

2009 Alaska Cruise Journal # 2



Harriman Fjord Six major glaciers plus minor ones of different sizes empty into Harriman Fjord, which lies in the northwest corner of Prince William Sound set against the Chugach Mountain Range. The water is very deep except for Serpentine Bay which has a tricky entrance. We crawled over the shallow submerged glacial moraine into the bay in which, other than ice bergs and a few sea otters, we had the fjord all to ourselves **(photo)**. The

water, clouded with glacial till, was a deep aquamarine. It created the perfect backdrop for dinner on the upper deck, which included freshly prepared cedar planked Copper River sockeye salmon and roasted vegetables. The evening sun did not set until long after we had gone to bed.

The fjord and glaciers were named by railroad magnate George Harriman, who in 1898 organized 25 of the nation's most distinguished scientists, naturalists and artists including John Muir, John Burroughs, and Edmund Curtis to visit the area. The Harriman Alaskan Expedition spent about two weeks exploring and naming all the glaciers in this immediate area before continuing their 9000 mile exploration of Alaska. The glaciers in nearby College Fjord were given the names of various Ivy League schools like Harvard, Yale, Wellesley, and Vassar.

Off the Bow It is not unusual to be entertained by a few Dall's porpoises that often spot our vessel from some distance and quickly come over to ride our bow wave. What was unusual was the larger size of this pod



2009 Alaska Cruise Journal # 2



that had chosen the *Inside Passage* as its afternoon playground. Darting up and down through the emerald water and back and forth from one side of the boat to the other, it was difficult to determine how many there were, but we were confident that we counted at least nine. Although we have watched this sight many times, it is always a pleasure on a sunny day to enjoy again these cetaceans that are capable of speeds of 35 MPH (photo previous page).

A Stop in Seward When cruising in Alaska the weather is often the determining factor in our schedule. Experiencing more discomfort than we desired, we headed up Resurrection Bay to await calmer seas and enjoyed a visit to Seward. As a regular cruise ship stop, Seward, with numerous tour boats and fishing charter businesses, is a much livelier town than Valdez.

We rode the town trolley to the Sea Life Center in the downtown area a few miles from the harbor. Brad asked the young woman selling tickets if there was a McDonald's in town and was informed that the nearest one was 120 miles up the road in Anchorage. It is one of the stops along with Costco and Walmart when her family has an appointment in the 'big



2009 Alaska Cruise Journal # 2



city’.

The Sea Life Center remains the best attraction in Seward, where it is always great to see the local wildlife close-up and learn more about their habitats.

Our First Blue Jellyfish

Departing Seward, we cruised around scenic Alalik Cape, a clump of nearly naked rocks housing boisterous colonies of nesting gulls, kittiwakes, puffins, murres and cormorants (**photo previous page**).

Blessed with a sunny calm day; we anchored in a small cove in the Ragged Islands as we cruised along the

Kenai Peninsula. The Kenai, as it is known to Alaskans, is shaped roughly like an arrowhead that stretches about 150 miles in length south of Anchorage. After anchoring, the kayaks were lowered and we all took off exploring this scenic area with its high black cliffs. We discovered many of the same sea stars that we touched in the Seward aquarium. While kayaking, Joann spotted a rare object – a blue jellyfish pulsating just under the surface (**photo previous page**).

Fishing Hole After being told on several occasions that guests in prior trips at certain locations caught large fish; there was some understandable skepticism from our hardy fishermen and woman. Finally, the conditions were favorable and the fish gods were smiling. All three of our guys caught ling cods at the all-time best fishing hole of the *Inside Passage* (**photo above**).



2009 Alaska Cruise Journal # 2

No boat records were broken but all were clearly pleased with the results. The entire crew pitched in to clean and prepare the catch for dinner that evening. Talk about fresh catch of the day! Even the seagulls that grabbed the waste scraps seemed pleased.

Riding Out a Storm When we downloaded the day's weather information, we saw a major storm was heading our way so we headed into Port Chatham to lie over until the weather front had passed. Port Chatham was the location of the former famous Portlock cannery, a name well known historically to residents of the Pacific Northwest. During one particularly strong blast of wind, Carl checked the wind gauge which showed the wind gust reached 65 MPH. The heavy rain thoroughly cleaned the exterior of the boat and removed all the salt off the windows.

In the morning, Randy was a great help to Carl in changing the engine oil. As our volunteer mechanic, his services were invaluable throughout his cruise. In the afternoon, the crew bowled, played golf, tennis and other sports on the Wii that Randy and Christie had brought with them.

Bianco-opoly About ten years ago, the staff at Bianco Properties purchased the modifiable version of Monopoly for use at a company retreat. The modifications allowed included replacing the property names, Community Chest and Chance cards as well as the paper currency upon which the visage as their boss was placed. One of Monopoly's railroads became the *Inside Passage*. The highest value Chance card was titled "Good News: Boss on cruise for two months. Collect \$1000". Brad loves the game and whenever he visits, Bianco-Opoly is always on his list of things to do. After spirited competition, Christie was declared the winner (**photo previous page**).

S'mores on the Beach By evening, the storm had passed and the group explored the remains of the cannery. Carl and Randy worked hard to get a decent fire going using as much dry kindling as we could find. With the rusted remains of an old boiler from the cannery as a shield from the wind, they finally succeeded. With some graham crackers and a chocolate bar, s'mores were savored leaving sticky fingers for all (**photo**).



