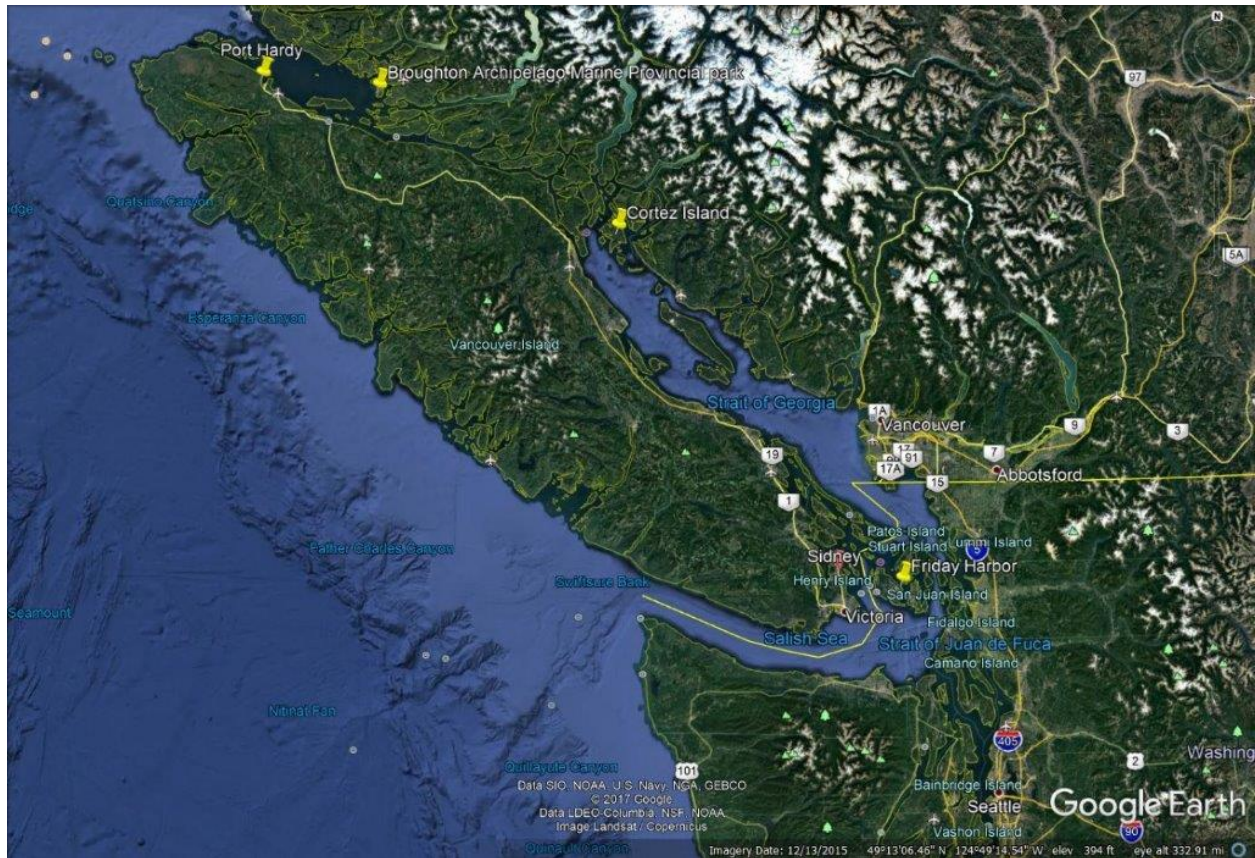
