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# Wrangell St. Elias News

*"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"*

Vol. Eleven Issue ~~Two~~ Three

May & June 2002

Two Dollars

## Geologists in Alaska

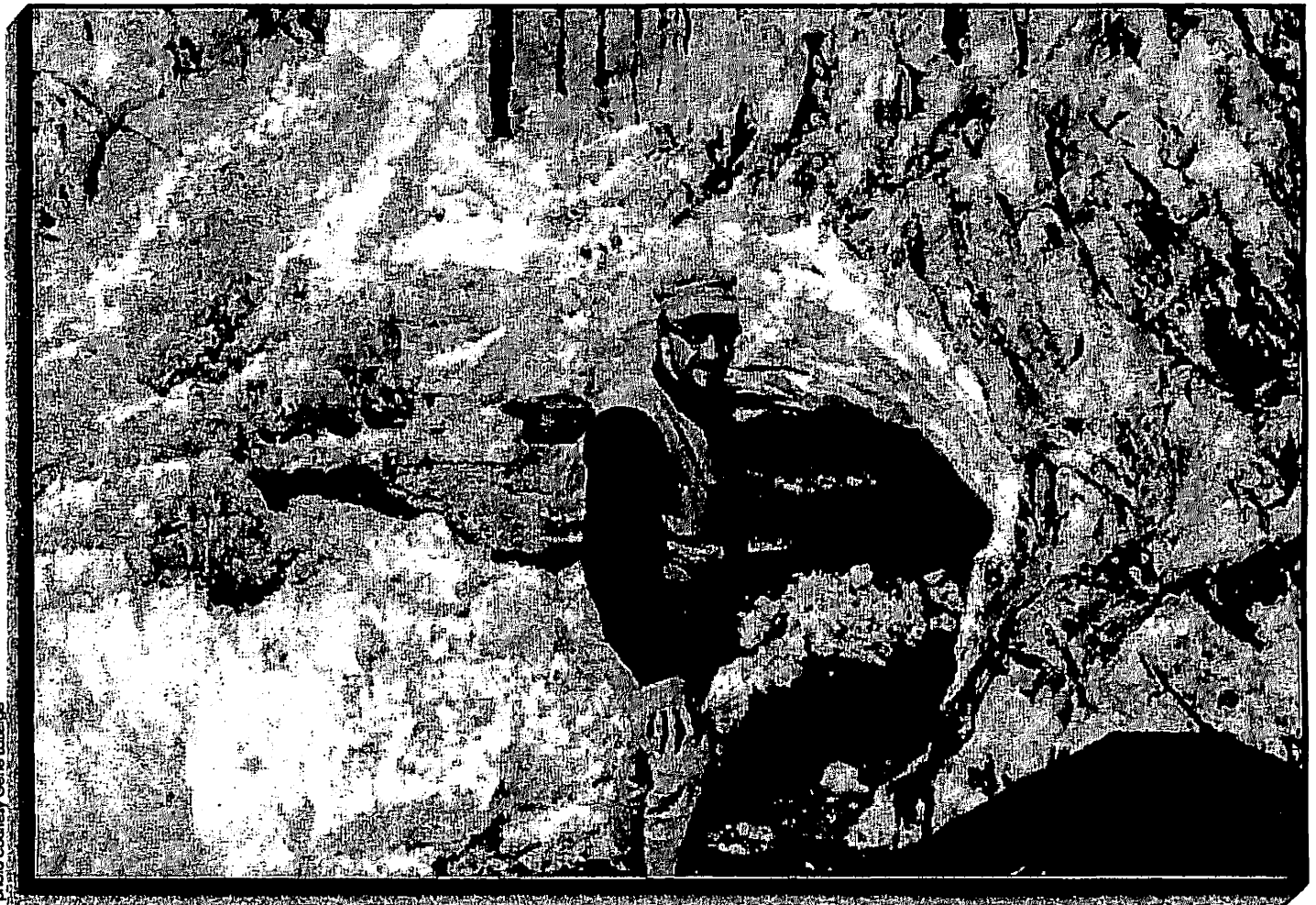


photo courtesy Gene LaBerge

Geologist Gene LaBerge came to the Wrangells in 1961 looking for mineral wealth. Instead he found something else. "Although the company I worked for didn't find any mineable deposits during our exploration efforts, I did leave with hundreds of photographs that I used in my teaching for more than 30 years—as well as countless memories that I still cherish," says Gene.

See *Geologists in Alaska—part one* on page 6.

## *A note from the publisher*

BY BONNIE KENYON

Winter has *finally* decided to begin its departure. It is April 29th as Rick and I put the finishing touches on this issue of WSEN and spring breakup is upon us. We are a week late in

planting the greenhouse this year, so when we woke to overcast skies this morning, we decided it would make a good transplanting day. A small propane heater will keep the greenhouse warm at night until summertime temperatures arrive.

We are back at the computers now and Rick has stated up the Gestetner CopyPrinter. Because this issue filled up much too quickly, we ran out of space for some of those last minute items of interest which I include here.

First of all, many thanks to subscriber Gene Laberge for the extremely helpful work he did in providing us his story and numerous pictures in an article entitled *Geologists in Alaska*. Because it was longer than we could use for one issue (and we didn't want to leave any of Gene's account out), we are dividing it up into two parts. Part one is in this issue and the July/August WSEN will have the conclusion.

Rick and I want to show our appreciation to Charlie and Inger Ricci for the lovely calendar poster which we received in the mail recently. What a pleasant surprise! It is a 2002 calendar with a beautiful color photo of Kennecott Mine, Alaska by photographer Harry M. Walker and printed by Alaska Printing of Anchorage. We are going to frame ours, too, Charlie and Inger.

As most of our readers know, Inger is a Kennecott Kid. She informed us that the fourth Kennecott Kid Reunion is taking place May 20-23 of this

year at the Kennicott Glacier Lodge. Inger tells me there are approximately 45 expected to turn out for the occasion— some of those will be grandkids of the Kennecott Kids. Inger says they are looking forward to a great time together again. A big WELCOME BACK, to all the Kennecott Kids and their families!

Be sure to take a close look at *Our Town*. We have been including news items from *The McCarthy Weekly News* since the Nov./Dec. 1992 issue of WSEN. Since that time we have covered news from November 3, 1917, through April 30, 1927. This appears to be the last issue of that fine newspaper. We decided to fill the space with excerpts from *The Kennecott Star*. My thanks to Betty Adams for her help in securing an original copy so I could transcribe it for you. Also, thank you former Kennecott teacher Jim Busey for your vital assistance in aiding your pupils in its writing!

We just received a notice that two Open Houses are being celebrated in Copper Center: the NPS Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Visitor Center and the Copper River Wilderness Princess Hotel. The public is invited to stop in and visit both facilities on Saturday, May 18 at 10:00 am - 6:00 pm.

*Wrangell St. Elias News* welcomes aboard the following new subscribers: Holly Houghton, FL; Mildred Lohse, MN; Jane Powell, WV; Rebecca Nelson, AK; Rob Wesson, CO; Chris Harris, AK; Herman Hauck, AK; Pete McCarthy, UK.

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# Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

**George Cebula:** George returned to McCarthy in early March following a 12,000 mile road trip across the lower 48. As usual Sophie, his dog, was along for the ride. The first morning on the road the transmission went out around Slana, and he was towed to Tok for repairs. It didn't help any that the temperature was a -30 degrees! After a rebuilt transmission was installed, it was on to Haines to catch the ferry.

Christmas was spent in Milwaukee with brother Ted and family. New Years in Ohio with his mother and the rest of the family. Then it was time to head south. Friends and family were visited in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Texas, Arizona, Nevada, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Oregon and Washington.

Sophie was a great traveler and made herself at home everywhere they stopped. The highlight of her trip was their visit with Ken and Carly Kritchen in Bakers City, Or. She was free to run as she pleased and was observed chasing a deer one evening.

The final leg of the trip was on the M/V Kennicott ferry from Prince Rupert, BC to Valdez, AK. George just learned that his friend Frank Moore, whom he and Sophie visited in Spokane, passed away on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Frank was a WSEN subscriber and a previous visitor to McCarthy. Frank was 87 years old.

**The Welty family:** Speaking of neighbors returning from elsewhere, the Welty family is back at their McCarthy area home after spending about 5

months in Cordova. Don signed on for several construction projects so they all decided they would spend the winter in town. Having once lived in Cordova, the Weltys enjoyed visiting with old friends, taking part in church activities and family outings such as deer hunting, ice skating and skiing, to name a few.



Photo courtesy George Cebula

GEORGE AND SOPHIE ON M/V KENNICOTT.

Sarah and Rene decided to sign on for an upcoming mission's trip to Mexico with young people from various youth groups in Cordova. The Cordova Community Baptist Church is sponsoring the trip. The young people will be helping in the construction of a church in La Paz on Baja Peninsula. The Welty girls plan to leave McCarthy May 27<sup>th</sup>. We are excited for them and look forward to seeing pictures and hearing all about their trip when they return.

Since arriving home, Sarah, Rene and their home school

teacher and mom, Lynn, are digging into school work and hoping to finish up before the girls leave. Don left this last week to work for a guide service on a spring bear hunt.

A hearty "Welcome back" to the Weltys!

**Jurgen Ogrodnik:** Another familiar face we haven't seen in awhile is Jurgen. He's been gone for 5 months and was in Germany visiting friends and family. While there he did some more recording for his new CD. He tells me he had a wonderful time. Another "Welcome back," this time to Jurgen!

**Ed LaChapelle and Meg Hunt:** Break-up conditions showed up here today (April 21) and Meg says she has managed to do a bit of "post-holing all over her yard." I think the spring weather has spurred Ed and Meg on. I received an "Item of Interest" email from Meg that will give you an idea what they are up to.

"We have a construction project starting; we are going in with Rick Jurick on a freeze-proof root cellar. Rick has the terrain, a nice hillside. (If we were to dig deep enough at our house to get below the frost line, we would be in the water table!) In order to save some labor and have a strong, water-tight structure, we have ordered up and hauled in a cylindrical steel tank, 6' long and about 6' diameter, already fitted with vent openings, a door opening, and welded angle iron for shelf supports. Now it is my job to figure out the arrangement of shelves and get everyone's approval before holes are drilled

in the angle iron and the interior is painted. The cellar/tank will be hauled up to its new home this summer when conditions are good."

We certainly wish you all the very best success. A good root cellar is a blessing, especially when you like to garden, Meg.

**Jim and Audrey Edwards:** Audrey was busy on one of her favorite hobbies when I called, that of painting egg shells. I wanted to know if she needed any more empty egg cartons to store her finished product. She agreed to take what I had set aside so that must mean she is really on the roll!

With 25 inches of snow on the ground at the time I'm writing this (April 22), we McCarthy area ladies may be in the mood for spring but it just hasn't showed up yet. I guess we should be thankful we have a little extra time to finish up our winter hobbies.

In the past, Audrey and I have discussed what it would be like to have maid service. Wood heat seems to put a great deal of dust in the air and a grey tint to our windows. To date, neither she nor I have a maid BUT Audrey has discovered a great substitute, an air cleaner that is working to keep that dust problem to a minimum! Maybe she will do a product review for us ladies who are always looking for all the help we can get in this arena.

Audrey also reports that Jim is doing real well after his cataract surgery. Medical science has certainly come a long ways in this area. According to Audrey,

Jim's surgery only took 8 minutes. Congratulations, Jim, on coming through this with flying colors.

**Jim and Jeannie Miller:**

Jeannie was busy at work when I called. She was on the computer and attempting to complete more of her "To-Do" list. We discussed the merits of making lists and sticking to them. I believe we came out with the pros being more than the cons of such things as "lists."

If anyone in this community has a green thumb, it is Jeannie. She may not own up to that description, but let me give you a perfect example of her living up to it. Adina Knutson of Chitina (she used to be the Postmistress at the Chitina Post Office and now retired) sent me a package of her own rare Delphinium seeds

tell you? I am grateful that Jeannie has promised to share her seedlings with me.

She told me today that she continues to learn something new each year on her gardening techniques; for instance, don't plant your lobelia seeds in fertilized potting soil. It may just do in the seeds before they get a chance to sprout.

This time of year we can expect to find Jim and Jeannie getting things ready for their pizza season in downtown McCarthy. Jeannie is updating her menus and, when I called, Jim and son Matt were working on the pizza building itself.

Seeing that I didn't think my phone call was on Jeannie's "To-Do" list, I soon said my goodbyes. **The Keith Rowland family:** A lot of progress has been made on the

Rowland house building project since our last issue of WSEN. The roof and shingles are now finished. Keith was pleased to have the help of two friends from Fairbanks who arrived for the sole purpose of giving Keith a hand with



WSEN staff photo

ROWLAND'S NEW HOME NEARING COMPLETION.

the shingles.

Laurie and the kids are seriously working on completing home school subjects so they can move to their property site where the whole family can devote more quality time and effort to finalizing their new home. From the way the kids are eagerly pursuing their studies, I don't think it will be much longer. Congratulations on all the hard work already accomplished and still in progress!

