

The Micronesia Compendium

A Compilation of Guidebook References and Cruising Reports

Covering the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau



IMPORTANT: USE ALL INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT AT YOUR OWN RISK!!

Rev 2016.4 – August 20, 2016

We welcome updates to this guide!
(especially for places we have no cruiser information on)

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The current home of the official copy of this document is <http://svsgogypaws.com/files/>

If you found it posted elsewhere, there might be an updated copy at svsgogypaws.com.

Revision Log

Many thanks to all who have contributed over the years!!

Rev	Date	Notes
A.0	28-Oct-2013	Initial version, still very rough at this point!!
A.1	17-Nov-2013	Moved some "outer atolls" around. Added some stuff gleaned from the RCC Pilotage Foundation. I am still not clear where and who each of the outer atolls that other cruisers have mentioned actually fall in location and jurisdiction. I will resolve this in the next edition.
A.2	26-Jan-2014	More on Pohnpei and Kosrae, as we prepare to go there, plus Carina's update on Lukunor.
A.3	14-Feb-2014	Added Downtime, Savannah's Pohnpei, Swingin' on a Star and Carina. Broke the "between major islands" sections into separate sections.
A.4	15-Feb-2014	Brickhouse Inputs on West Fayu, Elato, Olimarao, and Lorelei inputs on Losap
A.5	17-Feb-2014	Added section on Traditional Navigation on the Caroline Islands. Added bits from US Sailing Directions (Pub 126). Added Savannah's notes on out islands and Yap.
A.6	20-Feb-2014	More info from Brickhouse and Kokomo
A.7	16-Mar-2014	Brickhouse updates on Oroluk and Palau. Soggy Paws useful phone numbers in Pohnpei. La Gitana's inputs on Kapinga and Nukuoro. Some older info on Pohnpei from Carina. Lorelei's notes on diving in Yap.
A.8	21-Apr-2014	Kokomo, La Gitana, and Soggy Paws reports on Puluwat, Kokomo on Woleai, updates on Chuuk by Soggy Paws
A.9	07-Jun-2014	Soggy Paws reports on Woleai and Ulithi. Brick House on Peleliu, Savannah on Palau
A.10	??	Palau Cell Phone Notes from Soggy Paws
B.1	18-Feb-2015	Helen Reef Notes from Noonsite/Vaarwell
B.2	28-Dec-2015	Pohnpei Update from Changing Spots. Helen Reef and Palau updates from Sloepmouche. Soggy Paws account sailing from Palau to Philippines, and several inter-island passage notes
B.3	29-Dec-2015	Kosrae Update from Changing Spots.
2016.1	25-January-2016	Kosrae Update from Ariel IV.
2016.2	23-Feb-2016	EJII account of stopping Kapinga in 2014 on their way to the Solomons. Carina update on email addresses in Palau. Changing Spots updates on Kosrae and Yap
2016.3	04-Mar-2016	Various updates from Dream Away
2016.4	20-Aug-2016	Updates on Helen Reef and 2016 updates from Carina and Soggy Paws on Palau

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1 Introduction

The original Compendium for the Tuamotus in French Polynesia started out as a way for s/v Soggy Paws and a few friends to organize notes and various internet sources on the Tuamotus, prior to our cruise there in Spring of 2010. Later, it became a way for us to pass on what we've learned while cruising the Tuamotus in 2010 and 2011. Now the idea has migrated with Soggy Paws, from the Tuamotus, to the Marquesas, to the Societies, Hawaii, the Cooks and Samoas, Tonga, Fiji, the islands between Fiji and the Marshall Islands, the Marshall Islands, and now the Micronesia.

If you haven't yet found our other 'Compendiums', they're available online at <http://svsoggyypaws.com/files/>

This is not intended to replace the guidebooks or charts, but to supplement out-of-date guides with recent cruiser first-hand reports, and fill in places that the guides don't cover.

To compile this 'compendium', we have used all sources at our disposal, including websites, blogs, emails, and our own experience. We always try to indicate the source of our information, and the approximate time frame.

If your information is included in this guide, and you object to its inclusion, please just email us, and we'll remove it. But this is a non-commercial venture mainly to help cruisers from all of our collective experiences.

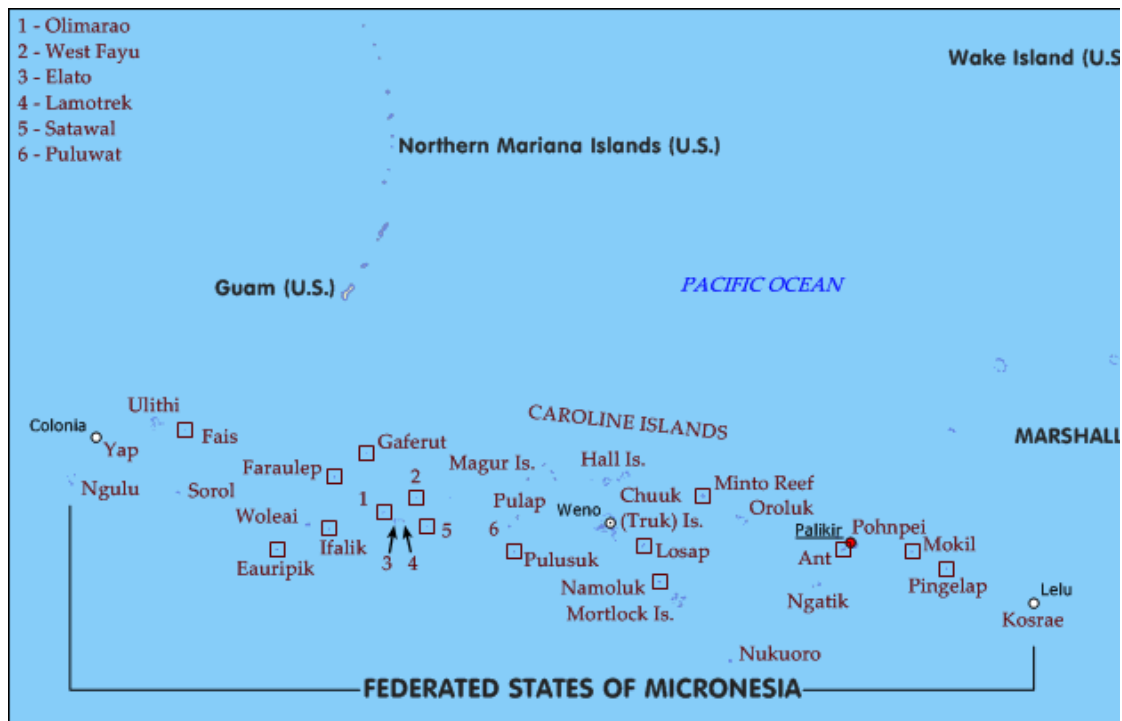
1.1 *Organization of the Guide*

This guide is loosely organized from the perspective of a cruiser cruising west from the Marshall Islands toward Palau.

1.2 *Overview of the Area*

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) are Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk (formerly Truk) and Yap, stretching over a vast expanse of Pacific Ocean just north of the equator. We have included Palau in this "Micronesia" guide.

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: The FSM is divided into four states, based on ancient kingdoms, now governed from Pohnpei. Local government and authorities exist for each state and it is necessary to clear through formalities when transiting between them. Ports of entry are limited, the active ones being; At the eastern end of the chain, Kosrae State - Lelu Harbour and Okat Harbour, Pohnpei State - Kolonia Harbour, Chuuk State - Weno Harbour, and at the western end of the chain, Yap State - Colonia Harbour.



Geographically, these four small states are part of the Caroline Islands, consisting between them of over 600 islands, of which only 65 are inhabited. Also part of Chuuk state are the isolated Mortlocks, Hall Islands and Western Islands.

Sloepmouche - July 2012: Looking back at our six months in the FSM, we are very glad we spent enough time in Micronesia, as the atolls have lots to offer.

Each state has a different feel and personality and the outer atolls have their own flavor and we enjoyed them all. FSM-ers generally speak very good English, as this is taught as their common language among the different islanders.

As far as the best time to visit Micronesia, here is what we learned from cruisers who crossed Micronesia. The ones who traveled across in Oct.-Nov. experienced fluky conditions from no wind to numerous squalls (30-50kn) from all directions. They ended up motoring a lot, sometimes against the wind and seas. They were quite frustrated and did not enjoy the passage much. The cruisers who waited until after Christmas got steady conditions and more reliable trade winds. The cruisers like us, who took their time, started experiencing milder trade winds or no winds starting about May. We ended up using the iron sail a lot but we had nice conditions while visiting the atolls.

The GRIB gods were kind to us and were generally accurate during this Jan.-July 2012. We seemed to have the universe on our side as so many times we grabbed a two or three day nice weather window, hopping to the next atoll, arriving just in time to be safely anchored when the rain cells and squally weather or the westerlies set in for a few days.

Nicest officials to check-in/out and most painless: Yap. Worst officials: Chuuk.

We originally planned to visit Palau before continuing to the Philippines, but we took longer to explore the FSM (no regrets) so we decided to postpone our discovery of Palau for next year when we have enough time. We signed up for the Davao to Morotai branch of the Sail Indonesia

Rally in September since it gives us a perfect opportunity to discover a new area of Indonesia. August is a good time to be in Davao, Philippines as they have big festivities (parades, food tasting and pageants). The culture and food of the Philippines are calling us!

1.3 Time Zone

Palau, UTC +9

Yap, Chuuk, UTC +10.

Pohnpei, Kosrae, UTC +11

Marshall Islands, UTC +12

1.4 Weather In This Area

1.4.1 General Weather Conditions

Soggy Paws – Sailing West Across Micronesia – Mar-July 2014: We left Pohnpei in early March and took the southern route across Micronesia. We had generally good conditions, but light to almost non-existent Easterly winds most of the time. We motored a lot. General, east of Chuuk you don't have too many worries about typhoons or westerly winds (though in 2015, Majuro had several bouts of strong westerlies from passing lows during the summer season).

The people in Chuuk say that their only export from Chuuk are typhoons. Most of the typhoons seemed to form just west of Chuuk and proceed west from there, curving more NW later on. The later in the year (Oct-Dec) the typhoons tend to curve less, and so Palau and the Marianas and northern Philippines are more at risk for typhoons.

Soggy Paws - April 2014: We had very light winds for about 3 weeks in the latter half of April. We also had almost 10 days of westerlies (very light, fortunately). So we waited at Woleai until the first breath of a northeast wind. The forecast promised winds from ENE starting out at 15 knots and dropping off to 10 knots.

Soggy Paws – Palau – July 2014: We had originally planned to stay in Palau until September, but the weather in the last month has really been poor. We haven't had one chance in 4-5 weeks to get out and go diving. The "Monsoon Winds" have arrived, and the Monsoon Trough has sat over Palau for weeks, bringing SW winds, rain and squally weather. The monsoon wind blows primarily from the SW--directly on the best part of the reef.

US Sailing Directions: (Includes Guam): **Rain:** Frequent rain occurs in all months in the East Caroline Islands. The Truk Islands average 3,200mm annually with a maximum of 270mm per month occurring in July and August, and a minimum of 135mm in January. January, February, and March show average rainfall somewhat under 255mm per month. Thunderstorms are quite common between May and October. In the Pohnpei Island and Kosrae Island area, rainfall averages 240 to 510mm per month throughout the year.

Much rain occurs throughout the year in the West Caroline Islands, but there is a definite increase between May and October. Thunderstorms are fairly common from June to November.

Rain occurs at all seasons in the Palau Island area, but is at a minimum during the period of the Northeast Monsoon. Squally conditions appear to occur more frequently from November to January, as the Northeast Monsoon is gradually established against the variable S to E drift of

preceding months. Thunderstorms are rare from January to April, and fairly common from May through August.

At Palau Island, 4,400mm of rain normally occurs annually, with 510mm in July and slightly over 150mm in March. Rainfall is somewhat lighter over the open sea. Precipitation occurs on about 50 per cent of the days from February through April, and on approximately 75 per cent during July through September. The heaviest rains occur during the early morning with a secondary maximum soon after sunset.

Wind: The Caroline Islands are under the influence of the doldrum's belt, from June through November. During this period, heavy rains, thunderstorms, and violent squalls will sometimes offer hazards. Cumulus and cumulonimbus clouds with ceilings sometimes reduced to 152 to 305m for short periods, poor visibility, lighting, and confused seas accompany the more intense of these storms. Most are of short duration and seldom cover an area larger than 20 or 25 miles in diameter. The storms usually move from E to W and occur most frequently at 0600.

The East Caroline Islands are swept by the Northeast Trades. East, NE, or E winds blow almost constantly from December through April. The average rate is 8 knots. From May until December, E to SE winds increase in frequency and predominate in September through November, with an average rate of 5 knots. Averages were computed from land station records; velocities are higher over the open sea. Gales rarely occur. Over the open sea, winds are usually strongest about 0300 and lightest about 1400.

In the Truk Group, the Northeast Trades are very steady, between November and June; 85 per cent of the winds blow from NNE to E directions. By July, however, the indraft of the summer monsoon carries E to S winds from this area into Asiatic waters; thereafter through October, the trade winds are overshadowed by various S to W breezes, with an average 13 per cent of calms.

In the Ponape Island area, the Northeast Trades predominate at all seasons of the year, and blow with great steadiness over the N part of the area, between November and April. Winds are more variable and are marked by occasional shifts to SE and S between July and November, although winds still predominate.

The West Caroline Islands, including the Republic of Palau, and the Mariana Islands come under the influence of the monsoons and trades with NE winds in the northern winter and winds between E and SE in the summer. As these groups lie on the E margin of the monsoon belt, the Northeast Trades and the Northeast Monsoons merge and create winds averaging 12 to 14 knots in the open sea in the northern winter and early spring. In May, the winds over this section diminish in force and blow mostly from the NE; at this time, the Southwest Monsoon begins to be felt in the vicinity of the Republic of Palau.

In summer and early autumn, the Southwest Monsoon prevails in the vicinity of and N of the Republic of Palau, but S winds predominate in the vicinity of the Admiralty Islands. In October and November, the NE winds become established over the whole area. Winds of 12 to 16 knots are experienced during the winter months.

In the Yap Islands area, NE to ENE winds prevail from November to June, when the trades are reinforced in the cooler months by the Northeast Monsoon. The Southwest Monsoon occurs between July and October, but is less pronounced at Waleae and Lamotrek, where at that season the winds are frequently from the SE as from the SW.

In the Palau Islands area, the Northeast Monsoon is usually well established from December to April, though its appearance is often advanced or delayed by as much as a month. The Southwest Monsoon occurs from the latter part of July to about the middle of October, but E winds often occur. The winds are variable during the remaining parts of the year.

Gales seldom occur in the East Caroline Islands. Gales occur occasionally in the areas N of Palau and Guam, chiefly in winter, due to the strengthening of the Northeast Monsoon and the Northeast Trades. Sometimes, however, they occur at other seasons in connection with typhoons.

Noonsite: The islands are under the influence of the NE trade winds, which blow between October and May. January to March is the dry season, while rainfall can be heavy in the summer months. The SW monsoon lasts from June to September, when there are frequent periods of calm. Strong SW gales can occur during August and September. They appear to be caused by the typhoons which are bred in this region but usually move away from the islands. Occasionally the islands are affected by typhoons. Although typhoons can occur at any time of the year, the period 1 December to 30 April may be regarded as relatively safe. In some years, the typhoon season may start early, or last longer than usual, so the weather should be watched carefully at all times. Guam has the best forecasts for the area.

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: The typhoon season runs from June/July to November, but out of season typhoons are not uncommon. The lowest incidence occurs around January and February, at which time the islands are firmly settled in the NE trades, the weather dry and the sailing wonderful. It would probably be unadvisable to be in the islands during the typhoon season as some of the most powerful storms in the world develop in the area.

1.4.2 Weather Sources – With Onboard Email/SSB

Soggy Paws - 2013: In our transit through this area, what we used most of the time for watching the weather were 6 files (via the free service Saildocs):

Text forecasts:

send <http://www.prh.noaa.gov/data/GUM/AFDPQ> (Area Discussion from Guam)
send <http://www.prh.noaa.gov/data/GUM/SIMGUM> (Satellite Interpretation Msg)

Keep a close eye on the date/time stamp on the Guam area discussion report. Sometimes it doesn't get updated for a day or two. When that happened, I used this URL:

Send <ftp://tgftp.nws.noaa.gov/data/raw/fx/fxpq60.pgum.afd.pq.txt>

optional:

send FZPN40.PHFO
send pmz181
<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/data/GUM/CWFPQ1> (coastal waters forecast for E Micronesia)
<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/data/GUM/CWFPQ2> (coastal waters forecast for W Micronesia)

When a cyclone is in the area, the Joint Typhoon Warning Center will start mentioning it here:

send <http://www.usno.navy.mil/NOOC/nmfc-ph/RSS/jtwc/ab/abpweb.txt>.

Once they start tracking and forecasting, these two are useful. Change the number at the end to correspond to the correct one from the JTWC overview.

send <http://weather.noaa.gov/pub/data/raw/wd/wdpm31.pgtw..txt> (Discussion)
send <http://weather.noaa.gov/pub/data/raw/wt/wtpn31.pgtw..txt> (Fcst Track)

A spot forecast for the location we were in—every 6 hours for 10 days

send spot:07.1N,171.3E|10,6|PRMSL,WIND,WAVES,RAIN,LFTX

A 'local' GRIB file that gave a fairly detailed forecast for a reasonably small area for about 5 days, and included sea state information

send GFS:6N,10N,173E,165E|.5,.5|0,6..144|PRMSL,WIND,HTSGW,WVDIR,RAIN

A 'wide range' GRIB that watched conditions approaching us. The area we request while in transit was a pretty wide area on a 3x3 grid, for the next 10 days. This is about a 25K GRIB file. This provided a decent long range forecast.

send GFS:0N,30N,160E,175W|3,3|0,12..240|PRMSL,WIND,RAIN

During times of tropical activity, we also found these sources useful for additional perspective

send <http://www.usno.navy.mil/NOOC/nmfc-ph/RSS/jtwc/ab/abpweb.txt>

Also we requested these two products via Sailmail/Winlink. These give the forecast track, wind radii, etc.

wtpq31.pgum

wtpn31.pgtw

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: Weatherfaxes are essential, but the surface pressure analyses can be difficult to interpret unless tracking a typhoon. The Pacific Streamline Analyses from Hawaii are very helpful.

Hawaii broadcasts on 9982.5kHz, 11090.0kHz, 16135.0kHz, 23331.5kHz.

Australian and Japanese faxes are also helpful. Australia broadcasts on 5100.0kHz, 11030.0kHz, 13920.0kHz, 20469.0kHz, 5755.0kHz, 7535.0kHz, 10555.0kHz, 15615.0kHz, 18060.0kHz and Japan on 3622.5kHz, 7305.0kHz, 13597.0kHz, 18220.0kHz.

Storm warnings included with the US time signals from Hawaii on 5kHz, 10kHz and 15kHz can also help.

Hawaii Weather Faxes - North Western Pacific (Local times are +11)

UTC	Local	Product	Coverage Area
1724	0424	SIGNIFICANT CLOUD FEATURES	30S - 50N, 110W - 160E
1755	0455	STREAMLINE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1815	0515	SURFACE ANALYSIS	EQ - 50N, 110W - 130E
1835	0535	EAST PAC GOES IR SATELLITE	05S - 55N, 110W - 155E
1901	0601	24HR SURFACE FORECAST	30S - 50N, 110W - 130E
1914	0614	48HR SURFACE FORECAST	30S - 50N, 110W - 130E
1927	0624	72HR SURFACE FORECAST	30S - 50N, 110W - 130E

1940	0640	WIND/WAVE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1953	0653	24HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
2130	0830	SURFACE ANALYSIS (NW PACIFIC)	20N - 70N, 175W - 135E
2302	1002	48HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
2315	1015	72HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
2341	1041	24HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
2354	1054	STREAMLINE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
0014	1114	SURFACE ANALYSIS	EQ - 50N, 110W - 130E
0034	1135	EAST PAC GOES IR SATELLITE	05S - 55N, 110W - 155E
0524	1624	SIGNIFICANT CLOUD FEATURES	30S - 50N, 110W - 160E
0555	1655	STREAMLINE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
0615	1715	SURFACE ANALYSIS	EQ - 50N, 110W - 130E
0635	1735	EAST PAC GOES IR SATELLITE	05S - 55N, 110W - 155E
0701	1801	24HR SURFACE FORECAST	30S - 50N, 110W - 130E
0714	1814	48HR SURFACE FORECAST	30S - 50N, 110W - 130E
0727	1824	72HR SURFACE FORECAST	30S - 50N, 110W - 130E
0740	1840	WIND/WAVE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
0753	1853	24HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
0930	2030	SURFACE ANALYSIS (NW PACIFIC)	20N - 70N, 175W - 135E
1102	2202	48HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1115	2215	72HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1141	2241	24HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1154	2254	STREAMLINE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1234	2334	EAST PAC GOES IR SATELLITE	05S - 55N, 110W - 155E

Weatherfax On the Web

The full Hawaii schedule is available as a text email via Saildocs or online at <http://weather.noaa.gov/pub/fax/hfhi.txt>

The Streamline is available at this URL: <http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/stream.gif>

And the Significant Cloud Features here: <http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/neph.gif>

The Sat Photo is here: http://aviationweather.gov/data/obs/sat/intl/ir_ICAO-F_bw.jpg

Getting the Hawaii Faxes via Email from Winlink or Iridium email

From s/v Whoosh: Here are the files I've been sampling using NOAA's FTP file server because I don't find these in the Winlink catalog and Sailmail won't offer graphics files/attachments.

This just boils down to sending an email to winlink with some special commands in the body of the email. They require opening up your file size limit (to 40K in some cases) but one or two are practical with a good connection, without using up all one's time. These are the same products available via wxfax IF propagation supports getting them in a viewable, usable form, and IF the timing fits the crews' other plans. So the FTP option is just another arrow to have in the quiver.

PJFB10.TIF - Pacific Wind/Wave Analysis 30S-30N, 110W-130E (Most Current)

PWFE11.TIF - 24HR Pacific Wind/Wave Forecast 30S-30N, 110W-130E (Most Current)

PJFI10.TIF - 48HR Pacific Wind/Wave Forecast 30S-30N, 110W-130E (Most Current)

PWFA11.TIF - Pacific Streamline Analysis 30S-30N, 110W-130E (Most Current)

QYFA99.TIF - Tropical Surface Analysis 40S-40N, 100W-120E (Most Current)

PBFA11.TIF - Significant Cloud Features 30S-50N, 110W-160E (Most Current)

PYFE11.TIF - 24HR Pacific Surface Forecast 30S-50N 110W-130E (Most Current)

PYFI11.TIF - 48HR Pacific Surface Forecast 30S-50N 110W-130E (Most Current)

To get any of these, you address an email to:

ftpmail@ftpmail.nws.noaa.gov

No subject; use the following format with one or more files listed:

```
open
cd fax
get PJFI10.TIF
quit
```

I'm finding that connecting to the Winlink Hawaii station must be done the evening before I do a morning weather report (in order to connect) - do either of you pull down winlink files in the early a.m.? For me, this means using some stale f'cast products (e.g. that streamline analysis) but doing so seems better than not having it altogether.

Note: To get any of these via internet directly, prefix the product above with

<http://weather.noaa.gov/pub/fax/>

If you have trouble viewing or downloading as TIF file, try changing the .TIF to .GIF

For an printable listing of current Pacific "Fax" products

<http://weather.noaa.gov/pub/fax/rfaxpac.txt>

1.4.3 Weather Sources – Voice

There is a guy from Guam who comes on at 9159.5 USB at 0900 Chuuk time (2300z) who does News and Weather in English. He basically reads out the text forecasts from Guam.

As of March 2014, there is also the "**Shellback Net**" on 8107.0 khz USB at 2200 Zulu (formerly 8161 at 2100Z). This net currently covers cruisers heading west across Micronesia, up to the Philippines, and down to the Solomons, as propagation permits. However, s/v Carina, who has

been the heart of this net for the past year (2013-2014) is heading west to Palau and the Philippines in 2014, so unless someone else volunteers to anchor this net, it might not be there when you arrive.

1.4.4 Weather Sources – Internet

The Mother of All Weather Websites

This site has nearly every useful weather picture/forecast for Micronesia on ONE PAGE! It is based in Guam and since most of Guam's weather comes from Micronesia, it's great for keeping track of the whole area.

<http://weather.jeffspiratescove.com/>

This site is somewhat bandwidth-heavy, but a good place to start, and you can bookmark individual links of you are normally bandwidth-stressed.

Guam "Discussion"

This is the best discussion of what's happening in Micronesia. The local Guam stuff is superfluous, but the overall discussion is good, and the Eastern Micronesia and Western Micronesia discussions tell you what's affecting our weather.

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/data/GUM/AFDPQ>

Local NOAA

Though there are U.S. weather service websites in the Marshall Islands (Majuro), Micronesia, and Guam, they don't offer a lot of useful information.

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/majuro/>

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/pohnpei/>

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/koror/>

NOAA Charts in Color from Hawaii

Though these are highlighted in color (much easier reading), they are small files, only about 30K each.

Current Streamline and Streamline Loop:

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/stream.gif>

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/streamloop.gif>

Surface Analysis:

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/npac.gif>

24, 48, 72 Hr SFC Prog for Entire Pacific

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/24hrsfcprog.gif>

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/48hrsfcprog.gif>

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/72hrsfcprog.gif>

Full List of Hawaii Marine Weather Products:

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/pages/marine.php>

Satellite Pictures

A really nice color-coded loop of the West Central North Pacific is this one:

<http://www.ssd.noaa.gov/mts/wcpac/flash-rb.html>

For slow connections here's the link I use for a small B/W Pacific Satellite:

http://aviationweather.gov/data/obs/sat/intl/ir_ICAO-F_bw.jpg

This picture is updated about every 15 minutes, and if you download and save successive files, you can get a fairly nice moving satellite picture.

Passage Weather

Note this is mostly 'repackaged GRIB' files

<http://www.passageweather.com>

1.4.5 Tropical Weather (June - October, sorta)

US Sailing Directions: Typhoons occur on the average of five times a month in the western North Pacific during the month of September. July, August, and October have almost as many. Two-thirds of all typhoons of this area occur during these four months. Typhoons are least frequent during the month of February. They average about one per month for the entire western North Pacific Ocean.

It appears that most of the typhoons of the western North Pacific form to the W of 150°E longitude. An occasional typhoon occurs farther to the E.

Typhoons rarely occur in the East Caroline Islands. Two or three a year, however, either invade, or pass slightly to the N of the West Caroline Islands. The normal typhoon path is S of Republic of Palau during the period from March to June, and again in November and December.

The portion of the West Caroline Islands, including the Republic of Palau and the Mariana Islands, which lies N of the parallel of 5°N is a region of great typhoon frequency.

Typhoons sometime occur in the Yap Island area, usually in May and June, or in the last three months of the year.

An average of two typhoons affect the Palau Island area annually. A considerable number originate in or near the West Caroline Islands. The diameters are small.

Noonsite: The SW monsoon lasts from June to September, when there are frequent periods of calm. Strong SW gales can occur during August and September. They appear to be caused by the typhoons which are bred in this region but usually move away from the islands.

Occasionally the islands are affected by typhoons. Although typhoons can occur at any time of the year, the period 1 December to 30 April may be regarded as relatively safe. In some years, the typhoon season may start early, or last longer than usual, so the weather should be watched carefully at all times. Guam has the best forecasts for the area.



Track of Super-Typhoon Haiyan Nov 2013

Originated near Chuuk, passed over Palau... see Palau section for yacht reports

The Joint Typhoon Warning Center is the best source of typhoon forecasting in the area.

<http://www.usno.navy.mil/JTWC/>

This site aggregates inputs from the various surrounding weather offices (primarily NOAA, the US Navy, and Japan) and produces a consolidated forecast.

1.5 Customs & Immigration

All yachts, whether in possession of a cruising permit or not, must proceed directly to a port of entry.

It is forbidden to stop at any islands before clearing in. Even after having cleared into one of the four member states, it is still necessary to complete formalities with Customs and Immigration on arrival in each individual state.

Yachts sailing to another state may stop at outer islands on the way, even if they do not belong to the state that has already been cleared into, as long as a coastal clearance is obtained in the port of departure.

Sloepmouche - January 2012: We entered the FSM in Kosrae. The entry formalities were painless with Customs and Immigration clearances made ashore in Tofol. I showed them our Cruising Permit and all was fine. When back at the Ace Hardware dock, I met the Quarantine officer who came onboard to check for restricted animals or plants. Alas for Zenne and Zwetke, pets are not allowed ashore, but are confined onboard. The only fee on arrival is \$25 USD for quarantine.

Swingin' on a Star - January 2009: We stopped at Kapingamarangi (on the equator between the Solomons and Pohnpei) on our way north to Pohnpei. We carried aid supplies for the villages on Kapingi and Nukuoro. But in the end, after the chief in Kapingi asked permission for us from Pohnpei via SSB, we were NOT allowed on shore nor were we allowed to deliver our aid packages.

1.5.1 Pre-Arrival Cruising Permit Required

A cruising permit should be obtained in advance of arrival. Several cruisers have reported that, in spite of applying well in advance of their planned arrival, no permit was issued.

It is now possible to download the application form from www.fsmbassyc.org/forms.htm and email the permit.

Fill out the form and sign it. Scan it. Add a crew list with passport numbers, issue date, expiry date, sign and scan. Add a copy of the boat registration papers. Add copies of the passports. Send it all to imhq@mail.fm

Alternatively, apply in writing to the Chief of Immigration, using that form.

If the permit has not arrived by the time you leave the last port, a copy of the original application should be sent to the above email address. An answer may be received within 48 hours. If on arrival in Micronesia you still do not have the cruising permit you have applied for, be sure to have proof that an application is in process, for example, a copy of the faxed application form.

There is no fee for the permit. The permit is typically issued for 60 days, but can be easily extended in Pohnpei. Any yacht arriving without the permit may be asked to leave after three days.

Soggy Paws - February 2014: Since someone had said to request the cruising permit well in advance, we requested ours by email in early December for a 30 January arrival. For some reason (we think because another boat was badgering them to reply to their emailed request), they issued our cruising permit the day we requested it, December 6.

Even though our request--both the email and the form--indicated our arrival date as 30 January, they started the cruising permit the day they issued it, on Dec 6, and for the standard 2 month period. So our Cruising Permit expired on Feb 5th. Due to the normal cruising delays, we arrived in Pohnpei (our first stop) on Feb 6th. They asked us why our permit was expired!!

Renewal was easy--we created a "request for extension" letter, explaining why we wanted an extension and for how long. We attached our current expired permit, and our original application (just in case), and dropped it off at Immigration in Palikir (our taxi driver knew where it was).

With a couple of phone calls, we were able to pick up our new cruising permit a few days later at the Immigration office "downtown". We asked for and received another 4 months.

Our clearance was easy--in spite of the expired cruising permit. We tied up at the Port Captain's dock, and a total of 5 officials came to visit within about an hour (one by one). It cost \$30 for Quarantine, and we were given a receipt on the spot. I think every officer wanted a copy of the cruising permit, so be ready for that.

Sloepmouche - January 2012: Before we entered the country, we applied by email to obtain the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Cruising Permit. It is a simple form to fill out and no fees are required. The form is available online and can be submitted electronically.

We received our three-month initial cruising permit by email, printed it out and presented it without problems when checking in to Kosrae.

Several other cruisers without permits in hand had difficulties on arrival as Immigration needs to see your cruising permit.

Our advice: do not apply too early, apply when you are pretty sure of your arrival date, ask for enough time and do not hesitate to email several times to get confirmation that your request was received and then to remind them to send you the signed permit by email.

We only requested a 3-month cruising permit ahead of time. But we had a new permit issued for an extra three months when we were in Pohnpei without difficulties

1.5.2 Immigration

Passport must be valid for 6 months beyond the date of departure from FSM.

Entry permits are granted on arrival for up to 30 days, with proof of adequate funds. Extensions of 30 days can be obtained, up to 60 days maximum.

One must clear in and out of each state, and a new entry permit of 30 days is given each time. Stays of over 30 days in one state must be applied for in advance from Chief of Immigration, PO Box PS105, Palikir, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, FSM 96941. Tel. 320 2606, Fax. 320 2234.

Citizens of Palau, the Marshall Islands and the USA can be issued an entry permit for visits up to one year.

<http://www.visit-fsm.org/visitors/entry.html>

Soggy Paws - Feb 2014: As Americans, we had no problems staying as long as we wanted. But non-Americans, including EU and Australian and NZ citizens, were given only 90 days. This is not a lot of time to cruise through an area as large as the FSM. I believe visa extensions can be secured (Sloepmouche did it, probably in Pohnpei).

Our friends on Westward II did an International checkout from Pohnpei, in hopes that they can check in again in Yap and get another 90 days. We'll try to remember to come back here and tell you whether that worked for them.

1.5.3 Customs

From the website: Firearms must be declared to the police on arrival and may have to be surrendered until departure.

Any fresh food on board will be confiscated.

Customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export of items such as religious materials, antiquities, medications, business equipment and other items.

Soggy Paws - 2104: In reality, we were never hassled about any of this. We gave them a "Stores List" which summarized what we had aboard (6 lbs beef, 4 lbs pork... 2 cases of beer... etc). We don't of anyone carrying firearms, so we don't know what that experience would be like.

1.5.4 Health

Typhoid and tetanus vaccinations are recommended.

Visitors should use caution in where they obtain their drinking water.

Visitors to the island should cover arms and legs and wear hats and shoes (rather than sandals). It is advised that you apply insect repellent.

There are hospitals on the four main islands and some scattered clinics. Medical supplies can be in short supply.

1.5.5 Stopping at Outer Atolls

It is formally prohibited to stop at outer atolls before clearing in at a port of entry.

Between FSM states, the officials prefer that you do not stop at outer atolls before checking in to the state that "owns" those atolls. However, it can be done.

Sloepmouche - Jan/Feb 2012: Before leaving Kosrae, we obtained permission to stop in Pingelap and Mokil on our way to Pohnpei (obtained from Pohnpei Immigration via Kosrae Immigration).

Soggy Paws - 2014: We heard of several cruisers stopping at Kapinga Merangi on the way to or from the Solomons. Those that had a happy experience had an FSM Cruising Permit in hand when they stopped (obtainable by email).

We did NOT obtain advance permission before stopping at any of the outer atolls (2 in the Mortlocks between Pohnpei and Chuuk, and several between Chuuk and Yap). But at each stop we had to check in with the "mayor" or other appointed official, sometimes fill out a form, always show our Cruising Permit, and usually pay a \$20-30 fee to the mayor.

1.5.6 Pets

Animals require a veterinary certificate and must remain on board at all times. Birds such as parrots and parakeets cannot be imported without special permission from the Director of Health Services. Birds not having this permission may have to be destroyed or exported.

Challenger - February 2014: We checked in at Kosrae and again at Pohnpei, and were told the normal story--pets are OK if you keep them onboard. But when I checked in at Pohnpei, I asked the officials what I had to do to get permission to bring my dog ashore. Since I had gone through the process of importing my American dog into NZ, she had 2 chips, all kinds of shots, and I had a stack of very detailed and formal-looking documentation for her. When I asked what they needed, they responded with "what do you have?". I ended up taking my entire document stack for the dog to Immigration and then had to return and badger them with daily visits for a week before any official would give me formal permission to bring the dog ashore. But eventually I did receive permission for my dog to go ashore.

I was also able to get permission in Palau for her to come ashore.

Sloepmouche - January 2012: After completing our Customs and Immigration formalities in Tofal/Kosrae, when back at the Ace Hardware dock, I met the Quarantine officer who came onboard to check for restricted animals or plants. Alas for Zenne and Zwetke (our two dogs), pets are not allowed ashore, but are confined onboard.

1.5.7 State-to-State Clearances

Soggy Paws - 2014: You must check in and check out of each major port (Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap, and Palau). Even though the FSM is supposedly a single country, each state requires a nearly complete "international" check in and check out. Pohnpei and Chuuk fees were each around \$120 for "in and out". Yap tbd.

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: On arrival into the country, or when arriving in a new state, you must Clear In with Immigration, Customs, Agricultural Quarantine and the Harbourmaster. This is usually a straightforward process. The Agricultural Quarantine officers will charge a fee. Officers from all departments may want to come aboard.

1.6 Local Information and Customs

Trigger - 2013: In the outer islands, it is the local custom to bring a gift for the island's paramount chief upon arrival. This can be anything from a case of Ramen Noodles or a bag of rice to some fresh fish.

RCC Pilotage Foundatoin - Nov 2008: The Micronesians are distinctly different than the Polynesians and Melanesians. The effects of US colonisation of the FSM are still very evident in the attitude of the people. There are significant differences between the tribes that make up the four states.

To visit the outer islands of any of the states, regulations require you to contact the mayor of each island that you intend to visit, before arrival, to obtain permission. However, these islands are generally friendly towards visitors, and it would be surprising if an island mayor was unhappy to see a yacht that had arrived without warning.

Custom demands that when visiting any outer island the mayor (chief) should be sought out and a gift given. Some islands have very strong dress-codes, particularly for women, and great sensitivity should be shown when going ashore.

Soggy Paws comment: Note that most islands have a mayor AND at least one chief. They are not the same people. Chiefdoms are hereditary. Mayors are elected.

1.7 Yachtsmen's Services - Overview

1.7.1 Money

Soggy Paws - 2014: As far as we know, there are at least two banks in Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap, and at least one working ATM (usually one per bank).

We had trouble using our Mastercard branded ATM card--it was rejected all the time. But a Visa-branded debit card was no problem at the same machine. Various people had various problems with the ATM's.

So, it's a good idea to keep a pretty good stock of U.S. dollars just in case. Don't forget to allow for about \$150 on check out of each state, in port fees.

The larger stores, hotels, etc would accept an American Visa card as payment.

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: Currency throughout is US \$. Fortunately for yachtsmen, Yapese stone money is used only ceremonially! Banks are available in the capitals

of each state and can give cash advances over the counter, or at the ATM if available. Credit cards are widely accepted.

1.7.2 Diesel and Gasoline

Fuel can be bought in all centres, usually by jerrycan, although some fisheries have pumps or can arrange to have it delivered to the dock by tanker. The price of both gasoline and diesel in March 2014 was between \$5/gallon and \$5.50 per gallon.

Fuel is rarely available in the outer islands, and if available is around \$10 per gallon.

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: Diesel, outboard fuel and kerosene should be easily obtainable in the major centres, but the outer islands have very limited supplies and frequently run out, so it would be unfair to ask for fuel there.

1.7.3 Propane (Cooking Gas)

Soggy Paws - 2014: Propane is usually available in Pohnpei and Chuuk and Palau. We heard it was available in Yap also. Don't know about Kosrae.

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: Propane is easily obtainable in Chuuk and Yap. The US POL type connector is standard.

1.7.4 Groceries

Provisioning is good in all main centres where there is a selection of imported goods, mainly from the USA, although they tend to be on the expensive side. There are also fresh produce markets and some fresh produce can be found practically everywhere even if the selection is not always great.

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: The large towns have good supermarkets, reasonably well stocked with good Asian supplies and US supplies imported from Guam.

The Micronesians seem not to have the same instinct to trade fresh produce that the Melanesians have, making fruit and vegetables very hard to find. Food tends to be scarce on the outer islands during the Jan/Feb/March cruising season, so be prepared and don't expect to restock away from the main towns. Fish, however, is always in abundant supply. Ocean fishing is spectacularly productive.

1.7.5 Water

Water sources must be chosen carefully as often the public supply is not drinkable and should be treated. Generally, rain water is more reliable if one has access to a catchment tank, or provision should be made to collect one's own. Rainfall is only abundant in Kosrae and Pohnpei.

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: Supplies are limited and unlikely to be good quality. Catching rainwater or using a watermaker are the best solutions.

1.7.6 Boat Parts & Repairs

Facilities vary widely across the Federation, with basic repair facilities in the main centres and very little in the outer islands. There are fisheries plants in several islands and wherever there is a base for fishing boats, one may be able to find at least a modicum of repair facilities. One

should carry a good supply of essential spares as the only parts that may be available locally are those used in trucks or heavy plant in use on the islands.

However, if you are prepared to wait, parts can be ordered in from the U.S. and delivered by US Postal Mail.

1.7.7 Medical

Before - July 2012 (from Palau): All capital cities in Micronesia have medical hospital facilities.

We were able to get all our maintenance drugs (3 months) and care at the hospital from \$17.00 to \$20.00. If the hospital doesn't carry your drug, the doctor will help with a substitute or know one in advance. Guidance helps. If there is any balking, tell them you are leaving on a LONG sea voyage. I only had to resort to that once. In addition all have diabetic clinics. Again our tax dollars at work!! Majuro and Pohnpei have private pharmacies (Pharmed?) and they are helpful in supplying or ordering for you at reasonable cost, less than mail order.

1.7.8 Laundry

In Pohnpei we there were a couple of laundramats. In Chuuk, the Truk Stop Hotel did ours for a reasonable price (for a hotel).

1.8 Embassies and Consulates

So far I have seen an American and Australian Embassy on the map in Pohnpei.

1.9 Getting Visitors In and Out

Below is a route map I found online somewhere. Someone told me that the airplane arrives 3 times a week in Kosrae.



In Chuuk, a plane came every day from somewhere, but details of where, I don't know

The Palau Visitor's Bureau also has this map on their site:



From their site: Many visitors to Palau arrive on Continental Airlines by way of daily flights from Guam--gateway to Micronesia. There are daily connections to Guam from Tokyo, USA, and other metropolitan centers around the world. Continental Airlines provide daily flights from Guam to Palau and twice a week from Manila, Philippines.

In addition, there are scheduled chartered airline services and they are Asiana Airline from Incheon, South Korea, China Airline from Taipei, Taiwan-ROC, and Japan Airlines from Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka, Japan to Palau.

From the western seaboard of the United States, you can hop to Hawaii, skip to Guam, then jump to Palau. For a scenic island route, you can do an island hop across Micronesia to Palau. Through Asia, there are twice weekly charter services between Taipei, Taiwan and Palau and additional flights are also available during peak seasons. From Europe, visitors can fly via Emirates direct to Manila, Philippines and onwards with Continental Airlines to Palau--this is possible without overnight stay in Manila.

More here: <http://www.visit-palau.com/index.cfm>

1.10 Communications

1.10.1 VHF

Note: In general, no one in Chuuk uses VHF. Not the Port Captain, not the dive boats, not the dive operations. Call a few times on 16, but don't be surprised if no one answers. A better bet would be a cell phone and have researched phone numbers in advance.

General VHF Advice that applies to all areas: Be aware that on high power, a good VHF will transmit 25 miles line of sight. So if you are only doing within-anchorage communications, switch to low power. On the flip side, if you are trying to call across island, or to the next island, use high power, and turn your squelch down. Make sure you are aware which channels are automatic low power (ie 17, 67 on some radios), and stay away from the low-power channels for long distance conversations.

Though widely spaced in channel number, channels 16, 68, and 18 are very close to each other in frequency. Most VHF antennas are 'tuned' for channel 16, so long distance communications will work best on 16, 18 or 68. Conversely, in a crowded anchorage, transmission on high power on channel 18 or 68 may 'bleed' over to channel 16 (and almost any other channel, if you're close enough). You don't need high power to talk to the boat next to you, so turn your radio to Low Power!!

Also be aware that some channels that Americans use frequently are 'duplex' channels in International mode. So, for example, you may have trouble communicating with a European boat, or an American boat whose radio is in International mode, on Channel 18. (see any VHF guide for the full list of international and US channels and frequencies, but any US channel designated 'a', like 18a, 22a, etc will cause trouble with VHF's in international mode).

Make sure you ask in each port what the local channels are--both so you know how to reach someone ashore and so you know not to use those channels for your off-channel conversations.

1.10.2 SSB Radio Frequencies and Nets

The primary cruiser net in the FSM is the **Shellback Net** on 8107.0 khz USB at 2200 Zulu (10am Marshall Islands Time, 9am Pohnpei time, 8am Chuuk and Yap, and 7am in Palau). This net covers cruisers heading west across Micronesia, and also down to the Solomons and PNG.

Soggy Paws - 2014: There is a guy in Guam who comes on at 9159.5 USB at 0900 Chuuk time (2300z) who does News and Weather in English--headline news from the U.S. and news from Guam and FSM. WNJ293A? I have heard someone on an FSM atoll ask for a phone patch into Guam on this frequency for medical purposes, after the "net" is over.

From Herman in Pohnpei (thanks to Brickhouse) - Local FSM Nets and Frequencies

- FSM Police - 8993.0
- FSM-wide - 7876.5 Herman always stands by on this in addition to the regular meeting time
- Chuuk Local 5205.0 and/or 5470.0 and 2724.0
- RMI Local 8833.5 and/or 8877.5
- YAP 877.5 (there is a number possibly missing here...)
- Palau 8113.5 and/or 8877.5

They all meet at 1045am /11am weather/ or 1115am. In other words right after or right before the weather/ Other times to talk can be arranged at that time too.

Herman in Pohnpei can arrange emails, faxes, and phone patches in an emergency.

From Carina - Jan 2014: The out-islands absolutely depend on their SSBs. They confirmed that today here in Lukunor (which is now officially something else, we'll confirm the spelling)...

Is the meeting/chat/weather time [Herman Herman gave you for the FSM] in Pohnpei time?

CHUUK - At Lukunor we were told ..

- The "master" Chuuk state frequency is 5205.5 (with an alternate of 2724.0)

YAP - Two men from Satawal who we met in Pohnpei said frequencies were...

- 7876.5 (the same as the FSM one) or 8113.5 (for Yap)

The meeting times they said were 9 am and 5 pm Pohnpei time (8 am and 4 pm Chuuk/Yap time)

If you are heading east from Micronesia, the **Yokwe Net** operates out of Majuro, and covers cruisers in the Marshall Islands, but also covers cruisers heading west, until they can't be heard anymore. It operates at 0745 Marshall Islands time (+12 GMT), on 6224 USB. (Decent propagation to Kosrae, gets less good the further west you go).

1.10.3 Telephones & Cell Phones

Cellphone GSM Frequencies: 900 (This means you will need a GSM cellphone that will work on 900MHz to use it in the Federated States of Micronesia.)

The country code for FSM is 691.

Outgoing local cell phone calls are \$.15/minute. State-to-state calls are \$.50/minute peak and \$.30/min off peak. There is no charge for incoming calls.

Up to date rate info is here: <http://www.telecom.fm/wireless/rates.htm>

The prepaid cell phone call rate to the U.S. is \$.75/minute peak and \$.47/minute off peak. Here is the full table of the international call rates:

<http://www.telecom.fm/phones/international.htm>

To place an international call, dial 011, country code, city code and telephone number of the destination party.

U.S. ATT does allow roaming in FSM, but it's expensive. \$2.50 per minute voice (\$2.00 per minute if you buy international "anywhere" minutes) and \$.50 per text message.

In **Palau**, if you have an FSM cell phone sim, or one from another compatible country, you will be automatically registered for a Palau Cell Phone. Palau also uses the GSM 900 band. We turned on our phone when arriving, and received a text message that said "Welcome to Palau, your Palau cell phone number is..." No setup fee, no new sim card required. All we had to do was buy a PNCC cell phone recharge card, and we were in business. See Palau Communications section for more info.

Soggy Paws - Feb 2014: We skipped Kosrae, so signed up for an FSM sim card in Pohnpei. This was the easiest cell phone experience I have ever had! It took me about 30 seconds and \$10 to get a sim card. If you are not sure your phone will work here, they have a test sim you can try before you buy. I have also seen ads for \$30 phones with sim card, if you phone doesn't

work. Once you have a sim card, you recharge with recharge cards, available from Telecom and most local stores.

This cell phone was invaluable on our approach to Chuuk, to call officials to schedule our check-in and check out. No one in Chuuk uses VHF, so there's no other way to do it efficiently.

Sloepmouche - January 2012: When we arrived in Kosrae, I went to the phone company (FSMTC) to get a SIM card for my **mobile phone** for use throughout the FSM during the next four months. We found out later in Pohnpei, that if you buy your SIM card in Kosrae, you can use your phone in the other three FSM states, but your rate will be higher due to roaming charges. I assume this holds true no matter which state you buy your sim card in initially.

There is GSM cell phone coverage in most of the populated areas in the FSM.

1.10.4 Internet Access

There is wifi internet access in most of the populated areas in the FSM. Check the nearby resorts.

Soggy Paws - Feb 2014: In Pohnpei, the FSMTC signal is available all over town (and in the anchorage). To use these, connect to any FSMTC SSID, make a log-in via your browser, and then use any "recharge card" (the same ones you use for cell phone) to add money to the account. The data rate is pricey, (\$.08 per Mb), but it's widely available. Several of the local restaurants and bars also have free wifi for their patrons. (Ocean View, Rusty Anchor, etc).

In Chuuk we were able to transfer the balance on our FSMTC account to the Chuuk FSMTC, and get wifi in the anchorage at Truk Stop. Truk Stop also has their own password-protected wifi, which they charge a modest amount for (and which we could NOT receive on the boat). Blue Lagoon has limited internet coverage, we heard only in their bar and restaurant.

1.10.5 Mail

Soggy Paws - 2014: Each major city in the FSM has a U.S. Zip Code, and so you can usually use Postal Mail to and from the U.S. Expect 2-3 week delivery. Sometimes things get hung up in Guam. Each section (below) has a recommended mailing address and specific comments.

Palau also has a U.S. Zip code.

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: Postal systems are provided by the United States Postal Service and should be quick and reliable.

1.10.6 News

News via SSB Radio

Soggy Paws - 2014: There is a guy in Guam who comes on at 9159.5 USB at 0900 Chuuk time (2300z) who does News and Weather in English. WJN293A?

We understand that FSM has one or more AM stations, but didn't try to listen to them, so have no idea what frequencies and whether there is any English broadcasts.

Westward II - June 2013: Here are a list of AM radio frequencies we have been listening to in the Marshall Islands:

Voice of America - 6110, 17735

Radio Australia for PNG, Solomon Islands, Micronesia, Guam, and Japan - 5995, 6020, 6080, 7240, 9580, 9660, 9710, 9815, 11650, 15240, 17580, 17715, 21725

Radio NZ - 6095, 9885, 11675, 11725, 11820, 15160, 17675

BBC - 9740, 11765, 11955, 12080, 15070, 15360

News via Email

I don't know of any news service that formulates a customizable daily news email for yachts at sea (if you do, please email me, see email address at front of this guide).

But we had success, using Sailmail, in subscribing to a 'daily news email' from Reuters. We set it up so it went to a shore email address, and then we used Sailmail's Shadowmail feature to retrieve the daily emails when we felt we needed/wanted news, and had good enough propagation, to retrieve the email, stripped of all the graphics and stuff.

The daily 'US News', coming in through Sailmail, was only 7Kb. It contains the 'top 10' headlines, with a one sentence summary of each. Check out what Reuters offers at <http://links.reuters.com>

I am sure there are many other similar sources of a daily news email, but try them out on your internet email before you subscribe via your Winlink/Sailmail account!! And if you have Sailmail access, I strongly recommend you check out Shadowmail (it is not offered/supported under Winlink)

1.11 Diving

There is good diving, and dive centers that can provide gear and fill tanks, at each major city.

1.12 Haulout, Storage, and Repair Facilities

There is haulout available in Pohnpei (by crane). Nothing in Chuuk (that we saw). Savannah (a catamaran) was hauled on a railway in Yap--see that section for details.

Most boats head for the Philippines or Borneo when they are ready for a haulout. A couple of boats were also hauled at Lipari in the Solomons on a railway there.

1.13 Tsunami Information

Soggy Paws - January 2014: The entire Pacific Basin is subject to tsunamis. Since we have been in the Pacific (5 years), there have been 3 significant tsunamis which have affected cruising locations (American Samoa and Tonga in 2009, So America, Galapagos & Panama in 2010, Hawaii & Mexico in 2011).

The tsunamis originate in various locations, but the worst origination locations were Japan and Chile, however, many 'tremors' happen in these locations that do not cause widespread tsunamis.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center website is located here:

<http://ptwc.weather.gov/>

If you have onboard email, it is a good idea to subscribe to tsunami warning emails while you are in the Pacific, which you can do on this website. It might be useful to first subscribe from your internet email for a little while, to understand what messages might be coming your way, and how often, before you chance clogging up your onboard email.

1.14 Cruising Information Sources

We are indebted to the people and organizations below for documenting their experiences and sharing them with us. We hope they don't mind that we've gathered their comments into this document to share with other cruisers who don't have internet

A few details about the boats are included, where we know them, so you can assess what 'a foot under the keel' means, for example.

Where it's important, we've annotated the contributions. But every section is a mix of several sources.

1.14.1 Local Websites

Here are some websites you should visit when you are looking for information on this area:

<http://www.visit-micronesia.fm>

<http://www.kosrae.com/>

<http://www.visit-palau.com/>

An excellent excellent website with a lot of cultural background, specific to Ulithi Atoll, but applicable to the rest of Micronesia is this one:

<http://www.pacificworlds.com/yap/>

Most of the website are topical bits of information expressed by quoting local individuals on Ulithi. Just like sitting there asking them questions.

1.14.2 Cruiser Reports

For most of the earlier sources, we have gleaned the information off the internet (cruiser's websites, blogs, and online forum postings) or out of an SSCA bulletin. For the sources reported below as 2013-2014, much of the info has come directly from our cruising friends, helping to round out the information in our various Compendiums.

Ariel IV (2016) – Ariel IV arrived in Kosrae in January 2016 and proceeded west across Micronesia. They are a monohull.

<http://www.arielfyra.se/>

Dream Away (2016) – Dream Away arrived in Pohnpei from the Solomons in December 2015, and arrived in Palau in late Feb 2016. 44' Peterson monohull drawing around 6 ft.

Changing Spots (2015-2016) – Changing Spots arrived in Kosrae in early December, 2015, and moved on to Pohnpei in late December, with plans to continue westward across Micronesia in 2016. Changing Spots is a Leopard 40 catamaran. <http://www.changingspots.net>

Carina (2013-2014) - Carina spent a year primarily in Pohnpei, and then set out across FSM westward in 2014. <http://sv-carina.org> They spent May and June in Palau, and then headed for the Philippines.

Soggy Paws (2014) - Soggy Paws transited Micronesia from Feb - June 2014 and hung out in Palau through Fall 2014.

Soggy Paws is a CSY 44, a 44 foot monohull with a 5.5' draft. Soggy Paws' blog is here:

<http://svsoggypaws.blogspot.com>

Westward II (2014) - Westward II arrived in Kosrae in Jan 2014 and left Palau in late May 2014, headed for the Philippines. They have a website <http://westward-ii.com> , but most of the information in this guide attributed to Westward II was gained by verbal communications over the HF radio.

Brickhouse (2014) - Rebecca and Patrick spent about 2 months in Palau in Feb-Mar 2014.

<http://www.whereisbrickhouse.com/>

Lorelei (2014) - Lorelei left Pohnpei in February 2014 and headed west across FSM, stopping in a few outer atolls, then Yap, before moving on to Palau in April, where they spent 3 months diving.

<http://yachtlorelei.blogspot.com/>

La Gitana (2014): Volker & Michaela cruised into Micronesia from the Solomons in early 2014, arriving first at Kapingamarangi, and then cruising slowly north and west through the out islands.

<http://www.seezigeuner.de> (in German)

Downtime (2013) - <http://downtimecat.blogspot.com> Downtime is a big catamaran with a large RIB dinghy. They crossed the FSM, stopping in many of the out-of-the-way atolls, in the first half of 2013. They came back to Palau from the Philippines in May 2014.

Savannah (2013) - We are indebted to Monica from s/v Savannah for collecting and collating information as they passed through Micronesia. Her guides are posted on their blog, plus additional information available in their various blog posts:

<http://savannahsails.blogspot.com/>

Savannah is a 40 ft Owen Easton Catamaran.

Zephyr (2013) - Bill and Tracy Hudson on Zephyr spent a couple of months in Pohnpei and then went straight to Palau in 2013. They have a Shin Fa 458 (monohull).

Their blog is located here:

<http://www.sailblogs.com/member/svzephyr>

Sloepmouche (January-July 2012) - Sloepmouche is a trimaran. They transited through Micronesia in 2012.

Swingin' on a Star (2009) - Randy and Hideko Abernathy on Swingin' on a Star transited Micronesia in 2009, and ended up in Palau. Swingin' on a Star is a St. Francis 50 catamaran. Randy ended up writing The Palau Guide, an up-to-date cruising guide to Palau, which every cruiser should purchase.

<http://www.sailblogs.com/member/swinginonastar/>

Trigger (January-May 2013): Trigger is a big catamaran with a very big dinghy. They cruised west to east from Palau to the Marshalls in 2013. We were fortunate to share a couple of anchorages with them and were able to pick their brains about Micronesia. They have also posted a couple of very useful bits of information on Noonsite.

1.14.3 Circumnavigator's Yahoo Group

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Circumnavigation/>

Once out of the Puddle Jump region, the only other similar group bulletin board.

1.14.4 Noonsite

Originally started by Jimmy Cornell, this site is a great repository of information for all those out-of-the-way places. Made possible by YOUR contributions.

<http://www.noonsite.com>

1.14.5 Seven Seas Cruising Association

The SSCA is a world-wide organization for cruisers whose primary function is to exchange information about cruising destinations. They have a monthly publication that is mostly letters from cruisers about the areas they are cruising. They also have a good website and a well-attended bulletin board. Membership is reasonable, and the monthly publication is available electronically every month. Indexed back issues are also available electronically.

<http://www.scca.org>

1.14.6 Ocean Cruising Club

The OCC is a world-wide organization for cruisers whose primary function is to exchange information about cruising destinations. They have a website and bi-annual publication that is mostly letters from cruisers about the areas they are cruising. Membership is reasonable, and the publication is available electronically. Indexed back issues are also available electronically.

<http://oceancruisingclub.org>

1.15 Printed Sources

1.15.1 Cruising Guides

We are consciously NOT duplicating any in-print, printed, copyrighted information here. It takes a lot of effort AND money to publish a cruising guide, and we firmly believe that if it is still in print, you should BUY it, not steal it (in electronic form).

There are no current cruising guides that cover Micronesia. However, there is a good current guidebook for Palau.

[The Palau Guide – A guide to yachting and tourism in Palau](#) - Randy and Hideko

Abernathy – 2010 Try to get a copy before your arrival so you have all of the navigation information to enter the outside reefs and proceed safely into the harbor. Their guide is very well

written and quite detailed about cruising the Rock Islands and the other anchorages anywhere around Palau.

Here are some old out-of-print guides that you may be able to find in PDF format:

Migrant Cruising Notes of Micronesia - Phil Creegan - 1995: Covers the FSM, Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Tuvalu. Since this is out of print, I have included excerpts from this guide in the appropriate subsections.

South Pacific Anchorages - Warwick Clay - 2001: Micronesia is not in the South Pacific, but he does cover Pohnpei, Kosrae, Kapingamarangi and Nukuoro

1.15.2 Recommended Reading

For background, we recommend the following books:

An interesting read from a World Teach volunteer who spent a year on a Marshall Islands atoll... [Surviving Paradise: One Year On a Disappearing Island](#). Some of this applies also to Micronesian atolls.

For World War II buffs, there are a number of fiction and non-fiction books that we have read to provide background and perspective as you transit through the area:

[Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, Redemption](#) by Laura Hillenbrand

For **Historical Reference**, we belatedly discovered [Micronesia: Winds of Change](#) by Francis Hezel. This is a compendium of historical accounts, starting in the 1500's and right on up through modern times, of all the various "visitors" to Micronesia (including Guam and the Mariannas and Marshalls). If you like reading first hand accounts from long ago, this is great. We found used copies available on Amazon.com for about \$25-30.

All of Francis Hezel's books published while he was leading the Micronesian Seminary in Chuuk are listed here:

<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/books.htm>

In a similar vein, we were given a book called [Island Traders](#) in Pohnpei. Written by Yvette Etscheit Adams, and is a firsthand account of her life in Pohnpei, starting about 1915 and right up to modern day. They were one of the few white families allowed to stay when the Japanese moved in, and they spent about 4 years as "prisoners of war" on Pohnpei after Pearl Harbor. Fascinating and moving. It may not be available on the public book market, but if you get to Pohnpei, I'm sure you can find a copy by asking around

An assessment of "Underwater Cultural Resources" in Micronesia can be found on the National Park Service Website, here:

http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/maritime/micronesia.pdf

This is about a 600 page document, with lots of historical information in it, written in 1991.

and a smaller, older document (1980), here:

http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/wapa/war_micronesia.pdf

A very rich website of Micronesian cultural information (centered on Ulithi Atoll, but somewhat relevant to the rest of the FSM). Stanley at Mogmog in Ulithi showed a printed copy of this website to us. It was several hundred pages long and consisted mostly of first-hand accounts of Ulithi today and Ulithi history by Ulithians. Pretty fascinating. Unfortunately, it's not available as an easy download, but a web of linked web pages.

2 Passage Reports

2.1 *Sailing Here from Elsewhere*

2.1.1 *From the Marshall Islands*

Soggy Paws - Feb 2014 - Kwajalein to Kosrae: This trip is 344 nm pass-to-pass at 233°. With the normal wintertime wind conditions, this trip is about 2.5 days at 6 knots.

Downtime - Feb 2013: We set sail from Alinginae Atoll just before noon and headed south for a 400 mile sail to Kosrae. The winds looked favorable and we thought it would be no problem averaging 8 knots on a beam reach. We set the double reefed main and full jib and the winds were moving us along nicely.

We made good miles for a first day, but about noon the next day the wind speed dropped, so we had to motorsail the rest of the afternoon. This is not the first time this had happened....it seems that when the most critical passes are to be made we are always fighting for a few more minutes of daylight.

The entrance into Lelu harbor, which is on the east side of Kosrae, had a pass even Popeye wouldn't dare go into at night! The charts were anywhere from 150 feet to 300 yards off depending which charts you are using! The channel markers consist of a single 12 inch red buoy that is really hard to see in the swell and a few stakes that are pounded into the reef itself. The pass is about 300 feet wide with reef and breaking waves on either side.

It was worth burning a few gallons of diesel to be able to anchor in the fading daylight. There were just two other boats in the whole harbor and we anchored in 30 feet of water in front of the small town.

2.1.2 *From the Solomons & Vanuatu*

Dream Away – December 2015: We had a great sail up from Vanuatu, hardly any motoring, not too much squall activity, and none of it strong. That was until we were a couple of days out of Pohnpei, when a cyclone basically just formed around us! We were beating overnight into what we thought at the time was just a pretty ugly front, then got the misty, murky, sloppy centre during the day, so prepared for what we knew would follow and put out just a pocket handkerchief of genoa, attaining 7-8 knots in 48k of apparent wind behind us. There was a cross-sea, probably about 4m, occasionally higher. By now the gibs were showing what we'd got.

Carina - December 2012: Our trip from the Solomons was amazingly blessed by monsoon winds from the west that propelled us east northeast almost to the equator when suddenly - within a 5 minutes or less -winds turned south easterly.

Thankfully, the following day, winds went northerly and we beat hard-to-weather due east during daylight hours to reach our goal of 164 west. This allowed us to tack NNE and make Kosrae (KOHS rye) without another tack.

On this last leg, we encountered repeated vicious and capricious squalls one of which we misjudged, in spite of tracking squalls using our Furuno radar, and came almost to a knockdown. The end result was we threw a batten from our mainsail and then ripped it from

flogging the poor old tired thing- a reasonable outcome for a nasty encounter. We'll probably patch it again but have already begun budgeting for the replacement.

2.1.3 From PNG

Swingin' on a Star - January 2009: We had left early in the day in the hopes that we could make Kaping by afternoon tomorrow. If we can keep 8 knots on we'll do it. The wind was forecast 10-15 from 115 degrees, which is on the beam apparent for us. If the forecast comes true we'll have no problem. That is a big "if" though. If not we'll be standing off over night. We were motor sailing with full jib and main at 8 knots early in the day with 5 knots of true wind.

Our friends on Angelique and Whistler made their way out of the lagoon at around 8:30AM. They are both committed to a 2 day passage. I am discovering a big catamaran drawback of late, we are always the ones calling back the safe entry waypoints after transiting the hairy passes.

Various squalls were wandering about in the light, doldrum like conditions. We got a lift from a couple squalls but never long enough to shut down the motor. Then in the late afternoon we crossed a line of clouds (several of them raining) and boom, there were the NE trades. We had 15-18 knots from 50 apparent. Off went the motor and we started making 8.5 knots under sail. I hope it holds, things are lightening up after sunset.

As much as I hated to do it, we tucked a reef in the main at sundown. There are just too many squalls about to have to deal with reefing in the middle of the night. We'll fire up a diesel if we need to in order to keep pace. At present we can probably make the pass if we arrive by 3PM, which means high 7 knots for the rest of the way in. We shall see.

Anchored in Kapingamarangi - 01/22/2009

We had a nice passage to Kapingamarangi. The wind was mild but functional and sometimes perfect. The direction was pretty much east, which is always nice when you're sailing due north. The seas were pretty mellow for an ocean passage. We had a fair amount of squall activity by day but none at night. The radar was clear all last night.

It was our second time crossing the equator, now we've done south to north and north to south. We ran across one fishing boat on the 270 mile passage but other than that, nothing. We averaged about 8 knots for the trip, which was mandatory for our timely arrival at the Greenwich Passage into the Kapingamarangi lagoon. We left Nugarba Atoll at 5AM yesterday and arrived at Kaping 35 hours later (4PM today PNG time). We ran the motor for a bit when necessary to keep the speed up when the wind feel off.

It had been fair weather the whole trip with only isolated, small squalls on the first day. We managed to stay dry with one slight course alteration. Today however, things were perfect, right until we got close to our destination.

2.1.4 To/From Eastern Indonesia

Sloepmouche – November 2014: Our sail from Waigeo (Raja Ampat area of Indonesia) was good—after a few hours of motoring in calm seas around Waigeo, we finally got some favorable wind, as well as a favorable current. During a short squall, we somehow broke four of our plastic main sail sliders so we decided that this was a sign to check out Helen Reef.

Dropping our mainsail was not enough to slow down enough to get there by daylight (we did not want to arrive in the evening) so we furled some of our genoa and reefed our mizzen sail (first time ever!). We arrived outside the pass at about 8 a.m. with good light to enter the pass. We were prepared, as we had checked the topography on Google Earth (in case we decided to stop) and took exact GPS positions to negotiate the winding channel leading into the lagoon. The GE photo is spot on for the entrance and channel. Entry outside: 02°52.50'N, 131°43.84'E. The channel is wide, at least a few hundred feet across, and the four times we visited the pass, there was never any strong current.

Dreamkeeper – April 2009 - Helen Reef to Sorong: We had a pretty easy and uneventful passage except for one awful night traveling through a major rain and thunder/lightning storm, which we think was the ITCZ. We got hammered for about 12 hours overnight in pitch black conditions, big seas and 30+ knots of wind with driving rain. Sailing, steering and using the radar were useless. We hove-to and waited it out. Thankfully, in the morning it cleared up, and we motor-sailed away to the south.

Keep a lookout for debris in these waters. We saw everything from huge slicks of trash to massive trees floating in the currents.

On a positive note, when crossing the last bay between Waigeo Island and the mainland of West Papua, where Sorong is located, we saw whales, big pods of dolphins and even a sunfish (mola-mola) on the surface.

2.1.5 To/From the Philippines

Sloepmouche – 2015: Palau to Davao: We had a fast passage from Koror to the Philippines. We went with a weather forecast of NE 20-25kn and that's about what we got. The last third of the passage, the wind turned farther north so we had beam wind. We sailed for a few hours at 10-11kn (ol' Sloepmouche can still kick up her heels without stress if conditions are right!) on a close-reach with 20kn. The seas can be confused during that passage with currents and swell different from the wind. We were so glad to be on a multi-hull, and even we got knocked around and had crazy waves coming over the wheelhouse.

Soggy Paws – Late July 2014 – Palau to Davao:

Day 2: We left Palau 2 days ago, and are now about 290 miles from the easternmost point of Mindanao, the biggest island on the SE side of the Philippines. We are trying to get to a place on the N end of the small island of Samal, off the big city of Davao, in southern Mindanao. There is a marina there called the Holiday Ocean View Marina at approx 07-11.87 N / 125-42.62 E. This is where we plan to leave Soggy Paws for our next trip home.

We are hard on the wind in 10-12 knots of wind, and bucking a .5kt current right now. There is a bigger current coming--the current running south along the coast of Mindanao peaks at 2.8kts!! (Think Gulfstream). To complicate our weather routing situation, just about the time we get to

the strong current, we will have almost 20kts of opposing winds. This is not a good situation. So we are looking at t-t-t-tacking around a bit trying to balance staying out of the strong adverse current and the strong adverse winds--and especially out of the strong-current-against-strong-winds situation. (Think Gulfstream in a Cold Front).

So far it's been a very nice sail. But the next few days are going to get rough. Though it's only 295 miles straight to the coast, it's nearly 400 miles to the point we have to round to get up into the Gulf of Davao. And we won't be able to do it in a straight line.

Fortunately the weather in general is pretty settled, so at least we don't have to worry about 30 kt squalls in the mix.

We are in loose company with 3 other boats who left at the same time.

Day 3: We were having a great sail, but going slowly in the wrong direction, and Dave just wants to "Get 'er done" and get there.

So yesterday afternoon, after a long discussion between Dave (the motorhead) and me (the sailor) we cranked the engine up and started motorsailing directly toward Cabo San Augustine, the SE point of land on Mindanao that we have to round to get up into the Gulf of Davao.

Also, the best wisdom in strong current is to make all speed directly across the current, to get out of it sooner, so that's what we're doing. Our current plan is to keep heading WSW until we strike the favorable southbound current, and then tack over and head south in the favorable current. But the plan changes with every new forecast.

There's another typhoon brewing well to the north of us, and what looked like a nice settled weather window is looking less settled as the typhoon spins us. So Dave's "let's quit playing around out here and get there" is somewhat justified.

Also, we got wind of an anchor-chain re-galvanizing expedition in Davao, our destination. To get in on that, we have to be at the marina by Tuesday evening. If we keep motorsailing we'll just barely make it. (saving lots of money on chain/re-galvanizing but spending about \$3/hr on diesel fuel).

One other factor out here I forgot to mention. The Filipino fisherman fish offshore in small boats up to 180 nm from the coast. So once we get that close to shore, we have to keep watch for possibly unlit/unmarked FAD's (fish aggregating devices). They can be anything from a wooden raft to large metal cylinders, and anchored out in deep water. We have waypoints for ones that have been spotted by others, so we know about where they start appearing.

The fishermen are also out fishing at night along the coast in small unlit boats, often with nets. So you can't do coastal passages around here at night--another reason why we decided to stay offshore, rather than head for the coast and then creep along in the protection of the coast.

We're using RTOFS requests from Saildocs to get the current information. Last time I tried it (about 6 years ago), I didn't get anything, but now I do--a 3-day forecast for what they expect the current to do. It is a GRIB file just like the GFS forecast grib's, and can be viewed in OpenCPN or ViewFax.

Anyway, all is well out here, and we're "only" 215 nm from rounding Cabo San Augustine, and then it's 60 miles or so to the marina.

Day 4: Here we are enroute to the Philippines now on Day 4. This is definitely getting old. We have finally reached the "favorable" current (south-bound), which makes it easier to make the heading we need to get around the point. But the southbound current against the northbound wind has made the seas really short and steep. So we are bashing and crashing--big sheets of salt water coming over the bow. My tomato plants are definitely NOT happy. And neither are we.

Fortunately, we made the right decision in motorsailing further south to reach lighter winds. We have better weather here, while two of the purist-sailor boats that left with us were "hove to" this morning in 20-30 knots (temporary squall conditions). While they sneer at our wimpy-ness, we know they are wishing they were where we are.

There is a typhoon that was just forming as we left Palau, and was supposed to track off to the northwest and not be a factor. It has stalled about 600 miles north of us and turned into a "Super Typhoon". This is making what looked like an ideal weather window... 12-15 knots... into a less than ideal window. We've had 15-20 all day and it's clocked a little to be more on our nose, and the forecast is for it to continue like this for at least another day.

But because we've been motorsailing for two days now, we are now less than 24 hours from rounding the point (God willin' and the creek don't rise), and then we'll be in more protected waters and going with the wind and the current--and only 60 miles from our destination. We probably won't make it all the way into the marina tomorrow, but will likely stop somewhere to rest up and make it into the marina on an easy day on Tuesday.

We spotted our first FAD this morning. It was a large day-glo orange cylinder in 6,000 METERS of water (~18,000 feet). We can't imagine them being anchored... they MUST be just launched and floating. But what a hazard to navigation! They are typically made out of steel and are roughly the size of a refrigerator. In calm weather with a good radar, you might be able to pick them up on radar, but not in these seas (and not with our tired old radar mounted on the arch).

We're in no danger, just discomfort. We have 3 other boats out here with us to commiserate with, and a number of boats waiting for us at the marina in Samal with a cold beer. We're just ready for it to be over.

2.2 *Between Atolls in FSM*

Dream Away – 2016: We sailed in FSM from Pohnpei to Yap between December and March, the winds were steadily from the E to NE, slightly stronger than predicted, often 20-25, which it has been suggested is part of the El Nino effect. The winds gave rise to stronger west-going currents, which made for fast, comfortable passages. Swell generally fairly short as usual, but only around 2m.

We did have one unexpectedly squally night between Olimaro & Woleai, just as we were trying to avoid Gamen Reef.

Saw one ship between Lekinioch & Lamotrek. Saw several between Woleai & Sorol, and again from Sorol to Yap.

2.2.1 *Kosrae to Pohnpei*

Carina - December 2012: Clearance papers finally in hand, we hoisted our staysail and trysail (our mainsail was still ripped), and slowly motored out into rolling seas and brisk tradewinds, rolled out the genoa and sailed around the NE cape and off towards Pohnpei, 325 nm away.

Our expectation had been for a stable weather pattern - as promised by the NWS and computer generated GFS GRIBS - but instead we got two days of calms with only brief, screeching interruptions by squalls which sometimes (and always at night) shifted and accelerated our winds and soaked us before stalling or turning back and coming at us from another point of the compass. Grrr.

Day three we finally got sun and tradewinds and Carina was once again blazing along putting on miles. Our last night at sea was as perfect a sailing night as can be expected; 15-20 knots abeam, 2 meter seas, a waxing nearly-full moon and only puffy clouds drifting by to change the scene in the immense sky above.

2.2.2 Chuuk to Puluwat

Soggy Paws – March 2014: By the time we got checked out from Chuuk and ready to go, the weather forecast had changed drastically for our trip. When we had set our departure date, the winds had been forecast at about 10 knots. By the time we left, the forecast was for 20+ knots!!

Had we been in Pohnpei, a harbor with very good protection and much easier communication with the officials, we would have stayed a couple of days and waited for a better window. But Chuuk isn't the best place to be if the weather deteriorates. AND the text forecast we got at the same time as the GRIB file, was more optimistic about the forecast. At the time there was a tropical depression forming to the east of Chuuk, forecast to drift slowly WNW. We wanted to beat it to Puluwat, which has a better anchorage for weird winds. Since supposedly, a weather forecaster creates the text forecast from the machine-generated GRIB forecast, we opted to believe their forecast over the GRIB files.

Turns out, this time at least, that the GRIB file was more accurate.

We left Chuuk in fairly pleasant conditions, and were congratulating ourselves on the decision to go, right up until about 1am, when the wind (as forecast by the GRIB files) started to pick up. Our "Genoa only, on a pole" sail plan, which was OK when the winds were 10 knots, turned out to be terrible (for steering) when the winds got up to 20 knots. Neither the wind vane nor the autopilot was very good in the windy conditions with large waves going down wind, with only the single headsail out, at least on the heading we were trying to make. Had we had a wing-on-wing configuration with either the mainsail or staysail on the opposite from the genoa, it would have been better. But we don't do sailhandling in the middle of the night in rough conditions if we can avoid it. So we just gutted it out and hand-steered when forced to, when the wind got up.

At dawn it was obvious that we had the GRIB-forecast conditions, not the text forecast conditions. As best we could tell without a real-time satellite photo, the depression had moved west and was nearly at our same latitude but 150 miles south of us. We had about 20-22 knots steady with gusts a little higher when the squalls went past. The seas had built to about 6-8 feet and were pushing the stern around a lot, making the steering situation even worse. (Overall, these are not terrible conditions, we just normally don't choose to go out in weather like this if we can help it).

We finally rolled in the genny to "squall size" and turned on the engine to help steady out the steering. We also pulled out the staysail, sheeted in hard on the other side, to help with the roll. By now the winds had gone east far enough that we were going dead down wind. Had we been

on a longer passage, we would have adjusted our sail plan and/or angled off to a heading (temporarily) that would be easier for the steering.

The engine helped a lot for the steering, but I hated to be running the engine when we (finally) had some wind. It also helped us pick the speed up some. We wanted to get in AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. At that point, we were both pretty tired--not much sleep during the night, on or off watch, in those conditions.

On the approach to Puluwat, there are a couple of shoal areas, which I was worried about. The CM93 chart is vague, with few soundings, and the Google Earth chart is "air brushed" out in part of the area. Though the CM93 chart was fairly accurate in Chuuk, it's not accurate everywhere out here. So we got on the morning SSB net and asked about going over those banks in our current nasty weather. Fortunately we were assured that it would be OK. Others in previous weeks had come through there in similar conditions. So we headed straight for our waypoint at 07-20.5N / 149-11.8E just off the entrance to Puluwat's narrow channel.

Going over the banks I'd been worried about, we avoided the shallowest spot (30 feet on the charts, coming up abruptly from about 6000 feet), and so saw least depth of about 40 feet during the whole last 5 miles. But most of the time it was 150 feet or more, only occasionally rising to 60 feet and then dropping off again. I had worried about nasty washing machine seas with this variable bottom, but didn't notice the seas much worse near the banks.

The next thing I was worried about was having seas breaking across the channel. There isn't much protection from the big wind and seas until you get up inside the channel. The depths go from 150 feet to 40 feet to 20 feet in about 100 yards.

We had been warned that it was narrow, and it was! If we hadn't had good Google Earth charts, a good set of waypoints from friends, and assurances that others had come in in similar conditions, we might not have ventured in.

Dave was standing on our lookout position giving encouragement and directions, as I steered our way using the waypoints provided by Kokomo. One tiny end of a wave did break across the entrance, but we could see it wasn't bad. Fortunately we were between squalls, so visibility was reasonable, at noon, even with the overcast. One minute we were out in the storm, the next minute... ahhh... calm and quiet in a pretty little lagoon with a 25-30' deep sand bottom, and a sand beach. Very pretty and very quiet.

2.2.3 Puluwat to Woleai

Soggy Paws – April 2014: Day 1 - Watching the weather has been aggravating the last few days. The forecast changes radically every 6 hours. But at least we were in a nice protected location. We had a couple of nice days, but also several squally blustery days. One weather window we let go by, because the forecast the day before had looked ugly, and we'd committed Dave to fixing someone's water tank in the village. When the day dawned sunny and with the right winds, we weren't ready to leave.

We finally opted to leave this morning in light winds in an iffy window. However, there's no better window in the works in the next week. It looks like the ITCZ (or something similar) is hanging right over 7N in western Micronesia. Waiting another couple of days may bring westerly winds. So we opted to go in light easterlies in somewhat still-unsettled weather.

