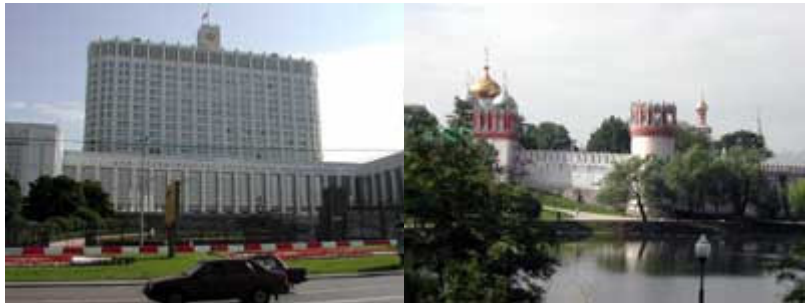


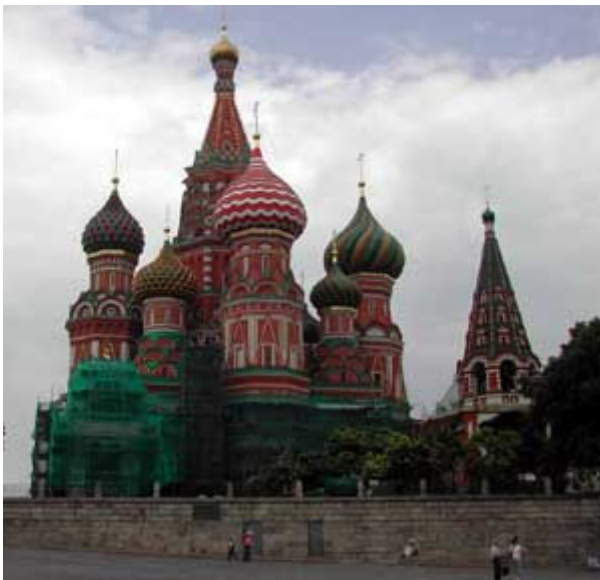
# Russia and the Baltics

June – July, 2004

Flying first class and business class is definitely the way to go, the Sky Lounge and food were good and the legroom ample. We left early Sunday and arrived in Moscow about 10 pm on Monday. Our host was there to greet us and take us to the river boat, the Yesenin. We unpacked quickly and went to bed.



Tuesday – The City Tour was our first outing. We boarded the busses to hear and see Moscow. Our first stop was the University of Moscow, then on to the Kremlin.



We stopped in front of St Basil's Cathedral; the colorful copulas make this the landmark scene for Moscow in front of which newscasters often bring their message. Built by Ivan the Terrible in 1555, this is the place where Ivan was proclaimed the Czar.



The “Big Ben” of Moscow, built by Ivan the Great between 1505 and 1508 contains 21 bells  
The largest bell weighs 70 tons and is rung three times to announce the death of a czar



A Russian guard at the Kremlin

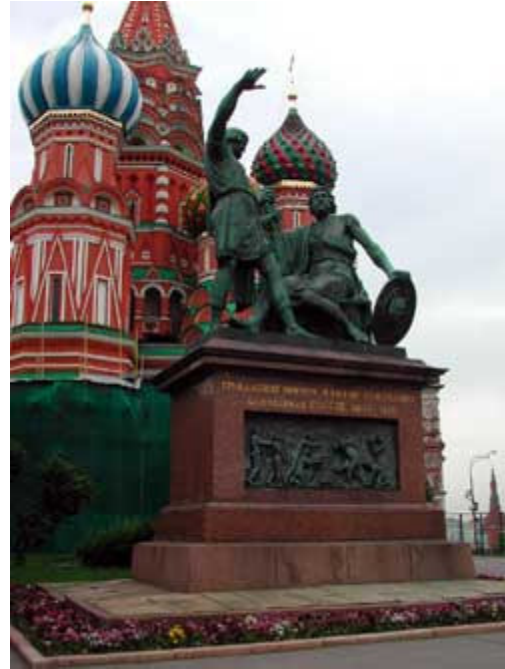


← Here is a close shot of Lenin’s tomb, still located right outside the walls in Red Square Lenin meant well with his idea of communism, even though it didn’t work

This platform in the square was the site of many executions



The statue in front of St Basil's is dedicated to Minin and Pozharsky who drove out the Polish invaders in 1612



Across the street is the GUM, the state owned shopping center in which beautiful (and expensive) stores sell designer clothes. We stopped for the bank ATM and the potty. I thought Josh would like this poster of Spiderman 2

We were a bit tired; our clocks are not yet reset, so we took a nap in the afternoon. The ship had an optional tour (extra charge) to visit the subway (Metro) and the Arbat Street. We tried to do it on our own. After brief instructions on the location of the Metro, we embarked. My Russian

language study came in handy. I had been practicing reading the signs on the city tour. I asked for four tickets in Russian and the ticket seller understood me just fine and presented two round-trip magnetic stripe cards for 40 rubles. Each trip is about 35 cents. The Moscow metro is quite splendid in and of itself with ornate ceilings, chandelier lighting and statues in many of the stations. We arranged the trip for a few transfers so that we could see a sample of stations. We arrived at our destination without flaw. The challenge is to find the train in the right direction. The lines are numbered and colored but the trains are listed by the stops. Without a map it would be hopeless but well armed, one looks for the station that is next to get on the right train.



When a tourist rides a subway and leaves the station, there is a long pause to get bearings and locate a street on the map. This was my greatest challenge and after one false start in the wrong direction, I found the street. Unfortunately, I walked in the wrong direction and wound up at the Ukraine Embassy instead of the pedestrian shopping district. On top of this it started raining heavily. Judy was a good sport and after asking for directions in Russian a few times, we located the Metro station where we could return home.

The evening entertainment on board was a splendid presentation of Russian folk music. A 40-piece orchestra presented a variety of songs using the typical Russian musical instruments including balalaika, spoons, pipes, accordions and trumpet (among others that I can't remember). Additionally, they played Simon & Garfunkle's 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Bridge Song and had us hum along. Finally, they played "Roll Out the Barrel" and invited us to sing. Looking over the band, I thought only two of them looked "Russian," the rest looked like they could easily have lived in Iowa. I think my stereotype of Russian people is rather inaccurate. The truth is that most of them look just like us!

