

## Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Siberian Russia – Day 8 Oct. 5:

About 5:30am we were awakened by the Petropavlovsk pilot boat coming alongside the Amsterdam and the orders shouted over a bullhorn. We proceeded slowly into the harbor and at daylight dropped anchor. The Amsterdam was located about 1000 yards off the shore of an industrial section of Petropavlovsk, as shown in the map on the right.

About 7am another Russian boat came alongside and twenty uniformed customs and immigration officials boarded the Amsterdam. They set up shop in a room next to the ship's library and started to process passports and other paperwork. What followed was a frustrating 4 hours as the passengers, eager to go ashore, milled around the decks of the Amsterdam waiting for the signal that we could go ashore in our first port of the cruise.

Finally, about 11am, Cruise Director Gene Young came on the PA system and announced that people in the first of the organized tours could collect their passports and leave the ship. Since we did not have a tour scheduled it was about 2pm before we were able to go ashore.



The weather for our visit in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky was marvelous. The temperature was about 45°F and the sun was shining brightly through intermittent clouds. It seemed like a nice fall day in East Tennessee. As we waited for permission to leave the ship we occupied ourselves with sightseeing from the decks of the Amsterdam. The view of the area surrounding the harbor was punctuated by snow covered volcanic peaks like those shown in these two photos.



The boats shown here are part of the fishing fleet which is the primary economic sector in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky.

Another striking feature of the area was the bright colored roofs on some of the houses facing the harbor, as shown in the photo below.



We spent some time in the Lido waiting for permission to go ashore. We happened to meet the Amsterdam's Medical Officer, Lorna Morris. We learned that one of the requirements for the job of Medical Officer is to have at least two years of experience in emergency cardiac care. She has been the Medical Officer since last spring and is enjoying life as part of the Amsterdam staff. Lorna is a tea drinker and likes her tea hot. We had stopped by to chat with her because we noticed that she had her tea pot covered with a knit "sweater" that looked like a little house. It turned out she had knit the sweater herself and was quite proud of it. Before we parted it was possible to get the picture of Lorna and her "tea pot cozy", as shown on the right.



Finally, about 1pm the immigration folks finished their business and we were able to catch a ship's tender boat and go ashore. Fortunately, the ride in the tender boat to the pier was short and we were soon on solid ground and ready to explore Petropovlovsk.



The first order of business was to record the arrival of Barbara's library card in Petropovlovsk, Kamchatsky as shown on the right.



We briefly explored the cruise terminal, shown below. There were some trinkets for sale but we didn't find anything of interest so we moved on.



As we left the pier area we caught the welcome sight of public toilets (WCs), which in foreign ports can sometimes be in short supply.



Our primary tourist destination was the huge statue of Lenin that Amsterdam Tour Guide, Barbara Haenne, had told us about a few days ago.

There was a steady stream of Amsterdam passengers along the road leading toward the town area. We hadn't gone far when our friend, Louise called to us and directed our attention to a collection of padlocks festooning the iron railing of a fence along the water's edge. Without her quick eye we would have missed this curious cultural site.

There is a custom among lovers to symbolize their eternal devotion to each other by putting their names and date of dedication on a padlock and clamping the lock to this sturdy iron fence where Louise is standing.



The deal between the lovers is forever sealed by tossing the key into the murky water of the nearby inlet. Some of the padlocks were quite fancy so we snapped a few pictures of these “iron-clad” promises..





Not far up the road from the marvelous collection of padlocks stood the impressive bronze statue of Lenin appropriately located in Lenin Square. We wasted no time in getting Barbara's library card into a photo with Lenin.



As can be seen in the photo above, the fall colors were showing very nicely in the leaves of the trees. This was a nice compensation for missing this favorite time of year back home in East Tennessee.

The Petropavlovsk streets, sidewalks and many buildings seemed to be in the middle of a major repair and building program. Building material was stacked here and there, concrete trucks were making deliveries, and workers were busily engaged.

There was intense traffic on the streets and near traffic jams from time to time.



