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# *Refior News Bulletin*

Paul \* Pam \* Nikki \* Laura

A WARM SPRING GREETING FROM THE REFIORES !

We just love spring. New life is popping out, the air is getting warmer, the days are longer, this is just a great time of the year ! I am writing this BULLETIN just after our return from a most delightful cruise.

A couple of years ago I wrote in the BULLETIN about our first caribbean cruise. That one was a four-day cruise. I said at that time that we had been "smitten" with the delight of going "cruising." So this time we went on a seven-day cruise. We were on the newest and largest ship of the Carnival cruise line fleet, "ECSTASY." On Saturday, April 3 we traveled to Fort Wayne and checked into the Luxbury Hotel for the night. We did that because our flight was scheduled to leave Sunday morning at 6:00 a.m. We had a wonderful evening with Pam's brother, Tim, and family. Then off to bed. Pam had this unusual desire to be at the airport two hours before our 6:00 a.m. departure time. So Pam, Laura and I arrived at the Fort Wayne International Airport quite early on Palm Sunday. Off we flew to Fort Lauderdale with intermediate stops in Cincinnati and Atlanta. Nikki was flying from Indianapolis to Fort Lauderdale and was scheduled to arrive a good bit earlier. Although we had planned on meeting Nikki at the cruise ship in Miami, her bus trip from the airport to Miami was delayed so we actually met Nikki there at the Fort Lauderdale Airport and went by the cruise line's bus together to the ship.

Following the initial paperwork and the photograph going on to the ship we made our way to our cabin. The cabin was prepared with three beds and a roll-away for the fourth bed (the roll-away was sufficiently "mashed potatoes" that we asked for a second mattress with the fourth bed then being two mattresses on the floor instead of the roll-away). It worked out just fine. We had a very nice window in our cabin. It was like a small hotel room. There was great water pressure with the shower. The most unusual feature was the sound of the toilet. It has a system similar to that on an airplane. When you push the button there was this extremely loud sucking sound followed by a powerful bang. It seemed violent enough to me that I wanted to make sure that I never was in a position that a vacuum could be created by that beast.

The ECSTASY is an extremely large ship with all kinds of facilities. As you know, cruise ships are famous for their quality and abundance of food and pampering. Actually there were 12 scheduled meal opportunities from 6:00 a.m. through 2:30 a.m., and additionally there was 24-hour room service available (at no extra charge). Our waiter for our table was named "Suwarno" (a family man from Indonesia with a wife and 2 daughters back home running the

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family grocery store), and our bus boy/waiter was named "Mayro" from an island off of the coast of Mexico (a single man who reported that he has "a girlfriend in every port."). Although I had been doing extremely well on my diet, I declared that I was not on my diet that week and didn't want to hear about any dieting during the cruise. The way I ate during the week, such a thought was obviously in a very deep freeze. There was only one night when all 4 of us stayed up for the 12:30 a.m. big buffet, but different combinations of us attended 2 or 3 of the buffets during the week. Each meal in the dining room had multiple courses with great selections, and you could have as many entrees, appetizers, soups, cheeses, desserts, etc. as you cared to ask for. The normal routine for breakfast was for me to go to the dining room and I would read the Bible while I ate breakfast by myself. Then I would go to one of the 4 locations where breakfast was being served cafeteria style and I would load up a tray with glasses of orange juice, hot tea, croissants, yogurt, muffins, and fruit and then I would deliver the tray of food to my precious ladies in the cabin. We were all happy that way. I enjoyed the leisurely and luxurious pampering in the dining room, and the girls got to sleep in and have breakfast without a worry concerning dressing or putting on makeup. So much for the food (yes .... I am back on my diet here in Indiana and I fully expect that I will continue to make good progress with the Lord's help).

