

From ^O_R Point ^O_F View

the Ladies of Mission Vanuatu

Saturday 4-15-06 – This is Gomon and Ure’s week for the all church fellowship. They chose for us all to meet at the land for the building and clear some of the weeds that are doing a great job of taking over. One of the great things about tropical countries is that the soil is so fertile that things grow so well – however, that also includes weeds and the weeds have gone crazy at the land for the church building! There is always a lot of work to do in clearing that land. So, at 6:30 Eric, Shawnda, Mike and I loaded up in the Brandell’s truck (Aaron stayed home sick and watched Kaela) and headed to the land. We picked up Fiona on the way. There was a good turnout for clearing the land and everyone armed with their bush knives started cutting the weeds and the rest of us raked them up and carried them away. It was hot, hard work but the land was looking great by the time we finished working at 9am.

We women were scheduled to meet at Fiona’s at 1pm to have our Women’s devotional and fellowship but I think we were all too tired to get back out in the afternoon. So, we decided to postpone it until Monday lunchtime and make it an all-church fellowship. We’ll take food and roast it over a fire, sing, swim, eat and socialize! It will be a great way to spend the day on Monday, which is part of the Easter holiday here!

Sunday 4-16-06 – Today was quite a day. Things happened a little differently with our Sunday trip to worship with the Etas group. Aaron took our car in to get worked on Thursday and it was supposed to be finished on Saturday. However, the people called and said it wouldn’t be done until Tuesday (big surprise). So, Aaron left the house at 9am to go find a bus or taxi that could take us to Etas in time for worship at 10:00. Well, blessings of all blessings – there happened to be a bus sitting outside our house waiting on a different man who needed to go to Eton village. Etas is right on the way to Eton so the bus driver said he would be glad to drop us off at Etas. Yea! So, we got to Etas in plenty of time worship and everyone was ready on time. That was a treat since I was prepared to have to wait at least 30 minutes for all to show up. We had a good turn out – the 5 Christians, Philip (a man we are hoping will be baptized soon), Sam’s sister and her husband were visiting, and also Alice and Tom both came for worship and stayed to talk and eat afterwards! Aaron preached a GREAT lesson – I was so proud of him – especially since I knew he wasn’t feeling 100% and he still did a great job! Afterwards, Ruth had cooked food for us all so we ate with them: boiled manioc, rice, fire roasted chicken and some wild pig that was just super delicious!

When we got ready to head back to Vila we knew we had some walking to do since we don’t have our car. So, we two-footed it back to the main road from Pbles’ house, back in the bush. It took about 30 minutes to get there on account that Kaela insisted on keeping her hands full of small rocks and flowers that she found along the road. When we got to the main road we waited about 10-15 minutes for a bus/truck/taxi to be able to pick us up and take us into town. Thank goodness there were clouds to help block the sun part of the time and a good breeze to keep us from getting too hot! Finally, a truck came along and we all climbed in the back of it and had a windy, yet cool ride back into town. The man was only going as far as the roundabout at USP (Univ. of S. Pacific) and then heading in the opposite

direction of our house so he just let us down there. We thanked him for the ride and then two-footed it again up the hill and all the way home (another 30 minutes). By the time we got home we were all hot, tired and thirsty, but it had been a good day!

Monday 4-17-06 – Today is a holiday in Vanuatu since Easter was yesterday. They really know how to celebrate the Easter holiday here – 3 days of vacation! The women decided to post-poner our women’s devotional until today and make it an all-church fellowship so everyone could come. It turned out to be a great time for everyone! The weather was beautiful – hot and sunny but, not suffocating at all. The water was warm and since there was just a nice breeze there weren’t too many waves in the lagoon for swimming. We all met at the beach (not a true sandy beach, but a kind of rocky shore instead) right across the street from the place where Flexon and Fiona live. We cooked hot dogs and chicken and everyone brought other food like manioc, breadfruit, sandwiches, rice and passion fruit (LOVE that stuff!). We talked and ate and then some of us went swimming – including Kaela who actually cried when Aaron and I made her wait until after lunch to get back in the water. We had a wonderful time and got home about 3pm just in time to rest and relax before dinner. There is a gospel meeting at Epau village every night this week at 7pm so they are out every day at 5:00 until midnight or so by the time they get back.

