



Log #18 - When things go Pear-shaped, or Doing an oil change in reverse!

Last we heard from our intrepid sailors, Michael and Suzan had joined the ARC World fleet for Leg #2 of the **Round the World** adventure, experienced the ultimate sailor's metamorphosis of becoming a "Shellback", while learning "New English".

Say Hello and Goodbye

We arrived in Puerto Lucia very early in morning and had to "hove to" for several hours before approaching the harbor entrance as the area is not particularly well marked and full of hazards that should only be negotiated in daylight. "Hove to" means to set one sail in the opposite direction (across) from another with the attempt to have one sail drive you backwards while the other pushes you forward. The net effect is hopefully you will stay in the same place without anchoring, but you stay abaft of the seas. This a useful technique if you have some wind to "drive" the boat. No wind... and all you accomplish is staying abaft the seas... and this means that the seas are hitting you on the side and you rolling back and forth (a.k.a lying-a-hull). Well, three hours of excessive rolling combined with a massive tropical down-pour we were ready for the harbor.... and the bar. Our first ARC World passage completed! We were giddy with joy and of course had a celebration but also to wish Steve and Deb goodbye as they would be returning to another boat in the ARC. It has been delightful having them on board and have told them that they are welcomed back at any time. By the way, the "Hove To" technique should never be attempted while seated at the bar.



Den and Steve leaving by dinghy

And you papers Ma'am?

Every country's, and for that matter, every port's entrance procedure is a little different. In this case, a early morning check-in with the Harbor Master's office (not to be confused with the Port Captain) put us on the list to be visited later in the day by the various agencies. We were allowed to leave the boat but not the Puerto Lucia Yacht Club compound. So while enjoying an afternoon drink on the bar patio overlooking the pool, we spied that there was someone on the boat. So we rushed to the dinghy and jumped in to reach the boat. As we approached MaaMa there stood 5 representatives of the various Ecuadorian government branches in their neat uniforms all gathered on the back swim step and trying to keep their shoes out of the water. As we were not on board, they did not have permission to go above, so they were essentially perched on the 3 foot wide "porch". A very funny sight as the boat is bobbing up and down and they are clinging to the stern transom awaiting permission to go on deck... darn, where is that camera when you need it!

Navy was well represented by an officer in his full summer whites and navy issued black patent leather deck shoes, which of course will leave lots of marks on MaaMa's topsides. National Police, Immigration and Customs each had their respective khaki uniforms with the regulation boots while the Port Captain had to settle for a dapper polo pique shirt, jeans and running shoes. (Darn - no metals and no scrambled eggs on the hat for this guy) but as he was the one who spoke the best english, he directed the show. To Michael's chagrin I offered drinks all around which included Mi-



Ecuadorian officials - The next day

One down! The other 'Rescue Boat' just behind ... very simple wood boats, but easy to repair. It was back in service within a week

Michael's precious collection of ice cubes.

A little hospitality helped smooth the

way as our Zarpe from Panama showed that we only had 2 people on board and we are arrived with 4.

Oops, I had forgotten to add Steve and Deb prior to leaving Panama. So.... with the explanation that they had been on another boat from the rally going into Panama and came to help us (it was obvious that we needed help, what with the bandage still on Michael's finger) Immigration accepted the snafu and allowed them into the country. Phew, another country's pokey narrowly averted. They don't just take the stowaways, they take the Captain too... poor Michael would have been all alone... and not knowing where I hid the credit card.

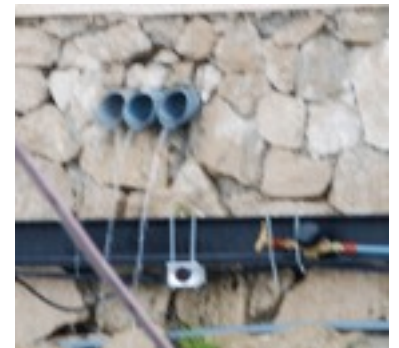
Rescue Boat Sinks

We awoke the following morning to find that the torrential downpour of the night before had swamped one of the two near coastal "rescue boats" anchored just behind us. Just the top foot of the coach roof still bobbing above the water. A number of small dinghies came out to see if they could move the newest underwater obstacle.... not a chance, and then the marina work boat managed to foul its prop. It is a literal three ring circus out here... even the local harbor tour boat has come by to gawk. One down, one to go.

