

NEWSLETTER # 5

Apia

Western Samoa

September 1986

Dear Friends,

Contrary to all speculation and conjecture, Georgia and I have not sailed off the edge of the earth, nor have we become pot-luck for a tribe of cannibals. Rather it has been decided that it was my turn to write the news letter and, I must say, I do have trouble sitting down and shutting all else out so I can write. Well with much prayer and urging from my conscience and Georgia, it seems that this is the day to set pen to paper and let you know what is happening here in the South Pacific.

Brenda, Georgia and I sailed from Bora Bora to the atoll of Mopelia which was a voyage of 125 miles. When we arrived at the pass it was like a raging river and my tug boating experiences proved real handy in these currents. I was glad we had installed a new 48 horsepower diesel engine before leaving the U.S. because we used 47 of those horses to make it thru the pass. The current out of the pass was 7 and a half knots. Once inside the lagoon we dodged some coral heads and made our way to where there were about 15 other yachts anchored. Brenda said it looked like Marina Del Rey: We met a lot of yachties here and it wasn't long before Brenda and I went on a fishing expedition with Peter from "Yah-udie". We went out to the reef in our zodiac inflatable where the water was so clear and only 3 to 6 feet deep, jumped in with our spears and in no time had a bucket full of parrot fish, red snapper, grouper, and unicorn fish. After the first few fish we speared we also had a number of white tip and black tip sharks keeping us company. About the time we were to wrap up our spear-fishing a large gray shark came by. Brenda let out a shout and jumped into the dinghy where I had been resting. The gray was about 6 feet long and he came within 3 feet of the dinghy so I let him have it with the blunt end of the oar and he sure got out of there fast!

The next day the wind changed direction so we motored down to the anchorage in front of the village. We could hear someone crying very loudly and then we saw Ruta, the chiefs wife, sitting in about 2-1/2 feet of water near the beach and she was resting her head on the front bumper of the island jeep which was taking a bath??? We went ashore in the dinghy and tried to comfort Ruta. We finally pieced together that John had accidentally driven the jeep into the sea and was off to get the other two men to help get it out. I went back to 'Flyer' to pick up our long nylon anchor line and some pulleys then returning to shore, hooked the line and pulleys to the back of the jeep and the other end to a conveniently placed coconut palm. By this time some of the other yachters had arrived and with all the extra help we pulled the jeep to dry land. In two days, Jim, from "Scorpion", who was a good mechanic, had the jeep running again.

About this time we acquired a fourth crew member in the middle of the night! We heard a commotion topsides and I leaped from my bunk to see what was going on. There was Ron from "Voyager" with his crew, Colleen, whom his family had taken on in Bora Bora and they were arguing so I quieted them down and found out that they had had personality conflicts and tonight was the time to unload! Colleen had asked to be put ashore and in the process they had hit a coral head. So Ron came to our boat to see

if she could stay aboard until morning. In the morning we discussed the situation with Colleen and decided she could sail with us to Pago Pago.

One day Brian from "Foxy Lady II" was cleaning some fish when he realized that the fillet he was working on was his thumb! Brenda's E.M.T. training was put right to work and she had him steri-stripped together in no time and instructed him to stay out of the water. Several days later we were anchored off the bird motu when a dinghy came along side with another wounded yachter named Bruce. It seems that they were making coconut crab traps and he miss took his shin bone for a coconut and whacked it good with a machete! After Brenda shaved his leg (I accused her of shaving a lot more of his leg than she needed to and she just smiled) and cleaned it up, she pulled the 1-1/2 inch cut together with Steri-strips and then wrapped it with gauze and the repair was complete. We felt sorry for Bruce since he was sailing by him self so we invited him to stay for dinner and carrot cake after. I had a spare coconut onboard, so I showed it to Bruce so he would not make the same mistake again! His yacht's name is "Carlad" and he has sailed from London, England.

