

Subj: **Hello from Tahiti!!**

Date: 9/24/2009

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Hello Everyone,

Couldn't resist trying to send a travelogue and a few pictures from this visit to Australia & Tahiti. Internet has been rather sketchy and expensive, but bought an hour's worth of time from the Star Flyer Clipper Ship and since this morning I'm already too sunburned on the back of my legs from snorkeling all day yesterday, I thought I'd put together something to either bore or make you all envious!!

George & I arrived at the Melbourne airport on Wednesday morning, 9:45am, Sep 9th. We were met by our joint hosts, Carol Simondson and Mike & Beryl Harcourt. The next 10 days were wonderful. We danced, taught (managed to teach 8 dances overall), visited, tasted wine, & did some fabulous sight seeing (including visiting a National Park & an aquarium - our 2 most favorite things!!). We met many new friends and got reacquainted with lots of "old" ones!! The weekend festival was great fun for us and hopefully for the Australian and New Zealand dancers also!! We also got to attend 2 different local clubs and had a grand time there too!



Boardwalk at Cape Schanck on the Mornington Peninsula.



Puffing Billy in the Dandenong Range.

On Friday, Sep 18th, we flew to Papeete, Tahiti. Due to recrossing the date line, we managed to enjoy Friday twice. Talking about a long day!! First time was spent flying, second day was relaxing in our Overwater Bungalow at the Intercontinental Hotel in Papeete. Second Friday was by far the best!!!



Sunset view from our Overwater Bungalow of the Island of Moorea.



Polynesian wedding at the Intercontinental Resort.



View from our Overwater Bungalow on our last morning in Papeete.

I'll end this one here and continue with the Cruise on the Star Flyer Clipper Ship! Mike & Beryl, please forward this to Carol - I don't have her email address.

We miss everyone and truly wish you were all here with us!!

Lots of love,

Subj: **1st few days of the Star Flyer Polynesian Cruise**

Date: 9/24/2009

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Hello Again!! Greetings from the Beautiful French Polynesian Islands!!

Running out of time to write, nearly time to eat again and change into swim suits for our swim/snorkel with the stingrays and black tipped reef sharks!!

So here's a very brief glimpse of our cruise so far!!! We boarded the ship at the port of Papeete on Sunday, Sep 20th about 4pm. We set sail at Midnight and cruised all night (puzzling because it was only 11 km across to Cook's Bay of Moorea??). We spent the first day on a 4X4 tour of the island, beautiful jungle and fruit farms. We had our first snorkel with the staff after a short zodiac ride out to a anchor in the lagoon. Marvelous, but rather rough water. Then after much eating, we set sail to Raitea. Rough sailing night (and they said that was nothing!!!) and then another snorkel with an afternoon kayak on the only navigable river in French Polynesia. Only a very short sail that night across the shared lagoon to Tahaa. Beautifully still night anchored in the lagoon and then an unbelievably gorgeous day of snorkeling on a Motu (small island) in the lagoon. That one day made the entire cruise worthwhile no matter what else happens. Just indescribable. More fish, coral, sun, beach, palm trees, scenery, polynesian dance show, than one couple should be able to experience in a lifetime!!!!!! So, now a few pictures and hope to get this sent off!!!!











Hopefully more later!!!

Lots of love,



George & Pamela

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)
Look at my pictures on Webshots <http://community.webshots.com/user/pshurd>

Subj: **Last day on the Star Clipper**

Date: 9/26/2009

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Hello Again!!! The days have passed much to fast! We are currently sitting on the ship in Opunohu Bay of Moorea. We'll have our final sail from here in a couple of hours to finish up the week in the Port of Papeete. It will be an easy sail and probably only an hour or so. Now to back track!!

Last email we were running out the door to do the Stingray & Shark tour! Wow!! Wow!! Wow!!!! First we took an covered boat to the far side of Bora Bora and stepped off the boat into about 4' of clear slightly cool water. The Stingrays recognize the boat and the local guides and all came to get fed. We were surrounded by 15 or 20 medium to large rays. They would mostly just brush by us, we had on snorkel gear and no flippers and could either float or stand in the water with our snorkel masks down. They were all around us!! It was really thrilling. Occasionally you would feel a bristly tail brush by, but they didn't hurt, just felt much like brushing your skin with a hair brush. George had 5 little hickey like red places on his back. When I noticed them and mentioned it, he decided one of the rays must have been sucking on his back. We had been told they would do that and he had felt something when we first got in the water, but had thought someone was just brushing against him! The marks are pretty much gone now! The guides fed them fish and they were climbing all over them! You could pet them and they were very soft. It was very exciting to be in the water with them.





Then we hopped back in the boat and went around the outside of the reef for the shark swimming. This was so very exciting!!! They had everyone get off the boat and into the water with your snorkel gear and hanging on a rope off the front of the boat. They the guide started throwing off fish in the water. First off, we were already surrounded by thousands of trigger fish, and a few parrot fish, then the black tip reef sharks started arriving! Oh MY GOSH!!!!!! Someone said they counted 25 at one time circling around in front of us. Sizes varied from 2' to 6' or so. There were humongous Lemon sharks on the bottom (probably 30' below - but very very clear water). A German friend from the boat got a video which I cannot wait to share. We've seen stuff like that on TV (and talked about how crazy the people were!!!), but it was just an amazing opportunity! Don't have any pictures yet, trying to collect some from other cruise friends that had underwater cameras. It was by far the most amazing thing we've done!!

Sooooo, that was Thursday, and Friday we were supposed to stop in Huahine. Well, we woke up to lots of rocking and rolling and realized that we hadn't docked yet! Turns out it was too rough to get into the harbor and we were have to bypass that island. Too bad! Spent an awfully rough day at sea all day Friday and Friday night, but the moon was coming out by about 10:30pm last night and then today has been mostly clear and calm. Spent several hours up in a deck chair watching the oceans, but didn't get any really telling pictures!



This morning we took a Dolphin and Whale watch trip with Dr. Michael Poole (Mom I did ask, but can't find if we're related or not!), but didn't see any sea creatures. Did enjoy fabulous scenery and looking forward to 2 more days on this island! Here's a nice picture of our ship with Moorea in the background.





This is the Intercontinental Hotel that we're coming back to tomorrow for 2 nights.



So this will do it for our Tahitian Vacation!! Don't think we'll have internet again until we get back to the good ole USA on Wednesday!

Hope everyone is fine and looking forward to seeing everyone soon!!!

Lots of love,



George & Pamela

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Look at my pictures on Webshots <http://community.webshots.com/user/pshurd>