**Emily Morrison:** I had the opportunity to chat with Emily

for me to try. I already have purple and blue varieties that Dee Frady gave me years ago. Each year they have grown to greater heights.

I told Jeannie of Adina's gift. I wondered what color of flowers these seeds would produce. After Jeannie offered to look up some growing information for me, I decided to share my rare find with her. I'm glad I did!

None of my share of the seeds came up but nearly every one of hers did. What does that

on the phone recently. She shared the news of her upcoming marriage to Mark Bass. The wedding will take place on May 11<sup>th</sup> in the Brookshire Mountains in Massachusetts. "It will be a small, simple wedding," says Emily, "and then Mark and I plan on returning to McCarthy May 22<sup>nd</sup> and staying until November." As an item of interest, Tim Rydell, a familiar face to McCarthy, will be singing at Emily and Mark's wedding. We congratulate the happy couple and look forward to having them back in the neighborhood next month!

**Erin Adkins:** Shortly after writing the above item on Emily and Mark, I received a phone call from Erin, who wanted to share the good news about *her* upcoming marriage to Ruben Scherle of Anchorage. She was so excited and eager to let her McCarthy area friends know.

Erin first came to our town in the summer of 1993 when she took a job with Wrangell Mountain Air. She had also purchased property near Mile 55 of the McCarthy Road earlier that same year.

She and Ruben's wedding will take place on May 19 in Hawaii. An outdoor reception will follow on June 8 at the Scherle's residence in Anchorage.

A big CONGRATULATIONS, Erin and Ruben!

**McCarthy Ventures:**  
Downtown McCarthy is astir with all manner of constructive activity. Rick and I stopped by the McCarthy Lodge the other day. Doug Miller is certainly a busy, focused man these days. He and his crew have accomplished a lot this winter. Sometime ago when Doug first shared with Rick and me his numerous plans for the lodge, hotel and other buildings, I just couldn't fathom

how he could possibly make a dent in his list of "To-Do's!" However, recently I managed to get a clue as to why he can stay so focused.

For 30 years Doug has dreamed a dream. A dream that has grown since his family sold the lodge years ago. Someday he would come back to McCarthy, and when he did he would incorporate his historical love for McCarthy into the town. He kept his dream alive through studying the era of McCarthy's heyday even down to the appropriate decor of the 1910's to the 1930's. Doug's background as a graphic designer enabled him to mix his own pigments for the color of paint for the rooms in the Ma Johnson hotel, choosing the appropriate wall paper trim, the changes he would make to the existing lodge and what new construction he would add to the McCarthy property. Eventually the time was right for his dream to materialize. He actively pursued the purchase of the lodge and property to add to his already existing property in McCarthy which included the dressmaker's shop (currently Tailor Made Pizza leased to his brother Jim).

With his plan in hand and the resolve to carry it out, Doug isn't wasting any time in fulfilling his dream, building by building, one step at a time. As you tour downtown McCarthy today, you will see old construction with a new face and new construction underway such as the Lancaster Hostel, a deli and a gift shop. Doug is always quick to stop what he's doing and give us locals a show-and-tell tour. Thanks, Doug, for letting us in on your dream and your willingness to share it with us.

**ATTENTION! Important name changes:** Many of our local

residents and visitors will want to make note of the name changes in the following businesses:

Terry and Dee Frady, owners of Willow Herb Mountain Depot, Mile 55.5 of the McCarthy Road, have changed their business name to Fireweed Mountain Arts and Crafts.

Kennicott McCarthy Wilderness Guides of downtown Kennicott, previously owned and operated by Chris Richards, is now under new management. The new business name is: Kennicott Wilderness Guides and is still located across from the Kennicott Glacier Lodge.

Chamber says "thanks!"

The Kennicott McCarthy Chamber of Commerce would like to thank the DOT for assisting our community in keeping the McCarthy Road open this winter. We also give a special thanks to the following community members who helped financially and with inkind donations to keep our grader operating: McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church, Richard Villa, Keith and Laurie Rowland, Brooks and Diane Ludwig, Ken and Nancy Rowland, Eric and Patty Yould. Our thanks also go to Copper Valley Telephone and DOT for donation of the fuel.

The Chamber greatly appreciates John Adams for providing a place to park and plug in the grader, Jim Miller for helping with the chains and Rowcon Services for their time and equipment in keeping the river crossing open this winter. Of course, a very special thanks to Lane Moffitt for his hours donated to operate the grader.

# Geologists in Alaska

BY GENE LABERGE

The period from the late 1950's through the 1970's was a time of extensive geological exploration in Alaska. Indeed, it is still going on in some parts of the State. I believe that the many geological explorations of that time represent an interesting and important part of the history of Alaska. The impetus for the exploration was a period of optimism and growth that followed World War II and the Korean War. And a major factor was the development of helicopters during the Korean War, for helicopters provided access to many areas that were previously almost impossible to reach.

I spent three summers working as an exploration geologist in Alaska. In 1960 we worked in Southeastern Alaska, with two boats as our base of operations, we covered the area from Petersburg north to Haines, and from the British Columbia border to the Gulf of Alaska. I was lucky enough to spend over five months during the summers of 1961 and 1962 in the Wrangell Mountains, which I consider to be one of the most beautiful parts of North America. I am sure that many other geologists had experiences similar to mine, however, I have never read accounts by any of them. My purpose in writing this story is to record a bit of what it was like, what we did, and how we lived during our exploration activities. Although the company I worked for didn't find any mineable deposits during our exploration efforts, I did leave with hundreds of photographs that I used in my teaching for more than 30 years—as well as

countless memories that I still cherish.

My Alaska experience actually began in January, 1960, when John Mckee came to Madison to interview geologists at the University of Wisconsin. I had completed my Master's degree the previous spring and was looking for an interesting summer job. "Mac," as he wanted to be called, was an entrepreneur who had formed Fremont Mining Co., out of Forest Grove, Oregon, with financial backing from Weyerhaeuser Lumber Co. and the W. S. Moore Co., of Duluth, Minnesota. He talked about the exploration program he had going (I think this would have been its third year of operation). He also showed a packet of photographs of some of the exploration done in previous years. The photos were spectacular, and were an important part of "selling" the job. (I learned later that the company bought the film and paid for the developing, and for that they reserved the right to make copies of any photos they wanted. But we kept the originals.) After about an hour of talking and looking at photos, Mac asked, "Well, are you interested in a job, or are you just here to look at pictures?" I assured him that I was, indeed, interested and willing to work in Alaska. The following is a brief record of the Alaskan experience I had in the Wrangells.

The 1961 season began as soon as classes ended in late May, but this year we were told that we would be working "in the interior," in the Copper River region. I was given a list of U.S. Geological Survey reports covering the Copper, Chitina,

and Nizina River areas to read before I arrived. I flew into Anchorage on one of the new Boeing 707 jets—my first flight on a jet passenger airline, and it was quite a change from the old Constellations!

Jack Wilson, from Glennallen, met me at the International Airport and took me over to Merrill Field where his Cessna 180 was waiting. We loaded my gear and climbed in for the flight out to our camp. We landed briefly at Glennallen, and I still recall my first view of the Wrangells from the airport. The weather was clear and Mt. Drum and Mt. Sanford stood up as proud as can be. Then I got back into the plane and we flew on east up the Chitina and Nizina rivers to the May Creek airstrip. Little did I realize that THIS was to be my "home" for the next three months. Frank Blair and Ed Buettner met me at the airstrip in an old World War II jeep they had coaxed into running again. We drove down the road off the north end of the airstrip about a quarter of a mile to a clearing in which there were 4-5 tents with frames and plywood floors in various stages of construction. One was the cook's tent, another was to be our "office tent," and the others were our sleeping/living quarters. I chose a bunk in the corner of one of the tents on the bank of May Creek and soon joined the others in completing the carpenter's work on the camp. We dug a latrine about 100 feet from the tents, across the road from May Creek. Clearly, this was going to be a very different arrangement than living on a boat!

Within the next week, the remainder of the crew arrived,

there was a total of thirteen of us. The cook and his helper (let's list the most important people first!), along with five geologists, two geophysical technicians from Canada, two helicopter pilots, a helicopter mechanic (we had different pilots this year because Gary, our pilot from 1960, had been killed in a chopper accident during the winter) and John Mckee (the chief of the company). Gasoline for the helicopters along with heavy equipment (like a stove and refrigerator, a gas-powered generator, lumber for the tent, etc.) was brought in on Cordova Airlines DC-3's as well as an old C-119 "Flying Boxcar." I remember watching the "Flying Boxcar" land because he came in over the camp so low that we thought he was going to crash. Evidently the May Creek strip slopes down to the north, and the pilot thought he needed to be lower. He didn't crash, but his propellers surely chopped through the trees before he landed on the runway.

The first few days were spent going out in one of the two helicopters, a Bell G-2 and a supercharged Bell G-3, to get acquainted with the general area. We flew up the Nizina and Chitistone rivers, and over in the Young Creek area. In 1961 there were only very rudimentary maps of the area, and large parts of the Wrangells were not covered by topographic maps. However, we did have extensive coverage of the area on aerial photographs, so we decided to plot our geological data on the aerial photographs and record our observations in our field notebooks. Because I had two years completed toward my Ph. D. and a year of experience in southeastern Alaska, I was one of several of the geologists given

the task of a broad scale reconnaissance of the southern flank of the Wrangells. First we worked from the Nizina River

decided to land on the glacier below the cliff and locate samples that probably came from the "interesting-looking" area on

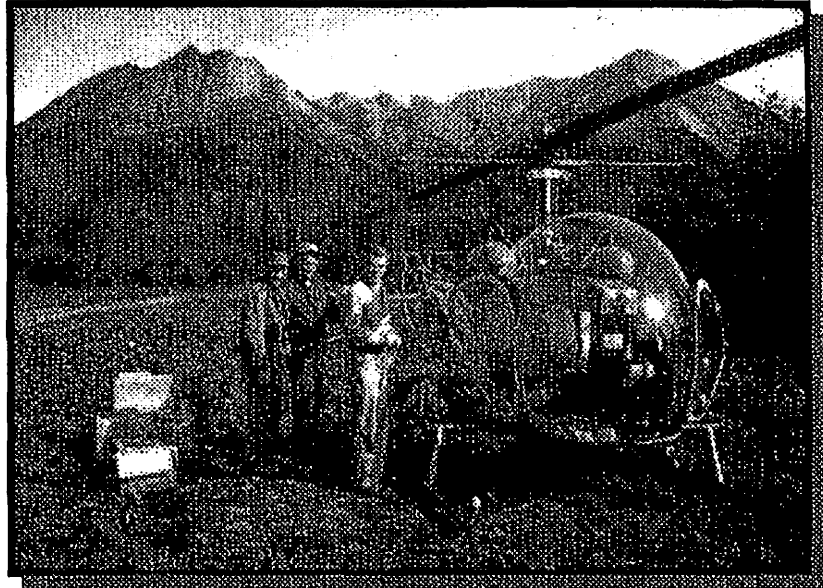


Photo courtesy the author

FRANK BLAIR, THE AUTHOR AND BOB NOKES LEAVING FOR THE FIELD IN MAY CREEK. SOURDOUGH PEAK IN THE BACKGROUND.

almost to the Yukon border, along the Chitistone River, Glacier Creek, Canyon Creek, and on east in the Barnard Glacier area. We flew up among the high peaks and down along the valleys, looking for evidence of possible mineral deposits. We landed where we could to get rock samples—on ridges, on glaciers, and along streams. Thankfully, most landings and takeoffs were pretty routine, but some were downright terrifying. Up close to the mountains as we were, the winds were very unpredictable and treacherous. For example, we could see some mineralization up on a cliff on the south side of University Peak, and tried to get as close as possible to look at it. Winds coming over the cliff blew down on top of the rotor blades, and we did all sorts of gyrations before the pilot got the chopper under control again. We finally

the cliff. (The mineral of interest turned out to be molybdenite.) On some occasions, when we had some "white-knuckle" maneuvers, we geologists would think, "Thank God, we are out of that," and then the pilot would remark, "Guys, we are not out of this thing, yet!" Now, when the PILOTS were worried, we were especially nervous! Sometimes when the wind blew down on the rotor blades, the pilot simply couldn't keep the chopper in the air, and we had some pretty rough landings. I must say, however, that our two pilots, Ray Hausmann and Bob Nokes were truly outstanding men at the controls, and, although we had a number of tense and exciting moments, we never did crash.

It might be worth mentioning here that I am very prone to airsickness, and the bouncing and pitching of the



helicopter among the peaks was beyond my limit. Even with Dramamine or Marazine, I surely used a lot of "urp bags" during the hundreds of hours I spent in the choppers. In especially bad turbulence, I would have the pilot land, and after a half an hour or so on the ground I was ready to get back to work.

