

South America - 2002

November 29, 2002. - We raced around today, trying to do our last minute packing that started today. As we rolled out of our development onto A1A, I announced that “we are now on vacation, relax!”

We continued up US 1 and as we passed the Publix, I queried, “Did you put my blazer in the car?”

Judy said no and we turned around, as I can’t go on board preparing to lecture on the tax laws in my tuxedo. We raced back to the house and picked it up out of my car and while we were there we collected a pair of pants, socks and a neckties and a box of Puffs facial tissues. We jumped back into the car and drove out of the development once again. Again I declared, “we are on vacation, relax!” and we both laughed.

We reached Melbourne Airport, unloaded the luggage and turned in the car and took our first official first class flight to Atlanta. The flight attendants were very helpful and courteous, asking us repeatedly if we wanted anything more. The flight was uneventful and we landed in Atlanta with plenty of time.

It is so easy to leave the US, compared to other countries. One need not pass through endless lines of officials seeking passports and departure cards. One only shows your passport to the ticket agent and away you go.

Chile



November 30, 2002 - First Class air travel is a very nice thing. Actually, I suggest that the seats are too far apart; one cannot easily reach the seat back in front to withdraw the entertainment program. Nevertheless, the wine was flowing and the thick lamb chop was nicely cooked. The rock lobster tail was a good way to start the meal and though the ice cream was served a bit too cold, it warmed up while I ate the cheese and crackers. I don’t think that Judy will ever eat nuts cold again, they were so good warm. The flight south was much easier than the European flights to which we are accustomed, the eight-hour trip gains only two hours so one actually sleeps about five or six hours and arrive in good

time for the next day’s activities.

We checked into our Santiago hotel, Hotel Tupahue at about 10 a.m. and the clerk said that they had only one room available but that we could change it later. He suggested that we not unpack. I was glad to be able to shave and shower. The room was small, had twin beds and had not been renovated, clearly the last room available but the shower worked and we had a place to collect ourselves. Following our ablutions we went out on our first view of the city of Santiago, the capital and the financial headquarters of the most efficient and prosperous of the Latin American

countries. Our hotel is only a view blocks from the very center of the downtown area, Plaza de los Armas, from where all positions in Chile are measured.



We first headed out to a bank to use our ATM card to get some cash \$100,000 pesos is US\$140. Then we had our first Chilean meal, a sirloin steak, rice and salad for Judy and Churrasco, a thin sliced beef and salad for me. With tap water under \$5,000 pesos for both of us, that is, less than \$7.50. I guess we won't have to share meals. The food was good and we then went out to the Plaza where we saw the police. They looked very handsome on their steeds and considering the mass of people, this was certainly a more efficient way to view the situation and get around. Also in the plaza is this statue of Chile's founder, Pedro de Valdivia, who secured permission to settle the land south of Peru in the name of the Spanish crown. He was more interested in the conquest than the riches and founded Santiago de la Nueva Extremadura on February 12, 1541; just about 50 years after Columbus discovered America. Alas, Valdivia could not defeat the fierce Mapuche Indians and in a rebellion, he was captured and suffered a gruesome death. Indeed the Mapuches defended their territory effectively for the next 300 years. We also saw this statue of Simon Bolivar, who was principal in the founding of South America. This is a particularly good roost for pigeons as you may be able to see, they are atop of both heads. I had to wait for one to move who blocked the lady's face.

You may wonder what Chilean's look like. These two photos are typical of the Santiaguinos. You will notice that the typical person is under age 25 as half of the population is under age 25. I doubt that either family knew that their picture was being taken though the first one was posing for a professional photographer. The second was enjoying ice cream.





Other buildings in the central downtown area are representative of the architectural styles. On the left the Central Post Office occupies a building that was once the Governor's Palace. Next to it is the National Historic Museum built in 1804 and formerly held the Supreme Court. On the right is behind the square, the Justice building currently houses their Supreme Court and other superior courts.



December 1, 2002 - Sunday is a good day to go for a walk to the mansion area, Calle Dieciocho, or 18th Street. Here many beautiful architectural buildings are found and the *crème de la crème* is Palacio Cousiño. This beautiful house is not quite a palace but is certainly a mansion. We had a tour of the interior and strolled the grounds afterward.

On our way home we stopped to worship in the Basilica del Santisimo Sacramento, a very fine church that was serving communion when we arrived. There after was the fellowship period in which everyone shook hands or kissed in welcome. Finally a song was sung to the tune of "Sounds of Silence" but certainly had different words. It is very difficult for me to translate music so I had no clue as to what was being sung. Following the Basilica, we headed home but on our way, we passed a street revival. There was singing and testimony. Next door was an amusement arcade that had pinball machines, video games, skee ball and the most fascinating dance machine:



We were transfixed as we watched a young lady on this device. For \$100 pesos, about 14 cents, you select your song and the screen shows arrows indicating where you are to place your feet. As the arrows go by, one scores points by having your feet in the proper places as this young man is doing. I am sad that I didn't get the picture of the young lady, for she was very good. I'm sure that 15 minutes of this dancing outweighs an hour in the gym for calories consumed.



