
PANAMA CANAL CRUISE

Judy and Jim made their first cruise through the Panama Canal from October 1, 2000 through October 28, 2000 transiting the canal twice, once westward and returning eastward on the Celebrity Cruises Mercury ocean liner. We made the round trip voyage as the Bridge Directors for the cruise. We directed a game each day we were at sea and also taught beginning bridge lessons on most sea days.

On the way, we stopped at Aruba where we rented a motor scooter and toured the western half of the island on our westward trip and we toured the eastern half of the island on our eastbound trip. The high point of the experience was a visit to Aruba's largest cave, part of its national park. We were provided with flashlights as part of our admission. The cave was dry and the ceiling was high enough to walk in most parts. After touring the lowest part of Aruba we also scaled the summit of Mount Judith, the highest point in Aruba, some 617 meters in elevation. From this pinnacle, one can see all of Aruba before you. The cruise ship was very visible on the south west corner of the island, the refinery on the south east and the sea on the north east. The northwest corner was not easily seen.

The pictures of the canal show our passage through this incredible engineering accomplishment.

Following the canal we stopped at Acapulco where we saw the breathtaking view of the harbor and bay and at Cabo San Lucas where emerald shopping was the primary tourist attraction. After viewing the wares available Judy selected the emerald ring of her choice. In San Diego we went shopping for a sport coat for me and downloaded the Internet messages.

On our return, we visited a blown glass factory in Cabo San Lucas and walked back along the beautiful beach. While at the factory, Judy took her turn at blowing glass.

We did not get off the ship in Acapulco except to buy a bottle of Kaluah and check in with the office. After passing through the canal, we stopped in Cartagena, Columbia where Judy picked up matching earrings, a broach and coffee gifts for our friends. Our guide did a good job in taking us to the places that would interest us.

I enjoyed my job on the ship of teaching and directing but I missed playing bridge. Judy was often busy playing with whomever did not have a partner. We had many students who had never played bridge before and for whom we gave a 45 minute lecture and then assisted them in the play of the hands that followed. Five lessons were given each cruise so that each student had the understanding of basic card play and bidding, enough for them to enjoy a beginning bridge game or to play with friends.

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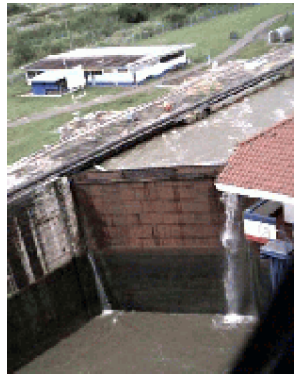
canal

We enter the lock

The red ship ahead is about to leave

We enter the

The French attempt is unsuccessful because they did not provide for locks.



The lock raises the ship.



Jungle

Panama City

Gatun Lake

Bridge of the Americas

Panama

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