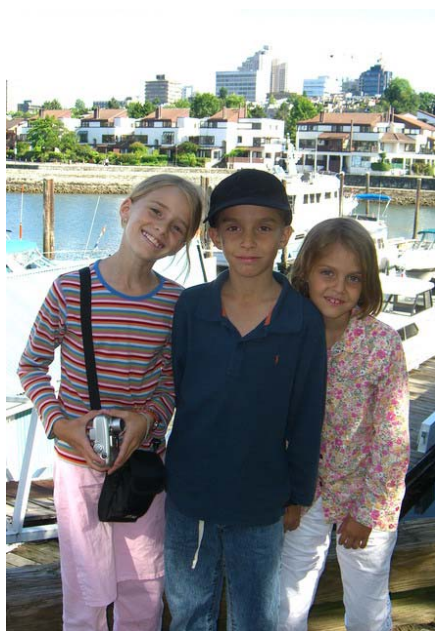


## 2006 Alaska Cruise Journal # 1



**Off to an Unusual Start** Our 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Alaska cruise was scheduled to be different, because this was the year we were going to have all five grandchildren onboard at some point during the summer. We did not, however, anticipate the unusual beginning. It was just the two of us departing Seattle and Joann was not feeling well. Fueling the boat and going through the government locks in Seattle requires both of us, and Joann tried to participate, but was not functioning at her usual best. She slept most of the one and one-half day trip to Vancouver. We needed to arrive in Vancouver by Saturday night because our daughter-in-law Shoshana and our three grandchildren Naama (10), Coby (9), and Adara (8) were arriving on Sunday from Israel.

We moored at Granville Island in the False Creek area, believing it would be perfect for the kids to explore and for fresh produce

shopping. We did not anticipate just how convenient it would be. Joann's condition had become worse during the transit and immediately upon our arrival we called our Group Health consulting nurse. She instructed us to go immediately to the nearest hospital. After many tests, it was determined that she had encephalitis and she was admitted to Vancouver General Hospital. The hospital was conveniently located just minutes away from the boat (see photo which shows the tall hospital building directly behind Coby).



**Vancouver, B.C.** Our weary travelers arrived with their small carry on bags and in good spirits, even though they had been traveling for twenty-six hours. With a ten hour time difference, for a while days were nights and nights were days.



Nevertheless, they insisted that their first stop be the hospital to visit Joann. From there, Carl marshaled them on to the boat and helped to get them settled in. With plenty to see within walking distance, Granville Island enabled the family to entertain themselves while Carl visited Joann and her doctor. Monday, the day after their arrival, was Adara's eighth birthday. The group made a morning trip to the Granville Island Market so Adara could choose her cake (see photo) for the afternoon's birthday party to be held at the hospital. For their visit, the children wore their newly received *Inside Passage* hats, all of which were tightened to the smallest settings (see photo).

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Carl did take them to a couple of attractions each day. They really enjoyed the Vancouver Aquarium, in particular the beluga whale show (**see photo**), the Science Center with all of its interactive exhibits and especially LegoLand. Even a wilderness walk in Stanley Park around Beaver Lake (**see group photo below**) was part of the overall experience. Joann improved rapidly and was back with the group by Thursday evening.

**Victoria, B.C.** Friday morning, only two days behind schedule, the *Inside Passage* departed for Victoria. The weather could not have been more

perfect. The North Pacific high pressure area had become firmly established for the summer, and clear warm sunny days were the norm. We motored across the Strait of Georgia and then south to Victoria, the capital of British Columbia, on the southern tip of Vancouver Island. Enroute we passed a tugboat towing a large boom of logs. Upon close examination, it had over one-hundred fifty hitchhikers, all harbor seals. We pulled close to the log boom and the children snapped numerous photos. We also kept a watch out for orcas (killer whales) that take up summer residence in Haro Strait but did not see any. Fortunately, we moored right in front of the Empress Hotel in the Inner Harbor. The kids loved all of the buskers (street performers) entertaining along the Causeway both day and night. Naama was chosen to assist the juggler in his performance, and a star was born! The children toured the British Columbia Provincial Museum, the Parliament Building and learned much about the history of the area.

