

Subj: **1st Travelogue of the Asian Trip** Date: 4/13/2010

Wow!!! We're on a real high tonight! Not sure we'll have internet now unless we get lucky on the cruise ship, so thought I should send out a fast episode of the happenings so far!!!

George & I left Mesa and made a quick drive to Mom & Dad's in Rosewood (by the way Mom & Dad, Rosewood made the square dance survey at the St Louis Jamboree! One of the questions was where does Pam's Mom & Dad live!! Too funny!!) to get taxes done, do some airfare reservations for June, and do the packing for the Dance weekend and the month vacation! Everything went like clockwork and we left Rosewood on Friday morning to drive to Mesquite to leave the Jeep at my brother Gary's and he took us to Love Field to fly to St Louis. Early day (up @ 6:00am! ick!!), but love Southwest (wish they flew everywhere we needed to go) and made it to St Louis easily.

Hank & Judy Scherrer were our hosts for the weekend and we had a ball with them! Wish they were vacationing with us! The weekend was great fun. Callers were Gary Shoemake and Steve Kopman and we really enjoyed listening to their calls and dancing to them. Our teaches were great fun (even though our session on Saturday started at 9:00am!!!! Obviously they don't know us very well!!!!) and we made lots of new friends and even had some good friends drive down to be with us from Chicago!! All in all, it was a lot of fun and we loved working St Louis!





On Sunday morning, Hank & Judy took us to the airport at 6:45am. Easy flight to MSP and then stinking 4 hour wait for flight to Bangkok, via Tokyo. Loaded on the plane and it was the oldest 747 we have EVER been on! Just ancient. Overhead screen 30 rows in front of us rather than in seat entertainment (George was really really happy about that!!!!), but we got in the rear with us 2 seats instead of the 3 across. Anyway, to make a long story short, we were 2 hours late taking off for maintenance problems, but they held up Pat & Freddy at the Tokyo/Narita airport and we made it on to Bangkok, arriving just an hour late!

Checked in at our Best Western Airport hotel to lovely rooms and got almost 3 hours of sleep before starting a FABULOUS FULL DAY OF TOURING IN BANGKOK!!!! Barbara Gill & Dazarine Pool were already at the hotel waiting for us and at 7:00am we began a tour that included the Floating Markets (went by long tailed boat and it was awesome!!!)





Then on to ride the Elephants at the Elephant camp. All moneies go to help feed and care for the Elephants. They seemed very well cared for and totally trained! It was a fantastic experience (even rode the elephant in the water!!!)!!!







I'm already too long on the email and haven't even gotten to lunch yet!!!! We toured 3 absolutely unbelievable Buddhist Temples (largest solid gold,



2nd largest reclining



and Emerald (actually Jade in the Grand Palace). Then on to the Grand Palace, (oh my gosh you can not imagine!!!!!!),





then to see emerald & saffire gem cutting, setting & selling, and then dinner and show at the Siam Niramet. The show was FABULOUS!! Similar to a Disney production. Theater seats 2000 (only about 900 or so there tonight) and the stage is the tallest in the world. Absolutely a don't miss show! Everything from lightning, flying angels, demons, and every stage costume and prop you can imagine! Rice bloomed in front of our eyes and Elephants, goats, & chickens were a part of the 150 man stage production!!

Finally back to the hotel and tomorrow we transfer to the Diamond Princess to start our 16 day cruise!!!

Miss you all and wish you were here!!!

Lots of love,

*George & Pamela*

Subj: **Travelogue #2 From the Diamond Princess!!**

Date: 4/20/2010

Hello Everyone! First off, sure wish you were all here to enjoy this incredible vacation with us! Wow!!!

Well, I'll continue with our adventures!

Boarding the ship on Wednesday, we all met up for our first Happy Hour in Freddy & Pat's Suite at the back of the boat!



Their suite is HUGE with a balcony all across the back of the ship and a perfect meeting place for us to chat about our day before heading down to dinner. We have a lovely table in a back cubbie hole with 2 windows and our Waiter Leo (from the Philippines) and Asst Waiter Sujit (from India). So far the food has been marvelous and too plentiful!

Our first day was at Sea and the ocean was very calm and flat. We were all a bit tired from our excursions in Bangkok and we rested up and met again for our first Formal night Happy Hour! Pat & Freddy even found a very nice clothes line in their suite, but you'll have to ask them for more information on that!!!



The social areas on the ship are marvelous. There are 4 bars with rather nice dance floors and 3 bands, plus the Ship's Orchestra that circulate all the areas. The gym is nice, if rather small and the girls (Barbara & Dazarine) are making the most use of that (Daz drags Barbara out of bed for the 7:30am Bend & Stretch class - they are looking good!!!). Most of us are getting quite a lot of exercise walking from our cabins (near the front of the ship) to Pat & Freddy's suite (on the rear of the ship). Seems to be a mile long straight hallway!!!



Our first port of call was Singapore, a city state on the Malaysian peninsula. It was quite a shock for all of us. A very very Western progressive city that could have been Chicago except it was cleaner!!



The tour was wonderful, including a bumboat ride (supposedly named due to the tires along the side to keep them all from bumping (bum vs bump???)



The boat ride took us past the Merlion (artist's rendition of a symbol for Singapore - story goes that the first explorer to find Singapore saw a lion (tiger maybe? but folk lore says lion) and named it City of Lions) and Cavanaugh Bridge, a most beautiful bridge in an exclusive tourist area.



The boat ride was pretty hard work (hum??), so we stopped at a coffee shop for a local treat - bread toasted over a charcoal grill and spread with a jam made of coconut and egg. Yummmmy!!!! Their standard coffee and tea is served sweetened with something similar to condensed milk but we were all concerned with our calorie consumption (sure we were!!) and had our drinks without sugar!! Aren't we being good??



We walked through Chinatown and visited 2 museums depicting life for the first Chinese settlers, a pretty severe life style.





We also visited Sri Miriamman Temple, a Hindu temple that had just been restored in the past week. It was quite beautiful inside, but they charged for pictures, so we just got a picture of the tower.



We finished the day with a stop at a local market. So far we'll all keeping a close hold on our wallets and haven't spent a lot of money!!



This has already gotten, pretty long winded, so I'll break off to continue with Vietnam separately!!

Lots of love,

*George & Pamela*

Subj: **Travelogue #3 From the Diamond Princess!!**

Date: 4/20/2010

Hello Everyone!

First off, none of the Natural disasters occurring around the world are currently affecting us. The earthquake in China appears to be a long distance from anything we will visit and the Volcanic ash is quite a bit north of us. Thank goodness!! We are getting all the world news from the Ship's broadcast of BBC's CNN.

That said, hope things are going well back home! Let us know if anything happening that we need to be aware of!! Seems that we are lucky enough to access the internet at a reasonable price (free for all of us!! except for Pat & Freddy!!!) because their suite has access included!! Therefore George & I have decided that we would prefer that someone travels with us on all our trips and will book a suite!

So, we had another relaxing day at Sea after Singapore. We had 2 ports of call in Vietnam. The first was Phu My. It is the nearest port to access Ho Chi Min City (formally called Saigon). Joe & Clarice took a tour with the Cruise Critics to see it. It's about a 2 hour bus ride each way and they said it was a great tour. Don't have any of their pictures yet!

The rest of us took a tour up the coast on the so called Tourist Road to Vung Tau. This is the dry season and many of

the rice fields were totally dry, with water buffalo wandering loose.



There was a mind blowing mix of straw shacks and 4 star hotels along the drive, with a variety of vehicles on the road, motor bikes (most preferred by locals because they are available cheaply (\$1000 American) from China) and trucks full of people.



We visited a temple honoring the Whale (widely worshiped as a protector of the fishermen)



and a huge complex overlooking the bay (the White Palace), built by a French government official and now used as a Museum

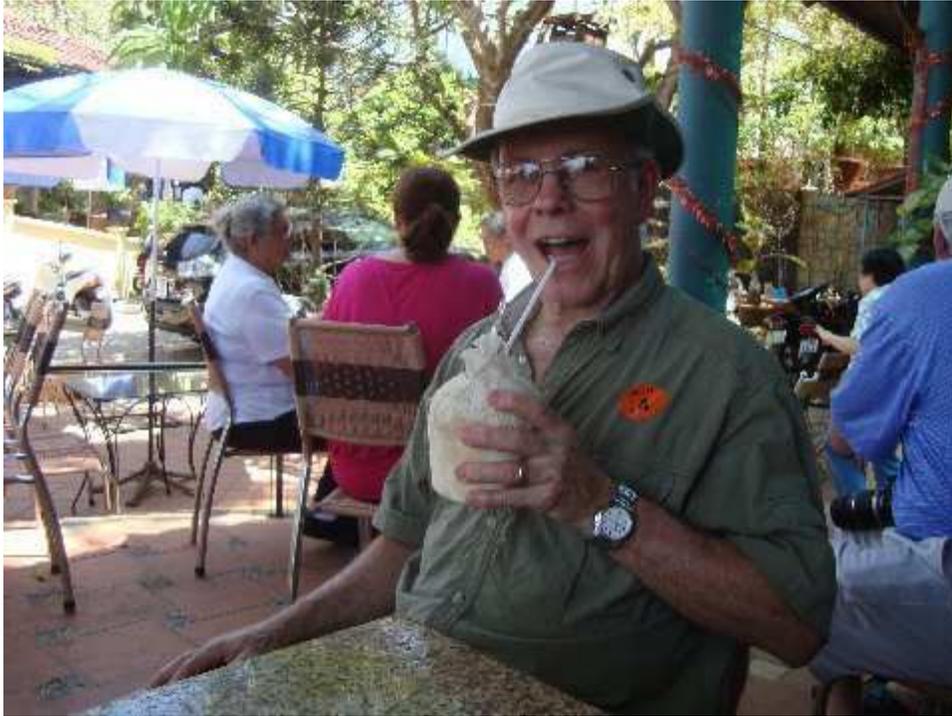


While there a group of young university students asked to have their pictures taken with us as they "loved Foreigners."





That was very exhausting work, of course (Ha Ha), so we had to make a stop for a refreshing ??? local coconut drink (we were all afraid that the water inside the coconut was actually tap water but none of us suffered any ill effects YET!!).



Then on to a beautiful city park along the water. I must inject here that each stop was accentuated by a troop of traveling saleswomen. The same group would meet us at each stop, selling embroidered robes, short sleeved shirts, and assorted knick knacks. Some of the group enjoyed bartering with them and a few even bought something!!



We made another stop to see the Nirvana Buddhist Temple. It was also set in a beautiful location overlooking the water.



We finished up the day at a fascinating market that sold anything and everything you could possibly imagine.





A few of us relaxed in a lovely seating area (sort of) while the others spent their money!!



Well, I feel that I have babbled on quite too much and think I'll leave our second day in Vietnam for the next email!!

