

3/23 - 24/07 Days 67, 68 – At Sea - Friday, Saturday; 23 - 24 March 2007: The sea was calm and sky sunny. The temperature and humidity were both significantly lower and more comfortable than when we were in Mumbai. It was a typical lazy day at sea where we caught up on chores not done while visiting India. About 4:30pm Carl and Trudy from next door and Joan with her daughter Kathy came by for a little get together before dinner. Kathy joined the cruise in Hong Kong and is scheduled to leave us on the second day in Dubai so we were wishing her a safe journey home to Concord, MA. Joan is a close neighbor of Carl and Trudy in Ft. Myers, FL and we have enjoyed getting to know both her and Kathy. The dress for dinner was Maharajah and Maharanee. That is, the men were supposed to dress in formal Indian Maharajah garb and women dress as Maharanees. As you might expect the women did a much better job of matching the native Indian dress code than did the men. Here on the right are Trudy and Joan in their Maharanee outfits.





A steward came by at an opportune time and we got him to take a picture of our whole happy group.

Left to right back row - Joan, Trudy, Barbara, Orlin; Front row - Carl, Kathy

The time came for dinner and we were greeted by the head waiters in their Maharajah costumes. Barbara had to take advantage of this opportunity for another photo with her Indian outfit.

Here are Zain, Barbara and Anas. Note Zain armed with his squirt bottle of Purell for last minute cleansing of the hands as we enter the dining room.

Rescue at Sea Update: Barbara stopped at the dinner table next to ours and inquired about Joy who had been removed from the ship in an emergency medical evacuation on February 14. Her table mates had been in touch with her by email and she is reporting recovery from the problem that led to her helicopter removal from the Amsterdam. There was even some suggestion that if her medical condition permits she may return to the Amsterdam in order to complete the 2007 World Cruise!



In the mornings while doing our laps around the Promenade Deck we noticed that the ship's security guards are no longer on watch as they were in the seas around Indonesia and Malaysia. In addition, the two LRAD 1000 sound blaster repelling devices that had been stationed around the deck area (see the Feb. 24 and 25 entry for Days 40 and 41) were now taken down and stowed on the forward bulkheads. Apparently, the ship doesn't feel there is sufficient threat to keep the defenses up. Even though we are approaching the homeland of Al Qaeda terrorist organizations our defenses are being stowed away. At lunch today, our friend Paul informed us that the security chief on board, Mark Maranda, said that the purpose of the sound blasters was to fend off pirates. That threat no longer exists in these waters so the defenses and security watch has been taken down.

On one of the days at sea we attended a presentation by the Amsterdam's Environmental Officer. He explained how the ship's treated waste water was handled. His explanation differed from the reuse of reclaimed water that we put in the blog on 1 March 2007, (Day 45). We had said that reclaimed water treated to remove all biological agents was used for non-human contact applications. During the Environmental Officer's presentation we learned that the filtered and chemically treated waste water is not crystal clear but retains a color of weak tea. Reclaimed water was at one time used on an experimental basis to launder clothes and wash windows. That practice was stopped when they observed the white staff uniforms taking on a subtle off-white appearance and the windows showed streaks when dried. Now the reclaimed waste water is simply dumped overboard in compliance with maritime regulations.

George and Dorothy Hennings organized a lunch today in the main dining room with Paul and Maria Bradley and us. With the rapid succession of ports in India we had not seen Paul and Maria for a while and the six of us had a good time sharing the experiences of the cruise. Paul



and Maria had been invited to visit the home of a family in Mumbai and described the extensive household servant staff that their hosts employed. We have passed the halfway point of the cruise and Dorothy (Bluewhale) is continuing to act as a catalyst in bringing together the participants in the message board at www.cruisecritic.com. Here is a picture of our group today.

Left to Right – Paul, Barbara, Orlin, Maria, Dorothy, George

In the afternoons when we are underway the Amsterdam has sponsored arts and crafts instruction and work sessions for passengers in the Lido Restaurant. The craft work items that are created will be given to an orphanage in Casablanca when we visit that port next month. Douglas and Gretchen Prozan are the coordinators and instructors for the sessions. It is a popular pastime and our table mate, Esther enjoys the work and conversation with friends as they make the craft items. Today the group was busy making stuffed soft blocks for the kids in Casablanca to play with. Esther and Marilyn Onstott, the AAA Representative on the Amsterdam, were busy working when this picture was taken today.



Left to Right – unknown lady, Marilyn, Esther (nearly hidden by the table flowers).

Tomorrow we dock in Dubai, UAE and we experience a new port.