



by Joseph M. Herrmann

## King Neptune Comes Calling

I had only planned to do two articles on the Norwegian Woodturning Cruise, but I decided that there were a few brief stories left that I wanted to share with you. One concerned an “execution” in the form of “walking the plank” that was carried out aboard ship to atone for a slur against the good name of Odd Erik. I will discuss that in a future article. However, today, I would like to share with you the story of King Neptune’s visit to the MS Gann to commemorate our crossing the Arctic Circle.

### BACKGROUND

We crossed the Arctic Circle at 7:22 a.m. on the sixth day of the cruise on our way to Bodø. Many of the passengers who were on deck saw the marker that indicated the location of the Arctic Circle as we passed (see Fig. 1). Rumors started to fly that a special guest would be on board sometime in the afternoon, and all kinds of stories started to circulate about the gruesome initiation ceremony that first-time crossers of the Arctic Circle would have to endure as a rite of passage. Many passengers chose to hide in their cabins and only the bravest among us opted to stay on deck.

### KING NEPTUNE ARRIVES

The uppermost deck of the ship was chosen as the place to hold the ceremony and the “bravest of the brave” among the passengers were gathered to face the God of the Sea! King Neptune and his henchman appeared, Odd Erik read the proclamation about crossing the Arctic Circle, and the passengers were prepared for the ceremony (see Fig. 2).

King Neptune was

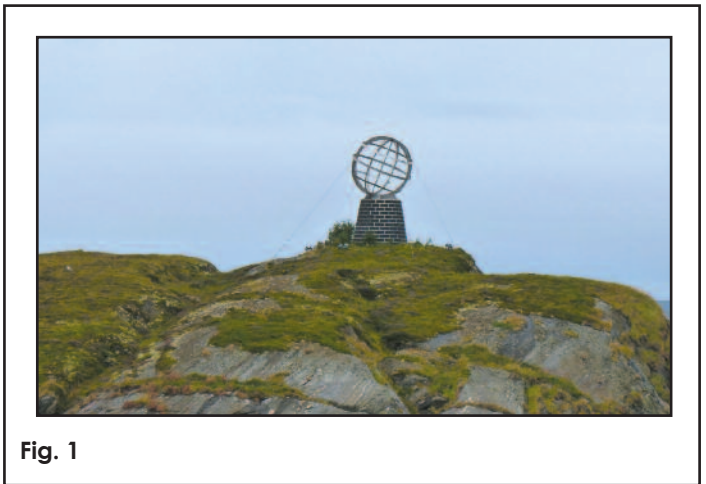


Fig. 1

The marker indicating the location of the Arctic Circle was on a small island in the fjord (photo by Mike Stafford).

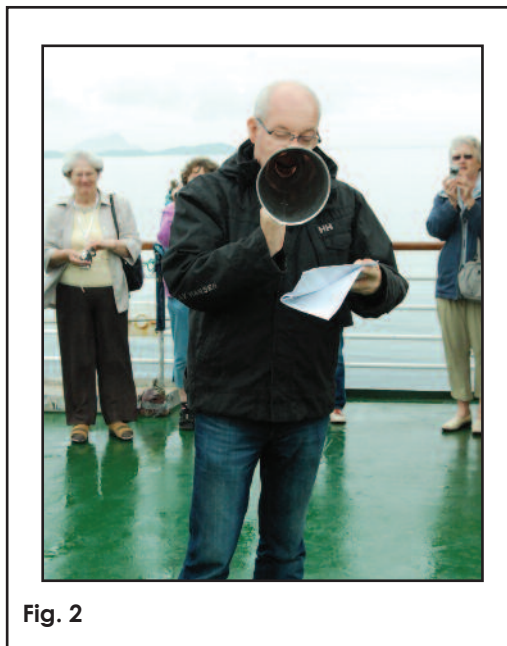


Fig. 2

Odd Erik read the proclamation about crossing the Arctic Circle.



Fig. 3

King Neptune makes his appearance.



Fig. 4

Every king needs a henchman to help carry out the unpleasant tasks.



