

Wrangell St. Elias News

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"

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White Sheep Paradise

1958 —Cordova hunters in the Wrangells

BY KEN SMITH

It was the fall of 1958. My lifelong school chum, Dick Renner and I had just graduated from high school in Cordova. Dick and I had enjoyed hunting goats and geese on the coast, and when an opportunity to go after the famed Dall Sheep in the upper reaches of the Chitina River in the Wrangell Mountains came along, we were eager to give it a try.

This area had become the favorite hunting territory of Bob Gill, a long-time commercial fisherman from Cordova. Gill had been sheep hunting in the Wrangells for over a decade. He was our leader and the only one of the group who knew anything about sheep hunting. Matter of fact, he was one of the only guys around Cordova who knew much about it.

Gill had been hunting the Wrangells even before Jack Wilson or Howard Knutson showed on the scene as pilots for Cordova Airline. His sheep hunting experience began with Herb Haley as pilot; it was still Cordova Air Service then, and Herb



Photo courtesy the author

In 1958, during sheep hunting season, Cordova Airline would often overnight a DC-3 in May Creek. The crew would drive a jeep over to the McCarthy Lodge.

was using one of Cordova's Stinson Reliants.

A very popular medical doctor from Cordova, Raymond Coffin, relocated to the Territory from the New England states because of Alaska's great outdoors. He even brought his Maine canoe to Cordova. But Coffin couldn't get away from his practice in Cordova very often. When he did he absolutely loved to hunt. He especially enjoyed sheep hunting in the interior with Gill. My father, "Mudhole," and the doctor were very close friends. They loved to kid each other.

One tale Dad loved to tell, over and over, was how Coffin, during one of his trips with Gill in the interior, had medically helped one of the great native old-timers in that part of the country — a lady who was one of the last to be born at Taral across the river from Chitina. Dad's version of the story was undoubtedly embellished. At one time, Dr. Coffin and Gill were involved in some sort of sheep hunt goof up. About the same time, Suzie, the indigenous and aged Athabascan from Taral, had a medical problem that Coffin cured. So, according

to Dad, Suzie used to say, "Him great doctor, not much hunter." Dad loved to tell that, and truthfully, Ray liked to hear it.

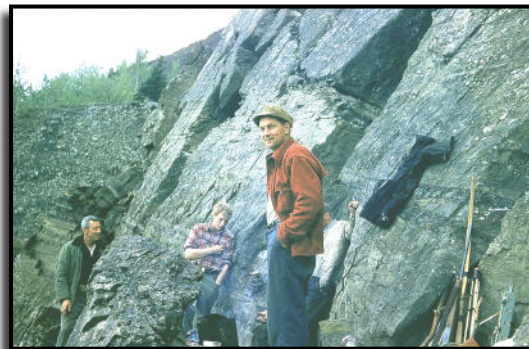


Photo courtesy the author

Gill's "cave"—Harley King, at far left. (At the time Harley lived in Cordova; later he moved to Long Lake.) Dick Renner and his father Ralph are also pictured.

(story continued on page 7)

A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

It is March 2nd, Rick and I are just about to pull out the Ricoh printer and begin the next stage of producing the March/April issue of *WSEN*, the final product. For those of you who have recently come on board as a subscriber, we do the entire *WSEN* here in our log cabin located on the outskirts of McCarthy. We have lived here on this property west of the Kennicott River since the summer of 1978 after spending a year at Long Lake, about 15 miles from here.

Rick and I began *Wrangell St. Elias News* the summer of 1992, thinking it may only be the July/August issue in celebration of the 4th of July. We are now on our 83rd issue and still going strong, thanks to you and your continued interest in the news from and affecting the McCarthy/Kennicott area.

The cover story, *White Sheep Paradise*, is written by a long-time contributor to *WSEN*, Kenny Smith. Kenny never ceases to surprise us with the myriad of stories he recalls from his experiences in this wonderful state of Alaska. Many of you will recognize some of the characters in Kenny's story of Cordova hunters in the Wrangells.

Peggy Guntis, *Cooking with Peggy*, passes on her regrets for such a short column this issue, but she is recuperating from wrist surgery

(hope it wasn't necessary from all the typing that goes into her sharing those scrumptious recipes with us!). Being in a splint really cuts back on her typing capabilities. We all wish you a speedy, complete recovery, Peggy.

The month of February brought the news of the passing away of two community pillars —Ed LaChapelle of McCarthy and Lance Gilpatrick of Chitina/Valdez. Both men will be greatly missed. Our prayers go out to Ed's Meg and Lance's Susan and their families. Please note a personal story written by Ed's son, David, who is also well-known in the McCarthy area, on page 6. Due to our limited space, David gave us permission to shorten it. We thank you, David, for so kindly sharing your heart's thoughts with us on such short notice.

Since our last issue, the McCarthy area experienced a very unusual occurrence with the opening of the Kennicott River. Residents were using a snowmachine crossing over the ice for quite some time, but that came to an abrupt end the third week of January. You can read Keith Rowland's account of *Hidden Lake Dumps Mid-Winter* on page 8 with pictures by local pilot and resident Don Welty. For the past week, and I'm sure with the help of the frigid temperatures that dropped to -42, the river is now frozen over and

locals are crossing it safely once again.

If you tried to call anyone in McCarthy and the outlying area on January 29-31 or February 22 and 23 and didn't have any success, it was because our long-distance and local service was out of commission. Thanks to Copper Valley Telephone and AT & T's repair crew, we are up and running again. When our phone service goes down, things get *really* quiet, especially in the winter months. Several folks, us included, have Starband dishes for internet access. Communication has become a high priority in many our lives, whether it's with our family members, friends or neighbors. We are always glad for the capability to contact our telephone providers in Glennallen or Valdez or each other when there is an emergency situation on our community. Things have certainly changed since the early days when we first came to this area in 1978 when our local communication was CB radio. Our only contact with the "outside world" was via the mail or Amateur Radio. (Rick and I are "hams," in case you couldn't tell!)

WSEN welcomes aboard the following subscribers: Larry and Maureen St.Amand, AK; Pete Mapes, AK; Mike Nolte, NC. Online subscribers: Michael Stemper, NY; Mark Cassell, Aric Morton, Miles Erickson, WA.

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Contributors to this issue: Peggy Guntis, George Cebula, Ned Rozell, Don Welty, Keith Rowland, David LaChapelle, Jeremy Keller, Kaylin Moffitt, Susan Smith and Kenny Smith.

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Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

Jim and Audrey Edwards: Just because it's winter in McCarthy doesn't mean Jim and Audrey take the season off and bury their "to-do" list under the snow (which finally arrived). The Edwards' just don't get bored. I guess that isn't on their list.

They decided to continue their kitchen-upgrade project—out with the scratched, burnt, peeling, old yellow countertops and in with the brand new light blue-gray counters. A bit of re-work on the outlets are the icing on the cake. "They look better," says Jim. I'm sure Audrey is spending more time in her kitchen these cold wintery days. I expect all that extra work, Jim, is well rewarded by the extra goodies that Audrey is turning out these days.

Jim says he is thankful their water well is working fine this year. It seems there has been no water in Swift Creek these past several months. The creek normally flows down the hill behind their hangar, under the runway and into the creek bed that flows in front of their house. It has proved a real treasure in years past. Jim recalls another year when it disappeared. That time it was pre-well days: "Several years ago, we had the problem that no water whatever was coming down the creek here by the house. That was very unusual. It was a nuisance to haul water in 5-gallon buckets from McCarthy and then hand pump it up into the (water storage) tank. Whatever the cycle, it evidently has repeat-

ed itself. I think this is only two times it has been like that for more than a few days in the 33 years I have lived by Swift Creek. Sometimes physical phenomena are quite interesting!"

Dan Elofsen: Rick and I were surprised to see Dan back in the neighborhood. His job with the Alaska Marine Highway ferry system keeps him away from home several months out of the year. But, we can be sure when he has the opportunity, he comes home. When he returned the latter part of January, he managed to do some major remodeling.

Dan said he was in dire need of an insulated floor for his cabin. Instead of working from the bottom of the cabin, he simply built a well-insulated floor, called in the nearby neighbors who assisted him in moving the cabin onto the newly-built floor. He guesses there were about 6 house movers altogether, armed with crow bars and muscles, who turned out in full force and got the job done in one day.

Some folks bungee jump for fun, he said, others, like himself and his crew, move cabins in the middle of winter!

I asked about his folks, and he said their log cabin is being built in Palmer and they hope to have it brought in this upcoming July and placed on their newly-acquired property next door to Dan's. I'm sure this will turn out to be a fine item of interest for our summer edition of *WSEN*!

By the way, Dan, congratulations on passing the exams that

enabled you to upgrade your position with the ferry system!

Jim Kreblin: Jim lives down the road, about 15 miles, from us. His cabin is on the bank of Long Lake, our frequent ice-fishing spot. He doesn't come up this way too often in the winter, but the other day he snowmachined toward McCarthy looking for his dog, Nomad, who was happily visiting locals in our neck of the woods. Nomad especially enjoyed seeing fellow playmate, Sophie. Even though we are in the middle of another cold snap (-42 degree F. our recorded low), the dogs played gleefully while chasing each other between George's place and ours.

Recognizing Nomad we knew we were up for a visit from Jim. Sure enough, he showed up on our doorstep. We had a nice visit, catching up on his winter activities. With all these cold temperatures lately no one, including himself, is venturing too far from home if they don't have to. He reports that things are quiet AND COLD at Long Lake. He chose to come at the warmest part of the day and dressed in his warmest winter clothing. Snowmachines might have hand warmers, which are a great blessing, but the driver is still exposed to the frigid air all around him.

Our conversation quickly came around to this year's ice-fishing derby at Long Lake. Jim keeps hinting at a new category for the derby which includes (of all things) bowling balls and pins. This has my curiosity

piqued for sure. Check further down in *Items* for the derby details.

George Cebula and Sophie:

George and dog Sophie returned from a 3-month road trip to the lower 48 where he spent the holiday season with family and visited a variety of acquaintances. He arrived home on February 14th and is finally unpacked, settled back in and waiting for the rest of winter to run its course. With all these blustery cold temperatures occurring so soon after he returned, he may be wishing he had stayed a bit longer in sunny, warm Tucson. He reports that Jim and Peggy Guntis are doing well. George accompanied Jim on an electrical job and gave him another set of hands for a day. Another couple, Ken and Carly Kritchen, who are still warmly remembered by their McCarthy friends, just moved into their new log home located in Bakers City, Oregon. George makes the Kritchen's new location one of his annual stops.

Since Gene and Edith Coppedge relocated to northern Georgia recently, George and Sophie added Summerville to his itinerary. Although we all will miss their smiling faces at the Silver Lake Campground, George reports that they are settled into their home.

Welcome back, George and Sophie!

Don and Lynn Welty: Since I started writing *Items of Interest*, one thing that stands out the most to me is the fact McCarthy folks just don't seem to suffer from the malady of boredom. I admit that many will say to me, "I'm not doing anything very exciting," but, for the most part,

they don't have time to twiddle their thumbs, even if the winter temperature dip to the minus -40s!

I just got off the phone with Lynn. She and Don are getting a jump start on spring time, realizing the sun is now higher in the sky, and their solar panels are in for some of that good free energy. However, on closer inspection, they decided it was a good time to take out a few standing trees that were blocking the sun's rays to their panels. Lynn said the job (like most jobs out here) is taking more time than anticipated. Not only is the harvesting of the trees providing them firewood for next winter's heat but is clearing the way for another kind of energy — electricity.

Lynn remarks that burning the brush piles help keep her warm while she is outside during these cold temperatures.

Another project the Weltys are working on is an indoor construction job on the crew house for employees of Wrangell Mountain Air. The cold weather has curtailed that job momentarily but they are expecting to return to that soon.

