

1/24/07 Day 10 - At Sea – 24 Jan 2007, We started the day with a 45 minute walk around the Promenade Deck. In 3.5 laps around the Promenade Deck you walk 1 mile. We got in 3.5 laps in about 20 minutes so in total we logged in over 2 miles. The temperature was balmy and the seas light with a significant breeze at our backs when chugging down the starboard side of the ship (the navigator officially calls it a fresh wind). We caught breakfast at the Lido buffet where we saw Superman. Superman is an amazing waiter that our dinner companions had told us about.



He can remember all the passenger's names on first introduction. We had met him in the Lido Restaurant while we were docked in Callao, Peru. Later that same day he saw us in downtown Lima and called to us by name. Here is Superman on the job in the Lido.

Later in the morning we went on the Internet and found to our joy that our website at www.cruisingstansfields.com was now accessible from the Amsterdam with all the pictures and administrative functions operational. We want to thank Dejan Mitik, the Internet Manager on the Amsterdam, for clearing away the Internet tripwires that had initially plagued our blog website. With hundreds of neophyte Internet users asking for help in the first days of this cruise he was still able to find time to fix our problem. Here is Dejan in a brief moment away from the computer and cyberspace challenged passengers. Thanks again Dejan!



A couple of other key staff people who have made our first days on the Amsterdam more enjoyable are Rollie our concierge and his assistant Maureen. Here is Rollie at his concierge desk and Maureen at her other job in the Front Office.





Later in the morning we attended a travel lecture about Easter Island. Easter Island is also known by the Polynesian name of Rapa Nui. It's a fascinating place and we are all hoping that the weather will be calm enough on 28 January so that we can go ashore in the ship's tendering

boats.

On our way back to the room from the Easter Island lecture we ran across Bluewhale (Dorothy Hennings) of www.cruisecritic.com fame, and her husband George in the Internet Cafe. Like we had mentioned earlier, the days at sea are great for just kicking back and drifting around the ship looking for friends.



1/25/07 Day 11 – At Sea - The weather continued fair with a broken cloud cover and calm seas. We started the day with a 2 mile hike around the Promenade Deck. When walking on the Promenade Deck you pass under the lifeboats that are stored above each abandon ship station. Here is Barbara standing on the Promenade Deck under one of the lifeboats. Other passengers are bearing down on her. In this case the oncoming walkers are Marvin and Marilyn, the AAA and CAA Travel representatives for this cruise.



When the ship cannot tie up to a pier the



lifeboats are used to haul passengers to and from the ship so that they can visit the port. We will be using them when we stop at Easter Island in a couple days. There are two types of lifeboat hulls. Some boats have a single propeller that pivots right or left to steer the boat. This is an example of that type of hull at Lifeboat Station 4.

A second type of boat has a double hull and a propeller protruding out of each hull. This picture shows an example of that type of hull at Lifeboat Station 14.

We are assigned to Lifeboat Station 14 and take some comfort that our boat has two propellers to use in emergency. On the subject of lifeboats, the protocol for abandoning ship is for women and children to board the lifeboats first and then the men if there is room. Always the practical traveler, Barbara suggested that in case of any future emergency she should be the one to carry our house and car keys. :-)



We are over 500 miles from any land today and we were amazed to observe sea birds, perhaps albatross, soaring around the ship as shown in this photo.





Here's a close-up picture of an albatross taken by Barbara. Apparently these birds never land on the ship and simply fly for days on end. We are told that this behavior is common among the industrial grade seabirds that make the ocean their home.

We attended a presentation about the production and evaluation of Tahitian pearls which are a product of the South Pacific region we will be visiting. Following that lecture we attended a presentation by Colonel Stephen Bauer, USA (Ret). He recounted some of his experiences as a Military Social Aide in the White House during the administrations of Nixon, Ford, Carter. He told humorous anecdotes about the duties of a Social Aide. For example the aides help rescue first ladies and other dignitaries from too talkative guests using prearranged signals. He has recently written a book called "At Ease in the White House" and the stories he told were taken from the book.

