

2016 Alaska Cruise Journal # 1



The Tally is Now 33

Departing this summer from our home on Mercer Island a few weeks later than previous years, we are making our 33rd cruise to Alaska.

Returning crew for the first portion of the trip are Bill Faia and his wife Carol Booth, our neighbors on Maui (**photo**). This year, we will be spending the majority of our time in British Columbia, making the turnaround in Ketchikan, Alaska before heading home.

Our 1st Port of Entry

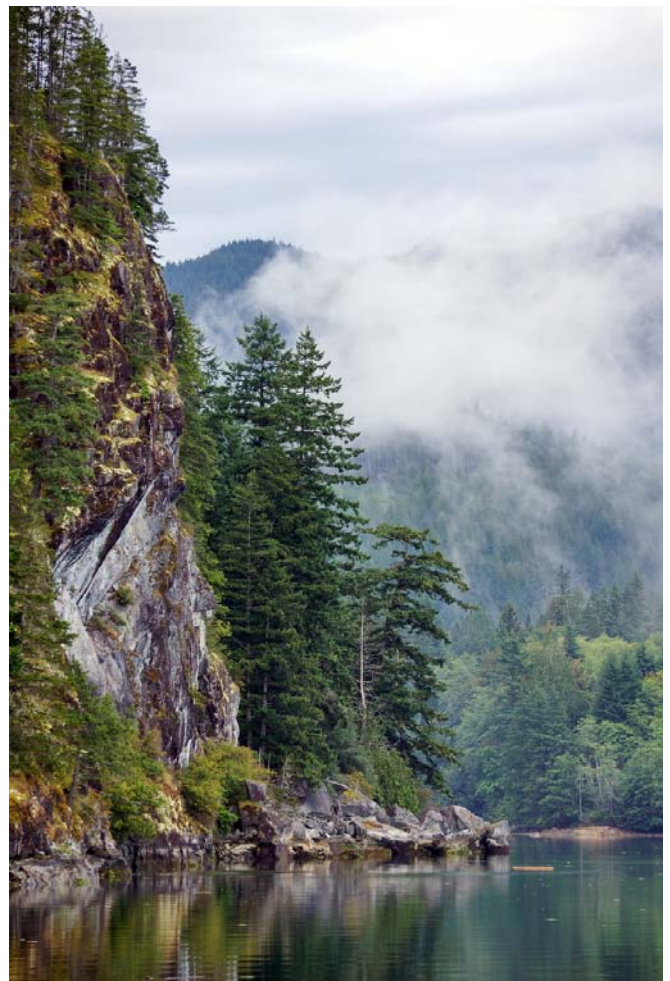
Known as the “Gateway to the Pacific”, Vancouver is the third largest city in Canada and the cultural center of western Canada. We moored at the Coal Harbor Marina (49 17.450 N, 123 07.468 W), which is strategically located near Stanley Park and the many architecturally striking condos of downtown Vancouver. We arrived on the eve of Canada Day celebrations, their rough equivalent to the U. S. 4th of July.

Accompanied by her friend Andrew, Corrine Zajac joined us for dinner. Corrine is the Palm Springs broker who did an outstanding job for us in negotiating the purchase of our new winter home in Rancho Mirage.

Passing Through Desolation Sound This beautiful and very popular cruising ground north and west of Vancouver was set aside in 1973 as the largest marine park in southern British Columbia (50 08 N, 124 44 W).

The park was named, like many other locations in the area, by Captain George Vancouver in 1792 during his exploration of the west coast of North America on his ship *Discovery* (**photo**).

This region, because it is where the tides meet, contains some of the warmest summer waters north of Mexico, and is an ideal summer boating destination. Desolation Sound is a true fjord with extremely deep waters that lie beneath the snowcapped peaks of the Coast Mountains.



2016 Alaska Cruise Journal # 1



The mountains held very little snow this year, but still provided a scenic and fascinating backdrop to the forested hillsides of the many tightly clustered islands. Accompanied by the periodic calls of a common loon, we kayaked on a calm evening after dinner (photo).

Introducing Our Drone The new addition to the *Inside Passage* equipment this year is a DJI drone that we received from a generous benefactor. Carl has practiced all winter learning to operate this technological wonder (photo). It will give us a whole new vista of the complex topography of the wonderful wilderness that we explore.



Although we are occasionally able to hike to higher elevations in these wilderness areas, we mostly see the



strikingly obvious beauty from the boat at sea level. Now we have the ability to see the lakes, waterfalls, and streams that lie just over the nearby horizon.

We can watch the drone's progress live on the screen of our iPad. It also records 4K videos along with high quality still photos (photo).

Our main challenge will be to keep it dry. Needless to say, there will be no 'do-overs' if it crashes into the ocean.

2016 Alaska Cruise Journal # 1



U'mista Alert Bay is a small town on the south side of Cormorant Island at the beginning of the Queen Charlotte Strait.

The residents have fixed up their waterfront with boardwalks and covered viewpoints and seem to be trying to cater to the tourist trade.

A small car ferry travels between the island town of Alert Bay and nearby Port McNeill on Vancouver. The north end of the island is primarily occupied by

members of the Namgis (formerly spelled Nimpkish) First Nations band.

We moored at some sadly decrepit docks that were conveniently located near the U'mista Cultural Center ([50 35.643 N, 126 56.486 W](#)). U'mista is a proud repository of many historical native celebratory items plus some modern additions (**photo**).

The cultural center was built and first opened in 1980 and houses artifacts that were petitioned from major museums around the world and repatriated to the local native band (**photo**).

This was our first visit in 14 years and it was clear that the community takes great pride in this treasure.

They have recently expanded their gift shop and have created additional displays and videos.



More in a week or so...