



Still On The Road

The Boot & Beanie

The Spring, post CarniVail, Class of '65 newsletter

From your Newsletter editor

I am one of many alumni who interview candidates for the incoming freshman classes. This is not only rewarding because I am helping Dartmouth, but I get to briefly meet some really amazing people. Musicians, mathematicians, writers -- I realize that my high school accomplishments weren't in the same league as theirs, but I hope that I would have performed accordingly if the bar had been this high. This year Dartmouth was able to accept less than 10% of applicants. Dartmouth College's [Admissions Office](#) received more than 22,000 applications for acceptance into the fall Class of 2015, a 19% increase over 2010, and Admissions Office interviews have been eliminated -- there are just too many applicants to deal with. Interviews were never absolutely essential, since many applicants couldn't arrange one, but this means that the alumni interviews are the only ones that applicants can receive, making them more important than before. While generally interviewers do not have the power to make or break an applicant's chances, the correlation between high scoring interviews and acceptance is amazing. No doubt there's the 'great minds' effect, but the interviews can certainly make a difference in close calls, or can clarify vague situations.

When you are considering how you can help Dartmouth, bear this valuable service in mind. A few hours from November through February, perhaps interviewing four or five applicants, is all that is needed. Registering your interest in becoming an interviewer can be done at: <http://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=dHdYREdsT2FOOVIDQkR2ZWZORIZZcIE6MA>

Roger's Corner

Keene, NH -- The snow banks here in Keene are trying to melt, though the cold nights are holding them back. As we look forward to the balance of the year, one of the current matters worth our attention is the Dartmouth College Fund. Don Bradley and our Assistant Class Agents have and will be contacting classmates with reminders to pitch in with contributions to the Fund. Last year we had 52.5% of classmates contributing and our goal moving toward the 50th Reunion is to get that number above 65%, so please chip in what you can -- give until it feels good. Many thanks to those of you who have contributed.

Tucker Mays is developing plans for future Out-of-Hanover Mini Reunions and has developed a questionnaire which is available on Survey Monkey. Please give us your opinion about the various options. Go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CDF6XT8>.

The annual Class Executive Committee meeting at Bill Webster's house in Old Saybrook, CT will be on Tuesday, July 12. Please let me know if you would like to attend and participate in this important opportunity to brainstorm and plan. ~Roger Hansen: hhansen@ne.rr.com 603-903-0524.

CarniVail 2011
The '65 Saga
by Dick Durrance

Vail, CO -- A contingent of seven '65's and their brave wives converged on Vail for the weekend of 25-27 February 2011 to join more than one hundred fellow Dartmouth graduates in attending the seventh annual CarniVail extravaganza, originally conceived and magnificently orchestrated by our own **Steve Waterhouse**. In addition to Steve, those in attendance--most of them trying not to show how desperately they were gasping for Vail's thin mountain air--were **Chuck Lobitz, Rick Davies, Norm Christiansen, Roger Hanson, Tom Campbell**, and your novice newsletter stringer, **Dick Durrance**.

Working together, Steve and a team from the Tuck School filled the weekend with opportunities to catch up with classmates, meet fellow graduates, feast on elegant foods, drink good wine, fire up our minds, and dare the mighty pitches of Vail Mountain.

Steve gathered everyone together for a group photo at 9:00 am Friday morning. I have it on good authority that any similarities to herding cats are purely coincidental.

Following lunch at the Wildwood Restaurant on Vail Mountain, only a few of the eager skiers lingered on assorted pretexts to rest their aching legs.

The Sonnenalp Hotel, a fabulous family owned resort in the fine tradition of Alpine resorts, hosted most of the weekend events, starting with the après ski cocktail party on Friday afternoon. The clamor of friends reuniting in the atrium adjacent to Ludwig's restaurant threatened to clear the lobby of the hotel. The buzz at the cocktail party carried over to the '65's dinner at the nearby Bodega restaurant. A couple seated in the upstairs room with us were very gracious about the racket.



Lobitz & Durrance

Saturday morning the Dartmouth armbands provided to all participants were seen on trails all over the mountain. Some participants were sporting racing bibs as well. The NASTAR course was set up for eager Dartmouth competitors. The '65 ski team members Durrance and Lobitz, not wanting to tarnish the shimmering memories of their glory days in the gates with the reality of their current ability to race, spent the day skiing with their former captain, **Jim Page '63**. Dick had not seen Jim in 48 years and had a wonderful time catching up.

