

Travel Journal

Baltic Cruise

August 12-27, 2003

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Adventurer and Chronicler

ITINERARY

- Fri-Sat, 15th & 16th Departure from Copenhagen and at sea
- Sunday the 17th Stockholm, Sweden
Tour of Royal Palace in the heart of this vibrant city followed by lunch with Roderick at Grand Hotel.
- Monday the 18th Helsinki, Finland
Tour included a drive through the city to note the cleaning of rugs, the splendid cathedral at Senate Square plus other notable structures before going out to the quaint little town called Porvoo. Lunch at an old distillery preceded a visit to the Sipoo Old Church and the amazing Rock Church on the way back to the city and the ship.
- Tues-Wed, 19th & 20th St Petersburg, Russia
Tours included Peterhof, the Bronze Horseman, St. Isaac's Cathedral, lunch at Grand Europa Hotel, Church of the Spilt Blood, Yusupov Palace, The Hermitage Museum at the Winter Palace, and Catherine's Palace in Pushkin.
- Thursday the 21st Tallinn, Estonia
Tour of Old Town that accented the significant growth of commerce and vitality following the recent end of Russian domination.
- Friday the 22nd Visby on the island of Gotland, Sweden
Tour of the well tended farmland *en route* to small area called Masterby to visit medieval church, then a nearby Bronze Age burial site, an old fishing village and later a walk within the walls of the medieval town. (Actually, I did not do the walk since I had not brought along an umbrella and it had started to rain.)
- Saturday the 23rd Berlin, Germany via the port of Warnemunde
Tour highlights included Checkpoint Charlie, remnants of the Berlin Wall, Brandenburg Gate, The Victory Column, Charlottenburg Castle, Bebel Platz (where books were burned by Nazi's in 1933), the Allied Museum commemorating the Berlin Airlift plus the town of Potsdam to visit Schloss Sanssouci and the Neue Palais.
- Saturday the 24th Arhus, Denmark
Walking Tour highlighted the Cathedral School, two cathedrals, the theater, Royal Hotel, newly "gentrified" pedestrian area and a Women's Museum.
- Monday the 25th Oslo, Norway
Tour began with a drive through town to see the Royal Palace and Town Hall before visiting Vigeland Park plus the Viking and Kon-Tiki Museums.
- Tues-Wed, 26th & 27th At sea before ending cruise ends at Harwich, England

While airborne to Frankfurt on Tuesday, August 12, 2003

Dear Mother:

Since you have mentioned several times that you would like to be on this cruise and that you love the idea of my developing an ongoing travelogue, I've decided that I will address it to you. I want to begin by agreeing with you that the itinerary indeed is exciting, especially at this time of year. I only hope that the heat that has been so challenging to other European areas recently will have not chosen to also do this trip! Hopefully, also, the several frustrations per Holland America that I have recently experienced in preparing for this trip will all be history soon.

I won't promise any particular flow or theme to this journaling. Instead, I plan to respond to experiences or just record ideas or other considerations. It's also a valuable way for me to become accustomed to using my laptop and to experience journaling with a keyboard. This could substitute for my not being able to sleep while airborne! It may also help advance my thanksgiving letter for this year!

Annie and Debbie will also be in my mind and heart as I journal.

Pre-cruise Experiences

On this Lufthanza flight *en route* to Copenhagen, the German stereotype of efficiency and purposeful composure is especially evident. This crew is all business! I miss elegance! However, leaving on time, having no immediate neighbor and receiving my low calorie meal suggests that meeting customer expectations also really works!

Thinking ahead...

What am I hoping to experience on this cruise? First, the ship promises to be special since it's a new vessel and I just love the idea of having my own verandah to experience the nights with so much light! Such a phenomenon will be new to me and delightful to anticipate especially since most of the days will be spent on shore in the several interesting ports of the trip. As you know, I truly love being at sea ever since experiencing it the first time at your persistent (now I regard as precious) insistence that we all do the cruise last November. What a new and promising experience that was even if it suggested a version of Kmart of the Seas to me! The promise that it became was as unexpected as it has been expansive since I've become actively and adventurously cruise-crazy.

As you may remember, my initial response was to consider cruising to be a particularly offensive form of pandering to people's pleasures. I easily overcame that notion in the first few hours! Even with all the food, entertainment, etc., my greatest delight was in

experiencing the rocking motion of the ship which felt to me as though I were being cared for -- almost coddled -- essentially an unknown experience. It was especially evident to me early on the last morning when we docked in New Orleans and I sensed that my bed felt especially hard which I had not noticed the entire cruise. The lack of movement had significantly erased the magic of the experience. As you know, it also tantalized me into wanting more. When I returned and was referencing this particularly satisfying aspect of the cruise, a friend noted that the French words for “sea” (*la mer*) and for “Mother” (*la mere*) are essentially the same. Lovely, lovely thought!

I also quite remember sitting on my verandah just looking out at the water and thinking that as we bobbed along on the surface of the planet that it really reflected reality since we’re never in charge but so often can sense that we are. It was such an experience of being loved by my Creator who chooses to allow me to think I’m in control when I’m ever in God’s hands. I suppose the cruise could actually have been considered a prayer although I’m not sure that any cruise line would be interested in such a theme for a promotion!

So, dinner is now over and the “natives are restless” on board the flight. I’ve often thought that meals are really means of keeping passengers in their seats as a form of order and control. For sure, food can be one of the better forms of anesthesia in our culture.

We’re over the North Atlantic now and Debbie would be amazed at the difference in this flight to our recent, exciting experience aboard the Concorde. So many contrasts are evident internally but especially externally as my in-flight map delineating the journey indicates that we’re only at 35,000 feet! This certainly seems to be the definition of going lower and slower than the Concorde crew suggested was to become their experience post Concorde!

11:33PM

It’s been 12 hours now since I landed in Copenhagen and unchronologically I want to capture an experience that is both profoundly simple and simply profound as evidenced by my tears in response. In order to have background music while taking the opportunity to capture the events of the past 12 hours and my reactions to them, I decided to listen to a CD that literally showed up in my life recently. It had actually seemed odd that twice recently I “ran into” Clare Gavin who I had enjoyed interacting with especially as fellow members of the Liturgy Committee at Daylesford Abbey years ago. At our second happenstance meeting she brought me a CD that she and her singing group had made. She said that she’s been meaning to get it to me. It was her gift in more ways than I knew at that busy moment. Realizing quickly that it could not possibly just be background music (which I had hoped would counter music I can hear from the street below my hotel room with my window open), I also clearly determined that meeting her in the parking lots of two different food stores was God’s way to “feed” me with the reminder of the constancy and gentleness of the love that surrounds and permeates me even when I’m not aware or attentive. It seems to be too complicated a retelling of the experience but I feel especially grateful that God values me enough to pierce through my usual busi-ness to

remind me of the simplest and most precious of realities. It was such a welcome reminder that ever since I was but a spark of a being God has loved-to-treasured me with the only expectation that I would choose to respond to such generosity by expressing my gifts in service to others. I have truly been loved into being and want to return that fullness with gentleness and grace. I guess sometimes I need to be a quarter of a world away from my usual distractions (although I certainly have more “stuff” than I “need”) to be able to be open. The strength of conviction combined with gentleness of Clare’s voice, her creatively original songs, her poetically powerful but familiar messages were extensions of her gift that neither of us could have known would become so important in such unexpected ways!!!

Deb—Do you think that using the Concorde earphones also made a difference?!

I plan to buy several CD’s from her to be able to share the gift of her expression with you, Annie, Debbie, Jerrye, the Hoss, etc.

Now to record the earlier experiences of the day...

The airport in Frankfurt is both huge as well as amazingly simplified, in the particularly German approach to efficiency. As I waited in the lounge for my next flight, I also noticed that this airport also features a world people parade! So many different kinds of people and yet so many similarities in dress, in couples actually looking alike, in the automatic affinity I feel for people in business dress, in the “pack-like” posture of middle Eastern women and children which seems reminiscent of their nomadic past, in the number of babies people bring on their travels, etc.

I was quite impressed both in Frankfurt as well as in Toronto last week that passengers are “bridged” to and from planes which allows additional flights to be available without building any more terminal! Clever!

Listening to Clare’s music reminded me how much I value gentleness and elegance and how absent it is in things German. In fact, that helps me clarify the concern I had for the seat neighbor on the flight to Copenhagen. An interesting and currently challenged individual who lives in a Philadelphia suburb works at Ikea. Holger’s background is business but he’s in an IT rotation and frustrated since he does not have the same technical strengths of his 19 direct reports. He seems to feel that he can continue to manage as he has in the past and, of course, I had an alternative perspective. He’s also frustrated by the work ethic of Americans and resisting the opportunity to be less German and more sensitive and invitational. Likely, he’s not going to receive encouragement from his manager who seems to be rather unenlightened and untested by competition.

Holger also noted that the Scandinavians are known for their casualness in every way. It’s evident to me in how they engage life, their notable furniture preferences and in what the world would regard as their morals. My initial thought was that they tend to be submissive and have low expectations but even in this brief time of observation I’m

beginning to consider that the space that they have orients their thinking into an expectation of abundance which gets instilled as a perspective on life. An example that Holger used to distinguish the difference between the Germans and the Scandinavians is that in Germany on a hot day people need to get to a lake by 8am just to be able to get a parking spot. In Scandinavia, if there's already a car at a lake, one just goes to another lake! Tells the whole story...

Their fluency and fluidity with several languages both amazes and convinces me that they enjoy additional dimensions to life.

I'm learning that the Danish nuance to the Scandinavian casualness has its own character. Learning from a recent British Airways article by an architect that the Danes are intent on making the functional aesthetic and the aesthetic functional, it's evident in such expressions as furniture to cutlery to their irrigation system.

I want to capture that the airport in Copenhagen is like no other I've ever experienced. It actually feels cozy with polished wooden floors! My hotel room also had polished wooden floors.

My afternoon included a short walk in the area of my hotel to find a cash machine and to have lunch. Holland America people who are stationed in the hotel all day recommended a restaurant at a planetarium across the street. It was an exceptional choice. The restaurant has outdoor seating, which most do here, and in the shade with a slight breeze at the edge of a lake with all manner of ducks (thought of you with the ducks!) and also magnificent, active fountains, my Salad Nicoise was a treat.

Returning to the hotel to do a work out and take a nap reminded me that traveling for 16 hours can be both tiring as well as transitional. I'm feeling settled and looking forward to a tour in the countryside tomorrow to see castles, etc., following a breakfast buffet that may even have muesli!

In talking to a few others at the hotel who are also on the cruise I learned that the main reason that several of us have had frustrations with Holland America for this cruise is that since it's a new ship the company decided that it wants to use technology to a higher degree. Seems that the idea and the reality don't match. At least it helps me to understand a bit more. I think the Hoss was correct—since they have been bought by Carnival they're being required to be more cost-effective and are having trouble responding to the timeframe provided. They may be based in the states but seem to still have the individualistic Scandinavian mentality!

More tomorrow...

Late Evening, Thursday, August 14th

My day began by watching the locals busily getting to work on a delightfully cool

morning while enjoying my breakfast from the buffet in the hotel. It included dry mueslix (I was looking forward to the “wet” way that the Swiss and the Brits prepare it) plus the usual wonderful breads, cheese, etc. By the way, I don’t know where the executives were unless they get to work later.

Note: I realized later that we were not situated close to the commercial area of the city.

The primary event of the day began shortly afterward-- a tour of castles. Our guide was wonderfully informed and pleasant and I became aware of the rich history of the Danes and how little I know about it. At this point I’m in the struggle part of the learning process but I want to capture some of the highlights.

En route out of town to the castles we were to visit, we drove through a town-within-the-town of Copenhagen that continues to be a separate entity. Seems that it was the original address for a summer palace of the royal family and so it still remains a smart address that people like to have. How interesting it is that we are ever fascinated with and like to be close to power!