So far, in the 7 hours we've been underway, we have seen wind from the East, South, and North. There is a really weak low hanging around with light circulating winds. I think we just sailed through the north edge of it. So we are motorsailing right now, trying to see what the wind is going to do before making yet another huge sail change.

It's 300 miles to Woleai, our primary destination. But we go right past Lamotrek in 150 miles, and there are two other smaller atolls between Lamotrek and Woleai, so if things get ugly unexpectedly, we have several places we could duck in.

Day 2 - The winds haven't been as forecast the whole trip. There has been a trough laying across all of western Micronesia, and the GRIB files just haven't been able to predict where the trough was going to go, and what the resulting wind was going to be. Instead of the forecast E 10-12 we have had winds all over the map, and very unsettled weather. We thought we would be able to sail slowly the first 2 full days, then probably have to motor in the last 50 miles. But instead we had to motor frequently when the wind dropped to zilch.

Then yesterday afternoon the wind switched to strong WSW--right in our face. We had a fall-back plan--fall off and head WNW to intermediate atolls of Lamotrek or Olimarao, and wait for the winds to change. Fortunately the wind eased to 8-10 knots and eventually swung around to the north. We had a beautiful calm sail all night long. Other than 3 hours of drizzle (but no accompanying violent weather), it was a perfect overnight sail.

Lamotrek was too close to stop--we passed it in the middle of the night. Olimarao was a bit further, and we arrived off the pass around 8am. It is an uninhabited satellite atoll of Lamotrek--the men from Lamotrek come up here periodically to fish, but no one is permanently based here. (So we don't have to do the "village" la-di-da--something that gets tiring after two or three of them in a row).

We stayed in Olimarao for a couple of days, and then moved on to Woleai (see passage notes in Olimarao to Woleai section).

2.2.4 Puluwat to Lamotrek

Downtime - March 2013: The sail to Lamotrek from Puluwat was just over 170 miles and the winds were predicted to clock north again so we stayed well north of the rhumb line to be ready for the shift this time to eliminate having wind on the nose. Well the shift never came and all our planning did was add a few extra miles to the trip.

We had been sailing on a broad reach with the big reacher sail out all night long and at one point were only going 4 knots with only 10 knots of wind. At that speed we would not arrive until 8 pm, well after dark. A few hours later the winds picked up and we were going 7 knots again and were due to arrive by 2 pm so sometime you just have to be patient and wait for the wind to show up.

I put the lines out at dawn and in a few hours the fish started biting! We hooked a few Mahi to start with and were able to get them aboard while keeping the sail up. Then a big black marlin came by and took the bait! This fish was not happy and at one point was charging the boat jumping wildly and heading straight for us! About 50 feet away he turned away and took off leaping through the air. While he was doing this I was frantically winding in the 1000 feet of slack line he had stripped off the reel while we were rolling up the sail. I knew better than to get him to the boat to quickly and let the pole do the work and reeled in the slack when he quit fighting. It took

about 40 minutes for the fish to tire out and then we were able to get him along side the back steps and take a few pictures and get the hook out of his bill and let him go to live another day. If we can let these magnificent fish go unharmed we do, others that either swallow the hook or drown we put in the freezer and give away to the islands.

A few hours later we had 3 more Mahi strikes and got them all aboard. This made 11 mahi, 1 marlin landed and 2 marlin, 1 wahoo and 4 mahi that got away in the last 700 miles!! Some of the best fishing we ever seen on Downtime!

We entered the pass mid afternoon on 1st of March and decided to anchor next to Pogue Island for the night and make our way the last 8 miles south to the main island next day.

2.2.5 Olimarao to Woleai

Soggy Paws - April 2014: We had really light winds, and some light westerlies, in the latter half of April. We sat at Olimarao while the winds clocked all the way around. The next day the forecast was for light NW, and since Olimarao was to the WSW, we went for it, knowing full well we'd probably have to motor in. We sailed through the day and most of the night until daylight, when we were near Ifalik, and then motored on in Woleai.

Some sailors would opt to wait for more wind, with no chance of having to motor. But given the choice, we'd much prefer to go in light air, and motor if we have to, than go in the heavy wind and seas. On this last trip of ~200 miles, which lasted 50 hours duration, we motor-sailed about 17 hours. Our fuel consumption while motor-sailing "easy" is about .6-.8 gallons per hour. So we burned about 10 gallons of diesel to go 200 miles in easy conditions. We'll take it. We have plenty of fuel to motor all the way to Yap, if we have to. And we can top off in Yap without too much trouble. Fuel out here in the major cities is around \$5-\$5.50 per gallon--not cheap, but cheaper than trying to acquire some in the outer atolls, where we were quoted \$10-\$11/gallon, if it's available.

The Woleai CM93 chart is out by almost a half a mile. We had a couple of waypoints from friends, and a decent Google Earth shot, but the SE pass we came in is so wide, and the winds/seas were so calm, that I wasn't sure we were in the right place. But we were.

Downtime - April 2013: We set sail around 3pm for the short 120 mile sail west to Woleai Atoll from Olimarao island. The forecasts were showing winds to ease to 15 knots out of the east so we set the screecher sail and expected a slow 20 hour passage. Instead of easing, the winds did the opposite and increased to over 25 knots! With a breeze like this Downtime was really moving and surfing down the swells at over 11 knots at times! Needless to say we were going way to fast to fish and just sat back and enjoyed the smooth downwind ride.

Around 10 pm with the winds still blowing strong we decided to change sail and slow the boat down so we would not pass up our destination during the early morning hours. Furling this huge sail can be quite a challenge in high winds like we were experiencing and I was not looking forward to going on deck and wrestling with it while the boat going 10 knots and sliding down waves in the dark. We were lucky tonight and everything rolled up like it was supposed to and the dreaded job was done in 15 minutes and Downtime was now cruising along at a comfortable 7 knots. Having cover nearly 80 miles in the first 8 hours of the trip we had just 40 to go and were due to arrive a 7 am at the south pass into the atoll.

As we approached the island we were hailed on the radio 4 miles out by a watchful eye on shore who asked us our vessel name and intention. This was a first in a long time that we had been spotted so far out and we were impressed that they were watching their waters so closely. After entering the lagoon we were handed over to a guy name Tommy who would be our go to guy for the week and he gave us directions into the anchorage. (see Wolei section for more)

2.2.6 Wolei to Ulithi

Soggy Paws - April 2014: Unlike Downtime, we had very light winds for about 3 weeks in the latter half of April. We also had almost 10 days of westerlies (very light, fortunately). So we waited at Woleai until the first breath of a northeast wind. The forecast promised winds from ENE starting out at 15 knots and dropping off to 10 knots.

Well, when we motored out of Woleai (via the NE pass), there was almost no wind. We motor-sailed for a number of hours, charging batteries, until the wind filled in. We never did see 15 knots, except in squalls. For one whole day, we had light squalls--with max winds to about 18 knots in the squalls, and zero knots after the squalls, and shifty winds from SE to NE and back. Once or twice we gave up sailing and motored for awhile until the wind steadied up again. We needed to average about 4 knots to make it in before dark on the 3rd day.

Since the forecast had been for 15 knots, we had not rigged our light-air sail, so we were stuck with the heavy genoa that does OK, but not great, in light air.

Fortunately, instead of petering out on the last day, the wind steadied up and we had a nice sail all the way to Ulithi. We opted to sail right across Z-- Bank (just SE of Ulithi), because we crossed it in light winds and during the day on a sunny day. It was no problem, but good light would be useful to cross it (see waypoints in Ulithi section). In the dark, or with really strong winds, I'd think about going around.

We put out our fishing lines before going over the bank, and fished all the way into Ulithi and never got a nibble.

Downtime - April 2013: We set sail from Wolei with intention to sail strait to Sorol Island 220 miles to the west but the shifting winds had other plans for us. The wind was predicted to be easterly at 15 knots on the weather report but shifted a little more north and intensified to 25 knots. With winds of this force Downtime moves between 8 and 9 knots and at that speed we would arrive at 7-8 pm and just after dark. Our choice was to turn north to Ulithi or try to slow way down to be able to arrive during daylight at Sorol. We decided to head north and set a course that would get us to Ulithi by the following morning after sailing 280 miles and two nights at sea.

Sailing during our first day we only had one line get hit but the fish did not take the bait. I put the lines back out at sunrise on the second day and we drug them all day before we had any takers. But, when the fish did finally show they came in force and all 4 lines were screaming with a mahi on them! Somehow we managed to get them all aboard before the shark that was following us took a bite out of any of them. I seen his dark shadow going after one of our fish but Daria must have been reeling too fast for him to sink his teeth in.

All that wind we had been having kicked up quite a swell by the second day and we were feeling the effects of the big waves pounding against Downtime. It is a great feeling at the end of a passage to see your destination appear on the horizon. The first thing you see is coconut trees,

the highest points on the islands appear on the horizon at about 10 miles out. As you get closer you start picking up the island itself and the waves crashing on the reefs around them.

2.2.7 *Ulithi to Yap*

Soggy Paws – April 2014: We up-anchored from our pretty little anchorage at Sorlen and headed south inside the atoll to check out the wreck site of the USS Mississinewa on our way to Yap.

With a little difficulty we located it. I tried to get Dave interested in making a short dive on the Mississinewa while I waited onboard Soggy Paws (without anchoring), but he thought that was too risky. So he jumped in with mask and fins and snorkel and just looked at it from snorkel depths. He could clearly see the bow section about 70 feet below him. He took a picture. That was good enough to say "mission accomplished" on that one.

We left by one of many breaks in the reef on the west side of the atoll at about 10am, and proceeded direct to Yap with an (ETA tomorrow morning). The wind was light and after unsuccessfully trying to sail without the engine, turned the engine back on and motorsailed, making pretty good time.

The wind died off about 10pm, so we had to motor the rest of the night. But by morning we could see Yap in the distance. We finally anchored in the inner harbor about 10am. Yap has a pretty well-marked channel coming in--with a few of the markers with proper red and green lights on them. And our CM93 chart, and the Google Earth charts we made, are pretty accurate.

Swingin' on a Star - March 2009: Ulithi to Yap is a 97 nautical mile trip from hook to hook. With only 12 hours of daylight this time of year we needed to do more than 7 knots to avoid a night time arrival. We left the pass at Ulithi at 6am, backtracking our course on the way in, in the moonlight.

After playing with the sails and the auxiliaries for a little bit we settled on a double reefed main with both auxs running at 1,800 rpms to produce an average speed over ground in the mid 8s.

The main made little difference most of the day because the wind was about 5-7 knots from astern making the apparent wind about zilch. Dragging the double reefed main through the air doesn't cost much and we did make a few tenths of a knot once in a while when the wind backed and picked up (usually 50 degrees to starboard, apparent). The raised main stabilizes the rig but in the calm seas this was not a real consideration.

The day passed under blue skies with lots of little fluffy white cumulus clouds and the occasional rain shower passing by. Miki slept almost all day (amazing really) and Hideko and I exchanged watches at the helm. We saw nothing. No boats, no fish, no nothing.

2.2.8 *Yap to Palau*

Soggy Paws – May 2014: We checked out of Yap on the morning of our departure. The Yap officials would not permit us to check out late the afternoon before and leave at the crack of dawn, as we had wanted to. So we had to wait until their office opened at 8am to check out. But it was done quickly and painlessly and without cost. We made one last stop at the grocery store--hoping that tomatoes would have magically appeared on the shelves. But alas, we had to make our passage tomato-free.

As seems to have been the pattern during our whole trip across Micronesia, we left port on another long passage with the promise of wind that never materialized.

And also true to form, Dave didn't want to drift along in the light winds, so we motored a lot of the way to Palau.

The entire trip was pretty uneventful. We spent most of the second day with passing squalls and doing the zero-to-25-to-zero squall "two step". But about midnight that day, the final squall passed and our last 12 hours was pretty good.

The whole passage was 260 miles, from the anchorage in Yap to the commercial wharf in Palau. It took us 53 hours, and we motored 31 hours of that.

Our check-in in Palau was pretty hassle-free. We tied up to the commercial wharf at 1pm, and by about 3pm, we were completely done.

Downtime - May 2013: We set sail from Yap just after 5 on Friday afternoon. We were sailing slow and I decided to leave two poles out just to see what might bite them on the moonless night.

At around 11 pm one fishing pole started screaming as the line tore off the reel with something big on it! I first thought it had snagged a log or something because what could possibly see a bait on a night this dark? Well that idea lasted only a few minute when the pole started jerking erratically after I gave it a few tugs, it was definitely a fish, a big one at that! It turned out to be a 150 ft swordfish that eventually got off, thankfully.

The winds had been light and we were just sailing on the Genoa and going 5 knots. We only had 80 miles to sail during the night to reach Ngulu Atoll and from where we were at I calculated we would arrive no sooner than 8 am so I double checked the course and set the auto pilot and took a little nap. The fish must have taken a lot out of us both because the next thing we knew it was 7 am and the atoll was 3 miles off to our starboard. Apparently the wind had picked up and we arrived an hour before I thought we would, just thank goodness I had steered the boat well away from the island or else we would be wrecked on a very nasty looking reef! A good lesson I learned in the past, never point the boat directly at an island! It is always better to backtrack or divert a few miles than to hit a reef!

We were stopping here without advance permission, so I got on the radio and began hailing the island to say hello. A while later we were greeted by George and his son the caretakers of this deserted piece of island paradise.

Yohelah - March 2010: This was a quick but boring passage. The winds were light and we spent two days trying to balance the desire for a short trip with the hope to sail when we could. The wind was behind us and varied between 4 and 14 knots. Sometimes we motored, sometimes we sailed, but mostly we motor-sailed. We arrived at the island early Monday morning as planned and found a barrier reef with no marked passage across, and a 2.5 knot outgoing current in the 3 mile channel around the inside reef. It was a bit of a white-knuckler for me, but we arrived safe and sound at the dock where we found all the officials waiting for us.

2.2.9 Kapingamerangi North

Swinging on a Star - January 2009: The pass was already running a good knot or so on the ebb when we left Kapinga. I don't like having the current with me. Exiting was no problem,

thought it did require more concentration than I readily have on tap at 7AM.

We walked the reef around to the west and laid in a course for Chuuk, 335T. We made over 8 knots all morning in a nice 13-14 knot beamish breeze. Then, on my shift of course, the wind died. We started slogging along at as low as 5 knots. The wind came forward and lightened. Oh well, it was still a lovely day and the only squalls we saw were in the early morning and none of them came after us.

Day Two: What an ugly 24 hours. Hideko's shift started at 8PM and by the time it was over at 2AM we were surrounded by squalls. We were getting hit left and right with the wind going from light and variable to 20 plus knots, with an array of directions as far as 90 degrees off of the forecast gradient wind. We tried to pick a window to sail for Chuuk with as little cloud forecast as possible, so much for the cloud cover data in the GRIBs.

By mid way through my shift I was seeing a fair amount of lightning and some large solid shapes moving about on the radar. I began tracking a really big rain mass vectoring in on us at about 5AM. We had reef one in the main, standard night protocol, but something told me that wasn't going to be enough for this one. Just as I started to reef down Hideko came up to check on things. "Want some help?", she said. Yes please! We got reef two in the main just as the storm came on.

As they often do, this one hit like a wall. Calm, then 10 knots and quickly 15 and some rain, then rapidly 20 knots and pounding rain, followed immediately by 25 knots and a total black out, then 30 knots. You never know how far they are going to go until they stop going, and you never know if you've got enough reefs in either. Reef three on this boat is a go forward and collect the main sail at the mast affair, I was hoping not to need that. The wind howled up to 35 knots and the already moderate seas began to get really peaky and unpleasant.

It was a big nasty thunderstorm though, and it wasn't over in a minute, like the run of the mill squall. It kept pumping out 30 some knots of wind and the accompanying seas for almost an hour. Every now and then a blast of light would illuminate everything around, a startling contrast to the total blackness otherwise extant. As nasty as it is when you're in it, there's nothing you can really do but protect the boat and head for the exit as best as possible. So Hideko went back to sleep and I just drove the boat. I was kind of tired so I went back to the auto pilot but it took me a while to get used to riding it so that we didn't tack or go beam onto the wind. I got a little lazy at one point and we ended up crashing through waves at 13 knots.

Two hours later when the wind finally came down under 25 knots we got a nice ride for an hour or so before the wind went light again. It was overcast the rest of the day with minor squalls everywhere. This has been perhaps our gloomiest passage to date. Odd in the northern hemisphere trades. Oh well, we are still on schedule for an arrival in Chuuk late tomorrow so hopefully we'll see some stars tonight (I'm not holding my breath).

Day Three (arrival): It was yet another nasty 24 hours but we are happily anchored in Chuuk Lagoon off of Uman island. We had total overcast last night and constant squalls. I have never seen this kind of weather before. The atmosphere literally pumped out new squalls constantly. We had a hit or a near miss every hour or two. As soon as one would pass we would either see

the next immediately upon us or it would materialize after a short break where the wind would go light and variable in the dense overcast.

We had departed with a pretty good forecast with decent wind and minimal convection. The problem with forecasts in the south pacific, and this part of the equatorial pacific, is that there are no developed nations here. If you are in waters of interest to the USA you can get a pretty solid forecast. The satellite coverage in this part of the world is not on a par nor is the talent interpreting the data from what we have seen. I would rate the forecasts here at 50% of the accuracy of those in the Caribbean or Hawaii area. As an example, our forecast from yesterday night for the waters surrounding Chuuk was "partly cloudy and isolated showers". The reality was well beyond "mostly cloudy and scattered squalls", into the "total overcast and continual squalls" zone. Even 12 hours out the forecast was not even close.

Kuop atoll is just south of Chuuk lagoon and we were looking forward to getting behind it. We would sail much faster without the big sharp seas, not to mention increasing comfort aboard. We were doing 9 knots and close to the atoll when another squall formed up and came sliding down between us and Kuop. There was nothing to do but head up and slow down. It blew by in a half hour or so with wind in the 30s. We took care to keep plenty of sea room between us and the atoll. Our charts were good but apparently not perfectly aligned for WGS84 when compared to radar. The squalls were so full of rain that you couldn't see through them with radar and the atoll had a vary light leeward return anyway because it is just submerged reef for the most part.

It was getting close to sunset and we really needed to make Chuuk lagoon or find an alternate. Anchoring at the atoll was a possibility but the south pass was not looking good given the seas rolling by. There are two passes on the chart located along the west side of the reef but they are both narrow and shallow as charted. Doable though perhaps.

We pressed on and got rerouted or slowed a bit by two more squalls. Things seemed to be getting nastier. Perhaps the higher islands in the Chuuk lagoon were launching even more convection or perhaps the weather was just going that way.

We came out from behind Kuop a little more than an hour before sunset and the seas came up quite a bit. We were behind Chuuk at this point, but the channel and the now 20 plus steady wind was making a mess of things. Two more squalls passed in front of us and we were now sailing in 30 knots apparent (probably 23 true) steady. As we got close to the pass we rolled up the jib and started the engines. Both Yanmars came up, so down went the main. Our course through the south pass was dead to weather and we didn't want the hassle of sails flogging about. If you have only one auxiliary perhaps it would be wise to leave the main up in this sort of situation.

We came in the pass on our charted track and finally got in contact with Whistler. He had made the port around 15:00 and indicated that the track was good through the pass. As we came in through the pass the seas were big. Steep three and four footers came right at us. It was hard to see the shoals to port and starboard as the pass is deep and wide. It was also close to sunset and very overcast. If this wasn't a ship caliber channel (very wide and deep) we probably would have had to stay outside. Staying outside here would require sailing well off the surrounding reefs.

Angelique had anchored two miles outside of the pass but pulled up to follow us in. We had thought that perhaps the lagoon would be calmer than outside, but it is a very large lagoon. It was as bad or worse as the area outside the pass, smaller waves but steeper. We bashed into big head seas and 20-30 knots of apparent wind for another hour to reach Uman island, which seemed like the best and closest place to anchor for the night. It is 20 miles inside the lagoon through shoals and many ship wrecks to the port but it was only 6 miles to Uman.

As we approached the leeward side of Uman the seas went flat and the wind relented. It is a nice little harbor. It was getting fairly dark but we came in close to the island until we found 60 feet. We made a circle around the spot to ensure that there were no hazards in the swinging arc and then dropped the Rocna. The anchor set instantly, and then I heard the unpleasant sound of coral scraping the chain. It doesn't hurt our chain but it is no good for the coral. I don't like to damage coral bottoms. Our chart gave no indication of the bottom type here but given the scuba reputation Chuuk has I would guess that pure sand is tricky to come by.

3 Kosrae



3.1 Approach, Arrival and Formalities

There are two main harbors in Kosrae, Lelu Harbor, and Okat Harbor. Okat is the the main ship harbor. It is preferred that yachts clear in at Lelu Harbor.

Several cruisers reported outrageous fees being charged by the port captain.

Changing Spots – Feb 2016 – Port Fees Maybe Not Revised: It is not over yet! Apparently, the Kosrae legislature still has the authority to increase their port authority fees without notice. Somebody thinks that by increasing the fees for pleasure vessels, they can solve their fiscal difficulties, and vetoed the bill making the fee changes. There is lobbying taking place to fix that possibility, but in the meantime, please contact the port authority, at the emails listed, to determine the current fee - before arrival. The \$30 fee is great, if still valid, but don't forget the customary quarantine fee of \$25.

Indeed, please email them to ask about their fees (even if you just thought about visiting Kosrae). Jesse, at the Port Authority is one of (the only?) good guys there, and may have been a bit over zealous in hopes of the new fees bringing more cruisers.

Ariel IV – January 2016 – Port Fees Revised! We have some good news for all the boats going to Micronesia and especially Kosrae.

After a long time of both high port fees and confusion we have finally got this e-mail from the Port Authority on Kosrae. It makes a whole lot difference and now boats can start sailing again to Kosrae. Rumor tells that last year only one yacht visited Kosrae.

You now pay 30 dollars for 90 days and then 1 dollar a day after that.

No Custom or Immigration fees!

Quarantine fee of 25 dollars.

Here is the email we received from Kosrae officials;

Hello Sir,

You are very welcome to visit our beautiful island. As for the fees, we have been working with our legislature to amend the port charges to a reasonable amount. I'm very glad to tell you that they did amend it.

Our port fees for pleasure vessels is only \$30.00. Again thank you for inquiring and hope to see you soon. Also sir, if I may ask that you help us to pass on the changes in our port fees. If additional information is needed please do let me know.

Thank you and Best Regards

Jesse,

Seaport Manager

To make sure there was no misunderstanding, we wrote again and asked if everything was included in this 30 dollar, like entry fee, harbour fee, docking fee and anchorage fee and the answer was "yes sir".

Changing Spots – November 2015 – Still Outrageous Port Fees: In summary: if you enjoy idyllic tropical mountains and scenery, with friendly people, and a great welcoming host - and you can tolerate a money-grubbing, petty official, then this is a place that should not be missed.

A bill with proposed new fees were presented to the legislature Dec 21, and we are awaiting the results.

Please help by emailing their Port Authority at all three email addresses given below (even if you don't think you will go there):

Ignore your charts when entering Lelu harbor.

Kosrae is a beautiful small island which is the easternmost state of FSM. It is also called the jewel of FSM. The people are friendly, and very welcoming.

BUT, the port authority is a problem. Several years ago, somebody there decided to interpret the law so that cruisers became very heavily "taxed". It is not clear what ever happened to the funds, and some boats skipped the country without paying. I don't know what happens at all ports when you show up at the next port without your "exit papers". But it wasn't a big deal at Pohnpei.

The result was that instead of over a dozen cruisers visiting every year, there were no more than one. Smith, from Ace, (who is still here and extremely helpful and supportive of cruisers) has a sign in book for cruisers. It was almost empty for several years when the fees were high.

A few years ago, this was supposedly fixed.

Soggy Paws Compendium for Micronesia published a letter from the secretary of the chamber of commerce, Feb, 2013, stating that the problem had been fixed, and that cruisers were again welcome. The fee was \$25 quarantine, and \$35 check in out.

Spots arrived here from Majuro in Nov. 2015. (Instead of the placid passage, in hopes of thoroughly testing the new code zero and its furler, it was a rough, slow trip. The day before last we caught the edge of a tropical depression, which turned into a cyclone by the time it got to Chuuk.)

The nicest check in anywhere!

Smith had arranged for all the officials to meet at his place, where the check in was pleasant and painless under the mango tree - after a cold drink and fresh chilled mango.

He even arranged for immigration to bring our cruising permit, which we hadn't received before we left. The quarantine officer offered to give us a ride to town, where we could go to immigration to make more copies of our passports. "You are invited to Thanksgiving next week, we are going to roast a pig. Stay for Christmas!" A wonderful welcome! Mark, from the Pacific Treelodge resort, and Eco divers is also very helpful and supportive.

Next morning there was a hail on the VHF radio: sailboat, this is port authority. He had been at our check in but didn't say anything. When we met, he said I heard you might want to stay a month and didn't want any surprises for you. Here is a copy of the fees. I explained there must be a mistake, since I have notice that this problem was fixed over 2 years ago, he said this is the new fee schedule.

When I did the math, it added up to \$225, plus a daily fee of \$15.52 per day (USD) for Changing Spots, a 40 foot catamaran. If you plan to visit Kosrae, I strongly recommend determining the current fee structure, directly from Port Authority, immediately before arrival, and document it. It would be a shame to skip it, so here are contact persons at port authority. There is a chance that no officials will answer emails. From what I heard, the blame goes to a legislator named Martin (?), and he has been holding the Port Authority's feet to the fire.

Jesse is a junior person, and very sympathetic to the problem.

jessewilly8@gmail.com , wkinere@gmail.com , william_tosie@yahoo.com ,

From the fee structure given, it seems (is!) arbitrary which ones you are charged, and I heard of a boat paying over \$1000. I was only being charged the first 3 on the list.

When trying check out, after creating a fuss about the fees, somehow they requested "only" \$10 per day, plus the other fees. Ask what are the current fees. If he tells you a large number, please tell him how ridiculous/greedy/stupid and/or? it is, and that you certainly won't come.

They may take cruiser's responses to his bosses, and maybe it will get fixed. Indeed, please email them even if you just think about visiting.

To make matters worse, for these fees, they supply absolutely no official facilities for cruisers! We are totally dependent on the kindness and generosity of Smith.

The email address for immigration, for your cruising permit is: imhq@mail.fm . As noted elsewhere, no problem if you don't receive it in time, just print copies of your application, high you emailed them in advance.

Kosrae Chamber of Commerce - Feb 2013 (From Noonsite): I am the secretary for the Kosrae Chamber of Commerce Board. We just learned of the port fees controversy.

I have had a personal conversation with the Secretary of the Port Authority Board and he assured me that the Port Authority is seriously concerned about the fees issue. They held a special meeting last week to discuss and resolve.

At this point they have taken two steps: One is to meet with the port general manager and advise him to be very careful on his interpretation of the regulations relating to the fees and to make sure that his fees are correct within the current regulation; The second step is to review the current fee structure and modernize it. Especially, to separate the fees for recreational vessels from those for commercial vessels.

Please understand that cruisers are very welcome on Kosrae. In this instance I think that some unfortunate things were said on both sides, however the community welcomes cruisers as does the business community and island leaders.

Katrina Adams - Kosrae Chamber of Commerce Board

3.1.1 Lelu Harbor (East Coast)

Lelu Harbor is protected by the reef and Lelu Island, is the harbour of the capital Tofol, and is on the eastern side of the island. This is the preferred port of entry for yachts.

Changing Spots – November 2015: Navigation into Lelu is simple, as long as you:

- Have adequate visibility, and
- Ignore or turn off your chartplotter.

The track on my Navionics chart on Raymarine chartplotter, and CM93 charts on Sea IQ on my iPad, showed me sailing over the reef, but Google earth charts on Sea-IQ, clearly showed the track. The good news is that the large channel entrance was very easy to see: obviously where the surf wasn't breaking. I never saw the range noted on the chart.

Anchor in 35 - 45 feet off Ace Hardware (looks like the back of a warehouse), before you get to the big white church. It is fine to anchor in the middle of the channel, (more breeze and fewer bugs) since there is no shipping traffic. I have found the holding to be good, but be aware that a cruiser dragged onto the reef several months ago. Tie your dinghy to the stairs in the concrete wall at Smith's house, right next to Ace. Use a stern anchor for your dinghy to keep away from the concrete wall.

Ace Hardware, and supermarket are right there, very conveniently located. Don't miss a dinghy trip (or more!) up the mangrove swamp to Bully's restaurant. If you time it right you can ride the tide up, and then down.

Westward II - Jan 2014: We anchored at 05-19.8N / 163-01.2E in 13m mud. We checked in during normal hours. It cost us \$24 Quarantine Fees. We were told that on leaving, there would be a \$25 anchoring fee and \$2/ft in Port Fees. Make sure you have applied for and received a copy of your Cruising Permit, in advance. Take 3 copies of the cruising permit with you to check in. One boat that had applied for the permit by email, but did not have a copy in hand when they checked in, had some significant problems. Keep bugging the Immigration office, politely by email, before you leave, to get them to send you a copy of your permit.

We had no trouble finding the entrance to Lelu Harbor, but even the new Navionics Android app on our tablet, the chart was off. So be careful. I wouldn't advise entry in the dark.

Downtime - Feb 2013: We had received a few emails from other cruisers saying that the port captain was a real piece of work and had been trying to get the cruisers to pay large fees to clear out. We met the customs, quarantine, immigration, and the dreaded port captain and they all treated us nicely and welcomed us to their island with minimal paperwork and then we were officially cleared in.

I guess the problem was that the previous port captain was pocketing the fees and now the system was broke and scrambling for resources and charging unrealistic fees to cruisers instead of collecting fees from the cargo ships like they should. Typical government games.....

When we were ready to leave, I dropped Daria off at immigration to clear out while I was at the dentist. The men are always flustered when a pretty girl comes in and they gladly stamped the passports and gave her clearance papers for no charge. Well in my experience that is all you need to leave port.. We finished our last minute shopping and left port to do some diving before we sailed to Pohnpei. When the Port Captain gets the news of this I am sure he will not be very happy..... but hey it is my message to him to be nicer to the other cruisers next time.

Noonsite - Feb 2012: Call Kosrae Marine Services on Channel 16 on arrival and they will contact Customs and Immigration for you.

If no answer, the captain can go ashore at the steps in the back of the Ace Hardware and ask Smith or his family for assistance, they are all very cruiser friendly. Either they will call the authorities or you could hitch-hike or get a taxi to clear in yourself in Tofol at the Custom & Immigration offices in the same building as the Post Office.

A copy of your Micronesia Cruising Permit will be required by Immigration. They will call the quarantine officer so he can inspect the boat. The only fee is \$25 Quarantine fee. Quarantine might confiscate any fresh fruit.

Do not delay checking in, but do so directly on arrival.

Clearance is also possible at Okat Harbour on the western coast, although Lelu is the preferred Port of Entry. The airport is there.

Due to concern about the coral, boats are asked not to anchor around the island except in Lelu harbour.

Here the bottom is mud and about 30-40ft deep. Put plenty of scope and allow for possible dragging in wind gusts and squalls. Your boat might not lay in the wind, due to currents going in/out if you anchor too far away from shore.

Anchoring Eastwards of ACE Hardware building is said to be firmer bottom with less dragging. From this anchorage, you can easily leave your dinghy at the shore and access the island.

After checking in, it may, depending on the weather, be more comfortable to move to Okat Harbour, on the west side of the island, close to the airport. 3 big yellow moorings are installed here for transiting yachts as it is requested that you do not anchor anywhere in the marine preserve. The only drawback is that you are much further away from anywhere except the airport.

Smith Sigrah (Ace Hardware) has taken over his father Ted long welcoming attitude to cruisers (since early 70's) and Mark & Maria (Pacific Treelodge Resort) make a visit to Kosrae a memorable experience.

Sloepmouche - January 2012: After a slow, but uneventful (much better than rough and exciting with breaking gear!) passage from Kwajalein, we arrived in scenic and well-protected **Lelu harbor**. We anchored at 05°19'72N, 163°01'37E right in front of the Ace Hardware (back of the store, looks like a warehouse, no sign) in 30-40' and a muddy bottom. Lay out plenty of chain to avoid dragging when occasional wind shifts are experienced. Sometimes whirlwinds are experienced and you need plenty of swinging room.

We read back in old late 80s SSCA Commodores' Bulletin that Ted Sigrah, the owner of Ace, was a great friend of cruisers so we looked for him. He passed away, but fortunately his eldest son, Smith, and brothers took on the relay in welcoming cruisers on their island. It is very interesting to peruse the numerous visitors' books signed by cruisers (several we knew for more than 30 years!). You are welcome to tie your dinghy to his seafront concrete steps and pass between their house and the Ace Hardware store. We recommend Smith becomes the SSCA Cruising Station for Kosrae.

The entry formalities were painless with Customs and Immigration clearances made ashore in Tofol. I showed them our Cruising Permit and all was fine. When back at the Ace Hardware dock, I met the Quarantine officer who came onboard to check for restricted animals or plants. Alas for Zenne and Zwetke (our dogs), pets are not allowed ashore, but are confined onboard. The only fee on arrival is \$25 USD for quarantine.

Kosrae is the easternmost state among the four states in FSM and should not be missed. Very laid back, this island is fun to visit and quite a contrast to the low-lying islands of the Marshall Islands. There are big mountains, some waterfalls and great soil for growing food.

Some friends leaving Majuro decided to sail straight to Pohnpei. We were very happy to make the slight detour here, as this is well worth a stop. We stayed almost six weeks!

3.1.2 Okat Harbor (West Coast)

Noonsite - March 2012: Okat Harbor is the main ship harbour and is well-buoyed with alignment markers to get in. Caution should be exercised as big fishing vessels often end up on the reefs along the entrance!. It is on the west side of the island.

Customs and Immigration Officials will need to be dinghied out to the boat, unless it is possible to raft up to one of the tuna boats at the wharf.

It is preferred that yachts clear in at Lelu.

There is also the possibility of clearing in at the airport.

This harbour provides a better anchorage than Lelu, with the added advantages that it is close to the airport and WiFi could perhaps be picked up in the anchorage.

There is a small boat marina, but this crowded and only possible for shallow draft boats.

Sloepmouche - January 2012: You can also moor on one of three giant moorings in Okat anchorage on the NW side (we hear there is Wi-Fi there as the anchorage is close to the airport). Okat is also a port of entry/exit, but is far away from anything except the runway, and a small boat marina with a snack store.

3.1.3 Utwe Harbor (South Coast)

Utwe harbour, on the southern coast of the island can only be accessed after getting permission from the local chief.

Sloepmouche - January 2012: To stay in the anchorage in the south, **Utwe Bay**, you need to obtain permission from the village chief and port authority in advance. Some think the reason is to protect the pirate Bully's wreck and the treasure buried in the area!

3.2 Cruisers Services

3.2.1 Monery

Westward II - January 2014: There are two ATMs now in Kosrae.

3.2.2 Diesel and Gasoline

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: Mark from the "Tree Lodge" resort arranged the delivery of 55 gallon drums (300\$ each) with manual pump to the ferry dock. I believe a minimum of 4 drums is necessary. Maybe a cheaper deal can be had directly with a petrol station. Otherwise, fill up jerry-cans at any station.

3.2.3 Propane (Cooking Gas)

3.2.4 Groceries/Provisioning

Westward II - January 2014: Most of the groceries come in by ship--the same ship that stops at Majuro, a day or so later. Basic veggies are available, a little more wilted

Sloepmouche - January 2012: We enjoyed Kosrae's fertile ground that produces bountiful produce like bananas, papayas, tangerine, local durian, breadfruits and hard and soft taro. Green vegetables are available, but it takes a lot of searching among the many roadside stands. Fortunately, taxi drivers were amenable to stopping at each one and waiting (as reported by one cruising couple).

3.2.5 Water

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: Ace hardware has a big rain-water tank and will sell water for a reasonable price. Jerry-cans will have to be used. It's a good idea to tie to the ferry dock to do it. Another option, requiring a car, is to fill up jerry-cans at the bottling plant up the hill. It's free but not close to the dock. Look up Hilton, the immigration officer, whose family owns

the plant, for details. They live in a house on shore opposite the anchorage. (It's the one with the yellow Volleyball net).

3.2.6 Boat Parts & Repairs

3.2.7 Laundry

3.2.8 Medical/Dental

Changing Spots – November 2015: For those who were hoping to see the dentist who was so glowingly reported, sorry, but he is no more.

Downtime - Feb 2013: We heard there was an American dentist on the island and stopped by the hospital to see if we could get an appointment to have our teeth looked at. We went into the office and he was just finishing up on a patient and had us take a seat and open our mouths. Try doing that in the States or anywhere else for that matter!

I had a cracked filling and Daria got a gold star. Dr Greg told me to come back in the morning at 8 and he would replaced the filling. Amazingly he showed up on time a first for any island appointment! I gave my name and had to pay the fee upfront a whopping \$6, seriously why can't we have this kind of service in the states? A double dose of novacaine and 30 minutes later I had a new filling! Greg was the best dentist I have ever been to, very professional and the filling feels great!

3.2.9 Getting Around

Westward II - Jan 2014: We rented a car for 2 days, but 3 hours later we had pretty much covered the entire island.

Downtime - Feb 2013: One day we rented a car from Kosrae Nautilus Resort for just \$40 for the whole day to drive the 30 miles of paved road around the island.

Sloepmouch - January 2012: Hitchhiking is the easiest method to get around the island, but getting in one of the ten taxis only takes a phone call.

We asked the police if we could use our mini-scooters and the attorney general was consulted, as they never saw such small bikes. We were told yes, we could drive them around Kosrae after we paid the registration fee for motorcycles of \$5/year. Kosrae is perfect to drive with bicycles or a moped because the paved road is in excellent shape and does not have many inclines. After some engine fine-tuning and mechanical problems, we enjoyed driving around to look, take photos/videos and trade for local food. The weather here is quite wet, but there are also beautiful, sunny days.

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: Rent a car is available from a DVD store by the main road, ask the locals. Cost us 35\$ a day and is imperative if you want to go to the authorities, supermarket etc.

3.3 Communications

3.3.1 Telephones & Cell Phones

Sloepmouche - January 2012: I went to the **phone company** (FSMTC) to get a SIM card for my **mobile phone** for use throughout the FSM during the next four months. We found out later in Pohnpei, that If you buy your SIM card in Kosrae, you can use your phone in the other three FSM states, but your rate will be higher due to roaming charges. I assume this holds true no matter which state you buy your sim card in initially.

3.3.2 Internet Access

Sloepmouche - January 2012: While at the phone compnay, I bought wifi refill cards to top up our **Wi-Fi** account (\$5 for 64Mb). It was fine for checking emails and searching the net but not a great rate to down or upload big audio and video files. It might be better to pay by the minute at the Internet café. Speed is OK.

Some places on the island have Wi-Fi coverage. The Lelu harbor repeater antenna was not functioning for months but cruisers are welcome to dinghy (or go by road) to the **Pacific Tree Lodge** resort where Wi-Fi is accessible at their restaurant terrace.

3.3.3 Mail

Migrant Cruising Notes - 1995: Mail should be sent to:

Your Name
Yacht in Transit Boat Name
General Delivery
Tofol Kosrae, FM 96944 USA

3.4 Things to See and Do

<http://www.kosraetreelodge.com/>

<http://www.kosraevillage.com/>

<http://www.kosraenutilus.com/>

Downtime - Feb 2013: The town around Lelu harbor sits on a ancient set of ruins that were built over 2000 years ago. There are still 20 foot high rock walls built with thousands of stones some of which weigh several tons! Walking around it hard to imagine what it all must have looked like since the jungle relentlessly reclaims it's place and covers everything in site. Little is known of this lost civilization and only old legends remain.

Only 6000 people live on this island paradise and Kosrae is one of the few places in the world where the population is actually decreasing. Being a US territory the citizens have all the same rights as US citizens and many leave to join the military or get jobs in the states. We saw little or no local industry and only 5 resorts on the whole island to draw tourist trade. Just like in the states half the population works for the government and who knows what the rest of the people do for work?

We checked three resorts during our week long stay and the Pacific Treelodge Resort by far had the nicest restaurant setting. The restaurant was built on a pier and sat on the edge of the river. A 500 foot long path was built over the mangrove swamp to access the pier. It was truly magical to walk through the mangrove backwaters and wind up at a nice restaurant. Mark and Maria were great hosts and we enjoyed several meals there during our stay. Saturday was lobster night for \$10 I got a meal I couldn't touch for \$70 in the states I enjoyed this while Daria spent the next hour cracking mangrove crab.

We rented a car for a day and went exploring. On our way around the island we stopped at most of the fresh vegetable stands to see what they had to offer and by the end of the day had a car load.

Further around the island we stopped for lunch at the Kosrae Eco Lodge. This resort was where you could go native and sleep in thatched huts and enjoy a minimalist experience for full price of course!

We asked where we could find the WW2 Japanese caves and they recommended we contact Phillip the tour guide. They said we should ask around since his phone no longer worked but someone would know where he was.

After a nice lunch we headed down the road to find Phillip. A few miles down the road we entered a small village and I saw his sign hidden behind some bushes out of the corner of my eye. We pulled over and started asking people where we could find Phillip? We had several different answers and were ready to head to the next town when who pulls up behind us? Phillip himself! What luck!

We asked him when we could take the tour and he answered any time would be fine...Well how about now? Sure why not. We followed him up to his house since the trail started in his back yard and an hour later we were hiking up the 1500 foot high mountain through the jungle towards the caves. It is about an hours hike to the top of the mountain to where the tunnels are and along the way Phillip explained many things about the jungle to us. He is 52 so he missed the war but his dad and grandfather told him many stories about it.

There was no combat in Kosrae but the Americans dropped tons of bombs on it anyways. Over 7000 Japanese used the miles of tunnels for protection during the raids and probably spent years digging them out of solid rock.

We went into a few of the tunnels and I found myself crouching down since they are only 5 feet high. We walked hundreds of feet though the mountain and at one point turned off our lights and experienced complete darkness! Pitch dark and the only sound was our breathing and the water dripping through the ceiling.

We spent 20 minutes in the tunnels and I was ready for some fresh air. I can only imagine what it would have been like when they were crammed with men feeling the earth shaking beneath them while listening to the sound of bombs blasting overhead.....

Further across the ridge we came across a stream that led down the back side of the mountain. We followed the stream and it got bigger and bigger and at one point dropped off in a series of waterfalls. The last waterfall had a nice pool to go swimming in at the bottom of it and I jumped in. The water felt great crashing over my head as I stood under the falls cooling off.

An hour later we were sitting in the shade behind his house enjoying a fresh coconut with sliced oranges, tangerines and bananas. Phillip did a excellent job guiding the tour and charged a fair price for his time. We were also able to buy a sack of oranges and a stalk of green bananas to add to the rest of the vegetable we found that day. If you need to call him, Call his brother at 3876 and he will get the message.

That afternoon we covered the miles of paved road we missed that morning and handed out our bag of toys and candy along the way to the island kids.

Noonsite - Feb 2012: From Lelu Harbor, you can also go by dinghy in the mangrove channel to the very cruiser's-friendly Bully's Restaurant at Pacific Treelodge Resort.

About 63 orange mooring buoys are laid all round the island. These are usually fastened to concrete blocks screwed into the reef and are generally thought to be suitable for a medium displacement yacht up to 35ft. They are free to use, but care should be taken if using them overnight as they are often close to the reef or surf line. These are dive sites and you are welcome to tie up your dinghy to dive.

Sloepmouche - January 2012: We enjoyed hanging out at the **Pacific Tree Lodge** resort where Wi-Fi is accessible at their restaurant terrace. It's nice to dine and enjoy the setting in the natural mangrove tree park, too. Mark and Maria are great people, very helpful and their prices very reasonable.

Unless other cruisers are there to show you the low-tide route by dinghy, it's best to go there at high tide or by car first and ask Mark to make you a map of the route. The resort offers inexpensive meals and they organize theme nights with discounted dishes. They have pizza and movie night, lobsters and mangrove crab, happy hour nights, etc.

Two cruising couples took advantage of the special cruiser's discounts to take their PADI Open Water course. We went **diving** with them and were impressed by the abundance of healthy coral reefs! You can also dive on both wrecks in the harbor. All dive sites around the islands have small boat moorings where you are welcome to tie your dinghy to dive (they are not big boat moorings). Since the seas can be a bit confused, it might be easier to go diving with Mark when you want to dive outside the harbor.

You can also ask Pacific Tree Lodge to book **hiking tours**. We recommend going with guide Salik to the Menke ruins (an easy 3½ hour roundtrip). We swam in the river and it was a treat after 14 months in the flat, river-less Marshalls. Another fun hike with Hamilson is to the Olum waterfalls and WWII Japanese tunnels. We also walked to the Lelu ruins, which are right behind Ace Office Supplies store. From there we crossed to the other side of Lelu Island and walked around the island's east coast, along the harbor pass and back to the harbor. Once the paved road ends, you can trek along the footpath, along the mountain edge to the beach and back to the paved road towards the main dock.

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: The "Tree Lodge" and "Nautilus" resorts were good places for eating out. I did two dives with Mark at the Tree Lodge, special price for yachties.

3.5 Cruising in the Area

Downtime - Feb 2013: After clearing out for Pohnpei, we sailed to the south side of the island that is protected from the swells and tied to a mooring ball, one of 30 that are provided for diving around the island. It is nice to dive right off the back of the boat because you do not have to

haul all you gear around. The dive was amazing! The reef was covered in spectacular corals with a multitude of colors. One coral had hundreds of small fan like creatures that would suck into a hole when they sensed you near.. Their fans were red, blue, orange, purple and a rainbow of colors and it looked like someone spilled a variety bag of jelly beans on the coral.

Another coral was as big as a small house at least 30 feet across and one of the biggest corals I had ever seen! There were lots of small reef fish but the bigger ones along with the sharks were nowhere to be found?

We spent the night on the mooring ball and around 5pm the kids from the village lined up on shore and were waving flags, sticks and their arms shouting hello. We should have put SD down and brought them some candy but the shore was rugged and there was no place to land so I took Downtime's American flag to the front deck and waved it and shouted hello back to the amusement of them all. This went back and forth for the next 20 minutes and it was nice to feel so welcome.

The last day we sailed to the west side and did one more dive. Not quite as good as the south side but there was still lots to see. The coral everywhere is healthy and alive. The mooring balls prevent damage that we have seen elsewhere because it give you an option instead of anchoring on them.

4 Islands and Atolls Between Kosrae and Pohnpei

4.1.1 Pingelap (06-13N / 160-42E)

Sloepmouche - February 2012: Before leaving Kosrae, we obtained permission to stop in Pingelap and Mokil on our way to Pohnpei (obtained from Pohnpei Immigration via Kosrae Immigration). We arrived off Pingelap at 10 a.m. with good light to try to find a possible anchorage. Alas, we did not find any possible anchorages anywhere along the lee side of Pingelap. From the breaking protective outer reef the depth plummets (we could not even get a reading on the depth sounder). So with regret we left without a visit ashore. Mokil was 60nm and we could not arrive before dark so we continued on to Pohnpei.

4.1.2 Mokil (06-41N / 159-45E)

According to Google Earth, Mokil is actually located about 2 miles north and west of whats on our CM93 2010 chart (roughly measuring center to center)

5 Pohnpei

5.1 Approach, Arrival and Formalities

Changing Spots – December 2015: Don't miss Pohnpei! A beautiful place, with very friendly people, lots to do, and not unreasonable prices.

DO put the waypoints for the entrance, and to the anchorage, since some of the markers are missing, and some have colors and numbers faded. See Carina's note for the waypoints.

DO call port authority on channel 10, when entering the channel. They answer promptly and arrange for all the officials to meet you at the dock, and take your lines for you (great when we

arrived since it was low tide and we couldn't reach the bollards). They will also advise regarding shipping traffic, and most importantly, airport traffic! The planes are REALLY low when they approach the airport. We were done in less than 2 hours, on a Saturday morning. Quarantine was \$25, and we were advised that the port fee, upon departure, had increased from \$65 to \$100. Port authority even offered to hand down our dock lines and guide us to the anchorage. They did an excellent job of welcoming us, and making the entry process painless and efficient - worth the \$100. Interestingly, and I didn't question it, there were no overtime charges..

Carina - January 2014: The reefs on the east side of the Sokeh's Pass (mislabeled on most charts as Jokeh's Pass) were breaking heavily when we entered. We had no trouble except of course keeping Carina on track with the lee caused by beam-to winds in the pass. Philip said the range was difficult to see and we didn't seem to be following it but we had no issues entering. The dolphin on the east side of the pass is obvious. All marks into the commercial wharf are in place, IALA A..red left.

Call Pohnpei Port Control on channel 10 when entering. They will direct you to the wharf where the police boats berth. Winds will blow you off but put fenders high. Port Control will generally send someone out to take your lines. You will need 5 copies of crew lists, clearance, etc. and at least the number of - if not a copy - of your FSM Cruising Permit. You will check in with EPA, Quarantine, Customs, Immigration and Port Control.

Yachts are monitoring channel 71.

Go ashore at the marina and meet Kumer and Antonia Panuelo. They are amazing people.

The SSCA host is John Ranahan. His boat, Kijro, is in the Mangrove Bay Marina.

The bar at Mangrove Bay is open W-S from 4 until it closes. Brand new facility and a great spot to meet. Can do potlucks/parties here but you need to coordinate with Kumer in case they have another party (there was a wedding last week) and it is understood that we need to buy drinks from the bar if we use their lovely open air building. Currently there are no charges for dinghy dock or use of water.

Don't miss the Six Waterfalls hike and snorkeling with manta rays...and of course Nan Madol.

Watch out for Robinson; he may show up ostensibly to help and then he'll ask for \$5- \$10. He's not a bad guy and he is trying to support a bunch of kids his wife keeps adopting. (We always gave him spare line, clothes, wire, shoes, etc. - and the occasional beer.) He lives in the Kapingamarangi village east of the anchorage. You'll see him around caring for Sakura and Links, two boats on moorings.

PHNAPR 007 04.1623 N / 158 30.0549 E

The chart says there are FADs north and south of the track between these two waypoints. We never saw them.

PHN1 007 05.8162 N / 158 14.9850 E

PHN2 007 03.3611 N / 158 11.6951 E

SOKAPR 007 01.6167 N / 158 10.4257 E

SOKOUT 007 00.3055 N / 158 10.5160 E

pass

SOKIN 006 59.7609 N / 158 10.8869 E
KOL1 006 59.7253 N / 158 11.3120 E
KOL2 006 59.5224 N / 158 11.7398 E
KOL3 006 59.1185 N / 158 11.9124 E
KOL4 006 58.8668 N / 158 11.9212 E

Commercial wharf - where you will check in. Take great care and go slowly with a bow watch beyond here.

KOL5 006 58.5966 N / 158 12.1660 E
KOL6 006 58.4610 N / 158 12.2255 E
KOL7 006 58.3055 N / 158 12.2559 E
KOL8 006 58.2178 N / 158 12.2167 E
KOL9 006 58.1617 N / 158 12.1364 E
KOL10 006 58.0364 N / 158 12.0936 E
KOL11 006 57.9031 N / 158 12.1050 E
KOL12 006 57.6394 N / 158 12.0941 E

Caution: There is a mooring as you enter which should be marked with a buoy that says Mangrove Bay unless someone removes the buoy (which sometimes happens in Pohnpei). Position: 006 57.7540 N / 158 12.0653 E If there is no buoy on the surface, TAKE CARE because there are two buoys just below the surface. We wrapped this mooring when we first anchored in Pohnpei

CORAL PATCH - NOT VISIBLE IN GOOGLE EARTH PICTURES: Approx position: 006 57.6169 N / 158 12.0017 E Many boats have hit this reef; it was marked for awhile but the mark disappeared.

Downtime - February 2013: We arrived in Pohnpei after a 300 mile 2 day sail from Kosrae. We did not have much luck fishing on the way over but the winds blew us along nicely the whole way.

Pohnpei is one of the biggest islands we had been to since New Caledonia, nearly 130 sq. miles and is surrounded by a huge reef system that lies one half to up to 2 miles off shore. On passage during the night I usually get up every hour to look around for traffic and to check our position. Since we are only going 7 or 8 miles an hour things change slowly on the charts and thankfully traffic is far and few between in this part of the world. I was up around 1 am and everything was looking fine and we were 35 miles from the island, but the next time I woke up I looked at the chart plotter the clock said 4:30 and showed we were just 9 miles off the reef! Talk about oversleeping will kill ya! But in reality we were still well over an hour away from land....but

this is exactly how boats get onto reefs, just ask the guys who were driving the wrecks smashed up on them!

Jokaj Pass (Sokeh's) is on the NW side of the island and had waves breaking on either side from an 8 foot swell and things were not lining up on the plotter again, but we made our way through the pass and proceeded to the customs dock to clear in without any problems. The clearing process was all organized by the port captain and within an hour the paper work was all finished. The channel to the anchorage was littered with at least 5 sunken boats that thankfully had markers on them this week but a week or so earlier a cruiser hit one that the mark had fallen off of! The commercial harbor looks like a place where the fishing fleet comes to die with at least 40 boats laying in rusted heaps sunk along the shoreline. A few years back an Aussie came in and offered to clean it all up for only the scrap metal as payment, but you guessed it the government wanted a cut and now the boats will be eye sores for eternity.

The water in the anchorage is forest green from all the run off and raw sewage that gets pumped into the bay. The island is apparently working on fixing the non-existent treatment plant but it could be years before anything happens?

Pohnpei is one of the wettest places on earth and receives over 300 inches of rain a year! February is the "DRY" season and during the 2 weeks we were there we only got an inch of rain! It was so dry in fact that all the hotels and businesses had run out of water during the last few days since rain is their only source of water they were all hoping for rain.

Several of the boats here have had the anchor down for months or even years....I think these boats were some peoples a one way ticket to paradise and they find they just can not go back to the craziness of life back in the States again. Two other boats were owned by local business men that have a weekend retreat floating nearby.

Our planned 5 day stay quickly turned into 2 weeks.

Finally we had enough of this dirty anchorage and cleared out the next day which was as easy as clearing in. The port Captain met us at the dock and took me to town to pay the port fees of \$100 and the other officials met us at the boat during the next hour.

Carina - June 2013: Pohnpei is the capital of the FSM; the Federated States of Micronesia, the entity created when the treaty with the US allowed the Trust Territories of the Pacific to become independent. Palau and the Marshalls decided on autonomy while Yap, Chuuk (nee Truk), Pohnpei and Kosrae became the FSM. So, being the capital of the country, Pohnpei is a medley of cultures from all the States, mixed coarsely with diplomats, NGOs, a bunch of ex-pats from different countries and the big evangelical churches. A melting pot it ain't. Everyone has their 'burb and their church, but mostly it works. Every place like this has its bad boys and the Chuukese are the ones who like to stir the pot. They reside on Sokeh's Island to our west which they acquired after the Sokeh's Rebellion resulted in exile of those living there at the time. (At Christmas they decided to extend the holiday so all Chuukese took two weeks off and spent most of their time drinking sakau (kava) and alcohol and pounding on drums made of barrels.)

To our east is the Kapingmarangi clan; displaced from their atoll (located at 01 N) by a drought many years ago. This Polynesian clan has feudal chiefs (like Tikopia in the Solomons) and is a tightly knit group. Whistles from their organized sports fill the supper time air, their youth sailing program dinghies cross the bay each weekend, and their daily 6 am bell resounds off the waters of the bay. Their wood carvings and weavings are acquired for a dear sum by the tourists who

arrive on the sole passenger carrier, United Airlines. Though the Kapingamarangi men are skilled carvers, their most prolific product seems to be children; Robinson, a Kapingamarangi man who cares for some boats owned by local business owners, told us that, of the 500 or so residents of the village, 400 were children! He himself is caring for eleven, many more than he has sired, since his wife seems to keep adopting needy children. When we have "excess" food, we try to send it Robinson's way.

On shore to our south is the Pohnpei Marina, still under construction by Kumer and Antonia Panuelo. Kumer is part of the powerful Panuelo clan that owns most of the land on the south end of the bay (up to and including the mountains to our south). But, despite his family ties, Kumer is a self-made man. Both Kumer and Antonia went to university in the US and they have high standards for themselves, their projects, their children and their workers, and are kind, generous and ambitious. It seems impossible to "out give" them. They just will not allow it. We have been welcomed to their facility and into their family and home and have enjoyed their company. Without Kumer's local knowledge, his boat with 400 hp of power, his enthusiasm and skill, the SSCA vessel Zephyr (engine-less) may well have been a wreck on the reef at Sokeh's Pass when the wind suddenly died and the boat was sure to go up on the reef as waves crashed all around. Kumer towed Zephyr through Pohnpei's pass and into the bay where dinghies of yachties took over and tugboated Zephyr into the tight little marina. They remain there still but will soon be leaving for points west.

So far, the marina remains under construction, so we land our dinks for free, carry away city water (not yet metered) and use the crude "clubhouse" (an open air tin roofed structure recently decorated with burgees by SV Tomboy) for sail repair and frequent BBQs. The Panuelos are slowly building the foundation of a great yacht/sport fisher facility and we're so pleased to do what we can to help them.

Also ashore are John Ranahan and his wife Jean who serve as the SSCA Cruising Station hosts here. Their warm hospitality, their porch with its wifi and one of their vehicles are always ready to help yachties in Pohnpei.

As for fun, other than the regular potluck BBQ, we've ventured by local fast boat to Nan Madol, site of a city of man-made basalt islands connected by canals and to "Manta Road", where mantas supposedly frequent- though these large gentle friends have eluded us twice. Friends on Celsius came to town and Philip and friend Rob (of Compass Rose) did an island circumnavigation with them by car, including a brisk hike to the peak of Sokeh's Ridge. This week is the 20th anniversary of the founding of the college and a parade of floats designed by students, plus a national holiday called Culture Day. We are looking forward to both of these events before school restarts on Wednesday and the Easter break is finished.

Savannah - 2013: We arrived in Pohnpei early in the morning and waited outside the pass until 8:00 so as not to pay overtime fees. We contacted port control on channel 16. It took a few times to get a response but eventually they answered. We were told to pull our boat up to the commercial pier and wait on Customs, Immigration, Health, Quarantine and Agriculture. All but Immigration showed up within an hour or two but we ended up having to ask one of the other officers to call for Immigration. They eventually showed up and we were off the dock by 1:00.

The path back to the anchorage is a little tricky. The easiest way to get there is to ask a local to guide you through. At the time we were there, another cruiser met us and we followed them in their dinghy. If having a guide isn't an option, keep the shore close to your port side. You'll see

PVC pipe as markers, keep those on your right for the first leg. You'll pass behind a small clump of mangroves (keep those on your starboard side) and then the channel will dogleg right and then back to the left.

There are a few mooring balls that belong to various locals. If you pick up one of these balls, you will more than likely have a visitor named Robinson come out and greet you. He takes care of the local boats and may try to charge you for the moorings, but they're not his. Just politely ask if they're his and maybe that you heard they were free and you shouldn't have to pay anything. At the time of this writing, they belonged to a man named Noel. Robinson is very nice man but likes the company. Occasionally he will sell you some fresh veggies or crabs.

If you choose to use these mooring balls, give them a hard tug. We have heard of some big boats (>40 ft) dragging on them. We dove and anchored our chain to the bottom of one and left the boat for 5 months, but Andy did all of the work to ensure we weren't going anywhere.

If you want to anchor, we were able to finally get some holding in the mud/silt after three tries and we were stuck in there pretty good for about two weeks (we experienced 25 – 30 knots and didn't move).

Sloepmouche - February 2012: Just before rounding the NW corner of Pohnpei lagoon, we encountered a big rainstorm with squally winds and had our excitement at the end of the trip while entering the pass.

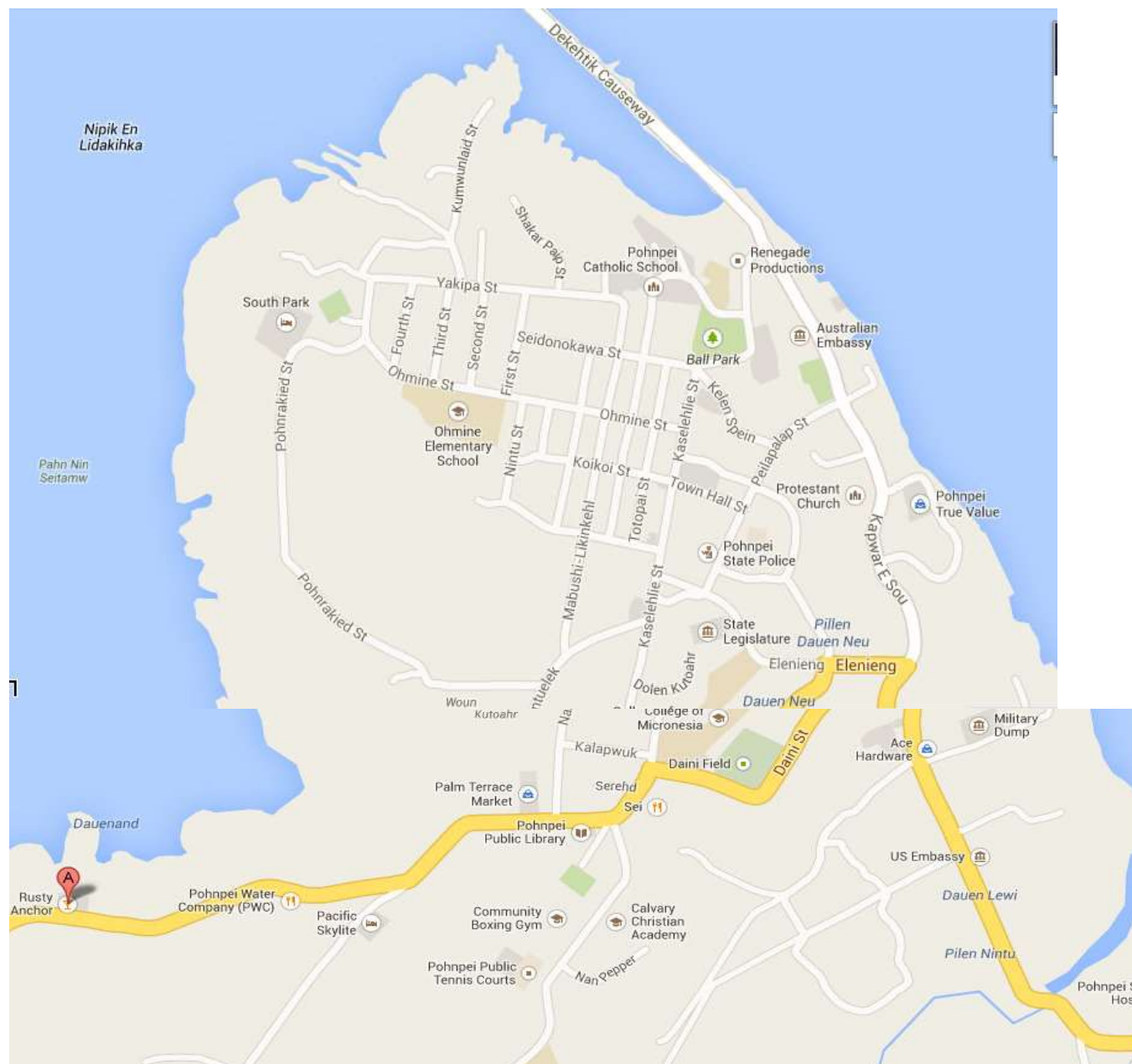
The main pass into Pohnpei lagoon and the port area is well marked, easy, and straightforward. The local authorities do insist that yachts tie to the main dock both for check-in and check-out. Both times we ended up waiting hours for some officials to arrive so we could finish the process. Perhaps one day they will make the whole process easier for yachts and themselves.

Incoming fees were \$25 for quarantine and outgoing fees were \$65 to harbor authorities, which are flat fees regardless of boat size or length of stay. Yachts that arrived outside of normal business hours or over the weekend paid overtime fees. The fee varied, according to the affected yachties we spoke to; sometimes the fee charged was nominal, sometimes substantial. There didn't seem to be any rhyme or reason to the amount charged.

After clearing in, yachts proceed to the inner anchorage at the head of the bay in calm waters. We heard from others that the way in was very tricky with many hazards, and were given GPS points, and told to ask for a local guide. We eyeballed it in with good light at a relatively low tide when it was fairly easy to see the shallows. It's really pretty simple: stay close to the shore on your port side. From the dock, proceed in while staying close to the dredged area that looks like an unfinished marina project, go straight towards a big pile of construction sand with a large cargo-type ship tied there, turn right following along that ship and some wreckage along the shore. Turn left again following the shore about 100' off, then you'll see some markers to show the way clear of dangers, but these are just poles without red or green markings. One pole will be seaward of a lone bush and the shore, pass to the right of that, and pass to the left of the next marker and head toward the local catamarans.

The other option is to follow local speedboats or some previously-arrived yachts. You will see some local yachts at moorings on the east side and there is plenty of room to anchor west of them.

5.2 Cruisers Services



5.2.1 Marina

Dream Away – December 2015: Marina has at least six pontoon berths for yachts. Could accommodate up to around 50ft plus a couple of slots wide enough for a cat. Cost for a mono hull is \$5/foot/month. So for 44ft Dream Away a month was \$220 but as we stayed a shorter time we paid pro rata. There is non potable water available but no electricity. The wifi from the bar/sushi bar did not reach the yacht but we were told there was the possibility of a new aerial coming soon. The hotel wifi did but we were told it was not available for us. Apparently previous cruisers had abused the system and none of the businesses or hotel was prepared to share it.

Speed first thing in the morning makes some things possible, in the afternoon/evening it often grinds to a halt.

The entrance is on the right hand side of the hotel viewed from the sea. (Approach 06 57.555 N 158 12.035 E; eyeball curving to the left; Entry 06 57.522 N 158 12.049 E). It is tight but well sheltered. The generator kicks in most weekday afternoons when the town electricity fails, but it is not too intrusive unless you are moored right next to it. We found anchoring in the bay a far more pleasant experience providing you don't mind being surrounded by rotting hulks.

If you anchor in the bay, you are charged \$10 per person per week for showers, toilets, wifi, trash disposal, water & dinghy dock.

Changing Spots – December 2015: The marina complex is done, and is a landmark. The hotel and the restaurant are finished.

The marina looks nice and new, with floating plastic docks, but is not built for the large boats that cruisers have. Some sailboats are in there, but tied to a mooring by the stern, and to posts ashore. Walking the dock is a game of stepping over all the lines. Cost is \$5.00 per foot per month. Electricity is not available.

Holding in the anchorage is good.

The old Rumors dinghy dock is no more, but with the gravel piles nearby, maybe new construction is planned.

5.2.2 Dinghy Dock & Trash Disposal

Changing Spots – December 2015: The dinghy dock is no longer free, and I plan to tell them to call their charges a facility fee, not a dinghy dock fee. It is \$10 per person per week, but also includes showers, toilets, water, trash, and best of all, **WiFi** in the restaurant - albeit slow.

They will also call taxis for you, so you can avoid the walk up the hill in the heat. The new facility now includes a fuel dock, a dive, and surfing shop.

Soggy Paws - Feb 2014: As of our visit in Feb 2014, Kumer's marina (Mangrove Bay Marina) is complete, and the dinghy dock is now at that marina. We were told that small trash bags can be put in the trash cans near the dinghy dock, but if you have large trash, you should take it up the hill to the dumpster at Ocean View.

John Ranahan, the SSCA Cruising Station and all-around helpful guy, also offers the dock in front of his place (the old Rumor's bar and grill, see Savannah's account).

Savannah - 2013: Dinghies can be parked at the old Rumor's bar and grill. Low tide is REALLY low and requires some rowing, but it's free and convenient to the main road (after a pretty steep hike up the hill). Garbage can be disposed of at the top of the hill at the Ocean view Hotel.

As of our visit, you can also park your dinghy at the new "marina" free of charge, but there is no garbage drop off there.

Sloepmouche - Feb-Mar 2012: Access ashore is in three places as of now: our usual was at the old broken down Rumours Bar and Marina pier and boat ramp. You can also tie at the dilapidated pier or right at the ramp. Walking 100 yards from the ramp, to the right on the path, you will find the house of the SSCA Cruising Station hosts John and Joan Ranahan. Enjoy

meeting them, share potlucks and pick their brain for local life. Slightly to the right of the Rumours landing is the construction site of a new sport-fishing marina but they do not currently welcome cruisers.

More to the right, just around a Chinese fishing boat wreck, is a small harbor for dinghy tie up and access to the Rusty Anchor, the local yachters hangout in a huge, unfinished building on the hill. Wayne, the Aussie owner, provides free Wi-Fi access at the pub and in the anchorage and we all patronize his bar/restaurant with pleasure.

On the east side of the anchorage there is a dinghy tie up at the small Polynesian village. Robinson, a man from that village will probably dinghy out to greet you and sometimes he brings local produce to sell.

5.2.3 Money

Changing Spots – December 2015: There is a conveniently located Bank of Guam ATM inside the telecommunications office, which is very close to the post office, tourist office, and A-1 supermarket.

Soggy Paws - Feb 2014: My Mastercard-based ATM card would not work at the ATM at the Palm Terrace Store (Bank of Guam), but my Visa-based ATM card would.

Westward II - Feb 2014: Several cruisers had trouble getting money at the Bank of Micronesia ATM, so we always used the ATM at the Palm Terrace store.

Savannah - 2013: The closest ATM to the anchorage is at the Bank of Micronesia. It only costs \$2 per transaction (cheapest in town). There is another one across from the Bank of Micronesia outside of the Palm Terrace store. And finally, a third ATM across town at the Bank of Guam (next to the American Embassy).

5.2.4 Diesel and Gasoline

Diesel and gasoline is available in jugs from the gas station, which is within walking distance of the marina. Cost is \$5.35/gallon for diesel. \$5.00/gallon for gasoline. We topped off our diesel when we had the rental car, and again by taxi later.

5.2.5 Propane (Cooking Gas)

Soggy Paws - Feb 2014: The LP Gas filling place is 1 ½ blocks SE of Immigration on Kapwar E Sou. (Immigration is N4 on the Kolonia map). Propane costs \$2.30 U.S. per LB. Note that this is owned by the family that owns Ant Atoll. So this is where you go also to get your Ant Atoll Permit.

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: Look up “LP Gas” in town. Other businesses include Ace Hardware and Wall Mart.

Downtime - 2013: The first day we arrived in Pohnpei (Friday, first of Feb) there was a Rotary Club party at **Cupids Restaurant** to raise money for the local kids. It was a lot of fun to meet the locals and by the end of the night we had won a raffle prize and organized a poker game for later in the week on Downtime.

Sunday was Daria's birthday and we had internet so she could talk to all her friends and family back home. Later that afternoon we went out for a nice dinner with Paolo and his new crew on

Supermario on the far side of the island at the **Village Hotel Restaurant**. Sadly the place faced east and the sunsets to the west (yep even here) was not that great but the food made up for it. It is probably the fanciest place in all Micronesia but had a nice local feel to it.

5.2.6 Groceries/Provisioning

Soggy Paws - 2014 - Prices: Here are some prices we noticed while shopping.

Chicken Leg Quarters - \$1.95/lb

Boneless Skinless Ch Breasts - \$4.95/lb

12 Small Apples / 1lb - \$4.95 (Ace)

Case of UHT Milk (12 L boxes): \$28

28 Oz Jif Crunch Peanut Butter - \$7.75

1 case of Red Horse Beer 330ml cans - \$24 (\$30 in Chuuk)

Apple Juice 46 Oz can - \$4.35

When we were there, the Palm Terrace normally had better veggies than Ace Commercial, but I ended up always shopping at Ace first, because Dave was always in the Ace Hardware across the street. Not mentioned by Savannah is a new store in Pohnpei, called A-1. It is air conditioned and cleaner than Ace, but reportedly owned by the same people. It seemed a little more expensive, but when everyone else was out of some veggies, they still had a few.

Beer, wine, and hard liquor is available in the grocery stores.

Savannah - 2013: Provisioning is ok here. It's feast or famine. If you see it and want it, buy it because you never know the next time it will be available. When the ship comes in, there's tons of stuff, but it may be another month before you see fresh veggies (cucumbers are ALWAYS available).

Worth mentioning is the difference in prices from store to store... We found a large tub of cream cheese for \$11 in one store, \$8 in another and \$4.75 in another. And it's fairly inconsistent as to who has the cheapest. Shopping around is usually worth the effort.

We were told of a Chinese Garden on the other side of the island (near Nan Madol), but we never found it. Supposedly, they may or may not sell you their fresh veggies, something not found very often in Pohnpei. Ask around...maybe you'll have more luck.

Sei's Curry Coffee: OK, not really a store for provisioning, but it's the best place I found to find local, unrefrigerated eggs (\$4.50/dozen). Go early in the a.m. (8:00 or so) as they are gone pretty quickly.

The Blue Nile: A short walk past the Oceanview Hotel and gas station, it's on the same side of the road as the hotel. They carry dry goods, alcohol/wine (there's a pretty decent rum for \$4), cleaning supplies and some cold items. Occasionally they have veggies, but not often. You can also get miscellaneous items here (for example, they were selling outboard engines when we were there).

Simon's (Veggie/Seafood Market): Across from The Blue Nile, this is the closest veggie and fish market we found. You can usually get cucumbers, bananas, limes, eggplant. On rare

occasions I found tomatoes, local eggs and avacados. The fish here were usually very fresh and fairly inexpensive. Mangrove crab is always available and occasionally, if you're lucky, lobster. If the rest of the stores are out of veggies, this is the best bet as they only sell local produce and don't rely on the ships coming in.

Ace Commercial: Large grocery store style across from ACE Hardware. Good for soda, beer, canned goods. They almost always have good veggies (if the ship has come in) as well as some of the cheapest wine.

Palm Terrace: Not a far walk from the dinghy dock, across from the Bank of Micronesia. They usually have veggies, but not necessarily the best selection (ACE is usually better), but usually in large quantity. Wine and liquor is sold here. We found Charles Shaw (aka 2 buck chuck) for \$8.50.

Wall Mart: Large grocery store style on the other side of town than the anchorage, but veggies are usually very sad. Very, very sad.

Neimes: Neimes carries a lot of western items but mostly in bulk and at VERY high prices. You can usually find good cheese and sandwich meat there (\$20+ for a block of cheese and \$18 for a pack of sandwich meat) if you're really hankering for it. They had huge packs of pepperoni and bacon as well. It's worth visiting, as you never know what they're going to have.

5.2.7 Water

Soggy Paws - Feb 2014: It rains a lot in Pohnpei. I think almost everyone is just catching what they need. But when it didn't rain a lot, we were told that the water hoses at the (new) docks have potable water in them. Several boats were jugging from those hoses.

5.2.8 Boat Parts & Repairs

Soggy Paws - February 2014: We were impressed with the big Ace Hardware in Kolonia. Upstairs they have a good assortment of fishing supplies, and a few boating items. Downstairs in the hardware department, we found stainless steel fasteners. Plus all the usual stuff you'd find in any Ace in the U.S. Prices are a little higher than U.S. prices but not outrageous.

There is also a Do It Best and a True Value hardware stores in Kolonia. So if you can't find it at Ace, check there.

Jun the Diesel Mechanic: Our friends on Zephyr had some major problems with their diesel engine when they arrived in Pohnpei. They highly recommend Jun, who works on the big tuna boats. When Kumer arranged for Jun to work on Westward II, he charged \$10 per hour. Jun's phone number is 920-6644. He gets really busy when the big tuna boats are in, but will eventually return your call.

Brickhouse - January 2014: Herman in Pohnpei does fiberglass, welding, and woodwork in his shop halfway between the hospital and ACE Hardware, across from the US embassy under a huge 80 X40 tent. I met Herman very briefly in person, and he appears to be a nice guy. Also have a reference from Noel a 3 year yachtie/residence in Pohnpei that he is a trustworthy guy as far as they know. May also be able to help with SSB/Radio problems/installations.

Herman lives down the side road across from the U.S. Embassy (near Ace Hardware). His phone number is 920-7900.

Downtime - 2013: A guy named Robinson, who comes around the anchorage occasionally in a boat, was our connection in finding most anything we needed. We had the gas cans filled, the boat polished, Island souvenirs brought to us, along with locally grown produce. He would come by most days and just ask us what we needed. This was nice to have and the first time in forever that we had this kind of service come to us.

Sloepmouche - February 2012: If you need someone to fix computer problems, we personally recommend Kalioedwin@gmail.com (320-4514) located just before the causeway to the port/airport.

Edgar Santos, the Pohnpei Visitors Bureau (PVB) manager, is also very helpful. The PVB is located in the botanical garden just after the public library.

5.2.9 Laundry

Soggy Paws - Feb 2014: We used a laundramat that was around the corner (down the side road/shortcut to town) from the Palm Terrace grocery. This laundry charges \$3.50 for wash/dry. We had them do our laundry--they want you to provide your own soap, and pay them for their time... but won't quote you a price. We ended up paying \$5/load for wash/dry/fold, and they seemed OK with this.

There is at least one other bigger self-serve laundry in town.

5.2.10 Medical

5.2.11 Getting Around

Changing Spots – December 2015: The new marina restaurant will call you a taxi. Taxis are mostly in great shape, and the shops will also call them for you. In town is \$1 per person. Prices offered for a tour of about 6 hours is \$50 for 2 people, and \$80 for 4 people.

Soggy Paws - Feb 2014: We were given the phone number of Robinson, a local taxi driver who has been driving the yachties around. He has a decent car with good a/c and knows where we like to go. As long as you stick with "one trip one way", he charges the same \$1 per person per trip fee that any shared taxi charges. He can also be hired to "run you around", but you should check on the cost for this ahead of time. His personal cell phone is 925-2361, and he encouraged us all the time to call him for a ride. He seemed to work 7am to midnight 7 days a week! The taxi company he drives for is Downtown Taxi and their number is 320-7391. They have about 20 taxis in service. If Robinson couldn't come get us, he would send a friend.

The benefit of calling a taxi vs walking up to the road from the marina, is saving you the walk up the hill. You can wait for the taxi in a covered area out of the rain and the sun, vs standing by the roadside trying to flag one down.

It's easy to flag down a taxi in town, but less easy out by the marina. Taxis get really full/busy when it's raining a lot, so it's useful to have a few taxi numbers in your cell phone.

Savannah - 2013: Town and stores are all within walking distance, but taxis are also easily flagged down. They are "shared" taxis and cost \$1/person for anywhere in town. It costs more to go further out in the island (\$3/person).

We have been offered rides, but mostly by ex-pats.

Sloepmouche - Feb-Mar 2012: From any of the three dinghy landing places near the anchorage, you can walk to the main road and access Kolonia by walking. Taxis are \$1 a ride anywhere in Kolonia.

5.3 Communications

5.3.1 Telephones & Cell Phones

Soggy Paws - Feb 2014: This was the easiest purchase of a cell phone sim card I've ever done. There was no paperwork whatsoever. They have a test sim card available so you can check to see if your phone will work on their system. \$10 for the sim card, cash, no waiting. Recharge cards in \$5, \$10, and \$20 increments. The same cards work for the internet signal "FSMTC".

5.3.2 Internet Access

Dream Away – December 2015: 3G Wifi is available from FSMTC, at 8c a MB, or they have 3 packages: \$5 for 100MB (use in 1 day, expires @ 03:50); \$30 for 2GB (valid 30 days); \$50 for 5GB (valid 30 days)

Changing Spots – December 2015: With the Dinghy Dock fee, the marina also provides (slow) internet in the restaurant. Rumor has it that by 2016, Internet will be available in the anchorage. With a powerful WiFi adapter, you can pick up a bit of that WiFi from the anchorage now.

