

Endurance

Episode Log - Florida to San Diego

Via Central America and the Panama Canal

February 2 – May 1, 2008

Subject: The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 2/7/08

X-Via: Sailmail

The past week has been very exciting as we begin our adventure on *Endurance* leaving Fort Lauderdale on Saturday, February 2nd. We got off about 11:15am with great weather as we traveled down to Miami and into Hawk's Channel just between the ocean reef and the islands leading to Key West. The great challenge of Hawk Channel at night is to keep your heading "made good" as you're heading for the marks indicating the channel. With the GPS, radar and Nobeltec Map Chart (with GPS connection) the passage was smooth and uneventful.

We arrived in Key West about 8am and had to wait a bit for the dock master at Conch Harbor Marina to open his doors on Super Bowl Sunday. Thanks Dunk and Kim Pruett for the recommendation of the marina. It was close to every thing. Once we got in our slip and washed the boat down, we had breakfast by Chef Mark Cohen. Mark has been keeping us happy with his great food preparation. His organization and storage of the provisions that our boat will need for the most part of three months was impressive.

Robin, the former William and Mary College lineman, was in charge of finding us a location to watch the Super Bowl but before that event at 18:30 EST, we had three tickets to take the trolley train historic tour around Key West. What an amazing town that sits on a two mile by four mile island. Lots of very interesting parts of Key West – some being the end of Route #1 and the location where many Cuban refugees have landed being only 90 miles from Havana. The boardwalk around the harbor is full of tourist stuff but it was great to get off the boat and enjoy the town.

Robin contacted Key West Yacht Club and we were admitted without any problem. This venue was perfect for the Super Bowl as it was not crowded and initially did not have any loud and obnoxious fans (New York). The bar was set up with a TV and another larger screen was set up in the room next to the bar. We started out in the bar and moved to a table right in front of the large screen and enjoyed a buffet dinner while watching a very good game. The only problems were the two New York fans that were also in this room, one was drunk and the other was VERY loud. But you can't blame them as the game was very exciting and the underdog won.

The next day, Monday, February 4th, we prepared to leave by getting some last minute stuff from the stores and topping off with about 150 gals of diesel. We then went out on the hook in the anchorage about 16:00 and had dinner. At 22:00 we pulled our anchor and headed to Central America.

The breeze was up around 25 knots from the SE so it was hitting us on our forward quarter. The seas were 4-6 feet so our stabilizers were getting a workout. In the middle of the night we noticed that the rudder was making some noise similar to what we experienced in the Chesapeake Bay and then in one

of our inspections of the engine room, we noticed some oil leaking from the stabilizer reservoir. This was a slight leak but we decided we should pull into the nearest marina to check out the problems.

We pulled into Marina Hemingway about 9 miles east of Habana, Cuba, at 8:30am on Tuesday, February, 5th. The customs and immigration procedure for us took about four hours with a number of "Guardians" coming aboard to inspect *Endurance*. The final inspection was with not one but two different drug-sniffing dogs at two different times. They inspected just about every nook and cranny on *Endurance*. After the initial inspections and paperwork including the confiscation of all our flares until we left, we proceeded to our slip that the dock master assigned to us. I was told because we were the only boat arriving that day that the official party was full of new trainees and they were killing time by taking their time with the procedures. They were disappointed that we said we would be leaving on Thursday morning after repairs to our steering and stabilizers.

Once into our slip, I had to go as the Captain to customs again where I waited in a small room with six officials of which three were women. I soon found out why they were all hanging out. It was pay day and the "big chief" arrived with little envelopes for the group. I bet I had to sign 10-12 forms for the entire process. But everyone was very courteous and friendly. The customs office was part of the marina although it was a long walk to everything in the marina. There was an interesting bumper sticker on the wall of the customs office. It said "Impeach Bush." I kept my mouth shut!

The marina has four long channels perfect for rowing skulls, which we saw a number of Cuban men and women practicing in the evening and early morning. The marina can hold about 400 boats and there were probably about 30 boats, 20 sailboats and 10 power boats. Most of the visiting boats were from Canada, Australia and a couple from the U.S. One U.S. boat was a new power boat that the American owner told us he comes here often coming through Bimini. The American boats tend to be fishing power boats. There is a big fishing tournament called the Hemingway Cup that attracts a number of fishing boats from the U.S. in June.

The dock master, Gabriel, met us and was very helpful. He introduced us to Nelson, a 45-year-old young man who was very familiar with boats. After talking to Nelson, I determined he could serve to help us review our steering and stabilizer issues. He also washed the boat and then drove us around Habana showing us the side of Cuba that probably many tourists don't see. We spent the good part of two days with Nelson as we walked the old parts of Habana, enjoyed drinks in Hemingway's favorite bar. This was after he inspected our issues with the boat and we determined that we could proceed with some minor adjustments.

The late afternoon of Tuesday, February 5th, we completed our car tour and walking tour of Habana with a great dinner in a "private" restaurant where Nelson had some friends. We turned in early as we were all pretty tired from our crossing to Cuba and our long day getting the boat fixed and touring Habana. Wednesday morning Nelson arrived to totally wash down the boat and then we took another tour around the outskirts of Habana ending up at Hemingway's home about 30 miles from the marina to the south of Habana. The estate was in need of much repair and there were about 20 Cuban folks in various parts of the estate to be sure tourists didn't go where they shouldn't. The home was open from the outside so you could take pictures peering through windows and doors. Hemingway's study, bedroom, living room, studio, etc. were very "Hemingwayish." About 100 yards from the main house was a project that was just getting underway. This was the refurbishing of Hemingway's old boat,

"Pilar." The workers were building a framework around the boat prior to beginning the project. I suspect this will be a two year project but the old boat is sitting on stands and seems to be quite happy there.

Some observations that we made included Nelson telling us that about 75 percent of the people were not happy with the Cuban communist government but that he already has seen some small changes happening. Raul, Castro's brother, has allowed some neighborhoods to decide how they would like to do certain things. Formerly, this was never allowed. Of course the kids all get schooling and English is required. We found Gabrielle's (Dock Master) and Nelson's English quite good but for the most part the Cubans don't get to practice English so most are not very proficient. As Nelson told us, there are two types of people in Cuba: the government people and the Cuban people. The license plates on the cars tell you who are the owners: green for army, blue for government citizen, red with a cross for emergency vehicles, brown for car rentals, yellow for foreign businessman, and black for foreign diplomats.

We drove past the major hospital where Castro is in a clinic behind it apparently. Obviously no one knows exactly where he is but Nelson said the story is he is in this hospital clinic. Nelson has a wife and a six year old daughter in elementary school plus a son from a former marriage. He is optimistic about the future of Cuba. We visited among a number of places like the Hotel National where there are drawings of the famous and infamous folks that used to come to Cuba in the hay day of the 40's and 50's. You could tell from the architecture of the buildings including plazas, churches, hotels and restaurant/bars that Cuba was a really fun place before Castro.

Nelson showed us some beautiful homes that were confiscated from the "rich" Cubans that eventually fled to the U.S. and now reside mostly in Miami. These are now occupied by senior officials in the Castro government. There are two TV stations controlled by the government. The interesting thing is that there is no internet allowed by the government but you can have a cell phone and can call the U.S. with your phone. The officials that we came in contact with used computers but they only were used to fill out forms and I saw no lap tops.

Wednesday, February 6th, we went to lunch at a private (as opposed to government) restaurant. If you are allowed to have a "business," it has to be approved such as a restaurant in your home or in a commercial area. You will pay the government 51% and you get to keep 49% of your gross income to pay your bills. The restaurant we went to lunch at on Wednesday was on the coast just south of Habana. We drove into a small driveway with three guards with parking only available for about four cars. We went upstairs in the house to an area with about 15 tables. We took a table on the deck outside overlooking the ocean facing north. The food was great with an expanded menu. The waiter told us we could also have lobster and shrimp which the government doesn't allow private restaurants to sell so they can't compete with the government restaurants. Apparently these private restaurants occasionally have lobster and shrimp but they don't put it on the menu. If they were caught selling these items, they would lose their license.

We were not able to find 10W-40 oil for the stabilizers but we had enough aboard to refill the amount we lost on the trip from Key West.

These experiences were enlightening in light of the political situation between the U.S. and Cuba. So the future looks somewhat bright for Cuba. The people seem anxious to rejoin the world in the future.

We are heading now for Isla Mujeres, Mexico, which is about 260 nm from Marina Hemingway, Cuba, and we should arrive Friday, February 8th, in the morning. The weather is wonderful with winds out of the SE at 10 knots true, seas calm and the temperature about 77 degrees.

If you want to respond to this email, use our email address: WDD6631@SailMail.com
Please keep the messages short with no attachments.

Robin, Mark and I send our love to our families and best to all! All our boat systems are working well including water maker, engines, generators, stabilizers, etc.

Sandy Purdon
Robin Reighley
Mark Cohen

Subject: The Adventures on *Endurance* - 2/10/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 20* 22.4 North 87* 14.8 West

It's hard to believe we've been on the water traveling for over a week now since we left Fort Lauderdale on February 2nd. Time does pass rapidly when you're busy and having fun. Mark and Robin are holding up very well and the good ship, *Endurance*, is still running flawlessly. (Will that be the kiss of death?)

Our passage from Cuba's Hemingway Marina to Isla Mujeres, Mexico, was very pleasant except for the dodging of the freighter traffic coming across the Yucatan Channel between Cuba and Mexico. You can imagine that there would be a lot of freighter traffic with this area a choke point for freighters coming and going to the U.S. We were traveling for the most part in this area at night. With Robin's experience on these big ships, we monitored radio channels 13 (ship-to-ship commercial traffic) and 16 (international contact and emergency frequency) and worked our way around them. At one time I think I counted about a dozen ships on the 24 miles radar range and we probably had over 30 vessels and barge loads in our vicinity. The charts have traffic separation scheme's that attracted a concentration of vessels as they turn the corner going to Panama or coming from Panama headed for the U.S. Needless to say we were busy keeping ourselves away from this traffic.

Arriving at Isla Mujeres, Mexico, (21*16N, 86*45W) was a treat. While the north entrance is a little tricky, we negotiated it without incident once we understood that we had to keep close to the beach on entering the harbor. Our final destination was the Marina Puerto Isla Mujeres and the Pemex fuel dock. The dock master at the marina informed us that "for a small fee (\$100)" he can do all the arrangements for immigration, health, customs, etc. Realizing that we would be walking around town which is over a mile away and having to visit 4-5 different agencies, we opted for the "fee.. So we fueled up with about 450 gals of diesel and cleared immigration and customs.

When arriving at a new country, it is required to fly a yellow “quarantined” flag until you have passed the agriculture and health inspection. The inspectors are looking for meat and perishables that may not have been inspected. They accepted packed U.S. meats and poultry. We didn’t have to throw anything out fortunately. But it always takes time for the various inspections when arriving at a new country. It will be interesting to compare this process as we enter Belize in a couple of days and then Honduras, Columbia and Panama. The Mexican authorities are very efficient when organized as they were in Isla Mujeres.... for a fee.

Once fueled and into our slip we proceeded to wash the daily accumulation of salt off the boat. As we passage from one location to the next, we do accumulate a lot of salt on the rails, decks and top sides. This is the one very hard job we have every day as it takes about 90 minutes to do a good job with soap, soft brush and fresh water. But salt is our enemy on this boat as it will eat everything it sits on over the months we will be traveling. Our routine is the arrive at port, get secured with the anchorage, mooring or slip and get the generator or shore power turned on to get the air conditioning inside the boat started. Then we wash the boat down which gets us pretty sweaty but knowing shortly that the AC will welcome us inside the boat along with a cold Corona.

The Marina Puerto Isla Mujeres is quite upscale and is located in the middle of the island off Cancun. We were on a dock with about 30 very modern U.S. sport fishing boats. It was a bee hive of activity as we finished our wash down and these boats were returning from a day of fishing. We walked up and down the docks admiring the American and Mexican crews clean and filet their catch. After our showers and a cold drink we went to the very modern pool and outside pool bar area to enjoy more refreshments and watch the various charterers and their families. Dinner on the boat was again prepared by Chef Mark exquisitely followed by the showing of the Deep Blue PBS DVD. I lasted about 15 minutes before falling asleep in my chair... nothing new on the water than on land!

Saturday, February 9th saw us leave Isla Mujeres at 6:15 am. We headed south to Puerto Aventuras, which was a distance of about 75 miles. On this leg we threw out our fishing line and Mark became the first person to catch a fish on *Endurance*. We learned later that it was a reef fish called a “Cero” and it was about 26” long and weighed about 10 lbs. Mark followed this up with another “Cero” catch so we enjoyed some ceveche and lunch and later dinner on this fish. It was very tasty and Mark did a great job in preparing it in different ways.

We landed at Puerto Aventuras (20*29N, 87*13W) passing up Cancun to our starboard side. This little community has a narrow entrance that was built by blowing up the rocks to form a marina and a real estate condo project. Apparently the story is that an “out of favor” Mexico City official “retired” to this area in the late 70’s and developed this community in the 80’s. We were very impressed with the project that included a small group of 25 shops, a couple of very nice hotels and a series of dolphin pens where people could pay to swim with the dolphins. This seems to be a good attraction for groups of visitors as we saw large catamarans taking 25-35 people out at one time into the ocean through their narrow channel entrance. Para-sailing and diving were high on the list for the tourists but it didn’t feel overly touristy to us.

There was a Beneteau 50 named CORSAIR in front of our side tie location on the sea wall. The owners, Mads and Lani Emanuelson, were kind enough to assist us in docking. They are from Houston and come down every year to Puerto Aventuras and stay for months. We invited them over for drinks

later and learned he is a retired engineer and business owner, while Lani is a Harvard PhD who is retired from the finance business world. They told us the development story of Puerto Aventuras and were helpful in giving us some tips for our travels south.

Now it is Sunday (2/10/08) and we are hoping our families are well and enjoying the end of the weekend. Tonight we are hoping to land in a nice anchorage called Bahia de la Ascencion (19*45N, 87*25W).

Sandy Purdon
Robin Reighley
Mark Cohen

Subject: The Adventures on *Endurance* - 2/11/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 18*46.17 North 87* 19.084.8 West

Our arrival yesterday at Bahia de La Ascencion (19*45.65N; 87*25.00W) was exciting. The charts and cruising guides had us guessing where the shallow spots were located. We opted for the Freya Rauscher guide and came in on her suggested heading to an anchorage behind a small island called Culebra Cays which sits in the top of this large 14-mile inner bay. We only saw two fishermen on a ponga some distance away for an hour and then we had the entire bay to ourselves. It was blowing 15-20 knots so we relaxed and had a wonderful meat loaf meal by Chef Mark.

Mark Cohen is doing a fantastic job as our chef considering he is quite strict on himself about not eating meat or chicken. But that doesn't stop him from providing any dishes he can come up with for Robin and me. We do feel a little guilty eating some of his great preparations and he can't enjoy them with us. But don't worry, Mark is not starving and seems to be enjoying his role and the trip. We've even come to enjoy what I call his "shaggy dog" stories that come from the long hours in the operating table with his surgical team when he was a practicing doctor.

Robin has been par excellent in keeping us tied into the navigation equipment and the various methods of using the great gear on *Endurance*. He continues to show us some great "tricks" with the radar and map chart systems. For those who are interested what gear we have, it is quite extensive. Navtex Weather; Furuno Fishfinder Depth and Water Temperature; NEC chart plotter with GPS connection; Nobeltec Electronic Charts; Northstar GPS; Robertson Auto Pilot; B&G wind speed and direction, depth and speed instruments; Furuno Radar, Kenwood Ham 2 & 4 meters; ICOM 710 Single Side Band Radio; KVH SatPhone with Inmarsat; 3 ICOM radios (one handheld); A second radar is on the fly bridge along with the depth and speed readouts and one of the VHF radios.

One of the "cool" things with this gear is the ability to set your anchor and have the boat's position marked continuously and recorded on the map chart obviously tied into the GPS. The GPS has an anchor alarm among many other features.

When we got up today, Monday, February 11th, it was blowing about 20 knots even in our protected spot behind Culebra Cay. But we wanted to get to Banco Chinchorro (18*46.17N; 87*19.08W). This is some 50 miles off the coast of Mexico and is, along with the three in Belize, the only atolls in our

hemisphere. These are very much like the atolls found in the south seas of the Pacific Ocean. They are open bays surrounded by reefs that make for great diving and swimming except we found the currents quite strong for swimming.