Frederiksborg Castle was our first stop and magnificent to experience. A Renaissance structure, it was built in the 1500’s by King Christian 4 who ruled for 60 years (between 1588-1648). He named it in honor of his father. I regard it as a tribute to commercialism since after it burned in 1885, Jacobson, the head of the Carlson Brewery Company decided that it needed to be restored and used as a museum to capture Danish history. He was aware that as the culture was changing for the Danes, they needed to have a place where they could learn about their heritage. To achieve his goal, he needed to receive permission from the government. It was easily granted. He has therefore established quite an important service to his people as well as a legacy for him. The brewery still maintains it to this day and although I don’t think they “own” it, whenever the royal family may want to use it, they ask permission of the brewery. Interesting switch... The furniture in the castle also reflects the history since the earliest pieces from the 1500’s were made in Germany, the pieces from the 1600’s were made in southern Europe and those from the 1700’s come from the Far East.

A feature of the castle is the chapel and a wooden organ it houses that is the oldest in the world. Built in 1610 by Compenius with the help of the composer Praetorius, the organ is used only for concerts now. The chapel serves as a parish church and is also a favorite place for weddings.

Afterward, we saw the Summer Palace, called Fredensborg Palace, of the Queen who is Margrethe 2. It was built in the 1700’s by Frederick 4 as a substitute for the medieval nature of Fredricksborg Castle. We could only see it from the outside—I’m not sure that it is ever open for tourists. A custom that continues to this day is that when the queen and her family come to be in residence in the summer, the locals light her way with torches. She has indicated that she loves the display and it seems to be just one way that the Danes demonstrate their unabashed love and respect for her and the entire royal family.

We also learned that Christian 9th loved to summer at Fredensborg Palace where he would gather his extensive family of his nine children. He's called the Father of Europe since his children either married into or were invited to lead in several other countries including England, Greece, Russia, etc.

Afterward, we had a wonderful buffet lunch of Danish delicacies where I had the opportunity to realize once again that I really don't like herring. It may a treat for the Danes (and other Scandinavians, I understand) but I won't be eating into their supply!

The next castle, in Elsinore, is the Renaissance Kronberg Castle, the setting of Shakespeare's play Hamlet. As usual, Shakespeare took poetic license and set it in the 1600's but if I understood correctly, the actual event dates back to the 800's. Details, details... The play is performed in the courtyard every summer and this evening was the last performance for this year. I inquired and learned that it was sold out.

We returned to Copenhagen via the Danish Riviera passing many magnificent summer homes and several interesting places including a museum named "Louisiana", built by a man who had three wives all named Louise, and also the home and museum of Karen Blixen who wrote Out of Africa and Babette's Feast.

After a nap and a visit to Tiovli Gardens I'm ready to capture the day and look forward to tomorrow.

Notes of interest from the day:

Most of Denmark (85%) is Lutheran (although only @ 2% seem to actually go to church).

The country is composed of 400-500 islands but only 85 (yes, the same number as the earlier %) are inhabited.

There are @ 1.7million people in Copenhagen and @ 5.3million in Denmark—the same number as in Switzerland.

Beech and oak trees are currently used for making furniture in Denmark.

Sweden and Denmark have fought more battles than I can count and the ferry ride across the sound between the two countries now takes 17 minutes!

Greenland and the Faroe Islands are also a part of the Danish Kingdom and are represented in Parliament.

From the 15th century until 1857, the Danish king charged a toll to any ship that wanted to dock in Denmark. It was called the Sounds Toll. The collectors were situated at Kronborg Castle because of its strategic position. It was supposedly to protect the ships from the pirates who were actually the king's men! In addition, the king had the right to

board any ship and buy any item of interest at the price that had been stated in the inventory. Captain's apparently were challenged in the process of developing the inventory because it served as both the basis of the toll as well as the price for the king to pay.

Salaries are taxed between 42-67%. The VAT tax of 25% on all goods is additional plus a special tax on luxury items. For example, 2/3's of the price for a car is tax! About 1/3 of a family's income goes into housing.

Windmills produce 12% of the country's electricity. They are built and exported from Denmark to many other countries. I especially remember the many, many of them in the desert near Palm Springs, CA. As my flight was landing it was impressive to see many of them in the sea.

The Little Mermaid, sculpted in 1913, was in response to a commission by Jacobson (yes, the same creative, generous individual who also restored Frederiksborg Castle). The idea apparently came to him while at the ballet of the story and he thought it would be a shame for her to be forgotten. Aren't whims and money a great combination?! He initially wanted the star ballerina from the ballet to serve as the model but since it was considered inappropriate for her to pose in the nude, the wife of the sculptor was the model for the body and only the face is that of the ballerina's. In 1964, someone cut off the head of the Little Mermaid statue and it became a national disaster. It was soon replaced. A part of this Hans Christian Anderson story that I did not remember is that she supposedly turns into foam when she dies. Anderson is proudly remembered as a Dane especially by the merchants!

Arabic numbers vs. roman numerals were used to indicate the “#” for the king/queen.

Bishop Absolem, a war hero in addition to being a religious, founded Copenhagen in 1157. The king was apparently in favor of this move. His historian, Saxo, recorded the history to that date at the direction of the bishop.

A crown with an open top, according to our Danish guide, is a Swedish custom. So, for the coronation of Christian 4, he had his crown made in this way to suggest that he wanted to recapture Sweden. He also had an apple carried on a pillow in the procession to indicate that his interest was in the world as well (the proverbial orb). At the head of the procession, two men threw coins to the commoners. (It reminded me of the time as a child when we went to hear Earl Long speak from the back of a pick-up truck and after his speech he threw out quarters. Remember?)

By the way, a closed crown with a cross in top of it, the European tradition, represented the divine right of the monarch or that he/she needs only to be open only to direction from God. (I guess this worked as long as the subjects bought it!)

It was fascinating to me to note on a poster I bought about the Danish leaders that the current royal family has an ancestral line to the 9th century and the Vikings. It suggests

that Denmark is the oldest kingdom in the world! It was also notable that the 18 kings who preceded the current queen were alternatively named either Christian or Frederick. The name “Fred” means “peace” and although there were many “Fred’s” in all the Scandinavian countries as well as Germany, there did not seem to be a relevant amount of peace.

For example, in 1864, Denmark lost 1/3 of the country to France and to Prussia. Indeed, it was Christian 9 who was king at that time—a Frederick had just died the year before. It could be really interesting to track the wars and the Frederick’s but not in this effort!

There was an interesting mention that the current “war” with Sweden takes place on the soccer field. It seems to be quite a serious matter!

At former coronations, the monarch was blessed by the current bishop. The practice now is for a simple proclamation to be made without any formal coronation.

Children of a king’s mistress were only able to have lower titles such as duke or count. One king was known for his “amorous adventures” and resulting brood... but I don’t remember who he was.

I thought I understood that Frederik 6 was the last ruling king. I think that I also understood that it could have partly been because he was more attentive to his personal life than interested in the affairs of state. It seems that he had three wives—the first two were through arranged marriages and the third was to a commoner who was his choice. I think she may have had the most influence on him since, in 1848, he joined a European trend and signed away the power to rule the country thus allowing it to become a democracy. It is now a Constitutional Monarchy as are the other Scandinavian countries.

Thatched roofs, which have a unique wooden feature on the top here, are made from fresh water straw. It is “harvested” in the spring so that it can dry before being applied in summer.

When a rose was placed on the table in the dining or Knights Room of Frederiksborg Castle (only in a Danish castle?) it meant that the topic discussed needed to be kept confidential. Since the king used the room often for that purpose it was also referred to as the Rose Room.

Buildings are only four stories tall since ladders of the fire department reach that height!

Along the roadway, I noticed a bush grows that I had also seen in Newport, Rhode Island. I learned later that it is an old rose bush that is especially hardy.

Christmas trees represent an active industry and many grow along roads as well as on farms. They’re shipped as far away as Hong Kong since, apparently, it is special to have a Danish Christmas tree. Did you ever hear that?

Bikes represent a particularly easy and convenient form of transportation. As you may remember, they're also everywhere. Many people will have two bikes—one to ride from home to a train and then another one in town to ride to their work. Each is locked at the respective places.

Families are especially clever about the many different ways they accommodate their children on bikes. For babies, they have bikes with a pram on front. The next level arranges a car seat for toddlers on the back and then they advance to a small seat for older children who also have on helmets. When they can actually pedal, a bicycle-built-for-two is used. It's so interesting to note the inventiveness and caring involved!

In addition, there are also @ 2000 “city bikes” that are brightly painted and can be easily rented by putting a coin into a slot and then returning the bike after using it and receiving the same amount (20DDK or @ \$3) in coin in return. Essentially, therefore, the bike is free. A map is even attached somehow to the handlebars. Fascinating! Also, both in Amsterdam and Copenhagen, over 1/2 of the population uses bikes all year in each city! (It snows rarely in Copenhagen although it can get very cold, rainy and windy.

I also noticed that bikes queue for stop lights. So orderly!

The Kings Road originally could only be used by the king!

Daisies are planted on special roads as a scenic statement and also as a form of welcome to interesting places of interest. Lovely. Actually it was too late in the summer to see any of them but the signs to note the practice were, of course, evident.

I'm amazed to realize that it's already 2:04am on the Feast of the Assumption, Tommy's birthday. I'm also thinking of Tommy and Jerrye as they begin their birthday/anniversary weekend with their dear family.

For now, then, good night. There's another tour tomorrow *en route* to the ship. I look forward to getting on board!

11:30pm on Friday, August 15, 2003—First night on board!

It's been an interesting morning previous to an easy and quick registration process for boarding the ship @ noon. I easily found my cabin and was welcomed by flowers from Joanie, my Travel Agent. She's ever so thoughtful and I love it!

I'm delighted to also “report” that I now have the tours I want in St. Petersburg. It took two visits to the shore excursion office but I'm content to be able to look forward to very interesting tours in these historic ports of call on the itinerary.

Actually, this Holland America line in general and this ship in particular are specifically and significantly disappointing given no internet connection in the room or Gentlemen

Hosts as promised, plus no capability to iron in the room. If I understand this correctly, I do have “the opportunity” to purchase a \$120 “unlimited laundry and dry cleaning package”, as an alternative.

My cabin steward speaks limited English and seems to be untrained, e.g. I asked him to help me get connected to the internet since the phone connection on the cord I brought does not fit the modem “plug” and he brought me an extension cord. Another time when I asked about an iron he said “no iron” and brought me some wrinkle-free solution to spray onto a blouse that was wrinkled.

The only availability to be connected to the internet is to buy a package in the ship’s Internet Center for \$.55 per minute. Very aggravating!

The food is quite ordinary, inane games fill the daily programs, fellow passengers seem content with having their low expectations met plus information from the ship is often conflicting.

Other religions receive more favor, per the priest, who never knows from one day to the next at what time and in which location he will be able to say Mass.

Management seems to be seriously flawed. All in all it seems that this is an experiment that’s not working very well. Also, the ship was built in Italy and shows it!

I do quite love having my own balcony and a queen size bed but I’m really reminded of the Carnival Conquest. This ship is obviously trying to compete with more upscale cruises and it seems to have been promoted in that way when in reality it’s just a newer version of mediocrity!

I guess I should have realized that my earlier frustrations were only precursors to actually being on board. So, I’ll quite enjoy my own private little world. My cabin is one deck below the bridge two decks below the fitness center. I got to read at Mass today so I can easily focus on my preferences.

The QE2 this is definitely not and I miss her!

The tour this morning was wonderful and provided yet more fascinating history of Copenhagen. I could easily have spent another two days to explore the area’s features even more.

Our first stop was a beautiful church that was especially spacious and simple in lovely alignment to its posture as the cathedral for the Lutheran Church.