Love you all and wish you were here!!!

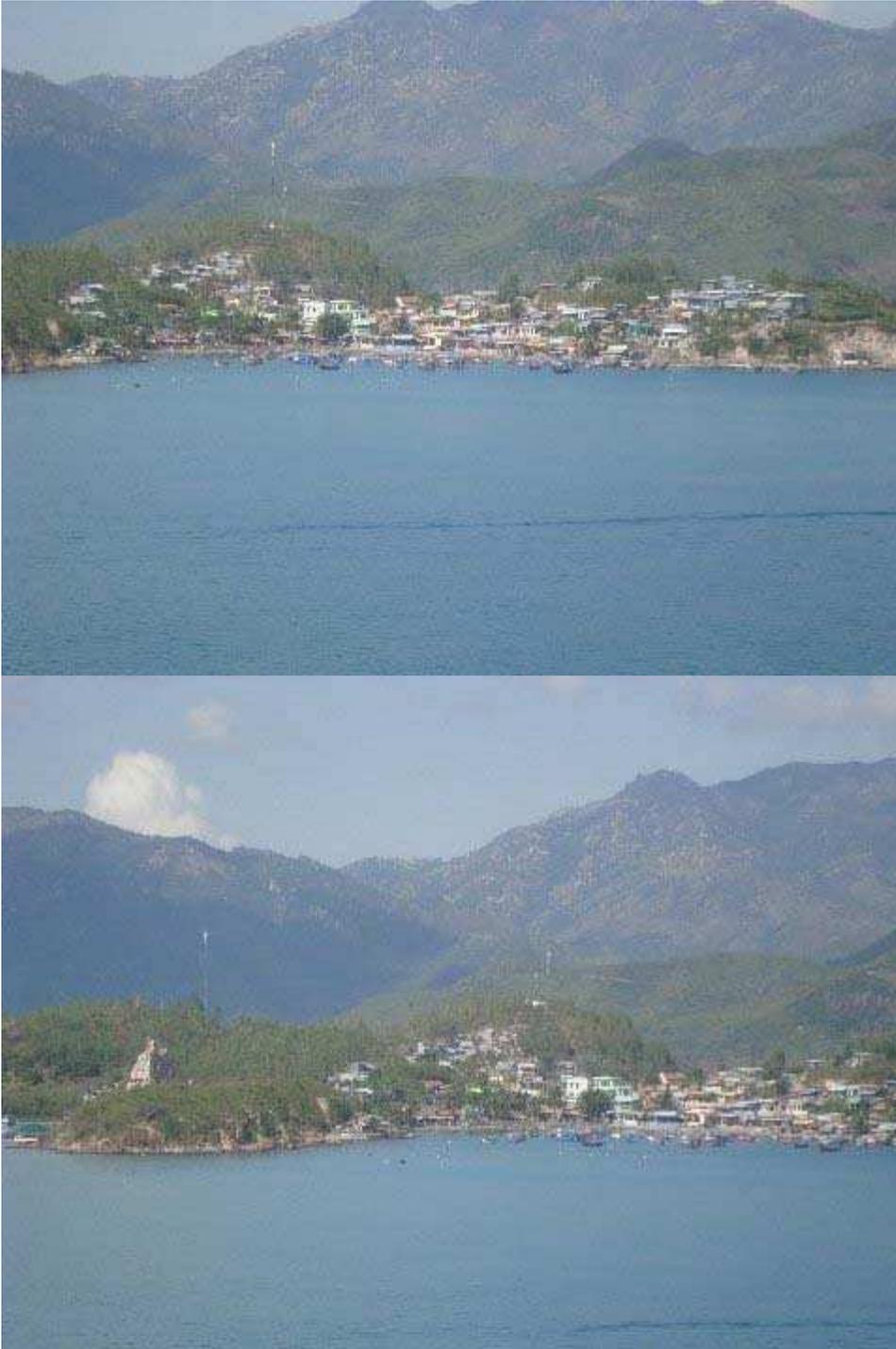
## *George & Pamela*

Subj: **Travelogue #4 - Nha Trang, Vietnam**

Date: 4/20/2010

Good Morning Friends & Family!!

Our vacation continues marvelously!! Our 3rd port of call was Nha Trang, Vietnam. What a beautiful surprise it was!! We opened our curtains onto our balcony at about 8:30am and this was the view that greeted us!!



Absolutely stunning! Seemed much more like a Mediterranean Port than any of us had expected! We had to use a Tender to get to shore and our tour was last off the ship, so things started a bit slow. We were about an hour late starting our tour. No worries though, since it was a Princess booked tour, we just took longer completing it and the ship waited!!

It was a lovely mix of activities in this tour. We started out with what we all agreed was the real highlight of the day. A tour of the Hand Embroidery Picture Factory. It was government run and was both a training facility, a show room, and a sales office. Tom & Marge were the only ones that bought embroidery (the girls bought some gorgeous (& inexpensive) jewelry). The average age of the girls was 18 and usually 2 girls worked on one piece for 8 hours a day.





The girls were taught shading and color harmony. Although the background was printed on the fabric, the girls were allowed to use their own abilities and tastes to choose the colors and shading. No 2 pieces would be exactly alike.



Some of the most beautiful pieces were 2 sided. Each side had different colors and appearance and they were all just fabulous. Absolutely amazing work.



Next stop was the Long Son Pagoda. The temple portion was lovely (if rather annoying, the locals would grab your shoes as you removed them to enter and demand a tip to return them and help you put them on). Several of our group refused to enter due to this situation and George stood outside and guarded my shoes!!!



The enormous cement Happy Buddha at the top of the pagoda is considered the largest in Nha Trang and was built in 1963. Apparently it was unharmed during the war. It was 150 steps up to the top



and some of our group elected to sit in the shade (it was blistering hot - 93 degrees and totally humid!!) and wait for the crazy folks that walked up!





The drive through the city was quite interesting. By the way, our guide said that Nha Trang was quite a small city, ONLY 400,000 people. And he was serious! Too funny! Wonder how Gilmer, TX - population 4000 would fit into his equation???? The thousands of motor bikes navigate around each other,

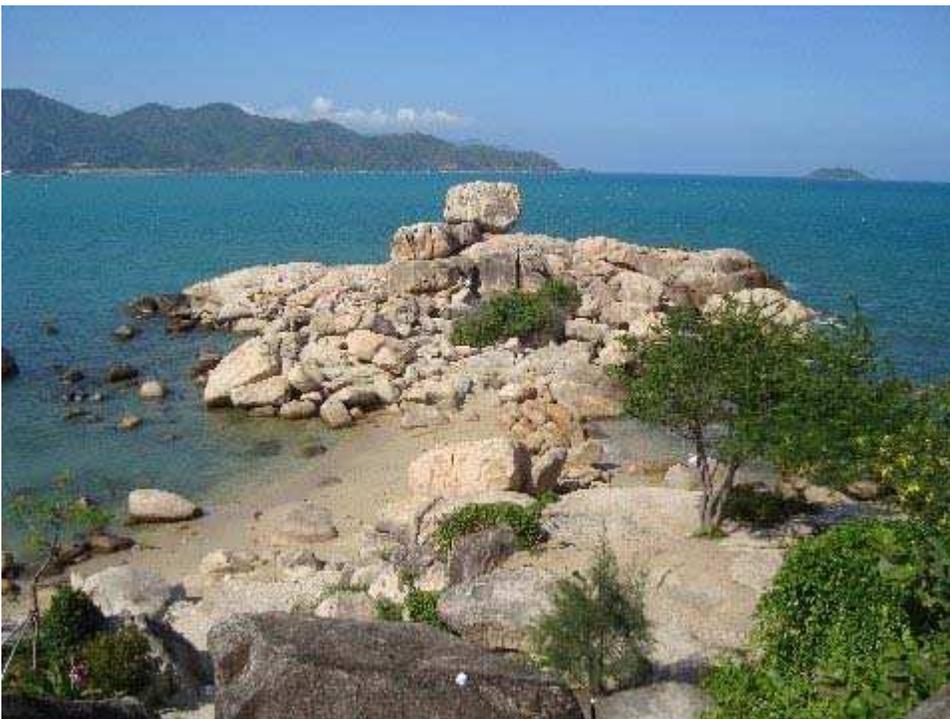


the busses, and the farmers carrying their wares



without the benefit of traffic rules or signal lights. Amazing! Didn't see a single accident, but foreigners are not allowed to drive here, thank goodness!!!

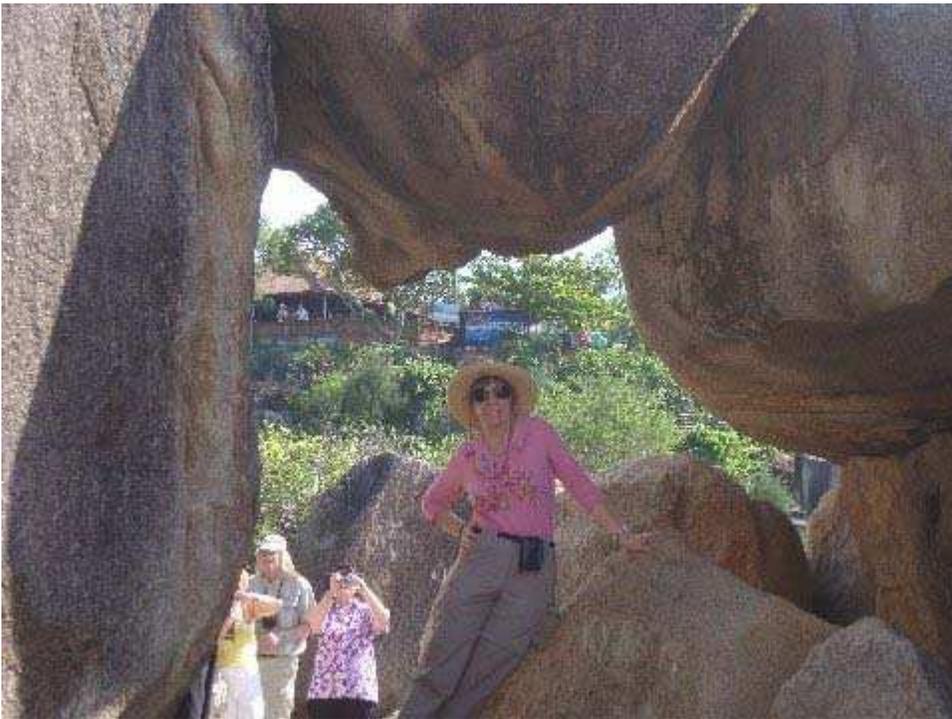
Anyway, on we went to a beautiful protected area where we walked out to look at the Husband Rock



