

## July 2010 Niusletter

A MAGICAL DAY—FAY AND CHASE— QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY—A VERY FRIENDLY PUFFER FISH—SAND DIVERS & OUR MYSTERY FISH—SAM—WINTER'S HERE—HECHA—SAVING A LIFE—

Hi, Everyone,

There comes a time when we look out in the morning- the water is mirror flat, glistening blues in the sun, look at each other, and say "Play Day". It had been quite awhile, so with great eagerness, we packed up our picnic lunch and our gear, and off to Kicha we sped. Kavachi Korner was uncharacteristically calm, with zero current. Our big animal show usually occurring at the current swept point was scattered hither and yon, and a kind of lazy haze seemed spread over the reef, with lots of cleaning going on, and very little feeding. It gave us the opportunity to try different routes and explore the usually ignored wall. I wandered out to the top of the point, where I had never been ; 2 new wrasses challenged my camera skills, and I just hung in the schools of fish just kind of "hangin' out" at the corner, some waiting in line to be cleaned, some just being lazy. A most unusual experience.

With the flat water holding, we headed out to the unprotected east end of the island, and discovered a cotton candy wall- covered in PINK soft corals; our big angels abounded, along with the usual run of jacks, cudas, sharks, bumphead parrots, etc. With the boat anchored, we labored against the current, occasionally able to duck around a corner and rest. Massive undercuts and crevasses provided ever-changing scenery. As our computers and energies flagged, we rose to the top of the wall, and drifted over the surf washed shallows to the boat. Dellington loosed the anchor and let it swing free so we would ride with the current. I was finishing my safety stop, when Dell grabbed me, pointing in an almost panic- at a huge bull shark, sniffing at the anchor.

We were not unhappy to miss the transfer from Tetepare of Fay Khaw and Chase Wheatley, as they made part of the 4 hour trip through drenching rains and rough seas. They were happy to reach our sunny shores where lunch was waiting for them and the Tetepare crew, who had to turn around and make the return journey. Hailing from Flinders Island ( off the SE coast of Australia- near Tasmania- my geography lessons are never ending) , we only had time to introduce Chase to diving, give Fay a refresher and get in 1 stunning fan coral dive at Toana. I told Chase how many very experienced divers would be VERY jealous of his having seen a pygmy seahorse and a flaming scallop on his second ever dive.

My crew announced it was the Queen's Birthday, and thus a public holiday. We sang to the

Queen, got out my guitar and sang a whole lot more, and finished our celebration with a Male Male Magic dive. Student Berry Watts was my buddy, while Dellington introduced a visiting student to the joys of SCUBA. About halfway through the dive, we spotted a giant Star Puffer fish. On our return trip to the boat, it was still there. This time I approached for a photo, and started snapping my fingers. To my enormous surprise, it came to me- closer, and closer, until I was a bit concerned about losing a finger. Their jaws are powerful enough to remove one. But there was no aggression, just curiosity. I motioned Berry over, and the puffer came to him, too. It finally let us stroke it very gently- and when we finally had to head for the boat, it followed. I believe we have a new friend.

Treasure again offered us more "jewels". Our first ever Sand Divers ( no good pix yet) and our Mystery Fish- a pair of gorgeous shrimp gobies with their stunning housekeepers. Sand Divers- about 8 inches long and skinny, they hover above the sand, feeding and courting. When frightened, they dive right in to the sand, thus the name. they look rather plain, until the male decides to impress the ladies. He drops a "beard" under his chin, and raises a long dorsal fin while his spots glow a bright blue. We have yet to come from a dive there without finding something new.

Sam Mollard was here last year with family; this year he came solo and stayed out with us for a very special week of diving and hiking. Hailing from Tasmania, where he is a court judge, Sam entertained us with stories and jokes, and was in turn entertained with stories of Marovo culture and genealogy. Our Kicha day lived up to its usual standards. With a strong current running for our second dive, we decided to try drifting the north side heading west- opposite of our normal dive. And a stunning dive it was, ending with an unusual show starring a huge Titan trigger fish who had dislodged a large piece of coral and was mining the now open area for food, assisted by numerous other fish bent on leftovers. Our presence was completely ignored, and we could approach as close as we wanted. A 5 hour hike up Mount Mariu with Dellington rounded off Sam's holiday. They arrived back tired, stiff, hungry- and very happy.

And southern hemisphere winter knows the official date- and came roaring in with high winds, torrential rains and giant waves. The skies can be deceptively blue, the sun friendly and warm; suddenly, the breeze turns to a rattling wind, and someone shouts "HECHA", and the race is on to gather laundry and drop screens as the southeast winds drive the rains sideways. As quickly as it starts, it is gone. Nights are often cooled by thunderstorms. People often ask me about weather here- and I answer- yes, we have it! I am more than content to spend a few days catching up on paperwork and projects.