On the tour we also drove by Rosenborg Castle, built by Christian 4. It houses the Crown Jewels and other treasures of the royal family which I would have loved to have seen but also serves as a good reason to return.

In addition, we saw two more castles:

1—Christianborg. It houses Parliament (where three women are currently members) and also has Reception Rooms where the Queen receives people twice each month.

2—Amalienborg. The Queen's Winter Palace.

Both of these are located on "Castle Island" which is so called since it has only government buildings on it...many are Neo-Classical in design. There are a total of eight bridges that connect the island to the other areas of the city.

Note: There are a total of eight parties in Denmark. I'm not sure if they are each represented in Parliament.

It was interesting to learn that Amalienberg, completed in 1749 and named for his wife, was built by Frederick 5. It is only one of four palaces in the rococo style that surround the plaza that contains a huge equestrian statue of him in its center looking toward a church that is, appropriately, called Frederickskirchen or the Marble Church. The architecture is Roman Baroque (I still can't distinguish architectures!) and its dome is the 3rd largest in Europe (after the Vatican and St. Paul's). The other three palaces were given to noble families by the king with the expectation that they would develop the area. Royal Guards here seem to be less rigid than in other areas and in wonderfully colorful uniforms/costumes. I was reminded that I still have not ever seen a changing of the guard anywhere!

So, just the experience of driving around the city was especially delightful since yesterday I went on a tour in the countryside.

On last stop before getting to the ship was to see the Little Mermaid statue (again). Today the Queen's yacht was anchored in the bay and just opposite the statue, black sheep were grazing on the ramparts of the fort. (I did not learn why black sheep were used but it reminded me of the nursery rhyme, "Black sheep, black sheep, have you any wool? Yes, sir, yes sir, three bags full". I wonder what all that meant!)

More items of interest I learned on this morning's tour:

The average income in Copenhagen is 300-400,000DDK or @ \$45,000. I referenced the high taxation yesterday but failed to note that taxes "buy" all medical care and all education. In addition, especially generous social security" benefits are available to serve any need, plus retirement benefits.

Danes drive with their lights on 24 hours a day... I think all the Baltic countries do.

Copenhagen is also referred to as the Green City since there are so many parks and also because spires and statues of bronze turn green in their weather.

There's a very limited subway system in Copenhagen since it is limestone underground.

They're looking into how to overcome that reality.

Service in the military (for two years, I think) is mandatory for men but voluntary for women. There are currently two women who serve as Royal Guards.

The three Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Norway and Sweden cooperate in several interesting ways such as SAS (Scandinavian Airline System), the same religion, similar languages and cultures. They've apparently learned that's there's more to be gained from collaboration vs. competition.

In 1953, because the king, Frederick IX, had three daughters and no sons, the constitution was changed to allow the monarch to be a woman. Upon his death in 1972, his oldest daughter became the current queen, Margaret the 2nd. (Had he not advanced this constitutional change, his nephew, who was not regarded as being very "clever" would have become king.) As I mentioned earlier, she is beloved and respected especially because she's an individual which Danes value, and also because she has effectively combined tradition with modern life. She's also an accomplished painter, playwright, and linguist who has mastered six languages.

One of the two orders that can be conferred by the Danish monarch is called the Order of the Elephant. Christian 1st established it in the 1400's and, supposedly, chose the elephant as a symbol of strength and power. Many shield-like plaques hang in Fredericksborg Castle to commemorate the designees.

A new opera house is being constructed in Copenhagen on the waterfront that is a gift from Mr. Miller of the Maesk Corporation. It is scheduled to open in October of 2004. What opera lovers he and his wife must be! He's 90 years old and is the third generation of this largest shipping company in the world.

A very modern building for the national bank headquarters was designed so that the windows would reflect the old buildings that surround it—lovely tribute. Likely, it also quelled the historically-oriented locals.

The New Harbor area was originally developed in the 1600's as the "red light" district. A gentrification process has been taking place over the last 15 years transforming it into a particularly quaint area that resembles Amsterdam especially in terms of the colorful buildings that front the canal.

In the 1870's, the German Royal Family married into the Danish Royal Family.

June 5th is the Danish Constitution Day to note the date when the country became a constitutional Monarchy in 1849.

During WWII, Denmark was occupied by the Nazi's from April of 1940 to May 5, 1945. The Royal Family stayed in Copenhagen. Every morning the King, Christian X (now using roman numerals, for some reason), would take his usual ride on his horse. It was

done partly as his custom and also partly in protest to the occupation. The Nazi's did not want him to be taking such liberties. The numbers of fellow Danes who walked or rode beside him ever increased during the occupation. His boldness served as inspiration for the country.

Note: The Royal Families of Holland and Norway went into exile during their occupations. Sweden was not occupied during the war. Of course, the royal family in England not only stayed in London but became icons for going out and meeting with the citizenry every day dressed elegantly. This Queen Mum may have been an old-fashioned royal, but she also understood her role in difficult times.

Another notable feature about Denmark was the impressive resistance movement that protected the Jews who were considered to have been 100% integrated into Danish society. In August of 1943, the Nazi's ordered them to report to concentration camps. Instead, the Danes had been quietly but definitely encouraging the Jews to make their way to the northern coast. Families there participated in hiding them. On one specific night, an eclectic armada composed of yachts to row boats transported them across the sea into Sweden. My understanding was that a total of 95% were saved on that night. So impressive!

Winters are more rainy than snowy.

Denmark is one of the best countries in Europe for farming.

Danes are considered to be the "Italians of the North" because of their liberalism. Swedes are considered to be more cosmopolitan since many royals have married individuals from France.

Denmark was once a large kingdom. Events such as Sweden's Declaration of Independence in 1648 and Norway's in 1814 plus the awarding of Jutland to Germany reduced it.

Norway, Sweden and Denmark are all Scandinavian as well as Nordic countries. Finland, however, is considered to be only Nordic. The Finnish language is similar to Estonian and Hungarian.

Denmark, Norway and Sweden all have Royal Families who are all cousins since their families have intermarried over the years.

There are 10 cathedrals in Denmark. Only one, in Copenhagen, is Catholic.

In 1536, as a result of the Reformation in 1536, all Catholic churches became the property of the Crown and Lutheranism became the official religion. In many other countries, the Catholic symbols in the churches were burned except in Denmark.

About 4% of the population attends Catholic services. I don't know how many (or, more accurately, how few) Catholic churches there are.

Two famous Danes were Victor Borge and the philosopher, Kirkegard.

The Hotel D'Angleterre is ranked as 5 Star and beckons me back to this delightful place.

Note: The Hanseatic League, developed in 1669, included Tallinn, Visby (when it was originally a part of Germany), Stockholm and perhaps others. Notably, it did not include Copenhagen who disagreed with its goal.

The swan is the "state bird" of Denmark—just another reason for me to really like this place!

The first university was founded in 1479. (I think that the printing press was begun by Gutenberg in Strausborg at about that same time.) Harvard, as I remember, was founded in 1636 (as a Divinity School).

In schools today, English is taught as a second language in the first few grades. After that, German is taught in the next few grades. If a student remains in school beyond that period, either French, Spanish or Russian can be chosen as yet another language. I think Latin is chosen if later studies are to be scientifically-oriented.

In closing, I want to capture that I've been so enjoying looking out my room at the moon which seems closer than I've ever noticed and has a very different egg-shape! So special!

Good night.

Mid-afternoon on Saturday, August 16, 2003

The biggest drama thus far was the ship's response to a medical emergency. A helicopter came to rescue a passenger and I got to see much of it from my balcony and also capture it in photos. (Deb, I'm so glad you encouraged me to take your camera and helped me to become familiar with it.) I also felt grateful to realize that at least Holland America honors the critical issues of health and safety.

It's also been delightful to observe the sea traffic that has gone past my balcony. I'm glad I brought my binoculars!

4:10pm on Monday the 18th, after touring in Helsinki

Hearing the seagulls serenade me on this particularly pleasant afternoon as I capture the past events of yesterday and today while sitting on my verandah is all amazing to me if only because of the greater amount of information I've learned about these the two cities

on our itinerary thus far.

Stockholm, yesterday, was especially impressive to me since it felt both historic as well as fresh-to-almost-new. I guess another way of describing it is to note that it seemed alive with both history and current life. After being significantly impressed on my own by the Royal Palace, I enjoyed experiencing the city through Roderick's eyes. He's totally smitten by Stockholm and in two weeks is even interviewing for a position in the headquarters of his company. If he gets the job, he'll be moving to Stockholm which he very much wants to do. He even loves the traditional color the Swedes paint their summer homes on the many, many islands that we navigated into the harbor. For a sense of scope, the islands, called the archipelago, are so numerous that it took three hours from the sea to the harbor (and back, of course). It really was exciting to meet Roderick at the Grand Hotel as we had planned. He's quite the accomplished businessman and proud father with specific-to-aggressive future plans that I think he's quite capable of achieving.

The name of the city means "a town between bridges". It is sometimes referred to as the Venice of Northern Europe.

As early as the 14th century, it was a trading center and in 1634 it became the capital of Sweden.

There are 50 museums and 10 palaces, one with as many as 806 rooms!!!

Back to the morning... Our arrival was greeted by a band and two herald trumpets which signaled quite a festive mood. The Swedes seem to laugh quite easily and could even be considered to demonstrate a northern version of *joie d'vivre*. Their ease of expression was also evident as we sailed away and numerous boats from small craft to local sightseeing boats seemed to salute our departure. Lovely.

We arrived later than originally expected because of the medical emergency that took place the previous afternoon so I did not have enough time to get to the island of Drottningham to visit the Royal Palace where the royal family lives, etc., that I had been advised by two Swedes to see. Another time...

As an alternative to be able to enjoy some experience of the history, I visited the Royal Palace which is only used for formal functions (another one outside the city is the residence of the royal family). It was so splendid and reminiscent of Versailles. From the State Apartments to the Hall of State to the Chapel to the Treasury below where the Crown Jewels are kept, I sensed a strong fervor and pride that was inspiring. I noticed that all of the crowns had closed tops which was not what was suggested as the "Swedish custom" by the Guide in Denmark. Perhaps dates would be helpful with distinctions.

(A local theologian in Philadelphia later pointed out that the Lutheran Swedes never officially broke from Rome so their sacraments are still considered to be recognized.)

It really was a short day in Stockholm but before I leave it I want to capture an

observation that as we were going through the archipelago in the morning, I kept on thinking that only God could have created such uniqueness!

Today's experience in Helsinki may have had less luster if only because when I opened my drapes after my wake-up call this morning what I saw was (and still is) a wharf with containers stacked two to three stories high plus cranes and other *accoutrements* of commercial shipping!

Helsinki distinguished itself by several (1) unique churches, (2) interesting stories and (3) rather depressing history of submission and (4) other tidbits.

1—Lutheran Churches:

* Rock Church—literally and impressively hewn out of a rock, this is a massive structure that's prayerful in its simplicity and solidity. In contrast to other Lutheran Churches who typically point altars to the East this altar points to the north in response to the golden hue of the rock after a dynamite blast to shape the interior. Trumpet concertos were being played on (from recording) and reminded me of Barbara Prugh who played classical trumpet at my birthday party.

* The most impressive is "The Cathedral" (that's what it's called!) in Helsinki at Senate Square. Built in 1852, it's relatively new as cathedrals go and is especially bright and imposing atop 47 steps (referenced in the St Lucia account below).

* Lighthouse Church (one of only three in the world).

* In Porvoo, another Cathedral was impressive. Built in 1435, it was, of course, originally Catholic and still had the Crucifix above the altar and also a replica of DaVinci's painting of the Last Supper especially noting the feminine orientation of John/Magdalene to Christ's right. Interesting.