Another cruiser said that the library **WiFi** was free and very fast, that is - fast enough for Skype

Soggy Paws - Feb 2014: Internet via FSMTC, which we could get almost everywhere in the anchorage and downtown, is \$.09/MB, which comes out to \$90/Gb, which is pretty expensive. But if you frequent a couple of the establishments (Ocean View, Rusty Anchor) you may be given the password to the non-open wifi spots, which we could get out on the boat most of the time. So we saved FSMTC for when the others wouldn't work.

We heard that the library had good fast internet, in air conditioning. The cost is still \$10/mo.

Savannah - 2013: There is free internet at the Rusty Anchor on shore. If you have a good wifi antenna you might be able to get it from your boat. The Oceanview hotel also has internet for \$15/30 days and they give you a password. Again, with a good antenna you could probably get this on the boat. Finally, the FSM Internet cards work here as well. You can get them at Oceanview hotel – just about all of the stores sell them.

Sloepmouche - Feb-Mar 2012: Internet access is no longer free at the library, but \$10/month. They have a fairly quiet air conditioned room with tables and 110v plugs.

The **Rusty Anchor**, the local yachters hangout in a huge, unfinished building on the hill, provides free Wi-Fi access at the pub and in the anchorage. We all patronize his bar/restaurant with pleasure. *(note, no wifi from Rusty Anchor in the anchorage any more--someone abused it and they shut it down. But it's still free and fast at the bar)*

5.3.3 Mail

Carina - Jan 2014: General Delivery works just fine. The folks at the Post Office know yachties well and manage our mail accordingly.

Your name
Yacht in Transit Boat Name
General Delivery
Kolonia Pohnpei, FM 96941 USA

You may have a little trouble getting Amazon to ship any sort of computer gear directly...Also the FM state code is sometimes missing from the list of state codes. However, as long as you have 96941 USA things usually arrive.

Delivery is about two weeks...average. About a month ago they got scanners, so now you can tell if something is at the PO in Pohnpei...that is if they get around to scanning it.

Zephyr - 2013: Small mail packages that look like they only have mail in them (vs things) can be picked up any time the post office is open. But if they look like parts, you will have to clear Customs, and Customs is not always open when the PO is open.

Sloepmouche - Feb-Mar 2012 - Postal Warning: When using the USPS to get packages in Micronesia (or Marshall islands) that you need ASAP, and tracked, it is best is to use Express Mail. Sometimes Priority Mail is put on the ship in Guam and the transit time is 6-8 weeks. Express Mail (and Priority Mail that makes the plane) arrives in 10-15 days.

If Express or Priority packages make all the right connections, they can make it to you in as little as seven days.

5.4 Things to See and Do

Sloepmouche - Feb-Mar 2012: We stayed two months in Pohnpei busily exploring all the attractions the island has to offer, from the **Pohnpei/FSM Cultural day on March 31** to hikes to great waterfalls, the ruins of Nan Madol, diving, surfing, a tour of the island by car, exploring some lagoon islands and eating in the numerous inexpensive restaurants in town.

Edgar Santos, the Pohnpei Visitors Bureau (PVB) manager, is very helpful. The PVB is located in the botanical garden just after the public library.

5.4.1 Restaurants & Bars

Changing Spots – December 2015: The restaurant at the Sea Breeze hotel, down the street from immigration, and across the street from Cocos has a nice, very inexpensive lunch buffet. The choices vary daily, but includes crab, sashimi, salad, and local foods every day. They had a 20% discount for the holidays, and for seniors. And it was only \$8 to start with. Their free **WiFi** was the fastest I have found on the island. The staff were very welcoming, and helpful. Don't be late.

The Rusty Anchor doesn't seem to be the hangout that it used to be. Take a late afternoon/evening to enjoy the view (and the reasonably priced decent food, but skip the wine) at Cupids.

Savannah - 2013: There are plenty of restaurants in Pohnpei. This is just a listing of the ones we visited.

Ocean View: Located at the top of the hill from the “dinghy dock,” provides decent food at decent prices. They’ll call a taxi for you if needed, appreciating your ordering a few cold beers while waiting. Also a good place to wait out the rain... Good breakfast menu and friendly service.

Rusty Anchor: Owned by an Australian ex-pat (Wayne), married to a Pohnpeian. It’s located right above the anchorage in an old hotel that was never finished. You can identify it from the anchorage by finding the red canoe hanging from the ceiling and a few random lights at night. You can park the dinghy inside the dock area underneath the restaurant after getting permission from Wayne first. Then it’s an easy walk up to the restaurant. They have good pizza, burgers, sashimi, kabobs...a random menu, but all pretty good. Lots of ex-pats and a few locals. Free ice cream for kids.

Arnold’s Café: Nice clean restaurant with fair priced lunch and dinner. Located next to the blue nile. Best hamburgers in town.

Angie’s: Random selection of hamburgers, asian food and fried chicken. Not our favorite.

Cupid’s: Best view in Pohnpei. The décor is kind of tacky (exactly what you would think with a name like Cupid’s), but the food is decent. It’s one of the higher end restaurants. It’s located up the hill above the anchorage. It’s easiest to arrive by taxi, as it involves a few large hills and more than a mile walk.

The Cliff Restaurant: Overlooks the harbor and is located past the “village” near the SDA church. They have good pizza at decent prices, but I haven’t eaten anything else there. Nice atmosphere.

Cocos: Located by the water and near all of the fish markets, this is hard to find. You may have to ask around. It’s a popular place for expats. They serve sandwiches, salads, sashimi, etc. as well as a full bar. At high tide, you can actually take your dinghy through a small bridge and bring it around to Cocos. If you go from the anchorage to the first large wreck on the right (towards the commercial dock) and turn right. Stay to the left side of the shore as there is a big reef. Go to the end and turn right, still staying to the left following the road. At the end of the road there is a bridge on your left. It’s not really visible but once you find it, it makes the other side of town more accessible.

The Surf Club: Mostly an Asian menu. Very good sashimi and bento boxes. We only ate dinner here, but have heard the all you can eat sushi lunch for \$9 is a good deal. But we were warned the sushi isn’t necessarily what we’re used to...whatever that means. This is also accessible from dinghy if you follow the directions to Cocos. It’s located a bit further down, but can be spotted by the red roof and dock. They have their own boats that are in and out all the time, so make sure you park your dinghy out of the way.

Joy Restaurant: Located in the Joy hotel, across from Walmart...unfortunately, we didn’t find this until right before we left. They have a great lunch menu at reasonable prices and the place is always packed.

Ramen Noodle House - Japanese - Near Surf Club: We never actually ate there, but got this place got many cudos from some of the other ex-pats. Go past the Surf Club, across the bridge

and turn right. There is a Japanese restaurant on your right and they apparently have great food...even make their own noodles.

5.4.2 Massage

Several cruisers went to visit Melba Sanchez for a massage while in Pohnpei. 320-3289 or 921-7406. Great massage for good price.

5.4.3 Hiking

Soggy Paws - Feb 2014 - Six Waterfalls: Our friends on Westward II called the guide known for doing the "Six Waterfalls" hike. He was a little hard to reach, but finally called back on Friday night, and set a date to take us on the hike on Sunday. We had 13 people, and Kumer provided transportation for us in his big pickup, there and back, for \$5 each. The meeting place was a good ways back in the mountains on a bad road at an elementary school--you need a 4WD to get there.

The hike lasted all day, and we were exhausted when finished. But we saw all 6 or 7 waterfalls and had a great day hiking. This is not for the lame, feeble or out-of-shape. DO NOT wear flip-flops or other flimsy shoes. The guide charged \$20 pp, and it was worth it. He knew the terrain and took good care of the group.

Sokeh's Ridge: We took a \$3pp taxi ride as far up the hill as the taxi would go, and this left us with only a 15 minute trudge up a steep dirt road to get to the picnic area at the top of the ridge. From here, it's a short walk to right to two Japanese anti-aircraft gun emplacements, and a longer walk to the right (down a muddy track that starts in the ruins of some old buildings) to a huge shore gun on a cliff pointing NW. Also to the right is the road which continues up to the cell phone tower on the ridge. This is a nice spot for a view. The walk back down from here to the marina was only about a half hour.

To get to the rock that Savannah mentions... coming from the marina, walk over the little bridge and where the road splits 3 ways, take the rightmost fork. The middle fork goes up the hill to picnic area and cell tower, and the left fork goes around the island and meets up with the right fork.

Savannah 2013: There are various hikes around the islands and most require a guide or at least a little local knowledge. Sokeh's Rock has two hikes, one to the top ridge and one up the side of the rock. Talk to John and Jean Ranahan (living in a house underneath Oceanview Hotel) and they can help out with directions.

5.4.4 Touring

Soggy Paws - Feb 2014:

Lenger Island: We arranged a boat through John Ranahan / Kumer to go out to Lenger Island, where the Japanese had a seaplane base and fuel depot during WWII. We had the tourist map and thought that would be sufficient. It's helpful, but not detailed enough. Getting a guide on the island is recommended. Reportedly they will guide you for \$4 pp--though when we were there, we were charged \$4pp to see the fuel tanks and were not offered a guide. We ended up blundering around a lot, but did eventually manage to find everything we came to see.

John told us to take our snorkel gear, as there is good snorkeling off the seaplane base. There are supposedly Mandarin fish out there somewhere. But we didn't snorkel there.

Nan Midol: The taxi driver Robinson (different from the anchorage Robinson) offered to take us on an island tour for \$80 for a car load. But in the end, us and Westward II shared a car rental and drove ourselves around the island (\$55 for the day from Ocean View plus \$20 gas). The primary stops were the Botanical Gardens / Pepper Plantation, Nan Midol, and the waterfalls close to Nan Midol.

We blundered into Nan Midol without knowing where we should go, and when the road split, we took the left fork (stayed straight). If you want to walk in at low tide, you take the right turn after you get over the causeway.

Walking, you should plan for low tide, and still must pay the landowners to cross their land to get to the main attraction. Someone told us \$6.

At the end of the road on the left fork, we found a guy in a boat, who offered to take us out to Nan Midol for \$5pp. We had a nice (short) boat ride to the main place, and they waited for us to explore. Had the tide been higher, we could have gotten a ride around more of the complex.

It was worth a visit, but you can see most of it in about an hour.

Next we went right out of Nan Midol and across the main road to a parking lot, and paid \$3pp to park and walk 5 minutes to see another waterfall. It was good. We took a swim, and there are bathrooms and changing facilities where you park your car.

Savannah - 2013 - Nan Madol: There are a few ways to see Nan Madol. You can visit by land or by water. By land, you rent a car or take a taxi to the SE side of the island. Follow the signs. You will have to pay a few various fees to the land owners to continue through. We did not take this route, so I can't say for sure how much.

We bit the bullet and paid the \$85/person (child half price) at The Village and went on their tour. They need three people to go and then it's rain or shine (up to you). This tour is by boat and is split up into three parts: 1) snorkel with the mantas at Manta Road, 2) Hike up to a waterfall about halfway there and swim in the pool at the bottom, 3) Kayak Nan Madol. We thought it was all well worth the \$\$\$. The whole tour is based on the tides so there may be some stop over's on various islands waiting on the tide. You can either buy your lunch from The Village (not included in tour) or bring your own. Plan on a whole day for the trip.

5.4.5 Diving & Snorkeling

Soggy Paws - Feb 2014: John Ranahan (with Kumer's boats) arranges some great dive trips. We paid \$40pp for two-tank dives, tanks included. We went east one day to Manta Road and west one day to the passes on the west side. Ask John about night dives if the weather is good and the moon is full. Kumer is planning a dive shop in the new building on the end of his point.

We arranged **dive tank refills** for our own tanks from the same guy that John Ranahan uses, for \$6/tank. Mike, a local Pohnpein, who works for Kent Ainslie, does the filling. Take the tanks by taxi to Kent's place--going east from town, past the hospital, across the bridge. Take an immediate left, and it's the first house on the left. (Our taxi driver was familiar with its location). They have a good clean setup there. Mike's cell number is 922-0052 and Kent's home phone number is 320-1195. Kent is an avid diver. email kentmainslie01@gmail.com

Fly to Truk to Dive: While in Pohnpei, because all the bad stuff we'd heard about Chuuk, we investigated flying to Chuuk to dive. We talked with Rick Dereas at The Village Travel (320-2777) villagetravel@mail.fm Flights go 3 days a week from Pohnpei to Chuuk in the afternoon and return 3 days a week in the morning from Chuuk to Pohnpei. Rick quoted a \$612 "flexible fare" or \$386 "residential discount fare" for roundtrip Pohnpei-Chuuk-Pohnpei. He might also help negotiate a package deal with one of the dive/hotel outfits.

Savannah 2013: There are a few dive operators around town (The Village, The Surf Club, locals). We found the cheapest and easiest was with John Ranahan. He lives in the house at the bottom of the hill where you can pull your dinghy up. He owns one of the sailboats in the harbor and is very helpful to cruisers. You can email him and ask him about his prices and trips, but at the time we were there it was \$32/dive per person for a two tank dive and that included your tanks. Occasionally you had to pay a little extra for the driver (\$8 or so), but that seemed to be when he wasn't using his regular guy. The other convenience is that he almost always gives you a ride. On a few occasions, he brought the boat around and picked us up off of Savannah.

If you want to dive from your own dinghy, we found a few reefs out by the pass, to the right as you're going out. They were fairly easy to access and we found lots of fish and anenomes there. We also did a fair share of snorkeling there on those HOT days when you just want to get in the water.

5.4.6 Surfing

Pohnpei has a great right-hand break at Palikir pass. If you're around in the winter, when the big swell comes in from the north, bigtime surfers from around the world start arriving to surf this break. A number of the ex-pats have launches that go out to surf on the weekends.

There is also a small surf resort somewhere on Pohnpei.

5.4.7 Dinghy Sightseeing

Savannah - 2013: At high tide, you can take your dinghy to the back of the harbor and go under the bridge to drive through the mangroves. There are several paths that will take you all over the bay. It's a nice way to spend the afternoon. There are rumors of a waterfall back there, but we never found it.

5.5 Cruising Around Pohnpei

Soggy Paws Feb 2014: The area inside the reef around Pohnpei is surprisingly well marked. The marks are on white pipes with (usually) triangle and square topmarks. On our trip (in a dive boat) around the west side of the island, the square marks should always be left on the island side, and the triangle marks on the reef side of the boat. We marked waypoints with our handheld GPS while in the dive boat as we went by, and later used these waypoints to travel inside the reef as far around as the west pass (and then out to Ant Atoll). It was pretty easy even in the typical Pohnpei overcast to navigate, with the help of our Google Earth charts.

Downtime - Feb 2013: Strangely this island has very few beaches to enjoy and the coastline is covered in mangroves. Inside the reef the navigation is tricky and there are literally thousands of coral heads to dodge when you are driving inside it.

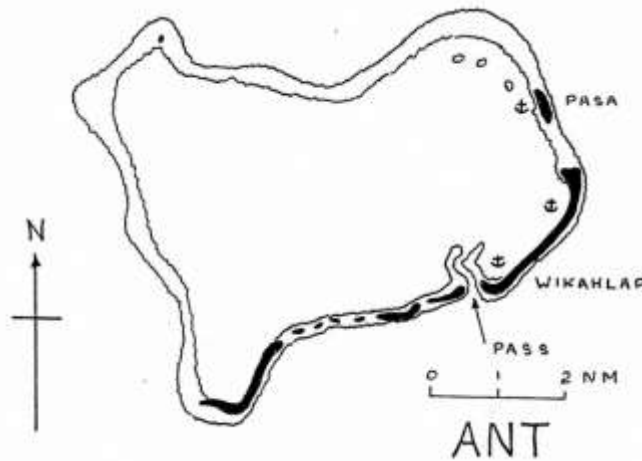
5.5.1 Nan Midol

John Ranahan says you can't get to Nan Midol inside the reef. Whether going east or west around from Kolonia, you will have to go outside at some point.

Lorelei - January 2014: (by radio) We anchored at 06-51.769N / 158-19.243E in 8m sand/mud bottom. This was a great anchorage and well protected from prevailing wind and seas.

5.5.2 Ant Atoll (6°48'N / 158°01'E)

Ant Atoll is only about 30 miles, anchorage to anchorage from Pohnpei, so it's a good "weekend" spot to get out of Pohnpei harbor. Permission is needed. When going to Ant from Pohnpei, and coming back, the only formality that's needed is to call the Port Captain on VHF 10 to let him know you are passing through the port.



Sketch of Ant from Migrant Cruising Notes

U.S. Sailing Directions: Tauenai Passage, located on the SE side of the atoll, leads into the lagoon between two curved reefs which extend from the entrance points. It is readily identifiable at LW as the reef bares on each side of the channel at that time. The passage is about 90m wide and has depths of over 15.2m. Inside the lagoon there are many detached reefs in the vicinity of the barrier reef, with the central part being relatively clear.

The flood current attains a velocity of 1 knot while the ebb a velocity of 2 knots in the passage. Caution is necessary as eddies are found in the entrance. The best time to enter the passage is reported to be about 5 minutes before LW, when the tidal current is at minimum strength.

Soggy Paws - Feb 2014: The family that owns Ant Atoll runs the LP Gas filling place, which is 1 ½ blocks SE of Immigration on Kapwar E Sou. Immigration is N4 on the Kolonia map.

We went to LP Gas place and paid \$25 for the boat and \$10 per person (a 2-person boat would therefore cost \$45), and received a written permit and receipt. They ask that you call the LP Gas place to let them know you are going, the day before you leave. 320-5661, and they will let the people at Ant know.

It is possible to go around the west side of Pohnpei and out the west passes to Ant Atoll, inside the reef.

When we visited, we anchored in 3 different spots, but we didn't get up to the northernmost island, where a new resort is under construction. In addition to the anchor spots shown on the above sketch chart, we anchored on the west side of the pass, and in the southern tip of the island. We really enjoyed hanging out with two other boats down in the south time. Nice sand anchorage, a beach that was still usable at high tide, decent protection from NE to SSW, and no one to bother us.

Like most atolls, navigation was easy in decent light, especially with the help of Google Earth charts. The CM93 2010 chart set is also fairly accurate for Ant.

There is a "caretaker" on the island on the left side of the pass as you come in the pass. These guys had a cage full of baby turtles (fun to see)--they are raising them to dinner-plate size before releasing them. We were told by the caretaker that the northern half of the atoll was a nature preserve and we couldn't take any fish or anything, but the southern area it was OK for us to fish.

Pass: When big north swells are reported in Pohnpei, it seems like the pass current never reverses to "incoming". Several times we timed our visits for what should have been incoming tide, and the current was still going out. We ended up diving on the outside of the pass, out of the current, on the right side of the pass. This area seemed pretty protected from the wave action.

Carina - January 2014: We hung out in Ant Atoll for 9 days to take care of some last minute chores while anchored in Ant's calm, clear, turquoise water. We still needed to finish cleaning Carina's hull of any residual sea growth: barnacles, green slime, wormy-looking calcium deposits and even the occasional oyster! And, after 13 months of moored in Pohnpei's calm harbor, we had gotten a little careless about everything on the boat being in its proper place, so storage for sea was high on our list. Then too, we wanted to do some recreational snorkeling, and finally, to once again wrap our heads around the concept of sailing out of sight of land on long passages.

We enjoyed every single minute at Ant and had fine weather in Pohnpei's rain shadow which allowed us not only to work but also to play. We made an excursion a mile and a half downwind one day to snorkel Ant's pass, which was truly a spectacle. Sheer cliffs formed by coral 100' or more in height from the sea bottom, awash with brilliant fish, create a narrow winding channel where currents run frighteningly fast. The underwater world here is brilliant and vibrant, in constant motion, but at the same time serene. To access the pass, we anchored our dinghy on a sand spit on its eastern entrance and swam across a sandy shallow, bright to the eye. The pass loomed ahead, an intense blue abyss that enveloped us as we swam over the cliff edge.

Leaving: We pulled up the anchor early and began motoring out Ant's circuitous pass at what we'd hoped would be nearly slack tide. Once inside the pass, it became clear which of our tide station information was correct and that we'd chosen the wrong one. We went flying "blind" at 7 knots following waypoints generated from our inbound track. Once clear of the surf, Leslie was able to breathe again.

Savannah - 2013: Permission: Ant atoll is uninhabited but it is owned by some locals in Pohnpei. Therefore, permission should be granted before visiting. We spoke with Wilson at

Port Control and he wrote us a letter stating we had permission to anchor in the atoll. We also had to pay him \$25 per person (kid was free). He indicated this on the letter so as not to be taken twice. There are people coming out to the atoll daily so it is conceivable that someone would ask. We, however, were never asked for our letter or if we had permission (we were there one week).

We anchored both in front of the popular island (where the tourist boats go), Pasa as well as the island directly to the right of the pass as you come in. Both were great. Snorkeling was good, etc.

We snorkeled the pass and found it to be great coral. We saw a few sharks and a turtles.

Due to being by ourselves and the limitations of our dinghy, we did not dive outside the pass, but heard that there is a great wall dive to the left of the pass as you're coming in.

The other "amazing" dive site we heard about was on the outside of the reef on the island you see first coming from Pohnpei. Again, not convenient with a dinghy, but maybe worth the \$\$ to go with one of the local dive operations. We heard there were walls, caves, tons of big fish, sharks, giant clams, etc. This is the site where they collect the giant clams for spawning and selling to aquariums around the world.

Downtime - Feb 2013: Having cleared out in Pohnpei, we set sail for Ant Atoll just 20 miles to the south. Everyone said it was not to be missed and had beautiful beaches and great snorkeling. Well we might be getting hard to please after New Caledonia and all the other places we have been so lucky to see... I thought it was just OK. We only spent 2 days here.

Daria took the paddle board out to the reef and took some great pictures while I spent the morning scrubbing the bottom of the boat knocking off everything that started growing in the dirty harbor.

Sloepmouche - Feb-Mar 2012: This atoll is only 25nm away from Pohnpei Harbor, but what a world of difference. Here you are back in the atoll with low-lying islands fringed with coconuts and good snorkeling. Make sure to obtain permission from the owners in Pohnpei.

The pass is well-shown (but slightly off) on CM93 charts but exact position can be seen on Google Earth. I found that the pass was described better in the CM93 than in Google Earth.

We anchored close to the north end of the island, north of the pass in clear water in 25' on sand with coral rubbles and a few well-seen bommies. The islands offer the usual walks and beachcombing. The pass offers great drift snorkeling when the tide is coming in, with great corals and great visibility. There is a dramatic wall on the north side. We met Kimo, one of the two men living on the tip of the pass on the southern island, and a nice trader.

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: There is a well marked channel zigzagging into the lagoon. Watch out for a shoal at the end of the last leg.

5.5.3 Pakin

John Ranahan pronounced this Pack-EEN.

Though the words "Boat Passage" show mid-way along the western side of the CM93 chart, there is no pass visible on Google Earth. John Ranahan said the only pass is a small boat

pass. It is relatively shallow and very narrow--he did not think the average monohull could get in, except at a very high tide--then you'd be trapped until the next very high tide.

John also said there is no need for permission to visit.

US Sailing Directions: Pakin Atoll (7°04'N., 157°49'E.) consists of five islands and a number of islets enclosing a lagoon. Nikalap is the largest island and lies at the NW end of the lagoon. The only channel into the lagoon is a boat passage leading through the SW side of the atoll.

6 Islands and Atolls Between Pohnpei and Chuuk

6.1.1 Ngatic (5-49N / 157-16E)

U.S. Sailing Directions: Ngatik Atoll consists of ten small islands and islets, all of which are low, flat, and densely covered with coconut palms. A radio station is situated on the atoll.

The pass into the lagoon lies on the SE side of the island, is about 114m wide, and clearly defined at LW. This channel should only be attempted by small vessels with local knowledge, under favorable conditions of light and tidal current. A least depth of 11m was reported in the pass entrance. The slack water ebb within the pass is reported to occur about 1 hour 30 minutes after LW at Pohnpei.

Three beacons mark the E side of the pass and indicate the channels leading from the pass to the lagoon proper. The S beacon is a plastic pipe in a concrete base, which marks the S side of a lesser channel. The N two are more substantial structures marking the main channel. In 1986, a vessel recommended making the turn on the beacon with a green triangular daymark, leaving it very close to starboard, and leaving the beacon with a red square daymark very close to port.

Some of the coral heads within the lagoon are marked with old concrete structures, or newer, locally made beacons.

Caution.—It has been reported (1986) that the entire atoll is charted 2.5 miles SSW from its actual position, with the slope of the reefs and the positions of the islands being misrepresented. Depths within the lagoon are reported to be inaccurate, with numerous uncharted and mischarted coral heads being present. An excavated channel shown on the W side of the pass does not exist. Vessels are urged to exercise the appropriate caution.

6.1.2 Oroluk (7-30N / 155-15E)

Brickhouse - January 2014: We came in the Southeast pass:

07 27.1199 N / 155 23.9988 E Outside Pass

07 27.2810 N / 155 23.7892 E Inside Pass

Pass was deep, obvious and uneventful

Anchored at 07 31.449 / 155 23.211E OR 07 31.994 / 155 23.299E (cant tell from my track where we actually anchored- but it was one of these 2 approximate locations) We were there in East winds, and it was an OK anchorage. High tide a little bumpy. Snorkelling was OK. Water very very clear. Mostly flat bottom. Wouldn't want a west wind shift here!

We explored for anchorages up the reef northward, but did not explore the extreme Northeast corner. Went up towards the north pass and the island there, to see if we could anchor around there, but there was too much current and a wind shift again would have been dangerous.

We continued toward the northwest corner to see about anchoring there. There were a few bits of coral to avoid - but in decent daylight you can see everything. We anchored on a sandspit at 07 36.577N / 155 09.727E and swung around to 07 36.569N / 155 09.699E. We were in about 12 feet of water if I remember correctly. There was room for 2 boats here, possibly more.

Within the hour we were visited by outboard motor boat by the 4 men who were living there. They insisted on giving us 4 nice groupers, and welcomed us to Oroluk. They would not accept anything in return. It is their custom, they explained to welcome visitors.

However, by evening, the wind came around to the southeast and blew strongly. It turned quickly into a terrible anchorage. The current was very strong, stronger than the 20 knots of wind so we were facing stern in to the wind and waves. Waves boarded the cockpit frequently! Another boat moved a little way away to an anchorage spot more north of this behind a reef that was more acceptable, although he was a hardier type than us, with a different keel configuration that was obviously less affected with the current than our 3/4 keel. We ended up leaving in a hurry the next morning.

Waypoints for west pass that we exited from which was uneventful, deep and obvious when you got up to it (hard to see on inside approach):

Inside: 07 35.524N/155.09.858E Outside: 07 35.643N/155 09.384E

4 miles outside the pass, the Pohnpei patrol boat boarded us at sea (routine) and checked our papers which they seemed happy with. They were very professional. and friendly. The cruising permit in hand seemed to be key. They said that they patrol all of FSM mainly for illegal fishing boats.

Overall, would not recommend Oroluk but for the very nice men ashore. Its rare in this part of the world to receive a gift and be told not to reciprocate. If we had made it ashore, and not taken off so quickly from the potentially dangerous anchorage there, we would have brought them something anyways. If you go there, please give them something from Brick House - the boat that left in a hurry just a day after getting there!

We did not see exceptional snorkelling possibilities, and the anchorage options are not very good. Possibly in the northeast corner would be worth exploring. There is lots of current and opposing wind, all along the north reef making it a bad anchorage all the way across the north reef. If it were calm, it would be an acceptable stop.

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: We found Pioneer pass at 07 35'620 N 155 09.460 E. Only four people in there right now.

U.S. Sailing Directions: Oroluk Lagoon is formed by a chain of reefs which mostly dries and has an average width of 0.5 mile. Oroluk, a densely wooded and prominent island, lies on the NW side of the lagoon. A conspicuous wreck lies close NE of Oroluk. A second wreck is reported to lie about 2 miles further SE.

Depths—Limitations.—The seaward side of Oroluk Lagoon is steep-to, with no apparent off-lying dangers. Mariners should give the reefs surrounding the lagoon a wide berth. Many above and below-water dangers are found within the lagoon.

Pioneer Pass, located on the W side of the lagoon, is narrow and suitable only for small craft. Reefs and shoals encumber both sides of the entrance and a shoal reef lies close inside.

West Pass, 2.75 miles S of Pioneer Pass, is about 0.3 mile wide, with a shoal swept to a depth of 7.3m in the entrance. Tidal current in the pass attain a rate of 1 knot.

Another unnamed pass, 0.3 mile wide, lies 1.25 miles SE of West Pass. A coral patch, with depth of 0.9m, lies on the N side close within the entrance. A channel swept to a depth of 12.8m passes to the S of this patch.

Tides—Currents.—Currents in the vicinity of Oroluk Lagoon are strong and irregular during strong NE winds. A W current of 1 knot is experienced off Keltie Pass on the N side of the lagoon.

Anchorage.—Oroluk Lagoon is reported to afford unlimited anchorages, but offers no protection other than that provided by the atoll reef. Vessels can anchor, in a depth of 20m, about 1 mile SSE of Oroluk.

6.1.3 Minto Reef (08-05N / 154-17E)

U.S. Sailing Directions: Minto Reef (8°10'N., 154°18'E.), 59 miles NW of Oroluk Island, is an atoll reef, about 4.5 miles long. A sand bank, about 1.8m high, stands on the N side of the reef. This reef is visible only under favorable conditions of light and constitutes a dangerous hazard at all other times. Several wrecks lie stranded on this reef. There are several shoal passages into the lagoon.

6.1.4 Lekinioch (Mortlock Group) (Lukunor) (05-30N / 153-48E)

Dream Away – December 2016: Simon, the meeter and greeter that Soggy Paws and Carina talk about has passed away, and when we were there in December 2015, nobody had replaced him. We met the mayor and gave him a small gift but were not asked to pay anything. He was concerned to know if anyone had “bothered us”.

They have wifi which was free when we were there. The signal reaches into the anchorage from the aerial on the government building at the root of the old dilapidated concrete jetty.

A couple of locals came out to trade but other than that we were left alone. Folk ashore were friendly and welcoming, but only in passing.

Soggy Paws - March 2014: Though this atoll shows as Lukunor on some charts, the locals emphatically told us that the name of their atoll is Lekinioch, with the "ch" pronounced like cherry.

We stayed a week here in Lekinioch with our buddy boat, Westward II, and could easily have hung out for another week.

We anchored in a large sand area in about 40 feet at 05-31.32N and 153-48-89E. We could not find a large enough sand area to have the entire chain in sand, so we buoyed the last 75 feet of our chain--to make it hang over the coral, rather than drag around and destroying it.

Simon came out in a canoe with his grandson "Typhoon" to greet us just after we anchored. He had an official paper (hand-written) to register us into Lekinioch, and he wanted to see our Cruising Permit. We paid the same \$20 per boat fee that Carina did.

Simon escorted us over 2 days around the village. He's just turned 78 and kind of slow and his knees hurt, but his english is pretty good and he introduced us around. He was 10 years old when the Japanese took over Lekinioch and moved all the people to another island (and made them work their own taro patches for the benefit of the Japanese). He has some interesting stories.

During our stay, we invited the 2 American Peace Corps women out to Soggy Paws for an American-style spaghetti dinner. They were very grateful, and we had a nice evening getting a fairly good picture of the island life. We donated as much as we could afford to give for school supplies, to them and to Toma, the K-5 teacher that Carina mentions.

Stephen from Westward II had just bought a projector for his laptop, and offered to show a movie to the village on Saturday night. The only thing he needed from the village was a speaker big enough to project the sound. Simon arranged the permission and venue for the event, as well as the speaker and power source. Pretty much everyone in the village showed up to watch Shark Tales and John Carter. Stephen used a heavy cloth strung between two pillars in the big concrete meeting area near the Catholic church, and his tiny projector attached to his 10" netbook. Simon had arranged for a speaker which required power, and so arranged also for a small generator. Even though we know hardly anyone understood what was going on in John Carter (I didn't, I and speak good english!), the village loved the event. They also loved seeing the rolling "slide show" of the village pictures Stephen had taken, which he showed as he was setting up. We are going to order one of those projectors to do similar events ourselves down the road.

We were invited to the "blessing of the canoe" ceremony, for the new canoe mentioned by Carina--lots of food piled on the canoe, extended family (but no officials or religious people there), a short prayer, and then the food was passed out and handed around. They had set us up our own picnic table complete with plates and forks and cups. We brought brownies and popcorn to share and they loved it. We were told that then after 3 days the canoe would be ready to use.

Simon took us to 2 of the 3 "stores" in the village--we were looking for toilet paper and powdered milk and found neither. One store consisted of just a big Rubbermaid-type tub with assorted stuff in it, plus 50-lb bags of rice, and boxes of Ramen noodles.

The pass looked interesting for diving when we came in, but we never got around to trying to dive it (wx was not cooperating).

We did walk the path from the village down to the pass one day--about an hour walk each way through fairly lush jungle.

Some of the other people we met: Mariel and Karenia, the two Peace Corps teachers. Ursula and her family, where the canoe was being built. Tobias, who has a store (of sorts) and who is one of the high chiefs of Satawan--he has SSB radios in his house and we looked at one of them to try to get it operational. Toma the K-5 teacher. Joe with the broken DVD player (the ribbon cable was cracked and not repairable). "Sick Sam" (or Six Sam), a personable young

teen with 3 small brothers and a canoe, who stopped by several times trying to trade bananas and coconuts.

We tried to trade for eggs, bananas, papaya, coconut crab, and in a week, we only got 2 eggs, 1 coconut crab, 3 papaya, and offers of lots of bananas and coconuts. Plus gifts of taro, doughnuts, and coconuts.

We loved this little village--very clean and neat, and the people friendly and respectful. The anchorage conditions were pretty good--almost no swell at all even at high tide, sheltered from the wind from N-E-S, and some protection (because it is a small atoll) from the SW, W, and NW.

After almost a week, we left for nearby Satawan, to see the relics of Japanese occupation there.

Carina - January 2014: Lukunor is a small atoll in the Mortlock Group, Chuuk State. The preferred local spelling / pronunciation is Lekinioch. The yacht book shows only a handful of boats visit each year. They welcome yachts warmly.

Simon Bualuay will meet you and ask you to fill out a registration including cruising permit number, passport numbers, etc. He gave On Verra a welcome gift of bananas.

The island asks for **\$20 flat fee**. We also met with the Mayor's office and gave a small gift of a Carina hat and tinned ham and asked officially for permission to anchor, take photos, walk around the island; the usual stuff. (To Simon we offered instant coffee and condensed milk and he seemed very pleased.)

The island is run by both a traditional clan hierarchy and an elected government...which may amount to the same thing! It appears to be a well run little island and everyone is cheerful and friendly. The children are delightful.

There are only a few supply boats so everything is game for trading. They are still living primarily on island foods, taro, bananas, breadfruit, and have few fresh veggies.

We have traded rice, fish hooks and line for fruits - lime, bananas, papaya - and coconuts and eggs. A young beauty asked us for a volleyball.

As always, a pile of DVD players and radios, most far beyond repair, have arrived aboard our yachts. Philip and Alfredo have tried to repair them, but with little success.

Yesterday we took a village tour and the village is spotless. We saw no trash and everything was swept clean. There are no motorized land vehicles and only a few bicycles. The predominant religion is Catholic though there is also a Protestant church, though we haven't seen that "village". We will likely go to church to see the ceremony in the native language. The island is dry, though tuba drinking was in their tradition. We saw no one with betel nut stained teeth; tobacco is preferred but we saw little of this. If you want to play billiards, it'll put you back 10 cents a game but you only have 8 minutes to finish the game.

There are still many houses of traditional design with thatched roofs. Cooking is done on wood fires in separate cooking huts.

There is also a men's meeting house/canoe house that is, according to Simon, one of the last, if not the last, remaining one of traditional construction in Chuuk State. It's an impressive structure.

We visited a canoe building project where two young men were being taught the art of canoe carving and construction. They had the most interesting glue/resin in use which they learned from Filipinos. Styrofoam dissolved in gasoline...it works! We were told that the students would weave a pandanus sail. The canoe is going to be sold to the College of Micronesia and is to be called the Miss Lekinioch. It will be "christened" in a traditional ceremony where the men will eat fish together and then the canoe will be launched.

There is a large school with two Peace Corps volunteers which we plan to visit on Monday. Sixty solar panels run computers and lights at the school. There is no central power; only solar panels.

Tuesday there is a planned outing to the northern motu in search of crab. Today Alfredo of On Verra is joining young men to hunt for lobster. We are free to fish in the lagoon. There is a perimeter road which we will likely hike on Monday after our school visit. Haven't snorkeled yet but the water is clear and clean.

C-Map and paper charts are not accurate; waypoints made on GE chartlets were perfect for entry. Please check these waypoints against your GE chartlets to confirm I've made no typos.

Entrance to Pass: 05 29.7619 N / 153 47.7091 E

Then: 05 29.9398 N / 153 47.7238 E

Then: 05 30.1011 N / 153 47.9258 E

These waypoints allow you to miss the coral patch which is dead ahead when you enter the pass. Once inside there are no hazards to the anchorage off the village.

Carina's **anchorage** in mixed sand and coral (ca 50' water): 05-30.1215 N / 153-48.813 E

Additional info sent later: The kids are GREAT here. Very sweet. Very smart. Beautiful. They are gleeful and hug-able and we usually have a flock trailing behind and holding our hands. The island is very education oriented (yeah)...so anything for the school...books, etc. The Peace Corps volunteer (Marielle) is trying to teach biology, so...

The kids adore any (and I mean any) sort of little things...hair clips, nail polish, ribbons, bits of string...

Every kid wants a volleyball...oh, well. We gave a couple of frisbees and played a bit of keep-away with the kids after church on Sunday. Oh my lots of fun. We also explained the concept of ultimate frisbee (like soccer or football) to the principal of the school so hopefully the frisbees will continue to be used.

The school needs pencils. (Black) Please bring some if you can. They have paper. Any kind of educational or story book. They also loved the Alert Diver we gave them...so anything with good photos to help stimulate the kids. They teach in English and also in Mortlockese. The schools SSB radio battery is dead, so any donations of 12V batteries would be great (though the town hall SSB appears to be functional).

Very basic items for subsistence living are valued...matches, reading glasses, old pots and pans, fabric, clothing, salt, sugar, rice and especially fishing line and hooks. Young men may come for fishing line and hooks and promise fish; no fish have arrived so this isn't such a good deal. ;-) Instant coffee. Aspirin (the dispensary has nothing for pain).

If you give a little you will get a LOT...banana flowers cooked over an open fire were a treat for us. Sweet taro in coconut cream...oh yum. Coconut crab. Lobster. FRESH eggs. Smiles and hugs.

If you come here, you will meet Simon Bualuay. He will make sure you are integrated into the village and appropriately introduced. Tomasa Ruben at the school teaches kindergarten. Go see her, she's a treasure. She studied in Alabama. Both Toma and Simon Bualuay have guest books.

Tomasa Ruben, PO Box 411, Weno, Chuuk 96942

Downtime - February 2013: Lukunor was very friendly and there are about 1000 people living on this little piece of land! Who knows what they all do all day? May be that is why there so many kids!

The **fishing** has been amazing and Mahi are biting on Yellow, yellow/green squid baits 4-6 inch long. We had a wildcard out there a pink bubble head feather jig and a 200 plus pound marlin took hold of it and did a amazing dance for us flying back and forth behind the boat trying to shake the bait. About the time we furled the sail and I was tightening the drag he did one more tail dance and the hook popped out of his mouth and he got away. I am glad he got off because I sure did not want to deal with another fish that big and feisty on Downtime! A while later another much smaller marlin took a yellow/white bait and was on for about 5 minutes before he threw the hook. Then the grand finale, three poles got hit at the same time with Mahi on them. Two of the three made it aboard to make 5 Mahi landed for the day. One Mahi, 2 Marlin and a Wahoo got away! Sharpen those hooks and get ready for some amazing fishing!

Yesterday afternoon the locals started showing up in their outrigger canoes and at one point we had 4 tied up to the back of Downtime with 12 people aboard. Mostly kids, but one brave adult came out and he hit the jackpot! He had brought out his broken portable DVD player to see if I could fix it. He was in luck! I might not be the electrical engineer you are but I dug out a old player we have not used for years and gave it to him and made his day. He wound up trading us several shells and other hand made items for our treasure chest. The kids ate candy like they never seen it before and the older ones all sported a new pair of sunglasses when they left Downtime.

The pass between the islands reminded me of Likiep Atoll and the winds were just right for two days of kite surfing!

This morning Joe the guy I gave the DVD player to shows up with the biggest stalk of bananas we have ever seen and asks Daria if she would like him and his cousins to go catch some coconut crabs for her? Silly question!! Daria gave them all a ride to the next island over in our big dinghy and gave them a radio to call her when they had a sack full. They caught the crabs while I kited and the local kids sat on the boat eating candy and watching me.

Now we have 50 pounds of bananas, 50 or so coconuts to drink, a sack full oranges and crabs and some handmaid gifts and a whole bunch of new sea shells to add to the pile we already have.

Savannah - November 2012: This pass is very easy. There is a big reef to watch out for, but it is shown on the charts and in decent lighting, very easy to spot.

We anchored in front of a two story building, about the middle of the island of Lukenor in 30 feet of water – sandy bottom, a few bommies. This turns out to be the municipal building and is a good location for tying up the dinghy on shore.

This atoll sees a boat about twice a year on average. Simon is the official “yacht greeter” and will find you shortly after arriving on shore. We did give the “Acting Mayor” a gift of coffee, a knife and fishing line, however, it wasn’t clear if this is the normal thing to do or not. We also gave Simon a fish we had caught on our way in. All seemed to be well received.

Simon has some “official” paperwork to be completed, mostly for his records I believe. He has a nice log book as well that he will ask you to sign. Everyone is very welcoming. We were not charged any kind of anchoring fee.

There are no services or supplies on this atoll. If you needed water, you might be able to convince someone to share with you here.

They grow bananas, coconuts, limes, taro, papaya and breadfruit (when in season). There were rumors of mangoes, however we never saw any. We were given some “oranges” that tasted more like grapefruit to us. This is all they have, so we were careful not to ask for anything. If it was offered to us, we accepted. There is a supply ship that comes approximately once a month. They order things through Chuuk and have it sent from there. A small store is on the island, but wasn’t really stocked with anything we needed more than they did.

There is rumor that the larger atoll of Satawan has internet but we did not visit there.

Both atolls have Peace Corp volunteers, two in each atoll. There is another village on the opposite side of Lukenor atoll where the other peace corp volunteer lives.

The school is in need of any supplies you can offer. We gave paper, pencils, crayons, dictionary, pencil sharpeners. As we have a child on board, we were also able to give some reading curriculum (Hooked on Phonics) that was greatly appreciated.

There are two churches, one Catholic, one Protestant. The Catholic church is located right in front of the school. The Protestant church is further south.

Simon appreciated any books in English we could give as well as any movies. The kids asked for movies as well, but since Simon was the one with the DVD player, we gave them all to him to share.

We did give out candy if the kids swam or paddled to the boat, but warning...there are A LOT of kids here and once the word gets out, you’ll be bombarded. Either come with a lot of goodies, or be prepared to say no. Eventually, I had to cut them off (and send them home), otherwise they would stay at the boat all day.

Snorkeling/Diving - We did not dive here, however we did snorkel the big reef in the middle of the pass. It was ok. Lots of fish, but not much coral. No big fish to speak of.

6.1.5 Satawan Atoll (Mortlock Group)

Soggy Paws - March 2014: We motorsailed down from Lekinioch in very light wind--around the east end of Satawan and in the south pass, and then up to the Satawan island.

We had a heavy overcast and visibility was terrible, and our Google Earth chart of the pass was not very good (clouds). But fortunately the CM93 chart looked like it agreed pretty well with

what we did have visible on our Google Earth chart, so we relied on that for entry and transit across the lagoon.

The SE pass was wide and deep, and had virtually no current. It was mid tide, on a rising tide, according to our tidal information. Here are the waypoints we used:

Outside: 05-17.31 N / 153-37.79 E

Center: 05-17.49 N / 153-37.85 E

Inside: 05-17.62 N / 153-37.96 E

We **anchored** of Satawan island in a large sand area visible on Google Earth at **05-19.91N / 153-43.87**, in about 25 feet of water. This spot is just off the new (still under construction) Catholic church, and there is a ramp and seawall there where we left the dinghy.

We had met one of the High Chiefs of Satawan in Lekinioch, and between that and a mission to locate Simon's son Eugene, we didn't do the normal "formalities" with the mayor and/or the chief. Our guide pointed out one of the other chiefs, and the mayor's house, and the Peace Corps workers here showed us around some, but no one suggested we needed to check in with anyone.

The main reason we came to Satawan was to see the relics of Japanese occupation during World War II. We heard rumors of a couple of tanks, a big gun, and an airplane in the water. We found much more than that. We could see bunkers on the eastern shore of Satawan island as we came down the coast. And Simon's (from Lekinioch) son, Eugene, guided us around to all the locations on Satawan.

There is a high school and elementary school here. There is an airport on the next island to the south (Ta) which Caroline Airlines flies into on a semi-regular basis. They also get ships in every couple of months.

Like Lekinioch, the yards surrounding the houses are neatly tended. And the main road down the middle of the island is smooth and wide. There are more breadfruit trees here than I've seen anywhere else.

We only stayed one day here--we unfortunately already had reservations to dive at Chuuk, and a good weather window, and needed to get going. But it would be easy to spend a week or more here, exploring and socializing.

U.S. Sailing Directions: Satawan Atoll is the largest atoll of the Mortlock group. Nearly 90 islands and islets lie on the atoll reef. In general, the islands are low and are covered with coconut palms, breadfruit, and other trees. Satawan is the largest and principal island. A wharf, 64m long and 10.6m wide, extends from the lagoon side, about 228m from the N end of the island.

Tides—Currents.—In South Channel, the current attains a velocity of 0.25 knot at flood and 1.25 knots at ebb. The ebb is reported to run SSW from 3 hours after LW to the following LW. When the currents are strongest, ripples appear at the extremities of the reefs.

In North Channel, the tidal currents attain a maximum velocity of 2.75 knots. The currents turn 2 hours after HW and LW. There are tide rips on the shoals inside this channel at strength of flood.

Depths—Limitations.—Numerous above and below-water dangers exist in the lagoon, some of which are hard to discern. Large areas in the NW and SE parts of the lagoon have been swept to depths of 14.9m. A passage, nearly 1 mile wide and swept to the same depth, connects the two swept areas. Most of the dangers lie outside the swept areas.

South Channel, situated on the S side of the atoll, is the main passage leading into the lagoon and to the anchorage off Satawan. The channel has been swept to a depth of 14.9m over a least width of 270m. Reefs extending out from both sides of the channel and in the lagoon are normally visible under favorable conditions of light. Tide rips are sometimes seen in the channel.

North Channel, situated on the N side of the atoll, is deep, and winding, with a least width of 228m between the reefs. A passage leading to the anchorage in the N part of the lagoon has been swept to depths of 14.6 to 18m, except for isolated shoals and reefs. The reef extending out from More, an islet on the E side of the channel, and the islet itself, can be passed fairly close-to as they are steep-to and usually visible under favorable conditions of light.

Anchorage.—Anchorage is almost unlimited in the lagoon. Vessels can anchor, in 27m, about 0.5 mile W of Satawan. This anchorage is sheltered from E winds.

Good anchorage can be taken during the Northeast Trades, in a position SE of Lalang Islet, located E of North Channel. Anchorage can also be taken SW of Afarene islet located W of North Channel.

6.1.6 Losap (06-53N / 152-42E)

Lorelei - January 2014: We entered the lagoon via Morchan Channel on the eastern side of the lagoon. On approach (06-51.8120 N / 152-42.7380 E) it is difficult to see the entry as it turns to the north and is hidden behind the breaking waves on both sides of the channel. The pass was approx 75m wide and 20m+ deep to the end where we passed over a shoaling area with some coral heads where we found a minimum depth of 8m.

We exited the lagoon via one of the western passes (06-51.8885 N / 152-40.5132 E) where we had a minimum depth of 4m. The pass was less defined and we had to pick our way out through the coral heads.

We anchored in the lee of Losap island (06-53.6930 N / 152-43.4700 E) in 14m of sand with some coral heads. We were here during neap tides and light winds so we cannot advise what the anchorage is like in rough conditions but for us it was very pleasant - no roll.

The chief - Atarinu Eram - visited us at the boat within 30 minutes of arriving and requested that we pay \$250 anchorage fee. We negotiated the fee down to \$20/night as we only planned to stay 2 nights. Expensive but better than motoring or bobbing in 2m swell and no wind. We were told that we could not do any activities unless we paid taxes - Diving \$250, Snorkelling \$150, Fishing/Spearfishing is charged per trip. We are sure this fee would be negotiable but did not try. The anchorage fee did include going ashore and meeting the people.

Onshore the people were friendly and we were surprised at how many lived there - probably around 150. They have a church and a school. Most people work in Weno in Chuuck and only return periodically.

Whilst the Japanese did occupy the island during WWII there were no significant war relics.

We were asked for alcohol and cigarettes by the chief & the local policeman and one afternoon we had to deal with uninvited kids onboard Lorelei while we were below sleeping.

We would not recommend Losap as we felt a bit like prisoners on our boat as we were not prepared to part with some serious USD.

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: East entry point at 06-51.812 N / 152-42.738 E. West exit point (there are several, this seems to be the northernmost) at 06-52.906 N / 152-40.493 E (for entry use same Longitude ended by .426). Chief Atarinu Eram will want to check your cruising permit and other papers. Rowdy, noisy kids all around the yacht were a disturbance and also stole a mask and snorkel...

6.1.7 Nema / Nama / Nomwin Island

Note: The center of this island according to Google Earth is located 1.2nm SSW of where it shows on the CM93 2010 chart set.

7 Chuuk

7.1 Chuuk - To Visit or Not

Soggy Paws - March 2014: There are a lot of hearsay accounts of horror stories from boats visiting Chuuk. As avid divers, we really wanted to stop at Chuuk. We had looked at flying in from Pohnpei to dive, but it just seemed so expensive. So we had reluctantly decided to bypass Chuuk. But when we met the Peace Corps workers in the Mortlocks, all of whom had recently spent time in Chuuk, we reconsidered.

Bottom line, we spent almost two weeks in Chuuk without incident, and had some GREAT diving, and completely pleasant encounters with the locals we met. But we, like Sloepmouche and Trigger, heeded previous cruisers and locals advice, and went to "high alert" status aboard, and did not anchor anywhere other than Truk Stop and Blue Lagoon.

We felt just fine going out during the day to go shopping, etc. But never ventured out after dark (after 2 deep dives every day, a "big night out" for us was dinner at Truk Stop and an early bed for an early dive the next day).

We did meet some of the younger divers staying at Truk Stop who DID go out at night. One, a young girl, went partying on Saturday night at a bar/disco until 3am--but with one or two local "friends" from Truk Stop.

Sugarcane - March 2014: *(I received this 3rd hand, but thought it useful to put in here, as it seems credible..SP)*. Sugarcane (big boat/motorsailer), heading east from Philippines to San Diego, stopped in Chuuk for a few days. The owner's laptop was stolen in Chuuk. He went to the supermarket, and left his backpack at the counter, as was requested. When his shopping was finished he got his packback back and noticed that his laptop was gone. Even with a lot of noise, he did not get it back.

Peace Corp Workers on Lekinioch & Satawan - March 2014: We (Soggy Paws), based on all the bad rumors, but especially the "cruiser rumor mill" below, had decided we'd skip Chuuk. No matter how badly we wanted to dive the wrecks, it wasn't worth risking life and boat. But on our way west, we stopped at Lekinioch and Satawan in the Mortlocks, and met 4 of the Peace Corp workers there--all young women. They all are coordinated out of Chuuk, and all had spent

a couple of months apiece during orientation, training, and holidays at Chuuk. When they found out we were avid divers but were going to skip Chuuk, they urged us to reconsider. They related that they, young, single white women, had no problems walking around Weno unescorted (except they recommend going with a local to keep you out of trouble if you want to go out at night).

Soggy Paws - Cruiser Rumor Mill - Jan 2014: I received this as a warning in an email from another cruiser (who had heard it from friends, who had heard it from friends). I asked for details, boat names, places, dates, or any more details, but never received a response.

"We got many warnings about that lagoon but you were the first ! Now we know there were 6 boats in the lagoon, all robbed, three at gun point and two were shot at !"

I did some googling about cruising and Chuuk and could not find any account of this. Perhaps it happened to non-native-English speakers and it is posted somewhere, but not in English.

The people at Truk Stop looked honestly blank when I talked about things happening to cruisers at gunpoint. I hate to just write this off as cruiser word-of-mouth exaggeration, but without first hand corroboration... I don't know what to think...other than maybe it happened at Tol (the western island in the atoll) on the way out. We were warned by several people while we were in Chuuk to stay away from Tol.

C'est la Vie - Summer 2013: A boat named C'est La Vie published a letter in the October 2013 Latitude 38 that indicated the officials in Chuuk arrested him with no cause, let his boat go on the reef, and plundered it while on the reef, and wouldn't let him go back aboard. His Amel 52 was a total loss, he had no insurance, and was "repatriated" by the officials, to the U.S..

The **facts**, according to local sources (Bill Stinnett, American, the owner of the Truk Stop Hotel), that we (Soggy Paws) contacted, are quite different. Bob on C'est La Vie caused his own problems and, though his boat did go on the reef, he put it there himself. *Soggy Paws: We met Bill in March 2014, and he is definitely a straight-up guy. Bill's version of the story was corroborated by several sources we talked to at Chuuk.*

He was arrested by the Chuuk officials but he had left the harbor without completing his check-in, and when they came to board him AFTER he'd put himself on the reef, he reacted beligerently and would not let the officials aboard.

To quote Bill Stinnett: "Their issue started with the exchange that took place between the American and our clearing authorities, Immigration, Customs, and Agriculture. A view existed that the clearance was not completed for one reason or another and a "to be continued" issue. But, before the "to be continued" occurred, the yacht left the mooring by our hotel and ran up on a reef in in the western part of the atoll--in what was considered an unusual area." (*Soggy Paws: We were warned several times by several people to not attempt the western pass nor stop anywhere near the Tol group in the west part of the atoll*)

"At that point, it's a matter of who you believe and exactly what caused a bad situation turn into a nightmare and then to a worst case scenario for a visiting yachtie. The guy was arrested by the National Police and they let him call me - I went down to the police station and they gave me free and easy access to him, then later they brought him and his sweetie to our hotel to shower up. The problem that got the attention of our State & National authorities has never been made

clear to me and while our officials did talk with me, the yacht owner only complained - didn't help himself."

"I put him and sweetie up at our hotel as a kindness to him. I called and got the U.S. Embassy Officials involved but for reasons that are unknown to me, this didn't improve his position any. "
(Soggy Paws: One of the Chuukese guys involved with interpreting told me that he witnessed Bob cursing at the US Ambassador, and they subsequently refused to have anything to do with him)

"The yacht owner was unable to get his yacht off the reef, which, like all the reefs and islets inside the lagoons in the FSM, is privately owned. The owners claimed damage to their property."

"In the end, the yacht owner and sweetie left without coming down and even saying "good bye" to us. He left owing us over \$1,800 USD."

"I've only heard rumors about what happened to his yacht - nothing first hand or that I would relate. In my 34 years out here, this is the weirdest or oddest incident involving a visiting yacht I've ever witnessed or heard of. I am sure there is way more here than meets the eye or touches the ear."

"I write it off as an inability to gauge a culture, understand that you are in a foreign country where the rules are different, finding out the right way to proceed to resolve issues and then doing that."

Soggy Paws: The rumours I heard from reasonable sources have two theories about why he left the Truk Stop mooring and went motoring about. One was that he had decided that his impromptu stop in Chuuk was a bad idea, and he just left to continue his passage to the Philippines. This would have been a reasonable thing to do had he not chosen the worst place in all of Chuuk to run himself HARD aground. The western pass LOOKS open, but you have to transit through a really bad area with many many scattered patch reefs.

The second theory was that he was buying or selling drugs, as Tol (where he went aground) is a known trafficking area--and no one can imagine why he'd be in the Tol area for any other reason. This, and the fact that his girlfriend's husband had filed a "missing persons" report in the Solomons, and he had not finished his check-in before going walkabout, is likely why the officials were so upset with him to begin with. Plus, according to one source "He was offensive to everyone."

Also, NO ONE in Chuuk uses VHF, so his cries for help on the VHF went unheeded, not because no one cared, but because no one heard them. I was also told that the locals offered to help but he told them to go away (probably rudely).

Trigger - March 2013: From our experience Chuuk is not paradise found, but it is not lawless and hostile.

We heeded advice to not leave loose items on deck and to lift and lock the dinghy at night.

We had one incident where a banana salesman was waiting for us next to the boat after our dives, and another where we were requested an anchorage fee from afar in a rude manner at one of the outer islands. In the first incident we bought some expensive bananas (\$10 small

bunch), but anchored there for a week at no charge and the second incident we just ignored after the guy's poor English left him in the lurch.

We're sure you'll enjoy the dives at Chuuk, especially with Truk Stop where you can anchor, leave your dinghy safely, use their facilities, arrange fuel at the dock and above all they are very knowledgeable on the wrecks - and super careful.

Cindy, from the dive shop reminded me that they are very busy during March and April and it would be best if you can let them know in advance (as best you can) when to expect you so as not to be disappointed. She can be contacted at diveshop@dive-truklagoon.com

7.2 Approach, Arrival and Formalities

Soggy Paws - March 2014 - Arrival: First, expect to go through "international" check-in procedures at each official stop in FSM (Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap). When we left Pohnpei, even though we made it clear that we were stopping in Yap before moving on to Palau, we had to do everything our friends who were going straight to Palau did, except that the officials pulled their yellow Immigration cards and did not pull ours. On checking in at Chuuk, we had to see all the officials again, and do all the same paperwork. Make sure you have a copier--it will greatly facilitate your check-in.

Also understand that we were never able raise ANYONE on VHF, not officials, not dive shops, not dive boats.

Following advice by Trigger, and using the cell phone sim we bought in Pohnpei, we called each official as soon as we had cell coverage, in the morning as we made our way across the lagoon. We made an appointment for 1:30pm, and slowed our approach to Weno to make sure we arrived at the big ship pier at 1pm and no sooner (ie avoiding overtime). We lucked out and arrived on a day when the airplane arrives in the morning. (We later learned from Truk Stop that M-W-Fr the plane is in the morning, T-Th-Sat, the plane is in the afternoon, and there is a 3am flight out on Sunday night/Monday morning). We checked in on Thursday at 1:30pm and had (almost) no problem.

We tied to the big concrete pier located at 07-26.7N / 151-50.4E. It has heavy black rubber "bumpers" so you are not grating against concrete. But the bollards are spaced very far apart for a yacht, so you need to be prepared with long lines, and have some chafe gear ready. If you have to spend any time on the dock, perhaps a short length of chain to go around the bollard and across the concrete would be appropriate. There are usually a few guys loitering around who will take your lines. Since the pier is so high, you really need someone on the dock to help tie up.

Within a few minutes of our appointed time, Immigration, Customs, Health, and Quarantine had stopped in. All wanted copies of our cruising permit and crew list. At least one, maybe two, wanted a copy of our boat documentaiton. Customs and Quarantine wanted a "Stores List" (same as at Pohnpei). Customs and the Port Captain wanted the original of our Port Clearance from Pohnpei. Customs, who visited first, took our Clearance from Pohnpei, and later when the "Port Captain" finally arrived, he wanted the original too--fortunately, we'd saved a copy and gave him the copy..

We learned that the primary official who had previously given cruisers a really hard time, the Immigration official Mrs. Mori, nicknamed "The Dragon Lady" by the local ex-pats, had "retired". A number of local ex-pats confirmed that she was a major source of the problems that cruisers (and local ex-pats) encountered. Our Immigration official was extremely courteous, as were the rest of the officials, including the Port Captain, when he finally showed up.

The only snag on our check-in was the "Port Captain". In Pohnpei, the Port Captain has an office at the port which has a VHF that is manned 24-hours, is very friendly and efficient, and arranged all the officials for us, checking in and out. Not in Chuuk. This guy is key to checking in and checking out, and is incredibly hard to contact.

We were told that his office at the port burned down a year ago. He has no office and no VHF, and the office phone number that Trigger has for him (330-2592) is disconnected. And for whatever reason, he never answers his cell phone (he later told us a text message would be better, because it is there when he turns his phone on).

We started at about 9am trying to contact him for a 1:30 check-in--via his cell phone, office, VHF, and through other officials. We even called Information and asked for his number--they said it was the number we had been calling, but confirmed that it was disconnected. As each other official processed our clearance, we asked them if they could contact the Port Captain for us. All tried and failed. Finally, just as we were about to leave the dock at 4:45pm without clearing with him, (and anchor within sight of the clearance dock, off Truk Stop) he showed up (I think one of the dock workers we talked to sent a relative to his house to roust him out). He confirmed the cell phone number that we had been trying to call, but told us his cell phone battery was dead.

We paid \$30 on check-in directly to Quarantine (the same or close to what Pohnpei charged us). The Port Captain listed the fees to expect on check-out, and they were nearly identical to Trigger's listed below. The \$25+\$10 per day is a bit high, but sure beats airfare and hotel room to fly here and dive.

We think our clearance was greatly helped by (a) We had our cruising permit (b) We contacted each official and made an appointment (c) we had a copier to copy whatever documents they wanted (d) we were friendly and courteous at all times.

If you are coming to dive, and plan to dive with Truk Stop (our recommendation), you should contact them ahead of time and make a reservation. They do get busy, especially Jan-April, and will not overload their boats just to accommodate passing cruisers. Contact Cindy at diveshop@dive-truklagoon.com ahead of time, and make a tentative reservation. She's very good at answering email.

Soggy Paws - March 2014 - Entry, Exit & Anchoring Waypoints

SE Pass we used: 07-12.00N / 151-59.74E Outside

07-13.54N / 151-59.47E Inside

This is basically a on direct line from the Mortlocks (Lekinioch/Satawan) to Chuuk. Visibility entering at 8am was fine, and all the hazards in the lagoon matched our CM93 (2010) chart and Google Earth chart reasonably well. From there we went north around Dublon/Tonowas and up the west side of Moen/Weno.

Truk Stop Moorings: 07-26.52N / 151-50.25E

Our Best Anchorage: 07-26.51N / 151-50.205E

The moorings would be preferred, but there are 2 semi-permanent boats there right now. Their moorings are 3/8" chain around coral heads, and they have the best anchoring spots. Where we anchored was as close as we could get to them and Truk Stop dock with 360-degree swing. We dropped in sand, but ended up hanging over some coral, so we bouyed our anchor chain with buoys at 90' and 125'. If the wind was E or ESE, we ended up in the middle of the "morning rush hour" small boat traffic lanes, but there's not enough swinging room to get closer in. You could make a temporary mooring with some chain around a coral head, but we didn't bother, as we "borrowed" one of the existing moorings for nearly a week. Make sure you have a bright anchor light at all times.

Commercial Pier: 07-26.69N / 151-50.39E

This is a large/high concrete pier with big black rubber fenders to keep you off the concrete. It is nicely protected from all directions except west. You will need long lines to tie up here, as the bollards are high and widely spaced. There are usually dock workers loitering about to take your lines (you will need someone on shore to get tied up).

Getting on and off the boat at the pier is a problem--a scramble up the high sides of the pier. Almost all the officials opted to deal with us from up on the dock vs coming aboard. One, the Immigration guy on check-out, wanted to come aboard and take a look around. We weren't sure whether he was looking for stow-aways, or just curious. He was nice and friendly and was more interested in our lifestyle than anything else.

There is no one to contact before going in--NO ONE uses VHF in Chuuk (not the officials, not the dive operations or the dive boats). If there's space at the dock, feel free to tie up. Depth to about 25-30 feet, so no problems for sailboats. If there's no space on the south face, you might be able to raft to someone for clearing in, or use the west face of the dock, or anchor close off the west face until you can arrange to come alongside (mandatory we are told for clearing in). The large ships that come in, do dock on the west face, but they only come in for a few hours once every 2 weeks. The dock workers will know if there is a ship coming in soon. Most of the time there was plenty of space at the pier for a sailboat.

There is a 24 hour guard on the dock, so we felt pretty secure while there, but we still were at Code Yellow status (everything loose on deck stowed below, and the boat locked up when we left). We had no troubles whatsoever anywhere in Chuuk, and had we not been warned about all the possible bad stuff beforehand, we'd have found Chuuk very friendly.

Blue Lagoon Anchorage: 07-24.86N / 151-50.47E

This is nestled up in a sand spot as close in as we could get, with decent protection from NW through E and almost to S. In about 25' sand. We bouyed the anchor with 2 sets of bouys to minimize any coral damage (this is within snorkeling distance of the Blue Lagoon Resort). We went ashore at night, leaving our dinghy on the beach, and had dinner. There is a security guy roaming the grounds.

Blue Lagoon Odyssey Mooring: 07-24.8N / 151-50.4E

This is the mooring for the Odyssey live-aboard dive boat. It is normally vacant except for Saturday and Sunday evenings, when they do the guest change-over. You can probably use it with permission. But we could not raise Odyssey on VHF, even when we came in and anchored very close next to them. There is reportedly another mooring for Odyssey on the east side of the Blue Lagoon peninsula, but we don't know the exact location.

When we asked where we should go if the winds went west, someone told us "on the other side of the airport". Good Google Earth charts of the north and east side of Weno/Moen would be recommended if you're staying long in Chuuk. We did not do any exploring over there, but a day trip on a calm day exploring would be worthwhile, to suss out a spot for a westerly blow.

Western Pass we used on Exit: 07-26.21N / 151-33.05E

This is a wide-open pass with easy exit. The route direct from the Commercial Pier to this pass is fairly easy in daylight with reasonable light. Our CM93 (2010) chart showed 2 or 3 small shallow spots, which (on close inspection) we also found on the Google Earth chart. We saw them approximately as plotted on the chart as we passed by. But this pass is 17 miles from the pier/Truk Stop, so you need to get an early start so you're not navigating with the sun in your eyes. There are two or 3 passes to the north of this one that are closer (closest is about 13 miles, and more to the NW so you wouldn't be absolutely into the sun in the afternoon).

WARNING: We were warned several times NOT to stop at Tol... This is the big set of islands near the far western end of the atoll. These people have a bad reputation as being a bit lawless. It is also pretty reefy getting through there. This is where C'est La Vie ran into trouble. It would be tempting to stop there coming in from the west late in the day, but it is not recommended. Better maybe to come in the south pass as Swingin' on a Star did, and stop overnight behind Uman, if you have to.

Stopping ANYWHERE but the Commercial Pier, Truk Stop, or Blue Lagoon, and you are likely to be asked for a fee to stay. This is the Chuukese way, and applies to everyone, not just foreign vessels (unless you are part of the clan or connected by friends/family).

Soggy Paws - March 2014 - Checking Out: We started by making sure we had the phone numbers of all the officials we needed to see on checkout when we checked in. (they are listed in Trigger's report, and are all still valid except the Port Capt's office number) Then a day ahead of time, call them and set your departure time and make a firm appointment for them to come visit. Understand that the airplane schedule will affect when they visit. Currently, on Sunday night, there is a 3am flight (they will be less responsive in general on Monday because of this). On M-W-Fr, the regular flight is in the morning. On T-Thu-Sat, the regular flight is in the afternoon.

Because we wanted to leave first thing Tuesday morning, we set up for a Monday afternoon checkout, and planned to pay ahead for an extra night on the pier and stay at the concrete dock overnight. They said they normally didn't allow checking out a day in advance, but they allowed us to do it. (Dave was always so nice and courteous to everyone, I think it helps a lot).

Once we got into the dock, it turned out that Monday was a holiday, and we paid overtime anyway to Immigration and Customs--double on Holidays, a total of \$75. But this was our fault, and once informed by the Immigration guy, we could have opted to wait til the next day and not have to pay any overtime (March 31, 2014 was "Cultural Day"). If we'd waited til Tues am, we

would have only had to pay the port charges (\$130 total, itemized, with a receipt, no overtime included).

The only official we had trouble with was again the Port Captain. Never got an answer on his cell phone. I think he never has it on or doesn't carry it. He told us a text message would have been better, because it's there when he turns his cell phone on. He also said he passes the port a couple of times a day, and will see any boats that are there. Once we got him at the boat, he was friendly and efficient. He went away to prepare the "port clearance" paperwork and came back an hour later with that and the itemized "port charges" bill.

Again, everyone was polite and friendly. I think each official wanted another copy of the crew list, even though it was the same one we gave them on clearing in. I had also made several copies of our Cruising Permit in anticipation, but I don't think anyone asked for it.

We dinghied over to Truk Stop for a last meal, and loaded the dinghy that night, and left about 7am Tuesday morning.

Some helpful people--Mason Fritz--associated with Truk Stop (cell 930-6424). Speaks good English, related to several of the officials, and generally very interested in seeing that visiting yachts have a good experience. Also, a guy by the name of Gideon, who is the head/manager of the stevedores at the port. Speaks good English, and knows the workings of the port well. (cell 932-2644). Gideon has family on Puluwat, so if you are going there after Chuuk, you can thank him by carrying a few items for his family (we took a cardboard box, 50lbs of rice and 20 lbs of "turkey tails" to his sister).

Trigger - 2013 - How the High Check-In/Out Fees Can Be Avoided (from noonsite.com):

Several reports on Noonsite and elsewhere refer to inexplicable high charges at Chuuk and of Immigration specifically charging \$40 without explanation or receipt.

We were also target to this, having to pay a surprising \$80 to Immigration on entry and a forewarned \$280 official port charges on exit after 23 days.

My queries to FSM Immigration HQ remain unanswered, but my questions to several officials of the various departments have revealed the following cost structure in Chuuk:

Each official is entitled to an overtime fee if they perform their duties outside of working hours. The consensus was that although the amount is determined by pay grade it usually amounts to \$20 per official. One official is sent per department except for Immigration that sends two. Official hours are from 8:00 to 16:00, but lunch time is also billable and although most yachts would expect to wait until after lunch, many officials favor working during lunch time. I received a variable response regarding exact lunch hours: 12:00 to 13:00 usually or sometimes 11:00 to 12:00.

Quarantine certificate \$25 on entry.

Harbor dues payable on exit, calculated as below:

- Entry fee is \$25.
- Anchorage fee is \$25 for the first 48 hours and \$10 for each day thereafter.
- Docking fee is \$25 per occasion, exempted when performing clearance procedures only.

- Customs - no charge.
- Visa and visa extension - no charge.

Our experience, corroborated by several other yachts, was that some officials are sluggish in their response and try to delay their arrival until it falls either in lunch time or after hours, albeit by just a couple of minutes.

On our exit we employed the following procedure with very good result:

- give each dept 48 hours notice
- state a specific time for the appointment (early e. g . 9:00)
- keep on phoning if they don't arrive, either from the dock office or ask the officials who are on time to phone their colleagues
- note openly the exact time of arrival and time of conclusion of official business
- if (when) an official finds a reason to return to his office, agree on a time of return.

Chuuk Port control does not have a radio and you will not get a response on channel 16.

On entry, proceed to the harbor wall and then phone the relevant departments (repeatedly). The office at the wharf has a telephone that can be used for landlines only.

Port: Office 330-2592 Mobile 932-5510

Agriculture: Mobile 930-1136

Customs: Office 330-4482 Mobile 931-8811

Immigration: Office 330-2335

Sloepmouche - April 2012: We entered the atoll by the NE pass, the one used by big ships. It was easy and straightforward. The isolated reefs are well marked but we cannot verify the lights as we entered in the early morning. We proceeded to Weno to clear in. After rounding the north side, around the airport runway, you can see the commercial harbor. We called several times on VHF CH16 and only got a reply from Perry, the weather man (he is also a Pastor), who called the Port Captain for us. The port office burned down just before our arrival and they did not have an office at the time.

We docked at the commercial wharf between a cargo and a Chinese fishing vessel to wait for the officials to show up. We arrived at 10 a.m. and by 4 p.m. we saw the Port Captain, Customs and Immigration but not the Quarantine Officer. Since offices were closed by this time, we left the dock and anchored in front of the Truk Stop Hotel, just a few hundred yards away.

Remember that Chuuk is at GMT+10 not GMT+11 like Pohnpei.

Since we arrived during business hours, we did not take the hints of overtime we got from Customs and Immigration, who came during lunch time. Quarantine inspection fee is the usual FSM \$25 fee. The Port Captain told us during check-in that upon departure we would be charged a special anchoring fee (no matter where you anchor anywhere in the whole Truk lagoon!) of \$25 for the first 48 hours and of \$10/day thereafter. He agreed with me that this steep charge was one of the reasons that arriving yachts were not too pleased and do not stay very long! Mason Fritz, the Tourism Office manager, understands that this kind of tax actually

results in the government losing income versus charging low fees, which would attract more cruisers, who spend some good money to dive, dine and make other local expenditures. Perhaps someday the officials who impose that anchoring fee will also understand that lowering or abolishing that fee would attract a lot more dollars than now!

The weather is variable in May so make sure you can swing 360° wherever you anchor. From the Truk Stop or Blue Lagoon anchorages you can access **Wi-Fi** from the local phone company.

We decided first to scuba dive some of the famous Truk Lagoon wrecks with the Truk Stop dive center. Cindy and local crew took us out to explore some of the wrecks. You go in a big fiberglass boat for a two-tank dive. Diving with Nitrox, I was able to extend my bottom time and get great video footage. We recommend going with the Truk Stop diving center; it is a serious and well-run outfit. The wreck diving was the best of the Pacific WWII wrecks that we dived in the north and south Pacific. These wrecks were impressive, had lots of artifacts and cargo still left and identifiable, were well-preserved for their age, and the soft coral and marine growth carpeted many of the wrecks. It was the most prolific and colorful of any wrecks we dived so far. It was wonderful to see soft corals again (hadn't seen them in such profusion since our days diving the Maldives and the Red Sea.) Ever since becoming Dive Instructors, we had heard about diving the fleet of Japanese wrecks sunk in Truk Lagoon by the U.S. during Operation Hailstorm, as retribution for the attack on Pearl Harbor. We had the impression that the wrecks were deep, 150'-200', requiring expert-level diving, and were quite surprised to find the majority of wrecks are well within sport diving depths of 70' – 140'. The wrecks are so massive that you can enjoy them without penetrating anywhere where you can't see light from the outside. Many of the ships are upright and some of the masts are only 30'-60' deep and could almost be a reef dive by themselves, so covered are they in colorful marine growth. It would have been a great shame to sail by Truk/Chuuk without diving on the famous wrecks, just because we were told it was a dangerous place with bad locals.

We were warned often not to visit Chuuk due to the hassle and thievery —unless we were avid divers. We are. So we came, but we were as prepared as we could be. We did not go out at night and we only went to town accompanied. You cannot anchor anywhere in the lagoon without prior permission, and you run the risk to be asked for fees or have rocks thrown at you if you try to land on any island. We had been warned about thievery on yachts in Chuuk so we took our full safety measures like locking everything day and night, dinghy up on the davits at night or locked up at the stern during the day and, most of all, we had our two Schipperkes doing full 24/7 watch/guard duty on deck. We had no problem, nor any feeling of being unsafe. In fact, all but a few of the locals were very friendly and smiled and waved and loved looking at the dogs as they passed in their runabouts. They seemed pretty much like Pacific islanders everywhere.

One time we went by dinghy to town to buy diesel and we were hassled by a helper who wanted \$20 to assist me at the gas station and were blackmailed \$1 to tie to a supposedly private wall! From what we could gather by talking to Mason and Cindy and others, it seems that the Chuukese are jealously territorial. They will try to charge money whenever possible to outsiders (even other locals), will be unwelcoming to strangers, and are easily provoked when opposed - especially when drunk. They are some of the greatest opportunists when it comes to "borrowing." Yes, natives here in Chuuk have a bad reputation as spoiled children with bad tempers.

Our **departure** from Chuuk was quite eventful and stressful! I knew that the best time to depart was the beginning of the afternoon to have enough daylight to cover the 16nm inside the lagoon (clear of any dangers according to the charts) to reach the west pass (unmarked by islets or navigation aids) before dark. On the other hand, I knew that if we wanted to check out during lunch hours, the Immigration and Customs would be very happy to charge overtime fees! First thing in the morning, I asked the Visitors' Bureau secretary to call both Immigration and Customs to arrange our check-out. Unlike most other countries we visited before, they insisted that yachts tie up at the main commercial dock for checking in and out procedures. Main docks are not designed for small yachts due to the high walls, dirty black fenders, or sometimes worse and dangerous metal or concrete protuberances. It was not good news that we had to dock but there was no choice. Their training and seeming lack of imagination or empathy, made it impossible for them to agree on anything else. I scheduled us for 1:30 p.m., just after lunch time.

Mid-morning, the boat driver who was to take us to film the next island (old capital island) finally showed up and we went filming. But because everywhere we could land to film ashore, we would be asked to pay fees, or some could throw stones at us, the boat driver just let us film from the boat at a safe distance from shore. When we came back from that quick trip, I dove to retrieve our mooring and we proceeded to the dock.

The big, old SS Thorfinn, a live-aboard dive boat, which has been here about 30 years, was at the dock getting fuel. There was plenty of room behind her so we tied up there. On the other side of the dock were a cargo ship and a visiting USCG ship. The Immigration lady tried to blackmail me into paying \$80 overtime charges because the "law" tells them to come one hour prior, thus at 12:30, which was during their lunch time. I argued the impropriety of these charges and politely refused to pay; she did not push the issue. We barely averted catastrophe when, right in front of us, the SS Thorfinn captain cast his lines and was pivoting away from the dock. We thought he would simply back up and pass on our side. Then the captain yelled at us from his bridge to get out of the way, as he could do nothing but bear down on us! We both thought he was joking; why would he not inform us of that fact BEFORE casting his lines off? On his second warning, we realized that, indeed, he was bearing down on us and we realized quickly that this heavy monster was going to crush us at the dock unless we moved out of the way very quickly. We released our dock lines in record speed and backed up along the dock. Alas, being tied up port side to the dock, when backing up the propeller pulls our stern to port so our stern was bouncing along the wall. The huge, rubber dock pilings kept us from crushing our wooden hull into the concrete pier. Black rubber marks and some paint scratches are better than broken planking! Our luck was that the pier angled away to the left so our boat was able to pivot to the left and get out of the way of the unmaneuverable monster. Thanks to Jackie, who managed to fend our stern off the wall and tell me what was happening and where she was, thanks to my calm (even if adrenaline was flowing quite high), thanks to the universe to give just the time we needed and a dock curving away. No thanks to Captain Lance, who left without anything to say over the VHF! I think that 30 seconds more and the ship would have crushed us against the dock!

We returned to the dock to complete our departure formalities, and I resumed my talk with the Immigration woman about refusing to pay abusive overtime charges. She was charging for her time, as well as for Customs, but I could see the Customs guy was very embarrassed by the whole situation and was not being part of it. The flaw in the FSM system is that these officials

keep any overtime charges they collect. Apparently, collecting overtime when yachts or ships clear in or out on weekends, holidays or after hours is not enough. They think it's best to even invent laws and regulations to make sure to charge more overtime. During that time, there was still no port captain to clear us out so I knew we could not leave yet. I politely just refused to pay the charges and called her bluff. Ranting and saying she would report us so we might have problems at Yap, she reluctantly gave us back our stamped passports; a sure sign that she knew she was on shaky grounds. It was only a quarter to three when the port captain handed us the anchoring bill and port fees, a total of about \$300! By luck, I previously arranged with the Chuuk Visitors' Bureau to waive these local charges because of my video work and other promotion for the States. The port captain was aware of this and a phone call to the right person finally cleared that up, so he gave us his clearance with a smile and "bon voyage."

