

# Wrangell St. Elias News

*"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"*

Vol. Twelve Issue Four

July & August 2003

Two Dollars

## **NPS closes Visitor Information center at McCarthy Private sector prepares to take over service**



Visitors to McCarthy last summer often stopped at the NPS Visitor Information center at mile 58.5 on the McCarthy Road.

From a newly-constructed log cabin, an "interpretive ranger" would hand out Visitor's Guides, discuss bear avoidance measures and tell about available services.

This year, NPS announced that the center would be closed, citing "budget cuts."

McCarthy locals put their heads together and came up with a plan. Steve and Kelly Syren joined forces with the Pilgrim family and will soon have a new Visitor Information Center open right at the Kennicott River Bridge.



## *A note from the publisher*

BY BONNIE KENYON

In the last issue of WSEN I opened this column with the signs of spring... Those signs are long gone and the signs of summer are here in McCarthy. The July temperatures during the second week are rising into the 80 degree marks. That is

hot for us but we are not complaining! We cannot say we did not have a summer season this year.

A highpoint for us since our last issue is the arrival of my mom, Neta Schafer, from Leesburg, VA. She is extending her visit until October 1 this year. Several neighbors are offering to loan her winter attire just in case she gets snowed in.

Rick and I offer our apologies for the lateness of the July/August issue. We are beginning to receive inquiries on its whereabouts. We appreciate your interest in this publication and, even from some of you, our welfare.

Besides all the happenings that kept happening in our little town, Rick and I are fine. In other words, the news just wouldn't stop long enough to write about it! Also, Rick is presently recovering from a bout with a cold/flu-like attack that kept him away from the computer and his share of writing projects. Today is July 14 about the latest we have ever been on any issue since we began publication July/August 1992. Thank you for your patience.

I know many of you are wondering how the Pilgrim family is faring these days. As I write this several of them are busy harvesting and canning salmon for their winter supply. Others are busy

giving horseback and carriage rides (a group are headed up the valley to the homestead right now) while even others are putting together an informational booth at the Kennicott River bridge. It is a good thing they are a big family!

They were very disappointed when the survey revealed their Marvelous Millsite lot had much less usable land than they had thought. The Park Service appears to still be pursuing a lawsuit against the family.

We have received over 100 Emails in response to the Pilgrim family situation. Instead of writing our own *For Your Consideration* page, we decided to let a few of the numerous Email responses provide their editorial on the circumstances.

WSEN welcomes aboard the following new subscribers: Wayne and Janine McCready, AK; Allen's Press Clipping Bureau, WA; John Patterson, AK; Steve Stanley, AK; Larry Dietrick, AK; Julie Kay Smithson, OH; Judi Thurmond, AK; Carlos Bailey, AL; Jim Stratton, AK; Dennis Foster, AK; Gene Therriault, AK; Kathy Stratton, AK; Rene Wolfe, AK; Herb Simon, AK; Emily Clements, SC; Pete and Judy Scorup, AK; Frank and Sheila Kirkland, CA; Mark Loomis, AK; Jenny Rosenbaum, AK.

### **Wrangell St. Elias News**

VOL. Twelve, Issue Four, July & August 2003.

Published every two months at McCarthy, Alaska. McCarthy, PO Box MXY, Glennallen, AK 99588-8998. Phone (907) 554-4454. FAX (907) 554-4494

E-mail:  
[WSEN@starband.net](mailto:WSEN@starband.net).

Copyright © 2003 by Wrangell St. Elias News. No part of this publication may be reproduced by any means without the express permission of the publishers.

Contributors to this issue: George Cebula, Ned Rozell, Lynn Welty, Mike Loso, McCarthy Annie, Susan Smith and Jim Wilder.

Subscription price is \$10 for one year in the USA. Canada \$12.50. Other countries \$20. Advertising rates upon request. Deadline for publication in next issue is August 15.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE  
PAID AT GLENNALLEN,  
AK. 99588.

POSTMASTER: Send  
address changes to  
Wrangell St. Elias News,  
McCarthy, PO Box MXY,  
Glennallen, AK 99588-8998.

# Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

**Don, Lynn, Sarah and Rene Welty:** May for the Welty family was a rush of finishing school, getting the garden planted and adjusting to various summer jobs. The month of June is nearly over but it yielded plenty of fun time visiting with John and Nancy Burtch, Lynn's parents from Xenia, Ohio.

They spent the first week of their Alaskan vacation fishing halibut in the Cook Inlet. The family fishing tournament was a great success. John hauled in the largest fish that weighed 85 lbs. Nancy took second place with her 65 lb. catch. A daily limit of king salmon was taken by everyone on the Gulkana River.

The Burtches timed their McCarthy visit just right. They gave Don and Lynn a helpful hand in preparing the high school graduation ceremony for Granddaughter Sarah on June 20<sup>th</sup>.

Shortly after arriving at the Welty homestead, Nancy spotted Lynn's abundant supply of ripened rhubarb. To Don's utter delight, Nancy's pies and a variety of her special rhubarb desserts were waiting for Don when he returned home from a long day of flying.

I told Nancy that harvesting all that Welty rhubarb sounded like a lot of work to me but she quickly responded, "Don is worth it!"

I'm certain the Welty's enjoyed all those freshly-baked goodies but, most important says Lynn, is the great time they had together as a family.

**Keith and Laurie Rowland and family:** Just up the road from the Weltys, the Rowlands were making their own family

memories with the visit of Laurie's folks, Bob and Joyce Person, of Willow, California. We only had the Persons in our area for a week, but it was a jam-packed visit. A picnic at Kennicott and a combination flightsee and trip to visit Country Rose Pilgrim were a few of the highlights of their trip to our area.

I LOVE meeting the parents of my neighbors! Now I know why Lynn and Laurie make such wonderful friends; they have terrific moms and dads.

**Jim and Peggy Guntis and daughter Kim Northrup:** The Guntis's arrived the first week of June. Frankly, I think it was with great relief for Jim and Peggy to exchange Arizona's 100 degrees for McCarthy's 70-80.

Kim was here for a week-long visit shortly after their arrival. This summer's to-do list is well underway. A fresh coat of paint on walls and floor, a new back porch and the removal of Jim's famous and well-used lift are just a few projects they can mark completed. I have a feeling Peggy has an enormous grin on her face to see the lift outside instead of in her living room!

Jim and Peggy are now getting ready for a visit from Jim's daughter, Sally, and her husband Scott. I'm sure Jim is busy planning various excursions for his family.

With my mom's arrival on June 11<sup>th</sup>, our weekly game night of Rummikube with Peggy has officially begun. Kim also joined us. Jim and Rick started up their Thursday night chess game.

The neighborhood is getting into summer mode once again. Welcome back, Peggy, Jim, Kim,

and, of course, my mom!

**Peggy Morasch:** I was pleasantly surprised to see Peggy and her two dogs stroll up to our cabin today. Peggy drove the Alcan, accompanied by her friend, Ann, from Tennessee. Ann tagged along so she could get a closer look at this marvelous state and wishes her stay here could be extended. Peggy plans on being at her McCarthy home through the month of July. Another welcome and congratulations on your successful trip, Peggy.

**Doug Ford:** Doug and his brother, Jeff, are at Doug's nearby cabin as well. We had a brief visit with them and then they were off on a hike-in-the-backcountry adventure. They returned on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July in time to take in some of the McCarthy festivities.

Jeff is from Idaho and although he enjoys the mountains in his neck of the woods, he is quite impressed with Doug's choice of a home-away-from-home. He gave Doug a welcome hand at constructing bunk beds and making the cabin more habitable for family and friends. I'm sure both fellows are returning to their homes with numerous memories of their trip to Alaska and the McCarthy area.

**Troy Hvass:** Troy is thoroughly enjoying sharing the summer season with his friend Michelle Casey and her two children, Tracey and Carl. Michelle is waitressing at McCarthy Lodge and Tracey and Carl are babysitting for Betty and Lane's son Kaylan who seems to be quite taken with his new overseers. Welcome to the area, Michelle, Tracey and Carl!

**Neil O Donnell and daughter Catherine:** With each welcome I write, I can not help but think of someone else who is visiting or has recently visited the area. I'm sure I won't get everyone in this month's items, so please forgive me if I leave you out. Our little town has swelled for a season with summer neighbors and holiday visitors.

Neil and Catherine are two familiar faces to the area who always look forward to staying a spell in their cabin. Catherine, 6, had a grand time at the July 5<sup>th</sup> McCarthy parade. Participants in the parade showered the bystanders with candy and even coins. I couldn't help notice Catherine busy at work filling her backpack with all sorts of bounty. In fact, several onlookers gave Catherine a hand. She seemed quite pleased with the extra help.

**Dolan and JoAnn Collins:** Dolan and JoAnn stopped by the other day for propane and a nice visit. JoAnn and the town of McCarthy go back a long ways when she was a part owner in the McCarthy Lodge. Now her son, Doug Miller, is part owner and operator.

The Collins arrived here from their home in Yakima, Wa. a couple of weeks ago. They have a cabin in Kennicott not far up the road from another son, Jim Miller. Dolan and JoAnn love the area and hope to retire here in the future.

JoAnn says they are staying busy clearing some of their property to enhance their gorgeous view of the glacier.

Thanks for taking the time to visit, JoAnn and Dolan! Have a wonderful stay in the McCarthy/Kennicott area.

**Copper Oar:** Rafting is a seasonal activity in our area and Copper Oar has already geared up for a busy 2003. Gaia Thurston-Shaine, guide for

Copper Oar, in preparation for a custom trip to the Upper Nizina, stopped by for propane and to introduce us to manager Leo Durand of Maui. Leo has guided for Destination Wilderness, owner of Copper Oar, on trips all over the world.

An abundance of multi-day trips are booked, says Gaia, and the season is looking better than she can recall in past years.

Other guides are Jodi Shephard, Rick Petter and Chelle Crowder. Gaia's parting words to me and you, if you are in the area were: Hope to see ya on the river.

Have a great season, Copper Oar!

**Roadside Potato:** If you've ever visited McCarthy, I'm sure you are acquainted with our own Roadside Potato. A lot of good food is sampled from this local eatery and has been for several years now. Denise Jantz, the original owner and operator, has finally decided to pass the potato to colleague and friend, Stephanie Peikert (also widely known as Spuddy).

A potluck and celebration to transfer the Potato and to witness the dubbing of Denise to the knight of the spud order was held on July 1 at the toe of the glacier. Nearly 60 people attended the grand festivity.

The ceremony rites were performed by Paul Barrett and Gary Green. Paul officiated the transfer; Gary Green, the dubbing which was performed with a hot dog on a stick.

Lots of good food most of which was prepared by (you can guess) the potatoheads and, as you can see by this item, much fun, laughter and, yes, a few tears were had by all.

Congratulations to both young ladies: Stephanie to her new position as owner and operator of the Roadside Potato

and to Denise as she moves on to expand her rental cabin business to an additional location on the McCarthy Road. We expect great things out of these two young entrepreneurs!

**Baby Announcements:** May was certainly baby month for three ladies in the community. Each mother is celebrating the births of baby girls. We are pleased to announce and congratulate the following mothers for a job well done!

**Athena Swinford and Aaron Hall** gave birth to a healthy 6 lb. baby on May 17 at their cabin across McCarthy Creek. Elishaba and Papa Pilgrim assisted with the delivery of Gypsy Princess which is only a nickname at the present time until a final version is chosen.



**Elizabeth Schafer and Howard Mozen** are proud parents for the second time around. A 9 lb. 4 oz. baby was born on May 24 at 10:35 a.m. at their home in Anchorage. Baby Moose (another temporary





nickname) came into the world at 21 ½ inches long with a full head of brown hair.

**Michelle Niland** is the proud mother of a 6 lb. 15 oz. baby girl named Leka who was born May 24 at 10:52 pm at her cabin located near the Nizina. She is a beautiful, sweet baby and growing every day, exclaimed Michelle.

Rick was able to take a photo of mother and baby, but somehow it got lost in the world of digital marvels. Our apologies to all.

**Adam and Becca Adams** are the proud parents of their first baby girl. Amelia was born May 14 at 3:55 pm at Elmendorf AFB Alaska. Amelia weighed 7 lb. 5 oz. Adam is John Adams' son. Our congratulations go out to the entire Adams family.

**Jürgen Ogodnik:** Jürgen stopped by the other day and provided us with some good news that I wanted to pass on to all our readers. Jürgen is working on a brand new CD with his well-known and accomplished classical guitar music. Be on the lookout for news of its availability for purchase. We know you will want to get your own copy and stock up for future gifts for friends and family. Stay tuned!!

**Denise Jantz:** Since Denise sold Roadside Potato to Stephanie Peikert (Spuddy), I thought she just might kick her feet up for awhile and take a much-needed vacation. Wrong! She is busy at work enlarging her cabin rental business—more cabins on a new lot ½ mile from the footbridge. A successful 80' well was dug by Kirk and Linda Shively of Sourdough Drilling on Denise's new location.

Mona and Al Jantz, Denise's parents, are due to arrive on June 23 bringing Denise's sister, Roberta, and Roberta's 3 children, Tara, Brenna and

Kenny.

I've concluded that Denise is just too busy to take a vacation!

**Patrick and Kathleen (Nelson) Gainey:** What a pleasant surprise to have Patrick and Nelson back in the neighborhood. They had been living in Bond, Colorado, but decided their McCarthy home was where they'd rather be. The Gainey's brought their new dog, Irish, who is making himself right at home. Nelson is presently working for McCarthy Air in the office. She and Patrick are preparing to return to McMurdo Station in the Antarctic for another stint this fall/winter.

Welcome home, Mr. and Mrs. Gainey!

**Brooks, Diane and Ian Ludwig:** The Ludwigs are off to a new adventure. Brooks has taken a new job in Fairbanks so they have packed up their belongings and headed to the big city. They are currently living in a townhouse up on Chena Ridge surrounded by a stand of birch trees. Brooks is 10 minutes from his job with Alaska State Parks. Diane said to pass on to her friends their new address: PO Box 82496, Fairbanks, AK. 99708.

Because Brooks' new job is year-round, we may not be seeing their smiling faces as often (especially during the winters) as we have in the past. For that we are sorry.

We are assured, however, that between email and postal service we will stay in touch. Keep those emails coming our way, Diane! We are eagerly awaiting more good news from your new neck of the woods.

**McCarthy Kennicott Community Church gives THANKS:** On the late evening of Thursday, May 29<sup>th</sup> a fire broke out in the church's generator building but was quickly and

efficiently extinguished by town residents. Our sincere thanks goes out to every person who sounded the alarm, running to the rescue, saving the generators and the majority of the building and keeping the fire from spreading to the church building.

Thanks to the Pilgrim family and John Adams' generosity in providing building materials and labor, the generator building and generator was up and running in time for Sunday morning service.

Everyone's efforts are greatly appreciated by us all!

**McCarthy/Kennicott residents and visitors say thanks:** While many of us wait for the upgrade to the McCarthy Road, we cannot help but be grateful and say so for the tremendous work done on our behalf to keep the road open and safe to those who live in and visit our area.

Our thanks go out to the Chitina maintenance station DOT operators and our local grader operator, Lane Moffitt. You guys are appreciated more than you know!

**Year-round taxi service for the Copper Valley:** Ed and Suzanne Wilson of Backcountry Connection in Glennallen have announced that they are now offering a year-round taxi for the Copper Valley. They are also offering jumpstarts and deliveries. Their rates for Glennallen and Copper Center are \$2.00/per person and \$1.00/per mile. Rates for other areas will be discussed when a call is made to 822-5292. This service is being made available to individuals as well as businesses and corporate business accounts can be set up for monthly billing.

