

**South America Cruise – 3 Legs
48 days - Long Beach to New York City
February 3 – March 22, 2013
Carnival Splendor**

Background

A repositioning cruise to move the ship from Long Beach, California to New York City. The ship is too wide to go through the Panama Canal, and must go around South America and Cape Horn. It is the return trip for the Carnival Splendor as it came from New York City four years earlier.

Repositioning cruises are typically great bargains and that is what attracted us. We checked out the Splendor the previous summer on a cruise to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, to see if we would like it for 48 days. When we got back home we booked the repositioning cruise. I couldn't get the same aft facing cabin all the way through. For leg 1 (17 days) we would be on deck 7 aft. For legs 2 and 3 we would be one deck below on deck 6. Later Carnival called and offered a great deal for a deck 6 starboard **Suite** on leg 3 (18 days). It was a no brainer and we jumped on it.

The suite turned out to be a grand suite.

The cruise was a great experience for the money and would do it again.

Feb 2, 2013. Good flight down to Salt Lake then on down to Los Angeles.

The couple seated in front of us in Salt Lake had a Carnival backpack. LaRue asked if they were going on a cruise. The lady came back with, "yes, a 48-day cruise around South America". It was high fives, and we became kindred spirits. Two other couples at the hotel in Los Angeles were also going on the cruise.

Day 1 - Feb 3. Check in and boarding the ship was a challenge for many passengers. Some were in line for 4 hours and they were still boarding at 6pm. Departure was to be at 4:30pm.

We had priority boarding, so we made it on the ship around 1pm. We had a nice lunch in a largely empty Lido deck buffet. We were onboard, content, and happy.

We sailed from Long Beach 3 hours late at 7:30pm, and well into the Super Bowl. We missed the first quarter due to the lifeboat drill required before sailing.

The problem was caused by employees not showing up for work to watch the Super bowl. Also, there was an abnormal amount of luggage and supplies to load. Also, the union workers go to dinner, etc.

We had a nice prime rib dinner with nice people from Florida. They are Michael (Mike) and Jussara. She is originally from Brazil. He worked a lot in South America, and they are a fountain of knowledge. Both are now retired and work part time for Carnival at the Canaveral Cruise Port. Our wine was a good bottle of Argentine, Mendoza Malbec.

A lot of older people. We later heard that there are only 7 kids aboard. So far we have met mostly Canadians and most are in for the full 48 days.

We are now on leg 1 for 17 days to Santiago, Chile. Our cabin is a veranda cabin on the back of the ship. The view from the veranda is a nice 180 degree view aft.

Day 2 - Feb 4. We bounced around during the night as they picked up speed to get back on schedule. Sea was calm this morning and I had an hour long walk on deck 11. Only a couple of speed walkers flailing their arms about.

A Nice brunch for breakfast and lunch in the dining room with the same menu for both. A different format from our other cruises, but really good food.

In the morning briefing they introduced the naturalist on board that will give about 20 lectures on the flora and fauna. We attend the first one at 2pm today. The talks are called Mickey Live.

In the 2pm talk Mickey asked the people that were on the ship in 2009 when it came around the horn to stand up. About 50 people stood up. Learned that 400 species of humming birds are in Equador, and to watch for humpback whales in these waters. He will talk on every sea day at 2PM.

Nice day and wondering when I will find time to read all these books on my e-reader.

Another nice dinner with really nice people then a hypnotist show after. A 300 pound guy under hypnosis was marvelous as a ballerina.

Day 3 - Feb 5. Got my early morning walk in with beautiful weather and calm sea. Getting an inferiority complex being overtaken by women power walkers older than me. My analysis is that they take two strides to my one. They have powerful swings of the arms with their thumbs pointed forward as in full throttle ahead. I believe the secret is the thumbs pointed out gives them something super-natural. I did overtake a white haired lady later that turned out to be LaRue.

I have a distraction walking as I am scanning the sea for whales. Maybe that gives the other side an advantage. The only whales I saw this morning were the 2 large ladies that passed me. Saw one scarecrow lady in spandex that LaRue even commented on. Also, saw an old man in black with calf high white surgical socks. knees wrapped, new white sneekers, and a black bandanna on his head. Hope it was not me reflecting off the windows.

About 2 hours out of Cabo San Lucas and a lot of whale activity. We have quite a view off the back of the boat and a huge veranda that is 10x18 feet.

Getting on the tender and going ashore in a while and see if we can find a free wifi hotspot to send this.

Day 4 - Feb 6. Departed Cabo last night and had a nice dinner.

Sat on our patio and watched the lights of Cabo fade into the distance. Ran into the same people from Florida (Mike and Jussara) that we had dinner with the night before. We had dinner again with them and a Canadian couple from New Brunswick. Mike's wife is from Brazil, so we get inside knowledge. He was a Marine and said he was a Remington Raider. I figured one of those sniper guys or special ops. He said no, he wore out a Remington typewriter as a clerk for four years.

No power walkers out this morning, so nothing to talk about there. Passed Puerto Vallarta about noon today and this afternoon is getting hotter and more tropical. Very nice out. The sea is calm and smooth sailing. Slowed down to about 17 knots compared to 22 knots from Long Beach to Cabo.

Formal night tonight and a Captain's cocktail hour with apologies for the boarding mess in Long Beach. Clocks went back one hour last night and will do so again tonight. The cocktail hour was very nice.

Many choices for dinner including prime rib, lobster, and shrimp. Interesting and nice people to talk to. Met a Canadian couple from Okanoggan (sp), BC at the party and had dinner with them.

Big singing and dancing production after dinner. We did not stay long.

Day 5 - Feb 7. The power walkers were not out this morning around 7:30 am while I was out walking.

The sun came up in a big orange and red ball over the bow of the ship. We are going south. How can that be? The sea is smooth and shiny as glass. It hardly feels that we are moving along at 17 knots. It is 78 degrees and 68 degrees humidity this morning. Just looked out and a huge mountain range is off the port side. We have 7,000 ft of water under us.

Passed by Acapulco at 4pm. The highrise buildings were very noticeable.

We had an invitation to the Captain's cocktail reception at 4pm but we forgot about it until it was too late.

Nice dinner again and ended up at a table with our friends from Florida again. That makes 3 out of 5 dinners. What are the odds for that with 3,000 passengers.

Day 6 - Feb 8. Pulled in to Huatalco, Mexico at 7am with a beautiful sunrise behind us. Lots of people up early and ready to go. We will get off later and maybe find a WIFI spot.

The free wifi spot did not work out, so will continue on. We were sitting on our patio as we backed out and a whale came up right behind us. Lots of oohs and ahs. About 90 degrees today.

Had dinner with 3 couples from Calif, Canada, and Kansas. All about 10-20 years younger than us. They have been everywhere including a couple trips to South America. Kind of intimidating. We all commented on how good the food has been, and they have been on about every cruise line. They all had prime rib, but we had it a couple days ago and went for the filet of sole, which was really good. The bread on cruise ships is excellent but we have noticed on this trip everyone is avoiding it to save calories. Also, very few smokers in the few smoking areas.

If you read some strange characters or words out of place it is because I am using a notebook with a smaller keyboard than I am used to. I look up and I will be completely somewhere else.

Day 7 - Feb 9. Rough ride last night as the sea was heavy, and we were cranked up to almost 22 knots. There were barf bags by the elevators.

Saw a whale on my morning walk. Not many people out.

Nice leisurely breakfast in the dining room with 2 Canadian couples that have cruised all over the world. Trumped and out cruised again. The message is that we need to pick up the pace.

We dock in Guatemala at 11am, so will be a short stay there. We have a security alert and told there will be extra security checks. Also, told not to try to go to Guatemala City. Mainly due to the traffic congestion there.

Just read the email responses I got back from my first update and see nobody could open the document. It was supposed to be word doc, but it was wps, whatever that is. Will send it this time as a web page. That changes the format but should be readable. It may take some scrolling across.

Day 8 - Sep 10. Departed Guatemala a couple of hours late last night as tour busses were late getting back.