The highlight of the day was lunch in the main dining room arranged by Dorothy (Blue Whale). She and her husband, George, are having small groups of www.cruise critic.com contributors join them for lunch in the main dining room from time to time as the cruise progresses. This was a great opportunity to get to know the Cruise Critic people a bit better.

We had a good time in conversation with George and Dorothy (Bluewhale) NJ, Paul and Marie (Paul123) UK and FL, and Jack



and Evelyn (travel2much) from MA. Here is a photo of the chatty group. Dorothy and George are on the left then proceeding clockwise, Paul and Marie, Jack and Evelyn, Orlin and Barbara.

We were having such a good time when one of us noticed that we were the only guests left in the dining room. Waiters were hovering about setting tables for the evening dinner meal so we reluctantly brought the lunch to a close. However, we are all looking forward to a get together of Cruise Critic message board participants that Dorothy has scheduled for February 17 in the Crow's Nest.

1/26/07 Day 12 - At Sea - The weather continues delightful. The sea has taken on a dark cobalt blue color. How much longer can our luck hold?

We went up to the Lido buffet for breakfast. We saw Captain van Zaane in full uniform ordering eggs and toast with the rest of us.

We attended a lecture about Easter Island. The island is an enigma in several regards. The first humans arrived about 300 AD. Some theories say they came from South America on reed or balsa wood rafts while others say they came in canoes from the Polynesian islands to the West. The Polynesian source seems to get the approving nod from most authorities. This conclusion is supported by some twentieth century DNA analysis of Easter Island natives that showed a connection to the westward Polynesian islands. Sometime around 700 AD there was a population explosion and over the next few centuries the islands resources were used rapidly. These were the good times and about the year 1000AD they started carving the stone images called moai (pronounced mo-eye). The exact purpose of the stone statues erected around the island is not known. Unfortunately, the original natives had no well established written language to explain what was going on. The dominant opinion suggests the statues had a religious significance probably associated with veneration of ancestors buried in tombs near the statues. The concept is that the spirits of the ancestors inhabit the statues. As natural resources on the island continued to be depleted the natives fell to fighting among themselves for the meager supplies of food and other necessities. This fighting was going on when the island was discovered by Europeans in the early 1700s. Fighting between rival clans on the island resulted in many of the statues being pulled down and broken into pieces by the mid 1800s. The detailed history of this culture was lost in a final tragedy. That was when most of the native population was hauled off on sailing ships and died working as slaves in South America without leaving a recorded history.

We have found that countries in the Southern Hemisphere are much further east than we had realized. Here are some geographic factoids that we have found interesting. Lima, Peru is due south of Washington DC. Easter Island is due south Denver, CO. This new found knowledge



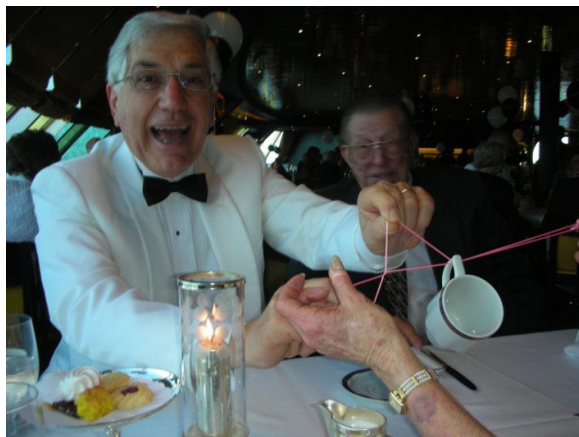
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came from a huge world map posted on the ship.

Tonight was the gala black and white formal evening in the dining room. The crew decorated the dining room with white draperies and tinsel for us. The ladies looked stunning in their black and white finery.



Bob was finally able to teach Orlin a parlor trick with string and a cup. We have here the moment of Orlin's triumph with proud Bob savoring hard earned success in the background.