Tuesday 4-18-06 – Today is Aaron’s birthday! The big 27. Lucky him. He feels so old. I just can’t help but laugh at him in his agony. (I’m such a nice wife). Ha. Ha. Shawnda and I attacked our grocery shopping late this morning and then we had a team birthday lunch for Aaron. John Oscar, a guy that Aaron used to study with, came by the house because he is home on school holiday from Santo Island. So, he stayed and ate with us. Then after he left to go home, we did presents and cupcakes.

Wednesday 4-19-06 – Wow. Tonight was quite the village experience. It rained all day and even though I knew the place would be a muddy mess at Etas, I still wanted to go and see Leimawa and Alice. Kaela came with Aaron and I since Shawnda was in Epau. I never take her to these studies because she is so distracting – which she was. She wanted to get down and play, but I wouldn’t let her run around while they were studying. She was tired and fussy and made for a long evening on my part. However, it wasn’t all bad. Actually it was rather funny. It was SO MUDDY there! We took our little Tico car and it can’t handle the in-roads at Etas so we had to park it on the Etas main road and then walk into Pbles’ house. This wasn’t too bad on the way there because it was light. Kaela wanted to walk but, I wouldn’t let her because there were mud puddles everywhere and slippery, slidy mud all over. While we were there, just walking around she had a _” of mud caked on the bottom of her shoes. She looked like she was walking on platform shoes! Then, it came time to leave...it was laughable. I couldn’t help but laugh at how crazy it was walking back to the main Etas road. It was a dark night (cloudy so you couldn’t see the moon for light). For Aaron, Kaela, Sam, Leimawa, Tino and I there were only 2 flashlights and Aaron’s was pitiful. We squished and slipped and slobbered our way back through the mud and the puddles all the way back to the car. And I was giggling the whole way which just got Leimawa going too since she thought it was funny that I found it funny. It was definitely an experience! A true village experience!

Friday 4-21-06 – A couple of observations that I have been meaning to write about. Number one and of by far the greatest of importance: It’s getting cooler!!!! Yee-Hah! In the last week or so there has been a quite noticeable and steady decline in temperature. It has been wonderful! Our fans don’t have to run at full speed all night just to sleep comfortably. It gets

hot in the day...after all, this *is* Vanuatu. But, it isn't the "I just want to lay down in front of a fan and not move kind of heat." I am so completely and utterly thankful for the break from the heat and I actually remember what it feels like to want my long sleeve t-shirt jacket in the evening. Yea!!!!

The second order of business is just an interesting observation. Interesting and somewhat surprising for me. Personally, I am not a lover of the hole-in-the-ground toilet. You know, the kind you encounter while camping high in the mountains. I worry about snakes and spiders and all sorts of things lurking in the darkness below me. So naturally, when I am faced with the "village toilet" of the hole-in-the-ground variety I do all I can to avoid using it. As in trying not to drink very much water while I am visiting Etas so I can just wait it out till I get home. In most villages if there isn't a modern type commode. There is a facility that is basically a hole in the ground with wooden planks over it and a hole cut out and people crouch over the hole to do their business. Like it or not that is just the village way making the best out of what they have. I recently found out something on this subject to be most surprising and an interesting study on the similarity of people everywhere. Not only I am somewhat "afraid" of the hole-in-the-ground toilet, but, some people who have lived in the village their whole life are similarly afraid of using a modern toilet like we have in our house. Interesting...because I naturally assumed that because my facility is nice and clean that it is "superior" and people from the village would gladly use my toilet over their own. Surprising...because that isn't always the way it is. This happened on two instances: One with an older woman about 70 years of age that has lived her whole life on a remote island and needed to use the bathroom, but told her family that she was afraid to use my toilet. The other instance was with a little girl about 3 years old that has used a patch of grass as her toilet (common for young children) and was also afraid to use my toilet. It is an interesting study of how people are basically the same everywhere. We are comfortable with what is familiar to us and somewhat afraid of that which is new or different. It was an interesting lesson to learn.

