

LOG OF MY CRUISE TO SYDNEY

2013

It is Saturday, February 2, 2013 and I finally started my log. I'm sure some details will be lost but for the sake of brevity that might not be so bad.

On the previous Saturday I flew from Chicago to Ft Lauderdale & got to my hotel early. Bill, Ken & his wife Jamie met me in the lobby & after depositing my luggage in my room, we had dinner in the hotel. It sure was good to see each of them again. I hadn't seen Bill in 8 or 9 years and he still looks the same as when we at UW in 1969. Some people never age.

The next morning we were loaded onto buses with lots of luggage. The princess cruise line rep asked if one bag was all I had. We boarded the Pacific Princess and I found my cabin on the port side on the 7th deck, with a private balcony, refrigerator, queen size bunk & a head. There was plenty of space for my stuff but I'm not sure what two people would do. I found the pool bar on the 9th deck and ordered a Mt. Gay. No Mt Gay! An Aussie named Grahame was seated at the bar having a Pinna Colada in memory of his recently departed significant other. I watched as we left the pier and headed out through the cut into the ocean. I changed clothes as there are no shorts or sandals allowed in the formal dining room. My dinner companions were Malcolm and Jennifer, a lady from London. She was a geologist and an accountant; a most interesting lady. Dinners were good with several specials each evening.

The next day I was up early and explored the ship. The Pacific Princess (PP) is 601' long & 84' wide. She was supposed to have just over 600 passengers but we were short of full. The ship had everything anyone could want. After exploring the

ship, I sat in the hot tub to get the frost out of my bones.



Pool & hot tubs

Pacific Princess in Tahiti

weather on TV in cabin

After a few days, I developed a regular routine, coffee, news & a movie in my cabin; a power walk on the deck, (13 times around for 1 nautical mile, 6070') lift weights and then breakfast on the fantail. After breakfast I would generally sit in the hot tub, take a swim and sit in the sun to dry off. I would then have a Miller and try to read but I found watching people much more interesting. Most of the women at the pool should have worn one piece bathing suits and the men two piece. I had trouble establishing an E-mail connection with my Kindle so I visited the internet center to get help & there just was no way. They said it had to do with Road Runner.

On Wednesday evening we had our first formal dinner. So after a routine day, I climbed into my tux. After several attempts to tie a bow tie I surrendered to a clip on. Malcolm left us for some other table. I thought that it was something I said but he said not. I was glad that he left as I had a hard time hearing him.



Limon, Costa Rica

Moses

View of Limon

Early the next morning the ship backed into a berth at Limon, Costa Rica. Limon is a hot, poor city with a very busy harbor. It was good to get away from the ship. I had no excursions planned so I found a guide, Moses, and he took me to an internet café. After a short walk we got to a small shopping center with two floors. The escalator did not work so we climbed to the 2nd floor and found an internet café. The Wi-Fi didn't work either and Moses took me to another computer center which had not opened for business. Moses seemed to know everyone in town. We sat in a tropical park across the street and waited for the business to open. Soon the owner showed up and I was on-line for \$5 all day. Moses and I went back to the park and he waited while I received and sent e-mails. It was good to hear from my friends. Moses disappeared and reappeared with fresh coconuts with tops cut off and a straw. Drinking the fresh milk was delicious. Moses & I walked through the park & Moses took photos using my camera. A cab driver that Moses knew asked if I wanted a tour of Limon and I agreed. We jumped in the cab and headed to a bodega (restaurant) at top of Limon. The views were spectacular. After having a beer (the cab driver had lemonade). I said I wanted to visit my ancestors (monkeys) & so we headed out. We soon got to a small boat landing with several small tour boats with mosquito netting and I said no to another boat ride. We drove along the river but no monkeys were to be found. We turned back to town. By this time, it was getting hot. I realized that I had not negotiated a price for the cab & it ended costing me \$80 plus another \$20 to Moses; all in all a great day. I got back aboard & jumped in the cool salt water of the pool; it felt great.