This evening we met Alfredo and Gabriela Pinochet, my associate, George's, friends in Chile. George met Alfredo while in Japan and they have been corresponding for more than 10 years. We went to a handicrafts festival and saw the handicrafts of the various regions of Chile, Peru Uruguay and Paraguay. There were exhibitions of folkloric dancing as well. Judy bought a small embroidered picture for framing on our travel wall. After the festival, we went to dinner in a typical Chilean sandwich shop. Judy and I each

had typical Chilean food, Barros Luco, a beef and melted cheese sandwich and a similar one with roast pork. We had a bottle of Carmenère wine, a red wine of Chile that was not very dry and had a nice fruity taste. We talked continuously, sharing the customs and methods of our various countries, how they differed and how they were similar. We had a splendid time with our new friends.



December 2, 2002 – Today the museums are closed so we went to the park. Not just any park but the one that overlooks the town and has the highest point in the city, the Metropolitan Park. We went to the top in a cable car, up the mountain, Cerro San Cristóbal. At the top is a beautiful view of the city.



Also, on top of the mountain is a statue of the Virgin



and a view of the Andes to the east of the city.

After viewing the sights, we began our walk down the sidwinding road down the hill. When we got to the bottom, we were on the other side of the park, beyond the area of my map. I asked the guard which way was downtown and he told me, to the right. Judy and I walked our little feet off and after we

crossed the river were considering a cab. I got the bright idea of taking the bus. The night before, I got some riding instructions from Alfredo about paying the fare and we selected a bus that was heading in the right direction. As I entered, I asked the driver if he was going downtown and he said yes, where downtown, I wasn't sure. I watched my map carefully as we past the streets but did not see any that were marked. Suddenly I saw a familiar street and realized that we were a few blocks from our hotel. We got off at the next stop and I was thrilled! The guidebook says that the bus routes are too complicated for tourists but we had managed to do the impossible.

After a shower and a nap we were ready to take on the world again.



We selected the Santa Lucia hill, not far from our hotel for the evening. I knew that there was an elevator that would take us most of the way up the hill and I thought that the evening view with the setting sun on the mountains would be romantic. Sadly, the elevator was closed and even though we had just done plenty of mountains, we walked up the stairs to the top. From there one had an expansive view of the city.



circular garden and the Castilla Hidalgo built in 1820.

As we descended we stopped to see this



December 3, 2002 – Today was museum day. We first stopped at the Church of San Francisco, the oldest standing building in Santiago. At the altar sits the famous Virgen del Socorro, (Virgin of Help) brought here by Pedro de Valdivia, the founder of Santiago and Chile.

After the church we went to a ceremony in the Plaza del Libertador O'Higgins. There was a band that played and big wigs stood on the red carpet while the flags were raised. You will see General Bernardo O'Higgins on his horse in the background.







Across the street is the Palacio de la Moneda, now the office of the President of Chile but formerly the place where the national mint was located, hence the name.



This triangularly shaped building is the Chilean Stock Market, known as the Bolso de Comercio.

Inside the trading was far from hectic. It was downright boring. But with the slow pace it was easy to see the trades recording on the ticker and on the list shown in green and red. One or two traders stood at the computers far away from us.





After a nap, we prepared for lunch at the Central Market. We had shrimp and fish. It was good though expensive. As we walked home, we saw a mime in the Plaza de los Armas.

We also saw the Coke Christmas tree on the Alameda.





December 4, 2002 – Today we picked up our rental car at the airport and went on an excursion to the Concha y Toro wine vineyards. Concha y Toro is the largest wine exporter in Chile and its shares are traded on the Chile and on the New York stock exchanges.

150 years ago by his father-in-law. It contains original 19th century furniture however the rear part of the house is offices for the export department of company. Shown in the photo is our guide, a very pretty young lady who English well and was happy to answer our questions. There were more than 30 in our group; two couples from Canada we found would be on the same cruise as us beginning on Saturday.



This is the home of the founder, built about still

used as the tour spoke

This is a vineyard growing the grapes used for Merlot wine. Our guide pointed out the special characteristics of the soil here which are particularly good for grapes. One seeks soil that is not too rich because you want the grapes roots to be superficial. One seeks weather that is not too rainy again to keep the roots high in the ground and to prevent fungus and molds. Roses are planted at the ends of the rows because they get the same diseases as grapes but catch them more quickly. If the roses get a disease, you can treat the grapes to prevent the vineyard from



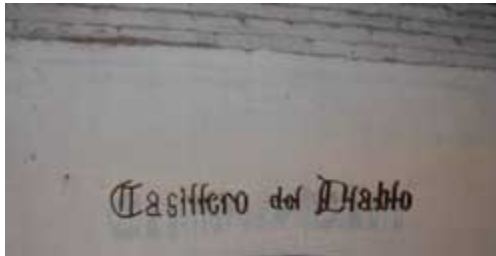
also contracting the disease.



