

SIVB BOARD MEETING-PLAYING GRANDMA-GARDENING-SASSI & HOBO-REUNIONS-BAPTISM& BIRTHDAY PARTY-HONOLULU & MORE REUNIONS-HONIARA-SP.T WORKSHOP-HOME AGAIN-THIEVES IN THE HENHOUSE

Hi, Everyone,

WHEW!! What a whirlwind & wonderful 6 weeks it has been since our last visit. My Hawaii adventure began with a 4 a.m. departure by boat for a 4 hour and 40 minute trip to Ramata to catch a 9:30 flight ( only seat I could get). Flat water blessed us all the way. We arrived 10 minutes before a horrendous storm blew through, delaying our departure until noon. For all of our difficulties with Solomon Airlines scheduling, I must say we always manage to get where we're going within 24 hours- sometimes with great creativity and sometimes even earlier than scheduled- unlike thousands and thousands of US travelers stranded by Aloha, ATA & American Airlines while I was there.

With extra time in Honiara, I met old friends, caught up on news, and met Geoff Allen, owner of the new Coastwatchers Dive Shop and head of our Recompression Chamber. We hit it off immediately, and he and Wilson Maelaua invited me to speak at a meeting of the new Solomon Island Visitor's Bureau Board of Director's meeting. The new energy from our new prime minister, Dr. Sukua, who stands solidly behind tourism, was invigoratingly obvious in the board members; good things are already starting to happen.

My trip to Hawaii was easy, but long. Tom was a very welcome sight as I exited the terminal in Kona. My 10 year old goat, Sassafrass, and old dog, Hobo, were ecstatic to see me- knowing many long romps were ahead.

The next morning I set off for East Hawaii and a long awaited reunion with my daughter, Kendra, and my 1 year old grandson, Kyle. Within 20 minutes, we were buddies, and I must say, everything they say about grandparenting is true- it is so much fun when you are not the person majorly responsible for their well being. I delighted in teaching Kyle such intellectual games as "Peek-a-boo" ( he invented his own version) and "Stick- out-your-tongue". The day to day changes and accomplishments were just amazing. At the tender age of 1 year he is avidly testing rules and boundaries already. Keeping a straight and stern face was most difficult when he'd look right at me while surrepticiously reaching his little hand out for some forbidden object. When I arrived, he was taking his first hesitant, wobbly steps; when I tearfully left, he was officially a toddler. Kendra is a beautiful and relaxed Mom- it was truly a joy to share this role with her.

I so enjoyed spending hours helping in her new gardening project, which is flourishing despite efforts by Kyle and wild turkeys to thwart our

efforts. A part of me will stay with her amid the peas and sunflowers. After our labors, we would often pack up and drive to their 50's restaurant for a late lunch and visit with Kyle's idol, his Dad, Chris, and the restaurant staff.

I alternated between Kendra's and Tom's; much of my time in Kona was spent contributing to the economy and packing things up to send home. The balance was consumed enjoying walks and talks with Tom and his neighbor Rowena, and meeting with old friends and catching up on all the news. As my time was running so short, we hosted a pizza night party of slides and visiting for those I had yet to see.

Kyle's baptism and birthday party brought together family and friends for a beautiful, relaxed ceremony performed by Larry, Chris's dad. With Becky and Mike in from Honolulu the whole family was together for a brief, fun time.

Ans suddenly I was hugging everyone good-bye again, heading for Honolulu and 3 days with Becky and Mike on my way home. We shopped and ate and caught up on news and happenings and changes in our lives- a special time for me. 2 hours of swapping fish stories with old friend Jack ( Dr. John) Randall and an unexpected reunion with Mitch and Bambi D'Olier which included attending their lovely church and an afternoon snapping photos at the zoo for my crew back home made for a very stimulating trip.

Back in Honiara- almost home! Finding and sending supplies, visiting, and attending an invigorating workshop sponsored by South-Pacific.Travel on marketing Solomon Islands occupied my 5 days there, and soon, I was excitedly boarding our twin otter for the final leg- HOME! I leaped from the plane at Sobiro into the arms of my crew and, to the delight of onlookers, was knocked down by 2 ecstatic pups happy to see their Mom. An hour later- I was on the wall with my crew, checking on our sweetlips cleaning station, our lions out hunting, our blue spotted rays. A stream of silver fusiliers reflected the evening sun- I was now TRULY HOME. Wandering through the village, being attacked with hugs by my friends, hearing little kids yell "I love you". Putting on a small drama with Evah & Tapi for the church health program entitled "Tobacco Free" with a catchy, corresponding song ( just holler for the words) in preparation for our "Great Peava Smokeout". Yes, indeed, I was HOME.

My pride in my crew knows no bounds- while I was gone they hosted 4 different families and introduced them to the wonders of our waters. Judging from their comments in our log book, my A team performed with excellence and professionalism. This week, our delightful guest has been Atsushi Matsumoto from Japan, who, on his 7th diving trip to the Solomons, has enthusiastically declared " Solomon Dive Adventures and Wilderness Lodge the very best"

But -all is not well. We have uncovered a thief in Vuana- Reliance was wondering why her hens weren't laying anymore, and snuck out to catch an opportunistic monitor lizard with a taste for eggs- sunny side up, please. Tighter security measures are definitely called for!

I hiked out to the point with the pups last evening and sat on the beach watching the play of setting sunlight on the clouds, the shimmering pinks and blues of the sea, and gave great thanks for all that I have- my wonderfully loving and understanding Hawaii family ( oh, I miss those special baby hugs) , my friends and my Solomon Island family and friends, and the incredible life I am privileged to lead. I am, indeed, blessed.

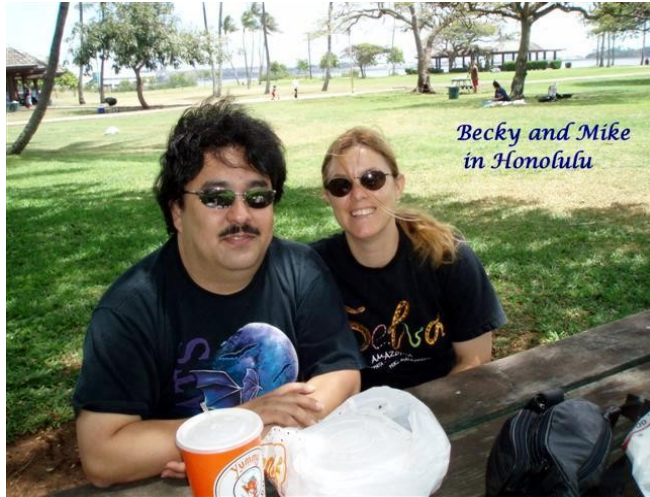
Have a wonderful month- I have 6 weeks worth of diving to catch up on.

Love and hugs to all,  
Lisa

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





*Becky and Mike  
in Honolulu*



*LISA WITH JACK RANDALL AT 83 YEARS YOUNG!*



*sunset pastels in the lagoon*



*youth fair at the soccer field*

