

Alaska, the Family Cruise

May 30, 2003 – Miami

Our cruise began with our air voyage on Alaska Air from Miami to Seattle. Though there was no movie, the lunch was splendid! I cannot recall ever getting better airline food in coach class. We were served oriental chicken, salad, roll and cheesecake. It was nicely cooked and very tasty. As we drove to Miami, we were preparing ourselves for the dry chicken sandwich and chips that is the customary fare on Delta. What a pleasant surprise.

As we continued from Seattle to Anchorage, Alaska, we thought, no, there wouldn't be food on a flight that departed at 1 p.m. and arrived at 4. Surprise again, a nice ham and cheese sandwich on brown bread, organically grown corn tortilla chips and chocolate elf cookies. I shall always take Alaska Air when the opportunity arises.

We met Rob in the Anchorage airport and tried to load the luggage into the "full-sized" car that we rented. No matter how we tried, it would not fit. We went back to Hertz for a bigger vehicle and were pleased that the agent could give us an SUV at the same price. Now there was plenty of space for the luggage so off we went to Seward down the Seward Highway, a beautiful three-hour trip through the forests and mountains of Alaska.



We arrived at the Celebrity Summit cruise ship in the nick of time, checked-in, boarded and unpacked. Here you see our daughter-in-law, Michele, lounging on the couch in our room. We joke about her conceiving on board but it is wonderful having the whole family to join us on this cruise. Rob was thrilled to be invited on a cruise to Alaska, a place he had wanted to visit for many years. Our granddaughter, Abbie, is modeling her formal night dress.



Family pictures are an important aspect of an outing like this.

Here is the Bailey family.



Below is the whole family.

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Rob & Michele A rare photo of Uncle Rob & Abbie We next visited the Mendenhall Glacier which is just outside of Juneau.



Being in the rain forest, Juneau gets about nine feet of rainfall each year. Just 100 miles away, Skagway, gets a more normal three feet. The rain is very frequent so today was not unusual. We got a coupon book to visit the various shops near the harbor and Judy bought the fur she had been waiting for since her birthday. [Michele photo to be



MENDENHALL MOVES

A Glacier in Action

Mendenhall Glacier flows 13.5 miles from the Juneau Icefield, which is nestled in the Coast Mountain Range. Snowfall accumulates in excess of 100 feet per year on the icefield and compacts underlying snow layers from previous years into solid ice. As glacial ice continues to build, the force of gravity pulls the ice downslope. The glacier's speed depends on the slope of the underlying bedrock.

Melting occurs when ice reaches the lower elevations. Occasionally a piece of ice breaks off the front of the glacier. This is called calving.

Our Shrinking Glacier

Mendenhall Glacier has been getting shorter or receding since the mid 1700's. This retreat, a reaction to the current global warming trend, is part of a natural cycle of glacial retreat and advance that occurs over thousands of years. Glacial advance would require a reversal of the climate's current warming trends.

Eventually the glacier will retreat out of Mendenhall Lake. The glacier will continue to recede until it reaches a point of equilibrium where the amount of ice building up in the icefield equals the amount of ice melting near the glacier's terminus.

supplied.]
We took a brief bus tour



to the glacier to get a close look. A glacier is formed by snow accumulating in the mountains. When more snow falls than melts the build up turns the bottom snow to ice. As the mass becomes heavier, the weight causes the lower ice to melt and the ice formation begins to slide down the mountain with the force of gravity. As it reaches the sea, the warmer, salt water causes the ice to break off, or calve, and ice burgs are formed. The bluish hue comes from the refraction of light. The blue rays are absorbed by the ice.



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Our next stop was Skagway, the jumping off point for the gold rush. The White Pass railway makes the trip from Skagway to White Pass a few times daily in the summer season taking the tourists on the same ride that the gold miners took. The track is now laid parallel to the trail. There was no easy way at the end of the 19th century. Pack mules and horses were required and many died enroute from lack of food and water. This unique bridge is attached on one side so that in the event of an earthquake, the repairs can easily be made to the right side and the bridge will remain standing. The bridge crosses the fault in the earth. The weather is cool at the summit. We crossed into Canada, just for a few minutes and got a drink from this

cascading waterfall.



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Here you can see our ship in the Skagway Harbor and the town of Skagway, only 100 blocks in the town.



Outside of town, near the railroad track is the Gold Rush Cemetery. The remains of Skagway's most famous con man, Soapy Smith are buried here (though he is six feet outside of the cemetery to avoid desecrating the hallowed ground. Also, most prominent are the remains of his killer, Frank Reid, who in a duel gave his life for the reputation of Skagway. Both men were shot in the duel, Soapy by a shot to the heart. He was dead before he hit the ground. Frank was shot by Soapy in the groin and lived an excruciating 12 days thereafter.