We just messed around the cruise terminal area as we had toured this area 4 years ago. Lots of little outdoor shops. LaRue got a purse and a bag. I got a nice shirt.

LaRue decided to wash her bag in the bathroom sink. It was dark purple and stained the sink purple! She was in a panic. I figured we would be buying a new sink. It would be very expensive as the sink is in a one-piece countertop. She got cleaning supplies from our cabin attendant and worked like the devil. The stain eventually came out to our relief. She left the bag on the ship in New York when we got off.

Finished reading the book, Ghost Soldiers, about the Bataan death march, and POW atrocities. Later, we got on the elevator with an

older Japanese couple. He announced, "I am Japanese". I looked at him and all I saw was one of those WW2 Japanese soldiers. Felt like smashing him.

Shared a dinner table with 5 Canadians. One guy ordered 5 huge baked potatoes and nothing else. His wife then peeled them, cut them up in about 6 pieces each, and he ate it with no seasoning. Neither one explained the situation, but were very talkative. I guess you see it all. I had pasta with shrimp and LaRue had very good pork loin.

The show was a singer from New Orleans that flew in and met the ship.

Rough sea last night and today with white caps. Was hard walking and a strong wind so cut it short. Started feeling poorly about 8am. Took a dramamine, and got over it.

Had a nice brunch with huevos rancheros and breakfast burritos. Shared a table with 3 Canadian couples who were bragging about their travels, and their investments. A lady walking by heard "Winnipeg". She barged in and started telling very raw jokes. When hearing we were from Idaho she said we could leave now. We were too shocked to respond. Someone finally asked us what we did. I said I was into convenience stores - robbing them. Think they got the message. Beginning to think the ship is 80% Canadian, a few Americans, and a bunch of Asians.

Nice dinner again. We both had very good prime rib. Sat next to one of the Canadian couples that was at our brunch table. Lot more tolerable by themselves. He said my convenience store thing was funny. So, I said it was not really a career thing. It was just a couple of times.

The late show was a latino singing and dancing production, and hard for me to stay awake.

Day 9 - Feb 11. Went through a big rain squall this morning just before I went out for a walk. The first rain we have seen.

Met a couple at brunch that are moving to Ecuador, and will leave the ship tomorrow. Giving up on California. Will buy a big condo on the beach for \$90,000. No taxes for those over 65. Free medical care after becoming a resident in 30 days. The currency is the US dollar. Sounds like the place to move to.

Temp this morning is 81 degrees and the humidity in the high 70's.

We are at latitude 4 degrees this morning. Will be a big party and some kind of initiation we are told. In the afternoon talk we learned that we will cross the equator between midnight and 2am tonight. The crossing party will be as we leave port tomorrow. King Neptune and Davey Jones will be there. The custom is to kiss Neptune's belly, get dunked, and get a certificate. We shall see.

Had dinner with an Australian couple that are really world travelers. They get off the ship and explore South America for about a month. Then catch a cruise ship from Miami to Barcelona and fly down to Africa for a while.

Talking to a lot of people that are getting off the ship and going on their own. One or two couples are getting off in Rio de Janeiro, staying for a while, then catch another cruise back around to California. Was not aware that you can do this.

Cruise people tend to complain about anything. But, the consensus is that the food on this cruise is really good. We agree.

The late show was a rather good singing show.

Day 10 - Feb 12. Docked at Manta, Ecuador this morning. About 80 degrees and slightly overcast.

The early tours are departing, and ours is after lunch. We will get off shortly and catch the pier shuttle to the terminal and shopping area. Have to catch a shuttle from the ship as this is an industrial pier. However, there is not much activity.

-We are now in the southern hemisphere. Water drains out of the sink counter-clockwise. It is kind of confused near the equator.

I whacked my shin on a 2x4 sticking up about 2 ft high in the middle of the sidewalk. Have a nice knot on my shin now. Weird place to have a board sticking up.

We do not get a lot of news on the TV. CNN mostly on gun control, etc. We get the networks, but never catch the news. Did get something on the Carnival cruise ship with the fire, and getting towed in. The footage was our ship when it had a similar problem 2 years ago.

Had a nice tour of Manta and Montechristi where panama hats are made. Very involved labor intensive process. Also learned about vegetable ivory that is made from coconuts. They make buttons and nice carvings. Bought a couple of items made of it.

Ecuador is an oil rich country and diesel is \$1.20 per US gallon. Regular is much less.

Day 11 - Feb 13. Quite a party boat last night. Came out of late dining and a mardi gras party was going on in the atrium from 9-10pm. Then it all moved to the midship pool area for the equator crossing party. Quite a skit and proclamation read. Then crew members subjected to the initiation with scrap pasta and food dumped all over them while sitting in a portable plastic wading pool. At the end we were all elevated from polywogs to shellback status and given a certificate. At the end the ship's horn blasted a few times.

It was so smooth this morning we both looked out to see if we were moving. We were, but only doing 8.5 knots. Just off the tip of south Ecuador there were small boats out fishing, and no land in sight.

While I was out walking a small fast outboard was going from East to West and crossing in front of us. I thought sure we were going to hit him. He made it by 500 yards or so.

Then another boat toyed with us by turning and heading straight for us midship. I was thinking pirates attacking. I am standing here looking down on them. Not a good place to be.

It is 75 degrees out this morning and 78% humidity. Worked up a good sweat walking.

Just saw a cruise ship to the left of us also heading south. Too far away to tell which cruise line it is.

We are at 2 degrees south of the equator.

Two cruise days to Lima, Peru. Nice to have leisure days at sea after a hectic day being tourists in Equador. It does not get any better than today. Warm sunshine and smooth seas.

Nice lunch in the dining room. I had cannelloni bolognese that was outstanding. Gourmet Italian quality and the best Italian food I have had on a cruise ship. I almost ordered a second plate but thought better of it because of the calories. LaRue had turbot papillon which was good but not as good as mine. The changing menu and food quality on this cruise amazes us.

We picked up some hitchhikers in Equador. When I was out walking I spotted several huge moths resting on the deck. Some were the size of a hummingbird, They were black with off white stripes, and speckles. They look like a stealth fighter plane.

The captain said in his noon briefing that we have 10,000 ft of water under us.

Another nice dinner. I had vegetable and black bean enchiladas with a superb sauce. LaRue had the comfort food selection of beef stroganoff.

The show was a mentalist. It was too cerebral for me.

Day 12 - Feb 14. Just cruising away this morning on a smooth sea at 17 knots. Temp a little cooler at 72 degrees and humidity at 87%.

The sea color is a rather murky, and dark brownish green. It has been a crystal blue color.

When I was out walking this morning a huge school of dolphins joined us for a while. I stopped to watch. Everyone else kept on chugging, oblivious to it all. They seem like robots. Nothing interesting except a couple nerds out stretching. One had all kinds of stuff hanging off his belt like a phone, GPS, Swiss army knife, etc. Half expected to see a slide rule like we did way back in college.

At breakfast we heard a new description for Florida residents. Florida is "Gods Waiting Room".

LaRue is handing out red heart shaped chocolates to the staff. They seem to like it since it is Valentine's day. Then she says, "they do not have Carnival on them", referring to the ones we get on our turned down bed every night. We will have a huge collection of Carnival chocolates by the end of the cruise. Only 37 days left. It is going fast.

Have talked to two waiters from Peru that are really excited. They are from the Lima area, where we dock tomorrow. They get to bring their families on board, and tour them around. We are excited for them.

Was reading on my Kindle Fire e-reader on an outside deck this morning when it went quite weird. It switched modes from white background to black background. It was hard to read in the sunlight anyway, but with black background was really difficult. Could not find the settings menu that I experimented with yesterday. Then noticed that I had no more books on it. Probably my fault as I was trying to restore settings. What a bummer. Can't say I like the Kindle Fire anyway. It is heavy and hard to read in the sunlight. LaRue's Nook e-reader is lighter, smaller, and easy to read in the sunlight.

Had our valentines and anniversary dinner in the extra charge Pinnacle Steak House. Really nice plush ambience. I had the largest filet mignon I have ever seen. LaRue had two huge lamb chops. Really nice dinner. They presented us with a happy anniversary cake as well as the regular dessert menu. Just too much. We got on the

wine sommelier as she was not too attentive when we needed more wine poured. So, she comped the before dinner manhattans.