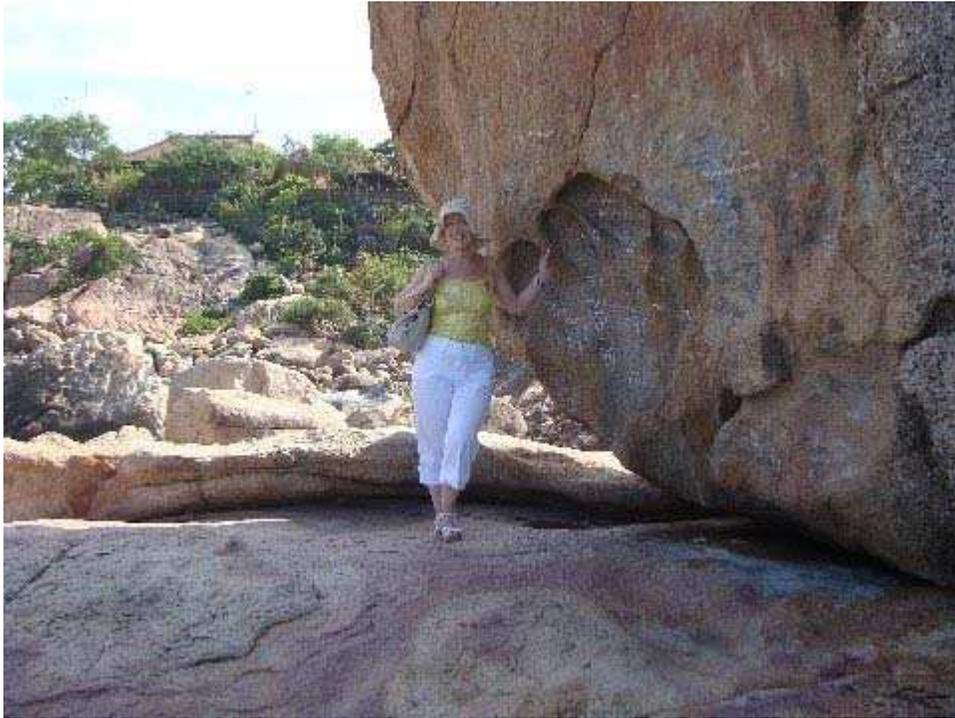
and Wife Rock.



There was a folk lore tale about the naming of the rocks, but didn't make a lot of sense to us. There was a formation they called Heaven's Gate



And another that they claimed had a huge hand print. After all that strenuous activity, we had to make a refreshment stop for more coconut milk and a show.



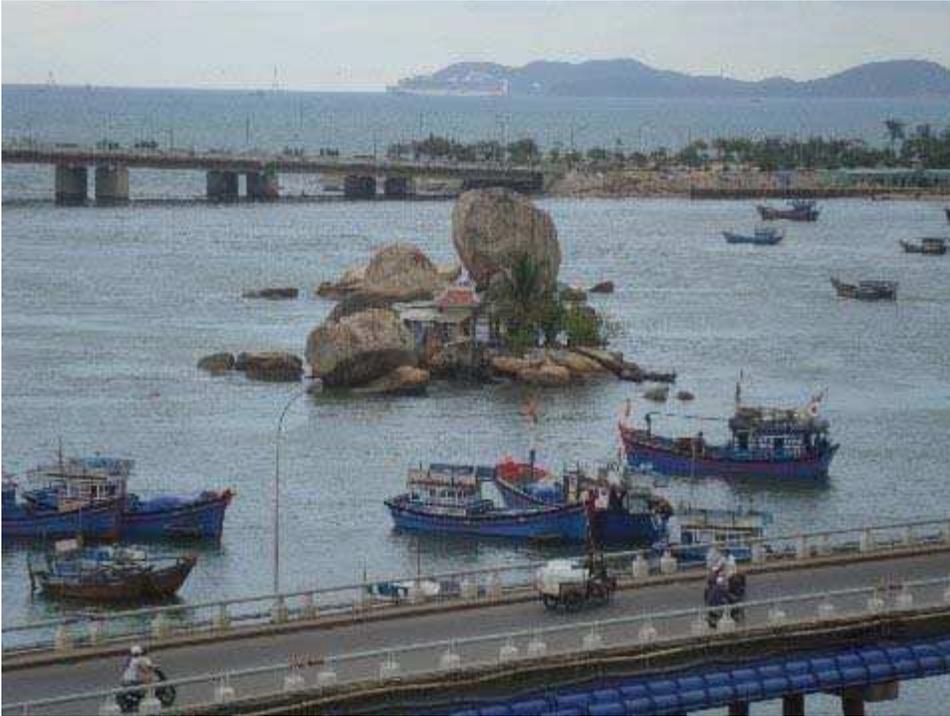


We went on to the Historical site of the Cham Towers, a Hindu temple that is 1000 years old. Tom & Marge said it looked much like the Ancient City in Thailand.





The view from the top was unbelievable. There is a whale temple on the rocks in the foreground and that is our beautiful Diamond Princess moored out in the bay in the distance.



The last stop of the day was another market. We only had 20 minutes to shop, so we made the most of it. I found some gorgeous bead bracelets and tried my hand at bargaining. She first asked \$8 per and I got her down to 4 for \$25. Not too bad! I was happy and she was happy! And George was happy that I only bought 4!!



It was a very satisfying and fun day! We returned back to the ship just in time to clean up and head to dinner! Didn't have time for Happy Hour! So very sad, but Freddy & Pat said they didn't miss it! Oh well, suppose it's good to give them one day off!!

The evening entertainment was the best show yet. A singing/dancing musical called Pianoman. It was a medley of tunes from Barry Manilow, Liberace, Elton John, some others. Daz decided she was tired of sleeping through the shows, so she skipped out on us. She'll have to catch it again later - on this ship they repeat some of the shows. Never ran into that before.

Tuesday was another day at sea. Very slight wind, a bit cooler (we're heading north) and smooth seas. Next stop is Hong

Kong!!!!

Wish you were all here!!

Lots of love

## *George & Pamela*

Subj: **Travelogue #5 - Hong Kong!!!**

Date: 4/23/2010

Hello Everyone!

Time is flying past us! Can't believe we only have 7 more nights left on the Diamond Princess!! Of course we still have our 10 day Chinese Land Tour ahead of us!



Of course we enjoyed another Happy Hour at our favorite Suite on our day at Sea!

We spent 2 days and 1 lovely night in Hong Kong's Victoria Harbor! The first day we docked at the HIT Cargo Pier and were shuttled via bus out of the port area and onto our tour locations. We were met at the dock by a Chinese dance troupe!



We gathered in the Princess Theater and waited to disembark on our 1st Day's excursion to Lantau Island, This island is twice the size of Hong Kong Island, but very sparsely populated. It is mostly designated as Country Park (Hong Kong's equivalent of our Natural Park's -see I try to visit these park's World Wide!!). Once on the road, we crossed over Victoria Harbor on one of the many huge bridges that seem to be a real symbol of Hong Kong.





There was a very low cloud cover that we kept hoping would burn off, but it plagued us most of the day. Glad we chose not to do Victoria's peak as we heard later that it was totally in the clouds!

Our first stop on Lantau Island was Cheung Sha Beach. It is a favorite local hangout on the weekends, the South China Sea is very warm for swimming and the sandy beach is kept clean & in good condition for the public. Life Guards are on duty almost 24 hours. Of course today it was almost totally empty since it was mid week and overcast.





The next stop was extremely interesting, if rather smelly! The Tai O Fishing Village is kept fairly true to historic accuracy (although most of the ancient homes on stilts have electricity, TV's and even satellite hook up - everything except sewer hookups according to our guide!! He said high tide took care of that - ICK!!).





Most of the residents make their livelihood by fishing. The Markets mostly sell dried fish which are taken home and re hydrated before being cooked.



Check out the dried Shark!! There were some live fish also.



And also just a mix of interesting things for sell!!



There was a Buddhists temple of course and we learned here that as a sign of respect, you always step over the threshold without touching and men step over with the left foot and women must step over with the right foot. Interesting, huh? Didn't explain why, but we all followed the rules, sometimes making a quick doublestep to change feet at the last minute!!



We moved on to the so called "Big Buddha." Currently he is the largest outdoor Buddha in the world, but according to our guide, he will loose that status when India completes construction of one that will be about 3 times his size! Unfortunately he was mostly in the clouds and they didn't allow pictures inside of him, but we at least got a few glimpses of him and the statues around his base.





Most visitors to the Buddha had to climb up 256 steps, but our bus carried us right on up to the top and then back down also!!



After viewing the Buddha up close and personal, we went down to the Po Lin Monastery at his base for a fantastic Vegan lunch. We had a table to ourselves and were later "complimented" on how well we cleaned the plates served to us family style!



After enjoying our lunch, we wandered the grounds and the temples, watching the worshippers light their huge bundles of incense and catching a few other glimpses of the Buddha.







Here's a post card picture of the Buddha to give you an idea of what we might have seen!



Back on board ship, we got to celebrate Marge's birthday at dinner!!! Joe was decorating Marge for the celebration!



When dark fell, our ship transferred to a mooring spot out in the Harbor and gave us a fantastic view of the gorgeous Hong Kong Skyline in Motion!!









Well, I apologize from making this sooooooo big. Will do a shorter one for our second day. Miss & Love you all!!!

## *George & Pamela*

Subj: **Travelogue #6 Hong Kong Day 2** Date: 4/23/2010  
Hi Everyone,

Will make this one pretty short! Our group split up for the day. George & I did a fabulous 6 mile hike along Dragonback Ridge in Shek O Country Park in the Southeast corner of Hong Kong Island. The others did a wonderful and comprehensive tour of Hong Kong Island, but I do not have any of their pictures yet.

Our hike was rather steep at first and luckily it was again a bit fogged it, keeping the temperature down to a reasonable mid 70's. The humidity was higher than the temperature!!!















The first 5 miles was great. Unfortunately for the last mile, it literally poured buckets! We have never been this wet outside of a shower stall!!! Our shoes were squishing for not only the last of the hike and the wait for the bus, but all the way back across on the tender and into the ship!!! It was still warm, so no real harm and the entire group was really laughing about the situation, so just made it an incredible memorable adventure!!! No pictures of our drowned rat society, had to put the camera in a plastic bag!! No one fell on the slippery walk down the hill through the river that the trail turned into!! All in all, it was really fun and very interesting!!

Well, time to say bye and get ready for Happy Hour in our cabin tonight because the Patterson's and Chism's get to join the Captain's Cocktail hour tonight!!

Lots of love and miss you all!!!

*George & Pamela*

Subj: **Travelogue #7 from Keelung, Taiwan!**

Date: 4/26/2010

Hi Guys,

Things are continuing at a super fast pace!! We had our Happy Hour sans Chism's & Patterson's (they were playing VIP with the Captain, while we slumped in our balcony room!!).