About a week ago Don took David and Kaleb Rowland and Carl Gressel ice-fishing at Long Lake with the results less than desired —3 bites and one fish. However, Don reports that all participants thoroughly enjoyed the snowmachine excursion.

Locals and visitors come and go: As the daylight hours increase, locals and visitors begin making trips in and out for a variety of reasons. Soon it will be spring break and we'll see an even great influx, with some

folks being temporary and others being long-term. The upkeep of the McCarthy Road this winter has been excellent (thanks to DOT and the Chitina crew!) which greatly aids in folks traveling to and fro.

Here is a run down on some of those familiar faces: **Dave and Renee Person** paid a short visit to their new log home during the second week of January. **Jay Williams** and his son **Nick** arrived a few days later. The Williams' family have a cabin near the Persons' place. Both families live in Fairbanks but look forward to their frequent trips to our area. **Michelle Casey** and son **Carl**, who relocated to Valdez about a year ago, make the trip out to their west side property as often as they can. It is always good to see them and wish they could visit more often. They were here the weekend of February 17th. **Trig Trigiano** braved McCarthy's cold snap on February 24th to bring in a load of supplies for his home on the "J" road. He's getting things ready to spend more time in our neighborhood now that he is semi-retired. Although he didn't stay long, he assured us he'll be back. There's no place like his McCarthy home!

Mail days in McCarthy are twice a week —on Wednesdays and Fridays. This time of year locals are returning from outside trips to visit family or take their annual vacation excursions. **Dianne Milliard, Mark Wacht, Christine Johnson, Dave Hollis, Gary Green and Diana, and Kelly, Natalie and Tessa Bay** are such who fit into that category. We welcome everyone back home and trust each one had a great time!

Neil Darish: Rick and I paid Neil a visit the other afternoon at his newly-remodeled home in downtown McCarthy. With all the recent construction work and upgrades to Neil's quarters, we thought we were stepping into a different building. A few more touch-ups and the place will be classified finished (although most dwellings in McCarthy are never "quite" finished). What a beautiful job Neil and his fellow workers have done to-date. He praises the foreman of the crew, Jeremy Keller, with all the handiwork. I would say that Neil is no slouch either when it comes to decorating and making a place feel like home. He gave us the grand tour over coffee and brownies.

This last Wednesday, February 28th, Neil left on a trip to the big city of Anchorage where he plans on being on hand for the start of the Iditarod 2007. McCarthy Lodge, which Neil is an owner, is a major sponsor of Jeremy Keller and dog team, first-time participants of the famous race. I'm sure Neil and other familiar faces from the McCarthy/Kennicott area will be present to cheer Jeremy and his dogs out of the starting line and well on their way to the finish. We'll look forward to a first-hand report when you return, Neil!

The Rowland family: Earlier in *Items* I mentioned the word "boredom." It is a word that is rarely used by McCarthyites, and I dare to say, in the Rowland household. If Laurie were to use that word in her homeschool spelling class, her students, Kaleb, David, Daniel, Hannah and Jubal, would, most likely, have to ask her, "What does that word mean?"

School work is always on the agenda for the majority of the week, but accompanying dad Keith on the family's trapline is another major priority. That already makes for an action-packed week.

On the "to-do" list these days is the planning of the family's spring-break when family and friends arrive in town to "play in the snow." Forget spelling or schoolwork —period —during mid-March this year. It is time to fine tune the snowmachines and make sure skis and boots are all accounted for. The Rowland young folks are eagerly awaiting their cousins' arrival, more players and more fun in the snow is soon to be had by all.

Thank you, DOT and others! Many thanks go to the DOT workers in the Chitina station for all their dedication to keeping the McCarthy Road and the airstrip safe for winter use this year. They always have a challenge especially when it comes to the continual winter road glaciers.

Thanks also go to John Adams and Keith Rowland who came to the rescue of our local westside roads and driveways that are not on DOT's list of "to-do's."

A big, heartfelt THANK YOU from local residents and visitors for a superb job done by all the operators!

Long Lake Ice-Fishing Derby: Well, it's that time of year again, says Jim Kreblin, our Long Lake ice-fishing Grand Marshal. Dig out your fishing rods, fellow fisherfolk, and sharpen up those hooks and lures. Jim announces this year's derby — our third annual —to take place on Saturday, March 24th. Just in

time for spring break. No particular starting time, says Jim, but most local participants usually begin arriving between 9 and 10 am. (Say, Jim, could you have Nomad start digging the holes earlier this year?)

Prizes will be given for the largest fish caught in the boys and girls and adult age groups. A hot lunch of homemade chili and roasted hot dogs will be served "on the ice." Jim realizes the eager fishermen and women don't like to wander far from their favorite fishing hole!

Those who aren't too keen on ice-fishing can participate in a new game —ice bowling. Jim has already acquired 30 bowling pins and 6 light-weight bowling balls for those who want to try their hand at this interesting (this is always a good descriptive word to use for something I'm not quite familiar with!) and unique winter game.

For further information, you may call Jim Kreblin at 554-4434.

Chitina Ice-Fishing Derby: Come out and join the family fun at Chitina's fourth annual ice-fishing derby to be held on April 7th from 11 am to 4 pm. There is no entry fee and holes will be provided. Limited lodging is also available.

The person catching the largest fish will be granted the Grand Prize of approximate \$300 value. A lot of door prizes will be given as well. Immediately following the derby will be a free pig roast held at Uncle Tom's Tavern who is this year's sponsor of the event.

For further information, you may contact Beth at 823-2252 or 823-2253.

There was always the mountains: the passing of Edward LaChapelle

BY DAVID LACHAPPELLE

Editor's note: The following story, written by Ed's son, David, is a condensed version used by permission. Thank you, David, for sharing your story with us.

On the morning of February first, the eve of a full moon in the heavens, Ed LaChapelle went powder skiing at Monarch Pass, Colorado. On this day he was to ski his way into another world. At around noon, with the sun high in the sky, his heart began to falter. He left this plane of existence by mid-afternoon.

To understand why my father would leave us on a perfect powder day on a Monarch's slopes we need to go back to his childhood. His childhood and his destiny were arranged around "The Mountain." Ed's early days were spent at the foot of Mount Rainier, near Seattle. He played, hunted, hiked and explored the landscape that was dominated by the volcano. His love of mountains began within the embrace of "Tahoma" (The Mother of all Waters). He would need the strength of mother mountain and his own mother as he would face a most difficult test.

My father remembered very clearly reaching for a salt shaker at the dinner table as a young child, and missing the object. He knew something was seriously wrong. Ed had contracted polio. He quite rapidly lost motor control of significant portions of his body. His mother took him to a family physician in Tacoma to seek help. This practitioner would altar the potential path of my father's life greatly. In his official capacity, the doctor explained that there was not much that could be done except to alleviate the symptoms and let the disease run its course. But as my Grandmother was leaving he took her aside and said that he had a theory about the disease which might help her son.

His theory was that if she could keep Ed immobile for a period of time then the damaged nerve tissue would grow back and he might regain more function. My grandmother put her faith in the doctor's knowing. She kept her five-year-old son immobile for a month, covering his legs with a cardboard box and reading stories to him to keep his attention focused on something other than his body. My father drank the waters of Tahoma, was sheltered in the fierce protection of his mother's faith and drew on his own strength as the doctor's hunch was shown to be true. Slowly, steadily, my father's leg strength did begin to return. He was to walk with a limp his whole childhood. In high school, determined to change his limp, my father joined the high school track team. He never once placed in any events, but by the end of the year he no longer had the limp.

With the force of his determination my father had honed his body so that it would serve him in his life's passion. On his twenty first birthday he climbed Mt. St. Helens, Mt. Adams and Mt. Hood in three consecutive days. All three of these mountains afforded him an excellent view of Tahoma, the anchor of his childhood.

I came across a letter from Ed's mother after she passed away. In it she was answering a request from Ed, now a middle-age man, to move back from Hawaii to the mainland so he could be closer to her. She said to him, "Because I gave you the first twenty years of your life, you will understand if I take the last twenty for myself."

It was her dedication to him, massaging him often, watching over him, rubbing oils into his legs and tending him that helped give him the gift of his mountain legacy and the nurturing of his capacity.

I remember speaking with an acquaintance of my father's in Alaska a few years ago about his amazing stamina in the mountains. This man was marveling at my father's ability, at 75, to leave much younger men behind as they made their way up a nearby mountainside. The man said, "He simply set a pace, slow and measured, which he never altered. In the end we were left behind by the steady of strength of his maturity."

The only remnant of polio for my father would be an occasional intense leg cramp that usually would happen at night when he was sleeping. I remember, as a child, hearing him writhe in pain from the intensity of these cramps. I asked him about his cramps only a few days before he skied into eternity. He said that he hadn't had one in a while, and that even though he had been trying all his life, he couldn't figure why the cramps happened when they did. The scientist in him had still been trying to unravel this mystery.

Some mysteries we take with us when we leave. His cramps were the shadow of his astonishing physical ability, an ability which enabled him to climb mountains, ski powder, launch glacier expeditions in Greenland, Alaska and Washington State and to live self-sufficient in the Alaskan bush until his eightieth year.

My father had a mountain "conversion" while he was in his late teens. At this time he was working at the Paradise Lodge on the side of Mount Rainier as a bell hop. In a letter to my mother which I found for the first time this week after both of their passings, he described his experience of the mountain:

"...One day 15 years ago when—oh, this itself is a miracle—I looked out from the porch of the employees dorm at Paradise the second day I had come up there to work for the

(continued on page 13)

White sheep paradise

1958 — Cordova hunters in the Wrangells

(continued from Cover)

We left Cordova on a Cordova Airline DC-3 for May Creek a week before the season began. In those days May Creek and Chisana were the only airports east of the Copper River capable of accommodating a large aircraft. Cordova Air would run hunting specials with the big plane back then, so the DC-3 was full of sheep hunters and an entire season's hunting supplies for the horseback-guiding operations at Chisana. May Creek was an intermediate stop on the way.

Howard Knutson flew us into base camp after we got off in May Creek. Just before we took off for base camp, two Cordova friends, Harley King and Ed Bilderback stopped by in Harley's Super Cub. They had just stayed overnight in McCarthy with Cal and Viola Aiken. We asked them to join us. A few days later they did.

Neither Harley nor Ed knew anything about sheep hunting either. Ed was a fisherman as well as a big game guide on the coast. Ed was Fred Bear's Kodiak brown bear guide. Bear is the famous name in the archery hunting business. Harley guided for Ed. The "Valiant Maid" was the name of Ed's boat. One of the crewmen on the "Maid" also joined us for the hunt, making a total of seven in our party.

Gill lived for the outdoors and hunting. All he ate was wild game. Deer, goat, sheep, ducks, geese and salmon. Later, the moose herd around Cordova got harvestable so he added that to his diet. Since Gill



Photo courtesy the author

Cordova Airline bush pilot, Howard Knutson, upon returning some of his hunters and their trophies to May Creek.

had hunted the Chitina River for so long he had it down to a science. Gill's sheep paradise was five miles west of Canyon Creek on MacColl Ridge. We expected to have to cross the Chitina River on an inflatable raft that Gill brought, as there was no place to land close to shore on the north side. However, the chan-

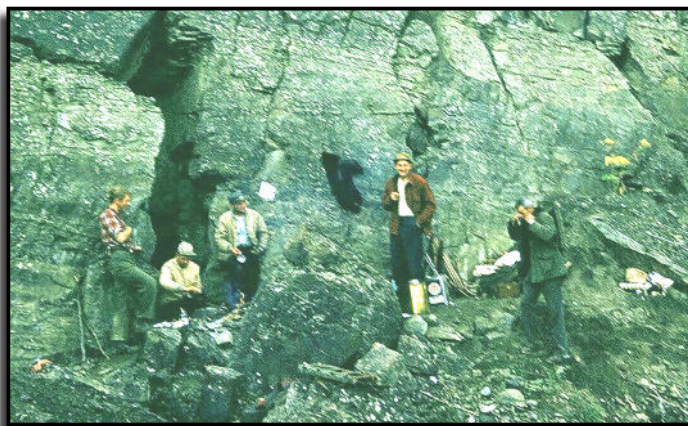


Photo courtesy the author

Top Camp—Gill is in the doorway of his "cave". The gear was stored inside but the hunters slept outdoors.

nel changed that year and we were able to land near the north bank and did not have to cross the river.