When we woke up on Monday we were in port at Nassau, Bahamas. We had signed up for the snorkeling excursion. Donned with our swimming suits we entered a boat parked near the cruise ship at the pier. We thoroughly enjoyed the scenery as we left the harbor on a 45-minute boat ride to a large coral reef near "Gilligan's Island" (yes, the very island that was pictured on the Gilligan's Island T.V. show). The boat did not go to a pier or to shore, but stopped in the water near the coral reef. The boat was constructed with platforms on the back so that swimmers could put on their flippers and masks immediately before jumping into the water. What followed was one of the most incredible experiences of each of our lives. The coral reef was just like you see on the National Geographic specials. There were multiple forms and colors of coral and sea life and countless beautiful fish. The colors were so brilliant and iridescent that they looked almost artificial. And the fish were so plentiful and **BIG** ! Many of the tropical fish were the size of a carp and one that seemed to be following me around was fully one half of my size. I tried to touch the fish but failed each time. One time I was swimming through what appeared to be hundreds of fish swimming close to one another and I thought that surely I could touch a fish at that time. But, alas, God gave them quicker reflexes than He gave to me. We purchased a throw-away underwater camera which we used to record the event. What a neat remembrance. The Refiors were the four last people to return to the boat. We simply did not want that incredible experience to come to an end. The sun was shining on the beautiful turquoise waters and the air temperature was wonderful. On the way back to the ship Laura and I went up on the sun deck and "laid out." Laura desperately wanted good weather for our vacation and she had sunshine every day!

Back on board the ECSTASY I made my way up to the "sports deck" and worked out in the gymnasium. That gym was as well equipped as any gym I have seen. After working out on the equipment and doing my stomach exercises I went one flight up to the forward sun deck where there is a running track. Because my knees have felt so good for so many months and since I have been doing disciplined conditioning for 3 months I decided that perhaps I could jog like I used to (I used to be a 7-day a week jogger for years). I enjoyed jogging in the sea breeze a lot. The sun was brilliant. However, after a mile or so I started to perceive those signals from my knees. I realized that I was being pretty reckless and even presumptuous of our great Lord who had answered prayers for my knees. I resolved that I had better not do that again. I had

the luxury of working out every day but one. The rest of the days I worked out in the gym and then did a "fast walk" where I walked as fast as I can using that same jogging track. That was really nice. Working out helped to ease my guilty conscience for all of the food I was consuming.

Tuesday was spent aboard the ship. It was in the high 80's with full sunshine. It was a day for laying out in the sun and "vegging out." This was the first vacation that I have taken since being a lawyer when I took no legal work with me .... none. It was a true vacation. There was plenty of time for quality quiet time with the Lord. There was plenty of time to talk and laugh with the family. There was plenty of time to sleep. There was plenty of time to leisurely dine. There was plenty time to work out. There was plenty of time to read. There was plenty of time to stroll around the ship and enjoy the ocean air. There was time .... to vacation. Each evening there were entertainment shows in the large theaters which could seat 1,000 people each. We went to the general audience shows and let the late night crowd attend the second round of shows later which were not designed for general audiences. Besides, at the later time we were either sleeping, at the buffet or standing on deck at a rail talking while we watched the reflection of the moon dance on the waves.

Wednesday morning we arrived in San Juan, Puerto Rico. We sailed past the old San Juan Fort as we entered the harbor. We signed up for the bus tour of San Juan. It stopped at the fort and we had a walking tour before getting back on the bus. That was very interesting. Throughout the trip we enjoyed taking many pictures. What fun ! Again it was a beautiful, pleasant, sunny day. After taking in the bus tour of San Juan we were "on our own" in the shopping area of Old San Juan which was located within walking distance of the ECSTASY. We did shop and made some excellent purchases. We walked back to ship and cleaned up in time for a relaxing and delectable dinner. After dinner we joined the group going to the El San Juan Hotel where we took in an outstanding performance of traditional Flaminca dancers. I concluded that the dance was a very interesting combination of ballet and clogging. The costumes were beautiful and the dancers were outstanding.

