

Wrangell St. Elias News

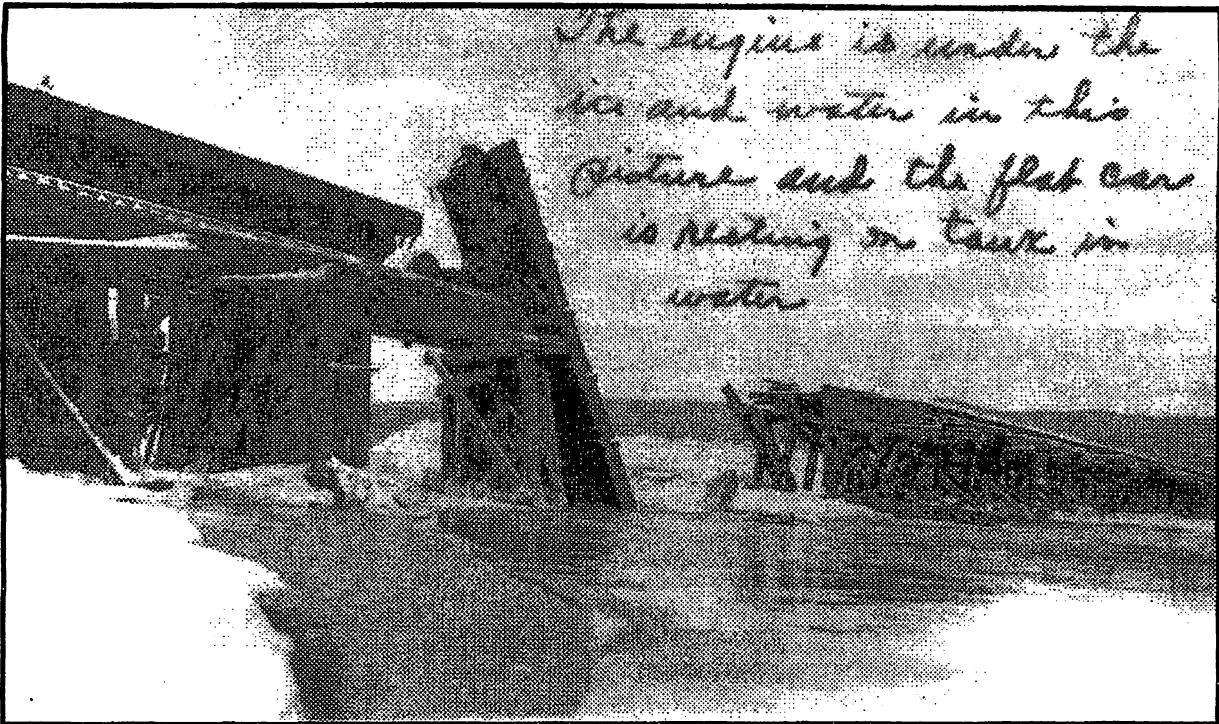
"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"

Vol. Seven Issue One

January & February 1998

Two Dollars

1918—Engine no. 74 remembered



Candy Waugaman photo

Chitina—November 30, 1918— "Early yesterday morning a serious accident occurred on the Copper River Bridge when the North End Local was making its first trip across. Absolutely without warning, the bridge collapsed beneath it and engine & two flat cars were hurled into the river."

So reported the McCarthy Weekly News 79 years ago. Historian Ron Simpson looks at the tragedy that claimed the life of the fireman and injured others of the crew of engine no. 74. Story starts on page 6.

ALSO

Solar Power Systems—part 2

McCarthy Road Scenic Corridor Plan

A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

We are back! In last issue's *A note from the publisher*, Rick informed you we had tickets to fly south on November 3. We managed to mail you the November/December 1997 WSEN on October 23 which was roughly a week early. Rick and I want to thank our regular columnists, Carly Kritchen and George Cebula, and those of you who contributed to that issue for promptly submitting your material early so we could get a head start on our vacation.

Winter REALLY arrived in McCarthy on October 14. It started to snow in the early morning hours and didn't seem to want to stop until the evening of the 17th! Before we knew it, there were 25 inches on the ground. The McCarthy Road traffic came to an abrupt halt, and those of us planning to leave the area were beginning to wonder if we would have to leave our vehicles at home!

Rick sent a "HELP" fax to Cal Datta at the Tazlina DOT station, others began calling, with the result that the road was plowed before the time we needed to leave. Thanks, Cal!

We had a remarkable visit with family and friends in Daytona Beach, nearby Deltona and Donalsonville, Ga. Our son, Rick Jr., daughter-in-law Maria and our two grandsons Jonathan David, 4, and Stephen Joel, 2, drove down from Georgia to visit us on our first weekend in Daytona. Virginia, Rick's mom, celebrated a birthday while all of us were together and that was a highlight.

Grandpa Rick and Jonathan went "camping" in my mom's living room and I watched "Veggie Tale" videos with Stephen.

Rick and I usually go south during the month of January but we chose to go earlier this year, to see if we could escape those

infamous road glaciers on the McCarthy Road (we did have a successful drive in!) and celebrate Thanksgiving together as a family – a rare occasion indeed! The morning after Thanksgiving

Maria and I were on the road by 6:00 a.m. heading for the Daytona mall to take advantage of the sales. You should have seen all the ladies that were already there when we arrived!! Fortunately, there was enough to go around.

My brother Ron, his wife Rhonda and their three boys, Nick (10), Nathan (7), and Scotty (3) live in Deltona, only about 30 minutes from Daytona, so we had special time with them as well. My mom and I got to attend Nick's piano recital one evening and I was so proud of him! Nathan showed Uncle Rick how to play an exciting computer game. And of course Scotty kept us all entertained with his antics.

To put the icing on this fabulous vacation, Rick Jr., Rick Sr., Maria and I – for the first

time ever – sang a quartet at my mom's church on the last Sunday we were in Daytona. Rick Jr. led the song service, Maria played the piano and my mom accompanied on the church organ. Rick's folks were in attendance as well. What a wonderful time we had as a family!

Rick and I were pleasantly surprised to receive several e-mail messages from subscribers (and friends) Kim Northrup in Ramona, Ca. and Nelson Corcoran who is working in Antarctica this winter.



WSEN staff photo

We brought this sign back with us. It used to grace Rick's folk's cabin in Michigan, and was originally a gift from a very special subscriber – Thanks, Aunt Hazel!

When we got home, we began receiving Christmas cards from so many of you. Thank you and please accept our apologies for not returning cards to each and every one. Rick and I pray you all experienced a beautiful holiday season and we both wish you a prosperous and peaceful new year! 🍷

Wrangell St. Elias News welcomes aboard the following new subscribers: Richard Givens, WA; Pat McEntee, AK; Thea Agnew, AK; Howard Daniels, WA; Kevin Coughlin, OR; Monte Weaver, AK; Steve Sylvester, PA; Jim Kreblin, WI; Mark McIntyre, TN; JoAnne Pross, AK; Ken and Francie Borden, NY.

Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

Brooks and Diane Ludwig: As winter begins to make it's entrance in the McCarthy area, the busy summer activities slow to a crawl and the local population takes a nose dive. While some folks take leave of the cold, dark months, others, like Brooks and Diane arrive. After spending 3 weeks visiting family in Washington and Arizona, the Ludwigs arrived the middle of November. Diane's eyes always light up when she talks about spending time with her 87 year old grandmother. She must be one exceptional lady!

Brooks and Diane dropped by after mail the other day. I asked them what was new in their neck of the woods. During the last week of November, they were surprised to hear wolves howling in the vicinity near their cabin. To top things off, on a recent supply run into Glennallen, they actually saw 4 wolves between Chitina and Kenny Lake. Sounds like we may expect added wolf activity this winter.

The Ludwigs informed me they are busy building shelves for their cabin and even planning a sauna. Just in case you stop in at Fireweed Subdivision, be on the lookout for Diane cruising along on her new dog sled. Diane says their two huskies love every minute of it!

The Bursch family: I was delighted to discover through the Ludwigs that their nearby neighbors, Thom, Cate and girls, are expected over the

Christmas holiday season. The word is the Bursches are due to arrive Dec. 21 and be in our local area for 10 days. McCarthy is always richer when the Bursch family return!

Doran, Ronnie, Rebekkah and Adam Ward: Even though I haven't seen Cal and Pat Ward since we've gotten back from our vacation, I did get to see Ronnie, their daughter-in-law, at the annual Christmas cookie exchange. She, husband Doran, daughter Rebekkah and son Adam live in Washington when they aren't visiting their Fireweed Mountain cabin.

Ronnie told me their house which they put on the market recently sold much quicker than expected and the new house being built wasn't finished enough to move in, so they decided to come north and "camp out." They are thoroughly enjoying it, too, and plan on being here until the end of January.

