

# David Payne's Notes

## June 30-July 6

My journey has finally begun. But I will have to admit that when I first volunteered, I could not ever have visualized the setting for night #1. We are "camped" in the gym of RCMP "E" Division Headquarters in Vancouver. 10 of us from the Island have spread our sleeping bags around the edge. We have commandeered some tumbling mats to use as extra padding under our thermarests, so the hard wood floor promises not to be a discomfort.

It is 8:30 p.m., and a couple of the guys are playing floor hockey, killing time until lights out, which I imagine will be about 10:00 p.m. We have an early morning ahead. The bus leaves at 5 am. The trip to Hazelton is about 20 hours. They tell us that the bus will have movies on it, and we stop at several places on the way to pick up more paddlers. The day has been for the most part uneventful, if time-consuming. Deb drove me to Parksville where we picked up 2 of the RCMP paddlers, then back to Lantzville for Ursula, and out to Duke Point. Great crossing. The rain seems to have finally stopped, with the rumour that our annual summer high may finally be near. As we looked out the ferry window we commented that hopefully it will be sunny and calm like this in a month, because we will be paddling back down this way. Had a great chance to chat with the RCMP guys, and am again reminded at how special are those who have been chosen for the trip - so far everyone I have met is so gentle and spiritually aware - which neither fits the stereotype, nor our expectations in light of the kind of work they do. It was also interesting to talk to them about how their roles have changed over the years. Their job is no longer to "arrest people", as they tell me the school kids think, but to act as community resources - to facilitate, mediate, nurture, and when necessary, enforce. The paddlers on the Journey see themselves as bridges, two-way conduits between the Native cultures and mainstream Canada.

It was also interesting to hear their comments on some of the barriers inherent in native communities to the restoration of their own culture. Specifically the friction between the hereditary chiefs and elders and elected officials. Native culture was originally hierarchical. The chiefs derive their status from being able to trace their lineage back to this one who fell from the sky. An individual's stature in the community derives from how closely he/she is related to the chief. Ceremonies, rituals, governance, commerce, etc. all traditionally derived from this relationship. In order to restore their own cultures they must find a way to balance this with the benefits and demands of an electoral system which was introduced by the white man, but has now divided many communities. They have also shared with me the significance to RCMP members of the doughnut, with the consumption of which they are frequently associated, and sometimes maligned. It seems that the doughnut as food is primarily symbolic, reflecting its metaphoric role as an often practical, and sometimes spiritual icon. For example, the shape of the wheel was patterned after the donut, thereby enabling the creation of the police car. The circle of life, the basis of First Nations spirituality, and subsequently adopted by many whites, was inspired by the donut. The sweat lodge I attended last Saturday? Imagined without its roof, and viewed from above.....you got it. A donut.

John Grant has indicated that he hopes to begin each day of paddling with a circle, a communal gathering of paddlers to confirm our commitment to each other and the Journeys initiative. I was intrigued to learn that this ritual derives its name, not from the formation in which we will be seated, but from the shape of the confections that we will be dunking in our coffee at the time.

That's it for now. With a little luck I have figured out how to modem this through their switchboard, and you will have it to read in the morning. I am sure that they do not check their long distance phone bills that closely.

July 1st

Canada Day, 1997. A day to remember. 4am saw us showering in the RCMP gym. The bus got away on what was supposed to be a journey that lasted until 10 pm (17 hours, 1,000 miles, long enough) a few minutes late. That turned out to be an omen. It was nearly 2am the next day before we actually got to bed. I am learning, from this and other experiences over the past few months that the RCMP is simply incapable of doing anything on time. But aside from sore backs and knees, it as an okay trip.

My seat mates changed several times, so got to meet a few more interesting people, and continue to marvel at the qualities that these folks combine. I realize that I may be experiencing the cream of the crop, but they all seem to combine a neat combination of toughness, compassion, intellect and spirituality. I doubt very much that they are on their best behaviour for us, because there are just too few of us to bother impressing. In this trip, which was really quite testing at times, there was not a single example of friction, whining, etc. Everybody just figured out how to get by. About supper time it became apparent that our woman driver (the bus was donated by Gray Lines - TVÅ-s included - we watched a couple of pretty funny movies - your boys might like Dennis the Menace, and some in-progress video clips being made of the Journey for promo purposes) was exhausted and there would be no relief for her. Turns out one of our guys had been a Greyhound driver and kept his license current, so he drove the rest of the way.

Remind self to get video of press conference - it contains a great verbal description of the purpose of JOURNEYS.

One of the fellows I sat near, Rocky Fortin, had been part of the RCMP contingency sent to Haiti, at the time Aristide was installed, to help teach the Haitians western style, i.e. fair policing. Said he would never go back. Every day they loaded at least one body off the street. At the end of the stay they were asked to provide an evaluation of each of their Haitian counterparts. Those that passed their evaluations were fired; those that failed retained. The government only wants officers it can manipulate. So much for western style justice.

The other observation was that most of the paddlers are much older than you might have expected. As I come to know them it is apparent that they are all career officers who recognize that the old policing ways have failed miserably, and want to try to do something about it. Very strong on the idea of community policing - combined with the acceptance that it is a last resort, and its effects will take a very long time to show, and this is just the beginning of a process that will take a very long time. . It is also something to hear them talk openly about spirituality (theses guys are anything but shrinking violets), and participate in sing the native songs that have been prepared for

us. At one point a couple of folks took out a recorder and native drum and they practiced our paddling song.

You will also be pleased to note that most of the animals congregated at the back of the bus, where I was fortunate enough to be located. And we had a very funny time.

Although at times it was a bit too much even for me.

We fell into bed at nearly 2am. 2 beds, 3 guys. I volunteered to sleep on the floor with the assurance that I get a bed next time.

## **July 2**

Morning:

Awake and up at 6:30. No idea why so early except I was sleeping on the floor and the room still had not cooled down.

Ed Hill was sitting by the coffee machine distributing necklaces made by native spiritualist in Hope for all the paddlers. The necklaces had been blessed and prayed, smudged. Primary role to protect us on our journey, but could be used as gift in extra special cases. Components:

Leather thong

Short length of devil's club ( a medicinal plant, reportedly resembles ginseng, with healing powers) red dots painted on each piece represented the number of times it had been prayed.

A few beads of assorted colours - white leadership/red strength/blue perseverance.