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Tuesday, June 3, 2003 – Sitka, Alaska – Well-known for its Russian influence, Sitka was the most beautiful weather on the trip. The Alaskan children were in their sandals and shorts enjoying the bright sun on this 65-degree day. We were a little over bundled at the beginning of our adventure in front of this traditional house. These pictures are of Dave and Lisa with Abbie and Josh.





Nearby is the Bishop's house, the place where the bishop of the Russian Orthodox church lived. He had gardens with vegetables to sustain his family in this area where the primary food is fish. This is the oldest Russian building in Alaska and has been preserved in its original fashion, hence its simple exterior.

On the way to the Fort where the Russians overtook the native Tlingit Americans, we passed a park. Abbie enjoyed climbing on the animal figures.



At the Historical Center, replicas of the Tlingit totems are found. Each of the grandchildren took turns taking pictures of the poles. See if you can identify the photo with the photographer.







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The last totem above, marks the site of the Russian-Tlinget battle. There is no evidence of the fort or the battle, only the site remains.

On our way back to the ship, we stopped at the playground.





The “onion” dome is characteristic of the Russian Orthodox Church. This cathedral is in the center of town.



Wednesday, June 4, 2003 Ketchikan, Alaska

Today we shopped for all of those back home. There were plenty of stores catering to the cruise trade. The weather was drizzly and the skies were gray, a good day to play bridge so after lunch we played in a two-table Swiss team game. I think our team won.

That evening we went to the Captain’s Cocktail Party in the Revelations Lounge. The orchestra played, the drinks flowed and hors d’oeuvres were served. We had just finished eating so we ate no hors d’vors. We met the Chief of the Hotel and complemented his on his staff. In deed the facilities and staff have been excellent on this cruise. We met a couple there that had attended my previous lecture. They compared me to their son-in-law, who is a genius. (I guess they liked me.)

Thursday, June 5, 2003 Inside Passage

My favorite part of cruising is the day at sea however this one was sort of boring. There is one destination lecturer, a bridge director and me as the guest staff. I have not see dance hosts or dance teacher, clergyman or crafts instructor. I guess that’s all you get on a one-week cruise. I showed up for the shuffleboard game at 9:45 this morning, all alone. The staff man played a game with me. Neither of us had played much and after four rounds, we were still tied at zero. We both played like gorillas, going past the end zone in most cases. Finally, I broke the tie in overtime ending with a seven.

The weather was beautiful and the temperature warm so I donned my swimsuit and went to the top deck for some sun. I enjoyed reading my book and got an hour on each side before lunch.

In the afternoon, we saw the video of the children’s program that featured our Abbie and Josh, among others. They had a good time including a tour of the back stage area. This ship, being only two years old, has state of the art sound and lighting in the specially designed theater. I would have liked to go myself for that tour.

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the art sound and lighting in the specially designed theater. I would have liked to go myself for that tour. The children then presented their own talent show. A couple of teens aspired to be comedians and told "blonde jokes." Some were pretty good so I used one while warming up my audience before my lecture began. I spoke on "How to Play the Stock Market, without Losing Your Shirt." My audience of 38 was receptive and many asked questions. I had some extra time at the end so I spoke about the changes in the tax laws that were enacted last week. Some had been traveling so they were not familiar with the changes.

We enjoyed this cruise; it was up to Celebrity's standards. The evening entertainment was very good. The food was fine; the staff was efficient and friendly. The weather was very good.

Friday, June 6, 2003 – Vancouver

We visited the major sights of Vancouver:

our friends, Don & Gerry who we met on the South America cruise

Granville Island, where we had brunch at an open air market and saw the artisans. We also booked our whale watching trip there

