



Home with the Armadillo #55 is brought to you by Liz Copeland of 3243 165th Ave. SE, Bellevue WA 98008. Phone number is 425-641-0209. Email is received at lizc@nwlinc.com. (And if it bounces as undeliverable, try again the next day. They've been messing with the servers.) Started in September 2002, for SFPA 229.

August

Allie will be a senior this fall. This meant college visits this summer, at least for the ones outside of Washington State. As we were going to visit Canadian schools, let me change that to universities. In Canada, Universities are 4-year schools with a BA or equiv degree. Colleges are technical or vocation schools or the equivalent of a community college here in the states. (At least if I've understood the explanation from our new Canadian friends correctly.) James had 2 classes scheduled in August, back to back, so we were going to try and go the first week, before his classes started, but that didn't work, so we abandoned the boys and headed north, asking Tina, one of the aforementioned Canadian friends, to pick James up from his classes and deliver him home. Thus allowing Jeff to actually stay at work all day. What a concept.

Allie and I drove up on Sunday, August 11. It was a 2.5 hour drive to Anacortes where we caught the ferry to Victoria, BC. The ferry ride took another 3 hours so we arrived in Victoria at about dinnertime. I love the ferry



ride. We travel through the San Juan Islands and get to keep an eye out for orcas, porpoises and other aquatic life. Allie and I spent time leaning on the railing on the deck, watching the water and the giant seaweed and just talking. After checking in, we went to the tapas bar restaurant that Jeff and I had discovered in June. We had a very nice time and I enjoyed explaining the whole exchange rate thing to her. The thought of going shopping with US dollars in Canada during all of college excited my daughter.

On Monday, we visited the University of Victoria. It has about 18,000 students and an interesting campus layout. There's a road that encircles the main campus (called Circle Road) and the class buildings are inside the circle so that it's not hard to rush from building to building. The student housing and maintenance buildings are outside the circle. The people were friendly, the variety of students was good, but what clinched this as Allie's first choice was the population of bunnies on campus. Turns out the bunnies are basically allowed free run on the campus although they are checked annually for health and have winter housing so they don't get all wet when it rains. The administration also keeps up the paint job on the smiley face that was painted on the observatory in the late 60's/70's. This is the kind of attitude that we like.

Tuesday, we drove up island to check out the second school. Before we even got to the campus, Allie was saying no. The campus was in a seriously rural area, with cows and feed stores and tractor sales places. So, we stopped at Tim Horton's for doughnuts, drove past the campus, and drove



back to Victoria. We checked out the areas in Victoria where lots of students live off campus, found a really fabulous thrift store for shopping, and spent the late afternoon walking around downtown Victoria looking for music places and checking out the shopping potential.

Wednesday, we did a whale watching tour. This was the same tour that Jeff and I did. We went out in a zodiac boat, bouncing all over the place, and seeing all 3 pods of orcas in one place. It was a warm and sunny day so the orcas were frolicking in the water, and surfacing regularly. Our driver positioned the boat really well after we located the pods and we were positioned perfectly for a group of 4 adults and 1 baby orca to swim right at our boat and under it. Allie got some fairly good close up pictures and we had a great time. This was a good thing as this was our only real break for the whole week.

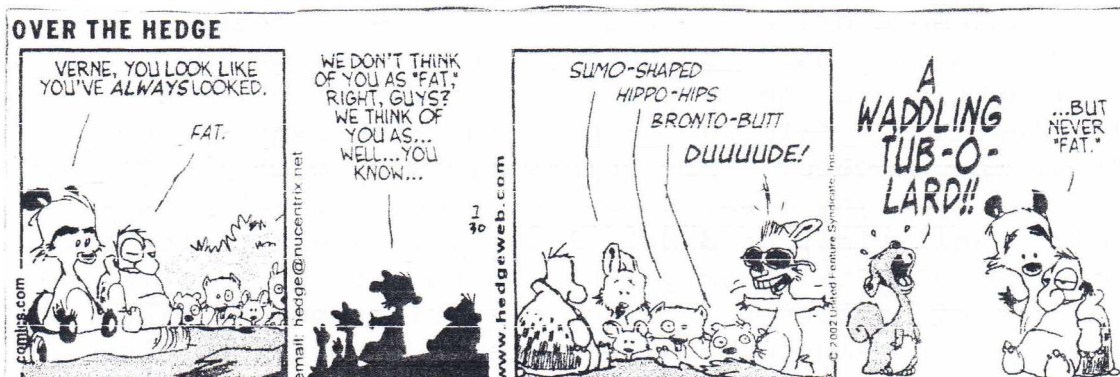
Thursday morning we got up and raced to get to the ferry to Vancouver. We got there about 15 minutes before the ferry sailed but the line was so long that we had to wait for the next one. Fortunately, the BC ferry service actually has a cafeteria in the ferry landing along with several arts/crafts booths. I bought a blue, batik tea cozy which I am now using on Sunday mornings to have a whole pot of warm tea while I read the papers.