Few things are more internally satisfying than saving a life- and this one was very special to me. Thanks to the pups, who were begging to go for a really early run, I said- heck with it- let's go. We went down to the beach where they love to chase the kids in a game they have mutually concocted. I was in the water with the kids- throwing them, having swimming races, teaching them to float, etc. I happened to glance up and saw Thomas,

Nate' & Evah's 19 mo. old son playing with another little one at the water's edge. Next thing I knew, his big sister, Diane was coming with a frantic look on her face— and I knew. She found him- underwater on the other side of our boat, blocked from my view. She hauled him out. . He wasn't breathing. I grabbed him and upended him over my arm. Foamy water starting coming out immediately, and it seemed like a forever 10-15 seconds before he took that first breath. His frightened crying was a VERY welcome sound. It is time to give Thomas swimming lessons- he has a very potentially fatal attraction for the sea and our boat.

And on that very joyous note, I would like to welcome Maureen ( my house staff) and Kelwin's new little son- the news is that all are doing well. Our family increases. AND we went over to Beka Beka yesterday, confident of getting online and sending out the photos—only to find a sign on the door " The internet is down—!" Enjoy anyway.

Have a wonderful month everyone.

Love and hugs,  
Lisa

Log onto "YouTube" and type in "Magic of Marovo" for a glimpse of our magical world! Thanks to Ed Pasini for adding music and posting.

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!!!

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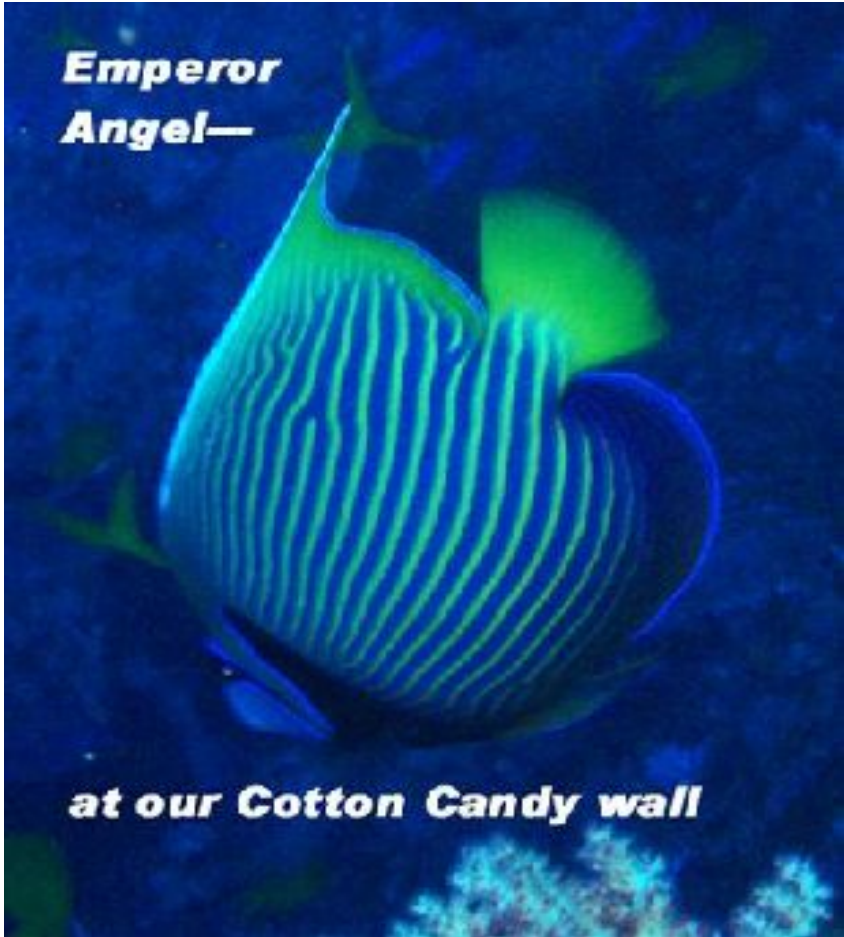
Lisa Choquette  
SOLOMON DIVE ADVENTURES  
Peava Village- Marovo Lagoon  
SOLOMON ISLANDS  
lisa@solomondiveadventures.com  
www.solomondiveadventures.com

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



***mystery fish of the month***

***see their gorgeous housekeeping shrimp***



***Emperor Angel—***

***at our Cotton Candy wall***

***Nate and Fay at Toana***



***making friends***



***"Star" and Berry***

**The Titan broke off that  
big piece of coral**



**Notice the "clean up crew!"**

**Dellington & Sam cool off in  
a mountain stream**





