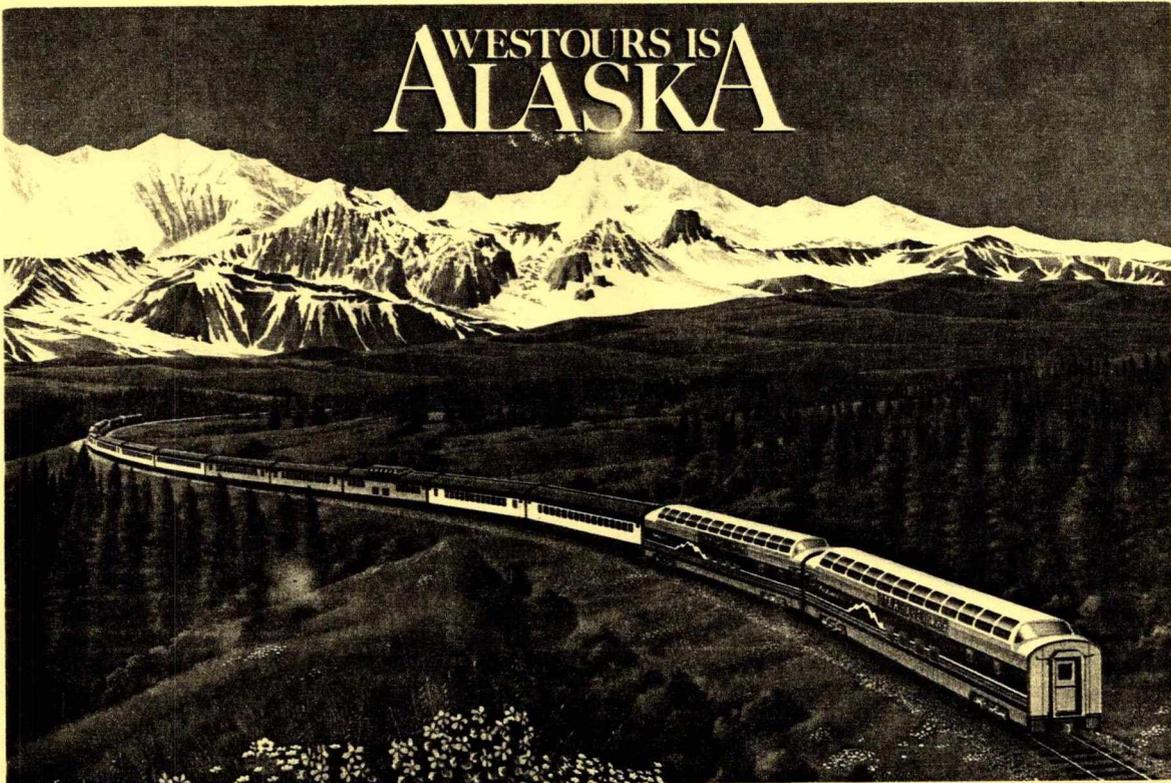
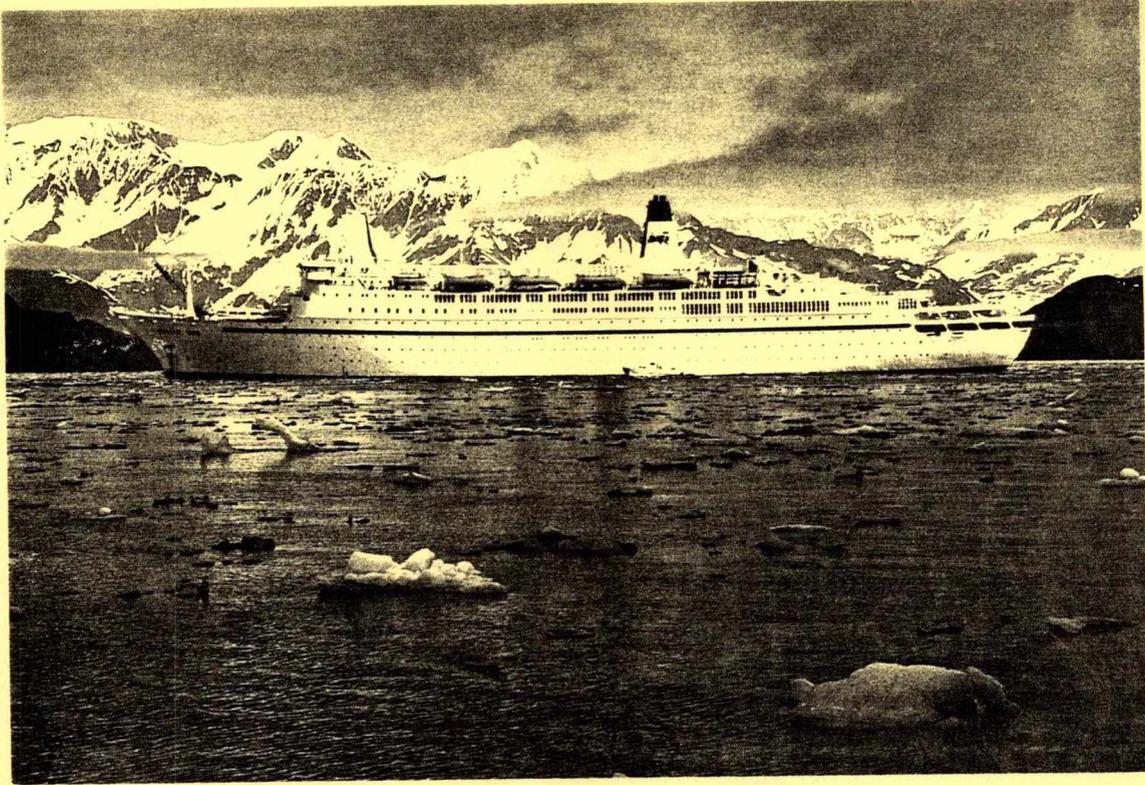


NORTH WITH THE SUN



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For the last several years, Elayne has been mentioning that she would like to take a cruise to Alaska. By last year, the prospects for taking such a cruise in 1989 looked favorable, so we started researching what was available.

The parameters were Size of Ship, Duration of Cruise, Cost, Available Dates, and Features (On-Board Activities, Ports Visited, Available Add-ons).

We decided against taking the coast-hugger and channel-prowler kind of cruise, which uses a small ship, in favor of the Inland Passage and Bay cruise on a large one. In order to maximize the chances of seeing the Aurora Borealis -- which is most prevalent to the Equinox -- we'd take the earliest cruise available in the Spring. Vacation limitations -- Elayne gets fewer days per year than I do, and we wanted to allow for Westercon and Worldcon -- would allow a seven day cruise and a 4-day land add-on. And I decided I wanted to visit Sitka, the Russian settled city of Alaska, so that limited us to certain cruises.

The best bet looked like Regency's 7-day cruise on the Regency Sun, with a 4-day land addition up into Dinali Park. It would sail from Vancouver on 14 May, make four stops along the way (including Sitka), and connect to a railroad-based trip through Dinali to Fairbanks. There was a \$250/person discount for early booking, and we shopped around for the best price from a travel agent, finally settling on The Cruise Company, with offices in Canoga Park and Glendale. We put down a deposit, put the rest on American Express a month or so later -- on the grounds that Amex will be glad to go after anyone who fouls up their customers -- and sat back to wait for information, and tickets and stuff.

There was already a minor scheduling complication, in that the Retreat scheduled for the Southern California Institute for Fan Interests -- "SCIFI," pronounced "Skiffy" -- was the weekend of May 12-14. But we figured we could leave early, get to Burbank and fly to Vancouver for the sailing in the late afternoon. Wait and see what the air schedule from the cruise people was like. (They did offer Burbank as a Gateway, from which flights to the sailing could be arranged for relatively inexpensive add-on fares, so we didn't have to go to L.A. International.)

The next complication came up when I found I was wanted at Baycon as a Masquerade judge. Baycon would be starting the Friday we returned from Alaska, and how I got to San Jose would depend on the time of return to Burbank -- or maybe I could talk the cruise arrangements people to flying me to San Jose instead of to Burbank. Couldn't hurt to find out. Wait for scheduling information. Should be available a month before the cruise.

April 15th came and went with no information. There had been some scheduling problems, and things wouldn't be ready until two weeks ahead of time. May 1st came and went. The Amex bill came in and I decided to sit on it to the time limit, just in case... .

Elayne beat on The Cruise Company, but they had no information. I sat on the phone trying to get through to Regency in New York and finally got some information: We would be flying out of Burbank to San Francisco on an 8:40 a.m. USAir flight, then changing to Air Canada for a noon flight to Vancouver. Tickets for everything would be sent a week before the sailing. OK, we'd have to leave the retreat early, like around 5:00 a.m., and there would be a 3-hour layover in San Francisco, but at least it was air all the way instead of partway by bus.

The 1-week deadline was a Sunday; I allowed them the Monday. No tickets or any communication. Tuesday we burned the phone lines to both targets again, and were assured by each that they would have definite information by that afternoon. Nope.

Wednesday morning early, once more the phone lines sizzled to New York. The tickets had been cut Tuesday night and would be Federal-Expressed to us by Thursday morning. I gave them Elayne's work address and asked to have the stuff sent there, not to the agent -- The Cruise Co. -- who would still have to get them to us. Regency gave us the schedule for the trip: Out of Burbank on Alaska Air at 7:40 a.m. to Seattle, then Motor Coach -- translation: bus -- to Vancouver. Great.

Thursday I went to work and waited for a call. When it came, there was Good News and Bad News: the tickets had arrived -- at The Cruise Co. Elayne took off early to go get them, rather than let any further transshipment happen. And when she got them home, there was Bad News and Good News: we weren't in the mid-deck cabin we'd been assigned; we had been bumped up from a 3rd Class to a First Class (having paid for a change from the base rate of Tenth Class to a Third Class). But we had the tickets, and the vouchers for land transportation and hotels, and various descriptive booklets. And the next day we left for the Lake Arrowhead retreat.

There isn't much one can say about the Retreat. Arrowhead Conference Center is owned by UCLA, and is used for a sort of Charity Summer Camp ("Uni-Camp"), as well as for university and other "educational" etc. retreats. Its facilities are generally quite pleasant -- but then, Elayne and I had one of the two-level very comfortable bungalow rooms, not one in the "Dormitory" which had troubles with its heating and its hot water supply during the weekend.

People straggled in Friday evening, Friday night, and into the small hours, depending on their own schedules, until all 40 of the Skiffyites and guests arrived. Skiffy met several times Saturday (and Sunday, after we'd left), as a whole, and as a couple committees. Mealtimes were at set hours, and between meals and meetings we partied and shmoozed. Mah Jongg predominated as a "sport," although a few energetic types made use of the Badminton court, and most participated in the afternoon "picnic" despite the weather.

It was generally regarded as a Good Way to get away from other concerns and have some time to consider Skiffy matters -- between partying, anyway -- without as many outside interruptions. We expect to do it again.

We set my watch alarm for 3:00 a.m.. It didn't go off, but I woke up at 3:30 and by 3:45 we were in the car with Elayne at the wheel, creeping slowly down the fog-enshrouded mountain. By 6:00 we were back at The Tower. We fed the cats, traded luggage, said hello to Elayne's parents, who were house-sitting, and had her father drive us to the airport. A couple free Frequent Flyer coupons got us upgraded to First Class (for additional leg room), and we took off for Portland and then Seattle.

A Motor Coach picked us up at the airport for the two and a half hour trip to Vancouver, with a driver who was apparently in the pay of the Washington State Chamber of Commerce, from the quality and quantity of his praises for the area.

The only stop was at the Canadian border, where passengers were allowed a 20-minute break for a rest stop and a visit to the Duty-Free shop. All I wanted was a drink, but some people can get in trouble anywhere. There was nothing to drink but coffee at the Duty-Free, but a gas station behind it had a soft drink machine with (among other selections) Diet Coke. I fed in sixty cents as required, and without my pressing any button, out came a can of Sprite. OK, maybe the previous purchaser had left the Sprite button jammed. I fed it another sixty cents and pressed the Diet Coke button. Out came another can of Sprite. Carrying both cans, I went to the cashier's window:

Elephant (politely): Excuse me, your drink machine seems to have a problem.

Cashier Bimbo: We don't have anything to do with the machine except that it's here.

Elephant (still politely; moving toward machine): In that case you won't mind if I break it.

Cashier Bimbo (sticking head out of side door): I'll just have to call the police, sir!

Elephant: Please do. (Waits patiently; by the time the bus starts reloading, nothing has happened.)

So we drank Sprite. Yech.

As we drove into Vancouver and crossed False Creek, I was looking to see what remained of the Expo 86 structures. Not much. The dome (of Expo Centre?) was still there. I wonder whether anyone was able to save "Highway 86," the wonderful concrete Highway sculpture with all kinds of vehicles imbedded in the concrete?