The day we were preparing to leave Mopelia, the whole village came out in their barge and they didn't look very happy. We soon found out that the chief, Ruta's husband, had died in the hospital at Papeete, and they wondered if we could call on our ham radio to the next island for a boat to pick Ruta up so she could go to the funeral in Papeete. The only yacht I could contact was in Bora Bora, so they gave the message to the officials there and they said they would take care of it. We said goodbye to the islanders and yachters and set sail for Suvarov Island in the Cooks.

It was nice to have the extra help from Colleen on the six day passage to Suvarov since the weather was real squally and sometimes we would almost go in a circle to miss a thunder storm or big black cloud on the horizon. When we did arrive at Suvarov, it was in the morning and as we approached the entrance pass, we sighted four men on the shore waving very animatedly with hats and palm branches. We didn't know whether they were shipwrecked or just excited to see us. Shortly after we had dropped the anchor in front of Tom Niel's cabin, the men came out in their aluminum boat and greeted us, They were the officials who were to look after the bird rookery and the fisheries there and were also to check all yachts for proper clearance into the Cook Islands, which we hadn't done, so Mr. Kola said we could stay 48 hours. Georgia then handed them our guitar and they really enjoyed playing their island songs for us since they didn't bring one with them. Mr. Kola told us to feel free to come ashore to look around so after we cleaned up the boat (I was a little unpopular for demanding that the boat be cleaned first) we all went ashore and found the fellows busy cleaning up the fallen trees and rubbish. They got us a bunch of drinking nuts and then demonstrated how to husk them and climb the palm trees which Brenda, Colleen and I tried, but didn't quite master the technique in the short time we were there.

The next morning Sam, John and Tom came out and took Brenda and Colleen out to the outer reef in the low water to gather lobster and in a couple of hours they returned with 12 lobster and then took them (lobster) to shore and cooked them for our lunch. Yummmmmmmmm! After lunch the boys took us to the bird motus across the lagoon where we gathered coconut crab and tern eggs. These eggs are smaller than chicken eggs and have bright orange yolks but the flavor is very much like chicken eggs, so we replenished our supply of fresh eggs since they told us that the terns will lay more eggs when they find their egg missing.

On the return trip to the cabin we trolled the hand lines as we made several passes across the entrance of the lagoon. We hooked several tuna and then I had one line and a hard jerk about pulled me out of

the boat! I started to reel in the line when everybody began to laugh since Sam had jerked on the line when I wasn't looking! We made another pass and there was another hard jerk but this time a 4 foot barracuda leaped high out of the water and then shook loose before I could haul it in. (PHEW!)

That evening we had a wonderful feast on shore prepared by the four men. They had woven plates from palm fronds and cooked everything in the 'umu', which is a pit oven. We took our guitar, mandolin and autoharp ashore with us so the men entertained us while we ate barbecued tuna, coconut crab, lobster and rice with coconut milk and onions. Boy, it was fabulous..! It was then their turn to eat and for us to entertain them so we sang songs and then noticed that they were not eating off palm plates but using real dinner plates so we accused them of laughing at us while we ate with our fingers from those funny palm plates. I had set up my tape recorder at the beginning of the entertainment and recorded all the songs of which I gave them a copy. Our copy has reminded us many times of our Suvarov friends.

Another nice thing about Suvarov Island is the lack of bugs, mosquitoes, and no-nos. Tom Niel settled on this island years ago and he wrote a book "An Island Unto Itself" (I think?) and I can see why someone would like to settle here because food abounds here and the islands are beautiful and tranquil.

The day came for us to leave and we went ashore to say goodbye and exchange gifts. We had been here four days and became very fond of these islanders who had also enjoyed our stay. As we sailed out the pass there were four men waving palm branches until we were out of sight. They had also lit a signal fire on the beach and we could see the smoke from six miles away. It was hard to say goodbye to these friends but onward to the west and Pago Pago, American Samoa.

We made a quick 3 day passage to Pago Pago and as we approached the island we caught a bonito for our dinner that night!

