

British Columbia

July 26-August 10, 2013

Friday, July 26 - Since our flight to Vancouver left at 7:00 AM on Saturday, July 27, we decided to spend the night in Portland at the Hilton Garden Inn near the airport. We drove from Brunswick and had dinner at Boda in Portland. What a pleasant surprise! We enjoyed a succession of Vietnamese inspired small plates consisting of Crispy Quail, Kanom-Krok Quail Eggs, Crispy Squid, Ma-Hor (bite-sized fresh pineapple topped with ground pork, shrimp, onion and peanut), Grilled Shiitake Mushroom Skewers and Pork Satay. Afterward we checked into the hotel and went to sleep early since I planned to get up around 3:00 AM in preparation for our flight.

Saturday, July 27 - We arrived at Portland Jetport around 5:00 AM, parked the car, checked in for our flight and had breakfast. The flight left on time and we arrived at O'Hare in Chicago. Fortunately, we were flying first class so we were able to use the United club there. Finally, we left for [Vancouver](#) and arrived about 3:30 PM (West coast time), called Keith (our apartment manager) and caught the SkyTrain into [Gastown](#). We made the short walk to 27 Alexander Street where we met Keith and settled into a small, but comfortable apartment. It was pretty hot and the apartment had a small air-conditioner. Keith had asked us to use it for only five minutes at a time to avoid causing any problems. What? It was too hot to avoid using it for only five minutes. We used it, as needed, and had no problems. There was some kind of festival going on and there was a lot of rowdy noise outside all night. We didn't get much sleep.

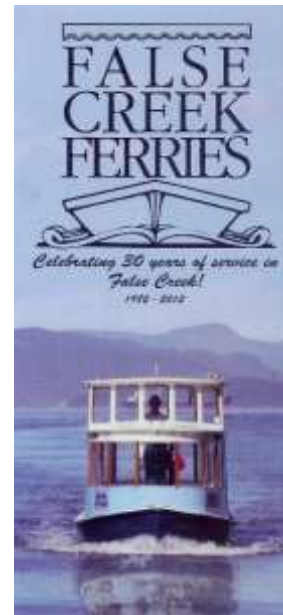
Sunday, July 28- I got up early and started walking around the neighborhood in Gastown to see what I could find in the way of breakfast. I passed the famous steam clock, which is just that, a clock that runs on steam. Eventually, I walked into the [Chinatown](#) area and found a great little place that sold dim sum, which we had for breakfast with some juice and coffee that we had bought the day before at a nearby grocery store. Later we got a call from Tom. He wanted to meet us somewhere for brunch so I suggested a restaurant called Wildebeest (now closed), which turned out to



be great. We met Tom, Alexander, Tom's friend Bill and his son Harrison at the restaurant. After brunch, Tom and Bill went out for a day on Bill's friend's boat so Cindy and I walked to the harbor where our flight to [Victoria](#) was to leave on Tuesday. We thought about walking to [Stanley Park](#) but it was quite a long walk. We opted instead to walk back to the apartment for a rest. Later we walked back to the harbor and had drinks at a place on the water where we watched seaplanes come and go and cruise ships sailing on the tide. Afterwards, we had dinner at [Guu-Izakaya](#), a funky little Asian inspired restaurant, on the way back to the apartment.

Monday, July 29 - We took a bus to [Granville Island](#) which is a great little community within Vancouver that has lots of shops, restaurants, galleries, entertainment venues, etc. After roaming around the public market (wishing we had something similar at home) and most of the rest of the island, we stopped at Edible Canada (now closed) next to the market for lunch. Cindy had a wonderful Watermelon, Feta and Quinoa salad and I had a fantastic Ling Cod Fish and Chips.

After lunch we walked around the market again. It was so fascinating, a cornucopia of food items. We had decided to take the little [False Creek ferry](#) to the Science World SkyTrain stop then take the SkyTrain back to Gastown. It was a fun trip. We saw the [2010 Olympic stadium](#) and the [Science World](#) building. When we left the ferry, we encountered an interesting sight



next to Science World. It was a sort of perpetual

motion exhibit with steel balls that dropped down onto plates that made ringing sounds, etc. We watched it for about twenty minutes before walking on to the SkyTrain.

