

NEWSLETTER # 17

January 1997

Dear Friends,

Greetings to you all from Loren and Georgia Murphy! We hope that this letter finds you well, prospering and at peace with the Lord.

Two things do not seem possible: #1. It has been almost two years since our last newsletter. #2. I celebrated my **60th** birthday two days ago! Neither of these events seem at all timely. Since I can't do much about the birthday event, I will see what I can do about the newsletter.

March 24, 1995 was the day our grandson Isaak Lawlor became a born-again believer in Jesus Christ. Hallelujah! Cody, Sophie and Wayne's son, accepted the Lord last year!

May, 1995 saw Georgia and I moving from the Kidd Island House to the family homestead in Casco Bay. The family had rented the Kidd Island House to a lovely couple from Arizona who wanted to rent for several years with the option to buy. There was a lot of work to be done on the Casco house and we spent most of May making it habitable.

The first part of June we drove across the USA for a CHRISTIAN BOATERS ASSOCIATION (CBA) board of directors meeting, which was held in Annapolis, Maryland. We spent the remainder of the month visiting friends in Virginia who are also in boat ministry.

Home improvement was the order of the day when we returned to the Casco House. For those who might not remember, Casco Bay has no road access and is a 1-1/2 mile boat ride from Coeur d'Alene. (Murphy's are usually found near a body of water – I read somewhere that, historically, the 'Murphy Clan' were *sea warriors*). It was also time to cut up and stack six cord of wood for our winter supply. An early flood in February necessitated moving the wood from the beach to the lawn to keep it from floating away. A group of the youth from church came equipped with waders and rubber boots and saved day.

A job of remodeling my brother Skip and Sue's kitchen brought us through the winter and then in the spring I started working full time for Murphy Tug and Barge Co. operating the tugs and building marinas, etc.

In May, 1996, we were invited to our niece, Glenna's wedding in Richmond, Virginia. Since we were also planning to be at the CBA conference in June we decided to spend that time on the east coast.

About this time we were in contact with our friends Bob and Fi Doe, who live in Bermuda. We had been in correspondence with them for several years previously as they were sailing in the Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea areas. We asked Bob if he would be a speaker at the CBA conference and if we could fly over and spend some time with them before the conference. Bob called back several days later and said YES if we would consider sailing to the conference with them on their schooner "CHRISTIAN VENTURER". I was hoping he would suggest that! **Of course we can!!**

We hopped into our trusty Mazda 626 and in four days had covered the 3000 miles from Coeur d'Alene to Richmond, Virginia. After the wedding we caught a flight to Bermuda.

Bob and Fi picked us up at the airport and drove us to the pier, in St. George, where their small fishing boat was moored. We motored 3/4 mile across St. George's Harbor to Smith's Is. where they have leased some acreage and two ancient stone cottages. As we approached the pier we passed by "CHRISTIAN VENTURER" swinging on her hurricane mooring in the bay. She was a fine looking, no nonsense, 57 foot, three masted schooner. We loaded our gear on the golf cart at the pier and rode up the narrow track to the cottage on the top of the island. In the middle of a grassy space among some palm trees was a light blue stone cottage with a whitewashed roof. Very picturesque! Most all the homes in Bermuda have whitewashed roofs because they catch all their water and collect it into cisterns under their houses. Bob and Fi had just recently moved off the boat and were still in the process of remodel and repair of the cottage. The guest room, however, had just been completed and was wonderful. I'm sure the paint had just finished drying as they were on the way to the airport! The next two days were a national holiday in Bermuda so we rested and planned how to make "CHRISTIAN VENTURER" ready to sail. She had not been on a crossing for four years and needed some cleaning up and checking over.

Bob's daughter Jenny and her fiancé David came to help. They were going to sail with us. In two weeks the boat was ready to sail and *David had become a born again believer* in the midst of the work!

We were invited to a luncheon and we all went except for Jenny who had to work. Several other couples were there and we had a good time meeting them. After lunch Bob and David had a lengthy discussion in the kitchen. When they returned it was time for us to go. Before leaving we gathered around for prayer. I glanced at David as a woman was praying. He had a very puzzled look on his face. As we were leaving David asked me if I had noticed anything when *that* woman prayed. I hadn't. He said he couldn't understand what she prayed but this strange feeling was all over him. The next day David could hardly wait to tell us what had happened on the way home from the luncheon. He was diving home when all of a sudden he began to shake violently and the shaking became so bad he thought he might have a wreck. He pulled off the road and broke into weeping. He wept a while and then got himself together and started for home once again. The shaking started again and he had to pull off and wept some more. The third time the same thing happened and after weeping for a while he said "**Lord, I surrender my life to You**". A great peace came over him and he knew the LORD had heard him; David was **born again!** David also said that an anger he had felt for many years was taken away. Praise the Lord!