Wednesday – We visited the inside of the Kremlin and the State Armory Chamber with our guide. The Kremlin or fortress, houses the government offices. It was originally built in 1147 but the ravages of war and fire have resulted its being rebuilt a few times thereafter. Ivan III and his son, Vasily III, shaped the Kremlin into its present appearance in 1460 – 1505. Napoleon tried to blow up the Kremlin walls but the townspeople extinguished the fuses so that only three towers were lost.



At 210 tons, this is the largest bell in the world. It has never been rung. This is the largest canon in the world. It has never been shot. It was designed to scare away the enemy.



The Emperor's Cannon weighs 40 tons and the cannon balls are one ton each.

We viewed the various public buildings while in the Kremlin, none are exceptional. There is a Palace of Congress, an Arsenal with cannons in front, the Senate Building, the Presidential Office building and the Kremlin Theater.

We visited the Cathedral of the Assumption, built in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, Ivan the Great chose an Italian architect to design the church. Its walls are completely covered in frescos and the five-tier iconostasis, altar screen, dates from 1652. These altar screens traditionally have five rows; the third row contains smaller icons and the bottom row, icons of the figures in the locale. The 12 chandeliers are notable because they are made of silver. Ivan the Terrible's wooden throne stands inside this church, to the left of the entrance. Made in 1551, it is elaborately decorated with carvings. There are numerous other palaces and cathedrals in the Kremlin. We saw them from the outside.

The Armory Palace contains thrones, suits of mail and armor, swords and sabers and an extensive collection of clothing worn by the czars including boots that Peter the Great made for himself and wore. He was about 6' 8" (6.04 meters) tall, a huge fellow who probably did more to shape modern Russia than anyone else. Commemorative gowns, jewelry and accessories are displayed in large glass cases. Also of interest were the various horse-drawn carriages and a sleigh that were used to transport the nobility. Finally, a collection of Faberge eggs is at hand, each one elaborately decorated outside and inside. Faberge lived in St Petersburg and made some 50 such eggs. Ten are presented in this museum and another nine are in a private collection owned by a Russian.



This statue of Lenin is outside his library



We returned to the Arbat again, this time to visit the restaurants, street sellers and artists. This unconventional restaurant façade caught my eye.

The evening entertainment was the famous Moscow Circus. We had splendid second row seats to see the clowns, chimps, dogs, horses, llamas, contortionists, dancers, gymnasts and finally, a trapeze show, all within the city center. Though very well done, the Circ du Sole spoils us.



Thursday – We recovered (I hope) from jet lag by taking a 1-½ hour nap at 10 a.m. After lunch we went for our final Moscow expedition. We jumped on the subway and went toward Red Square getting off a stop early to visit the wax museum. On the way we saw this famous grocery store, Yelisyev's. Beautiful white sculptures and garlands line the shop front, and the gilded interior is filled with stained glass and colorful displays. Alas, the wax museum had gone out of business so we continued on our way.

A statue depicting

the founder of Moscow, Yuri Dolgoruky, commemorated 800 years of Moscow from its founding in 1147 to 1954. We stopped to view other important buildings on the way to the massive underground shopping mall where we looked for a Russian charm and



ate ice cream cones



This evening was the sail-away festivity as we made our way down the Moscow Canal. Just south of our ship is the Moscow Port Authority.





As we prepared to sail away, the wives and children came to say good-bye to their fathers, the sailors. We are reminded of the shipyard and the hundreds of tons of cargo that pass through the canal daily.



The Tolstoy was at dock, this is the ship we were originally scheduled to take but because Uniworld could not make the contract, we were shunted to the Yesenen.



To take a picture of a submarine could have landed one in jail. This one is in dry dock.



It was an unusually warm day today so the Moscowvites swim when they can. Note the "beach people".

Our formal night continues with the captain's cocktail party in which the crew was introduced. Thereafter, a fine dinner was served including my first borsch.



Locks regulate river transport. Our entry to the first lock.



The locks are framed by ornamental statuary



We pull into the first gate. After the water drains out, the boat is 8 meters lower and the gate opens. It is remarkable that the rear gate is brought up from the riverbed; the front gate swings open



Friday – After breakfast we heard the guest lecturer, retired Professor Igor Ornatsky. He reviewed the history of Russia from its founding in 900 through current times. One of the points that he made about current politics was that when Yeltsen was the president, his

Congress was all communists, having been appointed during the Soviet era. Accordingly, his reform measures were rejected uniformly. This made it necessary for him to make the communist party illegal. Though overruled by the court as being unconstitutional, this act shook up the legislature and made his reforms possible.

Putkin's first act was to unify the country by reducing the power of the provincial supervisors by increasing the power of the central, Moscow, government. This made the government more stable, but not necessarily more efficient.

The transition from a command economy to a market economy is unprecedented and did not go as well as some would like. If you were the president, what would you have done differently? I wouldn't have invited American advisors as Yeltsen did. They did not understand the unique factors of the country. He also acted too quickly in the transition; the process should have been done more gradually. Yeltsen created a very heavy external loan burden. (Though he didn't say how to avoid this.)

Yeltsen established complete freedom of speech, particularly the newspapers criticized him. Today, one can express ideas openly privately, but the mass communication means are now government controlled. When Yeltsen was in power, there were more privately owned media. This trend is very dangerous and he doesn't like it.



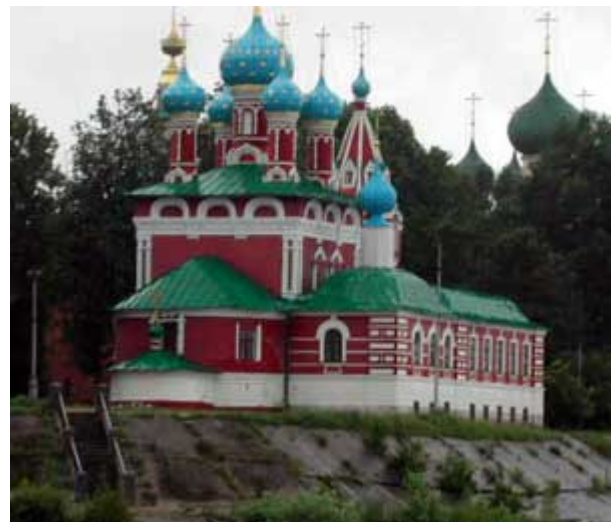
Later, the ship's shop manager spoke about the artistry employed in the creation of the typical Russian souvenirs, the nesting dolls, lacquer boxes, trays and scarves.

