

From ^O_R Point ^O_F View

the Ladies of Mission Vanuatu

Sunday 4-1-07 – Today was the first fellowship meal that we have had in quite a while and it went really well! After worship was over we all piled into ours and the Brandell's trucks and Timothy's bus and headed over to our house. The food was great and there was plenty of it. We ate together and then after that the men who were sitting under our carport got to talking about something and so we ladies just laid down on the mats on the grass and talked and rested and watched the kids play. It was a great time of fellowship and the last person headed for home at about 3pm. I am already looking forward to our fellowship meal next month!

Monday 4-2-07 – It is SO UNBELIEVABLY hot today! I thought April would mean a little cool down in the weather but boy was I wrong! It is SOOO hot. The miserable kind of humidity and heat that just makes you want to lay under a fan and not move (unfortunately today was grocery day so I didn't get much of the "not moving"). I feel terrible because I have been cross and cranky all afternoon. Kaela has been miss difficult pants today (probably because she is miserable too!) And I have not had the patience to deal with it. While Aaron was saying prayers and singing with her at bedtime, I went and took a cold shower. It felt so good! And then I just planted myself on our bed with the fan on high and tried to stay cool. What a day! I had a real problem about 6pm – the sun had gone down and our house still felt like a sauna. I wanted to go outside because the night air was cool but the mosquitos were hungry little meat eaters tonight! Forget that idea!

Tuesday 4-3-07 – School today went really well. The kids were in good moods and everything went much better than it did last Friday. I guess I felt better too and I am sure that helped! The only problem with having school in Etas is that I can never just leave and go home right after class is over. There is always someone that needs me to haul something for them or people that need to be dropped off in town in different places. And really I am glad to help out although sometimes I am just ready to get home and wish I could get there a little faster! I probably deserve a kick in the pants for thinking that way. Today Sam's brother is building a house and needed me to haul some corrugated steel in our truck. Only the sheets of it were so long that they didn't fit in the truck very well and they had to tie it on with rope. The top in angled in the air off the roof of the truck about 3 feet and the bottom end hung off the back bumper about 2 feet. I had my doubts that hauling it was going to work since the road in Etas is so bumpy. And I guess I was right. We only made it about 100 feet before we came to an abrupt 8 inch dip in the road. The steel hanging off the bumper of the truck was dragging the ground and it became evident that this wasn't going to work. So, they had to unload it again. I guess John will have to look for a "cameo", a long truck for hauling, to see if it will come get the supplies for his house. After that I headed for home and for the first time in a few weeks I didn't have anyone hitching a ride to town with me so it was quick sailing to our house. Today is

another humid day. Not as hot as yesterday because it is mostly cloudy. Maybe that means rain is on the way and we can have some relief from this humidity. Also, Eric and Shawnda just found out that the passport office doesn't have any more passports – they ran out. So, they won't get any new ones in until May. That puts a real damper on their plans to return to the States. As of now they are having to delay at least a week and will miss Eric's sister's graduation. What a bummer.

Sunday 4-8-07 – It has been quite a weekend. A tiring one, but a good one. This week went by so fast that I haven't updated my journal for several days. Friday, I had lots of kids absent from school because they wanted to take a personal Easter holiday. That didn't make me very happy since my school only lasts two hours. But, whatever. What can I do about the "island way"?