Arriving a week early allowed us plenty of time to establish a base camp and a few days later, a top

camp. There was a small cave up high on the mountains that Gill had found years before, so that is where we headquartered. In those days, the white sheep or "Ovis dalli" rams looked like maggots spread across the green rolling hills and steep cliffs north of the Chitina River. Gill had us take a sheep the second day, to be used as camp meat for the next week. Even in those days that undertaking wasn't entirely in accordance with territorial game regulations.

We ate that sheep almost in its entirety. Gill had brought all the ingredients for stew. So we had sheep stew all the time, made in a 5-gallon gas can with the top cut out. During the day we were covering so much country I was always starved. I will never forget that sheep stew which made the best meal I have ever tasted. (I never had sheep meat again with which to

make another stew, with one exception. A few years ago, our good friend and guide at McCarthy, Don Welty, gave me some fresh sheep meat. My wife Donna was in with me at the time and had heard me rave over the years about Gill's stew. She made a stew that evening out of Welty's sheep. All I can say about that is, wow, it put me back on the slopes of the Chitina again, reliving the 1958 hunt.)

After the season opened, officially, we all got a ram. Gill was a hunter who salvaged almost everything from the hunt. Capes, meat, horns, you name it. Gill even made lamps, for gifts, out of hooves. So he took all of that

(Continued on page 25)

Hidden Lake dumps mid-winter

BY KEITH ROWLAND

Hidden Lake surprised our local community by draining the week of Jan 21. On Wednesday, Jan. 24, I noticed clear water running over the ice on the Kennicott River near the service bridge. Just some overflow, I thought. The temperature that morning was only 7 degrees F, and it had not been above freezing all month. Strangely, the water increased in volume throughout the day. By Thursday morning, the Kennicott River was flowing “bank-to-bank”—about equal to normal summer high flow—with muddy brown water.

There was much speculation buzzing around our community about what could possibly be happening, but most locals had a pretty good hunch it was Hidden Lake draining. Local pilot, Don Welty, confirmed this on Saturday. After flying over the area, he said that the lake had completely drained, and it appeared the lake had been close to its normal ‘full’ level before the drainage as evidenced by shore ice left behind.

The Kennicott River appeared to peak sometime Friday the 26th after an approximately 5-foot rise in water level. Two and a half weeks later, the water had subsided to normal levels.

During this time, all snowmachine traffic had to cross the footbridge or service bridge—and you should see the sparks fly from those carbide ski skegs zinging across the open grating of the footbridge!

Long-time McCarthy resident, Jim Edwards, says in his 50+ years in the valley, Hidden Lake has never drained during the winter.

Normally, the lake starts filling in spring-time and drains sometime in July or August, flooding the already swollen Kennicott River. It appears that the sub-glacial drainage channels must have closed off early last fall, allowing Hidden Lake to capture our tremendous fall flood waters, which filled the lake. Since Hidden Lake is in a remote area, no one noticed it filling.



Photo courtesy Don Welty

Just two days earlier, the Kennicott River was completely frozen over and snowmachines were crossing the ice.



Photo courtesy Don Welty

View from the air looking upstream. Residents were shocked by the sudden event in late January.

From our house overlooking the Kennicott River, we are serenaded all summer long by the distant roar of the river as it rushes toward the Nizina over huge boulders. Then, as winter cold shrivels the river to the size of a large, clear creek and the stream is covered by ice and snow, the roar subsides. For the next five cold, dark months, the valley is silent except for the hooting of owls, the howling of coyotes, and the buzzing whine of Don Welty’s chainsaw. As the Hidden Lake flood waters rushed past our bluff this winter, the most noticeable thing was the return of the river’s roar, seeming even louder in the cold, still winter air.

I was interested to learn that a glacier-dammed lake up Skilak Glacier (upper Kenai River) drained the same day, also never before having drained in the winter.

Record budget increases proposed for Alaska park units in 2008

The President's \$2.4 billion National Park Service budget for Fiscal Year 2008 calls for the largest increase in park operations' funding ever proposed and leveraged public-private investments that could generate as much as \$3 billion to help the parks prepare for their 100th birthday in 2016. It is the largest increase ever for park operations, that category of the budget that pays employee salaries, utilities – the money it takes to keep parks open for visitors. This increase in operations' (\$100 million identified for the National Park Centennial Initiative) funding means 3,000 new seasonal employees, or what the public sees as Park Rangers: 1,000 for interpretation, 1,000 for maintenance and 1,000 for resource protection. The FY2008 budget proposal is the first financial infusion for the President's Initiative to ready America's parks for the 2016 Centennial of the National Park Service.

National park units in Alaska would see significant visitor service and maintenance improvements under the fiscal year 2008 budget proposed by President Bush last month.

The President's budget proposes more than \$6 million in increases for Alaska parks, primarily focused on visitor services, resource protection and maintenance. About one-third the funds, or \$2.03 million, are proposed for hiring seasonal staff. In Alaska parks, a total of 123 seasonals, or about a 25% increase, would be distributed among parks and the Public Lands Information Centers in Fairbanks and Anchorage. Nationally, the budget proposes \$40.6 million for hiring 3,000 seasonals.

Additionally, the FY-2008 budget includes about \$1.8 million in increases to parks for the restoration of permanent and other staff which

has been lost over the past several years to budget erosion, as well as providing operating funds for fuel, utilities, vehicles and other support costs. More than \$1 million is proposed to cover increases in fixed operating costs such as salaries, building rents and utilities. Also proposed is a regional increase of about \$1 million to a program within the NPS which funds one-time and recurring maintenance projects in parks.

"This proposal treats Alaska very well, and we're pleased that this level of support is offered in the President's budget," said NPS Alaska Regional Director Marcia Blaszak. "These proposals recognize the large mission of resource protection and providing for increasing numbers of visitors to the parks."

The increases bring the proposed 2008 budget for national parks in Alaska to almost \$60 million, including operation of the regional office in Anchorage and other non-park programs. Nationwide, the National Park Service budget for 2008 is proposed to be a record \$2.4 billion, a \$230 million increase in park operations' funding over the 2007 budget request.

The proposed FY-2008 funding increases include:

Sitka National Historical Park, \$168,000 + \$55,000 seasonal

Funding would provide seasonal staff to restore interpretive visitor services at the Russian Bishop's House, restore adequate maintenance of visitor use areas, increase resource management capabilities, and increase health and safety protection. Since 2002, budget erosion and rising fixed costs have resulted in the lapsing of four of 10 seasonal interpretive positions, one of two seasonal maintenance positions, and one of three permanent maintenance staff. Fewer building tours, longer

emergency response times, and reduced maintenance have resulted.

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, \$137,000 + \$152,000 seasonal

The new funding will sustain the park's field operations at the Silver Salmon Creek Ranger Station and aircraft operating support to back-country ranger stations, and add seasonal rangers. Rising fuel and utility costs have significantly affected the park's ability to maintain remote operations and provide support to volunteers who frequently staff ranger stations.

Denali National Park and Preserve, \$746,000 + \$380,000 seasonal

Funding would restore basic maintenance support for core visitor services and information facilities within the park entrance area and along the road, and allow the park to meet legal requirements for its water system. Since 2002, the park has lost six seasonal positions and support funding in its maintenance operation; and its water system has been found by the Public Health Service to be out of compliance because of inadequate emergency staffing. Proposed funding would also allow the park to rebuild its safety program, restore key maintenance positions, and hire staff to fill critical law enforcement, visitor service and emergency response capacity.

Western Arctic National Parklands, \$297,000 + \$42,000 seasonals (4 parks)

Funding is proposed to provide maintenance and visitor services, and utility and fuel costs for the new Western Arctic National Parklands visitor and cultural center which will opening in Kotzebue in 2008. The facility will house a visitor center, maintenance facility, and offices. The 11,110 square foot visitor and

cultural center is a partnership with the NANA Regional Native Corporation. The funding will also pay a portion of a building lease in Nome, and add seasonal employees.

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, \$110,000 + \$326,000 seasonals

Funding is proposed to restore a supervisory park ranger position for interpretive operations at the 3.3 million-acre park, and add seasonal interpretation and maintenance staff. In the past decade, visitation has increased by 42 percent, due in part to increased vessel traffic in the park. Much of the park's interpretive

programming and visitor contacts are made on-board cruise ships which carry more than 350,000 people annually. Park interpreters spend 10-12 hour days on-board each ship visiting the park.

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, \$339,000 +\$40,000 seasonal

Funding is proposed to improve the park's radio dispatch capacity and add a margin of safety, training and support for backcountry ranger and aircraft patrols. The request would also allow the park to cover new, higher lease costs for an office building in Fairbanks. The fa-

cility, which opened in 2006, brought together park staff from Gates of the Arctic and Yukon Charley River National Preserve, along with regional science and fire programs and various Fairbanks-based employees from other NPS parks and programs.

Other proposed increases include seasonal funding at Wrangell-St. Elias (\$299,000); Katmai (\$302,000); Kenai Fjords (\$131,000); Klondike Gold Rush (\$182,000); Yukon-Charley Rivers (\$24,000); and the Anchorage and Fairbanks Alaska Public Lands Information Centers (\$98,000).

Proposed NPS regulation changes troubling

By SUSAN SMITH

Several regulation changes have been proposed by the National Park Service (NPS) for NPS units in Alaska to update provisions governing subsistence use of timber, wildlife viewing distances, solid waste disposal, off-road vehicle use, and other activities. The agency regularly reviews each park's compendium for the purpose of moving rules from an individual park's compendium into special regulations within 36CFR13 (Title 36 - Parks, Forests, and Public Property; Chapter 1 - National Park Service; Part 13 - NPS Units in Alaska).

Unfortunately, they were published December 27, 2006, too late to be addressed in the last issue of WSEN, and the 60-day comment period ended February 26, 2007, before this issue could be distributed. Residents of the Wrangells (ROW) sent out an Alert to their membership earlier in the month to bring the proposed changes to everyone's attention. ROW has also written a comment letter to NPS regarding the proposal, available soon online at <http://www.rowonline.org>.

A complete listing of the proposed rule changes may be downloaded at www.regulations.gov. Enter the search parameters: All Documents, National Park Service, Proposed Rules, Alaska (Keyword), Submit, then click on the View desired for Docket ID# NPS-2006-0388. A hard copy may be acquired by contacting NPS at the address below.

The NPS claims that these new proposals are "...a continuation of the rulemaking process begun in 1980 to implement various provisions required by ANILCA... While the legal and policy issues associated with some parts of ANILCA may have been considered novel when adopted, they have long since lost their novelty. The continuing implementation of ANILCA has become routine..." This constant process used by NPS to subtly change the meaning of the ANILCA statute by proposing frequent regulation changes is alarming.

Definitions - 36 CFR 13.1

The very first proposed change is troubling to me. NPS seeks to delete the definition of the term "adequate and feasible access" from the Part 13 regulations. They claim that the term is not even used in

Part 13 and has been "superceded" by the similar definition now found at 43 CFR 36.10(a)(1), and that the deletion is "...a non-substantive administrative correction without regulatory effect."

