Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

A Seattle couple leave their jobs to go cruising on their 40' cutter. During their two year, 15,000 mile adventure, Bob Richardson and Candace Allen sail to Mexico, the Marquesas and Tuamotus', Society Islands, American and Western Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, New Zealand, and then beat back home against the trade winds via the Cook Islands and Hawaii.

Queen Charlotte Is.
Vancouver
San Francisco
Los Angeles
Guadalupe
Pioneer Rdg
Murray Deep
Molokai Fracture Zone
Tropic of Cancer
Clarion Fracture Zone
Clipperton Fracture
Equator
MARQUESAS
Nuku Hiva
Fatu Hiva
TUAMOTU
Fakarava
Makemo
Hao
SOCIETY IS.
Tahiti
TUBUAI IS.
Austral Ridge
Is. Gambier
Mangareva
Oeno
Henderson I.
Ducie I.
Pitcairn I.
Actaeon Group
HAWAIIAN ISLANDS
Midway Is.
Honolulu
Hawaii
Johnston I.
Palmyra
Teraina
Kiritimati
Malden I.
Starbuck I.
Caroline I.
Flint I.
Vostok I.
PHOENIX IS.
Hilgard Deep
KIRIBATI
MARSHALL ISLANDS
NAURU
GILBERT ISLANDS
Kingsmill Group
TUVALU
TOKELAU
WESTERN SAMOA
Samoa (U.S.A.)
FIJI
Viti Levu
VANUATU
TONGA
Niue
Rarotonga
New Caledonia
Noumea
Norfolk I.
Three Kings Is.
NORTH ISLAND
NEW ZEALAND
Wellington
SOUTH ISLAND
Chatham Rise
Chatham Is.
Stewart I.
Mellish Seamount
Milwaukee Seamounts
Wake I.
INTERNATIONAL DATE LINE

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Chapter 1 - The Getaway

The Dream is Born

The first time I sailed "offshore" I was thirteen. My friend, Mike Poor, and I sailed his Herreshoff 12 1/2 two miles off the Marblehead lighthouse. The fog rolled in, putting land out of sight. It wasn't luck that we'd had a good chart and a compass. Basic navigation skills and a healthy respect for the sea were lessons from earlier years. But I'll always remember that combined sense of adventure and responsibility as we plotted our way through the fog, from racing buoy to navigational marker, until we located our mooring buoy.

The sense of accomplishment was great, yet I couldn't share it with my parents. They would have had "a fit" if they knew Mike and I were out sailing in the pea soup fog. Nevertheless, it was an experience I sought out several more times that summer.

The first time I seriously considered long distance, off-shore passage making was after reading William F. Buckley's book, Atlantic High. While Buckley's book may have planted the seed, my neighbor Wynn Kampe nurtured the seed. He was planning a trip around the world and was a never ending source of good advice. Finally, hassles at work provided all the fertilizer the seed needed to blossom into a full blown dream that had to be fulfilled. Unfortunately for Wynn, his trip ended tragically in Argentina, but not before he fulfilled one of his life long dreams, sailing around the Straits of Magellan.

On the outside of Vancouver Island, July 1988

Three months later, on April 15, 1989, my wife Candace and I resigned from our high stress consulting jobs. We had already purchased a Tashiba 40, a.k.a Baba 40, built by Tashing, which is a traditional, cutter rigged cruising sailboat. We named her ***Baba BarAnn*** after the Beach Boy's popular song, and dreamt about her carrying us to distant beaches. Why wait? Do it now! Our lives took off on a completely new tack, as we feverishly prepared for a long term sailing adventure. We worked seven days a week, trying to check off all the tasks that accumulated on our "to do" lists.

We read many books written by other cruisers . . . Hal Roth, the Pardey's, the Hiscock's. We wound down one lifestyle and wound up another. We canceled insurance and subscriptions, stored furniture, changed addresses, closed bank accounts, leased out our house, moved onto the boat. We learned about ham radio, navigation, provisioning, DC electricity, marine plumbing systems, customs, charts, first aid, and Spanish. August 21, 1989 was circled on the calendar as the date of departure. That would make it possible for my fifteen year old son Alex to join us on the first leg to San Francisco, and still get back to school for his sophomore year. The lists dwindled; we made it happen.

Can you imagine our excitement, our apprehension? The longest trip we'd taken was a one month circumnavigation of Vancouver Island. We'd never sailed offshore more than a few miles, and never over night. How far would we get?

We're Off!

On Sunday, we dropped off our car with Alayne, one of Candace's best friends. She said she'd try selling it for us, and did within the week. Late in the day Joel, my long-time friend and bridge partner, stopped by with a bottle of Champagne and final best wishes. That was really nice. That night we walked up to Azteca on Market Street for the "last supper" in Seattle. Shortly after arriving back at the boat, around 9 PM, one of Alex's friends showed up to say goodbye. She didn't leave until 10:30 or so. So our "finals" (that's ham talk) had been said and we were ready to go.

Monday morning, drop off the key with the marina, top off the water tanks, and then through the locks. I won't be missing them any! One of the first things I noticed was the failure of my instruments to register "boat speed." In two years of owning the boat I've never had a problem with that. Now, when I'm pulling away from the dock on my lifetime saga, it craps out on me! Well, that's something I'll have to deal with much later. Then to Shilshole to top off the diesel tank. While there I started talking to a guy who was filling the tanks in his large, beautiful, $500,000+ (I can't tell when they get that big) power boat. When he asked where we were going, I couldn't resist saying "around the world." After chatting some more, he said that he owned a small winery, Salmon Bay, and gave us three bottles to send us on our way. We later discovered they're very good . . . definitely much better than the caliber I'm used to buying.

Now we wanted to take a spin around Elliott Bay and "say good bye to the office," and perhaps rub it in a little. The Seattle marine operator would not take our International telephone card, since it was a local call, and she wouldn't take VISA. What to do? So we called them collect and of course the switchboard operator accepted the

call! Then we gybed around and headed north to Port Townsend, our destination for the first night. By Point No Point, the wind was swinging around to the north, and it was quite threatening. The windmill was screaming and rain was starting to spit. While reefing the mainsail, the windmill came apart! Two of the four bolts holding the rudder on the windmill had shaken loose, making the whole device rattle like crazy. By now it was raining sideways, with the wind gusting to 29 knots straight from the north, and starting to get dark.

Port Townsend seemed a bit optimistic, so we headed over to Port Ludlow to lick our wounds. Into the little harbor at Port Ludlow, we anchored for the night and had a great steak dinner. The rain had stopped long enough to use the BBQ. Early next morning we headed to Port Townsend, in the drizzle, to get the reefing system fixed properly. While there, Alex and I took down the windmill and fixed the rudder. We also replaced the 6 foot shaft for the blades, which I felt made way too much noise with no appreciable increase in output, with the standard 5 foot shaft. Candace picked up some more sail repair stuff at Port Townsend Sails. [Detailed Map of Washington State]

At 1400 we hit the slack low tide at Point Wilson, and started motoring out the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Although the tide was turning against us, and there was no wind, the sun finally came out, and spirits were high. We had fixed all the major problems, and headed to Port Angeles for the night. While picking up a mooring buoy, near the ferry terminal, I noticed two cruising boats from Alaska. Cruising boats are distinctive by all their clutter on deck. Several water and diesel jugs strapped to stanchions, bicycles sometime attached to the shrouds, a BBQ, life raft, extra anchors, outboard motor on the stern pulpit, and of course a dinghy somewhere. I wondered if they had just come down from Alaska, and where they were headed.

Next morning at 0800 we motored into the thick fog and headed west. One eye was glued to the radar, while the other tried to peer through the fog. There are some major size LOGS out there! Like 20+ feet long and maybe two feet in diameter. While missing tankers to the north (at least they were showing up with regularity on the radar) and dodging logs, we were "surprised" from time to time as we slid within 50-100 feet of some very small fishing boats. These were 12-18 foot open boats with one or two fishermen who would wave and give us a toothless grin, as we passed them in the fog. If only they knew how close disaster was! Because of the 5 foot swell in the Strait, they weren't distinguishable on the radar from the "sea clutter." If we hit them they really would have been sea clutter.

About 1700 we were abeam Neah Bay. The weather forecast was for more overcast skies and fog the next morning. We saw no advantage to spending the night there, so out into the Pacific we continued, heading toward the SW and wanting to leave the fog and shipping lanes. Just past Cape Flattery, the radar helped us avoid collision with a tug and 300 foot barge. It was invisible until perhaps 100 or 200 feet. At 2000 the wind freshened, and veered to the north, so we turned off the motor, hoisted sails, and continued down the coast.

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 2 - Passage to San Francisco

First Offshore Passage

We were generally 30-40 miles offshore, with 10-20 knot winds from the north, About one-third of the time, when the wind fell below 5 or 6 knots, we'd use the iron genoa, to both continue our progress and charge the batteries. With radar, LORAN, lights, refrigeration, and radios, we had a heavy electrical diet that couldn't be ignored.

Candace had the 7-11 watches, Alex the 11-3, and I the 3-7 shift. We had the whole world to ourselves, 360 degrees of water and waves. We saw the lights of a few ships the first three nights, but generally we were out of sight of land and ships the entire trip. On Candace's morning shift, August 24, she was visited by 75-100 Pacific white-sided dolphins. She saw them coming from miles away, generally in groups of three, leaping in unison. Once at the boat they continued to perform for about one-half hour, doing complete flips, belly rolls, and of course diving under the boat.

One morning as I relieved Alex for the 0300 shift, we were about 20 miles offshore at the mouth of the Columbia River. We flashed the light around and saw the ocean completely covered with salmon fingerlings. Every square foot of ocean, as far as could be seen, had three or four fingerlings jumping and heading south. There must have been at least 10,000. And we didn't see the ones below the surface of the ocean. That was really spectacular.

The porpoises came a few more times, the weather got gradually better, and our passage was progressing with no problems . . . except for seasickness. Candace felt really lousy the first 3-5 days, Alex didn't feel great, but never complained, and I felt punk enough to try one of those scopolamine patches. They worked pretty well, at least for Alex and me. Life under sail, 24 hours a day, is fairly difficult. The boat is always rocking and pounding through the waves, the noise of the wind and water is non stop, and it's an effort to do almost anything. Eating requires holding the plate with one hand, and a fork in the other. This means that it's impossible to cut your food with a knife, since you'd need a third hand to hold the plate from falling off the table. Of course your beverage is held between your knees. Walking around, inside the boat, requires use of the hand rails, and a plethora of bruises is inevitable. Difficulty in sleeping goes without saying, even without the need to rise in the middle of the night to take your watch. It was also quite cold. I wore a tee shirt, long sleeve shirt, sweatshirt, a heavy wool sweater, AND a down ski parka. A wool hat, gloves and boots completed my outfit.

Near southern Oregon [detailed map of OR], about 0500 on my watch, I noticed a light off to starboard, but my radar showed a boat off to port. At first I thought this was because we were heeling a little to port. I held my course and soon saw the boat off to port, which was on the radar screen, and a Coast Guard cutter off to starboard, which had lights on, but could not be picked up by my radar. Could they have had some kind of device to jam radar signals? Pretty sneaky! They probably were looking for drug smugglers. They checked me out from a mile away, as they slowly continued to the north.

Dead reckoning was crude, to non-existent, without boat speed or log instruments; however we felt comfortable that the LORAN was working well. Every 2 or 3 hours we'd mark our position on the chart as we continued progress down the Washington and Oregon coasts. When we crossed 42 degrees north, the skipper cried out "welcome to California,"[detailed map of northern CA] even though we were 40 miles offshore. The boogie board was put in the companionway to blast Beach Boy music out to the cockpit, the sun was shining, with temperatures in the low forties, and the wind picking up along with our spirits.

First Storm at Sea

We then put a second reef in the main, as the seas were building, perhaps to 10 feet by now in the early afternoon. Then the Yankee came down and the storm staysail was raised, as sail shortening still seemed smart. Even though the seas had grown to 12-14 feet, the apparent wind speed was only in the high twenties. We were moving quite fast, perhaps 7-8 knots down the waves, with the wind about 140 degrees off the starboard side. It was getting colder and darker as night approached, and I was becoming more and more concerned about the height of the seas and our increasing speed. We then decided to trail some warps off the stern. One 200 foot line (3/4 inch) was looped around another 200 foot line which was fastened to each to the stern cleats. This slowed us down and made steering much easier. Sometime earlier we had gone to shorter shifts, and hand steering, as I didn't trust the Monitor windvane to avoid broaching when we came down some of the big seas. It's quite a sight to see these large waves coming at your stern, way above your head, with the warps coming completely out of the water by about 4 feet, when you're in the trough.

Alex sailing to S.F.

About 2000 the wind picked up even more, gusting to 33 knots apparent [about 44 MPH true wind speed, when considering the forward speed of the boat]. A third reef was "tucked" in the main, but our progress wasn't slowed appreciably. Steering was difficult, and the entire crew was quite tired. We were about 40 miles offshore, northwest of Cape Mendocino. I was concerned about our high rate of speed going down the waves, and worried about broaching. What to do? At 2200 we tried to hove to. I'd done this many times before with

great success on 23 ***Skiddoo***, my former San Juan 23, but had never been satisfied with my results on ***Baba BarAnn***. I put the helm over, backwinding the staysail, and let the boat sail herself. Then I went below, locking the companion way boards in the hatch. We were heading straight west, away from land and trouble, but we were beam reaching at break neck speed, rather than really hoving to. This process was quite unnerving to the entire crew. The LORAN gave our progress at 9-10 knots as we screamed over the water, flying over the wave tops. The noise and motion were very unsettling. Sleep was impossible, except for Alex.

By 0330 the next morning we were 90 miles offshore, the wind and seas had subsided somewhat, and we were ready for new tactics. Back to the east we headed, although our progress was much slower. There must have been some current pushing us westerly, along with the weather. We headed toward shore. Perhaps Eureka, the nearest port, would be a good spot to lick our wounds and regroup. As we neared the coast and came within VHF range, we called the Coast Guard to find out the tidal situation at our midnight ETA. Unfortunately, the tide was going to be ebbing, maximum current, going into the teeth of the seas. Rather than wait around for a more prudent time to cross over the bar at Eureka, we decided to continue south.

This was not the time to have another major problem with the roller furling. Somehow a cotter pin in the staysail stay turnbuckle had worked itself loose. While rolling up the staysail, the stay came completely out of the lower turnbuckle. Now we had the staysail stay, with the staysail partially wound around it, flaying all over the deck, lashing out at the mast, the radar dome, us, the shrouds, you name it. While thrashing around, it cut the bottom line to my Firdell blipper radar reflector. Even though it remained attached at the top, the radar reflector banged against the mast for the rest of the trip. Using the sheets, we got the stay wound around the mast a few times and under control. At least it wouldn't decapitate anyone. The staysail was then unwound, and unhanked, somehow, from the stay. Then the stay was reattached to the turnbuckle, and of course a cotter pin was firmly inserted. God, that was almost a real disaster!

Progress under sail, and sometimes under motor, was pretty good as we closed in on San Francisco. Our ETA in SF was 0400 on Wednesday, August 30. To avoid arrival at that hour, we decided to spend the night at Bodega Bay, about 55 miles north of SF. We had a glorious beat to the east, winds in the 20-25 range, and fairly high seas. The fog was quite thick in the morning. As we neared the coast and shipping lanes, our radar was called on more and more to avoid collisions. Alex saw land first, after a week at sea.

Coming into Bodega Bay the winds increased to 28 knots. Neither the staysail, nor the Yankee could be rolled up completely with our rotten roller furling. In that wind, it was necessary to unroll the Yankee, and then unhank it from the forestay. As Alex and Candace struggled with the Yankee, the staysail came unwound further with the leech of the sail thrashing mightily. Damage to the leech was such that Candace had to spend an afternoon fixing it once we got to SF. With sheets and sails thrashing about, this was really ugly. Under motor I headed downwind to lessen the apparent wind speed, but this provided only partial relief. Just as we got the staysail under control, the Coast Guard from Bodega Bay came speeding out to see if we needed any assistance. Perhaps earlier we could have used some, but now we were OK. So into Bodega Bay for the night. Yes, it was difficult walking on land with our sea legs.

Into San Francisco

The next day, in thick fog, we motored the remaining distance to SF. Although we could see the pillars at the base of the bridge, the Golden Gate was otherwise completely hidden from view. As we headed into Sausalito, the wind, which had been pretty much nonexistent the entire day, picked up to 28 knots. While we motored around, looking for moorage, we got stuck in the mud for about 10 minutes. Welcome to the Bay! It is really shallow everywhere.

Our first offshore passage is history. We arrived safely, although somewhat battered. Our Mariner roller furling was the cause of most of our grief. Next, being unprepared for the high seas provided most of the remaining problems. We resolved to scrap the roller furling, and replace it with traditional sails that raise and lower the old fashion way, with halyards. I got a copy of Heavy Weather Sailing by K Allard Coles and started devouring it immediately. I never realized that the learning curve would be so steep! And we'd only just begun.

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 3 - San Francisco

The Bay Area

At $22 per night, Schoonmaker Point Marina was rather pricey in 1989. We tolerated this exorbitant figure since dock space was very hard to find. Due to the concurrence of Labor Day weekend and the Sausalito Arts Fair, this was their biggest weekend of the year. Our slip was near, ***Blondie***'s, a Santa Cruz 70 that's a famous offshore racer. We had a restaurant meal, Candace did laundry, about 1/2 mile from the boat, and I did some shopping. I arranged for the rigging work to be done, which would free us from our roller "fouling" system. We took a bus downtown and saw the big city. We walked down to pier 39, strolled around, and then took a bus back to Sausalito.

Alex and I went to the Arts Festival one day and enjoyed a very good slide guitar player named Roy Rogers (not the cowboy). The weather was typically foggy every morning, really nice during the day, blowing like stink, 30-40 knots, during the late afternoon, then real nice from 1800 on. I took Alex to the airport on Sunday afternoon to fly back to Seattle and his sophomore year in high school. For the first time since he was born I would not be seeing him for more than a few weeks. This time we both knew it wasn't going to be until December 27 that we'd meet again. Candace and I thoroughly enjoyed him every moment of the trip and it was very sad to see him leave. Sunday we anchored out in Sausalito Bay. I talked with a French couple who had been cruising for several years on their 28 foot boat. They had come from the West, via Japan and Canada, and were heading south to Mexico. Their boat seemed as small to me as 23 ***Skiddoo***, my former sailboat - a San Juan 23, but they obviously loved it. In fact, it seems that just about everyone loves their boat, regardless of size, value, or the amount of gear on board. I guess that's not too surprising.

Shopped at West Marine, arranged to have some nice jib bags made for the headsail and staysail, called MCCA to have our mail forwarded, General Delivery, to the Sausalito Post Office, and spent some time with the Scanmar people, Hans and Mike, who make the Monitor wind vane. Boy what great service they give. They came out to our boat and inspected our installation job. Noticing a minor problem, the next day Mike came out and spent an hour or two improving its performance, all at no extra cost. All these places were within a short walk from the dock in Sausalito.

Thursday we motored across the bay to the SF Municipal Marina since we were going to a friend's home for dinner that night. Of course it was blowing like crazy, and we ended up wending our way through a massive International 14 sailboat race. It was truly an international regatta with many nations represented, and there were perhaps 100 of them out there, in their trapezes, getting overpowered, and dumping. We tried to go far around them as best as we could, but still had to dodge a dozen or so on the fringes of the fleet.

The Municipal Marina shares the same breakwater with the St. Francis Yacht Club. We were just looking for a place to tie up temporarily, while arranging moorage. The only spot large enough had the wind blowing us away from the dock. Candace jumped off with the stern and bow lines, while I tried to control the boat. The wind really started to grab the boat, and Candace was just about at the end of her line, literally. I jumped (it seemed 8 feet) off the boat and ran over to lend a hand. We stopped ***Baba BarAnn*** just inches before she would have smashed into a gigantic racing boat, ***Mongoose***, on the opposite finger pier. God what a close call! We were both quite shaken. Then some wimp from the St. Francis YC told us politely to get the Hell off their dock.

Candace of S.F. Bay

There are about 8 or 10 transient slips at the Municipal Marina. One long, 71 foot dock, already had a 29 foot boat at it. It was the last spot available, and seemed just right for our 40 footer. When we got there, the story was quite different. His 29 feet, plus a 7 foot bowsprit and 2 foot poop deck, along with our 40 feet, 4 foot bowsprit, and 2 foot wind vane amounted to 84 feet. A 13 foot overhand! We both kept quiet, and no one complained. I think it would have been another story on a weekend. We shared our dock with a Canadian boat that had just arrived from Vancouver. Like everyone else we were meeting, they were heading south to Mexico. The two Alaskan boats I'd seen in Pt. Angeles, a Valiant 40 and a Tayana 37, had arrived in Sausalito, as well as one from Olympia. The Class of '89 was definitely closing ranks.

Then Friday it was back to Sausalito to pick up our mail and jib bags. We were both tired with the hubbub of the city, the cold and the wind of San Francisco, and the inevitable expenses. Everyone said, head to "the Delta." So we did.

Dawdling on the Delta

East of San Francisco you can either head south, to Oakland, Alameda, Candlestick Park, etc., or you can head north to San Pablo Bay and much further east. The Sacramento River to Sacramento, and San Joaquin River to Stockton, form a delta with dozens of sloughs, levees, cuts, and generally shallow water. Everyone said "don't worry about grounding, it's soft mud, and everyone does it in the delta." The first night we anchored about 300 yards offshore. Nevertheless, the shallow water alarm started beeping at 10 feet. Even though we draw 6 feet, we reset the alarm for 8 feet before settling back to sleep. Hell, we still had two feet under the keel. Around Puget Sound we would typically sail in 500+ foot depths and anchor in 30-40 feet, so this seemed quite novel to us. The weather was warmer in the Delta, and we enjoyed relaxing. Then the next day, Sunday, we had a great sail to Benicia, pulled into the marina there and had a nice restaurant meal. We met a few more boats that gave us tips on cruising in the delta.

On Monday it was motor upstream all day, often with only 3 or 4 feet under the keel! We "anchored" in Potato Slough. Well, it wasn't anchoring in the normal style, but "when in Rome . . . " We dropped a stern anchor and then eased forward, straight into the weeds until stopping in the mud, tied a bow line around a willow tree, and

then backed off. I got in the dinghy and tied another bow line and set another stern line. Thus ensconced, we felt comfortable, with boats just a few feet away on either side of us. Yes, the weather finally got hot, to the upper 80's the next day. On Wednesday we headed further north. Backing out of our "anchorage," thunk, we got stuck in the mud. After 30 minutes or so, a power boat (2 foot draft) helped pull us back out, and we were on our way. Perhaps 30 minutes later, the depth went from 30 to 6 feet, or maybe even 5 feet, and we were really buried, as I was doing about 5 knots at the time. (Whenever you see 20+ feet on the depth sounder in the delta there's a tendency to put the pedal to the metal.) At least the tide, all 4-5 feet of it, was coming in. In the dinghy, I took soundings all around the boat, coming up with 5-6 feet everywhere, except directly behind us where it was 5.5 to 7 feet. About 2 hours later, waiting for the tide to rise, a sailboat motored by and asked if he could help. We tossed a line over and were pulled off. He invited me over to his boat to partake of some local knowledge and look at his charts. So I rowed over in the dinghy, while Candace motored ***Baba BarAnn*** around in the deepest water she could find. Not much later, his engine stopped and we discovered OUR dinghy's painter wrapped around HIS prop. Damn!

He donned a bathing suit and mask and jumped overboard. Luckily it only took about 10 minutes to cut the painter free. I cringed a little, since that painter was just two days old. (The former painter on our dinghy had been "trimmed" by our outboard). I really felt bad about screwing up this guy's day. As he said, "I should've known . . . No good deed will go unpunished!" It was really hot, and we were a little gun shy about heading up some more shallow sloughs for the day, so we turned around and headed back to another nearby anchorage. Same anchoring technique except we did it quite well. Drop your Danforth stern hook while you come in, coast up slowly to a tree, lasso it and tie off the bow line, then pull back on the stern anchor. Perfect. We spent a few days there, swimming, reading, and just kickin' back.

The next day, Friday, we decided to head off in another direction in the delta. We made a perfect getaway from the anchorage. Drop the bow line, back up gradually to the Danforth, maintaining tension on the rode so as to avoid tangling the prop, raise the anchor, after swishing it just the right amount of times to clean the mud off, and then head off in the right direction. Twenty feet later . . . thunk, stuck in the mud! It was a nice gentle tap, but we couldn't back off. Worst of all, it was two hours before low tide, so we had to wait probably four or more hours for our freedom, in the hot sun, right under the sterns of a dozen other self righteous skippers. Damn. I went down below to sulk and read, while Candace used the opportunity to clean the topsides. A short while later, some strangers, Ernie and Lynne, motored by and asked if we'd like to try and be pulled out. What the heck. After attaching a line between sterns, he went forward, while I went in reverse. In two seconds, we heard the worse crunching noise and my motor stalled out. Understand that this was the first time, EVER, that the motor has stalled. I wasn't having any more towing after that incident. Like Alabama sang, we're gonna wait until the tide rises again. Another hour later, Ernie and Lynne returned to the anchorage. They said, "Throw out an anchor and come on over for a drink while you're waiting." What the heck! We dinghied over, had a beer, and got to know them a little better. They, and another couple, Don and Lin, are in their early fifties and from Los Altos. At about the predicted time, the tide had risen enough and we noticed that our boat had moved. So it was quickly back to the boat and on the road again. We'd even drifted into nice, deep water . . . 22 feet.

Start the engine, raise the anchor, put it in gear, CLUNK. Damn! "Candace, quick drop the anchor, I'm going to see what's going on." Rapidly I donned my swimsuit, flippers, and mask, and then jumped overboard. Diving under to inspect the prop, I couldn't believe my eyes. Our propeller is in an aperture between the full keel and the rudder. Well, pulled through the aperture was the stock of a gigantic Danforth anchor. The flukes of this monster were on the starboard side, and the stock was protruding out the port side. Tightly wound around the drive shaft was a one-half inch polypropylene line, about six feet long.

Ernie Landes

Since poly line floats, it reached up to my prop, wound around the shaft, and pulled the anchor up and around the propeller, causing the motor to stall. Damn! We're really in a pickle this time. I tried to cut the line, but couldn't get very far. My asthma has really shortened the time I can stay below, to perhaps only 15 seconds. After eight dives I wasn't getting anywhere, except pooped. Just about then, Ernie & Don dinghy over to find out what's wrong . . . they thought we'd be long gone by now. I said, "You're not going to believe it" . . . Ernie jumped in, borrowed my mask, dove down, came up, and said "I don't believe it." Ernie immediately started making multiple dives, each for almost a minute. He tied a line around the anchor, so we wouldn't lose it, then used wire cutters, knives, and tools of all types. Finally, after at least 30 dives, he freed the anchor and the poly from our prop. ***Baba BarAnn*** was as good as new, although the crew was a bit stressed out. Yes, the prop was crinkled just a little bit.

No more dawdlin' on the delta today, so back to the anchorage. We invited the two couples over for cocktails, and presented the Danforth and poly painter to our saviors. The next day, September 16, was rainy, with thunderstorms, so we just stayed put. That was the first rain we'd seen since August 22. On Sunday, once more we headed out to the delta for a new destination. Two hours into this trip, thunk, into the mud again. We were even between green and red buoys at the time! At least I could watch the football games while waiting this one out. Shortly after Joe Montana pulled out a victory for the 49ers, we used a kedge and pulled out of the mud. For the third time in as many tries, we failed to make our delta destination.

We'd had enough. We did a 180 degree turn and headed back out of the delta. All this dirty dancing in the delta mud hadn't hurt our boat any, but it didn't seem like a lot of fun to us. We'd had our warm weather fix, and R&R, and were now recharged to continue the trip.

Leaving the Bay Area

Sunday night, after slithering out of the Delta, we arrived back at Benicia Marina, which was our parking spot the previous Sunday night. It is a relatively new marina, in a pretty little town that's quite clean. We had dinner at a Chinese restaurant. Monday we hiked 1.5 miles to the Laundromat, Safeway, bank machine, and liquor store. Then we taxied back to the boat with all our goodies. For the past several weeks we had been debating on the future of our brightwork. Should we let it go, try to keep up with it in the tropics, or do something else? That Monday we decided to give varnish another try. For the next six days we masked, sanded, washed, tack clothed, and varnished all the outside teak on the boat. The weather was hot, in the 90's, and sunny, and the work was hard. We consumed about 20 sheets of sanding paper. When the dust had settled, and the varnish had dried, we had three more coats on, and ***Baba BarAnn*** looked great. The effort was worth it. Our spirits rose with the shine on the cap rails.

Monday PM we left Benicia and headed to China Camp, in San Pablo Bay. Coming into this very shallow anchorage, I fell into the Monitor wind vane control on the steering wheel and put a deep, painful gouge in my kneecap. Candace bandaged it up nicely, but we were both concerned. Infection, of course, is a great concern. But it would be a significant problem if I were incapacitated for even a few days. Our lifestyle relies on us being

physically fit and mobile. For example, because of the accident, we were in no mood to try and find a little deeper anchorage for that night. I calculated that we would have only 1 or 2 feet under the keel, at low tide, assuming we didn't swing. Even thought it's only mud, I don't like the idea of being "on the hard." We didn't ground that night . . . the depth meter showed 7.8 feet at low tide, or almost 2 feet to spare, and my kneecap looked and felt promising.

Next we spent a night at Brickyard Cove Marina, in Richmond, to see some friends on ***Gray Eagle*** that we'd met in the Delta. While there, Candace heard another sailor report to the Coast Guard on the VHF that there had just been a suicide off the Golden Gate Bridge! The sailor was really shook up. The Coast Guard asked if the sailor could help the victim, or get him on board. The sailor said there was no hope for the victim.

On Wednesday morning we headed back out, under the Golden Gate Bridge, to resume our passage south. A few miles from the bridge, the fog started to roll in, so I flicked on the radar. Nothing! A blank screen. After the experiences we had entering SF, I had no intention of leaving SF without radar. Luckily I was able to find and fix the problem within a few minutes. Obviously it was a loose connection to the power supply. So without breaking stride we continued. Unlike our first trip under the bridge, this time, we could see it! We were just as concerned with shipping traffic fore and aft, as with human traffic from above.

South to Monterey

For the first time in almost a month we were back in the Pacific. The swells weren't large, but we didn't handle them well. Even I felt punk. Luckily our anchorage on Wednesday night, at Half Moon Bay, was nice and calm. Next day we motored the entire way to Santa Cruz, about 50 miles, on the north end of Monterey Bay. We were looking forward to seeing an old college friend, John Aird, who lived in nearby Soquel. Candace had met him and his wife Anne at my 25th Haverford College reunion in June.

Thursday night we went to a nice restaurant with them. On Friday, Anne drove us all around Santa Cruz, so we could do lots of errands. Dinner at their house that night, then Saturday we took them sailing in Monterey Bay. The winds and weather were perfect. That night we BBQed some steaks back at their house. All three of these nights we had anchored off the pier at Capitola. In an attempt to fix the log/speed instruments, I disconnected the main control box and took it into the dealer in Santa Cruz. Unfortunately, it checked out perfectly. That means the problem is in the transducer. I think it's going to be a major pain fishing out the wires to have the transducer replaced/fixed. I'd tried to have this work done in San Francisco, but the dealer there was a real jerk. The Santa Cruz dealer, like the one in Seattle, was very helpful.

Sunday we had a great sail to Monterey. Seeing the historic golf course materialize, as we approached shore, was a moving experience for this former golfer/TV sports fan. Entering the harbor, we passed hundreds of loudly barking sea lions. What a racket! There was no place to anchor inside the breakwater, so we headed to the outside anchorage area. At first it was extremely rolly, and uncomfortable. Then we moved in closer to shore and to some other boats, and used a bow and stern anchor like they had. This was necessary to keep the bow pointed into the swell, while the wind blew from the port beam. It was also a lot quieter outside the harbor, but we could still hear the sea lions barking all night. How could anyone sleep in the inner harbor? We also saw gigantic pelicans and a few otters. Motoring our little 8.6 foot dinghy around these massive, aggressive acting sea lions, was a bit frightening.

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 4 - Monterey to Santa Barbara

Monterey

We liked Monterey so much we stayed there four nights. It was fun watching the sea lions, pelicans, and otters, although I never got used to the stupid barking of those dumb sea lions. I mean all night long they would bark. The only quiet time seemed to be between 0600 and 1100. We went to the world famous sea aquarium. Yes, it's quite a bit nicer than Seattle's. We restocked at Safeway. We've noticed that the Safeway's here in California [detailed map of northern CA]don't seem to be quite as nice as the ones in Western Washington. However, they do sell scotch! We walked all over town, trying to find some ink jet paper for the Diconix. SIX stores later we found it, and bought 3 packages. That should last a long while. We also picked up photographs which REI developed and sent to the Monterey P.O., General Delivery. These included several shots covering the trip to San Francisco. Richardson's Law is "The amount of fun is proportional to the number of dumb photos." We obviously had a lot of fun. The dumbest pictures were taken with the camcorder, but we really enjoyed them.

From Monterey the next stop was San Simeon, more than 90 miles away - about 15 hours. Due the length of the passage, and the likelihood of fog upon arrival, it was prudent to leave Monterey at 1800, in order to arrive during the day. When we tried to weigh the stern anchor in Monterey, it wouldn't budge. Using the boat's engine to apply some real pressure . . . snap, the anchor rode broke. Boy was I ticked off to leave my Danforth stern anchor and some chain on the bottom of the bay. I'm sure it's down deep enough so that no one will have a problem like we had in the Delta, and it wasn't a floating polypropylene line.

The overnight passage was not without its thrills. About midnight, with Candace on watch, we came nose to nose with a very large freighter. They had decided to cut directly in front of us. Candace kept trying to stay on the RIGHT, like she's suppose to, while the freighter kept turning to port, crossing in front. Finally, both boats took sharp turns to the LEFT to avoid collision. She'd been watching this freighter for at least six miles. It was going to pass slightly to our port. Then, all of a sudden, it decided to turn in front of us! At midnight! In perfectly clear weather!

Just before arriving in San Simeon, we saw two sharks. They were moving slowly, as close as 50 feet away. Above the sea surface we could see a dorsal fin . . . a black, equilateral triangle, about 18 inches on each side. It seemed pretty large to me.

San Simeon was very pretty. The cove had only four sailboats, two power boats, and two fishing boats. There were several otters . . . no sea lions. The next day we rowed the dinghy into shore, and walked about a mile to catch the bus for the Hearst Castle tour. If you ever get a chance, don't miss it. It was one of the most enjoyable, interesting place I'd been to this side of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.

When we got back to the dinghy, later that afternoon, the "surf was up" (perhaps only 2 feet) and we had to launch the dinghy through the waves. We need a lot more practice. Candace and I were on opposite sides of the dinghy, standing in shallow water and trying to time the waves so we could get over them before they broke. I shouted "GO" and started pushing the dinghy out into deeper water. Candace thought "GO" meant get in the dinghy. What a disaster! We took on one wave that soaked us and filled the dinghy with about 6 inches of salt water. But the weather was nice, the water wasn't too cold, and we got back to the boat safely.

The next day, Sunday October 8, we went to San Luis Obispo Bay. The seas were too rolly there, and we were glad to leave the next morning, for the trip around Pt. Conception. This is the big turning point. It separates Northern/Central California from Southern California. One book calls this point the "Cape Horn of the Pacific." We were lucky to have very calm weather. It blew 22 knots, right on our nose, at Pt. Arguello, but by Pt. Conception it was about dead calm. We spent the night about three miles east of the infamous point, in a windy spot called Cojo Anchorage.

Tuesday, another very calm day, we motored to Santa Barbara. We encountered about six offshore oil rigs, but no real excitement. The last few days, since San Simeon, I've enjoyed reading the autobiography of Marion Davies who was W.R. Hearst's mistress. She was really beautiful. She sounds like an air head, but I'm sure she was darn sharp.

We're looking forward to replacing our Danforth anchor, getting our mail, and doing several chores in the big city, Santa Barbara. We haven't done laundry since Benicia three weeks ago.

Santa Barbara

On October 10 we motored into Santa Barbara and spent the night at a rolly anchorage, east of Stearns Wharf. It's been pretty disappointing that we've had to motor so much since leaving San Francisco. But the motor has loved the exercise.

We really liked Santa Barbara. Can you believe we spent 13 days there? A record. Laundry done; much provisioning at super markets; several trips downtown. We replaced the Danforth anchor (left in Monterey Bay) with a Fortress. According to Practical Sailor and the U.S. Navy, they're better than Danforth. Yes, it cost almost $100 more! Instead of waiting for San Diego, we decided to haul and get our bottom painted in S.B. Out on Thursday and back in the water by Friday night. The service was great. We only had to live one night "on the hard," climbing up and down a ladder to home. They also tapped out some of the crinkles that the prop accumulated in the Delta.

Both Candace and I couldn't help remark about differences between Seattle and California. Several times I made many calls in Seattle, just trying to find someone who would be willing to do some work. In California, not only have the providers of service been willing to provide service, but they have been eager. The quality of service has always been equal, and usually better, and the price hasn't been higher (maybe even a little bit less) than what we'd expect in Seattle. This has really been puzzling to us.

For example, service at West Marine in Seattle is generally quite good. But we've perceived that the salespeople feel a little pressured to help someone else if we can't make up our mind right away. It seems that the California

stores have fewer customers. Thus, the salespeople seem to be in no hurry to leave you, and get on to someone else. They're quite willing to give you all the time you need. I hate to beat this concept to death, but it's so completely different from our expectations, that I can't help dwelling on it a bit. Bus drivers have been friendlier and more personable, ditto with super market checkout clerks, and other salespeople.

Well, that wave we took in the dinghy, getting back to the boat in San Simeon, was a Hell of a lot more damaging than we could have expected. Saltwater ruined BOTH the camcorder and our 35mm camera. We took the camcorder to a repair store in S.B. They estimated that it would cost $500 to fix it. We said no thanks. Even if they fixed it, the camera would be just as vulnerable to the next wave. Our Canon AE-1 was about 12 years old and likewise not worth repairing. We figured it was a $1,500 wave we hit in San Simeon. Pretty expensive lesson!

In Santa Barbara we bought a Nikon camera that can be taken 10 feet below the surface. It's an automatic everything camera, but should be able to take the saltwater environment very well. We've never thought that automatic focus cameras did a good job. Candace even prefers to set the speed and aperture herself. Auto loading, winding, and unloading are just battery wasters. Anyway, that's what we've got now. Partially because of the camera, with its two AA batteries, we bought some rechargeable batteries at Radio Shack, as well as the recharger. We also bought some rechargeable batteries for the Diconix printer. Our computer printer can run on batteries; five rechargeable "A" batteries fit inside the platen.

We also put a completely new ham radio antenna up. It was a cheap $8.00 one from Radio Shack, but it worked fairly well. We used one of the ham radio nets and contacted someone in Tacoma for a telephone patch to Alex on Mercer Island. We hope to use the ham radio a lot more now that our rig is working so well.

In S.B. I also wired in a cigarette lighter. It seems that all DC systems get their juice from cigarette lighters! Of course, that's because most people only have DC systems in their car, and they can get access to the battery most easily via the cigarette lighter. We use the lighter primarily to plug in our 300,000 candle power spot light (good for checking out anchorages at night.) However, I've discovered that another great use for the lighter is to melt the ends of freshly cut nylon lines. Works great.

In Santa Barbara I also improved our anchor equipment. On the bow roller, we have a 45 pound CQR backed with 175 feet of chain and 200 feet of nylon rode. We also have a Danforth plow (similar to a CQR) backed with 6 feet of chain and 200 feet of nylon. With only six feet of chain, its lower weight makes it easy to row for a second bow anchor.

Hanging on the stern pulpit we have the new Fortress anchor. In the lazarette there's a duffel bag with 6 feet of chain and 200 feet of nylon rode. To set a stern anchor, the bag can be easily lifted up, rode attached to the stern anchor, and then rowed out in the dinghy. Then you drop the anchor and row back to the boat, paying out line. Of course you must be sure not to drop the anchor too far from the boat!

We generally just drop the main CQR at 25-35 feet, and let out four to one scope. After making sure it's set, we then put on our anchor bridle. That's a single chain hook with two 25 foot lines attached . . . one leading to each of the port and starboard haws holes. The bridle not only provides an elastic snubber for the chain, but also keeps the chain off our bowsprit when the tide changes. So, with the bridle, it ends up being about 5:1 scope. Of course, tight anchorages demand less scope, and more open-to-the-weather anchorages beg for more.