On Saturday Aaron took Kaela with him to do some work at the church ground so I had the morning to get some computer work done. It's REALLY hard to do computer work with Kaela around. She just demands so much attention (like any 2 year old) that it makes it difficult. Anyway, I had gotten behind on my emailing and I figured my family would want to hear from me (once in a while would be good!) so, I spent the whole time catching up on that. Then in the afternoon, after Kaela's nap, we all loaded up and went to Etas for what was supposed to be a short trip, an hour or so we thought. Ha! Nothing ever turns out that way! With the upcoming celebration tomorrow for the church meeting at Etas for one year, there has been a lot of activity and a lot of preparation. Anyway, our "short" trip to Etas turned out to be a long one. When we arrived the men were sitting around singing. (that's always a nice sight to see. Not really a devotional or set time of worship – just singing together because they like to.) After they finished, a large group of us loaded in the truck and went to the beach so the men could gather some coral, by the time we got back it was dark and raining (pitch black outside actually). And since we didn't expect to be there so long, neither Aaron or I carried our flashlights so we had to walk to Pbles and Ruth's house in the dark, in the mud. It was very unnerving. I was carrying Kaela and I couldn't see a blessed thing! I have walked the path a million times but there are trees and rocks and tree roots and muddy spots and it was kind of scary! I was so afraid I would fall down but I didn't and we made it there fine. However, by that time I was hungry and tired. But, we ended up staying and eating a small plate of food with them and finally got home at 7:45. I was hoping for a good nights sleep but we had a big thunderstorm last night. It rained harder than I've ever heard it rain here. And all night long. Kaela woke up scared several times because of all the rain, thunder and lightning. Needless to say we all didn't sleep much during the night with her in our bed for part of the time.

Worship and our special meal celebrating one year of meeting in Etas went really well. We had a lot of people in attendance. It was supposed to start at 8am so we arrived right about then and of course we didn't actually start worship until 9:45. The rain and mud was really slowing everyone down. It was amazing the standing water everywhere! Anyway, aside from that everything went well and it was a good time together. We are also glad to report that there were two baptisms today! Sam's dad, his name is Iata (eee-ata). And also a man that has been coming to studies and worshipping with us on and off named Jake. They call him Jake Long because he is tall and to differentiate him from another Jake in Etas. That was a really exciting part of the day! We got home at 4:30pm and I am B-E-A-T!!!! So tired!

Monday 4-9-07 – Today was grocery day and it was another sweltering day for the books! Oh how I wish the cool season would get here! I had a long day again today. It was grocery day and then after lunch, I put Kaela down for her nap and then I worked on my school stuff the whole two hours while she slept. Aaron left for Etas for a Bible study at 1:30pm. That is turning into a really good study-I think he has five people studying with him now. He got back home at 6pm and we had dinner. After dinner I put away clothes and did a boat load of dishes and fell into bed right after Kaela at 8:30pm.

Tuesday 4-10-07 – The events of Saturday, Sunday and Monday were really wearing me down so after school today I planned to rest the whole afternoon. I had school this morning and it only went okay. I am a little frustrated by a few of the girls I have in class because they aren't very good listeners. They are the space-out girls and Leimawa and I are constantly having to get their attention again. I am writing progress reports to give to some of the kids on Friday. I have six kids that just need additional assistance at home and I have four (the girls) that need a good talking to from their parents to encourage them to be better students in school. Right now they are just wasting their parents money for their school fee! I put Kaela down for her nap this afternoon and I was so tired that I went to sleep not long after her and slept for two hours! I KNEW my body was telling me to take a rest but it just took me several days to find the time to get it done! I felt SOOOOO much better when I got up.

Wednesday 4-11-07 – This morning when we woke up the air was stifling. The humidity was so thick in the air that I could barely stand to stay out from underneath the fan. However, I had a busy morning since my 12 week doctor's appointment was this morning at 9:00. After seeing the doctor we drove to the hospital so I could have my 12 week sonogram. Aaron and I were so glad to hear everything with the baby looks good! We even got three pictures of it! Since we got pregnant we have been praying every day for the health of the baby and I had been trying not to worry about having another miscarriage. But, I still had my fears. However, after the sonogram and finding out that everything is going well, it put a lot of those fears to rest. Aaron and I are feeling so much better about this pregnancy and have much to be thankful for. Did I mention my due date is October 17?

By the time we left the hospital it had started raining and that brought a little relief from the heat. But, as seems to be the case these days, it is Wednesday and it is raining. That has become the joke as of late with the Christians in Etas. We always say if it isn't raining now, it will be raining on Wednesday! I don't know why, but it always seems to rain whenever we are headed to Etas. Either early in the day or late making plenty of mud for us to trek around in! We had a really good turnout of men at our Bible study tonight – 9 men in all but only three women. I am sure that is due to the rain and mud. Many of the women don't like walking with their kids (and babies) down to the study when there is so much mud on the road and I can't say I blame them. My study with Marina went REALLY well tonight and I have high hopes that she will be baptized here in the next few weeks.

