

A Trip of Thanksgiving

By Karen Lynn

Three weeks ago, I sailed the pacific seas to the Gulf of Mexico. I stopped in the ports of: Cabo San Lucas, Loreto, Guaymas, Topolobampo, Mazatlan, Sinaloa, and Puerto Vallarta.

This was an unexpected trip, to a part of the world, I always wanted to see.

My in-law's got an incredible deal on a cruise, and asked if we would like to join them.

So how could my husband and I pass up such a wonderful offer. So we said yes.

However, my imagination, could not prepare me for what I was truly about to see witness, and, or stumble upon.

The MS Ryndanm, and all their crew, were about to treat me with much care, and take me on a trip of a life time.

As I traveled the 2,726 nautical miles of breath taking seas, my sea legs became one with the ocean floor, and, I was prompted to remember once again, of all the things I have been blessed with, within my life; and that I have been given a chance to glimpse, observe, and participate in.

We departed the shores of San Diego, on October 12, 2008, on a cool evening, as my husband, his brother, his wife, and my siter-in-laws brother all waved goodbye to the pacific shores we left behind.

This was the longest cruise I had ever taken or been on.

But before we even traveled more that 100 knots, we were summonsed to a passenger boat drill to insure everyone's safety. Although, minutes before, my sweet, hubby, Chris, left our room; on a heroic search to find ice cubes.

I ask you? What was he doing looking for ice cubs at a time like this? After more then 5 minutes of wondering curiously, I began to get a bit frantic.

Where was he when I needed him the most?

As on our last voyages to sea, he was right by my side to help me tie my life jacket to my person.

This time, however, his timing was off, and got discombobulated by where our cabin was laid out.

So I pulled out our life jackets from the closet and proceeded to walk to my destination point with concern.

Over a hundred people passed me by to get to their designated station.

Fortunately, for me, while walking, I found all my family members except for Chris, whom I wanted to, find the most!

Then, after a few moments of worrying and laughing, with my family jokester, my husband almost pasted me by.

"Hay honey, where do you think you're going?"

As I tried to direct and real him in with my voice, while my newly adopted brother-in-law, Willie, was making me, and his sister Laura, giggle uncontrollably.

After we were all lined up like penguins, four sort bells and one long bell rang as we were dismissed to go, and play.

We were off to commenced voyage to Cabo San Lucas where clear skies and fresh gales awaited us.

Port after port, my mind took hold on the vastness of what I was seeing.

I tried to capture pictures both in my mind, and with my photo lens, as I snapped the images that reach out and touched me the most.

Harbor after harbor, I saw the poverty of the Mexican people.

Yet, I also saw an attitude of desperateness, need, kindness, and gentleness longing in there eyes everywhere I went.

Not like in the United States where greed saturates our country, and our hearts and minds.

These men, women, and children are grateful even through much haggling takes place in the market place and amongst the streets.

They struggle with a reminder everyday of what we take for granted.

While riding on a bus into Guaymas and Topolobampo, the passengers were told by the guide of the great destruction from a hurricane not more than two or three days before we arrived in their city.

The guide explained how in some parts of the city there was no infrastructure as it was just whipped out. Nevertheless, these men, women, and children pick themselves up and continue on only eighty dollars a week.

It reminds me of what so many of our people go through in trying to carve out a living in our world.

This is a direct representation, of the subtle injustice, that most of us in the disabled community deal with every day of their lives.

The next day we docked in Loreto, where my two brother-in-laws hailed a cab. Boy what a ride that was!

When we started out, everything was smooth riding; as we saw the sites of the most rich and famous in their town.

And hotels right off the water's edge.

But then, things got real bumpy!

We were out for a ride of our lives!

Instead of taking a paved road thirty minutes out of town, to an old Mission we wanted to see, we wound up taking a path that almost threw my husband for a loop.

The car we were using was not a four wheel drive. This lack of amenity made it difficult to travel and also unnerved my husband to no end.

He was pulling his hair out with disgust, revolt, and fear.

There were so many rocks, river beds, and obstacles to cross, that it sometime seemed "that we might not make it to the church on time."

Once we had gotten out of the cab, seen the sites, and had delicious casadía's, and tacos; the road and return home proved much easier on everybody.

I truly felt a family connection with the taxi drivers, too.

Through laughter, communication and connection, in their native tongue, and having married into a family that speaks the language fluently, it made the excursion and trip that much more comfortable, warm, exciting, valuable, and inviting.

Especially, our last stop! When my husband, my family, and I; visited the port of Puerto Vallarta.

The cab stopped to let us observe the breath taking sculptures, to cross the street, and to visit and take snapshots of the awe inspiring sand castles.

And oops! Yes, you got it!

The street was so full of pot holes, rounded rocks, and gullies, that I took a flying leap into a hole, all by my little ol' lonesome.

No body by my side but me-

I was walking alone and stepped right into it!

Thank God no one hit me!

And thank God, I did not break a foot, or leg, and that it was our last dock to visit!

If I were in the United States, I would have been terrified to be further hurt.

Thankfully, I wasn't.

Thankfully all I got was a very, very sprain ankle and calve.

Someone else in my shoes, or position, would have sulked, gone back to the ship, and perhaps, even gone home, but I didn't!

The experience was not easy, as I was in pain, and could not walk like I normally do, but I found a way to keep smiling like I always do.

In my mind I knew this was a trip and a moment of a life time.

I knew it was truly a gift and so worth while.

Moreover, I knew that I might never ever get this kind of opportunity or chance to take in these majestic marvels again, so I forgot about my discomfort and smiled a ray of sunlight for Gods beautiful landscape, and backdrop.

I also was shown how unconditionally I was loved and cared for by my family and complete strangers.

Thus, I immediately found gratitude in my own heart, and found new positive ways, to continue on my journey with gratification in my own inner self and being.

My positive attitude, along with all my past triumph and tribulations, gave me a wonderful, exuberant energy, and willingness to make the best of a difficult situation for all involved.

I was so accommodating, that we went forward to visit the cost line's and city scapes with pure pleasure and delight.

So, with a bag of ice cubs, surrounding my leg, we visited an organic distillery, where all types of wine and liqueurs were made, and we drove to Casa Kimberly.

For those of you who do not know what Casa Kimberly is, it is now a bed and breakfast.

Although in the early sixties, it was where Liz Taylor's, and Richard Burton's had their home.

One could see the pink remaining bridge that linked the two homes together.

Even though I tripped and fell at my last port, I can't express to my readers how wonderful, breathtaking, and joyous my time in Mexico and on the ship was.

Travel is something I feel is very vital, freeing, emancipating, and uplifting for us all, but especially for the disabled community.

The more communicative, active, visible, and perceptible we become, the more we partake in life's precious activities; it cultures, and joys of the world, the more we can breakdown the stereotypes, and promote the truths of our lives and beings.