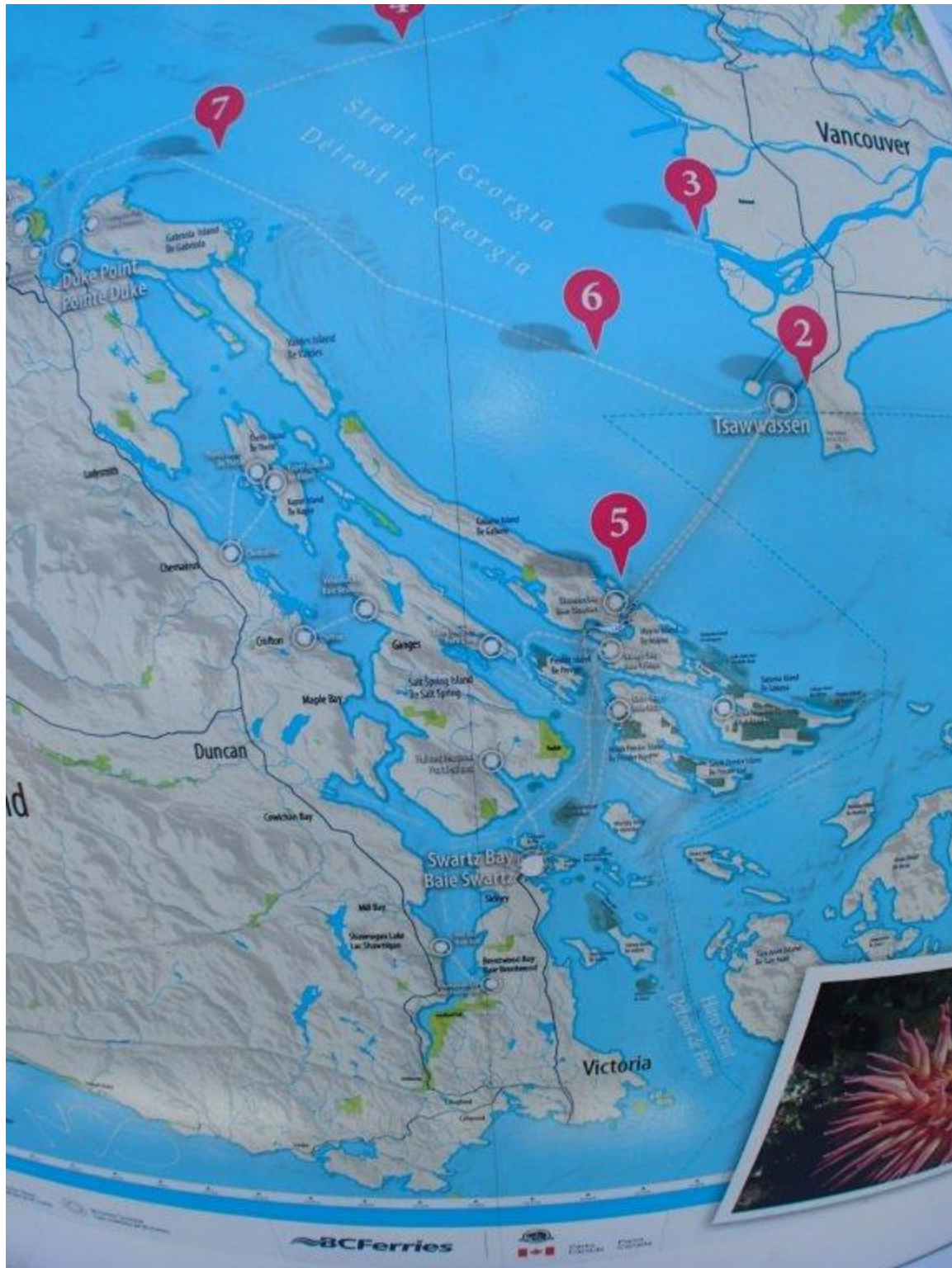