By 3:00, we were driving under Canada Place to the ship-loading docks, and a short time later we were in the queue to board the Regent Sun. [LASFAPans should be warned that I picked up seven new -- and different, of course -- Canadian lottery tickets with which to annoy them at some future time. I even traded in my \$2

winner for another ticket and \$1 in cash, just so I'd have all the available varieties of ticket.]

On the boarding ramp, we cattle -- or maybe sheep; I wasn't sure whether to bleat or moo -- were chivvied along and then split into Main Seating and Late Seating to receive table assignments. The ratio was apparently 2-to-1 preferring Main Seating, so we of the Late Seating group got through a lot faster. I did get the impression they didn't have all necessary paperwork ready: our Late Seating table assignment card is a "Main Seating" card with that phrase scratched out and "8:30" written in. Up the last ramp, stopping for the obligatory Boarding Photograph by the Official Photographer, and onto the ship.

We were guided along the fairly narrow and low-ceilinged corridors -- I wondered if my claustrophobia was going to kick in, but it never did -- to our room on the 8th floor (Riviera Deck). We dumped our stuff and went back on deck to watch the sailing.

Ours was the first cruise ship to sail from Vancouver this season, and it was the 125th year of Vancouver's being a port. There were several thousand balloons to let loose, a band to play as the ship cast off and moved out, and hundreds of sightseers with nothing better to do than come down to Canada Place to watch. I did think that the least they could do would be to give us one of the "125th Anniversary" balloons, but Nooo... . But it was very nice Ceremony, and the passenger photographers -- still and video -- jockeyed for position to film the departure.

We explored the ship from top (9th Floor or Sports Deck) to bottom (1st Floor or Fitness Deck). Elayne decreed that using the elevators was not permitted, on the grounds that using the stairs might at least work off some of the excess weight likely to be gained by the almost incessant eating that would be going on. We located the Computer Room (six PC-XTs with basic word processing programs and share ware games), the Library (about 30 shelves of miscellaneous books, including a mid-50's Encyclopedia Britannica), the Casino (50 quarter or dollar chip slots, plus blackjack tables and a "Caribbean Poker" table), and the various lounges.

An avalanche of papers appeared in our stateroom -- or under the door -- introducing Schedules, suggesting contests, summarizing the News of the Real World, and promoting the various shore excursions available during the cruise.

Dinner was divided into the two Sittings, but for this first night it was Open Seating, and we were not required to find Table 47. Our table-mates included two elderly gentlemen from Okeechobee, Florida, one of whom kept up a running monolog in the guise of a conversation-generating inquiry as to where everyone else was from and what they did. He asked the gentleman from New York if he was a stockbroker, saying he looked like one. The latter denied such an occupation, but the Floridian referred to him as that again and the New Yorker finally had to demand his identity as a psychologist. Aside from the Okeechobee-ite dinner was fine.

Monday morning we caught a late breakfast, then participated in the Compulsory Lifeboat Drill. It went very well, actually, in spite of my feeling like a sheep being chivvied along with the rest of the herd to some unknown destination. (My occasional "Baah! Baah!" wasn't received too enthusiastically in the Elayne Dept.) I do know such things are necessary, not just legalistic nuisances. They mustered everyone at predetermined stations, moved them to the Promenade Deck and lined them up, and even lowered two of the lifeboats -- one on each side of the ship -- to show us how things would be done in case of an emergency.

Next was a slide show describing the various shore excursions available during the cruise. Since the reservations for the excursions had to be made today, the forms had to be turned in by noon, with the tickets to be picked up -- and paid for -- starting at 2:00. (The reservations were radioed ashore to agents who would make the arrangements with the companies involved in providing the excursions.) Once we found out the excursions could be paid for on plastic, we stopped worrying about affording them and just concentrated on picking ones we really wanted.

We also picked up the first Daily Quiz, which was a contest listed in the group of activities for which participation would earn one "Wooden Nuggets," which could eventually be exchanged for prizes. This first quiz was on Girls' Names in Songs, and we turned ours in with one blank and a couple of guesses. (It eventually won, with 4 of 25 wrong -- one of which I realized was wrong a while after it was turned in, but... .) Further inquiry about what one got for participation and/or winning revealed that participating got you nothing, and winning got One Nugget. BFD.

We picked up our excursion tickets, and, since the time we had to do so interfered with our scheduled Second Seating lunch time, we invaded the Lido Lounge buffet for lunch instead of going to the Cordon Rouge Dining Room. This sort of scheduling conflict is a bug that the management needs to watch out for in the future, but on a first cruise it is perhaps overlookable.

In the afternoon, I decided to try the Bingo Game: 3 cards for \$10, for a set of four games. Two sets per session, with the last game in each set being a Jackpot Game. Well, with marvelous luck, I won the very first game, and collected \$30.00! ["Always let the suckers win a little first..."]

Dinner was Formal, and was preceded by the Captain's Cocktail Party. The Official Photographer was set up to catch people as they came to the cocktail party, and take portrait shots. The Captain and his Hotel Manager, introduced by the Official Hostess, formed a receiving line at the entrance to the cocktail party, where yet another photographer lay in wait to snap you as you shook hands with The Captain.

After the receiving line was through, the Captain introduced all of his senior officers -- truly an international set, with sev-

eral from Greece, one from France, one from the U.S., one from England, and the most striking of all, the Purser (who was attractive enough to begin with, but also had her great mass of blonde hair done up in a Lion's Mane style which looked really great!), from Finland.

At dinner we met our regular table-mates: a retired couple from Oregon, and a couple in their 40's from Cincinnati. The table seated eight, but apparently the other two had been permanently reassigned to First Seating because they were part of a tour group. So for the entire cruise, we were a table of six. (I wonder if there was any way of compensating the service staff, who had two fewer people from whom to get tips?)

In the way of introductory small talk -- at which I am not very accomplished -- I asked the gentleman from Cincinnati what line of work he was in. He sort of smiled slowly, and his wife almost giggled, waiting to hear what he'd say: "Well, I'm in the religion line."

Jerry never did mention what denomination his church was, but his business card lists him as minister of the St. Paul United Church of Christ (Hamilton Ave., Cincinnati). He too was armed with both videocamera and still camera -- newer and better ones than mine, and ones he was quite obviously better at using than I am with mine. I'll have to trade up and/or get more practice!

We met our regular waiter, Jerszy, who was Polish. He declared that he preferred to be "George." We also met Yayah, our busboy, who was Turkish. Each of them speaks several languages, so Jerszy got to put up with my occasional attempts at German or Russian. Yayah was luckier -- I don't even pretend to know any variant of Turkish, and I don't try French except to annoy Robbie Cantor.

There was a variety show in the Regency Lounge later that night -- there would be one each night -- which we decided wasn't worth staying up for. If any of them were, we never knew it.

Tuesday the 16th, the Sun docked in Ketchikan around 9:00 a.m., and the various tour groups departed. Elayne and I had signed up for the Misty Fjords Float Plane tour at 9:30, and went by bus to the Temsco Company's waterfront office. There we divided into groups of ten and were assigned a pilot and his red-and-yellow Otter plane. (Except that group C -- Elayne's and mine -- got the one blue otter.)

We flew over the nearby mountains, with the pilot describing (over the radio into our earphones) what we were seeing. Eventually he landed the float plane on Rudyard Bay, and those who wanted to do so could climb down onto the floats to look around and take pictures. Elayne and I and at least six of the eight other passengers took advantage of the opportunity. The stop lasted about 20 minutes, and was our first taste of the "Other World" feeling it is possible to get in the middle of the Alaska wilderness (and probably in others).

Then we flew back and into the most dangerous area: the souvenir counter. Various pieces of junk having been purchased, we caught the bus back to the dock, then set out for a walking tour of downtown Ketchikan. We bought more junk, had some film developed at a 1-hour shop, walked up the hill to the totem pole and rubbed its belly for luck, and conducted a futile search for decaf tea. (It was one thing the ship didn't have, and Elayne's supply was running low.) We got back to the ship in time for lunch (open seating, since most of the passengers would still be ashore).

At 4:00, the Sun sailed for Juneau, and at 4:15 the Bingo players sailed for another eight games. The ship, fortunately, had better success than I did.

Wednesday we woke up with the ship stopped in Edicott Arm, from where it would turn around and continue towards Juneau. We headed for the promenade to take some pictures of the small ice floes floating by, then to the breakfast buffet.

A stop at the Purser's Office took care of cashing a TravCheck (no fee for doing so), and we pulled our half dozen Official Photos from the photo wall for decisions of purchase or discard. (The Boarding photo went into the discards, as did the cocktail lounge one and one of me in the Captain's Receiving Line -- he looked half dead and half bored.) Two of the Keep-It stack needed reprinting to eliminate accidental blemishes in the processing.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>RACE 1</p>  <p>№ 2720</p> | <p>HORSE NO.</p> <p>2</p> |
| <p>RACE 2</p>  <p>№ 3525</p> | <p>HORSE NO.</p> <p>2</p> |
| <p>RACE 3</p>  <p>№ 2865</p> | <p>HORSE NO.</p> <p>2</p> |

The Daily Quiz -- daily when we're at sea, at least -- was on TV shows, stars and such. Elayne and I together could come up with only about seven of the 25, so we gave it up as a bad job.

The Indoor Horse Races -- three races of 6 horses advanced over a counted-step course in the lounge by means of dice-throws -- left Elayne up \$8.00 and me out \$6.00. (My horse in the second race tied for the win but lost the race-off of five steps.)

There was also another Mileage Pool -- to guess the number of miles traveled since leaving Ketchikan. I was off by about 31 miles -- apparently we went off on a side course, as we'd gone 290 miles when Ketchikan to Juneau was only 279, and we weren't quite to Juneau by noon, which was the cutoff time mark. Another \$2.00 shot -- tsk, tsk.

The Sun anchored off Juneau, and everyone who wanted to do so went ashore on the two motor launches she carries. Elayne and I piled onto a bus for a short trip to Mendenhall Lake, where we traded our shoes for Wellington Boots, added a poncho and a life jacket, signed a quitclaim for possible damages or property loss, and climbed into a large rubber raft. With seven other passengers and a guide to do the maneuvering (and lecturing), we then floated down the Mendenhall River, which leads from the glacier-created lake to the sea. There were some rapids, and there were several shallows to be negotiated. Of the three rafts in our group, one got stuck twice -- once to the extent that the guide had to get out and haul it off the obstruction. The rapids -- nothing like those of the Colorado, thank you very much -- got a few of us (those sitting on the outsides) a little wet, but nothing problematical.

The only other difficulty came when the guide let his left oar go too deep into the river. The current took it out of his hands, and the near end gave me a good crack in the back of the head. If I'd had any brains left to addle -- which I probably didn't, having agreed to come on the float trip in the first place -- it might have been worse. As it was, it didn't even hurt much after 20 minutes or so, though there will probably be a bump there for a while.

About three-fourths of the way through the trip, we landed for a break, and the guides broke out snacks: reindeer sausage, smoked salmon jerky, cheese, seabiscuit (which doubled as biodegradable plates), and a concoction called "Mendenhall Madness" which included brandy, apple juice, and champagne. (For the teetotal, there was plain apple juice.)

The bus met us at a convenient landing area, and we traded the trip gear for our shoes and a button proclaiming "I Shot the Mendenhall." There were also t-shirts to buy, and if one had made arrangements at the start of the float one could get a picture of oneself as the raft was shooting the rapids. In all, it was lots of fun, and we might even go for another similar trip closer to home -- as long as it's under the control of professionals, and the length is less than a day. I won't sit in front of the guide.

The bus dropped us off back at the pier, and we set off exploring downtown Juneau. In general, since the time was now after 5:30, downtown Juneau was closed. The Forest Service building was closed, so I couldn't get my National Park stamp for having been to Mendenhall. The Russian Orthodox Church was closed, so we couldn't see it (except by peering through a front window). One of the two bookstores was still open, but was obviously trying to close. The other one was closed.

But a lot, if not all, of the shops were open, and we got in our usual junk-shopping. Elayne even found a needlework store that was openable. (It was locked, but it was supposed to be open, and a friend of the clerk, coming over from next door, pried her out

of the nearby eatery to let us in. Once in, Elayne found a needlework kit of the Alaskan Blueberry and bought it.) I found the Mother lode of Souvenir Pins -- the design studio that makes the things. It also sells them. Luckily/unfortunately, it was closed. Happily/stupidly, I left my business card so I would get their catalog.

We went back to the ship for dinner, while others were going on the Salmon Bake excursion or otherwise eating in Juneau. None of our usual four dinner table-mates were there, but two other couples were at our table when we arrived. Apparently there had been an earlier announcement that Main and Late seatings would be ignored for the evening, and these were Main Seating couples who were recently returned from town. They were quite pleasant too -- pairs of inlaws from Michigan.

