

Seagate and Wild Blue Alaska Cruise – Tuesday, June 10, 2008



Fanshaw has great views but Tracy Arm, just 37 miles up Stephens Passage, has the famous

(← *Dozens of ice bergs in Stephens Passage.*)



Sawyer Glaciers, the source of all the ice bergs we keep seeing. As we move up the Passage in near calm waters, the numbers of ice bergs and whales

increase dramatically.

Besides the bergs, we see dozens of whale blows all across the Passage. Whale tails and flukes are showing from all directions, usually in the distance.

*(Whales and more whales just everywhere you look! →)*



So as usual while cruising, we keep our eyes peeled for logs, floats, bergie bits and other floating objects. We look about 100 yards ahead as this gives the driver time to adjust course around any floating object. So Alex is driving when a log suddenly appears at 50 yards ahead. It's a nice roundish looking log, or is it whale? It's a large humpback whale, stop the boat! He must be asleep to let us get this close. Suddenly he "blows us off" and we can smell his bad breath, as he slowly circles around us to say hello to the Seagate crew. Wow that was close.



*(This log turns into a sleeping humpback whale that awakens to our surprise.)*

At last we drop our anchor in Tracy Arm cove with several other boats. The cove is at the entrance to the Arm, and the Arm leads to the glaciers. The best thing about the Cove is its shallow depth, about 30 feet, and shallow is not only good for easy anchoring. This shallowness insures that those house sized ice bergs, which float with about 80% of their size under water, will hit the bottom before they float into the cove. A house-sized berg next to the boat couldn't be much fun in the dead of night!

We'll do the glaciers tomorrow, but now everybody wants to explore an ice berg up close. Let's do it. Bob and Tina with Gerard and Peggy spy a large and interesting berg, a short distance away. They take the tender over to get close up and personal with it.



*(← Gerard gets excited by the berg, while Peggy thinks “Ho Hum”.)*

While they are examining the berg, Alex requests glacier ice for that special drink known as 15 over 15,000. The Wild Blue crew obliges and brings back a full bucket of 15,000 year old ice. Just add 15-year old scotch (or whiskey) for 15 over 15,000.



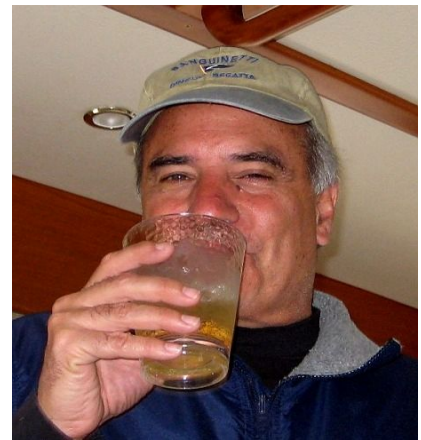
*(← To make an impression, Gerard climbs aboard this slippery boat. Attention kids: Please don't try this at home.)*



*(← The amazing colors that are absorbed from the ocean into the crystal clear glacier ice make a great photo.)*



*(← A spectacular view from our anchorage up Tracy Arm.)*



*(Clockwise: Peggy, Bob, Tina, Alex and Gerard. Five out of six of the Wild Blue crew celebrate with a 15 over 15,000 drink. Pat abstained, but did eat a 15,000 old ice cube.)*



Tomorrow we head up into Tracy Arm for a view of Sawyer Glacier. We've heard the ice is thick, but we are determined! If we necessary, we'll follow a cruise ship into the ice flow to clear our way. And hopefully, we won't follow the one that went aground. As Harriett says, "If Shackelford can do it, so can we!"