

## Day 34 (Thursday 10/23/08) At Sea

Today the sea was calm, humidity high and temperatures in the mid 80s. At 7am the ship crossed over the equator headed in a southerly direction. The captain made an announcement later about having crossed the equator. He said King Neptune was aware that the Amsterdam had crossed the equator and he would extract a penalty from some members of the crew when the ship crossed over again headed north.

We worked on the blog describing yesterday's activity in Singapore. There was a lifeboat drill scheduled for this morning. However, it was raining pretty hard and the decks around the lifeboats were wet so the drill outside with life jackets was changed to just a description over the loudspeaker about what we should do in case of an emergency.

The big event of the day was a meeting of our Cruise Critic contingent called by MaryAnn (wowzo). MaryAnn opened the meeting and welcomed Nick (foxpaw) who joined the Amsterdam yesterday while we were in Singapore.

Nick headed up the lapel pin project for the "Cruise Critic 2008 Asia Australia Cruise" the image of which we copied for the heading of this blog. He brought along a nice supply of unsold Cruise Critic lapel pins for anyone who still wanted one. Nick had also brought ballots for 6 patriotic passengers who had arranged for absentee voting in the November general elections in the US. Those ballots could be filled out and mailed back to the US while we were in Singapore so that they would arrive by the deadline for absentee ballots in November. Nick is seen here on the right getting his Cruise Critic Book Bag from Evelyn (itravel2much). Evelyn and her husband, Jack, had the bags made with a classy red embroidered identification of "Cruise Critic 2008 Asia Australia Cruise". Evelyn and Jack gave them to all us Cruise Critic folks at our first meeting shortly after we left Seattle in September.

After some announcements about scheduling lunches for the rest of the cruise, MaryAnn adjourned the meeting into a general chatting mode. Here's MaryAnn on the right, bringing the formal part of the meeting to a close.



Soon the conversation sound level rose to a volume like the second half of a cocktail party among old friends (even though all we had to work with was coffee and cookies). We went around the room taking pictures of this friendly group catching up on what everyone had been doing since the last time we had seen each other. Here are a few of the photos fit to print.



Craig Whiting, on the left boarded the Amsterdam in Bangkok. Craig is posting a blog about the cruise at [www.cwstravelnotes.blogspot.com](http://www.cwstravelnotes.blogspot.com).

This has been a very active group of Cruise Critic participants. We had planned to get a group picture at the meeting but everyone seemed to be having so much fun talking we decided not to disrupt the party. We'll get one next time.



At noon Captain van Zaane said that during the day we passed from the South China Sea into the Java Sea headed for Bali with about 300 feet of water under the keel. The fact that the sea is so shallow in this part of the world seems surprising each time we hear it. This is an active shipping lane and we saw several ships. In addition, there were islands passing by and oil rigs with flare gas flames glowing.

Before dinner our dinner mates brought a chilled bottle of champagne to our room and along with a bottle that we had it helped cheer us up from the fact that the mid point of the cruise had passed while we were in Singapore.



This was a formal night in the dining room. We had to take advantage of the opportunity to have our head waiter, Janar, take a picture of the same cast of characters at our table.



These festivities pretty much brought the day to an end. We'll be continuing the trip at sea tomorrow on our way to Bali.