

# 2007

Only as I am going over the last year notes and pictures am I realizing what an exciting year it was, full of changes, events, and also losses. The major event is Larry finishing Shattuck Court project, and Pavla becoming an US citizen. Considering how busy was Larry with Shattuck, I got to have all the fun. I returned to the country of my youth for two weeks, and I returned for good to the passion never lost – backpacking and all that comes with it – blisters, dried food, pink alpine glow and blue horizons ahead.

Sadly, we lost several close people. My friend Libor didn't return from Mt. Everest. Ken, a good friend of Larry for more than 50 years, is not going to arrive with a potted plant and start searching for chocolate ice cream any more. And Mrs. Patrna, my surrogate grandmother since I was 2, finished her slow and sad journey to the other side.

Few pictures and links to the web albums of 2007: [2007 Web Album](#)

## January

I am still the IT manager for a children's museum in Sausalito, and the systems administrator is wonderful Monique, who can take apart and put back together absolutely anything. Over the years we perfected mind reading skills to the point that even our husbands envy. In January we decided to take advantage of a bizarre provision in the museum rules, leave the servers behind and do a little team building while skiing at Sugarbowl. Somebody stole my new scarf, but we had blast, just our humorless boss cringed a bit.

## February

Larry is finishing framing of Shattuck North, and the roofing starts. He is in the process of installing windows and doors, and a huge truck unloads enormous pile of sheetrock. My tracking poles by renowned maker Leki arrive, and they were "Made with pride in the Czech Republic". The museum is celebrating Chinese New Year with lion dancers and dragons. Larry is an early adopter of Windows Vista, which leads to him being without a working computer until he reverts back.

Sabra is spending the month doing research at Huntington's library in Pasadena. Much better place to be in February than Ohio. I am going to visit her for a weekend, taking along my friend Patricia as the navigator. Patricia fails by not spotting the last Starbucks in Northern California, but we managed anyway. Sabra's indian friend Anyu is joining us, and nothing can stop our girls only weekend, not even Larry's desperate call that our data server crashed. It was warm and sunny, we visited the famous gardens and museum, and Sabra managed to show us the Huntington archive. Sunsets over Colorado Blvd were so Southern California as we were picking out places to eat. Data server got fixed over the phone.

At Shattuck the installation of hydronic heating is under way. Sheetrock is everywhere.

## March

Spring is in full swing in San Francisco, but the last traces of winter are still lingering in the mountains. In preparation for a three day trip to the Pear Lake in Sequoia NP, Patricia and I are heading for the day of snowshoeing to Loch Leven lakes. I am immediately falling for snowshoes, never mind we missed the lakes covered by snow. Later that month I am taking a day off to drive for a day of skiing at Sugarbowl. Long drive, but oh so worth it.

Larry and Arturo are working on furniture for our media room. Larry came up with a great design hiding all the cables in cabinets with back access, and there is even space for my beautiful red Electrolux vacuum cleaner.

I am leaving for a snowshoing trip to the Pear Lake hut, a historical ski hut high in the Sierras. Adrenalin is bubbling in my blood, nothing can stop me, give me the highest peaks, I can reach them all. Well, until I start gasping for air, after the first mile. Who added the bricks to my backpack, anyway? And so I suffer upwards, one step at a time, sweat is running down my eyes, and I am enjoying every single minute. Happiness is snow and sky so blue and icicles and frozen chocolate. And little whiskey before dinner. [Pear Lake snowshoe](#)

One Saturday we drive to the Monterey aquarium. On the way back we stop at a small state park known for its newts. This is the mating season, and I want to see a newt. We are looking, searching, letting the ranger scream, no newt. As we are driving back, I am mumbling something like "If you really loved me, you would have found a newt for me", at which point the brakes screech, the Jeep stops, and in front of the car is a newt, crossing the road, cute to the last finger on his little paw. What a husband I have! 😊

Ken comes for a weekend and joins us for a St Patrick's party at Doug and Angie. On the way back he falls into the canal, fortunately Angie hears the splash and Ken is briskly rescued, somewhat shaken but unhurt.

