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THE HORNPIPE

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NOTICE: CCSC will host its annual spring picnic and meeting at Hammock Island on Saturday, May 8, starting at noon. So bring a dish and join in the fun!

Commodore's Comments

By the time this Hornpipe hits the presses, I'll have *Breezing Up* snug in her slip at Hammock Island. We've had a glorious stretch of weather here in early April, and I've used it to do some extra work. I even made my first serious attempt at patching some dings and gouges in the gelcoat. Looks OK and I think I'm ready to do it better next time. So now let's find time to go sailing!

On a less positive note, I'm sure many of you know how much I detest the fumes and noise of cigarette boats. I guess I'm too old to admire them. As the old saying goes, if it's too loud you're too old! Late in March I came across an article in the business section of the Baltimore Sun describing plans for a new attraction operating out of the Inner Harbor, which will take the cigarette boat idea to new heights in our area. The people who operate the amphibious Duck Boat tours are nearing final approval to run a high-speed tour boat from the Inner Harbor in Baltimore, past Fort McHenry, and out to the Key Bridge and back, a round trip of about twelve miles, eight at high speed. Between Fort McHenry and the Key Bridge, it will operate at

32 knots (about 37 miles per hour!). It will carry 120 passengers. Not incidentally, if approved it will pay a fairly hefty share of its ticket sales to the city, which is broke and needs the money. Approvals seem certain.

That area is a busy part of the Baltimore Harbor, with lots of freighters, cruise ships, water taxis, and recreational boaters. This seemed like such a bad idea to me that I wrote the following to the Baltimore Sun (It appeared on the Editorial Page on Sunday, March 28):

*RE: High-Speed Harbor Tours:
Baltimore Sunday, 26 March (Business
Maryland)*

*Has anyone asked the recreational
boaters?*

*I really enjoy sailing and motoring
the stretch of the Patapsco River from the
Key Bridge toward the Inner Harbor and
back, at about six knots. I've done many day
(and night) sails through this fascinating
and active harbor area from my marina on
Bodkin Creek, as well as overnight trips to
many of the excellent marinas ringing the
Patapsco, and I can with great trepidation
picture how truly awful this new offering
will be, as seen from the water.*

*Of course, it is essential that we
recreational boaters keep a close watch on
the freighters, large cruise ships, and other
power and sail boats under way in this area.*

Now we will also have to maintain a full-time watch for this 120-passenger, 32-knot cigarette boat on steroids? Fortunately, it won't be hard to notice that it is somewhere in our vicinity. I imagine the obnoxious roar of the engines will be part of the attraction.

Depending on how often this fun, adventure experience rips its way through the water between Fort McHenry and the Key Bridge, I may well have to let go of one of my favorite bay experiences.

Check out page 68 of the April issue of SpinSheet Magazine. Adrian Flynn has agreed to provide monthly reports on the CCSC in the "Cruising Club Notes" section, and her first one appears this month. Nice work, Adrian
George Alberts

More News from the Grotzes Aboard the *Queen Mary 2*

Since Hong Kong, we have two new couples as table mates. One is a stitch and would have fit with our previous mates very well. The other couple has appeared twice. They're Aussies. He is not well. Suffers from some sort of blood disease and has to have transfusions in order to make it. Plus, he had unsuccessful knee surgery so is in pain quite a lot. They prefer eating in Kings Court, and she spends all her time in the casino. The first couple is a UK/Italian blend; married 44 years and were in the catering business in London until they retired in 1998. Mario, particularly, keeps us laughing. And the two of them together are LOTS of fun. Mario and Art share the same birthday, only he's a year younger than Art.

Art's had the "QM2." His cough doesn't sound any better now that he's been on Amoxicillin for two weeks than it did when he started the antibiotic. So we're planning on a trip to the doctor this afternoon.