However, the drivers were very polite and carefully stopped for pedestrians (like us) attempting to make a street crossing. That Russian courtesy was much appreciated.

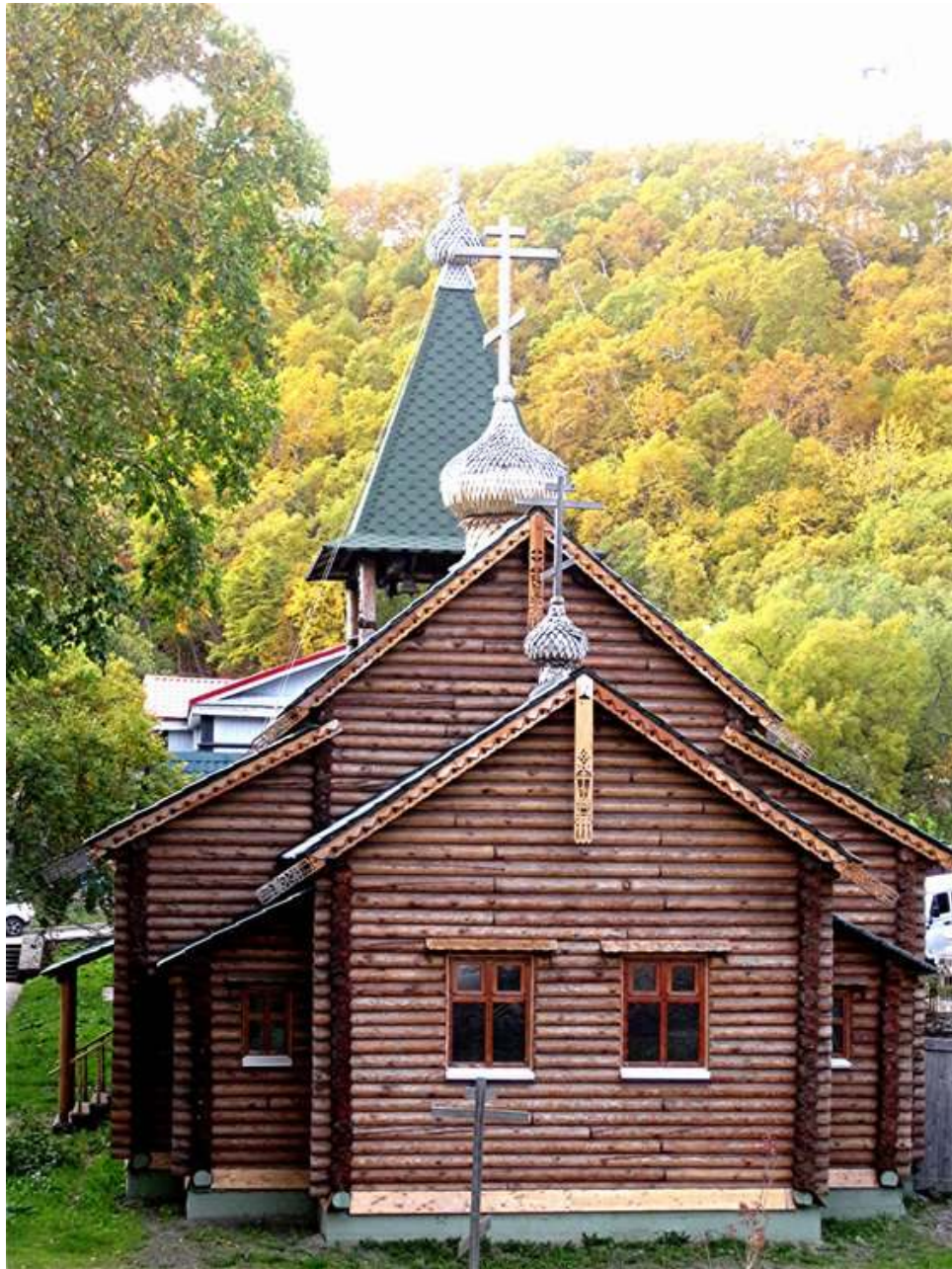
There weren't many souvenir shops but we

found one that had an unusual collection of animal trophies. Some of the pelts and a mounted bear are shown below.





