

# From <sup>O</sup><sub>R</sub> Point <sup>O</sup><sub>F</sub> View

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## the Ladies of Mission Vanuatu

**Saturday 3-1-08** – The first day of March!!! The first day of March!!! Only one more month of sweltering heat and then it starts to cool down! I know it seems a little lame to get so excited about the cool season but, you just have to understand the magnitude of the hot season to truly appreciate the cool season!

That Kaela Sue sure does say the funniest things! Tonight she was telling Aaron the story of Paul Bunyan (which he has told her a few times) and she couldn't think of his name so she called him, "Paul Onion" and then when she knew that wasn't right, tried again with, "Paul Bunny"! Ha! Then later tonight we were talking about Shrek and how he is just pretend. She goes, "He is too real! He is a yogurt!" (Instead of an ogre). That silly girl!

**Sunday 3-2-08** - My Bible class left me feeling disgruntled today. I just wasn't happy with how my lesson turned out. I felt like a dweeb because I could get my words out! For some reason I was just "off" today and I had trouble telling my story! Augh! How annoying! It's not like it was a hard story to tell - just Adam and Eve in the garden. Oh well. Sometimes it just works out that way. Plus - I had a lot of kids I don't usually have from Eton village and they were all very shy (since they aren't usually in Vila) and possibly a little scared of me (at least the little ones were). What are you going to do?! Try it again next week, I guess! On the up side of things we had about 50 people (including the kids) because a whole pack of Eddie's family from Eton were visiting. And we had a really nice fellowship lunch afterwards. I was beat that afternoon, though. Aaron was in Etas today which meant I juggled the girls, our food, and getting them home and down for naps by myself and I fell into bed not long after!

**Tuesday 3-4-08** - Today was a big day for us! I started Melia on cereal today! She seems to really like it and I am happy that it seems to be helping her to take a better nap in the afternoon and sleep longer at night! Yea! It's so fun to see her trying new things! I can hardly wait to start her on fruits and veggies!

I did my grocery shopping today. Since the weather was nice and I only had a couple of places to go, I took Kaela with me. She doesn't usually get to go so she was pretty excited to have the chance to go with me! I made her repeat my two rules, though, several times: 1) No crying and whining 2) No begging for candy and things at the store. I'm happy to say that she did great and I kept my sanity! Ha! It was a fun outing for the two of us. We did a fun thing too and took the slow boat over to Iririki island so I could check into the price of renting a jet ski. I thought that would be a fun thing for Aaron and I to do to celebrate his 30<sup>th</sup> birthday that is coming up next month. He's been feeling a little down about turning 30 so I thought that doing the jet ski thing would make him feel youthful again! However, the price was a much more steep than I had anticipated so, needless to say, there will be no jet skiing for us! I'm working on thinking of what else I can do that would be fun. Hopefully, I'll come up with something good!

Today has been so humid that it's incredible! You could just smell the moisture in the air all day, but it didn't rain. When I went in our shower room this evening after Kaela had her

shower, it was like walking into a steam room, the air was so thick! And that was with the door open!

**Thursday 3-6-08** - Last night was SO TIRING! It's been about two months since I have been out to the village or in the bush that I forgot how tiring it can be! One of the Christians at Etas, Jimmy, is having a fundraiser to raise money for his son's school fees. So, Aaron told him that he would take him out to his garden, which is in the middle of the bush, to go pick up his food. So, the girls and I went along for the ride. We left here about 4:30 pm and drove outside of town, past Etas, picked up Jimmy and two others, and drove about an hour way far into the bush. The roads were so bad that Jimmy kept joking that they were like the salt water! The truck rocked back and forth so much that it was almost like we were in the waves! The bush roads are just dirt roads, but during the rainy season they turn to thick mud that takes a long time to dry, especially in the places that don't get much sunlight because of the trees. When trucks go down these roads then that sticky mud makes huge tracks that you basically have to follow because once your wheel gets down into one of those tracks there is no getting it back out, even if you have four wheel drive like us! Anyway, it was an adventure! Melia went right to sleep with the rocking of the truck. We drove all the way out to his garden, loaded his food, and then drove him back to Etas to unload. By that time it was dark and about 7pm and we didn't get back home and dinner on the table until 7:30! (Which is usually the time we start bathing the girls and getting them ready for bed!) We were all tired that night but it was a nice time to spend together!