Here you see the steel vats that contain the wine following the fermenting. The hoses on the floor are used to transport the wine from the fermenting area to the steel vats and then to the wooden barrels.



visited the Casillero del Diablo, the Devil. The legend says that to prevent the founder hid among the casks at devil-like sounds with chains and frightened the workers so that they



Next we Castle of the employee theft, night and made sighs and would not

pilfer. Of course, no one wanted to work there at all any more but the episode made its point, no one stole from the proprietor any more. On the right, the barrels are held in a cave at 85% humidity, no more or the fungus will grow on the casks. The temperature in the cave is lower than the ambient temperature outside as well. This is for the aging of those wines that are cellar aged. Not all wines are so aged, for



example, Merlot is sold within one year of its harvest.

On the left is the private stock: One or more bottles from each vintage and each brand for comparison.

December 5, 2002 – Today is a day to relax. Judy stayed in Viña del Mar while I returned the car. At \$70 per day, we decided that there was less need for a car than we thought and we would have to return it the day before we boarded the ship so that we could arrive in time. As there is no Alamo office in Valparaiso nor in Viña we had to return to Santiago to drop off the car. Busses run frequently from Santiago to Viña, in fact I was astounded that I could ride 120 miles in a beautiful, new tour bus for \$4. The trip took less time than I thought and I found Judy reading in the hotel room when I returned. The Best Western Marina del Rey hotel gave us an outstanding hotel suite. A living-dining room with well-appointed furnishings and an oriental rug on the living room floor augments the spacious bedroom. When we drove in to Viña, arriving in a rather run-down neighborhood, Judy remarked, “only two nights.” When she saw the room, she said, “Maybe we should stay for three nights.”

The rest our day was spent relaxing at the beach, watching the teen-agers play soccer and paddleball and watching the waves roll onto the shore with a roar. Pacific would not have been my name for the ocean that day. It is a little cool for us so we didn't try the water though we walked the beach. After a nap we went to a wonderful Italian restaurant for lasagna and crêpes. I bought a half-bottle of Concha y Toro wine to commemorate our stay because tomorrow we move on to Valparaiso.

December 6, 2002 – We transferred by cab to Valparaiso and though the cab driver had to stop for gas and got lost finding the hotel, we settled the fare amicably at \$10. Our hotel is nice but not nearly as good as the one in Viña del Mar. We walked around the town in the morning while our laundry was being washed and saw all of the sights. We were threatened by an old man in a beard but were easily able to out walk him without having to confront him. We had no idea why he was so excited but he will be one of the characters we always remember in Valparaiso. We spent the afternoon in the hotel relaxing and watching HBO and that evening visited one of the best restaurants in the world, according to our Frommer's book. We agreed that the food was very good, but the filet mignon is better at John's Island Club.



It
s it



financial productivity and my loving wife.

December 7, 2002 – A day of relaxation today. We donned our gym clothes and went down to the terrace to catch some rays and enjoy the view. I read my book, Facing 50, A View from the Mountaintop, quite good and it seems that I am going through the mid-life phase. I find that I am more blessed than most with children who love me, a wife who loves me, a job I enjoy and no chance of being fired or laid off. I have specific plans for my phased retirement that include giving to others. The book inspired me to appreciate my grandchildren while they are still young. Our relationship will change dramatically when each becomes 13. Further, I will express my pride and love for my children in words, something that men do not do naturally, with ease. Indeed, many of the problems and trials of being 50 plus, I have been spared because of my careful planning, my

This afternoon, we took a walk downtown to see where we would meet the ship tomorrow, to buy me a pair of gym pants, to replace those that I have that have a hole that is not readily fixed. We had lunch downtown, sawed off the lock on one of the suitcases that had broken and replaced it with another, all for less than US\$1.

Following an HBO movie, this afternoon, we dressed for dinner and went to the same restaurant we visited last night. The food was quite good. Judy and I each had chicken; hers baked and mine in a lemon cream sauce. A little Sauvignon Blanc wine completed the evening and Judy walked me home. The view from our hotel, high on the edge of Cerro Concepción:

December 8, 2002 – We packed our bags and prepared for our cruise. After checking out, we had to travel back to Viña del Mar to complete the immigration documents for Argentina, establish our on-board credit account and provide tickets for the cruise. We then were taken by shuttle bus to the Valparaiso port to board the ship, as there is no



passenger terminal there for that purpose. On board the Zenith, we had some lunch, had the lifeboat drill, checked out library books, toured the ship, heard the spa lecture, had dinner and met our boss, the Assistant Cruise Director, Robert. Thereafter the first gala dance program was presented in the

Celebrity Showroom. The seas are high so we quickly retired to bed.

