

2008 Alaska Cruise Journal # 5

**Juneau** Our arrival in Juneau coincided with gale force winds and 1.82” of rainfall, which set an all time Juneau rainfall record for the day. Having to thread the boat into a tight moorage under those conditions resulted in what Carl described as his most difficult docking ever. Juneau is Alaska’s third most populous city and the capital of

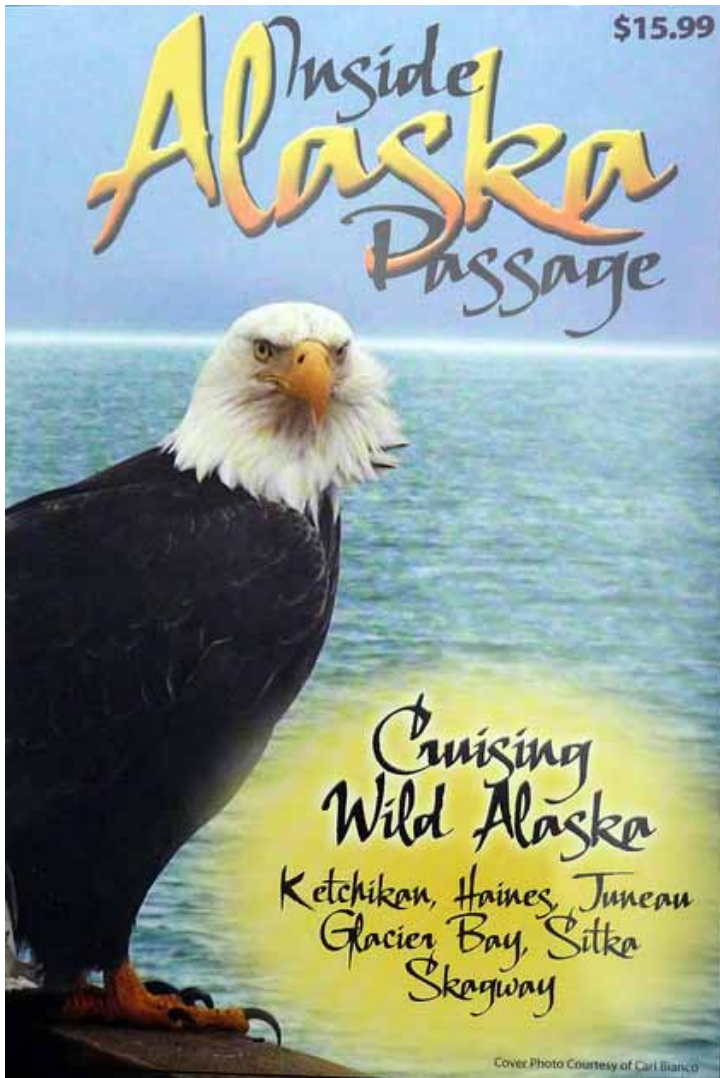


Alaska. The territorial capital was moved here from Sitka in 1906 because of all the activity surrounding the gold rush that took place in the area. The city gradually shifted its focus to its legislative and administrative role, which it retains despite periodic attempts to move the capital elsewhere. Our son Dick and grandson Nick Migliore (13) of San Antonio along with our grandson Brad Akin (14) of St. Louis joined us in Juneau. The rain broke for their arrival, and with their help we raised their “Don’t Mess With Texas” flag so all would know our special guests were onboard (photo).

**Mount Roberts Tramway** With the weather having cleared, we rode up a gondola of the Mount Roberts Tramway to the 1800-foot level (photo). The tramway is owned and operated by Goldbelt Inc., Juneau’s urban Alaska Native Corporation. This destination has the Timberline Bar & Grill, the Chilkoot Theater with a presentation on native history, an eagle recovery facility, and nature and hiking trails of many degrees of difficulty. At this elevation, there were still some snow patches on the ground.



