

# Wrangell St. Elias News

*"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"*

Volume Eighteen Issue Three

May & June 2009

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## Alaska Mountain Wilderness Ski Classic ski race

The Alaska Mountain Wilderness Ski Classic Ski Race is the longest unsupported backcountry ski race in Alaska. This is not a dog-sled or snowmobile event. Racers in the Classic travel on foot, often with skis.

Starting at Nabesna, seven of the nine racers who started towards McCarthy, some 150 miles away, finished.

One of those seven, Ned Rozell of Fairbanks has agreed to share his journal with us. WSEN readers will recognize Rozell as the author of many Science Forum articles provided by the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Traveling with fellow Fairbanksan Michael Gibson and former Fairbanks resident Forest Wagner, the team arrived in McCarthy in just over 6 1/2 days. (The winning team of Craig Barnard, Luke Mehl and John Pekar, who chose a shorter but more dangerous route through the Wrangells, had arrived in McCarthy some 3 days earlier!) Sit back, grab a cup of your favorite beverage and enjoy the Wrangell's wilderness through Ned's eyes. Story page 12.



Photo courtesy Michael Gibson

Ned crossing the Nizina, Forest Wagner waiting in the background.



## The ten year trip

BY PEGGY MORSCH

George Mobley, a retired National Geographic photographer, had answered a simple question I posed while meeting him for the first time at his home in the McCarthy area.

"George, you've been all around the world on grand assignments and seen some magnificent places. Why did you choose Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve as a place to retire part of the year?" I asked.

As I waited for his answer, his eyes spoke to me before his voice. "Because it IS the most beautiful place in the world." Story page 7.

Photo courtesy Peggy Morsch

# A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

There is no doubt spring has sprung in McCarthy and the surrounding countryside. Today is April 28<sup>th</sup> and nearby creeks are running profusely. Yesterday's high temperature was a whopping 60 degrees. "Break-up" is not always pleasant but inevitable. As my mom used to comfort me with when I made my frequent trips to the dentist: "This too shall pass." And, so shall spring break-up! I cannot help but think that by the time the July/August issue is ready to mail, McCarthy gardeners will already have their plants in the ground and seeds sprouting. This thought is challenging when I look at our garden plot today and see it still partially covered by 5 inches of snow. And...this, too, shall pass!

On a somewhat sad note, McCarthy area folks have had to say goodbye to one of the best postmasters we've ever had! The "sad" part is on our end, but on Terry Keizer and his wife, Sally's part, it means retirement from a very busy career with the postal service and more time to participate in fun and fulfilling adventures. Terry was one of the postmasters that went *beyond* the extra mile for his customers. I cannot count the times he called us with advice on how we could save money in our mailings and, then, in some cases doing it for us. Thanks, Terry, for the years of service—and I mean—service to us personally and our town!

A nearby land owner, Peggy Morsch, surprised us with a story and pictures of her March trip to McCarthy. She must have started writing before she ever left the ground in Anchorage, because her story arrived in plenty of time to make this issue. (Another example of quick service; this time, for you, our readers. Thanks, Peggy!) Be sure to visit Peggy's web site for her

amazing professional photos. You'll be glad you did.

Wayne Maars, along with his wife Gaia, own and operate a local guide service called St. Elias Alpine Guides (SEAG). We invited him to share his opinion on an NPS/commercial operator issue for Group Size Limit in Donohoe Basin. You will find his article on the *For your consideration* page of this month's *WSEN*. Thank you, Wayne, for taking the time to write down your thoughts and suggestions on how to reduce bear-human conflicts.

An adventure story by Ned Rozell covers his personal journal while participating in the Alaska Mountain Wilderness Ski Classic Race. Thanks, Ned, for giving us permission to print this in *WSEN*.

Local resident Mark Vail was quick to offer his recollections of a recent avalanche safety course he took in early April. Maybe this will whet the appetite of other McCarthy

area residents for future classes. Thanks, Mark!

Last, but not least, is a heartfelt thanks to Rick, my husband, my best friend, the co-owner and publisher of this humble publication! In the 17 years we have worked side-by-side on *WSEN*, he not only writes articles, stories and opinion pages, but he does the layout and keeps our various office machines and printers working properly. Today as I finish "a note," he is working on a last minute article to include in this issue. The next job assignment he will take on is finding a place for it which means moving a few articles around to make this last one fit. Rick, you are a treasure to me and the *WSEN* readers. Happy birthday, Rick! (He celebrates his 62<sup>nd</sup> year on May 10<sup>th</sup>.)

*Wrangell St. Elias News* welcomes aboard the following subscribers: Lorene Ellis, AK; David Roman, AK; Kim Ball, AK; Ray and Dabene Hendricks, AL.

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# Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

**Alysia Herbert:** Since Alysia is new to *Items of Interest*, I decided to start with her. Although she is not a newcomer to McCarthy, we had not officially met until just the other day. It was a brief introduction on a mail day. I invited her for tea and she took me up on the offer.

It turned out to be quite a fun-filled “tea” break. We were joined by Dorothy Adler and her 2-year old son Logan. Bjorn Keller, and his dad Jeremy, happened to stop by. While Riek and dad talked business, Bjorn joined the tea party in progress.

Alysia’s transportation was a 3-wheeler belonging to Ian Gyori, who happens to live just down the road from me, but is at the present time still in New York. Alysia single-handedly shoveled it out of its winter garage—26 inches of snow. This unique ATV instantly became an item of interest with Logan and 4-year old Bjorn. Staying indoors while the ladies visited was just not on the agenda. Alysia and her 3-wheeler became the center of attraction, thus we ladies had to adjourn our social event to the outdoors.

Alysia comes from Pennsylvania where her parents live. Since the summer of 2007 when she first began working for the McCarthy Lodge (serving in their dining room), she finds the McCarthy life-

style a great source of happiness. After her summer job ended last season, she did some traveling, but once March arrived, she made sure she was back in town. (Today as I write this “Item,” it is 50 degrees outside, the warmest day so far.) She made it back just in time!

I asked her what she was doing with her time: “I have learned how to drive a snowmachine, chainsaw and cut my own firewood, and just finished taking a 2-day avalanche course given by Matt and Meghan Smith.” When Alysia is not doing all of the above, she gives her attention to painting, embroidery and other craft projects.

**Mark Vail:** Another participant in the avalanche course was Mark. In fact, I just got off the phone with him in which he dictated an article on the subject. Be sure to read his account as you may want to take part in the next course Matt and Meghan offer.

When Mark isn’t riding his bike to mail or attending local activities, he can be found making several trips, morning and evening, to and from his greenhouse. Approximately 20 plus trays of those vegetable plants we are all eager to see produce, are occupying much of Mark’s time these days. The plants are thriving on the 6-hours of full sun, says Mark. A summer neighbor of mine, Barbara Rice, emailed me

with a list for Mark of a variety of plants she wants to grow in her garden plots this summer.

Mark does manage to squeeze in some spare time for birdwatching. A few spring birds are showing up in his yard: a brightly-colored snow bunting; a pair of 3-toed woodpeckers and a Downy woodpecker.

While on a recent skiing trip up the Lakina River with Carl Donohue, Mark reports they both spotted a Blackback Woodpecker, a rare sighting for our area. Due to trail conditions (or should I say the lack thereof!), Mark and Carl didn’t make it all the way up the river, but they sure had a great skiing adventure.

In the meantime he is still waiting for the annual arrival of the swans and juncos—sure signs of spring.

It is April 20<sup>th</sup> and I am putting the finishing touches on “Items.” I just talked to Mark on the phone and he let me know his first Robin and Varied Thrush of this year’s season appeared yesterday. “The migration is on,” says Mark.

**Cal Ward, Jr:** The Ward family homestead at Fireweed Mountain has a rich history. During the Kennicott/McCarthy mining days, a man by the name of Pete Johnson owned and operated a steam engine powered sawmill which supplied building lumber for McCarthy. He

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Contributors to this issue: Peggy Guntis, George Cebula, Ned Rozell, Wayne Maars, Mark Vail, Peggy Morsch, Carole Morrison, Meg Jensen and Mary Odden.

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logged the timber himself using horses and cross saws. The Ma Johnson Hotel, was built with some of that lumber. Pete and his wife owned and operated it during McCarthy's heyday in the 20's and 30's.

Cal seems to have inherited Pete's enthusiasm for making his own lumber—for Pete it was lumber for McCarthy's building projects, for Cal, just a small-scale operation for himself and nearby locals. His sawmill, which he purchased years ago, is gasoline powered. Instead of horses, he makes use of a track vehicle called a Rangler, a snowmachine and snowshoes. Creating his own lumber for projects and harvesting some of his nearby resources gives him great fulfillment, he says. Thankfully, he is willing to share his expertise in lumber-making as well as the finished project.

Recently, Rick and I shared with Cal our desire to build a new guest cabin. Before the visit was over, he offered to help. In short order the majority of the lumber we needed was sitting in piles in our yard, ready for the snow to melt and the building site to be revealed. Cal says he is even eager to give us a hand at putting the cabin together this summer. Working with his own lumber and seeing it to completion will give him great satisfaction.

Thanks, Cal, for all your hard work and an excellent product. We'll see you in June!

**Neil Darish:** All is well in the downtown area of McCarthy, says Neil, who, by the way for those of you who don't know, is the owner of the McCarthy Lodge, the Ma Johnson Hotel and The Lancaster. The "hotel" is still taking in guests and serving those visiting our area, although it is in a restored and spruced-up condition, without loss of its great historic value to our town.

Neil was more-than-excited when I talked to him the other day.

The McCarthy Lodge made April's cover story for *National Geographic Traveler Magazine*. The story, "129 Hotels We Love To Stay At," is a special stay list of unique hotels that define their sense of place.

The following is an introduction to the story which I found very interesting and thought you would, too! It was written by Charles Kulander and used by permission.

"The hotels on our Stay List 2009 don't just reflect their surroundings—they help define them. What they all have in common is a transcendent vision that goes beyond traditional hotel-keeping. This mindset is what gives these hotels their special sense of place. Make no mistake: You'll sense the vibe at once. Maybe it's the regional architecture that speaks to you. Or a guest room resonating with history. Or local food that not only tastes great but tells a story to boot. After your stay, you'll leave with the kind of insight only soulful places can provide.

"To find these hotels, *Traveler* tapped into the collected experiences of veteran journalists, inveterate road warriors, and local experts. They based their nominations on key criteria. Is the hotel engaged with the local community? Does it subscribe to sustainable practices that respect the region? Does it truly capture the spirit of its setting? Further research and detailed questionnaires winnowed hundreds of submissions down to this sweet list of 129 hotels.

"There's something for everyone here, from wilderness cabins to urban lairs of luxury—all authentic, purposeful places to enhance your travels. Welcome to Stay List 2009."

Just in case you are the curious type...Here's what they wrote about McCarthy Lodge and the Ma Johnson Hotel:

"A 1920s-frontier false-front hotel in a restored Alaskan ghost town, surrounded by enormous Wrangell-St. Elias National Park.

Home-off-the-range rooms: fabric-covered walls, handmade quilts, pedestal sinks. Saloon is a popular local hangout, with "open mike" evenings. Greenhouse supplies fresh produce; salmon caught wild. Playtime: Fly-in glacier trekking, alpine hiking, rafting. 20 rooms; from \$129."

Neil says he and the staff are excited about the summer. Until summer arrives, they are gearing up for a great season. Local contractor, Jeremy Keller, is working on the upgrades for Ma Johnson's and the Lancaster—new carpet, vinyl flooring, to name a few.

Thanks, Neil, for quite an item of interest and congratulations for making the 129 Stay List!

**Matthew, Elishaba (Hale) and Esther Grace Speckels:** The Speckels' family paid the McCarthy area and their friends a visit in March. They had someone they wanted us all to meet!

Baby Esther Grace is, as Elishaba says, "a blessing and a picture of God's grace in our lives. She is growing so fast it is hard to believe that three months have already past. Esther has been so full of smiles ever since she was born." I can certainly attest to that apt description of her.

Matthew and Elishaba brought pictures of a new house they are building on their property in Palmer. They are so eager to move in but it may not be ready until fall, Elishaba says. They want plenty of room for visitors and family members and gatherings.

Rick and I were pleased to catch-up on their progress as a family and meet in person Esther Grace. Thanks for stopping by and making the long trip out to see old friends!

**Jim and Audrey Edwards:** When I called the Edwards' house, Audrey was in-between chores. One such chore was unpacking from a trip she took to Anaheim, Ca. with her sister, Marelyn, her niece, Melo-

dy, and Melody's 6 year old son, Logan. Of course I expected Audrey had enjoyed her travels and the excitement of taking in the sights at Disneyland.

The weather was "nice, great, beautiful, warm"—and plenty of sunshine to go around, says Audrey. The three women (Audrey actually said "old ladies") had quite an adventure. Young Logan did his best to act as their tour guide, making sure they didn't miss anything exciting! Needless to say, Audrey had some recuperating to do upon her arrival at home.

Mt. Redoubt threatened to detain her departure and arrival to and from Anchorage, but she managed to squeak through and just made her connections enabling her to meet a few other relatives en route. Side trips to Knoxsberry Farm and Snoopy Park (for Logan's sake, I'm sure) filled out her travels and didn't allow for any moments of boredom.

Jim managed to stay plenty busy while Audrey was playing in the sunshine. He tackled nearby trails and paths with his snowblower, doing his best to encourage the remaining snow to disappear. He is now busy cleaning out their numerous bird houses. The swallows should be grateful for all the attention they receive at the Edwards' homestead! Hopefully, they will do their part in eliminating as many of those pesky mosquitos that find their way into our area.

Since returning to McCarthy, Audrey is pulling out those vegetable seeds, planting trays and dirt. It's quite obvious what she has in mind.

Welcome home, Audrey, and glad you were ready to come home!

**George Cebula and Sophie:** George and dog Sophie deserve a "welcome home," too. They just returned from enjoying an overabundance of sunshine and warm Arizona weather. They spent two weeks in Phoenix visiting friends, Art and

Linda (Warren) Phillips, who are summer visitors to the McCarthy area. George's brother Ted from Milwaukee met up with George in Phoenix and they drove out to Washington state to see Ted's daughter Sharon and her family.