In S.B. I spent a lot of time researching solar panels and GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) systems. Despite the nice price (now down to $2,550) and cute, compact size, I'm not that impressed with the Magellan GPS. I think that more expensive systems may work a lot better. I'm waiting for the prices to drop some more on GPS. At the moment, I don't like ARCO solar panels. They seem to have the most amps per square foot and per dollar, but they're heavy, cumbersome, and breakable. Solvonics are nice and flexible, but don't provide as much juice per dollar or per square foot. If the Solarex panels pan out as advertised, I'll be getting some of them for the boat. The wind generator can't provide all the battery charging that we want. I'd like to run the engine as little as possible just to charge batteries. With all the motoring we've done since San Francisco, we've only had to run the engine six or seven times solely to charge the batteries. That's pretty good for two months.

Another "project" in Santa Barbara was the purchase of some "Rocker Stoppers" to cut down the motion at rolly anchorages. I hope they work. Finally, we got another, second hand, dinghy while we were in S.B. I bought a nine foot Achilles dinghy with all the accessories for just $240. We've heard about several boats that had their dinghies stolen in Mexico, so now we've got some insurance. It can be quite difficult to replace a dinghy, as well as quite expensive. Anyway, this was a GREAT buy, and we had room to store it under the vee berth.

Perhaps the most difficult project, and maybe the most important, we completed in Santa Barbara involved the radar cable. When we installed radar in Seattle, we didn't pay attention to the potential of the cable banging inside the mast when the boat rocked. Of course at Ballard Mill Marina it wasn't a problem. Well, in the ocean it is. After thinking about the problem for quite sometime, I got some foam cushion from a carpet store in S.B. ($3.00 for eight square feet). This was cut into 2" wide strips. Then, Candace hoisted me up the mast in the bosun chair, where I disconnected the cable. Then I tied a messenger line to it, and lowered it down the inside of the mast. She wrapped it with the form strips and tape. Then I raised it back up the mast. Everything was reconnected after much effort fishing the cable back out the little hole in the mast. The cable is now quiet when the boat rocks.

The earthquake in the Bay area didn't hit this far south. Like so many others, I had tuned in the TV to watch the World Series, only to see all the grief in SF. That fire in the Marina district was just a few blocks from where we had docked on the night we had dinner with John Atteridg. We had walked up that street to Lombard Avenue on two occasions. We were glad we weren't there. What a tragedy. What a mess.

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 5 - South to San Diego

Santa Cruz Island to Long Beach

The number of projects to be completed before leaving the U.S. is diminishing. I'm starting to feel good about our preparedness. Candace really has done a great job in the provisioning and food planning area. More than that, she's made the boat very comfortable and clean. She's also concentrated on the medical side of things. Because of my asthma, I couldn't get any health insurance after COBRA runs out. The PPO plan at work didn't provide any coverage outside of the Seattle area. So we've been without ANY health coverage since leaving Seattle. Once we leave the U.S. we can be covered under an International Plan which is provided by a company in England. Hopefully that will be as good as it appears. Just 305 pounds per year (less than $500) and I'll be covered for 100% of all in-patient expenses, both hospital and medical, with a £50,000 maximum per year. However, it doesn't apply in the U.S. or Canada. Candace's premium is even less!

We've met some fun cruisers. A couple from Alaska has been most helpful, especially in the ham radio area. I should have the weatherfax working perfectly in about a week. It's been one of the lowest priorities. I'm getting down to the bottom of the list! On October 22 we left Santa Barbara. After 13 days we were starting to get marina rot. It was good to get back on the sea. We left, with our friends Chuck and Bev from Alaska, for Santa Cruz Island. On the way we saw about eight Dall Porpoises . . . the first we'd seen since Puget Sound, one shark, and many seals. More importantly, the seals had several babies. It was neat to see the little baby seals, perhaps 18 inches long, jumping and swimming. Unlike the seals we'd seen so often between SF and SB, these seals had ears. We anchored at China Harbor on Santa Cruz Island the first night, and Prisoners Harbor, slightly to the west, the next night.

After getting the weatherfax working, I received a weatherfax, on the ham radio, from Hawaii, which was converted via the modem into the computer. I did some editing and then printed out the weather map for the north Pacific. Unfortunately, it showed a big storm coming. I also used this PK-232 system to "listen" to two ham operators using Morse code. The system interprets the dots and dashes, and just prints out the words on the computer screen. For my first "translation" I got a gushy conversation between a guy in Colorado Springs and a girl in Tucson. ("I love you very much"..."You're the best" . . . etc.) That was kind of fun. I trolled a line trying to catch dinner, but without success. That was the first time I'd done any fishing on the trip.

We planned to leave early, at 0430 on October 25th, for the long trip to Redondo Beach, just south of Marina Del Rey. However, the wind came up quite strongly from the North, making our anchorage extremely uncomfortable, and dangerous, with a lee shore. So we got up to leave at 0250! We hadn't slept any, because of the noise and rocking. The 66 mile trip was accompanied with 10-11 foot seas and winds in the mid 20 knot range. Both Candace and I were very tired and quite seasick. It was not a pleasant journey.

When we turned to port to duck behind the breakwater at Redondo Beach, the wind hit our dinghy broadside and it flew off the boat. We quickly did a 180 degree turn, Candace grabbed the boat hook, and she retrieved the dinghy before the large waves could push us onto the beach. Whew! Because of the closeness of the beach, we knew we only would have one shot at getting our dinghy back. Even in the harbor, there were gusts up to 30

knots, and waves were breaking over the breakwater. We put out a bow anchor with plenty of scope, as well a stern anchor to keep us pointed into the wind.

Despite the winds, it was a smooth and pleasant anchorage. The next day I got two new lures, and one worked great. I caught one mackerel, about 18 inches long. It tasted "mushy" and we threw it out. I also caught a Pacific Bonito, about 24 inches long. The first night it was fried and the second night it was poached, with onions, tomatoes, green olives, and spices.

From Redondo Beach we then went to Long Beach where we had to pay $18 just to use some mooring buoys! On Sunday morning, October 29, we were awaken by some Santa Ana winds, up to 25 knots. Talk about a "mailman's holiday," we spent five hours at the Long Beach boat show. We finally took the plunge and ordered insulators for the backstays to obtain the best possible reception for the ham radio. We also got some aluminum propane tanks to replace the steel ones which were rusting away. The stove, and the BBQ, use propane. Because each of our new tanks holds 5 gallons of LPG (20 pounds), they may last us about 3 or 4 months before needing to be refilled.

Sunday night, we went out to dinner with Doyal and Wilmoth Boring. He's a Principal in the Mercer LA office, and a long time friend and sailor. Doyal actually saw ***Baba BarAnn*** in Marina Del Rey, before we did, and sent us many pictures.

Queen Mary and Candace

On Monday we played tourist, and saw the ***Spruce Goose*** and the ***Queen Mary***. We really enjoyed both attractions. Howard Hughes, like W.R.Hearst, seemed larger than life. Both had tons of money, were successful simultaneously in movies and another endeavor, and squired the most beautiful movie actresses.

On Tuesday we continued south, just a few miles, to Alamitos Bay. Here we stayed at a dock and enjoyed shore power and water. Candace spent many hours cleaning off the Santa Ana dust that covered the boat during Sunday's wind. We got some more spare parts at West Marine, and filled our new propane tanks.

One of the projects I've been working on is an audible alarm for the bilge. I found just what I wanted. If our automatic bilge pump is overwhelmed and water rises more than 3 inches above it, then my new alarm will set off a buzzer. So many other systems I'd seen either have the buzzer connected to the bilge pump (causing the alarm to always go off whenever the bilge pump runs) or have an alarm that is tied into the ship's electrical system. Since one reason for failure of the bilge pump is battery failure, it seems crazy to have an alarm which uses the same battery system. This new alarm just uses two 9 volt batteries, requires no wiring, and costs about half as much.

I ordered four 30 watt, Solarex solar panels, to be picked up in San Diego. I hope these will produce 50-60 amp hours per day of clean, quiet electricity. Between them and the windmill, I should need to run the diesel engine

to generate additional power only a few hours per week. Of course, it's really difficult to judge our needs in tropical climates. Refrigeration consumes 60 to 80 percent of our electrical diet. Just how good will the fridge's insulation be when it gets hot?

During the first week of November, it's been very cold during mornings in LA (into the 40's), but it warms to shirt sleeve weather by noon. Unfortunately, the boat's heating system hasn't worked since leaving Seattle. So we wear lots of sweaters or sweatshirts to keep warm during the mornings and evenings. Tonight we're puttin' another blanket on the bed! We've been hearing that Newport Beach is extremely crowded and not that nice a place to "visit." However, the backstay insulators, which I'd ordered at the boat show, were to be picked up in Newport Beach.

On Wednesday, November 1, I was talking to a guy on the dock who was interested in buying a boat that was for sale at this marina. He was very friendly, like almost everyone in California, and offered to give me a ride to Newport Beach to pick up the insulators. I hopped into his Mercedes and headed to Newport Beach, about 30 minutes south of Long Beach. After picking up the insulators, he decided to give me a ride back to the marina. Fantastic. Now Baba BarAnn didn't have to go to Newport Beach, and I could install the insulators while using the good facilities of the marina.

The next morning I went up in the bosun chair and removed the backstay. It was a bit scary, being at the top of the mast with no backstay support. Since our mast is stepped on the keel, as opposed to the deck, my fears were partially assuaged. Then I cut the backstay in two places, and put in the insulators, exactly 32 feet 10 inches apart. That's the distance that's perfect for the 20 meter ham radio band that we use the most. Other bands are also available because we have an automatic antenna tuner. Needless to say, the most scary job was cutting the backstay, since it's such an important component of the rig. Everything seemed to work out perfectly, and we were using our new antenna that night. We talked to our friends, Chuck and Bev on ***Carina*** who were still anchored over by the ***Spruce Goose & Queen Mary***. They said our signal was loud and clear.

On Friday night we went to a Chinese restaurant with a cruising couple from Fairbanks, AK. They had sailed from Mexico to Hawaii last year, and back to Long Beach in the summer. Their boat is only 28 feet long, but is quite seaworthy. Unlike most cruising couples, he's the one that gets seasick the most. We had noticed that our new windlass, installed just last July, already was showing lots of electrolysis. It was improperly installed since there was no barrier between the aluminum windlass and the stainless steel mounting bracket. With a little salt water, electrolysis was attacking the "less noble" aluminum. So on Saturday, I took off the windlass and inserted a heavy duty vinyl barrier. Of course there was much corrosion, and it took about all day. With all the people down at the marina on the weekend, there was a never-ending stream of people offering help and assistance, and in particular, tools to borrow.

That night we were invited to dinner on ***Lightnin'*** by a couple we'd met at the marina. ***Lightnin'*** was formerly owned by Ted Turner, and is more of a racing boat than a cruising boat. But Blair and Kathy have done a great job remodeling it. They're planning to leave for the Marquesas next March. It was a great dinner with shrimp and fettuccine.

Santa Catalina

Sunday morning we left for Santa Catalina Island. That night we stayed at Emerald Bay (aptly named), and the next two at the Isthmus. Anchoring for free is not allowed on Catalina. You have to pick up a floating "wand"

which has lines attached to a mooring buoy on one end for the bow, and a stern anchor on the other end. The winter rates are pretty cheap, $26 for the entire week. For the most part we just read, wrote, and relaxed. We noticed that the automatic bilge pump was being "called on" a few times per day, whereas formerly it ran about once a week. I found a slow, drip-drip, leak coming from our stuffing box. In order to work properly, it must drip a little, but this was a bit too much and will have to be fixed very shortly.

I've also been looking into roller furling systems that would be a lot better than the Mariner System we used to have. Initially I was attracted to the Hood LD system that uses a continuous line, rather than have the line accumulate on a drum like all the other systems. Now I'm leaning toward a Pro Furl system. On Wednesday, November 8, we left Santa Catalina Island for Dana Point. We had by far the best sail of our entire trip. Smooth seas, 9-14 knot winds on the beam, and blue skies. The windvane steered almost all the way, our speed peaked at 7.35 knots, and our navigation was flawless. Perfect.

I even tried out two sun sights with the sextant. Both put us within one mile of our position as reported by LORAN. That's quite encouraging. I realize that the sextant won't be as accurate with rough seas, and worthless when it's cloudy or dark, but it's reassuring that celestial navigation works so well at other times. When we pulled into the anchorage at Dana Point, we noticed the same Canadian boat that was next to us at the San Francisco Municipal Marina when we overhung the pier by so much. They shared some tips about getting all the paper work done with the Mexican authorities. Dana Point looked like a very nice spot, perhaps the nicest we've been to since Seattle. It would have been nice to stay longer. There was an old tall ship, named ***Pilgrim***, moored next to us. About 30 grade school kids spent the night on the boat and learned about the seafaring life 200 years ago. They were really having a good time.

San Diego

On Thursday we headed for Mission Bay in San Diego . . . our last port of call in the USA. Another sun sight with the sextant put us less than one-half a mile away from my LORAN position (I think the LORAN is off!) I also received and printed out a weatherfax of the northeastern Pacific Ocean. Looks like ugly weather in Washington state, with a couple of nice highs foretelling continued good weather in southern California. Candace is studying Spanish everyday now.

Just north of Mission Bay we encountered a gigantic kelp bed, perhaps five miles long by two miles wide. Of course some kelp wrapped around our prop, but that was easily cleaned off after we anchored.

We're here in San Diego, two thirds of the way to Cabo San Lucas and about 1,400 miles from Seattle. Except for the Mariner roller furling, there have been no major problems. Ruining our cameras with that wave in San Simeon was pretty bad, but they were vulnerable and likely to be totaled sooner or later. Now its time for final provisioning, getting our Mexican paper work completed, as well as our Mexican ham licenses, and finishing the final projects.

The weather in San Diego is fantastic. We even had time to go to the San Diego Zoo. On November 21 we motored around Point Loma to San Diego to get a little closer to the "action." Do you remember the America Cup races were called the "Coma off Pt. Loma" by some sportswriter who was bored with the mismatch between the "cat and the dog?" Of course that was a takeoff on the Ali/Frazer heavyweight fight billed as the "Thrilla in

Manila." Lest I digress, San Diego is really quite the sailing Mecca, and they're still into the America's Cup. All the banks, the Post Office, and all the stores have sailing pictures on the walls. Bumper stickers query "To sail, or to varnish, that is the question" or perhaps, "Read the Deed," following the theme of the America Cup court proceedings.

Before San Diego, we spent twelve days in Mission Bay. The anchoring rules only allow four days at anchor per week in Mission Bay, so we spent four days on the hook in beautiful Mariner's Cove, four on the dock at the Hyatt Islandia Marina, and then four back in the cove. Except for a visit from Candace's parents who had driven their RV from Houston, it was a period of non-stop projects. Redo the brightwork, following up on the promise we made in Benicia to keep it looking nice; minor rewiring on the windmill; and finish installing the ham antenna. Actually, hams never finish tinkering with their antennas. That's why they spend 90% of the time talking about them.

We bought a ProFurl roller furling system for the headsail, but not one for the staysail, two large M-55 ARCO solar panels (they've temporarily stopped making the Solvonics ones that I had originally ordered), spare light bulbs for all the lights, a stainless steel cable to lock the dinghy, several filters and a repair kit for the water maker. Finally, we both got a spare pair of eyeglasses, and carbon paper to help us fill out the multiple copies of Mexican paperwork. Can you imagine the bill we're running up on our VISA card? Many of the other cruisers who are "headin' south" are spending just as crazily as we are. It's a feeding frenzy at the marine stores in San Diego!

In contrast to all the pro sailing vibes exuded by business and the general public in San Diego, their Harbor Police has made it quite difficult for cruisers. Unlike any other port on the West Coast that we've been to, San Diego is the only one that requires a boat anchored during daylight hours to hoist a black ball, twelve inches in diameter. We stuffed some laundry in a black plastic trash bag, tied it up in a roundish bundle, and hoisted it for all the harbor police to see. They also require anchor lights to be lit at least twenty minutes before sunset. Anyway, we complied, even though it wasted electricity. The harbor police also give tickets if you're in a dinghy that's not registered. In Washington state, a small dinghy is not required to be registered so long as there's no motor on it. Finally they require a dinghy to display red and green running lights, as well as a white stern light, if being operated at night. The fines for these "infractions" are in the $75 to $125 range. What a hassle! To make matters worse, the only legal anchorage is between the San Diego airport and the Navy's airport, so it's quite noisy.

We put up with that crap for only one night while we checked out the marinas. We found a good spot for $15 per night in Commercial Basin on Shelter Island near all the marine stores. Seattleites would be surprised to see the Gestapo-like harbor police of southern California. When I checked into the Santa Barbara marina I was intimidated by the large revolvers strapped on their hips. In order to use the marina, not only do you have to pay some inflated price, but you also have to show your current, unexpired, state boaters' registration. Then the police actually check that the registration numbers and the boat description match with your registration. All this is done in an unfriendly, confrontational atmosphere. When you're used to dealing with the friendly Californians that I've talked so much about earlier, it's quite a shock to be treated like a hardened criminal just to pay a ridiculous price for a dock. This has been the case in every municipal marina in Southern California. Northern California is a different state!

Shelter Island. What a great spot for cruisers! There are more than twenty stores selling various stuff and services for boaters . . . all within walking distance. Plus laundromats, banks, grocery stores, and restaurants

galore. We checked in with the Downwind Marine Store which seems to try harder than any other, catering to the cruisers heading to Mexico. They provide many services, for free, just on the chance you'll spend what's left of your cruising kitty with them. For example, they will forward mail to us in Mexico. They have a beat up truck which we can use for free. We've signed up for it on Friday to do a bunch of errands in downtown San Diego. They monitor several ham nets and will forward messages to us. This will allow people to call Downwind Marine in San Diego (619-224-2733) to forward a non-business message to us via the ham radio. Even if we're not listening to the net that day, another cruiser who's in our vicinity may hear the message and volunteer to forward it to us. This is great.

I spent almost all of Thanksgiving Day installing the new ProFurl system. This was quite an undertaking, but everything seemed to go smoothly. First I had to go up in the bosun chair and remove the headstay. Then all the aluminum extrusions and the rest of the system had to be installed on the forestay while it was on the dock. Then the tricky part was reattaching the forestay, with all the heavy furling system on it, without bending it. With a long line in hand, Candace went to the top of the mast in the bosun chair and lead it through a turning block. I put the heavy furling drum, which is at the bottom of the forestay, in a Styrofoam box. One end of the long line was attached to the top of the forestay and the other end was wrapped around a jib winch. As I started to winch up the top of the forestay, the Styrofoam box/sled at the bottom slid smoothly along the dock. This approach worked perfectly, and we hoisted the furling system without bending it. I can't wait to try it out.

Candace fixed a small, 9 pound, turkey with stuffing and gravy, then topped it off with pumpkin pie. Like most Americans, we had leftover turkey for several days. We were thankful for many, many things.

Final Preparations

On Friday, we borrowed the Downwind Marine beater truck and went downtown to get our Mexican cruising papers. Whether or not one fishes, it's necessary to get a fishing license for the boat, the dinghy, and all people on board. That set us back $61. The Tourist Permit was free, but something else cost $16. Candace picked up another how-to-speak Spanish book, and I picked up a spare start-stop switch for the windmill. In San Diego we had the diesel engine serviced. Not too surprisingly it had been knocked out of alignment somewhat by the "Delta Danforth." We picked up a spare fan and module (the "brains") for the refrigerator. Everything we've heard tells us that our Adler Barbour large cold machine will break down under constant running in the tropics. So we're preparing as best we can.

We had noticed that the water was tasting a little bit "moldy," so Candace emptied all the tanks and cleaned them as best she could. Then she treated them with bleach, flushed them a few times, and then refilled them. This was a good task to complete while we had easy access to a plentiful water supply. I installed a charcoal water filter for the galley foot pump. We noticed an immediate improvement in water quality. I purchased another 150 feet of chain. The 200 feet we already had plus the new chain were joined together to form a single, 350 foot long, all chain anchor rode. We want all chain to avoid chafing in coral anchorages. I stretched it out along the dock, up and back in 25 foot segments. Then I spray painted red marks at 25', 75', 125', etc., and white marks at 50', 100', 150', etc. With these marks on the chain, it's easy to let out the desired amount while anchoring.

One project I didn't get around to completing was calibration of the boat speed/log. The initial adjustment, after

the instrument was fixed in Redondo Beach, was made strictly from the memory that we went about 6.25 knots when the motor ran at 2,400 RPMs. That should be close enough for government work!

We made radio contact with Chuck and Bev on ***Carina*** for the first time in weeks. They were "around the corner" in Mission Bay. Together we rented a car and drove to Mexicali to get our Mexican ham licenses. What a hassle. Virtually every other country in the world has free reciprocity concerning the licensing of foreign hams. Not Mexico. It's a 2.5 hour trip to Mexicali, the capital of Baja California Norte. At the border, I exchanged less than $400 for a million pesos. I guess that makes us Mexican millionaires! Then we drove around from the "Direccion General De Normatividad Y Control De Communicaciones," to a store to get four copies made (they didn't even have a copy machine in the government building), then to a bank to pay 76,000 pesos and finally back to the government building to get the final papers stamped. Afterwards we went to a new shopping mall in Mexicali, had lunch and ice cream cones, then headed back to San Diego. It was fun trying to communicate in Spanish. Everyone was friendly, and getting in and out of the country was "no problemo."

Old Town shop in San Diego

One of the last projects before heading south was the mounting of the solar panels. They have to be moved around to get optimum output from the sun. I built a frame to hold both panels and completed the wiring. I hope my arrangement works. Every boat seems to have a different idea when it comes to mounting solar panels. That's because there really isn't a single best solution.

We bought a Mexican flag, and a new USA flag since ours was kind of frayed. Candace also made a Q flag. That's a solid yellow flag that's hoisted when you sail into a new country and request clearance. Final food purchases were completed and we declared we were ready. Now it's time to have fun.

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 6 - Down the Mexican Baja

Coronados Islands

On Monday morning, December 4, we topped off the diesel tank and headed south. Since we didn't get away until after lunch, we planned to anchor for the night at the Coronados Islands, then make the 45 mile trip to Ensenada the next day to clear customs. Although the prevailing winds are from the north, that day we had them from the southeast . . . right on the nose. One starboard tack down to Tijuana, then a port tack out to the Coronados Islands and we expected to arrive just before sunset.The weather had different ideas. Despite clear skies everywhere else, the islands were socked in with thick fog. That cut out the sun's light an hour early and we were left in the dark and the fog. We dropped the sails and motored toward the islands, navigating 100% with radar.

We threaded ***Baba BarAnn*** between the middle and the south islands, then maneuvered into a small cove, and dropped the anchor when we hit the 5 fathom mark. This was all done without ever seeing land! The radar showed we were in a cove with about 50 yards on three sides, and open to the south. When we turned off the engine, we could hear breakers all around us. We were anything but comfortable. Knowing that sleep would be impossible in such a tenuous anchorage, we decided to continue south. So up came the anchor, and we threaded our way back out, between the Islas Los Coronados. I'll never do anything as stupid as that again.

We then hoisted the sails and started to beat our way south in dense fog. About every hour or so we'd tack, not playing the wind shifts. We didn't want to arrive at Ensenada before sunrise. That was a mistake, and we ended up sailing all night long, getting only 20 miles further south. In essence we ended up sailing back and forth, east and west. Then the wind died completely, so we had to motor the rest of the way to Ensenada, in order to arrive there before dark!

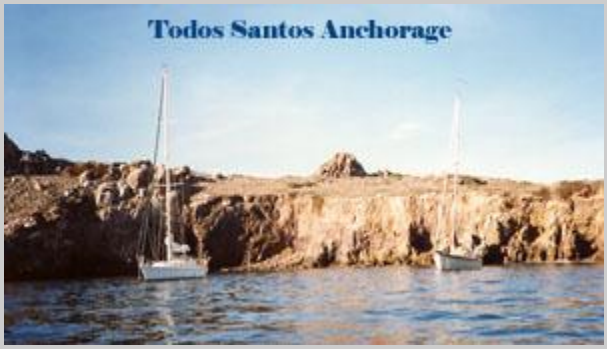
Ensenada

Ensenada is the largest town in the Baja, with about 250,000 people. The air and water pollution was terrible. An enterprising young guy motored out in his panga (18 foot open boat) and tried to get us to use his mooring at $5 per night, with "taxi" service at $1 per person per trip. No thanks. We anchored a little further away from town, next to two other cruisers. The boat next to us recognize us from Mission Bay, and even remembered my name. We rowed over, enjoyed a cerveza, and found out the routine for completing all the paperwork. The next morning, we motored the dinghy into town and completed all the red tape in just over an hour. It really wasn't too bad.

Then we headed for the fish market. We were the only gringos, and we slowly checked out all the stalls. A small, but muscular boy, perhaps 14 years old, knew a little more English than the others, and had a nice style, as well

as some nice looking fish. We picked up a fresh looking fish and said "How much?" "Five dollars!" That seemed high, so Candace asked how much it weighed. He threw it up on some scales above his head, and it read 1.2 kilos. I'm not sure whether or not his hand was on the scale, but that wasn't important. This fish certainly wasn't going to be sold by the pound. Candace said "5,000 pesos," he said "10,000." After a few more rounds of negotiations, we settled on 7,000, or about $2.65. Welcome to Mexico. Actually bartering was kind of fun. We both thought it was a fair price. Then the boy expertly filleted our fish and we were off. We stopped at a Fish Taco stand (they have lots of them), only to buy some fresh cilantro to season our fish. The entire transaction took place in Spanish as Candace asked "Puedo comprar cilantro?" (Can I buy cilantro?) We gave the girl 15 cents for a large bunch and then we went back to the boat. We had to get out of the choking air and smelly harbor as soon as possible. After lunch we headed to Islas Todos Santos, just 10 miles east of Ensenada.

Islas Todos Santos



Just a few hundred yards off the island our depth sounder still wasn't registering. Since it's good for depths down to 650 feet, I was sure that all the oil in Ensenada had fouled the transducer. But shortly before reaching the island, it started registering 500-600 foot depths. The one good anchorage is a cove about 250 feet in diameter, with rocks all around on three sides, and there was one boat in there already. As we entered, its skipper waved, so I knew he wasn't going to be too grumpy about sharing his secluded cove with us. He said he had a stern anchor out, and suggested we tie a stern line to shore.

In tight quarters between his boat and the rocks, I spun ***Baba BarAnn*** around, and headed back out so Candace could drop the bow anchor and 200 feet of chain. After backing down and setting the anchor, I grabbed a bag in the lazarette that contains the stern anchor rode, jumped into the dinghy, tied one end of the rode to the boat, and then rowed to shore to find a spot to tie our line. Finding nothing but steep, sharp rocks, it didn't look good when I scrambled to shore with the dinghy painter and the last 10 feet of anchor line. Just around the corner of the rock I'd landed on, I found a large metal ring sticking out. Just what I needed. Charlie's Charts of Mexico had mentioned such a ring, but I didn't think I'd be lucky enough to land my dinghy on just the right rock. I quickly tied a bowline, and got back to the boat as fast as possible. Meanwhile Candace had her hands full keeping the boat off the rocks. Once on board, I quickly winched in the stern line while Candace brought in 50 feet of anchor chain, thereby pulling us away from the rocks, in between the anchor and shore. I'd noticed that our neighbor's boat, ***Moko Jumbi***, was a Hylas 42 with a Seattle home port.

After quickly consulting the computer, I jumped back on deck and said "Thanks for the help Jim! You're Jim O'Connell aren't you?" We hadn't met before so he was really confused. I'd been told by the head of the Seattle Crow's Nest marine store, last July, that I should look up his friend on a Hylas 42 who had similar cruising plans. The computer didn't have his boat's name, but it had enough information for an educated guess.

Moko Jumbi

We dinghied over and became more acquainted. I told him how I'd known his step-father, Duff Kennedy, who is the head of one of Seattle's largest pension asset management firms. He wanted to know what other information we had in the computer! He and his friend, Robin, both commented on our expert anchoring routine. I wanted to agree that a lot of things were done right, and some a little bit lucky (like finding that ring in the rock, and having just enough line), but just bit my tongue. During our trip around Vancouver Island last year we had much practice with stern lines, and we'd done a lot of anchoring.

That night's dinner of fish poached with tomatoes, onions, green olives, and fresh cilantro was great. Our first day in Mexico was a big success. I just hope it's a harbinger of many good times to come. The next morning I picked up Jim and Robin and we dinghied to shore to take pictures and climb around. Then we weighed anchor and headed south.

Five Days Offshore

After three glorious hours of sunshine and favorable winds, the winds died and we were becalmed. We're really trying to preserve our diesel, and couldn't motor at the drop of the wind. This looked like a good time for a "doldrums drill." So we waited, and waited, and waited for the wind to come up. After TWELVE HOURS we were still in the same place, it was 2 AM, and we had enough. On went the motor for about nine hours. Shortly before noon some favorable winds picked up from the Northwest, and we were off. Smooth seas, and fair winds from the northwest. Perfect. We headed out, as much as 100 miles offshore, and charged down the Baja coast.

We sailed non-stop for five days, generally with brisk Santana winds. At times there were gusts over 30 MPH, but generally we had 15-25 knot winds. We were moving. The first few days were tough, only because we couldn't get used to sleeping with the noise and motion of the boat. Exhaustion is a good remedy for that problem, so after three days with virtually no sleep, I finally got the hang of it. There's a natural tendency for your body to resist the rolling motion. When the boat rocks one way, your muscles react the other way. How many times have I heard, you've got to go with the flow. Not only was I exhausted, but my thigh and shoulder muscles were sore from resisting.

Offshore passages are not easy. When you're not on watch, you lie down with eyes closed, hoping to sleep 10 minutes here or there. There are four different sleeping areas on ***Baba BarAnn***. The vee berth, where we normally sleep at the bow of the boat, is too noisy, and has too much motion when we're sailing. The best alternative is the aft cabin for port or starboard tacks. The main salon has one settee on the starboard, and one on the port. They're probably the best, especially when it's very rocky. However, the person on watch uses the starboard area in front of the nav station, and could disturb someone trying to use the port settee.

Being "on watch" entails carefully looking around the horizon every 20 minutes and sometimes checking the radar screen. You can set a timer to wake yourself every 20 minutes if there are no problems with steering, although it's better to stay awake. When motoring, it's quite easy, since the auto pilot steers flawlessly, and

there's no need to conserve electricity. That means the radar can be on all the time. Under sail, the wind vane generally has no problem steering, especially if the winds are fairly consistent. Light winds, with a quartering sea, on a broad reach can be a problem, since a wave can force a gibe.

The "on watch" person is fully responsible for keeping the boat sailing safely and in the desired direction. Sail reefing or changing is a two person job, so the "off watch" must be awakened. A thermos of hot water is ready for coffee or tea, while candy bars, fruit, nuts, and other munchies are handy. About every hour or so a dot is put on the chart to plot our dead reckoning, along with the time, log (odometer miles), and course steered. I usually read during night watches, while Candace fights seasickness and sleepiness. Sometimes we listen to tapes on the "walkman."

Celestial Navigation

Of course we saw no land, and only a very few boats would show up on the horizon. We were far enough south such that the LORAN was unreliable. We didn't have SatNav or GPS. That meant I could now practice celestial navigation when it really counted. Our starting position was plotted on the chart from our last land observation. To this we added our "dead reckoning," (DR,) plots. A "running fix" was obtained using the sextant and a hand calculator. It would provide two crossing lines of position (LOPs) from sun sights, so we marked that spot on the chart and compared it with our assumed position from DR. Hopefully the two were close.

Based on wild guesses about the current, the perceived quality of the sun sights, and divine intervention, I then determined a new starting point, from which we recommenced DR plotting. The next day another running fix showed us to be about 20 miles behind our DR position. Either my celestial was off, or the log on the boat was off. Since celestial showed that we went 120 miles in the last 21 hours, not 140, I recalibrated (recalibrated seems a bit too refined a term for the action . . . how about re-eyeballed) the log to give 15 percent lower readings. Forget that this was only the first day I had used celestial navigation . . . of course it was more accurate than the expensive "odometer" on the boat. This celestial stuff is supposed to be really accurate, although it was a bit tricky getting readings with my sextant when the boat was rocking in 5-8 foot waves. Anyway, that's what I did.

That night I got a fix using two stars. Star fixes at night were possible because the full moon made the horizon visible. The next day our DR position was within two miles of a celestial position obtained with three stars. About twice a day we would have radio contact on the 40 meter band with Chuck on ***Carina***. He'd left two days before we had, but our non-stop trip had caught up with him. He was traveling south, along the coast, while we headed ESE . . . both converging on Bahia Santa Maria with an ETA of noon on December 13.

At sunrise I spotted land . . . just a mountain. Was it perhaps Mt. San Lazaro, on the north entrance to Bahia Santa Maria. That mountain should have a bearing of 77 degrees magnetic, not 66 degrees. I'm either further south, or somehow that's a very high mountain further north and inland (off my charts) from Mt. San Lazaro. Of course I'm fully aware that it could be one of a dozen mountains on the coast. Where am I? It's starting to get tense. My confidence and celestial bravado are starting to shake. Candace suggests calling Chuck, who has satellite navigation, to get a visual check on our landfall. I didn't want to resort to that unless it was absolutely necessary. I'd gotten us this far (wherever "this" was) so we're not going to cheat just 20 miles from the finish.

Candace has a good suggestion of quickly taking another sun sight, and it places us about 5 miles further south

from our DR track. Now I'm comfortable that the mountain is Mt. San Lazaro. We did it! We found that needle in a hay stack on the Baja coast, using celestial navigation! We turn slightly to the north and confidently head toward the bay.

Bahia Santa Maria

A little later, I call Chuck to ask if that's him I can see, sailing by the Cabo San Lazaro lighthouse. Yup, and he sees ***Baba BarAnn*** coming in from the SW. I challenge with "First fish wins a beer!" We meet up at the entrance to the bay, just 15 minutes after he'd arrived. Of course I was trolling a lure. I started to pretend like I had a big fish on . . . but it was too late. I saw him dip his net into the water and lift a small fish. "Chuck, you're not going to count a fish under 12 inches, are you?"

It's hot and sunny. That night we have dinner on ***Carina***, enjoying some of the tuna fish that Chuck caught a few days ago. They're not as thrilled since they've been eating tuna fish for 3 days! I have a slight case of "immotion sickness" since it's so calm in the bay, but I'm extremely happy with the successful completion of our first long passage as a couple. Excluding the half day bobbing up and down during the "doldrums drill," we traveled 621 nautical miles in 4.5 days, at an average speed of 5.75 knots . . . 138 miles per day. About 20% of the time we were motoring at the same 5.75 knots. Seasickness was not a problem, although we took some pills the first few days. I also found out that there is a strong southerly current which explains why I ended up 5 miles south of my assumed position.

December 14 I traded a small bottle of Canadian Club and a third of a loaf of bread that Candace baked yesterday for four lobster . . . it worked out to about 75 cents per lobster. They're spiny lobster, about one pound a piece. Candace caught 4 Pacific Herring by jigging for them with little hooks just off the stern. They're a pretty fish, about 10-12 inches long, with yellow around the "ears." Chuck and Bev traded for their lobsters and came over to ***Baba BarAnn*** for dinner.

Baja Lobsters on Deck

We had pan fried fish, two lobsters per person, potato salad, veggies, and cold sauvignon blanc. Somehow we even found room for chocolate cake and coffee. The solar panels could easily supply enough electricity for the water maker, and have some left over for the refrigerator. So this is Baja life. Nice.

Final Leg South to Cabo San Lucas

Just 160 miles south to Cabo. We left at 7 AM, hoping to arrive during daylight the next day. It was drizzling . . . just like Seattle. Soon the sails were up and we were beating south. Yes, the wind was directly from the southeast where we were heading. As the wind picked up, we reefed the main. Later we took down the staysail. When the wind built to 25 knots, and the waves increased, we had to fall off a bit. Once again back and forth, east and west, making very little progress toward our destination.

When the wind rose to 30 knots, we stopped beating (the boat as well as our heads against the wall) and started motoring south. All night and day we pound against the waves. That night rain squalls were interspersed with lightning, wind, and waves. Eating and sleeping was impossible. Maintaining balance and our stomach was a full time occupation. This passage ranked down there with Cape Mendocino for terrible trips. Late the next morning, the sun came out for a brief instant, allowing us to use the sextant and "shoot the sun." In order to get our exact position, we combined an east-west celestial line-of-position with our radar's north-south line six miles offshore.

Three more hours to go. What a miserable passage. At times the motor could only make one knot forward progress against the wind and sea. Crashing off the top of one particularly large wave, the doors to the chain locker came open, spilling wet chain over our bedding. Because we don't sleep in the vee berth during such violent motion, we didn't notice our soggy sheets until arriving in port. Finally we turned the corner into Cabo San Lucas. (Picture of Cabo before all the development) The sun was now blazing hot and the weather was glorious. We squeezed into the crowded inner harbor and dropped the anchor. Four more times we re-anchored that night, trying to fit. Bedding and clothes were brought on deck to dry out.

After dinner we went to ***Bequia Chief*** for tea and cake. We first met this boat in San Luis Obisbo, then later Santa Barbara, more than two months ago. Actually, we had met their son, Tavis, who's an extremely affable, outgoing 14 year old. He let me copy one of his computer space games. Finally we meet Tavis' parents, Tom and Jan, and little sister Jo. Like all cruising children, they're taking correspondence classes. Most American kids are taking a high school course produced by the University of Nebraska, or a grade school course produced by the Calvert School in Maryland. The Canadian children seem to be taking courses offered by the government.

The next day we played the Mexican paper shuffle game. ***Clovelly***, a Vancouver boat we first met in the Delta, said the record was one and a half hours for the process. So we walked one mile to the Port Captaina's office. Unlike at Ensenada, he said go to "inmigracion" first. Next we walked to the copy store, got three more copies than they needed in Ensenada (48 cents), then walked two miles to a 15' by 15' shack to get them stamped by "inmigracion." Then back to the Port Captain for more stamping. Finally, next door to the Taxman to get another form filled out and pay 5,780 pesos ($2.25). Because we walked pass the "inmigracion" shack several times before having the nerve to enter the barbwire yard, it took us two and one half hours.

Next we "checked in" at Papi's Deli, the cruisers' main rendezvous point in Cabo San Lucas. We were boat number 133 this year. By the time the season's over, 350 boats will check in. Papi's runs the cruisers' VHF net where info is swapped, equipment is bought and sold by cruisers, and activities are announced. That night there was a free Christmas party put on by the downtown merchants. After lunch, we checked out some stores for some minor shopping (a.k.a. tried out our Spanish). Our language skills are substandard but acceptable in a pinch. Some things cost less, some more, but most are about the same as USA prices. We met Chuck and Bev who had just arrived almost 20 hours after us. They had some engine problems and motored very little. We both commiserated on the rough passage.

We decided to avail ourselves of a real luxury. Miguel on VHF channel 14 picks up laundry at our boat, and then returns it all clean and folded for 12,000 pesos ($4.50) per six pound load. We stuffed three weeks' worth into a large sail bag and hoped it weighed less than 24 pounds.

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 7 - Cabo San Lucas and La Paz

Cabo San Lucas

Baba BarAnn rocks with each ferry boat full of passengers that disembarks from the Princess Sea Liner which is anchored in the outer harbor. Yes, Cabo San Lucas has gone big time in the touristo business. Primarily the town (now up to 14,000 residents[1990]) caters to the marlin fishermen who stay at the hotel, $100-150 per night per room, charter the boat, $100-400, and generally get shuttled from one Mexican hustle to another. Each morning, while staying in the inner harbor, we are awakened at 6:30 to charter boats zipping around on either side of us as they rush to the primo spots on the sport fisherman's wharf. The cacophony of shrill Mexican whistles fills the air along with the smell of oil. That's the early show. When the fishermen return there's much cheering over the day's catch, but it's less intense since it's spread over a couple hours in the early afternoon.

Walking around town, we are continually besieged by clean cut young adults who entreat us to see the Finisterra Hotel, have a free breakfast and a bottle of Kaluha. Since we have plenty of time, we agree. During the nice breakfast we discover that they're really pushing time share condos. We notice some other cruisers who are likewise enjoying the breakfast and enduring the sales pitch. After saying no a dozen different ways, we collect our bottle of Kaluha (a full liter) and are on our way. It sure was different being on the other end of the "time is money" equation. The view was nice and we were in no hurry. Then of course there's the more typical tourist traps of arts and crafts, T-shirts, clothes, etc. The silver jewelry really looks good, and is reasonably priced after negotiating. I'm just not a shopper (except in marine stores).

