



# Gift of smiles to north isles

For the second year in a row, Michael Leppert took his floating dental clinic – a.k.a. the yacht *Mariposa* – on a voyage around a number of the Marshalls' atolls, treating almost 300 people on the way.

"This year I went to Maloelap, Ailuk, Utrik, Rongelap, and Bikini," Michael said, adding that everyone was happy to see him.

"I had no big medical problems," Michael said. "It

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was only standard work: Extractions, some small operations, some periodontal work, X-rays, and a few root canals." He also visited the schools and did extensive examinations of the students.

Michael said that the Ministry of Health's Maybelline Bing had been extremely helpful in making his dental voyage a success.

"But to improve the dental health in the outer islands, they need to start a system that sees all children clean their teeth at school in the morning and at the end of classes with the help of the teachers."

Michael said his second visit to RMI was very enjoyable. "I made a lot of new friends and hope to come back next year."

The German dentist pays for most of his dental needs himself, with a little help from some German friends.

A number of outer islanders wrote thank you letters to Michael. Health Assistant Kori Marshall on Ailuk wrote:

**From left: Dr. Michael Leppert checked the children in all the elementary schools on the islands he visited. The doctor works on a patient in the cockpit of *Mariposa*. A squad of people arrive at the boat. Photos: Birgit Reimann.**

"I learned a lot of things with him about dental work." The Health Assistant on Utrik, Bill Bilwood wrote: "We are grateful for what Dr. Leppert did in our communities." Bikini Mechanic Supervisor Ben Maloloyon was also grateful: "All the workers at BPD (Bikini Projects Department) and DOE (Department of Energy) thank Dr. Leppert and his dental assistant for giving us free good services."

SV *Mariposa*.