Our passage was in 4-7 foot seas with the wind blowing 22-28 knots and the seas coming at us from our port forward quarter. *Endurance* rode well as she likes these seas but if we didn't have the stabilizers, we'd be very uncomfortable. Our trip took about 7 hours to go the 60 miles but once inside the reefs, we were very comfortable with the wind still blowing 15 knots but the seas flat behind Cayo Norte Island inside the reefs. Again the Nobeltec Map charts were off about a mile here but the cruising guides were very good for getting by the reefs.

We set the anchor on hard coral sand and, after Mark dived on it, we found it was on its side but we don't seem to be drifting or dragging. We put out 100 feet of chain in 10 feet of water which is a little overkill, but it seems to be holding. We will keep an eye on our position throughout the night.

Once settled into our anchorage, Mark and I took a swim in the 80-degree clear aqua green water. The current was running 2 knots so we put out a fender on a line in case anyone got swept back of the boat.

Shortly after our swim, we were visited by six Mexican Navy officials carrying M16's in a ponga. I was more worried about the ponga hitting *Endurance* before we set them up with fenders. But they came aboard and checked our papers and passports as this anchorage is a Mexican preservation park. It has one of the best Conch beds in Mexico and it is dear to that industry. They inspected our closets and rooms but not very thoroughly. They were pleasant but didn't speak much English. Somehow with the three of us and our broken Spanish, we communicated just fine.

After the Mexican officials set off to check two other sailboats in the little bay, we cleaned up and relaxed. Mark does his drawings and reads, Robin reads usually on the aft deck when it's light. I try and get some emails out before I set about getting into one of the books I'm enjoying. We have the Sirius Satellite music which is usually tuned to a "smooth" jazz station that we all enjoy. It is piped into the salon, pilot house and the master stateroom.

To my surprise we haven't gotten into the DVD collection on the boat that is quite extensive. After dinner it is hard for some of us to stay awake much past 9pm. Robin seems to be capable of a later schedule followed by Mark.

Tonight I'm finishing up my laundry washing and drying. Both Robin and Mark did their wash last night after we deciphered the Swedish washing and drying machines on the boat. Now that we have it all figured out, we will be doing our wash as often as necessary. Don't want the good ship *Endurance* to get too "ripe."

Tomorrow we'll see what the winds are like to determine if we can make Xcalak, Mexico, and their entrance to their little harbor.

Sandy Purdon
Robin Reighley
Mark Cohen

Subject: The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 2/14/08

X-Via: SailMail @ 17*54.36 North 87* 57.56 West

We lucked out with the wind into Xcalak, Mexico, on the mainland. Apparently on Tuesday when we decided to stay over at Banco Chinchorro it was blowing close to 40 knots at Xcalak so the entrance would have been tough. As it turned out, the winds died down and our passage through the entrance was the way we like it...normal.

Xcalak is your last port where you can check out of immigration and customs from Mexico heading into Belize. The town is quite rural and reminds me of what much of Baja was like 40 years ago. The waterfront behind the substantial reef was about 9 feet deep and we went to anchor near 3 sailboats on 3 moorings. One was leaving as we had just dropped our anchor and as he passed us he said they prefer the visiting boats pick up a mooring. So we picked up the one available that he had just dropped.

Once secure, we did a quick clean up. We lowered the tender and Mark and I took off for the Port Captains office. The town pier is long and quite large although the depth was only about 4 feet in most spots. It was easy to see why no boats were tied up to the quarter mile pier. We parked our tender in 2 feet of water tied up to the pier about half way out.

As Mark and I were walking to the Port Captains office, a white pickup (they are all white around here) stopped and a couple said they would be back shortly to take care of us at the Port Captains office. Well, a moment turned into about an hour as we waited knowing that the 2pm siesta was approaching. They returned and had us checked out with our paperwork at 2pm. Funny how that works here.

On our way back we stopped at the only grocery store and picked up two cold six packs of Sol Beer. It was very refreshing as the humidity was high and the temperatures over 90 degrees. The most impressive building in the little village was the school house and play yard for the kids. There was a unisex barber shop and some rustic restaurants. One was called the "Leaky Pallapa" apparently owned by two Canadian girls that moved here a few years ago. I chatted up a gentlemen on the road who was Canadian and he said he's been here for 30 years. All I could imagine was that he must have been running from something or someone to land in this village for so long.

Back on the boat we did some more equipment organizing and cleaning and then put the tender back on *Endurance*. The wind was blowing pretty well by now and the boat was rocking considerably. Robin came up with a way to secure the boom for the tender because Mark had taken a trip into the drink trying to hold the tender off *Endurance* earlier. Robin's system worked great and we got everything nicely secured for the night.

Valentine's Day came on *Endurance* with some great surprises. Kathy, Emily and Charva had arranged for a postman (Robin) to deliver 3 Valentine Day cards to me. It was a great moral booster needless to say. So we dropped the mooring line and headed out the inlet to the ocean heading for Belize.

Our passage into the country of Belize was smooth to the entrance to San Pedro, the first port where you can check into immigration and customs. We called up the Belize Yacht Club (a condo/hotel project with a nice marina) and arranged for a slip and fuel. The entrance into San Pedro is a little challenging but with the various cruising guides, it was not a problem. We did have another motor yacht behind us that requested the dock master to come out and guide them through the entrance. We were asked to wait until he got this other boat through the entrance and then he showed us how to enter the marina. Our draft is 5 feet so we probably touched the soft sand a couple of times getting to the marina. But we arrived about 11:30am and secured the boat.

We had to jump into a taxi mini van to go to the bank to get Belize dollars (2 Belize dollars to 1 U.S.). After the bank we went to immigration and customs with our Zarpe (the document that you have to have when passing from one country to another). The Zarpe is prepared by the immigration official of your check-out port when leaving a particular country. That's how they hand you off to the next country to be sure you don't overstay your allowable visit time.

On our return after customs, we met the fuel vessel that I ordered through the dock master. We took on 350 gallons of diesel that should last us until Roatan or some other port in Honduras. We hold 1025 gallons of diesel and depending on our burn rate we can get some 800 miles from about 800 gallons provided we stay under 8 knots of speed over the ground.

Next to our boat in the marina, a sailboat arrived with two couples. They also joined us in the pool and we found out they were from Pensacola, Florida, and had sailed from Pensacola to Belize via some Mexican stops.

After dinner with some steaks that I actually grilled on the BBQ on *Endurance*, Robin and I ventured out to the casino next door and checked out the immediate vicinity. It was a pretty lame casino and at our end of town, it was pretty quiet. So I'm back on *Endurance* doing this episode of our trip. Tomorrow we head down to some islands on the inner passage through Belize. Should be interesting as the water should be very calm and the cays and islands are supposed to be spectacular.

Geography/History Lesson for Mrs. Hyman's 4th Grade Class at Francis Parker:

From this point forward, I will attempt to pass on to Emily's class some relevant information regarding the areas where we are traveling. I am beginning with the southernmost part of Mexico on the Atlantic/Caribbean Coast as this is a place most of the students probably have not experienced. Try and figure out where we are by using our Latitude and Longitude navigation fixes that I give in the periodic reports.

Beginning with Banco Chinchorro and Cayo Norte where we spent two nights on Feb. 11th and 12th. This is a natural atoll that is quite unusual in that it is only one of 4 atolls (the other 3 are in Belize) in our hemisphere that is similar to those found in the South Seas/Pacific Ocean. What is an atoll?

Where we stayed overnight was off Cayo Norte, a small island inside the atoll. This area has one of the largest commercial populations of queen conch and lobster. What is a "conch?" This area is a protected area ecologically and there is no fishing, conching or shelling.

There are at least 30 known shipwrecks along this reef of Banco Chinchorro. Divers have counted over 40 bronze cannons at one wreck site.

Xcalak (pronounced "Ish-lack") is the first or last port of entry or exit for boats traveling into or out of (in our case) Mexico. Whenever you enter or leave a country you have to report to immigration, customs and usually some health department. You have to get your passport stamped and your ships papers presented with a crew list. They usually come out to the boat and inspect for guns and drugs and food that might be forbidden to enter that country. The word "Xcalak" is Mayan for "two passes". The two entrances to this harbor are passable but the southern one is larger so we took that entrance to be safe.

San Pedro, Belize is a small but growing town that supports an airfield and a number of tourist-type attractions like diving (world famous), fishing and just relaxing. This town sits on Ambergris Cay, which has a population of about 4,500 residents. It is the largest land settlement in Belize. Belize City is the capital of Belize but we chose to skip Belize City as we heard it is not as nice as the outlying areas of Belize. Belize used to be British Honduras so it is heavily influenced by Britain. Most people in Belize speak English but their heritage is from Mexico and Spain. Saint Peter is the patron saint of San Pedro and they celebrate with a big festival on June 26th each year. A carnival is celebrated here March 1-3 each year and the entire fishing fleet is blessed after the boats make a procession through the harbor with the lead boat carrying a statue of San Pedro.

Sandy Purdon
Robin Reighley
Mark Cohen

Subject: The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 2/15/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 17*07.20 North 87* 05.40 West

The trip from San Pedro's Belize Yacht Club to the small islands of the Colson Cays on the inside of the grand reef off Belize was smooth. We anchored in 10 feet of water behind the southern most Colson Cay and to the west of the island in the lee of the east wind. There was only one boat besides us and it was an 80-foot 4-spreader custom sailboat that we gave plenty of room to for privacy. We noticed it was clothing optional on their boat and, however enticing it was to sneak a peak, we tried to respect their privacy.

We got the tender off *Endurance* and Mark and I took it into the islands for some snorkeling. After running up on some coral with the dink (no harm) we ventured over to where there was suppose to be good snorkeling. The water was warm (80's) and clear but not a lot of fish. We pack the boat up and had our normal cocktail hour and dinner in this very pleasant part of the world.

Tomorrow we head down to Placencia, Belize (16*31.16N, 88*21.54W), a trip of about 40 nautical miles. This is suppose to be another great town in Belize and we will hopefully find an anchorage so we can go into town for a night out on Saturday night! This where SDYC member Jeff Bennett and his wife, Heather, honeymooned after their marriage. We'll toast them in Placencia.

Sandy Purdon
Robin Reighley
Mark Cohen

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 2/17/08

X-Via: SailMail @ 16*20.560 North 88* 21.870 West

Placencia, Belize, will be marked as one of our favorite stops for many reasons. The small town 45 miles north of the Guatemala border is home to a Moorings Fleet of charter sailboats and some of the best diving in this hemisphere. We anchored among 20 sailboats hailing from Germany, Canada and the U.S. We were the only power boat but we made friends quickly as we traveled the weekend in this very rural community.

Saturday we arrived about noon and Mark and I ran into town with the tender to get some groceries and inquire about checking out of Belize. We were told to go to the customs office in Big Creek. We did a quick grocery visit and then picked up Robin and our papers. We took the tender 4 miles up the Big Creek river to try and find the customs folks. When we got there about 3pm, they were closed for the weekend so we returned to the boat destined to remain in Placencia until Monday.

Mark and I took the tender to the Moorings landing (safer and nicer docks). They were getting their change-over charter folks set up for the next week. We then went to Seahorse Dive Shop and lined up a Scuba diver for Mark and some snorkeling for me for Sunday. Being Saturday night, I took the crew to dinner at the Purple Space Monkey Restaurant in town. It turned out to be a fun place with a great ice cream parlor next door. Needless to say we succumbed to the temptation.

Sunday, Mark and I went diving and snorkeling on a dive trip out of Placencia's Seahorse Dive Shop. About 20 people were on the trip to the Laughing Bird Cay about 20 miles from Placencia. It took us about 30 minutes to get there by the fast dive boat. This is a protected park, but what a setting! Talk about your ideal picture island in the south seas with palm trees, sandy beaches, topical fish and birds and, by the way, probably the best diving and snorkeling in the Caribbean. The group split between divers and snorkelers. Those snorkeling stayed on the beach while the divers went out in the boat. There was a 1 ½ hr session in the morning followed by a great hot BBQ lunch, followed by another 1 ½ hr session. We returned by 3:30pm and Robin picked us up with the tender.

Tonight we eat on the boat, tidy everything up and get prepared for a long haul on Monday, February 18th. We head to Punta Gorda which is 42 miles south, anchor and check out of Belize, then move another 16 miles to Livingston, Guatemala to check into that country. Livingston is at the head of the Rio Dulce River that we want to explore.

Sandy Purdon
Robin Reighley
Mark Cohen

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 2/19/08

X-Via: SailMail @ 15*49.327 North 88* 44.906 West

On Sunday, after our diving and snorkeling trip (Mark and Sandy) we returned to find Robin had made some friends from a couple of German boats in the anchorage. After he picked us up from the dive shop and we returned to *Endurance* for cocktails, we were visited by Lisa, one of the German's who was on her boat alone except for her dog. She arrived by dink with her dog and we invited her to join us for drinks and later dinner.

Lisa (don't know her last name) had sailed her boat to the Caribbean from Europe and then to Belize and Placencia. She was quite colorful claiming she was married to two doctors of her three marriages. She was at least 6'3" and quite interested in everything we were doing and in the boat. She left promptly after dinner. Apparently she was having trouble staying in Belize as her time for immigration had expired and her business of teaching kite surfing was being challenged by the local authorities.

The next morning we got up early and left for Punta Gorda (PG), Belize, the most southern stop in Belize where we were to check out. The idea was to check out of PG at noon and then get back on the boat and get to Livingston, Guatemala, and check in there before dark. The 43 mile ride to PG took about 4 ½ hours and we got some of our check-out paperwork done before noon but were not able to get immigration, customs and the Port Captain papers completed. We learned that if we waited until 2pm, the charge would be half of the overtime charge between noon and one (lunch time). So we found a nice little restaurant and had our lunch ashore leaving the dink with a young man to guard her.

After lunch we got our other stops and paperwork completed, jumped back on *Endurance* and headed for Livingston, Guatemala, some 16 miles further south. We arrived about 4pm and called for checking-in to Guatemala. I got an agent to assist us and he brought five others (customs, immigration, port captain, and security and health officials) with him in a ponga. This was a good way to go although it cost a little extra (\$30 U.S.) for the agent. I followed the agent into town after taking a ponga with him and the others to shore. I had to wait an hour for all the paperwork but he let me go on his internet computer and I pulled up the San Diego Union for Sunday and Monday and got caught up with the news and sports. I notice that I hadn't missed anything important so that was nice to know.

Tuesday, February 19th, we woke at daybreak and pulled our anchor for the fantastic day trip up the Rio Dulce Gorge. This river is a natural wonder. As we entered the river, the sides of the river rose sharply to 300 feet above the water and consisted of thick trees and sheer rock. Along the sides of the river you see fisherman setting line and casting for their nets. River trip pongas with some dozen tourists occasionally come by at high speed, but the ride on *Endurance* up this Rio Dulce Gorge and El Golfete Lake that you enter after the gorge took 3 ½ hours. After the lake you enter a marina district where we stopped for brunch at Mario's Marina. They gave us a side tie while we enjoyed their breakfast menu at 10:45am. After lunch and some walking around the grounds and chatting with cruisers in the marina, we left and went further up the river to the Front **Eras** (George - I don't know if this is correct - the original document had "Front eras Bridge" - Velma) Bridge, which would lead you to Guatemala City to the southeast or Tikal to the northwest. We turned around at Castillo San Filipe, a beautifully restored castle and park that is a public museum depicting the place pirates and others were held back by the indigenous Guatemalans centuries ago.

We returned down Rio Dulce during the afternoon and anchored again at Livingston. We enjoyed a cocktail and Mark prepared us another great dinner. Wednesday we check out of Guatemala and head for Isla Roatan, Honduras, some 145 miles from Livingston. This will be an overnight trip.

Sandy Purdon
Robin Reighley
Mark Cohen

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 2/21/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 16*20.5N; 86*29.0W

After an hour of checking out of Livingston, we headed out across the shallow sand bar at Livingston and into the Bay Of Honduras for Roatan. This was a 142 mile crossing that started out very nice in 10-15 knots of breeze but quickly changed to 20-25 knots in a current that was opposing the wind. The seas were 6-10 feet and we slogged along at 6 knots and arrived in Roatan at 8:30am being escorted into the French Harbor inlet where the Barefoot Cay Resort and Marina is located. This was a great place to land after a long and rough night.

We are still losing some stabilizer oil slowly out of the port stabilizer and have a little left to get us to Panama (I hope). We have had to add oil twice now in the past two weeks. Otherwise the boat is holding up nicely.