Did not bother with the late show.

Day 13 - Feb 15. In Lima Peru today.

Just got back from the Lima Highlights and Miraflores tour.

This is a huge place with lots of traffic and people. The city stretches about 50 miles along the coastline. Nice weather. It never rains here. They get their water from the Andes mountains about 60 miles away. The lawns and flowers are beautiful, for no rainfall.

Our tour guide said their drivers are the best in the world. That is because there is no mandatory insurance here. If you scratch your car you have to pay.

Also, pedestrians have no rights. The traffic was orderly, and pedestrians caused no problems.

There was a huge square in front of the presidential palace that was full of booths with protestors, political party statements, and bands. Our tour guide did not want to talk about it. He did talk about the Catholic church majority, and that the American churches coming in were giving the Catholics a headache.

When we got back from the tour about 1:30 we went to the Lido buffet for some lunch. The Peruvian crew members were there eating with their families. The guy we know saw us and waved. We could tell he was really proud of his family. We gave him a big hurrah. It is good they get to do this. I noticed they were going through the food pretty good.

Another nice dinner with a Canadian couple from BC, and Alan, a strange guy from Vancouver. Three times at dinner with him and he is the kind of guy that everyone tries to avoid. I think he is a serial killer.

Caught a zinger from the guy that asked me what I did in life, which I consider rude. When I told him he said, "oh, I thought you were a bulldozer operator". I should have told him I robbed convenience stores.

Day 14 - Feb 16. Sea day today. The gambling crowd got a surprise when it was announced that the casino will be closed the whole time we are in Chilean water, which is several days.

The sea is higher this morning at 3-5 ft. The ship is moving around as we are doing 20 knots. Hat and the wind made it difficult walking this morning.

Nice couple from Missouri, and a couple from California at our table this morning. Both couples veteran cruisers. The Missouri couple took their family on a cruise for their 50th anniversary. The California couple just came off a 42 day cruise, and then got on this one. It turns out they were all on this ship when it came around from New York 4 years ago. They said they had a man overboard in about the same area off Chile that we are in today. They searched extensively along with the Chilean Coast Guard, but never did find him.

Kind of strange timing as LaRue spotted debris in the water this morning. I said, "it is somebody waving. Don't report it. It will delay our voyage".

Within sight of huge mountains along the Chilean coast this morning.

Had a quiet dinner. The dining room was about half full, and we ended up at a table by ourselves. Kind of nice not having to talk to somebody. The waiters had time to visit.

Went to the late show that was a big singing and dancing production.

Clocks go forward 1 hour. again tonight. That makes 4 times. We got back to our cabin and there was a notice that the morning tour will depart at 8am instead of 9am.

Day 15 - Feb 17. Short night last night. Docked in Arica, Chile when we woke up.

Just had time to catch some breakfast at the Lido buffet and catch the tour bus.

Arica is a small port city with a very arid climate. It is the driest city in the world with only .2mm of rain per year, which is about a thousandths of an inch, we were told. And to think just one year ago we were at the rainiest city in the world in Kuaii.

The tour was archeological sites, museums, and sightseeing. Lots of stuff on the Chilian mummies that go back 4,000 years.

Very nice place. Most of the houses are shacks, apartments, and very small houses. The minimum wage is \$360 per month. Fertile land is about \$80,000 for 1 hectare. The water comes from the mountains via a river. It was totally dry when we drove through it.

Back on the ship we had native bands and native dancers entertaining us at dock side all afternoon. It is Sunday and they were having fun.

Watched 2 small trucks pull up with cases of tomatoes, chard, lettuce, and milk unload onto the ship.

When we departed about 6pm we went up to the sail away party and had margaritas as we sailed away. Saw the "Dancing Lady" actually sitting down and having a drink. We see her often as we walk through the ship and stop wherever there is music. She is there and always moving with the music, and grinning ear to ear. She is old, very skinny, with long arms and legs, and has everything moving. She reminds me of when I was a kid I had this board with a monkey dangling from strings. When you shook the board the dangling monkey started dancing.

We liked Arica, being small and remote. I only saw 4 buildings of 20 stories or so. They get about 3 or 4 cruise ships per month between November and March. It will be way fewer when the new wider locks

through the Panama Canal open in 2014. Ships like this will go through the canal instead of around the horn.

Had Chilean sea bass for dinner, which was very good. I went for the strange stuff for starters. A Vietnamese crepe with lime shrimp and an Indian (that's a dot Indian, not a feather Indian) hot sweet and sour soup. Not bad at all, but spicy hot. Can't remember what LaRue had. I just asked her, and she does not remember either.

After a hard day touring we skipped the after dinner show, which was a ventriloquist.

Day 16 - Feb 18. Two sea days until Valpariso/Santiago, Chile.

Nice blue color water this morning and 71 degrees. It will gradually get cooler as we get farther south. Some people complaining how cold it is. We think it is wonderful.

Walking this morning the ship was moving fore and aft which is easier than a side to side roll. Not bad though. New guy passing me that resembles a silverback gorilla that I have named "Silverback". He is about 60, stocky build, a rather wide back side, has white hair, leans forward, and swings his arms to and fro with his palms always pointing backwards. Just like a silverback gorilla. The ladies were nothing to talk about this morning.

You can get a tour of the whole world just by reading the shirts that people wear. I guess they do it to show off where they have been. I only wear plain shirts with no message. The one shirt I like was "Don't need Google - my wife knows everything". It also had Puerto Vallarta on it, but I have never seen it down there.

The Captain said in his noon briefing that we have 15,000 ft of water below us. Have not seen any whales since Guatemala. Guess they do not make it this far south. Have seen lots of dolphins, and a sea turtle.

Met a California couple at dinner. They have a condo in PV and said they would rent it to us for \$70 per night. She will bring info by

tomorrow. The other table mates were the Kansas couple that we have met before. They get off in Valpariso and will take a bus over the Andes to Mendoza, Argentina (where Jake was on his mission). Then on to Rio de Janeiro, and catch a cruise ship back to LA. They were bummed out because the trip over the Andes would be at night. I said probably better you don't see it.

Day 17 - Feb 19. Rough sea last night. Clocks forward 1 hour again. That is the 5th time since we left. So, we are eastern time +2 hours. Finally got an entrée last night that I did not care for. Ordered the comfort food selection - meatloaf, mashed potatoes and gravy - awful. The other two guys at the table sent theirs back for something else. I was not needing anything else after a shrimp cocktail and a bowl of black bean soup, which I liked.

The show was amateur hour for the guests. It was pretty bad, but amusing.

Hardly anybody walking this morning due to the rough sea, wind, and 65 degree temperature. I took a dramamine as a precaution. Talked to a lady wearing the motion sickness wristbands, one on each wrist. She said they seem to work as she took them off to shower and started to get seasick.

Have to pack up today as this leg of the cruise ends tomorrow in Valpariso. We have to move down to deck 7 just below us. Same type of cabin, but a smaller veranda.

The scuttlebutt at breakfast was that 2 people have died so far. Bound to happen with so many old people.

One old lady, that we dined with before, was bragging about all of their cruises, and all of the gifts they get since they are diamond level. I said that we don't get any gifts in staterage (we did, but I was not about to tell her).

A quiet day cruis'n. The cabins have door tags that say "cruis'n", when you are out, "snooz'n" when you are in. Waiting for one with "booz'n".

Talking to a guy and he said we are in a unique place in the world. We have 40,000 ft of water under us, and 20,000 ft mountains on our port side. It is a trench only exceeded in the Marianna Islands.

Day 18 - Feb 20. Leg 2 of the cruise. Arrived early in Valpariso, Chile.

Everything packed up for the cabin steward to move while we are on a tour.

Did the city tour for 4 hours and visited a museum. Beautiful city that is also referred to as little San Francisco. It has a Mediterranean feel.