Over the course of three to four weeks, we covered the area

just inside the portal there were 50-100 cases of old dynamite along one wall of the adit. We didn't know how old the dynamite was, but it was probably 30 years or more old, and there were pools of a liquid near the cases. We didn't know if it was nitroglycerine or just water, but we decided not to try to find out. We carefully walked back out of the adit, climbed

close to "town" that we got all summer.

It would be very misleading if I have created the impression that all we did was fly around the mountains "sight-seeing." In order to get a good look at the rocks, we did a lot of climbing in the mountains, some of it in very difficult conditions. We usually carried ropes, pitons and carabiners to help us through the difficult spots, and "crampons" for work on glaciers. Sometimes we worked our way up the mountains, or we made traverses along the slopes. Other times the chopper would let us off at or near the top of a mountain and we would work our way down, examining the rocks as we went. On one particular day, July 4, 1961, we were let off high on the ridge north of the old Green Butte Mine and planned to work our way down to McCarthy Creek. The first part of the traverse was fairly routine, and no one noticed that none of us had any ropes with us. However, as we got farther down the slope it became progressively steeper, and because we were in a shear zone, nearly all of the rocks

were loose. We probably should have gone back up, called the chopper, and got the climbing gear to complete the traverse, but we didn't. After several hours of very precarious climbing we had reached the point of no return — we HAD to go on down the mountain. It was obvious to us that, if we ever started falling we would go down a thousand feet or more. Progress down the mountain was slow because we sometimes ended up on overhanging cliffs and had to retrace our way. I think that all of us felt that we were not going to make it down alive. But after about six hours of very stressful

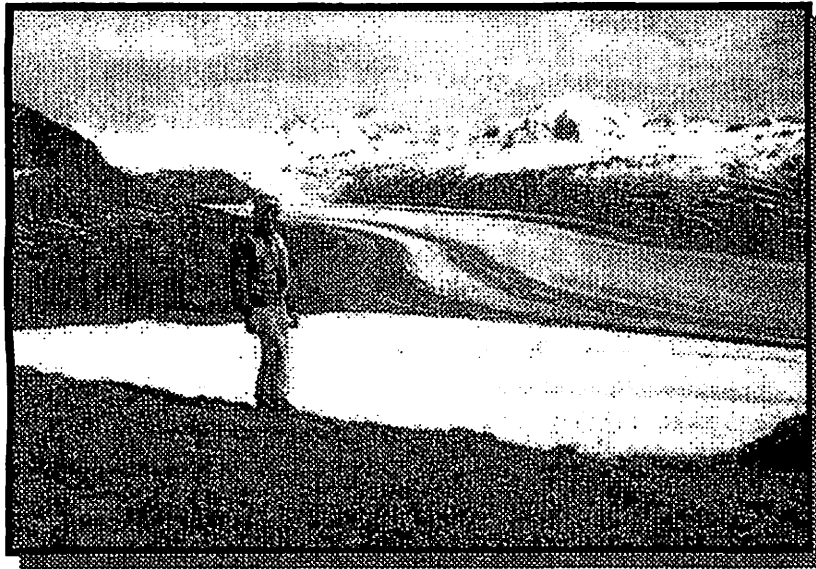


Photo courtesy the author

JUNCTION OF ROHN AND REGAL GLACIERS TO FORM THE NIZINA GLACIER. HIGH WRANGELLS IN THE BACKGROUND.

from about the Barnard Glacier westward to the Long Glacier area on the south flank of Mt. Wrangell. While we were working in the area to the west we rented a room in the hotel in Chitina—the one with all the ghosts painted on it, and called "The Spooks Nook." We flew across the Copper River each day, going up the Kotsina and Kuskulana valleys, where we examined many old prospects and mine workings. I remember one old mine in particular. We landed on a small ledge above the adit and climbed down to look at the rocks exposed in the old workings. To our surprise,

back up to the chopper and flew off. And we never did learn whether there were any interesting rocks in the mine! I sometimes wonder whatever happened to all that dynamite! There was a large slab of "float" native copper in Chitina that weighed more than a ton resting on two posts. We were told that it had been recovered from the gravels in the Nizina River, somewhere near the junction with the Chitistone River. I'm not sure why it was displayed in Chitina, but I took a picture of it. I noticed when we returned in 1998 that it was gone. We stayed in Chitina about ten days, and then moved back out to May Creek. That was as



climbing, we all did make it to the bottom of the cliff, and radioed the chopper to pick us up. I don't think I have ever been more emotionally drained than I was at the end of that day. I remember telling McKee that if THAT was what I had to do for this job, he could send me home. He assured me that we weren't expected to do that kind of work, and so I stayed.

We saw a great deal of wildlife as we flew around in the mountains and the valleys. It was a rare day that we didn't see a number of moose and grizzly bears. The bears seemed to be in the same areas day after day, and we were told that one of their favorite foods was the ground squirrels that were abundant in places. We also saw many mountain goats, especially in the Young Creek area. And, of course we saw the beautiful Dall sheep. Every now and then we saw a wolf from the chopper. I recall seeing a black wolf out near Gilahina Butte one day. In camp, we saw many tracks showing that moose had walked through the camp at night, but we never saw one in camp during the day. We did see a lynx go along the perimeter of the camp one day, a very impressive animal. Mostly we saw the little red squirrels that were common around camp.

In addition to our geology picks, lunches and survival gear we had a wide array of geophysical instruments, which we used to measure the magnetic properties of the rocks and to measure how a number of different types of electrical currents behaved within the rocks. To do this, we carried the instruments up into the mountains in the helicopters, and ALSO on our backs over some very rugged terrain.

Remember that this was before transistors, so the equipment was heavy, and the batteries necessary to power it were also heavy. Many of the geophysical surveys required 4-6 people to string the various cables and man the instruments. So several geologists as well as the geophysical technicians would be transported out to the various sites where the work was being

Newfoundland of English ancestry had been in the Canadian Army at the outbreak of the war, stationed in Singapore. He was captured by the Japanese and spent the war in a Japanese concentration camp. These two men seemed to harbor NO ill-will toward one another, and talked fairly freely about their experiences. The third technician was Wilt Seguin,

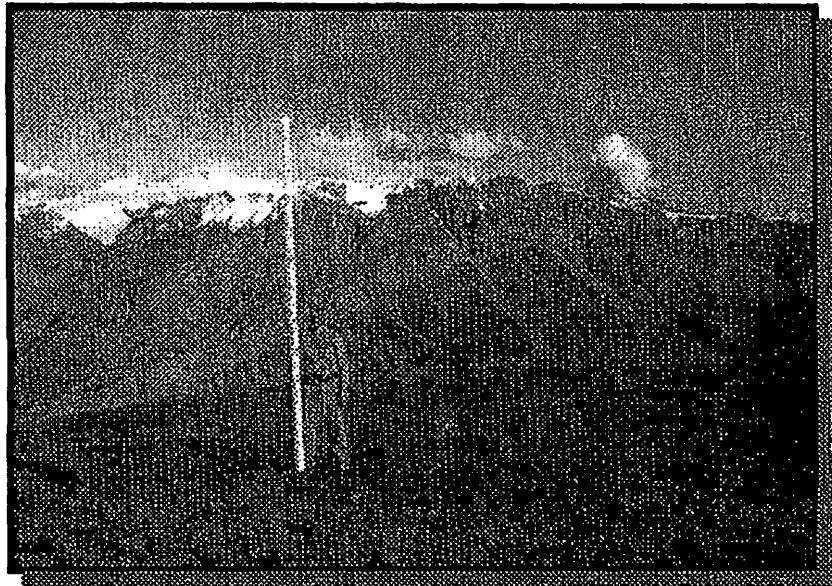


Photo courtesy the author

HOLDING A STADIA ROD DURING SURVEYING FOR CLAIM-STAKING ON NIKOLAI RIDGE.

done. This involved several trips by the chopper in the morning and again in the evening.

The geophysical technicians working with us were Canadians, and they were a very interesting group of guys. Frank Wakida was of Japanese extraction. His parents had had a fleet of taxis in Vancouver, but after Pearl Harbor, the business was expropriated by the Canadian government and the family was interred for the duration of the war in a detention camp at Kamloops, British Columbia. I don't think they were ever compensated for their loss after the war. And a fellow from

a French-Canadian from Chibougamau, Quebec. He bunked above me for two summers. During the day he spoke quite good English, but he spoke almost constantly in his sleep at night — always in French. He also played solitaire, and he must have known a hundred different kinds of solitaire, for I don't recall ever seeing him play the same game twice in a row.

I mentioned that one of our helicopters was a supercharged Bell G-3. This more powerful chopper was used to fly around in the mountains towing a prototype geophysical instrument

called an Airborne Afmag specially designed for helicopters, which measured natural electrical currents within the earth. We were hoping that this instrument would help us find another deposit like the Kennecott mine. It did locate a number of "anomalies," which we then tested with other electrical devices on the ground. To do

had to file claims and stake the area. So we cut about 100 stakes to the proper length, got out the transit and stadia rod and flew the materials up the "claim area" as we called it. We surveyed out the various claims, and set a stake at each corner, and made a map of the area. As it worked out, we contracted the drilling out to Texas Gulf Sulfur

but had to shed it quickly when we came back down to camp at the end of the day. One day as we were coming over the top of Sourdough Peak on the way back to camp, something happened to the helicopter—the pilot announced that he couldn't control it. He set it into auto-rotation and we headed down toward the Nizina River as he called "May Day, May Day!" on the radio. There was no doubt that the chopper was going to go down. Bob Nokes was trying to make it to a sand bar in the Nizina. The rotor blades clipped the tops out of a few spruce trees in the last 40-50 feet, and we made a hard, bouncing landing on the sand bar. There seemed to be no damage, and Milt, the mechanic was on his way out in the other chopper. He found that somehow the small cable that controls the tail rotor had slipped off a pulley near the rear of the tail boom. He put the cable back on the pulley and said, "OK guys, you can take off again," but you know, no one was especially anxious to do so right then! This "crash landing" was the closest thing to a real crash that we had.

Life in the May Creek camp was quite simple. We went out into the mountains every day the weather permitted, and in 1961 we had a stretch of good weather that lasted nearly two months. We were really getting exhausted when, fortunately for us, an outside consultant, Virgil Mann, arrived in camp and gave us all a day off after 40 consecutive days on the job. So what did we do? We loaded our home made sluice-box and our gold pans onto the helicopter and flew up Rex Creek to look for some GOLD! We actually did a lot more physical work that day than we did on many of our working



Photo courtesy the author

SHOVELING GRAVEL INTO OUR HOMEMADE SLUICE BOX LOOKING FOR GOLD ON REX CREEK.

this, we had to carry some pretty heavy equipment around in the mountains. Remember that this was before the advent of transistors, and the instruments were bulky and heavy. So we surely got our daily workouts!

The most interesting anomaly area turned out to be on Nikolai Ridge, between the Nizina River and McCarthy Creek. We spent several weeks, conducting almost every kind of geophysical study we could think of in the area. All the testing we did suggested that this area had promise. But the only way we could really test it was to do some diamond "core drilling." And before we could do that we

Company, who drilled several core holes during the summer of 1962. I was offered the "job" of staying over the winter of 1961-62 in May Creek camp to "guard the claims," but I turned it down so I could return to Madison to continue my studies.

Although we did some geophysical projects in the stream valleys (like McCarthy Creek), most of the areas we worked in were between 6,000-8,000 feet, whereas our camp was at a little over 1,000 feet. Some days we worked in snow storms, but it may have been 75-80 degrees in camp. We often needed long underwear for the weather where we worked,

days, but, hey, this was fun. We came home with more than an ounce of gold (\$35.00 worth at that time), which we divided into three shares. The next day we were back on the job again! We had made a number of evening trips up Chititu Creek in the old WW II jeep that was in camp, so we had had some practice in panning. The road up to where we panned for gold was atrocious. It was mainly a first or second gear road—or we might get up to 20 mph on a few of the good stretches. We never found much gold in Chititu, but we found quite a few copper nuggets. Perhaps that was fitting, since *chiti* means “copper” in the language of the Native Americans of the region.

We had some real excitement on the way home from panning on Chititu Creek one evening when two grizzly cubs went up trees when we came around a corner. Of course, they weren't alone, and the sow decided to come after us. Remember that a high speed escape was not an option for us. I was driving the old jeep, which, by the way had no top on it. Although I was driving as fast as I could control the jeep, the bear was gaining on us rapidly. Frank Blair was imploring me to go faster because the bear was nearly at the rear bumper! As usual, we had our trusty .44 Magnums with us, but Frank was so busy holding on to the windshield that he was never able to pull the revolver out of the holster. After a few hundred yards (it seemed like MILES!) the bear stopped and turned back toward the cubs, and we got our hearts back down in our chests! I must say that I had a rather fitful sleep that night. I woke up the next morning to see a black bear's head in the



Photo courtesy of the author

#### PANNING THE CONCENTRATES FROM THE SLUICE BOX ON REX CREEK.

doorway of our tent! There I was, in my sleeping bag about 10-12 feet from the bear in the doorway. I let out a yell that woke up the others in the tent (no, the whole camp)! But the bear did amble off into the woods. As it turned out, these were the only two incidents with bears that I had in three summers, and they occurred within a period of less than 12 hours. The rest of the black bear story, however, is that it had found our food-supply tent, and began tearing it to pieces. We tried for several days to scare it away by shooting in the air, but it wasn't about to leave all that food behind. Finally we had to kill it and then move the several hundred pound carcass out of the camp. We rigged a sling under one of the helicopters and carried it off and dumped it about ten miles from camp.

