

Day 9 Aug 2, Sunday – At Sea – on the way to Isafjordur, Iceland

Northern Latitudes: We are definitely heading into northern latitudes. At noon the ship's position was 63 degrees North. We will be near the Arctic Circle when we reach Isafjordur, Iceland tomorrow. Yesterday we set the clocks back an hour at 12:00 noon so this morning we are now 3 hours ahead of Eastern Daylight time in the US. We set the clocks back another hour at noon today. Last night it didn't get really dark until about 11pm and this morning it was daylight by 4am.

Liz Quisgard: Cruising is enjoyable on several levels and one aspect we like is meeting new people. For the most part, people on a cruise ship like to socialize and there is usually plenty of time to stop and chat awhile. While eating breakfast in the Lido Restaurant we noticed a lady apparently writing in a journal but most of her time was spent on a full page pencil sketch of a lighthouse. Barbara got her attention and complimented her on the beauty of the sketch she was making. That casual comment got us engaged in a 5 minute conversation where Liz Whitney Quisgard was transformed in our eyes from an anonymous fellow passenger into an a really nice person and accomplished artist. It turned out that Liz is an artist who is well known in the art world and has exhibits in many museum and corporate collections. She has an exhibit at Vanderbilt Hospital in Nashville which is not far from our home in East Tennessee. The image she was sketching was the Point Amour, Labrador lighthouse that she had seen while we were in Red Bay a few days ago. She doesn't use a computer to record her journal but instead of using digital images the way we do, she uses her artistic skill to illustrate the highlights of what she sees. As we drew our conversation to an end she gave us an illustrated booklet published by the Gibson Gallery at The Art Museum of the State University of New York at Potsdam. The booklet is filled with beautiful pictures of her paintings which are primarily acrylic on various substrates and emphasize architectural patterns and structure. We took a picture of Liz to commemorate our chance meeting. We are looking forward to seeing her about the ship in the coming weeks of the cruise.



Towel Animals: When the stewards, Yadi and Kamal, make up our room at night they use a bath towel, rolled in an clever way to form a whimsical sculpture of some sort of animal. Here are some examples of towel art. A small dog is on the left but the larger bulldog is our favorite pet so far.



Church Service: This being Sunday there was an Interdenominational Church service at 8am in the Half Moon meeting room. About 50 people attended with the Rev. Herbert Meza and his wife Fran conducting the services. He is a retired Presbyterian minister from Florida. The theme of the sermon was that at any point in life, even for those of us “senior” types, we can resolve to have a new beginning with improved behavior and outcomes.

Outside World Connection: For the last 3 days there has been no satellite TV connection to provide current news so we are quickly losing track of outside world events. There is a daily summary of news called “Times Digest” which gives headline stories from the New York Times but our interest in that has rapidly fallen off as we have gotten into the spirit of the cruise.

Holland America Cost Cutting: One of the reasons we signed on to the Voyage of the Vikings was that, because of the current economic downturn, Holland America Lines (HAL) had reduced the price significantly relative to the charge they made in prior years for the same cruise. To their credit they have found ways to reduce onboard expenses without too much sacrifice on the part of us passengers. Some innovations in that regard that we have noticed are the following:

1. **No trays in the Lido Buffet Restaurant** --- Now, without trays it is necessary to make several trips to the buffet if you want several different types of food. This was a little pain at first but the extra effort has caused us to rethink what we really want to eat and (to our benefit) cut down on our mindless consumption of food.
2. **Bath Towels used as Animal Sculptures** --- On prior HAL cruises the bathroom towel rack was fully stocked each night and the towel animal sculptures left by the stewards on our bed were made from additional towels. Now the animal

sculpture is actually one of the towels we need to use later in the evening and the next day. This practice saves the laundry cost of the extra towels and the only downside is that sometimes we have to destroy the animal sculpture sooner than we would like to.