When it came time for dessert, two of the inlaws ordered the butter pecan ice cream: two scoops, George! He smiled, and scamp-ered off for them. When he got back, another of the four finally decided on dessert -- butter pecan ice cream: two scoops, George! That unfortunately encouraged Elayne to ask for two different desserts: the pseudo-babarhum, and the little pudding cake. No problem, smiled George. And what did I want? Er... butter pecan ice cream. Two scoops? Er... . Oh, one is too small! Oh, all right, George... . I mean, if the waiter is going to push des-erts, one might as well cooperate, right?

There were a couple contests scheduled for the evening, beginning with Bingo at 10:45, so I headed for the Regency Lounge around 10:40. I got there just in time for the last part of the Mag-ician's act (which was the intertwined rings, and looked quite good). That was followed by the Cruise Director, Derek Mann, doing "The Warthog" by Flanders and Swann. I suspect that very few others in the audience have ever heard of Flanders & Swann, but I've underestimated the hoi polloi before. Derek is no Mi-chael Flanders, but no one is, these days. He announced that his accompanist for the number, Alan Jones, would be doing the Music Quiz in the Monte Carlo Court after Bingo, and the Regency Lounge stage was cleared for the game.

The bad news was that I didn't win anything at Bingo -- the good news was that they had only one set of games instead of the usual two. (There hadn't been any Bingo scheduled for Wednesday until the passengers set up a sufficiently loud request for it.) Then I wandered to the Monte Carlo Court right next door to the Regency Lounge, and found Alan Jones was on the 3rd from last question. Sniff!! So much for my winning any nuggets tonight. (Especially since I didn't know the answer to two of the three last ones.) The winner, however, apparently only got 8 or 9 of the 20 ques-tions right. I probably could have done that good, I decided, after listening to the answers afterward. I grumped politely to the genial pianist, who said the schedule had been fouled, and there'd probably be another contest later in the week. (He hadn't heard the "after Bingo" announcement, though he was at the piano right behind Derek.) OK... . (I'd probably be better off buying

the things I'm trying to win enough nuggets to get!)

Thursday the 18th, we docked early -- 8:00 a.m. -- in Skagway, so those of us who wanted breakfast got up early and attacked the buffet in the Lido Lounge. Then off the ship and across the dock to the waiting parlor cars of the White Pass and Yukon Railroad, for an excursion to the White Pass summit. Each of the cars is named for an Alaskan or Yukon lake -- unfortunately, the one I wanted to ride, Lake Lebarge, was the last one, which was the crew car, not available to passengers. (One point to any literary snob who knows what was running through my alleged mind to make me want to ride that car.)

The tour guides had no objection to the photography-nuts standing on the platforms of the cars to take pictures as the train traveled the 20.4 miles to the summit, though they asked us not to stand between the cars. I hogged one platform corner for at least half the trip up, using the videocam most of the time and the still camera a few times.

The White Pass, heavily used by the Gold Rush prospectors in 1898, was also known (in part) as Dead Horse Gulch, from the approximately three thousand carcasses of horses and mules that died on the route and were pushed to the bottom of the valley. The guides said that pack animals were a necessity, because the Canadian authorities wouldn't let a Sourdough through the border to continue toward the Yukon unless he had at least a year's worth of supplies with him. That amount frequently weighed a literal ton. Entrepreneurs would buy horses and mules for \$3.00 each in San Francisco -- those that weren't in the best health or condition -- and ship them to Alaska in the holds of ships, under conditions not conducive to maintaining, let alone improving, the health of the beasts. Then they would sell the animals for \$500.00 each to prospectors. One wonders whether some disgruntled prospector, stuck with one or more now-dead beasts and having to quit the trail, didn't go back to Skagway and add an Entrepreneur Carcase to the ones in Dead Horse Gulch.

At the summit, the train actually travelled a short distance into Canada, in order to reach the switch-tracks that allow the three diesel engines to move to the other end of the train for the return journey. Apparently there has been a bit of a pother about this necessity (the switch-track was already there, in Canada, before the railroad was reactivated as a tourist attraction). It is complicated by the fact that the railroad is owned by Canadians, but is run by and under the rules of, the Americans (which is better than no operation at all for the owners). None of the passengers is supposed to get off the train while it is stopped for the switch, but of course several did -- a couple to grab snow from the nearby bank and bring it back to throw at companions. For once, neither Elayne nor I was involved in this. Though if Elayne could have reached the bank without leaving the train, I would have been in trouble -- and she would have been tossed off the train into the snowbank. I wonder if I could have managed to bring some back for Marty Cantor... .

The parlor cars were set up with two rows of chairs, both facing forward, so that the front row had the best view. In order to be fair to all passengers, the two rows exchanged at the summit. Having had a front-row seat on the way up (even if I did spend a lot of the time outside on neither row), I moved to the back row for the return. And went to sleep. As usual.

The train let us off in Downtown Skagway (such as it is), and we went junk-shopping. Once more the disadvantage of being the First Cruise Ship into the area was made known: lots of places weren't opening until next week. Still, by the time we walked up and back on the main street we'd found the few pieces of junk I needed to add to my collection: a patch, a pin, and a sticker. I also found my first 1989 National Parks passport stamp, in the visitor center.

Digression: I don't know how many people are willing to admit that they collect tourist junk, but in case there are some, I have a question: when you visit someplace from which you want to get a souvenir, do you buy one for the area, or for the specific place? New York City or Statue of Liberty? Florida or Cape Canaveral? Washington D.C. or The Air & Space Museum? I happen to prefer the specific place -- which makes it difficult at times, because the companies that make the things seem to prefer the area. I can see the point, I suppose: there are many more junk sellers that can sell "Alaska" stuff than can sell "Skagway" stuff. Even so... .

From the End of Town we walked to the Temsco Helicopters office, located between the aforementioned End of Town and the ship dock. We were a little early, so we signed in, traded our shoes for "Moon Boots," and waited until the Temsco bus brought the other passengers for the 2:00 flight. When everyone got there, we loaded up three helicopters -- four passengers and the pilot in each -- and flew to the nearby glacier. And landed. Everyone got out and walked around on the glacial ice field. Crunch, crunch, crunch... . Two of the helicopters took off again, leaving us there to absorb the really extraordinary scenery. The guide pointed out various features of the glacier, and described the measurements and movement of the thing. (This one is receding -- melting more in the summer than it freezes in the winter.)

The glacial blue striations of the ice field, and the glacier stream running down across the field, getting deeper and deeper, then running down the face of the field to form a river in the valley below -- they verge on fantasy. One of the party was Curtis, the 26-year-old Bingo Director from the Sun. Turns out he's from Redondo Beach, California, and is on his first trip to Alaska. There is the possibility I should have pushed him off the glacier just to try to improve my Bingo luck.

After about 20 minutes, the other two choppers returned, disgorged more tourists, and loaded us up again for the flight back. They gave us a certificate for Standing On a Glacier, and I

bought a patch before we headed back to the ship. They had a T-shirt, but it was just for Temsco Helicopters, with a glacier in the background. My "Specific Places Only" governor kicked in, and I didn't buy one. If they'd had "Skagway" on it, I probably would have. The patch, at least, said "Skagway." (Temsco also has glacier trips from Juneau.)

To get back on board, one was supposed to show the yellow boarding pass handed out in Vancouver. It became obvious, though, that checking was perfunctory. so this time the yellow paper I flashed was my address list. Worked just fine. We were back on board by 3:00, in time to lose another eight games of Bingo. I should have pushed him off the glacier! (Or maybe given up and gone to "The Art of Napkin Folding" that the Maitre D' was giving at the same time.)

Dinner was Formal Dress again. My threat to boycott (and eat at the buffet instead) ran into Elayne's quite understandable objection that she'd bought two formal gowns, had every intention of wearing the second one, and this was the last formal occasion. I was going to dinner. OK, OK.

Actually, Dinner was quite good, as usual -- even if it was French Night... . There was another Official Picture taken as we left the Dining Room: the dress came out fine, we came out terrible. So it joins the junkers.

Friday dawned very early: the Sun anchored off Sitka at 6:30 a.m. and the tour groups went ashore at 7:00. Since there were only two tours, there were huge numbers signed up for each, and the two 50-passenger tenders needed help from a 185-passenger boat sent out from the land, in order to get us tourists ashore in any reasonable amount of time.

When we landed, we were met by guides in dark maroon coats. They had discovered a new way to display the tourist pins they collected over the years -- wear them on your coat! (One of them remarked that it was great until you had to have the coat cleaned and therefore had to take all the pins off before sending it to the cleaners.) Elayne said it looked like every old Nehru Jacket in the state had been dyed maroon and pressed into service. The style was similar... .

The Sitka Historical Tour was a bus tour, with many buses weaving their routes among the four or five featured attractions. Ours started with the National Park HQ, where there was a museum, and a slide presentation of Sitka history. (There was also a book shop that had my second National Parks passport stamp of the trip and the regional and national stamps for 1989, which they hadn't had in Skagway.)

From there we went to a performance -- at 9:00 in the bloody morning! They must be desperate for tourist money. -- of the New Archangel Dancers. They are an all-female troupe that performs Russian (and similar) dances in Sitka and occasionally on tour.

They are pretty good, though my memory of the Ukrainian dancers in Winnipeg refuses to let me consider them the best. There was no objection to our taping the performance, so several videocameras were whirring away during the half hour show.

The next stop was the Russian Orthodox Church, which was a rebuilt copy of the original 19th Century building (which burned down in 1967), containing almost all the contents of the original. The contents had been rescued by townspeople during the fire -- including the huge gilt doors to the altar, all the icons, paintings, and such. I was rather uneasy in the place -- it didn't feel right. Maybe if it had been set up as a museum, I might have been comfortable with it, but it felt wrong as a church. Maybe it was just too different from what I've seen before. (There were, for instance, no pews, benches, or other seats. The congregation stands for services.)

From the church, the bus drove a few miles to Old Sitka, the site of the original Russian fort. Bald eagles were sighted every few minutes, on the left -- waterfront -- side of the bus. Two Senior Citizen ladies who had been seated on the left side for the first parts of the trip, but were obliged to take right-hand seats for this part because others were sitting in their previous seats, were very voluble about the unfairness of it all -- how they would have been able to see the eagles if they had their original seats, and... and... . I suggested that there were other left-hand seats still open at the back of the bus. They wanted to be closer to the door. No pleasing some people. (Of course, on the way back, the right-hand seats were water-side. That probably didn't suit them, either, because we only saw four eagles instead of six.)

There was to be one more stop on the bus tour, but several of us opted out of the college-housed museum, in favor of having at least an hour to go shopping. There was a Russian store, with a beautiful collection of hand-painted lacquer boxes, there were shops with handcrafted art objects, and there were the usual junk shops. I found my standard junk -- pin, patch, & sticker -- and then both of us dithered about a couple other items.

In Elayne's case, it was a lacquer box painted with a Firebird -- a red box instead of the usual black. In my case it was a belt buckle incorporating the apparently last available Sitka Trade Coin. The coins were no longer available at the Centennial Center (whose display case had a copy), or the bank, or the coin dealer. And the jewelry-and-collectibles shop (suggested as a possible source by the person at the Centennial Center) had only the one left after selling all the others to some visiting Russians who wanted to send them home. The buckle could be taken apart and the coin removed. So, on the grounds that regretting the expense if I did buy it was of much lower probability than regretting the lost opportunity if I didn't, I trotted back and bought it. Elayne also went back and bought the Firebird Box. Then, with about ten minutes to go before the last tender would leave for the ship, we headed back.

At 12:30 the Sun sailed for the Columbia Glacier. All those who had gone on the shore excursions were, of course, hungry, since there hadn't been time for picking up lunch while in Sitka. Those with the Main Seating could get right in to the dining room at 12:30, but the Second Seating group had to wait until 2:30. There was a buffet available in the Lido Lounge, and there were hot dogs and hamburgers available in the Riviera Grill. The lines became huge very quickly in both places. Coming up from the gangplank floor (4) we stopped at the Lido (6), which was jammed, and then continued to the Riviera (8) which had a shorter line, but was moving slower as the grill filled orders individually, cooking things up in batches. The Riviera grill is outside, though under a covering, and it was getting cold as the ship moved off north again. Elayne gave up and headed back to the Lido; I got stubborn and stayed. So of course, when I finally got my food and sat down at one of the deck tables -- outside the covered area -- it started to rain. The diners got friendlier at the few sheltered tables.

After finishing, I scuttled down the outside passageway and into the cabin area of the Riviera Deck to our room, and found Elayne crashed out, not feeling well. At 2:30 she was still disinterested in any more lunch than she had had in the Lido, so I went down to the Cordon Rouge alone. Very alone -- no one else at our table showed up. Good thing I don't need company to enjoy eating... .

The Afternoon Gambling Division of the Cruise Entertainment Department first auctioned the ownership of the six horses that would be raced on Saturday. The idea was that the owner of the winning horse in the third and final race on Saturday would take away all the money garnered by the auction of the six horses. The owners would be encouraged to decorate, name, and describe the Wondrous Features of their horses before the race. The auction didn't start off very well: Curtis was barely able to coax \$15 out of the audience for each of the first three horses. The next two brought \$20 each, and only the sixth and final horse brought any real action, as the bids reached \$45.00. Total Purse: \$130.00.