We finally left for Vancouver at about noon, and arrived 95 minutes later. Unfortunately, we only had detailed maps of Victoria, so I misread the fairly large scale AAA map and we ended up driving around some commercial dock areas underneath the bridge that I had intended to take across the river into Vancouver proper. We finally backtracked, got to the right bridge and at 3:30 pm, we were driving in early rush hour traffic through the south of Vancouver. They are not good drivers. Fighting our way across Vancouver and then east to the motel took over an hour. So much for getting to the second school before 5 pm. We checked in, took a swim in the pool (driving away another family in the process. They apparently were either appalled at my being a fat woman, or didn't like to share the motel facilities, or didn't like Allie's ear piercings. We got some definitely nasty looks which did not improve our opinion of Vancouver.) After showering and grabbing some sushi at a neighborhood restaurant, we drove out to Simon Fraser to check out the campus. Simon Fraser is usually ranked either first or second in the national

rankings for Canadian universities so we had high expectations. We got there to find a truly dreary campus. All the buildings were from poured, rounded concrete, they were all in a row about 2-3 buildings deep along the ridge that the campus was on, and none of the dorms had food facilities in them. All of the cafeterias are in the classroom buildings. This may make sense considering the amount of rain Vancouver gets, and the number of students who live off-campus (comparing dorm capacity to total enrollment made it clear this is basically a commuter college). We were not impressed, and Allie decided it wasn't worth coming back on Friday to talk to the admissions people. This turned out to be a fortunate thing.

So we got up on Friday about 9 am, loaded the car, and went to the local IHOP for breakfast. It was attached to a mall so we also got to finish the shopping for Tina. She's having cravings for the Canadian foods that she can't get in the states including the Canadian version of Reese's Peanut Butter cups. (In Canada, they're Reese Peanut Butter cups. And different chocolate, apparently.) We found them at the Walgreen's equivalent in the mall. Also, some postcards to send to ourselves.

We were on the road for the border by 10. This turned out not to be early enough because the border crossing was backed up about 2.5 hours worth. It took us about an hour to figure out what was going on and by that time, some of the ice cream and water vendors had come by. We crossed into the US and got lunch shortly after 1. This meant we hit the Friday afternoon traffic in the Seattle area about 4 and got home around 6:30. It was a grueling week.



I got back in time to take James to a tutor for dyslexia training. It took a whole week, and we've seen some improvements but the major improvements are probably a few months off. We have to continue working on things here at home.

Just after that week ended, we started getting ready for school to start. We went thru the school shopping, and then got hit with headlines about teachers possibly striking. Three school districts in the Puget Sound area were unable to come to agreement on their contracts by the August deadline. Fortunately, the Bellevue teachers agreed to start school on time and continue the negotiations until Sept 18.

September

My big event in September was taking a weekend class from David Walker, a big name quilt teacher. His webpage is www.davidwalker.us. The seminar was about his technique for doing backgrounds. I was glad to learn the technique of reverse appliqué that he uses, and to talk with him about how he sells his work, but I'm not sure how much I'm going to use his techniques. He does work that is much more dramatic in color choice and contrast. I got 2 pieces started during the workshop and I'm using the one with higher contrast for the cover of this zine. Part of what was wonderful about the seminar was talking to the female artist who runs the seminar space. She thought what we are doing is wonderful but she can't understand why we insist on calling our fiber art quilts. "Quilts make people think of grandmas. Stop using the term quilts."

This seminar was part of some major changes I'm going through this year. I'm moving toward doing smaller, more abstract pieces. This is a major change and it's making it hard for me to finish some more traditional pieces I started earlier in the year but I'm persevering and will get them done sometime. Before tax season begins.

The other big change is that I'm taking the H&R Block course to become a tax preparer. This will possibly be my daytime job allowing me to devote part of the year to my art, and part to earning some money. I'm doing well in the course so far, but that doesn't guarantee a job offer. I'll know more about that in December.

Part of what this means is that I'll be doing short SFPA zines for the foreseeable future. I'm reading the mailings; I just don't have the time and energy to do a meaty zine. I will keep doing this type of zine, catching everyone up on what's happening and what I've been reading in addition to SFPA.

Books & Movies

Tina Klein-Lebbink and her husband, Bruce Payette, are our new Canadian friends. They moved here last fall and we've been doing a lot with them. They're Toronto fans and Tina's sister, Elizabeth, is active in LA fandom. Tina also sells art at conventions. She's been very kind about loaning me interesting books, especially by Canadian authors, so I have actually been reading some SF this last couple of months. Her favorite author, **Tanya Huff**, has provided most of the reading I've been doing since we got back from the university touring. She has 3 series: one about vampires with titles that start with the word Blood, one about a fantasy world with bards singing the elementals to do magic (all with Quarter or quartered in the title) and the one I like best, Summon the Keeper which has a second book that I haven't read yet. The vampire books are much kinder and gentler than the Laurell Hamilton books but are still a decent read, although they remind me a bit of romance novels. The bard books are also somewhat in the line of romance novels combined with magical fantasy. They present an interesting world and I'm looking forward to reading the 3 that I haven't read yet. The Tanya Huff I liked best, however, is Summon the Keeper. It has a nicely edged sense of humor to it and one of the major characters is a talking cat. This does not come across as cute, but is just part of the fantastic elements of the world. I'm searching for the second book now.

After Allie saw **Panic Room**, she came home and said that Jody Foster played me. After that evaluation, I had to see it. We rented it last week, and I must admit, I can see what Allie was talking about. There were really no stupid people in this movie; the plot made sense and even the bad guys had a complete character. I'd recommend it.

And that's it for now.