We got back to the cruise terminal and went across the street with Mike and Jussara to a supermarket with a huge wine selection. It was not much cheaper than at home. We each got a bottle of wine as allowed by Carnival. We got a Chilean Cabernet and an Argentine, Mendoza Malbec.

They would only take Chilean pesos, which we did not have, or a credit card with a passport. Our passports were taken away from us when we boarded in Long Beach. No English spoken there. It was good to have Jussara with us. She is fluent in Portugese and Spanish is similar enough that she could interpret. The clerk finally agreed to our driver's license for identification.

Our new cabin is on the aft end of the ship also. It has a smaller verandah, and the interior is about 1 ft narrower. However, we have a more expanded view.

About 1500 passengers got off here and a new batch boarded. A lot more foreign languages being spoken, and a few more kids. I suppose that is because it is summer school break for kids in South America.

For this leg of the cruise we switched from any time evening dining to fixed time dining at 7:45pm. We will have the same table with the same people every evening. We got to our assigned table, which

was for 8 people, and it is next to one of the large windows looking out the back.

Another couple showed up and the lady goes bonkers. She assumed they would have the same people as leg 1, and was throwing a fit. LaRue said, "gee I thought we would have some happy and interesting people to dine with. If you don't want to join us talk to the maitre 'd". That shut her up. They settled down and were pleasant the rest of the evening. We only had four at a table for eight. It will be interesting to see who shows up tomorrow night.

LaRue had sweet and sour shrimp and I had a linguini something or other. Pretty good. One of my favorite starters is a shrimp cocktail that I have had most every night.

Decided to skip the late show and get some sleep.

Day 19 - Feb 22. Two days at sea before we reach Puerto Montt, Chile.

Cooler this morning at 60 degrees, windy, and higher sea with whitecaps.

I was the only person out walking this morning on deck 11. Nobody was on deck 12, the jogging track, which is shorter. After about 20 minutes silverback showed up, then the deck crew closed the decks for cleaning.

I went down to deck 3 which is more sheltered under the lifeboats. It does not go completely around the bow and aft ends. You just go back and forth, which is still a good distance. It is also more stable since it is closer to the water. I was the only person there, so I guess the hot shots wore themselves out.

Picked up our autographed copy of "Logbook and Tourist Guide at Sea from Valparaiso to Buenos Aires". Our onboard naturalist (Mickey) aka tour guide, aka photography expert, knows the author, who also is our pilot. Mickey arranged for a limited number of autographed copies, and we got one. Mickey is hoping this guy will

be our pilot around the horn as he gives a great narrative over the ship's intercom as we go along. Mickey is also hoping for bad weather as you then get routed through the more scenic inside passage.

The introduction in the book starts out with ***“sail this unique route of the Chilean fjordsto take you to amazing beautiful places where the freakish meteorology allows the four season in one day only”***. It also goes on with ***“You may normally find in tourist guides plentiful information and tips, but nothing to compare with this, as it is exclusively prepared for you, the cruiser passenger.”***

Can hardly wait to get there in a few more days for then we will not only be cruisers but cruiser.

Sat out on our verandah about 11am. The sun was hot and temp about 75 degrees. No wind as we are on the back of the ship.

Went to lunch then watched an ice carving performance under the big screen area by the mid deck pool. The carver took a huge block of ice and came up with a Crazy Horse look a like. Very good.

Sea was rough all day, but started calming down by evening.

Went to dinner and the couple that were going ballistic the night before found another table. So, we were alone at a table for 8. Our headwaiter said that other people are assigned to our table but have not shown yet. The dining room was only about 50% full. I think it is because of the rough sea and people are feeling seasick.

The evening show, which was to be a big singing and dancing production, was cancelled because it was too rough for the dancers.

Day 20 - Feb 22. Much calmer sea this morning. Not many out walking since it is a cool 60 degrees. A windbreaker jacket felt good.

We are following the coastline of a big bay with big mountains. About 20 miles out with a beautiful sunrise about 7:30am over the mountains. It did not get dark until 9:30 last night.

Had the most interesting breakfast this morning. One couple from Reno has been around the world and traveled extensively doing missionary work. The other couple from Erie, PA now live in Africa doing missionary work and are on an around the world tour. They use cruises and spend time at their layovers doing missionary work. In Africa he goes to places that require walking for hours upon hours where they have never seen a white person. He is big and has white hair, so he really stands out. The natives call him "fat white man". Name any place in the world and they have been there. They work for the cause of "Rescue the Children". They go to places in Africa that is so bad that if he is going into the bush without her they have to find a place to lock her in for her safety. We could have listened to them all day.

I guess the moral of the story is become a missionary and let the good church members support you while you travel the world and do good things. Not a bad concept. LaRue says she doesn't think I could handle that. I said she could not handle the being locked up part.

At 11 this morning went out on the verandah and there is a light sprinkle of rain. Just getting to the interesting part of the Chilean coast which is fjords, bays, and inner channels.

We are at 39 degrees south latitude. We entered an inside channel about 5 pm. Then made a left turn and cruised north during the night between islands and mountains on each side. Just like the inside passage in Alaska.

Had a nice quiet dinner all alone at our table again. The head waiter says other people are assigned but are just not showing up.

Attended a ventriloquist show after dinner. He had two dummies singing at the same time.

Day 21 - Feb 23. Anchored early in Puerto Montt, Chile, which is central Chile. If I didn't know better, I would place us in Sitka or Juneau, Alaska.

Overcast and a light rain early, then it stopped. We had to tender in and caught a 12:30pm tour. People were dressed for cold weather with heavy sweaters, North Face parkas, stocking caps, etc. I wore short pants, a windbreaker and was comfortable all day. I got some looks and comments.

The area was settled by the Germans in the 1800's, so there is a heavy German influence. Expected a rundown fishing village and poverty, but very neat and well maintained. Beautiful dairy farms, cattle ranches, and berry farms. A big industry is 30 huge salmon hatcheries, where the fish are hatched and later released into the Pacific.

Riding through the countryside reminded us of Tillamook, Oregon area. This is a place that we could live. We saw the largest lake in Chile, and it is the 3rd largest in South America.

Went into a huge modern casino in Puerto Varas on the lake. The instructions on the machines were in English. Very impressed with this area after arid northern Chile.

The main Catholic cathedral is built of wood, and a complete duplicate of one in Bavaria.

We also saw a Lutheran church and a small LDS church in the town of Fruterra.

We ordered a domestic beer in a little cafe in Fruterra and it was Heinkens.

The southern end of the Pan America highway starts in Puerto Montt and ends in Alaska. It is a very modern toll freeway here. We traveled about 40 miles on it.

Quiet evening. Alone again for dinner. We get lots of service as we have a team captain, head waiter, and assistant waiter. All are

anxious to do something as their other tables are missing a lot of people also. The maitre 'd announces the crew as "one can read, one can write, and one can speak".

A beautiful view from our table looking aft and out both sides. We watched the sun setting and shining off the green mountains in the east. Then the moon came up shining across the water. We both had filet mignon which was very good.

Skipped the show as we saw it on the last cruise on this ship.

Day 22 - Feb 24. Day at sea today and tomorrow.

Little cooler and only 2 others walking on deck this morning.

Have not seen another ship in days, but at noon today, we met the Crown Princess cruise ship going north. A pretty sight.

Formal night with a Captain's cocktail party preceding dinner. The booze flowed freely, and security was very evident. Before I knew it I had 5 manhattan's in front of me. Big ruckus when the Captain announced we would not enter the Chilean fjords tonight. The best explanation I heard was that it would be dark, and you would not see anything. Plus, it would be too dangerous. Good enough for me. Anyway, it really set people off. Boos and yelling, mostly from a certain block of people. Security jumped right in and broke it up.

Now everyone says the only reason they booked this cruise was for the few hours cruising in the fjords. Watch for a class action lawsuit in the future.

At dinner a couple showed up at our table. They said they prefer the buffet upstairs, at their own schedule. Probably will not see them again.

Day 23 - Feb 25.

Starting to enter The Magellan Strait today.

Getting colder at 45 degrees, overcast, and windy. I was the only person out walking this morning.

This afternoon cruising through the strait with towering rocks and mountains on both sides. Looks to be 30-50 miles across. We go through a really narrow part about 5:30pm.