There followed eight more games of Bingo, wherein I again discovered I'd be better off playing at horseshoes or thermonuclear devices.

As the Sun proceeded into deeper water, the ship rolled more and more. There was a presumption of seasickness being Elayne's problem, though it produced headache instead of nausea. I got her some (free) pills from the Purser's office, which was apparently doing a land office business in handing the things out. The rolling never bothered me, though it was intriguing coming down the stairs between decks, where you were going with the ship's motion half the time and against it the other half -- and the motion was now aggravated.

Figuring that (1) I had nothing better to do until dinner, and

(2) I really ought to make use of the facility at least once before the end of the cruise, since I'd come prepared to do so, I went down to the indoor pool and gymnasium on the lowest deck (called the Fitness Deck). An earlier reconnaissance had indicated a lack of changing area, so I put on T-shirt, swimsuit, and zori, added the pool robe we'd deliberately bought for the trip, and headed for The Depths feeling somewhat conspicuous. The nearby elevator ("A") only went to deck 4, so from there I shuffled around to the B stairs (being unsure whether the B elevator would be useful) and descended the rest of the way.

The gymnasium had stationary bicycles, rowing machines, a couple nautilus machines, a ping-pong table, and the pool. Doors led off into Men's and Women's Saunas. I hung up robe and shirt on a hook, noting that the two or three others in the place hadn't left anything hanging about. Did 10 miles of bicycling, and some swimming, then investigated the sauna. Oh: that's where things were hiding -- changing area, lockers, showers. Great. I moved my stuff, feeling like something of a fool for not checking things out more thoroughly. Then I hit the sauna for 20 minutes or so and went away. (The posted rules say 5 to 15 minutes for the sauna, but I suspect that's to limit the run-of-the-mill (or -ship) oldster. I've got a mini-sauna at home, and don't have a problem with a half hour at the temperature they were using.)

The B elevator did go to the Fitness Floor, so I took it up. Its top floor, however, was 7, not 8, and it let me off right behind the Theater, with no inside passageways available. Nothing for it but to trek the length of the Promenade. Uh-huh, and when I got to the end of the Promenade, I realized I was on the wrong side, and would have to trek back again or go through the other promenade. Once through two promenades seemed better than twice through one, and eventually I arrived at the right area to escape up the A stair to our room.

Sometime around 8:00 I decided to get some typing done, and took the laptop down to the Regency Lounge, where the pianist was doing a Classical recital. I figured I could hide in the back, away from any audience, and use the light from the windows to write up my report. Wrong! There was a seat at the back all right, and there was plenty of light from the windows -- the sun wouldn't set until well after 10:00 -- but within five minutes of my arrival, the place was packed, and even the soft clicking of the laptop's keys would have been an annoyance. So I sat and enjoyed the music instead, then went to dinner.

As she had thought likely, Elayne didn't show up for dinner. It was probably just as well, since we could sit and look through the distant windows and watch the ocean alternately appear and disappear in the distance, as the ship continued to roll. As dinner finished, several of us made noises about coming to the midnight buffet in a few hours. I hadn't been to one of the things yet, but this would be the "Buffet Magnifique," arranged to look beautiful as well as to feed the greedy hungry. (The doors would be opened at 11:30 for photography only, then at

midnight for those wanting to destroy the Creation just to feed their faces.) And maybe Elayne would be well enough to want to eat by then.

I went back to the room to suggest the idea, which was met with guarded enthusiasm, and took a nap until 11:30. Or at least that was the plan. Attempts to wake me up were futile, and insufficiently motivated -- Elayne didn't really want food. So yet another Midnight Buffet passed without my appreciative presence.

Saturday the 20th, there were no shore excursions and no reason to get up early. So we didn't. A leisurely breakfast was followed by attending the Disembarkation Talk, where the Cruise Director went over the procedures and regulations.

Ignoring the final Mileage Pool, we stayed in the Regency Lounge for the Horse racing. Elayne made \$2 on the first race, then quit, and I broke even on the series by refusing to bet on any of them. In the Owners' race, the expensive horse came in and its owner took down the \$130.00 bid for all the horses.

For the length of the cruise, my bar tab had only one daiquiri and two diet Cokes on it. After I paid it off Saturday. I bought an "Alaska Special" bar drink called a Polar Bear (white rum, rum 151, coconut cream, and pineapple juice) just to get the souvenir glass. I could have bought one of two other "Alaska Special" drinks: a "Gold Rush" (vodka, Galliano, apricot brandy, pineapple juice, and orange juice) or a "Chinook" (gin, tequila, blue Curacao, and lemon juice) to get the glass, but I'm not that fond of (1) orange juice, or (2) tequila.

The entertainment department was calling for passengers to register for a game of "What's My Line?" and I talked Elayne into registering. The problem was that the registration period was in the middle of our scheduled lunch time. I explained this to one of the staff, and he took the registration early, warning us that not everyone who registered would be called as a contestant, since they were limited by time to only eight contestants. Elayne assured him she wouldn't mind if she weren't called.

In mid-afternoon, we arrived at the Columbia Glacier, and all the photo nuts headed for the bow end of the top decks. The Cruise Director talked about the glacier over the loudspeaker, and cameras clicked, whirred, and buzzed for a while. Then the ship turned and sailed away. The passengers went inside to warm up again and get back the usual shipboard activities.

The Glacier Viewing had delayed the Passenger Talent Show, and the latter -- including very little talent (from what I could hear of it from walking through the lounge and from sitting in the nearby Monte Carlo Court trying to have Tea) -- went longer than planned, and it was 4:30 or so when the final Bingo Game began. The buy-in price was doubled -- \$10 for a card, \$20 for 3 cards -- and the number of games increased to 6 for the series. (In fact, since they split the final game (with its \$525.00

jackpot) into three consecutive games, there were really eight in the series.) It didn't matter -- one away from winning, the best I did, is still losing. See previous remark about horseshoes or thermonuclear devices. Total for the week: -\$80.00.

The "What's My Line?" game came right before Second Seating Dinner -- or, actually, right before our arrival at College Fjord, which came right before dinner. Elayne didn't get called, even when one of the ones they had selected didn't show up. Too bad, too, as they were giving medals and ribbons to all contestants, whether or not they stumped the panel. (Only one did: a female pawn shop broker.)

College Fjord -- called thus because the glaciers which form it are named for colleges: Yale, Harvard, Smith, Columbia, etc. -- again knocked the schedule awry. The beginning of Second Seating was extended 15 minutes, but by the warning notice -- the dining room doors would have to be closed in 10 more minutes -- the ship still hadn't started its turn to leave the area, and some people (including me) were still trying to take pictures. At the warning, I decided to accept the offer of a front-line position for long enough to take the shots, and hastily retired to the cabin and thence to dinner.

Today was the time for settling accounts, making final purchases, and generally getting ready for early departure on Sunday. This final dinner was the time for saying goodby to our waiter and busboy (and giving them their tips for the week's service), and the occasion of The Ultimate Dessert: baked Alaska en parade.

Envelopes had been distributed to each cabin for tipping the waiter, busboy, and stewardess, and a suggested schedule of tipping was published in the daily newsletter: \$2.50 per day per person for the waiter, \$2.50 per day per person for the stewardess, and \$1.50 per day per person for the busboy. We had no reason not to comply with the guidelines for the waiter and the busboy, who had both been friendly and efficient, but when it came to the stewardess we balked. Since we had twice found the room left open when we returned after she had been in to adjust the room (and knowing we had locked it when we left), and since we had had to request one of the staples of bathroom supplies, we couldn't see tipping her as if everything had been fine, so we left a lesser amount.

After dinner we said goodby to Noreen and Frank, our Oregonian table-mates, who would be leaving on the early train in the morning. Everyone else we'd see at least once more.

We packed everything that could be sent on to our Anchorage hotel and put it outside the stateroom door to be picked up and hauled off sometime in the early hours of the morning. A last run through the casino; a visit to the last Midnight Buffet (finally!) and we wandered out onto the deck to see why the ship had apparently stopped.

The Sun had arrived at the port of Whittier, and was waiting for a tug to come chivvy it in next to the wharf. So at 12:30 we stood there with binoculars and watched the lights of the little rail head port come slowly into focus, then watched the deck hands and wharf crew begin to make the ship fast. Then we gave up for the night.

Transportation from Whittier to Anchorage is by rail -- even if you're travelling by bus. The bus drives onto a flatcar and the train moves it through the tunnel that connects Whittier to the highway that leads to Anchorage, Then the bus drives off the flatcar and into the city.

We were scheduled for the 9:30 train, for which debarkation would start at 8:00. (It was the train which the majority of passengers would take -- 11 buses were needed to carry everyone.) So we had time for breakfast in the dining room, and time to say goodbye to George and to Yahya. And a tentative goodbye to Barbara and Jerry O'Connor, our Cincinatti table-mates, whom we would likely see in Anchorage since we were staying at the same hotel.

The eleven buses were loaded, and pulled up into formation, waiting for the train. Since there was time, the passengers got off and wandered around the dockside area. I took advantage of the opportunity to walk out onto an unused dock and take panorama shots of the harbor, ship, buses and all. So of course the train arrived early. I stubbornly finished my filming, then headed back for the bus.

Once through the tunnel and onto the highway, things became less interesting -- in spite of the driver's running comment on the area from his viewpoint of having grown up there -- and I went to sleep. The first stop was at the Anchorage airport, to drop a few people, then to the Westmark Hotel to drop most of the rest, including us.

The room arrangements were fine. I got the keys to our non-smoking room, registered my Alaska Airlines Frequent Flyer number for the hotel points, and took our luggage, which had arrived safe and sound ahead of us, to the room. When we could get near the Westours/Grey Line representative, we asked about two problems: (1) our vouchers included a transfer from the ship to Anchorage Airport, dated the 25th. It should have read from Westmark Hotel Fairbanks to Fairbanks Airport on that date. (2) The vouchers were for two nights in Denali and one in Fairbanks, instead of the one night in Denali and two in Fairbanks that were listed in the tour booklet. She said she would get back to us before the departure Monday morning.

We spent the rest of a drizzly Sunday exploring downtown Anchorage -- historical markers and signs, which were plentiful in the dozen-block area; eateries likely to be open when we wanted dinner; the tourist information center, with its very friendly people and lots of information; the 180-degree-screen film presentation called "The



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Alaska Experience" in the Omni Theater; the grocery store that would be open early in the morning if we needed it; and the junk stores.

Monday morning we were down in the lobby ten minutes early for the required 7:15 meeting with Westours/Grey

Line people who were to get us to the train station for our 8:30 train. They, of course, were late. And, also of course, the representative that said Sunday that she would get back to us didn't.

Sue Williams, an Australian we'd met Sunday afternoon, was going on the train with her mother, and she was feeling unwell. The delays weren't helping.

A representative arrived. The bus didn't. The representative radioed back for the bus. And waited. And waited. We tagged the luggage to be sent ahead to Fairbanks. And waited. The bus arrived and we scrambled aboard. And waited. The bus finally gave up on the stray -- a backpacker who had to pick something up at the museum, which hadn't opened yet today, and... -- and went to pick up the last two train passengers, from the Hilton. Sensibly enough, they had given up and taken a cab to the train. The bus drove to the train. Finally.

We climbed onto the upper (Observation) deck of the McKinley Explorer, the Westours dome car, and found a 4-person half-circle seat which we shared with the Australians. The car, the last on the train bound for Denali National Park and then Fairbanks, was quite full. Car attendants walked back and forth with free soft drinks, tea, or coffee; packages of peanuts; postcards of the McKinley Explorer, and a McKinley Explorer badge. Other drinks were available from the bar in the car, and a dinner was served in shifts on the lower deck. (The drinks were about airline-priced, and the dinners were priced similar to what a medium range hotel would charge.)

The car attendants talked about the areas we were travelling through. One of them, Harry Buzby, was from the Matanuska Valley -- the area that grows the record-breaking fruits and vegetables. (He himself had grown the 1988 record zucchini -- 17 pounds.) The Valley's very rich soil, together with three months a year of 12-17 hours of sunlight per day, is what accounts for these feats.

One of the passengers was William Sheffield, ex-governor of Alaska, who was pressed into service to talk about the state over the microphone. He described himself as a politician out of work,

and, among other things, mentioned the fact that the state has a 10 billion dollar Permanent Fund, the interest from which is split, with half of it being divided among all citizens of the state who have been here at least six months. (The rest of the interest goes back to inflation-proof and increase the Permanent Fund.)

We also got a lecture on salmon -- the five kinds, and the two names for each, and their uses (canning versus eating, versus dog food, etc.) Having relatively little interest in fish of any kind, I had only heard of a few of the names. Try to pick the pairs that go together: Chinook Salmon; Chum Salmon; Coho Salmon; Dog Salmon; Humpback Salmon; King Salmon; Pink Salmon; Red Salmon; Silver Salmon; and Sockeye Salmon.