I beg to differ. Residents of the Wrangells have pointed out the discrepancy between the two definitions to NPS several times in the past. The definition for adequate and feasible access proposed for deletion reads "...a reasonable method and route of pedestrian or vehicular transportation which is economically practicable for achieving the use or development desired by the applicant on his/her non-federal land occupancy interest, but does not necessarily mean the least costly alternative."

The definition which would remain reads "...a route and method of access that is shown to be reasonably necessary and reasonably practicable but not necessarily the least costly alternative for achieving the use and development by the applicant..."

Note that the remaining definition not only omits the reference to pedestrian and vehicular transportation, but states that the route must be shown to be reasonably neces-

sary. These are two very important shifts in thinking about the access concept which do indeed have substantive administrative and regulatory effects. Also, “economically practicable” was changed to “reasonably practicable” and the reference to the applicant’s “desired” use and development was deleted.

Both definitions have existed in the regulations for twenty years. Unfortunately, when NPS regulations for Alaskan parks were developed in 1986, the altered definition went on the books. They now wish to delete any reference to the original ANILCA definition.

Subsistence Use of Timber and Plant Materials - 36 CFR 13.485

The existing regulations regarding timber are fairly clear. Paragraph (a) in this section states that live standing timber with a diameter of three inches or less at ground height may be cut without a permit. For live standing timber greater than three inches, cutting may be allowed “...in accordance with the specifications of a permit...” Paragraph (b) goes on to say “... the non-commercial gathering of dead or downed timber for firewood shall be allowed without a permit in park areas where subsistence uses are allowed.”

This important guarantee in paragraph (b) is not a section proposed for change. However, NPS proposes to delete the reference to “live” timber in paragraph (a) (1) to read

“For standing timber of diameter greater than three inches at ground height, the Superintendent may permit cutting in accordance with the specifications of a permit.” This omission of the word “live” implies that a permit may be required

for dead and live timber, in opposition to paragraph (b).

NPS refers to regulation 36 CFR 13.35(a), passed in December of 2004, which states, “The Superintendent may authorize with or without conditions the collection of dead standing wood in all or a portion of a park area. Collecting dead or downed wood in violation of terms and conditions is prohibited.” In combination, these regulations present a mixed message and would imply that rural residents should now have permits to cut dead wood.

This section also contains a provision for temporary closures of portions of a park to subsistence uses of a particular plant population. Currently, the Superintendent may only make a closure “...if necessary for reasons of public safety, administration, or to assure the continued viability of such population.” The new proposal would add additional conditions to authorize closures for “...resource protection, protection of historic or scientific values, conservation of endangered or threatened species, or (violating) the purposes for which the park area was established.”

Wildlife Distances and Special Restrictions

Bear viewing distances of 50 and 300 yards are proposed for Alagnak Wild River and Denali Park, respectively, and provisions were made for the viewing or photography of, or fishing near most other mammals in those areas. Special regulations in several other individual parks would restrict camping, bicycling, pets, off-road vehicle use, firearms, commercial transport of passengers by motor vehicle, and snowmachine use.

Solid Waste Disposal

NPS offers to relax certain restrictions with respect to solid

waste disposal in several Alaskan parks. Here in Wrangell - St. Elias, “Transfer stations will be allowed without a permit, on non-federal land within the park area, if it is determined that it will not degrade resources. These sites may accept non-NPS solid waste generated within the boundaries of the park area.” Sites may also be located within one mile of existing facilities; current regulations maintain a one-mile buffer and would only allow collection of NPS-generated waste. NPS defines a transfer station as “...a public use facility for the deposit and temporary storage of solid waste, excluding a facility for the storage of a regulated hazardous waste.”

Comments

Public comment was only received by the agency until February 26, 2007. If you were unaware of these proposals, are concerned about their adoption into regulation, and would like to request an extension of the comment deadline, we encourage you to write to NPS and voice your concerns. Any comment related to this proposal must include the agency name (NPS) and Regulatory Information Number (1024-AD 38). Comments may be submitted:

1. Email
akro_regulations@nps.gov
2. Mail
NPS Regional Director Marci Blaszak
Alaska Regional Office
240 West 5th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501
3. Fax
(907) 644-3805

Please be advised that any comment, and your identifying information, will become a matter of public record.

“Independence is the recognition of the fact that yours is the responsibility of judgment and nothing can help you escape it—that no substitute can do your thinking, as no pinch-hitter can live your life.” —Ayn Rand

Hello Team McCarthy!

BY JEREMY KELLER

Editor's Note: The following is a letter from Jeremy to all those interested in his progress as he works towards the starting line for Iditarod 35 and beyond! The Kellers write: "We are so proud of the dogs, they have come a long way. And they could not have done it without all the support from "Team McCarthy" which is anyone who has given support in spirit, encouragement and of course in sponsorship. It has been overwhelming and we are so grateful. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

Jeremy, his wife Allie and son Bjorn, are McCarthy residents and well-known in our town. This letter was received at the WSEN office on the morning of February 23rd.

Team McCarthy wishes Jeremy a successful finish!

Eight days and counting... thought I'd deliver a brief update on the season so that everyone has the same lens through which to view this madness called IDITAROD.

The old adage could not be more accurate. Had I known then what I know now, I certainly would never have begun. I have been developing sled dogs for sixteen years in varying

capacities and in particular my current small core of dogs since I discovered McCarthy. In this sense, I am very experienced, and am also good at what I do. However, training young hearts and minds, and driving them long distances on limited rest over days are two very different endeavors. While the former certainly prepared us well, there were still some HARD lessons to learn in practice.

As many of you know, I have a rather rigid mind-set regarding my team, best illustrated by our kennel name, "Less is More Kennel." I began the season with 12 dogs, 8 core dogs and 4 I purchased over the past year. Marathon, one of my core dogs, was injured at a critical juncture in the training regime and had to be dropped for the season. I have since added 2 more dogs. Because of our intentionally marginal dog numbers, each dog is critical. Excessive care has been taken to ensure that each animal continues to have fun and remain in good health. My goal has been for this team to increasingly enjoy this adventure with every step as they become stronger, faster, and more confident. I am happy to report that we finished the Yukon Quest 300 @ 11:35 p.m. Alaska standard time (12:35 a.m. in the Yukon), Feb 14th with our best run of the year to qualify in the 12th hour for Iditarod 35! I

won't know until the start, but I believe that we will begin the race with all thirteen dogs. I make note of this because conventional wisdom says it is not possible to put 1500 miles on a small dog team in four months, including a 200 mile camping trip, and 700 racing miles and still field a team. I would like to make it clear to everyone that it was a sound training strategy, Luck and Grace, and YOUR SUPPORT that has gotten this band of walking wounded to the starting line.

This adventure denied me the complete control I normally require (!) some time ago and I can point to numerous contributions from Team McCarthy and Team Knik that have been critical to our survival. I have had some high high's and low low's and quite honestly on a couple of occasions the thought of disappointing anyone or everyone is all that kept me marching. So, THANK YOU! Eight days to go and lots of fun details left! Allie and I can be reached @ 440-4534/440-7924 beginning Monday afternoon and would love help with signage for truck. Also, I will be running the dogs every day in town, pulling a 2nd sled and would love x-tra hands/fans around. We look forward to seeing all of you on 4th Ave, even if only in spirit!

Online-only subscriptions available

BY RICK KENYON

Wrangell St. Elias News subscribers now have a choice of delivery methods. We have been constantly updating our online issues, and now can offer a complete online version which looks just like the print version. It is posted in PDF format, which can be read with the free Adobe Reader. (Most browsers already have the reader built-in.) You can

download the file to your computer for later viewing, and you can even print out a few pages or the complete issue.

We also post an html version which includes 6 or 7 of the main stories of that issue. It loads much faster than the PDF version for those of you with a dial-up connection.

Regular subscribers can access the online version also. If you are

not currently getting a "key" to the full version each month by email, just drop us a line at WSEN@starband.net and we will add you to the mailing list for each issue.

If you prefer to get the WSEN online only, you can save a few bucks. Online only subscriptions are only \$11 per year instead of \$14 for the print version. Our new renewal notices will offer this option.

(LaChapelle, continued from page 6)

first time, and saw the storm clouds lift away and reveal evening sunlight on Mt. Rainier... I can still remember to this day as clear and simple as the note of a bell this was the single biggest turning point in my life, when in a single blinding moment I knew what I must do and where I must live with my life."

The conviction of my father's mountain-born insight lasted him until the final morning of his life. His contributions to snow and avalanche science, his practical ability to translate ideas into usable actions, his organization of glacier projects and the contribution he made to glaciology in general, the mentoring of a whole generation of avalanche experts, the numerous rescues he oversaw, the books he wrote and the spirit of inquiry which was so alive in him all pivot around that moment on the flanks of Mount Rainier. My father's destiny carried him surely through the great war and the incredible growth of the ski industry in the last sixty years.

This conviction was honed by the bodily condition he had overcome. My father's capacity for hard work, discipline, organization and thoroughness was deep. Whatever he turned his attention towards he would master. He sewed his own backpack, building the aluminum frame himself. He made his own sleeping bag, created a whole pantheon of instruments for his different experiments, created a unique snow crystal photo lab and mastered calligraphy, photography, woodworking and financial management. After he "retired" from teaching and working for others, he created, with his partner Margaret Hunt, a self sufficient Alaskan home. For years I have been proud to say that my father is the only one of my extended circle who lives completely off the grid.

Ed's sister, my Aunt Lou, remembers my father coming down from his room when he was a teen announcing that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. My father heard the news on his own shortwave radio. His family was the first in the neighborhood to know that the world, as they knew it, had just changed forever.

Ed loved electronics. His passion for the discipline carried him to the top of his naval radio school. As a teenager, he graduated first in his class ahead of over two hundred men of all ages and experience. He joined the Pacific Fleet right at the close of World War II. (My father said that one of the most impressive sights of his life was seeing the American naval power arrayed in Tokyo Bay for the signing of the armistice.) His skill in electronics served him well in developing the various instruments for his science. It also helped launch the first portable avalanche beacon, (now a main necessity of back-country skiers world-wide).

Yesterday, as I poured through the various items he brought on his last ski journey I found his shortwave radio. The current version is a small, handheld device that is dwarfed by the radios I remember from my childhood. But the fact that it was included in his orderly set of clothes and tools for his fateful road trip testifies to the deep love he had of listening to the echoes of humanity across the electromagnetic spectrum.

Ed also loved good practical jokes. He tempered the rigor of his science and the discipline of his work with various schemes and mischief events. As a teenager he and a partner developed something called "power pills" which were small bombs made of gelatin capsules and bb's mixed with a propriety blend of now illegal explosive substance. He took great delight in setting these incendiary devices off in a variety of locations. His pranks with the power pills earned him a visit from the Tacoma police.

While directing the Blue Glacier project, a multi-year research station on Mount Olympus in Washington state, he decided to try his hand at a bit more dramatic explosive activity. You probably have heard of or seen young boys putting a fire cracker under a tin can and using the explosion to send the can as a rocket into space. My father went them one step better. He put a stick of dynamite under a used 55-gallon fuel barrel on the glacier to see if he could send it into space. He should have done his calcu-

lations a bit better, because instead of sending the drum into the atmosphere the explosion shredded the steel sending shrapnel flying everywhere. It was a miracle that no one was hurt.

I was at the receiving end of one of his pranks while I was with him on the glacier. I must have been nine or ten and was reading the "Nearing" books by C.S.Lewis. The books were populated by dragons and the such and I was enjoying the fantasy of imagining such creatures in a distant place and land.

My father decided to bring them closer to home.

