

travel



By BILL SCHEMMEL

Three nights out of Buenos Aires, the southbound Santa Mariana veers sharply westward and sails into the Strait of Magellan.

To passengers pressed against the ship's railings, this treacherous channel at the bottom of the earth, dividing the South American mainland from the island of Tierra del Fuego, has changed little since Portuguese sailors under the intrepid Fernando Magellan laid sea-weary eyes on it in 1520.

Even the signal fires which inspired the name, Tierra del Fuego, glow orange in the starry Antarctic night. These, though, aren't Indian bonfires intended to frighten away invaders;

they're the flare-off from Chilean and Argentine oil wells. For a day and a half, the Santa Mari-

Cargo loading, unloading determines ports, sailing times of this cruise

ana follows Magellan's precise navigational charts on its 370-mile passage from Atlantic to Pacific. To many a passenger, the spectacular scenery revives memories of the Norwegian fjords and Alaska's Inside Passage.

At times, the channel is so narrow that the ship glides directly beneath snow-crowned mountains and diamond-

blue glaciers. Penguins and sea lions waddle along the nearby shoreline; an occasional whale blows off his spume a few yards off the bow; an even rarer passing ship hoots its whistles in greeting.

The Panama Canal ended the Strait's 400-year hold on the world's shipping, and nowadays only vessels like the Santa

Mariana directly engaged in South American commerce, traverse the Strait, or challenge the stormier waters off Cape Horn.

As a grim reminder that it's folly to take the Strait too lightly, the half-submerged hulk of a cargo ship rears out of the icy waters; it has been rusting there since 1969.

The ship failed to negotiate a tight S-turn and tore itself against the rocks. The weather is as fickle as the tides. It changes with the seasons, of course, snowier in the South American winter (June-August), to the balmy 40s in summer (December-March). It also changes by the hour: radiant sunshine kaleidoscoping into enveloping fog, then to rain, sleet, snow and cloudless, sunny skies.

The glowing lights of the Chilean port of Punta Arenas, the Southernmost City in the world, and the probing beacons of naval lighthouses signal that there's human life on those lonely looking shores, after all.

THERE'S CERTAINLY no absence of life aboard the Santa Mariana. Passage through the Strait is celebrated with parties and festivities, and a rousing induction the very exclusive Royal Order of Penguins Antarcticus, more

(Continued on page 6)

travel log

Iris Sanderson Jones

Down home ingredients spice Cajun Mardi Gras

They will wear extravagant ball gowns, and paint sequined nutcrackers on their faces for the Mardi Gras parades of New Orleans and Lafayette this week.

But those are big city celebrations. Fat Tuesday, Feb. 19, will be a much more down-home matter in the Cajun villages between those two cities.

Mardi Gras along the Bayou Teche and the Bayou Lafourche will be full of masked men on horseback who ride neighboring towns for a "fat little chicken to make a big gumbo."

And the swamp country will be full of fais-do-do's, those pour-down-the-beer, kick-up-your-heels dancing parties for which the Acadians of Louisiana are famous.

Fais-do-do means literally make sleep, which is the last thing on earth the Cajuns will do on Mardi Gras. The name came from an old country tradition by which families took their children to the neighborhood dancing party and parked them to sleep under a wallside bench.

If the kids cried, mama rocked them back and forth and sang fais-do-do to make sleep.

Ann Harmon, formerly with the South-Central Planning and Development Commission in Thibodaux and now director of Tourism for the nearby town of Houma, can vouch for that story. "My grandmother used to take me to parties and fais-do-do me to sleep," she said. Ann, 41, not remembering something from another age, she is an attractive young woman in her 20s.

MARDI GRAS IS as big as Christmas and the Fourth of July put together in this Mississippi River country. The parties and balls are scheduled over several weeks, but people start celebrating in earnest on the Friday before Mardi Gras and don't go back to work until the first day of Lent on the following Wednesday.

There are 50 parades in the New Orleans and surrounding areas, and lots of stores on the street; "I met my husband under a Mardi Gras mask and I didn't know what he looked like for a week."

The celebrations as we know them began here in New Orleans in 1857. Former French Mardi Gras revelry, held in the French Quarter of the city, had been stopped long before because they became too riotous.

