

From ^OR Point ^OF View

the Ladies of Mission Vanuatu

Thursday 2-16-06 – Today I worked on my last minute cleaning before Steve and Samantha come and did some planning for my Bible lesson. This afternoon Aaron and I walked down to the hospital so I could visit Lissie and her new little boy. He doesn't have a name yet, but when I got home Shawnda told me that Lissie told her that we could name her baby for her! Its funny how ni-Vans don't spend much time thinking of names for their babies or even care who names their baby. So different from us Americans! I think I have been thinking of names for my future children since junior high, which Aaron thinks is just crazy! Anyway, Shawnda and I talked about it and I suggested that we name him Wayne after Wayne Burger. Wayne has meant a lot to Shawnda and I, as well as Lissie. I am excited to go to the hospital and tell her tomorrow the name we picked out! We head to the airport at 9:45 tonight to pick up our guests! It will be so fun to see them!

Sunday 2-19-06 – Keeping up with my journal is quite the challenge whenever we have guests here. Not that I don't enjoy keeping a daily journal, but it is much too tempting to spend time with our friends than to sit at the computer in our office/oven. Friday took a while to get our plans all lined out, but we finally decided that since we were in a schedule crunch that it would be the best day to go to the waterfalls at Mele. It was lots of fun and the water was so nice and cool! However, because the rainfall has been down, many of the natural pools off the falls were dried up. That was a little disheartening since those small pools of water and little "waterfalls" make for some of the neatest sights there. It was also a little annoying because the people who took our money didn't bother to tell us that half the falls were dried up. We still had a great time though! Friday night we had the mid-week fellowship at the Brandell's and that gave opportunity for Steve and Samantha to meet all the local Christians here in Vila. It was a great time!

On Saturday morning I got up early and got dressed because we were going to have to do all our grocery shopping. Monday we are planning to go around the island so, Saturday became shopping day. We tend to avoid the grocery shopping on Saturday because it is INSANELY busy! And it was. It was crazy. However, we got it all done and then everyone but Kaela and I headed out to the villages for the night and will be back on Sunday evening.

Also, we received an email Saturday morning saying that our friend's Rebekah and Josh's little girl had passed away. Janea passed away on her one year birthday. It is very hard to be away from home and away from Beck and Josh during this time. I just love them so much.

Monday 2-20-06 – We headed around the island this morning. Driving around the island is a great way to see what Efate island looks like. You get to see some of

everything: starting in the city, lots of villages, people walking on the road, the ocean and various lagoons. We stopped in Paonangisu and Epau and visited with the Christians living in each of those villages and then stopped at Eton beach to eat lunch. Eton village has one of the most beautiful beaches on the island. We ate our sandwiches and then spent a couple hours swimming. The water was perfect and it was a fun time swimming. It was my first time to swim at Eton beach and I had a great time. Kaela did pretty good and even let us take her in the water for a while. She really was more interested in playing in the sand than anything, though. We came home, rested, ate fajitas for dinner and visited after dinner. It was a long day, but a great one!

Tuesday 2-21-06 – It rained today so it made for a wet drive to pick everyone up for Ladies Bible class at Rose-Hanna's. Shawnda, Samantha, Kaela and I headed out at 11am with our food to pick up Fiona and Rose for class. Samantha gave our devotional thought. It was nice to have her give the devotional, for a change of pace. Afterwards, we ladies discussed our future plans for our Bible class to try and make some changes to help make our schedule be more beneficial for everyone. We decided to do a tentative one month schedule. We will now meet on Saturday's with a different woman in charge every week. For instance next Saturday (March 4), Ure is in charge. She chose something different. She wants us to meet at the land for the church building at 6am and do some clean up work such as moving rocks and sticks to help clean up the grounds. Afterward we will have a prayer, some cookies and juice and then go home.

Wednesday 2-22-06 – Today Steve, Samantha, Shawnda, Kaela and I spent the morning in town doing some shopping. They wanted to do some shopping to take souvenirs back to their girls and various other people. I went along to hopefully be of assistance in helping them to find the best deals at all of our favorite shops in town. There are A LOT of different shops in town catering to tourists and over this last almost-year I have developed a list of favorites! Today they had some shopping to finish up so we tried to squeeze it in before Preaching in the Park. Preaching in the Park went well despite the rain - was the word on the street. Kaela and I left early because she was quite fussy and wanting to take a nap so, she and I headed home about halfway through.