Finally had a little rough ocean, but still not bad enough that it caused us to miss any dancing! The guitarist in this band (called Phoenix Rising) is the son of Joe & Clarice's next door neighbors. George & I know and have square danced with his parents for many years. Small world, huh?



Taiwan is a beautiful green island (read that to mean that it RAINS A LOT!!). Unfortunately it was overcast, but fortunately it never rained on us at all. We elected to take a short drive out of the port city Keelung to a beautiful little mountain village called Chiufen.



Enroute we passed several of these interesting sites. Explanation was that they are Cemeteries! Sorry the picture is a bit blurred, but wanted to include it anyway, because it was so very interesting. Apparently the little houses are built for the deceased and their bones are kept there for 7 years before they are cremated and then the family can either place someone else there or resell the property!



Chiufen used to be a Gold Mining town. Didn't seem much like any of the Gold Mining Towns we are familiar with in the US!! Now it is a gorgeous little shopping market that mostly caters to local tourists rather than the foreigners.

First stop (OF COURSE) was a Taoist Temple,







The vase of sticks in this picture is used to tell their fortunes. The person prays for whatever they are wishing to have, then draws a stick out of the vase. The stick has a number on it which corresponds to a certain parable. Then the individual takes 2 stones and drops them on the ground until the stones land the same way 3 times in a row. The stones are rounded on one side and flat on the other. Depending on the way they land, their request has either been ignored, given a yes response or a no response and the parable that they are referred to can be interpreted from that response. The individual can either do their own interpretation or pay a priest to give them an interpretation. Interesting!

Anyway, then we moved on to something more important to us all, a bit of tea, coffee, & snack at a beautiful Tea Cafe on the hillside. They gave us some delightful shortbread style cookies and tea or coffee (actually we all had both!



and then shopping!! What a delightful place to shop! First off, the prices were fantastic. Most things were only a couple of dollars (we bought a beautiful 2' teak shoehorn decorated with abalone for \$5! Also, the shopkeepers were not pushy! They would just let you wander and look all on your own! Also, they had lots of food samples out that they encouraged you to try. We were mostly afraid to try things (except for Joel!) unless the guide gave us a description of what it was before hand. There were some fabulous pastries and rice cakes, but there were also lots of seaweed and dried fish items (don't you just know I was anxious to try them!!!). Everything was very very clean. Our guide said the prices were so reasonable because it was mostly for the local folks! Saw lots and lots of stuff that reminded us of how many things we see that are marked "made in Taiwan!!!!!"







After getting back to the ship, we dropped off all our purchases, grabbed some lunch and then took back off to walk around the port town of Keelung. This was the only stop where we could actually walk off the ship and wander around..



There was a market to look through and check out these strange vegetables!!! And are these chicken feet???







Do you see the Starbucks in the background????

Back at the ship, there was an adorable group of young children at our ship playing drums for us. Their parents were all there snapping pictures of them too. Made us feel appreciated!!





We left Taiwan thinking what a wonderful island it is!

Lots of love,

## *George & Pamela*

Subj: **Travelogue #7 from Okinawa!**

Date: 4/26/2010

Well Hello Everyone!!

We're starting to realize that our cruise is coming to an end!! Only one more port stop before the end!!! Sure has been awesome!!

Our Japanese stop was quite nice and different! First off the weather was absolutely perfect! Lots of sun and in the mid 70's!





Our tour took us to a Fabric dyeing factory. We even got to try our hand at dyeing too! Fabric dyeing that is! The Japanese have been making fabric and dyeing it for hundreds of years and they showed us how they weave the fabric, make stencils to form the patterns and hand color the designs. It was a lot of fun! Will be interesting to see the final products we all brought home after they have been washed and pressed!!







After making our masterpieces, there was a bit of time to shop (things were extremely expensive here, so we didn't buy much!!) while we waited for them to touch up our efforts and package them up for us!!



Then it was on to the Shurijo Castle which is used by the King for all his political meetings. Although the castle was a bit boring for us all, the weather was so lovely, we really enjoyed wandering the grounds and enjoying the sunshine!







They did a little dancing for us and we also toured the inside of the castle to see of the extravagant furniture and also saw some examples of their ceremonies.







Well, next stop is Shanghai! One of the biggest cities in China (or the world for that matter!!!).

Miss you all and wish you were here!!!!

Lots of love,

*George & Pamela*

Subj: **Travelogue #9 - Shanghai** Date: 4/28/2010  
Hi Everybody!

Sorry, I lost a number - got in a hurry and sent our 2 number 7's!! Oh well! I'm sure you figured it out! Can't believe we've almost finished up our cruise! Actually it's a good thing, I think we've all gained a little weight and our fun meter is pegging! Get to finish up the cruise with 2 days at sea. Give us a chance to rest up (this touristy stuff is really hard work!!!) and get packed for our 10 day land tour!

Joe & Clarice took a Cruise Critic tour - haven't had a chance to hear about it yet! Have to check out their pictures some other time!!!

Anyway, Shanghai was incredibly interesting. Huge city, officially it's 11 million, but by all recent survey's, it is closer to 20 million people! Wow!! Very westernized. And very very clean. Toilets were very clean, but we have had to use several of the notorious Asian "bomb sites." Made use practice using our leg muscles and learn to hold onto bottles, cameras, & sunglasses! Certainly don't want to drop anything! One even had an automatic flush. Mine worked well, but Marge's flushed the entire floor!!

Our ship was invited to dock at a brand new port. We assumed it had been finished up in preparation for the World Expo to open in Shanghai on May 1st. It was really cool! We were met at the dock with huge fanfare: 2 bands, dancing troupes, and a huge menagerie of folks that gave us all gold pins with the date, the ship's name and some other writing that we can't make out without a magnifying glass.



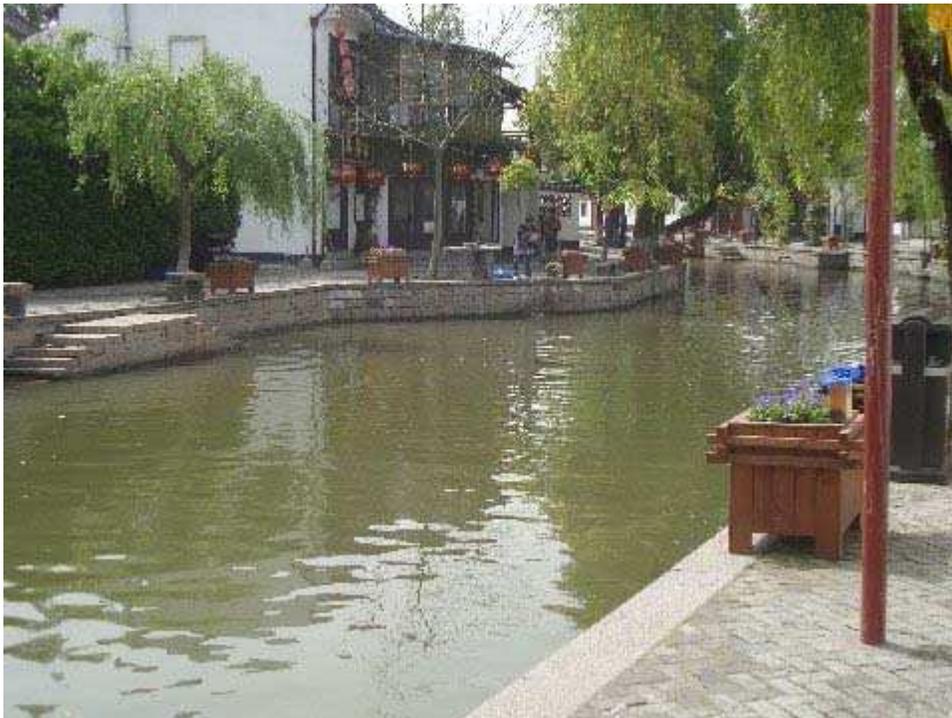




Our bus took off across the city. We discovered quickly that the rules of the road are dominated by the premise of you who's bigger goes first! Luckily our bus was large (not the largest, we had a humongous truck turn right in front of us (we actually had to back up to let it complete it's turn!!) that must have been 100' and still had car ramps hanging off the back of it!!!) Made for a most interesting drive!!!



We continued out into the South China countryside to the ancient Canal town of Zhujiaijiao. Sometimes called the Venice of China. It was incredibly lovely - the flowers had just started blooming after a rather cool wet spring, but we enjoyed a fabulous sunny day in the low 70's!!



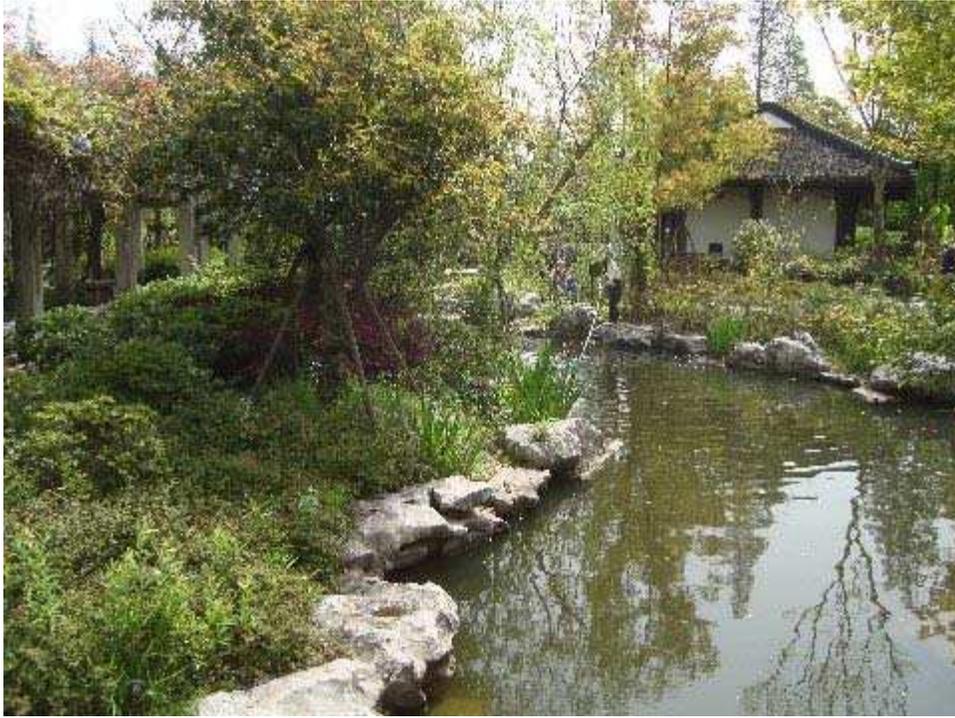
Our first stop was to tour a huge home with multiple buildings and garden that was built in the early 1900's by a Salt Magistrate. It was beautiful. There were hydrangeas, wisterias, Japanese Maples and numerous flowers we didn't know the names of. Definitely built with "fung shua" in mind!