Dinner was good, but apparently something -- possibly the reindeer sausage -- combined with the motion of the train to make Elayne sick. (Our Australian, having had some time to rest, was recovered. Possibly there is a limit of one sick passenger per seating area?)

Photography was allowed from the platforms, so I spent a while standing between the cars and aiming at snow-topped mountains, half-frozen rivers, and at least one breathtakingly beautiful gorge.

Moose



As we neared Denali, the Westours people came around the train with a method of randomizing the order in which we would re-board after overnighiting in Denali. Each group travelling together drew from a hat a sticker with one of three animals. At the time of boarding another random drawing would determine which group boarded first. We were Moose; others were Grizzlies or Dall Sheep.

Grizzly



A bus took us from the rail road depot to the hotel -- a trip we could have walked in about five minutes -- and let us off in front of what appeared to be discarded Alaska Railroad cars. Back behind them, in a couple rambling two-storey wooden buildings, were the actual hotel lobby, rooms, and restaurant. (And junk shop.) We found our room and Elayne collapsed into an advanced stage of being sick.



I undertook a couple missions -- one in search of dramamine, which was finally successful when I asked the gift shop for it; one for low-fat chocolate milk, which was successful at the second trip to the "Mercantile" -- the only store within many ~~parsec~~ miles -- whose staff was still busily putting up stock on the shelves to become fully open.

The other mission -- to correct the problem of our vouchers being wrong -- was unsuccessful. The Westours staff, who have an office at the hotel, were as helpful as they could be. First they modified the voucher for our departure so that it would take us from the hotel in Fairbanks to the Fairbanks airport. Then they tried to deal with the harder problem of changing the second day in Denali for a day in Fairbanks. They determined that it would be quite possible for us to catch the McKinley Explorer dome train on Tuesday instead of Wednesday. They determined that the Westmark Inn in Fairbanks had a room available on Tuesday night. They then ran up against the problem of transferring payment to the Westmark Inn (which is associated with Westours) from the Denali Hotel (which isn't). The Denali Hotel wouldn't refund to a voucher. We'd have to pay the \$100.00 or so in Fairbanks -- about the same rate as we were paying in Denali, but that we had already paid -- ourselves. We decided to stay put. And write letters afterward.

At dinner time, Elayne was not in the least interested in food, so I ventured into the hotel dining room alone. (Neither she nor I are especially social with others, or even with just the two of us, during meals. Polite, yes, but not social. We are quite likely to bring reading material -- Trashy Novels, Comics, Fanzines or what-have-we -- to the table and ignore the other occupant(s).) Looking around, I found I was almost totally alone -- maybe three other tables were occupied.

The dining room staff was friendly and helpful. Dinner itself was... um... "mixed." I tried the Fettucini Alfredo, which was listed as being "with a hint of garlic." If that was their idea of a hint, I don't want to get near them when they make a Statement!

I inquired about hot tea; did they have anything but Lipton's or herb tea? The waitress thought about it and remembered they had some Earl Grey tea. That would be just fine. I hadn't known that Celestial Seasons, purveyor of a great variety of herb teas, also makes an Earl Grey tea. It arrived, and I unsuspecting drank it. Somewhere in this world, Celestial Seasons has found or invented a flower named "Earl Grey," which they cultivate to use for a tea. I politely refused a second infusion when it was offered.

The dessert, however, made up for most of the rest. It was an apple-filled shell of puff pastry, topped with whipped cream and vanilla ice cream. Dinner at least finished quite pleasantly.

I wandered back to the room, stopping to acquire enough ice to keep chilled the pint of chocolate milk (from the Matanushka Valley -- very rich stuff) and the half gallon of skim milk I'd bought at the Mercantile. (A 1-to-5 or more mixture of the two was the only way I could find to use what was available at the Mercantile to fix the low-fat chocolate milk Elayne correctly assumed was about the only food that wouldn't continue to make her sick.) I faded out well before the "day" did.

By Tuesday morning, Elayne was a bit better, if not yet entirely well. We had a brief breakfast in the hotel's cafeteria-style snack bar, and boarded a bus for the Wildlife Tour.

The bus driver (and tour guide) was a very pleasant, friendly person, with all sorts of information about the Park and its fauna. Everyone acted as Spotters for wildlife, and when anything of importance was seen within reasonable range of cameras, the bus would stop for people to take pictures. There were many caribou in the grasslands along the route, and various birds (especially the ptarmigan) and snowshoe hares. We watched three grizzly bears lumbering around on a river bank. A small group of swans lifted into the air as the bus came near their small water hole. And even a rarely-seen white wolf passed by our stopped bus about 30 yards away, climbed up onto the roadway some distance behind us, and trotted off in the other direction. Someone said they saw a moose, but I didn't. All in all, quite a satisfactory outing.

We stopped at a designated turnout, joining another tour bus. The guides broke out a hot water dispenser for coffee or tea, and we ate the box lunches provided on the tour. (A package of reindeer sausage was included; Elayne put hers away for some other time. Or person.) When we were done, the guides picked up all litter, emptied the water dispenser, and we took everything away with us so as not to leave foodstuffs of any kind where the animals could get them. We were back at the hotel by 1:00.

Ordinarily, the tour goes further, but the road wasn't yet open as far into the Park as it would be in a week or so. This resulted in a partial refund (\$12.00) to those of us who had paid for the tour before the road schedule became known. We were also refunded the \$3.00 advance payment for Park admission, since the administration wasn't yet collecting such fees. Refunds were almost enough to pay for dinner.

Elayne had her books to read (when she wasn't trying to sleep off the effects of being sick), but I had run out, and the Gift Shop offerings weren't of any particular interest. (They did have one SF book, and a Stephen King book, in their fiction section, but neither was enticing enough.) So I picked up a copy of the Fairbanks newspaper and reads that. It's probably the Nosey Parker in me that finds small town newspapers fascinating every once in a while. They're like a cross between a fanzine and a gossip column. I expect they'd become boring if I had nothing else to read for news for a long time, but as an occasional thing they're quite interesting. This one was full of articles about the High School graduating classes. There are about five High Schools in the Fairbanks area, and each valedictorian was asked some stock questions about herself or himself and his or her interests and aspirations. One question was "What is your favorite book?" and some of the answers were intriguing: The Stranger by Camus; The Fountainhead by Rand; The Foundation Trilogy by Asimov... . It was a well-spent seventy-five cents.

The afternoon, like the once-a-day train to Fairbanks, came and went. In the early evening, there was a video presentation in the Hotel's auditorium, so we watched a lot of pretty Alaska pictures -- once they figured out who was running the show, how to get the lights off, and how to get the Big Screen TV working. It's early in the season; they'll get the kinks worked out soon.

Dinner was again sought in the dining room, with no noteworthy occurrence. (I had warned Elayne about the Earl Grey tea.)

After dinner, with the 9:30 p.m. sky looking like it was perhaps 7:20 a.m., we walked to the Horseshoe Lake Overlook -- about a mile or so round trip, I guess -- stopping for photos every once in a while. (The trip took care of my exercise requirements for the day.) The trail crossed a creek and the railway, but the only actual signs of life we saw were two other hikers going in the same direction. (But faster.) They were at the Overlook when we arrived, and still there when we left.

As we got close to the hotel we could see people standing around outside and staring intently at something. Then, coming around the final bend of the trail, we saw what attracted the attention: a cow moose, with two mooselets, was on the lawn at the side of the hotel, about 20 feet away from the road. The mooselets looked like they were maybe a couple days old. The cow dropped to her front knees -- which I had no idea they did -- and contentedly chomped away on the grass, paying no attention to the people who watched or the cameras that clicked and whirred. I used the still camera I had with me, and as soon as I could get to my room and back I added my videocamera's whirr to the others.

The guide had explained earlier that it was calving season now, and there were mooselets being born in the Park. The cows had taken to coming relatively near to the hotel because the bears didn't like to be around people, and generally weren't as likely to go after a mooselet that near to people. Still, she didn't indicate that they would come this close for such a long time. Elayne and I discussed the possibility that this was one of the Hotel's tourist attractions that they bring out from some barn every few nights. In which case another attraction might well be a grizzly bear that they would bring out after the moose one night a week. We finally decided it was the hotel's way of saving money on a lawnmower. Fascinating beasts. Ugly, but fascinating.

Wednesday morning we had a late breakfast, checked out, stashed the luggage in the Hotel's Checkroom, and went in search of the wild National Park Passport Stamp. An early inquiry, from a Hotel clerk, had elicited the information that it was available at the Riley Creek Information Center, about a half mile from the Hotel at the Riley Creek Campground. But our excursion on Tuesday had taken us past a trail to Riley Creek Campground, and it was marked "Closed." Further investigation was obviously necessary.

We found that the Senior Hostel Group that was staying at the Hotel was going to be going on a guided hike with a Park Ranger,

so we waylaid the Ranger and asked him about the Stamp. It was at the Park Headquarters, a little over a mile from the Hotel -- in the other direction from Riley Creek Campground. We had passed the entrance to the Park Headquarters on the bus tour. It was walkable, even for me. (But that ought to have taken care of my exercise requirements for several days.)

The Senior Hostel group headed off on the trail; we headed off on the roadway. Maybe I ought to investigate membership in that group. If anyone is going to become a Hostel Senior -- no matter how you spell it -- it's probably going to be me.

It was actually a very pleasant walk. We didn't spot any large animals, but there were several snowshoe hares that were willing to be photographed from just a few feet away. (They were probably under the impression that they were standing so still that we wouldn't see them.) The guide on Tuesday had mentioned that the snowshoe hare cycle -- seven years? -- was at its peak right now, so there were LOTS and LOTS of hares around the Park. She expected that the number of lynxes would be increasing too, because of this -- they follow the hare cycle.

An elderly lady Walker -- defined as someone going at a pace slower than a Jogger but faster than a mere Hiker -- came by jangling several large bells of a type I tend to call Christmas Bells -- the kind that attach to reins and such things. I had seen the things for sale in the Gift Shop, under the label of Bear Bells, and she was indeed carrying them to frighten off bears. She warned us that a bear had been seen near the Hotel that morning, and we should be careful. Yaah, Shuure... [said in fake Swedish accent]. I didn't doubt there had been a Bear sighted around the Hotel, but I was quite willing to accept the guide's word that bears aren't interested in people. (The story of the three new Park employees out for a jog who did run into a bear -- the previous year -- was very funny (except to the one guy, I guess). It's a bit long to run as part of a Trip Report.) The lady Walked a short distance past us, turned around and Walked back toward the Hotel. We went back to Hiking and watching for hares.

Part of the trip was uphill, and from the top of the rise the view back across the valley was lovely. The road runs along the contour of Hines Creek in that area, with just enough room between the road and the creek to put a trail for the truly Woodsy types. (I always prefer to hit the uphill parts of a trip on the outbound part, since that will let the return part, when I'm likely to be tired and just wanting to get back instead of wanting to GO somewhere, be downhill.)

It took maybe 45 minutes, even at the lackadaisical pace we were going, to get to the Park Headquarters. A Ranger dug out the Stamp and imprinted my Passport (with Tuesday's date, since she had not yet changed it to the 24th). I talked Elayne into buying a topographic map of the Park (with a LANDSAT map on the reverse) for a friend who collects such things. So we lugged a 5-foot-long

rolled map for the rest of the trip, trying -- successfully -- to keep it from getting squashed by various detrimental forces (such as a suitcase tossed into an overhead compartment on the plane home). That'll teach me to try getting Elayne to catch up with me on junk-buying!

Then we checked out the other attraction at the Park Headquarters: the sled dogs. The Rangers keep a team of dogs available at the Park for emergencies, and even give demonstrations of how they are harnessed to the sled and such. There was to be such a demonstration in the early afternoon, but we were afraid we might not have time after the demonstration to walk back to the Hotel in time to retrieve our luggage and catch the train. Next time, maybe. Yaah, shuure... .

We could still see the dogs themselves. The friendliest of them were tied to their individual kennels with no barrier between them and the public. The next group had a rope barrier along the path in front of their kennels, with a note explaining that one should let the dog make the move. If they want to visit, they'll come to you. The third group was behind high chain-link fences. We played with the friendly ones, looked at the others, and took pictures of many. It was quite warm, and the second group -- along with some of the other groups -- preferred sleeping on top of their kennels to visiting. The ones we could pet were shedding like crazy. (I picked up a souvenir tuft of sled dog hair for one of our local Dog Fanciers. She threw it out. No gratitude, eh?)

The train was due in at 4:30, and at a few minutes past four we decided not to wait for the bus to take us the short distance to the depot. It was, at most, a five minute walk.