Their service hours are 7 am to 8 pm; however, for emergency purposes, they are offering 24-hour service.

## Accident claims one life badly injures another

BY BONNIE KENYON

**McCarthy:** McCarthy resident Richard Villa and long-time visitor and local land owner, Christopher (Chris) Williams, were involved in a serious paragliding accident on the early evening of June 12 at the toe of the Kennicott Glacier.

According to those who participated in the rescue of the two injured men, a tremendous

amount of cooperation among Kennicott/McCarthy residents, summer employees and a few tourists visiting the area, expedited on-the-scene medical attention and transportation to medical facilities.

Pilots Gary Green, of McCarthy Air, and Jason Lobo of Wrangell Mountain Air, assisted in flying Richard and Chris to Gulkana where they were met by

ambulance and quickly medivaced to Providence Alaska Medical Center in Anchorage.

Both men survived the accident but sustained serious injuries. Chris Williams died of his injuries on June 23. Richard Villa spent 21 days in the hospital and underwent 3 major operations. He remains in Anchorage while he recuperates.

## McCarthy/Kennicott come together, raise funds

BY BONNIE KENYON

**McCarthy:** Local residents, businesses and visitors alike joined forces to raise financial support for the victims of the June 11<sup>th</sup> paragliding accident which claimed one life and seriously injured another.

On June 14<sup>th</sup> a local 7-member band called Midget Ridge gathered at Tailor Made Pizza in downtown McCarthy to play music and collect much-needed funds on behalf of Richard Villa and Chris Williams. Tremendous flight-related and medical expenses have occurred

and folks turned out in great numbers to show their support of the cause. According to Jeremy Cohen, mandolin player with Midget Ridge, \$375 was raised.

A dance was held on June 20 at Kennicott and \$233 was collected.

Jeannie Miller, owner and operator of Tailor Made Pizza, opened her doors June 28<sup>th</sup> to a silent auction for the sole purpose of providing additional funds to help cover transportation costs and other related expenses. Music was provided by

Jurgen Ogrodnik and other local musicians. Businesses and locals alike offered services, and merchandise for auction to the highest bidder. A total of \$5082 was raised. Other donations amounting to \$1485 were added as well, giving a grand total of \$7175 which has been distributed between Richard Villa and Chris Williams family.

Everyone thanks Jeannie Miller and Jeremy Cohen for heading up these fund raising events.

## Inaugural Kennecott Solstice Dance a Success

MICHAEL LOSO

The first ever Kennecott Solstice Dance was held on Friday evening, June 20, at the Kennecott Community Recreation Hall. Nearly 80 local residents and visitors showed up to celebrate the completed renovation of this historic landmark, adding their steps to its time-worn (but recently refinished!) mining-era floorboards. Caller Natalie Cabrera skillfully led beginners and experts alike through the basic steps of an old-fashioned

contra dance, and dancers of all ages filled the hall with stomping feet, clapping hands, and laughter.

The band, Midget Ridge, was composed of familiar McCarthy residents: Karen Bembien and Chelle Crowder, fiddles; Jeremy Cohen, mandolin; Chris Epton, washtub bass; Mike Loso, banjo; Diane Malik, flute; and Rob Terwilliger, guitar. They played two full sets of traditional southern Appalachian, New England, and Irish dance tunes. Originally conceiving the dance

as a fundraiser for local nonprofit organizations, the musicians ultimately decided to donate dance proceeds to the care of friends and local residents Richard Villa and Chris Williams, who were involved in a tragic accident two weeks before. Dancers generously emptied their pockets, raising \$233.00.

The dance was a big success, and we'd like to thank everyone involved. In particular, we'd like to thank the National Park Service and Friends of Kennicott for funding the renovation of

Service and Friends of Kennicott for funding the renovation of Kennecott's historic Community Recreation Hall, all our friends

on the maintenance crew who put their hard work into the renovation, and NPS ranger

Stephens Harper for making this cooperative community event so easy.

## Richard Villa – full of gratitude and thanksgiving

BY BONNIE KENYON

Surviving a terrible paragliding accident on June 11, which resulted in loss of 2 units of blood, 3 major injuries to his neck, skull and eye, local resident, Richard Villa, is overflowing with thanksgiving.

"I am so grateful and lucky to be alive—thankful for all the prayers and the support from everyone. Everyday I'm feeling better and stronger," commented Richard in a recent telephone conversation. Even the condo where he and

companion, Yosheko, are presently staying in Anchorage, is a gift from someone who cares. Richard said he was in very "fragile condition" but is receiving "excellent care" from Yosheko.

Richard spent 2 ½ days in Intensive Care and a 21-day stay in Providence Alaska Medical Center where he underwent 3 major operations – one lasting 5 hours, another 2 ½ hours – to repair a broken neck, deep cuts in his scalp and forehead and a damaged eye.

Richard commended the local responders for their expertise in medical attention at the scene of the accident and for the speed in which he was transported to Anchorage. He estimates the accident occurred somewhere between 4 and 5 pm and by 12:30 am he was in surgery in Anchorage.

Richard foresees a long recovery ahead but promised a return to his McCarthy home and friends as soon as possible!

## Good turnout for 4<sup>th</sup> festivities

Lots of sun, fun and celebration marked the Fourth of July festivities at McCarthy which stretched into a two-day celebration. On the 4th the Pilgrim family's "Wagon Rides," complete with covered wagon and horse team, was seen often taking tourists and locals on a jaunt around town.

At noon on the 5th the Kennicott Marching Band began the annual parade off with their patriotic tunes getting everyone into the holiday spirit.



Following the parade was an afternoon packed with games: pie eating contest, nail pounding contest, the Flying Potato teeter, Egg toss and the Potato Walk.

Historical presentations were featured at the McCarthy Lodge by Dick Anderson and Jim Edwards.

A public barbecue was served at the lodge with the Tall Tales contest rounding out the festivities.

# In Which, NPS Gets a S.W.A.T.

BY MCCARTHY ANNIE

MONDAY, JUNE 23, 2003-

*Ring & Ring & Ring &  
McCarthy Lodge-Neil here.*

Do you know the Pilgrims?

Yes, of course! They're our neighbors.

The stranger's voice hesitated, then dropped to a hushed murmur. Do you know anything about their, uh, situation?

Well, I know they're having problems with the Park Service.

There was a moment of silence on the other end of the line. Then, as if driven by some inner resolve, the mysterious voice pressed determinedly on,

You don't know who I am. I've just come from a federal office, where I overheard something that you guys in McCarthy ought to know. The Park Service is coming out there to survey the Pilgrims' land *and they're going to bring a S.W.A.T. Team with them!*

Click.

Neil stared at the telephone receiver, stunned. His mind raced back to mid-April, when the NPS had posted their now infamous Public Notices around our nearly deserted little hamlet. One of these notices had claimed that the historic McCarthy-Green Butte Trail was an illegally bulldozed road, and had closed it to motor vehicles. This caused a furor among us McCarthyites, since most of us are well aware of the RS2477 status of this road, and what that means to our right to travel on it. We are also well aware that the McCarthy-Green Butte Trail serves as the Pilgrim Family driveway. To cut off this road is to blockade and lay siege

to an innocent family. But you can read about that in a story called *In Which, NPS Rewrites History & Law*.

There had been another notice, however, which announced the NPS intention to conduct a land-based survey of the boundaries between the Pilgrims' homestead and the park. This sounded reasonable at the time, and aroused only a minimal amount of interest among us McCarthy folks. In the wake of the illegal road closure, a taxpayer-funded survey of property boundaries seemed relatively benign. What could be menacing in this?

Little did we know.

One man in McCarthy had an inkling of what sorts of shenanigans those parkies might try to pull off. Papa Pilgrim had already attended several classes at the NPS School of Hard Knocks, where for some reason, the professors kept referring to him as the Subject. At the NPS School of Hard Knocks, he had learned that the main goal of the men in green uniforms was to knock Pilgrim Hard, hard enough to eject him and his kin from the most coveted piece of real estate on the NPS wish list. Which Pilgrim owns.

A digression: Let me tell you more about this renowned institute of higher park learning, as you may want to consider the NPS School of H.K. as an option for your child's future education. On both the undergraduate and post-grad levels, classes mainly center on Methods & Philosophy of Lands Acquisition. A listing of classes would include such titles as:

Public Disinformation 101 (or, Manipulating Public Opinion to Alienate the Subject)

Simplified Easement Vacation Procedures 102 (or, Road Closures to Isolate the Subject)

Legal Interpretations 103 (or, Manipulating and Fabricating Laws to Incriminate the Subject)

Uniform Code of Etiquette 104 (or, Flak Jacket Subject Intimidation Strategies)

Fallacies of Private Property Rights 105 (by rights, it all belongs to the Park NOT the Subject)

On the post-graduate level, classes are thematically similar to the undergrad course, but with a more advanced scope of study. For example, classes include:

Lies, Slander & Rumor Mongering 401 (an in-depth continuation of Pub. Disinform. 101)

Special Weapons And Tactics (S.W.A.T.) 404, recently renamed Special Events Team (S.E.T.) (or, When Subject is Uncooperative, Send In The Military)

Of course, all classes include lab and field work. On-the-job training is freely provided at high cost to the taxpayer and the Subject.

With all of this hard-won strategic NPS education knocking about in his head, Pilgrim and his family set about drafting an official Pilgrim reply to this Survey Notice. In their response, the Pilgrims stated that they agreed to the survey, and proposed several requests.

First and foremost, they set



as a condition that *NPS may not trespass* on Pilgrim land during the survey. Now, before you go off half-cocked and start thinking those Pilgrims are being hostile and unreasonable, let me clear a little matter up for you. You see, the Park Service doesn't do the actual surveying— all government land surveys are done by Bureau of Land Management people, who are generally nice, honest surveyors and haven't been anywhere near the NPS School of H.K. Quite *normal* fellows, you know. So the Pilgrims' intent was to be helpful, even hospitable to the BLM folks, but to prevent NPS rangers from taking advantage of the situation to gain access to their home.

Other parts of the response read somewhat like this: *Pilgrims will offer Room & Board to surveyors guaranteeing their nice & enjoyable stay (Pilgrims compliments)*. And this: *Surveyors may hire locally chartered flights (Wrangell Mountain Air or McCarthy Air) to land on Pilgrims' private runway*. And this: *The Pilgrim Family may also accompany the surveyors*.

The letter ended thus: *And all done in Jesus' Name* (Signed) *the Pilgrim Family*.

Just to be sure they hadn't missed anything, and to get community input and help on this letter, Pilgrim passed a copy around to several of his friends. We all agreed that it was fair, reasonable, and really quite gracious, all things considered.

And so, at a town meeting on April 18, this response was read publicly before a packed lodge, then hand-delivered to Park Super. Gary Candelaria, Asst. Super. & Head Ranger Hunter Sharp, and Ranger Marshall Neeck. You may have heard their

names before, as these three are distinguished professors at the famous NPS School of H.K. and have visited our community before to carry out various field trials and lab experiments on their Subjects.

Weeks went by, the survey thing was relegated to a back shelf, and we all got back to doing what we each do best around here. Seems like what the Pilgrims do best is helping their neighbors and spreading cheer and random acts of kindness around our neck of the woods.

One night, a few of us were gathered in the bar at the McCarthy Lodge. It started out as an unremarkable evening. An affable game of pool was keeping Tom and Ian busy. Adam had been in the game earlier, but had stepped outside for some fresh air. Someone had found an old hula hoop, and a few of us were making a Serious and Purely Intellectual Effort at reviving the ancient art of well hula hooping, I guess you'd say. Layla the Pug Dog had just made her Nightly Run through the bar, when Adam stepped abruptly back into the room. Randy says the church is on fire, he calmly announced. I'm gonna go check it out.

So much for the unremarkable evening. I've never seen a bar empty out so fast, especially considering that we all were racing pell-mell *for the church*, of all things!

By the time we all straggled over there, Joshua and David Pilgrim had nearly put the fire out. They hadn't been with us at the bar (as a matter of fact, those Pilgrims never set foot in the bar), but had been doing some work by the river when the

smoke and flames started. They had made a desperate dash toward the church and thrown themselves bodily into the burning building, hoping to save it. As it turns out, the building which was burning was only the church's generator shed, but the boys plunged in nevertheless, grabbed both generators, and drug them outside. Then, heedless of the peril, they dove back into the inferno and emerged a moment later clutching full 5-gallon gas cans. And not a moment to spare, either—the plastic can that Joshua had rescued was already softening, and hot to the touch.

We quickly formed a bucket brigade and tossed a little water on the shed, but with the Pilgrim Volunteer Fire Team hard at work, there didn't seem to be much else for us all to do. And so one by one we meandered back to the Lodge and tended to the drinks we'd so hastily left behind.

A few days later we learned that those same Pilgrim boys, along with some others, went back to the church the next day and *completely rebuilt the generator shed!*

Typical Pilgrims.

Another time, a little girl in our community took a bad fall while playing outdoors. Hannah suffered a severe concussion, and after two days was still in pretty tough shape, white as a sheet and horizontal when not puking. As soon as the Pilgrims learned of their little pal's misfortune, several of them showed up at the door of her cabin bearing gifts of medicine, cookies, herb tea, hugs, advice and, most importantly, love and prayer for their special friend. As Elishaba held the barely-conscious girl and

the others gathered around, grief and deep concern etched themselves deeply into each face.

A day and a half later, when Hannah ambled smiling into the Pilgrims McCarthy camp, 11-year-old Job could hardly contain himself. Straightening up from the snowmachine he'd been tinkering on, he blurted out in astonishment, *Is that Hannah?!* Then, realizing it was indeed her, raised practically from the dead, he dashed straight to her, and then stopped, struggling to suppress the urge to throw his arms around her. How ya feelin', Hannah? came his solicitous query, as he searched her face anxiously.

I'm doing fine!

Oh, good & I was real worried about ya. Then, his composure completely gone, he dashed toward their cabin, shouting, ELISHABA! HANNAH'S HERE!

After a friendly visit and hugs all around, Hannah left. As she walked out the door, Elishaba said, I love you, Hannah. Goodbye. Then at the bottom of the porch stairs, 4-year-old Lamb's voice sang sweetly out, I wuv you, Hannah! Finally, as she rounded the back corner of the cabin and headed out to the road, Hannah caught the huskier tones of Job's voice drifting out. *Ah love ya, Hannah &*

Normal, everyday, loving Pilgrims.

The other day I stopped in for tea up at the homestead. Country Rose and I chatted, and Job passed around some delectable fudge, which he had made himself, starting with building the fire in the old-fashioned wood cook stove. 13-year-old Hosanna,

with practiced eye and lightning fingers, nimbly set to work at the old treadle sewing machine. By the time I bid my fond farewells an hour or two later, she had, *completely from scratch and without a pattern*, sewn me a beautiful, Pilgrim-style dress. Later, upon trying the dress on, I discovered that it was a *perfect* fit.

#### Quintessential Pilgrims.

You can't outgive a Pilgrim, either. Last fall, some of the neighbors lent a few canning jars to them after Elishaba, Jerusalem, and Hosanna shot a moose. Now, canning jars aren't exactly what you'd call a high-value item. Everyone's got seads of them littering pantries, kitchens, woodsheds, you name it. No matter to the Pilgrims soon after the jars went up the mountain to be used as extra freezer space for that big moose, return gifts began trickling down the mountain. There was a haunch of moose (the best cut from the hind-quarter), a box of cookies, fresh things from their garden, a gallon of that morning's goat milk, along with some homemade cheese.