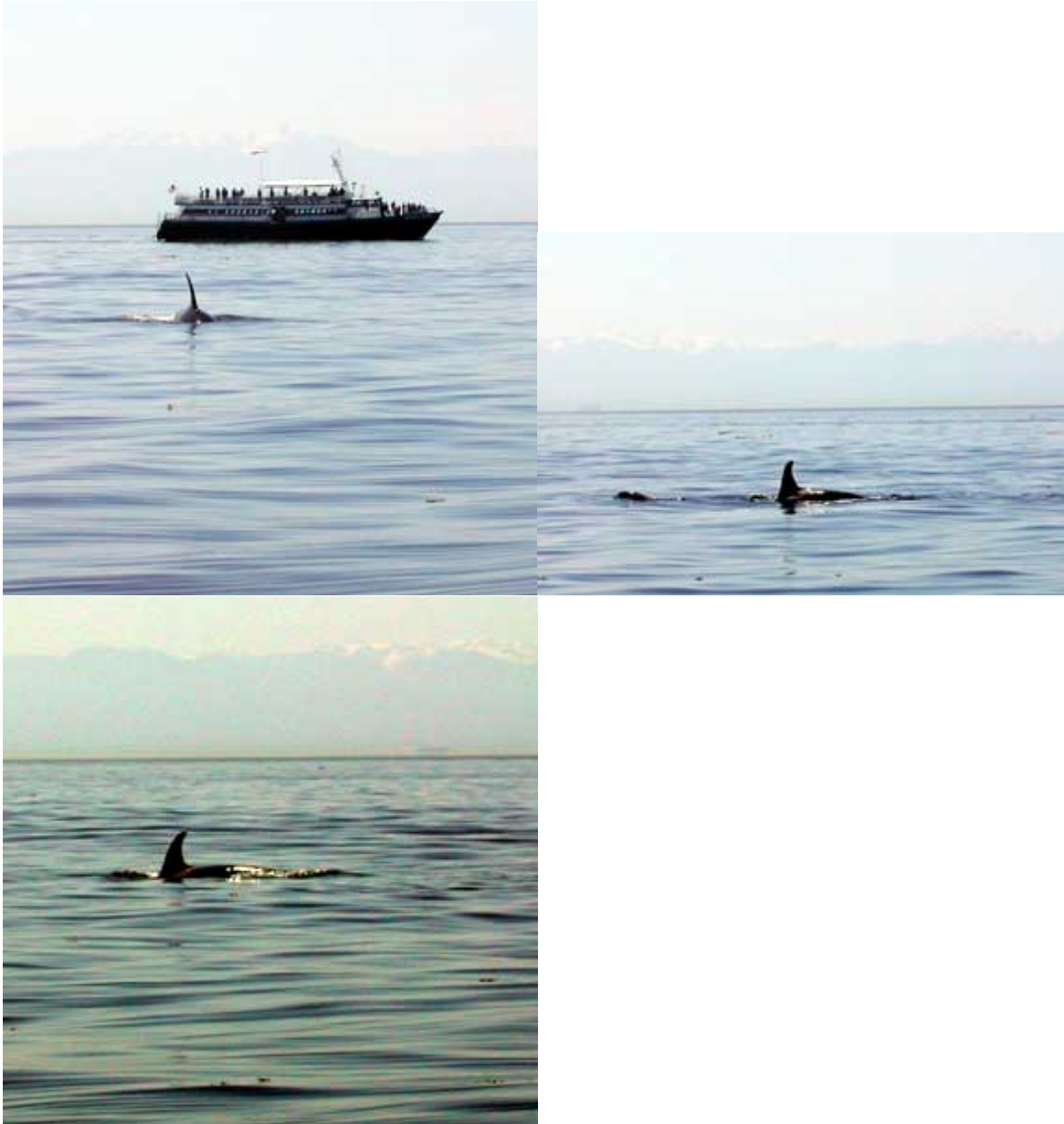
We rented tandem bicycles and rode around the Vancouver sea front and Stanley Park

The Stanley Park Aquarium where we saw the sea lion show and the Beluga Whale show as well as the fish of various parts of the world

When we checked into our hotel, we were quite tired and dirty so we showered and prepared for dinner. Our friends had recommended a nice Greek restaurant so we drove over and had a very fine dinner of roast leg of lamb and beef souvlaki with rice and Greek salad. The food was tender, tasty and plentiful, the service, a little slow. Nevertheless, a fine dinner after a long day.

Saturday, June 7, 2003

I went over to the airport to trade-in the humungous Yukon for a more reasonable Protégé. I had to hurry so that I would not incur more than one day on the Yukon which rented for \$CND140 per day. Mission accomplished, I returned to pick up the others for a day at sea, whale watching. We drove to Steveston, in the south part of Richmond, the town south of Vancouver to meet the boat for our tour. The Killer Whale or Orca was our quarry but they were quite far south so we rode for more than two hours to the State of Washington to see them. Behold, they were numerous, they were active and they were right next to the boat.



It was very hard to photograph these critters because one must anticipate their actions and push the shutter in advance to capture the image. Indeed they were breaching, that is, they were jumping in the water. One of the older males has a dorsal fin that is six feet high.

As we were returning to port, we saw this group of harbor seals sunning on the small island in the Strait of Georgia. These tender morsels are the primary food source of the gray mammal eating killer whales, not the fish-eating variety that we had been watching.

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Today was another sweaty day and shower at the hotel before Chinese dinner.

Sunday, June 8, 2003 - We drove from Vancouver to Seattle, a very pleasant drive. We had no problem in customs or immigration at the border and our flight home was very comfortable. We really enjoy flying Alaska Air! (No promotional consideration was supplied. I'd vote for them to merge with Delta and Alaska Air being the survivor.)