After breakfast moved to huge prayer circle in parking lot behind the police station where boats were being stored. All our days will start with a prayer circle. Lead by John Grant and Roy. Purposes:

Prayer: for the strength to be teachers and healers, for physical strength and fortune during our voyage

Re-affirmation: the purpose of our Journey - to communicate Vision Quest. WE are reminded to support each other, that the canoe is the metaphor for community. Stressed the importance of people to get along for the journey to be successful, and reminded us to address problems early while they were still small, and that certain individuals had been delegated to assist, in confidence. Also, pitch in- don't wait to be asked. "Your time is not yours as of today. It belongs to the project and the community." Re: protocol - simple - respect and loving heart. It will be difficult to go wrong if everything you say and do comes from your heart - Roy. we will make many mistakes along the way, so make amends and let it go, and hope that those hurt will let it go too.

Planning: - outlined the agenda for the day - discussed media relations, specifically that we all may be called on to speak to the media, that this is a RECOVERY Center, not an addiction centre, that at FT Rupert we are joining tribal journeys, not the other way round, and that this is not just an RCMP initiative, rather it is in support of a Vision of Roy. Introduced persons with specialty roles - personal counsellors, medical assistance (keep bodies whole - get care for hot spots on hands, small cuts before they get infected, giardia could be an issue so drink only fresh water and stay hydrated - avoid dehydration and becoming dead weight on the boat, . We have a nurse that specializes in geriatrics which "considering the age of the paddlers is a pretty good idea". Dave

"where do babies come from?" Tacit consensus by the group that perhaps he would benefit from the experience even more than the rest of us.

Communicate with each other: this is the best opportunity during the day for individuals within the group to communicate re group matters, for example, clothing exchanges when clothing issued was wrong size.

Introduced the boats

RCMP - Skookum Kalitin, Strong Arrow - since Tribal Journeys organizers want boat to represent a specific nation, and since our is mixed, it is called Yenka Dene - People of the Earth. Question was put to a famous woman Elder (Order of Canada, ganges), and she solved in this manner

Vickers - Many Hands -Nun Sal Sales- - Coast Salish, also had another name. black hull, red hands, many supporting, plus one pointing forward, and another beckoning from the stern for others to join.

Chris Cooper - Le Swiet - Soul Entering - had been paddled up-coast to join the venture. "We are in for a marvelous trip, it will be an inspiration to everyone. The circle was closed by singer/drummer William Wasden, reputedly one of the finest native singers in the country. He sang a song belonging to Big Whale, his chief. A healing and blessing song. Man travelling by canoe spotted a whale foundering on the beach. Overcame his fear and succeeded in assisting it back into the water. In gratitude the whale gave him the power to heal, including healing songs.

Discussion with Dave

violent crimes, 80% sex related.

great, if somewhat irreverent sense of humour.

not religious, but spirituality important to him.

importance of event not lost on him. had great relationship with his dad and would have liked for him to know that his son was participating in such a great event. To him, this was the high point of a 20 plus year career.

Afternoon/Evening - See brochure on Ksan, also tentative agenda for the event

We broke for an hour or so, with instructions to re-convene at Ksan, about 4 miles from Hazelwood. Ksan is a restored village in a setting on the river that has to be experienced to be believed. A row of long (big houses) fronted by totem poles, facing the river and separated by a grassy meadow fringed by a grove of cottonwood trees.

The skies had cleared to reveal a huge mountain backdrop - Roche de Boule, Stekyooden. The facility was established to showcase Native culture, and provide a venue for its sustenance and regeneration. Traditional performing arts are taught to young people, as well as carving (totems, masks, jewelry). One building also houses a gift shop (nothing tacky) and a small museum. Traditional this site had been the end of the trade route up the Skeena, canoes then turned around and headed back down.

Our ceremony was a huge community event, about 600 people in attendance, which represented a large percentage of the neighboring villages- there are several in the immediate vicinity, and many whites, including some tourists. RCMP members were in red serge, natives that were participating wore ceremonial garb - predominantly red and black. Quite a sight.

Events included:

opening prayer by Frances Sampson - the hereditary chief of the Gitksan Wetsuweten nation (in her language)

followed by addresses from John Grant, and Roy re-the purpose of Vision Quest Roy spoke to his roots here - he spent part of his childhood here referred to "my drunken days", "as I stumbled, through my art work I created beautiful things" and referred to his mentors from the sera that had encouraged him with his art work. "all people have the right to be free, to have fun, to be worthy and loved, unconditionally. To do this they must be healed from addiction."

4 hereditary chiefs of the Gitksan clans (Frog, wolf, Fireweed and Eagle) and elders. Some had to be assisted onto the stage, but I learned afterward that this event was too important for them to miss. All spoke to the importance of VisionQuest and its value in healing their society. Of note: the women, whose numbers equaled those of the men mostly spoke in their native language, the men in English. Many of the men also referred to their own recovery from addiction. "will be the first time that anyone has tackled this massive a job. , but good luck to all and have a happy journey".

treated to ceremonial dancing - colorful, well organized, only music a drummer and or drummer singer. Small children learning their traditional ways. One of the last dances was a dance traditionally used by individuals asking for help. Given with the consent of the traditional chief this dance sent the message "I am poor, I need help" - in this case Vision Quest's need for funding. Dozens of people lined up and gave a total of over 3,000 \$ to the dancers.

Roy danced a chief's dance to thank and bless his hosts.

Notes:

Although event was formal and serious, people came and went in a picnic like atmosphere, and this was not construed as rude. Small children wandered into the most solemn of ceremonies and were simply accepted and encouraged. Compare this to a ceremony of similar gravity in the white world.

Some huge dogs got into quite a fight on the edge of the crowd, appeared dangerous to onlookers. One of the general duty officers zapped them with pepper spray, which stopped the fight and was ignored by the crowd, even when it wafted past everyone and got more than a few coughing. People just accepted.

Ceremony was very long by our standards. All speakers were given their say for as long as they wanted to say it. No one was in a hurry.

Blessing of the boats - by spiritual leaders. Paddlers lined up around their boats, "smudged" individually with burning sage to purify and protect.

Other notes:

I interviewed Lavender MacMillan (sp - I have her card, promised her a thank you letter) Great sense of humour. Asked her how it was that she could speak her language so well. She learned it at home. Her parents hid her when "they" came to take her to the residential school. Her brother and sister attended, but parents had heard stories of the strictness of treatment. She commented that not all kids were forced to go there. The

school in Lytton at the time was the only option if parents wanted their kids educated. Also they had become conditioned by church and other authorities to believe that their culture was inferior, and the only alternative was to adapt to the white world. Parents voluntarily gave up their kids.