Prior to visiting Phoenix, George made his annual trip to Tucson where Jim and Peggy Guntis (also summer McCarthyites) spend the winter.

George and Sophie continued their trip home via the ferry and arrived safe and sound at their McCarthy home. Sophie is in good spirits and health. I think she enjoyed basking in the warmth of Arizona's winter and I don't blame her! Welcome home, George and Sophie.

**Tim Mischel and Kathy Drury:** Tim and Kathy made good use of the added daylight hours and warmer temperatures of mid-March to travel to Tim's home away from home—the Angle Station above Kennicott.

On their return to the valley below, they immediately set off for Anchorage to visit Tim's nephew Joseph Wald and Tim's sister Sharon. Both Joseph and his mom are landowners in the area and visit the area as often as they can. Joseph is presently recuperating from surgery. We pray for a quick recovery, Joseph.

The Chitina Fishing Derby was in progress the day Tim and Kathy headed back to McCarthy. Kathy said they enjoyed taking in the festivities at Silver Lake where a 3 lb. 5 oz. Rainbow Trout took top prize.

Shortly after Tim and Kathy arrived in McCarthy, they paid Rick and I a visit, hand delivering Sharon's subscription renewal to WSEN. We hope to see more of Joseph and his fiancée, Erica, this summer. Their plans include a wedding in our town which is always a time for celebration.

**Howard and Chris Haley:** The Haleys returned from a trip "outside" on March 4<sup>th</sup>. Chris spent

3 months of the winter with family in Washington state and even managed to work a stint as a Nursing Assistant to keep her license current. Visiting her 90-year old grandmother was a highlight of her trip.

Howard kept an eye on their place in McCarthy, managing to get in a few snowmachine ventures and then when Chris was ready to head north again, he flew down to meet up with her. They had a pleasant drive home even taking in a ferry ride and doing a bit of sightseeing in southeast.

Since arriving home, Chris said she has managed to build a couple burrow end tables and is now working on a hutch made from hand cut spruce lumber she acquired from Cal Ward. It will have a country, rough-cut flavor to it, she said. I am eager to see her handiwork. I expect it will be finished by the time Rick and I need our next haircut.

Chris is an avid fisherwoman and made it to the Chitina Fishing Derby where she caught a 12 inch Rainbow Trout.

In between her crafts and fishing, Chris is pulling out those vegetable seeds and getting ready for spring. Howard is taking on replenishing their wood pile. Both the Haleys were rehired by the National Park Service this year so they are making wise use of their available time before their jobs begin sometime in early May.

**McCarthy students complete annual testing:** I was privileged to, once again, act as testing proctor on behalf of the Galena City School District's IDEA (Interior Distance Education of Alaska) program. I am always glad I am the proctor and not the student being tested! This year's students were David, Hannah, Daniel and Jubal Rowland. The testing was held at the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church. This was Jubal's first year to participate in the testing process. His brothers and his sister are old-hat to the challenges of test taking.

All students survived and so did their proctor!

**May Day Fly-in at Valdez:** We just received word that the May Day Fly-in at Valdez will be on May 8-10. Voted "Top 100 Must See Events in America," this year's events include: Poker Run, Beach Landing, Flour Bombing and STOL Competition.

For more information you may call 907-835-2984 or go on the following web site: [www.valdezalaska.org](http://www.valdezalaska.org).

**The Christian Pilot's Association** invites everyone to participate in their 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Fly-in Breakfast to be held at 10 a.m., May 16<sup>th</sup> on the tarmac in front of Copper Valley Air Service's hangar in Gulkana.

According to Dave Parmenter, owner and pilot for CVAS, you don't have to be a pilot and you may fly or drive to the event. Bring an appetite for a hearty breakfast will be served.

## Postmaster Terry Retires

BY MARY ODDEN

It's been a long and varied string of living situations for Terry and Sally Keizer during Terry's United States Postal Service career, from Baltic, South Dakota, to Glennallen, Alaska, but Terry says they wouldn't trade any of it.

Well, maybe Terry would be willing to trade the 108 degrees F the summer he worked as a city carrier in Flandreau, South Dakota, but otherwise he says it's been "wonderful experiences and people" all along the way.

Terry had returned to Baltic, South Dakota, from his second hitch with the United States Army after a total of 14 active duty years. In 1991 after having a cup of coffee with friends at the Baltic Cafe, he was walking across the street to pay his telephone bill when the postmaster stuck his head out the window and hailed him. "Hey Terry!" he yelled, "do you want a job with the Postal Service?"

That first job was as a "casual" employee, but Terry moved from the Baltic "post master relief" job to the career path job on the Flandreau sidewalks. After that, he took part-time clerk positions in Garretson, then Dell Rapids, only four miles from Baltic where he and Sally still lived.

To fill out his paycheck, Terry pulled night shifts at the big postal center in Sioux Falls two to four nights a week. He was getting lots of experience as "officer in charge"

when the various postmasters were out of town or on days off.

Sally had a job with a finance company in Sioux Falls and the Keizers had a nice home in Baltic, but the USPS was about to tempt them with adventure.

There were postal job openings around the country for clerks willing to transfer at their own expense, and the jobs in Alaska caught Terry's eye. In 2003 he bit on a full time job at the Bethel, Alaska, post office. The nine months he spent as a junior clerk in Bethel meant living solo, as Sally stayed behind to finish up the year's projects at her job and help with family events.

In January, 2004, though, Terry was offered the job of Postmaster at Mountain Village, a Yupik village north of Bethel on the Y-K delta and the last village on the Yukon River before reaching the coastal villages. Sally came to join him in February and the small plane deposited her on the snowy runway at 20 below with the wind whistling. She had to wait a while, as Terry had no transportation "but my own two feet," and was trying to round up someone with a vehicle. When he finally was able to get to the airstrip he told her, "Welcome to bush Alaska."

The Keizers liked their nearly two years in Mountain Village very much. Having lived in South Dakota, they were not put off by small towns, snow and wind, or sub-zero winter temperatures. They "were warmly received," made many lasting friends, and enjoyed the wildlife

and fishing. Did we mention that Terry is a fishing nut?

By 2005, though, Terry and Sally were thinking about making their way to some location on the Alaska road system, and then a retirement move back to South Dakota. The first part of that plan worked out.

Terry competed for the Glennallen postmaster job and was hired. He started work on October 1, 2005, thinking he would only spend a year and a few more months behind the counter, then take an early retirement back to Baltic. A retirement seminar threw cold water on that plan, and something else occurred—the Keizers decided that Glennallen felt like home.

Soon active in many volunteer activities, church, community music, and as the "unofficial Cross Road Medical Center fishing and wilderness adventure guides," Terry and Sally have become indispensable to nearly everyone who knows them in the Copper Valley. They now plan to establish their retirement home somewhere in the midst of all these friends and activities.

Congratulations to Terry on his retirement after nearly 28 years of federal service.

If you came into the post office during Terry's last week at work, the week ending March 20, you may have been surprised to see his normally snowy hair dyed blue—the color of an especially bright snow cone at the state fair.

This is quintessential Keizer. With a significant nudge from Donna Catledge, Terry offered to change his hair color to raise money at the previous week's CREMS Radio

Auction. That lovely shade of blue brought in more than \$500 towards the new ambulance.

Thanks, Terry, for being a great Postmaster, and to Terry and Sally for all the energy you have added to our communities. Welcome home.

## The ten-year trip

BY PEGGY MORSCH

It was about 10 years I ago that I found myself in what was to be a seed-bearing conversation with Daniel Morrison, the primo builder/fine carpenter in the McCarthy area. He was working on our cabin when I spoke with him about how George Mobley, a retired National Geographic photographer, had answered a simple question I posed while meeting him for the first time at his home in the McCarthy area.

“George, you’ve been all around the world on grand assignments and seen some magnificent places. Why did you choose Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve as a place to retire part of the year?” I asked. As I waited for his answer, his eyes spoke to me before his voice. “Because it IS the most beautiful place in the world.”

So as I shared that conversation with Daniel, I told him my favorite time of year for photographing in the Wrangells was the fall. Yellows, greens and reds abound on the mountains against the backdrop of crispy, clear days and blue skies. “If you think the fall is great, you should see it in the winter,” Daniel replied. “The last two weeks in March are the best. There’s about 2-3 feet of snow on the ground, the temperatures are warming into the 20’s and 30’s and the best part is the 12 hours of daylight.”

Now to be fair, I must tell you that I had similar conversations about the beauty of late March with Mark Vail, the local ‘naturalist’ and friend, who talked about it being the best part of winter to go on camping trips with his sled dogs, as



Photo courtesy the author

well a great time to observe all the changes in the natural world. Larry Turnbull, who plumbed my cabin, talked about the warmth of the sun that time of year, and many others who planted the seeds for this year’s winter trip. Thanks everybody for piquing my curiosity!

I arrived on the mail plane, which in itself is an adventure! Dave, from Copper Valley Air Service took me on a special route up the Lakina River drainage and over the mountains into the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Pass; a place that I had seen in Mark Vail’s pictures from his hike through that area last summer. Beautiful! When photographing in this Cessna 185, you need to imagine a small, single engine plane with minimal elbow room in the cockpit. I put my camera through a workout as the day was bright, clear, and did I mention cold?! It was minus something when we left Gulkana. But it didn’t matter because I was warmed by the magnificent scenery!

Bonnie Kenyon greeted me at the plane, dressed in her snow machine suit and purple goggles, with a big smile on her face! “Welcome to McCarthy!” she hailed as the “bowl” of the snow-bound mountains surrounded my view. After the mail was sorted she graciously snow-machined me to my cabin, where Daniel and Carole Morrison greeted me with open arms and a good fire going in my little Vermont Castings stove. They had come in to help me get the cabin warmed up. Good thing, because after a couple of hours of fire, it was 44 degrees inside! Can you say “indoor camping?” But by bedtime it would be 60—cozy enough for my first night. With their care in getting my solar power and water up and running, I went to bed feeling pampered, but grateful for their skill sets and assistance.

My first few mornings dawned bright and clear, and I was told it was about -20 outside. Those R40

ceilings and R30 walls that Daniel and his boys had built sure kept in the heat. The temperature had held at 60 all night, even with me stoking the fire a couple of times during the night. The cabin walls still weren't yet warmed but, hey, that was an 80-degree difference from outside to inside!

When the sun came up, the passive solar design of the cabin just soaked up the warmth of the sun like a sponge. When it hit 70 inside, I worked in a T-shirt grouting the tile around the wood stove. It was warmer than our 100+ year old Victorian in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where we keep it at 67 degrees. So the cabin passed the warmth factor "stress test" with flying colors!

I came to photograph this magnificent winter landscape, and each day I watched the light change over the mountains and create those gorgeous shadows early and late in the day. I heard Great Northern Owls and Goshawks, saw the ubiquitous Arctic Hare tracks, and some moose tracks, and felt grateful for this experience. Because I was alone, I ventured out only when the temperatures came up to zero. Carrying some survival gear and dressed in my hunter orange down coat, I laughed that if something happened to me, at least they'd be able to spot me!

At first I walked with my neighbor's, (Emily and Mark Bass) plastic sled behind me, with my photo sling pack, tripod and Emily's snowshoes inside. That kept the weight off my back and sliding along the snow, but it was a heavier, snow-machine sled for pulling "freight." Bonnie and Rick offered their smaller, lighter plastic sled, and that made all the difference in the world. Walking up to 5-6 miles in boots was much easier with that sled!

One of the highlights of this winter adventure was the day I spent with Daniel Morrison and Howard Haley when they "chauffeured" me out onto the frozen Nizina River; a white landscape I could only appreciate from an "up close and person-

al" viewpoint. We saw a couple of moose moving quickly along the crease formed by the mountain and the river, and we took in the historical Nizina River Bridge, which was once a "bridge to somewhere." Then there was the view of the Nikolai Butte, Williams Peak, Mt. Holmes and Chititu Peak across some open water. Throw in that clear, blue sky, and I was talking about a "picture perfect" trip!

We scooted up Young Creek and took in another amazing view of the mountains, and I felt grateful and inspired at the same time. When you are looking out at 360-degree views of snow-covered mountains on a sunny day, and you stop to consider first, its creation and second, the fact that there are 13.2 million acres of this repeated many times over within the park boundaries. "Awe, wonderment and humble" are such small words to try to describe the enormity of one's feelings. Having come here for 10 years, I've never once heard a person say or imply that they take these views for granted. I could see why.

So my busy time of making images and splitting wood had to come to an end. My time here corresponded with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the grounding of the Valdez and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Three Mile Island meltdown, which I directly experienced while attending undergraduate school in Pennsylvania. Then there was the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1964 earthquake that devastated Alaska. Of course, I would be leaving out another adventure if I didn't mention the historic eruptions of Mt. Redoubt that began on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009, and its ripple effects on the last few days of my Alaskan journey. It all started on the day I was to fly out of McCarthy with Dave and his Cessna, when Rick Kenyon said, "I have good news and bad news about your flight." I knew exactly what he meant. Mt. Redoubt had erupted again!

Volcanic ash had temporarily delayed my arrival in Anchorage,

but on the day I was to fly back to Milwaukee, the gritty ash from Mt. Redoubt's "sneeze" blew over Anchorage for the first time. My flight was canceled, the airport was closed "indefinitely" and TV reporters were delivering "live" news with dust masks and goggles on. Sled dogs were brought inside and just when everyone wanted to be outside playing in the warmer weather, Redoubt drove them back indoors. The news reports stated that these eruptions could go on for weeks and months and I wondered if I would become a temporary resident of Alaska! My McCarthy friends & neighbors, Mark, Emily, Ross and Lucy Bass provided me with a comfortable, homey place to stay while I waited for the skies to clear, and we took in the Asian Alaskan Cultural Performance at the Anchorage Performance Center.

Northwest Airlines brought in a specially chartered 747 jet that scooped us up to head for the Lower 48 states. On board were two friends I had previously hiked with on an REI trip around Mt. Blanc in 2003. We had met for lunch the day before in Anchorage and that's when I discovered they would be on my flight! A small world brought back together within the eruptions or should I say, disruptions, of one active volcano.

So I thank all of you who suggested I come up and experience the "best part of winter" and also those that made my stay more comfortable. It was a pleasure to visit with all of you in a season where you had more time for that activity! Audrey, it was a pleasure to meet you before you left town and many thanks to Chris Haley. She not only has good wine but she makes a great chicken pot pie! It sure beat the backpacking food I mailed in ahead of time.

