



JANUARY 12, 5TH DAY AT SEA HEADING TOWARDS THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS - SEAS ARE UNHAPPY

Had a rough night. Seas were retching all night. Calmed down a bit when we headed to the dining room for breakfast. The place was crowded again, no tables available so decided to sit out on the back deck in a protected area under an awning. The seas actually calmed down while we were eating and the skies opened up. Maybe the worst was over. Nope, that didn't last long. Seas got rough again and skies overcast. I think we went through the eye of the storm.

As we began to leave the dining room, the ship got hit by what felt like pretty big wave. As we walked by the open buffet windows, dishes were flying off the shelves onto the floor! The kitchen staff was busy trying to keep things in order. Just another day on the rough seas I guess.

We headed to the front of the ship to a view spot just over the pilot house called the Explorer's Lounge. Found a couple of seats to settle into. At 10:00 AM, the naturalist on board was to meet there to point out whales and other wildlife. There was no chance of seeing anything in these seas. The nose of the ship was moving up and down as the horizon became a moving target. We spent the time reading until the trivia group arrived and started to rearrange the furniture into groups of 6 for teams and eyeing our chairs. Then the social coordinator came out with the loud microphone and the games began.

After awhile it was too loud and we decided to head to the dining room for some lunch. It was very difficult to walk but it didn't discourage anyone from moving around the ship bumping into walls and wobbling like drunken sailors.

We didn't feel like going down into the bowels of the ship for any more lectures. We managed to keep some lunch down as we headed down to the first level of the ship called the Living

Room. It was probably the most level place on the ship and so we took advantage to do some more reading. That's about all you could do in these seas. Even, there the ship was still rolling around. Fortunately and now I understand why they have window coverings on the windows there. On a day like today all you would have seen were swells higher than the windows. So better not to see that is my guess. The waves are bigger than I've ever seen them. We stayed there for awhile reading. The bartender was having a heck of a time as things were flying in the bar too, one crash after another. First something fell on one side and then he was running to the other-side of the bar to catch something else. One crash, then another. It was amazing to watch.

We finally decided to head up to our rooms on the 6th floor and plop ourselves on our bed which was the best place to be as it did not require much in the way of muscle exertion. Larry can sleep through anything and immediately went to sleep. I on the other hand thought I should take a picture of the seas as they were incredible. I couldn't even budge the door open as the winds were so strong. So just took a cell phone video from inside and through the salt water covered windows. Some of these waves must be 30 feet tall and 30 - 50 feet apart. They are coming on our port-side forward quarter. Massive white caps are in the distance.

When we got back to the room, housekeeping had left a note on the bed saying due to the sea conditions they've had to slow the ship down and won't arrive at port at the scheduled time. So our excursion was going to be delayed tomorrow.

I had to laugh thinking about this guy this morning at breakfast telling everyone he could see the islands already. He was delusional, about a day off.

I think that calm opening of weather we had this morning was the break between two fronts. Larry said we would get a patch of calm and that was it. It was kind of like the lull in a hurricane. Larry checked the weather conditions and they called it a STORM 10 which is just below a hurricane. Now we are in the midst of the worst of it for sure.

It's starting to feel a lot like when we used to boat and get into some bad seas and I would wonder and ask myself what the heck am I doing here? This is supposed to be a fun vacation. The sun was starting to come out but seas are still big. Somehow it's not as scary if the sun is out. If our dear "friend" hadn't sent me that link showing this ship being rescued in bad seas I wouldn't feel so on edge right now. Boy is he going to get it when I see him next. LOL.

3:00 PM - 5-6 meter waves coming out of the NW, 30 knots winds from the west.

For a distraction, I started watching TV. We have no live TV but they have recorded talks that were given on the ship that are available to watch. That was a good distraction.

The seas are on our beam now so we are tilting left and right. We are NE of the islands so the captain is going to have to make a turn to port pretty soon. Next thing I see my cameras across the room sliding across the desk as we are hit by a particularly strong wave. Got up quickly and now have the cameras in bed with me for safe keeping.

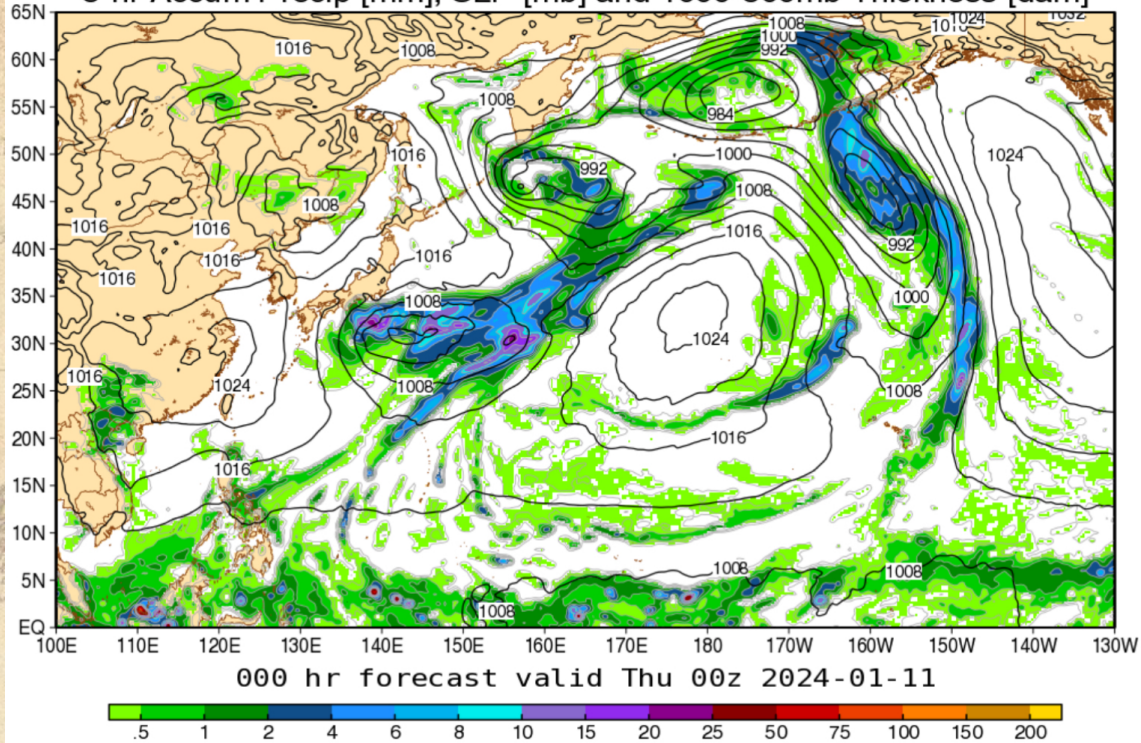
We eventually went to sit down service restaurant for dinner. We didn't want to struggle trying to do the buffet in these conditions. I think everyone had the same idea as it was crowded. It's on the 2nd floor. They put us by the window but the wind was blowing in so strong through the pane that we had to move. It was really roly. Several times we heard dishes and trays crashing in the kitchen. Larry had a soup appetizer and it was dripping diagonally as he took each spoonful to his mouth. A nearby ice bucket with a bottle of red wine went flying and



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GMAO

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broke spilling red wine all over the carpet. Another waitress managed to lunge and grab several wine bottles before they met the same demise. She lunged and grabbed them both arms like a big hug preventing a disaster. People were walking in at an angle and weaving like they were drunk. The service staff were walking wide legged trying to straddle the floor for stability.

