

Happy Holidays to my dear family & friends 2008



My holiday letters have been so much fun, but I got ahead of myself and could not keep up. First of all I did not forget you last year.... I was simply overwhelmed with everyday life when I got back from New Zealand. This year started off there. It was a wonderful adventure and left me remiss in sending my [2007 letter](#). I decided to let technology help me utilize my time more efficiently. Therefore, I created a [website](#), with a huge help from Germar. I do not have all my pictures organized yet...but I am getting there. :o) I am hoping by adding links to my website and other sites, this 2008 letter will be more concise and

less likely to overburden your computer and my timeliness :o) (Click on the underlined words to take you directly to sites).

2008 has been a wonderful year with a few hiccups. As soon as I got back to San Diego, the next weekend was spent in Idyllwild with my dear lady friends. Of course, we had a wonderful bonding weekend and what happens in Idyllwild, stays in Idyllwild :o). However, we did plant a pine tree in loving memory of our dear Ann who passed away from breast cancer. It was a weekend that we all emotionally needed. On our way home, Robyn & I stopped at [Living Free](#), an animal sanctuary. Unfortunately, when I got home from NZ, my kitties, Tori & Tinker were gone :o(. I was beginning to ponder the thought of new ones, even though I was not emotionally ready. Therefore I kept pondering.

February and March were filled with weekends of desert hiking, desert biking and mountain biking with Germar, Diana, or Diane & Monte. March also brought me an experience I will never forget. Jen & I backpacked San Geronio Mountain and a snowstorm hit. The winter conditions created a critical experience, however our [story](#) does have a happy ending!!! Germar & I enjoyed stunning desert flowers and fun little eggs for a pleasant [Easter](#) in the desert.



April brought about fire lookout training once again in Idyllwild. Additionally, I helped Diana gather plants for a plant atlas of Anza Borrego. I found a plant that they did not know existed in Anza Borrego!

We brought May in with my birthday in Santa Ynez. We rode our bikes from winery to winery through the beautiful countryside. Martin also shared a special birthday that weekend. Mother's Day weekend, Kelly was visiting SoCal so Jen, Allan, Charity, Kelly & I camped & hiked in Idyllwild. After a fun filled weekend, I stopped at [Living Free](#) and brought home two best

buddies, Sierra & Pico. They became best friends during their quarantine time and I could not separate them...therefore I decided to be a 'mom' to two handsome kitties. I come home and they bring a smile to my face each & every day. They are just soo cute!!! :o) For the [Memorial weekend](#)...I flew to Buffalo to visit Bernadette & dad. Michael & Timmy also drove up from Pine Bush with their beautiful families. We had a wonderful time visiting Niagara Falls and just enjoying the little ones. They grow up soo fast!

The Sierras were calling us in June. Jen, Allan, Charity & I backpacked into [Treasure Lakes](#). We enjoyed the snow and summited Mt Dade. A quick trip down to the Guadalupe Valley for the 'Guateque' wine festival was a fun cultural event with Nic & Barbie. As for mountain biking, Germar & I continued to find new rides.

July found us in the Sierras again. We backpacked out of [Saddlebag Lakes](#) & over McCabe Pass. We packed cross-country around Sheep Peak and summited North Peak on the way out. The scenery was revitalizing. My firetower lookout season also started. Come visit me next year in Idyllwild at the Tahquitz Fire Lookout!

August started in my firetower again. And then off to the Sierras again...we backpacked into Palisades basin with Kevin & Wendy. We summited [Starlight and Thunderbolt Peaks](#), both 14ers. It was an exhilarating weekend! At the end of the month, Lidija married Mike. Jen, Allan & I ventured up to [Seattle](#) for a beautiful wedding on Cougar Mountain. After the festivities, the 3 of us backpacked into Colchuck Lake and it snowed on us! We plan to return to Washington and explore a lot more of what it has to offer.

