

From: "Inside Passage Satellite Access" <CABianco@stratosnet.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 30, 2002 2:57 PM
Subject: 2002 Inside Passage Journal #5



Ketchikan.. After saying our farewells, Carl ferried the Greensteins, Spetners, and their luggage across the channel to the airport. He also picked up Will and Dayle Spencer from Maui, our crew members for our final two week segment of this summer's voyage. Also along in spirit was Will's 86 year old mother Ruth who expressed a desire to visit Alaska via a clip of her hair, in order to complete her goal of visiting every state. It rained steadily the entire day, which added to the challenge of delayed luggage and the added security regulations at the airport. After restocking provisions, we finally left Ketchikan at 5:00 PM. It was the first time in a very long while that we have

eaten dinner enroute to the evening's destination. The anchorage chosen was Meyers Chuck, a little village of less than thirty people. We had read about this hamlet for many years, but had never visited it.

Meyers Chuck All of the homes are connected by a dirt trail and much of the travel is by skiff across the lagoon. We visited the town's little gallery in the woods and were surprised at the fine quality of the local art work. A woman named Jacque was manning the shop that day. She is an expert basket weaver and also makes beautiful fish screenings on fabric using real fish! Joann couldn't resist a traditional Haida woven cedar hat that Jacque had just completed. Although she had spent three weeks allegedly making it for her daughter, Jacque also couldn't resist the opportunity to sell the hat (see photo).

The Post Office There was a community sign and telephone booth at the top of the dock. Dialing only four digits on the community phone, Carl called the postmistress to meet us at the post office to show us her husband's craft work as well as open up so we could mail our postcards. Since mail service in Meyer's Chuck is once a week, it would be six days until the mail went out. The postmistress's husband is an expert wood turner who makes beautiful wooden bowls and other items that are sold all over Southeast Alaska. She and her husband have lived in Meyers Chuck for all of the forty years of their marriage. It was so sad to hear her story that they were hoping to sell their island, including their A-frame home and the post office, because of their deteriorating health conditions. Anyone out there want to buy it? For only \$180,000, it is all yours and includes propane refrigeration so you don't have to run the generator all of the time.



Anan Creek Falls & Bear Observatory The bear observatory at Anan Creek is run by the U. S. Forest Service. We have come to this beautiful spot often to watch both brown (grizzly) and black bears feeding on pink salmon. Before we even reached the falls, there was a brown bear mother and two cubs in the lower stream (see photo). We have often been asked how you can tell the difference between the black and brown bears. This time we heard a new answer. "Climb a tree. If the bear climbs up after you, it's a black bear. If it knocks the tree down, it's a brown bear". We saw numerous black bears



including a mother and two curious cubs whom she sent to scamper up a tree by the viewing platform so she could fish (see photo). Interpreter Meagan and Ranger Matt were on duty and very helpful. They reported that we added to the day's total of seventy guests. We remember the days in the 1980s when we might be the only visitors. There were innumerable fish and as many as sixty eagles in the field of view at one time.

A Late Night Move At about 11:00 PM, a strong wind came up that stretched out the anchor chain and we were too near to the shore for comfort. Carl relocated us across bay to an inlet near Blake Island with Will out on the bow. Everything went well even though it was a dark cloudy night and we were dependent on our radar, depth sounder, and GPS for positioning. When we awoke the next morning, we could read the large sign posted on shore. It warned

boats not to anchor because a 138,000 volt cable ran along the bottom. Carl slowly and cautiously eased up the anchor, and we headed north to Wrangell with no problems.

Wrangell This town of about 2,300 people is one of the most historic communities in Alaska. It is the only town in the state to have been ruled by four nations: the Tlingit First Nation, Russia, Britain and the U.S. Arriving midday, we had time to jet boat up to Chief Shakes Hot Springs about 25 miles up the nearby Stikine River. The Stikine is the fastest free flowing navigable river in North America. It runs 330 miles through British Columbia and the Alaska mainland. After topping off our fuel tank and getting some local advice on crossing the shallow river delta, we headed off as prepared as we thought we could be. Just a few miles before the hot springs area is a short river to the Shakes Glacier which we had never visited. Will and Dayle were anxious to fulfill their dream to see a glacier and icebergs (see photo). After viewing the glacier and taking some pictures, we headed back into the main channel. Near the exit into the river, our engine stopped. We were out of gas. We had made the trip seven years ago on less than a full tank, so go figure. We suspect we are losing power



in the jet outdrive and Carl plans to investigate further. Fortunately, a boat of locals came by to assist, and we were offered a ride back to town by tour guide Brenda Schwartz. Besides being a pro at running a jet boat, she is a very talented artist who paints marine themes in watercolor on old marine charts and

also owns the local art gallery.

Up the Stikine The following morning, Carl visited with Dave, a Forest Service Supervisor, who was staffing the cruise ship exhibit at the City Dock. He offered to take us and fuel back to our boat after the *Seabourn Spirit* left at 2:00 PM. The Spencers spent a well deserved calm day in town while we were gone. Dave brought along his 13 year old son Jason, who actually drove their boat the entire distance with dad standing behind as an advisor. After refueling our jet boat, Jason asked if he could ride back in our boat with us. As we chatted above the roar of the engine, we learned that he was adopted and was 1/8th Tlingit. He dances in a native dance troupe and was looking forward to performing at the Southeast Alaska State Fair in Haines this August. When we returned to Wrangell, we welcomed them aboard the *Inside Passage* for a tour. Jason checked out every nook and cranny and even climbed up the mast



Le Conte Glacier/Petersburg Carl zigzagged through the 21 miles stretch of the Wrangell Narrows at low tide the following morning. After confirming with the Petersburg harbormaster that there would be space at the docks that evening, we went past town and headed to the Le Conte Glacier. It started to rain as we passed town and did not let up the whole day, but the gray weather couldn't dampen our spirits. The huge icebergs we saw in Le Conte Bay were an intense blue (see photo). It was awesome site in muted shades of gray with waterfalls dropping thousands of feet from high cliffs. The scenes were made even

more majestic by the sounds of Vivaldi playing over the vessel's stereo system. We returned to Petersburg for the evening's moorage.

Frederick Sound After experiencing a full day of rain, we were blessed with mostly sunny skies. We passed by Yasha Island to show the Spencers some Steller sea lions. This area has historically been one for terrific humpback whale sighting. A lone whale was seen at a great distance, not close enough to even photograph. Fortunately, they are able to see the whales in Maui during the winter months. We then headed south to Deep Cove on Baranof Island for the evening. An intricate and charming waterfall provided us with a scenic view during dinner.