**The Fijian Times**

 **29.07.88**

**Boy Falls Overboard in Shark-Infested Waters**

Reported by A.McArdle

**IN the early hours of this morning, a 12-year-old British boy, Michael Blue, was reported missing from a family yacht which was sailing just off the coast of the island of Fiji in the South Pacific Ocean.**

It is believed that the Blue family (from Sheffield, England) bought a yacht – The Peggy Sue – last year after the redundancy of Mr



**Michael and his dog – Stella Artois – taken 2 months before his disappearance**

and Mrs Blue from the local brickwork factory in which they were both employed. Upon receiving a substantial redundancy pay-out, it is claimed that Mr Blue decided, on a whim, to buy the Peggy-Sue without prior consultation with his wife or child, missing boy Michael. The family, avid dinghy sailors, commenced training to sail a yacht on the ocean and decided to circumnavigate the world after only six months! Barnacle Bill (the family’s instructor) quoted, in an interview last night, “I was sure that the family were ready to set sail on the open ocean. They seemed like a competent bunch. However, I did try to discourage the parents to leave young Michael and the dog behind. Children, animals and water don’t mix well. In hindsight, it was a disaster waiting to happen!”

 It is alleged that the voyage had been highly successful until a terrible storm had hit in the Tasman Sea. It is reported that the steering mechanism on board the Peggy-Sue had snapped resulting in the family having to constantly man the helm 24-hours a day until they could dock at the next available port. However, shortly after Mr and Mrs Blue awoke this morning, they were quick to discover that their son, Michael, had disappeared from the yacht, assumed to have fallen overboard shortly after his parents retired for the night in their cabin.

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**The Peggy-Sue – the yacht in which missing boy fell overboard**

A distraught Mrs Blue reported, “We woke up early, as usual. I immediately climbed up to the helm to see if Michael wanted a bowl of his favourite cereal – Cheerios. It was then that I discovered that he was gone.” It is further reported that the Blue’s, in response to their discovery, instantly sent out a Mayday call. Head Fijian coastguard, Mr Samuel Ogalooloo, said that he received a Mayday message from an hysterical woman claiming that her son had fallen overboard in the middle of the night. “Of course, I sent out search and rescue teams without delay to explore the area of the Pacific believed to have swallowed the boy. Mr and Mrs Blue have provided all the necessary details and now need to have faith that their son is safe and well.”

 Mr Ogalooloo has stated that that the first 24 hours after a disappearance at sea are crucial. He has assured the family that his team will continue their search until Michael is found – dead or alive. It is reported that ten divers have been sent to explore the area in which the child is believed to have fallen overboard. Furthermore, two coastal helicopters have been sent out to search surrounding un-inhabited islands. The head of the Fijian coastguard team has asked the general public as well as local fishermen in the vicinity to be vigilant. He suggests that the young boy, if lucky, may have been washed upon one of the many islands dotted around the area in which the Peggy-Sue had been sailing. If anyone has any information regarding the incident, please call: 02335 562145.