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Wrangell St. Elias News

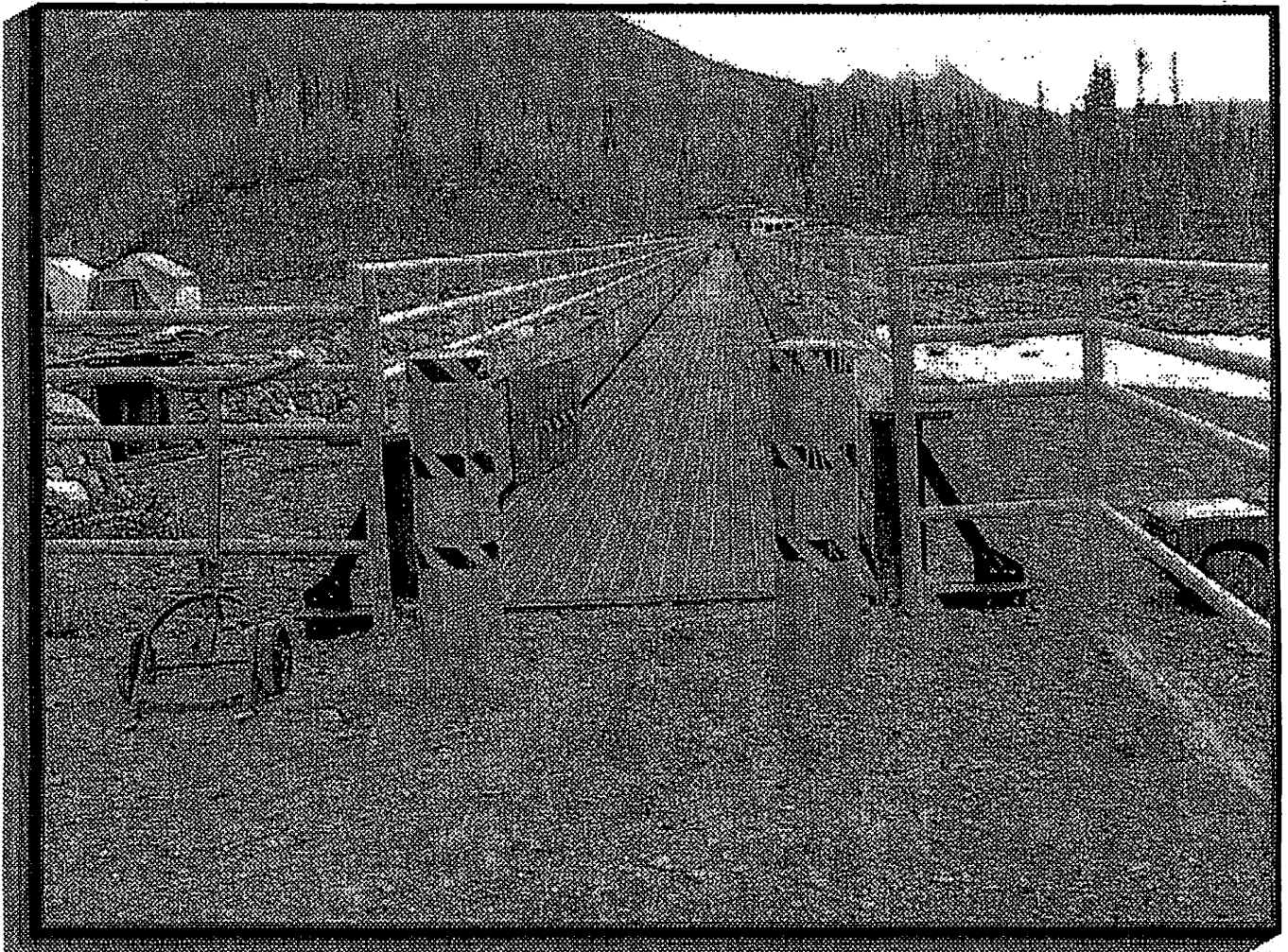
"External vigilance is the price of liberty"

Vol. Eleven Issue Six

November & December 2002

Two Dollars

Access to McCarthy restricted—again



WSEN staff photo

Some say it looks more like the entrance to Folsom Prison, rather than the gateway to the nation's largest National Park—even though the restricted access was requested by the Park Service. After being "bollard-free" all summer, the DOT spent \$30,000 of federal maintenance funds to restrict the bridge over the Kennicott River with 4 bollards and 6 "restrictors" in late September. The restrictors are located in three different places along the bridge and restrict the opening to 52." The bollards further narrow the opening to 36," effectively preventing ATV and snowmachine passage.

See story on page 6.

A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

Last year at this time there was a foot of snow on the ground. Today as I look out the office window, I can still see green grass and the outdoor temperature is 29 degrees at noon. McCarthy is experiencing quite a reprieve from past early-winter seasons. Many locals were thrilled to have the extra time

tacked on, so to speak. Some of those locals being Rick and myself. Rick called on Dan Myers' building expertise and the two men managed to finish our bedroom addition project in plenty of time.

Rick and I are making plans to travel south for about 3 weeks to visit family members in Florida and Georgia. As most of our local area subscribers already know, Rick and I had the privilege of having my mom, Neta Schafer, visit us for a couple of months this last summer. She was such a vital support during the busy summer season. We tried to extend her stay into the winter and, in spite of neighbor John Adams' offer to give mom a pair of bunny boots, she decided to head back to Virginia for the winter!

We will be out of the office from November 11th until December 12th. You may still contact us through Email at WSEN@starband.net. WSEN welcomes aboard the following new subscribers: Steve Lloyd, CA; Doug and Judy Frederick, AK; Dan Bross, AK; Sourdough

Drilling, AK; Ed and Sue Slater, WA; Michelle Gressele, WA; Jerry and Cheri Hvass, WA; Holly Holm, AK; Barry and Joyce Weiss, AZ; Judy Fulton, AK.

Wrangell St. Elias News

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PS Form 3901, October 2001, Approved

Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

Brooks, Diane and Ian Ludwig: Now that winter is nearly here, we are eagerly looking forward to the Ludwig family arriving in the area from their summer home at Delta. Right after Rick and I put the finishing touches on our last issue of WSEN we received an item of interest from Brooks. Because we were not able to include it in the September/October issue, we held it over for this current issue. Brooks writes:

There's a new hunter in the Ludwig family and, no, it's not Ian! It all started last Thursday (August 29th) when we went to the homestead for the day and spotted a legal bull in our backyard. The hunting regulations changed this year on the homestead. Now the only moose that are legal are young ones with a spike or fork horn or old ones with a 50" spread or three brow tines.

To throw a bone to us disgruntled moose hunters, the Dept. of Fish and Game gave out some calf moose tags. The only catch was that you could only shoot a calf and nothing else. Well, I figured a 350 pound calf, which happens to be the same size as a bull caribou, might taste pretty good so I applied and received a calf tag.

Opening day came with Diane manning the upstairs loft and Ian sleeping (sunup is 5:30 am). I headed up the creek. I had gone maybe a half mile when I spotted a decent bull across the burn. He only had two brow tines so he wasn't legal. Another cow also passed me by at about 50

yards. It started raining so I slipped out of sight of the bull and donned rain gear. When I peaked back around the tree the big bull was gone.

After glassing for another couple minutes I spotted a moose across the burn in some



timber. Lo and behold, it was the fork horn that we had seen on Thursday. Since I couldn't shoot I decided to head home for reinforcements.

Diane headed up the creek and I opened the observatory window to listen for a shot. I didn't have long to wait. The bull was working his way down the creek towards the homestead and Diane spotted him. She paralleled the bull until she had an opening to shoot through and knelt down to make the shot. Diane dropped the bull with her first shot, hitting the neck and clipping the front shoulder. She made two more quick shots to the chest to finish off her quarry.

She used my Uncle Richard's .243 that was given to me shortly before my Uncle's death. I know

he would have been happy to see it put to such good use!

I woke up Ian and we headed up the creek to join Diane at "the kill." We spent the next couple hours butchering. I guess Ian's getting some pretty early butchering lessons. We said a prayer of thanks and loaded the moose into our canoe and floated back to the homestead.

Ian's final remarks were, "I eat moose and salmon."

I replied, "You sure do, honey; thanks to mommy!"

Congratulations, Diane, on bagging your winter meat and making sure Ian has plenty of those tasty moose pepper sticks!

Jim and Jeannie Miller and family: I managed to catch Jeannie

in-between chores. She was getting ready to head down the hill to the airstrip and pick up the incoming mail, but she assured me she had time to give me at least one item of interest.

With the busy summer season behind us here in the McCarthy/Kennicott area, that doesn't mean we can all stretch out on our lounge chairs (what are those, anyway, Jeannie??) and do nothing. Jeannie said she finally was able to clean out the garden of the vegetable plants but the weeds, well, that's for someone else to do. Jeannie figures it's now time to release the chickens from their summer captivity and let them do the fall cleanup in the garden. Sounds like a terrific idea to me; in fact, I'm wishing I could "borrow" her

crew for a few days!

Matt and Julie are nearly finished with a sauna and hope to spend the winter months harvesting dead trees to make their own lumber for a another building project. By the way, congratulations to this younger Miller couple who are fixing to celebrate their first wedding anniversary on November 3rd.

Stacie is back from the Brooks Range and her job at the hunting camp. It sounds like she may be looking at her own winter building project—a log cabin.

Jeannie reported that the bears stayed away from the homestead this summer although she saw a few on the road between her place in Kennicott and McCarthy. No sign of coyotes or lynx, either. Makes for a much more contented chicken population, Jeannie!

The Ralph Lohse family:

When Tyee answered the phone, I asked to speak to the social director. He immediately called his mom. Linda informed me the Lohses were all accounted for, fishing season in Cordova is over, a sheep and a caribou hunt were successful and they are back home at Long Lake to stay.

We both comment on how grateful we are to have the extended warm weather for this time of year. Everyone is taking advantage of it. Trae is winterizing his pole tree building. All three boys are digging a drainage ditch – one more hour of digging should complete that project! Ralph and daughter Robin are planning a small cabin for Robin.

Linda reports that her folks, Larry & Kathleen Kritchen of Cordova, paid them a visit in August.

School work is in the making, says Linda, as well as a trip into Glennallen so that Trae, Teal and Tyee can attend a

silversmith class being taught at the community college.

All is well with the Lohse family, things are quiet at their Long Lake home and it sounds like they are *almost* ready for winter to arrive.

Howard Mozen, Elizabeth Schafer and Avery: Another "item" that didn't make it to my desk prior to last issue's printing was from Elizabeth. She writes: Avery turned 2 in June; she is a big talker and likes to sing songs like *Itsy-Bitsy Spider*. She got to spend the summer at home with Howard. They had a lot of good daddy/daughter time. Howard finished his first year as a special ed teacher in Anchorage, and the summer break was well deserved. He even got a few projects done between chasing Avery around – like the roof on our guest cabin. (It looks *real* good!)

I worked full time as a ranger for the park and enjoyed that a lot—very nice to get a few months work in after 2 plus years off.

Howard is back in Anchorage, work started August 28th. I'm done, and Avery and I spent most of September in McCarthy picking berries, pulling the garden, etc.

Patrick and Kathleen "Nelson" Gainey: In the last issue of "items" I passed on the good news about Nelson's wedding which was to take place on September 7th in Wolcott, Colorado. That is now past tense and the happily married couple showed up on our doorstep the second week of September. Rick, my mom and I had the pleasure of meeting Patrick for the first time. What a pleasure it was, too.

The Gainey's spent several days here at their cabin while Nelson acted as tour guide to Patrick, showing him off and around the community. They have since returned to Bond, Colorado, but we expect to see

more of this delightful couple in the future, as Patrick was quite impressed with the area (and we hope his neighbors!).

After Nelson and Patrick left, I received an Email from Nelson's sister, Darlene, who included several wedding pictures so I could see how lovely Nelson looked in her wedding gown.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Gainey and a most blessed future together is my prayer!



Photo courtesy Darlene Lagesso

PATRICK AND KATHLEEN "NELSON" GAINEY

Mark and Emily Bass: The other day Rick and I received a phone call from Emily. She invited us to stop by on one of our walks. We did and had the pleasure of getting a tour of their home and the many projects she and Mark had accomplished this summer. We were sorry to miss Mark but he had preceded Emily into Anchorage as he had a job awaiting him. Mark is an expert wall paper hanger and so his business ventures take him into

the big city at various times throughout the year—mostly during the winter months—which makes it nice for them to spend the majority of the summer season at their McCarthy area home.

Both Mark and Emily handcrafted built-in cabinets in their kitchen/dining room area and upstairs in their bedroom. A new deck, wood paneling on the inside of their house and a rock stairway up to the main floor of the house were a few of the finishing touches Rick and I observed. Except for a trip to Colorado to attend the Gainey's wedding (Emily was Maid of Honor), the Bases have been one busy couple.

Mark and Emily, thanks for being such fine neighbors and sharing your lives with us!

