



2011 2nd Edition

World News Magazine



Maya Bay – Phi Phi Island- Phuket - Thailand

Suhair Mahmoud

World Airlines Clubs Association

2011 2nd Edition

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WACA President at the 5th IPTT African Conference on Climate Change in Lusaka

By: Maga Ramasamy / WACA President

In his capacity as WACA (World Airlines Clubs Association) President, Maga Ramasamy and also the IPTT (International Institute of Peace through Tourism) coordinator participated in the conference which was inaugurated by the President of the Republic of Zambia Mr. Banda in the presence of the former president Dr, Kenneth Kaunda. Maga was pleased to present a paper on Sustainable tourism- a challenge on the climate change for the Islands of the Indian Ocean. He seized this occasion to mention about the Mk programme “One take off, one tree”. A common declaration was then issued after the conference.



Sustainable Tourism- A Challenge for the islands of the Indian Ocean region in relation to Global Climate Change.

**Presented by Maga Ramasamy,
Coordinator, IIPT Indian Ocean Islands
Chapter and
WACA President.**

The Moderator,

Members of the panel,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

Apart from my two positions as WACA (World Airlines Clubs Association) and Coordinator of the International Institute of Peace through Tourism (IIPTT) for the Indian Ocean islands Chapter, of not only we people coming from the tourism generation but as a citizen of the world.

I am also an Airline Employee at Air Mauritius working at Human Resources Manager in Mauritius. I am pleased to associate myself with this conference to give you an overview of how the subject matter “ challenges to climate change to tourism” is the concern For the purpose of this presentation I will focus mainly on Islands the south western part of the Indian Ocean which are regrouped under the Indian Ocean Islands Commission composed of five main islands namely Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Reunion Island and Comoro Islands.

These islands are working together on different issues of common nature and among others Tourism and the effects of Climate change affecting the islands of the Indian Ocean.

I would like to quote the Secretary General of the United Nations – Mr. Ban Ki Moon on climate change at the Climate Change Science Compendium in 2009.

Quote

“The science has become more irrevocable than ever: Climate Change is happening. The evidence is all around us. And unless we act, we will see catastrophic consequences including rising sea levels, droughts and famine, and the loss of up to a third of the world’s plant and animal species”

Unquote.

It is a fact to day Tourism for the five islands states is a major contributor to the economy of each country. It was recorded that nearly 1.8 million of tourists visited the Islands of the Indian Ocean last year out of which 50% went to Mauritius as their main tourist destination. The islands in the Indian Ocean have different attractions for tourists and a special challenge to sustainability. The mystique associated with these islands is dependent on a blend of lifestyles, indigenous cultures, unique land formations, flora and fauna, and lagoon and coastal resources.

To keep this mystique there is an important call to harmonize the actions in a responsible manner from the Social, Environmental and Economic point of view which bring us to the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR is the concerns of each and every one, private and public sectors towards its respective stakeholders.

Each and everyone recognize the unequivocal warming of the climate system and are affecting us on all fronts.

As a Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Mauritius as the other islands of the Indian Ocean is highly vulnerable to climate change and the resulting sea-level rise.

As per records for more than five decades from the Mauritius Meteorological Services made over the entire Republic of Mauritius, there has been observed changes on average temperature increased by about 1.0 °C since 1951. Rainfall deficit recorded for last 100 years is 100 mm. The mean sea level has risen to 2.1 cm during the last decade. Some major impacts are on agriculture, water, fisheries, erosion of beaches, degradation of reef system and bleaching of corals, loss of wetlands and depletion of biodiversity, among others. According to the Fourth Assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2007, the detrimental impacts of Climate Change in SIDS are now established facts.

Based on current trends, the Mauritius Meteorological Services Department has also predicted that projected changes which are as follows:-

- Decreasing trend of 8% in annual rainfall
- Increase in heavy precipitation events with increased risk of flash flood
- More frequent heat waves in summer
- Milder winters
- Increase in the number of intense tropical cyclones
- Increase in duration of dry spell, and therefore higher demands of water
- Increase events of high energy waves (tidal surge) impacting the shores of Mauritius

Considering that Mauritius has limited land and other resources, it is considered that any further increase in global temperature will immensely exacerbate the well being of the human population. Mauritius is most likely to become a water- stressed and water- scarce country. Agriculture and the marine ecosystem will be negatively impacted upon.

Despite being a low emitter of green house gases (GHG), Mauritius has been facing the impacts of climate change and has been pursuing sustainable development since decades. Planning to prime sectors like water, agriculture, tourism, health, employment and transport.

The Government of Mauritius has since long realized that Climate change is not only an environmental issue but it is also an environmental, economic and social threat that impacts On every facet of Government and public life – from finance and The challenge now is not just an adaptation to the impacts of climate change but also reduction in emissions of GHG. It is a comprehensive re-engagement with core objectives and principles of sustainable development.

