

## [The Niuse for August, 2009](#)

**IV/AIDS TALK----MALARIA TESTING AND MEDS--LISA & CAMERON----THE WEDDING---  
BALLANTYNES--- HONIARA AND THE RECOMPRESSION CHAMBER--TRACY AND TONY----FLU  
SEASON-----OCEANS WATCH-----MEG & MATT----TESTIMONY NEEDED-----YOUTUBE**

Hi, Everyone,

As I begin this month's missive, it's 5 a.m., and wild and stormy- high surf, strong winds and drenching rains. I was on my way down to check the boat, when I saw Peter's light. Sent him down instead loaded with thermos of hot water, coffee mix, muffins, and warm sweater for Ashley, who watches the boat at night. Do NOT want to repeat last month's episode of a sunken boat. July has been a very strange month, with little diving for me, personally, but lots of other activities. Susan Paxton, ( see June Nius), generously volunteered, to spend her last evening here giving a talk on HIV/AIDS to our villagers. Her information was detailed and crucial, as there is so much false information floating around on the Coconut Nius Network ( our answer to, and sometimes more efficient than, CNN News). I was so impressed I met with her the next morning, reviewed facts, and put together a 4 page Q & A paper and have been disseminating it as widely as possible. Every HS and college young person who went back to school after holidays took a copy. I also noticed the condom jar in the library was quite empty.

Also on the medical track, on my last trip to Honiara, I procured both the new Rapid Detection Tests ( RDT's) and the new meds ( Coartem) for malaria. With a winter flu sweeping the village with symptoms similar to malaria, it has been a busy time of testing. Most of my staff can do the tests- they are that simple, and most are better at taking the blood than I am. This is rapidly revolutionizing treatment of malaria in the Solomons, and hopefully, will go a long way towards eradicating it.

Returnee Lisa Wasterson brought her husband Cameron for another long weekend to sample our diving delights, including our first pregnant male pygmy seahorse at Toana. . Sidelined with a stubborn sinus infection, I've proudly watched my very capable divemasters, proving, from our divers comments, that I am a bit superfluous. They are becoming more and more proficient at taking over the running of the entire business, from meeting our guests, to the bookwork and E mail.

On a bright and sunny morning, with ( luckily) flat seas, we loaded up 28' Male Male with her 15 HP motor Sobiro bound for my first Solomon Island wedding. I thought we were more than fully loaded and ready to shove off- when more people climbed in, and then still more, and then a few more; several babies were handed in along with trays and trays of food. My comment to skipper Wayne that we were perhaps slightly overloaded went either unheard or ignored. When we were packed to breathing room only, we finally and precariously were pushed off from the jetty and slowly putt-putted our way across the bay. Barely daring to even turn around, fearing to upset the extremely delicate balance and end up with an unplanned swim and rescue session, I counted. Not believing the result, I counted again. We had somehow squeezed 43 living beings onto the boat. The wedding was lovely and quite

fully westernized with the bridesmaids and flower girls in pink gowns, the groomsmen and ring bearer in pink silk shirts. The little ones were almost comical in the solemnity with which they undertook their tasks. Reunions with Ruth and Roland Piko, who were of such great help to me when I first arrived, made the occasion special.

Meanwhile, Dellington and Ronald did such an outstanding job entertaining the 7 member, 3 generation Ballantyne family snorkeling at Mbulo, that they booked an all day dive-snorkel-picnic trip to Kicha. Dad Paul and Grandad Chris tasted the wonders of Kavachi Korner, while Bryan educated the younger members about the fish and their behaviors and guided them to the interior to listen to the Kuru-kuru who are just returning to nest.

Leaving Ronald and Bryan with pages of instructions, Viso, Dellington and I boarded a twin otter for the picturesque flight to Honiara for a week long course on the Recompression Chamber and its operation. My primary purpose was to get all my immigration papers FINISHED. Although I am not 100% sure of my status, I succeeded in fulfilling all my requirements. Our course, taught by Neil from Tulaghi Dive, was interesting, with 2 evenings of hands on work at the chamber itself. My days were spent chasing paperwork, shopping and reconnecting with friends. Visits with Dr. Silent Tovosia, our Seventh Day Adventist medical officer, and our former pastor, Selwyh Koutu, were very special. Mia again opened her home to me, and a "girls only" evening capped a busy, successful week.