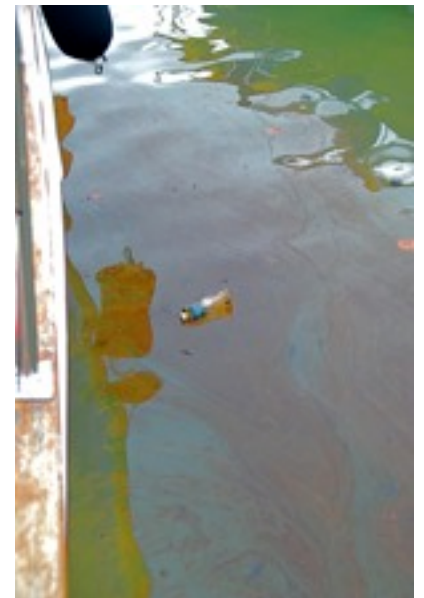
The facilities at the yacht club in La Libertad Ecuador are lovely. A well design and well constructed modern facility with lots of tile and vegetation. Nothing is lacking but a real internet connection. They have only a few slips there which got snapped up by those who arrived first, so those of us who dallied in the islands (Las Perlas) on the way here had to settle for the "wall"... a rock jetty of sorts with a steel beam running along the top. With bow in and stern tied to 2 mooring buoys and about 2 and half feet of water under the keel, we swayed and lurched with the tidal surge. Which is substantial. We all had fenders out to cushion the bump with the boat next to us, but there is no fender for the bow and rock wall. We draped an electrical cord over the bow to the newly installed plug on the wall that would make any IBEW electrician weep from sadness - but this is Ecuador and we were happy to have power. We could only wonder how "hot" the marina was. Hot means that there is stray electrical current in the water which create electrolysis with dissimilar metals literally melting it and then boats sink! We were later to find out that there had been no ground wire to earth which means that someone could have been electrocuted.

Would that be SAE 30 weight?

We learned that the Yacht Club had been built on the grounds of an abandoned oil refinery. Seems that there was still quite a bit of the unrefined product lurking in the soil below. While 11 months of the year, the surrounding waters are calm and pristine, it seems that February was the one month of the year when the winds shift combined with a large tidal surge, a result of a "Spring" tide and a lunar eclipse forces massive amounts of crude oil to the surface... coating everything in the sight... so we learned what it is like to be in an oil spill and its definitely "icky". Everything from lines, dinghy and the boat are filthy - gee, we were real happy to have our brand new paint job covered



Water runoff over the shore power connection!



Hard to photograph the oil and filth in the water - It coated everything!

in thick sticky oil that didn't want to come off. The rocks and beaches also have the mess and the smell is not nice. The marina offered to clean our mooring lines and the boat, but the question is how to get it done and get out of port clean. We were provided with 'sacrificial warps' of polypropylene to tie up with so that our own lines wouldn't be fouled.

How to clear the bar! This is when things were really going "pear-shaped".

Just yell out "There's a boat on the rocks" and everyone races to the edge of the patio to look over the wall to see which boat it is... It just happened to be MaaMa! And Michael was the one yelling. It seems that the mooring anchors for the aft buoys weren't large enough for MaaMa and the provided lines were snapping. MaaMa weighs 54,000 pounds and she can stress any standard 5/8" line, but if it polypropylene, the lines fail within hours... so onto the 7/8" lines, and doubled up at that. We have a whole new appreciation for "line fatigue". With the creeping buoys, and finding MaaMa on the rocks we raced to the boat (via the dinghy) started the engine and put her in reverse. We then set about to lay out stern anchor ... a 40-pound anchor with 50 feet of chain and then several hundred feet of 'rode' (rope). Two fellow rally participants, Don from Harmonie, a US boat, and Volker from Anna Mare, a German boat, helped us to set the anchor and then we took the rode to the primary winch and winched ourselves out from the rock wall. With that anchor set up, we weren't going to have a problem again. Our other option was to drop lines and go out of the harbor and anchor, only problem was it dark (about 9PM) and at low tide, navigating through a tight marina could be quite dangerous. We felt that the stern anchor was the best choice. Boy, was I impressed when digging into the aft lazarette to pull line, that Michael had thought of everything and had 300 feet of rode prepared with the special thimbles for attachment and shackles. Preparation can save your bacon. We wouldn't know what damage has been done to MaaMa until we haul her out or I went diving... but with the fouled waters, there was no way I am going in... Merck hadn't yet developed the vaccine for these fouled waters. As we weren't taking on water, we elected to relaxed. By the way, in order to move the buoys, it requires a diver to attach a hook to the block of concrete resting on the bottom. The divers only wear a mask and use a snorkel and they do this day after day in these waters!