I'll be back next March for some more images but let's hope Mt. Redoubt skips a repeat performance!

You can view Peggy's images online at: <http://www.peggymorsch.com>



# 2009 Long Lake Fishing Derby attracts locals and (thankfully!) fish

BY BONNIE KENYON

Long Lake: —Ice-fishing may not be everyone's "thing" to do in winter, but for those who turned out to this year's derby, it certainly WAS the thing to do on March 28<sup>th</sup>.

The first to arrive at the lake, besides the annual derby host Jim Kreblin, was Don and Lynn Welty and Kaleb and Jubal Rowland. Rick and I arrived shortly thereafter. Within a half hour Cal Ward of Fireweed Mountain made his entrance on snowmachine, pulling a sled laden with rod, lures and fish eggs. After picking his spot on the ice, drilling a hole in just the right location, he settled down onto his snowmachine seat —prepared to catch those unsuspecting Dollies. And that is just what he did!

About 1:30 pm the action began. Before long Cal had pulled in 4 Dolly Varden, each at least 18 inches long. Lynn caught two; Don and

Jubal tied for one each. Rick and Mark Vail landed a few smaller varieties and I at least had a decent bite! Jubal did more than catch a fish, however. He actually cleaned it right then and there, placed it on a stick and promptly roasted it over the well-fed bon fire.

Approximately 24 folks showed up to either fish, visit with neighbors, try their hand at ice bowling or sample Mark Vail's delicious "North Slope" chili. Some participated in all events.

An ice-fishing tent was in place this year once again with folks enjoying the scenery below the ice. An occasional, "There's a fish heading your way," rang out to the nearby fisherfolk. All rod holders went on alert and, for some, it was well worth it.

In-between moments of action, folks ambled off to the bon fire to either warm up or roast hot dogs and marshmallows.

While taking Cal's picture along with his "catch" for the day, I overheard his niece, Sarah Ward, comment, "Dad (Art Ward) always said his brother was a better fisherman!" He got that right. Cal took home a brand new fishing rod for the most caught and the largest fish. Lynn was presented with a new rod and Jubal took the youngest fisherman's award, a puzzle.

Jim Kreblin claims Cal has now won enough tackle to start his own sporting good's store on Fireweed Mountain. "He can expect to be promoted next year to Life-time Judge." (For some reason, I just couldn't quite see this as a promotion. Obviously, I am missing something here.) It looks like I'll have to wait until next year's derby to see how this plays out.

Thank you once again, Jim, for hosting such a fine community gathering!

## Avalanche safety course encourages safe travel

BY MARK VAIL

McCarthy:—On April 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, eighteen area skiers and snowmachiners gathered to learn about avalanche safety. Local residents, Matt and Meghan Smith, presented the two-day basic course for free, with some sponsorship by the National Park Service. Matt worked the winter with the Alaska Avalanche School.

The first day, we met at Tony Zak's for a 5-part PowerPoint presentation. This covered five ava-

lanche dynamics: 1) terrain; 2) snow pack; 3) weather; 4) man; 5) backcountry travel. Each segment was followed by questions and answers and a short break outside to enjoy the spring sunshine.

Day two saw 16 return for a day of outdoor instruction using avalanche beacons, probes and shovels. We broke into two groups and learned how to test, power, where and use a beacon.

As the afternoon progressed, we changed instructors and were

placed in various scenarios to practice our new skills.

Regular practice with the beacons is required. At the end of the day our instructors displayed proper shoveling techniques and recapped the course, answering questions. We all left with new safety tools for backcountry traveling. Our thanks go out to Matt and Meghan and their sponsors.

Watch for future classes and travel safe!

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*"Many are destined to reason wrongly; others, not to reason at all; and others to persecute those who do reason." —Voltaire*

# Alaska Mountain Wilderness Ski Classic ski race

## A journal By Ned Rozell

April 3, 2009

Night 1, Cooper Creek

A few miles shy of the Blue Lake turn, the one we don't want to take this year.

Nine of us left Dave Cramer's compound, mile 83.5 Tok Cutoff Road, for the start at Devil's Mountain Lodge. Three—Luke, John, and Chunk—took a right up Nabesna Glacier to do the President's Chair glacier route, a straighter line to McCarthy. Chunk, aka Craig, said they each carried about 10 pounds of food, in the form of Taco Bell burritos. "One for breakfast, one for lunch, one for dinner."

We on the low route have at least twice as much food. Three people are ahead of Michael and I—Dave Cramer, Forest Wagner, and Rob from Anchorage. Danielle from Anchorage is somewhere camped behind us.

Big headwind today and a few skis through overflow made for frozen bindings and an epic doublepole day as the wind blasted us near the mouth of Cooper Creek. Cramer, who could take his skis off, installed his ice creepers and made good time, crossing paths with a few river otters on the way. We used his advice and used a few containers of lock de-icer to free our boots just before we camped.

Tired on this take-off day, time to shut 'er down, under a million billion stars . . .

April 5, 2009

Night 2, by Dot Lake, an island near Chisana

After passing over this lovely island three times, I'm finally camping on this oasis of witches' broom spruce and swamps. Must be a few flying squirrels around here.

A nice pull today. Lots of snow on Cooper Creek ice, but ice creepers (\$20) did the trick as I walked the tricky parts. A fox walked right up on us after we saw Dave Cramer on the trail.

So much snow here that we haven't shouldered our packs yet (we have a system where we can either pull our turtle-shell sled packs or carry them on our shoulders). Our sleds have sufficed so far.

Saw Forest Wagner's tracks and were hoping to camp with him on this island. He may have veered left on a side trail and camped across the Chisana. Since Andy and I have gotten our feet wet on the Chisana twice by overflow, Michael and I agreed it would be good to shut 'er down and hit the river first thing in the morning, when it may be more solid. Thankful to be out here in the country!

April 6, 2009

Night 3, Solo Mountain Cabin

Solo Mountain cabin! In this old gold-country waypoint with Michael and Forest Wagner, who reeled us in today despite busting through the Chisana last night and getting his shoes wet.

A flawless run for us (thanks to GPS with properly loaded maps!), though slow, with snowmachine trail assist. There's a TV in this cabin, though no electricity or receivable signals! Also a busted window



Photo courtesy the author

This is the last photo of thousands I have taken with my old Nikon Coolpix. We're headed through the canyon at dusk, me just about to get wet.

and an open door that left it full of snow. We shoveled out, and will have a fire tomorrow morning to remove all the ice from our bindings. So lovely outside. Stars bright as magic, a faint aurora cranking up.

April 7, 2009

Night 4, Hobbit Forest

With Andy's friend Forest, and Michael. We shut 'er down at 4 p.m. rather than march through Skolai Pass in a howling headwind (this is winter, after all, and that is Skolai Pass).

In '99, Andy and I were camped in gnarled willows 10 feet behind where I now sit on my backpack. This patch of Hobbit woods is the only protection for miles ahead, filled with jogging ptarmigan. Back then, Andy and I were babes in the woods, having a campfire here before stumbling through the pass. Ten years later, two new friends.

Woke early in Solo Mountain cabin, after a night sharing the wood-plank bunk with Forest, Michael on the floor. Fired the wood stove this morning, and it thawed

our frozen bindings despite the missing cabin window. Found the trail down to White River, along with painted skulls and moose antlers. Funnest downhill of the trip.

Made good time to here over some of the prettiest terrain of the trip (crossing of Lime Creek lovely, as usual).

To my delight, Forest suggested shuttin' 'er down here, and Michael concurred. All that's left is to enjoy the view!

April 8, 2009

Night 5, Frederika Creek cabin!

All these places I wanted to check out—and here we are!

This cabin, another resting point on the old McCarthy to Chisana trail a century ago, caught my eye two years ago as we skied past. Today, we put it in our sights and made it here. This cabin has much snow in it too, like Solo Mtn. Here, it pours through the window like a waterfall.

So, we're tenting, after a nice pull from the Hobbit Forest. Michael's watch alarm went off early, and we were on the trail at 7 a.m., even before sunrise—unheard of! We aced Skolai Pass, thanks to a ton of snow that covered the piles of rock you usually walk over in ski boots all day.

The snow allowed us to ski with skins the entire way. Forest and Michael picked a great route through the pass. "I was following the wolves," Forest said. We saw tracks the whole way, as a wolf pack traversed the opposite way, maybe when we were sleeping last night.

We paused high on Castle Mountain and looked out at where Russell Glacier crashes into rock and turns northward, making Skolai Pass.

On our descent from a mile high on the slope of Castle Mountain, I dug my ski tips in soft snow, fell on my pole, and broke it in half! Forest and Michael did a temp. repair with part of Forest's spare pole

handle and a few hose clamps. I just reinforced it here in the cabin by pounding a carved willow stick inside the broken metal tube. Good to go.

Tough day for me. Big blister on my left instep, which is used to set the edge of the most important ski when skiing south-facing slopes. Ouch!

But the boys pulled me through, by fixing my pole while I snacked and by waiting for me with much patience. They are sleeping in tents outside now. Now to get to sleep so I can keep up with them tomorrow!

April 9, 2009

Night 6, The gap

between Skolai Creek and Nizina Glacier.

Where a dipper lives, flitting down this brand-new waterway, and where I fell into the creek when a snow bridge collapsed. We were moving through the new canyon cut by Skolai Creek, skiing over ledges above the open water. Some of the ledges were the width of two skis. I was moving across one and—splash—I was in the foot-deep water on my side with skis and pack on. Forest was nearby, having led us through the canyon. He saw me in the water and told me to keep my hand on the bottom, and most of my body out of the water. I did, aware that my camera in my right pocket was under cold water, and that I didn't have a clue how to get up with my skis and pack on.

"I'm going to pick you up now," Forest said, after which he grabbed me by the pack and I was back on my feet. I climbed back on a snow bridge and dripped off for a bit, pulling out my wet camera and noticing I'd lost my Swiss Army knife, one that had been with me since before the Alaska days.

The boys found a camp right past the canyon and next to the wall of Nizina Glacier. Mike set up the tent, and I jumped in and got in my sleeping bag in my wet clothes. Mike did everything from there,

making me hot water for dinner. It's good to have partners in this race.

As for the rest of an extraordinary day, Forest led us through the Golden Horn gully, the deep cut under that amazing rock formation, and a few other trenches. He, the only one with crampons, kicked steps for Mike and I a few times. We took our time.

Mike found a great path down to Skolai Creek itself. Usually, this is a hellish bust through alders and prickly bushes. Mike zig-zagged us right down to the creek after we crossed the Horn. We made it on skis with skins!

A great image up there today—a family of goats, BELOW us. They noticed us and walked straight up to the Golden Horn.

Now, in my moist but warm bag, I inventory my Classic Beatup: Frostbite on my pinkie, my rib hurts from something I hit on the fall to the water, and a blister on my left instep the size of a silver dollar. Still, doing well in godly country, looking forward to the beauty tomorrow (our last day?).

April 10, 2009

Night 7, McCarthy

We busted in. Made it to John Adams' B&B, home of two trays of lasagna, at 2 a.m.

About a 40-mile day, more than doubling the mileage of some days.

Started with a problem. As the boys were ready to go, I found my boots hard as concrete. Couldn't force my feet into them even though I removed the liners and bent them open last night. Sitting there, boots and feet in sleeping bag, an idea.

Forest took my boots over to the open Skolai Creek and held them both underwater. He didn't let go. The 36-degree water thawed them enough for me to wedge my feet in.

We took off, following the faded tracks of the three guys who did the glacier route.

## NPS news

BY MEG JENSEN—SUPERINTENDENT WRST

I want to update you on some of the activities the National Park Service has planned in the Kennecott/McCarthy area for summer 2009. We have a busy season ahead, with employees from all the park's divisions working on projects in the area. I'm happy to say that we have many experienced, returning employees this year, as well as some new folks that I am sure will bring a lot to our operations in Kennecott.

A change in our organization from 2008 is that the park's Visitor and Resource Protection division and the Interpretation division have been combined into one. Norah Martinez is our new Chief of this combined division, Visitor Services and Protection. Norah began working with us in February and has already spent some time in McCarthy getting to know our operation. I hope to have Norah join me at a MAC meeting in the near future to start meeting folks in the area.

Here are some of the specific projects we have scheduled for this year.

**Kennecott Restoration:** The restoration of the oldest building in Kennecott, the General Manager's Office, will be completed this season. The National Creek Trestle, damaged by a flood in 2006, will also be completely rebuilt and usable this year. A heating system will be installed in the General Store and a new propane generator/battery bank system will replace the diesel generator for more efficient electrical production. Restoration work will begin on the Dairy Barn and work will be completed on a Silk Stocking Row cottage, as well as the Kennecott Visitor's Center inside the General Store. Other restoration work will occur in the Refrigeration Plant, as well as the Blackburn School and

the New School. Please be careful in the mill town this summer; there will be heavy equipment at work.

**Interpretation:** The interpretive staff will be staffing the Kennecott Visitor's Center and the McCarthy Road Information Station daily. The interpretive rangers will also be giving daily programs including the history walk, nature walk and screenings of the Kennecott History film. A twice-weekly illustrated history program will be presented in the evening at the Kennecott Recreation Hall. Park staff will also be educating visitors along the trails about low-impact camping practices and how to be safe in bear country.

**Protection:** The protection staff will include the addition of two or three general rangers this season. These positions will increase our ability to provide emergency medical and search and rescue response as well as bear/human conflict management in the Donohoe Basin. The protection staff will be conducting regular patrols to educate visitors on ways to reduce impacts on park resources. Enforcement of the park's food storage requirement will increase in order to reduce the number of incidents of bears receiving food from people. The protection staff is working with the area guide services to better coordinate emergency medical and search and rescue response, as well as with the fire department to finalize an agreement that will benefit fire protection in the area.

**Resource Management:** Several resource management staff will be working in the area this summer to control invasive plant species, count and collect information about the salmon that spawn in Long Lake, and manage historic artifacts in Kennecott. We are working on a research agreement with Wrangell

Mountain Center to test the use of electric fencing in conjunction with dogs to protect bears from human food. We are looking forward to the research summit which is being hosted by the Wrangell Mtn Center in early July!

