

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, 2012!

website: arizonaloukiteboarder.com

Dear All,

Merry Christmas - Hope you and yours are doing well.

What an unusual year, with new kiteboarding experiences, health issues and toys.

The year started out with an almost month-long trip to the **Philippines** in late January for kiteboarding at Bulabog Beach on Boracay Island. You can find this, other trips, videos and photos on my TRIPS web page. It took two days to get there and involved three flights on two airlines, a cross-country (cross-island)



trip, a banca boat, a motorized tricycle (shown) and a walk along the beach to Surfers Home.

I spent my last week or so in the Philippines with Stacie, Self, my niece, who was in the peace corps. What fun, hiking waterfalls, hanging out and seeing her good work with profoundly deaf adults in Bacolod City on Negros Island.

Now the health issues: I had PVP (greenlight photo-selective vaporization of the **prostate**) surgery scheduled upon my return. The surgery went well but after it, I developed a PE (**pulmonary embolism**, or blood clot in the lungs). Some think it was due to the surgeon keeping me flat on my back for 24 hours. Anyway, I spent several days in the hospital, saw a parade of tests, blood thinners and anticoagulants go through my body, went on warfarin (dilute rat poison) for three months and was told not to do anything that could cause me to bleed. Canceled my traditional spring kiteboarding trip!

Since I could not do anything more strenuous than mild workouts at the gym, I designed and installed digital battery monitoring gauges in my van, got bids and had the mansard roof replaced on my Dahlia rental house, bought a Trex 100x micro **RC helicopter** (after meeting a personal challenge), celebrated George's (younger brother) retirement, continued shopping with 96-year old Mildred, and got a misplaced eye-tooth and a baby tooth

pulled. The baby tooth was about to fall out anyway and I did not want that to happen on one of my trips. I had my baby tooth, a molar, replaced with a dental implant.

In June I drove early to **Kansas** for my Central Christian College 50-year class reunion to help with work projects around the campus. I helped install data cables for their new journalism lab computers. Since it became windy and I was just off the warfarin, I stole away to Cheney Reservoir, west of Wichita, for some good kiteboarding and some good company. Back to Central for the reunion, it was awesome seeing and getting re-acquainted with my class mates. Somehow they were a lot older!

Then on to Hutchinson, Kansas to spend a few days with Stanley (older brother) and cart him off to Cheney for a second day of kiteboarding, where Mike Blair of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism did a neat video about this old guy (me!) visiting Kansas to kiteboard on Cheney.

On my way back to Arizona I stopped by **Altus, OK** for a week with Anne (daughter) and my two delightful granddaughters, swimming, babysitting, reading bedtime stories, walking the neighborhood, park visits, eating lunch in my van, going to church and working out at the air-force-base gym. Specific activities with Katie included stunt-kite flying; swim practice; creative sewing. Specific activities with Brooke included bowling; *Marble Maze* creations.

After my Kansas trip I did a little figuring and realized that, not only was there enough time to fly to Hawaii for 18 days of kiteboarding, but also the airfare was lower due to increased route competition and this was the windiest time of the year on **Maui**. It was the perfect way to spend the money I had been saving for "something." I kited every day, although the wind was a lot more gusty, there was more wind chop on the water and fewer good waves than I expected. It WAS a neat trip.

Late August I embarked on my big (3-month) trip, heading, initially to **Colorado Springs** to visit my oldest cousin, Herald. The highlight there, was zipping



across his small canyons on **zip lines**.

Then traveling across northern Kansas, I checked out some possible kiteboarding lakes when it is windy and ended up, for two months, on **Hatteras Island**, the Outer Banks (OBX) of North Carolina, the best kiteboarding conditions I have found on the planet. The wind was disappointing – they tell me, about the poorest they remember. I did get some good riding in, destroyed an old kite in the surf, bought a replacement and took a jump lesson from the best in the world, Dimitri Maramenides.

November was a whirlwind month, starting on Hatteras Island and ending up home in Phoenix.



Probably the most unusual experience was being on Hatteras when **Hurricane Sandy** went by, which created some pretty big waves (no this isn't me) and took out sections of Highway 12. As a result, getting off the island was a little tricky, having to take a ferry



Next stop was **Oneida, KY** to visit with Scott, my son. We had an excellent visit and I had a chance to visit old friends and meet new ones there. While in KY, I got my van's AC compressor replaced because it sounded like it was going to fly apart at any time.

Driving on toward South Padre Island, I stopped by Scottsboro, AL to check out the **Unclaimed Baggage Center** and bought a pair of shoes and a 7" Internet tablet there. Awesome store!

I stayed only a week on **South Padre**, needing to get home to Phoenix in time for my annual physical exam. I did get some good riding in, although this

year, I neither did a downwinder nor rode on the Gulf of Mexico.

A couple of Texas kiteboarders saw my website and invited me to spend some time kiteboarding with them. Since there was no wind and no kiteboarding, I drove up to Robstown and spent several days with **Adam**, kiteboard instructor, and his family, then on to Fredricksburg for two nights and Thanksgiving day with **Phillip** and his family. What a world when you are invited to stay with people who have never met you. I guess that demonstrates the power of the Internet, the quality of kiteboarders and that there are a lot of really nice people in this world!

On my way to Fredricksburg I spent a half day at the **Texas Ski Ranch** wake-board cable park, riding in circles on their lake being pulled by their 20 mph cable. I actually did a few little pops and a direction switch. (Here I am coasting in from a session).



In the financial department this year, I moved my cell phone service from AT&T to **StraightTalk** for unlimited and unrestricted talk, text, messaging and data in the U.S. I'll save about \$730 per year! 3 months later, the mess that AT&T created in the switchover is still not resolved!

Each month I have continued to invest what used to be my mortgage payment into Vanguard's Total World Stock ETF and also was fortunate enough to underwrite **Duet's** design and printing of their new "bookmark" brochure. Duet (duetaz.org) is the organization through which I take Mildred shopping and provide transportation, like doctor visits, for senior citizens who can no longer drive.

Be sure to check out the TRIPS page on my website.