After dinner we moseyed out to the Living Room and talked to customer service. They said the ship is due in to the dock at 10:00 AM and should be entering the harbor to Kauai at 8:00.

The sound of dishes and bottles crashing and trays flying in all directions continue throughout the evening. It didn't matter what floor or where you were, you could hear something crashing. But in the Living Room, passengers were seated in various lounge chairs and sofas, having cocktails and calmly listening to the cello and violinist play as if nothing odd was happening. We sat and listened for a bit and decided to head back to the room.

It was a rough day and night, no doubt about it.

JANUARY 13 - END OF OUR 5 DAYS AT SEA, KAUI

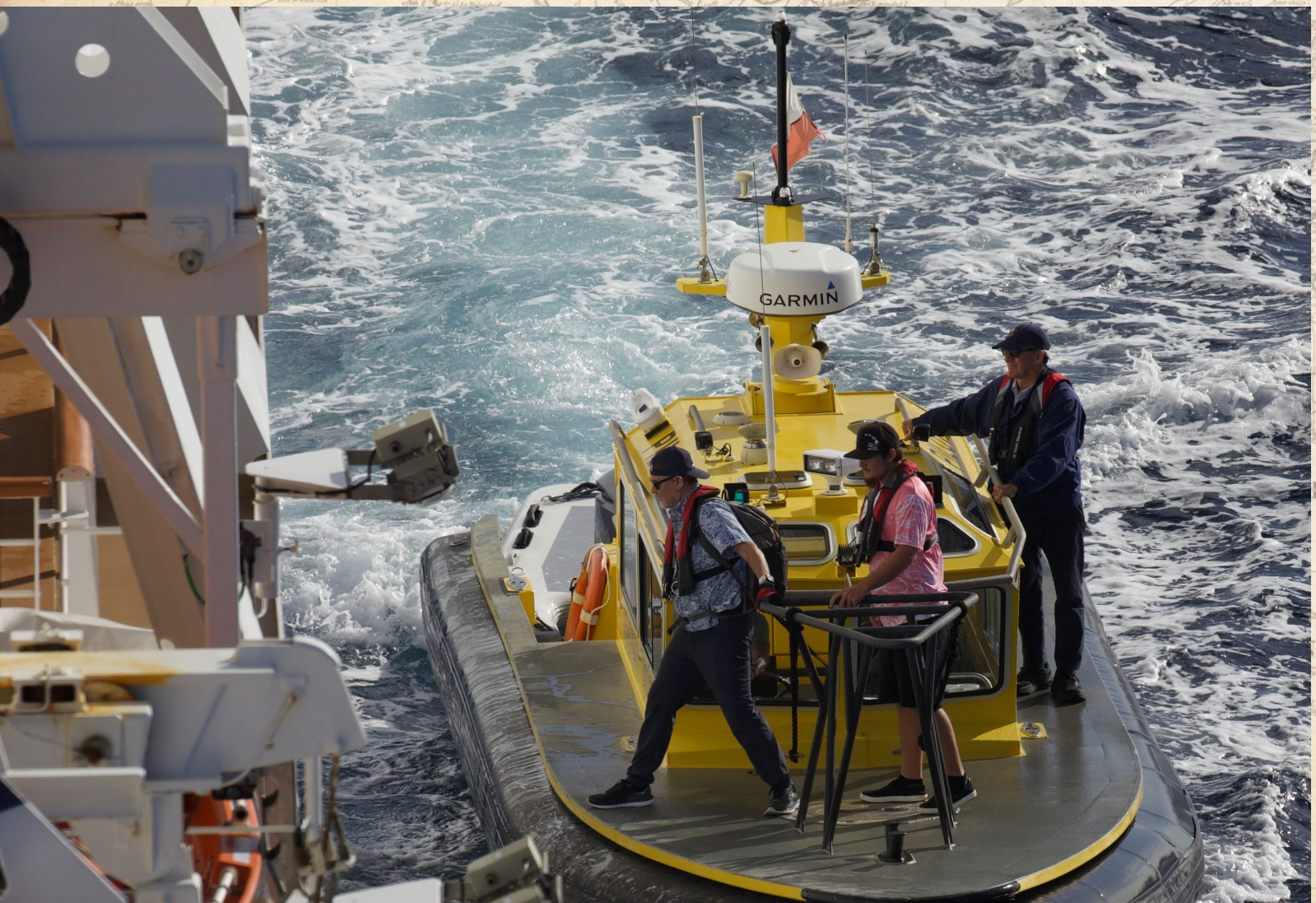
It's 6:45 AM, still dark out, seas still rough. We struggled to get up and get dressed. We wanted to see our first land fall. It was quite exciting for everyone to see land after 5 days and rough seas so the Explorer's Lounge was packed.

It's a beautiful sight coming into Nawiliwili harbor. The mountains are lush and green, tall and jagged.



Met a nice lady in the Explorer's Lounge. She's from St. George, Utah, traveling on her own. Lost her husband a few years back.

We had only signed up for the complimentary tour today as we'd done some of the other options when we visited here years ago, which was a helicopter ride and also to see what they call the Hawaiian Grand Canyon. Our tour today was to see a sugar plantation and didn't leave



until 1:30. How bad could it be? They cancelled the waterfall portion but instead added “a special train ride around the plantation”.

The port where we docked is #3. Just across the way was a huge Carnival Cruise ship at #2. This port is not close to anything. Viking said there is a shuttle bus that takes people to a small shopping mall nearby that has a few tourist shops and restaurants. So we thought we'd take the shuttle bus to the mall to spend the extra time before our tour. We had no luck renting a car or getting a taxi. Should have made plans earlier. Have to get our act together. To tell you the truth it's been a few rough days and didn't feel much like doing anything even though we were finally on land. Everything in our body was tired from just hanging on so we didn't fall over.

Of course they didn't tell us it was about a 1/4 mile walk to the shuttle bus. The shuttle only stopped in front of the Carnival Cruise Ship. You'd think Viking would have arranged for the shuttle to stop at our ship also. If anybody needed a shuttle it was our ship as the majority of people on our ship were double the age of most of the people on the Carnival if you averaged it out.

Anyway, took the shuttle which was like an old fashioned open air trolley. The shops were touristy and nothing of interest. It was lunch time so we decided to get a bite to eat otherwise we'd miss lunch. Larry wanted to go to the Mexican restaurant and I thought on a Hawaiian Island? OK. Turned out the Mexican food was better than we get at home. Fresh Mahi Mahi tacos! Yum!

KALAMAKU PLANTATION TOUR

We had to hustle back to the boat to catch the 1:30 tour. Did the long walk again where the shuttle dropped us at the Carnival Cruise ship. Going to be wiped out before we even take the tour. The tour is taking us to Kalamaku Plantation. We barely made it back in time as the tour buses were lined up and right away we were herded onto a bus and off we go to a plantation tour. It didn't quite feel like a plantation as it's right near Costco, Target, you name it all the name brands. I think I remember coming here for dinner 30 years ago and it was out in an





unpopulated area. A lot can happen in a few years when you are invaded with tourists.

