

Thursday Sept. 12, 2013
Canada road trip

Leave Seattle at 10:30 am.
Delayed at the Canadian border -
it's the first time Grant has tried to
get into Canada since he had his
juvenile record cleared. We had to
go inside while they checked their
database. Within a few minutes they
let us in! Grant was really thrilled.

Our GPS doesn't work up here, and
our map was confusing so we took
99 instead of 1 & ended up driving
through congested Vancouver neighborhoods
& lots of traffic lights. It was stressful
because the road signage was poor &
we got confused, plus big city traffic
is tough. I got a headache. We
finally got shunted onto hiway 1
after having gone quite round about.

But we (Grant especially) enjoyed
seeing some of Vancouver's urban,
ethnic neighborhoods. He saw a



Palestinian & a Pakistani restaurant.

Waited for about 45 minutes for the Horseshoe Bay ferry to Langdale. It was quite warm in the full sun & now my headache is pounding.

The ferry puts the WA State ones to shame. Huge & quiet with shops, play area, & ~~other~~ ^{one} staffed information booth.

The views are beautiful, with steeper mountains than Puget Sound.

Arrived in Langdale about 5pm & drove 30 minutes north to Sechelt & Porpoise Bay Provincial Park. Found a nice campsite with a peek-a-boo view of the bay. It's a very pleasant temperature. Made hobo stew with chicken chunks. The individual sites don't have fire pits but there are several communal pits.

After dinner we walked down to the bay on a short trail. It's a beautiful beach with sand & pebbles, no waves, lots of picnic tables. The bay is ringed by houses & there are a few 

noisy boats & jet plane float planes,
but mostly it's very peaceful & quiet
here. The campsites are large & quiet.
I'm exhausted - going to turn in early.
Cost is \$25 (US & Canadian dollar are
at par). I forgot a flashlight. Luckily
Grant has an extra. No bugs here.

Friday, Sept. 13

Slept until 6:30! A warm, peaceful
morning (until the float plane roared by
deafeningly at 6:55!). Flightailing it up
to land to get a campsite, as it's
the weekend.

Arrived Earl's Cove Ferry at 8:24.
Ferry scheduled at 8:25 but running late
so no problem getting on. A beautiful balmy
morning on the Queen of Chilliwack, a
venerable battleship of a boat built for
rough weather. A somewhat noisy &
vibrating 50-minute crossing. Taller,
steeper mountains here than in Puget
Sound or the San Juans. Water is
like glass today.



From the Sattery Bay terminal it's 37 miles to Lund. This section is called the upper Sunshine Coast - the section south of Earl's Bay is the lower. Sattery Bay Provincial Park (P.P.) looked nice & had fire pits but we decided to keep driving up to Lund. Dinner Rock Rec. Area, just before you get to Lund, is a free "forest service" CG on a bluff overlooking the water. It has firepits & a pit toilet - no water. There are many empty spots. We grabbed ~~a~~ one right on the bluff. Someone had left behind two plastic chairs (Adirondack) on an adjacent knoll with a gorgeous view of Sattery Island. It's called the "tropical island" because of its white, sandy beaches & ~~is~~ warm water. You can take a water taxi there from Lund. After an early lunch of leftover Subway sandwiches we walked down to the beautiful, empty, pebbly beach & sat on a log for a while. What an idyllic place! We left our camp **P**

chairs & an "Occupied" sign & drove up to Lund. It's a tiny, quaint fishing town with a bakery, marina, & small general store. Unfortunately all of the parking is pay & the signage is a bit confusing & unwelcoming.

I bought a scone & a loaf of seed bread at the bakery & asked about hiking. She showed me a nice trail on the north side of Okeover Arm PP, but we couldn't find it. We drove up to the kayak rental place north of the park (which looks like a great place & also does guided trips) and they had never heard of a trail along the shore. He suggested that we hike a stretch of the Sunshine Coast Trail (SCT). It crosses Malaspina Road just west of Okeover Arm. We walked for an hour through a very old cedar forest in warm, dappled sunlight, and found a nice view point. We watched a small woodpecker (hairy or downy) from up close. We saw 3 other people on the trail.