Despite the above, we're generally impressed with Cabo San Lucas. Unlike Seattle or any other city in the USA, we haven't been panhandled or had to avoid drunks. Despite very few paved roads, the town is fairly clean. We went to a clinic given by a doctor on sanitation in Mexico. As a brief summary, DON'T DRINK THE WATER, unless it's been boiled 20 minutes. Also thoroughly clean lettuce and cabbage with a special solution (it's something like iodine). The big point is to never drink water from a tap, or at a restaurant. Our game plan is to make ALL our water with the desalinator, and never eat lettuce or cabbage. Partially to avoid the inner harbor noise and pollution, we decided to move to the outer harbor. The clean salt water in the outer harbor will allow us to use our water maker to replenish the tanks.

When I stepped on the deck switch to raise the anchor, I saw smoke coming up the chain pipe. Boy did that get my attention! I quickly turned off the electric current and discovered that the wiring for the switch was completely corroded. Another terrible installation job on the windlass. Remember that Marine Servicenter in Seattle forgot to separate the aluminum windlass from the stainless steel backing plate, leading to much electrolysis and a big job for me in Long Beach? This was potentially much more dangerous. If I had tried to raise the anchor at night, I might not have seen the smoke, and the boat might have caught fire. As a partial fix, I disconnected the good "down switch" and connected the "up switch" to it. We now lower the anchor the good old fashion way, with gravity rather than the more controlled way with the windlass. In the outer harbor, we anchored in 55 feet, letting out 225 feet of chain. With 300 pounds of anchor and chain, I sure hope the windlass

works when we need it.

Christmas

About one-half of the "fleet" in Cabo is going to Papi's for dinner on Christmas Eve. We prefer to stay on board and cook our own Mexican food: super picante chili rellenos, beans and tortillas. Getting into the spirit, I scribe the following drivel:

Christmas '89 in Cabo

'Twas the night before Christmas, and the fleet's real happy,
'Cause they're dining in style at the Deli of Papi's.
While the Communist world is falling apart,
We're counting our blessings, and crossing our heart.
Can you believe that they're shooting Romanian boys,
on the eve that Saint Nick delivers the toys?

Now they're fighting and killing in Panama City,
In place of pinatas, it's really a pity.
Even though Noriega is trying to nuke us,
I hope he can't find us in Cabo San Lucas!
The Class of '89, as we're sometimes called,
Is pretty darn lucky, we're havin' a ball.

P.S. I challenge one and all for a better rhyme with Cabo San Lucas!

Some of the cruisers in Cabo that Christmas:
Allegro, Alpenglow, *Altair*, *Amazing Grace*, *Baba BarAnn, Beluga*, *Carina*, *Chanteuse*, *Charisma, Cinnamon, Clovelly, Coho II, Courser, Dream Maching, DX*, *Easy Street, Exit Left, Genesis*, *Halcyon, Ichiban*, *Independence, Karefree, Kingston Eagle, Lyo Lyok, Lysette I, Metheus, Moko Jumbi, Our Way*, *Perihelion*, *Play Right*, *Runaway, Shangrila*, *Southern Cross, Spice Sea, Spira, Theresa, The Todd*, *Ulysses, White Cloud*.

On Christmas day we dinghy over to Lover's Beach, a beautiful beach right at "the Cabo," for sunning, swimming, and an informal party. About 15 dinghies show up, but 4 or 5 get swamped trying to beach them in the surf. The water's OK, about 70-71 degrees, and the sun's really hot. That evening we go over to ***Carina*** and join Chuck and Bev, along with their daughter Catherine, for a fantastic, traditional, Christmas turkey dinner with all the fixings.

Our Mail Finally Arrives

For several months we've been concerned because our State of Washington boat registration had expired, as of June 30, 1989, and ***Baba BarAnn*** wasn't documented with the Coast Guard. It didn't make sense to pay the annual fee of $700 when we were going to be in Washington for just a few weeks, before leaving in August. The answer is Coast Guard documentation which only costs $100, with no annual fee. We had heard from several other boats that it would take about a year or more to obtain Coast Guard documentation. We had started the process in October, but hadn't gotten very far. Being out of the country, and not having rapid mail service, would probably stretch out the process even more. While in San Diego on December 2, I went to a firm that specializes in helping yachts get documented. On December 26 we received our mail, the first since Thanksgiving. Yeah! It included our Coast Guard Documentation. That was amazingly fast service. It was worth the extra fee to have an "expert" move the paperwork along.

As you might have gathered, we've changed many of our eating/drinking habits to be in sync with Mexico. Kellogg's Corn Flakes, made in Mexico, are really cheap. Corn tortilla's are 28 cents per kilo (12 cents a pound!); the grapefruit is juicy and good; bananas and melons are good while apples are poor. I've never seen better tomatoes and we're eating loads of them. Limes are inexpensive, good, and used a lot; peppers and onions are good while carrots are below average. Jicama, green chilies, jalapeno peppers, and cilantro find their way into our diet quite often. The French bread is great. We've eaten lots of fish; scallops were very good; and pork, ground beef, and chicken have been good. Chorizo was tasty but greasy, Steaks have been poor and lamb hard to

find. Pasteurized cheese and milk are very good, although the milk in Cabo didn't stay fresh for many days. Jose Cuevro Tequila (Blanco or gold), at $3.75 per liter, is a great buy. I saw a fifth of Stolle vodka for sale at $6.20. At about $2.40 per six pack, beer in cans is not the fantastic buy I had expected. Bottles are cheaper, if you return them. The cheaper, $4.00, wines have been fair while the $5-$6 haven't been.

Beth and Alex Visit

We moved back to the inner harbor on Dec. 27 for calm but noisy waters. It would also be easier for Beth and Alex to get around. On December 28 we took the bus, only 2000 pesos (80 cents) a piece, to the airport 1.5 hours away, in order to pick up Beth and Alex.

With my frequent flyer mileage on Alaska Airlines, I had gotten them tickets to Cabo for a 10 day visit during their Christmas vacation. I hadn't seen Beth since early August, before she went back to her sophomore year at Washington State University, nor Alex since early September when he left us in San Francisco to return to his sophomore year at Mercer Island High School.

Beth, Alex and Candace

They stayed on the boat, in somewhat tight quarters, but what a nice visit. We went to the beach several times, sunning and snorkeling, walked around town, and shopped at the local Mexican stores. In the evenings we played pictionary, hearts, and boggle. One night we borrowed a VCR movie from another cruiser and another night we watched several "Saturday Night Live" shows that were taped a year ago. Beth caught a nice size sea bass, and two barracudas, while I got skunked.

One night the wind picked up to almost 30 knots in the inner harbor. Because the windmill was "screaming," I turned it off at about 2 AM, and went back to sleep. One half hour later, I was startled awake with a BUMP. A boat upwind of us had dragged anchor, and had barely bumped our bow, just on the other side of the hull were I was sleeping in the vee berth. Inside, perhaps eight inches from my ear, it sounded like an explosion and I jumped up . . . smashing my shin. The bump to the boat was less damage than the typical trip through the locks in Seattle, but my shin took almost four weeks to heal. And Beth slept through the entire episode! January 6 was a sad day as I took Beth and Alex back to the airport. I don't know when I'll be seeing them again.

Intellectual Exercise

With the minimal number of small projects and maintenance to do on the boat, we finally have lots of time for reading and fun. Both of us were looking for some intellectual exercise so I started learning a new computer

language, Pascal, while Candace decided to learn how to play bridge. I had packed three large books and a tutorial program on Pascal. I wanted to learn Pascal because I have a good bridge program, written in Pascal. I thought it would be fun to modify the program to play different bidding systems. To help me with that project, I had also packed at least six books on bridge . . . two on bidding, and one each on declarer play, opening leads, defensive bidding, and opening leads. Unfortunately for Candace, there aren't any beginning bridge books on board. So she's learning bridge with Two Over One/Game Force by Max Hardy, a top flight bridge bidding system used by approximately 50% of the players in duplicate bridge tournaments. Each day we discuss different bids and practice bidding. The computer also provides competition. It bids and plays two hands, and we play the other two. Candace seems to be having fun learning bridge, and I'm enjoying being her tutor.

A few days before leaving Cabo San Lucas, I noticed ***Micaline***. It's a steel boat, sailed by a French couple with their little, 15 month old, daughter that I first met in Mission Bay. Bernard is an expressive and very friendly guy, while Louise is intelligent, interesting, and likeable. Their English is quite understandable, with a heavy French accent. He's from Cameroon, in Africa, and they've sailed east, across the Pacific via Tahiti, Hawaii, and Canada, and are headed through the Panama canal on their way to Europe. Their daughter, Gaella, is expressive like her dad, and lots of fun. The love shared by the three on their small boat is beautiful. Bernard and Louise were quite happy that Gaella was born in Oakland, CA, since that gives her dual citizenship in France and the USA. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting this family, and were sad our paths were diverging. Candace had remarked that Louise was the one of the few really interesting women that we've met while cruising. She's right. We've found that the typical "first mate," at least from the USA, is often boring.

The Trip To La Paz

On January 11 we left Cabo San Lucas for La Paz, 135 miles to the north. This passage is noted for being a difficult one during the winter, since there are strong prevailing winds from the north. The first day, we motored 46 miles to Cabo Los Frailes, with 20-22 knots winds directly at us. It was such a beautiful anchorage, that we stayed another day. I threw out a line with four small hooks to jig for some dinner. Ten seconds later I pulled in one. Then 2 minutes later I pulled in FOUR, one on each hook. They were Green Jacks, about 9 inches long. Although they tasted fine, they were too bony and we resolved to use them only for bait in the future. That day Candace made banana/walnut bread in the morning, and biscuits for dinner. The sunset, replete with tequila sunset drinks, (tequila, orange juice, grenadine, and lime) was gorgeous. January 12 was a "ten."

The next day we continued north to Ensenada de los Muertos. Leaving at 9:00, we motored for 3 hours into the wind. At noon we changed our course 25 degrees to the northwest, and raised the sails. Beating into the wind is usually a pain, but this turned out to be a great sail. Not a cloud in the sky, 16-18 knots off the starboard bow, and the waves against us weren't too large. The wind vane held our course while we heeled to port and cut through the waves. For five straight hours we beat at 305 degrees, averaging 5.95 knots. Pretty darn respectable for a heavy boat into the wind! Ten minutes before sunset we pulled into the bay. Although we were the only boat anchored, there were about 10 RV's near the beach, obviously filled with gringo fishermen. Many of the RV's even had satellite dishes for their TV's.

For three out of the last four nights we've used the ham radio to make telephone calls back to the USA. The Seafarers Net, on 14.314 between 1900 and 2000 PST, has been most helpful. We make contact with a ham "up north" who has telephone patching equipment. He then makes a collect call to our "party." This is all done for no

charge to us, although the "party" has to pay for the collect call from the ham's house. We always chit chat a little with the ham operator and I think he gets some vicarious enjoyment out of our adventures. Sometimes the propagation is poor and we can't get through, but it's been pretty good recently. Ham radio also provides us with news, via the BBC, Voice of America (heavy propaganda included at no charge), and the Christian Science Monitor (with 15 minutes of religion per hour).

The next leg north was directly against the wind, so we had to motor again. This time I dragged a small Krocodile lure about 70 feet behind the boat. It bounced on top of the waves much of the time, but it finally worked. We caught a skipjack tuna, only 15 inches long. In no time we had it filleted. That night, in our own private cove, I barbecued a good chunk. We poached the rest two nights later. It was OK, but not in the salmon league. At 4:30 the next morning, 17 knot winds from the west found the only opening in our cove, and made the rest of the night quite uncomfortable. By noon the next day we were in La Paz.

La Paz

La Paz, the capital of Baja California South, is the big city, with more than 100,000 residents. Some cruisers spend $350 per month to stay at a dock where they can plug into shore side electricity. We decided to pay $71 for a month's use of a mooring buoy, dinghy dock, security, and nice sandy beach. Since it's been quite windy recently, 14-18 knots, our windmill has topped off our batteries for free. The Mexican paper shuffle was a lot more tiresome in La Paz. We walked, just about non stop, for 6.5 hours, before making the rounds from immigration, to port captain, to port tax. We kept getting the wrong directions from well meaning Mexicans, who never had to go to the port captain. I estimated that we walked 20-24 miles! We also stopped at the bank where they gladly accepted our VISA card. There's a US style super market within walking distance, and that's a real treat.

After a few days in La Paz, the weather turned cold and windy. We had three straight cloudy days of 20-22 knot winds with temperatures in the low 60's. We hadn't seen weather like that since July in Seattle. At least the windmill had a good workout. With the extra power, we topped off our batteries and the water tanks. We've been eating jicama daily in our salads, and have remarked how it has the crunch, and somewhat the taste, of apple. Apples are expensive and of poor quality here, so we had a "great" idea . . . how about jicama pie? (My vote for jicama pan dowdy was ignored). So Candace made a jicama pie! The crust was good. The jicama retained their crunch and the experiment was ruled a complete flop. Anyone for chayote crepes? We're really enjoying eating the local foods. Sautéed with a little parmesan, chayote is really good. We've started using mole sauce, the quintessential condiment in Mexico, on chicken and meat. Not only is it easier to "go with the flow," but it's fun to live closer to the indigenous culture. Rather than complain that the hamburgers and French fries are lousy, we enjoy the enchiladas and other Mexican specialties.

The "La Paz Waltz" has been written about often, but it has to be seen first-hand to really appreciate. Perhaps due to the shallow harbor, the La Paz tide flows in and out at four knots or so. Meanwhile the north wind rushes down the Sea of Cortez and into the harbor, often at 20 knots. A boat at anchor points south into the out rushing tide, flowing north, while the less powerful wind blows at her stern. The result is a boat that dances around its buoy or anchor rode, sometimes quite animatedly. Imagine dropping a wood chip into the water, and watching it flow rapidly INTO a 20 knot wind! That's what happens. Under these conditions, ***Baba BarAnn*** sits comfortably, stern to the wind, with the anchor bridle under the boat. In other words, the tidal currents on the

keel push from the south, while the strong winds push the spars and rigging from the north. One problem is having your anchor rode wrapped with each tide. Each time the tide changes, the boat makes another turn around the anchor. If a boat is left unattended too long, the anchor rode winds up, gradually shortens, reducing scope, until eventually the anchor starts to drag. About every three days, when the tide was slack, I unwrapped the anchor rode. Because each boat reacts differently, it appears that the boats in the harbor are all dancing in different directions.

On January 21 I got on the VHF net and asked "What time does the Super Bowl start?" The terse response was "About this time next week!" Can you image I'm so much out of touch with football that I was off by a week? When Super Bowl Sunday arrived I went down to the big hotel in town to watch the action. Of course the only "action" was the coin toss. The '49ers creamed the Broncos. I guess I'll be able to survive without a steady diet of pro sports on TV. I can pick up a few local channels on our tube, but Mexican sports seem to be limited to boxing and soccer. At least I don't have to translate the Spanish to enjoy the action.

While in La Paz we redid the brightwork . . . it needed it. That took six days of hard work. We also waxed and polished the fiberglass, to protect it as well as to make it look nice. Only the rookie cruisers work on their boats, so all our efforts are branding us as "rookies." We've met a few cruisers who have been in Mexico for several years. The longer they've been here, the more laid back/lazy they seem to be. Is it the Mexican lifestyle that makes them so lazy, or is it the lazy people who can't get it together to leave for new destinations? What's already happened to us? Most noticeably, I've lost a fair amount of weight. Instead of squeezing into 38 inch trousers, the 36" ones are quite comfortable, if a little loose. Candace hasn't lost any weight, although there's now some noticeable definition in her biceps. This has happened without any conscious effort to reduce calories. In fact, we both are eating a lot more than before. Not having a car, and doing all the walking as well as the physical labor on the boat, burns off lots of calories. Another important factor is our reduced consumption of alcohol. We have wine perhaps once a week, and a second cocktail before dinner is quite rare. Of course we're both tanned. At 7 to 8 hours per night, we're sleeping a little more than during our working days. All in all, we're much healthier. The lack of stress associated with our jobs and the commute is fantastic.

Well, the weather in La Paz has continued to be windy and cool. We're tired of it, so we're heading to Mazatlan on "the mainland." We talked to Chuck on the ham radio, the first contact we've had with him in about a month, and he really liked Mazatlan. He sold us on it. La Paz is really dirty, and a big city without a whole lot going for it. Perhaps Mazatlan will also be dirty, but we hope it has better weather and inviting beaches. So with a day of provisioning and favorable weather, we'll be headed southeast.

Isla Partida

On Sunday, February 4, the wind had died down enough to leave La Paz, and head north to Isla Partida. This beautiful anchorage, just 26 miles north of La Paz, is inside a volcano that has been eroded to the sea on both the east and west. Only a dinghy can get through the opening on the east, but there's plenty of room to enter from the west. Once inside, we found six other yachts, anchored in the beautiful, emerald colored lagoon.

On the trip up, we noticed that our log/boat speed instruments weren't working again. Maybe the impeller had gotten clogged in La Paz? Once anchored, we had to do one of the most nerve wracking tasks . . . pull the impeller and temporarily replace it with a plug. As soon as the through hull is removed, gallons of water start

pouring into the boat, until it's plugged. One, two, three . . . Candace yanks the impeller out of the through hull while I rapidly put in the plug. Even for just that split second, we could see the emerald sea bed, as the water gushed through. The impeller was clogged with growth. It was an easy matter to clean it, and then reinsert it in the through hull. We're getting better at that, but still one to two gallons of salt water gushed through. That's what bilge pumps are for. Now the log/boat speed works perfectly.

The next morning we dinghied over to a shrimp boat that was anchored in the bay, and got about 2 pounds of nice size shrimp, with their heads cut off, for only 15,000 pesos ($5.75). It was a great buy, and good for three meals. On February 6 we left Partida and sailed back to Los Muertos, on the way south to Mazatlan.

Back to Los Muertos

We really had the tide working with us, and made good time. As we pulled in, we noticed ***Halcyon***, a Seattle boat we'd first met in Cabo. They were heading north to La Paz with another boat that was still slugging it out against the tide. The other boat, ***Deus Regit II***, was sailed by the youngest couple in the "Class of '89". Allen and Cindy, in their middle twenty's, from Newcastle Australia had sailed their little 25 foot, 5,000 pound boat across the Pacific. Their daughter, Anne, was born 5 months ago in Vancouver, and now they're in the Sea of Cortez. Their little outboard couldn't buck the tide, so they had a long trip sailing against the wind and tide, until they arrived just before dinner. Luckily, they had caught a nice size dorado (mahi mahi). So we put together a yummy pot luck dinner, with our shrimp, the dorado BBQed, veggies, cerveza, etc. We really enjoyed both couples quite a bit. But, one of the sad parts of the cruising lifestyle, we were heading in opposite directions. ***Deus Regit II*** was heading through the canal, on the way to Europe. ***Halcyon*** was staying in the Sea of Cortez for another year to do lots of diving.

Back to Los Frailes

We stayed another day in Los Muertos, and then left for Los Frailes. The first three hours we motored on a glassy sea, in beautiful warm sunshine, a big change from La Paz. With a freshening breeze, we started sailing and decided it was also a good time to catch a fish for ourselves. This was the time to try out the "heavy artillery" fishing lures we'd purchased in La Paz. We tied the six inch lure, onto 100 feet of 150 pound test line. On the other end we attached the one foot long, rubber snubber, and then looped a line around the winch. No rod. No reel. Just lure, line, and snubber. We weren't fishing for sport. Just a "meat Fisherman" as my father would say. In about an hour, we yanked in a nice size dorado, about 20-24 inches long. It was a beautiful emerald green when hauled from the sea, but it rapidly paled, first to lime green and then to white.

Earlier in the day, I'd heard a cruiser from Los Frailes talking on single side band (SSB). It turned out to be ***Achates*** from Juneau. That was the boat we'd first seen in Port Angeles when leaving Seattle, and then again for a few minutes in Sausalito. Until now, almost six months later, we never spent any time with them. Another pot luck dorado dinner! We had several mutual friends from Juneau. Kevin even did much of the programming on the State of Alaska's personnel system, which both Candace and I used in our jobs consulting for the State. The wind in Los Frailes blew up to 30 knots for three straight days. Along with six other boats, we were all pinned in. The weatherfax hinted at a slight break, so we finally left on Sunday morning, February 11, for the 160

mile passage across the Sea of Cortez to Mazatlan. With gusts to 27 knots, we left with a reefed main and just the staysail. The seas were very sloppy for the first four hours, and we both got seasick. Ever so gradually, the wind diminished and we added sail. We averaged a respectable 6 knots for the first 12 hours.

The light northerly winds on our easterly trip gave us difficulties with the Monitor windvane. Taking a suggestion from the Monitor manual, we used the following approach to balance the boat. The staysail. was either sheeted in hard, or even sheeted on the windward side, depending on wind strength, while the main and genoa where sheeted loosely. I'd never heard of such a technique, but it worked fabulously. The Monitor steered the entire way with no problems. We could even make reasonable progress in 5 knot breezes, whereas formerly we needed 7 or more knots to get our heavy boat moving. It's almost like hoving to with the staysail. and main, while driving with the genoa. What a super discovery. By 7 AM, the winds had slowed down, and moved around to the bow, so we motored the last 7 hours into Mazatlan.

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 8 - Mazatlan

Mazatlan

Shortly after entering the anchorage, Roberto Castro motored out to greet us. He is the enterprising young Mexican who provides "yacht services" for the cruisers. We'd heard about him from Chuck on ***Carina***.

The next day he drove us around Mazatlan to complete our paper work, took us to the bank, and then to a few "marine stores." The stores were hopelessly low on stock, but otherwise the day was a success. We topped it off by buying a huge lobster, perhaps three pounds, from a local fisherman for only 10,000 pesos ($3.75). We had fabulous lobster salad that night.

Mazatlan Diver

The weather was great in Mazatlan. There was a free dinghy dock, and anchoring was also free, just below the El Faro Lighthouse. We could get around the large (400,000 residents) city in their efficient but dirty bus system. Only 30 pesos, just 11 cents, and you could ride from one end to the other. Although the stores weren't close, everything was right on the bus lines.

Mazatlan Buses

What an experience riding the bus here. Often people would get on board, without paying, play the guitar and sing a song, and then pass the hat, before getting off a few stops later. Amazingly, at least half the riders would usually give him something . . . a couple hundred pesos, although we never did. Sometimes they were blind and just played the maracas by beating them against their head! But always, they got something from the other poor Mexicans. Only once did we hear a political message (I think it was Yanquis get out of El Salvador). But the best was yet to come. A man in his early twenties got on the bus, pulled out an ice pick, and rapped it a few times loudly on the metal hand rail. He was just two feet away from us, as he started talking rather agitatedly, while holding the ice pick to either his stomach or pointed to his nose. We didn't know what was going on, but were both extremely nervous. None of the others in the bus seemed too worried, and all eyes were glued on the ice pick. After more ranting and raving, he took the ice pick and shoved it right up his nostril, a full four inches. Tilting his head back, the square wooden handle on the pick stopped its penetration. Gross! What a show! He got money from almost everyone. I almost barfed in his hand. Luckily our stop just came up as we staggered, thoroughly shocked, out the door.

The buses are filthy, and each one is elaborately personalized by its driver. Baby shoes dangle; windows are

festooned with stickers. As incongruous as it seems to us, it was typical to see, on the same window, a silhouette of a buxom nude, tweety bird, and pictures of Jesus Christ. One hood was "adorned" with three silver horses, about 4-5 inches high, and two pictures of Capt'n Crunch. We even saw the bus driver spit on the floor. Once I saw the driver pour a can of oil into the crankcase, and then throw the empty can in the middle of the street . . . not even to the side of the road!

Mariachi music blares, while passengers' tobacco smoke intermingles with exhaust smoke that pours through the holes in the wooden floor. This sensory delight is enhanced with cheap perfume and the fish heads bought at the public market by your neighbor. The peaceful beauty of the waterfront, sparkling in the afternoon sun, is counterpoised with the near mayhem on the streets as the bus weaves in and out of everything, including a man blowing six feet of flames out of his mouth. A little six year old girl (no front teeth) stands in front of us, proudly petting a white shrimp. "Plastico?" I inquire. "No, viviente!", as she hands it over to me to pet. "Gracias!" What else could I say? It won't be alive tomorrow. What a show, and all for just eleven cents.

One of Candace's best friends, Alayne Cartales, and her husband Al came down to Mazatlan to visit us for a few days. Except for one night in a hotel (so they could really run the water for a shower), they stayed on ***Baba BarAnn***. The weather wasn't so great . . . it even rained one day. One day we went to the beach so they could get rid of some of their Seattle pallor. On Sunday, we went to the bull fights. I'm glad I went once, and I might again sometime later, but it's not something I could take as a steady diet. Alayne had a miserable time since she always rooted for the bull.

GPS and Customs

While we are quite comfortable with celestial navigation, clouds can often hide the celestial bodies. We wanted an additional navigational aid that used satellites, but never could make up our minds. The older, SatNav system is being phased out in the next few years, and doesn't provide continuous coverage, but can be purchased for about $1,000. The newer, global positioning satellite, GPS, system will have 24 hour a day, continuous coverage later this year, but costs much more. The pricier systems cost almost $10,000. After much foot dragging, I decided on a Magellan GPS system that cost about $3,400, including the remote antenna. Shortly before Alayne and Al visited us, I had a mail order firm send the Magellan directly to them. Then they could bring it to us when they flew down. When they got off the plane in Mazatlan, a Mexican customs agent asked Alayne what was in the box. She didn't know, except that it was something for our boat. The customs agent confiscated the Magellan, and indicated that she should have declared it before boarding the plane.

The next morning, along with Roberto as my translator, I went to customs to retrieve my GPS. We were unsuccessful. AT 3 PM they closed for the weekend, so it was a long weekend. On Monday morning, back we went, to see more officials, and more customs brokers. Some said it was possible that I might have to pay a 40% import duty. I was concerned. Finally, a little after noon, I got to see the right person. Because we had obtained an import permit when we were in La Paz, we didn't have to pay anything. Phew! So Roberto and I went back to get the GPS. About 45 minutes later, we were still waiting. Finally another official said that he wanted 50,000 pesos (almost $20) to facilitate the return of my GPS! What to do? Pay the bribe, or go back over his head to complain . . . thereby risking the return of my GPS? I chose the latter course of action . . . and won. The boss came storming out, wanting to know who was looking for the 50,000 pesos. Within 10 minutes we were walking out of the customs house with the GPS in my hands. What an experience.

Semi-Final Preparations

Mazatlan has a gigantic supermarket that was perfect to complete final provisioning for the South Pacific. For three successive days we loaded up everything we could possibly carry to the bus, and then to the dinghy. Except for certain U.S. specialty items, prices were very reasonable. Could you load two shopping carts to the brim at Safeway, and get out the door for only $91? Now ***Baba BarAnn*** is loaded to the brim. We also topped off the diesel tank. That's not as easy as it might seem. With our two 5 gallon jugs, plus three borrowed from Roberto, we drove to the one gas station in town that sells diesel. It was only 70 cents per gallon. Then the jugs had to be dinghied out to the boat, and the diesel carefully poured through the special "Baja fuel filter" to eliminate dirt and water. I also purchased several liters of lube oil for the engine.

Isla Isabela

With only 15 gallons of water on board, we were almost scraping the bottom of the barrel. We had to get out of the oily harbor to make fresh water out of salt water, in order to have our tanks reasonably full for the long journey west. We decided to take a side trip to Isla Isabela. That way we could try out the new GPS and maybe see some blue footed boobies, and also "make water" in the clean anchorage there.

Isla Isabela

The Magellan GPS worked flawlessly, as we homed in on Isla Isabela, 85 miles southeast of Mazatlan, and about 15 miles off the coast. This little island, about 2 miles long, is a bird sanctuary. It's also inhabited by a dozen families of fishermen. On the way, we saw a few whales, and several of our favorites . . . manta rays. The rays we see are about 3 to 4 feet across, and just love to jump two feet out of the water and then splash down. It's really fun to see them flying and splashing. Why do they jump? One rumor has them slapping the water to shake off parasites. I think they do it for fun.

Anchored in a nice cove on the south end, we could see fish swimming in the clear waters below us. Birds were everywhere. We primarily saw magnificent frigate birds, red-billed tropicbirds, brown (yellow footed) boobies, brown pelicans, and

Herrmann's gulls. One blue heron was all by himself and seemed to be lost. We went ashore and tried to talk to some fishermen, but our Spanish was pretty weak. The water maker droned on, 12 hours everyday, as we steadily filled the water tanks. We used this period to finish some last minute projects on the boat. Candace made some great screens. One for the vee berth, one for the double hatch in the main salon, and one for the companionway entry door. Velcro keeps them up and snug from the inside.

The foot pump in the head started acting up, so I replaced it with a new Whale Gusher model. Of course, nothing is a "plug to plug" replacement on a boat, so that took several hours. Now we have a better pump than the original equipment.

One day we rowed ashore, and hiked about three miles through the jungle, from the south end of the island to the north end, in quest of the blue footed booby. We've been talking about the blue footed boobies for many months, and haven't seen our first yet. Unfortunately, we only saw more of the yellow footed ones. On the way back we saw three iguanas and lots of big crabs on the sea shore, as well as thousands of birds. In the fishing shanty town, we gave handfuls of candy to the four young kids on the island. Boy did their eyes light up. It was really neat. Then we rowed back to the boat, and jumped overboard, under the noon day sun. Not just to swim, but to finish cleaning barnacles off the propeller and clean the boat's bottom. I also installed a new zinc in order to prevent electrolysis. That took 1.5 hours, but the water was great.

Brown Boobies

At lunch we noticed a new sound from our water maker. Sure enough it wasn't working properly. This required a complete disassembly, only to find the problem, and clean out some small shavings that were sloppily left in when it was made, and just now had worked their way to the outlet check valve. Now it works perfectly. With so many systems on board, it's no wonder that there always seems to be some project. Believe it or not, I've really enjoyed learning about all this "stuff," and I have a great deal of satisfaction when I'm successful at fixing something. However, I wouldn't mind if things stopped needing attention.

Final Preparations

We beat back to Mazatlan for final preparations. Somehow, Candace found room on board to squeeze $200 more of food, primarily fresh produce. Our list of provisions, kept on a LOTUS 123 spreadsheet, runs nine full pages now! We hope to have enough to last for six months. For example, some of the larger quantities include: 11 boxes of breakfast cereal; 9 pounds of coffee, plus 3 jars of instant; 18 cans of corned beef; 41 cans of fruit, various flavors; 63 liters of boxed juices; 66 quarts of dehydrated milk; 20 pounds of rice; 24 pounds of flour; 21 bags of nuts; 36 bottles of soda and 36 bottles of tonic water; 17 pounds of sugar; 22 cans of turkey; 18 cans of tuna; and 73 cans of tomato paste/ puree/ sauce/ or whole. There are a total of 1,510 items in storage. That doesn't include stuff that's been taken out of storage and into the galley. Changing the oil in the diesel engine turned out to be a bigger problem than anticipated. The old, dirty oil has to be sucked out. It can't be drained out the bottom like in most engines. Expressly for this job, I'd purchased a little pump that attaches to the electric hand drill. Well, it didn't really do the job. From the bilge storage, I retrieved the partially broken foot pump that I'd replaced a few days earlier. With some duct tape and a few hoses, we were able to suck the rest of the dirty oil out in a reasonable amount of time. So we changed the oil, and also topped off the diesel tank with ten more

gallons.

Goodbye Mexico

On the next to last day, we had to complete final paperwork for departing Mexico. First we went to Immigration. When we entered the building, they motioned that we should go upstairs. That seemed odd since we used the downstairs office when checking in. The people upstairs told us that we had to go downstairs. Instead of checking out to another Mexican port, we were checking out of the country. Consequently, the immigration agent said we had to surrender our tourist visas. Then we went to the Port Captain. After much discussion, they said we had to recover our tourist visas and take them to customs for their clearance before final clearance with the Port Captain. Besides, the Port Captain said the weather was so bad (it was really blowing) that he wasn't giving clearance to anyone until tomorrow. We didn't think the Immigration agent would return our visas, even if they could be found.

There's only so much of this Mickey Mouse crap that anyone can take. We tried to do it right. We made an executive decision . . . we're sailing tomorrow! We didn't even try to go back to immigration, or speak to our "friends" at customs (remember the GPS). Thursday morning, March 15, was a beautiful day, and thankfully the wind had died down. We were both tired of super markets, provisioning, and Mexican inefficiency. More than anything, we were tired of the dirt and filth of Mexico. I exchanged all our pesos for US dollars. Then the dinghy was stowed, under the boom. We weighed anchor just before 1 PM and headed out of the harbor. The Magellan GPS said, "MAZTLN TO HIVAOA, 231 degrees magnetic, 2749.05 nautical miles" via the great circle route. Needless to say, we both were a bit nervous. What lies ahead?

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 9 - The Long Passage to the Marquesas

Anchors Aweigh

As soon as we cleared the harbor, the engine was turned off. Conserving diesel is going to be extremely important. Our ample diesel supply can take us about 800 miles at most. That's why we're prepared to squeeze every knot out of the wind. Upon leaving the harbor, our thoughts aren't on light winds. We're apprehensive about the large waves and high winds that we could be heading into. The ham radio has kept us up to date with the cruisers who are preceding us. This last week there was a large storm, the same one that closed the harbor yesterday, which brought 18 foot waves and 35 knot winds to a few unlucky sailors. That's the kind of uncomfortable sailing we hope we can avoid. Let's be lucky! The weather fax from the night before showed that the bad storm had passed us by, and the weather looked clear. This looked like a good time to leave.

Seafarers' Roll Call

At 10 PM we officially checked in with the Seafarers' Roll Call, on frequency 14.313. We're boat number 18. Every night, in the same roll call order, boats check in with the net. Each boat provides its latitude, longitude, compass heading, boat speed, wind speed, wind direction, sea condition, cloud cover, and barometric pressure. Messages can also be taken or sent at this time. In this manner we can keep tabs on the other cruisers out there, and be prepared for upcoming weather. The net controller also tells us what's ahead and provides suggested course changes to avoid as much bad weather as possible. If anyone fails to check in after a few days, search and rescue efforts can be initiated by the net. Although the regimen is too much for some, we think the Roll Call is a great idea. Chuck and Bev, on ***Carina***, left two days before us from Zihuatenejo, 100 miles northwest of Acapulco, and are number 14 on the roll call. They started out 450 miles southeast of us, but could have lighter winds and not arrive at Hiva Oa any earlier than we do.

The First Week

This first day at sea, we had good winds, in the 15-18 knot range, and made fine progress. The seas were somewhat lumpy from the prior storm. Candace always has some seasick problems the first few days out, while I feel just a little under the weather. This time was no exception. The second day is like the first . . . winds to 18 knots and lumpy seas. For a few hours, there's hardly any wind, but on this day we still cover 120 miles, straight toward our target. We're both still looking for our sea legs. Candace doesn't think she ever owned any! My

biggest problem is sleeping. With the noise and motion of the boat, I have a hard time getting to sleep. This problem is heightened by sore leg muscles. Especially when it's rough, you have to continually balance yourself, and move from hand rail to hand rail. All that uses different muscles in your legs, feet, and arms. After 48 hours of continually bracing yourself and getting used to the wave motion, your legs really get a workout. Aspirin usually helps.

The seas smooth out for the third day, with steady winds in the 9-12 knot range. Then the winds slacken, so we motor to charge the batteries and make some hot water, as well as to move forward. After a hot shower, shave, and clean clothes, I feel great. Candace also feels better, but not 100%. We have corn beef hash to celebrate Saint Paddy's Day. Certainly there's no better oxymoron than "Irish cuisine."

Now I'm into the routine and enjoying it. At night, during my watch, I use the computer to work on some pet projects. With an unobstructed view of the entire night sky, I learn more and more about stars and constellations. The Southern Cross, low on the horizon to the south, doesn't seem as impressive as I'd expected. All night long, ***Baba BarAnn*** glides through the sea, ticking off the miles at a steady pace. Our GPS tells us we've passed another milestone . . . "TO HIVAOA 2497 miles" Hey, that's less than 2,500!

After the fourth day, when we're about 200 miles SW of Cabo San Lucas, the winds die. The Seafarer's net has warned us of a high pressure area that was "taking" all the wind. Not that we can do anything about it, but it's nice to know somebody understands. Now ***Baba BarAnn*** rolls from side to side in the sloppy waves, making little progress. Life on board is pretty uncomfortable. Even though sea sickness is not a problem any longer, the violent rocking back and forth, with the mainsail slatting and banging, is very tiring. Days four, five and six we average only 75 miles. Where are the trade winds and the nice, widely spaced, ocean rollers?

Our daily routine is settling into some semblance of a pattern. In the morning, at 1600 zulu, we have a "sked" with Chuck on ***Carina***. Ham radio and sailors seem to call it "zulu" time, but it's also known as Universal Coordinated Time, UTC or Greenwich Mean Time, GMT. It's what the little hand says in England, regardless of what your local time says! Anyway, at 1600z, or 0800 MST, we talk with Chuck for about 30 minutes. We exchange information on our lat/lon [chart for the passage] , the weather, what sail combinations seem to be working, and what new birds or sights we've seen. With all our radio contact, it's hard to believe that we haven't seen them since Christmas Day.

After breakfast and radio, I try to rest for a few hours. We read, rest, work on the computer, rest, have a meal, rest, trim sails/navigate, rest. I think you've got the beat now! Candace takes the early evening watch, and checks in with the Seafarer's Roll Call. Sometime between 11 and 12, I take the watch until the early morning. Despite all the "sack time," I think I'm sleeping only 3 or at most 4 hours per day. Evening watch means poking your head out of the cabin every half hour or so and looking around for boats. We seem to see one in the distance about every three days. Often we set the "minute minder" alarm for 30 or 45 minutes and then nap until its time to look around again. The more active responsibility is to keep the boat sailing as well as possible in the correct direction. While sailing on a broad reach in light air, a large wave can force us to jibe. This has to be corrected ASAP.

I've rigged an extremely strong "preventer." It consists of one inch line, looped around the boom, then around a large rubber snubber (18 inches long by 1.5 inches in diameter), and tied off on a large cleat. If we jibe in a hurricane, the boom will still stay put. There's no fear of the boom flying across and decapitating someone, or smashing into the shrouds on the other side. The rubber snubber really cushions everything and takes all the

abuse. We also have a boom brake to control our intentional jibes.

Head Wars

The day before leaving Mazatlan, I noticed a small, hairline crack, in the base of the commode, which resulted in a very small leak. I sent a letter off to the manufacturer requesting a new base be sent to Nuka Hiva in the Marquesas (hopefully under warranty). It would take several days to get a replacement shipped to Mazatlan, and the leak seemed minor enough that we shouldn't have a problem. Now, one week out to sea, the leak seemed a little bigger, and we were having some other problems with the "head." I took the entire head out, cleaned everything up, and tried to seal the hairline fracture in the plastic base with the soldering iron, melting the plastic together. Of course we were worried about making it much worse. It took all day to complete this project, because everything is so tight, compact, and difficult to reach.

At first, it seemed like our problems were solved, then, the next day, we had a major problem. Nothing would flush. Pressure on the hand pump resulted in sewage being forced through the vents in the holding tank and onto the deck. Yuck! I closed the seacocks for both the sea water intake and the toilet discharge, and started to disassemble everything. The intake system was fine. But the outflow hoses, from the head to the Y-valve (to direct discharge overboard or to the holding tank), to the anti-siphon valve (which prevents sea water from siphoning into and flooding the boat), and all the way to the through hull, were completely clogged.

Urine and sea water combine to form calcium chloride deposits that gradually closed off the hose, something like arteriole sclerosis. I'd heard about the problem, but had no idea it could occur so rapidly. The repair books suggest replacing the hose, rather than trying to breakup the deposit by beating the hoses on the dock. Great. I don't even have a dock. It was very difficult removing the hoses. It took more than two hours to remove about fifteen feet of hoses that were tightly packed in and around the head. Once removed, the hoses were then "whompped" on the side of the boat and we gradually cleaned them out completely.

Of course all this activity was taking place while we were sailing along at 5 or 6 six knots. Somehow I missed this chapter when I was reading the books on sailing to paradise! By far the hardest part was putting all the hoses back into their nice tight cubbyholes. Except for the tiny leak that is still in the base of the commode, the head now works perfectly. While fixing the head I discovered that the Y-valve was installed improperly. I even think it was designed improperly. Because of the tight, cramped quarters where all the plumbing is jammed, the cure is more complicated than switching a few hoses around. I'll get to that later.