The following day we left the rock mooring to go to the fuel dock. As foreigners, you must negotiate for fuel and then it is delivered under a special contract from the government. Wednesday was to be the day that fuel would be delivered and fortunately we were first in line!

The previous day, two of the rally yachts were tied to the fuel dock to obtain their port clearance, and their combined weight with the tidal surge racing through the breakwater put so much stress on the 'I' beams that were securing the fuel dock to the wall, that one of the 'I' beams broke in two. However, the marina personnel jump into action and it was welded together in a matter of hours. So our turn... and this time just a single boat. Well the fuel hadn't gotten out of the tanker yet, so we had to wait... and while waiting, the combination of tidal surge, wind and current got the 27 tons of MaaMa to lurch forward 3 feet and then back three feet, to the side 3 feet and back to the dock. We



Tight quarters along the wall



The wall off the bow - about 10 feet of tide which must be accounted for in the mooring lines



Diver attaching cable to adjust mooring buoys The water is indeed brown and the diver only wears a mack and snorkel

were tied to the dock with 1" lines which were be stressed so much that under load they became 1/2" lines. Michael advised crew and dock personnel to be sure to stand clear of the lines as if one "parts" it will be an instant failure and could take someone's leg or arm off! Well indeed another section in the now repaired beam broke. Yikes! We had just been delivered 2 new long 1 1/4" lines for our return to the mooring spot, so we jumped up and took our lines to secure the dock to the adjacent concrete pier to prevent any further damage. Without those lines holding the dock in place, the surge would have for sure ripped the other beam from its mooring and the dock's fuel connections would likely have gone with it too! The rally boats were going to need fuel and so we had to help... and help right then. By the way the prices we have paid for fuel along the way have ranged from \$3.25 in the US to as much as \$5.30 in Costa Rica. The price of fuel in Ecuador? 93 cents a gallon plus tax of 13% which takes it to \$1.05.

The following morning at 9AM, tuning into ARC World Control radio net, the rally yacht owners were advised that any and all fouled lines should be delivered to the fuel dock that day, but what to do if you still need those lines to keep yourself secured until we leave - there is a scheduling problem here! Having heard this, Michael inquired as to "Where can we leave the boats to have them cleaned". Reply from World Control was to "Stand by".

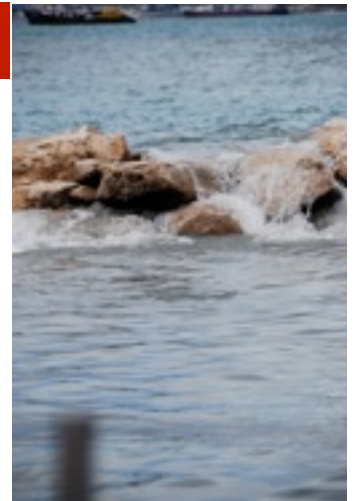
New Crew Arrives

We were thrilled to welcome Jim and Kristi Moore from Seattle on-board for the passage to the Galapagos and a few days of sightseeing in Ecuador. We took a car and driver to Guayaquil to pick them up. Our joy was further increased with the arrival of 200 pounds of supplies and boat parts that they brought with them from Seattle. Having been in the Peace Corp they understood how important goods from home were and made no objection to being *sherpas*. Good thing we hired a large van to fit in all the boxes and fortunately with Kristi's massive mileage on airlines, she managed to get all this stuff through without major excessive baggage charges. Had the stuff be shipped we would never have seen it, but more on that in a future log.