We moved on to walk through yet another market (our guide wouldn't stop for us to make any purchases - she said "they don't sell anything that's real except for the food!!" So even though they all tried to sell us pearls, turtles (real live ones!!!) silk kimono's, Rolex watches (yep got down to 2 for \$5 American!!!) & handmade embroidery "for cheapest price!!", we sped through taking only pictures!! She taught us the phrase "bouyyeh" that means "no thanks, I don't want any!!!"











Many of them were eating really strange things that the guide described as a local delicacy wrapped in bamboo leaves. None of us tried it.





The town is known for its 36 stone bridges, many built back in the days of the Ming Dynasty.



We also toured a Pharmacy (herbal medicines still prescribed and used today) and the oldest Post Office where they had pictures of their own version of the Pony Express -is that where we got the idea???

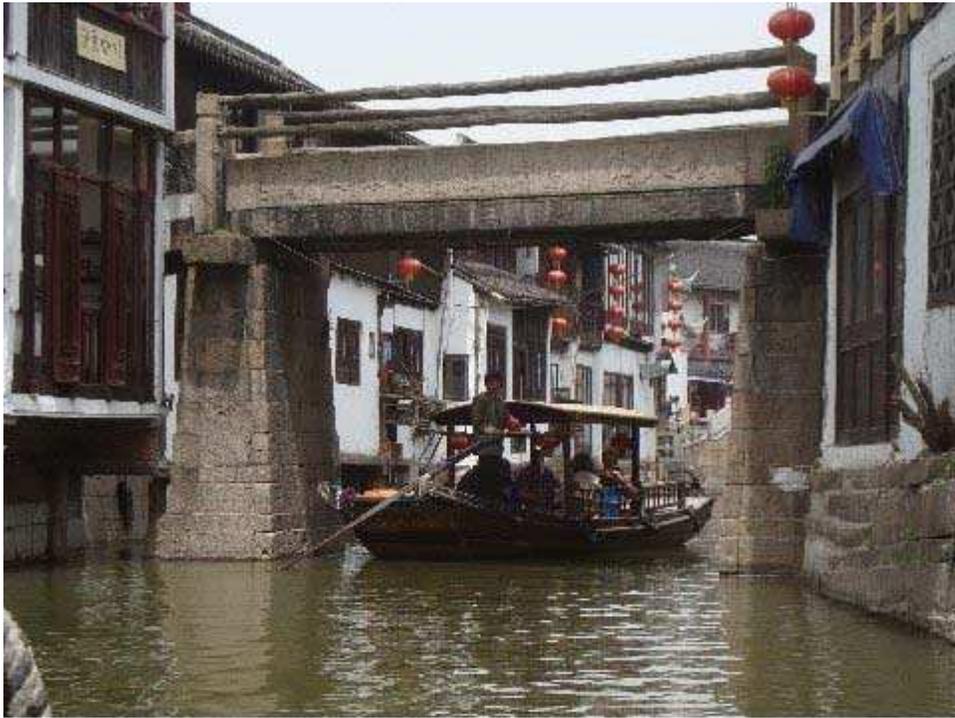






We took a boat ride along the canal. We were rowed along by a contraption that reminded me of a Gondola, but our guy wouldn't sing Ole Sole Mio! We tried to encourage him though!!







We moved on to lunch in a Silk Factory. Food gave us a taste of what's to come in the next 10 days. This was served "family style" and was supposedly a traditional Shanghai meal. We ate quite a few things that we have no idea what it was, even after swallowing!!



After "eating," we moved into the Factory to a explanation of how the silk worm produces the silk and then how it's turned into silk threads that are woven into cloth for clothes and pulled into the filling for blankets.







Rather than shop, we retired to the cafe with Fredda & Pat to sample Chinese refreshment!



Back on board the ship, we had a standard fabulous dinner and then were treated to a show by the famous Shanghai acrobats! This was the young ones and they were awesome! When we return at the end of our land tour, we should see the adult professionals!



The next time you hear from us will be on the mainland of China - hopefully we'll have time in Beijing!!

Lots of love & wish you were here!!!

## *George & Pamela*

Subj: **Travelogue #10 -Beijing 1st & 2nd Day!**

Date: 5/11/2010

Hi Everyone,

Well, we are actually back to Texas now, but I couldn't stand not to finish the Travelogues!!! We were incredibly busy on the 10 day land tour and even though we did have internet off & on, there was just no time to put anything together to send out. Hopefully you don't mind that I'm doing it after the fact!!! The land tour was totally awesome!!! Sooooo....I'll try to keep this down to just 4 final episodes -the 4 major stops: Beijing, Xi'an, Guilin, & Shanghai.

We got off the boat on Friday morning, 30 Apr 2010 and our first guide was waiting for us in the parking lot. The drive to our hotel was a couple of hours long and our guide (American Name Julia) gave us an overview of things to come. She warned us that we were there for the Chinese Labor Day, which was the first we had known that our timing was rough as the Chinese would all have a 3 day weekend and all of China would probably be in Beijing to see the same sights that we were also hoping to see!!! Yipes!!!

Anyway, she delivered us to the Holiday Inn (it was absolutely gorgeous) and we had the rest of the day on our own. Hummmm!! What kind of trouble could we get into on our own?

First, several of us headed off to find wine. The helpful Bell boy had described a Supermarket only about a 15 minute walk away! Learned 2 things on this jaunt. First off -Chinese in Beijing have no

sense of time or distance and China has a Walmart!!!! The 15 minute walk was actually about 45 minutes each way!!! But we persevered and were rewarded by finding "WuMart" and guess what???. They actually gave us a wine tasting!!!



Made it back to the hotel and we again took our Happy Helpful Bell Boy's advice on a place for an evening meal! Don't have a picture of that -but it was fairly close to a disaster! Although the menu (it was at least 45 pages long!!!!) had pictures: "stomach of pig", "sea cucumber bellies", and other such delicacies were not to our liking!! We each finally chose something (George & I had spicy chicken hot pot and needed a fire extinguisher to get us through it!!!) and we gave up on trying to order rice or noodles or any other side dish! We decided we were apt to loose weight during our next 10 days!!

Sooooo, we split up, the others wanted to go shopping and George & I went looking for the Night Food Market and Pedestrian Mall (Wangfujing Street) that we had read about.



Wangfujing was really similar to walking in Times Square in New York, except the billboards were lite up in Chinese Characters!





The Night Food Market was just as crazy as we had been led to believe! Everything offered on a stick that you can imagine and a lot that you can't!! The scorpions were live until you chose them, then they were deep fried and apparently much enjoyed as the gorgeous young girl munching on them showed us! There were baby birds, bats, rats, many many things that we couldn't recognize and smells that you'd really rather not ever experience!! Nope, we didn't eat anything there!!!!

The next morning our tour started at 8:30am with a visit to the Winter Palace. We pretty much beat the crowd and enjoyed a lovely wander around and a Dragon boat ride across the shallow man made pond.







Our first lunch set the tone for what to expect for the rest of our meals in China. Decided that the Government probably had a set menu for Western tourist as lunch and most dinners included many of the same dishes: sweet & sour pork (pretty much recognizable), various chicken dishes (mostly not recognizable except they included the heads), a whole fish (head, tail, eyes, etc), egg plant, bok chow (a green that was either seaweed or spinach or something like that) green beans (delicious) and everything was served on a huge glass lazy susan in the center of the table. We pretty much got to be professionals with the use of the chop sticks (it was either that or starve!!!!) and we learned that the dishes must be pushed onto the center of the lazy susan or they would knock over our glasses as we spun it around!!! Ha Ha!!!



Anyway, then off to the Forbidden City (called that because the Emperor's and families were the only ones allowed inside)





and then on to Tian An Men Square. There was one small adventure added to this trip!! We should have been able to walk directly across to Tian An Men Square from the Forbidden City, however; for reasons that we were not privy to, they had closed the entrance from that side and we ended up walking in a huge crowd of about a half a million people about 2 miles around the outside to get to the square!!!!!! A small preview of what was to come the next day!!!!!!!





Actually by the time we made it to the square (about 5pm), many folks had given up and gone away, so it was not nearly as crowded as we expected, still since the square is so enormous, there were definitely more people than we've ever seen in one place!!! And we were probably the only white faces (or "big noses" as we were told we are called!!!!).

That night we got to experience the Chinese Opera!!!! Next time you see me, ask me for a sample of the songs -I think I'm pretty darn good if I say so myself!! We got to watch them make up to prepare for it too!





It was actually better than we had anticipated. The English subtitles let us in on the humorous story of a nun (?) looking for her boyfriend on the river and getting tricked by the boatman! Something must have been lost in the translation!

Dazarine and Barbara were especially impressed.



Actually the ending was really exciting. One soldier was attacked by all the others with those spears and managed to fight them all off by bouncing them back at the attackers. It was really amazing!!!



Well, I had good intentions, but this is already way too long, so will stop this one and do the next 2 days in Beijing in a separate email!

Hope it's not too boring! You can always hit the delete button!!!!

Lots of love,

*George & Pamela*

Subj: **Travelogue #11 Beijing, Days 3 & 4**

Date: 5/12/2010

Hi Guys,

The 3rd Day in Beijing was probably one of the major highlights of the trip for most of us! It was the 2nd day of the Chinese Labor Day and we were to drive out of town to visit both the Ming Tombs and the Great Wall. Unfortunately, about 5 million Chinese has the exact same idea!!

Our first stop was to the Jade Factory.



We were supposed to go directly to the Great Wall! OOPPPSS!! After about an hour stuck in traffic our bus driver decided that we'd be best off going to the Ming Tombs first. He found a short cut (did I say SHORT CUT???) through a very scenic construction area Soooo, we eventually made it to the Ming Tombs and strangely enough it was almost empty there. Never did figure that out -traffic jams were huge, but when we arrived at the parking lot, it was empty and so was the park!! That was okay, we enjoyed the beautiful flowers and the ice cream stand!!!