We loved the Grill Event in Tokyo. Some of the highlights were: Visiting the Bonsai Museum; having a traditional tea ceremony there;

the women being dressed in gorgeous kimonos and the men in traditional male outfits; and having a bonsai demonstration by a master bonsai-ist. It takes eight years to become a master. We had a wonderful sukiyaki luncheon at a restaurant in the city, a tour by coach of the city, and a visit to the Akakusa temple, which we'd seen the last time we were in Tokyo. The weather was CHILLY. There was snow in Yokohama the day before we arrived.

Nagasaki was really interesting. We were there on Ash Wednesday. How symbolic was that? One would never know that the A-bomb had caused such devastation 65 years ago. Our guide told us that the spring after the bombing, green sprouts appeared.

Guam is a lovely island, much more so than we'd expected. Lush and green, with nice beaches. The guide was very proud that when McDonald's was built there, it was the largest one in the world; and he believed that the Kmart there is the largest in the world.

And Rabaul! Wow! By far the most primitive place we've been since visiting the Fanning Island, Republic of Kiribati, several years ago. They had two simultaneous, devastating volcanic devastating eruptions in November 1994 that covered the entire surroundings with lava and ash. There were only a couple of deaths, because everyone heeded the advice of their grandparents, who had lived through the eruption of 1937, and evacuated to the northern end of the island. It is a Christian nation, with United Methodist, Seventh Day Adventists, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, and some non-denominational churches.

Everything stops there on Sundays so folks can attend services.

One of the volcanoes stopped spewing ash just a few months ago, but is still smoking. Three highlights were: Seeing a tunnel the Japanese had made during World War II to hide barges; seeing the war museum with a lot of Japanese tanks and machine guns, chinaware from Japanese ships, a fuselage from an American bomber, and several letters; and visiting the war cemetery, for folks who lost their lives there during the war, that is kept up by the Australian government. Rabaul became the Pacific headquarters for the Japanese fleet from around 1942 until toward the end of the Pacific war.

We are now shellbacks, having been initiated as pollywogs after being tried by King Neptune and his court of jurors for crossing the equator by water. That was fun. We spent the rest of the afternoon at the pool on deck 12.

Captain Nick is a character! He boarded in Hong Kong when Commodore Warren disembarked for his three-month holiday. We enjoy his noon-day reports with sayings from his "friend," Patrick O'Shaughnessy, who is supposedly aboard ship.

The Royal Court evening shows (first shows) are so packed we have a hard time getting seats in our regular spot in the balcony. We may have to switch to the late show, which we attended last night and found that there were plenty of seats. One smashing hit was a group that imitates the Beatles and is quite popular on Cunard Lines. They were GREAT and also played one night in the Queens Room for dancing. They even made Art forget, somewhat, about his heel spur!

Well, that's the view from QM2 as of today. We arrive at Whitsunday Island the day after tomorrow.

We're now heading to Fremantle, Australia, the port for Adelaide. We had a great time snorkeling at Manterey Bay off Airlie Beach, Whitsunday Islands, Australia. The ship anchored off Airlie Beach, which is a small resort town where folks come to take advantage of the Great Barrier Reef.

Since we'd been to the reef when we visited before, we opted to snorkel at the Whitsundays instead of leaving the ship at 8:00 a.m. to snorkel the Great Barrier. The weather was terrific, as was the water. We were transported to a small beach about a 30- to 40-minute ride away in a FAST, hard-bottomed inflatable boat. There we walked on the beach and had some refreshments before reboarding the boat for a short ride to the bay, where we snorkeled. Before entering the water, we were issued Lycra suits to wear that covered our entire bodies, because it was stinging nettle season there. Saw lots of fish and beautiful colorful coral.

Our next stop was Auckland, New Zealand. We went on tour to a beautiful black-sand beach. The black sand, which was volcanic, had a lot of

iron in it, and our guide demonstrated how magnetic the iron in the sand was by passing a magnet over it.