Other kids were taken because in the eyes of the authorities, their parents weren't taking adequate care of them.

Lavender also alluded to the gap between hereditary and elected chiefs, and the resentment (she is closely related to a hereditary chief) but I was unable to draw her out in this.

Hi, and thanks for the info and suggestions.

Couple of things to add to yesterday's transmissions:

There was a feast hosted by the village for paddlers and guests ie everyone at the celebration, including tourists after the blessing of the canoes. Pretty well the whole village turned out. You want smells? there was salmon everything. Baked, boiled bbq'd, smoked, souped etc. Plus about 3000 lbs of baked potatoes. Held at an adjoining park. Native music played over the PA system in the background. Raining, but didn't seem to matter. Lots of kids, and always lots of dogs. In fact dogs are everywhere - seems Natives can't afford to get them neutered. Learned a new expression with this explanation - "happier than a two-peckered dog on a reserve.

As for other sounds - hardly any vehicle noises, the odd gust of wind through the poplars, and always the background hiss and gurgle of the Skeena, which is at an extremely high level at this time of year.

Other dominant sounds during celebrations - voices of singers - usually old, or the young kids, seldom male and seldom middle-aged. Presumably this reflects 2 plus generations lost to the residential schools, and the renewed attempts to interest youth.

And drums, the only instrument that accompanies singing except for the odd rattle.

Note from news this evening, when VQ was announced: Fitting that the journey begin in Hazelton - 90% of policing problems here are alcohol, drug or addiction related.

Sights - dominated by scenery - Grey Skeena, deep green of the trees on either side of valley, then massive grey peaks on both sides, still considerable snow cap for this time of the year

Another unbelievable sight - as the rain stopped last evening, just at the end of the feast, there was an incredible double rainbow. Viewed from the far end of the meadow, one end rested on the 3 canoes that were parked at the far end.

July 3

We are now in Terrace, staying in a hotel downtown. Waiting for the canoes to arrive for the welcoming ceremony. It has been a rough day. Partly because we had to get up at 4am. Awakened by the sound of bagpipes in the hall - Ed Hill. I got 4 hours sleep after getting to bed at midnight. Slept on the floor again last night. It has also been extremely hot, and somewhat disorganized. I also find myself getting a tad cranky that I can find no space for myself. We are 4 to a room this evening. Perhaps it is my fatigue, or general state of mind, but today I truly doubt my ability to deliver this project, and feel very angry that I got myself and everyone else involved.

Rolled out of bed, shower, gear onto the truck. We were served breakfast by the Lions club at 5am. Pretty good actually - pancakes, ham and porridge. Everyone seems in pretty good humour in spite of the early hour. The clowns of the group have long since

declared themselves, but there humour is always in pretty good taste, and sometimes exceptional. I continue to marvel at how little friction there is, although I detect undercurrents that John Grant may be getting a tad frustrated at some of Roy's demands and last second changes.

Beautiful morning. Clear and slightly chilly. No wind. I will not paddle today. This end of the Skeena is treacherous, particularly in flood, and will be handled only by down-river experts. In fact the boats are short-crewed, the space being needed for extra flotation. After the blessing at "Ksan, and the dip (a ritual in which the paddlers immerse themselves in chest high, and here freezing water, to purify themselves, and make themselves one with the water and their boats) we will meet the boats at the village of Kitsegukla, about 18 km downstream.

At the blessing two spiritual leaders set up an altar (animal skin on which was placed two abalone shells containing sage for smudging (which incidentally smells like dope when lit), individual packages of sage for the pullers, and eagle feathers for fanning the smoke on the beach in front of the boats, which were now beached bow-first on the shore. The ceremony was attended by 40 or so villagers, in spite of the hour. The paddlers were blessed with prayer, smudged individually at the altar, William drummed a song. The only sound the river, and the two escort vessels gunning their engines offshore in order to hold position against the current -which I estimated to be running at 6-8 knots (later confirmed by the skippers).

The boats then loaded up and pushed off, first pointing upstream, then turning with the current, and smoking downstream, saluting those on shore with their paddles as they went by. I have never seen canoes move this quickly. They were round the first bend before we knew it.

The other crews and support paddlers proceeded to the beach at Kitsegukla, a small village 18 km downstream. When we arrived the beach was packed, and had been since 5:30 am. They had built a huge fire to keep warm - there had been frost when they first arrived, and also had a bbq going, ready to feed us all when the boats arrived. They had been expecting us for some time, believing for some reason that we would be there in the wee hours. Natives have now started teasing us good-naturedly about running on Indian Time - We spent some time wandering around talking to people, and, as I have begun to expect, we are besieged with small kids. The paddlers have trading cards of themselves that the kids can't get enough of. We also have three different stickers of the initiative (Deb, we should include these in the book, thousands are being handed out, and they will be familiar logos by the time the book is out) Some adults also ask for them, and many grandparents for their grandchildren. Our pins are a particularly big hit.

Dogs everywhere at this village, which judging by the appearance of the residents (ratty clothing, many missing teeth) is very poor. Nevertheless we were treated royally, fed freshly caught spring salmon (netted in front of the village the previous day), and after the blessing and Roy's speech, the villagers contributed over \$400 in about 5 minutes. The canoes arrived around nine, came screaming round a bend, turned upstream in front of the beach, and while the paddlers held them level, Roy asked permission to come in ashore in peace. It was quite a feat of helmsmanship in this current and rapids. I spoke briefly with Vernon Milton, the hereditary chief. He commented that this beach, which used to be the site of the village houses until carried off by a flood in 1936, had

not seen such activity in years. Obviously his was a huge social event, a considering the theme, and the fact that their sometimes enemy the RCMP are involved. Also got a bit of an insight into the 2 sides of community policing from Const. Tim Mackin, who was having huge success kibitzing with the kids and young people on the speech. Remind me to tell you the story of Alfred -large family, mother died, father and older brother drunks, abused him physically. Ran, took up residence in another village - 52 counts of sexual abuse with young girls. Other side, the shop lifter, "find me the article that you most value" B&E and theft, not relevant to a society that bases wealth on having the least number of possessions (potlatch) so we have to understand this, but they have to feel that theft hurts - MJ baseball cap.

