

2009 Memories and Wishes for an Outstanding New Year from Annie, Germi, Sierra & Pico



We hope to find everyone happy and healthy!! We have had a wonderful first year together. As Annie left off in [last year's letter](#), Germi was in Bavaria and she was later on her way to South America. Since Germi was enjoying the delights of winter, Annie ventured to Idyllwild with Lori & Chuck to fulfill their holiday spirits. We were certainly fulfilled with a spectacular [winter wonderland](#) <. Thus pictures were emailed back and forth, sharing the winter beauty of opposite sides of the world and now we are sitting in the lounge at the Philly airport en route to Bavaria to enjoy a winter wonderland in the Alps. The Alps won. :o)

Rewinding back to January brings many smiles upon our hearts. In our best effort to share our year with you...please click on the links (underlined words) throughout this letter. This allows us to make this letter a wee bit shorter and hopefully not overburden your computer. Now, back to South America...it was an incredible way to start the year. Annie organized a [climb of Aconcagua](#) in Argentina for 5 friends and herself. From the trailhead, up the Vacas Valley to base camp, camp 1, camp 2 and

then the summit was a 14 day expedition with weather perfect. They summited 27 JAN at [22,841](#) feet. It was physically the hardest day of her life, but...wow...what a feeling. The power of a summit consumes your inner spirit! 14 days up, 2 days down and on to the next adventure.

While Annie was in SA, Germi was in Nice for an "ASLO" meeting. Upon arrival back to SD, he packed his bags and flew to SA also. We met in Punta Arenas, Chile to backpack [Torres del Paine](#). The splendor we encountered was beyond words. We boated across glacier fed Lago Pehoe with a backdrop of the Cuernos and packed to [Glacier Gray](#) for the evening. We enjoyed our appetizers and wine beside the incredible slice of nature. We spent 4 more days backpacking the "W" route of the park. The [Cuernos](#) majestically rose above the landscape to capture one's excitement for life. > We knew Patagonia was one of the most beautiful places in the world, but it captivated our senses beyond anything we ever could of imagined. The [Torres del Paine](#) played hide & seek with the clouds, but when they appeared our senses were tickled. ✓

It was sad when the backpack was coming to an end, but we had [penguins](#) to visit, so the excitement simply changed course. We visited Isla de Magadalen, the home to 70,000+ pairs of penguins. "Follow me, the cute ones are this way" ✓



All the love in the air, led up to Valentine's Day and it was time to return to San Diego. Mike & Donna were in Laguna Beach for a wedding, so we spent the

next day with them. We were a bit jet-lagged but it is always a treat to have family visit. Within the next week, Germi was soon on a plane again to New Zealand for a WMO meeting on UV instruments.



Once our itineraries settled down, we synchronized our schedules and we were once again hiking and biking together. We helped Diana lead a few hikes in Anza Borrego for the San Diego Hiking Club. She is writing a book on the top hikes in Anza Borrego, so the club is rating them for her.

her.

As desert season came to a close, we started packing our bags for [springtime in the Alps](#). The middle of May found us on our way to Bavaria, Germi's home. Wow...it was more than Annie ever imagined! Visiting mom, Fritz & Gabi, Markus and friends was a delight and the thrill of waking up to the Alps out our bedroom window just made one want to go out and play. We mountain biked to huts, > we hiked to huts, we backpacked to huts, and of course we indulged in yummy Bavarian cuisine & beverages in each hut. You must be thinking that there were a few peaks involved and of course we were seen on few :o) We attempted [Alpspitze](#), >but the weather and the chains being under the snow turned us around not far from the summit. We descended safely, spent a lovely evening surrounded by peaks and were happy with our little adventure. ✓ We later learned of others being rescued off of [Zugspitze](#).



When the weather was less than perfect in Garmisch, we headed south through Austria to [Italy](#). Castles nestled upon hilltops were ubiquitous like a fairytale. We nestled ourselves in quaint

little villages, grabbed perfect picnics – Italian wine, sausage & cheese ✓ and hiked through fairy tale scenery to stunning hilltop views. <✓



Bavaria is riddled with farmland. Many of the trails were actually farm roads, and bells adorned each [friendly cow](#), horse, or sheep. Bavaria is a world apart of San Diego, and it was so sad to go :o(We knew many more adventures were ahead of us...so we reluctantly boarded the westbound plane back to reality.