We shoved off that evening and after having dinner in my cabin, I was in bed early. I slept with the balcony door open and I awoke to find spray coming into my cabin. At daybreak we entered the Colon breakwater and soon we entered the Panama Canal. I had a quick breakfast on the fantail as we entered the first lock & then I headed for the top deck to photograph the canal. The Panama Canal is the most impressive man-made object I have ever seen. It was one way only (west bound, really south) as the east bound canal is being worked on. I assume the east bound traffic went through later. After passing Panama City and

entering the Pacific, I had an early dinner and an early bed time.



Panama Canal

Malecon

The next day (Sat. 2/2) the sun was rising over the Andes Mountains and the Pacific was flat. I had coffee on my balcony and went for a walk and lifted weights. After breakfast, I went to the pool where I met James & Lisa from Santa Cruz, California. They are the youngest people I've met so far. That evening I had dinner with Jennifer in the dining room, then a short floor show and then off to bed.

Super bowl Sunday started a little slow. Stayed in my bunk until we crossed the equator (coffee had been delivered). I walked, lifted weights and had breakfast with a couple from Edmonton, Canada. The day was overcast, rainy & cool so I sat by the pool and finished one book and started another. That afternoon the sun came out and a ceremony was held commemorating our crossing of the equator. The MC was Neptune and it was great fun. I went from a "pollywog" to a "shellback". That evening they showed the Super Bowl on a large screen TV on the lounge on the 10th deck with snacks, pizza, & popcorn. I sat with a couple from Chicago who were rooting for the Ravens. I went home at the end of the 3rd quarter. I bought 4 squares in a football pool in the casino and none of them were any good.

As I woke up we were tying up in Guayaquil, Ecuador. After a quick breakfast we were on a tour bus made in China. Guayaquil is a city of 3.5 million people that I had never heard of with great contrasts between the rich and the poor. Our first stop was a Panama Hat factory; a very modern facility with women weaving hats from reeds. Next we went downtown to a cathedral. We crossed a busy street to a park with statues & iguanas running all over the park. We then had a short walk

to the Malecon or a boardwalk along a tidal river. We walked along the Malecom and passed two yacht clubs neither of which was open. We then trudged up a cobble stone street to an artist colony with very Spanish architecture. We then returned to the P.P. for a cold beer, a swim & a bowl of ice cream. I stayed in my cabin that evening as we headed out to sea.

The next morning dawned cool and overcast (strange being that close to the equator). We followed the coast of South America south to Lima, Peru. I would get an occasional glimpse of the Andes Mts. After my work out and breakfast I went to the library to find a world atlas to find out where the staff was from. It seems that the staff is from all over the world except the U.S. The dancers are American. The lady that cleans my cabin is from the Philippines and my favorite cocktail waitress, Ludmila, is from the Ukraine. That evening I went to an early floor show with a Broadway singer that was very good. After dinner, Jennifer and I went to a Rock & Roll show that was fun. I danced with one of the show girls that I later found out is from Myrtle Beach SC and celebrated her 21st birthday later in the cruise.

I was slow to rise the next morning but the sun was rising over the Andes Mts. It was strange to see snowcapped mountains. After my workout & banana pancakes for breakfast I laid in the sun as we docked at Lima. We boarded a bus and headed through Lima to the Gold Museum. Lima and Callao (the port city) also have great contrasts between the very rich and the very poor. Greater Lima has a population of 9 million people. The museum was interesting but I found another area with weapons, armor & uniforms which was fascinating. We then drove back to the PP. A small market on the pier had Wi-Fi & soon I was online.

Coffee was delivered to my door at 7AM (I could get used to this). We had not left Lima as this is our only overnight port. After breakfast on the fantail, I jumped into a cab (after I had negotiated a price) and headed for "Minka", a nearby shopping center. Johnny, my cab driver waited in the parking lot while shopped. Again, no Mt Gay! I bought a bottle of rum from the Dominican Republic. I tried to download my photos to the internet without success; cost me 50 cents +/-.

The shopping center was beautiful. Indoor/outdoor with lots of flowers and very

clean. Also they had anything you can imagine, food, clothing, cars, liquor, meat and a McDonalds. I found Johnny and soon we were back to the pier. I bought a few trinkets and smuggled my rum aboard. This was the most expensive rum I have ever had, \$10 for the rum, \$25 for the cab ride. I then had a refreshing swim, a MGD and after drying off I had a nap.

