

British Columbia

September, 1996

Friday, September 13

Pick up Jan at 3:00 at Proctor. Uneventful flight to Seattle. Watched "Mission Impossible" on trip while the crew was serving dinner. Jan had to bob and weave to watch. We missed parts and will probably have to rent it to get it all.

Arrived in Seattle and rented a car - a Kia Sephia (never heard of that before). The rental man wanted to sell everything from upgrades to kitchen sinks. We left with what we had ordered.

Drove directly to Joanruth's turn off on Mercer Island; however, got lost multiple times on the way to the condo from the freeway exit. Finally got there. Both Lindsey and Scottie were up, but Scottie wasn't too happy about it. Talked until after midnight west coast time.

Saturday, September 14

Cereal and fruit for breakfast. Lindsey takes Scottie to soccer game and Joanruth takes us around Seattle: first to house boats, then to Pike Street market where we buy items for dinner, flowers, dried fruit, and almonds. We go up to the Space Needle for lunch. After lunch we drive to the Lake Washington-Puget Sound Locks where we watch the boats go in and out and watch the salmon climb the fish ladders. Back to the condo for jambalaya and to meet Joanruth's friend, Dick. Dick brings a pecan pie for dessert and a Columbia Crest Gewirtz Traminer wine which was great. Again we talk too long. The day looked awful all day but it didn't rain until we got to the fish ladders.

Sunday, September 15

Joanruth makes omelets with cheese and some taco sauce that she got at the market the previous day. We also have the raspberries that we got. Take the ferry from Seattle to Victoria. Again, it looks ominous (including a very, very dark cloud right in front of the boat), but never rains more than a few drops. Start the trip in the solarium and then drop down to the enclosed cabin for coffee, latte, and mixed berry (including a few apple chunks) pie. Check out the gift shop where a book convinces us to go to Bchart Gardens. Check in at Cherry Bank Hotel. Hotel central area has old world charm but our room is very stark. Bed has a flying halo. Walked around Victoria down by the harbor. Decided to have dinner at Rebecca's restaurant. Got a table right by the window. Had wonderful pasta dinners, bread dipped in olive oil, and an apple raspberry cobbler with cream for dessert. Walked back to the Empress Hotel and visited shops on the ground floor. Then back to hotel and to bed.

Monday, September 16

Breakfast at the hotel. Faxed problem solutions back to Cincinnati. Drove to waterfront to photograph parliament building and get a picture of us in front of Rebecca's

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restaurant. Got data at Parks Canada office (not much help but got a reasonable booklet) and drove to Buchart Garden. Visited the sunken Gardens and the Rose Garden before the rain started. Viewed the Japanese Garden in a downpour. Stepped in a stream in the garden and didn't get much wetter than I already was. Had sandwiches for lunch, visited the gift shop, and left. Rained off and on for the rest of the afternoon. Drove through Chemainus and looked at murals painted on sides of buildings from car. Continued up island to cross island highway. Hiked loop at Englishman River Falls. Upper falls was a long falls into a very narrow crevasse. Then went to Qualicum River Falls. Again hike loop. Again upper falls is most spectacular with a triple drop and a very deep gorge. Eat dinner at Dairy Queen in Port Alberni and arrive at B&B in Ucluelet at about 10:15. The proprietress was in her nightgown obviously not expecting us. House is on Fletcher's Cove and is named after that. Stay up to watch promo video for Ucluelet and then watched "Babe".

Tuesday, September 17

Had a good breakfast of cranberry muffin, eggs, and fruit. The sun and the tide were both out, but the tide stayed out and the sun didn't. Got introduced to our first banana slug. Went to Pacific Rim National Park and stopped for a map at the visitor's center. Went first to Radar Hill (part of the coastal defenses during world War II and then part of the "Pine Tree" line during the cold war). Then went to Long Beach and saw seals (sea lions?) on Seal Rock. Walked the beach seeing cormorants on the rocks and a very small black and white shore bird on the beach. Hiked a loop through an old grove forest. Went to the Wickannish Inn for lunch (celebration for our fifteenth month anniversary) and had a beautiful beach view right by the window. Had wine, salmon salad, and mussel and leek soup. Walked the bog trail.

Drove across the island again to Black Creek B&B. We played Frisbee with Spud. Went to eat at Salmon Point Pub. Came back and conversed with keepers.

Wednesday, September 18

The B&B served Eggs Benedict with the whites of the eggs beaten into a meringue. It was excellent! Go up to Strathcoma Provincial Park at Mt. Washington. Had trouble finding the trailhead with all the construction for the ski area. It was drizzling when we left the B&B. We hoped that we would get above it going up the mountain. We didn't. Finally find the trail and start down just ahead of a group of school kids. Not much peace until Lake Helen Mackenzie where they stop for lunch. Climb part way up ridge behind lake and come back by lake. Stop for some trailmix and pecans at edge of lake. Birds that looked like nuthatches without crests wanted to have lunch with us. Hiked back by Battleship Lake as clouds descend. Get out and drive off the mountain in the fog. Have dinner in Old House Restaurant in Courtenay. Have baked tomato soup (with pastry shell), veggie lasagna, ravioli filled with ricotta and sundried tomatoes and blueberry pie. Took ferry to Powell River and went to Hamshires Country Inn B&B. Not an impressive stay.

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Thursday, September 19

Scrambled eggs for breakfast. Drove to Sultary Bay Beach and walked a bit there. Then caught the 11:30 ferry to Sechelt. A beautiful heron was on a piling next to the dock posing for us. Hiked to Sakookumchuck Narrows in provincial park. Then drove to Porpoise Bay and hiked the creek looking for salmon. Didn't find any. Hiked under ribbons and out onto estuary point. Returned to car; drove to Robert's Creek. It was closed. Drove to next ferry catching 6:30 boat (for no charge!). Arrive in Vancouver and go to Kingston Hotel only to find no parking and four showers for sixty rooms! Walk down Robson Street looking for dinner. Eat at Mexician-Puby type restaurant. Return to hotel and go to bed.

Friday, September 20

Toast and orange slices is the breakfast menu. Extra of anything costs extra. Go to University of British Columbia Anthropology Museum and take a two hour tour. Eat lunch on campus and then back to museum. Awesome!

Drive to Stanley Park and see totem poles. Then to Prospect Point to look at bay and Lion's Gate Bridge. Watch raccoons eating the garbage and anything that people will give them. Drive to beach and hike back along sea wall to bridge. See gulls, cormorants, and herons along shore.

Go to Gastown for dinner. Eat pasta dishes at Uno Porto Amberto. Continue to window shop in Gastown and then back to hotel.

Saturday, September 21

Disaster strikes. Someone breaks into car over night taking camera, camera equipment, film, traveling case backpack, tickets, and passports. Spend most of morning recovering. Trade Thrifty cars. Cancel traveler's checks. File police report. The drive back to Seattle was not too happy. Get to airport and (because Jan has AAA itinerary) we get new tickets for re-issuing fee. Get to motel, eat mushroom broccoli chicken (a dish of our own making) and pot stickers. Turn in car, pack and go to bed.

Sunday, September 22

Day began early when ghost turned on TV. Get up at 5:30, catch van at 6:30, and get in huge line for check-in. Make plane just fine anyway. Take off on time. It's a beautiful day in Chicago. Too bad it's only a short stay here. Made it back to Cincinnati early, a record for air travel.