Don, Lynn, Sarah and Rene Welty: Now that Lynn's seasonal job is over, she has put on her teacher's hat. She says homeschool is in full swing at the Welty house. Don is still at hunting camp until the end of October, so she and the girls are getting a good start on this year's subjects.

Rene spent a couple of weeks as cook's helper at the hunting camp and really enjoyed the adventure, she tells me. She also went to Cordova recently and helped celebrate her best friend's birthday.

Sarah is making plans to go to Anchorage and attend college-preparation activities at Anchorage House. This is coinciding with the College Fair which is bringing in a wide variety of college representatives. I'm sure Sarah will have her notepad in hand.

Lane Moffitt, Betty Adams and Kaylin: I finally figured out why it took me so long to find Lane, Betty and Kaylin for an item of interest. Lane filled me in. They closed on 5 acres of land

just recently and are paying nearly daily visits to the site of their new home to-be. Located on the west side of the Kennicott River, Lane says they have a wonderful view of the Stairway Icefalls and a 360 degree view of the local mountains.

Bags of cement, a mixer and sand are now on site in preparation for pouring the foundation for their new house. All three have been mighty busy doing the ground work. In fact, Kaylin got a lesson on running a compactor the other day and the three have celebrated with their first wiener roast on site.

When Kaylin, student, and "mom," teacher, are not at the lot, they are busy doing school-work. Kaylin, 5, is well underway on his Kindergarten studies and has received a couple of packages in the mail already from homeschool director, Karen Lawn. Lane admits he is Betty's student #2. Sounds like she may have her hands full these days!

Congratulations to the happy land owners and many thanks, says Betty, to Keith Rowland and Jim and Jeannie Miller for their support and help in obtaining the necessary cement needed for stage #1.

Jim and Audrey Edwards: We were so glad to see Jim and Audrey in attendance at the performance of the Arctic Chamber Orchestra recently. Audrey is feeling better and is thankful to everyone for their kind thoughts and inquiries during her recovery from recent surgery. When I called yesterday to see what is new in their neck of the woods, Audrey was busy washing clothes – trying to catch up before winter sets in. Most of us ladies are doing the same type of chores!

The other day Jim flew to the McCarthy side of the river and spotted two moose "attending" church. Seems they were

meandering around the church property when he landed. They didn't give Jim much notice. Perhaps they were disappointed that no services were scheduled for that day.

Jim and Audrey are looking forward to a visit from Werner Stückler from Germany. Some of you may recall Werner from a previous trip he made to our area approximately 8 years ago.

Congratulations, Thea and Tom!

Thea Rose Agnew and Thomas Patrick McRoberts, together with their families, celebrated their marriage on September 7th, at 3:30 pm in the Kennicott Recreation Hall. Nearly 200 friends and relatives from as far away as England and New Zealand, attended the ceremony. A reception complete with appetizers and wine was held in the Jurick Building. Lilly Goodman and Kirsten Richardson helped with the appetizers.

A buffet, potluck dinner followed with Kirsten in charge of the food co-ordination. Jeannie Miller cooked up a variety of meats. Matt Smith baked fresh breads and local gardeners, Marci Thurston, Mark Vail and Rick Jurick donated fresh vegetables. Denise Jantz, Aly McVey and Laura Bunnell roasted vegetables. Elizabeth Schafer and the Shidners were put in charge of providing enough mashed potatoes for the dinner. Howard Mozen freshly grilled a Copper River Salmon. James Sill baked a beautiful wedding cake for the occasion.

Following the dinner, tables and benches were moved aside to allow room for dancing. A band from Fairbanks – Gangly Moose – provided the music.

Our congratulations and best wishes to the happy couple.

DOT's Director Swarthout: The Attorney General made me do it.

BY RICK KENYON

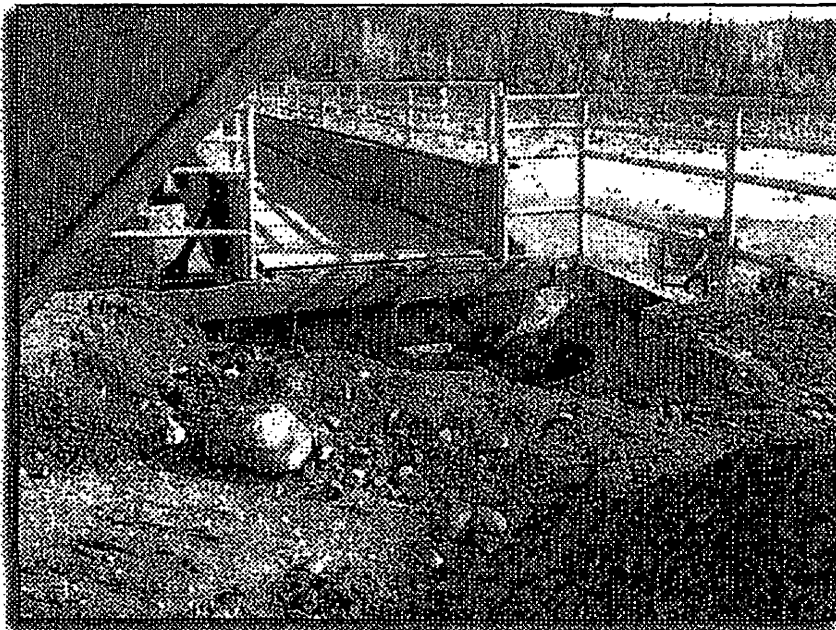
Two Alaska State Troopers and an armed National Park Service Ranger spent most of one day watching Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) workers install bollards at both ends of the main channel bridge over the Kennicott River.

Asked why they were here, one Trooper responded, "We're just here to make sure everyone is safe." Asked who invited them, they were hesitant to respond. After much questioning it turns out that our local NPS Ranger Marshal Neeck flew them here from Glennallen. And why did Neeck spend the day at the bridge? "I just didn't have any-



WSEN staff photo

A TOURIST WAITS FOR THE BRIDGE TO RE-OPEN WHILE TWO ALASKA STATE TROOPERS AND AN NPS RANGER LOOK BORED.



WSEN staff photo

BEFORE THEY COULD INSTALL THE NEW BOLLARDS, THE BRIDGE CREW HAD TO DIG OUT A NUMBER OF OLD BOLLARDS THAT HAD BEEN CUT OFF BY LOCAL RESIDENTS. THE BRIDGE WAS CLOSED FOR SEVERAL HOURS.

thing else to do today," was his comment.

While several tourists looked on with bemused interest, some locals were outraged that two armed Public Safety Officers and an armed National Park Service Ranger spent most of one day standing around while the Department of Transportation blocked the only access into McCarthy — at a time when the McCarthy Road was in terrible shape and in danger of being closed due to washouts. Troopers said they were treated with respect, though, with no violence or threats being made.

Many local residents had been in contact with DOT&PF's Northern Region's Director Ralph Swarthout about the bollard issue. Some, asking for bollards to be re-installed (they had been removed last spring by local residents) but the majority

pleading for them to be left out. Some residents even traveled to Fairbanks and talked with Swarthout personally about the problems associated with getting mail and supplies when the access was restricted.

Swarthout said the bridge was built after a public process

during the mid-90's determined that most residents wanted non-vehicular access. However, he refused to acknowledge that a more recent public process, the Kennicott River Wayside project, showed that a majority of residents now favor decking the bridge over, and building a parking lot on the east side of the

river — with vehicles still being restricted from accessing the Kennicott and McCarthy town-sites.

Finally, Director Swarthout said that he had talked to the Alaska Attorney General, and that he "had no choice but to re-install the bollards."

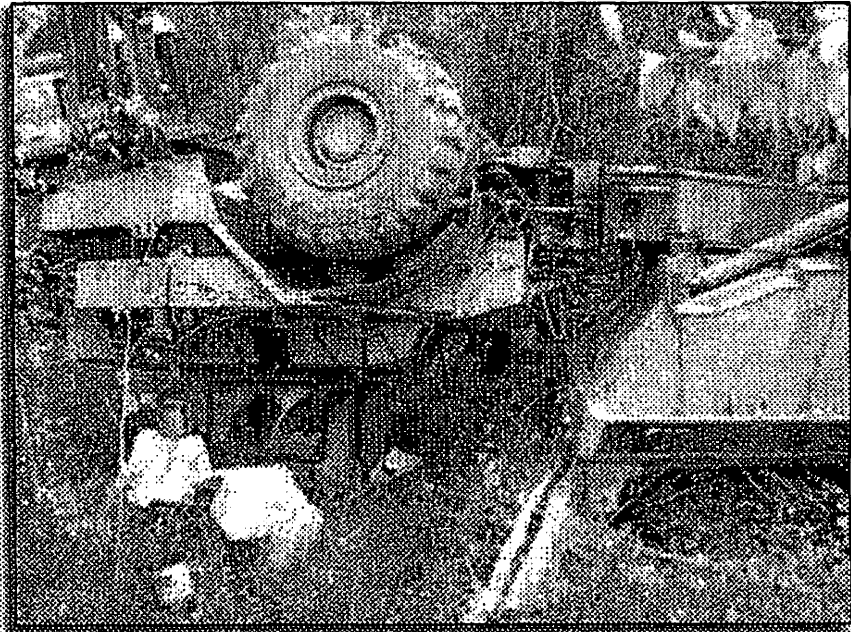
Rock truck rolls

BY RICK KENYON

What happens when you are driving a monster "Rock Truck" and the shoulder of the McCarthy Road suddenly gives way?

"I just held on to the steering wheel as best as I could," said owner-driver Keith Rowland shortly after the incident occurred. Rowland and the truck went over a steep bank near the mudslide area, just a short distance from the end of the road. Fortunately neither Keith nor the truck were badly damaged.

Keith and his wife Laurie own Rowcon Services and recently moved to the McCarthy



area from Fairbanks. Keith was able to bring his excavator to the scene and turn the truck over, onto its wheels. He told us that there was no major damage to the structure, but that several hundred dollars worth of hardware was destroyed.

There were more accidents on the McCarthy Road reported this year than any year in recent history.

Earlier this summer a large motor home nearly rolled over when the shoulder gave way several miles from where Rowland's truck went over the side. It came to rest after hitting a small tree,

which saved it from going completely over.

There was a report of a head-on collision earlier this summer, injuries unknown.

A Silver Lake resident driving a 4-wheeler was forced off the road and into a pond near Silver Lake in mid-September.

Valdez residents driving the McCarthy Road had their share of accidents and problems. Donny Moeller was heading to

his home in Valdez after spending the weekend at a cabin on Silver Lake. When he reached the Kotsina Bluffs area near Chitina, his Izuzu Trooper hit some debris that had fallen onto the road from the hillside above, sending him and his dog over a hundred-foot cliff. Miraculously neither were injured.

Our good friend Kay Houghton makes the drive from Valdez to McCarthy nearly every weekend during the summer months.

She had been driving a Chevy Van until the sliding door fell off halfway between McCarthy and Chitina this summer. Kay had the door track welded back on and promptly traded the van for a new Tahoe SUV. On her second trip to McCarthy in the new, rugged off-road vehicle she was rewarded with a total of 5 flat tires.

So the saga of what some call "the worst road in Alaska" continues.

Middle Fork Trail tests new technology

BY K.J. MUSHOVIC

Repeated travel across wetland-area soils usually results in water-collecting ruts that turn the routes into small streams, ponds and bogs. In response, trail users often move to undisturbed areas next to the rutted route, creating a "braided" trail that collects more water from natural drainages, exacerbating and spreading the problem.

The National Park Service (NPS) Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program, BLM's Glennallen District, and the Copper River Watershed Project recently completed an experimental demonstration of new trail stabilization technologies on the Middle Fork Gulkana River Trail (sometimes referred to as the Meiers Lake Trail) at Mile 169 of the Richardson Highway.

This summer, trail crews staffed by the three organizations worked for two weeks rebuilding the first 4,000 linear feet of the notoriously trail in a cooperative response to cross-jurisdictional resource issues. The core funding for the demonstration project was a \$30,000

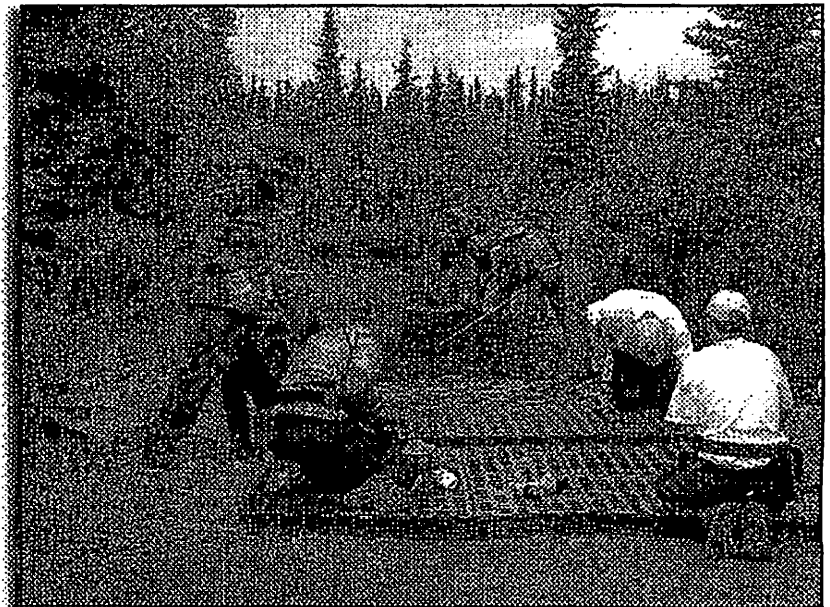


Photo by Kevin Myers

PROJECT CREW MEMBERS ASSEMBLE MATERIALS USED FOR TRAIL STABILIZATION (FOREGROUND) WHILE OTHER CREW MEMBERS PREPARE THE TRAIL SURFACE FOR INSTALLATION.