We had an agent take care of our customs and immigration, got topped off with 344 gallons of diesel at \$3.40/gal, and got the boat washed down top to bottom as we had about an inch of salt from the spray over the night passage. The wind is still up so we may park here for another day if it doesn't subside.

But we could be in worse places. The Barefoot Resort has a lap pool, restaurant, two dive boats, internet (although we can't get it to work for us), 50 amp power, water, etc., and a pallapa with two hammocks, easy access by taxi to one of the two towns about a mile in each direction, and an owner who is an American from Seattle. He developed this and lives here with his family.

Sandy Purdon
Robin Reighley
Mark Cohen

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 2/22/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 16*20.5N; 86*29.0W

Thursday afternoon, February 21st, we went into town to check French Harbour out. It is a little like Tijuana but we found a nice restaurant, Gio's, out on the entrance to the harbor with a spectacular view south. We met a couple from Colgate University (staff), who live in Vermont, and were trying to escape the cold winter there. The cab ride into town and back to the boat cost us about 1-2 dollars (U.S.) per person each way. Barefoot Cay Marina sits on a little island so we have to take their little

people ferry about 40 yards from the island to the mainland whenever we leave or return. The ferry driver is on duty 24/7 so there's no problem getting on or off the island marina.

Friday, February 22nd, was a "lay day" for the crew of *Endurance*. In the morning, Mark and Sandy went snorkeling off the pallapa that sticks out on the long dock into a much protected lagoon. Robin got comfortable with a book and "vegetated" for the day. In the afternoon, Mark went on a Scuba dive with a dive instructor from Barefoot Cay by himself. Sandy went to the extreme west end of Roatan, about a 30-minute taxi ride to Gumbalimba Canopy Zip Line and Park. Having never done this but always wanting to try it, this seemed like the perfect time. With luck, I was the only person on the zip line as the cruise ship had left earlier in the morning. I survived the zip line ride with it ending in the park that was very interesting with a history tour and playing with White Face and Spider monkeys as well as McCaw parrots. The park included a "real" pirate's cave where apparently lots of coins and jewels were hidden back when pirates ruled Roatan.

Friday evening we ate at the Barefoot Resort restaurant after a nice cocktail hour with the other guests. Having done our laundry and made water, we hit the sack early for our long voyage to Panama. We hope the winds and seas are going to be good to us for the next 4-5 days.

Sandy Purdon
Robin Reighley
Mark Cohen

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 2/24/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 16*14N; 82*39W

Our departure from Barefoot Cay and Roatan was smooth after I ran into town to get a gallon of oil for the leaky port stabilizer. The breeze came up and we had a lumpy ride in 20-24 knots on the nose with a current in our favor but deep 6 ft plus seas. This lasted all day Saturday and most of today, Sunday.

We are attempting to make the 680 nm run to Colon, Panama, without having to stop for fuel in the Columbian island of Isla San Andres. I figure if we keep our usage to less than 1/2 gal/mile we can easily make it. Our speeds are low in the 6-7 knot range but that helps with the seas. Now the wind is down, Sunday evening, and we are making better speed. We are still headed east until later tonight when we head southeast to Panama.

Yesterday, Mark caught a beautiful Mahi Mahi and we are eating very well. He caught another but it got away. He also got an Albacore Tuna today and we quickly eat some of it raw for lunch. Tonight we had some of the Mahi Mahi and it was fantastic.

All systems are working very well except for the leaky oil from the port stabilizers. We are 25% of the way from Roatan to Panama and we have used only about 150 gals of fuel. We are making a lot of fresh water and the generators are keeping us nice and cool with the air conditioning at 72 degrees.

Called Kathy today and she informed me that her efforts to arrange to join us for the trip through the canal are in place. It will be nice to have some female companionship on *Endurance* for the trip

through the canal. She arrives on March 6th and departs on March 12th. She and Emily will come down again on March 20th for a week on *Endurance* in Costa Rica with Randy and Mickey Short. The trip through the canal now has Mike Morton, Mark Cohen, Bill Waite, Scott Launey, Kathy and Sandy Purdon. Looks like I'll have plenty of line handlers.

So we will shortly turn the corner that separates Honduras and Nicaragua for a long run to Panama. This is the area that we are trying to stay well offshore as there have been some reported problems with pirates and such in the past. There are also lots of shoals in this area off the coast of Nicaragua so we will stay well offshore.

The past few days we have enjoyed a full moon including about four days ago an eclipse of the moon. This area of the world has its special beauty both on the water and on the various land stops we have made. Mark and Robin have been a great crew and have helped make the trip so enjoyable. We continue to miss our families and our friends. Some of us need a hair cut very badly.

Sandy Purdon
Robin Reighley
Mark Cohen

SPECIAL LOG REPORT TO MS HAYMAN'S 4TH GRADE CLASS AT FRANCIS PARKER SCHOOL:

Monday, February 25, 2008

Location of *Endurance*: 14*43N 81*55W

Off the northeast Caribbean coast of Nicaragua

This edition of the *Endurance* Log will deal with some history and geography of this area of Central America. First, what countries make up what we call "Central America?"

The country of Belize lies just south of Mexico. Its population is about 201,000 people. English is the official language but Spanish is also common. The currency of Belize is called a Belize dollar and one U.S. dollar equals 2 Belize dollars. While Belize City is the largest city in Belize, it is not the capital. The capital of Belize is called Belmopan and is about 40 miles inland from Belize City.

Belize has lots of dangerous reefs but it also has some of the best diving and snorkeling. What would you think would be some of the businesses you would find in Belize? (Answers: tourism, cruise ships, diving, hotels, restaurants.) What was Belize called before the country got its independence from England? (Answer: British Honduras)

Livingston, Guatemala, would be the next stop as *Endurance* moves along the Central American coast. This is the entrance along the narrow east side of Guatemala and is the entrance to the famous Rio Dulce. Livingston's residents are primarily Garifuna, descendants of African slaves who were brought to the New World by British slave masters. They settled in Roatan after a revolt of the slaves. Livingston's name came from the Anglo name of a Louisiana lawyer who wrote Guatemala's penal code and helped introduce the democratic trial by jury process in 1823. One big difference is that in

Guatemala you are "guilty" until proven "innocent." What do you think is a better system, "guilty until proven innocent" or "innocent until proven guilty?" Why?

The island of Roatan, Honduras, is part of the Bay Islands of Honduras. Can you point out on a map the other islands of the Bay Islands of Honduras?

Answer: Guanaja, Roatan, Utila and Cayos Cochinos; they spread out over 70 nautical miles north of the Honduras mainland.

In 1502 Columbus named the country Honduras, meaning "deep", because he thought deep waters were causing the rough seas he encountered. Fifty years later, Spanish slave ships depopulated Roatan and the other Bay Islands of their natives. In the 1600's, English, French and Dutch pirates took control of the Bay Islands. The English-speaking descendents of these pirates and slaves still inhabit these islands. Pirate treasures have been dug up and smuggled off the island, therefore the authorities take a dim view of treasure seekers. In 1859, the Bay Islands became part of Honduras.

The next country that *Endurance* entered was Nicaragua. This country is politically more restless than the other Central American countries so *Endurance* stayed well offshore. But off Nicaragua, there are two small islands owned by Columbia although Columbia is well south even beyond Panama. These islands are called Isla Provencia and Isla San Andres. *Endurance* will be passing closely by these islands on the way to Panama. From a map, how far is it from Isla San Andres to Panama? (Answer: 220 nautical miles.)

By the way, what is the difference between a nautical mile and a statute mile?

Sandy Purdon, Captain on *Endurance*

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 2/26/08

X-Via: SailMail @ 12*13N; 81*00W

We got through our third night with one more night to go before we reach Panama on the Caribbean/Atlantic side at the city of Colon. We will be docking the boat at Shelter Bay Marina tomorrow morning.

Our trip so far as been only slightly uncomfortable due to the fact that we shut down the stabilizers as we were losing too much oil. During the day when the wind and seas are up, *Endurance* rocks and rolls a little but we've battened down everything. The boat, weighing over 70,000 lbs., seems to handle the seas quite well. I've emailed Shelter Bay Marina to see if we can get a NIAID stabilizer guy somewhere in Panama to check out our problem.

Yesterday afternoon about 4:40pm we were intercepted by a Columbian patrol boat as we were near the Columbian islands of Isla Provencia and Isla San Andres. Robin said it was a former U.S. Navy boat that we either sold or gave to Columbia. We saw them turn around and head for us so we expected them to contact us. They called us up on Channel 16 and I had about a 10-minute conversation with the Columbian Coast Guard officer. He wanted to know the name of the boat, skippers name, number of people on the boat, documentation number of the boat, our last port (Roatan) and our next port

(Panama). With that he thanked us and wished us a safe journey. Frankly, it was nice to see them on the high seas patrolling hoping to keep the bad guys away.

Mark just pointed out an interesting fact. We are currently in 10,400 feet of water but 10 miles back the depth is 180 feet. That means that there is a 10,000 foot mountain coming out of the ocean floor that we just passed over. The top is about 5 miles wide so we speculated that if it was in a different location, it might be a nice place to put a home with a great view. Oh yes, as they say...location, location, location!

Speaking of Mark, he has done quite well in the fishing department. It is exciting to hear the real click when we get a strike. We have figured out a way to land and clean the fish on the back of the boat but the largest fish we caught was a Mahi Mahi that was 45 inches long and 25 lbs. We don't want anything really big. We've lost three lures so far from large fish that have just severed the line and left nice teeth marks. One lure we got back all scratched up with teeth marks.

With 180 miles to Colon, Panama, the good ship *Endurance* is moving along at about 7.4 knots so we arrive tomorrow morning about 9am. Then we have a lot of work to get her ready for Mike Morton and Scott Launey who arrive on Friday.

Sandy Purdon
Robin Reighley
Mark Cohen

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 2/28/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 09*23.8N 79*55.1W

Wednesday, February 27th, at 7am about 20 miles from the breakwater into Bahia Limon and Colon, Panama, we starting seeing large returns on our radar screen. At about 12 miles out I contacted Cristobal Control on Channel 12 VHF. Cristobal Control is like an airport traffic controller for the Atlantic side of the Panama Canal. We counted over 40 vessels, mostly container ships, at anchor outside the breakwater waiting for Cristobal Control to direct them for passage first inside the breakwater for the "on deck" circle and then eventually through the canal.

My initial contact with Cristobal Control had them tell me to re-contact them when I was two miles from the entrance to the breakwater. I did that and the controller told me to proceed through directly, being aware of a cargo ship coming from the canal out through the breakwater. We entered through the breakwater and turned west and contacted Shelter Bay Marina. They directed us to our slip at the marina which is on the NW corner of the inside bay across from Colon.

Shelter Bay Marina was developed a few years ago and has grown to one long side tie for mega yachts and two long docks with some 50 slips each. These are floating docks with good power pedestals and all the other amenities of a good marina. Flying our yellow flag, the first order of business after checking into the marina office was to contact Pete Stevens at Delfino Maritime. I asked him to suggest someone to come down and look at our port stabilizer issues and arrange for our measurement of the boat for the passage through the canal.

After getting the boat cleaned of the accumulated salt residue on the rails and top sides, we were visited by a mechanic from Cristobal Boat Repair. The mechanic analyzed our stabilizer issues and said he would return Thursday morning to replace a seal that he thought was the problem. Today we are to be measured, repair the stabilizers, and fill our tanks with fuel.

Parked next to us is a 55' catamaran with a French family of five on their way through the canal heading for French Polynesia and the South Pacific. They had about a dozen old tires stacked up and attached to their rails inside garbage bags for protection from the locks. They are expected to leave Thursday to go through the canal.

Last night Mark prepared a wonderful meal of the Mahi Mahi that he caught and we celebrated our arrival in Panama by cracking open a bottle of Pinot Noir. We were all pretty tired after four nights at sea so a good eight hours of sleep was the order of the night.

Sandy Purdon
Robin Reighley
Mark Cohen

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 3/3/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 09*35.2N 78*41.9W

The past four days have been quite adventurous for the *Endurance*. Our attention at Shelter Bay Marina, after getting a good night's sleep, was focused on getting our stabilizer issues resolved. I contacted our agent, Peter Stevens and his assistant, Ricardo Salveno, and described the problems. He contacted Cristobal Marine Services and they came out to the boat. After assessing the issue and resolving that the seal on the port stabilizer was failing, they took the stabilizer apart and took the pieces to Panama City to get a custom seal made. There are no NIAID Stabilizer representatives here so we had to fabricate the seal.

While we waited for the part to be made, we went about getting the boat cleaned and laundry done so the boat would be ready for crew change. Robin was leaving us on Saturday and Mike Morton and Scott Launey would be joining us Friday night. They arrived late Friday, February 29th, and we sat up until 1am telling our tales and welcoming them with proper libations. The next morning we were planning to go to San Blas but the stabilizer had not been put back together. We decided to get our fuel tanks filled after saying farewell to Robin and thanking him for his month of great service to the *Endurance* adventures.

Later Saturday the boys from Cristobal Marine Services arrived and put the stabilizer back in working order. Unfortunately, they broke off the indicator wire that shows the position of the stabilizer in the pilot house. We decided we could live without knowing the exact position of the stabilizer as long as it was functioning properly. After testing, we determined it was now working correctly and we would deal with the indicator later.

The winds were blowing hard on Saturday, so we were not disappointed that we had not left for San Blas. It gave us time to get the boat reorganized for the canal and we learned that we would be

transiting the canal on Saturday, March 8th, sometime. The exact time would be told to us on Friday, March 7th.

Now it was time to plan our trip to San Blas. Because we were not going through the canal until Saturday, it meant that we would not have to return from San Blas until Thursday, March 6th. So we left for San Blas on Sunday and the winds were about 15-20 from the NE and we were heading east for about 70 miles. Our destination was Isla Porvenir, San Blas (Kuna Yala). This is the check-in place for visiting boats to San Blas. It is a small island with a short airstrip that is the transportation hub for the Kuna. We arrived about 3pm and before we could anchor there were a half dozen cutout canoes with kids and women selling their “molas,” which are the 3-5 layer clothing designs the Kuna’s are famous for creating.

In the early part of the last century, the Kuna society was in conflict with the Panamanian government. The U.S. government intervened and a treaty was created that gave the Kuna’s government control of San Blas. But Kuna law is not all that we might want to live under. Kuna society is a matriarchal way of life where the men move in with the women’s family when they get married. Every island, anchorage, tree, fish, shell and coconut has a rightful Kuna owner so you can’t step ashore or take anything from the water without permission and paying for it. Kuna’s are not allowed to marry outside the society, which creates some albino and birth defect issues. Physically, Kuna’s are small in stature but very friendly and outgoing.

When we arrived in Isla Porvenir, we were visited by two Kuna’s who came to the boat after we anchored. They issued us a permit and charged fees for our stay which was limited to 90 days (\$72.00). We couldn’t check into immigration and customs because all those officials were in Panama until Thursday when we were going back to Colon. It remains to be seen if we will actually get checked into San Blas but in the meantime we are enjoying the islands.

We enjoyed the company of about 10 boats at anchorage in Isla Porvenir for the night. We took swims and relaxed on the boat under a very brilliant sky full of bright stars. The temperature was about 85 degrees with the water about 82 degrees.

Monday, March 3rd, we slept in until about 8am. We took care of some of the little things you need to do to keep all the systems going, like pumping up the steering and synchronization steering reservoirs. We fixed a sticky float valve in the bilge and checked on our stabilizer systems. At about 10am, we headed out for Cayons Holandes eastern end, a trip of about 15 miles. We checked out what is commonly called the swimming pool anchorage and decided another anchorage called the hot tub was better suited for us. We ended up anchoring in a beautiful clear lagoon in about 6 feet of water with a sandy bottom. Our anchor held well and we took a swim and cleaned the boat of salt on its topsides and rails.

When we left Shelter Bay Marina on Sunday, we were asked to take a package to a boat called *Blue Sky* that was somewhere in the San Blas islands. The Monday morning net radio broadcast at 8:30am found *Blue Sky* trying to reach us on the Single Side Band. We were not able to transmit to them but later got them on VHF as we got closer to the east end of the islands where *Blue Sky* was located. We ended up giving the package to another boat in the swimming pool anchorage and those people were to see *Blue Sky* later in the week.