Saturday 4-22-06 – Last night Aaron, Kaela and I went to Epau for the gospel meeting. It was our first time in the week to go and we really enjoyed ourselves. I was a little unsure about how Kaela would do. We left the house at 5pm and the meeting began at 7:00, just an hour before her bedtime. I had envisioned her sleeping contentedly in my lap for the whole meeting. However, she was more interested in the kids around her and what they were doing – particularly a little girl that was about her age that kept coming over to play with her. She had such a good time that I couldn't get her to sleep at all! Thankfully, she was quiet and I was able to enjoy the singing and the rather lengthy question and answer session. We finally left to head back to Port Vila at 11pm and Kaela went to sleep almost immediately and slept all the way home.

This morning was our Women's devotional and fellowship day and it was scheduled to be out at the farm just outside of town where some Christians meet. I didn't get to sleep quite as late as I had wanted, however, I felt blessed to be able to sleep until 8:00. Shawnda and I left the house at 8:30 with Kaela in tow. We picked up Fiona, Rose and Ure on the way and then headed out to the farm. There were about 5 women there ready for the devotional which they all took charge of and organized. Rhema said the opening prayer, Mabel did a scripture reading and Winnie said the closing prayer and prayer for our snacks. Also, joining us was Woi, a new Christian sister! Woi is a friend of Mabel's and has been studying these last few weeks with Shawnda and Mabel. She made the decision to become a Christian on Thursday. She is so sweet – I am really looking forward to getting to know her better. She is

very young (probably about 16). It will be great to have her as an active part of our Women's activities in Vila!

Sunday 4-23-06 – The day finally came. The day for me to eat flying fox (bat) for the first time ever! I wasn't really looking forward to it --- at all. But, seeing as how islanders love eating flying fox, I knew I would be served it eventually. Who knew it would be today? Inwardly I wanted to gag a little at the thought – especially after I saw one that wasn't cooked yet, but recently cut up for cooking. I had to give myself a good peptalk and say a prayer for courage to eat that which I had no desire to do. Leimawa had cooked it especially to share it with us and was so excited to feed it to us that I couldn't bring myself to turn her down. So, I sucked it up and tried it. And you know what? It tastes like chicken. I know. The famous saying – but it was true – it was kind of like eating dark meat chicken and didn't look a whole lot different. Leimawa ate the guts (which the locals like) and I am good enough friends with her that I told her that she was welcome to them because I wouldn't be eating them. She just laughed at me. I just love Sam and Leimawa! They are such good friends to Aaron and I. We like spending time with them and talking with them. They are friendly and funny and just generally great to be around!

Monday 4-24-06 – Today was our team's one year anniversary vacation celebration day. That's kind of a long name for the day, but that is exactly what it was. Ure came at 7:30 this morning to pick up Kaela and take her to her house for the day. Kaela went without a tear in her eye. She just loves Ure! At 8am our team gathered outside by the road for the Sail Away Cruise transport to come pick us up for our day excursion. They were a few minutes late, but after they picked us up we drove about 40 minutes out of town to catch the Sail Away Cruise's boat. It was a catamaran and very nice! It took us out around some of the islands nearby Efate (where Port Vila is). We went first over by Hat Island (shaped like a hat) and snorkeled there for a while. Aaron and Eric went diving, but Mike, Shawnda and I stuck to the top of the water. No thanks on any possible shark encounters. The snorkeling was GREAT! The water was clear blue and beautiful. There was coral of about every color imaginable. The prettiest of the coral all had a neon tint to it that really stands out under water! There were tons of fish – all kinds of bright colored ones. Later in the day I even saw a sea turtle and a six-legged electric blue starfish. That was by far the coolest – oh! - We also saw *Nemo*. After snorkeling for about an hour or so we went back to the boat to rest and eat lunch: teriyaki chicken, rice, fresh fruit and veggies and bread. Yum! Then, we snorkeled over to Hat Island to see the gravesite of Roimata. I won't try and tell you all about the story of his death and all. I'm sure Shawnda will highlight it in her journal, though. The *very* basic story is that Roimata was a chief who died and several other chiefs, family members and their wives were buried alive with him in order to join him in the afterlife. After that we went back to the boat and it took us over to the girls beach from *Survivor Vanuatu*. That was interesting to see and it looked very much different than it does on TV! We snorkeled all around some more until I was completely exhausted and in need of another rest. Then we had some time to rest and relax on the boat before it was time to head back to the place where the transport would take us back to town. It was a GREAT day! Time just flew by, though. It is amazing. I am happy to report that neither Aaron or I got sunburned --- too bad --- only a couple of places that missed the sunscreen. Kaela did great for Ure and was so excited to see us all when we got home! It was a wonderful day to spend time together, relax and to talk about the work here in Vanuatu. We have had a truly blessed year and for that we are so thankful!