It was now about 3 p.m. local time and we used the engine to give us extra speed to exit the lagoon in daylight over the pass. We made it with about half an hour to spare. What a day - far from the yachting magazine's images of cruisers sipping a cocktail in their cockpit at sunset with no cares! So, we can only agree with the cruising advice to skip Chuuk unless you are an avid diver—and then, be forewarned!

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: Port – No answer on VHF, we tied at the commercial dock on the south.

Fees - Immigrations – 40\$ in and 40\$ out. Quarantine – 25\$. Port – 75\$ on departure. No fee for Customs (tel. 3304482) but all charge overtime outside working hours.

Swingin' on a Star - January 2009 - Arrival by SE Pass, late in the day: It was getting close to sunset and we really needed to make Chuuk lagoon or find an alternate. Anchoring at Kuop Atoll was a possibility but the south pass was not looking good given the seas rolling by. There are two passes on the chart located along the west side of the reef but they are both narrow and shallow as charted. Doable though perhaps.

We pressed on and got rerouted or slowed a bit by two more squalls. Things seemed to be getting nastier. Perhaps the higher islands in the Chuuk lagoon were launching even more convection or perhaps the weather was just going that way.

We came out from behind Kuop a little more than an hour before sunset and the seas came up quite a bit. We were behind Chuuk at this point, but the channel and the now 20 plus steady wind was making a mess of things. Two more squalls passed in front of us and we were now sailing in 30 knots apparent (probably 23 true) steady. As we got close to the pass we rolled up the jib and started the engines. Both Yanmars came up, so down went the main. Our course through the south pass was dead to weather and we didn't want the hassle of sails flogging about. If you have only one auxiliary perhaps it would be wise to leave the main up in this sort of situation.

We came in the pass on our charted track and finally got in contact with our friends on s/v Whistler. He had made the port around 15:00 and indicated that the track was good through the pass. As we came in through the pass the seas were big. Steep three and four footers came right at us. It was hard to see the shoals to port and starboard as the pass is deep and wide. It was also close to sunset and very overcast. If this wasn't a ship caliber channel (very wide and

deep) we probably would have had to stay outside. Staying outside here would require sailing well off the surrounding reefs.

Angelique had anchored two miles outside of the pass but pulled up to follow us in. We had thought that perhaps the lagoon would be calmer than outside, but it is a very large lagoon. It was as bad or worse as the area outside the pass, smaller waves but steeper. We bashed into big head seas and 20-30 knots of apparent wind for another hour to reach **Uman island**, which seemed like the best and closest place to anchor for the night. It is 20 miles inside the lagoon through shoals and many ship wrecks to the port but it was only 6 miles to Uman.

As we approached the leeward side of Uman the seas went flat and the wind relented. It is a nice little harbor. It was getting fairly dark but we came in close to the island until we found 60 feet. We made a circle around the spot to ensure that there were no hazards in the swinging arc and then dropped the Rocna. The **anchor** set instantly, and then I heard the unpleasant sound of coral scraping the chain. It doesn't hurt our chain but it is no good for the coral. I don't like to damage coral bottoms. Our chart gave no indication of the bottom type here but given the scuba reputation Chuuk has I would guess that pure sand is tricky to come by. Their position report from Sailblogs here was: 07 18.1'N / 151 52.2'E

Swingin' On A Star - January 2009 - Clearing In: We slept in today. The anchorage was lovely and we had a nice relaxing breakfast with a beautiful view of the lush green islands inside the Chuuk Lagoon. We talked to Whistler on the VHF and told him that we would try to get over to the port to clear in by 14:00.

Shortly thereafter I noticed four teenage boys hanging off of our stowed dinghy. I went outside to greet them and see what they were up to. They had four coconuts they wanted to give us. I told them we were under quarantine and had plenty of coconuts, but thanks. The leader said, "I give you one". Trying to be nice I said, "ok thanks". Then he said, "now you give me something". I could see where this was going. I asked what he wanted. The four guys had a little huddle then one came back and said, "champagne". There was obviously a language barrier here but I got the drift. I gave them back their coconut and told them we were under quarantine and they had to go. I'm pretty sure they understood the go part if nothing else.

I turned to go back inside and it started raining. They didn't leave. I went back out and they said they wanted to wait for the rain. They were sort of sheltered by our swim platform so against my better judgment I said ok. Back inside the boat with the sliding door closed I could clearly see them but they could not see me. I watched as the lead punk, as I will refer to him from this point on, reached over the edge of our dinghy and began to lift our paddles. I burst back outside and yelled at him to drop the paddle and get away from my boat. That worked.

Sad to say that everyone we have talked to around here today confirms that there is a very high rate of petty theft in Chuuk. Even the guy who was putting up the money for a little league project was getting all of his gloves and balls stolen. As a tourist in a secure hotel room you have nothing to worry about, but when you have your entire home with you it is a little more troubling. Certainly restricts your interest in leaving the boat unattended. Once again we are happy to have Roq aboard. He is the most harmless animal ever to walk the earth, but island folks are generally pretty scared of him.

After setting out for the port, it was a tough slog up the lagoon around the weather side of Dublon. Fairly similar to yesterday actually. Once we turned down wind things mellowed out and we had a nice trip around Weno in protected water to the port on the west side of the island.

We hailed port control an hour out and they asked us to tie up to the main quay. The quay is a big ship dock with huge rubber stand offs. They do go from the top of the quay to the water at low tide though so you can work out a horizontal fender arrangement that will do a fair job of protecting the topsides.

A Dutch freighter was just leaving for Pohnpei as we arrived. The quay is huge, and once the m/v Islander had gone, it was empty. I think they get about one ship a week but the quay looks like it belongs in the port of Long Beach. Very nice. Too open to swell and chop for yachts though and it is the only place to tie up in Chuuk that we know of.

John from the port came by to clear us in and go over the fees with us. It was \$25 a night to stay on the quay (something we would like to do for as short a period as possible), \$25 for the first two nights anchored out, and \$10 per night thereafter. Pretty expensive as islands in the middle of nowhere with no real services to speak of go. Next we saw customs. A copy of the ships docs, a list of previous and next ports, and a crew list sorted him out. Then quarantine, \$25 and the "I usually confiscate all of the food on board but you can keep yours just don't bring it ashore" speech. They have no incinerator so we could not take out our trash (ug). Immigration showed up at 5:30PM, to ensure overtime payment which totaled \$57.50. They were the ones interested in our cruising permit, oddly. We had to print them a copy of the application we sent to Pohnpei. They took off with our passports until further notice. Hopefully we'll get the cruising permit tomorrow at 11AM when she promised to come back.

We spent the night at the port dock. (Sailblogs position: 07-26.7'N / 151-50.4'E) It was less than an optimal evening on the cargo ship quay. The problem with the quay is that you just can't get tied up in such a way that your boat will be at rest. It is a roadstead and there's a couple feet of tide, a couple feet of slow rolling swell and a lot of small boat wake mixing together, fore and aft, side to side. We were eager to move out into the islands.

Eleven AM and Mrs. Mori from Immigration never showed up. The diesel guy, who is actually an American, did come by as scheduled though. It was raining so hard and often though that it took three stints to get the tanks filled. We had to keep closing everything up and running inside the boat, while the diesel guy sheltered in his truck.

Health showed up out of the blue in the afternoon. They looked at our immunization cards and our most recent physical exam records and that was that. So the total official visits was now up to five (Health, Immigration, Customs, Port, Quarantine). I was talking to an Australian who is here as a tax adviser to the government and he indicated that the government is largely funded by the USA and that something like 20% of the population in many areas work for the government. If there's one place in the world that needs less government it is here!

We sat on the quay all day waiting for immigration to bring our passports and our cruising permits. We had sent in the cruising permit applications from Gizo over a month ago. The email exchange with Pohnpei was much like consulting with the great Atun of Planet 7. You can make

your requests of the oracle but little indication of your disposition will be forthcoming.

Mrs Mori from immigration showed up at 3PM, four hours late, with a story about the air plane creating a slow down in her day. There is one flight a day into Chuuk and it is the same every day. She had nothing. In fact we had to give her new copies of our application for cruising, crew list and ship particulars. It didn't seem to matter that we had already sent all of this in to the capital via email. She left and said she would try to return at 5PM with our permits and passports. No such luck.

Eric on Whistler had started his process a day before us and just got all of his stuff back today. He left the dock for the anchorage south of here off of the Continental Hotel (now the Blue Lagoon) a bit before sunset. We were all envious and hope to join him soon. After all we came here to anchor around the islands and go SCUBA diving (which you can only do with a guide), not to sit in the container port.

This has been by far the most confused circus of officialdom I have ever experienced in any country (and we've been in and out of over 30). There was no way we were staying on the quay another night. Our boat had not been damaged yet, but I wasn't going to wait for it. Our fenders and dock lines were certainly no better for the wear. We left the dock just after sunset. We were certain immigration was not coming at this point, they no showed but did not have the courtesy to tell us they would not be back until tomorrow.

We anchored off of the quay far enough to avoid most of the small boat traffic. The bay next to the quay is the shuttle harbor where all of the boats running about the islands in the lagoon converge. Things pretty much shut down after sunset though. The harbor bottom is pretty scoured and we had to try twice to get a set.

Day 3 of trying to clear in: We waited the morning out in the port but found no sign of immigration. At and I had finally had enough. I dingied over to Angelique, who had received some unfortunate damage from the quay overnight, and we headed for the immigration office. It was noon and of course the office was closed.

When two o'clock rolled around and still no one showed up at the office we proceeded to the airport. We were looking for the head of immigration in Chuuk. He arrived at the airport from home about a half hour later. We made our situation clear.

It went something like this: "We have been in your port for three days and have not been cleared in. We filed for permits more than a month ago and received no confirmation or contact, even when requested, over any channel. We tried to bring aid to your outlying atolls (much like the US air drops at Christmas from Guam), but were denied. We are now being held up here. You can give us back our paperwork and we will contact our embassy and leave, or you can clear us in. Please decide and complete your process in the next hour."

He assured us that his office was working to get us in but that Pohnpei was taking more time to approve the paperwork than normal. We returned to the boats to watch the clock. Back at the port Mrs. Mori arrived and she still did not have our permits. She insisted that she be allowed to

inspect our stores to see that we still had our aid package aboard. We obliged and then both At and I blew up. We had had enough of the rinky dink games and quite enough of the Pohnpei power play. We were ready to demand our prior clearances, refunds of fees, and to be on our way to Guam.

After a lot of apologies from immigration we were swayed to stay until tomorrow, at which point, we were promised, permits and stamps would be forthcoming. So far this country's government has proven pretty good at wasting people's time, insulting folks who spent thousands of dollars of their own money to assist people in the outer islands, creating the most complex entry program we have ever encountered and charging more money than anyone but the Bahamas.

As a side note, we have been warned to anchor no where but in front of the Blue Lagoon because should we anchor anywhere else in the lagoon we are liable to get robbed at knife point unless we have a local aboard (this came from two Chuukese friends we had made at the port).

Day 4: If you only have a week you might want to avoid FSM. It took us four days to clear in. We went ashore at the Blue Lagoon today to look around the resort and await immigration with our final paperwork. The resort is the nicest place in Chuuk as far as we can tell. They have about 50 rooms and perhaps 5 were rented. I worry about the viability of the place.

We bought Telecom cards at the front desk (good for pay phone calls, cell top ups and Wifi) and made some calls and got caught up on the internet. When immigration arrived we finally got our passports back, stamped, and received paper copies of our cruising permits. It turns out ours had issued in December but it expired before we got here. Pohnpei took some time to sort this out and issue another permit.

Happy to be "in" the country we relaxed at the Blue Lagoon Resort for the day and enjoyed a nice dinner at the restaurant.

Swingin' on a Star - Feb 2009 - Clearing Out: Angelique had already anchored in the port by the time we made way. We anchored behind them but after contacting port control it became clear that we were going to have to tie up to satisfy the inflexible officials (particularly immigration, they are too lazy to get out of their car much less get on a dinghy).

A large Japanese cargo ship was inbound but the port captain let us tie up to the A berth. This is the best spot on the quay, as it is actually inside the fishing/small boat harbor and much more protected from the wind and swell. The small boats also tend to go slower here and you don't get waked as badly.

It was clear that the officials were not coming for an hour or two, so we dinghied over to the Truk Stop for lunch and some final internet.

We cleared out with far less hassle than clearing in and only had to deal with three organizations rather than five. Immigration still required us to print them a crew list on exit (even though it was the same as the one we gave them on entrance and they had all of our passports). Port charged us \$185 and that was after we talked them out of \$25 for one night of stay on the quay, forced upon us. In total (in and out) we paid about \$275 to officials to be here for two weeks on our own hook (or a yacht hostile quay). It is by far the most expensive country I have been to and certainly one of the least favorite. Diving the amazing collection of wrecks is the only reason I can think of to come to Chuuk, and I would recommend flying in to stay on a

live aboard dive boat rather than visiting with your own yacht. Unfortunately FSM controls a vast area of ocean, for safety and comfort many yachts will want to make stops inside FSM territory when transiting the area.

The officials, other than port which was expensive but always very friendly and reasonable, demanded that we depart immediately after checking out. Rational behavior did not fit into their doctrine. We said little, paid our fees and left.

Swingin' on a Star - Feb 2009 - Anchoring Overnight at Fanos Island: We arrived at Fanos island, seven miles from the port, just before sunset. We have been warned by everyone to avoid the Tol group and everything around it. The best passes on the west barrier are in this area. Upon inspection of the charts we discovered that there is also a decent pass with 30 meters of water in it four miles from Fanos. So we decided to anchor behind Fanos until we were ready to depart.

We arrived an hour before sunset and it was getting tricky to read the water. The island has a lot of coral heads on the southeast end but we found reasonable shelter and room for three boats at the north west end in 40 feet, fairly close to shore. Angelique came in just after us and Whistler arrived a bit after sunset. Soon after some guys in a fiberglass boat from the island came out to give us drinking coconuts. I was just lamenting to Hideko about our lack of drinking coconuts. It was like magic. The guys were very friendly but didn't speak much English. They were looking for cigarettes but offered the same courtesy to the other boats (Eric had some smokes for them) and then they headed back to shore.

Fanos is small but lovely. The anchorage is good in north to northeast wind. The reef around the southeast point gives you some protection from the easterly seas. The bottom is sand and coral. Too much coral to be optimal for sure. The island has a few structures on it but looks to be sparsely inhabited.

We settled in for a nice evening and looked forward to spending a beautiful day here at Fanos tomorrow.

After a mellow morning with some squalls blowing by we started to do final checks on the boat.

The local guys on the fiberglass boat came out to Angelique and demanded a \$60 anchoring fee. We had of course already paid the port plenty of fees and were told that we could stage up here no problem by John, the harbor master. At from Angelique told them nothing doing and they left mad. Well we don't stay where we're not welcome.

We toyed with sailing up to a deserted island (maybe some peace!?) but in the end decided to head for Namonuito reefed down for an overnight rather than messing around. Angelique left before us and had no problem getting out the pass. Eric had called back to let us know that the track was good but to bias north. The chart here needs an offset but even if you offset it some parts line up with reality but then others are still off a bit. You can't get the whole chart dialed in perfectly.

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: Weno Town Anchorage; 07° 26.51'N 151° 50.21' E Off the Truk Stop Hotel pier, in coral and sand. This is a convenient but noisy anchorage with many

banana boats passing through in the morning rush hour. It is safe to leave a dinghy at the hotel jetty.

Some hardware is available at Ace Hardware.

Blue Lagoon Hotel 07° 24.7' N 151° 50.2' E A bay at the south end of the island with reasonable shelter and holding. Better security here. Comfortable facilities at the hotel.

U.S. Sailing Directions: The range of tides in the lagoon is usually small. The average tidal range is 0.4m at Dublon Island and 0.5m at Moen (Weno). The tropic range, which is the increased diurnal range occurring semi-monthly, is 0.6m at Dublon Island and 0.6m at Moen (Weno). The maximum tide is about 0.9m. Tides usually occur twice daily within the same 2-hour period, except when the diurnal inequality is greatest and there is one tide.

The tidal currents in the passages turn approximately at HW and LW, with the flood current flowing into the lagoon and the ebb out of it.

It was reported that the currents in Northeast Pass run at a much stronger velocity than shown on the chart. In the vicinity of the pass, the tidal currents are affected by the wind, and a maximum velocity of 5 knots has been obtained. A heavy swell occurs at spring tides with strong NE winds.

Within the lagoon, the currents are complicated and seldom exceed 0.5 knot.

Depths—Limitations.—The barrier reef is broken by numerous passages, many of which have been swept to adequate depths. Extensive areas within the lagoon have been swept to depths indicated on the chart. Almost the entire N part of the lagoon has been swept to depths of 16.8m, except for the shoals, which have been swept to lesser depths. Swept areas and channels lead from the main passes to the anchorages off the main islands.

Numerous above and below-water dangers are scattered throughout the lagoon. The islands are fringed by reefs and fronted by dangers.

Northeast Pass (7°30'N., 151°59'E.), the recommended pass, is marked by breakers and by the white cylindrical light to the S and Mor Island to the N. The charts indicate several swept passages that lead from the various passages to the anchorage areas. Vessels should stay within these areas and navigate through them under only the most favorable conditions of light, due to the numerous scattered reefs and shoals. The channel leading through Northeast Pass to Moen (Weno) Island is marked by IALA Maritime Buoyage System (Region A) and swept to a depth of 11m. The harbor may also be approached through North Pass.

Passages leading into the lagoon are numerous, however, only those passages swept are free of mines for shipping on a risk acceptable basis.

North Pass (7°41'N., 151°48'E.) has a channel 0.5 mile wide and swept to a depth of 17m.

Piaanu Pass (7°20'N., 151°26'E.) has a channel 0.5 mile wide and swept to a depth of 18m.

South Pass (7°13'N., 151°48'E.) has a channel 463m wide and swept to a depth of 17m.

7.3 Cruisers Services

7.3.1 Trash & Dinghy Dock

Soggy Paws - March 2014: The **dinghy dock** is the Truk Stop pier, where we were welcomed, as long as we didn't get in the way of the dive boats. They also didn't mind if we dumped our trash in their bins.

7.3.2 Money

Soggy Paws - March 2014: There is a Bank of FSM with an ATM almost right across from Truk Stop Hotel. Like in Pohnpei, our Mastercard-based ATM card was rejected. But our Visa-based ATM card worked fine except one day when the internet was down. A few hours later it was back working.

There is also a Bank of Guam further down the street (toward the Pier and Shigato grocery). I did not see an ATM outside, and did not go inside.

7.3.3 Diesel and Gasoline

Soggy Paws - March 2014: Fuel if you need it in small quantities is by jugging. Gasoline was \$5.25 per gallon at the gas station. When we were inquiring about where the gas station was at Truk Stop, someone there volunteered to run us down to the gas station, wait for us, and bring us back. The dive shop uses jugs too, so if you think ahead and ask Cindy, you might be able to just have them fill them for you when they next go.

Large quantities of fuel or water could be had by arrangement at the commercial pier.

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: Fuel – Good service from Bruton Enterprises, tel. 330-2318, they will send a truck with meter and electrical pump.

7.3.4 Propane (Cooking Gas)

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: Propane is available from the Truk Stop Hotel.

7.3.5 Groceries/Provisioning

Soggy Paws - March 2014: There is a grocery store across from Truk Stop with a fair supply of goods. About a block down towards the airport (next to the Yamaha place and just across from the port) is another store with better (and more expensive) stuff. I think it is called Shigato. They had a good supply of veggies after the ship came in.

There are two ships. The blue "Hibiscus" ship doesn't carry veggies. The other ship that comes in 3-4 days after Hibiscus has the good veggies, according to the owner of Shigato. Hibiscus is the same ship that stops in Majuro and Kwaj and Pohnpei, so if you figure out the schedule (every 2 weeks) in one of those places, you can have an idea when the ships are due in to Chuuk.

When we were there, Hibiscus came in on a Sunday, and only stayed a couple of hours. The other ship was there on Weds. By 10 days after the ship came in, we had trouble finding any veggies that weren't really gross--and even all the onions were gone. Between Truk Stop and Shigato, there's also a lady who sometimes has local vegs for sale (bananas and papayas).

7.3.6 Water

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: Water can be bought in 5 gallon containers that you have to return to their (Blue Lagoon Resort?) well equipped shop. 10 containers cost 22.5\$ and they let us use one of their motorboats to ferry them to our yacht.

7.3.7 Boat Parts & Repairs

7.3.8 Laundry

7.3.9 Medical

7.3.10 Getting Around

7.4 Communications

7.4.1 Telephones & Cell Phones

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: International phone calls can be made at the Truk Stop Hotel.

7.4.2 Internet Access

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: Internet by WI-FI or PCs in the reception lobby of Blue Lagoon Resort.

Swingin' on a Star - Jan 2009: We spent the day on the Internet today at the Blue Lagoon Resort. The service here is not super fast but not bad. The connection drops from time to time though and this makes it hard to upload photos or to download large files. Things are a little better at the resort than on the boat but not much.

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: Email is available at the computer shop just outside the Truk Stop Hotel.

7.4.3 Mail

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: The post office is in the orange building near the port and general delivery can be sent to General Delivery, Weno, Chuuk, FSM, 96942

7.5 Things to See and Do

The main attraction for Chuuk is diving WW2 wrecks.

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: Blue Lagoon Resort – (Formerly Intercontinental, or Continental). Food was O.K.

Main attraction is diving which is relatively very expensive (plus 30\$ to the government) but good equipment and special diving.

Swingin on a Star - Jan 2009 - Weno Island Tour: We took a tour of Weno, the island capital of Chuuk State today. It was an eye opener. The trip was arranged by the Truk Stop Hotel in town, and a driver came to pick us up at the Blue Lagoon at 9AM for our three hour excursion.

The van was pretty beat up. I can live with beat up, but I mean really beat up. No air conditioning, which is ok, we're sailors, but the windows didn't open much and fumes wafted through the interior regularly. Not the clean island air you hope for when exploring an out of the way place. We had lots of room though and it got us down the road.

Speaking of roads, the roads on Weno are so absolutely damaged that after a heavy few days of rain, such as we've had, the pot holes turn into lakes. There are no side walks and there are places you literally could not get through on foot without wading. The one road that runs along the west side of Weno is self regulating at speeds of 15mph or less.

After quite a long while we reached the Truk Stop Hotel. This is more of a motel really. It is the nicest place in town, the Blue Lagoon being the nicest place on the island. There is nowhere else that I know of to stay other than the live aboard dive boats (which might be the best choice if you're a diver).

After checking in at the Truk Stop we set off on our tour. There were three stops and not a lot of liner notes to go with them. We first stopped at the **Japanese memorial** to the honored dead from WWII. This memorial was nice but not in a great location. In fact, on Weno, there are not many nice locations.

Our next stop was ad hoc. As we were driving along the coastal (only) road to the road that goes up to the cave with the big Japanese gun in it we noticed a terrible sight. You get used to trash all over the place here in Chuuk. On the sides of the street, piled up in the bushes, there's garbage everywhere. There are also wrecks in the shallows of fishing boats, old freighters, skiffs and all other manner of craft. You'd need to be really careful in shallow water here.

There are also wrecks on land. There are perhaps as many cars sitting on rims or just rolled into the bush here as there are operating. Many of those operating should be rolled into the bush.

The thing that really blew all of us away was a sight we came upon in a little quaint bay with a community along the edge and a few little fishing skiffs out in the shallows. The fore shore of the area and the waterline and the first 10 feet of bay was totally buried in trash. Garbage of all sorts, but particularly floating plastic and other very persistent debris. It was only a progressive escalation from the other miscellaneous dumps we had run across but it was still perhaps the worst example of pollution I have personally borne witness to.

On the way up to the **cave with the Japanese gun** in it we had to stop at a shop to pick up the son of the land owner, whom we paid \$5 a person. The fee is a little excessive to start but if you don't pick up the kid, the hoodlums up at the cave will charge you even more. Our driver wouldn't leave the van because we had bags in it and he didn't want them to get stolen. If you are getting a poor impression of Chuuk from my description, I must sadly confirm your assessment.

The gun was awesome and what it represented alone was worth the visit. The ghosts of an era long gone play about such things. The cave was hewn out of solid rock and you can only imagine the toil in the tropical heat necessary to create such a thing.

Our third and final stop was the **Xavier High School**. The school is interesting in itself, but it bears the historical significance of being one of the **Japanese radio posts** during WWII. Chuuk was Japan's primary forward naval facility during WWII and thousands of troops were stationed in the islands here. There was a sea plane base, many airstrips, repair facilities and lots of protected anchorage space. The orders to attack Pearl Harbor even came through Chuuk.

From the roof of the Japanese administrative building, now Catholic High School, one can see some wonderful vistas out over the lagoon and her little islands. The school itself is an important resource in the islands. There are not many high schools and I have met few people who went beyond 8th grade. Of the several hundred tested to enter 9th grade at Xavier, only 40-50 are admitted. The school charges \$1,100 per year for live in students but this is far from enough to pay for the expenses. The balance is made up with charity.

Our tour almost halted at the school as our van would no longer go in reverse and we were parked such that going forward would plow us into a school bus. Finally some kids helped us move the van back enough that we could forward our way out. It was for naught though because after a short stop at the telecom office to top up on internet cards, forward went out too. We had though to visit a fourth sight, the Japanese light house from WWII but the tour ended abruptly.

We flagged down a guy with the SDA in a big truck who was kind enough to give us a ride back to the Truk Stop. We had a nice lunch at the Truck Stop's Hard Wreck café and talked over our eclectic day

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: The Truk Stop Hotel, located in Weno, offers dives including equipment.

7.6 Diving in Chuuk

With it's terrible reputation, the only reason cruisers stop in Chuuk is to go diving.

Swingin on a Star - Jan 2009 - Blue Lagoon: The number one must dive wreck seems to be the Fujikawa Maru when you take a poll. So that was our target.

We dove with Blue Lagoon Divers. The dive shop was started by Kimiuo Aisek, the Chuukese guy who really launched the dive industry here. Kimiuo was 17 when he saw the operation Hailstone sink the majority of Japanese ships in the lagoon. He has passed on now but his son runs the dive operation. The former continental Hotel is now the Blue Lagoon Resort, also owned by the Aisek family.

The boat came around to pick us up with two guys on board. Jersey was our driver and surface support. He took care of setting up our gear and breaking it down. Tonky lead the dives, anchored the boat and did the standard islander bow conning, hand waving bit when we got close to one of the sites.

Many of the dive sites have mooring balls marking them, but the moorings are all 3-4 feet underwater. This ensures the open Yamaha fiberglass boats that whip around here in taxi

capacity don't snag the lines and it also ensures that yahoo divers out to go diving without a guide (which is illegal here) can't find the sites easily.

The guys don't moor to the line though in most cases. They instead prefer to drop a grapnel anchor onto the wreck and hook up that way. Unfortunate for the wrecks, and the coral on them.

The **Fujikawa** is a 433 foot passenger/cargo ship. The Fujikawa has a lot going for it. It is in reasonable depth, with a bottom at 112 feet, the deck at 60 feet, a stack running all the way up to 20 feet and a rear mast near the surface. She has several intact zeros in the hold, deck guns, ammo, spare prop blades and lots of other cargo and artifacts. There are some nice swim throughs and the ship is deeply covered in growth. It is a fantastic dive.

We have picked up some literature on the lagoon from different places. Franko's Chuuk Lagoon Dive Map is a must for anyone diving here. It gives an old school map of the lagoon with pictures and descriptions of all of the ships as new, and on the other side pictures of the wrecks and dive notes. We also picked up a copy of "The Legacy of Truk Lagoon", DVD, which is very interesting and well done. Pricy though still very interesting, and by far the most detailed resource, is the 500 page, "WWII Wrecks of the Truk Lagoon".

Our second dive was on the **Kensho Maru** (Maru is the suffix applied to any merchant ship in the Japanese fleet). The Kensho had some nice swim throughs and was worth diving but not as spectacular as the Fujikawa.

The rides out from Weno to the wrecks can be long and the lagoon can get very choppy. The dive boat does have a bimini and it rides fairly smooth considering. We were back at the Blue Lagoon dock by 1PM, just in time for lunch. The dock has a nice set of rinse basins and a fresh water shower for the divers. It is a great setup for cruisers looking to conserve fresh water but not wanting stinky dive gear. After cleaning up, Eric and I scarfed down a Blue Lagoon Cheese Burger and a Four X ("XXXX", an Australian beer I am growing fond of). It was a perfect day in Chuuk.

Second Day's Diving: Our primary target for today was the wreck of the **San Francisco Maru**. The San Francisco Maru is a 385 foot long passenger/freighter build in 1919. She plied the west coast of the Americas until the war and then became a support ship. She was sunk in day two of operation Hailstone in Truk Lagoon. She lies in 200 feet of water and is known as the million dollar wreck, due to the vast collection of goods that lie with her.

It is a **technical dive** and our plan was to visit the deck only, at 160 feet, for no more than 12 minutes. We would stop at 60 feet for three minutes, 30 feet for ten minutes and 15 feet for as long as air allowed. We were diving with 100s so it was going to be a lot of hanging around in blue water for 12 minutes of bottom time. We were hoping it would be worth it.

It was awesome. The San Francisco is in great shape due to the depth she sits in. She has much less growth than the shallower wrecks. We parachuted in, dropping down as fast as we could manage while staying together as a group. When the deck is at 160 you see nothing for some time, even though the visibility was probably 70 or 80 feet. At first it is just the mooring line (whose float is a good 4 feet underwater so only local knowledge will locate it). Then the towers rising 50 feet off of the deck come into view, deeply encrusted with corals and other creatures.

Next the superstructure materializes. Then you check your depth gauge and you are on the deck at 150 feet.

The first hold you come to has piles of unexploded mines and other ordinance in it. Good buoyancy control is a plus here! There are three fully intact Japanese battle tanks on deck which are wondrous to look over. Our short stay uncovered many controls and operational widgets in great shape along with aircraft engines, trucks and other relics.

Normally I would say deco dives are not worth the 45 minutes or more you spend hanging around on the way up. This dive was an exception. If you are comfortable doing decompression dives, this is one you should try.

Our second dive was the **Shinkoku Maru**. This 500 foot long naval tanker is almost as great as the San Francisco. Lots of stuff to see and some cool swim throughs. We ran across a big manta ray who played with us for a bit as we were swimming along the deck. The hull has lots of growth, in particular some huge anemones. A good sized black tip reef shark came to take a look at us and a school of trevally 100 strong circling one of the ships towers.

As we were surfacing we saw the reef hook anchor go flying by. Looking up I could see that a nasty squall had set in since we descended. Big waves were rolling by and rain pock marks covered the surface. We all stayed down at the safety stop as the boat drifted away. In a bit he fired up the motors and came back up to the underwater buoy and dropped the hook down. It was like being Charlie Tuna in one of those old commercials. One of the shop guys rehooked the anchor on the tower of the wreck. I winced.

The guys from the shop are safe but they are probably a few nicks shy of PADI 5 star. No VHF on the boat (or at the shop), things like that. You will get little in the way of a dive brief and they will be chewing beetle nut and smoking Dorals during the surface interval.

We all climbed aboard in the driving rain and had a really bumpy, wet and even cold, ride home. Never the less it was a fantastic day of diving, perhaps one of the best ever.

Swingin' on a Star - Jan 2009 - Truk Stop: We like to try all of the shops when we visit a place if we can. The Truk Stop dive outfit is run by a friendly New Zealander named Kelvin and our boat driver was Newie a Chuukese from Dublon. Both are very experienced divers who know all of the wrecks in the lagoon. Kelvin was most recently in the Philippines and Newie used to work on the Aggressor live aboard before they moved to Sulawesi.

We did our first dive on the **Nippo** and our second dive on the **Heian**. Both were great. I think the Heian is a wreck you could spend more than one dive on easily.

The Truk Stop guys gave us a lot more in the way of a dive briefing than the Blue Lagoon folks. I think I would also have to give them the nod for general safety and respect for the wrecks.

The shallower wrecks are getting pretty corroded and picked over these days. The Cousteau boys did a survey in 1969 and hauled off a few tons of goodies (now in a warehouse in France somewhere). Many of the locals have a bell or two hanging in their shop. That said, Chuuk is still the most awesome wreck dive destination I have been to or could possibly imagine.

One needs to be very careful when penetrating this vessels today. More and more structural elements are weakened over time and you hear tales of collapses much more frequently. A

regime of total buoyancy control and touching nothing should be self evident but seems rarely adhered to.

There are also some nasty chemicals still lying in wait in some of the wrecks. It is highly advisable to use a gentle frog kick, rather than a flutter, to ensure the silt stays on the bottom. Some smoky looking stuff was stirred up in front of me on the Heian and I didn't think anything of it. After swimming by, the back of my leg began to burn. I'm not sure what it was and it did no damage beyond giving me a little rash but it is the kind of thing you'd like to avoid.

We had a nice day out on the water and hope to get in at least one more set of dives before we take off. The guys dropped us off at our boat and after a quick rinse we headed to the Blue Lagoon for a nice lunch/dinner.

7.7 Cruising Around Chuuk

Swingin' on a Star stopped at one anchorage on the way in, and on on the way out. On the way out they were asked for \$60 anchoring fee. No one else that I know of has actually stayed in Chuuk and cruised.

7.7.1 Pata Island

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: Trying to anchor near a village in Pata island, locals became unpleasant which made us decide to split.

8 Islands and Atolls Between Chuuk and Yap

8.1.1 Namonuito Atoll (08-45N / 150-20E)

Namonuito Atoll is a little-visited atoll NNW of Chuuk. Not sure if this belongs to Chuuk or Yap. It is on a direct line from Chuuk to Guam.

Swingin' on a Star - Feb 2009: Last night (110 nm passage from Chuuk) was not the best sailing night, we rarely saw less than 20 apparent wind, often 25, and the seas were fairly big and steep. Many squalls plagued our groove requiring boat operations in the middle of the night. We finally quadruple reefed the jib and I even thought about putting reef three in the main. The boat was fine, we were just going too fast. Hideko or I would go inside to get a drink, come back to the helm and the wind would be 25 knots on the beam and the boat would be doing 9 knots or more bashing through the seas.

With a scrap of jib flying and the double reefed main we still made an average of over 7 knots. The passage was only 125 miles so we had to go into a deep, off course, broad reach to keep the wind below 25 in the squalls and the VMG under 8. Then we'd head up and fore reach a bit at 3 knots and a vmg of 2 or so until our eta moved back into the daylight.

After an evening of yacht slowing antics and bouncing seas we arrived at the Namonuito pass (if you can call it that) right at sunrise. The Namonuito atoll is more like a huge 40 mile wide bank with little islands in each of its three corners. Fortunately for us there is also a set of islands along the NE facing side of the atoll. We knew no one who had been here and we know of no

guide for the place, so we had a chart and the sailing directions only. Sometimes the reality diverges significantly from the image the chart gives you. The area in the middle of the NE side of the atoll has a large island called Onari and several smaller ones to the NW connected by reef. It looked to have the properties of a decent anchorage. It wasn't mentioned in the sailing directions which was a little ominous.

We picked a spot to enter the bank that showed 500 feet of water, just west of the protection offered by the Piaaras islands in the SE corner. The sailing directions suggest the next big passage to the west. Our pass got down to 80 feet before dropping back down to the 120-150 foot norm on the bank. There may be some shoals on the bank but it all looked pretty deep around our track.

The seas might have been a bit steeper on the bank once out from behind Piaaras. There is nothing to tell you that you are in an atoll from the surface except the peaky waves, there is no barrier reef to speak of. It was another 10 mile beat from the "pass" to the anchorage. As we approached we could see the 3 meter-ish swell making a spectacular display on the reef to the south of the islands.

Once in the protected arch of the reef and islands we found a huge area with large sand patches, and some intervening coral, all 30-40 feet deep. There was a fair bit of swell rolling in on the beam. A minor annoyance for a catamaran but monohulls be warned. There might be flatter spots and it may mellow out overnight (low tide), we'll have to see.

As we came in the people living in the little village (estimated 200 folks) began to shout and wave. We asked for permission to anchor and they welcomed us heartily. By the time we had the anchor set there were 20 people around us in dug out canoes. A standard FSM Yamaha skiff arrived under paddle bearing the chief. The boat had a 40hp Yamaha outboard but no gas. The chief, Max, was a wonderful gentleman and we had a nice chat with him and the guys. We gave him some coffee after he mentioned that they get a small ship about twice a year and have little in the way of products from the mainland.

Their reported position report for this blog post was: 08 45.1'N / 150 20.0'E..

A second Yamaha skiff arrived after a bit bearing the mayor. The mayor had gas. He also welcomed us and asked us to come visit the village and perhaps take in some local dancing. Talk about a completely different experience. We told everyone we were going to take a nap but that we'd love to visit later. One of the guys even promised to take me spear fishing. Soon Angelique and Whistler were arriving and we became old hat. Everyone said goodbye and headed over to greet the other two boats.

Eric doesn't smoke but he always carries cigarettes which is the first thing guys on an island will ask you if you can spare. I try not to promote smoking but the islanders really enjoy it and probably have bigger challenges to their longevity than cancer. We'll drop off some school supplies and I think At gave them some gas and rice.

The islands are beautiful and flush with azure water, reefs, white sand beaches, and palm covered isles. From what the locals tell me the reefs are rich in sea food. I can believe it given the size of the place and the population of only 200 here. There are villages on the other islands as well, so perhaps 1,000 people live on this open bank atoll with a 30-40nm diameter.

Happy to be on the hook and tired from the busy night, nap time came promptly.

--- We had a wonderful afternoon at Namonuito yesterday after our nap. No one asked us for our cruising permit or called in to Pohnpei to check up on us, though it would have been fine if they did. It was nice to be in a real out of the way atoll with people more concerned about day to day life than the bureaucracy and handouts from the mother ship. In fact, though it is only 130 miles from Moen, this place seems far more remote than Kapingamarangi.

The people here were also badly hit by the large tides. Their school, church and other structures are far worse off than the southern most atoll of FSM. People seemed in need of food staples but were self sufficient when need be. They receive a small boat from Moen perhaps twice a year. There is no other regular way to get back and forth between here and civilization. Angelique gave them 10 kilos of rice and we pitched in with what we had as well.

At and Dia from Angelique took us ashore in the afternoon to visit the village. Eric from Whistler was playing volleyball as usual. Jeff, his new crew was just enjoying the surroundings. It is pretty amazing the first time you visit a village where people are totally self reliant and without much in the way of modern invention. We brought some supplies for the school which were warmly accepted and apparently in dire need.

After a bit of mixing with the folks in the center of the village we asked the kids to take us on a tour of the island. The mayor apologized for the mess indicating that they clean up the island every Friday. The island was pretty clean, though there was some trash on the ground here and there.

The kids walked us down the main path and put on lots of antics to entertain us. An 8th grade girl played ukulele for us as we walked and often the entire group of 20 or so kids would join in singing songs. We had flower petals raining from above as some of the younger kids picked them and threw them in the air, laughing and running about. All of the buildings in the village are either leaf huts or old and fairly delapidated cinder block affairs. They had PVC plumbing for fresh water that ran the length of the island. The island was well developed with houses, the village, coconut palms and pandanas, as well as banana trees, taro patches and other things I'm sure we missed. It didn't seem crowded though.

After walking almost the length of the island we went down to the beach and came back by way of the lagoon. The fore shore is shallow and reefy with lots of coral bits on the sandy beaches. There were many lovely overhanging trees on this, the west side (which is the leeward side about 90% of the time).

After our wonderful tour we said goodbye to Jesse (mayor) and Max (Chief) who both invited us to the island for traditional dancing the next day. The day was not over though. At 9PM a crew of six guys plus Eric stopped by to take us out spear fishing. Talk about local knowledge, we motored (with fuel AT and Dia had given the people) out to the reef at the south end of the island and anchored (large cinder block) just inside of the break in the pitch dark. Then off we went with underwater flash lights and spears (many of which we supplied). Batteries are a real prized item here.

After two hours in the water we turned up five lobsters and a bunch of reef fish. We also found a sleeping sea turtle (which thankfully no one shot), and a huge Eagle Ray drifting along. I only saw one lobster and the guys we were fishing with live and die by the hunt, so neither Eric nor I had a prayer. They bagged that one and four more, two were unfortunately females with eggs. I found a big doctor fish in a hole but the opening was smaller than the fish and I didn't have a barb lock on my spear to drag him out with (expecting to go for lobster I was using a three point tip). I later brought up a good sized hog fish which one of the guys generously traded me for a lobster.

I have noticed that these people are very hardy. When it rained yesterday during our first visit with them in the anchorage, they ignored it. Hey a fresh water rinse, what's not to like? They also spent over 2 hours in the water last night in swim trunks and I saw not a shiver. I was pretty chilly in my 1/2 shortie.

It was a long day. We were wanting to leave early from a weather point of view but having a hard time saying goodbye to these wonderful folks so soon. We also wanted to see the dancing display. In the end we decided to leave in the early afternoon and packed it in for the night.

In the morning today it was squally. What a surprise. This has been our weather since we left Kapingamarangi. The GRIBs show it clearing, particularly between here and Guam but we'll just have to see. Winds are projected to be 15-25 over the next week, so we're targeting the days with the lower end of the scale. The forecast just won't give us a break in February it seems.

We went into the village at around 1PM today to say goodbye and to watch a dance show that the folks in the village had arranged for us. It was amazing. We really felt like honored guests. The chief had asked his family to make us hats from coconut leaves, very stylish and great for keeping the sun off with a 360 brow. He also gave us some copra candy. I don't know how else to describe it, it is coconut bits but made into a ball and infused with what they call honey, which is really distilled coconut milk that tastes like honey. Very tasty.

We joined what must have been close to the entire village in the public house, which is a big leaf hut with only walls on the weather side. The little kids performed songs and dances and then the women came out and did more. They had the mayor, the priest and the chief give speeches and we gave introductions. It was a mix of some English and mostly Chuukese but it worked just fine. We were so sad to leave.

But leave we did. It was leave now or stay for at least a week. So we picked up the anchor and sailed across the short seas in the 100 feet deep lagoon. The wind is bouncing around between 18 and 22 with some lulls to 15 here and there. We made about 8.5 average across the lagoon with a double reefed jib and main. We are shooting for a Saturday evening arrival in Guam.

The charts are not bad here but the exit in the reef I picked 2 miles south of the northern most island didn't match up perfectly. I adjusted the chart to match the radar of the two islands to starboard as we approached the drop off. The soundings showed 120 as the shallowest on our track but we saw 50. There were no breakers in the neighborhood, and with the seas we had it

would certainly have been breaking if it was shallow. Once outside I turned off the chart offset and we headed for Guam.

8.1.2 Puluwat Atoll (07-21N / 149-12E)

Soggy Paws - April 2014: We came in on a wild day--with winds to 25 knots. We were worried about crossing the "banks" east of Puluwat because they shallow from something like 3,000 meters to 10 meters in a short distance. We tried to avoid the 10 meter spot, but did see 40-foot for a few minutes. We had 2.5 meter seas at the time, and didn't really notice any terrible sea condition from going over the banks. Most of the time, the depth sounder was reading over 100 feet. The areas on the Google Earth chart that looks like large round shallow coral areas shoaled from over 100 feet to about 40 feet. Nothing shallow enough to grab a normal cruising sailboat.

Next I was worried about going beam-on to the seas and entering the narrow pass, with potentially breaking seas across the pass. We used Kokomo's waypoints and came in cautiously with the engine and just the staysail out, keeping a good watch. There was a tiny breaking wave across the entrance (like 6"), but it was no big deal. The water shoaled to 20 feet, and the wind and waves dropped immediately.

We checked out Kokomo's anchor spot, but it looked like it was in coral. (Later we found out that much, but not all, of the black stuff on the bottom here is grass and not coral). So we anchored at 07-21.13N / 149-11.56E, fairly close into shore because we expected pretty big winds in the next couple of days. (warning: flies here)

We spent several days here in blustery weather waiting for what turned into mild Typhoon Peipah to pass by.

When we went into Relong village to pay our respects and our \$30, we met Sky, a very friendly guy who's son Ricky is the mayorial stand-in right now. Sky arranged for Ricky and two other guys to show Dave the Japanese lighthouse and some other artifacts on Alet Island. Dave and the guys spent all day on Alet. They left the boats on the southern beach of Alet, and walked down the beach almost to the lighthouse, then cut in on a trail to explore the lighthouse (take mosquito spray, and your own machete if not accompanied by one). Dave was really impressed by the lighthouse. He said "It's not an ordinary lighthouse. The construction makes it seem more like an upscale house rather than just a lighthouse." On their way back, they took the old Japanese road down the center of the island, and the guys showed Dave all the Japanese artifacts they knew about, including:

- 10 Japanese howitzer type guns on trailers
- Lots of trucks, road graders, rollers, tracked and wheeled tractors and much other construction equipment
- Several bunkers

Sky also showed us the wing of a downed US airplane which he said had come in low on a bombing run, and was shot down by anti-aircraft fire from Alet. It is in 10-15 feet of water about a half mile behind where we are anchored (see waypoints below). We snorkeled around in the shallows and found more parts of the plane, but never located the body of the plane.

Airplane Wing #1 07-21.16N / 149-11.24E

2 Propellers 07-21.14N / 149-11.13E
Airplane Wing #2 07-21.14N / 149-11.14E (and 2 engines)
Jap Dock on Alet 07-21.31N / 149-11.59E (the inland road to the lighthouse starts here)
Patrol Boat on sandbar 07-21.59N / 149-11.42E (not much to see)
Lighthouse 07-22.28N / 149-10.22E

The first canoe to show up at Soggy Paws were two young girls, who brought us a couple of coconuts. She was interested in fishing gear (and probably candy, we realized later). We were busy working on a project, and a bit put-out at the interruption, so we ungenerously gave her just a few small fishing hooks. This turned out to be a good move, because we have not been bothered much by the steady stream of canoes (mostly kids) looking for hand-outs that we had in Lekinioch. Another canoe with 2 girls in it stopped by the next day, and I gave them each a small piece of candy and a baloon. We asked if they had any papayas and bananas to trade, and they said they'd be back. The next day they stopped by empty-handed, and we didn't give them anything, ignoring them til they went away. It seems heartless, but it's not a good thing to teach the locals "begging works". We are quite willing to exchange gifts and trade for things we want, but are not into just giving stuff away.

In exchanging gifts and trading with the locals out here, the most often things asked for are fishing gear, resin (and fiberglass cloth) for repairing boats, coffee, sugar, paperback books, and DVDs.

Hurricane Hole: We "dipped" (from the dinghy) the way into the hurricane hole, to see if it would be deep enough to get a monohull in. At about mid-tide, we never saw less than 6 feet. Here are a couple of waypoints we took from the dinghy, to help us get in in bad light, if we needed it:

#1 07-21.378N / 149-11.570
#2 07-21.488N / 149-11.601
#3 07-21.501N / 149-11.626

As you're going in, most of the dark stuff is fairly deep water with dark grass. I would follow the curve of the grass, basically. The sand to the left looked shallower. Go slow, most of the bottom is sand or grass, so if you go aground softly, it shouldn't be hard to back off.

Once inside, the first lobe of water to the right gets pretty shallow pretty fast. But go further on in the lagoon, and you can find a good area with sand bottom and nearly 360 degree protection-rough waypoint: 07 21.36N / 149 11.84E.

Kokomo - March 2014: We left from Pohnpei and sailed directly to Puluwat. It was a easy spinnaker sail in light tradewind conditions.

We entered the entrance into the lagoon late afternoon. Narrow, but easy pass and Open CPN and Google charts were right on the money. We never saw less than 20ft of water coming in.

Entrance waypoints: (@ your own risk)

07 20.624N 149 11.529E
07 20.745N 149 11.521E

07 20.802N	149 11.514E	
07 20.867N	149 11.516E	
07 20.917N	149 11.527E	
07 20.982N	149 11.536E	
07 21.270N	149 11.528E	anchored here

We anchored in 27ft. of water in sand with good holding and shelter from the trade winds.

Puluwat has two villages. One, Rewo is Protestant, the other Relong is Catholic. Rewo village at the south end of the island is right at the main anchorage.

The other village "Relong" is along the inner lagoon and can be reached easily by dinghy or foot. The path that leads from the broken concrete dock at the Rewo Village goes all the way around the lagoon to the Relong Village. You will pass the Protestant and Catholic church, the school and the hospital on the way.

The hospital is a small pre-fabricated building in really poor condition. All windows are broken.

The school rooms are dirty and not very well organized.

When we arrived we dinghied into the lagoon and left our dinghy with "Sky" on "Relong" His house is approximately 200 meters east of the fishing boat stranded on shore. He speaks good English and is very helpful.

His brother is the mayor.

When we arrived the mayor was in Chuuk so we paid his assistant "Ricky" the \$30 fee.

"Ricky" is a young guy and was very shy. He is "Sky's" son.

The chief of the Rewo village is now married to a woman at the Relong village and lives there now.

At that time there was no need to see both chiefs. Everything was relaxed and easy going as long the mayor received the fee which was used for the community.

At the "Relong" Village we saw several open traditional buildings with ocean going canoes. The boats are build mainly from breadfruit trees. They are still using their boats to go fishing and traveling to other Islands.

A major portion of their diet is breadfruit, coconuts and bananas in addition to fish, chicken and pigs. There are lots of dogs around and our understanding was that they are also part of the menu.

We saw more young people than adults on the island.

Alet is the biggest island of the atoll and is uninhabited. At the NW end of Alet is a light house left from the Japanese. Other reports mentioned a road leading to the light house with WWII relics along the road. We were not able to find the road anymore and locals say that everything is over grown and not passable. We walked along the beach to the light house that has a great view of the island. Lots of rocks on beach, take your hiking shoes and your machete to get to the lighthouse and also take mosquito repellent.

La Gitana - March 2014: when we approached Puluwat in 25kn northeasterlies and 3m seas it was no problem going over Uranie Bank. The CMap 93 ed. 2 from 2009 were pretty much correct concerning depths on the bank. Sure, the waves were a bit steep but overall no problem so I do not think you have to go around Uranie Bank in standard trades.

We used the following waypoints coming in:

07°20.6N 149°11.5E

07°20.8N 149°11.51E

07°20.86N 149°11.517E

07°20.95N 149°11.52E

Never saw less than 4m at pretty much low tide. No current to speak of in the pass, but then again we might just have hit slack water.

You have to favour the starboard side of the passage since there is a bommie on the western side that looks menacingly shallow - most likely less than 2m.

Inside the lagoon there are some patch reefs easily discernible in decent light (or on GE). However, most of the black fields you see on the bottom is sea grass, not rocks or coral. Great holding with our Buegel Anchor.

Overall a narrow, but short and fairly easy passage.

Savannah - November 2012: The pass in Pulawat was small, narrow and tricky. The shallowest part under our rudder was 8 foot (we're a catamaran with a 3' draft). We anchored in 25 feet of water just shortly after coming in the pass. There are bommies all around. It's possible to go further into the lagoon and anchor in front of the other villages, but only at high tide. It needs to be looked at in the dinghy to decide if it's worth it or not. We were there during a potential typhoon and opted to go in. At the shallowest, it was 3 feet below our rudders. This is a pretty good hole to wait out a storm in if you have to. We put out four hooks and tied to a coconut tree in the south east end of the lagoon. Fortunately, we never saw more than 30 knots, but we didn't move.

There are two villages here and there is confusion as to who is in charge. There is a mayor in the north village (Dale at the time of this writing), and a chief in the southern village (Joey, at the time of this writing). On our way in to see the mayor, Joey intercepted us and insisted we give him a fee of \$50. He said we could "pay this down" with goods if we had them. He also wanted to see our cruising permit. In the end, we paid him \$35 and gave him some fishing hooks, coffee, and a knife (we felt this was a bit extravagant). The mayor wanted \$35, but was very nice and said he would work it out with Joey. In the end, we were told the fee was only \$25 and should be given to the mayor. Good luck.

Everyone had something they needed fixing. Fiberglass work was a big request as was fixing electronics. Batteries were appreciated. This island was much more "gimme" than Lukenor, yet still very friendly for the most part.

There is a mix of traditional meets modern here. The older women still wear only their lava lava's or skirts and go bare breasted. The younger women mainly appear to wear skirts and t-shirts, although we did see the little girls with just lava lava's. Most men wear the "mungca" here - lava lava's wrapped around the important parts.

They grow bananas, coconuts, papayas and taro here. They eat a lot of reef fish. We were told there were coconut crabs and lobster. We were offered two crabs for purchase but they were really small – we declined. We did buy some lobster that a young man brought to the boat that were really delicious.

There are a few people from other islands, so if you're moving on and can take letters or packages, it's worth asking around.

Two churches: One catholic, one protestant. A bell rings EVERY morning at 6:00 for Mass. We were told Mass was at 9:00 on Sunday, although we did not attend.

Things to do (besides fix things): We found the snorkeling to be mediocre to nil here, but were told there was good diving outside the reef on the north side. Apparently, an Australian dive boat comes occasionally for the shark diving. We only saw tiny black tips inside the reef, mostly near the shorelines.

There is an old Japanese lighthouse on the western side of the atoll built before WWII. You can ask someone to take you there or if you're adventurous, it is possible to find it yourself. We walked down the beach on the south side of the island until we got almost to the end where you would meet the ocean. We cut into the island near a large tree and found the trail almost immediately. It is a bit overgrown and we found our machete helpful. Take a picnic or snacks, lots of water, and lots of bug spray. We wore shorts, but long pants would have helped with the brush and bugs. You can climb the lighthouse and enjoy really nice views of the ocean. There are lots of Japanese buildings around to explore. There is rumored to be two airplanes but we didn't find them. Having a guide might change that.

They have the traditional sailing canoes here and they go out regularly for fishing. Andy was going to sail with them, but due to the pending typhoon, the trip was canceled. I imagine it's very much worth the effort of asking to go.

There is also a sailing canoe that was built here for the Japanese (they put up the \$\$) using only traditional building techniques. A documentary is being made and it will be sailed to Japan and put in a museum there. At the time we were in Pulawat the canoe was still there.

Sloepmouche - May 2012: This was our first stop on our way to Yap. This atoll is part of Chuuk state. After easy sailing with a moderate east wind, we entered the narrow pass into the atoll and saw 10' minimum.

Many friendly natives soon visited us and we let them know what we could do to help anyone.

You might or might not be asked for an **anchor/landing fee**. We had friends visiting earlier this year who were not asked for any, but we had other friends who were charged \$35 just two weeks prior to our arrival. We were asked for \$50 by Joey and Alex, with threats of not being able to set one foot ashore and even having to leave the lagoon if we did not comply with the fee. Not a very nice beginning, but I was able to negotiate it in exchange for some gifts and assistance to the villagers. Earlier, we met several locals who were nice and interested in trading for fruits and lobsters, and we negotiated the regular \$35 anchoring fee (the second village) with the mayor's younger brother (also a chief from the Catholic village), who accepted a gift instead! Now, just before dark, these two, Joey and Alex, pretended to be the only real representatives of the chief who happened to be away from the island.

Later on, we found out more about collecting anchor fees. Even though this is a very small atoll with about 300 people, they live in two villages; one Catholic and other Protestant. Each village has a traditional chief and the atoll has an elected mayor (who, naturally, is one of the two chiefs). The mayor was away at this time, so the lower chief (Joey) tried to take advantage by collecting the fee for himself. He admitted a few days later that he had been educated in Washington state and only came back here a few weeks ago when his dad passed away (the chief of his Protestant village). He graduated in Divine Sciences and is a Protestant pastor, even though he is not the pastor here (there is one already). I asked him if Jesus asks to welcome visitors by charging money and threatening them if they do not comply, or if generosity actually reaps a lot more benefits.

Like in every similar situation we have encountered before, I explained to him that cruisers, when welcomed, end up giving things and helping the local community in many ways. And I think he got the point. The next yacht coming in may get fruits as gifts instead of an inflation-adjusted \$100 anchoring fee!

We visited many people and checked their solar panels, batteries, fixed local canoes and fiberglass boats with epoxy and traded for fruits and lobsters. So if you bring with you some polyester resin, epoxy or fiberglass there will be plenty of opportunities to help out.

While here, the atoll was visited by a big USCG vessel based in Guam that gave some water safety training to some locals and brought cargo from relatives living in Guam. The ship is too big to enter the atoll and anchored 1nm away. The natives went out to the ship to ferry the goods to the island. The USCG fast tender boats made trips for hours, and I even went to do one run, as the ship did not want to linger with the approaching typhoon!

Over the two days we saw weather forecasts about a circulating storm in Chuuk and it was developing rapidly. The path of the storm was NW so it would pass close to Puluwat. By luck, this atoll offers the best protection and it has an inner lagoon that is completely surrounded by islands so the wind-driven fetch is minimal. We carefully eyeballed our way in (we saw 6' minimum depth at medium tide) and set our two biggest and best anchors. We were able to turn 360° and be away from land or coral. The bottom is good sand, so the anchors were well set. By luck, the tropical storm warning was canceled because the winds decreased, so we lucked out again.

Two local canoes came back in time from a week trip in Pulap to catch some turtles. The skills of sailing canoe building are quite impressive in this atoll. They can truly build using only local materials. They are building a traditional canoe this year that they will sail to Okinawa, Japan next year. That project is paid by a foundation that comes here a few weeks at a time to film the whole building process. They insist on all materials being traditional. Next year, by sailing to Japan, they will demonstrate the old natural navigation of the old Micronesian sailing navigators who used only wave patterns, clouds and stars to navigate the Pacific. Once that canoe arrives in Japan, it will be placed in a museum. All that said, Rapwill, the old navigator, asked me to fix a small portable GPS someone sent him. This GPS was dead on arrival here, so it shows him (us) the fallacies of electronics versus his old skills handed from generation to generation.

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: Easy entrance, good anchorage on sand near south part of village. Inner lagoon possible by dinghy. Deputy chief took a fee of 25\$, a custom that you see all over now.

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: Puluwat is a stunningly beautiful atoll with a fascinating history and culture. The traditional sailing canoes and navigational techniques are still in daily use, fishing the reefs and visiting the surrounding islands in the group. Many ancient taboos, particularly regarding women, existed in relation to the canoes but these were dispelled when a missionary persuaded a well respected navigator to break every taboo he could think of and then go to sea. A successful trip followed and on his return the population happily dropped all the taboos, which they regarded as a complete nuisance anyway! The book *East Is A Big Bird* was written about the island and is worth reading whilst there. Rapwi, a famous navigator pictured in the book, still lives there and is full of kindness. The Japanese lighthouse, which dominates the unpopulated north end of the atoll, was built in the 1930s when Chuuk was a major Japanese naval base, and is a remarkable example of brilliant engineering and construction. Many remains exist from the Japanese occupation before and during WWII and are easily accessible, including Japanese vehicle wrecks off the road to the lighthouse.

Pilotage: The pass is tricky and requires keeping very close to the reefs on the starboard side of the entrance to avoid coral heads in the middle of the pass. Coral heads exist within the lagoon, particularly in the western part, so keep close inshore. Reasonable daylight is essential for entering.

Anchorage: 07° 21.19' N 149° 11.54'E. Excellent shelter and good holding in 8m sand and coral off ruined jetty at Rewo village. There is a strong current through here, but this is not problematic. For a shallow draught vessel it is apparently possible to enter the inner lagoon, though this seems unnecessary as the shelter is similar. Yachts have ridden out typhoons in the lagoon and the islanders could advise on the best position, which seems to be off the south shore of Alet Island.

Formalities: Several chiefs and mayors exist on the island. One of the traditional chiefs is a good English speaker. You may be directed to the mayor in the village of Relong.

Facilities: None at all, not even any medical care, fuel or cigarettes for the islanders.

8.1.3 Satawal Island (07-23N / 147-03E)

This island looks on Google Earth to have no anchoring spot. It also appears (from Google Earth) to be EAST of the location shown on the CM93 Zoomed-out chart and NORTH of location on the Zoomed-in chart.

Scott Leis - March 2012: Satawal is located at 07° 22 52.75N, 147° 01 52.30E. It is not part of an atoll and therefore, finding a secure anchorage may be tricky. It is recommend to consult the latest charts around this island and consult one of the locals as soon as you get there regarding a reliable site for anchorage. People here speak their own language, Satawalese, and the majority can also speak some English.

8.1.4 West Fayu (08-05N / 146-43E)

Brickhouse - February 2014: West Fayu is a nice small atoll with one small island in the north (walked around in less than 1 hour for the slowest of walkers). 3 or 4 temporary shelters for the

people of Satawan Island or Lamotrek to sleep in when they arrive to collect whatever they collect (lobsters? Shells? Turtles?). A small church. The bananas and other scant amount of things grown on the island are not more than what can sustain a few people when they come there. Water catchment in center of island catches lots of water- we treated it with chlorine when we were there. We washed a small amount of clothes from this water.

Anchorage is acceptable in N to NNE winds. We experienced N to East winds 20 knots. Crystal clear water, aquamarine, excellent holding in pure sand. Very pretty. Saw no boats or people here for an entire week but evidence that we had just missed someone.

Easy entrance, we went out in the dark. Our google earth charts were right on, Navionics and CM93 charts were very far off. Approach during daylight but it is deep, and there is nothing in channel to hit. But favor the starboard side going in because far to the left is a big sand bank that can break, as shown in all charts and google earth. Some current at mid tide but nothing difficult (maybe 1 knot max)

Beautiful picturesque island, with nice beaches, Beautiful shades of blue, like a swimming pool. Snorkelling on the west reef was more colorful and more life than on the east reef although both sides were nice enough, although lots of current until you get far south towards the very last large wreck. Plenty of black tip sharks, a couple of turtles and stingrays, and lots of new to us variety of tropical fish. A few large shootable fish but not plentiful and are skittish. Dolphins in and outside of lagoon. Decent lobstering near furthest wreck with least amount of current, but did not look anywhere at night this time. Definitely a nice place to relax, but not overwhelming, and not a gentle flat anchorage at any time.

Entrance Waypoints

Waypoint	Distance	Bearing	Latitude	Longitude
008	0.03 nm	255 Deg. T	08 04.2896 N	146 43.9225 E
010	0.19 nm	271 Deg. T	08 04.2932 N	146 43.7305 E
010	0.02 nm	292 Deg. T	08 04.3004 N	146 43.7123 E
011	0.03 nm	309 Deg. T	08 04.3208 N	146 43.6873 E
012	0.03 nm	322 Deg. T	08 04.3450 N	146 43.6684 E
016	0.03 nm	330 Deg. T	08 04.5526 N	146 43.5924 E
018	0.03 nm	357 Deg. T	08 04.6502 N	146 43.5649 E
023	0.04 nm	033 Deg. T	08 04.7848 N	146 43.6201 E

U.S. Sailing Directions: West Fayu Island (8°05'N., 146°44'E.), densely wooded, stands on the NE side of West Fayu Atoll. A passage, located about 0.6 mile S of the island, is about 0.5 mile wide, but the navigable channel is greatly reduced by a shoal, with a least depth of 1.8m in the middle of the entrance.

A conspicuous stranded wreck lies on the edge of the reef, 0.8 mile W of West Fayu Island,; another is reported to lie 1.25 mile farther W. A conspicuous stranded wreck is reported (1991) to lie on the inside edge of the reef 2 miles WSW of West Fayu Island.

In 1982, the island was reported to lie nearly 1 mile WSW of its charted position.

Several banks and shoal depths are charted or have been reported to lie between West Fayu Island and Oraitilipu Bank, and may best be seen on the chart. A reef surrounded by breakers was reported (1971) to lie 6 miles SE of the island, and was reported to be about 2 miles long in a NE-SW direction.

8.1.5 Lamotrek (07-28N / 146-21E)

Wikipedia: Lamotrek is a coral atoll of three islands in the central Caroline Islands in the Pacific Ocean, and forms a legislative district in Yap State in the Federated States of Micronesia. The atoll is located approximately 11 kilometres (6.8 mi) east of Elato. The population of Lamotrek was 373 in 2000,[1] living on almost 1 km².

The atoll is 11.5 kilometres (7.1 mi) long northeast-southeast, and up to 6.5 kilometres (4.0 mi) wide. Its total land area is only 0.982 square kilometres (0.379 sq mi), but it encloses a lagoon of 32 square kilometres (12 sq mi).[2]

Among the individual islets are the following:

Falaite (northwest)

Pugue (northeast)

Lamotrek (southeast)

Dream Away – January 2016: Lamotrek is a wonderful place where we were fed endlessly and Graham spent every evening in the mens Tuba (coconut wine) drinking circle.

We were met by chief Joe who runs the dispensary, is a master navigator and boat builder, a fascinating character who was our main host. He had a fibreglass boat that needed the transom rebuilt where the outboard attaches, a common problem we were later to find. He was in luck as Graham had a load of fibreglass mat and resin left over from our major refit in NZ.

Two other boat owners put in requests for simpler repairs, the school HF radio set needed fixing and a gluing job was needed on a wooded canoe. So after all that lot we were not charged anything but were given a tremendous amount and a fabulous departure party. Av was given two lava lava's, beautifully woven on back strap looms and we spent most days decked out in leis. Graham received a hank of the hand-made rope. Plus we received food enough to feed us for at least a week, including 2 large coconut crabs.

They have all the kit for wifi but as yet nobody has arrived to install it, the likelihood is it will be in place soon.

We moored on the inner of the two moorings laid by Orbit for 'Pacific We Care' with no problems (07 27.46 N 146 22.598 E). Good shelter from the prevailing easterly sector trade winds.

Carina - February 2014: Lamotrek is one of those "pinch me" places you dream of coming to when you begin cruising. The lagoon is magnificent and the island culture strong and unique.

Men control the resources but women control the land. Women are required to show respect to men by remaining at a lower level or bowing their heads. Resources, including food, are shared. There are no police here, individual clans are responsible for enforcement of community regulations - such as quiet after 9 pm - and penalties for transgressions may be, for example, weaving 100 fathoms of coconut fiber into line. Windfalls, such as our arrival gifts of sugar, salt, coffee, tinned ham and milk, are divided up according to the community's needs.

The people, who speak Woleaian, a language unrelated to Yapese, live primarily off the land and the sea with turtle being a favored food (unfortunately - we watched as they slaughtered and cut up a large green turtle.) Breadfruit, taro, coconut and banana are also important. There is a small store, managed by Xavier, the school principal, which all islanders are

obligated to utilize. Western clothing is extremely rare, almost non-existent. Men wear loinclothes and women topless with lavalava skirts. Brightly colored lavalavas hang on clotheslines. Cooking is on wood or coconut shell fires. In contrast, the school office includes laser printers and laptops and many elders have nice watches, so the island is prosperous despite its seeming poverty due to its adherence to rural living standards. This is not the most pristine island; you'll find plastic and other pieces of trash on the beach.

This is home to many ocean sailing canoes, the latest, completed in the fall of 2013, is called the Queen Veronica after their 100 YO paramount chief who is still alive and living on the island. The dispensary manager, Joe, is a master traditional mariner and a knowledgeable medical practitioner. The Queen Veronica returned from her second voyage around the Caroline Islands on December 24 and Joe was the navigator, navigating with stars, compass and wave direction. We are helping to assemble a new (bigger) sail for the Queen Victoria using our sewing machine powered with the generator at the school. They have professionally cut panels of Dacron provided by the Yap government but will cut the sail to create the final shape once they construct new booms. They will then sew-on, by hand, coconut bolt ropes.

Francis is the official greeter and he will come to your boat and make sure you are introduced around the village. The tour includes stops for sampling island foods. **There is a one time \$20 per head landing fee** which covers a stay of undefined length ("a day or a year").

Handicrafts - hand made coconut line, lavalavas and model fish traps are for sale at prices dictated by the government. You can watch women making lavalavas on backstrap looms and the men will show you how they make coconut rope during the men's drinking circle. Lavalavas of traditional materials - hibiscus and banana are \$50, while those of thread are \$25. Coconut rope is made from husks that are soaked for two months in seawater and then pounded. The rope is strong, light, UV resistant, low stretch and knots very well.

Tuba is important part of everyday life and men "cut" their tuba a few times a day. Tuba is yeast fermented coconut sap that takes 4 days to ferment to 7% alcohol. It is slightly fizzy and slightly sweet, a milky white and pleasant. The yeast culture is an heirloom variety and is already in the coconut shell used to collect the sap. Each afternoon, the men get together to drink tuba and make decisions. Women of the village are not invited but tourist women are considered guests and are invited. Our first evening, the men's drinking circle included a huge feast which was supposed to be as a send off to those leaving on the imminent supply ship. We were sent home with a meal of fish cooked on an open fire plus taro, breadfruit and banana (plantain).

There are a number of **passes** into the lagoon. The largest is in the NE corner but it is shallow and open to the ocean swell which was high when we visited during the dry season. We entered through the narrow pass about 2.5 miles west of the main island along the south coast. We had a small current against us. This is not a pass we would recommend to enter at night. There does not appear to be enough fudge to account for possible error in GPS readings.

The next pass is about 1.25 nm further down the coast. This pass was dragged to a depth of 12 - 13 meters and is used by supply ships. It is noted in the Migrant Cruising Guide from 1994 that there is a sandy cay just to the east of this pass. We, however, didn't use this pass because we did not have a clear Google Earth photo, the chart has an error of roughly 0.9 nm (that varies depending on which end of the atoll you measure) and we had waypoints derived from the track of the yacht Hawkeye for the narrower pass.

We entered the most SE pass at 0930 local time in early February with mostly cloudy conditions but could see hazards fairly well.

At the village are two (free) moorings installed by two Scandinavian boats in the summer 2013. They are composed of 9 mm chain around coral, with floats below the surface and three strand line of ca. 1" diameter. The water is crystal clear so it is easy to inspect the moorings. We are on the one farther out from the village (07 27.5 N / 146 22.6). The mooring is in about 35' of water and there is a huge bommie under us. The water drops to about 65' south of the bommie. The anchorage, which is between us and the beach, is coral and sand mixed with varying depths though it remains deep close to shore. We did not survey the whole anchorage. The landing is on a soft coral sand beach with little swell.

Waypoints to narrow SE pass:

LMPSS1	07 27.6634 N	/	146 19.9523 E
LMPSS2	07 27.9388 N	/	146 19.9537 E
LMPSS3	07 28.1560 N	/	146 20.0530 E
LMPSS4	07 28.1700 N	/	146 20.1650 E

PLEASE check these against a WGS84 compatible chart or chartlet before use to ensure we have made no typos.

Yesterday we were given gifts of a lavalava and 100 fathoms of coconut twine. And yes, every woman you pass wants to feed you. Lovely people; unforgettable experiences. Joe here, the master navigator and dispensary manager is especially interesting and a heck of a nice guy. We still need more time to talk with him about the navigation techniques. We also need more time talking with Xavier. Everyone was busy the last couple of days; Joe with immunizations sent in on the H1 (Hapilmohol) and Xavier and Frances with the school accreditation team sent in on the Caroline Islands Voyager. Lamotrek is the home of the captain of the CIV; Patrick. Philip had the chance to meet him during his stay here. The CIV leaves today for Woleai.

Trigger - April 2013: Lamotrek is a fine example of the Yapese islands and culture. The island in itself does not offer the rich WW2 history of Woleai although there are wrecks of two Jake seaplanes on the beach and a Zero fighter plane in the water.

The island has a primary school which seems well stocked with books and computers for all the teachers powered by a large solar bank. Children are sent to Woleai for secondary education. The school has cultural craft as a subject and the girls especially are eager to demonstrate their weaving talent. On average the people are quite used to westerners and have been the subject of some European sociology studies, but still maintain their own culture proudly. The people portray the generosity, tolerance and friendliness that seem ingrained in the Yapese culture.

The most interesting current event is the canoe building project on the island. A very large tree was gifted to the islanders in recognition of their assistance to a boat captain. The tree was felled and carved down by the outer islanders residing in Yap proper - a first. It was then transported to Lamotrek for communal construction overseen by Master Carver Xavier Yarofaliyango. This will be the largest canoe in Lamotrek Island and quite possible the largest

canoe in the state of Yap. It belongs to the Lamotrek community and is expected to be finished this summer (2013). Rumor has it that once complete, the canoe will be sailed to Guam and Saipan by Lamotrek navigators. More info on <http://www.waagey.org/>

Downtime - March 2013 - Lamotrek: We entered the pass mid afternoon on 1st of March and decided to anchor next to Pugue Island for the night and make our way the last 8 miles south to the main island next day.

In the morning we moved south and anchored in front of the village on Lamotrek. There was already one other boat here which we had met in Puluwat.

We were greeted by Francis, the brother in law of the chief that passed away who paddled out and collected our landing fee of \$20 per person. We were warmly welcomed to the island and were then free to go ashore.

Lamotrek is famous for their hand woven lavalava's (a wrap around skirt) that the ladies make on ancient looms that they use to weave the high quality cloth in a rainbow of colors. It takes them up to 3 days of waving to make one lavalava and they sell them for \$30. You can also find the authentic traditional ones made from banana fibers for up to \$100, using a time staking process that has been passed down for generations.

The other thing that is famous for is that this lavalava is the only thing the women are allowed to wear! No tops!! For a western man this was hard to get used to at first and the sunglasses stayed on! The only time women are allowed to wear a shirt is when they are working the taro fields. All visitors who stay longer than 2 weeks have to dress like local people (topless and lavalava/loincloth). It's one of many tricky rules of Lamotrek.

Many men of the village are busy building a new outrigger sail canoe. The design is one of the biggest made to date and is almost 30 feet long. The bottom of the hull is carved out of a single piece of flawless mahogany that was brought over from the island of Yap. The side planks are cut from huge breadfruit trees and also are also of perfect quality without a single knot. The planks are first rough cut with a chainsaw and then painstakingly trimmed with a adz. The planks are bent by blocking each end and getting the biggest men in the village to stand on the middle and then a rope is tied across with a block in the middle to maintain the bend. Once the correct bend is achieved the time consuming task of trimming the edge of the plank begins. They use a red dye painted on the edge of the lower board and set to upper plank on top and the dye transfers contact points and then they trim the points with an adz until there is a uniform paper thin gap between the two planks. When the gap is perfect they use a series of holes along the planks edge to bind the two together with twine and pound a tapered peg into the lashing to cinch the two planks together tightly. Later when all the planks are complete they take them back apart and put a sealer between them made from the sap of the breadfruit tree. Although if they had 3M 5200 sealant they would gladly use that too!

A canoe this size will take thousands of hours to complete with the help of the 30 -40 men working every day for months, all the while being directed by the Master Carver who is always present. The sails will be hand sewn, another huge project with cloth donated by a cruiser from Australia. They hope to have the project finished by May and I felt lucky to have the process explained to me and to have seen such a project under way.

This is by far the busiest and most productive island we have been to. We saw other men busy building fish traps, a project that takes 50 to 100 hours each to complete. The traps are made

from hundreds of individual sticks tied together with hundreds of feet of string and thousands of knots. The traps are 3-5 feet square and a foot and a half high with a tapered entrance on one side where the fish go in and are caught. Each trap is a work of art and intricately made. The men who were neither building the canoe or fish traps were busy planning the construction of a fishing lodge on a uninhabited island 30 miles away on Olimarao. A shelter to stay in when they go out to the island to fish and hunt turtles. A single building 16x20 with a concrete floor and walls with a water storage cistern and covered with a corrugated metal roof. All the building materials were ordered and delivered by the ship that arrived this week. They were all sitting in a circle going through the materials list when they asked if I had grinder or hacksaw blades to cut rebar with. They were in luck I had both which I donated to the project. The next issue was getting the portable generator running that had been in storage for 4 years! A few hours later the carburetor was cleaned and the motor service with the engine running smoothly.

When the women are not weaving or in the taro patch they are preparing meals over an open fire in a cooking area separate from the home. Usually just a small roof covering the fire and blocked on one side to keep the wind out. Hanging from the roof are an assortment of pots and pans with their charred black bottoms from the coconut husk fire. The meals are simple and most include taro, breadfruit or rice when they can afford it. Fish is seasonal and some times they do without and other times when plenty full it is hung to dry for later. The pigs are saved for special occasions as well as sea turtles which are one of the island favorites. Chickens and dogs roam the islands and often find themselves on the menu also.

Every afternoon at about 3 pm the men get together where the canoe is being built ("man house") and drink tuba, the naturally fermented wine from the coconut tree. The juice drips into a small container that is tied to the main fruit bearing branch at the top of the tree. The branch that would usually produce the coconuts is tied off early in its development and is trimmed back 3 times a day and drips out the tuba into the small container tied to the branch. This liquid is then fermented a short while and has about the same alcohol content as wine about 10%. It is amazing to see the young guys climb the trees and collect the juice, they make climbing the 30 foot tall trees look easy!

This same juice can have yeast mixed in be left to ferment and made into a strong alcohol which most of they export to the main island of Yap. I was thinking if they could build a small still then may be they could run their out board motors on pure ethanol!

A few days after we arrived the first ship in 5 months finally arrived and delivered much needed supplies. The Priest was also aboard and during his short stay here performed two weddings and several first communions. It was a privilege to be included in these ceremonies and to be able to see a traditional wedding. The young kids who took their first communion looked beautiful and were dressed in white clothes, turmeric powder on the skin with flower lei's and had bright colored head bands.

One afternoon while I was onshore with the men fixing the generator and properly taste tuba, Daria had a small get together aboard Downtime with Michaeila and several other girls. She's shown them some pics, music and of course served tea and sweets which she baked day before. Soon there were 15 kids swimming around the boat and everyone had a great time.

Later that afternoon Daria invited Camilla and Joanna on board from Flow to share stories and I brought the island chief Mannuel aboard for a few beers which are banned from drinking on the island but are ok to drink on the boat.

The culture here is a much different than in the States in how the land is passed down in the woman's family. Women own the land and the home and when they man marries he moves to the woman's village and island. There is not much interaction between them during the day when the women are busy in the gardens and weaving, while the men are working and fishing. We read that most of the children have adopted families like god parents and most spend equal time with both families. The kids seem to be very independent and spend a lot of time on their own while growing up. Most the outer island kids go to school and live on the main islands during the high school years and stay with their adopted families. Ester (local woman) has a dissertation about Lamotrek wrote by German girl few years ago. One night we took it on Downtime and read it. It is worth to read to understand this culture better.

Lamotrek was also the first island we have been to where most of the people are chewing betel nut. This a nasty habit that destroys and turns the persons chewing it teeth red! Long time users have just a few blackened teeth left and are addicted. This is also the first place where Tuba, the palm wine was drunk daily to abuse. Every day gallons of the stuff would be consumed by the men from 3pm to all hours of the night. The women drink sweet tuba (non-alcohol) and sadly are occasionally victims of drunken violence.

The afternoon before we left the ladies of the village prepared a farewell feast for Camilla, Joana from Flow and Daria and myself along with Eric, a visiting anthropologist from the States who had arrived on the supply ship a few days before. This was an amazing time where the ladies sang us songs and wished us well on our journey. They presented us with lei's and colorful head dressings and then rubbed bright yellow turmeric powder on our shoulders. After the ceremony we were given meals with enough food in them to get us all the way to Yap 400 miles away! For each of us there was at least 3 pounds of boiled taro, breadfruit, cooked banana's, fried breadfruit and taro and sliced meat (canned). We experienced all the many delicious ways they cook the taro with coconut cream. Daria was given another beautiful lavalava that had detailed embroidery work on it and in return gave the women gifts of earrings and necklaces.