After lunch, we heard about the geography of the Russian Federation, the largest country in land mass, covering 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the earth's surface and transversing 11 time zones; the fifth in population; containing each of the earth's environmental zones except the tropical zone



At Uglich, the cathedral of Dmitry of the Blood, commemorating the death Ivan the Terrible's son by murder. Without the prince, the monarchy was in turmoil. Three impostors attempted to seize the throne but none succeeded. Without an heir, the aristocracy appointed the first Romanov czar, ultimately leading to the leadership of Peter the Great.

As we approach the town of Uglich, one sees the belfry from the church of the nearby town, Kalyazin, built in 1800. The entire town was dispossessed when Stalin built the reservoir. The townspeople objected to the demolition of the church so they permitted them to stand the belfry on this little piece of ground.





Inside a cathedral, these clergymen sang for our groups. They made a melodious sound that was amplified by the splendid acoustics of the church. This photo was taken without flash using the museum setting and telephoto as the fellows were too far away for a flash.

On the way back to the ship, we bought souvenirs. Our guide, and Judy's persistence got a good price (I think) on Chaika watches because we bought three. They are characteristic of the area

and are made here at the watch factory. As the tourist season is short, many of those in the tourist trade work in the factory in the off-season. We also bought matryoshka dolls for the kids. I bargained in Russian and I think we got a good price on them too.



Saturday – We arrived in Yaroslavl early in the morning and toured the city of 600,000 by bus. Today, the city boasts a tire factory where synthetic rubber is made. A mercantile town settled on the banks of two rivers, the Volga and the Kotorosl Rivers, as shown in the confluence on the left.



The community is a leader in the arts. We were treated to a folk music performance including instruments, dancers, and a singer.



A young man played the bells using his fingers to draw the strings as one would a marionette.

From the belfry a good view of the town is available the red-bricked Church of the Epiphany stands on the square behind the monastery with its five domes representing Christ and the four Evangelists. This church is one of few with Roman cross on its dome.







Judy was at the shopping plaza below. The history of this town is interesting: The bear was long worshipped by pagan inhabitants as a sacred animal. In 1010 Prince Yaroslavl the Wise wrestled a bear on the banks of the river and won. The inhabitants were sure that this man was a god and accepted him as their ruler. The coat of arms has a bear standing on his hind legs and a gold pole-ax, representing the endurance of the Yaroslavl spirit.

In the afternoon we had our first Russian language lesson. We reviewed the letters and introduction words like “hello” and “good bye.” We actually had a lot of fun as our exercises included singing the good morning song to the tune of frara jacqua and we sang a Russian folk song using our words for family.

A short movie followed giving the history of the Russian royalty, and then the Russian dance class began in the bar. I have enjoyed the places and activities so far.

Fairy tales:

A girl and a boy were walking in the woods on their way to their cousin’s house. After walking a long way, the boy became thirsty and pleaded for water. The girl told him that a well would come soon. The boy continued walking and saw a cow hoof print filled with water. He said, “I’ll take a drink from here”

The girl told him not to do so or he would become a calf

Horse print -> pony

Goat's hoof print -> goat; well the boy could not wait any longer and drank from the hoof print and turned into a goat and ran around the girl playfully

Merchant came by asked her to marry and she would be dressed in fine clothes and the goat would live with them forever

When merchant was away a witch came

She went with the witch to the river where she was sunk with a rock around her neck

The witch dressed up in the girl's clothing

The witch asked the merchant to slaughter the little white goat

After much delay he gave in but the merchant said to the witch that she should slaughter the goat

The witch set out the pots and fires to prepare the goat

The goat pleaded with the merchant that he should let him go to the river

He went the river and called to his sister

The sister called back from the river a heavy stone is on my neck,

She was retrieved from the river and revived, dressed in fine clothes; the goat turned back into a boy and the witch was tied to a horse's tail and let go in an open field

The Little Red Hen





## The Great Prince and the Beautiful Princess



## Sunday – Russian Foreign Policy with Professor Ornatsky

Commonwealth of Independent States excludes the Baltic States who refused to join it. The treaty was designed to enhance economic relations between the states. In reality, trade between Russia and the other states has declined lately because the other states sought hard currency and wished to direct their exports to other European countries though not successfully. Russia continues to sponsor these countries and their debts to Russia is unlikely to ever be repaid due to its burgeoning size. In lieu of the success of the CIS, more integrated treaties are being established with Belarussia and Ukraine, more so in Belarussia which is considering the utilization of the common currency, elimination of trade barriers and tariffs and other integrations. Relations with Ukraine are more complicated because of its dependence on Russia for energy, principally natural gas.

Russia and the US relations have had their ups and downs, in the US Revolution; Russia assisted the colony in the war and refused to aid the British. He also referred to the particularly good deal that we made in the acquisition of Alaska. It was difficult to deal with Reagan who referred to Russia as the “evil country.” Gorbochev worked well with Clinton and each referred to their friend, “Bill” and their friend, “Boris.” Putkin and Bush get along well in the war against terrorism and Putkin was one of the first to call Bush after the 9/11 disaster and offered Russia’s assistance in the war against terrorism.

Our countries have agreed to mutually reduce their nuclear arms by two thirds. US – Russia balance of trade is 8% to US and 1% to Russia due in part to the trade barriers exacted when Russia prohibited the emigration of Russian Jews to Israel. US buys raw materials from Russia, Russia buys engineering, food and tobacco from US. Capital investments by the US have been primarily in the energy sector. Professor suggests that Russia needs to increase business lobbying in the US Congress to improve its relations and give the US a more balanced picture of their trading partner.