We have begun to tease Dave (I confess I started this) that his is the only card that the kids give back. In fact, at subsequent villages we can expect the kids to be waiting on shore to give the paddlers Dave cards. Some of the other paddlers have picked up on this, as has Dave, and it is becoming quite funny. A set of cards which includes a 97 Dave is worth \$5. Without, \$2,000.

The next village was Kitwanga - people of the rabbits, (used to proliferate here), a hour or so down stream. This village noted for the line of ancient totem poles on its main street. Unable to interpret, other than an eagle, bear, and wolf at top of 3, presumably representing clans. because virtually all the villagers were down at the beach, waiting for the canoes to come in.. Another example of the white man's insensitivity. Used to face river-because source of commerce. After the railway went through, were made to turn to face it.

Also saw another example of the importance of this event, people lined the bridge across the river into the villager as well as the beach. Included in our welcome was a group of women chiefs and elders, who chanted and sang and drummed. WE did a crew change here, ate lunch. Before leaving the women played at giving song where people encouraged to participate, and as they came forward with their money, the leader danced with them,, followed by calling out their name and the amount donated. Even little children came forward with loonies and toonies. Over \$200 collected.

Here I met Matilda Loring, who had fashioned the most beautiful horn from cedar. Figure of the wolf carved and painted into it. She is a teacher on the reserve, and is resolved to replace the musical artifacts lost to the potlatch persecutions. She has been learning to carve at the centre at "ksan. Has also created the drum, and whistle used in our celebration, as well as several ceremonial rattles.

The rest of the afternoon was hell. Hot, hot, hot. At one point we stopped at a rest area high above the river to wait for the boats to go by in the rapids below us. Waited for 2 hours and nearly melted in the heat. Several, including myself have sun burns and many paddlers and non-paddlers are beginning to show the fatigue associated with the pace, heat, emotion, and lack of sleep. After we, and the crowd that joined us, cheered the boats as they went by (sideways) we headed into Terrace. The boats were way late, and there no sense to any of cooking

There was a ceremony scheduled at the Kitsumkalum Reserve just outside of town. In fact it was planned for the boat ramp. This was by far the least attractive setting - unpaved parking lot by boat ramp which opened onto a back eddy of the river. Railway trestle on one side, busy main highway on the other. Tons of mosquitoes, even the natives were putting on bug juice, and many had been waiting since 4pm. We arrived at

9:30 yet none of this detracted from the enthusiasm we received, attesting to its importance. Singers and drummers lined both sides of the ramp, and the crowd applauded and each boat was sung and drummed in. The chief shook each paddlers hand, welcomed us. Following Roy's speech, there was a blanket dance, in which onlookers placed money on a blanket spread on the boat. I was again struck by the unique combination of formality and spontaneity of these ceremonies that are so effective in communicating their message, yet are mostly absent in white society. Imagine the repercussions on parents and children of kids running up during a high mass and laughing and tugging on the bishops clothes, and possible blowing out his candles.

Following a talking circle where mostly housekeeping and planning topics were reviewed, adjourned to the community hall for hamburgers and hot dogs. I paddle the second shift into Rupert tomorrow. Yess!!!

#### **July 4**

At breakfast I learned that we have lost our photographer. Great! Heat stroke. She is a fair skinned red-head. With all the rushing around yesterday, and the demands of her role, she was unable to wear her sunglasses, and sometimes her hat. Also couldn't take enough fluids. When she awoke this morning, she was so ill that she could not move. Our doctor, Tom Watt has ordered her to stay in bed. Figures by tomorrow she will be well enough to move, and she can head back to Vancouver, or possibly re-join the trip. Ed Hill will be our photographer today, following which I will talk to John about seconding some ident guys from each detachment that we pass through.

Today is expected to be our longest and most difficult day. About 100 miles from Terrace to Rupert. The plan is to send the first crew off from the boat ramp at \*\*\*\*\*, the off crew would drive into Rupert with all our gear, check into the hotel, then head down to the government wharf to meet the Western Star, a 65 ft seiner owned by a friend of Roy's who was so captivated by the idea of this project that he committed his vessel as an escort on the ocean, at least to Port Hardy ( I have since heard that he plans to do the whole route). WE would load the food and supplies for the trip to Hardy onto the seiner, then head back up the river to relieve the first crews at about the half way point.

We all went down to the send off at the boat ramp, again attended by natives, mostly older ones and again the majority women. We joined hands in a prayer circle around all 3 boats, and Roy gave thanks to the Creator (he is a devout Anglican, and manages to accommodate Christianity and traditional beliefs in his beliefs , which I have noticed is common here. Creator, Lord and God are used interchangeably in prayers and ordinary conversation. Let's hear it for the good old Anglican Church. It is amazing that these people, now with the full knowledge of how our Church has contributed to the decimation of their culture, can continue to pray to its God. Perhaps the ultimate statement of there gentleness. This morning he thanked the Creator for the good weather. I assured him that the Anglicans could not have pulled it off. He laughed. I think.) Clouds of black flies; I am a pretty popular guy with my deet.

(Note on Terrace - basically a one industry town - forestry. Dominant image, string of mills for several km along the highway into town)

Promises to be another hotter than hell day, and the boats should probably have gotten

away earlier. However yesterday was so tiring the call was made to let us sleep in until 7am - a real treat.

I drove to Rupert with John Grant, Carol, her sister Joanne, and Joy Hill, Ed's wife. We were able to chat a bit about "stuff", mostly cultural. Carol is intensely spiritual; John told me shortly after I met her that she is "Mother Earth", and I suspect I could come to like her very much. She has a lot to offer and give.

Couple of things I learned. Because of oral tradition, the song writer/singer an essential component of society. Sometimes when a song is performed in public the audience is paid to listen to it. This validates the song, and by accepting payment, the audience commits to remembering it, and passing it on. I will interview William Wasden, because I am told his story is a neat one.

Carol's view on ritual (and I suspect she is right) that Natives culture has so many rituals that yank them back into the here and now, that we lack - all centered on love, respect for each other, ourselves as only a part of a greater whole, that includes an environment we share with everything other living thing. I must try to develop a comparison between some of our rituals (Church on Sundays, 9-5 work days, weekends) with theirs.

Dipping - NB because in its gentlest form i.e. tolerable water temp, it is a form of meditation which grounds (keeps you in perspective)one at the beginning of each day, in its least gentle (freezing water, it jolts the previous day's baggage out, and lets you start the day fresh.