He had one of the men who worked for him on the project dress up in a parachute camouflage with a cardboard dragon's head and hide in the small rock crevice above the research station. The man also carried a fire extinguisher.

I was led up the crevice on some pretext I do not remember. As I climbed down into the crevice I heard a bellow, saw rolling carbon dioxide smoke clouds coming towards me, and the dim shape of a dragon behind. I was literally ejected from that crevice by the adrenaline that ran through me.

I have my father's skis, boots and poles now. Several days ago I put them on and skied a few runs in his honor. It was not powder, but the memory of powder lives in his skis and in my legs. The steady strength of my father's being carried me down the slopes. I can no longer turn to him for help with my Alaskan cabin, or any of the other myriad ways he expressed his love for me in the small details he tended, but I can ski again in the high mountains marveling that this man gave me, and so many others, a way of the mountain.

Thank you, my dear father, for the integrity of your life.

Your turns are true now, no longer limited by an aging body. The fall line is clean and the crystals are eternal that slip under your skis as you descend the mountains of light that live within us all.

Ed LaChapelle —1926-2007

McCarthy resident and renowned avalanche pioneer, Ed LaChapelle, 80, passed away on Thursday, February 1st, 2007, in Salida, CO, after a morning of skiing powder at Monarch Pass. According to long-time partner Meg Hunt, the elevation and exertion finally got to his aging heart.

Ed was born on May 31, 1926, in Tacoma, Washington, where he was raised.

After two years in the U. S. Navy, he entered the University of Puget Sound, graduating in 1949 in physics and mathematics. As a student, he learned to ski and make climbing trips to the Canadian Rockies. His career as a snow scientist, began at the Swiss Federal Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research as a guest worker in the winter of 1950-1951. He served as a U.S. Forest Service snow ranger at Alta, Utah, from 1952 to 1972, his work varying according to the seasons. In winter he worked for

the Forest Service, becoming head of the Avalanche Center, and in the summer, he did glacier research in places such as Greenland and Alaska.

While in Alta, Ed became a part of the pioneering crew of Forest Service snow rangers who laid the basic groundwork for avalanche control programs at ski areas and for highway departments. As well, he authored *The ABCs of Avalanche Safety*, a pocket-size, how-to manual that has for decades been a mandatory text for winter backcountry travelers.

The "Avalanche Hunters," as the Alta snow rangers were dubbed, refined the use of explosives for avalanche control work which included a variety of exciting field experiments.

Ed was also involved in the development of the avalanche transeiver—a radio transmitter used as a locator for buried avalanche victims—now regarded as an essential piece of equipment for all ski mountaineers.

In 1967, he was appointed to the faculty of the University of Washing-

ton, retiring in 1982 as Professor Emeritus of Geophysics and Atmospheric Sciences. Between 1973 and 1977, Ed was also involved in avalanche studies at the Institute for Arctic and Alpine Research of the University of Colorado at Boulder, spending winters at Silverton in the San Juan mountains.

In his later years, Ed, with Meg at his side, retired to McCarthy where they purchased a one-room log cabin. Over time they developed a self-sufficient home, "off the grid." Ed became deeply involved in community affairs and well-known among residents and even visitors to the area. He leaves a great void in the small town of McCarthy which he called home.

Ed's death came just over a week after that of his former wife, Dolores LaChapelle, who died of a stroke in Durango, Colorado. He is survived by one son, David LaChapelle, and a sister, MLou Doyle.

A memorial service is planned for May 31st in McCarthy. The details are yet to be decided.

Lance Gilpatrick —1954 - 2007

Lance Michael Gilpatrick, 53, of Valdez passed away Tuesday, February 6, 2007.

He was born in Framingham, Massachusetts, on February 1st 1954, to Milo and Harriet (East) Gilpatrick. Lance is survived by his wife, Sue, daughter Ann and son, Ian, all of Valdez. He is also survived by his mother, Harriet Ryan of Philipsburg, Montana; brother John Ryan of Missoula; sister Jennifer Ryan of Stevensville; and sister Janna McMillan of Stamford, Nebraska.

Lance will be remembered by his family and friends as a doer, a self-made man—someone you could always count on—one who enjoyed making others laugh and smile with his quick wit and sense of humor.

In 1982, he moved to Alaska to chase his dream of a better life. That dream began when he met and married shortly thereafter his wife, Sue.

Lance worked as a hard-rock miner in Palmer at Hatcher Pass. He became interested in oil spill recovery, and true to his nature, became one of the first experts in a field and at a time when there were no experts. His skills were soon tapped by Alyeska, when, in 1989, the Exxon Valdez ran aground. Lance headed up part of the recovery efforts and assisted in laying groundwork for new response protocols.

In 1991, he and his family set up shop as Gilpatrick's Greenhouse, a successful commercial venture, which still brings beautiful color every summer to the Valdez area and outlying communities in the Copper River Basin.

With two successful careers under his belt, and keeping with his entrepreneurial spirit, Lance decided to build The Gilpatrick's Hotel Chitina in an old copper mining/railroad town similar to the one in Montana where he grew up. The hotel successfully opened for business in May 2006. According to Trevor Fishlock, a recent British visitor to Chitina, Lance was smitten the moment he saw it: "From my boyhood in Montana I dreamed of running a frontier hotel." Seeing the Old West facade of the Hotel Chitina, he knew he had to buy and restore it.

His spirit will live on in the many lives he has touched throughout the years. Lance, we will miss you. You are light and inspiration for us all.

Memorial services were held in Philipsburg on Saturday, February 10th and in Chitina on February 18th.

The world (way) around us

BY DON WELTY

Winter in interior Alaska can be challenging to deal with. Cold temperatures, long nights with limited daylight hours, and increased chores are enough to chase most of our residents off to warmer climates.

In spite of challenges, many of us enjoy the winter season with its slower pace, providing more time to nurture relationships with family, friends and our Creator.

The long, dark nights give an opportunity to view the glory of the heavens like no other place I've been. Free from artificial light interference and air pollutants, the winter sky comes alive with a serenade of lights. The view truly declares the glory of God. Jeremiah 10:12 says, "He [God] has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, and has stretched out the heavens at His discretion." Let's take a look at the awesomeness of His "discretion."

Units of distance measurement used on earth are inadequate outside our solar system, leading astronomers to come up with a large-scale distance measurement, the "light year." Although it sounds like a measurement of time, it actually represents the distance light travels over the course of 365 days. A light year is approximately 6 trillion miles, and, traveling at the speed of light, puts you at 186,000 miles per second. At this speed you could circumnavigate the earth in less than one second. A trip to the moon would only take 1.3 seconds. If you had the time to spare, you could travel to the sun, 100 million miles away in a little over eight minutes. It takes awhile to let that soak

in and begin to understand the magnitude of such a distance. Although a light year is an almost inconceivable distance, it's like a millimeter of God's "discretion of stretching out the heavens."

With the launching of the Hubble satellite telescope, came the most magnificent views ever of our galaxy and universe. Located outside the earth's atmosphere, this telescope has allowed us to view the deepest regions of space in uncompromised clarity. What we have seen is a vast frontier of infinite wonder, a celestial masterpiece.

Let's take a light speed tour of our known universe to see how big God's discretion really is. If we were to head towards the nearest star outside our solar system, Proxima Centauri, it would take us over four years to arrive, traveling at 186,000 miles per second! If we were to travel all the way across the Milky Way, our home galaxy, it would take us 100,000 years, and pass by 200 billion stars, and, we've barely left home! The closest galaxy beyond ours, Andromeda, would take us 2 million years to travel to. Although these close neighbors are already past the inconceivable mark, I've got to keep boasting of our Lord.

Consider current estimates, in our observable universe, of 100 billion galaxies containing an average of 100 billion stars in each one. The total size of the observable universe, although highly uncertain, has been as high as 20 billion light years across. Wow, meditate on that for awhile.

I think back to Isaiah 42:5: "Thus sayeth God the Lord who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it,

who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it." Makes a person want to listen to what He has to say!

Often, when blessed with a cold, clear, winter night view of this tapestry of God's immensity and magnificence, I try to fathom how the same God that made all of this, can concern Himself with the affairs of man. Loving this created being, while we were still enemies of God, even denying His very existence, He loved us so much that in order to reconcile our relationship to Him, He gave Himself in Jesus Christ as a living sacrifice for all whom will believe.

"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him..." Psalm 8: 3 & 4.

References:

Henry, Dr. Jonathan, 1999. *The Astronomy Book*, Master Books, Green Forest, AR.

Richards, Jay and Gonzalez, Guillermo 2004, *The Privileged Planet*. DVD. Illustra Media. www.illustramedia.com

Moody Publishers, *Journeys to the Edge of Creation*, 1996. DVD. Chicago, IL. www.moodypublishers.com

If this wets your appetite for more, here are a few highly recommended resources:

Book: *The Privileged Planet* by Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay Richards.

DVD: *The Privileged Planet*. Illustra Media. www.illustramedia.com

Journeys to the Edge of Creation, Moody Publishers. www.moodypublishers.com

"Whenever you find you are on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect." —Mark Twain

THE CHITINA LEADER

March 1915 April

OF GENERAL INFORMATION

Cordova, February 24 —A. B. Iles will be a passenger on the train tomorrow for Strelina. He will make a visit to the mines on Nugget Creek of the Alaska Copper Corporation. Mr. Iles returned yesterday from Valdez. He has been furnishing the electric power to a company of local business men, who supply the town and the people at a low price. He states that his company and the allied company have been merged into one corporation. The old company is still in existence and is furnishing light for 2 cents per kilowatt.

The other day three mushers reached Fairbanks from the Outside, in record time. The News-Miner says that the total time from Seattle via Cordova, amounted to only 16 days, which is covering the water and the ground pretty fast for this season of the year. Especially is this true when it is considered that the men mushed from Chitina to Fairbanks, a distance of 306 ½ miles over the big trail in ten days. This is over 30 miles a day. The men report that there is a good firm foundation to the snow and the mushing good in most places. All three are old Northerners, which amounts for much, in the rapidity with which they traveled. George Blondo returns after a long absence, while the Carpenter Brothers have been in Fairbanks before.

March 2

OF GENERAL INFORMATION

Good progress is being made in moving the supplies for Howard Birch from McCarthy to Dan Creek where there will be extensive work this season.

Caynette, on the Dan Creek benches, is taking out good money.

He is sluicing with drain water under cover in his tunnel.

Old miners are unanimous that we have had the best winter ever known in the interior. It has been clear and pleasant most of the time with hardly any snow. And there has been no extreme cold, as 10 below was the coldest.

March 9

OF GENERAL INFORMATION

J. E. Laurie, formerly with Finkelstein & Sapiro, who went outside a month or so ago, returned on the Alameda, and is en route to McCarthy, taking in a stock of men's furnishings and clothing. Jack thinks McCarthy looks good to him and has arranged to open a store there.

McCarthy, March 20 —Finally McCarthy is to have a school. After many ineffectual attempts, committee after committee appointments, T. T. Lane studied the situation over and suggested to the government officials during their recent trip here an outline of the result of his investigation. The plan looked feasible to them and they instructed that an effort be made along the line as outlined by Mr. Lane. A meeting was called and another committee appointed to confer with the directors of the Kennecott district. The plan met with their approval and Mr. Seagrave, manager of the Kennecott Mines Co., assisted them in every possible way, with the result that we are to have a school. An election of school board has been ordered for April 6th, next. Every one feels that all credit is due Mr. Lane, whose efforts resulted in securing the school and in a great measure to Mr. Seagrave for the kindly interest he took in our behalf.

Since my last letter, Mr. Finkelstein, of Cordova, has opened a gentlemen's furnishing goods store here, in the Pete Johnson building. He is enjoying a good trade and with his pleasant, genial manner, has quickly made a place for himself in our midst.