There were already people at the depot waiting for the train. The Westours staff was present making sure that everyone going on the McKinley Observer had a sticker on his or her boarding pass identifying him or her as a Moose, Grizzly, or Dall Sheep. I begged a pristine copy of each sticker from the staff person handling the rolls of them, and promised that I wouldn't use them to change my identification as a Moose if one of the others was called to board first. (Fanzine Trip Report writers become accomplished at spotting Stuff to photocopy into their reports!) And there was still time to go to the depot Gift Counter, to investigate the Alaska Railroad junk available for sale and to pick up a few more gewgaws. I wonder if I want to start a collection of travel souvenir magnets... ?

Just before 4:30, one of the Westours people selected a likely victim from the waiting horde and had her pick one of three large cardboard squares, the face of which were all blank. The verso had Dall Sheep stickers. A second selection brought forth the card with Moose stickers, and thus the Order of the Boarder was established. (The selector was a Dall Sheep, and there were, of course, cries of "Fix!!")

EKLUTNA

Please have this pass ready before boarding



The train pulled in amidst a slight sprinkling of rain (and the whirr and click of cameras, of course). A sparse crowd of arriving passengers was grudgingly allowed to extricate themselves and their luggage from the McKinley Observer car without the Dall Sheep trampling them in the rush (and being trampled themselves by the Moose). The few Grizzlies were uncharacteristically patient in waiting their turn.

There was one surprise when I saw the train arrive: the McKinley Observer car was not the only dome car. Behind the Westours car -- the Eklutna, the same one that brought us to Denali from Anchorage Monday -- were two taller cars from the Princess Line. They even had better domes -- more available visibility from them -- than the Westours car! This is what happens when we don't know enough to ask the right questions in comparison shopping! Next Time... (In Chorus Now: "Yaah, shuure... !!")

The three and a half hour trip to Fairbanks was uneventful. We passed up the opportunity of again dining on board, and made do with tea and Diet Coke. I continued the trip report with the laptop. Having not done so on the first train trip, I went about purchasing souvenirs of the McKinley Explorer -- a large wooden train whistle with the McKinley Explorer name and image stamped on it, a model train car replica of the McKinley Explorer, and a souvenir sweatshirt. The whistle is very useful in annoying the cat (and anyone else around trying to concentrate on what she is doing). The model train car will go with the rest of the model train set -- HO gauge -- which is still in its box since I got it as a Christmas gift more than five years ago. And they were out of my shirt size, so they will have to sell me one by mail one of these days. Good timing, as usual.

We arrived in Fairbanks around 8:00, and were taken by bus to the Westmark Inn. We were checked in without any problem, and our luggage from Anchorage was already there. We reaffirmed, with the Westours agent in the hotel, that our transfer voucher, as corrected by Westours in Denali, would indeed get us to the Fairbanks airport on Thursday morning. And ventured out to see what Fairbanks might be like at 9:00 at night on a Wednesday.

It was, of course, Closed.

We walked the half mile or so into the downtown area, such as it is. The Visitors Center was closed. The junkshops were closed. Well, all but one, which was in the act of getting rid of two last customers -- two of our fellow cruise passengers -- and closing. Didn't look like they'd have my level of junk anyway. From visible evidence, unemployment and alcohol abuse -- and probably The Homeless -- are problems in Fairbanks.

On the way back we stopped at one of the two open eateries -- a Colonel Chicken (which we usually refer to as "Kentucky Fried Whomp-Rats") -- which turned out to house a small menu-driven dining room in addition to the Take-Out Counter. (And three arcade quarter-grabbers which were in fairly constant use.) We, of course, discovered this after ordering via the Take-Out Counter, but they seemed to have no problem with our sitting in the dining room to consume our Gourmet Repast. We also discovered that the dining room opened at 7:00 a.m. for breakfast, and would thus provide an alternative to the hotel coffee shop, should we want one.

Other than that -- and the brief amusement of the episode I mentally label "The Punk Two-Cats-in-a-Gunnysack, the Punk Boyfriend, and the Brat Brother," which indicated that Alaska has not, regretfully, escaped as much of "Civilization" as it might have wished -- the evening and the night offered nothing better than sleep.

On Thursday, our last day in Alaska, I got up by 7:30, and suggested breakfast. This was greeted with the usual disinterest of a sleepaholic, so I left on solo foray. The Kentucky Fried Whomp-Rats dining room served breakfast quite admirably. The quarter-grabbers were already beeping, clanging, and zapping away in the corner.

The Visitors Center opened at 8:00, so I walked there first. It held nothing of interest to anyone not planning extensive tours in the area, and I headed back toward the one junkshop that opened at 9:00 instead of 10:00: Woolworths. Not usually my choice as a source of tourist junk, but we had to leave at 10:00. The resulting acquisitions were acceptable, if not exceptional, and I headed back to the hotel.

Westours sent their bus -- the full-size one -- to take us to the airport. We were the only ones leaving at that time, so we sat up

front and had the bus to ourselves. The driver, who grew up in Fairbanks, pointed out various scenery as we drove through it.

The airport provided one last junkshop and, for the first time in the trip, I saw something everyone at home would probably ask about: the oil spilled into Prince William Sound. All through the cruise we didn't see a drop of the stuff -- it was washed ashore north of where we were -- but here it was, in Fairbanks. They were selling vials of it, complete with Prince William Sound water and a small descriptive booklet. I had to buy one. (It made an amusing birthday present for one of my friends at work. I probably should have bought a few more, just for the hell of it.)

The plane was on time. The flight to Seattle was uneventful, as was the one from there to Burbank. Jordan Brown picked us up from the airport, and we began the readjustment to California.

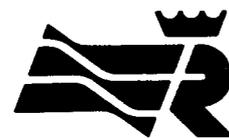
The Summary is, approximately: Cruises Are Swell! Alaska is Real Pretty. Cruises Are Swell! Trains are probably OK, buses are a necessary evil. Cruises Are Swell!

We are looking forward with great eagerness to Thanksgiving week, when we're going to take the next Cruise -- to the Caribbean, on Dolphin Lines. There is much discussion regarding (1) when can we afford -- in time, mostly, but also in money -- to take another week-long (or longer) cruise. Next year's allotment is taken up with ConFiction (the World SF Convention in the Netherlands) and a proposed Rhine Trip prior to that; the following year we want to go back to England for a few weeks, at least. (2) Where do we want to go on such a cruise? (3) Could we stretch funds by taking an inside stateroom, which is much cheaper than the outside ones? (4) It would be great to take the Regent Sun again at the end of the cruise season, to compare staff, passenger, and shore relations attitudes to those on the first cruise; but it would also be great to take some other line to Alaska for comparison with Regent; and a midsummer cruise might actually see the Aurora, which we didn't see this time. Decisions, decisions... .

I wonder how the video stuff came out -- I haven't tried watching it yet, as of 6/7/89. The still pictures came out pretty good, but I may still try to upgrade both cameras before another extensive tour.

Oh, yes: the salmon pairs will be published next month. I'm sure you're thrilled... .

The following pages are dedicated, almost in the manner of Don Marquis, to Robbie-knows-who and Robbie Knows Why.



CELEBRATING
"First Arrival '89"
The Vancouver Port Corporation
and
Regency Cruises
welcome the
Passengers, Officers and Crew
of
'REGENT SUN'
to
The Port of Vancouver
May 14, 1989
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Province of British Columbia 1989

SHORE EXCURSION ORDER FORM VOY.# 22
NORTHBOUND

NAME: _____ CABIN #: _____

FIRST SEATING: _____ SECOND SEATING: _____ TABLE # _____

- 1) Circle TOUR #
- 2) Circle DOLLAR AMOUNT under NUMBER OF TICKETS requested.
- 3) Enter DOLLAR AMOUNT in far right column.
- 4) Enter TOTAL AMOUNT OF ALL TOURS on bottom line.
- 5) If you wish to request a time, please write it in the margin .

| TOUR # | | NO. OF TICKETS | | | | TOTAL \$ AMOUNTS |
|--|---|----------------|-----|-----|-----|------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| KETCHIKAN (TUESDAY 9:00 AM TO 4:00 PM) | | | | | | |
| 310 * | TOTEM HERITAGE & RAIN FOREST TOUR | \$ 20 | 40 | 60 | 80 | \$ _____ |
| 311 - | MISTY FJORDS NATIONAL MONUMENT FLIGHTSEEING | \$ 119 | 238 | 357 | 476 | \$ _____ |
| 312 * | MOUNTAIN LAKE CANOE ADVENTURE | \$ 55 | 110 | 165 | 220 | \$ _____ |
| 313 - | METLAKATLA TOUR | \$ 89 | 178 | 267 | 356 | \$ _____ |
| 314 - | KETCHIKAN WATERFRONT TOUR | \$ 36 | 72 | 108 | 144 | \$ _____ |
| 315 - | SPORTFISHING TOUR | \$ 112 | 224 | 336 | 448 | \$ _____ |
| JUNEAU (WEDNESDAY 1:30 PM TO 11:30 PM) | | | | | | |
| 320 * | MENDELL GLACIER TOUR | \$ 22 | 44 | 66 | 88 | \$ _____ |
| 321 * | MENDELL GLACIER FLOAT TRIP | \$ 69 | 138 | 207 | 276 | \$ _____ |
| 322 * | THE LADY LOU REVUE TOUR | \$ 12 | 24 | 36 | 48 | \$ _____ |
| 323 * | GOLPANNING & GOLD MINE TOUR | \$ 22 | 44 | 66 | 88 | \$ _____ |
| 324 - | TAKU GLACIER LODGE TOUR | \$ 115 | 230 | 345 | 460 | \$ _____ |
| 325 * | GOLD CREEK SALMON BAKE | \$ 19 | 38 | 57 | 76 | \$ _____ |
| 326 - | HELICOPTER GLACIER FLIGHT | \$ 115 | 230 | 345 | 460 | \$ _____ |
| 327 - | ICE CAP FLIGHTSEEING TOUR | \$ 80 | 160 | 240 | 320 | \$ _____ |
| 328 - | JUNEAU SPORTFISHING | \$ 114 | 228 | 342 | 456 | \$ _____ |
| SKAGWAY (THURSDAY 8:00AM TO 4:00PM) | | | | | | |
| 330 * | CARCROSS YUKON EXCURSION | \$ 60 | 120 | 180 | 240 | \$ _____ |
| 332 * | SKAGWAY HISTORICAL TOUR | \$ 16 | 32 | 48 | 64 | \$ _____ |
| 333 * | SKAGWAY HISTORICAL / SOAPY SMITH SHOW | \$ 26 | 52 | 78 | 104 | \$ _____ |
| 334 * | GATEWAYS TO GOLD AND DYE TOUR | \$ 35 | 70 | 105 | 140 | \$ _____ |
| 335 - | GOLD RUSH HELICOPTER TOUR | \$ 115 | 230 | 345 | 460 | \$ _____ |
| 336 * | SKAGWAY HISTORICAL / GOLDPANNING TOUR | \$ 35 | 70 | 105 | 140 | \$ _____ |
| 337 - | GLACIER BAY SCENIC FLIGHT | \$ 99 | 198 | 297 | 396 | \$ _____ |
| 338 * | WHITE PASS & YUKON RAILWAY TOUR | \$ 67 | 134 | 201 | 268 | \$ _____ |
| 339 * | PORT CHILLAOT GLACIER FLIGHTSEEING | \$ 132 | 264 | 396 | 528 | \$ _____ |
| SITKA (FRIDAY 6:30 AM TO 12:30 PM) | | | | | | |
| 350 * | SITKA HISTORICAL TOUR | \$ 21 | 42 | 63 | 84 | \$ _____ |
| 351 * | MARINE WILDLIFE TOUR | \$ 40 | 80 | 120 | 160 | \$ _____ |

CRUISE DIRECTOR'S CHOICE: 1 2 3 4 TOTAL AMOUNT OF ALL TOURS \$ _____
(\$120.00 PER PERS.)

* Inquire at Shore Excursion Office for children's prices.
(Under 12 years old, accompanied by an adult.)

Once we reserve t tours we obligate ourselves,
therefore ,** NO TICKET CAN BE REFUNDED. **

Ketchikan

Captivating Ketchikan perches near the sea with the velvet green slopes of Deer Mountain rising steeply behind it. The city is just a few blocks wide yet nearly six miles long. With many houses and buildings built over the water on pilings, this colorful small city is a photographer's delight.

Here you can admire the world's largest collection of totem poles, or tour historic Creek Street, once a rough-and-tumble red light district. Ketchikan, the salmon capital of the world, also offers some mouth-watering dining experiences. A variety of Regency shore excursions explore such fascinating sights as Alaska's only Indian reservation or offer an exciting flight into the complex of deep fjords in America's newest national monument, Misty Fjords.

