight that worked occasionally this time. Luckily, we got a ride part of the way back with some American ladies.

A short time after the ladies dropped us off, a car with 3 other inebriated young women passed by us and we exchanged in a lot of good-natured banter. The young women drove a short distance away and stopped. The door opened. Hmmm, were we going to get another ride the rest of the way to the boat? What luck! As we approached, we heard "I'm OK now" and they drove away. I walked up in pitch darkness to where they had been, and stood there confused. Not so much because they drove away, but rather, why was I standing in a fresh steaming pile of partially digested enchiladas and rice?

We continued to shuffle home. I had to do a lot more shuffling than Brad to clean my shoes, and arrived at the boat for a well-deserved night's rest.

Saturday morning we were up at a normal time and left early to explore Conception Bay. This interesting body of water is perhaps 2-5 miles wide and about 21 miles long. There are high mountains to the east and west with the northern end being



**Satellite view of Conception Bay, to NW is the River mouth and Mulegé (From Cunningham's Guide)**



**Coyote Bay, in Conception Bay, looking east from a cave**

open and the southern end low and sandy. There are many interesting anchorages. Many are remote, and many others are in small bays with several huts (palapas), modern summer homes, and RV sites that are filled during the winter.

We anchored at a mouth of a small lagoon with thick mangroves contrasting their vibrant green leaves with the dry reddish rocks of the hills. At the head of the lagoon there was supposed to be a hot spring and several caves. With visions of a hot bath, we followed the trail to the springs. As soon as I stuck my foot in, I snapped it out with an oath. The water was *really hot*, way too hot to bathe in. The caves were cool though, and we took a short cut back to the boat. Wading through the shallow mangrove lagoon, was reminiscence of an *African Queen* swamp scene. My brother looks nothing like Katherine Hepburn, though if he redid his hair and applied a bit more makeup than he usually wears... Now me, I've been told I am quite Bogart-esque. Please note, the previous 2 sentences are for fraternal ridicule purposes only.

After a cold Tecate from a beer Palapa near the boat, we had an uneventful sail back the 12 nm to Mulege. Our last night together found us in town again at the same nice restaurant. This night we ordered the highly recommended T-bone steak. It was one of the best I have ever had. The meal was composed of soup, salad, lots of fresh bread, grilled vegetables and a huge steak and desert. The total bill for both of us including a couple of beers was only \$27 without the tip. Since money was no object (and we forgot the flashlight) we took a cab back to the boat. We lay awake and recounted all the great (and not-so-great) things we had experienced together on the trip, one we would remember for a long time to come.

**To Be Continued.....**