To this effect, as per information garnered from the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Republic Of Mauritius , Government has undertaken a multi-prong approach towards adapt and mitigate climate change as below:

Ratification of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 and the Kyoto Protocol (KP) in 2001. And also the active participation in negotiation process including works towards “legally binding agreements in Mexico in 2010 (that is the second commitments period under the KP and the Bali Action Plan on long term Cooperative Action).

Government announced its vision towards Building Green Mauritius through the “Maurice Ile Durable project” with the overall aim of the project to reduce its reliance on fossil fuel by shifting to local renewable energy sources.

In its current 5-year programme, *‘Government will participate actively in all efforts of the international community to address issues relating to climate change and sea level rise’*. Moreover, it also indicates that in line with Maurice Ile Durable, *‘Government will support and promote the interests of Small Island Developing States’*.

Furthermore, *'Government will take steps to accelerate the process of regional integration and will also encourage cross-border initiatives in key sectors such as food security, climate change, Infrastructure, ICT, renewable energy and marine resources development.'*

The Government of Mauritius is already participating in high level negotiation process as indicated earlier and is making its voice heard through negotiating blocs such as Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the Africa Group and the group of 77 and China towards reduction of green house gas emissions by developed countries parties to the UNFCCC.

Concerning the Copenhagen Accord which parties took note of during the 15th Conference of Parties to UNFCCC/KP in Copenhagen in December 2009, following a Cabinet decision taken on 09 June 2010, the Government of Mauritius has associated itself with the Accord with the following conditions:-

A legally binding agreement should be reached at the 16th Meeting of the Conference of Parties in Cancun;

A second commitment shall have to be taken by the Parties under the Kyoto Protocol for a determined period beyond 2012;

The financial assistance of 30 billion US dollar for the period 2010-2012 promised in the Copenhagen Accord should be in the form of grants and not loan;

The quick-start funding to be made available forthwith and be monitored to ensure that same is not a repackaged fund which should otherwise be granted as traditional overseas development assistance;

The Copenhagen Green Fund proposed in the accord should be set up and made operational without any further delay; and

Priority for funding should be given to the most vulnerable countries such as Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDC) and Africa.

Government of Mauritius is also supporting regional initiatives and programmes through African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN), the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) among others.

The present and future detrimental impacts of climate change on Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) are now established facts, and the situation seems to be irreversible for a number of SIDS with topographies just above the sea level. Some observed impacts of a warming climate include temperature, changing patterns of rainfall,

sea level rise, the continuing coral bleaching, alteration in stratification and circulation patterns of Ocean currents and increased frequency of extreme weather events. The impacts of climate change are all around us.

Some concrete actions taken and implementation progress made by Mauritius for instance can be summarized as follows:

- Close monitoring of climate change and Sea Level rise
- Reducing Green House Gases (GHG) emissions
- Investing in renewable Energy
- Sensitisation and Awareness raising
- As per *Zinke et al*, in their research observed that soil erosion, land degradation and modern climate change pose a mounting threat to coastal nations in the western indian Ocean. A better understanding of the entire ecosystem in the region is recomendable. It will lead to improved sustainable management of the coastal environment. The vulnerability of the coral reefs in the region to climate change (increasing sea surface temperatures) has become increasingly well known in scientific circles. As per Obura (2010), to ensure the long term viability of coral reefs the atmospheric CO₂ level must be reduced significantly. Coral reefs are important for the region.

It can be observed that Coral reefs are the most biological diverse habitats for Oceans and provide essential ecosystem goods and services to hundreds of millions of people.

From the aviation side, being given that the Indian Ocean islands are tourist destinations and most of the tourists travel by air, and as per IATA's report aviation is responsible for:

- 2% of global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions

- 12% CO₂ emissions from all transport sources, compared to 74% from road transport

- 3% of the total man-made contribution to climate change

IATA also emphasizes that by 2020, airlines are aiming for at least an additional 25% improvement in fuel efficiency and CO₂ emissions through technology and operations enhancement.

Air Mauritius being the national carrier of the Republic of Mauritius is one of the leading airline companies in the region of the Indian Ocean islands. The Airline Company is conscious that deforestation is a huge contributor to global warming and is contributing in the initiative to save the earth for future generations. Air Mauritius, to be in line with the philosophy of the government i.e. Maurice Ile Durable, MID, (Sustainable Mauritius) and that of IATA, it has developed a green project called "One Take –Off, One Tree".

This programme is in partnership with the Mauritian wild life Foundation (MWF). It helps the foundation to plant a tree for every Air Mauritius flight that takes off. so as its operations and activities are done in a respectable and responsible manner towards its stakeholders in general.