**Firewood Cutting EA:** Over the last couple years we have noticed increased firewood harvest of dead standing trees in creek corridors around the park. We have talked intermittently about transitioning to a permit system for firewood cutting which we envisioned would operate much like the subsistence fishing permit we currently issue. Last fall we sent out a news release which stated that we were going to embark on a firewood cutting Environmental Assessment to analyze this proposal and we have since discussed at our last two Subsistence Resource Commission meetings as well as a Citizens Advisory Committee on Federal Areas meeting. The reaction from most of our park community residents has been very negative regarding this proposal. Therefore, we are going to terminate this EA process, and the proposal to require a firewood cutting permit, at this time. We will be looking at other ways to address park resource concerns and will be discussing with you over the months ahead. Please be assured that we will continue to involve you in this discussion.

**Group Size Limit in Donohoe Basin:** We discussed this at MAC's annual meeting in September 2008 and at that meeting generated a short list of folks from the McCarthy area interested in ongoing discussion regarding this issue. Over the winter months, we exchanged a number of emails among this group regarding this issue and made a decision for the 2009 calendar year operations. On a trial basis this year, the park has established a

group size limit of 12 for the Donohoe Basin for the park's commercial operators, in an effort to reduce bear-human conflicts in the area. I have agreed to consider requests for exception to this policy on a case by case basis. We also are evaluating other locations near the Kennecott area which could accommodate larger groups this year, and will be discussing these ideas with our affected operators in the near future.

We will also ask our general park visitors to comply with this limit on a voluntary basis. We plan to improve our trailhead signing to better educate our visitors on this issue.

**McCarthy Campground:** Our trail crew will be doing some initial work on the campground located near the toe of the glacier in McCarthy where the bear boxes are located.

**Front Country Planning:** We plan to embark on a front country planning effort, beginning in 2010, which will address a variety of management issues in the park's front-country along the Nabesna and McCarthy Road Corridors and in the Kennecott/McCarthy area. Some airstrips may be included in this plan, most likely those strips which serve as major portals to the backcountry. Other planning issues likely to be included are transportation (motorized and non-motorized) and trails designation, defensible space in the community-park interface, solid waste transfer station, recreational development, bear/people management in the Donohoe Basin, and trails and facility development. We are looking forward to this process and hope to have lots of public participation from the Kennecott and McCarthy communities. This is an opportunity for us to work together on a common vision for our collaborative efforts in the area.

**Root Glacier Trail Outhouse:** The Park recognizes that the outhouse on the Root Glacier trail

needs some focused attention. We are planning to assess our options as soon as it warms up. This issue is more complicated than it seems it should be—state law limits the options we can consider.

**Trail Crew:** The parks trail crew will be working on maintaining existing trails in the area as well as some new trail development.

**Mudhole Smith Cabin Restoration:** This cabin at the old McCarthy airport south of McCarthy creek played an important role in the early aviation history of the area. The cabin will be stabilized this summer. This is proposed for park interpretation use.

**New Shuttle Bus Turn-around:** The park has discussed this transportation need with the local community and included the concept as a part of the Kennecott Support Facilities Plan which was developed a few years ago. Over the winter, we had the opportunity to compete for new funding from Congress and in January 2009 the park was approved for a Centennial Challenge matching grant from the National Park Service to construct a shuttle bus turnaround and to design and develop interpretive displays for the general store visitor center. A \$50,000 donation from the Steve and Mary Birch Foundation made this additional \$50,000 funding possible. The construction of a new shuttle bus turn-around in Kennecott will occur this summer. The turn-around will be located on the south side of the Blackburn School, the first building on the left as you enter Kennecott. This new facility will have a small rain shelter, interpretive panels and an informational kiosk to provide important park and community information, as well as a map to orient visitors to Kennecott. This will also be the site of a new entrance sign to the Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark.

**New Informational Signs:** Additional signs will be installed along the McCarthy road which will show

boundaries between public and private lands, as well as boundaries between the park and preserve. Informational kiosks similar to the ones already along the road will be installed near the east side of the Kennecott River foot bridge, near the McCarthy Museum, at the McCarthy airport and at the Root Glacier Trail head. These kiosks will include maps that show visitors where public lands are and will hopefully reduce trespass on private land.

**Concessions Management/Commercial Use:** New to my staff is Mark Keogh, our new Concessions Management Specialist/Public Affairs Officer. Mark has worked in the Alaska Tourism industry for many years, and most recently was the co-owner of Copper River Excursions in Copper Center. He will be working closely with all our commercial operators in the park to maintain a high-quality, proactive program. He will be visiting with all our commercial operators and getting to know them this year.

**Special Events:** A volunteer trail work and park clean up event will occur in McCarthy on June 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. Construction of a new trail starting at the McCarthy Road Information Station and clean up and restoration of the Mudhole Smith cabin will begin during these two days. All are encouraged to come help out! Contact Kennecott District Ranger Stephens Harper, 907-554-1144, for more information.

A ribbon cutting ceremony for the historic General Manager's Office will be held on September 6th. We are excited to open this newly restored building to the public and would like to take this opportunity to highlight the completion of this and other projects in Kennecott, such as the new Visitor's Center and new electrical system. Stay tuned for more information as our plans develop over the next few months. We'd love to have you join us!

The dipper, pioneer bird, flew to open spots on the creek, flushing as we got closer.

Found a snowmachine track at the toe of Nizina Glacier, and we were thrilled. Followed the track for miles and miles southward, the river giving a path to McCarthy that made us feel as if every poleplant was getting us closer. My repaired pole was so good I didn't notice any drop in performance.

The half-dozen crossings of the open Nizina always sound worse

than they become. You plunge in, and your blisters fire, then fade.

We lost the main trail to the McCarthy Road for awhile and considered camping, but the boys let out a whoop when they found a snowmachine highway a few miles from the road. We hit the road at about headlamp time, and made it the six miles to John Adams' place in a few hours, really stretching ourselves.

We walked right into John's place, where I had stayed with my

aunt and five other nuns a decade ago. Our journey was over.

I'm very thankful for these partners, who helped me finish much faster than I would have without them. I felt lucky to be with them every day.

*Editor's note: You can access Ned's blog and see his colorful photos of the trip at <http://www.alaskatracks.com/281/night-1-cooper-creek/>.*

## McCarthy Area Council meetings bring change and dignitaries

BY BONNIE KENYON

McCarthy: —On March 27<sup>th</sup> the McCarthy Area Council (MAC) held its first meeting for the new year. Thirteen people gathered at the Tony Zak building in McCarthy to discuss a variety of issues. Nearly 24 folks turned out for the April 24<sup>th</sup> meeting which included park service officials and two representatives of the National Parks Conservation Association.

At the March meeting, President Jeremy Keller announced that MAC received a check for \$35,000 from the state revenue sharing program. Adding that with the remainder of last year's state funds, gives MAC a surplus of money allocated for community projects. Keller reminded those in attendance that MAC is accepting proposals for projects that community members would like funded. Proposals must be written, submitted and discussed at any MAC meeting and can be voted on by members at a following meeting. The guidelines have

been sent out by email to the community and are also posted at the mail shack. Possibilities of streamlining the future money dispersal process and a board to filter the proposals were discussed.

One such proposal was submitted by Tamara Harper on behalf of radio station KCHU to support moving the radio transmitter from its present site to a new location by this fall. According to Tamara's project description, the new location could possibly be the Copper Valley Telephone tower/generator site. The estimated costs for the change in location will be \$31,000. Upon completion of the project, the new site will broadcast a clean FM signal coming from the internet and it will be on 24/7. All McCarthy-Kennicott residents who listen to the public radio station will benefit from the move. KCHU needs a 10% match to get a grant for the funding. Tamara's proposal to MAC is that the council fund the 10% match of \$3,100. This

proposal was voted on and passed at the April meeting.

Not all MAC members agree with the issue of receiving state funds but, instead expressed concern over the potential harm that the money could cause our community. A couple even stated they wished the money could be returned. Another idea that was discussed concerned the possibility of a dividend for locals as an easy way to use the money —area residents could receive a portion of the money much like the state dividend program. Some stated this was a cop-out and that the benefits of community projects would outweigh the negative outcome. In the meantime, MAC members voted to place the state money into an interest-bearing savings account.

Since MAC still has \$70,000 yet to be dispersed on proposed community projects, a motion was made at the April meeting to decline next year's state money for another \$35,000. The motion failed to pass.

MAC's membership did vote to lower its yearly dues from \$25

per person to \$5 for each voting member. The motion passed unanimously. It was decided there would be no refunds for those already paid up for 2009, but it is hoped the decrease in membership fees will encourage others in the community to participate in the council.

Superintendent Meg Jensen opened up the April meeting with the subject of harvesting firewood on park lands. According to Jensen, the permit pro-

posal, which caused a very negative reaction from most of the affected communities, has been terminated at this time and she will pursue a regulation change to deal with "technical legalities and conflicting regulations." Other park service officials who accompanied Supt. Jensen were: Eric Veach, Mark Keogh, Rich Richotte and Norah Martinez.

The National Parks Conservation Asso. sent two of their rep-

resentatives to the MAC meeting: Melissa Blair, Alaska Field Representative from Anchorage, and Lynn Grams, the Wrangell Area Coordinator, from Copper Center. Both ladies were on hand to listen to and address any issues of concern by local residents. One particular issue was a recent survey distributed by NPCA officials in Washington, DC. which drew negative reactions from folks in and out of Alaska.

## Changes to National Park Service Local Hiring Authority

BY KRIS FISTER

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

The National Park Service has used the provisions of ANILCA 1308 to employ many Alaskans in a variety of jobs. This authority has been used by every park in Alaska to hire both seasonal and permanent employees. ANILCA did not provide for the authority to be used in Anchorage, Fairbanks or Juneau, where much of the permanent workforce is stationed.

Recently, the NPS Alaska-wide workforce totaled 666 employees. Of that, 180 employees were hired through ANILCA 1308. Even that number understates the positive effect of local hire, as some employees began their careers under local hire and have been converted to the competitive civil service ranks.

The legislation signed by the President on March 30, 2009

makes two significant changes to how the NPS will administer local hire, but it won't change the National Park Service's commitment to bringing the knowledge and skills of people who have lived and worked in or near parks into the workforce. The major changes which were part of H.R. 146 are:

- People who are currently in permanent local hire positions will be converted into the competitive civil service ranks. What this means is that they will be able to compete on a level playing field with other federal employees for jobs outside their local park. This provision will also be retroactive, meaning past work under local hire will now count as competitive service. This benefits people now outside the federal workforce who may want to compete for a federal job.
- Jobs advertised under local hire will now be advertised

nationwide rather than just in an area close to a park. ANILCA did not limit recruitment to people who currently live in or near a park unit. This change will better implement ANILCA's intent. The NPS is still working with the Department of the Interior and the Office of Personnel Management to reach a consistent approach on how a person's knowledge and expertise about a particular park area will be factored into hiring decisions. Job postings for Denali National Park and Preserve can be found at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>. Type in "Denali National Park, AK" in the search field.

The NPS workforce this spring and summer will reflect a transition period. Regardless of the hiring mechanism, the NPS in Alaska continues to value the contributions of local residents in helping manage more than 54 million acres of parklands across Alaska.

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*"Yet even in earthly matters I believe that 'the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.'—Michael Faraday*

# Subsistence use added to Nabesna EIS

BY RICK KENYON

Just as we were going to press (April 29) we learned that just this morning a notice was published in the Federal Register saying that the National Park Service (NPS) intends to expand the scope of the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for the Nabesna District Off Road Vehicle (ORV) use to include ORV's used for subsistence purposes. The notice also extends the scoping period for the EIS until June 29, 2009.

The EIS came about as a result of a lawsuit from environmental groups including the National Parks and Conservation Association. It originally only addressed recreational users of the trails, not subsistence users.

The addition came about as a result of comments during the scoping process. Almost a third of the 30 comments said that NPS should include subsistence use in the EIS.

I talked with Wrangell-St. Elias Superintendent Meg Jensen this

morning and she assured me that, "We want to preserve and enhance access in the park, not to stop it."

"We want to ensure environmentally sustainable access to the park for everybody," she said.

Meg also told me that comments would be considered past the June 29 deadline. We hope to have another story on this issue next time.

For more information go to <http://www.nps.gov/wrst/parkmgmt/planning.htm>

# Birth announcements celebrate life

**L**ukeAllen Steadfast Jensen, son of Kurt and Lindsay Jensen, of McCarthy, made his grand entrance on April 17<sup>th</sup> at 3:55 pm. He weighed 8 lb. 8 oz. and was 22 1/2" long and was born in Fairbanks, AK. Parents and son are doing very well. Says father Kurt: "We are all healthy and happy, but trying to catch up on our sleep!"

The Jensen family expect to return to the McCarthy area some time within the next couple of weeks.

**Jim Kreblin** of Long Lake is the grandfather of LukeAllen.

Our congratulations to Kurt, Lindsay and "grandpa" and a heartfelt "welcome" to baby LukeAllen.

*(Editor's note: Although the following families no longer call McCarthy area home, they still have friends, connections or property in our town. We celebrate the births of Jack Owen Zuspan, Ruth-Anna Virtue Hale and Dylan Babchek Proden.)*

**J**ack Owen is the son of Jarrett and Shanna (Wasserman) Zuspan of

Sacramento, California. He was born on March 19<sup>th</sup> at 8:17 am. Baby Jack weighed 8 lb. 12 oz. and his proud grandparents are Eric and Joan Wasserman. The Wassermans lived in McCarthy in the '70's and still own and continue to visit their property on the west side of the Kennicott River.

On April 2<sup>nd</sup> Grandma Joan writes, "He (Jack) is already over 9 lbs. and we can't wait to meet him in person."

Shanna welcomes her friends to try her blog that records Jack's activities. You can find updated pictures of Jack and his parents at <http://www.babyzuspan.blogspot.com/>

**R**uth-Anna Virtue was born to Joshua and Sharia Hale on April 3<sup>rd</sup> at Palmer, Alaska. She weighed 7 lbs. 1 oz.

Many remember Joshua as one of the Pilgrim family boys who lived in the McCarthy area for several years. Sharia is the daughter of Jim and Martha Buckingham of Palmer.