All that for a few old canning jars!

Yep, random acts of kindness is what the Pilgrims do best. So-o-o-o &.. What was this about a S.W.A.T. Team Survey??? Sounded really nutso, and just a tad bit well scary to us McCarthyites. Everyone knows the Pilgrims are kind, gentle, pacifist types who'd never hurt anyone, so *why this?*

Heck, I've always been under the impression that S.W.A.T. Teams were specially reserved for performing dangerous fully

armored offensive maneuvers to bring back, dead or alive, the violent drug-laced psychotic hostage-taking outlaws from their desperate flight across the forbidding desert wastes of & well, you get the idea.

I guess I don't need to tell you that Neil had himself a real first-class quandary, what with the information he'd just learned, the mysterious nature of the call, wondering if it was some kind of hoax or practical joke or was the caller just some crackpot Black Helicopter Club flunkie who'd had a few too many?

And then he remembered. Two friends of his, Rick and Keith, were scheduled to meet with Hunter Sharp the next day, to talk over the access & roads situation. Likely Professor Sharp or one of his colleagues was the brains behind this little, uh, *plan*. Surely Neil's friends would enjoy adding a little *er surprise* to the meeting agenda. Neil picked up the phone and dialed Rick's number.

Have you ever seen one of those police detective shows where they've caught one of the bad guys and are grilling him to get information on the other villains plans, whereabouts, M.O., and other highly technical cop stuff? Where the bad guy is a real tough nut to crack and the handsome, uniformed interrogators have to pry every scrap of info out of him? Well, the meeting between Hunter, Rick and Keith was sort of like that, only the guy in the uniform was the one in the hot seat, instead of the other way around.

Rick: What about this survey up at Green Butte, Hunter?

Hunter: (Confused) The survey up at Green Butte &?

Rick: Yeah, we had a paper from you saying you were going up there to do a survey. Do you remember that?

Hunter: Ah! What I'm going to do-(oops!) not *I*, but the *Park* is to come out the 15<sup>th</sup> of June with a group of *ologists*, and we'll walk up the road.

Keith: Walk up McCarthy Creek?

Hunter: Yeah. We'll just put them on the ground, let them walk a section, [helicopter] over the creek, walk another section &

R: Who are these what did you call them *ologists*?

H: Well & A botanist or two, a cultural archaeologist & or two, a geologist & And they'll go up the creek on the road, and they will measure it and see what's been disturbed & We'll see what it comes to.

R: How many biologists?

H: Ummm & I think one biologist, a couple of botanists, uh, a fisheries person &

R: Anybody else? This isn't even the survey crew!

H: Well, yes & At the Marvelous Millsite, we'll put in a 3-person BLM survey crew, who will do the boundaries of the millsite and Spokane Placer.

(McCarthy Annie, here: For those of you who are completely cross-eyed with confusion over all these places and names, just try to remember that anytime these guys get to jawin' about the road or the creek, they're really talking about the McCarthy-Green Butte Trail, or the McCarthy Creek Trail, which you'll remember from my last tale of treachery around these parts. Marvelous Millsite, Spokane Placer and Motherlode Mine can all be translated Pilgrim's Place. Hope that

clears it up for ya, and now let's get back to The Inquisition &)

Rick: OK, so the rangers won't be accompanying them?

Hunter: Well, yeah, we'll be accompanying the group that goes up to the millsite, and we'll also be accompanying the other group.

Keith: So there'll be rangers with both groups? Armed rangers?

H: That's right.

K: How many?

H: Welllll &. I don't think we've made up our mind.

R: Have you contacted any outside agencies for assistance?

H: Yes.

R: Who?

H: The U.S. Marshall Service, the FBI, the Alaska State Troopers & Oh, we've just talked to them about what we're doing, but we're not necessarily asking them to come with us, we've just *talked* to them.

R: So, you have not contacted anybody to bring a SWAT team up there?

H: NO! & Well, what we have done is, we've told those other federal agencies what we're up to, and invited them to accompany us if they feel they need to. There's no indication that *that* sort of thing is going to happen.

R: Well, there is some indication that it *will* happen, Hunter.

H: (All innocence.) *What* will happen?

R: That there's a SWAT team.

H: Well & there's a Park Service team we call a Special Events Team. We use them when we need a group of folks who've practiced together.

R: A Special Events Team?

H: Yeah &

R: And they're going up?

H: Uh, huh.

K: How many of *them* is there?

H: Ummm & Between 6 and 8.

K: Are you sending rangers in addition to the Special Events Team?

H: Yes.

K: How many?

H: I haven't decided yet.

Stunned silence. *This is w-a-a-a-y too bizarre. What else did they have up their sleeve? Tanks? With an effort, Rick gathered himself and plunged back in.*

R: What about this Special Events Team? Six to eight SWAT-type guys?

H: They're *not* SWAT guys. We *don't* have a SWAT team. I *told* you what they were, they're a Special Events Team. They are just people who work together to provide crowd control, that kind of thing.

R: (Bewildered) W - w - why? These are peaceful people with *little children*, Hunter!

H: (Somewhat peevish.) The document they sent us said we could not trespass!

K: But they invited the BLM surveyors onto their property!

R: (Outraged.) *Are you guys trying to have another Ruby Ridge?*

H: Naw &

R: Well, it sure looks like it.

H: Hey, we're just trying to protect the Pilgrims!

*PROTECT THE PILGRIMS?! Like a pack of wolves (6-8, trained to work together and provide crowd control) protects all the newborn baby*

caribou! There are *babies* on that mountain, remember? I ask you, beloved reader, how would *you* have responded to this?

**T**he first order of business was to find out more about this S.E.T. Team, since none of us had ever heard of such a thing before. We did a little poking around, and, when all was said and done, we weren't real surprised at what we found. Directly speaking, a S.E.T. Team is really a S.W.A.T. Team, except they work for the NPS instead of State Police or BAT&F. And they're *trained* to work together, all right with their Special Weapons And Tactics, to perform dangerous fully armored offensive maneuvers (read *hostile takeovers*) to bring back, dead or alive, the violent drug-laced psychotic hostage-taking outlaws (read *inholders*) from their desperate flight across the forbidding forested mountains of & well, you get the idea.

The next order of business for the Pilgrims and for those of us who take a dim view of the Park's harassment tactics was to put our bushy heads together and hammer out some kind of plan. Those park monkeys had gotten out of their barrel, and it looked like it was up to us to stuff 'em back in.

What we came up with was a three-prong plan. First, we would launch a nationwide news and media campaign. If those green-vests knew that their activities up on the purple mountain majesties were being watched by hundreds of thousands of freedom-loving citizens across the fruited plain, then, by golly, I would suspect that they'd be just a tad bit more

*restrained* than what they had, perhaps, planned.

Second, we decided to let some of our state politicians in on those parkies' dirty little secrets. The way we figured it, a little well-placed political pressure on behalf of honest, hard-working Alaskans could not possibly be remiss.

As an added measure of security, we planned to send as many locals as possible up to the homestead, carrying video cameras, tape recorders, still cameras, notebooks *whatever it would take* to make those flak-jacketed protectors feel naked and exposed. For you see, if there's one thing we've learned about Professors Candelaria and Sharp, it is that they prefer to do their lab experiments on only one Subject at a time. When the whole town shows up for a pep rally, class usually gets canceled. Or at least postponed &

**A**s it turned out, our three-prong plan worked to perfection. Inside one week, the NPS had already back-paddled so hard, their skid marks had formed a new riverbed in the McCarthy Creek valley floor.

Let me allow Robert Arnberger (NPS Alaska Head Honcho and Revered Guest Lecturer for Public Disinformation 101 and other NPSSHK classes), tell you about it in his own words. Here's what he disinforming his own people in an NPS memo dated 6/4: (*AHEM!*)

The National Park Service plan for undertaking the survey and resource assessment has been constantly evolving in response to a fast-changing adversarial environment in McCarthy.

*Adversarial environment?*

Hey, all we were doing was passing information on to our politicians and fellow citizens. If that's adversarial, what would you call the SWAT Team, or the unspecified number of armed rangers?

Arnberger continued:

Recent decisions have focused on accomplishing the survey as the highest priority and carrying it out in the least confrontational manner possible. At present a 3 - 4 person surveying team & will be helicoptered to the property and allowed to do their work. No other work is planned concurrent with this survey.

Or, putting it in Plain English for those of us who've been skipping class: The McCarthy savages have caught wind of our plan and are now getting hostile and brandishing keyboards and telephones dangerously, so we've changed our mind about Sending In The Military. So, everyone go home except the surveyors, and we can all pat ourselves on the back for the extreme restraint we've exercised to avoid what surely would have been a violent and tragic confrontation.

Right.

**L**ast I saw of those BLM surveyors, they were sitting around the gigantic, rough-hewn timber table in Country Rose's kitchen, three or four fresh cookies in one hand and a mug of fresh, hot, black coffee in the other.

Yessirree, fellas, those boys were holdin' their guts and smilin'.

*And not a ranger in the valley!*

# Pilgrim family center of media attention

BY RICK KENYON

When the National Park Service hung posters around McCarthy last April 8 stating that the McCarthy Green Butte road was illegal, few suspected that it would lead to national attention just a few months later.

As we go to press with this issue of WSEN, the Pilgrim/NPS controversy has been the subject of an *Anchorage Daily News* article, an 11-minute TV news story on *KTUU* in Anchorage, a major story by Sarah Foster at *WorldNetDaily*, two segments on Alaska Public Radio and an editorial at the *Anchorage Voice of the Times*. (Not to mention the numerous WSEN articles, including the always entertaining, continuing saga by McCarthy Annie.)

Jason Moore, of *KTUU*, spent two days filming at McCarthy and the Pilgrim family home. His 11 minute news feature starts and ends with the Pilgrim family's wonderful harmony as they pick and sing what they like to call Gospelgrass music.

We had a wonderful time minding our own business, working with our hands, Pilgrim says. We were never in conflict or whatever. We just simply were shepherds. We grew our food. We made our soap. We made our bread, everything. We tanned our hides. We grew up working and loving, spent a lot of time in the spirit with the Lord, and we became a real strong, unified family. Then one day, the Lord told us to go to Alaska.

The Pilgrim family figured it would be the perfect place to live a simple life, says commentator Jason, minding their own business. But they've become the

center of one of the most divisive controversies in this area since the park's creation.

We thought Moore did an excellent job on the story. The only real factual problem was not Jason's doing. Candelaria says the park became concerned when rangers noticed clearing around the Pilgrim property that appeared to be on park land, Jason says. Then, this spring, they found a 14-mile scar—a road bulldozed from the Pilgrim property to the town of McCarthy, right through the national park.

Funny, having lived here for over 25 years and having seen that road every year, I find it amazing that our park superintendent can continue telling the story that the Pilgrim family created that scar—that is in reality an 80-year-old mining road. Or that people would continue to believe the tale.

Several local residents were featured. This is what the big fear going on here is, that we're losing our rights and we're actually, once we enter into a negotiation, we get put under covenants and under a fee process to access your own property, said Doug Miller, another McCarthy resident.

Bureau of Land Management surveyors had been busy trying to find the boundaries between park land and the Pilgrim's Mother Lode Mine. The film crew were with Papa Pilgrim when he learned some disturbing news of the BLM survey results.

We were actually able to find the marker today, one of his sons told him.

Is that a corner?

That's the corner to the top

side of our property.

That's the top corner? Oh, my goodness.

If you go due south, it puts this corner from right here, it puts that corner right straight through half of our house there.

Oh, so they're going to cut our house in two, huh?

Hardly what this family, trying to mind its own business expected, living in the wilderness, says Moore. But they plan to work through the challenges.

Papa even explains the basis for the Pilgrim name, on-camera.

The life and land where I live is like a temporary thing, says Papa Pilgrim. I'm still reaching forward to that heavenly kingdom that is promised Christians, the basis of this country, and I'm a pilgrim, a stranger in that sense. That's what the Scriptures say we are, and it just seemed so beautiful that I was a pilgrim. And one day someone asked me my name and I said I'm Pilgrim. So it's as simple as that.

The next morning began a two-part story by Sarah Foster at *WorldNetDaily* (WND.com) called *Park Wars*. Part one introduces the Pilgrim family, talks about their reception by the residents of McCarthy and the family's reluctance to talk with local NPS officials.

... from the time they began work at their homestead they found themselves being drawn into a contentious relationship with the NPS characterized by surveillance, unexpected prohibitions on the use of their road and slanderous rumors, writes Foster.

Part one ends with a quote of



Chuck Cushman, founder and executive director of the American Land Rights Association.

The bottom line is these guys have to be able to get to their property, Cushman declared. They've got to have access, and the Park Service keeps throwing barriers in their way. All of them sound legitimate, all of them sound reasonable, and all of them, for the most part, are not consistent with what was intended by Congress when they passed ANILCA.

Part two starts out detailing the plans for use of a Special Events Team at the Pilgrim homesite.

Although technically not a SWAT team, writes Foster, it would be a squad of armed law-enforcement rangers with extensive training and top-notch skills that would augment the park's regular ranger force. Prompt action by Internet activists rallied support for the Pilgrims and forced the Park Service to scrub the operation and scale back plans for resource damage assessment. At least for now. But their problems are far from over. In fact, they are just beginning.

The well-documented story tells of the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act and how its protections are eroding. Ray Kreig has extensive experience at Kantishna, and is a

member of the Federal Oversight Committee.

Kreig said although people living in parks and those with mining claims believed their access to be guaranteed, the federal government officials had their hands behind their backs and their fingers crossed it was a trick. The bureaucrats figured they'd get their way later.

The driving intention behind all this is to obtain an inholder's land, according to Kreig, and the strategy seems to be to look for trivial disruption of the environment a depressed tussock or some willow brush cut that's grown over the trail and declare, That is damage, that's resource damage. You have to apply for a permit. You can't do that. We're going to seize your vehicle.

Kreig said that at Kantishna in Denali Park as in Wrangell-St. Elias the Park Service has wasted utterly wasted millions of dollars screwing around out there with helicopter monitoring, sending teams of scientists and biologists and geologists out there, spying on landowners and users while at the same time constantly complaining that they don't have money for visitor centers or maintenance.

Foster talks about the NPS efforts to keep access to a minimum by limiting access to both McCarthy and the rest of the park.

The behind-the-scenes lobbying by the park bureaucracy of a state agency to hamper access has fueled a widespread perception that the NPS wants to decrease the number of visitors to the park's interior, since one way to accomplish that would be to make it difficult or impossible to get there and once there, to move about, she writes.

Foster then details the closing of the McCarthy-Green Butte road by NPS notice, the meetings and protests that followed. She tells in detail of the anonymous phone call warning that NPS planned on bringing out a SWAT team, and of the Internet campaign which resulted in canceling of those plans.

The two-part story concludes with the threat of civil lawsuit that the Pilgrims received from the Department of Justice, Pilgrim talking to Director Arnberger of NPS, and Chuck Cushman's admonition. These people are being abused by the Park Service, said Cushman.

And it seems to me it's an opportunity for people across the country to see that if they can do it to this God-fearing family that has 16 children and is living the wilderness life, plays music, and participates in the community there if they can treat really nice people this way, heaven only knows how they're treating everybody else.