On our last morning there the school had cultural days and all the kids dressed up traditional with the small girls wearing grass skirts and the boys wearing the men's blue and white striped lavalava which is narrower that the women's version and worn higher around the waist over their loin cloth. The girls gave a weaving demonstrations on how they made the headbands and baskets while the boys showed navigation skills on a white board. Later they would meet with the master carver, master sailor and master fisherman to have those skills explained to them. They had items for sale on tables like locally woven palm fiber rope, small carvings, sea shells, lavalava's and a few baskets of food with chicken or dog with rice for \$15. We bought a chicken lunch, not brave enough for dog yet...

We had a wonderful week on Lamotrek and want to thank everyone for showing us such amazing hospitality. We will remember this small piece of paradise forever!

Savannah - December 2012: Entrance and Exit from Lamotrek was narrow, yet deep. We had steep waves leaving with winds 15-20 out of the NE. We had coordinates from s/v Jaraman (but forgot to use them). Later we checked ours against them and they were pretty close. The chart is way off and showed us in the middle of the lagoon as we were just entering the pass. We use MacENC.

Coordinates from s/v Jaraman:

07 28.074N 146 19.993 BEARING 18MAG

There are not many islands in this atoll, offering little in protection as you go across the lagoon. However, we found the anchorage in front of the village to be very comfortable with NE/E winds.

Anchoring coordinates from s/v Jaraman (we did not check these coordinates):

07 27.513N 146 22.636E FIRST ANCHORAGE westerly blow put us too close to shore so moved to 07 27.500N 146 22.627E

The chief here is very ill (they had removed his IV at the time of our visit), but we met with him (Mannuel), his wife (Rosalia), and his stepson, Mannuel in the large canoe house directly in front of the anchorage. The stepson speaks very good English and was very welcoming. We gave gifts as well (fishing hooks, squid skirts, canned corn beef, and coffee).

We were later told in conversation by Mannuel that if yachts help the people out here via fixing things and/or giving items needed, there is no charge. But if one wants to anchor here and not provide any help, there is a \$20/person charge.

There are no services or supplies to speak of here, however we were gifted food and lava lava's by several families in thanks for our help. They make the traditional lava lava's here and sell them to anyone who asks. The "cheap" ones go for about \$20 and the nicer, more well crafted ones, go for \$35 - \$40. They grow bananas, breadfruit, taro and papaya here. They eat a lot of fish and were the best cooks we had seen in Micronesia. They can do anything with the coconut.

While we were here, we were asked for batteries, sail material, the use of our drill, flour, cooking oil, dvds, and just basic repairs of lights and inverters. For the most part, they could fix their own stuff, they just didn't have the tools.

There are two schools here; one elementary school (first grade – ninth grade) and one "Head Start" school (preschool/kindergarten). The first is to the right of the chief's canoe house, all the way to the end of the road. The principal's name was Xavier. The Head Start school is to the left, pass the dispensary/hospital, on the right. The two people employed there were Sasario and ??????. They were appreciative of all supplies (we gave pencils, sharpeners, paper, dictionary, crayons and workbooks. Sharpeners seem to be a hit at all of the islands).

There is a dispensary/hospital here. You don't want to have a need for it. The manager at the time was Ester – she lives across the path to the building. She speaks good English.

There is only one church, Catholic. Mass was at 8:00 a.m on Sundays at the time we visited (although they have a service every day). The principal of the school, Xavier, is also the Deacon on the island.

There are three drinking circles where they drink the local fermented coconut, known as "tuba" in Yap. Andy was invited to two; Mannuel's and the teacher's circle (closer to the elementary school). Both proved to be a good way into the community. It starts at 3:00 every day. They end at 5:00, go home to eat, and come back at 7:00 for a second circle. Andy only attended the 3:00. It was decidedly manly, so I found that spending the time with the ladies was more comfortable, however I was welcome when I asked to attend on our last day to say goodbye.

Sloepmouche - May 2012: This was our first atoll in the Yap state. We sailed via the eastern pass at 07°28'12N, 146°20'04E in the wide pass and found a minimum of 24' depth. From there

we sailed towards the anchorage, a 35-50' white sand patch in front of Lamotrek island. What a beautiful view of the island before sunset!

Soon after anchoring we had a visit from Francis, the chief's translator. After his visit we went ashore to pay our respects to the chief, Manuel. As usual, we briefly introduced ourselves, stated our reasons for visiting the atoll, and offered our assistance in solar energy/LED lights and repairing broken things (if possible). We also offered a few symbolic gifts. The presents were received with pleasure, and the chief told us that other cruisers had already told them about us a few months before and the villagers were waiting for the trimaran with the LED lights!

There were no fees requested when cruisers offer help, as islanders appreciate the assistance of visiting cruisers. We did see in the chief's visitors' book that sometimes \$5 was collected from visitors. The chief's wife was so tiny and cute! She really took a shine to Jackie and gave her a lava-lava that she had woven herself, and each time we visited, she always wanted Jackie to sit next to her.

What a difference it was here from Puluwat. Like Puluwat, the main structures are the huge, giant-beamed canoe houses built of thatch and breadfruit trees, but the island is much better kept. The people clean up around their houses, there are clean pathways, and you can see more flowers; it is a much nicer place to live.

We were invited to the kindergarten graduation. The kids had nice traditional makeup and we all partook in a small island feast of island foods. The people here seem to be more active and sharp minded. Perhaps it is due to the education system being much better run than east of here. It seems many have been educated in Guam or the U.S. and have used the education to improve village life. It was a surprise to see the primary teacher's office with computers and printers run by a solar system with lots of deep cycle batteries (we even saw 10-year old Rolls batteries still running), solar panels and inverters. There was no graffiti and the school was well-kept. It was great to see the children at work cleaning up the grounds.

While some people might be a little shy to speak English, when they do, their language skills are quite good. It appears, too, that Yap state takes better care of their outer islands, with better political representation on Yap Island. They still carve island canoes with their own breadfruit trees, using only manual tools. They are now building a big canoe to sail to other islands with big mahogany logs they received from Yap. Any old sails are welcome!

If any cruiser passing this way in 2013-14 has any old sails to give/trade away, they will be warmly welcomed, as they need sails for the new canoe. Chief Manuel and interpreter Francis (principal of kindergarten) seem to have the welfare of their people at heart. We had the chance to film the sailing canoes and the women dancing.

Our first Yap island visit confirms what we heard about them being more traditional with no western clothing. Men prefer to wear a fabric loincloth and women are bare-breasted, wearing a lava-lava wrap-around. They only use fiberglass and outboards when really needed.

It was also nice to talk with the new generation who is reflecting on the future and on what direction they want to take. While they do not want to go back to the old ways completely, they want to back away from too much western influence.

The island people seem to get along quite well and the ambiance was good. We filmed the ladies singing and we drank tuba (fermented coconut flower sap) with the men.

When we were there, the passenger/cargo ship from Yap brought in the island high school students from Yap for the summer break, and they seem to fit right back on the islands. Some adults took the same ship back to Yap to go on vacation in the capital.

All in all, Lamotrek is one of the atolls where we felt the most welcome and we recommend it to our fellow cruisers.

Scott Leis - March 2012: Lamotrek is located at 07° 27 19.15N, 146° 22 49.85E. It is a small atoll with only a few islands, one of which is populated. People here speak Woleaian and the majority can also speak some English. Good anchorages are available inside the reef near the island.

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: Northeast pass is very wide with good depth (if memory serves right not less than 9 meters). Very nice traditional village. Chief Ernest charged 5\$ fee. Exiting we tried the southeast pass at 07 28'48 N 146 21'357 E according my GPS and found minimum depth 4.5 meters.

8.1.6 Elato Atoll (07-31N, 146- 10E, Close to Lamotrek)

Dream Away – January 2016: We had an unforgettable experience in a village with only 100 people who were like one big family to us. We had been invited there whilst in Lamotrek by Kevin who wanted his outboard fixed. He was actually quite a competent mechanic, just lacking in any tools so was easy to work with. They had blown the head gasket but fortunately we salvaged one from another very dead motor and brmm off went the little engine.

The drums had been beating and the locals already knew about the transom job in Lamotrek and were up for one on their boat. Theirs was in a far worse state with some serious gunwhale damage about midships and some floor stringers needing replacing. "What have you been doing with that?" asked G. "Turtles" was the reply. Hauling them over the side breaks the gunwhale and a big stroppy turtle crashing around in the bilge plays havoc with the stringers.

Whilst messing around with the engine the chief's son came along with an electric drill that only went in reverse, I told him he needed left handed drills but that was wasted humour. I had forgotten about it until we were almost ready to go, so fixed it and quickly returned it to him. He obviously tried it out immediately as he came chasing through the village to find us. Talk about happy, he was over the moon, apparently it had been like it for years which had kind of slowed progress on the building projects. Av sewed the sail for their traditional canoe.

We were not asked to pay anything there either. Were fed and watered similarly to Lamotrek. Elato have adopted a system whereby each yacht has a family designated to look after them, it doesn't just fall to the chief.

Another special leaving party was laid on for us. We were given more coconut fibre rope and two more lava lavas and a mountain of food including lobsters, octopus, turtle meat and fish plus masses of fruit, fried breadfruit slices & taro chips.

We used the single mooring laid by Orbit. It was in reasonable condition (07 30.493 N 146 10.224 E), good shelter from the prevailing easterly sector trade winds.

Brickhouse - February 2014:

Outside Pass: 07 29.5902 N / 146 09.7567 E

Mid Pass: 07 29.6412 N / 146 09.6444 E

Inside Pass: 07 29.6969 N / 146 09.5971 E

Going to Anchorage: 07 29.9851 N / 146 09.6477 E

Straight line to anchorage from the above waypoint to the Anchorage waypoint below:

Anchorage: 07 30.4745 N / 146 10.2015 E

Pass is wide, clear and obvious, and exactly as our Google Earth charts showed. Navionics and CM93 charts considerably off. In grey rainy day it was still easy to see everything coming in and progressing across lagoon.

Excellent protection at northern island. Water is deep enough right up to shore for anchoring as close as you want, in sand with patches of coral rubble, in 40 feet, less as you get closer. One mooring available there for no charge which they encourage you to use to protect the coral. As always check it out before using but it was originally made by a sailboat for a heavy sailboat, in 2013.

150 ft cargo ship comes every few months and puts its bow practically on beach!

NO fee asked for, although it was reminded to both boats arriving this week that the "20\$ fee per person that the government allows them" was happily waived in exchange for fixing some things like VHF, solar panels, outboards or computers. They asked our "specialty" and then put us to work. I fixed a couple of computers, donating an external keyboard that I had for them at the school, and the boys troubleshooted a VHF radio, and did some successful work on the outboard engine and oiled up their neglected tools, in addition to re-wiring a solar panel that had a broken wire on it. They told us to 'stop working now' because if we do more they would feel the need to pay us for our work. SO we stopped.

There was some trading going on with individuals for beautiful hand woven lava lavas, as well as for some local vegetables. They showered us with gifts of local medicine, bananas, veggies, coconuts etc to thanks us for the work. Caroline Voyager, the cargo ship, was there and when they were about to depart, the little girls of the village did about 1 hour of dancing for them which we enjoyed too. The dancing was said to be traditional but was to electronic music, occasionally with a single lady singing the lyrics live. Perfume and gifts were showered on the girls, and there was plenty of hooting, hollering and tuba drinking of which we participated too. We also got to try the children's version of tuba...a cross between coconut water and Sprite. Men spoke excellent English and were eager to introduce themselves and welcome you the island. Only a few women speak English. Women wore only bright colored knee length lava lavas, men wore modern shorts, or "thus" - a piece of cloth wrapper around waste and between legs and tied off casually .

The people and community are very very generous and hospitable. They often sit and tell us about their customs and beliefs, and unlike many islands we have been to before, they know what OUR customs are and have little interest in hearing more. They mostly want to tell about

their customs and how eager they are to keep their customs. The adults and children alike thank you for every gesture you make to them, and there are laws in the community that they can not go out to a sailboat anchored there unless they are granted permission from the chief. There was an incidence they tell us of many years ago where a child went out to a boat when he saw a TV running, and climbed on board quietly to watch through the window. He was almost killed by the boat owner because he was thought to be an intruder in his home. SO they don't ever allow children out the boats, and only a few men are granted permission to come out to the boat. The few that WERE allowed out did ask for alcohol from us, but it was in a very polite and respectful manner.

At first I was a little disappointed that there wasn't a huge amount of traditional life as I expected. But as time went on and we asked more questions, I saw that I was very wrong about this.

As tourist women we were encouraged to spend time in the men's gathering house, sipping tuba and telling story. But I sought out the ladies one day to see what they really do while the men are talking story. We chewed betelnut wrapped in lime and a tobacco leaves, told our own stories, and laughed together. I found betelnut to have a very natural healthy taste but it induced a lot of saliva production, necessitating lots of spitting which I felt very subconscious doing, so I only chewed for 10 or 15 minutes. They said normally you chew for about an hour. One lady told me she only chews for 5-10 minutes like I did because she doesn't really like it. She is the same one, when I asked about how many children they would prefer to have, said that ONE was enough for her!

Alicia and I also stopped in on some women who were weaving with their traditional looms, lava-lavas. We were shown the differences between the thread lava-lavas and the local material (pandanus leaves) lava-lavas that fetch much more money in the tourists shops of Yap. I got to hear about how to choose a husband (a good provider - fisherman etc) and about what happens when a girl "fools around" on another island and comes home pregnant - the brothers help the sister to support. I got to hear how the ladies really feel about exclusion from the mens house (jealous), and about the sleeping arrangements (entire family sleeps in same room on the floor).

The men traditionally sit and chat most of the day, and start drinking tuba after 3pm. The women are said to work back in the houses and are generally very segregated from the men. Girls learn early that if they see their brother or father in the mens gathering house, that they should not only come no more than 200 feet from the house, they should bow down when they walk past it. As female tourists we are exempt from this rule. But we were told that we should always try to sit if the men are sitting, that it would not show respect to the men if we stood while they sat.

On our last few days here, we knew it would be hard to say goodbye. The people here, as we have gotten to know them more, and they us, are incredibly warm and sincere. They have a great sense of humor and are caring, proud people. They politely ask for what they need, but at the same time, they make sure to more than reciprocate anything that they are given, or any service you give them. They have huge pride in their culture and heritage, and are proud to share it with you. It has been a very long time since we have been on an island or atoll that we feel as welcomed, and as reciprocated for our efforts as we have felt here. Every last person, young and old, male and female, has gone out of their way to spend time with us, show us their ways, and share a laugh with us. Yap may very well become our most favorite place north of the

equator. While they are atolls with the same topography and scenery of the Marshall Islands, the culture and people are NOTHING like the Marshall Islands. It more closely resembles the eastern Fiji islands in people, although shy at first. Drink some tuba with them a few nights in a row, or seek out the women and trade for a lavalava and wear it whenever you are in the village, and they will warm up to you very quickly, and you will have experiences like you have had nowhere else.

If effort is not made to go back a little ways towards the houses and put on a very social face, you will miss a big part of this culture. And talking with the ladies, you will find out that they resent the fact that the men have all the fun with the visitors...that they can't partake in so many of the activities. They will be very very happy if you seek them out and sit with them, (ladies only), and just chat and maybe try betelnut with them! You will also be adorned with fresh flower leis and crowns the whole time you are here, often many more than you can wear at one time!

We left today, with lots of food, local medicine, flowers and thank yous. We are sailing now to Olimarao, Lamotrek's food island, with spare buckets and coolers for them from the people of Elato.

Trigger - April 2013: Elato ended up being our favorite atoll. We intended to stop at Lamotrek but were "lured" to Elato atoll via VHF radio. This place is a true gem with an appreciative and generous community. The island is beautiful, the water is clean and the insects are minimal. Elato has just over 100 inhabitants and is usually bypassed because most yachts stop at Lamotrek just 10 miles off.

We met with chief John, who doesn't speak a lot of English, but has a burly presence. We had interesting conversations with easy-going men with a bright sense of humor gathered in the meeting house. On our tour around the island we met with the women and were inundated with invitations to join them for something to eat and with gifts of beautiful leis and lava-lava. We were touched by receiving such a sincere and warm welcome by all the people down to the pre-school class of seven.

The entrance to the lagoon is easily identifiable and there are buoys inside the lagoon marking two shallow spots. Anchorage is protected from the NE.

Downtime - March 2013: After Lamotrek we stopped for 4 days (from 8th to 12th of March) in Elato Atoll just 10 miles west of Lamotrek. Elato, along with the island of Olimarao (20 miles away), is a part of double lagoon formed by shared seamount. Recently the atoll has become the center of quite a bit of foreign press as an example of things to come. The small, low lying atoll islands, as Elato are losing portions of its beaches to erosion and its to unusually high "king tides". So we are glad we took an opportunity to see it, when an atoll still existed! It was a great experience! It is a very casual island with 80-100 people, they consider themselves like one big family.

First day we visited a main high chief of the three islands (Lamotrek, Elato, Satawal) - Chief Veronika, she is 100 years old and living on Elato, she owned the best land in each of those three islands! We exchanged our gifts and now I've have one more lavalava in my collection, total of four!!

On our second day, one guy caught an octopus and gave it to us, we gave him shades and t-shirt. The dress code on Elato is not as strict as on Lamotrek and everyone is allowed to wear tops, but some people are still just in traditional clothes.

Later that afternoon they caught 2 huge turtles and butchered them right on the beach. They partially cooked them before and then divided the meat between the families. They gave us like 6 pounds of shoulder, heart, liver and some fat. They leave nothing to waste and eat everything inside! They even rinse out the intestines and catch the blood! I cooked up everything and heart tastes like cow tongue, liver is exactly like cow liver, but looks very black and meat is like beef, which I fried and it was a bit chewy...But next day I cooked turtle hamburgers from rest of the meat and it was delicious! And still taste like a beef!

On Sunday, after church, we went out with three guys to Ulor Island and they caught us 16 lobsters! While the men were busy with hunting, I explored island and snorkeled on the reef.

When we got back on Downtime we gave them a bottle of Bounty rum, t-shirt and hat, shades, some fishing lures and a spear gun.

On Monday we visited the school and shared our travels with the kids about our adventures and also we took my laptop and showed them some pictures. We gave them some toys and candy, coloring books and crayons for the school. I also printed a collage of the best pics from the island and Pete laminated it.

Pete fixed the chief's sail and a few other things for the islanders and I sorted and copied 300 movies and some educational programs for Stan, one of the chiefs.

Like on Lamotrek the tuba (alcohol drink from coconut tree) flows freely so it is kind of problem! These guys like to party and I think more than half had strong addictions!

In the end I can tell you that Elato can offer sailors everything: beautiful and safe anchorage, really nice and friendly people, good snorkeling, "tuba" circles, spear fishing and other island joys. They only get a few boats per year and compared to Lamotrek's few per month! So if you have time this place is not to be missed!

Scott Leis - March 2012: Elato is located at 07° 30 43.67N, 146° 10 19.47E. It is a small atoll with only a few islands, one of which is populated. People here speak Woleaian and the majority can also speak some English. Good anchorages are available inside the reef near the island.

8.1.7 Olimarao (Uninhabited 07-41 / 145-52E)

Dream Away – February 2016: We were given permission by both Chief Joe in Lamotrek, and one of the chiefs in Elato to visit Olimarao. It is a lovely spot, and we had it to ourselves. One evening we got a bit of a shock when we suddenly heard surprised voices, and an outboard – and we had no lights on. Lights quickly switched on, and the fiberglass boat approached. It was 4 men off the 'Caroline Voyager'. The ferry had anchored outside the reef, and these guys had come in looking for turtles. They found none, but upon their return a couple of hours later were asking if we had any alcohol to give them. We politely refused.

Soggy Paws - April 2014: We made an unplanned stop at Olimarao when the wind went west unexpectedly. We had good sun and pass was easy to see. We motored all the way around the inside of the atoll—checking out anchorages on the west side of the lagoon just in case the west winds brewed up stronger and we needed a refuge. Then we went over and anchored next to our friends on La Gitana.

La Gitana has been here a week--with VK laid up with an infection on his foot. We have been following their tracks, and talking with them on the radio for the past two years, but have never

met them. So we thought we'd pop in to Olimarao to socialize for a couple of days. We'll poke around here, get a couple of nights good sleep (we hope!) and then move on.

We went ashore for a look around and ended up walking around the whole island. There were turtle tracks everywhere, and signs of turtle nests being dug up by visiting fishermen.

Sherry & Dave

Heading west across Micronesia in 2014

<http://svsoggypaws.blogspot.com>

At 04/12/2014 2:24 AM (utc) our position was 07°42.04'N 145°52.80'E

Brickhouse - February 2014: Olimarao's pass is very easy. It looks shallow all the way across the wide opening, but we didn't see less than 19 feet the whole way in and often deeper. There IS one coral head you could possibly hit, so be sure to go in with good light. NO dangers inside at all. Anchorage is deep in the middle with shallow shelves on edge that you can anchor in about 18-20 feet, hanging in about 50 feet. Easy access to shore on steep sandy beach on southeast side.

Waypoint for pass: 07 40.6120 N / 145 52.4360 E

Waypoint for where we anchored: 07 42.0149 N / 145 52.8160 E

Nice protection from north and northeast/east. Pretty aquamarine water with some patches of coral. Don't go in too close - there are coral heads too close to surface but they are very visible.

When we arrived, after a short visit ashore to introduce ourselves to the 8 people visiting from Lamotrek, we explored the reef a little bit and then headed in to see what they would do with their catch of the day - 2 big turtles! A most devastating event to watch to say the least! Two more came in the next day, and the next day. Very busy people, but they did spare us some lobsters and coconut crabs in trade for wine, spices, coffee, and DVDs. Nice people, but there to work, not to play with cruisers.

We did minimal snorkelling. Other boat here did some snorkelling on the west reef, inside, and experienced LOTS of current but got lobsters with a lot of work. We did take a dinghy down to small island, and in 15 knots of breeze probably too bouncy to anchor there with big boat, and probably too shallow too on nice sandy shelf. Unable to go to shore or to snorkel due to technical difficulty with dinghy. We did not get a chance to re-do the 3 mile roundtrip ride. This is the area, near the rock, inside the lagoon that the locals got lobsters for us.

Later... Snorkelling in the anchorage is superb, even 30 feet from beach!!! What a surprise! Huge schools of fish, big(4 foot) Yellowtail amberjacks (or were they rainbow runners?), 18 inch Bannerfish, 18" Spadefish, a few big groupers, 1 peacock flounder (or Sole), a boxfish, some small triggerfish, and a big blacktip shark as well as a big friendly grey reef shark that came right up to me - 5 feet away- directly at me, in 15 feet of water, in a school of no less than 1000 8 inch fish. Exciting right in the protected anchorage. Coral OK, but fish very nice! No turtles seen though. A few lobsters seen too.

We can't tear ourselves away from here. We didnt leave today. Maybe tomorrow - Patrick is trying his hardest to carry on. Wind is on the nose for the next few days to go to Guam.

Improves dramatically on Tuesday. May stay here until then, may carry on westward. The decision changes every other hour based on Patrick's heart beats.

Trigger - April 2013: Uninhabited with signs of temporary fishing activities from nearby atolls. The entrance to the lagoon is easily identifiable and straightforward. Protection from the NE close to the largest island.

Pass Waypoint: 7° 40.612'N 145° 52.436'E

Downtime - March 2013: On 12th of March we sailed to Olimarao from Elato, which is just 20 miles NW of Elato. On our way we caught 3 Yellow fin Tuna, 40 pound each and one Rainbow Runner!

Olimarao is a deserted bounty island, the most beautiful in FSM in my opinion, where turtles lay the eggs, but right now 16 guys and 2 women from Lamotrek are building a fishing shelter. The island is a remote fishing/hunting ground for Lamotrek and also has giant coconut crabs.

We brought them a heavy box full of nails and some other materials for their construction project. They were also out of water and we delivered four big canisters of fresh water. Also we gave them one of the Yellow fin Tuna and they traded us for a few huge coconut crabs.

Late this afternoon Pete was kiting for an hour until the wind died. The island has a gorgeous lagoon perfect for kiting.

Next morning we checked out the other end of the island, did few pics and when we back I suddenly felt fever coming on, so we took it easy for the rest of the day.

Around 4 pm the guys came to the boat and brought us basket with 2 more crabs and few chunks of turtle meat and invited us for Tuba circle. Pete went along for few hours to share stories and see how they built construction!

Next day we took our big dinghy to Falifi island with thousands and thousands of birds. After a walk around the island we did an awesome snorkel on our way back. The first spot was very shallow just 3-4 feet deep with beautiful coral heads and coves, which were full of very big squirrel fish and groupers, also we saw big school of parrot fish but color was black and grey.... And on the second spot, it was a very big rock inside the atoll, covered with corals and hundreds and hundreds huge fish, the wall started from few feet and go down to 30 feet. I even saw white tip sharks!! (Pete was waiting in SD.) It was simply amazing! I wish we did a dive there.

Before we left we went to the island to say goodbye to everyone and gave them our rain catcher, some batteries and kava left over from Fiji, in return we received 8 coconuts, which I started to be addicted to (there is not many other fruit here) and another huge coconut crab!

We have very little fresh fruits and vegetables on Downtime, just few apples, oranges and limes left, one pumpkin, a few stalks of celery, green peppers, 2 cabbages and few potatoes & few onions left. Debbie Myers Green bags can make a miracle in keeping produce fresh but it has been 5 weeks since I visited fresh market in Pohnpei and our provisions are getting low. But our protein resources are huge: fresh turtle meat, lobsters, crab-meat, roasted turkey breast, yellow fin tuna and last pieces of octopus in the fridge and even some ice-cream in the freezer!! Life is goood!

I badly wanted to stay a few more days on this paradise island, but we saw the new grib-file and it seems it was our last option to sail for next 8 days.

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: Uninhabited and quite nice. We entered at 07 40'666 N 145 52'469 E with minimum depth of 5 meters and exited at 07 40'671 N 145 52'218 E with 4.5 meters. With care one can pass anywhere between those two.

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: Olimarao is an uninhabited atoll and stands out as a Pacific jewel. Two small islands stand on the coral ring, which is a little over two miles diameter, and excellent shelter can be found from the NE trade winds. There are signs of many turtle nests. Islanders from Lamotrek and Elato come here to catch turtles. Coconut crabs are abundant, if you know how to catch them. The snorkelling and diving are wonderful.

Pass: Chart BA772 (1992) is reported to have negligible GPS error to WGS84. The pass lies in the south part of the reef and is not difficult. Suggested directions for the pass are as follows. From position 07° 40.54' N 145° 52.52' E, which lies close outside the reef, steer for the western end of Olimarao Island on 005°T until you reach position 07° 40.76' N 145° 52.50' E.

You should pass close to breakers at the edge of the reef to starboard and leave a shoal on the inner side of the reef to port. There are least depths of 8.0m in the pass, and only weak currents through the pass. Crossing the lagoon, there are no reported dangers on the approach to Olimarao Island. There is a 5m coral head close in the anchorage.

Anchorage: 07° 42.00'N 145° 52.80'E. Good shelter and holding in 13m sand and coral on a steeply shelving bottom. Alternatively slightly further off in 15-20m sand and coral on a less sloping bottom. Buoy the anchor. It is possible to get closer in and anchor in 3-4m sand off the beach, but beware of coral heads. Contrary to the comments in the Admiralty Pilot, landing is very easy.

Facilities: Coconuts ashore!

8.1.8 Fachilop Atoll (Faraulep) (08-37N / 144-34E)

Scott Leis - March 2012: Fachilop's approximate location is 08° 36 45.67N, 144° 33 39.49E. It is a small atoll with only three islands, two of which are populated. The two populated islands are Piig and Fachilop. People here speak Woleaian and the majority can also speak some English. Good anchorages are available inside the reef near Piig or Fachilop.

U.S. Sailing Directions: Faraulep Atoll (8°36'N., 144°33'E.) consists of three low wooded islets on a reef enclosing a circular lagoon. Depths of 14.6 to 20m are found in the lagoon. There are three passages into the lagoon on the S side of the atoll. They are narrow and shallow. In 1978, a small ship, 65m in length, reported using the center channel without difficulty.

Anchorage.—Anchorage may be taken, in 18.3m, off the SW end of Eate, an islet on the S side of the atoll.

Gaferut (9°14'N., 145°23'E.), a small island, stands on a reef that extends 315m NW and 0.1 mile S from it. The island is wooded, and some of the coconut palms attain a height of 19.8m. Vessels have anchored, in 11m, near the reef's edge, about 0.4 mile SW of the S end of Gaferut.

The island was reported (1969) to lie 2.5 miles W of its charted position. In 1977, the depths encountered S of Gaferut were reported to be less than charted depths. In 1979, a small boat channel with depths of 3 to 4.5m was reported in the S portion of the reef.

8.1.9 Ifalik Atoll (07-15N / 144-27E)

Sloepmouche - May 2012: The passage into the lagoon here is a little tricky, as it does not correspond exactly to either the CM93 or Google Earth. We arrived with a SW wind and rain and a large SW swell, and approached the pass cautiously and very closely to be able to see exactly where the pass was. On CM93 it shows two small rock islets on the starboard reef. On Google Earth it does not show any rock or islets. In reality, there are two small islets with coconut trees, but these are connected to the port side reef.

On the approach, stay close to the island on your port side and follow roughly parallel to its shoreline and this puts you in line to see the channel between the reefs. In regular east to NE winds, it should be calm and easy to see in good light. Just inside the pass, watch for isolated shallow reefs just in front of you and keep mostly to the right side of the channel and follow along where you see the sandy shallows dropping off into deeper water.

We had a SW swell push us through, between the surf that was breaking on both reefs each side of the channel. Kind of exciting the first time! Once past the shallows, the bay opens up and there's plenty of room in 40-50' of water. Our anchor was barely touching the 50' sandy bottom when natives in dugout canoes surrounded us. Our dogs did their job well in deterring young kids from climbing aboard uninvited.

Soon after, we were visited by Mano, head of the four chiefs (four villages here), whom we invited aboard. He was dying to get some coffee and told us more about the atoll as we shared coffee and cookies. He warned us to keep anything off the decks as young people have stolen things off boats before and young people are difficult to control by the chiefs. Looks like schooling off-island and action DVD movies have a more negative impact here than other places. This was no problem for us, however, due to our two Schipperkes on Chuuk guard duty.

Next, Chief Mano told us that they charge a \$20/pp landing fee and a \$10 anchoring fee. Sounds like cruise ship charges, so I explained to him that while it makes sense for tourists who are visiting for a few hours only and not helping locals in any way, most cruisers, on the other hand, are very giving in many ways, from repairing things to offering gifts and trading more than fairly. He agreed and accepted our help/gifts instead of the fees. After talking to all the chiefs from the islands that wanted to impose fees, we got the impression that the anchoring fee idea is something that Yap State told the chiefs they could charge to help them get cash into the islands.

We arrived here just in time and had westerly winds and rain for the next two days. Even though the west side of the atoll is only reefs, the atoll is only a mile or so wide, so we gently rolled in about 10kt of wind, and even in 20kt or more in squalls, never felt uncomfortable or in danger. The bottom was good sand and we always anchor to swing 360°. This was a good resting place before we continued west towards Yap.

It turned out that the natives were always respectful about approaching the boat after that first day. The fact that there were two noisy fierce-looking dogs may have helped. Many folks, young and old, were eager to trade foodstuffs and we ended up with four complete bunches of

bananas, breadfruit, taro, papayas (mostly green), drinking coconuts and lemons. We also traded for some lobsters, taking only the larger-sized and refusing the small and female with eggs. Lobster is harder to come by because the natives have different rules among themselves for reef access, and we didn't want to cause someone to poach on someone else's reef.

We heard and read differing reports about Ifalik. Some mentioned that Chief Mano was always asking for things; one boat was not happy about the fees and said some people threw rocks at their boat. We find that an open, reasonable approach to dealing with people is usually the best plan, and sometimes we gently, and in a nice way, decline to give things that we don't want to give. Letting everyone keep face is always the best policy. Chief Mano agreed to waive the fees when he found out that Luc could convert a fishing beacon buoy that was found washed up on the beach into a solar powered LED light system for his house and out buildings. Luc showed some of the younger guys how to do the conversion so they could do it themselves if other beacons showed up on the beach. Ifalik was different in its ambiance than either Puluwat or Lamotrek. There was a sophisticated system of major and minor plant-lined pathways to each of the villages, and there seemed to be a lot more groomed open space between dwellings so that the island had almost a park-like feel to it. Taro patches are more prominent and neatly kept. People were friendly when approached and spoken to (again, English is quite good), but they are not as outgoing. The canoe houses were prominent features and canoe building and the making of elaborate bamboo fish traps are current activities. It's amazing to see how, in all the atolls, they can make the parts of the canoes fit together so exactly just by eyeballing it and then whacking away with a hoe-like tool with such fine precision. We didn't stay long in Ifalik, as a good weather window came up to jump the 250nm to Sorol. But we will never forget the idyllic scene we witnessed as we exited the pass, surrounded by a fleet of colorfully painted canoes rowing out to set out their fishing nets in the pass, and were passed by a large sailing canoe full of young people coming back in the pass from an excursion outside the reef. What a memorable exit!

Scott Leis - March 2012: Ifalik is located at 07° 15 03.05N, 144° 26 46.93E. It is a small atoll with only a few islands, one of which is populated. People here speak Woleaian and the majority can also speak some English. Ifalik is one of the most traditional islands of all the Neighboring Islands between Yap and Chuuk. Good anchorages are available inside the reef.

8.1.10 Woleai Atoll (07-22N / 143-54E)

Dream Away – February 2016: We had our most formal greeting ceremony here, where the elders gathered with the 2 chiefs, and there were speeches, after which we were expected to present a gift to each chief.

The High School computer system is no longer functioning. The wifi emanates from the Dispensary, and was still \$5 a week. We did have to pay here - \$10 each, regardless of any labours. G joined one of the tuba circles, populated mainly by teachers from the High School.

We gave a couple of powerpoint talks to the Senior pupils, and were rewarded with a traditional lavalava made from banana fibre, and a canoe paddle which makes a noise each time you make a stroke.

Soggy Paws – April 2014: We played with the chart offset for Woleai in OpenCPN and made these corrections:

02920431 - x: 600 meters y: 150 meters

02910431 - x: 600 meters y: 150 meters

This makes the charts reasonably accurate, and match the Google Earth charts. We used Kokomo's waypoints below to enter the same pass they did.

We found Woleai Atoll to be a unique blend of very traditional Micronesian, and fairly modern. And one of the most welcoming and generous groups of people we have encountered in the last 7 years of cruising.

On the "traditional" side, the islanders still wear traditional dress, which for the men is basically a loincloth, and the women, a wrap-around lava lava, with no top. Western dress is discouraged. The women still weave their own lava lavas on a "backstrap loom". Though there are fiberglass launches (about 1 for each clan) with outboard motors, the men do most of their fishing in proa-style dugout canoes. The housing on Woleai is also fairly traditional... mostly woven palm leave and thatch construction, with the cooking facility separate in an outdoor (but covered) area. The men have a gathering area separate from the women. Both the elementary school and the high school have cultural classes that teach traditional skills... for the boys, traditional navigation methods, canoe-making, etc... for the girls, weaving and basket-making.

On the modern side--they actually have internet on Woleai, with wifi, and we were allowed to use it for a modest fee of \$5. We saw a few laptops, tablets, and smartphones using the wifi, or taking pictures. Plus they have a generator on the island, and power to most of the houses. There are a couple of vehicles on the island (one belongs to the school system for transporting supplies from the beach to the high school on the other side of the island). Many of the people own VHF radios, and there's a lot of chatter on their channels--10 and 11--a kind of party line.

Unlike Chuuk, where no one on the entire (large, populated) atoll seemed to own or use a VHF, everyone in Woleai uses one... both for the "safety while at sea" reason, but also as a party line for communications. They normally chatter on VHF 10 and 11, but know that we standby on 16. We and they quickly learned each other's callsigns, and it was nice being able to contact people ashore by radio. Handheld VHF's were one of the items the yachties were asked for, and each of the other 3 boats ended up selling a hand-held to someone on the island. They told us that their source makes them pay \$200 for cheap Chinese junk, so they were quite happy to pay us \$150 (replacement price to order a new one) for a good US Brand handheld.

A politician had given out rolls of sailcloth sometime in the last year, and we were asked if we had a sewing machine to help sew the panels together (for Chief Francis' clan's canoe). They did the measuring and cutting, and we just used the machine to stitch overlapping seams (harder than it sounds, but we got it done). Once all the panels were together, they did the final shaping and finishing of the edges. At least one other clan asked us to do their sail too, but we were out of time. So if you have a sewing machine... (double sided tape really helps with the slippery stiff Dacron).

We asked for a guide to show us around the Japanese artifacts on Woleai. Julian was assigned this task and did a great job on a half-day walk around. He knew where all the stuff was, but wasn't very knowledgeable about WHAT it was. In an attempt to educate those that might be interested, we left some pictures with Matthias with labels on them. Fabian at the school was talking about trying to do a website for Woleai and using those pictures.

Matthais gave us the waypoint for the H8K "Emily" Japanese flying boat. It was sunk while at anchor in the atoll, not far from where we were anchored. We really should have hauled out the dive stuff and done a proper dive on it, but we were leaving the next day and didn't want to go through all the bother. The Emily is in 35 feet of water, so is a bit deep for a snorkel. But it is possible if you can snorkel down 20 feet or so. The entire wing with all 4 engines is intact, upside down. You can see two of the outer floats nearby. And an aft gun turret with the gun still sticking out. GPS 07-21.92N / 143-54.083E

Kokomo - April 2014: Open CPN (ie C-Map CM93) charts are a little off.

The entrance (Raur Channel) into the Lagoon is appr. 0.15nm too far to the east. We used the Google charts.

Channel WP: 07 20.414 N / 143 53.963 E. No problems the channel is wide and deep.

We anchored at: 07 22.149 N / 143 54.194 E

There are also 2 moorings available. The first few days we used one and then anchored because of the approaching tropical storm.

When you approach the Island you will be hailed on channel 16 and they will stay in contact with you until you are at the anchorage.

People are very friendly and helpful.

VHF 16: Matthias (callsign "Scorpio") will ask you to come ashore to check in with him. You will need your passport number and \$10/person. Matthias will be your contact on the Island. He arranged the meeting with the chiefs, has all the information you need.

So far only 5 yachts visited Woleai this year.

VHF 16: Capt'n Rob, Woleai Harbour control

VHF 11: Elementary School

VHF 42: Hospital (*this may be CB?*)

Internet: As of April 1, they have internet at Woleai. We have a wifi antenna on Kokomo and had no problem to receive the wifi signal on land.

You need to see "Santos" a teacher at the Elementary School who is responsible for your internet connection. The antenna is at the hospital. He will give you a pass word when you sign up. \$5/month or \$2/day for one computer.

We had a great signal at anchor and did not have to go to the hospital to have internet.

The island is very clean and traditional. The people are very friendly and helpful.

Every day @ 5pm is "Tuba" drinking. Check with Matthias which men's house to visit.

There is one main road or path that goes parallel to the shore. The 4 villages are along that path, so you never know in what village you are. There is one chief per village to keep the community small.

Woleai has one hospital, an Elementary School and a High School.

The Island has a power plant which provides electricity and street lights.

Woleai is a great place and should not be bypassed on your way west.

Noonsite - Upd Feb 2013: Woleai holds firmly onto its traditional ways: canoes are favoured over motorboats, and there are rules against wearing T-shirts, pants, baseball caps and other Western clothing. While foreign visitors are exempt from clothing regulations, it aids your acceptance if you endeavour to wear traditional dress.

Trigger - April 2013: We made an unscheduled stop at Woleai atoll and were pleasantly surprised - despite the good reports that we have read about this atoll.

Woleai has a very interesting history which might not be widely known. During WW2 a Japanese garrison of almost 7,000 men was stationed on Woleai where they built an airstrip, several bunkers and had a seaplane base. During the bombing raid on 1 April 1944, which was part of the Palau-Yap raid, the Americans dropped 60 tons of bombs on Woleai and spent around 20,400 bullets. The wrecks of several Japanese planes, Betty Bombers, Zeroes and Zekes are still on the island and an Emily seaplane with a wingspan of 38 meters is submerged in the atoll. Deeper water holds the wreck of a submarine according to the islanders. Decayed Japanese light armored tanks type 96 can be seen scattered between palms trees and taro patches. There are also several anti aircraft guns and canons strewn around the island and torpedoes in storage bunkers.

(Link to Woleai WW2 remnant photos: [Yap Outer Isles.](#))

There was a famous rescue of a downed Hellcat pilot by the submarine USS Harder. The wounded pilot ditched in the sea and had a raft dropped to him by an Avenger, but the current took him onto the reef. 3 Hours later the sub USS Harder surfaced about 2 miles from shore. The cook and 2 other volunteers swam a rubber raft out on a towline while the sub kept position with the bow on the reef and the engines in slow forward. Covering fire from escorting fighter planes and gunfire from the sub subdued Japanese sniperfire.

On the way back the tow line was accidentally severed by a Seagull seaplane tasked to rescue another downed pilot. The cook swam back to the sub with the towline while the rest of the group waited on the reef. Another crew member swam out with a new line to tow the raft back as quickly as possible. The islanders who witnessed these happenings were in two minds to help or not, but the local "magic" folded palmleaf kept on indicating that they must keep their heads down.

Today there are around 1000 islanders living in the atoll with the largest concentration of people on Woleai Island which is divided in 5 different villages. There is a high school for children of neighbouring outer islands, a general store, a clinic and a church. The island has a running generator that provides cash electricity to each household. The runway is not in use any more.

We met with chief Francis Waieral (the chief of the northern-most village on Woleai Island). He is a sharp witted fountain of information of 70-some and was a youngster when Yap was subjected to the Japanese. There is a \$10 fee per person which is payable to the chief and shared in a communal coffer. There is an additional fee for diving which we negotiated to \$10 flat. In exchange you get the freedom to walk around the island and experience Woleaian culture, get a guide to show you the location of the WW2 canons, bunkers, anti aircraft guns, wrecked warplanes and Japanese built airstrip. Our guide was Julien (in a red canoe) who was very knowledgeable, extremely helpful and had lots of interesting tales to add. The islanders

are welcoming but respectful of your privacy and are gracious with gifts of fish, taro, breadfruit, coconuts, bananas and much (too much) more.

Downtime - April 2013: As we approached the island we were hailed on the radio 4 miles out by a watchful eye on shore who asked us our vessel name and intention. This was a first in a long time that we had been spotted so far out and we were impressed that they were watching their waters so closely.

After entering the lagoon we were handed over to a guy name Tommy who would be our go to guy for the week and he gave us directions into the anchorage. After we got settled we were contacted by him again and he welcomed us ashore to meet the chief. We lowered Sour dinghy and went ashore after breakfast and were greeted with a beautiful lei and a warm handshake.

There are several villages on Woleai and Chief Francis lives on the south end of the island. We met in a circle under a men's canoe house with the 78 year old blind Chief and few other village leaders. Everyone we meet gets the condensed version of our travels and most are amazed by all the places we have been. We gave the Chief a zip lock full of tuna filets and a hat and he welcomed us to stay on the island as long as we like.

After all the formalities were done we set off to do our favorite thing on a new island, find the kids and hand out gifts and candy. Soon after we arrived at the elementary school our bags were empty and we were surrounded by smiling faces. Most the kids spoke English and it was fun to throw a Frisbee and blow bubbles with them. The elementary school has about 120 kids and there is also a separate high school with another 200 students from here and also a few surrounding islands like Likiep and Elato. The dress code is loin cloth for the boys and lava lava for the girls and everyone is topless including the teachers.

Five 8th grade girls from the elementary school showed us the way to the high school, down a path that took us through the jungle and across the island. I was thinking as I walked among them that if I was 15 again and walking through the jungle with 5 top less girls that I would be the luckiest man alive.....

We met with the principals at both schools and gave some supplies to the grade school and accepted an offer do a presentation of our travels to the high school. I have to say that it looks like they are doing a good job teaching and they have enough resources to do their jobs. The kids are very well mannered and are attentive in class.

We made it to church on Sunday and caught the end of the service. It is kind of hard to get motivated to get to church and sit there for hours listening to a language you do not understand. So we just show up late and meet with the people afterwards.

The night before I had asked permission from the chief to be able to teach some of the boys how to wake board and he said it would be fine after church to go have some fun. I met the kids on the beach at 10 and the fun began in the rain. I had 40 5th and 6th grader boys ready to go! I started the first load of 5 kids on the wakeboard. The second kid who tried got up after 2 tried and went a few hundred feet! I thought great now I have a teacher who can help me explain to the other kids.....WRONG!! I was only able to get 1 out 15 kids up so I switched to the much easier surfboard, where they could just lay on it and be pulled across the water behind SD. I kept encouraging them to try and stand and only one brave soul hung ten for a few hundred feet before he wiped out. I tried telling them all that it is OK to let go of the rope when they crashed, but most held on for dear life and became human torpedoes!

There were big things going on at the high school with the arrival of 24 new computers filled with tons of information. John Bush, a computer tech from Hawaii and longtime island volunteer was just finishing up the installation. The mainframe was state of the art and will supply limited information to these students who most of have never operated a computer. They are still a long way from having internet but that is not all that bad considering what a waste of time it can be.....instead the mainframe is loaded with all the national geographic issues, the latest world book encyclopedia's and lots of other useful information that can broaden these kids view of the world.

A few days later we returned and John set up a projector and Daria and I showed the high school kids where we were from. Daria had lots of great picture from St. Petersburg and I dug up a few of the cows back in Kansas. Next we showed them a few places like Machu Pichu, the Mayan ruins in Belize and then shots from the Panama Canal and New Zealand. I think they had the most fun with shots we took on their own islands since they rarely see pictures of themselves let alone projected life size on the wall. It was good times sharing with all these kids and we were loudly applauded after each presentation.

The winds had been calm for a few days so we contacted Tommy to see if he could find us a dive guide. We were in luck, Morgan had recently returned from Yap and is a professional dive guide with over 2000 dives in his log. We set it up for Monday after we had our presentations at the school and hoped for sunshine. The weather cooperated and we did two good dives along the pass. We spotted lots of things with the help of Morgan who could find a needle in a haystack! We saw several moray eels, octopus, starfish, a flounder that I thought was sand until it moved, nudibranch, sea stars and even a few pieces of discarded artillery from WW2. It was strange to see a 5 inch shell laying on the ocean floor knowing it was most likely fired at some unlucky ship so many years ago.

Woleai Atoll has 8 islands surrounding a beautiful lagoon. Inside the shallow lagoon are two small islands that might have been candidates for the Corona Beer commercial with a few swaying palm and white sand beaches. The main island is Woleai which was occupied by over 7000 Japanese troops during the war.

Chief Francis remembers the war vividly and told me that when the troops were here there was not a tree left on the island and you could see from one end to the other. Like many other islands in the pacific it has a runway built on and has many concrete bunkers dotting the landscape. All the locals were evacuated to Yap during the war and he told me he went to school there until one day when bombs fell on the island and blew up the schools and that was it for school for a while. Very few locals were killed during the war itself and the only casualties were from people playing with hand grenades they found afterwards. The Japanese were not as fortunate....he told me only 3000 of the 7000 walked on the ship after the war--the rest remain buried on the island.

Every afternoon the men gather around at 5 to drink tuba (palm wine) and discuss what went on that day and they all seem to want the new visitors at their villages circle for the night. There are 5 circles on main island. I have learned one thing and that is to bring your own cup and drink slowly!

The men were sitting around one night and discussing fishing and turtle hunting, neither of which they were having much success at lately. It seems turtles are harder to find and there are not many large fish left on the reef. I had seen the boat come in and there were 7 or 8 guys with

spear guns and maybe 50- 4-6 inch long fish on the ground that they were dividing...not much meat for all that work.....Things used to much much better...

Being a farmer I asked the question of what they were doing to sustain their resources? Their answer was that they closed certain parts of the reef to fishing certain times of the year. I asked them to explain how they thought this was helping when obviously a few months was not really helping the catch size.....I took the floor and presented the idea of closing certain parts of the reef for years not months so that fish could mature and actually become old enough to reproduce. Then they would spread to other parts of the reef and replenish it. The idea was well received and they said it made sense....but implementing it will be a whole other matter in itself....

The next idea I had was how they could harvest more and larger turtles....The practice now is to catch and kill everything you see no matter what size or time of the year it is. It is even fair game to track the females onto the shore and kill them when they are nesting and laying eggs! Sadly the eggs are a bonus and they dig them up and eat them too! What chance does a turtle have when only 2 or 3 eggs will develop into a mature turtle undisturbed in the wild....now with hunting [practices like these it is ZERO!` A turtle lays 70 to 80 eggs and most baby turtles are picked off on their way to the ocean or are eaten by sharks or fish before they are 3 months old.

I suggested to the chief that it would be in everyone's best interest to stop digging up the nests and taking the eggs and to also stop killing the females during nesting season. Another idea was instead of eating the eggs they should gather them and move them to one of their uninhabited islands and protect them. They also need to build a pen to keep them safe for the first 6 months of their life and feed them. When they are big enough to survive turn them loose and in 2-3 years these same turtles will return weighing hundreds of pounds. Only then after a female lays its eggs can they harvest them for meat having created a sustainable farming program. Again the idea made sense to them...but time will tell if future generations will even know what a turtle looks like.

It seemed every time we went ashore we were given fresh flowers by some one... Wednesday was Raymond's birthday one of the teachers at the high school and he invited us ashore for a small party. Daria made some chocolate cupcakes and I put together some fishing gear for a present. Both were very much appreciated and soon Daria was covered in flowers again. There was no shortage of tuba either....but I was still in pain from the night before when I almost drowned in the stuff at another party! We made a short night of it and went back to Downtime early.

The next day we met Tommy and he took us around to see the war ruins. We saw a few planes in the jungle and some old equipment rusting away. Most the buildings were bombed to smithereens and only foundations remained. Walking through the jungle we saw many craters where bombs had dropped which now were taro gardens where the plants like to grow in standing water.

Our week here was quickly coming to an end and we told Tommy we planned to leave on Saturday. Next thing we knew a going away party was being planned at the main village. There was one other boat leaving on Friday so, Thursday night it was.

The culture here is much different than back in the states and only the men showed up to the party! The women obviously spent many hours preparing the food and flowers but the men

served it to us. The younger guys had been out fishing all morning and our meals had one small fried fish and boiled taro in coconut sauce and had enough food for two people!

The tuba flowed freely and the guys from the other boat brought a few cases of beer so there was plenty to drink. We brought some yellow fin tuna which the men sliced and ate raw, a favorite of theirs.

It seemed that everyone that showed up brought flowers and soon we had 2 or 3 lei's and 4 or 5 head bands stacked up on our heads. I had never seen so many flowers!

The next night we asked John to bring down the projector so we could do a slide show at the church for the village. There had to be 70 or 80 people sitting around as Daria and I showed them pictures of our travels. We were glad we could share our world with them since they were so generous with sharing theirs.

Our last night on the island Raymond invited us over again and had another bunch of fresh flowers for us to wear. Wow what an amazing experience! The generosity and love these people showed us will be treasured for a life time!

Savannah - December 2012: We stopped at Woleai to drop off items from Lamotrek. Their kids attend high school here and they sent letters and/or food.

The entrance is wide and deep. We had no issues. We had coordinates from s/v Jaraman. They found the charts to be way off, ours were not too bad (MacENC).

Coordinates from s/v Jaraman - Way Points Woleai Reef Entrance

07 20.448N 143 53.804E

07 20.793N 143 53.974E

07 21.491N 143 53.835E

07 21.672N 143 53.844E

07 21.779N 143 53.891E

07 21.934N 143 54.127E

07 22.097N 143 54.216E ANCHORAGE - electronic charts out by more than half mile

We went to shore and were led to the chief. There are two; Francis and Francis (one is blind). S/v Jaraman had met with Martin, but we were told he was in Yap. They said we did not need to see both chiefs, so they took us to the one who could see us. This island is decidedly bigger and more progressive than Lamotrek (they have electricity on the whole island), although still very traditional. We walked a good way to see the chief. We brought similar gifts for him as we did the other atolls. He was very friendly, asked us how long we were going to stay, where we were from, what we needed in terms of food, and asked us to pay a \$10/person fee. After giving so much at the other atolls and knowing we had things for these folks too, we told him as much and asked if helping out could be our payment, as we did not have much cash. If not, then we would be glad to leave the next morning. He agreed and was very nice about it, although I know he would have preferred the cash. The supply ship was coming in two days.

We ended up only staying one day, so our knowledge is limited. There is an elementary school and a high school, both kind of tricky to find on your own. We had a young man Alex, offer to take us wherever we wanted to go. There are lots of WWII things here but you need some local

knowledge to find the good ones (i.e. guns, planes). Alex showed us one gun on the ocean side, but said the planes were pretty far into the jungle. We didn't come prepared for that, so we passed. There is a nice propeller the class of 2011 has put up by the high school. Ask around, someone will take you to see whatever you want.

We found the people to be very friendly, but as this was our fourth atoll and we were five weeks since leaving Pohnpei, we were ready to get to Yap.

Scott Leis - March 2012: This is a small atoll made up of many small islands. People live on Falalop, Wotigai, Tagailop, Falalas and Sililap islands and speak their own language, Woleaian, and the majority can also speak some English. Falalop is the largest and most populated island and also has a runway that receives periodic flights from Yap's PMA office. Woleai Atoll provides a good place for a safe anchorage in the event of a storm and is protected from the north, east and west by islands.

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: Beautiful. Chief Fred charged a fee of 10\$ per person.

8.1.11 Eurapik Atoll (06-41.5N / 143-03E)

Wikipedia: Eauripik Island is a coral atoll of three islands in the western Caroline Islands in the Pacific Ocean, and forms a legislative district in Yap State in the Federated States of Micronesia. Its total land area is only 23.6 hectares 0.236 square kilometres (0.091 sq mi), but it encloses a deep lagoon of 5.921 square kilometres (2.286 sq mi).

With light southwest winds, there are usually breakers on both sides of the atoll. All of the islets are covered with coconut palms. There used to be five islets, but two were washed away in the late 1970s by typhoon waves.

Eauripik is located approximately 108 kilometres (67 mi) southwest of Woleai.

The population of Eauripik Island was 113 in 2000.[citation needed] Many islanders are usually residing on the Yap mainland as temporary laborers.[1]

Scott Leis - March 2012: Eurapik's approximate location is 06° 41 31.45N, 143° 02 55.33E. It is a small atoll with only a few islands, one of which is populated. People here speak Woleaian and the majority can also speak some English. Eurapik does not have a deep channel entering the reef so be careful entering the channel depending on the tides.

8.1.12 Sorol (8-08N / 140-22'E) Uninhabited

There is no Google Earth picture for Sorol. But below is a picture from the internet that is not geo-referenced.



Brickhouse - Feb 2014: When approaching from SE, dont go closer than this waypoint if you cant see very well: 08 06.5N/140 26.1E. YOu will likely see it breaking if you have good light like we did. We saw 148 feet in the bank that the charts show 42 feet, southeast of the atoll, and saw no evidence of this shoal otherwise and we went over the top of it on our chart.

Waypoints along the south reef (will keep you off reef, but close for fishing. Go further out if you cant see)

08 06.45N/140 24.96E

08 06.797N/140 23.941E

08 97.125N/140 23.110E

Approach to pass entrance: 08 07.424N/140 22.345E

Entrance to pass: 08 07.611N/140 22.301E

Inside entrance: 08 07.679N/140 22.613E

We saw mostly 20+ feet in pass, but towards end, one 14 foot bleep. We came in at exactly mid tide (+1.5 meters below dead low). Water is very clear- looks shallower. We came in at 12 noon, and could see very well in all directions, and could see very well in the lagoon. This was dead "low" tide (but it was only a half tide today), and there was no current. Wind was NNE, and pass was flat. Rebecca was on bow and not freaking out so its not incredibly scary or anything.

Once inside we saw only one reef to our port: 08 07 695N/140 22.853E

We anchored at: 08 07.413N/140 24.058E in 45 feet of water. With NNE winds it has been very flat overnight. Looks like it would be well protected from N through to SSE.

Pretty islands, looks like lots of white sand beaches, coconuts, and aquamarine water with reefs to explore. Saw one big turtle outside reef on the way in and huge school of big yellowfin amberjacks near a bird pile also on the way in.(outside reef) We were not fishing at this time. AT high tide it would be close and easy to dinghy over reef to outside.

Trigger - April 2013: Sorol is uninhabited with an abandoned small village and school on the largest island. Entrance to the atoll is wide and deep. The C-map chart is not very accurate and Google Earth does not have a high resolution image for Sorol, but the entrance to the atoll is wide and deep and easily identifiable. The anchorage is well protected from the NE.

Sloepmouche - May 2012: The passage into the lagoon is actually an area on the southern side, where the outlying reef is deeper than the rest, not a pass per se.

We entered at 08°07'611N, 140°22'301E towards 08°07'669N, 140°22'624E and found a minimum of 11' at mid-tide. We anchored in 50' of good sand at 08°07'88N, 140°22'24E. (*Ed Note: This waypoint looks wrong*) If you have a shallow draft, you could anchor closer to shore amidst the coral formations that reach to 5' from the surface. Good protection from north to east to SE here.

We experienced some west and SW winds making the anchorage a little roly, especially at high tide when the southern barrier reef is submerged.

Sorol is a deserted atoll (once populated by about 25 people). There's good beachcombing and drinking coconut gathering around the different islets, as well as the remains of a motor catamaran and big Chinese fishing boat that wrecked themselves here.

On the east island we saw plenty of monitor lizards, some quite big. In the other islets we did not see lizards, but plenty of birds nesting and even a coconut crab out during the day. It was also very refreshing to see many recent traces of turtles coming ashore to lay their eggs. In view of the numerous turtle breeding sites we have encountered in Micronesia, we cannot blame the Micronesians for the occasional turtle hunting and turtle egg gathering they do.

We did some very successful spearfishing on the NW side of the atoll, outside and inside the lagoon around the last two islands on the western side of the atoll. The coral is nothing special, and there is not much of it, but the fish life was interesting, especially on the drop-off outside the reef. At high tide, near the far western island, the southern reef is submerged and you can dinghy back and forth over the reef.

We anchored the dinghy on the inside in shallow water and snorkeled the dramatic wall that drops straight down to over 100'. The visibility was great, and we saw white and black-tipped sharks, a big Napoleon wrasse, a BIG sea turtle (probably waiting for nightfall to lay her eggs), schools of parrotfish and snappers and an occasional large grouper. Another time, in the shallows, we saw the biggest bump-headed parrotfish that we had ever seen. I thought it was a 50-gallon black plastic garbage bag that had caught on a rock in the shallow water and was rippling with the waves, but on closer approach, the tail fin came out of the water and we could see the huge dark green silhouette of the fish as it just lay there not moving but for a couple fin flips!

After visiting so many people in Micronesia it was nice to experience some solitude in this nice uninhabited atoll! We had some idyllic days of blue skies, fluffy white clouds, white sand, green trees, gliding birds and myriad shades of blue and aqua water all around us. Some days really ARE like the magazines show it!

8.1.13 Fais Island (09-45N / 140-31E)

Scott Leis - March 2012: Fais is located at 09°45 46.29N, 140° 31 04.48E. It has the greatest elevation of any of the Neighboring Islands in Yap State with the highest point of the island being around 85 ft. It is a beautiful island with raised coral cliffs on its east and west coasts. It is not part of an atoll and therefore, finding a secure anchorage may be tricky. It is recommend to consult the latest charts around this island and consult one of the locals as soon as you get there regarding a reliable site for anchorage. Most people here are initially skeptical and quiet when meeting new visitors but are very friendly once you get to know them. Fais also has a runway and receives periodic flights from Yap's PMA office. People from Fais speak Ulithian and the majority can also speak some English.

U.S. Sailing Directions: Fais (9°46'N., 140°31'E.) is fringed with a reef except at its NE and SW ends, which are steep-to. The middle of the island is cultivated, the remainder being covered with palms. On the NE and SW shores, cliffs rise to a height of 13.7m. Refinery Point, on the NW side of the island, is a sheer cliff, 18.3m high and jutting into the sea.

There is no safe anchorage; in calm weather vessels lie offshore and load copra from native craft. A W current, with a velocity of 3 knots, has been reported off the S end of Fais.

8.1.14 Ulithi Atoll

Wikipedia: Ulithi is an atoll in the Caroline Islands of the western Pacific Ocean, about 103 nautical mi east of Yap. It consists of 40 islets totalling 4.5 km² (1.7 sq mi), surrounding a lagoon about 36 km (22 mi) long and up to 24 km (15 mi) wide—at 548 km² (212 sq mi) one of the largest in the world. It is administered by the state of Yap in the Federated States of Micronesia. Ulithi's population was 773 in 2000.

There are four inhabited islands on Ulithi Atoll. They are Falalop, Asor, Mogmog, and Fedarai. Falalop is the most accessible with an air strip, a small resort hotel, gas dealership, store and one of three public high schools in Yap state. Mogmog is the seat of the high chief of Ulithi Atoll though each island has its own chief.

Ulithi was a major staging area for the U.S. Navy in the final year of the Second World War. Several sunken warships rest at the bottom of the Ulithi lagoon, including the USS Mississinewa, a fully loaded fleet oiler.[1] The sunken tanker was found to be seeping oil into the lagoon. The United States Navy responded, locating the tanker, tapping her storage tanks, and pumped off her oil. The clean up operation was completed in February 2003.

The atoll offers good fishing and diving, though recent typhoons have eroded some of the reefs.

Electricity is now available on some islands, and the advent of video players and cell phones have brought a touch of the outside world to this very isolated atoll. Occasional diving and adventure tours visit Ulithi from Yap. Western clothing is prohibited on Mogmog island for everyone including tourists.

As the Second World War moved west across the Pacific, the US Navy required a more forward base for operations. The Japanese had established a radio and weather station on Ulithi and had used the lagoon as an anchorage occasionally early in the war, but had abandoned it by 1944.

Ulithi was perfectly positioned to act as a staging area for the US Navy's western Pacific operations. The atoll is in the westernmost of the Caroline Islands, 360 miles (580 km) southwest of Guam, 850 miles (1,370 km) east of the Philippines and 1,300 miles (2,100 km) south of Tokyo.

On September 23, 1944, a regiment of the US Army's 81st Division landed unopposed, followed a few days later by a battalion of Seabees. The survey ship USS Sumner examined the lagoon and reported it capable of holding 700 vessels—a capacity greater than either Majuro or Pearl Harbor. It became the undisclosed Pacific base for major operations late in the war, including Leyte Gulf and the invasion of Okinawa.

The US Navy transferred the local islanders to the island of Fedarai for the duration of the hostilities. Next came what Admiral Nimitz called his "secret weapon", Service Squadron 10. Commanding officer Commodore Worrall R. Carter devised the miraculous mobile service force that made it possible for the Navy to create repair facilities and re-supply facilities thousands of miles away from an actual Naval port. Service Squadron 10 was called upon to convert the lagoon into a servicable naval station. Pontoon piers of a new design were built at Ulithi, each consisting of the 4-by-12-pontoon sections, filled with sand and gravel, and then sunk. The pontoons were anchored in place by guy ropes to deadmen on shore, and by iron rods driven into the coral. Connecting tie pieces ran across the tops of the pontoons to hold them together into a pier. Despite extremely heavy weather on several occasions these pontoon piers stood up remarkably well. They gave extensive service, with little requirement for repairs. Piers of this type were also installed by the 51st Battalion to be used as aviation-gasoline mooring piers near the main airfield on Falalop.

Within a month of the occupation of Ulithi, a complete floating base was in operation. Six thousand ship fitters, artificers, welders, carpenters, and electricians arrived aboard repair ships, destroyer tenders, and floating dry docks. The USS Ajax had an air-conditioned optical shop and a metal fabrication shop with a supply of base metals from which she could make any alloy to form any part needed. The USS Abatan, which looked like a big tanker, distilled fresh water and baked bread and pies. The ice cream barge made 500 gallons a shift.[6] The dry docks towed to Ulithi were large enough to lift dry a 45,000 ton battleship. The small island of Mog Mog became a rest and recreation site for sailors.

Fleet oilers sortied from Ulithi to meet the task forces at sea, refueling the warships a short distance from their combat operational areas. The result was something never seen before: a vast floating service station enabling the entire Pacific fleet to operate indefinitely at unprecedented distances from its mainland bases. Ulithi was as far away from the US Naval base at San Francisco as San Francisco was from London, England. The Japanese had considered that the vastness of the Pacific Ocean would make it very difficult for the US to sustain operations in the western Pacific. With the Ulithi naval base to refit, repair and resupply, many ships were able to deploy and operate in the western Pacific for a year or more without returning to the Naval base at Pearl Harbor.

The Japanese had built an airstrip on Falalop. It was expanded and resurfaced, the runway running the full width of the island. The east end of the strip was extended approximately twenty feet past the natural shoreline. A number of small strips for light aircraft were built on several of the smaller islands. The Seabees completed a fleet recreation center at Mog Mog island that could accommodate 8,000 men and 1,000 officers daily. A 1,200-seat theatre, including a 25-by-40-foot stage with a Quonset hut roof was completed in 20 days. At the same time, a 500-seat chapel was built. A number of the larger islands were used both as bases to support naval vessels and facilities within the lagoon.

The Japanese still held Yap. Early after the US occupation they mounted a number of attacks but caused no damage to the Seabees working on the islands.

On 20 November 1944 the Ulithi harbor was attacked by Japanese kaiten manned torpedoes launched from two nearby submarines. The destroyer USS Case rammed one in the early morning hours. At 5:47 the fleet oiler USS Mississinewa, at anchor in the harbor, was struck and sunk. Destroyers began dropping depth charges throughout the anchorage. After the war Japanese naval officers said that two tender submarines each carrying four manned torpedoes had been sent to attack the fleet at Ulithi. Three of the suicide torpedoes were unable to launch due to mechanical problems and another ran aground on the reef. Two did make it into the lagoon, one of which sank the USS Mississinewa. A second kaiten attack in January 1945 was foiled when the I-48 was sunk by the destroyer escort USS Conklin. None of the 122 men aboard the Japanese submarine survived.

On March 11, 1945, in a mission known as Operation Tan No. 2, several long range aircraft flying from southern Japan attempted a nighttime kamikaze attack on the naval base.[14] One struck the Essex-class aircraft carrier USS Randolph, which had left a cargo light on despite the black out. The plane struck over the stern starboard quarter, damaging the flight deck and killing a number of crewmen.[15] Another crashed on Sorlen Island, having perhaps mistaken a signal tower there for the superstructure of an aircraft carrier.[16]

By March 13 there were 647 ships at anchor at Ulithi, and with the arrival of amphibious forces staging for the invasion of Okinawa the number of ships at anchor peaked at 722.

After Leyte Gulf was secured, the Pacific Fleet moved its forward staging area to Leyte, and Ulithi was all but abandoned. In the end, few US civilians ever heard of Ulithi. By the time Naval security cleared release of the name, there were no longer reasons to print stories about it. The war had moved on, but for seven months in late 1944 and early 1945, the large lagoon of the Ulithi atoll was the largest and most active anchorage in the world.[6]

Soggy Paws - April 2014: We found the CM93 2010 C-Map charts to be pretty much spot-on for Ulithi.

We approached Ulithi from the SE (from Woleai). On our approach, we had good weather and good visibility, and so crossed right over **Zohhoiyyoru Bank** using these two waypoints:

SE	09-53.1 N	139-57.7E
NW	09-53.95 N	139-55.85 E

Taking a straight line between these two points, we saw a least depth of about 40 feet. We didn't notice any huge wave action on approach. However, on exiting on the NW side, there

was a pretty good rip running all along the reef, about 200 meters offshore (to the west). It was no big deal in our conditions, but in rough conditions, it might be pretty bouncy.

We crossed into the Ulithi Atoll proper through "Dow Pass" using this waypoint:

10-01.8 N 139-44.8 E

It was not so much a pass as a "low spot in the reef". We could have crossed much further east in those conditions (looked same depth to the east of us a good ways). We saw minimum of 20 feet at this waypoint.

After reading that Downtime paid \$40 to stop at Asor, we avoided stopping there. We only had a couple of days to spend at Ulithi, and we really wanted to go see Mogmog, where the US R&R facility was during World War II. We opted to spend our first night anchored off uninhabited **Sorlen Island** (between Asor and Mogmog), at waypoint

Sorlen #1 10-04.43 N 139-44.40 E, in 25 feet sand

This was a pretty anchorage off a nice beach, and it was nice after Woleai to not have to do the village thing. We anchored in sand in about 25 feet, with 360-degree swinging room. Protection here was good from ENE through NW.

The next morning, we called Mog Mog on VHF 16, and Stanley answered. Stanley is Mog Mog's "greeter". He was born on Mog Mog, but worked as a liason for the Governor's office in Yap, before retiring a year or two ago. Dave asked permission to come visit Mog Mog (the locals pronounce it "Mo Mo" (rhymes with yoyo)). We moved to **Mog Mog** and anchored between the two old piers at

Mog Mog 10-05.09 N 139-42.56 E, in about 30-35 feet sand.

This is right off a big Canoe House, and there were several fiberglass boats pulled up on the beach where we landed. There is a dinghy channel leading into this spot on the beach through the coral just off the beach.

Stanley met us on the beach and welcomed us to Mog Mog. We made sure we were wearing appropriate attire, as Mog Mog is known as the most traditional island in Ulithi Atoll. (Dave wore shorts/collared shirt, Sherry wore the lava lava she was given in Woleai and a nice t-shirt). Stanley carefully led us around the butchering ground (between the building where the fiberglass boats were, and the Canoe hut to the east), explaining that it was taboo for women to be in that area.

Stanley's house is just inshore on the main road from where we landed, in a nice shaded spot under a big breadfruit tree. We had a nice chat with Stanley, and when we asked what he needed from us (meaning paperwork), he said "nothing". He didn't ask for any money either.

Dave's main purpose in visiting Mog Mog was to get a tour around of the former Navy facilities. Stanley obligingly walked us around, but there wasn't much to see. None of the housing from WWII facilities remained (several typhoons have been through since 1945, and pretty much everything was leveled in one typhoon in 1960). But he did show us the remains of the seaplane ramp, where the hospital had been, and a few other things like that. He showed us Mog Mog's generator facility, where they have just installed a large solar array (around 100 190-watt panels). It's not operational yet, so the generator was still going.

Dave asked whether they had any old Coke bottles around the island, and Stanley took us to what used to be the dump, and let us root around in the ground until we found a couple of 1944 vintage glass Coke bottles.

When we went back to the boat late in the afternoon, the wind was up to about 18-20 knots out of the east, and Mog Mog doesn't offer any protection from easterly winds, so we motored the 2 miles back to **Sorlen**, and anchored in a different spot with better protection from the east. Our 2nd anchorage was at

Sorlen #2 10-04.65 N 139-44.11 E, 28 feet sand

This is right off the old pier and building at Sorlen, in another nice sand spot, and better protected from the East than our first anchorage. There are a couple of buildings visible at Sorlen but nobody lives there anymore.

We had asked Stanley for permission to go ashore at Sorlen. When he asked the person on Mog Mog who is part of the clan who "owns" Sorlen, Stanley was reminded that he should have collected a \$20 Ulithi Atoll fee from us, plus the guy wanted \$20 in addition as a landing fee. Dave eventually negotiated that down to just \$20 (after telling Stanley no other atoll had charged us that much money, and no yachts would come to Ulithi if they charged so much to visit).

We had by then given Stanley 2 big bunches of bananas (the gifts from Woleai that we just couldn't eat), some coffee and sugar, and some fish hooks. He said he'd "take care of it".

If you meet Stanley, and have the time, ask to borrow his two books "Welcome to Ulithi" and "Winds of Change". These are two historical compendia, one about about the whole Caroline Islands (including Guam, Palau, and the Marshall), going back to the 1500's, and the other about Ulithi, with a whole lot of traditional information. Stanley allowed us to borrow his copy overnight, and we sure wished we could purchase our own copy.

It was time to move on to Yap before our weather window evaporated completely (about 10 days of no wind was showing on the forecast).

On our way out of the atoll, we wanted to at least locate the USS Mississinewa, a fuel ship that was sunk by a Japanese submarine in 1945. We had 3 waypoints for the wreck... one from Wikipedia, one from a US Navy report from a defueling operation in 2003, and one from the wreck symbol on the CM93 chart. We had the most confidence in the US Navy location, as it came from a detailed report. However, when we got to that waypoint and circled it, we couldn't find any sign of the wreck (using our fishfinder and watching depths). So we next went to the Wikipedia location, and that was wrong too. We zig zagged and circled around these two waypoints (near each other) to no avail. So we went to the CM93 wreck symbol, and there it was. Once we got close and located it, we also saw a small bouy that was apparently tied to the bow section. We didn't really want to take the time to make a dive on it, but Dave jumped in with snorkel gear to see what he could see. Visibility was pretty good, so he could confirm it was the bow section, and take a picture of it by snorkeling down a bit. We marked the following waypoints:

Bow	09-58.716 N	139-39.648 E
Stern	09-58.716 N	139-39.603 E

According to the Navy report, the Miss is laying approximately E-W, with the bow to the east. The bottom here was about 120-130 feet, and the hull came up to 70-90 feet. Other than the bow, the rest of the ship is lying upside down, and isn't very interesting.

If you had settled weather, and wanted to anchor a sailboat nearby, we found the shoal a half mile to the west (marked on the chart) at approx

Day Anch 09-58.5 N 139-39.0 E

We went over part of the shoal (but did not anchor) and saw depths as shallow as 20 feet. There was some coral, but also plenty of sand. It would be an OK day anchorage in settled weather, from which to dinghy to do a dive on the Mississinewa.

You might be able to find an overnight anchorage in light winds well north of east in this area:

09-58.64 N 139-37.35 E

But you'd probably be better off overnight behind Fassarai to the SSE.

We exited Ulithi to the SW for an overnight to Yap using Towachi Channel, using waypoint

Towachi 09-58.2 N 139-36.36 E

It is easy, wide and deep, and shows up clearly on the chart and on Google Earth.

Downtime - April 2013: Ulithi is the 4th largest atoll in the world and is 20 miles long and 8 miles wide with a giant lagoon in the middle surrounded by small islands. This atoll is where the US navy staged over 600 ships to make the final assaults of WW2. Most of the islands spread around the atoll are small and uninhabited and just a few of the larger ones are inhabited with less than 200 people living on them. The exception of Falalop which has a high school and airport and about 600 people.

With the winds still blowing strong we were looking for an anchorage with protection from the strong NE winds but only a few islands in the entire atoll provided that. The first one was **Fassarai** which is located on the lower south east side of the atoll. The island is just over a mile long and you have to anchor 200 yards off shore to stay out of the coral heads. The anchorage is rolling at high tide from the waves wrapping around the island but the holding is good.

We no sooner had the anchor set and we were hailed on the radio by Martin on the island. We told him we would be ashore after we settled in to say hello. An hour later a guy name Pive came by and gave us a few coconuts and also welcomed us ashore.

We went ashore later that afternoon and were met by 8 or 9 men sitting under the men's house next to the church. The scene was much different than at the last islands and nobody was drinking tuba. Apparently the chief of this entire atoll banned the making and drinking of the stuff and everyone was just sitting around chewing bettle nut. Everyone warmly welcomed us to their island and Pive then took us on a tour of the rest of the island and to the school to meet the kids.

As always the kids were happy to see us as we gave our gifts to them. The elementary school only has about 30 kids and the entire village has less than 100 people.

What they did have that they were proud of was solar power! The whole village was given a solar station and underground connections to each home by the EU several years ago. Each home gets enough power to run a small fridge and lighting for just a few dollars a month. This

was an impressive setup with over 150 solar panels feeding a huge battery bank. Power is limited to the basics and air conditioning is not allowed.

All the water they drink is collected from rooftops and stored in cisterns since the groundwater is too salty to drink. The breadfruit and banana trees seem to grow just fine though as well as the taro plants.

After our tour we met the men back at the men's house to see what else was going on this week. We met Martin who had hailed us on the radio and who was also one of the sons of the chief that had recently passed away and is acting chief of this island.

Naturally Daria asked about coconut crab! Martin told us his family owned the islands 7 miles across the lagoon and if we took him and a few guys over there he would be happy to catch us a some. Well that sounded like a plan to me and we told him we would meet him in the morning for a crab catching adventure.

The next morning we met Martin at the village along with Jaymin and Luciano, two very good crab catchers and we loaded into SD for the bash across the lagoon. The winds were still blowing strong and the waves toward the west side were 3 to 4 feet and I was soaked by the time we arrived at the island. We dropped the guys off at the island and Daria and I went out to the edge of the reef and went for a snorkel. With an off shore wind the ocean was nice and calm and we saw lots of interesting fish and even a sneaky moray eel and several sharks.

After about an hour we went back to the island and found the guys who were having a little trouble finding the coconut crabs. They did manage to find a few and decided to give the next island a try. The tide had fallen since we had been here and now we found ourselves dodging coral heads on our way across the shallow pass between the islands. We wound up getting out of the boat and walking to the island while Jaymin walked the boat through the shallows. Daria went along the shore and took pictures while I went into the jungle with the guys to find crab.

The creatures live in holes anywhere they can burrow into the ground. So the first thing is to find the pile of dirt they dug out and then see if the entrance to the hole is open or closed. Closed holes mean someone is home and then you start probing the ground with a stick to see where he is at. They are usually not deep and when you find a soft spot you start digging to find them. When you get lucky you find a nice size crab and you grab him by the top of the body and make sure you watch out for the powerful claws that can take a finger off!

Luciano is a seasoned professional and can tell just by looking at the size of the hole just how big the crab is and if he is there or not. The ones that are there are dug up and bound in less than 5 minutes and he off to find the next one.

We wound up with 7 nice sized crabs and called it a good morning and headed back to Downtime for a fresh a mahi lunch.

Daria was more than happy to feed these guys lunch for all their hard work, a fair trade for all those crabs. I asked the guys what they needed in trade and dug into the fishing tackle and "hooked" them up with a bunch of new gear. Next they asked if I had any rum?...well they do drink!! Just not tuba? I broke out a bottle of Bounty Rum from Fiji and warned them to be careful and the rest is history! Soon after the rum disappeared they were happily dancing to their favorite band CCR on the back of Downtime.

Jaymin eyed my ukulele that I just bought in Majuro and asked if he could play it? I replied: Can you? I brought it to him and he tuned it and began playing. I have to admit this was much more music than this instrument had ever played since my learning to play was short lived. Then he boldly asked if he could have it and I told him why not since I would never learn to play. This made two people very happy, Jaymin and Daria, who would not have to listen to me practice and longer!

It was quite a day and later that afternoon we went ashore to bid our farewells since we would be leaving in the morning. I have to say this is the third island in a row where we really made a connection with the people and had such a wonderful experience. You can tell this is a place where everyone shares and you could also tell everything they had they would gladly give to help someone out. Lucianos daughter gave Daria a beautiful necklace with over 100 tiny shells woven in a beautiful design.

We headed north in the morning fighting the north winds the whole way, it took us 3 hours to make just 12 bumpy miles to the next island of **Asor**. This was another small island in the top NE side of the atoll and the anchorage was just a rolling at high tide, but beautiful. Again we were met by a few guys that welcomed us ashore and to their island. In the morning we went ashore and met the chief and paid the \$40 entry fee. The village was small and about the same size as the last island and we had enough gifts for all the kids on the island. This island also had solar panels and everyone had cheap power available.