We set sail at noon, Saturday, and as we passed Ordnance Island, Bob fired a cannon salute, **KABOOOOOMMMM!!!** And we were on our way.

Our passage to the East Coast took four days. Our original port of call was to be Norfolk, Virginia, however, on our second day out we heard on the SSB that there was an intense low developing over Norfolk. To miss the low we changed course for Morehead City, North Carolina, which was 200 miles south of Norfolk. The passage was made entirely on the port tack! With moderate winds we made good time. Several fish were hauled in for our meals but one got away after about 20 minutes fighting him to within 50' of the boat. With one great lunge the fish ripped the eye out of the lure and was gone. He was about five feet long! The only tense time we had on the passage was crossing the Gulf Stream with its attendant lightning storms. These storms surrounded us for several hours with lightning drilling into the sea all about us.

Before we arrived in port the next morning we had a short stop just off shore to give thanks to the Lord for a safe journey and to have a communion service together. It was a blessing! After clearing with the

customs official at Morehead City, we headed up the ICW (Inter Coastal Waterway) for the two day cruise to Norfolk and Newport News where the CBA Conference was to be held.

The conference was a success. With over one hundred in attendance there were many new people to meet. Bob Doe spoke about their sailing into the Black Sea and on to Odessa and how God provided for them in that remote place. Avi Heyns, whom we had written about in NEWSLETTER # 16, had flown up from St. Maarten and told of their encounter with Hurricane Louis. It was a horrendous experience. Their boat, "PETACH TIKVA", was the only boat in their immediate area left standing upright. Over 800 boats were sunk in that lagoon! "PETACH TIKVA" became a haven for some of the people who had lost their boats. Avi said that it was such a privilege to be able to share the love of Jesus and to comfort those who had lost everything. There were many facets to the conference such as the share tables where many ministries had displays; a dance troupe as part of the worship one evening; quality time with new and old friends; important and meaningful contacts made; etc... At the end of the conference we all felt blessed and encouraged.

Back in Coeur d'Alene it was time to get to work on the lake again and also start getting in the winter's wood. We bought a new wood stove to replace the old **WOOD BURNER** we had used for years and I don't think we will burn nearly as much wood this year.

It was also time to take our pastor sailing. While at the CBA conference one of the speakers said if you really want to get your church interested in the boat ministry take your pastor sailing! We thought that this was such a good idea that we chartered the 45 foot ketch on the lake and invited our pastor, his wife and other leaders of the church for a cruise. It was a great time and a successful venture!

At the end of September Murray Frew called us from the Solomon Islands. He asked if we could come down to Hong Kong and sail a donated boat to Honiara, Solomon Islands, for the South Pacific Bible Society. The 51foot ketch "SOUTHERN CROSS" had been donated to them for outreach in the Pacific. Murray said that he was so tied up with administering the work that he couldn't skipper the boat himself. We had met Murray, Robyn and their family while we sailed "AMERICAN FLYER" in the South Pacific. They were also in boat ministry aboard "EL SHADDAI", a ferro cement sloop, which they had been sailing into the islands to work with the local churches.

Georgia and I prayed about the request, then I checked with Skip about work and finally I called pastor Larry. We had a green light to go! There was a flurry of arrangements; get tickets, finish the wood pile, winterize the house and be in Hong Kong by October 20. That's less than three weeks! One thing is for sure, we are NOT taking as much as we did when we went to South Africa. But the HAM radio, antenna, GPS and guitar have to go. We just need enough stuff for two months.

Our home group really surprised us with a bon voyage party and several other home groups joined in. What a blessing.

On October 19, Brenda and the boys delivered us to the Spokane Airport amidst the first real snow flurry of the season. We flew to Seattle and then caught Air Canada to Vancouver and on to Hong Kong. We liked Air Canada's service and equipment.

Murray met us at the Airport. We caught a taxi and in a half hour we were standing on the pier, in the rain, in the dark, trying to signal to Lowell who was watching for us from the boat. We were several hours later than expected because our flight was a bit late and we had lost one of our bags, which

showed up two days later. Lowell finally arrived at the pier in the dingy and after two trips we were all aboard "SOUTHERN CROSS". After a visit with Murray and Lowell and quick look around the boat it wasn't long before we were in our bunk and fast asleep. It had been a long day!

Lowell and his wife Helen have been living in Honiara for three years and are starting a YWAM (Youth With A Mission) Base there. When Murray mentioned he needed crew to bring the boat to Honiara, Lowell volunteered. They had owned a farm in Minnesota and he was quite familiar with maintaining diesel engines and equipment.

