

Day 56, (Thursday, 11/13/08) At Sea, Equator Crossing Ceremony

The day started with temperature in the low 80s, calm sea, and overcast sky. At the noon navigation report the Captain van Zaane said we had 1350 miles to go before we reach Honolulu and we have 5100 feet of water under the keel.

Equator Crossing Ceremony: Sometime this morning we crossed over the equator. When we crossed the equator on October 23rd going south there was an announcement that King Neptune had noticed our crossing and he was disturbed by the lack of any special ceremony. About 10am today Captain van Zaane came on the public address system and said that King Neptune had been sighted riding across the waves toward the Amsterdam in his chariot. He warned that King Neptune would be arriving soon to punish us for prior infractions of his rules.

In anticipation of King Neptune's arrival the Lido Pool Deck was set up for any ceremony that King Neptune might come up with.

Anticipating the worst, the staff put up a make-shift jail for the Equator Crossing offenders.

(About this time Orlin accidentally changed the settings on his digital camera to take only black and white pictures. (Helllllp!!) It helps to think of the following pictures as artistic photography or a trip back to a time before color prints.)

The passengers lined the area around the Lido Deck Pool and also looked in from the open roof.



Ten offenders, who are known as Pollywogs, had been rounded up and they were brought in and promptly jailed.



The jailed Pollywogs were some unfortunate crew members who must have drawn the short straw today.

The Pollywogs waited in jail for King Neptune's prosecutor to begin the proceedings. They seemed to be in good humor.



King Neptune's prosecutor read the charges against each person. They were humorous exaggerations; like the steward who, while polishing brass also polished the bald head of a sleeping passenger, or the beautician who used car wax to give some lady a leg-wax treatment.

In the picture on the right the black robed prosecutor was reading the charges and King Neptune, holding his trident, signals with upraised arm that it is time for a verdict on these hapless souls.



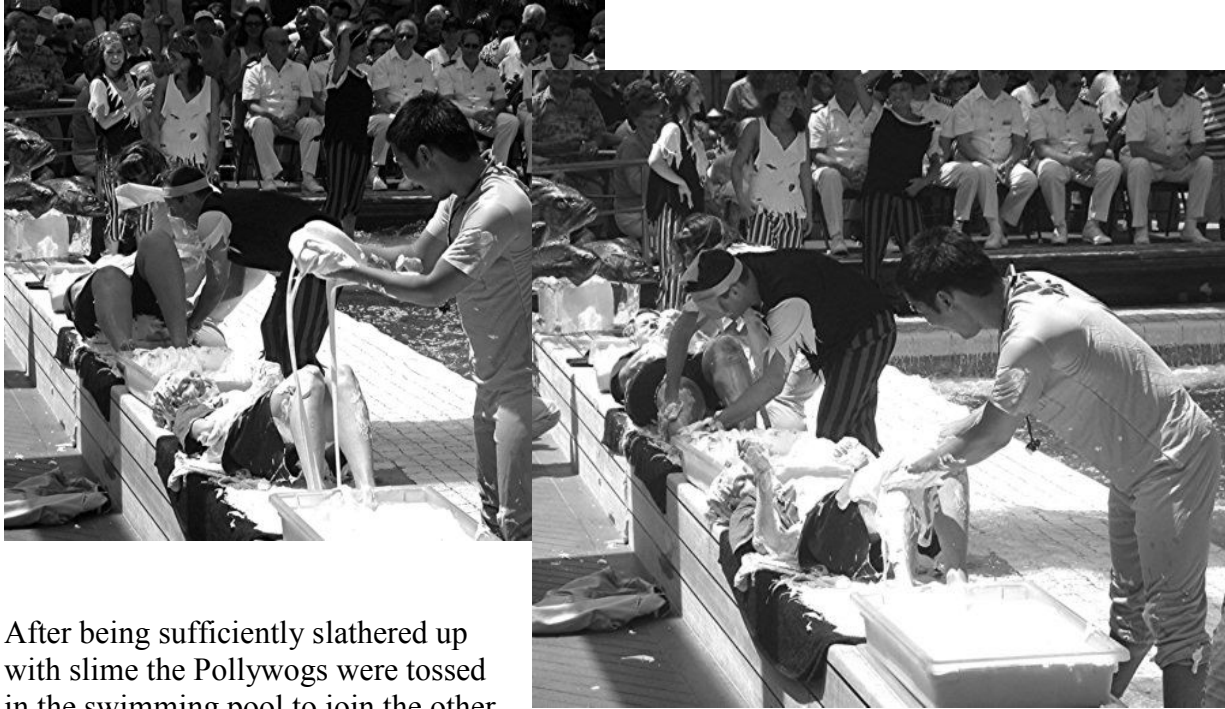
In the picture below the Amsterdam's officers (Captain van Zaane is the big guy on the right) in their best dress whites render a judgment in the form of an energetic "Thumbs Down". Caesar would be proud of these boys!



Having been convicted the Pollywog's first punishment was to kiss one of King Neptune's large fish friends that had been brought to the proceedings. This gesture was accomplished with the frenzied crowd spontaneously chanting "kiss the fish – kiss the fish"



The next punishment for the Pollywog was to have a white slime-like material smeared over their bodies.



After being sufficiently slathered up with slime the Pollywogs were tossed in the swimming pool to join the other victims who had just been through the initiation.



After the ten Pollywogs had all accepted their punishment, some of them climbed out of the pool and proceeded to toss their tormentors into the water. The captain and other officers made a hasty exit before the boisterous activity engulfed them.

Wanting to make sure that we shed our Pollywog status today we, along with Bob and Esther, volunteered to "kiss the fish" as the festivities wound down. We know it is hard to watch but we must show this for the record. Orlin's picture is in the drab black and white dictated by an unfortunate camera setting chosen at the start of the ceremonies. He plants a conventional smacker on the fish.



Fortunately, Bob's camera was working in glorious color and he provided the following three photos.



Barbara works up a good pucker for this monster of the deep.

Esther looks a little tentative in her approach but she claims the camera missed the actual contact.



Always ready for a good time, Bob explores the pleasures of a "French Kiss" with this gorgeous animal.



Everyone, including the Pollywogs, had a good time in the light hearted ceremony which turns a Pollywog into what is known as a "Shellback". Those of us who were not already Shellbacks became one today just by being on the Amsterdam. We all got nice certificates conferring on us the official title of Shellback.

Before dinner this evening good ole Table 142 mates got together to celebrate our shellback achievement and give a toast to the cruise which is drawing to a close soon.