[http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=33268](http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=33268)

[http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=33279](http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=33279)

<http://www.msnbc.com/local/ktuu/m306657.asp?0ct=-302>

---

# WRST Superintendent defames inholders in Open Letter

BY RICK KENYON

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Superintendent Gary Candelaria, in a document sent out over the Internet, says that the press coverage of the National Park Service's (NPS) interaction with the Pilgrim family has been inflammatory and biased and that the Pilgrim family are criminals.

The Pilgrims have broken the law, openly, deliberately, repeatedly, writes Candelaria.

They exhibit no regard for the law, for proper process, for legitimate authority, or for the rights of others. Their concerns are for themselves at the expense of anyone else, he continues.

It is important to note that the Pilgrims have not been charged with any crime, there has been no trial, nor have they been found guilty by a jury or judge.

The letter was sent in response to a concerned citizen in New Mexico, Denise, who had written a letter of support for the Pilgrim family. This is such a sad and unwarranted situation. And quite truthfully the NPS is acting very silly, and out of bounds, said the letter. The letter was sent to WSEN, with the request that it be passed on to the Pilgrim family. It was also carbon copied to the NPS at Wrangell-St. Elias.

The next day Denise received a reply from Bev Goad at the Copper Center office saying

Thank you for your interest. I am attaching a response from the superintendent of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve. (See attached file:

Open letter on Pilgrims.doc). The attached file was a Microsoft Word document, with no date or official NPS letterhead, but signed by Gary Candelaria, Superintendent.

The letter followed a week of intense media coverage. Alaska Public Radio had done two segments, KTUU Television aired an 11 minute feature story, WorldNetDaily ran a two part story entitled *Park Wars*, and the *Anchorage Daily News* ran a story about the Pilgrims.

It is easy to be carried away by the surface emotion of the Pilgrim story within Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, starts the letter from Candelaria. This is especially so when all one has to base an opinion upon is inflammatory half-truths and biased reporting. The Pilgrims have been presented as an innocent, harmless group of people just trying to live a peaceful rural life in the Alaska wilderness. The truth is somewhat different from that idyllic image.

What outraged Denise was this paragraph:

For another thing, the Pilgrims do not yet own the land they are living upon. In fact, they have not made a payment to the holder of their deed of trust since last year and are in danger of being foreclosed. They have refused to pay their creditor since January, and have also refused to leave his land. Within the town of McCarthy, they are squatting upon land owned by two elderly women who reside in Anchorage, some 250 miles away. The women have sent certified letters

asking them to leave the land, but the family has refused. They have cleared the trees on the land and have moved substantial amounts of their private property on the land. They did these things without even the courtesy of determining who owned the land and asking the permission of the rightful owners.

Denise's reply, in part:

Mr. Candelaria, with all due respect intended if the Pilgrim family are in arrears on their land payment, or if they have extended onto another parties deeded property it is simply none of YOUR business and that factor should NOT have been included in any stand by National Park Service. Especially not a penned letter from someone holding the position of Superintendent who finishes his letter: "We will do so without prejudice or malice, with all due respect and care for the safety and rights of others, and as professionals and public employees. But act we must, and will."

You have, in the first paragraph shown clear cut and dried prejudice and malice. How can you later claim to have none?

Why include such defamatory remarks that are plainly not within your jurisdiction, that should have no bearing on the situation, that any professional with any moral conscience would NOT have included in a letter intended for widespread distribution?

...NO government employee has the right to send out derogatory remarks pertaining to financial or

civil situations about any individual or family. To do so shows clear bias, prejudice and is an injustice. It likewise shows that a clear defining line has been crossed between what your job is, and what it isn't, and I truly believe you should be terminated from your position for having done so.

At the very least you owe them an apology for that terrible impropriety.

Denise was not the only person to respond to the Superintendent's letter. Ann, from West Virginia, had this to say:

Did you REALLY have to further your cause by saying the family was late in their payments to the seller. IS THAT YOUR/MY BUSINESS and does THAT justify your actions against that American family in your mind?

Pitiful, shameful of you to write such but par for the course for an NPS employee trying to justify

their sick actions!

At one point in the letter, Candelaria referred to park lands as special and even sacred places, held in trust for now and the future as part of our national heritage. This prompted a response from Chuck Cushman, Founder and Director of the American Land Rights Association.

Somehow the Park Service must be held responsible for their attacks on personalities and their willingness to tear people down with rumors, threaten violence (swat teams, set teams, etc) and their willingness to use their power to abuse the rights to honest citizens. They really don't care what Congress says. They have their "mission."

One of our members sent me a message a few years ago that said, "The preservationists (in this case the Park Service) have become like a new religion, a new paganism, that worships trees and

sacrifices people." I believe the Park Service has come to believe they can do no wrong. That only they know the right path. In the process they are destroying a special culture and segment of our population as they wage war on rural America and carry out its destruction. I wonder if the Bush Interior Department has the will to rein in this out-of-control bureaucracy.

As a final note, the holder of the deed of trust says that the Pilgrims have made all current payments and are in no danger of foreclosure. WSEN has on file a copy of the Cashier Checks which include a time/date stamp from the bank and predates the Candelaria letter.

The Candelaria letter was given to the NPS interpretive staff at Kennicott to show to anyone who inquires about the Pilgrims, as the employees have been instructed not to give their own opinions.

## Permits

*Editor's note: We are grateful to community members who are willing to write stories for WSEN. Normally we encourage them to write under their own byline. Sadly, however, a number of people in our community are intimidated by fear of punishment by the National Park Service, and while willing to speak out, they would prefer to remain anonymous.*

BY CC (CONCERNED CITIZEN)

We've heard a lot about the need for access permits in the Wrangell-St. Elias Park. With the passage of Federal Regulation 51 FR 31619 on September 4, 1986, ANILCA Regulations were outlined for access across National Park land in Alaska for transportation and utility systems, inholdings, and for special and temporary uses, all which require a permit. Let's take a look at their permitting process.

First is the pre-application

process [Section 36.3] to establish early contact with federal agencies to discuss details and schedules. In areas administered by NPS, a permit must be obtained before pre-application can begin.

Section 36.4 requires the filing of an SF299 application with each federal agency having jurisdiction in the permit area; all filings must be completed within 15 days [on the same day, if possible] after paying any filing fee required.

Section 36.5 specifies that

the agency having jurisdiction over most of the trail or area will be the lead coordinating agency. Upon receipt of an application, the lead agency reviews it. If the 15-day filing deadline is not met, the application is returned to the applicant. If the required information is missing or incomplete, each federal agency has 60 days to inform the applicant, who has 30 days to respond. Failure to respond will result in the return of the application without further action. An incomplete response

causes the application to be rejected and returned with a list of deficiencies. When all information is complete, the application is reinstated and filed.

Section 36.6[a] states, The provisions of the National Environmental Protection Agency and the Council for Environmental Quality regulations [40 CFR Parts 1500-1508] will be applied to determine whether an Environmental Assessment [EA] or Environmental Impact Statement [EIS] is required, or that a categorical exclusion applies. The lead agency then has nine months to complete an EA or draft EIS, or longer if extensions are applied. If an EIS is not required, a Finding of No Significant Impact is prepared. If an EIS is necessary, public hearings must be held in Washington, D.C. and in Alaska; the EIS must be completed within one year of the application filing date.

Section 36.6[c] requires the applicant to reimburse costs for application processing and reasonable administrative and other costs of EIS preparation! [a trip to Washington, surveys, and one year of administrative NPS permit-related work?]

The decision process

granting access to an area within the National Wilderness Preserve System is explained in 36.7[b]. Each federal agency involved has four months to tentatively approve or disprove each right-of-way permit, providing a statement of reasons and findings to the applicant, along with a copy of the final EIS. No appeal procedure is allowed for denials of access within Park boundaries.

Once an application is approved, a right-of-way permit is issued after all fees and charges have been paid [Section 36.9[a]], subject to at least the following conditions: [a] right-of-way use compatible with the purposes of the park, [b] requirements for restoration, revegetation, and erosion prevention, [c] respect for air and water quality standards, [d] possible requirements for minimum necessary width of trails, [e] prevention of damage to fish and wildlife habitat or public property, [f] hazards to public health and safety, [g] protection of interests of other resource users of the area, and [h] use of measures to avoid or minimize adverse environmental, social, or economic impacts.

Inholder access is addressed specifically in Section 36.10. In addition to going through all of

the procedural steps outlined above in Sections 34.4, 34.5, and 34.6, an inholder application must include additional proof of property ownership, a detailed description of the use of the inholding, and proof that the land is essentially enclosed by park land.

A right-of-way permit is then issued, unless it is determined that: [a] there would be significant adverse impact on natural or other values of the area, [b] public health or safety is jeopardized, [c] adequate feasible access exists elsewhere, [d] the route is inconsistent with the Park Management Plan, or [e] the route is unnecessary to accomplish the applicant's land use objectives. If any federal agency finds one or more of the above conditions in existence, another alternate route or method of access will be specified to provide adequate and feasible access.

For over 20 years, many of us have lived a peaceful, subsistence lifestyle within the Park boundaries and have continued our customary and traditional use of our State-recognized right-of-way trails. Now, we are expected to go through this lengthy, arduous and expensive maze of federal red tape just to reach our homes.

## Closures

BY CC [CONCERNED CITIZEN]

We are all familiar with the Bollard Battle for access over McCarthy's bridges. Have you ever looked along the McCarthy Road for trails blocked by wooden bollards and posted with No Motorized Vehicle signs? There are quite a few. And, of course, we are aware of recent

McCarthy area trail closings. What authority, I asked myself, gives the National Park Service (NPS) the right to close trails?

I recently acquired a copy of the Federal Register for Wednesday, June 17, 1981, which outlines the Department of the Interior's National Park System Units in Alaska Public Uses, Part III. Section 13.30

deals with Closing Procedures. Under 13.30[a], Authority, any NPS superintendent or their agent may close an area or restrict an activity on an emergency, temporary, or permanent basis.

To determine whether an emergency closure is used to close an area or restrict an activity, 13.30[c] advises NPS to

be guided by factors such as public health and safety, resource protection, protection of cultural or scientific values, subsistence users, endangered or threatened species conservation, and management considerations necessary to ensure that the activity or area is being managed in a manner compatible with the purposes for which the park area was established.

Emergency closures not relating to aircraft, snow-machines, motorboats, non-motorized surface transportation, or the taking of fish and wildlife shall become effective upon notice. Notice constitutes either [a] publication in at least one local newspaper, if available, radio messages, Post Office notices, and map documentation, or [b] posted signs on the trail or area, or [c] both. However, an emergency closure can last only 30 days and may not be extended.

According to Section 13.30 [d], temporary closures or restrictions follow the same Notice procedures in 13.30 [f] and shall not extend for a period exceeding 12 months and may not be extended.

Section 13.30 [e] states that permanent closures or restrictions shall be published as rule-making in the Federal Register with a minimum public comment period of 60 days and shall be accompanied by public hearings

in the area affected area and other locations, as appropriate.

On September 4, 1986, Federal Regulation 51 FR 31619 was passed to outline ANILCA Access Regulations concerning Transportation and Utility Systems In and Across, and Access Into, Conservation System Units in Alaska. Section 36.11 Special Access implements the provisions of Section 1110[a] of ANILCA regarding use of snowmachines, motorboats, non-motorized surface transport, aircraft, and off-road vehicles. Section 36.11[h]2i Closure Procedures states that temporary closures shall not be effective prior to notice and hearing in the vicinity of the area[s] directly affected by such closures and other locations, as appropriate. Section 36.11[h]4 cites the same Notice clause as in the above NPS Regulation which states that notice must be given or signs posted, or both.

NPS has obviously chosen to post signs on trails rather than follow the public notice procedures. ANILCA, however, through 51 FR 31619, says that temporary closings require notice and hearings in the local area; no provisions for emergency closings were even mentioned.

So, what type of trail closures are we dealing with in the Wrangell-St. Elias? Are they

emergency closures? I doubt it. Expired in 30 days and unrenovable. Temporary closures? Over in 1 year and unrenovable. I doubt that, too. If we have permanent trail closures on the McCarthy area trails and all other blocked trails in the park, where are they published as rule-making in the Federal Register? When was our 60-day comment period? And where were the public hearings in the area affected? I, for one, would like to know which closure classification was used for our trails to see if proper NPS procedure was followed.

Two closing thoughts were found in the Federal Register for June 30, 1983, the Department of the Interior's General and Special Regulations for Areas Administered by the NPS, Part II. Section 1.5[b] Closures and Public Use Limits states:

Except in emergency situations, a closure designation, use, or activity restriction or condition... of a highly controversial nature shall be published as rulemaking in the Federal Register. Section 1.5[c] outlines Except in emergency situations, prior to implementing or terminating a restriction, condition, public use limit, or closure, the superintendent shall prepare a written determination justifying the action.

I think we'd all like to see that.

## DNR talks to McCarthy

BY SUSAN SMITH

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) held a very informative Community Meeting on the afternoon of June 19, 2003, at the McCarthy Lodge. The room was packed with local

residents, ready to learn about and discuss ANILCA access issues, public trust doctrine, navigable waters rulings, RS2477 trails, and many other topics.

Sam Means, Natural Resource Manager for ADNR and Tina Cuning, Wildlife Biologist

and ANILCA Program Manager with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) narrated a slide presentation which outlined the State's role in access issues and relevant state and federal legislation guaranteeing access rights.



Natural Resource Managers Mike Sullivan and Marcie Menefee were also present.

The 1980 ANILCA legislation was described in detail with respect to subsistence access and access to inholdings. Known as "The Great Compromise," ANILCA law established Alaska's National Parks as the most liberal conservation areas in the nation, allowing special access, subsistence, and other public assurances "to protect the Alaska lifestyle." Section 811 "Access for Subsistence" ensures reasonable access for rural residents and allows for use of "snowmobiles, motorboats, and other means of surface transportation traditionally enjoyed for such purposes by local residents, subject to reasonable regulation."

Public Trust Doctrine was documented with respect to land and navigable waters and easement regulations from the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act were explained. A detailed review of RS2477 trail designations gave crucial information about legislation, qualifications, documentation of historical use, permitting, maintenance, and current allowable uses.

An important realization for many who attended the meeting was the recognition of ADNR's role as a valuable ally in settling RS2477 issues. ADNR has been mandated by the state legislature to identify other existing trails which qualify for RS2477 status, report them to the legislature, and work with the National Park

Service (NPS) as an intermediary to help resolve RS2477 claims as yet unrecognized by the federal government.

Another worthwhile outcome of the meeting was the wealth of documentation brought by ADNR and ADF&G. A 1993-1998 study of trail usage conducted by ADNR and the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities resulted in the preparation of a map packet plotting all known trails. Tina Cunning helped in its preparation and presented the community with two reference copies of this important resource. Also available were handouts for National Park Service Regulations (1981), ANILCA Access Regulations (1986, outlining the permitting process for transportation or utility systems and inholder access), a Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve General Management Plan (1986), the ADNR RS2477 Project, Identification and Management of RS2477, Fish & Wildlife Resource Management Tools, Allowed Uses on State Land, and U.S. Army Corp of Engineers permitting regulations.

