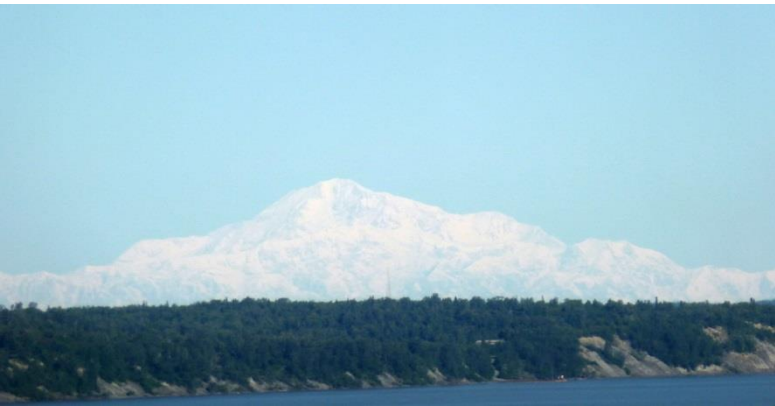


Alaska Trip – Day 13 – August 25 – Anchorage to Seward:



Today is the end of our thirteen day ground tour of Alaska and the Yukon Territory with Globus. We really enjoyed the tour; it was excellent. Now we are very much looking forward to the next part of our Alaska Trip...a cruise. This afternoon we will be boarding the Holland American Line's cruise ship *Zaandam* for a trip that will start in the southern Alaska port of Seward and end seven days later in Vancouver British Columbia Canada, just north of the Washington State border. On the ship we will spend a couple of days cruising through the Gulf of Alaska along the southern coast of Alaska and through Glacier Bay National Park. Then there will be three days when we will dock at Haines, Juneau and Ketchikan, towns on the southeast Alaska panhandle where we'll enjoy land excursions and sightseeing, and then one final day of cruising through the "Inside Passage" to Vancouver.



This morning is a relaxing one at the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Anchorage. The weather is spectacular; sunny skies and temperatures headed for the 60. Marcia goes up to the top floor of the hotel and takes another good picture of twenty mile distant Mt. McKinley. After a leisurely breakfast we put out our packed bags for pickup at 11:30 AM and board a motor coach before noon. Of the 27 folks on our Globus land tour, 13 are also going on the cruise; Marie, Kal, Marcia and I along with the eight Australians and the South African lady. We have learned that they all have planned several

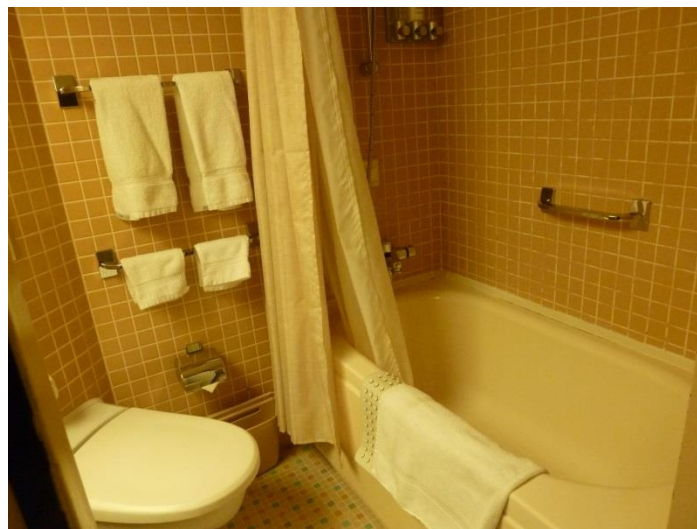
more weeks of travel in North America after this cruise.

For the 2-1/2 hour drive to Seward we have the same motor coach and excellent driver, Bill that we had on the land tour. We drive south along the Turnagain Arm of the Cook Inlet. We've learned that as you move closer to the poles tides get higher and the Turnagain Arm regularly experiences 30 foot tides. We spot a few Beluga Whales hunting for the migrating Salmon. We next drive onto the Kenai Peninsula and through Chugach National Forest. The scenery is spectacular.



We arrive in Seward at 2:15 PM, spot our ship and are happy to note that it's only about one-half the size of huge "normal" cruise ships. Bill takes our large luggage to the transfer area and we proceed to the ship's check in and boarding tent.

Check in is a breeze...there is no one in line! They warn us if we leave the ship to walk around Seward don't be out too long as they are expecting 800 passengers to be checking in between 4 and 6 PM and there will be lines. We go to our cabins and find that they are quite roomy. Both of us couples have booked outside cabins with a window (no balcony). Our rooms are spacious with a large window, tons of storage space, two twin beds that can be pushed together, couch, table, chairs, TV + DVD and a big bathroom. We will be most comfortable.