A year ago, we did an intro dive with Tracy Provest, who enjoyed it so much, she returned as a certified diver. Between weather and an injured back, Bryan and Ronald only got to host her on one very busy dive at Toana. She and husband Tony generously endowed us with books and DVD's for our library, more reading glasses and first aid supplies. Perhaps their greatest gift was spending time in our Headstart program, reading new stories to the youngsters.

A strong tailwind propelled us homeward, commencing a week of high winds and heavy seas that have yet to completely abate. Winter has, finally, arrived, along with the "Honiara flu" which knocked all 3 of us down, and has kept me dry for an additional week. To the confusion of my crew, I actually declared a sick day- and took it- well- most of it. They kept tiptoeing up to check on me as I slept a good part of the day; the rest I spent watching the impressive mountains of water moving between us and Male Male and watching for Magic Roundabout, a small yacht skillfully skippered by Chris Bone, founder of Oceans Watch, an ocean loving visionary whose mission has become organizing those who roam the seas in search of adventure into roving community assistants. Luckily, they agreed to put Peava on their itinerary. They endeavor to assist communities in areas ranging from establishing MPA's, teaching reef monitoring, marine education, partnering schools, establish water and sanitary systems, organic farming, self sustaining businesses. Assisted on this journey by marine biologists Alison and Cleo, and computer wizard Gardner, they spent their short time here meeting people, assessing needs and squeezing in 1 all too short dive; Alison entranced the younger members of the community with simple talks and introductions to monitoring.

Two more surprise guests, Meg and Matt, sampled the beauty of Toana, the variety of Kicha, and the mysteries of Loka in their brief stay. They are an adventurous addition to our growing clientele, braving the hike to Biche village in the pouring rain, crossing a flooded river via a

slanted coconut log, which their guide, Morrance, scurried gracefully across. They decided that swallowed pride was a better alternative than the raging river, and crawled across, to the great amusement of the villagers.

ODDS AND ENDS: My new travel dates are Sept. 18- Oct. 18. It seems to be a better time for everyone in Hawaii, actually. ---The following quote from UNDERCURRENT online came to me via my US agent, Tom Shockley. All of you who care, especially those who have dove in Hawaii, should please send testimony to those below. It truly helps.

Keep Hawaii's Fish In The Ocean, Not Aquariums: In our July issue, writer Rene Umberger described the awful truth about how up to 75 percent of Hawaii's endemic fish are being taken by the aquarium trade. Subscriber John Woolley (Seattle, WA) says we divers should contact Hawaii politicians and remind them about their most important consideration: money. "Those coming to marvel at the fish in their natural habitat --snorkelers and scuba divers -- bring more money to Hawaii than those capturing the fish to send them out of the state. Add to this the ecological impacts of depleting fish stocks, and you have a looming ecological -- and economic -- disaster." Send your comments to top state senators Colleen Hanabusa ([senhanabusa@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:senhanabusa@capitol.hawaii.gov)) and Fred Hemmings ([senhemmings@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:senhemmings@capitol.hawaii.gov)), and House of Representative leaders Calvin Say ([repsay@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:repsay@capitol.hawaii.gov)) and Lynn Finnegan ([repfinnegan@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:repfinnegan@capitol.hawaii.gov)).

And from our CNN our Distant Learning Center is temporarily shut down, cutting off internet access. There will be fewer photos this letter, as I have to send them via Sat. phone- an iffy process at best.

And just in from long time client and friend, Ed Pasini. "I have posted an 8 minute film of underwater stills taken by Lisa's group in Peava, and backed up by Solomon musicians. You can access it by clicking on the link on the Newsletters section of the website under the talking parrot. Also a link on the second page of the site.

As our month draws to a close, we are beginning to gear up for the Loloma Foundation medical team's visit here in early Sept., and await the arrival of our August guests and some more adventures, both above and below the sea. Have a great month!.

Love and hugs to all,

Lisa

PLEASE, DO NOT JUST HIT "REPLY" TO SEND ME A NOTE- IT SENDS MINE BACK TO ME! I LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU, BUT MY MAIL COMES VIA SATELLITE PHONE- EXPENSIVE!!!  
PLEASE CREATE A NEW E MAIL, OR DELETE THE ORIGINAL. THANK YOU SO MUCH!!

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"Lose yourself in the adventure-find yourself in the richness".





***Dellington learning to operate the chamber***