A lively question and answer period followed the formal presentation. Many local residents had questions relating to recent NPS closures in the McCarthy area on valid state-recognized RS2477 trails. ADNR spokesmen acknowledged that those trails had documented historical use and had need for regular maintenance, sometimes

even heavy equipment. Since RS2477 designations were "self-executing" and no recording process was necessary, documenting construction or use with records, maps, photographs or affidavits becomes increasingly difficult as time passes. Surveying, recording and permitting of existing trails becomes an expensive and time-consuming process. NPS regulations for permitting, as outlined in ANILCA regulations, are laborious and are decided now on a case by case basis with the absence of negotiations between the State and NPS to collectively settle control over access of all state right-of-ways across Park land.

Other topics addressed were bollard placement and prohibition of motor vehicles on local trails and bridges, land access for Long Lake residents, access fees based upon square-footage proposed to some inholders, and snowmachine and ATV use in the Park. Several local NPS problems were mentioned, keeping ADNR informed of the local situation.

In closing, the community would like to thank Sam Means, Tina Cunning, and their associates for their time in coming out to McCarthy to present this important information at a time when many access issues are surfacing on National Park lands in Alaska. They showed a real interest in educating the public about access law rights and acting as an intermediary with the NPS to help resolve local access issues.

---

*Government is not the giver of rights; only God confers these to the people. People create government, giving it certain and limited powers. Only eternal vigilance by the people will confine government to its proper role. Joe Vogler*

## Congratulations to Sarah Welty graduate

BY BONNIE KENYON

**M**cCarthy: A huge milestone has been completed by one of our own. On Friday, June 20<sup>th</sup> approximately 60 people flocked to the McCarthy Kennicott Community Church to attend the high school commencement ceremony of local resident Sarah Welty.

The program included music played by Laurie Rowland; invocation by Rick Kenyon; opening remarks by Robert Crumley, Assistant Superintendent, of the Chugach Extension School; guest speaker, Ty Mase; graduate address by Sarah and diploma/award presentations by Karen Long.

A beautiful cake, punch and plenty of visiting followed the ceremony.

All who know Sarah are proud of her accomplishments but, even more than that, we are honored to know her, call her friend, neighbor or family. God bless you, Sarah.

Sarah plans to attend Jackson Hole Bible College in Jackson, Wyoming this fall.

The following speech was given by Sarah.

About a week ago, a big thunderstorm rolled into the valley. It was trying to rain and hail at the same time. I could hear it pounding on our metal roof. I had been attempting to write my speech for tonight, and I had only been staring at a blank piece of paper forever. The rain was beginning to lessen and the hail was nonexistent. So, I decided to take a walk to clear my mind.

The sun had started to peek through the ever-lightening clouds and was basking the damp earth in its warmth. I stepped outside and took a deep breath. The clean air smelled fresh and green. The rain on the grass glistened in the sun's rays and the songbirds were coming out from beneath the protective branches of the spruce trees. I smiled inwardly and turned towards the Kennicott River.

I stopped short. To my surprise, I found a triple rainbow, stretching from one end of the sky to the other. It disappeared into the rushing glacial waters below me and was contrasted against the dark clouds that were slowly fading into the distance. It was a picturesque scene that could take your breath away. Who else can see something like this right off their own back porch?

I couldn't help but feel that this storm was like the trials and challenges we encounter so



frequently. Something happens we don't expect or want to happen. Sometimes it seems like the sun will never shine again, and then all of a sudden, a few golden rays pierce through the dark and turn the difficulties into something beautiful and new. And you are a better person because of it.

And then I thought about that fateful day 6 years ago, when our family of four traversed that glacier-laden gravel road 65 miles to our new home in the Wrangells. I had thought at first that a move to McCarthy would be a grand adventure, but the novelty wore off in about 6 weeks. It wasn't what I expected or wanted. I tried in vain to persuade my parents that they had made a big mistake when they moved us from our home in Cordova to the middle of nowhere and that we had to go back. But I soon realized that no matter what I said, the decision

(continued on page 32)

(Graduate continued)

was final, and I was stuck with it. I was just sure that this place would never be home, but time has a funny way of changing things and McCarthy has a funny way of growing on a person. Now as I look

## *Christopher Charles Williams, 1971-2003*

Girdwood resident Christopher Charles Williams, 32, died June 23, 2003, at Providence Alaska Medical Center in Anchorage from injuries sustained in a paragliding accident in McCarthy on June 11.

Christopher more widely known as Chris to his many friends in the McCarthy area was born January 28, 1971, in Seattle. He moved to Alaska shortly after graduating from Bremerton High School in 1989. Although he lived in Girdwood for many years, Chris loved spending his summers in McCarthy.

Chris loved traveling. His many trips took in countries such as Nepal, Thailand, Indonesia, Hawaii and Costa Rica where he eagerly participated in skiing, sailing, ice climbing, surfing, paragliding, rock climbing with his many friends.

A celebration of Chris' life was held at 2 p.m. on June 24 on the banks of Glacier Creek in Girdwood. Guests brought favorite stories, photos, and memories of their adventures with Chris.

Chris will always be remembered for his amazing hugs, his contagious excitement, his loving spirit and his passion

for adventure. Chris has touched many lives through his unlimited generosity and gracious love. He will be greatly missed, shared friends.

Chris is survived by his mother, Marcia Williams of Redmond, Oregon; sister and brother-in-law, Katie and Cuyler Lighthall; uncle, Jack Miller; aunt, Donna Lewis; and many cousins, nieces and nephews. He is also survived by a close extended family including his girlfriend, Meghan Seifert; Chris and Rod Hofmeister; Nick and Alyssa Hofmeister; and Cobi Harris.

## *Tonya Frederick, 1981-2003*

Anchorage resident Tonya Lynn Frederick, 21, died July 1, 2003, of injuries from a vehicle accident on the Glenn Highway outside Glennallen.

A celebration of life was Saturday, July 5th, at Witzleben's Bragaw Chapel. A burial service was held July 7th in Nenana, where she was buried next to her grandmother, Dina Mary Jensen.

Tonya was born October 20, 1981, in Anchorage to Doug and Judy Frederick. She spent the first 18 years of her life between her parents' home in Slana and her second mom, Avis Pomerleau, a close family friend in Anchorage.

Her family said: Tonya was a very active and social person throughout the community. She raced sled dogs with her brother, Kenny, and played volleyball and basketball all throughout her school life. She also was content

with hanging out and spending time with her other brother, Tony, and sister, Kelly.

She had a tremendous heart that had a special place in it for children. Tonya devoted much of her time working with the elderly and disabled. Whenever she had a spare moment, she would go and visit her friends and their children. Whenever someone needed her to watch their kids, Tonya wouldn't hesitate at the opportunity to spend time with her special little friends.

Many have said that Tonya was like a second mom to many people, both young and old. Tonya always carried pictures of all the children that she was close to in her wallet, or proudly displayed in her house and car. She was a very kind and giving person who always was buying small gifts for the children whenever she could.

Tonya always had in tow

either Sara, Justice, Jasmine or Boo Boo. As they grow up, they will not only remember the amount of kindness and happiness she brought to them, but the amount of pride and joy they brought to her. She will be remembered for her generosity and genuine kindness of heart to everyone.

Tonya will be missed greatly by many friends and relatives.

She is survived by her parents, Doug and Judy Frederick of Slana; sister, Kelly Rutledge of Anchorage; brothers, Kenny Frederick of Los Angeles and Tony Jensen of Nenana; and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

*Wrangell St. Elias News* offers their deepest condolences to the Frederick family. Please know our prayers are with you at this time.

# THE CHITINA LEADER

July 1911 August

## LOCAL NEWS

Frank Iverson returned from a business trip to Cordova on Thursday's train and says that his mine near mile 191 now looks more promising than ever. H. A. Kellar, the great mining expert, is expected to examine the property and Frank may yet, as he stated, be the first to ship gold quartz over the Copper River Railroad which he has helped to build.

Hugo Fells and a crew of men who have been working on the Kuskulana bridge came down this week to work a few days on the trestle across the Copper. Hugo says the work at Kuskulana will soon be completed.

## ADDITIONAL GOLD STRIKES BEING MADE UP THE LINE

Private advices have been received in the city from McCarthy Creek, giving news of additional strikes in that neighborhood. On the Mother Lode the ore is growing richer everyday, and the extent of the ore now in sight justifies the prediction that this is going to be one of the best properties in the district and a producer of the red metal second only to the Bonanza.

Up the creek, some

distance a strike of gold quartz has been made but this is being kept very quiet to prevent the mob from stampeding the country from Valdez.

Owing to the fact having leaked out of the railroad surveying into the White River country, prospectors are going into that region and many claims are being staked. Still another gold strike is reported from mile 127, samples assayed here running high in the precious metal.

July 1.

The Katalla Co. has started work on eighty acres of ground at mile 138 as an experiment farm and have sent out two men, W. W. McCarthy and Geo. Fraser to build cabins, stir up the soil and do preliminary work with a view to having extensive work done next year in scientific farming.

## LOCAL NEWS

Tom Holland and Billy Wilds left Friday morning on a prospecting trip into the Chitina River country and expect to be gone a week or ten days before coming back for another outfit of supplies.

P. D. Burke, of Long Lake, spent the Fourth in Chitina and said our committee overlooked an important event in not putting

on a walking contest. P. D. walked all the way from Long Lake and made it in several hours sooner than expected.

July 8

## LOCAL NEWS

Deputy Marshal Joe Brown now boasts of having the finest water on his place in Chitina and is the first to have been successful in digging a well. He has installed a good pump and if you want a good drink call at the "Hotel de Brown."

## PLACER GOLD ON CHITINA RIVER

Ancient channel of auriferous gravel is found to contain good pay and many miners are now prospecting in that section.

## SLATE CREEK EMPLOYS 100 MEN

Fairly good pay is being taken out - big dredging plant to be installed there next season - wages are \$1 an hour, with plenty of labor in the district.

A large lathe and some heavy machinery was shipped through Chitina last week to the Kennecott mines. Over 100 tons of expensive machinery is soon to be installed at these mines and thoroughly equipped and up-to-date machine shops will

be in readiness by the time the snow flies.

July 15

## CHITINA BRANCH COMPLETED

Work on the Chitina branch of the Copper River & Northwestern Railway, which means from mile 132 to 196, will be completed today. With the exception of a small force left to clean up, the entire crew of men and steam shovel will be removed on Monday to mile 67, where the track from mile 62 to 67 will be brought to grade. It was on this stretch of five miles that so much trouble was experienced by the trains last winter. When the proposed work is completed no more delays will be experienced from the ice.

Next week the construction of the snow sheds will also begin, the lumber for which is now being distributed between mile 52 and 65.

July 22

## INTERIOR SOIL YIELDS GOOD CROPS

On the Deyo homestead, just below Chitina, Albert Church is giving a practical demonstration that the soil can be made to yield good crops in this section. Moreover, he is making it pay and is now selling some of his

second crop of several kinds of vegetables.

Among the products grown successfully are cabbage, potatoes, carrots, parsnips, peas, Brussel sprouts, turnips, lettuce, radishes and onions.

His second crop of lettuce is now ready for the market. He began planting this year June 2, sowing in the soil without any hothouse preparation. He says that May 20th will not be any too early to begin planting.

Mr. Church is in all particulars a scientific farmer. He leaves nothing to chance, but studies out every move. He keeps the weather temperature and knows chemical analysis of the soil.

While the vegetables have all done fine this year, the season so far has been an off year and much colder than usual. There were but 18 days of actual sunshine to August 8th, and this is something unheard of since nearly every day of summer around Chitina is simply one of sunshine. The average temperature has been about 60 degrees above, while it should average about 70 degrees. The highest temperature registered is 86 and there were only 20 days with the temperature 70 degrees above zero.

Mr. Church has a pipe line running along the hill above his garden patch, so that he can irrigate, when necessary, but he has had very little use for the water this season.

Among the things that Mr. Church tried as an experiment were Brussel sprouts, and they matured

finely. Those who have not tried this plant for greens have a rare treat coming.

"Yes," said Mr. Church, an answer to a question, "I meet people every day who are skeptical about this part of the country ever being good for farming purposes. Any one with common sense and ordinary powers of observation should know that this soil is productive. There is plenty of proof of this fact in the wild berries and luxuriant vegetation and flora seen on every hand. Whenever the soil weathers wild vegetation it will grow domestic products. Here, of course, the same as in all new countries, certain experiments must be made before the maximum results can be obtained from the minimum effort and cost."

### LOCAL JOTTINGS

Miss Dora Keen, of Philadelphia passed through Chitina this week on her way to ascend Mt. Blackburn.

A. McClellan is in charge of the expedition and Frank Buell, of Chitina, and A. Wolf, of Cordova, are members of the party.

The party will be taken overland from the railroad by Fagenberg's pack train. The horses will take the members of the party as high as possible to make camp and the mountain climbers will then attempt the ascent.

No one has ever been on the summit of Mt. Blackburn, which is 16,000 feet above sea level. For this reason Miss Keen is anxious to be the first person on the summit. She has had considerable experience in mountain climbing, having

been through the Alps and some of the main peaks of America.

On a clear day Mt. Blackburn can be easily seen from Chitina, and its snow and ice bound summit looks anything but easy of ascent. It is about 90 miles distant and about 30 miles from the railroad.

The party is well equipped for the ascent and provided with cameras. Opinion here is divided as to their chances of reaching the summit this season.

Peter Schneider, better known as Tazilana Jake, paid Chitina a visit last week in his "prairie schooner." He covered the distance from his farm at Tazilana, 60 miles in three days and a half with one horse and his home-made wagon.

The wagon, or rather the cart is a two-wheeled affair, with wooden wheels and a canvas covering. Mr. Schneider brought along some fine oats.

He has about thirty acres under cultivation. He has a half an acre planted to barley, ten acres of oats and raises potatoes and all kinds of vegetables.

He is a handy man with tools and made a self binder out of odds and ends picked up in Chitina when he worked in the old tunnel. He has a number of farm implements and believes his farm will net him a good income in another season.

The Katalla Company will erect a double telephone wire from Cordova to Kennecott. By transposing

every half mile a metallic circuit will be established and the service thus greatly improved.

### WILL SHIP ORE FROM LEDGE AT MILE 191

Christian Tjosevig, one of the main owners of the group of copper claims by the same name, near mile 191, passed through Chitina this week with an outfit to start work on the claims.

Mr. Tjosevig intends to ship some of his high grade ore this winter over the railroad to the Tacoma smelter. He expects to soon have enough ore in sight to warrant the railroad building a spur track.

He came through from Fairbanks over the trail with his pack outfit down O'Brien Creek, which empties into the Copper a short distance below Chitina. Twelve years ago, while prospecting for placer, he ran across a considerable ledge, but owing to the lack of transportation facilities, did not stake it at the time. Now that the railroad furnishes a means for quartz development in this section, he deemed it worthwhile to revisit the scene and stake the ground. He has sent some of the samples to be assayed, and says he has a well defined ledge at least two feet wide. One prospector this summer spent three months on O'Brien Creek trying to find a ledge traced from a piece of quartz float found in the bed of the stream, and it is possible Tjosevig has located the much sought ledge.

August 19



# Far North Grizzlies Develop Taste for Muskoxen

BY NED ROZELL

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

In May of 2001, Badami oilfield worker Royce O'Brien focused his binoculars on a rare Alaska encounter—a grizzly bear standing nose-to-nose with a muskox. Suddenly, the grizzly made its move.

The brown bear ran up and got behind the muskox like a wrestler would, and got its front leg over the muskox's shoulder, O'Brien said. It bit into its neck and pulled it to the ground.

