

At Sea – Day 4 Sept. 30:

We went for an early breakfast in the Lido at about 6:30am. We typically sit in the same general area each day and usually with our friends, Bob and Esther. The stewards in the Lido are assigned to a specific group of tables so we are starting to get fairly well acquainted with Widi and Wayan who take care of us during breakfast.



Widi can be seen here, cozying up



to Barbara while Wayan is a little more reserved. The names and dates seen on their shirts were edited into the picture file for easy identification later. The stewards keep a light hearted atmosphere going and genuine friendships can develop over the course of a cruise.

After breakfast we went to the morning TV show called “Good Morning Amsterdam” with Cruise Director Gene and co-host Adele. Then in the afternoon we went to a cooking show put on by Adele. In the picture on the right, Adele is checking out some eggplants in the initial preparation. She



showed us how to make an

appetizer from eggplant with an emphasis of using natural foods and ingredients that were tasty and nutritious. Samples were passed out to the audience and we agreed it was a winner.



In the evening there was entertainment by comedienne, Marty Brill. He substituted for the Amsterdam Singers and Dancers when it was decided the “motion of the ocean” was a little to active for the safety of the dancers.

At the end of the day we returned to our room with the red spiral decoration from Cruise Specialists and our East Tennessee fall leaves scene with the “Happy Fall Y’all” greeting, as shown on the left.

At Sea – Day 5 Oct. 1:

About 11pm during the night we passed from the North Pacific through an opening between two small islands in the Aleutian Island Chain and entered the Bering Sea. As soon as we were clear of the islands the captain changed the ship's course and headed north to keep the Amsterdam in relatively calm seas. The course of the ship and its location is displayed on a TV screen in the library as shown in the photo below.



Also shown in the TV display is the International Date Line which is an imaginary line that corresponds with the 180th meridian except where it deviates to avoid inconvenient crossing of land masses. The Date Line is necessary to permit consistent recording of the date and time of events taking place around the globe. The need for the Date Line is illustrated by the following thought experiment. Assume that you began to travel west around the globe at a high rate of speed so that you arrived back at your starting point in an instant. You would set your clock back one hour for each time zone you passed. Since there are 24 time zones around the world you would set your clock back 24 hours and arrive back at your starting point an apparent 24 hours before you started. If you traveled at the same speed in an easterly direction, setting your clock ahead for each time zone you would arrive back at the starting point 24 hours after you started, and yet the trip had only taken an instant. This unsettling artifact of global travel cropped up when early explorers returned from their long voyages around the world and found they had lost or gained a calendar day in spite of accurate record keeping. By international agreement the problem was solved by establishing the International Date Line. When crossing the Date Line from east to west you now gain one 24 hour calendar day and when passing from west to east you have to repeat the current 24 hour calendar day. This convention solves the time accounting problem for both the imaginary travel around the world in an instant and travel in real commerce.

All this discussion of the International Date Line is just to prepare for an auspicious event tonight at midnight. At that time the Amsterdam will cross the International Date Line from east to west and we will zip past the 24 hour calendar day of Sunday October 2nd, and find ourselves suddenly in Monday morning October 3rd.

While walking around the Amsterdam it was easy to divert our minds from the heavy duty subject of the International Date Line to more trivial matters. For example, the Amsterdam has a very attractive casino that is part of a route that we walk while getting our morning exercise. While it is possible to pass through the casino without sampling the goods, we sometimes succumb to the temptation of making a wager. The Amsterdam makes it very easy to gamble because when playing the slot machines you don't even need cash in your pocket to participate. We simply put our room key in a slot in the machine and push a few buttons to select the amount of cash we want to risk and the game is on. Barbara is particularly fond of video poker slot machines and the photo on the right caught her enjoying herself this morning.



Later we took part in a Tai Chi exercise program in the Queen's Lounge. The class was led by Allison who encouraged us to relax, breathe deeply and through a series of very deliberate and gentle movements of our arms, legs and bodies draw in the energy that surrounds us. It can't hurt --- so we may make this a regular morning routine.

Another routine we appreciate is the 11am "Chat Time" in the Explorer's Lounge headed up by the Cruise Specialists escorts, Henk and Lucia Barnhoorn. They make this time available for Cruise Specialists clients as a means of getting better acquainted with fellow passengers. This morning we stopped in and enjoyed meeting Frank and Jody who were celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary today. Frank and Jody shared the interesting story of their wedding day with the members of the group whom we had met earlier. Here are a couple pictures of our Chat Time group this morning.



On the right from left to right:
Jody, George, Lucia, Rose, Frank.



On the left: Frank, Henk and Barbara.

We went to the Queen's Lounge at 8pm for the evening entertainment. This morning during the Tai Chi session the Queen's Lounge had been almost uncomfortably cold due to a mix-up in temperature control and outside temperatures that were hovering around 40°F. As we entered the lounge tonight it felt much more comfortable but we noted that comfy blankets were available for those guests who needed a bit more warmth.



The entertainment in the Queen's Lounge was an excellent singing group called "Moscow 4". Their show consisted of singing and dancing American Broadway musical hit tunes. They actually sang most of the songs in Russian but the tunes and words were so familiar to the audience that the foreign language didn't matter. The superb choreography and high quality voices were enjoyable in any language. They had an Elvis Presley routine that was good and then there were the Mama Mia musical selections that have been our favorites for years. At the end they received a standing ovation from the appreciative Amsterdam audience.

Returning to our stateroom we found that the stewards had left the room in tip-top shape. In addition they had left a comical little dog made from towels twisted and folded in an artistic fashion, as shown on the right.



Not quite ready to turn-in for the night, Orlin put some finishing touches on the day's cruise journal, as shown below.



This brought Day 5 of the cruise to an end.