Blue Sky mentioned that on Sunday, they had met with the James Bond movie producers and cast who were filming in San Blas and Panama. The movie is the next James Bond movie that will take place in Haiti but much of it filmed in Panama and San Blas. The movie is also using Colon and Shelter Bay Marina for scenes. Apparently, they blew something up in the Colon harbor just inside the breakwater near Shelter Bay Marina where we will return on Thursday.

Tonight we were invited to join the local folks anchored in both the swimming pool and hot tub anchorages to come to BBQ Island next to swimming pool anchorage for a 5pm cocktail gathering that is traditional every Monday evening. We took the tender over with our tasty treats and drinks and joined an eclectic group of “yatistas” on the shore of this small palm tree island with one Kuna hut on it. There were about 40 people from the boats in the anchorages and they welcomed us with open arms. The “poo poos” were great and the personalities of these cruisers were even better. Most were in their 50’s to 70’s and quite experienced in this lifestyle in this location. Most had been in and out of San Blas for four or more years. Apparently the “M.O.” is to stay your 90 days or more and then go to Cartagena, Columbia, about 200 miles to the east to check out and back into San Blas.

We returned after dark to our anchorage under another night of brilliant stars, warm winds and quiet waters. *Endurance* was quite happy to be in these protected waters with a crew that was watching some BBC productions of the “Blue Earth.” This is a series of DVD’s on the earth’s oceans and its sea life. Tomorrow promised another short trip to another tropical island.

Sandy Purdon
Mark Cohen
Scott Launey
Mike Morton

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 3/6/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 09*35.7N 79*00.7W

After leaving the hot tub anchorage on Tuesday morning, we traveled about 15 miles to the Carti Islands. We anchored off Carti Sugdup, which is the busiest of the compact village islands. We were escorted on shore by a young man, as required, to visit the chief. We walked through the village and Mark purchased some great mola purses for his granddaughters. We then got in the tender and went to Carti Yandup, which was quite different. Yandup was very clean and the homes were much farther apart. We joked that we just went from East San Diego to La Jolla between the two islands. Here we purchased some other specialty molas that seemed to have quite good quality. We were able to find some cold beer and enjoyed watching a large load of bananas that were unloaded at the city dock. About 50 Kuna women come out and in a parade gathered the bananas and took them in baskets to a warehouse. We ended up purchasing 10 bananas for \$1.00.

Back on *Endurance*, we enjoyed another great fish meal by Chef Mark and watched “Mystic River” on the DVD/TV. After the movie we enjoyed the last of the single-malt scotch that Scott brought and sat on the aft deck enjoying the seclusion of the San Blas Islands.

Wednesday morning, March 5th, we pulled anchor mid-morning and went six miles back to Isla Porvenir to try and check into the Port Captain again. We went ashore and brought all our papers but the one person in the office was not the Port Captain and he said we could continue on to Colon without the immigration stamp and customs check as we were to leave Thursday morning before the Port Captain returned.

Before returning to *Endurance*, we visited the museum about the Kuna culture on Porvenir and had a beer at the Porvenir Hotel next to the landing strip for the small airport on the island. Returning to *Endurance* we pulled anchor and traveled about four miles to Chichime Cays, a small anchorage between two small islands east of Porvenir. There were five boats already in the anchorage including the couple from Amsterdam, Gaston and Britt, who had been traveling for four years on a 1917 sailboat.

We enjoyed a late lunch and a nap on the fly bridge. Gaston was out spear fishing when Mike and I went exploring in the tender. He invited us over to see his boat and we reciprocated by inviting them to *Endurance*. Scott went snorkeling around the reefs and Mark read and sketched. After a swim off *Endurance*, showers were taken.

Gaston and Britt visited us first around 5pm and we enjoyed giving them a cold beer and rum drinks and showing them our boat. They were most impressed with all the systems and the ice maker. We were visited by more Kunas selling beautiful shells. We then moved the party to their boat, *De Rob*, (The Seal), and enjoyed the work that Gaston had done to bring the old vessel to its current good condition. As darkness ensued, we went back to *Endurance* and put the tender away while Mark fixed dinner. Following dinner we enjoyed a French subtitled movie that put Mike and Scott to sleep early.

Thursday, March 6th, we pulled our anchor at 6:30am to travel back to Shelter Bay Marina leaving the beautiful San Blas Islands behind. This had been a special four days and we were very happy we took the time to visit this special place.

Sandy Purdon
Mark Cohen
Scott Launey
Mike Morton

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 3/10/08

X-Via: SailMail @ 08*56N 79*33W

A beautiful voyage along the San Blas coast to Colon and Shelter Bay Marina was enjoyed aboard *Endurance* Thursday, March 6th. We pulled into the first slip on the quay wall at Shelter Bay about 2:30pm and immediately gave her a wash down and clean-up. After all, Kathy Purdon was going to be showing up in a few hours to join us for the crossing through the Panama Canal and we wanted *Endurance* to be “spic n’ span.”

We enjoyed meeting a crew of five (two females and three men) aboard a 45 ft. Hunter sailboat across from our slip. They were all in their late 20’s or early 30’s and were from San Diego, making their way

home from Florida. They had just been bumped for two weeks for their crossing to Panama in the canal. So we were quite worried that we might not make our March 8th appointment.

About 10:30 pm, Kathy arrived and we enjoyed hearing of her trip and what's going on in San Diego. Everyone was pretty tired by midnight so a good night's sleep was in order. The next morning, March 7th, we were getting excited to confirm our transit through the canal. Kathy, Mark and Mike took the shuttle to Colon to shop for provisions while Scott and Sandy prepared *Endurance* for the trip through the canal. We all got back together at lunch. Bill Waite and his Panama friend, George Hinman, joined us about 3pm. George has been living in Panama for over three years having moved from San Diego where he was a former practicing attorney. Now he was retired and had just purchased a 4,000 sq. foot condo on the 14th floor with a 360 degree view of Panama City, the inland and the Pacific Ocean for a price of \$350,000. But he says the prices are now escalating and inflation is starting to go up rapidly.

Scott borrowed a marina bike and took about a 12-mile ride out into the surrounding area. He reported back about a very beautiful area called Castile San Lorenzo along the Chagres Rio. George, Bill, Kathy, Mark and Mike took advantage of George's car and, after hearing about Scott's adventure, they went out to explore this park area. Everyone reported that it was quite special and lots of pictures were taken.

As the sun started down, George said he had to leave to get back to Panama as the road was difficult at night. The rest of us, with Bill aboard, enjoyed another dinner by Mark with Kathy helping out.

Waking us up on Saturday, March 8th, was a lot of commotion around the dock right in front of our slip. We were stern to the dock so we sat on the aft deck with our morning coffee and cereal watching the movie crew of the new James Bond movie set up for the day's action shots around Shelter Bay Marina and the entrance to the bay. They had arranged to have about 30 sailboats anchor off the entrance to Shelter Bay so they would be the backdrop for their speed chase scene in the Colon Bay.

Around *Endurance* they had no less than five small craft with various cameras and other gear. One amazing camera was on a gimbaled contraption that hung out over the dock next to *Endurance*. The designer of this camera was a Russian guy that we talked with a lot. We had a chance to chat with the various assistant directors and producers for the movie and watch the dozens of workers on the movie, each with a VHF radio and cell phone. This went on all day with us "goggling" the stunt actors and various support people for the production. We never saw the stars of the movie as it was a day of action using the stunt folks. We did see one stunt girl return with a big scrape or scratch on her back that she must have gotten from one of the boat stunts out in the bay near us.

Evening saw the movie crews pack up and return to their Colon hotel. Apparently the filming was to continue until around March 28th but we had to get ready to transit the canal. We got our lines for the transit delivered by our agency and we confirmed our rendezvous with our pilot assistant. We were told to be on station in the flats near the channel to the canal at 1800 hrs (6pm). So we left Shelter Bay about 4:30pm and proceeded to our rendezvous location. Everyone was now quite excited that we were actually going to go through the canal.

It ended up a "hurry up and wait" event as our pilot, Victor, didn't arrive until about 7:30pm. Once aboard we learned that we would be going through the first lock with three chambers called the Gatun

Lock. We would be in a chamber with a large cargo ship leading with *Endurance* along in the middle with a center four-line hold followed by two catamarans rafted together in the center. It was dark now so the approach to the Gatun Lock was tricky with a number of large container type ships coming and going.

We learned then that the lines our agent had delivered to us were too short so we had to borrow lines from one of the catamarans as they only needed a total of four of the eight they had. We transferred these lines in the dark and proceeded to the first chamber of the Gatun Lock. There are three ways to proceed through the locks. "Side wall" is the least preferred as you are attached to the wall of the chamber, which could damage your boat as it goes up or down. You could be "side tied" to a tug or some other larger vessel, or you could be "centered tied" as we were with four line handlers keeping the boat centered in the chamber.

The process is very interesting. As we approached the first of the three chambers of the Gatun Lock that would take us up some 85 feet to the Gatun Lake, men would come out to the side of the chamber and throw us a "monkey fist" line that our four line handlers on *Endurance* had to secure to their lines. On *Endurance* for this first part, Mark Cohen and Mike Morton handled the two lines on the bow while Scott Launey and Bill Waite handled the two stern lines. Once we got to the spot in the chamber where we were to stop, the large lines were pulled up to the sides of the chamber by the canal staff on the wall. They would put the loop of the large line from *Endurance* around a cleat and the *Endurance* line handlers would tighten the line keeping *Endurance* centered in the chamber.

After all boats were secure in the chamber, a whistle blew and the water started to rush into the lock from under us. We rose up quite rapidly so the four line handlers had to keep pulling in their lines to keep the boat centered in the chamber. When we were at the top of the lock, the chamber doors would open and the canal line handlers would release the boat lines but hold on to the monkey fist line and walk to the next chamber as we moved forwards.

Sandy would keep the boat centered and remain on the fly bridge with the pilot and Kathy would run around taking lots of photos and keeping everyone happy with food and drinks. The canal at night has a lot of lighting so it is not hard to see the process. Our schedule had us getting out of the Gatun Lock about 11pm. We then proceeded to a mooring on Gatun Lake about 10 minutes from the exit of Gatun Lock. We tied up to the mooring and had dinner and went to bed; with the pilot, Victor, leaving us on a pilot boat that came alongside to pick him up as well as the two pilots of the two catamarans that also tied up to another mooring.

At day break a few of us on the crew of *Endurance* were having coffee on the aft deck when we heard this very loud howling from the jungle about a quarter mile from the boat. We had been warned that as the sun comes up these howling monkeys would start their ritual of screaming. You would have thought that King Kong was going to come out of the jungle at any moment. Once the sun was up, the howling stopped for the day.

About 7:30am, another pilot was delivered to *Endurance*. His name was Oscar and he was the safety officer for the canal as well as being a pilot advisor for boats under 65 feet. Oscar gave us a wonderful history of the canal as well as pointing out many features of the canal as we proceeded to the Pedro Miguel Locks with one chamber and the Mira Flores Locks with two chambers. But before we reached

these final locks that would take us down to the Pacific, we had to travel some 28 miles through Gatun Lake. This lake had been created from the Chagres Rio (remember what the crew visited from Shelter Bay Marina on March 7th?) with a dam just past the Gatun Locks. We saw a number of freighters on this path coming and going north and south to their destinations.

Just before we entered the final Mira Flores Lock, Kathy called her sister and brother on *Endurance's* Sat Phone to see if they could see us on the web cam from the Mira Flores Lock. They are located in San Diego and Alaska respectively. Both later said they saw us as we actually were coming through the locks and they were able to get photos to show us. With these final chambers, we were going down so the *Endurance* crew and line handlers had to slowly let out their lines rather than take them in.

As we exited the final chamber of Mira Flores Lock, we opened a bottle of champagne and celebrated our adventure. We presented Oscar with an official *Endurance* hat and thanked him for his interesting commentary and assistance. We then moved *Endurance* down the canal to the area of Balboa where Oscar was picked up by a pilot boat. We continued on to the Balboa Yacht Club and picked up a mooring.

Once comfortable on the mooring, Bill Waite got a water taxi and left to go to his friend George's home. We cleaned up the boat and proceeded to meet with Bill and George at his residence about 5:30pm. George hosted us with cocktails and "poo poos" and we enjoyed the view and commentary about the growth of Panama. We then went in two cars to Jimmy's Restaurant where we enjoyed some local flavor cuisine, beer and wine. After dinner, Sandy presented the crew with a certificate that Kathy had designed called the "Order of the Ditch" so we could all remember this fantastic transit.

The next day after a visit from our agent, Peter Stevens, we met George and Bill next to the Balboa Yacht Club facility. We rented a van and a driver for the day so we could travel to various places for provisions. First we went to a Panamanian arts and crafts facility where numerous vendors sold their wares. Here we found gifts for family and friends as well as enjoyed the various artisans that displayed their art. After this visit, we headed out to find an auto parts distributor to purchase some 15W40 diesel oil for back-up for *Endurance*. Our driver took us to this place as well as to the large grocery store where we purchased provisions to get Scott, Mark and Sandy to Costa Rica and also for Kathy, Emily, Randy and Mickey Short to use on their Costa Rica cruise starting March 22nd. We returned to the boat in the late afternoon.

About 7pm, Peter Stevens returned to *Endurance* with the agency and canal fees bill. He also gave us a wonderful book about the canal as well as a binder that had all our proper papers to enter Costa Rica. We presented him with a book about San Diego boating and invited him to join us for dinner. He stayed and told us wonderful stories about the canal as he first came to the canal in 1960 and has never left except for visiting family and friends. He told us stories about various billionaire's boats that he had handled through the canal over the years as well as unusual occurrences he experienced.

The next morning, Tuesday, March 11th, Kathy had to leave and Peter had a taxi waiting for her at the Balboa Yacht Club. After seeing Kathy off to her plane, Mark Cohen, Scott Launey and Sandy Purdon departed the mooring for the Las Perlas Islands about 50 miles south of Panama. On the way we stopped by Flamenco Marina fuel dock to top off our tanks with diesel and our tender's gasoline.

Sandy Purdon
Scott Launey
Mark Cohen

SPECIAL EDITON FOR MS HAYMAN'S 4TH GRADE CLASS AT FRANCIS PARKER
The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 3/12/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 08*37N 79*02W

SAN BLAS ISLANDS

Before we entered the Panama Canal from the Atlantic/Caribbean side, *Endurance* took a trip about 70 miles past Panama to the San Blas Islands. These islands are a step back in time. They consist of about 300 small islands most with coconut-palm cays, white sand, and green clear waters. There are many coral reefs for snorkeling and diving but the people are what make San Blas Islands special.

The Kuna Indians call this place Kuna Yala. They consist of about 40,000 Amerindians who were driven from the mainland to this sanctuary called San Blas or Kuna Yala. In 1918 their existence was threatened by the Panamanian government who wanted to force these people into a more modern way of life. The Kunas finally revolted in 1925 and, to prevent a civil war where the Kunas would have been defeated, the U.S. Government sent in a destroyer and negotiated a peace. The result was an autonomous government in San Blas where Panama would not interfere with their way of life.

The Kuna way of life consists of very little of the modern conveniences that we enjoy. Little or no electricity and eating or drinking only what you catch or grow. The men dress in pants and t-shirts. The women dress in skirts and blouses consisting of molas, which are colorful layered patterns in various forms and shapes. These molas are sold to tourists and have become a staple for income for the Kunas.

So money comes into this society in the form of tourist dollars. They in turn purchase some staples and goods for tourists from the mainland. But for the most part they live a traditional life on these islands and strip of mainland about 130 miles to the Columbian boarder. They have survived over 500 years of traders, slavers, miners and soldiers. Anthropologist's love this place as the people enjoy long recitations of myths, native dancing, special rites of passage for children becoming teenagers, grass roof houses, dugout canoes, sugar cane wine, and a prehistoric lifestyle. When a man marries, he moves into the women's family home and becomes the hunter for the family with the other men.

The Kuna government consists of up to three chiefs to govern each of the 40 inhabited islands. They also send representatives to the Panamanian government. Every island, anchorage, tree, fish, shell and coconut has a rightful Kuna owner so you can't go ashore or take anything from the water without asking permission and paying for it. For the *Endurance* crew, we had to get a permission certificate to visit these islands and we could not go ashore after dark without a special pass. Kunas also are very superstitious, believing in ancient gods and traditions.

THE PANAMA CANAL

As the Captain of the *Endurance* I had to arrange for our passage through the Panama Canal many months before leaving the United States. I worked with what is called an "agent" to submit my papers and to arrange for all the contracts to make passage through the canal. There are over 45 boats, mostly

very large cargo ships, that make the passage north and south each day. Private boats (under 65 feet in length) and their crews are called “yatistas”. They usually go through at night for the first half of the trip and then at daytime for the last half of the passage.

