

**Day 9 At Sea – Jeff Trachta – Mongolian Barbecue – Flowers - 4 Oct 09 :** We attended a chat session that was held in the Explorer’s Lounge with Jeff Trachta, the entertainer in last night’s Queen’s Lounge show. There was standing room only this morning as Jeff gave an interesting monolog about his career which included 6 months while he was immobile with severe clinical depression. With the help of a dedicated psychiatrist he overcame his mental disease and has created a very successful career for himself in the entertainment industry. His basic message was that life is wonderful and exciting but we have to work at making ourselves happy because no one else can do it for us. It was essentially an inspirational talk and we enjoyed it. Here is a picture taken during his presentation.



**Mars:** We then went to one of the Explorer Series lectures by Bill Bendel where he talked about the environment of the planet Mars and some interesting questions about how the exploration of that planet may turn out over the next 100 years. The conventional wisdom is that the space exploration effort will push toward eventually sending humans to Mars. With all the problems we have here on earth it was difficult for us to get very enthusiastic about establishing a colony of humans on Mars. However, Bill Bendel’s concluding words were that humans thrive on challenges and we were destined to go to Mars in the next 100 years. It will probably get done without much input from us.

**Mongolian Barbecue:** At lunch time the Lido Pool Deck had been transformed into a huge outdoor barbeque with a Mongolian theme. Our friends, Bob and Esther, on prior

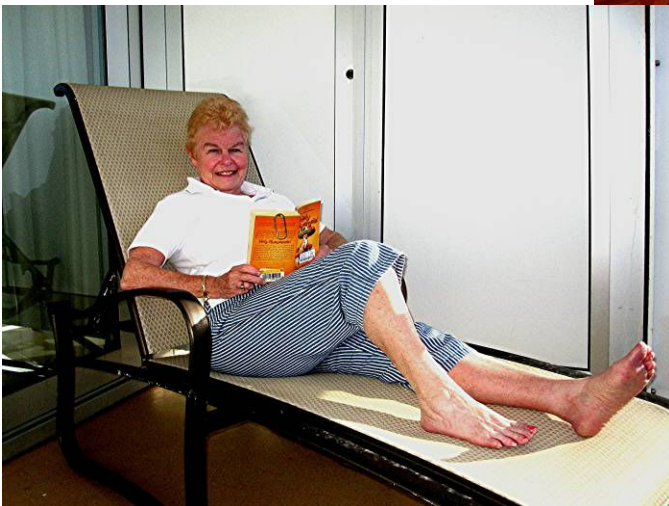


Holland American Cruises were always big fans of this traditional feast and we thought about them today when we took these pictures.

Speaking of Holland American Lines traditions, the Daily Program recently had a short note discussing the origin and significance of the logo used by this cruise line. We thought the article was worth repeating here. In the early 1600s Henry Hudson set sail from Holland in a tiny ship called “de Halve Maen”. His long voyage across the Atlantic heralded the beginning of Dutch exploration and settlements in the New World. During this century’s great era of Trans-Atlantic elegance on cruise ships, Holland America’s ship the Nieuw Amsterdam II (1938-1973) came to represent all the luxury, magnificence and splendor of that time. The emblem adopted by Holland America shows the Nieuw Amsterdam II alongside “de Halve Maen”. Together, these two ships symbolize the centuries old seafaring tradition of the Dutch and long-standing friendship between Holland and America. The now familiar logo that decorates the Amsterdam’s smokestacks is shown on the right.



While strolling around the Lido Deck we happened upon, Ann, one of our long-time friends from prior cruises and a real Cruise Critic fan. Like us, she was enjoying a leisurely day at sea.



Later in the afternoon, Barbara entertained herself by reading on the verandah.

Meanwhile Orlin decided to get pictures of some of the live orchids that decorate each of the tables in the Lido Restaurant. We love the orchids because for us they transform the Lido from just a super buffet to a really nice restaurant with a touch of elegance. Here are some examples of the orchids distributed in individual flower pots on the tables around the Lido.





Following along on the theme of the flowers used for decoration on the Amsterdam, each evening the dinner table has a flower arrangement for the centerpiece. Tonight the flowers were particularly pretty and we got this picture on the right.



When we returned to our room tonight there was one of the familiar cards left by the room stewards on the bed. The message on the card was about having to turn the clock back tonight because of going to a new time zone. This time the change was a little bizarre. Tonight we will be setting the clocks back only 30 minutes rather than a full hour. Apparently, as with Newfoundland, Canada, the inhabitants of this part of the world want their noonday sun to be more directly overhead than would be possible with a time zone that was a full hour wide.