We got back to camp at Dinner Rock around 2:30 & it's still mostly empty. We're reading & writing in the warm sun with a delightful breeze. There were quite a few mosquitoes earlier, but the wind has knocked them back.

Our neighbors are now rocking out to live music, alas. Wondering if they would turn it down if we asked them... A camper with two big german shepherds and a loud-voiced woman pulled in next door & has spent the past half-hour noisily jockeying their RV into position & yelling at their dogs. This has drowned out the music. I'm try to ~~focus~~ focus on the humming sounds of the boats putting past & the water gurgling on the rocks. Cars are constantly coming & going here - it's a busy place for day visits. Grant is getting bit by mosquitoes (none are bothering me). The couple next door are swimming. They say the water here is pretty warm.



I think we're the only people here without dogs. The couple next door are smoking joints & increasingly oblivious to their extremely smelly dogs running off.

Dinner of leftover hobo stew & bread. Nice fire. Beautiful purple & gold sunset on the beach, waves lapping languorously, smell of salt water. Waxing half moon.

Saturday Sept. 14

Up at 7. Thick thin coastal fog.

Warm & quiet. On the road at 7:45, heading for 9:25 ferry in Saltery Bay.

Planned to stop for groceries, but no stores visible. We're both a little crabby - not sure why. Ferry left at 9:45. Overcast ride so we just sat inside & read. Drove to Eggmont which is a tiny town with a general ~~grocery~~ store, hotel, & marina. Parked at Skookumchuck trail & made salad for lunch. It's a very pleasant 2-mile walk to the rapids on a mostly wide & smooth trail. The rapids were wonderful. We got there during



flood tide. Kayakers, many in short "stunt" boats were playing in the huge waves. It was mesmerizing to watch them leaping about in the frothy water. We hiked back & drove south to Pender Harbour. Road signage here we find extremely confusing. They often give you over a mile advance warning of a turn & then there's no sign at the turn itself. Pender had a grocery store & a few shops. We stocked up, checked out the small marina & park & that's all there was. In Sechelt we stopped at McDonald's to use the WiFi. I was thrilled to learn that Ian & Haley got their apartment! I was upset to see Grant eating an ice cream cone inside while I was doing email in the car.

At 5 we left & drove to Roberts Creek PP CG. Lots of empty spaces. \$16 a night. It's sandwiched between 101 & houses, so it's nothing special, but it has big spaces &



firepits. Dinner of eggs, cheese, potatoes, sausage. Grant is acting really unwilling to be here so we're slowly working through what is going on with him. So far we're not having a really great time on this trip. He has recently become obsessed with baseball & football (I fell in love with a man who wasn't into sports).

So this whole trip is revolving around us needing to be close to Vancouver so he can watch or listen to a Sunday night football game. He's also getting a lot of mosquito bites so he is complaining a lot about that. And he's worried about the weather - he heard that a storm may be coming somewhere.

We've concluded that the Sunshine Coast is great for boating & beaches but not so great for driving.

Sunday Sept. 15

Up at 6:30 to the sound of a large owl hooting. A delightful sound I haven't heard in a long time.



After talking last night our moods are better today. A foggy morning but comfortable temperature. Catch the 8:25 ferry to Vancouver.

We decided to head for Tonasket instead of Whistler because Grant thought he'd have a better chance of watching the football game there. & because it was a beautiful drive, despite being overcast, through Manning Provincial Park, along rivers, through ranching valleys & lush agriculture like Chelan.* Keremeos had numerous produce stands bulging with local bounty, many organic farms, vineyards, & some dreadlocks too.* Salad lunch in hot sun at ^{west entrance to} Manning Park.