State Recreation Trail Grant (TRAAK Grant). Funding for the grant is based on a federal tax on off-highway vehicle use which is disbursed to all states. The NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program was the recipient and manager for the grant and teamed with BLM and the Copper River Watershed Project to provide staff, equipment and do the job.

On the Middle Fork project, crews routed the trail onto more stable soils and used existing ruts to create drainage ditches, installed a geotextile fabric covered with gravel on some sections, and used plastic porous "pavement" panels that can be interlocked to create a protective surface that bridges wet areas while letting vegetation grow through the pores. The panels,

resembling a small-gridded pallet, were originally designed to be backfilled with topsoil and reseeded to provide a lane for emergency response vehicles over lawns in urban areas. About 1,000 feet of the panels were interlocked together to form an eight-foot-wide trail. In some cases, the panels were backfilled with gravel; where productive soils still existed, they were left to revegetate naturally. Unimproved parallel routes were blocked with brush to funnel users onto the improved route and allow for natural revegetation.

The last 1,000 feet of bogs before the trail climbs on drier terrain had limited drainage ditches installed but was otherwise left as a control section. "We want to see if this section improves with limited drain work" said Kevin Meyer, the NPS project manager. "And we want people to remember what the trail used to be like."

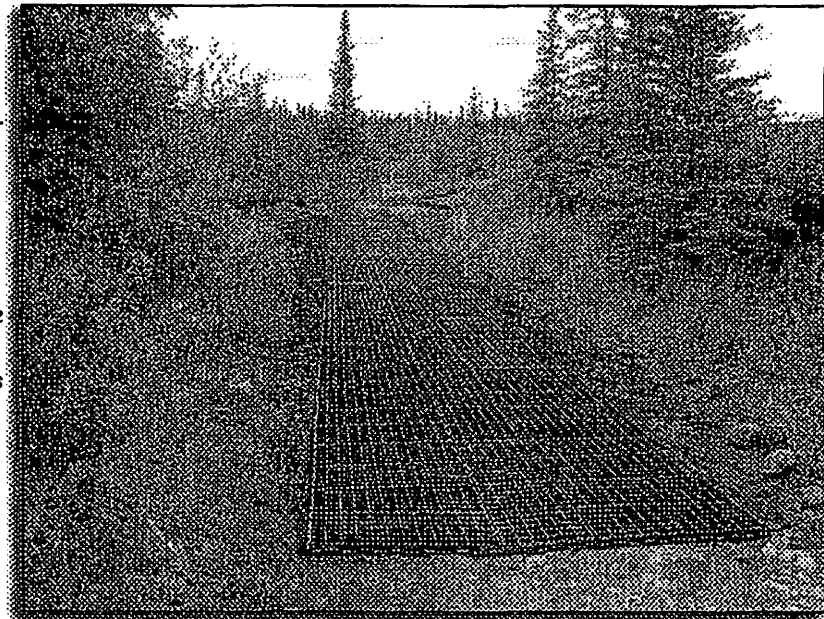
Jeannie Green Production's "Heartbeat Alaska" program, studying the issue of trail degradation on Alaska Native owned lands in Alaska for an upcoming feature, paid a visit to the project to film part of the installation. State Director Henri Bisson and Glennallen Field Manager Ramone McCoy were on hand to describe how BLM is attempting to address trail damage issues. Green told BLM staff that she may be able to use film footage from the project as an example of what types of alternatives are available for potential application in other rural Alaska locations.



PHOTOS BY DENNIS GREEN (UPPER) AND KEVIN MYERS (LOWER)

(ABOVE) TRAIL BRAIDING AND THE RESULTING EROSION (ON RIGHT OF PHOTO) WILL BE A THING OF THE PAST ON THE MIDDLE FORK TRAIL.

(BELOW) FRESHLY-INSTALLED GRIDWORK (PRIOR TO BEING COVERED WITH DIRT AND GRAVEL) WILL PREVENT OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE DAMAGE TO THE TRAIL AND SURROUNDING LAND. IN PLACES WHERE PRODUCTIVE SOILS EXIST, THE GRID IS NOT FILLED SO VEGETATION CAN GROW THROUGH THE OPENINGS FOR A MORE NATURAL APPEARANCE.



(This story was reprinted from the Fall 2002 issue of BLM Alaska Frontiers Magazine)

"In much of Western life religion has descended into simply making people feel good. At its best, however, religion teaches what is ultimately important and what isn't. Neither a good nor a happy life is possible without knowing that."—
Dennis Prager

NPS closes park trails, fixes BLM trails?

BY RICK KENYON

This summer the National Park Service (NPS) closed three trails in the Nabesna area after meeting with over 70 area residents who asked that a way be found to keep the trails open. The trails had become "braided" in areas, and definitely needed some repair work. Area residents offered to volunteer labor to fix the trails up so that they could be used without damaging park resources. Local officials of the NPS refused.

At about the same time, the NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program received a \$30,000 grant from the State Recreation Trail Grant program. They used the money to repair the Middle Fork Trail, also known as the Meirs Lake trail. The Meiers Lake Trail is located outside the park, on BLM land.

Why would the National Park Service use resources to repair a trail that is on BLM land, outside of the park, and at the same time close trails inside the park that are important routes to local residents? The answer is simple. The trails in the Nabesna area that were closed by NPS were not considered *authorized trails*.

"We closed no authorized trails in the Nabesna area," said Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Superintendent Gary Candelaria. "What we posted closed were three unauthorized trail segments leading from private land across public lands."

Since at least one of the trails in question (Trail #1) had

been in use since the 1930's, long before the area became a national park, we asked the Superintendent how an established trail like that could become "unauthorized."

Candelaria gave us a detailed explanation.

"Trail #1 never was authorized. When the park was created, a number of existing trails were looked at, and continued public use authorized as a result of their previous existence. The route leading from Mr. Fredrick's place was examined but not included on the authorized trail list because it has no public access—it begins on Mr. Fredrick's land and he (his father actually I believe) would not permit public access to it. In essence, it is a private route. Further, the use was light, intermittent, and caused no damage to public lands. That is no longer the case. The use is extensive, still private and not public, possibly commercial, and damaging the public lands over which it passes. The reality is Mr. Fredrick created this situation. Had he continued to use the land lightly, for subsistence purposes, and without damaging the public land over which he passed, we would not have been compelled to act. For whatever reason, he was unwilling to continue the use patterns that had developed previously, and for his own purposes altered the situation."

The Superintendent further explained, "There is no way we can expend public money to repair illegal trails, one of which has no public access across

private land (Trail #1), nor can we encourage or assist the community to maintain or promote illegal use by helping them repair them."

We asked Doug Frederick to respond to Superintendent Candelaria's explanation.

"As usual the park service is twisting the facts. The trail from my property to Jack Lake used to have heavy traffic. Ellis used to operate a Weasel, hauling people from our place to his float plane on Jack Lake where they had their float plane air-taxi operation. There was no heavy traffic this year. Over the 4th of July a family from Tok camped on Jack Lake for two days. I have letters where the Park Service has told people that since my place is a public place that the public can go through our land to use the trail. We have never turned anyone away from using the trail. The Park Service has never contacted us about it either way. In fact the Park Service doesn't work with any of the inholders. On the other segments, I got with the park service about a better route to Tananda Lake and we went out there in Oct. 2001 and they were impressed that there was a dry route. The Park Service was going to get back with me last winter about getting supplies to fix the few small areas that were swampy. I offered to haul the material out and do the work during the winter before spring break up. Mr. Sharp started the meeting of July 24th stating that fact, which we have on video tape."

Local voices need to be heard

Murkowski asks for answers after Park Service decisions cause growing concerns in Wrangell-St. Elias

WASHINGTON, D.C. — OCTOBER 11, 2002

Alaska Sen. Frank H. Murkowski today called on National Park Service Director Fran Mainella to address the concerns of residents in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve regarding several recent decisions.

"Many in the Wrangell-St. Elias area look at the NPS with a great deal of mistrust and concern. Decisions regarding road closures, bridges, and local businesses are causing significant divisions. Alaskans should

be able to look to the NPS as a partner and an advocate, not an adversary. We need to lay the groundwork for better communication and better community relations."

"Local voices need to be heard. I want to know if the NPS is listening, and if not, why?"

"I have asked National Park Service Director Mainella to send officials from her office to join Special Assistant to the Secretary of Interior Cam Toohey in Alaska for meetings with affected

residents and the officials who made these decisions.

"I want a full accounting and have asked for full answers in two weeks," said Murkowski.

The Senator was reacting after local residents, especially McCarthy residents, complained about alleged decisions by the park's local ranger to deny access to the park, in opposition to in-holders in the park, and to restricting the McCarthy Road bridge to "foot traffic" only.

NPS responds

In response to the senator's letter, Director Mainella has sent Special Assistant Don Smith to Glennallen, Tok and Slana to meet with selected individuals. (October 21 & 22) He is accompanied by Alaska Regional Director Ron Arnberger of NPS and Special Assistant to the Secretary of Interior Cam Toohey. Although the senator specifically mentioned McCarthy in his letter to the Director, no public meetings have been scheduled there. A number of McCarthy residents have expressed their disappointment, and said they intend to send written comment to Toohey.

Instead, Smith and the team are expected to concentrate on the recent trail closures in Nabesna, and reports of harassment by park rangers.

Our deadline prevents us from reporting on the results of

the inquiry, but we will try to cover the event in the next issue. We have, however, received copies of written comments from several people who have had unpleasant encounters with the NPS.

The first was written by some folks who had just visited Doug Frederick's place, the Sportsman's Paradise Lodge. (Frederick had recently had the trail to his fishing camp closed by the park service.)

This story began on the 10th, Aug, 12:30 P.M, a beautiful bright morning and the first day of sheep hunting season. My [friend] and I decided to visit the Wrangell's Park and Sportsman Paradise Lodge.

On the way in about part way up the Nabesna Road, we passed two park service rangers having a conversation with a couple of hunters. We waved at the Rangers and I still remember the feeling of security I had on seeing the park officials. Little did I know what was in

store for us.

The next memory I have is of a grouse crossing the road and us jumping out to get a better look. Before we even got a good look at the grouse we were boxed in by two unmarked cars with Rangers in it.

The bigger Ranger said, quite unpleasantly, "What is going on?" "Chasing a grouse," says my friend. These were unlike any rangers we had ever seen. They had army style assault rifles and bullet proof vests on.

They checked our entire truck and wanted to know if we were drunk. Luckily we had not had any that day, so they had no excuse for more of the rude behavior that followed.

Long story short we got a full flavor of "Taliban" right here in friendly Alaska.

They summarized the event like this:

A Tale of Harassment and Intimidation right here in USA.

Here are the salient points of our interaction with the NPS in Nabesna.

Nabesna.

- 1) The rangers in question had army style assault rifles and bullet proof vests on.
- 2) They were riding unmarked white SUV's with US Government license plates.
- 3) They checked our entire truck and all our ID's without giving us any reason.
- 4) They were very rude and intimidating.
- 5) The entire interaction was very scary, I was half expecting to get shot.

The next one was written by a Chugiak resident:

The following is a summary of events occurring the weekend of August 10th, 2002. This was opening weekend of sheep season and my partner and I were out to do some hunting but primarily to do some scouting for a trip planned over the week of Labor Day 2002.

We arrived at the Slana Ranger station around 4:00 PM on Friday August 9th. We registered our 4-wheeler and 3-wheeler with the park ranger. During that time a young man asked if we would allow him time to interview us regarding use of the park. I agreed. The line of questioning to me was intimidating in the fact that I was definitely there to hunt and the interviewer was giving the serious impression he was anti-hunting. I didn't appreciate the bias line of questioning but I remained polite and answered all

questions.

Upon arrival at our departure point of Lost Creek trail we were promptly checked again by a park ranger. He was polite but I thought it odd since I had just checked in at the ranger station not a 1/2 hour before.

We then rode the trail and decided to head into the Soda Lake area. We rode in and spent the night. Upon leaving to head home, at the confluence of Soda Creek and Platinum Creek, two armed rangers jumped from the bushes and waved us down. We again stopped and were subjected to an intrusive line of questioning that went beyond what was necessary to determine if we were correctly licenced. Again the line of questioning was very intimidating and NOT targeted at fish and game enforcement. They were determined to find out where we had been what we were doing there and why. Again, not a line of questioning I would expect from game enforcement.

