

Bill and Luise Schulz's Cruise Adventure (January-March 2020)

This 30-day cruise from Cape Town to Singapore had been on our bucket list for over a year. We left 9PM Jan 30 via London and arrived in Cape Town after 7AM on February 1. The morning prior to leaving we received an email from the cruise company advising us that no passengers or crew who had been to China the previous 30 days would be allowed on board, as well every person's temperature would be checked and refused boarding if they had a fever.

We spent the next four days touring the city and surrounding area and were very impressed and would love to go back and spend more time there. We boarded our ship the Oceania Nautica which holds 684 passengers on February 3 and set sail on February 4. Our cruise ship was very proactive, and we were sanitizing constantly and checked at 5 ports for possible fever. For the sake of brevity, I will not describe each port and figure if people are interested, they could check them out on the internet.

The next 5 ports were all in South Africa and they were Mossel Bay, Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban and Roberts Bay. We did the normal touristy things going on private Van tours or walking tours and although the places were interesting, they didn't compare to Cape Town. In Roberts Bay we did a day long safari which was excellent, and we saw all the major animals except for the cats.

Our next port was Maputo, Mozambique which was quite a contrast to the previous S.A. ports, it was probably like the real Africa, very crowded, dirty and busy, it was raining so we had to dodge big water puddles, it was quite an experience but we coped.

The next port was the French Island of Reunion, population 800,000 located in the Indian ocean east of Madagascar and about 200 KM's S.W. of Mauritius, quite impressive. Next port was Port Louis Mauritius-lovely beaches. The next two ports were in the Seychelles -great beaches, excellent snorkeling, would love to visit again if it was not so far away. Day 20,21 we sailed to Male, Maldives very interesting.

We then received notice that due to the coronavirus after visiting our next ports Colombo and Galle Sri Lanka we would not be proceeding to Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore instead we would head west, then north to Oman and Dubai. Sri Lanka was extremely interesting and adventuresome. We survived a day touring Colombo on a Tuk Tuk with a driver who thought he was a Nascar driver. Then the next day in Galle river boating the mangroves and driving the road where the Tsunami hit in 2004.

Our detour resulted in having an additional two days at sea plus the challenge of arranging air transport from Dubai to Vancouver via Toronto which was extremely frustrating and cost double the fare from Singapore/Hong Kong /Vancouver. The cruise line was however very generous and gave all passengers a very substantial rebate due to the change of itinerary.

Our visit to Muscat Oman was awesome especially visiting the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque which holds up to 20,000 worshippers. Our disembarkation port Dubai UAE is indescribable it is a combination of New York, Las Vegas and Disneyland. The architecture is fantastic, with

numerous shopping centres and high risers including the Burj Khalifa which is 830-meter-high (Empire State is 381) and is the tallest in the world. We visited Dubai from March 4 and flew home March 6 at 11:55PM via Toronto and after 26 hours in transit we got home Saturday March 7 at 1PM.

There was absolutely no screening for the virus and we also did not receive any Quarantine notice, I unfortunately woke up Sunday morning with a cold, so I isolated myself and I'm thankful Luise did not catch it. We are both fine, haven't visited Luises 97-year-old Mom and 88 year old aunt, which has been very sad but necessary. To summarize I thank Jesus for a wonderful vacation and bringing us home safe and sound, I have been praying for my Rotarian family that the Lord will protect us all from this Pandemic and draw all our hearts to him for he alone will give us the peace and faith to endure whatever may happen in the future. If I can be of any encouragement to any of you please don't hesitate to contact me 604 724-1943 or bschulz@shaw.ca.

Blessings from your fellow Rotarian.