The four of us walk around the ship and get acquainted with the public areas. The interior of the ship is very well appointed; three restaurants including the two floor Main Dining Room, a show lounge with balcony, three swimming pools, many shops and good viewing areas all around. The only annoying part of our walk is that they've set up "roadblocks" through the Spa area for anyone trying to get to the gym. We had to stop and talk to the facial massage lady, the foot massage lady, the acupuncture lady, hair dresser, etc. We think we will be quite comfortable on the *Zaandam*. We take advantage of the nearly empty condition

of the ship to go the Excursion Desk and sign up for the activities that we plan to do during our stops in the ports.



We have been assigned an early seating for dinner and that is what we prefer. We are delighted to find that our table in the Main Dining Room will be by a window for the duration of the cruise. Now, there are two formal dinner nights on this cruise and we had decided not to pack our formal wear (my tuxedo is lost at the dry cleaners) so on those nights we will have dinner in the less formal Lido Restaurant. Our dinners are fine and the service very prompt and attentive from the mostly Indonesian wait staff. So far we have found all of the crew to be most pleasant.

After the mandatory Life Boat Drill we go up on deck and watch the *Zaandam* sail from Seward at 8 AM.



At 9:30 PM we go up to the Crow's Nest Lounge at the top bow position of the ship. Marcia gets a nice photo of a glacier as the sun sets. At 10 PM the ship slows to a crawl and later reverses course and travels back towards Seward. It appears to us that the Captain plans to spend the night in the calm waters of the bay and probably start cruising to the southeast in the morning. Tomorrow will be a full day at sea.

Alaska Trip – Day 14 – August 26 – At Sea on the *Zaandam*:

We wake up after our first night of sleep in our comfortable cabins on the *Zaandam*. Today will be a full day at sea as we cruise eastward along the Gulf of Alaska towards Glacier Bay National Park. We are cruising about 50 miles from shore and that distance combined with the cloudy and foggy conditions means that we will not sight any land today. We've been lucky on this trip. It seem that if we were going to have a few hours of rainy weather it would always occur while we were on a long drive on the motor coach and not when we were out sightseeing. So, this is a good day to have poor weather around our ship and not on a day when there is something to see or we are on a land excursion.



Marie and Kal are up early and have breakfast in the Main Dining Room. Marcia and I have breakfast later in the Lido Restaurant where they serve a buffet style breakfast, lunch and dinner. Interestingly, in addition to asking that everyone apply hand sanitizer prior to entering the Lido, for the first 48 hours of the cruise passengers cannot “help themselves” to the buffet offerings. Instead you point to what you want and a member of the wait staff places it on a plate and hands to plate to you. This is, of course, to avoid the spread of the gastric ailments that occasionally spread on cruise ships.



So today we spend time exploring the ship and relaxing. We also take part in onboard activities and they have a full slate: exercise classes, shop sales and auctions, game tournaments, wine tasting, informative talks, kitchen tour, beer tasting, computer and photography classes, and cooking classes. One or more of us take part in the last five mentioned.

This ship has somewhat of a “musical theme” and contains displays of many old musical instruments. Two that caught my eye were the display of three guitars signed, respectively, by Queen, Eric Clapton and Carlos Santana, and The Rolling Stones and a saxophone played and signed by Bill Clinton.





We relax with four of our Australian acquaintances in the Crow's nest lounge before dinner. Marie, Kal, Marcia and I then have dinner in the informal Lido Restaurant rather than the Main Dining Room as this is the first of two formal nights on the cruise and we did not (by design) bring the appropriate clothes.

Tomorrow will be a big day as we will be cruising through *Glacier Bay National Park* with wildlife and whale spotting opportunities. We enjoy seeing the "towel dog sculpture" left on our bed by our Cabin Attendant.

Alaska Trip – Day 15 – August 27 – Glacier Bay National Park:

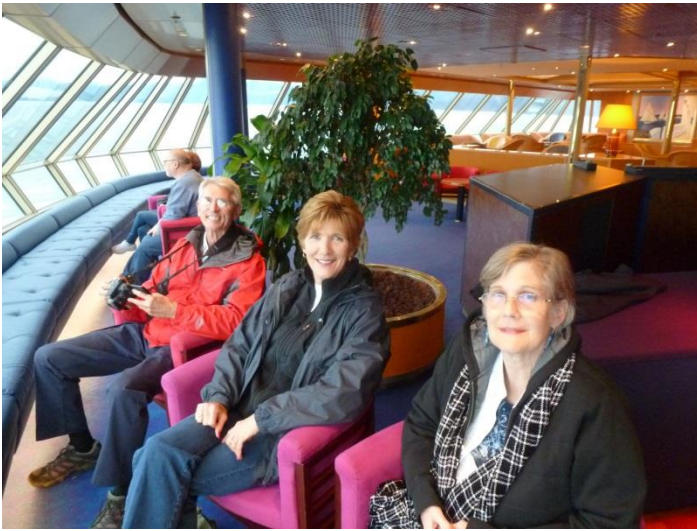


We wake up today on the *Zaandam* and view a beautiful sunrise. Today will be another full day at sea but should be a more interesting one than yesterday as we will be cruising most of the day inside of *Glacier Bay National Park*.