Labor Day weekend, we were off to the southern Sierra. It was a nice easy backpack into [Albanita Meadows](#). It was Germar's first backpack, and now I think he is hooked. We bagged a handful of fun 9000' peaks and enjoyed great weather. Germar & I found a few more fun bike rides averaging 5000' of elevation gain. Great workouts! :o) At the end of the month, I was off to the Sierras to summit [Mt Darwin](#) with Kevin & Wendy again. The fall colors were spectacular!!!

October was upon us and the desert started to beckon. Diana Lindsay has been asked to prepare a guidebook of Anza Borrego's Top Trails. Therefore, Diana & I have been leading potential hikes for the San Diego Hiking Club. Our first hike was Pinyon Ridge to [Wilson Peak](#). I'm certain the hike will be a 'top trail'! Now that fall was upon us, we were off to the [Grand Canyon](#) to see the colors and enjoy the cool air. I met Kelly at the south rim and we hiked rim to rim of the Canyon. It was a pleasant 20-hour hike; the weather was perfect, no blisters, no nothing. :o) My last weekend of the season for my [firetower](#) was upon me. Germar visited and we enjoyed the gorgeous sunset. It is a spectacular setting and I am already looking forward to being up there again next season. At the end of the month, Germar put together a campout on the flanks of [Mount Baldy](#). It is so hard to believe that we were looking down on one of the State's largest cities!

All of a sudden it was November...where does the time go? We enjoyed the desert with a few more 'Top Trail' hikes traversing Coyote Mountain and hiking down to the Goat Canyon Trestle - the highest wooden trestle in the world. Dee had moved to Arizona, at the foot of the Huachuca Mountains, over the summer. Dee and I started dayhiking the Pacific Crest Trail in JAN 2002 and I missed hiking with her! She invited us for [Thanksgiving](#) and we were on our way! Eight of us drove over and enjoyed a special holiday with Dee & Bob in their beautiful new southwestern home.

Actually Thanksgiving time was super special!! In case you hadn't noticed, many weekends over the past 8-10 years included hiking and biking with Germar. We have had sooo much fun together and I guess it took us a while to figure out there was a reason for that. Our friends had it all figured out...but I guess when you put a scientist and a surveyor together, too much calculating goes on. We finished the calculations in the Huachuca Mountains an hour or so after [Tub Spring](#) on Carr Peak.

December is now here. We only had a wee bit of time left before the holidays took over. We packed our packs and backpacked [San Geronio](#). I was a bit hesitant, but thank goodness, it turned out to be an uneventful trip. It was only Germar's second backpack and he enjoyed it so much, he is ready to backpack Patagonia.

Now we are in the midst of the holidays and as Robyn let me know, I am early this year with my letter! Germar left for Germany 20 DEC to visit his mom, family and friends. He will be back 4 JAN and I will be leaving 8 JAN for Argentina to climb [Aconcagua](#). I will be climbing with Tina (we met on the mountain in 2006), Chuck & Andy. I will then venture down to Chile to backpack Torres del Paine in Patagonia. Germar will join me 5 FEB. We are excited about being in one of the most beautiful places in the world!

In between all the fun, I do have a career. I've been active with the California Land Surveyors Association. I've been attending state board meetings in Oakland. Steve moved up there last year, so we catch up while I am there. We have visited Napa, Sonoma and the Carneros Valleys and simply have been enjoying the San Francisco bay area. I was asked to contribute to our CLSA magazine as a [woman in surveying](#). It was an honor. I also took on another position at work. I am now working with the field surveyors and finalizing the monumentation of the subdivision maps. It seems that mapping is my life. The surveyors that I work with are great fun and the new challenges are a breath of fresh air! Life is good!

I hope you have a wonderful holiday and a tremendous year to follow!!! You are always in my thoughts and I hope to share some memories with you soon!!!



Xxooxoxxooxooxox
Annie
and Pico and Sierra