

Travel Scene



Thursday, March 7, 1991/ECE

(C) 1991 ECE

Alaska

Porpoises and sea lions say howdy-doo to cruise crowd

By Mickey Jones
special writer

Alaska is hot this year! They broke tourism records in 1990 and this summer will be even bigger. The Persian Gulf war and rising overseas costs due to the slumping dollar are at least partially responsible for the great interest in Alaska.

This year, hundreds of seven- to 14-day Alaska cruises are being offered on ships diverted from the Caribbean for the summer months.

One-week trips from Seattle or Vancouver take you through the "inside passage" to the southeastern "panhandle" of Alaska and back. Some ships go all the way to Anchorage.

These huge cruise ships travel mostly at night so passengers can spend their days in the ports of Ketchikan, Sitka, Juneau, Skagway and Anchorage. They also cruise into Glacier Bay and some of the larger fjords.

An alternative way to appreciate coastal Alaska is to fly from Seattle to Ketchikan or Juneau and spend a few days on one of the small ships operated by Alaska Sightseeing Tours.

The Sheltered Seas, for example, is a modern 90-foot motor yacht offering three-day, all-daylight cruises between Juneau and Ketchikan. It has no staterooms, so motel or hotel accommodations are provided for each night. A similar boat, the Spirit of Glacier Bay, makes two-day cruises to Glacier Bay from Juneau. It has staterooms for accommodations for 49 passengers for the two days and one night at sea.

After following a black bear along the shore, we literally barged our way through floating beds of ice floes covered with hundreds of harbor seals as we approached the towering blue face of LeConte glacier.

These small boats are extremely comfortable and have the advantage of being able to navigate narrow passages and shallow waters where big cruise ships can't go. They get you really close to nature in the raw.

I boarded the Shelter Seas in Ketchikan one morning in September for a three-day cruise to Juneau. As we cruised between misty islets, a crew member used a large megaphone to give us an overview of our journey. Almost all of it would be within the Tongass National Forest, the largest national forest in the U.S.

We spent much of the first day cruising along the mountainous coastline of Southeast Alaska which is just raw, long, raw, long, raw, and 4,000 people.

After a delicious lunch, another crew member lectured on the native cultures of Alaska which we would clearly see when we got to our stop at the small fishing village of Wrangell.

Founded by Russians in 1834, the town has an interesting collection of totem poles and a tribal house on tiny Shakes Island. The northeast of

the Wrangell Sentinel, Alaska's independent weekly published newspaper, declares it to be "The only newspaper in the world that gives a damn about Wrangell."

On the second day we saw plenty of wildlife. Dozens of porpoises swam alongside our hull as we snapped pictures of their smiling faces 10 feet away. Whales spouted so close that we could feel their spray, and we were able to get within ten feet of bull eagles perched in tall trees.

After following a black bear along the shore, we literally barged our way through floating beds of ice floes covered with hundreds of harbor seals as we approached the towering blue face of LeConte glacier.

During an overnight stop in the quaint fishing town of Petersburg, passengers were treated to a Norwegian smorgasbord and other delights in a waterfront restaurant.

The next day, as we cruised north, west toward Juneau, our ship made a long side-trip into Tracy Arm to view the magnificent Sawyer glaciers. We again bumped our way



Unlike big cruise ships, boats like the Sheltered Seas can give passengers a real good view of the Alaskan coast. In this picture, passengers get up close and personal with the LeConte glacier.

MIKEY JONES

Please turn to next page

Have pen, will travel, always looking for Michigan residents

Everywhere I go I meet people from Michigan. And every time I write a travel article, I meet people who know more about the destination than I do. Both things happened to me in relation to the story we ran last week on the Florida Keys.

Sarah Shaw, for example, she works as a waitress at the Full Moon Saloon in Key West. Ask a couple of questions and you soon find out that Sarah grew up in Redford and Layman and still visits her parents in Howell and her brothers in South Lyon and Milford.

Or Jeffrey Anderson. I was on a tour boat out of Key West when I met Dina and Jeffrey. Anderson, Captain Dave was at the wheel telling the same jokes he tells every night and getting the same laughs from the 25 people aboard. And the first mate was serving cold beer and champagne.

The Selago is a catamaran so we were all sitting around the edges of the boat, in shorts and T-shirts, watching the sun go down. I was on the landward side of the sail with a young couple on their honeymoon.

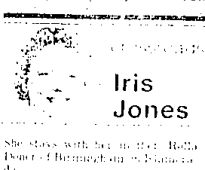
"Where are you from?" I asked.
"Chicago. What about you?"
Michigan.

"I grew up in Bloomfield Hills," Jeffrey said, and there it was again, the Michigan Connection.
Jeffrey graduated from Anderson High School and attended Eastern Michigan University before he moved to Chicago and met Dina. They were staying at the Casa Marina in Key West, planning a little honeymoon and a little jet skiing. Their favorite place in Key West was Shoppie Jones, "loud bands and fun people."