The snow was melting in the Sierras and they were calling us. Germi has had issues with altitude in the past but he trusted Annie to get him up to altitude. A few experiments were conducted :o) We backpacked and climbed [Arrow Peak](#) > with Jen & Allan over the 4 JUL holiday. Germi did have a few agonizing hours but he soon became strong....he was the first one on the peak and it was his highest ever – 12958'! He was a happy camper and fell in love with the Sierras. He asked many times when our next backpack would be. Therefore, we were off to the Sierras again with Lori & Chuck to climb [Mallory \(13850'\)](#) & [LeConte \(13930'\)](#) in August. The stark beauty of the the granite & alpine lakes – the Sierra wonders were once again fascinating for a Bavarian. Germi did endure acclimatization agony but once again, on summit day he was the first on top – his new highests. He is now officially Annie's Bionic Bavarian. From the summits we had a view of Mt Whitney and Germi felt cheated as not having reached 14000'.



At the end of August, Germi was off to Bavaria to visit mom for her birthday. Mom was pleasantly surprised :o) A visit with Fritz >, Gabi and the family makes one truly miss the Bavarian life.

As summer wound down, we backpacked up and over Kearsarge Pass with the SD Hiking Club over the Labor Day weekend. [Kearsarge Lakes](#) are a gem of the Sierras and once again Germi was enthralled with the magnificence of it all. We enjoyed a few nearby peaks, Rixford (12887') and Gould (13005'), but Germi was still pouting because he had not surpassed 14000'. At the end of September, we concluded our Sierra backpacks with a huge Bavarian smile. We packed into Palisades Basin through moraine boulders over Thunderbolt Pass with Lori & John. We plopped our tents down below the lofty Palisades range and evaluated our route for the upcoming morning. We summited [North Palisades](#) 26 SEP and Germi was now at his highest and stronger than ever! He had finally reached 14242'. Germar did endure some acclimatization agony, but all in all our experiments were successful.

Fall was upon us and we continued to fill our weekends with biking and hiking. In the midst of it, Annie volunteered as the [fire lookout for Taquitz](#) as in the past years and this year she also hosted the [Palomar Mountain fire lookout](#). It was the first year for Palomar to be hosted since 17 years ago. We complemented the time with mountain biking exceeding elevation gains of 4000'+, thus making the sunsets, wine and appetizers over SoCal superb.



Thanksgiving & our one year together was upon us. We celebrated in Rocky Mountain National Park. We camped with a view of Longs Peak, the park's highest. We hiked up Hallett Peak which is above the Continental Divide. The winds were blinding with snow, Annie's layers were not adequate and needed adjustment before Germi told her she was a weenie. During the adjustment, Annie looked up and a majestic big horn walked before us as if there was no wind. We were mesmerized. < Thrilled with our day, while descending, we were treated with Ptarmigan and to be expected, the next day a magnificent herd of elk. The herd of elk sidetracked us for our hike up [Long's Peak](#), but we were advised of 'winter conditions', so we enjoyed

the elk. However, our trail was clear and we made it up and over the keyhole without a worry and enjoyed the glorious view of the snowy Rockies. >

We were treated to snow upon arrival in Bavaria. It put Christmas in the air for the two of us now living in SD but growing up in snow country :o). We have filled our days with skiing and snowshoeing. We enjoyed the Christkindl Markt in Innsbruck. The medieval city was truly a delight! We enjoyed a true Bavarian feast with mom on Christmas eve. On Christmas day we snow shod [Wank](#) down to Esterbergalm and back up again. It was snowing and we were walking in a winter wonderland.



We enjoyed Switzerland for a few days. The steep tiny streets with icy snow were a fun challenge. The streets were bounded by charming Swiss houses, and only one small car could fit. We continued to [St. Moritz](#)...the world of "beyond rich". It was entertaining watching all the furs walk down the street. The top hotel had a Rolls Royce for the hotel shuttle. We needed to get back to reality...therefore we found a hut on a map, donned our snowshoes and made tracks to Parkhutte Varusch. It was perfect.



It has been a funfilled yet stressful year due to the economy. Professionally, Annie continues to be active with CLSA and [state CLSA](#). Financial cut backs within the City necessitated creative methods for saving jobs within her section, thus many sleepless nights, and of course paycuts. Germi continues to make UV measurements in the Arctic with grants from the NSF and is now also engaged in a NASA satellite validation project.

Tonight, the last of the this wonderous year...we will be skiing from hut to hut on the top of Germany. (Germar was born with skis on his feet and Annie will be trying) We will be thinking of you all and reflecting upon how the joys of your friendships and love have added so much to our lives. We hope to share in many more adventures with you and wish you a gutes Neues Jahr from Bavaria!!!