W. R. Faddis, who has been operating a restaurant in McCarthy has put in a line of fine groceries and seems to be doing a nice business.

The Hotel Golden has closed its doors. Having been refused a liquor license for the ensuing year, it was decided to close the hotel and go out of business, thus leaving McCarthy with one saloon.

Mr. Royal's family has moved to Kennecott, where Mr. Royal is employed. They will be greatly missed from our midst, where Mrs. Royal has always been active in church and social work. No longer will we hear Charley driving his dog team and Scotty's barking response.

March 23

OF GENERAL INFORMATION

James J. Godfrey and wife were arrivals on yesterday's train from the interior, having been on the property of the Mother Lode Copper Mines Company for several months past. They took the steamer this morning for Valdez and will return and go outside on the same steamer. Mr. Godfrey is president of the Mother Lode Company and will go at once to New York on important business. During the past winter considerable high grade copper ore has been shipped to the Tacoma smelter. But the breaking up of the trails has prevented any further shipments until next winter, as the ore has to be hauled by teams for 12 miles from the tramway to the rail-

way at McCarthy. The break-up came three weeks earlier this year than heretofore, the last shipment being a car-load that was sent south on the last steamer. Mr. Godfrey left 30 men at work at the mines and they will be engaged in clocking out and getting ore ready for shipment next winter. They have uncovered large bodies of the high-grade ore that it is expected will place the Mother Lode on a par with the Bonanza and other great copper mines.

Cordova, April 9—The steam freighter Edith arrived this morning about 11 o'clock bringing a cargo of lumber and explosives, divided as follows: C. R. & N. W. Ry. Co., 51,000 feet; Kennecott Mines, 119,000 feet; Arctic Lumber Co., 100,000 feet. Fifty thousand feet of the latter consignment will be shipped to Chitina, having been sold to the U. S. government to build the warehouse for the Alaska Road Commission at that interior town.

Will Clayson took E. R. Peoples of Fairbanks, out in his launch today, so that he might see the Copper River flats and also how well an Evinrude motor works in these waters.

April 13

OF GENERAL INFORMATION

Oscar Breedman came in on the train yesterday from McCarthy. He states that on Friday's train he will receive six of his packing horses and that on the steamer Evans next week he will go with them to Ship Creek. He believes that he will be able to inaugurate a teaming and packing business at the new railroad port. He states that Finkelstein & Sapiro are selling out their store at McCarthy and that after the 25th Mr. Finkelstein will return to Cordova and then go to Ship Creek, with the idea of engaging in business there.

Cordova, April 15 —Yesterday the Copper River & Northwestern

Railway announced the personnel of the several trains crews for the summer as follows: Main line local: O. L. Larson, conductor; K. G. Robinson and W. C. Sutton, brakemen; J. W. Fillinger, engineer; Ed Walsh, fireman. Brank local: L. L. Butler, conductor; John Nicolet and Carl Johnson, brakemen; J. R. Reed, engineer; Arthur Holt, fireman. Pile driver: Wm. Hayes, conductor; Wm. McFadden and Floyd Smith, brakemen; Henry Lee, engineer; Jack Courtney, fireman. Ditcher: George Scott, conductor; Kenneth Holden and Geo. Steel, brakemen; George Buchanan, engineer; August Thiel, fireman.

Cordova, April 16 —Some little trouble was caused at the Chitina crossing this morning by a slight movement of the ice. It was not enough to cause any delay in the running of trains. As the open season has started at least two weeks earlier than usual this year it is expected that the run of ice within a few days will do the usual damage to the wooden bridge crossing the Copper River at Chitina. Last year the run started in earnest on May 5th. The earliest time for the ice to start was on April 24th one year.

Late this afternoon it was reported that more bents had gone out on the Chitina bridge. It has not been determined whether repairs can be made or whether it will be better to now wait until the ice floes have done their full damage before making the structure safe and permanent again. In the meantime no freight will be accepted for points beyond Chitina.

Cordova, April 17 —It is reported that Capt. Lathrop is to extend his operations in the moving picture line. In addition to his movies at Cordova he will start up at Seward and Valdez, and possibly open a house at Knik and Ship Creek.

Cordova, April 19 —Late Saturday afternoon what might have

proven a fatal accident occurred just this side of Chitina at the saw mill which is operated by the Nelson brothers. Max Nelson was working in the mill just underneath the saw when he struck his head with such force against a piece of machinery as to almost cause a fracture of the skull. He was taken to his home and Dr. Council was wired for. He left in the evening on a speeder and today reports that his patient is resting easy and will likely recover unless he takes a turn for the worse within the next couple of days. The Dr. will return on the train tomorrow afternoon.

Chittitu, April 2 —The mining season is nearly a month earlier than usual. The snow has practically all disappeared, leaving the ice bare on the creeks, which in places is falling in. If no cold weather comes shortly Andrus' men will be packing powder all summer. Erve Harring has most of the Andrus summer supplies across the May Creek bar.

Geo. Max Esterley's men are putting in a telephone line from his lower camp to the Clarkin roadhouse. They may also continue with it to McCarthy, as this would be a great convenience to the people in this section, and would save many a trip across the treacherous Nizina river during the summer.

G. Howard Birch brought in a large supply of wire and he expects to string it 9 miles across to the Mother Lode property, which will likely connect with McCarthy and Kennecott so that Birch will have through telephone connection.

Haar and Santien are building a new cabin on No. 11.

There will be more mining here this summer than in the early days, as more pay is being found every few days on the benches. It is not expected that there will be any shortage of labor this summer.

April 20

Temperature inversions go to extremes

Hydrologist Ed Plumb of the National Weather Service in Fairbanks was out measuring ice thickness on the Chatanika River last week. On his drive to a valley north of Fairbanks, he kept his eye on an outdoor thermometer attached to the truck.

As he crested Cleary Summit, the thermometer read 44 degrees Fahrenheit. He watched the temperature drop as he descended toward Chatanika Lodge, where the thermometer read minus 2 degrees. That temperature difference, caused by an extreme temperature inversion, occurred over a distance of about seven miles when Plumb dropped from a height of about 2,200 feet on the hilltop to 713 feet at the valley bottom.

Temperature inversions — where air temperature increases with elevation — happen in calm, windless places such as Interior Alaska. With no wind to mix the atmosphere, not much sunlight to heat the surface and a snow-covered surface that reflects sunlight, cold air tends to pool in low places and stay there. Fairbanks often has temperature inversions — that's what makes car thermometers so much fun here — but the ones on the last two days of January 2007 were exceptional.

"Temperature inversions are not that unusual, but to have a 45-to-50 degree temperature inversion, that's pretty extreme," Plumb said.

Plumb's colleague Ron Stuvek drove the Elliott Highway the day after Plumb. Stuvek saw an even greater temperature spread, from 40 above at Wickersham Dome to 8 below at the Chatanika River.

"That's 50 degrees of change within the inhabited elevations of the Interior," said Eric Stevens, who was working in the National Weather Service office in Fairbanks that day. "You don't see stronger inversions than that."

On the same day meteorologists noticed that a weather balloon launched from Fairbanks International Airport recorded at temperature of 12 degrees Celsius (about 54 degrees Fahrenheit) at about 5,000 feet.

"That would be warm even for summer," said Stevens, who was working in the office that day. "Not only was that a record for the last day of January, but this is the warmest temperature measured at 5,000 feet for the six months of November through April since weather balloons began being launched in Fairbanks in 1948."

It was a warm day up higher, too. The weather station at 18,733 feet on Denali, maintained by Tohru Saito of the International Arctic Research Center and mountaineers of the Japan Alpine Club, recorded a temperature of minus 2 degrees F that day. Two degrees below zero is a typical temperature for a nice summer day up there on the moun-

tain. Within two days, the temperature at Denali Pass had dropped to a more seasonable minus 36 degrees.

The reason for this warm air aloft was the "pineapple express," the south-to-north flow of air that brought warm air from around Hawaii northward to Alaska, Stevens said. That airflow also causes chinook winds in Interior Alaska to further amplify the warming. A big low-pressure system sitting south of the Aleutians drove the pineapple express, making for warm temperatures throughout much of Alaska.

Fairbanks temperature inversions are so consistent that meteorologist Rick Thoman, also of the Fairbanks office of the National Weather Service, once calculated how much firewood he saved by living in the hills west of town.

He lives at about 1,600 feet elevation, and he compared his average temperatures with those of a Weather Service observer who lived at 590 feet. In one winter, his home averaged 16 degrees warmer than the low site. Thoman figured that, thanks to Fairbanks' persistent temperature inversion, he burned 20 percent less wood by living up high.

This column is provided as a public service by the Geophysical Institute, University of Alaska Fairbanks, in cooperation with the UAF research community. Ned Rozell is a science writer at the institute.

Premiere Screening of Ahtna Heritage Film

NPS COPPER CENTER

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve and the Ahtna Heritage Foundation are proud to announce the premiere screening of a recently completed film, An

Ahtna Tradition -- Potlatches.

Produced by the Ahtna Heritage Foundation, this 20-minute film explores the rich history and traditions of the Ahtna Potlatch.

Join us at 12:00 noon on Wednesday, March 7th in the Na-

tional Park Service Theater to enjoy this new production. Light refreshments will be provided.

For more information, please contact Smitty Parratt at 822-7223.

Wells Fargo Donates \$1.6 million to Alaska Nonprofits in 2006

ANCHORAGE—FEBRUARY 1, 2007

In 2006, Wells Fargo contributed \$1.6 million in cash to schools and nonprofit organizations throughout Alaska. More than 200 organizations received funding to serve the needs of local communities in the areas of social services, youth and education, arts and culture, civic events and economic development. Education is Wells Fargo's top funding priority, representing more than 40% of the financial services company's contributions.

In addition, Alaska team members volunteered more than 4,200 hours of their time to nonprofit organizations in 2006.

"Wells Fargo is pleased to support Alaskan communities by giving back financially and as active community partners and leaders," said Richard Strutz, Wells Fargo regional president for Alaska. "These charitable contributions are just one aspect of our community support efforts in Alaska. Our team members teach financial education through our Hands on Banking®

program, and they give their time, energy and financial expertise as community board members and volunteers for local nonprofit organizations."

Major funding of \$50,000 or more was provided to the following Alaska nonprofits in 2006: Anchorage Museum Association for expansion project, University of Alaska Fairbanks Rural Alaska Honors Institute, University of Alaska Anchorage-Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program, Alaska Pacific University (Rural Alaska Native Adult Distance Education program), United Way and the Providence Alaska Foundation for a new cancer center.

Interior Alaska organizations that received substantial charitable contributions from Wells Fargo in 2006 are:

- Ahtna Heritage Foundation
- Copper River Emergency Medical Services Council
- Doyon Foundation
- Fairbanks Concert Association

Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce

Habitat for Humanity-Fairbanks
University of Alaska Fairbanks
Museum of the North (Military Appreciation Days)

Wells Fargo was named "Outstanding Corporation in Philanthropy" for 2005 by the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Alaska Chapter for its "exceptional civic leadership and responsibility by providing financial support and leadership to the nonprofit sector."

Nationally, Wells Fargo's total financial contributions reached \$100 million for the first time with \$102.7 million donated to 14,000 nonprofits—up almost eight percent from 2005 and up 87 percent since the 1998 Norwest/Wells Fargo merger. Forbes magazine ranked Wells Fargo the fifth-most generous corporate foundation, and Wells Fargo received an "Excellence in Workplace Volunteer Programs" award from the Points of Light Foundation in 2006.

Wire in a tree

BY KAYLIN MOFFITT

My uncle gave me a spruce log that had a wire in it. I thought I would count the rings on the log to find out how old the tree and wire are.

A tree forms a layer of wood every year. In the spring new cells form under the bark. In the winter growth stops until a new year. This makes a layer or ring.