It's worth noted that Air Mauritius is fully committed to the good cause of ensuring the Corporate Social Responsibility concept is well understood from the business point of view Air Seychelles and Air Austral are the two other Airline companies in the region which are very well versed as well in ensuring that the Corporate Social Responsibility is being respected.

All efforts are made from various quarters to ensure a sustainable management approach so as the Indian Ocean Islands remain less affected by the global warming and the climate change. If not the consequences will be very fatal for all the stakeholders and thus creating social unrest as everything is centered towards one main component which is People.

Our responsibility may it be private and public we should base ourselves on the main pillars Ecological/ Social/ Economic which go hand in hand whilst being RESPONSIBLE. Many leading environmental and human development organizations have taken climate change to heart, and in doing so, advocated for the best possible scenario for limiting climate change.

Both the paper presented and the Lusaka Declaration may be found on the www.waca.org



Secretary General Message Corner

By: Angela Leresche

Dear Interliners,

For those who are going to Phuket, I look forward to seeing you and having fun exploring the Thai Culture.

For those who are not going, I will miss you and look forward to maybe seeing you on another upcoming event.

Please check our waca.org under events as there are lots of adventures to be had with your WACA friends.



A word from the Editor!

By: Suhair Mahmoud / Vice President Public Relations

Dear Interliners,

Here I am speaking to you again in our second Edition from WACA World News (WWN), with only less than a month for our trip to Phuket – Thailand celebrating the 44th Annual General Assembly which will be hosted by Airline Club of Thailand and as we were assured by our RVP Far East & Australia Mrs. Orathai Buddhamanupap, that this AGA will be a memorable one.

For those of you who never been in Phuket I assure you that this magical island has what it takes for your extreme joy and pleasure starting with its white sand beaches and crystal clear water, its rainforest and the exotic nearby islands and most amazing the well known Thai Smile and hospitality.

Airline Club of Thailand has made all the necessary arrangements to make sure that this AGA will be exceptional and the program will be up to your expectations and satisfaction.

I may recommend to tag along with you various gifts such as toys, clothing and monetary donations for our charity this year which will be organized for the children of Phuket affected by 2006 Tsunami. I also would like to urge our clubs to bring with them at least one prize for the Tombola, (The more prizes we get, the excitement Tombola we will have).

I have to stress here that without your contributions in the WWN magazine we won't be able to progress, therefore your participations, photos, reports, news about your local and international events will be very helpful and will add to the excitement. We urge you all to send your clubs newsletters and your travel experiences at the following address: Suhair.mahmoud@rj.com , I shall be glad to publish them in our next editions to be shared with the interliners.

Till we meet again, I wish you a safe trip.

Yours in interlining,
Suhair Mahmoud



Fantastic Destinations on WACA Calendar this year!

Phuket Highlights!

Phuket

Is the largest island in Thailand. At 540 Km sq, it's about the same size as Singapore. Just over an hour's flight from Bangkok or Singapore and with daily connections to most major Asian Airports, Phuket is ideally situated for a short break or a relaxing vacation.



Business Hours

Generally 9am to 5pm, weekdays, and 9am to 12 noon on Saturdays, except Public Holidays when hours may vary. Shops and local stores open from 10 or 11 am to 10 pm, daily.



Banking Hours

Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Some branches including those located in shopping centers, are open as late as 7-8pm. And on Saturdays. Currency Exchange booths are usually open 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, 24 ATMs are widely available, and most accept cards using international banking networks such as Cirrus or Plus.

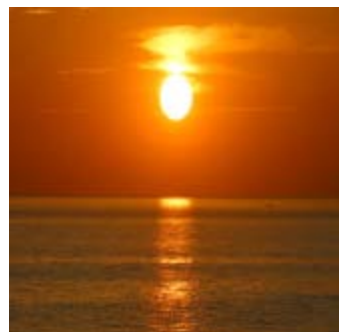


Currency

Is the Thai Baht.

Electricity

220Volts. several different plugs and sockets are in use, but two pin flat (US type) or round (European type) are pretty universal. Adapters can be bought at local stores.



Your **Free Phuket guide** is available now on our website:
www.waca.org



North America Regional Meeting

19th of March 2011, San Diego

By: Aubrey Winterbotham – Montreal Interline Club



The North American Regional Meeting was held in San Diego on March 19th. The region has been reduced to 10 clubs with the recent demise of the Edmonton Interline Club. Of the ten clubs, six sent representatives. Calgary (Linda McIlhone), Detroit (Marie Scott- Kosick), Montreal (Aubrey Winterbotham), Pittsburgh (Ellie Masters), San Diego (Donald Graham) and Vancouver (Sharon Revel).

The meeting was run with the usual efficiency of RVP North America Chico Valdez and the minutes taken by Miriam Marley of the host club.