The weather should also be better than yesterday's. It's forecasted to be mostly cloudy with temperatures in the 60s with some sunshine and no chance of rain.

At 8:30 AM the *Zaandam* starts to enter the long and narrow sixty five mile sound that comprises the heart of Glacier Bay National Park. We have learned that the Park Service only allows two cruise ships per day to enter the park. Marie, Kal, Marcia and I secure prime viewing seats in

the enclosed Crowe's Nest Lounge on the 9th deck. This location also gives us quick and easy access to the exterior walkways on both sides of the ship for picture taking.



At 10 AM a small boat motors over to our ship and two Park Rangers, a representative of *Alaska Geographic* and a representative of the local Inuit Indians board the *Zaandam*. They will be giving presentations during the day and the Rangers will be offering narration and answering questions as we proceed up the sound. We spot wildlife but can't get many good pictures. We see Humpback Whales (one jumping clear out of the water), Orca Killer Whales, Mountain Goats, Bears, and many Sea Otters. They have opened the front decks of the *Zaandam* for optimum picture taking.



We pass Mt. Cooper, the highest mountain in the park at 6780 feet, and then start to view the glaciers. We first see the *Rendu Glacier* then the *Reid Glacier*, *Lamplugh Glacier*, and the 33 mile deep *Pacific Glacier*.



The real highlight of today's cruise into the Glacier Bay National Park is our viewings of the *Margerie Glacier* with its 1 mile wide front rising 250 feet above the calm water of the bay and the *John Hopkins Glacier* with a 1 mile wide and 300 foot high front. In both cases, due to the lack of large icebergs in the waters leading up to these two glaciers, the Captain is able to position the *Zaandam* very close to the front of these glaciers. On most of its cruises this ship cannot even enter the inlet leading to the *John Hopkins Glacier* due to ice. At both of these glaciers the Captain stops our ship for about an hour and we enjoy viewing the glacier fronts. We learn that the *John Hopkins* is a rare "advancing" glacier.



During our time in the park we see no buildings or other structures as there are no roads into the park. We see only one or two other ships. We cruise out of the park at 5 PM after a most enjoyable day.

The four of us have an excellent dinner in the Main Dining Room. Our waiter is a funny guy.

Marcia and I go to the evening show featuring a magician said to have appeared on The Tonight Show seven times. He is very good.

Early tomorrow we will dock at the small port town of Haines and experience our first shore excursions.

Alaska Trip – Day 16 – August 28 – Haines:



The *Zaandam* docks this morning at the small Alaskan town of Haines. Haines has a summer population of 2400 and a winter population of only 1800. They also have one of the highest Zip Codes...99827.

Marie and Kal have signed up for a morning excursion...*Takshanuk Mountain Trail by 4x4*. Here they drive four-wheel-drive Kawasaki Mules on a mountain trail through *Tongass National Forest*. They later report that they had a good time with stops up in the mountain for scenic views. They were given a good lunch of deep fried halibut.

Marcia and I attend a morning computer class covering how to use Microsoft Photo Gallery for creating professional looking photos. We then leave the ship for the first time and walk into town. It is nice that the *Zaandam* will be docked at all of our stops on this cruise and we don't have to "tender in" to shore.



We are looking for a place in town with free Wi-Fi internet service. Our ship charges the outrageous rate of 100 minutes for \$55, which we are paying, but we don't want to go over the 100 minutes. We find the "Rusty Compass" coffee house and Marcia sits down with a hot chocolate and does her computer things. I sit outside and chat with the young owner when he comes outside for a break. He tells me he is closing up his shop for the season at 4 PM and leaving at 5 PM for college. He was born and raised in Haines and is going to school at Gonzaga University in Spokane Washington. He tells me that the Holland America ships, like the *Zaandam*, are the only cruise ships that stop in Haines; one ship a week. The other cruise lines stop in

Skagway instead. An "Old Codger" pulls up in his pickup truck to wish the young man good luck at college this year. I chat with the old timer for a while. He's been a canoe and now kayak guide in the area for 50+ years. As he leaves he tells me his "motto": "I am often wrong but never in doubt". I like it! Marcia and I next walk around more of the small and picturesque town, where Disney's *White Fang* was filmed in 1991, and then return to the ship.

In the afternoon Marcia and I go on an excursion to the *Kroschel Wildlife Park*. After a 45 minute bus ride we arrive at the park and are greeted by Mario Benassi and his Red Tail Hawk. We learn that he is a master falconer, cinematographer and naturalist. Then the barefoot Steve Kroschel appears, a noted wildlife filmmaker and naturalist.



We walk through the grounds and are introduced to their menagerie of wild animals all the while giving us interesting information about each of them. We meet their Weasel, Wolf, and Wolverine.



