

Anchorage, AK 7/13/08

Contributed by Jane
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The final stage of our journey. {rokzoom title=|Mists of Tracy Arm| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG6162.jpg {/rokzoom}

We started out for Alaska from Seattle, traveling through Banff and Jasper. I thought nothing could compare to their beauty until we got to Alaska. It was our first look at the icefields of Northern Canada, retreating glaciers and lakes colored a surreal turquoise from glacial meltwaters. Lots of wildlife and luckily great weather too. {rokzoom title=|Rainbow in Banff| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG4935.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Big Horn Sheep in Jasper| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG4949.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Hike from Moraine Lake in Banff| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG4969.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|In the Midst of Moraine Lake| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG4995.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Prepare,| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5001.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|The Jump,| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5002.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|And The Landing!| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5003.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Lake Louise| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5023.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Lake Louise 2| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5040.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Peyto Lake| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5053.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Athabasca Glacier – our first – and its on the retreat!| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5109.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|From where I stand to where Miles and Kell are is how far Athabasca has retreated since 1982!| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5116.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Water-carved chute at Athabasca Falls| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5145.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Me at Athabasca Glacier| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5150.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Mountain Goats| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5170.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Valley of the Five Lakes| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5182.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Newly Calved Elk| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5225.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Rafting the Athabasca| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/rafting.jpg {/rokzoom}

We sailed on the Alaska ferry from Prince Rupert, BC to Juneau. The ferries here are long and slow as they make their way up the inside passage. Luckily, bordered on both sides by beautiful mountains and abundant wildlife, we haven't been bored. Our first ferry trip was two days. Kell had the run of the ship and made a few friends so that was fun. Miles and I found the bar and wavered from our tee-totalling lifestyle for a night. {rokzoom title=|Taking Off for Two Days on the Alaska Ferry| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5304.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|The Queen Charlotte Islands| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5527.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|The Native Village of Kake| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5539.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|A Tail of a Whale| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5573.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Mendenhall, Our First Alaskan Glacier| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5640.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|The ‘stream Making Landfall in Alaska| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5659.jpg {/rokzoom}

We've spent time in Sitka (a small island south of Juneau) and in Juneau for the last two weeks, soaking up the coastal life again. What the climate lacks in desirability here (wet most of the time), the scenery more than makes up for. We've been hiking around glaciers, mountains and muskegs, we've seen whales and bears and eagles too many to count. We've observed seals calving on iceberg floes and elk calving in the campgrounds. It's just overwhelming and wild. The people up here are great too. On Sitka, we caught up with our Montana friend Jeannie's cousin Wendy (got that?). She and her husband Jason and their 5 year old daughter Grace were the most gracious hosts – taking us on a picnic our first night there and then on a fabulous hike the next day. Kell had a great time trying to keep up with Grace who is truly a force of nature. {rokzoom title=|Kell and Miles as a Totem Pole| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5694.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Mt. Edgecomb Volcano| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5701.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|The kids on our picnic – brrr!| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMG5739.jpg {/rokzoom}

We came back to Juneau for a few days and got a chance to hike up around some old mines, and take a boat out to see a calving tidewater glacier in the Tracy Arm Fords Terror Wilderness. It was by far one of the most beautiful places we've seen. To get to the glacier we had to slowly make our way up a narrow 1200 foot deep fjord. On either side we saw towering walls, waterfalls and bears munching on mussel-encrusted rocks, bald eagles fighting over fish, and the seals and their pups basking on the ice that floats down the fjord from the glacier. Sawyer glacier is known for shedding huge chunks of ice and snow into the water on a regular basis and we got a few glimpses of that once the captain had managed to navigate the boat through the maze of swirling icebergs (some as big as the boat). {rokzoom title=|Kell and

Miles in front of Mendenhall Glacier and Falls| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMGP5914.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Bear up a tree| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMGP5984.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Nesting Birds and The Chugach Mountains| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMGP6087.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Kell and I at Point Bridget State Park| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMGP6100.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Flowers and Mountains at Point Bridget| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMGP6128.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Chester Rejoices in snow!| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMGP6147.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|So does Kell| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMGP6152.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Mist in Tracy Arm Fords Terror Wilderness| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMGP6162.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Iceberg in Tracy Arm| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMGP6236.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Kell and Iceberg| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMGP6277.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Waterfall in Tracy Arm| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMGP6374.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Black Bear in Tracy Arm| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMGP6406.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|North Sawyer Glacier| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMGP6444.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Seals on the Ice| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMGP6517.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Waterfall in Tracy Arm| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMGP6668.jpg {/rokzoom}{rokzoom title=|Humpback Whale in Tracy Arm| album=|7-5-08|} images/stories/7-5-08/IMGP6758.jpg {/rokzoom}

Being in Alaska is like traveling through the looking glass, and if I could actually sleep at night during the summer (it gets dark at 11 and light at 3:30), and if it weren't so so hard to get to, I might consider living here instead of Nelson.