While Doran commutes to work, Ronnie and the kids are fairing just fine! She pointed out to me that having a snowmachine with an electric starter is making her adventure much easier. Rick tells me he gave Ronnie's machine a good looking over – just in case we might want to upgrade our next machine to include one of those

fancy buttons!

Lilly Goodman: Today as I started Items of Interest, I was given a copy of *Candle Sparks* – Lilly's book which is now in print and available to the public. Even though I haven't had time to read it, I can not help but recognize the cover as being the artistry of local resident Mark Vail. Look on page 21 for a review of *Candle Sparks*.

Don, Lynn, Rene and Sarah Welty: According to Lynn (mom and homeschool teacher), daughters Rene and Sarah are nearly half done with this year's schoolwork. The two students

are doing well with their studies and enjoying Art class with Rita Hoare of Kennicott. I'm hoping some of their artwork will find its way to the city desk here at WSEN by



WSEN staff photo

The Welty's – Lynn, Rene, Sarah and Don.

next issue. If so, we'll try to share it with you.

Don is staying occupied with his building project for Wayne Smith and anticipates getting the cabin roof on this winter.

Kim Northrup: Kim may be in Ramona, Ca. for the winter, but she stays in touch with us via e-mail – in between kennel work, dog shows on the weekends and her job as a resource counselor. She is working with adults with developmental disabilities and

writes, "It's both challenging and rewarding."

Kim's "family" has grown to include a playmate for Mamma Pajama. The new puppy's name is Rosie and is lots of company, says Kim. Mamma Pajama's first dog show is scheduled for January 13 in Mexico. Naturally, Mamma's "mom" hopes her young Pyrenee comes back a Mexican International Champion, beginning her career as a show dog!

Dave Hollis: Speaking of e-mail...Dave checks in with WSEN on a regular basis. He informs us that "opportunity knocks." He is relocating from Fairbanks to Anchorage where he will be working as a mainframe computer operator for a financial institution. His mail is being forwarded so keep those cards, letters and e-mail winging his way!

Chris Richards: I wish I had taken my camera to mail the other day, when several large boxes bearing his name were unloaded off the mail plane. The goodies turned out to be a complete computer setup - a surprise gift from his family! A few days later I called him to

see how things were going, and in spite of the fact he is somewhat "befuddled" with all this hi-tech equipment, he is learning a lot and getting a taste of e-mail communication.

If he can break away from his newly-acquired interest, he hopes to visit his mom in Los Angeles during January. Says Chris, "Just to watch the flowers grow!"

Matt Hambrick and Kris Rueter: Shortly after Rick and I returned from our trip to Florida, we were elated to look up the hill behind us and see a beautifully-lit tree. Because their cabin is rather small for an inside Christmas tree, Kris and Matt say they chose to decorate an outside tree instead. Kris says they are glad to be here this winter and are looking forward to a "McCarthy Christmas." From the looks of it, I'd say they've gotten a good head start.

E-mail and computers are becoming common items of interest in McCarthy. In fact, when I called Kris tonight to see what is new on the hill, she said she was just getting ready to call us. Now that she and Matt

are proud owners of a new computer, she was getting ready to tackle the Internet and had a question. (If anyone has a question about computers or their by-products, I promptly hand the phone to Rick!)

George Cebula: George is presently visiting his mom, Helen Cebula in Campbell, Ohio, and his brothers in Wisconsin over the Christmas holidays. While Rick and I were in Florida during November, George, who is our closest neighbor and retired from the Alaska weather service, filled in for us and did an excellent job. Rick and I have been contract weather observers in the McCarthy area since the fall of 1983. At that time George was working for NOAA and based in Anchorage. The McCarthy station was just one of many he was responsible for. Although he retired a couple of years ago, he continues to be a great encouragement to us. Thanks, George, for assisting Rick and I in experiencing a wonderful vacation.

Terry and Dee Frady: I just got off the phone with Dee and all is well at the Frady homestead. Because they needed to replace their previous snowmachine, Terry and Dee decided their winter travel needed some upgrading. With comfort a high priority, they both chose a machine with the independent suspension feature which does a great service to one's back and (what all us snowmachine gals dream of) an electric start option!

Jim and Audrey Edwards: I've been home for nearly 3 weeks now so I decided it was time to pay Audrey a visit. We both were pleasantly surprised to have Kris Rueter join us for

Wrangell St. Elias News

VOL. Seven, Issue One, January & February 1998.

Published every two months at McCarthy, Alaska. McCarthy, PO Box MXY, Glennallen, AK 99588-8998. Phone (907) 554-4454. FAX (907) 554-4454. E-mail Wsenews@aol.com. "Copyright © 1998 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, Carly Kritchen, Ron Simpson, Ed LaChapelle, Joe Hoare, Neil O'Donnell, Carla Helfferich, Andy and John Adams. Subscription price is \$10 for one year in the USA. Canada \$12.50. Other countries \$20. Back Issues \$2.50 each. Advertising rates upon request. Deadline for publication in next issue is February 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.

a cup of tea and Audrey's delicious cheesecake. Kris was on a ski trip down in the Edwards' neck of the woods. In the course of the conversation, I discovered I had missed seeing Jim's daughter, Shelley, son Steve, Steve's wife Lana and their son Ben, who had visited them over Thanksgiving. Audrey and Jim are planning a trip to Anchorage to spend Christmas with Audrey's dad and see more of Jim's family.

Audrey says she is giving Jim a hand on the airplane building project that is well underway in their workshop. The Zenair is expected to be in the air by this summer.

By the way, McCarthy ladies, Kris and I got a peek at Audrey's new Danby washer and were really impressed with its design and streamlined look.

Ken and Carly

Kritchen: On December 12, approximately 15 ladies along with their favorite cookies and/or candy gathered around the Kritchen's round table to celebrate McCarthy's Third Annual Cookie Exchange. Carly, the founder and hostess of the "ladies only" function, prepared a scrumptious luncheon for us all. Most of the gals came by snowmachine from as far away as Kennicott to the north and the base of Fireweed Mountain to the south.

Conversation and laughter is never hard to come by at these fun-filled get-togethers. Thank you, Carly, and all you ladies who attended for making this the best exchange ever!

Jim, Jeannie, Stacie, Matt and Aaron Miller: The Miller family is celebrating more than Christmas this year. Daughter Stacie arrived from Fairbanks and is spending a good portion of her school break with her family in Kennicott. Jeannie drove into town to meet up with Stacie and bring her home for the holidays. Welcome home, Stacie!

While Jeannie was gone, Jim replaced her old kitchen countertops with new. (He doesn't get many opportunities



for such projects, he says.) It's not easy getting Jeannie out of the kitchen for any length of time!

Things are quiet up on the hill this winter, says Jeannie, and they are enjoying the warmer temperatures we all are experiencing this year.

Rick Jurick: Rick has taken off for the big city of Anchorage for a short stay. I am told,

however, that earlier this winter he opened up his Silk Stocking home to live "Tuesday Night Music." For a small community, McCarthy has quite a number of musicians. It is reported that on an average 15 people, bringing guitars, banjo, keyboard, violin and flute, turn out to make music.

McCarthy Lodge: Betty, Lane and son Kaylin kicked off the Christmas season with "McCarthy's first Christmas Lighting Ceremony." Although Rick and I were in Florida, we heard the party was a success and a colossal turnout for our winter population. I was told 55 people attended the festivity which was held November 29 in downtown McCarthy. Highlights included a Christmas treasure hunt for the kids and an awesome display of lights and fireworks after dark.

John Adams: John is back from Wasilla where he spent the Christmas holidays with family. Son Andy returned to Alaska from West Point to join the celebration.

John is sporting a new look these days. Actually, it was a Christmas present to his mom, Denny – a short, stylish haircut! John, it looks great on you!

Lynn Ellis: Our favorite mail pilot went way above and beyond the call of duty on Christmas eve. When he was unable to fly the mail in due to bad weather, Lynn put the mail in his pickup truck and drove it in. Now that is dedication!

Thanks also to Matt Hambrick who drove out to meet Lynn. ☐

The Copper River Crossing at Chitina, CR & NW Railway Mile 132

BY RON SIMPSON

When engine #74 pulled out of Kennecott for the last time on November 10, 1938, on a wintery day of blowing snow, it was following a run it had been making for 21 years. In four hours, the trainload of passengers and salvaged equipment would be approaching the Copper River crossing east of Chitina. The blowing snow of this day would mimic that of 20 years ago in the same month when #74, then only a year in service, approached the crossing from Chitina, headed toward Kennecott with a group of empty steel flat cars. At the

time, most of the ore was bagged, 200 pounds per sack, with mill processed copper ore, which were heaped on the 107 steel flat cars of 100,000 pound gross capacity which were available for ore shipments.

The crossing at Chitina was a 950 foot long trestle, barely above high water mark on the Copper River. This trestle was always relatively new, because it would go out at least once each year at spring break-up, and sometimes more frequently. By the end of the 28 year project, this bridge would be responsible for at least 15 accidental deaths.