The troops all got home about 2pm and brought lunch with them – fried fish (YUM!) – and then we all rested before our trip to the village. Tonight Aaron and I are taking Steve and Samantha out to Etas to meet the Christians there and have another village experience! We will leave about 4pm.

Thursday 2-23-06 – Last night was great! We had some rain and mud issues out at Etas and it ended up being a rather messy visit, but a good one! I know the Christians there were so encouraged and excited to have Steve and Samantha visit them. Steve gave a short word of encouragement and Aaron translated for the locals. Then Sam wanted to thank Steve and Samantha for coming to see them so Aaron again translated for Steve and I translated for Samantha since they were sitting across the shelter from each other. Afterward they gave candy to the kids which was a big hit and some of the locals presented them with gifts. Ruth gave Samantha a set of custom feathers that the women from Tanna put in their hair for custom celebrations and Tom (the husband of

Alice that I am studying with) gave Steve a VERY nice wooden custom statue. It was a great night! Also, my study with Alice went really well – I am looking forward to studying the church with her next week!

Steve and Samantha's flight left today at 6pm. It has been wonderful having them here! Just the best! It seems like the week went by quickly because we filled up everyday. We tried to give them what our team felt like would be the "perfect" view of Vanuatu. We did several fun touristy things, but they also spent a good bit of time experiencing what life is really like everyday in Vanuatu. In the midst of all the activity we squeezed in some good "down" time to relax and talk. What a great week!

Friday 2-24-06 – With our company gone it is time to get back into the groove of things and also get ready for the next round. Antony (from New Zealand) comes tomorrow and he will be staying at our house. He is always a great person to have stay with you because he is so laid back that he becomes just part of the team and part of the family. On Wednesday, Todd (from New Zealand) and his father-in-law, Danny (from the US) are coming to join Antony in the work on the building project. They will be busy with that during the time that they are here. It's going to be a busy few weeks! I am sure he will feel taken back a few years (like when his kids were little) because Kaela is potty training now and more than happy to announce to the world all about her "accomplishments"!

Monday 2-25-06 – Grocery shopping day again. How does it come around so quickly? I am the picture of redundancy – I say that every week. Oh well. I only say that because it can be a time consuming activity. That's alright though. I really don't mind too much. Shawnda, Kaela and I didn't head out until after lunch because we had too much happening this morning. We managed to make it to Nambatu supermarket and to the butcher before Kaela's nap and then came home dropped off groceries, put kaela down and headed back out again to the chicken shop, Rainbow Gardens, and Centerpoint supermarket. Busy day!

Tuesday 2-26-06 – Today was a quiet day which is a nice change from all the busyness. It was rainy off and on all day and that just added to the relaxed feeling of the day. I pretty much spent the day running Kaela back and forth to the potty. We are working on potty training here. Today was a day of great success in that regard. Yea! Don't get too excited though – we aren't there yet. Our dog, Juntao is sick. We aren't sure what is wrong with her other than maybe she ate something bad. It's hard to tell when she roams around a lot looking for things to chew on and eat...like tree bark. She generally causes me great annoyance, but it is still sad to see her looking so sick. We aren't sure if she is going to make it or not.

Wednesday 2-27-06 – Well, Juntao didn't make it through the night. I found her on the Brandell's back porch this morning. How sad. Poor dog. Aaron and Eric called Ure yesterday and found out that she has a friend who is a veterinarian. He came this morning and gave Rex Kwando a shot and told us he was pretty sure that Juntao died from a worm that she had when she was born. I guess it just got worse because

Juntao's mother was never given shots when she was pregnant. Anyway, he took care of Rex and hopefully she won't get sick.

Tonight is our Bible study at Etas. Aaron has one with a group of guys at the same time I have mine with Alice. Antony, Todd and Danny are all coming with us. Todd and Danny flew in at 2:20pm this afternoon and then at 4:00 we are heading out.