The muskox struggled free and got back to its feet to face the bear and its two yearling cubs. The adult bear then flashed past the muskox's horns, duplicated its wrestling move, and pulled the muskox down a second time. As soon as it hit the ground, the yearlings were in there, said O'Brien, an environmental technician at Badami oilfield, located on the Beaufort Sea coast about 30 miles east of Prudhoe Bay. O'Brien watched as the bears killed the muskox and began feeding, witnessing an event that was unheard of in Alaska until recently—far-north grizzlies killing muskoxen, sometimes as many as five at a time. Biologists are intrigued by a few instances of surplus killing, behavior for which grizzlies are not known.

There's been a dramatic increase in known grizzly bear kills of muskoxen, said Patricia Reynolds, an Arctic National Wildlife Refuge biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Sometimes a bear kills more

than one animal from a group. Why?

Since 1982, Reynolds has studied the 300 or so muskoxen that live inside or near the borders of the refuge. Last spring, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pilot saw several muskox carcasses while flying over the Canning River. The pilot, Dave Sowards, thought someone with a rifle must have killed the animals, so he called Curt Bedingfield, an Alaska State Trooper who works in Coldfoot. Bedingfield flew into the site and, from tracks and other signs, found that one bear had killed five muskoxen and another bear had killed two. Reynolds and biologists Dick Shideler and Harry Reynolds have now counted eight incidents of multiple kills of muskoxen by grizzly bears in northern Alaska.

Bears and muskoxen have coexisted in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge since 1969, when state biologists moved 51 muskoxen to the area from Nunivak Island. Known for their curved horns and shaggy hair that makes them look haystacks on legs, muskoxen have thrived in the refuge and elsewhere in the Arctic, ranging from the Colville River east to Canada's Mackenzie River. Here, their range overlaps with brown bears known as barren-ground grizzlies, which are smaller than grizzlies from more productive areas but are the same species.

These northern grizzlies are some of the most adaptable creatures on Earth, and they may

have just figured out a method of killing muskoxen, Reynolds said. When threatened, muskoxen often position themselves rump-to-rump, in a circle-the-wagons defense that may work well against wolves but not bears. Male bears of the North Slope emerge from their dens in late March and April, when snow still covers the landscape.

They're hungry critters up there, Reynolds said. There isn't a lot to eat. The farthest-north grizzlies now preying on muskoxen are among the least productive of brown bears in Alaska; females don't have their first litter until they are seven years old. These bears eat anything, from tubers of spring flowers to whales, and in learning to kill muskoxen they have exposed themselves to a new risk. After two recent encounters, muskoxen's curved horns allowed them to kill one grizzly and seriously wound another.

Why the bears sometimes kill more muskoxen than they can eat is a mystery, Reynolds said. Maybe deep snow, which slows muskoxen to a crawl, is allowing bears opportunities to kill that did not exist before. Maybe, when surrounded by prey, a bear's instincts churn into overdrive, like a weasel killing chickens in a henhouse. Only the bears know for sure.

# New WRST users group formed

## *Residents of the Wrangells (R.O.W.) organize*

BY SUSAN SMITH

A new organization has been formed to help the residents and subsistence users of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve (WRST) collectively address the access issues and challenges we are encountering with the National Park Service (NPS) and other state and federal agencies. Brought together by word-of-mouth, posted signs, and radio messages, about 20 McCarthy area residents met at 7:00p.m. on Thursday, June 5<sup>th</sup> at the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church to form *Residents Of the Wrangells (ROW)*.

Discussion opened with current NPS access problems in the area including closure of trails to motorized vehicles, placement of bollards in trails scattered along the McCarthy Road, resident access across lakes, NPS access fees based upon square-footage, and the Green-Butte Trail situation. The group then focused on their purpose and goals. All agreed that residents and subsistence users of WRST need to be represented by an organization that will speak as one voice to

protect access rights.

ROW would like to reach out to the community to establish membership, identify roads, trails and traplines which need access protected, and document any problems with NPS. With this summary of trail usage and difficulties, ROW would then provide the information to state and federal legislators and agencies to show the scope of the situation and to encourage a final negotiation and settlement with NPS to recognize state right-of-ways in the Park.

ROW will also try to ease tensions with NPS by setting up a regular meeting schedule to address problems, encourage notification of their permit procedures (and who they feel should comply), and allow ROW a voice in the decision-making process.

Susan Smith of Chokosna was elected Chairperson and Jenny Rosenbaum of Long Lake volunteered to establish websites for the organization at [WWW.RESIDENTSOFWRANGELLS.BRAVEPAQES.COM](http://WWW.RESIDENTSOFWRANGELLS.BRAVEPAQES.COM) and [WWW.MCCARTHY-KENNICOTT.COM](http://WWW.MCCARTHY-KENNICOTT.COM). E-mail may be sent to [RESIDENTSOFWRANGELLS@YAHOO.COM](mailto:RESIDENTSOFWRANGELLS@YAHOO.COM).

A second meeting was held on Thursday, June 19<sup>th</sup> when an ROW Mission Statement and NPS Land Use Questionnaire (both available on our websites) were finalized. The group decided to collect dues of ten dollars per year for mailings and other costs, acquire a Post Office box in McCarthy, purchase a business license, and set up a bank account. Many e-mails have already been received and other area organizations have contacted ROW to encourage its mission and offer support.

Rick and Bonnie Kenyon have graciously agreed to print the ROW NPS Land Use Questionnaire in this issue. If you access your property, hunt, trap or gather within the Park boundaries, ROW encourages you to help protect continued traditional access across WRST land by taking a few moments to complete the Questionnaire.

You may join ROW and get on their mailing list by sending a check or money order for ten dollars to: Residents of the Wrangells, McCarthy #63, PO Box MXY, McCarthy, AK 99588.

---

*We went to so much trouble to carve out this route, Dan. Nature will reclaim our millions of dollars worth of work very quickly. Wonder what people who visit the area by some other means will be thinking 60 years from now those people who happen to look down on some piece of overgrown right-of-way, and spot our old rails way out there. Stephen Birch to Dan Jackling, on the Chitina Local, near the Gilahina trestle, July 1924.*

---

*The danger of the past was that men became slaves. The danger of the future is that men may become robots. True enough, robots do not rebel. But given man's nature, robots cannot live and remain sane, they become Golems, they will destroy their world and themselves because they cannot stand any longer the boredom of a meaningless life. Erich Fromm*

## RESIDENTS OF THE WRANGELLS NPS Land Use Questionnaire

In an effort to document and protect access and freedoms of all residents and users of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, and to collectively address access and other problems with the National Park Service, *Residents of the Wrangells* (R.O.W.) is an organized citizens group committed to speak as one voice for all residents of the area concerned with freedoms within the NPS lands.

We encourage you to join our group and/or help us document access and other rights problems by filling out this questionnaire and mailing it to: Residents of the Wrangells, McCarthy #63, PO Box MXV, Glennallen, AK 99588.

For more information you can send comments via email: [residentsofwrangells@yahoo.com](mailto:residentsofwrangells@yahoo.com)

Membership in R.O.W. is not required to fill this survey out. We appreciate any information that will help us in our endeavors.

Do you cross NPS or preserve land to access your property? Y N To subsistence hunt? Y N

To subsistence gather? Y N To trap? Y N Otherwise? Y N

How many trails do you access within the park lands? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list (on a separate sheet of paper) the trails and give locations and, if known, when created.

What years did you start using these trails? \_\_\_\_\_

Have the trails had continuous use since you began using them? Y N Before then? Y N

Do these trails qualify as RS2477 (created across federal land before 1968) Y N

What type of access has been traditionally used on your trails?

{ } foot { } 4 or 3 wheeler { } motorcycle { } dogsled

{ } car/truck { } snowmachine { } bulldozer

OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

Have you had problems with the NPS concerning your trails? Y N

Have they told you that you need a permit to use the trail? Y N

That you need to pay an access fee? Y N That you cannot use motorized vehicles? Y N

That you cannot use the trail at all? Y N

Have they shown proper, written documentation of these things? Y N

Been threatening, harassing or unreasonable in these issues? Y N

Other issues?

Has the NPS made an effort to block your access with bollards or posts or any other method? Y N

Posted No Motorized Vehicle signs? Y N Are there other trail blockages in your area? Y N

Where?

Are you interested in joining R.O.W.? Y N

Would you be willing to donate \$10/year for membership dues covering costs of mailing, internet usage, telephones and other related expenses? Y N

If you have any particular issues or instances concerning you, regarding the NPS and their interactions in the area please feel free to share them, also.

Also, if you have any information regarding officials to speak to or sources of information etc., please include that.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone# \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Book review **Alaska's Spectacular Aurora**

Our favorite aurora photographer, Todd Salat, has done it again this time with a book. This 96-page hardcover coffee-table book not only includes over 100 breathtaking color photos of the lights but also provides a first-hand insight into the adventures of hunting them.

The book has amazing scenes from all over the state of Alaska. Todd is also able to mix science with art all throughout the colorful pages.

Turn to page 30 and you will find a section on Kennecott. Both of Todd's photographs (*Kennecott Treasures* and *Kennecott Colors*) that we have come to love are reproduced there. The author tells us how he was able to capture these classic photos, and also gives us a magnificent view of the aurora seeming to erupt from Mt. Blackburn, with Mt. Donoho standing guard. Another photo shows a moonlit Stairway Ice Falls with an arched aurora lending a crown effect.

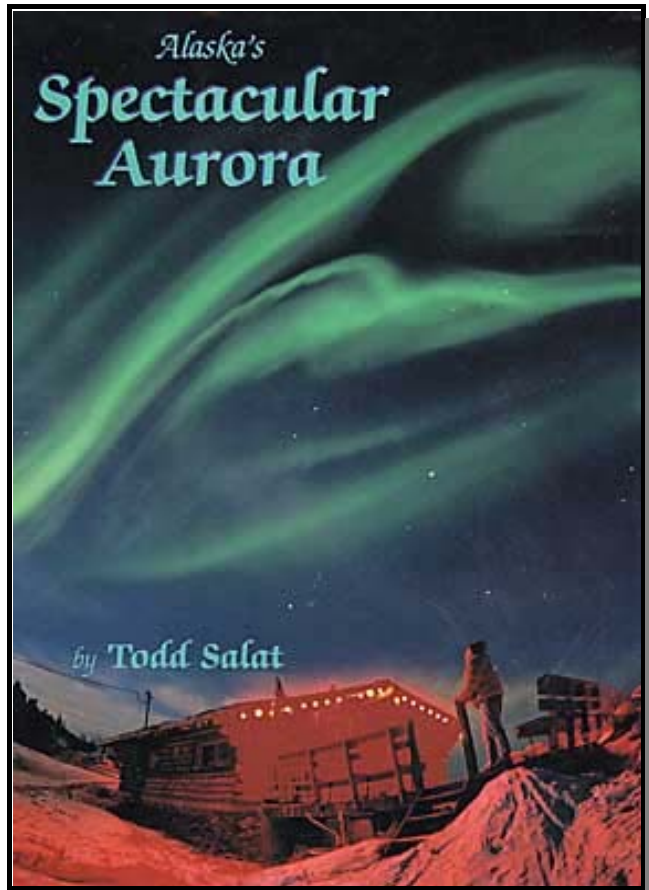
I like the chapter titled *The Northern Lights Have Seen Queer Sights*. There is even a chapter on Anchorage (*No city light can stop this kind of show*).

The 10"x13" book is a bargain at \$29.95 plus \$10 for priority mail s&h. You can go to Todd's website to order

(<http://www.salatshots.com/>) or call

1-877-277-4711, or write Todd Salat Shots, 645 G St., Suite 100, Box #798, Anchorage, AK 99501.

Todd's email address is [salatshots@alaska.com](mailto:salatshots@alaska.com).



## Book review **Nabesna Gold**

We are happy to report on a book written by one of our WSEN subscribers Kirk Stanley. Kirk's new book is called *Nabesna Gold and the Making of the Historic Nabesna Gold Mine and Town on the Frontier of Alaska Territory*. Kirk knows whereof he speaks, not only because he is a geologist with a Master of Science degree from Montana School of Mines, but also because he acquired the Nabesna Gold Mine in 1969.

In 1898, thirty-one years after Russia sold Alaska to the United States, gold was discovered at what is now Nabesna Gold Mine. Plagued with hard luck those early prospectors moved on. Then in 1907 Carl F. Whitham rode into the Nabesna

country of eastern Alaska to find a gold mine. In 1926 he discovered one of the richest gold veins ever reported in Alaska. He built Nabesna Gold Mine into what was, during territorial days, the largest underground gold mine in eastern Alaska.

It is a place back of beyond, rich in history and where mysteries linger on. The old town, the mine and the cliffs are on the National Register of Historic Places and hold secrets not likely ever to be revealed.

*Nabesna Gold* is \$14.95 + \$3 S&H from Todd Communications, 203 W. 15<sup>th</sup> Ave. Suite 102, Anchorage, AK 99501. Credit card orders call (907)276-6858.

# The Bears of the Kennicott Valley, Part II

BY JIM WILDER (THE BEAR GUY )

*This is the second in a two article series on the bears of the Kennicott Valley. In the first article, which appeared in the last issue of WSEN, I summarized the results of my bear research in the Kennicott Valley from 1999-2002. In this installment, I will describe the aspects of local bear ecology which contribute to the occurrence of bear-human conflicts.*

## Basic Bear Ecology

In order to properly understand bears, it is necessary to understand their basic ecology. In general, bears are active for 5-7 months out of the year in Alaska. Most mating takes place from mid-May to the end of June. Male bears may wander far during this time in search of prospective mates. Females give birth to 1-3 cubs in January or February while dormant in their dens. Bears are very intelligent and may live for 34 years or more. They are very good at locating and remembering nutritious food resources (including human foods and garbage). Bears are also curious creatures and rarely miss a chance to investigate novel items in their environment. This curiosity probably evolved as a food-finding strategy. For example, if a bear finds food by investigating burn barrels or homesites, then it is likely to look for food in burn barrels and homesites in the future. Consequently, storing food, garbage, and other human attractants properly is the single most important thing you can do to prevent conflicts between bears and humans.

When sub-adult bears reach the age of independence (usually at 2 ½ to 3 ½ years of age), they must establish their own territories. Females can usually adopt a portion of their mother's home range as part of their new territory, whereas newly independent males almost always

leave their mother's home range and seek out territories in new areas. These newly independent bears are inexperienced, hungry, and travel through unknown territory during this time, and are thus more prone to come into conflict with people. They seek out areas with few dominant males, good nutritional resources for the rapid attainment of large body size, and breeding opportunities. Because of its extensive soapberry (*Shepherdia canadensis*) habitat and human occupation, the Kennicott Valley provides all three, and is thus attractive to young male bears. These facts have direct implications for the occurrence of bear-human conflicts in the valley.

## Bears are Ruled by Their Stomachs

Because bears are dormant for 5 to 7 months of each year, they must meet their nutritional requirements in the relatively short time between den emergence in the spring and winter dormancy in the fall. When bears emerge from their dens in the spring (usually early April), there is precious little for them to eat. In the Kennicott Valley, they mostly feed on overwintered berries, horsetail (*Equisetum* spp.), grasses, sedges, willow catkins (*Salix* spp.), and balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*) buds at this time (based on studies in neighboring Kluane National Park, bears in the Kennicott Valley are probably 85-96% vegetarian). If they are lucky, they may also find winter-killed

carcasses to feed on. Grizzly bears also dig root crops such as eskimo potato (*Hedysarum alpinum*) and field locoweed (*Oxytropis campestris*) in the early season. Because of the low nutritional value of the foods available in the spring, bears continue to lose weight for a month or more after den emergence. When berry crops such as soapberry ripen in late July, bears abruptly switch to feeding on them. Some bears, particularly grizzly bears, may also migrate to salmon spawning areas.