Tonight, Aaron had his class and he called me about 5pm and said that Ruth (one of the local Christians) needed to take her daughter to the hospital and then needed somewhere to stay until her husband got done with class. Patrick and Ruth live out towards Eton village, way out on a farm in the middle of the bush. They frequently come into Port Vila to worship but on weeks that they can't get into town they just have to worship by themselves on the farm. They are the only Christians in their area. Anyway, Ruth and her little girl, Mary (one year old), came and ate dinner with myself, Kaela, Melia, Ann and Jonathon. So, I had a houseful! It turned out to be a really nice time for fellowship! This was the first time that Ruth had ever been to our house and I pretty sure the first time she had ever been to a "modern" house! I could tell she was really surprised at the way we do things at our house. I went to bathe Melia for bed and she wanted to know if I was using cold water. It never occurred to her that we have a hot water line that runs in our house and I don't have to boil water for our baths. She was also very interested to find out that Melia and Kaela sleep in room separate from Aaron and I. This really surprised her as Mary still sleeps in bed with them and probably will until a baby comes and then she might move to a pallet on the floor in the same room. I explained to her that we do things in a "style blong America". We talked about how it is different than they way they do things in Vanuatu. Right now we are also training Melia to put herself to sleep at night so we let her cry for a little bit and go in and tell her to go sleep periodically until she finally gives up and goes to sleep. Ruth told me that she felt sorry for Melia when she was crying but when she was done (about 15 minutes later) she told me that she liked how we did it and it was good to not have to put your child back to sleep every time they wake up. I could tell it was all a learning experience for her and she'll probably be telling everyone at the farm all about the crazy things the Americans do! Ha! I just love, Ruth, though! She has such a sweet, kind personality and it is always so nice to spend time with her.

**Friday 3-14-08** - Yes, I do realize that more than a week has passed since my last journal entry, thank you very much! This has been one of those weeks that has just been jam

packed with stuff going on and the weather has NOT been cooperative in helping us to have plenty of energy to accomplish our tasks! Aaron and I both have been battling fatigue due to the high heat and humidity and we are both ready for a break! I have spent the last week (bare with me as this is kind of a gross description - but also very accurate) covered in a glaze of sweat. Isn't that wonderful?! And you may cringe reading it, but just think how we feel trying to function in it! The humidity has been incredibly high this week and I am hoping and praying that we will have some relief soon. I am sitting here at my desk in the office, listening to thunder rumbling in the distance and hoping with all my heart that it brings us some major rain to cool things down. It thundered and rained yesterday, but only for about 5 minutes and then the sun came out and it kind of ruined my hopes for a some cooler weather. Oh well. Such is life here this time of year. Only a few more weeks to go until it cools down some. In the mean time, on we go with life!

I'll try to re-cap what's been happening this week without rambling. So, here goes. Monday morning I ran in the office and pulled up my email to find out that Eric and Shawnda's baby was born! Yea! There were some hang-ups with the delivery and she ended up coming by c-section but, we are all praising God that both Lexi and Shawnda are healthy and doing well! And what a beautiful baby she is! I can hardly wait to meet her! It will be like welcoming home one of our own family the day that they arrive back in Vanuatu! I can't wait!