Endurance is about 60 feet in length with a 16 foot beam (wide), a 5 foot draft (deep into the water), weighs about 70,000 lbs and has two diesel engines with 450 horsepower in each engine. We carry over 1,000 gallons of fuel and have two generators; a water maker; air conditioning; two heads (bathrooms) with showers; three staterooms (bedrooms); a galley (kitchen) with a stove, convection/microwave oven, a refrigerator with ice maker, a separate freezer; TV; and a pilothouse with GPS navigation, auto pilot, electronic map chart connected to the GPS, Single Side Band and VHF radios, Inverter, radar, weather reporting and computer for email and WiFi when available. We carry a 12 foot tender (dingy) with a 40 horsepower engine that can go over 30 mph.

The canal was first conceived and started by the French in 1879 when Count Ferdinand de Lesseps, the builder of the Suez Canal, formed a company that got permission from Columbia to build the canal. Columbia owned the land called the Isthmus of Panama. The well-educated French engineers were famous for their structures, but the failure of the French was their attempt to build a sea-to-sea canal without locks even though there is some 90 feet difference in sea level between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans here.

The French lost over 20,000 lives to disease and accidents attempting this passage. They spent more than \$285,000,000 U.S. equivalent dollars which was the largest expenditure in funds and lives outside of war. The attempt came to financial ruin in 1889. A second attempt in 1894 by another French company also failed for lack of proper funding.

In 1903, the Panamanians made an agreement with the new U.S. President, Teddy Roosevelt, to create a Panama Canal Zone for the U.S. to help in their succession from Columbia. The American plan was to create a dam at the Chagres River with the Gatun Dam and thus create the Gatun Lake consisting of over 116 square miles of water. Into this lake and out of the lake there would be a series of chambers in locks to raise the vessels up to the lake and down from the lake. In 1914, the canal was opened to traffic.

In 1999 the U.S. transferred the canal to Panama. Over \$100 million is spent each year on maintenance and improvements on the canal. Recently Panama has started to build a second lock canal system next to the existing canal to accommodate larger ships. This will be completed in about 10 years if the financing can be sustained.

The cost for a ship to transfer the canal can be as much as \$250,000 for cruise ships. For *Endurance* the cost was about \$850 with additional agency fees and costs totaling \$1,400. For “yatistas” the trip starts at night with a “sleepover” in Gatun Lake and the final lock transfer the next day in daylight.

There are ways to see the canal from a Panama Canal webcam. Just Google “Panama Canal” and go to the webcam for directions on how to access the live video feed of the boats going through the canal.

Sandy Purdon, Captain
Endurance

Panama Crew: Kathy Purdon, Mark Cohen, Scott Launey, Mike Morton & Bill Waite

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 3/14/08

X-Via: SailMail @ 07*06N 81*10W

After fueling up *Endurance* on Tuesday, March 11th, we headed out about 11am Tuesday for the Las Perlas Islands some 40 miles south of Balboa/Panama City. We had left Mike Morton, Bill Waite and Kathy Purdon ashore the last few days so we were down to three crew, Scott Launey, Mark Cohen and Sandy Purdon. Our first stop was Isla Contadora where we anchored off a nice beach where a number of fairly upscale homes were built. There were a half dozen boats in this anchorage and there was an airstrip off to the side. Wealthy Panamanians fly out here or boat here from Panama City and stay in their homes on the beach. The island was quite built up which was not like the rest of the Las Perlas Islands. About three miles across to the south were the small islands, Isla Chapera and Mogo Mogo where we were told one of the "Survivor" shows was filmed.

The next day, Wednesday, March 12th, we headed out about 10am and took a southerly course through the Las Perlas Islands. These islands are usual stops for cruisers heading to the Galapagos and Marquesas islands in the South Pacific. We found the most southern island, Isla San Jose, and a great little bay with what we discovered was a small private resort hanging over a cliff next to a couple of great beaches.

Isla San Jose is privately owned and it has an airstrip on the other side of the island. The family that owns this island only has this little resort available on the island to the public. It is called Hacienda Del Mar and I would encourage a check on its web site by Googling the name. We anchored off in about 30 feet of water at high tide with three other small boats and one sportfishing boat used for guests at the resort. Hacienda Del Mar has only 14 casitas and a main lodge with a great bar, pool table, dining room, pool, and lots of tropical birds such as peacocks, toucans and a variety of parrots.

We dropped the tender in the water with our snorkeling gear and went exploring. Before we left, a young man came out in a dingy and in broken Spanish we worked out where he would pick us up at 6pm to take us into the resort. Snorkeling was a bust as the water was not clear. We were not used to this as our experience has been diving in water with great clarity. We did find a couple of great beaches that we explored in the extended area of the anchorage.

At 6pm we were showered and dressed to be picked up. The resort tender picked us up and took us in although it was through some light surf as we landed on the beach. Once ashore we could see the quality of the resort and its facilities. We walked up to the main lodge and immediately found the bar. We then walked around and befriended a couple of families that were staying at the resort. After long conversations with these guests we went upstairs to the outside balcony restaurant. The dinner was great and Mark particularly enjoyed not having to cook this night. Scott insisted on picking up the tab for the evening and we went out to find our guy to take us back to *Endurance*.

Our ride back to *Endurance* was not as enjoyable as the ride into shore. The outboard engine on the resort tender broke down and our driver never got it started. Scott ended up paddling us and the driver

to *Endurance* where we tried to fix the engine for the young man but with no success. He ended up paddling back to shore.

The next morning we pulled our anchor about 9:30am and headed out for our long overnight of about 200 miles to Isla Coiba, the largest island in the Panamanian offshore waters. It was a former prison and now is mostly a protected ecotourism park. During the night we had to dodge some freighters as this is a funnel for ships heading to and from the Panama Canal. At 3:07am we reached the most southerly point on the entire three month voyage and started heading slightly north. After six weeks of traveling, *Endurance* finally is headed north to San Diego. That was the good news. The bad news was we had about 3,000 miles to go.

Sandy Purdon
Scott Launey
Mark Cohen

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 3/15/08

X-Via: SailMail @ 07*59N 82*01W

It's Saturday and we completed our overnight at Isla Coiba and are now at Islas Secas, Panama. Last evening in Coiba in a great little bay on the north side of this the largest island in the Western Panama we experienced what I'm sure was a major rip off. We knew that Isla Coiba was a Natural Preserve and was administered by a park system. The cruising guides said that you should expect to pay \$20 per person to be at anchor overnight. A park ranger (or maybe he wasn't a park ranger although he had a shirt that seemed to be official) tied up to our boat and proceeded to explain that there were new fees and that *Endurance* would be charged \$300, plus the three crew members would be charged another \$60 for a total of at least \$360, I almost lost it. It was getting dark and I was ready to pull anchor and get out of this place but Scott negotiated the fee down to \$50 for us to stay the night, not go ashore and be gone by 7am the next morning. He wouldn't give us a receipt nor did he have a fee schedule of any kind which was a red flag that we were being ripped off. I swallowed my pride and paid the \$50 and we stayed. After a great meal of fresh fish that Mark had caught that day and watching "From Here to Eternity" with Burt Lancaster and Deborah Kerr, I was relaxed again.

Our anchorage on Isla Cavada, which is the northern most island of the Secas Islands, was terrific. It was in front of an unnamed resort that was very private and would not allow anyone ashore. The island is privately owned and, while they allow you to anchor, you cannot go ashore on this island. The resort seems very exclusive as they have an airstrip and interesting permanent luxury tents spaced quite far apart. I suspect this is for very high-end clients that want total privacy.

Scott and I took the tender loaded with our snorkeling gear, cameras and cold beers to another Secas island where there were reportedly some great beaches and fish. About 39 minutes at top speed got us to a terrific cove with great snorkeling and a deserted beach where we enjoyed our beers after snorkeling. We toured this island and some of the others that had unique trees and vegetation on our return to *Endurance*. We are about to have cocktails on the fly bridge and BBQ some of Mark's great fresh fish again.

Sandy Purdon
Scott Launey
Mark Cohen

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 3/17/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 08*07N 82*19W

HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY...It's hard to believe I've missed the Super Bowl, Valentine's Day (Thanks again for the cards KP), President's Day, and now St. Patrick's Day. But in a few days I'll have some new guests aboard *Endurance* including Kathy and Emily! Don't know if Emily will recognize me with my new beard and I haven't had a haircut since the middle of January.

We learned a little more about our anchorage site off the Secas Resort. The owner of the island was an American that was a "dot com" winner by selling his company to Google. I don't know his name but he apparently was a wiz kid and graduated from college at 17 years of age. He bought this island with his billions and established an eco resort with those elaborate tents that I mentioned in my last episode. Unfortunately he was killed last December flying in a Cessna 172 with a young Panamanian pilot with his 11-year-old daughter and a girlfriend of the daughter. I remember something in the news about this as the daughter was killed along with the father and pilot but the friend of the daughter was rescued about four days after the crash in the jungles of Panama. The facility that we anchored in front of was called The Isla Secas Resort. We saw no lights or activity except for a caretaker on the dock, and suspect due to the tragedy the place will be closed for a while.

All this was learned at our stop in Boca Chica, which was about a 25 mile ride from Islas Secas. We worked our way up the channel and river leading to Boca Chica and found an anchorage with about a dozen boats. The actual town of Boca Chica (one street with about 20 homes, a church and a store) was anchored on the river, with a spicy bar called Wahoo Willy's. We enjoyed a beer here after touring the town, which took about 10 minutes.

An interesting structure on the east side of the river where we anchored among the other boats caught our eye. It had a great floating pier which was important as the tides are 8-10 feet here. We ventured up to the facility and found a gem of a home, restaurant, bar, mini-hotel (four rooms) with a pool and chartered fishing. It is called "Gone Fishing Panama" and was a feature on Fox Sports' show about sport fishing. We met the owner, Bruce, and his family (wife, stepson, stepson's wife and child of six), and about 6-8 Panamanian employees. We talked and learned about what he had gone through to build this beautiful place that caters to sport fishermen and folks that want to go somewhere off the beaten path.

We went back to the boat but made reservations for dinner at Gone Fishing Panama and promised to return for happy hour. Our return found us in the bar with about six others who had returned from fishing for the day. A couple of guys from Connecticut had been spear fishing and one used a titanium \$2,500 spear fishing gun. They said one spot they landed and got in the water with a bunch of feeding sharks...no thanks!

Happy Hour at Gone Fishing Panama also brings out Bruce's parrot. He enjoyed the chips and Gatorade while talking to all the guests. We talked with everyone and all of Bruce's family as everyone hung out at the bar, which was an extension of the six table restaurant and the family room/kitchen. The kitchen was very open like American homes are designed now so all the guests get to watch and comment on the cooking preparations for the evening. We got a choice of two fish dinners so you go with what was caught. Needless to say it was very good and fresh for only \$22 each. After dinner we toured the four rooms to see what the hotel part looked like. All were very comfortable with air conditioning.

Monday, St. Patrick's Day, had us leaving the anchorage about 10am for the trip to Isla Parida where I am writing this now. We are in a great anchorage off Isla Gomez with four sailboats. On our arrival about noon, we were greeted by a guy that had just bought a sailboat in El Salvador and had made his way into Panama getting ready to go through the canal. He said he was organizing a cocktail party on the beach with the other "yatistas" and was hoping we would join them. We said we'd bring "poo poos" for everyone and our drinks. His name was Michelle and he was from British Columbia. I invited him aboard *Endurance* so he could show me some of his favorite stops in El Salvador and Nicaragua. He spent about 20 minutes with me in the pilot house showing me some good anchorages that Doc, Rich and I can experience if we have time.

After lunch, Scott and I jumped in the water (83 degrees) and worked on cleaning the waterline and bottom of *Endurance*. The warm water and sunlight is giving *Endurance* a grass skirt that we tried to remove. It will probably be a weekly chore to keep her bottom somewhat clean. Mark worked to prepare the "poo poos" for the evening's festivities and St. Patrick's Day party on the beach at Isla Gomez.

Sandy Purdon
Scott Launey
Mark Cohen

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 3/20/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 08*36N 83*11W

St. Patrick's Day beach party on Isla Gomez was a chance to meet some folks working their way south of the Panama Canal. Now we were the experts with everyone asking us for advice on how to approach the apparent slow-down action of the Panamanian pilots. We were lucky and got through on our scheduled time thanks to our agent, Peter Stevens; others that we met had to wait weeks. I dread to think, if I hadn't organized our passage through the canal months ago with our agent, we could have had a really messy program since most of the *Endurance* crew for the canal were on tight schedules themselves.

There were four other boats (sailboats) besides us until a large catamaran arrived. This catamaran crew never came to the beach and we all speculated that they were Eastern European folks. Our group of about 14 consisted of a family of five with three teenage girls (13, 15, 18) from British Columbia, a couple from Oregon, a couple from San Francisco, a couple from Los Angeles, and the *Endurance* crew. Everyone brought some food and we had enough for dinner on the beach with a camp fire and a

sign showing where Dublin, Ireland was located. Scott brought his iPod and we played Irish tunes all night. It was interesting that they all were bemoaning the fact that in the southern Central America's, there is no wind so why do they have sailboats...except for the fact that their fuel bills are pretty low but they travel slowly...which is the point, right? They couldn't believe what we had seen in less than two months and that we would be back in San Diego in May. They were taking a month or two to do areas that we were doing in days. As I told them, we have "j...o...b's", so our program is quite different from theirs.

The Dad of the teenage girls confided in me that his middle daughter was having social problems and was really turning "south" on the family with attitude, drugs and the friends she had. He said that she did not want to leave on this trip and would not talk to him for two months. But she turned around and now is one of the most enthusiastic of the family. I noticed that she gave her Dad a lot of affection while we were on the beach. He probably saved her life by doing this trip with his family. They are all being home schooled and will be back in school in the fall in BC. The girls went board-skiing behind their outboard for hours behind *Endurance* and giggled themselves silly before the beach party. He bought their boat in El Salvador probably for a song. It was a Beneteau 51 and the family was really enjoying themselves. The Dad outfitted the boat with five trips to the boat before bringing the family down to start their trip.

The only negative was when Scott and I went out in the tender to snorkel around the back side of Isla Gomez and Scott forgot that his camera was in his pocket when he jumped into the water. It was lost along with all his photos from the trip to date. Fortunately, I have hundreds of photos and a number of photos were taken by Kathy, Mike, Bill and Mark. We all plan to share our photos so Scott won't miss anything although he would have liked to take home photos for Suzi to see immediately.

The next morning we pulled anchor about 6:30am and headed for Golfito, Costa Rica, a trip of about 70 miles that we would do in about 8 hours. We arrived mid-afternoon and got a slip at the Banana Bay Marina among mostly sport fishers but a couple of large motor sailing vessels. This would be *Endurance's* home for the crew change for the next few days.

Golfito is a small town but it has an airport and a good variety of stores. We were able to provision for the next group as Mark Cohen departed on Wednesday, March 19th, and Scott Launey left early on Thursday, March 20th. Customs, immigration and health authorities were accessed and papers stamped for our entrance into another country, Costa Rica. The Banana Bay Marina was established about ten years ago by a guy, Bruce, from the southeast U.S. who was a sport fishing boat captain. He purchased the original house and one pier with a partner whom he has since bought out. He built docks, slips, fuel tanks, restaurant, bar, a four-suite hotel, and other amenities on the property. He now has a very busy and nice facility with 14 employees. He has since married a local and has one 3-year-old with another child on the way. He has given me some great advice for our trip up the coast of Costa Rica besides driving me around to all the authorities for checking into this country.

The departure of Mark and Scott is a big loss for *Endurance* (me). Mark will be the longest serving crew on this entire adventure and he was absolutely fabulous. He jumped into the very important job of being responsible for the food provisioning on the boat and preparing the meals. I can't emphasize how key this is to the functioning of the boat. With all the moving parts, particularly on a 60 ft. power boat with all its systems, the relief of having one person responsible for the food provisioning and

preparation is really key in my opinion. Mark agreed to do this and not only did he prepare all the meals but he also *caught* a lot of the meals with his fishing. We ate extremely well with some great varieties of sauces and actual cooking of the varieties of fish, and dinner was always a joy to share together. With Mark also being a surgeon, we had our first class medical officer on board *Endurance* for half the trip. Mark was with me for 38 days. We got to know each other much better over this time and I would not hesitate to recommend him to anyone wanting to cruise or race in the open ocean. Another great member of the *Endurance* crew will be missed.

