
From: "Carl A. Bianco" <CABianco@BiancoProperties.com>
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Subject: Inside Passage Journal #1

First - Some Options

Greetings from aboard the Inside Passage. This e-mail is the first of eight of our planned one per week reports on our summer cruise, but first we need to take care of some housekeeping. If you wish to be excluded from the mailing list, address an e-mail to Boat@BiancoProperties.com and put the word "CANCEL" in the message.

Also, this initial e-mail is sent with HTML coding and includes photos. If your e-mail system does not handle these items well &/or you would prefer the text only version without photos, send an e-mail to the address above with the word "TEXT". We welcome your replies or comments. Please not use your reply button as the reply would be sent to our home e-mail, not the Inside Passage. Rather, start a new e-mail to the boat address above.

A Wet Start

We are off again for another summer adventure, but it's become almost predictable that our trips have a damp beginning. Pauline and Jack Reiter arrived early and we loaded their supplies. We then departed in rain which seems to have become an annual tradition. Carl is a firm believer that we can expect rain either upon departure, when we pass through the locks, or when we refuel. On this morning we were doing all three, so rain was almost guaranteed. The large lock was closed for repairs, so we waited & waited for the small lock. Since we lowered during a minus 2' tide, we had a total drop of 24'.

We fought a big tide all the way through the Strait of Juan de Fuca, but after the tide turned we got a little boost into Friday Harbor for our first night layover. Dinner was at Maloulas, a small Mediterranean restaurant, whose owners started near Damascus and wound up in the San Juan Islands. Carl had to fax a document signature page for the completion of a property acquisition. He found some agents on duty in the local Coldwell Banker office who not only sent the fax, but refused even a contribution to their coffee fund. Such is life in small towns.

Vancouver

We had very calm seas the next day, so we headed around East Point on Saltspring Island and straight up the Georgia Strait into Vancouver. We were able to get reciprocal moorage at the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club near Stanley Park which is a beautiful and very convenient location. Our primary reason for belonging to the Lahaina Yacht Club (which is not much more than a bar in downtown Lahaina) is the reciprocal moorage available to us.



We took a cab to Gas Town to check out the art work in the galleries there. We bought the necessary postcards and Canadian postage for the grandsons and then walked miles around fascinating downtown Vancouver. The warm sunny weather was just perfect for our excursion. We had an excellent dinner at Stephos Greek

Taverna on Davie Street, one of Jack & Pauline's favorites.

Desolation Sound

The following day, we headed north. In the Copeland Islands, we saw the same petroglyph we saw with the Hellmuths last year. The petroglyphs are ancient native drawings that have withstood the passage of time. They are done with an ochre paint on the faces of cliffs. For the evening, we headed into Grace

Harbor in Malaspina inlet near the entrance to Desolation Sound.

Desolation Sound is one of the most beautiful areas in the Pacific Northwest. We passed many aquaculture facilities raising salmon and/or oysters. Pauline brought along some new recipes to try during the trip. Friday night's gourmet Shabbat dinner featured grilled Chilean Sea Bass & Soba Noodle Sushi. We are going to have to watch our waistlines on this leg.

Yacultas

On Saturday we had lots of heavy rain interspersed with brief windows of sunshine (which in the Pacific Northwest are called "sun breaks"). We were able to find another petroglyph, this one at Walsh Cove, as we slowly cruised through Desolation Sound waiting for the change in tides at the Yaculta rapids. Our timing was a little off, and we arrived 1 hour early but the rapids were still quite calm. The thrill of seeing dozens of eagles in the trees and soaring overhead as we passed through this area is hard to express. They feed on the small fish stunned by the velocity of the water passing through the rapids.

Blind Channel

We stopped overnight at the Blind Channel Resort in Blind Bay for a hike and dinner in their restaurant. The Reiters selected a few craft items from their store, and then we all headed out for a 45 minute round trip easy hike to see an 800 year old Western Red Cedar in the nearby woods.

We thoroughly enjoyed an excellent dinner at the restaurant, and were greeted by Annamarie an elderly woman who with her husband started the resort in 1970. They personally transformed an abandoned cannery site into a lovely resort that is now being operated by their son and his family. She was quite a talented artist and her paintings and mixed media collages were displayed throughout the restaurant. Her grandson served our first class dinner.



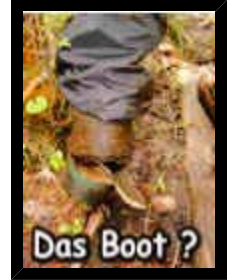
What followed next, was a rainy uneventful cruise day, as we needed to position ourselves for next morning's crossing of Queen Charlotte Strait. We relaxed with our books and good conversation to pass the day. Carl selected anchoring in Skull Cove just east of Cape Caution. We spotted a lone Arctic Loon in the cove, but he was too busy diving for fish to allow us to get a good photograph.

The Crossing



We lucked out! With Relief Bands at the ready, we enjoyed a very easy early morning crossing of Queen Charlotte Straits. It is potentially one of the roughest areas we travel going north. We took an early break into Codville Lagoon, and took the hike to the fresh water lake mentioned in one of our guide books. It was an extremely muddy trek and though there was some doubt that we all would make it, we did.

Jack's boot disintegrated in the muck, and he reported they were only one year old. REI will be getting a return to be sure. Dinner was served in the sun on the upper deck which is always a treat. We watched our video from the first part of the trip and were generally pleased. We are still getting used to our new digital still & video cameras, but so far they are superior to anything we've had in the past. The picture of the bear was taken from our camcorder video.



Waglisla

The day started with beautiful sunshine until the fog moved in. We cruised through Lama Passage in pea soup fog with some concern of meeting a cruise ship in the narrow passage. The fog burned off just before arrival at Bella Bella, (which the locals now call Waglisla). There was no dock space open, so we anchored out and then clamored over a trash strewn dock to get up the steep ramp.



We stopped first into the grocery store operated by the local band (tribe) and then toured the mostly native town of 1000. We arrived in the midst of Sports Day at the town schools and struck up a conversation with Violet Humchitt, the local proprietress of Vi's Videos. She gave us a tour of the school & cultural center and introduced us to the school principals. We were very impressed with the quality of education offered in this small town.

Whale & Bears

After departing Bella Bella, we saw a solitary Humpback whale behind Ivory Island which is the furthest south we have ever seen one of these magnificent creatures. We again enjoyed another gourmet dinner on the upper deck in Green Inlet off of Graham Reach consisting of 'Neptune Halibut' and 'Festive Mushroom Rollups'. After dinner, we went exploring in the jet boat and immediately spotted two juvenile (2 year old) brown bears grazing in the meadow by a nearby waterfall.

Initially, they were quite wary of us, but after a few minutes, they ignored us and went back to eating grass. They were severely scarred with large patches of fur missing from their hides. We were able to get fairly close (50 yards) and get some good video from the boat while they grazed. To finish the outing, we went up the tidal rapids that connect Green Inlet to a fresh water lake. The outflow was minimal because of the stage of the tide but still exciting.



Well that is all for now. We hope that this give you a glimpse into our adventures so far. The boat has been operating great with no problems, and we're enjoying the opportunity to rest and visit with our friends. Joann's cold is virtually gone. More next week.

Carl & Joann