Number 74 was one of the

heaviest pieces of equipment on the line at 95 tons, not counting its huge tender filled with bunker "C" oil. It was limited to a speed of ten miles per hour crossing all the wooden trestles, and mile 132 was the longest of these wooden structures.

November 29 was a day of blowing snow that limited visibility severely. A channel was open at the bridge and some large chunks of ice were passing through. No one had checked out the bridge in advance and the engineer could not see that two bents (supports) had been knocked out from under the bridge. The heavy engine, its tender and one of the steel flats were

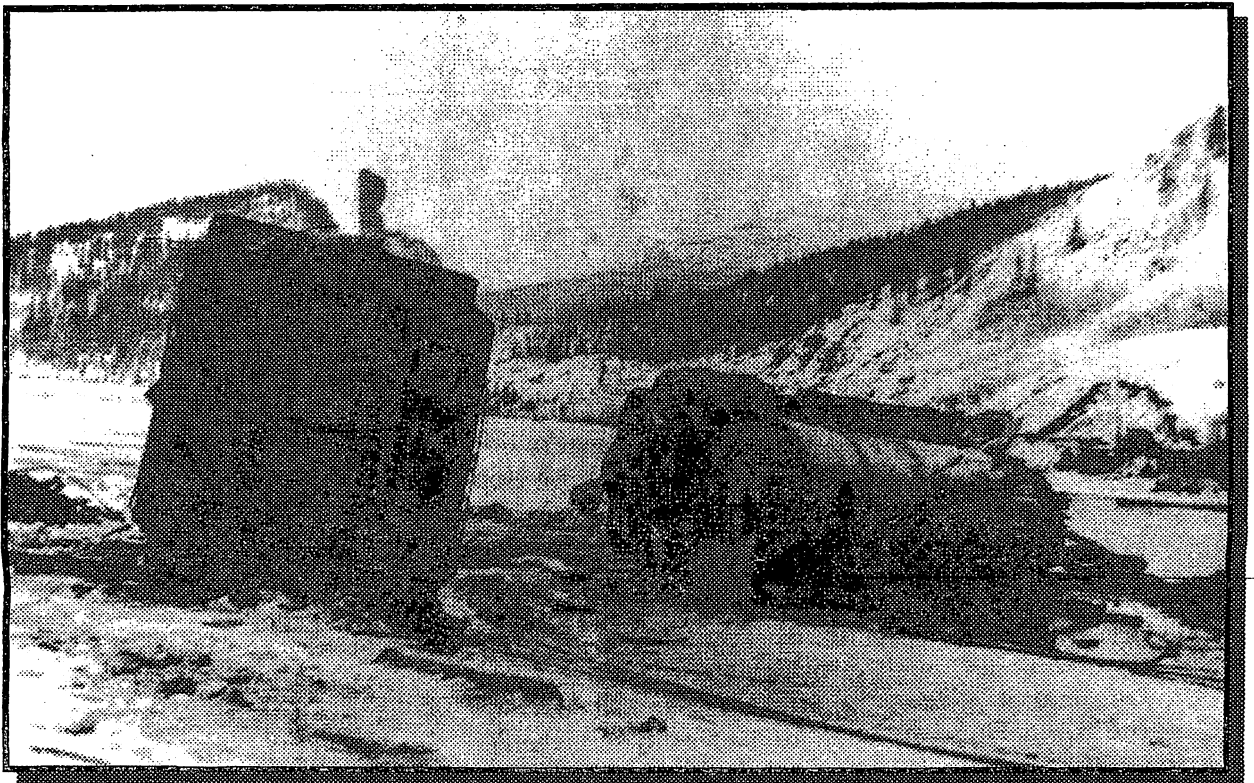


Photo courtesy Candy Waugaman

ENGINE #74 WITH ITS TENDER ON THE EAST BANK OF THE COPPER RIVER AFTER THE 1918 BRIDGE ACCIDENT.

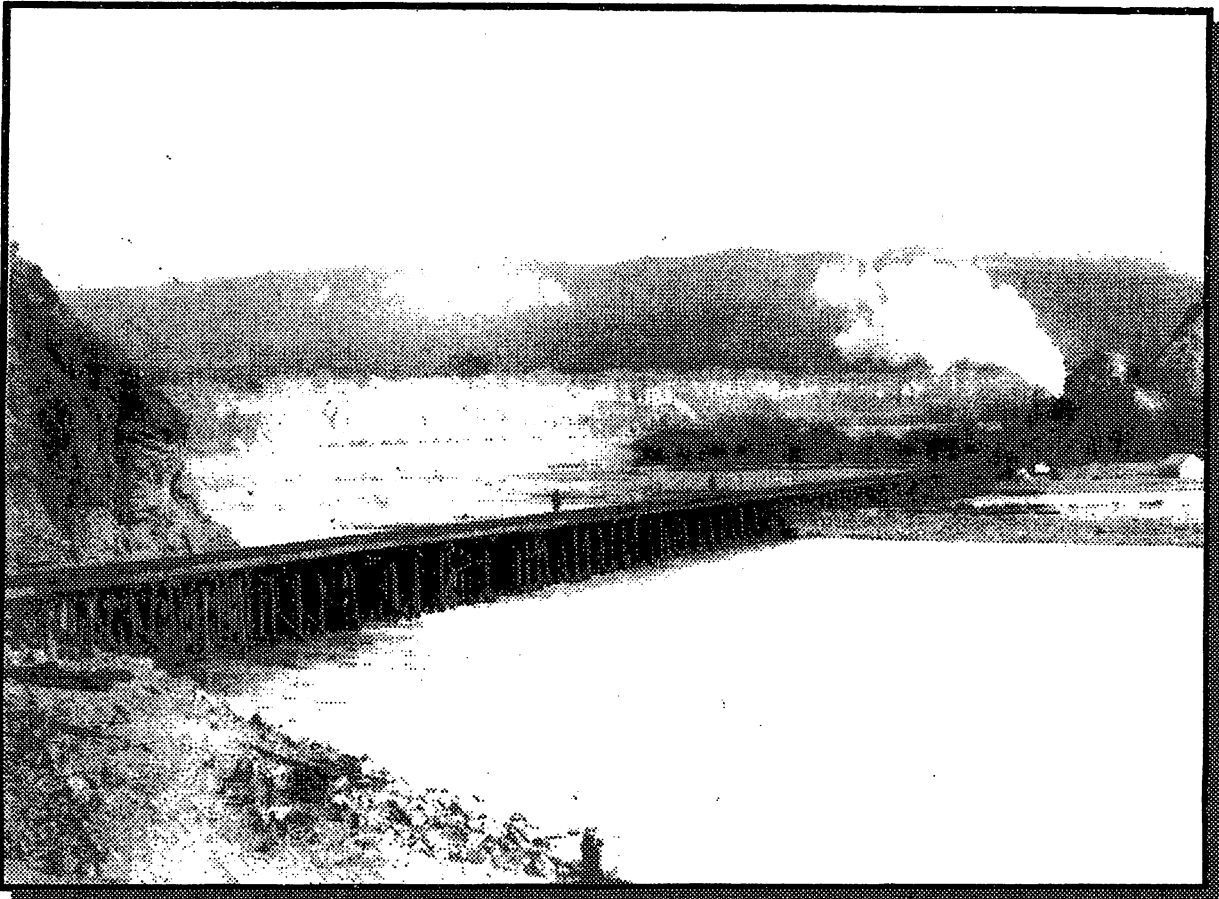


Photo courtesy Candy Waugaman

THE 950 FOOT WOODEN TRESTLE AT THE COPPER RIVER, CR&NW MILE 132, LOOKING EAST. VISIBLE ON THE LEFT IS THE ROCK ON THE WEST BANK WHERE THE PERMANENT STEEL BRIDGE WOULD HAVE BEEN ANCHORED.

completely immersed when the bridge gave way, and the fireman was killed. Somehow the other crewmen survived the plunge into the icy river.

Had this been the regularly scheduled mixed freight run, the car immediately behind the tender would have been a Pullman combination passenger and baggage coach, and disaster would have been certain.

It took a large capacity Brownhoist crane from Cordova to pull out the engine and other cars. Engine 74 would survive in service for another 20 years, becoming one of the four 70-series engines sold after the closing of the CR & NW Railway,

It continued in service both in the U.S. and in Mexico until being scrapped in 1964—46 years after being unceremoniously dumped into the Copper River.

The wooden trestles comprised a large part of the CR & NW line—a necessary but high maintenance part of the system covering some 15 per cent of the grade from Cordova to Chitina. Many of these were considered temporary structures which would serve as falsework for the permanent steel spans that would eventually replace them. The crossing at mile 132 was one of these “temporary” bridges, except that the permanent

structure was to be placed up river from the trestle rather than on top of it.