The following day Murray went to fetch the rest of the crew who had flown in from New Zealand. Pastor Colin, David and Richard from Rhema Church in Whangarei, New Zealand, made up the rest of our crew. Murray would not be sailing with us because SPBS work required him to return soon to Honiara.

In May, Murray had flown to Hong Kong to receive the boat from the owner who was a pilot for Cathay Pacific Airlines. He also met with a crew which had flown in from New Zealand and Australia to help on the boat. There was much work needing to be done on the boat since it had been used mainly as an apartment for the former owner when he was in the Hong Kong area. After three weeks of work the crew was ready to set sail but the typhoon season had started and so they had to abandon their plans and fly back to their homes. I'm sure that they were quite disappointed that they couldn't make the passage. Lord, bless them for their labors on the boat.

The following morning we committed our work to the Lord and then made a close inspection of the vessel making a list of things needing to be done. Some of the major items were: Replace the mainmast mast step. We had noticed that the stays (cables that keep the mast from falling over) on the mainmast were slack and on inspection discovered that the base of the mast had settled into the supporting timber. It was rotten and mushy! We removed the rotten timber and replaced it with reinforcing steel and concrete. No more settling there!; patch the muffler; Murray and Lowell spent a lot of time in the engine compartment; check out and replace a lot of wiring (Richard's specialty); install my HAM radio and antenna; inspect all the rigging; attempt to get the new SSB working (didn't happen!); install my Garmin GPS 75 at the helm; buy new second anchor; etc... We all pitched in and in a week and a half we were ready to set sail.

While working on the boat we took a day off and caught the MTR (Mass Transit Railroad) and went into Hong Kong. We needed to pick up some parts for the boat and this afforded us the opportunity to see 'The City'. It took about 45 minutes to get there from Heve Harbor Yacht Club in New Territories, where the boat was anchored. We did a lot of walking, saw a LOT of people and actually found what we were looking for! We were all pretty tired by the time we returned to the boat. On Sunday we fellowshipped at 'The Resurrection Church' which was sponsoring the donation of the "SOUTHERN CROSS". We met some of the people who were taking an active interest in the boat and who had purchased the new Radar, GPS and SSB.

The day before we were to set sail we received a FAX from our daughter Brenda telling us that many were praying for us and the crew, but the head line was that our grandson IAN HAD ACCEPTED THE LORD!! What a wonderful send off gift from the LORD!

Other members of the crew had received Fax's too and Richard heard that his wife was pregnant with their fourth child!

It was time to go! Murray cast off our dock lines and waved goodbye to us and we were on our way. It wasn't long before we had all sail up and were motor sailing at 6.5kn. We wanted to clear the major shipping lanes before night settled in.

Murray had suggested we have daily devotions when we began working on the boat. We all agreed that it was a great idea. It was my turn this particular evening. I shared the scripture; *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity!"* I reminded us all that we are commanded not to let the sun go down on our anger. Christians need to keep short accounts and if we have anything against another we need to resolve it quickly so that it won't fester and blow out of proportion. A passage on a small boat is like being in a crucible. It can pin point our weaknesses and highlight our strengths. Let us then have patience and love for one another and humbly bring correction to those of us who might need it. Lord, as the captain of this vessel, I ask Your blessing to be with us and to go before us. As we cross these waters to deliver this vessel into Your ministry, grant us success! In Jesus name I pray. Amen!

As we pushed out into the South China Sea the winds began to pick up and we were able to shut down the engine. Ah, the lovely sound of Sailing! By the second day we had taken down the mizzen sail and the jib, leaving the main and staysail up, the wind had picked up to 18-20kn. None of the men had been to sea before but they were eager and learning the ropes quickly. The next day the wind was 20-25kn. I was up on watch when I heard something and I looked up and saw that the mainsail had ripped its stitching loose on the third panel from the top. I called the crew to the deck and they got the sail down before any further damage was done. I headed the boat off the wind as they brought the spare mainsail on deck and within two hours we had it up with a double reef and were back on course. The seas were six to eight feet and rather sharp, possibly a counter current, so we went onto the starboard tack which gave us a better angle on the waves and a better ride.

The Lord gave us a beautiful Sunday with fair winds and sunny skies. We were sailing parallel to the Philippine Coast, about 25 miles off shore. After the last four days of rough going we were reveling in the fine weather. As we sailed along we acquired seven additional passengers! Seven sparrows landed in the rigging and before very long they were checking out the deck. They decided they would stay awhile and checked out the galley too. It was a lovely sail and we could see land off to the port and as evening settled in we could also see some lightning storms ahead of us.

