

# Wrangell St. Elias News

*"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"*

Volume Sixteen Issue Three

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## Local sights & personalities



WSEN staff photo

We had to wait a bit to get to the weather equipment to do an observation when this young moose wanted to share the trail at the WSEN homestead.



Photo courtesy Joe Darnell

McCarthy's own Iditarod musher, Jeremy Keller prepares to start the race.



Photos above and right courtesy the Rowland family

These awesome views are only available to those willing to go into the backcountry. Above: The towering Mile-High-Cliffs. Right: The group goes boldly to the face of the glacier.



## *A note from the publisher*

BY BONNIE KENYON

Springtime in McCarthy is delightful! It is April 27<sup>th</sup> and there is only a trace of snow to be seen at our office and home west of the Kennicott River. The neighborhood is awakening out of winter mode, snowmachines are now stored away until next snowfall and the 4-wheelers, our major summer transportation, are now out and about.

New, but not unknown, faces are returning to town and countryside, gearing up for the fresh season that is on its way in. Many folks commented that this recent winter was the quietest one they can recall. I have to agree with them. Perhaps more neighbors are taking up traveling to far away places. Whatever the case, most begin their reappearance in March.

Speaking of March, you will enjoy Keith and Laurie Rowland's account of *Spring Break 2007* starting on page 6. For those of you who do not know the Rowlands, they live in the McCarthy area year around. They often contribute stories and articles to *WSEN* which Rick and I greatly appreciate. We

know we are not the only ones who do. One subscriber, whose name has slipped me, called wanting to know when the spring break was going to take place. I assumed she wanted to read the Rowlands' story, but now that I think about it, she may have wanted to join in on the outdoor fun!

This leads me to thank our regular contributors such as Don Welty, George Cebula, Peggy Guntis and frequent story writer, Kenny Smith. Every one of these folks has a valuable stake in the McCarthy area. Don, along with his wife Lynn, own a home and both work locally in the area. George also calls McCarthy home, works during the busy summer season and, although he is retired from the weather service (NOAA), he continues to serve the local community as a source of weather-related information. Peggy and husband, Jim, visit their McCarthy summer home yearly. Jim is an electrician and is frequently called upon for his expertise in these areas. He also volunteers time improving historical displays for our McCarthy Kennicott Historical Museum. Kenny and his wife,

Donna, own a beautiful log cabin on Swift Creek which Kenny keeps manicured and decorated all summer with beautiful hanging flower baskets—always ready for his visiting family members who also love this place.

At this time of year, Rick and I must split our time with getting the May/June issue written and published and the local annual visitor's guide called, "*A Visitor's Guide to Kennicott & McCarthy.*" Both publications are projects we enjoy making available to those who are interested in visiting our area. If you would like to see what McCarthy and Kennicott are like during the summer months, please feel free to visit our web site at [mccarthy-kennicott.com](http://mccarthy-kennicott.com) and click on the Visitor's Guide link. The 2007 guide is due to be distributed by May 15<sup>th</sup> and the online version will be updated shortly thereafter.

*WSEN* welcomes aboard the following subscribers: Shelaine Williamson, ID; Karl Heinz, AK; Online subscribers: Elizabeth Horan, RI; Judy Richards, CA.

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## Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

**Kurt, Peggy and Kelsey Smith:** It's springtime in the McCarthy area. Folks are starting to come out of their winter hibernation and the sounds of progress are once again being heard in the neighborhood.

The Smiths live out near the Nizina River so their trek — about 9-miles one way — into McCarthy proper takes some doing. Peggy says Kurt has begun those early seasonal chores on the McCarthy Mercantile's building which includes plumbing and carpentry projects while Kelsey, 14, and Peggy busy themselves with cleaning and painting. Locals are chomping at the bit for the town's only grocery store to open its doors. She assured me they will be open for business by at least the Memorial Day weekend, hopefully sooner.

We can expect to see a new smiling face behind the counter this summer, says Peggy. Her daughter, Katy, 23, is arriving this week and will be here all summer, giving an extra helping hand to the Merc's customers.

The chomping at the bit phrase made me think of Kelsey's item of interest. She is desiring to sell her horse, Lily, to a good home. Lily is 14 years old and a Registered Haflinger. If any of you are interested in contacting Kelsey, you may call her at 554-4488.

We want to say "happy belated birthday to Kurt" who spent his special day in Fairbanks with other family members. He isn't telling his age these days, but

celebrating another year certainly beats the alternative, Kurt! May you have many more.

**Ralph and Tyee Lohse:** Ralph and son Tyee spent a couple of weeks in March at their property on the banks of the Lakina River at Long Lake. While there they succeeded in salvaging the second floor of their house which was swept from its foundation during the flooding events of last fall. With the help of a few neighbors, Ralph's brother Bob, and a piece of heavy equipment, the Lohses were able to maneuver the remains of their home off the river ice and onto dry land.

**Mike Monroe:** It is the third week in April and I was curious to know what the conditions were like at Kennicott. When I called, Mike was outside working on a newly-acquired 4 wheeler. His snowmachine is now ready to be parked for the summer.

He assures me Kennicott is experiencing springlike conditions. Most of the snow is gone and he convinced me that he actually sees green grass sprouting. He is thoroughly enjoying all the sunshine. His solar panels are making good use of it, too. The only problem Mike has these days is that he has more electricity than he can use. (What a problem, Mike!) I'm not sure if Mike wants any more electrical appliances, but if you have any extra lying around you want to get rid of, you might want to give Mike a call. Just maybe he'll take them off your hands.

Mike reports seeing a moose cow and her calf several times between Kennicott and McCarthy. Samantha (Sammy), Mike's dog, seems to think he is providing her with additional playmates. Mama moose isn't impressed. Thanks for giving us a "heads up," Mike!

**Howard and Chris Haley:** The Haleys recently returned from a spring break of their own — a week-long trip to other parts of the state. Besides taking in an Anchorage shopping trip for supplies, they attended the funeral of Howard's hunting partner at Moose Pass. While in the area, they stopped at Seward and purchased a sightseeing package. (Usually those of us who live here are providing services to those who are visiting the McCarthy and Kennicott area. Chris explained that she had never been to Kenai or Seward so this was a great time to check them out.) The special package included a 4-hour tour boat ride on Resurrection Bay, viewing the whales and the porpoises. They certainly saw a different variety of animals than are seen in the McCarthy area. Chris says they had a great time and even spent an extra day in Seward, admiring the unique "setting and character" of the town.

Now that they are home, it is time to return to their unfinished chores. Howard is working on his new generator and battery bank, just a few bugs to work out of the system, says Chris. She was just getting ready to walk out the door and tackle outside cleanup chores. Springtime is

here and my neighbors are on the move!

**Neil Darish:** Another neighbor making wise moves these days is Neil. He says, "We are busy getting ready for the season, of course! Stripping the floors in the Lodge, saloon and hotel and refinishing them in time to open. The plant starts are looking strong and healthy, with about 70 varieties of flowers for landscaping. I hope to do a few new flower beds by the hotel this spring. This is the easiest season start so far."

**Brad Grossweiler:** Brad, owner of Kennicott River Lodge and Hostel, just arrived at his place of business after spending the winter in Florida as a principle caregiver to his mother. He is busy unboarding windows, the yearly task of spring cleanup, all in anticipation of a "good summer."

Welcome back, Brad! We wish you many productive days and good-natured customers.

**Jay Bitely:** Many of the McCarthy area folks will remember Jay who spent the winter with us a few years back. He touched base with us recently via email letting us know all was well with him. The first of April Jay was enjoying life in a little surfing village on the northern coast of Peru. He had spent a long weekend, he said, in the northern Andes hiking and playing in the mountains. At the present, Jay should be on his way back to the good ole USA and to Chicago to spend time with his sister. Then, as his custom is, he will spend the summer in Curtis, Michigan, helping family run and operate a fishing lodge during the trout

season. Thanks for staying in touch, Jay!

**Volunteer Trail Work in Kennecott:** The following item is an announcement from Stephens Harper, Kennecott Area Park Ranger. "Please help out the National Park Service and your community by joining us for a day of trail work to fix a flood-damaged section of the Root Glacier Trail at Bonanza Creek. We have a lot of rocks to move and a bridge that can be reused but is about 50 feet from the new creek channel. The more we can accomplish at Bonanza Creek the more our efforts will free up the NPS crew to work on the real challenge which will be bridging Jumbo Creek. So, pass the word and come join us; the bugs won't even be biting yet. Where: Meet at the General Store in Kennecott. When: Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. Bring: Lunch and work gloves; NPS will provide tools." Stephens can be reached at: cell#907-960-1011 or email at: stephens\_harper@nps.gov

**Sally Gibert shares:** WSEN subscriber and McCarthy landowner, Sally, is well-known in our town and although her home is in Anchorage, she and her family visit as often as they can. In a recent email to friends, she shared of the sudden and unexpected death of past McCarthy resident, Loy Green. (His obituary is included in this issue, thanks to Sally and husband, Dick's efforts.) Included in her message was the following account of her visit with Loy shortly before his death.

"Whenever Loy was in the hospital, I would try to visit him every day to reassure him that he

would be going home soon. (He had become very attached to the Pioneer Home and was usually stressed out when he wasn't there.) The last time he was in the hospital —about a month ago —I stopped by to see how he was doing the day before his release and found him in an unusual state of mental clarity. We had a wonderful and wide-ranging conversation about philosophy, religion, the 1980 McCarthy Creek flood and numerous other topics that illustrated a sudden, renewed ability to maintain a complex train of thought for many minutes at a time. Our unexpected conversation reminded me of all those winter evening visits in McCarthy when we would sit around the wood stove and drink tea and talk. Back in those days he was always stretching my mind with his sometimes unusual yet always interesting ideas. So, last month was like he was suddenly transported back in time about three years. He wasn't as clear-headed as his good old days in McCarthy, but he showed abilities I 'knew' he had lost due to permanent brain damage from his succession of small strokes.

"We engaged in conversation steadily for an hour and a half on that Saturday afternoon until I finally had to leave. I saw him the next day back at the Pioneer Home and it was like his episode of clarity had never happened. Based on my understanding of the documented condition of his brain, his sudden but short-lived revival of true consciousness was seemingly physically impossible, yet he was undeniably present and highly communicative the day before. His steady decline in

eating and social contact started shortly thereafter. Now that he is gone, I see that, among other things, this fleeting opportunity was a precious gift to both of us—a reminder of all the special experiences and memories we shared over the last 30 years. I am very grateful.”

#### Memorial for Ed

**LaChapelle:** There will be a memorial gathering for Ed LaChapelle on Thursday, May 31—his birthday—at 3:30 pm in the Kennecott Recreation Hall at Kennecott.

Following will be a potluck supper and a more informal celebration of Ed's life. Local residents are asked to bring food enough to provide for a few out-of-town guests. Please spread the word to those who might wish to attend. David, Ananda and Meg welcome your presence.

#### Baby announcements

*Editor's note: The first three baby announcements were inadvertently left out of the March/April WSEN. We apologize to the proud parents who wanted to share their good news with you all!*

**Matt and Julie Miller** of Kennicott are delighted with the birth of their baby girl—**Ashley Jayne**—born on January 21<sup>st</sup> at 9:07 am in Palmer at the Mat-Su Regional Medical Center. Ashley Jayne weighed 7 lbs. 2.3 oz. and was 20.50" long.

**Tim and Tenley Nelson** of Nelson Lake at Mile 11 of the McCarthy Road, announce the birth of their son, **Conner Sinclair Nelson**, on January 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:58 pm. Conner was born in Wasilla and weighed 7 lb. 7 oz. and measured 20 1/4 inches long. Says Mom: "He is cute and very healthy. He

has big hands and feet and long fingers and toes.”

**Joshua and Sharia (Buckingham) Hale** are blessed over the birth of their son, **Jeremiah Victory Hale**, who was born on February 8<sup>th</sup> at their home in Palmer. Jeremiah Victory weighed 8 lb. 2 oz. and is described by a close family member as “very large, very strong, a healthy baby boy and beautiful.”

