



Log of S/V *High Drama* No.6- Panama to Ecuador

Greetings once again from ***High Drama***! This episode finds your hearty sailors at Puerto Lucia Yacht Club in Salinas, Ecuador preparing to cast off to the Galapagos. Yes, I know. Careful readers undoubtedly thought that we should be in the Galapagos by now. But, we have no schedule and we are sticking to it. For those of you who would like to see our location on a map, please click on <http://wl2k.org/aprs.htm> and then add KD7GWH, which is our ham radio call sign. We will up date this map daily when we head to the Galapagos and points west.



High Drama Crew in Panama

Mike and Stacy Morrison joined us in Panama. Those of you who have been following this Log since it's inception will remember that Mike and Stacy sailed with us 1½ years ago when we left San Diego. We sailed together to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico where they returned to a more normal life. As soon as Mike and Stacy joined us, we started the paper work to check out of Panama. We set off for

Las Perlas Islands. Goodbyes were said to our close friends Scott and Sharon aboard **Geisha**, pictured below with their dog, also named Geisha. If you follow the Spanish speaking soap operas you will notice that Sharon is wearing a “Yo Soy Betty La Fea” T –shirt. (This extremely popular soap opera is roughly translated as “I am Ugly Betty” and it follows the life of Ugly Betty in a fashion modeling agency. If one is patient enough to follow the plot to a conclusion one learns that Betty is not ugly after all, but a ravishing beauty.) We had sailed with Scott and Sharon for many miles, from Costa Rica to the Panama Canal, and it is once again sad to leave good friends.



Sharon, Scott & Geisha

The Equator

We sailed south from Panama keeping Colombia a minimum of 200 miles to our port. The activity of the drug people, the anti drug people, and the military, supported by the Clinton administration suggested that we should stay well offshore. The Caribbean trades pushed us southward and we picked up a modest current of about 1½ knots, also to the south. For three days we enjoyed great sailing. After traveling approximately 500 miles south, we crossed the equator, on Valentines Day. Below is a picture of the GPS showing that we were truly at the Equator. (00 degrees, 00.000 minutes of latitude) We immediately ran below decks to flush the head to see which way the water flowed out of the drain, to confirm that we were in the Southern Hemisphere.



GPS at equator



Crew celebrating crossing the equator



Ann pouring champagne for Neptune

Champagne flowed as we celebrated the crossing. Ann poured a glass of champagne to Neptune invoking his permission and guidance for safe sea travel. After the ceremony, all former “polliwogs” were now inductees into the Honorable Ancient and Venerable Society of Shellbacks, with all of the privileges and responsibilities attendant thereto.

Ecuador

We sailed to Salinas, Ecuador to meet two cruising boats that lost their outboard motors to the local economy. Ecuador had no replacement outboards in the desired sizes, and also charges a 50% duty on everything imported. So, *High Drama* smuggled two outboard motors as deck cargo. When we arrived, the two boats had a party for us. They filled a basket with beer and cheeses and strange snacks, all of which were produced in Ecuador. Their thanks was a wonderful arrival treat.

While we enjoyed the great sail from Panama, our 13-year-old auto helm did not. It failed about half way down here so we ended up hand steering for several hundred miles. Most cruisers agree that steering by hand gets very old very fast. We were fortunate that there were 4 of us to trade off in the late night watches. Also, while we were at sea we received an email indicating that Ann’s dad, Mac Lyon had a health problem. We believe that once we finally take off from the South American continent air travel will be a matter of weeks away from us. When we arrived in Salinas we caught a flight to Los Angeles and squeezed in a quick visit to Mac, my mother, our kids, and a few friends in

Phoenix. Ideally our broken auto helm would have been replaced while we were gone, but that was not in the cards.

While Jeff and Ann were in the USA, Mike and Stacy visited Peru and the ancient Inca ruins at Machu Picchu. Mike had longed to visit this place and was not disappointed. The ruins were up on mountains at 8000 feet of elevation. Eerie, awesome, quiet, and beautiful are terms Mike used to describe this place.

In the few days since we have been back in Salinas, there has been a temporary addition to **High Drama's** crew. Talley, the rust colored cat from our starboard side neighbor (**Talisman**) has adopted us. The beast serves as a surrogate daughter or surrogate granddaughter for **High Drama's** female crew. In short, this poor cat is smothered with maternal love and affection constantly when she is aboard. Talley trained Mike to pull us closer to **Talisman** when she wants to eat or do other business. The beast almost always makes the 8-foot leap between boats without assistance, but now that she has Mike to help, she just sits there and cries until he valiantly comes to her assistance. Once recently, however, she missed. According to Peter and Ginny on **Talisman**, Talley has a fairly significant history of misses!



Stacy comforts Talley (and vice versa) after a missed jump between boats.

12 Royal Air Force Infantry soldiers man our new neighbor portside, **Lord Portal**, a British boat. (Apparently the RAF has infantry permanently attached to it to secure landing areas.) This regiment is sailing **Lord Portal** around the world in one-month legs. The Queen owns 8 sailboats built for the first Whitbread race back in 1973 that the British military forces use. The current crew sailed up from Chile. One evening there was a benefit fashion show put on by the yacht club. Although the function was for women only, the RAF Infantry Regiment landed in full force and of course, ended up in the pool. These fellows make local news whenever they go ashore. They attack bars with the same vigor as a landing zone, and several bars in Salinas have had to close early after they visited, because the RAF drank all the beer. We can hardly wait until Monday when the current sea weary crew leaves and a fresh crew arrives!



RAF Infantry Regiment aboard *Lord Portal*

The Puerto Lucia Yacht Club is a fairly new facility. Although we don't have a slip, we are moored with our bow to a sea wall, and our stern tied to mooring cans. The flavor here is distinctly international as a stopping point for a few boats headed for the Pacific. There is a French yacht, one from Belgium, two from Germany, one from Italy, and four US flagged vessels. We delivered an outboard to **Roger Henry**, a boat owned by Alvah and Diana Simon. These folks make their living at sea publishing articles about their adventures. Alvah wrote a book called **North to the Night** about their trip to the Arctic Circle in **Roger Henry**. The book is gripping and fascinating story and we highly recommend it for your late night reading.



Boats moored to seawall



Pool at Puerto Lucia Yacht Club



Stacy and Ann working out at Puerto Lucia



Getting a tow from Bob & Robin on *Misty Dawn*

We always welcome hearing from you. Please email us often and let us hear what is new. We don't hear much about what "W" is up to, or whether "Bill" is still in the news, or how the Navy came out after sinking the Japanese fishing boat, or what the weather is like in Minneapolis or Phoenix. **But please don't send our email back to us.** We receive email at sea by high frequency radio and it cannot tolerate much text and no pictures. We receive at 1200 baud, which is quite slow, but adequate for a one to two page email. Please email news to us at , or at sea. As always, please send lawyer jokes, photos, and religious material to us at that we check when we are on land.

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