

4/28/07 Day 103 – At Sea - Saturday, 28, April, 2007: The day started overcast and the sea was choppy.

We spent the day packing stuff in two boxes and 11 suitcases. Our plan is to ship 10 items by way of International Port Service (IPS) company and carry 3 suitcases with us on the return to Oak Ridge. We got tags from the Amsterdam that put us in the Red 1 group for getting off the ship in Fort Lauderdale. We should get off the ship sometime around 9am on Monday. If there is no hang up finding our bags on the dock or checking through US Customs we should be able to catch our 12:30 Delta Flight that will get us to Atlanta and on to Knoxville, TN. Steve plans to pick us up at the Knoxville Airport about 4:30pm.



The elephant we got in India is heavy and we had to get a fairly big box for it in order to protect the uplifted trunk. Of course, with the big box we had to fill it up with stuff so that box is very heavy. We estimate it weighs about 60 pounds and we hope it doesn't tear itself apart during the process of being shipped to Oak Ridge. Here is a photo of our final pile of luggage to be transported one way or another to Oak Ridge.

In the afternoon we had our dinner table mates drop by to help empty the open wine bottles that had accumulated. We always have a fairly fast moving conversation and tonight the subject suddenly changed to various scars most of us have on our legs from various surgical procedures. Of course we had to compare scars and the following, rather ludicrous scene developed.





We decided that a more formal picture should be taken of our happy group to mark the end of the cruise. This is the best we could do.

We thought that some people who read this blog may be wondering what plans we have for it after we leave the Amsterdam. Our plan is to make an entry for Monday, 30 April where we would cover the

disembarkation experience and the trip home to Oak Ridge. We would probably make a few entries to discuss the decompression process of returning to reality after 104 days of cruising. Then we would wait until our shipment of luggage arrives by way of IPS. We'll describe how the stuff survived shipment and then bring the blog to a close. We will maintain it on the Internet for about a year afterwards. We figure this will give everyone who may be interested a chance to read the whole blog from start to finish if they want to. At that point we'll probably discontinue support of the blog on the Internet.

Our neighbor, Trudy Deremo, was having fun getting ready for Carl and her to leave the ship in Fort Lauderdale. We got these candid photos of her room and packing preparations because she said her daughter would like to see how she was doing in these last days before Ft. Lauderdale.





Luckily we can still keep a sense of humor even though the cruise ends soon.

4/29/07 Day 104 – At Sea - Sunday, 29, April, 2007: The day opened bright and sunny with a calm sea. We can feel the humidity and warm temperatures of Florida already. We had breakfast and handed out gratuities to the stewards who had served us in the mornings throughout the cruise. We had snapshot pictures of most of them so we included copies of the photographs with the money. They were all very appreciative and gracious.

After breakfast we went to the Protestant service with Pastor Doug. There were a lot of new faces in church because of the passengers who got on in New York. After church we turned to the final stages of packing our suitcases and preparing them to be moved to the pier in Fort Lauderdale. The suitcases and boxes each got a tag that indicated they should be available on the pier for pick up about 9am tomorrow morning. Since we have more than the exempted \$1600 in purchases to declare to US Customs we have to see US Customs on board the Amsterdam tomorrow morning before getting off the ship. They will be open for interviews at 6:30 on board. We plan to be there early.

On the way back to our room we ran into two couples who have been great companions during the cruise. They are Don and Gloria Bell and Dan and Jean Clements. We all commiserated about the cruise coming to an end but were glad that we had the opportunity to get acquainted over the last few months.



L to R Don & Gloria Bell, Barbara, Jean & Dan Clements

We passed by the huge map on Deck 5 that has the 2007 World Cruise route outlined with red



and green lights. When we first started last January the route was all red lights and the red lights were replaced with green lights as we proceeded along the route. Now there was just an inch of red lights left between where we are at sea and the port at Fort Lauderdale. Seeing the around-the-world cruise shown this way gave us a feeling of accomplishment.



After our bags were packed, Bayu moved them out into the hallway so they would be ready for pick up and movement to a temporary storage room prior to movement to the pier. The lineup of bags and boxes in the hallway outside our cabin as shown on the right.

Our final tally was 15 total bags and boxes. We will have 10 bags and boxes shipped by IPS and we will carry 5 with us on the plane ride. The 5 bags include a briefcase, computer, and small roll-on suitcase. We will check a large roll-on and a duffel bag containing stuff we needed to keep with us the last night on the Amsterdam.



In the afternoon before dinner we had our last wine party in our stateroom. Our dinner table mates were there plus Marvin and Marilyn Onstott, the American Automobile Association (AAA) and Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) representatives on board the Amsterdam for the 2007 World Cruise. The conversation was lively and the time went fast. Here is a picture of the group.

L to R Bob, Marvin, Esther, Marilyn, Orlin, Barbara, Gayle, Roy

At 5:45 we broke up the party and made our way down to the La Fontaine Dining Room for our last dinner on the 2007 World Cruise. During the meal several people came by to say goodbye and exchange good wishes for the journey back home.



We took these pictures of Tom and Linda Noecker while they were at our table.

We had met Bob and Esther as well as Tom and Linda in the Atlanta airport back on January 14 while all of us were on the way to Fort Lauderdale and the 2007 World Cruise. We were all in the waiting area for the flight to Fort Lauderdale and Barbara noticed their Holland America Cruise Line baggage tags. She naturally struck up a conversation about the upcoming cruise. It was later we learned that Bob and Esther were our table mates. In addition, Tom and Linda were neighbors on the same deck with us on the Amsterdam. On this cruise we made many friends such as these that we will always treasure.

After dinner we returned to our room and put some of the last minute things into suitcases. Fortunately, our bags packed earlier in the morning were still in the hallway. When we discovered we needed more suitcase room we were able to stuff more things into the suitcases still in the hallway.

We finally went to bed, not looking forward to the hectic day of getting our baggage through customs and into the IPS shipping process and then getting ourselves onto the 12:30pm Delta flight to Atlanta on the way to Oak Ridge.