**Mike McCann and Dorothy Adler** are the proud parents of a son—**Logan Michael McCann**. Logan was born at 3:58 pm on Wednesday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. Logan weighed 8 lb. 8 oz. and was 21.25 inches. Mike reports, “Mom and baby are doing good!”

**Joseph and Lolly (Buckingham) Hale** are pleased to share the good news of the birth of their son, **Benaiah Faithful Hale**, who came into the world at 1:43 p.m. on Sunday, April 8<sup>th</sup>. Benaiah Faithful was born at his Palmer home weighing in at about 8 lbs. and was 19 1/2 inches long. “Our hearts are full of gratefulness to the Lord for His great grace towards us all,” says (Grandma) Martha Buckingham.

*Psalms 139: 13 & 14: “For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.”*

#### Wedding announcement

**Matthew Paul Speckels** and **Elishaba Trust Hale** will be uniting in marriage on May 12, 2007. You are cordially invited to join us for the wedding ceremony at 2:00 pm, held at the Lazy Mountain Bible Church in Palmer.

Dear Family and Friends,

Our hearts are filled with gratitude to the Lord for the miraculous work of grace He has done in both of our hearts to prepare us for this moment in time. “This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.”

In His Sovereign love and mercy, the Lord brought Elishaba (with her siblings) to live with the Buckingham family two years ago. He has wonderfully transformed her into a woman like the one mentioned in Proverbs 31: “The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her...”

The Lord has faithfully used these past few years as a time of conforming Matthew to the image of Christ and causing him to adopt a mindset to serve God whole-heartedly. A little more than one year ago, he came to live with the Buckingham family. As a result of God's arrangement, the Hales and the Buckinghams have become like ‘family’ to both Matthew and Elishaba.

How many grooms have the privilege of living in close quarters with the bride's family for a year before becoming engaged? This opportunity has given us the chance to see the best of Christ, and the worse of the flesh in each other. We go into marriage with the confidence that He has chose us for each other... that together, He might continue to conforming us to His image.

We feel that God has brought us in part into this place as a result of your love and prayers on our behalf. Please continue to pray for us as we start our life together...that our lives might be lived in a way that would honor and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew and Elishaba

# Spring Break 2007

BY KEITH AND LAURIE ROWLAND

They began arriving in droves on March 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, aliens invading our peaceful little town, seeking release from their pent up city life. Okay, actually it was cousins, uncles, aunts, and friends arriving for our annual spring break snow sport extravaganza.

We had a three day trip planned, so Sunday at church we asked our local weather man, George, when we should go, and he suggested later in the week.

Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> was a beautiful day, so we took a day trip to the Nizina Glacier (90 miles round trip). This year any place north of the Chitina River received almost no snow, especially the Nizina drainage. On top of this, the Nizina valley has strong winds that strip the snow from the gravel bars. We had a miserable trip bouncing and ricocheting over endless gravel bars. But what the Nizina lacked in snow, it more than made up for in wild and majestic scenery. We stopped under the towering Mile-High Cliffs, feeling awed by their formidably soaring heights. Next, we cruised up a small side drainage to check out a summer waterfall that winter's freezing temperatures had transformed into a 100-foot icicle. Soon we were at Nizina Lake at the toe of the Nizina Glacier. There was no lake here when I was a boy, but one has formed as the glacier has retreated, and now it is quite large – over 3 miles long. The glacier calves huge icebergs into the lake during the summer months, but during the winter the glacier movement slows down (it advanced about 10 – 15 ft. this winter, judging by the pressure ridge in the lake directly in front of the glacier), and the lake ice locks the front of the Glacier into place. We were able to explore around the lake and gawk at

infinite varieties and shapes of icebergs, some many acres in size. We crossed the pressure ridge, went boldly to the face of the glacier and crawled into its eerie, dark blue interior through ominous, gaping cracks in its surface. After exploring around the glacier, we returned home.

Wednesday the 14<sup>th</sup>. We awoke to a beautiful day, and by 10:00 am 14 guys on snowmachines pulling sleds were making tracks for a private cabin in the Chugach Mountains, 65 miles away. We traveled on the Bush Alaska Freeway—down the Kennicott River, down the Nizina River, up the Chitina River, up the Chakina River, up the West Fork, and up Monahan Creek. By then it was afternoon, we had entered the Chugach Mountains, and there was 4 feet of powdery, untracked snow on the ground. We unhitched our sleds and climbed our way up a small drainage till we topped out at a 6,500 foot plateau known as Steamboat. From here, magnificent vistas stretch out wherever you look, and you can travel in any direction on relatively gentle terrain. The plateau drops off abruptly to the north, giving awesome views of the Chitina watershed and the Wrangell-St. Elias peaks farther back. We didn't stay long – it was about -15°F and there was a decidedly chilly breeze, so we headed down. Back at the sleds, we hitched up and got back on the Freeway—up the Klu River, down the broad, expansive Hanagita Valley, and arrived at the cabins around 6:00 pm. 95 miles for the day.

Thursday morning dawned bright, clear and cold (-25°F). We went up Sangaina Creek and played on high glaciers and hanging valleys, surrounded by the raw splendor and white brilliance of God's amazing creation. Snow conditions were excellent for high marking,

side hilling, brodies, jumps—you name it—and Dave Persón had a brand new Summit 800 Skidoo, which was more capable than he was. Dave kept us entertained by climbing up every chute he could find, 'til it looked like he would kiss the rocks at the top. He also kept us amused with his Eskimo rolls, nose plants, tail dives and other antics, including high-marking trees with his bumper. All the while, the continuous drone of the Persón and Rowland boys' under-powered Ski-Doo Tundras, in their endless attempts to keep up with the big machines, provided an acoustic effect uncannily reminiscent of a hive of bees in swarm mode.

All too soon, the sun began to sink behind fire-rimmed mountains, and we headed back to the cabins for dinner and rest. 80 miles for the day.

Later that evening, the guys voted unanimously to honor Jay Williams' better half with the Nicest Wife Award, on account of the delicious banana bread she sent with Jay to share with all of us. We're hoping for some stiff competition in this category next year!

On the other end of the spectrum, the Worst Vittles Award went to Jeff Green this year when, one morning at breakfast, we found him choking down a frozen vegetarian MRE which had only half-thawed with the chemical heat pack. While all the guys were sympathetic with Jeff's distasteful plight, no one offered to trade meals.

Friday morning dawned clear and cold... -25°F. Another nice day. We chose a different valley and played in the high country powder until 2:00, then raced back to the cabins, packed and cleaned up, and hit the trail for McCarthy, arriving around 7:00 pm. 120 miles for the day.





Photo courtesy the author

Rowland girls having fun in the backcountry

The Fairbanks crew returned to their various homes over the next couple of days with happy memories, great pictures, and, more importantly, no emergency room bills!

Our next big trip was the Rowland Family Lakina Campout, which my wife, Laurie, will tell you about.

Hi—Laurie here. It's no fair that the men get to do all the snow-machine trips, leaving the women and little 'uns home, so we Rowlands like to take a family-style snowmachine trip during spring break. This year's destination: a small, old log cabin near the headwaters of the Lakina River. There were 16 family members on the trip this year—Grandpa & Grandma, Keith & I with our five kids and dog, and Roger & Tammy with their five kids and new puppy. To get to our destination, we snowmachined 15 miles out the McCarthy Road, then headed north up the Lakina River. Eager enthusiasm mounted as the broad expanse of powder-covered river bed opened up before us, and snow-clad mountains reared up on either side. *"I will lift up mine eyes to the hills..."*

Keith took the lead, blazing a trail for those of us who needed it and doing the hard work of bridging, clearing, and otherwise improv-

ing places that were impassable. He and the boys had scouted the route a few weeks before, so Keith came prepared with 1x6's, a hammer, and a pocket full of nails. With these, he made a bridge over a spot where a creek had formed a steep walled gorge as it flowed

into the Lakina. Bridge construction time: 15 minutes, max. I was impressed.

There were five open-water crossings along the way, one of which turned out to be Grandpa & Grandma's "Water-loo!" After Roger and Grandpa fished the snowmachine—and Grandma—out of the much-too-gleefully chuckling stream, they continued on, slightly damp, but undaunted.

With 16 people, lots of gear, and only seven snowmachines among us all, a few of the kids used a tow rope and skis or snowboards for transportation. This year's Bronze Legs Trophy goes to Kaleb and Kimberly, who skied at the end of a tow rope, Arctic Man style, the entire trip. They each logged 60 miles the first day, and roughly 75 miles the second day of our excursion. And all without breaking a sweat or complaining of sore muscles.

Sometime after lunch, we arrived at the cabin and unhooked our sleds, significantly lightening our machines' loads. Then we were free to cruise the last couple miles to the toe of the Lakina Glacier, where we buzzed around on our snowmachines, watched Kaleb ski down the fairly vertical face of the glacier, shouted encouragement to those whose machines were stuck, and of course, feasted our wondering eyes on the spectacular panorama all around us.

All the boys, ages 7 – 15, had volunteered to help decongest the small cabin by sleeping outside in our tent, the "Arctic Oven" (now, there's a misnomer!). With no heat in the tent except that produced by their small, boyish bodies, and temperatures dropping to 25° below zero that still, moonlit night, I'd say the Rowland boys deserve the Sam McGee Cold Camper Award for 2007. In the morning, chilly boys began trickling into the cozy cabin, one by one. But soon we realized that not all of them had arrived. Where was Axel? Roger went out to the tent, opened the flap, and peered inside. No Axel. Roger went into the tent and reached his hand deep down inside Axel's sleeping bag. There was Axel, curled up in a tight little ball with Tishna, the puppy, in the very bottom of his sleep-



Photo courtesy the author

Rowland family on Lakina Campout.

ing bag. Boy and dog were peacefully sleeping, all snug and warm.

I arrived home that evening tired, stiff, hungry, sunburnt, sore... and happily gratified. It was a fun, exciting, beauty-filled trip, yes, but more importantly, I got a reminder of just how wonderful each member of this family is, and what a blessing each one is to me.

And now, back to you, Keith...

The best trip of the year for me occurred on March 30<sup>th</sup>. My brother, Roger, neighbor Don Welty and I strapped on as much fuel as we

could carry on the backs of our machines and headed off into the sunrise. The weather was perfection itself—clear but mild. Putting it in a nutshell, we traversed the Chugach Mountains between the Hanagita Valley and the Tana/Bremner Valley in a big loop. At the end of the day, we had logged 165 miles, of which only about 20 were backtracking miles. We traveled on seven rivers and numerous creeks and small drainages. We crossed eleven mountain passes, ranging in elevation from 2500 feet to 6000 feet. We felt we could have

gone farther and done more, but at some point you just have to head back to the barn, so reluctantly, we did. As it was, both Don and Roger ran out of gas about a mile from home!

Well, the snowmachines, skis, and snowboards are put away for another year, and the kids are all back to their school books. But we thank God for this awesome country—the work of His creative hands—and we thank Him for watching over us while we experience (sometimes recklessly, I'll admit) His handiwork.

## 2007 Long Lake ice-fishing derby —another success!

LONG LAKE: —

The third annual ice-fishing derby took place on Saturday, March 24<sup>th</sup>. Most of the 44 folks in attendance arrived by snowmachine and sleds. Those that drove their vehicles were eagerly ferried by the younger set—who seemed to enjoy keeping their machines in good running order.

Thanks to Tye Lohse, most of the ice holes had been drilled and awaited the incoming fisherfolk by 10 a.m. That's when the major action began—at least on the side of those wetting a line. As for the fish...well, they held back on their end of the deal and the catch for the day was slim compared to previous years.

The first fish pulled in was by Kaleb Rowland. Cal Ward, Jr. hooked the most fish; Owen Mozen may not have been the youngest fisherman, but he certainly qualified as catching the most fish within the younger category; and Bonnie Kenyon, the largest at 2 ½ lbs. Dolly

Varden trout was the most popular variety caught. All the above winners took home new ice-fishing rods and lures supplied by Grand Marshal and Long Lake resident, Jim Kreb- lin. Several other participants were treated to puzzles.

Jim decided to add to the excitement (just in case the fish weren't biting!) by collecting bowl-

and that, too, received plenty of attention.