The drive to Rupert was as scenic as one would expect. The hwy. followed the river through the mountains to the coast. The river and valley widened, and the river slowed. 20 miles out the river became tidal.

When we arrived at Rupert we encountered more of the hurry up so we can stand around routine that so far has characterized this trip. Particularly frustrating in the heat. For the most part people deal wit it with amazing good humour, although most begun to comment on it. All the standing around, combines with the issuing of instructions that are frequently countermanded has caused some to head off and do their own thing, which just aggravates the problem. Anyway by 4pm we had loaded the seiner - the human chain method, kind of fun, and by 5:30 we had returned up river to relieve the first crew for the last leg of the Skeena. It had started raining in Rupert when we left, having suddenly become overcast and cooled off.

We left the dock at 5:30. It was very cloudy but the rain had stopped. This front looks like it will be around for a while. Great paddling weather if the rain holds off. First 2 hours were pretty uneventful. A deer swam in front of Many Hands; eagles seen - the Vickers clan animal, so a powerful omen We had a bit of river current, and the tide was at slack. Some wind in our faces, and the occasional bit of chop. But nothing the boat or crew could not handle. Many Hands and Strong Arrow had traveled about the same speed to our first rest stop for our meal. Soul Entering was a km or so behind. The boats were far apart, well beyond hailing distance, and the helmsmen had radios, Roy's was not working. Roy incidentally, has helmed every shift of his boat since we left, something he is determined to do for the entire tip. He is intensely competitive, and while I am told is a very kind person, is driven, and owns a pretty strong ego.

We put back in the water at 7:30, and about an hour later all hell broke loose. A squall hit, and combined with the effect of the incoming tide we were into 4 foot standing

waves. The boat took them well, although headway was difficult, and keeping our stroke in rhythm very hard. We had also lost contact with our shore support. An hour or so of rocking and bopping, and the odd bit of water coming over the gunwhales (not much though, the high bows of these suckers split the waves beautifully). Our Zodiac escort came over to tell us that Soul Entering was done, and would look for a place to put in. We and Roy decided to press on past the next point, where it was hoped that the water would calm down. This in fact worked well and we were into calmer water within the hour. By now it had become apparent that it was far too late to press into Rupert, but we had no support contact, so we would make it to port Edwards (mostly deserted village), and try to contact our support there. By about midnight we had made contact and were beached on some mud flats at the site of a deserted cannery, exhausted, and besieged by no-see-ums. We stumbled out of the boat and slid it along the mud flats to shore. And then we all hugged and shook each others hands - the team had done it. At no point in this experience did anyone whine or complain (and we were all fucking dying), There were a couple of problems around stoke rates, and the timing of breaks, but these were all solved amicably. WE felt like we had conquered the world. By the time the support vehicles got us back to the hotel we were cold, soaked and covered in mud and bites. It was after 1am. The other paddlers had stayed up for us and the cooking staff had prepared hamburgers and coffee. A couple of the women (Carol was one) were in tears. Guess they were pretty worried. And oh. Roy, decided that he would press on further - no lights, no chart, and no local knowledge of the water. We learned later there was one near collision with a fish boat, and one grounding on a gravel bar. His crew got to the hotel about an hour and a half after us.

## **July 5**

The paddlers from last night would be allowed to paddle the rest of the way into Rupert (10 miles) this morning. The band here had scheduled celebrations at the waterfront for about noon. In deference to our fatigue we were allowed to sleep until 7am, with a talking circle scheduled in the parking lot for 9am. This is our most NB circle to date, and was fascinating to watch. There seemed to be two areas of concern: the need to address the logistical fuck-ups that have frustrated everyone since we started. Our leaders believe that these problems will disappear once we start heading down the coast. Here we can fall into a routine, assisted by access to escort vessels, rather than trucks, vans and motels. This bears watching. I think they are dreaming. My observations are that the group is simply incapable of doing anything on time. In their working lives they are ruled and defined by externally mandated routine. Take that away and they are lost. Example: the 9am meeting this morning was changed at 8:15 to 8:45, which didn't really matter, because they weren't ready to go until 9:15. We are consistently 2-4 hours late attending any function, keeping dignitaries hanging around for this time. The simplest calculations - distance over speed, adjust for current or tide, add room for error and mishap completely eludes them. While it is a blast to watch, and sometimes frustrating, I suspect means little in the overall scheme of things. Couple of neat things to observe. People spoke to the fact that there have been some frustrations, but rather than let these fester, we should deal with them now. Also to remember that we are a community with a mission, and for the next month that takes precedence over everything. Some examples were given of persons acting on their own

without regard for the community - for example - Roy took his crew for a dip, and ignored the other paddlers. Also the safety issues that were ignored yesterday created worry to other paddlers that they did want to experience again. (I was not here for this, and quite frankly did not think at any time was anyone in serious danger)

Roy spoke last. He asked for forgiveness from the paddlers for pushing them (safety and exhaustion) to the benefit of his own ego, and assured the group that this would not happen again. Told us that the attention he was receiving was a burden, and that he would try to remember humility, and asked our forbearance.

housekeeping

safety and procedural changes on the water - need for operational radios, hand signals in lieu of radio

lost and found

people using sun screen and keeping the bottle, etc.

(Make a note re my feelings at boat ramp while participating in prayer/chants - not that bad once you let yourself go. Kind of take over your body)

We drove back to Port Edwards and got back in the canoes for the 2 hour paddle to Rupert. Dominant images

another warm day, no wind, ocean calm

another eagle overhead as we launched

3 boats saluted Roy's uncle a hereditary chief (we are now in Tsimshian territory)- in wheel chair at top of ramp. Boats assembled facing his name and we all chanted his native name 4 times (everything is done in 4's - points of compass, and a circle) as we rounded the point to head to the mouth of the long Rupert harbour, porpoises on our left escort boats came out to meet us, plus huge RCMP cat. Fish boats saluted us as we moved down the harbour. As we got close to dock where celebrations to be held, realized there was a huge crowd waiting for us. We were given chairs under a canopy and treated to presentations and dancing and singing in our honour, including a blanket dance, expansive entertainment, young people, most animated and obviously proud of their dance and heritage - chiefs and elders had some really neat carvings as hats - raven, whale. huge buffet served after. Then head cover to Port Simpson loaded boats onto the escort vessels - I did not go. Had to stay back and write.

## **July 6**

Note from yesterday's circle to add to notes - in face of logistical problems and confusion, NB we remember our focus.