* Another grey stone church in Sippoo had very uneven cobble stones inside the church. A feature of this church was the Bench of Shame that supposedly was the place where those so designated by the clergy were to sit. Different offenses resulted in different amounts of time to be "resident" on the bench but for sure the intent was ever the same: shame them into submission. What a mechanism of control that could only work in a culture of fear. I've never heard of this before but want to learn more about it.

Note: Two of the old ones still maintain original artwork notably Crucifixes over the altars which are not seen in the more modern Lutheran churches where a more gentle God seems to be represented.

A feature of at least two of the churches was a beautiful ship model suspended from the ceiling to represent the primary trade of the time.

One of these ship models was provided by Peter the Great. Seems that he had a model built in France to use for demonstration purposes. The ship that carried the model from France sank but the structure that contained the ship model was saved and he made it

available to the church. I'm not sure which one (or even if it is in Finland).

2--Stories of the day:

* On the Feast of St. Lucia on December 13th, a young woman wearing a flowing white dress with a red sash descends the 47 steps. She carries a lit candle and on her head is a crown of lit candles to symbolize hope as winter begins. I don't think we were given the explanation for the specific number of steps.

* Saunas, it was suggested by the Guide, are quite an integral part of Finnish life. They're also not lacking in ritual. Seems that at least once a week with family, work colleagues or friends, people gather to sauna together in the nude for one to two hours at a time. For example, when guests are invited for dinner, a sauna precedes the meal. On any given day, at the end of a bike ride into the office a sauna followed by a shower transitions one into work. It's apparently not unusual for men who are trying to solve a problem to go sit in the sauna and not leave until the problem is solved. Most homes, even second homes, offices, bars, apartment houses, hotels, etc., have saunas.

In a sauna, after getting sufficiently heated (not sexually we were assured), there's a dip in a cool pool or even a lake after a hole has been removed from the ice. Failing either of those two options, lying in the snow to make snow angels becomes an alternative.

The translation for "sauna" is "nest of life". It is considered to be good for circulation, muscles, skin and even the heart.

One story that was related was that it is an annual custom for the President and the Council (of 18 members) to sauna together. Since the new President is a woman there was all kind of speculation about whether or not she would continue the ritual. She did!

* Midsummer—On June 21, the Summer solstice, there is no darkness and the Finns take full advantage of this promise of summer by partying all night. One tradition at this time is for girls to pick seven different kinds of flowers—in silence—and place the flowers under their pillows to be able to dream of their future husbands. It's interesting how cultures borrow from each other and essentially entertain themselves.

As a preliminary to the midsummer festivities, another time for celebration is on the last day of April and first day of May to mark the end of winter.

They do seem to be a "party people" but I suppose, it's a pastime since in the middle of winter they could have as little as two hours of sunlight on "sunny" days.

* Rug washing—One area we passed this morning on the tour is near the water's edge where people "wash rugs" as a typical summer practice. The kinds of rugs that are washed range from inexpensive to fine Orientals. Their sense of humor was also demonstrated in the story that suggests that if a man is seen washing a rug it's because he needs to remove some "sins" from the winter months.

* Sculptor/statue—The names will be omitted since I can't understand or spell them but the story goes that one of the famous Finnish sculptors was also a great drinker. As he was working on a statue of a nude woman, the pharmacy on the corner of the square refused to sell him any form of drink. So, when he completed the statue, he faced her in the opposite direction of the pharmacy (with her rear facing the pharmacy) as his response. Some time later, the pharmacy moved across the street.

3—History of Submission

Three major stages of Finnish History:

1—Swedish

In 1223, it became a part of Sweden and for 650 years experienced growth and development.

In 1346, the town of Porvoo was established by having the Swedish King come to provide it the status of a city. It had originally been a fort. Today, it's a haven for artists and tourists with interesting shops, restaurants, etc.

2—Russian

The 100 years of Russian rule over Finland began with Alexander I when, in 1809, he declared Finland to be a Grand Duchy of Russia. In 1812, Helsinki became capital of Finland. Alexander II continued the posture his father, Alexander I.

An interesting story suggested that in 1809 after Alexander I became its king, a formal meeting or "Diet" was held on the traditionally annual basis so that the people could provide "feedback" for the king/government. Another one was not scheduled until 1865!

The reign of terror *a la Nicholas* began with Nicholas I overtaking Alexander II. Russia became preoccupied with WWI and the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917'ish and negotiations with Russia eventually advanced Finland's independence.

It was noted by our Guide that one of the main reasons for Finland to have decided to join the European Union in 1995 was to have a safeguard against the vulnerability of their past. I don't know if it were required as a part of the membership, but it's the only Baltic state to use the Euro. (However, isn't England a part of the E U but chooses to have its own currency?)

4—Other tidbits:

There are four parts to their government:

1—One chamber of Parliament with 200 members who are elected to four year terms,

(Currently 1/3 women)

2—A President who is elected to a six year term and who is currently a woman.

3—A Prime Minister who is elected (?) to a one year term.

4—A “Council” of 18 members who are elected (?) to one year terms. (Currently, eight are women.)

There are multiple parties who are all currently represented in government.

Finland’s economy “stands” on three “feet”: ship building, Nokia and the forest industry. It was especially interesting to learn that, just like other Baltic states, 68% of the country is forested, 10% is cultivated and 10% is lakes.

The population is tri-lingual—Finnish, Swedish and English.

Potatoes and fish are the primary foods, plus reindeer and moose. In the summer, berries and chanterelle mushrooms are plentiful given the intense, hot sun. The Finns enjoy family excursions of going into the forest to pick each for the winter.

Taxes—As learned in both Denmark and Sweden, taxes are high but medical care, education and “social security” benefits are available to anyone. The average tax is 35% on the average monthly salary of \$2,000-\$2,500. One of the really interesting ways that taxes are “used” is for churches. In Finland, the two “state” religions are Lutheran (85%) and Russian Orthodox (5%). People “belong” to one or the other for official reasons such as the opportunity to be married in church or to be buried from church. They really don’t attend church or actively practice either religion. The privilege of “belonging” cost Lutherans 1% of their salary and Russian Orthodox, 1.5%. If one chooses to be Catholic, for example, then one would contribute directly to one’s own church but it seemed almost countercultural to do so.

The Opera House is a massive and square white building. A favorite opera of the Finns is Carmen. It’s apparently a staple on their repertoire and is performed every year. Our Guide reported (but I find it hard to believe) that the costumes are made here and sold every year because the Finns love to buy them to wear for Halloween. I would be tempted to have a party if I could secure costumes—worth checking into!!!

Kings used to build manor houses to use essentially as their own hotels when they would travel to different parts of their kingdom. We ate lunch in what is now a distillery but once was considered to be a large such estate.

In the winter when the lakes are frozen, they not only skate on the ice but even race cars! A family might also choose to take a Sunday walk out on the ice and have a picnic.

The eight ice breaker ships that are used to literally break the ice to keep commerce flowing also break tradition in terms of being named after men since their job requires such strength and power.

The most popular Christmas gift last year was an ultraviolet lamp!

We saw a new Carnival ship being built in a shipyard.

There are 5.2 million people in Finland with 1 million of them in Helsinki. (Sounds familiar to Denmark and Sweden.) It was interesting to learn that 1/2 of the population have sailboats and also at least one sauna.

Most homes are painted in the traditional red with white trim (the same as “summer homes” in Sweden).

It's very late now on the night before arriving in St. Petersburg and I need to accept however, ungracefully, that I won't be able to be sending this journal as I develop it. I've met with the Manager of the Internet Center on board several times and she is really no help in trying to become connected to the internet in my cabin. I need to let go of my frustration since it keeps me in a state of frustration and disappointment. I really don't need the added aggravation since the ship provides plenty enough!

So, on to a new day in every way. Amen!

Thursday the 21st in Tallinn, Estonia

Spending so much of my time in St. Petersburg on tours meant no time for this journal. Since I'm more confused about the history of the czars and czarinas I'm going to first capture my impressions or observations.

Driving into St. Petersburg on the way to Peterhof was really depressing given the significant neglect of the buildings. Apartment buildings seem to be the primary way that people live. There were very few individual homes except for a few under construction as summer residences of the wealthy.

One of the most impressive campuses we saw was the Naval Academy. It represented just one of the many buildings that have recently been renovated in preparation for the 300th birthday of St. Petersburg. This impressive facility housed the visiting dignitaries for the celebration in May.

Except for the several magnificent structures I got to see, specifically, Catherine's Palace, Peterhof, The Hermitage at the Winter Palace, Yusopov Palace, the Church of the Spilt Blood, St. Isaac's Cathedral (only from the outside), and the Grand Europa Hotel, other buildings in and around St. Petersburg suggest that WWII just ended. Even buildings constructed after the war look as though they were actually in the war.

The people were even more evident of the many forms of suppression that Russia has experienced especially at the hands of individuals from Peter the Great to Catherine the

Great to Stalin and Hitler. I'm not even sure that they have any energy left to even employ malicious compliance. There are evident exceptions given the new "freedom" they currently "enjoy" via people such as our Tour Guides and other entrepreneurial types taking advantage of tourists. I didn't like being approached but I did feel proud of them!

The Tour Guides are mostly women and seem to be quite knowledgeable. At least they were believable given their strong conviction and stamina!

Actually, I'm confused because of amount of and seemingly contradictory information that was nonetheless quite forcefully delivered! I was reminded that Daddy used to call me Katrinka because he thought that I was strong physically. When I asked him who she was he suggested that she was a Russian wrestler! Do you remember any of this, Mother? These tour Guides suggested that there could be such a thing as a verbal Katrinka!

The all-day tour I took on the first day included Peterhof where I was amazed at the fountains that would run for 10 hours via a system that only used gravity. The extravagant rooms here and also at Catherine's Palace were all bombed during WWII and restored in very recent years.

We also traveled by hydrofoil to St. Petersburg where our bus was waiting to take us to the Grand Europa Hotel for lunch. "Grand" it was indeed. It seems that the "have's" and "have not's" continue to exist in Russia but clearly not everyone in the hotel was Russian. During lunch a colorful and interesting group performed. We also saw the Bronze Horseman and later went into the Church of the Spilt Blood commemorating the assassination of Alexander II who was beloved. In addition we saw St. Isaac's Church from the outside.

Interestingly, we were encouraged by the Guide to buy at the "Black Market" flea market nearby. With so many stalls, I really don't think she received any cut although the tour company who employs her may well have.

It was fascinating to learn that the "underground" form of currency is the American dollar and street vendors/flea market "businesses" preferred it. However, even in Catherine's Palace when I bought several books and postcards I was told that they only accept cash even though there are signs suggesting that several different kinds of credit cards are accepted.

Another custom that we quickly became "accustomed" to experiencing is the need to buy permits (@ \$5 per building) in order to take photos in any of the buildings. I really wonder who pocketed that cash!

I was ultimately really glad to leave Russia even though I was fascinated by the specific and significant improvements that President Putin is deliberate about achieving. It was even mentioned that he plans to have two capitals in Russia, the official or governmental

capital in Moscow and the “cultural” capital in St. Petersburg. After all, it is his hometown!

An interesting custom is that couples marry in state settings (where they usually need to wait for hours). They wear traditional wedding attire of white dress and veil for the bride, tuxedo for the groom plus formal wear for attendants. Seems that since church life was so unavailable for so long during the Soviet period that people essentially lost any allegiance. Following their legal ceremony, the bridal party is driven in flower-bedecked cars to the major historic sites for champagne toasts. Russian brides are expected to give their flowers to one of the monuments. (I learned from the German Guide later that the East German brides did not cooperate with this expectation.) I’m not sure if this is an old custom or established during Soviet Rule to substitute for more private, religiously-oriented occasions. My sense is that it became a Soviet practice to accent the importance of the state and miniscule value of individuals. If I wanted to accent the importance of the state over individuals this would certainly be an influential time to do so.