At four-thirty we eased, with a sigh of relief, into chairs at the Sonnenalp for a brilliant introduction to the new Dartmouth/Tuck Center for Health Care Delivery Science given by **Dr. Al Mulley '70**, the Center's Director. By the time we stood up at the end of his presentation, many of us were blown away by how complex the challenges of health care are and very pleased to know that guys like Al Mulley and institutions like Dartmouth are tackling the problem.

A lovely dinner at the Sonnenalp featured a delicious wine from Norm Christianson's Canyon Wind Vineyard. Dinner was followed by Steve Waterhouse's

CarniVail Group Photos



Left to right around the table Jim Page's wife Ginny; Rick Davy '65; Sue Drinker (Durrance); Dick Durrance '65; Nancy Hansen; Roger Hansen '65; Diane Boyer '78; Bill Smith '58; Tom Corcoran '54; Steve Waterhouse '65; Norm Christianson '65 in the back, acting his age; Jim Page '64 (top half of head); Linda Waterhouse; Gretchen Lobitz. No ID on the guy in the top right.



Left to right top: Rick Davy '65; Dick Durrance '65; Steve Waterhouse '65; Roger Hansen '65; Chuck Lobitz '65
Left to right on bottom: Pia Streeter ; Tom Campbell '65 (with his beard just grown during a one month trip to New Zealand, which included the earthquake a week earlier.)

awarding of Dartmouth Carnival posters celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Carnival to people who have played notable roles in Dartmouth skiing. The evening was capped off by **Tom Corcoran '54**, National Ski Hall of Fame racer, sharing stories from his years of racing for Dartmouth and in the Olympics.

The grand finale for the weekend--a special 7:30 am “dawnbusters” ride up the mountain, began with clear blue skies and ended with brunch in Vail's famed Game Creek Club high on the mountain.

More info on the guests at the '65 dinner, pictured with our group above:

Diane Boyer '78 of Vail..... Vail area local; former professional free style skier; owner of Skea Ski Clothing and first woman Chairman of the SnowSports Industries Association.

Jim Page '63 and his wife..... Former D ski racing star; National Champ; D Ski Coach; Olympic Ski Coach and Administrator.

Pia Streeter..... Colby Jr grad in our day; a local Vail resident adopted by the Vail Dartmouth Club; wife of deceased Olympic skier and Middlebury grad, Les Streeter.

Bill Smith '58..... Vail area local; Captain of 1958 Ski Team which won the NCAA Championship; 1958 National Downhill Champ.

Tom Corcoran '54..... One of Dartmouth's all time great racers; member National Ski Hall of Fame; 10-time National Champion in 4 countries; 4th in 1960 Olympics Giant Slalom; founder/owner of Waterville Valley Ski Area.

Class News

Longview, WA (TDN - The Daily News Online, Jan 17, 2011) -- **Former Monarchs headed to Mark Morris [HS] Hall of Fame. Ivars Janieks (Class of 1961):** A member of the second graduating class at Mark Morris, Janieks was a standout in the classroom and as an athlete. He earned nine varsity letters in football, basketball and track during the time MM was a three-year high school. Janieks also received all-conference honors in football and track, and all-state kudos in football. His time in the 110 hurdles (15.74 seconds) is ranked sixth all-time among MM athletes.

Janieks ... received an academic scholarship to attend Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, where he participated in track and football.

He was part of Dartmouth's Ivy League championship football teams in 1962 and '63, and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Economics in 1965. Janieks parlayed his business savvy into several successful operations in California and Texas. He continues competing in athletics, and for the last 15 years has competed in senior basketball tournaments around the world, and has led teams to several gold medals and two world tournament titles.

Hanover -- **Mike Gonnerman** has been elected by his fellow class treasurers to serve as the class treasurers representative to the alumni council. His three year term will begin in July, 2011.

Philadelphia – As I write, March 28, the Silk Road show about which I emailed everyone is in its last day. The [Edward Rothstein review](#) was for a time the 8th most e-mailed NYT article. **Vic Mair** was a

consultant to the exhibition and editor of the exhibition catalog.