**Cruising the West Coast's
Fabulous Gulf Islands
September 2017**





Two years ago a life-long dream was fulfilled when the Glickpersons invited us on a marvelous sail through the Broughton Archipelago at the north end of Vancouver Island. <http://www.jasonschoonover.com/2016/10/two-weeks-before-the-mast/>



This year Capt. Lynn Danaher invited us aboard the 50-foot *Fantome de la Mer* for a lazy, week long cruise of the lower Gulf Islands. It had the inviting appearance of another dream come true....



Jake Satre and I didn't suspect it would be a ship of horrors. At first we took the old gals' smiles and the lambs-to-the-slaughter manner in which they eyed us in total innocence. L-R: Flasher, Kate Jackson, Capt. Snorkel Master, The Dragon Lady.



But when we saw that they had stocked in THREE bottles of gin, we grew uneasy. We hadn't bargained on this—two of us trapped aboard a boat with four old women full of party remover.



Especially when they drank like this (and this was our captain!). To protect ourselves, we rushed out and bought bear spray and barbed wire.



It was a good thing because by 2 a.m every morning we could count on the old timers to be screeching and banging their canes and walkers against our barricaded doors.



For the first several days Jake and I didn't go anywhere aboard alone and without our fish bats.



The Dragon Lady watching porn. That and gin is a deadly combination.



The first chance we had to escape was at Ganges on Salt Spring Island. If this picture is blurry it's because it's looking through the macular degeneration of one of the old ladies' eyes.



It was Saturday, market day, and we managed to ditch them in the crowd.



Well, I had to trick mine by buying her this shawl for her upcoming birthday. When she was distracted ogling herself in the mirror, I ducked out. And ran for my life.



We hoped to board a ferry out but one wasn't due to leave, so I tried to quell my nerves by shooting pictures in the meantime.



I wanted to get some shots of the quaint old church-...oh, that damn camera again! I forgot—and brought the problem one!



I tried again. Dammit! That bloody camera upset me almost as much as the ancient crones we had to ward off.



Jake: "Jeezus Jason! Now my camera's infected too!"



Ganges is a village and they tracked us down easily, surrounded us, and marched us back to the boat. We resigned ourselves to the voyage, hoping the fossils would run out of gin sooner than later.









There's great hiking. Note that they have me bracketed so I can't slip away again.













We saw a few enormous and ancient Salish midden beaches. A midden is what archaeologists call a garbage dump.





Everyone's favorite tree: arbutus.



Then back to cruising. “Go that way.” “No! I want to go THAT way!” CRASH!



Fortunately, they'd pass out early and the navigation would be back in a man's safe, capable hands. We were relieved when on day four the old bitties ran out of gin.



The harridans were all designated by Captain Snorkel Master as kitchen or log wenches, and Jake and I were the deck dicks. I felt sorry for her—stuck with a bunch of hick stubble-jumpers who were more used to driving tractors and milking cows than operating boats. When I saw this tie off, I laughed so hard I almost fell in. Calling her over, she laughed louder and longer.



Though one of deck dicks is an old Boy Scout and canoe brigade leader and knows knots, har har har. I also used to crew in the Phang Nga Regatta in Thailand, and I've owned a couple of boats. That's why I'm known as CAPTAIN Twat.



We saw a lot of wildlife, besides the superannuated coquettes. Lots of seals as in this pic, porpoises, eagles, but just a single orca. The fishing was nonexistent. In the '60s you just had to drop a hook to the bottom and a rock fish would grab it. Today, many areas are off limits as the fishery tries to recover.



We linked up with Clive and Caron. We had the pleasure of guesting at their luxurious villa on Ko Samui in Thailand this spring, along with Flasher and Caron's cousin Jake. <http://www.jasonschoonover.com/2017/04/thailands-exotic-ko-samui-ko-phangan/>



At Montague Harbour on Galiano Island we took the Hummingbird bus—the wildest bus ride since the Merry Pranksters’—to the pub of the same name for Su’s birthday dinner.



Everyone is given a shaker or tambourine and Tom the driver is hilarious.



