

Day 55 – At Sea – Sunrise – Dateline – Marty Brill - 2nd 19 Nov. 09: The day started with moderate sea, temperature in the high 70s, and partly cloudy. The partly cloudy condition combined with a burst of sunlight coming over the horizon created a morning picture with a brilliance we have seldom seen. Barbara tried to capture the fleeting beauty of the moment in the photos below.



The International Dateline is an imaginary line running from the North Pole to the South Pole on the world globe. The purpose of the Dateline is to provide a location for the separation of each calendar day from the next. Although explanation of the Dateline can be complicated it is sufficient to know that keeping track of the timing of International transactions and commerce in widely separated locations would not be possible without it. When the Amsterdam was sailing westward it crossed the Dateline on 18 October 2009 and we lost that day as the date changed instantly to 19 October. The Dateline passes close to Tonga Island on the east side. Shortly after leaving Tonga last evening on 19 November we crossed the International Dateline headed east. In principle all the clocks were turned back 24 hours so when we woke up this morning it was still 19 November on the Amsterdam. We are living through a second 19 November. Just for the record, we don't feel any different and life goes on. Also for the record, when we returned to our room after dinner tonight we found a certificate stating that we had crossed the International Dateline.

Dr. George Losey, the Explorations Speaker gave part one of a series of lectures on Legends of Hawaii. The ancient Hawaiians crafted many Gods to help them explain the world they lived in. The Gods played a major role in many of the Legends that they used to guide their rituals and daily behavior. The Goddess, Pele, who controlled volcanoes and lava was the most powerful of the Gods and dominated early Hawaiian life. In fact, many modern Hawaiian show a strong respect for the Pele. Dr. Losey said that he was aware of one case where Hawaiian construction workers would not erect a barrier to divert molten lava from a volcano on the big Island of Hawaii because it would have violated the will of Pele who was sending the lava down the hill.

The entertainment in the Queen's Lounge tonight was the comedian Marty Brill. He has been a comedy writer for hit shows like MASH, The Mary Tyler Moore Show, and the Merv Griffin Show. He delivered the most hilarious line of comedy that we have heard in a long long time. His theme of commenting on the effects of aging hit a responsive chord with the Amsterdam audience and the laughter shook the room. We are hoping he puts on another show before leaving the ship.

We are sailing northward to Apia in the independent nation of Samoa. We visited Apia in 2008 and are looking forward to this return trip. The Amsterdam is scheduled to dock in Apia by 7am tomorrow morning.