MISTY FJORDS NATIONAL MONUMENT FLIGHTSEEING

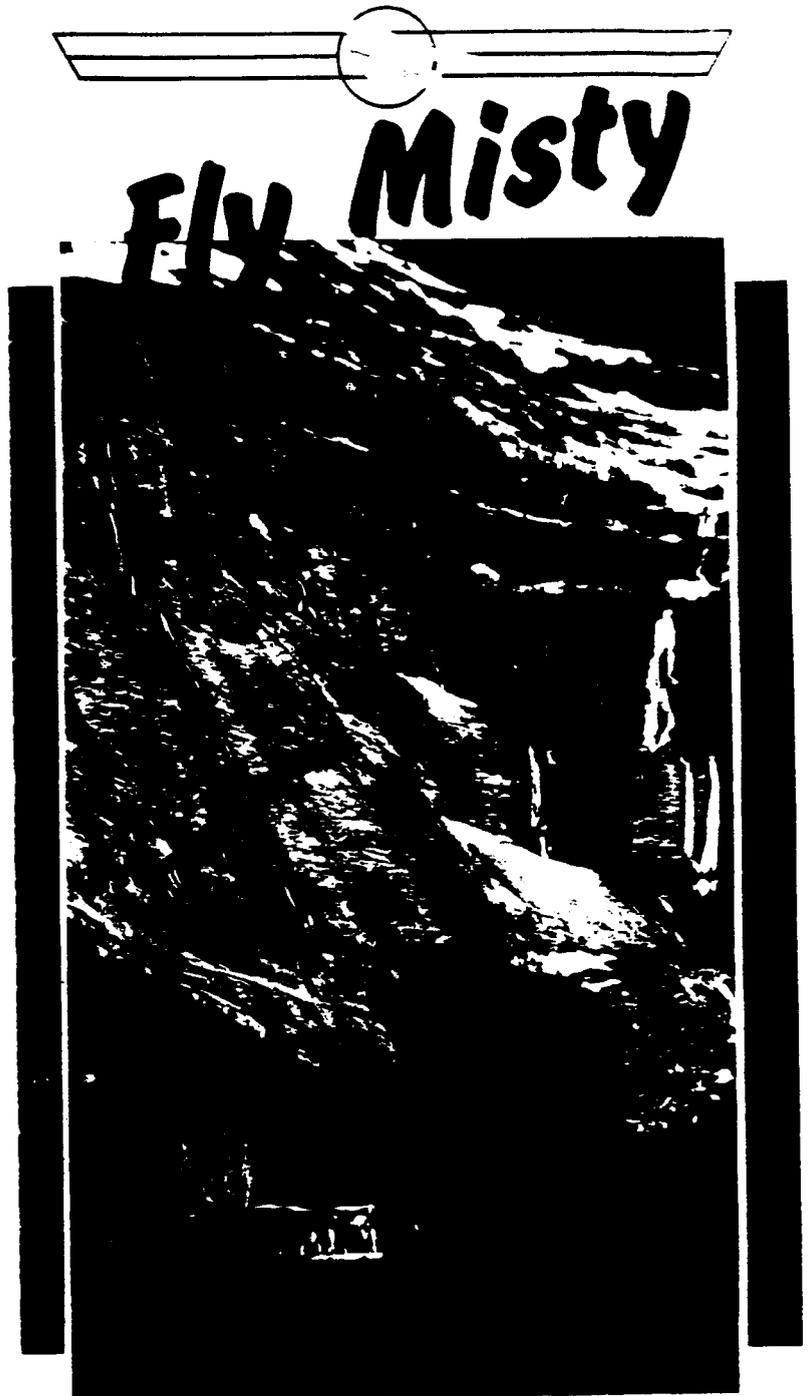
2 HOURS

TOUR #311

America's newest national monument is awe inspiring. Flying by float plane through these beautifully glaciated Misty Fjords is a unique experience. As the massive glaciers that carved out and shaped the earth retreated, they left a land of uncommon beauty. Your skilled pilots will fly you into the fjords, as they wind their way into the heart of this mountainous region. You will experience a continuously changing panorama of rugged granite cliffs rising 4,000 feet from the sea and waterfalls plunging to the fjords below. Your float plane will make a landing in this virtually untouched wilderness of fresh water lakes, streams, fjords and snow-capped mountains so that you can absorb in silence the breathtaking beauty of Misty Fjords.

Note: 1 1/2 hours actual flight time and water landing.

\$119.00 PER PERSON



TEMSCO AIRLINES

"Serving All of Southeast Alaska"

Juneau

With two snow-crowned mountains as a backdrop, Juneau is one of America's loveliest state capitals. This bustling city is named for gold prospector Joe Juneau who discovered the precious metal along Gold Creek in 1880, sparking Alaska's first gold rush.

There's so much to do in Juneau! Stroll among lovingly restored buildings in the historic People's Wharf neighborhood... explore the superb Alaska State Museum...or visit the famous Red Dog Saloon, a frontier-style bar. Regency shore excursions take you to such attractions as the impressive Mendenhall Glacier or Gold Creek, where you can pan for gold. You may also enjoy exciting sportfishing or explore a breathtaking world of glaciers on a "flightseeing" trip.



MENDENHALL GLACIER FLOAT TRIP

3½ HOURS

TOUR #321

This is an exciting, yet gentle introduction to whitewater rafting, popular with people of all ages. We begin with a scenic bus ride from town to the Mendenhall Valley. Our adventure begins at Mendenhall Lake where we have an excellent view of the glacier — one and a half miles wide and one hundred feet high. We don ponchos, life jackets and water-proof boots and climb aboard the rafts. Each raft carries eight to ten people and is rowed by an experienced guide.

Our guides row us through the still waters of the lake to the river beyond. We enjoy spectacular views of the glacier and surrounding mountains as we float past the forested shoreline. Stretches of gentle rapids add excitement to the ride. Midway through the journey, we go ashore for an Alaskan-style snack — smoked salmon, reindeer sausage and cheeses plus our famous "Martha's Mendenhall Madness" and apple cider. After snacking, we float to our take-out point at the intersection of the river and the road, turn in our rafting gear and return to town by bus. This trip is an excellent first-time rafting experience.

\$69.00 PER PERSON

\$45.00 Children 12 & under (Accompanied by an adult)

X SKAGWAY

Skagway

Skagway was born during the great Alaskan gold rush. Thousands of gold seekers stopped here before crossing treacherous mountains to the Yukon's Klondike region. Those were the days when Skagway had 80 saloons and was known as "the roughest town on earth."

The city's rip-roaring past will come alive when you walk down Broadway, a main street so authentic it is part of the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park! Special Regency shore excursions explore Skagway's fascinating history. You can also follow the old path to gold and glory in the Yukon or take a scenic flight to view the amazing wonders of Glacier Bay National Park.



WHITE PASS SCENIC RAILWAY TOUR

3 HOURS

TOUR #338

No trip to Alaska is complete without an adventure over the White Pass & Yukon, the "Scenic Railway of the World." Born of the mad rush to the Klondike in 1898, this spectacular narrow gauge railroad has supplied the Yukon gold fields, the Alaska highway construction, and postwar mining development. Now, operating exclusively for excursion passengers, the trains consist of vintage "Parlor Cars" which depart from ship side. Leaving Skagway, the Alaskan wilderness unfolds outside your window as you climb the grade past Bridal Veil Falls, Inspiration Point, and Dead Horse Gulch where the original Klondike "Trail of '98" is etched in rock for all to see. From your car's windows, you will admire the canyons, rivers, peaks, glaciers, ghost towns and trails that were made immortal in the writings of Robert W. Service and Jack London. After reaching White Pass Summit, the international boundary between Canada and the U.S., your train will bring you back to Tidewater, ship side.

\$67.00 PER PERSON

\$33.50 Children 12 & under (Accompanied by an adult)

X

SKAGWAY



**GOLD RUSH
HELICOPTER TOUR**

1 1/2 HOURS

TOUR #335

Travel back in time on this spectacular helicopter tour that combines the excitement of this historic area with the grandeur of the rugged peaks and glaciers that surround it!

After boarding one of our modern, turbine helicopters you will gently lift off and fly over Skagway, once a booming gold rush town of 20,000. Retracing the steps of those hearty prospectors, your flight will take you up into the mountain passes that proved to be the most formidable obstacles on their way to the Klondike gold fields. Your helicopter will provide an excellent vantage point to view this rugged and treacherous route.

Leaving all traces of civilization behind, your flight will continue into a remote mountain valley filled with hanging glaciers. Upon setting down on one of these magnificent rivers of ice, you will disembark and explore for yourself this incredible phenomenon of nature. Standing on a glacier thousands of years old and hundreds of feet thick, you will find yourself transported into another world of twisted ice spires, translucent blues, pure mountain air and the spellbinding sound of glaciers inching down the mountain valleys. This is an adventure that everyone enjoys.

*Special boots are provided for your comfort and added traction on the glacier.

Note: 45 minutes actual flight time and glacier landing.
\$115.00 PER PERSON

Step Into Another World



Never before the year 1879 when I made my first trip to Alaska
had I seen anything so hopelessly beyond description.
Go to Alaska, go and see.

John Muir, Explorer

This is to certify that **Bruce E. Pelz** has stepped
into another world by participating in TEMSCO HELICOPTERS' Expedition to the West
Crack Glacier. This person has walked on a glacier hundreds of feet thick and thousands
of years old and has viewed the Ice Field from a vantage point not dreamed of by earlier
explorers.

It has been our pleasure at TEMSCO HELICOPTERS to have taken you
to this very special world, a world that now includes you.

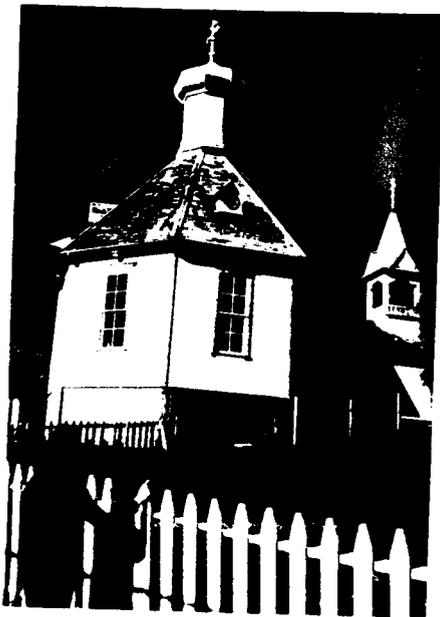
Thank you for riding
with us.

TEMSCO HELICOPTERS, INC.
Skagway, Alaska

Sitka

A Russian heritage and the magnificent setting make Sitka an enchanting destination. The city features a harbor studded with picturesque islands, and a backdrop of majestic mountains, with spectacular Mt. Edgecumbe, a volcano often compared to Japan's beautiful Mt. Fuji.

Once the capital of a vast Russian fur-trading empire, Sitka displays its past in such attractions as St. Michael's Cathedral with its striking onion-shaped dome and the Russian Blockhouse. An exciting Regency shore excursion delves into the city's Russian and American roots at these and other historic sights. And the tour concludes with a performance by the world-famous New Archangel Dancers. A "must-see" attraction! (North-bound cruises only.)



Sitka, once the capital of the 19th century Russian fur-trading empire, still retains a strong Russian influence.

SITKA

SITKA HISTORICAL TOUR

3 HOURS

TOUR #350

Sitka's unique Russian and American History comes alive as you visit all major historic points of interest such as St. Michael's Russian Orthodox Cathedral, The Sheldon Jackson Museum, Castle Hill, The Russian Blockhouse, Sitka's National Historical Park and Old Sitka.

The Sitka National Historical Park houses an impressive collection of totems, some of which are over two hundred years old. You will have an opportunity to watch native artists at work and question them about their native heritage. The Sheldon Jackson Museum offers the largest collection of Indian and Eskimo artifacts in Alaska which includes a magnificent basket display. St. Michael's Russian Orthodox Cathedral, The "Mother" Cathedral for all Orthodoxy for all of America, contains priceless icons and vestments used by Bishops and Priests during the Russian period. You will travel seven miles out of town to Old Sitka for a complete look at the Island and Indian village. The tour will conclude with the performance of the Archangel Dancers at the Centennial Building.

\$21.00 PER PERSON

\$10.50 Children 12 & under (Accompanied by an adult)

Staterooms with Style

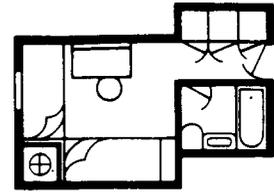


REGENT SUN

Contemporary in design, the Regent Sun's staterooms combine comfort and style. Handsomely decorated with cheerful, bright colors, cabins are accented with modern wood trim. Each tastefully appointed stateroom features such popular amenities as spacious closets, climate-control air conditioning, tiled bathrooms, ample lighting, outlets

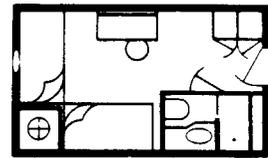
for hairdryers or other small appliances, multi-channel radio and telephone.

The layouts featured here represent the different cabin categories available. There will be some variation in actual layout, size and decor.



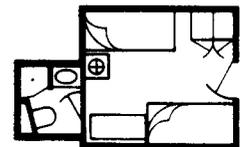
Deluxe Outside Double

These well-appointed cabins have a window to view the ever-changing scenery, two lower beds in a convenient L-shape for extra spaciousness, mirrored vanity with chair, two or three ample closets and tiled bathroom with bathtub.