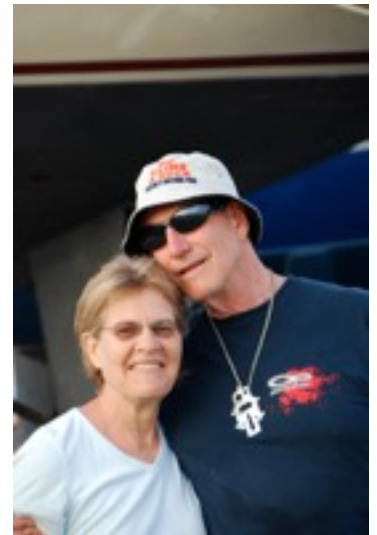
MaaMa flies

While Michael, Jim and Kristi went on a tour of the surrounding area, I prepared and maneuvered MaaMa to the travel lift and got her out of the water. We had been having problems with the brand new navigation system since we left Seattle and Simrad, the manufacturer of the equipment, decided that we needed a new transducer and water speed indicator, which require removal of the existing instruments. As they mount and protrude through the hull... read hole in the water... So we had to haul the boat out (at our expense, even though this was 'warranty work') to exchange the equipment. This having been the fifth port for repair of Simrad equipment we weren't too please. While the local Simrad dealer had the underwater parts, the replacement "brain" was still in Customs, but that is another story.

Hauling out is always a fretful experience as you never know what might happen and MaaMa has a lot of equipment and rigging. Just getting into the narrow "travel lift slot" is difficult... what with the tidal surge and windage combined with concrete piers that are precariously above the rail, it is difficult



This may not look like much, but that is the wall the "protects" the harbor!



Jim & Kristi Moore - Jim is already wearing the "boat key"!



A tight fit and lots to hit

to fend yourself off or keep the boat from getting damaged. You can well imagine my relief when the travel lift bridle was finally under MaaMa and a bit of lift applied to steady her in the water. Because of our size, we usually have to drop the back stays - those 2 precious steel cable wires that hold the mast in place. In order to drop those, you need to apply some other form of aft tension to mast... So I used the main halyard lashed to the boom gallows and sucked it tight with the winch.... then removed the large clevis pins and lash the loose backstay cables forward. Then it was time to set MaaMa on the "hard".

Then the problem becomes getting MaaMa clear of the travel lift. When she is in the water, the travel lift's top cross beams clears all equipment, but on the *hard* all that equipment rises up to about the same level of the cross beam. So off comes the wind generator and the various antennas. The good news is that with some ingenuity the marina crew could raise the travel lift in order to clear the radar by a good half inch - I really didn't want to take that off too. So three days in the air (requiring a ladder to get onto MaaMa), we saw the rock damage - just paint scrapes as MaaMa is tough (and has 3/4 inch steel plating at the vulnerable points - and replaced the thru-hulls... but not quickly enough to make the start of Leg #3 with the rest of the fleet.

The Fleet leaves

The start of the next leg was indeed colorful and we took lots of pictures. We would be behind them, but not far. So next time, our sailors will be testing Darwin's theory of "Survival of the Fittest" and his evolution of the species.

Fair Winds ☺), Suzan and Michael

Start of Leg 3 - The Fleet leaves port



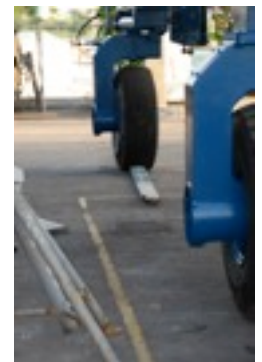
Log # 18 - Ecuador



That's a lot of stuff up in the air!



The radar dome (in the middle) clears by 1/2 inch



Raising the travel lift - the Ecuadorian Way



Ecuadorian children are so friendly and handsome



Lots of surfing - good waves!



The local chandlery a.k.a. marine hardware store



Now that's a sand castle!



Ecuador is very poor - colorful typical home



Busy streets of Guayaquil



Sundial



Log # 18 - Ecuador



The seaside - the weekend getaway for the wealthy of industrial Guayaquil

Left -typical roadside cafes