Thursday 4-12-07 – What a WONDERFUL, GLORIOUS day!!!! There seems to be a change in the air and it is FINALLY cooling down! Today we woke up to overcast skies, which usually means rain is on the way and humidity is killer. However, this morning, the humidity seems to be almost non-existent. It is cool and breezy and I am in a great mood just because of it! I LOVE THE COOL SEASON!!!! Yea!!!! Okay. I know I may seem

overly excited about a little bit of cool weather but I can't help myself! The heat and humidity are enough to drive me nuts sometimes, hardly wanting to cook because the kitchen gets so hot, stepping out of the shower and drying off only for my skin to be wet with sweat again, etc. Let's hope this cool weather isn't just a short thing-but is the official start of the cool season!

Friday 4-13-07 – School went really, really well today. (and my arm actually got cold from having the window down in the truck while I was driving to Etas!) I worked and worked and worked with four girls in my class that it is like pulling teeth to get them to talk and participate in class. And I finally got them to talk! I just felt really good about my teaching and excited for next week. It is always nice to have a good day at school. After school Kaela went with Fiona and Aaron to take Fiona home and so Aaron could talk to Flexon. By the time they got home it was lunch time. After lunch Aaron, Eric and Mike all left to go to the other side of the island. Mike was visiting some people in Eton and Epau and Eric went to Emao island for the weekend to do some teaching. Aaron didn't get back home until 7:30 which made another long evening for him. When Kaela got up from her nap this afternoon I noticed that she was coughing and had a bit of a fever. It looks like she is coming down with something. By the time she went to bed her voice was all raspy, the cough was frequent and she still had the fever. I gave her some Tylenol Cold and she went to bed a little early. On a side note: That Kaela Sue sure does crack us up sometimes! For some reason instead of saying "I have to sneeze" or "I have to cough" she has taken to saying, "I have to bless". She coughed at dinner tonight and said, "Mommy, the potatoes make me bless." She is just too cute! (And that is my un-biased opinion!)

Saturday 4-14-07 – Kaela slept well last night in spite of her cough but she still had a fever when she woke up and seems to be feeling a little bit worse. I am trying to keep her from being too active so we are watching movies while I do my computer work. I had plans to join Aaron in going to Paonangisu for worship tomorrow morning and then to pick up Eric but I decided it would be best if we didn't go. He has to leave at 7:30am and likely won't get home until about that time in the evening and we would be better off staying at home to get a good rest in so Kaela can start feeling better.

Sunday 4-15-07 – I kept Kaela home from worship this morning. She woke up with a small fever and she is still coughing pretty regularly so I decided that it would be best if she stayed home and rested. Aaron left at 7:30 this morning for Paonangisu. He ended up getting home much earlier than I had anticipated. He and Eric got home at 4pm so that was good. He said he had a really nice time in Paonangisu and even met a couple that are in the Peace Corp that came to worship. I guess the guy, Troy, works with Harry and Harry invited them. Aaron came home and said that they spend as much time talking about/dreaming about the food in the US as we do! That was funny to me! We Americans sure like our food!

Monday 4-16-07 – A couple of interesting little bits of information just for your reading pleasure....the fan in our living room sounds like the propeller of a helicopter starting up when we turn it on. We always are telling people how much more expensive things are here – especially food. In the US I felt like I was getting a great deal if I got a dozen eggs for \$.99. In Vanuatu I'm getting a good deal if I can find them for \$3.60. One liter of milk is about \$2.00 and it's a bear trying to find mayonnaise for a decent price. The majority of

small jars of mayonnaise (2 cups worth) are about \$6.50. If I'm lucky I can find it randomly on sale for \$3.00. Also, we have this large cement grill thing outside our house. Our dog is a little confused and every once in a while she climbs up on top of that cement platform and lays there like she thinks she's a cat.

