

2013 Alaska Cruise Journal # 3



An Extra Day As often happens with a journey planned months in advance, not all arrangements go as originally scheduled. Our eighteen year old grandsons and crew for the next two weeks, Brad Akin and Nick Migliore, were delayed a full day because of a storm in Chicago. Once they and their luggage arrived in Cordova, we were off on the second leg of this year's voyage with Kodiak as our ultimate destination.

Apply Named Cascade Bay After two full weeks of clear skies and no rain, the more normal moist maritime climate of this region returned. Fortunately, the grey skies are somewhat offset by almost twenty hours of usable daylight in late June at this latitude.

Our first anchorage was in Cascade Bay, home to one of the most impressive waterfalls in Prince William Sound (60 54.970 N, 147 48.170 W). Even though it was raining, we quickly lowered our kayaks and paddled over to see how close we could approach the falls without getting totally soaked.

The large quantity of falling water added to the distance it drops results in a powerful spray emanating at the base. Brad was determined to

challenge himself and the result was he did indeed get drenched (**photo**). As a veteran crew member, he knew that once back to the boat, the warmth of the large engine room would dry his clothes quickly.

An Unexpected Explosion Viewing marine life is a continuous process and is an important contributor to why we come back each year. While passing Knight Island under calm conditions, the ocean suddenly exploded ahead of us (60 27.504 N, 147 53.148 W). Without warning, two humpback whales started breaching and rolling around repeatedly slapping their pectorals fins (**photos**). We never know when the next wildlife experience will happen, but very few days go unrewarded.



2013 Alaska Cruise Journal # 3

Sliding Down the Ice We anchored for the night at the south end of narrow Bainbridge Passage where the shoreline had some significant sized ice fields that almost reached the water. The group kayaked over to the shoreline and the boys raced uphill for the opportunity to slide back down (**photo**).

Remnants of avalanches from the winter's snowfall form chunky triangle-shaped hills of granular ice. This provided an opportunity for Brad and Nick to climb and throw a few snowballs, which was quite a contrast to the 90 degree temperatures they had left behind in their hometowns of St. Louis and San Antonio.

Finally Reaching the Glacier

Just south of our anchorage was the Bainbridge Glacier which is near but no longer quite reaches the salt water (60 06.509 N, 148 23.509 W). Twenty years ago, we reached the face, but in several attempts since then we have failed because of the considerable outflow of melt water that becomes a raging river in places.



Carl assessed the layout and recommended that we kayak into the river as far in as possible and then hike along the south side as we could not cross the freezing river (**photo**). It was not an easy hike as the Bainbridge, like most glaciers, drops an accumulation of boulders of all sizes when it reaches its terminus. After exploring some large beached icebergs, we successfully reached the glacier face (**photo on next page**). We did not try to get on the glacier's surface as that can be quite dangerous since glaciers often have deep crevasses that can be covered with a thin layer of ice.



2013 Alaska Cruise Journal # 3



Weather Break With a storm approaching, we headed up Resurrection Bay into the town of Seward (60 07.100 N, 149 26.080 W). Seward is one of the few communities in South Central Alaska that serves as a cruise ship terminus as well as having both highway and Alaska Railroad access.

As a result, it is quite busy in the summer serving tourists, many of whom take water tours to see the abundant wildlife along the coast.

The rain was relentless but that didn't stop us from exploring the town in full rain gear and showing the boys the Alaska Sea Life Center aquarium.

After departing, we found out that the large fleet of local tour boats update each other on wildlife activity using VHF radio channel 72. This allows each operator to show their guests the maximum viewing experience. We silently eavesdropped on the reports of sightings of a mountain goat, a fin whale, and numerous sea lions high above the sea on a pinnacle rock (**photo**). The captains have developed their own slang in which "fur balls" refer to sea otters and "wide guys" refer to humpback whales. We understand the logic behind "fur balls" but the relationship and meaning of "wide guys" escapes us.

The seas were still un-settled as we departed and we heard one captain report that he had his worse passenger experience of the summer thus far with 25% of his customers suffering from *mal de mer*. A partial cause of that problem is the fact that the tour boats race around at 19 knots while we cruise at half that speed. We were proceeding easily when we overheard two captains discussing our vessel. In these waters where owner operated boats from the "outside" are rare, we are often subject to commentaries. In this instance, it made us feel good to hear them describe the *Inside Passage* as a seaworthy vessel that was "taking the waves well".