Relations with the rest of Europe were diminished following perestroika due to the hostile withdrawal of troops from Eastern Europe. NATO encourages the former satellite countries to trade with the other European countries instead of Russia. Russia endeavors to reduce trade barriers and enhance satellite and Western Europe relations. As the satellites enter the EU, visa restrictions and formalities are required whereas they were not required prior to their joinder. These visa formalities reduce the free contact of individuals between the countries.

Russian relations with China are very important as they share a long border notwithstanding their political differences. Professor suggests that China is moving toward the capitalist and democratic system in a more reasonable manner and they endeavor to follow its lead.

There is still no peace treaty with Japan since the Second World War largely due to the dispute over the northern Japanese islands that we ceded to Russia as the winner of the war. Japan resents this and continues to consider them their own. Russia is considering

releasing these islands to make peace and to incorporate the Japanese economy into its eastern zone.

Textiles and pharmaceuticals are substantial ties with India, which has a substantial relationship with Russia. Israel has substantial ties with Russia as a result of the massive emigration. Russian is frequently heard spoken in Jerusalem



We visited the Kirillov Monastery of St Kirill of the White Lake. This is remarkable in that it is one of the oldest monasteries in Russia. Though much of it is dedicated to public museum, three monks live in the cells. The entrance way includes your typical spire however this one presents the archangel Gabriel with his trumpet. This is the oldest church in the country. The original church was made of wood, a primary industry of this area but later it was preserved in brick. Other agricultural products of the area are flax, vegetables and cattle. The handicraft for which the area is well known is the Vologda Lace. The butter, known as Paris butter, received the gold medal in the Paris fair. Following are typical houses in the northern area of European Russia.





### Monday – Professor Ornatsky – How Russian's Live (Part 1)

Life expectancy has dropped considerably in Russia since 1965. The life expectancy for men is less than 60, 12 years less than US. Mortality exceeds new births resulting in a net loss of one million people per year. Most of the common causes of death are voluntary: coronary disease, alcohol and tobacco abuse, aids, venereal disease, suicide and homicide.

Average wages per month \$170 in Russia, in China about \$95, in US about \$13.50/hour. Moscovites earn about three times the average, 40% are completely satisfied with their life. Salaries for education, health and service workers are particularly low. In St Peters-

burg the salaries are about 20% less than Moscow. Highest wages are paid in commercial industries. More than ½ of the commercial companies pay their workers in dollars or euros.



In the afternoon we stopped at Kizhi Island. This small village has about 18 permanent residents and an island about 7 miles long. We were tired of seeing churches and monasteries however when I saw this fantastic wooden church in the background I could easily handle just one more. Our guide was very well spoken having been a foreign exchange student in the US for a year, she lived in Louisiana. This majestic work was made in 1714 without nails except for attaching the shingles on the roof. Made

of aspen, the wood changes color with the angle of the sun and when wet. The roof lasts about 50 years even in the drastic winters. This was a particularly warm day and very sunny, about 85 degrees. Annoying large flies kept us shooing with our hands. We visited a smaller church, also made of wood where we could go inside and see the icons.

Thereafter we visited a typical house (for a large family) that had been made into a museum. The house would have accommodated parents and perhaps three sons with their individual families in the three large rooms. A family often ate, slept and lived together in the same room, with the central stove providing heat. The room was equipped in the manner of a house of that era with benches around the perimeter, a large stove built into a corner, a single shelf around the perimeter about 6 feet two inches from the floor on which cooking equipment and other components were stored. The shelf crossed the room two thirds from the outside edge making an anteroom where guests would stop, gaze at the icon and cross themselves, then greet the owner sitting by the window, cross themselves again before finally entering.

We visited the other rooms in the house that would have been similarly equipped but included displays of handicrafts including a young lady dressed in the style of the period that was crocheting with beads and another who was working a loom. The men's workroom had various tools of wood including a frame to bend sled runners. The horses and cattle lived under the house where they were protected from the weather and servicing them could be done without going outside. We were very pleased to be introduced to the culture of country living in this way.



Also in the afternoon, on the ship there was a Mr. Cruise contest. Four other competitors and I (generally the younger men on board of which I was 5 or 10 years the youngest) were given various tasks: We were to recite the nursery rhyme, “Humpty Dumpy” in different manners, mine was being angry at my brother, another was scared by a dog, one had embarrassed by his grandmother. Next we danced based on the draw of a card, I had a Russian dance, and others were waltz, tango and polka. We each acted first as the wife and then as the Russian husband who came home after drinking late at night. The strength contest had us lifting a broomstick on which balloons had been secured, each of us showing the audience how we would lift such a heavy weight. We also had a musical hat contest. It was fun for us, the contestants, as well as the audience. Two passengers acted as the judges and they struggled to come to a decision, which one of us would receive the title of Mr. Cruise. After consulting with the cruise director, ribbons were awarded, Mr. Poet, Mr. Dancer, Mr. Actor, Mr. Speaker and ultimately I was awarded Mr. Cruise. It was good that everyone received an award as I was get-

ting worried when everyone got a ribbon but me as we approached the end. Actually, I thought that Bob, a 6’ 6” guy was the life of the party having done a very good tango, dramatic reading and wife/husband portrayal.

## Tuesday – Professor Ornatsky – How Russian’s Live (Part 2)

New housing is generally apartments however 12 1/2 % of the Moscovites live in communal flats, about twice this amount in St Petersburg live in such housing where five or six families have separate rooms but share a common kitchen and bath. One in four families have telephone in the cities, one in seven in the country. Housing is one of the most significant problems facing the Russian government. They hope that within 10 years, 1/3 of the population will be able to afford reasonable housing, now only 1/10 can economically do so.



Under the Soviet system, all medical services were provided without charge though they were not very good. Under the Democratic system, all workers pay 3-½% medical insurance premium from their wages but the services provided are still not too good. Private services provide a much better standard of care for those who can afford it, particularly for dental care.

They estimate that 4 –8 million people are drug addicted. AIDS and drugs go hand in hand. About 15 million people have AIDS in Russia. Tuberculosis is also a problem, particularly in the prison system. Children's health is also poor, about 12% of the children are considered healthy many have chronic diseases generally because of poor health services, lack of examination and vaccination of children. Physicians are poorly paid; they earn less than the national average. Nurses are a chronic shortage, which encourages qualified medical practitioners to leave the country.