I was on watch at 2100hrs and suddenly a cold wind hit my back. I shouted down below for all hands on deck. By the time they were on deck the wind had increased a bunch. I shouted to be heard above the noise of the squall for them to let all the halyards go and get the sails down ASAP! By this time we were engulfed in a furious lightning squall. David got the jib down and had to sit on it until somebody could help him tie it down. I managed to get the mizzen down while steering the boat. Lowell, Colin and Richard tackled the main. They had to pull it part of the way down because the strong wind had it jammed against the rigging. They battled to gather the sail onto the boom so it could be tied down and not be shredded by the wind. Georgia was below closing all the portholes and hatches and hanging on. Lightning was flashing all around us and the wind was blowing the wave foam and torrential rain horizontally across our deck. By the time we had all the sails tied down and regrouped, the squall had blown by! We motored the rest of the night.

The next morning, as we discussed the storm exercise, Richard pointed out that every time a major event had taken place, requiring decisive action, I had been on watch! That's the grace of God!

Later we saw a ship about three miles away heading north. Three of our sparrows saw it too and flew directly for it. The last three, we must have lost one during the storm, had adopted us and made themselves very much at home. That night Georgia and I were sleeping. I rolled over and my arm brushed something. **Chirp! chirp! chirp! chirp! flap flap chirp! flap flap chirp!** Then this little bundle of ruffled feathers landed on my bare chest in an eight point (clawed) landing!! It took a couple of swats to get that critter to dislodge from my chest..... I don't know what Georgia was thinking....giant sea monster attack? or Pirates?....but I assured her that *I had everything under control.*

The next morning we arrived at Puerto Galera, Philippine Is. Our crossing of the South China Sea had taken six days. Thank you Lord, for a safe crossing! As we picked up the mooring in front of town I noticed our three little feathered friends fly off towards the beautiful palm trees, gently swaying in the breeze beckoning to them.

Puerto Galera is a beautiful little port, one of the best typhoon anchorages in the Philippines, and very active with 'bunkas' zooming this way and that, ferrying islanders to their villages. Bunkas are long, narrow boats with outriggers on each side that are indigenous to these islands. They take very little power to move them along at 15 to 20kn (knots). PG is also home port for a hydrofoil ferry and the Sea Cat ferry.

After getting "SOUTHERN CROSS" shipshape Colin and David went ashore to have a look around. I rowed over to the Puerto Galera Yacht Club and met Dave, who was the manager. I figured if anybody in the area should know where to find parts and material it would be the YC manager. Dave said, if we were sailing through to the east, we could probably get the sail repaired in Cebu. As far as exhaust pipe and fittings, we would probably have to get them from Manila. The iceman is at the pier every morning at 7:30 'when' he comes?, and the water at the end of the YC pier is safe and the best in town. We can fill our tanks at no charge! He invited us all to come over and use the hot showers and said they serve great meals there in the evening.

Back on the boat, Colin and David were excited about the time they had spent with a local pastor and an elder of a small church in town. I told everybody about the hot showers and **COLD cokes** that were waiting for them at the Yacht Club. Dave had a policy that for new arrivals the first drink was on the house! Georgia squealed with delight at the thought of a hot shower. While sailing, the men had opportunity to put on their swim suits and shower on deck in the rain storms but Georgia felt to intimidated to try. The first dinghy load headed for the YC had Georgia and me onboard.

While inspecting the rigging the next day we found that the termites had paid special attention to the bow sprit. We spotted some loose bolts where the staysail boom bracket was fastened and discovered that the termites had honeycombed the inside of the sprit. It was only a shell that appeared to be a solid, OK, sprit! We could push a screwdriver clear in to its handle in several places! If the bow sprit had collapsed the main mast would have fallen over backwards and probably taken out the mizzen mast with it!! I'm sure there must have been at least a half dozen angels hanging onto the bow sprit in that violent squall just off Manila Bay two nights ago!

Back in Hong Kong, Colin had begun displaying a real talent as a "**go-fer**" (One who seems to be able to find what ever items you need, no matter where you are). We turned our secret weapon loose on Puerto Galera! By that afternoon Colin and David returned with some angle iron and long bolts to reinforce the bow sprit; some heavy wall ("SUPER") PVC pipe and fittings to replace the exhaust pipe

(this is a wet exhaust system which doesn't get hot); and **cold coles** for every one. Such a Talent!! Colin had checked with the pastor as soon as he got ashore and the elder was the very man who had the tools and material we needed for the bow sprit and he knew where to find the 'SUPER' PVC for the exhaust. Talk about connections!

With the bow sprit reinforced, the exhaust system repaired and the other misc. items done, we were ready to sail within three days but a typhoon warning kept us two more days. The harbor filled up with small ships, the bunkas were staying in port and a Philippine gun boat also sought refuge there. The Typhoon went directly over us but we were in "a safe harbor"!

