

4/22-23/07 Days 97, 98 – At Sea - Sunday and Monday, 22-23, April, 2007: Sunday, 22 April started out with a gale blowing from the south. The sea got progressively more turbulent during the day and we were suffering borderline seasickness.

During cruises, HAL provides yarn to people who want to donate their time and knitting skills to the Gifts of Love Program. At the end of the cruise the items are collected and later transferred to a children's charity. On this cruise the original plan was to donate knitted items to a children's charity of Casablanca, Morocco. Because of the cancellation of the visit to Casablanca the contribution will now go to a New York children's charity. Barbara had knitted several scarves and hats for donation to the Gifts of Love Program.



She put her items in with the contributions from other knitters and the total collection was put on display in the Hudson Room about 11am. We went down to the Hudson Room and took photos of the knitted handiwork that had been created during the cruise.

In spite of the pitching and rolling we still felt like having lunch when noon rolled around. By luck we ran into George and Dorothy Hennings (bluewhale) and they invited us to join them in the main dining room. They had already lined up Bob Alspach (rkacruiser) and Rosalie Melnick (wander). The six of us sat down for lunch. We were all veterans of the www.cruiscritic.com web page and thoroughly into cruising so there was no lack of conversation.



Barbara Haeni, the port lecturer, gave a presentation on New York City. One reason for stopping in New York was to let people from the northeastern part of the country get off and return home with a shorter trip than if they went on to Ft. Lauderdale. We will be tied up at the Twelfth Avenue Berth from 7am to 5pm on April 27. There will probably be only 5 or 6 hours available to touring New York so we won't do much. At the end of her port lecture Barbara said goodbye to the assembled passengers and wished us well. After 100 days traveling together it was like saying goodbye to a long time friend and we all gave her a standing ovation. She broke down in tears and a lady in the audience gave her some tissues so she could wipe her eyes and wrap up the session.

We decided to start packing our stuff in case the storm got so bad that packing became impossible. We first pulled all our purchases out and put them on the bed. It made a daunting pile. We made a guess that we will have 10 pieces of luggage to ship home by way of International Port Services (IPS). The passengers, like us, who booked the entire World Cruise early in 2007 will automatically receive unlimited shipping through the IPS Luggage Service system. The IPS representative, Ed Wade, recorded our estimated 10 bags and gave us luggage tags for 7 bags. Unfortunately, he had run out of enough tags for everyone. The packing continued to the point that the sofa in our room would hold most of the unpacked items.

Here is a picture of the state of affairs after we had already put some of the stuff in the aqua colored duffle bags.



At 4:30pm Marvin and Marilyn Onstott gave a reception in the Crow's Nest for all the AAA Travel customers on board. This was a farewell get together and it was good to have our new friends all together to say goodbye. According to the weather conscious people on board we had finally

passed through the weather front. The wind suddenly changed direction by about 180 degrees and by about 5pm the sea started to calm down. This was a hopeful sign for tomorrow.

Orlin started suffering from a head cold on Sunday and it got steadily worse through Monday. We discontinued the luggage packing while we were still talking to one another and Orlin crashed into bed. Barbara took off and attended a talent show made up of passengers who wanted to display their entertainment skills. The skits and musical offerings were very entertaining. Quite a talented group of passengers!

On 23 April we took the last of the malaria prevention pills, Doxycycline HYCL 100 mg capsules. We have had no noticeable side effects from taking the malaria pills but it has been an annoyance to have to remember to take one each morning since we started on 15 March.

4/24-25/07 Days 99, 100 – At Sea - Tuesday and Wednesday, 24-25, April, 2007: The day started with a clear sky but fairly stiff breeze. Fortunately the ocean has calmed and the ship just had a gentle rolling motion. After staying in bed most of yesterday Orlin's head cold was improved. A significant fraction of fellow passengers are hacking and coughing so there was no chance of avoiding catching whatever bug is going around.

This morning we took part in a program that Holland America Line initiated to raise money for breast cancer research. The program is called "On Deck for the Cure". Passengers make contributions to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and get a tee shirt advertising the On Deck for the Cure event. The On Deck for the Cure is a 5k walk around Deck 3. The 5k walk on Deck 3 takes 10 laps to complete at about 5 minutes per lap. Here are some of our friends taking part in the walk.



(L to R) Jack, Gloria, Barbara, Don and Evelyn

Bruce, the cruise director, came in and explained the purpose of the event and then he got us going on the walk. The cruise staff played lively marching music and kept track of laps pretty well.

After about 5 laps the population of walkers had thinned considerably and Orlin dropped out claiming weakness from a head cold. Barbara, being the superb athlete that she is, finished the 10 laps and got a "Dam Dollar" for her effort.



In the afternoon there was a "Dance Showcase" in the Queen's Lounge where people who have been taking dance lessons during the cruise demonstrated on stage the steps they have learned. There was a large audience and we appreciated the courage it must have taken for some of the couples to show the first dance steps they have learned. The beginners were interspersed with more accomplished couples and the whole show was a treat. Luckily, the ocean had calmed down and the stage was steady during the show.

Tonight we attended the final show on this cruise for the Amsterdam Singers and Dancers. They put on a great show of non-stop popular music and fast dancing for 45 minutes.