Tuesday 4-17-07 – Kaela's coughing seemed to be worse today. At lunch today she had a particularly bad fit of coughing and could hardly get enough air to breathe and get calmed down. After that Aaron and I decided that it wasn't going to be better by itself since she is coughing almost constantly and not sleeping well. I feel so bad for her she has little dark circles under her eyes it makes her look so pitiful! Anyway, right after lunch we took her to town to the pharmacy and got her an antibiotic and so hopefully she will start getting better soon.

Wednesday 4-18-07 – Today is Aaron's Birthday!!!! Happy Birthday, Aaron! He is 29 years old, much to his great disappointment. I organized a kind of...sort of surprise party for him in Etas tonight. We have our regular Bible study there. But, I passed a message through Tom to all the Christians asking them to come and help celebrate Aaron's birthday.

Right after we arrived I went and studied with Marina. The study went well and I am hopeful that next week she might be ready to become a Christian. It will be a difficult week for her. She has a lot of things to think about concerning her salvation during the coming days. Afterwards, I walked down the church shelter and Aaron had already started the study for the night. After the study, Sam got up to make some announcements and then announced that it was Aaron's birthday. Aaron was fairly well surprised (he might have had some suspicions). He cut the "cake" that Leimawa made for him and we all sang "Happy Birthday" and then Sam presented him with a present from the Christians there. It was a wooden statue of a tamtam in the shape of a chief. Leimawa's cake was what they called a "local" cake – it was a cooked pumkin with a filling of coconut milk and it was SOOOOO yummy! I made a banana pudding that was quite a hit. So much so that I caught Leimawa licking the pan I made it in!

I think Aaron had a nice time at his birthday celebration. After we ate dinner we sang a few songs and then it was time for us to go. We left Kaela at home with Eric and Shawnda since she is still coughing so we needed to get back and put her to bed. On the way back to take Sam and Leimawa (and company) back to their house, Leimawa was sitting in the back of the truck and just starts belting out "I Know that my Redeemer Lives". It was just so funny. Leimawa is such a joy to be around that sometimes I just want to hug the tar out of her! She is one of my best friends here and I am so thankful to have met her.

Thursday 4-19-07 – I spent the morning doing my regular chores plus getting ready for our Ladies fellowship. The morning flew by faster than I had anticipated and I didn't even make it to the shower before it was time to go. Which was really okay since our fellowship today is at Fiona's house and we went swimming in the lagoon across from her house. The fellowship went really well even though there were only five of us there. After the fellowship and swimming by the time I got home I was ready to shower and sleep. However, Kaela was ready for her nap too and that duty came first. I put her down to sleep and then took a short, unfortunately not very restful nap myself. I was rudely awakened by some car sitting on the street outside our house honking. I got up and did a little bit of school work, organized a shelf in my closet and then got Kaela up from her nap.

Saturday 4-21-07 – Today was a delightful surprise for our family! It is our first Saturday in a while to not have any “set” plans. No visits to Etas, no meetings of any kind. Nothing. It was nice to be able to relax and do the things that we have wanted to do and some things that we just plain needed to do....like clean the shower. Such excitement. I can hardly stand it. The bad news is that our copy machine broke down this weekend and so I had to search out alternate means of making my copies for school on Tuesday. I was able to get the copies done at Stop Press but to the painful tune of \$.25 a copy! It cost me \$8.25 of my school funds just to make copies for ONE class! Augh! Annoying. I am hoping the copier will get fixed this week so I won't have to dip into those funds again for my Friday copies.

Because Eric and Shawnda had plans yesterday evening, we moved our team night to tonight. Also, since Aaron's birthday was this week we celebrated his birthday. We had fajitas for dinner – YUM! – and didn't eat dessert since we were all too stuffed to eat anything else. Then he opened his gifts from the team and we had an all around great time!