Original plans of 1909 called for the permanent railroad bed following a much higher contour once it passed through the tunnel just north of Chitina. The permanent grade to the river dipped very little, and would cross upstream about 70 feet in elevation higher than the wooden trestle, avoiding the 4 percent grade approaches. The permanent steel structure was to be anchored into the rock at about the point where an aerial tram once crossed the river (to accommodate those times when the bridge itself was out). The first span, similar to

that used in the Miles Glacier bridge at mile 49, crossed the main channel, and was to be 360 feet long. The other three spans would be 275 feet long, identical structures, with all the support below the rail grade, the same as at the Kuskulana bridge. Four large concrete piers would support the high structure, the fourth being at the very east end of the bridge, where it would presumably meet up with a wooden

trestle approach to complete the crossing, completely avoiding the grades which are still used.

The modern concrete highway bridge is located where the old wooden trestle was and at a much lower level than the railway bridge would have been.

The nearly 1200 foot long steel bridge would have been second in length only to the Miles Glacier bridge. As it was,

four of the five steel bridges immediately considered were built and no significant bridge alterations were ever made after 1911.

The cost of the permanent structure at the time was estimated to be \$650,000. Since the copper mines served were not expected to last even 15 years, it was not thought necessary to build the steel crossing at mile 132.

The 70-series Mikado locomotives

Steam locomotives are sometimes classified by wheel arrangement. The Mikado was a 2-8-2, two leading wheels, eight drive wheels, and two rear wheels (which provided support for a heavier firebox than that used in the lighter consolidation engines, the 2-8-0 types).

The wheel arrangement "Mikado," came from a series of Baldwin 2-8-2's built for the Nippon Railway of Japan in 1897. The word, which means "emperor of Japan," somehow stuck.

The first Mikados for U.S. service were built in 1901, but they became very common in the teens as standard freight locomotives when five of them were built by Brooks for the Copper River & Northwestern. These were numbers 70, 71 and 72 built in 1915 and numbers 73 and 74 built in 1917.

These engines all came equipped with superheaters, which resulted in 25 to 30 percent more power than those engines not so equipped. Because these Mikados were larger, more powerful engines than the ones they replaced—95 tons as compared to the 85 ton consolidation

freight engines—one 70-series engine could replace two 20-series consolidation freight engines working in tandem pulling the same amount of freight. The acquisition of the 70 series engines occurred at a time of greatly increased copper ore production as the full

potential of the Jumbo mine came into being to meet the demands of the first "world war."

The earlier 20-series engines—20, 21, 22 and 23—were 1907 ALCOs. At that time the 2-8-0 was the standard, with the name "consolidation," coming from a merger of two eastern railways. The first of these was built in 1866, and more consolidation

engines were built than any other wheel arrangement. As with the CR & NW, the older type consolidation engines in the states were replaced by the more powerful Mikado engines. The 20-series of the CR & NW were largely relegated to track maintenance by 1917, having served well during the construction years of 1908 to 1911 and for the early years of Kennecott before ore production reached its high point in 1916.

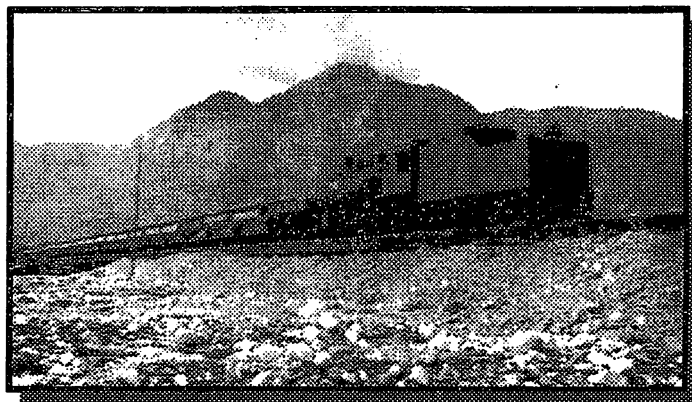


Photo courtesy McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Society

ONE OF THE 70-SERIES ENGINES PUSHING A LOAD OF GRAVEL ON DUMP CARS WITH FIREWEED MOUNTAIN IN THE BACKGROUND. IT WAS ONE OF THESE 95-TON ENGINES WHICH CRASHED THROUGH THE BRIDGE IN 1918.

Copper ore, jewelry and time travel!

BY BONNIE KENYON

If you are looking for Larry Hoare and you don't find him at home, you might want to check down the road at the warehouse next to the Kennicott mill site. The old warehouse building is a hum with action this winter. Larry's *Wintercreek Jewelry* is turning out a variety of earrings, rings, pendants and bracelets which will find their way to various art galleries throughout the state, says Larry. In the summer months, his jewelry is found at our local gift shops as well.

Larry specializes in semi-precious stones set in silver. His stones include garnet, amethyst, jasper, agates, copper ore and Alaska jade. He fabricates his own jewelry with silver sheeting and wire, by soldering, filing and bending. He is venturing into lapidary work, cutting and polishing the stones himself.

Larry started fashioning his own jewelry in 1973. He and his wife Rita spent 1981 in Kennicott. They eventually purchased property in the area, then moved to Homer.

While Rita taught school in Homer, Larry was able to get a part-time job working for a local jeweler.

In anticipation of Rita's retirement from teaching, Larry seriously began "tooling up" — seeing if he could make a living for Rita and their sons, Garrett and Joe, creating and marketing his jewelry.

Although Rita's retirement became a reality and they are now back home in Kennicott (this time, hopefully, to stay), Rita hasn't stopped her

teaching career. She is now busy in her new role as a home school teacher for their two boys.

Last summer over the July 4th weekend, Garrett, 8, and Joe, 11, set up their own shop in front of dad's warehouse and sold copper ore to the visiting tourists.

If you'd like to contact Larry you can write to him at Wintercreek Jewelry, McCarthy #50, PO Box MXY, Glennallen, AK. 99588.

The following copper ore story was submitted by Larry for our readers.

THE COPPER ORE STORY

Chalcocite, a heavy, grey, soft copper sulfide, was the principal ore mined at Kennecott. At almost 80% copper, it was rich enough to warrant spending \$23,000,000 on a railroad to haul it out. Malachite (green) and azurite (blue) are secondary copper ores that form near the surface when copper sulfide bodies are weathered.

Looking at the mountain behind Kennecott one can see a formation of light-colored rock (the Chitistone Limestone) sitting on a dark formation (the Nikolai Greenstone). The chalcocite was found in the limestone not far above the greenstone. Seventy-five feet above the contact was the most favorable horizon for chalcocite formation.

The Chitistone Limestone and the Nikolai Greenstone were formed near the equator during the Triassic Period, or between 250 and 200 million years ago. The calcium

carbonate that eventually became the limestone is thought to have been deposited in evaporitic conditions as is now going on in parts of the Persian Gulf. This helped make the limestone especially suitable for mineral deposition.

When the plate on which these two formations were riding docked at North America during the Cretaceous Period, the resultant heat, pressure and deformation caused thermal brines to pick up copper from the greenstone and deposit it in the limestone.

Eventual uplift and erosion of the Chitistone Limestone exposed the ore body above Bonanza Creek. It was the malachite bloom on the surface of the chalcocite that Clarence Warner and Jack Smith saw on that day in 1900 when they discovered the deposit that became the Kennecott Mine.

With that background, enjoy young Joey's story of

TIME TRAVEL IN KENNICOTT

BY JOE HOARE — GRADE 5, AGE 11

One day when I was walking through Kennicott admiring the jagged mountains and the rugged glaciers I thought, "This place seems really powerful and mysterious, almost magical." The old copper-mine buildings were ragged with broken glass and missing windows. The fading red paint was flaking and cracked. I put my hand in my pocket, and suddenly I noticed that all the red paint on the old, boarded-up buildings had changed to prime condition.

I asked my friend, Luke if he saw anything different about the

buildings. He said, "They look just the same to me."

"Maybe they look different to me because I've been camping up the mountain at the mine since last Wednesday," I answered. I didn't tell him that while I was gone I had found this glowing crystal on the doorstep of the mine building. It was in my pocket now. That's when I knew things might get really strange. Perhaps the crystal was magic!

Later that day I saw that all the windows were back in place. "That's weird," I said to myself. At dinner that night I told my family about the buildings. They said they looked just the same to them. In the morning I ate breakfast and decided to go for a walk. There seemed to be a lot more buildings, and the trees and bushes seemed a whole lot shorter. I'm probably still half asleep," I assured myself.

At noon I visited Luke and his brother, Nick. On the way the old railroad seemed as good as new, and all the collapsed parts of buildings seemed to have sprung back up. When I got to my friends' house we decided to go copper ore hunting by the mill building, so we could increase our supply to sell to the summer tourists. We just never seemed to have enough. I, for some reason, found lots more copper than Nick or Luke. It looked to me like the copper ore had fallen there just a few days ago. Luke said, "I could have sworn I didn't see that piece there a minute ago," as I picked up a great chunk of covellite, the best I ever found!