While we slept Wednesday night the ECSTASY traveled over to St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. Although St. Thomas is reputed to be the best place to do shopping, we concluded that we could shop anytime in Indiana. Since we had made a considerable investment to take in and experience the exotic tropical islands we instead signed up for the trip over to the island of St. John. We had a "taxi" (and old pickup truck with bench seats installed on the back under a canvas cover) transport us to a ferry. The ferry then took us over to St. John Island. Then another "taxi" took us to Trunk Bay. Because St. John Island is mostly a national park, it remains in a pristine condition. The waters are turquoise and various shades of beautiful blues and purples. The beaches are perfectly clean with white, soft sand, and the water is incredibly transparent. The taxi ride to the beach was breathtaking as we went up and down the volcano-created mountains with amazing views of the various inlets, coves, bays and beaches. The beach at Trunk Bay is reputed to be one of the top 10 most perfect and beautiful beaches in the world. I BELIEVE IT ! While we were there we had to pinch ourselves to see if this could possibly be true. Picture the most perfect tropical beach and you have the beach at Trunk Bay. Furthermore, just off the beach was a small island which had a coral reef all the way around it. Much to our surprise, the tour was scheduled to stay at that paradise for only approximately one hour before it was to return to St. Thomas for people to have an opportunity to go shopping. We decided it would be well worth the \$50 it would cost us to obtain our own transportation back to the ship later, so that we could stay behind at that beautiful beach for the entire day.

We had such fun. All of us went snorkeling and again enjoyed the beautiful coral and the various tropical fish. I even came upon a barracuda on the back side of that island. It wasn't too interested in me and I decided I would not do anything threatening toward the barracuda. We spent some time climbing some rocks rising from the ocean. The girls relaxed on the beach while I went back for more snorkeling. It was so much fun. The beach is located in the United States national park and there was a pay phone there. Dialing from the island of St. John back to my office was no different than calling from Illinois to Warsaw. And the connection was just as clear. Modern technology is really something. We arrived back at the ship shortly before the deadline for returning on board. Because there were some shops near the ship we actually did have a few minutes to do some quick shopping there. My hours of snorkeling were the substitute on Thursday for a workout on board. The ship was pulling out as we were getting ready for dinner. We had another fun and relaxing evening together as a family. St. Thomas was the last port before the ship headed back to Florida.

Friday and Saturday were spent entirely at sea. Again we had beautiful skies, brilliant sunshine, pleasant ocean breezes, and delightful temperatures. Those two days were spent in wonderful family conversation, lots of happy laughter, taking in the sunshine, working out, spending time with the Lord, and generally just having a true vacation. When Easter Sunday morning arrived it did not seem like either Sunday or Easter Sunday (even though our family privately remembered the celebration of the resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ). We had a fine breakfast together in the dining room and then there were activities which were a part of the disembarking process. Then there was the bus ride to the airport. Nikki's flight was sooner than ours. We had a delightful lunch together in the restaurant on the 7th floor of the hotel at the airport. We saw Nikki off at her gate and then the three of us paid \$20 for a taxi cab ride to the International Mall which we intended to be our afternoon activity (rather than waiting all afternoon in the airport for our flight). The taxi driver did not bother to tell us that the mall was closed that day for Easter. After unsuccessfully walking around looking for something to do or places that would be open, we took the return taxi ride back to the airport where we spent the balance of the afternoon waiting for our flight. We arrived back in Fort Wayne to cool temperatures. Although our car was in the right place where it should be, some blindness came over me and I could not find the car for some time. Finally I found the car, we loaded up, and we drove back to Warsaw, getting in pretty late. We had a quick trip over to Pam's parent's house to pick up our dog, Candy. Candy was soooooo excited to see us - especially her mommy, Pam. Then it was back to a very, very, very special object .... our own bed ! How nice. Simply put, that week was the most wonderful and fun family vacation I have ever had. I thank the Lord for that opportunity.