We were leaving. Upon passing the Sportsman Lodge an Alaska State Trooper waved and I waved back. Not 5 minutes later on the road an IRATE Park Service employee came flying down the road waving us to stop. The ranger was aggressive and accusatory. He stated that we ran a game check point. And that the state trooper wanted to talk to us.

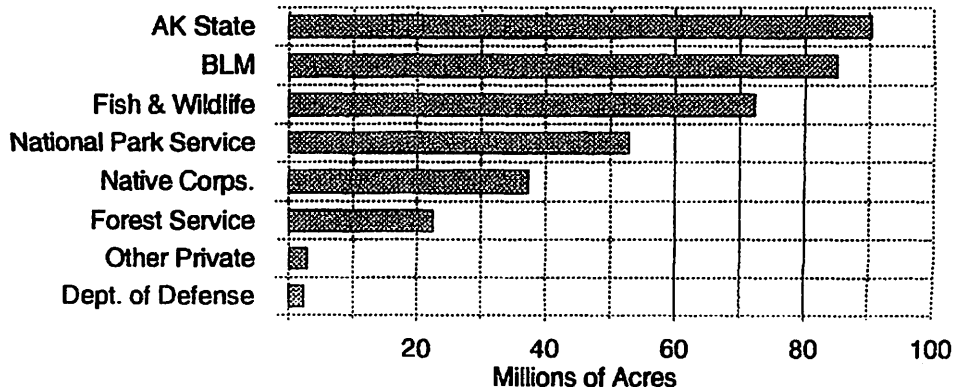
Listen, state troopers are big boys and if he wanted to talk to me

all he had to do was hit the lights. I would have certainly stopped. The trooper gave me no indication I needed to stop so I didn't. Again the park rangers' line of questioning was aggressive and accusatory. I asked if he could explain to me what the h___ was going on as I had never had this kind of questioning and that it was harassment as far as I was concerned. He would only tell me that the Park Service had "Some Concerns" but would get no more specific than that. At this point a second Alaska State Trooper pulled up. Some nervous glances were exchanged between the trooper and ranger. The trooper took over the situation and was polite and courteous. He checked our licences and did what I would expect from a fish and game enforcement officer. Upon the arrival of the trooper I noticed the ranger no longer took an active role in questioning but stood back arms folded. The trooper eventually allowed us to go.

I would just like to say I have been in the Nabesna area since the late 1980's on and off. I have never seen or even heard of such behavior. In a matter of 48 hours my partner and I were questioned or interrogated by no less than 7 enforcement people all but one were employees of the park service.

I don't know what is going on out there but I would sure like to see it straightened out and I will help in any way I can.

Who Owns Alaska?



Senate Candidate Mac Carter visits McCarthy

BY BONNIE KENYON

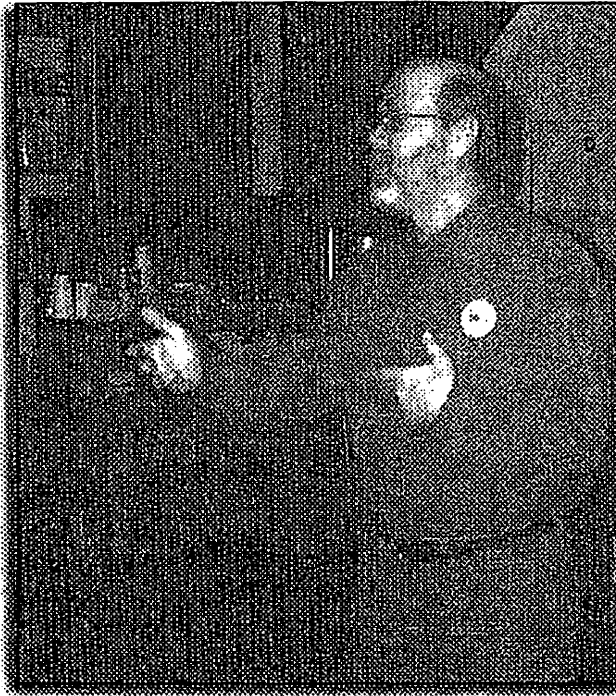
McCarthy: – On the morning of October 18th around 24 local residents meandered into the McCarthy Lodge to meet Mac Carter of Central, learn his take on the present condition of our state and what he hopes to accomplish if he should win the election for Senate Seat C.

He confessed that his initial intentions were to visit us in June, but he was warned that his 2 wheel drive truck was no match for the present condition of the McCarthy Road. Since June, DOT managed to grade the road and repair a few serious places. Even then Mac was encouraged to leave his truck at Silver Lake, Mile 11, and receive a ride the rest of the way. Needless to say, the condition of the 60-mile long McCarthy Road was one of the topics that was addressed.

"You are being held hostage in your community," said Carter. "The access is dangerous, hazardous and a real health problem. You could lose your life." Citing the need for a much-needed upgrade, Carter decried the so-called DOT budget cut which did away with our Chitina maintenance station. Instead of putting a freeze on new hires, Governor Knowles okayed just the opposite. Reading from an article in the October 10 issue of *Delta Wind*: Preliminary wage and salary employment estimates for August indicate that the state added approximately 600 jobs over the month. The esti-

mates also show an over-the-year increase of about 2500 jobs.

"Instead they attacked the people where it hurts the most, instead of the positions. Someone has their priorities in the



wrong place," said Carter. "The waste in this government is unreal; in fact, there are (state) employees who have quit due to the waste."

"What is Alaska's future?" he asked. "Are we going to be known as 'the socialist state of the north?'"

People need to be working instead of taking free money. The present administration has been "dictating to us, not serving us."

The influence of outside special interest groups have infiltrated Alaskan towns and local government entities such as chambers and councils. They are "managing people not resources," declares Carter. As an example he described the effect of this kind of influence on Haines.

"They've killed Haines. Every other business is closed. Cruise ships were killed."

Carter promised that if he is elected he would do what is right for each community. He wants to be "the listening ear," keeping us updated and informed on issues that would affect us, adversely or for the good, giving us opportunities to contact our legislature. "The legislature is a reactive body to public involvement where the majority rules. I'll fight for you and so will Frank Murkowski."

The first question for Carter came from a younger member of the community, David Rowland, who attended the meeting as part of his homeschool education. "If you are voted in would you be up to a vehicle bridge?"

"Yes," answered Carter. "There are all kinds of scenarios to look at. I'm for what you want. The majority rules."

Another question came from Rick Kenyon. "If we get a major upgrade on our road, does that automatically mean taxes?"

Carter answered in the negative, saying that some people will use any means to discourage the project.

Ending his visit with the McCarthy residents, Carter reiterated that the priorities of the present administration are "goofed up." Encouraging us to get out there and vote to change the direction of our state government or, as he best put it, "You won't be able to afford to live here."

Access — Local meeting discusses “ideal picture”

BY BONNIE KENYON

McCarthy. — Nearly 26 people gathered on Friday, September 27th at the Zak House to share with each other what their ideal picture would look like regarding access if each one could “have it their way.”

Thea Agnew, President of the McCarthy Area Council, laid out ground rules to ensure the discussion remained respectful of each other’s point-of-view. Everyone received the same amount of time to give their respective scenario for access across the Kennicott River.

Scenarios ranged from bicycle only to a full vehicle bridge.

“Ideal pictures” included:

Seasonal access in the off season for supplies and heavy equipment.

A free vehicle access that is legal in the off season with locals only having 4 wheeler access.

A hidden, secret bridge unknown to the tourists but for local use.

A bridge stretching from private property to private property.

A sound, unrestricted vehicular bridge year round with east side parking.

A vehicle bridge for locals to access mail and town and a footbridge minus the bollards for visitors.

A vehicle bridge with the Park Service providing land for east side parking with limited access into McCarthy and Kennicott. A railroad from McCarthy to Kennicott

The present bridge decked

over for vehicles with distribution points over on the east side and a welcome center to help funnel visitors in the right direction instead of a choke hold on the people.

A wayside on the west side with a footbridge that remains limited except in the fall with a freighting bridge elsewhere open in the off season.

A full vehicle bridge across the river either downstream or by decking the existing bridge but restricting vehicles from entering sensitive areas of McCarthy or Kennicott. Several parcels of land just east of the Kennicott River, owned by the state and NPS would be used to include a nice kiosk — something like the state has at Worthington Glacier — that contains interpretive signs, rest rooms and parking. The shuttle would pick up people at this site. Access for locals and service vehicles would be worked out at a different location perhaps through an arrangement with a local landowner.

Car-less places that would encourage people to get on a bicycle and to step out of your car and do things.

A place that is more peaceful and quiet.

A seasonal or a restricted-to-local-use-only bridge on private property.

Car-free zones in Kennicott and McCarthy.

No summertime access across the bridge, seasonal access for vehicles.

A safe, low speed road with a west side wayside and adequate means for supplies to get over

the river.

A variety of additional comments were made during the round of presented ideas from each participant:

It is not the issue to keep locals out.

I desire to be more self-sufficient while running my business.

I don’t like access that only certain people can use.

Footbridge is just not adequate.

It is hard for my children and I to get to mail with the blockage on the bridge.

Having the bollards out is so much more welcome.

A vehicle bridge would allow people to take their cars home. There are already over 120 vehicles stationed on the east side of the river.

Bollards limit my ability to do my business and I have concerns with fire equipment getting back and forth.

I don’t think only locals could use a bridge. Constitution stresses equality. We have a vehicle bridge necked down to a footbridge. I think this is a miss-use of funds.

When I came here in 1976, I drove over on a bridge. We used to get along with each other until the tram went in under false pretense to keep a bridge out. The road really ends at May Creek and belongs to the people of Alaska. This is not a Greenie Utopia.

I’m not that opinionated and would like to see some sort of compromise. I try to be self-sufficient.

I can get whatever I want with a bicycle.

We need a real, legal bridge that will handle fuel trucks and sewer and freight, as well as ATV's. Just removing the bollards on the existing bridge will not solve the problem.

We need to be more civil and more peaceful.

My boys saw the bollards removed and obscenities written. I want the conflict to end and vandalism to end.

I grew up in Manhattan. Cars deteriorate the quality of life. Car-less is part of our charm. People with 2 or 3 vehicles is a problem. Other places have restricted access.

Ideally we would just tell DOT and NPS what we want. We better prepare for the future. Ideally more park would be available to tourists. We must agree on something.

I would like to see more civil and peaceful town meetings so we can come to some consensus. There are a lot of different ideas and people. The McCarthy Area Council provides a forum for ideas. An entity for NPS and State. We should get back to this. I like to listen to everybody's ideas. People who use the road and bridge need to be respectful and reasonable. I'd like to see a self-regulated people. That's why I vote for

restricted access because we don't have legal regulations. I want to keep it that way.

I believe people visiting are charmed with the slower pace. That's why I came. I am struggling with change. It is easy to get stuck with the way things used to be. What is really worth protecting? The charm of this place. Let's keep talking.

I'd like to see a place where we are allowed to enjoy the scenery, history and see the environment protected. A place where government involvement is seen as a good thing.

This is one of the better meetings.

I want to get along with people and have respect. This is most important to me.

I want to see some sense of compromise but not to lose the first part. I can't visualize the free movement of cars up to Kennicott and I don't want a stream of 4-wheelers, or vehicles up my way. I see limited access as a control over our destiny and things such as vandalism, speeding and drunkenness. Maybe we should have regular town meetings. If we don't decide what we want DOT and NPS will decide for us. Access for me is not a real big issue because I don't live here. We need to respect each other. Everyone should have a voice. The community is failing to

listen, thus the removal of the bollards.

Democracy is the most perfect way. You don't get 100% of what you want.

We are a republic, not a democracy.

Where do you want the road to end? And what are the consequences?

Locals who live year-round should have more say. Future meetings should be held in McCarthy.

A question was asked NPS park planner, Vicki Snitzler, that if a full-vehicle bridge were built across the river, could NPS do a wayside on the eastside? The answer was yes.

As the meeting came to a close, it was agreed that we would like to keep discussing and working together. It was suggested that we find a way to take this meeting's ideas and develop them. With maps and documentation, we could research the legal and possible scenarios shared by those in attendance, doing some fact finding in order to come up with solutions. A November follow-up meeting is being planned.

Thanks to Thea Agnew who assisted in the establishment of ground rules for the respectful discussion that was exhibited at the above meeting.

"It is a great mistake to think of being great without goodness; and I pronounce it as certain that there was never yet a truly great man that was not at the same time truly virtuous."—Benjamin Franklin

"Freedom and not servitude is the cure of anarchy; as religion, and not atheism, is the true remedy for superstition."—Edmund Burke

"Two Democratic contenders made up ... and they decided to bury the hatchet. They decided to bury it in the Republican President."—Will Rogers

Good news from the Wrangells

BY BONNIE KENYON

The months of November and December contain two favored holidays—Thanksgiving and Christmas. I considered each one and asked myself, “What word best describes these special occasions to me?”