It was a tourist trap but not in the worst way. We knew it would be. It's what's left of an old estate and sugar plantation. It was quite the place in its heyday. They entertained anybody that was anybody in its day we were told.

I did not know this, but found it interesting, that sugar plantations in the Hawaiian islands were the result of the Civil War. During the war the South cut off the supply of goods to the North and instead shipped their sugar and cotton crops to France in exchange for guns and ammunition. To compensate the North went to the islands and signed a treaty to purchase all their sugar and cotton and that is how sugar became big on the islands.

So this land was purchased in 1864 by a wealthy land baron. People from all over the world came to work in the fields: Irish, English, Chinese, Japanese and Norwegians. They never left Kauai and as a result, Kauai is quite the melting pot of people today all resulting from that migration of international workers.

Steam trains were used on all the plantations until about the 1950's when trucks took over. Most of the old trains were shipped away. The Kalamaku Plantation though in recent years found this old original steam engine in the Philippines, had it shipped here and restored it and that is what is shuttling tourists around the plantation.

We were herded onto the train to take a ride around the 150 acres to see the animals, a couple horses, cows, lots of free range roosters (in fact roosters are everywhere) and the highlight was a bunch of wild pigs. Of course it was also a tour to show all the different types of agriculture that is grown on the land. There are many varieties of exotic fruits and nuts grown here. One in particular is what they call the 1-2-3 fruit (forgot the botanical name). The conductor said it is a very delicious fruit but you can only eat two. If you dare eat third you will be doing number 2 like number 1.

THE TORTILLA TRAIN

Half way through, we stopped at the pig area so everyone could get off to feed the wild pigs that had now been domesticated. The cows and horses all came a running too. Apparently they all like corn tortillas. Our job was to throw a tortilla or two at them and they would fight over them and then the winner would run off with a tortilla in its mouth. As we left the pigs ran in a pack alongside the train hoping for another tortilla. Even the roosters got into the act and ran after the train. It was quite a silly sight.

At the end of the train ride we were herded around again, this time to a large open air luau building. This is where we got a complimentary mai tai along with a little taste of authentic

Hawaiian dancing. We also got little more than we asked for as a few of those cruise passengers, who should not have, got up in front of everyone and danced along.

Finally, we then were finally “free” for an hour to walk around the property and see the old plantation house and taste their own rum made by “volcanically strained and purified water and sugar grown in the red volcanic earth giving the rum an extra dimension of sweetness” or so they say.

And then not without being herded once again this time back to the buses and off we go past the shopping mall, Target and Costco, back to the boat. Not our cup of tea but still was a bit interesting, and homey, at least we got to ride around as we were very tired and was better than walking.

Bumped in to Ellen again at the boat. She just got back from her tour to the Hawaiian Grand Canyon which is supposed to be the rainiest place on earth. I guess she was prepared, was over dressed in slickers and hot. She said there was not one drop of rain. She didn't seem too pleased.

Had an early dinner and went to bed.

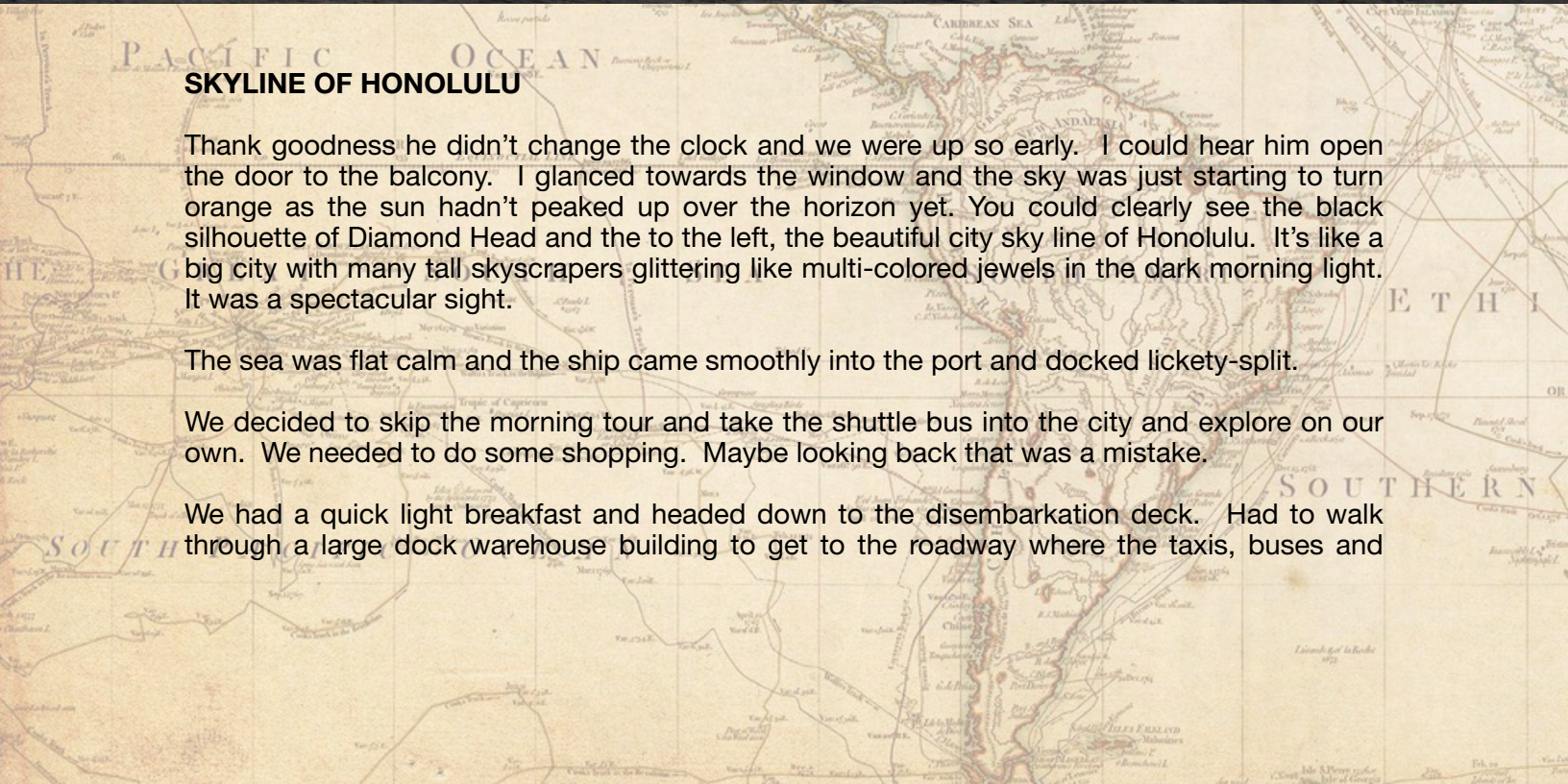




JANUARY 14, SUNDAY, WOKE UP JUST BEFORE DAWN, SEAS FLAT CALM FROM KAUAI TO HONOLULU

10 TIME ZONES TO GO

Finally calm seas. We slept like babies. Larry woke up just before dawn forgetting to change his iPad clock one hour, as he thought it was an hour later. So far we have changed the clock two times since we left Los Angeles. We will be changing the clocks 10 times before we reach London. We changed it during the crossing to Kauai and then again before we got to Kauai.