While riding the tour bus from one historic place to another I noticed that several people were carrying small bouquets of flowers (apparently) home. It seemed almost ironic to see such freshness and beauty in such an otherwise depressing setting.

The real highlight for me was the Gala Evening. Not only was the Yusupov Palace another splendid example of the powerful combination of money and imagination but the re-enactment of Rasputin’s murder was portrayed interestingly with wax figures. The real highlights, though, were the three musical experiences of the evening. They were almost worth the trip thus far! The first musical delight was a string quartet playing chamber music as we entered. After touring much of the palace which was owned by a noble but not royal family, we were led into a large hall for champagne and caviar. It was so very curious to experience the Russian version of a cocktail party because we were all seated in rows facing one another as we were served very methodically by unsmiling young, uniformed servers. At the same time a Russian ensemble of accordion and four stringed instruments played Russian folk or balalaika music. Their spirited interaction with one another and with the audience was only exceeded by their excellent musicianship as they demonstrated that they could delightfully “play” as they “played” their instruments.

Then, the *piece d’resistance* of the evening was being escorted through another series of amazingly beautiful rooms to an actual theater of 100-150 seats for a performance of opera arias. An orchestra of 20 or so pieces played an opening selection and then five extremely well trained and poised opera singers provided an hour long concert of favorite opera arias. Each one was better than the next and it was thrilling for me! It was the one benefit that I could note that the state-run country could provide. I’m not sure that each of these singers could have afforded vocal training had it not been determined that a talent deserved to be developed. I’m not sure that such a system still exists but if so it can be commended for this one value.

All in all, I’m really glad to have visited Russia and would be willing to go back if Annie were interested since I know she loves this history (and I bought her books, as she

requested). But, on my own, I might want to wait another 10 years or so until more improvements are made.

Note: Clocks did not work on towers in St. Petersburg, so unlike anywhere in Europe.

When I was in London in May, Brenda had given me a very interesting book about St. Petersburg as a birthday gift. One of the most helpful parts of it is a Romanov Genealogy. From what I understand, the House of Romanov began with Fedor Romanov, although his son, Michael seems to have been the first actual Romanov ruler from 1613-1676. So, for my benefit, I'm developing a list below of the Genealogy of Romanov Rule (note-the time of their rule!) beginning with Peter I (the Great) who, of course, is synonymous with St. Petersburg. I do not have the actual years of their lives. I'm including individual annotations of interest.

Peter I (the Great) 1682-1725

In 1701, he started the Great Northern War to "reclaim the lands" that he needed in order to be able to gain access to the sea and thus have a route to Europe. His patroness was Minerva, Goddess of War.

An interesting reality about him is that he did not like bridges but instead preferred boats. He had developed a significant navy (which was critical to his goal of expansion) and had even learned how to build boats himself in order to teach others. It was a trait of his to learn what he needed to know to build whatever he needed for his "kingdom".

Interestingly, he spoke four languages.

Once he began to travel to Europe he realized how uneducated he was in the formal sense and ever felt inferior about it. As a compensation for or a form of pure determination to achieve his aims, he insisted his court move from Moscow to St. Petersburg since it became the new capital. He also required that they would dress in European style.

He never lived at Peterhof.

Since he acquired so much "stuff" on his European travels (don't we all?!) he built a Chamber of Curiosities -- a museum to display his treasures. Essentially, anything that his eye fell upon that interested him he bought. The idea of a museum was even foreign, however, and so, no one went. Therefore, to incite people to go he offered in free admission, etc., which eventually taught the populace about his interests.

At six feet, seven inches tall, he literally towered over the people of his day. How intimidating he must have been with his vision, energy, courage and determination. Of course, he also was ruthless in his pursuits.

After he became fascinated with a young woman from Lithuania whom he had met at a friend's party, he had his first wife sent to a nunnery. This practice was the customary way to rid oneself of a wife. When he married the second time, his non-Russian wife was required to take a Russian name, a Russian custom. She became Catherine I.

He died after contracting a common cold.

Note: Peter's father, Alexis, was ruler from 1645-1676. He had married two times and had two sons (Fedor and Ivan) and one daughter from his first marriage and Peter from

his second marriage. After Alexis died, his oldest son from his first marriage (now Fedor III) became the ruler and apparently when he died or was overthrown, both the second son from the first marriage (now Ivan V) and Peter assumed the throne. It seems that there was uncertainty for a seven-year period (not in Peter's mind!)

Catherine I 1725-1727
The second wife of Peter the Great.

Peter II 1727-1730
The grandson of Peter the Great and his first wife.

Anna 1730-1740
Niece/cousin of Peter the Great.

Ivan IV 1740-1741 (died in 1764)
Nephew of Anna.

Elizabeth 1741-1762
Daughter of Peter the Great and his second wife, Catherine I. She is said to have spent her money on dresses (one Guide said 10,000 and another said 15,000). She never wore the same one twice.

Peter III 1762
Grandson of Peter and his second wife, Catherine I. He was married to Catherine II and they apparently did not have any regard for one another. It was considered to be a contest of which one would succeed in killing the other. She won. He was Czar for a few months and she succeeded him.

Catherine II (the Great) 1762-1796
Her parents were a noble family in Germany, who were cousins of the royal family of Russia. Catherine II was originally named Sophia and she was invited by her aunt Elizabeth (daughter of Peter the Great and his second wife Catherine I) to come to Russia to marry Peter III, Elizabeth's nephew. She was 15 when she left Germany to go to Russia but seemed to learn how to manage in Russian society quite readily. (Peter the Great had died 40 years earlier.)

Remember that it is a Russian custom for a royal to have a Russian name so she became Catherine II.

It is considered that she really had no right to the throne!

Catherine II never remarried but was known for her many lovers...one Tour Guide suggested 400! Supposedly, at age 54, one of her lovers was 22 years old!

She ruled as Czarina for 34 years.

Paul I 1796-1801

The son of Catherine II and Frederick III, he was killed by his wife, likely at the direction of her mother-in-law, his mother.

Alexander I 1801-1825 (died 1857?)

Not the favorite grandson of Catherine II. Considered to have been an effective-to-kind ruler. Ironically, there is a statue of him in Senate Square in Helsinki to commemorate his rule over the Finns.

Nicholas I 1825-1855

Brother to Alexander I.

Alexander II 1855-1881

Son of Nicholas I and regarded as significant.

Alexander III 1881-1894

Son of Alexander III.

Nicholas II 1894-1917 (died 1918)

Son of Alexander III.

He changed the succession to require that only men could rule.

His reign as the last czar is legendary and his death with his entire family so sad. There were four daughters and one son, Alexis, who he intended to be his heir but who was also a hemophiliac and sickly. (Remember that the “monk” Rasputin had great influence over the mother, Alexandra, because she thought he could heal their son.) Their bodies were discovered only in 1990’s and they were buried with the honors due a czar in 1989 in the same place that all other Russian Czars have been interred, St. Peter and Paul.

Parliament gave the title of “Great” to each, Peter I and Catherine II for their significant contributions to the country. (I don’t know when.) For example, he built St. Petersburg, greatly enlarged the land area of Russia, secured an outlet to the Baltic, and connected Russia to Europe culturally, etc. She founded the Hermitage to house the vast amount of art she collected, secured an outlet to the Black Sea and won victory over Turkey.

Showing off seemed to be a primary pastime (not just of Russians). Palaces became one of the more dramatic demonstrations of wealth and power. There are seven Summer Palaces and 64 total palaces in area of St. Petersburg.

The word “bolshoi” means grand.

Peterhof was a favorite palace of Elizabeth. In 1918, it became a museum. Much of the furniture is original although 80% of the interior is restored. Tiles for the stove were originally brought from Holland but were later made in Russia since, as he did with several other items he wanted, Peter the Great learned how to make the tiles and created a factory to have them made in Russia. The Throne Room has light green walls and dark red swag drapes.

The original Catherine's Palace was built for the second wife of Peter the Great in the town of Pushkin (which was not its original name) because it had a dryer, healthier climate and more days of sun. She became Czarina for two years after Peter the Great died. Elizabeth, their daughter, expanded it using the same architect who had designed the Winter Palace.

Since, the "C" and "E" in Russian look the same, the palaces that were started as Elizabeth's and became Catherine's maintained the same initial with "I" in the center of the letter as the official insignia.

Whatever was "portable" at Catherine's Palace was removed in the very short period of time that they had to evacuate. Features of the restored palace included:

The Amber Room that was the most recently completed renovation. It was unveiled in May as a part of the 300th birthday celebration of St. Petersburg. It had originally been a diplomatic gift from Prussia to Peter the Great in exchange for seven soldiers he had provided in exchange for the room. (Remember, he "bought" whatever his eye saw and liked!) An interesting note is that during the war, all of the amber "mysteriously disappeared".

A Great Hall that was reminiscent of Versailles with walls of white and gold leaf accents on all the many other items of décor. No chandeliers were used but candles lined the many mirrors to provide light in reflection. The entire ceiling is covered by the original canvas painting!

An impressive corridor of doors would be opened one at a time to create an illusion of a golden passageway that was 300 meters long that ran along the rooms that fronted the palace.

It was noted that her boudoir was not a bedroom but her dressing area.

Dining rooms that would have both long tables for the main courses, and round tables for dessert and tea. In the Cavalier Dining Room, a few of the many china patterns were displayed that were made for specifically for the individuals who received "orders" as one of their tributes.

One painting shows her burning rose petals which supposedly suggested that she had no bitter memories.

A Throne Room that included a huge painting of her in military dress on horseback.

A small hermitage or place for solitude or quiet time with friends, she had no servants in evidence so a self-service system was employed. The way it worked was that when guests arrived, they were asked to write out what they preferred to have for their meal. Their "order" was then sent by "dumb waiter" to the kitchen below.

Notes:

- 1-- After the Bolshevik Revolution, it became a museum.
- 2-- It served as barracks for German soldiers during WWII.
- 3—Catherine became so large toward the end of her life that she became essentially immobile.

When Catherine II became Czarina in 1762, she greatly expanded Catherine's Palace and

chose it as her permanent residence. The area surrounding the palace became known as the Czar's Village since her noble friends wanted to live near her. After the Bolshevik Revolution, the town was renamed "Pushkin" after the Russian poet. It has become a suburb of St. Petersburg with no industry to disturb its pleasant setting.

Peterhof and Catherine's Palace are both outside of St. Petersburg and were each severely damaged during WWII. However, situated inside St. Petersburg, the Winter Palace was not damaged at all.

The Winter Palace was built for Elizabeth who died before it was completed. (I'm not sure about this but my notes suggest that her nephew, Peter III, was the first Czar to live in it. He was also the husband of Catherine II, the Great). It originally had 856 rooms. In one painting at the Winter Palace of Catherine I, she is shown with the face of Minerva.

Moscow Square in St. Petersburg was originally intended to be a government center but it was realized that it could be too close to enemy lines so it was closed. A statue of Lenin stands in front.

Victory Square commemorates the 900 days that the Germans had the city of St. Petersburg surrounded in WWII. Over one million people died of starvation. A large museum is underground the obelisk in the center.

The Admiralty, a golden column with an angel on top is a symbol of St. Petersburg. It was important to Peter the Great who prided himself in having developed a navy.

The later history of Russia, as I understand it, follows:

In 1924 Lenin died. He had begun to have important monuments opened to the public in 1921 such as the Winter Palace.

I think that Stalin took over at this point. He had Kirov killed, who had been a leader of the people, plus another 20 million (30,000 of The Red Army) in his 30 years in office. A feature of his "leadership" was to appoint his own "friends" as his "officers" but he provided no rank or distinctions.

Another one of the horrors he is remembered for was regarding the Finns. The Finnish border originally reached to St. Petersburg and when the army of Stalin fought them for the land, the Russians outnumbered the Finns 30 to one. The trees in the area of the battle have never been harvested given the significant amount of metal in them.