Visiting spring breakers from as far away as Dutch Harbor (Roger and Tammy Rowland and family), Anchorage (Neil O'Donnell, wife Margaret, daughter Catherine and their guests from Hawaii), Valdez (Carl Gressel) and Palmer (Ken and Nancy Rowland) all joined the local attendees in the yearly fun-on-the-ice event.

A bon fire was set ablaze, food was shared and set out on folding tables while Mark Vail brought out his annual pot of chili. It's hard to beat Mark's homemade chili after a hard morning on the ice! Thanks, Mark, for your handiwork in our annual derbies. Young and older eagerly roasted their hot dogs while catching up on news of family and friends.

Much thanks goes to Jim Kreb- lin for keeping the snow shoveled off the bowling lane and coming up with such a grand idea in the first place. See ya next year!



WSEN staff photo

Happy Derby winners. Left-to-right: Cal Ward Jr., Bonnie Kenyon, Owen Mozen.

ing balls and pins for the creation of an ice bowling lane. Young folk and adults alike enjoyed the new addition to this year's derby. A volley ball court was also set up on the ice



## DOT's Northern Region pulls plug on McCarthy Road project

BY RICK KENYON

Department of Transportation and Public Facilities' (DOT&PF) officials announced on April 25 that they were officially stopping work on the McCarthy Road Improvement Project Environmental Impact Study (EIS) "due to a lack of funding for construction."

"This is a large project and our construction estimates are now well above \$100 million dollars," said Steve Titus, DOT&PF Northern Region Director. He continued, "The EIS has been underway since 2002 and will take several more years to complete." He added, "We need to spend our finite resources on projects that will turn dirt, and it's not realistic to expect to see construction on this project anytime soon."

Since an EIS normally carries a wide range of alternatives, from "no-build" to whatever large-scale project the planners envision, it is not clear what process the Northern Region used to assign the \$100 million dollar figure to the project.

Although officials have consistently stressed that the work being done by the local DOT maintenance personnel is of a temporary nature, that the road bed is that of a pioneer road and needs to be reconstructed before any lasting improvements are possible, they are now taking a different tact.

The success of last year's maintenance project (primarily the hug-a-boulder bend project) caused highway officials to look more critically at the larger project. "We were able to make significant improvements to this road last year through our preventive maintenance program." Said John MacKinnon, DOT&PF Deputy Commissioner for Highways.

Former Governor Murkowski was an strong supporter of upgrad-

ing the McCarthy Road, and during his administration the state was able to obtain a \$5 million dollar appropriation as part of the 2005 SAFETEA-LU transportation appropriation. Normally this money would have to be given back to the federal government when a project is canceled. However, DOT&PF officials say they have gotten an exemption from the Federal Highway Authority and will be assessing what projects on the McCarthy Road can be developed from the remaining monies.

Critics say the Northern Region has taken what has been a long-term public process and made an arbitrary, in-house decision without public input.

"Stakeholders throughout Alaska have participated for over a decade in various public forums to help define a plan for the McCarthy Road upgrade project and, while the progress by the state has been slow, there was nonetheless a feeling that progress was being made," said National Parks and Conservation Association's Jim Stratton in a letter to Governor Palin criticizing the move.

"No one had heard that DOT was planning to pull the plug," wrote Statton. "It was a complete surprise."

In fact, as recently as December of 2005, DOT&PF had written to the Coalition for Access to McCarthy (CAM), stating, "Completion of the EIS remains a priority. We plan to have the public review Draft EIS and public hearing in August 2006. After that the Final EIS could be ready in January 2007 and the Record of Decision issued in summer 2007."

The Coalition for Access to McCarthy also wrote the Governor, harshly criticizing the decision.

"That this decision was made with absolutely no prior public notice, public meetings or public input is also very distressing. What was the point of having everyone attend all those meetings when DOT&PF was going to throw in the towel two-thirds of the way through the EIS? The way the decision was handled suggests to some in our area that the termination of the four year EIS process reflects, as much as anything, a lack of interest in the project by DOT&PF's Northern Region and a desire by the Northern Region to build roads closer to Fairbanks. If that is indeed a motivating factor, it would be a very parochial view given the importance of the McCarthy Road upgrade to the tourism industry statewide."

National Park Service officials were surprised and not pleased with the decision.

According to Jim Stratton, last year the NPS reprogrammed funding within their budget to support the construction of four waysides along the McCarthy Road, complete with bathrooms and picnic tables. These were to be the first visitor roadside amenities on the road and this was being done with the assumption the state was continuing its part of the overall access improvement by looking at road upgrade options.

"I would like to see the DOT finish the EIS — even if they finish it with a scaled down proposed action that is fiscally more achievable," said Meg Jenson, superintendent of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. "The beauty of an EIS is that the proposed action can be retooled at every step of the process," she said, "and can incorporate a full range of activity between 'no-action'(status quo) and proposed action."

## CVTC to install new phone system in McCarthy

BY JIM GIFFORD, CVTC/COO

Copper Valley Telephone will be installing an all new 3G digital wireless telephone and data network in McCarthy this summer. This all new system will provide voice, data & high speed Internet access for both Copper Valley Telephone fixed wireless customers and Copper Valley Wireless mobile customers.

The new equipment will be installed at both the McCarthy town site and the Sourdough Ridge site, providing service to all existing McCarthy area customers.

Fixed wireless customers will enjoy more reliable high quality

phone service with options for Internet access. All CVTC fixed customers will receive new equipment this summer as the service is transferred from the old analog system to the new CDMA digital network.

Wireless customers will enjoy higher quality service, a host of additional calling features, including Call Forwarding, Call Waiting, Caller ID, 3 Way Calling, Call Transfer, Do-Not Disturb and access to Voice Mail services, not to mention longer battery life, access to text messaging, high-speed data and internet services, and a larger free calling area which will include not only McCarthy, but all of the State of Alaska.

Copper Valley has recently turned up this network in the Glennallen/Copper Basin area, Valdez, Whittier and Prince William Sound. Customers in these areas are now benefiting from greatly improved voice quality, along with custom calling features, text messaging and voice mail services. Data and high speed Internet services will also become available later this summer.

Please stop by the office or visit our website [www.cvtc.org](http://www.cvtc.org) to check out our great selection of phones and PDA's, as well as our new statewide and nationwide rate plans.

## McCarthy musher fulfills dream

BY BONNIE KENYON

McCarthy: —Jeremy Keller, local contractor, McCarthy resident and “for- fun” musher, realized his dream when he crossed the finish line at Nome at 6:56 a.m. on Tuesday, March 20<sup>th</sup> —the end of the 2007 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Allie, Jeremy’s wife and grandest supporter, was on hand to give him the best welcome of all, a big warm hug. His supporters back home —Team McCarthy —were with him in spirit.

Since the 1,122-mile race began on March 4<sup>th</sup>, Jeremy and Allie’s friends and neighbors were glued to their radios, the Iditarod’s website and word of mouth for any news of “their” musher and his team of 13 Alaskan huskies.

Of the 27 rookies in this year’s race, Jeremy was one of 20 to make it to Nome. He was one of 82 mushers to start the race with 58 finishing. Jeremy was number 54.

In Jeremy’s own words: “I can tell you that the first 700 miles were 90% super fun (with the exception of the run from Don’s Cabin to Iditarod...which was utterly

ridiculous/dangerous/not fun, etc.), and the final 300-plus miles were my challenge as the fog came over the team. They began to break down physically and mentally. The trust between us began to weaken as they wondered if this was ever going to end.”

It did end for six of Jeremy’s team as they were dropped with sore shoulders at checkpoints along the way. Three of those dogs were lead dogs.

In an interview with *The Boston Globe* Jeremy described the run from Shaktoolik to Koyuk: “I was having trouble filling the lead spot. It was starting to come unraveled, and, not having the experience, I didn’t really know where the edge was... we had a 40-mph headwind for eight hours. We got into patches of glare ice where the dogs just had no traction at all.”

Eight year old, Sugar, the remaining lead dog kept the team from faltering but she certainly had her work cut out for her. “She dragged us across for that entire run. There was one point I thought they were going to turn around and head back to Shaktoolik, and there was nothing I could do about it... But after that 15 minutes, Sugar just put her head

down, and then the rest of them put their heads down and marched the rest of the way. It was the hardest run for me, and it was the most impressive.” Needless to say, Sugar won the Most Valuable Dog award. “I would not have made it to Nome without her,” said a pleased and grateful Jeremy. In fact, Jeremy was proud of all his dogs.

On March 26<sup>th</sup>, Jeremy, Allie, 2-year old son Bjorn and their “family” of dogs returned to their McCarthy home —the “comfortable world of man,” as Jeremy put it. He is promising to put together a synopsis of the more interesting legs of the journey so that we may fill in some of the blanks and tell the more dramatic stories of the race.

“Iditarod 2007 was a much larger experience than I could have imagined before we began. I am truly humbled by how much so many of you enjoyed and lived it as the extended Team. Allie, Bjorn, the dogs and I appreciate all your prayers,” writes a thankful Jeremy.

Congratulations, Jeremy, and dogs! Welcome home!

# McCarthy Kennicott Historical Museum news

## Spring cleaning

Please mark your calendar and plan to turn out for the Museum's spring work party: FRIDAY MAY 4, beginning after mail, and continuing SATURDAY, MAY 5. This year we have much more to do than usual, because we had to move everything into the reading room so that John Adams could work on the interior. Now we have to put it all back. Come when you can, lend a hand for a couple of hours or whatever you can spare. Please bring work gloves if you have them. Bring food if you can, others will if you can't. Questions? Meg Hunt, 907-554-4408 We look forward to seeing you! "Many hands make light work."

## Summer volunteers needed

As is the case each summer, the Museum is looking for one or two good volunteers to act as caretaker/curators between Memorial Day (end of May) and Labor Day

(Sept.). We can offer bush-style accommodations (a small furnished dry cabin) and a small expense stipend. Volunteers are expected to be on site at the Museum from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. four days a week, to meet the public as needed, and do many and varied maintenance and cataloging tasks. We would love to hear from interested people!! If you or anyone you know would be interested in being a volunteer, please contact Neil Darish at 554-4402.

## Museum remodel completed

John Adams got a dirtier job than he bargained for when he agreed to help remodel the Museum's interior this last fall. Venturing up into the attic to clean it before adding insulation, he found the space covered with mounds of coal dust from the old days of the CR&NW railroad. The coal dust constantly drifting down through the cracks in the ceiling is probably one of the main reasons that the building has always been so dim and dusty.

The Museum is a much warmer and brighter place now. After finishing the monumental task of cleaning up this mess, John made repairs, installed paneling, and painted the walls, ceilings and floor. The building hasn't looked so good since the railway left town! Thank you, John, for all your hard work.

The interior marks the completion of our two-year grant for structural repairs and improvements from the Rasmuson Foundation for this grant and the National Park Service for the donation of construction materials.

Special thanks goes to Meg Hunt for taking on the difficult and often thankless job of writing and administering the grant. Your efforts and generosity have given the old CR&NW Depot a new lease on life.

Be sure and check out our new look this summer!

## Kennecott Flood Repair Plans

NPS KENNICOTT—

The NPS has been working diligently over the winter to acquire necessary funding for repairs needed in Kennecott resulting from the flood in October. This flood caused damage to the trestle over National Creek, the structures bordering the Creek and to Root Glacier, Bonanza Mine and Jumbo Mine Trails. The Wrangell St. Elias NP&P has received some emergency funding from the Alaska Regional Office to begin to repair the trail system and we have a commitment from Federal Highway Administration that we will receive funding to repair the trestle. Additionally, other flood repair funding for this park was included in a Congressional request for assistance for all the parks affected by related storm events such as Olympic and Mount Rainer. We are still awaiting word on the status of this request.

Before winter set in, the Park was able to work with a local contractor and re-established the low water crossing just above the trestle. As soon as possible this spring the NPS will place

an interim footbridge just above this crossing. It's anticipated that this footbridge will be in use for the summer season. In order to repair the trestle, it will have to be dismantled. This could begin in late July or earlier. Visitors and local residents should expect to encounter construction related to trestle repair both this summer and next. Vehicles will be limited to the low water crossing until repairs are complete.