There actually is some other news about other things besides our cruise. Jerry Yeager resigned as an associate lawyer at my law office. Jerry took a position with a law firm in Nashville, which works with entertainers in the music industry. And so two weeks after learning of Jerry's decision he was gone. That obviously impacted the office. [UPDATE - Jerry just informed us that he has left that firm, and his future plans are uncertain]. God has been very gracious to help me in keeping everything together and getting everything necessary done. I am very thankful that Bill Fawley is in his last semester of law school and that he will be licensed as an attorney this year. That will help a lot. Even though Jerry left, I kept my same large staff and they all remain very busy and highly productive. They are really terrific. Things are going great at the office and I thoroughly enjoy lawyering. As much as I enjoyed the vacation, I can honestly say that I am happy to be back at the office. What a blessing ... it's great to get away and it's great to be back. Spring has officially arrived - today the lawn was mowed for the first

time at the office.

Laura was in the cast of the musical *GUYS AND DOLLS* put on by the high school. Laura did a great job. The quality of the performance was much higher than one would expect for a high school musical. Laura was selected to be a camp counselor all summer at Camp Hiawatha - a Christian camp located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (this is the camp where the teens of Pleasant View Bible Church go each summer). With Laura graduating a year from now, our nest is going to be empty so soon as it is, so it is a tug on the heart for us to think of Laura being gone all summer. However, we know that this is God's will and that Laura will grow spiritually and have great ministries this summer. After school lets out, and before Laura starts here duties at Camp Hiawatha, Laura will be making 2 trips. She will be going with the drama teacher and some other students to New York City to go to some famous Broadway shows. Laura will also be attending the National Student Government Conference. Laura has worked very hard on her grades and continues to get outstanding grades in her schoolwork (She is presently ranked 3rd in a class of well over 400 students). She still plays the piano every day - much to her daddy's delight. The Lord blessed both Nikki and Laura with beautiful singing voices. Laura is a part of the high school "Select Chorale" and their group succeeded in advancing to State and getting a first in the ensemble competition.

Nikki continues to live and work in the Indianapolis area. She enjoys the various duties and responsibilities at Continental Saddlery Company. She is very involved in the Awana Program of her church. She enjoys the kids so much. Her roommate was married last month and Nikki is now looking for a suitable lady to move in as her roommate. Nikki has had the opportunity to sing at Gray Road Baptist Church and to play the piano as an accompanist there.

Pam and I doing great. We are happier and more in love than ever. Now that Spring is finally arriving Pam will be in her glory as she digs in the dirt and communes with those flowers, plants and other growing things.

Things are very, very exciting at Pleasant View Bible Church. The Lord is moving hearts and there is a fresh spirit of commitment to the Lord and a desire to serve Him. We have been many months without a senior pastor. The associate pastors, Chick Gerber and Scott Howington have done a marvelous job. A significant change is the way the church has come together and the church leadership has come to a new resolve for the body in Christ at Pleasant View to move forward and to move out in ministry. There also are some excellent developments toward the selection of a senior pastor. Some of you have been praying about this and I would urgently request that you continue praying for God's man to be called as our Senior Pastor at this important time.

Before I bring this **BULLETIN** to a close, it is time for the sports report. Indiana has only one class for high school basketball teams. The basketball tournament is appropriately called "Hoosier Hysteria." Last year the Warsaw boys made it to the final four, but the Tigers two all-state performers graduated. It was exciting as this year's team developed and in the tournament made it all the way to the *ELITE EIGHT!* Way to go Tigers! The Iowa mens' basketball team finished tied for third in the Big Ten and made it to the final 32 in the NCAA National Tournament. The Iowa womens' basketball team made it all the way to the *FINAL FOUR* (and they would have won the *NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP* if the spineless referee would have called the blocking foul at the end of the semi-final game against Ohio State). And finally, the awesome University of Iowa wrestling team won the Big Ten Championship (for an