WACA is at a turning point in its existence and some very important decisions need to be made. In this regard the region will be front and centre.

A brain storming session was held and some interesting suggestions were offered.

The San Diego Interline Club and its committee did a fantastic job in organizing the event and the cruise that followed.





European Regional Meeting Krakow, Poland

15th-17th of April 2011

By: Heidi Tetri/ Regional Vice President Europe



The European Regional Meeting was held in Krakow, Poland on April 15-17. There were over 20 participants, including 10 delegates and our president Maga Ramasamy.

Krakow's old city center has grown around the huge main market square, called Rynek Główny. That is the place where something is going on all times of the day. The beautiful St Mary's Church and the mysterious Cloth-Hall Gallery attract Polish and foreign visitors equally, especially on Sundays.

The weekend started with a full day tour on voluntary basis to Auschwitz-Birkenau. If you have visited this gloomy place once, you do not want to visit the concentration camp ever again. (It is though a good reminder of how we humans are our worst enemies.)

Saturday was a full day for all of us. The observers were taken down town for a city tour right after breakfast. The delegates had meanwhile a successful meeting that finished with two brainstorming groups, one collecting ideas to attract our interliners to Europe, and the other one discussing the future of WACA and the size of the EC.



The fast snack promised for lunch turned out to be a full size lunch. The delegates saw all main sights and parts of Krakow during a 2,5h city tour run by funny electric golf-buggies. The spring weather showed its sunny side, which was perfect. The whole group met at the tour bus that brought us south of Krakow to visit the Wieliczka Salt Mine that was in operation for around 700 years. Salt used to be a very important and expensive trading good before the invention of electricity and fridges. After a descent of 380 wooden stairs we were down at 135 m and walked through corridors, chambers, even a chapel, all decorated by carvings and statues – made of salt by the miners. To be sure that all was salt around us, it was easy to proof it by tasting it 😊. It was an amazing place that all of us were happy to have seen! The day ended at our hotel Artur with a farewell dinner.



Our Hungarian friends Barna, Georgina senior and Georgina junior deserve a big thank you for putting together this successful event and giving their souls to make us feel comfortable! We had a good time, a good meeting and had a first impression of Krakow. Krakow is famous for its many jazz clubs and its nearness to the mountain resort Zakopane and the Tatra Mountains, so there are many reasons to visit the city again!



Africa Indian Ocean Islands & Middle East Regional Meeting

10th of June 11, Mauritius



The Africa Indian Ocean Islands and Middle East Region held its regional meeting on the 10th of June. The meeting was held at La Pirogue Hotel and the Paille-en-Queue forming part of organizing committee attended the meeting and was represented by the Executive Committee members namely Devi Bhoyjonauth, Monique Chan, Krishen Cunden and Darel Nallan.

The local club is very active within the region in organizing events for other airline employees forming part of WACA to visit Mauritius with main objective to develop the friendship among airline employees of the world, to have the mutual understanding and also to promote Mauritius as an exclusive destination together with the other nearby islands, thus contribute to the idea of Ile Vanille put in place by the Ministry of Tourism.

The Regional Meeting was successful and was attended by five members of the WACA EC, where some important ideas were discussed regarding the new WACA structure, the 45th AGA that was supposed to be held in Cairo and other alternative venues.

Brain storming session was held and some interesting suggestions were offered.



The Paille-en-Queue Club and its committee did a fantastic job in organizing the Dodo Nest and the special package that was designed for delegates to attend the Regional Meeting as well.

Interliners have enjoyed the beach parties, the dinners and the day tours that were arranged successfully by the hosting club.







“Love is in the Air “!

Jamaica Jump Up! 2nd of June till 5th of June

By: Jacquie Lyseight/ RVP Latin America & the Caribbean



Hundreds of years of experience in different areas of the airline industry converged at Breezes Runaway Bay for Jamaica Jump-Up.

WACA has hidden talent and once again, Jamaica Jump-Up was the venue for the launch of “WACA Idol Talent Show” on Thursday night. Star Wilfred Saldana from Canada took center stage singing and playing the guitar with the live band, Rock’ n Rolling that had the entire hotel “shook, shimmy and shaking”. After that performance, entertainment went to another level with “fast dancing” with his beautiful wife “Zee” – all competition surrendered and fled the dance floor quickly.

♥ (Secret: Still searching for Elvis?? – He was at Jamaica Jump-Up 2011.)

Everyone enjoyed a fun time in Jamaica – Food and liquor was excellent and never ending, a little rain, enough sunshine to get a tan plus sunburn, and great live nightly entertainment. The company of interliners was awesome!

