

Wrangell St. Elias News

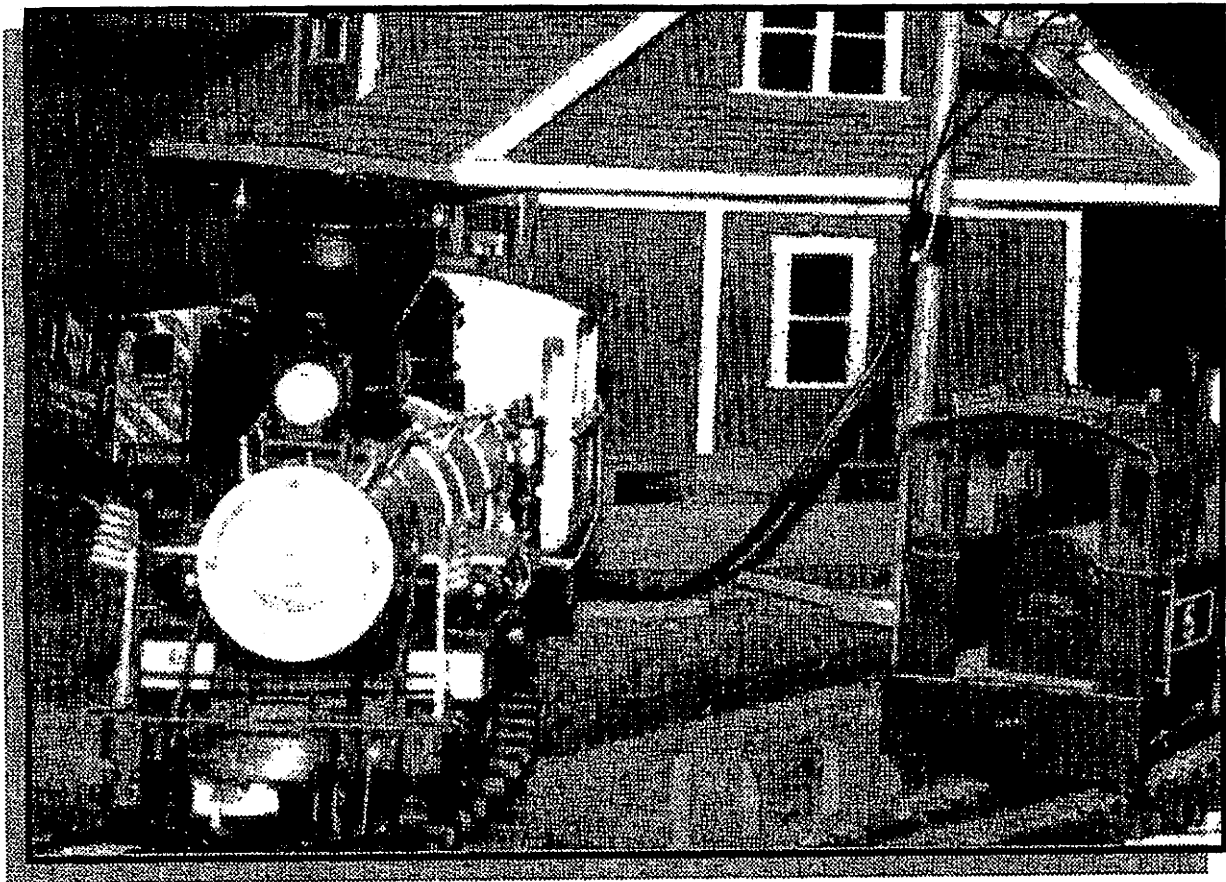
"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"

Vol. Seven Issue Four

July & August 1998

Two Dollars

Copper River & Northwestern up and running—again...



- ◆ **Miniature railroad up and running** pg. 6
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A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

Greetings from sunny, warm McCarthy! I am pleased to announce that summer is finally here in the northland. Our garden is beginning to show signs of life and, although the tomatoes in the greenhouse are still green, they are promising us a good harvest.

It occurs to me that it was only six years ago that Rick and I published our first issue of Wrangell St. Elias News in July of 1992. It contained a mere 14 pages and was stapled together in the left-hand corner. What a challenge it was to put that initial issue together!

Today—June 29—we are applying the final touches on the July/August '98 WSEN and I notice this particular issue is 40 pages. I still find each issue contains its own special challenges, but I admit, it is much easier than the first WSEN! (Perhaps we are getting less intimidated with those challenges!) I must take this opportunity to give credit where credit is due. Since those early days, friends such as George Cebula, Carly Kritchen, Dee Frady and Ron Simpson have come aboard as regular contributors and that makes things much easier for Rick and I—not to mention the enjoyment our readers get from hearing from them.

We have gradually added

equipment that makes the job of publishing in a log cabin much more pleasant! Since the May/June issue, we have given the latest addition (a Sprint Bookletmaker) a good test and are pleased to report that it is saving us a lot of time and effort. All that extra time can be spent with people such as Sissy and Ted Kluh from Olympia, Wash. and Otto and Wilma Seiz from Switzerland who came a long way to see our area.



SISSY & TED KLUH

Sissy and Ted were here to attend the Kennecott Kids Reunion. Rick and I were so pleased to meet Sissy's husband Ted this time and have a nice, long visit

with them both. If you haven't read Sissy's book *Born in Kennecott*, please be sure to find her ad in this issue, and order a copy for your library.

Otto, whose father Joseph Otto Seiz worked at Kennecott in the early 1930's, and his wife

Wilma paid Rick and I a visit the other day. It was so nice to have a leisurely lunch with them. The Seiz's were in our area this time last year as well. We hope they continue these yearly visits! By the way, Otto and Wilma, your postcard arrived after you left our cabin!!

Correction: In the May/June *Items of Interest* (page 5) I mistakenly described Fred and Ann Dure's truck shipment as consisting of "bales and bales of hay." Fred has since advised me that, "Hay is for horses; straw is for structures." My item of interest should have read, "bales and bales of straw." I stand corrected, Fred!

Wrangell St. Elias News welcomes aboard the following subscribers: Copper Valley Electric Association, AK; Oscar Watsjold, AK; John Williams, AK; Rusty Imlach, AK; Weston Smith, AK; The Barber Shop, AK; Janelle Eklund, AK; Irma Haaland, CA; Todd Henry, AK; Ashburn & Mason, AK; Cam Worrall, AK; Cynthia McCann, AK; Susan & Robin Nielson, MO; Wayne & Diann Smith, WA.

Wrangell St. Elias News

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Contributors to this issue: Ron Simpson, Evonne and Mike Sullivan, Nan Moore Henderson and Jeanne Moore Elliott, Senator Frank Murkowski, George Cebula, Carly Kritchen, Kenny Smith, Dee Frady, and John Adams. Subscription price is \$10 for one year in the USA. Canada \$12.50. Other countries \$20. Back issues \$2.50 each. Advertising rates upon request. Deadline for publication in next issue is August 15.

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Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

Doyme, Kay, Annalisa, Beth, Holly, Kristi, and Rebecca Houghton: It's a sure sign that summer is here when we see the Houghton family arrive in McCarthy. All seven of the Houghtons (I forgot to include Sullivan, the family's Irish Setter, making them eight altogether!) look forward to opening up their cabin for their summer weekend trips to our area.

This summer 18 year old Holly arrived in style! She was driving her own 1988 Jeep Wrangler—with 2 *Smitty Built* bumpers—which she earned the money for herself. She brought it by so Rick and I could get a good look at it and it certainly is worth Holly's perseverance.

Holly's sisters are proud to ride with her and, of course, Sullivan loves riding in the back!

Congratulations, Holly, and "welcome back" to the entire Houghton family!

Kenny Smith: Kenny is also back in the neighborhood after spending a busy winter in and out of Anchorage visiting his grandchildren. Rick and I are always glad to see Kenny. When he's at his cabin here in McCarthy, his favorite pastime just might be cruising the neighborhood on his 4-wheeler.

Noticing how much the Houghtons are enjoying their two 4-wheelers, Kenny eluded them in on several of his favorite trails and shortcuts.

He stopped by our place the other day to pass on an item of interest and a warning. While at his cabin on Swift Creek hill, he saw a cow moose and her two calves being chased by a grizzly bear. According to Kenny, a short time later a cow moose showed up at the Edwards' Beaver Creek cabin where Mike (Jim and Audrey's new caretaker), is staying. Harm and Birte were visiting Mike at the time and claim they all heard quite a commotion in the

woods but didn't know what it was. About an hour later, a lone cow moose showed up again near Kenny's cabin. He says he's not positive it's the same

cow as he saw earlier but it could have been. Whatever the case may be, it's always good to be forewarned of a grizzly in the area!

Quite a number of WSEN subscribers who read Kenny's article, *Merle "Mudhole" Smith - my dad*, in the May/June issue are hoping he will do more reminiscing for us. We do too!

Emily Morrison: Another summer regular to McCarthy now is Emily, who purchased property near Rick and I on the west side. Emily brought her



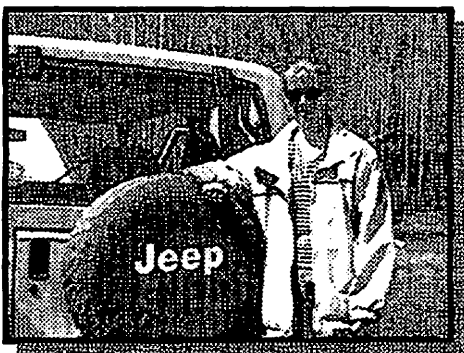
WSEN staff photo

EMILY AND CONSTANCE ENJOY VISITING IN MCCARTHY.

mom, Reverend Constance Morrison from Pittsfield, Mass., to McCarthy for a visit and I was pleased to meet her. Emily says, "She is such a trooper!" It seems Constance bravely managed Mark Vail's trail while listening to Mark's adventure-packed bear stories!

This summer Emily is working at the Kennicott River Lodge and Hostel, and gave Rick and I a tour recently through the facilities. We were pleased to see the progress and can appreciate all the work that owner Brad Grossweiler has done. Have a great summer season, Emily!

Terry and Dee Frady: Last Sunday afternoon, Wendy Cobbett, Julie Hardy (friends and seasonal workers for Kennicott Glacier Lodge) invited me to "go shopping" with them. My first response was "Where?" "To Willow Herb Mountain Depot, of course," was



WSEN staff photo

HOLLY ENJOYS THE FRUITS OF HER LABOR.

their reply.

As most of you already know, the Depot is a local gift shop owned and operated by the Fradys. I didn't even hesitate in giving them a hearty "yes!"

When we arrived at the store, Terry was busy cutting up a spruce tree that had just succumbed to recent winds in our area. We inspected the beginnings of what will be a new addition to the shop. Several rounds of logs are in place to date and it is expected to be in use next summer season, says Terry.

Dee was minding the store so I enjoyed a "catching-up session" with her while the girls and I inspected every nook and cranny of the Frady's unique Alaskan inventory. Of course, we came back with an armload of gifts for friends, family and ourselves!

Neil O'Donnell: Neil was out this way visiting recently. Wife Margaret and daughter Catherine stayed behind in Anchorage, but we did get to see Neil. He is about to embark on a cabin-building project, he tells us, but first things first. This particular trip's mission was reassemble and find a good location for his outhouse, which he had built and then disassembled at his home in Anchorage.

Rick and I drove down to the O'Donnell homestead yesterday to see how things were shaping up. Well, I must say, that if his cabin turns out as nice as his outhouse did, it will be a fine addition to the local neighborhood!

John Adams: I am pleased to report that John is joining the ranks of the "high-tech" residents of McCarthy. No, not as a computer operator, but as a new owner of a cell phone.

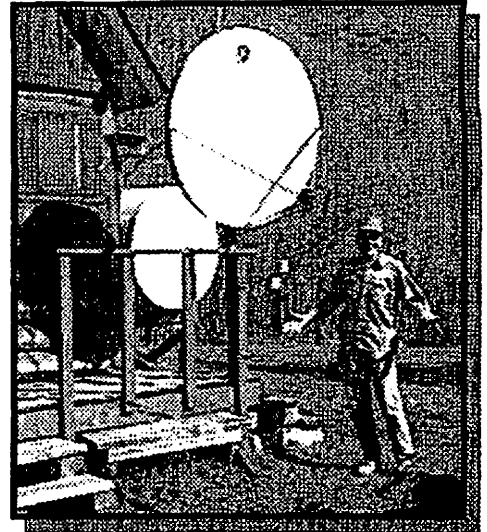
Actually, he says it's all son Adam's fault. Usually Adam comes out to give his dad a hand in the summer with his local bed and breakfast, which gives John a chance to attend to other projects outside his home-based business. But Adam is busy in town learning the trade of commercial painting and putting in long hours. Without Adam, well, let's just say, John is tied up and had to succumb (John used the word "stoop") to hiring on the help of a second-rate assistant - a cell phone with call forwarding. So, this is fair warning, if you need a room for the night and you call McCarthy Trail Rides B & B and get John, you just might find that John is answering you from a nearby glacier.

Kim Northrup & Jim and Peggy Guntis: I've had several people ask me when Kim and folks are arriving. I really don't like having to report that Kim is not coming up this summer. She has a good job in California and has decided to stay with it awhile longer. However, Jim and Peggy are expected to leave Phoenix on or around July 6 to head this way. Kim says she will miss seeing all her McCarthy friends but her thoughts are with us all.

George Cebula: When Jim and Peggy arrive in the neighborhood, they will drive right by a new addition on the Cebula homestead - a 4' satellite dish. George didn't have trouble putting it together, but getting it tuned in was another matter altogether. Frankly, I was beginning to wonder if something that small

could do the job!

Rick and I have a much larger dish with an excellent southern exposure. George lives next door so he and Rick mounted his dish on a spruce pole and brought it over here



WSEN staff photo

GEORGE TESTS SIGNAL STRENGTH FROM KENYON PORCH.

for testing purposes. After much patience (we almost lost it a few times...), a good signal was forthcoming. Needless to say, George was elated.

The fellows transferred the dish to a metal pipe and attached it to George's garage. Tuning began again and more patience was required. I was back at home by this time, but before too long I heard a good deal of shouting from their direction. Not wanting to even consider they might have dropped the dish, I quickly made my way next door to check on the commotion. I am thrilled to announce the shouting was due to victorious results in their tuning efforts.

It didn't take long for the word to get out that George's dish was up and running. A couple nights later several neighbors showed up at

George's door all ready to watch a live basketball game!!!

Jim, Jeannie, Matt and Aaron Miller: After a couple of failed attempts to find Jeannie at home, I managed to catch her in-between tossing her delicious Tailor Made Pizzas. Frankly, I felt rather foolish asking her what she was up to these days, knowing full well she is one busy lady this summer. Jim, who is working on the North Slope, isn't home full-time so Jeannie is on her own as far as the family business is concerned. However, sister Sam and husband Craig and their daughter, Natalie, from Palmer showed up on Memorial Day weekend to help Jeannie open up so she was in good hands!