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As I write it is Monday, July 7th, and we are storm bound in Kikatlá. We got on the ferry to Vancouver a week ago, it seems like years. Glad I am making notes. No way I would be able to remember a fraction of this stuff. I have found a desk at the health centre at which to work. Every once in a while the building shakes from the wind, and the rain sounds like pellets against the window. Because of the lateness of the hour at which the festivities ended last night (3:30 am) today has been declared a holiday by the Band Council. The pullers have been asked to return to their billets, and are busy organizing a sports day in the gymnasium (basketball is a huge diversion here, and forms the basis of some pretty serious inter-village rivalries. at 2pm, followed by coffee, tea cake etc. I just heard this over the cb radio. Telephones here are a recent innovation, and many still can't afford them, so all homes and vehicles have a cb radio, which monitors

channel 20, and community interest items are just piped through this as they occur. Pretty effective.

The pullers are absolutely bagged. Most of us got a whopping 3 hours sleep last night, yet somehow have managed to retain a sense of humour and purpose. (Although we did lose our photographer for good yesterday. She had rejoined us after recovering, but seems to have balked at her accommodations on the seiner. I heard that John asked her to turn in her gear, and she was flown home. Hope to get the real goods before too long)

The day started in what has become typical so far. We were allowed a bit of a sleep in (Port Simpson the night before was a late one) with the thought that we get away around noon for Kitkatla. A feast was scheduled for the village at 5pm, so the seiner and escort boats would take us to a small inlet a few miles from the village and we would paddle in from there. This was an extremely nice visit for Roy and Matt, because they had spent much of their formative childhood years here. We all headed down to the dock, unloaded all our gear onto the seiner, and then waited and waited and waited. We did not get away until nearly three, and the trip by seiner, our slowest vessel would take at least 3 hours. As we began our prayer circle (there are 80 of us now; led by Dempsey Bob, famous carver) it began to rain. As far as crap goes for the day, that is about it. The rest of the day was a blast. So here goes, and I only hope I can do it justice.

Another boat was tied up to us (Western Spirit, and 2 trawlers-Toucan, and the smaller Therapy) the Inkster - RCMP patrol boat, cat, 72' - and loaded with toys. (I have the specs, also on the VQ web page. Drew would love) I seem to have fit in quite well with a group of RCMP guys that are best described as "animals", and they were on the Inkster, and asked me to join them. Seems the Inkster was going to accompany us to Kitkatla. But with a difference - it travels at 25 knots, the others at about 8. So when we got to our rendezvous area we were nearly 2 hours ahead of the others. So the skipper anchored, 4 fishing lines appeared and we spent the time yarding in rock cod and sea bass.

When the other boats arrived we rafted up, unloaded the canoes then filled them with paddlers. WE had about an hour and a half paddle into the village. RCMP dressed in serge, and the natives in ceremonial dress. Roy and Matt, obviously nervous, looked magnificent. They were coming home.

On the way into the village 2 fish boats appeared from between 2 islands loaded with drummers and singers and they drummed and sang us most of the way to the beach in front of the community centre (gym). (We have just had a power failure here, probably a result of the wind, and the nurse is attempting to start the health centre generator). WE asked permission to land, backed in, hauled the boats up on shore and did the usual get besieged by kids thing (cards, pins, stickers). Paddlers then led in double file to community hall. AS we entered the hall it became apparent that the hall was full (an elder later told me that this was the fullest he had ever seen the hall), each paddler was taken on each arm by a child dressed in ceremonial regalia and led to his seat at the other end of the hall. All the while the drumming and singing had the whole hall shaking. What follows I suspect will be typical of our welcomes, and future descriptions will only include deviations from this.

Several servers were assigned to us. Ours was Georgina Eaton, and Eagle. Since the banquet was hosted by an Eagle clan Senior Elder, Matthew Hill mostly Eagle women

prepare and serve the food, much of which came from Matthew Hill's freezer. They had been working at this for 2 weeks. Georgina, and aristocrat, was flown in from another village because there were so few Eagle women to help. When they marry, women carry the clan name, but move to the village of their husbands.

The feast contained an incredible variety of foods, most procured from the immediate area. Georgina took me down the row of tables containing food and identified them for me:

Roast beef, sea cucumber, halibut, clams, smoked oolichan, smoked cod, seal intestines, roast deer, seal meat, king crab, herring roe, kelp, cod, abalone, fried bread, fried seaweed, salmon, devil fish (octopus).

## July 7

Life of Reilly today. At least for the morning. My crew doesn't pull until the second shift, so I have skulked off to Toucan, which has a 110 volt outlet, and am sitting at a table in its salon typing my notes from yesterday. Toucan is owned by Blaine and Hennie Hagedorn. He is a semi-retired grocer from Gibsons, friend of Ed's, who got involved in the project because they thought it would be fun to combine an opportunity to cruise the coast while helping out. They have also been participating in all the ceremonies, and generally just lending a helping hand (place to crash, venue for food preparation, etc.). I spoke with them briefly yesterday and they indicated that they are only beginning to understand the importance of the event.

Yesterday was a pretty easy day, the rain and wind never did let up, and I had hoped to get caught up with my notes. Didn't. First a power failure, so I waited awhile, and then wandered over to the fireball where a circle had convened. The pullers were cooking up a night of entertainment as thanks for the villagers. Pick-up basketball was also arranged with the village kids for anyone who wanted to play. I went in and warmed up with them, but decided not to play (sandals are not great for B-ball). There looked to be some pretty good players there, a fact which was confirmed to me by John Toogood, who with a couple of the constables plus Roy and Matt played about 2 hours of pretty fast pick-up.

Then wandered down to Toucan, and set up to write. Began to nod off over my computer. Hennie volunteered the V-berth for a snooze. I don't remember my head even hitting the pillow, and slept for an hour and a half. Like all the other paddlers I am suffering from sleep deprivation. Fortunately the muscle aches are mostly gone. Several of us are sporting bandages on our fingers as a result of hot spots (blisters) from their paddles. And there hasn't been enough sun for the past few days for it to be a threat. All the bug bites from the Skeena are beginning to clear up, with no new ones being added. Pullers attitudes, and senses of humour continue to be remarkably excellent. All have tried to grab a few winks of sleep when they could.

I have decided not to spend another night on the back of the seiner. Margaret Hill, and elder, and her husband Wesley, have beds going begging at their house. Besides, I cannot tolerate the thought of being woken up by Hill and Klassen again.