Ruth-Anna is the third child of the Hales. They have a son named Jeremiah and another daughter,

Mercy. Writes Grandma Buckingham: "Jeremiah and Mercy both love their baby and want to hold her."

**P**at and Amy Proden send their greetings to their McCarthy area friends by way of Tanzania, the Netherlands, Ethiopia, Kenya, Alaska, California, Michigan and finally landing in Oregon, at long last. They are proud to announce the birth of their son. **Dylan Babchek Proden** was born on Friday, March 20, 2009 at 11:47 am—just about 8 hours after the Spring Equinox (4:44 a.m.). At birth, he weighed in at 7 pounds, 9 ounces and stretches to 20 inches long.

Amy and Dylan are both in great shape after delivery. "We had just one little detour back to the hospital last week for the blue light special treatment for Dylan's jaundice," writes Pat. "He had a speedy recovery and was released 12 hours later. So far, he's proving to be a sweet, sweet baby and we look forward to introducing him to you! We are very appreciative of all the support, kind words, generous gifts, and name suggestions we have received."



# Ivan R. Thorall

## 1913-2009

Alaska lost a beloved friend and longtime resident on Jan. 13, 2009, with the passing of Ivan Robert Thorall in Anchorage at the age of 95 years.

Ivan was born March 16, 1913, in Mapleton, Ore. In Oregon, Ivan was in the Civilian Conservation Corps and worked as a logger. He came to Alaska in 1940, logging, trapping, mining and working construction. When World War II started, Ivan enlisted and worked on Ladd Field, now Fort Wainwright, as a staff sergeant. Ladd Field was responsible for the hand-off of more than 8,000 Lend Lease fighters and bombers to the Russians during World War II.

After the war, Ivan proved up on three homesteads, one on Badger Road, another on the upper Chena River and his last was in Chisana, a settlement situated on the headwaters of the Tanana River, southeast of Northway. Ivan surrounded himself with friends and family on his property in Chisana.

Ivan lived with various members of the Eugene V. Miller family in Fairbanks, when he was not at his homesteads or working. His last years were spent in the care of Chuck Miller of Anchorage, who had become like a son to him.

Ivan was the first lifetime member of Tanana Valley Sports-

man's Association and a lifetime member of the National Rifle Association. Ivan became a member of the Fairbanks Carpenters Union in 1947 and retired in 1978. He was active with Alaska Fish and Game, serving on the Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Board and then was appointed to the Alaska Fish and Game Board from 1971-1976 under Gov. Bill Egan. Ivan was then elected chairman of the board by its members. Ivan was active and influential in establishing the Alaska resident dip net fishery in Chitina. Ivan also helped the Kenai dip-netters get started with their fishery.

In recent years, Ivan made an invaluable contribution to the University of Alaska with his endowment of an archive of original films documenting many unique events in Alaska's history. This project gave evidence of his love of Alaska and his keen interest in preserving its resources, especially its wildlife and remote wilderness.

Ivan was just as vivacious during the last half of his life. He quit smoking at 68, learned to fly when he was 76, bought two Cessnas, shot his last moose at 88, flew his plane until he was 90 and drove until he was 94.

Those closest to him will remember his quiet and kind manner, generosity, impeccable honesty, his wit and many stories

of life in Alaska as he lived it, including true stories of bygone territorial days. Living life fully until his last days, Ivan was an example to all.

He will be greatly missed by his friends and family. However, his spirit and Alaska legacy live on with each of those he touched.

Ivan is survived by his nephew, Ken Thorall, Ken's wife, Jill of Big Lake, and Ken's son, Pat Thorall, Ivan's grand-niece, Arlene McKay; nephew, Dan Thorall; niece, Catherine Deubell; Chuck and Patti Miller and Chuck's four children, Stacia, Kale, Leland, and Cecilia; Barbara Despain, Eric and Nancy Larsen, and many other friends too numerous to mention.

A celebration of his life was planned for March 16, 2009, in Chisana. In early April, Ivan's remains will be buried next to his mother, Johanna Thorall; father, Julius Thorall, and two brothers, Ken and Vernon in Deary, Idaho. Ivan also is predeceased by his two sisters, Edna Beard and Verna Wright.

Special mention should be given to Dr. Quier and the staff at the Anchorage VA Clinic, the staff at Elmendorf Hospital and Connie Tapscott who brought comfort to Ivan during his last years and final days.

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*"Because He has set His love on Me, therefore I will deliver Him; I will set Him on high, because He has known My name. He shall call on Me, and I will answer Him; I will be with Him in trouble; I will deliver Him, and honor Him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation." —Psa 91:14-16 MKJV*

# THE KATALLA HERALD

Vol. 1. No. 39. Katalla, Alaska, Saturday, May 2, 1908. Price Ten Cents Published weekly by J. F. A. Strong

## Idle Men Throng Cordova

Seven hundred idle men throng the streets of Cordova and in their idleness they have become more or less turbulent, according to private advices received in this town from Deputy Marshal Sam Brightwell, says the Valdez Prospector. It appears that the railroad management is shipping more men to Cordova than there is work for and that many of these men lack sufficient money to get out of town. Deputy Brightwell says that on the day he wrote the letter he arrested seven men, and on the day before three. He asks in his letter that the recipient "tell the boys for God's sake, to stay away from here."

MAY 1

## Local and Personal

The snow is disappearing rapidly, the trees are putting forth their tender buds; grasses are springing, and the crocus and snowdrops are showing their delicate faces; the raven has ceased his croaking, and a few stray redbreasts pipe their early morning tremolos; wild fowl in large numbers are returning to their northern haunts, and the old reliable sea gulls are seeking their nesting places on near-by islands and headlands; and, cheerful yet defiant, sounds the pibroch of the barnyard chanticleer —spring "has come."

MAY 8

## Copper on Rampage Much Delay to Railroad Construction

According to passengers on the Portland which was in port Thursday the line of the Copper River railway has been flooded, a lot of trestle has been washed out; two locomotives are dead on the track in 8 feet of water, and it is said that it will take six weeks yet to put the road in as good shape as it was last fall.

## Railroad Laborers on Rations

Sub-contractors and station men on the line of the Copper River & Northwestern railway, in the region beyond Abercrombie canyon, are short of provisions, and are giving their employees but one meal a day. The snow is so deep, however, that there is little work for the men to do. It will be impossible to get in more food until the river opens.

Paul Luchinni, who reached Katalla this week from Cordova, says there are between 1000 and 1500 men employed on and about the railroad, about 350 of these being at Abercrombie canyon, where a bridge is being built. Considerable difficulty has been experienced in sinking caissons, on account of big boulders being encountered while sinking. An 1800-foot aerial tramway is used to deliver material at the bridge site.

Good progress is being made in the construction of bridges at the lower crossing, where the steel is being placed in position. Trains are being run to mile 49. L. J. Caswell, formerly of Katalla, is now resident engineer at Cordova. Business in the town is exceedingly quiet.

The Herald is in receipt of a letter from W. A. Thompson, who was at Tasnuna camp, which explains fully the trouble. The letter is dated May 5, and is as follows: "the last teams came up on the 29th of April. As the trail was very soft and the river open in a number of places, when the teams reached Tasnuna they had only half the loads they started with. Then there was a how-do-you-do between 700 and 800 men in camp and only ten days supplies. About 400 men were wise enough to pull out for the next camp below, 32 miles, and the rest decided to stick it out. They were immediately put on rations, a sandwich and cup of coffee for breakfast and a light meal in

the afternoon. The day before yesterday the crowd was a little bit ugly and undertook to dictate, but the few company men in camp after telling the crowd just how matters stood, paid no more attention to them; so yesterday and today they have been a little more meek. The man who was left in charge here started for headquarters this morning to get a deputy marshal or be deputized himself.

"The men are decidedly in the wrong. Heney is not to blame because the season here is two weeks earlier than usual. If the young, able-bodied men would make a thirty-mile trip they could get plenty of work and grub, and then the old men and sick could make out all right."

MAY 22

## News Notes of Alaska

Thomas V. Smith, better known as Middleton Island Smith, was in Valdez recently on his annual visit. Smith derives his nickname from Middleton Island of which he is the sole occupant, and where he raises potatoes and blue foxes. Forty-six blue fox skins, which he sold for \$1200, were the result of this season's harvest.

## Local and Personal

The Hinchinbook lighthouse, upon which work has already started, will be built of concrete.

Gull, sea pigeon, and other wild-fowl eggs are becoming plentiful on the adjacent islands and headlands.

Katalla offers a good opportunity for a small drug store and up-to-date news stand. The right man would soon have a profitable and growing business.

R. M. Straus the Kanak island rancher, is planting heavy crops this spring —especially alfalfa —in which he is being assisted by Heine Estabrook. They are due in town for a well-earned rest at any time.

A. B. Hunt is in town from the Hunt coal mine, Carbon mountain. The air shaft which is being sunk, is now down sixty feet, and it will soon be completed. It is now in solid coal. Mr. Hunt came down to meet a number of coal miners who are on the Bertha, and take them up to the mine. Paul Luchinni will also return with him.

MAY 29

### When Patents are Issued

A Katalla man who recently had a talk with Chief Engineer Hawkins at Cordova, says that he gathered from the conversation that there would be no railroad building this year to the coal fields by the Copper river people. "We could be ready to begin work on the coal road in fifteen minutes, if the patents to the coal claims were forthcoming," Mr. Hawkins is reported as saying.

And there the matter stands, and there it will remain until the government decides that in the interests of the public welfare, the patents should issue.

JUNE 5

### Trains to Miles Glacier

C. Nelson of the Brewery saloon who returned this week from a short visit in Cordova, says that it is a good substantial looking town, and is growing steadily. Mr. Nelson states that P. D. Burke who had just arrived at Cordova from up the Copper river, told him that the railroad company is now running trains to Miles glacier, and have a ferry boat and barge there, which carries four cars across the lake, and then the train runs from there to Steamboat Landing at the upper end of Abercrombie canyon. Deyo, the surveyor, is up Copper river with 50 men cutting a trail to connect the railroad with the Fairbanks trail, so that travel from the interior next winter will pass through Cordova.

JUNE 12

### News Notes of Alaska

The Alaska Road Commission will construct a trail from a favorable point on the Valdez trail to a point near the mouth of the Chittina river.

Among the natives, from Taral to Mantasta in the Copper river country, numbering approximately 150, last

year there were 53 births and 18 deaths.

Nathan H. Meyer and Charles Boyle, employed as carpenters on the construction of river boats at Abercrombie canyon, were killed by a snowslide on May 27. The bodies were recovered.

JUNE 19

### YAKATAGA BEACH STILL A PRODUCER

Yakataga beach still continues to produce the yellow metal, although this season has been far from favorable, owing to heavy storms which covered the paystreaks deep with fine gray sand, in some places.

Matt Baker, the well known miner of Yakataga, came up this week from the beach. He has had fair success himself, this spring, but unfortunately this has not been the case with all. Marvitz, Eberly & Co's hydraulic plant is at work on White river. There are about 35 men in that section. Provisions are scarce, but the arrival there this week of a quantity for the Pacific Coal & Oil company, will help out until more can be taken down.

Mr. Baker is accompanied by his wife and child. Mrs. Baker's health is not good, and she will remain here so as to obtain medical treatment. Mr. Baker will return to Yakataga on the Corsair with a cargo of supplies, as soon as the weather will permit.

### RAILROAD PROGRESS

#### Construction Work Along The Copper

A resume of the work under way on the line of the Copper River & Northwestern railway is contained in a recent issue of the Cordova Star, and is as follows:

At Alganik 30 men are employed in breaking rock. Six miles farther is Flag point, the first crossing over the Copper river. There are about 170 men at work at this station. Several piledrivers are working, and the concrete piers are almost finished for the big steel bridge. The present wooden bridge is half a mile long, and the steel bridge will be a little longer.

The next station is No. 33, and here nearly 200 men are employed on track work. No. 42 camp is the gravel

pit, where steam shovels are operated on a large scale, manned by 250 men. The machinery here loads 22 cars in 40 minutes, and a record has been made of 22 cars in 15 minutes.

There are two crossings after leaving Flag Point, Nos. 27 and 28 mile posts. A steel bridge is also being constructed to replace the second crossing.

The next station above 42 is Glacier, where the two big icebergs are on display. The first glacier one comes to is Childs' glacier, erroneously called Miles, which is three miles across the face. Half a mile farther around a sharp turn in the river, is Miles glacier, which drops into a deep lake of dead water.

At Glacier there are 240 men at work. One of the largest steel bridges in the world is being built at this point, which will consist of two caissons and two abutments. The men are now working on one caisson, gaining depth very rapidly. The pressure is six pounds to the square inch, having doubled during the past week. Mr. Carr, a Star representative, was in the caisson a short time, escorted by J. W. McCord, better known as the Copper River Scout.

A quarter of a mile from Glacier is Camp 49, where 250 men are working. Two days ago the ferry boat was launched, which will tow a scow over the river with cars until the steel bridge is completed. Just across the river is old Camp 18, now 52. This is on M. J. Heney's division, which begins at the river. There are about 1,000 men strung out from Copper river to Steamboat Landing, above the rapids, a distance of six miles, busy with track work. Messrs. Heney and Archie W. Shiels are now at Steamboat landing superintending operations.

There are 500 rock men between Tasnuna, 30 miles north of Steamboat Landing, and Cascade creek, 45 miles, and Teikel river, 65 miles, and Thunder creek, 75 miles from Steamboat Landing. The track extends to two miles this side of Steamboat Landing at the present time.

Two steamboats are operating on the river, the Chittina and the Little Willie.

JUNE 26

# The brief life and times of snowshoe hares

BY NED ROZELL

Here on this March morning, in the forested floodplain of the Tanana River, snow is falling with vigor. Even the paddle-feet of snowshoe hares press several inches into the new fluff.

Knut Kielland wears metal-frame snowshoes as he zigzags through alders and willows near the frozen river. He stops when he sees a snowshoe hare, right where he expects it—inside a wire-screen metal box.

The hare, which ventured into the live trap in pursuit of alfalfa chunks and a carrot, wears a collar with a tiny transmitter the size of a triple-A battery. Kielland, an ecologist at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and his colleague Karl Olson have captured this animal before.