Our next stop was at the northern part of the North Island, Bay of Islands, New Zealand. It was one of the most beautiful, picturesque places we've been. The region is composed of numerous islands (maybe as many as 97).

We visited a glow-worm cave on tour. How interesting that was! These little worms cling to the ceiling of the cave and weave nets that capture insects. The worms' tails have a luminescent substance that glows a light blue in the dark and attracts insects. Looking up at the ceiling of the cavern, where these glow worms were, looked almost like the Milky Way on a VERY clear night. It was amazing. Never seen anything like it before.

Our next stop was Sydney. Sailing into Sydney harbor was quite a scene. Being Sunday, there were at least 100 small boats that sailed along beside us. There were also helicopters overhead, people lining the shore, and hundreds of people on ferries and other charter vessels accompanying us. The Captain obtained permission from the harbor control to approach the Sydney bridge (which we were too large to go beneath) and then spin the ship bow-to-stern before docking so the folks on board and the folks lining the bridge could get a good look at each other.

We docked at a small naval base in Sydney that was within walking distance of the city, but I think most people took the shuttle buses into town.

Sydney is certainly a beautiful city. Having been there twice before, we shuttled into the shopping district and did a lot of window shopping. Plus we bought some Schweppes tonic, because the tonic on board is the size of small prune-juice or V-8 juice can and costs \$2 each, plus a 15% gratuity each to boot. The bottles we bought at a convenience store were 1-1/4 liters for about \$3.50 each. We found the gin to be less expensive on board from room service than at the ABC store ashore.

Tomorrow, we have another Grill Event that will consist of a drive through Adelaide to Mount Lofty House, which is a historic country-house boutique hotel overlooking the Piccadilly Valley in the Adelaide Hills wine region. There, we'll have a glass of sparkling wine, see an

Aboriginal welcome performance, and have an interactive wildlife-animal experience, where we'll meet Australian birds of prey, wombats, snakes, lizards, and koalas. We'll then walk to the Piccadilly Restaurant courtyard, where we'll have a gourmet high tea accompanied by local sparkling wine and a performance by the Adelaide Jazz trio.

These Grill Events have been so nice!!! Surely hope the weather is nice! Apparently, Cunard is not going to offer these events any more on future world cruises, but will allow grill guests \$400 credit toward shore events (tours).

Well, all for now. We're still having a glorious time. Only 36 more days of this cruise.

We can't believe we've been aboard for 84 days and have only 17 more to go on our world cruise. We have been about 33,000 nautical miles since leaving New York City. The time has flown!!! What a blessing it has been, being able to be aboard this beautiful ship, having the opportunity to see the different countries and how others live in this world, and sailing upon the Atlantic, Indian, Pacific, and Southern Oceans, and visiting six continents (Well, by the time we arrive home, we will have visited six continents.).

Our last communication was after we left Sydney. Our next stop was Adelaide, which has its own beautiful port. It is a lovely city. We had a wonderful Grill Event there. Cunard arranged for us to go to the Mount Lofty House, which is a historic house built in the 1850's. It was destroyed by an enormous forest fire in 1983, leaving only the original stone wall, and was restored by a local architect to its original condition. It is now a boutique hotel. It overlooks the gorgeous Piccadilly Valley in the hills of Adelaide.

We were served a high tea with nice finger sandwiches, shrimp, scones, clotted cream, and jam. (Art couldn't eat much because of his low-carb eating habits.) Upon our arrival, we were served sparkling wine from the region under a tent and were shown a large wombat, a brown falcon or eagle (We can't remember which.), an owl, and a python. We were disappointed that we weren't shown a koala or roo! We did have a couple of aboriginals do a traditional dance that featured an

interpretation of Australian animals. We feel that we were really fortunate to be able to travel in a Grill Suite and to be included in these types of events, which are different from the regular tours and were included as part of our fare.

Fremantle and Perth were also lovely places. Fremantle is the port and is older than Perth. Perth has outgrown Fremantle over the years and is a booming city and quite lovely. We especially enjoyed our visit to King's Park, which overlooked the city of Perth and the Swan River that runs thru the city.