He died on March 5, 1953 and is considered to have been a victim of his own politics.

Kruschchev follows Stalin.

1964-- Brezhnev assumes power.

1985-- Gorbachev institutes the policies of Perestroika and Glasnost to end the Soviet era. In 1990, he is awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace.

Note: The word "glasnost" means "thawing".

1991-- Yeltsin becomes first democratically elected Russian President.

1998-- Yeltsin resigns and Putin is confirmed as Prime Minister.

2000 – Putin becomes President in March.

Note: Gorbachov is considered to be the man who first understood that given the opportunity, Russians could decide for themselves. The classic Russian response had been to send tanks. His vision was deemed to be too distant from the mentality of the time and Yeltsin was chosen to implement that approach. However, his undisciplined lifestyle left him unavailable to the task. President Putin, who apparently lives almost an ascetic life, is regarded as a leader fit for the challenge although one non-Russian reporter recently noted that he seems to be slipping into Czar-like thinking as is evidenced by his holding new conferences in Throne Rooms with the throne in clear view. Scary...

In 1991, the citizens voted to change the name from Leningrad to its original name of St. Petersburg which is the name Peter the Great gave it in honor of the apostle St. Peter.

Elections will soon be held in St. Petersburg for mayor and it is considered likely that a woman will be elected!

There are currently 4.5 million people in St. Petersburg. In 1945, the population was reduced by war to 500,000!

One of the fascinating realities about life in Russia today is that there is very little trust in banks. It's essentially a cash economy. Since there's also no system of credit, people pay for rent and even cars with cash. We learned that it is possible to buy cars on credit but the percent rate is so high that few do. Apparently, very few buy insurance.

After a woman has a baby, she is paid by the state for three years. She must return to work after that period or risk losing her job.

The unemployment rate is 3%.

Military service is mandatory for males age 18. Students are exempted or males who are married and have a child.

In St. Petersburg,

--we needed to go through an Immigration Process in a trailer-like structure each time we left from and returned to the ship.

-- all women die their hair (mostly hideous shades of red). It was one of the few practices that suggested to me that some self-pride was in place!

I was fascinated to learn that Christianity came from Greece in 989 so that's why it is eastern in orientation.

Tallinn, Estonia

What a delightful change from Russia! There was evident prosperity and energy in this

quaint little town and it felt refreshing even though it has certainly had a history of repression. Historically, it has been invaded by Denmark, the Knights of the Sword (who may have been locals who rebuilt the Danish fortress in the late 13th century), Sweden, Germany plus the Crusades which were intent on Christianizing the “northern heathens”. In addition, the Russians were unfriendly neighbors such as Peter the Great who made it his first conquest on his way to gaining access to the Baltic Sea. His was only the first of several Russian occupations.

It really seems to have been a pawn in the political gyrations of the larger powers that surround it—not unlike Finland!

Estonia just declared its independence as recently as August 20, 1991!

Geographically, it is only 50 miles south of Helsinki.

It's a very small country with population just over one million. It's a tourist spot especially for the Finns who represent 70% of their tourist industry. They come to shop for cigarettes and vodka since the tax is much less than in Finland (although apparently after some upcoming alliance the Finns may reduce their taxes to be able to keep this traffic.)

Except for the Russian Mafia, many Russians stayed after Estonia declared independence. Today, life and wages are much better than in Russia. While under Soviet Rule, both Russian and Estonian were official languages.

There are no corporate taxes and there's no royal Family.

The Opera House was built in 1913.

The spire at St. Olaf's Church was the tallest in Europe in 16th century. However, after seven fires, it no longer has that designation.

While in Tallinn, I was reminded that I became clear that God did not want me to have lived in Russia!

Visby on the island of Gotland in Sweden

There are 22,000 inhabitants in Visby—57,000 on the entire island of Gotland which is the largest island in the Baltic Sea.

The Swedish system of taxes, of course, is in place. At least 33% of income is taxed and an additional 25% on purchases, including essentials like food.

There are 800,000 tourists each year, 100,000 from cruises. Mostly other Swedes visit the island since it is considered that there's more sunshine than on the mainland.

Much of the island is forested (40%) with pine trees and their “little brothers” the juniper.

I noticed that the farmlands were lovingly tended.

The Ancestry:

Stone Age -- 7000 B C The cemeteries maintain the remnants since the natural limestone preserved the bones.

Bronze Age -- 350 B C I think I understood that about 400 graves were designed with stones in the shape of ships.

Iron Age -- 600 B C. (?)

Viking Age -- 750 to 1050 The Vikings were the first to get rich as a result of going as far south as the Black Sea where they secured silver.

Richest period--1100's, 1200's and 1300's. As a way to demonstrate their wealth, these islanders built as many as 92 churches. They were often separated by as few as five miles.

In the 13th century, a lively trade developed because ships would stop to restock their supplies since their ships were small. Once ships began to be built on a larger scale, then the island floundered from the lack of trade. People also began to leave the island to go to cities to be able to earn money.

It was reported that silver plates were in everyday use in homes.

The Black Plague—1350—reduced the population by one third!

In 1361, a Danish King claimed the island “with the help of a witch”.

Early, Christian practice (1050-1539'ish):

Christianity “arrived” via the practical requirement of needing to be Christian in order to be able to trade in Europe! Back home, however, at least initially, they still held on to their Norse or pagan myths and rituals. For example, they kept much of their treasure of silver under the floor to assure that they would have as good a life in the hereafter. Generations that followed did not disturb the treasure lest they impede their ancestors.

I think I understood that (early on) it was the law that they had to go to church as often as three times each week! There were different entrances for men and women and separate sections. I think they stood during the entire service. Only the priest was allowed in the altar area. Since a newborn was considered to be possessed by evil, at Baptism the entire child was submerged into water!

Lutheran changes (after 1539):

Pews were added, separation of men and women was reduced and in present day they typically go to church only three times in their lives—Baptism, Marriage and Death! (What dramatic difference to go from three times a week to three times a life!)

In the 1600's, roads began to be constructed around Visby but when the Swedish Queen Christiana decided to abdicate in order to go live in Rome, the road construction ended so that she could have the money. (Road construction continued in the 1700's.)

Between the 1600's to the early 1900's, fishing for herring was a lively industry.

In 1808, Alexander II of Russia simply marched onto the island and took it over. The people never expected to have to defend themselves and so were unprepared to do so. Somehow, the Swedes were alerted and three weeks later, they came to save Gotland. Following that incident, a military was formed and every male age 18 is required to serve.

At the beginning of 1900's, King Gustav V of Sweden ruled with his Queen Victoria (I think the daughter of Queen Victoria). I'm not sure why I captured this item except perhaps because of the connection to England.

There are many golf courses on the island which are open almost year-round given the climate. The temperature in the winter months of January and February is 30-35 degrees with very little snow.

There are @ 33 different kinds of orchids that grow naturally on the island.

The Pippi Longstocking movie was made on Gotland. It is also the setting of the books about her.

It is three hours to Sweden and only one hour to Denmark by ferry.

There is no prison on the island. The building that was the prison is now a youth hostel—very small “rooms”!

Berlin

There are now 3.5 million people living in 900 square kilometers. (Paris, by contrast, is 105 square kilometers.) The architecture was striking to me as it combined both the old and the new—almost stridently new. City leaders hope to continue building it into an icon for the “new” Europe.

One interesting “combination” structure is a church that was bombed during the war. When it was “reconstructed”, the new additions were done in contemporary style. As a result, it has rectangular steeple and a round adjacent building and is referred to as the

“lipstick and powder box” church.

In 1443, it was chosen as capital. It was an island.

In 1539, Germany became Protestant after Luther posted his 95 Theses. (If I have dates correct, this is three years later than the Scandinavian countries adopted Lutheranism and Luther lived in Germany!)

I got really confused about the Friedrich's and Wilhelm's in Germany/Prussia, but I think I understood that a castle called Schloss Charlottenburg was used as a summer residence for Prussian Kings. The first building was constructed from 1695-99 during the reign of the first King of Prussia, in honor of his wife, Queen Sophie Charlotte. She entertained her friends who were interested in things intellectual and cultural. One of them founded the Academy of Science. After she died in 1705, he renamed the town in her honor.

Note: In 1850, two buildings were added as military academies to Charlotte's Castle. They are now museums.

It was significantly damaged during the war but was restored. There's a famous riding sculpture of the Great Elector (1691) in front of the palace who, I think, was Friedrich I who became the first Prussian King in 1701.

My notes from the tour were confusing because I also had that Frederick William, the Great (1640-1588 and also referred to as the Prince Elector, I think) won a battle in the 30 years war. I also noted that his (or someone's) second wife decided that the city needed to have trees and had a major street lined with linden(?) trees.

In 1745-1747, Frederick II of Prussia (the Great) built “Schloss Sanssouci”, a palace of only 12 rooms. He considered it his Summer Residence and apparently did not want much company! He “shared” the palace with his 13 dogs and he required his servants to address them as people. He used the French term of “sans souci” which means “without care” because he wanted to have a place for relaxation to devote himself to his philosophical and musical interests. (Sounds like a great idea to me!) French was the sophisticated language of the day and he actually spoke better French than German! His regimen included rising early in order to read books from his library since he was a particularly literate individual who used to enjoy entertaining the intellectuals of the day, all male, including Voltaire (who apparently “got around” since I think I remember that he was brought to St. Petersburg by Catherine II for several months in order for her to enjoy philosophical discussions with her.)

Frederick II lived until age 74 and died, he was buried at Schloss Sanssouci with 11 of his dogs.

Interestingly, he had several libraries in the several residences he owned. Each library contained the same books but with different colored covers.

Note: French was the accepted language of sophisticated society from the 1500's to the 1800's.

From 1763 to 1769 Frederick II had the “Neue Palais” or New Palace built. The crown sculpture above the main entrance is held by three women, specifically, Madame Pompadour, Catherine II and Marie Theresa of Austria. I'm not sure of the significance. He built the palace in response to the desire of his nine siblings to be able to have a summer place of leisure for their families. He waited until after the Seven Years War to begin it and used it as a way to demonstrate the prowess of Prussia. It had 200 rooms! Chinese influence was noted in the furnishings.

By the way, his wife, who was selected for him by his father, never was “invited” to this palace. She lived in her own place in Berlin. They had no children.

Two unconnected buildings that were originally a part of the New Palace are now a part of Potsdam University.

The Brandenburg Gate was erected between 1788-91 at the order of King Friedrich II on a design by him that is modeled on the entrance to Athens' Acropolis. A “quadriga” (chariot with the Goddess of Victory, Victoria, pulled by four horses) is situated on top. (It's curious to me that these male warriors exclaimed their victory so boldly with a statue of a woman!) It was badly damaged during WWII but was later replaced by a copy made from the original plaster cast. Another interesting aspect about this “statuary” is that Napoleon had it captured to commemorate his victory over Prussia 1806. It was returned in 1815.

It is important for two reasons:

1-- It's the only gate that remains from the original wall built around the city and is an example of the neo-classical style.

2—It was completely cordoned off by East German authorities in August 1961 (when the Berlin wall was built). After reunification, it became not only accessible again but the chosen site of the festivities on New Year's Eve in 1989.

In 1805, Alexander I of Russia made a military alliance with Napoleon. I'm not sure why except that perhaps it was better to join him than to be potentially defeated by him. He may have been a unique Russian who was more intent on creating alliances vs. enemies. I think he is the same Russian Czar who is commemorated with a statue in Senate Square in Helsinki.

By the way, as clarification, the dates of WW I are 1914-1918 and WW II are 1940-1945.

In 1871, Berlin became the capital German Reich. The King became the Kaiser at that time.

Prussia was considered to be the most important of all the several German states before 1871. Each state was its own entity and had its own king. The geographical area of

Prussia was from Berlin to the northern coast. It disappeared after WWII since the area became divided.