Congratulations to:-

- ♥ Bill and Geri Cain who met at Jamaica Jump-Up, got married at Jamaica Jump-Up and every year celebrate their wedding anniversary at Jamaica Jump-Up.
- ♥ Alfredo and Sobie Toledo – first time “Jump-Uppers” celebrated their wedding anniversary.
- ♥ Sheryl Ferguson - another Jump-Up Wedding Anniversary Celebration (even though at the last minute her husband was unable to come due work commitments.)
- ♥ Wilfred and Zee even celebrated with a “Horse and Carriage” Champagne ride.

Love was truly in the air at the “Jamaica Jump 2011”, Breezes Runaway Bay Hotel, Jamaica W.I as interliners reunited and had a wonderful time of fun, love and celebration.

Don't Miss May 31st – 3rd of June 2012. (Register early if you plan to get married)





Horseback Riding Day!

Jordan Interline Club

By: Salam Shahatit / Jordan Interline Club

The Jordan Interline Club held, its popular event, on May 1st at the Country Riding Center of Jordan. The event, attended by forty one members, relatives and friends, and twelve children, turned out to be more a family day than a Horseback riding “adventure”. Even “Mother Nature”, whom the event organizers made sure to be present as a “guest of honor”, put her best “attire”, presenting the participants with a sunny, clear and perfect day.



Safeway, our meeting point, was also the “caravan style” departure point for us. We wanted to make sure that none of the participants would get lost on the way to the farm. Besides a perfect day, the location of the farm also offered a spectacular view and excellent food.

What more can one ask for an opportunity to share time, jokes and stories, or yet, play cards, smoke the Hubbly Bubbly and watching the sunset amid friends, while the youngsters ride their bicycles(which they had brought from Amman), practice their “horseback riding”



play ball or get acquainted with the horses, visiting the stables. As a welcome gesture, addressed to the JIC Members, the owner of the Farm surprised us bringing Konafah (An Arabic Sweet) from Amman.

Amongst the regular members of the JIC, we had the participation of Guests from the Royal Wings who, after enjoying the camaraderie and Friendship displayed, joined the club's membership, promising to bring more of their colleagues to the next JIC Event.



It was with sorrow that by 6P.M, we started getting ready for our return to Amman.

We were already missing the fresh air of the mountain and the company of good friends.





JIC Camping in Wadi Rum!

Jordan Interline Club

By: Salam Shahatit / Jordan Interline Club

Our group of forty four participants, composed by JIC members, their family and friends, board the bus for the three hours drive that would take us from Amman to our weekend retreat: Wadi Rum. The late scheduled departure (06 PM) was intentional and in order to keep the “wonders” of the desert wilderness as a surprise to all, and also in anticipation of the view of the sun rising over the desert and mountains. The three hours’ drive went away too quickly, with the participants (keeping up with the tradition of the AIM Region’s “Fun Bus”) singing and telling jokes.



Wadi Rum is a protected area covering 720 square kilometers of Dramatic desert wilderness in the south of Jordan.

Huge mountains of sandstone and granite emerge, sheer-sided, from wide sandy valleys to reach heights of 1700 meters and more.

Narrow canyons and fissures cut deep into the mountains and many conceal ancient rock drawings etched by the peoples of the desert over millennia. Bedouin tribes still live among the mountains of Wadi Rum and their large goat-hair tents are a special feature of the landscape.

There are too many ways to enjoy the attractions of Wadi Rum, including jeep, camel and hiking tours, and of course, overnight in a Bedouin tent and gaze at the amazing panoply of stars.



We arrived at our camp site at around 9 PM and after “checking-in”, some went to the tents to “refresh” while others went to “explore” the grounds, before we all sit for our “Zarb” Bedouin dinner.

Zarb is a way of slow-cooking in underground ovens perfected by the wandering Bedouins. Trays of meat, chicken, rice, and today, you'd also find whole onions, potatoes, and aubergines, are marinated and covered to be buried under the sand to roast. Two of the attendants at the Camp give a demo as we stand around, clearing the sand on the surface with shovels; after a bit of digging, they haul up a three-tiered tray on stands which gives out an irresistible aroma. Then they bring the tray to the centre where we sit in low divans. You just dig in from the huge platter.

Having had a very interesting and delicious meal, some members group headed to the dancing floor of the local "Disco", and joining the DJ, put up an entertaining "show" with their singing and dancing.



We stayed at the "Disco" until around three in the morning. Although it had been a very long day, it seemed that none of us wanted to go to bed, afraid of missing the spectacular view of the Sun rising behind and above the mountains.

Finally, some headed to the tents for a few hours of rest, while others prefer to sleep under the stars. I would have never imagined myself sleeping under the stars; it was truly a sensation worth the hours on a bus to reach to Wadi Rum. I was very tired, but could not and did not want to go to sleep, enjoying the silence of the night and looking at the star filled sky and the nearly full moon. I also wanted to make sure that everything was fine, and if anyone needed anything, I was there!!!