Russians consume half of the vodka produced in the world. 90% of crimes, traffic accidents and work absenteeism is due to alcohol. It is also a significant factor in the incidence of divorce. 71% of the Russian men smoke, 13% of the women smoke, 35% of teenagers smoke, even those in grade schools (21% 25% 26% for these factors in the US).

Tourism is flourishing in this country however it exports more than it hosts. The majority of such tourists come from Finland and China, however they may be traders in disguise. Also many come from Europe. The number of US travelers is small. Only about 10,000 Russians visit the US annually, probably because of the distance, Turkey, UAE and other European countries are much more popular.

That evening was the captain's farewell party. This giant fish was prepared for us with decorations all over it. After we were seated, the fish was cut up and served.



We had a special dinner with Russian Bliny, vodka and caviar. Bliny are like crepes and are eaten with either honey, sour cream or red caviar. One should not mix the complements or the salty caviar will not work well with the sour cream. We had trouble hearing the instructions as many were talking while they were being given and two of us put all three accents on the bliny at once.

Following was the Yesenin cruise program provided by the passengers. I was the Master of Ceremonies. We began with Russian dancing Marina and Ludmila did a Russian romance skit. The grand finale was the Kalinki Choir (the Russian class) who sang the Kalinki song and Moscow Nights, the tune that virtually every music box plays.



#### Wednesday – St Petersburg

We arrived at mid-day. It was raining, a good day for museums. After lunch we went to the Hermitage, Catherine the Great's Palace, where she lived, entertained and stored her artwork. Peter the Great started the art collection on his tour of Europe, but Catherine enhanced it greatly. The Hermitage is such a fantastic building that it would be one of the principal sights of Russia, even if it were empty. The floors are inlaid parquet, the ceilings have paintings, moldings and such that one does not know whether to look up or down, the walls may be completely covered in gold leaf and even the door handles are great works of art. Inside are Rembrandts and works of other well-known artists, Russian paintings, an Egyptian section, an Oriental section, and an ancient works section. We concentrated on the first two only as the museum has more than 1,000 rooms and would take nine years to view if one spent 30 seconds on each item. It truly was fantastic and because of the building facility, outshines even the Louvre [add pictures from book].

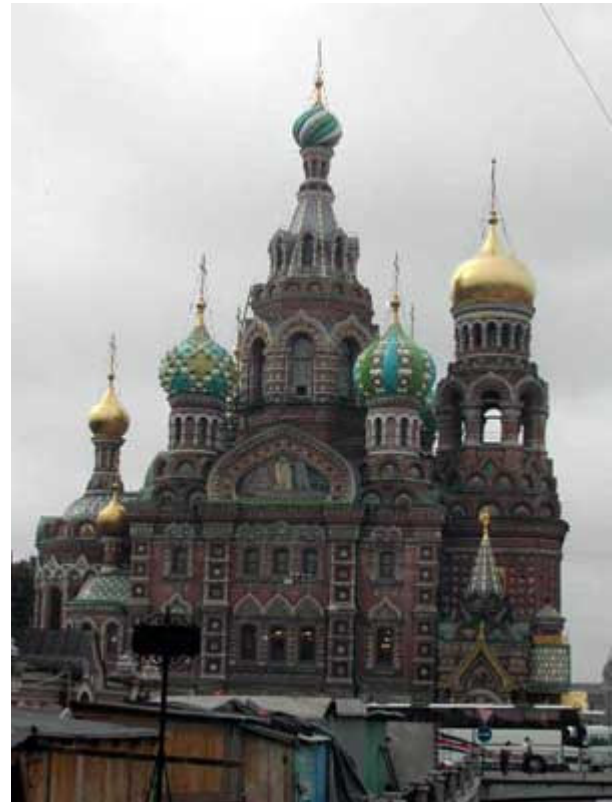
After dinner we continued to the Hermitage Theater where we saw a ballet presented with a live orchestra. Judy and I enjoyed the music and the dance.

Thursday – St Petersburg



The ship, Aurora, 100 years old held the cannon that fired the blank shot that began the Revolution c. 1917. Today, a canon is fired at noon from the Peter and Paul Fortress in commemoration of the event.

Across from this elegant cathedral, the Church of the Resurrection of Christ, Judy bought her matryoska dolls portraying the life of Jesus.



St Isaac's Cathedral took 40 years and over 100 kilos of gold were used to gild the dome. It can be seen for 25 miles. The cathedral now holds more than 400 sculpture, paintings and mosaics by the best Russian and European masters of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In front of the cathedral, is a statue of Nicholas I finished in 1859.



The statue is unique because the horse stands on two legs and is otherwise unsupported. Doing this requires engineering and balance in that the horse and rider weighs several tons [p109].



We ate lunch at Podvorie, a cozy wooden restaurant where the only complaint is there is too much food. In fact, the food was very good and we heard that President Putkin had eaten here for his birthday a few years ago. The luncheon included folk singing lead by Russian singers. They sang our Kalinky song and we sang along.







Catherine's Palace was splendid. Completed in 1756, the interior was fantastic like the Hermitage but this was more quantifiable, not overwhelming. Additionally, you could take pictures inside without paying an additional fee.







Shown above: the great ballroom – photo cannot portray the effect of the mirrors and lights that mimic the hall of mirrors in Versailles; the gold leaf trim on the doorways and moldings; the dinner table, set for company; Catherine, the portrait room; the view down the hall is designed to show room after room filled with gold



That evening we saw a folk production of the Russian Army choir and dance team. This was one of the most fantastic productions. Photos cannot capture the man doing continuous cartwheels across the stage or the man jumping over his sword. Most incredible was a man holding one foot and jumping through the gap with his other, landing on one foot in front and then in back.



## Friday -- St Petersburg

Our trip to Peterhof, a world-famous palace with fountains, cascading waterfalls and a palace began with a two-hour wait in the sun to enter the palace. We were tired and annoyed by the time we entered the palace. The palace was beautiful. The Nazi's destroyed the place during World War II but the restoration is proceeding very well. Reconstruction is being made from photos taken before the war [photos in guide book].