The water in May Creek was too cold to bathe in, although we did take “sponge baths” occasionally. We decided to rig up a shower so we could clean up

on a regular basis. We painted a square five-gallon gasoline can black and tied it up in a tree. We had a hose on the nozzle for our “shower head.” We'd fill the can with water from the creek in the morning and let the sun warm it during the day. By evening it made for a pretty good shower. Of course, we did all our own laundry in a wash tub and scrub board, and dried it in on a clothes line behind our tent.

Old Hixon, our cook, was not only very talented at preparing meals, he was also very accommodating. When we brought home a box of grayling we had caught while out working, he would cook up a mighty tasty meal. Other times we brought home a pack full of rhubarb we had harvested from some old abandoned cabin, and he'd make a tasty dessert. But all of our food was excellent. Jack Wilson did a fine job of picking out the groceries that he delivered each week.

(To be continued.)

# Fire Management Plan draft presented

BY ED LACHAPPELLE AND MEG HUNT

**E**ight local community members gathered at the McCarthy Lodge on the morning of April 11 to hear a National Park Service (NPS) review and discussion of the Wrangell- St Elias National Park & Preserve draft Fire Management Plan. Steve Hunt, Environmental Protection Specialist; Marshall Neeck, Kennicott District Ranger; Marsha Henderson, Fire Mangement Officer (FMO); and Stacie MacIntosh, Archaeologist, represented the Park Service.

Henderson outlined the Plan and its background. Focus is on forest and brush fire protection, with four levels of response to a fire: Limited or do nothing unless a crisis of some sort develops, Modified, or optional response in designated areas depending on available resources, Full, or aggressive suppression of fires, and Critical, or aggressive suppression with highest priority for available resources. The Kennicott Mill Site, for instance, is designated critical, as are other community areas. Backcountry areas are generally designated limited. A large, colored poster displaying the various classified zones throughout the Park will be furnished to the community.

Henderson explained that

the lead firefighting agencies varied from one part of Alaska to another. In the area occupied by the Park and Preserve, the lead agency is Alaska Department of Natural Resources (AKDNR).

In the ensuing discussion, questions were raised by Mark Vail about prescribed burns and their local notification. NPS presently has no plans for prescribed burns within the Park and Preserve. If such future burns are planned, the necessary process and public input can take up to a year.

Participation of local community fire-fighting resources were discussed, with the latter oriented more to structure protection. Local Fire Chief Jeannie Miller reported continuing frustration with getting the State Fire Marshall to conduct training sessions for the community volunteer fire department.

She also noted problems with getting available volunteers with continuity from year to year.

Henderson's office in Fairbanks (she is FMO for several parks) will be adding a new staff person devoted to fire prevention. The following discussion examined at length the problems of informing and

educating visitors on fire safety practices, with particular emphasis on fireworks. A proposal was made to work with AKDNR to establish a fire hazard warning sign (Low, Medium, High, etc.) at the end of the road. George Cebula volunteered to service such a sign daily and keep it current.

The Park Service may be able to assist local fire protection efforts by supplying equipment. Any additional surplus vehicles would have to be acquired through a State program.

The meeting then turned to another topic, a brief discussion of an Environmental Assessment for John Klaus's application for a permit to extend an aviation easement for his Ultima Thule runway by completing clearing under 3 acres of Park land at the end of the runway to improve the approach. Al Gagnon suggested that the runway would be better improved and the impact on the valley landscape reduced by exchanging the proposed acreage for a similar amount of land at the other end of the runway.

There were no further comments and the meeting adjourned.

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**"[T]he first prerequisite of self-government is to govern one's own passions, resentment and anger." —Alan Keyes**

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## CLASSIFIEDS

**Property Wanted**— Looking for property in the McCarthy Kennecott area. 5+ acres, with or without a cabin. 314-849-8419 or 314-369-8419 Email [JMR-BKR@worldnet.att.net](mailto:JMR-BKR@worldnet.att.net)

**Subscribe to the Copper Valley Weekly.** \$15.00 for one year, 25 issues. Keep up with what's going on in the Copper River Area, everywhere north of the Million Dollar Bridge. Call 907-822-3927, write Copper Valley Weekly, HC 60 Box 229, Copper Center AK 99573, e-mail [cweekly@cvinternet.net](mailto:cweekly@cvinternet.net) or stop in at Lightwood's Mile 6 ½ Edgerton Hwy.

## McCarthy Lodge to host history discussions and slide shows

*July 4th 2002 event for the local community will reveal more secrets of the area's past*

MCCARTHY, ALASKA, APRIL 16, 2002 -

McCarthy Lodge announces a new addition to the town's already famous Fourth of July celebrations. This year, everyone is invited to enjoy several discussions and slide shows presented by local historians and relatives of McCarthy's past residents.

Starting at 9:00AM in the McCarthy Lodge, we will kick off the start of what promises to be an exciting day. A presentation by Dick Anderson will offer new insights into our town's past.

Anderson's mom grew up in McCarthy, and this will be his first presentation to the community of his extensive collection of photographs, documents, and local records collected over the years.

Goffrey Bleakley from the National Park Service will be presenting information on McCarthy's role as a supply and mercantile center for the area, and a wider perspective on the town's relationship to the rest of the Copper Valley.

Jim Edwards will be presenting a 90-minute slide presentation. Barbara Wilkens, a relative of J.P. Hubrick, will be here to discuss newly found details of Hubrick's life. Friends of Kennecott plan a presentation on the relationship between Kennecott and McCarthy. There are many more surprises about McCarthy's history to be revealed, so don't miss this interesting addition to the annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations in McCarthy!

## House Puts Brakes on Snowmachine Law

*Passes HB 397 to Eliminate Rider's Need for Drivers License*

(JUNEAU) —

Alaskans will not need a driver's license to operate snowmachines or other motorized vehicles off-road, under legislation sponsored by Rep. Vic Kohring (R-Wasilla/ Peters Creek) and passed by the House April 10, 2002.

"It is ludicrous to assume that passing a test on traffic signals to get a driver's license improves your ability to drive a Ski-Do on the frozen Kuskokwim River," said Kohring. "House Bill 397 simply restores common sense to Alaska's law regarding off-road vehicles."

Kohring introduced HB 397 after a 2001 state-wide study of winter transportation issues revealed widespread ignorance about several safety and legal aspects to off-road snowmachine operation. Media reports focused

public attention on a largely unenforced 1978 state law requiring anyone operating a snowmachine on public land or waters, whether in or out of town, to have a driver's license.

The news that law enforcement agencies planned to resume enforcing that law caused an uproar in rural Alaska, where adults and children alike use snowmachines as a primary means of day-to-day transportation. Many urban Alaskans who use snowmachines for recreation also questioned whether licensing improved safety, or simply represented a government intrusion on popular family activities.

"Having a driver's license has nothing to do with safe operation of an off-road vehicle," Kohring said. "If safety is the concern, then the focus needs to

be on safety, not on requiring a driver's license."

Kohring's bill, which passed with support from legislators from both urban and rural districts, would allow operators of all off-road motor vehicles, including snowmachines, boats, airplanes or ATVs, to operate off-road on public property without a license.

"Those who depend on snowmobiles, boats, and ATVs for basic transportation to work, hunt, and fish in many parts of Alaska need to have their rights protected," Kohring said. "HB 397 protects their rights, and still provides important safety protections for the use of such vehicles in town."

The bill passed 34-3, and notice of reconsideration on the bill was given.

## Morgan: Bill will help small communities

(JUNEAU)—

The House April 19 passed House Joint Resolution 47, calling on federal and state environmental regulators to exercise common sense and flexibility in imposing a new national mandate requiring use of ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel on rural Alaska.

HJR 47 responds to a recent national policy decision by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to require diesel trucks and buses to use diesel fuel containing no more than 15 parts per million of sulfur as of 2006, in an effort to reduce air pollution and related health and air quality impacts nationwide.

Rep. Carl Morgan (R-Aniak), who sponsored the resolution as co-chair of the House Commu-

ity and Regional Affairs Committee, said that while the regulations may be well-intentioned, they ignore the reality of how rural Alaska uses diesel fuel.

"I'm very concerned that imposition of these new standards will place an unfair expense on small communities that don't have the capability to stock multiple grades of diesel fuel, and which would be forced to buy only the new fuel that may cost up to 45 cents a gallon more," Morgan said.

Morgan noted that electrical companies testifying on the resolution said varying grades of diesel fuel would become increasingly difficult to obtain for existing systems under the new standards. Representatives of the state trucking industry

expressed concerns that the higher-cost diesel fuel would raise the costs to transport freight to and within Alaska.

In its response to the proposed regulations, the state Department of Environmental Conservation recommended accepting the national standards for communities on the state road system and the Alaska Marine Highway ferry system, and asked for an additional year to implement the regulations on the rest of the state.

HJR 47 encourages the federal and state agencies to work together to allow more time and flexibility in implementing the regulations on rural Alaska.

HJR 47 moves next to the Senate for consideration.

## Kott's recreational liability bill passes House

### *HB 319 Shares Responsibility for Outdoor Activity Hazards*

(JUNEAU)—

Alaskans and visitors willing to pay for the excitement of outdoor recreation in Alaska would share some of the legal liability for the risks of such activities, under House Bill 319, which passed the House April 19, 2002.

Sponsored by Rep. Pete Kott (R-Eagle River), HB 319 would clarify state insurance law to specify that clients of commercial outdoor recreation businesses accept the inherent risk of such activities and are partially responsible for any damages or injury resulting from such participation.

"While outdoor adventure and recreation activities are

some of Alaska's major attractions, high liability insurance costs can be prohibitive, especially for smaller businesses offering commercial recreation opportunities," Kott said. "By helping eliminate confusion about who is liable, and in what degree, for injuries that may occur during such activities, House Bill 319 should discourage unfair injury claims that can unreasonably hike insurance rates."

Small tourism companies taking clients on river rafting trips, guided hikes, snowboarding and sport fishing expeditions offer many of Alaska's most exciting outdoor adventures. HB

319 would clearly establish the responsibilities of commercial recreation operators and their clients who choose to participate in these or other, even more challenging recreational activities.

The bill lays out specific guidelines operators and participants must follow to minimize the possibility of accidents, and it in no way dilutes the obligation of outdoor recreation businesses to meet standards for safe operations, and proper training of their employees, Kott said.

HB 319 moves next to the Senate for consideration.

## Kennecott News

BY VICKI SNITZLER

This summer season will be another busy one out at Kennecott National Historic Landmark. Some of the projects planned for this season include stabilization work on the recreation hall, ore shoot, general manager's house, east bunkhouse, store, mill building, shaw building and machine shop. Some of the projects were started last year and some like the general manager's house are new. There will be some adit closure work at Erie Mine and Independence Gulch. Planning activities include repair of the Trestle across National Creek, potential improvements to the road between McCarthy and Kennecott, development of

interpretive themes and development of a concessions permit for Mill Building tours.

The amount of activities planned for this year means some new faces to help manage the workload. Ken Hutchinson who arrived in the park in February will be stationed in the area as the Maintenance Project Manager to give Jim Baker and the maintenance crew a hand. Marshall Neeck the Nabesna District Ranger has been re-assigned to Kennecott as the new Kennecott District Ranger and will be on site as well this summer. Marshall will be joined by his spouse Vicki Snitzler, the Park Planner, who will help oversee the interpretive rangers and keep tabs on the planning

projects. Other new staff will include an archeologist, curator and seasonal law enforcement ranger.

Additionally, park staff will be working with Friends of Kennicott, Wrangell Mountain Center, McCarthy Area Council, McCarthy Museum and other interested citizens on a variety of projects and issues. Some of these include the Kennicott River Wayside, McCarthy Road Environmental Impact Statement, a National Park Service campground on the east side of the river and an administrative site on the west side. We look forward to building partnership relationships with our neighbors as these projects develop.

## Best-selling British author visits McCarthy

*Pete McCarthy, author of "McCarthy's Bar," visits McCarthy!*

BY RICK KENYON

Recently we had the pleasure of sharing a moose pot roast and a delightful evening with the author of Britain's #1 best-selling book, Pete McCarthy. He is here researching his next book, to be called *The Road to McCarthy*.

Pete said he was pleasantly surprised when his first effort at a full-length book, called *McCarthy's Bar*, rose to the first position on the charts both in England and Ireland. A resident of Sussex, England, with an English father and Irish mother, Pete says he suffers from an identity crisis. Should he live in England or Ireland? *McCarthy's Bar* recounts his experiences traveling around Western Ireland. As *The Irish News* puts

it, "A travelogue of Ireland told through great set pieces and jokes...The author seems to have a natural aptitude for meeting funny, strange, and fascinating people. This book will make you laugh out loud."