On the way back to our cabin after the show we had another reminder that the cruise was coming to an end. We saw the large map of the world that shows in small lights the path we have taken on the cruise around the world. Back in January the lights were all red indicating that we had not gone over the planned route yet. As we proceeded on the path the red lights turned to green. Now the route is mostly green. Only the little bit of Atlantic between here and New York and the New York to Fr. Lauderdale route is still red.





During Tuesday night and Wednesday morning the sea got considerably more turbulent and the Amsterdam started to rock and roll. On Wednesday morning we could see the wave action. It was officially classified by the ship as "Moderate" with waves of 4 to 7.5 feet in height. Down on Deck 3, where we normally do our morning walking, there was a

sign asking that we not open the door because of the high winds.

Here, on the right, is a view of the ocean in a "Moderate" condition of wave action.

Both of us were feeling fine with no sign of sea sickness so the situation wasn't all that bad. However, this experience made us even more appreciative of the good weather we have had over most of the cruise.





The swimming pool on the Lido Deck was showing the effects of the rough sea. A red net had been placed across the pool, presumably to discourage swimmers from using the pool under these conditions. Water was sloshing out of the pool onto the deck which was wet. Nobody was in a mood for sunning themselves or swimming this morning. Here are a couple photos of the wave action in the pool. Note water pouring out in the

first picture foreground.

Shortly after these pictures were taken the two swimming pools on the ship were drained of water. Fortunately, we eventually passed through the cold front and the wind died down. By noon the sea had calmed and we were back to smooth sailing again. Thank goodness for smoother seas, we are definitely fair weather sailors.



Just before dinner there was a farewell party in the Queen's Lounge. Captain van Zaane and his staff had a reception line and we all got to say goodbye personally. Barbara was surprised and complimented when the Captain told her that he had enjoyed reading our blog about the cruise. There was a nice program and large video screen showing the entire staff saying goodbye to the passengers. Finally, there was a farewell to the Hotel Manager, Fekko Ebbens, who retires at the end of this cruise. Fekko was presented with a gift and he said a few words of thanks and goodbye.



The reason for the party this evening rather than on the approach to Fort Lauderdale was that many of the passengers will be departing in New York and this was a way that they could participate in the proceedings.

After the farewell party we went to dinner in the main dining room. The dress code for tonight was formal with the theme being black and gold. Barbara wore her gold sequined blouse and Orlin his gold bow tie with black tuxedo. Here is a photo of our table mates and us during the meal.



Table 119

L to R Gayle Brown, Esther Robbins, Barbara, Orlin, Bob Robbins, Roy Brown



This was the special Baked Alaska night and all the stewards carried baked Alaska dessert around the dining room with sparklers blazing. The practice of having flaming rum on the baked Alaska had been abandoned because of the fire hazard. Yudan and Denny carried our baked Alaska to our table.

This wasn't a real farewell to the stewards because we still have four nights left on board but we were all dressed up so we got a group photo.

L to R Denny, Orlin, Barbara, Yudan



4/26/07 Day 101 – At Sea - Thursday, 26, April, 2007: The day started with a nice calm sea and overcast sky. At 10am there was a meeting of all passengers in the Queen's Lounge. The purpose of the meeting was for Bruce, the Cruise Director, to go over the disembarkation procedures for tomorrow in New York and also to bid a farewell to the passengers leaving the cruise in New York. After a brief description of the immigration and other disembarkation arrangements, Bruce had the Amsterdam crew assemble on the stage of the Queen's Lounge so

they could say goodbye to us and we could say goodbye to them. After spending over 100 days together the imminent parting brought up some sadness but it was mostly a noisy time of clapping and cheering going in both directions. Here is how the crew looked assembled on the Stage.



The room stewards were at the back and the dining room chefs in front with the rest of the ship's crew in between.

The Cruise Director, Bruce Scudder, can be seen with the microphone and in a blue jacket near the middle of the line behind the chefs.

At noon we got together with some of the www.cruise critic.com group that Dorothy Hennings has been leading during this 2007 World Cruise. We met for lunch at a table for ten in the main dining room. We talked about experiences on the cruise and how enjoyable the friendships have been with other CruiseCritic contributors. Dorothy and her husband George have been the glue



that has kept the www.cruise critic.com group bonded together on the cruise and we all thanked them. Here is a photo of our assembled group.

L to R Dick Salberg- Anne Salberg standing (ANSalberg), Rosalie Melnick (Wander), Orlin and Barbara Stansfield (TENNcruisers), Bob Alspach (rkacruiser), Karen and Darrel Rhodes (Cruisertwo), Dorothy and George Hennings (Bluewhale).

In the hour before dinner our neighbors, Carl and Trudy Deremo, invited us over for a little party with some other friends. John was there with his four daughters (Sarah, Anna, Mary, Susan) who joined him on the Amsterdam in Civitavecchia (Rome). Trudy thanked her friends for all the help she and Carl received while coping with Carl's illness on the cruise. The party was a lot of fun but we finally had to leave for dinner.

Tomorrow we arrive in the good ole USA. We are looking forward to seeing the Statue of Liberty slide by on the port side as we enter New York Harbor.