Tuesday 4-25-06 – Grocery shopping day was is on my doorstep again. This morning I worked on laundry and getting the house cleaned up and organized. Shawnda, Kaela and I headed to Nambatu supermarket at 10:30am for our general shopping. We came back – dropped off our cold items – and Kaela for a nap – and then headed out again to the market and Centerpoint supermarket before lunch. After lunch and Kaela’s nap we left yet again to go to Rainbow Gardens so Shawnda could get her potatoes. A fairly uneventful day, just busy.

Saturday 4-29-06 – Aaron and I took a 3-day holiday this week! We left on Thursday morning and came home today! Kaela stayed with Eric and Shawnda and did just great with them. With them living next door I don’t think it was too much of a change for her since she sees them everyday anyway! Aaron and I went to the Blue Water Resort. It is a modest little resort on this island that is quite a ways out of town which is just what we wanted! Somewhere quiet and relaxing and away from all the hubbub of the city! We had a very restful time snorkeling, kayaking, and mostly just sitting on the front porch of our little cabin and reading! Yea for us! It’s back to work now for both of us, though! As soon as we got back I got ready for the Women’s devotional and fellowship. It was at Shawnda’s house so Kaela and I just went next door for that. Aaron headed out to Paonangisu village for his weekend visit. He will get back Sunday night and I know Kaela will miss him terribly!

Sunday 4-30-06 – Well, I didn’t sleep well last night since I slept in the same room as Kaela so I was beat this morning! With Aaron gone Kaela and I went to worship in Vila instead of going out to Etas. It was the first time in almost a month that I have worshipped in Vila and it sure was great to be able to see some of the Christians that I haven’t seen too much of in the last month. It was a good day! Thankfully, I got caught up on my sleep this afternoon. Eric and Shawnda had a Bible study this evening and got home about 6:00pm. Shawnda invited Kaela and I back over to their house to eat with them and hang out until Aaron came home at 8:30. It was nice to have some company! I let Kaela stay up past her bedtime until Aaron got home because I knew she would want to see him and he would want to read to her and sing to her before bedtime. She sure is going to miss her Daddy next week when he leaves for Ambae Island for 2 weeks.

Monday 5-1-06 – May is here! I am so glad for it! The temperatures are so nice now days. Warm in the daytime and cool at night! Last night Aaron and I didn’t even turn on the fan in our room because it was so cool and comfortable! I love that! Today was grocery day and cleaning day for me. Grocery day was a little abbreviated since today is a holiday here – Labor Day – and some of the stores were closed. I had to really get busy cleaning because tomorrow Robert Martin and Ken Forrest, both from the US are coming into town. They will be staying with us until Friday and then they will fly to Ambae with Aaron. It will be a busy week, but nice to have them here visiting! Ure is coming over at 5pm to help Shawnda and I make salu-salus (like a lei) for Robert and Ken.

Tuesday 5-2-06 – Robert and Ken’s plane was scheduled to come in at 9am so it was up and at’em for us this morning! Of course, just as we were getting out of the truck at the airport Shawnda remembered that we had left the salu-salus in her fridge at home. We decided that it would be shame to leave them at home after Ure came all the way to our house to help us make them and we spent all that time folding the leaves and sewing them together. So, Shawnda and I hopped back in the truck and headed home to get them. It was going to be a race because we were already running late and Robert’s plane had likely

already landed. We were just banking on it taking them a bit of time to get through customs. However! Every slow car in Port Vila happened to fall in line in front of us on the way home! It took FOREVER! One slow car would turn and another one would pull out in its place. Why is it always that way when you are playing beat the clock? Anyway, we made it back to the airport with the salu-salus and we were late. Oh well. They weren't going anywhere since we had the truck. As it turned out only Robert was on that flight and we found out that Ken would be coming in later on Thursday. We came back to the house, Robert got settled in at Eric and Shawda's and we had a nice rest of the day catching up with him.