Peter's new book, *The Road to McCarthy*, will be a pursuit of the McCarthy clans more interesting characters. He began in Ireland, then on to Gibraltar, Morocco, Tasmania, Montana and New York City before coming to our fair town. Pete is researching the James McCarthy for whom the town and McCarthy Creek are named.

Just how nearby on the family tree are James and Peter? We'll have to wait for the book to be published to find out!



WSEN staff photo

PETER MCCARTHY  
RELAXES AT THE MA  
JOHNSON HOTEL.



## Tim Eckstrom, 1918-2002

**K**ennecott-born pioneer, Tim W. Eckstrom, 83, died February 19, 2002, at Alaska Regional Hospital in Anchorage.

Mr. Eckstrom was born April 16, 1918, in Kennecott. He graduated from Cordova High School and the University of Washington. He later served in the U.S. Navy. Mr. Eckstrom worked as one of the first two customs officers at the Anchorage airport.

He was a 60 year member of the Elks Lodge

and a 56 year member of the American Legion. Mr. Eckstrom also held memberships in the Moose Lodge and Pioneers of Alaska.

His family said he loved Alaska and the mountains.

Mr. Eckstrom is survived by his wife, Eleanor Eckstrom of Anchorage. He was preceded in death by his parents, Tim and Anna Eckstrom; and sister, Mary Ann Eckstrom.

## Legislature honors Chris Richards

*Editor's Note: We received this from Representative Carl Morgan's office early in April.*

### Christopher Ray Richards

#### Memoriam

**T**he twenty-second Alaska State Legislature is pleased to honor the life of Christopher Ray Richards, a boy from Ohio, who followed his dream and embraced and lived the Alaskan adventure.

**B**orn April 3, 1953, Christopher Ray Richards grew up in Toledo, Ohio. He moved in 1974 to rural Homer, Alaska. Chris was fiercely independent and loved the freedom of the wild Alaska he adopted as his new home. He lived in a replica of a Sioux tipi the first year in Homer and then purchased an historic house in Kennicott in 1976. During those first years in Kennicott he was quite often the only one who stayed through the winter. This he said made him the only resident qualified to vote in town elections and therefore eligible to nominate and elect himself Mayor. On a credit card application requesting he disclose his assets he wrote: "a million dollar view." When asked how he survived the short days and long nights of the Alaskan winter, he replied, "Where else can you stand in your back yard and look down on two glaciers and where else are the stars any brighter or the aurora borealis any more beautiful?"

**I**n March 1983 Chris survived after being hit by three bullets fired by a man who went on to murder six people at the McCarthy airstrip. Although Chris was critically wounded he crawled through snow banks in freezing temperatures to alert others of the impending

danger only to be confronted by the murderer again. His heroic efforts that March morning were hallmark of his care for fellow frontiersmen. Chris recovered from the physical injuries though his right eye was damaged by one of the bullets resulting in occasional double vision. He never did completely recover from the psychological trauma. Chris vowed to never again let anyone hurt his friends and neighbors. His love of Kennicott and his friends was only equaled by his love for his faithful dog, Rudy.

**C**hris worked seasonally for the Department of Transportation for a number of years. He then went on to try several ventures in the abandoned mining town, including a convenience store, a tram west of McCarthy and a guiding business in the historic downtown district. He established the Kennicott McCarthy Wilderness Guides in the early 90's and led backcountry trips and historical tours of the old Kennicott Mining Complex.

**A** fire engulfed his Kennicott home, December 19, 2001, which tragically took his life. The Twenty-second Alaska State Legislature extends its deepest condolences to his family and to his friends and neighbors in Homer, McCarthy and Kennicott who had the great fortune to know him. His friendship, adventurous spirit, strong opinions, stories and laughter will be missed.

# Good news from the Wrangells

BY BONNIE KENYON

Words of encouragement, sincere compliments, or good news from a neighbor or friend are like heirlooms lovingly passed down and to be treasured. That is how I look on those special Emails, articles or sayings that are shared with me from many of you. I have a specific folder where I keep them with the hope of finding the right time to pass them on to our WSEN readers. Sometimes it is not easy deciding which "good news" to share. For this issue one in particular stood out. It comes out of a time of sharing from George Cebula on a Sunday service not too long ago. He read a poem that had been reprinted from the December 1982 *Reader's Digest*.

The title of this marvelous piece of encouragement is *Anyway*. It goes like this:

People are unreasonable, illogical and self-centered.

Love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives.

Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies.

Succeed anyway.

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.

Be honest and frank anyway.

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow.

Do good anyway.

The biggest people with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest people with the smallest minds.

Think big anyway.

People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs.

Fight for some underdogs anyway.

What you spent years building may be destroyed overnight.

Build anyway.

Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth.

Give the world the best you've got anyway.

The "good news" in this poem is that you and I don't have to allow the misunderstandings, misrepresentations or maybe even outright lies to imprison us from doing good. We can choose to give up on people, choose to be constantly offended at someone, be increasingly critical or continually seeing ourselves victimized or we can choose to be a blessing and be productive anyway.

A minister by the name of Charles Spurgeon made this statement that encouraged me and I hope it will do the same for you. He said: You will never be in a position where God cannot help you.

Sometimes when negative things happen to us and surround us, it is difficult to stand alone. Yes, we have friends, neighbors and family members, but I have found (and I believe many of you have, too) that we need the encouragement and strength from the One who created us and knows us best. Let's give Him access into our daily lives and just be encouraged anyway!

## ATTENTION McCarthy area residents and friends

*Community Open House celebrating  
the marriage of Erin Adkins and  
Ruben Scherle*

*Location: Tailor Made Pizza in  
downtown McCarthy*

*Outdoor Barbecue and refreshments*

*Sunday, May 26th at 4:00 p.m.*

For more information, feel free to  
contact Erin at: 907-350-0495 or  
write P. O. Box 240093, Anchorage,  
AK. 99524-0093

# OUR TOWN

May 19, 1938

The Kennecott Star  
Published, Edited and  
Printed By Pupils of  
Blackburn School  
No. V Kennecott, Alaska,  
Thursday, May 19, 1938.  
FREE - By Carrier, Five  
Cents.

## CREEK MINES GET READY FOR SEASON

C. H. Kraemer has had a full crew of men since the middle of April on Chititu creek, which is 14 or 15 men. Leonard Brenwick has been freighting for Kraemer. He will haul 75 tons altogether. Mr. Kraemer will be ready to mine as soon as the water starts to run.

## DAN CREEK OPERATIONS

Jack Price of Dan Creek has about 17 men working with him. At present they are getting the pipe line and sluice boxes in shape so they will be ready to mine when the water comes.

## OUTFIT FOR CHISANA

A mining outfit of about 15 tons left Seattle on May 15. When it arrives at McCarthy on the railroad it will be flown to Chisana by Merle Smith of the Cordova Air Service. It will be flown over Skolai pass into

Chisana. When it gets to Chisana it will be used to develop a gold quartz property of W. A. Sulzer, who was once governor of New York.

## LONG AT COPPER CREEK

John Long will mine again this year at Copper creek for O. A. Nelson. He has been freighting all of his supplies by dogteam from McCarthy. Fred Wittikop and John Stanfield will work with him this year.

## HOSPITAL NOTES

Nicolais Jenson, who has been at the Kennecott hospital for some time, is improving. Mr. Jenson is a photographer of great repute. Mrs. Olaf Nelson, of Valdez, is up and around, and expects to fly home in the near future.

## SCHOOL HAS LITTLE SICKNESS TROUBLE

Only three persons were absent because of sickness this year. The rest were absent because of the rough road between McCarthy and Kennecott. The month ending October 1 had 89.95% attendance, which was the lowest. This was because 60% of

the school left for a week's visit in Fairbanks. The best month was March, with 100 per cent attendance. Attendance for the whole year was 96.88 per cent. During the first six weeks there were five pupils and during the rest of the time there were seven except for the last month when there were six.

## PHOTO IN MAGAZINE

Werner Henschel took a picture of Mount Blackburn which will be printed in an early issue of the Alaska Sportsman. The picture was taken from the glacier and shows the mountain in the distance. Werner says the picture isn't the right size for the cover but will probably be the frontispiece.

Lyle Morris has been sick with the flue and out of school for two weeks.

Mrs. Paul Werner and Mrs. A. W. Tolnen arrived May 17.

## SORRY CARD

We are sorry that the paper is three days late. We ran out of ink but the Cordova Times saved the STAR from sudden extinction after several futile attempts at making

it ourselves. - The Editors

Term Completion Calls  
For Summary of Work  
END OF YEAR MARKED  
BY FULL PROMOTION  
LIST. NO SERIOUS  
DIFFICULTIES. SPECIAL  
INTEREST SHOWN IN  
GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY  
AND HEALTH.

With tomorrow marking the end of the school year, it may be a good idea to review the year's studies. Tommy O'Neill, first grade, has quite a mathematical ability. He finished second grade arithmetic and has done about a month of third. He expects to finish second grade reading matter this summer. He did good work in spelling and his art work shows promise of some day comparing with that of Leonardo da Vinci. He has a promising voice and will probably make Lawrence Tibbet ashamed of himself.

## RONALD GONE

Ronald Brososky, second grader, left a month ago. He did third grade work from the middle of the year. In his quiet way he got things done, and he showed promise in story

writing.

#### JOHNNY COMES LATE

Johnny Pytel started late in the year. When interested he plows into things for all he is worth. His voice is good and since he comes from a long line of Latin ancestors he will rival Tommy O'Neill after Lawrence Tibbet has been put to shame. Johnny shows interest in history, geography and health. He is particularly interested in the way the geography book tells about Alaskans sitting around in igloos toasting their toes on blocks of ice while tearing off large slabs of walrus meat.

#### BILL THE STUDENT

Wm. Humpheries, while not considered the final authority in handwriting, made up for this by his knowledge of geography, history, health and kindred subjects. Einstein had trouble with mathematics in school, so maybe Bill will be a super-scientist. He is a studious soul who shows signs of future scholastic greatness. He uses the Socratic method of discussion.

#### LYLE, THE AUTHOR

Lyle Morris was in the sixth grade. What Lyle lacks in volubility she makes up for in story writing. One of her stories was put in the Alaska School Bulletin (for which she wishes to

thank Mr. Karnes). She is good in arithmetic, and was interested in what the geography had to say about South America and Mexico.

#### HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS

Bruce and Frank Morris worked together in two of their courses but they hardly make a pair. Bruce gets things done by blood pressure, while Frank does his by patient plugging. They weren't very wild over Spanish but Frank found geometry his long suit and Bruce was an expert in English. Both did well in world history and have covered a thick high school text and part of a college book. The college book has too many oversized words, tho.

#### Boat Taking Shape

John Letendre is building a 15 ft. river boat for use on the Chitina river. The boat is needed for crossing to the Bremner mine. All of the wood was gotten right here at Kennecott. John will put it together here and then haul it down to the river.

#### RARE BIPED CAPTURED

Pat Hooks was caught in a gopher trap this week and has a bruise on his arm. He is pretty mad about it too. He says he would not mind being caught in a wolverine trap, but that a weasel trap is an insult. - WH

#### Bill Slimpert To Leave

Bill Slimpert is getting prepared for the summer. He hiked up Mount Porphyry to above the timber line.

Bill is soon leaving for his claims with Bill Mahar. If the camp shuts down he says he will trap. Next spring he intends to make a river boat and put an outboard "kicker" on it.

On May 2 it was reported that Lake Baltoff was still covered with ice, except around the edges. If the good weather keeps up, we can go swimming about the tenth of June.

Ten inches of snow fell on April 20.

#### BUY HORSELESS CARRIAGE

Werner Henschel and Louie Wick bought a green car from Mrs. Murray in McCarthy. The brakes and a few other details needed readjusting. They expect to use the car for fishing trips and other outings.

#### DISGUSTED DENTIST

Dr. A. W. Coutts arrived here on April 25 to do dental work, and then left on May 6 for his Cordova home. Dr. Coutts stated that he left early because so many men from the mines would get a lay off for a day or two in order to see the dentist and then would go down to McCarthy and get drunk instead, that he ran out

of customers.

Ivan Bolin was hurt May 10 while working on the bridge at Chitina and was brought to the Kennecott hospital on a speeder. He had been hit in the face by a drift pin. He left the hospital the morning of May 12.

On May 6 Steve Guitana, Jack Morris and Bill Bruno went to Chitina. They put in a new length of cable on the river tramway. They returned on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

#### RINK DEMOLISHED

The yard gang tore down the skating rink two weeks ago. The rink was made with the first real freeze up. At first it was used quite a bit, but after awhile it was not used for weeks on end.

On May 4 a speeder broke down at Long Lake and was towed up to Kennecott by another speeder. The speeder was fixed the next day.