Outside Double

The outside double cabin features a porthole for extra light, two lower beds, most L-shaped for extra spaciousness, mirrored vanity with chair, two or three large closets and a tiled bathroom with shower.



Inside Double

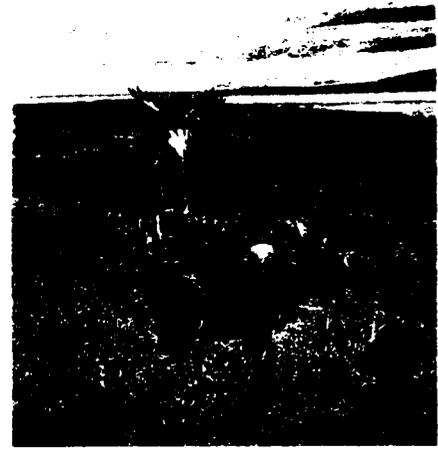
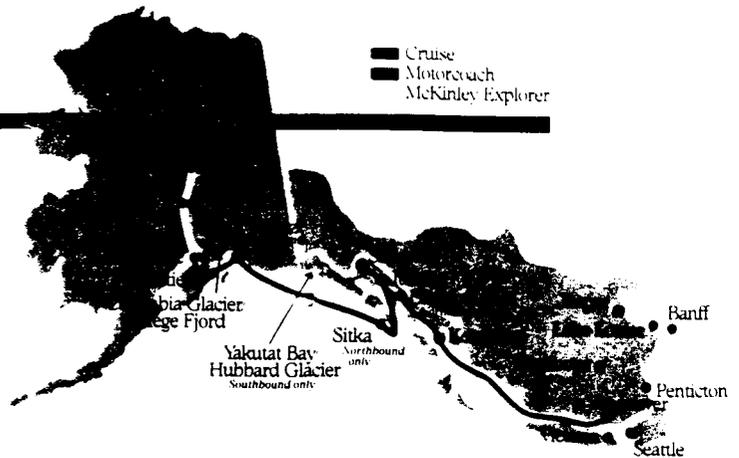
These staterooms each offer two lower beds, mirrored vanity with chair, two ample closets and a tiled bathroom with shower.



Wildlife

Seven-day cruise plus Anchorage, Denali Park & Fairbanks

12 days from \$1925



Day 8 Whittier, Anchorage

This morning dock at the port of Whittier and transfer by deluxe motorcoach to Anchorage for overnight deluxe hotel accommodations. In Anchorage, Alaska's largest and most cosmopolitan city, enjoy a sightseeing tour of the city including Lake Hood, the largest seaplane base in the world.

Day 9 Denali Park

Board the McKinley Explorer, Westours' luxurious private motorcoach, bound for Denali Park, home to majestic Mt. McKinley. The full dome railcar provides spacious comfortable seating in the upstairs lounge for viewing Alaska's magnificent scenery and an elegant private dining room below. Overnight deluxe hotel accommodations at Denali Park.

Day 10 Denali Park, Fairbanks

At Denali Park, tour 60 miles into the park on a wildlife search to see animals in their natural habitat. Spot grizzly bear, moose, caribou, mountain sheep and on a clear day glimpse Mt. McKinley, the monarch of the Alaska Range. This afternoon continue north to Fairbanks aboard the McKinley Explorer. Overnight deluxe hotel accommodations in Fairbanks.

Day 11 Fairbanks

Tour the fascinating city of Fairbanks with a stop at the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and experience life in the far north, just 90 miles south of the Arctic Circle. Then, step back into history with a delightful cruise down the Chena and Tanana Rivers on the stern-wheeler "Discovery." Overnight deluxe accommodations in Fairbanks.

Day 12 Fairbanks

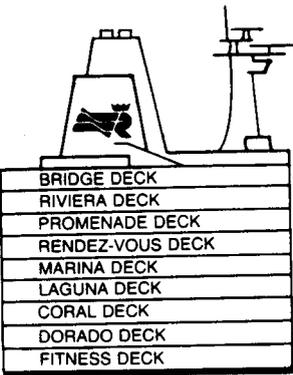
Transfer to Fairbanks Airport for your homeward-bound flight.



Days 1-7

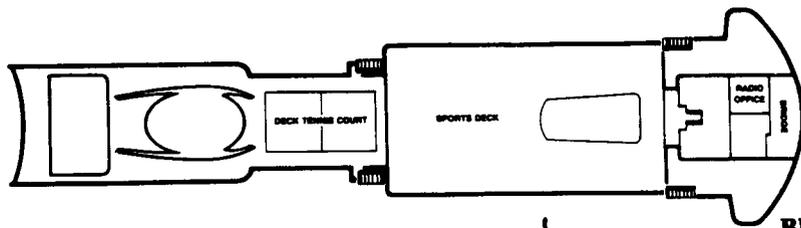
Board your Regency cruise ship in Vancouver to begin your spectacular 7-day cruise through the Inside Passage and Glacier Route. Sail out from this beautiful harbor, under the Lion's Gate Bridge and north into the wilderness waterways. On Day 2, you'll cruise the Inside Passage of British Columbia's north coast. Visit Ketchikan on Day 3, the city with the largest collection of restored totem poles in the world. Cruising northbound on Day 4, you'll enter the beautiful inlet of Endicott Arm. Southbound cruises will instead view the 80-mile long Hubbard Glacier. All cruises visit Juneau, Alaska's capital city, with time to explore Mendenhall Glacier, the Alaska State Museum or the Red Dog Saloon. Explore Skagway on Day 5, "Gateway to the Gold Rush." Then sail through the beautiful Lynn Canal, home to humpback whales and sea lions. On Day 6, northbound cruises will sail to Sitka, one-time capital of Russian Alaska. On southbound cruises, you'll visit Valdez, the southern terminus of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. Day 7 takes you past the 6-mile wide Columbia Glacier, and through College Fjord, with spectacular glaciers, each named for a college that supported an Alaskan expedition.

REGENT SUN

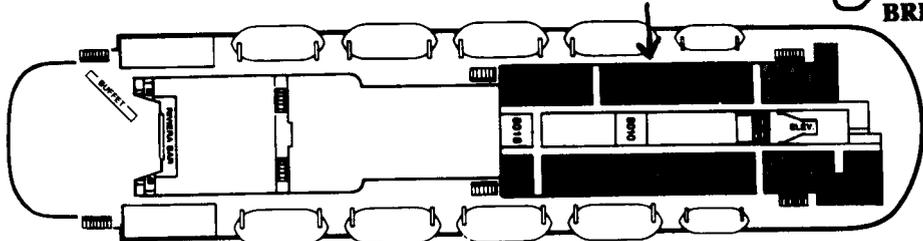


Regent Sun Specifications

- Registry: Bahamas
- Gross Tonnage: 25,500 Tons
- Length: 627 Feet
- Width: 81 Feet
- Cruising Speed: 19 Knots
- Passenger Capacity: 832
- Stabilizers: Denny Brown Stabilizers
- Cabin accommodates 3 persons
- Cabin accommodates 4 persons

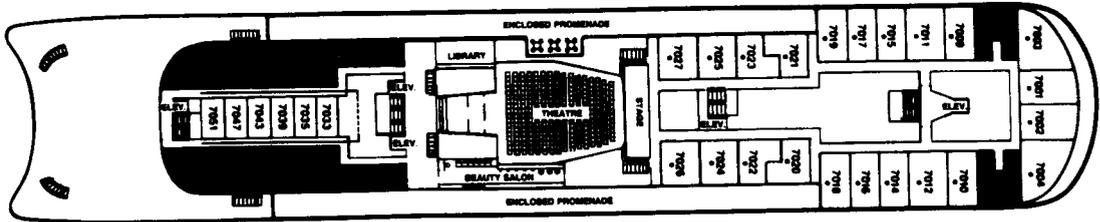


BRIDGE DECK

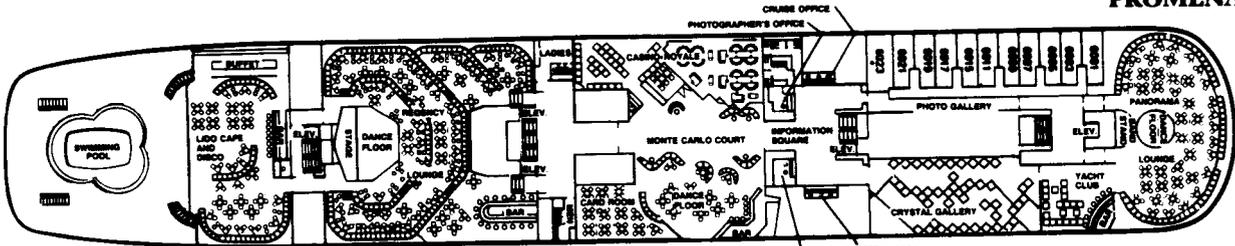


RIVIERA DECK

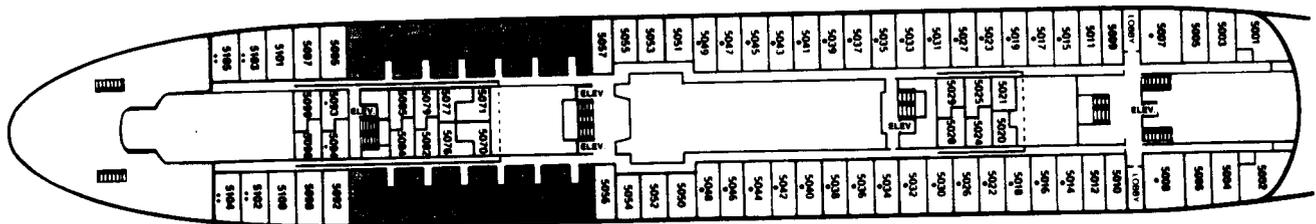
Views from the Riviera Deck cabins may be obstructed by life boats



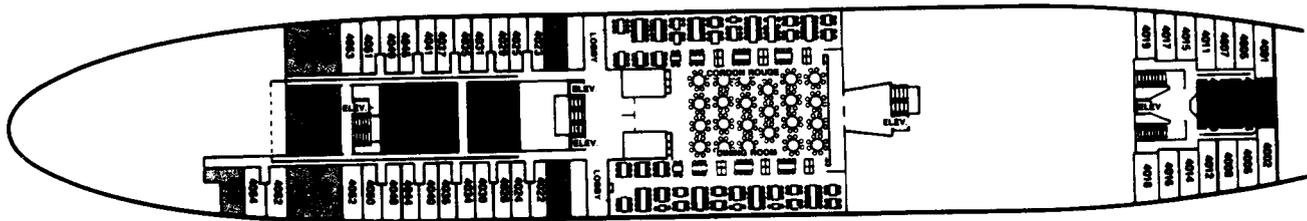
PROMENADE DECK



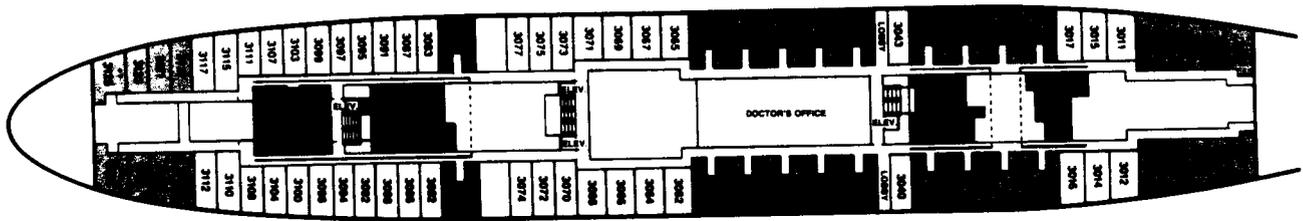
RENDEZ-VOUS DECK



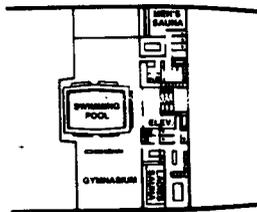
MARINA DECK



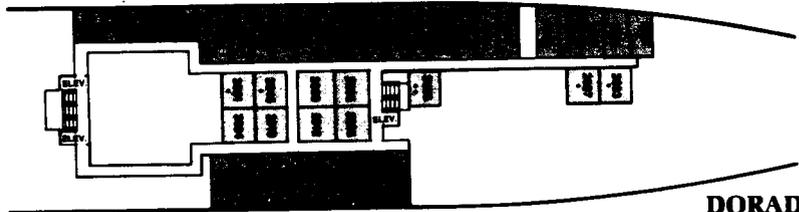
LAGUNA DECK



CORAL DECK



FITNESS DECK



DORADO DECK

| Category | Count |
|-----------|-------|
| Dlx Suite | 2 |
| Sup Suite | 4 |
| Jr. Suite | 7 |
| | 10 |