

## **FEBRUARY 09 - SUMMARY – AN EMBARRASSMENT OF MANGOES**

### **BY ANN VANDERHOOF**

With Barb traveling, I led the discussion as we traveled from Toronto through the Caribbean on a two-year voyage. Barb had left discussion notes, Curt sent his input from Maryland and 9 readers came to the meeting.

We began with Curt's comments about this was less of a travel book and more of a life style change. Phylliss chimed in that it was by no means a vacation, it was an extended trip. As with other books about travel, Curt lamented that there was not a map in the book. Our copies had a basic map showing the route, but no details on any of the islands.

Barb asked us to consider the following segments of the book; pre-trip preparation, the actual trip, and the evolution of Ann and after the trip.

**Pre-trip** – The group discussed that leaving a full time job in today's climate would not be as easy as it was in the 90's. I thought it was wise that they took their time to get all their ducks in a row (5 years that turned into 7 years). With leasing the house, a paid-in-full mortgage and income generating books, they had a little nest egg and some potential income as they left. Keith questioned the wisdom of the boat they selected as it need so much updating before it was really sea worthy. We were amazed that someone who was so unused to sailing (Ann) went along with her husband. I would say it was quite a testament to the couples communication skills and solidity of their partnership.

**The Trip** – Money was a factor in the ability to do this trip and even with their planning, they were using credit cards by the end. While they felt that they connected with the local cultures, our group felt they could have done more. Perhaps they did and it just didn't make it into the book. After all, a two-year trip if written in more detail, would have made the book much longer.

**Evolution of Ann** – From an uptight, stressed, time obsessed worker to a laid back, go with the flow and roll with the punches woman, Ann very much evolved during the trip. She admitted that she took on things she never thought she could do, did them and ended up on the other side feeling stronger and more capable then before. Whether she will add these skills to her resume is doubtful, but I feel that she returned to Toronto with different eyes, expectations and confidence in her own abilities. (Just like most of us do when we return from any international trip, whether for two weeks or two years.)

**After the Trip** – Barb had found an interview with Ann as she described her early days back on land. Here is some highlights of what she found and the link for the entire interview.

“Which was more difficult, making the decision to go — or coming back?”

Here is her answer:

"The question really made me think: After all, I had obsessed about making the decision to go. But I realized the coming back had ultimately proved more

difficult.

"When we moved back into our Toronto house, I thought it would seem positively spacious after living on a sailboat. In fact, the opposite was true: The house seemed more claustrophobic than *Receta*. I realized that living on *Receta*, in the Tropics, we had spent a large portion of every day outdoors. Our living space wasn't just the tiny cabin below decks, but also included our cockpit, the sea around us, and the island on our doorstep.

"And when we moved back into our house, I thought I would revel in taking long showers, running the dishwasher, and picking up the telephone whenever I felt like talking to family and friends. I thought I would enjoy the luxury of sleeping through stress-free nights, since I didn't have to worry about the anchor dragging or be alert to changing weather. (In fact, the first few weeks back in our house, Steve and I would hop out of bed if the wind picked up in the middle of the night to check if everything was secure.)

"What I found instead was that I missed the *adventure*. Life back home was too predictable, and began to fall too readily into comfortable routines. On *Receta*, every day brought something new — new people, new cultures, new foods, new flora and fauna, even new problems to solve."

source:

<http://www.randomhouse.com/broadway/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780767914277&view=qa>

Most of the group found the book a pleasant read, but not thrilling. Most wanted much more detail on the local cultures and the island people that they met. Some of our group who had visited the islands said that she did not address the poverty and life style very much. Most people had so little, but at least in the tropics, food was plentiful so no one would starve. Windows aren't standard, as they aren't really needed often, and in the heat and humidity would require maintenance that would be work.

The recipes sounded good to some and while interesting, caused stomach distress to one reader who tried one. Ann clearly loves to cook but the group marveled on how much time she spent on the discussion of food. This brought up the topic of how in the US, and some cruisers, we buy in larger quantities and don't shop daily. On a small boat, it is a necessity when in port. My personal frustration with the recipes were that she mentioned so many exotic vegetables, that without pictures or a shopping list showing the US equivalent, reproducing some of them will be almost impossible.

In summary, the group indicated that sailing was not a style of travel that most would attempt but visiting some of the islands sounded pretty good to most of us. Thanks Barb for selecting this book and providing the discussion notes.

## **FUTURE MEETINGS**

	<b>BOOK</b>	<b>BY</b>	<b>LEAD BY</b>
Mar 9	Take Me With You	Newsham	Phylliss
Apr 13	<i>Jungle Child</i>	Kuegler	Keith
May 11	My Path Leads to Tibet	Tenberken	Willie
Jun 8	Arabian Sands	Thesinger	David
Jul 13	A River's Tale	Gargan	Helen

## **UPCOMING TRAVEL RELATED EVENTS**

Elizabeth Gilbert of *Eat, Pray, Love* will appear at the Mile Hi Church on Sunday, Feb 15 at 3pm. Tickets are \$45 or \$75 that includes a reception. [www.milehichurch.org](http://www.milehichurch.org)

There is a new Travel Book Club starting in Lafayette – First meeting is Wed, Feb 18. They will be discussing *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson. For more information, contact Bonnie Booth at [hiker8051@comcast.net](mailto:hiker8051@comcast.net).

Other than the Budget Treasurers Travel Club on Thursday, Feb 26 and the Changes in Latitude lectures every Tuesday, I don't have any other news.

If you come across any travel related events that will happen between now and the next meeting, please let me know and I will forward them to the group.

## **THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND INTEREST.**

I look forward to seeing each of you at our next meeting.

Until then, Travel in Safety!

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