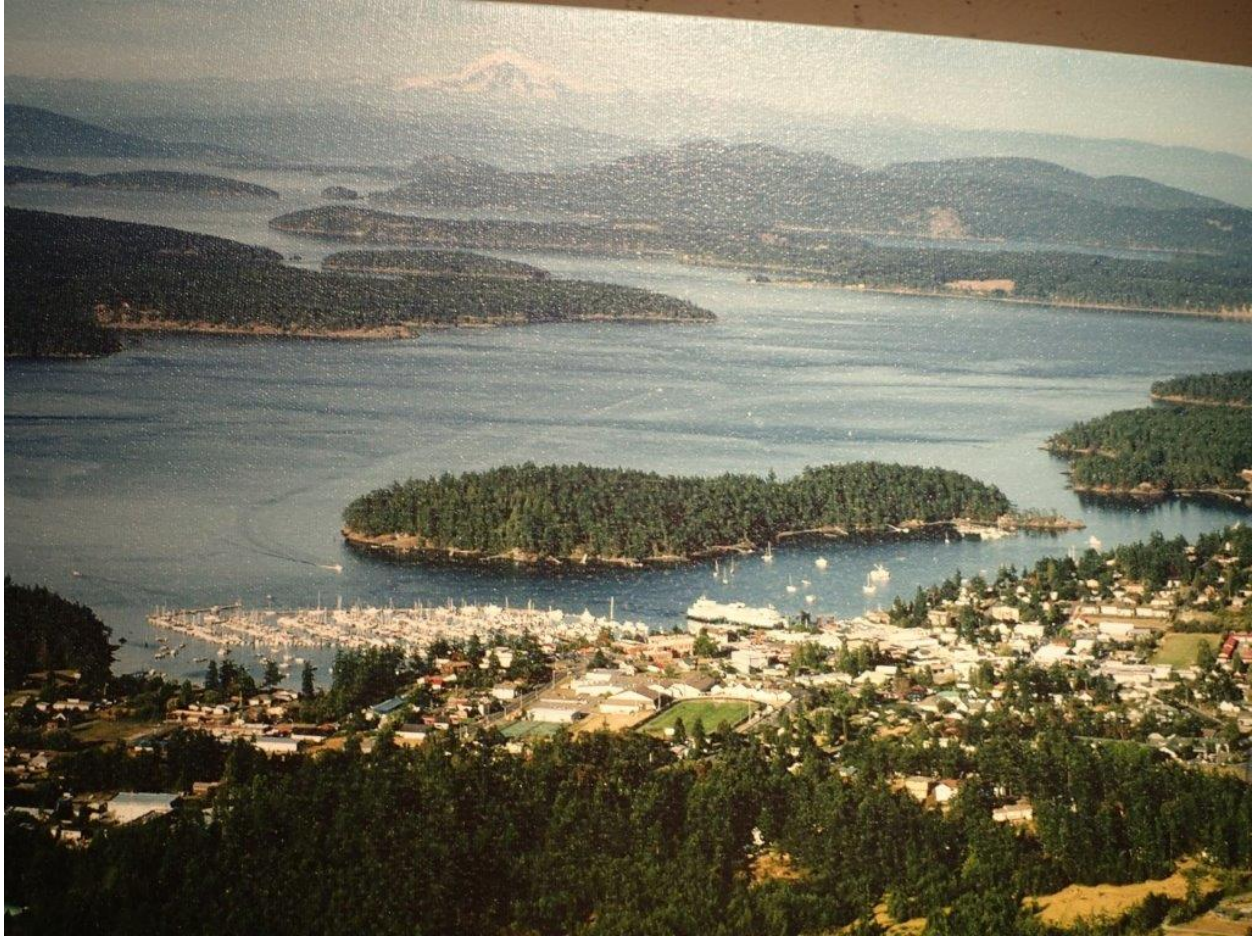
The old broad's birthday cake and candles. I can't tell you how old she is because my calculator froze, unable to reach a number that high.



Crossing into the US, we cleared Customs at Roche Harbor on San Juan Island where Johnny Carson kept a slip for years after retiring.



Johnny's 130-foot *Serengheti*.



Friday Harbor is to the US side what Ganges is to the Canuckistanian—only bigger. Ganges is a village; Friday is a town of over 2,000. Both are very picturesque.