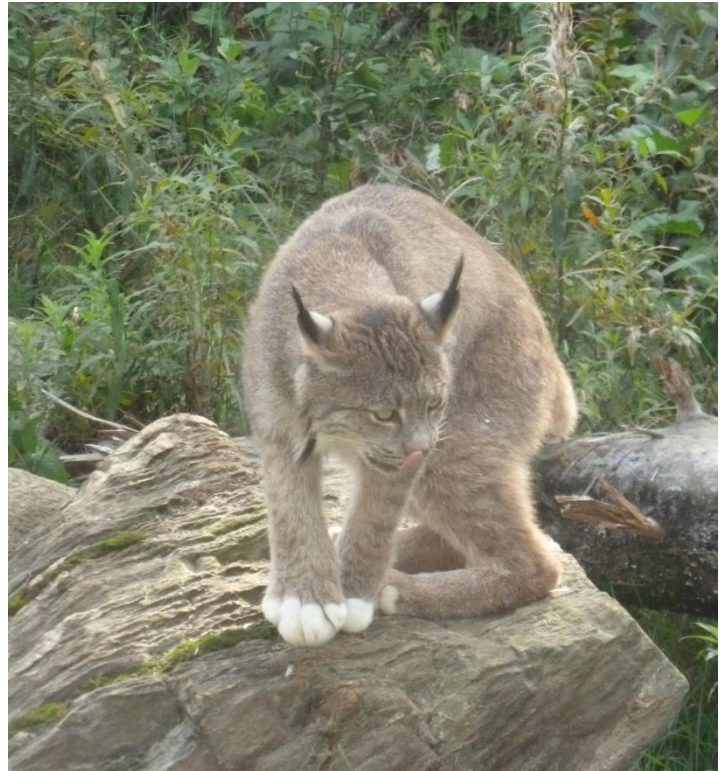
We see a baby Moose and a Red Fox.



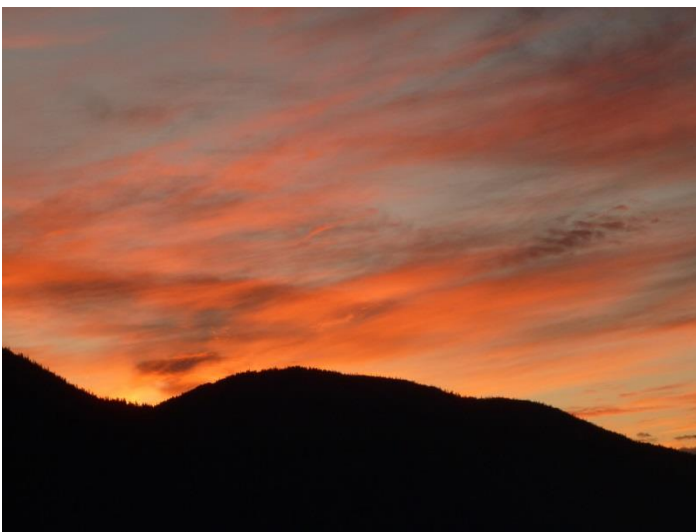
I get to kiss the mother Moose and Marcia is able to feed the Reindeer. We see the Marten and the Mink.



I pet Mr. Porcupine and we see the Lynx. The last animal we visit is the Kodiak (Grizzly) bear.



We enjoyed our time at this unique wildlife preserve.



Marcia and I return to the *Zaandam* and meet up with Marie and Kal for dinner in the Main Dining Room. Tomorrow we will be exploring in the Juneau Alaska area.

Alaska Trip – Day 17 – August 29 – Juneau:

We take some peaks out of our cabin window overnight (easily done as the window is right at the head of our bed) and see nothing but the moon and stars in a clear sky. Could

it be; we are going to have a clear day in Juneau Alaska, one of the rainiest places of earth? Yes!

There are just enough clouds behind Juneau to give us a beautiful sunrise as we pull into port. We have learned that Juneau is the capital of Alaska and has 32,000 residents in the city and surrounding area. As it is enclosed by high and steep mountains there are no roads into or out of Juneau. You must fly in or arrive by boat. Juneau receives over 100 inches of precipitation a year while the mountains above it

receive over 1000 inches.

Marie and Kal depart the *Zaandam* after breakfast and take the Tramway 1800 feet up the side of Mt. Roberts. They see great views of Juneau and the cruise ships in port. After hiking along the side of the mountain they return down to Juneau and walk through town to the beginning of the *Perseverance Hiking Trail* which they complete in the afternoon. In all they hike for over five hours.