The Kings of the various German states regularly entertained themselves by going to war with one another and/or other countries of Europe. I think the same was true of France where in the 14th century the Sire of Coucy was considered to be more powerful than the French King. I remember visiting the ruins of his huge place in Piccardy, France.

The Column of Victory, a huge 67 meters high, was erected in 1873 as a memorial to Prussia's war victories and the founding of the Reich in 1871. At the top is a most impressive gold statue of the Goddess of Victory or Victoria. She's eight meters tall herself.

The events surrounding WWI are especially confusing to me. In 1914, in Serbia, the assassination of the Archduke of Austria, who was the heir to the Austrian throne served as the catalyst for the war. Note alliances below.

Note: I needed to clarify the alliances of the two opposing sides:

- * Russia was allied with France and the UK.
- * Germany was allied with Austria and Italy (who later changed to the other side when they thought it was winning)!

In 1914, the Declaration of War was signed by Kaiser Wilhelm II.

In the meantime in Russia... In February of 1917, Czar Nicholas II abdicated and a Provisional government was established. The Czar and his family were held under house arrest after they were refused exile in England. They were all shot the next year. Speculation surfaced periodically that one of the four daughters, Anastasia, survived and there have been several Anastasia "Pretenders".

In October of 1917, the Bolshevik Revolution took place.

Back to Berlin in specific and Germany in general...

By 1920, "Big" Berlin (as it was called by the German guide) was comprised of 95 different towns and villages all connected by a sophisticated public transportation system.

On May 10, 1933, (I think) on Hitler's 100th day in power, all the books of ostracized authors were burned in front of the university.

Since Hitler hated the Jews, a propaganda campaign began against them. Initially, they were isolated professionally and socially. Their shops were no longer patronized, they were not welcome in community functions, etc. Soon afterward, each one was required to wear a yellow star and when bombs were dropped they were not allowed in the bunkers.

On November 9, 1938, Nazi's burned their places of business, their homes and their synagogues.

In 1942, it was decided to eliminate them. I don't want to go into more detail.

In February of 1945, Roosevelt accepted Stalin's proposal to meet at the River Elbe. On April 12, Roosevelt died. May 18th was considered the Day of Liberation (but I'm not exactly sure for whom). I would guess that it was from Hitler and the Third Reich.

On April 30, 1945, Hitler married Eva Braun and also committed suicide.

In 1945, Russians went through East Berlin to reach the center (of the city or the country?) Between May and mid-July, the Russians were in Berlin without the Allies.

From July 17th to August 2nd, 1945, the Potsdam Conference included Truman from the US, Stalin and from Russia and Attlee (the photo shows Churchill?) from the U K. (Anyone from France?) The notable result was the Potsdam Agreement that divided Berlin into four sectors, one each for the Americans, British, French and Soviet/Russians. Interestingly, Truman learned just prior to the conference that we had "discovered" the atom bomb and he used that knowledge to leverage his influence over the Russians. The eastern sector of Berlin was assigned to Russians. Berlin now became the site of conflict between capitalism and communism in a reality known as the Cold War, which lasted until 1961. Skyscrapers were built (by Americans?) in West Berlin and, in response, apartments were constructed by the Communists in East Berlin. Only the "best" Communists were allowed to live in these apartments!

Note: The name "Potsdam" comes from two Slavic words (having to do with oak tree, I think). The city is 1000 years old. During the reign of the Soldier King (I don't remember who he was) he didn't have enough money to build barracks for his soldiers so he required homeowners to take them in. A new practice of adding a small apartment to the home was begun to provide for the soldiers. I did not quite understand how they were constructed under the Mansard roof or something.

Today, Potsdam is a very lovely and vibrant town with nice homes and much new construction.

As a result of a Soviet blockade between June of 1948 and May of 1949, the Berlin Airlift took place to provide vital supplies to those "trapped" in West Berlin. As many as 78 American pilots died in the process. The museum about this reality was especially touching to me. I remember having similar crayons and other memorabilia but I'm not proud to admit that I knew nothing about this effort. I kept thinking that if had I lived in the area at that time, I would gladly have been one of the women who helped to build the runways at the Tegel Airport (40 % of those who did help were women). Perhaps, I would have helped teach English to the German kids and/or helped with organizing or facilitating social activities in some way! I left the museum in tears considering the nobility demonstrated by this airlift effort. After the airlift, the border was closed.

In the 1950's, professionals started leaving East Berlin to be able to earn more money and to improve their lives for their families. Unfortunately, both then as well as now, West Berliners are given preference.

On June 17, 1953, workers in East Berlin protested. Russia sent in tanks.

In 1957, the Russians launched Sputnik which advanced them a notch in the competition of the Cold War. Khrushchev used this event to "suggest" that Americans and other allies should leave Berlin.

In 1958, the American pilot Gary Powers was shot down from the U2 "spy plane" that was used to photograph Russian operations. It was the next power play.

On April 12, 1961, the success of sending the first Russian cosmonaut was used as another form of leverage to encourage Americans and other allies to leave Berlin. When there was another refusal to do so, Khrushchev ordered the Berlin Wall to be built literally overnight on August 13, 1961 in order to "protect from fascists". It stretched a total of 100 miles. The actual location was inside the border of the Allies and if it had been challenged it could have been considered as provocation for Russia to use their nuclear bomb. It actually was two rather thin walls separated by 25 yards or so of ground that was called "No Man's Land".

In February or 1962, Gary Powers was exchanged for a Russian spy (?) who at a bridge in Potsdam. We drove across it.

After 28 years in existence, on November 9, 1989, the wall came down with much jubilation. New Year's Eve that year was especially festive and centralized at Brandenburg Gate as earlier mentioned.

On August 31st, 1990, the Reunification Agreement between The Federal Republic of Germany and the freely elected government of the German Democratic Republic was signed (in a building called the Palais Unter den Linden which is near the Hilton where we had lunch). For some reason, the date of October 3rd was chosen as the anniversary date to note in the future. Germany was now reunited and again great celebration resulted.

Berlin had been a pawn in the power struggle especially between the US and Russia and their respective allies! The capital was returned to Berlin from Bonn in the spring of 1999.

Other Structures or Items of Note:

The area known as Checkpoint Charlie still feels tense. I was glad to notice a small millinery shop down the street that provided some relief and also served as amazing contrast. The young woman in the shop was intent on her work but also delighted to explain in her limited English the several gorgeous hats on hand.

There is a huge Philharmonic Concert Hall where Sir Simon Rattle recently chose to become their Conductor. (Philadelphia did its best to convince him to come here!)

A State Opera House was built in the 19th century was destroyed during the war. One of the events that distinguished it was the fact that Sinopoli died at age 54 while conducting Aida there. I don't remember anything about the new one.

An international film festival is well regarded and important to the city. The film industry also seems to flourish in Berlin.

Russians are considered by Germans to be "big brothers" vs. "friends" since friends are chosen!

A large circle of bears standing and (almost) holding hands was impressive to see. As a Berlin statement to creativity (as the cows in Chicago), these bears symbolize unity with the world. Lovely!

Note: In 2006, the World Soccer Championship will be held in Berlin. Preparations are already in evidence.

Our witty-to-poetic Guide from East Berlin or Prussia

-- stated that although the rain can cause depression, Germans "house" fire in their hearts! So dear!

-- referenced Queen Elizabeth of England as "Betsy Windsor"! Clever!

-- when I mentioned that I was born just before WWII and that I remember the antics of Khrushchev he asked me if I sleep in a refrigerator. Delightful!

Arhus, Denmark

Christianity came here in 826.

Vikings from the Norway settled in the area in 900 near the harbor where we docked. Excavations have revealed that their houses had a floor underground and a wooden structure above ground with grass growing on the top. The same street pattern developed by the Vikings is in use today.

Since 1050, the Church of Our Lady has been on its current site. Originally, it was wooden and a part of a Blackfriars Monastery before the Reformation. It is now a Lutheran Church.

In 1201, the cathedral was built in Romanesque style. After being burned, it was reconstructed in 1472 in Gothic style. The length of the church is the same "distance" as the height of the spire.

In 1389 or 1397 (I found two different dates for the same event), Margaret I united the Scandinavian countries in a pact called the Kalmar Union. I learned in Oslo, our next stop, that she had been married to a Norwegian King in 1360 when she was 10 years old. (Yes, 10 years old!) He was often away at war (it's in the male genes!) and so she was lonely and cold. At age 17, she had a son. Both husband and son died. Now, how did she know to unite and then lead these countries? Impressive! I guess one way that she could feel less lonely was to claim areas of interest as a part of a kingdom that she devised. Why not?!

In 1425, the Town Hall was built. It has more recently become a museum dedicated to women. I enjoyed visiting the two main exhibits, the History of Women and Minerva's Daughters (which celebrates the 100th year of girls being allowed to go to grammar school).

In 1838, the Royal Hotel was built primarily as a place where the Royal Family could stay. In 1902, a Royal Palace was built as another Royal Residence.

Arhus borders the continent at one point and is connected by bridge to the eastern part of Denmark by the new Storebaelt Bridge. Completed in 1998, I think it connects the eastern and western parts of Denmark. (I was sorry not to have found a sketch of it to add to my collection of bridges.)

An interesting feature of Arhus is a small river that once was covered by a street. In recent years, the City Council decided to uncover it and turn the area into only pedestrian traffic to enjoy interesting boutiques and restaurants.

In 1862, the first railroad was built which developed the southern part of the city.

Major exports for Arhus are pork and dairy products (including a feta cheese to Greece).

Arhus has the second deepest harbor in Denmark.

It is known for its "red brick" university, started in 1926. Prior to that time, students were required to go to Copenhagen for university studies.

In 1198, a Cathedral School was established (initially for clergy, I think and now for lower grades).

There are currently 283,000 who live in Arhus, the second largest city in Denmark. Copenhagen is the largest.

In 1900, a theater was built by the same architect who built the Royal Palace and the new Cathedral School. Each season, the repertoire includes new as well as traditional selections and always something by Henrik Ibsen (who was actually Norwegian). The interesting characters on the frieze are characters from Danish comedies.

Oslo, Norway

Oslo dates back to the year 1000(BC?).

Between 750 and 1000 the Vikings brought fear and terror to those they encountered. The Swedish Vikings went as far East as Iraq and Iran. The Danish and Norwegian Vikings went West (including Newfoundland) and are considered to have discovered America before Columbus.

Since they had run needed more space to plant, etc., the initial “motivation” for their adventures was necessity.

The first recorded Viking raid took place in England at Lindesfarne—a monastery. The Vikings realized that monasteries contained treasures but were not well fortified. Since they were heathens they had no qualms about stealing from the church.

They both traded as well as colonized such places as Iceland, Greenland, central UK and Newfoundland. They are considered to have founded York, England and Dublin.

The Danes colonized the southern parts of England.

There is no indication that there were horns on the helmets of any Vikings. However, they were considered evil by the monks who were their victims and who, therefore, portrayed them with horns! The Viking had apparently realized that monasteries were filled with treasures but unfortified so very easy to raid. Monks had considered that everyone would treasure what they treasured but, of course, the pagan Vikings did not.

Valhalla was considered the place that men went when they died in battle. It was expected that their days would include battles and their evenings feasting and women. (I was reminded of the promise of 72 virgins!)

The men who did not die in battle went to a place of void. Women were important to the Vikings for what they could do (e.g. make the sails) but did even merit any destination after life. I’m not sure if they had yet realized their part in the birth of children.

To achieve a “high” that would provide the feeling of invincibility to be able to fight, the Vikings would eat a small portion of a special mushroom.

The work “berserk” comes from the practice of wearing a bear head and skin over their heads to appear even more menacing.

Note: 750,000 Norwegians immigrated to America between 1865 and 1914.

