



I'm an Adult Now!

Thursday July 25th 2019 – It's Skylar's Birthday!! And he is now officially an adult. At 18 I'm not sure if you can really say that, but legally I guess he is. For his birthday he wanted to go to Squirrel Cove about 2 hours away. He loves the rope swing at Squirrel and the lagoon with reversing rapids is fun to play in.

In the bay we met back up with Bruce and Gloria and some other friends of ours, the Scott's (Jason & Coleen along with their 2 young kids Jacob and Delanie) also tied up with us. All 4 boats were tied together for the party. Skylar insisted on fish tacos. The fish was not a problem, but all the other fixings needed to be obtained from the Squirrel Cove store. It's a short dinghy ride away and not much of a store but we made do. The tacos were great, and it was fun to watch everyone give Skylar advice on being an "adult".

Friday July 26th – Then it happened. Skylar's first full day on the job as an adult he hurt himself.

Remember what I said about medical attention being hard to get to here? We were about to find out just how hard it really was.

The rope swing. Yes, of course the rope swing. The same rope

swing that yesterday Skylar and I argued that the rope swing we have had so much fun on over the years didn't look all that safe anymore. "Dad, its fine" he said in a now "adult" voice, but it sounded the same to me. I told him "it looks like the hill under the swing has fallen down some, you better only do that at high tide". The day went on, but the time came that evening, just before dinner, when some of the kids went to the swing for some fun.

We were all hanging out on the 4 boats tied together when all of the sudden a dinghy came racing toward us. It was Jason, who was calm but firm "I need your medical kits, blankets and 2 guys to help me. Skylar has been hurt"! The thoughts that go through your head at that moment are unexplainable. Not knowing the extent of the injury is the worst. As we were frantically gathering some things Jason went back and was able to get Skylar in his dinghy. Upon his return I could see a huge open wound exposing the bones just above Skylar's left knee and another one on his shin. Skylar was in a bit of a daze, and there was a lot of blood. We lifted him out of the dinghy and on to Jason's boat. I pulled out some absorbent pads and placed them on the wounds while wrapping it up pretty tight with a bandage.

Skylar stayed amazingly calm as the sun set in the sky. Now, how to get him help. Bruce radioed or called someone, I don't even know who, and arranged to have an ambulance pick Skylar up in Lund. The problem is that Lund would be at least 3 hours away on our boat, it would be dark by then. Jason, God bless him, offered to take us to Lund on his boat. At 31' his Sargo appropriately named "Kinsmen" was built for speed.

Julie was smart enough to grab a few things like, snacks, phones, and my wallet as we got the boat ready to leave. Jason drove the boat. Julie and Bill (who was a friend of Bruce's and someone who we had just met a couple days ago), and myself all tried to keep Skylar comfortable on the boat as we headed out of the bay to open water. The sun was setting further now,

and the seas had picked up. 2-3' waves pounded the boat for the next 40 minutes at 32 knots. It was not comfortable for Skylar, but it was our best option to get him there quickly. Bill was such a kind man. So helpful and calming. He prayed over us asking God for help in this time of need. Jason stayed calm and drove the boat with determination. I guess military training has its advantages in a time like this. Skylar started to go into shock and was really hurting but he was so strong and positive.

The staff at the Lund hotel and fuel dock had been alerted we were coming. They cleared the dock to give us room and the manager of the hotel was out there with 2 other staff members to help us get Skylar up the dock ramp. They were all amazingly helpful. The manager had an Australian accent which just makes everything better! The ambulance was waiting but the problem is Lund doesn't have any medical facilities. (Lund is the northern most point of highway 1, its where the road starts and goes all the way to Chile) The closest hospital was in Powel River which was a 45-minute twisty road ahead.

Skylar, now getting a little delusional, was doing pretty good. He was talking with the EMT, who was the nicest guy ever. After hearing the story, he said "oh yeah, you were on a Zunga". "A what" we said. "A Zunga". There are so many rope swings up here that the people of Powel River coined the term Zunga for rope swing. The local brewery even named a beer after it.

It was all very interesting and chatty but, the ambulance was getting extremely hot. The EMT who was riding in back with us finally called up to the driver to have her turn the A/C on. We waited for some kind of relief, but it didn't come. Another call to the driver, this time to turn it up, still didn't cool us down. "It must be broken" he said. By that time, I was feeling pretty sick. My adrenalin was slowing, the roads were twisty, it was super-hot, and the lack of windows were all taking a toll on me. Thankfully Julie brought some snacks

which provided some temporary relief. Skylar meanwhile, just kept talking and talking, almost as if nothing was wrong.