Marcia and I have signed up for an excursion, *Mendenhall Glacier Whale Watching and Wildlife Quest*. The operator guarantees a whale spotting or will give each customer a \$100 cash refund. We board their motor coach at 8:30 AM for a twenty minute ride to a port. We enjoy good commentary from the driver. We board a large catamaran with enclosed seating on two decks and exterior viewing areas. The boat is only about half full. For the next three hours we cruise the Lynn Channel which leads from Juneau to the sea. The forest rimmed channel is surrounded by snowcapped mountains and contains over 1000 islands. We learn from our boat's our excellent guide/naturalist that the Juneau area has a "Temperate Rainforest" climate. We first travel out to *Little Island* where we view a colony of Steller Sea Lions and spot two Bald Eagles. We are told that there are 30,000 Bald Eagles in the area.



Our Captain states that there are reports of Whale sightings in the North Channel near Shelter Island and we proceed at high speed in that direction. The crew all comments at how lucky we are to have such a clear and sunny day; it's a rarity in this region. The temperature is now rising into the 60s and the water is calm.

"Thar She Blows"; we see whale blow-hole spouts in the distance! For the next hour and a half we have a memorable experience as perhaps a dozen Humpback Whales circle and frolic around our boat. Marcia is most happy!

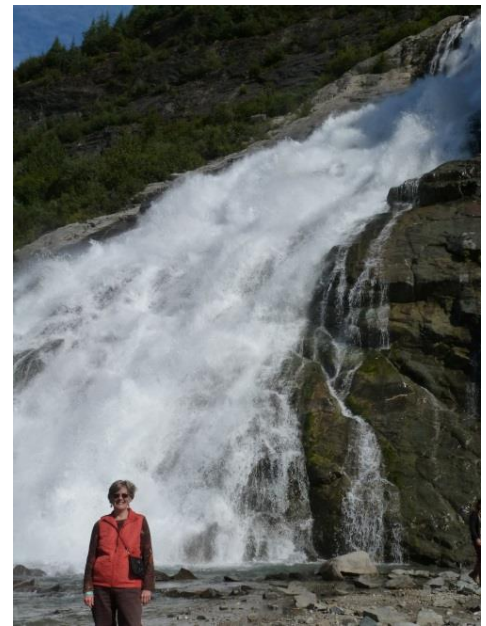


We learn that there are about 3000 Humpback Whales in Lynn Channel. They are now bulking up on food, eating as much as a ton a day, as they will start their annual migration of 3000 miles to Hawaii in about a month. There they will have their offspring. The babies will be about fifteen feet long at birth and will exclusively get nutrients by nursing during their first six months. Food is scarce for whales in Hawaii but they prefer birthing there due to the warm waters and the fact that the higher salinity of the water provides extra buoyancy for the juveniles.

We start our return to port and are delighted when we spot a pod of Orca (Killer) Whales, immediately recognizable by their prominent dorsal fin and distinctive black and white coloration. They are very fast and swim

alongside our boat for a brief time. Our guide states that this is only the third time this summer that they have spotted Orca. We briefly see some Dall's Porpoise as our boat returns to port about noontime.

We re-board our motor coach and travel for about fifteen minutes to the *Mendenhall Glacier* where we will have an hour for viewing and exploration. It is now nearing 70 degrees and sunny. We first walk to a viewing point and see the one mile wide face of the glacier. Then we hike about a mile to see *Nugget Falls*. Amazingly we can walk right up to the base of these powerful falls. They are perhaps 400 feet high.



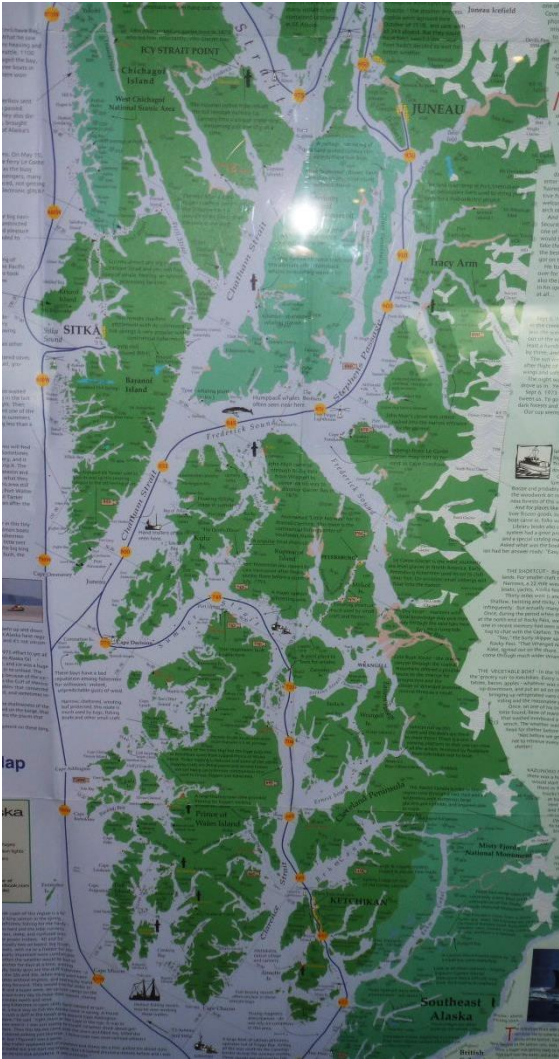
Our motor coach returns us to Juneau and drops us off at the *Mt. Roberts Tramway*. We travel 1800 feet up the mountain and enjoy clear views of Juneau and the four cruise ships now in port. We also see a Bald Eagle that is recuperating from a gunshot wound.