Brazil, Diego Garcia, Saigon, etc -- **Bill Affolter** has emailed **Pete Frederick** two alarming tales of medical emergencies afloat in Brazil and the Indian Ocean, with happy, or at least under control, endings to both. The first of them is included below. The snail mail newsletter would be too big if I included both in this issue. The second is appended to the web version of this newsletter, so if you haven't checked out the website, here is motive.

Deaths -- We have received news of the deaths of two classmates, Daniel Morley and Michael O'Connell. Details should appear in the Alumni Magazine.

Correction

“Who are you, and what have you done with the real Dick Fuller?” department.

Steve Fuller writes, “I appreciate the inclusion of the Summit picture on Mt. Moosilauke. Given the effort needed by all to make the picture possible, I thought it would be good to get my name and my wife's name right. My name is Steve and my Wife's name is **Karen**. We did not have a Dick Fuller in the class.” Apologies, Steve and Karen. My fact checker was goofing off that day.

Take Action!

Mini-Reunion Survey -- Roger writes, “Under the leadership of **Tucker Mays**, the Class is planning future Out-Of-Hanover Mini Reunions. Please copy this link to your browser to complete a brief questionnaire to assist us in the planning: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CDF6XT8>.” [I took the survey. It works, no problems. Let's hear from you folks!]

Call for papers – Without Bill Affolter's stories I'd have been reduced to reprinting news from emails you have already received, such as Pete Frederick's Alumni Council report. Worse things have happened, but let's hear from more people out there, not just the usual New England suspects. Send news and photos, with accurate captions, please, to Harris.65@alum.dartmouth.org .

Class Dues – Dues are slow coming in. Jennifer Casey '77a in the Office of Alumni Relations commented on the decrease in classmates' paying dues -- 316 last FY and only 275 so far this FY. She notes that in general the number of dues payers is down by about 5%, but our class will most likely be down 10% or so. **We have arranged to accept class dues via PayPal and credit cards**, and, at Jennifer's suggestion, the following additional actions will be taken:

1. Compare 2011 to prior years. Done. We had a real bump in 2009, and a sharp drop off in 2010.
2. Compare 2010 and 2011 collections by month. Done. We had little activity in Q4 last year, and will have to work to significantly increase our Q4 numbers for this year.
3. Contact classmates who contributed to the Dartmouth College fund but did not pay dues.
4. Send an email reminder in Q4 to those who paid dues in 2010 but not in 2011.
5. Put messages on the web site and in the class newsletter.
6. Point out the **great programs that our class dues have been supporting** over the years, such as athletic visitations, Friends of Baker Library, the Native American program, the Alumni Memorial Book program, Class Scholars program, the “Passion for Skiing” and “Passion for Snow” projects, the Dartmouth Alumni Book Project, the 50th reunion - Mount Moosilauke Ravine Lodge/Cabin and the Rauner Library project. Man up, guys. Pay your dues.

Monkey Business
by Bill Affolter

“So whatever you do, don’t pet the freakin’ monkeys!” was my rallying call at the first medical pre-port. This was a result of having used all our rabies vaccine when we stopped at Brazil on the SAS trip in ’96. Indeed, at our first port on that trip we hadn’t been off the ship for more than two minutes when a student came running up. “Dr Bill, a monkey bit me!” Arrrrrgh. Now, granted, there are lots of monkeys in Brazil and a lot of other places and they are cute and run around jumping on people and trying to steal food, etc. Unfortunately they also carry rabies, albeit rarely. One problem with rabies, however, is that it’s uniformly fatal and once you get symptoms, there is no treatment. In the US we can afford the \$1,500 dollars for the vaccine and immunoglobulin, but most people in the world can’t come up with that kind of money, especially when the risk is admittedly low.

I was thus somewhat disturbed to hear a couple of hours before we left the Amazon port city of Manaus that a young girl on a jungle lodge trip had had two or three monkey bites. I went to the clinic, saw we had barely enough immunoglobulin (given for immediate immunity) and vaccine (for long term immunity) to treat her. I asked our nurse, Randi, in the two hours before “on-ship time - gotta be back,” to go to the Institute of Tropical Medicine and see if they had vaccine. Randi barely makes it with the child and her mom in time to be seen, and the docs there didn’t want to give us the vaccine, but Randi has persuasive powers and returned, just in time, with the vaccine and the immunoglobulin - given gratis, since in a country with socialized medicine there is no way to charge for it.