On the way home I could have bet my life I thought I heard those old generators

trying to start again. The next morning I woke to a rumbling, beeping, hissing noise. I thought, "Oh, Dad must be grinding coffee beans." I got up and went into the kitchen. "What's that noise?" I asked.

"What noise?" my mom said.

"You know, that awful racket."

"Well, your little brother, Garrett, went to play outside before breakfast."

"That must be it," I said drowsily. At 11:00 I went copper hunting again because of my good luck yesterday. On the way to the mill building I kept on hearing that rumbling, beeping, hissing noise. I looked at the powerhouse with the humongous generators in it. Smoke was coming out of the towering, six foot-wide stacks! I ran all the way back to our house and yelled, "Someone started the powerhouse up!"

"What?" exclaimed my mom. "You must be kidding, because I sure don't hear anything."

"No, really come and look," I said. So Mom and I ran down to the powerhouse.

"OK, Joe," said my mom, "you've had your fun, but I'm baking bread, so don't play any more tricks on me, OK?"

"OoKaayy, but I still think I hear it," I whispered as my mom walked away. As I continued to walk toward the mill I saw doors opening and closing and heard people talking. It was a fairly windy day, so I guessed that the doors were being blown back and forth, but I wasn't too sure about those voices. I thought Nick and Luke might be playing a joke on me. I looked around, but no one was in sight. Then I

dug up a nice hunk of bornite, even better than the piece I found with Nick and Luke. I looked around again, and boy, there were an awful lot of people! Everything was like it was it the mining days. "Hello," said a curious voice.

"Huh?" I said

"My name is Walter Lommel," said a bright-eyed man.

"My name's Joe," I explained.

"Joe, I don't remember any kid on the list named Joe." Suddenly my hot orange, gortex jacket seemed out of place.

"Oh, I think I traveled back in time. What year is it?"

"1927," said Mr. Lommel. "What year are you from?" he asked me.

"Uh, 1997," I replied.

"What's it like in the year 1997?"

"It's pretty technological. We have a computer and an electric piano."

"What's a computer?"

"It's sort of like a T.V., but you can do activities on it."

"What's a T.V.?"

"It's like when a camera takes a picture, but when you look at it everything is moving."

"Oh, that's amazing!"

"That house isn't there any more. It burned down."

"That's my house!" he yelled.

"Don't worry. Your family was out of town. You see that one over there?"

"That's gonna be my mom and dad's in 1978."

"Gosh, are they born yet?"

"No, but my grandparents

are babies now. What do you do here in Kennicott?"

"I'm a chemist at the assay office. I test the ore for copper content. But right now I'm looking for a very rare crystal."

"I have it! Here you go."

"Thank you! Thank you!" he exclaimed. "Anyway, what do you do in Kennicott?"

"I mostly look for copper ore to sell to the tourists who come to look at the ghost town of Kennicott."

"Hey, you helped me, now I can tell you where some copper ore spilled off an ore cart. I know that it is very rich in copper. It's the best kind so far. The reason no one has gone to get it is because so much is coming out of the mountain. It's under that cable over there."

"Thanks a bunch!"

"You're welcome. Well, I have to go to Cordova with this load of ore. Good-bye and good

luck!"

As he took off on the train, I wondered how I was going to get back to my own time. I turned around and day became night about 26,000 times really fast! The trees grew taller, and some of the buildings collapsed. People zoomed everywhere at almost the speed of light. Then I walked home with a zillion stories going through my head. Maybe that crystal was magic after all.

Wrangell Rams Snowmachine Club

Glennallen — Reviving an old name, a new club has been formed to promote snowmachine issues in the Wrangell's.

An election of officers resulted in Ric Goozen as President; Mark Robitaille, Vice

President; Renee Spracklen, Treasurer; and Julie Williamson, Secretary.

According to our mail pilot Lynn Ellis, who is also on the Rams' board of directors, a general meeting will be held at

the Glennallen High School on January 21st at 7 PM.

Membership applications are available at the McCarthy mail shack or at WSEN. For further information call Julie Williamson at 822-3545.

NPS news

BY RICK KENYON

We got a short email from WRST Superintendent Jon Jarvis just before we went to press. He told us that the NPS did get a \$4.2 million appropriation in the FY98 Interior Bill for acquisition of Kennicott. According to Jarvis, they are still in negotiations with the owners and "things look very promising." He said it is not likely that residents or visitors will notice any change

at Kennicott this summer. Year two of the Cultural Landscape study will be underway, and some meetings with the community are likely to discuss the future of the Kennicott site.

NPS also plans to do some site work for the new Visitor Center at Copper Center this summer. Major construction is planned for fiscal year 1999.

The WRST staff is undergoing quite a change. According to Ranger Tom Betts, Russell Galipeau and Margie Steigerwald are leaving for promotions at Yosemite N.P.;

Donald Mike has taken a position over in Katmai; and Jay Wells will be heading to San Francisco as the Chief Ranger of Regional Operations. Their replacements will likely arrive in April. Chris Zinda is coming from Utah to replace Chief of Administration Hala Bates who transferred to Theodore Roosevelt National Park in ND.

All 17 Hunting Guide areas in the Preserve are currently being re-bid. Bids for these areas must be received by January 15, 1998.

Back Issues

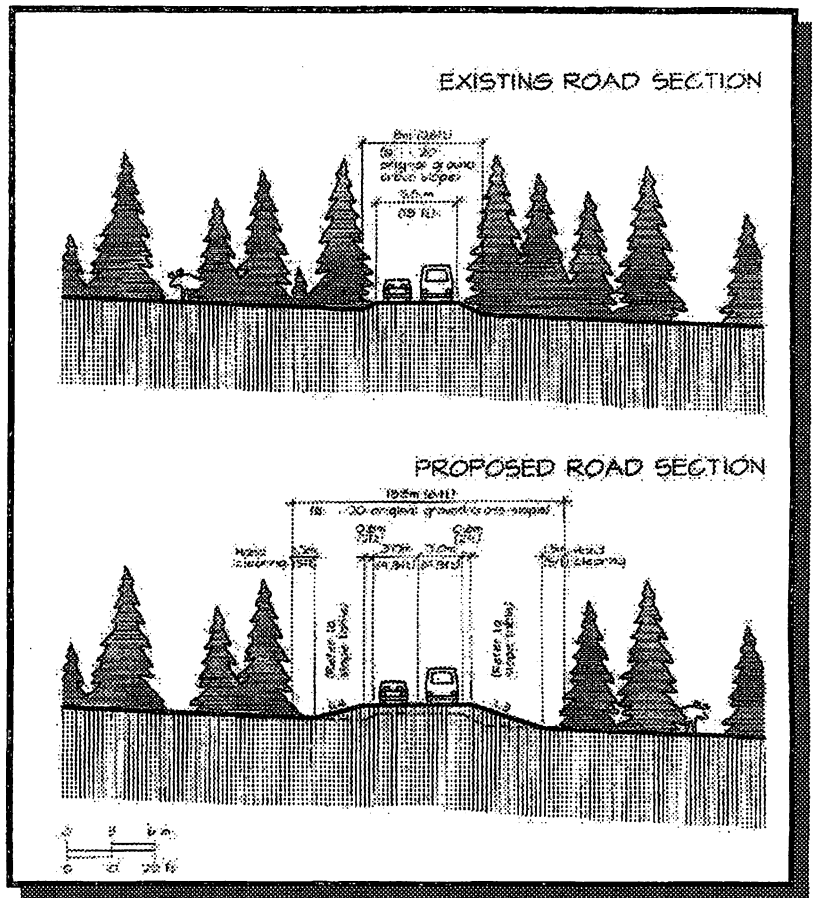
Back issues of the Wrangell St. Elias News are available for \$2.50 each postpaid. We have most of the issues back to July & August 1992. Write to WSEN, McCarthy #42, Box MXY, Glennallen AK 99588.

