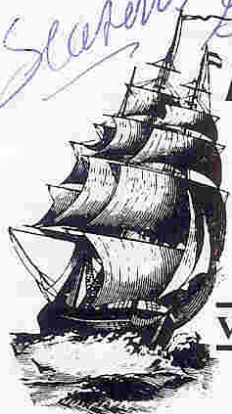


Season's Greetings

See page 8 - Thanks!

FREIGHTER TRAVEL NEWS



my best friend
Leland J. Pledger

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LEE'S LETTER



Happy December! May this holiday season be filled with joy and light for all of us. When thinking about the perfect gift for those hard-to-buy-for people (haven't found that gift yet, have you?), how about a gift subscription to the *Freighter Travel News*? We'll even see that your giftee (giftee?!) Gets a nice Christmas letter a few days before Christmas. Just let me know who is the, yep, you guessed it, the giftor.



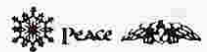
A number of Club members have asked about the availability of passenger space aboard freighters heading down the east coast of Africa and to some of those exotic islands of the Indian Ocean - Mauritius and Madagascar to be specific. Yes, there are, indeed, ships calling at those locales. Captain Zunic of **Maris USA** reported on just such itineraries in his July newsletter listing ships of the CMB and Delmas companies (French). Although these are just 3 and 4 year-old containerships, they are equipped with deck cranes and booms to allow for loading and unloading in ports without modern container equipment (could mean longer port times...). These sailings however, originate in Belgium (Antwerp) and subsequently call on several European ports during the 61-day journey. I almost got down there on a freighter a few years ago - wish I had now.

Now, to get to Europe. There are a number of options - freighters of

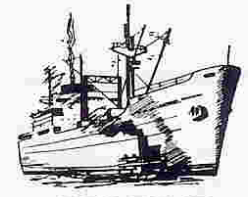
course, but if you're in a hurry or don't have the extra time (or money), you might consider a "courier" flight (e.g. New York - Copenhagen for \$259 roundtrip). For information on courier flights and what they are, drop a note to Steve Lantos at *Travel Unlimited*, P.O. Box 1058, Allston, MA 02134.



Margi of **Freighter World Cruises** reports of yet another **new service**. This time to the very popular destinations of the South Pacific, to include Tahiti, American and Western Samoa, Tonga, two ports in New Zealand, Fiji and even Hawaii. The ship for this routing, the *TUI PACIFIC* of Reederei Nord, is a six year old containership of some 14,600 dwt and features three double cabins for passengers. Departures are from Long Beach with the return port of Seattle, some 41 days later. Fares range from about \$3300 to \$4725 (sole occupancy of a double cabin). Sounds like a pretty great way to spend a month and a half of our winter up here in the northern hemisphere.



As winter settles in, it's a good time to jot down some of those ship adventures you've had recently and share them with us. I always enjoy hearing from our members and relish in following adventures even if only vicariously. Keep me posted. Now have a great December, and may all our sugar plums dance in our heads only, and not settle on our waistlines.



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(Continued from last month)

ED. NOTE: We rejoin John & Dorothy in Colombo, Sri Lanka on their 'Round The World sojourn. To date, we have visited Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore

Going through Colombo on our way back to the ship, Ed stopped to let us see the Buddhist and Hindu temples which were quite elaborate and old. Despite the beauty of these temples, I doubt if the largest percentage of people in this city have any sanitation facilities at all. Poverty seemed rampant.

When we returned to our ship, there were some jewelry salesmen with cases set up on display in the stairway passage into the dining room level. We could hardly miss seeing them as we had to walk by to get to our meals.



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ED NOTE: The following is an
article from the most recent
Walkabout Travel Gear catalog.
Thought you might be interested.

SANTA WAS REAL. AND HE HAD A TAN.

It's true. Despite Western myth, St. Nick's home is not the North Pole. In fact, it is reasonable to assume he never saw snow. For it rarely snows on Mediterranean beaches. Santa lived his life on the Southwest coast of Turkey, of all places.

Noel Baba ("Father Christmas") was born in Patara, Turkey around the 4th century AD. He lived his adult life in Myra, east of Patara, where he became the bishop of the city. Besides being the patron saint of children, he is

also the protector of prisoners, travelers, and sailors. The Church of Saint Nicholas is in Myra, preserved in impressive detail. St. Nick's rock sarcophagus can be viewed as well as impressive murals. The church is a quick walk from the bus station - follow the "Aya Nichol" signs. (If you get lost just say "Noel Baba" to any local and they'll point the way.)

Noel Baba's remains were plundered and taken to Bari, Italy. Some of his bones are on display farther up the Coast, in the Antalya Museum. They lay reverently in an ancient box, fitted in red cloth. The painting in the lid shows Saint Nicholas, not Santa Claus. He is thin, dressed in a ceremonial robe, with graying hair and a receding hairline. A Bible rests in his right hand and a halo over his head.

Looking at the bones of St. Nick is unnerving; kind of like finding out the Easter Bunny was real and viewing its remains.

For a copy of the fascinating and informative *Walkabout Travel Gear* "catalog and travel information



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