



January


2012 NEWSLETTER

It's a new year and the holidays are over. All our children were home and it was just wonderful to sit and watch the action. Molly was here from LA for a real, old-time white Christmas. Molly has been working two jobs since she graduated from UCLA architecture school. She teaches in the architecture program at Woodbury University and does design work for an artist named Doug Aiken. This all seems to make ends meet, and along with going to lots of weddings, camping trips, and casting an occasional fly with her Dad, this keeps her plenty busy and thriving. Louisa was also here and again with boyfriend Nick Storm. Louisa has started a Masters/PhD program in the journalism/communications department at the University of Washington in Seattle. She and Nick worked for NOLS for many years, and this is an interesting new direction to their lives. Furthermore, we have learned that they will be married this summer! While all were here, we got to ski almost every day together, play some games, and eat lots of Christmas goodies. Paula, of course, orchestrated the whole affair with great amusement. Hank and Paula and the whole crew enjoyed the presence of all the chickens on the porch. Chickens through the winter came about when I was encouraged to build a real chicken house. Nick and Hank "socialized" these chickens, which can give you quite a laugh.

With all the fun of just having the kids at home, it always dawns on me how lucky we have been over the years. I think of all the friends we have made through our fishing trips and how, I'm sure, we have helped to bring more excitement, life, and meaning to many through the introduction of our beautiful western landscape. Thank you for this opportunity to make a lifetime of what most would not consider work! It is always wonderful to hear from you, about your families, adventures, misadventures, jokes, and just plain old life. Hope you can come by and visit, have a cup of coffee or tea, and chortle at the chickens.

Some of you may know that Ruby has had to retire because she came down with diabetes a year ago. We have to give her insulin twice a day and after losing her vision to cataracts, and the consequent miracle of lens replacement, she seems to be as happy and kind as ever. We just can't take her in the mountains anymore.

M O U N T A I N S E A S O N



Our 2011 season was anything but ordinary. After a spring (that means even early summer) that no one had ever seen before (snow, snow, snow), we were wondering if any of our mountain lakes would open up. We found out in not so

early July when we took Carolyn and Scott Heppel, Phil Gilbertson, and Rich Amerian to one of our old haunts. Carolyn and Scotty had been there several times over 20 years or more. We found the water very high, but the lakes at timberline were thawed enough and it felt like a particular

adventure trying to coax goldens out from under remnants of ice. Hank and I tag-teamed again on all our mountain trips, which also included a backpack adventure starting West of the Divide with Joe Brereton, and Don Kelley and his son Forrest. This trip





was marked with adapting to the conditions presented us.

We had fun finding big cuts (some hiding under the ice), but our goal of the big GOLD (golden trout) had to be put off for another season. Wonderful to see this crew bond together and make the situation work for all. It turned out that conditions finally normalized by August (except that we still found spawning fish up high). We were joined by **Charlie Scott** (now 85), his son **Scotty** and new wife **Mary (McGuire)**. All had a great time...such a pleasure to observe those who just enjoy being in wild country. Slightly later we took long time mountain stream man **Leon Patterson** and his two outdoors friends from South Carolina, **Steve Navarro** and **Doug Harper**, to one of our favorite locales. They all thrived through still heavy bugs to catch lots of trout and enjoy the beautiful country. The last trip of the main summer included **Paula Hunker** and our friends **Linda** and **Reid Murchison** from North Carolina, along with daughter **Sarah** and husband, **Andy Campbell**, daughter **Claire**, and niece **Allison**. Although not all were die-hard fly fishermen, Hank showed them how to have real fun. It was wonderful to spend time with this caring family. Hank and my final trip in the season came in September with **Jim**

Knippen (at least 20 trips in the mountains), **Ed Walsh** and **Doug Gouge** (at least ten trips in the mountains each). These guys love being out (even when it snows); they love the Winds, and spending time around the fire! We told lots of old stories and jokes.

Jim Ferguson led two mountain trips with his niece **Anna**. As usual they loved being in our Winds high country. **Mike Reese** joined them again, with younger daughter **Mollie**. And later **June Aprille** and **Nelson O'Bryan** enjoyed their favorite high camp under the peaks. June fished hard as usual and Nelson caught some nice ones and progressed in the learning process. Jim took **Steve Hempel** on a backpack in September, where Steve landed a particularly nice stream golden.

Locally we experienced some of the best fishing one could expect. The hopper fishing in late summer was shocking. So fun to be startled by a brown trout explosion! Jim fished with **John Kolb** and **Francie** and **Chuck Hulin** along with new face **Jim Dunn**. I got to fish for our jumping browns in late summer with **Peggy** and **Kurt Mundt**, **Mike Vandierdonck** and his buddy **Ted Bloomquist**, also **Cliff Garten** and local **Bruce Campbell** and his son-in-law **Jason Salsgiver**. Hank spent one day on the Bighorn in our new

Clakacraft drift boat with **Mike** and **Ted**, not to mention a ton of time on his own. We feel we have a pretty good read on that river and would love to guide there more, especially in the spring (March-June) and the fall (September-November). The baetis mayflies were still hatching in early December. **Doug Gouge** and I hit it good on small dries on a busman's holiday the day after he got out of the mountains in September. They even let me row occasionally.

Check out Hank's latest fishing videos on YouTube. Search hankhunker. They're fun!

We hope that this letter finds you well and ready for a new year's adventures, and that maybe a Sweetwater trip will figure into your plans. Some of our friends have returned for more than 20 years and always find something new. We would love to float the Bighorn with you, fish a Tenkara rod on a small stream, or hangout around a campfire in the Winds. Hope to see you soon!

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