McCarthy Road Scenic Corridor Plan released

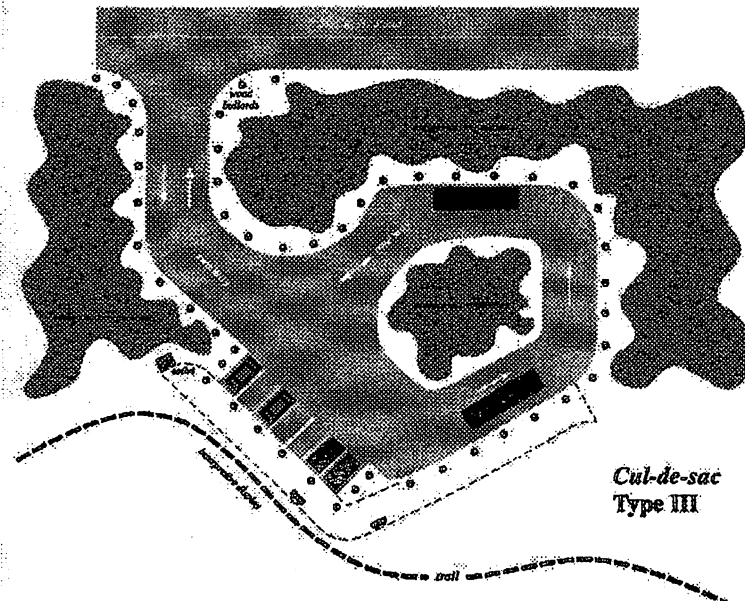
BY RICK KENYON

A planning document that outlines the "facilities and road improvements appropriate for the McCarthy Road based on standards established for national park roads" was released just before Christmas. Called the Scenic Corridor Plan (SCP) it was jointly funded by the National Park Service (NPS) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Also involved with development of the plan were the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

The SCP calls for little actual road improvement — a slight widening of the road (from a present 18' to a proposed 20' plus 2' of shoulder on each side), a design speed of 37.3 MPH, and limited hand brushing on the sides (approximately 5' beyond the slope of the roadbed shoulders).



The main difference from the present road would be the addition of numerous wayside parks (an average of one every 3.3 miles!) and construction of a multi-purpose 8 foot wide trail (running from Chitina to McCarthy but separated from the road).



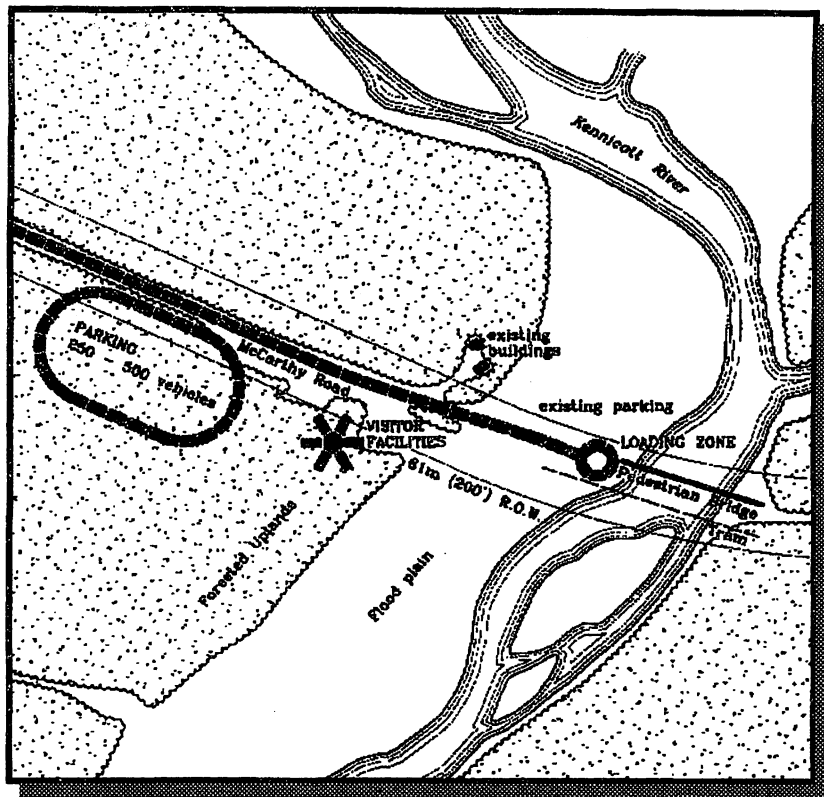
Paving of the road is discussed but no recommendation is given. An interesting logic is displayed in statements like these: "Paving may appear to reduce annual maintenance costs but could encourage greater visitation to the area by those reluctant to drive a gravel road." and "...the McCarthy Road corridor has a tradition of accessibility limited by natural barriers and remoteness, steeped in history within the park."

Eighteen waysides are proposed between Chitina and McCarthy.

They range from "Type 1," which has an interpretive display and room for several cars to get off the road, to "Type 3," which includes toilet facilities, benches, and parking for up to 50 cars and busses.

Also proposed are visitor facilities at the end of the road which include parking for 250 to 500 vehicles, a National Park Campground with tables, fire pits, toilets and potable water. The parking lot would be located several hundred yards from the river and the existing commercial parking lot, and the two would apparently co-exist.

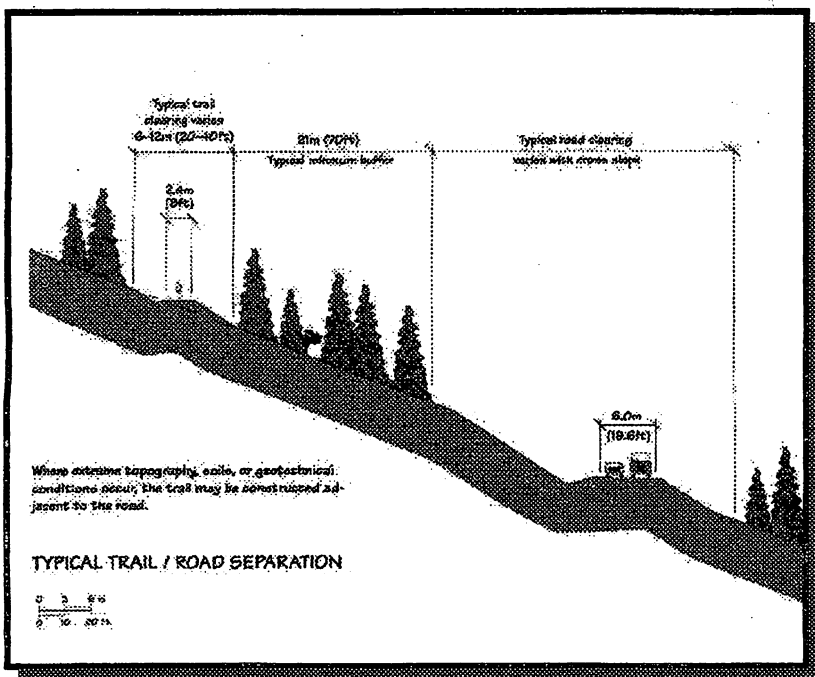
Although the book does not mention it, the proposed NPS campground at mile 57.9 is almost directly across the road from the existing, privately-owned *Glacier View Campground* — and would be in direct competition for the same campers. In contrast, the SCP encourages the privately owned *Crystal Lake Campground* at mile 41.2 to expand its facilities and the NPS offers "technical expertise and assistance to private enterprise for campground design." The entry for a proposed Silver Lake Access also fails to mention that it would be right next door to the privately owned *Silver Lake Campground* — which also offers parking and lake access, albeit at a price.



The multi-purpose trail recommendations are for an 8 foot wide trail with 1 foot shoulders

constructed of compacted gravel and separated from the roadway by a minimum of 70 foot. The planners figure that about 142 acres of private land would need to be acquired for trail right-of-way, in addition to state and federal lands.

The SCP is a spiral bound book of 65 pages plus an appendix. It has many black and white photographs and a number of "fold-out" maps and drawings done in full color. The book is very nicely done. If the road upgrade could only approximate the quality of the book, folks would surely count the trip from Chitina to McCarthy as the highlight of their visit!



Good News from the Wrangells

BY BONNIE KENYON

It is December 30th as Rick and I put the finishing touches on this final issue of WSEN for 1997. A new year is about to begin. It's time to take our Christmas tree down because Christmas is now past. Or is it? According to the calendar, December 25, 1997 is gone but if we examine the true meaning of Christmas, we can make the spirit of this holiday continue on through 1998 and beyond.

Subscriber Tonia Alexander of Wasilla e-mailed me the following story which touched my heart and one which I desire to share with you. At first I considered saving it until next Christmas but I believe the message this story contains can go a long ways in making our new year a successful and peaceful one. (Part 4 of my story will continue in the March/April 1997 WSEN.)

The Real Meaning Of Christmas

It was only five days before Christmas. The spirit of the season hadn't yet caught up with me, even though cars packed the parking lot of our Houston area Target Shopping Center. Inside the store, it was worse. Shopping carts and last minute shoppers jammed the aisles. Why did I come today? I wondered. My feet ached almost as much as my head.

My list contained names of several people who claimed they wanted nothing, but I knew their feelings would be hurt if I didn't buy them anything. Buying for someone who had everything and deploring the high cost of items, I considered gift-buying anything but fun.

Hurriedly, I filled my shopping cart with last minute items and proceeded to the long checkout lines. I picked the shortest but it looked as if it would mean at least a 20 minute wait.

