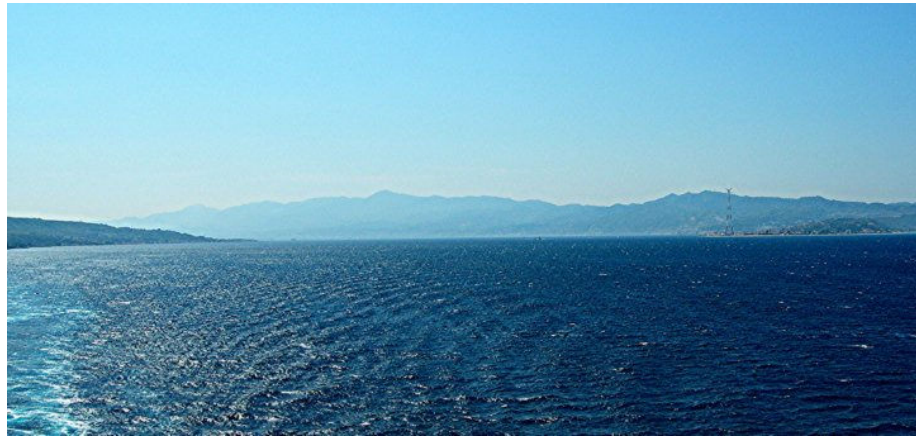


4/12/07 Day 87 – At Sea - Thursday, 12 April, 2007: We cruised all day in sunny weather on our way from Dubrovnik, Croatia to Civitavecchia, Italy. The coast of Italy was in sight off the starboard (right) side of the ship for most of the day. About noon the snow covered slopes of Mount Etna came into view in Sicily on the port (left) side of the ship. It was hazy and Mount Etna quickly came and went as a viewing possibility.

The Amsterdam was on a course to pass between Sicily and Italy and then proceed up the west coast of Italy to the city of Civitavecchia which is the port city for Rome. As Mount Etna slipped from view we passed into the Strait of Messina that separates Italy from the island of Sicily. There are cities with high rise buildings on both sides of the Messina Strait which narrows down to about a 3 or 4 mile gap that ships must pass through. The shipping channel is about 20 miles long through the Strait and the Amsterdam took on a pilot for the tricky job of negotiating the passage. Here is how the Messina passage between Italy and Sicily looked as we pulled away from it.



The island of Sicily is the hazy mountain in the background. Italy is the dark point of land on the left in the picture and a tall

antenna on the right (near the high point of the mountain range in the background) marks the point of Sicily across Messina Strait from Italy.



The antenna in Sicily is difficult to see in the photo. This is how it looked close up as the Amsterdam passed through the narrow part of Messina Strait.

One feature of cruising is that there is usually an auction of pieces of art during some days at sea. There had not been any art auctions on board during this cruise but today marked the beginning of a series of auctions. They are quite popular and many people participate in the auctions. Arrangements are usually made to ship the large framed pieces of art to the home of the passenger so that they don't have to deal with the artwork as a luggage issue. Here is the auction scene, on the right, near the beginning of a session.



The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Holland America Line, Mr. Stein Kruse came on board in



Dubrovnik, Croatia, and stayed with the Amsterdam for the trip to Civitavecchia, Italy. One of the things he did while on board was recognize the long service of the Hotel Manager, Fekko Ebbens. Today Stein Kruse made a presentation of a gift to Fekko. Here they are in the Queen's Lounge for the event with Bruce Scudder,

Cruise Director, assisting in the presentation.

Left to right: Stein Kruse, Fekko Ebbens, Bruce Scudder

A highlight of the evening entertainment in the Queen's Lounge was the singing of Lorna Luft. She put on a great show that included some comments about how she came to grips with her own identity after growing up in the shadow of her mother, Judy Garland, who was a legend in show business. One of our favorite parts was when she sang a series of songs that were very popular in their time but were never nominated for an Oscar.

This closed out a rather quiet day. Tomorrow we tour Rome.