It was our week for the mid-week devotional and fellowship so Aaron and I set it to be tonight at our house. We planned to have a fellowship meal to welcome Robert and so he could see the Vila Christians before heading out to Ambae on Friday.

Thursday 5-4-06 – Last night Robert and Mike went with Aaron and I to Etas. It was a good night for the study. I was a little disappointed because there wasn't really anyone around. We went down to Sam and Leimawa's right after we got there. Usually there are kids everywhere and all sorts of family members running around. I guess everyone was in the garden or had gone for their swim (to bathe) because there was only a pack of dogs (about 10 of them!) at their house. It is the first time I have ever been there and it be so quiet! We left their house and drove down the road to where Pbles lives. I talked with Alice a little bit before the study and asked her again if she wanted to talk or had been thinking any more about being baptized. I told her that I didn't want to pressure her about it, but I did want to make sure that she knew that I am available if she ever has questions or wants to talk. She just told me that she would tell me when she is ready. I take that to mean that she is not going to make a decision until something happens with her husband, Tom. So, I will just continue to wait and pray.

Friday 5-5-06 – Aaron, Robert and Ken left this morning at 5:30 bright and early. I did not get up for the event other than to set out some muffins, start the coffee and kiss Aaron good-bye. The rest of the day I spent doing some last minute shopping for things to send back to my family with Eric and Shawnda. May and June seems to be home to all kinds of holidays and birthdays for mine and Aaron's families. Tonight was a quiet night. Shawnda and I rented a movie since Eric had a meeting with the soccer team that he is on. We got brave and started it before Kaela went to bed. It was good, but since we missed few parts due to her little "toddleness" I think we will watch it again tomorrow if we can find the time. Lissie is supposed to come by the house tomorrow and bring baby Wayne with her. It will be good to visit with her and see the baby.

Saturday 5-6-06 – Being the first Saturday of the month is was Ure's time to choose our fellowship and she chose for we ladies to go do some cleaning at the church ground. The day was warm but not nearly as hot as it was last month. I worked for about 30 minutes and then sat with Kaela under a tree so Ure could go work. I expected someone to come relieve me so I could go work again after 30 minutes only no one came and I ended up "resting" for over an hour. Oh well. The local women just laughed at me when I asked why no one came to rest and make me go work again. Afterwards, Shawnda and I took Fiona and Ure home then I came home and showered.

Eric called about 30 minutes after I got home and said he was test driving a truck for Aaron and I and wanted me to come out to the road so I could test drive it. Aaron and I are selling our little Tico car and getting a village-road friendly 4-wheel drive truck. The lady was supposed to come pay for the car and pick it up on Friday but the bank didn't have her check

ready yet so that is supposed to happen Monday. Aaron told Eric to handle any dealings with selling the car and buying a truck if need be. We will see what happens. The truck was in pretty good condition and in our price range. I pretty much left it to Eric to decide if we should buy it while Aaron is gone. He knows better what Aaron wants and since Aaron put all that in his hands then that is fine by me. I just go with the flow. That's my job.

Sunday 5-7-06 – Eric and Shawnda were scheduled to go to Etas today for worship. The plan is for every week for one man from the congregation to go out to Etas and help them by preaching a sermon. This week Eric is on the list. Pbles came by about 8:30 this morning and needed a ride back out to Etas. He had come into town to pick something up and so I told him that he could just ride out with Eric and Shawnda. We had a pretty good turnout at worship in Vila and that was encouraging. Steven and Rose-Hanna hosted the monthly fellowship meal at their house. We had a good turnout for that and everyone had a good time! Kaela and I came home and took an afternoon nap since we both needed one!