After lunch we went downtown on our own to mail the postcards and make a last souvenir purchase. Though we had looked for a charm of the imperial Russian double eagle, we settled for an amber pendant that was very nice. I used my phone card to call the office and found everyone and everything was fine. I am always pleased that they make do without me.

After dinner we packed for our next phase, the sea cruise on the Baltic with Celebrity.

## Saturday – Transfer to Celebrity

We left the Yesenin by taxi to the very modern Finland Train Station. The train left right on time with our friends, Fred and Mary Ann, and us in first class compartments. Our comrades from Odyssey Tours rode in the second-class car. Shortly after we settled in, breakfast was served. This is class! In the next compartment, an Australian gentleman rode. We compared notes on St Petersburg and he told us about his trip to the top of Europe, the northern section of Norway and Finland. Fred and I played some computer bridge until the battery ran down. Then a short nap interrupted by the Russian customs agent, the Finland passport control, the currency exchange lady and numerous others. We gain an hour but shortly after noon, amid torrential rain, we disembarked in Finland. The Aussie had a map and tour guide of Helsinki showing a laundry but when we asked the cab drivers, none knew where it was. While Judy guarded the baggage, I went inside to the information counter to get a map and transportation directions. Even though we could take a tram, we decided to go by cab because of all the luggage. The ladies at the laundry were very helpful and we did the whole job in about two hours. We then took another cab to the ferry for Stockholm, set up our cabin and ate at the buffet.

## Sunday – Transfer to Celebrity & Stockholm

Our ferry arrived in Stockholm and it began raining. The taxi driver called headquarters to find out where the ship was docked and then took us there with no problem. Nevertheless, as we were late arrivals, we had to stand around while they called for security. After a short while, we were admitted given our cards and shown to our cabins by our boss, the assistant cruise director, Matthew. He was very cordial and told me to trade my Celebrity

card for a 50% off bar discount card. Wow, that will be a great savings on the wine bill. After we unpacked our gear, we set off to see some of Stockholm. We decided on the Vasa Museum, a fairly new museum housing the fairly complete remains of the ship that sailed for only a mile before capsizing in the harbor in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The museum was very interesting as it portrayed life in 1700, before the Revolutionary War. With the rain, a museum was a good alternative.



When we were ready to leave the rain had ended and we made our way back to the ship. We met our tablemates, Sheila, who does much of the talking and her husband, Al. Also Bill and Marlene who are also from Pembroke Pines, Florida. We swapped tales of our grandchildren and stories of our previous travel adventures. They seem like a nice bunch.

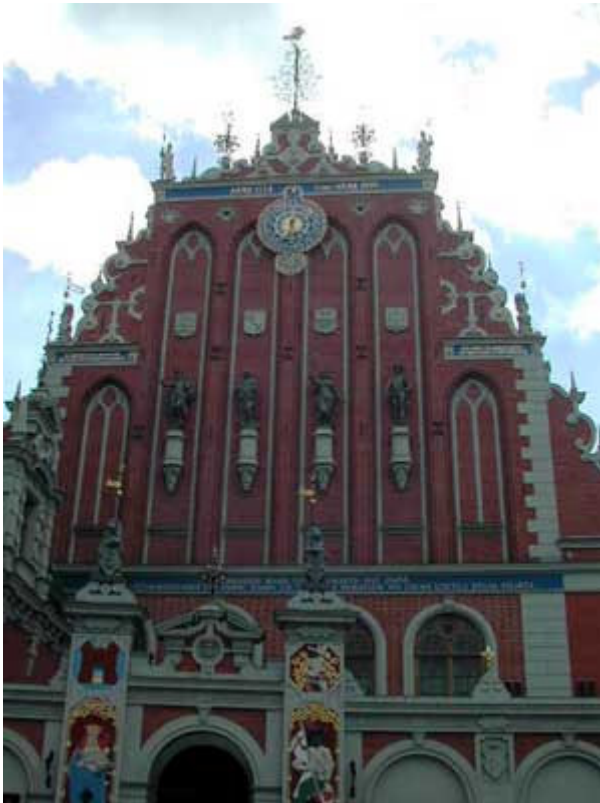
Monday – Riga, Latvia

Latvia is between Russia and Poland on the Baltic Sea, between Estonia and Lithuania. It has a small population and seems to produce wooden items, porcelain and amber jewelry. It has plenty of beggars, children we met as soon as we got off the bus and elderly ones too. Nevertheless, the ancient buildings make a good story. Many of them predate our Revolutionary War, some even the founding of America.



Our bus let us off at the Freedom Monument where we in time to see the changing of the guard. We were also challenged in that the map we carried had no descriptions of the sights. We later picked up the free, Riga This Week, which had English descriptions of the buildings and other sites.





We ate at this quaint open-air restaurant, outside of the Tower Hotel. The food was good and the weather was beautiful, about 72 degrees in the afternoon with sunny skies. Of course later it turned to rain but we had returned to the cabin by then.





The Powder Tower was first mentioned in 1330 and was used to store gunpowder and cannonballs some of which are still stored in the walls of the tower.



The Great Guild house shown here dates back to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century though the guild goes back to the Middle Ages. The guilds were responsible for the certification of craftsmen and

assisted their own by fixing prices. The forerunner of the union, guild membership was critical to the craftsman.





The Cat House has a colorful past – It was named after the two black cats perched on the roof. At the turn of the century, the owner of the building was exiled from the Great Guild across the street and he ordered the cats to be turned with their tails towards the Guild. The cats were eventually turned back after a long court battle and the man was re-admitted to the Guild.

Tuesday – Helsinki, Finland



After we left the shuttle in downtown Helsinki we thanked the Lord for the beautiful weather, the sun was shining, the temperature about 70 degrees. We traveled east to the Senate Square and the Lutheran cathedral. In front of the cathedral is a statue of Alexander II, one of the few good czars of Russia.



Inside the cathedral is this lovely pipe organ.

Nearby is the Orthodox cathedral. As it started to rain we ducked inside here.





At this ornate icon wall we prayed for better weather to return. We met Ed and Gail who were sitting next to us. We decided that it would be wise to see a museum in that it was raining and that the National Museum was across town. We agreed to take a taxi and split the cost. We left the cathedral in search of a cab and found one in short order.



