

Life@Pub

Blog post on <https://juerg.fraefel.ch/lifepub>

"Sea! – Hawks!" roars the pub in Vancouver's Gastown neighborhood. Sleep is out of the question, neither in Seattle nor in Vancouver. The football team of the Seattle Seahawks plays, although two hours south in Seattle. Fans from both sides of the border meet here in the pub, surrounded by half a dozen screens. Watching the game on the monitors does not detract from the vibe. – It started with a visit of Seattle friends. On arrival, they announced that today a weighty appointment was due. The football game between the Seattle Seahawks and the Minnesota Vikings. Now we sit in the packed pub and watch the match together with about 100 other fans. I will witness a piece of culture, whether a Canadian or American is for once not important.

Dave explains to me the football rules. Basically it's about winning terrain, which is sealed by placing the oval ball in the End Zone. Quarterback, Touchdown, Conversion, I need to learn several important expressions. Irritating frequent game interruptions. Waiting seems to be part of this game. And if that were not enough, the game in the stadium is also interrupted in order that the television stations can broadcast commercials.

No less important is food and drink in the pub. A choice of over twenty different beers. Chicken wings in four flavors are served at no cost. Happy hour. Second round of beer. Now the unspeakable Canadian Poutine, French fries mixed with creamy cheese, over brown gravy.

During our half years visit we realized that the pub is part of the culture here in America's Northwest, be it in Canada's British Columbia or up in the Yukon, in Washington State, Oregon or Northern California. Often our local friends would invite us to the pub, not without apologizing about the junk food. And they have happily washed down the fat hamburger with a local pale ale. Occasionally one yells at each other because of the loud music, while the muted screens show football, baseball or ice hockey. Always a lot of commercials. The visit to the pub would be part of everyday life, say our friends. A habit, a piece of home.

Often people talk to us strangers in the pub. Where from and why here. We would learn a lot about the country and its people, occasionally a little bit about the current political situation. Nothing profound, everyday life. And human gestures. For instance Keith who introduced us to his small town in the back country of Oregon and he spontaneously offered us his parking space for our RV over the night. Or Steve, whom we met at a bar in San Francisco and told us about his awkward work situation (see report in a previous blog post).

Score after 60 minutes: 21: 7 for Seattle. The victory of the Seahawks must be celebrated. Nothing is closer than a visit to another pub. Here too, an armada of screens flickers off the walls. A wild mix of ice hockey, baseball and music videos. And hunger returns. Tacos this time. Baseball rules repeated. Blasphemed about Poutine. Mobile phone number exchanged. It's getting late. Seattle is sleeping in Vancouver for once.