In front of me were two small children— a boy of about 10 and a younger girl about 5. The boy wore a ragged coat. Enormously large, tattered tennis shoes jutted far out in front of his much too short jeans. He clutched several crumpled dollar bills in his grimy hands.

The girl's clothing resembled her brother's. Her head was a matted mass of curly hair. Reminders of an evening meal showed on her small face.

She carried a beautiful pair of shiny, gold house slippers. As the Christmas music sounded in the store's stereo system, the girl hummed along off-key but happily.

When we finally approached the checkout register, the girl carefully placed the shoes on the counter. She treated them as though they were a treasure. The clerk rang up the bill.

"That will be \$6.09," she said.

The boy laid his crumpled dollars atop the stand while he searched his pockets. He finally came up with \$3.12.

"I guess we will have to put them back," he bravely said. "We will come back some other time, maybe tomorrow."

With that statement, a soft sob broke from the little girl.

"But Jesus would have loved these shoes," she cried.

"Well, we'll go home and work some more. Don't cry. We'll come back," he said.

Quickly I handed \$3.00 to the cashier. These children had waited in line for a long time. And, after all, it was Christmas. Suddenly a pair of arms came around me and a small voice said, "Thank you, Sir."

"What did you mean when you said Jesus would like the shoes?" I asked.

The small boy answered, "Our mommy is sick and going to heaven. Daddy said she might go before Christmas to be with Jesus."

The girl spoke, "My Sunday school teacher said the streets in heaven are shiny gold, just like these shoes. Won't mommy be beautiful walking on those streets to match these shoes?"

My eyes flooded as I looked into her tear streaked face.

"Yes," I answered, "I am sure she will."

Silently I thanked God for using these children to remind me of the true spirit of giving.

Christmas is not about the amount of money paid, nor the amount of gifts purchased, nor trying to impress friends and relatives. Christmas is about the love in your heart to share with those as Jesus Christ has shared with each of us.

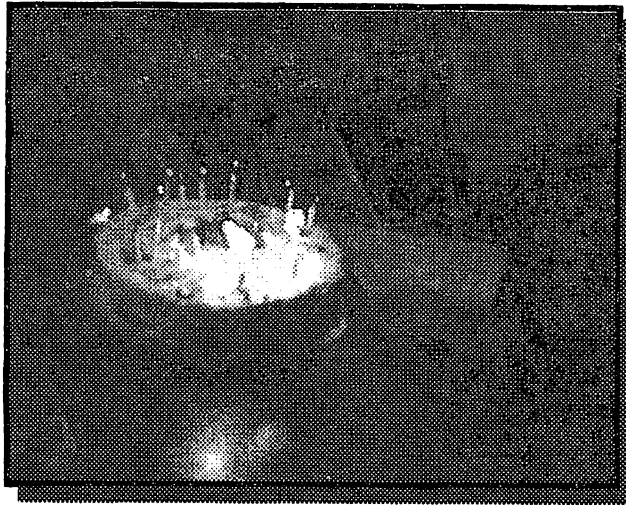
Christmas is about the Birth of Jesus whom God sent to show the world how much he really loves us. Please show this love as we think of the upcoming season.

Ken Berthelsen, Boeing - Everett, WA

A very special thank you to Don, Lynn, Sarah and Rene Welty for so graciously opening up their home for Sunday services while Rick and I were in Florida visiting our family. We appreciate their faithfulness to the Lord and the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church!

Just before Christmas Lynn said she wanted to invite Rick and I to a birthday party. I said, "Great! But who is having a birthday?" Lynn was quick to reply, "Jesus!" What a wonderful way to celebrate Christmas.

On Christmas Eve 12 of us gathered together at the Welty's. Lynn prepared a delicious meal and topped it off with a birthday cake - candles included! We sang happy birthday to the One Whose birth we were celebrating. Garrett and Joe Hoare, Rene and Sarah Welty together blew out the candles. A game of charades



WSEN staff photo

A birthday cake for Jesus!

depicting characters, places or things centered around the Christmas story followed. Another game that featured Christmas carols was a lot of fun (even though the team I was on didn't win!). Thank you, Weltys, for making this season a very joyous one.

Rick and I stopped over at the church building on our way to mail the other day to see the latest handiwork by John Adams. What a fine job he is doing! The basement walls and

ceiling are now finished with sheet rock and paint. Two small rooms are finished off as well as a new propane heater installed downstairs. The basement windows are in place. John built two knotty pine doors that lead into the sanctuary upstairs. An out building that now houses the generator is finished and matches the pine construction of the church building. We cannot thank John

enough for his expertise and the love he continues to lavish upon the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church.

Informal Sunday worship services are presently being held at the Kenyon's cabin on the west side of the Kennicott. They begin at 10:00 am and are open to all. Refreshments are served afterwards.

And remember: The One who knows you best, loves you most. His name is Jesus!

Congratulations!

The Wasserman family, known to most of the McCarthy residents, are celebrating a very important event. On Dec. 13 Joan and Eric's daughter Shanna graduated with honors from University of Northern Colorado with a BA in Political Science and minor in Economics.

"We are so proud of our daughter," writes Joan. "Seems like yesterday we were home schooling in our cabin at McCarthy."

The Wassermans, lived in the McCarthy area for several years during the late 1970's and still maintain a cabin on the west side of the Kennicott near the Kenyon's. They manage to visit McCarthy at least once during the summer season.

Shanna is pictured here on graduation day with her brother Evan.

Congratulations, Shanna. We are proud of you, too!



OUR TOWN

January 1923 February

Mr. C. F. M. Cole who has been resident and publisher in McCarthy for several years left on Tuesday's train to join Mrs. Cole and the family who are now in Cordova. Mr. Cole has been acting Commissioner during the absence of Judge Coppernoll.

Jan. 6

LOCAL NEWS

William Graham well known Nizina resident made a trip in to McCarthy on the eighth and returned to Nizina the following morning. Mr. Graham reports a fine trail and states that the teams that run the race should make excellent time.

D. KOCH PASSES AWAY

Daniel Koch, aged 53, passed away at the Kennecott Hospital on January 11th at 12 o'clock noon. He was admitted to the hospital for treatment of Bright's Disease on December 29th.

The funeral was held at Kennecott January the 12th.

A. R. C. NOTES

Mr. Huddleston the A. R. C. Engineer in charge arrived in town this week, and has started things going.

Work on a telephone line to the Nizina River began this morning. This step will greatly facilitate the work on the bridge.

It is understood that the Commission intends to open an office in McCarthy, as the business on hand necessitates much clerical work.

Nels Tjosevig has taken a position as lineman with the Commission.

CHITINA NEWS

The Slate Creek Mining Co. are freighting to their property and using tractors.

Mr. Chas. Kraemer who has charge of operations, reports a fine trail all the way to the mine.

Mrs. Griffith Olts formerly of Gulkana arrived from Seattle on yesterday's train. Mrs. Olts has taken a five year lease on the Chitina Hotel.

TWO NEW PUPILS AT SCHOOL

The McCarthy school will have two new pupils Monday when Fred and Ted, sons of Sam Crook enter the portals of education. At the end of the term the boys will return to the ranch to assist their father with the summer's work.

WORK ON BRIDGE STARTS SOON

The actual work on the Nizina bridge is soon to start. Several men in McCarthy, who belong to the regular A. R. C. force already and a number more are expected soon. When actual hauling begins a full crew will be put to work.

GOOD TIME SUNDAY

Sourdough hill was the scene of wildest hilarity last Sunday when a party of skiers came in from Kennecott. They were joined here by the local devotees for the afternoon.

Charlie Burroughs was the latest recruit, and he surprised the entire crowd.

OFF TO THE HILLS

One of the best know sourdoughs and old timers in McCarthy, left town this week, in the person of Warren Nelson. He goes from here to Copper Creek, and from that point will take a summer's outfit into Frying pan Creek. The supplies are being hauled by Sig, otherwise known as Too Much Johnson. Sig's new dogs are working fine, and if everything goes well the trip will be a record breaker.

According to all reports, the Creek will be quite well populated during the coming season, as several of the local prospectors have stated their intentions of going in later in the year.

Mr. Nelson has been staking claims in Alaska for a good many years, and he states that as far as good looking prospects are concerned, Pan Creek has all of the 'ear marks' of a producer.

Jan. 13

Born: Into the Ahrens family, a ten and one half pound baby boy on Friday. Dr. Mohr in attendance. Both the mother and the new arrival are reported to be doing well.

WHAT'S IN A RUMOR?

There has been much talk during the past week of trying to induce the Kennecott Corporation to sell electric energy to the people of McCarthy. Roughly the proposition is this:

McCarthy is to build a power transmission line halfway to Kennecott, a distance of two miles; and the Corporation is to build the remaining two miles. A meter is to be installed at some convenient point and the people in McCarthy are to pay for the electric energy consumed. The details of dividing the cost could easily be arranged.