The Miller farm animals are doing well, says Jeannie, with 3 baby pigs recently joining the flock of chickens and 5 turkeys. Most of the chickens are locked up, but the hens with baby chicks are allowed to run free this year. (That ought to make the tourists and van drivers happy!)

Katy Steger: Katy, who is Aaron Miller's tutor, dropped by last night. She is considering becoming a west side land-owner, so with plat in hand Katy was checking out our local neighborhood. While taking a look at a nearby lot, she and her dog had quite a scare! Evidently, they came upon a bear who didn't act happy to see them. Even though Katy didn't see the bear, she says he made plenty of noise and came in her direction. Needless to say Katy and her faithful companion left the scene much faster than they had arrived!

Denise Jantz: Summer resident and now sole owner of Roadside Potatohead is back in town and already busy at work

feeding the hungry souls who venture down the infamous McCarthy Road. Long-time friend, Kathleen (her previous partner at the Potatohead) is presently working on earning her teacher's degree so we won't be seeing much of her. However, Denise has called in the help of Diane Milliard, curator of our local museum, to give her a hand on Diane's day off. Denise tells me her folks are due to arrive later on this summer. That is always a treat!

Nancy Cook/Kris Rueter: Nancy and Kris are sharing the position as McCarthy/Kennicott's local ranger for the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve this summer. Both young ladies are land-owners and familiar faces to our community. Kris says she is covering for Nancy on her days off.

Ken and Carly Kritchén: We are sad to report that Ken and Carly lost Ginger, one of their two horses to an attack of colic. Ken's 8 year old mare came to the Kritchén home-stead in March of last year and couldn't have found a better home. Ginger had acquired a reputation for being such a friendly horse and really loved kids. Our condolences go out to Ken and Carly.

Don, Lynn, Sarah and Rene Welty: Since our last issue of WSEN, I am told that 13 year old Sarah has gotten a good number of jobs and is well underway in saving for a trip to Hawaii next summer with her Girl Scout troupe. In fact, Sarah gave me a hand the other day in a couple of outdoor painting projects. She did a fine job and her assistance gave me just the motivation to get started on those projects that get put on the back burner. Thanks, Sarah!

Rene tells me her family paid a visit to Cliff and Jewel Collins' place at Long Lake recently. They actually did an animal trade-off. Two of the Welty bunnies for 2 of Cliff's baby chicks – soon-to-be laying hens. Sounds like a good transaction for both parties.

Don is staying busy flying for Wrangell Mountain Air of McCarthy and Lynn is enjoying her morning shift serving breakfast at the McCarthy Lodge. Lynn says she loves pecking out the lodge's front window every so often and seeing Don going and coming from the air service's office across the street.

Jim and Audrey Edwards: Audrey just stopped by to pick up her mail and she brought a couple of "items of interest" with her. Her daughter Susan and husband Robin are here visiting for 2 weeks. The Nielsens are from Crocker, Mo. and are enjoying their first day in the Wrangells. Audrey was making sure they started their day out right by seeing something of our local countryside. By the time they got to our cabin, they had already been shopping at Willow Herb Mountain Depot.

Susan says they had quite a thrill flying from Anchorage to McCarthy in Jim and Audrey's Cessna 180. This was Susan and Robin's first flight in a smaller airplane and Jim was nice enough to give them a flightsee over town and Kennicott on their way in.

Welcome to McCarthy, Susan and Robin! Hope your two weeks stay doesn't fly by too quickly! ☺

Kennecott model – one of a kind set up

BY BONNIE KENYON

Stepping into Ron Simpson's mobile home in Copper Center is like experiencing a trip back into time – say 60 years! Don't get me wrong. Ron isn't living in the dark ages, but he is certainly living in the past. Kennecott, Alaska's rich, historical past, that is.

A scale model of the copper mining town during its heyday takes up the majority of Ron's living room leaving barely enough room for a couch and TV. It is obvious to me that Ron isn't satisfied with just visiting the Kennecott of today. He is determined to "build" us a picture of what life was all about back in those good old days.

It amazed me to see the quality and details Ron gave to his model town. I could almost hear the working sounds coming from the mill building and see the hospital staff busily at work in the Kennecott

Hospital. Several railroad and administrative buildings that are now missing stand in their original place as reminders of what used to be.

Ron reminds us that 60 years ago this year the Kennecott mines shut down. Over ninety years ago—in 1906—the first spike was driven for the Copper River & Northwestern Railway in Cordova. As I look at this real-to-life representation of Kennecott, it seems like just yesterday that the wheels of industry were turning to produce our nation's richest copper.

Ron tells Rick and I there is more to see and so we walk across the street and take in another bustling town from the early 1900's – Chitina. The Copper Rail Depot Saloon located on the Loop Road in Copper Center is Ron's place of business. It is also the present home of the only working model

of the Copper River & Northwestern Railway in the setting of the Chitina railroad yard of the 1920's in "G" scale.

Suspended from the ceiling and a little over 6' off the floor, the model CR & NW winds its way overhead and comes complete with train sounds! A rotary snow plow pulls 9 cars altogether including locomotives and a dining car.

A mixed freight train complete with ore cars, baggage and passenger Pullman and caboose also makes its way past recreations of the Chitina Hotel, the Depot, Obrien Creek Saw Mill, and a 2-bay locomotive repair barn. We watch as it passes over the Gilahina Trestle which, incidentally, is constructed out of pool cue sticks!

Ron points to his replica of the Alaska Railroad and proudly informs us this year is the celebration of its 75th anniversary having its beginning in 1923.

Although it is difficult to take my eyes off the moving trains above me, I can't help but notice the walls are covered with framed photographs of the famous Kennecott mines, mill site and the major rolling stock of the CR& NW.

Ron says on May 28 he was pleased to give a guided tour of his model to a group of Kennecott Kids who were returning from a reunion held at Kennecott. He wishes he had had more time to spend reminiscing with those who once called Kennecott home.

I have to agree with Ron when he says, "This is a one of a kind set up here!"

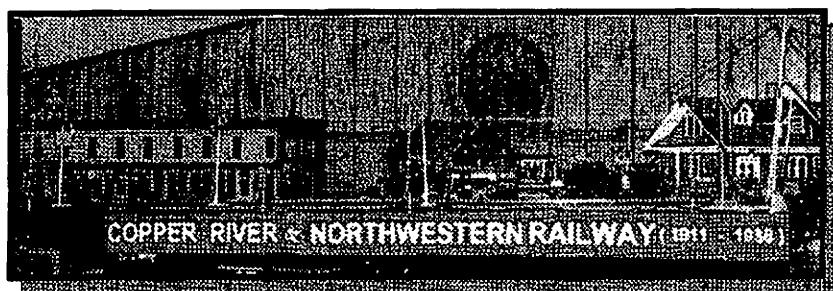


Photo courtesy Ron Simpson

THE CHITINA RAILROAD YARD—THE DEPOT HERE WAS THE MOST ELABORATE ON THE LINE. IT HAD SIX DORMERS AND IT HOUSED THE FAMILY OF THE STATION MASTER. THE HOTEL CHITINA, ALSO KNOWN AS BREEDMAN'S HOTEL, WAS ONE OF THREE SIMILAR SIZED ONES IN THE EARLY TEENS. THE OTHERS WERE O. A. NELSON'S COMMERCIAL HOTEL AND THE THREE-STORY OVERLAND HOTEL, WHICH BURNED DOWN BY THE EARLY 1920'S, TAKING OUT THE ADJACENT BAKERY AS WELL. CHITINA WAS AN IMPORTANT TRANS-SHIPMENT POINT UNTIL THE ALASKA RAILROAD MADE THE CONNECTION WITH FAIRBANKS IN 1923. THUS ENDED THE "BOOM-TIME" AT CHITINA. WITH THE CLOSING, THE CR & NW AND THE HOTEL CHITINA WERE DISASSEMBLED.

Remembering the Railroad

BY RON SIMPSON

This is historically a very significant year, being the centennial of both the Klondike gold rush and that of the Valdez and Klutina Glacier trail. Most of those hardy souls in 1898 who crossed those glaciers and then followed the Klutina Lake to the Klutina River and thence to the new settlement of Copper Center where the Klutina River meets the Copper River, were seeking gold within the Copper Valley. Among the prospector-hopefuls were Clarence Warner and Jack Smith, who two years later would discover the Bonanza copper outcrop, marking the beginning of the Kennecott Copper Mines and the railroad which would soon follow—the Copper River & Northwestern—CR & NW—the “Can’t Run and Never Will” railroad.

It was Michael J. Heney, the builder of the White Pass & Yukon connecting Skagway to Whitehorse, who had the foresight to recognize the value of Eyak on Orca Bay as the best site for a railway port into the copper region. He secured the right-of-way for his “Copper River Railroad” with the financial backing of the Close Brothers of London, who had been behind the original White Pass Line. Gambling that the Alaska Syndicate, who owned the Bonanza copper deposit would have to eventually buy his under-financed operation out, the consortium drove the first spike at the dock in what was to become Cordova on August 28, 1906.

The Syndicate had been constructing their railroad

from Katella, where there was easy access to the nearby Bering River coal fields. It was not anticipated that the

Alaska Railroad and the CR & NW Railway have an interesting historical tie, and, significantly, this also is the 75th anniversary

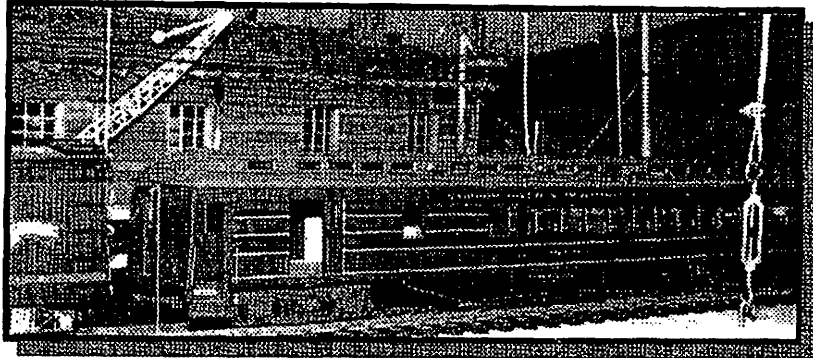


Photo courtesy Ron Simpson

THE PULLMAN COMBINE—THIS MODEL REPRESENTS ONE OF THREE SIMILAR COACHES PRINCIPALLY USED ON THE CHITINA LOCAL BRANCH. THE ORIGINALS WERE OPEN ENDED WOODEN MODELS BUILT IN 1910. THE OTHER COACHES — TWO DAY COACHES AND THE OBSERVATION-DINER — WERE SELDOM SEEN NORTH OF THE BRIDGE AT 49 MILE — A POPULAR TOURIST DESTINATION AT THE TIME.

government would close the area to coal mine development nor were the railroad builders prepared for the series of storms which hit Katalla in November, 1907, wiping out a huge investment in docks and breakwater. The Syndicate abandoned Katalla as a rail port and opted to buy out Heney's interests in his railway at Cordova that same month. They also gave his company the construction contract, and the building of the CR & NW thus began in earnest out of Cordova in early 1908 — ninety years ago.

The CR & NW Railway model at the Copper Rail Depot in Copper Center operated for the first time in May 1998 in commemoration of both the beginning and end of the original railway — 1908 to 1938. Included is an Alaska Railroad diesel-electric era model on the 1:24 “G” scale layout. The

of the driving of the Golden Spike which officially opened the railroad from Seward to Fairbanks at the bridge over the Tanana River at Nenana on July 15, 1923.

When President Warren G. Harding drove the spike the ceremony marked the official beginning of the Alaska Railroad and the end of the Alaska Engineering Commission which managed construction of the line. The precursor to the Alaska Engineering Commission was the Alaska Railroad Commission which was formed by Congress in August 1912 to examine potential routes for a government railroad from the coast into the interior. President Howard Taft appointed just four men to the commission. They were Major Jay J. Morrow, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, chairman; Dr. Alfred H. Brooks, geologist

in charge of the Division of Alaska Mineral Resources, vice-chairman; Leonard M. Cox, U. S. Navy Engineer; and Colin M. Ingersoll, a consulting railroad engineer.

toward the Iditarod River.

The Alaska Railroad Commission preferred the Cordova route because a) it had easy access to the Bering River coal fields requiring less

Thus began the Alaskan Engineering Commission, headed by William C. Edes as chairman and chief engineer, and also including Lt. (later Col.) Frederick J. Mears of the U. S. Army, who was involved in the Panama Canal project, and Thomas Riggs Jr., chief surveyor on the Alaska Boundary Commission, later to serve as a governor of the territory.

In *A Visitor's Guide to Kennicott & McCarthy 1998*, the Copper Rail Depot advertisement features a photograph of the Frederick Mears private train at the Chitina depot in 1914. Mears went on to eventually oversee construction of the Alaska Railroad.

The commission reviewed virtually every available route, including that of the CR & NW which had been offered for sale to the U. S. government. Also considered was a route from Valdez following the Richardson Trail as well as the old Alaska Northern route out of Seward. The final report to the President made no recommendation as the best route to follow, stating that "in selecting the route, other questions, besides strictly engineering ones are to be considered."

In the end the decision was left to President Woodrow Wilson. J. P. Morgan, who held a primary interest in the CR & NW, had opened negotiations with Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane for the sale of the line at the appraised value, rumored to be \$12 million for the 131 mile mainline section from Cordova to Chitina. This would have been a bargain, as the cost of the entire 196 mile line to Kennecott had been about \$23 million.