This week I got all ambitious and decided to do some spring cleaning. Fiona agreed to come over on both Wednesday and Friday and help me. We worked hard and sweated harder both days and I am so thankful that she can come and help me. We take turns working and keeping Melia happy (Kaela was in school) and then once she sleeps we both hop to it to get as much done as possible before she wakes up! We did really well on our tasks! We washed windows, dusted the whole house (windows and all), swept the house, re-arranged our bedroom (which is a HUGE job in itself for a variety of reasons), and several other exciting tasks that fall on my daily chore list! Then, today we took Fiona out to lunch at the market where we saw several of the local Christians! Friday is a busy day in Port Vila! It was really good to see Flexon, Selina, and Mabel (all from Vila - the latter who just came back from Santo Island for a visit), Morris from Eton and Max from Epau.

On Wednesday it was particularly hot and humid so Aaron and I took Kaela out for an ice cream cone at the grocery store after dinner. Only we had to make an agreement that this time he and I would choose the ice cream (the three of us usually share two cones). Usually, Kaela gets to choose and she chooses pink every time - sometimes it is strawberry (which isn't really my favorite), but occasionally they have this off-brand pink "fake strawberry" ice cream that she thinks is wonderful because it's pink and we think tastes horrible! Aaron and Kaela got their ice cream first and when I ordered mine (Macadamia - YUM!) , Kaela goes, "Mommy, when she hands it to you, you need to say, 'tankiu tumas'" Aaron had just told her that two minutes before and she thought I needed reminding too!

Other exciting events of the week include: Aaron having to eat fish that had been licked by some cats while visiting Paonangisu village! Good thing it was cooked AFTER the cats licked on it for 15 minutes! Ha! Mike's truck got stuck in the mud when he went to a Bible study out in the bush and when he came back to his truck after the study, someone had let the air out of all of his tires! Wonderful. He called Aaron and Aaron drove out to pick him up, they drove back into town (about 30 minutes each time), picked up some supplies to get him un-stuck, drove back out to the bush again and came back to town (another 2 hours later) covered in mud and late for a dinner get together we were having with our American friends that live in the city. What a day that was! The good news about that day was that we tried pizza at a restaurant called Le'Houstile for the first time and it was very good! We got

our new refrigerator yesterday and we were glad for that! Once our old fridge got us both sick we moved it out to our porch and moved the Brandell's fridge into our house. Unfortunately we have been spoiled by their nice, large fridge since our new one is small-ish...about half the size of an American fridge. But, a working fridge that is small is MUCH BETTER than one that doesn't!

This week I also took Kaela to play with her friends Shiloh and Mariah at 8:30am while I took Melia to the doctor for her four month check-up. I took her to the French doctor in town (for the first time) and I really liked him. He was very good with Melia. He gave her check-up and then weighed her - 14 pounds! - and gave her some vaccines. After the doctor I had to go to the pharmacy and get some medicine for a finger that she has sucked on so much that it is a little infected. Then, I dropped in and saw my friend Lissie (who I love dearly but is unfortunately a bit of a back-sliding Christian) and talked to her for a while and encouraged her to come back to worship on Sunday (we'll see). And then I dropped by Salome's (from Etas village) booth at the handicraft market and chatted with her for a few minutes. Finally, I was headed back home to pick up some diapers - I KNEW I was forgetting something that morning when I left the house! I called Aaron and found out he was at Mike's house because they had to shut the power off in our area from 8-11am that morning. ----- HALLELUJAH! IT'S FINALLY RAINING!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! ----- Anyway!...He couldn't get on the computer since his battery was low, so he went to Mike's house. Then, I headed off to Luke and Ricci's house to pick up Kaela. Kaela was having such a great time playing that I ended up staying through lunchtime and finally got the girls home and ready for naptime at 2pm.

It's Friday now...and I am enjoying the cool breeze that came with the rain (hopefully that lasts through the night! Wouldn't that be a dream!), working on my computer - emailing, journaling, getting growth charts off the internet for the girls, getting my next Yumi Ol Mama ready to print for Sunday and hoping to wrap all this work up before the girls wake up! Mike is coming over for dinner tonight and we are eating tacos...which reminds me that I had better wrap this up and go make my guacamole!