That evening Jennifer did not show for dinner so I ate alone. I went to the casino bar to hear Rose & ran into a former County Board Supervisor from Waukesha who knows Judge Flynn from Racine County (small world).

The next morning I saw the ship's doctor regarding a growth on my knee that had blossomed after I got aboard. The medical facility was very nice and doctor advised that I had the growth removed as soon as I got home. I then got some quarters and did a load of laundry with all the women. They said what a great husband I would make. I told them I tried it but it was like a bath, really hot to begin with but then it cools off. I then headed for the sun deck. That afternoon I went to a lecture by an amateur astronomer about the stars of the south sky. He didn't impress me. After a nap, a drink in my cabin I ran into Grahame at the casino bar & we sang popular songs including "Southern Cross". No Jennifer again so I ate with Reg & Diane who are Australians and most interesting to talk to. After dinner there was a rock & roll show so I had a night cap then off to the bunk. That night I saw the Southern Cross (Crux) for the first time.

This is getting redundant. At noon the navigator announced that we are at 90 degrees west, $\frac{1}{4}$ of the way around. The sun is directly overhead. I saw Jennifer at the pool and she is still ailing so after ice cream and a nap, I had dinner in my cabin, watched a movie and went to sleep. I can't go out every night. I woke up early and was able to read the Journal Times on my Kindle. Makes me glad I'm where I am.

After my working workout, I had breakfast with Reg & Diane. She eats a spread on toast called Vegemite made by Kraft foods in Australia. Reg calls it axle grease because that is what it looks and tastes like. I then went to the 4th deck for a putting completion & while waiting for it to begin I asked about my tour of Easter Island & it turned out I was not signed up for a tour so I joined the afternoon tour

of Easter Island. I came in 3rd behind a couple from Michigan in the putting contest. It was difficult to putt sober on a green that is moving. Then back to the 9th deck for some sun and a swim. I was laying in the shade (the sun was brutal) when Collin & Louise stopped and asked about my hat (Chicago to Mac. Mt Gay). They are from Antigua. Louise is a native of Portuguese origin and Collin is English. I suggested a hat exchange they said they would send me one.



Rose Winters



Grahame



Ludmila

That evening I had an early dinner with Rose Winters, the piano player and singer from the casino lounge. Rose is from San Diego and sails 9 months of the year. After dinner I went to a small bar on the starboard side and had a drink with Ludmila. They had some Appleton Estate rum and the bartender put my name on the bottle. The forward lounge had a singer who sang Nat King Cole songs and he was very good. Then I headed to the lounge on the 10th deck to hear Cinnamon, a young couple from near Stockholm for an Irish Cream. The next morning I had a hard time getting up. I thought I was still drunk. But during the night we had picked up a northerly ground swell. Walking on the track was a trick, then weights, breakfast & the hot tub with waves. They closed the pool for cleaning and regrouting so I laid in the sun and read. That afternoon there was a bartending contest and I was asked if I would enter; men against the women and it ended in a tie but I got a free cocktail and it was a lot of fun. Then off for some ice cream and a nap. My rum supply is running low so I will be glad to get ashore on Easter Island. They also tell me there is a tattoo parlor and a Wi-Fi café combined. That evening Jennifer showed for dinner and I had macaroni and cheese with a crab cake for dinner.

I was up early the next morning in anticipation of our landing on Easter Island. I was having an early breakfast with Grahame when the Captain announced that we would not be going ashore as it was too rough to get in the tenders (much sadness). The ship stopped so we could take photos and then we slowly circled the island. I got a few photos of the statues but we were still a long way from shore. Luckily I had some binoculars that I shared with my fellow passengers on the deck. I met a Canadian who had been in Marinette to install navigation equipment at Marinette Marine. I had a light lunch on the fantail and watched Easter Island fade away. Pitcairn Island is over 1000 miles to the west. That evening I had dinner alone and went to the casino bar to hear Rose. The lounge had a male singer who was only so so. That evening we set clocks back to US central time.