December 9, 2002 – The spa opened at 6 a.m. without us but we got there closer to 8 for our first on board workout. I played the roll of physical trainer and Judy and I enjoyed working out together. We met some new people at breakfast, one lady who returned to Chile, her birthplace, after about 25 years of living in Canada. The man on the other side of me was Brazilian. We exchanged stories of the US and Brazil and enjoyed the experience. Thereafter there was a lecture in the Celebrity Showroom about the various ports we would visit and our



next port, Puerto Montt. Judy was feeling a bit sick so we got the seasick medicine and retired to room.



December 10, 2002 – Our first port, Puerto Montt, was not very interesting according to our guidebook. Rather, the nearby town of Puerto Varas is where the beautiful sights are. This is the Chilean Lake District, where salmon, timber and tourism are the primary industries.



We made our own tour with Don and Geri. We took a bus from the port to Puerto Varas and then engaged a taxi driver to take us around for

three hours. After seeing this beautiful, volcano, lake and river we went to the waterfall in the national park.





At the falls, we saw a helicopter flying overhead



After our trip, we stopped at the restaurant that our driver suggested for some seafood stew that was very good and a salad. We had splendid weather today with bright sunny skies and warm temperatures instead of what could have been cold and rainy. We were blessed and enjoyed the company of our new friends.

December 11, 2002 – At sea today, we attended the bridge lecture during which the instructor attempted, unsuccessfully to “wing” his way through a lecture on various defensive bidding

techniques which confused more than illuminated the class because he covered too much and too lightly. He should have taken one topic and covered it thoroughly starting from the beginning level and then adding more advanced aspects as most of the participants were beginning bridge players, only a few played weak twos.

After lunch Judy attended a hair lecture and was certainly the most disadvantaged of the participants. Just before she dons a wig, she should visit the hair salon for a private consultation.



December 12, 2002 – At sea again, cruising the Strait of Magellan. We saw small glaciers,

nothing like those in Alaska. Judy also attended a lecture on what to do about her hair. The lecturer, Fran, took a particular interest in her thinning, fine hair and invited her for a private consultation. As a result, she had the makeover that she had been discussing for 15 years. She

cut and colored her hair and provided highlights, colored the gray and made it shine in the natural light, and the cut restored the waves, She was an excellent hair designer and Judy is now quite the knock-out!



Jim had his first financial lecture presentation. Here is a candid shot of him discussing Individual Retirement accounts: How to turn \$30,000 into \$4.2 million. The lecture was well received by about 20 passengers; some even congratulated me on the content and presentation.



December 13, 2002 – Today we landed in Punta Arenas, Chile, the southernmost city in the world. This town is known for its penguin colonies. We hired a minibus to take us to the colony and along the way we saw the Chilean ostriches. At last we arrived at the penguin beach. This protected area has about 5,000 penguins that raise their young and fish in the waters just north of Punta Arenas. Here is a sample of our friends.



Following fishing, one may lie on the beach to dry. -----/



Here we find one watching the burrow where the young are cared for. Penguins mate for life. At this time in the life cycle, the parents take turns watching the burrow and fishing. At about 10 and 5 o'clock each day, the parents change positions.

On the way home, we stopped at the cemetery. All of the founders of this southernmost city in



Chile are buried here in crypts. Most uniquely, the trees are topiaries in this unusual style.

December 14, 2002 – Ushuaia, Argentina, our first port on the east side of South America: Chile and Argentina share the island of Tierra del Fuego by a longitudinal divide of the area. Nevertheless, Argentina has the southernmost town in South America. The prisoners who were sent here developed Ushuaia, sort of a South American Siberia. In the beginning, those who were repeat offenders or convicted of particularly heinous crimes were sent here. Later, it became the place of choice for political prisoners. We visited the maritime and prison museum that showed replicas of the ships that were used for discovery of this area and the Antarctic to the south. Also shown were the original cells and statues representing some of the more notorious criminals lodged here. The convicts were used to provide labor-intensive services to the town and to construct many of the public works. Though discipline was severe, there was little need for high walls and extensive security. The convicts wore the traditional horizontal striped uniforms and Tierra del Fuego being an island, there was no place to go following an escape. In fact there is record of only one successful escape from Ushuaia, which being a trio of three political prisoners escaped with a tin of sardines, a crust of bread and some water. They set out heading north and walked until they could walk no more. They finally set a fire, aware that it



might alert the officials as to their position. When they heard people coming, they were too tired and cold to care and prepared for their capture. To their surprise, a fishing vessel had noticed their fire, came to check it out and being aware of their being *political* criminals, took them on to a safe place. Other incidents of escape were reported but no one had ever been heard of. We assume that the escapees died in the act.