For Thanksgiving, the word *grateful* comes to mind. Grateful means: a feeling or showing of gratitude; thankful, or causing gratitude. Each of us is surrounded by numerous blessings. More often than not, we don't take the time to recognize and acknowledge them. Personally, I have decided to take the time, to make the giving of thanks be a number one priority in my daily life—not just once a year.

As most of you know, Rick and I are contract weather observers for NOAA. We do nine

observations a days. Instead of complaining that it is time to do “another obs,” what a perfect opportunity to take note of something good and give thanks for it.

This leads me to ask you: who do you show your gratitude to? Sometimes a neighbor, a friend or a spouse is nearby that you can express your feelings to, but many times you and I are alone. When I walk out to our weather equipment behind the cabin, I am usually by myself—except for the one person who never leaves me or forsakes me—God Almighty. The Good News about Thanksgiving is that there is a God who blesses abundantly and who desires to be the recipient of our gratitude. I believe being a thanks giver is a great way to live, which effects our countenance and our

relationships with others. Happy Thanksgiving. I am thankful for you, our readers!

Christmas...the word that comes to mind is *miraculous*. Miraculous means: having the nature of a miracle; supernatural; marvelous. That is what the celebration of Christmas means to me. God Almighty supernaturally interceded in the lives of human beings with his marvelous goodness, mercy and peace through the gift of his Son, Jesus.

This God is bigger than any problem, any hurt, any disappointment, any loss or any injustice and He never sleeps. I am *grateful* for a *miraculous* God who daily performs marvelous deeds, aren't you? Merry Christmas to you, our readers!

THE TABLECLOTH

The brand new pastor and his wife, newly assigned to their first ministry, to reopen a church in suburban Brooklyn, arrived in early October, excited about their opportunities. When they saw their church, it was very run-down and needed much work. They set a goal to have everything done in time to have their first service on Christmas Eve.

They worked hard, repairing pews, plastering walls, painting, etc., and on December 18th were ahead of schedule and just about finished. On December 19th a driving rainstorm hit the area

and lasted for two days. On the 21st the pastor went over to the church. His heart sank when he saw that the roof had leaked, causing a large area of plaster about 20 feet by 8 feet to fall off the front wall of the sanctuary just behind the pulpit, beginning about head high. The pastor cleaned up the mess on the floor, and not knowing what else to do but postpone the Christmas Eve service, headed home.

On the way he noticed that a local business was having a flea market type sale for charity, so he stopped in. One of the items was a beautiful, handmade, ivory

crocheted tablecloth with exquisite work, fine colors and a cross embroidered right in the center. It was just the right size to cover up the hole in the front wall. He bought it and headed back to the church.

By this time it had started to snow. An older woman running from the opposite direction was trying to catch the bus. She missed it. The pastor invited her to wait in the warm church for the next bus 45 minutes later. She sat in a pew paying no attention to the pastor while he got a ladder, hangers, etc., to put up the tablecloth as a wall tapestry. The pastor could hardly

and it covered up the entire problem area.

Then he noticed the woman walking down the center aisle. Her face was white as a sheet. "Pastor," she asked, "where did you get that tablecloth?" The pastor explained. The woman asked him to check the lower right corner to see if the initials EBG were crocheted into it. They were. These were the initials of the woman, and she had made this tablecloth 35 years before, in Austria. The woman could hardly believe it as the pastor told how he had just gotten the tablecloth. The woman explained that before the war she and her husband were well-to-do people in Austria. When the Nazis came, she was forced to leave. Her husband was going to follow her the next week, but she was captured and sent to prison, and she never saw her husband or her home again.

The pastor wanted to give

her the tablecloth, but she insisted that he keep it for the church. The pastor offered to drive her home, and she accepted. She lived on the other side of Staten Island and was only in Brooklyn for the day for a housecleaning job.

What a wonderful service they had on Christmas Eve! The church was almost full. The music and the spirit were great. At the end of the service, the pastor and his wife greeted everyone at the door, and many promised to return.

One older man, whom the pastor recognized from the neighborhood, continued to sit quietly in one of the pews, and the pastor wondered why he wasn't leaving. The man asked him where he had gotten the tablecloth on the front wall and said that it was identical to one his wife had made years before when they lived in Austria before

the war. The man wondered how there could be two tablecloths so much alike. He told the pastor how the Nazis came, how he persuaded his wife to flee for her safety, and how he had intended to follow her but was arrested and put in prison. He never saw his wife or his home again.

The pastor asked the man if he would allow him to take him for a little ride. They drove to Staten Island and to the house where the pastor had taken the woman three days earlier. He helped the man climb the three flights of stairs to the woman's apartment, knocked on the door, and witnessed the greatest Christmas reunion he had ever seen.

Editors note: This story, Emailed to us by subscriber Richard Huff, is said to be a true story that was submitted by Pastor Rob Reid.

Further Good News!

I am grateful to share a miraculous item of much interest to all in the McCarthy area. As Rick was busy printing the last few pages of this issue, the fax/phone rang and out came four pages of a letter from our most recent neighbors to move into our town – the Pilgrim family! I can truthfully say, "This is hot off the press; the Pilgrim's press, that is."

Born to the Pilgrim family is a baby boy named Jonathan which means in the Hebrew language— Jehovah Given—and that he is. Jonathan was born October 18, 2002, at the family's mountain home.

Baby Jonathan and family are well. The entire Pilgrim family send their love to their McCarthy area neighbors and, we all send our love and prayers back to you.

**Welcome
to
McCarthy
Baby
Jonathan!**

THE CHITINA LEADER

November, 1910

DO NOT WASTE YOUR TIME IN FIGURING WHY A BLACK HEN LAYS A WHITE EGG - BUT GET BUSY AND GET AFTER THE EGG.

NEW TRAIL COMPLETED

NEW GOVERNMENT
CUT-OFF WAGON
ROAD FROM CHITINA
TO WILLOW CREEK
SHORTENS DISTANCE
FROM COAST TO
INTERIOR ALASKA -
TRAVELERS, MAIL
AND FREIGHT NOW
GO VIA CORDOVA
AND CHITINA.

"WHERE THE TEAM MEETS THE STEAM"

"Where the team meets the steam via Chitina and Cordova."

That's the slogan now with the interior traveler, and those coming from the outside have their baggage and freight marked "Cordova, via Chitina."

The new cut-off trail from Chitina to Willow Creek, connecting with the Valdez-Fairbanks trail, is now ready for winter traffic and there isn't a better trail or wagon road in Alaska. The road was finished and ready for traffic by November 1st, as was said would be done, when the road commission took hold of the work. From

the beginning to the end the work on this most important cut-off road to the interior has been the cause of considerable agitation by those opposed to the new route through selfish motives, and, strange as it may seem, even to this day, after the completion of the road, and demonstrated beyond all possible doubt that the route is the best and most practical for traffic, by both teams and pedestrians going over it, there are still a few narrow-minded knockers who are mean enough to tell the people from the inside, who are unfamiliar with the real conditions that it is impossible to get over the new trail, that the Tonsina river can't be crossed, etc., and the old trail to Valdez is the only safe exit. These reports we know to be true, for they come only this week from reliable Fairbanks businessmen, who were advised at a few of the different road houses to forget the new "cut-off dream" and go out by the old route. But like all good, hardy Alaskans, they did not hesitate to take a chance, and much to their surprise they found a wagon road fit for a bob sled, automobile or any kind of conveyance, instead of a torturous double-ender trail, as represented.

The Leader takes great

pleasure in this issue in heralding the news broadcast all over Alaska that the new wagon road from Chitina to Willow Creek on the Fairbanks trail is now ready, and in face of all opposition, the travel will be directed this way, as there isn't a better road in the North. A special edition of 1,000 copies have been printed and go out in the next mail to every camp in Alaska, as well as to Seattle and coast towns in the states, assuring the traveler that from now on he will find the best accommodations and make the quickest time over the new route.

LOCAL NEWS

A. J. Campbell, who has been in charge of the relay station at Tiekel, passed through Chitina the first of the week. After installing the relay at the new headquarters, mile 146, he left for Cordova and took the Victoria for a trip outside. W. E. Brown succeeds him as relay man.

Assistant Chief Engineer Alfred Williams made a business trip to Cordova on Saturday last, returning on Monday evening's train to superintend the work at different points all along the line.

Jim Douherty, of Cordova, paid us a visit

during last week, and contemplates the purchase of property here. Jim is the head boilermaker in the general shops of the Copper River & Northwestern Railway at Cordova. While in Chitina he combined business with pleasure. He executed some heavy repair work on engines Nos. 5 and 6, employed in switch service in the Chitina yards. He will return during the month to purchase property.

The last of the Hency forces and all equipment left the once bustling camp of Tiekel on Tuesday of this week. Most of the office force left on Monday, though a few remained with the paymaster to finish paying off the men already at Tiekel.

So far only ten inches of snow has fallen in the upper country, with the thermometer hovering around the 30 below mark.

Andy Harn, of oyster cocktail fame, has taken up a homestead at Long Lake adjoining that of P. D. Burke.

Prospector Gillispie killed a large moose on the upper waters of the Lackana last week and, now has a winter's supply of meat.

Work is going on rapidly at the Kuskalina bridge,

nearly all the false work being in and two sections of the steel assembled.

Rabbits are again making their appearance in the upper Copper region and are quite plentiful, both the snowshoe and the cottontail.

T e l e p h o n i c communication can now be had as far as the Kuskalina, mile 149, and in a short time the company hopes to have the line completed to the mines. The gang setting the poles are making rapid progress.

Several moose are reported as being seen in the vicinity of the Lackana, three having been killed so far this season.

P. D. Burke, the Copper river scout, of Long Lake, contemplates erecting a large modern hotel at that place next summer and making other necessary additions, such as boats, arbors, gardens, tennis courts, croquet grounds and other appurtenances necessary for the installation of a complete up-to-date summer resort, which, with the natural environments and an abundance of game will be the "paradise" of Alaska.

HOTEL CHITINA SOON BE READY FOR OCCUPANCY

Contractor Lund is rapidly getting the new Hotel Chitina ready for business. All the outside work is practically finished; and the carpenters are now busy on the hanging of doors, putting on casings and installing the glass fronts and windows. F.

A. Smith, the painter and paper hanger, who arrived from Cordova the first of the week, has been hard at work lining the rooms ready for papering, and says when the stoves and furniture arrive it will be but a short time until the hotel is ready for guests. Mr. Breedman, the proprietor, who is now in Cordova, is expected out next week, and has announced that the furniture and hotel supplies will be shipped in a few days. When the passengers for the interior leaving Seattle on the 16th will have arrived in Chitina the hotel will be ready to accommodate them.

Nov. 12

WORK PROGRESSING RAPIDLY ON THE KUSKULANA BRIDGE

The cold weather of last week somewhat retarded rapid progress on the Kuskulana crossing as the steel workers are unable to force their work so rapidly during real cold weather, but they are sure making up for lost time since the moderation and Superintendent O'Neil says trains will be running in two weeks if the present weather prevails. The travelers are now erected and steel will be erected rapidly from now on. The shore span on this side is already well under way, and by this time next week the crossing will take on the appearance of a real bridge. Superintendent O'Neil has been nearly incapacitated with a severe cold, but his lieutenants are pushing the work with equal vigor. Hugo Fels, who has

charge of the carpenter work, says all the wood work put in so far must be reinforced and that there is work for his gang there for nearly a month yet. Next week a Leader representative will make another trip to the bridge camp and report progress there as well as all along the line.

Nov. 19

KUSKULANA STEEL BRIDGE IS NOW CONNECTED

On Thursday afternoon the steel bridge at Kuskulana was connected amid the screeching of whistles, popping of guns and lusty yells of the steel workers. The successful connection was a great hour of rejoicing among the officials and men, for the construction of this crossing has been fraught with many hardships and aggravating delays, due to a great extent to cold weather conditions.

Superintendent A. C. O'Neil, the bridge engineer in charge, stated to a Leader representative on Thursday morning that it would require about two days to take down the travelers and that trains could cross the gorge within five minutes after the travelers were clear, so trains should begin crossing by the first of the week. A few of the steel workers may be given their release this week, or the first of next, but the majority of the crew will be kept at work until the riveting of which there is considerable yet to do, will have been thoroughly gone over and the bridge permanently

completed and ready for future use. The cantilever span was placed in position ready for the drawing of the wedges and lowering to place on Friday. The swinging of the Kuskulana steel bridge is the second of the "Impossible" bridges on the Copper River & Northwestern line of railway. The building of the bridge was in itself no difficult feat, but the fact of its having been built in the dead of winter with the thermometer often ranging 40 degrees and more below zero, is a most creditable task, which the "wise ones" claimed as impossible, and throws Superintendent O'Neil and his able corps of assistants once again into the spotlight. And too much credit cannot be given them, for outside of only a few old men from the Miles Glacier structure the work was accomplished by using men who had never before been in Alaska, and being totally ignorant of climatic and other conditions here, the work was necessarily more or less retarded. Soon now the engines at the front will be puffing over the structure and we will begin to forget and feel like the new comers that the bridge is there as it should be, but the building of it will go down in history and like the Miles Glacier bridge prove to the skeptical that capable men with plenty of energy and money can build anything.