Kielland coaxes the hare into a game bag, then weighs the three-pound, snow-white creature, checks numbers on its ear tags, and releases it into the forest. The hare then bounces away, seeming to disappear into the winter world. But Kielland can find it anytime he wants, using a binocular-size radio receiver and a handheld antenna that resembles a TV antenna.

Kielland and Olson have fitted 50 transmitters onto the necks of hares and often recover

them again and again. Once a transmitter was recovered from high in a spruce tree where a goshawk carried its meal. Using a receiver and all of those transmitters, Kielland is trying to find out the fate of the average hare. He wants to answer a simple but elusive question: how long does a boreal forest hare live in Alaska, and how does a population of hares fluctuate?

“(With methods such as ear tags), you don’t know whether the hares dispersed out of your area or died,” he said. “This is an attempt to really find out what happens to them.”

Biologists think hares probably live for about a year, with old-timers reaching three or four, but there are few ways to judge that. Kielland’s study, which is the extension of a project he’s been working on in his backyard of the Tanana River for a decade, should provide some answers.

The transmitters now carried by about 30 hares in the Bonanza Creek Experimental Forest emit a steady beep when hares are on the move. When one stops moving for about six hours, which means it’s probably dead, the beep rate doubles. Then, Kielland and Olson turn on the receiver, unfold the antenna, and go on a search for the collar. Not long ago, they found that a lynx they had been track-

ing with a satellite collar had intersected the path of a hare, the collar of which then started beeping rapidly.

“Our collared lynx ate our collared hare,” Kielland said.

Why study hares? The little creatures with the boom-and-bust cycles (which are currently near a peak in the Tanana valley) are food for just about every predator out there, from owls to lynx to coyotes to red squirrels, which hit the hares surprisingly hard just after young (leverets) are born, researchers in the Yukon found.

Hares produce lots of offspring, dropping litters of as many as five leverets up to three times each summer. That’s a potential 15 little hares from one female, but hares disappear fast under pressure from predators and from starvation. Seven out of ten hares collared in June 2008 are no longer alive.

“They do bite the bullet in winter,” Kielland said.

In a patch of the Interior he has studied, trapped, and hunted in for many years, Kielland monitors the hares each year for intense four-day periods in June, August, November, and March to learn more about one of the most important little creatures out there, a substantial meal for carnivores in the hungry country of the boreal forest.

*This column is provided as a public service by the Geophysical Institute, University of Alaska Fairbanks, in cooperation with the UAF research community. Ned Rozell is a science writer at the institute. He can be reached by email at [nrozell@dino.gi.alaska.edu](mailto:nrozell@dino.gi.alaska.edu).*

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“I want people to be able to get what they need to live: enough food, a place to live, and an education for their children. Government does not provide these as well as private charities and businesses.” —American frontiersman, soldier and politician Davy Crockett (1786-1836)

## DVD review—Alaska Aurora Hunting

BY BONNIE KENYON

Todd and Shay Salat surprised Rick and I by sending us their new release—Alaska Aurora Hunting—their first video project! “It was a blast,” writes Todd, “putting the DVD together with a huge learning curve...and, therefore, it is the most rewarding photographic endeavor of my life!”

Rick and I eagerly slipped the tape into the player and did our own hunting with Todd and Shay. To tell you the truth, curled up in your comfortable, warm cabin or home while witnessing how the Northern

Lights move and groove across the Alaskan sky beats (in my opinion) staying up to all hours of the night to hunt these illusive Aurora Borealis!

Todd and Shay are pioneering Auroras in Motion photography. Through this awesome DVD you can join the Salats on their Aurora Hunt to the top of Alaska. Journey up the Dalton Highway (Haul Road) and experience what it takes to get the shot! You can even learn a few tricks-of-the-trade on how to predict the aurora, how the aurora form and when and where to see them.

Alaska Aurora Hunting’s running time is approximately 48 minutes. Its retail price is \$19.95 plus \$2 shipping. You can purchase your copy on Todd and Shay’s web site at: [www.AuroraHunter.com](http://www.AuroraHunter.com)

Congratulations, Todd and Shay, on a fine production! I recommend this DVD to those who find the Northern Lights a special treat whenever you are at the right place at the right time to see them for yourselves. Alaska Aurora Hunting would also make an excellent gift for friends who desire to see and learn what these special lights are all about.

## Firewise landscaping

BY CAROLE MORRISON

Morrison Construction locally owned and operated specialty contractors, known for their expertise in building incredibly beautiful log homes, have now added Firewise landscaping to the list of quality services they provide to their clients. Carrie Hale will be joining the crew as landscape foreman. She has spent the last six years in the fire service as a volunteer fire fighter. She is currently the Strelna volunteer fire chief. Carrie has been an Emergency Fire Fighter through Alaska Division of Forestry since 2005, and she spent two years as Natural Resource Director for the Chitina Traditional Indian Village Council. She was also project manager of the Chitina Hazardous Fuels Reduction crew, and she brings invaluable knowledge and experience. She will do an assessment with you giving recommendations and then give you a determination for work you want done.

Landscaping in Alaska not only adds beauty and value to a home, but can also be the difference in a close call and complete ruin in the wake of a raging wildfire. Wildfire is an important part of nature and is necessary for much of Alaska’s eco systems. In the Copper River Basin, however, invasive insects such as the Alaskan Spruce Bark Beetle and the Spruce Bud Worm have defoliated much of the conifer stands and left a volatile path of highly flammable slash in their wake, adding fuels to an area that has not seen a large burn since 1927.

In 1915 the Sourdough Hill Fire burned 384,000 acres. It burned from the Chitina to the Kennicott River and from the Chitina River to the mountains north. 1915 saw another massive fire in the Kennicott area, burning an additional 64,000 acres. In 1927 the Willow Creek Fire burned 128,000 acres. All three of these massive fires were started by humans; in fact 88% of all fires in the Copper River Basin are human caused.

As fuels continue to build and the climate progressively becomes warmer the threat of catastrophic wildfire in the Copper River Basin increases. The last 12 months have seen the average precipitation levels in Chitina of only 4.59 inches, when they are normally between 7 and 9.

Protection from wildfire comes in the form of prevention and mitigation. Programs such as Firewise have been developed to assist home owners and community groups in reducing the loss of lives and property. Firewise provides tips for building and maintaining your home. Firewise strongly recommends the building of defensible space around your home. You can visit them online at <http://www.firewise.org>.

You can contact Morrison Construction at:

Office Phone: (907) 554-4456

Email:

[morrisonconstruction@starband.net](mailto:morrisonconstruction@starband.net)

Mail: PO Box 38 Chitina AK 99566

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*“Government’s view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it.” —Ronald Reagan*

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

(Continued from page 35)

fatality. This study indicates that a group of two is 60 times more likely to have a bear encounter than a group of ten <sup>(1)</sup>.

A possible counterpoint is that larger groups need more supervision, but does this regulation speak to this point? To make an educational trip for teens economically feasible, a certain number of paying participants are required to keep it affordable for average families. With a group that required 10 participants to be economical, we would assign 3 guides – but a group size limit of 12 encourages us to minimize guides, so this provision may encourage less supervision, which could be more dangerous than the bears.

Entering wilderness has a variety of risks and many unpredictable factors. In 2007, our guides and clients combined spent 1,011 days in the backcountry. This exposure to the inherent risks of wilderness guarantees that we will have injuries, bear encounters and other mishaps. Since human beings are the subjects of regulation, it seems reasonable to allow for human error. If we restrict action every time that an accident occurs or a mistake is made, there would be very limited access to the park.

It is possible to be granted an exception to this regulation for a special case, and the NPS is considering our request. We do appreciate that, but imagine how difficult planning will be based on yearly exceptions that take weeks or months for approval or disapproval. Although current NPS management may be willing to grant an exception, there is no guarantee that future NPS managers will.

From every angle, there seems to be no reasonable argument for this regulation. Now let's consider who's affected by it.

**WHO WILL BE NEGATIVELY IMPACTED**

We commonly guide groups of 2-5 families vacationing together that would exceed the new 12 person limit. Typically, the parents have been friends for years, and the trip is their way of keeping close, doing what they love, and introducing their children to the wilderness. Full of laughter and warm emotions, these trips are fun and rewarding. Because the purpose is for families to spend time together, they are not interested in breaking into smaller groups, so this new rule may stymie these wonderful family outings.

Teen adventure trips are also common and possibly affected. Groups of 12-16 teenagers travel the state with 2-3 adult leaders, learning about the environment, doing community service projects, and enjoying outdoor activities. They are enthusiastic, well-mannered, and often express it's "the summer of their life." Team building and shared experiences are a focus, so these groups are also not interested in dividing up. Considering the downward trend in young people visiting national parks, we feel it's important to introduce youth to wild and beautiful places, for their personal enrichment as well as tangible reasons to value the park.

Other larger groups include Boy Scouts, Sierra Clubbers, a group of older gentlemen that love backpacking but needed extra guides to help carry the weight, as well as a group of five couples (+3 guides) that celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> birthdays with a trip to WSENP.

The above groups may not consider a trip to WSENP without access to Donoho, as few can afford bush flights and even fewer would be willing to sleep on glacier ice for 5 days. We feel the terrain, with its glacial moraine campsites, is suited for larger groups. Considering overall national park visitation has been declining for over 20 years <sup>(2)</sup>, and

the economy is in dire straits – it seems like a bad time to limit access for teenage and family groups.

The economic impact for SEAG may be severe, but certainly doesn't stop at us. Although a small percentage of our clients, economies of scale allow these groups to be over 21% of our profit in our best years. And they do not limit their activities to SEAG – other services, lodging, food and drink sales are lost as well. Furthermore, we've been building infrastructure and hiring locals to do so – planning to pay it all off over ten years. Knowing that our income may be reduced by this regulation, we've cancelled two building projects, and that is more money lost to the community. With the current economy, we're concerned about the financial future.

**WHAT CAN BE DONE**

SEAG has spent the winter researching better bear deterrents, purchasing more bear resistant containers and formalizing our bear training protocols. We are invested in our clients, the community and the park, so it is paramount we manage this issue so that no one gets hurt, bears don't get food, and everyone can enjoy Donoho Basin.

Human impacts aside, if the overall concern is for the bears, then the NPS could have more impact by helping the community with bear issues in town. According to a study supported by the NPS, local residents are 18 times more likely than visitors to have a bear encounter, due to improper storage of garbage <sup>(3)</sup>.

More information needs to be gathered, as it seems that one reason for this provision may be a lack of data. SEAG reports all bear encounters, but many do not. We hear stories from campers each year of bears getting food on Donoho, including one eating dinner right out of their pot! Despite our encouragement to do so, campers rarely report incidents to NPS. A recent study in Yosemite NP (a much more

heavily patrolled park) determined park rangers learn of only 1 in 4 bear incidents that occur in the Yosemite wilderness (4). Most likely, bear incidents reported to NPS are a fraction of actual incidents, and since SEAG reports all incidents, we are undoubtedly a high percentage of those reported. The NPS needs to compile comprehensive, relevant data to understand the issue, and not penalize those reporting, if they hope to craft reasonable regulation.

Good information and careful consideration are required to come to reasonable, informed conclusions. NPS should be cautious of loud or dramatic politics that encourage rash decisions, and be sure to examine all options and their consequences. Can aggressive bears be relocated? We need to research possibilities and consider logistics. Should aggressive bears be shot? We need game officials or biologists to discuss black bear population impact, and a park ranger or subsistence hunter to let us know what's possible. Do we close Donoho to camping? We need input from visitors, guides, businesses, NPS and community members.

## CONCLUSION

NPS rules and regulations need to be rational, and reasonable concerns of individuals and businesses should be considered and answered. NPS should seek data from a variety of sources prior to implementing regulation, carefully considering the impact on individuals, businesses, the park and the community. We understand that the NPS felt pressure to enact this regulation, but we're hopeful that the NPS will reconsider it, gather necessary data, and engage the community to come up with logical solutions.

We also hope that anyone invested in the community will participate in the discussion, as we all have a stake in rational regulation. Saying "not my problem" leads to potentially unreasonable regulation anytime that just a few people are affected, persistently eroding the freedoms which make McCarthy-Kennecott such a special place. As those freedoms disappear, so do the independent people drawn to that freedom. It is this independent self-sufficiency that is the true spirit of this community. Although writing to government officials and attend-

ing MAC meetings take time, they are vital to maintaining these freedoms. Whether it's the bear issue on Donoho, firewood permits, or subsistence hunting concerns – we must speak out as one in defense of freedom and reasonable regulation.

## Endnotes

1. Tom Smith, Ph.D. and Steven Herrero, Ph.D., "A Century of Bear-Human Conflict in Alaska: Analyses and Implications": [http://www.absc.usgs.gov/research/brownbears/attacks/bear-human\\_conflicts.htm](http://www.absc.usgs.gov/research/brownbears/attacks/bear-human_conflicts.htm)
2. See "Summary Report – Multiple Years": <http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/park.cfm>
3. James Wilder, "Human-Bear Conflicts in the Kennecott Valley": <http://www.nps.gov/wrst/naturescience/human-bear-conflicts-in-the-kennecott-valley.htm>
4. Kathryn E. McCurdy, "Beliefs About Bear Resistant Food Canister Use Among Wilderness Users In Yosemite National Park," December 2006

# Copper Valley Telephone to vote on Regulatory exemption

BY RICK KENYON

Copper Valley Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (CVTC) will conduct an election by mail ballot to decide the question of whether they should be exempt from the Regulatory Commission of Alaska.

Public meetings to discuss this question will be held in Glennallen on May 5 and Valdez on May 7.

Ballots will be mailed to each eligible CVTC member about June 1, and must be sent to the Regula-

tory Commission of Alaska within 30 days.

A common carrier designated as an eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) is eligible to receive universal service support in accordance throughout service area for which the designation is received. CVTC was granted ETC status in 1997. The FCC estimated that CVTC would receive about \$10.9 M in high cost universal service funding in 2008. Typically, this funding is used to offset the costs of local telephone service and to promote investment in infrastructure.

If CVTC's deregulation election succeeds, CVTC would continue to receive federal high cost support, but would file an annual self certification regarding use of funds with the Federal Communications Commission, and would no longer be required to file information annually with the RCA regarding use of funds. The RCA would also no longer regulate CVTC's rates, including whether CVTC's rates were reasonably set in light of federal universal service funds.