Easter Island

Citizens of Pitcairn

Steven Christian

I woke up early and tried Facebook without success. I then walked (some of the old women can really walk). I wrote to the Captain to request a visit to the bridge and the next morning I received a denial saying that it was against company policy since the grounding and capsizing in Italy. I had breakfast with a gal named Tamara on the fantail. She is from Southern California and travels while her husband stays at home and plays golf. We had showers and it was humid. I was looking forward to our arrival at Pitcairn Island the next day. That evening was formal as it was Valentine's Day. I had a drink with Tamara and her friend, Theresa. I had dinner with Jennifer and went back to the Casino bar for a night cap. Grahame was there and was drinking again and making up for lost time. Rose was playing and soon she stopped and came over and had a drink with us at the bar. Rose is a very interesting person and a great musician.

We had set our clocks back again so I was up early. It was raining and blowing so after a quick workout and breakfast, I went back to my cabin. Soon Pitcairn came into view. Not much of an island, no harbor, no airport & a population of 57, most of them are direct decedents of the crew of the Bounty. The ship hove to and soon a 40' aluminum power boat came alongside. I then headed for the lounge on the 10th deck where the islanders were selling their wares. I bought a small jar of honey and continued my shopping. A ship's officer saw my honey and told me I would not be able to take it ashore in Australia. As I was talking to the officer when an islander came up and asked if the ship had any old sheets and pillows that he could buy. The officer told him they use the old sheets for rags. I introduced myself and he said he was Steven Christian, the 7th generation grandson of Fletcher. I asked him why don't you move and he said, "This is my home." I then met his wife and his cousin (who looks like Pat Markham) who noticed my Mt. Gay t-shirt and said that I could buy Mt Gay on Pitcairn. I thought about swimming it. Soon after I ran into them in the ship's store so I bought them Snickers bars. I watched from my balcony as they loaded onions, canned goods, beer, liquor and etc. into their launch and soon they were off and we steamed west to Tahiti. I had lunch on the fantail and watched as Pitcairn disappeared over our stern. That evening I went to the lounge to see a comedian, Tim Kaminski who is from Milwaukee and has a son attending Parkside.

Same thing the next day, lots & lots of ocean but I am getting in better shape. I spoke to a lady in the pool and she claimed the water was 83. The pool is salt water and some women bounce around in the pool with noodles. There are two hot tubs. That evening I had dinner with Jennifer and then went to a show in the lounge with a male singer who was not very good. That night we set our watches back another hour. After my normal morning routine I had breakfast with James and Lisa. As the weather was overcast and blowing I laid low. The T.V. claims the ocean temp is 30 degrees C. By my calculation that is 86 degrees F. They must be getting the water temp from the exhaust. That evening was an early show and dinner with Jennifer. She & I have very interesting conversations about the United Kingdom and the U.S.

I woke up before sunrise to get my first glimpse of Tahiti. I quickly showered and soon my coffee was delivered. I met Grahame and we boarded a 4wd Land Rover with bench seats and a canvas cover. Our driver and guide was a Polynesian who went by the name of Tebow. Tebow had the biggest hands I had ever seen and I told him he should be a Quarter Back in the NFL. We headed out of town and our first stop was the beach where both Captain Cook and Captain Bligh had dropped anchor. The surf was big enough so there were several surfers. We then followed a river upstream to a deep valley. As we climbed it began to rain. The rain was warm and refreshing. The woman sitting next to me was having a fit as she was getting wet. I asked her if she had ever been wet before. The road was horrible hence the 4wd. The views were spectacular with vertical cliffs, many waterfalls, jungle vegetation and flowers everywhere. The scenery was so beautiful that I forgot that I was soaking wet. The canvass cover leaked like a sieve. We stopped at a plantation growing bananas, pineapples, bread fruit, papayas and a gazillion flowers. Tebow was barefoot and walked on the sharp gravel as if it were carpet. We stopped and took photographs. Tebow poured us all a glass of pineapple juice; very refreshing. Tebow pointed out that we were in a volcanic crater. We started back down & had to ford the raging river. By this time the water was up to the axles. Soon we were back to the pier & it had stopped raining & it was getting hot. I quickly changed clothes and headed back out. A ships officer directed me to an internet café and gave me a map. I went to a bank and got some Polynesian Francs. I walked to a nearby shopping center; very nice, clean and modern. A guard directed me to an internet café. The attendant was a Chinese lady that also spoke English and French was very helpful and soon I was on line. Still no luck with E-mail but Facebook worked. The lady also helped me send photos to the RYC web site. I then asked about a liquor store and I was unable to find any Mt Gay rum. I went to a nearby grocery store and found some Tahitian rum (any port in a storm). I walked through a large flower market that was closing and found a few bargains. I then strolled along the waterfront. A former Moorings 44' cat was docking as I walked by which brought back memories of previous years.