**Sunday 3-16-08** - Aaron was scheduled to go to Etas this morning. I had originally planned to jump on a bus with the girls. But, about 15 minutes before we were to leave it started raining...sideways! And since I have to walk a little ways to catch a bus, I wasn't too keen on doing that with both girls and my big bag of stuff to take with me to worship. So, Aaron ended up dropping us off at the church building before heading out to Etas (even though it is in the opposite direction!) What a gentleman he is! And I sure was thankful to not have to juggle all that. Especially because Kaela is such a GIRL and doesn't like being out in the rain or getting muddy and all that. Which strikes me as kind of funny because I don't mind getting wet and muddy from time to time and neither does Aaron. On top of that she has been to the village and many times and has learned how to "make do" without conveniences there. So...whatever. Anyway, the point is that I was glad he took us to the airport.

Great news to report on the mission work front! Ann came through for me and taught the Pikinini Bible class this morning! I was THRILLED! This is a HUGE step in the right direction since we have lived here for 3 years with both Shawnda and I plodding, encouraging, urging, training and pleading and still no one would step up to the plate and help us with the responsibility of teaching kids Bible class. So, I was SO HAPPY when Ann said she would do it (I just asked her on a whim) but, I wasn't going to "believe it till I could see it" because too often here people say "yes, yes, yes I'll do this or that and then don't come through on their word". (That gets old after a while). Anyway, she did it and extra points for her in my book - she even had a cold and was talking all low but she still came and taught and did a good job! Yea!

I was the big dweeb-o this morning. Since Aaron took us to worship I didn't even think about getting my keys when we left. I guess sub-consciencously I was thinking that he had his keys and was with me so I didn't need mine. Woops! Wrong! I remembered as I was in Mike's truck and he was taking us and some other poeple home. At that point I was ever so thankful I didn't decide to hop a bus home. Anyway, he dropped me by the grocery store, I bought a stick of bread, a small jar of peanut butter and two small bags of chips for mine and Kaela's lunch. Then he came and picked us up again and took us to his house where we ate lunch and hung out until Aaron came to pick us up on his way (or OUT of his way, rather!) home from Etas! Of course, that change in plans made me get the girls down for naps later than usual, but it all turned out okay in the end.

**Monday 3-17-08** - Happy St. Patrick's day...if you live in the States! I didn't realize it was St. Patrick's Day until I was getting ready for bed tonight. When no one is celebrating here, those holidays tend to pass by un-noticed. We've been having rain since Saturday afternoon and the weather has taken a VERY pleasant turn for the better! Things are really cooling down here and I sure am glad for it! Aaron and I don't have glass on the upper windows in our bedroom we are enjoying a nice cool breeze coming in our room at night! On top of that I even put on a pair of lightweight pants this morning when I got up to sit outside and drink my cup of coffee!

**Tuesday 3-18-08** - Today was grocery day for me. So, I managed to make it to town at a decent time this morning. However, Melia was still needing one more of her vaccines so I had to drop by the Doctors office and get that taken care of. Before I did that though, Fiona, Kaela, Melia and I dropped by the butcher to pick up some pork chops. However, their power was out so they weren't able to scale any meat. We left there, went to the doctor and then back to the butcher to pick up the pork. However, they were the saddest looking little chops I have ever seen so I opted for chicken wings instead. Kaela will be happy about that! She loves "chicken on the bone"!

Fiona told me today that her and Flexon have to move apartments. Their landlady is tearing down all the apartments she rents (they are just made of corrugated steel with cement floors) and everyone has one week to find a new place to rent! How generous of her to give them so much notice! So, Fiona and Flexon will be moving soon. I would be great if they could find a place near our house! I just live Fiona and wish she lived closer to us!

**Thursday 3-20-08** - Poor Melia. She is really ailing this week! I guess I fed her too many mashed bananas last week and now she is a bit constipated. On top of that she has a painful diaper rash and also a small infection on her finger from sucking on it too hard. I have had her on a diet of breast milk and pureed papaya for the last few days and so hopefully things will start easing up soon for her! As for the diaper rash - I switched to using strictly cloth diapers and that seems to be helping some. It is just slow going! I don't know what to do about her little finger, though. It is all red and swollen around the fingernail. The doctor didn't seem too concerned about it and recommended some things we can do at home to care for it. It doesn't seem to bring her much pain so I am probably over-reacting. It just looks so bad - I can't help but feel sorry for her!