What really got my attention of this anchorage was the 2 mile wide reef that the 20 knot NE winds were blowing straight across onshore, creating perfect kiting conditions! In the morning we moved Downtime right in the middle of the reef behind a tiny island and got the kite gear out. The conditions were all coming together with enough wind and low tide falling behind a long reef all at one time. I was able to kite 3 hours straight the first day skimming over crystal clear 1-2 foot deep flat water of the reef. The outer reef absorbed the crashing ocean swell just yards away while I glided over the calm inside reef for a mile in either direction. This was by far the best kite spot I had ever enjoyed with 85 degree water and no obstructions to dodge. It is amazing to skim across the reef and see all the fish darting away inches below you! I even saw an occasional shark scooting away wondering no doubt, what was that? On the far side of the reef was another small treeless island just a few feet high and a half mile long that blocked all the waves and had perfectly flat water behind it. The wind blew unobstructed over the island while I kited on glass behind it going as fast as I could just feet from the beach! This never got old and we spent the next two days enjoying this very special reef.

Just to the west is another island, **Mogmog**, which is known for being very traditional and we went there for church on Good Friday to meet the villagers. The surrounding islanders came here for church and everyone was dressed traditionally with the women in lavalava's and the men in Tu's (loincloth). There were not as many flowers as on Woliea though, but I guess there never will be! It is too bad all the services are in the native language...but we did enjoy the warm welcomes of the villagers.

The anchorages in this entire atoll are marginal and it really depends on wind direction where you will be able to safely anchor.

With another week coming to a close it was time to move on and Monday we set sail for Yap, the island where we would finally have the first store to shop at in 6 weeks and would also clear out of Micronesia before we head to Palau.

Scott Leis - March 2012:

Falalop Island is located at 10°01 03.73N, 139°47 26.27E. It is the largest of the four populated islands in Ulithi Atoll and the location of the only runway and hotel in Ulithi. Pacific Missionary Aviation (PMA) flies to Falalop, Ulithi twice a week as long as there is fuel and weather permits. Yap's PMA office can be contacted at yap@pmapacific.org to inquire about flight schedules and availability. If sailors are interested in staying at the hotel, arrangements can be made by contacting the Yap Visitors Bureau at yvb@mail.fm.

The other populated islands in Ulithi are: **Asor** (10°01 46.76N, 139°45 56.52E), **Mogmog** (10°05 17.04N, 139°42 30.09E) and **Federai** (09°54 35.0N, 139°39 31.42E) formerly known as Fassarai.

Mogmog is considered the most traditional island in the atoll. All the populated islands in Ulithi now have limited electricity. People in Ulithi speak their own language, Ulithian, and the majority can speak some English.

Swingin' on a Star - March 2009: By the time we were approaching Ulithi Atoll big squalls were surrounding us. Ulithi was about a half mile away from its charted position on the Navionics chips but after setting up an offset the chart matched the radar nicely.

In the afternoon today we approached Zau pass. After an easy transit at 15:00 we turned to starboard and sat off of Mangejang island on the NW side of the pass to wait out a big squall that was pounding our target anchorage. We began moving again in parallel with the end of the squall, hoping to squeeze in between it and the next one in line. The squall in question crossed in front of us as we turned around Fassarai island on the way to our target island, Lossau.

There's lots of squak in Yapese on 16. One station has a 5 beep key up tone that is longer than most of their transmissions. Seems like all of the little islands are keeping in good contact.

The lagoon inside the atoll is pretty open in most places and the coral is low enough to make many passes viable. The lagoon is 80-100 feet deep in most places that we transited, and with good visibility the underwater hazards easy to see and far between away from the barrier reef.

The **anchorage** (position from Sailblogs: 9 53.0'N / 139 40.7'E) is lovely. We dropped the hook in a large 25 foot deep sandy area with very little swell coming in. The water is crystal clear and the island seems to be an uninhabited white sand beach and palm affair. I feel like I'm back in the Bahamas! You can hear the surf breaking on the other side of the island. This anchorage is wonderful in trade wind conditions but it would be no fun in a westerly. There just isn't any protection on that side, as the atoll is open to the sea. You could anchor behind some islands on the other side of the atoll though.

We stayed 2 days at Ulithi.

After coffee and muffins we got ready to take a swim. The water here is amazing. Vis is at least 120 feet. I can see our anchor from the bow and we have 150 feet of chain out in 25 feet of water. The platform where we're anchored is all sand (with lots of sea cucumbers and a few rocks mixed in). There are many healthy coral heads closer in to shore with lots of little reef fish.

Before we assembled our shore party some Ulithians came by in a Yamaha fiberglass skiff with

a Yamaha outboard (standard FSM issue). It was the chief's brother, Pierce and some friends. They were very nice but indicated that we needed permission from the chief to be here. We asked for permission and the response was, "The chief was wondering if you have any extra coffee". We certainly did (I'd advise bringing a good bit of instant coffee for trading in this neck o the woods). Once the coffee was handed over, everything seemed to be in order and they told us that they would bring us some coconuts. They ran ashore and brought us a crazy amount of coconuts, maybe 15. They whacked a few open for us to toast the beautiful day with.

We had a nice chat with the guys and showed them around the deck of the boat. One of the crew was maybe twelve and he and I took turns bouncing off of the tramp into the water. They gave us the name and number of the Lieutenant Governor of Yap (also their brother) in case we needed anything in Yap. It was a nice time spent with fun folks. I filled up their gas tank for them and wished them well as they motored off.

They report that between one and two thousand people live on Ulithi. Almost all in two villages, one on Fassarai just north of our position and the other on Asor I believe (near Falalop). We planned to exit the atoll via the Zowariyuru channel between the islands of Eau and Ealil (nice to choose passes with above water landmarks). Pierce suggested we take the Rowaruerii pass on the north side of Eau because it is deeper. They both look to have about the same depth on our chart I have, but I never turn down local knowledge. We'll take a close look at both before making our exit. I do find that locals in some places have different navigation sensibilities than yachts, due to their divergent goals and boats. I've been told to take paths that would be great for a 1 foot draft outboard skiff but not so great for a 4' 6" draft 8 meter wide catamaran.

Given the chief's indirect blessing we made our way ashore via mask and snorkel. The water is a refreshing 82 with lots of patches as warm as 86. We had a nice snorkel over the coral on the way in and then set out on a circumnavigation. Lossau island is uninhabited and lovely. It has beautiful beaches all around and the densest coconut tree forest I have ever seen. You can see little coconut trees sprouting from the nuts in the sand all over.

As we walked to the south end of the island we had a huge surprise. We ran across sea turtle tracks in search of the perfect nesting spot. You could easily make out the big track of the turtles heavy shell, the swaths on either side where the flippers scooted the turtle along, and the little track of the tail dragging in the sand behind. We found two nests which we stayed well away from. The island was perfect in many ways but discovering a fresh set of turtle tracks really made our expedition.

The next day (Sunday) we did a lot of relaxing, reading, snorkeling and visiting with the locals. The chief's son brought us some lobster in exchange for Rum. He then told me that the chief had outlawed alcohol on the island. Great. At night they came by to offer us turtle. Ug. They had two large turtles and one small one. This is the season the turtles lay their eggs all around this area. I tried to tell them that this was not a good time of year to be killing lots of turtles. They laughed.

In the end all we can really do is reinforce what they already know and "just say no to turtle".

We enjoyed a lovely sunset at the end of the day. We got the boat ready to go because we will have to leave first thing in the morning. The trip to Yap is 97 miles so we need to leave around

5:30AM first light and average a bit over 7 knots. It will be a motor sail given conditions so should be no problem.

We were up at 5:00AM, before the sun, this morning. We had gotten the boat ready to go last night so there wasn't much to do to prep the boat. After warming up the engines and testing forward and reverse Hideko began to raise the anchor. The water here is so clear that you can shine a flash light into the water and see your anchor 25 feet down.

There was a sliver of a moon low in the sky as we motored slowly back along our track. A direct path from our anchorage to the exit pass transits some 6 foot shoals on the chart. Our plan was to head back north a bit and then cut directly across the lagoon in water charted at around 100 feet deep. Considering the fact that Admiral Halsey's 3rd fleet, with more than five fleet aircraft carriers, five battle ships and a mass of cruisers, destroyers and support ships, all anchored here often at the end of WWII, I am inclined to believe that the charts are in the ballpark. It would be a bummer to run our little yacht aground, but I imagine it would be substantially more embarrassing to put a 33,000 ton war ship on the rocks.

We paced our lagoon transit to ensure some sunlight at the pass. As we approached we could make out the reef and shoals extending fairly far to the north from the island to our port (as charted). We aimed for the water at the center of the two islands and inched our way along. We transited the pass with what appeared to be lots of room on both sides and no less than 48 feet (45 at MLLW) of water. Outside the pass the bottom fell away rapidly as expected.

9 Yap

9.1 Approach, Arrival and Formalities

Dream Away – February 2016: Tino Siugwemal, the Port Captain for Port Control has requested that yachts email him at pfsoyap@gmail.com to alert the Port Authority of their impending arrival. We don't think it is compulsory, but they would just like to know who they are expecting, and approximately when.

Changing Spots – February 2016: Yap was the second best check in (after Kosrae) I have experienced.

Keep a good watch on your passage to Yap. We saw a tremendous amount of shipping between Woleai and Yap. Some don't answer the VHF radio, and some don't even answer when you call on DSC. If their closest point of approach is within 5 miles I like to contact them to let them know of my presence, and advise that there is no risk of collision if they maintain course and speed. One ship was concerned that he wasn't aware of me, at 15 miles. Then he was kind enough to say he could see me on radar at 9 miles, and AIS at 6 miles. He still couldn't see my nav lights (of course), but was happy to be able to see my 600 lumen LED dive light (at 6 miles). I thought that was interesting info, and was surprised that my AIS transponder wasn't detected sooner. I now have a new radar reflector.

Call port control on Ch 16 as you approach the channel. Somebody from port control will wait for you ashore and walk the short distance with you for the check in process. All the officials were there (chewing betel nut and spitting into a tomato can on the desk) ready to check us in. The fee was \$50, plus the \$25 quarantine fee. When asked if we stopped at any atolls on the

way, I said yes, they called us on the VHF radio, and invited us to visit. And that we loved it and would have stayed longer except for a soon to expire visa. When he asked if we were staying for Yap day, we said we would love to, except for the expiring visa. He said he could fix that, and we are still here now. The quarantine officer even gave us a ride to the post office to pick up all our packages, and the ATM, and back to the boat. I don't know if it would be as easy a check in if you hadn't already been to Pohnpei, or if you didn't have your cruising permit.

Everything is easy walking distance, and you can see when the container ship comes in, so you know when to head to the store for fresh produce.

The main anchorage is small, sheltered with very good holding in mud. With adequate scope for 40+ feet the boat sits on the other side of the channel. The other side of the peninsula is a much larger anchorage, but not as sheltered. The Marina restaurant (no marina) has a dock, and don't mind if you tie your dinghy to the end. Just ask permission, and have the occasional beverage or meal there. They might have Wifi, but the manager needs to be there to turn it on, and give you the password.

Yap is a bit upscale, smaller, cleaner version of Pohnpei, with very friendly people. A wonderful visit!

Soggy Paws – April 2014: Yap has a pretty well-marked channel coming in--with a few of the markers with proper red and green lights on them. And our CM93 chart, and the Google Earth charts we made, are pretty accurate.

We called the Port Captain on VHF on our way in, and made arrangements to meet the officials on shore at 11am. When we got there a few minutes late, John, the Port Captain representative was the only one there. He put us in his air conditioned pickup and drove us 100 yards to the air conditioned Immigration office (across from the Marina Restaurant). There we were waved into a chair and proceeded to meet 6 different officials to complete our check-in (Port, Immigration, Customs, Quarantine, Health, EPA). Quite a lot of paperwork for such a small island, and especially considering we've been in their country for almost 3 months already.

There was a question about our holding tank capacity--as usual, everyone wants you to have a holding tank, but nobody has the facilities to pump it out. We told them we'd be using the facilities ashore. Which, I am absolutely positive, DON'T go to a sewage treatment plant, but probably just a septic tank and then into the water (if it is a recently-built modern structure).

Also the quarantine guy wanted us to keep all our "garbage" (wet trash) aboard. But literally EVERYTHING (fruits and vegs) we have onboard were purchased in the FSM. They just don't get the difference between a cruising yacht and a big ship.

The EPA guy had a form for us to fill out about what fuel and other possible contaminants we had on board--in case we went aground or sunk, so they knew how to clean up our spill site. Methinks they've been training too much in the U.S. In contrast, I've seen guys in the islands just toss an outboard motor oil plastic container over the side when they were finished topping off their tank.

Anyway, everyone was friendly and fairly efficient. We hadn't brought enough copies of our crew list, but the Immigration lady kindly made a couple of copies for us. By 11:45 we were finished, and Dave and I went to lunch at the Marina Restaurant (no Marina to go with the Restaurant, but a nice view of our boat on anchor).

Downtime - March 2013: After spending a few interesting weeks on Ulithi, we continued our journey west to Yap, one of our last stops in Micronesia.

We had heard mixed reports on the coconut telegraph about the port officials there but decided to go see for ourselves what was going on. We found out, like any other story or bad rap, there is usually one boat that does something wrong and makes it sound like they didn't.

The boat causing all the commotion had pulled into Yap a few months ago and did not even call the Port Captain on the radio and just plopped the anchor down and kept the radio off. Then he had one crew who wanted to jump ship with empty pockets and a bag full of problems. Well, in a case like this it is the Captain's responsibility to pay for any crew he has aboard even when they want to jump ship. So in the end that is just what happened.

We were greeted with total professionalism and paid the published fees of just over \$120 to clear in/out which is not bad considering we had to talk with 5 different departments to do so.

One of the first things we noticed after we anchored was the lack of activity on shore, it almost seemed like a lazy Sunday afternoon with very few people driving and walking around. I guess we were assuming this was a busy place since a lot of outer islanders come here to shop and take a break from small island life. The island itself is one of the few volcanic islands in Micronesia but did not have high mountains to catch the rains like Pohnpei or Kosrae does and is considerably drier because of that fact.

We finally were able to get to shore late Monday afternoon to scout out the town and see what we could buy to replenish our dwindling provisions on Downtime. We found pretty much everything we were looking for at one store that resembled a mini-walmart right in the middle of town. We bought a few watermelons and to our surprise they turned out to be a bright yellow/orange color when we cut them open and were the sweetest melons we tasted in a while! The rest of the produce fridge looked more like a science experiment with once fresh veggies transforming themselves in to stinking globs. Luckily we had caught lots of fish so we were good on meat since the choices in that department were pretty slim also. Oh well Palau is just a few weeks down the road.

Our next mission was to find a good restaurant to relax at but this too was a challenge since anything they served would have had to come from the market right? We ate at a few and other than the exception of the Pacific Dive Resort the food was pretty much plain but it was nice for Daria to at least have someone to cook for her for the first time in almost two months.

The next day we hired a car to drive us around the island to see the stone money, the main thing Yap is famous for. Stone money is just that, a circular stone quarried and painstakingly shaped into a circular stone with a hole in the center. These stones range in size from 6 inches and go up to 12 feet in diameter that weigh many tons. The most remarkable thing is that they were not made here but 250 miles away in Palau! They say only 60% or so made it over and the rest litter the bottom of the ocean between here and Palau from shipping mishaps. The money was only traded once when it was brought over for mostly taro crops. The new owner would then proudly place this stone in front of his home as a status symbol and naturally bigger was better so hence the need for 12 foot diameter money. The hole in the middle served it's purpose in that they could slide a bamboo log through and transport the money by rolling it across the ground. There are now countless pieces of this stone money laying around the island that have long since become a currency of the past.

On the rest of our island adventure, we were impressed at the quality of the schools. We saw one of which was a brand new high school just completed last year. As we cruised along the freshly paved road our guide Susan told us many interesting fact and showed us a few traditional "Men's House". The architecture is slightly different than the eastern Micronesian islands and I thought it more like what we saw in Fiji with high peaked roofs and carvings along the eaves.

Looking back I have to say the best thing about the anchorage in Yap is that we had access to free high speed internet the whole time we were there! I say "FREE" but in reality...when you have not been online for shopping for a few days. This was great because we could order our "stuff" on eBay and it would be shipped US Priority mail and meet us in Palau in a few weeks! Well that was the plan anyways...

As I am writing this from Palau, we still have two packages floating in a container somewhere in the Pacific heading this way by boat because that's how the USPS shipping goes....when the plane is full they put it on a growing pile that when big enough gets put in a container and shipped on the slowest possible (cheapest) ship. And wouldn't you know it one of the delayed items was a new jacket for Daria to take on her trip home to Russia!

After a few days of frenzied internet shopping I was ready to set sail since the credit card had about all it could take. There was not much else I could say about Yap as a tourist destination but word on the street is that the Chinese are working on building a huge hotel casino project and that should give the place some excitement for a while.

Clearing out of Yap was a breeze, we just notified the officials 24 hours in advance and they had our paper work and clearance papers waiting for us at the dock at the agreed upon time.

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: When entering Yap we were asked by immigrations whether we visited any outer island, and told we should have asked permission beforehand.

He treated the matter tolerantly, promised to give me the contact info to the relevant office but forgot.

Dockage at the small boat harbor was 25\$ a day and we got one day free. Anchoring there where directed is free of charge. Water and garbage disposal 15\$ each.

Savannah - December 2012: The entry to Colonia, Yap is well marked and easy to spot. Once arriving, we called Port Control on ch 16 and were told to anchor our boat in the small harbor with the other boats and call when we were all settled. After calling the second time, they asked us to meet them on shore with our papers. We were met by Health and Quarantine and charged \$25. Agriculture also met us and just asked us to fill out some paperwork. We were then directed to the Customs and Immigration offices across the street. All was very convenient and painless. We were back on the boat in less than an hour. We needed our cruising permit, boat papers, passports, and crew lists.

There was a large (100ft) sailing vessel that came in after us and they were asked to go to the pier. They were told to stay on their boat and toss the lines. Then they were charged a \$200 line handling fee. No one else (at least 9 boats that we counted) was asked to do this....not sure the circumstances, just a head's up.

Exit: Customs, Immigration and Port Control require 24 hour notice of your departure. Once you have your papers in hand, you have 1-2 hours to depart the harbor. You cannot leave

outside of office hours according to the Port Control. Many boats who never received their cruisers permit from Pohnpei were not allowed to check out until they cleared that up with Immigration (in Pohnpei).

Visitor's Bureau: To get to the Visitor's Bureau (nice maps and great information), you can either walk from the marina dock or you can park your dinghy closer by going under the bridge and parking at the canoe buildings (ask permission first). You will see a telecommunication building at the top of the hill. Go past that building and turn right down a gravel drive. The Visitor's Bureau is on the left. To walk there, take a left at the three way stop in town and cut through the grass at the traditional huts there by the courthouse. Turn right on the road and that puts you on your way to the Telecommunication building.

Sloepmouche - July 2012: The entrance through the outer reefs is well marked and lit at night. We were happy not to come in at night because once you arrive in the anchorage you have to pay attention to shallow areas.

We called port authorities on VHF Ch16 and were advised to proceed to the yacht anchorage close to the bridge. Look for the big fuel tanks. The commercial dock is further inside, on the other side of the manmade peninsula, and not visible from the bridge anchorage. We **anchored** at **09°30'87N, 138°07'35E** in 40' over mud.

Some officials were already ashore, sitting at a small terrace in the back of a dive shop (right next to what we later found out was the Marina Bar and Grill). The marina existed at the time of the U.S. presence here, but there are no facilities now. The two small floating docks are owned by the two dive centers in that building. Meet the owners to ask about leaving dinghies there.

I lowered the dinghy and went ashore with the boat papers to clear in with the usual officials: Quarantine, Customs, Immigration, Port Control and even EPA. The extensive paperwork was filed leisurely by me with only quarantine and EPA asking to come onboard to inspect for plants, live animals and to make sure the heads will not be used (unless with a holding tank). Easy and friendly check-in; what a contrast to Chuuk!

The only **fee** was the usual \$25 quarantine fee. Six months earlier, our friends on a French catamaran described a much different experience. They went to the commercial pier and all officials came aboard with big black shoes and it sounded like they gave them the third degree and asked to see their holding tank, and wanted to charge them a fee for coming to the wall.

It's a good thing that few yachts come here at the same time as the anchorage is quite small, especially with the varied wind directions we experienced and the amount of scope required. Three weeks earlier, some other friends anchored on the same side as the commercial dock area, close to the Manta Dive resort but it looked very tight in there to us (and they ran onto a shallow reef in the process). It is very calm this time of the year (July), winds are quite light and tracked all around the clock. We slept very well here, little noise (except Friday disco night); no swell.

We found Colonia and the rest of Yap to be very clean, neat, and well maintained. The road system is very good with wide, well-drained rights-of way. Our feeling was that the state government spends more of its money for the public good, and not just filling the pockets of corrupted politicians. Contrasted to Chuuk, it was a breath of fresh air. It was the most nicely-kept of the four states of the FSM and had the most number of traditional buildings and displays of its unique culture. The Visitors' Bureau put in cute road direction signs, and some very nice

Memorials to U.S. WWII Vets who crashed or were killed in Yap. The Yapese are proud of their cultural heritage and are trying to preserve what knowledge they can. The Visitors' Bureau has beautiful brochures and booklets explaining the history, navigation heritage, dance, WWII history and the modern side of Yap and its people.

Contact Immigration, Customs and Port Control at least 24 hours in advance so you can arrange a check-out time, where you checked in. Painless, too, and no fees (they had just introduced a departure fee for air passengers during our stay, but we were not charged anything).

Fellow Traveler - 2011: Yap was not a planned stop for me, but with no wind and limited fuel, I had reached a point where I was within motoring range of Yap, but not Palau...so Yap it was. And I was there several weeks, waiting for parts to arrive via mail.

Officials in Yap were friendly, polite, and efficient so far. I did not have an advance permit, but that did not phase them.

Try to find a copy of HIS MAJESTY O'KEEFE before arrival...based on a true story of a sailor who "ruled" Yap for a while. It is for sale at O'Keefe's bar if you can not find it before arriving.

I anchored in the small boat harbor on the S. side of the docks, between the small tank farm and the gray open-air gym, just above the bridge over the lagoon entrance. 40 feet or so, and plenty of room: 2 other boats in here when I arrived.

Latest C-Maps are very accurate - within 10 feet or so.

Swingin' on a Star - March 2009: The channel into Yap's Colonia Harbor is wide, deep and very well marked. I wouldn't want to do it at night for the first time, but if need be I think our Navionics chart on the plotter and the lit markers would have made it fairly safe in calm conditions. Our charts were quite accurate until we got way back into the harbor. You never know these things until you've been there once of course, unless you have a friend in harbor.

We hailed the port to get permission to enter the harbor. No response from the harbor but Eric on Whistler came on. After a quick catch up on 17, Eric agreed to take me ashore to clear in. We anchored in the south arm of the harbor (out of the way of the main fishing and cargo docks) and I ran ashore with Eric.

The port captain's office is only open from 08:00 to 16:30. I did catch the duty officer on his handheld before entering the harbor and he called over the immigration and customs folks. We already had our FSM cruising permit from Chuuk so things went pretty fast. We paid \$40 to the port and \$20 to customs. Immigration was free and the officer stamped all three passports for me.

The process took no more than a half hour and there were no overtime fees even though we started the process at 18:30. There was a fair amount of Betel nut chewing going on (particularly by the women) which I haven't been able to get used to, but everyone was very friendly and helpful.

Sherry: Anchor position (from Sailblogs, may not be correct): 9-30.8'N / 138-07.4'E

Our first impression of Yap is a good one. The town is clean and there are several cute shops and restaurants along the coastal main drag. The locals are friendly and everything seems quite safe. The harbor is totally protected and flat.

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: Yap Proper Island is capital of Yap State. As such, the town of Colonia is small but important. The island is very friendly and interesting and a very pleasant stop. There is excellent sightseeing and diving. Yap is famous for its stone money and its manta rays. Tourism is easy on the island, although public transport is limited.

Pilotage: Entry through the pass is not difficult. The principle beacons marking the entrance were in place in 2004, as were most of the beacons marking the channel. However the docks have been considerably modified from those charted, with large areas of reef being reclaimed and built on. Be aware that there may be changes.

Anchorage: 09° 30.88'N 138° 07.32'E. The best anchorage is in the southern bay with good shelter and holding in 12m mud, directly below the bridge. On the ebb a strong current flows from the inner lagoon.

Formalities: Colonia is a Port of Entry and officials are helpful and organised. The harbourmaster is based near the main wharfs west of the anchorage and the customs office is in the mall just north of the anchorage. Customs will arrange for the immigration and quarantine officers to come to their office, otherwise quarantine is based at the top of the hill south of the inner bridge across the small lagoon.

9.2 Cruisers Services

9.2.1 Money

Savannah - Decmeber 2012: There is an ATM and Banking office in the same shopping center as the customs office and YCA store (see below). There is another bank and ATM, The Bank of Guam, on the road that goes by the lagoon (past the police station).

Fellow Traveler - 2011: There is an ATM, at Bank of Guam, past the post office on the road on the N. side of the lagoon.

The stone money bank in my photos on Facebook is a short walk out of town past the tank farm.

9.2.2 Diesel and Gasoline

Sloepmouche - July 2013: The fuel station is at a small dock so you can fill your jerry cans right into your dinghy—convenient!

Fellow Traveler - 2011: Fuel is available in the harbor. I took Fellow Traveler onto the small concrete dock, right by the anchorage, and right at the fuel station. They told me I was the first yacht to ever do so. I went at just short of high tide. The day before, I had checked, and there was 9 feet where your keel will lie. Coming in at a 45, it is plenty deep until right at the dock. The difficulty would be exiting in a stiff breeze, as you are right in the corner of the harbor, with a wall right in front of your bow, and downwind, so you have to spring off, then back out and turn. If breezy, or you need more depth, you can order your fuel there, then go to the small ship dock and they will bring it over in a truck.

9.2.3 Propane (Cooking Gas)

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: Propane is easily obtainable from the gas plant near the main wharfs.

9.2.4 Groceries/Provisioning

Savannah - December 2012: There are two major grocery stores here, YCA and Blue Lagoon.

YCA - The YCA store is in town in the same shopping center as customs. They carry the basics with a few surprises. For example, they had sourdough sprouted bread in the freezer, however it was \$9. They also had things like frozen Digorno's pizza and bagels, yet the only cheese they had was a huge back of shredded mild cheddar for \$25.99. But the basic needs can definitely be met here. We found the local vegetables to be much better and more plentiful than Pohnpei.

Blue Lagoon - The second store is just across the bridge that you can see from the anchorage. If you cross the bridge and take the road to the right, you will see the store on the left. You can also get here via dinghy by going under the bridge and parking your dinghy just past the store. There is a house there and we were told by a local, that it's the official dinghy parking for the store. We asked permission anyway. There is also a small rickety dock and coconut tree close to the house. This belongs to the Pathways hotel, but we were able to use that as well. The larger dock a few yards down is privately owned and we were told it was \$10 to park there. This second store (I don't know the name of it), also has the basics but is not quite as stocked as the YCA. But it does have different items so it's worth going to both. We also found the beer and wine here to be a fair amount cheaper. Just past the store is a local stand with a wide range of vegetables (cucumbers, okra, various different squashes, melons, bananas, greens, tomatoes, etc.).

Pick N Save - This store is on the road right before the hospital. It's not big but carries a few different items than the other stores. We found some decent wines and liquors here as well as parmesan cheese, olives, salad dressing, etc.

Fish Markets - For fresh fish, you can go to the fish market. It's the Pizza Hut looking building next to the dock by the anchorage (just past the community center). The fish are kept in coolers on lots of ice. It's clean and convenient, although not always open. Watch for the fishing boat to come in.

There is another small fish market accessible by dinghy on a calm day. Take your dinghy past the MNUW harbor and kind of follow the road. You'll see a blue building. It's run by a Yapese man and his wife from California. Fish runs about \$1.50/lb at both markets, regardless of type of fish.

Sloepmouche - July 2012: Provisioning is limited in Yap. During the four weeks we were there, the ship came in once, and within a week all the fresh veggies were gone. They had not had fresh garlic in months, and onions were also scarce. Local produce is available at the YCA grocery, or take the dinghy into the inner lagoon and look for a bright green building at the water's edge about two-thirds the way in on your left side; say hello to Lucy for us. Fresh fish is available at the store at the very right end of the lagoon at \$1.15/ pound for any fish, from small reef fish to larger fish such as Trevally and bonito. Tom at the Visitors' Bureau said most folks go directly to the farms themselves for veggies.

Fellow Traveler - 2011: Provisioning is reasonable. Frozen meats, mixture of US and Asian goods. Asian stuff is often very cheap...but I just can't get use to fish-flavored crackers and potato chips!

There is a local produce shop at the far side of the lagoon (the lagoon is obvious when you get here: in the center of town, with roads going all around). It is at the corner where the two roads join up. Not a huge selection, but some stuff.

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: There are several small supermarkets. You may well need to shop around to find everything you need, particularly if the regular supply ship from Guam has yet to arrive. Check with the harbourmaster to see when this is due as the shops will be much better stocked with fresh produce after this.

9.2.5 Water

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: Limited amounts of drinking water are negotiable from the fish wharf. Communications: The post office is located on the north shore of the inner lagoon, and is well organised. Mail can be sent to General Delivery, Colonia, Yap, FSM, 96943. There is an international telephone office up the hill just above the road junction near the

9.2.6 Boat Parts & Repairs

Savannah - December 2012: For Hardware items: If you turn right at the three way stop in town and walk past the Manta Ray hotel, you will see a Do It Best shop on the left. It's a smaller version of those we've seen on other islands (Am. Samoa, Majuro). If you continue down the road, you will see another store on the right (by the Yamaha store), called the PBC (I don't think there's a sign). It contains everything you can think of...electronics, fishing gear, school supplies, small amount of food/toiletries, bicycles, pool tables, deep freezes, etc...everything.

On the other side of the bridge crossing the lagoon is another local hardware store. It was slightly pricier but again, had different things. It's just past the Fuel Farm.

Hauling out here is possible. There is a rail car that is lowered in the water and can haul up to 50 tons (double check this as it's been downgraded a few times due to the condition of the cables). We hauled out our catamaran and painted the bottom. We were too wide so we went up sideways. They told us they had hauled out 4 monohulls in the past but we didn't see any blocks for it. It took a bit of engineering on our part to get Savannah pulled out but they were very helpful in making any changes to the cart we needed. We did our own work, but it's quite possible you could pay the local workers to do it for you (although it might take longer....lots of beetlenut breaks).

We were charged \$500 out/in the water. We were charged \$150 for two days use of a pressure washer (their guy did the washing), for a total of \$650. We wanted to be dropped back in the water on a Saturday, which was a non working day. They showed up at 7:30 a.m. with no additional charge.

Aside from the worry of the unknown, we had a very pleasant experience and were glad we could save the money here and do our own work.

Two Oceans (from Noonsite) - 2011: A very good refrigeration technician is called Arbin, tel. 9508600.

Fellow Traveler - 2011: Two big US style hardware stores in town, one Napa Autoparts. All with reasonable selection.

You can do an emergency haul out on the marine railway here in Yap....they have a fee structure for yachts. I can not imagine someone doing a routine haul here, as so little is available, but who knows?

RCC Pilotage Foundation - Nov 2008: Several reasonably stocked hardware stores are available.

9.2.7 Laundry

Savannah - December 2012: There are many laundry mats on the island, but I found two that I used the most. The most convenient is in the same shopping center as customs, YCA, and the ATM. It has four washing machines (\$1/load) and three dryers (\$1.25). If I went early, I found it to be empty, but it filled up quickly. The dryers were very slow and I only used this one if I was being lazy. The better (yet slightly more expensive and further away) laundry mat was across from Do It Best and next to the PBC. It had the industrial strength machines that while more expensive (\$2.50/wash), only took 22 minutes and the dryers took half that long. You pay by the quarter - \$.25/2 minutes – I found that I dried an entire load of clothes in about 14 minutes...worth the extra money to me. The washers were not bigger, but the dryers were. Even if it was crowded, the turnover was quick due to the better machines.

9.2.8 Medical

9.2.9 Getting Around

9.3 Communications

9.3.1 Telephones & Cell Phones

9.3.2 Internet Access

Changing Spots – Feb 2016: We found 3 restaurant/ bars with free internet, which at times can be fairly fast. One of our favorites, the Oasis, does not. BTW, every time I go to a new restaurant, I ask if they have Wifi, even if I know they don't.

If you like beer, a must-do visit is to the Manta Ray Bay Resort, ship restaurant. A European brewmaster makes 2 kinds of beer on premises. Happy hour, at 1630, is loudly announced by the firing of a cannon. And they have free Wifi.

Soggy Paws - May 2014: There is good FSMTC public wifi available all over Colonia, using the Telecards you can buy at any store. It is 8 cents per megabyte. It gets REALLY slow in the afternoons, but early morning (before 7am) isn't too bad.

Frequently, the wifi signal will be good, and you connected to a hotspot, but you cannot get the login screen to come up, so you can log into your account and access the wifi. If this happens (and it's usually on a weekend when it does), call or send a text message to Chris at 950-1226. He is the ONLY guy on island who can fix this problem. Once you get Chris's attention, he reboots something and it works again within a few minutes.

Sloepmouche - July 2012: You have access to paid Wi-Fi access on your boat with the local phone company cards. A good alternative is to meet Jeffrey, the hotel manager of the Yap

Pacific Dive Resort, and introduce yourself. He welcomes cruisers to use the pool, facilities and free Wi-Fi if you scuba with their dive center or take meals and drinks.

Fellow Traveler 2011: Harbor has wifi: buy cards from the Telecom office in town for usage by mb. Kind of expensive, speed varies, depending on time of day. Don't try downloading huge files.

9.3.3 Mail

Changing Spots – Feb 2016: The post office is an easy walk, and they said they would hold packages for up to a month. Like all USPS shipping to the region, only use priority mail, or flat rate, and make sure you have a tracking number. Express mail is often no faster, but always more expensive.

Your name
S/V Vessel name, vessel in transit
General delivery
Colonia, Yap, FM 96943 USA
(Micronesia)

Sloepmouche - July 2013: The U.S. Post Office can be accessed by dinghy by going under the bridge into the inner lagoon. Enjoy domestic rates (as you can in the Marshall Islands and Palau).

9.4 Things to See and Do

9.4.1 Restaurants & Bars

Sloepmouche - July 2013: The Marina Restaurant is next to check-in and the food (Filipino chef) was good and prices reasonable. You are right in town, with easy walking distance to the most modern grocery and small shops.

Savannah - December 2012: *Yap Pacific Dive Resort* has fairly good food for lunch and dinner, albeit the priciest we saw. They have burgers, sandwiches, sashimi, stir fry, etc. and a full bar.

Manta Ray Hotel has the big ship with a restaurant and bar. Both serve off the same menu so it doesn't matter where you sit. They have several different ways of serving fish (fried, tacos, etc.), burgers, and pizza as well as a full bar. We found happy hour to be fun, but preferred to eat somewhere else.

Marina Restaurant – located right at the dock where you park your dinghy, very good and relatively inexpensive food (compared to the hotels). They serve salads, pizza, burgers, and local food. We couldn't ever figure out their hours, but there were days when they were open for both lunch and dinner.

Oasis – located beside O'Keef's bar and grill (which is actually just a bar) and across from the Manta Ray hotel. The food here was excellent and also inexpensive. The service was great in as much as they seemed to respond quickly to requests. They serve mostly Asian cuisine and lots of it for the \$\$\$. By far the best food on the island.

Fellow Traveler - 2011: One recommendation for eating out: Oasis Restaurant (and the affiliated bar, O'Keefe's). they are located across the street from the Manta Ray resort, right in town. Excellent food, \$5 for lunch, 10 for dinner on average, not including drinks.

9.4.2 Diving & Snorkeling

Changing Spots – Jan 2016: On the other side of the island is a Manta Ray cleaning station, and all the Mantas have names. If you are a diver, sign up for a Manta dive. If not, or you are on a budget, take your dinghy, and snorkel.

Unless you want too much adventure, (like we did, at low tide), go at a fairly high tide. I would recommend having 2 dinghies, or at least a VHF radio - it is a long trip. If you work it right, ride the tide there, and after high tide, ride it back. There is a natural cleft between islands, in which the Japanese dug a narrow, sometimes navigable, trench.

There were 2 dive boats at the Manta site when we arrived, and we didn't know what to expect. They pay the property owners a fee for the right to dive there. We did a dinghy drift snorkel, trying to stay out of their way. The dive boat captain called us over (fortunately with a smile), and offered to tie our dinghies to his boat, and told us how to approach the Mantas. It didn't matter that the water was murky, the Mantas were plentiful, curious, and close. We declined his offer to check out the shark site. It was just outside the lagoon, in clear water. They feed the sharks there, so they are used to being fed at the sound of an engine.

Lorelei - March 2014: We dove the south end of the reef (Yap Caverns & Lionfish Wall) on our first day. The diving by our standards was average and we wouldn't be in a hurry to dive on the outside reef again.

The next outing we went on a double Manta dive. It was amazing. There were many mantas - up to 10 sometimes - swooping around us. As the cleaning station is in 5m/15feet we spent 2 hours on each dive underwater. The visibility is a bit murky as it is in the lagoon but it doesn't really matter - try to time your dives on an incoming tide to make it as clear as possible. The mantas came very close - sometimes just missing us as they swam overhead. The mantas are not always there - they come and go so some patience is required. On our second visit to the mantas they were there almost all of the time.

The best days to dive the mantas and mandarin fish is Tuesday & Saturday as these are the guest change over days and divers cannot dive due to their flights out. If you are lucky - as we were - you might be the only divers.

We also dove Rainbow Reef which is where the Mandarin fish live. This is a dusk into night dive and we saw 2 dozen mandarin fish and were lucky enough to see their courting dance and mating. Well worth the effort.

We dove with Keony from **Beyond the Reef** who is located near the ESA Hotel. Phone 350-3483. This is a local operator and their boat carries 4 divers only. They picked us up and dropped us off at the yacht. Double dive cost was \$99 - if you want to do a few dives you may be able to negotiate the price. Keony was a fun guy who didn't impose any bottom time limitations on us.

All reefs in Yap are privately owned so it is a bit of a hassle to dive on your own as you need to find out from whom to ask permission. CAUTION:at both of the manta sites a diving fee must

be paid and if you don't pay the landowner has the right to confiscate your boat which they may do while you are underwater diving...not nice !!!

In summary the mantas & mandarin fish are amazing and worth the trip to Yap to see.

Sloepmouche - July 2013: We took ten dives with **Yap Pacific Dive Resort** and found the whole crew very friendly and professional. From your boat, you can go by dinghy under the bridge to their dive center located just 300 yards away. We really recommend the shark-feeding dive; plenty of action there. If you want to see the famous Yap mantas the best times are between January and April when they mate, as during the rest of the year you won't see as many or (in July) you might not even see any. The tiny exotic Mandarin Fish is, however, guaranteed to be seen at a special site on a sunset dive (and 80% chance to see mating activity, according to Dieter, the Dive Center manager).

There is also a small local dive center, Nature's Way, next to the Marina Bar & Restaurant, run by Su, a cute, but unusually outspoken, Japanese lady who let us tie our dinghy to her floating pontoon.

One major impediment for any visitors interested in walking around or snorkeling on their own is that the Yapese are very serious about land and lagoon water ownership, and advance permissions and fees are often requested. Going without a local guide is not so easy.

The dive centers pay substantial fees to the landowners, so it's not feasible to go with your own dinghy. One thing you can do is a dinghy trip in the inner lagoon and out to the NW reef area or the NE side. It was interesting to go through the German (aka President's) Channel under a bridge. You'll see a large piece of stone money with Japanese engraved letters and a local-style bamboo structure on stilts. Go with at least a half tide that's rising and be prepared to get out of the way if you are there near the time the dive boats go out and come back at 20kt through the narrow channels. Saturday is a safe day, as most dive shops take that day off.

Savannah - December 2012: All of the hotels provide dive services and will pick you up at your boat. Ask for the local price and make sure you understand if it's for one tank or two. We had a mix up when we went to pay at the Manta Ray resort that left a bad taste in our mouth.

You can dive by yourself in some places in the channel, but the other areas are "owned" by the people here. They own both the land and the waterways. The hotels pay a fee to take people to dive there, which is why you won't have a problem going with them. To find the dive sites in the channel, go to www.mantaray.com and click on their "dive sites" link. They have a good description of each as well as a map to give you a general idea where to look. There are some good macro spots ("Slow and Easy") as well as two wrecks in the channel.

Fellow Traveler - 2011: I snorkeled out on the reef towards the entrance into the harbor, and it was OK. Nothing spectacular. Divers are reporting great diving, and much of it would be accessible via fast dinghy through the channel between the islands to the NW side of the island/lagoon, or go with one of the many shops.

Undercurrents Website - Dive Trip 2005: Dave Vecella, a gentle giant of a man, started **Beyond the Reef** thirteen years ago. While his dive shop had a slightly disheveled look, his rental gear was in good condition, aluminum 80's were pumped to 3000psi, there was a secure gear storage locker and separate rinse tanks for cameras. His three 22ft twin engine speedboats are a center console design with Bimini tops, dry storage, cell phone, first aid and

oxygen kits and complimentary rain coats for the passengers. He rolls out with no more than four passengers and a crew of two. His staff let competent divers follow their computers for hours + dives, and standout dive guides, like Gordon, could find most of the residents mentioned in their dive briefings. Dave was always chewing a hefty load of betel nut, which may have contributed to his mellow persona.

My first dive at "1:2" (that's one to two, like the macro camera setting) was a gentle drift across shallow coral bommies with Dave showing me a couple of lazy lionfish, a few weird nudibranchs, a flatworm or two, mating pairs of pipefish, schooling anthias, beautiful butterflyfish, opal sweepers, and vampire triggerfish. I asked to see a brilliant Mandarin fish, so after a brief stop at the dive shop, Dave sent the two of us out at sunset with a couple of his crew to the middle of the bay and Rainbow Reef. In finger coral in less than 30ft. of water, little Mandarin fish pass their days in relative protection. At sunset they sit on the coral, fluttering their pectoral fins in a bawdy display. The trick is to spot one and follow it at a discreet distance as it maneuvers hither and yon around the coral until it stumbles across a female. They sort of nuzzle each other and flash their fins, often taking several minutes to get in the mood. The actual spawning was over quickly, and the milky slurry of gametes was quickly feasted upon by other residents of the reef, hopefully leaving a few eggs to hatch.

The next morning Pete and I and two new arrivals from Norway headed out on the two-tank trip to **Manta Ridge**. Cruising a scenic cut through the mangroves, we arrived at M'il Channel and joined three boats from Manta Divers and a fancy new boat from Traders' Ridge. Long story short: all the boats got skunked! Lying on the sandy bottom in the 82F water, we stared into the 30-ft. vis. waiting for a manta. A single whitetip shark resting in a sand channel was the most noteworthy sighting. After our surface interval, some boats went in search of better diving elsewhere; however, the four of us took a second shot. The mantas didn't come.

For my final day with Dave, I asked him to take me to the southern tip of the island, and despite there being no other divers, he sent me with a three-man crew. During my two hour-long dives, we sailed along both Gilman and Lionfish walls as well as cutting in and out the interesting formations of Yap Caverns. While these dives are considered some of the best Yap has to offer, there was a blandness about the coral wall, a surprising lack of color and texture. There weren't many whips, sponges, soft coral, or fans. Rubble in the flats seemed to indicate major storm damage. While there was always something to look at -- a couple of bumphead parrotfish here, a whitetip reef shark there -- we didn't find any knock-your-socks-off schools of fish, nor turtles, rays, or other pelagics.

Manta Ray Bay Hotel. Founded in 1986 by mustachioed Bill Acker, this venerable dive resort was deep into major construction during my four-day stay: a new seawall, free form outdoor pools, new guest rooms above the dive shop. The shop was well organized and the staff efficient. The hotel seemed freshly painted, all utilities worked flawlessly. The rooms were spacious and furnished with hand-carved beds from Bali, and even a color TV (although there were no longer any stations on the air). But excellence has a price. Food and drink at Manta Ray Bay was twice as much as at the Pathways.

Their seven dive boats were similar to Beyond the Reef's, and ranged between 21 and 38 feet in length. They had a well-stocked dive shop, could rent or repair most gear, pumped Nitrox at \$10 a tank, offered a full range of diver certifications, and booked cultural tours. Somehow, it seemed like cook book operation. Taking out groups of eight to ten divers, they were likely to

have two or three boats headed out to Manta Ridge every morning. Third dives were scheduled at “1:2” site each afternoon. One diver who on a week long three-dive-a-day package loudly complained when he was taken there three days in a row. I paid extra for the evening Mandarin fish dive and skipped “1:2.”

The next morning we hit **Mi’il Channel** along with the flotilla and struck paydirt when four mantas took turns settling down on the cleaning station. The mantas were open-mouthed with their gills flared wide while divers snuck up toward the coral mound to get into the prime photographer’s spot, then retreated to let the next shutterbug have a chance. Sticking around for a second try, we were rewarded by deteriorating vis. and one short manta encounter.

On my third diving day with **Yap Divers**, I asked them to take me to the best stuff they’ve got and we headed back to Yap Caverns, Lionfish, and Gilman Walls.

Making Yap a single destination on a Micronesian journey would be waste. Diving is sometimes good, but not great. Make it a 2-4 day side trip but don’t expect mantas right away, every day. They’re not guaranteed and spending a lot of time in M’il Channel without mantas is no fun. Although they’ve got nice walls and good drift dives, they’re not comparable to Palau. All dive shops share the same few sites and do a decent job. If I were to go back — a long shot — I’d dive with Dave at Pathways.

9.4.3 Land Touring

Sloepmouche - July 2013: A short island tour by car will give you a chance to see the famous stone money “banks” and traditional boat and men’s houses. You can see some of these in town so don’t worry if you can’t drive around. There are two cultural villages that put on a three-hour presentation on Tuesday and Saturday if there are enough sign-ups (see hotels or the Visitors’ Bureau).

Yap doesn’t have as many land attractions and activities, so you probably won’t be tempted to overstay like yachts do in Kosrae and Pohnpei. The good thing is that you will be sooner on your way to Palau or the Philippines.

9.4.4 Hiking

Savannah - December 2012: We found several trails that were nice, medium level hikes (no climbing but some good hills).

Tamilyog Trail – The map from the visitor’s bureau shows this trail clearly. You can find the entrance easily on the road towards the airport. It’s directly after the large concrete wall with Welcome to Yap painted on it. It’s supposedly a 3 mile hike and you would need to arrange for someone to pick you up on the other side. We had a cab drop us off at the end (most cab drivers know where it is) and hiked backwards. We did this twice and never actually came out at the entrance, although we did have a good time. At one point we followed the river down and came out in a backyard.

There is a second trail that goes up to the phone tower across from the MNUW. Go to the back of the parking lot by the store with the bright blue roof. There is a nice, large stone staircase. Follow the stone path until you reach a fork. Take the right fork and follow it up until you reach the end of the stone path. The dirt path will curve up to the left and reach a dirt road. Take a

right on the road and follow all the way up to the towers for some fantastic views. This takes about 30-45 min depending on how leisurely you go.

Right before you reach the tower there is a small path that goes to the left off the road. If you take that you will find an old Japanese gun down the path a ways. There are many offshoots of this path and the adventurous will be rewarded with a few pill boxes and bunkers. We did not go to the end of the path, but imagine it probably comes out on a road somewhere on the other side as it looked well worn.

For a shorter walk, you can take the left stone path (at the fork) at the blue roof building, you will come out on a driveway. Walk to the right to the road. Take the road to the right just a few steps and you'll see some stone steps across the street going down. This is a very nice downhill path that comes out on the lagoon road.

9.4.5 Library

Savannah - December 2012: You can see the library from the anchorage. You will see a pavilion where the kids play basketball – this is the community center. Attached to that is the library. They will let you check out books (2 weeks) but all books are donations, so they appreciate anything you might be able to give them. In the summer, they have children's stories.

10 Atolls and Islands between Yap and Palau

10.1.1 Ngulu Atoll (08-26N / 137-29E)

Downtime - May 2013: As we approached Ngulu (from Yap), I got on the radio and began hailing the island to say hello. A while later we were greeted by George and his son the caretakers of this deserted piece of island paradise.

They came out in their skiff and came aboard for a cup of coffee and began telling us the story of these islands. Apparently some 30 years ago the Chief decided to move the entire population to Yap and abandon the outer island life? Now the village is a ghost town with the exception of George and his family to take care of things. George also monitors illegal fishing of the atoll with a radar system that is perched on top of an 80 foot tall radio tower.

Daria asked for a few coconut crabs and an hour later we had 4 huge crabs on the back of the boat! We traded him for a few Downtime Tee shirts and what ever else he was lacking on the island. Then George gave us permission to dive anywhere we wanted and to also come visit him ashore later.

In the morning the winds were calm and we went for a snorkle along the southern reef and saw a very healthy and lively reef system. We should have taken our spear gun because this was the first time we saw so many large groupers and snappers of harvestable size. Oh well I hope they breed and make tons of babies!

The only downside to this beautiful atoll was the fact that the anchorage was exposed and the holding was poor. In a few months the winds would change direction but that did not help our situation out today. I would have loved to stay a few more days diving but at this time of the

year the winds begin to change and you must pick your passages with them or find yourself motoring.

We went ashore and thanked George and his family for everything and he gave us a huge bunch of bananas and his wife came out of the garden with a nice pumpkin that was big enough to feed us for weeks! Also she made very beautiful lei's for us, our last flowers in Pacific!

That afternoon we set sail with Ngulu fading on the horizon. As I sat and recounted all the amazing experiences we had in these beautiful island of Micronesia I wondered what all of our new found friends were doing on their own little parts of paradise? It was an amazing experience and the highlight of our trip, so many beautiful people living in a beautiful environment sustaining a lifestyle that has been passed down for generations.

Scott Leis - March 2012: Ngulu is located at 08°27 09.25N, 137° 29 14.89E. Ngulu is a large atoll but only one of the islands is populated. Very few people live here, but those that do speak Yapese and can also possibly speak some English. The water and reef here are part of a Marine Protected Area (MPA) and violators will be held to local and legal punishments.

Swingin' on a Star - March 2009 - Stop in Ngulu on passage from Yap to Palau: We left the harbor in Yap around 7AM after stowing the dink and getting everything ready to go.

The weather was great at the onset of the day, but it got more and more squally as the day went on. We only got a brief shower toward the end of our trip but I could tell things were deteriorating.

As we closed on Ngulu we hailed Whistler a few times, hoping they would have done the work of sussing out the best anchorage in the 10 plus mile long atoll. No response. So we decided to try the north islands. They look to have a little better coverage from the north swell and NE wind. The big question was, would there be anywhere to anchor.

[P.S. We met a boat called Lorax in Palau that anchored in a small reef anchorage in the south where the 20 some locals live. It sounded like it may have been a tad better but not much.]

I had tried to corner various folks who had been to Ngulu to get recommendations while in Yap. When the rubber met the road, no one had really anchored anywhere, or if they had they were just a passenger and didn't remember where.

We came in on **Mesran Island** through a cut in the outer submerged reef charted at 130 feet. The skinniest bit was supposed to be 40 feet but we never saw less than 60. At Mesran we found decent protection in the SW corner but the bottom was 125 almost all the way up to the shore. After looking around a bit we found a place we could have hooked up in 90 feet. Hoping to upgrade, and to beat the big nasty squall coming in, we ran up to the next island, thoughtfully called North Island on the chart.

North Island was not too much better. Maybe a little more bump in the anchorage but we found a spot at 80 feet to anchor and took it. No sooner were we set with 300 feet of chain out than a big 30 knot squall hit. Whew.

We thought about checking out the little sandy island one more up. It looks like it might have better reef coverage from the waves and possibly a better (shallower) bottom, but once set it is hard to relocate after a long day out (and with rain coming left and right).

Anchorage position (I think) from Sailblogs: 8-33.5'N / 137-33.8'E. This doesn't plot on the chart right, but who knows where the atoll really is??

So here we are at lovely North Island. As we settled in for a nice pasta dinner, a la Hideko, we saw a fricus in the water near the reef. It was a turtle. No it was two turtles. In fact it was two turtles mating. Wow, never thought I'd see that. A lot of splashing goes on, let me tell you.

Next day: Our Ngulu anchorage was not the best last night. Like so many reef protected anchorages, it was good at low tide and not good at high tide. Coral never grows past the low tide level, so, unless you have some affect raising the reef over time, high tide sends several feet of green water over the reef in most places. We had a good 4 feet washing in on us last night. Not directly of course, but the island was small and round, allowing a lot of wrap around.

The setting was beautiful but without a nice anchorage we decided not to stay to explore more. We had all been reading up on Palau and were pretty excited to see it as soon as possible. We raised anchor around 10AM and headed across the lagoon.

Ngulu is about 15nm north to south. Our chart was not bad but it showed a lot of shoals and even some small islands that didn't exist. Our track through the interior of the lagoon was free of hazards. We saw two very conspicuous wrecks on the barrier reef, both good radar targets, high and dry, neither charted.

We exited in the southwest corner of the atoll in a wide opening with charted depth of 60 feet or so. It was even deeper than charted and very easy to navigate by eyeball. On the exit the sounder went from a steady 125 feet to no bottom instantly. Atoll drop offs are always impressive.

Wiikirri – March 2007: Exhausted from days of beating into a firm North Easterly trade combined with a solid West setting Philippine Sea current, large Ngulu Atoll with it's handful of tiny scattered islands, presented a welcome relief.

Our arrival coincided with the departure of a Yap state supply ship's monthly visit and over the VHF radio we heard; "sailing ship" and "look west" mentioned by the ship's guttural captain amongst an assortment of unrecognisable vocabulary.

Moments later a large motor boat sped out from shore towards us. Still open to the sea and the ocean swell a man near the front of the motor boat stood up yelling instructions to the motor operator.

"He's going to jump," we thought. Seconds later a man landed on our boat with all the grace of a cat tossed from a speeding utility.

"Chief Mike"! This vivacious character was full of rapture to greet us, but with great sadness also to bid us farewell as he was to return to Yap for the council of Chiefs meeting on the now impatiently waiting supply ship.

We've seen many results of betal nut but none as impressive as the Mike's blood red teeth. Somehow, somewhere the myth has spread that the darker your teeth the stronger they are. This we cannot confirm only to add that talking with these souls is an unforgettable visual experience.

As the chief departed he pointed excitedly at a man whom appeared to be sporting a pair of pantaloons wrapped around his head - "George, he'll look after you."

He sped off to the ship as our fishing reel sped off it's spool. Fifteen minutes later a nice dogtooth tuna was aboard in time for dinner.

Anchoring nearby an uninhabited island we sat in awe of just how magnificent this mid ocean jewel surrounding us was. The range of colour from it's azure water, curling reef and lush island vegetation swaying above sun bleached sand was such an antithesis to our earlier circumstances.

Soon after the departure of the trading ship George, with son Fabian, arrived to check everything was OK. Now George had the head thingy happening but Fabian paraded our first encounter with deshabillíé, the widely used Yapese loin cloth. From the front it could have passed for a poorly wrapped towel but from the back it resembled a large piece of coloured toilet paper yet to be dealt with.

The following day after a good nights rest, George returned again to check on us but this time with many crayfish, drinking coconuts and to present us with our first (of many) Micronesian lae's. He invited us back to the main island, not much larger than a football field, here we were greeted by two young ever smiling decorous girls presenting us with more beautiful lae's and a tour around their island. Returning to the main village, beneath the high pitched roof its pebai (meeting house), everyone sprawled out over a coconut frond mat to story with the rest of the islands inhabitants.

George explained that there was now only ten people living the traditional way of life at Ngulu as others were lured away by the bright lights, cigarettes and tinned fish.

As a result of Ngulu's dwindling population the school's funding was withdrawn forcing its closure. The remaining children are now taught by relatives.

The Yap and US government provide all the outer islands with communication equipment which keeps them informed of news from the capital, of potential typhoons, and for them to inform the authorities of illegal fishing.

The island people live a simple existence, yet their generosity never ceases to astound us. With so many flowers, fruits and seafood brought out to us, we felt somewhat ashamed of our simple gifts for them, despite the obvious delight it brought.

The night before departing a true traditional meal of turtle eggs was provided in a hand woven organic coconut basket. Some what reluctant, but happy to try one for the sake of diplomatic relations, the basket, instead of being a sample pack contained an entire turtle's nest of eggs. George waited for us to consume some (and waited and waited some more), we're not sure of the cooking method but the sensation was somewhere between a mouthful of seawater, frog eggs and partially cooked scrambled eggs. George answered our contorted faces by saying "yes, I don't care for them either"

We had some rain roll through last night and in the morning but once out on the ocean the weather was lovely.

11 Palau

Sloepmouche (from SSCA Bulletin Aug 2015) – Feb 2015 – How to Avoid Disappointment in Palau: One of the important benefits of the SSCA *Bulletin* is to give folks a good idea of what to expect in destinations they are considering visiting. Knowing in advance the positive and negative things gives us the choice to skip a destination altogether or to decide that the positive sides are worth visiting the place. At the very least, we can avoid a nasty surprise. Forewarned is forearmed.

During our three-month visit to Palau, we met several visiting cruisers who were more than happy to leave for other cruising destinations at the end of just a few weeks. As always, we have to take any comments with a grain of salt and realize that we all perceive things differently. This is the reason we appreciate best the Letters that give a maximum of facts and leave interpretation to the readers. This is what we try to do in our Letters and with this in mind, we'll tell you now our own experience in Palau (*Ed Note: Their detailed notes have been moved in to appropriate sections below*).

Try to get a copy of the *Palau Cruising Guide* (by Randy and Hideko, cruisers like us), before your arrival so you have all of the navigation information to enter the outside reefs and proceed safely into the harbor. Their guide is very well written and quite detailed about cruising the Rock Islands and the other anchorages anywhere around Palau.

In conclusion, did we enjoy our three-month stay? Yes, because we focused on the good sides. Would we go back? No, because there are many other cruising destinations where cruisers are much more welcome, with better activities to enjoy and better prices. We personally think that Raja Ampat in nearby Indonesia offers better diving at half the cost and less nickel-and-diming fees by the local bureaucracy (especially for non-U.S. boats and crew). Wayag Islands, in Raja Ampat, are completely unspoiled by mass tourism like here and cruisers can enjoy that area much better. FSM offers a free and easy way to get a cruising permit of three-months.

Palau is in uproar now at the invasion of cheap Chinese tourists coming in on pre-paid tours and spending less money with local business than the Japanese, Korean, U.S. and EU tourists they normally get. Since the number of hotel rooms is limited and the ecologic impact could be bad, the tendency is to start to emulate French Polynesia and cater to a smaller number of tourists ready to pay premium price for the privilege to visit. So if you sail by Palau consider all the above to make the choice to stop here or not without being upset or disappointed! The bureaucracy in Palau is invasive, slow and paralyzing. Even private businesses seem to vibrate at the same low frequency!

The one mega-positive thing about Palau is their Recycling Center. With help from Japan, they put in facilities that recycle bottles, aluminum and tin cans, PET beverage containers, Mylar and tetrapak cartons, and best of all, all kinds of plastic, like wrappers, bags, milk cartons, bottle caps, cosmetic, soap, and petroleum oil containers and more. All of this otherwise landfill-choking junk is turned back into oil and fuel with a special machine from Japan! The process is 70% efficient; 30% powers the machine and 70% is surplus fuel to be used for cars or other power. We were so excited to hear this. All island nations need this technology and this kind of recycling program. Also exciting is that they compost paper, cardboard and food garbage from restaurants, and offer compost to the public for gardening! Kudos to Palau for that!

11.1 Approach, Arrival and Formalities

There are downloadable Google Earth charts for Palau, located here:

<http://svsoggypaws.com/gecharts/>

Note that all these charts are made by hand by amateurs. Do not trust them without first verifying that they are accurate.

Sloepmouche – 2015: We arrived in Koror, from Indonesia/Helen Reef, during regular business hours, thus avoiding overtime fees, and docked at the commercial dock. There's no choice in the matter as all officials will come separately and board your vessel for their inspection. It took us over three hours to finally clear in with the last officials (Immigration) but the weather was fine and we did not mind, using the time to tidy up our boat there before motoring to Sam's Tour anchorage, just around the corner. Cost was \$20 to tie to the dock (as the dock is privately owned—no difference in the fee if someone helps you handle your lines or not). You will get a receipt. Plus the government charges a \$50 water tax. U.S. citizens get a one-year free visa, non-U.S. citizen get one month free, then pay up to two one-month extensions at \$50 each. After that, non-U.S. citizens must leave the country. If your vessel is not U.S.-flagged, then you also pay \$50/per month. When you leave you will also have to pay a departure tax of \$50/person. These fees for non-U.S. citizens add up and if it is any consolation, they tax incoming tourists as much (except they don't have a boat so they will pay an expensive hotel instead).

Several boats stopped here to avoid forming typhoons in the vicinity and they all had to pay overtime to the officials—and two boats together will not be able to share the overtime. Try to time your arrival during normal business hours to avoid the extra charge. We heard that the current president of Palau is raising all sorts of fees to balance the government budget, and visiting yachts are once again targeted for increases. Fees go up and down as decades pass by—when many visitors come, fees are increased and when visitors shun the place, then fees are lowered.

When you arrive at Sam's Tours you can pick the welcome mooring close to the dive center (marked with "RBYC"). Later you can rent a Royal Belau Yacht Club mooring for \$2/day or \$50/month. It's a good idea to email your arrival details, at least a few days before to Sam, at the RBYC so he can inform Port Authorities 24 hours in advance as required. Sam will email you an information package and also inform the officials of your ETA. Sam is the SSCA Cruising Station Host, as well as the Commodore of the RBYC, and you've probably read several cruiser's reports about Sam's Tours.

Things have changed a bit at Sam's Tours. For a while now, Sam has had managers running Sam's Tours diving business and these have changed the way they do business. The whole organization is a lot more rigid. If you'd like to go diving with them, you'll follow the same procedure that regular tourists follow. There's no more picking you up from your yacht in the Rock Islands and no jumping on the dive boats at the last minute (reservation by 7:30 a.m. at the latest or preferably the evening before).

In order to use the dinghy dock, get fresh water, use the showers, dispose of your garbage, and receive packages using their PO Box, you have to join the yacht club for the yearly membership of \$35. The RBYC is a non-profit association; Sam's Tours is not. Many board members of the

yacht club belong to Sam's Tours, but the relation between the two entities has been uneasy during this transition period.

There are an incredible amount of employees at Sam's Tours and the office and boutique staff are not always clear about, or happy to help with RBYC related things. For instance, on arrival, one yachtie couple filled out the forms and paid fees to join the yacht club at the cashier at the boutique. When they later went back to the boutique to pick up their membership cards, the employee there exasperatedly exclaimed, "Why are you guys always coming here? That's yacht club business!" No one had told the yachties anything different, so they assumed they would pick up their cards where they had applied.

The RBYC has a Port Captain to greet and orient arriving yachties about the club and Sam's. Logically, this is an employee of Sam's since they are there anyway. Up until recently, this person was the Manager of Marina Affairs, a nice guy named Q (yes, as in Bond, James Bond). Q was the one person at Sam's who we felt honestly wanted to help yachties. But the changing relationship often also tripped him up between Sam's and RBYC. There was always confusion about who picked up packages and where they were to be picked up. Sometimes it was at Sam's Tour office and sometimes at the YC office, and often times the responsible person was "not here right now, so come back later, because we don't know anything."

Our personal experience was that the people at Sam's, as well as the long-time resident yachties, were largely indifferent to visiting yachts. Even when greeted nicely and attempts were made to engage people in friendly conversation, there was very little reaction, and often very little reaching out to also be friendly. Only a gal named Charlie, who runs a small charter, and sells organic vegetables, was very friendly and fun.

The RBYC fees might change because Sam would like to commercialize the yacht club so it would be able to offer more and better services (and that will require bigger fees). We're not sure that paying more would improve things, though!

Sam's **anchorage** is well protected and we felt safe when under threat of a coming typhoon (that by luck went far north of us!). There are several protected anchorages nearby, as well as in the Rock Islands. (see Cruising the Rock Islands section for information on cruising permits, etc)

Brickhouse - March 2014: Make sure to send **advance notice of arrival** to:

dot@palaunet.com and imm@palaunet.com , 3 days prior to arrival and then 24 hours prior to arrival. This makes your check in much much quicker and friendlier too. There has been said without advance notice there can be a fine ...

I made a point in my email for NO line handlers. They advised us that 1 line handler is required and it would be just the 20\$ for our yacht. If you don't specify, they may have more people catching lines, and it is 20\$ per person...even 1 handler is really more than most yachts will need, so if there are 2 people there, tell them you only want one of them to catch your lines, not 2. They told us they have eliminated a larger charge now because so many people complained...but better safe than sorry. If you put it in your email, you should be better off too.

You also call Palau Port Control before you enter the channel. The channel is closed from dusk til dawn. Nobody answered the VHF before 7:45am for us. Nobody answered another boat at all who came in on the weekend.

We came in **Malakal Entrance** (east) with little difficulty. It is very well marked.

Just be sure to approach first red marker carefully as it has reefs on both sides of it depending on the angle you come at it from. We went in at 8am on a 50% cloudy day and could see everything very well, and it was 2 hours after low tide. Keep that first red marker to your left going in.

Make sure your engine is working well--the current was very strong against us primarily, but sweeping southerly, across pass too. Pass is very deep, and the reefs are very shallow on each side. Probably about 150 feet wide, roughly. Google Earth AND our Navionics charts were right on, but you don't even need these--the markers are all very dummy proof, although stay in the middle, the reefs come out a small distance from the actual markers.

Even inside the bay, going toward the commercial wharf which is very easy to spot, is straightforward, hazards are well marked...its obvious that Palau wants nobody hitting their reefs anywhere!

We we waved ashore by one man waiting to grab our lines. Have fenders up - its a cement cay, but very calm and wind was blowing us off the dock so no crunches.

Many officials come, and all want their papers and to talk to you at the same time. Have 5 crew lists ready, copies of your boat documentation, passports, and a "ships stores paper" ready, along with a couple of pens to fill out their paperwork and of course clearance from your last port.

Overall I think the whole group was there for 30 minutes of chaos and spilling our cold drinks, paperwork blowing around, and then they were gone.

They didn't seem very impressed with my ships store paper, commenting "that's all you have onboard?", but in the chaos they dropped it. Mine was a one page deal saying alcohol: various opened bottles and 2-3 liters of wine, 2-3 liters of spirits, no cigarettes, no firearms, dry goods which include but are not limited to 5 pounds of rice, 10 pounds of pasta, 1 pound of salt, 2 pounds sugar, and 1 pound of flour, "common refrigerated goods packaged in the US", and 100 cans of meat, vegetables, fruits and other. I wrote "for personal consumption aboard Brick House only" after everything. Also wrote "Various personal items aboard" as well. It was all pretty vague, noncommittal and nonspecific. Didn't bring up the freezer since that seemed covered in the refrigerated goods part. They didn't go inside to look at anything.

With that said they asked if we had any canned meat and I answered honestly - yes - "mostly tuna fish", and they were OK, even with the "mostly" part. They asked for live animals or plants. I didn't take that to mean bananas or carrots that we had since they aren't still plants technically. We had things of that sort in the open - they did not come downstairs. They mostly cared about collecting their fees. 50\$ for customs for a "water tax" fee which I'm still waiting for a promised receipt 24 hours later, 50\$ for immigration which included a cruising permit that was given to us later that day with a receipt with our returned passports (errggh), and 20\$ to the line handler who promptly provided a receipt.

We were issued 1 year here as American citizens who loudly announced that we would like to stay indefinitely (didn't want to get caught up with having to renew something shorter). I think no US or Paluan or FSM citizens get considerably shorter, but I know some foreign boats/citizens have been here for many months already waiting for parts-so it may be expensive

All receipts did show up at the marina along with required paperwork to have onboard, within 48 hours. Keep your receipts - boats have been charged on the way out for things not paid on the entry..so keep your proof.

Coming around to the **yacht basin** was very straight forward. Another cruiser inquired at Sams Tours, and then helped us tie up to a mooring so we could go ashore and sort out which mooring would be our long term mooring. 50\$ a month after a few free days. 35\$ to join the yacht club for 1 year which gives you 10% off at the bar/cafe and tours, free drinkable water, free dinghy tie up, free phone calls to Palau, among other things.

People are very friendly and welcoming at Sam Tours. The water is flat here so far- very good nights sleep. Put up your mosquito nets early. DO snorkel in the mooring field (on the edges) - there are beautiful mandarin fishes by the dock, and there are caves to dive in at the back of the mooring area, among other things. The bird calls at dusk are nothing short of amazing especially if you are on a mooring tucked in at the back of the mooring field...its like something out of the "Jungle Book"!

Brickhouse - March 2014 - Palau Fees for American Registered Vessels: We are an American vessel with American crew. I am not sure at all about other nationalities...but I am pretty sure they are different...

Check in:

Immigration 50\$

Customs (water tax): 50\$

Line Handler : 20\$ for 40 foot boat. Negotiate ahead of time to be sure this will be your fee.

Now you can proceed to the harbor and not pay anything else for the rest of your stay IF you don't go to thr Rock Islands or leave the Harbor.

Fees for visiting the Rock Islands are discussed below in the Cruising the Rock Islands section.

Check out fees Unknown, although I have heard 50\$ per person...save your receipts from checking in or you may pay again going out as at least one boat has.

Regarding going to the other states with our boat or just your person - there is NO list of fees per state - you have to call every state to find out the latest. There is a phone at Sams Tours that you can use to do that. If you rent a car and drive through the states, there is no permit required. A bike is included with this. If you stop at sites that require a fee to get in, again no permit is required. If you stay at hotels along the way no fee is required. Its once you start doing any activity in any of the states that they want their fee. This includes snorkelling, scuba diving, swimming, kayaking, hiking, etc. Biking isn't recognized as an activity - its just transportation like a car apparently, for now.

Downtime - May 2013: We arrived here after our 3 month stay in Micronesia and found it to be one of the easiest countries to clear into. We simply filled out a few questions and sent a e-mail to the port authorities with boat and crew information along with a general time that we would be arriving. We were a few miles out and were hailed on the VHF around that time with our arrival status and were greeted at the customs dock by all the officials and were cleared within the hour.

After clearing in we made our way around to the small anchorage in front of Sam's Tours and spent a few days on a mooring ball, our first in a long time! Sam's is very yacht friendly and even has a small yacht club and will help you find a solution to any thing you might be in need of.

Palau is made up of hundreds of islands and the main island of Koror is only 6 miles across and is home to most of the 17,000 inhabitants. The largest island to the north Babeldaob has only a few thousand living on the 40 mile long island. The islands were formed of uplifted limestone where two of the earths plates buckled upward to form the rocky islands. Just offshore lies the beginning of the Marianas Trench and some of the deepest oceans in the world. The main industry is tourism and the area south of Koror is known as the Rock Islands and home to the many dive sites people from all around the world come to see. The diving is amazing and the variety of fish and coral is the best I have ever seen. Not only the variety but also the size and quantity of fish is something that surprised me. On one dive in Ulong Channel we saw no less than 3000 groupers that were spawning and coveting every available nook and cranny. Other dives had several varieties of sharks, white tip, black tip and grey reef sharks that would get up close and personal with no fear at all of you. Then there are the napoleon fish that must be 50 years old and 4 feet long that swim right up to you and let you pet them and then keep sneaking up behind you during the rest of your dive! If wreck diving is your thing then Palau is your paradise since there are over 20 wrecks to explore within 100 feet of the surface!

Departure: We cleared out of Palau with customs and made our way south toward the lower islands of Palau for the last time this season and entered **German Channel** which is one of only a few opening in the reef on the west side of Palau. This is a really narrow ½ mile long 100 foot wide shallow channel that had been dredged to a mere depth of 6 feet at low tide many years ago. We found ourselves racing the clock to get through the channel before low tide. Our tide charts showing we still had a few hours to go but somehow the water in the channel showed us something very different.

The channel looked REALLY shallow as we slowly nosed our way into the tiny pass and it also looked much, much narrower while driving Downtime through than when I drove SD through several weeks before! At this point there was no turning back or turning at all for that matter since we only had what looked like a few feet clearance on each side! Our only option was to motor straight forward and I pushed the throttles all the way forward to full speed since I have always said: "When in Doubt, Gas it"!

We bumped 5 times on the way out but luckily just on soft sand mounds and there was no damage to the boat, just shinny new bottoms on the keels. We cleared the pass and set the sails, double reefing the main and letting the whole jib fly for what would be the last time.

Savannah - 2013 - Checking Out: Checking out is a breeze. You call transportation (the number is on the yacht club bulletin board at Sam's) and they arrange for Customs and Immigration to come to Sam's and check you out there. They expect you to leave within a few hours of checking out so make sure you plan accordingly.

Zephyr - May 2013: Called the Harbor Control just after 0800 for clearance and entered the main channel about 0845.

Harbor Control sent two men to take in our lines at the dock (\$20.00 please) when we arrived at 0930.

Immigration and Port Authority showed up. \$50.00 for Port Authority. Then came Customs and Quarantine--another \$50.00 to Customs. Finally Sanitation for inspection. All quick in and outs.

Pet Clearance: Our only hiccup was that Quarantine wanted to consider caging up the cats. Apparently there are now requirements and forms that need to be filled in before you arrive if you have pets. Nothing in any of the websites we have been into. The Quarantine man went to see his boss to see what to do. They would let us know their decision at Sam's Tours (where we are moored). We provided rabies certificates and even health certificates from the USDA that we got before we left the US.

We found out later at Sam's that all was well and the cats could stay on board. If not, we were prepared to fuel up and leave for somewhere else.

Moorings: We were all done by 1100 and we were off the dock and heading for the mooring field at Sam's. John off Hawkeye (met in Pohnpei) greeted us and escorted us to a free three day mooring provided by Sam's. Buoys go for \$2.00 a day or \$50 for a month. since we figure to be here for a couple of months, that works out fine with us.

Before - July 2012: After your first three months, you can apply for a resident card for the boat. The one advantage is that you don't have to pay the Rock Island fee and time limit. A couple of US boats have been here for 2+ years.

There is some talk that the government is going to change the resident card requirements and I think the 3 month wait and a Palau drivers license requirement is due to the recent changes.

Within an hour of a fast and efficient official check in we had parted from around \$300.00. And while many cruisers gripe or avoid Palau due to these fees, they are missing out.

Fortunately, we are are benefiting from our US tax contributions. For foreign boats who want more time, most sail to Yap, Philippines or Guam and re enter.

Two Oceans - November 2011: We tied to the commercial warf for check-in and were sent by the company controlling the port (BTT and something) to an office in town to pay for docking. The charge for our 6 tons cat was 36 cents... Then we were asked by them to pay 85.14\$ for line handling! I insisted on talking to the manager and probably succeeded in pointing out the absurdity of charging all vessels the same amount regardless of size, since the lady agreed to take "only" 20\$ for the 2 minutes it took the security guard to take our bow and stern ropes. Some people think one should simply motor away.

Royal Belau YC is hiding northwest of the commercial harbor and is everything they advertise. Follow the shore in that direction and their bay will come into view. We took a mooring at 07 20.329 N 134 27.139 E. Moorings belong to the RBYC and also some private people. Dermott, who is the manager of RBYC says they will help you contact the right owner and get permission to use one at no cost (as far as I understood).

Insouciance - November 2012: The Royal Belau Yacht Club is located at Sam's Tours (07°20'N, 134°36' 58" E). You can contact them on VHF Channel 16 or by phone: + 680-488-4382. The website is <http://rbycpalau.blogspot.com/>

Dues for membership in the Royal Belau Yacht Club are \$25 for an individual membership or \$35 for a family membership per calendar year. Members of the RBYC get use of the following:

- Use of dinghy dock

- Courtesy mail receiving
- Telephone and Fax (fees may apply)
- WiFi and Sam's Tours computer facility access (fees apply)
- Hot showers
- Potable water
- Trash disposal
- Bicycle Rack
- Book swap library
- 10% discount on all food and beverages at the Bottom Time Bar and Grill
- 10% discount on all products in the Sam's Tours Dive shop
- Preferred rates for tours offered by Sam's Tours on a space-available basis
- Participation in yacht club events throughout the year

Sam's Tours and Royal Belau Yacht Club are located on the west side of Malakal Harbor, west of Malakal Island in a small cove that offers good shelter and holding ground for cruising yacht anchorage. Although no channel is shown on charts of the cove, there is a small channel marked with flashing red and green markers. The center of the channel (07°20.25'N, 134°27.02'E) carries a minimum low tide depth of 12'

The anchorage is too small for superyachts which can, however, anchor in Malakal Harbor, just SW of the yacht anchorage.

Navigation and Entry Into Palau (Do not rely on GPS for entry into Palau)

There are definite discrepancies between GPS-derived positions and most charts of Palau, including both paper and electronic charts. The GPS position at the center of the entrance to the East Passage is 07°16.84'N, 134°28.01'E. Watch out for the reef extending seaward from both sides of the channel. Do not cut the corners! The GPS position at the center of the entrance to the West Passage is 07°32.48'N, 134°27.77'E.

This should locate you in line with the range markers. Although these positions have been successfully used by incoming and outgoing vessels, RBYC and Sam's Tours assume no liability for any error in this data. Safe navigation in Palau waters is your responsibility. Be careful and watch for reefs. Koror State Rangers assess steep fines for vessels grounding on coral reefs (\$100 to \$500 and up).

Vessels should enter either passage only during daylight hours and allow plenty of time to arrive at the Commercial Dock well before the government office 4:30 p.m. closing time. Coral reefs and swift currents make all navigation dangerous, especially for newcomers to Palau and particularly after dark.

Arriving Vessels

All vessels must clear in immediately upon arrival at the official port of entry on the east side of Malakal Harbor at the commercial dock. Anchoring before clearing in is prohibited. Arriving

vessels must contact Palau Port Control on VHF Channel 16 before mooring at the commercial dock. GPS position for check-in at the commercial dock is 07°19.84'N, 134°27.48'E.

The government officials require incoming vessels to moor to the commercial dock and will not clear vessels at anchor. Port Control does not monitor the radio until 8 a.m.

Port Control will acknowledge your arrival and inform you that line handlers will be standing by. If you do not want to use the line handlers, you need to inform Port Control that you do not require them. Line handler use is not mandatory (and fees apply, as described under the Fees and Permits section, if you do use them).

Palau Port Control, Division of Transportation: dot@palaunet.com

Office Hours: Mon-Fri from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. This is the same for most government offices. Overtime fees apply to vessels clearing in on weekends, holidays and after hours.

Clearing In - Be prepared for multiple government officials to participate in Vessel Entry Clearance. Officials are generally very courteous and polite and include, but are not limited to, Customs, Immigration, Sanitation, Quarantine, Transportation, Health Department and Public Safety (Police). It is highly recommended to make multiple copies of crew lists, ship's papers, inventory of any weapons and/or ammunition and other commonly-requested papers in advance. Being prepared and organized will smooth clearing in.

Crew Visas: All individuals receive a free 30-day Tourist Visa upon entry.

