

Shipboard study for UofA students

by Greg Halinda

Imagine spending a semester studying at sea. Leave Vancouver in September, sail around the world with 400 other students, and arrive in Florida one week before Christmas.

To make your 100 days of study more memorable, include stops in the Orient, India, Turkey, the USSR, Yugoslavia, and Spain.

Interested? Well, two U of A students were interested, and are now at sea aboard the S.S. Universe, studying under the Semester at Sea program.

Lee-Ann Abramski and Rod Campbell, both from the Edmonton area, left Vancouver early in September and set sail for Japan with 400 other university students from around the world. This was the beginning of their voyage.

The ship, the S.S. Universe, is actually a full-accredited liberal arts university, with classrooms, library, theatre, medical, and sports facilities. It has a capacity of about 500 students and faculty.

Rod, who studies business at the U of A, is taking 3 business courses on the ship, plus a core course in international studies.

"The best thing is all the courses have an international aspect to them," he said over the ship's telephone. "For instance, you study about Japan, then you visit Japan."

Field trips included the Matsushita Electric Company in Japan, and the Hyundai Motor Company in Korea.

Lee-Ann is taking music, anthropology, and business in addition to the core course.

"I find it difficult because you have to change your focus all the

time," she said. "One minute you're travelling in all these different countries and then you come back (to the ship) and you're expected to start working again."

"The first three weeks I was seasick all the time," she added.

The bulk of the student population for this semester at sea is American, with the exception of nine Canadians, and a handful from abroad.

80 days into the voyage, Lee-Ann said, "It's been just incredible. You learn so much about yourself and about other people of the world."

Rod noted in his travel log that while in Hong Kong, "the disco was hilarious. Whenever we stepped on the dance floor we were surrounded by Chinese who would mimic us."

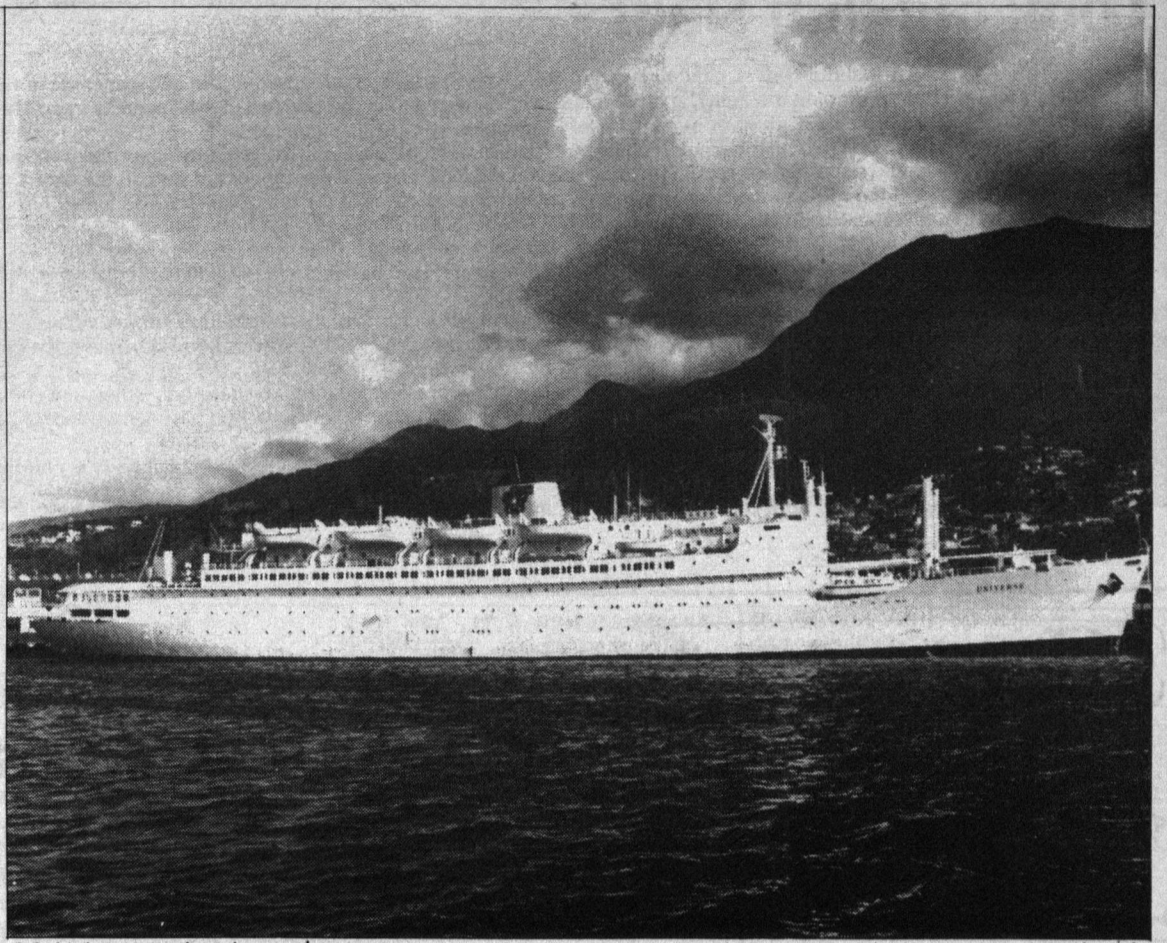
"I've made friends I know I'll have for the rest of my life," said Lee-Ann.

Other than a case of acute appendicitis and lots of seasickness, the voyage has to this point gone fine, even though delayed a bit by Typhoon Ellen between Hong Kong and Malaysia.

dean on board, who is recruited along with faculty for each semester. The current dean is Attilio Favorini, chair of the theatre arts department at the University of Pittsburgh. The U of Pittsburgh, incidentally, is the official academic sponsor of Semester at Sea.

Favorini calls the experience "especially enjoyable and enriching."

"I've gotten to pal around with undergrads in a way that I haven't done at my regular university for a while," he said.



S.S. Universe, university on the waves

photo courtesy of University of Pittsburgh

Favorini says the group aboard the Universe is in a small way representative of an international student body, and would like to see the program become more well-known among Canadian students. This semester is the first to have had a stopover in the USSR, which

both Rod and Lee-Ann took advantage of. The S.S. Universe will go to Yugoslavia and Spain before arriving in Florida December 20.

Rod says he is anxious to be back home for Christmas, but Lee-Ann said she would leave for another semester at sea with no complaints.

The next semester leaves Nassau, Bahamas, in January 1987.

There is still plenty of time to enrol, as Lee-Ann made it with only two weeks' notice. Oh, yeah. The tuition fee? Starts at about \$8800 U.S.

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