Tom's friend Bill invited us to have dinner that night with his family. He arranged to pick us up at the apartment that afternoon and take us to his sister Patsy's house. Tom had told us that Bill had a classic car. While we were outside the apartment



waiting for them that afternoon, I saw this old Mustang drive by, which turned out to be Bill's, but they didn't see us since they were too far away. Eventually they did find us and Bill parked his car on the street while they walked to meet us. When we returned to the car, it wouldn't start. After several attempts to jump and start it and frantic calls to find someone to help us, Bill's friend (with the boat) just happened to drive by in his Jaguar and was able to finally get the Mustang jump started. Bill later told us that was the only time he had trouble getting his car started. Anyway, Bill drove us to Patsy's house. We met Patsy, Bill's wife Joanne, his daughter Lucy, his mom and dad, and several other family members had a great dinner and a good time.

Tuesday, July 30 - Cindy and I left the apartment and took a bus to the Fairmont Waterfront Hotel where we met Tom, Alexander and Bill. We wanted to have brunch at the restaurant where Cindy and I had drinks yesterday but they told us that we could not be served because Alexander was underage. Canada has some strange laws. Anyway, the hostess told us that there was a place farther down the wharf where we could be served. Meanwhile, I was getting anxious because we had left our luggage in Bill's car which was parked at a metered spot on the street and might be towed if the meter ran out. Bill, Alexander, and I walked back, got the luggage and began walking to the other restaurant to meet Tom and Cindy. It turned out to be a long walk and we finally got there only to discover that they didn't serve breakfast. Bill was disappointed and only had a couple of cups of coffee. Cindy, Tom, Alexander, and I had some lunch since it might be awhile before we were able to eat again. Afterwards we said goodbye to Bill and walked to Harbour Air to check in for our flight to Victoria. After a short wait, we boarded the plane and took off.

The flight over the Inside Channel was incredible. I was able to take a few pictures of Vancouver, some of the Channel Islands, and Victoria from the air.





We arrived in Victoria, called Winnie (the apartment manager) and walked over the harbor bridge to our apartment in the [Songhees](#) area. Winnie met us there and showed us around the apartment, which was great. It even had a parking space in the garage, which we would need since we planned to rent a car the next day. After settling in, we walked to a nearby store for some supplies for our stay.

Later, we walked into Victoria's Chinatown and had Japanese food at [Shizen Sushi](#) on Government Street.

Wednesday, July 31 - We walked into Victoria to the Budget rental car on Douglas Street where we rented a car. We then drove to a restaurant called [The Blue Fox](#) that Tom found on the internet. It was rated second highest for brunch in Trip Advisor. When we arrived, there was a line waiting to get in so we took our place. It turned out to be about a forty-five minute wait. Alexander wanted to get a haircut so he went to a shop a few doors down while we waited. Finally, we were seated and had an excellent brunch. We then drove to the [University of Victoria](#), which was the main purpose of our trip, for a tour of the campus and to find out more about enrolling Alexander for college there. The campus was really nice and we hope Alexander goes there. It would be a great excuse for coming back. When we finished the tour, we took advantage of our rental car and drove along the waterfront in Victoria. We could actually see the United States far across the channel. We arrived back at the apartment and Alexander and I played golf on the Wii in the apartment. We had a fun time. Alexander won the first round but I clobbered him in the second. He needs to learn something about sportsmanship. Later we walked into Victoria again to have oysters at The Oyster Bar, where they were having Buck-a-Shuck night. I ate twenty-seven oysters on the half-shell. Alexander had so many he said he felt mushy inside. It was a night to remember.

Thursday, August 1 - Tom and Alexander walked into Victoria while Cindy and I relaxed in the apartment. We planned to meet them for lunch at [J&J Noodle House](#) on Fort Street, which we did. Afterwards, we decided to drive to [Bear Mountain](#), a golf resort north of Victoria. Tom was intrigued because the development had cost HSBC a loss of two hundred million euros. We ended up driving too far north, which actually turned out to be great because we drove through some beautiful, wooded areas. Tom enjoyed it because it had been a long time since he had seen so many trees. We passed a house with a fence made entirely of snow skis. Eventually we found Bear Mountain and inquired at the real estate office about lots for sale. We were told that all the available lots had been sold and that one of the two Jack Niklaus designed golf courses there may be closed because of the financial difficulties involved. There was also a pleasant hotel in the development so we walked there and sat on their terrace overlooking one of the golf courses and had drinks. By the time we got back to the apartment, it was getting late so we decided to get takeout Mexican food from a nearby place called [La Taquiza](#).