Tahiti



Waterfalls



Tebow & guide

I reluctantly went back to the ship for a beer and a swim before a quick cheeseburger dinner at the poolside. After a shower, I went to the casino lounge to hear Rose and have a drink. Grahame showed up and we had a couple more drinks. That evening as we sailed out of Tahiti there was a party by the pool. The music sounded good so I had a couple more drinks and ended up dancing. The next morning I suffered (cheap rum). No walk, no weights and only a light breakfast. I sat in the hot tub hoping to sweat my hangover away. After having dinner with Jennifer we went to a show in the forward lounge. The singer was not very good and I left after his third song. The next day I was back on schedule. An Australian folk singer sang in the lounge. His voice could have been better but it was a good show. We set our clocks back again.

Up early and looked out from my balcony and nothing but endless ocean and clouds. Had coffee and watched a movie then walked round and round on the track. Had breakfast on the fantail but there is not much to see but water and more water. Entered the putting contest again but did not fair any better (some people are so lucky). I then went to a Kindle class. Nothing I didn't know but the lovely lady who was our moderator was a dancer on the ship. After a dip in the pool I went to an early show and saw a male singer from New Zealand and he put on a great show. Jennifer stood me up (still ailing) so I had dinner with Reg & Diane. After dinner there was a disco party on the 10th deck lounge. The music and the dancers were good. The singer from New Zealand came in and we talked briefly about his background.

Early the next morning I read my Facebook and the Journal Times on line. The thought of cold and snow make me grateful that I'm where I am. It was overcast & rainy (not all that unusual in the morning, but the sky would clear for the PM). I rode a stationary bicycle, lifted weights and had breakfast. I then went to the salon and got my hair cut by a really cute English barber. We didn't talk about golf so Paul Minetti won't have to worry. I got to the pool and soon after we had an announcement that we had crossed the International Date Line and it was now tomorrow and at my age, I can't afford to lose any days. That evening I had drinks and a salad in my cabin then off to the casino lounge to see Rose. I sat down, Michael poured me a drink and Grahame walked in. There was a mentalist in the Cabaret Lounge (5th deck, forward). He was amazing. He could predict what card a person would pick. I then went to the 10th deck for a night cap and on my way home I walked outside. The moon was shining on the sea and the night sky was beautiful.

When I awoke, it was Saturday (no Friday this week). I wondered if my birthday had changed. Same routine and nothing to see but the vast ocean. I entered the putting contest and lost again; I give up. There was a bartending competition which was fun but I didn't win any drinks, not that I wanted one. That night was a drink in the casino lounge, had dinner with Jennifer and then went to a Latin show in the lounge.

The next morning there were strong east winds so I didn't walk and had a light breakfast. I met with the Cruise Director regarding several small issues. One of which was the interface between the GPS and the closed circuit TV. He told me to write a letter. I went to the cabin and called the service desk and asked to speak to the Navigator. In 5 minutes he was at my door and we talked about the interface and he said he would fix it. I went to the gym and was on the elliptical when I noted that the interface was fixed and was right on.

I then bought \$50 worth of casino chips and played Black Jack and won a few bucks. On Sunday they put on a brunch that would feed a third country. Anything that you could possibly imagine was on the buffet. I went back to my cabin and slept off all that food. That evening I just had a salad in my cabin and

won & lost a few dollars. I'm down \$10 which includes tips which means I'm even. I went to the bar and soon Rose began to play and of course Grahame walked in. I went to the forward lounge to see an entertainer named Peter Paki from New Zealand. He sang songs with a Polynesian nature and he is a good entertainer. I then went to the 10th deck lounge and then decided to walk on the deck to get back to my cabin. A young lady (Cheri) was power walking so we walked together for a few laps in the moonlight but I had a hard time keeping up as I was wearing flip-flops.