The HAM radio was a very important piece of equipment for this trip. I was able to get up to the minute weather reports for our local area from the HAM Nets and also glean important information about where to anchor and where to find parts along the way, etc.. It was from Rowdy's Net (14.320 @ 0000GMT) in Thailand, that I was put in contact with Mike Allen, in the Cebu area, who could help us to get our sail repaired when we sailed there. A little later on, after I had contacted Murray by phone from PG, I was able to keep in touch with him through Robbie's Net (14.315 @ 1000GMT) in Australia. Murray's neighbor, Fred H44FB, who works for Wycliff Bible Translators, helped in receiving our messages. When we couldn't talk to Murray direct, because of poor radio conditions, a HAM would relay for us. Tim, KT4RG in Guam, was there when ever we needed a relay. Our BASE STATION- IDAHO, **Whiskey Alpha 7 Radio Boston X-ray** (WA7RBX) Lonnie Spier, who had been our contact on many voyages, try as he might could not contact us. There was silence from state side. I could not hear a single state side HAM operator during the whole passage except for one in Hawaii! We sure did try didn't we Lonnie!

Two days later as we were sailing along the east coast of Cebu, nearing the small port of Carmen, we were on a collision course with a large rain squall. I could see on the radar that it had two rather intense cells in it. I prayed, "Lord make a way for us!" The two cells separated and we sailed right thru the middle in moderate wind! Shortly after we passed through, a dark angry looking water spout (tornado over water) touched down about half a mile behind us and tore up the sea for several minutes. Phew!! That's close enough!

We dropped anchor in the Port of Carmen at midday and then Richard and I took the hand held GPS and rowed to shore, right on course for Mike Allen's house. Mike had given me the coordinates of his house earlier. Then on foot we continued on course until we eventually found his house. Their house boy said Mike was not there but he would tell him we were anchored in the bay and he could get in touch with us by VHF radio. That evening Mike made arrangements to pick me and the sail up at the pier in the morning and take me to the canvas shop in Cebu.

In the morning I was off on an adventure. I left the crew with some work to do and loaded the sail into the back of a WWII jeep which had been rebuilt and rebuilt and rebuilt! We headed off to Cebu City! Bouncing down the roads dodging potholes, tricycles, jeepnees and people answered my question of why it would take 1-1/2 to two hours to drive (*dodge, swerve or take evasive action is more like it*) 20 miles to the city. I'm sure glad that I wasn't driving! We stopped at Mikes business along the way. The Boat Shop is where Mike builds cruising catamarans. He had a forty footer in the shop which he was commissioning soon and it was impressive. Pedro was going into the city to pick up some supplies for Mike and so I transferred the sail and myself into his 1965 Chevy pickup. Off we went. Now, several notches up on the highway hierarchy, we only had to dodge the jeepnees, trucks and busses. The

tricycles and pedestrians dodged us! We made it to the canvas shop and Boy said he could have the sail repaired by tomorrow afternoon for 750 Pesos. (\$27.78US).

On our return trip I asked Pedro if he was religious? "Oh yes, I'm Catholic!" I asked if he was born again? "Oh no, Born again go to a different church." I told him that I was born again with Jesus as my Lord and Savior and that I had several Catholic friends that were also born again. He was puzzled about that. I asked if he read the Bible? I told him that Jesus says in the Bible that unless you are born again you will not go to heaven! You can be Protestant, Pentecostal or Catholic but unless you are born again you are not saved! When you get home tonight look in your Bible at the Gospel of John, chapter 3. Before you read it ask God to help you understand what it is saying. Pedro said that he would.

By 1330 the next day we had sailed from Carmen and were approaching the Cebu Yacht Club. We dropped our anchor and backed in to the pier between two boats and secured our lines just as a squall hit. Thanks to Walter, who was on the pier to catch our lines, we beat the storm. It made more sense to sail to the Cebu Yacht Club, which was just a short taxi ride from the canvas shop and I wouldn't have the ordeal of the long drive from Carmen again. There was also fuel on the dock and a supermarket nearby. We needed to provision and fuel here since our next port would be a two week sail away.

Sail slides! That is a story in its self, I'll try to make it short: Sail slides are what hold the sail onto the mast. When the mainsail tore, the sail slides, being old and brittle plastic, began to break off at the top of the sail, continuing to the bottom of the sail. You might say, the sail unzipped from the mast! Sail slides are a rare commodity most anywhere and non-existent in the Philippines. Through the Net, while we were still in Puerto Galera, I contacted Roger, a HAM in Hong Kong, who called Anthony, our contact there. Roger told him that we needed some sail slides sent to Cebu and it was important that they be sent FEDEX. Everybody warned us not to use DHL because customs and fees were always a hassle and they were always late. The following day Roger said that the slides were on the way. Several days later we arrived at Cebu Yacht Club and there were no slides there. I contacted Roger again and he found out that they had been sent DHL! DHL had promised Anthony that the slides would be there on Tuesday, a day earlier than FEDEX. Tuesday morning I decided we would sail the following morning, sail slides or not. We spent the day fueling up and getting stores onboard. About mid day I called DHL and Mark told me that they had found our shipment in Manila and they could have it down here in a couple of days. He gave me the name of a customs broker who would help us with the customs fees and clearances. I said that we were 'a vessel in transit' and that there should not be any customs fees! He said to check back tomorrow. I hung up the phone and as I walked to the boat, a bit discouraged, I said, "Lord, I have done all I can do. You know what we need. I just commit this whole thing to You!"