Barbara Haenni had mentioned that a Russian Orthodox Church made of logs could be found in Petropavlovsk. We searched until we found it, nestled in a small park-like setting next to a busy street. This church, along with several Christian monuments around town gave evidence that Christianity had survived under Communism.



It was soon time to return to the pier where the last tender boat to the Amsterdam was set to leave at 5:30pm. On our way back we spotted a large building sporting a Gold's Gym sign. The fitness craze is apparently alive and well in Petropavlovsk, Kamchatsky. Like many buildings we saw, construction was going on next door.



Not far from Gold's Gym was the elegant old theater building shown below.





Across the street from the old theater building was the new theater which was part of what appeared to be a massive rebuilding of the city infrastructure.



In a small park we saw what looked like a wedding party and a man taking pictures of the bride and groom. Sentimentalist Barbara couldn't contain herself and grabbing the camera, she rushed over to take a picture of this momentous occasion. In her best Russian she called out her thanks.



The picture shows pretty flowering marigolds that were displayed in flower beds all over town. Apparently, the first frosts of winter have not visited here yet.

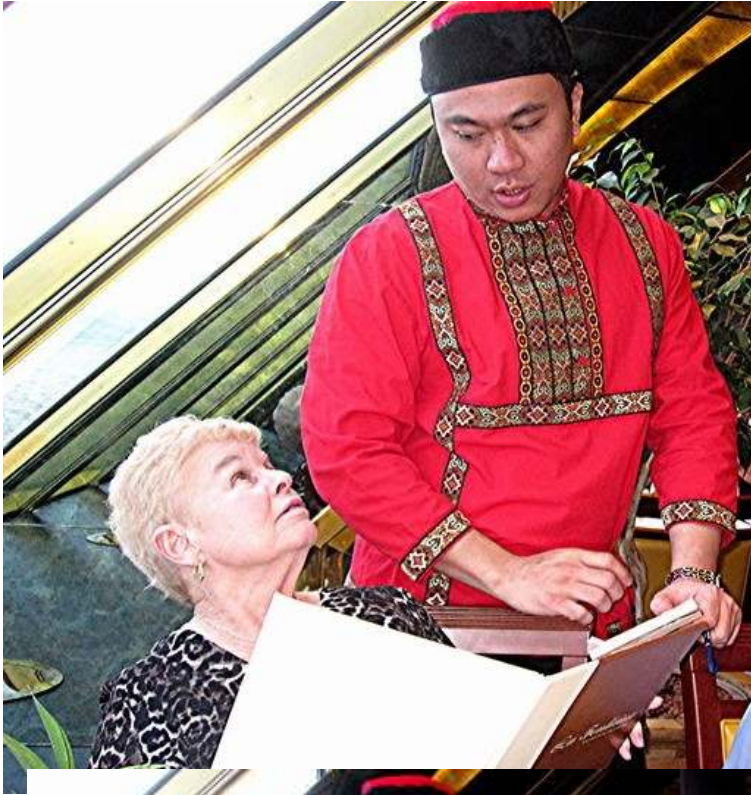
There was a small amusement park near the beach on the way to the pier. It had been shut down for the winter but some of the rides were left in place.



We returned to the ship in time for dinner in the dining room that had been decorated with the Russian national flags and colors.







Our stewards, Danu and Suchipta were decked out in striking Russian costumes as shown in these pictures with Barbara and Esther.



After dinner we finished the evening off by attending the show in the Queen's Lounge. Tonight's entertainment was an accomplished man and wife team called

"Moscow Magic". They put on one of the best magic acts we have seen. Most amazing were numerous quick change moves and a trick where a man from the audience, in an instant behind a screen, had his jacket removed and placed on the magician's wife through a maze of ropes. The audience was astounded.

In the evening the Amsterdam pulled up the anchor and got underway for Vladivostok, Russia. We will arrive there on October 9<sup>th</sup>.