

The

Seattle Scuttlebutt

Friday-Sunday, 30 January-1 February 2009

Seattle, Washington

Sleepless in Seattle



Seattle's skyline from Kerry Park in the Queen Anne district

Emerald City's the place for our silver anniversary

There are warmer places. There are drier places. Places with more palm trees and fewer umbrellas.

Maybe you'd celebrate your 25th anniversary – a quarter-century of wedded bliss – in one of those other

places. But we took the road less traveled, and that made all the difference.

Seattle is not everyone's idea of romantic, but we have a history there

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that we have enjoyed revisiting over our 2½ decades of togetherness.

We spent our first anniversary there in 1985 on the weekends before and after a ski trip to Whistler, British Columbia.

We returned after Gordon was born and also visited Victoria and Vancouver, B.C. In 1999 we flew to Seattle to begin a vacation trip to Glacier National Park in Montana aboard Amtrak's *Empire Builder*. Emily only had a few days off, and she flew home, but Gordon and I returned to Seattle on the train and spent a few days with old friends from Charlotte, N.C., Bruno and Ann Riegl, who now live on Queen Anne Hill in Seattle.

Gordon and I rode the *Coast Starlight* back to San Jose.

Seattle is a fine place to visit on sunny days. It's surrounded by snow-capped mountains including a huge one, volcanic Mount Rainier. But only about one in every three Seattle days is sunny – an average of only 139 a year – and most of those come in the months of July, August and September. The rest of the year can be kind of gloomy, but



The city of Seattle occupies an isthmus between Puget Sound on the west and Lake Washington on the east. The Lake Washington Ship Canal links the two, cutting across the city just north of downtown. The Queen Anne neighborhood, where Bruno and Ann live is just above the final "WN" in the big word "DOWNTOWN" on the map.

Seattle's reputation for rain is a bit overblown.

Most East Coast cities get more rain than Seattle's 37 inches a year, including New York, Washington, Charlotte and Atlanta.

January, however, is not the month most people choose for a Seattle visit. Neither is it a month many people choose to get married. But we did because we wanted to ski

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on our honeymoon. People who like snow and mountains aren't put off by a little bit of rain and clouds.

It didn't matter last weekend, though. We arrived in Seattle on Friday night after work, but when the sun came up Saturday morning, the sky cleared over Puget Sound for the first time in January.

We had no agenda, and Emily suggested that we just walk. After a waterfront breakfast, we climbed the hills to Pike Street Market, a four-block open-air shopping area that sells everything from fish to flowers, produce to T-shirts that say "I'm a senior citizen. Now give me my damn discount."

It was nippy out, so we wandered over to the Nordstrom mother ship where Emily could buy a pair of gloves. She was looking for a pair like she saw Michelle Obama wearing at the inauguration – green leather. Well, wouldn't you know it, but the sales clerk said the pair she had were the exact same model as the First Lady's only in blue and half-price. We saw no reason to doubt her.

There was a Nordstrom Rack just a couple of blocks away, and there was a pair of boots and a pair of flip-flops with little seashell things on the straps that, as luck would have it, were just Emily's size.

It was time for the poor man's cruise, the \$6.50 Washington State Ferry trip to Bainbridge Island and back. If you live on Bainbridge Island, the 35-minute ferry ride is quite likely your commute to work – breakfast in the dining salon eastbound, a glass of Washington State wine on the way home.

If you're a tourist, this run or one of the nine others across Puget Sound is about the least expensive way in town to have fun. The Washington State Ferries are the



Tulips for sale at the Pike Street Market.



Climbing the steps to Pike Street

largest ferry system in the United States, third largest in the world, and it carries 22 million passengers a year. Our vessel, the *MV Tacoma*, was one of three in the system's largest class with a capacity of 202 vehicles on two decks and three passenger decks for 2,500 passengers.

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Ferrying from Seattle to Bainbridge Island

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We finished our day at a seafood dinner with the Riegls.

Food was a highlight of our visit. For brunch Sunday, we headed 25 miles east of Seattle to the Cascade foothills and the town of Snoqualmie Falls, where we had the most famous breakfast in the Pacific Northwest at the Salish Lodge. The standard "country breakfast" – served since the lodge was built in 1916 at the brink of the 268-foot waterfall that gave its name to the town – is served in four courses: (1) juice, coffee and a breadbasket, (2) buttermilk pancakes with maple syrup, fruit, yogurt, and Devonshire cream, (3) oatmeal w/ cream and (4) 3 eggs w/ bacon, sausage, ham, potatoes and a biscuit. Bring your cholesterol medicine and a credit card.



Passing another Seattle-Bainbridge ferry



Salmon, Ann and Bruno

Ann and Bruno Riegl are friends from way back in the early 1980s when we all lived in Charlotte.

Ann, from Sedalia, Mo., was a philosophy student at the University of Missouri when she met and married Bruno, who grew up in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, in Africa. Bruno was at the first of a series of banks he worked for in Charlotte, and Ann was a colleague at The Charlotte News, when we first met.

We went to soccer games, and Bruno liked to fly with Emily and me when we rented a plane for our fun trips around the Southeast. They moved to Sydney, Australia for one of Bruno's banking jobs before Emily and I got married, but we reconnected when they moved to Seattle



and I began traveling there on sports writing trips.

Bruno has been working on his HO scale railroad layout for almost 30 years. It features the Spokane, Portland and Pacific Railway and Great Northern Railway, two fallen flags that are now part of the BNSF (Burlington Northern Santa Fe) system.



Every house should have a model railroad layout.



Emily, the Salish Lodge and Snoqualmie Falls.

Great breakfasts I have eaten

Breakfasts can be great because of the food, the occasion, the people it was shared with or a combination of factors. At the end of the day, it was what I remembered most about that day.

<i>Where</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Details</i>
Hamlet, NC	1950s	Salt mackerel on Christmas mornings, served on the "good china" with the full family at a table covered by the red and green tablecloth, red and green napkins with silver bells that tinkled when you used them, and a big red candle in the middle with the drips from previous years still on the sides.
Florida	1967	Hamlet High School glee club eating in the dining car of Seaboard Railroad's <i>Silver Star</i> with heavy silverware, china and crystal enroute to Miami and a cruise to the Bahamas.
Chapel Hill, NC	1970s	Four scrambled eggs, grits and toast at the Carolina Coffee Shop. Add bacon and orange juice on Sundays.
Airborne	198?	Eggs benedict in <i>coach</i> aboard an Atlanta-Denver flight for a Colorado ski trip.
Whistler, BC	1985	With Emily at Araxis Restaurant before skiing two mountains the same day, Whistler and Blackcomb.
Spearfish, SD	1985	Trout the morning after visiting Mount Rushmore on our move to California.
Utah	199?	Eating with friends and family in the warm and cozy diner of Amtrak's <i>California Zephyr</i> while climbing through the Wasatch Range in a snow storm.
Snowmass, Colo.	200?	Lox, bagel and snowflakes eaten outside before the first ski run of the day.
Kapalua, Hawaii	2000	Breakfast buffet outdoors at the Kapalua Bay Hotel with the whole family.
Carmel, Calif.	2004	Breakfast on the deck of the Highlands Inn with binoculars to watch the whales and sea otters.
Honolulu	2008	Unlimited smoked salmon under the banyan tree at the Moana Surfrider hotel.
Snoqualmie Falls	2009	Gluttony with a view, appropriate to the occasion.