We changed our minds slightly in that it had stopped raining and went to the Church of the Rock, near the museum, instead. This church is hewn out of solid rock, has a dome 70 feet in diameter in which miles of Finnish copper are used. It is quite impressive for a Lutheran church.

A little farther is the National Museum in which the history of Finland from the pre-stone-age times is depicted. The period from 1900 is the most interesting because it contains the period when Finland had a civil war to secede from Russia. The World War I was beginning and Russia had other problems so they did not put up a big fight and Finland was for the first time in a thousand years, its own country. Before Peter the Great, c. 1600 Finland was the eastern side of Sweden. Upon its independence Finland established a unicameral congress and a president elected by the people, including women, one of the first countries to have universal suffrage.







We decided to get lunch in a downtown café and saw this trained cat exhibition on the street near by. On our way home, Judy bought a picture of some reindeer for the wall in the office, reminiscent of Finland. The weather had turned beautiful again and all was well as we returned to the ship.

### Wednesday – St Petersburg, Russia

We were on our own today so after breakfast we went through passport control and found a taxi to take us to town. The prices they wanted were \$50 and well more than reasonable. Judy was considering walking the Disney marathon so we took off walking. It was more than two miles from our ship to the entry to the port, sort of like walking from the Orlando airport to the Beeline highway. We figured another two miles would take us to the Baltic Railway station that was the closest Metro station, our goal, the Botanical Garden. I had 33 rubles left from last week for the subway fare. We anticipated using credit card for the entry fee. Upon arrival from the Metro, we went to McDonalds for lunch, just because it was quick and we would know what we were getting. Alas, they did not take credit cards, or US dollars. I noticed an automatic teller at the exit of the Metro so I went back and got \$10 worth of rubles, about 300. We had 130 left over after lunch. Upon arrival at the gardens, I told the lady, “two persons, please” in Russian. She asked about children, a question for which I was unprepared but the lady behind me helped me in understanding. The fee was 140 rubles, no credit cards. I pulled out my 130 and carefully counted it. I was in a fix! The lady behind me gave me the 10 rubles (about 35 cents). I thanked her profusely!





The gardens were pretty with all of the flowers in bloom at this time of the year, though they were a bit overgrown. Our admission included a greenhouse tour. I did not realize that the 14<sup>20</sup> hand written on the ticket was the tour time when we when in at about 2 pm so we walked around the grounds for a few more minutes and then returned. There were about 20 of us in this group tour conducted completely in Russian.

I could make out only a few words but we enjoyed seeing the various cactuses, tropical plants and palms, many of which were native to our area. As the park was about to close at 5 we returned to our ship taking the Metro. As we approached I returned to the automatic teller and planning for the next day got 500 rubles, about \$17. The machine gave me one 500 ruble note. As we were leaving the subway I asked a young lady how much the bus cost, in Russian. She replied, “sem” which means seven. Seven rubles is about \$.23 I thought we might try the bus back to the ship as the street in front of the Baltic Railway station is a long, straight, busy one on which I might find a bus that just went down the street. At 23 cents we would not be gambling much. I had never attempted to take the bus I asked a few people, in English, whether you paid the driver or bought a ticket in advance, but none could understand me. English is not much spoken or understood in Russia though I thought that children were learning it in school. I then realized that a 500 ruble note might cause a problem if the driver did not carry change so I bought something at the drug store so that I’d get change. I asked the clerk who said, yes, one pays the driver.

As we waited for the bus, I showed some boys who were also waiting, my map indicating where I wanted to go, they said that the tram would get us closer. We boarded the next one and took it a few blocks before it turned south. We got off, but Judy did not want to try again so we just walked back to the port entrance. I took note of the bus numbers that went in our direction. We showed our passports and went in. A taxi driver offered us a ride. I said \$5 but he said \$10. We said no thanks and began walking. I had noticed bus stops as we were leaving the ship earlier that day but I wasn’t sure of the schedule or the cost. Now that I had some rubles, we walked to the first stop and waited only a few min-

utes for the next bus to arrive. The bus was free and took us right to the ship! We were all set for the next day to take the bus from the ship and then to the subway.

After dinner, we received a voice mail message saying that we were selected to escort The Last Romanovs tour, an all day tour going to all of the various palaces of the czars. We may not need our rubles anyway.

Thursday – St Petersburg, Russia



Today Judy and I were appointed as escorts on the Last Romanovs tour. It was an all-day adventure of four palaces occupied by the czars following Peter the Great. First was Catherine's Palace, which we had already seen before. Next was Alexander's Palace where Catherine's favorite grandson lived.



Following was Pavlov's Palace Paul is Pavlov in Russian He was here only for a short while, and then he moved to his military palace leaving his wife behind. Here is a statue of Paul in front of his palace.



Finally, we visited his military palace where his throne was on a podium, two steps above the parquet floor. He insisted that his subjects' knees be heard on the floor and that they bow their heads so that he could see the backs of their necks. The large parade area in front of the palace was for him to observe and march his troupes.







Friday – Tallinn, Estonia

Today Judy and I were escorts on the Tallinn Walking Tour. This first photo, which appears to be a rock, is a rock. Such rocks were brought by the farmers to secure the Parliament from the Russians, leading to their independence in 1991, a revolution that was completed without any bloodshed. This is Herman's tower, characteristic of Tallinn's medieval background. The Parliament



Building is pink

The Russian's built an Orthodox church right across the street to show who was in charge. This stone wall and tower were not designed to fend off enemies; rather they divided the





upper town from the lower town. The wealthy lived in Upper Tallinn, the not so wealthy were in lower Tallinn. The gates were closed at 9 pm each night. The gatekeeper was wealthy from those who paid him to open the gate when they were late This street is typical of the area.

This is the guild house for the craftsmen who were married and of good reputation.

This door is on the other guild house for the unmarried men of good repute.

The Town Hall is the landmark in the square. This building is one of the oldest town hall buildings in Europe.

The townspeople dress up in medieval clothes for market daily and sell their wares to the tourists from the stalls.