The Vikings were excellent wood carvers and would decorate their ships with decorative

carvings. They also used nails to secure the thin planks of oak. The longest is believed to have been 72 feet.

Their ships drew only three feet of water so that they could use the element of surprise as they approached such cities as Paris and London from their rivers. In between rivers, they dragged their ships on land with logs. They reached as far south as Constantinople.

The wool used for the sail took two years to make which was longer than it took to build the ship. The women made the sails from wool from the breast of animals which was woven so tightly that it was waterproof.

The current wild ponies in Iceland are considered to be descendants of those used by the Vikings.

A Viking ship was found “preserved” in the blue clay just outside of Oslo. It was called the Oseberg Burial which contained the skeletons of two women. It is believed that one was a queen and the other her servant. Addition, evidence of the following was found: 13 horses, 2 oxen, several dogs, the plumage of a peacock, household items, 3 sledges and a wagon that was usually used in religious processions in honor of the Goddess Freya, the Patron of Fertility. These items were believed to advance the dead into their next life.

We visited the museum dedicated to Thor Heyerdahl and his adventures with Kon Tiki and Ra II. While he was visiting islands in the south Pacific he determined that there were similarities to life in Mesopotamia (?). It advanced his thinking that oceans are not dividers of continents but rather means of communication via vessels. It is considered that as a result of his crossings with his papyrus boats he proved that the South Sea Islands were in contact with South America.

In 1624, Christian 4 of Denmark, developed the street pattern that is still in use today. The city had several fires that decimated such structures as three monasteries and six churches.

In the 1300’s, a fortress was built. It was also a castle. It was besieged nine times (seven times by Swedes) but never conquered until WWII. The Germans used it to house and/or execute “prisoners” during the occupation. After the occupation, 42 Germans were executed there. We were docked alongside of it!

In 1329, the Black Death eliminated 1/2 of the population.

In 1700’s, the Cathedral of Oslo was erected. The king wanted the church to be outside of the city walls to avoid it’s being damaged during wars.

In the 1700’s, there were @ 300,000 in Norway and 3,000 in Oslo.

In 1811, Norway got its own university.

In 1814, Norway was given as a prize to Sweden since the Danish King had joined Napoleon. Remember, he had also developed an alliance with Alexander I of Russia. He really was amazing! Before the Swedish King could arrive, however, Sweden declared its independence (or at least one of them).

In 1848, the Royal Palace was completed.

After the 1850's, industrialization began and the city grew.

The café in the Grand Hotel was the place that twice a day Ibsen would go to drink his favorite drink (I can't remember what it was) and also to read the newspaper. He usually did not talk to anyone. The painter Munch also went to the same café often.

The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded each December 10th in the City Hall.

The Guide noted two unrelated items about current Norwegians

- 1—They are converting to Catholicism, especially those in academics.
- 2—They are known to love jazz!

May 17th is the Constitution Day for Norway.

Winter is considered mild.

Vigeland Park

The vision of the sculptor Gustav Vigeland, contains 213 sculptors with over 650 figures. His intent was not only to keep his sculptures together but also to be able to demonstrate the universal feelings of relationships of human beings from birth to death. The main column at the center of the park contains 121 figures and took three artists 14 years to complete.

He was born in 1869 the son of a strict, domineering, alcoholic Lutheran who ever preached of hell. The impact on the sculptor was to cause him to be shy and unable to have loving relationships.

By 1900, he had studied in Europe and Egypt, was influenced by Rodin in France and was becoming recognized as an artist. A prolific sculptor, he decided to approach the City Council with a "deal" that he would give all his present and future sculptures to the city in return for a stipend and a studio. It was agreed. A year later, he further suggested to the City Council that it also grant him land and resources to create a park where he could appropriately display his work. It was also agreed. The result is this wonderful Vigeland Park which he specifically designed.

Overall Observations:

In specific:

- New words included “holidaymakers”, used by several guides, and “waitrons”, the generic form of waiter or waitress. Likely there were many more but I did not capture them.
- The ship never became “home” to me. It was good to get back to “her” after a tiresome day of touring but it was only the familiarity that was welcoming since it also represented constant frustration given the limited food experiences, the lack of internet access in my cabin (as promised) and the overall lack of stimulation or inspiration.

I did enjoy getting to Mass daily but consistent with the pretense of the ship, even the priest wore a hairpiece!

- On the cruise, my "entertainment" became the development of this Travel Journal capturing the interesting aspects of history, the notable choices of leaders along with various insights. It's unlikely that anyone will be willing to read it all but along with my photos it captures the experience for me.
- One other ship experience to record occurred in relation to the Odyssey restaurant. Seems that new ships are ever finding new ways to make money and a supposedly upscale restaurant is one of those attempts. I decided to try it out to be fair to the full experience. It requires making a reservation if only to be informed to expect the \$20 cover charge per person. The food, however, is not an extra expense. The drink, however, now there's the potential source of gold for the ship because when I was seated I noticed several different wine glasses on the table. Sure, drinks can be ordered at any of the restaurants on board but there seemed to be a not-so-subtle suggestion that to be really sophisticated one needs to drink oneself silly! I didn't take the bait. I thought I would test the limits of this pseudo experience, however, and chose the dessert opportunity to do so. Instead of the sponge cake with berry topping listed on the menu, I ordered fresh berries. This is a simple test that any good restaurant can easily meet and I really felt generous since berries are especially plentiful in Scandinavia at this time of year. Three different waitrons came to apologize that there were no fresh berries. I guess I wasn't surprised.
- As of Monday the 25th, I had cried three times with a sense of fulfillment and wonder— (1) when I listened to Clare's tape, (2) at the concert of opera arias of the five excellent young Russian singers and (3) upon leaving the Allied Museum in Berlin that had information and memorabilia from the 1948-49 airlift (which was all new to me, I'm not proud to note).
- There were more displays of affection in Scandinavia (and Finland) than in the states

which all seemed quite natural in expression.

- Berlin is one of the most sophisticated to intimidating cities I've ever visited. I'm not exactly sure why...yet.

In general:

I really did not learn or notice much about the development of music. Certain composers such as Grieg and Sibelius were referenced but only in passing. Of course, the Russian singers were an exception but there's likely another level of northern Europe to enjoy musically.

As one guide (I think Russian) mentioned, when men are rulers (I distinguished from "leaders"), war is a priority to expand their kingdom. (Bigger seems to be better.) Women rulers (again not necessarily leaders) address matters closer to home by building, enriching, etc. I don't have this totally clarified and there certainly are exceptions such as Elizabeth I of England and Catherine the Great of Russia but given the combination of money and imagination, the results are dramatically different since "his-tory" captures conquests and "her-story" evolves civilization. (I obviously have more thinking to do here.)

An absolute fascination for me was noting the several shifts that seemed to occur at similar times in different places on the planet. This requires more research but for now I'll list what I've noticed:

1—The availability for learning shifted from monasteries to the populace. For example, in 1479, the first university in Denmark was founded. I think that Denmark ruled most of the Scandinavian countries at that time so, in effect, it touched northern Europe. My memory suggests that the Gutenberg Press was also developed at that same time! Amazing!

2 – How to label this phenomenon, I'm not sure, but, in 1861, serfs were freed in Russia when the Feudal System was abolished. They were given land and the opportunity to create independent lives, however, with few procedures in place to advance them from their usual posture of servitude, they were essentially abandoned. Ironically, in 1865, our Emancipation Proclamation was written to free the slaves which likely left many of them abandoned as well.

I'm also not sure what the political state was in Russia at that time, but our civil strife reflected the unrest occurring in Europe at the same time that was evidenced by the replacement of the monarchy in France in 1949 (to create a Second Republic) as well as in Denmark at the same time (which was simply signed over by the king).

3 -- Similar dates of World War I from 1914-1918 and the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 are also notable.

At this same time on another “front”, women were fighting to be able to vote in the states as well as in European countries within a few years of one another. It was achieved in 1914 in Denmark and in 1920 in the states.

4 – Mentioned by two separate guides is current shift that is occurring regarding religion. The German guide referenced that people are turning back to religion in search of more stability and predictability and the Norwegian Guide noted that especially in the academic community, people are converting to Catholicism.

5 – At the same time that Henry VIII was breaking away from Rome and destroying monasteries in the process of assuring that he would have a son to succeed him, which, of course he did not achieve, Luther was challenging Rome to be more attentive to the rubrics vs. the pomp of the papacy. What interesting extremes!

I loved the spirit of the Scandinavian countries, Finland and Estonia especially in terms of their spirit of individuality and attitude of abundance or possibility. The contrast of St. Petersburg made each extreme more dramatic for me.

The most effective Russian “bridges” seem to be music and drink (usually vodka or champagne), their two means of “escape” from repression. I wonder how many generations it will take for them to even smile.

To: Mother, Annie, Debbie, Jerrye and Hoss

Re: Travel Journal and CD (enclosed)

Date: 9/2/03

Dear All,

I really want to share the Travel Journal and CD with each of you. I can almost hear Annie and Debbie noting that this seems to be one of my more dramatic forms of watch-making (vs. just telling the time)!

The lack of stimulation on board afforded me the opportunity to chronicle my experiences. That may have been God's reason for this trip all along! I'm even wondering how this interest could potentially be transformed into yet another career. (I can almost hear Mother saying, "I always knew you should write"). For example, I certainly could be open to traveling to places that interest me to capture the experiences in writing for an entity who would be willing to provide both the kind of revenue and creature comforts I prefer! Perhaps, just stating it to you is a way to advance the idea.

I don't really know how much time this effort took and I prefer not to estimate. I do know that I really valued the opportunity to organize my internal as well as external experiences and to realize anew the privilege I feel in my mission to challenge and support leaders making growth-oriented choices. As Thoreau observed in his book Walden, most people live lives of "quiet desperation". History records the deeds that reflect the opportunities of both the self-oriented, ego-driven exploits at the expense of people's spirits as well as the other-oriented, gracious acts of nobility that enable and enrich human spirits. Either extreme is newsworthy but I'm certainly more in "spired" by and eager to explore the latter than the former! (Could that be the focus of my travel writing?)

So, I invite you to sail away with me on this Baltic Cruise Adventure... in words!

Thanks for your constant and consistent support. It absolutely matters to me!

Love, Jr./Mom

From a friend who recently visited Finland

- you DO capture some of what I was saying about Porvoo: The 700-year marriage between Sweden and Finland ended after the Finnish War 1808-1809 when Finland was annexed to Russia as an autonomous Grand Duchy. Alexander I, the Czar of Russia, convened the Diet in Porvoo in 1809 in that building that you saw. Right next to that building is an older one, in which the Diet held a great dinner (now the living room of my friends' next door neighbor). My friend and his family live in the NEXT house on the street. As a result of the Porvoo Diet, Finland was allowed to keep its religion, its constitution dating from the Swedish era, and the rights of its estates - that means that they essentially saw themselves as a 'country' and it was the first step toward independence which came briefly in 1918, but then was quickly snatched away again by various wars and not really established again until the USSR fell apart (since they were beholden to their Soviet neighbors).

- The Finns wanted to join the EU and use the Euro to gain power in the financial/economic world. The point to the EU is for the European states to be able to compete with the US - and, it is working. When they were not linked economically, the UK was much more powerful than any European state and did not want to mix their economies with them. Now that the Euro is up and running and quite strong, there is no way that the other European states will be able to hold onto their own currency and remain a player...this is down the road a few years, but the Pound Sterling will someday be a thing of the past. Finland has benefited enormously from the Euro and the EU and it was quite smart for them because it gave them that independence they needed at a volatile time when their neighbor was literally falling apart. Compared to Russia today, their economy looks like ours!

- I found the lake thing amazing - they actually make highways across them and when you ask how long it takes to get from here to there, they might say - 5 hours in the summer and 90 minutes in the winter...and they mean it. Tracker-trailers use the lakes readily in winter. Strange!