Monday 5-8-06 – Shawnda came over this morning and video taped Kaela being “herself”. The Brandell's are going to see my Mom and Dad in Tulsa on the weekend of the 21st so we wanted to surprise them with some home video of Kaela. I did the washing and swept the house. We finally headed out to grocery shop at 11am and finished it up after lunch. For some reason today I got the urge to cut my hair. I guess I am getting tired of it being long. So, during Kaela's nap Shawnda and I went to a hair salon at one of the hotels in town and looked at pictures so we could get ideas. I have an appointment set for Wednesday morning at 10:00. Boy will Aaron be surprised when he gets home!

The woman who is supposed to buy our car today wasn't at work when Eric tried to call and it turns out that this is a French holiday so the French Embassy is closed. We are hoping to close the deal tomorrow. Eric also went by and talked with the manager at Asco Motors and told him that we DO want to buy the truck contingent upon the selling of Aaron's and my car. Now we are REALLY hoping things get finalized tomorrow.

Tuesday 5-9-06 – I spent the morning constructing boxes. I am sending some presents home to the US with Eric and Shawnda. It will cost SO much less for me to send them from the States than overseas and they will get there a lot faster! Most of the boxes we get here are from the grocery store and they are all about the same size. So, when I need a smaller box or a different shaped box, I cut and tape until I get it like I want it! It's time consuming, but worth the effort!

Nadia called Eric this morning and wanted him to bring our car to the Embassy at 10:30 so her brother can look at it before she buys it. He took it and her brother had a few complaints (minor ones) so Eric lowered the price \$250 to keep him happy and still sell our car today. We went to town at 2pm to pick up her bank check.

At noon Ure came over to visit Shawnda and I. We took more video of Kaela because she is always happiest when Ure is visiting! We got some really cute stuff (in my opinion!). I can't wait for my parents to see it!

While in town at 2pm Eric and I got the money from Nadia then cashed the check at ANZ bank. Then we took it to Asco Motors to put it towards the payment of the truck. Hopefully it won't take too long to get things situated with buying the truck. I am VERY hopeful that it all gets done before the Brandells leave on Thursday because I am not very experienced in purchasing cars! Eric said that he wishes he could be home when Aaron gets back. He wants to see the look on Aaron's face when he tells Aaron that he bought us a

truck while he was gone. Ha! That is funny to think about. Aaron will sure be surprised! But, also very happy with the purchase made.

Wednesday 5-10-06 – Today I got up and got busy earlier than usual. My hair appointment is at 10am and I need to have Kaela and I both ready to go by then. Getting up early wasn't a problem since Kaela is waking up at 6am this week. And sometimes a little earlier. 5:45 today, actually. I am sleeping in the same room as her at the Brandell's so there isn't any convincing her to go back to sleep once she realizes I am in the room with her! So, against my will, I am up with the chickens!

Shawnda accompanied me to my appointment for moral support and to watch Kaela. They went down by the lagoon and played in the sand while I got my hair cut. Interestingly, due to the high humidity here my haircut didn't turn out ANYTHING like the picture I picked out. While I thought I could cut out the curls and be left with straight hair I was wrong. Instead the curls stayed and got bouncier with the shortness. It's the first time that I have ever been truly surprised by the end result, but I am very happy with how it turned out!

Here are the truck purchasing details for the day – proving once again that nothing is easy in Vanuatu. Shawnda had a Bible study at 1pm so Eric dropped her off and then went to the bank with me so we could withdraw the money from my account in the States. We needed \$12,000. Yep. For a used car. Sas Tumas! “Very Expensive”. Anyway, that is just the way it is and there is no getting around it. First we withdrew money for insurance and taxes. Then we tried to withdraw the full \$12K and the bank in the US blocked it. So, we tried half of that - \$6K. It was still blocked. The bank told us to go home and call our bank in the US and see what the problem is. So, I did. We came home and I called Compass Bank only to find out that customer service closes at 9pm central time and it was then 10pm central time. What a hassle. Now, I have to get up at 1am and call the US to catch customer service when they open in the morning.