The talent show was superb, but long. We have some pretty talented people in the group - musicians (guitars and penny whistle) . The hall was packed with villagers. I have retained a copy of the agenda. Of note:

Sgt. Lioshitzes drill squad. Hilarious to kids and adults; also good for villagers to see RCMP making fun of themselves.

Vision Quest singers singing Lu Am Gordu Ahwul Neesum led by Roy- "Happy to See You" - to villagers in their own language. Some time ago Roy had been captured by the melody of this song, whose words in his language had been lost. With his sister Patricia they wrote the appropriate words, and this song has become another of our anthems, along with Ho Ni No, and we are all slowly learning it from use.

George's song, accompanied himself on guitar, back-up vocals by his family, "my home town" a gift to Kincatla. which he composed while in jail. This man makes magic with his guitar. He received a standing ovation. It was a complex, bluesy piece the power of which completely belied the shy and apparently cowed man who had sat in the sweat with us the week before.

Various paddler introductions where individual paddler were called to the mike and asked to tell how/why they got involved with Journeys '97.

As a finally William drummed and sang, and we all got up and danced, with him directing - explaining the meaning of the songs and showing us the steps. Actually pretty easy to do, or at least attempt, nobody seemed self-conscious, and many of the villagers, particularly young people joined us.

We presented a paddle to the village at the close of the ceremonies signed by all our pullers. In his closing remarks the Chief Councilor indicated that the new school would be completed in January, and the paddle would be hung in a prominent place to remind the villagers, particularly the youth of Vision Quest, and the need to remain addiction free for the restoration of their persons and their culture.

Other notes:

kids, kids kids - all ages, running around for the most part unchecked throughout the ceremony, in spite of the hour. This culture is in constant contact with the kids. Where the adults go, the kids go.

sense of time - this is not a society that places a premium on time. Scheduling largely irrelevant. Things happen when they happen. If a celebration goes into the wee hours of the morning, like last night, so be it, there is lots of time. Similarly, if a speech is long (which the elders do really well here, and I have noticed that a couple of our speakers have contracted this bug.

Got to bed around 1am. Show had started at 8:30. Scheduled for 7:30. Had my own room and bed in the basement of Hills. We awoke this morning to coffee, bacon and eggs, and toasted home made bread. Got 6 hours of sleep last night.

## **July 8**

Boats got away almost on time. about 9:30. As they pulled away from the beach it started to rain. And by 11am was raining hard, although we are in sheltered waters and the waves not much more than a ripple. The plan for the day is to paddle half way to

Hartley Bay (90 miles) and camp for the night if the weather is tolerable. Alternatively, we will load the boats on the canoe, and pound it through to Hartley Bay. (Grieving - a child recently committed suicide there)

12:20 - Toucan has passed the paddlers, and is stopped in a sheltered spot waiting for them to catch up. It is a grey, grey day and pissing down rain. There are dolphins playing around our boat. For the past 2 hours I have been using one corner of the salon table, while Carol, Joy, Jo-anne and Hennie prepare sandwiches for the pullers. I am not looking forward to my paddling shift. Fortunately, in a rare attack of common sense I remembered to pack my rain gear. The canoes have just passed us; I am told to be ready, we paddle in one hour.

Next morning - It was quite an afternoon. It remained grey, windy (SE) and rainy for the rest of the day. I was part of the second shift. We put in at 2pm, and had a great paddle, although we bucked the ride and wind for most of the way. We had finally persuaded our strokes to lower the pace, but take longer pulls. It is far less tiring, which is just as well, because we puled until 9pm. The place at which we had first planned to camp was too small, so we headed for another, 16 miles away. Crew's spirits were high, but we were all tired, and wet - from sea water (we had taken a few waves over the gunwales, and sweat, from exertion in our rain gear. WE were hauled out and towed at 9 pm - it being obvious that it would be dark by the time we reached our destination. In fact, Roy kept going, and we stayed with him as escort. So we got there just as late, just a little warmer and less tired.

What followed was chaos, and tested what appears to be the inexhaustible camaraderie and spirit of the paddlers.

To wit, crews 1,2&3 had gone ahead of us and set up camp. Our site a deserted logging road on a former burial ground. WE were cold, wet tired hungry and very testy, and it was raining, sometimes hard and dark. We were told to go to the seiner, anchored in the bay, and pick up our gear, and then hop a zodiac to shore, find a place to sleep.

Mayhem ensued. Our gear had been randomly dispersed around the stern by the rummaging of crews 1,2, and 3. People, anxious to change into dry clothing and get to shore to eat and sleep, couldn't find their gear, and when they found it there were often parts missing. Some were trying to change on deck, others eat (sally Hill and Rhonda had prepared an emergency stew on the seiner) and other to get to shore.

When they got to shore they had to muscle gear up slippery, barnacle covered rocks in the dark. With the result that:

Matt Vickers was seriously injured - thrown against the rocks by an out-of-control zodiac tempers frayed, with one confrontation that nearly ended in a fight several could not find sleeping gear and had to get by without it, sleeping on crushed rock in a miserable wet night.

The saving grace of the evening was the basic commitment of the paddlers to pull together, I suspect some considerable inner toughness, and a common commitment to purpose. PLUS our support cook staff, that somehow was able to improvise a hot chili meal and salad.

WE all fell into bed hoping for a much better tomorrow. Rumour had it that we were heading out on the 4am tide.

Wednesday, July 9

Wake up call at 4am this morning.. It was cold and still raining. "There is a chopper coming in 10 minutes. Get up and hold on to your tents. There were 3 of us in the tent. We didn't move. A few minutes later the chopper arrived. IT had come for Matt. During the night a coast guard boat had arrived with a doctor, ho had confirmed what our doctor had already indicated - Matt needed to be shipped to a hospital. Those that had bothered to get up were told to go back to bed. The first crews would leave at 10 am. (we would miss most of our favourable tide, which began at 4, but we were too tired to care).

(At the start of our circle, Cecil Hill reminded us that we were standing on what had been a burial ground and considered sacred. It was now a disused logging road, insensitively cut though the rock to reach an makeshift dock for the loggers. "How would you like it if we bulldozed one of your cemeteries").Worse was yet to come.