Yousef, the Jordan Interline Club's President, arrived in the early hours of the morning, and we sat for a while talking about the day's events. He seemed pleased that everything went smoothly and that the group was enjoying the outing.



At 5:30 in the morning a small group of “early risers” sat outside waiting for the sun to rise. And we were not betrayed! While sipping our “morning Bedouin coffee, we observed all the changes in color of the surrounding rocks, and watched the sun rising above the mountains, turning the desert in a stunning array of orange and red.



We decided to go for a walk, and climb a sand hill to have a better view of the effects of the sun rising over the desert. Walking on sand, in itself, isn't an easy task, but it seems that, on my particular case, my “love affair” with the cigarettes prevented me to reach the top of the hill. I definitely have to break this relationship!

We return to the camp site under the smells of breakfast bright and early as the Bedouins are early risers. It was flattering, to me as part of the JIC organizing team, to see the reaction of our group. They seemed excited and marveled by the scenery of the mountains in different colors. It was like if we were in a complete different world. After having a good breakfast, we went on a two hours Jeep tour, visiting the ruins of a French Fort and see an ancient Map of Wadi Rum carved in the rocks, in one of the surrounding mountains. Once again it was climbing hills of sand by foot, and a jeep's ride, up and down the hills, with the driver making “daring” loops on the sand. Were the participants excited? We could them screaming, asking the driver for more of those “daring experiences”.

The few hours that we would spend on Aqaba were to allow us to do whatever we wished. While some opted to go shopping (yep, alcoholic beverages are less expensive than in Amman) others went to the beach. Myself, I chose the latter relaxing and “toasting” under the sun, until our scheduled return to Amman at 5:30.



Unfortunately, some times, not everything goes according to our plans or schedules. Our colleague Ammar, who had just been released from hospital and not wanting to miss the event, disobey his doctors advice not to participate in the weekend, felt had to be hospitalized in Aqaba. The fine spirit of camaraderie was displayed by all the participants, refusing to leave scheduled time and not until they were assured that he was well, colleagues at the Amman Airport that did not spare any efforts to have Ammar's brother flying to Aqaba to join him, and last but not least, by Ihab, who stayed with him until the arrival of his brother.



We finally left Aqaba at 19:00. Our return trip was, thanks God, uneventfully, but, with a complete different scenario from the trip from Amman to Wadi Rum. There was neither singing... nor music, and no telling jokes. We were all exhausted and the few hours spent in the return trip were used to catch up with the hours of sleep lost during the weekend.

All in all, it was an enjoyable tour, in the company of good friends and colleagues.

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Workshop on CSR

The Paille en Queue Social Club of Air Mauritius

By: Maga Ramasamy/ WACA President



The Paille en Queue Social Club of Air Mauritius contributed fully to the mission of the company to enhance The corporate citizenship and has invited two imminent specialists, Prof. Dr. Michael Hopkins and Mr. Ivor Hopkins from the MHC International Specializing in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility to conduct a workshop. They interacted with the Air Mauritius colleagues with a view to bring an awareness of the concept of CSR in the right perspective i.e. to focus on three bottom line aspects which are environment, social and economic.

After a brief welcome of the President of the Club, Maga Ramasamy, the EVP Commercial and Communications, Mr. Payen was invited to open the workshop at the Cyber City, Eben on 10th of May. The workshop having as theme "Awareness of CSR in an airline Perspective" the workshop was well attended and participants were very pleased to the level of the two guests and the standard of the workshop. The Social Club of Air Mauritius was commended for such initiative.



St. Patrick's party!

Quoted from "Between the Lines",
The Vancouver Interline Club News Letter



The Vancouver Interline Club celebrated St. Patrick's in style with 41 members attending our function at the Mylora Golf Course.

The food was great, the atmosphere was vibrant and the costumes were fantastic. Thank you all for contributing to such a fun night.

Karin Houston won the best female costume; she was a delightful leprechaun including a beard.

Karin always manages to find such great costumes. David Houston won the best male costume on a split decision between him and Mark Glowacki. Runners up were Jan Glowacki and Helen Jackson, who even decorated her shoes. Good job! Many other people were wearing the Irish green, but were too shy to join the parade. (interliners shy?)

Sharon Revel out did herself by winning 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in the limerick contest. By her own confession made them up whilst driving to the event. Well done Sharon!

I think VIC broke a record; Sharon signed a new member at the Pionairs meeting on Thursday morning. Larry Magryta attended his first function the same evening, was a member of our astute panel of judges and won a door prize. Luck of the Irish? Janet Sinclair, another new member also served on the panel.