We learned from the mother, however, that many of the students on the trip with them were playing with the same monkey and may have been scratched or bitten, too. By now we are on our way down the Amazon with a nine day crossing before we would arrive in Ghana. “Oh, no”, I thought, knowing what was about to happen. I have a satellite phone and called my good friends in the Infectious Disease Department at Group Health in Seattle for advice. I had had the exact same conversation 15 years previously with the same friends and I knew what the answer would be -- if at all possible, we really had to vaccinate anyone who was exposed. I looked at the trip roster. There were 31 people on the trip. Suzie wrote up a memo saying, “If you were bitten or scratched by a monkey on the ----Lodge trip come to the medical clinic at 7:30.” I arrived at the clinic at 7:30 to find FIFTEEN students anxiously awaiting whatever we called them for. My heart sank, to put it mildly. Turns out they all had been bitten (two) or scratched (13) by one monkey - Jack, by name. I won’t go into why this happened, but, as I said, a lot of places have pet monkeys and they are cute.

The next 18 hours were spent on the phone and on email trying to decide what to do. I got lots of help. My ID friends in Seattle confirmed that you can’t isolate a monkey like you might a cat or dog, and observe them for two weeks because they can carry the disease for long periods without symptoms. You can sacrifice the animal and examine the brain but is this possible in Manaus? No way to tell in the middle of the night while we were steaming the 1000 miles down the Amazon. And, in the unlikely event that it was positive for rabies, it would be another nine days before we could get vaccine, and we were unlikely to find the human derived immunoglobulin we needed in Ghana. Most countries have immunoglobulin from horse serum, which has a much higher incidence of side effects, some serious.

So we called around. Called the CDC and after being transferred from person to person were told, “Oh, you’re in Brazil. We can’t give you advice, then. If you’re not coming back to a US port, you have to call the WHO.” Right.

We called the organization that supplies the ship with medicines in Miami and the Chief Operations Of-

ficer of SAS in Virginia and the head of the shipping lines who runs the vessel. The question of whether or not to immunize quickly went over the Medical Department head to these people and they to a one said, "We have to do it." So the problem became, where to get the vaccine and immunoglobulin. We had only one port -- a small town on the Amazon called Macapo which was about 100 miles short of the Atlantic. It had a small airfield. The captain said we could stop and anchor there for about 3-4 hours before we lost the chance to cross the shallow bar at the mouth of the Amazon.

To my amazement, the captain said that although the Amazon is about 100 feet deep most of the way to Manaus, the silt bar at the mouth makes it considerably shallower, and our 600 foot vessel had, get this, 19 inches of clearance when we entered the river. Miss that window and we'd lose a day, which becomes huge on a trip like ours, with everything on a time schedule. Waiting nine days and hoping to find the vaccine in Ghana wasn't much of an option.

Well, in this day and age, we could probably get the vaccine and charter a small jet in Miami and receive the vaccines in time, I thought. Turns out, it was impossible to just round up that much vaccine in a short time. The US facility that manufactures it had shut down to build a new plant and it comes from France, or some such thing, and it just isn't that easy. Dan Garvey, our dean and my friend and therapist for the previous day was sitting with me in his office calling Hanover, NH where they recently had a rabies outbreak - got as far as the purchasing officer in the pharmacy before we got a voice mail. We found they couldn't get that much in Miami, etc. and time was really running out. Dan is used to dealing with institutional problems that involve lots of participants and was a big help.

Our tour guides from Manaus who could speak Portuguese were on the phone to veterinarians and the Manaus Public Health Department, who said the last case of rabies in a monkey in Manaus was in the 1980s and that afterward they started vaccinating all pet monkeys, but since they didn't have another case, they stopped and apparently haven't vaccinated any pet monkeys in years. Jack hadn't been vaccinated. Every authority along the line recommended vaccination, but we couldn't find enough vaccine. We were going to arrive in Macapo in about eight hours. The tour guides had contacted a small hospital in Macapo which said they had some immunoglobulin but it was unclear how much or what kind it was.