I awoke before dawn to see the lights of Auckland on the horizon. My coffee arrived and I jumped in the shower and headed for a quick breakfast and went ashore. I was glad to be on dry land and of course I immediately jumped on a ferry and crossed the Harauki Gulf to a suburb called Devonport. I had made previous arrangements to rent a Segway. I found the shop on the ferry dock and after signing a release and taking a few practice turns we were off. There were four of us, a couple from Melbourne from another cruise ship and a guide. The Segway is easy to ride and lots of fun. We saw most of Devonport, an artistic community with a population of 3,000 and very lovely. We rode up Mt. Victoria and the views of the gulf and Auckland were awesome. We rode back through town and I did some shopping on the pier and found a sidewalk café where my co-riders were having lunch. I had a Mt Gay (the first in a long time) and we chatted about Australia. The New Zealanders and the Aussies sound a lot alike but at least they were speaking English. I then jumped back on the ferry and went back to the ship. I changed my shoes and headed into the city to find an internet café. I asked a bus driver and he suggested a McDonalds. I told him I needed a desktop to download photos. He directed me to a convenience store and sure enough in the corner were 11 computers and was able to send and receive e-mails and a few photos. Reluctantly I strolled back to the boat and changed the few NZ dollars I had remaining. After boarding, I had a cold beer and soon we were motoring out of the gulf. A 52' racing boat was out practicing. Cheri's mother said it was only 36' long and took a poll of everyone on the deck (the length varied from 36 to 70 feet).



Auckland NZ

72'America's Cup boat

The next day I had a hard time getting motivated. We were headed SW across the Tasman Sea and it was rough. My coffee came and I stayed in bed and watched the Academy Awards without commercials (what a treat). Finally I made my way to breakfast and got more change for the laundry. The rest of the day I laid by the pool, then some gambling, dinner and a show. An Australian piano player and singer was the entertainer and she was excellent.

I was up early and got to the laundry before all the women showed up. After doing my laundry and putting it away, I had some breakfast and a long workout. As boring as it was to walk around in circles on the deck, it was great to be out in the sunshine and the sea air. I went for ice cream and the ice craving from the night before was melting on the deck and I asked the waiter if that was what was left of the iceberg we had hit the night before. I ran into Jennifer and we agreed to have dinner in the dining room. It was our last formal night and after putting on my Tux, I sat down at the Black Jack table and lost the rest of my chips. I bought more chips and soon I was ahead of where I had started. I had a drink with Grahame and listened to Rose. The Captain then had a cocktail party (free drinks & hors d'oeuvres). I met Captain Poggi and told him how disappointed I was not to be able to visit the bridge. He said that he would send me some information and sure enough the next day I had a detailed description of the workings of the ship. Jennifer and I had dinner and then back to the casino bar for several night caps.

I woke up to a howling wind from the south (the cabin TV said north) and rain. I stayed in the bunk until 10:30. After a leisurely breakfast, I began to organize my junk. After lunch I brought my log up to date, read and napped. The wind continued to blow and by this time the waves were 15 to 18 feet. I had drinks and

dinner in my cabin and the waiter said that several of the passengers were sick. I then went to the casino and lost more money, had drinks with Grahame and Rose & then a quick trip to the 10th deck for a night cap.

The next morning I saw the lights of Tasmania before daylight. We backed into our berth at Burnie. Burnie is a city of 20,000 on the north coast of Tasmania. After a customs inspection we disembarked and got on a tour bus and headed east out of town. The coast road reminded me of California. Soon we turned inland. The fields and herds of cows reminded me of Wisconsin (w/o snow). We stopped at a turn off with a spectacular view of a large valley. The area is volcanic with a limestone cap. We arrived at an animal farm with both large and small animals. I covered the whole farm and discovered the Tasmanian Devil (I thought it was a cartoon). The farm had birds, reptiles, kangaroos, wallabies and wombats. It was most interesting stop. I went out to wait for the bus and sat on a log bench. People saw me sitting and decided to join me and soon the bench collapsed. I had a few small cuts, nothing too serious and the owner asked if I was OK and jokingly tried to blame the bus driver. We then headed back to the ship where another bus took us into town. I went to a bank and got some AUS\$\$. The clerk and I began to chat and I noticed the line behind me had grown so off I went. I found a pharmacy and bought band aids and razors. I spoke to a woman on the street while waiting for my bus. It takes 3 hours to drive to Hobart so mostly they fly to Melbourne if they need something.