Bears evolved from carnivorous ancestors relatively recently. Therefore, they still have the short digestive tracts of a carnivore, which does not allow them to efficiently digest plant matter. That is why bear seats sometimes look like they went right through the bear without any digestion whatsoever.

## The Importance of Soapberry

There are no major salmon runs into the Kennicott Valley proper. Because of this, soapberries represent an important nutritional resource for local bears because they are high in energy and are easily digestible. They are a rich, concentrated food resource that allows bears to put on adequate fat reserves for successful reproduction and hibernation. The large population of bears in the Kennicott Valley is partially a result of it being an important seasonal concentration site for bears feeding on soapberry, similar to the seasonal

concentrations of bears seen at salmon streams throughout Alaska. Soapberry may also influence the occurrence of bear-human conflicts.

Genetic data from my study show that new bears enter the Kennicott Valley as soapberry ripens. Many of these bears are likely naive with respect to humans and thus more prone to come into conflict with them as they wait for berries to ripen. In fact bear-human conflicts in the Kennicott Valley peak sharply in July and decrease abruptly thereafter. The sharp decrease in bear-human conflicts after the July ripening of soapberry suggests that once berries ripen, bears concentrate on them and are less likely to come into conflict with people. While feeding on berries, bears are very focused on the important business of eating and avoid interactions with humans.

#### ***Killing Bears May Actually Perpetuate Bear-Human Conflict Occurrence***

The Kennicott Valley is unusual in that it is surrounded by a large relatively unhunted bear population. Therefore, it provides an interesting case study of the impacts that humans can have on local bear populations. The major impact that humans have on bears is through mortality. As discussed in last issue's article, at least 24 bears, and perhaps as many as 36, were killed by humans in and around the Kennicott Valley from 1999-2001. Although you might suspect that this would reduce the number of bears in the area and thus the occurrence of bear-human conflicts, the actual effect may be the exact opposite.

Killing bears does not necessarily prevent the future occurrence of bear-human

conflicts and is not a learning experience, for either the bear or the humans involved. Killing bears in the Kennicott Valley has a two-pronged impact on bear-human conflicts: it creates a power vacuum in which there is no check on the influx of young inexperienced male bears into the valley, and it removes human-savvy bears from the population which have learned how to live around humans and their developments. For example, killing resident human-savvy adult female bears prevents them from passing on their hard-earned survival skills to their offspring. Killing male bears may simply create opportunities for dispersing individuals to establish home ranges in the valley. The reasons for this are directly related to the dominance hierarchies that govern bear populations.

Bear populations are governed by their social structure, which is based on a dominance hierarchy where the largest and most dominant animals influence the composition and distribution of the rest of the population. In a normally functioning bear society, adult males are at the top of the dominance hierarchy, and newly independent sub-adult bears and cubs are at the bottom. Bears establish and maintain their social position by acting aggressively. For example, adult male bears regulate population densities by preventing dispersing sub-adult males from establishing home ranges near them. Adult male bears generally avoid areas of human activity and stake claim to the best available habitat. As a result, young bears often settle near humans, which may actually provide them some respite from persecution by older dominant males. For example, researchers

have reported that 76% of the bears they captured in campgrounds, garbage dumps, and residential areas in Minnesota were young males. This facet of bear biology has direct implications for bear-human conflicts in the Kennicott Valley.

If adult males are absent from an area, through human-caused mortality or avoidance of human activities, their absence may result in an influx of dispersing sub-adult males. Their numbers can then build up to unusually high densities because there are no social factors preventing them from doing so. Many of these young bears have little or no experience with humans. The combination of increased numbers of sub-dominant bears in an area and their propensity for foraging on human foods and garbage leads to increased bear-human conflicts in those areas where adult males are absent.

Genetic data from my research supports this scenario, as there is an unusually dense population of bears in the Kennicott Valley, a disproportionate number of which are male. For example, bear densities within a 4-kilometer radius of the end of the McCarthy Road are approximately 1 bear/km<sup>2</sup>, 72% of which are male (this is about 10 times the densities reported for other interior Alaskan bear populations). These facts alone suggest that these are mostly young bears (mature males generally do not tolerate this many male bears in such a small area). Not coincidentally, the area at the end of the McCarthy Road is also a dense bulls-eye of bear-human conflict occurrence. This area is good berry habitat, is a natural travel corridor, and is

an area of concentrated human attractants, and so is attractive to bears.

Not all bears killed in defense of life and property (DLP) circumstances are necessarily problem bears. I observed that following high profile bear-human conflicts in the Kennicott Valley, there is a concurrent rise in the number of bears which are killed in defense of life and property. Some of these bears are likely innocent of any wrongdoing, other than being in the wrong place at the wrong time. I was able to determine ages for 8 human-killed bears (5 sub-adult males, 1 adult female, 2 adult males) by analyzing cross-sections of their premolar teeth. Because most bears killed by humans are sub-adult males, (which never reach adulthood and thus are never able to assert their dominance and prevent the influx of more juvenile bears into the valley) normal social hierarchies are disrupted and the power vacuum of attractive habitat remains open to future generations of dispersing sub-adult bears. The process continues full circle. Rather than killing bears, we would be better off trying to maintain an educated resident bear population.

#### ***The Kennicott Valley as a Grizzly Bear Population Sink***

The high-rates of human caused bear mortality in the Kennicott Valley, the quality of its natural food resources, and the widespread availability of human attractants may cause it to function as a population sink for surrounding bear populations, particularly for grizzly bears. A population sink is an area in which the number of deaths exceeds the number of individuals that are born or

immigrate into that area.

Based on genetic data from my study, we can say with some confidence that the Kennicott Valley functions as a population sink for grizzly bears. Eight individual grizzly bears were genetically identified in my study, 4 of which were killed by humans, including 1 adult female and 2 cubs. This is in addition to the adult female with 2 cubs which were killed in 1999. Of the 4 grizzly bears presumed to have survived, only one was a female. Because grizzly bears only reproduce approximately every 4 years and only have 1-3 cubs per litter, we can see that local mortality rates easily exceed the local recruitment potential. This trend represents a microcosm of what has happened to grizzly bears in the lower 48 and does not bode well for grizzly bears in and around the Kennicott Valley.

#### ***Aversive Conditioning***

A better alternative to killing bears is to first try to aversively condition, or educate them. Aversive conditioning will only work, however, in conjunction with everyone keeping a clean camp. One disturbing trend I noticed in the course of my research was the willingness of people to intentionally wound bears, including grizzly bears, with bird shot, buckshot, and .22's. This practice can cause long-lasting festering wounds in bears and unnecessarily creates a potential community safety hazard. Who knows how these bears will react the next time they encounter a human in the woods? Under no circumstances should a bear be intentionally wounded. A better alternative is to use rubber slugs, rubber buckshot, or bean bag rounds to educate bears through their rear-ends. Mason

Reid, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park's (WRST) wildlife biologist (907-822-7400), can provide more information on sources of aversive conditioning products (including air horns and aversive conditioning rounds) and how they should be used.

Bear savvy dogs can also provide a very effective bear deterrent for Alaskans living in the bush. For example, the Canadian Eskimo dog was the original defense of the Inuit against the polar bear. This breed has a 1,000-year history of interdependence with Inuit hunters in the Canadian arctic, who used it as a draft animal and as a hunting dog. These dogs would aggressively attack and hold polar bears at bay for Inuit hunters with little fear for their own life. Frank Glaser called them the best dog bear dogs in the world in Jim Rearden's classic book, *Alaska's Wolf Man*. Another good breed, the Karelian bear dog, is routinely used to aversively condition bears in the lower 48. However, specialized breeds are not necessary to get a bear's attention when it is investigating a homesite. Bears seem to have an innate regard for dogs in general, whether they be mongrel or purebred.

#### ***The Importance of Wrangell-St. Elias to Grizzly Bear Conservation***

The basic reason that most of us have chosen to live in Alaska is because we cannot take a landscape overrun with humans and denuded of its wildness. There is really no true wilderness left in the lower 48. However, here in Alaska if you walk off most any road for a half-mile, you are in the howling wilds. One measure of this wildness is the presence of bears, particularly grizzly bears, which are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of modern civilization.

Surveys have shown that Alaskans want to keep bears around and that both residents and visitors value bears as a renewable resource and as animals that can be observed and enjoyed. In the lower 48, grizzly bears have been reduced to less than 2% of their former range and their numbers have been reduced from at least 50,000 animals to less than 1000 in less than 200 years. Considering this sad conservation track record it is safe to say that grizzly bear populations in Alaska will not survive without a conscious effort by all Alaskans to safeguard bears and bear habitat.

Alaskans are fortunate to have one of the last large grizzly bear populations left in the world, but it should not be assumed that we always will. Our state is home to more than 98% of the grizzly bears in the United States and more than 70% of the grizzly bears in North America. The long-term preservation of grizzly bears is likely to be contingent on the preservation of large chunks of wild country that are relatively free from human disturbance. In fact, the major threats to bears throughout the world are loss of habitat and human-caused mortality. Therefore, both we and the bears are fortunate to have large protected areas such as WRST to provide a refuge for these striking symbols of the American wilderness.

WRST is one of four contiguous conservation units (including Kluane National Park, Glacier Bay National Park, and the Tatshenshini-Alsek Provincial

Park) spanning some 24 million acres in Alaska and Canada that are recognized as an International World Heritage Site. Altogether it is the largest internationally protected area in the world. As a 13.2 million acre member of this complex, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve is a unique resource for the long-term preservation of grizzly bears in North America, and indeed, the world. The bottom line is simple. If we want to maintain stable bear populations in the long term, the number of bears that die, whether by human or natural causes, cannot exceed the number of births. This is particularly critical for grizzly bears, which have some of the slowest reproductive rates of any terrestrial mammal. The major challenge before us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to apply the lessons learned from the lower 48 in order to maintain our healthy and diverse bear populations into the future. In so doing we will also be preserving the wilderness which first lured us north to this Great Land in the first place.

#### **Note of Interest**

**A**s part of my study, I surveyed bear foods and conducted a plant survey while doing my field work in the Kennicott Valley. I identified four plant species that were never discovered in the park before, one of which, *Viola renifolia* Gray v. *brainerdii* (a violet), Dee Frady discovered near her and Terry's cabin on Fireweed Mountain. This discovery represented a significant extension of the

known range of this species. The other species I collected were an arnica (*Arnica chamissonis* ssp. *chamissonis*), a paintbrush (*Castilleja* cf. *miniata*), and a mint (*Scutellaria galericulata* v. *pubescens*).

#### **For More Information**

**R**anger-led nature walks and talks are given throughout the summer in the Kennicott Valley. In some of these programs, rangers will discuss local bear ecology and point out common bear foods in the area. They will also talk about interpreting bear sign which hikers often encounter in the wilds of Alaska. For more information on nature walks and talks, contact Megan Brokaw, the Kennecott Interpretive Ranger at 907-259-7217. The park wildlife biologist, Mason Reid, can provide more information on bears in the park.

#### **Acknowledgements**

**I**would like to take this opportunity to thank Carl Mitchell and Devi Sharp, Wildlife Biologist (1997-2000) and Chief of Resources for WRST, respectively, for believing in and making this project possible. They were both critical to its success.

#### **About the Author**

Jim Wilder worked for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park from 1998-2002 and studied the bears of the Kennicott Valley from 1999-2002. He currently works for the NPS Regional Office and participates in bear research throughout Alaska.



(Graduate—continued)

was final, and I was stuck with it. I was just sure that this place would never be home, but time has a funny way of changing things and McCarthy has a funny way of growing on a person. Now as I look back on it all, I wouldn't take it back for the world. The experiences I have had and the friends I have made are worth far more than that.

I don't know what the next four years will bring. There are endless possibilities for the future. It is easy to see my gradation as an ending, but really, it is only a beginning. Challenges await that will refashion my character and make me a stronger person. I hated change once, but the consequences I have received, the lessons I have learned make the trials stand out as some of the best times of my life. Everything is about to change. But I will always come back. A part of me will always remain here, in this place, with all of you and I will never forget.

It may have just been a wave as we passed by on the road, or a smile and a good morning greeting. It may have been a five-minute chat between errands or a swimming party at Long Lake. Or it may have been a 2-hour phone call, or the letters we wrote back and forth. But whatever it was, I will always remember you. And it may have just been a leadership class, or an Anchorage House phase, but it made a difference. And this may just be a small ghost town with a few dozen people scattered within 20 miles, but it is my home. And all of it has made life special.

So to all of you who have made a difference in my life, thank you. To my family, who believed in me, even when I was ready to give up and who supported me through the whole college decision making process. You have got to be the best there is. To my grandparents, who took the time to share this special moment with me, it's the greatest graduation present you could give me. To my friends, for the fun we have had and the memories we've made. I will never forget our ridiculous games of capture the flag and tag, or how we have all changed and grown up. To my friend's parents, who have become like my second parents. To the Chugach Extension School and the Chugach School District. You helped me to push myself to do my best and achieve excellence in everything I did. Your many programs and activities have provided me with amazing opportunities that I will never forget. I have never felt deprived of anything in anyway when it has come to my schooling.

To those who wrote countless recommendation letters for me. I never realized how very small this town is until I started applying for college, scholarships, and jobs. I must have had half the town write recommendation letters, and many times, more than one recommendation. To my church, for the support and love you have shown me. To my neighbors and fellow residents of McCarthy and Kennecott, for the little things that you have done for me and for others to make this place so special. Thank you and God bless.

And last, but definitely not least, to the future graduates in this room: I feel very inadequate to give you a bit of wisdom, so I will just share with you two things I have learned in hopes that they will someday help you. Don't be so involved with the when, that you miss the now. It's easy to think that life will start when you turn 13 or 16 or 18. But life starts today, it starts with the decision to live now. Time flies by too fast as it is don't rush it. Take time to smell the roses and enjoy what you have. Never be afraid of what you don't know. Instead, when you find yourself in the unknown, be the best you can be. It's like they say: Shoot for the moon; even if you miss it, you will land among the stars.

## Newly Opened **Nizina River Crossing**

Secluded Private Cabin with  
a magnificent view of the  
Nizina River Valley & the  
Sourdough Rock Glacier.

Family owned & operated.

Call for reservations  
**(907)554-4488**  
Or leave message  
**(907)322-4528**

# Cooking with Lynn and Grandma Hyland

BY LYNN WELTY

*Editor's note: Lynn and her husband, Don, daughters, Rene and Sarah, are year round residents of the McCarthy area. Most of you will recognize the Welty family name through our regular column Items of Interest.*

I am blessed to share with all of the WSEN readers the following recipes. They have brought such wonderful and happy memories to me. My grandmother, Wilma Hyland, hand wrote all her family favorite recipes in a special book that was then handed down to each of her six grandchildren. Although I live so far from her, every time I make one of these dishes, I feel the love and warmth of my Grandma.

## Grandma's Spaghetti and Meatballs

*This is my favorite meal and my grandmother always makes it for me whenever we are home visiting. We were able to celebrate this past Christmas with her and the dear woman made four batches to feed the 22 eager eaters. This is quite a feat as she was 95 years old. (She turned 96 on June 18<sup>th</sup>.)*

- 1 large onion sliced (saute and reserve)
- 1 package ground beef
- 2 tablespoons minced onion
- 3 tablespoons Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons parsley flakes
- 2 cups bread crumbs
- 1 or 2 large eggs
- Mix the above ingredients

well and form into meatballs. Coat with flour and lightly brown. Reserve.