After a footbridge is in place across National Creek, the NPS will address repairs to the Root Glacier Trail. The main problem with the trail is the stream crossings, particularly at Jumbo Creek. The NPS plans to install a temporary crossing as possible after snow melt. It's probable that a temporary crossing at Jumbo will be in place for a good part of the summer while a more permanent solution is designed. After the Root Glacier trail is passable, the Trail Crew will move on to the Bonanza Mine Trail and the Jumbo Mine Trail. This initial effort on these trails will be to ensure pedestrian passage and then vehicular traffic. If it's possible these repairs will be addressed con-

currently. Residents and visitors should expect to encounter construction on these trails throughout the summer, especially in the beginning of the season that hiking will be more strenuous.

Stephens Harper, the Kennecott Area Ranger, will be coordinating volunteers that have expressed interest in helping with repairs.

The Assay Building was severely damaged in this last flood event and a final decision on how to address the building has not been made.

Alternatives that are being evaluated include relocating what remains of the structure, as well as, building a replica of the structure. We will keep you informed of this planning effort as it progresses.

We will do our best to keep you informed of upcoming repairs as we continue planning and gathering more information. We appreciate everyone's interest and support and hope that you'll contact us if you want to volunteer or if you have any questions or concerns. It will definitely be a busy summer trying to catch up and move ahead at the same time.

# Loy Millard Green

November 7, 1928 – April 7, 2007

**L**oy Green, age 78, died Saturday, April 7, 2007 at Elmendorf Hospital in Anchorage of heart failure. A celebration of Loy's life will take place this summer in McCarthy, Alaska. His ashes will be spread in the McCarthy Creek valley.

Loy was born November 7, 1928 in Monte Vista, Colorado to Grover and Mildred Green. Loy spent his childhood in Colorado. In his teens, he moved to California where he worked in various sales jobs. He enlisted in the US Army from 1950 to 1953, serving in Korea and Germany. He was honorably discharged as a corporal after earning a Korean service medal with 2 bronze service stars.

Loy and his brother Curtis moved to Alaska in 1963, first living in Valdez, then in Chitina. He often told the story of how the logs in their Chitina cabin acted like an accordion during the 1964 earthquake. He later moved to McCarthy, where he worked occasionally as a Kennecott caretaker and as a cook for mining exploration companies in the area, including a summer spent underground in the old Kennecott mines. Loy lived in either Chitina or in the McCarthy area until September 1998 when he

began spending winters in Anchorage with Bernd and Christy Hoffmann. During this period he was adopted as surrogate grandfather by their son Andre'. In April 2000 he moved to the Anchorage Pioneer Home, where he resided until his death.

Loy enjoyed painting, playing trumpet, reading (particularly philosophy), meditation and cooking. He also enjoyed philosophizing, and never seemed to be in a hurry. He was an expert at keeping old vehicles and equipment running. In the 1970s he masterminded the rebuilding of the severely-deteriorated foundation of the Old Hardware Store in McCarthy, and was proud to have squared-up the building without breaking a single window.

Today the building is the home of the Wrangell Mountains Center, an institution dedicated to environmental education and the arts. Loy was also a founder and for several years the live-in curator of the McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum. He lived a very frugal lifestyle, making his living working on small local construction projects in McCarthy by selling his oil paintings.

Much of Loy's artwork remains in a small art gallery in McCarthy.

Loy and his brother Curtis lived many winters and some summers at a remote cabin in upper McCarthy Creek. After floods destroyed the road up the creek in 1980, Loy established an elaborate system of pulley-operated ferries and stashed several trail bikes along the route to get to his cabin. Later floods further limited access to air travel in the summer and snowmachines in the winter. Loy built a small "Avid Flyer" airplane to fly from McCarthy to his cabin, although after two engine failures he abandoned this effort. Remnants of his plane sit outside his art gallery near the Old Hardware Store in McCarthy.

Loy is survived by his sister Martha Berg of Ashland, Oregon. He leaves behind many friends in McCarthy, Anchorage and the lower 48, including the Hoffmann family; Sally Gibert and Dick Mylius; Ben Shaine and Marci Thurston; and his devoted caregivers in the Pioneer Home. He was preceded in death by his brother Curtis Green and sister Ruth Hawkins.

Memorial donations may be made to the McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum, PO Box MXY, Glennallen, AK 99588-8998.

## Eccentric Pioneer

*Editor's Note: Molly Mylius is a senior at East Anchorage High School. She wrote this essay last fall for her school literature class. "It was supposed to be a caricature piece and we needed to choose someone to describe," said Molly. "I have known Loy since I was young and always found him to be a fascinating person and McCarthy has always been a special place to me, so I choose him as my subject."*

BY MOLLY MYLIUS

**H**is shirt was an eternal snap-button plaid, worn and matted like a time-worn teddy bear but still quite wearable. His perpetually dirty trousers were held up by a worn leather belt that interrupted the faded red and blue stripes of his flannel shirt. Loy

lived and breathed practicality. He never replaced items that were still usable; he also kept items that were not usable at all. Once, he gave away a large old watch to a girl named Molly.

"Why do you want to get rid of it?" she asked uncertainly, not sure

she wanted this "new" trinket. "Don't you need a watch yourself?"

"Oh, well... I don't really have any use for it; time doesn't matter much around here 'n McCarthy," he said, shrugging. "Some of the buttons don't work, but it's a sturdy thing. Take care of it," he said,



flashing her one of his gleaming grins full of neglected teeth.

Molly looked down at her own fluorescent Mickey Mouse watch, the one she had had for just about forever, and replaced the unit with this big, clunky digital version. Later, on the playground, her peers sneered at the size of her new wrist adornment. Then she showed them all the high-tech features and they ambled away, frustrated that their teasing had no affect on her mood. She did not take the watch off until all of the functions stopped working, and even then she left the watch on for a day or two more, hoping that maybe the batteries were just "resting."

A worn charcoal fedora always covered Loy's head, the felt so exhausted that the material was quite thin, not unlike the wispy gray strands that resided underneath. One always experienced a slight shock upon seeing the hat removed for the first time because the stray hairs poking out from under the brim gave the illusion of much more hair. His balding speckled skin hinted at a long life under the sun in his younger days.

He loved fixing things, and most people admired how he could work wonders with even the simplest tools. Duct tape and bailing wire, in his mind, could heal just about anything. "Junk" surrounded his life. Loy never knew when an old bed frame or an empty fuel can would come in handy to build a sled or repair a roof.

Years before Molly was born, her mother, Sally, met Loy right before she moved to McCarthy. In her early twenties, Sally was interested in buying the large, decrepit Hardware Store building built in 1913 during the mining days, but she had no idea how to go about fixing up the

place. Loy offered to head the renovation effort if she let him stay in one of the upstairs rooms. He was already staying in the Hardware Store as a sort of unobtrusive squatter, and he wanted to make certain that he was a part of the fixing-up process. She agreed, and that decision in 1976 was a very good one—his practical knowledge sparked a work effort with dozens of people that, in a few summers, resulted in a rejuvenated building that still stands today. Sally claims that buying the Hardware Store was the most foolish, naive, and best decision she ever made, and if Loy had not helped she does not know what would have happened.

When the Hardware Store was sold in 1989, Loy moved into a run-down, boarded up house nearby. He adopted this lopsided shelter as his own, turning one side into his home and the other into an art gallery. Similar to his arrangement with Sally, Loy contacted the owners and they agreed Loy could stay if he kept the cabin in decent condition. That was fine with Loy. He needed a house, here was an empty one, and what did property ownership matter if no one stayed at the house anyway? To the town of McCarthy, the asymmetrical house on the corner will always be "Loy's Place"!

Loy was eccentric. He loved oil painting, always trying new techniques with colors and layering. "I like to mix the landscape with scenes from my imagination," he said. Most of the locals have at least one piece of his unique artwork. Sometimes he would produce a particularly nice painting and people would encourage him to paint that scene again, but he would refuse; Loy thought that repetition was terribly boring; he did it for pleasure instead of show. He paint-

ed a moose for Molly once, a strong brown bull with a whimsical yellow-and-pink star-burst background. Loy also loved playing the trumpet. Every Fourth of July he played in the town parade. An idle stroller could sometimes hear him practice through the thin walls of his little cabin, bellowing out various tunes for as long as his diaphragm could hold out the notes.

Loy was a true pioneer. He ventured to Alaska from Colorado in the early 1960s, and the wilderness became his home. He was the museum curator, the town mechanic, the town foundation expert, and the town grandpa. Loy learned how to fly a small plane at 14. Later he purchased an airplane kit and assembled one himself, one of his few valuable possessions. He flew his little Avid Flyer around McCarthy, even though he never bothered registering for a pilot's license.

As one of the oldest residents in town, Loy had many stories. Some were perhaps stretched, but the amazing true stories always rivaled the exaggerated tales. He no longer lives in McCarthy, but his presence still lingers whenever there is a storytelling session, accompanied by a sadness that Loy himself is not present to tell the adventure.

Loy suffers from stroke-related dementia and can no longer live the independent life of which he was once so capable. His mind wanders and his stories and accomplishments are gradually slipping away, along with a part of history. His house still sits in all its muddled brilliance, next to what is left of his plane, which has since been stripped of its value to cover living expenses. The abandoned house still waits attentively, reeking of rotting wood and bygone memories.

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*"The idea that all men are created equal, and endowed with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is, indeed, an understanding that should be celebrated universally. That governments are instituted to secure these rights, empowered by the consent of the governed, is no less profound." —Henry Lamb*

# The World Around Us

BY DON WELTY

Since the last article, I hope you had an opportunity to do some research on the incomprehensible size of our known universe, and consider the majesty of its creator.

Our small planet, amidst the expanse of the universe can lead some to conclude that our planet earth is an insignificant speck, or as late astronomer Carl Sagan put it, "...a pale blue dot....our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark." This idea of the insignificance of the earth was an outgrowth of the discoveries of Nicholas Copernicus in 1543. Copernicus was the first astronomer to discover the correct relationship of the sun and its planets in orbit around it. The common theory, previous to his discovery, was the geocentric view that the earth was stationary, with the sun, moon, and planets orbiting the earth itself.

With the technological advancements in telescopes and the launching of the Hubble space telescope, the huge expanse of the universe was seen in more intricate detail than ever before. With this new insight into the size of our known universe, came a reinterpretation of the Copernicus discovery called the "Copernicus Principle." This is the idea that the earth occupies no preferred place in the universe.

This thinking seemingly leads to the conclusion of a lack of purpose or design, an idea not shared by the man the principle was named after. Copernicus himself said his search was for "the mechanism of the universe wrought for us by a supremely good and orderly creator.....the system the best and most orderly artist of all framed for our sake."

The Copernicus Principle coupled with the belief that life evolved from non-living chemicals on our planet, has given rise to intense de-

bate on the possibilities of life being common throughout the universe. However, as the new science of astrobiology (study of life in outer space) develops, a very different view of our planet and our place in the cosmos is being unveiled.

The search for other habitable planets has led to increased research of our own planet, and the conditions and location that allow life to survive, especially "complex life" such as animals (if you caught my first article you will remember that there is no such thing as "non-complex life"). The list of conditions considered essential, all at one time and place, continues to grow, but we'll look at the list so far.

The most universally accepted requirement for complex life is liquid water. Although often taken for granted by us earthlings, it is the basis for carbon based life. Water is essential for dissolving and transporting chemical nutrients vital for the life processes of living creatures. It also is critical in regulating the earth's surface temperature with its unparalleled ability to absorb heat from the sun. A whole book could be written on the life-giving properties of water, but as we shall see, water on its own is not near enough.

Another factor, intimately related to liquid water, is that the planet has to be within a certain distance from its home star, in a zone called the "circumstellar habitable zone." This zone is defined by the zone or distance from its star where the temperature parameters allow liquid water to be present. Too close and a runaway greenhouse effect is caused by the intense solar heating not allowing water to condense, eventually ending up like Venus with surface temperatures 900 degrees F. Too far and CO2 clouds form and the fate is that of the frozen surface of Mars.