We return down to Juneau at about 3:20 PM. Marcia hits the shops in town for some souvenir shopping and I return to the *Zaandam*. I have noted from the view up on Mt. Roberts that the roof has been retracted from our ship's main pool area and I go to see what the pool now looks like.

The four of us meet for refreshments and recap today's activities. It's the second "formal dinner" night so we have our dinner in the informal Lido Restaurant while watching our ship cruise down the Inside Passage towards Ketchikan. The *Zaandam* will dock in Ketchikan late tomorrow morning.

Alaska Trip – Day 18 – August 30 – Ketchikan



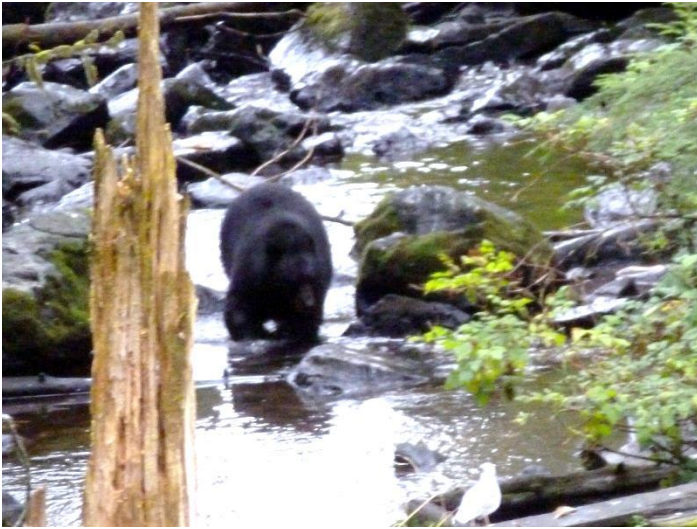
The *Zaandam* departed Juneau Alaska last night while we finished our dinners. Overnight our ship continued sailing south towards today's destination, Ketchikan. We are cruising through an "Inner Passage" made up of the shoreline and islands comprising the *Tongass National Forest*. Perhaps because we are sailing through a channel the water remains quite calm. I do not believe we have really detected any rocking from wave action or swells at any time during this cruise.

It is very overcast, rainy and foggy when we wake up this morning. At about 6 AM our ship blasts its fog horn several times as a warning to other ships as we pass through narrower parts of the channel.

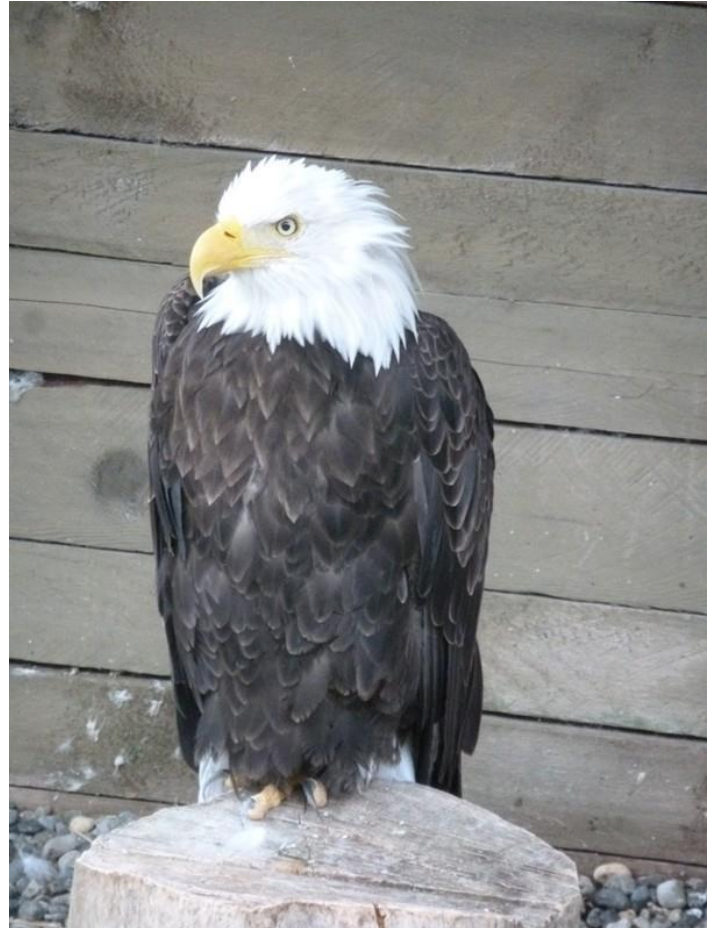
At 10 AM we start our approach to Ketchikan, right on time for our 11 AM docking. It appears that the weather is clearing up. We have learned that Ketchikan is a city of 13,000 people. Like Juneau there are no roads leading out; you must take a plane or a boat to enter or leave Ketchikan. Due to the moderating effects of the ocean, the average winter temperature is 45 degrees and the average summer temperature is 55 degrees. A few inches of snow will fall many times during the winter but will usually melt within a few days. Ketchikan receives precipitation 265 out of 365 days a year totaling about 160 inches. We see a constant stream of small float planes taking off from the harbor, most probably taking tourists sightseeing. We have learned that Alaska has more private planes per person and more registered pilots per person (one person in fifty eight) than any other state, most probably due to the lack of roads and the vast spaces. Ketchikan is a popular stop for cruise ships and there are three other cruise ships docked as we approach.