#### OSCAR AT DAN CREEK

Oscar Watsjold came back from Seattle on April 30. He left on December 18, 1937. He went to Seward on his way to Seattle. Oscar went to high school in Seward once. He is going to work at Dan Creek. - LM

A brilliant red aurora borealis was reported on April 16 by the engineers.

## Of Long-Distance Travel and Lynx

*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. He can be reached by email at [nrozell@dino.gi.alaska.edu](mailto:nrozell@dino.gi.alaska.edu).*

BY NED ROZELL

With a recent crash in Alaska's snowshoe hare population, life is getting tough for lynx, the leggy cats of the north.

"We're in a lynx bust," said wildlife technician Stephanie Rickabaugh of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge in Soldotna. "We're getting several calls of lynx getting into chicken coops. They tend to stay out of the developed areas when hare numbers are higher."

When their favorite food disappears, some lynx die, a few stay to hunt the lean country, and some pad away to new territory. A Montana scientist has determined that lynx have covered enough ground over the years that animals from Alaska to Montana are closely related.

Lynx live in most areas of Alaska, in spruce forests, lowlands, and other places favored by snowshoe hares. The slender cats have long legs and big feet that leave puffy round tracks in the snow. Lynx are abundant in Alaska and Canada but are rare enough in the Lower 48 that Michael Schwartz has seen nothing but scattered tracks in the last few years in his study area along the Montana/Idaho border. Schwartz is a biologist studying lynx with the U.S. Forest Service at its Rocky Mountain Research Station in Missoula, Montana. He recently gathered genetic

information from 17 groups of lynx from Alaska, Canada, and the Lower 48 and found striking similarities, suggesting that lynx travel long distances and interbreed rather than existing



photo courtesy Kenai National Wildlife Refuge staff.

in isolated pockets.

Schwartz called on Alaska scientists for blood and tissue samples of lynx from areas including the Kenai Peninsula, Paxson, Copper Center, Gold King Creek and Susitna Lake. Ted Bailey, a biologist completing a 20-year study of lynx on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, donated lynx blood samples to Schwartz, as did Gordon Jarrell of the University of Alaska Museum in Fairbanks.

Schwartz found strong evidence of "gene flow," meaning that lynx throughout western North America may travel even more than wolves and coyotes.

Schwartz's genetic evidence contradicts a theory that lynx live in tight groups and don't

travel much. Scientists subscribing to this theory say lynx's synchronized 10-year cycles of boom and bust are attributable to large weather patterns, such as El Nino or the North Atlantic Oscillation, that affect snowshoe hare abundance over the whole continent.

Northern scientists have found that lynx sometimes cover a lot of ground. Randy Zarnke, wildlife disease specialist with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, said a trapper in Fort Yukon caught a lynx that biologists fit with a radio collar near Whitehorse a few years ago.

"That's a straight-line distance of 400 miles, and God knows it didn't walk in a straight line," Zarnke said. "These times in the cycle when rabbits are disappearing, lynx will go a long way to find food."

Alaskans might not see as many lynx in the next few years, but lynx will be back when the hares rebound. The Lower 48 is a different story. In the entire Rocky Mountains and Pacific Northwest, only a few pockets of lynx exist, which gives Schwartz's work added urgency. If lynx are all interconnected, as he thinks, land managers need to figure out the types of country that allow lynx to travel long distances and protect those hare-rich corridors, possibly allowing the silent cats to rebound in the Lower 48.

# A Day in the Life of a Spring Black Bear

*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. He can be reached by email at nrozell@dino.gi.alaska.edu. This column first appeared in spring, 1997.*

By Ned Rozell

Imagine, for a few minutes, that you are not reading this. Pretend it's springtime in Alaska, and you are a black bear living somewhere between Ketchikan and the southern flanks of the Brooks Range. You have slept fitfully for the past six months, stirring on occasion to roll over, or, if you're a pregnant female, to give birth to cubs. Your body temperature, about 92 degrees Fahrenheit during your six months in the den, will soon rise to its normal 100 degrees.

You somehow sense that it's time for a change. Perhaps prompting you is the persistent sunlight that strikes the snow covering your den. Maybe meltwater collecting in your bed wakes you, and reminds you of how uncomfortable you are. Whatever the reason, you nose toward the light and paw at the framework of twigs you months ago pulled over the entrance to the den.

After digging away the twigs, you push at the blanket of snow that has covered your den during Alaska's fall, winter, and early spring. With a little shoving and scraping, you break through to blue sky. The air tastes cool and fresh.

You pull yourself skyward, creating a tunnel of snow and earth that is a little more than a foot wide. Sluggish, you stand on four stiff legs, feeling the

warmth of the sun for the first time in half a year. If you are a healthy bear, you are one of the first to emerge from the den. Less healthy, skinnier bears come out next, followed by mother bears with cubs. Tiny, woolly cubs, born in January and early February, weigh a few pounds each.

You stumble into spring air and sunshine. Walking hurts your feet; you shed your callused foot pads from the previous year, and the new skin needs toughening. Seeing a dry spot under a nearby spruce tree, you lightfoot over and plop down like a tired dog.

Your body slowly reacts to the small amount of activity you've just performed. You feel the need to use functions that were shut down during the last half year. For example, you haven't urinated or defecated since entering the den in late September. While you were curled up, your liver and kidneys recycled your urine. Your kidneys have filtered your blood of impurities, which are normally released as urine. While hibernating, your urine was reabsorbed back into your bloodstream. The urine flowed to your liver, which converted it to useful amino acids.

Your den is spotless. You haven't defecated there because you can't. Your intestinal pathway is plugged with dried

fecal matter. That discomfort, along with your empty stomach, inspires you to search for food and water. A melt puddle suffices for water and last year's low-bush cranberries, popping through the melting snowpack, explode with tartness in your mouth. The succulent greens of wild grasses and ferns will make up much of your diet soon, but snow still covers much of your groggy world.

When the greens are available, your diet will consist almost entirely of vegetation, which will serve to jump-start your digestive system. Later, in perhaps a week, your nose will lead you to a smelly salmon carcass you missed in the fall. You wander from the den site, following your nose to other prizes. You fill your belly. The sun shines. It's a great time not to be hibernating in Alaska.

You are no longer a bear. You are a person, reading a newspaper column, which I wrote with bear facts and speculations from Mark Bertram, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wildlife biologist at Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge; Erich Follmann, a professor of zoology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Institute of Arctic Biology; and Don Young, a biologist with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Fairbanks.

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**"A government that robs Peter to pay Paul can always depend upon the support of Paul." --G. B. Shaw**

# Book Review - Jim Rearden's Alaska: Fifty Years of Frontier Adventure

BY BONNIE KENYON

I must admit that in spite of the fact I have called Alaska "home" since 1976, I am not what you would call an outdoorsy type of woman— at least what I deem as outdoorsy. Although I find myself reading a variety of books since *Wrangell St. Elias News* began doing book reviews, I normally do not gravitate to the kind of book I am about to highly recommend to you.

Many of our Alaskan readers will recognize Jim Reardon's name. He is described as "Alaska's most popular outdoor's journalist." I can see why.

To be honest, I half-heartedly scanned the contents and decided I would tackle it. After all, I told myself, Epicenter Press does a fine job in releasing and sharing a variety of books for our perusal. The least I can do is give them and Jim a chance. I'm glad I did.

In *Jim Rearden's Alaska*, Jim shares his version of the ideal Alaska – the best of the best in his lifelong exploration of the Far North. He combines twenty of his previously published articles that appeared in *Alaska, Outdoor Life, Alaska Sportsman, Aviation History* and *Fish-Fur-Game* magazines and is illustrated by many of his original photographs.

Jim introduces us to characters such as "Slim" Carlson, a Swedish trapper, who spent 57 years alone in the Bush, making his own furniture and clothing, even performing emergency surgery on himself. The first chapter is entitled "Moose Johnson's Yinx." This was my favorite and the bait that kept me laughing, oohing and aahing the rest of the way through the book.

Hair-raising stories about bush pilots, a narrow escape from death on Mt. McKinley and tales

of the infamous wolverine easily kept my attention. Rick was quite impressed at my eagerness to begin each new chapter and informed me that when I finished reading Jim's book, I was to put it on his bedside table.

Jim Reardon has written seventeen books about Alaska. In 1999 he was named Alaska's Historian of the Year for his book, *Alaska's Wolf Man*. His most recent title is the best-selling *Arctic Bush Pilot*, also from Epicenter Press. He lives in Homer with his wife, Audrey.

The 6" by 9" paperback book contains 288 pages, 26 black and white photographs, one map and sells for \$17.95. It is available at your local bookstore. This book, as well as other Epicenter books can also be ordered by calling 1-800-950-6663, or online at [www.EpicenterPress.com](http://www.EpicenterPress.com).

## Regulatory Commission keeping eye on CVTC

BY RICK KENYON

The State of Alaska Regulatory Commission is requiring Copper Valley Telephone Cooperative (CVTC) to file information relating to the quality of local exchange telecommunications services provided by CVTC through the use of the Basic Exchange Telephone Radio Service (BETRS) in McCarthy, Alaska.

The Order came about after a consumer input hearing on December 10, 2001 at which customers focused on the poor quality of BETRS service. The customers testified that service

problems consisted of dropped calls, noisy connections, false rings, inability to make and receive telephone calls, and problems associated with the use of long distance telephone cards. The Commission writes: "Based on the testimony presented at the...hearing, we believe there may be service quality problems associated with the use of BETRS in and around McCarthy, Alaska."

"We are interested in the outcome of CVTC's efforts and progress in improving the quality of service in McCarthy," continues the Order. CVTC is required to provide a quality of

service analysis that continues through September 30, 2002. CVTC is asking for a partial consideration of the order, stating among other things that this would require them to add extra help during their busy summer construction season.

CVTC's Glennallen Plant Superintendent Dirk Rietveld recently announced that he has resigned his position to take a position with Arctic Slope Telephone. Operations manager Al Dickens is filling in while CVTC advertises for a replacement.



## Princess Wilderness Lodge debuts

BY BONNIE KENYON

**T**he Copper River Princess Wilderness Lodge is set to open for business on May 16<sup>th</sup>. The 85-room lodge is the perfect combination of modern amenities and the rustic outdoors. Breathtaking views in all directions with every spacious guest room promising a mountain or forest view awaits the area visitor.

The Princess is located just outside the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park on more than 200 acres in the Glennallen and Copper River area with views of the Wrangell-St. Elias mountain range and the Copper and

Klutina Rivers. It is just 4 miles from the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park's Visitor Center.

The new lodge's Two Rivers Restaurant will seat 120 and features Alaskan Cuisine dishes such as Buffalo London Broil, Reindeer Osso bucco, and the area's famed Copper River Red Salmon. Lunch fare includes Elk Burgers and Grilled Buffalo Salad with soups such as Alaskan Clam Chowder.

A wide selection of organized excursions are being offered. From flightseeing over the park's mountains, to river rafting, hiking, dog sled rides, sports-fishing, mountain biking and

horseback riding.

The Historic Kennicott & Wrangell-St. Elias Flight Adventure, for example, offers an opportunity to fly over the park en route to McCarthy and Kennicott. A guide will then take visitors on a tour of main street Kennicott and tell the story of the mining boomtown. The group will take a five-mile van ride to McCarthy, for a guided walking tour.

Princess is offering a special price of \$99 per night from May 16-June 3, 2002. Might be a good time to get acquainted with our new neighbors!

## NPS acquires Chititu

**T**he National Park Service has reportedly purchased the 907-acre Chititu Mine for \$403,000. The National Park Trust, a non-profit group helped with negotiations with the owners, J.E.A. Chititu Creek Corp. of Minnesota. The property is located about 15 miles southeast of McCarthy and has numerous buildings and structures still standing.



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Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
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#### For information contact:

State of Alaska, Department of Transportation of Public Facilities  
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2301 Peger Road, MS 2553, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-5399  
Phone: 1-907-451-5400 or 1-800-475-2464 Toll Free  
*Ask for Pete Eagan, Pat Thayer, or Sig Strandberg*

## Open Letter to Everyone who lives in the Wrangells

Over the last few years, many of you have approached and asked me why I am always taking photos at the most ordinary of McCarthy & Kennecott events. To give all of you an explanation, indulge me in a bit of history so I can explain why I regard the ordinary as extraordinary as I work toward documenting contemporary life in the Wrangells.