Even this circumstellar habitable zone is highly dependent on another factor, it must be around the proper type and size star. Our sun is called a spectral type G2 dwarf main sequence star, an ideal type and size for life on earth. This particular type of star produces an abundant supply of the narrow spectrum of light that just happens to be the type able to penetrate the earth's atmosphere and be useful to living organisms. In fact, this narrow band is less than a trillionth of a trillionth of the total of naturally produced electromagnetic emissions. The star must also be of the right mass. Too small, like 90% of the stars in our galaxy, and the habitable zone ends up so close to the star that the increased gravitational force would synchronize its rotation and orbit. This results in the same side of the planet always facing towards the star, exposing the star side to increased radiation from solar flares and freezing perpetually the opposite side. Too large and they radiate too much ultraviolet light. Wow, ours is just right.

The shielding of our planet from comet impacts, by the giant gas planets such Jupiter, is also critical to sustain life for any period of time.

Our moon, large for a planet our size, being 1/4th the size of the earth, is essential also. The moon's gravitational pull stabilizes the earth's axis at 23 degrees and helps to circulate the ocean waters due to tidal currents. This ensures relatively temperate seasonal changes and mild climates.

A habitable planet also needs a nearly circular orbit in conjunction with a moderate rate of rotation so that seasonal and daily temperatures remain moderated.

An inhabited planet needs to have a surface, referred to as a terrestrial planet, with a surface crust

thin enough to allow for plate tectonics. This helps temperature regulation of the interior, recycles carbon, mixes chemical elements, and produces and shapes landforms.

Our planet has an essential protective magnetic field produced by its liquid iron core. Without this type core and resultant protective magnetic shield of the proper strength, the solar wind would strip our atmosphere, leaving it like Mars.

An atmosphere like our own appears to be the perfect combination for life to exist. The 78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen, 1% carbon mix is just right for protection from solar radiation, providing a temperate climate, and sustaining liquid water. It also allows the, above mentioned, minuscule spectrum of light through that is useful for life processes, while protecting us from most of the harmful spectrum.

The right ratio of landmass and water must be present to maintain an active biosphere.

Another important aspect to consider is our position in the galaxy and the universe itself. Most of the universe is believed to contain insufficient amounts of heavy elements needed to form terrestrial planets. Even in our home galaxy

there seems to be a sweet spot called the "Galactic habitable zone," where a planet/star would need to be positioned to be able to support life. Too close to the center and dangerous black holes, supernovas, and intense radiation would sterilize the planet. Too far and the lack of heavy elements would prevent terrestrial planet formation.

These above parameters not only have to exist individually but also in conjunction with all the others at the same time.

Another consideration is that without all the basic fundamental constants, laws and forces such as atomic mass, electromagnetic force, speed of light, gravitational force, strong nuclear force, cosmological constant, mass of universe, proton and electron mass, all of which are finely calibrated within tight parameters, not only would life not exist, but even the universe itself.

An estimate of the probability, of only the known habitable necessities, coming about by chance together all at the same time using very conservative values, came up with the number 1/1,000,000,000,000,000. A number, even when considering the staggering number of known stars, makes us the winner of either the

great cosmic lottery or suggests divine conspiracy. And, if you're of the lottery thinking, factor in the chances of all the constants and their exact coordinated tuning and the impossibility of life from non-life on such a planet, if it did win the lottery. Most astrobiologists expect this list of essentials for life to grow as we research and understand our own planet better.

As I consider all these things that have to be—all at once—to allow me to be here, I am struck with awe at God's majesty and power. Isaiah 45:18 *For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD, and there is no other.*

References: Brownlee, Donald & Ward, Peter D.; 2004, *Rare Earth*; Copernicus Books

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## Glacier Bay ORV Plan Open for Comment

### ALASKA NATIONAL PARKS NEWS RELEASE

**A** draft environmental assessment for the Dry Bay Off-Road Vehicle Use Management Plan has been released for public comment by Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. The park is accepting public comment through May 18, 2007.

The Dry Bay area of the preserve is at the outlet of the Alsek River, southeast of Yakutat. It is accessible only by boats and aircraft, and off-road vehicles are the main mode of transportation for commercial fishermen, lodge owners and their guests. While ORV use is generally prohibited

in national parks and preserves, the 1980 Alaska Lands Act authorized use of vehicles in support of commercial fishing. Over the years, the ORV trail network has expanded to about 83.5 miles of trail and has resulted in duplicate trails and an increase in damage to park resources.

The National Park Service is proposing to authorize ORV use on several specific, designated trails and routes in support of commercial fishing and other activities, and to close some trails and routes that either duplicate access or are causing extensive resource damage. The proposal, if it

goes forward, would require special regulations to implement.

The environmental assessment proposes three alternatives, including a no-action option. The alternative preferred by the NPS would authorize 58.7 miles of trails and routes, and close 24.8 miles. This option would allow about 34 acres to revegetate.

Copies of the document and opportunities to comment are available on-line at the following address: <http://www.nps.gov/glba/parkmgmt/planning.htm>. Copies of the document may also be requested by mail from the park, P.O. Box 140, Gustavus, AK 99826-0140.

# THE CHITINA LEADER

## May 1915 June

### OF INTEREST TO ALASKANS

This afternoon there is copper ore lying on the wharf at Cordova to the value of over half a million dollars. Twenty five cars had been brought from Kennecott on Sunday and this afternoon 14 more cars were received. With the exception of one car from the Mother Lode Copper Mines Company the ore is from the Bonanza and Jumbo mines. It runs about 67 per cent copper, making 1,360 pounds of copper in the 2,000 pounds to the ton. The 39 cars average 50 tons to the car, or a total of 1,950 tons. As each ton has a value of \$270, at 19 3/4 cents per pound, the total value of the entire shipment is \$526,500. As the insurance on the copper ore only allows ore shipped on any vessel to reach the value of \$250,000, it is not permissible for any steamer to carry more than 1,000 tons. When the steamer Alameda reaches Cordova tonight from the westward she will take aboard nearly 1,000 tons of the ore now here and convey it to the Tacoma smelter.

### OF GENERAL INFORMATION

Cordova, April 30 —The coming of George Max Esterley to this northland every season is like the blooming of the flowers in the springtime. Both are as certain and as welcome. Since last fall he has spent considerable time with his family at Seattle, when not otherwise entertaining his scores of northern friends who have been in the Queen City during the past few months. He finally set sail from Seattle on the 24<sup>th</sup>, on the steamer Alameda, accompanied by Mrs. Esterley. They arrived at Cordova last night and the big mining operator expects to leave on the train tomorrow morning for McCarthy. From there he will cross over Sourdough hill, the Nizina river and hit the trail for his large and comfortable camp on Chittitu creek, where he expects to find everything in readiness for a big season's work. Mr. Esterley has a big hydraulic plant there and is working in some rich

ground. It required several years of hard work to open up this section and put in the necessary machinery but he has been getting substantial results for a couple of years past. It is expected that the present season, if water conditions are favorable, will permit of a quarter million dollars being cleaned up.

McCarthy, April 26, 1915 — McCarthy is again showing signs of considerable building activity. Fred Cope has commenced the erection of a two-story addition to his hotel. A large refrigerator will be built into it which will enable him to supply his restaurant and the community with good meats during the summer months.

W. W. Harvey & Co. are erecting a store building on Front Street which they have already leased to Mrs. Marie Hendrickson.

A. E. Todd lately received a large shipment of men's furnishing including Filson's waterproof clothing, Dry Sox and Olympic shoes, U. S. White boots and pacs. His motto is "Good Goods" and his stock shows that. He says McCarthy is in the coming Butte City of Alaska and he intends to stay with it.

Messrs. Ed. Lindig and Sam Rogers, proprietors of the Hotel Golden, gave a very pleasant party at their hotel last Saturday evening. Dancing was indulged in until midnight and it was the unanimous expression of all who attended that they had a most enjoyable evening. Everyone is pleased to see this popular hotel again open to the public.

MAY 4

### OF GENERAL INFORMATION

Cordova, May 12 —Thos. P. Holland of Chitina, a member of the recent Territorial Legislature, was a passenger from Juneau on the steamer Mariposa and will take the train for his home tomorrow morning. He states

that Representative Tansey took a trip to California but that he expects to return the latter part of this month and resume his duties at Kennecott.

Archie Cloninger came down from Chitina yesterday and has taken a position at the Mecca.

The Hazelet trail from McCarthy to the Chisana, which was built during the winter of 1913 cost considerable more money than was subscribed for that purpose. As a consequence there has been a deficit of over \$2,100 which has not been adjusted. An effort is now being made to liquidate this indebtedness. Vice President Baxter of the Alaska Steamship Company months ago agreed to contribute \$1,000, if the balance were taken care of. Now an effort is to be made to raise the balance necessary to wipe out the obligation. A large part of it was secured on money borrowed from the bank, on a note signed by various businessmen. The trail was only used the first winter but there is a feeling that the obligation ought to be wiped out.

Rex Creek, May 6 —For nearly a week we have had a touch of winter again, with snow nearly every day. But it is warm again and likely to continue on.

C. S. F. Cole, the Shushanna mail carrier, has landed the Nizina mail contract.

Art Powell, it is understood, has lined up some pay on Fly Gulch.

The Andrus camp will this year have luxuries for the men, that will include spring beds and mattresses.

On White Creek —One of the operators recently completed a smoke house on the creek and will prepare rabbits for the heat of summer. If successful, it may be the fore runner of larger packing houses, as rabbits are quite plentiful in most of the districts.

The Toubie boys have their summer's wood cut and dead work done, as much as the ice will permit.



Mr. Bodies of the Kiser bench visited McCarthy recently on business.

MAY 18

#### OF GENERAL INFORMATION

The reports that there is danger in the vicinity of Strelna from forest fires are not warranted. Eight or ten miles back of Strelna and near the Kotsina river, fires have been raging for some days past, but other than dense clouds of smoke that at times have been wafted from the north there has been no annoyance in the immediate vicinity of Strelna.

Paul B. Coe, who was formerly freight clerk on the steamer Alameda, left on Thursday's train for Kennecott. There he will act as secretary to Superintendent Seagraves of the Kennecott Mines Company, succeeding Mr. Erickson, who in turn will take the place of Larry Bitner, recently resigned as storekeeper.

#### CHITINA OBSERVATIONS — Alaska Road Building

While Chitina will not have a government railroad at present —of course she will sometime —there are signs of a greatly improved auto road to Fairbanks. The work of preceding years makes the work of each succeeding year much more efficient. Through ditching and the removal of the tundra the ground is dry and the frost out of it earlier each year.

The Alaska Road Commission has just completed a warehouse in Chitina 100'x45' for the storage of equipment and supplies. This, with their barn and other buildings, gives them a very well finished plant for the business of road building.

There is at present a crew of about 30 men working at Tonsina where they are extending the bridge across the river. When completed it will be about 1,000 feet in length. They have begun the work of putting a surface of gravel on the road which it is intended will eventually extend over the entire length.

Base Ball —The Ball Park at Chitina looked like a grading camp last Sunday. Every able bodied man in town was there with a shovel or a team and under the able and enthusiastic direction of John M. S. Nelson, the manager and promoter, they accomplished wonders. That is getting to be some ball

park and there are some ball players headed for Chitina. John is already laughing to himself at the way he is going to clean up the country around for about 60 miles north and, say 131 miles south. He was somewhat disappointed last year because a certain town on the coast was scared to cross bats with him. He hopes their courage has improved some this year.

MAY 25

#### OF GENERAL INFORMATION

Cordova, May 28. E. A. Hegg made a trip to Anchorage and returned last night. He found conditions lively at the white tented city and predicts considerable activity so soon as the permanent town is located. He took a number of good views of the new railroad terminus.

JUNE 1

#### TO OUR PATRONS

With this issue the Chitina Leader will be temporarily suspended. Business reasons make it necessary that the editor spend a couple of months in the states, and as he has not succeeded in securing a satisfactory man to run his newspaper interests in the Copper River region he has decided to lock up for the present. In view of the quiet summer times, this can be done at a financial profit. With the coming of renewed business activity in the early fall this paper will expect to again greet its patrons.

