

Round-the-world trip in twenty-six months aboard eight boats

By JIM THOMAS
STOUFFVILLE — Most people dream. Few follow their dreams.

The exception is Jane (Schweichert) Weber, formerly of Musselman's Lake, now living in Toronto. This 40-year-old grandmother followed her dreams—around the world.

She so enjoyed the experience, she plans to go again.

It was what Jane describes as 'a mid-life crisis' that prompted her to pack up all she could carry and head out from Whitby Harbor in a 55-foot ketch.

Her host was a Toronto family of four. "They needed a carpenter," Jane said.

In the 26 months that followed, the housewife-turned-sailor travelled 25,000 nautical miles in eight boats. Added to this were 10,000 miles over-land in Asia and 20,000 miles by air.

The voyage lasted from Sept.

1983 to Dec. 1985 and cost \$13,000.

"I wanted to meet my son-in-law and grandson," she said in explaining a main reason for returning home. Darrell and Sylvia Balsor and son Blaine live on Connor Drive, Musselman's Lake.

Of all the countries visited, New Zealand tops her list. "It has all the beautiful things we know in Canada, packed into fewer miles," Jane explains.

Added to this was the friendliness of the people. "I was tempted to stay," she admits.

But all wasn't a bed of roses. In the mid-Pacific, they sailed over an erupting volcano and their boat was struck by a gigantic tidal wave.

Jane also came face-to-face with a person-eating shark and in Panama, she was robbed at knifepoint.

Strangely enough, her worst experience was only a few miles

from home—crossing Lake Ontario.

Although a raw recruit when she started out, Jane now has her permanent 'sea legs' and "a taste for the ocean."

What's it like to live-in with a family you've never known?" she was asked.

"You must be flexible," she replied, "and give each other plenty of room." During her 25,000 miles of ocean travel, she tried her hand at everything from preparing meals to operating the radio. Never once, during the whole trip was she seasick.

A sailor's worst fear is losing a shipmate overboard, said Jane. When the tidal wave hit and the cockpit filled with water, the crew thought this had happened. Fortunately, the missing person was located, well but very wet.

With dozens of rolls of film and a scrapbook filled with pictures, Jane comes well equipped to tell of her experiences. She also has a storehouse of memories.

She's already working on a book and hopes to have it completed by the end of the year.

Would she do it again?

Jane's already making plans. She hopes to purchase a 35-foot fibre-glass sloop and set sail in five years, this time from west to east instead of east to west.

"I consider myself very lucky. Everyone should do it," she concluded.



Jane (Schweichert) Weber, formerly of Musselman's Lake and now of Toronto, has a scrapbook of photos to remind her of a 26-month, round-the-world trip aboard eight sailboats, covering 20,000 nautical miles.

—Jim Thomas

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Dear Editor:

I'm surprised our Stouffville doctors would fall into the 'trap' set by the Ontario Medical Association.

Town physicians would have improved their image if they'd stood 'above the crowd' and refused to participate in any slow-down of services.

They're only hurting themselves.

Sincerely,
Merle O'Brien,
Hemlock Drive,
Stouffville

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