It was then that we got an email, saying that someone in the Brazilian Health Authority or somewhere had found vaccine and that there would be doctors and nurses waiting at the port for our arrival in Macapo. They wouldn't give us the vaccine without seeing the students involved so the students would have to be taken ashore or we would have to convince the doctors to come to the ship. "Unbelievable," we thought. But what kind of vaccines do they have, and do they have enough and will they let us have it? But since there was no other option, we just crossed our fingers and waited. We got the students together and had decided that the ones that were bitten would get the immunoglobulin and vaccine and the very low risk scratches would get the vaccine, which, in this very low risk scenario seemed sufficient if not ideal.

In the AM we arrived at Macapo, which looked like just a few buildings in the otherwise unbroken jungle that had been the shore of the river for the last 900 miles. The Brazilian medical team apparently didn't want to come to the ship, but agreed for reasons I still can't be sure of. A boat came and pulled up to our floating gangway and eight people carrying an ice chest came aboard. None of them spoke a word of English. The students were all gathered outside the clinic sitting on the floor. They were particularly concerned that we wanted to sacrifice the monkey in question and were formulating a plan to make "FREE JACK" tee shirts. Randi, Laura and I entered the clinic with the medical team and anxiously opened the ice chest, not knowing whether we were going to find the right vaccines nor how

much, since we had ideally needed 70 vials of immunoglobulin and 60 vials of vaccine, a huge amount.

I opened the chest and found box after box of vials. Amazingly they had all 70 vials of human derived immunoglobulin. I was stunned. But they only had 15 vials of vaccine. I asked if they had any more and they immediately said, yes, and they'd send someone back for the rest, and would I please close the lid since it needed to stay refrigerated. Unbelievable. Where in the world did they get all this?

So now we had less than three hours before we had to leave. We needed to weigh each student, calculate the right dose of immunoglobulin, inject some around the wound and put the rest into their butts, keeping track of all the lot numbers of all the vials. Then in a different room draw up and deliver the vaccine, which couldn't be put in the same place as the immunoglobulin without inactivating it, and the Brazilian team insisted that they needed to draw up the vaccine and oversee the whole procedure, finally agreeing to let Randi and Laura and me do the injections. All this had to happen with all fifteen students and the 11 of the rest of us in this tiny clinic with three exam rooms and none of us able to communicate except by smiles and gestures and crude drawings, sort of like an elaborate game of Pictionary. We did have the one interpreter but she was quickly overwhelmed by requests.

It reminded me of a group of ants needing to move a stick or bridge a gap - there is all this chaos and then suddenly there is order of sorts and it just happens. And that is just what happened over the next few hours. There were a few problems at the end since the students started to wander off to lunch, etc. It was a little like herding cats, but amazingly, just as the captain sent word that we absolutely must leave, we finished the last injection, the rest of the vaccine arrived and the Brazilian team, whom we had bonded with by now, gave us all hugs and we hastily gathered for a group photo and we thrust Semester at Sea lanyards and eight Semester at Sea tee shirts into their hands and they boarded their shore boat and, with smiles and waves, departed as we simultaneously pulled anchor and steamed away.

And what did the medical team want in return? Nothing. The vaccine was free. They don't charge for this in Brazil. Somehow, eight lanyards and eight tee shirts just didn't seem like enough thanks for \$15,000 worth of vaccine. I'm still not sure who actually was responsible for arranging all this but we are all in their debt. But so many people were involved in this it needed everyone's help to happen.

I definitely had tears in my eyes as they pulled away, and I think they did too.

Now, I know this seems bizarre, and could easily be seen as an overreaction by a group of privileged (mostly) Americans who are used to eliminating risk and can afford to. We don't have open holes in our sidewalks, and we have health inspectors checking our restaurants, and we have clean water and sewers and, of course, lawyers for those who don't measure up. Most of the world lives on a fraction of the material wealth that we possess and would certainly roll their eyes at all this fuss for something which, in reality, is a very low risk situation. On the other hand, if your child were bitten or scratched by an unvaccinated monkey in the Amazon, what would you do to protect them? Real questions and no easy answers, but definitely a moral dilemma. Lots of food for thought as we circle the world on this cultural and academic quest.