Anchoring in Pago Harbor is like Russian Roulette! You think you are anchored well and then the wind changes direction and off you go just like your anchor had come loose from the anchor chain. Quick! Fire up the engine so you don't blow onto the reef or into that yacht or those tuna ships or those barges and try again! We finally asked the Lord to set our anchor for us and we didn't move after that.

On shore we asked some yachters where the post office was, they pointed and told us what a hassle it was to pick up mail here because of the power outages caused by generators breaking down from lack of maintenance. We were expecting to pick up a lot of mail here and had been praying regularly that it would all arrive without any problems. Shortly after we arrived at the post office the general delivery window opened and I asked if there was any mail for Murphy's on "American Flyer"? The postal clerk asked what had taken us so long and then began to hand us piles of mail and boxes which were stacked on top of her desk, under her desk and next to the window! I was glad we had run in to Bruce, from "Cariad", at the pier and he had tagged along to the post office with us. I bribed him with a cheeseburger to help us carry all the mail to the boat. His leg had healed up just fine.

Though the harbor here is the "PITS" because they dump everything into it including the waste from the tuna canneries across the harbor, the shopping is great. Prices are just like back home and so are the groceries, all American brands. What a blessing after French Polynesian high prices and strange canned goods. We restocked "Flyer" and took on 30 gallons of fuel.

Bruce spent a lot of time with us while in Pago Pago and when we sailed to Apia, Western Samoa, he decided to tag along. It was just an overnight sail and we arrived in Apia at 1:30 in the afternoon but the

customs officials were not to be found since there was a championship soccer game that afternoon. We stayed at the pier over the weekend and cleared in on Monday.

The first person we wanted to contact in Apia was our Samoan friend, Taua-lai Tuletufuga (Tau), who we had met during our DTS onboard the YWAM ship, "M/V Anastasis", in 1984. When we met at "Aggie Gray's Hotel" it was like meeting a long lost brother, we rejoiced that the Lord would bring us together again, and in Western Samoa, of all places! Tau and his wife Jane had arrived here three months ago and he was sent out by the Church of God, in Hawaii, as an evangelist to these islands. He had established a ministry at the local prison and invited us to go with him the next Saturday to minister to the prisoners. Later in the week Jane gave birth to Jarina Georgia, their first child.

On Saturday Georgia, Brenda, Bruce, Tau and I, went to the prison and we sang some praise songs, then I gave my testimony, which Tau translated and then asked the prisoners if any wanted to come forward to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Seventeen out of the twenty nine prisoners came forward and knelt down for individual prayer for salvation. Praise the Lord!

Sunday we went to Peace Chapel where we met pastor Bert Pierce and his wife Jolan. Bert and Jolan welcomed us with open arms and made us feel right at home. What a blessing to finally be in a fellowship where you can understand what is being said for until now all the church services had been in French or Tahitian and none of those congregations could speak English. Later, Bert told us that he and Jolan were going to be leaving this ministry and return to the States because of Jolan's health problems and he wondered if we could stay to help in the church until the new pastor came in September. Georgia and I prayed about it and, all things considered, said we could.

Much to soon, the time arrived for our number one crew, Brenda, to return to her job with the county fire department in Coeur d'Alene. I suggested to Georgia that she could go home for a months visit and on July 10, we set sail for Pago Pago, to catch the plane and pick up our mail at general delivery. Bruce decided to follow along with his boat so he could help us celebrate Brenda's 24th birthday on July 12. By the way, while in Apia, Bruce had spent a lot of time with us and it wasn't long before he began to ask us questions about salvation and the Lord. By his direct questions and openness we could see the Lord beginning to work in his life and it was very encouraging to all of us.

We had just a few days before Georgia and Brenda were to fly out and on this particular day when the girls were up town shopping, Bruce came over to "Flyer" and began asking me about certain passages in the Bible, salvation and eternity, and it seemed that the holy Spirit gave me all the right answers with the scriptures to back it up. Later Bruce was over for dinner, and with us for witnesses he asked Jesus to be his Lord and Savior. Praise God!!! Brenda had been expecting this and she presented Bruce with a Bible she had purchased the day before.