The afternoon was splendid cruising the Magellan Strait at 10 mph, and smooth water. Both sides of the channel were towering solid rock mountains that went up into the clouds, We saw several spectacular glaciers, some whale activity, and lots of birds.

No other inhabitants around except for two very small boats, and no buildings or roads. We were out on our balcony enjoying the sights in shirt sleeves until about 4pm. Then a jacket felt good. Our neighbors were out also. We were all visiting and pointing out the sights while sipping a little of the Chilean red.

A very nice dinner and spent a lot of time talking to our head waiter from the Phillipines. He told us his father is very old - 76. Wow, that is old. I had pot roast and LaRue had pork loin. Good as usual.

Day 24 - Feb 26. Anchored in Punta Arenas, Chile. Had to get up early to catch a tender to get to our Patagonia Experience tour. Punta Arena, population 120,000, is in the southernmost tip of Chile. The city looks more like 20-30,000 people.

We toured the city, a nice museum, a huge cemetery, and a farm set up for tourists. They met us with a glass of wine and a very good pastry with a meat filling that everyone really liked. It was ground llama. The hosts were 6th generation with their ancestors coming from Norway.

Lots of English. Scots, and Scandinavians settled this area in the later 1800's. Saw a sheep shearing demonstration and walked around the farm with the llamas and sheep. The owner said he has a large sheep and llama operation out in the country. He sells wool,

and lamb for eating all over the world. The old mutton goes to Turkey. I can attest to that because I ate a lot of it in my year in Turkey.

The average year around temperature here is 33-44-55 degrees. Winter average is 33, and summer average 55, for an average year around of 44. It will rain here every day, but for a short time. We did not get any. We had sunshine and about 50 degrees, so were lucky. They only get about 7 days a year like today.

Sail away was beautiful. We were all out on our balcony toasting farewell to Chili. We backtracked through the Magellan strait for a while. Then a channel going southwest. Turned left into the Darwin Channel and then east for Ushuaia, Argentina, the southernmost town in the southern hemisphere. About 6:30am we will reach the most scenic part of the trip in the Darwin channel, also known as the Beagle channel.

Day 25 - Feb 27. Up at 6:30am. Just starting to get light when we saw the 1st large glacier in a string of 5 on the port side, and some great waterfalls. Very high snow covered mountains. It was soooo spectacular. At one point the passage was 1 mile wide and 1 mile deep. We also saw smaller glaciers up high on the starboard side.

Really nice on our aft balcony where we could see both directions. We started our watch on an upper deck on the port side. Soon decided to come back to our cabin to see both sides at once. It also got us out of the wind. It was 45 degrees and not bad out of the wind.

At 10 am started to see some signs of civilization as we approach Ushuaia. We should dock about noon. Ushuaia is the jump off point for Antarctica and is Patagonia country.

The weather today was one of their best 5 days this summer. The locals were ecstatic. Three days before we got here it was terrible. The port was closed.

Nice tour out into the mountains and lakes. Stopped at a mountain lodge near a ski area for snacks and wine. They had a big round glass enclosed building with a huge firepit in the middle. Whole

lamb were splayed out roasting around the edge of the fire. When they need some meat they take a big knife and whack off a piece. Smelled good even to me. One thing we learned today. There are no wild animals here, except beaver. There are also no ants or bees.

Hope this weather holds as we tackle Cape Horn tomorrow. We do not leave until 11pm tonight.

Debated whether to have dinner in town or on the ship. Decided on the ship, and against walking to town about 6 blocks away. Quiet dinner with a nice couple from Kentucky. They joined us as their tour did not get back in time for the early seating. LaRue had lamb and I had bbq game hen.

Day 26 - Feb 28. We sailed southwest during the night. Then turned due west in the early morning to go around the horn. Seems strange. We stopped dead at one time during the night and do not know why.

I thought Cape Horn was the tip of South America you sailed by. It is an island off the tip. Sea is really heavy, whitecaps, big swells, overcast, and light rain about 9am. Temp at 49 degrees which is not bad, except for the wind. We turned north to go counter clockwise around the horn (the island). Then south in a big wide turn, and eventually turning east around the south end of the cape. Have to turn wide because of the wind. The wind dictates whether you circle the cape clockwise or counter clockwise, as we are doing now.

Cannot see much now but earlier got some good video, although overcast. I was on an open deck on deck 10 and the wind was blowing so hard I could not stand up without holding on. Three teenage boys were having fun in the wind. They had hooded parkas and asked me if I was cold. I was wearing a sleeveless shirt. I said no, and they probably thought grandpa had lost it. It was cold but not that bad.

We passed about a mile off the southernmost tip of the Cape at 10:35am. Heavy overcast and light rain. We could see the waves crashing on the shore. The Captain said over the intercom that he

wanted to let us know that a young Chilean naval officer, his wife and 2 young children are living there for 6 months to tend the light house.

In the 1pm Mickey Live presentation he brought one of the Chilean pilots to talk and answer questions.

Two pilots have been with us since Valparaiso (now 8 days) and they work 5 hour shifts. He said the wide sweeping turn we made to come around Cape Horn was necessary due to the 60 knot westerly wind blowing us towards the island. He said it was technically difficult and dangerous because the high ship profile caused it to list and sail badly (which we noticed). He could only order a turn of 5 degrees at a time. Then wait and go through the required calculations before ordering another 5 degrees at a time until we headed east again. All the bridge staff was involved. We all applauded loudly for a great job. He also said today's weather was pretty much the norm. This was the largest ship he has piloted through the channels and around the horn. We all came away realizing this is not all routine humdrum stuff.

About 5pm we started rounding the tip of eastern South America, and then turn north to New York.

Sea day tomorrow and a respite from all the sightseeing and touring of the last few days.

Day 29 - March 3. Seem to have lost the last 2 days writing covering turning north after Cape Horn and stopping at Puerto Madryn, Argentina, and still in Patagonia country. So, that part is missing.

A short recap is we took a tour and traveled about 50 miles to a Welsh settled area in Gaimen where we had a Welsh tea and pastries. Then went to Point Loma to see sea lions. We saw a church in a city called Tyrel that looks just like the ones at home. It was a Mormon church. Saw a huge billboard on the way back into Puerto Madryn advertising a hamburger joint called Nerds. No McDonalds here. The area in and out of Puerto Madryn to Gaimen was arid. It resembled driving across northern Nevada. Gaimen was lush farmland growing everything.

Rough sailing last night and today. The ship is pitching fore and aft, and rolling side to side. The cabin creaks and groans. Really difficult walking. We were bouncing off the walls walking back to the cabin after breakfast this morning.

We are at latitude 40 south this morning heading for Montevideo, Uruguay in the morning. One month on the ship today. Still about 7400 miles to New York.

Rough all day long. It sort of takes the appetite away for dinner. I had a seafood newburg. LaRue had Atlantic salmon from the everyday selection. Skipped the wine at dinner.

Skipped the show for sleep.

Day 30 - March 4. In Montevideo, Uruguay this morning. The bay is mostly the huge Plate River, which is muddy looking.

Toured the city highlights today which was mostly city and a large one at that. The German warship, the Graf Spee, was scuttled here at the beginning of WW2. We saw some recovered stuff from it.

The tour guide's intercom system was not working, so did not hear much.

After getting back to the ship we went out to the busy Mercado for shopping. Restaurants with meat cooking on open fires all over the place. Looked really good, but we had just eaten on the ship. A huge ribeye was priced at \$20 US dollars. We shared a local beer that came in a 1 liter bottle and cost \$7.80 US dollars. Two other cruise ships are here, so it was probably cruise ship pricing today.

Crossing a wide street and someone shouted "LaRue". It was one of our dinner waiters, Percy (he did the sultry dancing thing during the entertainment segment at dinner).

We bought a couple of trinkets and 2 bottles of wine, as we have been doing at every stop. Our wine cellar is building up. Ship's security lets wine go through. It is because their stock is low.