Dec. 31

Capturing the Sounds of Denali Park

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.

BY NED ROZELL

Backcountry hikers expect peace and quiet in Denali National Park, but they don't always get it. Some hikers at Denali have been telling park managers about excessive noise, especially from flightseeing aircraft.

"The noise is something like camping on a flight path," wrote one backpacker, who sent a visitor's comment form to Joe Van Horn, backcountry ranger at Denali National Park.

"I think it's probably the most common negative report we get back, other than mosquitoes or rain," Van Horn said. "I've been here for 23 years and I think the increase in aircraft-related noise is the single biggest change to the park's wilderness character that I've noticed."

The National Park Service has recognized the intrusive nature of human-caused noise, and a Denali ecologist is now recording the sounds of the park. The Park Service refers to this resource as the "soundscape."

Shan Burson, head of Denali's sound-monitoring program, has set up sensitive microphones in the Ruth Amphitheater, at Denali base camp on the Kahiltna Glacier, and at Wonder Lake, among other areas. He has collected 10,500 hours of sound, including bird songs, the buzz of aircraft, the

roar of glacial rivers, and still, quiet moments when his equipment measures nothing at all.

The Denali program is part of a nationwide census of sounds in national parks. Managers realize that while parks look the same as they did years ago, they have become much noisier.

Burson has recorded the sounds of Denali for two years, working with equipment he designed with the help of others, such as Skip Ambrose, who developed recorders to measure sonic booms and other aircraft noise around peregrine falcon nests in Alaska, and Mike Donaldson of Far North Aquatics in Fairbanks. Ambrose works at the National Park Service Soundscape Program Center in Fort Collins, Colorado.

To capture the sounds of an area, Burson sets up a microphone attached by a metal pole to a box that contains a sound-level meter, batteries and a laptop computer. He aims a solar panel at the sun to help power the equipment, and he has insulated one of his boxes so it works all winter using the heat of the laptop. Burson has three summer units and one winter unit, which he recently set up near the abandoned Stampede Mine on the north side of the park.

Using a microphone sensitive to sounds within normal hearing range, Burson's recorders turn themselves on every five minutes to sample the soundscape. His digital recordings have captured the sounds of the seasons—birds singing and mosquitoes humming in June and July, planes landing on glaciers during the climbing season, snowmachines whining in winter, and ravens calling all year long.

Burson is inventorying the current sound levels at the park so he can compare them with future readings. He has recorded sound on the park road as well. Burson also uses his recordings for a research project on snow-machine use. Two winters ago, Burson set up the insulated microphone system in the Dunkle Hills, a popular snow-machining area in the park near Cantwell.

Burson is now analyzing two years of data from sites on the south end of the park, and he will focus on the north end during the next two years. After he listens to the sounds of the south side of the park, he will share the results with park staff members who are writing up new management goals for the backcountry. The preservation of peace and quiet will be part of their new plan.

"The first rule is to keep an untroubled spirit. The second is to look things in the face and know them for what they are."—Marcus Aurelius

The Road to McCarthy reaches McCarthy

BY BONNIE KENYON

Spring wasn't quite ready to begin and winter wasn't quite ready to relinquish its grip on McCarthy when best-selling British author, Pete McCarthy, paid our town a visit earlier this year. (See May/June issue of WSEN.) As you may recall, Pete was here to research his next book, *The Road to McCarthy*.

It became quite apparent to those of us who—unwittingly or wittingly—contributed to the characters in Pete's recent masterpiece, that he has been more-than-busy since the last time we saw him.

Hot-off-the-press hardback copies of *The Road to McCarthy* began arriving in town, causing local phones to work overtime. Locals called locals to discuss Chapter 19: *Where the Road Ends and the Wilderness Begins*. If you are familiar with our town and its unique inhabitants, you will recognize names such as Neil Darish and Doug Miller of McCarthy Lodge, Kelly Bay of Wrangell Mountain Air, Jeremy the Dogmusher, Guy the "generator guy", George Cebula, John Adams, the Pilgrim family, Jim and Audrey Edwards, and Rick Kenyon and yours truly.

Although Pete took some liberties in his written encounters and dialogues with us, I found his descriptions hilarious.

Due to the precarious condition of the McCarthy Road, Pete opted to fly in with local pilot Kelly Bay. It seems Kelly did a great job in calming Pete down and convincing him that even though they were flying straight towards an enormous range of

snowy mountains, this was "real flying." Just about the time Pete relaxed his grip on the dashboard, Kelly started up on those good ole' hair-raising pilot stories.

"He landed right after us, and he was whiter than the snow on the ground. Said he'd had two gas canisters in there, not tied down, just crashing all round the cockpit. The gusts were so strong they ripped holes in his floorboards..."

Floorboards?

"...and punctured his roof. Y'know, we think we're in control, and we do our best, but it's only a machine, and if nature decides..."

Pete writes: I'm trying to think of something else, but find myself remembering the Australian bush pilot who regaled me with horror stories during our flight into Arnheimland. His favourite was the one about the guy who'd waded across the river at pub closing time for a bet, and had been bitten in half by a crocodile. So he lost the bet.

Needless to say, Pete was relieved to see the control Kelly exhibited when they hit their own turbulence en route. In fact, before long, against all his better instincts, he found himself actually "wanting it to bump a little bit more."

When Rick and I invited Pete, John Adams and George Cebula over for a moose roast dinner, I had no idea we were fixin' to be characters in this particular chapter. Before long the fellas had Pete so absorbed in their bear stories that I was concerned he might leave hungry. John gave Pete a

definition of the word "treed" after Pete questioned it's meaning when John remarked, "All this time I've lived out here, been treed by a moose, but never a bear." Treed meaning, "When you have to climb a tree to get away." I felt some relief for Pete that maybe now he could get back to his moose roast.

It seems that somewhere near then one of the guys prompted Rick to share his story of the rogue grizzlies who terrorized the area a couple of years ago. (I'm sure this is what prompted Pete to refer to Rick as the "grizzly-slaying pastor.")

"They started with breaking into the trunks of cars looking for food, then got to ripping open four-wheel drives and eating the seats," writes Pete of Rick's account. Pete then writes, "They eat seats?" And so the story progresses, but you will just have to read it for yourself.

The Road to McCarthy is not really about the actual McCarthy Road, but a pursuit of pinning down mythical tales of Pete McCarthy's own clan history. From Ireland, he travels to Gibraltar and Morocco, searching for his hereditary Gaelic chief. His journey leads him to New York, Tasmania, Montana, the tiny Caribbean island of Montserrat and finally he reaches our own town of McCarthy.

If you are interested in learning more about Pete and his adventures, you can visit the author's website at: www.petemccarthy.co.uk.

The publisher is Hodder & Stoughton. Their website is at: www.madaboutbooks.com.

Arctic Chamber Orchestra visits McCarthy

BY BONNIE KENYON

McCarthy: – On September 21st the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church was the setting for music makers and music lovers alike. Nearly 40 Arctic Chamber Orchestra members and about the same amount of local residents and visitors turned out to celebrate the Orchestra's 33rd anniversary season.

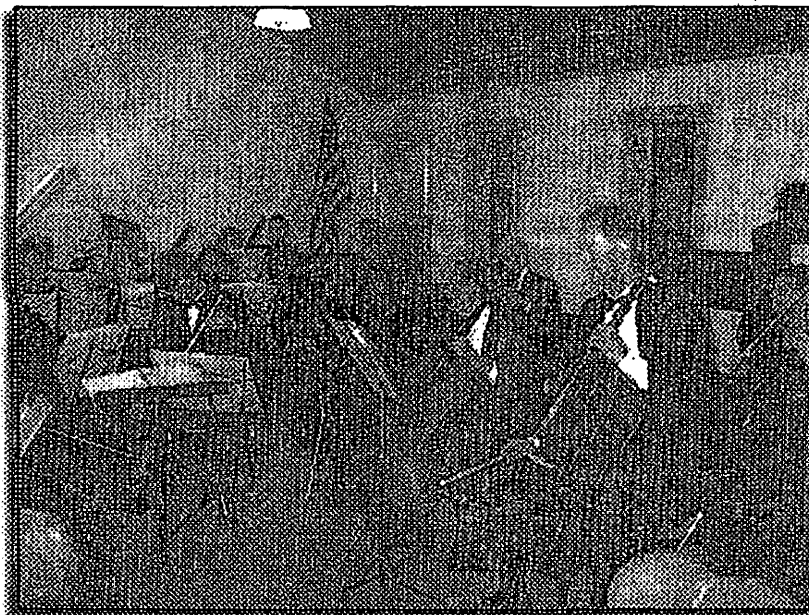
The program consisted of Overture to *A Midsummernight's Dream*, Concerto No. 1 for Cello and Orchestra in A minor, and Serenade No. 1 in D Major.

Conductor for the performance was Eduard Zilberkant who is recognized as one of today's most gifted artists. He is in his second season as Interim Music Director and Conductor of the Fairbanks Symphony Orchestra and the Arctic Chamber Orchestra, conducting them in subscription series, as well as on tour in Alaska and Canada. Eduard enjoys an active career as both pianist and conductor, performing in such halls as The



Academy of Music and Curtis Hall at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, Artur Rubinstejn Hall and Warsaw Philharmonic Hall in Poland, Volgograd Opera House in Russia, and Alaska Center for the Performing Arts in Anchorage. A grand prizewinner of the Young Keyboard Artist International Piano Competition in the United States, and a prizewinner at the Santander International Piano Competition in Spain, Eduard

Zilberkant gained critical acclaim at the 1985 Chopin International Piano Competition in Warsaw, Poland. This resulted in an invitation from the Lodz Philharmonic and recitals at the International Chopin Festival in Duszynski, Poland. He is presently Associate Professor of Piano and Head of Keyboard Studies at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and Music Director and Conductor of the Fairbanks Youth Symphony.



An orchestral appearance by Andrés Díaz on Cello was greatly received by the audience. In fact, he received an encore – McCarthy style, of course! Since winning the First Prize in the 1986 Naumburg International Cello Competition, Mr. Díaz has exhilarated both critics and audiences with his intense and charismatic performances. Andrés Díaz was born in Santiago, Chile in 1964, and began studying the cello at the age of five. Three years later he moved to Atlanta, Georgia, and studied at the Georgia Academy of Music with Martha Gerchefski. Mr. Díaz graduated from the New England

Conservatory where he worked with Laurence Lesser and Colin Carr, and currently plays an active role in chamber music performances with the Conservatory faculty. He served for five years as Associate Professor of Cello at the Boston University and Co-Director of the Boston University Tanglewood Institute Quartet Program, resigning in September 2001. Mr. Díaz lives in a suburb of Philadelphia with his wife, Julie, and son Peter Manuel. He plays a 1698 Matteo Goffriller Cello and a bow made by his father, Manuel Díaz.

The Arctic Chamber Orchestra, the touring arm of the Fairbanks Symphony Orchestra, was founded by Gordon Wright in 1970, and has toured annually to remote communities in Alaska every year since that time. Its musicians volunteer their time for these tours, giving performances, private lessons, and workshops to schools and communities in Alaska. They have received a Governor's Award for the Arts and was the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Challenge Grant in 1992, specifically for the purpose of

building an endowment to ensure future touring within Alaska.

This was the second time that the Arctic Chamber Orchestra provided our town with a night of music. On September 23, 1995, thirty-four members of the orchestra regaled us with an evening of musical enjoyment. Once again, Arctic Chamber Orchestra, thank you for making McCarthy one of your stops on the 2002 Fall Tour!

Book Review - One Second To Glory

The rich life of Iditarod champion, Dick Mackey, is revealed in a biography released by Epicenter Press. It is the story of one of Alaska's toughest and most adventuresome men.

One Second to Glory shares the stories of musher Dick Mackey whose adventures have come in all corners of the state and who has worked as an iron worker, bush pilot, tour guide, and cold weather consultant on the set of Disney's film, *White Fang*. Mackey also founded North American's farthest north truck stop at Coldfoot, Alaska, and

co-founded the Iditarod race.

Mackey's colorful stories are in his own words as told to author and friend, Lew Freedman. They include his shaky but determined start to make a home in Alaska during the first heady years of statehood; his first sprint races where he competed against mushing greats such as George Attla and "Doc" Lombard; and, of course, the story behind his dramatic one-second victory over Rick Swenson in 1978 after a two-week, 1,149-mile run that helped bring the fledgling sled dog race to the world's attention.

The Mackey legacy continues through three generations of mushers. Mackey's son, Rick, won the Iditarod championship in 1983. Dick and Rick are the only father-son title holders in the history of the event.

