

March 28, 2012 Preparation Day at Sea



We slept just a little longer, perhaps from fatigue from the relentless activity, however pleasant it was. Or perhaps it was due to the fact that the Marquesan time is half an hour ahead of the Tahitian time. Regardless we enjoyed the extra sleep, but finally sauntered to the dining room for breakfast to begin a day of dining and packing, and little else. After a leisurely breakfast, we killed time on deck watching the waves and waters until time for the “Anglais” version of the final Polynesian cultural lecture by Michael Koch.

It proved very informative and provocative as he discussed the concerns of the people whose roots had been so severely disrupted over the past two centuries. Prior lectures had been a



challenge to follow since he was not a native English speaker, we had little foundation in the Marquesan language, and sometimes concepts had been lost in the translation. However, we were beginning to catch on, our understanding had improved, and the Marquesan names and places now had a place in our brain.

After the lecture, it was time to eat, again, so we marched down one flight of stairs to the dining

room. Had to get some exercise! We gabbed our way through lunch, interrupted once by dolphins jumping from the water off the starboard bow. We could see them well without even leaving our tables. As word got out, many of the passengers move to our side of the boat, and for a moment I imagined the boat listing noticeably. Even without the interruption the meal lasted far longer than normal, with all the diners at our table realizing that our time together was soon to end.

Eyebrows raised a little when we announced we had to go and pack for the return home. Royal and Wanda remembered the luggage weighing ritual and offered their deepest sympathies. Several offered good luck, knowing full well that we needed it. But we found a foolproof way to get through the ordeal with the highest efficiency and least strain. I just kept my suggestions to myself, listened to what Fairy had to say, and let her pack at her own pace. It took about an hour and a half, but each item had its place, the purchases from the past three weeks all fit in the suitcases, and we were actually a couple of pounds under our total weight allotment. I know that I should never admit in public that my wife was totally in charge, but it really worked out well.



The accomplishment had come at a small price, however. To save weight we sacrificed our shoes to the crew, Steven hoping that mine would fit him. The binoculars I had brought to observe the stars were too bulky to pack with all the wood carvings we purchased, so we donated that to the ship as well. Steven and Vai seemed quite pleased with the items and noted that they would be put to good use.

With the packing done, it was time to relax! We headed to the bar to celebrate our victory with a maitai. Since we had closed out our account with the Aranui 3 that morning, we paid in cash, then picked some tables in the shade and settled down. Tom and Kathy joined us as well, and we sipped and slobbered to the rhythm of the sea. Day slowly faded to dusk and the moon, Venus and Jupiter appeared. I just had to take a photo of the moon since it appeared upside-down compared its appearance in the northern hemisphere. Before long it was time to eat—again!

Paul had reserved a table for twelve, and our gang all gathered round. Yota, a Japanese gentleman that had taken to our group, also joined us, and was full of spirited energy and humor. To our delight, Michael Koch, the anthropologist also joined, and we enjoyed his addition to



the conversation. Paul and Mari sat on one end of the table near Yota, while Tom and Kathy and Fairy and I sat at the other end. Frank, Royal and Wanda were somewhere in between, but we all managed to communicate quite well. As the meal finished, we passed around our cruise book for the rest of the table to sign, and Royal collected emails of the group, and then Paul had them copied at the reception desk so we could keep in touch. Again we were slow to disperse since it was the last meal the whole group would have together.

Finally we broke up, just before music was to start in the bar area. Fairy and I headed over shortly before the band started up, and Royal and Wanda joined us later. Our friend, Steve, joined Mana and two others with guitar, two ukuleles, and a gut-bucket bass. The music was loud and lively, and I videotaped them for about 10 minutes until the tape ran out. Several couples danced on the small floor of the bar lounge, and several more couples listened at a distance in the deck outside.

When the music was done we said goodbyes to the members of the band, and several seemed a bit sad that we had to leave a day early. Mana had a CD with several of his songs on it, so we purchased a copy before heading back to the room. Stars brightened the night, but we were too tired to gaze, and my binoculars had found a new home, so we headed straight to the room to sleep. However, the stars were not done with us just yet.

Parting Party:



Aranui Band—Stephen left center and Mana Arii right center