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## **My First Cruise**

**by  
Tom Holbrook**

As you read this column today I am either relaxing on my stateroom balcony watching the sunrise over the horizon; snorkeling among the fishes in CoCoCay; or sitting down for a scrumptious cruise ship dining experience that I've been told is the sole purpose for coming on cruises... eat 'til you pop.

We are on a 5 day Bahamas cruise aboard Royal Caribbean's Sovereign of the Seas and trying to act nonchalant as we stroll the decks of this beautiful ship as if we have done this many times before. In actuality, this is the first cruise I've taken in my short life unless an tube float 7 miles on the Greenbrier River in Greenbrier County, West Virginia, or a wild whitewater ride down the New River Gorge would qualify as such. I'm excited and not ashamed to tell you so. Judy has been on several cruises but I have lived a much more sheltered life.

We've been preparing for this event for the past few months and two Saturdays before we sailed we attended a gathering at a neighbor's house for all those in our immediate neighborhood who are on the cruise. There are 22 Winifred Villagers who chose to take the cruise and, I've heard, there are more than 90 residents total of The Villages who are participating as well. This is just another activity that we who live here have available to us for easy participation. Hopefully, in next week's column I will present to you a blow by blow description of the cruise from neophyte's perspective. I'm sure many of you who have never been on a cruise would want to know if it's something you could get excited about and I'll let you know.

Since last we met in this column several events have taken place in our lives... one of significance for me, was that the powers that be felt that my vocal talents were adequate enough for me to qualify for membership in the Village Voices, a 100+ member chorale that entertains residents several times a year with concerts and other appearances throughout the area. I would like to say I am honored to have been afforded an opportunity to sing with such a professional quality organization. I want to thank Yvonne, a member of the group, for greeting me so kindly and making it known that she reads this column regularly and, for whatever reason, seems to enjoy it.

On the side of physical fitness, Judy and I have added two bicycles to our stable of modes of transportation. This will make 7 bicycles we have owned over the last three years and, hopefully, this will be our last in the foreseeable future. We had two beautiful mountain bikes while living in WV but since we couldn't get them in the 6 X 12 trailer that hauled all our worldly goods to Florida we gave them to my son and his wife to enjoy and purchased two temporary bikes after we arrived to go with the bike Judy owned prior to our marriage.

The temporary bikes and Judy's original bike were also given away, to go to the Gulf Coast for use by whoever needed them. It is our hope that the quality of our new bikes and their smooth ride will encourage us to use them to maintain our obvious excellent physical condition.

Judy has completed her initial series of golf lessons which introduced her to the basics of golf and we have completed two rounds on different Executive courses and she showed herself to be capable of hanging with the best of them. Of course, she knows there is much to learn and much to master but she is not one to fear a challenge. The caretakers of The Villages' golf courses will be happy she's playing now because of her desire to organize and maintain cleanliness and order. I guarantee the divots on the greens will be repaired and maintained... and not just the divots that she creates. Given the opportunity and the time she would probably agree to repair the divots on all the greens in The Villages. We're looking forward to many rounds together in the future and she's told the ladies in our village that she'll be ready to go out regularly with them as soon as she gets back from this cruise. Of course her one condition would be that they do lunch afterwards.

Well, it's almost time for the dinner bell to ring and I've got to run. Tonight is dress up night for dinner and it takes a long time for me to clean up real good. Bon appetite!

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