A little after noontime Marie, Kal, Marcia and I depart the *Zaandam* for an excursion we've all signed up for, the "Bear Country Wildlife Expedition". It is quite cloudy but mild, probably around 60 degrees. After a short ride our small group of twelve meets our guide and starts walking on a trail leading to suspension bridges and viewing platforms above a salmon creek. After about 30 minutes the Black Bears arrive and we do get some good views of them "interacting" with the salmon.



After about an hour we continue on and see a salmon hatchery (at the salmon ladder the fish are jumping trying to return to their place of birth), Reindeer, and a recuperating Great Horned Owl and Bald Eagle. The Native Americans living in this area of Alaska are famous for their Totem Poles and we briefly watch a Master Native totem pole carver at work. This concludes the excursion which we thought was just OK; maybe our enthusiasm was blunted by the cloudy weather, the wait for the bears, the smelly dead salmon or our rather unpolished guide.

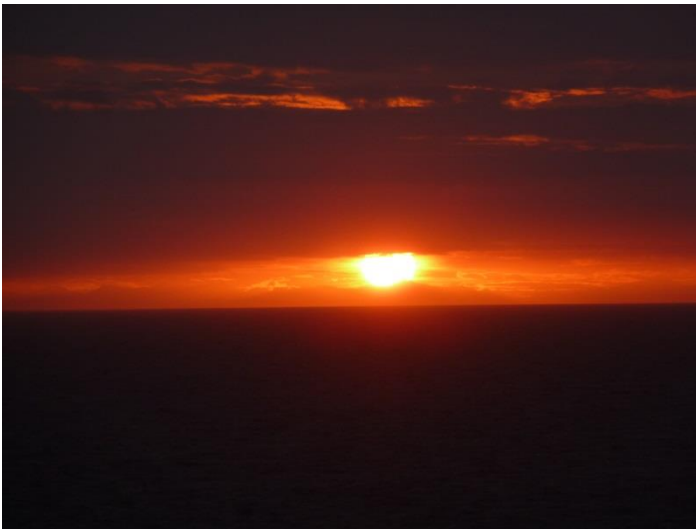


We return to Ketchikan and get in some sightseeing and last minute shopping at some of the many souvenir stores in town.

We enjoy dinner in the Main Dining Room where the food, presentation and service remain excellent.

The *Zaandam* departs Ketchikan in a heavy rain storm. Tomorrow will be a full day at sea as we travel towards our final port of Vancouver British Columbia, Canada.

Alaska Trip – Day 19 – August 31 – Ketchikan to Vancouver:



Today will be a full day at sea and it will be our last full day on the *Zaandam*. We left Ketchikan last evening cruising south for Vancouver British Columbia, Canada. We will dock in Vancouver tomorrow morning and then depart the ship and fly home.

We've been instructed to turn our watches ahead one hour as we are now on Western Canada/Pacific Coast Time.

We sit in on some seminars and classes today. Marcia takes an interesting one; how to fold towels into the "animals" that the Room Stewards place on our beds each night.



We learn that our ship will have traveled a total of 1434 miles when we dock in Vancouver. Our longest leg of the trip, 520 miles, is the one we are on now; Ketchikan to Vancouver. The *Zaandam* is 785 feet long and has a gross tonnage of 63,000 tons. The ship is full on this cruise with 1407 guests and a crew of 615. Top speed is 21.5 knots. The officers are all Dutch. The Captain is *Wouter Van Hoogdaem*.



We spend much of the day in our favorite common room on the ship, the *Crow's Nest*. It is on the top (9th) deck of the ship and offers a 180 degree view out of the front of the ship. We occasionally spot Whales and Dolphins. We see many scenic views as we cruise south. We also watch some of the college football games and are happy that OSU won.

