

# Alaskan cruisers greet porpoises, sea lions

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through masses of floating ice and icebergs, some white and some brilliant blue. Thousands of harbor seals were basking in the sunshine.

In another part of the inlet, the skipper nosed out how right into the spray of two waterfalls and later pulled up to a rocky little island covered with dozens of huge roaring sea lions.

It was getting dark as we pulled into the glistening harbor at Juneau where three huge cruise ships were strung with lights from stem to stern.

A comfortable hotel for the night and a bus ride to the Mendenhall Glacier the next morning concluded our Sheltered Seas tour.

The cost of these three-day trips on the Sheltered Seas, including all meals and accommodation for four nights is \$795 to \$1,295 per person depending on departure date. The season runs May through September with the highest prices from mid June to mid August.

The two-day Glacier Bay cruise from Juneau on the Spirit of Glacier Bay runs between \$399 and \$649 per

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person depending on stateroom selection.

These two tours can be combined or tied-in with other Alaskan air, land and water packages that include Anchorage, Sitka, Fairbanks and Skagway.

A close-up look at Alaska from a small boat sounds appealing, write Alaska Sightseeing Tours, Suite 700, Fourth and Battery Building, Seattle WA 98121, or call toll-free, (800) 426-7702. Ask for two brochures: Alaska Yacht Tours and Alaska Cruises and Tours.

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By extending your Alaska trip a

day or two, you can include such attractions as a day of salmon fishing, a flight or boat ride to Misty Fjords National Monument, helicopter to nearby glaciers or traversing a mountain lake in an Indian war canoe.

You can also switch down the bumpy Mendenhall River in a rubber raft, fly over Glacier Bay or zip over to the goldrush town of Skagway for a few hours, then ride one of the coastal ferries of the Alaska Marine Highway System affectionately known as "blue canoes."

It's a six-hour ferry ride from Skagway to Juneau and almost 24 hours from there to Ketchikan. If you have three extra vacation days, you can blue canoe all the way to Alaska and back from Bellingham, Wash. For a 1991 ferry schedule and fare information, call toll-free, (800) 642-0068.

These extras are not cheap, so if you follow the crowd to Alaska this summer, you may spend a lot of money but you won't be disappointed. It truly is America's last frontier.

For more information, contact your travel agent.



Doris Scharlenberg of Farmington Hills (at left) enjoys white-water rafting on the Mendenhall River near Juneau, Alaska, just one of the fun

things to do on a vacation to the final frontier. With Doris are Gordon Charles of Traverse City and Jeanne Porterfield of New York City.

## Airlines resume flights to Middle East

By Iris Sanderson Jones  
special writer

I shouldn't have been surprised, but I was. I was in an airport, talking to my friend Amnon Linn-Lipzin of the Israeli Government Tourist Office, ready to commiserate with him on the lack of travel to Israel.

"You can't get a seat on a plane to Israel, they're all full," he said. Remember, this conversation took place while the war was still in full swing.

The reason of course was that every airline except El Al had stopped flying to Israel, making the few available seats precious to those eager to be with their loved ones in the Middle East.

That situation changed this week. British Airways announced that it will resume twice-weekly flights to Tel Aviv March 14 and twice-weekly flights to Bahrain March 10. The flights were suspended Jan. 16, the day after Desert Storm began.

A British Airways spokesman

said that flights to Kuwait, and the Saudi cities of Riyadh and Dhahran would resume "as soon as possible."

Iberia, Spain's state-owned carrier, is also resuming flights to the Middle East, with service to Cairo and Tel Aviv already started.

And that's not the only good news in the travel industry.

Northwest Airlines will offer a coupon discount on fares in hope of attracting travelers who postponed their trips because of the Gulf war. Sunday papers in more than 40 cit-

ies will carry the coupons, offering discounts of up to \$100 off most ticket prices.

And if warm seas and cold slopes interest you, take note. Cruise ship bookings are already up and ski industry experts believe that the combination of pent-up demand and growing consumer confidence will boost domestic leisure travel. International vacations remain a question mark.

Information from The Associated Press contributed to this article.

## Nashville's Opryland Hotel growing again

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The Opryland Hotel, one of the country's largest convention hotels, will expand for the fourth time since opening more than 13 years ago.

Hotel officials say they will add 38,431 square feet of meeting and office space in the hotel's east wing at a cost of \$3.1 million.

When completed in November, the expansion will feature 15,641 square

feet of meeting space. Included will be three new meeting rooms, a new ballroom, a new reception area and a new gift shop.

A uniform distribution center, new offices, public space and support facilities on the lower levels of the hotel will bring the property to 2.4 million square feet, said Jack Vaughn, general manager of the 1,391-room hotel.