When I first entered the Wrangells a decade ago, I did so on the same day as the annual mountain bike race from the Copper River Bridge to the tram. I too was on a bike, albeit not as a contender. My panniers were loaded with a ball of wet clothes, a camera and a few small sacks of smoked salmon and caribou sausage that people had given me as I pedaled around the state. As

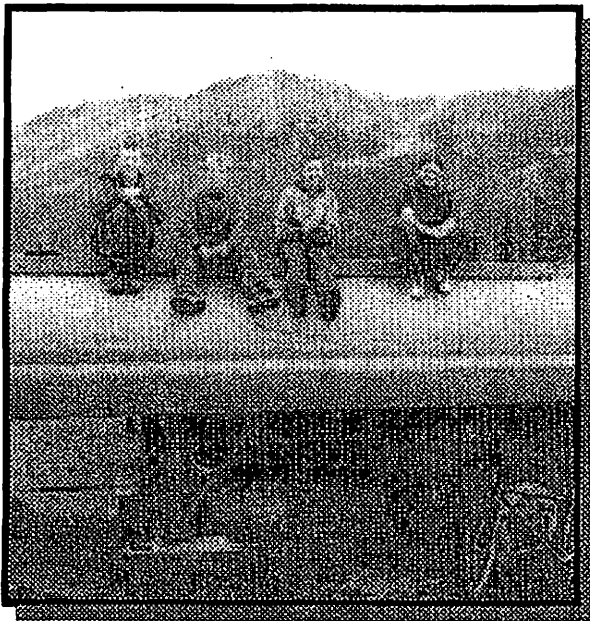


Photo courtesy the author

romantic as is sounded to finish my loop of Alaska at the tram, I opted to watch the racers rattle their noggins on the muddy washboards while I shuttled in one of their trucks with my bike in back.

I went ahead of the pack, then pulled over just east of the Kuskulana to watch them hammer on through the muck. The leaders splattered by in a blur, the next bunch bumped by like a muddied string of raw pearls and shortly thereafter came a lone tandem bike with an unusual pair of riders aboard.



Photo courtesy the author

The fellow on the front bent over the handlebars like a bowsprit breaking waves through an ocean of mud, his legs pumping like the Copper River & Northwestern Railway locomotives that preceded him down this route by some 50-plus years. The fellow mounted on the rear seat, however, sat as upright as a spooked bear tasting the breeze, but looking as calm and



Photo courtesy the author

content as a prom king in the back of a convertible.

I identified his contentedness not by what his facial expression suggested, but by what it didn't—all of his facial features were completely covered by a thick veneer of mud, including his eyes. And then like the forerunners of the race, the tandem bike disappeared behind a rooster tail of mud around the corner toward McCarthy.

Regretfully, my camera was in the dry cab of the truck when this pair went by. But as I drove on behind the racers, I became determined to take some photos when I reached the finish line. As usual, the road had stranded a vehicle ahead of me, preventing me from apprehending the finish-line photos I envisioned.

When I did finally meet up with the racers near the river I discovered that the unaffected fellow on the back of the tandem bike was not merely blinded by the mud, but was in fact completely blind—mud or sans mud. He shared equally as the horsepower of the locomotive, but he was definitely not a contributor to the navigation system.

In large part (this is where I go from anecdotal to metaphorical), I entered the Wrangells as blind as the blind biker. I came north to see the Great Land—the mythical wilderness that glazes the awares of all of us outsiders. But to navigate through this place called the Wrangell Mountains, I have trusted the trails of those who have muscled their way ahead of me.

After several seasons in the Wrangells, most of which was spent romping around the backcountry, I suddenly discovered that I had been most impressed by the people whom I had shared my time with in the region. This realization surprised me, and commanded that I shift some more attention toward understanding the folks who loved this terrain as much as I.

I too opted to shift my camera away from the intoxicating terrain and concentrate on observing (and documenting) the relationships that exist

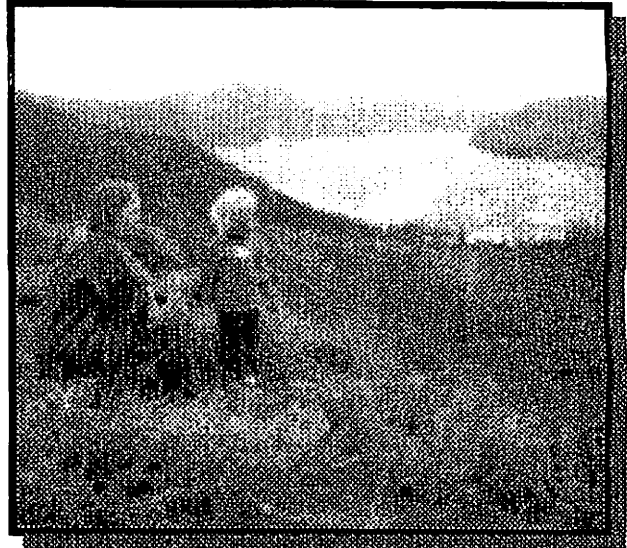


Photo courtesy the author

between all of you and this "place" we call the Wrangells.

In the last three summers I have taken more images than I have been able to print, but I feel my work is far from over. More importantly, my relationships with all of you are still nascent, and thus the images reflect but the beginning of this "documentary".

Above my desk is a small copy of the group shot I took at Tony Zachs' Memorial a few years ago. It reminds me that despite the size of McCarthy & Kennecott, we are rich with personality & character. And when I look at all of your faces, I realize how few of you I have photographed in a way that adequately honors each of you as individuals.

This summer I will be back up briefly in late April/early May, and then for most of July & August. I hope that my presence—and that of my camera—will continue to be welcomed by all of you.

Thanks for all of your receptivity thus far, and allowing me to step in and out of your world each year. Our Kennecott (great great grand-) kids will be forever thankful.

Sincerely,  
JT Thomas



Photo courtesy the author

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**VALDEZ / COPPER RIVER AREA**  
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The burn permit shown can be validated by following these steps:

1. Fill in the location of the property where burning will occur.
2. Sign in space provided for permittee signature.

3. Call the Division of Forestry at 822-5534 during normal business hours to obtain permit number, name of issuing officer, and / or any current burning stipulations that may be in effect.

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1. Construct a firebreak 10 feet wide to mineral soil around pile. For lawns / fields, mow, rake, and wet down a 10 foot perimeter. DO NOT burn within 25 feet of woods, structures, or other flammable materials.
2. Have a minimum of one adult in attendance at all times while burning.
3. Have a shovel / rake for each person, and have a charged water hose capable of reaching the entire burn area. In lieu of a hose, a wet gunny sack and a minimum of one 5-gallon container of water for each person can be used.
4. Burn with winds less than 5 mph only!
5. Fires must be completely extinguished before attendee leaves the immediate premises.
6. The burning of any material which creates black smoke is prohibited.

Call D.E.C. at 835-4698 for further information in reference to D.E.C. regulation 18 AAC 50.030.

This permit is issued under the authority of AS 41.15.050 and 41.15.060 of the Public Resources Statutes governing the establishments of fire seasons and the regulating of burning permits.

This permit may be modified, suspended, or revoked at any time.

The permittee shall have this permit in their possession at all times when burning and shall display it upon request from any duly authorized agent of the commissioner.

The permittee agrees to hold the State harmless from any claim or damage caused by negligent acts or omissions of permittee, his/her employee, or his/her agent, arising during or as a result of activities covered by this permit.

Willful or negligent disregard of the terms of this permit constitutes an illegal act and makes you criminally liable. This permit does not relieve the permittee from responsibility for fire damage.

**THIS PERMIT IS GOOD THROUGH  
SEPTEMBER 30, 2002**

DATE ISSUED \_\_\_\_\_

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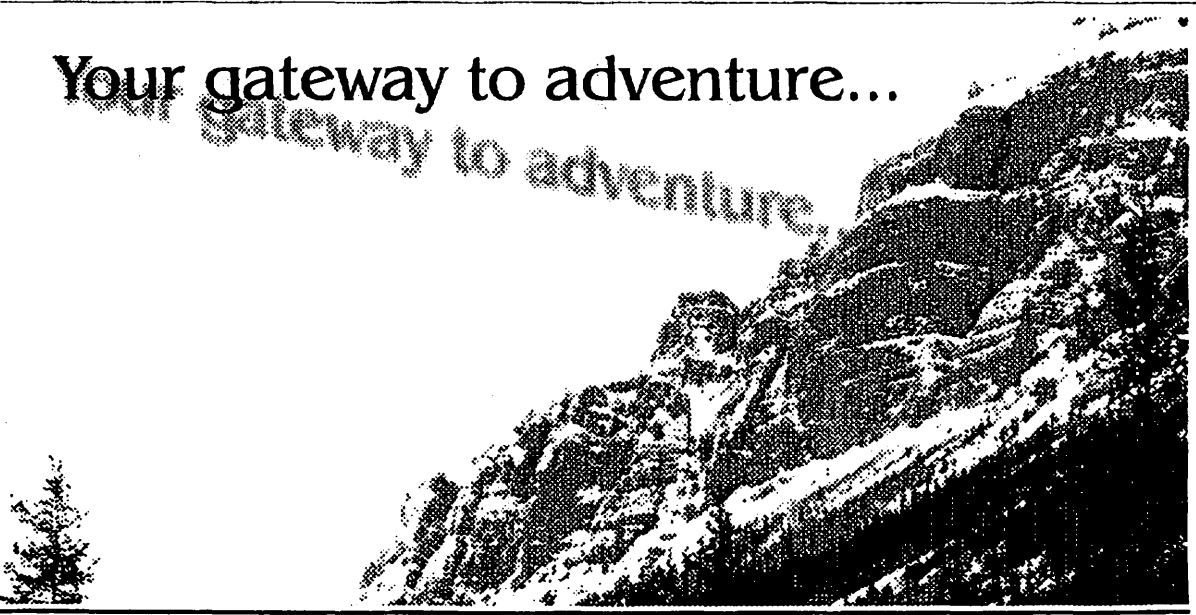
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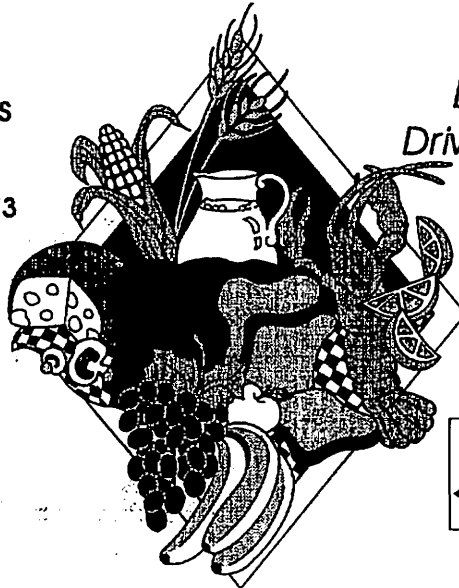
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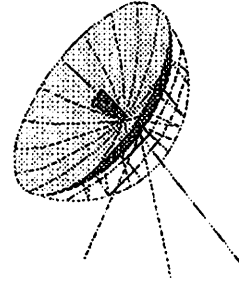


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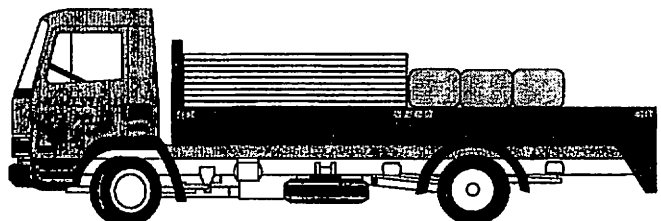
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# Cooking with Tonia

BY BONNIE KENYON

**I**n the last issue of WSEN, I asked for volunteer subscribers who would take the time to share a favorite recipe (or recipes) with our readers. I also requested a short introduction so we can get to know each other better. I was so pleased to have Tonia Alexander of Wasilla, AK. email us two of her favorite desserts to share with you.

I have known Tonia since the late '70's. We met at Long Lake (on the McCarthy Road). She and her husband Steve were married at Cliff and Jewel Collins' summer home on the lake. Our friendship has grown since that time.

The Alexanders have a cabin and property in the Long Lake area. They visit it as often as time permits. I say "permits" because both Steve and Tonia are very busy people.

Steve is a paramedic/trained firefighter and works mostly out of the Eagle River fire station. He also serves as Assistant Pastor at Word of Faith Assembly church in Wasilla and teaches a weekly Bible study at the MatSu Pretrial facility.

Tonia is a Certified Teacher and her "class" is their three sons, Josiah, 12, Seth, 9, and Levi, 6. She and the boys are part of the Alaska IDEA home school program which hires Tonia to administer Alaska

Benchmark Standardized Tests and the Terra Nova CAT5 tests. She also ministers with Steve in the music ministry at their church.

Both Steve and Tonia enjoy gardening at their home in Wasilla and raising honey bees.

*Tonia fixed this special dessert for Steve this last Valentine's Day. She writes: SO easy, SO good, especially for chocolate lovers. Not something to keep on hand on a regular basis. Just once a year or so!*

## French Silk Chocolate Pie

1 cup sugar  
3/4 cup real butter, softened  
1 1/2 teaspoon real vanilla  
9 Tablespoons powdered  
bittersweet cocoa + 3  
Tablespoons oil  
3 fresh eggs, added one at a time  
One baked 9" pie shell (or you  
can use graham cracker  
crust)

Beat the sugar and softened butter until VERY fluffy, creamy and smooth, scraping the sides of the bowl often. The granulated sugar should NOT be gritty any longer when a taste test is done. Add the vanilla and whip more. Add the cocoa and oil a bit at a time and whip more, scraping the sides of the bowl often to mix thoroughly. Finally, add one egg at a time

whipping thoroughly inbetween additions and continuing to scrape the bowl often. Scoop the chocolate silk filling into the cooled pie shell. Refrigerate overnight or until set 3-4 hours. If in a hurry, 2 hours in the freezer is usually sufficient, taking it out to serve before it gets frozen hard. It should be "set" firmly, but not hard to cut. May serve with whipping cream. This is VERY rich, and serving sizes should be small. Indulge!