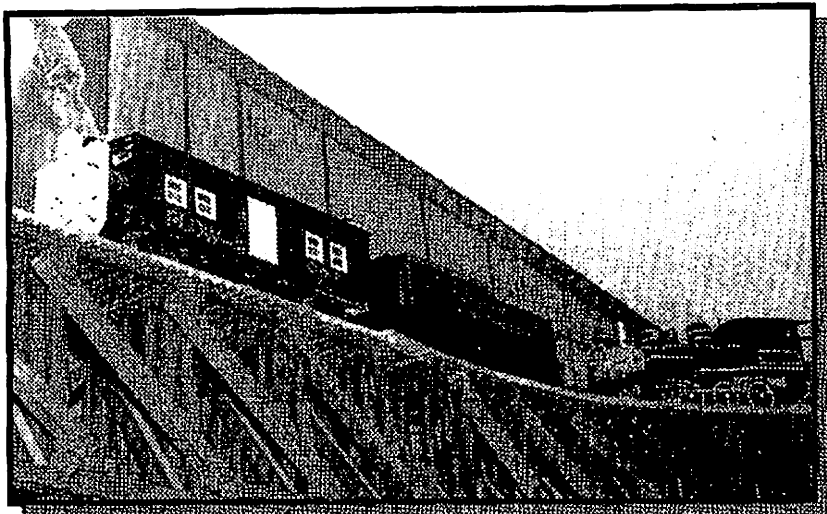


Photo courtesy Ron Simpson

THE ROTARY SNOW-POW TRAIN—THERE WERE FOUR OF THESE ON THE CR & NW LINE. THESE WERE NEEDED TO COMBAT THE DRIFTING SNOW FROM THE COPPER RIVER DELTA AND THE SNOW ACCUMULATIONS ALONG THE CANYON WALLS. GENERALLY, THE TRAIN CONSISTED OF TWO OR MORE LOCOMOTIVES PUSHING THE PLOW AND ITS TENDER, PLUS A NUMBER OF OTHER CARS SUCH AS A BUNK CAR, DINER UNIT AND THE CABOOSE. USUALLY THE ROTARY TRAIN TURNED AROUND AT TIEKEL, CR & NW MILE 101. THIS TRAIN IS PICTURED ON THE GILAHINA TRESTLE. THE ORIGINAL BRIDGE WAS 880 FEET, THE LONGEST WOODEN TRESTLE ON THE LINE.

The following year the commission recommended that two routes be constructed. The primary one was from Cordova to Fairbanks by way of Chitina. This would mean purchasing the CR & NW mainline and continuing north with their existing surveyed route which followed the Copper River and then the Gulkana River north through Isabell Pass and down the Delta River, then following the Tanana on to Fairbanks.

The other route started at Seward, following the 70 miles of railway started by the Alaska Central and Alaska Northern Railways and then heading

development than the other line which passed by the Matanuska coal fields; b) the cost of the Cordova route was considerably less and would thus result in cheaper freight rates; and c) the Cordova harbor was superior to that at Seward.

In 1914 Congress passed a bill authorizing \$35 million for construction of an Alaska government-owned railroad and providing for the President to "locate, construct and operate a railroad in the Territory of Alaska." The President was granted authority to select the route.

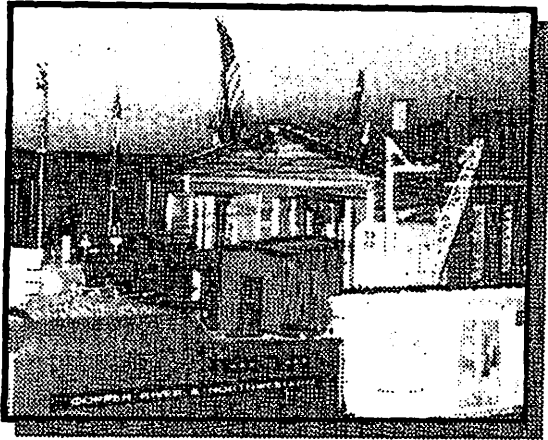


Photo courtesy Ron Simpson

THE LOCOMOTIVE REPAIR BARN—

THIS IS AN EARLY VERSION OF THE ONE AT CHITINA AND A SIMILAR ONE AT MCCARTHY. EACH BUILDING ALSO HOUSED A "PUSHER" ENGINE AS BOTH SITES WERE AT THE BEGINNING OF LONG GRADES REQUIRING ASSISTANCE. THE BROWNHOIST CRANE WAS A COMMON FEATURE OF MOST RAILROADS OF THE DAY, INCLUDING THE CR & NW.

There was, however, intense political pressure on the President by his own Democratic Party to avoid purchasing the CR & NW route, thus causing

an unwanted association with the Guggenheims and their Alaskan Syndicate.

President Wilson announced his decision on Feb. 15, 1915, to purchase the Seward route and construct the railroad to Fairbanks, avoiding the CR & NW and potential savings of as much as \$40 million, as it turned out. The CR & NW would never become more than an elaborate mining railroad—

and the connection to the Alaska Railroad was lost.

The model railroad in the Copper Rail Depot centers on the Chitina depot and the Hotel

Chitina. Both of these structures were gone by about 1942. It is now possible to see them again, as it is to see working interpretations of parts of the long gone CR & NW. Although no rolling stock except for some highly deteriorated bed cars are known to have survived, representations of a mixed freight train, including one of the Pullman combines, a rotary snow plow train and other pieces from those days of sixty to ninety years ago can now be seen.

Models such as the structures represented at the Copper Rail Depot interpret history – bringing back a sense of what was in a way that old photographs cannot. But the combination of the historic model and the approximately sixty framed photos at the "Depot" resurrect the almost forgotten days of another era.

NPS Summer Speaker Series

The National Park Service presents the "Summer Speaker Series" schedule as follows:

July 5 — "Life & Times of Alpine Flowers: Adaptations to a harsh environment and changing times" by Dan Doak

July 12 — "McCarthy-Kennicott in the Fifties: The Jim Edwards story" by Jim Edwards

July 19 — "The Bells and the Bees: How flowers get pollinated in the southern Wrangells" by Bill Morris

July 26 — "Trails and Trials: A brief history of the Copper Basin" by Geoff Bleakley

August 2 — to be announced

August 9 — Effects of Habitat Patchiness in

the Real World: Studies of an insect herbivore in the Wrangell Mountains" by Pat Doak

August 16 — The Wrangell Mountains Nature Writing Workshop presents: "What the Wind does to Snow: A writer's Antarctica journey" by Gretchen Legler with poetry reading by Nancy Cook

August 23 — "Adventures in the Exotic Mountains: Climbing tales from around the world" by Bob Jacobs

August 30 — to be announced.

The Summer Speaker Series will be held at the Kennicott Glacier Lodge Sunday nights, 8:00PM

"With an \$8 billion backlog to bring our park facilities, historic structures, roads and trails up to an acceptable standard, I think all will agree we have a national park system that is worn-out and broken—a system in dire need of attention." — Senator Frank Murkowski

Kennecott Kids visit hometown

BY EVONNE AND MIKE SULLIVAN, NAN MOORE HENDERSON AND JEANNE MOORE ELLIOTT

Pitch hitting for Inger Jensen Ricci, who usually writes about the "Kennecott Kids" reunion (and is busy attending to other matters of more importance), we reflect on what she wrote after the 1994 reunion. She was then, and we are now, still on cloud 9 after our 1998 reunion that was held May 25-28.

There were 21 "Kids," 2 McCarthy "Kids" plus those traveling with them (spouses, children, grandchildren, and otherwise traveling companions). Counting 43 all total, we filled 3 stretch vans, plus a pick-up filled with luggage. We met for breakfast at the Regal Hotel in Anchorage and set out for our long ride into McCarthy/Kennecott.

After lunch at Glennallen, we then set back to enjoy the unsurpassed scenery, fresh air and never-ending daylight found only in the land of our youth. The weather was perfect for our entire stay, which caused some residents of the area to think that someone of our group, or the "Kids" in general, have connections with the saints in the weather department. We like to think it is our parents, or those whom we follow, smiling their blessings down upon us.

Our reunion time was spent renewing old friendships, viewing pictures, with plenty of "remember whens." Those that chose to, walked glaciers, took fly-over trips and, of course,

walked the streets that were once known as "home."

The Kirkwoods and staff at the Kennecott Glacier Lodge spoiled all of us with scrumptious meals, comfortable rooms and never-ending acts of kindness. They earn the gold



WSEN staff photo

"MC CARTHY KID" BUD SELTENREICH TALKS OVER OLD TIMES WITH "KENNECOTT KID" OSCAR WATSJOLD.

medal for perfect host/hostess.

Our McCarthy neighbors invited us to a day in their town viewing the museum and back



WSEN staff photo

JEANNE MOORE ELLIOTT AND AL NIKOLAUS ENJOY BBQ AT THE PIZZA PARLOR IN MCCARTHY

roads of memory. A wonderful lunch was served at the Tailor Made Pizza Parlor and was enjoyed by all in attendance.

Wednesday night was story night at the lodge, with all neighbors invited to join in the fun of the "Kids" telling stories of life in the then bustling Kennecott. Even non-kids, tourists registered at the lodge, enjoyed the stories and felt lucky to be a part of it all. In fact, the morning of our departure they asked if we all could stay another day.

The "Kids" presented the Kirkwoods with a framed collage with pictures of the "Kids" and their families, taken back when they were residents.

Thursday morning, the day we were not looking forward to, as it was time for us to round up and head out, for our departure. The "Kids" assembled on the lawn at the lodge for a group picture, taken by our interview picture person, Gilbert Roetman, of Big Dipper Productions in Anchorage. The lodge sent us off with sack lunches to enjoy at Liberty Falls, and with million dollar memories setting off a warm glow in all of our hearts.

How can one justly say thank you to everyone for such a unique and wonderful experience?

We think we speak for all the Kennecott Kids when we express our heartfelt thanks and deep appreciation for all the hard work that Rich and Jody Kirkwood and Inger Jensen Ricci did in getting together another wonderful reunion for us.

It was such fun to be with friends once again from so long ago. Some of us were not able

to be at this reunion and we all missed them very much. Some new "Kids" were there and it was such fun getting re-acquainted with them.

The Kirkwoods at the Kennicott Glacier Lodge gave us the "First Class" treatment. It was so nice to meet Rich's parents who were there from Phoenix.

The food was most delicious —each and every meal. The accommodations were so special, especially with that nice cool air at night. The weather could not have been more beautiful. The picnic at McCarthy was scrumptious and it was so nice to wander around McCarthy and visit the museum. The walk on the glacier was great fun for all who participated. Our guide was the nicest young man. Took care of us real good.

Some got to tour the old Mill Building and had a ball. Some went on flightseeing trips. We walked, looked, remembered and I guess you could say that once again we were back in our old hometown where once upon a time life was so sweet for us.



WSEN staff photo

NAN MOORE HENDERSON KIDS WITH OTHER "KIDS."

Who would ever dream that we would all be celebrating thanksgiving dinner together – in May – complete with the most delicious pumpkin pie we ever tasted.

The sign in the Kennicott Glacier Lodge said it all – "Kennecott Kids Reunion – Welcome HOME."

The Kennecott Kids say "thanks"

The Kennecott Kids would like to thank all those responsible for making possible a wonderful trip "Home."

We feel honored to have been a part of the 60th anniversary celebration of the closing of the mine. Memories

are precious to recall of our lives in a bit of Heaven – Kennecott.

Thank you to our neighbors in McCarthy for their hospitality and delicious lunch and the capable, delightful, hardworking staff at the lodge. We are grateful to everyone for helping to keep our memories alive while we made priceless new ones.

Special recognition to:
National Park Service



WSEN staff photo

JODY KIRKWOOD—PERFECT HOSTESS

Kennicott Glacier Lodge
St. Elias Alpine Guides
Tailor Made Pizza
Wrangell Mountain Air/Bus
Wrangell St. Elias News

Remember Me?

My name is Gossip. I have no respect for Justice.

I maim without killing. I break hearts and ruin lives.

I am cunning and malicious and gather strength with age.

The more I am quoted the more I am believed.

I flourish at every level of society.

My victims are helpless. They cannot protect themselves against me because I have no name and no face.

To track me down is impossible. The harder you try, the more elusive I become.

I am nobody's friend.

Once I tarnish a reputation, it is never quite the same.

My name is Gossip.

Kennecott "proper" now public domain

BY KENNY SMITH

On June 10 and 11th a meeting took place at Kennecott which promises to be the first of many such meetings. Opening the meeting, Superintendent of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Jon Jarvis, announced that the current owners and Federal government would officially consummate the transfer of the majority of real estate the following morning. The property was once owned and operated by the Kennecott Copper Corporation which achieved its birth at the famous site.

The approximately 3.4 million dollar purchase culminated 10 years of continuous negotiation and compromise. Superintendent Jarvis stated that the "hard part is now ahead of us, which is how to manage this acquisition."

National Park officials explained that the agency has a long history of working closely with non-profit organizations and would like to do so with Kennecott. Working out such arrangements began with this meeting. As is almost always the case, the availability of financial resources for funding such

endeavors is the primary impediment.

Superintendent Jarvis pointed out that the lead paint problem was probably the largest initial obstacle to overcome. The red paint on the buildings is 60% lead and the white 90%. The 144,000 square feet of paint on the buildings isn't of much concern to the Alaska DEC but the lead from the paint accumulating in the soil is. Just cleaning up the soil contamination doesn't solve the problem since the paint will continue to flake off of the buildings. 1.2 million dollars has already been set aside to address this problem.

The Park Service anticipates a number of initial events and actions will transpire as a result of this: Expect a steady stream of interested dignitaries to visit Kennecott in the near future, beginning on June 27 with the visit of Senator Frank Murkowski and Lieutenant Governor Fran Ulmer and arrival of the Director of the Park Service the next evening. Work is already in progress by an architectural review team which is inventorying the

structures. Within the next year, the start of a five year effort to mitigate all hazardous material problems at the site will begin. As soon as possible, subject to the availability of funding, further stabilization of structures in order to reduce overall degradation of the site will begin. The Park Service will seek public opinion to determine the methodology for managing and the extent of restoration.

In addition to the many questions involved with managing the facility, solutions are needed for necessary services such as fire suppression. As more and more public and private dollars are pumped into improvements at Kennecott, the absence of essential necessities for small communities is going to become more apparent.

One of the Park Service's principle goals is to provide quite a bit of freedom for the public to safely look around the site. With its expressed sense of purpose, the Park Service should be able to provide a world class attraction for visitors in the years ahead.

FRIENDS OF KENNICOTT

Summary of workshop at Kennicott, Alaska June 10-11, 1998

PREPARED BY MARY GRISCO, SECRETARY, FRIENDS OF KENNICOTT

Kennicott acquisition and NPS Planning Process/Jon Jarvis

Acquisition will close shortly; Wrangell-St. Elias Superintendent Jon Jarvis recapped highlights of the last several years of acquisition

efforts including working with multiple corporate organizations, split estate, hazardous materials, covenants, Department of Justice concerns, etc. Sale price: \$3.4 million. The National Historic Landmark will become part of

the Preserve. An Historic America Survey Team is conducting an architectural inventory. Remaining hazardous materials concerns include oil/petroleum product spillages; transformers; asbestos; dumps and lead paint

(red paint is 60% lead, white paint is 90% lead). NPS has \$1.2 million for 144,000 sq. ft. of lead paint mitigation over the next 5 years, mostly involving stabilizing existing exterior surfaces and capping lead-contaminated soils immediately adjacent to buildings. Major short term concerns: public safety, toilets and setting up partnership for management.