NOTE: Visitors or crew arriving in Palau by air are required to have a return ticket out of the country (U.S. citizens are exempt from this requirement). If crew will arrive in Palau by air on a one-way ticket and depart by sea, Immigration must be notified in advance so they in turn can advise the airline(s) to permit the passenger(s) to board, otherwise the passenger(s) may be denied boarding on their flight in to Palau. A minimum of 48-hours notice is required and must be done during government business hours.

Customs - A Customs Officer will request the skipper to fill out a declaration form listing items carried such as alcohol, tobacco, cash, firearms, drugs, etc., and he or she may inspect your vessel. Firearms of any sort are not permitted in Palau. Firearms and ammunition on board must be inventoried and turned over to the Bureau of Public Safety (Police) for storage while in Palau. You will find police officers to be courteous and helpful and there is no charge for their services. Prior to departure, call police to have weapons promptly returned. Make a few copies of the weapons and/or ammunition inventory list to speed up the process. Drugs other than common non-prescription medicines must be accompanied by a prescription. Some non-prescription medications may be restricted in Palau.

Prepare an itemized inventory of ships stores for review by Quarantine. Dispose of any organic trash properly before arriving in Palau. Quarantine may confiscate for incineration any organic trash, fresh foodstuffs and any meats of concern to them. An incineration charge of \$35 applies per bag of any confiscated goods. Separate any organic trash (foodstuffs, plants, vegetables, fruits, etc.) from other items such as paper/cardboard/aluminum. All trash should be properly bagged in plastic. An incineration charge of \$35 per bag applies to any confiscated trash. No trash may be off-loaded without approval from the Quarantine Officer.

Make several copies of crew lists (including passport details) and ship's papers before arrival, as most officials will request one or more.

Moorings and Anchoring

Many yachts opt to anchor in the wide basin in front of Sam's Tours (in about 75' average depth). Stay clear of the reef upon entry to the basin. Yacht owners should be prepared to move their vessels in the event of strong SW winds, when the anchorage can become quite rough and untenable.

RBYC hosts one mooring exclusively for the use of incoming yachts. Newly arrived yachts may tie to this mooring, if vacant and preferably requested in advance, for up to a maximum of 48 hours. All other moorings are privately-owned and not free for the taking.

After using the welcome mooring or anchoring in the basin, you may be able to make arrangements to use a private mooring only with the mooring owner's prior permission. Even if allowed to use a mooring, you must be prepared to vacate that mooring immediately upon request, no excuses. This can occur at any time, and most likely when strong west to SW winds develop. Use of any mooring, even if permission has been granted, is at your own risk. You must inspect for yourself any mooring you tie to. Repair or cost of repair of any mooring damaged or broken, regardless of prior condition, is the sole responsibility of the skipper of the yacht on that mooring.

The Royal Belau Yacht Club has just completed a new welcome package with valuable information for yachts visiting Palau. The PDF file is located at the website <http://rbycpalau.blogspot.com/> The web version includes maps and a harbor photo.

Before - July 2012 - Moorings: We are on a mooring, put together by a friend and Richard. Lots of stuff on the bottom to chain to and no cost. The RBYC has a few moorings at around \$60.00/month. Some private moorings available, but generally for short term. As always dive on the mooring.

11.2 Cruisers Services

Carina – February 2016 – Contacting RBYC / Sam's Tours: The two email addresses previously listed elsewhere in the compendium:

rbycpalau@gmail.com

blueinkster@gmail.com

Are no longer monitored. Anya has moved back to the USA with her Palauan partner and has had a baby. She does not seem to be answering emails.

There are two addresses cruisers can try:

rbyc@samstours.com (Dermott gets these and forwards to Sam, commodore. Or, email Sam directly at sam@samstours.com (gets to Sam directly)

Brick House - March 2014: Details on everything available is in a somewhat dated, but very detailed binder at Sam's Tours, in the glass windowed bulletin board near the bar - definitely worth reading.

Palau is probably not for everyone - its a little slice of America here, although talking to the very educated well spoken locals here, there is a lot of culture alive and thriving here too, to discover. Careful - if you are prone to getting stuck somewhere for a while...this is a pretty good place to do that! And if you spend the time, ie 3+ months, it doesn't end up being as expensive as if you

wiz through and are paying to go the supposedly best parts as a tourist. But leaving the boat for a while and coming back doesn't count as 3 months...its what's in your passport that counts.

11.2.1 Money

Soggy Paws - 2014: There is an outside ATM at Bank of Guam and Bank of Hawaii, and an ATM next to the entrance of the WCTC grocery store. Palau uses US Dollars like the rest of Micronesia.

We agree with Savannah that the ATM's are quirky. Here is what we've found:

Bank of Hawaii - Likes out Visa Debit card, but won't accept our Mastercard Debit card from a different bank. We are only getting charged \$.50 for a \$300 withdrawal.

Bank of Guam - I think this accepts both cards. On the Mastercard USAA Debit card, we are being charged \$8 per \$500 transaction (!). It seems we are being charged \$3 from the ATM and another \$5 for some other reason (1% transaction fee?). We haven't tracked it down yet.

Other cruisers report different charges.

My advice, hit both ATM's with whatever cards you have for a standard amount, the first time you are in town, and then check your bank transactions to see which one(s) work best for you.

Most of the stores in town will surcharge you 3% for using a credit card, so it pays to carry cash.

Savannah - 2013: We primarily used two ATMs. The Bank of Hawaii and The Bank of Guam. For some reason our two cards were picky about which ones they liked. Both offer a \$300/transaction limit, but you can do multiple transactions in the same day (depending on your bank's limit). There's a \$3 fee for each transaction at both banks.

The Bank of Hawaii is just before the Payless shopping center on the right of themain drag. Bank of Guam is on the left after Payless and the college.

There are other Asian bank ATMs but we never used them as they were further out of town and just didn't make sense for us.

11.2.2 Diesel and Gasoline

Soggy Paws - May 2014: You can get diesel and gasoline alongside at Sam's Tours. You have to arrange a day in advance with Sam's, for a dock time between 10am and 2pm when all their dive boats are out.

11.2.3 Propane (Cooking Gas)

Brick House - March 2014: Propane is available right near the mooring field (to the left of the yellow hotel). Not sure on the costs, but reportedly reasonable.

11.2.4 Groceries/Provisioning

Sloepmouche – 2015: For local fresh greens and fruits, we ordered directly from Charlie (s/v *Eclipse*, John's wife). She delivers to Sam's, has great organic produce and offers good prices. The two main supermarkets in town have a good selection of foods and general merchandise.

Soggy Paws - May 2014: The only exception to Brick House's comment below is **wine** and hard **liquor**. Liquor is very expensive here, and less expensive in the FSM (probably due to government taxes). I haven't found any boxed wine here, and the cheapest bottled wine is about \$12-14/bottle (we eventually found out that we could buy by the case at about \$10 per bottle). If you plan to spend much time in Palau, you should stock up in FSM.

Beer, on the other hand, is about the same price or cheaper (\$1.05/can-\$1.25/can). If you like good beer, Palau has a "locally brewed" beer that is quite good, and it is available in cans at about \$1.75/can.

Though the local supermarkets have a pretty good regular supply of veggies (compared to Marshalls and FSM), they are the typical imported veggies (ie over-ripe plastic tomatoes, for example, and we have not found any bananas.) **Locally-grown veggies** can be found, not in a market, but by delivery truck. We stumbled on them when they were delivering veggies for the Siren (a big live-aboard charter boat) at Sam's. They told us they deliver throughout Koror 7 days a week. Call them a day ahead of time and arrange for them to stop in at Sam's (get a few boats together to make it worth their while). They have squash, tomatoes, long beans, bananas, papayas, small peppers, corn, cucumbers, and green onions. Also cilantro, mint, and basil. They did say they could bring tomatoes at varying stages of ripeness. Papayas and bananas cost \$.85/lb. We haven't yet priced anything else.

The Farm number is 587-3693, and the guys involved are Tony (Sales) 779-8947, Charlie 779-7787, Jack 779-2369.

Brick House - March 2014: There are 3 big supermarkets each with different things and prices varying. Overall prices are generally good in supermarkets (US prices), and everything is available in one place or the other. I would say this is the best provisioning since Fiji, probably better, and more American things on the shelves- in fact probably every American thing!

Lots of American fruits and veggies at American prices!

Pet owners-they have cat and dog food here, and cat sand too. There is an animal shelter fully stocked if you need to get a pet or get rid of one I suppose.

Only stock enough food in Pohnpei to get you to Palau. Once you are here, selection is very good and cheaper than Pohnpei provisioning. Almost as good as Kwaj pricewise, and definitely more variety.

Downtime - May 2013: Naturally after spending 6 months cruising in small atolls our first things on the list was to go to the market's and restock the boat. We had last seen a "real" grocery store way back in New Caledonia and were just about out of everything! Not to say we did not have our fill of banana's that we did and were amazed they did not even have them in the markets here? What they did have on the shelves in the markets here was a very good selection of fresh fruits and vegetables, something Daria had been craving for weeks!

Much of the produce is flown in and you can sign up for text service that notifies you when the plane lands and then it is first come first serve.

Zephyr - May 2013: We haven't seen stores like these since we left Mexico. Carefor in Tahiti was better than most but what they have here is great.

WCTC and Surangles are stocked to the gills. If you can't find it in one, the other is right across the street. It's not one of those "See it, you better buy it because it will be gone the next time". Fruits and veggies are abundant.

We were clued into a taxi (Norman Yalap) by Tomboy that can take us to a good local fruit and veggie market. For soft drinks, there are no store brands offered (Safeway was big in Pohnpei), only assorted types of coke and pepsi can be found and they run 75 cents per can. No discount for cases. It's food like we haven't seen in years.

Savannah - 2013: If you've come from the east or the south, you will more than likely be overwhelmed with the amount of options here. There are three major grocery stores, each with their own specialty.

Payless (the closest walk) – Hit or miss with veggies, but sometimes has things others don't like brussel sprouts, plums. We've found many good cheeses here – blue cheese, goat cheese, ricotta, fresh mozzarella, brie, etc. (but not all at the sametime, usually). They carry certified Angus Beef and have a butcher. They also have an excellent bakery where you can always find fresh baguettes. If you buy in bulk here (i.e. cases of beer, soda, etc.), they will deliver to Sam's.

Surangles – Usually has the best veggies. They don't sell pork or booze, but has a wide selection of vegetarian items and health foods. They're SDA, so they're closed on Saturday. They have a sign up sheet in the produce area. If you add your cellphone number, they will send you a text when new veggies arrive - really nice perk since all of the restaurants buy from the grocery stores and things can go pretty quickly.

WCTC – across from Surangles – More Asian ingredients, but basically carries everything you need. Good selection of beer, wine and liquor.

Both Surangles and WCTC have a department-like store on the second floor that carries most things you might need or want.

There are several convenient stores not far from Sam's for basic needs when you don't feel like going into town. When the ship has come in, the WCTC convenience store carries a fairly good selection of veggies.

The Mobile station across the causeway sells **ice** and has the best service on the island. There are a few places that sell ice, however most of them run out often. You can drive your dinghy to the Mobile station and they will many times, bring your order out to you. Be wary of their gasoline, however. We filled one can and ended up with water and paint chips in the gas. Best to stick to Sam's for fueling needs.

If you like Mangrove crabs, you can drive up to the crab farm and purchase them individually. They run about \$8.50/lb. After going across the Friendship bridge turn left (opposite the airport)...it's marked on all the tourist maps.

11.2.5 Water

Soggy Paws - May 2014: You can get good water alongside at Sam's Tours. You have to arrange a day in advance with Sam's, for a dock time between 10am and 2pm when all their dive boats are out.

11.2.6 Boat Parts & Repairs

Soggy Paws – June 2014: We have been hearing about the grocery stores here ever since we started reading up on Palau. There are 3 big stores, well stocked with both American and world-wide goods. There is a fairly large Asian contingent in Palau, so lots of small Asian stores as well. Due to the flourishing tourism business, daily flights bring daily replenishment of the veggies. So there seems to always be reasonably fresh-looking broccoli and lettuce on the shelves, and usually some decent tomatoes.

Brick House - March 2014: Ace Hardware is about the same size as Majuro, maybe a little bigger, and not quite as big as Pohnpei, but maybe about the same selection, just in a smaller space. There is also Napa Autoparts and other hardware/autopart stores.

There is one bike shop. Bike tubes 24 and 26 inch are readily available.

Teva and Columbia sandals, Columbia clothes are available although not cheap at all.

Diving and snorkelling equipment available although the cheapest fins we have found are 95\$, so not cheap!

11.2.7 Laundry

Brick House - March 2014: Laundry is about \$3.50 per load, wash, dry and fold, and is right near the mooring field (to the left of the yellow hotel).

Zephyr - May 2013: On Tuesday, we dropped off our laundry at the local laundromat. They do it all for you. It's about \$3.00 per load as long as you provide the soap. A bit more if you don't. For that, they do all the washing and drying and folding and return it to you. Most times, it's same day service but we got there just before noon so we could pick it up yesterday. Our final cost was \$9.00. Tipping is encouraged here so we gave her a \$1.00 tip. She was thrilled.

11.2.8 Medical

Brick House - March 2014: Hospital costs: 40\$ for a doctor visit, 29\$ extra if you go to emergency room. CBC blood test 50\$, other blood tests 10-15\$ each (adds up quickly).

The hospital is very clean (compared to Pohnpei for example), not many facilities- but maybe a few more than Pohnpei), but doctors are a mixed bag - one seemed very good, the other not so great at all (Patrick's heart problem - "relax- its the change of weather"...))

Most of the doctors are Palauan or Philippino.

Before - July 2012: We were able to get all our maintenance drugs (3 months) and care at the hospital from \$17.00 to \$20.00. If the hospital doesn't carry your drug, the doctor will help with a substitute or know one in advance. Guidance helps. If there is any balking, tell them you are leaving on a LONG sea voyage. I only had to resort to that once. In addition all have diabetic clinics. Again our tax dollars at work!!

11.2.9 Getting Around

Sloepmouche – 2015: Surprisingly, there are no public buses here so you walk about 45 minutes, bike, hitchhike or take a taxi (\$3-5 to supermarket).

Soggy Paws – June 2014: "Town" is, unfortunately not in easy walking distance of the anchorage. At high tide you could get there by long dinghy ride, but there are no dinghy dock facilities there. The alternatives are a \$5 taxi ride each way (for up to 4 people), bicycles, or hitch a ride with Sam's on their morning run to pick up divers from the hotels. We have unloaded the folding bikes we bought in Hawaii (for the first time in 3 years!), and have been using them for getting around. Our friends on Carina bought a pair of bikes from another cruiser who was leaving. Jerry on Challenger bought a bike from a local store for about \$150. The rest of the cruisers here have been carpooling with taxis, or occasionally walking. (Usually you only try to walk once, then you take an air-conditioned taxi).

Brickhouse – March 2014: 5\$ to town or back in a taxi per carload. It's hard to just pick up one down from Sam's Tours, so it's recommended you get a few phone numbers. You can tell them they can pick up others along the way that you would like to share the cab expense, they are allowed to stop. We haven't seen it happen, when someone looking for a cab sees people in the back, they don't ask for a ride. Nobody seems to really hail down taxis here except us - maybe everyone just calls them. Taxis cost more everywhere else.

There is a BBI bus that goes between the hotels and restaurants that you can sometimes get at the designated stops. You can pay 7\$ a week for unlimited rides per person. You can sometimes negotiate down to 1\$ per person for a single ride. They only go every 45 minutes or so from about 430pm til about 930pm. They have schedules at the Tourist Authority building and posted at many of the stops too. They don't really come on time though. Nice to get on one that is going out to the Palau Pacific Resort - its a nice pretty ride. You have to get out at a hotel or restaurant - no custom stops. Closest to Yacht Club is the Sea Passion Hotel. Haven't found any other busses that will let you on...

Car rental is expensive although we have not shopped around. Bike purchase is available at Surangels upstairs or Ben Franklin (above WCTC grocery). Bikes run about 200-230\$ for a Huffy or similar. You may or may not be able to sell them when you depart to another cruiser or a local. Lock them up - theft of bikes is common here. There is a bike rack at the yacht club.

Walk to town is long and hot. There are a couple of mini-marts in closer to Sams Tours though for the basics. 30-45 minutes for a slow walker like me in to town. Not hilly though. There are places to eat and have drinks along the way.

Some cruisers report success with thumbing and offering a few dollars for gas.

Some of the yachties who have been here for a while have a car and are always happy to offer rides, and others have had luck hitch-hiking and offering a few dollars for gas.

If you have bikes, break them out - this would be a great place to ride bikes - lots of smooth paved roads with sidewalks which the few bikes around seem to use regularly. NO helmet law, and not very hilly in general. We are considering purchasing new bikes here and will sell when we depart. Lots of 200\$ bikes to choose from - a cheap way to get around considering gas is over 5\$ a gallon, and car rentals not too cheap, and taxis very expensive (5\$ to town, much more beyond that) .

Zephyr - May 2013: Taxis run \$5.00 to go most places. If you make a stop, it adds a dollar to the total. If you are a local, it's just \$3.00. Cruisers that have been here for a while normally pay \$4.00.

11.3 Communications

11.3.1 Telephones & Cell Phones

The international country code for Palau is 680. Phone call to U.S. 011-1-XXX-XXX-XXXX

Sloepmouche – 2015: A SIM card cost \$25 with \$10 airtime (no low rates like Philippines and Indonesia). Competition is trying to come in, so rates might improve when that happens.

With the national phone company you have 3G on your phone (a brand new service in Feb. 2015), but at high prices.

Soggy Paws - May 2014: Based on Brick House's advice, we turned on our unlocked quad-band cell phone with an FSM (Pohnpei) sim card in it, when we were approaching the harbor. In a few minutes we got a text message that said our card was activated, and here is our Palau phone number! All we had to do then was buy a \$10 cell phone 'top up' card at the local store, and we had a phone. Outgoing text messages on my phone didn't go out but we were able to receive incoming text messages OK.

Later we found out how to change the settings on the phone to get outgoing text messages to work.

You have to go into your phone settings, and find the Text Message Configuration screen. I found mine not in the main Settings / Communications Settings menu, but in the Settings menu under the Text Message menu (I think every phone will be different). The full path in my phone was Messaging / Settings / Text Message. On this page, there is a setting for 'Service Center' and it had an FSM number in it (since mine is originally an FSM sim card). Change this number to +6807790000. There is also an email gateway setting that had an FSM phone number in it, that I changed to the same number, but I haven't tried sending any emails from my text msg yet.

Once I did this, the message that I had tried repeatedly to send, but failed, finally went out.

Text Message to U.S. 00-1-XXX-XXX-XXXX

Phone call to U.S. 011-1-XXX-XXX-XXXX

Brickhouse - March 2014: SIM card is 25\$ and includes 10\$ of air time. Turn your phone on with various SIM cards from around the world - you will get an instant text email if your card is compatible and can just be re-programmed with Palau airtime. My FSM one was not.

Your FSM cards are not good here either so use them up before you get here.

Savannah - 2013: In order to get the Sim card, you go to the local telecommunications office, which is on your way into Koror. You'll pass the National Gym on your right and Bank ofGuam on your left. Right after the Bank of Guam shopping center you'll see a green building on your left. This is the telecommunications office.

11.3.2 Internet Access

Sloepmouche – 2015: Internet is expensive, but works OK. You have two options. With the national phone company you have 3G on your phone (a brand new service in Feb. 2015), but at high prices. Now that the speed is better, the rates are no longer based on time but on volume. With Palau Telecom, you get a 7-hour-Wi-Fi card for \$10—less expensive and easy to capture onboard at Sam's Tours moorings if you have a hi-gain Wi-Fi antenna. There's an Internet café

nearby for \$1.50/hr. with good speed. Walk out of Sam's Tours to the main road and turn right, it's just past the Mini Mart. Beware of local SIM cards for your mobile. You do pay to receive calls and you will use up your credit if you forget to turn off your 3G data, as it will keep using Internet data automatically. A SIM card cost \$25 with \$10 airtime (no low rates like Philippines and Indonesia). Competition is trying to come in, so rates might improve when that happens.

Soggy Paws – June 2014: We have great pay-as-you go internet in the anchorage. But the downside is that it's not cheap, and it's very slow. With the booming tourism business here, the internet pipeline is not adequate to accommodate the number of people trying to connect. In the middle of the day, even with a strong wifi signal, you are lucky to get a fairly complex page like Amazon to even complete loading. Forget trying to download ANYTHING bigger than 100Kb.

There seems to be no magic way around the speed issue, except to get up and do your internet business in the middle of the night. For this, the worst internet service we've had since the Marquesas, we pay about \$1.25 per hour (via \$10 for 7 hour scratch-off cards). If you buy your scratch-off cards in bulk (10 at a time), the price comes down to \$8 per 7 hours. Due to the slow speeds, even getting up at 6am to do my surfing, I burned through \$80 in a week, and have contemplated going on a monthly plan at \$175 per month (unlimited time)! This is one reason I haven't been blogging or Facebooking much! Not only is it expensive, everything on the internet takes 2-5 times longer to complete.

I have heard that the Palau government is trying to upgrade their internet trunk line, but I haven't heard any hard dates, so it's probably "not this year". So we are stuck with the situation until we move on to the Philippines in September. I've heard the internet is better and easier there.

Brickhouse - March 2014 (just after arrival): Internet not great. Been here 24 hours and IM usually hooked up by now. I have purchased some cards that dont work, and the library internet is so slow they kick you off after 1 hour and your first page STILL hasnt come up yet! Maybe it will get better with time? Cards seem to run from 1.25-3\$ per hour for internet with some deals lingering around if you have a great antenna. Im still sorting it all out. Its available onshore in various places, havent gotten it on the boat yet but I am determined to get that going in the next few days!

Later... Finally have internet sorted out - that's the longest it has taken me in a while to figure it all out. It seems like everything that doesnt work for others is the only thing that works for me- not sure why that is. Am using the 'PTwireless' and any other PTXXXXXXX connection that is fast sometimes, slow sometimes. \$10 for 7 hours. Buy the card at the yellow 3 story hotel restaurant or hotel lobby, on the other side of the bay from Sam's Tours. Also welcome to sit in resturant and drink delicious \$1.50 coffee and use internet with nice view of bay. Its 192k speed- faster than some other wifis on the island, but certainly not blazing! Was able to get a shaky Skype connection once. I have a good antenna and was able to get in the back of the mooring field well when it was fast enough. Other cruisers are using Sams Tours, ashore, which is 10\$ for 4 hours. I have not been able to make that one work at all- but have only tried from the boat.

Savannah - 2013: In the same office you pay for your propane, you can buy internet cards. They're \$10/7 hours but if you buy 10 cards, you can get a deal for \$80. These same cards are sold at most mini marts as well (but no 10 card deal). Make sure you get the PT Prepaid cards, not the PNCC. PNCC works fine in town, but the signal is terrible from the anchorage.

It's worth noting that the internet is EXTREMELY slow here. With a wifi booster, we can get it on our boat 70% of the time, but it is the worst speed we have ever come across to date. There is free wifi at Necco Marine's Drop Off Bar. Grab lunch, surf the net. Also very slow. You can purchase a 3G card in their dive shop and sometimes it's faster. But once you log in, you must use the entire card within 3 days or you lose the time. These cards can also be purchased at the Palasia Hotel downtown.

Zephyr - May 2013: There really isn't anything like free internet here. Most sell you a card that is good for 5 hours for \$10.00. 2 hours for \$5.00 and it's not blazing fast. We found Palau Telcom that charges \$10.00 for 7 hours. Appears to be the cheapest on the island.

Sam's Tours, where we are is \$10.00 for 5 hours. There are some internet cafes around town but we haven't gotten to them yet.

It may be an island paradise but just not for the internet.

Swingin' on a Star - 2009: The internet here on Palau is painfully slow much of the time. It often takes an entire afternoon to update your computer or book a single airline ticket or pay a couple of bills online. We have recently realized that we have been simply trying to use the limited pipes into and out of Palau at the same time as everyone else. After school things get tough, after work they get unbearable. A rainy Saturday, just forget it. Mornings are by far the fastest time of day if you want to be productive.

11.3.3 Mail

Like the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau has a US Shipping address, so it is possible to use U.S. Priority Mail to somewhat cheaply send stuff from the US to Palau.

It is always a good idea to email ahead and confirm the mailing address, AND let them know you are coming and are sending mail to their mailing address.

Carina 2016: Here is latest best info about mailing U.S. mail to Palau:

Here is the current Royal Belau Yacht Club mailing address:

<your name>
<yacht name> Yacht in Transit
c/o Royal Belau Yacht Club
P.O. Box 6074
Koror, PW
Palau 96940

The current best contact for letting Sam know you have shipped something to RBYC, and/or you are coming to Sam's Tours is sam@samstours.com

Priority Mail usually takes 10-14 days. If, however, your package gets shipped by surface mail, it could take 2-4 months. So MAKE SURE you request Priority Mail. Also, be warned that Amazon now has some kind of Mail Select which may cause mail to go surface vs Priority.

We found also that ordering goods via EBay, much of which comes from Asia, the express mail service used by Asian shipper to ship small electronics is cheap and fast.

Sloepmouche – 2015: The U.S. Post Office works well and at domestic rates. It's a great place to get any mail and online orders from the U.S. If you ship out, you have to use locally-bought

stamps and flat rate boxes do not apply. Mail from the U.S. can take from two weeks to several months. As a RBYC member, you can get mail addressed to and picked up by Sam's Tours.

Kokomo Feb 2014: Before we had mail sent to Palau, I wanted to make sure I had the correct address. So I emailed Sam's Tours and was told, basically, that MAIL can be sent to Sam's Tours, but PACKAGES should be sent to Royal Belau Yacht Club. Both addresses are picked up by the same person, but It is a Customs issue as best I can tell.

Here is the Royal Belau Yacht Club mailing address:

<your name>
<yacht name> Yacht in Transit
c/o Royal Belau Yacht Club
P.O. Box 6074
Koror, PW
96940

11.4 Restaurants

Soggy Paws – August 2016: Our favorite restaurant has ended up being the Carp restaurant. They serve beer for \$2.50 per can. Their normal meals run between \$7 and \$10 but are family-sized portions (DO NOT order one for each person!!). Go with a group and split the orders, and you will have a good cheap meal for about \$3.50 each. Walking distance of Sam's (the side road opposite the convenience store, down the street, take the first left, and go all the way to the very end). Doesn't look like much, but has A/C (somewhat) and is popular with the locals. Has tables for 4, 8, and a big private meeting room that will accommodate about 12.

I liked Kramer's, but Dave doesn't because they allow smoking, and we couldn't find a table where the smoke didn't drift.

Sloepmouche – 2015: – Restaurants tend to be on the expensive side in the tourist areas, but some hidden-away places, frequented by locals, offer great value. We enjoyed several meals at Emamele, right behind WCTC supermarket.

Savannah - 2013: There are a ton of restaurants in town, but here are a few of our favorites:

Kramers – hands down the best food we found. Located very close to Sam's. At high tide you can take your dinghy. Ask around, everyone knows where it is. Fantastic mojitos and margaritas as well.

Drop off Bar at Necco Marine (across the main road from Sams, walking distance) - many people complain about the service here but we found if you engaged the girls in conversation, they eventually warm up. This became one of our favorite places to go as they have a pool and it was perfect for Jake. They have the best poke in town as well as the most well seasoned hamburger we ate in Palau.

Burger Bar – this is downtown on the way to the grocery stores. It's a small hut on the right hand side of the road. The hamburgers were ok, but the Parrotfish sandwiches were fantastic. They also sell smoothies and have some really good iced tea. It's pretty inexpensive. You order at the window and eat at some picnic tables. It's also a good place to catch a taxi after shopping.

They don't sell beer but you can buy it at the convenient store next door and drink it at the picnic tables.

Japanese restaurant at Comfort Suites (walking distance) – This is in the Napa Auto parts plaza near Sam's. It's upstairs and rarely busy. The prices are reasonable, food decent and it has air conditioning and a big screen TV. The service is excellent.

The Taj is an Indian Restaurant that gets great reviews. We ate there once with a large group and enjoyed it, but found it to be a bit on the pricey side. They have a buffet on Friday's for lunch for around \$14. That's the most economic way to try it out.

Rock Island Café – You'll pass this on your way into town on the right side of the road. They have large portions of a variety of foods (burgers, pizzas, sandwiches, stir fry, etc.) for decent prices. They have TVs and it's air-conditioned. It's also a hotspot for Internet.

El Mexican – This is not a restaurant, but a guy who delivers Mexican food. His name is Louie and he's from Southern California. He saw a need for Mexican food so he now takes orders and delivers from his car. You can call him at 488-2336 or text at 779-1335. He sells Burrito's (\$5-6.50), Taco's (\$1.50-\$1.75), Nachos (\$6.50), Chimichangas (\$7) or a Mexican plate of a burrito with a side of bean and cheese and homemade chips for \$10. We only had the burritos, but they were very good. We made a large order before we left and froze them individually for our passage.

Downtime - May 2013: The next thing after groceries we were craving was a good restaurant, so the quest began trying all the local hotspots. After a few days we found a few good places with decent food but "service" was the one thing that only a few special places had to offer.

Kramer's and **The Taj** had the best of both!

Several others had good food and even the small street place I Love Noodle's had excellent food for reasonable prices with good service.

Zephyr - May 2013: We've hit Bem Emii for their burgers and shakes (really thick). Kramers--great burger and really good ice tea. The Longshore Restaurant--good fish and baby back ribs (comes with soup, choice of potato or rice and a salad for \$8.50. Tracy had Mixed Tempura for \$7.50.

11.5 Cruising in Palau

Everyone should have the book [The Palau Guide – A guide to yachting and tourism in Palau](#) - Randy and Hideko Abernathy. This book has excellent write-ups about almost every viable anchorage in Palau. Some cruisers have converted the waypoints in this guide to a GPX file for use in OpenCPN and other charting programs. We won't reproduce this info here, but may not exceptions.

Brick House – 2014: If you want to leave the harbor, even on someone else's boat or a tour, to go anywhere in the Southern Lagoon - Rock Islands or anywhere else. (Peleliu and Angaur and islands south of there, and Balboabaud and north not included but have their own regulations/fees), you must buy a Rock Island User permit. This applies to everyone - not just yachties...and they rigorously enforce it.

11.5.1 Cruising Close to Sam's Tours (No Permit Required)

Sloepmouche – 2015: You are welcome to cruise and dive in the immediate vicinity of Koror Harbor and Neco (Nikko) Bay without any special permit, but that's about the only area you can do so.

We did explore Neco Bay by dinghy and enjoyed the scenery, but felt no desire to come and anchor anywhere, as visibility is poor within the lagoon for snorkeling or diving and there's not much to visit on the bushy, rocky islets. We did take our dinghy to go diving at the nearby WWII wrecks. Honestly, compared to Chuuk, they are not very colorful nor full of artifacts, but Chuuk is hard to beat! But any dive is always fun and we did have some interesting bits here and there. According to locals, the real diving is in the Rock Islands, outside of the lagoon.

Savannah - 2013 - Cruising Outside the Rock Islands: Palau is an excellent place for paddleboards and kayaks and dinghy exploring. Our favorite place to explore without going out to the Rock Islands was Nikko Bay. We took our big boat back there a few times but were eventually told we could no longer to this (no explanation was ever given). After talking to Sam, our recommendation would be to ask for forgiveness later. This was the first time any one has ever been told they couldn't go back there, so odds are, after a bit of time has passed, they'll forget they ever said it. With that said, if you have a high-speed dinghy, it's a really pleasant ride back there and well worth the effort.

11.5.2 Getting a Cruising Permit for the Rock Islands

Sloepmouche – 2015: To enter the Rock Islands you are required to buy a special 10-day-only permit for \$50/person (or \$100/person if you'd also like to visit Jellyfish Lake), as well as a vessel permit at \$40/month. There are extra fees if you plan to do any photo/video for any commercial purposes.

When we first arrived, I contacted the Koror State Park office, as well as non-profit organizations to offer our services of video productions, as we always enjoy promoting tourism and positive initiatives. During the Christmas holidays everyone had the best reasons to procrastinate and postpone any decision or plan any work.

With over 10 million dollars in annual tourist fees, Koror State bureaucracy is more focused on collecting money than managing services. We attended a Belau Tourism Association meeting and they announced that there would be over 130,000 tourist visits in 2014! Almost all, if not all of them, will go to Rock Islands and pay the fees. The Park Rangers, having a low working budget, were at first interested in getting some awareness videos made, but too many department heads made it impossible to get anything happening in just three months!

So after two months of wasting lots of time in meetings, calls, etc. we decided to go on our own and finally enjoy the scenery of the Rock Islands without any obligations.

Brick House – 2014: The cruising permit costs 50\$ per 10 day window per person. If you want to include Jellyfish lake, then it is 100\$ per person for 10 days. If you want to do any kind of fishing, its 20\$ per person, or 200\$ per year per person. Children 12 and under do not need a fishing license. Commercial photo permits are 100\$ for each 10 day period.

You get the permit at Sams Tours or the Koror Ranger office

This doesn't allow you to take your boat there though...this just allows you.

TO take your boat from the harbor, to anywhere in the Southern Lagoon, it is :

- 16 feet or less: 10\$ per month
- 23 feet- to less than 40 feet: 20\$ per month
- 40 feet to less than 65 feet: 40\$ per month
- Equal to or over 65 feet - 80\$ per month

You get this at the Koror Ranger office

However, if you plan to stay here (not your boat, but you the person), for a while, you may want to consider becoming a "resident". After 3 months, you present your passport and yellow card that you get upon arrival, evidence that you have at least another 90 days on your visa here, along with the rest of your boat papers, and you are given a resident ID card (cost 5\$ plus a photo that you supply). This gets you out of having to have the 50\$/10 day permit bit. Then if you want to avoid the boat permit, you pay about 35\$ give or take depending on size and outboard motor horsepower (35\$ for our 40 foot, 56 HP engine plus 9 foot dinghy with 15HP engine) good for 1 year. This gives you some numbers to put on your boat (hang on the bow pulpit or whatever), and a free pass to go where you like as well. So after 3 months, what used to cost you hundreds of dollars a month to do is now free free free. Its an out in the open, everyone knows, no need to hide policy.

The only way to get the resident ID card sooner than 90 days is to go through the process of getting a work visa. Once you find a job, this takes theoretically 30 days waiting period and then a few days or weeks longer to get. You have to actually work by the way. Maybe a part time job would do the trick - not sure. There is an 18\$ fee to get the application to fill out once you have the job. I am not sure if there are other fees after that. By the time you go through this its probably going to be 2 months I would think unless you have secured an offer before you get here...probably best just to wait the 3 months.

I asked other Palau states about claiming residency there, which you can do sooner, but that doesn't allow even the locals from the other state in to the Rock islands without the permit or Koror state resident ID. They too have to wait 3 months and get a Koror ID. There may be another way - I just haven't found it. They know the Rock Islands are their bread and butter.

Its a good resource for them and most vacationing tourists have little problem with it, but of course for us yachties on a fixed income or no income, it gets to be exorbitant!

Savannah - 2013: A permit is required to go to the Rock Islands and/or Jelly Fish Lake. Each permit is \$50 per person and good for 10 consecutive days. They can be obtained from the Ranger Station next to Kramers.

If you go diving with one of the dive operations, you also have to have a Rock Island permit. This is not included in the price of your dive.

To take your boat anywhere in the Rock Islands (anywhere out of the bay at Sam's or Malakal Harbor), you need a Rock Islands Cruising Permit for the boat. This cost \$40 and is good for one month.

For Americans: After you have been in Palau for 3 months (90 days), you can become a Koror resident. Once you're a resident, you no longer have to pay for permits. You must first go to the social security office and get a social security number. This is free and takes one day to process. After picking up your cards, you take them to the Koror State building by the

baseball field and for \$5 you can get your residency card. Once you do this, you can also register your boat at the ranger station avoid any additional cruising fees. If you plan to stay in Palau for any length of time, this is really worth the effort. It's an easy process and allows you to come and go, as you please, like a local.

Fishing - Everyone who fishes needs a fishing permit. They're good for 30 days and can also be obtained from the ranger station. We were diligent about this in the beginning but after a few months of not catching anything, we stopped renewing our licenses.

Brick House - March 2014: We have not figured out the Rock Islands (80% of the area that is cruised here) bit yet except that we know it will be costing 50\$ per person to go tour out there. Our plan is to stay outside of that area for 3 months, and then register boat (under 40\$) after that time to gain free access to that area. I think 6 months here would fly by - there is lots to do and its a nice lifestyle here.

11.5.3 Cruising Out in the Rock Islands

11.5.3.1 Mandarinfish Lake

Carina – 2016: The anchorage is approx:

07 18.1115 N / 134 28.6147 E

Pass is shallow but very doable in good light and with conning. We had waypoints from a good satellite picture but wouldn't trust them completely. We came in yesterday on a rising tide when the state of the tide was about 1 meter. I think I said the lowest water we saw was 13'.

This spot has good holding in 50-ish feet of fine limestone clay. We anchored north of here last time and ended up moving when we could feel our chain getting wrapped on coral. There is great protection from all quarters except south but there is virtually no fetch even from the south. Water is flat. Sometimes it's hard to tell where the wind is from outside as it swirls around a bit.

Two different turtles and one dugong today (a first for us!). Plus of course the usual amazing birds, including tropicbirds galore.

Croc hangs in the cave at: 07 18.0454 N / 134 28.5789 E

After we saw him there, the Sam's kayak guides confirmed that's a favorite spot.

Lots of neat places close by to putter around and explore in the dink, including the coast up towards Nico Bay. A Japanese gun emplacement cave just NW of the "croc" cave. Two gun bases and a piece of one gun still there.

The snorkeling is deep inside where you can't take a big boat. Beautiful. A marine "lake" but with access from the sea. Mandarinfish, a crocodile flathead (check out the picture of this guy on our website...very very cool), octopus, stonefish, picasso triggerfish, pajama cardinalfish and gorgeous purple lettuce coral...plus a whole lot more fun stuff to look at we have yet to identify. I don't think it's really a "dive" site since the clearest water is shallow and that's where we saw all the amazing stuff.

There's a rope across the entrance where you tie your dink at: 07 18.4307 N / 134 29.0060 E

The passage to the lake is shallow and there are a couple of lovely pink fans. This is the area we saw the stonefish. Supposedly best when the tide is ebbing and when the light is low (for mandarinfish anyway).

Sloepmouche – 2015: Our first anchorage was **Swiftlet Lagoon** on Ulong Island, well protected and scenic. We used this as a base to dive the Ulong Channel area (see diving section for details).

Our second anchorage was on the west side of Mechemechar at **Broken Rock**. We anchored in 15m in the middle (we did not find the 6m spot that the guide mentioned—perhaps it is too close to the rocks?). By dinghy we explored the scenic rock formations near the anchorage. Earlier in our stay, we went to Jellyfish Lake to film the conservation people monitoring the lake condition and we saw some of Mechemechar lagoon during that day. It's fun to dinghy through the maze of islets discovering new sights or eroded caves and caverns around each turn.

Our third anchorage was **Dancer, in Omekang**. There was a nice breeze in this wide anchorage, but fairly calm seas, even with 15-25kt from the NE. We filmed the rock formations around here too. We swam in the hidden lake by snorkeling through the arch at mid to low tide. But there again, we found a lack of corals and fish life, as well as poor visibility, common through the inside of the whole lagoon. We decided to keep the big boat here in this nice anchorage and go from there out to the famous dive sites via the German Channel.

11.6 Other Things to See and Do

11.6.1 Diving

Sloepmouche – 2015: From the Swiftlet anchorage we made the 3-6nm dinghy ride to the Ulong Channel and other dive sites outside, seeing lots of day and live-aboard dive boats in the area. We drift-dived in the Ulong Channel, but visibility was not great because the tide was going out. The wall diving just outside the pass was good, but we liked Siaes Corner and Siaes Cave better. The cave diving was very scenic and we enjoyed going first at 40m on the bottom of the big entrance and going out through the two higher up entrances. It's easy to get disoriented, as the entrances are actually at a 90-degree angle, so it feels as if you went on the other side of the wall (but you are on the same side!). You can access the cave right under the base of the mooring. We also dived Shark City with incredible currents during one dive and almost nothing 40 minutes later!

From the Dancer anchorage, in Omekang, we decided to keep the big boat here in this nice anchorage and go from there out to the famous dive sites via the **German Channel**.

We were glad again to have a big enough Caribe RIB with a new Yamaha 15HP to carry us with our two sets of scuba gear, including our four tanks, to the iconic dive sites of Palau, between 3 and 8nm away. We took our lunch with us so we could eat during our surface intervals. For safety, since no other yachties were around, we brought a portable VHF, laser flares, and EPIRB. You will meet so many dive boats (about 20-30) at the dive sites, as well as on the way to/from, that you could call their attention if you had a dinghy problem. The five live-aboard dive boats anchor in the area for days and days so we could also call them on VHF Channel 16 or their monitoring channels, if needed.

The best time of the year for diving Palau is the NE season during which you dinghy downwind to German Channel and once behind the corner, you'll be behind the small islands and protected from the seas on the dive sites there. We had a few days of a heavy southerly swell that created big surfing waves on the top of the reefs. The mooring buoys were just about IN the breakers (very impressive and sometimes scary!) The last three upwind miles back to the anchorage were pretty bumpy; watch out for your back.

Some dives we dove together and came back to the dinghy (either tied to one of the moorings or anchored nearby to a mooring) or did drift dives. We dove solo with a surface float the whole time so the other could follow with the dinghy. Most divers make drift dives with their divemasters inflating a sausage during their safety stop so the surface tender can come by—amazing how 12 groups of divers were picked up by the right tenders!

We did about 12 dives in a five day period. We dove along the wall at Ngemelis, Ferns, New and Big drop-offs, mostly with little current. We explored the caves of Blue Holes, Temple of Doom (no turtle skeletons there anymore) and Virgin Blue Hole. We saw myriads of school of fish at Blue Corner and even saw some mantas at German Channel. We saw sharks (black and whitetips, one a hammerhead) and turtles (Hawksbill and Green) on most dives. There were some soft corals, but mostly hard corals.

Several cruising friends, when asked to describe Palau diving, told us that Palau offers a great selection of very nice wall, drift, cave and other diving types, but that none of them was the best worldwide. After 25 dives in the area, we agree with this generalization. We did better wreck diving in Chuuk; better mantas in Raja Ampat, Indonesia or Rangiroa, Tuamotus; better soft corals in Raja Ampat, as well as in the Red Sea and Maldives. But in Palau you have a great selection in a small area.

Diving with any dive center is quite expensive here at around \$120/two-tank-dive and \$170/three-tank dive (this does NOT include the Rock Island fees). You end up in big groups and spend a long day commuting to the dive sites and some interval times in not-so-inspiring beaches. If you are experienced divers with good dinghies, it's best if you are two teams of two together. You will have much more flexibility and what you save on dive trips will justify your compressor costs. Note: at the time of this writing, there was talk that Palau was going to require all divers to go with Dive Centers—no more independent diving!

Soggy Paws – May/June/July 2014: We have now made two 10-day trips out to the Rock Islands of Palau. On the first trip, we were mostly diving on the SW and West reef, between German Channel and Saies Corner. On the second trip, we did a lot of diving on the Japanese wrecks left over from World War II (covered in the next blog post).

We used waypoints garnered from an online source called wannadive.net. We also asked for and got a copy of dive briefing notes from Sam's Tours.

The signature dive for Palau is Blue Corner, which is just one spot on the reef. But in reality, there are about 5 miles of reef on the SW side of the Palau archipelago that have just incredible diving. Incredible because of the clarity of the water and the huge amount of fish life--caused by a combination of current outside the reef and environments conducive to marine hatcheries inside the reef... and stringent protection regulations.

The people who manage diving tourism in Palau have done a great job of making the dive sites accessible without damaging the reef. They have a string of dive buoys all along the reef.

Besides the SW reef area, there are several channel dives. These are drift dives in the channel, usually on the incoming current. The best one is Ulong Channel, and we have done this several times. During May and June the Grouper are spawning, and they are all over in Ulong Channel. Other popular channel dives are German Channel and Lighthouse Channel.

For a few dives, Jerry from Challenger volunteered to be "dinghy tender". This was quite a luxury for us. Makes things much easier on current dives to know there is someone on the surface following your bubbles, no matter where you end up.

On other dives, we towed the dinghies with us. This is possible when there are no other divers or dive boats to worry about, and when there's not much wind.

There were lots of other very cool things to see in Ulong Channel, but it all happens pretty fast as we are drifting along at 1-2 knots. I really like the garden eels, but they are very hard to get a picture of. They are only about 8-10" long and sink into their holes in the sand when you approach. They look like turtle grass unless you look carefully.

Near Ulong Channel is a very nice no-current reef dive called Coral Gardens. This is a great place to take a novice diver as it is shallow and easy, with lots of pretty fish and coral.

Further out from Ulong Channel is Saies Tunnels and Saies Corner. It's a long dinghy ride (3-4 miles), but doable in our RIBs with 15-25 HP motors. In the early morning (half tide or greater to get over the reef) with no wind, it's an exhilarating ride. And totally worth it.

The only problem with all this "resource management" is that it ends up being very expensive to cruise here. The \$120 you pay on arrival as a cruiser is just the beginning. To go and anchor ANYWHERE except the single designated cruiser anchorage at Sam's Tours, it costs \$50 per month for a Cruising Permit for the boat, and \$50 per person for a 10-day Rock Islands permit.

So the first excursion out to the Rock Islands costs a whopping \$150 for 10 days, and another \$100 for another 10 days. Plus, there has been almost no wind (good for diving, bad for sailing), and so we've had to motor everywhere, and diesel is \$5.45/gallon.

But it's better than paying the fly-in tourist diver rate of \$145 per diver per day for a two-tank dive (plus of course, hotel, meals and transportation).

Savannah - 2013: There are many different diving operations around Palau. We dove with Sam's and Fish n Fins. We found Sam's to be much friendlier, convenient, reliable and more likely to help out a yachtie. There are various different rates, so it's best to ask around once you get here.

We got the "local" rate for \$70/two tank dive, but you risk the chance of getting "bumped" if the boats get filled up. And you must bring your own lunch. Still not a bad deal.

I would highly recommend buying a dive guidebook here so you can take advantage of the sites that are close by. The best one we saw was written by the folks that own Fish n Fins – Tova and Nevat.

There are a few places where you can dive easily from your dinghy. Chandelier caves is in the back of the anchorage. It's best to get there early in the morning before the various dive shops begin bringing their boat loads.

Diving at Sam's dock will reward you with some strange little creatures...crocodile fish, mandarin fish, cuttlefish, pipe fish, stone fish, squid....and it's free.

There are some wrecks close by that can be reached by dinghy. They're not spectacular, but interesting none the less. Our favorite was Helmet Wreck, however at the time of writing this, it was off limits due to some clean up efforts of the WWII munitions.

Most of the really incredible dive sites are outside the reef and probably most safely reached with a dive operation. We did anchor in Ulong and went with some other cruisers in our dinghies out to Ulong Channel. This was our favorite dive in Palau, also very popular. Go early to avoid the crowds. It's best on an incoming tide and the current can be quite swift, so plan accordingly.

Downtime - May/June 2013: The main tourist draw to Palau is its world class diving and we spent the second week here enjoying it all with a guide Jonas and his girlfriend Maria. We hired them to come aboard Downtime for three days and show us the best dive sites without having to put up with the crowds.

We would get to the best sites before or after the groups left and would have them all to ourselves. It was also nice to have a guide with a few thousand dives under his belt to give Daria that little extra boost of confidence she needed on some of the trickier dives that has strong currents.

On one dive Jonas took his camera along and took some amazing pictures on a day everything seemed to fall in place, the weather, the water clarity, and even the fish and turtles were all there! When were not diving Jonas took us around the lower islands and showed us some really cool anchorages that we would have never found on our own like the one at 11 Islands. When it was all done I had good idea where everything was all at and we had 7 great dives under our belts!

Later in the month, we moved up to 11 Islands to another secluded anchorage away from all the dive boats and anchored next to our friends on Savannah. This would be our staging spot to dive Blue Corner. Blue Hole, New Drop Off and German Chanel some of the best dives in Palau.

11.6.2 World War II Sites (Peleliu)

Carina – 2016: Another cruising couple (Graham and Avril on Dream Away) just got back from a trip to Peleliu. They contracted with Peleliu Adventures who took them on a tour with a guide. Stayed at the PA hotel and had a great time. Cost \$65/ea for tour (incl \$15 park fee) and \$87/night for hotel. Food at hotel was pretty inexpensive. They got to meet a Brit by the name of Bill who works for Cleared Ground and spent quite a bit of time with him. Graham said it was fascinating to talk to Bill and trip was well worth the cost. They left on a Friday and came back on the next Sunday.

Soggy Paws – June 2014: We made 2 trips to Peleliu on the ferry. The first trip was a scouting expedition. We had 3 couples and booked into the hotel across from the ferry dock (Island View?). We arranged for a guy to give us the Peleliu Tour in a 10 passenger van

(sorry, forget the price, but it was reasonable, probably about \$10 per head). He met us at the hotel/ferry dock and drove us all over the important sites, including a long stop at the museum. We paid our Pelelieu access fee at the museum. I think we spent one more full day, where the guys went off on the bikes to explore the off-road sites. They came back pumped up enough that they wanted to do another visit (without the wives) later.

A few weeks later, during a monsoon (wind + rain from SW), they went back and spent several more days at Pelelieu.

Being low low season, almost everything in Pelelieu was shut down, and in face the Island View was the only hotel we could get a response out of. We brought a minimal set of cooking supplies and the lady who owns the hotel let us make dinner in her kitchen! There is a tiny convenience store at the ferry dock, which had basic supplies, drinks, and ice.

The whole cost of the visit by ferry and staying in a hotel was almost the same as the 10-day cruising permit for Pelelieu.

Brick House - April 2014: First, make sure to buy the 2\$ map at Sams Tours that has Peleliu on it - called something like Historical and cultural Map of Palau. There are no maps available once you get there and without it you will have no idea where to begin to look for WWII artifacts or anything else. The map is wrong on many things but its the best one to use nonetheless.

Going by Ferry and Staying in a Hotel: You can go to Peleliu by Ferry - leaves on Friday noon time and returns on Sunday departing at 10am. (subject to frequent changes), This means you need accommodations for 2 nights. Two hours and 45 minute trip, and it passes Rock Islands on the way back and forth. Cost is 5\$ per person each way. Bags and bikes extra, from 75 cents and up, depending on size. Boat departs Malakal Dock close to Kramers restaurant. Phone number is 345-3000.

Peleliu State Office is behind the Visitors bureau, the phone number is 488-1817

If you do take the ferry, the most recommended motel by other cruisers on a budget is the **Storyboard Hotel** (345-1019)- 85\$ per night (Note Nice to cruisers too including use of restaurant for wifi even when its closed) The individual raised bungalows overlooking the sea/reef seemed tidy and comfortable. The dining room was open air, and simple and inviting.

If you want something cheaper, there is the **Peleliu Island View Motel** (345-1064), at the North dock, for 55\$ per night for 2. No atmosphere or charm.

If you are by yourself, the **Mayumi Inn** (345-1036) is a dorm for 25\$ per person.

For those who want a really nice place, the **Dolphin Bay Resort** at about 175\$ per night is exceptionally nice. Beautiful Individual. The dining room is also outdoors and truly inviting, and the staff is bubbly and professional. You can do wifi in their open air lobby which is very comfortable and electricity is available. They also have a full dive shop on the premises. Wifi with PNCC is available at both hotels on the premises. There are NO computers for public use on the island - so you must have a laptop or other if you want to check email or other.

Restaurants: There is one fast food café (OK Café) with covered outdoor seating in town, with wifi, no electricity though. Otherwise meals must be taken at your hotel. If another hotel has space, you may be able to eat there with 24 hours notice. The only stores here are 2 or 3 small convenience type stores. There is no post office, internet café, or other restaurants.

Peleliu Adventures offers tours of every kind. **Bike rentals** are available from them as well. The standard is 10\$ per day, from 7am to 6pm. You can't keep them overnight but you may be able to make prior arrangements with the owner to do so. Arrange tours ahead of time - there was never one available the entire 7 days that we were there. We ended up seeing everything by ourselves with our own bikes which was fine.

Going in your own boat: The fee to bring your boat there is \$125, even if you just stay a week...up to one month. Expensive, but cheaper than by ferry/hotel. If you go in on a weekend, you may get away with a couple of days before they come asking for the permit. If you don't have the permit, you can buy it there by making a 10 mile round trip to the downtown office by foot, bike or possibly hitching.

Navigation: We went out of eastern **Dengue Pass** after a few days in the Rock Islands, but you can go out any pass you want (nice excuse to sail down through the Rock Islands and maybe tuck in for a night somewhere along the way for safety's sake). You do not need a Rock island permit since you are 'in transit' to Peleliu, although stops are not technically allowed!

We spent 5 basically legal nights this way in the Rock Islands on the way down and never saw a patrol boat. We came back north by way of **German Channel** which takes off heaps of miles on the way back. We did buy a one month permit for the boat, since it was just 20\$ for the month, just to keep a happy outward appearance for the way there and back.

(Rock Islands Permit for boat up to 39.9 feet is \$20 per month. 40\$ for 40 feet and above. Rock Island permit for each person, is 50\$ for each 10 days, not including JellyFish lake.) It would make a nice trip to do 10 days before or after Peleliu. You can buy Rock Island permits in Peleliu at the Peleliu office and possibly other places too in town.

German Channel: Make sure you have a positive tide to come through or better, and go within the first hour after high tide to avoid sideways currents in the pass. Sometimes this is tricky because you also need good visibility with the sun not in your eyes! We came West to east (coming in to the lagoon), at about 10:45am, 45 minutes after high tide, and had perfect water, almost no current, and could see quite well. We had snorkelled this area on our way down-anchoring on the inside of the pass in sand with a few coral bombies. I don't think there is any where to anchor on the ocean side - its deep and very healthy coral is everywhere.

The pass is the most shallow in the beginning of the inside of the pass. It's mostly sand and seagrass in the channel. Its about 40 feet wide, so turning around would be quite difficult.

Here are a few waypoints in to Peleliu Harbor. Once you locate the harbor, use your eyes to get in. The Google Earth image I have suggests there are waves at the entrance to the harbor possibly breaking on something. There was nothing in reality in the entrance although it was shallower on the right side...so we favored the left side all the way in. We saw 6.5 feet 1.5 hours after dead low tide. Tides were about a foot above normal so you could possibly see 5.5 feet at low zero tide, or less if you go on a minus tide. ON the way out, at about 2 hours before high tide, we saw 10 feet lowest, so its about a 5 foot difference between low and high.

Wpt 1: 06 59.0375 N 134 13.1488 E Start of the pass

Stay a little to the left as you go in - it shallows a little to the right. When you see it opening up to the right, proceed with caution as it shallows for a period as you go around the bend/ Stay to

the right as you go around the corner but not too far over! Have someone at the bow for sure. It gets deep as you get to the other side.

Anchor 06 59.1686 N 134 13.3579 E

We anchored bow and stern in 6.5 feet at low tide at 0 tide. Nobody anchors just by bow - its essential to use bow and stern - you don't have room to swing. The holding is fine but not a factor since you really don't get wind even when wind is honking outside.

Alternate 06 59.0734 N 134 13.4387 E 10 feet low tide.

But you must go over there at mid tide or higher across the little reef because it gets shallow at approximately 06 59.1439 N/134 13.3845 E to about 3-4 feet at low tide. You may want to go check with dinghy first. The anchorage anywhere is very very calm in all conditions except moderate WEST or SOUTHWEST and if west winds are coming I would recommend leaving. There was 20-25 knots NE outside while we were there, and we felt nothing at all inside.

Aggressor 06 59.1294 N 134 13.4070 E

This is where the Aggressor and other big dive boats anchor, bow and stern in 10 feet at low tide.

Warning: No Seeums are ferocious here after dark. Reportedly from locals it is the worst 3 days before and after the full moon and new moon which is exactly when we were here. Put in your no seeum screens. Put on long clothes and socks. If you do get bit, a product available at the stores in town for \$5 called "Omega" is very soothing for the itches. If you see them, they are biting you - the itches don't show up for a couple of days. Nowhere near as bad as the Marquesas, but bad enough to notice! Insect repellent, 90% deet, did not keep them away...coils didn't. Our electric mosquito mats did seem to help a little bit. There were NO mosquitos at all here.

The harbor is far smaller than you think it is, even after looking at a clear Google Earth image. 3 sailboats could find space at one time but that would likely make it so that the Aggressor and/or the other boat could NOT come in - I'm sure they have more clout that we do!!!

One boat can stay out of the way...two maybe with lots and lots of tact. We anchored bow and stern close to, but not at the cement pier that is right before the turn to the right inside. Right next to that pier at low water there is but a foot or two of water, so you can't tie up side to. Beside there are dive boats that come and go from that pier regularly and side to would be very disturbing to the local boats. You could possibly put a very long bow line to the good bollards on that pier, and put out a stern anchor. We were about 75 feet out from it so that boats could come and go from it without too much effort to maneuver around us.

You can not anchor right in the middle because there are 2 huge dive boats that come in - the Aggressor and another one, that must be able to pass to the far right of the harbor. The big dive boats come in and anchor in the center of the right section with stern anchor to the old rusty piers in the back of the harbor, with an anchor out in front of them. They only come in for part of one day, coming in at mid tide, leaving at mid tide 6 hours later or so.

Around Peleliu: Bikes or great hiking legs are essential here. There is a perfect place to lock them at the dock and nobody messed with them or our dinghy although we paddled ashore with no outboard to be sure. We never truly locked the boat even when gone all day. The locals not

in the tourist industry were pleasant but used to seeing outsiders. Pleasant but not extending invitations or rides. There aren't many cars- you could walk quite a ways before seeing one. I think most people would pick you up if you were walking.

Bikes are much better as you can get off the main road and see all the sites that aren't even on maps. It's almost completely flat, and distances are long for walking and the main roads are mostly in the sun unless you go early in the morning. Bikes allow you complete freedom and the distances are perfect for bikes and for people not in great shape. The side roads are shady but circuitous, are less maintained than the hardtop main roads, but offer GREAT **birding**. I saw many of the birds in the Birds and Bats of Palau. But no parrots, and no owls although I'm sure they were there somewhere. Kingfishers and Fruit doves were especially abundant.

It was very very pleasant biking on this island and undocumented WWII artifacts were around every corner, especially on the side roads. Most of the artifacts were on the south side of the island and the middle of the island. Town is on the north side. The north dock looks like it would be a very crowded iffy affair...anchoring off may or may not be possible. One local told me sailboats come and anchor way off near the east reef and take their dinghys in.

The channel leading to the north dock looked ok to me as far as the eye could see, but there may be some shallower points beyond that as seen in the Google Earth images. The biggest question is if there is someplace to put the boat once you get in which it was hard to tell from the dock...it may not be deep enough - the water is not clear. There possibly could be something just beyond the dock. You are invited to tie up at the dock too - it may even be possible.

To get from the north dock to the south dock would be an all day affair since you can't just come down inside the reef. But we liked our location in the south even if there were no seeps. It was very peaceful, protected, and nearest to what we were interested in. We knew the wind never blew so we never thought about the boat dragging or other while we were gone...almost like being at a dock. If you were anchored in the north, the wind and dragging would always be a concern in my opinion.

Overall, we are very very happy we went to Peleliu. The WWII sites were amazing - some as if it just happened 5 years ago...you can almost feel the spirits of the brave American and Japanese boys that lost their lives there. The museum is worthwhile (donations appreciated - but you must have your 10\$ per person "land tour" permit with you). We presented our 125\$ boat permit, didn't ask any questions or present any doubt on our side, and they were fine with that permit. The attendant there when you get there could be different. You may or may not be able to buy your permit there - you may be required to go to town to get the permit. Nobody ever asked us for permits anywhere else on Peleliu and we saw many police go by while we were looking at WWII artifacts throughout the week. SO either nobody knows you are supposed to have one, everyone assumes you already have one, or we were just lucky.

We highly recommend Peleliu, especially to those that have a keen interest in the bloodiest battle of WWII, and/or those who love birdwatching and easy bike riding. We even saw a few boat constrictors!

Downtime - May/June 2013: Apart from diving there is also a lot of history here in Palau. The southern island of **Peleliu** was the location of one of the bloodiest battles in WW2 on in which the 1st Marines went in for a 3 to 4 day battle to take over the air strip. The battle turned into a 73 day standoff with the well fortified Japanese who were dug into hundreds of caves on the

island. The battle turned into a living hell on an island without fresh water or provisions and in the end over 18,000 brave souls gave their lives in the name of freedom.

The next island down, Angaur had a similar story of many lives being lost. We toured the island and the sense that something terrible had happened never left me and the site of old burned out equipment made me think of the ones that gave their lives so many years ago.

We went to Peleliu in our "big dinghy". When we arrived, we hired a local named Kyle and he gave us the 3 hour tour. The east side of the island was wiped out by a typhoon last December and the effects could still be seen in the tangled jungle and the barren beaches where millions of tons of sand were swept out to sea. Next we drove across the airport that was so ferociously fought for and saw a few old guns and tanks that were left behind.

The memorials sit up next to Bloody Nose Ridge and I have to say the Japanese really do a nice job building theirs. It was hard to imagine what it must have all been like back then.

11.6.3 Museums and Conventional Sightseeing

Savannah - 2013: There are two museums mentioned in the guide. Both are interesting. The **National Museum** is A LOT of reading. It's quite thorough and some cruisers preferred it, but I have a little one and he likes me to read everything out loud so it was quite exhausting. The second museum is the **Etpison Museum**, a privately owned operation. This is by far the best museum in Micronesia. It's \$5 to enter, however we found the more we went, the less likely they were to charge us as we were considered "locals." It's not a huge museum but is done quite nicely and covers all of Micronesia, not just Palau. They have a beautiful (and rather extravagant) gift shop upstairs.

Use the guidebook to find the various WWII pillboxes and relics. And don't forget to look for caves...Andy and Jake found a relatively unknown cave a few coves down from Pillbox Channel. Watch for turtles as well.

It's worth the walk to the carving shop for storyboards on the other side of Koror. It's very small but they do commissions upon request if you're looking for a really nice keepsake of Palau.

The guidebook gives pretty good descriptions and is very thorough on things around town...

11.6.4 Fitness

Savannah - 2013: There is a yoga class three days a week around 5:00 (MWF) at the Cultural Center. Yoga is not my thing, so I never went, but many cruisers claimed it was a good class.

The National Gym in town has various activities for little ones....soccer, tennis, t-ball, Judo.

There is a small Cross-fit group here. You can find them on facebook and get details about where they meet from there (Palau Cross Fit)

11.7 Typhoon Season in Palau

Palau, being much further west than the rest of Micronesia, does occasionally get hit by fairly strong typhoons. Below are reports from cruisers who have stayed in Palau during Typhoon season.

11.7.1 Typhoon Bopha - Dec 2013

From Lee & Richard - s/v Before: We have left Before in the Rock Is. in a 360 from the sea, a long 1/2 mile, channel tucked back where it is about 200ft wide with 18-20 ft in depth, have laid out all four anchors, 2 bow, two stern, took 4 lines ashore above the tide line away from rocks tied to trees at their base. Every thing is stripped or lashed. Our location is near 07 13.80 N, 134 22.63 E.

When we learned this was to be a direct hit as a cat 3 or 4, I figured there was nothing we would be able to effect, working on deck in 100- 130 knots. So we loaded the dinghy with papers, clothes, fuel, Kazi and made our way back 10 miles to Sam's Tours. Winds were 15 or so, some open water, took an hour. Guys at Sams helped me pull the dinghy and motor and gear, its all loaded deflated and lashed to a pallet, behind Sam's home.

We have a room on the third floor of a concrete hotel, West Plaza Hotel, rm 3513, (680) 488-2133-35 across the street from the Longshoreman Restaurant, the bathroom is most secure with glass block for window. So at least we are safe, only can hope for the boat.

Who knows what will happen with the infrastructure here, have the sat phone in case.

Later... Bopha passed south of us, hit Pelieu very hard, good for Koror, small damage . All the boats in Sam's cove are fine little or no damage. No idea yet as to "Before", possibly get the dinghy together tomorrow, depends on the sea state and winds and will go have a look, who knows.

Power went out about 2000 local last night and so went phones and internet, winds were about 50-60kts where we are staying. This place has a generator so the A/C was on and lights, cooked Raman & Chili in the hot pot, not a real hardship for us, just the worry.

Still later...Left the hotel to walk over to Sam's Tours, very little damage to their facilities, docks were just back in place so decided to head back to Before. Got the dinghy, and all the stuff, out of the woman's showers, pumped it up, loaded up Kazi and gear and set off for the boat, winds were down to E 5-10kts, a much easier ride.

Turned the corner into the cove and there she was, all the lines were slack, a little crooked in the slot, covered with leaves and stuff, but all was there, even the Dodger and Bimini--wonders never cease.

Opened the companionway all was in order, bilge was dust dry, found nothing knocked out of place. Turned on the still cool fridge, gave thanks and had a beer!

Looking at the hill sides, all of the north/south islands and ridges had lost 30-40% of the timber on the east faces, the broken trees were folded to the east, down slope. The small island that forms the north part of the cove had a dinghy pass around it to the west, this is now full of downed timber for at least 50 yards. None of the trees I had tied to were damaged, but lots of foliage in the water.

The anchor recovery was much more difficult than setting them , I'd set as one of stern hooks a 44lb. French Danforth/style, very sharp flukes of 1/2" plate, with 30ft of 3/8" chain. This was in 9-10 ft.

Tried to pull from the dingy, nothing not a budge, put on a mask and snorkel, squatted over the shank and pulled, still no movement, got dive gear and spent at least 30 mins. digging with a

large screw driver before even the shank would move free , finally got it in the dinghy and loaded back in the starboard anchor well, only took 5 hrs.

Spent 2 days to pick up and untie and with a 3/4 rising tide let go the last two lines, pulled the primary anchor and made our way out of the cove's narrow channel to a deeper anchorage clear of coral. Went back and recovered lines and took a break.

Got back to Sam's cove about 1400 yesterday, good to be back. We are very beat up and exhausted, but it's great to still have a boat.

11.7.2 Typhoon Haiyan - Nov 2013

From Linda - s/v Hawkeye: We had been out to the islands and anchorages the week before checking out places that we thought would be good in case a typhoon came.

John's insurance, Allianz, said they would not cover Hawkeye if we stayed on the mooring at Sam's so we checked out several possibilities the week before and, in fact, were still out but decided to come in for a day to pick up email. Of course when John picked up the Grib files, and saw what was possibly heading our way, we quickly got our lines some fuel and headed out with some other boats. Everyone had picked a place where they wanted to be (there are lots of little places to choose from) and we all headed to our prospective places.

It took the rest of Monday, all day Tuesday and most of Wednesday to get to what we felt was a good position and ready.

Hawkeye weighs about 14,000 lbs and is a Sirena 38, a boat built in Finland and would remind you of a Swan. We had the main anchor, a 44 Delta with 160 feet of chain on the Delta and 30 feet of nylon rode.

We attached to that anchor in tandem out front, with 25 feet of high test 1/4 inch chain to a 26 lb. high tensile Danforth. We then slid down a 35 lb. Kellett set on a line 50 feet long so that it was hanging on the chain to give more weight. On Wednesday morning I dove the anchor to make sure they were all set. At about 60 degrees to that anchor set up, we then set up a 22 # Delta on 50 feet of chain and in tandem in front of that was a 23 FX Fortress that I also dove and set. As we were short on chain on the 22 lb. Delta, we put a float on the connection to the rode so it would be up off the bottom which was pretty much free of coral heads but seemed to me to be sand over rock. One shoulder of each anchor and the point would be buried in sand but the whole anchor was not covered. Same on the Danforth and fortress but it was the best we could do. We were completely surrounded by islands which are all limestone (sort of reminds you of Tonga).

We ran lines to shore and tied to the biggest trees we could find. Because it is all limestone, very steep with lots of growth and undercut, it is hard to do. It is impossible to get on land so everything has to be done from the dinghy. Tied two of the lines off the stern and one off the port side. We really wanted to run one off the starboard side also but it was too far to land and a large downed tree was underwater to get there and, we didn't have enough line to do it anyway.

The wind was supposed to come from the Northeast and swing around to the Southwest as the typhoon went past, so that is how we positioned ourselves and set everything up. We don't know if the wind whipped around inside the enclosed anchorage or what, but it came from the

Southwest, then the south, and then the east. It totally confused us but there was nothing we could do at that time.

We had stripped the boat down and the decks were pretty clean so we decided to take film for the insurance company (just in case) of everything we did and how we did it.

We fared very well but as we were retrieving our lines to shore this morning, we discovered that the main line that held our stern when the wind was coming from the Southwest, the tree had broken off and was in the water with our line attached. We couldn't get it up and had to cut the line but it would have made us very nervous if we had known at the time!

We kept adjusting the lines all night long and in the morning, John had to dive and get one line out from under the rudder. That was the same line that went to the broken off tree.

Anyway, we made it through and are putting Hawkeye back together and will get all our lines run so we can put her back on her mooring when the tide gets lower this afternoon.

We were able to check in with Leslie on Carina (in Pohnpei) on Thursday morning and let them know that we were all right but could never get any information via Winlink. Now we know that it was a good thing as the weather information that Carina sent, said it was a super typhoon with a lot more wind than had originally been projected!

12 Islands and Atolls South of the Main Islands

12.1 South of Pohnpei

12.1.1 Nukuoro Atoll (03-50N / 154-58E)

La Gitana - March 2014: Nukuoro's position is not charted correctly on C-Map charts. The atoll is actually approx. 1.5nm WSW of its charted position. Strong currents run around the island, their direction varies depending on tide and prevailing weather patterns. One yacht misjudged the strong currents in 2013 and was wrecked on the SW section of the atoll.

Pass: The passage into Nukuoro Atoll is deep for the most part but particularly narrow. It is not wider than 40 Meters but with the water gushing out at ebb tide it certainly feels a lot narrower. We never saw less than 8m depth.

Approach waypoint 0.25nm SW from the entrance to the passage: 03°49.4N 154°58.0E

Entrance to the passage: 03°49,61N 154°57,80E

The passage is rather well marked. From sea a white post marking the starbord side of the channel can be clearly seen. It bears a green blinking light at night. Still, an entry into the passage at night time is certainly not recommended.

The port marker is missing but the concrete platform can be seen in suitable conditions once entry into the passage has begun.

Inside the passage there are several markers and even in mediocre light conditions it is quite obvious which side they mark.

The problem in entering Nukuoro is the strong current in the passage at ebb tide. In adverse weather conditions, i.e. when the wind is from the western quadrant, it can obtain a rate of 6 knots.

When we came through the passage at the end of ebb tide the current was going out at 4,5 knots.

The tidal flow reverses a few hours after low tide and the incoming tide is considerably less strong.

With an outgoing tide the current can be seen 1nm or farther out at sea. In any conditions where there is a sea running across or onto the passage big overfalls of 2m height form outside the passage during ebb, that can be dangerous to a yacht. With a moderate wind from the south it can quickly become impossible to navigate the passage at all.

If there is an outgoing current it is best to approach the entry to the passage in the lee of the overfalls and turbulences until already inside the passage. Then, a turn into the middle of the passage can be made, hereby avoiding passing through the worst of the overfalls and standing waves.

Clearly, if you do not feel comfortable navigating atoll passes, Nukuoro's pass is not the one on which to practice your skills.

About 0.3nm SSW of the passage there is a FAD anchored in 200m of water.

Pilotage: The islanders monitor VHF 16 on several radios. If you feel insecure about entering the passage on your own give them a call. If they have fuel available they will come out with a launch and guide you in. It does happen quite often though, that there is no gasoline on the island to operate the launch.

If the locals have piloted you into the lagoon it is a good idea and good protocol to replenish their gasoline from your stock or offer some payment to the government for the purchase of gas on the supply ship.

Formalities and fees: Nukuoro is only rarely visited by yachts and formalities are strict. Nobody is allowed ashore unless the yacht can produce a valid cruising permit for FSM. The local police force of 4 to 5 officers will come to your boat and check you in. There are no fees.

If you come in in an emergency you will have to leave the atoll once your repairs are finished.

Navigation and anchoring: The lagoon is fairly deep in many places, up to 100m. There are some patch reefs which can be seen fairly clearly. Most of them, but not all!, had a white PVC pipe as marker.

The village is on the biggest island in the SE corner of the atoll and can be clearly identified by the stone pier and the white government buildings.

Anchorage is kind of difficult, because the lagoon is pretty deep all the way close to shore. You will have to be prepared to anchor in 20 to 30m. The holding along the main island is good in coarse sand with coral.

Should you wish to sail to other motus in the lagoon you have to get permission from the mayor or the government first. There is a pearl farm in the lagoon and a collector line runs the width of the lagoon suspended about 1 or 2m below the surface. Beware!

Supplies: There are no stores on the island but the land is very fertile because the atoll receives a lot of rain. There are the usual fruits and veggies available for trade or sale, just ask around. Nothing else is available.

Trivia: There are only about 100 people on Nukuoro. The people are Polynesian and notoriously welcoming.

The island is "dry" and drinking "kareve/sakalu/tuba/sour toddy/palm wine" is only allowed in private.

People are still using outrigger sailing canoes, but fiberglass launches are definitely more prominent today.

There are no pearls available from the pearl farm. All are sent to Pohnpei and it is made sure, that no one gets his hand on a pearl outside the official sales channel.

If you go there, it is a good idea to try to contact the island on HF radio before leaving port. The locals would certainly be delighted, if they could "order" some supplies from you to bring along. Call "Nukuoro" or "Papa 29" on 7.876,5 kHz USB.

We stayed almost a month in Nukuoro in February and March 2014 and had a very good time here.

Jack the Toad (2014) (via radio): The residents have VHF, so call on VHF 16 "Nukuoro Atoll" and the locals will answer. Pass entrance reported at 03-49.6N / 154-57.8E. They are very nice here and welcoming.

RCC Pilotage Foundation (2008): Nukuoro Atoll and Kapingamarangi Atoll are Polynesian and have a different flavour to the rest of Micronesia. They are not only isolated physically, but also culturally.

Pass: Nukuoro has a short narrow pass that may experience steep seas.

Anchorage; 03° 50.32' N 154° 58.25' E. Good holding and shelter in 14m sand off the village. In westerlies, better shelter can be found in a bight in the reef south of the village near the pass, close to a mooring laid by American ex-pat yachtsman Steve for his yacht Cosmic Muffin.

Formalities; The mayor will want to see your clearance papers obtained in Pohnpei.

Facilities; Very limited supplies, even for the islanders. Limited connections with the rest of the state.

U.S. Sailing Directions: Nukuoro Atoll (3°50'N., 155°00'E.) consists of more than 40 islets, about 3.6m high, standing on the E side of the barrier reef. Nukuoro, an island covered with palm trees and tropical plants, is the center of activity. A small pier is situated on the lagoon side of Nukuoro, which is reported to be unsafe, even for small vessels. There is a radio station on the island.

Nukuoro Passage, 27 to 37m wide, leads into the lagoon between the reefs fringing the islands of Kaujema and Shenukdei. The passage is deep and is marked by tree branches stuck into the reef, but is fronted by a bar, with a least depth of 8.2m. Numerous coral patches, some of which dry, are scattered throughout the lagoon.

Caution.—The sea is usually high at the bar and becomes choppy when the tidal currents are strong. These currents sometimes attain a velocity of 6 knots on the ebb. In 1978, the passage was reported to have sufficient depth for small boat operations, but it is very narrow and has an uncharted bend of 45°. The passage should only be attempted at slack water, by small vessels with local knowledge, under the most favorable of conditions.

In 1985, a vessel reported that anchorage within the vicinity of the passage was impossible.

12.1.2 Kapingamarangi Atoll (01N / 162W)

Elizabeth Jane II – September 2014: *EJII stopped at Kapinga on their way from Palau to the Solomons. I do not believe they had any Micronesia paperwork.*

Only upon entering the reef encircled lagoon did we begin to appreciate the enormity of our trip and the amazing place we had managed to arrive in. The Chief of the atoll zoomed up in his (evidently the atolls' only) small outboard powered boat to welcome us and point us in the direction of the Touhou islet and main village, we were still 6 miles away.

We dropped anchor and started the diplomatic process of seeking the Chief - Alpino Samuels' permission to stay for a few days. Alpino was reserved but friendly and gave us a bunch of coconuts as a gift. We gave him a pair of reading glasses, some spam and some fish hooks which we hoped would be useful. While we did not have a permit to be in the region, he kindly let us stay for some respite and to mend a few minor things on the boat after we had travelled continuously for 12 days. And what a place for some R & R! It was visually spectacular, postcard stuff with palm trees swaying in the refreshing breeze atop golden sandy islets giving way to aqua then turquoise then brilliantly blue water which were crystal clear, calm and immaculately clean.

The atoll, 450nm from the nearest population centre, was inhabited by a pocket of Polynesians though now grouped geographically with the Micronesians of Pohnpei (part of the Federated States of Micronesia). Apparently populated by Polynesian castaways who had drifted some 1500nm from the east to form a self-sufficient community, Kapingamarangi is the most remote isolated island in the West Pacific. The Spaniards stuck a flag on it when they called the Caroline Islands theirs around the same time as snatching the Philippines. That all got traded after the US-Spanish War in 1899 to the Germans and consequently taken by the Japanese in 1914 when Japan was on a Pacific nation land grab. Then after WWII, it fell under the jurisdiction of the US as a Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. But all this trading of ownership did not change the locals way of life one iota. They still grew taro, coconuts, bananas and breadfruit, domesticated pigs and chickens to supplement their seafood diet, spoke their Polynesian language and used song to tell historical stories and teach the children about life on Kapinga. The Japanese did commercialise copra exportation but life on the atoll remained little moved from their traditional ways.

On our visit over 100 years after some German ethnographers studied the lifestyle of the 400 odd islanders, we could see that they had the same diet and relied primarily on their own gardens for survival. While a supply ship (unreliably) comes from Pohnpei 2 or 3 times a year, it only brings long life stores like rice, sugar, tea and coffee. The limited income of the islanders means that the locals live of their produce and enjoy the variety provided by outside food only occasionally. The demeanor of the people was also remarkably the same as historically noted, they were genuinely friendly but reserved, they did not speak unless spoken to. We thought back to Sulewesi in Indonesia where we were treated like rock stars and were virtually mobbed for photos. This was a very different experience. The people of Kapinga were dedicated to the cleanliness of private and public property with immaculate pathways and ensuring no rubbish was lying around. We noticed that the people were always working, whether it was cleaning,

doing food preparation, making copra, fishing or building houses, people were occupied with their tasks. The kids meanwhile were busying themselves with jumping off the pier into the water, the biggest hoots being gained from the longest run up. It turned out that school was a 4 month rotation as the teachers were on the supply boat from Pohnpei and now the kids were on holidays until the ship came. High school kids were preparing to go onto the ship when it came, as they go to boarding school in Pohnpei for the next 4 months.