Friday, August 2 - We awoke to a rainy day as we prepared to travel to [Salt Spring Island](#). After Winnie inspected the apartment, we drove into Victoria and returned the rental car. We had planned to have lunch at a great little place called [Red Fish Blue Fish](#), which was near the harbor air terminal and known for their fish-and-chips. However, because it was raining fairly steadily, we decided to eat at [The Spaghetti Factory](#), which was next door to Budget. After lunch, we walked to the bus stop to catch the 70 Express to [Swartz Bay](#) where we would take the ferry to [Fulford Harbor](#) on Salt Spring Island. After arriving at Fulford Harbor, we took a bus to [Ganges](#). Finally, we were able to pick up our rental car and drive to our [apartment](#) there. Since we had access to a great outdoor grill, we decided to walk to the nearby store and buy some steaks to grill. Tom was not able to contact Bill, who is staying at the [Vancouver Yacht Club](#) near [Long Harbor](#).

Saturday, August 3 - We walked to the Saturday farmer's market and happened to find Bill, Joanne, Patsy, and the kids having sushi at a little place nearby. Cindy, Tom, and I had some sushi then we all walked over to this place that had great ice cream, which Patsy's granddaughter had asked for. Next, we went shopping and I bought a Salt Spring Island t-shirt. Cindy bought a hat, tunic, and shirt. Bill invited us to his place at the yacht club so we drove to the Country Grocer, a store that had much better to offer than the Thrifty market near our apartment, where we had shopped the day before. We bought a leg of lamb, which we planned to marinate and grill, and some mushrooms and peppers. Then we drove to the yacht club and prepared the lamb for dinner later. Afterwards, we walked to the pool there and met Joanne and Lucy. Patsy was also there with her granddaughter and they were preparing to return to Vancouver on the ferry from Long Harbor. When she left, we all walked down to the dock and waved to them on the ferry as it sailed by the yacht club. Later we went back to Bill and Joanne's place, a quaint little A-frame cottage overlooking the harbor and started preparing dinner while the kids went fishing. We grilled the lamb and Joanne cooked the peppers and mushrooms and made a nice salad. We had a very enjoyable visit and when we left, Alexander wanted to stay with Harrison so Cindy, Tom and I drove home alone.

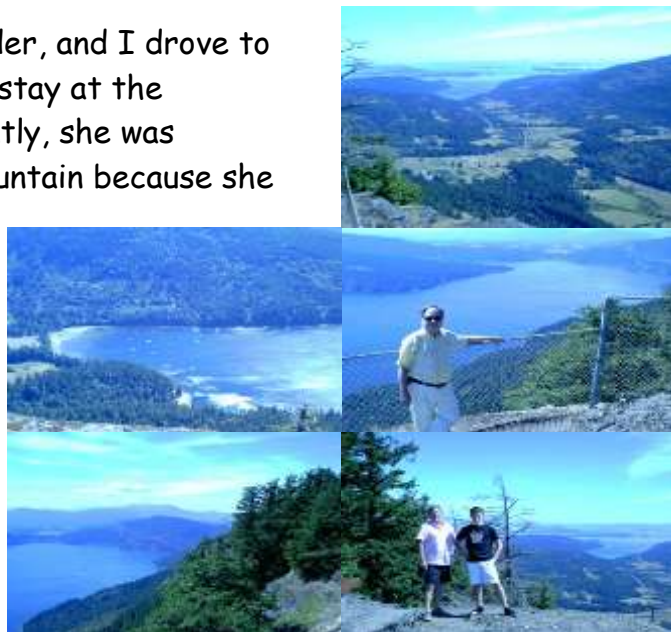


Sunday, August 4 - Tom and Bill arranged to meet at the Salt Spring Island Golf Club to see about getting golf lessons for Alexander and Harrison. Tom and I drove there and he and Bill made plans with the pro to get lessons over the next two days. Bill took Alexander and Harrison back to the yacht club. Later, Cindy, Tom and I went there too. There was some leftover lamb and Joanne made a nice salad to go with it, which we had for dinner.