Phase II of landscape survey is in its second season: Kevin Percival of the NPS Denver Service Center has been hired to work on Kennicott site planning. He has worked with the NPS and the City of Sitka on a similar community-based plan. Specifically, he'll be developing an amendment to the WRST General Management Plan (GMP) for Kennicott including facilities/services; pedestrian/vehicle circulation; vegetation/screening; staffing; adaptive uses; security; fire prevention; human and solid waste; identifying management partners. Kevin will be in Kennicott/McCarthy three times this summer to meet, listen, talk through individual and community meetings: June 17-27, July 28-Aug 7, Sept 8-18. A draft GMP amendment is expected by December. Discussion brought up interest in maintaining foot and bike traffic on the Blackburn road; bridging National Creek; working with the Alaska Land Managers Forum and TRAAK; working with ADOT/PF on McCarthy Road upgrade; maintaining camping restrictions in the townsite; and glacier retreat opportunities.

Public Forum

Participants were encouraged to bring up any

ideas/concerns/hopes for Kennicott area. There was substantial agreement among participants on most of the points raised below:

- *adaptive reuse of selected structures
- *not frozen in time, multiple layers for interpretative focus
- *use Bodie State Park, CA as guide: ghost town, self-guided tours, seasonal, only look in buildings, museum provides tours, basic stabilization
- *arrested decay, "not too prettied up"
- *let some buildings fall down
- *avoid competition between for-profit and non-profit (e.g. tours)
- *stop scavaging/looting
- *relationships with NPS interpretative staff
- *self-guided informational signs and walking tours, more educational materials
- *desirable appropriate development: locally owned, small
- *Kennicott surrounded by wilderness park with living community
- *community doesn't want to be in fish bowl
- *compatibility with ANILCA
- *not theme park
- *recognize importance of natural setting
- *interpretative themes: mining history, setting, character, sense of place, living community, natural history interface
- *recognize integral role of mines: interpretative and access
- *minimum tasteful signs
- *future themes could include alternative technologies
- *how far to go with keeping buildings standing?
- *schoolhouse would make a good museum
- *store could be visitor contact

point with Ron Simpson's display

- *ree hall could be community center
 - *consider development south of National Creek with north side for residential and ghost town industrial
 - *review covenants and Architectural Review Board for what's possible, what's appropriate
 - *establish limits (criteria) for use by non-profits
 - *minimize official/governmental presence
 - *self-sufficiency: community power source possibilities, not more individual generators
 - *public water, sewer, power possibilities: some growth would facilitate collective utilities; place under NPS management?
 - *little infrastructure goes a long way; sustainability; consider alternative energy sources (e.g. solar, hydro); minimize noise and light pollution
 - *options for off-site orientation
 - *marketing consistency
 - *defining season (new WRST visitor center, opening in 2000, will be open year-round and receive package tourism)
 - *public safety and enforcement
 - *parking, visitor circulation, growth and demand
 - *minimize need for cars, use non-traditional transportation modes
 - *model for interpretation of boom-bust and beyond as complex similar to Prudhoe Bay
 - *involve other communities convened by ADOT/PF for foot bridge
 - *use of technology/ telecommunications for interpretation
- Presentations/Options for non-profit organization involvement**

Friends of Kennicott: Rich

Kirkwood briefly summarized the trade-offs of managing the site vs. maintaining an advisory/public advocacy role. One organization can't do both.

Jen Benn, Executive Director of Mount Rainier, North Cascades & Olympic Fund briefly presented the three segments of involvement: government, non-profit, and citizens - and the inherent tensions among them such as personality vs. bureaucracy, information vs. perception, and individual interests vs. organizational missions. While NPS retains ownership, she recommended looking carefully at how authority, responsibility and accountability are structured in any hiring, contracts or agreements. She also recommended that the local community and NPS invest in time to define a long term mission statement that will weather the test of time and changing personalities.

Vicki Snitzler, NPS, reported on the non-profit role in management of the Presidio and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco. The Golden Gate Association (non-profit) has 150 employees and a budget in

the millions of dollars. They collect fees and do major fund-raising in the community for programs that the NPS would not be able to afford.

Ben Shaine reported on the non-profit management of Fort Worden State Park in Port Townsend, WA., including the wide variety of uses making use of the site and the use of carefully developed criteria for defining appropriate uses.

Chip Dennerlein, National Parks and Conservation Association, gave brief overview of ongoing efforts at Cumberland Island, GA and Rocky Mountain NP with non-profit involvement.

Dianne Milliard, representing the McCarthy Kennicott Historical Museum, reported that the Museum would like to take an active role at Kennicott. (Discussion indicated general support for a museum at Kennicott that would supplement but not replace the existing McCarthy museum.)

Mike Loso, Executive Director of the Wrangell Mountains Center, reported that the WMC is interested in expanding its programs and Kennicott presents some excellent opportunities for

more educational programming (Elderhostel for example), writing and the arts, in addition to ongoing research. The West Bunkhouse, for example, if brought up to functioning standards, could provide ample space for new and expanded programs. The WMC would not be able to use all of the bunkhouse, however, leaving room for other uses as well. The WMC is an educational institute and is not interested in providing interpretative services.

Additional discussion touched on involvement of Chambers of Commerce and Ahtna, Inc.; how to craft vision and mission statements with NPS planning process; what tools to use to gather community input (survey, newspaper, radio); advancing a community vision for Kennicott when Senator Frank Murkowski and Lt. Governor Fran Ulmer visit later in June; update priorities for building stabilization, re-use, interpretation; NPS does not want Kennicott to take over the identity of the park as a whole; NPS does want to work with one or more non-profits for management.

FRIENDS OF KENNICOTT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

JUNE 11, 1998—

Discussion focused on how to coordinate with NPS planning effort to maximize community and other participation. After kicking around several ideas, Friends decided to hire a contractor (preferably a local resident familiar with the issues) to expand public participation and assist in defining appropriate

non-profit roles. Friends will provide some direct funding and will seek out funding from other participating non-profits, as well as the NPS. The scope of work would include additional ways to look at management needs and Friends' capabilities and will run until completion of the GMP amendment (approximately 1 year). Friends will spend up to \$1,000 for this

effort.

In the meantime, the Friends' board will be updating its membership on recent events and invite them to participate in the vision/management planning. Friends will also continue its bylaws review. In the longer term, Friends may consider working with NPS on the stabilization and adaptive reuse of one

building—perhaps the Recreation Hall as a community center. But such stabilization efforts take a back stage to the short term community

involvement/advisory role that Friends is currently taking.

Next meeting: 5:30 pm, Tuesday, September 15, 1998, with two meeting sites:

Kennicott Glacier Lodge and Anchorage (Hoffmann Management conference room).

BETRS Charge Dropped BY CVTC

BY STEVE MERRIAM (PRESS RELEASE)

Copper Valley Telephone's request to eliminate the Basic Exchange Telecommunications Radio Service (BETRS) monthly rate of \$26.65 has been approved by the Alaska Public Utilities Commission, with an effective date of June 1, 1998. This change was approved in time for the June 1st billing.

MCCARTHY SWITCH ADJUSTED FOR IMPROVED DATA SPEED

On June 19th, CVTC technician Russ Jindra made adjustments to the McCarthy switch in an effort to improve data transmission rates. The adjustments included increasing the level of signal going to AT&T Alascom. Jindra reported experiencing an "increase and

stabilization of transmission rate" after implementing the change. Preliminary follow up with data users in the McCarthy area show the adjustment has improved performance for some subscribers but has had no effect on others.

AOL ACCOUNT SET UP FOR DIAGNOSTIC TESTING

CVTC has also purchased a subscription to America On-Line in order to evaluate the effect of changes to the switch. The account also allows us to attempt to replicate problems reported to us by McCarthy subscribers to AOL.

CVTC also wants to clarify the per minute charges customers incur while on line with AOL. These are due to the

lack of a local access node to the Internet in McCarthy; they are not a CVTC charge. In other words, when you dial into the Internet, it is not a local call and the Internet access provider recovers the cost of the long distance call to their access node's location by assessing per minute charges.

CVTC would like to hear from McCarthy subscribers who move data. Have you seen any changes in data transmission since June 19th? Send an e-mail to smerriam@cvtc.org or call Steve Merriam at 1-800-478-6612 and let me know if you have experienced an increase, decrease or stabilization in data speed transmission.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE OF THE MCCARTHY AREA?

The McCarthy Area Council (M.A.C.) is a non-profit organization formed in 1995 specifically to provide structure for discussion, decision-making, and planning on issues faced by the McCarthy area community. M.A.C. serves as the point of contact between the community and various State and Federal agencies, receiving and allocating community funds and grants. Annual meetings are held on the second Friday in October, with other meetings held as needed throughout the year. Annual dues are due on September 1 of each year, and cover the period from September 1 to August 31.

Two classes of membership are available: voting members and associate members. A voting member is a person 18 years or older who maintains a residence in the McCarthy area, specifically within the boundaries of the Chitina River drainage from Crystal Creek to the Canadian border. An associate member can be anyone who does not qualify as a voting member.

If you would like to participate in planning the future of the McCarthy area, please fill out the following form and mail with appropriate dues to M.A.C., McCarthy #31, Box MXY, Glennallen, AK 99588-8998.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Do you maintain a residence in the McCarthy area? _____

Voting member \$25.00 _____

Associate Member \$5.00 _____

Alaska fire information sources

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES — DIVISION OF FORESTRY

The arrival of Alaska's fire season provides an opportunity to review how wildfires are managed in the state, along with sources for up-to-date fire information.

Fire Management in Alaska

Fire has been a natural force in Alaska for thousands of years, and continues to play an essential ecological role, but it also sometimes poses a threat to human life and structures. Each year there are between 600 and 800 wildfires in Alaska, with nearly all of the activity taking place between late April and mid-August.

For fire protection purposes, all Alaskan lands have been divided into one of four categories: critical, full, modified, or limited. Critical protection areas (where human life and inhabited structures are endangered) receive the highest priority. At the other extreme are limited protection areas where the impact of fire suppression may be more damaging or costly than the effect of fire itself. In limited protection areas all fires are monitored, but suppression actions are only taken to keep a fire within the management unit or to protect specific values such as mining camps, cabins, or Native land selections.

Nearly half of Alaska's lands are in the limited category, and since 1984 more than 7.4 million acres have been allowed to burn naturally in these areas.

Who Does What?

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry is responsible for fire management in southern Alaska. Northern Alaska is protected by the Alaska Fire Service within the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and national forest lands are protected by the U.S. Forest

Service. Based in Fairbanks, the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center (staffed by Division of Forestry and Alaska Fire Service personnel) coordinates wildland fire suppression activities among the three agencies. Each agency fights fire on all ownership within its management area.

Alaskan wildfires are primarily fought by three types of crews; emergency firefighters, hotshots, and smoke jumpers.

Alaska's 73 Emergency Firefighter crews (also called EFF or Type II crews) comprise the backbone of firefighting in the state. Mostly from rural villages, these largely Native crews are hired when fires are fought and released when they are out. The 16-person EFF crews are also dispatched to fires in other states after Alaska's fire season, providing further employment paid by the federal government.

Alaska has four experienced and well-trained hotshot fire crews. These 20-member crews (also called Type I crews) are the Fairbanks-based Chena Hotshots, Denali Hotshots and Midnight Sun Hotshots, along with the Glennallen-based Tazlina Hotshots. Other hotshot crews from the Lower 48 may be called up during large fires when all four Alaskan Hotshot crews are already working.

The BLM employs 68 Fairbanks-based smokejumpers, highly trained firefighters who parachute from aircraft, and are often the first to attack a new wildfire.

Information Sources

Don Pitcher is the public information officer with the Division of Forestry in Anchorage, and can be reached at (907) 269-8443. On weekdays he produces a recorded statewide

daily fire hotline, available 24 hours a day at 907-269-8444.

Andy Williams is the fire information officer with the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center in Fairbanks. His phone number is 907-356-5226 (mornings), or 907-474-2230 (afternoons). On weekdays he produces a recorded statewide daily fire summary, available 24 hours a day at 907-356-5226.

Several sites on the Internet provide a wealth of Alaskan wildfire information. Two good places to start are the Division of Forestry's home page (<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry>) and the Alaska Fire Service's home page (<http://fire.ak.blm.gov>). The sites are linked together, and are also linked with various other fire-related sites, including the National Weather Service's detailed fire weather page for current and expected conditions around the state. On these Web sites you'll find the latest Alaska fire updates ("fire situation reports"), photos of ongoing fires, maps showing the locations of lightning strikes and fire danger throughout the state, satellite imagery showing the progress of cleanup, descriptions and photos of aircraft used on fires, copies of news releases, and other details on fire management in the state.

The Firewise Internet site (<http://www.firewise.org>) provides information on protecting homes from Wildfires. The Municipality of Anchorage's Video Center has produced a fire safety video called "Northland Wildfires, Lessons Learned" that shows hourly throughout the day on the municipality's channel 47. Other fire-related recorded programming also airs on this station.

The McCarthy telephone chronicles

It has been almost 6 years since a group of McCarthy residents contacted Copper Valley Telephone about putting in local phone service. The following are excerpts from WRANGELL ST. ELIAS NEWS articles published during that time.

September 1992 — "Pending approval by the board of directors, the Copper Valley Telephone Cooperative will install limited phone service in the McCarthy area this fall... The system would only have 2 voice links, a fax line, and two 9600 data lines available... The satellite system would then be replaced next summer with a microwave hookup which would enable more users."

January 1993 — "November came and left, along with McCarthy area resident's hope of seeing telephone service in 1992... As of press time, our letters of inquiry to Copper Valley Telephone have gone unanswered."

March 1993 — "Although efforts to provide temporary phone service to the residents of the McCarthy area last fall were not successful, it looks as if permanent service will become available this summer. By teaming up with Alascom, CVTC hopes to have service for those who want it by July 1993."

September 1993 — "CVTC says September service possible."

November 1993 — "Delays and more delays seem to plague the project...It now appears phone service is again delayed—this time until spring."

January 1994 — "McCarthy and Kennicott residents who have been trying to get telephone service for more than a year were disappointed again this fall when the promised service was put on hold for an indefinite period...According to CVTC General Manager Scott Smith, Mr. Paul Barrett contacted him and said that he represented a 'large number of landowners in McCarthy'...Questions were raised over the right-of-way needed to run phone lines to residents and power lines to the telephone switch...Smith said that right-of-way problems do not preclude being able to eventually get service into McCarthy, but that CVTC did not want to enter into a fight because they were simply responding to requests from residents to bring telephone service to the area, not trying to expand the co-op."

March 1994 — "Smith said he planned a trip to Seattle to meet with Barrett, and that he was optimistic about reaching an agreement

concerning the right-of-way needed to run phone cable."

May 1994 — "McCarthy-Kennicott area residents could be using the latest in cellular phone technology by September, if all goes as planned...CVTC would install small boxes and antennas on all those locations who can 'see' the tower...Scott does add this word of caution: 'While we think this is the best of all possible worlds, I want to caution you that we have not ascertained their (manufacturer's) ability to meet all of our conditions, and provide backup service for the equipment once we do install it.'"