After a beer, some shopping, changing of money and getting some Argentine pesos at the local bank, we had lunch on the ship. Following refreshment, we went out again, this time to the Glacier National Park. There is a chair lift to take you to the top of the mountain where the glacier is. In the summer, it seems more like a big heap of snow. We hired a taxi for US\$2 for the four-mile trip from our ship to the park. (The dollar is very good against the Argentina peso.) Our comrades joined us on the trip up the mountain.



A view of the city from the chair lift coming down from the top of the mountain.

December 15, 2002 – We round Cape Horn.



This is the first of two days at sea. I presented my third lecture on Estate Planning in these Transitional Times. My reputation is spreading and many of the passengers who attended the previous lectures show up again. In fact, with one handout per family, we ran short at 25 copies. I ordered some more from my boss, the assistant cruise director. Following me was the digital camera lecturer. She demonstrated how easy it was to lift the subject from one image and transfer it to another. The selection aspect of the procedure is the trick, an art that is developed with some experience. She also showed cloning and made a greeting card made from four images and a text message. I tried my hand.

There was a lecture on the Falkland Islands that said, in essence, there is very little here. 2,400 people, probably more sheep, a museum, café

and souvenir shops. I hope it is better than that. The currency is the Falkland Islands pound, which is pegged to the British pound sterling. We are braced for things being expensive. There was an excellent movie documenting the Ernest Shackleton expedition of the Antarctic. The dress was formal that evening, so the food is always extra special and following dinner, there was a cocktail party for repeat guests. As we are now part of the Captain's Club, we received our invitations and enjoyed the



party. As I continue on this cruise I think of how much I follow in my father's footsteps. He enjoyed cruising with Mom and would have looked dapper in his tuxedo at the cocktail party. However he would be drinking martinis, I sipped some champagne. Finally, the Celebrity



singers, dancers and orchestra performed the gala dance presentation, "World Goes Round."

December 16, 2002 – Our second, at sea day was fun for me but Judy spent most of the day in the stateroom sleeping. She has a cold and it appears to be in the waning stage. There were port lectures, a cooking demonstration and a chance to meet a man from Arizona and play Cribbage. I hadn't played for 20 years but after a review of the rules, we had a good time, in fact I won two of the three games we played.

In the afternoon was a movie on the Vietnam War. I enjoy the acting of Mel Gibson and he played the starring role in the movie. Two Vietnamese ladies join us at the dinner table each evening. They also watched the movie. At dinner we discussed the situation leading up to the war. Its no wonder I was confused about it, neither the older gentleman nor the younger Vietnamese lady, Kathy, could really explain it. She was one when her family left Vietnam. The



older lady, Kim, explained that the French controlled Vietnam and they had a puppet emperor until the Dien Bien Phu war of 1954. As part of the French surrender, a treaty was established dividing the country. Ho Chi Minh became the ruler in the north and the Americans installed the first president, in the south, Ngo Dinh Diem. The French continued to influence the south and the American government participated in this influence. Though he signed the treaty, Ho Chi Minh hoped to one day reunite the country and advanced on South Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh was supported by the Russians and the Chinese and embraced the totalitarian communism. The people of the north were unable to resist the communist rule. The south resisted, as they preferred capitalism. As the United States was against Russia, China and communism, it supported the south in an effort to avoid the domino effect, that is, if South Vietnam became communist, it would control the South China Sea and the surrounding areas would also fall. With the entire Indo-China area communist, China and its allies would become a very great power and might attack the US or its Pacific possessions. Our memory of World War II was still well in mind.

The Civil War in Indo-China continued and the south being less well organized and not well focused on the purpose of the war was not committed to fighting their fellow Vietnamese and ultimately fell after the US withdrawal. As part of the withdrawal, the US provided sanctuary to refugees from Vietnam who were permitted to leave Vietnam and its impending communist rule. Many, including our friends relocated in Southern California.

After dinner, a violinist provided the evening entertainment. She played well, or at least I thought so, but best of all, she chose mostly pieces that were familiar to us. She will have a classical concert tomorrow afternoon when I expect she will play the music that I've never heard for the "long hairs."

December 17, 2002 – We arrive at the Falkland Islands and see this very nice home as we walked around the town. We stopped in some shops and finally decided on the Victory Pub to have a beer and enjoy the local color. I had not realized that, as a result of the Argentina Conflict in 1984, there is no trade with Argentina, even the airplane flights go directly to the UK with a stop off the coast of Africa for refueling or they go to Puerto Montt in Chile. There is only one flight per month that goes to Argentina as a result of a treaty. There is nothing to remind you that the closest country is Argentina, nothing in Spanish, pesos are not accepted as currency, no Argentina people appear to work here, many refer to Britain as their heritage and as



almost everything is imported, most products are British. Even the British electrical outlets

are used here.