*Tonia's oldest son, Josiah, has this recipe down pat and makes it often for his brothers. It's fast, easy and nourishing for growing boys and even hungry parents.*

## Fast, Easy Cheesecake

1-9" graham cracker crust  
1 - 8 oz. Philadelphia cream  
cheese (soft)  
1 -15 oz. Eagle Brand milk (NOT  
evaporated milk)  
1/3 cup lemon juice (Real lemon  
bottled)

Beat cream cheese until creamy. Add milk. Mix/beat until no lumps are left. Add lemon juice. Mix well. Pour into crust. Refrigerate several hours. If you use a 10 inch pie crust, you may want to double the filling for a thicker pie. Serve with fresh strawberries or cherries or just plain.

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"Technology will not win the Holy War, though it may certainly grant us some satisfying temporary victories. Spiritual strength is what we need - and it is available. There are a lot of people who think God is on their side. Well, let's see about that."—Jeff Cooper

# A LOOK AT THE WEATHER

BY GEORGE CEBULA

February saw a continuation of normal winter temperatures, with March just plain cold. The precipitation was below average for February and just about average for March.

The high temperature for February was 45 on the 28<sup>th</sup> (42 on Feb. 26, '01 and 48 on Feb. 19, '00). The lowest temperature recorded at McCarthy in February was -28 on the 22<sup>nd</sup> (-16 on Feb. 19, '01 and -19 on Feb. 15, '00). The high was 30 or above on 6 days and the low was -20 or lower on 6 days. The average February temperature was 8.3 (13.6 in '01 and 17.2 in '00). This is still warm compared to -5.9 in '99. *Silver Lake had a high of 37 on February 12<sup>th</sup> (38 on Feb. 27, '01 and 43 on Feb. 3, '00) and a low of -30 on February 23<sup>rd</sup> (-18 on Feb. 18, '01 and -17 on Feb. 15, '00). The average February temperature at Silver Lake was 5.8 (11.3 in '01 and 17.3 in '00).*

The February precipitation was 0.18 inches of liquid (3.02 in '01 and 0.23 in '00). Total snowfall was 2.6 inches (14.2 in '01 and 2.5 in '00). *Silver Lake had only a trace of liquid (1.41 in '01 and 0.16 in '00) and a trace of snow (13.0 in '01 and 2.0 in '00).* McCarthy began February with 30 inches of snow on the ground and ended the month with 24 inches. *Silver Lake had 22 inches on the 1<sup>st</sup> and ended February with 20 inches.*

The 4<sup>th</sup> of March saw the return of below zero temperatures and plenty of

sunshine. The high temperature for March was 45 on the 25<sup>th</sup> (49 on Mar. 15, '01 and 52 on Mar. 16, '00). The low temperature for March was -29 on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> (-22 on Mar. 21, '01 and -14 on Mar. 10, '00). The average March temperature at McCarthy was 10.1 compared to 20.9 in Mar. '01 and 24.9 in Mar. '00. The high reached 40 or higher on 2 days and the low was -20 or below on 10 days. *Silver Lake had a high 39 on March 1<sup>st</sup> (43 on Mar. 11, '01 and 47 on Mar. 27, '00), a low of -30 on March 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> (-13 on Mar. 22, '01 and -12 on Mar 12, '00) and a March average temperature of 6.9 (20.7 in Mar. '01 and 21.3 in Mar. '00).*

March liquid precipitation was 0.68 inches (0.14 in Mar. '01 and a trace in Mar. '00) and snowfall was 10.2 inches (2.3 in Mar. '01 and a trace in Mar. '00). *Silver Lake had 0.90 inches of liquid (0.43 in Mar. '01 and a trace in Mar. '00) and snowfall of 12.0 inches (4.0 in Mar. '01 and a trace in Mar. '00).* By the end of March the snow cover was still 27 inches at McCarthy and 32 inches at Silver Lake.

The total snowfall for '01-'02 was 67.1 inches (84.0 in '00-'01 and 65.8 in '99-'00). This total is incomplete as the station was closed from Dec 26-Jan 22. The greatest snow depth was 31 inches. This compares with an average ('80-'01) of 64.1 inches and a snow depth of 27 inches. The greatest snowfall was 99.9 inches in '90-'91 and the lowest was 27.3 inches in '86-'87. The

greatest snow depth was 39 inches in '90-'91 and the lowest was 16 inches in '86-'87 and '98-'99. *Silver Lake had a total snowfall of 57.5 inches and the greatest snow depth was 32 inches.*

The cool temperatures continued into the first half of April. By the 17<sup>th</sup> we were still having lows near zero. A careful check of all the April records was done. April 1986 was close, but using the first 16 days of the month, April 2002 was the coldest. The average temperature for April 1-16, 2002 was 16.0 and April 1986 was 17.3. The extreme was lower in 1986 (-21 on April 10, '86), but overall this year was colder. There is still 2 feet of hard packed snow on the ground. Irene, at Dan Creek, remembers going for mail at May Creek on April 28, 1986, with the dog team. Will the snow ever disappear? It is safe to say that breakup will be late arriving this year.

May should see a rapid increase in temperatures with highs in the 60's by mid month. Precipitation is usually on the light side with an average amount of less than an inch. Breakup should be a bit on the wet side again this year with plenty of melting snow.

June is usually the warmest month at McCarthy with an average temperature in the mid 50's, highs in the 70's and about 2 inches of rain.

"A vote is like a rifle: its usefulness depends upon the character of the user."—Theodore Roosevelt

# FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

## ***An open letter concerning the Chitina DOT&PF Maintenance Station closure.***

**W**e write to you today after receiving terribly distressing news from the Knowles Administration. At the beginning of the forthcoming fiscal year the Chitina Maintenance Station will undergo: **“Complete closure. This will entail elimination of two full time and one seasonal position. Elimination of one grader, one truck, one loader and associated consumables.”**

This maintenance station is the lifeblood of the McCarthy Road. The station existed long before statehood. Even the federal government recognized the wisdom and necessity of locating highway maintenance at this location. Their first site was at nearby Lower Tonsina. In 1963 the station was moved over to Chitina. Before statehood the station provided maintenance on only the Edgerton Highway. Over three decades ago the 60-mile long McCarthy Road was created, adding further to the maintenance burden of this station.

This action is occurring at a time when Alaska needs economic diversification. Due to dwindling natural resources increasing visitation is one of the only viable solutions we have to achieve fiscal stability. The McCarthy Road is about the only surface access to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. A park over three million acres larger than the nation of Switzerland. With the tiny Denali National Park being overwhelmed with visitors it appears logical that the Alaska State government would move decisively and rapidly in order to

enhance this most obvious of visitor expansion options.

Instead our state is embarking on an objective where visitor attractions are not increased but existing ones are either closed or made all the more difficult to access. If our young state is to survive we must reverse this trend.

We recognize the difficult fiscal environment now confronting all of Alaska. We do not suggest that we want fiscal responsibility but “Not In My Back Yard.” Instead, we believe that public overhead capital should be utilized for the total economic welfare of the entire state. Thus, we promote almost all forms of economic stimulus for the state. McCarthy Road preservation and enhancement is merely one, and the one with which we are most familiar.

In looking back over the history of the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) we must question the reasoning used in determining recent budget reduction priorities. It appears to us that if cuts must be made the Department would first look toward reducing programs and internal organization expansion that occurred after oil royalties bloated the state budgets. We would expect the Department not to take the “Washington Monument Approach” to their dilemma by cutting and damaging the most visible public services. Heavy equipment operators, at places like Chitina, were on the payroll long before the state got “rich.”

While keeping a jaundiced eye on the motives of cost

cutting bureaucrats let's take a look at a few examples where Alaska's newfound wealth gave rise to expansion of state government:

—In 1977 the DOT&PF was created through consolidation of the Alaska Department of Public Works and the Alaska Department of Highways. Proponents of this merger contended that savings would result even though one of the first Alaska legislatures decided to create the two Departments from one (the original and unwieldy Department of Public Works). At the time, the legislature realized two departments were more efficient than the one. Not surprisingly, in 1977, when the Legislature reversed itself and created the DOT&PF, the anticipated savings did not occur, instead the new DOT&PF brought with it layer upon layer of additional management. Headquarter sites with commensurate huge staffs abounded throughout the state.

—As another for instance of this waste: Prior to the DOT&PF, one centralized Statewide Airport Leasing Office existed. It was located in Anchorage and worked perfectly with virtually no public complaints. After creation of the DOT&PF the one leasing office was expanded to five. One in Juneau, two in Anchorage (one at Ted Stevens International Airport) and two in Fairbanks (one at Fairbanks International Airport). One can only imagine the additional staff and expanded budget that this endeavor took. Today all five leasing offices still exist.

—Increased pressure upon general fund transportation

resources has not been brought about solely because of DOT&PF actions either. Prior to the state becoming so fiscally flush it was a common practice of the Department of Public Safety to lobby the legislature for funding with which to purchase and operate their own fleet of aircraft. Legislators and governors regularly rejected their arguments. At the time prudent fiscal logic dictated that these state employees could continue using

a combination of public common carriage transportation and federally certificated air taxi type charter operations for their transportation needs. Much the same as the Alaska Department of Fish and Game biologists did and still do. But oil wealth brought with it many things, one of which was a fine air force for the exclusive use of the Department of Public Safety personnel. The true cost of this questionable branch of government is

probably staggering.

We provide this brief insight into what we consider excessive expenditures not because we want to "gore the other guys ox" but to point out that many, many questionably necessary programs were established after oil wealth. The McCarthy Road was not one of those and it is needed today for the betterment of the total Alaskan economy more than ever.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Talkeetna, AK.  
WSEN,

Enclosed is payment for a subscription to WSEN. I'm in exile from my Copper Valley home in order to work in Talkeetna, so I'm glad of any source of information that helps me keep in touch. Since my profession is museum work, I was especially interested to read in your March/April issue about NPS developments concerning the care of artifacts in the park. I have a long-standing admiration

for the local effort that created the museum at McCarthy, and I'm sure that museum will continue its role in the community, also.

Lastly, I'm glad I didn't miss your report on Chris Richards. I remember Chris giving me a basic lesson – how hard it is to start a fire when it's really cold – when I first came to Chitina more than 20 years ago. His passing is as noteworthy as his presence always was.

R. J. Nelson

April 18, 2002

Hello from Cordova,

I enjoyed reading the diary about Nizina in 1902. I have a suggestion for finding out more about the keeper of the diary. You might check the Bureau of Mines Registry in Fairbanks, for placer claims in 1902. You might find some of the names mentioned in the diary.

Good luck,  
Larry Kritohen

# Wrangell St. Elias News

# B & B

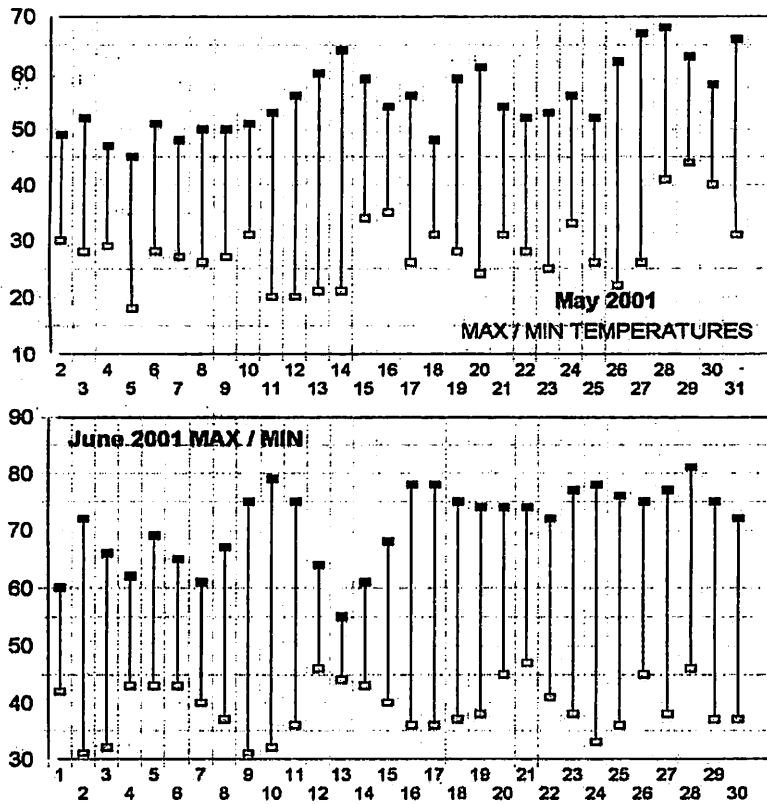
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