

## Travels with Charles (and Jim)



When I was a kid, we were a “CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite” household. Other families I knew watched Huntley & Brinkley on NBC, but not us. In the late 60s, Charles Kuralt began a feature called “On the Road.” He and his cameraman travelled around the US in an RV, seeking out interesting people and stories. I always thought that would be the best job.

But you know what’s even better? Having your own RV and driving wherever you want to go, seeing incredible places and meeting interesting people – and doing it for pleasure, not work.

Jim had also always wanted to experience travelling the continent by RV. It was one of the many things we had in common right from the start. So ... that’s what we’ve started doing, as of June 30<sup>th</sup>.

After much research and searching, we found what we think is the perfect mobile home. Unfortunately, a lot of other people seem to agree. If we’d bought a new one, it would’ve taken close to two years to get it. Finding a used one proved almost as difficult, but after much searching, (mostly by Jim) we found a 2018 Leisure Travel Van “Unity” for sale .... in Victoria!



Wednesday was a long and harrowing day, as we got up very early and flew to Victoria. Then we met the seller at the RV camp site, and went through a two-hour explanation of everything we needed to know (Yikes!!). Then we went to get it registered and insured, which involved standing in line outside the office for an hour and a half and then sitting inside the office for another hour and a half.

And then, the scariest part of all ... driving our new RV!



It wasn't actually as scary as we thought it might be. The most challenging thing to get used to is parking in parking lots. Mark, who sold the van to us, showed us the kind of parking spots to look for, and we've quickly learned to follow his lead.

We spent the next few hours finding places to buy stuff to outfit the can for the first night and morning. By the time we got back to our site, it was 7:00 and we'd barely eaten anything. We ordered pizza and crashed, after being up for about 21 hours.

The next two days were busy and exhausting, but we were in a lovely spot right on the water, west of downtown Victoria.

Here are some shots of "Charles", and the lovely Salish Seaside RV Haven where we first met. As the name suggests the land is Salish territory, so it was particularly meaningful to be there on Canada Day.







It was quite peaceful (except for seaplanes taking off and landing fairly regularly) and we saw herons, swans, and a number of deer walking by, or across the bay.

Everyone we met there was very friendly and when they found out we had just bought our RV they were very excited for us. Most of them were quite experienced and either lived in their vans full time or spent as much time as possible travelling in them. This was a fairly upscale site, so it felt nothing like Nomadland!



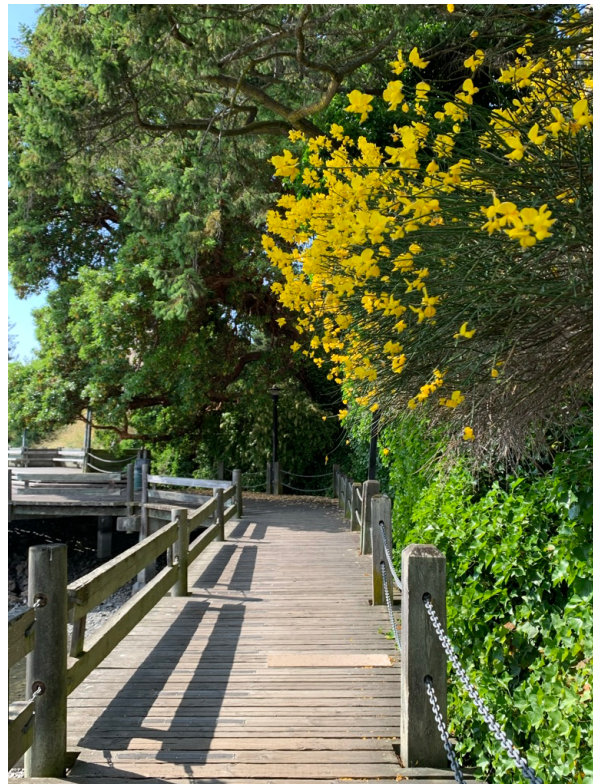


The RV site was right next to West Bay Marina where, along with boats there was a whole community of floating homes, which were beautiful and spacious, and they seemed to have a very active community – there was lots of partying going on, and the walkways between the houses looked like sidewalks. They even had a floating barber shop!





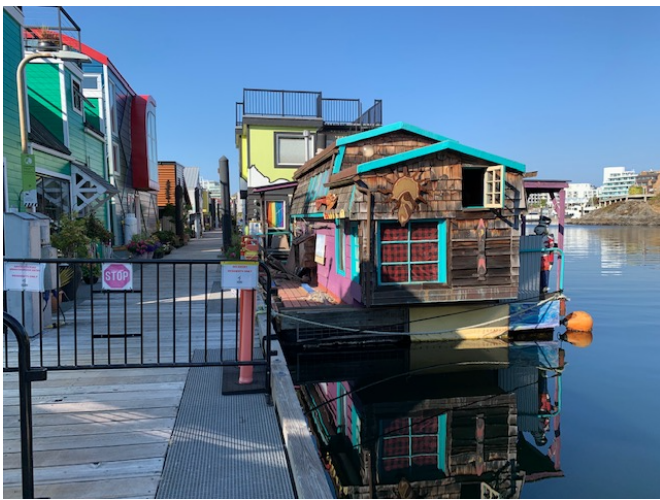
From the marina, there was a beautiful walkway that went by the marina and apparently took you all the way into downtown Victoria. We didn't have the energy or the time to walk all that way but what we were able to see was colourful and lovely.





On our last evening, we decided to take the water taxi into Victoria. Everyone told us we should go to Fisherman's Wharf, so we did. The water taxi arrived like a Yellow Cab.

We had a very pleasant ride into what turned out to be a very touristy area. We had good fish and canned wine, walked around a bit and enjoyed the colourful area.



Then went to the dock to catch a water taxi back. Despite being there much earlier than we were told to, three taxis came and left and wouldn't take us – we were told it was "closed", which meant they weren't going to bother taking us all the way out there when they could do more business taking people closer to downtown. We called a non-water taxi cab and got a lovely ride through downtown Victoria – for the same amount of money.

The next day, our real adventures would begin!