First Big Storm

Our weather for the first 10 days at sea was pretty good. Except for those three light air days, and sloppy seas, it was pleasant. No rain, and lots of sunshine. On the evening of March 26 the wind started to pick up. At 18 knots we reefed the mainsail. At 25 knots we rolled in the genoa, and sailed with just the staysail and reefed main. At 32 knots we tucked another reef in the mainsail. Luckily, the wind was from the northeast, pushing us in the desired southwesterly direction. Then it started to rain, and the wind picked up even more. Because the seas were fairly calm, and we were moving rapidly in the right direction, I didn't want to reduce sail even more.

How much more does this storm have in it. After two hours, the wind peaked at 39 knots before it subsided. [Wind speeds in this journal are always shown as Apparent wind speed. In this situation, the true wind speed was approximately 44 knots] By now the seas had "come to the party" and had built up to the ten foot level, but the winds had dropped to only 15, leaving us with uncomfortably sloppy waves. At 3 AM the control lines to the Monitor wind vane chose to break. Luckily we still had our electric autopilot. At dawn, we hove to for an hour while I put new control lines in the windvane. Then we were back under way none the worse for the storm.

In retrospect storms at sea aren't so bad. In retrospect you KNOW you've survived. The most unnerving aspect of any storm at sea is the uncertainty of its magnitude. You can't turn to the last page in the book to find out how it all turns out. Will 39 knots escalate to 60 knots? How high will the seas get? Will any equipment break? You're all alone, in the middle of the ocean, waiting for the "shit to hit the fan," knowing you have to solve whatever problems come your way.

The 1600 zulu schedule with ***Carina*** has expanded, by our invitation, to 8 boats: ***Arjumand, Menehune, Kokana, Amazing Grace, Orca, Journey, Carina***, and ***Baba BarAnn***. We're all going to the Marquesas at about the same time, and are within 600-700 miles of each other. This encompasses a "small" region of about 400,000 square miles in the eastern Pacific. The morning after the storm, our local ham net was really buzzing with horror stories. The boat that was closest to us, ***Journey***, had its steering break as a 65 knot gust had a different idea on where the boat should head. Eventually they got their emergency tiller attached, but after some pretty scary moments. They also had a spinnaker halyard wrap around the forestay and a few other ugly situations.

With lots of help over the radio from Ralph on ***Arjumand***, who was about 200 miles further down the line, they jury rigged a good fix. The steering cable had broken and needed replacement. Of course ***Journey*** didn't have any spare steering cable, but Ralph suggested pirating a safety line from the stanchions, which would be just about the right diameter. It worked fine. That night, ***Journey*** just hove to and went to sleep for the night to recover. However, they were only 35 miles downwind from us, and potentially right in our path. We were especially observant on watch that night, but never did see them. From several other conversations, I've come to believe that Ralph knows more, about "all this stuff" than anyone I've ever talked to. I'm looking forward to meeting him in Hiva Oa.

Downwind Sailing

Finally the NE trade winds materialized and we shifted from a broad reach to directly downwind. Now we could try our downwind pole for the first time since I made some changes back in Seattle. After some experimentation, during which Candace swore I'd be decapitated, we got it to work perfectly. With the genoa held out snugly to port by the pole, and the mainsail held out to starboard with the hefty preventer, we ran straight downwind. The windvane loved this arrangement, and kept us right on track. Day and night we slid over the water, on our 220 degree magnetic course to the Marquesas. In the past we'd always had problems with the pole. Gradually we worked them all out, with a little help from Ralph.

ITCZ - Inter Tropical Convergence Zone

North of the Equator the trade winds blow steadily, 10-20 knots, from the NE. Well, at least they do in the text

books. South of the Equator, the trade winds are from the SE. Both areas have a westerly setting current of about one knot. In between these two bands of trade winds is the Inter Tropical Convergence Zone, or the ITCZ. This area is sometimes called the "doldrums." It's characterized by light winds, squalls, lots of lightning, rain, and a counter current, flowing eastward at almost one knot. We can't avoid this area, but would sure like to skip over it as rapidly as possible. This time of year, the ITCZ is centered around 6-10 degrees North latitude.

Our game plan is to head straight south as soon as we're in the ITCZ. If our winds die, we're prepared to burn some diesel in order to get this area behind us. Most of the cruisers ahead of us left Mexico from ports southeast of Mazatlan, and thus arrived at the ITCZ further east than we had planned. It sounded like the ITCZ was uglier, the further east you crossed it. Thus, we took a more westerly path, and met the ITCZ at longitude 122 degrees West. Another reason for a more westerly crossing of the ITCZ was to delay getting into the SE trades, since they tend to be lighter than the NE trade winds at this time of year.

Finally, the westerly entry into the southern hemisphere would result in a beam reach, or broad reach, to the Marquesas, rather than a downwind run. In light airs, reaching is better and faster than running. Almost all of this planning turned out as desired. In the ITCZ, we encountered a stiff countercurrent at 9 degrees north, and a few short squalls, but in general had no problem with it. We didn't experience any lightning storms, although we could see them in the distance. Our weather was pretty good.

The real advantage was being able to beam reach rapidly toward the Marquesas, once we hit the SE trades. Not only did we go faster, but we could cut across the weather patterns. The squall lines go with the wind, from the E or SE. The cruisers that crossed the ITCZ early and had a downhill run to the Marquesas, got stuck in storms for days. Their only respite was to head south, away from the Marquesas, to get out of the storm's path. This not only resulted in a longer trip, but the problem recurred once they got hung up in the next squall line.

Shell Backs

Exactly on the Equator

The sun, on March 21, had just crossed the Equator on its way north for the summer. We sailed directly under it at 4 degrees north. Neither Candace nor I had ever been south of the sun before and we were looking forward to our first moments in the southern hemisphere. Until you've sailed across the equator,

according to some tradition, you're a "polliwog." Once you've crossed the line, and been initiated, you're a "shell back." In other eras, the initiation might result in having your head shaved. The Navy is really into this stuff. Traditions of this sort can get as bizarre as anyone will take them. One by one, as the boats ahead of us crossed the line, we'd hear about their ablutions to King Neptune. Chuck had saved a bottle of Alaskan beer to offer to the sea. Special meals were cooked. It certainly marks a good milestone on this long journey. Candace made some cheesecake . . . Jell-O no bake, and it was great. We poured some Jack Daniel's into the sea, and took a bunch of silly photos. I wanted to know what the Magellan GPS would say. At 0 degrees, 0.00 minutes, would it be "N" or "S" latitude, or would it be blank. For those of you keeping score, ours read 0.00.00S and 129.35.10 W.Now we're officially "shell backs."

Homage to King Neptune

The Home Stretch

Once through the ITCZ and south of the equator, we really ticked off the miles. The first day 147 miles, then 161 miles, and then 160 the third day. Formerly, our best day was only 131 miles. Everyday, we got closer and closer to ***Carina***. By April 7, we had cut her "lead" down to a mere 35 miles. Both of us were now shortening sail in order to arrive at Hiva Oa in the morning of April 9, rather than get there at night and have to wait around for daylight before entering the harbor. But the winds really picked up those last few days, and we arrived at the east end of Hiva Oa at 3:30 AM. After three months, and countless ham radio conversations, we finally spotted ***Carina***'s lights, and he saw ours. By now we were talking on the VHF since we were only a few miles apart. We hove to and slept until 6:30, before continuing into the harbor at Atuona.

Flying the Tri-Color

The passage took us a respectable 25 days. We think we had better weather and better winds, with fewer problems than most cruisers on this passage. Just the same, it was quite difficult. It wasn't fun, or relaxing, like we had read about. The continual motion, and rocking back and forth, got extremely tiring. Cooking in the galley was especially arduous. If we set a cup down, it was bound to spill . . . we had to keep one hand on everything! Walking anywhere on the boat, we had to use the hand rails. Our arms and legs were continually being used to maintain balance. After a few weeks of this, they rebelled.

When they let us down, we got thrown around the boat. That's what happened when the weather was good! At a pot luck dinner a few days later, we compared notes with the other cruisers; 100% of the women, and 75% of the men thought the passage was very difficult, and not much fun.

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 10 - The Marquesas and Tuamotus

Hiva Oa

Contrasting with the tougher than anticipated passage is the greater than anticipated beauty of Les Iles Marquesas. Verdant mountains, 3000 feet high, tumble into the Pacific. Flowers grow everywhere. The natives are beautiful, smiling and friendly. The biggest surprise is the obvious wealth everywhere. Along the few miles of roads, the only vehicles to be seen are brand new Japanese trucks and jeeps. The houses are very nice.

Cabbage, $7.80 or $9.00!!

It seems that people only work a few hours in the morning. Converting from the French Pacific franc (CFP) to dollars is extremely easy. One franc equals one penny. However, prices in the few stores are extremely high. The worst case I remember was asking the price of some nice looking plums . . . $10.00 per kilo; that's $4.54 per pound! Some cheap looking aluminum/Teflon frying pans were $60.25. A head of cabbage was a mere $7.80, if you got the small one.

At a small store selling home grown fruit and vegetables, we bought some pamplemousse. It's FANTASTIC, just like very large grapefruit, but not quite as tart. We bought a chicken (from the USA, about $1.75 per pound) and a nice frozen leg of lamb from New Zealand for $3.72 per pound. There's a bakery that only makes long, thin loaves of French bread (baguettes). It's about a 45 minute walk to town, but usually you can get a ride by sticking out your thumb. If a truck passes you without stopping, they always give a hand motion that they're turning off the road shortly, or don't have room.

The French military has a large presence here, but even they pick you up. Usually you end up riding in the back of a truck, but it sure beats walking in the midday sun. Besides talking with shopkeepers, thumbing is another good way to practice our French. I remember quite a bit from the French I took in high school and college. For many of the natives, French is their second language, so we both have fun using our poor French.

We went to the Catholic church on Saturday night before Easter. The priest spoke both French and Tahitian. The highlight was the beautiful, close harmony singing by all the parish. While the service went on for about three hours, we left after one hour. Then, with four other couples, we went to the only Marquesan restaurant in the village. We both had one-half a lobster, salad, loads of poisson cru (raw fish marinated in coconut milk), roast pork, rice, all the wine you could drink, and a banana/plantain custard pastry for desert. All for $22 per person,

tipping not allowed. It's just as well we didn't get a ride on the way back that night; we needed the exercise to work off the gigantic meal. Next it's off to explore the rest of the Marquesas and French Polynesia.

Tahuata

One week was all we could take of the crowded, rolly anchorage at Atuona. We got a few fresh vegetables and headed to Tahuata, the 8 mile long island southwest of Hiva Oa. Charlie's Charts of Polynesia really blew it on this one. He said that there were no good anchorages on Tahuata. We'd heard some good reports about Hana-moe-noa on the northwest corner of Tahuata, and wanted to see for ourselves. (I just saw a "New and Revised" edition of Charlie's Charts which describes the viability of the Tahuata anchorages).

The crystal clear, turquoise waters, and white sandy beach couldn't be ignored for long, as we rushed to get the anchor down and our bodies wet. Hana-moe-noa was every bit as beautiful as we were led to believe. In the late afternoon, herds of goats would roam the mountains that dropped right into the bay; their bleating was the only sound to be heard. We shared this anchorage with 6 or 7 seven other cruising boats plus the local inhabitants.

Aka and Emile

The locals consisted of three men, Aka, a 30 year old, muscular Marquesan, Emile, in his forties, and a short, speechless man in his sixties. There were also four dogs, one captured goat, soon to be eaten, and one captured pig with a similar fate. Over the next few days we talked with Aka several times. Along with goat and pig, Aka eats the fruit and vegetables he grows, and the fish he spears in "his" bay. He splits coconuts and dries the meat for the monthly visit of the copra boat from which he receives about 60 cents per kilo. Using an outboard motor on the outrigger canoe which he built, he makes daily trips to the bay two miles south in order to bring back fresh water. He gave us a large stalk of bananas, dozens of limes from his trees, a coconut, and several pamplemousse. We gave him a cold drink, some cake, and a Hall and Oates cassette.

One day WE went spear fishing. He walked the shore stalking fish and spearing them. Then I'd row over in the dinghy, take pictures, and pick up the fish. Great teamwork. Afterwards, he filleted three fish for us, two beautiful parrot fish and a tatuah (Marquesan word) which had two brilliant orange spots on an otherwise jet black body. We were a little leery about eating them because of the possibility of getting ciguatera, a disease which affects coral reef fish. We had the courage to eat them based on Aka's knowledge of the fish and the poison problem. Furthermore, the fish were small (14 inches long for the largest one) and we did not eat the heads where ciguatera accumulates.

The next two nights we had tasty BBQed fish, and no ill side effects. An honest account of Hana-moe-noa would have to mention its only problem, the hoards of black "house" flies that were everywhere between sunrise and sunset. The screens Candace made in Mexico worked perfectly. Nevertheless, the flies were a hassle. Having to stay inside during the heat of day, or duke it out with the flies, got tiresome after a few days. One week later, we said good bye to Aka and his lovely bay, and headed to Fatu Hiva.

Fatu Hiva

One of the most spectacular anchorages in the Marquesan Islands has to be Hana Vave on Fatu Hiva, the southernmost island. Unfortunately, the winds blow mightily down the mountain passes and into the bay. All day and night the wind gusts to 20+ knots, and then drops back to 3 knots. First the windmill screams, then becomes quiet. The holding ground is just as fickle as the wind. Because of the crowded condition, sharing this bay with nine other cruisers, we had to anchor way out in 80 feet of water, at the end of our 350 foot long all chain anchor rode. We had read about boats being swept out to sea from Fatu Hiva, and now we understood how.

Approaching Fatu Hiva

During our second and last day at this uncomfortable spot, we watched in helpless horror as a boat started to drag anchor and head out to sea. We quickly rang the alarm on the VHF radio and the owners were summoned from shore to rescue their boat. No thanks! This isn't the place for us. So back we headed, this time to the north shore of Hiva Oa.

North to Nuka Hiva

Our next "batch" of mail left MCCA in Colorado on April 16 and was expected in Nuka Hiva by May 1. Not to be late for this important rendezvous, we headed north. The first day out of Fatu Hiva was a hard beat, with 25 knot winds about 50 degrees off the bow. Our stomachs were reminded that we hadn't had any hard sailing in over two weeks. Candace was seasick and I didn't have much energy. With ten foot swells hitting our starboard flank, and winds off the starboard bow, it was a rough trip. Candace joined me in the cockpit, and questioned me about the high pitch squeak she had just started hearing. The squeaks that I know about on the boat last for less than a second. This squeak lasted for about four seconds.

Then, just south of Hiva Oa, bam! Bam bam bam! What was that? Sure enough the depth sounder confirmed what our eyes knew, that we were in deep water . . . more than 600 feet. Once again, bam! Each time, under the aft part of boat. Then we saw him. It was a tiny whale (another oxymoron?) only 9 feet long. He circled around, fifty feet behind ***Baba BarAnn*** came surfing down the ten foot waves, with his head out of the water, and charged again. This time he pulled up short and swam right next to the boat for about thirty seconds. After another less energetic charge, he lost interest and left us.

I joked that ***Baba BarAnn*** had lost her virginity. Upon reflection, we believe he was a baby whale looking for his mother, and obviously was confused. We're ecstatic that mom didn't come to the rescue. Those squeaks must have been the whale's cries. The unfavorable northeasterly winds had slowed our progress, and forced us to duck into Puamua Bay for the night. It was quite rolly and we were glad to leave the next morning. Now the northeast wind was our friend, as we sailed westward along the north shore of Hiva Oa. I caught a skipjack tuna that was good for two more dinners on the BBQ. At 4 PM that afternoon, we pulled into Hanamenu. At the entrance, my heart stopped as I thought I saw two uncharted rocks just below the surface. then I noticed that they were two

large manta rays. With the wind whistling at a steady 23 knots, we set the anchor under trying conditions. This was our third rolly anchorage in as many days. By 3 AM the next morning we were off to Oa Pou, a small island sixty miles south of Nuka Hiva.

Oa Pou

Beautiful Oa Pou

I take back what I said about Fatu Hiva . . . Oa Pou is the most spectacular Island in the Marquesas. On this little island that stretches only 8 miles at its widest part, there are several large rock spires that extend upward to more than 4,000 feet. We bypassed the nice looking anchorage on the northeast corner of the island, since it wasn't discussed in Charlie's Charts, and went around to Hakahetau on the northwest corner. As we motored in, we saw only two boats, including ***Orca***. We hadn't seen Martino and Karin on ***Orca*** since late January, and had spoken with them only a few times via ham radio during the passage from Mexico.

Over pasta and a jug of wine, we had a very enjoyable dinner hearing about their journey to the Marquesas. Martino, very attractive, is an Italian, born in France, educated at Harvard, enriched by silicon valley, and then burned out by his 26th birthday. Karin, long, blond and lithe, is from Sweden, and came to San Francisco to be a live-in "nanny" for a year before she turned 21. They were extremely friendly and interesting, and we hit it off immediately. The next day, Martino donned his scuba tank and cleaned off all the barnacles from ***Baba BarAnn***'s bottom.

Nuka Hiva

As much as we enjoyed ***Orca***, we didn't like the rolly anchorage on Oa Pou. Besides we were eager to pick up our mail, so off to Nuka Hiva. [nice picture] After a beautiful four hour sail, we were escorted into Baie de Taiohae on Nuka Hiva by a pod of porpoises. We've seen porpoises on numerous occasions, but never before had we seen little baby ones, perhaps 20 inches long. They were being taught how to surf a sailboat's wake by their parents. Pretty special!

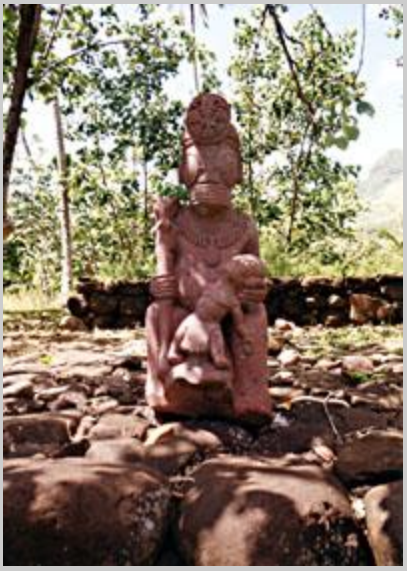
Above Nuka Hiva

We anchored next to ***Carina***, and put out a stern anchor to keep our bow pointed into whatever swell made it into the bay. Then we went to Rose's Cantina, the small hotel/restaurant owned by Rose and Frank Corser, to pick up our mail. The first four of seven packages sent by MCCA were there. Where are the other three? Anyway it was great catching up with the mail, even though the four packages cost $120 to mail from Colorado.

We checked in with the gendarmes, got some francs at the bank, and tried to pick up some fresh produce at the few stores in town. There were hardly any fresh vegetables or fruit, and everything was quite expensive. Although there were a couple more stores than in Atuona, the selection was skimpier. The one butcher in town, Michel, was a short, very expressive Frenchman, perhaps fifty years old. I took an immediate liking to him, and enjoyed struggling with my limited French to communicate. He spoke zero English. In Nuka Hiva we filled our diesel tank. This was more difficult than you can imagine. First I rowed to shore, (15 minutes), cleaned off my feet and put on sneakers, and walked two miles to Maurice's, the only store that sells it. Maurice wouldn't be back until late in the afternoon. So back to the boat and then, several hours later, repeat the whole process. This time I was told that diesel wouldn't be available until the morning!

Next morning, Chuck and I rowed to shore with our empty jerry jugs, and walked back to the store. We purchased two 55 gallon drums at $104 a piece. A Marquesan then siphoned the fuel into our jugs . . . by sucking on a tube until the diesel was in his mouth, and then putting the tube in our jugs. Gasoline is served up the same way at Maurice's, and it cost $1.10 per liter, or about $4.40 per gallon. We got a ride with our jugs back to the beach. It took two trips via dinghy to ferry the fuel out to our boats. Then we had to filter the fuel into the tanks. Unfortunately, the "Baja" fuel filter got plugged several times with rust and other dirt. We're most apprehensive about problems we'll have if we didn't get all of the impurities.

While fruitlessly looking for some fresh produce in the local stores, Candace met a small, attractive French woman named Gisele. She taught English, while her husband, Pierre, taught history/geography at the local school. With their two daughters, they moved from eastern France to Nuka Hiva just a year ago. They have a three year teaching contract. We enjoyed meeting this couple on four different occasions, and always had fun "teaching" English . . . or, more precisely, American, as well as learning French. I practiced lots of French with Pierre who was capable, but shy, with his English.



Tiki

The highlight was an all day trip in their jeep, over the mountain to the north side of the island. No regular car could have made this trip, on the narrow, bumpy path that served as a road. We took pictures, exchanged addresses, and have tentative plans to see them again in Papeete around the first of July.

Ratlines

A ladder used for climbing shrouds is called a "Ratline." Since we were going to the Tuamotus, we needed "ratlines" to provide an elevated view for spotting coral heads. Until now, I had successfully kept that project on the back burner. We could wait no longer. I had considered mast steps, but dismissed them on several counts. They 1) are dangerous and extremely difficult to hold on to when the boat rocks even a little, 2)

add to windage, 3) snag lines, 4) weaken the mast, due to the numerous holes that must be drilled, and 5) are expensive at $18-$22 per step. I purchased 70 feet of cheap, 2" by 1/2" lumber from Maurice's store, polypropylene line, and some nuts and bolts. Two lengths of line, following two different shrouds, were knotted every 14 inches and then tied to the port spreader, Each step was then made with two boards that had been cut and drilled appropriately to sandwich two shrouds, and the lines. After each step was bolted together, the nuts were covered with Styrofoam packing nuggets ("ghost turds") and protected by duct tape.

Ratlines

Our ratlines work fine and cost less than $30. Now we're ready to tackle the Tuamotus, the "Dangerous Archipelago." We attempted to do some final provisioning in Nuka Hiva, but there was really nothing for sale, except some small loaves of bread. After a quick trip to the gendarme to pick up our boat passport, we stopped at the post office to leave a forwarding address for the packages that hadn't arrived. It was our lucky day! They arrived that morning. We received a new base to replace our cracked commode (somehow "cracked head" doesn't sound right). It was sent under warranty. We also received replacement parts for the water maker, sent under warranty, and a "free" case for the Magellan GPS because we had returned our warranty card. All this free stuff cost about $40 for postage. At least we won't have to worry about tracking down lost mail. We also picked up some desperately wanted mail for ***Carina***.

The Sail to Ahe and the Tuamotus

We left Nuka Hiva at noon on May 17 and headed for the Tuamotus, a group of 76 coral atolls [good map] and 2 volcanic islands. Perhaps 30 of the atolls can be visited by cruisers. Each atoll is a ring of coral reef which usually has one or rarely two passes where water flows in and out of the inner lagoon. The land on the coral fringe, called motus, is about one half a mile wide, only a few feet above sea level, and covered with coconut trees. The low profile of these atolls makes them difficult to see more than 8 miles away.

This fact, combined with a strong, westerly setting current, makes them a navigator's nightmare. With the advent of satellite navigation systems, and GPS in particular, many of these problems have been solved. Negotiating the pass is the one remaining problem. This can only be done during the daytime, preferably with the sun high in the sky and behind you, at slack tide.

The first day we headed toward Manihi, with its reasonably easy pass, knowing that we could continue on to Apataki, a half day's trip further south, if we arrived at night. The weather and the sailing were perfect, as ***Baba BarAnn*** flew across the water. During the night, the southeast wind continued to build, but we kept flying our Yankee, staysail, and full main. For the first 24 hours we went 172 miles, easily eclipsing our previous "record" of 160 miles. The Monitor windvane steered flawlessly, and we didn't seem to be overpowered, until the winds reached 25 knots.

We reefed the main, rolled up the Yankee (yea for the Pro Furl roller furling gear) and continued to fly . . . 170 miles the next day. The weather turned gray and squally, the winds increased to 34 knots, and the seas built to

the 10-12 foot level. Then a turning block on the windvane broke, and shortly thereafter the PVC cup holding the bottom of the wind mill also broke. We switched on the electric autopilot, lashed the windmill to the back stay, and continued to fly toward the Tuamotus.

In one six hour stretch we averaged 7.56 knots. Some of this mileage was due to the current, but I'll take it anyway I can get it. In our daily contacts with ***Carina*** and several other boats scattered throughout the Tuamotus, we discovered that we were in the middle of a maraamu, a weather system caused by very high pressure "anti-cyclones" that come up from Antarctica. Throughout the Marquesas and Tuamotus, sailboats were pinned into their anchorages, not willing to voluntarily head to sea under such conditions. A maraamu typically lasts 7 to 10 days, and this one had just started.

From our radio contacts it seemed clear that Ahe, a few miles west of Manihi, would provide the best shelter from the strong winds. On Sunday morning we arrived at Ahe, having covered the 496 nautical miles in 70 hours, for an average speed of 7.08 knots. Unbelievable! During the last 24 hour period we covered 170 miles with just the reefed main and staysail, with winds constantly in the 28-34 knot range. Due to waves crashing over the windward side of the lagoon, water was continually pouring out of the pass on the leeward side. When should we enter?

The cruisers inside the lagoon said there was no slack tide, no time was any better than another. The wind and the water were both coming from the same direction, straight out of the lagoon. Just come into the pass with lots of power, and keep your bow pointed straight into the wind. If you get twisted sideways in the narrow pass, the coral will do major damage. Once you're in the pass, you're committed; there's no turning back. It's times like this that you think about the dirty fuel you just got in Nuka Hiva, and what would happen if the motor stalled in the pass.

We found the pass and headed in, with the wind blowing 30 knots on the bow, and three foot waves. We never would have attempted it, if we'd known what was in store for us. With the motor revving up to 3,400 RPM's, we maintained steerage, and perhaps 2 knots of forward progress. The waves and out rushing current would lift our bow so high, that I swear I could feel the wind blowing on the bottom of the hull. For one fleeting moment, I considered the possibility of pitch poling . . . **backwards**. Then the bow would come crashing down, splashing tons of water, which got blown over the boat. The deck was covered everywhere with eight inches of water. After a short but frightful five minute indoctrination to the consequences of poor pass timing, we made it.

Ahe

Inside, the lagoon's waters were very calm. Our battle with the pass was worthwhile. Despite high winds, Candace and I both agreed that this was the calmest, least rocky, anchorage we'd had since leaving Seattle. There were eight other boats at Ahe, waiting out the maraamu with us: ***Clovelly*** that we'd first met in Cabo San Lucas with Ken, Carolyn, and their son Jamal from Vancouver, BC; ***Wizard*** with Loretta and Charley that we'd met in Tahuata, ***Wazumi*** a Japanese boat that we hadn't seen since Cabo; a German boat, a French boat, ***Kokana*** with Chuck and Koko; ***Hybrid*** with Rob and Lance from Seattle, and finally ***Night Music***, a fabulous yacht with air conditioning and everything else. She was sailed by an English couple for her owner in Los Angeles, who, most bizarrely, preferred to sail on the long passages, and then had the hired hands take her the short hop from the Marquesas to Tahiti. Later on we were joined by ***Begonia*** from Seattle.

One night we had nine people on board for a pot luck birthday party for Lance. The next night eight of us played Pictionary. I came in last, but what's new? Our last night in Nuka Hiva, I was told that masking tape on the leading edge of the wind mill blades would eliminate all noise. When we got to Ahe I tried it, and it works perfectly. With the maraamu winds blowing up to 20 knots inside the lagoon, our newly quieted wind mill produced about 100 amp hours per day. I also fixed the wind vane, better than new.

Copra trade leaving Ahe

We went snorkeling near a large coral reef inside the lagoon and marveled at all the beautifully colored fish. Because of ciguatera fears, we didn't catch or eat any of them. We met a few of the locals, and played volley ball with them. No one kept score, and it was very low key, but a good cultural exchange. We met Hiti who was massively fat, spoke a little English, and played a great ukulele.

We walked around the village where approximately fifty adults lived with 30 children. None of the children appeared to be older than eight. We were told later that the older kids are sent off to school on other islands. These little kids on Ahe were the happiest, least shy, and most carefree I've ever seen anywhere. I think it's primarily because they didn't have any "big kids" around telling them what to do.

Apataki

After a week in Ahe, the maraamu winds left and we were ready to go. ***Carina***, all alone down at Apataki for almost two weeks, was starting to go a little stir crazy, and was eagerly awaiting mail. The trip south to Apataki is a difficult one due to the fifty mile distance. Fifty miles is almost too long for a daylight trip, and too short for an overnight trip. But it's imperative to leave and enter the coral passes during daylight. We got up at 0515 and were motoring toward the pass as soon as we had enough light to see. By 0600 the sun was up and we had reached the pass. This time it was very calm and we slipped out with no problem at all.

Later that afternoon we easily crossed over the pass to Apataki. Sharing this large lagoon with ***Carina*** was ***Anahita*** from Montreal. We meet George and Louise while at Tahuata. George took eight years to build ***Anahita***, an aluminum hulled sloop. They're planning to ship their boat from New Zealand so that Louise can resume her job as a psychoanalyst. Right now, she is recovering from dengue fever. She is the third person I've met who picked up this disease in the Marquesas. It's transmitted by a mosquito that has bitten someone carrying the disease. After the usual 5-6 day incubation period, the victim is miserable for 3-12 days with high fever (often 104 degrees) and no ability to hold down food. We talked to her just after she recovered, and she looked like she'd crawled through hell. We all felt very sorry for Louise.

We snorkeled and looked at the fish, then walked to the other side of the motu and found the remains of a shipwreck, probably a Japanese fishing boat. It was easy to gather armfuls of nice coconuts. The real challenge was husking them with a dull hatchet. I quit after the ninth one. So long as the water is still inside, they'll stay fresh. While at Apataki we also met Rainer and Heide on ***Rolling Home***. We were to become good friend with this German couple and link up with them many times on the remainder of our trip,

To Papeete

After four days in the deserted isle of Apataki, it was off to the bright lights of Papeete. This would be our first taste of civilization since leaving Mexico two and half months ago. What were we craving? I was focusing on an ice cream sundae with lots of chocolate sauce. Candace couldn't stop thinking about a big tossed salad. Chuck, I guess as his name would imply, was looking forward to some good red meat. I'll have to ask Bev if she was dying for something to drink. The trip to Papeete had the same problem as the trip to Apataki. Without very strong winds, it was too long, at 226 miles, for a one night trip, and too short for a two night trip.

We sailed for a day, hove to for six hours, resumed sailing as slowly as possible with a double reefed main and staysail, and still arrived too early. Despite the assurances of many other cruisers, we think it's bad judgment to enter any harbor a night. One boat hit the reef trying to enter Papeete two nights earlier. Twenty five miles offshore, we hove to starting at 2200. Except for one knot of current, ***Baba BarAnn*** remained stationery in the 20-24 knot winds.

Our introduction to Papeete was just an average day for the "Papeeters" (Papeeteans? Papeetonians? Papeetites?), but to us it was especially picturesque. In the background, Tahiti's beautiful mountains and valleys were spread out before us, while natives practiced rowing their canoes (called piroques) in the harbor for the big races coming up on Bastille Day. We were rocked back to reality by the wake of a ferry boat zipping just behind us and into the harbor. Cars were speeding along the road beside the quay. Yes, there was even that faint aroma of exhaust. Large neon lights implored us to "BUVEZ COKE." Welcome back to civilization.

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 11 - Papeete and Tahiti

Papeete - the big city

We rapidly recovered from "culture shock" after entering Papeete on the island of Tahiti. Who wouldn't get used to food markets that actually had produce for sale? Mirroring our experiences in the Marquesas, checking in with immigration, customs, and the port captain was efficient and easy. Unlike Mexico, which strategically placed these offices in separate, remote corners of each city, they were all in the same building in Papeete. True happiness was being able to fill up our wallets at banks that accepted VISA.

Carrot Cake on Carina

The first order of business in Papeete was to put together a surprise 40th birthday party for Candace. We arrived on June 3rd and the big date was June 6, so I had to work fast. Sixteen other cruisers were waiting at a nice Chinese restaurant to sing Happy Birthday when we walked in. I'm sure she was really surprised. She got a few small presents from some of them, but she didn't seem too happy with my special gift to her, two 150 foot stern anchor lines, 3/4" poly. What more could she have wanted?

Everything you've read about high prices in Tahiti is true. There is no income tax in French Polynesia; you could never collect it in a largely agrarian economy with such widely dispersed islands. So the government's major sources of income are import taxes, duties, and public services. Long distance telephone calls to the US run $8-9 per minute. Oil products, liquor, and almost everything else that's imported is hit with a stiff import duty. As a result of these inflated prices, home grown produce commands a commensurably high price. Decades ago, I remember reading in Econ 101 about "elastic demand" and product substitution. If the price for imported apples is too high, people will increase the demand for lower priced domestic fruit. This higher demand results in an increase in domestic fruit prices. In French Polynesia, taxes keep the price of apples artificially high. How high? Up to a $1.70 per pound for apples. Plums . . . $5.00 per pound.

Get this, bing cherries at $12.00 per pound! Pampers were on sale at $26.50 for a box of 40. A week old USA Today newspaper costs $4.10. Eggs vary from $3.20 per dozen up to $13.00 per dozen (I don't think they were golden). Scotch is about $30 for a 750 ml bottle. One of the few bargains is canned New Zealand butter at $1.65 per pound. So much for economics. In Papeete, we fixed everything that had broken along the way. These projects included the sewing machine (a local Pfaff dealer fixed it for a reasonable price), camera (just the film had broken, not the camera), broken or chafed lines, American flag replaced, a few staysail hanks replaced, outboard motor carburetor cleaned, two steps installed at the top of the mast, radar dome resecured, refrigerator defrosted, and some provisions added. With the luxury of a hose connected to a shore side supply of

potable water, we filled our tanks and washed down the boat. Except for 35 gallons taken on via jerry jugs in the Marquesas, this was the first time we've taken on water since San Diego six months ago. All other water that we had used for drinking, washing, and cleaning since then had been made with our water maker.

The biggest project was recovering the cushions. Candace found some attractive all cotton, color fast, material. It's a Polynesian print with tan, pink and powder blue colors in a floral pattern. She covered all eight cushions in the salon, plus the seat in the vee berth. My only job was to cover the buttons and sew them into the cushions. They look great. And the cotton feels much better than the scratchy, old, dirty, boring stuff.

Sunset behind Moorea

We read a few books and enjoyed talking with the many other cruisers in the harbor. The weather was perfect. A little hot during the day, cool at night, no bugs, and beautiful sunsets with Moorea in the background. Chuck saw the "green flash" at sunset several times; we could only see the green flash from the channel markers. The piroque racers became more and more serious as Bastille Day approached.

At times, we watched two or three dozen canoes furiously practicing in the harbor. Once in a while, a canoe would be accidentally flipped, treating all aboard to an embarrassed dunking. Those canoes seemed to be as tippy as a wind surfer. Sometimes, when they would row close to us, they would all be singing "Baba Bah Baba BarAnn". The Beach Boys are even big in Tahiti.

We both went to the dentist for a cleaning (with ultra-sound) and check up. The dentist commutes to Bora Bora on weekends to be with her husband, a doctor. We enjoyed talking with her, and have been invited to see her in Bora Bora when we get there. I saw a doctor to have a wart removed that's been bothering me. It's on my pinkie, which the French call the "ear finger." Their definition makes more sense.

Dinghy Wars

While walking back from "downtown," after another frustrating trip produced neither mail nor our French Polynesia ham radio call signs, I saw three boys getting into my dinghy and rowing it away. They were between 11 and 14 years old. I hustled to the beach and yelled at them in my most indignant French. They promptly brought it back. While I was rowing out to ***Baba BarAnn***, they got into another dingy, (it was ***Achates***"s from Juneau) and started rowing it. I then noticed that they had cut my painter. I was really ticked, as I yelled "Vous coupez ma ligne!" and started after them. They each said "Pas Moi!", while beating a hasty retreat to shore. The last one out of the boat threw a knife into the water, getting rid of the incriminating evidence, and fled on foot with the others.

The next day, about noon, I saw the same three boys motoring around the anchorage in a hard dinghy, and I told them to leave. Two hours later, they had returned, to another boat, ***Karefree***, cut the line to their painter, and were dragging it away. This was really dumb, since KAREn and GeofFREE were on their boat at the time. Geoff yelled to another boat for assistance, and they started chasing after the kids. The kids stopped towing the

dinghy, and got away. Geoff then swung by ***Baba BarAnn*** and told us what had happened. In a few seconds, I was in our dinghy, Adolf from ***Rose'l***, was in his, and the chase was on.

Three dinghies (that's us with the white hats on) chasing three little kids in their boat. All across Papeete harbor we chased after the little SOB's. I was gradually losing ground (losing water?) since I had a 5 HP motor, while the other three motors were all 9.9 HP. By the airport, about a mile away, they turned into a little estuary. I cut the corner, to catch up, and quickly saw the coral reefs a few inches under the dinghy. BAM! The motor hit on the reef, and kicked up. Luckily the rubber dinghy didn't get punctured on the reef. Can you imagine sinking in eight inches of water, a half mile offshore? I quickly rowed to deeper water, and rejoined the chase. As I rounded the corner, I saw that Geoff and Adolph had apprehended the little monsters. From what I heard later, the kids had gotten out of the boat, but Adolph commanded them to get back into their boat.

Who cares if they didn't understand English with a thick German accent? They quickly got back into their boat and placidly awaited their future. Adolph moved their gas tank into his boat so that they couldn't escape. Then we proceeded to tow them, all the way back across the harbor, to the gendarmes. When the "big chase" was going on, another boat was trying to contact the Port Captain and the gendarmes on the VHF radio. This resulted in every boat with a radio on being notified of our activities. I went ahead to get assistance on shore. While I was riding around downtown Papeete with three gendarmes in their "paddy wagon" trying to intercept the flotilla by Charles De Gaulle Park, the Port Captain sent out a boat to render assistance. Then we all trooped to the police station. As you might imagine, nothing happened. Each kid had to be picked up at the police station by his parents. Hopefully they won't be so quick to "borrow" somebody's dinghy in the future.

Alex Rejoins Baba BarAnn

We finally got our mail on June 15, a full two weeks after it left Colorado. Perhaps one of the biggest hassles of the cruising life is getting mail. We have our mail forwarded about every six weeks, and the postage runs over $100 each time. It's a little painful paying postage for some of the magazines and correspondence. For example, alumni fund raising pleas and Society of Actuaries newsletters pass through the "junk mail filter" and unfortunately get forwarded to us. But we treasure the few pieces of "real mail," so it's all worth it. Our concern for the mail was heightened because we were trying to arrange for my son Alex to visit us. After some difficulty getting plane reservations, Alex arrived on June 22 for a three week stay. We'd completed all our projects in Papeete, and were looking forward to seeing the rest of the Society Islands with Alex.

Paul Gauguin Museum

We spent two days at Taina, south of Maeva Beach, on the northwest coast of Tahiti, then went to the south coast. In a little bay, which we had all to ourselves one night, we anchored by the Botanical Gardens and the Paul Gauguin Museum. We dinghied to shore and walked around the gardens. There were many strange trees and ferns unique to the South Pacific, with very few flowers. We saw an attendant who asked if we'd paid a dollar for entrance to the gardens. When we said, "No," that we were from the boat, she said "OK." This confirms what other cruising guides had mentioned. I'd read that the law allows everyone access from the sea to the entire Tahitian coastline. Rather than fence off the gardens from the sea, which would look ugly, and be expensive,

they've elected to allow a handful of "freeloaders" to enter the gardens by dinghy.

Next we dinghied over to the museum. If we'd walked out the gate to the museum, we would have to reenter via the gate to get our dinghy, and they could charge us for that. The museum was primarily a biography of Paul Gauguin, with only a handful of original paintings, and many copies. Until age 22 he was a sailor, having sailed around Cape Horn twice, and to Tahiti once. Then he was a stock broker in Paris, married a prominent Dane, and sired five children. At age 35 he left it all, family and job, to paint full time. He lived the last few years of his life in poverty on Hiva Oa. The museum showed photographs and ancient Egyptian paintings that he'd copied for his pictures, substituting Polynesians for the original "models." Gauguin was disliked by the French, partially because of his anti-establishment attitude and actions, and partially because of his 13 year old Marquesan mistress and model. It's easy for us to dislike someone with a 13 year old mistress, but what did the Marquesans think?