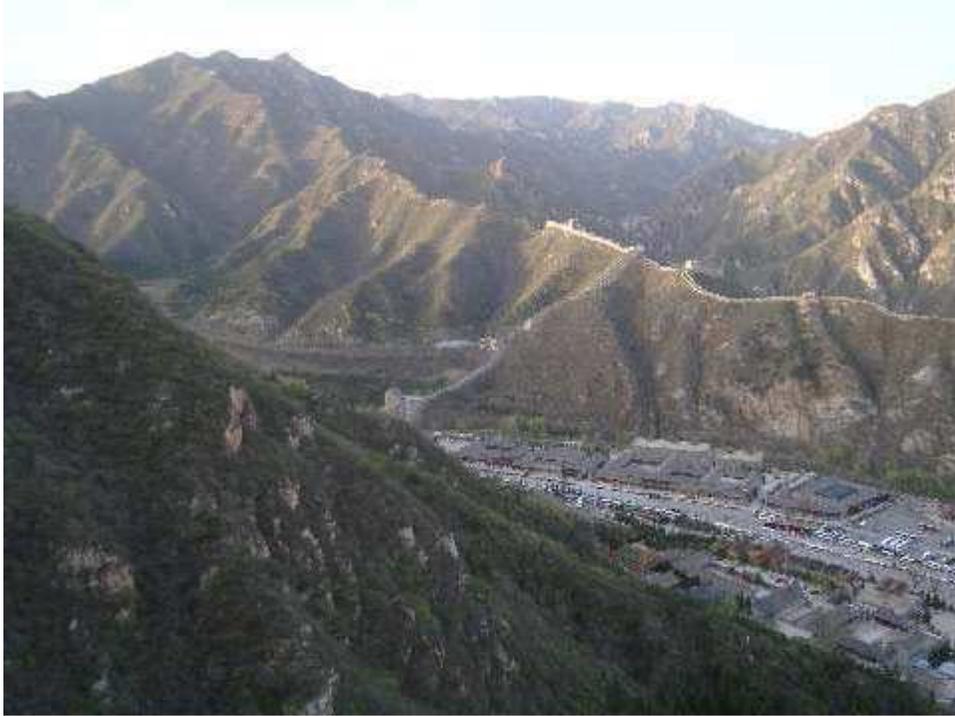
We went on to lunch at the Cloisonne Factory.

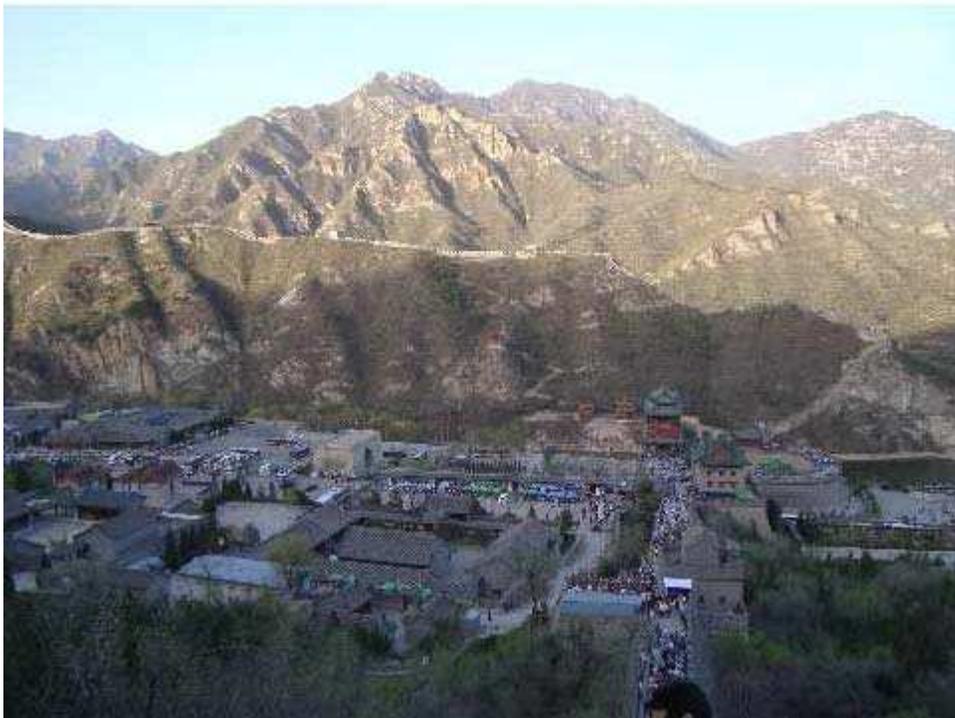


That was about the time we realized that unless we complained about it, there would be more shopping activities than Historical or Touristy stops!!! Also about the time we realized that Tom & Marge were buying up all of China! Can't wait to see their house with all the amazing purchases they made!!!! It was also when we started worrying that we wouldn't get to see the Great Wall!!!! Guide told us that all entrances were blocked and traffic on all routes was at a total standstill!!!! Panic!!! After about a half hour extra time after lunch, she finally said we were going to give it a try and that we were only a few miles from our destination. Remember when I said that we learned that Beijngites don't recognize time & distances? WELLLLLLLLLL, after an hour of total standstill on the bus, we hopped out and started walking.



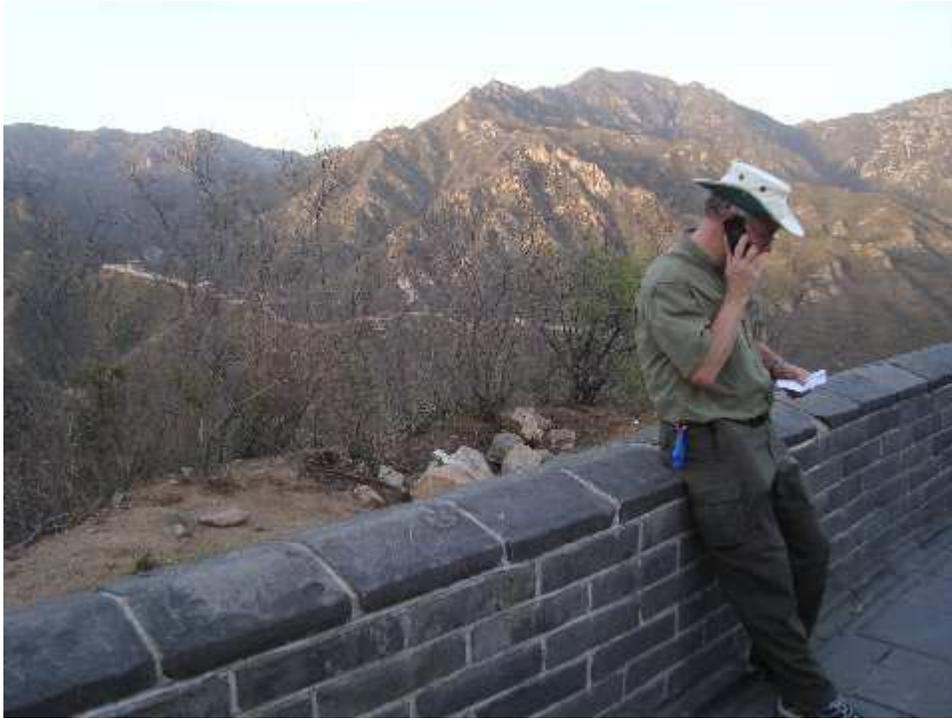
About 4 hours and 5 walking miles after leaving the Cloisonne Factory, we finally made it to the GREAT WALL!!!!!! It was 6pm and the gate is supposed to close at that time. Fortunately for us, the staff recognized the problems along the roads and they stayed open throughout the evening!!





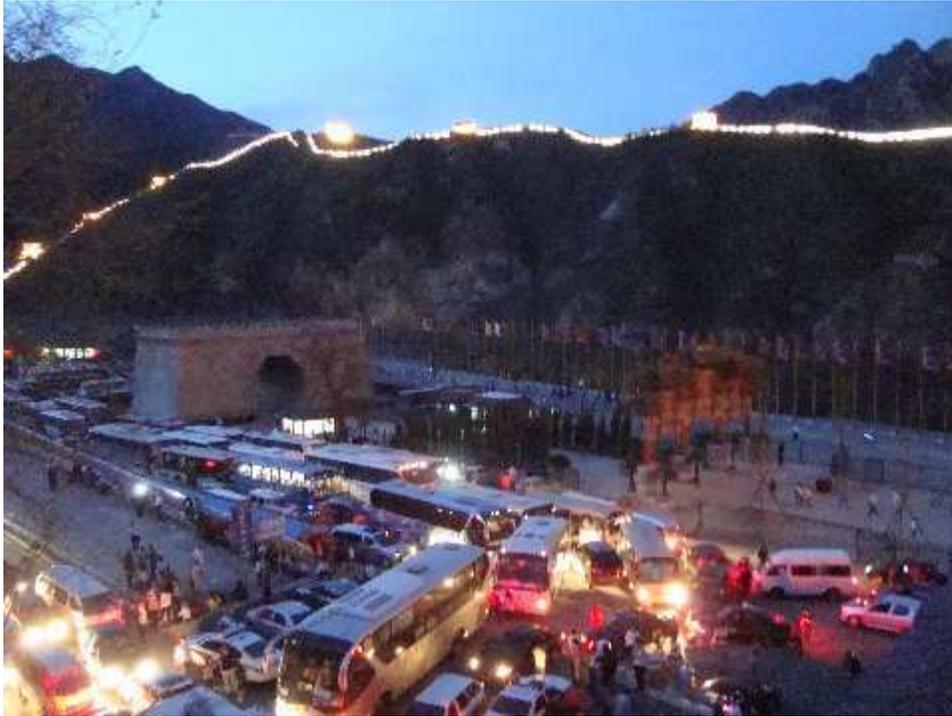


For me, this was the most exciting of all the stops. I will load many more of the pictures on my Shutterfly site. It was absolutely fabulous up on the wall. Everyone (except Dazarine & Freddy -they stayed on the bus) climbed to at least the 1st tower and George & I made it to between the 4th and 5th Towers!! We even called Stan & Grace (woke them up!!) from up on top!



We even got to see the wall at night. Our guide had never seen it at night and was amazed at all the lights!!





The bus was never able to make it up to the wall and we had to walk another 2 miles or more to get to it!!! Daz & Freddy had entertained themselves on the bus by people watching (and man did they have plenty of people to watch!!!!) and they did get close enough to see the wall even if they didn't get to walk on it (Freddy had been there before many years ago!!).

The bus had been waiting for us so that he could turn and get back on the highway to take us back to the city. At about 10pm, we pulled into the restaurant for our evening meal!!! After serving all the usual fair (and we were barely managing to stay awake!!!!), the served the Peking Duck!!! Our guide had carried us to her favorite restaurant because the one we were supposed to have had long since closed!!!





I had no idea what what Peking Duck consisted of, so it was fun for me to see that thin slices of duck were placed on a rice flour tortilla with zucchini & carrot, topped with soy sauce and rolled into a finger food fajita! Looked great! Then I tried rolling the rice paper with the chop sticks! Hummmmm!! Okay, it's late at night, fingers worked really well for the same outcome!! And then they brought out the second duck!! Come On!!!!!! We were snoring into our soy sauce!!!

Our last morning in Beijing was a fantastic tour of Shichahai Hutong on a Rickshaw!!!





We also got to visit a local family and play with their cats, mina birds, & turtles!!



The birds had such clear voices, we even learned a new phrase -Shilly Ma -literally means "Have you eaten?", but used as a greeting like "what's happening?" See we are avid students of knowledge!!!!