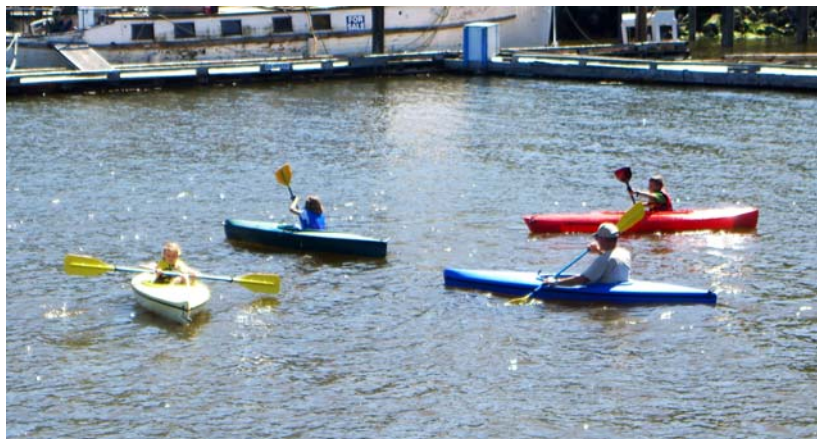


After a small 65<sup>th</sup> birthday party for the senior member of the crew, the captain demonstrated the use of kayaks to the children and they took right to them after minimal instruction. Even young Adara was soon paddling her own kayak. After watching the little harbor ferry boats perform their synchronized routine, Naama sat down to organize a kayak water ballet complete with written diagrams for each kayak. It is still in the planning stages, and the performance date remains uncertain.

**Discovery Island** After enjoying a nice weekend, we were ready to venture out to spend some time away from the main cities. Both of the major mountain ranges, the Cascades and the Olympics, were clearly visible in totally cloudless skies. We anchored off Discovery Island, which is just a short distance from Victoria on the northern edge of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.



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During one of the lowest tides of the year, the children had their first exploration of a tide pool area and saw hundreds of crabs and green anemones. We hiked through the woods and located the lighthouse (see photo on preceding page), which like most, was no longer staffed. On the entire Pacific coast, all lighthouses are now automated except for a few in Northern British Columbia. Carl gave our crew the option of docking at a town or

anchoring out. They all jumped at the idea of being on anchor for the evening.

**Saltspring Island** Saltspring Island is the largest and most populated of the Gulf Islands with about 10,000 people. It was first settled in 1862, and among the first non-native residents were blacks from the San Francisco area seeking to distance themselves from a city that had temporarily become less tolerant of people unlike themselves. We selected Fulford Harbour for our anchorage. We took the jet boat down and went to explore. There was not much to see, but we did get in a nice walk. After dinner, Carl demonstrated the “Fish Eye” camera. It is a video camera that is designed to work under water, and the picture is shown on the TV in the salon. The kids got a kick out of seeing what they could find near the floor of the inlet under the boat. Surprisingly, they did locate a couple of dogfish (small cold water sharks so named by the native peoples because their only value was for food for their dogs), a sea pen, a large crab and numerous other creepy crawlies.



**Ganges Harbour** We decided to stop next at Ganges, the largest of the settlements on Saltspring Island, just around the northern end of the island. It is a quaint town with a variety of gift shops, restaurants, galleries and a market all within a short walking distance of the boat harbor. After lunch in town, everyone went kayaking in the quiet harbor, except for Joann who took videos (see photo above). Interspersed in our days activities is school work. Shoshana sets aside part of each day to teach the children their school lessons as she home schools them the entire year. To our surprise, an extensive ‘red tide’ developed in the region and it turned all of the water for miles around a rusty brown color. We had never seen such extensive discoloration of the sea water, but know that this is the reason why so many shell fish are inedible during the summer season. The children developed into excellent deckhands (see photos on preceding page) helping their grandfather with all sorts of

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chores from creating a Flemish Coil with the dock lines (Naama) to helping wash windows (Coby).

**Bowen Island** The weather remained favorable so we decided to cross the Strait of Georgia back to the Vancouver side while the good conditions prevailed. We returned to Snug Cove after many years on the east side of this well populated island only nine nautical miles from downtown Vancouver. The old Union Steamship Company landing and other historical buildings, including a wonderful library, make up this busy harbor area. The ferry transports many commuters between this charming little community and the mainland. There was a bit of rush hour ferry traffic as we tried to cross the street to go for a hike. We located the salmon creek and fish ladder after walking through woods with many ancient tree stumps remaining from the earlier

loggers and settlers. The kids loved climbing on the rock walls and frightening Joann at every turn. The older two children went kayaking in the harbor the next morning surrounded by dozens of Canada Geese, their recently born goslings, and a solitary white swan.

**Return to Vancouver** We motored back the short distance back to the large metropolitan area by the scenic route along the shoreline of West Vancouver. The impressive estates built into the cliffs with fabulous views equal anything we have seen in the states. The group got close-up photos of an eagle sitting on a marker beacon (**see photo**). We passed near the classic and picturesque Point Atkinson Lighthouse (**see photo**) and saw many hikers climbing out on the cliffs to enjoy the water view. Many waved as we passed. For this visit, we had made arrangements to moor in Coal Harbor in the heart of downtown Vancouver across from Stanley Park and near the primary cruise ship terminal. Except for some hearing loss which will take some time to return, and a lower energy level, Joann has pretty much recovered from her illness, and we are all thankful. More next week.