The chores on the boat were mostly done so Richard and Colin went for a walk. About an hour and a half later, I was puttering around on deck getting things shipshape, when Colin called from the pier. I turned around and he held up a package. "**Here are your sail slides!!!**" *I about fell off the deck!*

Colin and Richard had decided to go to the left, they had been to the right many times. They hadn't gone far before they saw a DHL office. They stopped in and asked if there was a package for Loren Murphy on the yacht "SOUTHERN CROSS"? The agent checked the latest shipment, just in from Manila, and no there wasn't. Well, it was worth a try they thought and continued on their walk. About fifteen minutes later, as they were walking along the road, they heard a motorcycle coming up behind them. It stopped. "Are you from the "SOUTHERN CROSS"?" "Yes!" "Here's your package!" And away he went! **No invoice! No customs! No fees!** I'm beginning to believe in angels! Yes, even (Heavens) angels on motorcycles.

Four hundred miles from Manila to Cebu in less than two hours!..... Is Colin a 'AAA' GOFER or what!... Well,*somebody* had to receive that package from '*whoever*' was on the motorcycle

The Cebu Yacht Club was a new venture and Walter, who lived on the 40' sloop next to us, was advising the owners on how to set up the marina. Since Walter was a single we invited him over that evening for Bible study and refreshments. He arrived with his German Bible in hand and thoroughly enjoyed the evening. He said that it had been too long since he had been able to have a good spiritual discussion. The people around the marina had other 'things' on their minds. He came for dinner the following evening and joined in our devotions. Naturally, the topic was about being 'born again'. We discerned that he probably was not born again but felt constrained from challenging him on the issue. By the end of our stay we had developed a warm relationship with Walter and I believe he was sad to see us go. We prayed that the Lord would send a believer to help him into the Kingdom.

We sailed through the islands. Southern Mindanao is where all the piracy activity is so we sailed to the north of it. Then, the "BIG BRINEY" as some call it, the Great Pacific Ocean lay before us! Approximately 2000 nautical miles to our next landfall in Papua New Guinea. That equates to two weeks sailing in good conditions.

As we launched out from the Philippines into the Pacific, the winds were light and from the northeast, on our beam. We motor sailed along at 1100 rpm and according to the GPS we were making 5.5 knots over the ground, a very economical and easy speed for the engine. The seas were quite passive. (Pacific!) At this speed we can cover 132 nautical miles in a 24hr day. The next day we averaged 6kn – 144nm per day. The following day another 0.5kn increase. A phenomenon was taking place. From my sailing experience, (close to 40,000 ocean miles) I can say that the wind and sea conditions didn't warrant the increased boat speed. The rpm had stayed the same and the wind had picked up only slightly. The daily increase of boat speed continued until we were doing 8.5kn! I had even slowed the engine to 1050rpm and it didn't seem to have any appreciable effect. We covered 204 nm that day! During that 24hr period there was a stretch where we averaged 9.0kn for several hours. Colin logged 18nm on his two hour watch! He took the prize! The only response I can have is that the Lord had a schedule for us down the line and we were not going to make it without some Divine Assistance!

As we approached the equator there was zero (0.00) wind! The sea was like an undulating mirror. It was hot. The only breeze we felt was that which was made by boat speed. The only shade was the bimini over the cockpit. That's where most of us could be found. Georgia would go below to prepare a meal, having to rush up on deck several times to cool off before it was cooked. Motoring in the tropics is a hot proposition! Georgia certainly takes honors for her perseverance in the galley. She definitely had the hardest crew position of us all. I'm proud of her!

Georgia had to take a break from her preparations of Thanksgiving Dinner to come on deck just in time to witness the rest of the crew jumping off the boat! We had come to a stop right on the equator. We could see the dotted line and Richard jumped right on it! (snicker, snicker). Georgia also kept a lookout for *anyunder water predators*! None of us strayed far from the boat.

:::Some of you may remember that the last time I was swimming at the equator was two years ago off the coast of Brazil. That was when I was retrieving the sails off "PETACH TIKVA" after the dismasting! There were three overly interested sharks that time!:::

Thanksgiving dinner was wonderful. With pineapple glazed ham, sweet potatoes, yams, green beans, fruit salad and a dessert of chocolate pudding' with whipped cream! Georgia out did herself on this meal. I did notice a few helping hands in the galley.