## travel notes

### TORTOISE RESERVE

Passengers on Galapagos Cruises flagship Santa Cruz will now be able to visit the tortoise reserve in the highlands of Santa Cruz Island.

Early sailing visitors to the Ecuadorian archipelago all but wiped out the animals and today there are only two sanctuaries in the wild, on Santa Cruz and around the Alcedo volcano on Isabela Island.

Santa Cruz passengers will be driven into the highlands to the reserve, lunch at a farm along the way, and stop at nearby Los Gemelos, sink holes formed by volcanic action.

The trip passes through most of the vegetation levels of the archipel-

ago, from the salty lowlands through thickening brush and trees to cloud forest at the top.

For more information and prices contact your travel agent, or the tour operator's US representative, Adventure Associates toll-free, (800) 527-2549.

### NORTHWEST AIRLINES

Northwest Airlines has reduced its transcontinental first-class fares to economy-class prices. First-class fares have been lowered for travel between Los Angeles or San Francisco and New York City, Washington D.C., Boston or Philadelphia.

For example, the price of a first-class round-trip ticket between Los Angeles and New York has been low-

ered from \$2,202 to \$1,474. Round-trip travel between San Francisco and Washington D.C. went from \$1,594 to \$1,262.

First-class fares carry no restrictions and first-class night fares are applicable only to late night or overnight flights. All fares are subject to normal first-class availability.

Northwest has also cut its lowest discount fare by 40 percent for travel between Los Angeles and Honolulu. Northwest will charge only \$248 for a round-trip ticket, down from \$419. The fare is available Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. It's \$50 higher the rest of the week.

For more information consult your travel agent or call Northwest reservations toll-free, (800) 225-2525.

## Chicago River runs green as celebrants toast favorite saint

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ing tour of the pumping station and Great Chicago Fire exhibit.

Presentations are every hour on the half-hour from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$4.75 for adults, \$3.50 for students and seniors, \$10 for families of five or less. Group rates are available. Call (312) 467-7114.

For a sky-high view of Chicago and the Lake Michigan coastline, visit the Skydeck on the 103rd floor of the Sears Tower, or the observatory on the 94th floor of the John Hancock Center.

The Sears Tower Skydeck, 233 S. Wacker, is open 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Admission is \$4.42 for people 16 and over, \$3.38 for seniors and \$2.16 for children 15 and under. Group rates are available for 20 or

more. Call (312) 375-9696.

The John Hancock Center observatory is open 9 a.m. to midnight daily. Admission is \$3.42 for adults, \$2.39 for seniors and \$1.95 for children 15 and under. Group rates are available for 20 or more. Call (312) 751-7671.

For more information on things to see and do in Chicago, contact the Chicago Department of Tourism, 221 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago IL 60611; (312) 280-5740, or your travel agent.

## Columnist looks for Michiganders

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and even there you can wear slacks to dinner.

"Don't eat anything but fish. Lots of other things are good, but the fish is so wonderful that it's a waste of time to eat anything else."

"Try the key lime pie in different places, because everybody has

their own recipe.

"The best restaurants in the middle Keys are Mile Marker 28, Cheeca Lodge, Zippy's and the Lorie Inn."

"You don't have to like fishing to be in the Keys. There's a lot of fun to be had at the Net, Cheeca Lodge, as well as other resorts and condominiums."

in the Keys.

I found a lot of other travelers who were looking for a vacation spot in the Keys. They were looking for a place where they could relax, enjoy the sun, and have a good time. They were looking for a place where they could enjoy the beautiful scenery and the friendly people of the Keys.

## Local people appointed to ski board

Several ski industry business people from the area have been appointed to the board of directors of a new non-profit organization called Michigan Ski Industries Association.

MSIA, based in Thompsonville, will represent Michigan ski resorts and facilities, ski equipment manufacturing companies and ski retailers.

The organization was formed to promote skiing in Michigan and surrounding states, and to develop coop-

erative marketing ventures and corporate sponsorship programs.

Bud Hadden of Ski Concepts Inc. has been named vice chairman. The board of directors includes Bruce Firestone of Mt. Holly Ski Area, Dick Held of Daventon Village Ski Shops, Jim Sullivan of Sullivan International Ltd., Don Thomas of Don Thomas Sportsbars.

Other officers are chairman Jim Bartlett of Nubs Nob Ski Area in Harbor Springs, treasurer John

MacGregor of Eagle Point Ski Area, and secretary Mike Muller of Eagle Point Ski Area.

The association's first order of business was to invite Gov. John Engler and his wife Michelle to inaugurate a Michigan ski resort.

For more information contact MSIA, Box 1114, Thompsonville, MI 49684-9142 or one of the officers listed above.

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