I found that the log was about 97 years old. The wire was put on the tree 77 years ago.

I have seen historic pictures of this area and there were hardly no trees. The dates of the pictures match with the dates I counted on the tree.

My dad split the log open so I could examine the wire. I found out that the wire went all around the tree. The wire made the tree grow a

bulge around it. By the size of the wire I guessed it may have been an old trapping set.

Editor's note: Kaylin, age 10, is a resident of McCarthy. He lives with his parents, Betty and Lane, on their property just west of the Kennicott River. He is enrolled in the Chugach School District's Extension School. His classroom is his home and, as you can see, the great outdoors in the Wrangell Mountains.

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Valdez Museum develops native Alaskan exhibits

VALDEZ —

Plans are well underway for the new Valdez Museum Native Heritage Gallery, part of the museum's long-anticipated Revitalization project. This will be a brand new gallery space within the main museum that will be dedicated to educating about the culture and history of the Native Alaskans of Prince William Sound and the Copper River Basin.

The gallery space addresses a need for the museum to tell a more complete story about Native Alaskan cultures. Planning for the gallery began in 2004, when the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council announced the availability of funding for local display facilities housing traveling exhibits developed and managed by the Chugach Museum and Institute of History and Art, which maintains an archaeological repository in Seward. In addition to serving Valdez, the repository will make exhibits and artifacts available to display facilities in Cordova, Tatitlek, Chenega, Seward, Port Graham, Seldovia and Nanwalek.

The gallery will exhibit the museum's own collection of Native artifacts plus traveling exhibitions,

beginning with the Pratt Museum's *The Hunter and the Hunted*, scheduled for May through December 2007. Museum curator Andrew Goldstein states, "The gallery gives us a chance to talk about the different cultural groups who have lived in our area over the years, and their historical contributions to Valdez from prehistory up to the present day. It's a great opportunity for us to fill in an important part of the town's story by showing that Natives have been a continued presence here and still maintain their culture here today." Although the exhibits will focus on local Native groups, interpretation will also discuss shared cultural traditions and issues such as civil rights and ANCSA that affect all Alaskan Natives. The museum plans to complement its exhibitions through educational outreach programs and public programming.

Museum staff began the planning process by evaluating the museum's current Native collection, consulting with other museums, and looking at new casework for the display of its collection. On January 11, museum staff met with cultural consultants and community mem-

bers Diane Selanoff and Margó Small to discuss the content of the gallery and plan for its opening to the public. The ribbon-cutting to dedicate the gallery will take place at the museum in the early fall of 2007, following completion of the museum's Revitalization project.

To improve its collection of Native Alaskan materials, the museum is asking the general public for donations and loans of artifacts, photographs, and documents. Mr. Goldstein says, "We're looking for things like family photographs, film and video, oral histories, photos of events and gatherings — we need mid-20th century materials in particular. We're also looking for traditional Native Alaskan clothing and tools, and modern art that builds on Native Alaskan traditions." Goldstein adds, "We needn't keep the original artifacts — we're happy to make copies of photographs, or accept replica items." If you have objects, photographs or documents that you would like to donate or lend to the museum's collection, please call Andrew Goldstein, Curator of Collections and Exhibits, at (907) 835-2764.

Wrangell-St. Elias student scholarship program offers \$500 scholarship

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based career (preferable, but not required) related to resource stewardship. Applicants need not be related to National Park Service employees.

How to Apply: In person at Slana or Park Headquarters in Copper Center, or mail to

Wrangell-St. Elias Employee Association, P. O. Box 439, Copper Center, AK 99573 (must be received by March 30). See your High School Guidance Counselor, call 822-5234 for an application, or check on the website at www.nps.gov/wrst/scholarship.htm.

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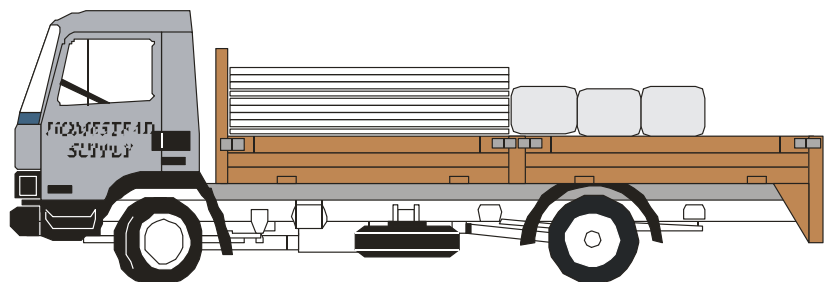
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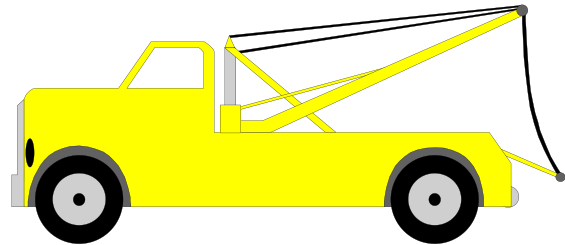
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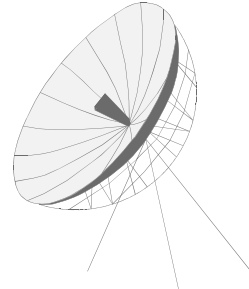
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Photo courtesy the author

Base Camp—Ed Bilderback is standing in the middle of the lean-to. Bilderback guided Fred Bear, the legacy name in the archery business, for the largest recorded Kodiak Brown Bear taken by bow and arrow.

out, too, in fact, in the evening he would be fleshing out the hooves around the campfire, which was quite a trick.

Gill brought lots of cheesecloth and boxes of black pepper. We would spread the meat out all around and cover it with the cheesecloth, then pepper it to keep the blowflies off. We used lean-tos at the camps, not tents. One night at base camp, toward the end of the hunt, there were only three of us left and we had meat spread everywhere. In the middle of the night Gill heard rain. He got us up and we frantically moved all the meat into and under the lean-to with us.

About a week into the hunt Gill wanted me to go down to base camp and leave a note for Howard Knutson, who was supposed to check on us the next day, in order to let him know we would be in for another week. I was also supposed to pick up some supplies, like bread, that we had left down below and then return right away.

One of the party decided he wanted to go with me. What he really wanted to do was leave the hunt but didn't want to tell Gill that. He kept delaying and delaying, so when he and I got down to base, it was getting pretty dark. Then I discovered he

had brought his sleeping bag along. That fall night I had to try and sleep without a bag. Man, what a frigid experience! In the morning, Howard came as scheduled, and my companion jumped in the Super Cub with him and left. I headed back up the mountain. Gill wasn't very pleased over our fellow hunter leaving; he got so mad I thought he was going to go nuts. When he finally calmed down he said, "Well, at least Kenny got the bread

and stuff." But, I had forgotten to bring it back up. So the tirade started all over again.

In defense of the hunter who fled, and what we didn't know then, was that the utility company he had been managing in Cordova for over twenty years had just changed hands. He had really stretched things by coming on the hunt in the first place, as his new boss was going to be in town.

One sad thing happened. Toward the end of the hunt we spotted the arrival of three or four other hunters on a far ridge. They shot five sheep, but didn't even make the effort to salvage the meat, or horns. At first we thought that they didn't know how to get into the canyon where the dead rams were. Harley King got close

enough to the hunters so they could hear him shout. Harley yelled that there was an easy access down to their animals. The hunters turned and walked away from him. We reported this after arriving back in Cordova. The *Cordova Times* used the event "Wanton Sheep Slaughter" as their lead story. I still have a copy of that newspaper. Later that fall Bilderback was in Fairbanks for a guide conference. While visiting a gift shop there he was discussing sheep hunting with the proprietor. Bilderback suddenly realized that this was one of those guys in on the slaughter.

At May Creek, sheep hunters were gathering awaiting the departure of the DC-3, which was already at the airport. However, as customary, the crew of the DC-3 was overnighing in McCarthy, 17 road miles to the northwest and hadn't arrived yet. So, we had plenty of time to share tales of our recent hunting venture. Melvin "Peanuts" Soder from Cordova came rushing over just as soon as we reached May Creek to share with us a story of his hunt. His partner was fairly new to hunting. Peanuts was as close to being a long-time hunter as Gill was. His partner had shot a ram but it was late evening when Peanuts finally located the partner and the ram. By that time it was very dark and they were still high on a mountain. The partner had been dragging the ram down a ridge. Peanuts pitched in. After a few hours of struggle and much perspiring, Peanuts jokingly remarked, "Wow, this is heavy—feels

like the guts are still in it." The partner said, "Maybe we ought to take them out." Much to Peanut's chagrin and with the aid of illumination from matches and a "Zippo" cigarette lighter, they dressed the animal and proceeded again.

Back in Cordova, Dick and I had to prepare for college. I had a wonderful time, a once-in-a-lifetime experience on that hunt, which made it even less appealing going off to a relatively boring winter of classrooms and studies.



Photo courtesy the author

The author—burying his buddy, Dick, in Chitina River sand. This event really tickled Gill's funny bone.

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Cooking with Peggy

BY PEGGY GUNTIS

Happy Spring everyone and Happy New Year. Hope your winter wasn't too bad.

I'm writing this in January, so we have a few more months to wait before Spring brings its cactus blooms, baby Roadrunners and Quail. Hope your holidays were full of family, friends, and food.

Right before the holidays I responded to a recipe chain letter. I've tried that before and never received any recipes, but this time I received three wonderful ones that I would like to share with you.

The first is one I tried during my holiday cooking and it has become one of my son's favorites. He had back surgery right before Christmas but managed to make it to the house to celebrate and EAT. He called me afterwards to ask if I had any of those "little peanut butter things" left over.

PEANUT BUTTER EGGS

1 cup graham cracker crumbs
1 cup coconut

1 box powdered sugar
1 cup crunchy peanut butter
2 sticks oleo, melted

Mix these ingredients together and form into egg shapes (mine looked more like little logs).

Coat with melted milk chocolate discs — place on wax paper to cool.

Hope you try these because they are really, really, good.

The next one is for a great side dish. I've served it with pork tenderloin and sesame chicken.

PASTA CON BROCCOLI

1 pound penne pasta
1/4 cup olive oil
3 cups broccoli florets
1/2 cup onion, diced
1 1/2 tablespoons garlic, minced
1 1/2 cups chicken broth
1/2 cup parmesan cheese

Cook the pasta, rinse and drain and set aside. Heat the olive oil and saute the broccoli, onion and garlic. Reduce the heat and add the penne pasta. Toss and season to taste.

Top with parmesan cheese.
(Serves 6-8).

This next can be used as a snack, an appetizer, or even an accompaniment to a bowl of hot soup.

CHICKEN DIP

8-ounces cream cheese
8-ounces sour cream
2 large cans of chicken
1 teaspoon seasoned salt
1 onion, chopped
1/3 cup parmesan cheese

Mix all ingredients, except the parmesan cheese. Bake in a pie dish at 350 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes. Top with parmesan cheese during the last 5 minutes. Serve with crackers.

I was so grateful to these people who responded to the recipe chain letter. One was from Ohio, and two were from Pennsylvania. It's such fun to try some of the favorite recipes of others. I would love it if some of you would send me some. My address is: 11270 E. Golf Links Rd., Tucson, AZ, 85730.

Happy cooking and eating everyone.

McCarthy Road Blog huge success!

BY RICK KENYON

The new McCarthy Road Web Log has been very well received this winter. The Web Log, or Blog, is an interactive area where you can post comments about the road condition.

The Blog not only helps travelers, but the Chitina DOT&PF keep an eye on the Blog to see where potential problems are. They have been very helpful this year in keeping the road open. "Three cheers to

the Chitina Crew" is often seen as a comment on the Blog!