Thursday 2-28-06 – Well, last night went really well. We made our usual trip to Sam's house first to pick up his family. Then, Aaron dropped me off at Alice's house so I could study with her. He stopped to talk with her husband, Tom, to see if he would be coming down to his study at Pbles' house. My study with Alice went really well – we did our first study of the church focusing on the fact that Daniel 2, Matthew 16, Acts 2, Ephesians 4 and Ephesians 5 all show that Christ came to establish his church – meaning one. Our study went really well. I am very encouraged by my study with Alice. She is SDA (Seventh Day Adventist) and came to many of the studies that Aaron held at Pbles' house. However, at the time she only had an English Bible. In talking with her I realized that her English is not very good so, it is hard for her to understand what we were studying many times. One of our supporting congregations donated some money so that we could purchase some Bislama Bibles to give away and I am SO thankful for that. Alice told me that it has made all the difference for her because before with her English Bible what she was reading wasn't clear, but now she reads out of her Bislama Bible and she can understand everything she is reading and can know that what we are teaching can be backed up 100% with scripture.

After my study with Alice, she gave me some simboro (manioc wrapped in island cabbage and cooked in coconut milk) to take down to the group. Aaron was still studying with the men and apparently had just recently got started because they weren't very far along in the study. I sat with Leimawa and helped watch the kids and keep them quiet while he finished up. Between finishing his study and answering questions it was well after dark (about 7:30pm) by the time he finished. So, we readjusted our plans. We ate together, sang some songs from our Bislama song books and then headed home after that. Since it was getting late – Aaron and Sam decided to postpone our study of the gospel of John. In the villages it is common for people to go to bed about 8:30. We would have probably been pushing 9:30 or 10pm if we went ahead with the study. For the sake of everyone involved Aaron decided to do that study next week.

I have been quite the organizer today! I really got busy and re-organized my closets in my back room. I had to work around Antony's stuff, but that was okay. I had the cleaning bug and I wasn't about to be stopped! I'm glad I did! I feel much better about it!

Saturday 3-4-06 – It was an early morning for all of us today. This morning was our first Women's Bible class to be scheduled on a Saturday and instead of having our regular devotional, Ure chose for us to work at the land for the church building. Shawnda and I were supposed to arrive at 6am to pick up rocks and sticks to clear the land so a lawn mower can be used on it later. Since, she and I were headed there so early, the guys decided to pack up as well and go before the day got hot. We arrived late at 6:30 and so far Shawnda and I were the only women there. We set to work

helping the men with their work (and trying not to get in the way) when Ure and Gomon arrived about 7am. By the time it was all said and done, Ure, Shawnda, Rose-Hanna, Mabel and I all came to work at the land. We worked off and on until 10am making a pile of rocks, adding sticks and dead grass to the burn pile and raking the land. It was hard work and VERY, VERY HOT work! I was exhausted by the time we agreed to call it a day. Shawnda led us in a closing prayer before we all headed home. I don't know how the men (our husbands and the visiting men) do it everyday! Every morning they leave the house by 9am and go work until at least 12:00 and then after lunch and a short rest head back out and work till 6pm! Being out working in the Vanuatu sun is about enough to knock me off my feet for the rest of the day – and I only did it for 3 hrs or so! It makes me appreciate so much more the work that the men are doing laying the foundation for the building. Especially the ones who don't "have" to be here working – Antony, Todd and Danny all come because of their love for the people here and their desire to do the Lord's work. They are a blessing!

Sunday 3-5-06 – Today was quite the busy day, as most fellowship Sundays are. We had a big crowd for worship and also at the fellowship lunch. And I am so happy to say that Alice (the woman from Etas that I study with) and her husband, Tom both came to worship for the first time ever. Tom has also been attending a study that Aaron is conducting on Wednesday nights with a group of men from Etas.

After everyone left and went on their way home, Aaron and Todd headed out to a Bible study that Aaron has on Sunday afternoons and the rest of us relaxed and napped. Tonight Antony treated us all to pizza at Seaview Restaurant. It was quite yummy and we had a good time!