Burnie, Tasmania



Tasmanian Devil



Downtown Burnie

We were soon back aboard the “bucket” and I jumped in the hot tub and had a beer. Shortly we were underway and I had a quick dinner on the deck and then to the casino where I won the rest of my money back plus a little to boot. Cinamoon



Cinnemoon

Michael & Friends

Ol' Joe on a Segway

was playing in the casino(I enjoyed their music and looking at her). I then went to the lounge to listen to 3 tenors from Australia sing and then back to the casino for a lightning fast and then off to bed. I woke with lots of aches and pains the next day so I had breakfast on the fantail. I went to a talk on the ship's navigation and other systems. The Italian navigator was very good and I wished that they had done that the first day out. I spoke with the presenter afterward and he was very knowledgeable. I went back to my cabin and finished packing as it was our last night aboard. I went to the casino and lost a few chips, had a farewell drink with Grahame and listen to Rose sing. I then figured I would blow the rest of my chips and as it turned out I won them all back. I had to cash them in that night as the casino could not open in Sydney. It turned out to be a very nostalgic evening as most of us were leaving the ship in Sydney. I was up before daylight the next morning as we entered Sydney harbor. I tried to go back to sleep but I could not. After breakfast, I waited in the lounge to disembark the ship. Soon it was my turn to get off and I found my luggage, got on a bus and drove two whole blocks to the hotel. I wish I had walked. We could not check in as we were too early so I went for a walk in an area called "The Rocks". I found a sidewalk café and ordered lunch and a beer. The waiter said the next one would even be better. I continued my walk along Pitt St. to the main retail area of Sydney. Soon I ran out of gas and headed back to the hotel. The bar at the hotel had Mt. Gay rum so I had a drink and then headed to my room for a much needed nap. The hotel restaurant was closed as it was Sunday so I had a sandwich in the bar and then went out for an ice cream cone. In my room I was able to get a Wi-Fi connection for \$25.00 for 24 hours.

Early the next morning I walked to the same café I ate at the day before. What a treat to sit outside, not moving and looking at young beautiful women and breakfast was good too. I then boarded a Hop on-Hop off ferry (can't seem to stay away from boats). I hopped off at Watson's Bay and walked around looking at the sights of this suburban town. I hopped back on the ferry and toured the rest of Sydney harbor. A most interesting tour and took a couple of hours. I got off where I started and got on a double decker bus. I sat on upper level in the sun wearing ear buds to find out what I was seeing. It was a great way to see the city. I went back to the hotel and a barramundi fish sandwich which was very good. I had a nap and then jumped in a cab and headed for the Cruising Club of Australia, the sponsor of the Sydney to Hobart race. As I walked in, there was a whole wall of clothing but a guard told me that because no club employees were there I was unable to buy anything. I got a drink from the bar and walked the docks. Their pier system was huge, mostly sailboats ranging from 40 to 70 feet. I had a small dinner on the veranda and watched the sunset. The bartender said that the club ran the clothing and beverage service and the food was catered. I called a cab and before I got to the street it was waiting.



Opera House

Harbor Bridge

Joe at his favorite cafe

The next (my last) I went to breakfast at my favorite café. The day was bright and sunny and the temperature was in the mid 70's. I picked up a few souvenirs and headed back to the hotel to shower and finish packing. We boarded a small bus and headed for the airport. Too soon we were herded aboard a Qantas A380 which is easily the biggest plane I have been aboard. I told the cabin attendant that the front half was over the Pacific before the back half had left the ground. I cannot say enough good about the service aboard the plane, hot food, first run movies, booze, headphones and all free. One of the movies I watched was

“Flight” which probably was not the best choice I could have made. We landed in Los Angeles before we took off because we re-crossed the date line.

After a long wait I finally cleared customs and immigration, I was back on a plane flying over the snowcapped Rockies. We landed in Chicago early but had to wait to get to the terminal. Joe & Sandi were waiting for me at the bus stop in Sturtevant. What a welcome sight in spite of the snow and cold.

Since I have been home, I have heard from (via e-mail) Grahame, Collin & Louise, James & Lisa & Steven Christian.