Saturday – At Sea



We had a nice day at sea, my favorite time in the cruise. We went to the bridge lecture on “Common Mistakes”

and enjoyed watching our peer present his topic. Then was my first lecture, “Estate Planning during Transitional Times.” It went well with 92 people attending. After lunch we listened to another lecture on politics, Dick Morris spoke on “The War in Iraq and Terrorism.” It was very well done. Among other things, he pointed out that the US is not dependent on Arab oil; rather we import most of our oil from Canada, Mexico and Venezuela. His position on oil independence is to switch to hydrogen powered vehicles. The government need only assist in the conversion of some pumps to hydrogen at gasoline stations, the technology is already there. If only it works out that easily. In the evening, the Celebrity dancers presented a fabulous program, “Fanta Sea.”

Sunday – Gdansk, Poland



Judy and I were selected to be escorts on the City Tour. We rode for about 45 minutes on the bus as the guide pointed out items of interest in the three towns that we passed before arriving at Gdansk. When we got off the bus, we saw this very picturesque town with Dutch architecture. The town had been greatly destroyed in World War II and had been reconstructed in the previous style.

The “Green Gate” was the entry to the old town.



Within the town was the town hall containing this spire with clock.

A statue of Neptune reminds us of the naval and mercantile background of the town.



As we returned to the ship, we passed this monument to solidarity. The three crosses represent the first three shipbuilders who died in the confrontation. The anchors refer to the sea.



My second presentation was scheduled for this afternoon, “IRAs, How to turn \$30,000 into \$41 million.” We had 84 passengers attending, including the cruise director himself. The gods of the microphone were not kind to us today and the mike gave out in the middle. After the cruise director called the AV man, I was given a new mike but it too faded in and out. At the end, he told Judy that there was a broken antenna. Additionally, when I stood by the lectern, the speaker hummed so I held my notes and was more nervous than before. There were many questions from the floor and I was able to answer them before taking personal questions at the front. I am confident that the stock market lecture will go more smoothly.

Monday – Germany

The weather was gray and the temperature cold so we decided not to go out; rather we played bridge in the card room, watched the movie, “Monster” and relaxed for the day.

Tuesday & Wednesday – Copenhagen, Denmark

We escorted the City Tour and stopped for a photo at the famous Little Mermaid Statue made famous by Hans Christian Andersen’s fable in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. We then saw





a Lutheran Church named Church of Our Lady. The sanctuary had life-size statues of each of the apostles except Judas Iscariot. A statue of Paul was included instead. I always wondered what the apostles looked like.

At the King's Library there is a small duck pond and this little house had a duck nest in it with ducks. They came out as we arrived. The duck house is under this modern monument.



The library is the red brick building.

This is one of the guards of the Royal Palace The Queen's chambers.



The Royal Church





That evening we went to Tivoli Gardens, established in 1843 and the inspiration for Disneyland. We saw a pantomime in the theatre as we arrived. They did amazing things with the drop-down backgrounds.



Then we saw a clown/trampoline act. This was the host. This man was the featured performer.

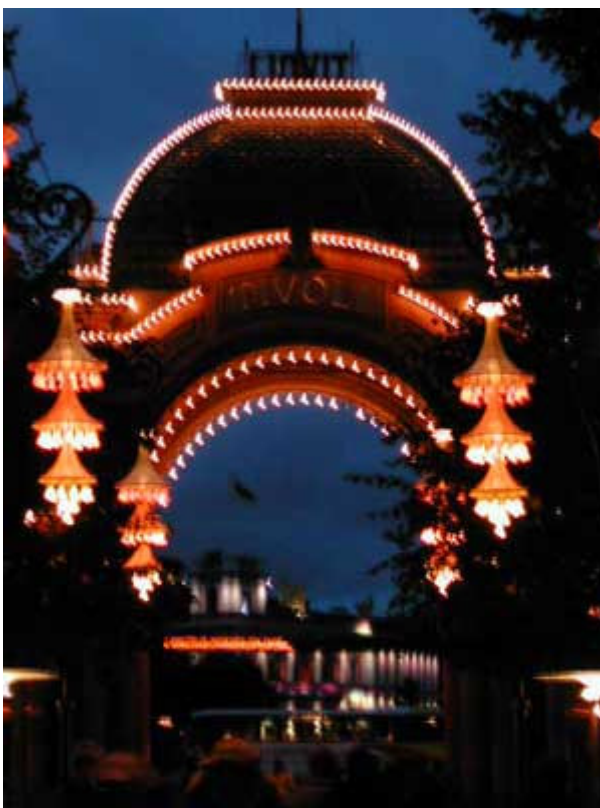






In the background is the city hall.

This palace is part of the garden: One view by day, the other at night.



This is the illuminated entryway. The lights are well worth the visit at night. Even though one must wait until about 10 pm for nightfall at this time of year.

Things are very expensive in Denmark. With the exchange rate at six kroner to a dollar, it costs \$3 for a one-way fare on the bus. The minimum wage turns out to be \$30,000 per year.

Wednesday we checked out the stores outside of the ship, reviewed our living



trust message and presented it before the political lecturer went on. We had 62 in attendance for living trusts and probate.

Thursday – Oslo, Norway

Judy and I were escorts on a coach tour of scenic Norway, minimal stops as this was designed for the walking impaired. I took this panoramic view of Oslo from a hillside. Another shot of the fjord.





Norway's recent king was a great sportsman, an excellent skier and is shown in statue with his dog, this is Olav V. The king is next to the Holmenkollen ski jump.





As you walk down the center walk, the statues are on either side. The park is full of flowers. I thought this statue representative of the many we viewed. This statue in the center of the park is a heap of humanity.



The city hall is shown with its unique two towers. The building was made in an area that was formerly a low-income zone in which the young ladies resorted to prostitution to make their livings. This statue shows the gentleman on the right, the prostitute in the center and around the corner, her pimp. While on the trip we drove by the Frogner Park, a public park in which a sculptor made 127 statues of people in all stages of life.





As we leave Norway, we pass beautiful views of the fjord. At our last day at sea, I presented my final lecture, How to Play the Stock Market without Losing Your Shirt. We had almost 100 guests and used the Celebrity Theater. Many asked questions, all were answered. I presented my report to the assistant cruise director, who seemed very satisfied with the presentations. We continued to Dover, took a bus to Gatwick and awaited our flight home.

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