

In January 2015, we were still in Palau on our boat. We had an easy sail back (some times hitting 10kts!) to Samal Island, end of Feb, back to the Holiday Oceanview Marina in preparation for our going to work for Jimmy Cornell with the Blue Planet Odyssey. After working so hard and for so long (2013-14) on our biggest refit on our home (sailing trimaran "Sloepmouche) we were ready for a change of pace and daily activities!)

So in March, Jackie and I flew to Tahiti where we were welcomed again by our great friends, Catherine, Charles and the Otomini family. It was as if we had never left, we felt so much at home, except that Naomi was no longer 8 yrs old, but 21!!) Then we flew to the Marquesas to welcome the BPO fleet of 14 yachts, which arrived from the Galapagos. Lots of work but lots of fun to organize activities in 3 of the Marquesas islands, and make new friends, Marilyn and Hugues, and family, who graciously welcomed us into their home. Then we flew back to Papeete, Tahiti to organize events there. It was great to see that we love French Polynesia as much as we did from 1999 to 2003. Life changed little and mostly for the better so we might go back there again some day, who knows! In May, since only about 9 yachts were to continue the rally around the world, it was decided that I would continue the work on the BPO by myself, and Jackie was free to spend a few months back in the USA. So she flew to Las Vegas to meet with our friend Dennis Richard to do some natural health treatments and learning in Idaho and Montana. She then flew to Oregon to be at Chelsea's wedding (the last of 3 nieces to get married), then she flew to Southern California to pick up our 2 new Schipperke puppies, Zotke (male) and Zonne (female). Jackie did an amazing job at training them, even tho getting 2 puppies at the same time makes it most difficult as far as training goes. The puppies tend to exclude you and bond together! She then rented a car and drove to Northern California with the puppies to help organize the cleanup of the old house of her aunt, uncle, Laura, Bill, and life-long family friend, Frank, now all passed away. She had a yard sale and with the help of her brother, sister, and old high school buddy, Keith Kohler, and friends, got the house ready to be put on the market, while at the same time, doing all vet visits and administrative requirements to export the puppies to the Philippines. Then she flew back to Manila and Davao with the 2 puppies at the end of August (an adventure in itself!).

Luc in the meantime flew to Bora Bora to take care of the fleet of BPO ready to cross the South Pacific. In June, I went to Indonesia to check on a few places where the BPO would go later. Then I spent July back on Sloepmouche, by myself, to do some small boat projects. In August, I flew to Vanuatu to lead and organize a month of activities with the BPO fleet. There again, little did change since our stay from 2006-11. As I thought, they survived that cyclone, earlier in the year, much better than portrayed in the TV news. It was so nice to spend time again with our 2 great friends, Romuald and Regis from the TopThe Bill video company days! Nice to meet many local people who still remembered us fondly!

Now, September was a great reunion for Jackie and I back aboard Sloepmouche with our 2 new crew: Zotke and Zonne! Small boat projects and more dog training and social life with our marina friends. Then on Sept 21, a terrible event happened for 4 of our friends here in the marina! They were abducted at at gunpoint, at 11pm, right in front of our nose, with nothing we could do about it, by some extremist Muslim guerilla group operating in Southern Philippines since many years. We all knew that some areas were best to be avoided but few of us thought we would be at risk here in the marina, near Davao City, one of the safest cities in the Philippines. But complacency and lack of foresight and preparation made it way too easy for the terrorists. Over 3 months later now, and our four friends (Kjartan, the Norwegian yard manager; John, a Canadian cruiser friend; and Robert & Tess, a couple, Canadian/Filipina, still are held

captive. The ransom demanded is 1 billion pesos/ per captive (\$22 million), and more than any person or govt. could, or would, ever pay, especially in light of the fact that they beheaded a Malaysian hostage after the family paid ea of 3 higher and higher ransom demands, but could not come up with a 4th higher demand. Many of us are quite frustrated and sad not to be able to help free them ... we did some petitions and other actions but have been told that this kidnapping business was old practice on both sides, as well as very political ...

Early October, I flew to Indonesia to take care of the BPO fleet again. For 8 weeks, I organized activities for the now 5 yachts + 3 (from another short rally that tagged along on/off [Philippines-Indonesia] in 8 different stop-overs. Amongst many things, we did see the famous Komodo Dragons and Borneo Orangutans as last well as Bali. Everyone had a great time! Jimmy Cornell did visit us at the stop in Nongsa, Marina to discuss next year's itinerary with the fleet, and he did give us a very nice lecture/slide-show about his successful sailing of the North-West Passage a few months earlier. The A/C was turned quite low so we were right in the mood ... and with ice in our drinks; we felt all there with him! On my way back, I had a brief shopping stop in Malaysia and Singapore. Jackie, during my absence, did some cosmetic boat projects and was quite busy doing so and at the same time spending some time training our new dogs.

I am back on the boat now and helping Jackie finish these last interior finishing touches. The past 3 days, we installed our new carpet in the main hull. The boat now looks better than it ever did since we bought it at Christmas/New Years 1995/1996. So this Xmas/New Year is quite special for us since we have been living on board our trimaran since 20 years now, and Jackie and I lived together since 31 years. So many adventures together in these 31 years and no regrets whatsoever!