Judy Berne doesn't live in the Keys. She lives with her husband Ed in West Bloomfield but she has been going to the Florida Keys once or twice a year for 12 years.



Dina and Jeffrey Anderson honeymooned in the Florida Keys and ran into writer Iris Jones, who was there doing a story. Jeffrey is originally from Bloomfield Hills.



Iris Jones

She stays with her mother, Della Diner of Birmingham in Bloomfield Hills.

The Keys are a most relaxing

place to visit, says Iris Jones. "I've been to Miami, Key West, and it's much, much, much better than the Keys for spring break."

I asked Judy to give some tips to potential travelers.

- Don't take anything drosser than a pair of white slacks. You can wear jeans and shorts every where. The only exception is the middle Keys is the Chevy Lodge.

Please turn to next page

St. Patrick's Day!

Chicago River runs green as celebrants toast favorite saint

By Vera Hogan
staff writer

Patrick O'Leary may have been the first Irishman to set Chicago on fire, when his west side cow barn caught the Great Chicago Fire 120 years ago, but he certainly wasn't the first Chicagoan to set the town on fire every March 17 on St. Patrick's Day.

That's the mad decision I had to make every spring when I lived in Chicago: Was it worth it to take a day off for the opening home game of the Chicago Cubs or for St. Patrick's Day? It's a tradition to take the day off for St. Patrick's Day.

You start at the end of the parade, watch the parades, eat corned beef and cabbage and drink green beer in pubs all over the city. Irish or not, you'll get hassled if you're not wearing green.

This year I will have the pleasure of escorting my husband, Mike, to Chicago for his first St. Patrick's Day away from home. I'm going to show the Irishman how to party Chicago.

If you plan to visit Chicago the weekend of March 16 and 17, you can enjoy the sights and smells of St. Patrick's Day.

The celebrations begin with the annual downtown St. Patrick's Day parade at dawn on Saturday, March 17.

Nearly 700 marchers lead an estimated 40,000 people from the West Loop to Van Halen.

As a tribute to appear in this year's parade include Jim Sullivan, son of Alvin Sullivan, one of the five famed Sullivan brothers killed during World War II. The Sullivan brothers are being honored by the Navy this year to commemorate the 50th anniversary of their deaths. For more information on the downtown parade, call 312-263-6615.

The annual South Side Irish St. Patrick's Day Parade begins 1:30 p.m. Sunday, March 17, along Western

You start at one end of the town, watch the parades, eat corned beef and cabbage, and drink green beer in pubs all over the city. Irish or not, you'll get hassled if you're not wearing green.

tower, 1011 and 1141. For more information, call 312-243-1969.

If you visit Chicago during the St. Patrick's Day weekend, look for the Irish green Chicago River. The river is dyed each year under the direction of parade organizers and the green dye is usually visible for a couple days after the parade.

Restaurants and pubs throughout the city will be ready to serve those ready to eat, drink and be merry. Irish style. A few of them include:

- Abbey Restaurant and Pub, 410 W. Grace, 312-478-4408. American and Irish selections and served Saturday and Sunday morning, open 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. Monday through Tuesday.

- Atlanta Restaurant and Pub, 711 W. Grand Ave., 312-622-3239. Features British and Irish cuisine and traditional British and Irish entertainment. Irish breakfast served Sunday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and midnight Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, noon to 2 a.m. Saturday, and 9:30 a.m. to midnight Sunday. Closed Tuesday.

- Butch McGuire's, 20 W. Division St., 312-337-9881. Music and lounge with lunch and weekend brunch, open 11:30 a.m. to 2 a.m. Monday through Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 3 a.m. Saturday, and 10:30 a.m. to 2 a.m. Sunday.

- Clancy's Pub and Deli, Ltd.,

1255 S. State St., 312-232-6297. Irish entertainment and deli sandwiches open 7 a.m. to 4 a.m. Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 a.m. Saturday and noon to 4 a.m. Sunday.

- Kitty O'Shea's, 720 S. Michigan Ave. in the Chicago Hilton and Towers, 312-622-4400. Irish pub and restaurant featuring live Irish entertainment nightly. Open 11 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. Monday through Saturday, and noon to 1:30 a.m. Sunday.

For the party goers and merry-makers who visit Chicago for the first time the St. Patrick's Day, the city offers an affordable, comprehensive transportation system via the Chicago Transit Authority and city rail companies.

The subway, elevated trains and buses can take you anywhere in the city for \$1.25 or less, depending on time of day. Cab fares are \$1.20 per mile.

If you have a little more time to spend in the city, you can get an overview of Chicago by attending the Here's Chicago exhibit at the Old Water Tower Pumping Station, 163 E. Pearson St., across Michigan Avenue from the Chicago Water Tower. In specially-designed theaters, images of Chicago are projected from 63 computerized slide projectors, followed by a grand tour of the city via 70mm film. The presentation takes less than an hour and includes the slide presentation, movie, walk-

Please turn to next page