At 1:30 AM, July 14, Bruce and I waved goodbye to Georgia and Brenda as the plane took off for the states. Bruce and I chummed around together for the rest of the week and on Friday we borrowed a car from our friends Rick and Alice who worked at the cannery. We toured the island in the morning and then in the afternoon we picked up our supplies and took them to the pier, by then it was 3:00 pm. We decided to see if we could clear customs before 4:00 pm so we would not have to pay \$30.00 overtime. We unloaded our supplies on the pier and while I was hauling them out to the boats Bruce took the car back to the cannery and hopped on a bus for the customs office. After unloading the supplies on the two boats I sped over the one-half mile in the dinghy, to the office where Bruce had just arrived. It was now

3:30 pm. We told the officials that we wanted to clear before 4:00 pm and they said there was “no way” we could make it. We said we would like to try anyway. After filling out the papers in this office we ran downstairs where they said we hadn’t received all the papers from upstairs , so back upstairs and then downstairs again. After paying the fees we headed out the door at 3:45 pm. and on a dead run jumped into the dinghy and zoomed over to our boats. I hardly slowed down as I passed “Cariad” and Bruce took a wild leap and snagged the backstay and swung aboard as I headed for “Flyer”. I jumped aboard, fired up the engine, ran forward to the anchor windlass uttering a prayer that the anchor would not be hooked on some World War II jeep, tank or landing craft and it would come free without any delay. I stepped on the switch of the windlass, it came to life and the chain and anchor wound up perfectly. Back to the cockpit to put the engine in gear and head for the pier with Bruce close behind me. As “Flyer” came alongside the pier a car from the customs pulled up and the official asked if I was going to tie up? I asked him if it made any difference and he said that if I tied up we would be on overtime. “We are not going to tie up”!!!!!! Just then Bruce pulled alongside “Flyer” and the official handed both clearance papers to me. It was 4:00 pm. Thank you Lord! I wonder if anyone has ever cleared from Pago Pago that fast before?

We both motored to the center of the harbor where we prepared for sea. Deflate and stow the dinghy, wash down anchor chain, store supplies, etc. I sure was missing my good crew about now, but in 1-1/2 hours we were ready to sail to Apia where I had planned to wait for Georgia’s return and Bruce hoped to be baptized by the pastor at Peace Chapel. Several days later Bruce and two Samoans who had recently accepted the Lord, were baptized in the ocean by Mark Quigley and within a couple of days Bruce set sail for Tonga. So-long Bruce, God bless you and hope to meet you again.

The remaining three weeks before Georgia’s return were spent seeking a clearer and closer relationship with my Lord. I also met with Tau daily during the week to discuss the needs and condition of the church here in Western Samoa. We would then intercede for these needs in prayer.

These islands are wall to wall churches of all the major denominations and the Western Samoa Constitution declares that this is a Christian Nation. Even so, the cults of Mormonism and Bahai are getting a foothold here. I believe this is because these churches have become like the Pharisees and Sadducees, of Jesus day, very precise in the act of religion but the Spirit of the Lord is not in them. There are so many “Christians” who have never heard about being ‘born again’ as in John 3:1-7. The Samoan pastors use the islanders pride to their advantage and become among the wealthiest men on the islands. How?? By reading in front of the congregation the list of members and how much they had tithed that day. Samoans use money which should be used to buy much needed food or clothing to tithe much more than they should so they will ‘appear’ richer than they really are! Pride is truly one of the major stumbling blocks for people who miss or reject truth and salvation through Jesus Christ. The field is ripe for harvest. An evangelist from New Zealand was here for two weeks and several hundred gave their lives to the Lord. The believers here are hoping and praying for a revival soon.