In the photo on the left, the white house on the right is rather typical with either aluminum corrugated siding, new vinyl siding (shown above right) or a few houses had wood siding. The building on the left is a beautiful hotel. The people are gregarious and friendly; no one seems poor though everything is expensive to us. The young lady at the pub hailed from Chile and she said that she made much more here than she would have at home. In that beer was only \$1 in downtown Santiago and here is about \$3,

there is no wonder. The weather was very nice for us in the morning with brilliant, sunny skies. Though cool, particularly when the wind blew, it was very pleasant for our walk. After our noon beer, the skies clouded over and it was colder than I like to be while we waited for the tenders.

December 18, 2002 – At sea again enjoying the informative lectures on Buenos Aires and Argentina in the morning. I presented my fourth lecture on Living Trusts, who needs one? And Probate: Removing the Fear factor. 42 passengers attended and there were a few good questions. A few people told me afterwards how much they enjoyed my lecture saying that it was well organized and complete and that they learned something new. I ordered a few more copies of the estate tax lecture for those who did not receive one and asked for 25 more copies of the stock market lecture. Afterward I went to the Name that Broadway Tune contest and played with a young lady who was traveling with her parents, and our dinner partner, Lana. We had fun and answered 20 correctly, the winner had 34 but there are no prizes. I find the most useful lecture is on the digital camera photography. Sarah spoke on downloading pictures and enhancements. Most of that one I had already figured out on my own. We had our last Captain's Club party just before dinner with hors d'oeuvres and drinks. They gave many door prizes, cups, bags, jewelry boxes and wine bottle stoppers. Judy won a cup which she tried, unsuccessfully to trade. Dinner was very good with chateaubriand being served. Afterward, the Celebrity Dancers presented a show featuring Brazilian dancing and the Pampas Devils did their gaucho routines. It was very good. We then sat in the bar and watched the people dancing while listening to our favorite music. We were particularly interested in one of the old dance hosts. He spends his life dancing on cruise ships, signing on for six months at a time. One lady he danced with danced particularly well. Sadly, I am getting Judy's cold and my throat is a bit sore. My only worry is that I will be most sick on the day of my grand finale. We will be in port today, so I will pick up some medicine at a pharmacy.

December 19, 2002 – Puerto Madryn, Argentina was a fun town to visit. This town in the north part of Patagonia, the southern part of Argentina was well prepared to meet the occasional tourist. This differentiates it from Ushuaia, our first Argentina stop, as Ushuaia was primarily a tourist and traveler point, catering to the Antarctic expedition and the ships that sailed around the continent to get to the other side. Our dollar to peso ratio of \$1 to 3.5 pesos was very good and we ate and drank for a pittance. We saw these tango dancers at the entry to the artisan market. The boy was particularly cute and danced well for his age.



The older boys were dressed as gauchos and also danced very well. While in town, our comrades checked their Internet mail, we called the office for the clothing sizes and bought some more drugs for our colds. At the artisan market we watched a man draw extraordinarily detailed landscapes on wall tiles with his finger. He could turn them out in about 10 minutes and he was so skilled it appeared as if a photo were being revealed as he passed his painting finger over the tile's surface. We had a beer and lunch in a café and each ordered an appetizer to share with the drink. We were reaching outside of our space by selecting things that we had never eaten to savor the local flavor.



This little girl was such a cutie. All she wanted to do was watch the dancers, however her friend wanted her to go with him. After a few tries he finally took her by the arm and insisted she go.

December 20, 2002 – We presented our final lecture on Investing in the Stock Market without Losing Your Shirt. 48 passengers attended and it was well received. I prayed that I would be able to stand up and talk as I am suffering from a cold and sore throat. My prayers were answered and many people complimented me on this and the previous presentations. As we are approaching Buenos Aires, the weather is warming up so I sat outside and read about our next destination while catching some rays. Lobster tails were the dinner fare and they were good. We bid our friends good-bye and saw the final Broadway show.

December 21, 2002 – We arrived in Buenos Aires early in the afternoon and spent our first day shopping on the Fifth Avenue of Buenos Aires known as Florida. I bought a new pair of shoes for \$50 and got change back. Our comrade, Geri, also bought shoes and a handbag. Don checked his Internet mail and we looked at our hotel rooms in preparation for our disembarkation the next day. Don paid only \$30 per night for his room that looked as nice as our \$87 so we canceled our reservation and

booked our hotel with him. After some more shopping for coats and jewelry we returned to the ship for dinner and packing. The movie Evita was playing at 10:45 so I took a nap to prepare for the late hour. It was splendid! I dreamt all night about it.