Monday 3-6-06 – Today was grocery shopping day again. However, today is also a holiday (I'm a little unsure as to which one) and the butcher, Rainbow Gardens and the chicken shop were all guaranteed to be closed. So, Shawnda and I worked around our houses this morning and then headed out after lunch to go to Nambatu supermarket. It was open so we were able to get a portion of our shopping done. Today the men tried a different working schedule and planned to be at the land at 5am and work until about 10 or 11am. Then come home and eat lunch and rest for a few hours. Then, they planned to head back out at 3pm and work until 6:00. It made for a long day for them, but at least they avoided some of the strongest heat of the day.

Tuesday 3-7-06 – Today Shawnda and I devoted ourselves to finishing up our grocery shopping. We tried to hit Rainbow Gardens for potatoes and garlic before lunch time. And also go to the butcher before lunch as well. While we were at the butcher Kaela was holding my car keys for me. She tripped and fell down and hit her lip on the keys. Her lip never broke open and bled, but she did get a pretty good fat lip from the experience. And it was what I am sure will be the first fat lip of many! Then we came home and waited for the boys to get home so we could fix lunch. After lunch we headed back out to Centerpoint supermarket to get some chicken (which they didn't have so we will try back again tomorrow). I'm sure we did something else today, but I can't seem to think what it was! – Oh, I also finished up my work on my Bible study for tomorrow night with Alice. On a side note and a couple of days late – Shem, Rose and Jonah left

Sunday afternoon to go back to Shem's home island of Ambrym and visit his family. They plan to be gone about a month...and in Vanuatu that can sometimes also mean – give or take a month.

Wednesday 3-8-06 – I did almost absolutely nothing of value today. I probably shouldn't admit something like that but, I guess everyone has days like that. I guess I did get my Bible study for tonight printed off and my bag packed to go to Etas and I fixed lunch and took care of Kaela – but other than that...I laid comatose in with a fan blowing directly on me. December and January were hot. February the humidity was setting in and the sun was, as they say here, "strong" and it was very hot. But...March. NOTHING could prepare me for March! --- Except when Eric came back from Vanuatu last year in March and said the heat was bad enough to put the reality of the fear of hell in him. Lovely. Today is so incredibly hot and humid I literally felt like I just stepped out of the shower, didn't bother to dry off and just put on my clothes. I can't get up and walk across the room without breaking a sweat and so I sat as close as possible to my best friend, the fan. I am really feeling sympathy for the guys who have been working at the land all day directly in the sun. Not only that, but today is the first day for them to begin laying the concrete foundation (the footer?) themselves.

Aaron came home at 4pm and we got ready to go to Etas. Tonight is our Bible study and even though he is about to fall over from exhaustion we are scheduled to go – so on with the show.

Thursday 3-9-06 – Today was another hotty. Not as bad as yesterday, but still I was compelled to spend my time in front of the fan. This morning Shawnda, Kaela and I got off to an early start and headed to the grocery store for the 4th time this week. It's becoming a habit going everyday and not really one that I like. Although that can't be helped much! We still hadn't had any luck finding chicken legs to buy for dinner tomorrow night so that was our reason for grocery shopping again today. On our way out we decided that today would be a good day to try to go see Lissie and little Wayne, but we had no idea where they lived. So, we went to Kalman's (Lissie's husband) work and asked him where to go. He was coming on to his lunch break so he got in the car with us and we took him home for lunch. It was quite the bumpy trip to their apartment. Kalman and Lissie live in an area of town called Orlin and the roads aren't that great. Which isn't unusual for this time of year with all the rain. The potholes were HUGE and inwardly I was wondering how thrilled Aaron would be if he was in the car. However, driving was the only way to get there so, I crept the car over the bumps and hoped for the best! It was great to see Lissie and Wayne who is now 3 weeks old. He is so little – only 3 kilos (a little over 6lbs.) but, is eating really well and things seem to be going good for them.

After we finished our visit we took Kalman back to work, went to the grocery store and then finally made it home at lunch time. Kaela was ready for a snack but even more ready to lay down and take a nap!

Friday 3-10-06 – Today is the last official day of work and I know the guys are MORE than ready to be done. It has been a long, hot week for them and they are all dog tired every night and falling into bed way before their normal time.