It was the Americans, socially scorned by early French and Spanish settlers, who revived the Mardi Gras in the middle of the 19th century.

In the cities it is based on a Creole tradition. Creole means born in the new colonies of French or Spanish parents, although it is sometimes used to describe black or mixed heritage traditions.

CAJUN MARDI GRAS has little to do with parades. In the villages along the bayous, where people have learned to make their own fun, bands of masked men assemble on horseback in the heart of every town. They wear patchwork costumes and peaked hats, and they ride off into the countryside under their leader "le capitaine."

At each farmyard they stop to ask, "voulez-vous recevoir les Mardi Gras?" If the answer is yes, the maskers are welcomed in "faire le macaque" or "make monkeyshines."

They'll sing and dance, switch horses and drown themselves in beer before demanding payment in the form of "a fat little chicken to make a big gumbo."

Several live chickens later, they ride back into town to cook the chickens in a community-sized gumbo pot and continue their revelry.

It's the biggest fais-do-do of the year, although you will find more modest ones any Friday or Saturday night in the local dance halls.

MCCC tour seats open

The word for Macomb County Community College's Summer Study Tour to London and Paris is go.

MCCC humanities professor Judy White said that 25 people signed up for the trip, assuring the college of its fourth annual summer study tour.

The June 15-29 trip will feature visits to Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral, the Louvre, Notre Dame, and the Eiffel Tower.

Among the many other itinerary attractions is a visit to the new Picasso exhibit.

THERE IS ROOM for 10 more on the tour, White said to bring the trip to its capacity of 35.

"If that happens and if an additional 25 beyond that are interested," she added, "we will run a second tour identical to the first, but beginning and ending a week later, June 22 to July 5."

The tour is worth three degree credits in the department of humanities. Those not interested in earning college credit but wishing to take the tour may register and pay their tuition as audit students.

The cost of the tour, including the \$969 trip expense, resident tuition, registration fee, and materials, is \$1,036.

There will be no refunds after April 10, and final payment is due May 1.

Money for the possible second trip (a waiting list is being compiled) is due May 1. Seating for this is first-come, first-served.

Reservation deposits of \$100 will be accepted and trip materials distributed between 8 am and 5 pm, Mondays-Fridays at the cashier's office at South Campus in G-132. South Campus is on 12 Mile Road at Hayes in Warren.

For more information, call 779-7153 or 779-7138.

Great prices to Paradises.

3 Islands/9 nights
low as
\$999⁰⁰

Excellent accommodations include: In Honolulu, 4 days/4 nights at the Prince Kuhio Hotel. In Maui, 3 days/2 nights at the deluxe Maui Inter-Continental Hotel. In Hawaii, 3 days/3 nights at the deluxe Kona Hilton Resort Hotel. Departure dates for 3-Islands tour: March 10 and 24, and April 4. (TUA-HMTT19)

4 Islands/14 nights
low as
\$1199⁰⁰

Features super/deluxe accommodations: In Honolulu, 5 days/5 nights at the Reef Towers. In Maui, 3 days/3 nights at the Maui Inter-Continental Hotel. In Kona, 4 days/3 nights at the Kona Seaside Hotel. Departure date for 4-Islands tour: March 8 and 22, and April 16. (TUA-HMTT14)

Both packages include: Round-trip Coach air fare on United. Interisland transportation via Aloha Airlines or Hawaiian Airlines. Complimentary meals and beverages on route to and from Oahu. Round-trip airport-hotel transfers, flower lei greeting. Complete baggage handling throughout (2 pieces). Escorted sightseeing tour of Honolulu and the Waialua River Cruise in Kauai. Prices per person/2 to a room, and vary depending upon departure date. Fare includes all taxes and service. (Ground meals not included.) Prices are subject to change without notice.

For details, including departure dates and special rates for children, send for your Hawaii folder today. Or call your Travel Agent. Or call United at 336-9000.

United Airlines Sales Office OEO211
400 Renaissance Center
Suite 2202, Detroit, Michigan 48243

Please send me your free folder. Check one:
 3 Islands (TUA-HMTT19)
 4 Islands (TUA-HMTT14)

I am interested in the _____ departure date.

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
My Travel Agent _____

Fly the friendly skies of United.