December 22, 2002 – Disembarkation and transfer to hotel took all morning and it rained cats and dogs so we arranged a tour for the afternoon. When the driver who spoke no English arrived in a car suitable for three people, we sent him back and he called for an English guide and driver with a mini-van. One half hour later she arrived and our situation was much better. Our guide was a 19-year old university student without much experience but who had grown up in Buenos Aires and knew the sites. We drove along the river and saw the port and domestic airport. We also saw the polo fields of Recoleta and the Hippodrome. The Recoleta Cemetery is a must see. We saw the mausoleums of the rich and famous, including that of Evita Peron.



Above is the epitaph of Evita on which the play was based. It says,
“Don't cry for me as lost or distant,
I am an essential part of your existence,
All my love and pain was foreseen,

I fulfilled my humble imitation of Christ,
And those who accompanied me,
May their followers continue on the same path."

That's not far from, "Don't cry for me Argentina, the truth is I never left you, not in my wild days, my brief existence, I kept my promise, don't keep your distance."

Below is the chancel of the church next to Recoleta Cemetery. One can have the funeral here and the entombment right next door.



Then we visited the magical area of La Boca, the bohemian area where the homes are constructed of corrugated steel and painted with bright contrasting colors. We stopped for some pizza and beer and the proprietor really took advantage of us in the check. Finally a little nap to prepare us for dinner and the tango show scheduled for this evening.



The dinner and tango show were splendid. We had some of the best steaks that Argentina could offer followed by an elaborate tango show with live musicians, dancers of three different styles. Of course pictures were not to be taken under those circumstances.

December 23, 2002 – Today was shopping day. We walked through all 112 jewelry and 237 shoe stores in search of the elusive charm typical of Argentina and unique shoes for Judy. We

bought some Bermuda shorts for me and belts for our boys and me. Judy found a pair of brown shoes, right at the beginning. While she looked at sweaters, I walked out with the shoes to take them to our hotel as I had lost my contact lens. This avoided our carrying them all day. Of course, I returned to pay for them. We also bought Judy a custom made coat for which they made a drawing and took measurements. We will pick it up tomorrow. As we despaired that charm bracelets are not very common here we decided to return to one of the early jewelry stores to pick up a charm that was a map of Argentina with a ruby showing the location of Buenos Aires. But alas, where did we see that store? Retracing our steps we found difficult because we had been on the side and back streets looking for bargains, rather than on the central shopping street, Florida. I suggested that we return to the hotel to drop off our packages and go to the bathroom and then set out again in the order we had traveled, rather than backtracking. We found it at the second jewelry store we visited. Finally, in the last hour, we found some shoes that Judy liked that fit. As she tried on the different styles, the salesman brought more and more shoes that she liked. He was very good, as soon as he identified what she was seeking, he brought just the right goods. Having selected nine pairs of shoes and a handbag, we began the abbreviated bargaining process. There is no bargaining with a single item but we found that 10% off of multiple purchases can be obtained by just asking on condition of cash payment, rather than credit card. With 10 we hoped to get more. As he was adding them up, he was giving 20 pesos off (\$6) here and there. The total was 990 pesos (\$283). I asked for 950 pesos as I would have to go to the bank for the third time today to get more cash. He agreed and we got the lot of them for \$271. Judy figures she paid an average of \$20 per pair for shoes that would retail in the US for \$100 to \$150 each.

We met our comrades for dinner and went to a wonderful, typical, Argentine-style steak house. They ate the grill entrée that included suckling pig, beef ribs, chicken and more, served on a steel plate on top of a bed of charcoal. I had a very tender sirloin steak that I shared with Judy and she had a Mary Stuart salad that was somewhat like a Waldorf except there were hearts of palm in lieu of apples and pineapple instead of walnuts. It was good. We had a fine time with our new friends discussing our activities of the day. We agreed to meet the next day for sightseeing in the capitol district.



December 24, 2002 – Today we did our Buenos Aires sightseeing. On the left is El Cabildo, the home of the town council. Other interesting buildings surround the Plaza de Mayo, the place where demonstrations and celebrations are held whenever an important occasion arises.





We started at the government center where the Casa Rosada is located. This is the Buenos Aires equivalent of our White House, the executive office building housing the President. You will notice an open balcony above the arched doorway. It is from this point that Evita made her famous speeches to her countrymen and others have made similar proclamations. On the left is a statue commemorating the independence from Spain and after which the Plaza de Mayo is named.



Nearby is the Bolsa de Comercio, the Argentina Stock Exchange. We were presently surprised to have a personally guided tour by the public relations officer. He explained that about 180

companies are represented on the exchange and the 4,500 member firms trade the securities daily. The wealthy class is the owner of most of the stocks, unions do not have substantial involvement in the stock market. When asked for his personal opinion on the answer to Argentina's economic woes, he stated that the entire government was so filled with corruption



from the Congress to the policemen that the country needed to be “re-founded.” He was concerned that Argentina had sold all of its assets to wealthy outsiders who owned the land and controlled the activities of the country. I observed that this is the well-paved road to communism: many unemployed, a few who own most of the land and a government in need of overhaul. He did not argue strenuously against this, perhaps as his job in the epitome of capitalism would not allow him to confront himself with this view of the future.