Well, the clothes that I washed on Tuesday are STILL damp from all the rain we have been having. The cooler temperatures are nice but they sure do make it hard to get the laundry dry! I have a hamper full of dark clothes that need washing but I keep putting it off in hopes of catching a day of sunshine!

**Sunday 3-23-08** - Happy Easter! Interestingly the Easter related holidays are a big deal in Vanuatu. The banks, schools and many businesses are closed on Good Friday, Saturday, Easter Sunday and again on Monday for the Passover. The funny thing is is that while everything shuts down - only the Catholics (who are a small number of the population) celebrate these holidays! Everyone else just enjoys the time off but doesn't do much by way of celebration. If Kaela knew all the "to-do" that goes on in the States to celebrate Easter she would probably feel cheated because we don't do much for it here, since not many other people are. However, I did do an activity in my Sunday school class that incorporated hunting Easter eggs and the kids thought it was a lot of fun. And Aaron bought some candy at the store to share with the Christians and that pretty much wraps up our celebration of Easter! However, for anyone needing a gallon size container of mini chocolate Easter eggs you can purchase them at the grocery store for \$80!

On another note - worship was so encouraging yesterday! We had a surprisingly good turnout for being a holiday weekend when many people head to their home village. Claude preached the sermon for the first time ever and did a really nice job and we were all so proud of him for taking that first, difficult step! Also, I just mentioned in passing to some of the women that we should have a fellowship on a Saturday since its hard for many of the women to get away on the weekdays. And Fiona jumped at the "passing suggestion" (I didn't even necessarily mean this week!) and before I knew it she had organized a Women's fellowship at her house on Saturday morning! I hope there is a good turnout! Sometimes on Sunday, everyone is "yes, yes, yes! Let's have a fellowship!" but by the time the day rolls around they have either forgotten or "something has come up". We'll see...

**Monday 3-24-08** - Kaela is out of school again today for the Passover. It is kind of throwing my whole week off because I keep forgetting what day it is since she isn't in school!

**Wednesday 3-26-08** - Yesterday was such an exhausting day! It seemed like all night Monday night Aaron and I were up and down with the girls. Melia felt like having crying spell about 12:30 and then was up again at 4:30 to nurse. Kaela woke up twice - once with a bad dream and once asking Aaron to fix her mosquito net on her bed. By the time 6:00am rolled around Aaron and I were both exhausted and neither of us was ready to get up! However, yesterday was my grocery day so I crawled out of bed, made the coffee and then hopped (more like groggily fumbled my way) into the shower so I could be ready to go after breakfast. Even though I was on top of things this morning and got the beds made, the dishes put away and breakfast taken care of in time to get an early start on my shopping, Kaela was in a bit of a foul mood this morning and it took me FOREVER to leave once I finally took care of the disciplinary issues! Finally, I made it out the door and off to do my shopping. Today I had to go to Centerpointe supermarket, Uncle Bill's Variety shop (the best Walmart-like store in the city - at about 1/50 the size!), convert some money at the bank and then hit Au Bon Marche grocery store. I made it back home just in time to put groceries away and make lunch. Then after lunch Aaron and the girls and I headed out the door to go see some people.