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**Carl's Cover Photo** Skagway gives us the opportunity to visit our friends Dennis and Nancy Corrington. Walking through one of the Corrington's numerous retail emporiums catering to the cruise ship masses, we recognized the eagle on the cover of a DVD clamshell case as a photo we had taken in Gustavus and featured in our first 2007 Alaska Cruise Journal (photo). Dennis had asked if he could use the photo but we never knew for sure if he did or how it had been used. We learned from Nancy that the one-hour video on Alaska had been listed for sale in their stores for \$15.99 in a clamshell with our cover photo, but they also were giving the video away free to every visitor who had seen a promotional offer. The "free" videos came only in a paper sleeve (obviously primarily to avoid paying royalties). The initial order they placed was for 4,000 videos in clamshells and 40,000 videos in paper sleeves. There were still numerous clamshells available, but all 40,000 videos had been given away, and 20,000 more were on order. Carl reasoned that if the video was worth \$15.99 with the photo and clamshell, but zero without, and given that the photo occupied the entire front half of the clamshell, he should receive a bundle in royalties. That being said, he quickly settled for a dozen copies of the video for future guests. Watching the video the following night, we were given the impression that after the wildlife and natural

beauty of Alaska, the next most important attractions of the State of Alaska were the Corrington's retail stores.

**Skagway** This well preserved and U.S. Park Service and cruise ship industry revived town became one of the most famous cities in the world when word of the discovery of gold in the Yukon reached Seattle in 1897. Thousands headed up the murderous Chilkoot Trail bound for the gold fields of the Yukon, 600 miles to the north. The White Pass & Yukon Route Railroad that was constructed at that time is still in operation today taking cruise ship passengers up along one of the gold miners routes to the interior. Skagway



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is the northern terminus of the 1,000-mile Inside Passage, after which our boat is named. For a full view of Skagway, we rented bicycles and set out to explore (photo on previous page). It had been many years since Joann had been on a bike but she kept up with the boys most of the time. Our tour included a trip to Reid Falls and the Gold Rush Cemetery that contains the remains of gold rush desperado Soapy Smith and town hero Frank Reid. The two shot it out in the summer of 1898 and neither survived, but it ended the operations of the card

sharks, confidence men, and town bullies that associated with Soapy. Frank Reid has the largest monument in the cemetery, while Soapy Smith's is off to one side.

**Ancient Artifacts** When the Corringtons, joined by their daughter Susannah, joined us for a Tex-Mex dinner on the *Inside Passage III*, they brought along some special gifts for Brad and Nick. Dennis had selected two ancient Aleut native harpoon tips that could be as much as 1,000 years old. Carved from the jaw of a walrus, the strongest bone available, these harpoons were most effective in the harvest of seals long before the introduction of the Russians to Alaska. What made them successful was that they would toggle after impact and secure the catch from slipping away. Dennis drew some sketches to explain how they were attached on the end of a wooden spear (photo). Russians eventually copied this technique and it is similar to the harpoon we carry on board for large halibut catches.

**More Aleut** From Skagway, we headed south down Lynn Canal into significant head seas. The strong winds that had held constant the entire time we were in Skagway continued as we left. Arriving in Funter Bay, we had still not spent much time in the wilderness and were anxious to go ashore and do some exploring, especially after receiving a tip



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from neighboring boaters. We used the crane to lower our shore boat (**photo on previous page**), and were ready to explore.

**Funter Bay** Located on the Mansfield Peninsula on the northwest side of Admiralty Island, this large island was named *Kootznoowoo* by the Tlingit Indians and is still known by the same name, which in English is “The Fortress of the Bears”. Funter Bay has an interesting history having both a cannery and a gold mine but



it also has another historical fact of social significance. When the Aleut people were evacuated from the Aleutians after the occupation of Attu Island by the Japanese during World War II, some were relocated to Funter Bay. It was one of four locations selected by the government where these Native Americans were interned during the war. The saddest part of this history is that many of the Aleuts died from being exposed to diseases for which they had no immunity. We found the cemetery back in the overgrown woods marked with Russian Orthodox crosses (**photo**). The original rotting wooden

crosses lay on the graves, and had been replaced by modern replicas. The graves indicated that most had died in 1943 and the graves were predominantly those of small infants and the elderly. The internment during the war of American citizens of Japanese descent on the West Coast is well known, but the removal of the Aleuts from their native lands is an historical fact that has never received much publicity.

Next we are off to Sitka for a partial switch in crew for the final week of this summer’s cruise.