SKYLINE OF HONOLULU

Thank goodness he didn't change the clock and we were up so early. I could hear him open the door to the balcony. I glanced towards the window and the sky was just starting to turn orange as the sun hadn't peaked up over the horizon yet. You could clearly see the black silhouette of Diamond Head and the to the left, the beautiful city sky line of Honolulu. It's like a big city with many tall skyscrapers glittering like multi-colored jewels in the dark morning light. It was a spectacular sight.

The sea was flat calm and the ship came smoothly into the port and docked lickety-split.

We decided to skip the morning tour and take the shuttle bus into the city and explore on our own. We needed to do some shopping. Maybe looking back that was a mistake.

We had a quick light breakfast and headed down to the disembarkation deck. Had to walk through a large dock warehouse building to get to the roadway where the taxis, buses and

other transportation were. Harbor security did a double check on everyone's IDs before we could leave the port.

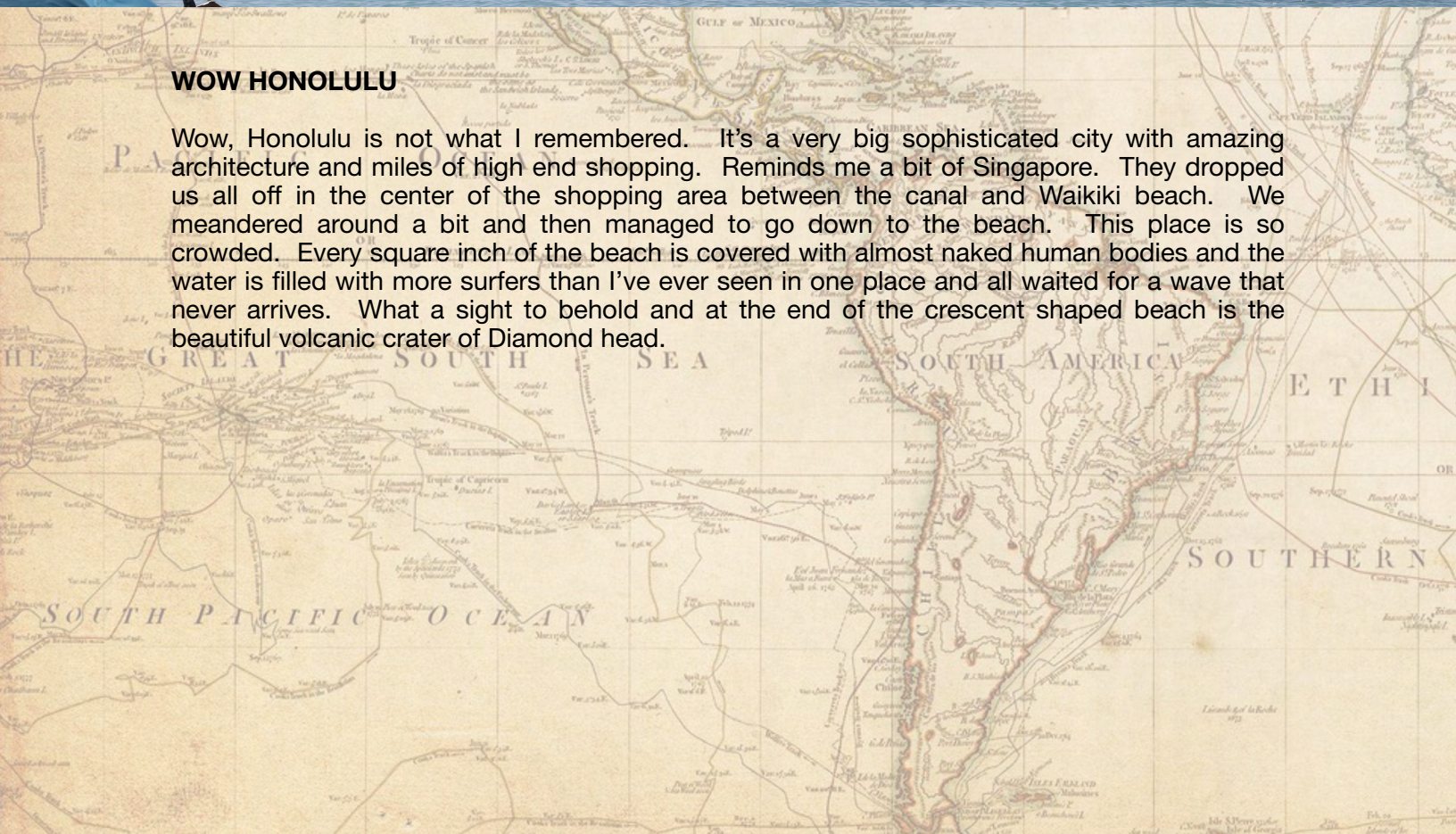
SHUTTLE BUSED OUT

The shuttle bus was arranged by Viking at the request of some of the passengers. It went every hour I think and dropped us off at Ross's of all places, in the center of the city. I'm starting to feel a little like cow being herded around. We had to wait in a certain spot and like kids were told when the bus comes to stand back so everyone can get off the bus before you board. Kind of common sense. When the bus came there was a bit of a push to get on though plenty of seats. There's something about buses and people, they all start to get pushy and butting. Once inside, I felt so crammed in. If our upper leg was one inch, maybe even a half an inch, longer in length, we never would've fit. Larry was grumbling saying these buses are made for small people. We got in and then sat and sat and sat. I guess they load as many passengers as they can and then wait and wait until a certain cut off time and if there are any seats left, the crew are allowed to get in. Yesterday at the plantation we felt the same way, herding us around like sheep as they cram us into these buses.



WOW HONOLULU

Wow, Honolulu is not what I remembered. It's a very big sophisticated city with amazing architecture and miles of high end shopping. Reminds me a bit of Singapore. They dropped us all off in the center of the shopping area between the canal and Waikiki beach. We meandered around a bit and then managed to go down to the beach. This place is so crowded. Every square inch of the beach is covered with almost naked human bodies and the water is filled with more surfers than I've ever seen in one place and all waited for a wave that never arrives. What a sight to behold and at the end of the crescent shaped beach is the beautiful volcanic crater of Diamond head.





MOANA SURFRIDER HOTEL

We ended up going into the oldest hotel in Honolulu. We didn't know that at the time. It was the Moana Surfrider. It's a beautiful building with lots of moldings with traditional style. It's not surprising that we were drawn to it immediately. It was opened in 1902. Back in the 1890's when the property was bought it was known as a "swampy backwater with nothing more than duck ponds and Taro fields". And now look at it, not one square inch left of a swampy backwater.

We sat out at the beach bar patio and had some fancy tropical drinks. It was enough entertainment to just watch the endless activity and it was amazing people watching.

The original opening of the hotel marked the beginning of Waikiki Beach tourism and forever changed the face of this beautiful area. It was the most popular hotel to stay until when it briefly was refuge for soldiers during the war.

In 1905 the hotel was also the center of a famous murderer mystery involving Jane Stanford, the co-founder of Stanford University and wife of California Governor Leland Stanford. She was poisoned in one of the rooms here and to this day the mystery has never been solved. Who would've thought that?