Back to Canada for a moment for a few observations. The Vancouver skyline was a shock to me. Tall grey buildings that all looked the same. I forgot that everything in Canada is labeled in English & French. I also forgot that Canadians not only speak with their own unique accent, but they are part of the British Commonwealth & use British spellings & expressions. This



made for a few interesting highway signs.
(Can't think of any examples right now.)
To my delight none of the parks or
hiking trails charge day use fees.

Back to Keremeos. There we saw a sign for the "first Native American winery." It's both sad & ironic that Indians, who often have ~~a~~ high rate problems with alcohol (many reservations ban alcohol), sell it to white people & make lots of money. Ditto for casinos.

We crossed the border with minimal fuss (he opened one door & peaked cursorily inside). We stopped at the visitor's center in Oroville. It was closed but a woman happened to be working there & let me in. She loaded me up with a thick stack of maps & brochures & some verbal information that turned out to be quite useful. After unsuccessfully searching for NFL radio stations or open sports bars in tiny Tonasket we kept going south. In Omak we found a crummy pub that would do in a



pinch. The visitor center lady had told me there was camping at the stampede grounds. Our GPS couldn't find it.

I got us turned around getting back to 97 & suddenly there was the stampede grounds. Sure enough they have camping for \$15. It's an OK place, lightly subscribed, with wide open sky, next to the river levee. Hiway 97 is nearby but not too loud. And there's a radio station for Grant. He listened to the game while I made spaghetti & did dishes. It's a lovely shirt sleeves evening with a light breeze. It sprinkled a few drops so we put up the canopy. It's pouring rain in Seattle. The game was delayed over half an hour.

After I climbed in bed we had a nice storm with rain, lightning, & thunder. Grant was happy with the clear radio reception - it was "omakulate".

Monday Sept. 16

Woke to a lovely pink & gold sunrise & lots of blue sky. It's a perfect temp. Took a long, hot shower for 75¢.



Nice walk along the river on a ~~closed~~ dike road. Groceries & ice at Safeway. Free wifi at KFC (other restaurants are jumping on the free wifi bandwagon - yay!). Drive up to Conconully. As soon as you leave hiway 97 the scenery is gorgeous! Rolling pine-covered hills & prosperous green ranches. Nice lake, state park, & private C.G. in the little town. Drove 2 miles up the road to Cottonwood C.G. Chop salad picnic next to a rushing stream. Blue sky, pine trees, light breeze. Idyllic! Cows on road & in campground.

From Conconully we drove north along the shore of Lake Conconully. The road became gravel for a while before intersecting another road at the Fish Lake junction. We turned east, back toward hiway 97. 10 miles thru some of the prettiest ranching valley scenery we've ever seen.

82° Stopped at the food coop in Tonasket hoping to find a loaf of



fresh bread but no luck. It amazes me that after all these years of hippies flocking to Tonasket, their presence is so little felt. Other than the coop with its adjacent garden & cultural center, this is still a conservative ranching town. A friendly hippie welcomed us to the coop, of which he seemed justifiably proud.

If I hadn't been with Grant (whose back is hurting badly) I would have chatted a while & asked a lot of questions about how he makes a living & what it's like to live here. Many years ago, when I was in college, I hitchhiked (alone) to the Tonasket Barter Festival. What an amazing experience - I wish I'd kept a journal!

We then drove 20 miles east on very rural hiway 20 & 6 miles north to Bonaparte Lake C.G. There are loons on the lake! We have the south half of the C.G. completely to ourselves. Our spot is right on the lake with our own little beach. \$12.



Heard the loons calling. Five mallards came begging. Potatoes, eggs, sausage for dinner. Sat by a fire & watched the sky & lake turn pink. Then the almost full moon rose & flooded the forest & lake with glowing light.

