

## Day 7 July 31, Nanortalik – Icebergs – Phillip Huber Marionettes– Gala Dinner

**Nanortalik:** We woke up about 5am to a calm sea and overcast sky with the Maasdam making headway in open water toward Nanortalik, Greenland. So far on the cruise the seas have been smooth and while there has not been a lot of sunshine, the temperatures have not been terrible and we had only one day of rain showers. The temperature out on the verandah this morning was in the chilly mid 40s and there were icebergs passing by the ship on a regular basis. We grabbed the camera and immediately started taking pictures. These chunks of ice were bigger and more numerous than the ones we had seen two days ago around Red Bay, Labrador. Shown on the right is one of the bigger ones that we saw this morning.



Barbara scanned the passing icebergs with binoculars to see if any of them carried a polar bear. The name Nanortalik means “Place of the Polar Bear” but today there were none to be seen.



As we sailed into the inner harbor of Nanortalik, Greenland the number and size of the icebergs increased. The iceberg shown below displayed the classic blue iceberg color. The

blue color results from diffraction of natural light passing through the unusually dense ice created by high pressure in the glaciers. This iceberg showed the blue color effect more than the others that we saw.



Greenland, which is part of the nation of Denmark, is an island separated from Canada by a narrow strip of water. These maps show where Nanortalik is located on a small island at the southern tip of Greenland.



About 7am the Maasdam entered the harbor of Nanortalik and dropped anchor amidst the icebergs. The whole town, with brightly colored buildings, was visible from the deck of the Maasdam.

By 8am the ship was cleared by the local authorities and we could catch a tender



boat to go into the town of Nanortalik.

The map below shows where the Maasdam was anchored, about 500 meters across the harbor from the town of Nanortalik. Also shown on the map are some local landmark sights that we saw while taking a 3 hour hike covering nearly every city street.



The Nanortalik tourist bureau had set up facilities on the passenger pier and we were able to get a map of the town to explain what we were seeing as we walked around.



An important order of business was to record the visit of Barbara's library card to the village of Nanortalik, as shown on the right. The crest of the city, containing three polar bears, is based on the meaning of Nanortalik, "The Place of the Bears".



The temperature was about 45 F, but with gloves and a light jacket we were comfortable as we walked. Consistent with our tradition for walking the cruise ship decks, we took a counter clockwise direction for our walk around the town. Our approximate route can be followed by checking some of the landmark sights identified along the way in the map of the city shown above. One of the first interesting sights was this small hotel. It seemed to epitomize the small town atmosphere of this city of 1700 people. While the citizens of Nanortalik were out and about today, the Maasdam passengers were the majority of people we saw on the streets.



There was a small fish market set up at the head of the pier where the fishing boats were tied up. Some large fish with spotted skin had been prepared for sale and were on display. These are deep water fish caught on a long-line with as many as 300 hooks on the line.



The most striking feature of the village was the bright colored houses. We have been told that the long periods of darkness during the winter are made less depressing by the use of bright colors on the houses. Shown in the photo below is an example of the range of colors seen on the houses. The

street lights in the photograph were present throughout the town, presumably to facilitate activity during the dark winter months. While the town of Nanortalik was definitely an austere place, the people we saw



seemed occupied and happy with their daily life activities. The landscape shown here is typical. We saw no evidence of anyone trying to grow a garden on the thin rocky soil.

The hospital for the town was this cheery looking yellow building shown on the right.



The narrow streets of the city were of asphalt but none of them had a painted line

down the middle. There were very few autos but as with Denmark the car traffic was nominally right hand drive. The natives and Maasdam passengers walked in the streets

with no interference by the cars. Along our way to our next stop at the town cemetery some obliging Maasdam passengers we met took our picture.

There was an extensive and well kept cemetery on the edge of town. Each wooden cross



seemed to be freshly painted and there were lots of artificial flowers decorating the graves. There is a tradition of leaving lanterns containing candles at the graves of friends and relatives. A couple small lanterns are shown in the photo on the left.

The flowers appeared to be in full bloom all over town

It was at the cemetery that we saw this most magnificent stand of blue lupine flowers.



We continued our walk around the town as we passed by the local Internet Café. Note the satellite antennae on the side of the building. All the antennae we saw in the town



were pointed nearly parallel with the surface of the earth to make contact with satellites over the equator.

About this time we bumped into our Cruise Critic friends, Carney and Kay. They were nicely bundled up and just starting their walk around town.