June 22

#### LEADER IN THE FIELD TO STAY

The Chitina Leader will continue to be published regularly as the writer takes a pardonable pride in the fact that he founded Chitina's first and only newspaper, and does not propose that the people of the Copper River valley shall be compelled to miss a single issue.

From the best information obtainable the outlook for this section is most encouraging. The financial interests in New York, which own and operate the Copper River & Northwestern Railway and the famous producing copper mines at Kennecott, recently sold \$10,000,000 worth of bonds, the money to be used in operating their properties in Alaska, acquiring new copper mines and the possible extension of our local railroad. This should mean big development work and Chitina

needs and will have a paper in the Leader that will do all in its power to advance the best interests of one of the richest mineral belts in the world.

As soon as business conditions warrant it is our intention to improve the Leader and make it in every way a newspaper that will be a credit to the Copper River Valley.

#### HARRY G. STEEL

Joe Feaster, the United States Deputy Marshal, at Chitina, broke his collar bone by running his motor cycle into an obstruction on the baseball field at Chitina.

#### CHITINA ROUTE FASTEST WAY TO OUTSIDE

Again it has been demonstrated that the Cordova, Chitina, Fairbanks route to the interior of Alaska is the quickest way to travel. Mrs. Ringwald Blix, wife of the commissioner at Copper Center on the Fairbanks trail, left her home last night in an auto, and left on this morning's train from Chitina, reaching Cordova this afternoon. She will be a passenger on the Mariposa tonight for Seattle, and will therefore reach Seattle in a trifle over five days from the time she left Copper Center. Mrs. Blix is going to visit relatives in Montana and Idaho, and will be joined later by her husband.

#### EPIDEMIC AMONG NATIVES AT TONSINA

Dr. W. H. Chase, has been notified that a throat disease has become epidemic among the natives at lower Tonsina, about 30 miles from Chitina. From what slight information the doctor has received he believes the trouble to be diphtheria. Dr. Chase has wired to Mr. Miller, a government teacher at Copper Center, to visit the scene of the trouble and expects to hear from him today and unless he wires that it is unnecessary, the doctor will leave on the train tomorrow for Tonsina. He has been attempting to secure diphtheria anti-toxin from the various settlements around the sound, and from Juneau and has managed to receive a small amount from Fort Liscum. One death has occurred so far among the natives and four or five in another family are already sick.

June 29

## Backyard glaciers on the wane in Alaska

On late winter nights in the Goldstream Valley north of Fairbanks this past winter, a woman named Hilary went for walks on the snow-covered trail outside her house. During a time of year when silence dominates, she heard something strange.

Water was percolating up through the ice of nearby Goldstream Creek, and flowing in fan-like channels over the ice. Not long after it hit the surface, the water froze. Ice accumulated over the days until it created a small glacier that crept to within a few feet of a woodpile on Hilary's porch. At about the same time, water began seeping into the first story of her house.

"I'm someone who appreciates nature, but there's a certain line where what's beautiful and awesome becomes a threat," Hilary said.

Hilary and her landlord installed a plastic pipeline to divert the water from her house. It flowed like a river back to the frozen creek and eventually slowed to a trickle. Her little glacier continued to grow until the

warmth of spring finally began shrinking it. The change of seasons saved her woodpile from the ice.

Overflow ice, also known as aufeis (German for "on ice") formed on many small creeks this winter, according to National Weather Service hydrologist Ed Plumb. He visited Hilary recently to see her glacier and interpret the scene. He said the recent winter was a prime season for creating aufeis in the Interior.

"We didn't get much snow this year and it was cold early," he said.

"November was the fourth coldest on record, we got about an inch of snow, and it really drove the frost line down. We saw a lot of icing this year."

Aufeis often shows up on Interior roadways where roadcuts intersect the water table. Groundwater seeps out and covers the road, freezing into small glaciers before crews with graders can scrape it away. Overflow ice occurs anywhere in Alaska, and is more prevalent in colder temperatures and in years of low snowfall where ice freezes thick-

er and pinches off normal channels, forcing water to the surface.

"It's common on the North Slope," said Larry Rundquist of the Alaska-Pacific River Forecast Center in Anchorage. "Springs that flow up there can cause sheets of aufeis that are tens of feet thick."

On a larger scale, river and lake ice in Alaska is breaking up gently so far this year. Because of Alaska's warm spring, the recent trend of easy river breakups looks like it may continue, Rundquist said.

"The Yukon has a pretty deep snowpack in its headwaters in Canada," Rundquist said. "If it sends snowmelt down before the ice rots out, it could be a concern for the upper river. But most of Alaska at this point is looking pretty good. If the temperature stays above average, we could have a really easy breakup, but it's still a little too early to say for sure."

For the most current forecast of the spring flood potential in Alaska, go to <http://aprfc.arh.noaa.gov>.

*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.*

## Scholarship Opportunity for Young Alaskan Women

JUNEAU—

Sen. Bettye Davis (D – Anchorage) is inviting all female high school juniors and seniors to participate in a unique essay contest that will award seven young women from across the country a three thousand dollar academic scholarship and a free trip to the National Foundation for Women Legislators (NFWL) annual conference.

The essay contest is a joint effort between the NFWL and the National Rifle Association. The contest asks college bound young women to write a 400-600 word essay about a woman or a group of women and their experiences and influence on the formation of the United States of America during the American Revolutionary Era of 1754-1791.

The winners will travel to the annual NFWL conference with a female legislator to learn leadership skills and to

network with political leaders from around the nation.

Senator Davis encourages all female high school juniors and seniors to enter the essay contest. For more information, check out the National Foundation for Women Legislators webpage at <http://www.womenlegislators.org/> or call Senator Davis' office at (907) 465-3822.

The application deadline is Tuesday, June 19, 2007.

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# Hale attempts to change plea to "not-guilty"

BY RICK KENYON

Robert Hale, formerly known as Papa Pilgrim, now wants to change his no-contest plea on charges of rape, kidnapping and incest, and instead face trial. Just before the sentencing date of April 30, Hale said he has changed his mind and wants to go to trial.

Hale now asserts that medication was responsible for clouding his mind when he entered the no-contest pleas on the day after Christmas, 2006.

"I spent Christmas Day in the hospital and they found some blood clots in my knee. Doctors this morning gave me months to live, so I'm not really concerned, but for my family," Hale said.

Apparently now that he is feeling better, his concern has shifted focus away from the well-being of the family and back onto himself.

"I want to make it clear that I never in any kind of way ever sexually assaulted anyone but for all counts and

purposes, for the families, I plead no contest for all this. I think I understand with a clear mind that this is what's best for my family and me," he said in 2006.

Under the plea agreement, prosecutors say Hale would likely have gotten a 14-year prison sentence.

"When I got this case, it was full bore. We were not going to make any offers — no offers — because the behavior was egregious, horrible behavior. And after about a year and a half, and I give my wife most of the credit, my heart got a little soft because I don't want this girl to have to go in front of cameras and tell what happened. What happened is awful and horrible," said assistant district attorney Richard Payne.

The court has set a date of September 13 to consider Hale's attempt to withdraw his plea. Payne said he plans to oppose the plea-change. If the court grants Hale's request, the earli-

est date for a trial would be the beginning of next year.

Hale had been represented by Palmer public defender Lee de Grazia, who worked out the plea agreement last December. His case has now been turned over to the state's Office of Public Advocacy (OPA), whose mission statement reads, "To protect the rights of vulnerable Alaskans by providing excellent, cost-effective legal and guardian representation to abused and neglected children, incapacitated adults, and others." OPA only represents clients when the agency is appointed by the court.

In addition to the alleged misbehavior of the elder Hale, the family has also been involved in a legal struggle with the National Park Service over access to their property near McCarthy. Rulings by a district court and the 9th Circuit have not been favorable. Their attorney, Jim Burling, says the Pacific Legal Foundation hopes to have the U.S. Supreme Court appeal done by May.

[www.PropertyRightsResearch.org](http://www.PropertyRightsResearch.org)

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# Ahtna Museum to be constructed this summer

NPS COPPER CENTER—

“A contract has been awarded for construction of the Ahtna Museum this summer at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve Headquarters,” announced Superintendent Meg Jensen today. “Blazy Construction of Soldotna was chosen to build the 2,400 square foot structure,” continued Jensen.

Ground-breaking for the approximately one million dollar project is scheduled for May, with the building slated for completion by the end of Sep-

tember. The museum building will blend with the style of other buildings in the complex, such as the visitor center and theater. The structure will include space for exhibits, presentations, and curatorial storage.

Ahtna Heritage Foundation and Wrangell-St. Elias, partners in the project, are presently finalizing an agreement for operation of the museum. Availability of curatorial storage opens the doors to repatriation of historical artifacts; bringing back home significant archeological resources is a high

priority for Ahtna. Denver Service Center will manage the contract, with assistance from a regional representative in Anchorage. Wrangell-St. Elias employees Will Tipton and Wayne Challoner will serve as Project Inspectors.

Visitors to Wrangell-St. Elias headquarters complex this summer should expect the same high level of services as in the past. However, construction noise and congestion will be present throughout the summer. For further information, call Smitty Parratt at (907) 822-7223.

# Collection Features Klondike Gold Rush, Skagway History

NPS—

An extraordinary, one of a kind collection of artifacts encompassing the Klondike Gold Rush and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century life in historic Skagway will be protected and made available for public viewing and research through the collaboration of the owner and four Alaska partner organizations.

The George and Edna Rapuzzi Collection, which was started a century ago by a Klondike Gold Rush stamper, was purchased this week for \$1 million by the Rasmuson Foundation. The Foundation will develop a plan to distribute the collection to the City of Skagway, the Alaska Natural History Association, and the National Park Service.

The collection, which includes an estimated 450,000 items and five historic buildings, was started by Martin Itjen, a stamper who later led Skagway's developing tourist trade. His longtime friend, George Rapuzzi, was a tourism promoter and tour guide, as well as a consummate collector in his own right. Together their collections came to be owned by Phyllis Brown, Rapuzzi's niece, who sold it this week.

“This is an amazing accumulation of Alaska's history,” said Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park Superintendent Jim Corless. “The generous

support of the Rasmuson Foundation is providing a fabulous opportunity to share with both visitors and Alaskans an important part of our nation's history through authentic objects in their original location.”

Among the stunning number of items in the collection are these:

- The 1897 parlor that belonged to the famed Jefferson “Soapy” Smith. After the gunfight which caused his death in 1898, the saloon became a restaurant and then the home of the Skagway Hook and Ladder Company. Martin Itjen acquired the building around 1935, remodeled it, and re-opened it as Jeff Smith's Parlor Museum. This landmark structure retains much of its 1898 appearance as Soapy Smith's headquarters.

- The 1900 YMCA Gymnasium and Reading Room and Meyers Meat Market complex, later used as an automotive garage and still holding many automotive artifacts from the 1930s.

- Martin Itjen's famous “Skagway Streetcar,” a home-converted 1906 Packard, used in early Skagway tours and still emblazoned with his marketing slogan “Nothing Like It In the World.”

- The original silk banner of the Arctic Brotherhood, formed in 1899 by stampers to provide mutual assistance, friendship, and social interaction

in the northern communities. The Arctic Brotherhood Hall is owned by the City of Skagway, now operating as visitor center for Skagway's 900,000 visitors each year.

- Numerous objects representing Native Alaskan stories including Tlingit carvings and baskets and a unique “Native Packers for Hire” sign from the gold rush. The collection also holds scores of photographs, hotel registers and ship manifests that add depth, texture, and personality to the story already told by Skagway's historic architecture.

The collection will be managed by the three Skagway partners, with a comprehensive inventory being the group's first priority. The plan is that the National Park Service, which has orchestrated the partners' purchase from Ms. Brown, will preserve and display items related to the Gold Rush era. The City of Skagway is contributing \$100,000 toward the purchase, and will add to its museum collection those items that tell other city stories, including those of Native Alaskans, tourism, and its port. The Alaska Natural History Association will restore the Collection's World War II Commissary building and focus its Skagway operations there and partner with the City in exhibiting Skagway's WWII history.