After dinner we met the assistant cruise director, Steve Gayda. He played the part of King Neptune in the Pollywog initiation when



we crossed the equator a few days ago. This evening he was dressed in his sequin covered tuxedo jacket for this special black and white evening. Barbara and Gayle took the opportunity to pose with him.

We also met a charming couple, Bernie and Bernice, from New York City.



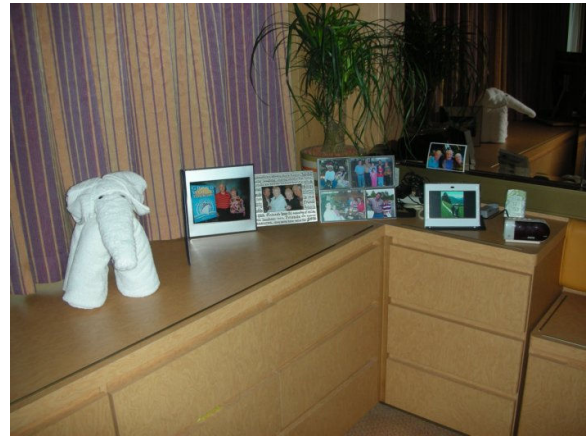
Bernie was expecting a call from his son on his cell phone which was turned on. They are on the ship for the whole world cruise so we expect to see them again.

1/27/07 Day 13 - At Sea – Saturday 27 January, The day started with our 45 minute walk around the Promenade Deck. During our hiking the sun came up about 7:30 EST so Barbara was able to get a nice picture of it.

This morning we went to the main dining room for breakfast instead of going to the buffet on the Lido Deck. We met Carl and Fred at our table. In one of those "small world" events we discovered that Carl had served in the US Navy on the troop transport USS Pickaway (APA 222) just a few years before Orlin served on the same ship. We went to an enjoyable lecture by Col. Bauer about life as a military social aide in the White House.



We took some pictures of our stateroom for the record. Here are a few selected shots of a typical SB category cabin.



In these pictures are shown the king size bed, dresser, picture gallery and towel elephant made by Bayu our cabin steward. The picture gallery contains pictures of family and friends back home. The picture on the lower right is an electronic display given to us by our kids for Christmas (Edge Tech Corp 7" Digital Picture Frame, www.edgetechcorp.com). Hundreds of photos can be stored on a Secure Digital memory board (like the one used in our digital camera) and inserted into the device. Our favorite pictures can then be displayed for 10 seconds or more before the next one in line takes its place. It's a great device and we probably wouldn't have brought the old fashioned hard copy photos if we had confidence we could operate the electronic photo frame when we left home.



In this picture the desk is on the left. Barbara is sitting on the fold out sleeper couch which is next to the doors to the verandah. We had the same type of room on the Amsterdam during a cruise to Alaska with our son's family. The grandkids slept in the sleeper couch for a few nights to give their parents some quiet time. Classic win – win situation!



Under the mirror are a bar, refrigerator, and a locking safe in the cabinet. The cabin door leading out to the passageway is in the background.



The Verandah area is shown above.

These are very nice surroundings and we are looking forward to the next 90 days or so of cruising and socializing.

Barbara has been waiting for the "Gifts of Love" program to begin. Today she attended a kickoff meeting in the Hudson Room. Knitting needles and yarn were passed out to those wishing to participate. This is a charity program where participating passengers knit and crochet items during the cruise and then the items are donated to a chosen recipient such as a children's hospital, orphanage or school. Holland America supplies knitting needles and yarn and cruise passengers supply the labor. She plans on knitting hats and scarves and maybe some baby blankets and this will be done while waiting for shows to begin or just sitting by the pool. A nice change from reading. This has been a very popular program and this year those who can't knit or crochet are being encouraged to donate toys and children's clothing that will be presented along with the hand made items as well as a cash donation. More passengers will be able to take part in this very worthwhile event.