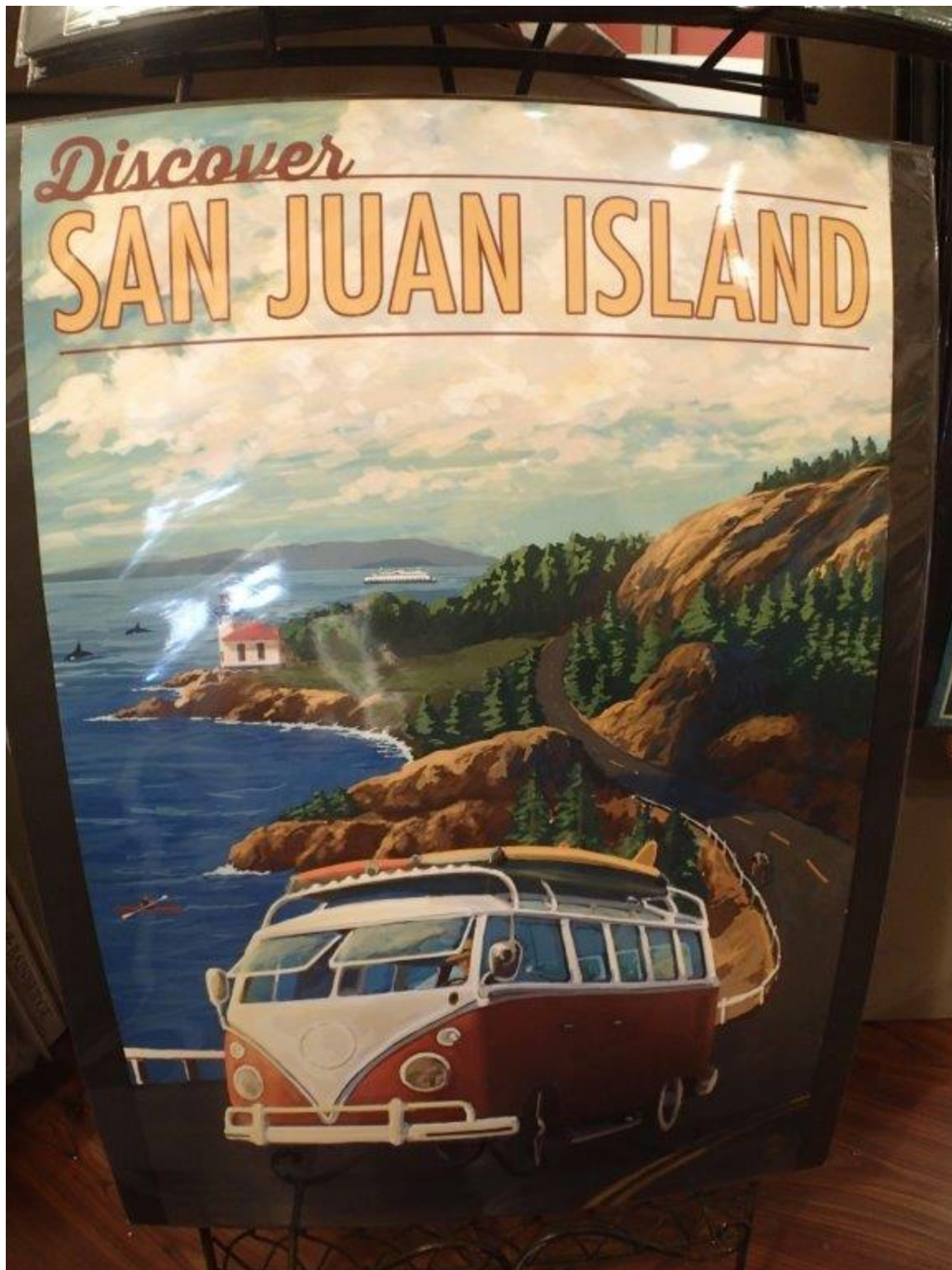
It's Snorkel Master's home base where she's beautifully renovated several century-old places to rent to the tourist trade, as well as owning commercial property. I kid her that she owns half of Friday Harbor. She's certainly a significant presence.



She's also the founding director of the Friday Harbor Film Festival, this year taking place November 3-5. Tom, the wild driver, is MCing this year.



Lynn's a fellow member of The Explorers Club and, indeed, is a director. One of the treasures in her fascinating home is this piece of line from Thor Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki*. I'm holding an originally tied bowline. To me, this is touching exploration history. I was enormously influenced by this riveting 1947 adventure.



She gave us a tour of the island, including sites where she worked on the filming of *Free Willy*. This picture reminds me that I think I'll sell our '73 Krautcan Westphalia next year. I hate to see it go. I've had it since '83 and it only has 132,000 miles on it, and with 35K on the second

motor. Near mint. But we're selling down the properties in the Mighty Holy Schoonover Empire and we'll lose the garage it's stored in.