We arrived at the hospital where they immediately supplied a bed for Skylar to rest. A nurse came in and checked Skylar out. She looked at the wounds and said, "oh yeah that's going to require more than just stitches". There was only one other person in the ER, and he was right next to us. A little boy was crying in pain while his mom and dad tried to console him. We felt so sorry for the little guy, probably only about 5 years old. Then it really started to hit me. Everything started to calm down with Skylar, but my nerves were pretty shot. And it was so heartbreaking to hear this little kid in so much pain. I went from burning up in the ambulance to shivering uncontrollably. The nurse gave me a warm blanket which helped a little, but it was really hard to take control of my emotions. Soon we found out the little boy had broken his femur. The small hospital was not equipped to take care of him, so they were preparing him to be flown out to Vancouver.

The nurse had to bring in the on call in a surgeon to evaluate Skylar. He arrived pretty quickly and took a look at Skylar. His hair was all bedhead and he had the personality of a toad. Our confidence level was plummeting. He told us the wounds were pretty severe and he would need to go under general anesthesia, then the wounds would need to be cleaned out really well before patching him back up. It wasn't a surprise. Two more on call nurses were called in to handle the situation. Skylar was in pretty good spirits, despite still not having any pain medication. As the surgeon took him back Julie and I said a prayer and asked God to please take good care of him.

An hour or so later Julie and I went back to a recovery room while Skylar woke up. The surgeon and nurse gave us the good news that everything went well. He had countless stitches inside, a chipped bone and 27 staples holding everything closed. The surgeon started to open up a little, which was

nice. He was retired but filled in part time when the normal surgeon for the hospital was on vacation. He was actually very caring. He insisted he be the one to come in and see Skylar in 3 days for a checkup.

Skylar woke up without any of the stories you hear of kids saying funny things. He could have at least provided us with that! It was now about midnight and Julie and I started to realize the situation we were in. All of the sudden things came to light. No extra clothes, no cell phone chargers, no food, no place to stay, no transportation, and no way to get Skylar around. I had a T-Shirt on, shorts and Skylar's tennis shoes on with no sox. Julie was about in the same situation. We found a hotel where the lady on the phone was super sweet. She said she would have a wheelchair waiting for us when we arrived. So now about that arrival, "who should we call" I asked her. There was one taxi service who of course only had one car available that night. After about 20 minutes he arrived, and we were able to slowly get Skylar in the cab. After a very weird conversation with the driver about Trump, where he insisted on knowing if we supported him, we asked him to stop at a store so we could buy some snacks, water and cell phone chargers. On to the hotel, we said goooooooooodbyeeeeeeeee to the weird driver and wheeled Skylar inside the room. Julie and I crashed while Skylar watched a Friends marathon on TV.

Saturday July 27th – The next morning brought more pain for Skylar. We wheeled him to breakfast in the hotel then I walked to a pharmacy for some crutches and prescriptions. Lund and Powell River are only about 12nm away by water. After dropping us off in Lund the previous day, Jason and Bill tried to make a late run to Powell River knowing that's where we would be the next day however, it got too rough and they turned around to go back to Lund for the night. So that meant we needed to get to Lund for a ride back to our boat. The taxi service once again picked up and drove us the 40 minutes to Lund where we got back on Jason's boat to get back to the boats anchored in

Squirrel Cove. The ride was uncomfortable for Skylar, but he was so tough throughout the whole ordeal. You know there might be something wrong with your child when later he says “actually, I wouldn’t take it back, it was worth it, I got to meet so many nice people and have such an amazing experience”.

We got him back on our boat and into bed where he was able to rest for the evening.

So, by now you are probably wondering how it happened. Knowing Skylar, you are probably thinking he was doing some daring dumb thing. Not exactly. He was at the bottom of the hill holding on to the tail of the rope. While climbing up, he neared the top getting ready to swing out. As he turned to swing, still holding the end of the rope, he lost his footing and fell forward. He held the rope and swung out. Because he was so low on the rope his legs were low enough to hit some rocks at the bottom. These were the rocks that gouged his leg open. Luckily, he had the sense to pull his legs up as much as possible to minimize the damage and keep turned enough not to slam his knee. That’s it, nothing very exciting, just a little slip. What’s weird is that I fell off a rope swing and broke my arm when I was a kid. A pretty bad clean break, my arm looked like an S curve. Like father like son.





Not so good veggies





The boat that saved us



Positive attitude!





All stitched up