Strange thing. We have a small Holland America cruise ship that has been following us since Valpariso, Chile (12 days now). We call it the ghost ship. It pops up everywhere. I looked out this morning and it was behind us really close. We are now parked bow to bow and nearly touching.

Quiet dinner and we both had panko shrimp. Said goodbye to our waiters as we switch back to anytime dining starting leg 3 tomorrow. They were great, if not the best we have had. The youngest, Andreas, 22 years old from Peru, had to have a hug with grandma when we arrived and when we departed every night. He also wanted to know if we had any granddaughters his age.

Leg 3 - Buenos Aires to New York City

Day 31 - March 5. Docked in Buenos Aires, Argentina this morning. It is the end of leg 2 and the beginning of leg 3 of our cruise. This is a huge city of over 3 million. The entire area is 13 million people.

Did the city highlights tour and was happy to get back to the ship at 2pm. It is too busy, too much traffic, and too many tourists. Four cruise ships in port, and all stopping at the same tourist spots. We saw the high end areas, the middle class areas, the working class, the poverty, and the homeless. It is a beautiful city with lots of parks.

Ran into our young dinner waiter, Andreas, in a shop. He had to give grandma a big hug. He was trying on a red leather motorcycle type coat priced at \$300.

Our tour guide pointed out a small river that she said is very polluted. If you drink from it you will die within 3 days.

Moved into our new cabin which is forward and on the starboard side. What a change. We were upgraded from a suite to a Grand Suite. It is about 3-4 times larger than our last 2 cabins. Our cabin attendant said it is the largest on the ship, and there are only 12. A huge bathroom with Jacuzzi tub, 3 large closets, an L shaped couch

that is at least 10 feet long, two big chairs, separate dressing area, wet bar, and a long verandah with padded chairs and a lounge chair. We only fill up about a third of the drawer space. Will be a nice change of pace for the last 18 days.

Dinner was our first night back in anytime dining. Shared a table with people we boarded the ship with. Rounding out the table was Alan the strange one, a couple from Australia, and a couple from Washington DC that just boarded. I said, "and everybody knows Alan". He just looked at me.

I was looking for something different so had southern fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy from the everyday selection. LaRue had grilled tilapia. Both very tasty.

Day 32 - March 6. Two days to Rio. Looked out this morning and we were just off Montevideo, Uruguay (where we stopped 2 days ago). It is a narrow channel with red buoys on one side and green on the other. We are in a line of two other cruise ships. They peeled off for Montevideo, and there are 2 huge container ships now behind us.

Went out for my walk this morning and there was an old lady standing in the hallway with her packed bags. Do not know where she was going, and did not ask.

New people out walking this morning. Nobody stood out. Silverback was there after 2 days absence. In discussing the people I observe with LaRue she said I should be called "the penguin". Don't know how to take that.

Shared a table at lunch with an 87 year old and his daughter (really). He is still a squared away WW2 ex-marine who survived the WW2 island hopping battles. Said he just came from researching back to back cruises out of New Orleans for him, and his "lady friend", that he did not bring on this trip. He can prepay 1 week in the parking garage in New Orleans and get away with 3 weeks parking. Said he drank one of those large Australian Foster beers, and, "was seeing double and thinking single".

Both of us had Atlantic Norwegian salmon for dinner. For a starter LaRue had duck liver pate' for the second time. She really likes it. It does not appeal to me. I have had a shrimp cocktail starter every night, except two. Best cocktail sauce ever.

Skipped the show as it was a dancing and singing preview that leads off the start of every cruise segment.

Day 32 - March 7. Noticed when I sent the email yesterday I had 700 miles to NYC when it should have been 7000 miles. Just missed the last zero.

Really zipping along last night and today at almost 22 knots, the ships maximum speed. Will be in Rio tomorrow. Looking at the map we have a long ways to go. Smooth sea but the ship is rolling a bit.

Back into warmer weather now and around 75 degrees before lunch. LaRue is off to crafts, and something called Tai-Chair stretching. I've been out on the deck reading. Got a book from the library titled the "Enterprise" about the WW2 carrier. Their shakedown cruise was to Rio de Janeiro and when they crossed the equator they had a wild initiation from polywog to shellback status. One sailor died from a heart attack.

Learned that when you cross the equator at the international dateline in the Pacific you become a golden shellback. When we cross back over the equator in 7 more days we become a hornback. I think golden status is something to think about for a future cruise. (*Note added much later. We did it*)

Was looking east out of our large picture windows and wondering how far the next land is. Checked our maps and it is Africa. We are now on about the same parallel as Johannesburg.

We both had filet mignon for dinner, which was very good. Wouldn't you know but weird Alan was at our table again along with another nice couple from Georgia. We had a little bit in common in that he flew the EC-47 spook flights in vietnam hauling some of my friends that stayed in the AF Security Service.

Day 33 - March 8. Up early today as we were coming into Rio de Janeiro and lots of scenery. It is the 3rd longest bay in the world. The others are San Francisco and Sydney, Australia. Passed about a half mile off Sugarloaf mountain as we passed through a narrow strait.

The temperature was 85 degrees and 75% humidity.

Took a highlights tour including the tram ride to the top of Sugarloaf. Fantastic view from up there overlooking Red Beach, Copacobana beach, and across to the huge Christ the Redeemer statue on another peak. Believe that Rio is one of the most beautiful cities we have seen as far as scenery goes.

The city is huge (6 million) with impossible traffic. Learned that the city got its name from the early Portuguese explorers. They found this place in 1505 on the river in the month of January. They named it Rio de Janeiro (River January). The French established a small city in 1550. The Portuguese came back and found them. They had a big battle over it. Red beach supposedly got its name from the blood that flowed. It is actually because of the red sand. This is all according to our tour guide.

Back to the ship at 3pm and worn out. LaRue talked to a guy in line at the deli who said his wife broke her shoulder in two places getting out of the shower that morning. They were catching a plane to New York in the evening.

Saw that I could pick up free wifi before we sailed. Powered up my Kindle Fire e-reader and was able to connect to Amazon.com and re-register it. Found my books in my account. Was able to do a slow download and was back in business just before we sailed. We will see if it goes berserk again.

Sail away was set for 8pm, which would be around our dining time. Our cabin is on the starboard side that will be facing Rio as we depart. So, we elected to order room service salads and sandwiches.

Then sit on our veranda and watch the lights of Rio pass by. It was spectacular for about an hour and a half.

Day 34 - March 9. 85 degrees when I went out walking this morning.

Thought I saw a yellow life raft, but when we went by it was a rather large yellow barrel. Also passing by some offshore oil rigs so it must have been from them.

Had two really nice Australian couples at our table this morning. Their stories about living and driving in the remote areas of Australia were just amazing.

Cruising along on a nice afternoon about 2000 miles south of the equator. Salvador, Brazil tomorrow.

Looking at our account on the interactive television and saw that Carnival deposited a \$600 refund to our account. Kind of nice. They also gave us a refund of \$100 each on leg 1 for not being able to see the fjords during the middle of the night. So, we are making money on this cruise??

Security and personal safety is a big issue at all f the ports lately. Do not wear any jewelry and be aware of pick pockets at at all times. Do not venture off by yourself. Tours are safe, but getting your pockets picked is an issue at any stop.

Formal night and the Captain's cocktail reception prior to dinner. Met up with Michael and Jusarra at the party.

Then went to dinner together. I had a slab of prime rib that covered the whole plate. Perfectly cooked medium rare and tender. It was so big I could only eat about a third of it. LaRue had a lobster and tiger shrimp combination. Sure going to be rough back home after all of this.

Day 35 - March 10.

Did an afternoon city tour of Salvadore, Brazile. Another big city of 3 million people. Saw the old, the new, and about 20 miles of nice beaches. The area has a heavy African influence from the importation of slaves in the 1800's. It is Sunday so the shops were closed and light traffic.

At 5pm the MSC cruise ship Orchestra pulled out from behind us and gave us a good serenade on the ships horn as they passed close by on our side of the ship.

We are supposed to leave at 6pm, but a fuel ship is still putting fuel aboard. Hoping to see the sun set on our side of ship before we pull out. Jusarra told us that you can see a band of green just as the sun goes down in this part of the world. We should see it.