Scott Launey had been with me on the first leg of the Intracoastal Waterway last fall. He is another fantastic person with some very keen boating skills. Scott troubleshoots the boat all the time. If he sees something that seems out of sorts or broken, he immediately jumps in with his tools, volt meter, dive mask, etc., to fix it. There is no boat challenge that Scott can't solve. He tackles a problem as a challenge to see what is wrong. He traced the issue of why the port generator wouldn't start from the switch in the pilot house (the start wire was attached to the wrong post back in Ft. Lauderdale when servicing the Fire Boy system). He cleaned the waterline of *Endurance*. He diagnosed why our anchor chain was hanging up in the chain locker and figured out a solution. He repaired the port navigation light. He figured out a good anchoring system for the tender when we go diving, etc. Scott loves to fix things on boats and a guy like that is invaluable for a trip like this. He has become a great friend and shipmate who will be missed a lot.

So I'm on the boat for three days by myself, which gives me time to clean the inside and outside of the boat, make some minor repairs, do laundry, organize the provisions and generally get ready for Kathy and Emily, and Randy and Mickey Short, our next guests on *Endurance* who all arrive on Saturday, the day before Easter. The only bummer is that all the bars and restaurants will be closed Thursday and Friday in Costa Rica as they make these days before Easter a national holiday for everyone. Fortunately I fueled *Endurance* and bought all the groceries yesterday.

Sandy Purdon

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 3/27/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 09*38 N 84*41W

Randy and Mickey Short arrived Saturday morning, March 22nd, at the Banana Bay Marina in Golfito, Costa Rica. I had just finished doing the vacuuming (yes, I do the house cleaning on *Endurance* also) so we settled into morning coffee and caught up. Randy is the President of Almar Marinas (16 marinas in California and Hawaii under ownership or management). We have been good friends for some 18 years sharing a lot of the marina business issues together. They live in the Channel Islands marina and Bishops as they love skiing. He was the mountain manager for Mammoth and she was the ski instructor at June Mountain in their former lives. They own a Mason 44 sailboat.

Later that morning we went to the town of Golfito and finished getting some provisions for the boat that I needed. Kathy and Emily arrived about 3:30pm having landed at 5:30am from the red-eye from LAX. They grabbed a few hours sleep in the hotel in San Jose before jumping on the small plane for the flight to Golfito. These prop planes have to fly over 10,000 ft. mountains and down valleys and then land on a small strip between two high mountains in the rain forest around Golfito. Apparently it

was a real “E” ticket ride as it is usually full of rain clouds and lightning and the pilots seem like they are about 18 years old. But it was a great reunion of the family and Emily didn’t know what to make of her Dad’s beard! She pretended not to know me at first! We went down the street (Golfito has just one street) from the marina to a restaurant so no one had to fix dinner that night.

The next morning we shoved off from the dock about 8am and traveled the 70 miles to Drake’s Bay up the coast of Costa Rica. Drake’s Bay is a really great cruising stop. This is where Sir Francis Drake arrived from Plymouth, England, along with many pirates and treasure hunters centuries ago. We anchored in about 20 feet of water at low tide (8 ft tides here) and enjoyed swimming and exploring with the tender. We found a great eco-lodge called “Aquila de Osa Inn”, which is on the edge of the rain forest and national park called Corcovado National Park.

I arranged with the manager of the lodge for Mickey, Kathy, Emily and me to take a 6-hour rain forest hike with the guide from Aquila de Osa Inn. Randy opted for watching the boat and reading as he had not brought hiking shoes. The rest of us had an unbelievable experience getting picked up on Monday at 7am from *Endurance* and taking a 45-minute ponga ride down the coast only to ride the surf to land at the Corcovado National Park station off the beach. Here we began our trek initially along the beach for about an hour and then into the canopy jungle where we saw Howler and Spider monkeys, exotic birds, thousands of ants building their colonies, and wild turkeys, pigs and other assorted animals. We were educated by the guide on the animals of the coast and rain forest, the plants and trees, and the amazing management of these forests. The interesting thing was that apparently some 40 years ago, four American families bought this land and dedicated it to be this national park forever to be protected. One issue that they have to deal with is the poachers that come in from not only Costa Rica but other countries to mine for gold and get the skins and tusks of some of the animals here. The other issue is that because of the currents off this area of Costa Rica, garbage from South America and Central America gets pushed by the oceans currents to the beaches off this park. So they have daily beach patrols that try and pick up this garbage.

Late that morning we returned to the park station and rested for a minute before starting a 45-minute hike to the infamous water falls. This trek was considerably more difficult as it took us along a stream bed with crocodiles and other interesting animals up on the side of a canopy jungle mountain. Eventually we arrived at a beautiful waterfall that fed into a stream and swimming hole. The morning heat was upon us so the dip in the stream below the water falls was very refreshing. Our guide assured us that the crocodile we saw upstream would not bother us and even Emily had the courage to jump in the water. After about 20 minutes of cooling off we returned down the mountain to our lunch that was prepared by our guide at the park station. After lunch we loaded all our gear on the ponga and pushed ourselves out through the surf to return to *Endurance*.

About 4pm, at high tide, we took our tender to the entrance where the Aquila de Osa Inn was located and traveled the river inland for about three-quarters of a mile. It was a great experience, considerably more realistic than the Disney Jungle Ride according to Emily. That night I had arranged for us to be the only outsiders to attend dinner at the Aquila de Osa Inn. We enjoyed the company of the guests at the inn some of whom had just caught the fresh sashimi served for “poo poos” with our cocktails. We were all seated in family size tables of ten and ate family style with a choice of fresh fish and chicken, red and white wine, great fresh vegetables and a homemade desert. The food was only topped by our new dinner guests consisting of a couple on their honeymoon from Cape Cod, a French Canadian

couple, and a couple from Calgary, Canada. The lodge only handles about 30 guests so it was great to meet and chat with these folks enjoying the new hot eco-tourism experience.

The owner of Aquila de Osa Inn is Bradd Johnson. He is a former catamaran sailor that has done some Pacific Cups apparently. He established this inn some 15 years ago and just this week had finally installed a gas and diesel pump for his some 20 pongas, sport fishing boats and dive boats. Prior to this he had to haul 50-gallon drums by boat from a village 20 miles away and then with around 20 workers get the fuel up 100 feet to the storage tanks that fed the fuel down by gravity. For the first time he now had a way to actually count the gallons he received and dispensed. He still had to get the fuel to his business by boat. Looked to me like a tough way to make a living.

We left at about 9:30pm in our tender but it was getting to be pretty low tide. Bradd tried to explain how we should navigate out of his river into Drake's Bay and with Randy with the flash light, we worked our way around the rocks and reefs and surf back to *Endurance*.

The next morning we departed for Quepos (68 miles) opting to go past Punta Uvita as a possible next anchorage. In Quepos we saw the new marina being built and the town from the water. Enjoying the solitude of anchoring offshore, we moved along the coast from Quepos a few miles and found a really great secluded cove where there was only one boat and it was uninhabited. We anchored offshore in about 25 feet of water and took our swim followed by cocktails and "poo poos" and then dinner. The next morning we moved on to Los Suenos, which was a distance of about 35 miles.

Arriving in Los Suenos Marina about 2pm on Wednesday, we first topped off our fuel tanks before heading to the slip. This marina was developed about eight years ago and is probably the nicest marina in Costa Rica. It has the Marriott Hotel adjacent to the marina with a championship golf course, shops, swimming pool, etc. The marina is full of sport fishing boats and we counted only three sailboats. The transient slip fee per night is \$3.50/ft/night and the monthly rate is north of \$34/ft/month.

Having not had a haircut since January, I walked into the salon and asked the price of a men's haircut. They said \$45 and I promptly asked Kathy to cut my hair. She did end up cutting my hair and did a pretty good job! This place was expensive but they are full of customers so the price seems OK by the patrons. We decided to eat on the boat as you can imagine the restaurant prices were high. Diesel fuel was \$4.19/gal and gas was \$4.41/gal.

Today we went to the Marriott Hotel so Emily could get in some swimming and we could relax. Tomorrow we plan to go into the village outside the marina and Marriott compound and purchase some provisions for *Endurance*. Kathy, Emily and the Shorts leave Saturday morning and Doc White and Rich Gallagher arrive on Saturday morning for another crew change. I should have my customs papers by Saturday night so we can depart on our long hauls Sunday morning up to Nicaragua.

Sandy, Kathy & Emily Purdon
Randy & Mickey Short

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 4/1/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 13*16 N 91*34W

The visit to *Endurance* by Kathy and Emily certainly raised the morale of the skipper. The company of Randy and Mickey Short was very special also. Randy and I inspected and critiqued the marina construction and operation at Los Suenos (we were actually quite impressed except for the aluminum docks that made a lot of noise from the surge). Mickey, being a noted water color artist, engaged Emily in a series of art lessons and we have a wonderful landscape piece Emily completed on *Endurance*.

The Shorts left Friday afternoon to go back to San Jose and fly out on Saturday. Kathy, Emily and I took a cab to the town of Jaco about five miles from the marina. This town sits on the beach south of Los Suenos. We found the best farmers market that is only open on Fridays so we lucked out. We bought the greatest fresh vegetables and fruit we have ever seen. We then checked out the town or should I say that Kathy and Emily did the shopping thing while HP sat in a nice air-conditioned coffee shop and watched Fox News! Well, someone had to guard the groceries!

We had an early dinner as the girls had to get up at 4am to catch the cab to San Jose and fly home. As it turned out their flight from San Jose was cancelled and they didn't fly out at 9am but later at 3pm. They didn't get home until 21 hours later, barely making a flight in Houston with their bags.

Later Saturday morning, March 29th, Doc White and Rich Gallagher showed up and were welcomed aboard a cleaned and buffed *Endurance*. The Captain is getting good at cleaning toilets, washing the sheets and towels, and vacuuming the boat during the switchover of crews. Of course Doc had to keep track of the University of North Carolina (he's an alumni) basketball so we timed dinner in the Los Suenos sports bar to watch the game which put them into the Final Four. Now we have to figure out how to see or listen to the games next Saturday.

Having delivered Doc and Rich's passports to our agent mid-day Saturday, we got our Zarpe exit papers from Costa Rica about 4pm. So the next morning, Sunday, March 30th, we left Los Suenos at 7am. We had some options for our next leg which included a stop at Estero Aserradores/Puesta del Sol, Nicaragua; a stop at Puerto Quetzal, Guatemala; or (weather permitting) shoot for going all the way through the Gulf of Tehuantepec, offshore to Huatulco, Mexico, a distance of 770 miles and a four-day/three-night voyage. We opted for the latter after we got some favorable currents putting us at over 12 knots for a while at only 1400 rpms and eating up only 11 gallons an hour of fuel.

As we passed Nicaragua on Sunday night, things started to change. Although we were offshore some 100 miles, we noticed a strange boat following us. It came up from behind us and as best we could tell it was some sort of old fishing boat but it seemed to have a lot of power. As it got closer we hailed it on Channel 16 to find out what their intentions might be. Getting no response, we prepared for the worse and loaded up our flare gun. It was then, as it came alongside, that we saw the occupants of the boat and the crew had ski masks on so we couldn't tell who they were. Now we were really concerned.

We dialed up the emergency single side band number on the radio and Rich started calling May Day, informing anyone listening that we were being boarded by masked men from an unidentified boat. I fired a flare across their bow and noticed that they had weapons at the ready. Doc prepared other weapons that we had onboard like our gaff for fishing and other flares one of which we shot in the air. I took the helm and sped the boat up to 16 knots and headed for land. Apparently this did the trick as we moved out from the renegade boat and left them in the dark of the night. I have to thank Doc and

Rich as they were real heroes with this incident. They kept their cool and were ready to fight to defend our boat.

This was not the end of our excitement. After moving out for an hour at top speed, we backed off and watched the pirate boat on our radar. They turned around and after a while left our screen. We weren't sure who to report this incident to so we tried calling the U.S. Coast Guard on the Sat Phone. We reported the incident but there really wasn't anything the Coast Guard could do based on our position.

Later that morning we put out the fishing pole and within 30 minutes we had a "hook up." I took the rod with the belt and sat in a cockpit chair with my feet up on the stern. I could tell this was larger than the other fish we had pulled into the boat and after about 3 hours of fighting this fish with my arms about to fall off, we brought the mammoth of a fish alongside the boat. It looked like a huge tuna as it was about 8-feet long and must have weighed over 500 pounds. We took the obligatory photos and then cut him loose.

Finally, on Monday night about midnight when I was checking the engine room, I noticed the floor boards were awash with water. The bilge pumps were working but it seemed they could not keep up with the flow of water into the boat. We knew we had to find the source of the leak soon or we were going to sink. After practically swimming around the engine room, I noticed that the port engine raw water thru hull was totally letting sea water into the engine room. As the thru hull was not working I proceeded to find some rags and pieces of plastic mesh and stuffed them into the opening. This slowed the flow of water considerably so the bilge pumps could keep up and drain the engine room of water. Of course this caused the port engine to freeze up with the propeller now shot so we were now working only on the starboard engine. Our plan today is to limp into Huatulco's Marina Chahue for repairs hoping to arrive there on Wednesday evening or Thursday morning.

As you can see we are having a wonderful time on "*Endurance*". I trust you are enjoying APRIL FOOLS DAY!!

Sandy Purdon
Doc White
Rich Gallagher

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 4/4/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 15*45 N 97*28W

We hope everyone enjoyed our April Fools log. It was interesting that about a dozen of you admitted via return emails you were "fooled" but we suspect others might have been also. While we joke about some issues that concern us out here on the open ocean, we don't take safety and our boat care and maintenance lightly. This can be a wonderful experience for all of us but can turn sour with potential problems as we described on April 1st. Fortunately, the experienced crews on *Endurance* have been wise and smart about how we conduct our passages.

The infamous T-pec winds that can make the passage from Guatemala to Mexico very rough did not occur for us fortunately. We saw an opening of winds not exceeding 15 knots and at night were about

10 knots for our crossing of the Gulf of Tehuantepec Bay and we took it. Our course took us directly across the 200-mile bay that is noted for having 40+ knots of wind coming down from the Gulf of Mexico over this narrow strip of land between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Our arrival in Mexico's Hautulco's Marina Chahue at the NW edge of the Gulf of Tehuantepec happened about 3:30pm on Wednesday, April 2nd. The marina was developed between a beach and some cliffs so the entrance around the breakwater is quite dramatic. Enrique, the marina manager, said via email that they were expecting us but we couldn't raise him on VHF and no staff were on the docks to greet us. So we took a nice side tie between a 110 ft. mega yacht and a 70 ft. cat sailboat. The docks were nice floating docks with full amenities for only \$.45/ft/night.

The town of Santa Cruz is immediately to the northwest of the marina but you have to go out around some large shoals and rocks that separate the town from the marina. Hautulco is the county that is Mexico's southernmost county bordering Guatemala. We noticed that some immigration officials were on another boat so we let them know we had just arrived and they came over to *Endurance* to begin our checking-into-Mexico process.

We got some of our immigration and health department's paperwork started so we could take down our quarantine yellow flag before nightfall but it was going to be necessary to go into town the next day to see the Port Captain, Immigration again, finalize our tourist visas, and have the Custom's inspection of the boat. The positive about all this process in Mexico is that you only have to do this when you check into the country and when you check out, except for us as we are changing crews in Puerto Vallarta. When you have a different crew entering Mexico than is leaving as we have, you have to redo some of this immigration paperwork as we will do in Puerto Vallarta.

We met some nice folks from Alaska, California, and New Zealand at the marina the next morning. In fact, the couple from New Zealand had just had Roy Dickson, Chris Dickson's (America's Cup with New Zealand and recently with Golden Gate/Larry Ellison's team) dad on their cruising sailboat for a week. I had befriended Roy and Chris at the 1987 and 1992 America's Cup events. I was sorry to have just missed him. The guy from Alaska does Salmon fishing in Alaska during the season, makes enough money to rejoin his boat (also called *Endurance*) so he can cruise for about nine months before returning to Alaska to fish. He commented that the biggest problem in fishing off Alaska is the jelly fish that they bring on the boat in the nets. The jelly fish schools are huge according to him and very venomous.