The building is truly beautiful and still to this day holds its own against all the modern structures that have built up around it. In the courtyard to the beach is

an enormous banyan tree that is the centerpiece to the whole setting. It was planted in 1907 and was only 7 feet tall at the time. Today it stands 75 tall with a span of 150 feet and really is integral part of the architectural setting. It's truly stunning.

This whole area was kind of overwhelming. We have not been around so many people in one place since Covid and that includes being on the ship. It just felt so crowded. We tried to find an on-and-off shuttle bus so we could see more of the city because it's so big and un-walkable for us. No luck as they are all one-day or four-day tickets and it was too late in the day to get one.



LUNCH AT DUKE'S

We had lunch at Duke's on Waikiki Beach. It was named after Duke Kahanamoku who was a legendary six time Olympic swimmer and water polo medalist who popularized surfing. Duke frequented the old hotel and beach out front and this area became the hangout for his "gang" called the Waikiki Beach Boys. This place has a surfing/tiki vibe and been there for years. It's right next to the Moana Surfrider. It's just what you would imagine stepping back into the 60s.

Walked around a bit more and caught a taxi back to the port. No more waiting and riding in those buses.

We crashed for a couple of hours. We said if we get back this way...what's the saying? we should of, could of, done it differently and that would be to rent a car and see other areas of Honolulu.

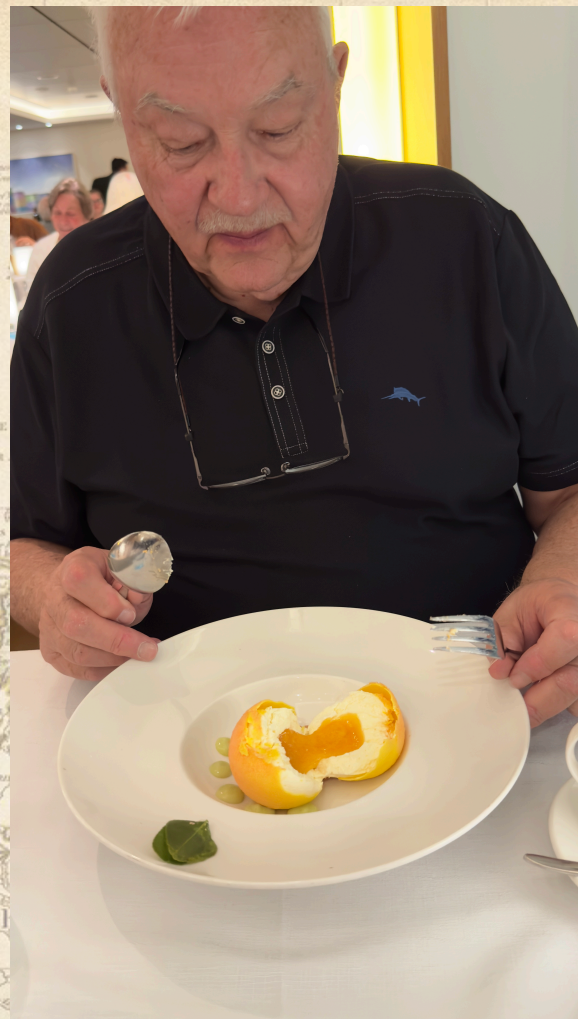
LEAVING HONOLULU

As the ship started to leave the dock we headed up to the aft part of the ship. We were taking bets on how the captain was going to leave the port. We watched as two tugs pulled and pushed a very lopsided looking freighter out the channel. Larry and the guy sitting next to us thought the Captain would back it out the channel. No way is he going to back out of a channel. He didn't. That's two port exit maneuvers I won.

Watched the harbor pilot disembark the ship and race back to the harbor. What a beautiful sight Honolulu is from the water. The buildings just glisten in the sunset, like jewels. The mountains behind contrast them. As the sun sets they take on the pink and orange shades of

the sun setting ahead of us. What a beautiful sight it was.

We dined out on the back deck tonight along with others. Finally we were able to sit outside after days of cold, windy, wet weather. The Chef put on what he called a Hawaiian feast which



included roasted sucking pig and other pineapple and coconut marinated delights. Guy sitting in table next to me wanted my drink straw and cocktail tooth pick as he could use them for the boat he's building. Yep, they have a boat building contest in a few days and he's collecting supplies. He said he's making an outrigger.

The Live Tv is not working on the ship and hasn't been since the Panama Canal I think they said. That's a lot of days. They say there is something wrong with the antenna. Not sure what port will be able to address that, probably Sydney. So Larry downloaded something so I can watch the news. Yay!

JANUARY 15, LEFT HONOLULU - ANOTHER FIVE DAYS AT SEA

Slept like two waterlogged sea logs last night. Woke to calm seas and nice weather. Checked our position. Just a little bit south of Hawaii. Looks like we will be going by the Cook Islands. I see several boats down in that area on the cruisemapper.com and you can check their itineraries on the app. Many are going to several small islands in that area. They are much smaller ships of only 300 passengers. Really amazing to be able to see all the ships that are at sea, where they are, how fast they are going, how many passengers and their complete itineraries and times of arrival and departure and even sea conditions.

VIKING'S DAILY SHEET

So checked out the Daily Sheet for today. It was the usual activities to keep the passengers busy: Bridge games, brain teasers, bag toss, ship golf, high activity exercise class, lecture on



bird migration, That's just a sample. I am content to watch the sea. Have seen a couple of albatross and a booby flying by the ship. Got the camera ready to capture one or two. Larry is excited as they have a magic show tonight at 9:00. We'll see if we can stay up until then.

Beautiful day at sea finally. We are just sitting out on the deck enjoying it.

GAIN 5-8 POUNDS A WEEK ON A CRUISE?

The food has been plentiful and good on the ship. There is more food than you can imagine and way too many deserts. What did I say? Okay, it's true, too many temptations. It's a problem as you have to be able to resist. It's next to impossible. I heard that it is normal to

gain 5-8 pound a day on a cruise. Holy cow. We've got over a 100 days. You can add up that amount of pounds right? I'm already tight in my pants so there is no more room to move. Cutting back right now. But the temptations are great.

So remember when we were griping about our room and the amount of window/viewing space we had? I might have to take that back as we just saw on the cruise facebook that someone has had trouble with their sliding door. It won't stay shut. It's been opening and closing throughout the entire cruise. Right now they have a piece of wood bracing the door provided by the housekeeping crew until they get the matter fixed. That must have been scary and annoying doing those days of bad seas that we had.

LAZY DAY AT SEA

Got up late, spent the morning out on our balcony drinking coffee and spotting birds flying by the ship. Gathered up our things and went to the back of the ship and watched the sea go by.

They had a special luncheon on the back deck today. It was a centerpiece of fresh tuna caught yesterday. They were grilling tuna kabobs and tuna filets.

It started to get misty/rainy out so we went back to the room and crashed for the rest of the afternoon.

Went downstairs before dinner and had a martini. I was going to take a picture of Larry and suddenly this woman who was sitting across from us (traveling along I think) insisted she take a picture of the both of us. She kept saying she was really good at taking pictures and does it for everyone. She said people ask her all the time to take pictures because she knows how to do it so well. I said OK and handed her the phone. I think she was a little crazy as the pictures she took were awful. She took about 10 pictures, some with our heads cut off or blurry. Not sure what was going on with her.