November 1994 — "On October 8, Tim Rennie and Jim Gifford visited those who had signed up for phone service and made local site tests. Alascom representatives arrived and installed their satellite equipment...McCarthy residents [can] expect 2 'installers' to arrive around October 31 to do site surveys as well as begin installing phones."

January 1995 — "McCarthy gets telephone service—at last! The new equipment did have a few 'bugs.' For the first few weeks local calls were nearly impossible due to a loud squeal on the line, but long distance calls worked fairly good—as long as it wasn't snowing."

March 1995 — "Despite some problems with the system, local residents continue to enjoy the luxury of having telephone service available locally...Locals still experience less than quality connections between each other, and sporadic problems with incoming or outgoing long distance calls. Rennie said that CVTC is working with the manufacturer of the equipment to solve these problems."

November 1996 — "McCarthy phone service area to expand...Two helicopters and 3 semi-tractors arrived on the west side of the Kennicott River on September 20 to begin transporting buildings, propane tanks, solar panels and other necessary equipment to a site on nearby Soudough Ridge...[the site] is expected to reach out and include McCarthy's surrounding areas such as Dan Creek, May Creek, Long Lake and much of the McCarthy Road."

January 1997 — "According to [Ron Ashe of New Horizons Telecom, Inc.] most of the installation work [on the repeater site] was completed before the crew left on the 27th of November. Two men expect to return shortly before Christmas to finish the wiring. Ashe stated the site should be ready for operation sometime after the first part of January."

March 1997 — "When the [repeater] site was initially activated, callers only got a busy signal when attempting to dial out, and several phones were knocked out of service by the signal from the repeater. As we go to press the 19th of February all the local phones are experiencing difficulty in dialing and in receiving calls."

May 1997 — "The telephone repeater site on Sourdough Ridge was activated on April 11. Users at May Creek enjoyed having telephone service for one week before CVTC returned and shut down the repeater. This was in response to numerous reports from other users in the area who complained of calls being interrupted and of difficulty in receiving calls from outside of the McCarthy area...As we go to press on April 26, the repeater is shut down, and local service is

still poor. Voice calls tend to be 'noisy,' and fax and data calls are often dropped, apparently due to excessive noise on the signals. CVTC has been notified and is expected to return to McCarthy in the near future. If you try to reach [us] by phone, please keep trying—we're here—really!"

July 1997 — "Scheduled to be operational by last February, the telephone repeater site on Sourdough Ridge is still turned off as we go to press...Each time the site is activated, a flurry of complaints from local telephone users whose phones suddenly do not work have caused them to shut it back down."

March 1998 — "I am having CVC's attorney write a strong letter to New Horizons Telecom asking them to correct the problems we have experienced at Sourdough Ridge within a short time period. If they will not do so, I intend to put them on notice that Copper Valley Cellular will remove and replace the RTI equipment with equipment that we know will work before summer,' wrote [CVC General Manager] John Monfils...CVTC's plan to have the site operational by this summer has met with some skepticism in the McCarthy area."

Dignitaries visit area

BY RICK KENYON

Senator Frank Murkowski and Lieutenant Governor Fran Ulmer got a first-hand look at the Park Service's latest acquisition—Kennicott—on Saturday, June 27. Accompanied by WRST Superintendent Jon Jarvis, they spent time walking the streets of McCarthy and Kennicott, enjoying meals at the lodges, and in general playing the part of tourists. On

Saturday evening they were gracious enough to address interested community members and to answer questions related to the McCarthy Road, helicopters in the park, Internet access and other questions raised by approximately 50 people who attended.

The Senator was accompanied by his wife, Nancy, and his assistant, Jim O'Toole. Also present were Chris Schabacker, who is an assistant to

Senator Ted Stevens, Jon Jarvis, Superintendent of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, and Logan Hovis, NPS historian.

Lieutenant Governor Fran Ulmer talked about the Alaska Land Managers Forum. (See her Letter to the Editor on page 33 of this issue.)

The highlight for Bonnie and I came after we presented the Senator with a Wrangell St. Elias News hat. He immediately put it on and wore it during the entire meeting.

The group flew in, but were planning to drive out to Glennallen on Sunday for the NPS Visitor Center groundbreaking ceremony in Copper Center. NPS Director Robert Stanton was scheduled to arrive in McCarthy on Sunday, after the groundbreaking.



WSEN staff photo

SENATOR FRANK MURKOWSKI

Good News from the Wrangells

Editor's note: It is my pleasure to share the WSEN "church page" (as it is often referred to) with McCarthy resident John Adams who is the primary church building contractor and is also serving on the board of the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church.

Whose church is the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church?

BY JOHN ADAMS

The name says who it belongs to—the community of McCarthy and Kennicott. As a legal, nonprofit corporation, we have a Board of Directors who is presently being served by myself, John Adams, as president; Doug Schrage, vice-president; George Cebula, treasurer; Bonnie Kenyon, secretary and Doynce Houghton.

The primary purpose of the church building is to provide a place for local residents and visitors to meet in order to worship the Lord. Weekly services are held on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. and center around the Bible as God's written Word. We are nondenominational and welcome all faiths and backgrounds. Everyone is encouraged to bring their Bible and to share the Word together.

A secondary purpose is to encourage unity in the community by providing a place for meetings. The basement of the church building is now ready and available for non church functions. Three large folding tables and chairs are available. A small kitchen alcove is equipped with cabinets and a propane stove. A generator provides electricity for lights. A

propane heater is also operational. The church property and materials were provided by people who want to share God's love with the communities of McCarthy and Kennicott. Each request for use will be given immediate attention with permission being granted by the Board of

the church at: McCarthy & Kennicott Community Church, McCarthy #42, PO Box MXY, Glennallen, AK. 99588.

Vacation Bible School comes to McCarthy/Kennicott!

BY BONNIE KENYON

A Vacation Bible School is going to be held at the McCarthy & Kennicott

Community Church on July 13 -

17 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

The church is located between the two footbridges on what is know as the "island." All ages are welcome. Crafts, games, Bible stories and snacks will be served. This year's VBS is sponsored by the Alaska Mission Committee of the Lutheran Church

Missouri Synod.

Adult activities are also being planned during the week. If you have any questions or are interested in participating or helping, you may call Bonnie Kenyon at 554-4454.

A group visiting from the Chicago, Ill. area will be hosting and leading the VBS. Paul Moller, the groups' leader is also bringing his 9 year old son, Rick, to help him in the activities. Others in the group include Jay Carter, Kate Miersch and Jeff Lang. †

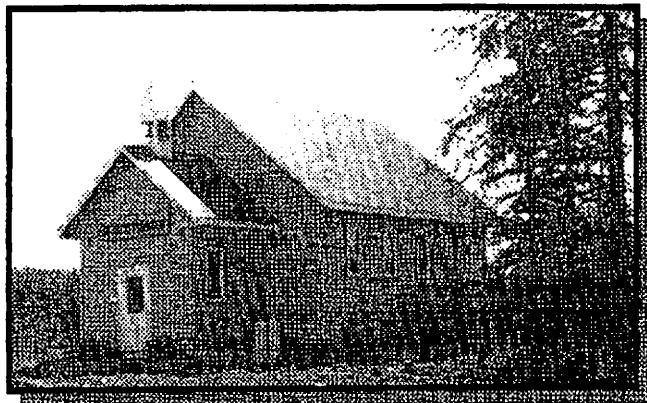


Photo courtesy Inger Rice

Directors.

The following guidelines are for non church functions:

- 1) No alcohol on premises
- 2) No smoking
- 3) Respectful conduct
- 4) Don't take the Lord's Name in vain
- 5) Leave the church building the way it was found
- 6) A minimum donation of \$20 (for heat and electricity, and building maintenance) plus an extra cleanup fee, if needed.

If you are interested in obtaining the use of the church building, you may contact me at 554-4433 or Bonnie Kenyon at 554-4454. You may also write

OUR TOWN

July 1923 August

EAGLES MAY FLY TO KENNECOTT

We have received the report that the Brooklyn Eagles in their flight thru Alaska may pause at Kennecott long enough to inspect the mines, in order to enlighten the newspaper reading populace of the East about "Copper, as she is mined in Alaska."

NOTICE

RATES FOR CAR HIRE

MCCARTHY TO KENNECOTT \$5.00
 MCCARTHY TO NICKELL 7.50
 MCCARTHY TO GREEN BUTTE 10.00
 MCCARTHY TO MOTHER LODGE 15.00
 WAITING TIME PER HOUR 1.50

FOREST FIRES SOUTH OF TOWN

Numerous fires have been burning on Sourdough Hill all week. None are very large, but they are gradually spreading in both directions. The smoke has been quite thick, so there have been no mosquitos.

Mr. Trimm reports that his buildings are out of danger, as he has been down backfiring several days. Jimmy Peterson's buildings being saved by Mr. Trimm happening along when he did.

McCarthy has had a spell of rather warm weather this week, the mercury climbing to 95 in

the shade and close to 110 in the sun on several occasions. If we'd had a palm leaf fan and a banana tree to sit under, we'd all have been real hot. But we kept right on working without even trying any Couc on ourselves, and before we knew it, evening had come and the cool breezes from the Kennecott Glacier had blown away the heat and cares of the day.

FILMING COMPLETE

The Alaska Motion Picture Corporation took its final picture for the purely Alaskan film, "The Cheechakos" at Mile 55 on the C. R. & N. W. Railway last Friday. The scene portrayed riding the rapid in the mad rush for gold which the dummies did very bravely.

July 7

NOTES FROM THE CREEKS

Art Powell had the misfortune of having a good-sized boulder fall ten or twenty feet and strike his hand recently. The hand was badly bruised and a bone in the back of it was broken. Mrs. Powell applied first aid, and with her efficient nursing, the bruised member is healing rapidly. Meanwhile, Art is enjoying a respite from kindling the morning fire.

Carl Anderson is now doing annual assessment work on the claims owned by himself and James McGavoek on Rex Creek.

THREE BRIDGES WASHED OUT

The heavy rains of the past week have washed out three small bridges on the Copper River Railroad, at miles 51, 65, and 74. The repair work is being delayed somewhat as the ditcher is undergoing repairs. It is understood that traffic will be resumed before Monday when the Eagles will go to Cordova.

CHITINA HOTEL TO CHANGE HANDS

On July 20th Mrs. Frank A. Lamson will assume management of the Commercial Hotel at Chitina. Mrs. Helen Kennedy is the retiring proprietress.

PERSONALS

Ed Erickson, formerly timekeeper at Kennecott, went to the Green Butte to work this week. Recently, Mr. Erickson left Alaska. He got as far south as Juneau, where he changed his mind and returned to the Copper River Valley. But he came not alone. He brought with him a bride whom he acquired, we know not how, at the capital city. Mrs. Erickson accompanied her husband to the copper camp where she will spend the rest of the summer.

July 14

FIRES

During the past several days the forest fires have been worse. One fire that

started on the South side of Young Creek, made such rapid strides toward the Nizina Roadhouse that fear was expressed for the safety of that establishment but the wind shifted and all's safe.

PERSONALS

It is reported that Charley Chong has purchased the Lubbe building and will move it to his old location on Front Street.

Mrs. John E. Barrett was hostess at a dinner Thursday evening. Home grown new potatoes and freshly picked strawberries were included in the menu.

July 21

PERSONALS

Mrs. Kate Kennedy received a new Dodge car on last Saturday's train.

Mrs. Robert's garden on her ranch at Blackburn is in splendid shape. She has a large variety of vegetables, including some very hardy bean, tomato and cucumber plants, as well as berries and a lovely assortment of flowers.

HENRY OLSEN JOINS THE RANKS

Last Thursday Miss Dora C. MacDonnell and Henry Olsen were united in marriage by Judge Coppernoll at his office. The bride is the daughter of Mrs. Wills of McCarthy, and the groom operates a local garage. They will make their

home on Front Street. After the service the young couple rode to Nikolai for a briefouting. We understand that Bill Reed followed them with a car full of tin cans. The newly married couple have our best wishes for happiness and luck in The Big Adventure.

LARGER SCHOOL FOR KENNECOTT

Another building is being renovated to be used for school purposes, as the number of children in camp make necessary the employment of two teachers when school opens in September.

FIRES THREATEN BRIDGES

Mr. Trimm and Bill Weare have spent most of the week fighting fires along McCarthy Creek, which threaten the destruction of bridges on the Mother Lode trail.

Yesterday there was an unusually large fire at Swift Creek.

July 28

A FEW NOTES FROM CHITINA

George Shade has purchased the upper, not the lower Tonsina Roadhouse, as stated in a recent issue of this paper. Mr. Nafsted still owns and operates the latter, which is on the Chitina branch of the trail.

The north end of the railroad tunnel at Chitina, which is being made into an open cut, caved in for a short distance. The train to Kennecott was delayed a day as a result.

PERSONALS

George Marhoffer was up from Strelna this week. He reports that Strelna is a busy place just now, as the vacation season is in full swing.

Little Eleanor Tjosevig and Dickie Lander, accompanied by their mothers, spent Tuesday at the Tjosevig cabin on the Mother Lode trail. Just above the first tunnel the party saw a good sized sheep. The animal stopped several times in its ascent of the cliff and gave the car and its occupants "the once over" most indifferently. It would have made an excellent target for gun or camera as it stood on the cliff, barely 100 feet above the spectators.

Bill Berry came in from Young Creek last Sunday. He reports that fires are general out that way; but are confined mostly to the moss, although considerable small timber has burned. Very few mosquitos have survived, however.

Mrs. Eekstrom and children of Cordova are visiting at the Iverson ranch.

LOCAL TALENT

Mrs. J. P. Hubrick has been doing some very effective tinting of panoramic views taken by Capt. Hubrick. Her coloring reveals the artist's touch to a marked degree and makes the pictures even more desirable as souvenirs of Alaska.

Aug. 4

FIRES BELIEVED OF INCENDIARY ORIGIN

That the large blaze on the Mother Lode trail, two miles from McCarthy, that Thursday called out all available men, was purposely set, is the consensus of opinion around town. This opinion is based on the manner in which it started. People riding by on the road observed no fire in that region. Returning a short while afterwards, the same people said the blaze, which could not have assumed such proportions in so short a time unaided. There are even rumors that someone was seen slinking through the brush as different cars passed during the day.

Immediately after the alarm was spread, every available man in town and all the men from the lower camp at the Green Butte were rushed out. About twenty five men worked until three o'clock Friday morning, and went out again at eight. With backfiring, they had it under control fairly well by afternoon.

This region is heavily timbered and a fire though it means not only the destruction of one of the attractive features of our prettiest drive, but it means also a destruction of fuel, which is one of the primal needs of man.