I just asked Suzie as I finished this, "Would you capitalize rabies?" "No," she replied, "But I'll bet you would."

Where in the World is Diego Garcia?

by Bill Affolter

Almost two days out of Mauritius and steaming north across the Indian Ocean with five more days at sea before we get to Chennai and I'm in clinic looking at a young woman who has suddenly started developing bruises on her legs and body as well as a rash on her legs.

A quick blood test and blood smear confirm that she has almost no platelets in her blood -- the little sticky things that help to form clots and prevent bleeding. We were thinking this could be ITP -- Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura -- a condition that may be caused by medicines, can come on after a viral infection, or can be related to other immune disorders, but no one really knows why it happens. We didn't have the laboratory facilities to be certain and we knew there were some other possibly more ominous possibilities, but Laura made a call to an oncologist friend of hers in Seattle to get some help. It was about 8:00 in the morning there and he was very helpful and also referred us to a hematologist colleague who he thought also might be able to advise us. After discussing the case we were fairly certain that the most likely diagnosis was ITP and we had decided on the best method of treatment we could offer. It can be treated with high dose steroids, which we had, but this may take several weeks to help. It can also be treated with immunoglobulin or platelet transfusion, neither of which we had, so we started steroids, stopped any medicines she was on that could possibly have caused it, and hoped for the best.

About the same time, one of the favorite students on the ship comes in to see Laura with an infected hand. Not usually a big problem but this student had incredibly severe burns over about 80-90% of her body at age two and had almost no normal tissue and, in the past with infections like this, has needed in-hospital IV therapy with a subclavian line, which we couldn't possibly do on the ship. Laura started IM and oral therapy with all the antibiotics we had available (that the student was not allergic to) and crossed our fingers.

Next day...yesterday. Student #1 is having some bleeding problems and her blood count is dropping. Student #2 is febrile and her hand is noticeably worsening -- weeping, swollen. Four and a half days to India. Not good. Her leg is also swollen, red and weeping.

Laura and Randi and I have a conference with Captain Jeremy. What are our options? Any naval vessels in the vicinity? On the big wall map there is only open water between India and us. He says, "There is one small island about a day and half away, Diego Suarez. It's an island owned by the British and there is an American naval base on the island. Unfortunately, it's very difficult to land there. I've been turned away from there in the past when I got too close, since it's a very secure military installation. The only other option is to use all four engines at top speed and try to get to India in three days."

I looked up Diego Suarez on Google and it said it was on Madagascar. Also some emails that were coming back from some of our evacuation consultants were calling it Diego Rivera. After checking again with Captain Jeremy he said, "Oh, I meant Diego Garcia."

Now I have ultimate confidence in Captain Jeremy. I mean he found Ghana with no problem at all and we hit Cape Town on one try so this was no big deal. Anyway, now that we had the name right we decided to try for Diego Garcia and called Medex Global, our evacuation company, and asked them to try to arrange it. They quickly replied that it was a high security military base and there was only a small clinic on the island and no hospital, although they did have an airstrip. We asked if they could land a chartered jet there and take the patients to Cape Town or possibly Singapore or wherever they

could get care. We were first told that it was not possible to off-load passengers there, but then after some negotiations they said we could come within 20 miles of the island. We started helicopter drills, but then in a few more hours learned there were no helicopters on the island. Randi, Laura and I, Executive Dean Dan Garvey and Captain Jeremy got on a conference call with the physician on the island and Medex Global and discussed options. The only feasible one was to send a tug out 20 miles to the ship and off-load the passengers there, but Captain Jeremy said that if we stopped the ship, the stabilizers wouldn't work and it would roll in the seas. A rolling ship and a rolling tug would be a recipe for disaster with these patients, both of whom would be in more danger if hit or bumped.

One other complicating factor was that our electronic chart system was down and we didn't have any charts of the island and it was surrounded by shoals... gulp. "Maybe they could fax you the charts," Laura suggested.

Captain Jeremy asked if we could go into the harbor at the base where the water was calmer. "No way," the doctor said. "It's almost impossible to get permission for that. The English naval admiral in Japan and the US navy both have to OK that and it almost never happens." Nevertheless she agreed to make some calls after she heard the problems we were having. Oh, and one of the crewmembers that morning developed a sudden loss of vision in one eye that could be a retinal detachment or a vascular occlusion. This was not life threatening but certainly threatened his job.

