

GRANPA AND GRAMMA AND PANAMA

The motorhome didn't call loud enough! Actually we had planned this cruise earlier. In fact, our suitcases were packed for this, in March, and had been resting at my sister's home in Lakewood, CA for a month and a half.

We had the opportunity to sail on the Crystal Symphony from LA thru the Panama Canal to Ft. Lauderdale. The Crystal Cruise Line ships are often rated as being the best ships in the world, and they live up to their reputation. However, a root canal would have been cheaper!

We sailed down the Mexican Riviera, Acapulco, Costa Rica, Through the Panama Canal, the other side of Costa Rica, and Cozumel, in the period of 15 days.

This is my third time thru the canal and it is just as interesting as the first.

The payment to Panama for transit is varied according to size, displacement, etc. The most money paid was a Royal Caribbean cruise ship. \$203,000. The least paid was 36 cents, by Richard Halliburton, who swam thru the canal in 1926!



As you might imagine, the weather was torrid this time of the year, being this close to the equator. Thank heaven for air conditioning.

The ship has an on board computer class that teaches specialty subjects as well as providing for E-mail capability for passengers. The world is so small any more, sending e-mail and receiving it from the middle of the ocean anywhere on the globe! I attended all the classes they had about digital imaging and digital cameras. Which, by the way, everyone seems to have one any more.

It seems strange to return to the ship from being on shore and having to sanitize your hands! They meet you at the dock access and make you use disinfectant towels on your hands before boarding the ship. They were alert for the Norwalk like virus and the SARS virus. Nobody came down with anything that we know of.

After living like kings, attending afternoon high teas and attending evening Broadway shows in the lounge, and stuffing ourselves with gourmet food daily...we rolled off the ship as cargo instead of the passengers we boarded as! We came back to reality, and now we are packing the motorhome as we speak.

Our itinerary at the present time consists of pointing the rig to the East. Other than that, keep tuned.

Dave & Bonnie

5/25/03