Day after day Larry gets up at 4:30, leaves the house by 5, returns around six, has a dinner, and works late into the night in the office. Seven days a week, working from home on weekends. He is falling asleep in between bites at dinner. So, when there is an open slot on the fire commission, he of course jumps at it, and the city council selects him. As though he didn't have enough to do already, now he is the fire commissioner for San Rafael, and I am proud of him.

Shattuck is getting lath, sheetrock is being taped, and the fireplaces and bathtubs are going in.

## *April*

After six months without a brain washer we are getting a new TV, big and flat. Increase in picture quality has no effect on the quality of broadcasting, unfortunately. When it is turned off, it looks really nice.

I am taking a backpacking trip to the Lost Coast. Five days of listening to the Pacific Ocean, mile after mile, wave after wave. We are finding bear tracks in the sand, and a whale jumps out of the water. This is part of the coast so rugged that even Hwy 1 doesn't go there. We are fording streams and my feet are sinking into sand. Happiness is waking up in a meadow full of golden poppies. [Lost Coast 2007](#)

Larry is installing insulation, and sheetrock work continues at Shattuck.

## *May*

In May I spent two weeks back in the Czech Republic. This was the first time I came back when it wasn't cold, rainy and miserable. I got to enjoy the good Czech beer in the beer gardens, and it was just as good as I remembered it. My sis in law, the wonderful Petra, and my little nephew Sammy came with me to the town where I grew up. Nothing has changed in that little apartment, just my parents are getting older, which was the main reason for the trip. But besides trying to help with their situation, I managed to see bunch of old friends, and we had so much fun that we could have been 16 again. I happened to be there for my 20 years high school reunion, too. Even my classmates seemed more fun and interesting than I remember them from those grey days of communism. Petra and I went hiking, and I took my parents to see their old friends that they don't get to see any more. On the way home I made a detour and stopped by an old farm where my politically suspicious daddy was sent to work by the communists, and a pretty young girl used to see him, long before we made them mom and dad. My brother Tomas took me to a piano concert in downtown Prague, and nephew Marek to a funny scooter 24-hour competition organized by his friends. I was willing to help them out, but my trial run was so bad that they disqualified me. You can't be 16 ever again... What an exhausting and wonderful two weeks.

Meanwhile Larry accomplished unbelievable amount of work at Shattuck, working all the time, mostly with his hands. Tile, doors, paint, structural wiring, stucco. There was a very tired Larry at the airport when I got home. He also managed to lift our hot tub out of its concrete enclosure, utilizing all laws of physics and his endless patience, and get it repaired.

A day after my return the sad news reached me that Libor, the always sunny friend from my college years, Libor who did so much for so many, died on Mt. Everest on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007. [Libor Kozak](#)

## June

Paige asked me if I wanted to go to the High Passes Loop, and since the moment I found a few pictures I couldn't stop thinking about the trip. To make sure that I have what it takes, in gear and in determination, I am leaving for an overnight trip to Yosemite. I am so tired coming back from a hike to North Dome. I keep missing my turn to the campsite, have to cook in dark, too tired to eat much anyway. I am returning home excited and determined as ever to do more.

Ken is going to a hospital for planned operation. After he is released his condition deteriorates, and when he is not answering his phone, we are calling sheriff's station in Altadena to check on him. Ken is unconscious and the sheriff is taking him to Huntington hospital in a very serious condition. Larry is making the first of what turns out to be a long series of long drives to Pasadena. Six hours drive south, visit with Ken, stay overnight, visit with Ken, six hours drive back. All while taking care of Ken's house, a little black dog, bills, yard, friends, and everything else.

Work on Shattuck Court continues.

## July

At the beginning of July is my backpacking trip with Paige to the highest passes in Yosemite [High Passes Yosemite](#). It is everything I imagined, only so much better. Well, there are the mosquitoes, too. We finish the loop in four days, running from the blood thirsty insects and combining two days worth of hiking into the last day. I get home at midnight on Friday, in time to join Larry on his trip to Pasadena the next morning. Ken is doing better and it is a pretty positive visit.