## Access issue divides neighbors

BY RICK KENYON

It seems access issues have plagued the McCarthy area for the past decade or so. Most of the disputes have been between the National Park Service and local residents. This one is different.

A proposal to reroute the long-established subdivision road that provides access to many homes and cabins on the "west-side" of the Kennicott River has caused unease and division among local residents who use the road on a daily basis. Some folks are saying they will only help to maintain the existing route, others say no, only the new one if it is built.

Al Clayton, who recently purchased the old Iverson property, told me that he has agreed to be the spokesman for the project which would be jointly carried out by he and Ken Rowland, who purchased the adjoining homestead. Last fall he circulated a letter stating his intention to "realign" the road.

It was not clear until this spring that the "realignment" would add an additional 33% to the length of the road. Where the current road meanders diagonally for approximately 1.5 miles, the proposed route would run straight south to the Kennicott River flood plain before turning 90 degrees due west before connecting to the existing road again. It is not clear how

the developers would deal with the annual high-water on the Kennicott which could make the road impassible during high-water events if it stays on the section lines, but in any case an additional half-mile would be added to the distance required to traverse the route.

There have been several prior instances where absentee landowners moved the road to the section line adjacent to their property. This allowed them to subdivide and sell much smaller lots. Many users grumbled when the existing route was blocked, but none took action. However, this time may be different. None of the prior reroutes have been as extensive as this one, and it appears that some current users are not going to allow the old route to be closed as it is a valid easement by prescription.

Several petitions have been circulating opposing the realignment.

Jim Edwards has probably used the road longer than anyone currently living. He had been living in his house on the west side of the Kennicott River for several years when Bonnie and I moved here in 1978.

"On the surface, it would seem that the purpose of the realignment is to follow the platted lines between the parcels of land," says Edwards. "I suggest we realize that these plats were laid out on north-south, east-west as is common in larger cities, and they

were drawn the easiest way, by people who do not live here and likely had no interest whatever in doing so, and had no thought whatever in the actual lay of the land.

"Unfortunately for platting, the area is actually in a shelf of land squeezed between an inhospitable rocky, shifting river, and a steep hillside. The 'lay' of this strip of pleasant homestead spots is actually from north-east to south-west; almost at the maximum variance with the thoughtless city drawn plat lines. To realign the roads with these plats, results in a zig-zag road, in which all roads go the wrong way."

Edwards was also the first to point out that the new route would be considerably longer than the old one.

"And this, each and every single time one drives, rides or walks on it, for the rest of our lives," he says.

Also impacted are John and Barbara Rice and the Satterfields, who built their retirement homes near what is now a seldom-used easement, but would become the main traveled route if the road is moved. "We and the Rices have much to lose by this proposal, not only from a loss of privacy, but also by increased fire danger as the traffic will be rerouted through a more hazardous fire area because of all the beetle-kill timber," says Lindee Satterfield.

## Grant-in-aid applications available for museums

PRESS RELEASE

The Alaska State Museum has announced that application forms are available to Alaska museums and historical societies for the state's Grant-in-Aid program. The mailing deadline for applications is June 1.

Museum grants are awarded on a competitive basis to assist eligible museums and museum-related orga-

nizations to improve their services. The museum assistance grants promote professional museum standards and practices in the state.

To apply, a museum must be open to the general public on a regularly scheduled basis for at least 120 days a year and be an organized, non-profit institution or local government entity. It must also employ at least one person, paid or un-

paid, who devotes time to the acquisition, care and exhibition of its collection.

Application forms are available from the Alaska State Museum, 395 Whittier St., Juneau, AK 99801. They may also be downloaded from the Museum's web site at: [www.museums.state.ak.us](http://www.museums.state.ak.us), or call (888) 913-6873.

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*"It takes the highest courage to utter unpopular truths." —Herbert Spencer*



# MKCC—what's in a name?

BY PASTOR RICK

There is a Chinese Proverb that says, "The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names."

The McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church (MKCC). What does that mean? Is it a building? Is it people? If so, what people?

Today if you look up the word church in a modern Webster's dictionary you will see a primary definition as a building for public and especially Christian worship. Most people today when they think of church likely think of a building. The MKCC church building is located on the McCarthy Road, just past the foot-bridge on what we often refer to as the island.

The MKCC building is owned by the MKCC corporation, a not-for-profit 501(c)(3). The corporation has a board of directors who are tasked with making decisions about the use of the building, finances and other secular issues.

The word church in the New Testament certainly did not mean a corporation, and rarely if ever meant a building. Rather, it referred to a group of people. When Jesus told Peter that He would build His church on a rock, nobody present thought He meant a physical building on a physical rock.

MKCC the group of people is an "inter-denominational" church. This means that people of all denominations are welcome to come and gather together for the purpose of "encouraging each other to show love and to do good things" as instructed in Hebrews 10:25. They are not welcome to come and "bite and devour one another," as the Apostle

Paul warned against in Galatians 5:15.

You say, "Pastor Rick, I don't have a denomination. I don't even know if I am a Christian or not." You, of all people, are most welcome and will be treated with respect and shown the love of the Lord.

We have a very simple church doctrine: *Good God, bad devil.*

Jesus exemplified this simple doctrine and taught it "A thief is only there to steal and kill and destroy. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of." John 10:10, *Message Bible*

Jesus is perfect doctrine. He told Phillip, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father," and "The Words that I speak to you I do not speak of Myself, but the Father who dwells in Me, He does the works."

We have this account of Jesus ministry in the book of Acts: "You know that God anointed Jesus from Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Jesus went everywhere and did good things, such as healing everyone who was under the devil's power. Jesus did these things because God was with him." Acts 10:38 *God's Word* translation.

The second part of our doctrine is: *God is smarter than we are.*

What do I mean by that? Simply that God's Word is final authority. Not a denomination. Not a creed, philosophy or theologian's ideas.

We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God and that salvation is by grace through faith, that it is the gift of God and not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8)

We believe that God is alive and well on planet earth and is ever ready and willing to meet your needs. I invite you to come, "taste and see that the Lord is Good."

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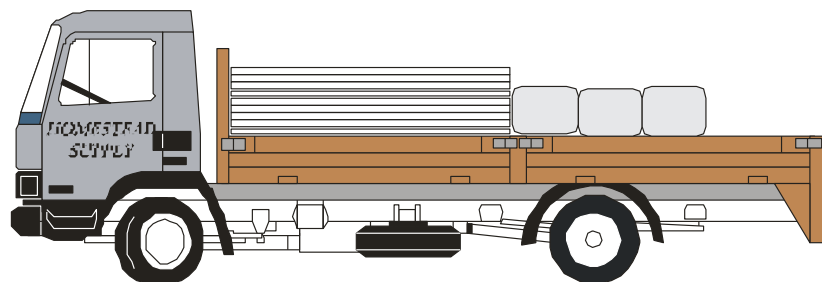
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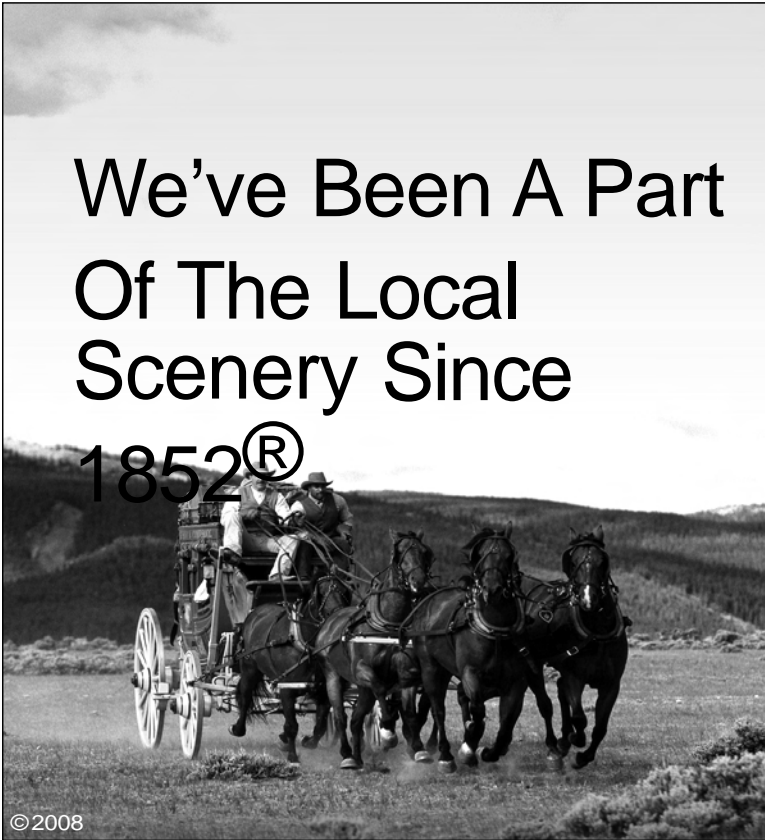
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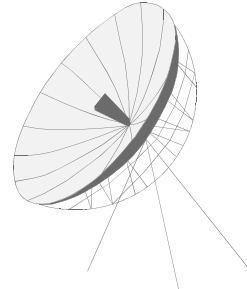
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# Cooking with Peggy

BY PEGGY GUNTIS

**H**i everyone! As I sit here writing this month's page for you, I'm eating several slices of freshly baked Loaf Cake and drinking a mid-morning cup of coffee. How good life is! Bonnie contacted me the other day and said that she had discovered some old files on her computer that contained some recipes for an issue of the *Cordova Daily Herald* of 1919. In case you aren't familiar with Cordova, it is a small city near the mouth of the Copper River nestled at the head of Orca inlet in the east side of Prince William Sound. It is also the home of the Merle K (Mudhole) Smith Airport! I can't believe we have been going to Alaska for at least 15 years and have never been there. We will remedy that this summer. We'll head over from Valdez by ferry in late June.

*Now, back to recipes! These are Tested Recipes of Cordova Women-taken from The Cordova Daily Herald, Saturday, March 1, 1919. I'm going to give them to you a little out of the order that they appeared in the newspaper and give you the one I was eating this morning first.*

## LOAF CAKE

(Mrs. Paul Bloedhorn)

*I'll give it to you exactly as she wrote it and then add a few tips of my own.*

"Four eggs, one cup flour, one cup sugar, one cup walnuts, one package dates. Beat the egg yolks and the whites, separately and then beat them both together. Add the sugar and beat again. Add vanilla essence to flavor. Add the flour gradually and then the nuts and dates. Bake in moderate oven from 40-60 minutes."

First of all I had no idea what Vanilla Essence was so "Googled" it and discovered that it does not have

alcohol in it and it is at least double the strength of Vanilla Extract which does have alcohol in it. So for 1 part Essence, use 2 part Extract.

Secondly, "one package of dates" in 1919 may be a little different than in 2009 so I chopped up and used 1 cup of dates. I used 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract since I didn't have the vanilla essence and guessed at the amount. I used ground walnuts and baked it in 3 small loaf pans instead of 1 large and baked them at 350 degrees. I did it that way so I can eat one and freeze two! It was really very easy to make and delicious.

The second recipe is for

## APPLE SAUCE CAKE

(Mrs. A. Cohen)

One cup sugar, one tablespoon butter, one teaspoon cloves, one teaspoon cinnamon, one-half teaspoon salt, a little nutmeg, one cup apple sauce, one teaspoon soda dissolved in a little water, two cups flour and one cup raisins. Cream butter and add sugar gradually. Dissolve the soda and add to the cup of apple sauce. Add this to the sugar and butter. Then add the flour, sifted with the spices, and the raisins. Bake in a loaf for 45 minutes.

The third recipe is for

## NUT MACAROONS

(Mrs. W. W. C. Baldwin)

One cup walnuts, chopped fine, one half teaspoon salt, white of one egg beaten stiff, one cup brown sugar. Beat the white of the egg, add the sugar, then the chopped nuts, salt, and drop with a teaspoon on buttered paper. Bake in a quick oven. This makes three dozen cookies. (NOTE) I am not sure what a "quick oven" is but I would try it at 350 or 375 and watch them like a hawk!

The fourth recipe is

## CLAM COCKTAIL

(Mrs. W. L. Fursman)

Grind up the tough part of raw Razorback clams and season with salt, pepper and vinegar set in cold place. Make a sauce of tomato catsup, worchestershire and either tobasco or horseradish. Mix with ground clams just before serving.

The fifth recipe is

## DIVINITY FUDGE

(Mrs. D. A. Mosser)

Two and two-thirds cup of sugar, 2-3 cups water, 2-3 cups white Karo syrup, pinch of cream of tartar. Boil together in an iron frying pan until it makes a long thread. Pour over the well beaten white of two eggs. Beat constantly with a large egg beater. Add a cup of nuts.

(NOTE) If any of you try or have tried these recipes or know or knew any of the women who contributed them I would love to hear from you. You can email me at [guj1072@q.com](mailto:guj1072@q.com).

*Now I would like to share with you a recipe I found back in the late 90's that normally I use as an appetizer but during the summer when it's hot or during the winter with soup I often serve them but don't cut them as I would for the appetizer. I'm sorry I have no idea where I got the recipe but thanks to whoever created it.*

## SHRIMP OR CRAB BITES

1 cup butter

2 cups crab meat or cooked shrimp, minced

1 tablespoon mayonnaise

3-4 ounces sharp cheese spread

¼ teaspoon garlic powder

Lemon pepper seasoning to taste

Paprika for garnish

Mix together. Spread on 8 English Muffins. Bake at 400 degrees for 10 minutes, or 15 minutes if frozen. Cut each muffin into quar-



ters to serve (as appetizers). Besides the flavor, another reason I like these is because for a party I can make them ahead, freeze them on a pan and then just put them in the oven and bake them. Try it folks, I think you will really like them.

*And now since it is rapidly coming into fishing season I wanted to share with you a recipe that Jim enjoys when we are in Alaska during the summer eating Halibut. The recipe is from a little cookbook I found somewhere called A Collection of Notable Recipes—compiled by Members and Friends of the Danbury Music Centre for their 60th year*

*celebration. Of course, the book is filled with wonderful recipes but one submitted by Mary K. Mugavero caught my eye. It's called*

#### BLUE-FISH (I use Halibut instead) WITH HEAVENLY TOPPING

1 medium onion, finely chopped  
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard  
2 tablespoons Mayonnaise  
1 pound (or so) Blue Fish fillets  
3 or 4 tablespoons Parmesan cheese

Mix onion, Dijon mustard, mayonnaise until smooth. Set aside.