Went that night to The Restaurant. Much better to be served than wobbling around at the buffet and serving yourself. Had grilled halibut, wedge salad and crepes suzette. Larry had a meat and mushroom pie English style, wedge salad and crepes suzette. Had to try the crepes so not doing so well on cutting back yet.

After dinner we tried playing Black Jack and checkers on the electronic tables they have. I guess it's their substitution for not having a casino. We managed to stay up late enough to go see the magic show. Turns out the woman doing it was the lady we'd seen walking around the ship with purple hair. Enough said.

Got a notice when we back to the room that they have ordered parts to fix the Live TV problem. They should be delivered and waiting for us at the next stop on Jan 20th.

JANUARY 16TH, TUESDAY - 2ND DAY AT SEA, SEAS CALM, DESTINATION BORA BORA

Woke at 6:20, sunrise is 6:34 or so they say. Had a nice calm night and good sleep. Sat out on the balcony. Getting more and more humid.

VIKING DAILY

Got our Viking Daily. So how are they going to keep the passengers busy today?? they are starting off the day with some hot filled croissants, mindful yoga (I think that is the one where they lay on the floor by the pool and think), more crummy bridge lessons (that guy is still teaching?? Going to have a bunch of bad bridge players on this ship is all I can say), golf and shuffleboard equipment available, a Crew emergency drill again, more awful bridge lessons later, a lecture by the RAF Commander on the history of tattoos (now that sounds interesting), a Photo workshop by the guy that says you are a clown with your big camera and all you need is the cell phone, another lecture "the secrets of Navigating the stars" (why bother when we have state of the art GPS), a golf discussion for people that want to get together to discuss their

love of golf, team trivia, more awful bridge, now here's a new one, world cruise choir rehearsal, then tea time, another lecture "50 years living on a Pacific Island" and an evening talk on "Colonialism, cloth and Conversation in French Polynesia" and all the while the crew will be doing safety drills in the morning and cleaning again, the starboard side this time in the afternoon. There is not a lax moment on this boat.

Went to the tattoo talk. Larry couldn't stay awake. spent the whole time punching him to keep him from snoring.

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

Will be crossing by Christmas Island this afternoon. The real name is Kiritimati but in its native language of Gilbertese the "ti" is pronounced as "s" thus phonetically it sounds like Christmas (not to be confused with Christmas Island to the NW of Australia). It was the testing sight of many nuclear bombs by the United Kingdom in the late 1950's and by the United States in the 1960's.

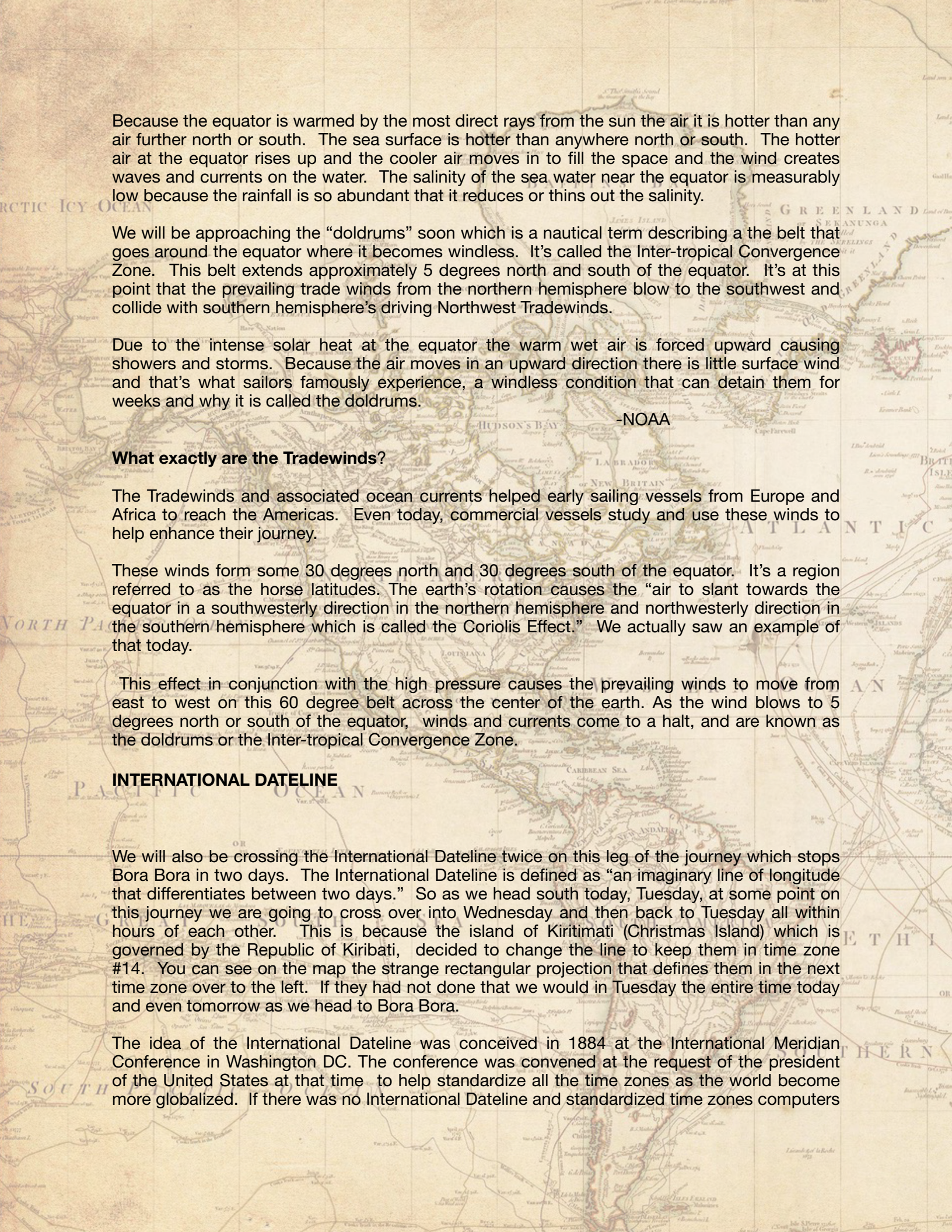
It is located in the world's farthest forward time zone UTC+14 and therefore is one of the first inhabited places on earth to experience New Year's Day. In 1990 the Republic of Kiribati realigned the International Date Line putting Kiritimati west of the dateline.

Today it's very wobbly again on the ship.

JANUARY 17TH, WEDNESDAY - 3RD DAY AT SEA, TWO TO GO, CROSSING THE EQUATOR 10:00 AM - MUGGY OUT BUT SUNNY AND CALM SEAS

CROSSING THE EQUATOR





Because the equator is warmed by the most direct rays from the sun the air it is hotter than any air further north or south. The sea surface is hotter than anywhere north or south. The hotter air at the equator rises up and the cooler air moves in to fill the space and the wind creates waves and currents on the water. The salinity of the sea water near the equator is measurably low because the rainfall is so abundant that it reduces or thins out the salinity.

