

BREAKAWAY

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It was 1967. We were living in Los Angeles, had been married for 5 years, and already had achieved the politically correct challenge of two children and a house of our own. But we yearned for more excitement and adventure.

Uncle Bob offered to sell us his home-made boat. It was a classic Fiberglass-over-Wood Monk hull with a 1956 Chevy inboard -- the same motor that I cherished in the cut-out sound of my own tuck-and-roll classic. I knew that engine inside and out, and felt caressed by the every purr of those 190 throaty horses. Uncle Bob touted his purring machine as the perfect Sea of Cortez explorer. And so our adventure was born!!

In honor of the windmill tilting Man of La Mancha, we christened her Mis-Adventure (with one "s", after the mis-spoken dreams of Sancho Panza). The most adventuresome people we knew -- Kathy's younger brother, Paul; and my brother, Bob, readily signed on. Along with our 5 and 3 year old kids we crossed the forbidden border heading South to find the Sea of Cortez.

Waking on Kino Bay, we were only a few feet from a crystal blue sea lapping onto the bone white beach. We launched the 18 foot Mis-Adventure in minutes that April morning, and loaded her to the gunnels with "stuff". Our kids rested comfortably on her roof as we headed for Isla Tiburon and the rumored head-hunting grounds of the Sari's.

Her purr soothed my soul as we sped across the blue glass sea to a mile long bleached beach with only us as adventuresome guests. By noon that first glorious day, our tent was up and we were absorbing the penetrating peace of a lonely, fabled Mexican beach where the six of us gathered each mid-day to simply trade today's shell and bone treasures.

When we ran short of gas or water, Uncle Paul skied non-stop behind that purring one ninety for 26 miles back to Kino Bay to pick up supplies. Brother Bob, a budding Biologist, chased lizards on Isla San Pedrito, and at Isla San Esteban he taught us the skill of pulling bloated Chuckwallas from wedged crevices

Unfortunately, on Good Friday we began to hear the unwanted calls of return to our mundane LA life. We decamped and once again confronted the 26 mile crossing. But this time the Vernal Equinox stirred our approach as it pounded waves onto the Kino shore. As we struggled to position our purring lady near the launch ramp, the rudder steering cable snapped. We wrestled to find balance in this wild, out of control situation. Someone needed to swim ashore to find us a miracle.

Confusion reigned as Brother Bob announced that he was too afraid to swim in these waves, and in the hell of it all, before we could look around, Kathy suddenly dove overboard. Ever the captain, I buried my head into the bilge and turned the rudder by

hand as Uncle Paul, future Navy missile controller, barked steering orders in our attempt to stay off the rocks. Brother Bob calmed Billy and Annette, the real treasures on board, as Mis-Adventure rose up one last time and slammed down on the beach.

The Equinox driven waves piled over the transom quickly filling our dear Mis as we all bolted onto the safety of the stark white sand. Brother Bob lured Saris to help us by providing them with cigar after cigar as a reward for their incredible bravery in swimming out to save our “stuff” and repositioning our Lady in the rising tide to crash onto her trailer (We had manually rolled El Remoque across the 200 yards of sand.)

The Sarris rigged chains and pulleys as improvised hoists to pull our beloved Mis-Adventure sitting proudly on El Remoque to high ground. Their generous bravery was incredible as they questioned with every load of “stuff”, how we could need this many “things”. As we winched our way off Kino beach, our sedate LA life seemed to be many, many infinities away.

That same fateful night of Easter Equinox, while trailoring north with badly damaged Mis-Adventure, Brother Bob softly mentioned that he had just seen our boat on its 4 wheel trailer pass us on the right as it careened off the narrow Mexican Highway heading across the moonlit desert on its own. Incredibly the trailer and boat had leapt into the desert night until the lower hitch anchored Chevy 190 to rest in a Palo Verde cradle. We each hugged the living boat memory of adventure and fell asleep on the desert floor next to her in the moon light of a Sonoran Equinox awaiting tomorrow’s freedom.

As we awoke in the desert next to our boat that Easter morning, we returned a few miles to the south to seek help from the “Green Angels” of last night’s dreams. Brother Bob insisted in his broken Spanish that our boat was perched high in the open arms of a Palo Verde tree. And our new savior kept repeating in Spanish, “Senior, either you have the wrong word for boat or the wrong word for tree”.

Dubiously the rescuers accompanied us up the highway to see our beloved Mis-Adventure resting comfortably high in the crotch of a Palo Verde with El Remoque several feet below. Always creative, our new Mexican saviors devised an ingenious use of old shock absorber spring coils to roll the boat out of the tree and back on to her life’s partner, El Remoque....those saturated 190 horses adding weight to the unwieldy chore.

Once across the border and home, our ‘Mis-Adventure’ was declared a complete insurance loss. But we faithfully set about the year long rebuilding process of boat and trailer. Mis-Adventure was to survive 18 more years of family adventures and misses until she retired to delight the local Sea Scout pack in San Rafael, CA. But the lesson of her maiden voyage -- Never Give Up – still lingers on within all of us!