A Thanksgiving blessing Georgia and I received was the *telephone call to Brenda!* That morning, in our prayer time, we asked the Lord if it was at all possible we sure would like to talk with our family on this Thanksgiving Day. After we had dinner I went below just to check for a possible HAM who could patch us through to Brenda. Within a few minutes I had picked up a strong station from Hawaii. This was the first station that we had heard from 'stateside' since we left Hong Kong! Bob Larsen, WDOCGP, operating the BFO Net (Blessings For Obedience Net), could hear me and asked where I was located. Once he knew my location was on the equator near the Admiralty Islands he turned his beam antenna in our direction and told me that my signal was strong enough for a phone patch! O' Hallelujah! Brenda answered and was excited to hear from us. She could hear us but due to a malfunction in the phone patch gear, we could not hear her, so Bob repeated her conversation to us. She told us of the ice-storm which had hit the area and that our house and trees had **not** been damaged! She was giving the "***Where in the World are Loren and Georgia Murphy?***" report regularly at church and many were praying for us! I told her that just before getting on the radio we had spotted several pods of Killer Whales. Some of them had diverted our way and made some quick passes under and alongside our boat before continuing on their way! We wanted her to pass on to everybody that there was great unity onboard and all was well! We expected to be in Rabaul, New Britain Island, Papua New Guinea in four days.

The day after Thanksgiving we could see the Admiralty Islands in the distance off to starboard. The following day we could see the north end of New Ireland off to Port. Two more days put us into the port of Rabaul on the island of New Britain, Papua New Guinea.

There had been some confusing reports about Rabaul. Those whom we had talked to on the HAM Net and in various ports had said that Rabaul was destroyed by a volcano eruption two years ago! Based on these reports I had planned to refuel at Manus Is., in the Admiralty Group. In a conversation with Murray on the HAM radio, as we were leaving the Philippines, he informed me that he had made arrangements, with the High Commissioner of Papua New Guinea, for us to clear directly into Rabaul for fuel and supplies???

As we approached New Britain we could see numerous volcanoes which looked like they had been dormant for quite some time. As we rounded the point of land that protected the harbor a volcano appeared on our starboard which had the side blown out and was still steaming. On the opposite side of the harbor loomed a huge cinder cone which had obviously erupted very recently. We made a right hand turn and motored between the two volcanoes and on into the main harbor. There before us was 'half a city'! The area to our right hand was destroyed and that to our left virtually untouched. Over fifty thousand people had been displaced by this twin eruption. The volcano on our right erupted at 6:00am and the one across the harbor erupted at 7:00am! Talk about a double whammy! The commercial docks survived.

I called the Port Captain on the VHF for clearance instructions and he said to anchor near the sailboats off to our right and dinghy to the pier for customs clearance. I thought, that's over half a mile to the pier, I bet he thinks we have a motor for the dinghy. It would make more sense to go and tie to the pier and check in!... That's when the Holy Spirit pitched in and He reminded me of that oily anchorage in

Carmen. I had been grouching about that too! And how He had blessed us with all the help we needed to get the sail repaired! Ok! Ok! *We anchor near the sailboats!*

As Colin and I headed off in the dinghy we heard a shout from shore. Jeff had just come to check on his sailboat and wondered if we could use a ride to the customs? Jeff's sailboat's name was "EVANGELOS" and he was a missionary here from Australia. He had been here with his family for three years and was a friend of the port officials! We got through with customs very quickly and then he dropped me off to make arrangements for fuel. He took Colin to get tickets to fly to New Zealand since Colin had a wedding he was obligated to do in four days. They came back and picked me up and dropped us off at the boat. While motoring to the pier Colin told us that someone had already arranged his flight to NZ and it had been prepaid! We had to wait for a ship to move off the fuel dock so we tied to the pier. Jeff arrived in his pickup and took Richard and Georgia to buy the meat, etc. at the store while Lowell and David went to the market for fruit and veggies. While they were away the Port Captain came by on his launch and gave us our clearance papers. Everybody arrived back from shopping at the same time as the ship moved from the fuel dock. As we fueled up, Colin packed his gear and got off to spend the night at Jeff's house. Jeff was going to give him a ride to the airport in the morning..... Connections!

We said our farewell's, dropped our lines and motored away from the fuel dock. It was 1800hrs. We were on our way just 4-1/2 hours after we had arrived! Got to be some kind of record!