At dinner I had fettucini and shrimp and LaRue had pork loin. Good food but just not all that hungry. Probably because we had a cheese plate and some wine in our cabin before dinner. Shared the table with four Australians who were interesting.

Day 36 - March 11. New faces out walking this morning. I guess because it is nice and warm at 82 degrees. The sea is a beautiful lighter blue color today and pretty calm, although small white caps. We are also moving along at only 7 knots as it is not to far to our next port, Recife, Brazil tomorrow.

Requested a table for 2 at dinner as LaRue is getting the sniffles and did not want to upset people. Talked to a nice older couple from Santiago, Chile at the next table. We both had fish filet and decided to turn in early as we have to get up early for touring.

Day 37 - March 12. Recife, Brazil, population 1.5 million.

We are only 2,000 miles from the nearest point in Africa. In WW2 the U.S. used this route to fly across the Atlantic.

Sailing in we could see about 20 miles of nice flat beach. There were 4 large groups of high rises along the coastline. Recife was

settled by the Dutch in the 1550's after kicking the Portugese out. It has a Dutch influence in the architecture.

On our tour we stopped at a shopping mall that was formerly a prison. The small shops were formerly jail cells. LaRue bought a very colorful top to wear. I just roamed around.

We toured the area and the nearby city of Olinda. In Olinda we were having a break in a bar/café and saw the people that we met on the plane in Salt Lake. This is the first time that we have seen them.

Was glad to get back to the air-conditioned ship in the afternoon. Cannot figure out what all these people do. There seems to be no industry around.

Decided to enjoy the sail away in our cabin and ordered room service turkey sandwiches, salads, and cookies. They make the best turkey sandwiches, and what a deal. It doesn't cost anything. Enjoyed a beautiful setting sun and sunset as we sailed away. The sun is absolutely huge down in this part of the world.

Day 38 - March 13. A day at sea and Fortaleza, Brazil tomorrow. Hot out walking this morning. The ship's display shows 82 degrees. Our patio door shows 92 with the sun partially on it.

We are at 6 degrees south latitude of the equator this morning. Will cross it on March 15.

Saw some sea birds that I have never seen this morning. Smaller than seagulls with a white slender body and narrow white wings with black around the edges. They like to draft off one side of the ship. Also saw one albatross for a while.

Found out in the Mickey Live show that the birds are called Boobys and exist only around the tropics. They spend 90% of their life at sea. They dive straight down into the ocean to get small fish. Also found out the water temperature here is 90 degrees F.

Quiet day reading and attended a hosted reception for frequent quests in the afternoon.

I had a NY strip steak at dinner. LaRue had lamb that she was not too thrilled with.

Went to the late show which was a hypnotist.

Day 39 - March 14. Arrived at Fortaleza, Brazil around 8am. It is our last stop in Brazil.

A little excitement with the wind blowing broadside against the ship. It blew us away from the pier and was a dangerous situation. A smaller ship was blown off. It even pulled out its anchoring post on the pier.

We maneuvered for a while, and then it was announced we could not tie up to the pier due to the wind and currents. We would not be stopping.

However, we had an emergency evacuation that had to be accomplished, and get the Brazilian immigration people off. So, we butted up close to the pier. Got them off and pulled away. The poor guy with the medical condition was loaded into the back of a police pickup truck. With that done we departed Fortaleza.

We had a tour booked so I guess we will get a refund. Really don't care about not stopping here. The city is huge with 1.5 million people and high rises everywhere. Also, it is very hot. It will be a slow day at sea relaxing.

Next stop will be the Barbados. We go by the mouth of the Amazon River today. Will not actually see the river, but should see the plume of muddy water out into the sea.

Now looks like we will cross the equator during the night instead of tomorrow.

People we had dinner with were down on the Captain. The guy that had to be medically evacuated was placed in the back of a police pickup after they got him off the ship. They were highly disturbed about it even though there was an ambulance arriving as we departed. They seem to ignore that the Captain took a big risk to get him ashore. He was occupied with getting the ship safely out of there, and nobody was lost off a badly moving gangplank. I let them know that we were with the Captain on this issue. They backed off and we enjoyed the evening.

The entertainers that were supposed to join us were not able to get aboard. So, there is some improvising. The evening show was filled in with a talent show which we skipped.

Day 40 - March 15. Going through rain squalls this morning. Only the 3rd time on this cruise.

Crossed the equator during the night. The celebration will be tonight.

Three cruise days to Bridgetown, Barbados. People are getting a little bitchy after we missed docking in Fortaleeza, Brazil yesterday. I tell them, "I am really bummed out. Fortaleeza is the only reason we booked this cruise". They give me a strange look.

We have been out of range of network news, CNN, etc., for about a month now. Once in a while we get CNN International and Headline News (always the Jodi Arias murder trial). The complainers don't seem to be complaining about it, which is odd.

Started raining hard at 5pm and continued all night.

Before we went to dinner LaRue called her brother, Ross, and Marion to wish her happy birthday. We knew she was near the end when we departed. We were quite shocked to hear that she passed away on February 15. Not anything we can do now,

The evening entertainment was a big equator crossing celebration in the pool area at 10pm. Got it all on video. The highlight was when the cruise director (who thinks he is above everything) got tossed in

the inflatable pool and garbage dumped all over him. He later said he was the only one on the ship that didn't know it was going to happen.

Day 42 - March 16. Still raining this morning and the sea is running heavy. Passing by the French Guyana coast today.

The Captain announced in the afternoon that we will not go to Grand Turk Island on the 18th as planned. The reason is that cruise ship's crew and passengers have been having gastrointestinal problems after departing. We will continue on to Antigua, which we have not been to. We are happy as we have been to Grand Turk and there is not much there.

Saw Mike and Jussara and they are coming by our cabin tonight for some libation. Then will go to dinner, which is formal night.

Heard at lunch that the Carnival Legend and the Miracle are experiencing technical problems. Carnival gives the media something to jump on. Sometime ago a Celebrity ship was going around Cape Horn and had propulsion problems. It never made the news.

We went to dinner with Mike and Jussara. Got a table for 6 to share with another couple. Who shows up but weird Alan. LaRue noted this morning that Alan never chooses the chair next to a man. He always sits next to a female. Glad for that. He ordered a filet that was a perfect medium rare and sent it back. The next one came out, and still too rare. The third one came out and it was still too rare, but he ate it all. He does that every time we have sat with him. He said he is on his fourth cabin because he cannot sleep in the lone he was in. LaRue told him she bets customer service winces when they see him walk up to the counter. He didn't get it.

Alan said he was at one of the pools earlier in the day and had to call security before a fight broke out. Seems as though a big fat guy was jumping into the pool and splashing everybody. He was totally obnoxious. A little old fiesty lady took him on, and neither was backing down. Alan called security (probably a good idea) who broke

it up. Now Alan fears the big guy will be looking for him. Oh for life on a cruise ship. We love it.

A lady at the table was making a big deal about a lifeboat being missing on the port side under their cabin. She would not shut up about it. I will check it out.

Day 43 - March 16. Another day at sea for 5 in a row since we did not go ashore in Fortaleeza.

Clocks went back one hour last night. We are now on Eastern+2.

On my morning walk I went down and walked on deck 3 under the lifeboats and conducted an inspection and count. There were 13 lifeboats on both port and starboard sides for a total of 26. There were no empty spaces and no missing lifeboats. Can not wait to see that lady again.

While walking I saw a wad of paper towels on a wooden bench that houses life jackets. As I got closer it looked like the remains of a small bird wrapped in it. I thought someone found it and put it there to be disposed of. Then a small black colored bird's head popped out and looked around. It must have been a distressed land bird that got caught on the ship.

Had a pleasant Sunday brunch this morning in the dining room with complimentary bloody marys. LaRue had huevos and a nice filet and I had mac and cheese. A nice change of pace.

We stopped by Guest sSrvices to see if bags could be delivered directly to the airline. LaRue was evesdropping on a very distraught Asian lady. She was registering a major complaint against an entertainer two days ago. Her complaint was that he sang a song implying the neighborhood dogs were ending up in the Chinese won ton soup.

