

Dear Friends,

Greetings from **Harrisburg, Oregon.**

Wow, it's been about six weeks since we wrote a Great Escape travelogue. A lot of water has gone under the bridge. Well, let's tell you what's happening right now and then we'll go back and deal with the past.

As we travel around, we try to keep track of our many RV friends so that we can meet up with them whenever possible. Two of our RV friends, **Jim and Peg**, have a very interesting business and lifestyle. They are full time RVers and they travel extensively. While traveling, they produce very interesting videos and interviews of their travels. If you have any interest in travel or RVing, you should really take a look at their videos. Their videos are entertaining, informative, free, and they're available right on your computer. We are so impressed that Cole & Cole and Doctor Diesel have become sponsors. Go to [www.americanrver.com](http://www.americanrver.com) and take a look for yourself. If you have a slow dial-up connection, be patient while the video loads. It could take 20 minutes.

Now for our current update. We have just spent a week in a motel in the little town of **Junction City, Oregon.** Living in a motel has definitely been no fun. Our motorhome has been in the shop at the **Monaco Service Center** in Harrisburg which is about ten miles from the motel. We had a small, six inch crack in our aluminum outer wall at the bottom right corner where the bedroom slide enters the wall. We would have been happy to have the corners gusseted externally, but Monaco wanted to tear off a large section of wall to learn why the crack occurred. They agreed to do all work under warranty and to put us up in a motel while the outside wall was off. It's a big job, but it's their nickel so we agreed.



Our motorhome with a portion of outside wall removed.

They pulled off the main awning, the door awning and removed the windows and water heater. Then they cut the wall into small pieces and removed it. There was no frame damage, but they thought the frame was moving and twisting too much so they welded a bunch of gussets to the frame in order to stiffen it. Then they reinstalled a single piece of new aluminum wall and cut it to fit around the bedroom slide and the windows. So we are now back sleeping in the coach in "Camp Monaco." We have no idea how long we are going to be camped here.

New decals need to be installed, but they don't have them. There is paint work to do, but they don't know when we will get into the paint shop. After the decals and paint, there is still the business of reinstalling the main awning, the door awning, and fasteners for the window covers. To Monaco's credit, they have gone overboard to make sure the warranty work is done correctly. However, they always take much longer than their estimates, usually as a result of very poor internal communication and bad coordination between departments. The Service Center has a real campground with water and electric hookups, a laundry room with free washers and dryers, and a dump station. It's not a great place to live, but not bad and it is free.

Well, the long and the short of it is we don't know how long we are going to be here or whether we might leave for awhile. We have a custom made sofa bed on order that should arrive in **Vancouver**, Washington, in about a week. So we need to take the motorhome back north to Vancouver, but we don't know when that will happen either. At the moment, we can't drive the motorhome because the windows and some other parts need to be sealed with silicone, but they can't put silicone on until the paint is finished.

Okay, enough whining. Our three month tour of Washington state had some delightful highlights. Let's go back and show you those. When last you heard from us, we were on **Whidbey Island**, Washington for Labor Day weekend. After that we loaded the motorhome and trailer onto a ferry and had a delightful trip to **Port Townsend** on the **Olympic Peninsula**.



Ferry to Port Townsend, WA, looking through our windshield.

Most of the Washington state ferries are drive through. You enter one end and come out the other. On this trip, they loaded our motorhome first which meant that we were parked in the front of the boat. That was neat. We viewed the whole trip from the comfort of our coach and saw the sights through our windshield.

We got off the ferry at Port Townsend and drove straight to the town of **Sequim**, WA, which is on the northern extreme of the Olympic Peninsula. We were able to stay two weeks free at **Diamond Point RV Resort** as part of our Resorts of Distinction (ROD) membership. Diamond Point is a lovely, small, quiet park, and we loved it. The weather in Sequim was wonderful. It is clearly a banana belt area with less than 20 inches of rain per year. This was a huge surprise as it is less than a two hour drive to the **Hoh Rain Forest** which gets 200 inches of rain per year! The Sequim park is a great home base as there is much to see in the area. The town of Sequim is only about 20 minutes away and has all the shopping and restaurants anyone could wish for. Another 20 minutes gets you to **Port Angeles** which also has some major virtues.

Port Angeles has two ferries that go to **Victoria, British Columbia**. The slow ferry carries foot passengers and vehicles and the fast ferry takes walk on passengers only. One morning we got up early and rode the motorcycle to Port Angeles to catch the fast ferry at 8:10 a.m. The Victoria Express makes the trip in about an hour at a cost of \$25 round trip per person. It's a smooth and comfortable ride and the boat crew goes out of their way to please. They also can arrange tours of Victoria and other excursions and have your transportation waiting when you get off the boat. Going through Canadian customs was easy, fast, and pleasant. Much nicer than U.S. customs.