Quick stop at teh Pottery Factory (yep, trying to sell pots and a pre glimpse of the Terra Cotta Warriors!!!)

From there, we went straight to the airport and flew to Xi'an!!

More later!!!

Lots of love,

*George & Pamela*

Subj: **Travelogue #12 -Xi'an & the Terra-Cotta Warriors**  
Date: 5/13/2010

Hi Friends & Family!!

We're getting close to the end of the fabulous journey!!! We flew from Beijing to Xi'an (this city is on the news right now as the latest place that has had problems with attacks in the Chinese schools against the children!!). Our guide met us, checked us into the Xi'an City hotel (which by the way was the only hotel we had any problem with -IT IS AWFUL!!!! DO NOT STAY THERE!!! We can recite problems from dirty rooms to leaking toilets, showers, etc. Lobby & restaurant are beautiful -it's all about Showmanship!!). She gave us about 45 minutes to freshen up and on to see the Wild Goose Pagoda, a very large Buddhist Temple Complex. It was a beautiful & relaxing area and we were also treated to a historical description of Chinese Calligraphy.







After a short stop for a Tea Ceremony (another of the endless sales pitches!!), we went to the theatre for our Dumpling Banquet and Tang Dynasty Show! The theatre was absolutely gorgeous!







The Dumpling Banquet was delicious! There were 16 different kinds of Dumplings (a type of Pot sticker that are hand made there!!!). We were all totally stuffed and quite content when we went into the auditorium for our show!





The show was fabulous -exciting music and extravagant stage presentations and the dancing was fantastic!! Some of our group are just really hard to please!! Ha Ha!!



Anyway, the next morning we started bright and early! We had another sales stop -but this time, we were able to amuse ourselves before listening to the presentation about how Terra-cotta is used to form the famous warriors and then wandering through the enormous sales showroom!









Still had more to see before getting to the Warriors. The Huaqing Hot Springs is both a functioning resort and a historical stop. Many Dynasties have taken advantage of this beautiful setting with the natural Hot Springs for medicinal uses!





After lunch, we finally made it to the main high light of Xi'an -The massive museum of the Terra-cotta Warriors! We learned that there were 3 main pits found. The 1st Pit is the site of the original find -discovered by a farmer who was digging a well (marked by the #1 in the picture below). Although the burial tomb of the Emperor was a known location, there is no historical description concerning the thousands of warriors, chariots, weapons, etc. It's really an awe inspiring sight in the 1st Pit!!!!







Each of the thousands of warriors were hand carved (no molds were used) and each have different facial characteristics and clothing. It's really mind blowing to think of all the work that was done to put this collection together.









Some of the horses, chariots, & other special artifacts are held in a separate building and restored with the gold decorations viewable.



The huge puppets used during the Olympics were also on display in one of the museum buildings.



Our final stop of the day was to the Xi'an City Wall. We tried to rent bicycles to ride around it, but they were closing and we'd not have enough time to make the entire circuit, so we just walked along the top a ways instead. The view from the top was nothing really exciting and we wished we had had the time to walk around the outside of the wall, which turns out to be a huge well cared for City park surrounding the entire old city area.





After dinner in the hotel, one of the high lights of the entire trip was a visit to get a "foot" massage! Turned out to be full body massage instead and the 8 (including Jenna, our guide) of us had a wonderful time! I never realized that my legs could fold backwards enough for my ankles to touch the back of my neck!!! Pat was the only male that decided to participate and his "harem" was a bit out of control!!





Thought I could finish with Xi'an, but this has already gotten way too long, so will finish it up in the next one!! Lots of love,

*George & Pamela*

Subj: **Travelogue #13 -Xi'an & Flight to Guilin**  
Date: 5/15/2010

Hello Once again!! The last few days in China are proving to be the most difficult to put together. The experiences just kept getting more and more amazing!!!

We had most of the day in Xi'an before flying on to Guilin. And the guide kept us running all the way to the airport!! First stop was the Drum Tower -built during the Ming Dynasty (1380ad) it has been renovated many times over the years, but basically it was used as a means of communicating. Now it's a museum on their National Historic Register.



We were lucky enough to be there during a performance of drum playing.



We could see all around the city from the top. This is the Bell Tower. The guide said that folks came to this public park area very early in the mornings and practiced Tai Chi and Ballroom dancing!



The Great Mosque is still used by the small Muslim community (about 50,000 of the 7.5 million population). One of the monks approached our guide to ask if any of us were Muslim, he wanted to invite them to participate in the noon ceremony. It is quite a large place, very beautiful and well maintained.



The Muslim market was busy and had some really unusual foods (surprise surprise) and more of the usual souvenir fare we were used to.



The had these huge vats of walnuts. We never bought any, but another western tourist offered us some. Apparently the walnuts are roasted in the vats in salt. Looked yummy!! Our guide gave us some ginger candy that we all sampled! Really hot & spicy, just a crystallized sugar basically.



Have no idea what the significance of all the cute little color statues, but we took advantage of them for a fun group picture!!



After lunch we stopped at the Hanyangling Museum. It is the mausoleum of an emperor and empress of the Han Dynasty and it's built over the pits of "little" terra cotta soldiers. I had never heard of this area. Never seen anything on National Geographic or any of the History channels about it. The guide suggested it as a place to stop enroute to the airport and it was very interesting. Apparently the pits were just discovered in the 80's and the museum was opened in 2006. We had to wear booties to wander through the huge building and the floors were mostly see through glass to allow you to look down into the pits. There were thousands of the little naked male and female soldiers. There were some colorful reproductions to give you an idea of how they imagine they were when they were buried in the tombs.







Our guide dropped us off at the airport and we had a little bit of excitement after she took off. We made it through security easily, but when we got to our gate, another flight was listed on the marquee and was just starting to board. We found the update board and it listed our flight at another gate. We rushed to that gate to find that no airline attendants were there. We went ahead and stood in front of the gates entrance and got really nervous when our boarding time came & went. There were no announcements or activity, so we just kept standing around and keeping our fingers crossed! Finally someone showed up about an hour later and we were loaded onto a bus and taken out to our aircraft!! There was never any explanaton for what had happened!! Not speaking the language is a bit daunting sometimes!!!

Our flight to Guilin was easy enough and although it had been raining when we landed, it quit by the time we got our luggage (which by the way was incredibly quick!!! We never made it to the luggage carousels before our bags were on them!!) and our guide met us and took us to our hotel without any problems. Our first glimpse of Guilin was impressive, colored lights everywhere!! Shadowy mountain views all around us!!



We paid a little extra for rooms with a view and it was well worth it! The views were awesome!!



The guys quickly headed out to find wine and we made Tom & Marge's gorgeous corner room our Happy Hour area! Realized we had an internet connection that worked with Skype and made some calls!

Life is good!!

Enough for now!!

## *George & Pamela*

Subj: **Travelogue #14 Guilin & the Li Jiang River**

Date: 5/15/2010

Hello Everyone! This is probably the hardest Travelogue to do, mostly because this area was soooooo incredibly beautiful! Thank you Thank you to Nancy Jarkowski for suggesting this stop! I took 600 pictures on the 3 hour river cruise! No, don't worry I won't subject you to them all, I went through and picked out my 76 favorites!!! And that's still too many to share! I am going to post them on Shutterfly and Webshots.







At first we were very disappointed because it was misty during the morning. It actually rained pretty hard for about 15 minutes in the middle of the cruise. Our guide had pulled some strings and gotten us the top room of the ship which gave us a private area with practically our own viewing platform. There were probably 100 seats on the main deck below. It was in the low 80's, so it was not uncomfortable to stand out in the mist. Our guide kept saying that it was best to see the river in the mist. We figured she was just trying to make us feel better! But actually the mist seemed to make the river look very mystical. After the hard rain, it cleared up pretty well and we were able to view the most scenic portion of the river in a very nice light.





This was called the Painted Hill of the 9 Horses and the guide tried to help us see the shapes of all the horses. Took a bit of imagination!







They served us lunch (of a sort) on the cruise. Luckily it was served during the rainy part. The food was some of the strangest we encountered during the whole 10 day land tour. Most was totally unrecognizable as any type of meat or vegetable that we are familiar with. The seaweed soup was cold and very strange. Then after the dishes were removed, Tom happened to find the staff washing up at the back of the ship -USING RIVER WATER!!!! Yipes!! Then he found them scrubbing the cooking utensils in the toilet sinks! Oh well! We survived and actually none of us ever experienced any type of intestinal problems!!!



This is called the Five Fingers Hill and it is pictured on the 20 Yuan bill. The most famous scene on the Li River.





Something about the beautiful scenery must have made us all feel sweet & loving!!





The cruise ended in Yangshuo County, a very busy little city! The main street of Yangshou is called Western Street and sold almost everything. Lots of influence from Tibet.









On the way back to our hotel, we made another "shopping" stop. This one to an Art Museum which must have really been closed for the day, because there was no one else around and the bus driver had to argue with the gate guard to get us in! It was a really interesting stop because they actually brought out a student who drew a picture just for us. He was amazing.



Back in Guilin, we had about an hour to freshen up, then off to dinner where we celebrated Dazarine's birthday! Not really the exact date, but decided it was close enough and besides it gave us an excuse for a wonderful cake! We were all in sugar withdrawal after all the sweets we had eaten on the cruise!!!



Our final tour of the day was an evening river cruise through the 3 lakes and canals of the city. This was absolutely magnificent!!







The most exciting part of this cruise was a demonstration of cormorant fishing. The fisherman trains his birds to dive for the fish and bring them back to him!! There is a ring around the bird's throat so it can't swallow the large fish!!!! He grabs the bird and ejects it from the bird's throat, then the bird does it again! Amazing! The birds are not tied or anything, they return to the fisherman on their own. Apparently they can swallow the smaller fish and only bring him the big ones. During the 15 minute demonstration, the birds brought him 5 or 6 fish.







Sorry this has been soooooo long. Truly a unbelievable day! Here's a few more shots of the beautiful Guilin city shoreline.







Lots of love,

*George & Pamela*

Subj: **Finish Guilin and on to Shanghai!!!! Travelogue #15!!!**

Date: 5/28/2010

Hi Dear Family & Friends!!

Had to get some real work done (wrote a dance and did the Mesa Brochure) and spent some time with Mom & Dad at the hospital, but wanted to finish the last couples of days in China for our trip! Made me feel incomplete to leave off in Guilin!!!

The last morning in Guilin was incredible! The area around Guilin is just beautiful! This day must have been to fulfill my love of National Parks, because we visited 3 of them!!!

First off, we headed to Seven Stars Scenic Area (China's answer to National Park). This stop was added to make up for the horrid hotel in Xian. They had given us a choice of visiting this park or everyone getting a foot massage!! Due to Nancy Jarkowski's prior knowledge of this beautiful park, we elected to take this option!!! And we're thrilled that we did!!