Lissie had to go to the doctor today so she brought Wayne by while she went to the hospital to get her number. She was number 78 and they just started taking people at 10am. Yikes. It will be a long day of waiting for her! Shawnda and I were more than happy to watch him and Kaela loved to look at “baby Wayne”. He didn’t do much other than eat and sleep so we just set him up in Shawnda’s extra room and tried to keep him cool while he slept. Lissie and her sister-in-law came and went during the day, checking on the numbers at the hospital and coming back to rest and talk with us. We are just glad that we live so close and they can come rest and wait at our house.

The guys got all finished up and we had ourselves a lovely dinner at 6:30pm. We grilled chicken and had corn on the cob. Yummy! That chicken was SO good! Afterwards, Shawnda and I cleaned up the dishes and I put Kaela to bed. The men were feeling chatty about “guy” things so Shawnda and I escaped to my bedroom where we laid on the bed reading in companionable silence. We are kind of strange that way –who likes to get together just to read separate books? We do. Strange girls we are. And we are okay with that!

Saturday 3-11-06 – Danny headed back to NZ today. His plane left at 7am so he had to be at the airport at 5:30am. I stayed home with Kaela. When Kaela got up we booked it around and got ready to go and ate breakfast. Today is Shawnda’s week for the Women’s devotional fellowship and we are going out to the farm to visit the Christian women there. There is a farm just on the outskirts of Vila, close to the airport, where a family of Christians meet to worship. It is a little far for them to come into town to worship with us and too expensive so, they meet together about 10 of them and worship every Sunday. So, today, we women went out to visit and fellowship with the women there. It went great and we had a wonderful time! I think we are all looking forward to having the building completed so we can begin meeting together for worship every Sunday!

Todd and Antony’s wives come in this afternoon. Shawnda and I are especially excited to meet them, since we have heard so much about both of them and have yet to meet them! Their names are Jeana (Gina) and Jeanette. Tonight is the weekly church fellowship at Mike’s house too. It will be a busy day for them, but great to be together with the Christians!

Sunday 3-12-06 – We had a great turnout for worship with morning. It was so good to see the room crowded with people! Mike was scheduled to do the opening prayer and when he walked up front to give it and the room was nice and quiet Kaela took it upon herself to call out nice and *loud*, “Uncle Mike!” This got a hand over her mouth and a round of chuckles from everyone including Mike. That Kaela, what will we do with her?

Aaron had a busy afternoon – he had to take everyone back to Etas, then come home, eat a quick lunch and head out to his afternoon Bible study in Mele (Mel-Lay), an area of Vila that is nearby where Flexon, Fiona and Joana live. The rest of us rested and watched a movie.

Monday 3-13-06 – You guessed it. Grocery day. The guys planned to head out to the land and finish up some work, planning to be gone only about 2 hours. So, the 4 of us girls (Shawnda and I (with Kaela), Jeana and Jeanette) planned to go grocery shopping.

However, we spent so long chatting that the guys made it home before we even were able to leave. So, Todd and Jeana ended up going back to their resort and Antony and Jeanette headed to town. Kaela was ready for a nap right about the time that we were ready to leave so I put her down for her nap and Shawnda and I headed out right before lunch. We went to Nambatu supermarket, which was a nice, speedy trip since we didn't have Kaela with us. Then, we came home and ate lunch and basically found things to do while we waited for the lunch siesta time to be over. At 1:30, after Kaela was up, we headed back out again to go to Rainbow Gardens for potatoes and to the market.

We planned for an early dinner which was nice and it just happened that Antony set up his projector and we spent the evening looking at his pictures from this last week – the men working at the land – and pictures from his previous trips to Vanuatu. We also saw some of their pictures from their family vacations in New Zealand and I can hardly WAIT to go visit! It looks beautiful!

Wednesday 3-15-06 – Today Shawnda and I decided to do our visiting. Ure was sick on Sunday and unable to make it to worship so we went out to visit her. We took her some flavored tea and a papaya. When we got to her house we found out that Sesky was sick too. This is the season for sickness. The weather is changing so much – raining and not raining – back and forth. Everyone is getting sick and I am feeling my throat is on the verge of soreness. We had a very nice visit with Ure. The three of us just sat and visited while Kaela kept us entertained. She was so happy to be going to see Ure that all the way to her house she kept saying, “Ure, Akisa, Ure, Akisa”. (Akisa is Ure's daughter that comes to stay with us when Aaron is out of town).