

Cross Country Travels to Alaska

by Jim Walgren

In August of 2017 Janet and I drove our 36' Four Winds Infinity RV to Houston and attended the Ability Expo, a big consumer show spotlighting products and services. We passed by a booth that provided travel services geared to those with disabilities. Easy Access Travel puts together cruises that cater to those with disabilities. We have traveled with their group to the Caribbean. Debra Kerper, the owner, makes all the arrangements for accessibility including: rooms, transportation and excursions. You meet some of the nicest people in the group as you travel to some of the world's most exotic places. One of my bucket list places to visit is Alaska, and it just so happened that she was organizing a trip to Alaska for the following year. Janet and I secured a spot and the planning started. We would be boarding the cruise boat at the port of Seattle.

Our daughter had moved to Seattle so we decided to visit her and then set sail for Alaska. We decided to make this a trip for the ages and drive the motorhome from Austin, Texas to Seattle, Washington. We gave ourselves a month to get there, and a month to drive home after the cruise. Naturally, we would hit national parks on the 2,000 plus mile journey up to Seattle and on the way back to Texas. We left Austin on July 5th and visited: Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado, Arches National Park in Moab, Salt Lake City, and countless side trips along the way. We normally would cover 150 miles a day, and then stop and sightsee for a few days. That really allowed us to travel without feeling rushed or stressed.

On August 1st we pulled into Lake Pleasant RV Park in Bothell, Washington which is North of Lake Washington and near Seattle. We had 3 days to rest up before the cruise to Alaska. While we are on the cruise, our RV would be at the RV park's onsite storage area plugged into power. We had prearranged to meet with HTC members Jack and Joan who we met at the Texas HTC rally. They treated us to a spectacular seafood restaurant and really made us feel welcome in Seattle.

We boarded the ship on August 4th and set sail for Alaska. Our itinerary included stops with excursions in: Ketchikan, Juneau, Skagway, and Victoria, BC. Along the way the ship would pass breathtaking views of snow covered mountains, glaciers, and temperate rain forests. Our balcony room allowed for perfect viewing. The accessible rooms on the ship are incredible. I have always envisioned cramped tiny spaces on these ships, but they have really improved their accessibility. Each port of call had excursions planned that would accommodate my power wheelchair. We enjoyed outings that allowed us to explore local sights, wildlife, shopping and of course, food. The highlight included boarding a smaller boat and going whale watching. The weather on this particular day was cold and rainy, but the climate controlled vessel allowed for comfortable viewing. The whales did not disappoint. We even got to view a whale totally breaching the water and splashing onto it's side. In Skagway we boarded a train which traveled into



Jim and Janet visiting Butchart Gardens in BC Canada



Cruise Ship

Once our cruise was over we returned to Seattle. Our son flew in and we had the whole family there to continue to see sights around Seattle. We left on August the 15th to continue the trip in our motorhome. Our plan was to head east on I-90 with stops in Yellowstone, Little Bighorn, Mt. Rushmore, and then on to Indiana for the HTC rally. We spent a week at each park and had a wonderful time. Unfortunately, due to an unforeseen health issue we had to cut our trip short and did not make the rally.

If you have not been on a cruise and are thinking about going, Janet and I have really enjoyed our various trips to different countries. Combining RV and cruise travel was the perfect combination.



Humpback Whale Breaching