WHITE RIVER TRIP

Miss Smith, of Latouche, Vannie Anderson, and Andy Taylor returned on Friday from a three weeks' trip to the head of the White River. They report a most enjoyable trip, with fine weather except for two small showers. Moose, caribou, and sheep, they report, were seen in numbers; the moose on occasion joining their

horses at grazing.

Aug. 11

"POTHOLE" PERFORMS

Last Saturday evening, the "boiling pothole" began its annual eruption which lasted 24 hours. Once a year, a lake some 13 miles away sends out its newly thawed waters through a subterranean outlet with such force that it breaks through the glacier, sending torrents of water 20 to 50 feet in the air, swelling the glacier stream west of town to unbelievable proportions.

PERSONALS

Sam Seltenreich and sons, Buddy and Fred, were in from the ranch for a few days this week.

New babies - eighteen of 'em - have arrived at the Iverson ranch within the last two weeks to gladden the hearts of two swine mothers. The youngsters are to be brought up according to Hoyle, so Mr. Iverson says.

Aug. 18

GLACIER BURST IN A NEW PLACE

After having done its annual stunt and apparently settled down for another year, the "pot hole" broke out anew; this time, however, the water broke through the top of a nearby moraine and sent three immense streams rushing down the side of the moraine, with a deafening roar and carrying huge boulders along with them.

FIRES STILL RAGING

Fires are still raging on the Mother Lode trail in spite of efforts to subdue them.

Aug. 25

the Languid Lady

Wildflowers of the Wrangells—Part 2: "Summer Favorites"

BY DEE FRADY

I first came to Alaska in 1972 and developed an immediate passion for backpacking. Terry and I hiked many, many miles of trails in the 70's and spent every possible spare moment outdoors. I bought my first Alaskan wildflower book, tucked it in my pack along with my camera and away we went. This was the start of my love affair with Alaska and her botanical delights!

July and August herald a profusion of wildflowers in all colors. Most are actually in full bloom in late June or early July as ours is a very short growing season. Indeed, it seems that one day there is barely a green haze on the trees, then the next day the leaves are already deep green and fully developed.

Here we go again—what do I include and what do I omit with so many beautiful choices? I will pick a few of the most commonly seen varieties for wildflower lovers, amateur botanists and summer visitors to our area.

CHIMING BELLS/MOUNTAIN BLUEBELLS (*Paniculata mertensia*) Borage Family

These beauties bloom early in June and into July. The dainty sky blue to light blue nodding bells are pink in bud and turn blue as they open. Many branched stems occur with broad, dark green, hairy leaves that taper to a long

point. They grow 18-36" tall in the woods, meadows and near streams. Transplants easily. Like Fireweed, Chiming Bells reclaim forests after a fire and soften the charred landscape with color. Related to the herbs comfrey and borage the flowers

spectacular in a natural setting growing among Wild Rosa. Did you guess? Another name is "Languid Lady" that refers to the drooping characteristic of the bells from gently arched stems. Truly one of my favorite wildflowers!



Drawing by Dee Frady

CHIMING BELLS (STRIKING PINK BUDS THAT TURN BLUE AS THEY OPEN.)

and leaves are edible, although not widely used as a food source. Medicinally, has been used for various lung complaints such as asthma (Lungwort). The name *mertensia* originates from Mertens, a German botanist.

Abundant on our property, these wildflowers are

PRICKLY WILD ROSA (*Rosa acicularis*) Rose Family

Another prolific and well-loved wildflower is the Wild Rosa. A woody shrub that has stems covered with small prickles and leaves usually occurring in groups of 3 to 7 leaflets. The light pink to deep rose blossoms contain 5 rounded petals, 2-3" across, with yellow centers. They grow in open woods, meadows and clearings in full sun to some shade. They can hybridize with Nootka Rose. Easy to transplant, less easily grown from seed. Can also root from stems. Rose hips or haws (orange to red seed pods) are edible and a rich source of Vitamin C as well as other vitamins and minerals (Three hips have more Vitamin C than an orange). During World War II rose hips were an important supplement due to blocked shipments of citrus to Europe. Note: Seeds in rose hips can cause intestinal irritation so to avoid problems remove the seeds before using. Versatile in use, rose hips, petals and leaves provide jellies, syrup, wine, catsup and teas. The tea is a traditional use for coughs and

colds. Needless to say, many recipes abound. Since the hips persist on the bushes throughout the winter, they are also an important food source for grouse and other birds. Fragrant rose petals are in common use in potpourri and as perfume bases.

I have Wild Rosa growing in my greenhouse. Years ago it sprouted up behind the raised beds and I left it. They provide a splash of very early color and blooms that I otherwise would have to wait to see.

FIREWEED/WILLOW
HERB(*Epilobium angustifolium*)
Evening Primrose Family

Often growing in spectacular dense patches these aggressive plants spread from persistent underground stems. The flowers are an amazing, brilliant rose to magenta color. Occasionally, shell-pink or white blooms are found. There are four petals and four sepals of a deeper shade that form a cross. The flowers are arranged in a terminal spike, in which the lower ones open first. When the uppermost blossoms bloom it is said soon comes the end of summer. The tall, stout stems (which can reach several feet) have long, pointed, willow-like leaves, hence the old name Willow Herb. At the end of the season, seed pods open and the plant becomes a mass of long, silken hairs that fill the air with white, fluffy parachutes.

Fireweed likes disturbed soil, recent clearings and burned areas. It takes possession of burned areas, quickly covering the scars and regenerating the soil. Fireweed is the territorial flower of the Yukon. The young, tender sprouts are often cooked and eaten as greens. The Eskimo name, Pahnmeuyuktuk,

describes the edible shoot. Fireweed is prized as a source of honey. It is a clear honey that has garnered many awards for beekeepers. Also made into a jelly as well as tea concocted from the dried flowers and leaves. Considered an excellent



Drawing by Dee Frady

FIREWEED
(RENEWS SOIL PAST FOREST FIRES)

food in survival situations, this plant was a favorite food of French Canadian Voyageurs. Medicinally, dried roots are mixed with a grease to spread on infected sores.

RIVER BEAUTY/DWARF
FIREWEED (*Epilobium latifolium*) Evening Primrose

Family

Along with Fireweed these plants occur almost everywhere in Alaska. The blossoms are much the same with four petals and four sepals but are not on a spike and are larger. They grow on a low, bushy, branched plant to 2 feet tall. The normally magenta blooms rarely occur in white or light pink. Preferred habitat includes well-drained stream banks, gravel bars or scree slopes. River Beauty is striking and memorable to see growing near glaciers. The young shoots are also edible as greens.

These lovely flower blossoms press well as they are larger in size and have a beautiful color with prominent veins.

TUNDRA ROSE/SHRUBBY
CINQUEFOIL(*Potentilla fruticosa*) Rose family

A much branched, woody shrub that grows 2 to 3 feet high. The reddish-brown stems have bark that sheds. The showy butter-yellow blossoms are about 1" in diameter and contain 5 petals. The leaves have distinctive 5-parted, hairy, narrow leaflets. These shrubs are hardy and have many habitats. They grow in a wide variety of moist and dry soils at various elevations. Easy to transplant. Nome Eskimos reportedly used the leaves for tea. From Latin potens, "powerful," referring to the astringent medicinal properties. Can be seen in greenhouses as they are grown commercially as ornamental shrubs.

YELLOW DRYAS(*Dryas Drummondii*) Rose Family

An evergreen sub-shrub that grows as a low, sprawling,

mat-forming ground cover over large areas. The oval leaves appear leathery with wavy toothed edges that are slightly rolled and hairy underneath. The yellow, solitary flowers only partially open and have a base covered with brown hairs. The seed heads are twisted spirals which open to tan, feathery plumes resembling a dandelion or as known locally—"Einstein's." A pioneer plant of flood plains, Yellow Dryas grows

on sandy river bars, gravel bars and other dry areas. Can be grown from seed, blooms in 3 or 4 years. The bacteria that inhabit these roots are the same that inhabit Alder roots. Add local Alder soil to inoculate potting soil. Scientific name honors the discoverer, Drummond, a Scottish botanical explorer in North America.

Seen in profusion and readily identified with our area,

Yellow Dryas grows near the footbridge and alongside the Kennicott River.

All of these plants grow around us on our property. In fact, you could hardly go anywhere in our area without seeing these particular wildflowers. They abound just about everywhere and also grow along the McCarthy Road, much to the traveler's pleasure. ☘

Knowles signs measure regulating snowmobiles

Governor says bill means money for trails, safety and education

BY RICK KENYON

If you buy a new snowmobile this year, you may be required to pay a registration fee before you take that new beauty home. House Bill 231 was signed into law on June 25, authorizing dealers to register snowmobiles at the point of sale. This is expected to increase the number of Alaska's estimated

80,000 snowmobiles which are registered. Currently only about 14,000 are registered. The fee is \$10.

"The benefits are significant," Gov. Knowles said. "Alaska's share of federal dollars through the National Trails Assistance Fund is based on the number of registered machines.

More registrations means more money for snowmobile trails."

Unfortunately, Alaska is the only northern winter state that does not have an active motorized trails program. The State Division of Parks expects the point of sale registration system will make a start at changing that.

Concealed Carry Permit class to be held at McCarthy

BY RICK KENYON

Chief Joseph K. Michaud is scheduled to be in the McCarthy area on July 10th and 11th to conduct firearm classes. The classes are a prerequisite for obtaining a permit to carry a concealed firearm in Alaska.

Michaud, who is chief of police in Valdez, said the classes consist of lecture, viewing of video, and qualifying on the range. Applicants must qualify with the type of firearm

they desire to carry—revolver or autoloading pistol, and in the largest caliber to be carried. An applicant may qualify with both revolver and autoloader if desired.

Alaska has reciprocal agreements with a number of other states, so a person with an Alaska Concealed Carry Permit (CCP) would be legal to carry in those states. Several Alaskan municipalities, such as Anchorage and Valdez, have

ordinances forbidding a person to have a loaded firearm in their possession, such as in a vehicle. CCP holders are exempt from these restrictions.

Along with a certificate of completion of the class, an applicant must also be fingerprinted and have a recent photo. The cost of the classes are \$75. For further information contact Wrangell St. Elias News at 554-4454.

Silver Lake fishing—bring your net!

BY RICK KENYON

Wrangell St. Elias News readers might think that Bonnie and I would give up fishing after being skunked at Long Lake this past winter. Being true fisher-people, though, we could never give up. Change locations, change tactics, yes. Give up? Never.

After several non-productive trips to Long Lake, we took the snowmachines over to Baltoff Lake, where we met with Fred and Irene Denner of Dan Creek for a pleasant day of fishing for the grayling that have made this lake well known in the McCarthy area. The day was pleasant, the folks were wonderful, but unfortunately we left Baltoff with the same number of fish we arrived with—zero. (Using the new ice-fishing tent, we did see a number of large grayling swim past our hole in the ice, totally oblivious to the enticing baits we were offering!)

The days finally warmed up, the snow melted, and we parked the snowmachines and got out the 4-wheeler and 4x4 pickup truck. With a freezer totally devoid of fish, we were getting desperate. Talk of a trip to Anchorage and actually *buying* fish was heard!

Then inspiration hit. How about a trip to Silver Lake? I am ashamed to admit it, but although Bonnie and I have lived here for over twenty years we had never sampled the fishing in this lake that is only 50 miles from our cabin. We had often stopped to visit our good friends Gene and Edith Coppedge, who run the Silver Lake Campground, had actually

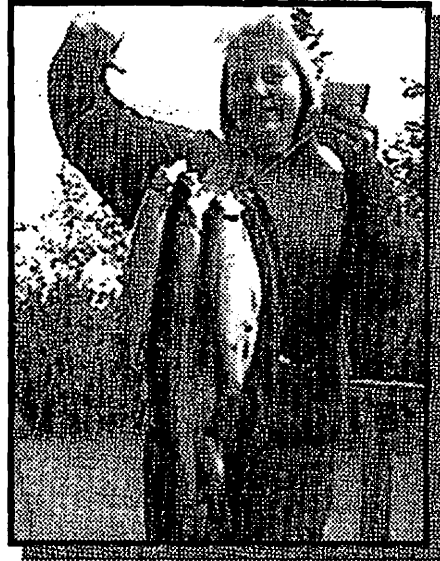
seen the large rainbow trout under Gene's dock after ice-out in the spring, but were always "too busy" to wet a line. We were usually on our way to Anchorage or trying to get home and wanting to get the bumpy McCarthy Road behind us A.S.A.P.

"Do you want a canoe, a rowboat, or a motor-boat?" said Gene when we arrived on his doorstep and stated our intentions. After failing in my attempt to secure Gene's services as a guide, we settled on an aluminum boat with a 9hp motor. "Go through the narrows, and fish the shallow water near shore. That's where they are this time of year," was his sage advice.

With lightweight spinning tackle and 6 pound line, we threw an assortment of spinners and small spoons to what turned out to be hungry rainbow trout. After several hours, and with smiles on our faces, we returned to the campground to show off the 14 trout on our stringer. "We'll be back," was all we could say.

Not many days later, a trip to Glennallen to pick up a new fuel tank for our diesel generator provided a perfect opportunity to stop at Silver Lake and see if the first time was just a fluke. We arrived at the lake around 8PM, and Gene checked over the boat for us. This time we picked up some of the "secret weapon" that we had been hearing about, called **Power Bait**. It looks sort of like *Play Dough* but smells like three-day-old fish. "Cover your hook with it, put a sinker several feet away and let the

hook and bait float just off the bottom," Gene told us.



This time Edith told us about the latest hot-spot, where a 27-inch lunker had been caught recently. Now those of you who know us know that 8PM is not far from our normal bedtime. But here we were, roaring off in a small boat, in pursuit of rainbow trout. Bonnie tried the *Power Bait* while I threw a small gold-colored spoon. It was after losing several real nice fish that Bonnie had brought to the boat and I lost when I grabbed the line and attempted to lift them out of the water, that we realized we had not planned our equipment list too well. No landing net. I remembered lifting large-mouth bass by the jaw, so tried that. "Ouch, these things have teeth!"

By the time our best fish, a 21 inch beauty was ready to boat, I had figured out a way to lift them by the gills without unduly injuring my anatomy or that of the fish. But next time — a landing net will be close at

hand.

Silver Lake Campground is located at Milepost 11 on the McCarthy Road. Campsites and parking are available, and many travelers leave their motor

homes there and come to McCarthy in the Backcountry Connection van. Gene rents boats and canoes and has a small selection of tackle (tailored to fishing at Silver

Lake) for sale.

Bottom line—come to Silver Lake, and bring your landing net!

