



Back Onboard It's not what we had planned, but we are still managing to make our annual summer cruise. With the Canadian border closed and Alaska requiring quarantine, we had to find an substitute destination for the *Inside Passage*.

After some discussion, we decided to go south to explore the mighty Columbia River that separates Washington and Oregon. For the first leg we signed up our son Dick, grandson Nick and his fiancée Maureen Oliva all from Texas (*photo*).

Our First Stop We moored overnight in Port Townsend. This historic town was founded in 1854 and served as the customs port of entry ([48 07.006 N, 122 45.041 W](#)). Every vessel from a foreign port had to make its first stop at Port Townsend. It was the most prosperous and largest town in the region until it lost the railroad to Seattle

As we pulled into the marina, we watched emergency environmental crews working to remove the fuel from a grounded pleasure boat. We don't know the cause of the accident, but did read that three people and one dog had been safely removed from the vessel before it partially sank (*photo*).



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Ice Cream Leaving Puget Sound, we rounded Port Wilson into the Strait of Juan de Fuca to Port Angeles (48 07.522 N, 123 27.10 W). The downtown is about a mile walk and after five plus hours at sea it was a perfect stretch for our legs.

The town was virtually closed on this Sunday, except for an ice cream & candy shop. We were still eating our treats as we passed the local campaign offices and realized that although our ages span over 50 years, we were 80% in agreement for the need to replace the “The Donald” (photo).



Around the Corner Neah Bay (48 22443 N, 124 22441 W) is located just inside the entrance from the Pacific Ocean. The area belongs to the Makah Indians, who have closed their village to outsiders for the duration of

Covid 19. As a result we had to anchor out and could not visit their well respected native museum.

Several decades ago, the Makah sued the U. S. Government in order to protect their right to continue their tradition of hunting gray whales. The court ordered resolution permits the tribe to continue to periodically harvest a whale.

From our anchorage in the bay on a cold evening, we watched a sunset with a very unusual cloud formation (photo).



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The Longest Day The most challenging obstacle to traveling south to the Columbia River is the over 100 miles of open ocean without any ports or harbors of refuge.

Carl and Dick started the run at five a. m. in dense fog. We turned the corner at Cape Flattery which is the most northwest point of the contiguous United States.

Passing between the cape and Tatoosh Island, we caught a glimpse of a few of the many hay stack rock formations that line this portion of the coast of Washington (*photo*).

Unfortunately, the fog kept us from seeing much else of this scenic coastline that makes up a portion of the Olympic National Park.

As we passed the offshore Sea Lion Island, we saw close to 100 Steller sea lions. Overall, the wind and seas were mostly behind us resulting in smooth cruising conditions.

Roll On Columbia

After an overnight stop in Gray’s Harbor, we entered the Columbia. The Columbia River is over 1200 miles long and has the 4th largest volume of water in North America.

The Columbia River bar is also known as the “Graveyard of the Pacific” where over



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2200 vessels have gone down since 1790.

River bars are potentially treacherous under conditions where the out flowing river currents meet strong wind and swell conditions existing at sea. This condition can create monstrous wave conditions. The U. S. Coast Guard will prohibit vessels of all sizes from crossing the bar under extreme weather conditions, but our passage was uneventful.

Big Ships Navigating the Columbia is much more of a challenge than

cruising in Alaska as much of the lower river is shallow and it is important to stay within the dredged channels. Large ocean going vessels navigate the river as far as Portland, and when one comes by, its passage does not go unnoticed (*photo*).

Numerous osprey nests are located on top of the many navigational aids along the river. As we passed, this baby chick was flexing its wings in possible preparation for its first flight (*photo*).

We are now in Portland and will continue up the river next week.