Thursday, April 3rd, found us waiting for three hours in the morning for the customs inspection but once that was completed Enrique took Rich and me into town while Doc guarded the boat. We went directly to Immigration to complete that paperwork, went to the bank to pay our tourist visa fee (\$34 each), and visited with the Port Captain to get our Zarpe. We had made up a grocery list but before going to the market, Rich and I found a nice waterfront restaurant to have lunch. We returned to the boat having done our shopping and inspected the option of taking on fuel in Santa Cruz later that day.

We left Marina Chahue about 3pm and headed over to the Santa Cruz's fuel dock. We took on about 800 gallons of diesel at \$2.37/gal, which has been the best price-to-date for fuel. The fuel dock had a lot of surge but the fuel was clean and it did not take long with two pumps filling our four tanks at once. We can hold 1025 gallons of diesel.

We left Santa Cruz and headed northwest about 5pm for our destination of Zihuatanejo and the island of Ixtapa, a distance of about 350 miles. While I was torn about stopping at Acapulco and possibly seeing some old friends at the Acapulco Yacht Club, we decided it was not a stop we would enjoy. Twenty years ago Acapulco was different than now with all the apparent drug crime and big city issues. We opted for something more low key and Zihuatanejo sounded much better. After a couple of overnights, we should arrive there Saturday morning, April 5th. Night passages with winds under 10 knots seem to be quite acceptable for three old curmudgeons!

Sandy Purdon
Doc White
Rich Gallagher

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 4/6/08

X-Via: SailMail @ 17*42 N 101*52W

The passage from Santa Cruz to Zihuatanejo went smoothly over two nights with all our systems on the boat running beautifully. Our watch system has been basically two hours on and four hours off from 6pm to 6am and then three hours on and six hours off from 6am to 6pm. Everyone gets plenty of time to read, fish, snack and nap during this time with a dinner gathering about 6pm with the watch change. The on-coming watch will check the engine room prior to assuming the watch. We make water up to 300 gallons when needed and we have been running the air conditioner basically 24-7 although it has been nice in the evening to be on the fly bridge or the aft cockpit area. Our Sirius satellite radio has now come back in range so it has been good to get music as we were tired of the same CDs all the time. As you can tell, we are really roughing it.

The anchorage in “Zhuat” was great. While a bit of a tourist area, the bay fronts a great little Mexican town and a great beach area. Rich and I went into town. Doc prefers to sit the boat and taxi us in and out of the town. We walked the town and had a light lunch stopping to observe a beautiful church service just concluding.

The big event for Saturday, April 5th, was the NCAA semi-final games that we were able to receive on Sirius Radio. Doc and Sandy had the big bet with Doc supporting his alma mater and Sandy taking Kansas. The bet started out at \$20 but quickly escalated to \$40 after Doc heard all the great stuff everyone was saying about UNC. After the first ten minutes, Doc almost went into cardiac arrest but was rejuvenated with about 8 minutes left when UNC got within 4 points. Doc retired early to his stateroom following the game. Rich and I took turns looking in on him and making sure all the sharp knives were still in the galley.

Sunday morning Sandy tried to play some church music on Sirius but was quickly voted down. We left Zhaut anchorage about 10am and took a “fly-by” of Ixtapa Island and the anchorages. We decided it was a little too touristy for our liking and headed northwest to Manzanillo, a trip of about 190 miles. This should be our last overnight on this leg to Puerto Vallarta.

Visually we have been seeing lots of life. Obviously we have had all sorts of dolphin playing in our bow and stern wakes. Some of the sealife we have seen include Mobula rays, sea snakes, turtles, Humpback whales, boobies (birds), Iguanas, and a number of flying fish that end up on *Endurance* each morning.

We are now only 1400 miles from San Diego. We will be in Manzanillo Monday night, Bahia Navidad Tuesday night, Tentacita Wednesday and Thursday night, Cereyes Friday night, Chamala Saturday night, Punta Impala Sunday night, Yalapa Monday and Tuesday night, and arriving at Paradise Village marina in Nuevo Vallarta/Puerto Vallarta on Wednesday, April 16th.

Sandy Purdon
Doc White
Rich Gallagher

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 4/8/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 19*17N 104*50W

After loosing another lure while fishing, I have determined that I am not cut out to be a fisherman. My knot that I tried to tie from looking at the "fishing book" broke when we got a strike on the way to Manzanillo. I now appreciate what Mark Cohen accomplished and am thankful that we still have some of the fish he caught. Maybe George Stuart will be more successful on our trip from PV to San Diego in two weeks. But I'm out of mono-filament line and out of patience!

We arrived at the Las Hadas Marina mid-morning Monday, February 7th, and immediately took on about 500 gals of fuel at \$2.47/gal. We then took a med-tie mooring to their floating docks. There was a lot of surge in their little harbor so we had to tie lines very tight. We washed the boat down and then Doc and I went to lunch at the hotel. Rich opted for reading and a nap.

Las Hadas didn't have many guests and the place looks a little tired although we understand it was under new management. It seems like we hear that a lot in Mexico. I took a swim in the hotel pool later and reminisced about the many San Diego – Manzanillo Yacht Races we did on Renegade and recently on Stars & Stripes. Today we head to Bahia Navidad, the infamous place where we lost the mast to Renegade in 1978 just short of the finish in a storm that we recorded had gusts up to 50 knots. Today's 10-knots of breeze is a far cry from that night.

Last evening I took a chance that maybe Clark Beek would be in the anchorage on his sailboat, *Contessa*. I called on Channel 16 and immediately he returned the hail. Clark has been sailing his boat around the world for nine years! We have been communicating via SailMail as a suggestion from his good friend and SDSU roommate, Matt Thoene. Matt is one of the Francis Parker Men's Club dads that meet every Tuesday for coffee after we drop our kids off at school. There are nine of us and Matt would tell us of his friend, Clark, and refer us to his website. When I took off on this adventure through Central America, Matt thought that we might be able to cross paths. Well, we did last night.

I invited Clark and his mother, Sandy, who had just flown in to visit for a week with Clark on his boat, for cocktails and dinner aboard *Endurance*. They came over in their dingy and we enjoyed sea stories

about our adventures. Of course we couldn't top Clark's tales of him and two friends being run over by an 800 foot freighter which caused about \$50,000 of damage, but they were fortunately not killed. Clark has been to the Antarctic, South Pacific, New Zealand, Australia, Thailand, India, Africa and South America, and is now working his way after nine years back to San Diego and Newport Beach. Clark's dad is a past Commodore of Newport Harbor Yacht Club and his uncle, Barton Beek, is well known in sailboat racing circles. We got the feeling that Clark might be heading back to work in the San Francisco area. We learned that Clark bought his boat from a broker at Shelter Cove Marina in the late 1990's and the boat was in our marina.

We arrived at Bahia Navidad's Bahia Grand Hotel Marina. This marina is first class and the hotel is definitely five-star. The hotel has everything from golf and tennis to kid's special rooms and pools, plus a wonderful location secluded on Mexico's Gold Coast Riviera! After a great lunch ashore, we discovered that our next door neighbor in the marina is a boat owned by Mike Reynolds, one of my partners in Shelter Cove. He is a member of Coronado Yacht Club. We hadn't seen each other for over ten years so it was fun connecting again. His boat had been down here since November so I imagined his real estate development was on hold and he was taking a nice time out enjoying this area.

Later in the day, *Journey*, a brand new Fleming 65 pulled in across from us on the dock and we met the owner, Mike Brown and his wife, Bobbie. Mike and Bobbie had owned a Fleming 55 that they kept in Sydney, British Columbia for eight years. They are members of both St. Francis and Newport Harbor Yacht Clubs. Mike is the brother of Cammy Peters and had just had Gary Gould and Geves Kenny on *Journey* for its maiden voyage in Newport Beach. We keep saying this boating world is very small and we are all only separated by six degrees. Mike showed off his 65 and it was quite impressive. The new technology in these new Flemings is unbelievable. Tony Fleming has taken boating to a new level.

Wednesday morning we had *Endurance's* bottom and topsides cleaned at the slip. Rich and I took a water taxi into the village across the lagoon and purchased some provisions for the boat. We left Bahia Grand Hotel Marina about noon and landed in Tenacatita Bay about 2pm. We anchored in the great cove near the Jungle River entrance on the northwest side of the bay protected from the prevailing NW wind. There were about ten other boats in the area. We will enjoy the afternoon and do the river exploration Thursday with the tender. This is the prime area of the Mexican Gold Coast.

We are about 1150 miles from San Diego.

Sandy Purdon
Doc White
Rich Gallagher

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 4/13/08
X-Via: SailMail @ 20*13N 105*36W

The Jungle River at Tenacatita was challenging going in and coming out. There is a sandbar at the entrance and even if you go in at high tide, it takes getting out of your tender and walking it over the bar on a wave. Once on the river, we worked our way around the shallow parts of the river found in the beginning. We ran up the river in idle occasionally being passed by pongas carrying tourists from the

hotel on Bahia Tenacatita. The river gets pretty narrow as you work your way up the 2 hours trip to the end. We were stopped by a panga ahead of us that had spotted a small caiman (alligator) so when they left the spot we pulled our tender into the side inlet and Doc got some photos of the critter. The challenge on the river is when one of these pangas or a large yatista tender passes you. Both boats have to almost come to a complete stop and inch their way past each other in the narrow parts of the river.

The mangos that grow along side the river occasionally cover the river in a canopy. The light that **axtes** (George - what is he trying to say here?) through the mango trees gives you an interesting presentation. The birds are plentiful and colorful. We arrived at the outer end of the river where you can dock the dingy and enjoy your choice for lunch of a half dozen restaurants that face Bahia Tenacatita from the beach. After lunch we returned down the river to *Endurance*.

On our return to *Endurance*, we trouble-shot our black water holding tank and why it was not pumping. Doc diagnosed the problem as not having any liquid in the pump probably from the fact that we left the pump running way past the time the tank was empty the day before. We tried to prime it from the outside with a water hose up the thru hole. That didn't work so Doc took the pump apart inside the boat and filled the pump with water. Fortunately in *Endurance* this pump is easy to access and easy to take apart. That was all it took to get it working - thank God! The good working and function of your holding tank on a boat is of prime importance.

Our typical program on *Endurance* is to enjoy cocktails about 5:30pm, dinner at 6:30pm, a movie at 7:30pm and read in bed until about 9:30pm. Then up about 6:30am and shove off for the next anchorage at about 8:30am trying to arrive at the next location in the early or mid-afternoon.

Friday, April 11th, had us traveling up the Gold Coast of Mexico. We pulled into Bahia Careyes after a couple of hours but found the anchorage for *Endurance* not particularly good. It was small and there were not any good spots that would work for us. So we proceeded up the coast about ten miles to Bahia Chamela where we found a half dozen other boats tucked into the protected cove. We located a great anchor spot and dropped the hook, followed by our nap, cocktails, dinner and a movie.

Saturday we moved from Chamela to Ipala, a distance of about 50 miles. Ipala is a small anchorage tucked inside a small point. We were the only boat in this anchorage, fortunately as there wasn't much room for any other boats. Pangas were scattered on the beach and apparently there are daytime residents here that come over from Yalapa. We chose to remain on the boat with our usual routine.

Sunday, April 13th, we left Ipala and worked our way around Cabo Corrientes, the northernmost point of this area they call the Mexican Gold Coast. We are headed for Las Tres Marietas to check for whales.

Sandy Purdon
Doc White
Rich Gallagher

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 4/1708
X-Via: SailMail @ 20*41N 19*9W

By leaving early in the morning from Ipala, we avoided the fresh breeze that hits Cabo Corrientes mid-day. We arrived at Las Tres Marietas but the water was not very clear and the red tide that we had seen often on this leg was still around. We got close to the islands to see some others diving and snorkeling. So our visit ended up being a fly-by and we headed off to Punta Mita.

Punta Mita turned out to be one of the best anchorages of the trip. It is a very large bay that is well protected from the NW winds and the holding ground is excellent. We started to anchor and we saw a mother and calf Humpback whale couple breaching about a mile from our spot. We halted our anchoring and headed out to the whales. We got close to them but by the time we got to them they stopped breaching. Doc thought the mother was probably teaching the young one how to breach. We hung out and followed the mother and calf around for about an hour and then we anchored not far from where they were playing.

Later in the day we moved our anchorage closer to shore to try and get out of any swells. It was a pleasant night on the hook with the usual great meal prepared by Doc with Sandy doing the usual clean-up of dishes and the galley. We watched "McArthur," the PPS documentary on General Douglas McArthur that was quite informative.

On Monday, April 14th, we moved a short eight miles to La Cruz de Huanacastle and anchored off their harbor entrance with about 15 other boats. They are building a great new marina here that will be well protected and the town has some great restaurants that people travel from Puerto Vallarta to enjoy. In a year or two this should be a great spot to use the new marina. I wonder if they will be a "clean marina." Here I introduced Doc and Rich to Kathy's favorite game of Yachtzee. After teaching them we played two games and Rich won the first and Doc won the second. It must have been the great teacher!

Tuesday, we traveled first about 12 miles to Yalapa. This cove is world famous for its romantic setting with a few small hotels and a great beach with about a one-hour hike to a great waterfall. I remembered this from bringing *Renegade* back from Manzanillo after one of the races in the 1980's. This time we opted to do a fly-by to just check it out and then we moved on to Nuevo Vallarta and Paradise Village Marina.

We arrived at Paradise Village Marina about noon and Dick Markie, the Harbor Master here, is an old friend who had arranged for us to have a "primo" slip right down from the marina office. Unfortunately, he and his wife were on a planned vacation so we missed seeing him. Dick's was the first marina in Mexico to be certified by our Clean Marinas California program and he is working to bring some other Mexican marinas into the program. His staff was terrific and took good care of us.

Paradise Village is a huge resort with a very nice hotel, spa, marina, two pools, beachfront swimming, tennis courts, kid's activities, a small zoo, three golf courses in the area, a short walk to a good shopping center with a good grocery store and liquor shop. There are lots of homes built on the water here as well as the usual condo complexes. The only negative is that you don't want to swim in the back river where there are some very good sized alligators.

We had lunch at the Vallarta Yacht Club in the marina. They actually reciprocate for SDYC and other club memberships or you can join their club for a nominal fee. That evening, Doc and Rich took the river ride (\$25/person) and got some great photos of the alligators, iguanas and birds.

The next day, Doc left the boat and flew back to San Diego. His newly remodeled home was about ready to be occupied and he and Ceci planned to move in the following Tuesday. Doc was a fantastic help and his knowledge and expertise in boating in general and power boats in particular was most valuable to me as a “newbie” to power boating. I can’t thank him, Rich and the others enough for all the coaching they have done to bring me into this world of “stick pots.”

We have often joked about the cartoon of the old man kneeling at the side of his bed saying a prayer at bed time. The room is full of sailing memorabilia and trophies with his sailing shoes and sailing shirts all about the room. He puts his hands together and looks up saying, “Please God, forgive me. I went on a power boat today and I LOVED IT!”

Having sailed all my life I thought there was no other way. I admit I was a bit of a snob and didn’t think “power boaters” were really the salt of the sailor. I think both are great and I still love to go sailing and racing. But sailing I’ve determined is an art, particularly racing, although there are an abundant number of technical parts of sailing and racing. But “stink potting” is really an exercise in tackling engineering challenges. With all the systems on these boats, one really needs to become comfortable with these systems to enjoy this type of boating. I guess after two years on *Endurance*, I’m getting more comfortable with them. Certainly the expertise of Scott Launey, Doc White, Robin Reighley on this trip, and Scott Taylor, Bob Spriggs and David Lowry prior to this trip took me to a level that now I am comfortable with running *Endurance* and troubleshooting most of the issues that might happen on the boat. All the crew members from this trip, the trips up and down the east coast the last two years, and many folks that have given me great advice on this adventure have made the trip successful to date without any major issues. I am indebted to each and every one of them.

At Paradise Village Marina we ran into *Journey*, a Fleming 65, again owned by Mike and Bobbie Brown. I mentioned them in one of my other logs. Wednesday, Staff Commodore Gary and Gail Gould and Ollie and Cammie Peters arrived to join the Browns on *Journey* for their trip to La Paz.

Today, Kathy and Emily arrive so I spent the day getting *Endurance* cleaned up and ready for the weekend activities. Laundry (sheets and towels), vacuum, clean heads, galley, etc. are the order of the day. Tomorrow George and Traci Stuart and their daughters, Haley and Jordan, arrive so *Endurance* will be alive with kids and fun! The moms and kids leave Monday. John Hawkins will join George Stuart and me on Monday to take *Endurance* north to San Diego starting Tuesday, April 22nd. We will be trying to arrive in San Diego by Thursday, May 1st.