The 232-page paperback book sells for \$16.95 and contains 74 black and white photos. Epicenter titles are available from your local bookstore or you can order by calling 1-800-950-6663, or order online at www.EpicenterPress.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (continued from page 35)

My wife and I did get a chance to revisit Chitina, McCarthy, and Kennicott in the summer of 1992. We had a nice visit with Cliff and Jewel Collins at that time. We were very sorry to hear of their loss by fire this summer. They were very gracious hosts when my wife and I drove the road to McCarthy in 1992. Please give our regards and best

wishes to them. I was also sorry to hear about Chris at Kennicott since he conducted a tour of the area for us at that time. On our Cordova Air Service tour in the early 50's our guide through the mill was Frank Morris, one of the Kennicott Kids.

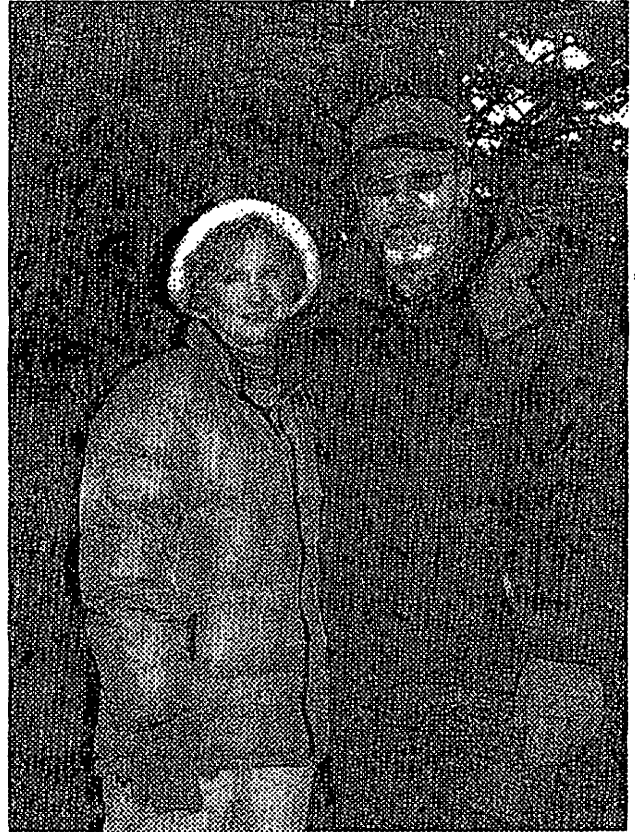
Well, I have rambled on long enough and so will close this note with best wishes to you and

your family and all of the present residents of McCarthy and Kennicott. Keep up the good work on the *WSEN*; we really read it from cover to cover and look forward to the next issue.

Bob & Paula Leitzell
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Declaration of Independence

I have lived in Rural Alaska for over thirty years. I know that we in Rural Alaska want the same things as any one else—an opportunity to prosper, safe communities, and a decent education for our kids. For the past decade, people in Juneau seem to have forgotten this simple list and have left us behind in favor of special interest groups. I intend to change this! Not just for my family and myself, but for generations of Alaskans to come.



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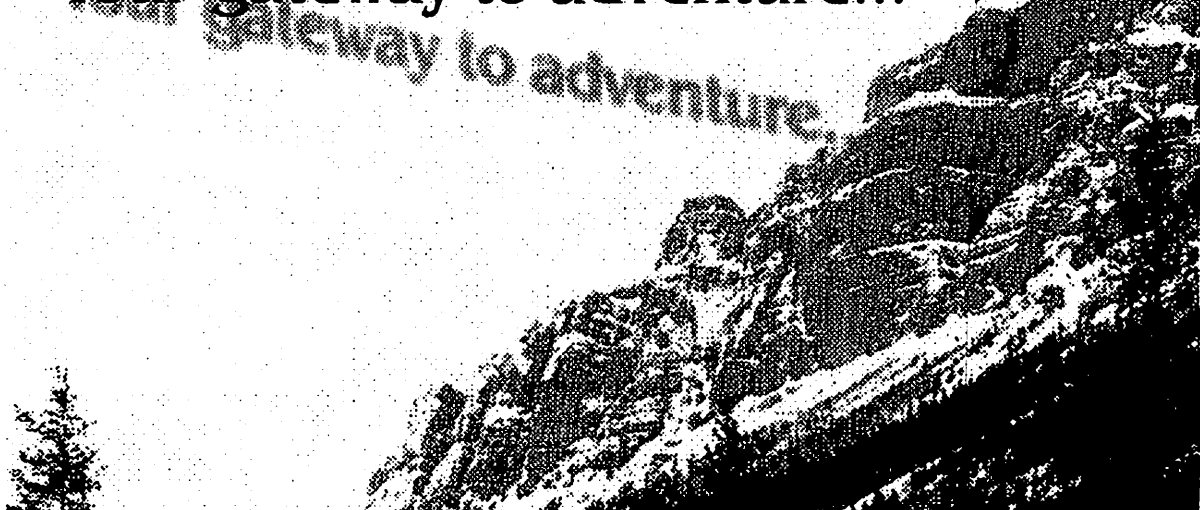
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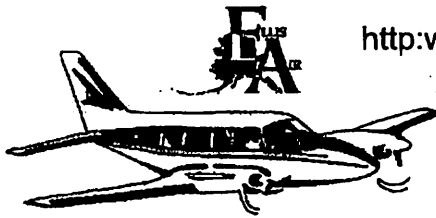
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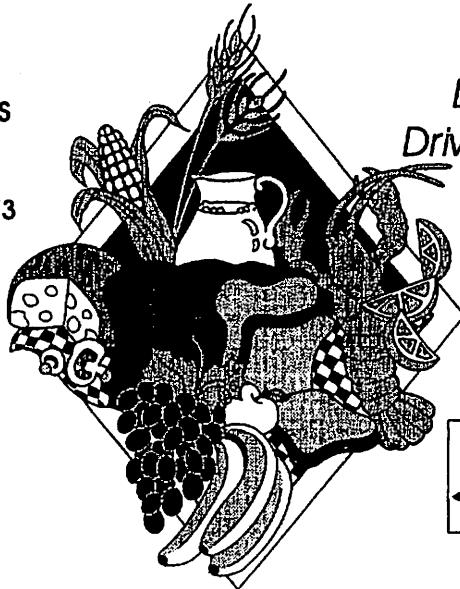
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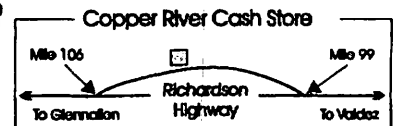
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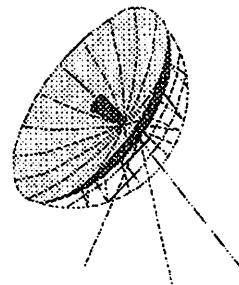
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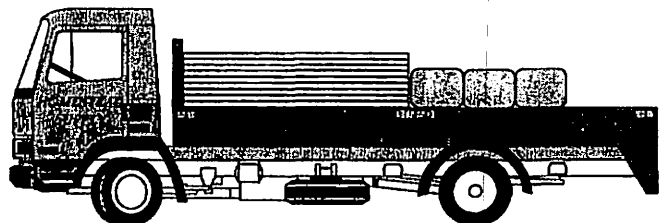
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Cooking with Peggy

BY BONNIE KENYON

Peggy Guntis is either known by a good portion of our WSEN readers or her name is a familiar one due to many "items of interest" I have written about her and her family.

Peggy's husband, Jim, and her daughter Kim Northrup are my summer neighbors. They own a home and property just a short walk from my cabin. Rick and I are so blessed to have such wonderful neighbors and the Guntis family definitely fits that description!

When Peggy is not in McCarthy, she and Jim live in Tucson, AZ where they own and operate their own business. Jim is a fine electrician and his customers are making it very difficult for him to retire. Peggy takes care of the accounting for the business, is an avid housewife, mother and grandmother. I have never heard her use the word "boredom" in all the years I've known her. She may—at times—wish she knew what that word meant but, frankly, she just doesn't have the opportunity to check it out.

Their summer lifestyle may be somewhat "different" than their daily activities in Tucson, but even though you may hear them use the word vacation, you won't find them lounging very often. Kim, who lives and works in Anchorage, makes frequent weekend trips to McCarthy. She and Jim keep a running list of summer "to-do's" on their home and property. Peggy is in charge of the kitchen and feeding her hungry crew and playing gofer. She is a terrific meal planner so I asked her if she would share

some of her tried and true recipes with us. Peggy writes:

I make these both in Tucson and McCarthy for just us and for company. We love them. You can get canned, pickled jalapenos and don't leave out the cumin! You can reduce the calories by using light cream cheese, light sour cream and skim milk. I don't think the reduced fat cheddar melts as well.

Turkey Enchiladas

1/2 cup chopped onion
4 ounces cream cheese, softened
3/4 teaspoon cumin, ground
4 cups chopped, cooked turkey or chicken or two large cans
1/4 cup chopped pecans, toasted
12 6-inch flour tortillas
1 10 3/4 ounce can condensed cream of chicken soup
1 8 ounce carton sour cream
1-2 Tablespoon pickled jalapeno strips, finely chopped (I keep a couple cans on hand.)
1 cup milk
1/2 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese (2 ounces)

Cook onion, covered in small amount of water until tender, drain. For enchiladas: spray or lightly grease 13 X 9 baking pan. Stir together cream cheese, cumin, and 1 Tablespoon water. Stir in cooked onion, turkey or chicken and pecans. Meanwhile, wrap tortillas in foil. Heat in 350 degrees oven 10-15 minutes or until softened. (Or when I'm in McCarthy and have a Microwave, I wrap them in paper towels and microwave them on high for 30-60 seconds.)

Spoon about 1/4 cup of turkey mixture onto each tortilla; roll up. Place seam side down in baking dish. For sauce, combine

soup, sour cream, milk and chili peppers; pour over enchiladas.

Bake covered at 350 degrees about 40 minutes or until heated through. Sprinkle enchiladas with cheddar cheese. Bake uncovered 4-5 minutes more or until cheese melts.

Sometimes while in McCarthy we get so hungry for Mexican food. Yes, we have tacos and fajitas but I also make this.

Mexican Chicken Casserole

2-3 lbs. of chicken cooked and cut into small pieces
1 can of Cream of Chicken soup
1 can of Cream of Mushroom soup
1 can Rotel tomatoes and Green chiles
1 cup milk
1 cup grated cheddar cheese
1 package corn tortillas (12) cut in strips

Mix soups, Rotel and milk together. In baking dish put a layer of tortillas, then chicken, cheese, and soup mixture. Repeat. Refrigerate overnight or at least 10 hours for flavors to blend. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 1/2 hours.

This recipe is unusual but easy and good. This goes great with ham and black-eyed peas or fish.

Cornbread Salad

2 packages cornbread mix - baked and crumbled
1 lb. bacon—fried and crumbled
chopped green pepper
chopped onion
tomato cut in small pieces
1 cup mayonnaise

Mix together and chill.

A LOOK AT THE WEATHER

BY GEORGE CEBULA

August 2002 will be remembered for its cloudy and rainy days.

The high temperature for the month was 81 on the 4th (80 on Aug. 13, '01 and 74 on Aug. 1, '00). The first freeze was on the 15th as the temperature fell to 28; this was only for a short time and most of the garden plants were spared. The temperature fell to 27 on the morning of the 26th and some of the plants were killed. There were only 4 days when the low was 32 or below and the low temperature for the month was 27 on the 26th (27 on Aug. 31, '01 and 28 on Aug 31, '00). The average monthly temperature at McCarthy was 51.7 compared to 55.0 in Aug. '01, 51.5 in Aug. '00 and 53.8 in Aug. '99. *Silver Lake had a high temperature of 81 on the 4th (80 on Aug. 14, '01 and 74 on Aug. 14, '00). The low temperature at Silver Lake was 29 on the 15th (30 on Aug 31, '01 and 31 on Aug. 17, '00). The Silver Lake average temperature was 53.2 (55.0 in Aug. '01, 52.5 in Aug. '00 and 54.9 in Aug. '99).*

The August precipitation at McCarthy was 4.86 inches compared with 0.60 inches in Aug. '01 and 3.29 inches in Aug.