A week later we return to Pasadena. Besides visiting Ken, we attend Ann and Garry's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They had met at Hillsides when Larry was a child and Ken a young employee.

At the end of July old friend from Slovakia, Lubo, comes to California. I am taking him for a backpacking trip to Isberg Pass. We run into some philosophical differences, but the country is beautiful as always. [Isberg Pass Yosemite](#)

Larry is again in Pasadena.

Shattuck is at a finishing work stage.

## August

Lubo departed, Standa arrives with his two daughters. We don't see them much, Standa is the ultimate tourist and has every minute planned. The girls are happiest when I take them to Stinson and they can play in the water. I am watching them, shivering in my fleece jacket.

Larry continues driving several times a month to Pasadena. I am going with him, and we have a breakfast with Ken's old friends. We feel as though we knew them forever. Ken is doing better, they are waiting for a bed on the physical therapy floor to become available so that he can start getting slowly ready to go home. The last weekend in August Larry sees Ken on Saturday, and Ken asks him to bring in some clothes from home. Over nights Ken's condition worsens and when Larry returns, and Ken is unconscious.

My last immigration interview is behind me, and I am becoming a proud American citizen on August 21<sup>st</sup>. Monique decorates my office with tens of flags and pictures, climbing on desks in spite of the fact that she is now 6 months pregnant [Citizenship Pictures](#)

The museum has few new people in important positions, and by August it is clear to me that it is time to look for another job. I start sending out resumes, and before I know, I am offered a job for a big company in San Francisco, for much more money. I hesitate. I negotiate. Either they give me another week of vacation, or we don't have a deal. They agree. I accept. I am calling Monique, who is on her vacation in Florida, and we both cry. We shall meet again, some place better, and I don't mean the eternal better place, I mean better company, one day. I hope.

I am calling Petra to come, and in less than a week I am picking her up at the airport. It is August 29th, my last day at the museum. Petra helps me collect my pictures and staff, hard to say good bye to the place and to the people that I liked so much. But the time to go is while I still love it so much... Petra and I are packing for our big trip, Larry is taking us to Celia's for dinner. It is late, time for bed, everybody is exhausted. The phone rings. It is Pasadena. Ken just passed away.

[Ken Clemens 1933-2007](#)

## September

Museum is far behind me, and the new job is far away. Early in the morning Petra and I load our backpacks into the Jeep and head out to face new adventures. For ten beautiful days we get to climb the mountains of Ansel Adams and Yosemite Wilderness, to travel the desert and the coast. We meet a bear. We climb over fallen trees, run down the granite slabs, swim in cold mountain lakes. When we are too tired to go any further, we just keep on going. We follow the cairns where we can find them, and then leave the trail behind and rely on our luck and the GPS. Howling wakes us up in the middle of the night, and I know that Ken's brother coyote is out there to tell us that Ken is happy at last, with them, roaming the evergreen pastures. We descend to the valley, and our journey continues through the deserts to the oceans of Southern California, and then back along Hwy 1 to the Golden Gate and home. Larry is just arriving from another Pasadena trip, and all three of us end up at Celia's and have plenty of Margaritas. [Girls Trip 1](#), [Girls Trip 2](#), [Girls Trip 3](#), [Girls Trip 4](#)

On September the 11<sup>th</sup>, what a sad anniversary, I am starting a new job. They are very happy to have me there, partially because my supervisor just turned in his resignation, and his boss is just in to return his laptop on his last day. And their mission critical software has been failing for the last week. My new boss is based in New York. The excitement from me being on board is somewhat one sided. By the end of month I am pretty much collapsing, calling Larry (who is of course in Pasadena) that I am going to quit comes Monday. But I am just no good at giving up. Instead of quitting I call my boss and tell him that something has to change, and he agrees. I am still not happy there, but at least I am not happy 40 hours a week, not 60.