The Beautiful Polynesians

One of the reasons I was looking forward to this trip to the "South Seas" was to see for myself the much fabled beauties of Polynesia. It has been written that both the men and women are among the most beautiful people in the world. From my observations, the myth is extremely alive and well, but far from the truth. By age thirty, virtually all women are quite fat and ugly, just like "Bloody Mary." The same holds true for most of the men. Marcia Davock in the Cruising Guide to Tahiti discusses the Tahitian feeling of "fiu" (boredom, or "I've had it!") when one is served with an air of nonchalance bordering on rudeness. Add one more "Aye aye" to that one. We've seen Tahitian "fiu" on numerous occasions. Those under age twenty are attractive, like children throughout the world, neither more nor less attractive. Perhaps their brown tanned skin and muscular male or topless female torso are the primary allure. They appear to be as happy as kids anywhere, and certainly a smiling face is the most beautiful feature on anyone. Perhaps they appear especially attractive after comparison with their dour elders.

What possible metamorphose could take place during the twenties? Not being able to speak Tahitian, and having a weak grasp of French, makes it difficult to discuss many sensitive topics. Over the last three months I've heard several stories, made my own observations, and arrived at the following conclusions. Please bear with my conjectures. We have no way to confirm the many stories but, on many occasions, we've heard that incest is still prevalent in Polynesia. Some have even gone so far as to say that small girls are encouraged to choose a male family member. When Captain Cook sailed into Tahiti, we read that his crew was "given" native women. These practices are reprehensible to our society, since those customs treat girls as little more than sexual objects. But it's well ingrained in their society.

In a different vein that shows major cultural differences, another cruiser supposedly talked to a Polynesian who admitted to cannibalism when he was a small boy. One of the first observations I made in Polynesia was how poorly behaved the little children were, and the physical slapping given them by their mothers. We've read that children are not disciplined prior to age three. After that they're probably beyond control. Fathers appear to be quite loving of their children, with all discipline being administered by mothers. We've seen grandparents, maybe they were great grandparents, taking care of children at the beach. The woman screamed at and cuffed the miscreants, while the male completely ignored the entire disciplinary process and actually tried to protect the little children.

We've also heard that Polynesian males often beat up their wives. This problem is exacerbated by the drinking problem that seems so prevalent for both the men and women. We've both seen several women with black eyes and puffed faces. We were told that the native women seek out European husbands. We thought it was for financial or social reasons. No. It's because the Marquesan males are such "violent lovers." In the Marquesas it was standard to see a male beach party, with lots of heavy drinking, and a separate female beach party with similar staggering and slobbering. The only time we've been in a car in Polynesia was with Giselle and Pierre at Nuka Hiva. Along with every other car, we were stopped at a road block and Pierre, the driver, was required to take a breathalyzer test. We hadn't been drinking, and of course he passed the "test," but it's indicative of the official concern for drunkenness in the Marquesas. I've talked to one cruiser who believes the drinking problem is a reaction to the westernization of their beautiful culture. I believe that these problems have always existed, and that the culture is far from beautiful.

It's my opinion that the Polynesians pamper their children, with most of the love coming from the male. This arrangement changes once the children marry. The woman assumes the role of wife and mother. Resentment of the changed role in her life can be directed toward her children, and especially the boys. The "macho" husband expects to be served by his wife, and is perhaps even looked up to by his peers if he beats his wife to obtain his desires. After being cuffed and beaten by his mother for so long, now it's time for the male to turn the tables on the woman in his life.

We were discussing the Polynesians with some other cruisers who sailed across the Pacific last year, and were on their way back east. They said that the three major problems were: drugs, wife beating, and incest. They confirmed that some Polynesian women were almost proud of the black eyes and bruises they "wore." The wounds indicated that they had a "real man." Just like the image of the caveman clubbing his woman over the head and dragging her away. They talked at length of the violent Samoans, where both the men and women were extremely large and aggressive. They discussed specific situations which showed that incest was a major concern. Once a girl turns twelve she might receive advances from a brother, a father, or anyone. Everyone talks openly about the "given" children. Little kids are given, like gifts. It's common for the first born to be given to the grandmother. This would be especially convenient if the mother were quite young. So much for the "beautiful" Polynesians.

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 12 - Moorea to Bora Bora and Huahine

Moorea

After returning from the Gauguin museum, we filled up with diesel and water, and motored over to Moorea, three hours away. In front of the Bali Hai Hotel, we spent two nights at an anchorage which we had all to ourselves. Mike and Karla from ***Amazing Grace*** (another Tashiba/Baba 40) dinghied over from Cooks Bay and spent the morning with us. We hadn't seen them since Nuka Hiva, although we'd talked with them frequently on the radio. Of course we proudly showed off the new cotton seat covers.

Then we headed over to Cooks Bay to share an anchorage in front of the Bali Hai Club with about twenty five other yachts. The Club is very friendly to cruisers. Besides the free anchorage in one of the most beautiful settings in the world, they offered free use of the dinghy dock, the pool, TV lounge, and other Club facilities. Alex and I saw most of the Italy-Argentina World Cup soccer match there. We went to a nice Chinese restaurant on my 48th birthday. The next day we enjoyed socializing with many other cruisers at the Fourth of July BBQ put on by the Club for the Americans, Moorea was the best anchorage we'd been to since leaving Seattle. After a few more days in beautiful Moorea, we headed directly to Bora Bora. Alex only had one more week to stay with us, and Bora Bora was a "must."

Bora Bora

Under the usual sunny skies, with winds about 12-15 knots, we headed off for "the most beautiful island in the world," only 140 miles to the West. After four hours the wind died, and on went the motor. For 20 hours straight, we motored, certainly the longest we'd run the motor since December when we were heading into Cabo San Lucas. With all ten of the free mooring buoys taken, we anchored in 85 feet in front of the Hotel Oa Oa just north of Vaitape.

We were thankful for our 350 feet of chain anchor rode, as this was about the deepest anchorage we had been in so far. Once we arrived, the wind picked up, just like it did at Fatu Hiva. First it would be calm, then the wind would scream down the mountain, gusting to 25 knots. Meanwhile, the boat swung rapidly around the anchor, moving with the current during the lulls, moving with the wind during the gusts, just like the La Pas waltz.

The Bora Bora "gun sight" - entering the pass

Similar to the Bali Hai Club in Moorea, the Hotel Oa Oa welcomes cruisers with open arms. Of course they hope you'll open your pocket book and use the restaurant or bar. They have free moorings, a dinghy dock, trash disposal, water, beach facilities, and they let you run up a tab at the bar/restaurant.

Eelyos, from Mercer Island is just a few boats away from us. On shore the natives practice singing and drum beating for the Fete (Bastille Day) competitions. That's kind of neat. Unfortunately, a new disco opened about a mile upwind of us. Our first night in Bora Bora was opening night for the Fete and for the disco. Now, every night until 3 AM the music blares, an eclectic collection of Polynesian, French, Spanish and American music, mixed in with a few oldies and rap. I heard two great Little Richard songs, "blasts from the past, moldy oldies from the wax museum!" "Rip it Up" and "Long Tall Sally." Another song they played a few times was the same song I'd heard in Mazatlan during the wee small hours when the hearty partiers were celebrating Mardi Gras. Many times it's kept me awake, and I like its mystical feeling. I'm so out of touch with current music that I didn't even know it was "Lombada" until today.

Our three month visa in French Polynesia was about to expire, and the extension we applied for was supposed to be waiting for us, general delivery, at the post office. Sure enough, a letter for Monsieur Richardson on ***Baba BarAnn*** was waiting for us. Checking in with the gendarme was the usual, efficient process, once the gendarme showed up at work. The Fete activities revolve around the piroque races, with events for 1, 3, 6, and 12 man or woman crews, and around the traditional dancing/singing events. We saw the finish of the piroque races from our boat. We bought great seats for opening night of the dancing event. There were three different groups from different parts of Bora Bora. Each group had about 60-70 members, both sexes, with ages ranging from 10 to 70. Some of the "big mamas" weighed over 250 pounds and could really belt it out. Each group's presentation lasted almost an hour. Close harmony, rhythmic drum, guitar, and ukuleles accompanied native dancing . . . hip shaking by the women and leg flapping by the men. The third group, which we dubbed the "home team" since we heard them practicing on shore ever since arriving in Bora Bora, had elaborate costumes, with skimpy loin clothes for the men and grass skirt/coconut shell bras for the women. Both sexes wore head dresses more than three feet in diameter. I took lots of pictures but have doubts that the long distance flash worked.

Bora Bora Yacht Club

After three sleepless nights in front of the Oa Oa Hotel, due to the upwind disco, we decided to move to quieter pastures. Five more boats had arrived, for Fete activities, and had anchored in front of us. A German boat, ***Marius I***, anchored very close, making it difficult to sleep while worrying about a collision. Sure enough, at 5:40 AM we bumped. No real damage, just a little varnish off the cap rail, but it wasn't comfortable. He apologized, and moved further away at daybreak, but we weren't sticking around. We moved over to the Bora Bora Yacht Club, about one mile north at Faanui, and were lucky to find a vacant mooring buoy.

The change in atmosphere was quite noticeable, with no disco noise, and a secure, roomy anchorage. Again, the buoy was free, and the BBYC even had a "water buoy" which made it extremely easy to fill the water tank. Just pull up to the buoy, lift the hose, and ask the BBYC to turn the water on. The owner, Guy, spoke English with a thick French accent, and was very friendly. His only request was that we make an entry in his log book. We were a bit intimidated by the exquisite artwork already left by cruisers on their way through Bora Bora. Our entry was a computer produced StarChart of the sky at the BBYC's latitude and longitude, at 8 PM on Bastille Day. We colored it a bit and left some kind words. It was a different and unique entry in the log, and I was proud of it. I had developed the program since leaving Mexico, primarily to learn a new programming language, Pascal, but also to help me recognize the new stars and constellations in the southern sky.

Alex Leaves on a Tramp Steamer to Papeete

Alex had to return to Papeete to catch a plane leaving for Seattle at 1 AM on Saturday morning. We'd planned on his taking the cargo boat that left Bora Bora on Thursday, arriving in Papeete on Friday. Getting good information on the boat's schedule was impossible. Between lots of partially true, and partially false information, all in French, we think we got the straight story. The cargo boat that Alex left on had no seats, and he had to sleep outside, on the deck. There were about 25 fellow passengers, a few who could speak English. He was part way through the third book of the Lord of the Rings, and he had his tapes and walkman, so I knew he wouldn't be bored. I wonder how he'll feel when he arrives at Mercer Island shortly after noon on Saturday, 48 hours after leaving Bora Bora?

Magazine Articles

There are at least 35 boats from the Pacific Northwest, (Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and Alaska) that I know who are cruising in French Polynesia this year. I've decided to try and assemble a story [pictures of 20 boats from the PNW] for 48 North, by including a photograph and letter from as many of these boats as possible. If it turns out as I hope, the article will appear this winter in the Seattle magazine. Last fall, I sent a letter to Latitude 38 in San Francisco and they published it. It was about our getting stuck in the Delta mud and getting the anchor stuck in our prop. In December I sent a story to Burgee, a southern California magazine that pays $50 for their monthly article entitled "I Learned about Boating from This . . . " Every time we picked up our mail I would ask Candace, "Is my fifty bucks from Burgee in there?" When we picked up our mail in Bora Bora, it was in there. The Burgee story says I learned not to pick up a buoy if I don't know what's at the end of the mooring line. So here we are at BBYC, swinging at the end of a free buoy for the first time since leaving Seattle, and not knowing what's at the other end, 90 feet down.

Wind Generator Crashes

One morning the wind started gusting mightily, perhaps up to 40 knots. Then the wind generator, spinning furiously, came crashing down, smashing the blades on the stern pulpit, twisting the stainless steel legs, and breaking the cup which held the main pole. It was a dramatic final chapter to the love/hate relationship I've had

since the beginning with the Four Winds II wind generator. It was expensive, ugly, extremely difficult and time consuming to install, and quite noisy. When the wind blew, it provided a fair amount of electricity. Now all that was history. It was beyond repair without access to machine shops and hard to find parts. Most importantly, I'd had it with the monster! The extra noise wasn't worth the extra electricity. Surveying the wreckage, the wind brake failed when some cheap pop rivets corroded. The centrifugal force wind brake is supposed to keep the blades spinning no faster than a 25 knot clip. The extra force applied by the rapidly spinning blades during the gust caused extra backwards pressure, breaking the cup at the bottom of the main pole.

When the bottom cup broke, the entire wind mill twisted over backwards. Luckily, no one got hurt, and it didn't harm the Monitor wind vane. I used this "opportunity" to rewire the solar panels so they'd be more efficient, and carefully monitored the engine running time necessary to keep our batteries topped off. While at anchor, we now have to run the engine 45 minutes a day. Under sail, since we light the masthead tricolor light at night and use the ham radio more, we'll have to run the engine a bit more. For the time being, we appreciate the quiet atmosphere and the uncluttered cockpit. I hope we don't miss the extra amps.

Huahine

Discussions we'd had with the cruisers in Bora Bora all corroborated that Huahine was a "must" while Raiatea could be skipped. Chuck and Bev had just arrived there from Moorea, so we decided to sail back east. With some good, blustery winds from the north, we had a great beam reach, and made the 50 mile trip in just eight hours. Our first two days there were spent, hunkered down, weathering the rest of the storm that provided us the nice sail. We spent a few days walking around Fare, the little village on the west coast of Huahine, and really enjoyed the place. It was quite noticeable that the people were friendlier than on the other islands. We're convinced that this is because Huahine has not been sullied by tourism. We spent some time with an interesting couple, Gil(66) and Lynn(50) on ***Tiare***. They lent us some VCR movies that we enjoyed on two nights, and we played bridge one afternoon . . . Candace's first ever game of bridge (not counting hands played against the computer!) It was lots of fun, and no arguments.

Gil was divorced many years ago from a French/Tahitian. But he's still "one of the family" to the Polynesians, and has been to non-stop parties and gatherings with them, mainly on Huahine. His ex-wife and ex-in-laws (outlaws?), are in the middle of a gigantic law suit worth 500 million US dollars. It revolves around a mysterious death, and bogus will, which cut the family out of all their property. The family had owned most of Huahine, the entire island, as well as the most valuable block in Papeete. They've already received several million dollars in settlements so far. Apparently, under French law, the government can be sued for authorizing the sale of property that wasn't rightfully owned. So the pockets are deep here, and the French are eager to stay on the friendly side of the Tahitians. Gil doesn't stand to gain anything, but his two sons do . . . one of whom has just taken over his manufacturing business in California.

Lynn's situation is also different. She's still married to an attorney back in Sacramento. Her family thinks she's crazy, running off to sea with another man. I wonder if she will return to her husband when her adventure is over?

Next we went to the southern anchorage at Huahine, called Avea Bay. It was quite pleasant, anchoring in 30 feet of turquoise water, with wooded hills descending to a crescent (croissant?) shaped, white sand beach on one side, and the barrier reef blocking all the waves on the other. You must be bored, reading about these beautiful anchorages, but some are more noteworthy than others. This was a "ten."

Tropical Flowers

Unfortunately, we couldn't stay there too long. We were experiencing a subtle change in the seasons, and had to be moving on. Instead of having showers once a month, they were now weekly events. About once a week it's cloudy and windy, as one low after another passes south of us. It was time to leave French Polynesia, and head west, back to Bora Bora to do some final preparations for the 1,100 mile trip to American Samoa. Please excuse my change of pace, tense and style. The following captures some of my feelings on how we got into cruising.

Northwest Cruisers in Paradise

"Why are there so many?", Candace asked. I took another sip and scanned over the anchorage, happy in knowing that we had provisioned well in Mexico and weren't affected by the exorbitant prices for beverages in French Polynesia. It was our favorite time of day, sunset, when it was cooler and calmer, a time for relaxation and reflection. Splash! About 100 small flying fish, perhaps four inches long, all leapt out of the water at the same time, fleeing in every direction.

It reminded me of the fire boats on Elliott Bay when they spew water in every direction. Soon we saw a large fish thrashing about, trying to wolf down the one flying fish that he had culled out. Why do the flying fish swim in large schools? Wouldn't it be safer to be a loner? Anchored at Bora Bora for the last three weeks, we couldn't help but notice that a high percentage of the sailboats in Polynesia is from the Pacific Northwest, perhaps 30% of all the boats. Maybe 3% each from Oregon and Alaska, 9% from British Columbia, and 15% from Washington.

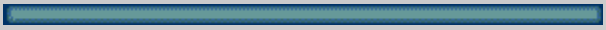
Why so many? It's my guess that 30% come from California; 30% from the east coast, Germany, France, and New Zealand; with the remaining 10% scattered among Australia, Japan, and the rest of Europe. It's logical that the west cost, being closer, has higher representation than the east coast or Europe. But California, with two and one-half times the population of the PNW, and at least 1,000 miles closer, has no more sailors out here. Per capita, the Pacific Northwest has 2.5 times as many sailors here in "paradise" as California.

Did the Californians head the other way, through the canal? Are the east coast boats content with the Caribbean, the rest of the Atlantic, and the Med? Each boat probably has a different reason for stepping out of the fast lane for a few years and going cruising, but the question still begs for an answer. Before offering my opinion, I surveyed the horizon once more. The Sun was just about to slip out of sight. Flash! The "GREEN FLASH!" It really exists! For the last second before the Sun was completely covered up by the Pacific it turned a bright, almost fluorescent, bright green. Until then, the only green flashes I'd seen were on the channel markers. (Unlike the USA, it's "Green-right-returning" here and for most of the world, or easier to remember "Red-Right-Wrong")

Why hadn't I seen it before. Was it because the waves breaking on the fringing reef were just high enough to eclipse the last second of the sunset? Well, I think the Pacific Northwest has the best cruising area in North America. It's easy to get started. Remember our first overnighter, on a San Juan 23 in Lake Washington? Pretty exciting. We even circumnavigated Mercer Island a few times. Then through the big, scary locks for the first time, and a night at Blake Island. That was really big time, and great fun. Then we met more and more cruisers, and added more and more destinations in our cruising log. Gig Harbor, Eagle Harbor, Poulsbo (I must be one of the few fans of lutefish eating contests) and even up to Port Ludlow. Soon we were planning our summer vacations around two weeks or more in the San Juan Islands.

Next it was Desolation Sound. By then we were hooked completely, and had bought ***Baba BarAnn***. That month's vacation, circumnavigating Vancouver Island, dispelled any lingering doubts. One month cruises and harbor hopping just wouldn't cut it anymore. So we got into cruising gradually, one step at a time. The Pacific Northwest probably offers the best training grounds in the USA. Cruising destinations out of San Francisco are quite limited, and once under the Golden Gate Bridge, it's major league Pacific Ocean sailing. No easy learning curve there. L.A., no way. If you can afford moorage and get a boat in the first place, your only destination might be Catalina Island, where you're herded onto tightly spaced mooring buoys. At least you can see herds of buffalo on the shore so you won't feel out of place in your own fiberglass herd. San Diego, forget it. One of the few places to cruise would be Mexico. With all its red tape and bureaucracy, it's not really a weekend destination.

So that's my opinion. Why do you think there are so many Northwest sailors out here?



Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 13 - Suvorov, Puka Puka, and the Samoas

Heading to Suvorov

We spent a week back at our old anchorage at the Bora Bora Yacht Club, filling up with water, having one more fabulous dinner at the BBYC, and preparing for the passage to Pago Pago. I took some more photos and picked up some letters for the "48 North" story. Most importantly, I called West Marine Products in California and placed a large order for marine "goodies." It will be sent to General Delivery in Pago Pago, and should be waiting for us when we arrive. The final task was to check out with the gendarme and pick up our bond. Back in April, when we arrived at Hiva Oa, we had to give the bank $850 a piece, to be retrieved, interest-free, upon departure. (The purpose of this bond is to insure that the tourist will not stay forever in French Polynesia. The bond is intended to be sufficient to purchase your airfare back to your home country.)

When Candace asked the bank on Friday for our bond money, they said come back on Tuesday when they would have some American money. On Tuesday, they then said they didn't have any American money and that she should come back on Thursday, since Wednesday was a holiday. That was the last straw. Candace had already cooked the meals for the first two or three days at sea, and couldn't tolerate another delay. After some snotty words from the bank pontificate, it was decided that perhaps some additional greenbacks could be accumulated by two o'clock in the afternoon. In the afternoon, everyone was all smiles, with lots of "No problems" and a few other English phrases among the many French ones. We had our money and the weather forecast was promising. The next morning, on August 15, we headed west.

Suvorov Island

Similar to our passage from Mexico, we checked in to the Pacific Maritime Net every night to report our position and catch up on whereabouts of the other cruisers. Only eleven boats were on the "roll call," and all but three of them were heading to Hawaii or to "the Mainland." After skirting Maupiti and Atoll Motu One to the north, we headed toward Suvorov Island, 685 miles from Bora Bora, and almost directly in line with Pago Pago. That's where we saw a large, whitish whale. He was about 1/2 mile away, and jumped completely out of the water on at least four different occasions. What a fantastic sight. This one large whale, seemingly all alone, jumping straight up and completely out of the water. His nose had to be at least forty feet above the water. Truly majestic!

We'd heard about the current inhabitants of Suvorov from ***Tao***, perhaps the "tightest ship" cruising the Pacific. While in Bora Bora, we met Greg and Maria on ***Tao***, along with their 18 year old twins Heidi and Tyson, and 14 year old son Kalen. They had been sailing their 29 foot sloop for the past 5 1/2 years since leaving Vancouver, Washington. Things weren't so crowded when they left, but of course the kids were much smaller then. They were returning to the Northwest, and had recently visited Suvorov Island. But the real story is about Suvorov, one of the northern Cook Islands.

Sofia, Mama and Candace

Suvorov, also know as Suwarrow Island, was the island inhabited by the solitary hermit Tom Neal for 16 years. His book, An Island to Oneself must be an inspiration to all the loners in the world. Now, the island is inhabited by four Cook Islanders: Jimmy, the "caretaker" in his mid sixties; Buju, his 22 year old grandson; Sofia, who'd just turned twelve did all the cooking and cleaning; and "Mama," a seven year old girl. I believe that Sofia was "given" to Buju's mother, and might actually be a cousin to Buju. Buju's wife was back in Rarotonga giving birth to his second child. Presumably the first child was "given" to someone else. The implication was that Buju's wife spent very little time on Suvorov. I never understood how Mama joined the family.

When we took our dinghy to shore, we already had sketchy bibliographies on the entire population! Sofia was waiting for us when we hit the beach, and in no time charmed us both. She told us she'd been eagerly watching us sail toward the island for several hours, and told the rest of the island "Hurrah, a yacht is coming!" Since ***Tao*** had left Suvorov, a Japanese woman in her twenties had chosen to live on the Island for a few months. She spends most of her time talking on the ham radio until the wee small hours of the morning. She also spends some time teaching the young girls. In contrast to the Tahitian children, Sofia and Mama were very well behaved, and seemed quite mature. We thoroughly enjoyed our stay. Unfortunately, we didn't even stay on this lovely island twenty four hours!

The Taro Route

After checking into the Roll Call the night before arriving at Suvorov, we were asked to assist in the delivery of some taro root. Two years ago, a hurricane ruined the taro root fields in Puka Puka Island, 215 miles northwest of Suvorov. Until their crop is fully reestablished, Nassau Island, 170 miles NW of Suvorov, has been supplying Puka Puka with the necessary amount of this main staple to their diet. Several weeks ago the inhabitants of Nassau had harvested their crop and arranged for its delivery. The first boat never made it to Nassau, and had to return to port with mechanical problems. A second boat was then commissioned, but unfortunately, it was lost at sea for eleven days and finally ended up in Western Samoa. Apparently there was a serious lack of food and water during her wanderings around the Pacific Ocean.

Meanwhile, the taro was still on the beach at Nassau, and was going to rot very shortly. So ham radio operators in Rarotonga tried to seek out any boats in the area who might be able to lend assistance. We were seriously considering the pros and cons of coming to the rescue. There were many unknowns. How much taro was there and how was it packed? Was it very dirty and full of bugs? Since there is no anchorage at either Nassau or Puka Puka, how would we receive and deliver the taro?

Would the weather for the next few days cooperate? Talking to Jimmy and the few people on Suvorov Island convinced us that we wanted to help these people. We got partial answers to our questions and prepared to leave early the very next morning.We hoped for good winds so we could arrive at Nassau Island before sunset the next day. With coordination provided by Tom Wichman, ZK1TW, out of Rarotonga, we contacted both islands, and they were eagerly awaiting our arrival. Even before we arrived at Nassau, there was a front page story in the Cook Island News (the country's only daily newspaper) describing the saga.

The winds remained strong, and by 1830 we arrived at the "landing" on the lee side of Nassau. It was easy to spot . . . there was a large 200' long freighter, high and dry, rusting away on the reef! On the beach, there were several people waiting for ***Baba BarAnn***. We milled around in the open ocean while the Islanders slowly glided their loaded whaleboat over the reef to join us.

Bringing taro to Baba BarAnn

About a dozen young men scampered off their boat onto our heavily fendered boat, and started stacking the bags of taro root around the decks. They were delighted in our picture talking. Only a few spoke some broken English. Although they were most curious, and peered through the hatches, not one even hinted of coming inside our boat. They were delightful, happy, and very appreciative. Before the first bag was loaded they presented us with more than forty coconuts, all husked. In total, forty three bags of taro, about 2,400 pounds, were stowed around the decks.

While some returned to shore for more gifts, the majority huddled around the cockpit. I put the "boogie board" in place and played some rock 'n roll, the real international language. After just one playing I think most of them had learned "Barbara Ann," and of course they had learned that our boat was named after the song. Then we were presented with a gigantic basket of "fresh" taro root. After handshakes all around, we parted ways.

The next leg on the "taro route" was only 43 miles long, but was the most tricky. About halfway between Nassau and Puka Puka lies Tema Reef. We had to head west to avoid the reef, then jog to the east to prevent the strong current from setting us onto the windward, eastern shores of Puka Puka. The official name for Puka Puka is "Danger Island," because of the many boats that have sunk on their reefs. Of course all this took place in the dark of a moonless night. To prevent arrival before sunrise, we only used the mainsail. Besides, the heavy bags of taro root covered our jib sheets, making access to them virtually impossible. We also discovered several small ants that didn't want to part with their taro. Slowly we probed the darkness, with ***Baba BarAnn*** rolling from gunnel to gunnel because of the extra weight on the decks. Between the rocking motion and the navigational concerns, sleep was non-existent. But the weather cooperated, with nice 10-15 knot winds and smooth seas.

Off-loading taro

At 0700 we rounded the northeastern point of the reef on Puka Puka and were pleased to see a boat waiting for us. Anchoring on the leeward side of the reef was a unique experience. We handed our anchor to Solomon. He motored to the reef, dropped it in just eight feet of water, and then dove down to set it. Even though we were only a few feet downwind from the anchor, we swung comfortably in 200 feet of water. That's how steeply the atoll rises from the bottom of the sea. The taro was off loaded in a few trips, and then we were invited to shore. Our escort was Peiwa, the acting Chief Administrative Officer. We walked around much of the island, spoke to many people, took pictures, and were heaped with lavish praise. Everyone on the island had been anticipating our arrival, and the arrival of their taro. Because the last two boats had failed, our success seemed even greater.

After an overly formal thank you speech from the chief consul, we were given two cooked chickens, much taro (it tastes like sticky dumplings, very starchy, and not that special), bananas, papaya, dozens more coconuts, and more sincere gratitude than I would have believed possible. We hosed down the decks, stashed all our bountiful presents, and set sail for Pago Pago, 373 miles to the southwest. After enjoying chicken for both lunch and dinner, we "crashed." We were both bone tired after being up for 36 hours.

Puka Puka

Carina was three days behind us and they too had decided to come to the rescue, bringing the last 38 bags of taro for the ever thankful people of Nassau and Puka Puka. ***Carina*** and ***Baba BarAnn*** were the second and third yachts to visit Puka Puka this year, and certainly the most appreciated in a long, long time. We were even told that the prime minister of the Cook Islands would welcome us [telegram from the Deputy Prime Minister] if we ever got to Rarotonga. We'll see! Rarotonga is on our itinerary for next May.

Normally Puka Puka receives two supply boats per year. They exist on fish, taro, a few chickens and pigs, some bananas and papaya. While they have a few modern conveniences, their culture appears to be unchanged, and certainly unharmed, by "civilization." We asked how they got the one tractor to shore. Easy! They took it apart, ferried it ashore in small whale boats, and then reassembled it on shore.

On the way to Pago Pago we stopped at Tau, [in the NW corner near Faleasao] one of the Manua Islands about 60 miles east of Pago Pago. It was such a rolly anchorage, we only stayed long enough to shower and have dinner. After a few hours we pulled the anchor back up and continued on to Pago Pago, arriving before noon the next day, Sunday, August 26.

Pago Pago

Pago Pago, American Samoa, (pronounced "pango pango") is much maligned. We've read that the customs officials are the rudest in the Pacific, and that they've even stolen articles and money from cruisers. The

Samoans are big and aggressive, shoving their way around stores and acting unfriendly to all cruisers. The harbor is polluted and smelly from oil spills and the tuna packing factories. Except for the pollution, our experience has been contrary to the above. We tied up to the customs dock on Sunday afternoon. Monday morning at 8:30 we were visited by customs, immigration, the port authority, and health officials. Everyone was extremely pleasant and efficiently processed a modest amount of paperwork. They didn't snoop around the boat, and only asked a minimum of questions. Then we went to the harbor master, about a mile away, and finished the entire paperwork process. By 10:00 we were done.

Yes, the men and women are quite large, heavy with broad shoulders. But during our two weeks there, we didn't see any action that might be considered aggressive or unfriendly. Quite the contrary, they were all very courteous. The harbor is terribly polluted from oil spills and trash. It's almost as filthy as Ensenada, Mexico. Sometimes we can smell the tuna processing plant when the air is still, but it hasn't been remotely close to the unbearable levels we were anticipating. My biggest objection, outside the dirty water, is the noise pollution. Turbines hum loudly 24 hours a day, every day. It's just like being at an airport. We close the hatches at night and turn our fan on. This creates a nice artificial breeze, and the lower pitched hum of the fan is less objectionable. The heat and humidity of Pago Pago are oppressive.

Maintenance and Provisioning

Ah, but the real reasons for coming here are the US prices and US mail. After 4 1/2 months in French Polynesia, regular USA prices seem fabulous. My package of "goodies" from West Marine Products was awaiting our arrival. Our mail and photos arrived the next day. We stocked up on everything to carry us through until arrival in New Zealand. On the diesel engine I changed the oil, oil filter, fuel filter and fan belt. I cleaned the air filter and the turbo charger, checked the water pump impeller and gear oil, and cleaned the outside of the engine. I also cleaned and lubed some of the winches and the steering system. It was dirt cheap to have the laundry clean and fold a large bag of clothes. Candace got some prescriptions filled at half price, and I had a cavity refilled for only $20. Medical care is free for the residents of American Samoa, and inexpensive for the visitors. It's all paid for by U.S. taxpayers.

The bus system is strictly private enterprise. Since there are at least twice the number of buses needed for the population, one seems to come every other minute. Almost all rides are just 25 cents. The buses are miniaturized, about one-fourth the size of a "real" bus, and they all BLAST reggae, rap, and native music. While there, we also caught up on the news, thanks to our TV which brought in English speaking stations for the first time in nine months. What a mess in Kuwait!

After 12 days we had done all those things that needed to be done, filled the larder and all the tanks, and were ready to leave. The noise and harbor pollution were starting to get to us. The Korean fishing boats just dump their bilge water into the harbor, along with lots of trash, when they bring their catch to the canneries. With the harbor such a mess, there seems to be little incentive to keep the streets and surrounding area clean. Our waterline was black from oil, while pink "things" were starting to grow on the bottom. Our harbor fee for the privilege of staying here was $68. But first we had to haul our stern anchor. After two hours of tugging and hauling from every direction, we finally saw our Fortress (Danforth style) anchor. It was completely entangled in a gigantic nylon bird's nest, with perhaps 200' feet of 1/4 inch anchor line. Using cable cutters I was able to free the anchor from the harbor, and us from Pago Pago.

Apia, Western Samoa

With good winds most of the way, we made the 90+ mile trip to Apia in 18 hours, arriving on Sunday morning, September 11. Despite the short distance of the trip, we'd obviously come a very long way from Pago Pago. The harbor was very clean; the city was clean. It seemed like the cars were traveling along the harbor road in slow motion. No hectic pace here. That very proper air of a British heritage was quite evident. We loved it. We enjoyed a guided bus tour all around the island, which also took us swimming at a beautiful beach and a waterfall. Everywhere, the children smiled and waved when we drove through their little community. Despite what our friends on ***Tao*** had told us about the aggressive, unfriendly Samoans, we had to disagree totally.

These were unquestionably the most friendly and polite people we had ever met . . . anywhere in the world. How ironic. The only harbor that has ever charged us to deposit our trash, one tala or 47 cents US per bag, is perhaps the cleanest one we've been to. Public education is not free, but there's a 90% literacy rate in the country. Most of the "money" in this country seems to belong to the numerous churches. We saw large Roman Catholic, Methodist, Bahai, Assembly of God, Congregational, and Mormon churches. Small villages, with perhaps 50-100 people, support at least two large churches. The entire country shuts down on Sundays. It's against the law to do any work on the Sabbath. Property is owned by the community, not by individuals. We've heard that the "squabbles" between communities, usually over property, are sometimes settled with violent rock throwing fights. I can believe it. Twice I've seen kids throwing rocks at other kids. Everyone seems to throw rocks at the mongrel dogs which roam the streets, eking out an existence. On these volcanic islands, there's plenty of ammunition! It seems that the Samoans have a violent streak, just below their friendly, polite veneer.

Taro Route - Part II

While in Apia, we wanted to learn more about the boat that was lost at sea for eleven days when attempting to pick up "our" taro from Nassau Island. Without success, we went to both newspapers and the library. Then we went to the Ministry of Transport and had a long talk, "off the record," with Richard Henshaw. He's employed under a two year contract with the Western Samoan government to help the port of Apia. The lost boat, ***Fotu-O-Samoa*** (***Fotu***) is owned by the government of Samoa.

The Cook Islands had chartered ***Fotu*** to carry about 50 people from Puka Puka to Rarotonga to participate in the Independence Day festivities during the first week in August. This request was originally denied, since neither the boat nor the crew of ***Fotu*** were licensed for international business. However, since one of the very few ways Western Samoa can earn "hard currency" is by chartering this boat, this denial was overruled by Richard's boss, the Chairman of the Ministry of Transport. If there were any problems, the insurance coverage would not apply, and the government could be liable for significant law suits.

The boat was in poor shape, with a badly twisted prop, and the crew had a history of mistakes. ***Fotu*** picked up the passengers at Puka Puka and headed south to Rarotonga. However, their SatNav started to act up, and became completely unreliable. There was no sextant on board, nor nautical almanac. After the boat was two days overdue in Rarotonga, a search plane was sent out. Amazingly it found ***Fotu*** about 200 miles north of Rarotonga, while she was steaming NE under the false assumption that she had overshot Rarotonga. With some

radio guidance from the plane, ***Fotu*** headed off in the correct direction.

Once again it changed course, was found, and received help. By now there was a serious lack of food and water for the fifty passengers and crew. Finally the boat limped into Rarotonga, with the passengers completely missing the festivities. ***Fotu*** picked up three passengers for a return trip to Nassau. Before heading off, ***Fotu***'s owners agreed to a suggestion that the harbor master from Rarotonga, who knew these waters well, travel on the boat. However, after pleas from ***Fotu***'s captain that this would be embarrassing, "trust me, I can do it," the harbor master was told to get off the boat. At least the harbor master convinced ***Fotu*** to borrow his sextant and nautical almanac.

The Cook Islanders then asked ***Fotu*** to pick up the taro root from Nassau and deliver it to Puka Puka. So off she headed for Nassau Island. Of course she got totally lost again. At one point she was 300 miles NW of her "assumed position," and almost hit a reef in the middle of the night. While trying to ascertain ***Fotu***'s position, they had radioed Apia with a sextant observation. It was another comedy of errors as the people in Apia tried to find a current nautical almanac to reduce the sights, in order to verify ***Fotu***'s calculations. Finally, they went to one of the cruising boats, ***Interlude***, that was at the custom's dock and asked for assistance.

While in Apia, we met Gordon and Donna from ***Time Bandit***, a 65' trimaran from Hawaii, and enjoyed hearing their part of the "Taro Route." Soon after ***Carina*** had delivered the second batch of taro, the people on Suvorov Island convinced ***Time Bandit*** to transport 90 people (about 30 were small babies) from Nassau to Puka Puka. ***Time Bandit*** agreed, and made two trips to complete the task. They only had celestial navigation (no satellite navigational system) and had trouble locating Nassau on the return trip, because of overcast skies. After several passes north and south of the island, the clouds lifted long enough to find the elusive island. Remember, Nassau is only one mile in diameter.

Food Poisoning

In Apia, we went to the famous Aggie Grey Hotel for the Samoan dancing, singing, and buffet dinner. We think it was there that Candace picked up a terrible case of food poisoning, although it may have been at a pastry shop where we got a small lunch, earlier in the day. Her temperature peaked at 103.5, her stomach (left side) hurt, and many of her muscles ached very painfully. At first we thought it was Dengue fever. Now we think it was salmonella. After "keeping our guard up" so diligently in Mexico and French Polynesia, we had lapsed. Perhaps just hearing the locals speak English lulled us into a false sense of security. Lots of Gatorade, and some antibiotics, cured her in less than a week, but it was a miserable time for Candace.

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 14 - Tonga and Fiji

Nuiatoputapu

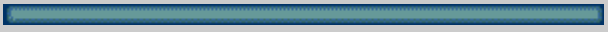
The small island of Nuiatoputapu, a.k.a "New Potatoes" by many of the cruisers, is less than 200 miles south of Western Samoa, and a logical port of entry to Tonga. We had fabulous weather and winds the first day, but then it turned ugly. Along with a few squalls, the seas increased to ten feet, and the wind built up to 31 knots. We could see there was no way to reach Nuiatoputapu before dark, so we had to hove to all night long in these rough conditions. For almost 18 hours we were hove to, moving very slowly at 1 knot, as the winds howled.

A little after sunrise we went through the pass in the coral reef around Nuiatoputapu; the seas flattened out, but the winds and the lousy weather continued. Six other boats were already anchored there. The Tongan immigration, customs, and health officials all wanted to be dinghied out to our boat to complete the necessary paper work. When there, they asked for beer and soda. This was a "first" for us, but we had been forewarned over the radio to give them one can. Adolf, on ***Rose'l***, said he didn't have beer or soda, and offered a drink of liquor. When the custom's man left, he asked to take the bottle, to which Adolf agreed very reluctantly.

In Tonga we had crossed the International Date Line, even though the longitude was still West. From Apia, which is 11 hours slow on GMT, we went to Tonga which is 13 hours fast. Thus we didn't change our clocks, or, more precisely, we moved them forward 24 hours! The people of Nuiatoputapu were the dirtiest, poorest, we had yet encountered. There were many, many pigs and goats roaming around freely, indicating a certain level of wealth, but there was very little agriculture. Hurricane Ofa last February had really devastated this island, blowing the roofs off many houses and ruining their fields.

The adults were friendly, but kept their distance, while the children always stopped to talk to us. The small children nearest the dinghy dock would run to us, waving, saying "hello," and asking for a "lolly." They had been "trained" by previous cruisers, including ourselves, who give small candies to the kids. Most of these Tongans spoke English and were quite friendly.

We went to a Tongan feast put on by Ofisi for $10 per person. Thirteen of "us yachties" sat down on mats inside an open "fale," and ate with our fingers, Tongan style. The many dishes included a spicy and tender octopus dish, taro leaves and fish, raw clams with onion and lime, pork, manioc (like potatoes), watermelon, papaya, and a desert with corn and caramel, all washed down with drinking coconuts. We were stuffed. Both of us, but especially Candace, were nervous eating such strange food which had been prepared under obviously primitive, unsanitary conditions. It was fun to do once. To work off some of the gigantic meal, I played cricket with some 8 to 10 year old boys. They seemed to enjoy that a lot. They were quite appreciative of the tennis ball we gave them the next day. Some charming 14-15 year old girls asked us for US magazines, and we gave them a National Geographic and Reader's Digest.

< 

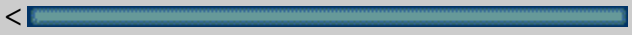
Vava'u

Primarily because of the poor weather, we were eager to leave Nuiatoputapu. We left as soon as we got a slight break in the windy weather that had continued since our arrival. Wrong! Outside the pass it was still blowing 30 knots, with waves from 15 to 18 feet. At one point the waves were as high as the spreaders - approximately 22 feet up. Wow! We turned around and retreated back to Nuiatoputapu for another day. The next morning the seas had calmed down, and we headed south to Vava'u under ideal sailing conditions. After a day, the winds had subsided to a mere 5 knots, so on went the motor for the last 70 miles. We made water the whole way and arrived with topped off batteries and water tanks, but of course a little less diesel.