'00. There were 21 days with a trace or more of rainfall recorded, compared to 10 days in Aug. '01. *The precipitation at Silver Lake was lighter with 3.08 inches recorded (0.47 in Aug. '01 and 2.03 in Aug. '00). There were 12 days at Silver Lake with a trace or more recorded compared to 5 days in Aug. '01.*

September 2002 will be remembered for plenty of clouds and average precipitation. The high temperature at McCarthy was 67 on the 2nd and 3rd (64 on Sept. 15, '01 and 60 on Sept. 15, '00). The low temperature was 20 on the 22nd and 29th (16 on Sept. 30, '01 and 10 on Sept. 30, '00). There were 9 days with the high of 60 or above and only 2 days with the low of 20 or lower. The average monthly temperature at McCarthy was 44.6 (43.9 in Sept. '01 and 41.0 in Sept. '00). This was about 10 degrees warmer than the record 34.3 of September 1992. *Silver Lake had a high of 65 on the 3rd, 4th and 5th (64 on Sept. 11, '01 and 65 on Sept. 1, '00) and a low of 24 on the 22nd, 23rd and 29th (22 on Sept. 30, '01 and 15 on Sept. 30, '00). The Silver Lake average temperature was 44.8 (43.6 in Sept. '01 and 42.2 in Sept. '00).*

There was no snow recorded

at McCarthy in September (0.00 in Sept. '01 and 29.5 in Sept. '00) and the total precipitation was 1.47 inches. The average for September (1968-2001) is 2.56 inches and compares with the 2.07 inches in Sept. '01, 10.82 inches in Sept. '00 and 2.77 inches in Sept. '99. There were 16 days with measurable rainfall, compared with 16 days in Sept. '01. *Silver Lake's total precipitation was 1.51 inches (1.49 inches in Sept. '01 and 6.12 inches in Sept. '00). Silver Lake had 10 days with a trace or more of rainfall.*

The first 21 days of October have been a continuation of the wet and cloudy days of late September with above normal temperatures. The first snow arrived on the 9th. It amounted to only 0.3 of an inch and was gone in a few hours. Only a trace of snow has been observed since. The total precipitation so far is 2.70 inches. There has only been 5 days without a trace or more. The high temperature has been 55 on the 1st with 54 on the 16th. The low temperature has been 14 on the morning of the 10th. Winter should be here to stay any day now.

"Government by its very nature is a bully. Laws give authority to those in government and authority always corrupts, not necessarily in terms of lying, cheating and stealing but in terms of wielding power until eventually it becomes excessive. The framers of the Constitution thought they had devised a government of limited power, one that would insure liberty and the rights of individuals, one that made government the servant of the people, not its master. In the long run they failed. They had to fail because of the imperfection of man. They failed because individuals, sometimes but not always for the best and most honorable of reasons, inevitably usurp authority and power, regardless of what the Constitution says. People who enter government service because of a desire to serve forget why they came and wind up with a desire to rule, with a firm belief that they know better than those they are supposed to serve what is good for them. Or, alternatively, they reach the point where they think the rights of others are secondary. ...The question now is: How much tyranny are Americans willing to put up with?"—Lyn Nofziger"

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

The story is told about a church congregation whose pastor announced that he would soon be leaving. One little old lady greeted him after the service and said, "I just don't know what we are going to do after you're gone." The minister was touched, and replied, "Don't worry granny, the next preacher will be better than me." To which the lady responded, "That's what they all said, but they just keep getting worse and worse!"

Some residents of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park (WRST) feel the same way.

"Many in the Wrangell-St. Elias area look at the NPS with a great deal of mistrust and concern. Decisions regarding road closures, bridges, and local businesses are causing significant divisions. Alaskans should be able to look to the NPS as a partner and an advocate, not an adversary. We need to lay the groundwork for better communication and better community relations. Local voices need to be heard. I want to know if the NPS is listening, and if not, why?"—Senator Frank Murkowski, October 11, 2002.

As a result of the Senator's concern, officials of the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service are in Glennallen at this very moment, taking testimony of local residents as to why they look at the NPS with such mistrust and concern. Unfortunately, they are not coming to McCarthy, and the meeting in Glennallen was hastily organized with little time for concerns to be heard. Still, amazing stories of harassment by NPS rangers wearing flak-jackets and carrying M-16s are surfacing.

When Bonnie and I were privileged recently to meet with the new director of the National Park Service (NPS), Fran Mainella, her main message was, "Local voices need to be heard." She looked at WRST Superintendent Gary Candelaria and said, "If we aren't doing that, we need to make sure we are."

Apparently the superintendent misunderstood. I don't think Director Mainella meant intimidating questioning by armed rangers who "jump out from behind the bushes" and scare people.

Alaskans *should* be able to look at the NPS as a partner and an advocate, not an adversary. At the present they cannot. Director Mainella has a huge job before her if she is to accomplish that goal.

Unfortunately for Alaskans, NPS has been in bed with the extreme greens for a number of years. And it's getting worse. Alaskans who do not subscribe to the "lock-it-all-up for the elite" philosophy are being ignored.

NPS Planner Vicki Snitzler continues to push for the state to build a parking lot in the right-of-way in competition with the privately-owned one at the end of the river, even though almost the entire community has voiced opposition to the project.

In a letter to DOT Commissioner Joe Perkins asking the state to "close the [Kennicott River Bridge] to 4-wheelers as well as cars and trucks," Superintendent Candelaria states that "there is evidence of increasing unauthorized off-trail ATV use," and that "we are not staffed to address this problem." Come, come, superintendent. You

seem to have no problem policing 13 million acres, and closing off any areas that you deem to be endangered. And your Kennicott Ranger tells us he has nothing better to do than stand around all day and watch the DOT install the bollards that you lobbied for. Wouldn't it have been better to enter into the many community discussions on the issue, rather than calling in political favors to make sure your point of view prevailed?

Speaking of the bridge, Director Mainella told us, "If it becomes the desire of the community to make a change, then we'll be glad to work along and see how we can adjust if the desires that they want are different access than just a walking access."

But when we tried to talk to Superintendent Candelaria about the subject, he said he wasn't interested, "no matter how many people may favor it or wish us to do so." He cited his fear of "damage, vandalism, and theft to vulnerable historic, cultural, or natural resources posed by unrestrained ATV access to park lands and structures east of the river." Apparently people who use ATVs are thieves and vandals, and must be restrained. (Like the miners, hunters and other undesirables, Mr. Candelaria?)

Meanwhile, the community is forced to use a private toll-bridge downstream at \$50 per trip. Indeed, the park service themselves continued to use this jury-rigged affair even after one of their own trucks fell off the bridge and into the river. It wasn't until Assistant Superintendent Hunter Sharp was confronted at a public meeting with the fact that the toll-bridge was

illegal and involved trespass across private lands that they stopped using it regularly. Now they just use it when they have to.

The park service is restraining the miners, hunters and ATV riders. But who will restrain the park service? So far Senator

Murkowski seems to be the only one listening.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sept 22, 2002

Dear Bonnie,

Our one visit to McCarthy and Kennicott in 1993 is the best trip ever (we have made two trips to Alaska in our motor home.) Now my husband is disable and does not drive.

So glad you included a picture of you and Rick in the Sept/Oct issue of *WSEN*. I read every word when it comes and then re-read some parts.

We just celebrated our 52nd wedding anniversary, remembering that our 43rd was celebrated at the lodge in Kennicott. We have a daughter and 2 grandchildren, and of course our son-in-law who lives in Anchorage. Janet is a nurse-midwife at Alaska Native Hospital, and she is the one who introduced us to McCarthy & Kennicott.

We cherish memories of the tram across the river. Thank you for all the *WSEN* news.

Gratefully,

Robert and Dorothy Froeschle

September 25, 2002 8:26 PM

Hi to the Kenyon's,

I read your recent item regarding Starband in the October issue. In fact, as a result of your original item in the *News* regarding Starband, we signed up and have been on since about the first of the year. Although we live about 60 miles from Sacramento in the foothills of the Sierra, there is no DSL, Cable or other fast connection. Our old telephone line ISP was very unsatisfactory and we needed faster downloads for our research.

We always enjoy reading the news about what is going on in Kennicott and McCarthy, especially the old newspaper items. We will be looking forward to the *Chitina Leader* since I spent many summer days in Chitina from 1950 to 1954. I recognized many of the names in the *McCarthy Weekly* newspaper and met a number of these folks in the early 50s. We were one of the first guests at the McCarthy Lodge when Cordova Air Service started a Memorial Day trip to McCarthy. I believe that we flew into May Creek and rode a very old vehicle into McCarthy from there. At that time, a speeder and some small rail cars were used to transport the visitors from McCarthy to Kennicott. I have a lot of color slides from that trip which I need to scan.

I was a member of the original "Copper River Survey" crew in the summer of 1950. We stayed at a couple of the old section houses between Chitina and the Million Dollar Bridge and spotted (set) the aerial survey control points between those two locations. Herb Haley was the pilot that flew us to the various sand and gravel bars along the river. The railroad section houses were still in good condition at that time and still contained a telephone, cook stove and bunk beds. The phone was of no use to us since the lines were long gone. We also did a ground survey on the Edgerton Cutoff from the Richardson Highway to Chitina.

The big name in Chitina was

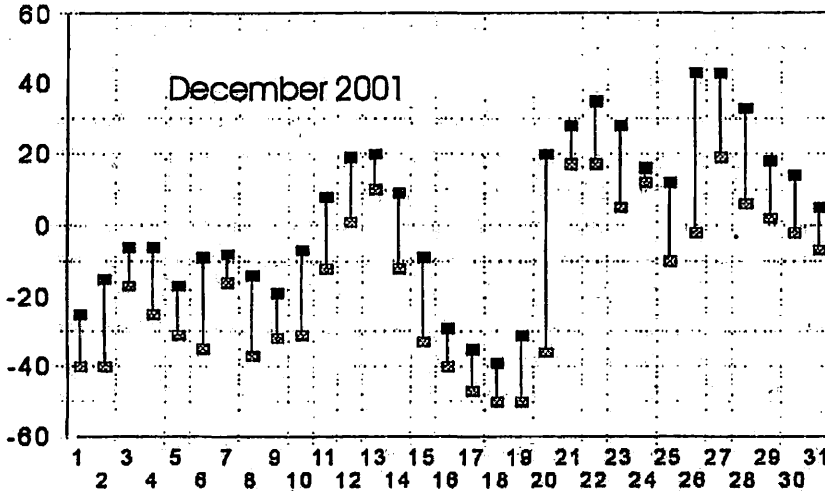
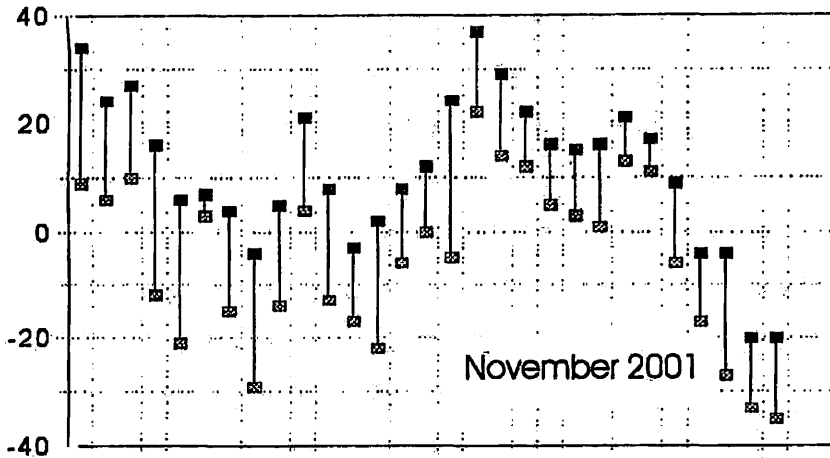
O. A. Nelson. I remember some folks just by a last name such as "Chase" at the Cash Store, Mrs. Lyons (O. A's sister), and I believe a Mrs. O'Neil, who helped with the cooking and other chores at the "Spook's Nook". At that time O. A. owned just about everything including most of the property, the water system, telephone system and the power plant down by the river. Chase ran the cash store and O. A. had the drug/clothing store and post office at the corner.

We were fortunate enough to be able to use the tram across the Copper River and borrow a speeder for a trip toward McCarthy. At that time all of the rails were in between the Copper River and the "Pothole" at the foot of the Kennicott Glacier. That was as far as we could get by speeder and there was no tram or footbridge to get us to McCarthy. Some of the track alignment was more like riding a roller coaster, including some of the bridge structures, but you could ride all the way through. Some of the rails near Chitina toward Cordova had been removed for scrap during WWII but farther on most of the rails were still in place and the "Million Dollar Bridge" was still undamaged.

I don't have all of the names of the members of the survey crew in my head. I would have to dig out the old slides to identify people and locations. It was an experience that I will always remember and cherish until the day my maker calls me upstairs.

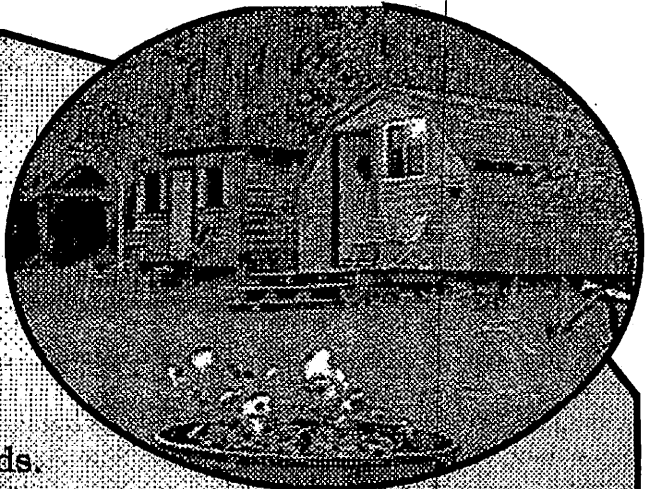
(Continued on page 23)

Weather - What can we expect?



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