Besides the absolutely gorgeous trees & gardens, there were monkeys running around one area (totally wild & just loose). We didn't get too close, but enjoyed getting pictures and watching the interaction with some of the folks who weren't leery of them!!



We took time for yet another group picture!!



According to the guide (and Nancy), folks met here to practice singing. Mostly opera, although we came upon a group that were singing folk songs and one gentleman was accompanying them on his leaf. Yep, LEAF! Hadn't seen anyone do that in years, I remember someone trying to show me how to do that (my grandpa, maybe???) before I was in school.



This is the most well known of the photo ops in the park. Called Camel Mountain (wonder why??), the guide said that Bill Clinton had had his picture taken here (I will not make any political comments at this point).



The next stop was Fubo Hill NP. It has several scenic spots and George & I climbed the hill for gorgeous views of the surrounding mountains and city.



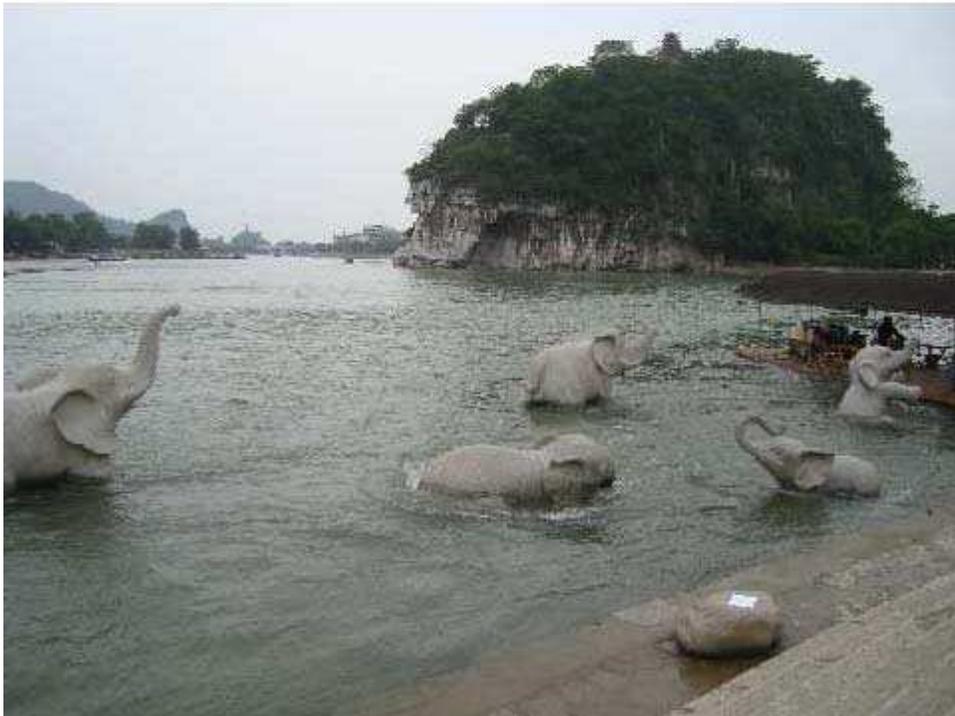


1000 Buddha cave had hundreds of carved Buddhas on the walls.



Then on to Elephant Trunk Hill for relaxing play time and more incredible scenery. As you can see, the rains had gone away and it was a beautiful morning.







After lunch at the hotel and packing up our luggage, we moved on to Reed Flute Cave. Although this was a beautiful cave, George & I felt like it was more a Disney exhibition. It was beautiful though.





We moved on to the airport. Actually ate dinner at the airport. Once again we had a flight delay (after the guide was long gone), so we spent several hours waiting at the airport. Noticed this chair that we got a kick out of the sign!!



Guess George was okay to sit there after all!!!

Anyway, once the flight took off, it was fine and we made it to Shanghai with no problem. Our guide was there to meet us and took us by the Famous "Bund Street area" on the way to our hotel. Unfortunately since it was so late, they didn't stop and most of our pictures were blurry!!



Bottom line was that as all the Chinese cities have been, it was incredibly covered in lights and decorations. Even though it was about 11pm, there were people everywhere. Wish we could have stopped and walked the area! We checked into our last Chinese hotel and it was a good one! The guys were able to find wine and we had a very very late Happy Hour!!! Even made some Skype calls!!!

Sooo, one more Travelogue and that will be it for our Asian Adventure!!!

Love ya,

*George & Pamela*

Subj: **The Grand Finalee!! Final day in China!! Travelogue #16**  
Date: 5/28/2010

Hi Everyone,

Just couldn't stand not finishing off the trip!! Can already feel the specifics getting hazy! Thank goodness for the thousands of pictures I took and everyone else took and shared!!! If you get a chance to visit Asia and especially in China, don't hesitate, although I would certainly recommend going with a group. For one thing, it was much more fun to share the day's experiences, it also felt safer and believe me, there are not a lot of Big Nose Westerners (Hellos for short) in that big country and the guide took care of everything!!!

Sooooo, here goes for the last day and a half!

We were up fairly early and first stop was the new opened (especially for the Expo that opened on May 1st) Shanghai Museum. It was gorgeous and we did not even begin to scratch the surface of what it held. It was 4 stories. We went up to the top and ran through the Jade Gallery, Minority Gallery, Furniture Gallery and skipped the Coin Gallery.



藏族面具  
Tibetan masks





We ran downstairs









We had a quick lunch -might I say, we were very very tired of the round tables with the huge glass lazy susans and the regular menu of Chinese food!!!!!!!!!!



And then on to what was for me one of the most exciting highlights! This was not included in the booked tour, but I had read about visiting the Financial Building to go up to the highest Observatory in the world and had my fingers crossed that we would have a relatively clear day to do it. We were lucky enough to get to do that and it was incredible!!!! It was set up like a Sci-Fi stage inside and the elevator ride was even impressive. Here's the link if you want to read more about it.















上海环球金融中心观光厅  
Shanghai World Financial Center Observatory

# 世界最高观光厅

The World's Highest Observatory

您所在的高度为 **474m**

• 吉尼斯世界纪录认证 **477.96m**

2009年上海环球金融中心观光厅荣获吉尼斯世界纪录“最高观光厅”称号。

• 世界高楼协会认证

2009年6月1日，上海环球金融中心通过世界高楼协会认证，在“最高使用楼层高度”和“最高层楼高度”两项认证中获得“世界第一”的称号。

• GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™  
CERTIFICATE

© Guinness World Records. World Financial Center Observatory is the World's Highest Observatory. Book 2008.

• CTBUH CERTIFICATE

© CTBUH. On June 1st 2009, CTBUH awarded the Shanghai World Financial Center the title World's Tallest Building in the category of "Highest Occupied Floor" and the title of "Tallest".







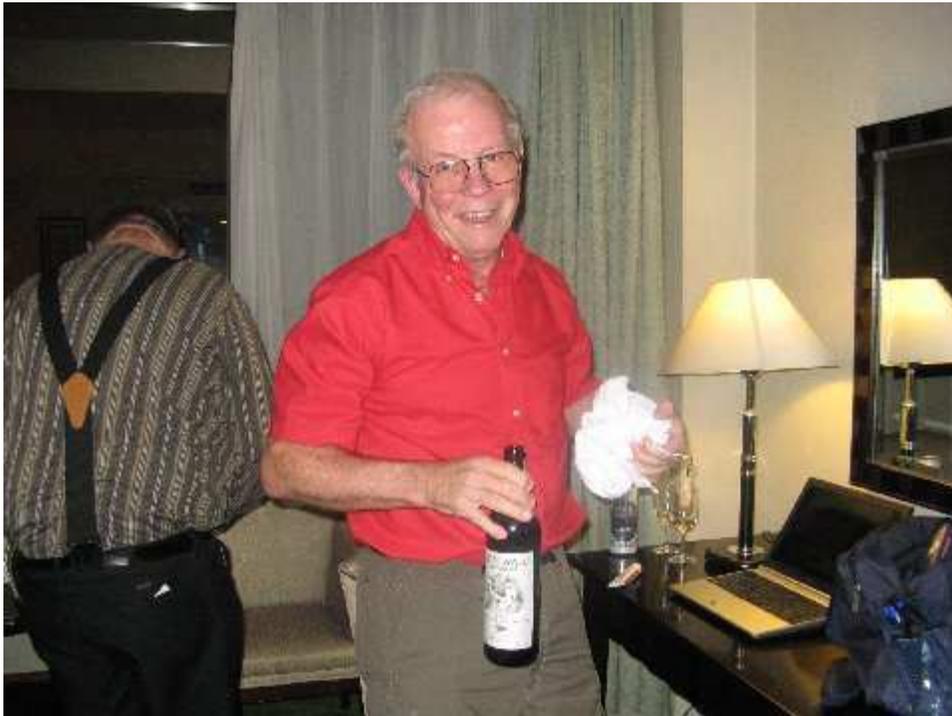
After that excitement, we visited a French Shopping area, had a Star Buck's coffee and then went on to dinner before walking over to the Magnolia Theater for a presentation by the World Famous Shanghai Acrobats. And boy oh boy did they live up to their name!!! Everything from Gymnastics, dancing, and a totally unbelievable motorcycle act inside a steel ball. Amazing and a perfect way to draw our trip to a close!!!





EXCEPT WAIT!!! We weren't done!! Our last Happy Hour! And guess what?? The cork screw broke!! George & Tom had to battle it out to get our last bottle of Chinese Wine open!!!!





And Finally!!

To totally finish up the trip, we all decided to let the bus driver take our luggage to the airport while we all rode over on the Bullet!! The fastest passenger train in the World!!!! It was fantastic. Although we were a little disappointed because they never got the train totally up to speed, we still got to travel at 301 KM/H (about 187 MPH)!!!



George & I and Pat & Freddy were the first to leave and we had no time to loose! We checked in, got through security and our plane was boarding! Easy flight back to the good ole USA and burgers and fries and Tex-Mex and Olive Garden! Yummy!!!! Understand that the others were caught in a "groupie" charge for some Chinese star and were almost trampled as they made their way to their gates! There's always something!!!

Anyway, thanks for sharing our once in a lifetime trip and we hope you all have a fantastic summer!!! George & I will head to McCloud on Sunday and after several dance commitments in California, Washington, Oregon & Alaska, we'll fly to Sweden to teach for 2 weeks, then play for a month in the Baltic and Norway!!!!!! More later!!!

*Lots of love.*



# *George & Pamela*

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Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#) Check out our dance demo videos [www.DanceRounds.info](http://www.DanceRounds.info)  
Look at my pictures on Webshots <http://community.webshots.com/user/pshurd> Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on  
Shutterfly <http://pampicsts.shutterfly.com>