Thursday 5-11-06 – Today Eric and Shawnda are scheduled to leave to go back to the US for 5 weeks. I was SO hoping that things would get finished up with the truck before they left, however, that was not meant to be. I think this is meant to be a growth experience for me. I'm not sure I want it. But, it doesn't look like I have a choice! I called the bank in the US at 1am and spent 30min talking to a very nice lady that told me that I needed to talk with the bankcard section of customer service. However, the “system was down” at the bankcard section and it would be another hour before it was up again. I really didn't plan on loafing around for an hour in the middle of the night, but that is just what I did. I popped in a movie, lay down on the Brandell's couch and watched it for an hour to kill time before calling them back at 2:30am. I wanted to call my Dad and wish him Happy Birthday at that time but I was afraid to “over-use” my Skype (internet calling) and have it shut down on me before I finished my business. So, I decided to wait until morning...later that is. Anyway, when I called back at 2:30am I was told that the reason they blocked my withdrawal was because there is a \$6K limit per day. I had already taken out over a thousand for taxes and insurance (MAN! This stuff is expensive!). So, I was told to go back to the bank in the morning and try to withdraw \$6K tomorrow. Yippee. I went back to bed and slept until the not-so-happy hour of 6:30am when Kaela was ready to get up. I was NOT ready to get up, but I didn't have a choice in the matter.

Kaela and I hung out with Shawnda this morning at her house. We are trying to soak up as much Shawnda as we can before she goes! I am sure going to miss her! Then at 9:30am Eric and I went BACK to the bank to make the \$6K withdrawal. Bingo. He loaned me the other \$6K for the day and I will be back at the bank again tomorrow to take the

second \$6K out to pay Eric back. What craziness! We then had the bank deposit the entire \$12K into Asco Motor's bank account. Interestingly Asco Motors just gave us their account number. Hmm...that's different. Anyway, the manager there told us that he would call when the truck was finished in the workshop. They were doing some things like putting in a spare tire, putting on a seat cover, etc. We waited all afternoon for him to call. Then finally Eric called the manager back at 3pm (we all had to leave for the airport at 4pm) and he told Eric that he had forgotten to call him and tell him the truck was ready. Wonderful. So, we went down to Asco Motors again only to find out that the workshop wasn't *quite* done with the truck and could we wait. We waited 20 minutes and then had to leave. It was nice to pick up and drive to Asco and spend 20 minutes waiting for nothing. But...whatever. It's Vanuatu – you have to learn to just go with the flow! I really wish Eric could be in town for the rest of this truck-buying-adventure. But, I am thankful that he was here to help me thus far. With Aaron gone I wouldn't have had any idea what to do – and without out Eric's help I would have been clue-*LESS!*

Akisa came over at 3:30 and went to the airport with us. Gomon, Ure and Mike all met us their to say good-byes to the Brandell's. I was feeling a little tearful. I sure am going to miss them! Especially Shawnda! She is my every-day-buddy! Kaela was just beside herself at the airport. We waited almost an hour with them and she was SO cross and cranky and antsy! I could tell that she knew something was going on and she didn't like it, but she wasn't sure what it was. Poor girl. With Aaron being gone and Eric and Shawnda leaving she knows that something isn't right. We dropped Ure off at her house then Mike brought Akisa, Kaela and I back to the house. I made dinner for the three of us (Akisa, Kaela and I) – Mike went home. We watched a movie and then went to bed EARLY!

Friday 5-12-06 – Day whatever in the truck-buying-adventure. I think I have lost count of how many days I have been doing this! The manager at Asco, his name is Job, called at 8:30am to tell me the truck was ready and he would bring it by this morning. So, I really busied myself getting all my work done and getting Kaela ready. I knew that after he dropped off the truck and I signed the papers I would need to go to town and get insurance set up, transfer the ownership, and pay taxes. I waited until 10:30am then called Asco. A lady answered the phone and said Job was out of the office and he would call me back when he came in. I waited again until 12:30pm (since the morning was DEFINITELY over). I had to run some errands in town so Kaela and I hopped in the Brandell's truck and on my way to town I went by to see Job. He came out and immediately apologized for forgetting to call me. He said he would bring the truck by this afternoon (In Vanuatu that is about 4pm-6pm). I said that would be fine. So, I am back to waiting again.