First, we went to Claude and Rosemary's house to pass the message that the men are having a meeting tonight. Of course, passing a message "Vanuatu style" is about a 20 minute visit rather than a 5 minute drop-in. Then, we went to visit Leila. She hasn't been coming to worship for several weeks now. Mike, Fiona and I have tried repeatedly to encourage her so I went by to give it one more try. I sat and talked with her for a long time and she seemed to very penitent for her actions and wanted to try harder and come back to church. I prayed with her and hopefully we will see her at both the fellowship on Saturday and worship on Sunday. After we left there, we went by a store to pick up some more light

bulbs for our nightlights - for the bargain price of two bulbs for \$5.50! What a deal! Ha! By the time we got home it was past time for Kaela's nap and Melia was already asleep. At 4pm, I made sandwiches for all of us, popped some popcorn to take to Rosemary's house, got both girls up and ready to go by 4:30. Then, Aaron, Mike, the girls and I hopped in the truck and they dropped us off at Rosemary's to visit with her while the men went to their meeting at the church building. I had a really nice time visiting with Rosemary and but by the time we got back home, Kaela showered and both girls to bed it was 8:30 and Aaron and I both were beat! What a long day!

**Saturday 3-29-08** - Well, today was a bit of a disappointment. Not the whole day, but, rather, the women's fellowship. I got up early, got ready, made breakfast for our family, boiled some corn on the cob (which took 45 minutes because it was local corn and not imported corn!), and got the girls ready to go to the women's fellowship at Fiona's house. Ann and Jonathon came over about 30 minutes before we were ready to leave so they could ride with us. We made it to Fiona's just after 10am and by 11am there were still only three of us ladies there! Frustration set in! (at least for me) Sometimes I get so tired/annoyed when on Sunday everyone is all "yes! Yes! Yes! Let's have a fellowship!" and by the time the day rolls around everyone has either forgotten or "something has come up" (which happens all too frequently). It just gets to be a little bothersome. Shawnda and I have worked hard to encourage the women to take part in our fellowships - not only that but to make it a priority but it only seems to sink in with a few of them. But, will we give up?! No! We'll keep on plugging away at it! Anyway, Ann, Fiona and I had a good time together. And I was actually, really impressed with Fiona. Since it was her house, it was understood that she would "take charge of things. However, with only three of us, I figured we'd just end up talking and spending time together and then have a prayer. However, she went ahead with the program and we sang songs, had prayers and she read a scripture. (Leila didn't show up for the fellowship and I was very disappointed by that).

**Sunday 3-30-08** - Today was a really nice day. We went and worshipped with the Etas congregation this morning. It has been weeks since I have gone to Etas and I was missing those people so much! It was wonderful to be with them again! I just love those women out there! They are such a joy to spend time with - you can't help but be encouraged by them!

Before we left, Aaron and I gave Kaela a good talking to about her behavior. She has been going through this phase where she has been grumping around and frowny-faced and it's about to drive us batty! We are in full force in trying to combat this grumpy attitude and get it turned around! Lately, I tried something new and when she is grumpy she has to stand and face the wall for several minutes and think of three reasons she has to be happy. Interestingly, by the time she gets done naming the things that she is happy about she has a whole new disposition! So, we feel like we are making some headway in that endeavor. Anyway...we talked to her attitude and the "rules for the day" - she must smile, shake hands and say hello to people when they speak to her. She was clear on the rules and it made some impact because she did wonderful out there! And she played with the kids, had a great time and came home muddy from head to toe! Ha! After she got up from her nap later in the day she goes, "Thanks for taking me to Etas, Daddy. I had a great time!" We were so proud!

**Monday 3-31-08** - Well, we found out from Mike last night that Leila wasn't at worship yesterday. So, today when Fiona came over to clean Eric and Shawnda's house she and I talked about what to do about Leila. On several different occasions Mike, Fiona and I have all visited with Leila about her not coming to worship. Fiona and I agreed that we would try

and talk to her one last time and let her know that after this they decision to come back must stop with her. So, she and I made plans to do that after lunch. Aaron watched the girls and Fiona and I went to visit Leila. It didn't go as well as I had hoped because she was busy massaging someone (that is something she does on the side to make money). However, Fiona and I did talk with her but her whole attitude seemed to be "let's not talk about this" even though she "promised" to come next week. Not to be the pessimist but I don't much count on it. We frequently run into the problem of people saying one thing and doing another because they don't want to let you down. So, we will just have to continue in prayer and wait and see what happens.