Door prizes were won by Art Morrow, Gwen Livingston, Sheila Read, and Karin Houston and as mentioned previously, Larry Magryta. After drawing the ticket for the 50/50 draw, and repeating the number three times, I decided to check my own tickets, and guess what, I, Ann Harward was the winner of \$70.00.

Once again, thank you all for attending and supporting the Vancouver Interline Club.
Ann Harward



The Show & Tell Corner

Sky Burial!

By: Steve Charlton / Montreal Interline Club

Photos by: Suhair Mahmoud

I had the occasion recently to attend a “western-style” funeral, a ritual too-well-known to many of us. The deceased was lying peacefully, appearing asleep, surrounded by flowers and also by grieving friends and relatives, who were slowly coming to grips with the reality of the situation. As I stood viewing the body, with organ music playing in the background, I pondered some of the fundamental mysteries of life – what now? Where are we going next?

I remember doing a research paper in university on “Suicide”, and I remember writing that in some Inuit communities, rather than causing a burden to their families, when the time comes, an older member of the family will just walk out into the snow, and disappear. I don’t know the frequency with which this happens, but the family is not burdened with disposing of the body.



In most cultures, however, death, and disposing of the body, is a religious ritual. Being an airline employee, and a single individual within the great number of people who love to travel, and therefore who are interested in cultures of different areas of the world, I became interested in the ritual of “sky burial” as our small group, led by Julian 2-3 years ago, approached an area in Tibet where this practice was carried out. We were not allowed to stop, or visit, but I am in close contact with someone who was allowed to witness this unique event. I will share with you what I have learned.



Rather than feeling squeamish about the whole thing, please be aware that many religions teach that the body is simply a temporary place in which the soul resides, before it moves on. Most Tibetans are Buddhists, and therefore believe in “*bhava*”, loosely-translated as “rebirth”. Once the spirit has left the body, the previous “temple”, now old and worn-out, has served its purpose. In some cases around the world, the body is actually “preserved”, and we are all familiar with the elaborate embalming procedures carried out in ancient Egypt, but most-often it is deliberately, but respectfully, discarded. In many cultures, including our own, the body is simply buried, but increasingly here, and common elsewhere, it is ceremoniously cremated – it serves no more purpose.

In Tibet, firewood is scarce (most of Tibet is above the tree line), so cremation was never a practical choice. The countryside is rocky, and in many cases is solidified with permafrost, so digging a proper grave has also not been an option. Whereas potentially covering the body with rocks might have been chosen as a solution, and this is actually the choice deployed elsewhere, the Tibetans chose a different approach, “sky burial” - feeding the body to the birds. This practice, called “*jhator*” (literally “giving alms to the birds”), is seen as an act of generosity on behalf of the deceased, providing food to other living creatures, who also possess souls.



Here’s what I was told, from someone who was allowed to witness this ceremony first-hand - the ritual actually starts the day before, with chants, religious readings, and visits by friends and family. The *jhator* itself, a solemn and respectful operation, occurs the next morning, as the sun rises, and is attended only by immediate family – foreigners are not allowed to witness the proceedings. The ritual is conducted by a lama (i.e. monk), who is aided by *rogyapas*, one or two men (rarely women) who actually dismember the body. The burning of juniper incense and chanting draws the birds (mostly Griffon Vultures, *Gyps fulvus*, but also a few hawks and ravens), which assemble on the rocks nearby, waiting to be summoned. The vultures are considered to be *dakinis*, present in both the Buddhist and Hindu religions, and called “*valkyries*” in ancient Norse mythology, basically highly-revered female figures at an advanced stage of enlightenment. If the more-hungry vultures approach too closely, they are driven off by sticks, until their time comes.



The *rogyapas* go about their business according to a procedure defined in a 12th century Buddhist document, *Bardo Thondol*, referred to as “The Book of The Dead”. This involves placing the body on a large flat rock, unwrapping it from its white linens, and cutting it into its respective components. “Sky burial” is sometimes referred to as “ritual dissection”. To Westerners, details of the *jhator* (not given here) may seem gruesome, as are details of the Egyptian embalming procedures (the brain is extracted through the nose and the entrails are saved in a jar – remember?), but apparently it is carried out with solemn reverence. The family often sits nearby, but not usually in sight of the body. Not surprisingly, photographs are considered offensive, even exploitive, and are (normally) forbidden.

The pieces are then placed in a central area for the vultures, which voraciously fight for food, just as we see in pictures from Africa.

When the birds have stripped the bones, these in turn are then smashed into pulp using a stone mallet, mixed with barley meal, and left for the smaller birds. At the end of the day, nothing is left.

It should be noted that the ritual itself is elaborate and expensive, and many commoners have no choice but to leave the body whole, intact, to be eaten as-is, without the ritual (as the Zoroastrians do), but the whole concept is still considered honourable and “correct”.