Sandy Purdon

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 4/25/208
X-Via: SailMail @ 22*54N 110*04W

Having Kathy and Emily arrive on Thursday, April 17th, after I saw Rich Gallagher off to his plane, was terrific. We had a day on Friday to hang out at the Paradise Village Hotel pool and take a trip to Costco so we could provision *Endurance* for our final leg of the trip to San Diego.

Late Friday, George, Traci, Haley and Jordan Stuart arrived for the long weekend. Haley is a classmate of Emily's so she was very excited to have someone her age join us. Jordan is about five years old but considers Emily a close friend also. The three girls had a ball on Saturday and Sunday as they tackled the slides at the hotel pool, played games on *Endurance* and visited the hotel zoo which had a pair of pumas, a pair of Bengal Tigers, some exotic birds and some spider monkeys. Saturday morning we took *Endurance* out into Bandaras's Bay and we found a Humpback whale which we followed for a while to the enjoyment of everyone.

Sunday George and I took our daughters in the tender up the canals and river adjacent to the marina. It is an area that has crocodiles and was posted for these dangerous creatures. Apparently there is a big one named San Jose that has been spotted around the marina. We were careful but interested in seeing one of these animals, but to no avail. We did see an Iguana in the trees alongside the canal. The homes that have been built on these canals are quite impressive with many having their own private docks.

In the afternoon, both families went to Sea Life Park which is like a small Sea World with the addition of water slides and swimming pools. After enjoying the swimming and slides, the moms and daughters took part in a "swimming with the dolphins" following the dolphin show we all enjoyed. The girls got to kiss, dance with and pet dolphins and they have it all on a DVD. This was one of the highlights for the kids.

Monday, April 21st, George and I saw our families off to the airport and we started the clean-up of *Endurance*. Later Woody and Coley Hunt arrived from flying in from San Diego to join their boat, *Coley D*, which was located only five slips down from *Endurance*. As we had made contact with Gene and Nancy Fletcher over the past weeks, we jumped in the Hunt's car and drove over to the Fletchers condo on the beach adjacent to the marina in Nuevo Vallarta. The Fletchers had invited us all to cocktails which was a real treat. They had previously built a home on the canals but had sold it recently and purchased this condo that sits high over the entrance to Paradise Village with views from Puerto Vallarta to Punta Mita.

After the Fletcher visit we drove back to our boats at the marina and found John Hawkins sitting on *Endurance*. He had just arrived from the airport so we welcomed him and got him settled into his stateroom after he and George previewed the Hunts impressive 66-foot DeFever. (George - is this a brand name or the given name of the boat? If the given name, please change to italics.)

Tuesday, April 22nd, we left the marina at 7:30am and were contacted by Gene and Nancy Fletcher who called us up on our VHF radio. They said they got some great photos of *Endurance* as we departed the channel from Paradise Village. The next 30 hours had us traveling to Cabo San Lucas overnight with the wind increasing to about 20 knots and the seas to about six feet. This was a good break in voyage for both George and John. On our arrival at Cabo we pulled into the fuel dock at Marinas de Baja as the price was 30 cents per gallon cheaper than the Cabo Marina. We also decided to stay at this marina as the price was considerably less than the bigger marina.

Wednesday night after getting the boat washed down and put away, we went into Cabo to check out the town and get dinner. Having not really been back to Cabo in many years, I was amazed at the growth in buildings and population. There were two cruise ships in the outer bay on Wednesday when we arrived, two on Thursday, and three on Friday when we left. The cruise ships arrive in the morning, unload passengers for the day and then pull out by the evening. This must be a fantastic financial bonus to Cabo.

Thursday, we went to the tackle shop to get my reel re-spooled from my loss of line when I attempted to fish a few weeks ago. With George aboard ready to take on the challenge of fishing, we got all our equipment ready for the trip up Baja. We had lunch over on the beach facing the Cabo bay and walked around the town and the developments. John and George bought a beautiful coffee table photo book on Baja for *Endurance*. That evening we returned to have drinks at Hemingway's and dinner at Ruth's Chris (we were dying for a good steak, baked potato and Caesar salad). George was insistent even with our objections on buying dinner for us for the second night in a row. John tried to grab the check but George is 6'4" and 37 years old. We were no match for him!

Friday morning we departed Cabo at 9:30am and put our fishing poles out as we rounded Cabo Falso. Within 30 minutes we caught a nice Mahi Mahi that we diced up for lunch to go with our pasta salad. We are now working our way up the Baja coast to make Santa Maria just north of Magdalena Bay in the morning. The wind is down to around 10 knots and the seas are fairly flat. This was a good weather opening to head north. Only 800 miles to go to San Diego!

Sandy Purdon
John Hawkins
George Stuart

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 4/27/208
X-Via: SailMail @ 26*05N 113*30W

Friday, April 25th, was the day we were going to catch some fish! And we did. George, our resident angler, threw both his pole and my pole up on the aft cockpit rod holders and soon we had a strike. It was a beautiful Mahi Mahi that I tried to filet (surgeon Mark Cohen taught me!) but it could have been better. George finished up the job and we ate some raw with our lunch salad and the rest we put out to eat later. I also caught a 20 lb Big Eye Tuna that we fileted and put in the freezer.

We arrived at Santa Maria just north of Magdalena Bay and found an anchorage. Only two other boats were anchored there and one left as we arrived. We had to move the boat three times to find a good hold for the anchor. This is a great anchorage, well protected by the large mountains holding off the wind and waves from the northwest. As soon as we anchored, a panga with a Mexican fisherman came by with lobsters. We purchased three for \$10 U.S., put them in salt water and thought about dinner.

Coming into Santa Maria, we came across some good sized whales just north of Mag Bay. Once in Santa Maria, we didn't see any in this bay but we would see some later on our departure the next day. Saturday afternoon we dropped the tender in the water and checked out the bay. Before we left we inspected the port forwards splash rail under the bow. Somehow we must have hit something that

broke about a 5-foot piece of this splash rail just above the water line. It is hard rubber so it must have been something substantial but not hard enough to make any marks on the hull. Only the 1.5" x 1.5" rail was damaged and there were no marks or damage to any other part of the hull. Our only thought was maybe a whale or something in the water that just nicked this rail. Just another item on the "to do" list!

Both John and George have learned the ropes on this boat. They are now both very proficient in handling the dock lines, setting the anchor and retrieving the anchor with the windless, wiping down the bright work at day break and helping with the galley chores. During the late afternoon, we did some minor "honey do's." John fixed the engine room door whose hinges had pulled off.

That evening I prepared some killer Caprice salad and George steamed up the lobster after John executed the poor fellows humanly. The dinner was exquisite!! With some great wine from the *Endurance* wine cellar, we enjoyed a lobster dinner on the hook followed by a great DVD by the BBC called "Blue Planet" about our oceans and sea life.

It turned quite chilly Saturday as the water was down to 58 degrees which is a long way from the 84 degrees we had in San Blas and Panama. The air was cold so we didn't need the AC any longer. We all got a good seven hours of sleep this night.

Sunday morning, April 27th, we left Santa Maria about 7:15am and headed northwest to Turtle Bay. Fishing was the order of the day again and George snagged seven Bonito during the day which we released as they apparently aren't great eating. George broke out the salmon Kathy had put in the refrigerator and prepared a great dinner complemented with the appropriate wine. As I write this, I'm on watch in the pilot house. Hawkman John and Chef George are watching a great PBS DVD special biography on General Douglas McArthur that I had seen with an earlier crew.

We hope to be in Turtle Bay by 8am in the morning and top off our fuel. The weather reports look great up until Tuesday night as we understand a storm is headed south and predicted to hit the area south of Ensenada late Tuesday. We will watch these reports closely and take appropriate action to be determined. We are still trying to land at our slip (H-20) at San Diego Yacht Club on Thursday at 4 pm.

Only 650 miles to go!!

Sandy Purdon
John Hawkins
George Stuart

The Adventures on *Endurance* - Dateline: 4/30/208
X-Via: SailMail @ 31*51N 116*40W

Our arrival on Monday, April 28th, at Turtle Bay happened early in the morning in calm seas and wind. The bay had only five boats at anchor but we were quickly met by a young man in a panga with a big sign on the side of his boat that read "DOCK FUEL". He told us the price (\$2.52/gal for diesel) and led us to the fuel dock. We pulled into a new lower floating dock below the normal fuel dock pier here. The floating dock had a lot of surge but we tied *Endurance* down hard and pumped about 440 gallons of diesel. We left Turtle Bay at 10am after doing a quick fresh water and soap wash down with full fuel thinking that we should try and get ahead of the reported high winds the weather reports were telling us between Turtle Bay and Ensenada would arrive Wednesday.

I remember being here 25 years ago when I was taking the 70' ULDB race boat, *Merlin*, back from chartering it for the San Diego to Cabo race in 1983. That was the time we went 23 knots in a sailboat, the fastest I've experienced sailing. In 1983 the weather was quite different and it was blowing pretty hard at Turtle Bay. Then we remained in Turtle Bay a couple of day waiting out the high winds, watching a couple of boats venture out only to return later in the day with torn sails or other problems. Once the winds died down, we took *Merlin* out of Turtle Bay and, after passing the lee of Cedros Island 20 miles to the north, we experienced huge 18-foot swells (verified when I called a freighter outside of Cedros to ask for his reading). Fortunately they weren't breaking so we could ride them up and down like rounded hills.

This time it was quite different with very flat water and not much wind. As we headed towards Isla Navidad, an island just northwest of Turtle Bay we saw more whales. Leaving Isla Navidad to port and heading north to the lee side (east) of Cedros Island, we spotted more whales and then what we thought were marlin resting. Since leaving Cabo we saw the water drop in temperature down as far as 55 degrees. This seemed unusual even for this time of year. We were now into long pants to take off the morning chill for the first time in three months.

The ride was smooth past Cedros with the wind picking up slightly north to Sacramento Reef. This reef claimed the passenger steamship, Sacramento, in 1872 tearing it to shreds with many lives lost. A number of recreation and commercial boats have been lost here in the past 130 years. I told the guys that our waypoint would be seven miles outside of the reef and I would be on the 10-12pm watch when we passed this area. George Lindley, our boat insurance guy, will be happy to know we safely passed Sacramento Reef about midnight on Tuesday.

We completed the 280 mile trip from Turtle Bay to Ensenada about noon on Tuesday, April 29th, ahead of any high winds or predicted storm. We pulled into Marina Coral outside of the Ensenada Harbor and took on fuel (\$2.42/gal) to top off our tanks for the final 65 miles to San Diego. We took our immigration and custom papers to the dock masters office for processing and they said we could get our Mexican exit papers late Wednesday afternoon. We took the boat to our slip and quickly got a couple of guys to wash *Endurance* down as she was quite salty from our trip the past couple of days.

The Coral Marina and Resort is quite nice with a very upscale hotel and marina. We retired to the hotel bar for some drinks before returning to the boat for showers and going out for dinner. Dinner consisted of a taxi ride into Ensenada for some abalone (not available) and a short walk around the waterfront including the fish market and boat yard area. Baja Naval is the boat yard that seems quite modern with computerized administration and very accommodating facilities. Being only 60 miles from San Diego, this is where a number of U.S. boats come to get their hulls and bottom paint done. Obviously, the

price is very competitive with not much in the way of environmental laws in Mexico. We were pretty worn out after our trip so it was an early night back to the boat for a good eight hours of sleep.

Our plans were to visit a couple of wineries, the "Blow Hole" and some local tourist spots in Ensenada on Wednesday waiting for our Mexican exit papers. Then an early start Thursday, May 1st, back to San Diego for the final leg of the three-month trip from Fort Lauderdale to San Diego. We hoped to get to the San Diego Customs and Immigration docks about 1pm and hopefully arrive at our slip at H-20 at San Diego Yacht Club by 4pm.

As this will probably be my final chapter in this long voyage from Florida to San Diego via the Panama Canal, I'll take a moment to look back on the experience. *Endurance* is a remarkable vessel and she held up better than I expected. The only real problem was the broken stabilizer seal in the port stabilizer that we got fixed in Panama. The salt water leak on the starboard stabilizer sort of cured itself in that it really was not an issue although I'll have both stabilizers reviewed in the yard. The leaky oil from the stabilizer reservoir cleared itself up after the level got below half-filled where it was supposed to be filled. I inadvertently filled it to the top and it took a month for the excess oil to slowly leak out to get the reservoir level down to its proper level (unknown to me until later).

While I have a number of items on my "to do" list from this voyage, just about all of them would have ended up on this list even if this trip was not taken. Over the next couple of months, *Endurance* will get these items addressed along with the normal maintenance schedule. We changed fluids and filters in Panama which was about half way in terms of engine hours. This trip ended up taking about 650 engine hours and a little over 5,000 nautical miles or about 5,800 statute miles.

Estimating an average of \$3.00/gal of fuel and about one gallon of fuel per nautical mile, the fuel cost was about \$15,000. Other costs for food, slip fees, and Panama transit fees were about \$10,000 WAG (wild ass guess) before I can add up the receipts. So a total of about \$25,000 total cost without factoring in a maintenance cost to bring the boat back to "Bristol" condition most of which I would have to do anyway during this time. So the cost of \$35,000 - \$45,000 of shipping the boat from Fort Lauderdale to Ensenada was somewhat saved not counting the experience of the adventure, sharing the time with friends and family, and really learning the boat and how it works over the past three months.

Finally, a word about the friends and family that really made this happen for me personally. The people that experienced this adventure on *Endurance* were very special to me. Sharing a voyage like this with good friends made the experience very special. The trip from Florida to Cuba to Mexico to Belize to Guatemala to Honduras past Nicaragua, Costa Rica and the Columbian Islands to Panama was shared with Robin Reighley and Mark Cohen. The "step back in time" side trip from Panama to San Blas was shared with Mark Cohen, Mike Morton and Scott Launey. The incredible passage through the Panama Canal saw Mark Cohen, Mike Morton, Scott Launey, Bill Waite and Kathy Purdon onboard *Endurance*. The amazing islands off the Pacific side of Panama to Costa Rica saw Scott Launey and Mark Cohen experience a special time with me. The "spring break" passage had Emily and Kathy Purdon join me with our friends Randy and Mickey Short for the beautiful ride up the coast of Costa Rica. From Costa Rica to Puerto Vallarta, Doc White and Rich Gallagher made the passage most educational and enjoyable. Finally, the last leg from Puerto Vallarta to San Diego with good friends John Hawkins and George Stuart was very special and a lot of fun.

Everyone is to be thanked for taking time to join me on this voyage. I learned a lot from each and every member of the crew. They put up with my schedule, my habits and my temperament. They prepared the dinners and cleaned the boat. They stood watch at all hours of the night, kept me honest on my navigation and checked the engine room on schedule. All in all, they were the best damn bunch of folks with whom to share this boating adventure. Thanks you all!!

Of course, this could not have happened without the support and enthusiasm of Kathy and Emily. Kathy particularly was with me all the way when I thought this might be a great way to experience our boat, get it to San Diego, and really learn the boat. She covered my responsibilities at Shelter Cove with Shaun doing her usual great job as general manager. Kathy kept the home front functioning as well as holding down a very demanding job as Regional Manager/VP of JP Morgan Chase Home Mortgage. Not the least of her responsibilities were to insure our daughter, Emily, was getting to school, doing her homework and making all her activities of piano, softball, drama, etc. I am looking forward to resuming my job to take and pick up Emily from school so we can resume our father-daughter conversations. Bottom line is that without Kathy's enthusiastic support for this adventure, I could not have enjoyed it as I did. Thanks, sweetheart...I love you!

I hope you found these logs enjoyable despite the typos, grammatical errors, and disjointed sentences. So Thursday, May 1st, we arrive at San Diego. We expect to arrive at our slip at H-20 at San Diego Yacht Club about 4pm. It will be very nice to be HOME...FINALLY!

We arrived at customs about noon and it took about 15 minutes to clear. We took the boat to Shelter Cove Marina for a complete wash down and then proceeded to San Diego Yacht Club and our slip where we found Kathy, Emily and about 30 of our friends welcoming us home. The champagne and poo poos flowed with lots of giggles about the trip. Many of the crew that helped along the way met us at the dock.

The adventure was now complete and it was "a trip of a lifetime."

Sandy Purdon
John Hawkins
George Stuart