Beetle infestation continues to take toll

Outbreak to continue until bugs kill non-protected spruce in areas under attack

Editors note: When visitors start the 60 mile drive from Chitina to McCarthy, the first thing they are greeted with is dead spruce trees along the road. It is not a very pretty sight. Fortunately, many of the infected trees have been logged off, but in areas where a "buffer zone" was left between logged areas and the road nearly every tree is now dead.

The June issue of Resource Review ran the following update on the spruce bark beetle problem.

Active spruce beetle infestations have declined by 50 percent in both Southcentral and Southeast Alaska, according to an annual aerial insect and disease survey conducted by the U.S. Forest Service and the State of Alaska's Division of Forestry.

The infestation is beginning to drop off because many spruce stands are now 80 to 90 percent dead and have little or no susceptible host material to support spruce beetle populations, according to Roger Burnside, State Forest Entomologist. Visually these stands have few recently-killed trees, are gray in appearance and are not mapped in the annual survey.

Burnside estimates 2.3 million acres are in this condition as a result of the spruce beetle activity over the past seven years. Since 1994, up to 50 million trees have been killed each year on the Kenai Peninsula from the beetle.

Heavy mortality exists in most spruce stands in the lower Kenai Peninsula from Bradley

Lake near Kachemak Bay northwest to Tustumena Lake and south to East End Road near Homer, as well as the Copper River Valley. Although it may appear the spruce beetle has run its course in many areas because of the loss of susceptible host, areas remain where beetle populations could expand into, including Anchorage.

The Anchorage Bowl has seen increasing beetle activity since 1992 with more than 100,000 acres from Potter Marsh to Palmer experiencing up to 90 percent spruce mortality.

Burnside said because the Homer area experienced a tremendous beetle flight last year, more spruce trees will be showing red needles in 1998. The 1997 beetle flight in the Homer area may have been the largest single flight ever witnessed.

The beetles have decimated most of the spruce stands in the Copper River Valley and many side drainages remain under attack. Beetles have also been more active in the Susitna River

Valley for several years, although the loss of spruce will not be as devastating due to the mix of hardwood.

Burnside predicted beetle activity is not yet over, however, he does not expect beetle populations this summer to reach the 1996 level of 1.13 million acres infested.

Michael Fastabend, a forestry program coordinator with the Alaska Cooperative Extension, explained that recently mild winters and dry springs have created ideal conditions leading to the current outbreak.

"Unless we get a couple of wet springs and summers in a row, we will probably see this outbreak continue until the beetles kill all available nonprotected large diameter spruce in areas under attack," Fastabend warned.

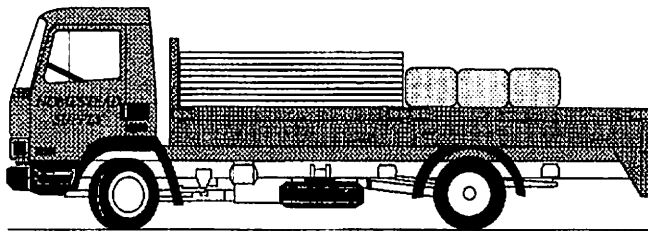
Fastabend said that on a landscape level, the intensity and duration of the spruce beetle outbreak is unprecedented in scientific literature or known historical record.

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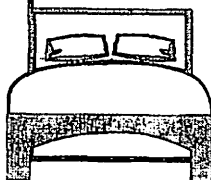
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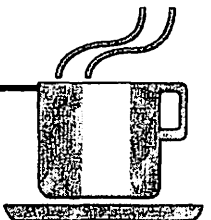
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*John Adams
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Glennallen, AK 99588*





*We at Copper Valley Cellular wish to
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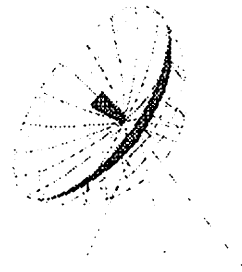
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Science Corner

Avalanches, landslides, good for some

BY NED ROZELL

Working in a steep valley once in Kenai Fjords National Park, I used an old avalanche chute for a daily commute. With all the trees sheared by a slide the winter before, the chute provided some of the best walking in the valley. Unfortunately, black bears came to the same conclusion. After I bumped into two in one day, I chose a more difficult path through the woods.

The bears' apparent preference for a country cleared by avalanche supports an idea becoming popular with habitat researchers—landslides and avalanches aren't such bad things.

Gordon Reeves and Kelly Burnett, fish biologists with the Pacific Northwest Research Station in Portland, Oregon, have studied the effects of landslides on streams and fish. Though landslides turn a creek brown and clog it with other debris, such as large trees and rocks, what remains after a natural landslide may be beneficial to fish in the long run. Logs provide shelter and feeding holes for fish, and rocks make good spawning areas. Burnett says a natural landslide, unlike one caused by logging, is part of nature's cycle, a pulse of rapid change to a stream system that keeps habitat varied and healthy.

Manmade landslides that occur after logging don't include enough big trees and occur too frequently to do fish any good, Burnett said.

At least 30 people in Alaska have died this year due to avalanches, a constant hazard of mountain travel. In areas where the snow retreats, avalanche chutes often look like claw marks on the side of a mountain, the reminder of the incredible force stored on steep slopes.

Though deadly if a person or animal happens to be in the chute at the wrong time, avalanches also seem to attract quite a bit of wildlife. Wolverines frequently were found near avalanche chutes in British Columbia by researchers taking part in the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program. When biologists John Krebs and Dave Lewis followed 41 radio-collared wolverines, they found the animals patrolling fresh avalanche tracks more often than not. The wolverines were rewarded with plenty of food in the form of dead animals caught in the avalanches. The researchers also tracked female

wolverines to their midwinter birthing dens. They found elaborate networks of tunnels at the bottom of avalanche paths, amid jumbles of boulders and logs.

University of British Columbia researcher Roger Ramcharita followed radio-tagged grizzly bears' spring wanderings in the Columbia Mountains. While avalanche tracks made up only 10 percent of Ramcharita's study area, bears spent 40 percent of their time there eating avalanche-lily roots and other early-blooming plants.

Another biologist, Rick Mace of the Montana Department of Fish and Wildlife, came to a similar conclusion. While avalanche tracks comprised just five percent of his study area, grizzlies spent 60 percent of their time there. Mace found that the bears were attracted to the chutes not just for food; females went to the same areas year after year to breed. The sows simply hung out until the males showed up.

Avalanche chutes and landslide tracks are now viewed with such importance that the British Columbia Ministry of Forests has created buffer zones around them to prevent logging or other manmade disturbances that could interfere with animals' foraging and mating in the open areas. Long seen as only terrifying and destructive, landslides and avalanches are now seen as essential.

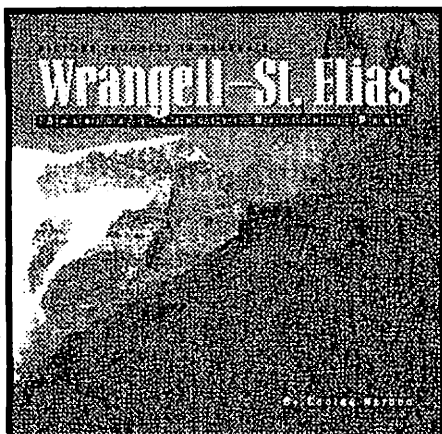
This column is provided as a public service by the Geophysical Institute, University of Alaska Fairbanks, in cooperation with the UAF research community. Ned Rozell is a science writer at the institute.

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Attn: Letters to the Editor

The Alaska Land Managers Forum (ALMF) is a partnership of federal, state, and Native land managers formed in 1996 to address issues that cross ownership boundaries. The focus of the statewide Forum is on discussion among private land owners, public land managers, members of the public, and other stakeholders regarding tourism and other land management issues.

The Forum recognizes the unique challenges and opportunities faced by the residents of the Copper River Valley regarding the future of recreation and tourism development, and has therefore created the Copper River / Wrangells Tourism Work Group. This subcommittee of ALMF interests has met occasionally over the past year, to develop a better understanding of what is happening in the region, and to explore ways to assist Copper Valley residents and other Alaskans in preparing for and participating in future tourism-related development.

As a first step, the Working Group recently edited and released the Copper River / Wrangells Tourism Planning and Development Inventory. This inventory describes, in brief outline form, some 50 completed, ongoing, and future visitor-related development and planning projects in the region, including who to contact for more information about these plans and projects. It is our hope that this document will be a valuable resource to anyone interested in the future of tourism in the Copper River Valley.

The group also agrees on the importance of holding a community meeting, or series of

meetings, in the Copper Valley, to facilitate discussion among local residents, public land managers, private landowners, and other stakeholders, about the future of recreation and tourism and how to foster appropriate development consistent with local and regional needs and values. We are going to hold these meetings next fall.

Please note that this is not another planning effort, nor are we charged by the Forum with developing land use policy. We are merely hoping that, by serving as a clearinghouse of information and a facilitator of dialogue, we can help provide an opportunity for discussion regarding the future of tourism and recreation development in the region. Entities as diverse as Ahtna Corporation, Copper Valley Economic Development Council, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, National Park Service, Alaska Visitors Association, Alaska Center for the Environment, and the McCarthy Area Council, have been actively involved in our meetings.

If you want more information about the Alaska Land Managers Forum, the Copper River / Wrangells Tourism Work Group, the Inventory, or have thoughts or concerns you would like to share with us, please do not hesitate to contact any one of us.

[signed]
Donna Tollman, Executive Director
Copper Valley Economic Development Council
Tom Brigham, Director, Division of Statewide Planning
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Jon Jarvis, Superintendent,
Wrangell – St. Elias National
Park and Preserve

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:
Sourdough Ridge
Dear Editor,

The Copper Valley Cellular extender site at Sourdough Ridge is still not operating. Over the past few months, our company has repeatedly told the CVC and CVTC management, that we (New Horizons Telecom) will reestablish operation of the Sourdough and Lake Louise Extender sites, one more time, provided that Copper Valley Cellular produces an employee that is competent to maintain engine-generator equipment. There is no sense wasting any more money on equipment if CVC / CVTC refuses to learn how to maintain it. They have enough engine-generator sets in their inventory to easily justify an engine-generator mechanic—somebody who actually wants to make their system work well.

Our pleas for board of director intervention have not been answered. None of the parties, Copper Valley Cellular, Copper Valley Telephone, their respective management or boards have answered our letters and they seem to be doing none of the relatively simple things that would solve their problem.

CVC owes NHTI over \$1.3 million in unpaid bills and claims. I can only assume that the management of CVC, and especially the management of CVTC, is individually paralyzed by the fear of eventual disclosure of their own personal errors and omissions. Their jobs are safe only as long as our litigation progresses.

Resolution would probably result in their employment termination.

In the material uncovered by our attorneys, we have discovered that the CVC and CVTC management was telling their boards that everything was "rosy," when they knew very well that it was not. We have recommended to each board

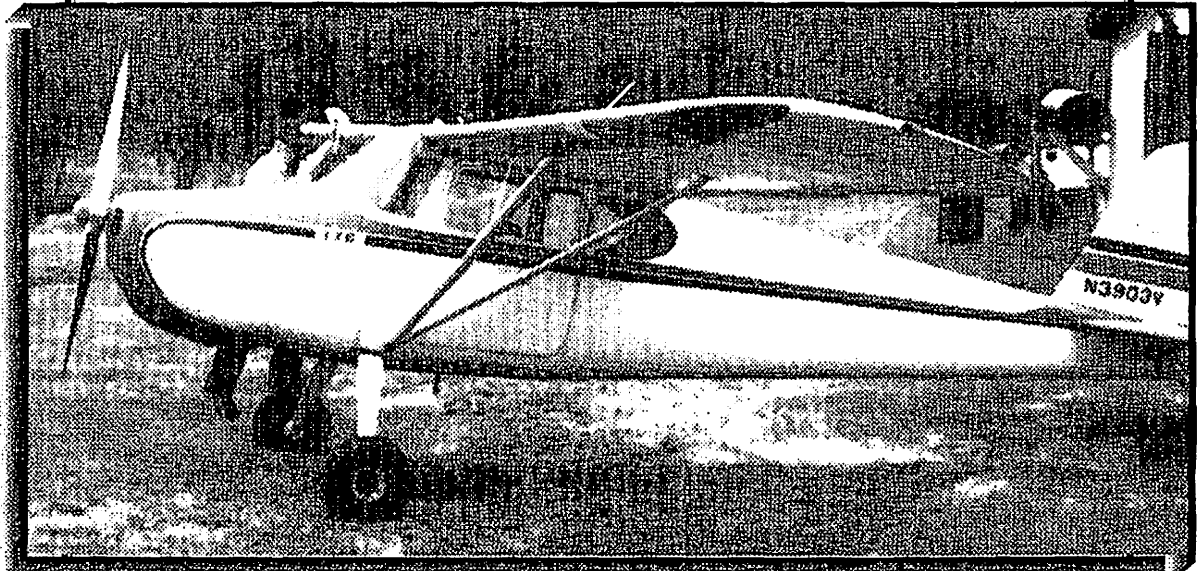
that they hire an independent management consultant to investigate the actions and inaction of CVC and CVTC management. I am confident that would result in discoveries and revelations that would solve this difficulty, once and for all.

New Horizons stands ready to finish the job at Sourdough

when CVC and CVTC are finally ready to stop playing games. If CVC and CVTC are true to past form, they will delay response until the onset of winter, and then get all excited about taking us up on our offer.

Sincerely,
John S. Lee, P.E.
CEO

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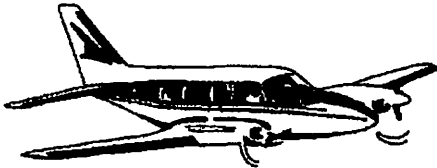
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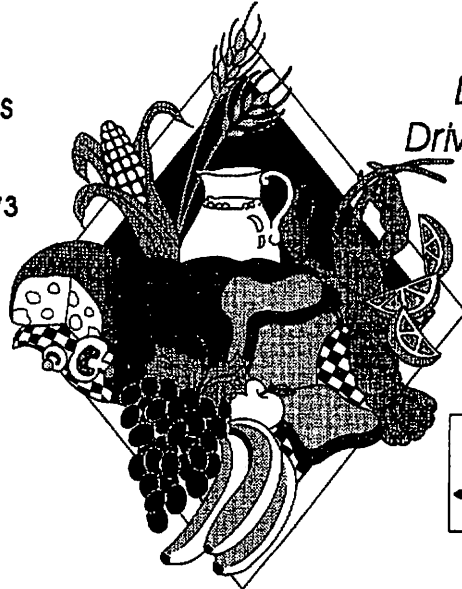
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Cooking with Carly

BY CARLY KRITCHEN

The salmon that start running up the Copper River every spring are getting to be some of the most popular fish sold in the U.S. Some restaurants in the Seattle area send representatives up to Cordova to hand carry fish back south so that they can be the first to serve it to diners! Both the Copper River red and king salmon are highly prized because of their high oil content, and also their color and texture. It's also the first run to be harvested after a long, cold winter with no fresh salmon!