We had a delightful five days at sea through the southern Indian Ocean to the island of Mauritius, which is east of Africa and is a part of Africa. It is a beautiful volcanic island and the most densely populated country of Africa, with 1.5 million people on a 788-square-mile island. Our tour took us to see lovely views of the Black Gorges, a lovely waterfall, and an area of seven colored sands. The tour included a really nice luncheon in a restaurant overlooking the Indian Ocean. The Indian Ocean (especially the southern part of it) is a beautiful, deep blue because it is so deep.

Archbishop Tutu and his wife boarded the ship in Mauritius and gave two presentations. One was a lecture and the other was a question and answer session that included the entertainment director. Then, Art and I were invited to meet Bishop Tutu at a special meeting that was held for 24 guests who had been the highest bidders for 24 autographed copies of his newest book, *Made for Goodness*. The money raised through this auction benefitted a hospital in South Africa with which Tutu has recently become affiliated. Sixteen thousand dollars was raised for the hospital. (I'm sure ours was the lowest bid, but felt fortunate to have received one of the books!)

Sue and Art Grotz

Spring Picnic and Cruise Schedule

Spring is finally here. Boat yard activity is nearing its peak as sailors prepare their vessels for April launching (Anyone else tired of sanding and scraping?), the Orioles opened their season at Camden Yards on the April 5, and our spring picnic is May 8. This year's cruise schedule is shaping up.

We'll kick off with a shakedown cruise to Sillery Bay on the weekend of May 15. For those who cannot make a Memorial Weekend cruise, the Annapolis Nautical Flea Market at the Navy-Marine Corp stadium on May 29-30 is a nice land cruise alternative.

This season will see the return of many club favorites: the best beer cruise, the best wine for under \$10 cruise, and a breakfast cruise to the Sabins. The MacDonalds have arranged for a tour of Poplar Island Tuesday, July 6, that should fit in nicely with the usual extended summer cruise: Fireworks on the Choptank, a tour of Poplar Island, and then on to the southern bay.

This year's schedule also includes a few full-moon or near-full-moon cruises, as well as several "captain's choice" mid-week cruises. These are great opportunities to enjoy popular anchorages without the weekend crowds.

There are also a few to-be-scheduled events.

Practicing man-overboard drills at the beginning of the season may be as important as assuring all safety gear is aboard and in working order. Andy Monjan has again courageously offered to do be the man overboard. We'll need a couple of boats for this.

We are also considering a navigation contest using only a watch and compass. This is often best run under power rather than sail, but can be challenging and fun either way. Since both of these are probably half-day events, it might be nice to follow them with a crab feast or barbeque.

The schedule is not final, so if you have a particular cruise in mind or if you are interested in captaining a cruise, please let me know. My email address and phone number are sailannierose@gmail.com, 301-604-5078.

See you at the spring picnic.

Patrick McGeehan

In the Armchair Adventurer Series...

For those of you who would like to join a vicarious adventure, I recommend bookmarking this link: <http://www.theplastiki.com/trackplastiki/> or downloading their widget (a desktop applet that gives you the current location and links to updated blogs and pix) to keep track of their progress. The

Plastiki is a catamaran constructed of plastic bottles and other recycled materials that set sail from San Francisco on March 19, headed for Sydney, Australia. The mission of the British-led, international, five-man-one-woman crew is to highlight the amount of plastic waste produced in the world on a daily basis and to show what can be done with recycling, ingenuity, and an adventurous spirit. Also, it's a great chance to spend a lot of time sailing, to which we can all relate!

The website is fun and informative, without being either overly technical or overly simplistic. Although the participants have an agenda, they do not seem to me to be offensively preachy or superior in their attitudes toward the less enlightened. In fact, they seem like a bunch of folks with whom I would like to cruise. Check them out.

Jenny Poniske