To carry on the work of the Germans, a group of American ethnographers spent time in Kapinga in the 1940s and '50s to document the life of the people for historic reference. We were lucky enough to meet Sakius George, an islander who was a former teacher, loved reading and was very interested in the history of the place and had a copy of the book written by the Americans. We borrowed the book and could not believe that 60 years after their visit, so much of the islander's life was the same, despite the influence of technology from the modern world and the international education afforded to many of the islands children. The book went through the history of the naming of the place, and found that the locals just referred to it as 'the land', but Polynesian interpretations of the name Kapinga-marangi broke it down 'to carry under the arms' - of 'the sky'. I suppose that being so far from anywhere else, it was irrelevant what you called your island, because there were not many other people to tell. The Americans found that the practice of story telling had been virtually lost after the 1920s when Christian missionaries arrived, banning the singing of non-religious songs. Sakius also talks about the loss of many of the islands' youth as they leave the island for higher education abroad in Pohnpei, the US, PNG or Fiji. He cited negative changes such as the loss of craftsmanship with the wooden canoes that were critical for fishing, where outside influences encouraged a change to fiberglass boats and the locals are losing their skills to fix the wooden canoes, rendering them without water transport in the event of a leak. The island has limited connectivity to the outside world, satellite internet is only provided sporadically through the primary school, the island has no mobile phone access and no real electricity. But reminders were around...like on the incoming tide, we were saddened to see a line of plastic rubbish floating to shore. None of this waste was sourced from the atoll (as they did not buy bottled water or polystyrene boxes) and had floated hundreds of miles to mar the otherwise spotless beaches. The locals are left to clean up the waste and either reuse it, bury it or burn it. A sign of the outside world impacting on life here; it's interconnectedness despite the vast tract of surrounding ocean dwarfing the atoll. Other reminders of the wider world included the sea level assessment station that had been erected by the University of Hawaii, presumably studying many islands in the Pacific for sea level rise. If the sea rose 1m, almost the entire habitable portion of this atoll would be underwater.

Summoned by the ringing of the enormous bell we made our way to church, the service of which unfortunately was all in Kapinga, but we could pick up on the gist of it and the passion presented in their harmonic singing of hymns came to us as the new (ie post-Christianity period) story telling and was a treat to listen to. Reverend Yoster was kind enough to translate for us, as he invited us to speak to the congregation at the end of the ceremony and we thanked them for their warm welcome. We were invited to Rue – the Pastors' house for coffee after the service. We could see the locals houses, which were thatched palm leaf roofing supported on four poles to protect an un-walled living space below. Sometimes an elevated platform was installed and covered with woven palm leaf mats, the open walls certainly enable air flow which was crucial as the searing heat of the day abated. I had brought along a banana cake that I had made, and

Rue gave us a gift of a pumpkin which almost made my eyes pop I was that excited to see fresh food!

We enjoyed snorkeling the channel that gave access to the lagoon, as the currents and tide ran through at a fast speed. We saw a plethora of fish schools like parrot fish, trevally and mackerel, sharks and we were treated to a view of an inquisitive spotted eagle ray as it flapped its wings to come and investigate us. The range of colour of the water was like an entire box of pencils, with all the blues, aqua greens and finally yellows of the shallow reef exposing themselves depending on the depth of water and range of coral below. Just stunning.

As nighttime would fall and the glimmers of pink in the sky disappeared to give way to a canopy of stars, the island would fall silent as there was generator driven electricity for lights in only 3 places (the church, the primary school and the chiefs office) and everyone was to go to sleep. The bell was rung at 8:30pm and again at 6:30am to mark the end and start of the day. A few fires flickered on shore from the remnants of dinner as the sound of the crashing waves on the outer reef was all we could hear.

While we only spent 4 days at Kapingamarangi, it will always hold a special place in our memory and we feel so very fortunate to have been able to visit another world, so far from anywhere where modernity has not yet wiped out the culture of the islanders.

La Gitana - March 2014: The island's position is represented fairly accurate on C-Map charts. Still, there is a small offset which makes it impossible to navigate by chart plotter exclusively. You will have to eyeball your way through the passage!

Pass: There are actually three passages into Kapingamarangi all close together. The major one, most often used and described here is the one with the dogleg to the east.

Apparently the other two passes are also navigable by sailing yacht, but we have no first hand experience.

Approach waypoint ca. 0.25nm SSE from the entrance to the passage: 01°01.7N 154°45.5E

Entrance to the passage: 01°01,9N 154°45,56E

The pass has a big concrete marker with a red flashing light on its portside. Inside the passage there are several markers on the port- and starboard side and in all but the worst light conditions it is fairly obvious which side they mark.

The pass itself is very deep, up to 40m, but gets shallow at the inner side where it ends up in the lagoon. We have seen a least depth of 7m there although the water appears a lot shallower because of the clarity of the water.

At ebb tide there is a medium strength current going seaward in the passage. At flood tide the current is almost still. The several times we went through the passage on the yacht or in the dinghi the current always was strongest in the dogleg, where it formed an eddy.

In strong winds from the West to the Southeast the current in the passage might attain rates of 4 knots or more and form big overfalls outside that can make it impossible to enter the lagoon. We know of at least one yacht that could not enter the lagoon in Southwesterlies.

We consider a night entry through the passage as impossible.

Pilotage: Sometimes the islanders monitor VHF 16. You might try to give them a call if you feel insecure about entering the passage. Keep in mind though, that the pass is 5nm from the settlement and it is not guaranteed that the locals will come in a boat to guide you in due to chronic fuel shortage.

Formalities and fees: The government officials are rather easygoing in Kapingamarangi. It will most likely be the Chief Magistrate to come out to your yacht to check you in. As long as you can produce a valid cruising permit, you can stay as long as you like. If you do not have a cruising permit, things might get more complicated.

There are no fees.

Navigation and anchoring: The lagoon is fairly deep in many places, up to 100m. There are quite many patch reefs which can be seen fairly clearly. Most of them, but not all!, had a white PVC pipe as marker.

The settlement is on two islands connected by a bridge in the North of the eastern side of the atoll. The concrete dock and some tin roofs can be seen from the pass.

Anchorage in front of the village can be difficult, since the seabed is totally covered with coral and there is a hardly a sand spot to be found. Anchoring depths are between 10 to 20m.

Supplies: There are no stores on the island and the land is not very fertile. There is a limited supply of atoll fruits and veggies available for trade or sale.

The islanders are very gifted carvers and if you want to see or buy carvings, you are well advised to make that known the moment you arrive, so the carvers have time to get to work.

Trivia: There are about 300 people on Kapingamarangi. The people are Polynesian and notoriously welcoming. There still seems to be a strong and traditional communal bond between the people.

Outrigger sailing canoes, often carved from driftwood trunks, are still in wide use and the hospitality of the people is unparalleled.

Diving through the pass gives you the opportunity to be pushed through a big school of grey sharks and there is also a cute wreck of a Japanese WWII freighter lying on its side in 7-14m depth. The locals will show you the location of the wreck, but be careful: we have seen a lot of unexploded shells scattered around and inside the wreck!

If you go to Kapingamarangi, it is a good idea to try to contact the island on HF radio before leaving port. The locals would certainly be delighted, if they could "order" some supplies from you to bring along. Call "Kapingamarangi" or "Papa 24" on 7.876,5 kHz USB.

We stayed more than a month in Kapingamarangi in January and February 2014 and had an outstanding time here.

Ironie - Jan 2014: Coming up from the Solomons, headed for Pohnpei, I couldn't make Pohnpei, so ended up stopping at Kapingamarangi. The pass is not difficult, and the anchorage has good protection from N to E, but not if the wind goes S or W. Diving is OK, but not great (compared to the Solomons, which we just left). We had 25-30 kts from W quadrant twice while we were there. The second time we went to a western part of the reef for protection.

This is not a port of entry, but since I had my cruising permit, I was allowed to stay.

U.S. Sailing Directions: Kapingamarangi Atoll (1°04'N., 154°45'E.) consists of 30 small wooded islets lying on the E side of an atoll reef. The reef on the W end of the atoll is almost submerged at HW. The islands are covered with coconut palms and other trees. Touhou Island, 35m high and connected N to Veilua Island (Ueru Island) by a causeway, is the center of population and the home of a native chief. A stone and coral pier is situated on the lagoon side of Touhou Island.

The seaward side of the atoll is steep-to. The lagoon is deep, but is studded with numerous coral heads and reefs, some of which uncover. A 3m coral head and a 0.3m coral head lie just within the SE channel of Greenwich Passage, located on the SW side of the atoll. A 0.6m shoal is located about 0.5 mile ESE of the NE beacon in Greenwich Passage.

Tides—Currents.—Tidal currents reach a maximum velocity of 5 knots and have a tendency to set toward the reefs on the W side of the passage.

Seas and swell are confused and choppy during local squalls and thunderstorms. From December through April, the sea and swell are from the NE; from May through November, they are from the SE; and from October through January, they are from the W. The heights are 0.6 to 1.2m, 0.6 to 0.9m, and 1.5 to 1.8m, respectively. The last named heights occur about 10 per cent of the time.

Depths—Limitations.—Greenwich Passage (The Passage), which is useable by small vessels with local knowledge at or near slack water, under favorable light and weather conditions, is the only entrance into the atoll from seaward. The passage consists of three channels, two of which are useable. The SE channel, which is not marked, is the narrower, shallower, and straighter of the two, and is reportedly favored by sailing vessels. It has a width of 68m and was reported to have a clear depth of 9.1m. A shoal, with a depth of 4.1m, lies at the channel's inner end.

The W channel, which has a width of 100m, is the deeper channel, and is marked by branches stuck into the reef. The channel contains a 90° bend.

Reports have indicated that currents with a velocity up to 6 knots set through the passage. The strongest ebb current was reported to occur at LW, and continues for 1 to 2 hours after LW.

A vessel reported (1985) that after negotiating the turn in the W channel, a vessel should continue to bear right to avoid a shoal. Vessels transiting the SE channel should immediately bear right and favor the reef side once through the entrance.

Anchorage.—Anchorage can be taken by small vessels with local knowledge off the lagoon side of Touhou Island. The reefs and shoals are usually visible under favorable conditions of light.

Swingin' on a Star - January 2009: Kapingamarangi's Greenwich passage has a bad reputation. Guides use words like, "devious", and phrases like "only to be used with local knowledge". The current is said to get up to 6 knots. Figuring out when slack will occur in an atoll pass is more black magic than science unless you know the place. If the swell is big and breaking over the windward side of the island continuously, you may never have a flood in the leeward passes. That said, just after high tide will probably be the low current point on such a day. If I'm not in the know I try to make the passes right after high tide.

Surprisingly Kaping has a tide station and our Navionics chip has the data. It seemed pretty accurate as well. We were shooting for a 15:30 pass transit. This was about an hour after high tide, hopefully slack.

As we approached we were running about a half hour late. Then Hideko, who was on watch, called me to the helm. I was laying in the cockpit looking up at the beautiful blue sky. At the helm Hideko pointed out a very large and nasty looking dark and layered cloud system. Right over Kaping. What luck.

We soldiered on, determined to make our date with the pass. To fail would mean floating around in the ocean for at least another 12 hours. If the storm was parked on the atoll when we arrived there would be no way we could enter, or even get close. It was already apparent that the Navionics chart of Kaping was more of a characature than a real chart. The shape of the atoll was close, but close would put you on the reef in several places. It is fixed a good half mile NNW of where the real island is. The chart also does not show the pass. Between the Navionics chart, the US Sailing Directions (126) and the South Pacific Anchorages book, I found the SPA with its sketch chart of the pass the most valuable.

As we closed on the stormy mass of cloud we could see white caps whipping up ahead. We reefed down as the wind climbed up to 30 knots. It was a big nasty storm system but I hadn't seen any lightening yet and we looked to be clear of the rain. So after heading up to reef we continued in.

We came in on the south western most island and then followed the reef to the west. On a calm day with poor vis this would be a dangerous foray for the first timer. The western extent of the reef was breaking presently, but likely because of the turbulent sea from the recent storm activity.

As we came along the reef we spotted a big piling. It marked the pass for heaven's sake. How nice, and unexpected. The sky was still overcast but we had fair visibility, the conditions were calm enough on the SW side of the reef and the sun was behind us. We were 30-45 minutes late but decided to make a go of it.

The pass is very deep and reasonably wide but there are strong currents and eddies in the entrance. I was watching the log and the SOG closely. It seemed we had about a knot of counter current but the eddies were threatening to turn us sideways. I powered up and moved through the pass at 5 knots SOG, though it would have been 6 without the current.

The most dramatic thing about this pass is the 90 degree right you have to make in the middle of the transit. There is a stick on the inside of the turn to mark the reef and the water is deep but when we went through there were nasty rips all around the area just after the bend. You really have to stay on the wheel and watch your track as you come through here.

In retrospect it wasn't that bad a pass, but it certainly deserves respect and you do have to be on your game when you go through. I would never attempt it with more than a couple of knots of current or with poor visibility. The **pass** can be found at position 01-01.770N, / 154-45.554E (WGS84). Approach from the south and only in good light and with great care.

Once in we headed for the southeastern most island, straight along the inside of the reef. There is a patch of 20 foot water along the route but we found no real hazards. Once behind the windward islands we ran up to a sandy bit and **anchored**. *Their reported position from Sailblogs was 01-03.1'N / 154-48.3'E*

What a beautiful batch of islands. We were very glad to be anchored in paradise, rather than hove to in a squall in reefy waters.

Shortly after we anchored, the acting chief hailed us on the VHF. I was very surprised. Most islanders don't have a VHF, much less the inkling to hail you on one. The chief asked if we had a cruising permit straight away. I suppose the US affiliation has bred paranoia and excessive bureaucracy in the FSM, just like at home. I told the chief that we had filled all the paperwork and that we had two other yachts inbound. He was very friendly and had no problem with us checking in tomorrow.

Not one canoe or boat came to "lookabout". It is the most serene place we have been in some time. We got the boat put away and relaxed with a rum and coke while the sun made a spectacular exit.

It was a stormy night last night. The GRIB files had shown the dense cloud mass hanging around the higher latitudes coming down this way by end of the day yesterday. That was one of the reasons we pushed to arrive yesterday.

We chatted with Angelique on the SSB this morning and they were making good time. It was going to be a close one for them though. If they could hold 6 knots they would probably make the pass before current and light shut it down. Whistler had gone out of VHF range but we exchanged emails last night and hoped to pick Eric up on VHF sometime in the afternoon.

Although we are at the exact same longitude as the islands in PNG that we came from, and anything in the 155E neighborhood should be UTC+10, all of Pohnpei State, FSM is UTC+11. So our boat is 9AM and the island is 10AM.

Our host Solomon, the acting chief, hailed us on the VHF at 10AM island time. We told him that we would come into the village at 11AM island time. We are anxious to see how everyone on the island is. Polynesians are very hardy and self sufficient so I doubt there is any immediate concern post the high tides. That said we are hopeful that the little aid that we bring will be of some help. We have coordinated with Whistler and Angelique so that we distribute half of our cargo to Kaping and half to Nukuoro. Nukuoro has fewer people I believe, but I think they were harder hit.

When we went ashore we were greeted by lots of friendly children. The first adult I saw took us to Solomon's office, which is right across from the quay behind the infirmary. They had received a large aid package from Pohnpei earlier in the month but were happy to have the additional supplies we brought. They had also received a very nice photo voltaic system with solar panels, huge batteries, monitoring gear and inverters when the supply ship came.

Solomon was an excellent host and served us fresh coconut milk while we talked about the village and life in general. The five island policemen unloaded our dinghy as we chatted. As it turns out there is no crime on Kaping but the police take care of administrative functions for the chief.

After a couple of hours getting to know Solomon and Kaping we returned to the dink. There were a lot of kids around the quay playing and oggling at the strangers and their strange boat. I had asked one of the kids to help me find the chief when we got here but the face went directly into the hands. The kids are so cute and shy, I assume that the younger ones only speak Kapinga as they didn't seem to understand me. I later found out that shy and lack of English comprehension comes in context.

When we jumped into the dink I noticed two long sticks of sugar cane (which I had been slowly gnawing on) that Jack from Nuguria had given us. I asked the kids if they liked sugar cane. The torrent of yeses was immediate. I handed the two long sticks over and they disappeared as if I had thrown a bleeding water buffalo into parana infested waters.

Hideko and I spent the afternoon exploring the islands around the atoll. When we reached the southern most island, which is really just a coral rock with a couple of palm trees and a US Navy survey marker, we saw Whistler coming in. We hailed Eric on the VHF and he seemed in good spirits. We raced out to the pass to meet him and guide him into the lagoon. A big, black out style, squall was coming so it was a bit of a race. It was not long after high tide, so as long as the squall didn't kill visibility Eric was in good shape.

Whistler came in through the tricky entrance with good light and no problems and followed us to the anchorage just before the rain came. It was his first time single handing on a double overnighter. He wasn't really too tired and seemed no worse for the wear. Eric is a great sailor.

As we were relaxing in the afternoon, Louie came by in his power boat. Louie is a great local guy with rough English skills but a great desire to overcome them. He brought us coconuts as a gift and offered to take us diving on the Japanese ship wreck and the US plane wreck from WWII inside the lagoon. We happily accepted that offer!

As dusk was coming Angelique came into contact. We had been worried that they would not make sunset. Even if they did, a safety margin was necessary today because we were in a three or four day window with overcast and squalls per the gribbs. More importantly the pass currents needed to be considered. My estimates suggested that high tide slack (the best time to transit) would be around 15:00, so entering too much after 17:00 would be pretty hairy. Take visibility away and you have a formula for disaster.

Late in the day Angelique reported in on VHF. We were all happy to hear that they were close. I copied 1.2 miles out on the radio so Eric and I jumped into the dinghy to survey the pass and help them through, if it was still safe. There was a big black squall coming our way on the way out. At the pass we met a bunch of friendly local guys fishing. Every adult on Kaping has learned English in school but I think only those that deal with outsiders often can really hold up a conversation. After a few attempts to ask the fishermen what they thought about conditions, we settled for "good evening", which seemed to go over well.

Things went down hill from there. The pass, on the way out in the dinghy, was borderline. Asked my opinion, I would say no go. It was still doable, but I had to think of a first timer coming through with the 90 degree right hand turn and the crazy turbulence and eddies running up to 2+ knots. Eric and I could still manage on the dinghy though so if At was committed to coming in we would help as much as we could. Then we realized that Angelique was not 1.2 miles out at last check, she was 12 miles out. She was not going to make sunset.

We talked to At and Dia on Angelique over the hand held VHF and they said there were going to head into the pass approach. We told them we'd keep looking at things until they got close and then give them an assessment. Eric and I ran the pass with a hand held GPS to create track lines as the light failed and a squall hit. It was very wet and very dark. Each run we made of the pass became harder and harder due to the increasing chaos in the pass and the fading light. The beacon at the pass entrance has a weak strobe on it but the other markers become hard to

see. We ran onto the shoal twice with the dinghy trying to perfect our pitch black transit technique.

By the time Angelique actually got into striking range the pass was running over 3 knots and it was just too dark and dangerous. We came out the pass to meet them and give them our input. It was a bummer to get so close and then have to stand off all night.

As we came out of the pass I saw Angelique's running lights close by. Then I saw them rock violently back and forth. In my mind I thought, "she's on the reef". At came over the VHF and said, "we've hit the reef". The worst nightmare of any sailor ensued.

It was after six PM on Friday night when Eric and I made our way to Angelique as she sat stranded on the reef in a falling tide. It was so dark that we had to be very careful not to run aground. There were no stars, no moon and no other outside lights. It was completely disorienting. The islands of Kapingamarangi were sometimes visible, and this occasional shadow was hardly enough to give you an idea of where the snaky reef was.

At asked us to find deep water for him. This was not so easy given the conditions but we used the flood light we had brought to find water at least deep enough to float in. At worked Angleique's engine hard to back her out but the swell (which fortunately was wrapping around from the northeast and not striking her directly) kept her pinned down.

Over the next hour we lost more and more water as we tried every thing we could think of to move Angelique out into deeper water. We tried to tow a line from the bow with the dinghy. We tried pushing with the dinghy. We tried to take a halyard and heel her with the dinghy. All the time At was working Angelique's overheating engine. It was no use. She was fast aground, grinding her keel, and possibly rudder, on the hard coral below.

At this point we decided to run out a kedge and to try and winch her off with the windlass. In retrospect this should have been our first tactic. We knew the tide was falling though and had hoped for a quick fix while the water was near the level she had come on with.

Our dinghy was not the greatest tool in all of this. The control line for the shifter is not setup right and the engine is half in forward when the shifter is set to neutral (the only place it will start) and the reverse wont engage at all. I tried to fix this while we were underway but the cable is not long enough. Running around the choppy water with the rocking Angelique looming overhead with only forward and a slow forward neutral, that generally causes the engine to stall after a minute, was not optimal.

Eric grabbed the heavy dreadnaught anchor that At lowered down to us and we went out in search of the nearest deep water. Angelique was facing West, beam onto the reef and seas, at this point and due to a bulge in the reef here, more west would be worse. East was not good and North was the breakers. So we set the kedge anchor out to the south. We sounded out the area with a lead line and it was deep enough to float Angelique's 2.3 meter draft. Eric jumped onboard Angelique to work the engine while At and Dia operated the winch. The winch up button had failed, of course, and so now Dia was having to short out the solenoid to run the winch while At tailed the rode coming up.

The kedge held and we managed to get Angelique pointing out to deep water. The tide kept falling though. As the scope went vertical on the anchor, Eric jumped back into the dinghy and we went out to pull up the anchor and reset it farther out. The anchor was attached to the

bottom. No force we could apply from our battered dink could budge it. We told At he would have to bring it up with the winch.

At this point the massive amounts of power the windlass was drawing was tripping the breaker in seconds. Eric reset the breaker as At hauled up inches at a time. Finally, ping! The anchor came free. We wanted to reset it immediately before we lost any headway we had gained. The swell continued to batter Angelique and rock her from side to side on the reef.

When the anchor finally cleared the water it was a bent mess. After some discussion we decided to use it again anyway. We are anchoring on reef and if it bites it will hold. If it holds it will not let go without fairly serious trauma. Better not to wreck two anchors while this one could still work, it was starting to look like a reef claw anyway.

We took the kedge anchor back out off of the bow again and this time dropped it in fairly deep water a little off the port bow. Even with the tide dropping, if she could make it to here she would be free. It was not to be though. We all worked to move Angelique forward but the swell had calmed and the water had dropped. The lack of swell was nice in that the boat no longer slammed up and down and across the rock, but neither did we have the liberating lift from the waves. The windlass couldn't take much more and everyone was exhausted. Low tide was at 10PM, almost two hours away, but we decided to wait.

I had let Hideko know the situation over the VHF, she was mortified but helpless to do anything but provide moral support from the quiet anchorage. We all climbed aboard the rocking Angelique to wait. Dia made us some hot noodles and we talked and planned as we watched the clock.

Angelique is an Amel, for those in the know, that says it all. Amels are designed to cruise the world with a couple aboard in comfort and safety. They are built completely for function, with no concern for form. Some people don't like their looks because of this but no one can contest the absolute focus on safety, reliability and ease of use that comes in the package. Down below the prop is in a protected aperture, the rudder is completely protected by the keel and the keel is a massive metal affair. Angelique was built in 1979, back when they used huge amounts of fiberglass (before they knew they could get away with far less). She is a 29 ton tank. If I had to sit on a reef to wait for a rising tide, I can't think of a better boat to do it on.

It was a very long two hours for all of us, but especially At and Dia. Their home was being ground left and right and occasionally picked up and dropped on solid stone. The rig was racked from side to side, interior systems were being pounded. Rain squalls came and went. It was a terrible beating.

While we waited we got a better idea of our surroundings in the total darkness that prevailed. It seemed that the tide was lifting outside the lagoon a little in advance of the tide table model. If we could just get her a few meters up the anchor rode she would be free. Everyone took their places and we made one last effort to bring Angelique back to deep water. The windlass mawed, Eric reved up the engine (which we had been constantly adding water to) and all at once the boat began to slide at first and then drive outright into the sea.

The problem was the anchor was still fast. Angelique drove up on the rode and then reeled to the side. Eric could not steer, so I jumped into the dinghy to try to nudge the boat into line before she went back on the reef. I took the painter with me as I hopped in. Then, as I drifted toward the breakers, the motor wouldn't start. Not wanting to complicate the situation with another

rescue scenario, I paddled like the devil to get back up current to Angelique. The dinghy's engine started then of course, and after a quick drive around I told Eric that Angelique was safe until the anchor came free.

Getting the anchor free was not happening though. This anchor had given its all and wanted to rest in peace in its new coral home. We obliged and cut it free, with a quick GPS waypoint to mark it in case we decided to recover it in the future. Angelique drove off into the ocean and I followed on the dink. There was no way Eric and I could get back into the lagoon in the black squally night that ensued. So instead we tied up the dinghy on a bridle, and stood 3 miles off shore until sunrise.

Everyone slept in shifts. When the sun came up Dia and I were at the helm. We came back in on the atoll as the sun ineffectively tried to shine through the layers of clouds. It was difficult to find the pass in the pale light. It is far from easy to spot along the faceless reef. The concrete beacon that marks it blended easily with the islands in the background. Eric and I jumped into the dinghy to do recon.

The pass was workable but the currents were still fairly strong and confused. It was not high tide slack but rather the lull between a low high tide and a high low tide. With proper light though, Angelique had only minor difficulty following us through into the lagoon.

At anchor next to Whistler and Swingin' on a Star, Angelique finally had peace. An amazing boat with owners who deserve her. Not only did At and Dia manage to stay calm and objective through the entire ordeal, they also cooked us all a wonderful thank you brunch. It was only shortly thereafter that everyone shut down for naps and a day of nothing but rest, in an ideal anchorage, just meters away from a very nasty reef.

---A Day of Rest: Everyone aboard the yachts in our little group was still a bit tired today. Things started getting back to normal though. Solomon gave us a hello call in the morning on 16 to let us know that his office was closed for Sunday and that mass was at 9:30. The one hour time difference was still catching us off guard so no one made it to mass. We are all now on Pohnpei time (UTC+11).

It was an overcast and rainy day with wind quite out of whack with the GFS GRIB predictions. We are anchored behind the east line of islands, so we have good protection from the predicted winds running generally east to ENE, and even for NE or SE. Today the wind is basically north. It is a long way to the north end of the atoll from here. This has created a fair amount of chop in the anchorage. It is not really bad but unless you like being secluded I would probably advise anchoring up near or past the village in the NE corner of the lagoon this time of year.

Winter winds seem to run NE to E with anomalies from N to SE. Other times of year you can get west wind in occasional gales, so we hear, which would require migrating to the north side of the atoll to anchor behind the reef.

The forecast suggests a next window with winds from the east over 10 knots and clear skies of January 30th. This is probably when we will head up to Nukuoro, a one night trip from here.

In the late morning Solomon called again and asked us to stay aboard our yachts. He had just talked to immigration in Pohnpei and apparently there are issues. It rained all day so this was no real hardship but we are curious to find out what the story is.

---January 26 - Kapinga Constitution Day: We stayed aboard all day today hailing Solomon on the VHF to no avail. It is a holiday on Kapingamarangi and a big noon time cook out was going on. We were sad to be stuck on the boats.

In the afternoon Solomon hailed me. I joined him on an SSB channel with the folks in Pohnpei. They wanted us to come to Pohnpei prior to stopping in Kapingamarangi. I told them that we had already filled out the cruising permits and would be happy to forward anything they wanted through the chief here. I also told them that we came with an aid package of 100kg of rice, much flour, sugar, cooking oil, as well as books, tarps, and plastic drums for water and what not. I went on to mention that we had a similar package for Nukuoro. I also told him that we could not travel 1,000 miles out of the way to clear in and come back to drop off the aid packages. We all need to be in Singapore before summer comes and the weather changes. It seemed sort of silly to sail right by the islands we were trying to help.

He was understanding but not willing to go against protocol. He is going to check with his superiors to see if an exception can be made.

We kept busy during the day by scuba diving under the boat to check the anchor and to look over Angelique's keel and rudder. That boat is a tank. The rudder was nicked up a bit at the trailing edge, needing about an hours worth of glass repair next haul out. Otherwise, nothing. I couldn't believe it.

In the mean time I think Solomon felt bad that we were being held up so. He sent a lovely pandana leaf basket of fresh food from the feast to all of the boats. We got lots of yummy barbecued fish, taro, rice and fresh bread (kind of like what we call Hawaiian bread in the US). It was very tasty. Hopefully tomorrow we will get things sorted out.

---Solomon hailed us on the VHF and told us that we were not allowed to go ashore or deliver the aid package, per the officials in Pohnpei. In fact we are not allowed to stop in Nukuoro, rumored to be hardest hit by the king tides, to drop off our aid package for them either. I wonder what the people on these islands think of this ruling? Is it in their best interest? No one is in danger of starving of course, the Pohnpei supply ship brought aid in the second week of January to both islands, far more than our modest contribution. Yet beyond formality, I can see no reason for the red tape. None of these islands grow any of the products we bring, so any contamination is fairly far fetched. Having been through quarantine in 30 countries I doubt post Pohnpei delivery of the aid package would look any different than pre Pohnpei delivery.

As it is, with the winds strong from the northeast, we will likely fail to fetch Pohnpei and end up blown off to Chuuk. We will spend three to four days at sea rather than three one night trips with stops in the safe harbors of Nukuoro, Ngatik or Lukunor (depending on the wind) and then Pohnpei or Chuuk (depending on the wind).

I fear that it is us, the developed world that these countries use as a template for their formalities. These far flung islands are only a country because we made them so. Heavy handed customs, immigration and quarantine are status quo in the USA, and perhaps with some reason, though even her own citizens dislike the bureaucracy. Perhaps small countries look at us and say, "ok, that's how you do it". Yet, should a country that can barely get a supply ship once a quarter to its outlying islands have such overhead? Does it really serve a purpose? These people survived for hundreds of years without such oversight. The capital would have no communications with them at all if the EU and others hadn't donated radios and solar systems.

Is any criminal hampered by the bits of paper filed 400 miles away? Illegal fishing certainly goes on unchecked. Are there other ways the FSM could invest her funds, rather than toiling to ensure that cruising yachts can seek no refuge on the 1,000 mile trip north from the Solomon Islands, nor deliver aid to islands whose resources have been damaged by climate change?

I hope that the FSM considers enabling the people of Kapingamarangi to receive yachts from the south in the future. It would create a valuable cultural exchange, bring benefit in trade to Kapingamarangi and provide a safe harbor for yachts on an otherwise unnecessarily long passage. If Palmerston, Cook Islands, can manage yacht check ins these folks certainly can.

After the bad news we set out to retrieve Angelique's kedge anchor, but after a couple of dives over a couple of days, we never did find it.

Later in the day Solomon came by. He brought us some more coconuts and some other tasty items, including a kind of donut that is made out of taro. He took us out to the locations of the WWI era sunken Japanese ship and US fighter plane as well. We spent a lot of time talking and learning more about the Kapinga people. In the end we decided to put it all together into a little cruising guide for Kapingamarangi. Unfortunately they get only one or two yacht visits every few years so it will be of limited use until the FSM allows yachts to check in at Kapingamarangi on their way up to Chuuk or Pohnpei.

We have been having an intermittent problem with one of the legs of AC from the Genset lately. Not long ago I found a burned wire in the 3 way switch and several loose connections. I cleaned that up but I think the switch may have been damaged due to the heat. Have to dig into it deeper to see. (it was the switch, swapped the genset to the shore power side and all is well, need to replace the switch)

Eric cooked dinner aboard Whistler for everyone tonight. He made a great spicy pasta and tomato sauce dish. Pretty impressive for a bachelor. We listened to Canadian, French and French/Canadian music all night (April Wine!) while playing "oh hell", which is kind of like quick and dirty bridge. It was a fun night.

---We had a day out on the water today. Everyone came over to Swingin' on a Star and we loaded up our dinghy and Angelique's with scuba and snorkel stuff.

Our first stop was the position of the Japanese ship wreck from WWII. We pulled up on a lovely beach and hit the water. It was nice snorkeling but we never found the wreck. Eric finished his Navigation dive and only has one more to go for his Advanced Open Water cert. We went out on local advice targeting low tide, but the visibility in the lagoon wasn't fantastic at this time.

Solomon came by after our dive to say hello. He brought us three different kinds of bananas, bread fruit, bread, coconuts, and some other stuff. It was an amazing amount of food. We thanked him heartily and told him that we would catch up with him tomorrow before we left. I think he wishes the officials in Pohnpei were a little more reasonable. That said he is doing his best to do right by them and us. It has been a little odd but we have still had a great time in Kapingamarangi.

We are likely to head for Chuuk in the next couple of days.

----The three yachts in our fleet had a routing meeting last night aboard Angelique. Whistler and Angelique decided to leave Friday (today) and we decided to leave the Saturday (tomorrow).

Dia made us all some excellent coffee and we looked over the route and weather. We have some clouds on the gribbs in the area on the 30th but less so going forward. Winds are predicted to be from about 070 degrees at 10-15, which often means 10-20 and up to 30 in squalls. Should be a fast sail to Chuuk.

We had all wanted to go to Pohnpei but it just wasn't in the cards. You can get breaks from the northeast wind, wind from the east or even east south east, this time of year, but not long enough to make it to Pohnpei direct. Island hopping yes, direct, not this time around. So Chuuk it was, and even at that we'd be passing up Lukunor, a perfectly good atoll, along the way.

The mono hulls are looking at a three nighter, hoping to make 5.5 knots average. We are shooting for a two nighter, hoping for a 7 knot average. In the evening of the 2nd the wind picks up to 20 knots on the grib so we expect up to 25. This makes for fast sailing but the seas get big enough that it is more fun to be in port. All three boats hope to be inside the Truk lagoon by sunset on the 2nd.

We are planning to go in a pass in the south part of the reef. The main pass is in the northeast and requires quite a bit of unnecessary exposed sailing, only then to make an entrance at a pass facing the weather and seas. It must be fine, as it is the main pass, but seems less than optimal for a north bound yacht. The charts for Chuuk look pretty good with lots of detail and many soundings. To be expected given the history of the place.

Whistler left at around 9AM and found the Greenwich pass running a bit over two knots. His report back was that it was, "a little scary". Angelique decided upon a prudent low tide slack water departure at around 11AM. Angelique reported a pleasant departure. Both yachts were making good way in fair conditions when we last caught up on the VHF.

Hideko and I spent the day cleaning up aboard Swingin' on a Star and getting her ready to sail. It's hard to believe but we will have been here 9 days when we finally depart. For not going ashore nor being welcome (by the Pohnpei government), it was perhaps the most friendly and pleasant place we have ever visited. Not a day went by where we did not receive taro, lobsters, coconuts, feast baskets or some other island delicacy from the local people.

We took a comprehensive tour of the islands today in the dinghy. It was a fantastic time and I'm really sorry our friends on the other boats missed it. We located an awesome enclosed anchorage that would be suitable for a west wind and great in anything with north in it. We took soundings along the way and stopped at several of the idyllic islands (though we didn't go ashore). We took a lot of great pictures including several of the village islands and the bridge that connects them. Hideko also located the Japanese ship wreck and the American plane wreck. The Japanese ship wreck was particularly impressive. Unlike most wrecks in the world, it is still completely intact. Finding a ship wreck that still has its prop is a very rare thing to say the least, given their value.

12.2 SW Of Palau

12.2.1 Sonsorol Islands (05-20N / 132-13E)

12.2.2 Pulo Anna (04-39N / 131-57E)

12.2.3 Merir Island (04-19N / 132-19E)

12.2.4 Helen Reef (02-52N / 131-45E)

Soggy Paws – August 2016: We stopped at Helen Reef on our way up to Palau from Raja Ampat. The first half of our trip was light and sunny conditions, and we motor sailed, stopping one night at Ayu Atoll.

Approaching the west side of the reef from the south, we trolled really close in (before we realized that we probably shouldn't be fishing!). We got a massive strike from something that took our best lure. We quit fishing after that.

We had our AIS on, so we weren't surprised when we got a call on Channel 16 as we entered the reef pass. But it turns out the Rangers don't have AIS—they use a 24 mile radar to look out for fish boats poaching near the reef.

It seems like the lot of the rangers from Tobi has vastly improved over conditions described by previous cruisers. They had recently been visited by a supply ship—which now comes once a month fairly regularly, so they were not wanting for anything...except beer. We generally have a policy against giving the "locals" alcohol, but we did eventually leave them with our last 6 pack of beer.

All the guys were clean-cut and spoke good English. They were friendly and accommodating. However, the official policy of the Tobi State (which owns Helen Reef) is that any visitor must have a permit to do ANYTHING, which includes not just diving, but taking pictures, snorkeling and walking on the island. This permit now costs \$1,500!! (Greedy bastards!)

They said we could stay and make an "emergency stop". Our (fairly truthful) excuse was that our watermaker wasn't working and we were running out of water. We wanted to stop to try to fix the watermaker. It being rainy season, they had ample water and allowed us to come in and fill our jugs up, which got us to Palau with plenty of water.

Because the Palau Patrol Vessel 001 happened to be visiting when we arrived, the rangers told us that we **MUST** follow the rules (ie no diving or snorkeling or walking on the island). But on further inquiry, we could snorkel or dive if required on our mooring. So we were given permission to look around a little bit.

When 001 left, they felt that they were able to bend the rules a little, and took us with them on their several-times-a-week spearfishing trip to get food. We didn't spearfish ourselves, but they did enough for all of us. We ended up with a big feast of fish, and we brought salad and a big tray of brownies. The next night we cooked up 2 of our Sorong chickens, with potatoes and vegetables, which they really enjoyed.

The mooring situation is pretty pitiful. They had no idea what was on the bottom, and they are down to one mooring, the other two lines having broken. We tried to find the other moorings for them and re-attach new lines, but it was deep, and not great vis, so even though we dove an

expanding square search starting right where they were sure the most recently missing mooring was. We never did find either of the other 2 moorings. After a getting a good look at what was on the bottom of our mooring, and looking at the weather forecast—SW winds to 20 knots, we decided to drop our own anchor...just ahead of where the remaining mooring was, so we would just swing clear of it. The depth is about 15-17 meters and good sand (as long as you don't drop in anything shallower than 15 m). We were pretty careful not to destroy any live coral. We slept a lot better with our own 100lb anchor and hi-tensile chain.

I am pretty sure they would have let us stay for a few more days, but looking at the forecast, we wanted to beat the monsoon winds to Palau (a monsoon trough was dropping down from up north onto Palau, and eventually Helen Reef) So we only stayed 2 full days.

We were cautioned by the rangers not to blog or post pictures of any of our activities with them, as they weren't supposed to be taking us out in their boat. (so keep this report among the cruising community). They said "You cruisers are always getting us in trouble!"

The rangers had found what looks like a WWII tank in the shallow water inside the reef, about 1-2 miles east of the island. You could clearly see the big tracks and a turret gun. We took pictures, but sadly can't show them to anyone! Googling after we got internet in Palau, I couldn't find any mention of a tank on Helen Reef, so this could be a pretty interesting find. We encouraged the guys to report it up the chain.

Our leg from Helen Reef to Palau was a blistering downwind sleighride, and we did indeed arrive ahead of the squally weather that moved in the next day. We only had one squall to 35 knots in the middle of the night, the last night out.

Sloepmouche – November 2014: Helen Reef lies about 200nm north of Waigeo, Raja Ampat and 320nm SSW of Palau. Located almost on a direct course between those two places, Helen Reef is a convenient place to rest and/or repair on the way. We had gathered conflicting info on how yachts are welcomed there so we were not sure if we would stop or not.

Our sail from Waigeo was good—after a few hours of motoring in calm seas around Waigeo, we finally got some favorable wind, as well as a favorable current. During a short squall, we somehow broke four of our plastic main sail sliders so we decided that this was a sign to check out Helen Reef. Dropping our mainsail was not enough to slow down enough to get there by daylight (we did not want to arrive in the evening) so we furled some of our genoa and reefed our mizzen sail (first time ever!). We arrived outside the pass at about 8 a.m. with good light to enter the pass. We were prepared, as we had checked the topography on Google Earth (in case we decided to stop) and took exact GPS positions to negotiate the winding channel leading into the lagoon. The GE photo is spot on for the entrance and channel. Entry outside: 02°52.50'N, 131°43.84'E. The channel is wide, at least a few hundred feet across, and the four times we visited the pass, there was never any strong current.

Call the Ranger station on VHF Channel 16. If no reply, try again several times, as they might not be near the radio. With good light, it is very easy to see the channel and the passages inside. There's no need for the rangers to come and help you in. But if you arrive in bad light at high tide with no wind and a lot of reflection of clouds, (as we had going out), follow the GE image exactly. Hopefully there will be buoys marking the channel with yellow reflective tape on port as you enter, and blue reflective tape on the right. While we were entering, they saw us on their radar (used to spot any illegal fishing boat in the vicinity) and welcomed us.

After the twisting channel we followed the west side all the way north to the tiny island where the ranger station is located. You have to go around some shallow reefs to get into the inner lagoon nearest the island to access the three moorings available for visitors (as always, check the integrity of the mooring personally after you are secure). There is a large mooring (or marker) showing the start of the passage into the inner lagoon. Shortly after we settled we had a visit from the rangers in their patrol boat. We invited them aboard and asked them permission to stay a few days. The four Conservation Area Rangers are very welcoming! Any boat wanting to stop to fix some technical issue or just to take a rest and visit the Conservation Area is welcome. We arrived just in time, for the next day the weather was black and rainy. Not the best conditions to enter the reef. But it was nice to receive the heavy rain—we all had a chance to refill our water tanks! We had bright sunshine after that!

Helen Reef Conservation Area prohibits all sorts of fishing and taking of any resources, but recreational activities are encouraged. The rangers have radar to scan the area and they patrol periodically. The rangers' main mission is to keep Indonesian and Filipino fishing boats away, as they like to come inside the protected lagoon and use their nets and spear guns to take all fish and whatever they can get money for. Often they use dynamite and net, killing everything indiscriminately (the rangers are living among thousands of birds, which were nesting at the time we were there). You can see turtles laying eggs at night if you are lucky. There's great snorkeling close to the anchorage and scuba diving in the pass and also outside of the barrier reef all around the lagoon.

We stayed here for a week, fixing a few technical issues, filming, diving and waiting for a good weather window to head to Palau. The good thing is that the Marine Conservation Park encourages visitors to come and snorkel, dive and visit, but poachers are not welcome! Few visitors come here, as it is so remote! Some charter boats come from Palau a few times a year and a few sailboats stop here in any given year and they are welcome. No one is allowed to fish or take live animals, but the Rangers are more than happy to share their catch with you. They will even take you to good dive spots if you can give them fuel. Any spare materials that you have on board that can be used to help them, such as old pieces of chain or line or jerry cans, will be so greatly appreciated as donations.

What is nice is to see that they all are happy to stay here for a three-month stretch at a time, often extending their time to nine months. These are young people who are happy to live in primitive conditions with nature at their doorstep—and even inside of their door, since birds fly in their kitchen and office area all the time!). They do not miss mobile phones, Facebook and the rest. They have two dogs to keep them company and do not feel lacking of anything! Twice daily they have a SSB radio schedule with the office in Koror so they can report anything happening. We were so lucky to meet Louis, Matthew, Jamos and his wife, Samrina, the very welcoming rangers on duty at that time. It is nice to see young people dedicated to their job of protecting this area. When we first arrived, they repelled an Indonesian fishing boat that threw dynamite in the water to keep the rangers off during their escape at sea, but that is very rare behavior. Normally they go away peacefully or surrender and pay the fines if caught illegally fishing.

The rangers are also protecting and studying the turtles that come year after year to lay their eggs. They tag them and see them coming back to lay eggs several times a year and then again years later. The rangers also protect the birds living and nesting on their tiny island. Last but not least, they protect giant clams, sometimes even displacing them for better areas to

thrive. When I told the rangers that we produce videos to promote activities and countries on the Internet, they asked us if we could film and make a short film about the Conservation Area to post on their website. We accepted with pleasure and we are pleased to see their enthusiasm at acting in the different shots we are taking to illustrate their different activities. This video is already posted on www.Youtube.com/Sloepmouche. While filming their activity of installing marker buoys to assist other boats coming through the entry channels, we also used our scuba gear to help secure the floats in the deeper areas.

One part of the lagoon is reserved for the ranger's own subsistence so they catch some tasty fish for meals. We had some meals with them including a potluck where they loved the pasta and meat/tomato based sauce that we prepared and we enjoyed the different fish. Our last day was also Jackie's birthday, so that evening she made pizza and they made fish and sashimi and we had chocolate cake and frozen banana sorbet! They said it was the first birthday they had celebrated with any visitor. Jackie was very touched by the presents: beautiful cowry shells and a lava lava sarong, made by Samrina.

We are glad to have visited the Conservation Area of Helen Reef on our way from Indonesia to Palau. We enjoyed the snorkeling and the diving in the area. Great memories and videos! We recommend a visit here to all cruisers passing in the area!

Despite GRIB files showing us a forecast of ESE wind at 10-15kn, we ended up motor sailing in very light wind all the way to Palau. But that will be the subject of our next letter.

Kelearin – August 2012: Cruising notes: DO NOT GO HERE WHEN THERE IS A LOW PRESSURE SYSTEM ABOVE PALAU!!!!!! Anchorage ((02 52.504N; 131 43.841E (entrance))(02 57.9N; 131 48.5E (mooring)). There is room to anchor in sand rather than take the mooring. Beautiful spot and can swim to snorkel on at least 3 reef sections. Walking around the island is great and you can watch the turtles being released or stay into the night to watch the big turtles come ashore to lay their eggs. Caretakers welcome visitors and appreciate any gifts. We left them a bunch of DVDs.

Helen Reef maybe gets 4 or 5 visiting yachts per year and we show up on the morning with another yacht arriving from the opposite direction. The caretakers came down to the opening to lead us through the maze of reefs and up to Helen Island where we anchored. Good thing, as our charts did not accurately reflect the reefs here at all.

The other yacht, a mega yacht, anchored outside of the lagoon while we were lead inside to a mooring. Fine, we thought. Nice, calm, peaceful. For two days, then all hell broke loose.

The SW monsoon regularly breeds super squalls and we got 3 of them over two days. We were up all night for two nights, fighting boarding waves, dragging on the mooring, which we finally dropped just before hitting the reef, and then the next night dragging on our own anchor. The squalls were like pit bulls on acid, ferocious, packing 50 knots in front of them. Jim and I both thought for awhile we were going to lose the boat on the reefs. Unlike me, Jim is skilled and keeps his head during these things. While I was screaming as loud as the squalls, Jim managed to get us re-anchored in unimaginable conditions.

Other than that, Helen Reef was an amazing stop. The caretakers, Hercules, Frano and Petra, were very welcoming and invited us ashore to see the turtles laying their eggs and be a part of the releasing of the babies.

They came by the boat with gifts of fish and lobster and pointed out the best snorkeling spots. Every time we went in the dinghy we saw turtles and rays swimming in front of us.

The island is small and getting smaller. It has moved east over the past 10 years and according to one of the caretakers, Frano, who has come here a lot over the last 20 years, the island is only 1/4 of its original size and he predicts it will be gone in 10 more years.

Vaarwell – Feb 2011: Coming from the island of Borneo (Malaysia) and sailing ESE to Papua New Guinea, Helen Reef makes a good halfway stopover. The four caretakers at Helen Reef informed us that yachts are welcome and not required to have cleared for Palau, before stopping at Helen reef. We did not pay any fees, there were no clearance procedures, we never showed a passport or other official paperwork. Only 4 people live on the island and their work is for the national park service.

(Ed: Note however that the official regulations for Palau state that all visiting yachts must first clear at Malakal before visiting the outer islands. See Palau Clearance for more information.)

Helen Reef is a marine park and provides a breeding ground for green turtles and thousands of seabirds on Helen Island. The island itself is very small and very low lying. Rising sea levels are threatening the island's existence unfortunately.

C-map shows Helen Reef in great detail, but not in the correct location. The entrance to the **pass** is found at **2°52.48'N and 131°43.13'E** and from that point the detailed chart shows all the significant reefs and the passes between them.

We called Helen Reef on the VHF, but did not get an answer until we were inside the pass. With good light, entering the pass is straight forward. The caretakers have only a handheld VHF, so they received our messages, but their unit had limited transmission power. They came in their runabout to the pass, even though it was late in the afternoon.

Once inside we dropped anchor in 15 meters, sand and coral with poor holding.

They came again next morning and guided us through the lagoon to an **anchorage** near Helen Island (**2°58.02'N, 131°47.71'E**), good holding in sand, 15 meters.

We spent two weeks at Helen Reef. Snorkelling, spear fishing, watching birds and turtles, having meals and long conversations with the caretakers, walking round the island, it was all good fun. Helen island has suffered extensive erosion in recent years, due to mismanagement (the caretakers are hard at work trying to make amends for that) and rising sea levels. The size of the island has been reduced to a quarter(!) of the original size, but the good news is that the reduction seems to have stopped and the island is stabilizing. Saying that: we were there at a spring tide with 20-25 knots wind from the SW producing moderate size waves, that every now and then washed over the island near the caretakers house. That same evening quite a few bird nests were swamped as well and the eggs ruined.

There are plans to raise and enlarge Helen island by spouting sand on, to give the breeding birds and turtles more room (the island is phenomenally overcrowded), but nobody has found the money yet to implement this plan. So to anybody with a lot of dough and a liking for big turtles and small birds: here is your chance to do a lot of good and associate your name forever with Helen reef and Helen island.

We left with a light north westerly wind. Our next destination was Ninigo Atoll in Papua New Guinea, 800 miles south east.

Dreamkeeper - April 2009: We stopped at Helen Reef on our way from Palau to Indonesia (Sorong). We stayed a week anchored in front of this little island and could have stayed a month. The three rangers that were there, Paul, Hercules and David, were all wonderful guys and treated us like family.

We hung out with them daily, spearfishing, playing chess and having little reef and crayfish barbeques at their compound. At night we would accompany them on turtle patrol; we searched for turtle tracks, nesting turtles and hatching nests. We even got to see some hawksbill mommas laying eggs. Lucky us.

The rangers will probably have a VHF on when you get close to Helen and will try to call you. They actually came out in their little skiff, which we towed behind DreamKeeper while the guys came on board and piloted us through the narrow reef entrance and through the scattered coral bomies up to Helen Island.

Helen Reef was definitely a highlight of our year.

12.2.5 Tobi Island (03-00N / 131-07E)

Warning: this island looks on Google Earth to be nearly 3 miles WEST of where it shows on the CM93 charts (2010 edition).

13 Traditional Navigation in the Caroline Islands

The below information was copied off of Terry, s/v Valhalla's website, verbatim. The reason for copying in vs just sharing the link, is that it's one of those things you'd like to have when you are "out island" and have time to play, and likely there will be no internet there. Terry has a lot of other useful information about Navigation on his website, here: <http://yachtvalhalla.net/>

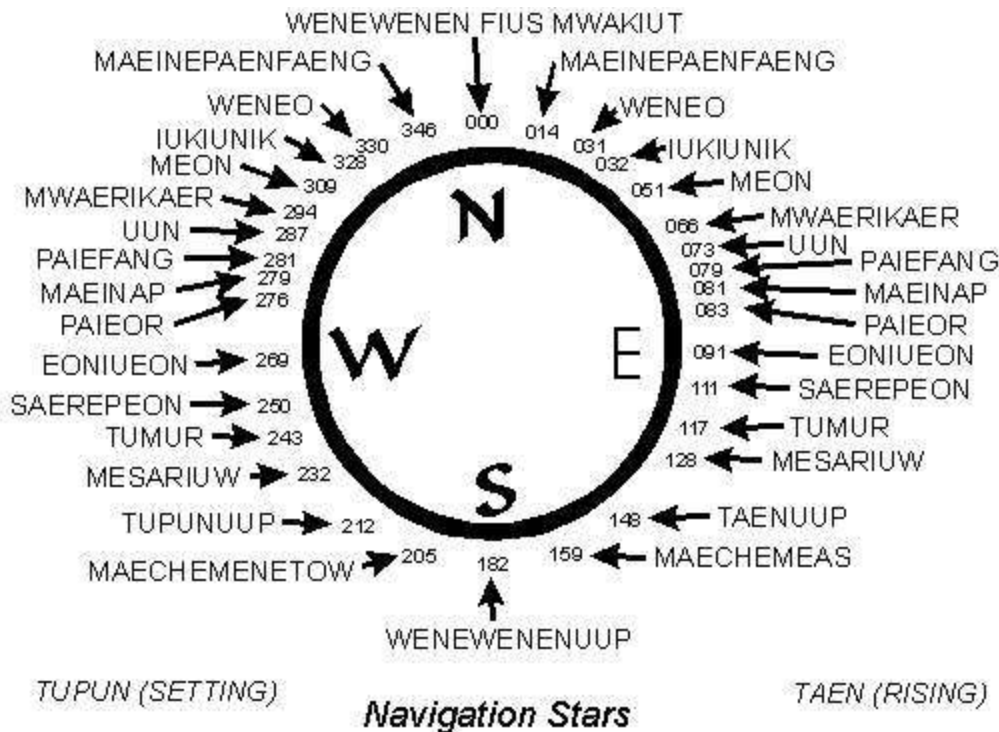
While sheltering from rough weather at West Fayu, a remote atoll in eastern Yap State, Federated States of Micronesia during 1993, my wife Sandy and I, aboard our Fuji32 Ketch, *Valhalla*, had the fortune to meet a Satawalese traditional navigator (*paliuw...pronounced 'pah-loo'*), Francis Sermonyong. Francis and his crew of four had sailed their 26-foot canoe, *White Horse*, the 50NM from Satawal, an 'outer island' of Yap, to West Fayu on a turtle-hunting trip and were delayed in departure by the same rough conditions from which we sought shelter. Over the next nine days we were fortunate to share experiences ranging from catching turtles, lobsters and coconut crabs to fishing from their swift canoe in the lagoon. We enjoyed an evening barbecue on shore with the crew, enriched by kava from Vanuatu and home brew beer supplied by *Valhalla* and a local brew of 'yeast' prepared by the *White Horse* crew with ingredients supplied by *Valhalla*. During the later stages of the evening I 'adopted' Francis in Micronesian style and set about a continuing relationship that, most recently, has culminated in an intense two-week period of information exchange.

On our recent arrival (July 98) in Colonia, Yap, FSM we saw Francis again and were introduced to his wife and four of their five children. In the time since we first met, Francis had advanced his knowledge as a *paliuw* by undergoing a regimen of instruction and ceremony called *Pwo...pronounced 'po'*. In the past 45 years, only two *Pwo* ceremonies have been performed, one on Lamotrek and one on Pulap (both islands in Yap state). The *Pwo* Ceremony on Lamotrek was filmed by Eric Metzgar, of Triton Films, in 1990 and is titled *Spirits of the Voyage*. See more of Eric's work at his website <http://www.tritonfilms.com/>. Francis is one of ten *paliuw* to complete the *Pwo* ceremony in recent times. With the threat of the arrival of the Southwest monsoon (which would make our continuing passage to Palau uncomfortable), Francis and I began afternoons of navigation information exchange. He purchased my handheld GPS and I taught him the basics of 'modern' navigation including the concepts of latitude and longitude, deviation, variation, distances on a chart, and operation of the GPS. His grasp of these non-traditional concepts was impressive and his work on practical exercises was outstanding. In return, he taught me the names and locations of the stars (or groupings of stars) used in the Carolinian 'compass' for passages and weather forecasting (to the extent necessary to decide if it will be favorable to begin a canoe journey). We were fortunate to have my laptop computer with the Skyglobe© program to view the stars from any position, direction, or point in time. Without these valuable tools it would have taken months to accurately define the 'star' in question. In this article I will relate what I have learned, recognizing that the two week period for learning was brief though intense.

13.1 The Carolinian 'Star' Compass

Using the island of Satawal (Francis's home island) as the viewing location, the points on the Caroline Island's 'star' compass were determined. Shown in the figure are the Carolinian names for 'stars' that comprise their directional reference system, or 'compass'. Not all have a specific star; some use an entire constellation, such as Ursa Major, where the direction is determined by

the 'eyeball' middle of the group of stars. The basic concept of passage-making is to view a 'star' as it rises in the east or sets in the west. These rising (*taen*) and setting (*tupun*) positions define points around the horizon that correlate to directions ahead or behind the canoe as it follows a 'star' course. North is always visible and is called *wenenwenen fius mwakiut*, "the star that does not move". The rest of the 'stars' are dependent on the time of the year when they will be visible, as we will see later in this article. The fragility of the sailing canoes causes concern, not unlike that of any mariner, for storms and squally weather. Prior to beginning a passage, the *paliuw* rises early and looks to the horizon for 'stars' which will give an indication of the coming day's weather. These 'weather stars' will also be discussed later.



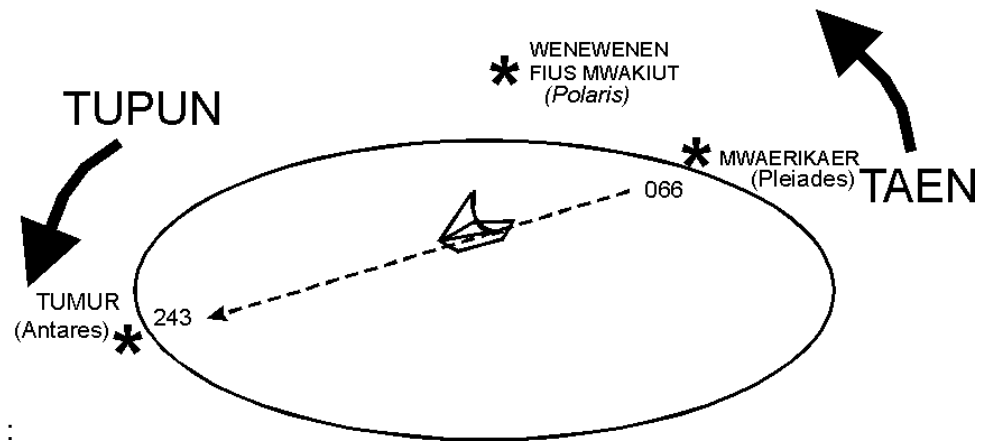
CAROLINE ISLANDS STAR COMPASS

The thirty-two points on the horizon that are determined from the rising and setting azimuths of each 'star' provide the basic directions corresponding to *star courses* that the navigator has learned. Ancient *star courses* relied on the concept of *latitude sailing*, similar to the Western square-rigger days, whereas of late the *star courses* have been changed to permit sailing directly to a destination.

13.2 The Traditional Navigation Concept

The basic concept of navigation at night using the stars is shown here:

BASIC CONCEPT



As an example, a canoe on a passage from Yap to Palau at a particular time of the year uses two stars to determine the course. Ahead would be the star Antares (*Tumur*) as it sets (*tupun*) and behind would be the deep space object Pleiades (*Mwaerikaer*) as it rises (*taen*). The *paliuw* uses these fore and aft points on the horizon to maintain the course, and can determine the set of the current by deviation from a line between these two points. The star Polaris (*Wenewenen Fius Mwakiut*), called 'the star that never moves', is visible at all times but the navigating stars are normally visible only for a portion of the time during the night.

Since the availability of stars is determined by the time of the year, the *paliuw* must know the different courses for the time of the year plus different courses for the prevailing winds which change throughout the year. This is an impressive feat, to say the least.

The 'stars' aren't all

The *paliuw* uses more than 'star courses' to find his way. Beyond the scope of this article are other means such as the species of fish being caught, wave patterns, flight paths of birds and their species, and a visualization at all times where landfalls to the left and right of the course may exist. These are secondary means to the *paliuw* but play an ever-increasing role as the 'stars' are not available due to clouds and for maintaining a course during the day.

13.2.1 Carolinian Star Translation to Western Designations

Shown below are the Carolinian 'stars' and their translation to Western designations. Included are both navigation stars (see the 'compass' above) and weather stars.

Translation between Caroline Islands 'Stars' and Western Designations	
Caroline Islands 'Star'	Western Designation of star, constellation or object
AENIMATEO	A collection of eight stars in <i>Perseus</i> : plus <i>Mirfak</i> (used for viewing)
AEPIN SAEREPEON	<i>Spica</i> (used for viewing the azimuth) and SAEREPEON
EONIUEON	Orion's belt plus the 'sword'. <i>Ahnilam</i> is used for viewing the azimuth)
IICH	A cluster of deep space objects surrounding the <i>M88 Spiral</i>
IUKIUNIK	<i>Cassiopeia</i> (midpoint between <i>Caph</i> & <i>Schedar</i> used for viewing)
KIUW	Triangle of <i>Caph</i> , <i>Schedar</i> & <i>Gamma Cassiopeia</i> followed by <i>Mirfak</i>
MAAN	<i>Pollox</i> (used for viewing the azimuth) plus <i>Castor</i> , <i>Sirius</i> and <i>Canopus</i>
MAECHEMEAS	Beneath <i>Gacrux</i> when the <i>Crux</i> is halfway up, at 45 degrees.
MAECHEMENETOW	Beneath <i>Gacrux</i> when the <i>Crux</i> is halfway down, at 135 degrees.
MAEINAP	<i>Altair</i> in the constellation <i>Aquila</i>
MAINEPAENFAENG	<i>Kochab</i> in <i>Ursa Minor</i>
MEON	<i>Vega</i> (used for viewing the azimuth) plus <i>Epsilon1 Lyra</i> and <i>Kappa Lyra</i>
MESARIUW	The two stars, <i>Shaula</i> & <i>Lesath</i> in the constellation <i>Scorpius</i>
MWAERIKAER	<i>Pleiades</i> in the constellation <i>Taurus</i>
NAA	PIING and <i>Alpheratz</i> (used for viewing the azimuth)
OANONGAN MANN	<i>Sirius</i> (used for viewing the azimuth) plus <i>Pollox</i> and <i>Canopus</i>
OAROMOI	<i>Arcturus</i> in the constellation <i>Bootes</i>
PAIEFAENG	<i>Tarazed</i> (also called <i>Alpha Aquila</i>) in the constellation <i>Aquila</i>
PAIEOR	<i>Beta Aquila</i> in the constellation <i>Aquila</i>
PIING	A 'V' in <i>Pegasus</i> (<i>Matar</i> , <i>Scheat</i> , <i>Sadalbari</i> and <i>Lam Pegasus</i>)
RHOW	The <i>Corona Borealis</i> (<i>Alphecca</i> used for viewing the azimuth)
SAEPIY	<i>Delphinus</i> , less <i>Eps Del</i> . Use center of constellation for viewing azimuth.
SAEREPEON	The midpoint between <i>Gienah</i> & <i>Epsilon Corvus</i> in <i>Corvus</i>
SEOTA	The constellation <i>Equuleus</i> and <i>Enif</i> (used for viewing the azimuth)
TAENUUP	<i>Gacrux</i> when the <i>Crux</i> is just coming up (<i>taen</i>), at 0 degrees.
TUMUR	<i>Antares</i> in the constellation <i>Scorpius</i>
TUPUNUUP	<i>Gacrux</i> when the <i>Crux</i> is setting (<i>tupun</i>), at 180 degrees.
UUN	<i>Aldebaran</i> (used for viewing the azimuth) plus others in <i>Taurus</i>
WENEO	<i>Ursa Major</i> (midway between <i>Dubhe</i> & <i>Merak</i> , the <i>Polaris</i> 'pointers')
WENEWENEN FIUS MWAKIUT	<i>Polaris</i> (the star that never moves Well, almost)
WENEWENENUUP	Beneath <i>Gacrux</i> when the <i>Crux</i> is fully up, at 90 degrees.

13.2.2 Azimuths and usage

Shown here are the rising (*taen*) and setting (*tupun*) azimuths and the use of stars, i.e., for navigation, for weather, or for both purposes.

Azimuths and Use of Stars				
Caroline Islands 'Star'	Taen Az	Tupun Az	Navigate	Weather
	(Rising)	(Setting)	(X=yes)	(X=yes)
AENIMATEO	040	320		X
AEPIN SAEREPEON	101	259		X
EONIUEON	091	269	X	X
IICH	076	285		X
IUKIUNIK	032	328	X	
KIUW	031	330		X
MAAN	062	298		X
MAECHEMEAS	159	n/a	X	
MAECHEMENETOW	n/a	205	X	
MAEINAP	081	279	X	X
MAINEPAENFAENG	014	346	X	
MEON	051	309	X	X
MESARIUW	128	232	X	X
MWAERIKAER	066	294	X	X
NAA	060	299		X
OANONGAN MANN	107	253		X
OAROMOI	071	289		X
PAIEFAENG	079	281	X	
PAIEOR	083	276	X	
PIING	062	298		X
RHOW	063	297		X
SAEPIY	075	285		X
SAEREPEON	111	250	X	X
SEOTA	080	280		X
TAENUUP	148	n/a	X	
TUMUR	117	243	X	X
TUPUNUUP	n/a	212	X	
UUN	073	287	X	X
WENEO	031	330	X	
WENEWENEN FIUS MWAKIUT	000	000	X	
WENEWENENUUP	182	182	X	

13.2.3 Weather 'stars'

Traditional navigation includes knowledge of the weather in general patterns and specific weather for a particular day. The months of February and March are difficult times for sailing due to the onslaught of the strong trade winds. February begins the period of *maeirhik* ... the time when it is better to do things such as making leis (there are plenty of flowers on the ground!) rather than go sailing. As a forecast of the new day's weather, the *paliuw* looks to the east for the rising of a particular 'star' well before dawn. The ability to see this 'star' is a hint that squalls aren't lurking over the horizon. Recognizing the annual rotation through the sky, some specific 'stars' are used for this daily forecast during each month. These are shown in the following table:

WEATHER 'STARS' FOR EACH MONTH OF THE YEAR			
(Observation at mid-month during 1998 from island of Satawal)			
MONTH	NAME OF 'STAR'	TAEN (UP) TIME	AZIMUTH
JAN	Tumur	0328	117
FEB	Maeirhik (Maeinap)	0428	081
MAR	Maeinap	0238	081
APR	Seota	0257	080
MAY	Naa	0308	060
JUN	Kiuw	0400	031
JUL	Uun	0343	073
AUG	Eoniueon	0224	091
SEP	Maan	0242	061
OCT	lich	0533	076
NOV	Saerepeon	0309	111
DEC	Oaromoi	0319	071

13.2.4 Availability of 'stars'

Though possibly a simple concept, passage-making using 'star courses' is not as easy as it may first seem. The annual rotation of stars through the sky presents a challenge in having the desired 'star' visible when the passage is intended. Shown in the following table are the local times for each of the 'stars' on the night of 3 July 98, as seen from the island of Satawal. As indicated, less than half of the 'stars' will be visible during that night, assuming the clouds don't interfere.

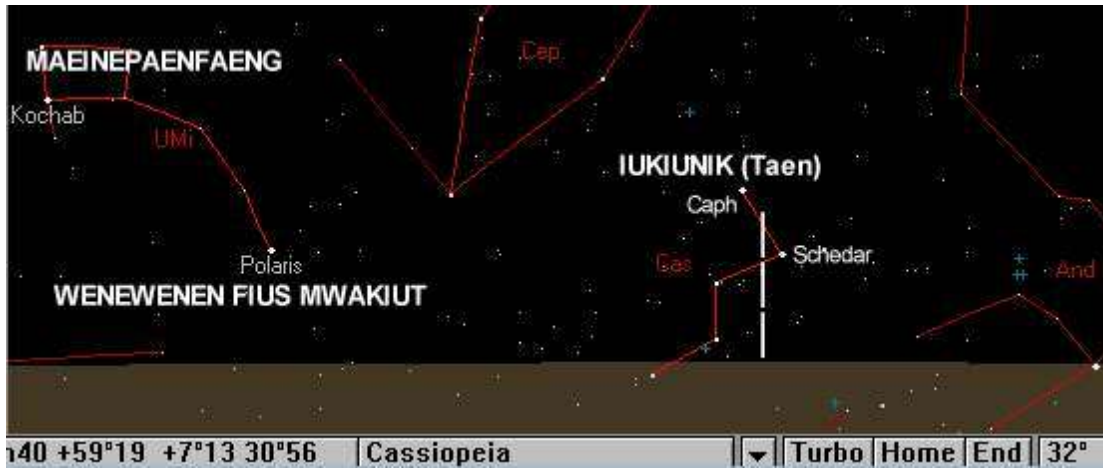
AVAILABLE 'STARS' ON ONE NIGHT (3 July 98 - 4 July 98)		
3 July 98: Sunset 1912 Twilight ends 2029		
4 July 98: Sunrise 0632 Twilight begins 0515		
NAME OF 'STAR'	TAEN (UP) TIME	TUPUN (DOWN) TIME
Wenewenen Fius Mwakiut	Always up	N/A
Maneinepaenfaeng	1236	0516
Weneo	1011	0007
Iukiunik	0000	1408
Meon	1810	0708
Mwaerikaer	0332	1607
Uun	0428	1648
Paiefaeng	1943	0753
Maeinap	1948	0757
Paieor	1954	0759
Eoniueon	0540	1738
Saerepeon	1233	0000
Tumur	1653	0410
Mesariuw	1807	0502
Taenuup	1338	N/A
Machemas	1624	N/A
Weneweneuup	1835	N/A
Maechemenetow	N/A	2050
Tupunuuup	N/A	2329
Number available:	8	7
Number not available:	9	8

13.3 Star Example

A view of the Traditional Navigation Stars on one night ... 6 October 98

On 6 October 98, we are located in Koror, the Republic of Palau, at a location of 7 degrees 20 minutes North latitude, 134 degrees 28 minutes East longitude.

At 1751 hours, just after sunset, a view to the NNE shows these stars:



High in the sky to the west of Polaris (Wenewenen Fius Mwakiut) is Kochab (Maenepaenfaeng) in the constellation of Ursa Minor, too high to be of value due to its height above the horizon. But to the east, the constellation Cassiopeia has risen, describing lukiunik ... a point directly beneath the mid-point of the stars Caph and Schedar, at an azimuth of 032 degrees.

At 2038, a bit further to the east we see Pleiades (Mwaerikaer) rising at an azimuth of 066 degrees.



At 2112, looking to the NW, we see the following:



Here Mesariuw (the two stars Shaula and Lesath) is setting but not quite on the horizon, but Antares (Tumur) has reached its azimuth of 243 degrees.

At 2140, looking back to the E, we see that Mwaerikaer is above the horizon but has been followed by Aldebaran (Uun) at an azimuth of 073 degrees.



At 2209, a look back to the NW shows that Mesariuw has finally set at 232 degrees azimuth.



At 2251 we see to the E that Orion the hunter is appearing to shoot an arrow at Taurus the bull.



Uun (Aldebaran) has climbed well above the horizon but Orion's belt has just appeared with Eonuieon (a point directly below Alnilam) at an azimuth of 091 degrees.

At 0048 on 7 October 98, a look to the west, in the constellation Aquila, shows three of the stars.



Beta Aquila (Paieor) has risen at 276 degrees, Altair (Maeinap) at 279 degrees, and Tarazed (or Alpha Aquila) at 281 degrees azimuths.

Later in the morning, at 0315, looking again to the NE we see the 'pointers' for Polaris begin to rise. These stars, Dubhe and Merak, define at their mid-point, the star Weneo at an azimuth of 032 degrees.



Finally, just before dawn at 0556, a look to the NW show us:



Cassiopeia has made it's rotation around Polaris this past night and Iukiunik (the mid-point between Caph and Schedar) is visible at an azimuth of 328 degrees.

The above views are all theoretical, however, since on the night in question the skies were totally overcast and we didn't actually see ANY stars that night !!!!! Lucky for us we weren't a *paliuw* on a passage.

The practical exercise

Departing Yap on a passage to Palau gave us the opportunity to try our hand at traditional navigation. This distance is 255NM and the course is 241 degrees true. We sailed the course described under the Basic Concept discussion above. Antares (*Tumur*) was quite visible during the night as it slowly descended to it's *tupun* azimuth of 243 degrees true then was totally obliterated by clouds near the horizon. Early in the morning Pleiades (Mwaerikaer) rose above the clouds in the east but was soon too high to be of much help.

Finding many of the other 'stars' familiar to our friend Francis was an exciting way to pass the time on the night watches. The squally weather on this three-day passage did, however, make us thankful for the GPS as the horizon was normally covered with clouds, emphasizing the difficulty the *paliuw* encounters.

14 Cmap Chart Offsets for OpenCPN

My copy (Updated 2010) of the CM93 Edition 2 charts are quite off in the Marshall Islands. However, some of the charts are very detailed. So it is useful if using OpenCPN to apply offsets to make the Cmap charts somewhat line up with the Google Earth charts we are using.

The below is pretty techie stuff.

I make no warranty that these offsets won't put you on a reef.

Use this info with extreme caution. No guarantees!!

14.1 How to Apply Offsets in OpenCPN

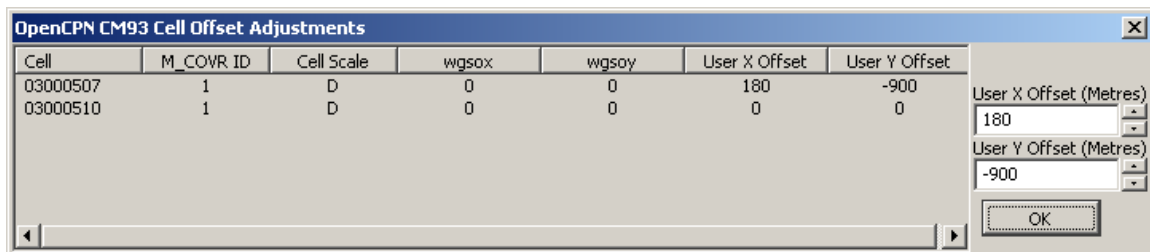
Unlike Maxsea, when you apply offsets to "correct" CM93 charts in OpenCPN, it shifts the chart, not the GPS position. (this is the right way to do it).

Here's a quick rundown on calculating the offset and applying it:

1. Drop a mark in OpenCPN on a prominent feature on a GoogleEarth chart for an atoll. (end of an island, or center of a pass, for example)
2. Turn off Chart Quilting (F9 key, or use the Settings Dialog). There are two easy ways to tell whether Chart Quilting is on or off.
 - a. If the colored ovals at the bottom of the screen have square corners instead of oval corners, quilting is off.
 - b. If you right-click on the CM93 chart (anywhere), the pop-up window will have an additional menu item "CM93 Offset Dialog"

Pressing F9 again will turn quilting back on.

3. Right-click on the CM93 chart and select "CM93 Offset Dialog". This pops up the OpenCPN CM93 Cell Offset Adjustments window:



Normally, if you are zoomed in, you will only see one line (the most detailed chart). Regardless, click on the line to highlight that line. Then enter the offsets in the box to the right. X offsets move the chart left and right. Y offsets move the chart up and down. As soon as you TAB out of the entry field, the offset will be applied. (Clicking OK also applies the offset, but also closes the window).

Keep fiddling with the offsets until the mark you dropped on the prominent feature on the GoogleEarth view, lines up correctly on the CM93 view.

4. Now check the offset in several other places on the chart. Often you will get it perfect in one spot, and it will be off in another spot. This is the nature of imperfect charts. Fiddle

until you are happy with it... either the pass you intended to go in is dead-on, or you have an average view.

Notes:

See the OpenCPN help file for more info (there's not a lot in v3.2.2, but may be in the future).

In OpenCPN, these offsets are, I think, saved in the CM93 folder in the OpenCPN folder in the Program Data folder (see the Help/About tab for where the log file is... that's where you'll also find a CM93 folder.) (ie where the layers folder is).

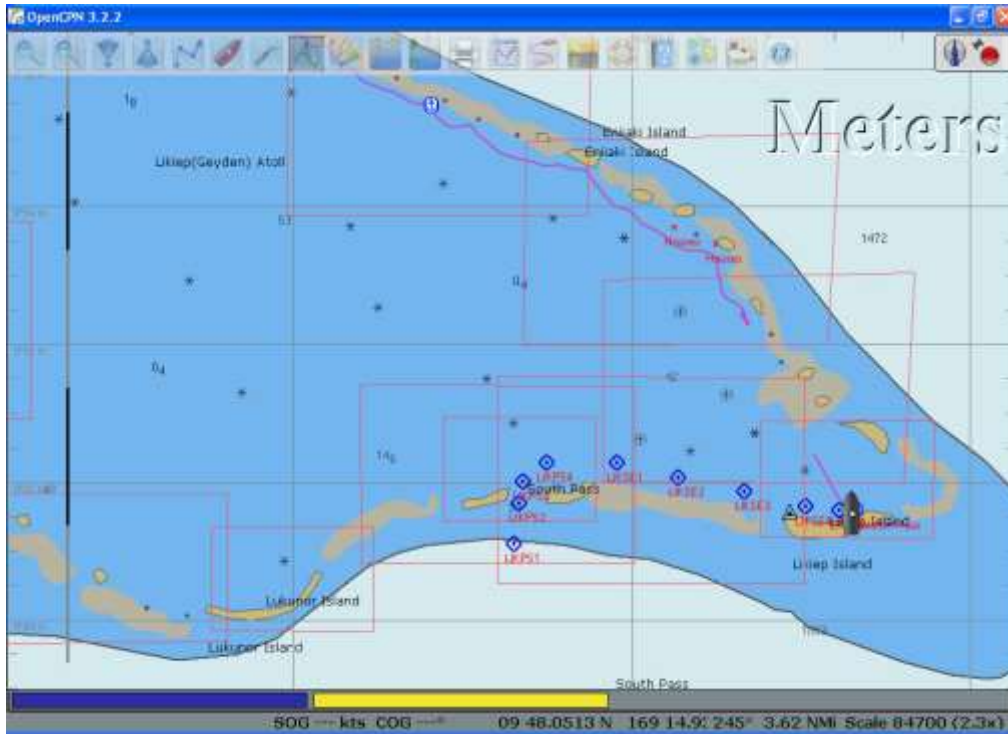
They appear to be saved in a file that is named the same as your CM93 chart folder name. Backing up this folder, AND keeping the same naming convention on another computer MIGHT allow you to transport these offsets to another computer. I haven't found any other way in OpenCPN to do so.

Warning: There are a LOT of different CM93 chart sets floating around. Offsets for a 2010 version of charts (what mine are) may not be appropriate for a 2011 (or 2005) version of charts.

Also, if your set of charts have been made from combined directories (ie copying an "update" into an existing CM93 directory, some charts may be there that are not in someone else's "2010" list. Example: Below is a screen shot from the most detailed chart I have for Likiep Atoll on one computer.



And here is about the same view with the "same" chart set on another computer:



Note considerably more detail. This chart, 2940504, dated 2010-03-01, does not exist apparently in the "latest" 2010 chart set. (it also won't be displayed by Maxsea, even if it is present in the CM93 folder).

14.2 Offset List

I make no warranty that these offsets won't put you on a reef. Use this info with extreme caution. No guarantees!! USE YOUR OWN EYEBALLS and only navigate in reefy areas with good light!!

Most detail charts of atolls in the FSM are fairly accurate. The following are the places we visited that were NOT accurate. But do not assume that if place isn't listed that their CM93 charts are accurate. I understand from Changing Spots that the entrance to Lelu Harbor is quite off on the CM93 chart. Be sure to download the [Google Earth charts](#) and compare them to your established charts and then use lots of caution (ie don't assume there isn't an error in the Google Earth charts).

Place	Chart Cell	M COVR ID	Cell Scale	X Offset	Y Offset	My Chart Date	Comments
Woleai	02910431	1	E	600	150	05/31/2010	
	02920431	1	E	600	150	05/31/2010	
Satawal	02910441	1	D	600	-2750	05/03/2010	
Sorol	02940420	1	D	650	800	05/03/2010	APPROXIMATE (no good Google Earth chart, and we didn't go there)
Fais	02990421	1	E	550	300	05/31/2010	APPROXIMATE (both ends of island don't line up)
Palau	02910402	1	D	-50	-40	05/03/2010	
	02910403	1	E	0	0	05/31/2010	