Before you travel the road, check in at <http://wsen.net> for the latest road conditions.

"The ACLU continues to make itself ridiculous in public. Recently, one Lucius Traveler, who claims to speak for the organization, was totally upset at a recent ceremony honoring the birthday of the Marine Corps in which all hands were portrayed at prayer. 'These are federal employees on federal property and on federal time. For them to pray is clearly an establishment of religion, and we must nip this in the bud immediately.' A Marine may technically be a 'federal employee,' but you may have to explain that to him with care. To claim that group worship by a military organization is 'establishment of religion' displays a degree of semantic confusion that is quite beyond me. And to call for us to 'nip this in the bud' suggests that the practice is somehow innovative, which point would be hard to explain to George Washington. But the ACLU stumbles on. One can hope that it will never be taken seriously."—Jeff Cooper

A LOOK AT THE WEATHER

BY GEORGE CEBULA

First, here is a short November Summary. The average temperature for Nov '06 was -16.6 (4.7 in Nov '05 and 6.9 in Nov. '04), the high was 26 on the 1st and the low was -41 on the 25th and 26th. Total liquid precipitation was 0.01 inches (4.71 inches in Nov. '05 and 1.30 inches in Nov. '04) and snowfall was 0.5 inches (50.1 in Nov. '05 and 8.2 in Nov. '04). The snow depth was 6 inches on the 1st and ended the month at 5 inches.

December 2006 had about average temperatures and below average precipitation.

The average December temperature was 6.3 (8.2 in Dec. '05 and -7.4 in Dec. '04). The high was 35 on December 20 (41 on Dec. 8, '05 and 41 on Dec. 23, '04) and the low was -18 on December 16, 17, and 27 (-45 on Dec. 2, '05 and -31 on Dec 30, '04). Nine days had high tem-

peratures of 20 or above and seven days saw the low temperature dip below a minus ten.

December precipitation was 0.85 inches of liquid precipitation (2.43 in Dec. '05 and 2.23 in Dec. '04). Total snow fall was 10.4 inches (7.8 inches in Dec. '05 and 21.4 inches in Dec. '04). The snow depth was 5 inches at the beginning of the month, increasing 12 inches on December 31, and ended the month at 12 inches.

January saw above average temperatures and average precipitation.

The average January temperature at McCarthy was 7.0(0.9 in Jan. '06, -1.2 in Jan. '05, and -15.6 in Jan. '04). The high was 34 on January 26 and 27 and the low temperature was -41 on January 10. Thirteen days had high temperatures of 20 or above and five days saw the temperature dip below minus 20.

January liquid precipitation at McCarthy was 1.47 inches (0.20 inches in Jan. '06, 1.03 inches in Jan. '05 and 1.05 inches in Jan. '04). Snowfall was 19.2 inches (4.4 inches in Jan. '06, 12.1 inches in Jan. '05 and 15.5 inches in Jan. '04). Snow cover at McCarthy was 12 inches on January 1, increasing to 21 inches on January 21 and ending January at 19 inches. Total snowfall so far for 2006- 2007 season is 38.5 inches.

Hidden Creek Lake began dumping water into the Kennicott River on January 24. During the next few days the river ice was covered bank to bank with water. This was a very unusual event and will be covered in other stories.

After eleven weeks on the road (11,137 miles) and two Alaska Ferry trips, Sophie (my dear dog) and I are back in McCarthy.

The 2007 edition of A Visitor's Guide to Kennicott & McCarthy is scheduled for publication in early May.

The Guides are given free to area visitors and are available by mail by sending \$2.50 s&h to Kenyon Services, PO Box MXY, Glennallen AK 99588.

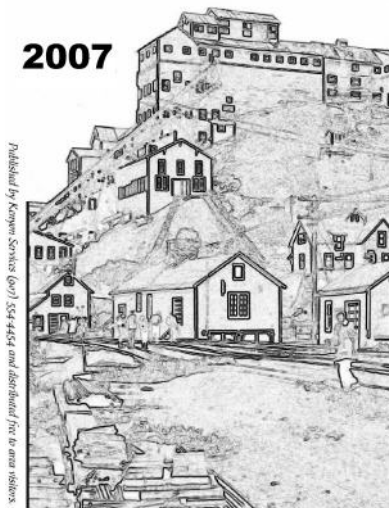
Although the Guide is aimed at Kennicott and McCarthy, it also covers the surrounding areas of Kenny Lake, Chitina, Copper Center, Glennallen and Valdez. If you have a small business in any of these areas please contact us for advertising rates. You will be pleasantly surprised!

The Guide is also available online at <http://www.mccarthy-kennicott.com/vg/index.html>

Phone (907)554-4454 for advertising rates
Email WSEN@starband.net

A Visitor's Guide to Kennicott & McCarthy

2007



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Also includes:

- Kenny Lake & Chitina
- Glennallen
- Copper Center
- Valdez

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

BY RON PECK

Seventeen years ago, economist Michael Porter put forward the recipe for competitive success by establishing that winning industries or regions will be those that differentiate themselves by promoting their uniqueness.

Alaska tourism has a competitive advantage by virtue of its beauty, location and natural resources, and the tourism industry has worked hard to promote the state's exceptional attractions.

But an increasingly competitive global marketplace is bearing down on us, and it is no longer enough to have a great product. As Porter said, we must have the means to compete and differentiate ourselves in a marketplace where other destinations are willing and able to spend much more to reach their markets.

The good news is that tourism, through its destination marketing efforts, offers a strong pipeline – a marketing pipeline that connects the Alaska travel experience and Alaskan businesses with consumers all over the world. The deliverable is immediate and equates to more than 1.9 million visitors every year.

Like other natural resource industries, we endeavor to reach the market but our pipeline – built more than 50 years ago – needs refurbishing. The current destination-marketing budget combines \$5 million in private funds raised from the industry with \$5 million matched by the state, all managed by the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA). But that amount is no longer enough for our message to pene-

trate the market. Increasingly, other destinations are flooding consumers with more television commercials, travel stories, co-promotions, direct mail, brochures and Internet marketing. In fact, Alaska now ranks 38th out of the 50 states in terms of public sector funding for tourism marketing.

ATIA anticipates that its marketing effort will be further impacted when industry partners with bigger tax bills to pay are forced to abandon their voluntary contributions to the marketing program. Conservatively, ATIA stands to lose \$2.5 million in industry contributions along with the matching \$2.5 million from the state. Other state and municipal taxes, fees, transport charges, a new car rental tax, lodging tax increases and pending cruise industry taxes now account for an estimated \$140 million collected from tourism businesses and our visitors. This number increases when you add in other relevant municipal and state assessments.

So who gets hurt when Alaska's competitiveness dwindles? Small tourism businesses, those who want jobs in the tourism industry, our economy and our economic advantage.

The decision to help grow Alaska's travel industry should be an economic development and investment decision – not a budget decision – in which the governor and the legislature participate. As the tourism industry faces an ever-competitive future with dwindling resources, the legislature has been asked to consider several ways to address this challenge, to look at tourism as a renewable economic

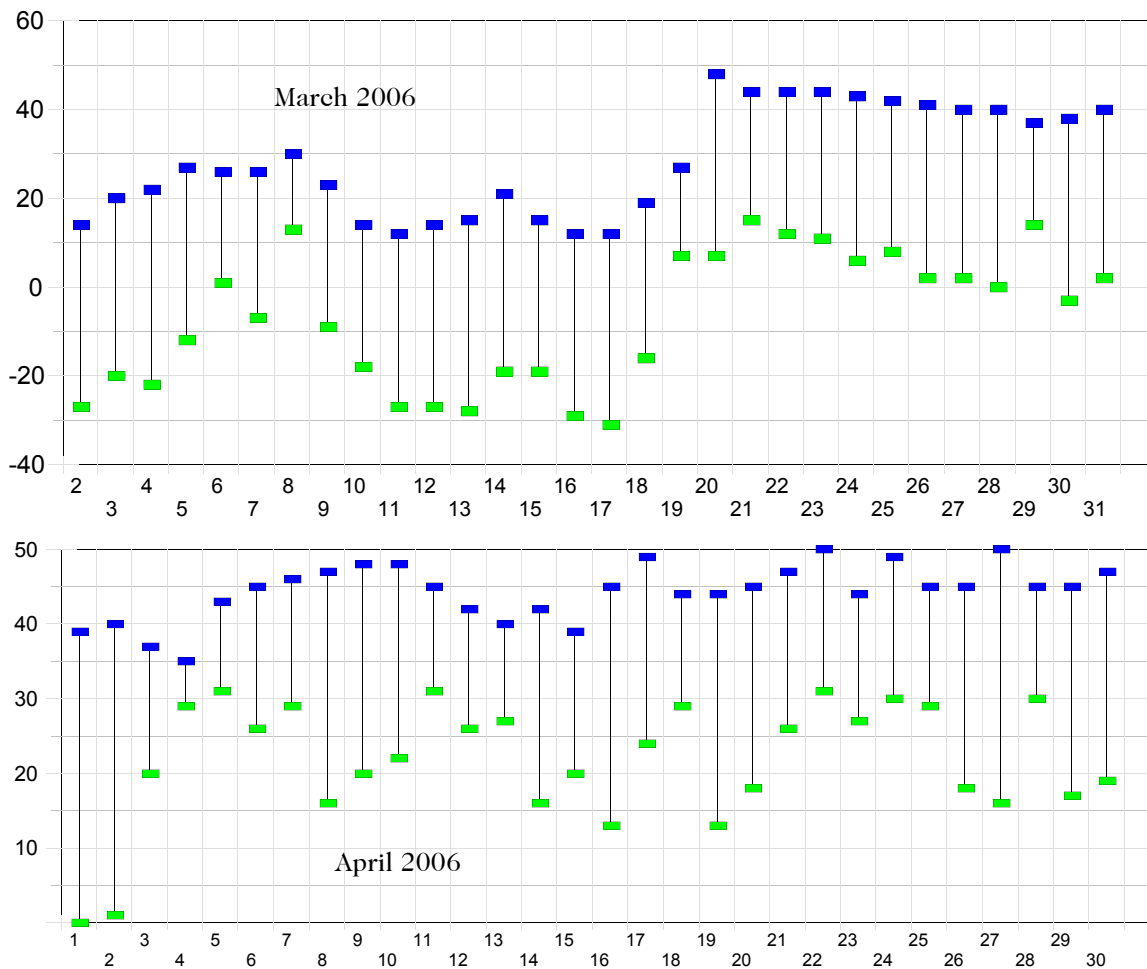
resource and to develop the economic potential of the industry by overhauling the existing pipeline to bring Alaska's travel resource to market. Options to discuss include:

1. Increase the funding level for the ATIA core destination marketing program in the next state operating budget to \$20 million;
2. Increase the current funding level for a separate program to entice more independent travelers to \$8.5 million – equal to the amount of the current vehicle rental tax; and,
3. In concert with the Administration, work to make needed amendments to ensure that the cruise ship tax is implemented in a way that does not hinder the future growth of this important sector of Alaska's travel industry, with particular focus on environmental monitoring, financial disclosure and eliminating duplicative taxes.

The potential for the travel industry to further strengthen Alaska's economy and enhance its residents' quality of life is tremendous — each vacationer spends about \$1,260 to enjoy flightseeing trips, fishing charters, museums, glaciers, Native culture, and state and national parks. But developing it further will not happen by accident. If Alaska is to stay competitive for the good of future generations, it will be important to remember tourism is not just ATIA's business or the state's business or the legislature's business. Tourism is everyone's business.

Ron Peck is the president of the Alaska Travel Industry Association

“Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? Oh, be not weary of well-doing. Go on in the name of God and in the power of His might.” —John Wesley to William Wilberforce



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