There was a gasoline station nearby so we took this opportunity to check out the local price of gas.

This photo of a gas pump shows that the last customer purchased 10 liters of gas at a cost of 43.70 Danish Kroner. The gas costs 4.37 Kroner per liter and at the local exchange rate of 5 Kroner per US dollar that works out to about \$3.50 US per gallon.





We headed south along the main street where, near the end of the street we came to a beautiful little church. It was surrounded by the pretty yellow buttercups that were blooming all over town. A lady dressed in a beautiful traditional costume was near the church and let us take her picture as shown below.



she



We crossed paths with our friend Jeff who was visiting the place of his birth. He had left Greenland as a child when his US military parents were transferred back to the States. As shown in the photo on the right, he was appropriately dressed for the occasion advertizing his Greenland roots. Jeff was having a grand, if somewhat nostalgic time, walking with some friends on Greenland soil again.

We had been walking about 3 hours and touched nearly every street in the town. It was an enjoyable visit to this small Greenland village but we were ready to return to the luxury of the Maasdam. Near the passenger pier we were greeted by some beautiful Greenland children who let us take their picture.



At the pier we saw that many of our fellow passengers had the same idea of making a return to the Maasdam.



As we waited for a tender boat we took this picture of the Maasdam showing the icebergs that separated the ship from the far shore of the harbor.



**Marionettes by Phillip Huber:** We got back to the ship in time for some of the afternoon activities. Phillip Huber, who had put on the marionette show in the Rembrandt Lounge a couple nights ago, gave another presentation showing in more detail how he designed, constructed and operated the marionettes. He had his marionettes on display for us to examine.





He said that each marionette was unique and it took months of practice to achieve the lifelike performance we had seen him produce with the marionettes. When he picked up the control paddle for each individual it was like picking up a different fine musical instrument. Mr. Huber finished his presentation with an extended question &

answer session where he demonstrated several of his marionettes up close and personal with interested people in the audience. In the photo below he is demonstrating the lifelike antics of his dog Taffy who was the hit of the show. For a charge of \$299 (US) Phillip Huber will send you a “Pick of the Litter” marionette similar to Taffy. He is practically a neighbor of ours, operating his company out of Cookeville, Tennessee. Interested people can visit his website at [www.HuberMarionettes.com](http://www.HuberMarionettes.com).

We thought his act was one of the best we have seen. He said he will leave the Maasdam in Iceland and go to his next engagement in Brasilia, Brazil.



**Master Chef's Dinner:** The dining tonight in the Rotterdam Dining Room was a special experience called the Master Chef's Dinner.

The event started with us donning silly chef's hats to set the mood. Then each course of the meal was introduced with the waiters all putting on a little show with a flare. In this photo on the right our waiter, Mike, makes his entrance waving a dinner napkin.



We couldn't let this moment pass without getting a photo with our dinner mates all wearing our Chefs hats.



The meal was finished off with Baked Alaska which is a dessert normally reserved for near the end of a cruise. As usual the Baked Alaska was delicious and in addition the

Maasdam chef made an innovation that Orlin particularly appreciated. A decade or more ago the cruise ship Baked Alaska was paraded through the dining room with flames rising from a generous splash of a “high test” alcoholic drink. Then, in an effort to protect us from fire danger, the flaming alcohol was replaced by rather gaudy fireworks type sparklers that were placed around the Baked Alaska like birthday candles. Maybe we were safe from death by conflagration but Orlin was concerned about the toxic nature of the exotic heavy metals that were used to produce all the colorful bright sparks. The sparks drifted down on to the Baked Alaska which we nonetheless wolfed down afterwards. Tonight there was another Baked Alaska innovation that was less dramatic than fireworks sparklers but probably much less toxic. Multicolored battery powered LED lights flashed from plastic holders on top of the Baked Alaska that was paraded around the dining room. Here our waiters Ary and Mike complete the performance.



This was a triumph of technology for keeping us safe but it seems that the trend in Baked Alaska pizzazz has a definite downward trend. We appreciate the enthusiasm and energy put into the production by the dining room staff but we would gladly go back to the death defying days of the real flaming booze on the Baked Alaska.

The Maasdam got underway from Nanortalik about 5pm. Tomorrow is a Scenic Cruising Day on our way to Iceland. We will be doing scenic cruising through the ice and past the glaciers of the narrow Prins Christian Sund on the southern coast of Greenland.