On our 2-1/2 day run to Gizo, our entry port into the Solomon Islands, we sailed into a pod of humpback whales. They were on both sides of us and they were big! Later, I saw a strange object protruding up out of the sea. Then more appeared from the sea. They were dolphin tails! They were standing on their heads, treading water, with their tails 3 to 4 feet above the sea! They would stay in this position for 15-20 seconds and then slowly slide back into the water. I could count up to a dozen at any one time. A very unusual sight!

Our arrival at Gizo was 0830hrs and we dropped anchor in front of the market. It wasn't long before Murray came along side in a canoe and said he hadn't expected us until around noon. He went to find the port officials who agreed to check us in even though it was a 'holiday'! He returned shortly with four officials in tow and we ferried them out in the dinghy. About two hours later, with a severe case of writers cramp, the paper work was complete. We could now move down to the pier in front of the hotel and be officially greeted by the various church leaders and island dignitaries complete with a Solomon Island dance team and flower leis. As we motored over to the pier Georgia made it VERY clear that she was not going to entertain any guests on this boat until she had a shower. *She had not had one **in two weeks!*** Murray had a shocked look on his face and as soon as we arrived at the pier he ran up to the hotel and made arrangements for showers! She was the first one in. What a transformation a hot shower can make!

After picking up some supplies we set sail on our final leg to Honiara. We wanted to be clear of the reefs around Gizo before dark. It was good to be able to visit with Murray on this two day passage and hear of his vision for increasing the flow of the Word of God in the islands. One of his ideas, which I thought quite innovative, was setting up a bible bookstore on a large 400 passenger ferry that tours the Solomon Islands every week.

The dock lines were secure to the pier in Honiara at 0530hrs, Sunday, December 8, 1996. THE VOYAGE was completed! The vessel had been delivered to its new home port. Our work was done! Thank you Lord!.....

It wasn't long before Murray's wife Robyn and Becky, Amanda, Joseph and Lara, their children and Lowell's wife, Helen, had arrived to have a tour of the boat. They were very impressed by the wonderful gift of "SOUTHERN CROSS"! Murray and Robyn packed us into the van and drove us up to their house on a ridge overlooking the harbor. While the crew took turns in the shower, we had a short visit with Robyn, Becky and the kids and then we were off! First to the church service, then a whirlwind tour of Honiara with Murray behind the wheel and then down to the boat which we moved from the pier into the anchorage at the yacht club. Georgia and I were then dropped off at Lowell and Helen's which was to be home for us the next two days. That evening there was a feast at the church to give thanks for our safe journey and for the gift of the boat.

The following day Murray gave us a tour of the two bible book stores that he operates and manages for the Bible Society. The book stores were nicely displayed with bright colors and a large variety of books and bibles to choose from. There was a steady stream of customers while we were there. Later we went to the boat and packed up our gear and officially moved off "SOUTHERN CROSS".

Lowell and Helen drove us to the airport the next morning. David and Richard arrived with the Frews. Murray had given us our return tickets the day before, *at no cost to us!* We were especially sad to say goodbye to the Frew Family. When we first decided to come on this journey we had hoped to be able to spend some quality time with them! Well Lord, you know! Bless them!

We arrived in Auckland, New Zealand in the afternoon and Sarah Watchman was waiting for us. I had called her from Honiara to see if she could put us up for a night or two. Our relationship with Sarah began in 1986 when we landed in New Zealand aboard "AMERICAN FLYER". We met her while helping to birth MARITIME MINISTRIES, New Zealand. Sarah was very actively employed in sailing the tall ships at that time and is now working for the NZ Coast Guard teaching navigation courses, etc. We saw her last June at the CBA Conference in Virginia. We had a nice visit before Sarah had to leave to teach a navigation course and give an exam up north in Whangarei. As she ran out the door she handed us the house keys and said she would be back in three days.

As Sarah drove away, Georgia and I sat down with a sigh! It had been over seven weeks since we had been on our own and the peace and quiet was almost too much to comprehend. *The Lord takes good care of us!*

The remainder of the week we put 800 kilometers on a rental car as we drove to visit our friends on the North Island. It was an encouraging time.

Our flight back to Spokane was eighteen hours counting our stops in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Brenda and the boys were waiting for us in Spokane. What a joy to see them again! It was December 17. We had been gone for *a very fast* two months!

We spent the night at Brenda and Jack's and the following morning I called Skip for a ride. He picked us up with the tugboat and delivered us to Casco Bay. Across the lake, up the dock and into the house. HOME AGAIN!

The next morning my reading in the Bible was:

Ps 46:10 " *Be still*, and know that I am GOD; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

Isa 40:31 ...*they that wait* upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Isa 41:1 Keep silence before me, O islands; and *let the people renew their strength*: let them come near; then let them speak.

God bless you all!

Loren and Georgia Murphy

PLEASE NOTE NEW ADDRESS:

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