With the Middle East crisis, and the subsequent rise in oil prices, we're starting to husband our diesel supply more closely. The Vava'u Group of Tongan Islands is reminiscent of the San Juan Islands. There are more than fifty small islands, all within a few miles, and all within a large fringing reef which protects them from the ocean swell. The weather was primarily overcast, so that too reminded us of the Northwest. However, that's where the comparison stops. In the crystal clear water, we could easily see our anchor 30 feet below, hundreds of rainbow colored fish, white sand, and coral. Overhead we saw several fruit bats (a.k.a. flying fox) which are rare except for Tonga and Fiji. It had been six months since we'd last touched our brightwork. So we found the energy to tackle that job once again. After sanding, we waited for a nice dry day to apply the first coat of varnish . . . and we waited. Because of the rain, we needed ten days to apply three coats. It was much easier this time. We had learned from ***Arjumand*** that it's not necessary, and perhaps best, not to sand in between each coat. I even found the time to clean and wax the hull. ***Baba BarAnn*** looks great and has finally been cleansed of Pago Pago.

The Canadians arranged a nice pot luck for all the Canucks and those with a Canadian courtesy flag, like ***Baba BarAnn***, to celebrate their Thanksgiving. They also arranged a book swap in conjunction with the pot luck. Almost everyone is looking for new literature, so this was a good opportunity. We also met up again with Martin on ***Orca***. Karin had returned to Sweden and he was soloing his Hans Christian 34.

Tonga was really nice, one of our favorite places, but we had to keep moving. Our mail was waiting for us in Suva, Fiji, 450 miles to the west. In between there are numerous uncharted reefs, islands, shoals, and "discolored water." They're due to the ash from recent, and continuing, underwater volcanic activity. The Pilot book even warns you to avoid pumice floating on the water, from any recent eruption, since it could easily clog a water cooled engine. For this passage I also tracked the weather very carefully, getting a weatherfax (with the ham radio and the computer) and listening to weather reports. The weather had been pretty bad recently, and we wanted to pick the best possible departure date.



Passage to Fiji

Orca with Martin Picard

We were as prepared for this passage as we could be. We'd topped off the diesel tank, the water tanks were full, we were rested, Candace had made several meals in advance, and we had thoroughly studied the weather and the tricky route ahead of us. After checking out with customs and immigration, we left Tonga Saturday morning, October 13, under beautiful sunny skies and favorable 20 knot winds. ***Orca*** had left before us, and had an eight mile lead. The race was on! We were in VHF contact with ***Orca*** the entire way. At noon the first day, Martin jokingly warned us about a hamburger he'd dropped over-board. I said "Thanks for telling us about the uncharted beef!"

It took us 30 hours to pass him. We both got out our cameras and took many pictures of each other, passing as close as 100 feet. Bright sunshine, surfing down eight foot waves with 16-20 knot winds on a broad reach, about 100 miles from land. This was fantastic sailing! It's really rare to see another sailboat on a passage, let alone pass within a few boat lengths. Good winds and great sailing continued until just 42 miles out of Suva. So on went the motor to charge our low batteries and speed us to Fiji. We averaged 6 knots . . . 140 miles per day. The weather was perfect. Overall, it was the best passage we've had yet.

Fiji - Navigational Waste Land

Baba BarAnn meets Eastern Hemisphere

Our original itinerary for the South Pacific had excluded Fiji. Its navigational problems are legendary, with numerous coral reefs and tricky currents. New islands and reefs are continually being formed by new volcanic activity. The first "Notice to Mariners" I read in Suva warned of an "underwater explosion at location . . . " The only people we had talked to, with first hand knowledge on Fiji, were soured by their experience. They had hit a reef and done some expensive, but repairable, damage, to their keel. Along with these problems are the stories of surly custom's officials and a reputation for not being very friendly toward cruisers. Who needs it?

Thumbnail History of Fiji

Starting in the 1880's, there was extensive importation of indentured servants from India to work on the sugar plantations. After ten year's labor, they could choose to return to India, or stay in Fiji. Most stayed. When this system ceased in 1916 the sugar fields were divided into 4 hectare plots and many of the Indians became tenant farmers. Others gravitated toward Suva, to become shop keepers or garment factory workers. In almost every way, these Indians were/are different from the Fijians. Picture the large, bulky, Polynesian with Afro haircut, whose heritage in a land of plenty has fostered an easy going lifestyle with community property rights and generosity, tempered by the recent, yet strong influence of the Christian church. Into this world comes the scrawny Indian, with stringy hair and weird smelling food, whose heritage has taught survival in an over-populated land, whose Hindu religion and traditions are so foreign. Not too surprisingly, these two cultures in Fiji have remained totally separate . . . and they always will. The number of Indians grew to 51% of the total population in Fiji by 1946. Despite their slight majority, and the laws that give lip service to equal rights, the Indians have not, and will never, be able to achieve political equality. Tension reached the breaking point in 1987, when political power was grabbed by a pro-Fijian group in a bloodless coup. Since then, many Indians have left the country, returning a majority to the Fijians, and probably making life even more difficult for the remaining Indians.

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Suva, Fiji

Into this boiling cauldron sails ***Baba BarAnn***. Over in the quarantine area of the anchorage, we spot Chuck motoring his dinghy in little figure eights. Just like a honey bee announcing a good nectar source to the rest of the hive, he's showing us an appropriate place to drop the hook and wait for the health officials to give us clearance. We hoist the yellow Q flag, contact the Port Control on the VHF, and wait. Shortly, a boat pulls up (smashes into us) and a health official comes on board. We struggle to understand his mumbling English, but fill out the forms and complete the process. Unfortunately, he's forgotten the form he must give us, but, not to worry, he'll drop it off tomorrow. The whole process was a complete joke. There was no action taken, nor question asked that was directed toward guarding the health of Fiji.

Too hot to dance standing up!

We then reanchor, close to the Royal Suva Yacht Club, and the next morning dinghy over to check in with them. The RSYC is the social center for cruisers in Suva. Sara in the office is a smiling, attractive Fijian with an impeccable English accent. After she calls immigration, they drive to the yacht club to meet us. What a switch. We complete reams of paper work, but it goes swiftly. Then we take a cab to the port control building to repeat/complete the process. It's really unfortunate that the British have taught them to drive on the wrong side of the road, and given them a love for paperwork!

Solo performance

Suva is a large, modern, busy city. What a total change from Tonga. There are paved roads, street lights, multi story modern buildings, buses, cabs, hoards of people. Music blares in every store (American country and western is often the choice). The large public market has excellent fruit and vegetables, with good prices. After so many months, our senses were ready for a little overload. The air is filled with the smell of different curries, coriander, and kava, along with the sounds of horns, honky tonk, and hare krishna. Indians and Fijians. Side by side. Each quite distinct, separate, and fascinating. We lunch at tiny restaurants on very hot curry and Chinese food. We dine in style on steaks, mahi mahi, and wiener schnitzel.

For the first time in eleven months, we tie up to dock at the RSYC and live in style, not having to take a dinghy to shore. The yacht club has happy hours, cookouts, fish and chips. We meet new cruisers, and become better acquainted with some others we've known for months. Suva is fun.

One day we were greeted by our friend and real estate agent, Anne Bentrott, and her husband Kenny Wise from West Seattle. We learned they would be vacationing in Fiji in October, and told them to look us up at the RSYC. It's rare that meetings based upon such sketchy details ever take place, but there they were on the dock in Suva, 5,000 miles from Seattle. We enjoyed hearing news from our neighborhood and about the new tenant she had found to rent our house. That evening they invited us to dine at their hotel. What a nice surprise visit. They left the next day, back to the cold and rain of Seattle, and it was time for us to start planning our departure for New Zealand.

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 15 - New Zealand

Passage to New Zealand

Each cruiser is faced with an important decision - where to spend the South Pacific hurricane season, which runs approximately from November through April. A few stay in Samoa, Tonga, New Caledonie, or Suva, where the harbors provide good, although not total, protection from the one or two hurricanes per year. The majority head south to New Zealand, while a few bypass NZ and head to Australia. Those with cats on board, like ***Carina***, and the few dog owners, don't have a "southern option," due to the laws and costs which make keeping a pet on board impractical Down Under.

For us the choice was easy. We'd always wanted to go to New Zealand, we'd seen enough of third world countries for one year, and we didn't want to take any unnecessary risks with hurricanes. The heat and humidity of the tropics is pleasant during their winter, but uncomfortable during their summer. Like migrating birds, the paths of cruising boats each season are quite predictable. At the end of the hurricane season, in March or April, most species set sail from the Pacific west coast, or flock through the Panama Canal, and head for the Marquesas and then Papeete. From July through October their paths diverge, with many varied itineraries, but always slowly working their way west with the trade winds. Now it's time once again to converge for the hurricane season. They cluster in Suva, Fiji and Nuku'alofa, Tonga, deciding when to take flight for the 1,100 mile passage south. Leave too early and you might be hit on the face by a late winter storm out of the Tasman Sea. Leave too late and you might get hit from behind by an early hurricane sweeping down from the Coral Sea. The cruisers must also confront head winds and cool temperatures for the first time since last March.

Like other rites of passage, the passage to New Zealand is often a bonding experience for cruisers. Instead of fattening up and flying in formation like birds, we reprovision our boats and head off, one by one, when the time "is right." We check into the roll call each night, informing the net controller of our lat/lon and weather conditions, check the progress of our friends, and hope that tomorrow's forecast is favorable. For the first day of the passage the wind and waves are up, as we beat to the west of Kandavu Island, the last land we'll see until NZ. Checking into the net that night we're pleased to hear that ***Amazing Grace***, another Baba 40, has left Tonga that day and is likewise heading to Opua. We hadn't seen Mike and Carla since August in Huahine.

Although they're 450 miles southeast of us, they're the same distance to NZ. Based on their check-in lat/lon at 0430Z, we calculate that they are 977.8 miles from Opua, while we're 996.9. They have a 19.1 mile lead, and the race is on! Even with 20-25 knot winds, the next day we lose 9 miles to them. We sail 160 miles on both day 3 and day 4, but only pick up 12 miles. As is our practice on all long passages, we've taped a chart on the walls of ***Baba BarAnn***. Actually it's not much more than a grid with latitude and longitude in 5 degree segments printed out on our computer. We plot our progress, as well as others in the vicinity. Our chart on the wall shows the two boats heading south, converging on New Zealand. Then the killer. Day 5. We sail 157 miles in steady 12-

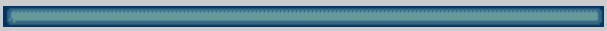
18 knot winds while they get stalled out in a big high. From minus 16 miles we go PLUS 30!

There are about 50 boats out here, heading from Tonga-Fiji-New Caledonie south to New Zealand-Australia, that check in each night to one of two ham nets. Just 300 miles to the west, one boat is hove to in 40-50 knot winds, while others are motoring in calms. The worst happens just 90 miles behind us, perhaps the closest boat to us. They were just rammed by a whale, mid-ship. Even though it was one of the stoutest cruising yachts out here, a Westsail 32, there was much structural damage done. Most of the furniture inside was broken. Luckily the hull wasn't harmed, they weren't injured, and they continued on to Opua. They noticed a lot of blood in the water from the whale, but apparently he swam on.

Our "game plan" to New Zealand took us much further west than the other cruisers'. This would give us a faster point of sail for the first half of the passage. Three hundred miles straight north of New Zealand we would be set up for the anticipated westerly winds south of latitude 30, that the pilot charts had predicted for this time of year. Unfortunately, the westerlies never came, and we were forced to beat into SSE winds in order to fetch NZ. For three straight days we beat into the wind and waves, with the wind 40-60 degrees off the port bow. Pound, pound. One day we could make no "easting" and were concerned about being blown into the Tasman Sea. It wasn't comfortable, but we were moving.

Finally, the wind swung around to the East, allowing us to point toward our destination. Later, just 100 miles out from Opua, the wind died completely, and we turned on the motor for the first time. On a glassy sea we powered south, racing to reach Opua before night fall. Into the Bay of Islands we turned, greeted by the green hills of northern New Zealand and the most beautiful sunset we'd seen in months. A nice wind came up, so we rolled out the headsail to give us some extra speed.

It was perfect. We were as excited as kids the night before Christmas. With the last fading rays of the day, we pulled up to the custom's dock. We'd made the 1,100 mile trip in 7 days and 9 hours. Fantastic! We'd averaged 148 miles per day, or 6.2 knots. The next day at noon, ***Amazing Grace*** pulled up along side of us. Their 8 day passage was quite respectable; almost everyone else takes 9 or 10 days for the trip. We still haven't heard of any cruising boat that's matched our numbers. Sure it's nice to go fast and have a quick passage. But the real reason is to get off those waters as soon as possible and minimize the chance of an ugly storm. Two days after we arrived in Opua, the cruisers behind us were dealing with 30-35 knots, 12 foot seas, and generally nasty weather.>

 >

Opua

As every sailor from the Pacific Northwest can't help but remark, the Bay of Islands in New Zealand is just like Puget Sound. This is the first cool weather we've encountered since arriving in San Francisco, 14 months ago. The skies are often gray, and, yes, it rains a bit. We dig out the long pants, sweatshirts, and even undershirts. For the first time in 7 months we're not going barefoot on the boat. We even have a blanket on the bed. Burr! The temperature barely reaches 70 degrees during the "heat of day."

Our first impression of New Zealand, its similarity to the Pacific Northwest, was quickly overwhelmed by another, stronger impression . . . the friendliness of the Kiwi's. The health official (Ministry of Agriculture and Fish) was with us until 10 PM on a Friday night, making sure we weren't carrying any egg shells, honey, seeds,

fruit, or vegetables which might foul their disease-free country. He even checked our sneakers in the closet and had us clean off the mud from one pair. Just a government employee, working late on the weekend. He still had an hour's drive back to his home, yet he was as friendly as could be. Likewise for the harbor master, working seven days a week this time of year when all the "yachties" come to New Zealand.

The next surprise was that our mail was waiting for us, at the little post office at the end of the dock. And we thought we had a fast passage to Opua. The mail took only five days from Colorado. We welcomed the first laundromat since Apia with a gigantic sail bag full of clothes. Stores had a large selection of everything. After learning how to convert NZ$ per kilo to US$ per pound (just multiply by .3), we got used to the prices. They're just about the same as the US. Meat, and especially lamb, is a little cheaper, while chicken and vegetables are a little more expensive. The quality is good. They have the very best oranges I've ever tasted. Sweet and seedless Keri Keri oranges far better than anything from California or Florida. It's hard to decide whether or not I like them more than the pamplemousse in Polynesia.

One surprise that I could have done without occurred the second day in New Zealand, while we were still tied up to the custom's dock. I was at the bow, adjusting fenders and spring lines to handle the tides when I heard a splash behind me. I hadn't paid much attention to about five local Maori kids, 7-12 years old, who had been playing on the dock, running about. I thought the water was too cold for swimming. When I turned around, I saw a young boy thrashing about with a panicked look on his face. I quickly grabbed a line and held it out to him, and then towed him to a nearby ladder. He was really scared and surely would have drowned had I not been standing right there at the time he accidentally slipped off the dock. It's scary being that close to death. I hope he now has some incentive to learn how to swim this summer.

Earlier this month, Chuck had likewise fished a young girl out of the harbor in Suva after she'd slipped off the dock. Opua is the main port of entry for cruising sailors, and the harbor was packed with boats arriving for the hurricane season. It's almost like "old home week," as friends get together for the first time in months, after miles of sailing.

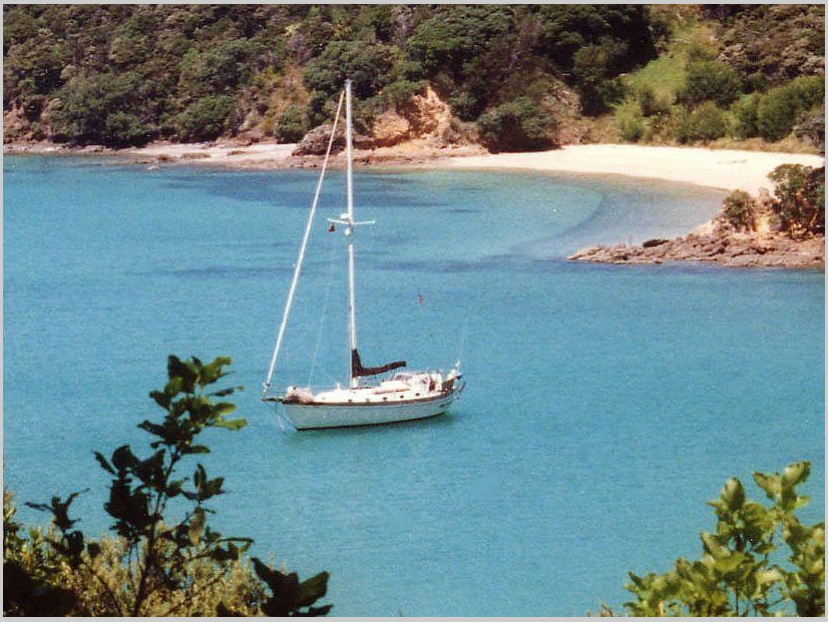
This year there were 170 people at the big "Turkey Day" feast put on by the Opua Cruising Club. To make non-Americans comfortable, they don't call it Thanksgiving, but the traditional food is the same. I don't think the Kiwi's eat cranberries, but the local stores were wise enough to stock up on a few pricey jars of Ocean Spray's finest, about $2.30 for a little 6 oz. jar. Although the clubhouse was very crowded, it was a fun "Turkey Day."The next morning we were greeted by the Custom's patrol boat, and their dope sniffin' dog. The dog gave our boat a thorough search and became very excited, wiggling his tail and pointing to the drawer that contains our sea-sick medication. After the pills and scopolamine patches were withdrawn, he was still wiggling. Then we found out what he was really after . . . our walrus mask. Candace bought a rubber walrus face mask before Halloween last year, and still dons it when things need to be lightened up. So once more the mask produced a good laugh.

We still maintain a weekly "sked" with Chuck on ***Carina***. While we're acclimating to the cooler and rainier weather here, it's getting pretty hot in Fiji. On the 28th of November, hurricane Sena passed just 25 miles south of Suva, and we were anxious to hear how they survived. He was anchored in a good spot, had everything tied down, and didn't have any problems. Several times there were gusts over 60 knots. How much higher he didn't know since his instruments don't measure any higher. While there are now 50-70 cruising boats here in Opua, there are only a dozen or fewer in Fiji. It's no wonder.

After completion of a few minor projects, we'll be heading south to Auckland. Our month in the Bay of Islands

has been fun. We've especially enjoyed spotting new birds which are unique to New Zealand. Our sea legs have been getting a good workout on long walks. When the weather's been "pookie," I've been programming the computer to play bridge. Later, when it's learned lots of fancy bidding conventions, I'll "teach" the computer how to play the hands a lot better than it does now. We've found a few other cruisers to play bridge with, and that's been fun.>

Bay of Islands



Peaceful anchorage - Bay of Islands

After reading about how great "the Bay" was supposed to be, we were eager to find out. It really is a great place. We spent seven weeks there. We kept trying to leave, but we'd head off to another island, spend several days, then head off to another. Then it was back to Russell or Opua to do laundry and stock up on food, and do it all over again.

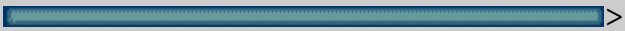
The weather was perfect, and we had to share our beautiful lagoons with only one or two other boats. Sometimes the hills would be populated with sheep and/or cattle. Other times, just the beautiful and unique flora of New Zealand; Pohotakawa trees in bloom with their bright red, feathery blossoms, Norfolk pines with perfect geometry stretching to the sky, Kiwi birds calling at night, gannets and shags diving for fish during the day. We'd go for walks or try to catch some fish. Somehow the time flew. The Bay is similar to the San Juans, with several small islands all protected from the swell of the open ocean. The only other area that we've been to that comes close to the Bay of Islands was Vava'u in Tonga. >

We would have stayed longer, but hoards of New Zealanders were about to leave Auckland for summer vacation. Nice bays with white sandy beaches that we have completely to ourselves are going to be inundated with perhaps 60 vacationing Kiwi boats, per lagoon. So on December 20th we headed south, dodging that pack heading north. We made it to Gulf Harbour Marina in two days. >

CIVILIZATION!

Laundromats, cleanliness, potable water, hardware stores and marine stores. Except for two weeks in Suva, we've spent every night for the last 16 months, swinging at the end of our anchor or sailing the high seas. Now we're tied up nice and snug at the dock. Best of all we don't have to get into the dinghy to go to shore. Except for

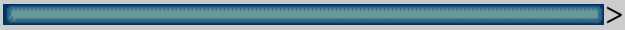
the marina cost, which is one-third of Seattle's, everything else in N.Z. costs, on the average, a little bit more than in "the States." Labor is much cheaper, but materials are more expensive. The Gulf Harbour Marina, an hour's drive north of Auckland, is only a few years old and quite nice. There is security 24 hours a day with the gate to the parking lot being raised and lowered by the security guard. The cost is only $125US per month, including all the 240 VAC/ 50 hertz electricity you can use. >



Hidden Charges

A neighboring boat said we could use his step down transformer to get 120 volts out of their 240 volt system. For some reason, I could only get 10.5 volts out of my battery charger, instead of the 13.8 - 14.1 volts needed. It took me several days to finally determine that the battery charger wasn't broken. Unfortunately, my battery charger needs 60 hertz, not 50 hertz. Most chargers aren't picky about 50 or 60 hertz, but mine is. It has a big 660 watt capacitor (6.9 micro-farads) which it uses for regulation. Somehow, the different frequency of the AC here confuses the voltage regulation of the charger. We just have one plug on board that's set up for direct AC. In Seattle I rewired our boat so that all the other AC plugs get their AC electricity indirectly, using our inverter and energy from the DC batteries.

So now we have all this "free" electricity at the marina, and only one plug. I could do some more rewiring, but it's not worth it since we only have a few AC appliances. The only thing we NEED shore power for is our microwave oven, and that need is pretty small. In Seattle we spent lots of money on a Webasto diesel heater for the boat, and it hasn't worked for two years. It was a low priority repair job since we were cruising in the tropics. With lots of help from a good friend, Rainer on ***Rolling Home***, we completely dismantled our heater and repaired it. It was a full day project. It's better than new now. Much of the problem can be traced to a mistake in installation. (The fuel pick-up tube was resting on the bottom of the diesel fuel tank, where it soon got clogged by any impurities from the fuel.) That's the kind of project I never would have considered before. I now feel competent to fix all systems on the boat, except the engine and the refrigerator. They're both working perfectly, so there's been no need to pick up that knowledge and experience, although I do all the maintenance of the diesel myself. On some mornings the temperature gets down to the fifties, so it's nice to turn on the heat. By midday the temperature is in the upper 70's. There has been extremely little rain, just a few sprinkles now and then, but the wind whips up to 30 knots about one afternoon per week. >

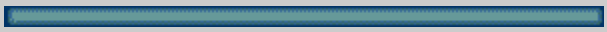


Driving in New Zealand

The Kiwi's are very friendly people, even though they speak funny and drive on the wrong side of the road. We bought a car last week. It's a 1981 Nissan Pulsar, four door hatch back with 132,000 kilometers on it (82,000 miles). Most second hand cars, like the one we bought, are bought and sold at weekend "car fairs" in Auckland. Four months' insurance only cost $40US. We'll sell our car before leaving, and probably spend about $200US total to use a car for four months.The slogan here among cruisers with cars is "Look right, Think left!" After a short while, I got used to the stick shift in my left hand, and driving on the left, but I still flip on the windshield (oops, windscreen) wipers with my left hand, instead of the turn signal with my right hand, whenever I want to turn. It gets confusing entering a traffic circle (round-about), spinning around clockwise, and trying to get off on the correct side of the road once you've figured out which road you want. Gas (petrol) costs $1.06NZ per liter.

That works out to about $2.40US per gallon, with 1$NZ = .60US. The Kiwi's are terrible tailgaters, and continually pass on hills and blind corners. It's scary just being on the road with them. I use to think that Boston had the worst drivers. >

Driving back from Auckland the other day, a large rock came flying out of the truck ahead of us, and hit the "windscreen." BANG! In a fraction of a second the entire windshield had broken into little pieces, making it impossible for me to see out. They use safety glass here, so it didn't shatter into the car. Laminated glass which is used in the U.S. would have only left a "bullet hole" in the windshield. Anyway, it cost about $150US to fix, and shook me up just a little. Of course the truck was long gone and we had to foot the entire bill. Luckily, we weren't hurt and a garage which replaces glass was only a mile or so away. Make that $350 for four months use of the the car.>



Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 16 - Touring New Zealand

NZ Sightseeing Trip

Now we're (well actually Candace is doing most of the work) busy planning a sightseeing trip around New Zealand. We're getting a train-bus-ferry pass that will allow us to go anywhere, and everywhere, around the country for two weeks. We won't be part of any tour group, but it will be hectic just the same. "If this is Tuesday, it must be Christchurch!" We'll spend several nights in hostels, our first nights not sleeping on the boat since June 1989. I'm really looking forward to the TranzAlpine train ride from Christchurch over the "southern Alps." We'll take lots of photos. We'll travel almost 2,000 miles. Since the roads are as wild as the NZ drivers, it seems highly likely that another broken windshield, hundreds of miles from any garage, could occur if we had to drive. Since I HATE long distance driving, I'm glad we're leaving the driving to them.

Of course we'll take the laptop computer. With many hours sitting on trains and busses, there will be lots of time for writing and playing/working on my bridge program. However, that presented a logistical problem . . . how to recharge the computer. The English boat next to us, ***Spray Venture***, has a 240 VAC to 120 VAC transformer, with a "Kiwi plug" (three angled prongs) on one end, and a US 120 double prong on the other. They used the transformer to run English 240 appliances on 120 current in Canada and the US. By just reversing the plugs, the transformer works fine here, converting 240 VAC to 120. After doing the rewiring and testing, I then discovered that the Toshiba computer's battery charger will accept either 120 or 240. My electric razor will accept ANYTHING from 12 volts DC to 240 volts AC. I didn't need any transformer. All I needed was an extension chord with a Kiwi male plug and a US female three hole socket. Of course that was easy enough to create.

Yesterday I purchased another battery pack for the Toshiba, so we should be able to "go" four hours per day, rather than two, then recharge at night. Meanwhile, we're completing a large checklist of maintenance items on the boat. Wax the hull, clean and polish all the stainless steel, engine oil, filters, lube, clean water tanks, reprovision lots of food for the return trip, regalvanize the chain and anchors, outboard motor maintenance, sail repairs, replace halyards and sheets, haul the boat for bottom painting, and so on and so on. We keep looking for our article "Bon Jour from Bora Bora" which we expect to be published in 48 North. Candace had an article published in Burgee Magazine (that small one out of southern Cal) and had three recipes accepted for publication by Cruising World. Don't know when they will print them. May even have a photo. Another boat on the dock, ***Footloose***, had some recipes published in the December '90 edition of CW.

Sunburn

You've read about the "hole" in the ozone layer. It's supposed to be larger over the South Pole than over the North Pole. I concur with the Kiwi's that ultra violet rays from the Sun seem to be MUCH stronger here, close to the South Pole, than any place. Even stronger than the tropics. It seems to be much easier to get sunburned here, and I have to watch it. The fair-skinned Kiwi's are really susceptible to burning, and they're extremely concerned with sunburn (rightfully so). Radios and newspapers continually warn people "put on sun block." I'm sure that other countries would eliminate freon immediately if they saw what's happening here, right now.

It's a Hard Life

Three days before our trip to the South Island, we had the boat hauled and stored "on the hard." It was time to repaint the bottom with anti-fouling and complete other out-of-the-water maintenance projects. This was last done 15 months ago in Santa Barbara. Two large straps are placed under the boat and then all 15 tons are lifted up, out of the water by a "TravelLift." Then the boat is driven over to a cradle and gently set down. Being a large boat yard, there were 20-25 other boats also on the hard, also being scraped, sanded, painted, and otherwise repaired.

Living "on the hard" is a royal pain. To board, you have to climb 15 feet up a rickety ladder. Since my battery charger can't handle the 50 hertz electricity here, and the diesel engine can't be run because it's water cooled, the only way to charge our batteries is with our solar panels. That provides sufficient energy for lights, radios, pumps, etc., but not enough to run the refrigerator. So we had to turn it off . . . a good opportunity to defrost and clean it. When the wind blows, the boat shakes just enough to make you think it might blow off the cradle. In summary, it's unnatural and uncomfortable. Due to my asthma, we decided it would be best to pay someone to sand and paint the bottom of ***Baba BarAnn***. While that work was being done, Candace and I left the boat for a two week sightseeing trip around New Zealand.

InterCity TravelPass

For $206US a piece, we purchased a 14 day TravelPass that allowed us to travel by bus, train, and ferry boat throughout New Zealand. We put together an ambitious itinerary that covered most of the country south of Auckland. Each night we stayed in a bed & breakfast lodge, average cost $37 US. On the first day, a friend drove us to Auckland where the train took us to Wellington. The next morning we took a ferry boat across Cook Strait to Picton on the South Island, and then the train to Christchurch. The weather was uncharacteristically beautiful that day, with bright sun, a gentle breeze, and 80 degree temperatures. The wind usually whistles through the Strait and can kick up some large waves. We were lucky.

Christchurch, with about 100,000 people, is NZ's third largest city. It's very clean and sylvan. There's a gigantic park in the center . . . with a golf course tucked in one corner, rugby and cricket playing fields, walking paths, and much open space, all kept in pristine condition. There are large trees everywhere, and a small river that meanders through downtown. We enjoyed a few hours in its large botanical gardens. A museum has a whole floor devoted to Antarctica (in NZ say "an-TAR-tick-ah," not "ant-ART-ika") with photos and exhibits of its discovery and exploration. Next we took the TranzAlpine train over Arthur's Pass and the "southern Alps" to the west side of the South Island. This trip would have been much more spectacular in the winter with lots of snow,

or in the spring with many bulging streams and rivers, but in the summer it was much like driving over the Cascade mountains.

By this time in the trip we had seen at least a million sheep running away from the on-coming train. There were also thousands of deer which are farmed for consumption in NZ, Germany, and a few other countries. Also lots of dairy cows and beef on the hoof. Then we hopped on a bus for the trip down to Fox Glacier. Narrow roads, many single lane bridges, beautiful rata trees with their red blossoms, and virtually uninhabited landscape. The entire South Island has fewer than one million people. The weather was perfect when we arrived at Fox Glacier late in the day. Unfortunately, the next day it rained heavily, thwarting our plans to walk on the glacier. With its 225 inches of rain per year (that's almost 6,000 millimeters for those keeping score metrically, like they do here) I suppose it was inevitable. We saw many different birds, like the large New Zealand pigeon, paradise shell ducks, several spur wing plovers, and dozens of black swans. We couldn't stay and wait for the sun.

Our schedule was tight. In the morning we headed for Dunedin, but not before Mount Cook revealed its majestic summit. The long, 10 hour trip to Dunedin was surprisingly quite enjoyable and informative. I was dreading such a long bus ride, but the time flew by. The bus drivers (we changed busses once) provided a dialogue almost continually over a loud speaker, pointing out interesting sights and filling in the history of the area. Numerous waterfalls, narrow bridges crossing high, rocky river beds that overflow with water and rocks during frequent rain storms. Beautiful lakes, and mountains that are packed solid with broad leaf trees. After crossing Haast Pass we slowly descended into a dry but fertile valley, much like the Wenatchee/Lake Chelan area. The bus stopped at a fruit store where we bought some plums, peaches, nectarines, fresh apricots, green gages (like plums but green and a little crisper, less sweet) and some early apples. Yum. Then we passed a new hydroelectric dam that had just been completed. They haven't yet flooded the area (for many miles) behind the dam. In the late afternoon we entered Dunedin, NZ's fifth largest city at 85,000, which is noted for its Scottish traditions and architecture.

Dunedin

The next morning, Sunday, we watched a motorcycle race on the city streets and then stopped at the Dunedin Bridge Club where a large tournament was being held. About 200 people were in one room playing duplicate bridge, but it wasn't the least bit noisy. Instead of speaking the bids, they write them down on a pad in the center of the table. The bidding proceeds smoothly, and there is never a need to ask for a review of the bidding - it's all right there in front of you. All in all, it's a much better system than bidding "out loud" or using bidding boxes like they do in the highest level duplicate tournaments in the US. They allowed us to "kibitz" several hands, and we talked to the players between rounds. After lunch we joined a bus tour out to the end of the Otago Peninsula.

It was a forty minute drive on a narrow, twisty road, before we arrived at the Albatross Colony. This is the only place in the world where albatross breed within close proximity to civilization. A chick is raised by both parents until it is 7-8 months old, at which time it weighs more than 25 pounds and is 50% heavier than its parents. After several days of flapping practice, one day it noses into the wind and takes off. After 3-4 years at sea, it returns to Otago Peninsula, to find a mate and hopefully raise a chick. The albatross usually stays with the same mate for life, reuniting every other year at the hatching grounds. The oldest known albatross at Otago was more than 60 years old. Around 20-30 show up each breeding season.

Yellow-eyed Penguins

The bus tour then went to the other side of the peninsula to see several dozen large seal lions . . . old stuff for us. The real treat was seeing the rare yellow eyed penguins who were returning to their nests after a day fishing. They would ride a wave in and then start walking slowly up the beach to their nests in the sand dunes.

Next came the highlight of the tour . . . a stop at MacGruders' farm. About six penguins were being raised at the farm, hand fed by the MacGruders, until they can be released to the sea. We could actually pet some of them. They were all yellow eyed penguins except for one little blue penguin like we'd seen in the Bay of Islands, and one Magellenic penguin. The latter came from South America and must have jumped off a cruise ship in Dunedin's harbor, where it was discovered. It is now a permanent "house pet" of the MacGruders.

The next morning we spent a few hours in Dunedin's Museum before taking an afternoon train to Christchurch. The museum had an excellent exhibit of Pacific Islands native cultures from the Marquesas to Papa New Guinea. On the next day we retraced our steps up to Picton and then the ferry to Wellington. Waiting for us at our bed and breakfast in Wellington was a fax from John and Sherry Weinberg, bridge playing friends from Seattle. What a surprise! We contacted them by phone and arranged to meet in Rotorua, as they were heading south while we were heading north. We spent the next day "doing" the museums of Wellington and shopping. Then it was off to Rotorua, a touristy area known for its hot springs, geysers, thermal pools and Maori cultural center.

Rotorua

The next day we toured Rotorua with the Weinbergs. First we went to the Agrodome for a very enjoyable and informative show, primarily about sheep farming. Sherry milked a cow and Candace bottle fed some lambs, as the husbands dutifully took snapshots. The skills of the sheep dogs were very impressive. Then we went to the "Thermal Reserve" to view the bubbling mud. Wow did it smell like rotten eggs. In a specially darkened house we saw a Kiwi . . . our first in New Zealand. We had heard plenty of them at night in the Bay of Islands, but we'd never seen one. Then we went to the obligatory native Maori dancing and singing show, which was a bit more professional and interesting than any other we'd seen in the Pacific. Some more botanical garden/museum strolling before dinner and then we even had time for several hands of bridge before turning in for the day.

The Weinbergs headed south the next morning while we headed toward Auckland, via the Waitamo Caves for glow worm watching (not worth the time) and an aviary. Two tired travelers pulled into the Auckland bus terminal that evening. We'd traveled about 4,000 miles in 13 days. Counting lodging, transportation, meals, snacks, tickets and museum donations we spent a total of $1,200US. Quite economical. We'd seen as much of the country as anyone can in a quick two week tour, met many people on the trains, buses, B & B's, and learned much about N.Z.'s history and heritage. For others contemplating a quick tour of NZ, we wouldn't hesitate to recommend the Intercity TravelPass - bed & breakfast approach rather than renting a car or choosing a prepackaged tour.

Back to Work

Arriving back at the boat, which was still on the hard, we had to apply one more coat of bottom paint before she could go back in the water. The few minor blisters had been repaired and ***Baba BarAnn*** was back in top shape, above and below the waterline. Our primary anchor was regalvanized, (the chain didn't need to be), the windlass was serviced and repainted, some minor repairs were completed on the staysail. We even sanded and put two new coats of varnish on all the inside floors. Of course filters and oil were changed on the diesel engine. Some of the lines were replaced, rigging checked, etc. We were "chompin' on the bit" to get moving. But the hurricane season still had a month to run. So we left for a short shakedown cruise to some of the islands in the Auckland area.

Kawau Island

Just 15 miles north of Whangaparaoa is Auckland's most popular cruising destination, Kawau Island. With a strong westerly wind we quickly sailed there. Even before setting our anchor, a motor boat sped out to meet us. "Have you filled in the census forms?" That was the night that New Zealanders stand up and are counted. Even though we were tourists, we got counted along with all the Kiwi's. The next day we met the first of many Seattleites. Approximately 50 members of the Seattle Yacht Club were visiting NZ as part of a reciprocal exchange with the Royal Akarana Yacht Club of Kawau Island. We were invited to the big BBQ, social event and were treated almost like celebrities. They seemed impressed that we had sailed from Seattle, rather than flown like they had. They took pictures of us and treated us royally. The adulation seemed a bit unnatural, but still nice.

Then we sailed to Great Barrier Island, 30 miles to the East. It was a bit scary, dodging reefs and charted rocks just below the surface. But the anchorages were nice. We took long "nature" walks, and enjoyed some great weather. I even went swimming. At 62-65 degrees it was a bit chilly, but someone had to cut away my fishing line that I had cleverly wrapped around the prop! After getting my heart beating again, it wasn't toooo bad. We both enjoyed Great Barrier Island and Kawau Island. It was nice to be rocking at the end of an anchor line, rather than tied up to a marina wharf. At that point the outboard motor for the dinghy had quit for the millionth time. Cleaning the carburetor would keep it going for only a few minutes. It was time to head back to "civilization." Upon returning to Gulf Harbour Marina, I sent a fax to West Marine Products. Within 36 hours I received a return message that they were sending me a new carburetor. Let's hope they come through.

Show Me the Way to Go Home

After spending the hurricane season in New Zealand, all North American cruisers are faced with the same dilemma . . . where next. Those from Europe have already committed themselves to a circumnavigation, so they don't have a choice. For others the choices are: continue around the world, spend another year in the South Pacific and delay the decision, or head back to the west coast. Instead of sailing downwind from east to west, it was now time to head back the wrong way, against the wind and waves. It was time to pay the piper for the

relatively easy sailing we had coming across the Pacific Ocean. Since leaving Mexico, ***Baba BarAnn*** had tacked, in the open ocean, only a handful of times. We were experts in jibing, but tacking through head winds and large waves was a skill we had rarely employed for the last year and one-half. The question then became, what's the best route back to our home port of Seattle. There are tomes written about the "milk run" from east to west. What about from west to east?

Northwest Via Japan?

Because of the north Pacific high pressure system, it is impossible to arrive on the west coast directly via the south. Thus the first decision concerning our route back to the west coast was whether or not to stop in Hawaii. We toyed, quite briefly, with the idea of sailing to Japan, and then making the long loop back across the north Pacific, close to the Aleutian chain of islands in Alaska. This was rejected primarily because of the long, typhoon riddled passage necessary to get to Japan. Prudent passage planning to the orient would require leaving NZ in March and then going almost non-stop, 6,000 miles to Japan. The last leg back to Seattle, 4,200 miles, would then have to commence by August at the latest. While a trip to Japan would be a nice juicy carrot, it was too far away, and we wouldn't have enough time to savor it. Scratch that.

Northwest Via Marshall Islands

Our good friends, Chuck and Bev on ***Carina***, chose to visit Tuvalu, Kiribati, and the Marshall Islands before making a long, 4,000 mile, clock-wise loop directly back to their home port of Seward, Alaska. This decision allows them to see several places which are off the beaten path. It also allows Chuck to return to places he'd been to during an earlier Army tour. One disadvantage of this path is the long last leg, which would be even longer to Seattle. Partially because one of our goals was to avoid the really long passages, we didn't choose this route.

Northwest Via Hawaii

Like 95% of the sailors heading back to the west coast from the South Pacific, we decided to make the trip via the Hawaiian Islands. Arrival in early June, with departure in early August, would enable us to see most of Hawaii during a six to eight week visit, and set up the reasonable, 2,400 mile passage back to Seattle during optimum weather. The earlier we arrive in June, the lower our probability of encountering the nasty after-effects of hurricanes and tropical storms emanating from Mexico, and the longer we get to stay in Hawaii. With that decided, the question then becomes, how do we get to Hawaii by June?

