

Victor I. Becker

610 No. Oakhurst Drive
Beverly Hills, California 90210

Thursday
November 14, 1974

George H. Balazs
University of Hawaii
Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
Coconut Island . P.O. Box 1346
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

Dear George,

This ~~dated~~ letter is in response to your letter dated October 16, 1974, mailed October 18, and received by me between October 22 to 24. (I was out of town).

It so happens that we had plans for a 31 day cruise on the Royal Viking Sky, through the Panama Canal and onto the Caribbean, and then return again through the Canal. (Although my wife and I have been through it several times, we never fail to marvel about it). We have taken several cruises in the past few years, and we always wondered whatever did happen to that bottle we threw overboard.

*we
Sail
Nov 17*

And when we received your letter, it really gave us a thrill. HOW SMALL the WORLD IS!

I read your letter to some friends of mine at a little gathering for conversation. And, needless to say, we had a most pleasant evening, and most interesting.

Now, to fill you in on just exactly what happened:

We were on a South Pacific Cruise on the S.S. Monterey. It is a customary ceremony to have a party on deck as the ship crosses the EQUATOR. They have quite a number of empty clean beer bottles which the passengers are asked to write notes, enclose and cork tightly. They are then all thrown overboard at the same time to float to wherever the tides and ocean currents drive them. I don't remember the details, but I gathered from a ship paper that many of these bottles in the past were found in the New Hebrides Islands about 2 years later.

Now what happened to my bottle was somewhat different. When we were in Auckland, New Zealand, I bought a bottle of Martell VSOP brandy, duty free. If I remember correctly, about \$5. That was a bargain. I nursed its contents, a little each day, but when we crossed the Equator on November 1, I still had some left, and I didn't want to guzzle what was left. So, After a few more snorts, it lasted until Nov. 7. Evidently the ship was sailing from Honolulu enroute to San Francisco (that's what the memo says), and at 11:20 AM I threw it overboard, with the note you found. The

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11:20AM LATITUDE was 28° 40' West
LONGITUDE 145° 25' North

November 1

LATITUDE 0.079° North
LONGITUDE 165° 31' West.

Just to be a little funny, I wrote the note you found telling about the wonderful aroma of the brandy, and that I hope that the recipient would still be able to appreciate the vapor that remained.

Little did I realize that the alcohol ATE through the paper. ~~But~~ Man! that really was a powerful brandy! Just imagine what it could have done to my innards if I had really guzzled it fast!

What is so bizarre is what remained as readable gave you sufficient information so as to send it to me and be received by me.

I note that you recovered the bottle at approx. 23° 45' North Latitud
166° 10' West longitude.

Considering that the drift wasn't that really great, I am amazed that it took as long as it did - 6 years! - to reach its final landing point. And considering that, as you wrote, the bottle had just been washed up as you had been present on the island for several weeks and had not noticed it, I wonder if the tide didn't float it back and forth for a while. Anyway, we'll have something to talk about for many years.

It so happens that I have always been interested in "Nature". Subscribe to National Wildlife. Always watch TV ~~shows~~ Jacques Cousteau adventures. It so happens that tonight a new season of Adventures begins tonight. "Life at the End of the World - The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau. Many other programs, too.

Well, my friend, I hope that this letter gives you a mutual sense of appreciation of how small the world really is.

I am afraid Polly Bergen, the actress, who is also a businesswoman, isn't going to do too much for your turtles. From all indications, she is helping to kill them off. I suppose you are aware that she spends a lot of money advertising TURTLE oils for ~~her~~ her cosmetics.

Best wishes to you, and Aloha,

Victor
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If I had the time, I am sure I could have done a much better job writing and composing this letter into a better literary effort. It would have been interesting reading as a good tale of the South Pacific.