Kaela and I ran our errands in town: the post office, the bank, the market, the grocery store and then came home so she could take her nap. Now I am typing this journal entry at 3:15pm and wondering if the truck will really and truly arrive this afternoon or not. You never know where this truck buying adventure will lead! - I hope they bring the right truck! Ha!

Saturday 5-13-06 – I got up early this morning and got everything ready for the Ladies Fellowship. I was scheduled to host it this week. It ended up being a little disappointing because only 2 women came. Ure and Rose with Akisa (who isn't usually there) it made an even four. We had a nice time anyway, but I didn't do the get-to-know-you activity that I had prepared as part of our fellowship. With so few of us there it wasn't worth it. I will just hold onto what I prepared and we will try to do it at a later date. Akisa had to umpire a netball game this afternoon so I took Kaela and we went to the movie store to rent a movie to watch while she was gone. However, that was an ordeal that I don't care to re-live. Kaela was not

on her best behavior and kept asking to go home very loudly. I was so annoyed and frustrated that I just ended up leaving without a movie. It was definitely nap time.

After we came home I put Kaela to bed and I decided to go check out the truck. However, it wouldn't start. I called Mike and he promised to come look at it tomorrow afternoon.

Sunday 5-14-06 – Today didn't really feel like Mother's Day since there wasn't anyone here to wish me a happy one. Even though it is technically Mother's Day in Vanuatu not many people celebrate it and I'm pretty sure Mike didn't even remember that it was. So, it was just another ordinary Sunday to me. Aaron did send me a nice Mother's Day letter that I received in the mail on Friday, though. We ended up not having Bible class this morning since there were only 2 kids and most of the adults didn't arrive until 9:45. So, the men just made the decision to go ahead with worship at 10:00 instead. I did get to talk with a few of the women who weren't at Ladies Fellowship yesterday, but did express their desire to be there. I guess various extenuating circumstances kept them from coming.

After worship and the weekly Matthew video, Akisa and I took Woi home. Woi is a new Christian and I am so proud of her because right now she is staying with her family at Pango village and it is hard to get a bus to come into town all the way out there. However, she did find a bus and came early to our house this morning and walked to church with Akisa, Kaela, and me. She asked for a ride home afterwards and I was more than happy to take her. I am proud of her for making the effort to come all by herself and especially from so far out of town.

Akisa and I read our books this afternoon while Kaela took her nap. At 4pm one of Akisa's friends came over to work on Accounting with her so I took Kaela over to Eric and Shawnda's house so they could work in peace and quiet. Kaela watched part of a movie while I swept their house. I am on a campaign to try and keep their house free of daddy long-legs spiders while they are gone. It takes no time at all – the space of a day or two - for the daddy long-legs to take up residence in every corner. They are something that I used to really not like and now they are just a normal part of my everyday life. They don't bother me and I don't bother them until it is time to sweep.

Monday 5-15-06 – This morning I checked the truck again before leaving on my grocery errands and it still wouldn't start. So, instead of taking our new truck to town I drove the Brandell's to town. First, though, I stopped by Asco and talked to Job about the two problems: 1) it won't start, 2) none of the things that he said they would fix on the truck have been fixed. I am sure that everytime he sees me walk through the doors of Asco he groans and thinks, "not her again." I'm always very kind and polite, but I'm also on a campaign to keep this truck-buying-adventure from becoming a Vanuatu "we'll-get-around-to-it-sometime-later" adventure. I don't think he believed me when I told him that it wouldn't start – like I did something to make that happen. However, I convinced him that I didn't do anything to make it not start since it hasn't moved from my carport since they brought it on Friday. I am certain the battery has issues. I also gave him a list of things that Eric had emailed me – everything he said they would fix when he sold me the truck. I wanted him to know that I knew exactly what he said they would fix and I was prepared to hold him to it.

After that little trip I went into town (Kaela stayed the morning with Akisa) to go to Rates and Taxes and then to get auto insurance at C&K. It took some doing and over an hour, but I finally got it all done. After I got home C&K called and said I needed to come back after lunch because they had me fill out the wrong form. So, right after I put Kaela down for her nap and left Akisa reading on the couch, I went to C&K – filled out another form, talked

with a real estate lady, Domonique, about an apartment for Mike, and then headed to Nambatu supermarket to do my grocery shopping.