After breakfast we had our circle. It lasted an hour and a half, with everybody who wished to say something asked to speak. Most indicated that although they were pretty tired and cold, and sometimes discouraged, they continued to be proud to be a member of the team, and were still committed. A couple of other items were addressed by John at the beginning which I think diffused what could have been pretty ugly:

we will no longer be paddling for unknown durations, possibly into the night. Shifts will be four hours long X 2. If we have not reached our destination, the boats will be towed. No more coming into camp sites at cold, wet and hungry.

paddling style was addressed. Some of the paddlers, notably those in our boat had been trained to paddle dragon boat style. Short choppy strokes, designed for short course sprinting. Our strokes had been setting this pace, and it was killing us, particularly those of us with long arms and naturally long pulls. Yesterday we finally persuaded them to use a cruising pace - the crew voted to put me in the bow to set the pace. We went faster and further and with less effort than on any previous shift . They are now convinced. Sorry for bragging but their goofy style had been driving me nuts, and hurting like hell.

procedural changes regarding packs and sleeping gear, so that the mayhem of last night will be avoided. It will be interesting to see if it works.

some specific and general concerns related to stress and interpersonal conflict were addressed.

By the time the circle ended it was too late to paddle. The boats would be towed to Hartley Bay. But before we left we travelled to the other side of the river, to \*\*\*\*\*, the ancient summer village of the Kitkatla people. This is a magical place. Set in a bay just inside the opening to the river. Now a grove a trees, carpeted with thick moss, it was a summer place because of the richness of trees, plants, and sea life particularly salmon. Sights of note:

William drumming for the morning dip in the river  
salmon rising in the little estuary

granite rocks some quite large, imprinted in village site - tossed there when the loggers blasted for the road on the other side of the river.

evidence on a live cedar where inner bark had been stripped for weaving into hats, mats, blankets. Example of continuing use of a living resource, conservation, which is at the heart of the culture (the spirit of the living tree is in this hat)

Cecil took Ursula to the site of 3 burial boxes. He wanted us to see it so we could tell the story. It is rumored to be that of a family 2 parents, one child, that had drowned off the point. Probably several hundred years ago, had been set in the trees on a steep shore against a rock face. Made of cedar boards stitched together, covered with cedar matting and a sea lion fur robe, brightly painted on the outside. The site had been recently vandalized, presumably by loggers. Pulled away from the rock and partially opened so that some of the bones, including the skulls, had fallen out.

As we left the bay to be towed to Hatley Bay, the weather cleared. some large clouds, separated by lots of blue. A light southwest breeze. Warm enough to lie out on deck, and sleep. We are exhausted again, and Hartley Bay is likely to be another long night. HB is considered to be a model reservw community. It has been dry for some time and it shows. the houses, dock, community hall hall are generally better maintained than the other native communities we have visited. Eve the boardwalks connecting the homes are maintained.

Feast daetails are in my notes.

#### **Thursday, July 10.**

3:00 pm

We have just hauled aboard the Toucan. Both shifts have completed a 4 hour paddle. The first crew left at 5am, the second met them around 10 am. We ahve five sick today and unable topaddle- some kind of virus, probaly spredd by shring the same water container while ibn thr csnoe.

WE ahve had a day that tourists pay big bucks for:  
sunshine, some of the guys actually had their shirts off  
green mountains dropping to the sea, snowcap  
no wind

green, treed mtns stright doen to the shore, snowcapped, waterfalls, occasionally cascading into the ocean

pod of killer whales approached us. Before swimming under on breached just off our bow.

the Queen of the North and Seattle to Alacka ferry have both passed us, rbord ralipassengers glued to the stas have several fish boats. WE salute them, they cheer back. The quen of the North even stopped and we pulled up close, passengered cheered and we a saluted. Race and water fight. They have

Haisla (sp) canoe from Kiimat has contacted us, Dug-out, we had hoped to accompy them tto Victoria. Dedicated- making very slow time brevcsuc shortseveral paddleres  
Everyone is tired, We sleot in the gym and wk=aht with the early rise (3:15 for the first shift) and he big-time snoring of a couple of members, followed by the paddle.

#### **Saturday, July 12 Bella Bella - rest day**

Not much to report today. I spent the day in bed, so ill that I was concerned I would have to come home. There is a virus going round, and that combined with the sun, dehydration, and genepral lack of sleep felled me big-time. Iwas sent to the hospital, and from there to my billet, (wonderful lady, Irene Brown, gave me my own room, and just

left me to sleep.) where I went to bed and didn't move until 10pm. By then my fever had left, and aside from some aches and pains and a headache, am relieved that I will be able to carry on.

Randy Churchill has offered me his notes from his journal on the day's events, which included a boat race with one of the village's canoes, and a basketball game. Generally the crews appear to have had a relaxing day, with chance to catch up on laundry, sight see, shop (there is a wonderful gallery here of native art) and all appear fresh and ready to paddle. This is also the birthplace of J. Bradley Hunt, and Carol was good enough to pick up a brochure on him, with some excellent text for inclusion in the book.

### **Sunday, July 13**

Woke up this morning to the sounds that I have come to associate with reserves - the calls of ravens, eagles and Robertsons thrushes, and dogs barking. Soon they will be joined by the calls of children, which will continue well into the night. No vehicles, or any other of the noises associated with urban life. I am feeling much better today, although my headache won't go away, and my body aches all over. I will not pull today, although feel a bit badly about missing my shift. It is my first time to do this.

We lost another puller (Dominique Dray) yesterday, reason unknown.

We have been joined by Philip Lincoln, a member of the Haisla crew. They had paddled down from KITIMAT as part of the Tribal Journeys, and had planned to join us to Victoria. They were relying on us for support, which we were unable to provide, and as a consequence had to turn back. However Philip will accompany us.

Kelly Brown and son Jefferson have also joined as pullers from Bella Bella. They have told me that their boat will be brought down later, there being no escort vessel for it until Monday, and it will join us (at Rivers Inlet), (this crew apparently has an interesting story, being comprised partly of recovering addicts) I will interview Kelly Brown.

Also joined by Craig Peterson, RCMP from Bella Bella.

It's a grey day - low cloud, fog, drizzle and not a breath of wind. We are headed to Koeye, just south of Namu. With the exception of a couple of spots, the sea is dead calm. Visibility very limited. NB to keep an eye out, this part of the route is heavily travelled with cruise ships, ferries, fish boats and commercial traffic to Alaska. The first crew left at 6am. apparently on time. The crew change was at 11. Crew changes are improving with none of the chaos of the first attempt.