We will be approaching the “doldrums” soon which is a nautical term describing a the belt that goes around the equator where it becomes windless. It’s called the Inter-tropical Convergence Zone. This belt extends approximately 5 degrees north and south of the equator. It’s at this point that the prevailing trade winds from the northern hemisphere blow to the southwest and collide with southern hemisphere’s driving Northwest Tradewinds.

Due to the intense solar heat at the equator the warm wet air is forced upward causing showers and storms. Because the air moves in an upward direction there is little surface wind and that’s what sailors famously experience, a windless condition that can detain them for weeks and why it is called the doldrums.

-NOAA

What exactly are the Tradewinds?

The Tradewinds and associated ocean currents helped early sailing vessels from Europe and Africa to reach the Americas. Even today, commercial vessels study and use these winds to help enhance their journey.

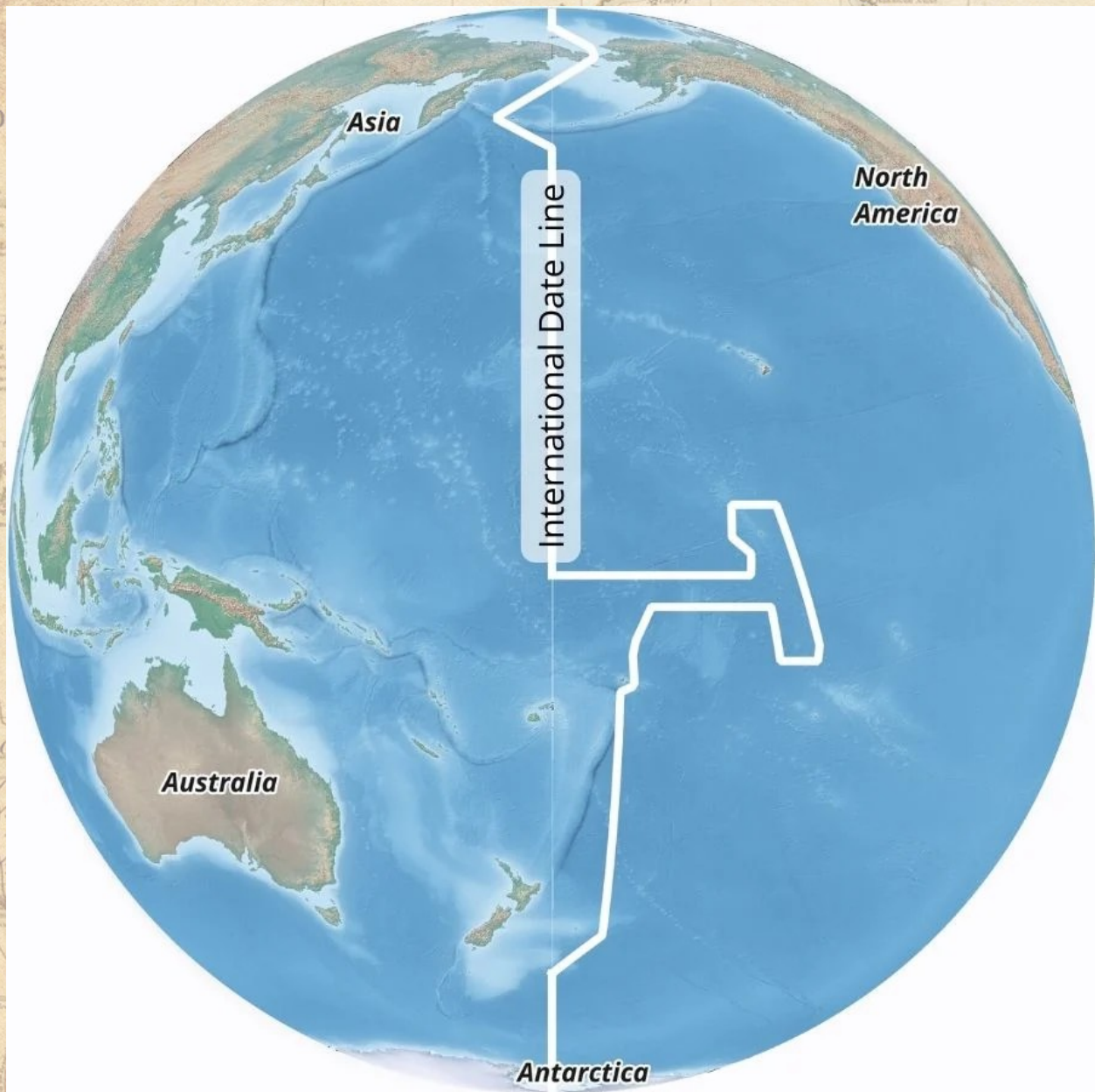
These winds form some 30 degrees north and 30 degrees south of the equator. It’s a region referred to as the horse latitudes. The earth’s rotation causes the “air to slant towards the equator in a southwesterly direction in the northern hemisphere and northwesterly direction in the southern hemisphere which is called the Coriolis Effect.” We actually saw an example of that today.

This effect in conjunction with the high pressure causes the prevailing winds to move from east to west on this 60 degree belt across the center of the earth. As the wind blows to 5 degrees north or south of the equator, winds and currents come to a halt, and are known as the doldrums or the Inter-tropical Convergence Zone.

INTERNATIONAL DATELINE

We will also be crossing the International Dateline twice on this leg of the journey which stops Bora Bora in two days. The International Dateline is defined as “an imaginary line of longitude that differentiates between two days.” So as we head south today, Tuesday, at some point on this journey we are going to cross over into Wednesday and then back to Tuesday all within hours of each other. This is because the island of Kiritimati (Christmas Island) which is governed by the Republic of Kiribati, decided to change the line to keep them in time zone #14. You can see on the map the strange rectangular projection that defines them in the next time zone over to the left. If they had not done that we would in Tuesday the entire time today and even tomorrow as we head to Bora Bora.

The idea of the International Dateline was conceived in 1884 at the International Meridian Conference in Washington DC. The conference was convened at the request of the president of the United States at that time to help standardize all the time zones as the world become more globalized. If there was no International Dateline and standardized time zones computers



now-a-days would not be able to sync together, nor back then could people reliably communicate with each other and schedules would be out of whack without it.

JANUARY 17, WEDNESDAY - WOKE TO THE DOLDRUMS

We are 5 degrees above the equator. We saw the air and moisture slant in a diagonal shape and slant towards the equator in a southwesterly direction. There is also a faint half circle rainbow off to our starboard side.

POLLYWOGS VS THE SHELLBACKS

Today at 10:00 AM the ship will have its traditional Crossing the Equator Ceremony which consists of gathering around the pool, those that are first timers to cross the equator get dunked and then chug some Aquavit. They are doing it at this time for convenience I guess as we actually won't be crossing the equator until later tonight around 11:00 PM. You are called a Pollywog if you have never crossed the equator and if you have crossed you are officially called a shellback (turtle). I guess we officially are shellbacks. There is a long nautical history about crossing the equator and the resulting ceremonies to get baptized into the club of shellbacks, some of these initiations are pretty violent if you read the history about it. It includes lots of hazing and dunking over the side of the ship and even deaths as a result of it. Glad these days are more civilized and we just get a voluntary dunking with a nice swig of alcohol at the end. We will be watching from the top deck above.

