

This is the 2007 holiday letter that I never sent out. (Life gets so busy)

I was in New Zealand during the 2007 holidays, and it has taken me a bit to get this out. I hope everyone had a wonderful year and I hope it was as great as a 'box of fluffies'. That is a Kiwi expression. I learned that one is to think of a box of fluffy little ducks...what can be better than that?? :o)

This year has been a wee bit simple yet rewarding. My lucky boss retired, so I have been filling in for the past year. That has kept my brain on over drive; yet I did need revitalization, so the weekends were still full of fun.

January started out in Parker, AZ for Nic & Barbie's birthdays. A cold spell hit, and it was sad but amusing listening to the snowbirds grumbling about the cold in AZ. It is not supposed to get cold in AZ...??? They even had to get out itty-bitty jackets for their poodles. But we loved it. We were hiking Big Maria peak and I fussed because my fingers were frozen and the next minute it was snowing. Then I knew my fussing was justified :o) Yes, it does snow in the desert.

There were many weekends full of bagging peaks, mountain biking, road biking, snowshoeing, and wine tasting. In March, we ventured down to Guadalupe Valley, Mexico and had a wonderful time tasting and camping at a Russian winery. It was so wonderful; we came out of it with a beautiful couple, Lee and Barbara.

In April, I went home for Ellie's first birthday. She is the cutest little thing and Tim sure is a proud papa bear! >



Since I was coming home, Mikey, decided that I was going to go camping with him and the rest of his Cub Scout troop. It was a blast...and I was volunteered to give them a power point presentation on climbing mountains. Mikey's friends thought he had the coolest Aunt. It was amusing. The next day, I took them canoeing, while the dad's sat around...gee whiz! What are aunties for? <



May was full of fun... Vintage Alpine as always for our unofficial birthday party, riding our bikes from winery to winery in Santa Ynez, and then Yosemite. Oliver, of Christine and Fritz, was christened with Yosemite Falls as a the backdrop...WOW!< The next day, Carrie and Eric were married. It was a spectacular weekend and in between the festivities I even summited Half Dome finally after all these years





In June, I was the token surveyor for a geology field trip rafting down the Grand Canyon. Some one has to make sure the geologists are reading their maps correctly :o)



The canyon is an incredible place. It was a different kind of adventure for me...it was hard for me to sit on a raft for a week without exercise, but the small side canyons were worth it. Some were geologically super cool ^ and



some were just simply gorgeous such as Elves Chasm V and the Little Colorado River with turquoise water. >



Of course, a rafting trip must have huge rapids. They were bunches of fun! V Trying to go through one without spilling the wine...was the challenge.



Now that summer was upon us...the Sierras were calling my name. I am addicted to them :o) The mountain top experience is one that I enjoy over and over again. It is not a matter of conquering the mountain; once upon the summit, I have conquered my self. I have put some fears & self-doubt behind. I have pushed myself beyond my comfort level. I then realize that I can do anything I want to do. It is a 'fizzing' experience as they refer to it in New Zealand. :o) Of course the views are spectacular especially from the 14er's that we summited this year.





In July, Jen, Charity and I summited Mt Tyndall. < The next day, Jen and I summited Mt Williamson. (It is the peak in the background)



Charity and I summited Mt Sill in August. It is the peak in the very back. Sill towers above the Palisades glacier and the glacier fed lakes create a magic in the area. ^

< A few weeks later, we were back in the Palisades area. Yes, the color of the glacier fed lakes is this beautiful and what is a better place to practice climbing out of a crevasse. We summited Middle Palisades the next day.



Fall was almost upon us, so we had to fit in another Sierra weekend. Andy, Jen and I backpacked up to Bishop Lake and bagged Chocolate Mtn. on the way. The next day, we went up Jigsaw Pass and bagged Gendarme and Aperture. It was a fun weekend! >



In between Sierra weekends, I fit my firetower duty into a few weekends. It really is a rewarding experience and the guests are the best. Kelly came to visit one weekend. She has a few pictures at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/barkybunch/sets/72157601101110002/> Please look at them...and you will understand why I enjoy it so much...really :o)

Fall was coming to an end, so I decided I wanted to go back to summer. Therefore, off to New Zealand I went. (hint...south of the equator, opposite of here) Wow...what a place! Pinot and penguins :o) Most of our hiking time was through rainforests, which I did not expect.<

On the North Island I visited Robyn's family. She grew up in New Plymouth with Mount Taranaki as a backdrop...and now I understand why she misses NZ so much. v





It really is a great escape. I was only there for six weeks and backpacked a wee bit, enjoyed the glaciers and mountains a wee bit, obviously there is never enough wine, but surely enough rain! Since I am soooooooooo late with this letter... this is the rest of New Zealand in a nutshell.



The natives were friendly. >



< The evening skies were mystical !



< Fields of lupine abound



Helicopters were piloted by furballs (look in front seat) >





< Climbing Mt Aspiring was inspiring and the Bonar Glacier was spectacular!

The sheep of the Matukituki Valley just made you want to go 'baaaaaaaaaaaaa' V



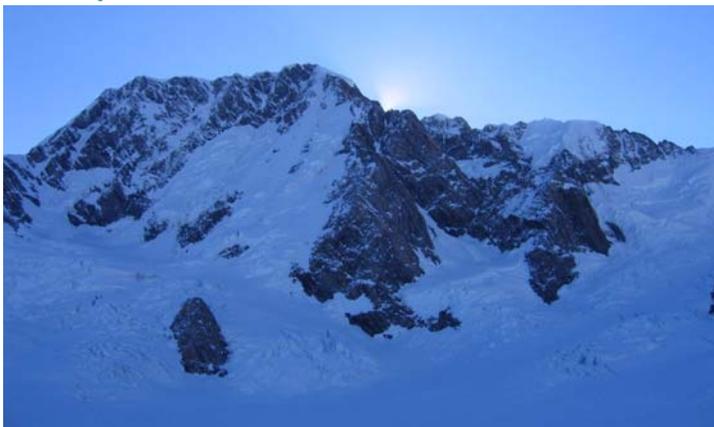
Ready for the next flight up the Tasman glacier and Plateau hut <



to

Sun setting behind Mt. Cook <

The beauty of snow, ice, rock and weather on Mt Cook >





The crevasses of the Caroline made trail blazing a wee bit challenging <



At the saddle of the Caroline and Boys glaciers backpacing down from Plateau Hut at Mt Cook >

New Year's Eve day paddle on Lake Wakatipu V



Great company for the Routeburn Track >



Stunning scenery on the Routeburn <





< Mt Christina offers us a rewarding rest on the Caples track

The roads to the wineries were a bit challenging after our backpack >



However, the next morning, it was possible to drive and drink coffee in a New Zealand traffic jam <



The busy-ness was getting to us, so we flew over to Stewart Island where the pace was a bit slower... so slow it took a bit to finally have a phone call go through >



Back on the South Island, the camp views were relaxing at Curio Bay <



On the Otago Peninsula, the yellow-eyed penguins were just so cute ^

We were wondering if they hatched from the Moeraki Rocks >



And then my last taste of beautiful Pinot Noir quarter of the way through my 48 hour day. V



I know I got sidetracked. But I will have a website next year. It will be easier to send out updates on my adventures and I wish for us to share a few! :o) I hope you all had a wonderful year and many more to come!!!!

XOXXOXOXOXOXOXOX

Annie