



Smooth Sailing Diary

New England & Canada

Day 1 Pittsburgh - NYC - At Sea

The 13th annual “Smooth Sailingsm” Cruise for respiratory patients took place September 29 - October 6, 2007. Thirty individuals, including three medical volunteers from the American Respiratory Alliance of Western Pennsylvania, boarded a deluxe motorcoach outfitted with liquid oxygen for the cross state trip to New York City. At the pier, we joined additional “Smooth Sailors” or “Smoothies,” as we’re fondly referred to, from Eastern Pennsylvania. All totaled, there were 101 in our group: 11 medical staff (1 physician, 5 nurses, and 5 respiratory therapists), 36 individuals on oxygen, and the remainder being family and friends. We soon boarded the *Carnival Victory* (one of the largest ships in the Carnival line, carrying 2800 passengers and 1100 crew) and settled into our new home for the next 7 days.

We sailed out of New York harbor, passed the Statue of Liberty, glowing green in the late afternoon sun, and headed north. Time to freshen up and join everyone for our first meal together. It was a long, tiring day. Stepped out on the cabin balcony to marvel at all the stars before calling it a night.

Day 2 At Sea - Boston, Mass

Our group met around 9:00 AM for the first two of six scheduled education sessions. Today we had a review of panic control and exercise. We then had time to meet ‘n greet everyone in our group. We did a get-acquainted activity that had us milling about and meeting our fellow Smooth Sailors.



At 2:00 PM, we arrived in Boston and docked next to *Cunard's Queen Mary II*. During our 8 hour shore leave, many left the ship to visit with family and friends, some relived history, while others participated in one of many ship sponsored shore excursions. Heard that the Boston Duck Tour was just “ducky!”

Day 3 Portland, Maine

After our morning class on oxygen therapy at home, some of our group left the ship and enjoyed the town of Portland. Although cool, the sun was shining and this quaint town offered plentiful shopping and dining. During dinner, our group raved about delicious, succulent Maine lobster lunches and purchases of maple syrup, sweatshirts, and beautiful nautical items. Tomorrow Canada.



Day 4 St. John, New Brunswick, Canada

This medium-sized seaport city welcomed everyone with open arms. As we came off the gangway, each lady received a rose compliments of the local tourist bureau. The pier was a hubbub of activity—craft people were selling their specialties from hand carved wooden items to handmade fur mittens (FYI — St. John annually gets 9-10 feet of snow each winter!) You didn’t have to venture far from the ship to do your souvenir shopping. This was great especially for those traveling in a wheelchair or scooter.

Day 5 At Sea

Our class today covered troublesome mucus and an inhaler review. Since most of this sea day was spent literally in the fog, people just kicked back and relaxed. Some had massages while others participated in art auctions, bingo, crafts, slot tournaments, card games, window shopping the ship’s boutiques, and, of course, the ever popular *eating!*

Stopped by the “med room” to top off my portable oxygen before taking a walk around the promenade deck. The fog was invigorating yet a little eerie. After dinner and the show, popped into the Adriatic Lounge to catch some of the medical staff doing karaoke. Hope they keep their day jobs (wink, wink).

Day 6 Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

We arrived in Halifax around 8:00 AM, and all weather reports were positive that “the sun would shine today!” Since there were no classes, the morning was spent exploring the pier shops and the revitalized waterfront.

Later that afternoon, our group boarded two buses and headed for scenic Peggy’s Cove. Since this was our exclusive tour, we had plenty of medical staff who brought spare oxygen should we need it. A couple of medical staff remained onboard to assist those in our group who decided to stay onboard. The 4-hour tour showcased this charming fishing village and its picturesque lighthouse as well as a brief city tour of Halifax.



At 6:00 PM, we set sail for the United States. Dinner that evening was a lively affair with everyone sharing their shore stories and looking forward to a restful day at sea.

Day 7 At Sea

Our last class this morning was conducted by our group’s doctor. We also received debarkation instructions from our tour operator, East Coast Touring, so that leaving the ship tomorrow would be uneventful.



Throughout the day, members of our group were out and about the ship — on the sun decks catching some rays; gazing out over the deep blue water in anticipation of seeing dolphins or whales; enjoying a piece of pizza or an ice cream cone; playing cards or sipping a drink in the three-story atrium lounge; attending demonstrations by the ship’s staff on napkin folding or bath towel animals. There was even time for last minute duty-free shopping before we needed to pack.

Day 8 New York City and Home

Once we cleared U.S. Customs, our group began debarkation — off-loading the medical equipment, claiming luggage, and packing up the buses for the trip home. We said our goodbyes to many new friends and while two buses headed for Allentown/Bethlehem, we settled in for the long ride to western Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh.

The overall consensus of the group was that although they were tired, they had a great time!



For those who use oxygen continuously, they were surprised that it was readily available and were impressed by the support of the medical staff. Many couldn’t believe that the adventure was over... it almost seemed like a dream.

Ed Note: We are still in the selection process for next year’s “Smooth Sailingssm” cruise. Once finalized, details will appear in upcoming issues of *Breathing Partners Notebook*.

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