I think that the best way to serve fresh salmon is just to simply brush it with butter and barbecue it over hot coals for about 10 to 12 minutes on each side. Test the salmon for doneness by poking the layers with a fork—they should flake off easily and the fish should appear barely opaque. If you can't barbecue, you can also bake fillets in a 400 degree oven for about 12 to 15 minutes, brushing with melted butter every few minutes.

If you prefer to serve your fish with a more elaborate preparation, here are a few good recipes that won't overpower the delicious flavor of the fish.

This is a good recipe for grilling salmon—serve with hot cooked rice.

Barbecue Oriental Salmon

1—2 ½ lb. salmon fillet
1/4 cup orange juice
1/4 cup soy sauce
2 tablespoons ketchup

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
2 tablespoons salad oil
1 tablespoon lemon juice
½ teaspoon oregano
½ teaspoon ground pepper
1 clove garlic, minced

Place fish fillet in a shallow pan. Combine the rest of the ingredients, mix well, and pour over fish. Marinate for approximately 30 minutes, turning the fillet once or twice. Grill over hot coals for about 10 minutes on each side, basting with the excess marinade until done.

Here's another simple sauce to baste salmon with.

Salmon Barbecue Sauce

1 stick butter
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/4 cup soy sauce
2 tablespoons American-style mustard
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
2 teaspoons ketchup

Combine all the ingredients in a sauce pan and simmer over low heat until the butter is melted, and all the other ingredients are well blended, about 15 minutes. Brush over salmon while cooking.

This is a more substantial barbecue sauce. If it is too thick after cooking, add a little more water so it is thin enough to use.

Sesame Chili Sauce for Salmon

1/3 cup sweet and sour sauce
3 tablespoons ketchup
2 tablespoons soy sauce
2 tablespoons honey
2 tablespoons water

1 ½ teaspoons sesame seed
1 clove garlic, minced
1 teaspoon grated ginger root
1/4 teaspoon Chinese five-spice (optional)

2-3 dashes hot pepper sauce

Combine all ingredients in a small sauce pan, and cook over medium heat until bubbly, stirring frequently. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for another 5 minutes. Baste salmon frequently while grilling.

I love left-over cooked cold salmon! Here are two recipes to use on cold fish—either left-over or simply poached and chilled.

Lemon-dill Dressing

3/4 cup mayonnaise
3 tablespoons buttermilk
2 tablespoons snipped fresh dill
1 tablespoon snipped fresh chives

1 teaspoon shredded lemon peel
Combine all ingredients and chill for at least one hour. (Flavor will improve if chilled longer.)

Sour Cream Sauce

½ cup sour cream
½ cup mayonnaise or plain yogurt
1 ½ teaspoons Dijon mustard
1 ½ minced fresh chives
1 ½ minced fresh dill
Squeeze fresh lemon juice.

Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients and chill for at least one hour.

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A LOOK AT THE WEATHER

BY GEORGE CEBULA

As in the past, April saw the end of a long winter and the last of the snow cover disappear.

April '98 was about average compared to the rather warm winter of '97-98. The high temperature for the month was 55 on the 24th and 30th (60 on Apr. 25, '97 and 56 on Apr. 17, '96). The low was 14 on the 1st and 9th (6 on Apr. 18, '97 and -17 on Apr. 3, '96). The average temperature for April was 36.7 compared to 34.7 in '97 and 32.2 in '96.

Silver Lake had a high of 56 on 25th (59 on Apr. 26, '97 and 57 on Apr. 18, '96) and a low of 9 on the 1st (2 on Apr 2, '97 and -17 on Apr. 3, '96). The April average temperature at Silver Lake was 34.8 (33.5 in '97 and 29.4 in '96).

The precipitation for April was about normal with 0.21 inches of liquid (0.34 in '97 and 0.01 in '96). Snow was observed on 2 days with a total of 0.1 inches. This compares with 2.6 inches of snow in '97. *Silver Lake had only a trace of liquid (0.08 in '97 and trace in '96) and only a trace of snow.*

McCarthy started the month with 21 inches of snow on the ground and this was reduced to 1 inch by the 30th.

Silver Lake was rid of its snow by the 18th after starting April with 10 inches.

The temperatures stayed rather cool the first half of May with highs in the 50's and lows near 30. It finally broke 70 on the 24th with the high for the month of 79 on the 29th (75 on May 20, '97 and 75 on May 30, '96). The low temperature was 17 on the 12th (20 on May 2, '97 and 21 on May 9, '96). The May average temperature was 45.6. This compares with 45.8 in '97 and 44.5 in '96. *Silver Lake had a high of 78 on the 30th (78 on May 22, '97 and 74 on May 31, '96), a low of 21 on the 12th (21 on May 2, '97 and 23 on May 9, '96) and an average temperature of 44.8 (46.3 in '97 and 45.2 in '96).*

The May precipitation at McCarthy was a little below normal with 0.73 inches of liquid. This compares with 1.07 inches in '97 and 0.66 inches in '96. The ground was clear of snow on the 1st. *Silver Lake recorded 1.10 inches of liquid (0.39 inches in '97 and 0.32 inches in '96). A trace of snow was observed at Silver Lake on the 4th.*

Mid April saw the end of the ice crossing on the West Fork of the Kennicott River as the ice began to break apart and water

was moving over the top. The river was clear of moving ice by May 25th and all the shore ice was gone by the 15th. *The ice on Silver Lake was too soft for travel in late April and it was completely gone the morning of May 9th.*

The first week of June was hot with scattered rain and the highs in the 70's. The lows were occasionally dipping below freezing and a low of 27 was recorded on the 1st. Summer should be in full swing by late June. June and July are the warmest months with the highs usually in the low 80s. The temperature begins to cool in August with highs only getting into the low 70s. The all-time high recorded at McCarthy was 87 on June 21, 1991. Freezing temperatures should be back by the end of August, although they can be observed at any time. Average monthly rainfall is about 2 inches (June-August). Hidden Lake should empty around the last week of July, with a rapid rise of the water level in the Kennicott River and some possible flooding. The first snow should be sometime in late September.

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FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

INHALANTS FRY BRAINS AND KILL

BY SENATOR FRANK MURKOWSKI

May 22, 1998

I was in Bethel recently when a grandfather asked me, "Can you help my grandson to make him stop sniffing gasoline?"

The question caught me off guard, and I'll admit that I didn't have a very good answer at the time. I have since given some thought to that grandfather's question and wanted to share the response I wish I had given.

Most Alaskans already are aware that drug use is a serious problem in our country. The statistics are clear:

- According to the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, overall drug use among 12- to 17-year-olds has jumped 78 percent since 1992.
- Experimentation with marijuana by sixth graders is up 71 percent since 1992.
- Some 23.5 percent of 12-year-olds in 1997 said they know of a hard drug user within their age group - up 122 percent since 1996.
- And estimates are that more than 13 million Americans are buying illicit drugs every year, spending a whopping \$57 billion.

Yet these statistics may seem foreign to many Alaskans.

Many of us think of drugs as a problem in some inner city neighborhood, not in the villages of rural Alaska. We think of drugs as crack or heroin— not paint thinner or aerosol spray cans. Yet these more common items allow kids in our own neighborhoods to get high and result in declined school performance, serious medical injury—even death.

The question from a concerned grandfather made a deep impression on me. He was looking to government for the answers. While government can help, we must all take responsibility to mobilize and support parents, faith-based groups and community leaders, teachers, law enforcement officers, small business owners—everyone—in an all-out effort to protect our children from the dangers of drug use.

Alaska especially stands to benefit from an improvement in the spiritual and economic lives of our young in order to stop the demand for drugs.

Government can and should work to help provide effective education and treatment programs and to stop the flow of drugs into our communities.

But we all have a responsibility to instill hope and ambition in our children to diminish the lure of drugs as a way of deadening the pain of boredom, cultural shock or economic hopelessness. As a beginning, I suggest that each family in

Alaska:

- Pray together once a day.
- Eat a meal together daily. The appeal of drugs can be supplanted by communication and sharing during a family gathering at the kitchen table.
- Encourage children to become involved in sports, whether basketball or traditional Native sports.
- Encourage elders and parents to spend time teaching children Native languages, traditions, hunting and fishing methods as well as carving, basket making, and other Native arts.
- Finally, we should all help young people obtain part-time jobs; from paid positions at the village store to work at the family fish/hunting camp. Such positions provide self-worth and result in the pride of a job well-done.

Government is only one partner in the efforts to halt drug abuse. We must all pitch in and take a real interest in improving the lives of our children so they can resist the pressures that lead to drug use.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ogden, Utah — May 27, 1998

Dear Bonnie & Rick,

In 1916 Steven Birch the founder and president of Kennecott Copper engaged a well known consulting mining engineer from Salt Lake City to examine and value the Alaska properties. His advice was to initiate a modest dividend rate and use the balance of earnings to invest in large low grade copper properties. There was uncertainty in the length of life of the Kennecott properties.

The result was the profits from the sale of some of the high grade ore from the Bonanza, Jumbo, Mother Lode, and Erie mines at Kennecott were invested in Utah Copper Co. at Bingham Canyon, Utah.

By the time I was born in 1924, Steven Birch had acquired 76 percent of Utah Copper Company, which is still going strong after 92 years.

Kennecott also acquired copper mines in New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona, and South America.

I called Ketchikan, Alaska yesterday, also the Alaska Marine Highway System, concerning the new ferry KENNICOTT. I learned very little—it may be a month or two before it will go into scheduled service.

Else and I deeply regret being unable to attend the Third Quadrennial Kennicott Kids Reunion.

Kudos and Best wishes to both of you.

Sincerely,

Jim McGavock

18 May 1998

Dear Kenyon's:

I am pleased to enclose my check for a renewal of my subscription to your very interesting publication, "Wrangell St. Elias News." Keep up the good work in reporting the news from a most interesting part of our country. Since I am a railroad buff regarding the CR&NW RR I am most interested in your OUR TOWN about events on that railroad. My research and writing my book, "Iron Rails to Alaskan Copper," uncovered many interesting facts about the railroad, but I'm always looking for more.

The article by Kenny Smith about his father, Merle, brought back my own experiences with the famous, "Mudhole." I arrived in Cordova during the winter of 1950 to meet "Smitty," and to plan the field surveying and aerial photography for the mapping of the Copper River from the delta to Chitina. My company, "Aero Service Corporation," had been awarded a contract for the mapping by the Alaska Road Commission. We planned to use a local aircraft for the aerial photography, and Smitty had been highly recommended.

Smitty met me at the airport on a very cold December day. His friendly greeting was followed by his confident, "of course we can help you," were all I needed to be assured that his knowledge and experience would help to get us through a most difficult job. Since I had never seen the Copper River, Smitty agreed to fly me over the

route to be mapped. The trip was one of the most harrowing in my experience. Smitty insisted on flying almost at deck level over the river. The canyon was a real "wind tunnel," and the turbulence was almost more than my poor stomach could stand. I recorded that trip in my book. We landed in Chitina where Smitty introduced me to O.A. Smith. "O.A. can be of great help to your surveyors," he said, "and furthermore he's a real character that everyone who comes to this area should meet." He was right. O.A. was a great help to us and in addition all the gang came back to Philadelphia with some great stories told to them by O.A..

Later we chartered a plane from Smitty, sent an experienced aerial photographer and camera, and successfully obtained good photographs of the Copper River. I spent two summers along the river, and except for the mosquitoes, I enjoyed the beauty and challenge of working along the river. It was here that I resolved to some day get more information on the building of the railroad by E.C. Hawkins.

Merle was of great help to us, and over the years, I made a number of trips to Cordova to visit him. I am sorry to make this note to you so involved, but Kenny's article brought some very fond memories.

I'll hope to get back to McCarthy some day. Smitty flew me over the area on that very cold December day in 1950.

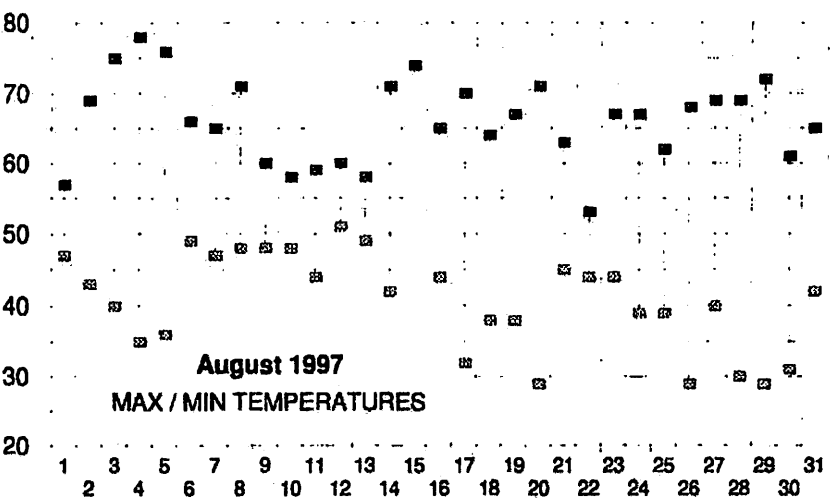
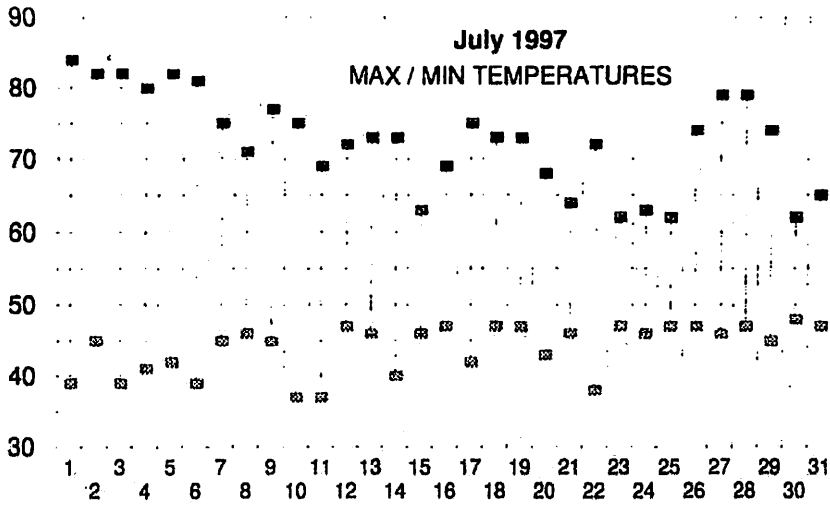
Best Wishes,

AO Quinn

(continued on page 33)

Weather - What can we expect?

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