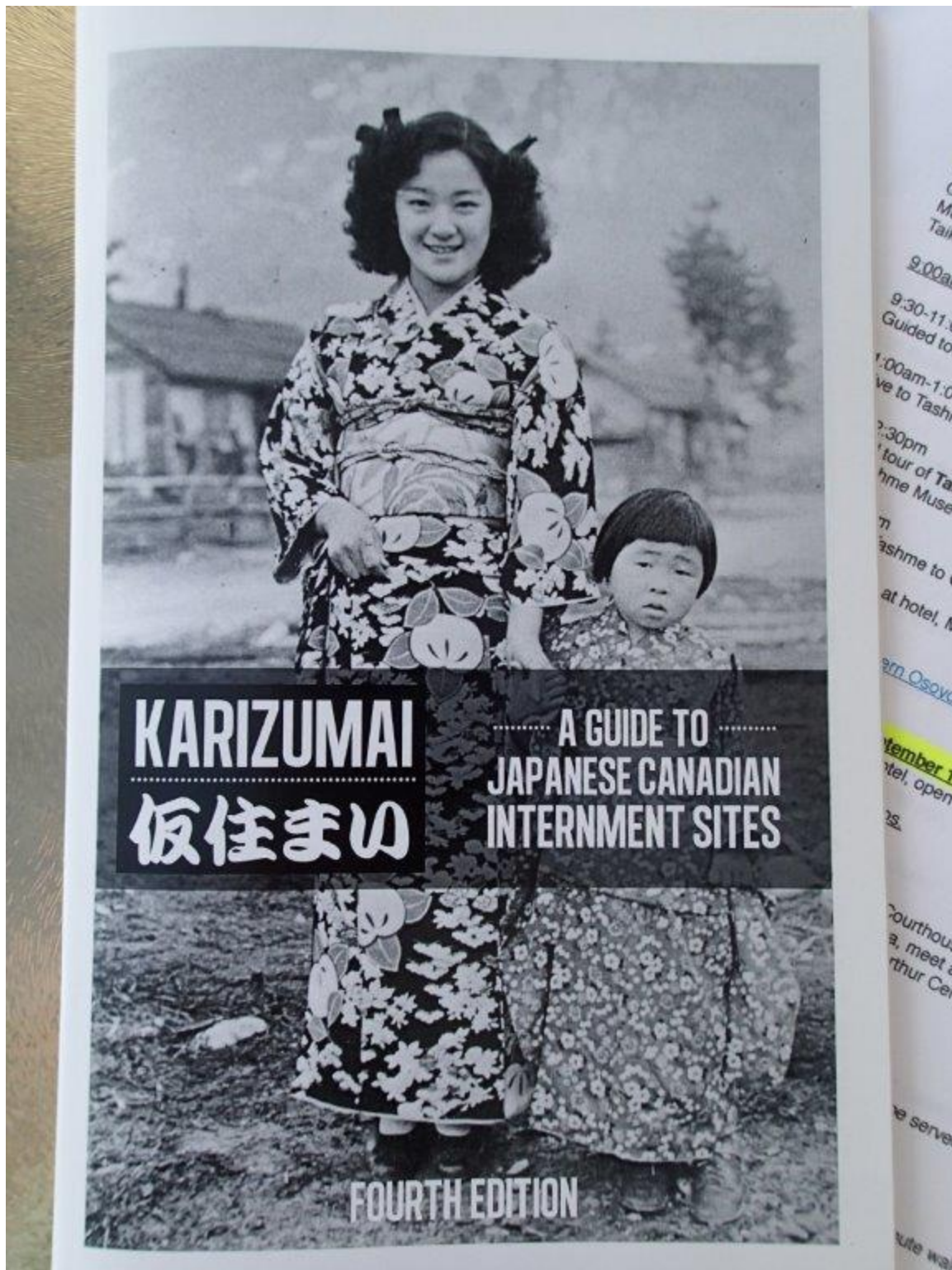
The most expeditious way to Bellingham was aboard a whale watching boat. We didn't see any in the salt chuck, but there were several aboard anyway. Grey whales especially. Certainly a lotta blubber sitting around the tables.



My Uncle Don picked us up and we headed to his and Laurie's place at White Rock.



Visiting were Su's 87-year-old Uncle Tom and Aunt Joyce on the left.



The next day they headed on a five-day bus tour of the WW-II internment sites he was shipped to after Pearl Harbor and after having had their land confiscated. That's a government term that means "legally stolen." Su's folks landed in the beet fields of Tabor, Alberta. We'll learn what memories and emotions this nostalgic tour brings....



And thus ends another great little adventure.... Thank you Capt. Lynn! (And Jake and I made it through with our virtue intact, whew.)