Fig. 5

Jerry Hammock was the first person to undergo the rites.



Fig. 6

I took my turn next (photo by Mark Baker).



Fig. 7

Mike took his seat on the throne.



Fig. 8

King Neptune applied the "hot oil" to Mike's face.



Fig. 9

The henchman sprayed Mike's face with the cold water.

dressed in a pair of orange coveralls covered with seaweed and he was carrying a pot of hot oil (chocolate syrup) that he would use to smear over the newly minted "blue noses" (see Fig. 3). His henchman carried a pot of ice cold sea water that would be used to baptize the

initiate into the fraternity (see Fig. 4).

### INITIATION RIGHTS

Jerry Hammock of King Arthur's Tools went first (see Fig. 5), and the application of the hot oil and the cold sea water



Fig. 10

The first two initiated didn't get cold water poured down their backs, but Mike did.



Fig. 11

Mike tries to get away from the king's henchman and the cold water.



Fig. 12

Mike still got quite wet during the ceremony.



Fig. 13

Mike proudly displays his Certificate of Crossing.



Fig. 14

Francis Tacq takes his turn and gets a monogram.



Fig. 15

Sarah Baker was a good sport and endured a little more cold water than most received.

didn't appear to be too bad. I figured that the king and his henchman would either get carried away right in the beginning or save it for later as their confidence grew, so I went next (see Fig. 6). My good friend Mike Stafford soon followed.

The person selected for initiation was seated in a chair (see Fig. 7) and was approached by King Neptune who daubed the "hot motor oil" on his face (see Fig. 8). Then the henchman sprayed the initiate's face with the cold sea water (see Fig. 9). I knew that sooner or later, the king

and his henchman would start to get carried away and they did. Mike also got a cup of cold water poured down the back of his shirt (see Fig. 10). He tried to get away from the henchman and actually succeeded (see Figs. 11 and 12). Everyone who participated in the Blue Nose Ceremony got a "Certificate of Crossing" as a memento (see Fig. 13).

### OTHER CELEBRITY INITIATES

Francis Tacq of Wivamac lathes had a "W" painted on his forehead by King Neptune (see Fig. 14). Sarah Baker (wife of the editor of the British woodturning magazine) took her turn in the chair (see Fig. 15). The king and his henchman were getting a little bolder by this time, and then, later on in the ceremony, they really baptized one of the passengers (see Fig. 16). I later was told that the woman was a member of the staff and I guess "payback" was in order! Everyone who participated got a certificate that they could frame upon returning home (see Fig. 17).

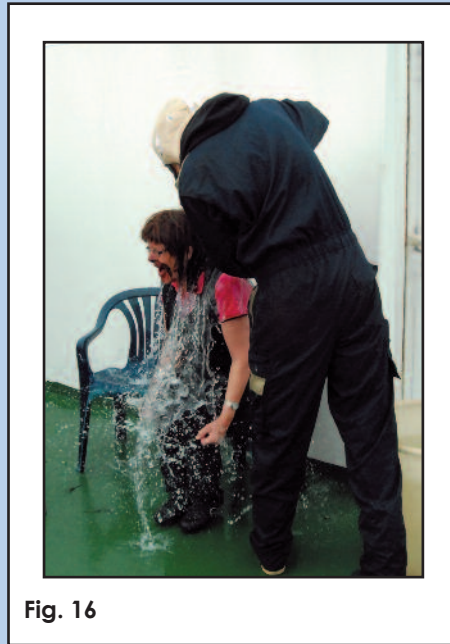


Fig. 16

The king's henchman really baptized this poor woman!



Fig. 17

This is my certificate that I received to mark the crossing.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

I hope you enjoyed this story of King Neptune's visit and that you will have an opportunity to get your own certificate on the next voyage. For more information about the woodturning cruise, please contact Odd Erik at [odderik@verktoyas.no](mailto:odderik@verktoyas.no) (Note: This is the correct e-mail address. There was a misprint in the e-mail address in the previous issue).





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