

From Commodores Marcie & David Lynn
NINE OF CUPS

Sometimes we are overwhelmed with the hospitality and generosity extended to us by local folks and fellow cruisers alike. We moved a boat from Ushuaia, Argentina to Piriapolis, Uruguay in February for a cruising friend. We arrived early morning and tied up to the fuel dock at the Piriapolis marina, the local Uruguayan Prefectura fellows were only too happy to help with docking lines. Good friends, Mike and Catherine Whitby (BREILA), had been following our trip via the Patagonia net and had hailed us on VHF at midnight when we were 30 miles out. Mike appeared on the dock shortly after our arrival, hugged us in welcome and promised freshly brewed coffee and warm “media lunas” for breakfast, which he and Cath promptly delivered. People stopped by all day, inquiring about our trip, introducing themselves and just saying hello.

SSCA Cruising Station Host, Jean Petley, arrived early afternoon and promptly drove us to the Immigration office at the Punta del Este Airport, after allowing us to drop off dirty laundry at the lavanderia and make a stop at the local ATM for Uruguayan pesos.

The following night a Potluck was held on the marina “patio” (read that the paved brick area between and under boats in the boatyard). A “parilla” (Uruguayan BBQ) was set up and newly recruited SSCA members, Bob and Bette Thigpen on MALLARD along with the BREILA crew served up grilled chicken, beef and ribs along with potluck contributions from nearly 25 people...locals, cruisers and expats all enjoying each other's company.

It seems that the Piriapolis port offers lots in the way of cruiser activities. Jean Petley stops by frequently giving out local Port Guides, created and updated by SSCA cruisers. A group gets together twice a week for Tai Chi in the park and Jean supplies transportation to yachties if they need it. There's even a cell phone borrow for visiting SSCA members.

Jean has also organized a Ladies' Luncheon once a month. What started out as a purely social lunch get-together for two women two years ago, is now quite the cultural exchange with 25 in attendance in March and a United Nations representation of ladies...UK, Switzerland, Germany, Canada, Australia, Uruguay, USA, Kenya, Colombia. We lunched gourmet at “Carumbe”, a lovely restaurant in a tranquil, country setting and the level of enthusiasm and female camaraderie was high energy. Plans for investing this energy into community projects are under way.

We had time for a visit to Jean's home and a review of the SSCA website's new features and benefits. Jean introduced us to several of her Uruguayan friends and “Spanglish” was the language of the day. We were chauffeured, given gifts of friendship and offered help wherever we turned.

The new Cruising Station Host from Punta del Este, Alberto Garcia and wife, Gabriela, stopped by and whisked us off to Punta on a sunny Saturday afternoon. We lunched at the Yacht Club Punta del Este restaurant where we had the opportunity to try *clerico* (a sangria-like drink made with white wine and fruit and served ice cold), *chipirones* (tiny fried squid that were outstanding) and the local fish *brótola*. We visited their Tayana 42, FAIAL, on her mooring and then had a lovely time at their local summer home, regaled with Alberto's passage stories.

We had only a week, but there was nary an evening nor a day when we were not made to feel welcome

and offered help with our tasks. SSCA's spirit of camaraderie is alive and well in Uruguay.