As human beings, facing our own transient mortality is difficult. But as travellers we are fortunate to have the opportunity to learn about other cultures, other beliefs, and day-to-day life (and death) of other human beings. Travel provides unparalleled opportunities to learn. “Sky burial” may not be a topic to discuss with your grandchildren around the dinner table, but you have to admit it certainly is another interesting facet of this fascinating world we live in.

And for those of you who think such a practice is disgusting, when we compare their way versus ours, which is better – to feed the birds today.....or the worms tomorrow???

Roof of the World- Spiritual Tibet hosted by Hong Kong Club will be from 15th of October to 26th/31st of October.



A story to be told by Pictures!

JIC group touring USA & heading all the way to the Mexican Cruise hosted by San Diego Interline Club

16th March – 2nd of April 11

Issa Al Nimri, Abeer & Noura Abu Hweij, Hassan Saudi, Suzi Hiari & my self from Jordan Interline Club started our trip on the 16th of March from **Chicago** City after 13 hours flying non stop from Amman. Though it was a one night stop in Windham Hotel – located in the Downtown - but we didn't spare any time to explore the neighboring area and enjoy walking and having the morning coffee next day before heading to **San Diego**.



Don't let me go!



Delicious Food in one of the restaurants located in the Italian Village





A sweet Jordanian Handcraft gift for Miriam, for her support and follow up during registration



Dinner arranged by San Diego Club as closing to the North America Regional Meeting and welcoming the others who joined the group for the Cruise



The sweetest couple
Aubrey & Kitty



The hard workers!



The Singer😊





Donald with the Winner



Carnival Spirit, our Cruise ship



Exploring the Cruise ship!



Cabo San Lucas, commonly called Cabo, was our first stop, is located at the southern tip of the Baja California Peninsula, known for its sandy beaches, world class scuba diving locations & the distinctive sea arch El Arco de Cabo



Ready for Dancing. :)



Hassan, Stop playing & winning the drinking completion!

Frog Place, you rock!



Next to the cactus Farm!



Congrats Abeer, finally you made it and in Cabo!

The Jordanian & the Lebanese group excited on the boat after seeing El Arco de Cabo!



In da glass Factory!

The great Mexican spirit!



The Casino, Issa's most favorite place in the ship☺



Even the girls didn't spare time trying their luck on the slot machines☺



Ready to get some sun & tan on the beach☺

The colorful buildings, typical Mexico!



Hassan with his Mexican Amigo or Amiga! :)



Ouch!

Suzy with the king of Pop!





Touring La Paz town, the question whose the tour guide!!



Here it is...we can see it!

Welcome to La Paz!



La Paz, the biggest city and the capital of Baja California, was our second and last stop.





Our last Gala Dinner on the cruise ship!



Our last moments on the cruise ship!





Smoking was the best way for Suzy to kill time while waiting for us on the thrill rides!

Next step on our trip was **Disney Land, LA**, where we had experienced another way of excitement!



Last step was the **Sin City, Las Vegas** where we spent our day exploring the strip and night trying our luck on the casino☺





Grand Venture Bonanza Prize Winner!

By: Marianne Fogde / Helsinki Interline Club

Dear Interliners,

I was the lucky winner of a Grand Venture Bonanza Prize donated by the Interline Club of Zurich.

The prize was a **weekend package for 2 people in Switzerland on 13-14 August including attending the Club's Grill Party.**

My host during the two days was the President of IACZ Eugen Meier together with Mia Zwahlen and Ria Buecheli.



On Friday evening I was invited to a Raclette dinner at Mia's place, which was a new experience for me. The next day we went to Schaffhausen and I saw the most spectacular waterfall, the Rheinfall with cascades of rushing down. This was amazing!



The next stay was the old beautiful town of Stein am Rhein where we stayed for lunch.

Later in the afternoon the Grill Party took place in the farmyard and consisted of lots of delicacies food and drinks. It was nice meeting old friends from my time as RVP Europe.

Friday Mia was my host together with Eugen and on Sunday it was Ria's turn together with Eugen. We headed for the Alps and passed through beautiful valleys and high mountains, some with snow on top. Our aim was a small mountain village called St. Martin where we had lunch. This was a very charming little village surrounded by the mountains.

Then it was time to start the way back to Zurich on steep mountain roads.

I am overwhelmed by the warmth and friendliness shown to me during these days and want once more to thank Eugen, Mia and Ria who took good care of me.

I really enjoyed being the Lucky Winner!

Big Interline Tombola during the AGA in Phuket!



Dear Interline Clubs,

Don't forget to bring your prizes along!

So far we have the following prizes!

Elephant Trekking - During AGA in Phuket



Massage from Hilton Resort & Spa- Phuket, 44th AGA

With your contributions, you will make our Tombola even more exciting!!!

"The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page."

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