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“[M]y real exercise, that truly keeps me fit, is to get on my knees each morning and each night and thank God for waking up in America, and to thank God for the men and women who wear the uniform in Iraq and Afghanistan and everywhere else they serve...” —Ben Stein



## New book releases

**A**laska Northwest Books announces the release of the 30<sup>th</sup> edition of *The Alaska Almanac*. This handy fact book continues to be an invaluable reference on Alaska answers to your questions on all things Alaskan — history, geography, biology, parks, population and more.

This affordable guide provides alphabetically organized, enlightening entries making it the premier reference book for travelers, students and anyone curious about the 49<sup>th</sup> state. Did you know that Barrow, Alaska, has 0 hours of daylight for 67 days, November 18 through January 24, and 84 days of daylight from May 10 to August 2. Another amazing fact: the Trans-Alaska oil pipeline is 800 miles long, 48 inches in diameter and crosses 834 rivers and streams, three major mountain ranges and an earthquake fault line.

Included is completely up-to-date information on cost of living, commercial fish catches, sports records, accompanied by new photographs, illustrations and sidebars. Plus, Anchorage celebrity, Mr. Whitekeys, once again shares his comical wisdom.

The latest edition of *The Alaska Almanac* is in softcover, contains 240 pages with 50 black and white photos, 12 maps and costs \$12.95. Be sure to check your favorite bookstore or visit Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company's web site at: [www.gacpc.com](http://www.gacpc.com).

**A**nother recent release from Alaska Northwest Books is *The Kids from*

*Nowhere: The Story behind the Arctic Educational Miracle*. The author, George Guthridge, set out with his wife and two daughters to a small village on the edge of remote blizzard-swept St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea. It is one of the harshest and most remote places in Alaska. He was there to teach at a Siberian-Yupik school so troubled it was under threat of closure, but George didn't know that. Like many other teachers hired to work in Alaskan villages, he had accepted the position thinking about adventure and about the great pay.

George tells the story of his own transformation and that of his students when they are entered into one of the most difficult academic competitions in the nation. Working with few resources and with a group of students who are bright but lack focus and training, George adapts, motivates and coaches. The students face emotional and academic difficulties that stagger the imagination. In their quest to win, they overcome fire, personal tragedy and prejudice. They must compete against teams from schools of the gifted on subjects that the Eskimo students have never heard of before. They study while hauling water and hunting whales, even go three days without sleep after being exhausted from the spring walrus hunt. But they prevail; they become the only team of Native Americans in U. S. history ever to win a national championship in academics. And they do so twice!

Hilarious, disturbing and packed with surprises at every turn, *The Kids from Nowhere*, is a powerful, poignant story that will make you want to cry and cheer at the same time. They had been labeled "uneducable." They were the children of whale and walrus hunters. They had no computers and almost no books. They spoke English as a second language. They had little world knowledge. And their teacher was ill. Together, however, they achieved what others called impossible.

The 328-page softbound book sells for \$16.95. The royalties the author receives from this book will go toward building a school in the earthquake-ravaged area overseas. It will be dedicated to the Kids from Nowhere.

George Guthridge is now Professor of English at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Bristol Bay, in Dillingham, Alaska, where he is currently creating a DVD and workbook series about his revolutionary approaches to teaching writing and grammar. He has been nationally honored four times as an educator for his work with Alaska Native youth. Using his methods, his rural-Alaska students have graduated from such places at MIT, Harvard, Dartmouth, West Point, Yale Law School, to name a few.

George is a former technical writer and science magazine editor-in-chief and has published five novels and more than seventy short stories and novellas. Three times he has been a finalist for the Hugo and Nebula Awards for science fiction and fantasy.

**"Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in, except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force. Never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy."**

— Winston Churchill, Oct. 29, 1941

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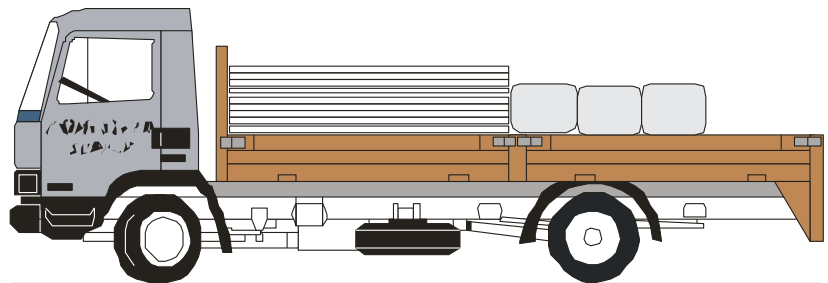
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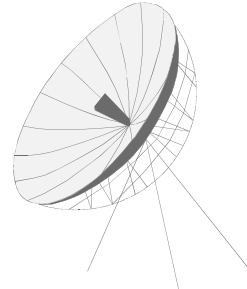
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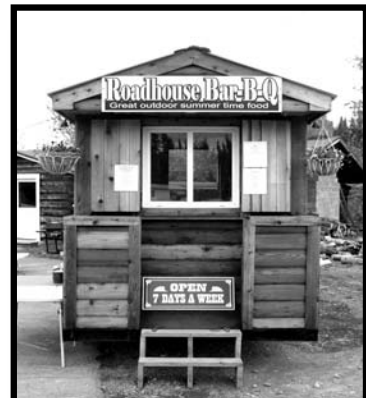
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# Cooking with Peggy

BY PEGGY GUNTIS

**H**appy Summer Everyone. I just realized the other day how little time there is before we head north — 54 days to be exact. I can hardly wait to see all our friends in McCarthy, our granddaughter in Valdez and our daughter and her husband in Homer!

First item on the agenda—please look back to the last issue at the recipe for Pasta con Broccoli. I tried it a couple of times and just for fun added ½ to 1 cup of Velveeta to the mixture and it was great. Try it—you’ll like it.

Next, let me tell you about a special cookbook I bought. A friend was visiting from out of town and we went to a very special new shopping plaza here in Tucson that neither of us had ever been to. She wanted to shop in one of the clothing stores, but knowing that I was heading to the wonderful land where I can wear jeans everyday, I just kind of browsed. Right there in Coldwater Creek surrounded by lovely clothes I found one book (books draw me to them like bees to honey). It was the *Special Edition New Cook Book* by Better Homes and Gardens. It’s the one with the pink ribbon on the front and the pink section of 32 pages of stories and recipes from those touched by breast cancer. When I found out it was only \$20 (the new paperback novels are \$15) and that 10% went to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, I bought it immediately. Of course I took a lot of kidding when the husbands met us coming out of a dress shop and my friend had bags of clothes and I had a recipe book! This book is filled with wonderful recipes, cooking hints, canning and freezing ideas and much more; plus for me a great bonus — nutritional information after every recipe.

*We’re coming into the season in Alaska when we’re thinking about fresh halibut and salmon. I would love to share a few of the recipes from the Better Homes and Garden for your fresh fish. Hope they don’t mind.*

## Dijon Mustard Fillets

- 1 pound fresh or frozen fish fillets, ½ to 1" thick
- ½ teaspoon lemon-pepper seasoning
- ¼ cup dairy sour cream
- 1 tablespoon milk
- 1 tablespoon Dijon-style mustard
- 2 teaspoons snipped fresh chives or chopped green onion tops
- 2 to 3 teaspoons capers, drained (optional)

1. Thaw fish, if frozen. Rinse fish; pat dry with paper towels. Cut into 4 serving-size pieces, if necessary. Measure thickness of fish. Place fish on the greased unheated rack of a broiler pan. Turn any thin portions under to make uniform thickness. Sprinkle with lemon-pepper seasoning.

2. Broil 4 inches from the heat until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork (allow 4 to 6 minutes per ½" thickness of fish). (If fillets are 1" thick, turn once halfway through broiling.)

3. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan stir together sour cream, milk, mustard, and chives. Cook and stir over low heat until heated through (do not boil). Spoon sauce over fish to serve. Sprinkle with capers, if desired.

Makes 4 servings

Note: The book gives you some hints on selecting fish—one of the things I love was that they should have “clear, bright bulging eyes with black pupils.” Guess I never thought about the color of their eyes! Shows you how much I don’t know.

*How about some*

## Fish Tacos

- 1 pound fresh or frozen skinless cod, orange roughy, or other fish fillets (I’ll use halibut)
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise or salad dressing
- 1 teaspoon lime juice
- 1 ½ cups packaged shredded cabbage with carrot (coleslaw mix) or shredded cabbage
- 8 corn taco shells, warmed according to package directions
- 1 recipe Mango Salsa (optional) recipe follows

1. Thaw fish, if frozen. Rinse fish and pat dry with paper towels. Cut fish crosswise into ¾" slices. Place fish in single layer in greased shallow baking pan. Combine butter, cumin, and garlic powder. Brush over fish. Bake in a 450 degree oven for 4 to 6 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork.

2. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl stir together mayonnaise and lime juice. Add cabbage; toss to coat. Spoon some of the coleslaw mixture into each taco shell; add fish slices. Top with Mango Salsa or your favorite topping.

Makes 4 servings

For Mango Salsa: In a medium bowl combine 1 ½ cups chopped, peeled mangoes or peaches; 1 medium red sweet pepper, seeded and finely chopped; ¼ cup thinly sliced green onions; 1 jalapeno chile pepper, seeded and finely chopped (be sure to wear plastic or rubber gloves and wash hands with soap and water if they touch the pepper); 1 tablespoon olive oil; ½ teaspoon finely shredded lime peel; 1 tablespoon lime juice; 1 tablespoon vinegar; ¼ teaspoon salt; and ¼ teaspoon black pepper. Makes 2 cups

*I can tell I'm running out of space but first how about some*

### Salmon-Sauced Mostaccioli

8 ounces dried mostaccioli or rigatoni (about 3 cups)  
1 small green or red sweet pepper, cut into bite-size strips  
½ cup chopped onion (1 medium)  
2 tablespoons butter or margarine  
1 ½ cups chicken broth  
2 teaspoons snapped fresh dill or ½ teaspoon dried dill  
½ cup plain low-fat yogurt  
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1 15 ½ -ounce can salmon, drained, broken into large chunks, and skin and bone removed (I'm going to try the equivalent amount with chunks of fresh salmon.)  
2 tablespoons snipped fresh parsley

1. Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain; keep warm.

2. Meanwhile, for sauce, in a medium saucepan cook sweet pepper and onion in hot butter until tender but not brown. Stir in 1 cup of the broth and the dill. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Stir together the remaining ½ cup broth, the yo-

gurt, and flour. Add yogurt mixture to saucepan. Cook and stir until thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir for 1 minute more. Gently stir in salmon; heat through. Serve sauce over hot pasta. Sprinkle with parsley.

Makes 4 servings

I'm planning to use these recipes and other from the *Pink Special Edition New Cook Book* from Better Homes and Gardens all summer while in McCarthy.

Enjoy!

## A LOOK AT THE WEATHER

BY GEORGE CEBULA

February and March were well below average in both temperature and precipitation.

The high temperature for February was 30 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> (44 on Feb. 10, '06 and 41 on Feb. 05, '05). The lowest temperature recorded at McCarthy in February was -42 on the 23<sup>rd</sup> (-26 on Feb. 25, '06 and -40 on Feb. 5, '05). The high was 20 or above on only 5 days and the low was -30 or lower on 7 days. The average February temperature was 1.7 (11.6 in '05, 12.3 in '05 and 14.9 in '04). This is still warm compared to -5.9 in '99.

The February precipitation was 0.05 inches of liquid (1.72 in '06 and 1.17 in '05). Total snowfall was 2.5 inches (8.6 in '06 and 16.4 in '05). McCarthy began February with 19 inches of snow on the ground and ended the month with 18 inches.

March was a continuation of the cold and dry February.

The high temperature for March was 40 on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> (48 on Mar. 20, '06 and 51 on Mar. 11, '05). The low temperature for March was -40 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> (-31 on

Mar. 17, '06 and -5 on Mar. 21, '05). The average March temperature at McCarthy was 4.2 compared to 10.0 in Mar. '06, 28.7 in Mar. '05 and 21.0 in Mar. '04. The high reached 40 or higher on 2 days and the low was -30 or below on 4 days.