We then went to the Theatre Colón to join more friends for a tour of one of the world's most famous opera houses, known for its size (seating 3,000) and its superb acoustics. The building is ornate with elaborate carvings, statues, stain-glass windows, carpets and marble walls that are topped by gold-leaf columns. We had a brief tour of the inside of the theatre by an English-speaking guide. Sleeping Beauty is being performed as the season draws to a close. Our comrades looked into buying tickets for the post-Christmas performance as we left for lunch. Judy and I wished that we had been able to go as this is something we would really enjoy.

After some cerveza and empanadas at the nearby café, we walked toward our hotel and took this picture of the obelisk, a Washington Monument-type structure erected 1936 to commemorate the 400 years of the City of Buenos Aires.

December 25, 2002 – Christmas Day and an exciting visit to Iguazú Falls in Northeast Argentina. Sometimes referred to as the Mesopotamia of Argentina, this area, the Mission province, lies between the two rivers, the Paraguay and the Uruguay. Though the soil is hard red clay, the humidity of the falls makes a lush jungle around the gorge. One should not take this view in passing, Iguazú is one of the world's two largest waterfalls. Mind, you this is not the highest, but large is

measured by the volume of water passing over the falls. Photos cannot do justice to the immensity of the falls, a picture of them would appear as a white page because spray and froth

are seen all around as one stands in the horseshoe of the gorge.





December 26, 2002 – I'm quite proud of myself. I have spoken more Spanish this month than I have in my life to date. I arranged with the taxi driver to pick us up this morning for a trip to Brazil and return directly to the airport. Further, rather than changing my money in Brazil, I asked him to pay for us and I would repay him. It all worked out very well. They say that Argentina supplies the falls and Brazil supplies the views. Indeed the view from Brazil is the face of the falls:



There is plenty of wildlife here, above I tried a close-up of one of the many butterflies. Below the ubiquitous lagarto lizard and the quati coons. What you see is a mother with three young. Two are below her and one is above her head.





After Iquazú we flew back to Buenos Aires where our driver picked us up for our visit to rural Argentina, a trip to the Pampas, to the Estancia el Ombú de Areco, a ranch with gauchos. We arrived at 9 p.m. to receive our supper and as we were quite tired, we went directly to bed.

December 27, 2002 – We arose at 7 a.m. for our first horseback riding.

We had breakfast first, though we were not expecting it and rode off while the temperatures were still reasonably cool. We saw more than 400 cattle including cows nursing their calves, 35 horses, various sheep and goats. They also raise some soybeans here, we were told. I asked how old a certain calf was and I was told, one month.



My curiosity continued and I

asked how long they eat milk, four to five months. So now I knew that all of the calves standing next to their mothers were born within the past four to five months, as such, in the spring.

After we returned from our ride, we took a dip in the pool and sat in the sun warming ourselves and getting a bit burnt. I met a lad from Ipswich, England. We enjoyed talking about our views of South American life and contrasting our American woes with the British ones. We had an asada for dinner at mid-day. This was course after course of

barbequed beef, salad and dessert. We ate our lunch in only two hours.

Later that afternoon, Ian and I went riding when we hoped that we could run the horses and were not disappointed. Another dip in the pool and we thought we would try the pool table before dinner. The pool table was a bit old so it was very fast, that means that the balls roll without stopping because there is very little felt surface left. In addition, the pockets on this Argentinean pool table we not opened so that the ball might enter. Eight ball pool was quite a challenge. I had just the trick, I introduced Ian to Nigger Billiards, a game my uncle Bill taught me as a child. It was perfect for this situation because pocketing the balls is not the primary object of the game, rather it is to make the cue ball strike more than one of the three balls that are on the table. He liked that very well and we taught the other Limey, Roger, how to play.



Judy enjoyed sitting on the shaded porch and talking to Charlie, a young lady from Kansas, about the mission work she and her husband are doing locally. They shared many stories of family, children and grandchildren. Charlie has three children, Andrew, Alex and Alisa, who were swimming in the pool while the ladies talked.

Supper was ready about nine, a very nice salad and some not so good ravioli, but the cake for dessert was luscious! (I had a second helping with coffee.) We sat with

the various Brits and shared stories of our lives and backgrounds.

December 28, 2002 – Last night it rained with thunder and lightning and the rain continued well into the morning so our morning ride was canceled and we sat on the porch and read. After noon the sun began to come out. We had another dinner asada with our friends, Roger and Linda from England and afterwards, we talked about how we met our spouses and what we thought about British royalty, among other things. The last few hours passed quickly and we made the final packing preparations for our journey home.