Monday, August 5 - Cindy, Tom and I walked down the Rainbow Road to [Mouat Park](#) where we hiked through the trees and discovered a disc golf course. Later, we drove to [St. Mary's Lake](#) where Bill and Joanne had taken the kids for a swim and the rope swing. Alexander decided to come with us so we drove north on Upper Ganges drive to the northern tip of Salt Spring Island. On the way back, we stopped at the [Seaside](#) restaurant at [Vesuvius Bay](#) to get Alexander something to eat. We ordered some calamari, drinks, and a burger for him and watched the ferry for [Nanaimo](#) being loaded. They brought our drinks but, we found out later, they had lost our food order so we left. On the way home, we stopped at the Country Grocer to get ingredients for Tom's burgers, which we had for dinner at the yacht club.

Tuesday, August 6 - Alexander had stayed with Harrison again so Cindy, Tom and I decided to take a drive to Fulford Harbor where we had lunch at [Rock Salt](#), a great little restaurant on the water. We sat on their deck overlooking the water and I finally had the calamari I had wanted yesterday. After lunch, we drove east to [Ruckle Park](#) where we took a short hike then drove past Weston Lake back to the apartment. Tom and I drove to the Salt Spring Golf Club to watch Alexander take his final golf lesson. Tom and Alexander went to Mouat Park while Cindy and I went shopping. Later we prepared seafood skewers for grilling at the yacht club. I made some rice pilaf to go with them and it was a big hit with the kids.

Wednesday, August 7 - Tom, Alexander, and I drove to [Mount Maxwell](#) but Cindy decided to stay at the apartment to read her book. Apparently, she was concerned about the drive up the mountain because she had read that the road was very rough. However, I was very careful and it wasn't too bad. The views were beautiful and when we returned, Cindy wished she had joined us.



Joanne had promised to have a Mexican food dinner so we went there and had an enjoyable evening to end the day.

Thursday, August 8 - Bill came by the apartment to pick up Tom and Alexander to go swimming at St. Mary's lake, try the rope swing, and go kayaking to an island in Long Harbor to jump off a cliff there into the water. Cindy and I opted for a more serene lunch at the [Oystercatcher](#), a seafood restaurant on Ganges Harbor, and just relaxing at the apartment. Later we went to the Country Grocer to buy some lamb burgers to grill for dinner. We had invited Bill and family to have dinner at the apartment. They brought steaks for themselves, Tom, and Alexander. Joanne made a salad and I made rice pilaf again, a double order this time so everyone could get their fill.

Friday, August 9 - We straightened up the apartment and packed for our trip back to Vancouver. Tom made some sandwiches for lunch later. Bill came by, picked up Tom and Alexander, and drove them back to the yacht club. We returned the rental car and waited with a Caesar at [Moby's](#), a bar near Salt Spring Car Rental. Bill had agreed to meet us and take us to the yacht club but first, he drove Joanne and Lucy to Fulford Harbor to take the ferry over to Victoria where they were going to visit a friend. Afterwards, he met us and drove to the yacht club. We loaded all of our luggage into his Mustang and walked to the ferry landing. Bill had also planned to take the ferry to Vancouver with us and he drove the car and luggage to the landing. We ferried over to Tsawwassen (Vancouver ferry terminal), said our goodbyes to Tom, Alexander, Bill, and Harrison and caught the 620 bus to take us to the Holiday Inn Express near Vancouver airport. We settled into our comfortable room, had a drink, and walked to a nearby restaurant for dinner.

Saturday, August 10 - I woke early to take advantage of the free breakfast offered by the hotel. We packed and took the shuttle to the airport and our flight home. We arrived at Vancouver airport around 9:00 AM and went to the Air Canada club, since they are a Star Alliance partner with United. I wanted to have a drink but couldn't find the bar. It turned out that all the alcohol was covered up but I found it and mixed Cindy and me some Caesars. Just as I was finishing, the woman who was taking care of the club saw me and said that they weren't supposed to start serving until 11:00. But I had the drinks sitting there so I just took them back to our seats and we drank them. We will miss Canada, its friendly, helpful people, its beauty, and the intelligent elimination of pennies.