To the skillet add:

- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 1 can tomato sauce
- 1 can home canned tomatoes or 2 store-bought cans

Blend well and cook 5 minutes. Add meatballs and onions. Put in a larger pan and simmer 3 to 4 hours uncovered, or until thick. Serve over cooked spaghetti.

## Pie Pastry

- 1 pie crust double for a two-crust pie

- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 cup Crisco shortening
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons ice water (plus)

Combine flour and salt. Cut in Crisco (I use a fork). Add the water. Blend together and roll out on a floured board. Bake 1/2 hour at 350 degrees.

## Lemon Meringue Pie

*My husband Don's favorite sight at Grandma's house is her lemon meringue pie sitting on the kitchen counter. He always tells her it is a work of art and a*

*pleasure to the taste buds.*

- 1 package of cooked (not instant) lemon Jell-O pudding
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 egg yolks
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- pinch of salt
- 2 cups water
- 1 baked pie shell

Combine pudding, sugar, salt, and egg yolks. Add the water and cook until thick. Remove from burner and stir in lemon juice. When cool add the filling to the baked pie shell and top with meringue.

## Meringue

- 3 egg whites
- 1/4 cup sugar
- choice of flavoring

Beat egg whites until stiff and gradually add the sugar and flavoring. It takes about 10 minutes to brown in oven at 350 degrees.

*I share these recipes with you to honor my Grandma Wilma Hyland who has shared her joy, wisdom and love of God to all her family especially me!*

On my arrival in the United States, I was struck by the degree of ability among the governed and the lack of it among the governing. Alexis de Tocqueville

Today, we need a nation of Minutemen, who are not only prepared to take arms, but citizens who regard the preservation of freedom as the basic purpose of their daily lives, and who are willing to consciously work and sacrifice



for that freedom. John F. Kennedy

BY GEORGE CEBULA

**A**s in the past, April saw the end of a long winter and the last of the snow. April 2003 was just as an April should be, warm temperatures and no precipitation. The high temperature for the month was 71 on the 27<sup>th</sup> (61 on Apr. 29, 02 and 52 on Apr. 23, 01). The low was -18 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> (-17 on Apr. 1, 02 and 0 on Apr. 2, 01). The average temperature for April was 32.8, compared to 24.9 in 02 and 34.4 in 01. The lowest average temperatures for April were 22.4 in 1972 and 24.7 in 1986.

*Silver Lake had a high of 71 on 28<sup>th</sup> (60 on Apr. 29, 02 and 53 on Apr. 27, 01) and a low of -12 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> (-18 on Apr 1, 02 and 13 on Apr. 1, 01). The April average temperature at Silver Lake was 31.7 (22.8 in 02 and 33.9 in 01).*

The precipitation for April was below average with only a trace recorded (0.39 in 02 and 0.07 in 01). There was also only a trace of snow (7.1 inches in 02 and 1.2 inches 01). *Silver Lake had no precipitation in April (trace in 02 and 01).*

The total snowfall at McCarthy for 02-'03 was 46.0 inches (74.2 in 01-02, 85.2 in 00-'01, 65.8 in 99-'00 and 38.9 in 98-'99). *Silver Lake's snowfall*

*for 02-03 was 51.0 inches (57.5 in 01-'02).*

McCarthy started the month with 18 inches of snow on the ground and was clear of snow on April 27<sup>th</sup>. *Silver Lake had 4 inches of snow on the ground as April arrived and was clear of snow on April 20<sup>th</sup>.*

The temperatures were just about average for May. The high temperature for May was 70 on the 29<sup>th</sup> (80 on May 25, 02 and 68 on May 28, 01). The low temperature was 21 on the 6<sup>th</sup> (15 on May 5, 02 and 18 on May 18, 01). The May average temperature was 44.4; this compares with 45.9 in 02, 41.8 in 01 and 42.7 in 00. There was 1 day with a high of 70 or above. *Silver Lake had a high of 67 on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> (80 on May 26, 02 and 68 on May 29, 01), a low of 25 on the 19<sup>th</sup> (14 on May 5, 02 and 18 on May 5, 01) and an average temperature of 44.0 (45.0 in 02, 42.0 in 01 and 43.3 in 00).*

The May precipitation at McCarthy was about normal with 1.42 inches of liquid. This compares with 1.79 inches in 02 and 2.13 inches in 01. There was 1.5 inches of snow recorded on May 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. *Silver Lake recorded 0.62 inches of liquid (0.96 inches in 02 and 0.52 inches in 01). No snow was observed at Silver Lake.*

The ice on the West Fork of the Kennicott River began to break apart around April 15<sup>th</sup> and water was moving over the top. The river was clear of moving ice by April 25<sup>th</sup> and all the shore ice was gone by May 1<sup>st</sup>. *The ice on Silver Lake was too soft for travel in mid April and it was completely gone the morning of May 5<sup>th</sup> (May 21,'02 and May 15,'01).*

The first half of June was warm and dry with highs in the high 70's to near 80. The lows were in the mid 30's to low 40's. 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 sometime in July, with a rapid rise of the water level in the Kennicott River and some possible flooding. The first snow usually arrives sometime in late September.

ENJOY THE SUMMER  
WHATEVER THE WEATHER!

Ah, summer, what power you have to make us suffer and like it. Russell Baker

Next to the right of liberty, the right of property is the most important individual right guaranteed by the Constitution and the one which, united with that of personal liberty, has contributed more to the growth of civilization than any other institution established by the human race. William Howard Taft

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor,

As most of you know I've been trying to get better access into Copper Lake and Tananda Lake and access to my property on Copper Lake. I've also been trying to set up a grass roots group for fixing the trails. Dick Shultz, Dave Stancliff and myself were there along with people from the environmentalist and the NPS. The environmentalists want all access in the park and outside the park shut off to all but hikers. The NPS wants the same thing but there are laws that guarantee that we have access but with the way that they interpret the regulations we can't afford the process unless we are Standard Oil, or unless the general public comes together and fights them on an organized front. I have been told that as of right now I do not have access to my property on Copper Lake and I need to play their game. I've been over 40 years building up this property and had a good start until the NPS showed up and over the years have watched the NPS harass people so that they don't come back. I don't have the deep pockets or another 50 years to protect my rights.

I don't know what the answer is. Dick Shultz and Dave Stancliff have done an awesome job trying to protect our rights but we need more help. If you want to give the next generation a chance to see some of the sights and experience some of the outdoor recreation that we have you need to get involved now.

Any one that has any ideas I would sure appreciate them.

Thank You

Doug/Judy Frederick  
Sportsman's Paradise Lodge

---

Good Morning,

I wanted to pass along some info about the Park Service that may not be known by the Pilgrims, and others.

The NPS has a program called *Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program*. The following is copied from the website.

<http://www.nps.gov/nrc/pr/programs/rtea/index.html>

National Park Service  
Assistance for Community  
Conservation

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, also known as Rivers & Trails or RTCA, works with community groups and local and State governments to conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways.

Rivers & Trails works in urban, rural, and suburban communities with the goal of helping communities achieve on-the-ground conservation successes for their projects. Our focus is on helping communities help themselves by providing expertise and experience from around the nation. From urban promenades to trails along abandoned railroad rights-of-way to wildlife corridors, our assistance in greenway efforts is wide ranging. Similarly, our assistance in river conservation spans downtown riverfronts to regional water trails to stream restoration.

Rivers & Trails has conservation professionals in communities nationwide. Find our staff near you. And

everywhere we work, we stand alongside exceptional partners.

Learn more about: How we assist communities

Another article in the *Anchorage Daily News* also may be of interest to you folks....It was published on June 8<sup>th</sup>, called *Motorized Alaskans wreaking havoc in Bush*, by Craig Medred. It's an interesting idea that he pitches for building a Bush Hiway Trail system.

This program needn't be costly, either. Kevin Keeler and others associated with the NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program have spent the past decade developing the technology for building all-terrain vehicle trails over and into muskeg. They could show the State Dept. Transportation how to build Bush roads for a fraction of the cost of our urban roads.

They have been working with plastic matting that allows natural grasses to grow through and around it, creating a firm, long-lasting bed for four-wheeler and tracked-vehicle traffic with little change to the natural setting.

My point in sharing this is that the NPS is whining about a problem they already know how to fix! And they have been working on this fix for a decade.

I would love to be at this meeting so that I could ask the NPS folks about the probability of them using their own research and development to end the issue of rights of way through parks, preserves, refuges, etc.

By allowing inholders to

re-build an obviously previously established right-of-way to a private inholding, (include deviations for land and water movement), with the technology available, that they HAVE there should be no issues with environmentalists, or their own regulations.

Park users can use a right-of-way just as anyone, it may be called Green Butte or Pilgrim Way or even Nebesna Road, that does not matter one skinny bit, it is access to a PUBLICLY HELD NATIONAL PARK AND WORLD HERITAGE SITE. Apparently the NPS officials out there have been at altitude for a little too long. If they would stop pointing fingers and making unreasonable demands of compliance of rules that do not realistically apply and STARTED demanding that their own departments follow their mission statements, and actually apply the technology that THEY HAVE ON HAND, their budgets would grow as well as their standing within the communities they serve. And make no mistake the NPS is a Federal Agency, by definition they are here to serve.

They could make lots of people, land owners and park users, very happy by increasing the access to the Park. That would in turn allow more people to use the area with less impact and fewer visitors per trail. That fact alone enhances the wilderness experience the park service is so worried that visitors from over populated cities might actually miss out on. They would be spending more time carrying out the Mission Statement of their agency, instead of getting nasty with a lot of red tape and armed rangers. Why waste the money fighting? When you have the solution in hand?

I live in Anchorage. I love McCarthy. It is my intent to live there. I look at potential properties each time I visit. I am also in the State of Alaska s Interpretive Naturalist Certification Program and a Student Pilot. I own part of a gold mine located on the border of the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. I am not a newcomer to the difficulties of working with the NPS or the difficulties of living beyond the end of the road.

When I find that perfect piece of land and buy it, (inside or out of the park boundary) I do not have any desire to argue with anyone over rights-of-way. I hope that this information about the NPS inner-department doings helps someone to find a common solution to the right-of way issue and access to the Park.

Thank you.

HollyAnne Holm

hollyinalaska@aol.com

---

Good morning!

It is with interest that I m reading the story of the problems between the NPS and one of your local families.

Would you please be kind enough to pass along my message of support to the Pilgrim family? While I m certainly not someone who could possibly be of any use to these folks, but rather am a boring middle aged housewife from the suburbs, I would still like to say to them that I am proud of them for taking a stand. I hope that they will continue to stand up for what they believe, and I hope that this whole thing ends in a way that is good for them. America needs more people like the Pilgrims, whose beliefs and values reflect the best for all of us.

As a taxpayer, I m alarmed that my government feels that it s okay for them to use my tax dollars to harass their citizens like this. The mere thought of sending \*armed agents\* (!) into an area that is known to contain 15 children is absolutely appalling to me!! What can the NPS possibly be thinking? With that many children involved, there should never have been any question that the use of weapon-toting officials was totally unthinkable.

I ve written to the NPS expressing my shock over their methods, and hopefully if there are enough people who do the same, they will reconsider their harassment of this family.

I would be much obliged to you if you would do me the favor of passing along my regards to the Pilgrims. Please tell them that they are in the thoughts and prayers of folks well beyond their immediate area, and that I, for one, am pulling for them and for a safe ending to all of this.

Thank you very much!

Kim

Farmington, MN

---

Dear Editor,

I just received your May & June issue great articles. I truly admire all those individuals who participated in the protest drive on the McCarthy-Green Butte Road.

For 14 years I have helped Kantishna miners within Denali National Park. Hopefully, McCarthy won t go the way of Kantishna. The key to beating the Park Service is to stick together and help each other out. A time proven NPS tactic is to get individuals fighting each other and pick them off one at a time. It is extremely important that no one, under any

circumstances, sells any private land to the Park Service. I can't emphasize this enough - never, never sell land to the government. Property rights is all about freedom.

Note: After reading the *WorldNetDaily* articles I want you to know that it is nothing new or creative when the Park Service tries to make the Pilgrims look dangerous. Over the years I have had many Congressional inquiries generated on my behalf due to Park Service takings. A couple of times the NPS Regional Director stated that they alerted security when I was in the building. That comment infuriated me since it was likely a lie, at the very least there was no reason for security to be alerted.

I have worked for the NPS before. Honest people don't last, or are put in the background where they can cause no harm. NPS employees will do most anything to protect their jobs. If they don't, there are plenty of individuals to take their position that will do as they are told. They are rarely held accountable, that is the reason they can say and do most anything.

Sincerely,  
Steve Hicks.

---

Dear McCarthy Annie,

I have just stumbled upon your various websites, and the story of the Pilgrim family. It is hard to keep my composure long enough to write this. You and your community are to be praised to the heavens for your fundamental decency, kindness, and honor. Your community demonstrates the potential of humanity.

I am an (increasingly) observant Jew, a construction estimator, a husband of nearly

twenty-five years, and father of four fine children aged 14-to-22. I have also been involved in the freedom movement since the 1970s. I cannot recall a more moving story. Not only of those who would be our Kings, but of those who stood against them with integrity and for liberty.

It is clear to me why the Pilgrims came to your community. You understand. So do I.

G-d Bless You All.  
Sincerely,  
J. Eric Andreasen  
Tempe, AZ

---

I just called and ordered a subscription to your paper before reading your online version. All I can say is Wow! this is the kind of stuff I wish more papers put out.

The story on the Pilgrim family was outstanding, not only because of the wonderful pictures available in your web version, but because Dorothy Adler made me feel her amazement and wonder at their story, and told me exactly what I would have been curious about had I been the one visiting. I smiled all the way through it.

I lived in Baranof Warm Springs, a small bay on the eastern shore of Baranof Island in southeast Alaska. From October to May, I had the place to myself. Summer months brought an influx of seiners, pleasure-boaters, and all manner of fly-in visitors and hikers to my world of isolation. I resented the boardwalkers who felt no reservation about picking my strawberries, thought it quaint that I did laundry on a washboard (including the multiple towels they had to have when taking a hot bath), and was quite

offended to find a photo someone had taken of my laundry hanging out to dry along the boardwalk had found its way into an art gallery one year. At that point, I realized nothing was off-limits and vowed to find a place where my undies could dry in private.

I now live in a small Indian village on Chichagof Island, Hoonah. It has two miles of pavement and I'm starting to feel civilized. Oops. Time to start searching again.

I appreciate finding your site on the web; I promise not to act like an outsider if I ever stop by your neck of the woods.

Looking forward to my first issue of WSEN,  
Rene' Wolfe

---

To whom it may concern,

God bless you all for taking a stand. I have bookmarked your website and will monitor your story (read about it on *WorldNetDaily*). The government can't keep their nose out of anyone's business. I live in upstate New York and we are getting hit so hard with taxes (and Hillary Clinton) that we are contemplating leaving this state for a friendlier environment.

Best of luck to all of you up there, I'm sure your story is being read by tens of thousands around the world.

You should make a push to have Gary Candelaria, Wrangell-St. Elias chief ranger Hunter Sharp and ranger Marshall Neeck removed from their jobs. If a petition starts, let me know, I'll sign it.

God bless,  
Scott Crist  
Rochester, New York