

RUBY PRINCESS

Recent publicity about an outbreak of Corona virus19 on the cruise ship Ruby Princess sent a chill down my spine because just 6 months ago Peter and I set sail from Sydney aboard her for a 5 day cruise to Hobart. Lady fate smiled at us and we had perfect weather, with a lovely starboard cabin as we sailed down the aussie coast. An old friend and colleague, former President of the Australia and NZ College for Seniors, Dr John Thorne, met us at Hobart and gave us a personal tour of his home town and sparkling sapphire coloured harbour. It was fascinating to hear about the remarkable voyage of discovery of this new "Van Dieman's Land" by Abel Tasman way back in 1642. John was Chair of the Australia and New Zealand College for Seniors at the time when I represented NZ tertiary institutions on the Board and he is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Tasmania - so we were in great hands for the day.

Note the magnificent sculpture commemorating Abel Tasman on the foreshore at Hobart (see right).

Anyway, getting back to our experience aboard the Ruby Princess pre Covid 19 virus I fondly remember lolling in the swimming pool on the upper deck watching Oreti Beach featuring in 'The World's Fastest Indian' on the huge outdoor screen above the pool. I was the only spectator! Peter was particularly appreciative of a regular late-night singer/entertainer in one of the housebars and I concurred...

BUT heaven's above, weren't we lucky not to be sailing on that same ship this week when it is in lockdown with C. virus? Ghastly to be confined to one's cabin for weeks on end wondering if you would be the next victim...

Liz Cruickshank

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RECOMMENDED READING

- 1 Where the Crawdads Sing
by Delia Owens.
- 2 The Birdman's Wife
by Mellissa Ashley
Recommended by Nola and Liz.

Contributions/Suggestions/Ideas

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NEWSLETTER 2 CABIN FEVER



A Major Disaster Avoided

At about 0330 on Saturday 25th March 1995. I was awoken by a phone call from the South Port watch house telling me that the vessel Alltrans was aground in Bluff Harbour close to Argyle beach. The Alltrans was a regular caller from Gladstone carrying alumina for discharge at Bluff for the NZAS.

The vessel was outbound from the smelter wharf having completed discharge and heading back to Australia. The vessel was under command of the Master with the duty pilot having the "con" of the vessel. The reasons for the grounding are well documented in the investigation however it is the saving from a catastrophe which I concentrate on.

I immediately in my capacity as Port Operations Manager and Chief Pilot drove from Invercargill to Bluff and via the Pilot boat boarded the vessel as it lay aground close to the beach. I met with the Master and pilot on the bridge. Both were pretty stressed out as was understandable. I assessed the situation and discussed options with the two Tug masters which were made fast and holding the vessel in position.

As you would note at the beginning of this story it was 1995. A bit before one had to do a risk analysis, immediately call any available authority, get legal advice etc etc. my personal analysis was that we were in a dangerous situation, the tide was about to change to incoming which would push us further on the rocks and with the tide change a SW wind increasing to 30kts which would cause some heavy movement and further damage to hull and possibly propeller and /or rudder.

..... I told the Master my thoughts and with his agreement took command of the salvage. An interesting hour was spent with full Tug power pulling the vessel off the rocks into the channel and out to sea. On inspection later it was found that 5 compartments had been breached including an empty (fortunately) fuel tank, rudder damage and a bent propeller blade.

At the next high tide after inspection and finding it safe to do so even with the propeller blade damage (engines tested and power proven), the vessel was brought back into Harbour and berthed at Bluff. Further diver underwater inspection took place and all the usual officials arrived with their briefcases and notebooks.

John Henderson

REALITY RULER EXCHANGE

I wrote this in Oct 2018. It is not reality, as are the articles from Liz and John, but from my fevered imagination!

How quickly things change...

I have come up with a new TV genre called: "Reality Ruler Exchange". The aim is to give heads of state the opportunity to try running someone else's patch for a year or two.

First up how about Donald and the present Pope, Francis, swapping the White House for the Vatican.

I can see Francis, in jeans, inviting to the Whitehouse a Republican and a Democrat, each day, for tea and a chat until he has shaken hands with all of them. Kindness can be contagious – who knows where it might lead?

These politicians would also come face to face with a Socialist, a Capitalist, and a Christian in the one body. They are bound to find this trinity challenging, even threatening, and, hopefully, mind expanding.

Meanwhile Donald has settled into the Vatican dressed in flowing robes that he rather likes. Francis had tweeted that Donald could reduce the cardinal count if he wanted and the Don was looking forward to doing that.

Another win win exchange could be Liz and Philip with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia. Riyadh would be warmer than London in winter for this aging royal couple. That Philip has walked a couple of steps behind the Queen all these years with his manhood and mana still intact might give Saudi men pause for thought and lead to women taking their rightful place in that kingdom. Meanwhile Mohammed and his entourage could enjoy the palace. Being on the spot to pursue arms deals and add to his kingdom's investments in "The City" would be convenient.

He would enjoy, I am sure, watching Theresa smiling as she limbo dances her way to Brexit while the EU continues to lower the bar. Down here in the south pacific, Jacinda and the team continue to repair the damage from our neoliberal experiment while Simon wishes that John and Bill were handy and wonders what happened.

Daniel Phillips