Bake fish fillets at 375 degrees, 4 to 8 minutes, until nearly done. Remove from oven and turn on broiler. Spoon onion mixture evenly over fish. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese lightly over onion mixture. Broil 3 to 5 minutes until cheese is lightly brown. Delicious. Serves 2 (or Jim).

Next time I'll be writing from McCarthy. I can hardly wait. Would love to hear from you with suggestions or some of your favorite recipes. Again my email address is [guj1072@q.com](mailto:guj1072@q.com). Eat well and enjoy life.

## ▲ LOOK AT THE WEATHER ▲

BY GEORGE CEBULA

A short November Summary. McCarthy had 17 days of missing data and I filled in with data from Kennicott as recorded by Mike Monroe. The average temperature for Nov. '08 was 13.5 (18.0 in Nov. '07, -16.6 in Nov. '06 and 4.7 in Nov. '05), the high was 42 on the 29<sup>th</sup> and the low was -16 on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Total Liquid precipitation was 0.41 inches (1.45 inches in Nov. '07, 0.01 inches in Nov. '06 and 4.71 inches in Nov. '05) and snowfall was 8.5 inches (17.9 inches in Nov. '07, 0.5 in Nov. '06 and 50.1 in Nov. '05). The snow depth was 11 inches on the 1<sup>st</sup> and ended the month with 13 inches.

December 2008 had about average temperatures and average precipitation. McCarthy had 16 days of missing data and again I filled in with Kennicott data.

The average December temperature was -1.8 (6.3 in Dec. '07 and Dec. '06, 8.2 in Dec. '05 and -7.4 in Dec. '04). This compares with an average temperature of 4.7 taken by Mike Monroe at Kennicott. The high was 34 on December 7<sup>th</sup> (33 on Dec. 8, '06, 35 on Dec. 20, '06 and 41 on

Dec. 8, '05) and the low was -45 on December 31<sup>st</sup> (-29 on Dec. 4, '07, -18 on Dec. 2, '06 and -45 on Dec 2, '05). Four days had high temperatures of 30 or above and four days saw the low temperature dip below a minus thirty.

The December precipitation was 2.10 inches of liquid precipitation (0.51 inches in Dec. '07, 0.85 in Dec. '06 and 2.43 in Dec. '05). Total snow fall was 28.6 inches (8.8 inches in Dec. '07, 10.4 inches in Dec. '06 and 7.8 inches in Dec. '05). The snow depth was 13 inches at the beginning of the month, increasing 27 inches on December 7<sup>th</sup>, and ended the month at 20 inches. Mike recorded 2.20 inches of liquid and 29.7 inches of snow at Kennicott.

The first 14 days of January 2009 is McCarthy data and the remainder of the month the data is from Mike Monroe at Kennicott.

The average January temperature was 2.5 (0.4 in Jan. '08, 7.0 in Jan. '07, 0.9 in Jan. '06, and -1.2 in Jan. '05). This compares with an average temperature of 6.3 at Kennicott. The high was 44 on January 15<sup>th</sup> (37 on Jan. 22, '08 and 34 on Jan. 27, '07) and the low tempera-

ture was -49 on January 7<sup>th</sup> (-23 on Jan 5, '08 and -41 on Jan. 10, '07). 10 days had high temperatures of 30 or above and 3 days saw the temperature dip below a minus 40.

January liquid precipitation at McCarthy was 4.45 inches (0.43 inches in Jan. '08, 1.47 inches in Jan. '07, 0.20 inches in Jan. '06 and 1.03 inches in Jan. '05). Snowfall was 26.3 inches (19.2 inches in Jan. '07, 19.2 inches in Jan. '07, 4.4 inches in Jan. '06 and 12.1 inches in Jan. '05). Snow cover was 20 inches on January 1, increasing to 27 inches on January 30<sup>th</sup> and ending January at 27 inches.

February and March were about average in both temperature and precipitation. There were 26 days of February data missing and again I filled in with Kennicott data.

The high temperature for February was 38 on the 18<sup>th</sup> (41 on Feb. 18, '08, 30 on Feb. 3, '07 and 44 on Feb. 10, '06). The lowest temperature recorded in February was -11 on the 5<sup>th</sup> (-10 on Feb 9, '08, -42 on Feb. 23, '07 and -26 on Feb. 25, '06). The high was 30 or above on only 6 days and the low was -10 or lower on 2 days. The average Febru-

ary temperature was 13.2 (6.8 in '08, 1.7 in '07, 11.6 in '06 and 12.3 in '05). This is warm compared to -5.9 in '99.

Mike Monroe in Kennicott had an average temperature of 13.5.

The February precipitation was 1.01 inches of liquid (0.81 in '08, 0.05 in '07 and 1.72 in '06). Total snowfall was 14.0 inches (9.9 in '08, 2.5 in '07 and 8.6 in '06). McCarthy began February with 27 inches of snow on the ground and ended the month with 25 inches. Kennicott had 1.10 inches of liquid and 14.5 inches of snow.

March was a continuation of February in both temperature and precipitation.

The high temperature for March was 45 on the 26<sup>th</sup> (47 on Mar. 9, '08, 40 on Mar. 21, '07 and 48 on Mar. 20, '06). The low temperature for March was -25 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> (-11 on Mar 3, '08, -40 on Mar. 3, '07 and -31 on Mar. 17, '06). The average March temperature at McCarthy was 15.0 compared to 21.7 in Mar. '08, 4.2 in Mar. '07, 10.0 in Mar. '06 and 28.7 in Mar. '05. The

high reached 40 or higher on 3 days and the low was -20 or below on 5 days. Kennicott had an average temperature of 18.8.

March liquid precipitation was 0.93 inches (0.51 in Mar. '08, 0.21 in Mar. '07 trace in Mar. '06 and 0.12 in Mar. '05) and snowfall was 15.4 inches ( 11.3 in Mar. '08, 3.7 in Mar. '07, 0.1 in Mar. '06 and 0.8 in Mar. '05). 6.9 inches fell on the 6<sup>th</sup>. March started the month with 25 inches of snow on the ground, increased to 34 inches on the 6<sup>th</sup> and ended the month with 25 inches. Kennicott had 1.30 inches of liquid and 22.3 inches of snow. Kennicott started the month with 30 inches of snow on the ground and increased to 41 on the 6<sup>th</sup> and ended March with 33 inches.

The total snowfall for '08-'09 was 118.4 inches, thru 3/31 (73.4 in '07-'08, 44.7 in '06-'07, 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 34 inches on March 6<sup>th</sup>. This compares with an average ('80-'08) of 65.1 inches and a snow depth of

27 inches. The greatest snow fall so far was 118.4 inches in '08-'09 (110.6 in '03-'04 and 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 week of April have seen a gradual warming of temperatures and only a trace of precipitation. The high reached 52 and the lows are in the 20's. By the 30<sup>th</sup> we should be seeing lows around freezing and highs close to 60. There is about 19 inches of snow left. The snow might be gone by the end of the month, but I'm afraid that there will be ice on the rivers and lakes until early 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.

# FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

## **Unreasonable regulation of a few is an important issue for all**

BY WAYNE MAARS

This past summer, a black bear swiped food from campers – and the reaction to this incident threatens to swipe at our freedom. It is a relatively small swipe—a hasty, unreasonable regulation—but the consequences of such an approach are far-reaching. In trying to address the bear issue, the National Park Service has decided to limit group sizes in the Donoho Basin. This regulation goes against scientific evidence and common sense, raising the question: Does NPS regulation need to be justifiable? Should the NPS answer to the con-

cerns of local residents and businesses? Should we attempt to restrict the people or manage the bears? Let's catch up on the history, so we can better understand our future.

### THE HISTORY

In 2003, an emaciated black bear with 3 cubs roamed Donoho Basin, and started taking food from campers. Since then we have seen a rise in bear incidents, quite possibly from these same bears.

In 2006 a group of 14 teenagers with 3 adults had a granola bar taken by a bear. St. Elias Alpine Guides (SEAG) took the group ice climbing, heard of the incident, and re-

ported it to NPS. Last summer, two SEAG guides led a group of 16 teens and 3 adults. They had ample food, and 26 bear canisters – intending to use NPS bear boxes for excess food. NPS personnel spoke directly to the group about the bear issue on Donoho, and the group set out. On the Westside of Donoho, the bear box was too small for the extra food, so the guides used an Ursack to store coffee and tea. Unfortunately, a black bear got the Ursack, and SEAG paid a \$500 fine. We feel terrible about the incident, as we've tried hard not to aggravate the bear problem on Donoho. The NPS was forced to shoot the bear as it dis-

played potentially dangerous behavior. There was, however, a tool that may have prevented this unfortunate incident: an electric fence.

Portable electric fences require skill to assemble properly, but in our experience, there is no better way to safely store food for a larger group. Some may recall the NPS giving electric fences to community members for effective food storage. To our knowledge, no group using an electric fence in the park has lost food to a bear. Unfortunately, in May 2008, the NPS announced electric fences were no longer ap-

proved. We're not politically adept, but it didn't seem reasonable to disapprove a food storage tool used effectively for years. In retrospect, this potentially unreasonable decision was bad for NPS, the teen group visitors, SEAG, and the bear.

The NPS spoke with us regarding this issue, and we do appreciate the dialog. This winter, they've been attempting to formulate a solution. Despite a lack of public forum, we and others sent letters voicing concerns. One provision drafted this year to address the bear issue is that group size in the Donoho Basin

is limited to 12 persons, inclusive of guides and clients. It seemed a knee-jerk reaction to the situation; we felt our letters and logic were ignored. Overwhelming evidence indicates that larger groups are less likely to have a bear encounter, so it's counterproductive to limit group size to reduce bear encounters.

**ANALYSIS OF NEW PROVISION**

The USGS Alaska Science Center compiled bear encounter data statewide, spanning 100 years and including encounters resulting in no injury, some form of injury or a

(Continued on page 22)

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

3/16/09

Hi Riek and Bonnie,

Here is the money for a 2 year subscription to the best little magazine in the USA.

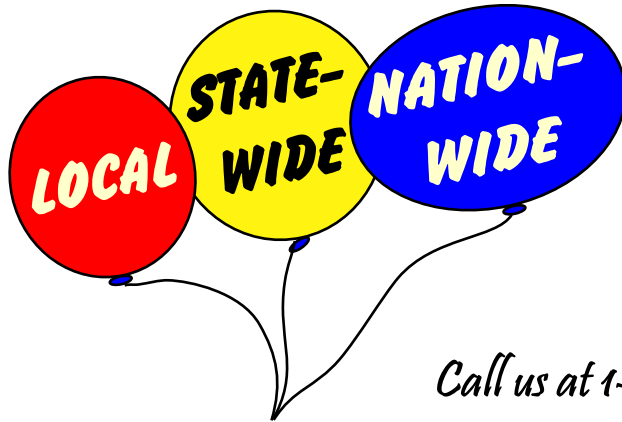
I truly enjoy it. I look forward to each edition that comes and love

the personal touches. It seems like I know everyone of you.

I keep saying I am going to stop in every September but it seems I get to Chitina and never get any farther up the road.

So please keep up the good work and I do look forward to your next edition and look forward to seeing how the fishing contest comes out on Long Lake.

Robert J. Kelly  
Wisconsin



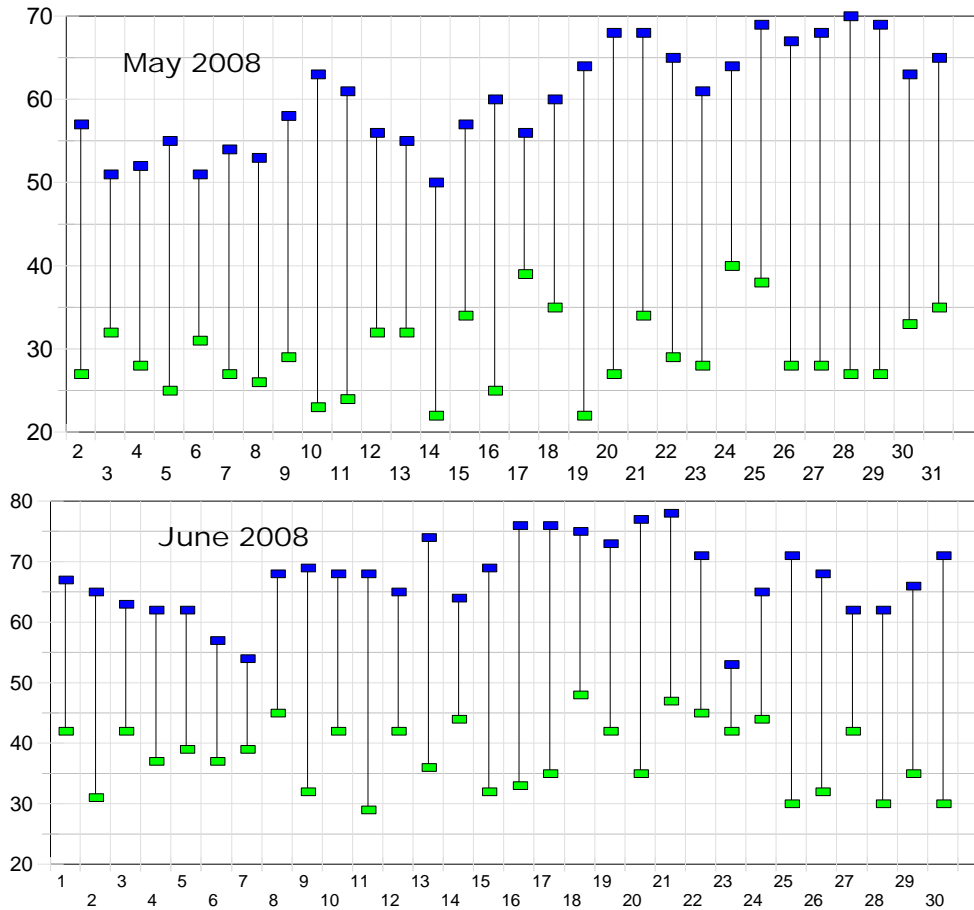
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