3. **Noon Hour Time Zone Change:** As the Maasdam cruises eastward it has been necessary to move the time forward one hour as we enter each new time zone. Normally the time change is made during the night and we lose an hour of sleep with each change. There has been an innovation on this cruise to move the clocks forward one hour at 12:00 noon each day. We like this new procedure and everyone we talk to also thinks it is a good idea. It is a WIN-WIN situation because the passengers avoid losing an hour's sleep during the night and HAL has the economic payoff of one less hour of having to provide food and other services during the height of passenger daily activity around noontime. An interesting check on this theory will be possible on our return trip to Boston when we will be adding an hour to our day as we move to a new time zone. It will still be a WIN-WIN situation if the routine is changed back to the usual shipboard practice of adding an hour in the middle of the night. The passengers always can use an extra hour of sleep and the hour is added at a time of minimum economic expense to HAL.

Ice Pilot – Capt. Raymond Jourdain: While we were in Red Bay, Labrador, a Canadian Ice Pilot named Captain Raymond Jourdain boarded the Maasdam. He has been helping the Maasdam's Captain van Schoonhoven navigate through the Canadian and Greenland waters where icebergs are lurking. Today he gave an interesting lecture based on his skill in interpretation of different types of floating ice and knowledge of modern technology for tracking ice hazards in the world's shipping lanes. He said that the floating ice of concern in the open sea all comes from glaciers, primarily in Greenland. A flow of cold ocean water coming south between the narrow strip of water between Canada and Greenland carries ice chunks down along the coast of Canada. Those are the ones we spotted off the coast of Labrador and the one that sunk the Titanic. We passengers typically call all the floating chunks of ice "icebergs" but he had three distinct categories, (1) growlers, (2) berger-bits and (3) icebergs. The most dangerous category is the "growler" which extends about 1 meter above the water surface and he said about 75% of the growler volume is below water. They are dangerous, particularly in choppy seas because they are too small for the navigation radar on the ships to detect and they can do serious damage in a collision with a ship. During the day growlers can usually be seen but at night they are a real hazard. The next larger chunk of ice is called a "berger-bit". A berger-bit extends about 5 meters above the water surface. The third category is "iceberg" which is all those ice chunks that extend more than 5 meters above the water. Both berger-bits and icebergs can be readily detected by radar and avoided so they are not so dangerous in the shipping lanes. When forced to hit an iceberg he recommended a straight on collision with the bow of the ship. He said that ships are best equipped to survive that type of collision and if the captain tries to turn the ship the collision usually rips a larger hole in the side which is more difficult to survive.

Yesterday it was Raymond Jourdain, our Ice Captain, who advised the Maasdam Captain that under the current ice conditions it was safe to transit the Prins Christian Sund. He made us feel good when he said that Captain van Schoonhoven was an excellent captain and they had a very good working relationship as we navigated the waters with the ice hazards over the last week. We are now out of the area of danger from floating ice thanks to being in the warm Gulf Stream that flows toward Europe.

Foodie Heaven: Tonight there was formal dinner. Usually on those nights the food is a little more exotic. Of course, Barbara went for the big plate of Alaskan king crab legs. The picture below shows the presentation which should please any foodie.



Tonight's Entertainment: All the entertainment performers, except for the Maasdam Singers and Dancers, will be leaving the ship tomorrow in Isafjordur. Three of the performers got together in a 1 hour variety show of their acts. Amy Abler played energetic grand piano pieces, Peter Mezoian played classic tunes on his banjo and our favorite, Bob Brizendine put on his great comedy magic act. He started out by putting flaming torches in his mouth as shown in this picture on the right.



Isafjordur Tomorrow: The weather has been improving with intermittent sunshine as we sail along. Tomorrow we arrive in Isafjordur, Iceland. We will thankfully be tied up to the dock so it will not be necessary to deal with the tender boat ride to a passenger pier. Barbara Haenni, the Maasdam Travel Guide has told us that it is a great town to just walk around and check out the local sights. That is what we plan to do.