Hawaii via Tahiti

The "traditional" route from New Zealand to Hawaii is via Tahiti. This approach gets all the necessary "easting" completed by Papeete, and sets up a relatively easy beam reach straight to Hawaii, with favorable winds all the way. For us, the disadvantages of this approach were: 1. The long, passage to Papeete. While the rhomb line is 2,300 miles, the necessary counter-clockwise loop adds an additional 200 or more miles, making this a 22-24 day passage. 2. We had already spent two and one-half months in the Society Islands last year and wanted new scenery. 3. We didn't want to hassle with the $850 per person bond which needs to be posted and then collected by sailors visiting French Polynesia.

Hawaii via Samoa

Most sailors heading from New Zealand to Hawaii go via Samoa. The advantage of this approach is the chance for another "pass" at Fiji and Tonga, en route to Pago Pago and/or Apia. From Samoa, the path then leads to Fanning Island in Kiribati and then to Hawaii. The advantages of this approach are the short passages and variety of anchorages. We did not elect this route because: 1. We wanted to avoid beating into the wind as much as possible. The passage from Fanning to Hawaii is reported to be difficult. We'd seen the large seas behind us when we were leaving Bora Bora, and we wanted to avoid them on the way back. 2. The allure of visiting new anchorages was greater than revisiting old ones. Not being scuba divers, we can't enjoy one of the major attractions of Fiji and Tonga. While we had stopped at three Cook Islands: Suvorov, Nassau, and Puka Puka, we had only spent one night at anchor due to our taro delivery mission. This had whetted our appetite to see more of the Cooks. 3. We wanted to minimize time spent sailing in the reef-strewn areas of the Pacific. A close encounter with Mbengga Reef, south of Suva, convinced us of the dangers inherent in Fiji and other places with numerous coral reefs.

Hawaii via Penrhyn

Although not unique, our route back to Hawaii via Rarotonga and Penrhyn is rarely chosen. The advantages of this approach are: 1. This passage to Rarotonga is projected to have fewer head winds and is much shorter than the trip to Papeete. The "traditional" NZ-Papeete leg is 50% longer than the 1,750 mile trip to "Raro." 2. The route to Hawaii allows a convenient stopover in Penrhyn. This breaks up a very long passage into two shorter legs, and provides the opportunity to visit the lovely, large lagoon of Penrhyn. 3. A few weeks in both Raro and Penrhyn will hopefully slake our thirst to visit the Cook Islands. During the taro delivery, we talked to a few people on the radio that we were now looking forward to meeting personally. Raro will be our first landfall where we will have acquaintances waiting to see us. The supposed disadvantage of this approach is the greater propensity for head winds on the leg from Penrhyn to Hawaii. This would certainly be true if we were to stop at Christmas or Fanning Islands, en route to Hawaii, but we don't plan to give up our easting. The Penrhyn-Hawaii leg, at 1900 miles, is 400 miles shorter than the Papeete-Hawaii leg. The overall distance from New Zealand to Hawaii is 4,400 miles via Raro and 4,750 via Papeete.

Final Preparations

Our 5 month stopover in New Zealand is rapidly coming to an end. We're rested and ***Baba BarAnn*** is in great shape. Next on the agenda is a 1,700 mile passage to Rarotonga in the Cook Islands. It may be a very rough trip as we'll be heading Northeast, often against the wind and waves. I anticipate fairly strong winds, and hope to make the trip in 13 or 14 days, but of course it's hard to predict. Just a year ago today we had crossed the equator, in route to the Marquesas. Our sailing skills have improved substantially since then.

Last weekend the marina put on a big BBQ as a going away party for all the international yachts here. They had lots of free beer, four sheep turning on the spit, plus dozens of "snarlers" - the standard Kiwi fare for such an event. Snarlers in NZ are the same as "snags" in Australia, "bangers" in GB, and sausage to us. Someone who knows how to make a good sausage could make a fortune here. After eating lamb every week since coming here, I think I'm just about "lambed out." The BBQ was a nice touch by the marina, and it was good to have a farewell party. Farewell to the many people we'd met at Gulf Harbour, and more importantly, farewell to the many, many cruising friends we'd met and sailed with for the last year or two

Rainier & Heidi from Rolling Home

About one-third were continuing their circumnavigation, another third were returning to Tonga-Fiji for another year and the remainder had other plans. It was something like graduation, knowing your lives were now heading in different directions, and you'd probably never again see some close friends.With just a few days left before our passage to Raro, I'm realizing how much I'll miss all the friends we've made in the last year. The BBQ brought it home that we'll be saying "bon voyage" to many people who will be heading out in opposite directions. Some of them we met in Mexico, some in French Polynesia, but they've all been close friends for a year or more. There are approximately 60 "international" yachts here at Gulf Harbour Marina. A little more than 50% are from the USA, with Germany, Canada, England - in that order - making up most of the rest.

Leaving New Zealand

Provisioning for our trip was a challenge because there would be very limited supplies in Raro, and none in Penrhyn. Candace bought a huge box of Spartan apples, 175 of them, for $30NZ. That works out to ten cents, U.S., per apple. Also large boxes of tomatoes and onions. We'll eat more than the required "apple a day." When the tomatoes start to ripen, she'll make salsa and great gazpacho. We won't have any lamb on board. Selling our car turned out to be quite easy. Another cruiser who was staying in New Zealand for two more months decided to buy it. For the 3.5 months we had the car, it cost $340 US, plus gas and a new windshield. Not too bad. We never had a problem with the car.

Next stop . . . Rarotonga!

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 17 - Southern Cook Islands and Hawaii

The Passage to Raro

We watched the weather closely, and decided to leave NZ on April 19, shortly after a low pressure system passed south of us. This gave us good south-westerly winds for the initial tack toward Rarotonga. The first full day we put 152 miles under the keel. On the third day, with continuing rough seas, and before we'd really gotten our sea legs, the head decided to clog up, just like it had on the passage from Mexico to the Marquesas. Once again we had to extract all the hoses and clean out the hardened salt crystals. It took every ounce of stamina to complete the job.

The winds increased to 30-35 knots, with gusts to 40, and swung around to the northeast. Now we had waves crashing over the bow. ***Baba BarAnn*** would go flying off the top of the even numbered waves, actually getting airborne for about 1.5 seconds. Then, she would crash in the trough with a bone rattling BAM, and get covered up by the odd number waves. Green water would flow over the decks, but since we were healed over quite a bit, the water just continued off the leeward side. This process continued, hour after hour, for two straight days. It was brutal.The Monitor windvane steered flawlessly, and the GPS satellite navigation system told us precisely where we were.

We poked a head out of the cabin every now and then to look around, and then quickly ducked back into our safe and dry cabin. It wasn't very comfortable, but we were making good progress. Then I heard some water sloshing at the bow, in the chain locker. With all the water on deck, lots had gotten into the chain pipe and down into the chain locker. This is normally not a problem, since it drains into the bilge . . . except when the drain is plugged. Several times during the night we had to bail water out of the chain locker.

In the morning, we hove to in 27 knots, let out our anchor and all 350 feet of chain into the Pacific (about 500 pounds total), and cleaned out the chain locker. Luckily we didn't catch any whales, while trolling with our heavy gear! The electric windlass balked at hauling up all that weight, and in fact tripped the circuit breaker once, due to the heavy load, but we got it all back into the chain locker. Just like catching a big marlin by pulling back, and then reeling in when you rock forward, I reeled in the anchor only when the bow was going down, as we rocked in the heavy seas. Never a dull moment.

Candace was having continued problems with seasickness, so after the third day, when her first scopolamine patch was "used up," she put on a second, half patch. That didn't help, and in fact made her much sicker. For almost the entire 14 day passage to Raro, Candace was very sick. We believe that she had a bad reaction to scopolamine. The glands behind her ears, where the patch was stuck, were swollen and sore. The skin where the first patch was placed was quite red. It looked like a Japanese flag with the red circle against her white skin. Perhaps some of the problem was due to cutting the second patch in two, but I think not.

One of the enjoyable diversions during the passage was checking into the Kerikeri Radio net each night, on 4445.0 MHz. John, the net controller, is the friendliest, most pleasant person I've ever heard. After we give him a report similar to the report given to the Seafarers' Net, he then gives us our unique weather report. We might be 500 miles from the nearest boat or land, and yet we have a weather forecast which is tailored just to our location. He warns of weather fronts, telling us from where they'll be coming and when. He tells us what the

wind conditions will be the next day. If we don't check in for two days in a row, he'll notify the New Zealand authorities to send out a search plane. Fantastic! We also could follow the progress of our friends, most of whom were heading to Tonga or Fiji. For some reason we have a very good radio signal, so we could help ***Elenoa*** out by relaying their weaker signal to Kerikeri radio. And it's all for FREE. I believe he charges New Zealanders $20 per year, but for foreign vessels there's no charge.

Rarotonga

We averaged 125 miles per day on the 14 day passage to Rarotonga. Marcia Davock, author of the best cruising guide to the Society Islands, met us at the dock shortly after we arrived in Raro. Although she didn't know us, we had seen her before, at the Seattle boat show. Now she works for a tour promotion company. She and her husband Tom put their name on the list at Shilshole for moorage before leaving on a circumnavigation. Just as they arrived back in Seattle seven years later, their name had finally struggled its way up to number one on the list. I've always envied their perfect timing. In hopes of similar good fortune, we had placed our name on the bottom on the Shilshole waiting list just before we left on our trip.

The Rarotonga harbor has one of the worst reputations. It's well earned. There is no protection from the North. About once a week a storm from the north would send large swells into the harbor, making it quite uncomfortable and dangerous. We got tucked into a little nook in the north west corner of the small harbor, and had as much protection as anyone, but it was still bad. Nevertheless, we really enjoyed our stay in Raro. We went to the newspaper office and picked up copies of the Cook Island News that told of our "taro route" last August. We were in four different editions . . . front page twice.

We rented a 100 cc motor scooter and zipped around the island. Went to several nice restaurants, and a nice beach on the southeast side of the island. Even on a small scooter, you can ride completely around the island of Rarotonga in just a few hours. After striking up a conversation with some Kiwi's, we found out about a duplicate bridge tournament and went over to watch. Teams from Australia, New Zealand, Tahiti, Moorea, and Rarotonga were competing in a week long event. I was asked to sit in for two matches (eight hands each) during a team of four event. With a good partner, "my team" won the first match 34-2 and then lost the second 14-7. It was tons of fun for me. A few days later, Candace and I played. It was her first duplicate tournament. We finished next to last, but had a good time.

The local Puka Puka community invited us to dinner in order to thank us for the taro delivery. As before in Puka Puka, there were many formal speeches. We saw Tom Wichman, our main radio contact during the trip, and thoroughly enjoyed our visit. He now works in the Energy Department, primarily setting up solar panel and massive battery systems for the various Cook islands. He proudly showed us his "piggery." It can easily collect pig excrement which then gets converted into methane gas, good for cooking. Tom is one of those rare individuals who has good ideas, and follows up on them. He's helped islands start pearl shell farms. He worked in a hospital and determined that there was a need for embalming services in Rarotonga in case foreign tourists should die here. With no support from the government, he went to New Zealand and learned "the trade" himself. Then he set up the first embalming service on the island. Now he's interested in desalination to provide water for some of the islands. We proudly showed him ***Baba BarAnn***'s solar panels and water maker.

Tom Wichman

Rarotonga is also the home of Arnold, ZK1DB, known throughout the South Pacific for providing weather information to mariners via ham radio. Arnold Gibbons works at the airport and picks up weather bulletins from Fiji, Papeete, and Honolulu. Then, everyday, seven days a week, he reads these weather bulletins over the ham radio on a voluntary basis. I think that's the highlight of his life. Like Tom Wichman, Arnold was very friendly and likable.

Arnold Gibbons

In Raro we enjoyed meeting Paul and Sue from ***Elenoa*** and Mike and Linda from ***Desert Star***. We also met a cruiser from Italy. He was thirtysomething, had sailed from Genoa, and caught the very first fish in his life just a few weeks before. And I thought I was a terrible fisherman. (Careful readers of this log will notice the absence of boring doggerel about all the fish caught and consumed by the author.) With half a dozen sailing boats in Raro's harbor, along with the usual complement of fishing boats and a large tanker or two, we thought the harbor was "full," especially when the northerly swell started rolling in. We heard that more than twenty sailing boats crowd in later in the year. That has to be suicidal. While we were there ***Desert Star*** had its cap rails chewed up very badly while heaving up and down against the dock during a storm. That was the tail end of a cyclone that had previously done some damage to boats we knew who were on their way to Tonga.

Penrhyn Island

We enjoyed Rarotonga and ended up staying a few days more than we had anticipated. After topping off the diesel and water tanks and getting as much fresh produce as we could, we headed off on May 16 for Penrhyn Island, 750 miles to the north. The winds were relatively light, and we ended up motoring a lot more than usual. For the six day passage we motored 28 hours. I erred in judgment by trying to sail on the rhomb line to Penrhyn. When we had winds from the south and west during the first part of the trip, I should have headed east. That would have made the last two days much easier when the strong eastern, and northeastern trade winds filled in. As it was, we had a difficult time getting back to the east once we were blown to the west of the rhomb line.

The trip to Raro was a little slower, and more difficult, because we followed the accepted practice of getting our easting in. Now, on the trip to Penrhyn, we were buffeted by head winds when we failed to get our easting in while we could. Damned if you do, and damned if you don't. Approximately 550 people live in Penrhyn. There's a large circular lagoon, about eight miles in diameter, and two villages. After checking in with Customs, we heard that there was an epidemic; flu or dengue fever they didn't know which. Almost everyone in the larger village was sick. The other village was just recovering. Tom Wichman had told us in Raro that six people had recently died from dengue fever in the Cook Islands. We knew some cruisers who got the disease in the Marquesas last year, and we knew it was about the last thing we wanted! With the steady trade winds blowing, we felt fairly safe

on the boat from mosquito bites. A contagious flu, on the other hand, could get us from any contact with the locals.

What a shame, we could spend only a few minutes on land. We were nervous and could not afford to be sick. A "MediVac" plane took one very sick individual to the hospital in Raro. A boat with many doctors and medical aides was on its way to Penrhyn. We're a bit peeved that the authorities in Raro hadn't warned us in advance. Luckily for us there was another cruising boat at Penrhyn and we enjoyed meeting Foster and Sally from ***FellowShip***. They had just cruised in Alaska and Hawaii - future destinations for us, and we had just been where they were heading. So both couples had good information to share.

Passage to Honolulu

After one week, Candace had spent perhaps 30 minutes on Penrhyn, and I had spent maybe three hours. It was time to head north to Hawaii. Foster had convinced us that the more difficult beating necessary to fetch Hilo was not worth it. We agreed with his suggestion to head for Honolulu, about 150 miles west of Hilo. On May 28 we checked out with customs on Penrhyn and headed out the coral pass. Ahead of us was a 1,900 mile passage that required crossing the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) (a.k.a "doldrums"), and much beating into the wind and waves.

The sailing "game plan" was an easy one. Just stay on a starboard tack and head as close to the wind as you can stand. With easterly winds south of the equator, we could head 30 degrees true. As we headed north the wind gradually moved northward, causing us to curve to the west. We had hoped to get as far east as 150 degrees west longitude. Unfortunately, the winds swung to the north earlier than expected, and the furthest east we could attain was 153 degrees west, at 6 degrees north latitude.

The winds generally came from 030-045 degrees, forcing us to stay close hauled all the way to Honolulu. Never did we see any winds south of 045 after crossing the ITCZ, despite the pilot charts predictions of ENE winds (067 degrees) MOST of the time. From the above you can surmise that our passage to Hawaii was a tough, wet journey. ***Baba BarAnn*** would beat into the waves, causing water to crash on the top of the boat every minute, day after day. Often we would fly off a wave, with the bow airborne, and then come smashing down in the trough. BAM! More water crashing on the boat. Envision a 30,000 pound boat flying.

With such rough conditions, there's not much you can do except lie in your bunk. We would listen to tapes, and talk to people on the ham radio. But otherwise it was very boring and uncomfortable. Of course the boat was healed over at an acute angle. I have a "lee cloth" to keep me from falling out of bed. Once a huge wave smashed into us, throwing me against the lee cloth so hard that it tore out one of the grommets. The grommets that were affixed to a double fold with four pieces of canvas held, but a single fold, with two pieces of canvas, wasn't strong enough.

The passage was not only tough on the crew, but also the boat. Some lines were ruined, the headsail had the Ultra Violet Protection covering just about completely torn off, and the Autohelm electric autopilot stopped working. The latter could have been a big problem. While sailing, the Monitor does all the steering. But when there isn't enough wind to sail, we turn on the motor and rely on the Autohelm to steer. Luckily, the wind held, and we ended up motoring, and thus hand steering, for only four hours on the entire trip. Two exhausted sailors

nosed ***Baba BarAnn*** into Ala Wai Harbor, near Waikiki, in just under 14 days. We averaged 137 miles per day for 1925 miles.

Hawaii Yacht Club

After checking in with customs, immigration, and the health department, we moved over to the Hawaii Yacht Club. They have a tradition of allowing overseas yachts to tie up at their dock for two weeks, for a reasonable fee. For the first time since leaving San Diego, we could plug into electricity and charge the batteries. True luxury! No more running the engine 45-60 minutes per day. We started to suffer culture shock as we ate some great pizza for lunch in a chilly, air conditioned restaurant. Cars everywhere, traffic lights, hoards of people (mainly Japanese tourist), activity galore. Welcome back to the USA.

While in Honolulu we repaired a sail and replaced some lines that were damaged in the last passage. We also mailed the electric autopilot to a repair shop in Seattle. When we picked up our mail, first in more than two months, there was a nice check from 48 North, for the article and photos we'd sent them last fall from New Zealand. Our letter to 48 North must have gone by boat, since it didn't arrive in Seattle until March. The May issue of "48" included a full 10 page article, as well as a dozen or so pictures. There also was a check from Sail magazine for the article that Candace wrote on the "Taro Route." Finally, the June issue of Cruising World included some recipes from Candace, and a picture of ***Baba BarAnn*** under sail. It was a picture taken by Martin on ***Orca*** during the Tonga-Fiji passage, when we passed him under full sail in the middle of the ocean.

In Honolulu we met several new cruisers who had sailed over from Mexico, and were reacquainted with some who had left French Polynesia the prior year to spend the winter in Hawaii. Several of these cruisers suggested that we would enjoy sailing back, upwind, to Maui and Lanai, but we were still tired from the last passage and, frankly, we were kind of "sailed-out." We elected to sail downwind, over to Hanalei Bay on the north end of Kauai, after a short stay at Pokie Bay on the west side of Oahu.

Hanalei Bay

Puff the Magic Dragon sure knows how to pick 'em. Hanalei is one of most beautiful anchorages in the Pacific, and it's on the hands-down most beautiful island in the Pacific. Forget all of French Polynesia or anywhere else that we'd been. Kauai is the most beautiful and, when we were there, had the best weather. Never too hot with temperatures 75-80, virtually no bugs, very little rain, and what there was only came at night, just like in Camelot. Steep mountains, awesome Waimea Canyon, white sandy beaches, and flowering trees everywhere.

Hanalei Bay from the helicopter

A mile offshore I could smell the flowers. Kauai was also the cleanest island we'd been to. The streets and beaches were extremely trash-free. As an added bonus, several large turtles, with shells up to two feet in diameter, swim around the bay each morning.

The beautiful Na Pali Coast

We rented a car for several days to see Waimea Canyon and visit the rest of the island. A local tourist newspaper mentioned a bridge tournament in Lihue, so we checked into a hotel for the night and then went over to play some bridge. One of the players gave us a free certificate for a night's lodging at the fancy Sheraton in Poipu. We also heard about another duplicate game on Saturday nights in Princeville, just three miles from Hanalei. So the next night we were back playing bridge again. We were invited to two more bridge games, as well as dinner. We were spending more time on shore than on the boat.

Before "using" our free night at the Sheraton, we splurged on a 60 minute sightseeing helicopter trip around Kauai. Awesome! You might guess that Candace and I had a fun time in Kauai. We could easily enjoy returning to Kauai for a long vacation.

We consistently heard from the other cruisers in Hanalei Bay that this was by far the best anchorage in the Hawaiian Islands. That was nice to hear since we missed seeing most of Hawaii. Now it was time to prepare for the long trip back to the Seattle. The autopilot appears to be fixed and everything is in working order. Ahead of us lies a 2,600 mile passage, over and around the Pacific high pressure system. Sure hope our heater works!

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Chapter 18 - The Long Passage Home

Around the Pacific High

We left Hanalei Bay on July 15. Our first four days were hard on the wind, similar to the tough sailing we'd had from New Zealand all the way to Hawaii. When were we ever going to get some easy sailing? While beating to weather, the boat heels over at a sharp angle. You have to hang on to a grab rail or something else to walk even one step on the boat. Slamming into waves, it's easy to get thrown around the boat, picking up bruises. Life is darn uncomfortable on board.

To prevent falling out of bed, we constructed "lee clothes." A lee cloth is made from canvas, with the bottom side through bolted to the main salon settee where I sleep. The top side has three grommets and connects to the grab rail above the settee with three strong lines. I was concerned that the "weak link" in this arrangement might be the grab rail. However, I designed it to withstand significant stress. I'm sure two people could chin themselves on the grab rail without breaking it. On the passage from Penrhyn to Hawaii, ***Baba BarAnn*** fell off a good size wave and hit with a smash. I was thrown against the lee cloth so hard that one of the grommets ripped through the canvas. So I reinforce the grommets. Now, on the trip north from Hawaii, another wave threw me against the lee cloth. The grab rail, grommets, and canvas held just fine. Unfortunately, the settee is no longer firmly attached to the floor! Can you image the amount of stress on the entire system from such a wave?Fixing the settee is just another project that awaits our arrival in Seattle.

I also need to fix the autopilot (Autohelm 6000). Something in the gimbaled fluxgate compass goes wacky whenever we hit rough conditions. So that means that we have to steer by hand when motoring in anything but placid conditions. The biggest problem is the roller furling drum. It gradually became more difficult to rotate. Ten days into the passage it had become completely unworkable. After that we furled and unfurled our headsail the old fashion way . . . with a halyard.

During the first four days of the passage we really moved, averaging 158 miles per day. Then we hit a moderate sized storm that literally knocked the wind out of our sails. After hoving to for a few hours we found ourselves wallowing in the middle of a large high pressure system, without wind. For the next seven days we limped along, getting more frustrated by the minute, hoping for wind. Our daily mileage ranged from 125 down to an all time low of 58 miles on July 27. Not only were the winds light to non-existent, but they always came from our destination, the northeast. Turning on the engine wasn't the solution, since we can only carry enough fuel to motor for perhaps 600 miles. We still had 2,000 miles left. Due to the broken autopilot, motoring would require the most heinous, boring, and tiring task for a cruiser . . . hand steering. Finally we got lucky. On July 30, the fifteenth day of the passage, we finally got some wind from the right direction. After beating for 1,600 miles, we could finally point ***Baba BarAnn*** at the west coast of Vancouver Island and sail downwind.

Traffic and Terns

Unlike any other passage we'd had, this one included traffic. After the first week, we spotted about one large commercial vessel per day. Usually we could talk to them on the VHF. Most the boats had radar but didn't have it turned on. They relied on visual spotting of boats to avoid collisions. We kept the radar on twenty-four hours a day, with an eight mile alarm ring. Whenever a boat came within eight miles a "beep, beep, beep" would warn us. Between fog and high seas, visual spotting of boats, at least from our low vantage point, was quite unreliable. Besides boat traffic, there was plenty of radio traffic.

We had scheduled daily radio contacts ("skeds") with several boats. We'd commiserate about the lack of wind or its direction, pass lots of weather information, and discuss equipment problems. Generally the skeds provided a little more structure to each day, and reduced the boredom inherent in a long passage. One night I tried to contact John on Kerikeri Radio, 4.445 Mhz, in New Zealand. Amazingly, he could hear me, though I was 6,000 miles away, just off the Canadian coast. Atmospheric conditions normally limit transmissions on four megahertz to 1,000 miles or so. A few days later on the Pacific Maritime Net, we heard from Sally on ***FellowShip***. That was the only other boat with us in Penrhyn. Even though they were now in Tonga, they too had heard us talking on Kerikeri Radio.

One day we spotted a Japanese glass float, the size of a basketball. We scooped it up in a fishing net, cleaned off a hundred goose neck barnacles, and now have ourselves a nice conversation piece. I can't imagine that many of these heavy glass balls are still used on fishing nets. If one gets loose, it often finds its way into the Japanese current, and floats all the way across the North Pacific Ocean. As usual, the highlight of the passage for Candace and myself was spotting birds and marine animals. We saw many albatross, Leach's storm petrels, and a red footed booby. We saw thousands of small Portuguese man-of-wars, (men-of-war) floating by us. Typically they had a transparent "sail" about two inches high on top of their blue disk body. Our port of entry on Vancouver Island was Ucluelet, on the northwest corner of Barkley Sound.

On the last day of the passage, we hit some of the roughest conditions of our entire trip. Large seas, with waves up to eighteen feet, combined with northerly winds in the 40-45 knot range, (i.e. 45-50 knots TRUE wind speed, or 50-55 MPH) , hit with force on our port beam. At least we weren't trying to head directly into those conditions. With just a staysail and double reefed main, ***Baba BarAnn*** was nicely balanced. Two years earlier we didn't know how to handle these conditions, or what to expect. Now, it seemed almost routine.

At 4 AM, in the height of this storm, only seventy-six miles from Ucluelet, we had our scariest experience of the entire trip. We spotted a ship on our radar eight miles away, and tried to reach it via VHF radio, but no one answered. When we rose to the top of each wave, we could easily see her getting closer. I couldn't veer to port into the large waves and wind, and I didn't want to steer to the right, and cut in front of her. So I held our course. Closer and closer the gigantic passenger ship came. With my heart in my mouth, she passed just one-eighth of a mile from us on our starboard side (the wrong side).

The ship was five stories high and about 300 feet long. At the very last minute she altered course and missed us. Way too close for comfort! About two hours later, we were close enough to the Canadian coast to be in contact with Tofino Traffic Control. Like airport controllers, they monitor all shipping traffic on the coast via radar and radio. Once we checked in, Tofino Traffic alerted other ships in the area of our presence, and us of their presence. Without further incident, we arrived that morning in Ucluelet. On the passage from Hanalei, we had logged 2593.8 miles in twenty-one days and one hour, for an average of only 123 miles per day. We had

experienced our longest (177.3 miles) and shortest (58 miles) days at sea. Our typical passage averages about 130 miles per day.

Return to Seattle

Once anchored at Ucluelet, we couldn't believe how calm and quiet everything was. No more waves rocking the boat or thumping on the hull, Candace and I just stared at each other and listened to the sounds of silence. It was eerie. Our sailing trip around the Pacific Ocean was coming to a close and we were feeling many emotions simultaneously. Perhaps the strongest was a sense of accomplishment. There is also much uncertainty about the future. For the fall, we have many projects lined up, fixing up our house in Seattle and putting ***Baba BarAnn*** back in "Bristol condition."

Our cruising life was coming to a close and we were now starting a new lifestyle. Not wanting to rush back to Seattle and into the unknown, we left Ucluelet for a secluded anchorage in Barkley Sound and worked on the boat for a week. The hull was waxed; all nine self-tailing winches were disassembled, cleaned, and lubricated; all the metal was polished. The weather was beautiful. Although my fishing skills continued to let me down, we collected all the oysters we wanted. Candace made the best oyster stew I've ever tasted. Finally the time came to head home. We took our time, spending nights at anchor in Neah Bay, Sequim, and Port Ludlow. We arrived in Seattle on August 21, two years to the day since our departure in 1989. Before entering the locks in Seattle, we hoisted all the flags from the countries we had visited: Mexico, French Polynesia, Western Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, New Zealand, the Cook Islands, and Canada. We had also stopped in American Samoa and Hawaii since leaving San Diego in December, 1989. We had sailed approximately 15,000 miles.

Future Plans

After spending the winter in Seattle, we plan to cruise to Alaska next summer, with a trip of two to three months, as far north as Juneau or Glacier Bay. Chuck and Bev on ***Carina*** are spending the winter in Seward, Alaska and will be heading south during the summer. We plan on meeting them near Juneau and then cruising back to Seattle with them. In the meantime we have many maintenance projects and short trips to the San Juan Islands on the drawing boards.

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Appendix - What worked, What Didn't

We left our jobs and frantically readied our Baba 40, **Baba BarAnn** for a multiple year cruise. We left Seattle in August 1989 and spent the winter in Mexico. In March of 1990 we sailed to the Marquises, Tuamotus, Society Islands, three Cook Islands, American Samoa, Western Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, and finally New Zealand. In 1991 we returned to Seattle via Rarotonga, Penrhyn, Hawaii, and Canada. Our two year trip around the Pacific Ocean covered 15,000 miles. We spent so much time and money, preparing for our trip, that we thought future cruisers might find something useful from our experience.

Cruising Equipment

Since returning, I have often been asked, "What worked, and what didn't?". Many sailors who have experienced similar trips often have very strong opinions about the only right way to equip a sailboat for such a trip. How could there be so many different opinions from different sailors, each sure that his is the only right one? Considering the necessity for total self-sufficiency, perhaps it's only natural for such strong opinions to exist. My view is that it's ridiculous to talk about the "only" or the "best" way to go when it comes to cruising. Most cruisers put together a package that fits their temperament, pocketbook, experience, and comfort level. This results in substantially different decisions when it comes to outfitting each boat. Mistakes are certainly made, but for the most part, everyone gets it right. With such a long winded caveat, the following summarizes our strongest opinions.

1. **Wind Vane** The most important equipment on any cruising sailboat is the self-steering device. Steering 24 hours for just one day, let alone day after day for a long passage, would be extremely difficult. Consequently, a good, reliable self-steering device that does almost all the steering is extremely important.

We were astonished to meet people in Hawaii who sailed there from the west coast using only an electric autopilot. Electric autopilots break and use an enormous amount of electricity. From our experience, they had the highest failure rate of any single piece of equipment. In calm conditions they consume 100+ Amp hours per day of precious electricity. Steering day after day in rough conditions, their motors often breakdown.

On the other hand, a good windvane can steer beautifully, if there's enough wind to move the boat, without using any electricity. It's virtually bullet proof. Moreover, in the process of learning how to sail with a windvane, you learn how to balance the boat in all conditions. The Monitor windvane on **Baba BarAnn** was our most valuable piece of equipment. The Aries and other good windvanes may be better suited to other sailboats, so I'm not touting just the Monitor. However, I couldn't imagine cruising without a windvane. A corollary of the need for a windvane is the requirement for a transom that can accommodate a windvane. This might rule out some of the newer designs with reverse transoms as being viable cruising boats.

2. **GPS** We added a Magellan GPS before leaving Mexico, and were quite happy. During 1990, at least six cruising boats hit reefs in the Pacific and were severely damaged. Some were sunk. It was a bit scary, even when you knew your precise latitude and longitude. The charts aren't all that accurate. We met a few people who had trouble with their Magellans, so I guess we were lucky. I know I was very frustrated with the Magellan's inability to provide accurate speed and course information. But it gave accurate positions every second for about 20

hours every day.

Typically we would provide the GPS with the latitude and longitude of our destination, and then just watch our cross-track-error. Except when we couldn't beat as high as we wanted, we would stay right on the great circle route of our desired course. Every 15 or 30 minutes we might tweak the Monitor steering adjustment lines if the cross-track-error showed that we were one-tenth of a mile off course.

3. **Cutter Rig** Sailing a cutter is somewhat different than sailing a sloop. We couldn't find any books on the subject, and had to discover the difference through trial and error. For example, our cutter heaves to with just the main sail. You do not back the headsail to hove to like you would with a sloop.

So long as the wind was 110 degrees or less off the bow, we would always fly the staysail Depending on wind conditions, we would also fly the full Yankee up to 20 knots or so, a partially furled Yankee up to 25 knots, or no Yankee headsail if it were blowing harder. Along with zero to three reefs in the mainsail we could stay perfectly balanced in all wind conditions. The picture of **Baba BarAnn** in the June '91 "Cruising World" shows her on a very broad reach, with the wind more than 110 degrees off the bow, with the staysail, single reefed main, and partially furled headsail.

Having the staysail seemed especially desirable when beating to windward in squally conditions, as in the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone. In such areas, the winds were typically 18-22 knots which are ideal for a single reef, staysail, and full Yankee. As a squall approached, the wind would gradually drop below 10 knots. This was the signal to quickly roll in the headsail. Soon thereafter the squall would hit, with winds usually 28-32 knots. With the reefed main and just the staysail we would stay balanced. All the while, the Monitor would steer flawlessly. When the squall passed, out went the full Yankee. We would have to go through this drill ten times on the worst days.

The combination of the staysail plus roller furling on the headsail made it easy to sail the boat shorthanded, leaving the cockpit only to reef the main. We believe it's very dangerous to work on the fore deck, in pitching seas and high winds. Having the staysail virtually eliminated trips to the bow.

4. **Refrigeration** We had been forewarned that our 12 volt electric Adler-Barbour refrigerator was destined to be overworked and break, shortly upon arrival in the tropics. We were always "waiting for the other shoe to drop." It never happened! Our "large cold machine" worked perfectly, providing ice cubes and cold drinks every day.With any refrigeration system, good insulation is crucial. We had four inches of insulation on all sides, perhaps more than the average boat. I estimate that our Adler-Barbour used 55-60 amp hours on the very hottest days in the tropics, necessitating about 45 minutes of engine charging. The solar panels produced another 30-33 amp hours which covered all other electrical consumption.

If you don't need a large compartment for frozen foods, we think that 12 volt DC refrigeration is superior to an engine driven cold plate system. The cruisers with cold plate systems generally ran their engines 1.5 hours per day, and they didn't even have ice cubes! Most importantly, we didn't have to run our engine every day to bring a cold plate down. In fact, we often went three days without turning on the engine. We think the Adler Barbour is great.

5. **Brightwork** Perhaps my biggest struggle was the amount of brightwork on our Baba 40 which had to be maintained. This was a never ending job made much more difficult by the tropical sun. The shiny varnished cap

rails, hand rails, etc. look great, but are not worth the enormous amount of work necessary to keep them up. My strong recommendation is to minimize the amount of outside teak brightwork. Whether or not you're cruising, brightwork is a pain. If you already have lots of outside brightwork, let it go completely until you return.

6. **Solar Panels** We purchased two ARCO M-55 solar panels They are quite large and cumbersome, but we wouldn't want the smaller ARCO M-65's. Although we usually mounted them on the dodger, sometimes we moved them to one side of the boat to catch the morning or afternoon sun at a better angle. We got a great price by dealing directly with Solar Energy Systems in Santa Barbara. Initially we had ordered four SOLAREX panels, since they were lighter and more durable than the ARCO's. However, due to some delamination problem, they had temporarily stopped making them. We would have preferred to add two more ARCO M-55's and have a specially constructed solar panel "farm"/bimini over the cockpit. On the average day our two panels would freely and quietly pump 30-35 amp hours into our batteries. Fantastic! Solar electricity is great.

7. **Wind Generator** The Four Winds II wind generator worked reasonably well, producing 10-13 amps in 20-24 knots conditions. It had an air brake that kept the generator from spinning too rapidly and burning out the brushes. At 15 knots we would get about 6-7 amps, and at 10 knots we would get 3-4 amps. During some windy days we could get as much as 100 amp hours.

Now the bad news. It's noisy, it's expensive, and it's quite difficult to install, with terrible instructions. So we had a love/hate relationship with our windmill. In Bora Bora the air brake failed, due to corrosion of their cheap pop rivets, and the entire wind generator came crashing down. It was beyond repair, being in such a remote place without access to a good machine shop.

Our life improved without the windmill. No noise. No fear of decapitation.

Despite the number one rating given to the Four Winds wind generator by the SSCA survey, I cannot recommend it. The noise is nerve racking, the vibrations are anything but good, and the spinning blades are too dangerous. The Windbugger brand of wind generator seemed to be better, but still not worth the negatives. Put your money into more solar panels rather than a wind generator.

8. **Fortress Anchor** I'm very enthusiastic about the Fortress line of anchors. I used our 23 pound Fortress solely as a second anchor. Being light, it was easy to take out in the dinghy. It set rapidly, unlike the CQR, and held every time. Our 45 pound CQR was always the primary anchor, but I think the lighter Fortress may have been better. We had a 77 pound Luke anchor as our "hurricane hook," and thankfully we never had to deploy it. Some cruisers had purchased a larger Fortress anchor for their "hurricane hook." I think this was a good choice.

9. **Roller Furling** We left Seattle with a Mariner roller furling system on both the headsail and the staysail We threw out our inexpensive roller furling as soon as we reached San Francisco. It was undersized and inadequate as far as we were concerned. Then we cruised with just hanked on sails. We discovered that we tended to motor more and sail less. Before leaving San Diego we purchased a ProFurl system for just the headsail. This arrangement, roller furling on the headsail and hanked on sails for the staysail, was the choice of the majority of cutter owners. Even though I had problems with the roller furling on the final leg home from Hawaii, I have no regrets and would not hesitate to recommend this approach. The problem was caused by my incorrect installation. The instruction manual warned about not over-tightening a certain bolt in the furling drum. I didn't tighten it enough! Harken and Profurl seemed to be equally popular systems with the cruisers, with third place

so far behind that I can't even guess the brand.

10. **Diesel Engine** Everyone was happy with their engine except a few who had Volvo-Penta. We know only three boats that replaced their engines. All three boats had Volvo's. Not one opted for a Volvo the second time around. The price for spare Volvo parts borders on being confiscatory.

Additional Biased Opinions

Electronics

1. **Radar** - Our Furuno 1720 was fantastic. It was the best "extra" item we put on the boat. We preferred its touch pad to the Raytheon R-10's, and found the pictures superior to the Apelco's. It paid for itself many times over by the time we reached San Francisco.

Some boats can mount the radar screen in a position that can be seen from both the nav station and the cockpit. We built a teak box which sits above the nav station, for viewing radar while inside. The extra radar cable and power lines are normally stuffed out of the way, in the compartment behind the nav station. For viewing while outside in the cockpit, we used the standard mounting bracket which was mounted under the dodger. It was a simple matter to pick the radar up, withdraw enough cable, and place it in the mounting bracket outside .

The most difficult part of the installation job was extracting the radar cable, and plug, out of the small hole drilled in the mast, just above the spreaders. We learned, the hard way of course, that the radar cable makes an unacceptable noise, banging inside the mast, on ocean passages and rocky anchorages. This was solved by wrapping and taping strips of foam rubber carpet backing around the cable as we fed it into the bottom of the mast. Then, when the radar cable slapped against the inside of the mast, the noise was cushioned.

We had a friend who tried to solve this problem by filling the entire inside of his mast with styrofoam packing "peanuts" (a.k.a "ghost turds"). Somehow, the peanuts got out of the mast and blew all over an anchorage. It took a long time time retrieve them!!

2. **Ham Radio** - Ham radio and a General license are very, very nice. We have an ICOM 735, perhaps the most popular radio among cruisers. We also have an ICOM AH-2 antenna tuner. We had read some bad things about Kenwood radios not standing up to the salty marine environment, but we saw no evidence of that.

The worst thing we did, in retrospect, while getting ready to "take off," was purchase a book entitled Sailing with Ham Radio by Ian Keith and Derek Van Loan. What obviously worked for them, cannot be generalized to all boats. We wasted much time and energy trying to adopt their approach of not using an insulated backstay. If you look carefully at the cover picture on the Keith/Van Loan book I'd swear you can see some insulated backstays.

After several agonizing months of failure, we purchased some StaLok backstay insulators, attached the ground like every other book discussed, and thereafter had one of the better signals among cruising hams. Of course it was a little scary cutting the backstay, but we really had no problem with the installation.

3. **Radar Reflector** - We spent the extra money for a Firdell Blipper radar reflector, including the mast bracket. Our decision was based partly on the expectation of a more effective radar reflector, and partly on its design. The Practical Sailor study of radar reflectors favored the cheaper Davis models, while other articles we'd read in Cruising World and the SSCA bulletins seemed to favor the Firdell. We saved our old Davis for a spare. We disliked the Davis reflector spinning in the wind and sometimes tangling with burgee halyards or banging the mast. The Blippers's smooth veneer and sturdy mount keep it hassle free.

4. **Weatherfax** - At the very last minute, we purchased the PK-232 for weatherfax and other ham projects we might get into later (packet, Morse code, etc). It seemed like a logical thing to do, since we already had the radio, computer (Toshiba 1200), and Diconix printer. Sometimes we get great weather-fax from Pt. Reyes CA or Pearl Harbor, HI, but often the reception was marginal. In retrospect, the PK-232 was terrible overkill for weatherfax. We sold it to a cruiser interested in packet.