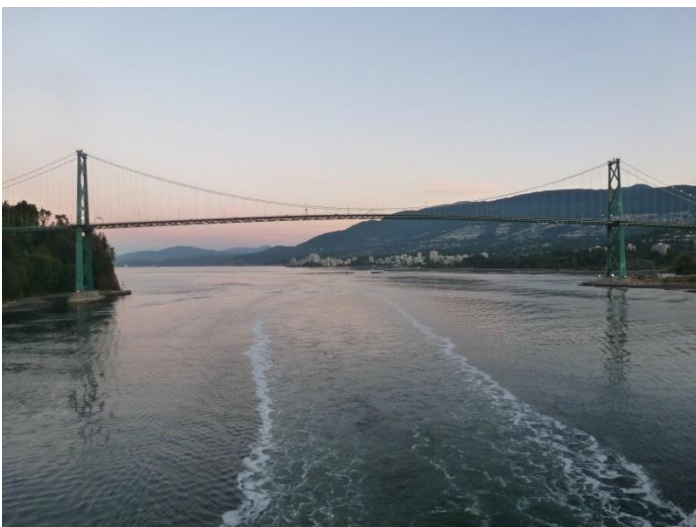


We enjoy our "Farewell Dinner". The Kitchen and Wait Staff parade around the Main Dining Room to our applause.

Tomorrow we travel home!

Alaska Trip – Day 20 – September 1 – Going Home:

We all have our large luggage (the checked baggage for our flights home) packed and outside of our cabin doors before going to bed last night. Holland America will pick up these bags and truck them to the Vancouver Airport for us to pick up prior to our check in. We are up early as all guests will be disembarking from the *Zaandam* between 7:45 AM and 8:30 AM this morning. We enter Vancouver Harbor and dock right near the center of the city at 7 AM.



By 7:45 AM all guests have gathered in the Meridian Show Lounge. We are called by groupings and leave the ship and board motor coaches for the half hour trip to the airport. We drive through the center of Vancouver and then some suburbs on the way to the airport. Vancouver is certainly one of the prettiest cities we've seen and is very quiet on a Sunday morning of the three day Labor Day weekend. At the airport we find our trucked luggage and wait a bit to start check in. The Holland America disembarkation process is very smooth and quick.

We check in with our airlines and then conveniently clear USA Customs/Border Control at this Canadian airport rather than at our first USA destination. Marcia and I are randomly picked for a higher level of scrutiny. We are led to a Border Control office where our checked bags are pulled and re-x-rayed. After a few questions we are released and walk to the boarding area.



We find Marie and Kal and sit down for lunch. We've discussed our trip and are in agreement that:

-The 13 day Globus land tour of Alaska and the Yukon was excellent. Our Tour Director Colleen and Driver Bill were the best. The motor coach was first rate. Some of the days on the coach were long but it was worth it to visit Dawson City and Whitehorse in the Yukon.

-The hotels Globus put us in were all fine as were the included meals. The itinerary had a nice pace to it.

-All of our fellow travelers on the Globus Tour were most friendly and fun to be with.

-Likewise the Holland America cruise on the *Zaandam* was excellent. Our standard window cabin was most comfortable; large and with a lot of storage. The ship itself was great; small on the outside and large on the inside. Even though the ship was full it never seemed crowded. The crew was most attentive and friendly. All meals were fine and the dinners in the Main Dining Room excellent. We didn't take in much of the evening entertainment. Boarding and disembarkation were quick and painless.

-We feel that we lucked out with the weather. It rained a couple of times on the land portion of our trip but always when we were on a long motor coach ride and it would usually clear up when we arrived at our destination. The only exception was the first day in Denali and we had to cope with the smoke from the nearby forest fires. Likewise on the cruise it only rained during the long sea days and cleared when we reached port. The sunny day we enjoyed in Juneau was rare and a real bonus. It was never really cold.

-Highlights:

----The wonderful seven hour included cruise through Prince William Sound during the Globus Tour.

----The optional excursion *Denali Fixed Wing* that we all signed up for. This was our small airplane ride around and over Mt. McKinley.

----The optional Whale Watching excursion that Marcia and I enjoyed in Juneau was exceptional. The promised whales made for great pictures and an exciting trip.

----The day on the *Zaandam* cruising through Glacier Bay National Park.

----The scenery of Alaska and The Yukon; the mountains, glaciers, forests, rivers and lakes exceeded our high expectations.

-Needing Improvement:

----The National Park Service's eight hour wildlife spotting bus ride through into Denali Park. Their crowded "school buses" offer little leg room and the bus's poor suspensions transfer every bump.

Marie and Kal depart Vancouver on a Delta flight at 12:57 PM. They change planes in Salt Lake City and land in Cincinnati at 10:30 PM. They make it home to Dayton by midnight.

Marcia and I leave Vancouver on United at 12:50 PM. We change planes in San Francisco and land in Pittsburgh by midnight. Jaime picks us up and we are back at her condo in half an hour. United Airlines did an excellent job on this trip for us.

A wonderful and a most restful vacation. Alaska is a surprising and beautiful place to visit. As always, the Tinkas are great to travel with.