This will give you an idea of how cold it was. The average temperature between February 21<sup>st</sup> and March 20<sup>th</sup> was -7.2. The high was only 28 on March 20<sup>th</sup> and the low was -42 on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. The high was 20 or higher on only 2 days. The low was -30 or below on 11 days and -40 or below on 3 days.

March liquid precipitation was 0.21 inches (trace in Mar. '06, 0.12 in Mar. '05 and 0.67 in Mar. '04) and snowfall was 3.7 inches (0.1 in Mar. '06, 0.8 in Mar. '05 and 10.1 in Mar. '04). March started the month with 18 inches of snow on the ground, increased to 20 inches on the 13<sup>th</sup> and ended the month with 17 inches.

The total snowfall for '06-'07 was 43.7 inches, thru 4/15 (84.0 in '05-'06, 79.4 in '04-'05, 110.6 in '03-'04, 44.5 in '02-'03, and 67.1 in '01-'02). The greatest snow depth was 21 inches on January 26<sup>th</sup>. This compares with an average ('80-'06)

of 65.1 inches and a snow depth of 27 inches. The greatest snow fall was 110.6 inches in '03-'04 (99.9 inches in '90-'91) and the lowest was 27.3 inches in '86-'87. The greatest snow depth was 42 inches '03-'04 (39 inches in '90-'91) and the lowest was 16 inches in '86-'87 and '98-'99.

The first 15 days of April have seen a gradual warming of temperatures and only a trace of snow. The high has been 56 and the low -4. The highs have been in the 40's and 50's, except for a 38 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. By the 30<sup>th</sup> we should be seeing lows near 30 and highs close to 60. There is about 5 inches of snow left. The snow should be gone by the end of the month, but I'm afraid that there will be ice on the rivers and lakes until mid May.

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.

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.

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"The difference between a welfare state and a totalitarian state is a matter of time." —Ayn Rand

# FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

BY KENNY SMITH

Here we go again! Once more our major upgrade aspirations for improvement on the McCarthy Road have been derailed by the recent action of the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF). Gone is our State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funding. This means, federal allocations will not be available for any work on our road in the future. All funding must now come exclusively from state tax or other revenues. Governor William A. Egan must be rolling over in his grave.

Why is this a problem?

Alaska's General Fund is where much of Alaska's state income revenue is deposited, if that money is going to be spent. The General Fund is the funding source for the State Capital Budget and the State Operating Budget. Appropriations for conducting the state's business are made each session by the Legislature into those budgets. If revenues are not spent, they can be placed into interest earning reserve accounts like the Alaska Permanent Fund or the Constitutional Budget Reserve Fund.

The beauty of having a project in the STIP means that the federal government matches state funds since federal highway and airport trust funds are used to match state funds in the Capital Budget. The ratio is sometimes as great as 94% federal and 6% state. It is no wonder then that legislators prefer to allocate funds into the Capital Budget only when they will be used to procure federal matching funds. Historically it has been pretty much a rare occurrence when the Legislature goes along with funding capital construction type work with only state funds.

The "Coalition For Access To McCarthy" (CAM) has written the governor and our district legislative delegation requesting a logical explanation for this abrupt termination of our upgrade. The Environmental Impact Study (EIS) portion of the project began in 2002 and was over two thirds completed. CAM told the governor:

"That this decision was made with absolutely no prior public notice, public meetings or public input is very distressing. What was the point of having everyone attend all those meetings when DOT&PF was going to throw in the towel two-thirds of the way through the EIS? The way the decision was handled suggests to some in our area that the termination of the four-year EIS process reflects, as much as anything, a lack of interest in the project by DOT&PF's Northern Region and a desire by the Northern Region to build roads closer to Fairbanks. If that is indeed a motivating factor, it would be a very parochial view given the importance of the McCarthy Road upgrade to the tourism industry statewide."

CAM also pointed out to the governor that many concerned individuals, both within and outside of CAM, have questioned the methodological bizarreness of this action:

"Why not finish the EIS with the technical staff that is already familiar with the road and this EIS effort rather than having to reinvent the wheel several years down the line? We have also been repeatedly told that the EIS will address several alternatives from "no build" all the way up to a full developed and paved road. Why not finish the EIS and then consider the evaluated alternatives in light of the then applicable fiscal constraints? Isn't that one of the purposes of the EIS? Why cancel the EIS—which is supposed to eval-

uate several alternatives—on the ground that one of the alternatives (the full, paved upgrade for the entire road) is now estimated to cost "above \$100 million"? We have been repeatedly told by DOT&PF that the road improvements would likely be accomplished in phases. Why not finish the EIS and then consider implementing the upgrade in phases as originally planned?"

Proponents of a decent road to McCarthy have been at this for a long time. They began way back in 1941, when our Territorial Legislature convinced the US Congress to preserve, for highway purposes, a right-of-way along the abandoned railroad center line. After that, our brand new state and its first governmental body, in 1961, authorized work to commence upon a modern highway bridge across the Copper River at Chitina. Diamond drilling the subsurface strata for the bridge took place that year. A happening occurring simultaneous with the beginning of the major upgrade on the connecting Edgerton Highway. This bridge was dedicated in 1971 at the same time the final phase of Edgerton upgrade was completed. In November 1973 a pioneer road was completed between Chitina and McCarthy. Since then, federal funds have been used to restore the Kuskalana Bridge and improve a thousand feet or so of sloughing roadway at Long Lake. In addition, state funds were used last summer for safety improvements at Hug-a-Boulder Bend. Over the years, the good efforts of the tiny highway maintenance crew at Chitina have also contributed to measured improvements along the route. Generally speaking though, since 1974, major improvements to the road have pretty much been stymied by an endless series of "stop and start" assessments, scoping programs, public hearings, roundtables, meet-

ings and comment periods. (I'm leaving out a lot of stuff here, like the three phases of the Alaska Land Managers Forum study, or the Scenic Corridor study and Plan, or the EIS, if you are still with me here, you should be happy I am.)

At the Copper River Bridge opening ceremony in September 1971, Governor Egan used words pretty much to the effect: "This Bridge will usher in an era of convenient vehicle access to an area of immense scenic beauty and recreational opportunity." Egan was telling Alaska then, that this road is important for the whole state. Today, many state visitor attractions are at or near capacity. Reasonable access to the largest national park in the country is the logical next step to facilitate growth in Alaska's visitor industry.

Where do we go from here? DOT&PF Northern Region representatives suggest that future improvements upon the road be made by salaried maintenance crews funded through their annual operating budget. They can only promise "occasional grading and some culvert replacement." However, if the administration is able to strong arm the legislature into enhancing funding increments for the Chitina maintenance crew, then larger assignments might be undertaken. Perhaps something similar to the maintenance effort Governor

Murkowski was able to achieve the last couple of years.

I suggest Northern Region's aspirations here to be delusional. The reason I feel this way is that I believe their argument totally relies upon an unusual funding scenario. Murkowski's recent use of general funds for state maintenance crew capital projects hasn't been viewed and approved as practical by past legislatures very often in our state's history. It is unrealistic to believe that any future legislature will reverse past policy by making this the norm.

Maybe even more important for us to consider here is an argument of the Associated General Contractors of Alaska. Their contention is that major modifications on Alaska roads, using small government labor forces, often results in doing the job "on the cheap." You must admit, they do have a point; for example, compare the bridge across the Copper at Chitina with the Lakina Bridge. The Chitina Bridge was accomplished with federal funds under strict engineering design standards using professional labor. The Lakina Bridge used only state funds and a hodge podge of labor, put together in a hurry up fashion under the overview of managers with questionable, at best, engineering expertise. Today, the Copper River bridge stands magnificent, while every other year, it seems, the too-short Laki-

na almost washes out. Other similar comparisons can be found along the route. Most of us look with pride at the Kuskalana Bridge, which was a federally-funded reconstruction and won a national achievement of excellence award.

A few years ago, the Attorney General's office woke the DOT&PF up to the fact that it didn't have much legal right-of-way on the McCarthy Road. In order to make any significant improvements to the road, additional right-of-way must be purchased. At hug-a-boulder bend last year the DOT&PF got their first taste of this. They couldn't afford to purchase the additional right-of-way necessary for a quality fix, therefore they downsized the project. Only through the STIP is the State going to be able to afford to acquire more right-of-way.

Strict reliance on maintenance crews to keep the road functional may prove to be a big mistake. Without a major upgrade of the road Alaskans can probably forget about using the Nation's largest national park for economic enhancement and growth of Alaska's visitor industry. CAM has asked the governor to somehow get our road back into the STIP where federal funds will once again be available.

So, that is my viewpoint. What do you think?

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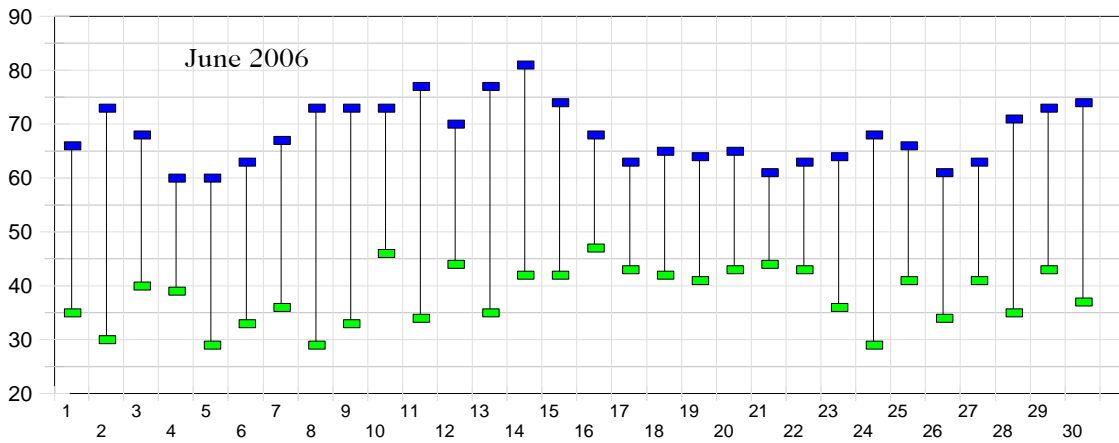
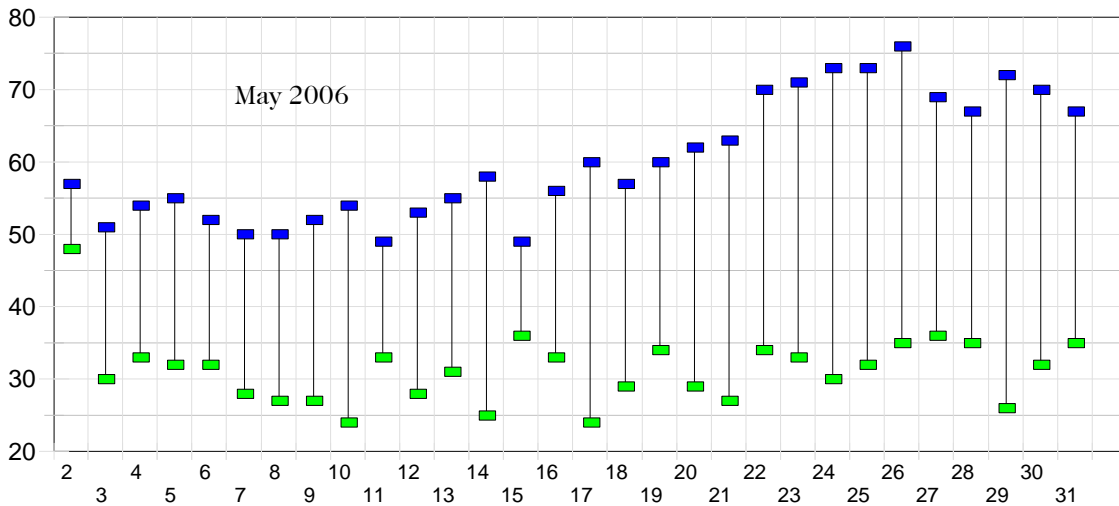
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