One answered prayer I would like to share with you; While meeting on the boat one day, Tau mentioned that the Samoan Parliament was in session in Apia. We felt led to pray that the Lord would raise up a voice for Him in parliament. Two weeks later, Tau met a Christian man who told him that he had a friend in parliament who had given his life to the Lord in the crusade last week and on top of that he had been with his parliament friend three years ago at an open air meeting when the evangelist there pointed to his friend and told him that God had put him in parliament for His purpose! Thank you Lord for

answered prayer! The Scriptures tell us, the Lord is answering our prayers even before we utter them. Can you believe three years before?

While Georgia was away I did some work on "Flyer". Since we sailed from Portland, Oregon last October, we have been sleeping on the sea berths in the main cabin because the 'v-berth' in the forward compartment had been totally packed out with sails and 'things'. My plan was to liberate the v-berth so Georgia and I could be cozy once more. After sorting, repacking and shuffling things around, I shipped the sails ashore to the pastors house for storage. I then rebuilt the v-berth to fill in the space that had been left out and cut a new piece of foam for the mattress. Next, with new dark blue sheets with light blue hibiscus flower print, some teak trim here and there, fans and lights, it looked real sharp. The day that Georgia was to arrive, Tau and Jane picked some beautiful flowers and I set them around in boat which made everything ready for her return. Also, I scraped the barnacles off the bottom of the boat which we must have picked up in Pago Harbor. Now I know why Bruce was able to keep up with me so easily on our passage from Pago Pago to Apia!

Georgia flew to Idaho via Los Angeles, where she stayed several days with our friends, Danny and Sue Sawyer, and gave a report to the church there in Cardiff, California, then on to Coeur d'Alene, where all our relatives live. She had a special time with our daughter, Sophie, who she hadn't seen since last October, and also Brenda and Georgia's parents Helen and Charles Finch who have been taking care of our affairs while we are gone. Thank you Helen and Charles! Georgia also visited with my relatives and many of our friends there in Coeur d'Alene. At our home church, Cornerstone Christian Fellowship, she gave a progress report on our mission and the needs in the South Pacific and they took up an offering for our mission, which we appreciated very much. One of the needs in the prison ministry was a guitar for the prisoners to use and a dear lady friend of ours bought a new guitar and Georgia was able to hand deliver it to Tau who took it to the prison and the prisoners are now singing praise songs among themselves.

Georgia really blessed me one time while I was talking with her by ham radio. We were trying to arrange for her flight back to Apia and she asked, "Would it be OK if I come home a couple of days early?" It was nice that she wanted to return early but what really blessed me was she said "HOME". Truly, home is where the heart is. Her time in the States was very intensive but she weathered it well until two days before she was to fly 'home' to Apia. She came down with the flu bug that was going around and the doctor said there wasn't any medicine for it and she would just have to wait for it to run its course. Georgia is not one to take things lying down and she called her family in for prayer for healing and the next morning she got out of bed and packed her bags! Next day, after 24 hours flight, she arrived back on "Flyer" with energy to spare and was amazed and pleased with the remodel and flowers. She could tell I had really missed her.

As the Lord leads, we have been able to share with the other yachters about how the Lord is raising up a fleet of boats to serve in the Pacific and we are coming into contact with more Christian sailors. The other day a woman came paddling over from one of the new yachts and said she had noticed the Christian fish symbol on our transom. She was a Christian and wanted prayer for her family, who were not, for them to be saved and for her daughters health. The following Sunday she and her daughter went with us to church and she told us that there was a new openness in her family towards Christ and her daughter was improving in her health. Praise the Lord!

If I don't stop writing you will never get this letter, so in closing I would like to say that what I said about the many churches here in Samoa was not meant as judgment, but rather to inform you all so you can pray accordingly for the needs and REVIVAL.

We are enjoying our stay here in Western Samoa and love these people but hate to see the false teachings of Mormonism and Bahai along with others that are taking hold here.

We should be here in Apia until about the 20th of September, when our visitors permit runs out. Then on to the Tonga Group until the last week of November, when we shall finally set sail for Auckland, New Zealand and arrive there the first part of December 1986.

May God bless and keep you all and also help you to write to us here. We do so much enjoy the letters that arrive.

In the Lord's Navy,
Loren & Georgia Murphy