

**Day 8 – At Sea – Captain Eversen – Formal Night – Verlie - 3 Oct 09:** The day started with an overcast sky and calm sea. The humidity was high but not uncomfortable with temperatures in the mid 70s.

**Joe Kess:** At 11am we attended a lecture by Joe Kess who is one of the Exploration Speakers. Today he made a presentation that covered the expeditions of the Spanish and Portuguese as they explored the Pacific Ocean and established their first colonies. He also briefly discussed the evidence that Chinese sailors may have crossed the Pacific and actually may have circumnavigated the earth before Magellan. There exists a map that is reputed to be based on a Chinese chart created around 1400 AD. That chart, which was made before Columbus sailed to America, shows a recognizable outline of all the major continents of the world including North America and Australia. Apparently, the cost of the explorations and other technology became too much for the ancient Chinese dynasties to support. In the early 1400s they abandoned their leading position in technology and world exploration as the European powers were beginning to expand their influence.

We had lunch in the Lido as we usually do. The Hotel Manager, Henk Mensink, came by our table. Barbara thanked him for the presentation he made at the Cruise Critic Meet and Greet session we had in the Crow's Nest a couple days ago. He said it was his pleasure and he looked forward to more interaction with the Cruise Critic folks. We took the opportunity to get his picture while he was there. Henk seems more approachable than the Hotel Manager we had on the Maasdam last summer during the Voyage of the Vikings.



The afternoon was spent with a lot of time on the verandah enjoying the view of the broad Pacific and being thankful for this opportunity to enjoy the good life.

**New York Times by Satellite:** Near the continents we have International CNN but when we are far out at sea it is lost from TV. We are not completely without news because a synopsis of a selection of New York Times articles is printed every day and each cabin gets a copy. In addition to the printed snippets of New York Times articles we can get the entire New York Times paper by Internet for free on the Holland America Internet Café website. This is a real plus for news junkies.

**Captain's Champagne Welcome Reception:** Tonight was a formal dress night and before dinner we went down to the Queen's Lounge in our finery where we met with



Karen to attend the Captain's Champagne Welcome Reception. Henk was there to receive us so we got another picture, this time with Karen and Barbara in elegant dresses for tonight's occasion.

The Cruise Director, Bruce, introduced the Captain. Captain Fred Eversen is a graduate of the Rotterdam Nautical Academy and he has been with Holland America since 1980 when he joined as an apprentice officer onboard the ss Rotterdam (A trivia note for

those who care: The ss Rotterdam has now been retired and it was converted into a Hotel in the Rotterdam harbor. The prefix "ss" stands for "steam ship" meaning that the ship's propulsion was provided by steam which drove turbines to turn the propellers. The "ms" in the name ms Amsterdam stands for "motor ship" meaning that propulsion is by huge reciprocating motors).

Captain Eversen, shown in the photo on the right, then introduced the ship's officers to the audience.



They officers assembled as shown below in this rather marginal photo that shows some of the fifteen people the Captain eventually called to the stage.



**Formal Dinner:** When we arrived at the table we were happy to find that an extra setting had been placed at our table for the ship's officer we had requested a few days ago. Soon Verlie Nelson arrived and we went through introductions. Verlie is the Crew's Purser and takes care of financial operations with the crew personnel. A tradition is that the ship's officer provides the wine for the table and Verlie was quick to get us started in that department as she offered a toast wishing us the best of times on the cruise.



Here is a photo of our entire table to commemorate the occasion.



Left to right:  
George, Judy,  
Sandy, Wanda,  
Valerie, Verlie,  
Karen, Barbara,  
Orlin

On formal dress nights the menu usually includes some special dishes. Tonight was no exception and we enjoyed the gourmet food of lobster tail and quail along with the beautiful decorations in the dining room. For our “foodie” friends here are a couple photos of tonight’s dishes.



**Jeff Trachta:** After dinner entertainment was provided in the Queen's Lounge by Jeff Trachta who is a handsome, youngish guy who is best known for his eight years as "Thorne" on CBS's The Bold & The Beautiful. Jeff regaled us with a wide ranging variety show of humorous impersonations, stories about his experiences, and singing of romantic ballads.

**Pillow Gifts:** As part of the tradition of giving passengers little mementoes as the cruise progresses today we received beautifully bound diaries for recording our daily experiences along with similarly bound card holders as shown in the picture on the right. Barbara was particularly glad to receive the card holders which she had found very useful over the years (and they don't take up much room when it comes to packing luggage).



Not exactly a pillow gift but found on our pillow tonight was a notice that the clocks would be turned back one hour at 2am to keep us on track with the sun as we progress across the Pacific to the west. We turned in for the night looking forward to an extra hour of sleep.