

## SECTION 9: JUNEAU & STEPHENS PASSAGE

**Wednesday, July 18, 2007**

**Auke Bay (Juneau)**

Juneau has three harbors; two small marinas are near downtown and one, the largest, is about eight miles north at Auke Bay. Often crowded, Auke Bay is where most transients seek moorage, often rafted together. Getting to the other two marinas and downtown Juneau via boat involves either transiting a complicated channel that dries at low tide and requires local knowledge, or taking a 33-mile trip around Douglas Island, the large island that shelters Juneau. Our plan was to base at Auke Bay, rent a car and tackle a long list of errands, sightseeing and shopping.

We got in to Auke Bay just in time to find a good space, a side tie on A dock, not too far from the ramp. Gill netting closed at noon today and the harbormaster says by 5 o'clock Auke Bay will be swamped. (Gill netting is limited to a certain number of days each week, usually opening on Sunday or Monday and closing on Wednesday or Thursday. Some bureaucrat figures it out, based on fish count, I think.)

We called immediately to get a rental car – but there were none to be had in Juneau. All three of Juneau's rental companies were completely out.....Looks like a business opportunity for someone (ship cars up by boat, find a place to keep them during the winter...perhaps not such a great business plan).



Drue, our physician friend from Pennsylvania on Makai, stopped by and talked about his youth, growing up on Douglas Island. If you needed to go somewhere, you rowed. When you got older and could earn the money, you got a little outboard...and kept moving up as skills and funds allowed.



There certainly weren't the rules and regulations of today. They'd go bear hunting once or twice a year. His brother shot his first bear at age 11! (Drue hasn't shot one; that brother is one of the most successful fishermen in Alaska. Crew members make \$200,000 a year just with their share.)

Drue told us that each December the Governor has an open house. Everyone in Juneau is invited. You'd think, Drue commented, that you might dress up, going to the Governor's mansion...but no, not Alaskans, they come in jeans and their ubiquitous brown rubber boots (aka "Alaska sneakers").

### **Thursday, July 19, 2007**

A busy day. We had such a good time listening to Drue talk that dinner wasn't until 8:30 our time and I missed my shower time. So got up at 6 o'clock Alaska time in order to shower, get Sam ashore while Bob started the engine to warm up the oil, gather laundry and strip the sheets....all so that we will be ready for the man who comes at 8 o'clock to change the engine oil. While that was going on, I took two carts filled with laundry about two blocks to the Laundromat. Discovered a waffle shop nearby with wonderful internet access! U of Alaska SE is nearby and this place seemed to draw students and faculty.

Not much else around. Sam helped, too. When the oil man came, she dropped her tennis ball into the engine area! (The understanding man retrieved it and held it captive.)

It has been 12 days since we last had shore power. Without shore power, we have limited hot water, just what the engine heats up. When it is gone, it's gone. So showers are limited and must be at night.

Laundry, oil and emails were done about noon so we called a taxi to go to Costco. Not sure of the savings -- \$25 fare one way! Rescued my ATM card along the way...It came with a nice note and artwork by Caitlin. (The one I had with me expired so Tracy mailed the new one to a Wells Fargo branch office.)

The weather station just announced that trollers for Chinook (King) salmon will close for the season at 11:59 p.m. on July 20. A lady I met at the Laundromat said it has been a very bad season, very slow. She proudly said she is a 5<sup>th</sup> generation fisherman. There is a big old house in Petersburg that now houses a book store. She said that was her great-grandparent's home. She was an older lady; in two years, when she and her husband can retire, she wants to get a boat -- one with a washer and dryer on it -- and just go cruising, like we are. No more Laundromats!

### **Friday, July 20, 2007**

Raining today and most of the boat/housekeeping chores have been done. We need a slow day. We are on sensory overload. Just when we think we can slow down and process all that we've seen, some new experience pops up! All fascinating but sometimes overwhelming.



Today has been a bit frustrating, the result of not being able to rent a car. Taxi fare to Costco was \$25 each way, more to downtown. We took a cab to town today, planning to copy the charts Spike gave us at Elfin Cove. The shop can't do it until the end of the day...Rain is pouring down...We ended up seeing almost nothing of Juneau and accomplishing little but cash from Wells Fargo and lunch -- all for a taxi fare exceeding \$50. Maybe the downer is also that we've "been there, done that" as Juneau is the place we started our 2004 cruise.

**Sunday, July 22, 2007**  
**Auke Bay to Taku Harbor**

33.61 miles (Route 26)

About 3.5 hours (2.5 hours to get around Douglas Island)

We didn't plan to come to Taku, but did so at the recommendation of our friend Drue on Makai, who grew up in Juneau and lived on Douglas Island. If you are in Juneau (and not Auke Bay where we were), it is just 20 miles south of Juneau.

There is a Taku Inlet, which apparently can develop strong winds and waves and is not fun to be on. Further south lies Taku Harbor, an open bay but described as “a popular well-placed anchorage offering some of the best protection between Juneau and the south end of Stephens Passage.”

Taku Harbor once was the site of a Hudson's Bay trading post. In the 1900's it had a big cannery. You can see the ruins, and rows of broken pilings where a wharf might have been.

Taku Harbor has a public float and lots of places to anchor. It certainly is not a “harbor” in the busy, populated way we might picture one; it's just a bay with a few deserted buildings and lots of trees.



Our Douglass guidebook warns of bears and river otters: “If you moor to the float, do not leave any food or garbage outside on your deck – you may be boarded by a black bear! River otters roam the dock area at all hours.”

We were concerned and hadn’t decided if we wanted to tie up or anchor out, so we set the crab trap near the cannery ruins and casually tied to the float to check it out.

There was just one boat on the dock when we arrived. A family from Juneau was having a wonderful time, kids fishing, deck chairs set on the dock. They scoffed at the concept of boarding bears and marauding otters and said they hadn’t seen any evidence of bears and just saw one river otter, in the water.

So we stayed, but didn’t reposition ourselves. so that we were on the outside of the float with our stern facing the opening of the cove.

A long floating wooden walkway connects the public float to land. Ashore a short gravel trail leads through rain forest-type vegetation to a cabin maintained by the park service for public use. Inside the cabin a two-level wood platform holds four foam mattresses (like bunk beds). A table and chairs, Franklin stove, sink and counter top complete the simple but clean and inviting furnishings.



The Alaskans left at the end of the day and we enjoyed a nice evening. We should have known that it was too good to last.