Monday 4-23-07 – Titus has a sinus infection or cold or something so Shawnda decided to keep him home from grocery shopping today. Eric went last night and completed most of her shopping and I picked up a few things for her today. This morning I had several tasks I had to do before I left and one of them was washing clothes. However, our washing machine wasn't being the most cooperative in the world. The spin cycle sometimes doesn't kick into gear and this morning I had a terrible time getting it to work! Finally, after a lot of coaxing I got it to start spinning my clothes. Thank goodness. I wasn't looking forward to dealing with a washer full of mildewy clothes or making a call to a repair man. That could take days.

Anyway, so I finally got around to my grocery shopping and just happened to be speedy quick enough to get it all done before lunch! Yea for me! After lunch I got a lot of computer work done and that was a big relief to me. However, I didn't make as much headway in my Mother's Day shopping as I would have hoped. Oh well. I guess I can try again tomorrow.

Tuesday 4-24-07 – I spent an hour during Kaela's nap today trying to get some Mother's day presents ordered online. Ha! Since, this won't be available to read until after Mother's day – I'll go ahead and give the details. I wanted to order corsages for Aaron's Mother and Grandmother. What an ordeal! After I FINALLY found what I was looking for and went through all the rigamarole of placing my order, I got aggravated. The flower shop online only gave the option of having the corsages delivered. I wanted them to just be picked up in order to avoid delivery charges. But, when it became obvious that a pick-up wasn't an option I decided to go ahead and pay the \$10 delivery charge. No biggie. Until I got to the payment page and figured out they charged me two delivery fees even though both corsages would be going to the same place. \$20 in delivery charges for my \$30 order! No thanks! I decided to then institute plan B. Which is fine, I just wish I hadn't wasted an hour online!

On a side note, we had chicken for dinner tonight. I had Aaron pick up some chicken wings at the grocery. They were out of the chicken wings that I normally buy and all they had were frozen ones. When I opened the bag and dumped them out. I realized it was the strangest combination of chicken parts I had ever seen. There were about 8

chicken wings, one breast and one of the largest legs I have ever seen! Gotta love Vanuatu!

Thursday 4-26-07 – Great news to share! Last night I had my Bible study with Marina and afterwards she told me that she was ready to become a Christian! Yea! I was very happy about this and even more happy that she wasn't doing it to please me or to follow Timothy, her husband. I admire that so much about her – she really wanted to make her faith her own. I just pray that she will be able to remain strong in the coming months, as Satan always seems to seek out the new Christians to attack. I'm putting her full story on the website and Aaron will be writing about her in Mission Vanuatu Minutes – so tune in to either of those if you want to hear more! I'm headed to bed!

Sunday 4-29-07 – Aaron, Flexon and Rocco Pierce (a missionary from the US living in American Samoa) all headed out to Santo island and Ambae island for a 3 week trip. Three weeks is sure a long time and I must admit that I'm not looking forward to him being gone for so long. Though that probably isn't the ideal attitude because I know he is going to do some good work while he is gone. I'll just miss him is all and Kaela misses him so much when he is away. I shouldn't complain though – Eric was gone for 5 weeks and I know that was none too easy on Shawnda and Titus. But, such is the life of a missionary wife! Kaela about broke his heart this morning when he went in to wake her up. She gave him a big hug and said, "I'm going to miss you so much, Daddy." And she is right – he will be missed!

Monday 4-30-07 – Grocery day today. Shawnda and I got a bit of a late start. Some days we just can't seem to get all our morning stuff done in order to leave the house early-ish. We managed to leave about 10:30am. We went to the butcher, brought our stuff home to put in the fridge and headed back to town again. I dropped by Island Properties (our rental company) to talk to one of the women there. Some men came to fix our hot water heater thing on Thursday. And it worked. For one day. We were out of hot water again on Friday. I know it isn't the fault of the man who fixed it. He has come to the house before and he is very nice and a really good worker – you can tell he knows what he is doing. He also told us that our water heater would probably break down again and we needed a new one. Hopefully, my talking with Island Properties will secure us a new hot water heater. After all – we rented this house because it was equipped with hot water so it would be nice to have that luxury! The weather will be getting cool soon and we will be wanting a hot shower!