Merrill Legal is a large international corporation providing services to the legal industry. Things like copies, deposition transcripts, court reporters, data discovery (if you keep any sensitive data on your work computer, then don't), and such. I am the IT representative for San Francisco. The office is just 5 minutes from the ferry, which is great, but it is a very dark and uninspiring space that makes me want to leave and never come back. But we have Pete's coffee in the office, and plenty of cool lunch places around, which can lighten one's day (well yes, I am gaining some weight). However scenes from Catch 22 play daily in many variations and repetitions at my new place of employment.

To save the rest my sanity, I drove to the mountains to spend a weekend with Backpacking Divas at Fourth of July Lake. I was a day late, but the divas woke up to snow the night before. What a wonderful change to be with a bunch of strong

and independent women, at a lovely lake, under rugged peaks. I slept in my little cozy Big Agnes tent like a puppy, and for the first time in a while didn't have a single work related dream. [Diva's Backpack](#)

## October

In October we finally had brunch to celebrate my new citizenship. Pleasant sunny day with pleasant sunny people. [Brunch](#)

Larry and I are flying to Pasadena to attend memorial service for Ken at All Saints Church. We spent the weekend with a wonderful family of Ken's local friends, and their dogs and cats, including a really cute puppy.

While Larry is returning from LA home, I am flying to Omaha Nebraska for a week of training. My first encounter with Mid America. Fortunately the heat was over and the cold hasn't arrived yet, and I enjoyed beautiful fall color. I found few nice restaurants, and one old fashioned Czech restaurant established in 1914. The food hasn't changed, while our tastes have, but it was an interesting experience. I really wanted to see a prairie, and in spite of the short days drove outside the town in search for one. What I found was a full moon above the farm country around the Missouri river, quite a magic moment.

October 29th is our fourth anniversary, and we spend a lovely weekend in Monterey.

Finishing work is going on at Shattuck – bathrooms, kitchens, cabinets.

## November

On November 6th I get to vote as an American citizen for the first time. It is a local election, and an important one – San Rafael is changing two council members.

Monique has a baby boy, Caden, on November 7th. He is cute as can be, and starts immediately torturing her. Congratulations!

On the same day Chinese cargo ship hits the Bay Bridge and spills thousands of gallons of oil over San Francisco Bay.

Before we know it is Thanksgiving. Even though there is only ten of us this time, we still cook enough for 16. [Thanksgiving 2007](#)

The weekend after Thanksgiving is another Backpacking Diva's trip, this time to the Pacific coast in Point Reyes. It is a short hike, no big hills, and we end up carrying so much food that we can share with the mice, and still eat more than burn. What a backpacking dinner – turkey, stuffing, gravy, potatoes, smoked ham, crackers and cheese, and to top it Baileys and glued wine. Then I'm lying in my tent, listening to the waves, and watching the Point Reyes lighthouse flashing across the sky, until I fall asleep. [Wildcat Camp](#)

Larry is finishing the finishing work on Shattuck. All the connections are done and he can pour the sidewalk. The only remaining detail is PG&E that hasn't been able to connect his service, a project more than two years in making.

## December

Our heater stopped working just as the cold weather arrived. How happy we are that Larry fixed the hot tub in the spring, our major source of warmth. Well, we also make fire, drink hot tea, and cuddle to stay warm.

Just as we are planning our vacation, my first American passport arrives in the mail. In theory, the world has just opened. In practical terms, we can go to Mexico, too.

As every year, Gerry and Marsha invite us for their Hanukah party. Marsha lights the menorah, and everyone enjoys the latki.

And it is the time to bake Christmas cookies and decorate the tree. Larry bakes huge batch of brownies, we combine them with my Czech Christmas cookies, and take a plate to each fire station in the town. Then we have our traditional Czech Christmas dinner, and to Larry's horror light the candles on the tree. On Christmas Day we traditionally have the entire highway patrol over for waffles. [Christmas](#)

Larry is entrusting Shattuck to a real estate agent, and returns to a normal human life. All of a sudden he is home while I am taking my run for the ferry in the morning, or getting in my way in the shower. He is home when I return from work, and he is not falling asleep at dinner. It is good to have him back. [Shattuck Court Finished](#)