By this time we had decided to hedge our bets and had all four engines (instead of one) up and running at full speed in case we had to go for India. Quite something to see, going 27 knots (30 miles an hour) – huge wake and the 180 meter long ship practically up on a plane. We spent much of the day sending emails, calling specialists and having conference calls. We were close to trying to contact our senators and representatives.

Laura and Suzie and I were at a formal Captain's Dinner at 9:00 PM that evening and Dan Garvey came in to pass on the news that we had been given the go-ahead to enter the harbor. Big grin from Captain Jeremy and sighs of relief from Laura and me.

Not much sleep last night. Laura and I were up emailing and calling gynecologists and hematologists and infectious disease specialists in a variety of places, making sure we had done as much as we could on the ship.

I was up at 7:00 this morning, went up to the staff lounge in the bow to have coffee and was greeted by rain, fog and our pianist who was playing something that sounded like a dirge. Not a good omen, I thought. However, by 7:30 the weather was clearing, and on the horizon there appeared the long low outline of Diego Garcia, a tiny, footprint shaped coral atoll in the middle of this vast otherwise almost featureless ocean. I was starting to be reminded of the TV series Lost, but knew that was a little melodramatic.

It turned out someone did fax the charts to the captain and we started to maneuver close to the island, and by 8:30 had entered a protected area away from the swells. A tug and several boats came out and soon a navy nurse, a corpsman and two heavily armed navy security men were on board in camos, flak jackets, automatic rifles, handguns, the works. They took their stations in the clinic, apparently protecting their personnel from? Us?

The guards were very big, pretty humorless, but warmed up when Randi started asking them questions, not knowing how much they could talk about. She got the quote of the day, though, when she told

them about the rabies scare in the previous medical episode when 15 of our students were bitten or scratched by monkeys in Brazil. One of them listened to the story and without cracking a smile said, “Not even drunken sailors would play with monkeys.”

It turns out that after we had asked for permission to land, the base had tried to contact the ship repeatedly and received no reply. So here was this unknown ship coming at full speed toward this high security base with unknown intent. Not a good idea as it turns out and almost got us in big trouble, I’m sure. For some reason, however, we did get permission to enter the harbor and the security guards were at a loss to understand why, since they frequently get such requests and never grant access. Might have had something to do with 700 American students and the potential fallout for refusing, or maybe they were just in a good space and it seemed like the right thing to do.

Anyway, our student and the crewmember and all the students’ friends were all gathered near the gangway when suddenly the British marines came aboard. About eight marines, heavily armed in battle gear (except the helmets) and their guard dog came in moving everyone away from the gangway and fanning out to do what could have been a full search of the ship but turned out to be a mostly make an appearance sort of entry. Pretty impressive though. Randi, who had been chatting it up with our navy guards, started asking the marines if she could take pictures (since they were all “very, very hot.”) We had been told not to take any photos, but she is such a schmoozer that I wouldn’t have been surprised if they had let her shoot one of their weapons if she asked. “Just make sure you shoot toward the open ocean....”

It became quite emotional as the students prepared to leave, with all their friends gathered to say good bye, but it was also a great relief to see them on their way to Singapore. The student with the infection had to be carried off by four soldiers in a litter and onto a transport vessel from a gangway that was bobbing up and down in the waves. All went well, however. A Lear jet was about to land on the island and ferry them seven hours to Singapore. We went out to the gangway and there were three more boatloads of armed marines surrounding the boat that would transport them. In a few minutes the students were on their way to the island and we were underway back to sea, escorted by three guard boats just making sure we didn’t linger around the base too long.

Pretty amazing way to start the morning. Remarkable how things sometimes work out. Everybody won. The students and crew member, most importantly, were on their way to get the care they needed, the medical team could sleep at night again, the captain had a great story to tell at the next Captain’s Dinner, Randi had two new FaceBook friends in the navy guards (true), and the nurse, corpsman and navy guards all had Semester at Sea T-Shirts and videos, the standard barter items for any service rendered. We were out of lanyards.

On to India.