Tuesday Sept. 17

The bright moon woke me in the night, shining on my face. Awoke to mist swirling over the lake. Drove the paved road north to Beaver Lake (the CG isn't very nice) & then drove on Chelan Rd & south to Republic. It was a beautiful road with lots of lake & ponds & probably a lot of birds. It was a cool morning with fog in the tree tops.

In the quaint town of Republic we went to the Ranger Station & stocked up on maps & brochures. The guy told us you can often see Dahl sheep on Customs Rd a few miles east of Curlew, so we drove the pretty



back road up to Curlew, past Curlew Lake. No sheep, alas. We then drove Boulder Creek Rd. east to hiway ~~20~~ 21 & ate lunch at a small park in the tiny enclave of Orient. This is not a tourist town. The one local we met didn't strike us as the sharpest tool in the shed.

South to the small city of Kettle Falls which has a large lumber mill. Judging from the mills & log trucks we've been seeing, this is logging country. I went for a long walk around town while Grant grabbed a few groceries. His back is hurting too much to walk.

We then drove hiway 20 east to Tiger, on hiway 395, because we'd never driven that section of 20, & it is dotted. It was mostly pine forest. Tiger has a nice little store, restrooms, & info display showing the many sights in the area. Worth a stop.

On the way back west we stopped to buy two dozen eggs (only \$2.50/doz) from a nice woman whose sister 

lives in Kirkland in a house I often walk by. Small world. We made a quick stop to see Crystal Falls, right next to the road, & then headed for Pend Oreille Wildlife Refuge. We drove in the Starvation Lake road. There are no refuge signs there but our map showed the road going through. The road was narrow & bumpy & we were skeptical, but it did go through. The campgrounds here are free. Cottonwood Camp was kind of funky so we opted for Bear Creek Camp. No tables but pit toilets & fire rings. We set up the canopy & built a nice fire. It began to sprinkle while we were cooking dinner. We heard thunder rumbling.

After dinner it began to rain harder & harder. Soon it was pouring & lakes were quickly forming around us. More thunder. Suddenly an earsplitting crack of thunder as Grant watched a bolt of lightning hit a tree about 100 yards away. The tree caught on fire!



I called 911 to report it. They called DNR, who called me. He said he might not send a crew tonight & he wasn't worried about the fire spreading since everything is so wet from the rain. He said we didn't need to evacuate. We washed dishes & buttoned up camp as best we could without getting soaked. We left the canopy up. If we have to get out quickly we'll probably just abandon the canopy! It was a pretty exciting evening & I felt a little shaky afterward from the adrenalin. Now we're sitting in the van reading & it's still raining, but more lightly.

Wednesday Sept. 18

It rained most of the night but stopped by morning. The lakes of water around our camp had mostly soaked into the parched ground. The tree fire had gone out. We could see the big scar & hanging slab of wood from where the lightning hit.



Our plan was to complete the refuge driving loop, but after navigating a few miles of pretty rough road, we hit a dead end where they had placed a large pile of dirt to block the road! There had been no sign. Grant had to back the Van over a pretty hairy ditch until we found a spot barely wide enough to turn around. The DNR fire crew called to check on the fire & we happened to drive by their truck so we stopped to chat for a minute with the two young guys. Brought back memories of my fire crew days.

We drove west out of the Refuge, intersecting 395 about 5 miles south of Colville. We stopped in the McDonalds lot to check email, gassed up, took a peek at the Farmers Market bounty & headed west on hiway 20. It was 58° at 9am with mostly blue sky. It felt like fall.

The sign welcoming you to Kettle Falls says "1640 friendly"



people & one grouch."

We crossed 5600' Sherman Pass to get to Tonasket. It must be some treacherous driving around these parts in the winter. The sky got bluer.

We took 97 south to Okanogan & then 20 west across the North Cascades hiway. Stopped for a picnic lunch at a CG at Loup Loup pass. It began to rain as we crossed the Cascades, damping the scenic splendour. But the skies got blue again on the other side.

We drove hiway 530 to Darrington & then hiway 9, arriving home about 5 pm.