**Victoria Express from Port Angeles to Victoria.**

The boat is also eco friendly as it burns biodiesel. Yay! As you probably know, we sell biodiesel processors to make low-cost biodiesel at home. By the way, we have a fabulous sale on processors running from now until election day. [www.doctordiesel.com](http://www.doctordiesel.com)

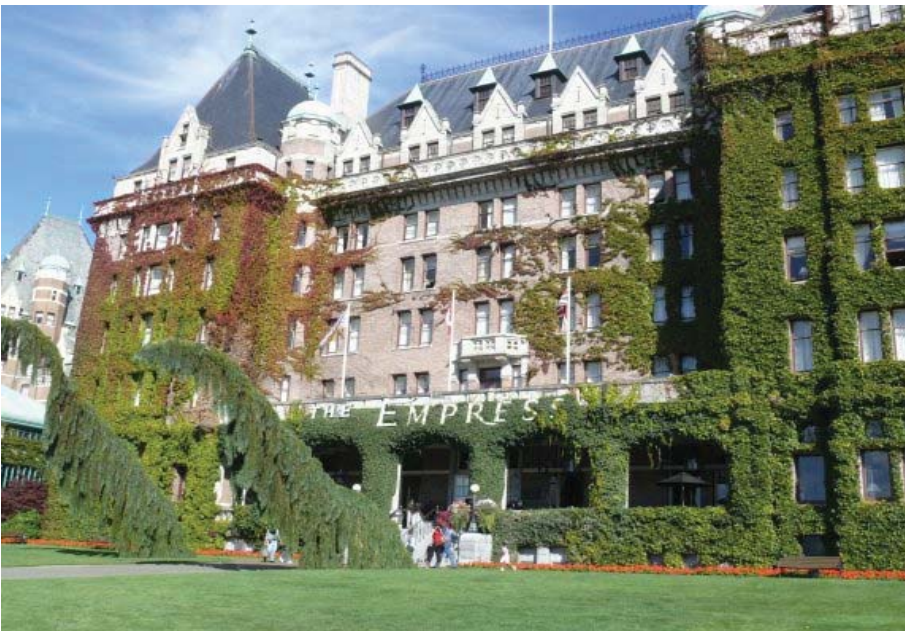


**Biodiesel powered Victoria Express.**

We elected to tour Victoria Island via a double-decker English bus. Wow, neat. From the top deck you have a great view of everything. The driver provided a great running narration. We also elected to be dropped off and picked up at Victoria's famous **Butchart Gardens**. The waterfront area of Victoria is absolutely stunning! It's a gorgeous city and the main downtown is small enough that you can see it on foot.



**Victoria B.C. Parliament Building.**



**Empress Hotel, Victoria, B.C.**

The **Parliament** building and the **Empress Hotel** are good examples of Victoria's style, grace, and history. But back to our story. We elected to have our bus take us directly to Butchart Gardens. The gardens are about 18 miles out of town and might have been a little difficult to find had we been touring on our own. The gardens occupy about 55 acres of perfectly groomed land. When we say perfect, we mean exactly that. Perfect! If you walk fairly hard, you can see the gardens in about two hours. In two hours of walking and taking pictures, we could not find a single weed. No weeds in the lawns, no weeds in the flower beds. No weeds. If that isn't bizarre enough, then we have to tell you that we could not find a single dead bloom. Acres of flowers and they are all perfect. It's incredible! There is an army of 50 gardeners, but we were there on Sunday and they must have the day off. Oh, did we mention that there is no trash. No cigarette butts, no gum wrappers, no nothing. The place is unreal.



Welcome sign at the entrance.



A small portion of the Sunken Garden.

**Robert Pim Butchart** owned and operated a cement plant. The Sunken Garden was originally a very ugly worked out limestone quarry belonging to the cement plant. Mr. Butchart's wife, **Jennie**, became determined to completely replant the old quarry and turn it into a spot of incredible beauty. Her hobby kept expanding as she developed a Japanese garden, a rose garden, an Italian garden, and a Mediterranean garden. By the 1920s, the gardens were already attracting more than 50,000 visitors a year. Today, there are a million visitors each year and in 2004 the gardens were designated a National Historic Site of Canada.

Yes, the Butchart Gardens have been in bloom for more than 100 years!

Our bus driver summarized Victoria by saying, "Victoria is the home of newlyweds, nearly deads, and flower beds." He was right on target. Many, many people go there to get married and many, many Canadians retire in beautiful Victoria with its pleasant climate.



**Ross Fountain in a small lake in the Sunken Garden.**



**The Sturgeon Fountain between the rose garden and the Japanese garden.**

Admission to the gardens is not cheap. We paid \$28 each. Our first reaction at the gate was, good grief! That's a lot of money to walk around for a couple of hours. Was it worth it? Absolutely! This is a world class experience. It is, in fact, a world class destination. There is probably nothing else quite like it on the planet.



A Cypress hedge around the Italian Garden.

Even the hedges in the gardens were unbelievable. Above is a hedge going around the Italian garden. It is about 12 feet high and 3 feet thick. It's so dense, it would probably stop a tank. Our friend, **Tim**, spent a week trimming our Cypress hedge at our home in Douglas City. Hey Tim, you need to see these hedges.



A portion of the Italian garden.

We have only given you a very brief taste of beautiful Victoria and the fantastic Butchart Gardens. But, we need to close this letter or the download will become burdensome. We will just have to show

you more in the next newsletter.

Until next time, home is where we park it.

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