Usually these ceremonies are attended by King Neptune, Aphrodite, and Davy Jones look-alikes. We will see what the ceremony brings.

VIKING DAILY

Let's see what's in store for the passengers today. Starting the day off healthy with Energy Pressure Points and Holistic Reiki, then a talk about the Warbirds of WWII which sounds interesting (Larry will miss that as he has scheduled himself a relaxing massage to work out that kink in his neck), various card games, golf and shuffleboard equipment available, more awful bridge lessons, the Equator Crossing Ceremony, water colors (birds this time), another awful bridge lesson for intermediate players, a talk about French Polynesia Mythology, a photography workshop "Discuss what you want from your camera" (simple, a picture), Trivia in the afternoon, more awful bridge, Duplicate Bridge this time, then Afternoon Tea serenaded by pianist, afternoon talk about "Gauguin's Depictions of Polynesia", an evening talk "Navigator Captain Bligh, Navigator Extraordinaire", and finally evening entertainment with a singer who is said to have a voice "richer than Fort Knox"?

At 4:00ish this afternoon we are all to meet in the restaurant to turn over our passports as required by immigration for the upcoming foreign ports. Also, any of us planning for independent overnight stays at any future stops must notify Guest Services and provide detailed information.

Also, the port-side of the ship is getting a cleaning today. I think they should think about doing some bright work too as the teak on this ship is in bad shape.

Today we are having a culinary event. The on board culinary team is highlighting Caribbean food. Wait, what? I thought we were in French Polynesia not the Caribbean. Are they confused? Must have a bunch of beans and rice they need to move.

CROSSING THE EQUATOR CEREMONY

Larry went for his first massage this morning. I went to get a seat to see the Equator Ceremony. It's in a large atrium where the inside pool is. It has a retracting roof. When I got there it was hotter than hell in there, like a sauna as they hadn't opened the roof yet. I got a seat and was supposed to meet Larry there when the ceremony starts. People began arriving, some in swimsuits (the pollywogs). The woman across from me was sweating profusely and fanning herself. Others were hot too. One woman got up and went to a crew and asked something while pointing to the roof. I assumed she was asking when they were going to open the roof. She told me "they are going to open it soon." More and more people gathered and it

was getting so hot I thought someone would pass out. I asked the lady next to me save my seat as I had to get some water. I went to the bar but he said he had no water. What? No water and it's like a furnace in here? As I walked back I saw the captain's crew and little did I know one in the center was the captain. I said "you NEED to get this roof open or someone is going to pass out!" I went back to my seat. Still nothing but I could see some engineers up there looking confused and seemed to be trying to figure out how to get it open. Doesn't work. I saw the cruise social coordinator and waved him over. I asked about the roof and he assured me they were going to get it open soon. I complained that it was too hot and you have no water here for anyone, someone is going to pass out. Off he went in a tizzy. Next thing the bar guy that didn't have any water brought me a tray of glasses filled with ice water. I took one and he began to pass them out. Everybody is sweating and fanning themselves. I waited some more but couldn't take it and got up and left.

I went up on the roof to see what was going on with the roof and why it wasn't opening. The engineers were kneeling over the mechanism looking very perplexed but there seemed no rush to fix it. Finally one guy comes moseying over with a small wrench in hand. He fiddles with the wrench and suddenly the roof begins to retract. That little wrench fixed that big thing? Makes me wonder about the maintenance on this ship.

POOL

We tried out the pool on the back deck today. To get in you have to be part monkey, and to get out is even more challenging. I don't know why it is so hard to get in and out but everyone is



complaining. They have the same jungle gym ladder for the pool in the interior atrium too I was told by the boat builder guy from North Carolina. Since all the chaise lounges are facing the pool and the pool is slightly elevated, you are on display when you get in. It's a bit embarrassing because everyone is looking at you. It's no easy task getting gracefully into the pool when the ship is rolling. We managed to get in without making fools of ourselves. It was fun being in the pool as the water was a bit roly like the seas. One woman decided not to deal with the ladder and just jumped in leaving a big splash. I guess she didn't want to monkey swing it down the ladder. The most difficult part is getting out. Not only does everyone watch but your weight coming out feels double what it was going in and then with the movement of the boat it is even worse. At dinner that night we sat next to a couple from North Carolina. She said she is never getting into that pool again as the ladder was impossible. Lots of funny stuff on this ship.

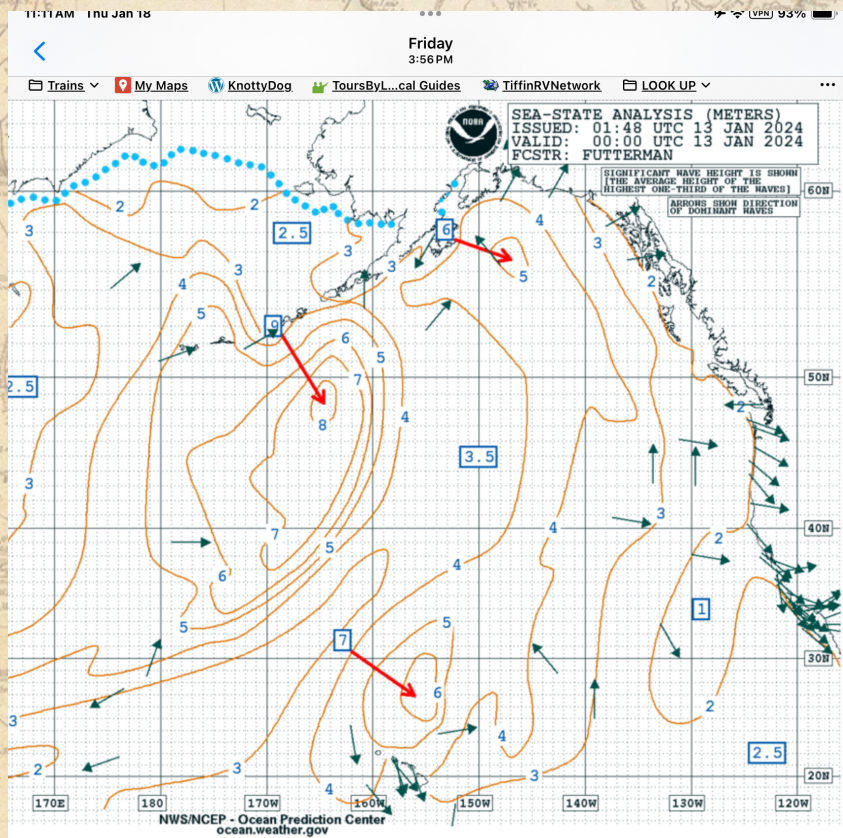
So went to bed tonight and for the first time we have live TV news! They said we needed parts that we would get until the 20th. Apparently it wasn't a parts problem because they were able to get it going. Now we can get the news and not feel so cut off from everything.

TWO MORE SEA DAYS TO GO

We've got two more days of sea and then we will sight Bora Bora. We'll keep an eye out for landfall.

Larry's comments.....

Even though we did pass thru time zone +14, the ship stays on -10 until 55 W, we do cross the 180 meridian heading to Australia.



On the way to Hawaii, the ruff weather was caused by this Gale shown on the sea-state chart..our position was about 25N 155W