

2006 Alaska Cruise Journal # 2



Final Weekend Our last few days with the Israeli grandchildren kept the hectic pace of the preceding two weeks. Hectic in that at ages 8, 9, & 10, the kids never seem to stop moving. Wake up takes about fifteen minutes, and after that it is non-stop until bedtime, and always with a smile on their faces. Among our activities, we walked down Robson Street from the marina into downtown. During our tour of the underground shopping center, the children were treated to a visit to Purdy's, a wonderful Canadian chocolate retailer. Sadly, it is one of the rare merchants that is still Canadian. Even the Eaton's department store is now a Sears.

Tourists Shoshana picked up a brochure for a new venue called "Storeyeum" in Gas Town that we thought sounded great, and it was. The performance was the general history of British Columbia with live performers singing and dancing in various settings all in the lower level of a large multistory building. It also had the option of a dinosaur exhibit with a movable full size rubberized T-Rex which the kids enjoyed as well. Given the potential for spills, the Friday afternoon art project was completed on the dock adjacent to the boat (**see photo**). Naama helped Grandma Joann braid the two Challahs for Shabbat, and was very proud of her bread-baking accomplishment (**see photo**).

Canada Day Saturday July 1st was Canada Day, the equivalent of our 4th of July. The weekend was filled with many community activities. There were boat horns periodically honking, music filled the air, and cannons were fired from the small military outpost at the edge of nearby Stanley Park. Allowing Grandma some rest time, the rest of the group bicycled the 6.5 mile circumference of Stanley Park. Grandpa Carl announced that although he had not ridden a bike in twenty-five years, it is a true statement that it is a skill that you do not forget. Saturday evening was final kayaking in the harbor next to the Westin Bayshore Hotel.

Farewell to our Israeli Family Sunday morning after a final large breakfast, the Israelis gathered their individual small suitcases, put cameras and binoculars around their necks, adjusted their *Inside Passage* hats, and made a 6:15 AM departure for the airport (**see photo on next page**). It was a wonderful and rewarding visit. At this point since our departure from



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home, we had spent fifteen nights onboard the *Inside Passage* at a dock and only two at anchor, which sets a record for a vessel that normally spends most of its time in the wilderness.

Veteran Crew on Second Leg

Herb and Lucy Pruzan from Seattle drove up with most of their family over the weekend to celebrate their 48th wedding anniversary before they joined us. Ed and Loretta Schafer flew in from St. Louis and joined us on Sunday afternoon. These four make up a unique pairing. We reviewed our log book and realized that the Pruzans are making their eighteenth cruise of our total of twenty-two, and the Schafers are making their fifteenth. Surprisingly, the two couples have never cruised together. Before departing, we enjoyed an authentic French dinner at the Café de Paris on Denman, replenished our fresh food supplies, and finally departed civilization the next day. A veteran crew onboard means that everyone knows their various duties and how things work the first day, which saves several days of crew familiarization.



Musket Island Marine Park in Blind Bay

The cruise north past Howe Sound and up Georgia Strait with a following breeze made it almost too warm to spend the day on the fly bridge. After

traveling about fifty miles, we settled in for the evening. This anchorage sounds remote but it really was not as we were gradually transiting away from the metropolitan area. There were a dozen boats and even a few summer homes in this small bay just off Malaspina Strait. We took the shore boat over to the marine park and climbed around a very dry rocky island and then settled on a log for a group picture (see photo).



Billy Goat Bay in Johnstone Strait

We motored through the Seymour Narrows around midday. Carl timed it perfectly

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and there were no rapids in this potentially turbulent area where even the cruise ships avoid the peak tidal currents. We sighted several orcas (killer whales) in Johnstone Strait (**see photo**). It was rewarding to spot them even before they were seen by the whale-watching tour boats in the vicinity.



Deserter Island Group We made good progress under favorable conditions. We chose to anchor among this small group of islands in the middle of the Queen Charlotte Strait as preparation for our crossing around Cape Caution the next morning. Since this exposed ocean crossing is the largest hurdle in our journey to Alaska, it is always an advantage when the Pacific is calm and the swells are minimal. This anchorage along the shortest route makes it easy on the few sensitive stomachs onboard. In the twenty days since our departure from Mercer Island, every day has been hot and sunny with no rain. So far, this has not been a typical Pacific Northwest summer.

Pruth Bay We experienced a relatively easy crossing with no one needing their Relief Bands (anti-seasickness devices) to feel comfortable. Lucy saw a humpback whale breach just as we cruised past the Egg Island Lighthouse in Queen Charlotte Sound. This is by far the furthest south we have ever seen one of these magnificent creatures in our 75,000 miles of Pacific Northwest cruising. It was a lone humpback feeding continuously, unlike the activities we see in Hawaii where socialization is the



primary objective. We chose Pruth Bay for our anchorage. The last time we stopped at this bay was over twenty years ago, yet all of us remembered it fondly. This area was very memorable for two reasons. The first being the easy hike from the bay through some woods to a white sand beach on the Pacific Ocean side of an isthmus. The second more unusual recollection was a painted face with snaggly teeth carved into a Western Red Cedar (**see photo**). The carving used to be along a wilderness trail, but it is now in the middle of a large fishing resort recently built at this location.

Storm Warnings We knew the wonderful weather had to end, and it did quite abruptly. Storm warnings on the marine radio announced an “unusually intense” seasonal storm approaching. The forecast called for gales (40+ mph) developing into storm winds (55+ mph) with the seas on the outside expected to be up to seventeen feet. We wisely decided to hole up for the day and read, talk, and write. Thus, this journal was written. To be continued next week.