Electrical Energy

1. **Batteries** - We had 6 Prevailer DF-230 gel cell batteries, which provide about 660 amp hours. We were very pleased with them. Not worrying about maintaining water levels, or acid spilling in the bilge, as with regular lead acid batteries, was very nice. These were truly zero maintenance batteries. We had two battery banks, each 330 amp hours, and alternated every other day. We didn't have a separate battery bank for the motor. However, as our "ace in the hole," we stashed a small, DF-75 amp hour Prevailer which was big enough to start the engine if all else failed. Every nine months we would "top off" this reserve battery, and then put it back in storage. We used lots of electricity, with the refrigerator, water maker, ham radio, tape deck, lights, computer, etc.

2. **Alternator** - We installed an Ample Power 105 amp alternator solely because it easily replaced the stock 55 amp Hitachi alternator that came with our Yanmar engine. If the 130 amp alternator would have fit without a hassle, we would have spent the extra money. We just learned about another cruiser's 160 amp alternator that bent the drive shaft because of excess stress. Now he limits his regulator to 80 amps. In retrospect, our 105 amp alternator was plenty large enough for our needs.

3. **Invertor** - We installed a Trace 600 watt invertor to obtain AC energy to charge the computer, printer, and electric razor, and run the TV, VCR, toaster, coffee grinder, and, yes, even the microwave oven. All worked fine except the cute, 450 watt microwave which only ran well on shore power. We were pleasantly surprised that our 1000 watt toaster worked so well. The invertor supplied AC power through all the AC plugs on the boat (galley, salon, nav station, and vee berth) except for the aft cabin. The aft cabin AC outlet was only connected to the shore power source of energy in order to eliminate the possibility of having shore power AC and invertor AC in the same outlet. It would have been nice to use the microwave through the invertor, but the battery drain would have been substantial. We were very happy with the Trace, but don't have any basis for recommending it over a Heart invertor.

4. **Voltage Regulator** - We installed an Ample Power shunt, ammeter, and 3 step regulator. They worked perfectly and were really nice additions. It would have been nice, but not necessary, to have an Ample Power amp hour meter.

Dinghy

1. **Inflatable Dinghy** - On long passages our West Marine 8.6 sport boat was deflated and stored, in a sail bag,

under the boom. It took about 10-15 minutes to inflate. On short trips, we kept it inflated at the bow. We use the staysail halyard to raise and lower the dinghy.

We learned a good trick for storing/mooring the dinghy while anchored. Two lines, about five feet long are tied athwart ship, using the grab lines on each pontoon. The shackle on the staysail halyard is then clipped around the middle of both lines, so that the boat stays horizontal when it's raised. With the outboard motor still on, we raise the dinghy to the cap rail. It stays suspended by the halyard, with one pontoon resting on the cap rail. This keeps the boat out of the water during the night so that:

- Barnacle growth, a major problem in warm waters, is minimized. This keeps the dingy and the motor out of the warm salt water.
- The dinghy doesn't bang against the boat, or tug on a mooring line.
- Theft potential is minimized.

Davits were not possible because of our wind vane, but otherwise would probably have been very nice. A slightly bigger dinghy might have been nice, but we would have had more problems storing it, the potential for theft would have been greater, and we would have needed a bigger and heavier motor. Considering all the compromises, we think we made the right dinghy decision for us. Cruisers that dive need a larger dinghy. A hard dinghy is definitely not a good choice from our experience, primarily due to instability and stowage.

2. **Outboard Motor Lock** - We heard of several dinghies that were stolen. One cruiser had his Avon and a new motor stolen in San Diego, and then another new Avon and motor stolen in Turtle Bay. He finally learned and put a motor lock on. We think the lock helps. Only the expensive Avon dinghies and only the larger motors seemed to be stolen. We never heard about a West Marine dinghy or a 5 HP motor being stolen. Our philosophy was that the best dinghy insurance was a cheap dinghy.

3. **Outboard Motor** - Our 5 HP Nissan outboard was chosen partially because of its relatively low weight, low price, and good ratings in the SSCA equipment survey. We used the halyard to raise and lower the motor to the dinghy. On passages, the motor was stored on a bracket on the stern pulpit. The 5HP motor could make the dinghy plane, and move rapidly, when there was only one person. Except on rare occasions, we couldn't get the dink to plane with both of us on board. Perhaps we should have gotten a bigger motor?

We had major problems with our Nissan motor. After less than a year there was so much rust in the internal gas tank that the carburetor was continually getting clogged. The newer internal tanks are made of plastic, but ours was metal and rusted terribly. The gas cap should have been attached to avoid the potential for losing it overboard. We weren't pleased with the amount of corrosion on the prop, the paint that peeled off the prop, or the rust. On the bright side, the service by West Marine was extremely good. We learned by experience to avoid internal gas tanks. The reason we went with the internal tank was to avoid taking up space in our small dinghy. West Marine converted our O.B. to an external tank model and it has performed fabulously ever since. It was still running perfectly in 1998, normally starting on the first pull.

4. **Dinghy Wheels** - We got the Pelican Dinghy Dolly wheels, and were very unsatisfied with them. They didn't work at all in soft, or semi soft sand, and the tread on the plastic wheels showed lots of wear after the few times being used on a hard surface. They were worthless! One of the Pelican wheels broke, and the company sent me another one, immediately, with no questions asked, under their lifetime guarantee. Great service but not such a

hot product.

Landing and launching a dinghy on a sandy beach was always tricky. We wish we'd gotten the larger "wheel-a-weigh" launching wheels. Better yet, the big fat ones that don't sink into the sand. The larger wheels allow you to keep the motor down, and motor right up to beach, without worrying about hitting your prop in the sand. This is a valuable feature that we envied on other cruisers' dinghies.

Sailing Equipment

1. **Autopilot** - We had an Autohelm 6000 autopilot and it was great - for a while. A good autopilot is one of the most important pieces of equipment on a cruising boat. We believe that the other brands are also good, but we love our Autohelm. Because we used the autopilot only when motoring, the electricity drain, perhaps 4-5 amps, was never a problem.

Once, with the Monitor steering on a very broad reach in light winds, waves would cause us to gybe from time to time. This problem was solved by having the autopilot steer a compass course. We only used the Autohelm to steer a compass course, and never used the feature that steers by apparent wind angle.

We had a problem with our flux gate compass and had to replace it. I believe that electric autopilots had the highest rate of failure of all cruising equipment.

After a few years the main arm on the autopilot started to freeze up. There was no fix for the problem or replacement part, and the entire Autohelm autopilot had to be scrapped. Very disappointing for such an expensive piece of equipment.

2. **Extra Sails** - We had Hasse & Pettrich in Port Townsend build us a storm staysail and put reinforcement patches on the main. We did not purchase a drifter, or cruising spinnaker, since our 150% genoa is so large. When we arrived in the Marquesas, we stowed the 150% genoa and thereafter used the 120% Yankee exclusively. We only used the storm staysail once, for the passage to San Francisco. Our main sail has three reefing points, and we got down to the third reef only once. We didn't see the need for a storm trysail, but then we didn't sail around Cape Horn. We would not consider adding extra light air sails for the trip we made.

3. **Boom Brake** - We purchased a Walder Boom Brake/Preventer. It didn't live up to its advertised capabilities. It didn't work well as a preventer on our boat, but it worked well controlling gybes . . . until the lines became too worn. The design of the two arms extending from the drum appears to be faulty. They kept coming off, and were continually in the way. Eventually we stopped using the Boom Brake. We made a great preventer from a rubber snubber. The elasticity of the snubber was perfect, especially in light air, lumpy sea conditions, to keep the sails from slatting.

Water Systems

1. **Water Maker** - We had a PowerSurvivor 35, reverse osmosis water maker. It made ALL, 100%, of our water for six months . . . from the time we arrived in Mexico until we arrived in Papeete. As advertised, it produced 1.4 gallons per hour, using 4.5 amps. In Mexico we were very cautious and never drank tap water. The water produced by the PowerSurvivor was purer, and better tasting, than Seattle's water. We didn't have to jerry jug water, we didn't have to treat water, and we didn't have to taste chlorinated water. It was great. We took fresh

water showers every other day, and ended up using about 2-2.5 gallons, per person, per day. Thus the water maker ran, on average, 3 hours per day.

2. **Water Filter** - Even though the water maker produced pure water, algae could still grow in the water tanks. The galley's fresh water foot pump was fitted with an Ametek, Model PS-C2, water filter to eliminated any taste of chlorine from our water. We liked it.

3. **Water Pump** - We replaced the Par freshwater pump with a FloJet pump and were quite satisfied. It was quieter and smoother. We had three foot pumps - fresh and salt water in the galley, and fresh water in the head - that were Taiwanese. All three broke and were replaced with Whale Gusher foot pumps. I don't agree with the general consensus that using foot pumps reduces water consumption. Water conservation is more a matter of attitude, that the type of plumbing you have. We rarely used the foot pumps.

4. **Wash Down Pump** - We put a tee valve in the same line as the salt water intake line to the head. Using a FloJet pump, the water was sent to a faucet at the bow. This was a nice system, used primarily to clean off the anchor chain as it was brought on board, but we had some problems. Most importantly, the ABI flush mount deck faucet was garbage . . . like about everything made by ABI. In just one month, the handle rusted completely off. We guess it was made for a fresh water environment. We got ABI to send another faucet assembly, but it rusted completely in just a week.

The installation was quite a problem, primarily getting good information. Both our intake and outlet lines to the head have anti-siphon valves. It was necessary to put a tee valve BEFORE the anti-siphon valve, in order to get enough pressure from the wash down pump. Salesmen were trying to sell us check valves and all sorts of plumbing connections, to get it working properly. We guess no one else has an anti-siphon valve in the intake line. For the few times we used the pump, it would have been easier and better to have a portable DC pump with a long extension chord. The intake line could then be thrown overboard to suck up seawater. Unfortunately, I never saw such a pump for sale.

Living

1. **BBQ** - The Magma BBQ met some of our expectations. Like most of the cheaper grills, it was ravished by the marine environment. A very nice addition was the hose adapter that connected to our regular LPG tanks. We never had to worry about running out of propane in the middle of a steak, we didn't pay an exorbitant price for the small propane canisters, and we didn't worry about having the small canisters rusting away in our propane locker. The Magma grill is not built to last, and our grate was completely corroded in about one year. Is there a more durable model out there?

2.**LPG Tanks** - Initially, we wasted much money and lots of elbow grease trying to maintain inexpensive steel LPG tanks. It's impossible to keep salt water out of the propane locker, thus the steel tanks were always rusting. So long as there's a ready supply of the cheaper tanks on sale at Ernst, we couldn't justify spending $132 per tank for aluminum ones. We now consider the aluminum tanks a good buy and are very happy we had them.

3. **Bilge Alarm** - After reading a few letters in the SSCA bulletins about the desirability of a good bilge alarm, we were convinced it was a good idea. Many of the alarms on the market run off the same electrical system as the regular automatic bilge pump. Thus, if the bilge pump fails because of an electrical failure, the alarm system will also fail. This is dumb. For only $25 we got a great bilge alarm, made in Dana Point, CA that ran off a 9 volt

battery. Nothing could have been easier to install, and it really works. Unfortunately, it ceased to work after just one year due to corrosion.

4. **Head** - The maintenance kit for the Par head is ridiculously expensive, and ours was failing after just two months of living on board. We replaced the Par head with a Raritan PH II and were quite satisfied. A little Super Lube on the piston, and some SaniFlush and/or cooking oil every so often, and it works smoothly. Our biggest problem with the head was caused by the excessively long outflow lines on our Baba. Twice they were clogged with salt crystals and had to be cleaned out. This problem can be helped with incessant flushing, like 20 times per! Several cruisers put a small amount of muriatic acid in the head to prevent the build up of salt crystals.

5. **Spotlight** - We had a 300 candle power spotlight, primarily for an emergency. It didn't get used much.

6. **Sewing Machine** - We found a secondhand, 1950 vintage Pfaff 130 sewing machine for the steep price of $500. This was supposed to be the perfect machine for repairing sails as well as other canvas work. We weren't too pleased with it because needles were always breaking (sewing through webbing or four layers of canvas,) and it was too easy to knock out of alignment. It was great having the machine on board, but we wish it weren't so temperamental.

Upon returning to Seattle, a repair shop found our problem, and since then the Pfaff has been very satisfactory. Despite our problems, we still think the Pfaff 130 is the strongest, portable machine, and haven't seen a better one for the cruising boat.

7. **Camcorder** - We bought one specifically for our trip. Unfortunately, it was ruined when we took on some water getting the dinghy through the surf and back to the boat at San Simeon. We also lost our Canon AE-1 camera in the same wave. We now have a waterproof Nikon rangefinder camera, and no camcorder.

Safety Equipment

1. **Life Raft** - We purchased a Viking, four man, soft valise life raft, which was stowed in the lazarette. This was a purchase we considered avoiding, but relented at the last moment. We chose it over the Avon and others, primarily because of cost. Avon's are terribly over priced and we had heard of one that didn't inflate during a demonstration.

2. **EPIRB** - We had an ACR RLB-21 EPIRB packed in the Viking lift raft, and never found out if it would work in an emergency. We wouldn't consider having a life raft without an EPIRB. We had heard that the old EPIRB's have limited use in the southern hemisphere, where we did most of out cruising. We really liked the idea of the newer, 406 MHz EPIRBs, but they were extremely expensive.

3. **Jack Lines** - Most books recommend jack lines running fore and aft along the deck. We tried that approach without success. We were continually tripping on the lines, and getting them tangled with the genoa car, genoa sheets, cleats, etc. Then we tried the high jack lines recommended by John Neal and Barbara Marrett. This was done by running a line fore and aft through an aladdin's cleat attached at shoulder height to a shroud. Not only were the jack lines off the deck and away from our feet, but the high line operated like another safety line. We could go to the mast and work without removing our tether. Going to the bow required us to unclip and then re clip on the other side of the aladdin's cleat, between the shrouds where there was plenty to grab.

Canvas

1. **Dodger** - Our dodger was made by Ellen Black at the Artful Dodger in Port Townsend. The design and workmanship are first rate.

2. **Wind Scoop** - We made a wind scoop along the same lines as the ForeSquare Ventilating Sail model that's sold by West Marine for about $60. Considering the cost of materials, and all our time, it would have been a better decision to purchase the wind scoop, except we wouldn't have had a tan one that matches the other canvas on board. The wind scoop was a necessity in the tropics.

3. **Deck Awning** - Our deck awning/water catcher was made by the Artful Dodger. Along with two strong PVC pipes that give it athwart ship stability, it was stowed in its own bag tied to the hand rails. In the tropics we got less use out of it than we expected. It seemed to be too low and too narrow. Water catching was never needed since our Power Survivor worked so well.

4. **Weather Cloths** - We made our own weather cloths. Initially our weather cloths extended too far forward, blocking our view out of the galley porthole. Since this extra protection was rarely needed, we shortened them and got our view back. When the seas were up, it was nice having the weather cloths.

5. **Bimini** - Our bimini was made by the Artful Dodger. It extended from the aft end of the dodger to the backstay, and was intended to be used primarily for sun protection while under sail. We remembered how nice it was to have one when we chartered in the Virgin Islands. Unfortunately it disrupted the flow of air around the Monitor windvane. It was also too low, making it difficult to enter or exit the cabin. We rarely used the bimini because of design problems. To do it over, we would have a stainless steel frame erected over the cockpit for the bimini and for solar panels.

Navigation

1 **Sextant** - Our Astral IIIB sextant, from Red China, is extremely well made. It provided our only means of navigation in Mexico. We both thought that learning celestial navigation was quite easy, and we trusted our LOP's more than our LORAN readings. We also had an old, Davis cheapie plastic sextant for a backup.

2. **Sight Reduction Computer** - For several years we've had a Celesticomp 3 hand held computer, sold by John Watkins of Vashon Island. It worked very well with extremely good instructions. The newer models (he's up to Celesticomp 5 now) are better. We suppose that the Merlin is even better, at a higher price. Although a real purist may want to reduce sights by hand, that seems like something we'd only want to do in a true emergency, when all else had failed.

3. **Charts** - We purchased about 300 photocopied charts covering the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Considering how expensive charts are now, we opted for cheaper photocopies, rather than a few pretty ones. In foreign waters it's silly to rely on navigational aids. In coral regions, depths are always changing. Thus, it's never possible to have "up to date" charts . . . it's just a matter of degree. We had Charlie's Charts for Mexico and Polynesia, as well as Marcia Davock's "Cruising guide to Tahiti and the French Society Islands." We liked them, even with all the errors and out of date info. We also had the U.S. Pilot which was our most up to date source.

4. **LORAN** - We always loved our Furuno LC-90 Loran . . . until we got the Magellan. The Furuno now seems

complicated to use. Magellan spoiled us. Loran was worthless as soon as we were south of San Diego.

Anchoring

1. **Windlass** - One of the biggest mistakes we made was purchasing a manual windlass (Simpson Lawrence 555). After one year, we sold it at a loss and now have an electric windlass, a Muir Cougar. We loved the electric windlass. Tap your toe and up comes the anchor! Sure a windlass is heavy, and you want to minimized weight at the bow. Nevertheless, the anchor and chain weigh about 400 pounds, so who cares about a few more pounds in the windlass! In our opinion, an electric windlass is a necessity, not a luxury.

We were not pleased with the amount of corrosion in our Muir. The windlass is made out of aluminum and is always in contact with the galvanized steel chain. More importantly, it is mounted on a stainless steel plate which is affixed to the bowsprit. The dissimilar metals caused much electrolysis. We think it should have been made out of stainless steel . . . not aluminum.

2. **Stern Anchor** - We think our Fortress, FX-23, was perfect as a stern anchor. Being light, it was easy to row out in the dinghy. Like the Danforth we used to have, it also set very rapidly. Our stern rode was 6 feet of 5/16th BBB and 200 feet of 3/4 nylon. Our old Danforth is still in Monterey Bay, after its 3/8th inch braided nylon rode snapped while trying to recover it. We learned the hard way that our rode was too thin. Henceforth, the rode not taken will be less than 1/2 inch!

3. **Stern Anchor Mount** - After being unsuccessful in trying to use an AnchoReady mount on the stern pulpit, we found the Bow Pulpit Anchor Holder, also made by Nautical Engineering, to be perfect for the job.

4. **Primary Anchor** - We were quite satisfied with our 45 pound CQR anchor, although the 60 pound one might have been a better choice. We used a 5/16th BBB all chain rode, although most cruisers seem to have opted for the 3/8 inch chain. We had 350 feet of chain in two sections, joined by an Italian anchor connector.

We believe that scope is more important than chain thickness. In the Society Islands we often had very deep anchorages, 75 feet or deeper, so we needed the longer rode. But all the weight associated with an all chain rode wasn't desirable. Some cruisers had systems for stowing chain in the center of the boat during passage making. Another approach, which seemed to work quite well, utilized 100 feet of chain, backed by 200+ feet of line. When more than 100 feet of rode was out, this approach had a built-in anchor bridle. After much reflection, I think 150 feet of 5/16th chain, backed by 200 feet of nylon line would be the best choice for the area we cruised.

5. **Anchor Bridle** - It's crucial to have a nylon anchor bridle to 1) keep the chain of the bob stay, and 2) provide some elasticity in the anchor rode. After much experimentation, we settled on two 25 foot lengths of 3/8 inch, three strand nylon. Both lines were spliced around a single thimble which was shackled to a chain hook. These lines were both led through the bow anchor roller and then cleated off on the deck. Sections of hose at the thimble, as well as at the roller, minimized chafe on the nylon lines.

The only problem was keeping the chain hook from falling off the chain. We didn't like tying the hook to the chain with a small line, but found no better solution. We tried leading the lines through the port and starboard haws holes, but that resulted in more dancing around the anchor. We tried thicker lines but they didn't stretch. We also tried attaching the bridle to the bottom of the bob stay, but found that approach unacceptable.

The thin, 3/8 inch line provided a good amount of elasticity. If one line broke, there would be a spare. During the unfortunate times that we were anchored in 40+ knot winds, our anchor bridle really stretched, but never broke.

6. **Storm Anchor** - We had a 77 pound fisherman anchor, stowed in the lazarette. Thankfully we never had to use it since it was so heavy and cumbersome.

7. **Rocker Stoppers** - Rocker stoppers can improve a rolly anchorage and we had six suspended on each side. They work best when suspended several feet off the beam of the boat. Once we used the boom on one side, and the spinnaker pole on the other, to suspend the rocker stoppers about 8 feet off the beam. This put a great deal of stress on the two poles, and made it extremely difficult to leave an anchorage hastily.

When we use them now, we just hang them directly off the beam. They only dampen the movement a little, but they're better than nothing. The biggest problem, other than cost, is the large amount of precious space it needs when stowed in the lazarette.

8. **Spare Anchor** - We kept a 35 pound Danforth plow anchor stowed in case we lost our primary hook. It was a very poor imitation of a "Genuine CQR," and its purchase was false economy. Another Fortress would be my choice now.

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Actual Passage Charts

From Seattle down to Mexico, we used "real" NOAA and other governmentally produced charts. For $650 we also purchased several hundred photocopied charts, covering virtually every anchorage from Los Angeles to India. We also wanted charts to plot our progress on passages. I decided to write a simple program that would print out 8 1/2" X 11" paper with grid lines.

Before each passage I would label the latitude and longitude on the grid, and tape together as many pages as it took. All land and other navigational features were then penciled in. Each day, at 0430 zulu we would check in to the the Pacific Maritime Net and report our position, and other information. We also marked that 0430Z position on the grid. I would often track the position of other nearby boats to follow their progress.

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Baba BarAnn's Provisions Leaving Mexico

"Where" Key - a coding system showing where items are stored on the boat.

First letter

A=Aft Cabin	H=Head	S=Shower
C=Cockpit	M=Main Salon	V=Vee Berth
G=Galley		W=Wet Lkr

Second letter(where needed)

S=Starboard; P=Port; C=Center; F=Floor

Folowed by

H=High; L=Low; M=Medium

For example "MPM4" means:

- Main Salon
- Port side
- Medium high storage area
- locker number 4.

ITEM	UNIT	QTY	WHERE
ace bandage, elbow	each	1	HH1
artichoke hearts	jar	6	MPL1
artichoke hearts	jar	1	VSL4
bacon, canned	1 lb	5	MF6
bacon, canned	1 lb	6	MSL3
bags, kitchen	roll	1	MPM4
bags, plastic	bunch	1	MPM4
bags, ziploc	2 qal.	3	MPM4
bags, ziploc	1 qal.	1	MPM4
bags, ziploc	1 qt.	2	MPM4
baking powder	can	1	VMD1
baking soda	bag	1	GL
bamboo shoots	can	3	MSL2
bamboo shoots	5 oz.	5	MSL3
bamboo shoots	5 oz.	2	VMD1
banana nut mix	box	1	MPM1
barley	bag	2	GL
Bay leaves	jar	1	VSL4
BBQ sauce	bottle	1	VSL4
beans	can	1	MPM4
beans, great northern	bag	1	MSM1
beans, green	can	1	MPL0
beans, green	can	1	MPL1
beans, lentil	bag	1	MSM1
beans, lentil	bag	1	VSL4
beans, pinto	2 k. bag	1	GL
beans, refried	can	1	MSL4

beans, refried	can	1	VSL4
beef jerky	bag	1	MF4
beer	can	54	VPL4
bisquick	40 oz.	2	MPM2
bleach	bottle	2	GL
Bold	42 oz.	4	MPM2
Bold	42 oz.	1	VSM1
bon ami	can	1	HL
boric acid	bottle	1	AC
bouillon, beef	25 cubes	1	MPL1
bouillon, beef	can	1	VSL4
bouillon, chicken	25 cubes	1	MPL1
bouillon, chicken	can	1	VSL4
bread crumbs	can	1	MPL5
bread crumbs	can	1	VSL4
bread mix	box	2	MPM1
brownie mix	box	1	MPM2
brushes & combs	each	3	HH1
cake mix, chocolate	box	1	MPM1
cake mix, spice	box	1	MPM1
cakes, cheesecake	box	1	MPM2
candies, hard	bag	3	MSM2
candy	bag	3	MPM3
candy bars	each	18	MPL5
candy bars	each	9	VSL4
cereal	box	3	MPM1
cereal	box	3	MSM1
cereal	box	2	MSM2
cereal, granola	box	2	MPM3
cereal, museli	bag	1	VSL4
chayote	fresh	5	VPH1
cheese, parmesan	8 oz.	1	MSL3
cheese, parmesan	8 oz.	1	MSL4

cheese, parmesan	8 oz.	1	VSL4
cheese, WSU canned	30 oz	3	Fridge
cheese, WSU canned	30 oz	13	MF8
chicken, canned	12.5 oz.	1	MPL5
chicken, canned	12.5 oz.	3	VSL4
chicken, canned/white	5 oz.	1	MPL4
chicken, canned/white	5 oz.	3	MPL5
chicken, white	5 oz.	4	MSL2
chicken, white	5 oz.	4	MSL3
chicken, whole	can	1	VSL4
chili	can	8	MSL1
chili sauce	bottle	1	MPL5
chilies, green	can	1	MPL0
chilies, green	can	1	MSL2
chilies, green	can	2	MSL3
chilies, green	can	2	VMD1
chilies, green	can	1	VSL4
chips	bag	3	MPM3
chips	bag	1	MSL4
chips, tortilla	bag	8	MPM3
chocolate, hot	servings	10	MPM3
chocolate chips	12 oz.	4	GL
chocolate squares	square	6	GL
clams, canned	6.5 oz.	6	MSL3
cocktail sauce	bottle	1	MPL5
coffee	1 kg.	3	MPM3
coffee	250 gm.	3	MSL4
coffee, instant	jar	1	MPM2
coffee, instant	jar	1	MPM2
coffee, instant	jar	1	MSL4
coffee filters	bag	1	MPM1
contact, case	each	3	HH1
contact, saline	bottle	5	HH2

contact, tabs	each	36	HH2
contact wetting solution		2	HH2
contact wetting solution		1	HH2
cookies	box	1	MPM2
cookies	can	1	MPM3
cookies	box	4	MSM2
cookies, vanilla waff	box	2	MPM2
corn	can	2	MPL0
corn	can	1	VSL4
corn meal	bag	1	VSM1
corned beef, canned	12 oz.	12	MPL5
corned beef, canned	12 oz.	5	MSL4
corned beef, canned	12 oz.	1	VMD1
corned beef hash	can	5	MSL2
cous cous	bag	1	MSL4
crab	can	2	MPL1
crab, canned	can	6	MSL2
crackers	box	1	MPM2
crackers	box	3	MSM2
crackers-wasa	box	1	MSM1
crema, Nestle	can	6	MPL4
cups, plastic	each	16	MPM4
dehyd meal	bag	5	MSL4
dental floss, unwaxed	each	4	HH1
dental floss, waxed	each	2	HH1
dish cloths	each	16	MPH2
drixoral	100 pack	1	HH1
drixoral	10 pack	6	HH1
egg replacer	16 oz.	1	MPM2
eggs	doz	4	MPH1
epsom salts	box	1	HH1
flour, rye	30 oz.	1	MSL4
flour, wheat	5 lb.	1	MPM1

flour, wheat	1 kg.	1	MPM3
flour, wheat	5 lb.	2	VSM1
flour, white	1 kg.	4	MSL4
flour, white	1 kg.	8	VSM1
flour, white	5 lb.	4	VSM1
foil, aluminum	75 sq	7	MPM4
foil, aluminum	200 sq	1	MPM4
frosting, chocolate	can	1	MPM1
frosting, chocolate	box	1	MPM1
frosting, cream cheese	can	1	MPM1
frosting, lemon	can	1	MPM1
fruit, apricots dry	6 oz.	1	MSM2
fruit, banana chips	bag	1	VSL4
fruit, blackberries	can	7	MPL1
fruit, bluberry f'l'n	can	1	VSL4
fruit, figs	can	1	MPL1
fruit, grapefruit	can	3	MSL4
fruit, mandarin oranges	12 oz.	5	MPL1
fruit, mixed dry	8 oz.	2	MSM2
fruit, oranges	can	9	VPL4
fruit, peaches	can	1	MSL4
fruit, peaches	can	1	VMD1
fruit, pineapple	can	6	MPL1
fruit, plums	can	1	MPL1
fruit, prunes dry	12 oz.	1	MSM2
fruit, raspberries	can	3	MPL1
Gatorade	8 qt.	1	MPL5
Gatorade	pkg.	3	MPM2
gelatin	pack	8	GL
graham cracker crumbs	bag	1	GL
grapefruit	each	12	MPH2
grapefruit	fresh	12	MPH2
grapefruit, canned	can	3	VSL4

ham, canned	1 lb	11	MF6
honey	jar	5	VSL4
jam, blackberry	2 lb	1	VSL4
jam, strawberry	275 gms	2	MF4
jicama	fresh	5	VPH1
Jiffy, baking mix	box	1	MPM2
Joy	bottle	4	SL
Joy	bottle	1	SM
juice, apple	box	2	VSH1
juice, apple grape	box	3	VSH1
juice, apple pear	box	3	VSH1
juice, concentrated	box	5	VSH1
juice, concentrated	box	5	VSH1
juice, grape	box	4	VSH1
juice, orange	box	17	VSH1
juice, Tree Top	box	6	VSH1
juice, Tropical	box	9	VSH1
juice, tropicana	box	9	VSH1
kleenex	box	5	HM
lemonade	8 qt.	3	MPL5
lens cleaners	each	2	HH1
light days	20	6	HM
limes	1 kg	1	VPH1
liquor, ale	bottle	2	MPL5
liquor, gin	liter	2	MPL5
liquor, gin	liter	3	WL
liquor, grenadine	litre	1	MPL5
liquor, Kahlua	liter	1	MPM3
liquor, muscadet	bottle	1	MPh3
liquor, scotch	liter	3	MPL5
liquor, sherry	liter	1	MPL5
liquor, tequila	liter	4	MPL5
liquor, tequila	liter	3	WL

lotion	bottle	2	SM
macaroni	22 oz.	2	GL
macaroni	22 oz.	2	MPL4
macaroni	200 g	7	MPM3
mangos	fresh	6	MPH2
mangos	fresh	2	VPH1
maple extract	bottle	1	GL
maple syrup	bottle	2	MPL5
maple syrup	bottle	1	MSM2
matches	books	30	MPM1
maxi pads	bag	1	HM
mayonaise	jar	5	MPM3
mayonaise	jar	2	MSL2
mayonaise	jar	2	VSL4
medicine, prescription	box	1	HH1
milk, dehydrated	1 qt.	24	MPM2
milk, dehydrated	1 qt.	6	MSL1
milk, dehydrated	1 qt.	11	MSL2
milk, dehydrated	1 qt.	12	MSL3
milk, dehydrated	1 qt.	13	MSM1
muffin mix, blueberry	box	1	MPM1
mushrooms	can	1	MSL1
mushrooms, dried	pkg	1	MPM2
mustard	jar	1	MF4
mustard	jar	1	MPM3
napkins	pack	2	MPH2
neosporen	tube	1	HH1
noodles	12 oz.	3	MPL5
noodles	bag	1	MPM3
nuts, almonds	bag	1	MPM3
nuts, almonds	can	4	MPM3
nuts, mixed	can	1	MF4
nuts, mixed	bag	6	MPM3

nuts, mixed	bag	2	MSL4
nuts, mixed	can	1	VMD1
nuts, peanuts	jar	2	MSL4
nuts, peanuts	bag	1	VSL4
nuts, pecans	bag	3	MPh3
oatmeal	box	1	MPM1
oatmeal	box	2	MPM3
oatmeal, instant	packs	4	MSM1
oil	qt.	3	MPL5
olive oil	1/2 l.	1	MPL5
olives, black	can	3	MPL0
olives, black	can	2	MSL3
olives, green	jar	2	VSL4
onions	1 lb	10	
onions, dehydrated	pkg	1	MSL3
oranges	fresh	2	MPH2
oranges	fresh	6	VPH1
oregano	jar	1	VSL4
oven cleaner	can	2	MPL5
Pam	can	1	MPM1
pancake mix	2 lb.	1	MPL1
pancake mix	3.5 lbs.	1	MPM1
pancake mix	2 lb.	1	MPM3
pans, aluminum	each	1	MPM1
paper plates	pkg/25	3	MPM4
paper towels	roll	12	MPM4
peanut butter	jar	2	MPM1
peanut butter	jar	2	MSL4
peanuts	jar	1	VSL4
peas	can	4	MF4
pepperroni	3 oz.	1	MF4
peppers, jalapenos	can	4	MPL1
peppers, poblano	fresh	5	MPH2

peppers, serento	can	2	MPL1
pepprs, green	fresh	4	VPh3
pickles	jar	3	VSL4
pizza crust	box	1	MPM1
pizza crust	box	5	MPM2
pop corn	jar	1	VSL4
potatoes	1 lb	10	VPH1
Q-tips	box	1	HH1
raisins	bag	1	MPM1
raisins	bag	1	MPM3
razor, disposable	each	3	HH1
razor, electric-Braun	each	1	HH1
razor blades	each	21	HH1
rice	kg	3	MSL4
rice, brown	5 lb.	1	MPM1
rice, brown	2 lb.	1	MPM1
rice, white	5 lb.	2	MSM2
rice, white	5 lb.	1	VSM1
roast beef	can	1	MSL4
roast beef hash	can	4	MSL2
roast beef hash	can	1	MSL3
salad dressing	bottle	1	VSL4
salami	4 lb	1	MF4
salmon, canned	7.5 oz.	8	MSL3
salmon, canned	7.5 oz.	4	VMD1
salsa	jar	1	MPL1
salsa, verde	jar	1	MPM3
saniflush	can	1	HL
saran wrap	roll	1	MPM4
scour pads	each	13	MPH2
seal-a-meal bags	bunch	1	MPM1
shampoo	bottle	5	SM
shaving cream	can	1	HH2

shaving cream	can	1	SM
shortening	16 oz.	4	MF4
shrimp, canned	can	2	MSL1
shrimp, canned	can	6	MSL2
shrimp, canned	can	4	MSL3
sng, alfredo	pkg	1	MPM1
sng, beef stew	pkg	1	MPM1
sng, beef & broccoli	pkg	1	MPM1
sng, brown gravy	pkg	2	MPM1
sng, chicken gravy	pkg	2	MPM1
sng, chop suey	pkg	1	MPM1
sng, chow mein	pkg	1	MPM1
sng, fried rice	pkg	1	MPM1
sng, pepper	16 oz.	1	MSL3
sng, pesto	pkg	1	MPM1
sng, pork gravy	pkg	1	MPM1
sng, stir fry	pkg	1	MPM1
sng, taco	pkg	5	MPM1
soap, hand - Simple	bar	17	SM
soda, Pepsi	bottle	6	VPL4
soda, Pinafiel	bottle	42	VPL4
soda, tonic water	bottle	42	VPL4
soup, clam chowder	can	1	MSL3
soup, corn chowder	can	1	MSL2
soup, cream of aspargus	can	1	MPM3
soup, cream of celery	can	5	MPL4
soup, cream of celery	can	1	MSL2
soup, cream of chicken	can	2	MF4
soup, cream of tomatoe	can	1	MPM3
soup, cream/ckn & mshm	can		MPM3
soup, cup o'noodles	cup	4	MPM1
soup, cup o'noodles	cup	4	MSL4
soup, cup o'noodles	cup	2	VSL4

soup, mushroom	can	2	MF4
soup, mushroom	can	4	MPL3
soup, mushroom	can	1	MPL4
soup, nacho cheese	cup	1	MF4
soup, quahog	can	1	MSL2
soup, tomato	can	4	MPL3
soy sauce	bottle	1	MPL5
spaghetti	16 oz.	1	MPL1
spaghetti	16 oz.	2	MPL3
spaghetti	16 oz.	4	MPM1
spaghetti	200 gm.	1	MPM1
spaghetti	bag	1	MPM3
spaghetti sauce	15 oz.	2	MPH3
spaghetti sauce	32 oz.	1	MPH3
spaghetti sauce	15 oz.	1	MPL1
spaghetti sauce	15 oz.	1	MPM1
spaghetti sauce	15 oz.	1	VMD1
spaghetti sauce	15 oz.	2	VSL4
spice-allspice	bottle	1	MPL1
spice-cloves/ground	can	1	MPL1
spice-clove/whole	bottle	1	MPL1
spice-cummin	bottle	1	MPL1
spice-curry powder	bottle	1	MPL1
spice-dill weed	bottle	1	MPL1
spice-garden mint	bottle	1	MPL1
spice-ginger	bottle	1	MPL1
spice-mustard	bottle	0	MPL1
spice-mustard powder	bottle	1	MPL1
spice-oregano	bottle	1	MPL1
spice-rosemary	bottle	1	MPL1
spice-sesame seed	jar	1	MPL1
spice-sesame seed	bottle	1	MPL1
spice-tarragon	bottle	1	MPL1

spice-vanilla	bottle	1	MPL1
sponges	each	10	MPH2
sterno	can	3	MPM3
stew, beef	can	5	MSL1
sugar	2 kgs.	4	MPM3
sugar	5 lb.	1	MSM2
sugar	5 lb.	1	VSM1
sugar, brown	2 lb.	3	MSL4
sugar, confectioners	bag	1	GL
taco shells	pkg	1	MSM1
tampons	40	4	HM
Tang	9 qt.	7	MPL5
tea	100 bags	1	MPM3
tea	100 bags	3	MSM1
tea	100 bags	2	VMD1
toilet paper	rolls	26	HM
toilet paper	roll	24	MPM3
tomato paste	can	2	MPL5
tomato paste	can	1	MSL2
tomato paste	can	2	VMD1
tomato paste	can	4	VSL4
tomato paste, spicey	can	3	MPL5
tomato puree	can	2	MPL0
tomato sauce	can	6	MF4
tomato sauce	can	2	MPL0
tomato sauce	can	1	MPM3
tomatoes	fresh	7	MPH2
tomatoes	fresh	17	VPH1
tomatoes, whole	can	13	MPL3
tomatoes, whole	can	11	MPL4
tomatoes, whole	can	2	MSL2
tooth brush	each	9	HH1
tooth paste	tube	5	HH1

Top Shelf meal	box	4	MSL4
tortillas	pkg.	1	MSM1
towlettes	pkg.	1	MPM1
tuna	can	5	MPL1
tuna	can	2	MSL1
tuna	can	2	MSL2
tuna	can	6	MSL3
tuna	can	3	VMD1
turkey, canned	6.75 oz.	4	MSL2
turkey, canned	6.75 oz.	6	MSL2
turkey, canned	6.75 oz.	1	MSL3
turkey, canned	6.75 oz.	12	VMD1
vegetable, napolitos	jar	1	MPM3
vegetables, mixed	can	1	MPM3
vinegar, white	3.5 l.	1	MPL5
vinegar, wine	bottle	1	MPL5
vinegar, wine	bottle	1	MSM2
vitamins, cod liver	250 tabs	0	HH1
vitamins, lysine	100 tabs	1	HH1
vitamins, multiple	60 tabs	4	HH1
water chestnuts	8 oz.	5	MPL5
water chestnuts	8 oz.	3	MSL1
water chestnuts	8 oz.	4	MSL2
water sweetener	bottle	1	VSL4
wax paper	roll	2	MPM4
wine, blush	750 ml.	1	MPL5
wine, red	bottle	1	MPM3
wine, white	750 ml.	4	MPL5
yeast	pack	1	MSL4
yeast, jar	4 oz.	1	VSL4
TOTAL ITEMS		1510.4	

Baba BarAnn around the Pacific

Pacific Northwest Cruisers in Bora Bora - 1990

ick on thumbnails for full image

Charlie & Robin

Lyo-Lyok

Bob & Candace

Baba BarAnn

Chuck & Bev

Carina

Jim & Robin

Moko Jumby

Don & Joyce

Windy Thoughts

Greg & Jenny

Eagle

Justin, Steve
Heather & Thames

Nautical Wheeler

Keith & Liz

Pangea

Mike & Karla

Amazing Grace

Mike & Monique, Peter & Heather

Harmonie II

McNair & Bill

Begonia

Lotar

Billy Bones

Ken & Gloria with children

Atol

Greg, Kalen, Maria, Heidi, & Tyson

Tau

Ken & Carolyn

Clovelly

Kevin & Beth

Achates

Donna

Tetheys

Steve & Joyce

Flying Cloud

Peter & Regina

Chilcotin

Pat

Eelyos

Adolph & Rosemary

Rose'l