We were at this show where the comedian improvised songs on his guitar for whatever entertainer you wanted to hear. He did a perfect imitation of Neil Diamond, and a song about dogs disappearing and ending up in the won ton soup. It was very funny. He will be on

again tonight. We will see if he apologizes. In this day and age he will probably have to. We went to the show, and he didn't.

Another one is that Mickey had to apologize for something he said in one of his Mickey Live shows. He told a story about getting a cab to get back to the ship. A lady piled in for a free ride. He said of course she was a (which I will leave out). The next show he had to apologize. Lots of drama if you pay attention.

Have not seen much sea life lately, but this morning seeing flying fish by the dozens. They take off from near the ship and fly away from it. The bigger ones skim along the water for 30 yards or so and then plunk back in.

At dinner weird Alan ended up at our table again. You should have seen his face drop when he saw us at the table. Last night his favorite cruise line was P&O Orient. The night before it was Cunard Lines. Depends on where the new people at the table are from. Not sure if you can believe anything he says. He once admitted he is not sure of what he has said from night to night.

Day 44 - March 18. In Bridgetown, Barbados today. Population around 250,000 for the whole island. Warned not to wear any military style stuff, including camo's, or you will be arrested. Formerly British, so they drive on the left.

Went on a tour through the city and out into the country. Lots of sugar cane grown here. Toured a rum distillery, a plantation mansion, and an artisan mahogany carving workshop. Really interesting.

Day 45 - March 19. Going between islands this morning approaching the island of Antigua. Saw some sailboats for the first time. One was crossing in front of us, and we had to veer right to pass behind it.

Absolutely beautiful coming into St Johns, Antigua. Nice beaches and colorful houses and condos. The water is a totally different color - sort of light greenish blue.

Did not take a tour. Walked around the downtown shopping area off the pier with Mike, and Jusarra. Was wearing my Idaho visor and ran into the other guy from Idaho that we had heard about. He lives in Driggs but is a retired patent attorney for a large NY firm, although he ran the LA office.

At breakfast this morning met a couple from Florida who are huge Boise State fans. Their daughter is a US attorney in Boise. They also have a family member in Nebraska that has received a scholarship to play linebacker at Boise State.

This is the last port call before New York City. Only 3 more days at sea after today. This cruise is just about over. Thinking back it has been a long journey that we have totally enjoyed.

Getting network stations now on tv. The weather up north looks like storms and cold weather.

Another nice evening. Mike and Jussara came by, and we are going to dinner together.

We made it clear to the hostess that we did not want Alan at our table. Our friends had him at breakfast. The hostess just grinned and gave us a table for four. She said Alan was already seated, so no problem there.

Worked out good. We got one of our favorite waiters from Thailand, Khimchai, (or something like that). He remembers all of us, and we were at his table the evening before. Lot of fun and he reminds me of our favorite beach vendor, Jerry, in Puerto Vallarta. Said he was going to fire his helper when we get to New York. He would not give me just one scoop of ice cream for dessert. Said I have to have two because one just melts away. The normal serving is 3 scoops. I had a steak and everyone else had short ribs. Everyone was happy.

After dinner we went up to the outside decks and enjoyed the evening under the stars with very few people out and about. We were cruising between islands and enjoyed seeing the lights. Quite a long string of small islands through here.

Day 46 - March 20. Day at sea today with 2 more to go after today. Then we are in New York City. Guess we will be ready to get off the ship, but sure will miss it.

Going by the Dominican Republic this morning.

Hardly anyone out walking this morning. Except for 5 women that I have never seen before. I would bet that they decided they were going to work off the weight gain before they get home (a little late for that). I think we have done ok, but will see in a few days.

Had a little drama at lunch in the dining room. The hostess was taking us to our table when we spotted a problem guy (I call him "the dominator") already at the table. We said no, not with him. Had to go back and explain to the maitre'd.

We got another table for two. LaRue had a nice Idaho rainbow trout, and I had Chinese pepper steak and rice. Meanwhile "the dominator" was giving us the stare down. We had lunch with him once. Retired Air Force, saved the free world, a world class cruiser, and to hear him tell it the cruise lines pay him to cruise. Retired teacher in Sacramento, President of the Retired Teachers Association, and on and on. He totally dominates, and nobody gets a chance to talk. LaRue asked him if he was married, and he said no. LaRue then said, "it is a good thing that your not". We departed early. Just two bad table mates that we don't like to dine with, which is not too bad. Would take Alan any day over him.

We have not seen a whale for so long that we were no longer looking for them. Then in the afternoon one came up just off our balcony. I just saw the big splash. LaRue saw the whole tail. That was it.

In the Mickey Live show we got some info on our entry into New York. We pass under the Verrazano Brige about 6am. Then go by the

Statue of Liberty and proceed on the Hudson. Then dock along side the Intrepid aircraft carrier, which has the shuttle on it now. Our side of the ship will then look out on the World Trade Center.

The Statue of Liberty will be on the other side of the ship as we come in, so will have to go up on deck to see it. Not looking forward to debarkation as we are told that immigration and customs is very strict. We expect it to be especially tough given all of the South American countries we have been to. We have priority getting off. So does more than half the ship.

Looks like we will have traveled about 18,500 miles.

Had a nice quiet dinner for two. We both had 5 big grilled tiger shrimp in a nice sauce. LaRue also had escargot and I had Maryland corn chowder. Afterwards we walked and enjoyed the upper decks under the stars. A movie was on the big screen at the mid ship pool area and people were lounging on the deck chairs and eating popcorn. A lot of people cycling down. The night before they were dancing to rock and roll music in the pool area.

Day 47 - March 21.

At 9 this morning we are on the same latitude as north Florida, and we hit a big storm. Heavy rain, wind, thunder, and lightning. Looks like it could be this way the rest of the way. Florida and the east coast is getting hit.

The pools were sloshing badly, so they emptied them. An announcement said we would be changing course to try to dodge the worst, so hold on to handrails when walking. Oh well, might as well have an interesting finish to this cruise. While we have big waves and whitecaps the ship seems pretty stable. However, we are listing about 10 degrees starboard due to the crosswind.

Day 48 - March 22. A little more drama at lunch today. At a table for 8 and one guy, who we have had before, is a chronic complainer. He was non stop complaining today. I finally told him that all he ever does is complain, and I did not want to hear any more of it. A little

later he and his wife jumped up and departed without another word. He goes on the list as #3 on the "do not dine with people". The rest of us had a pleasant lunch, and conversation after that. The other people at the table thanked me for speaking up.

Day 48 - March 22. Really tough night last night. The ship started bouncing around during dinner. It continued all night getting worse and worse, and making it hard to sleep. Got up twice to secure closet doors, etc. The bow would go up in the air then plunge down. Every once in a while we would get about 4 or 5 huge sideway jolts that would wake us up.

This morning the cabin windows are covered with salt. The ship motion is somewhat tolerable, but still hard to walk. Didn't even think about walking this morning. The outside decks are probably closed anyway.

These last 2 days of rough weather is probably pay back for the extremely smooth sailing we had the other 46 days. We thank our lucky stars.

This afternoon is packing up time and getting ready to go tomorrow.

Getting a lot colder and about 42 degrees outside this afternoon.

March 23. Coming into NY City was spectacular. Went under the Verrazano Bridge about 6am, then the Statue of Liberty about 6:30 still in the dark. Our smokestack did not clear the Verrazano Bridge by much.

The statue looks smaller than we thought it would be. In fact, it would fit in the atrium of our ship.

Then the skyline behind Manhattan started getting light, and what a view. Pulled in next to the WW2 carrier with the shuttle sitting on the deck. Quite a different view of the city from where we are tied up..

Had a two hour delay getting off the ship. The Port Authority would not let us off until all the bags were in the terminal. Immigration and customs was a walk through. We were in the first group to get off, so got to JFK via a shuttle bus with all kinds of time to spare. Had an expensive lunch and boarded our flight to Salt Lake. We overnigheted in Salt Lake and caught the morning flight to Twin Falls.

It was a great cruise. One that we will always remember.

The end