A good lighting system would effect a saving that would amount to a large sum per capita in the course of a year. We would also have better lights and reduce the fire risk to a great extent.

FOR SALE: McCarthy Laundry and Bath Building Cheap. Apply to John Amber.

Jan. 20

LOCAL NEWS

Bill Lang, well known resident of anywhere is making his headquarters at the Golden while in town. Bill talking bears, traps, fur and everything.

Judge Coppernoll will attend the upcoming term of the Valdez court. He has been summoned as a witness in several cases.

J. E. Barrett has been summoned to serve on petit jury, he is to leave on Sunday's train.

John McCann recently bought Ben Jackson's house. The deal has been hanging fire for some time, but was consummated on Friday morning.

Mrs. Trim and two children

have arrived in town for the remainder of the winter. Janis has entered school, making the third new pupil to enroll in the school this month.

Pete Brenewick is hauling hay in from the ranch.

Mr. Irwin, who has been trapping around Long Lake, for the past couple of months, arrived in town Thursday. He reports a fine catch of lynx, but states that other fur is very scarce.

WE CRAVE PROTECTION

Another bill is before the house of representatives to further protect the innocent and misunderstood brown bear.

This piece of saphead legislation would forbid anyone killing 'Ursus horribilis' by trapgun or dogs. Alaskans are of the opinion that it would be far more refreshing to pass a law making it a crime for the bears to kill a man any season of the year. Don't we deserve as much of a chance as a bear?

Jan. 27

LOCAL NEWS

Victor Marshall is running his father's store during Mr. Marshall's absence at Valdez.

Chauncey Boyce, former postmaster at Fairbanks and present U. S. Marshal at Chitina, is enforcing law and order in this city during the absence of Marshal Reynolds.

The two foot fall of snow has pretty well blocked the wheels of industry around the town.

Roy Snyder has announced that the Alaska Café will

close down for a week or ten days for repairs. There will be an entire new house when the Café again opens its doors.

Bill Reid, is spending a couple of days in town, visiting friends. He is employed at the angle station of Kennecott Corporation.

Andy Taylor, who has been suffering from a strained knee has nearly recovered, and states that he will be in shape for the dance on the 17th.

Olaf Holtec and Pete Brenewick left this morning for the Nizina River. They are to put in wood for Clarkson.

Feb. 3

LOCAL NEWS

Mike Knowles arrived from Shushanna Tuesday evening.

Mike states that the trail is broken over the Rhone Glacier, and that some of the staking is done at this end. The other end has been staked by Hans Runig and John Swanson. Johnson and Runig also made the trip into town. The boys intend to make the return trip with the mail after a short visit in town.

Bill Longley arrived in town from his camp this side of the glacier on Tuesday evening.

John Amber reports the sale of several pieces of property to Ed Bassett.

George Nickels who is in charge of the upper camp of the Nizina Mining Company, was a McCarthy visitor Sunday and Monday. He states that the winter work is as far advanced as can be expected, the warm weather

and deep snow proving a great handicap to the freighters. According to Mr. Nickels, the Company will begin operations about the first of May.

REX CREEK

Art Powell well known prospector and operator was in the city this week. He reports that winter work on his ground has progressed very nicely. Mr. Powell has been hauling timbers and firewood to his claims and has been stringing out hydraulic pipe. This work has occupied his attention since the freezeup but is now practically finished.

Mr. Powell is at present working on Rex Creek, where he has a mile of ground. He also has a group of claims on the Chittitu.

He is very optimistic about prospects for the coming summer and states that he's sure of a good cleanup. During Mr. Powell's stay in the city, Mrs. Powell is visiting friends in the "Glacier City."

Feb. 10

LOCAL NEWS

Lou Anderton, who has been in the city during the past several months, left Monday for Kennicott on Monday's train. He is one of the partners in a contract that has been let at the Erie Mine. The contract calls for a tunnel connecting the Erie with the Jumbo mine, according to information received here.

Mr. Radovan of Dan Creek returned from Valdez the first part of the week and has returned to his home. Mr. Radovan is very optimistic about the district and predicts a good deal of

activity during the forthcoming season.

Bill Berry recently arrived in town from Chisane and is making his headquarters at the Golden. Everyone who is the owner of a dog sled that is in the need of repairs is taking them to Bill. He is also constructing a couple of these vehicles.

CHITINA NEWS

The Chitina Cash Store has recently opened a strictly modern meat market. They have a first class cold storage plant in connection.

Feb. 17

SEVERE ACCIDENT

While working around a pair of horses last Thursday, Andy Taylor nearly lost his life thru being kicked. In some manner he got in the way of the irritated animal and was kicked in the throat and the jugular vein was nearly severed by a cork. As soon as the accident occurred Andy was rushed to the Kennecott Hospital for treatment.

Reports from the hospital today indicate that Andy's condition, while serious, is not as bad as was at first feared and that barring accident, he should be around in several weeks.

This is the second accident that has happened within the last 10 days. Last Saturday Dad Wakefield was kicked in the face and was knocked out pretty badly and had to go to Kennecott to have his face dressed. The wound was around his mouth. In some way Dad caught cold in his wounds and he is feeling pretty bad in consequence.

Feb. 24

Science Corner

BY CARLA HELFFERICH

It was an important holiday tradition: as soon as the tree was trimmed to the last dangle of tinsel, we'd settle down with cocoa while my father began to read: "was the night before Christmas, and all through the house..."

Even when I was very young, I was impressed by how clearly Clement Moore, the author of "A Visit from St. Nicholas," had observed those extraordinary events. I knew I'd have been too startled to notice soot on Saint Nick's clothes, or to count the number of tiny reindeer hitched to the sleigh. Somewhere back then, I decided that Moore had been a good naturalist, a keen observer of the world around him.

That was before I met my first reindeer. It was tied to a parking meter in downtown Anchorage. Antlerless at that season, the reindeer looked more nearly bovine than deer like. It was not tiny. I was not impressed.

In the years since, I've learned to be impressed by reindeer and their New World conspecifics, the caribou. They've evolved to cope superbly with the challenges of life in the north. But tiny they are not. Had Clement Moore perhaps not been so observant after all? The possibility was distressing.

Then, in the course of shunting old magazines off for recycling, I came across an advertisement featuring a photograph of some uncommonly handsome caribou. These animals seemed shaggier yet more delicate than

the caribou I'd seen crossing interior Alaska hillsides. Their coats were paler, too, with white coming higher on their buffy flanks. I read the brief photo caption: Peary caribou, the northernmost of the caribou clans, and also the smallest. An adult Peary caribou may be the size of a large dog.

Hmmmm. Really, why should a poet know that a caribou was not a reindeer? Especially a poet writing back whenever it was—I called the reference desk at the Noel Wien Library. The helpful folks there soon reported that the classic poem was first published in 1823, but evidently the author had written it earlier, just for his own children. That early in the century, Americans surely weren't attuned to deer delineation.

Contemporary Alaskans, on the other hand, can find the appropriate expertise fairly easily. Ray Cameron, now retired from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, was the first expert I found. Peary caribou? I asked. Size of a big dog? Huge dog, maybe, he said, but eventually allowed that as caribou go, at perhaps 130 pounds and a foot shorter than an Alaska caribou, a full-grown Peary could fairly be called "tiny." Within a few days, he provided more information about Peary caribou—about three pounds' worth of reading material.

The evidence was encouraging. Though reindeer and caribou are all members of the same species, separate subspecies occupy different

habitats. The caribou familiar to Alaskans and northern-dwelling Canadians are known as barren-ground caribou, chiefly because early European explorers thought tundra looked barren. To the south live woodland caribou; once, these animals could be found throughout the boreal forest, as far south as parts of the northernmost United States.

And to the north, on the islands of the Canadian High Arctic, about as far toward the North Pole as land exists, the tough little Peary caribou live. They swim across the icy channels between the islands; they haunt the windswept places, where snow blows clear of their sparse food. They live so far north that the Inuit people and even wolves seldom hunted them. But early polar explorers did; members of W.E. Parry's expedition shot some "deer" on the islands, as he reported in 1821—shortly before Moore wrote his poem.

Tough, tiny, and native to the farthest north: perhaps Dasher, Dancer and friends are really Peary caribou. And, since winter is a very hungry time for the shaggy little deer of the extreme Arctic, those Christmas Eve carrots and cookies are probably most welcome. 🍪

This column is provided as a public service by the Geophysical Institute, University of Alaska Fairbanks, in cooperation with the UAF research community. Carla Helfferich is a science writer at the institute. She can be reached on e-mail at information@gi.alaska.edu.

SOLAR POWER SYSTEMS—PART II

BY ED LACHAPPELLE

WHAT THE SUN ACTUALLY OFFERS

If the sun were to shine all day long every day, the available power from photovoltaic panels would be easy to calculate. Nature has other ideas. The patterns of cloudy days, the percentage of the sky covered by clouds, the season of the year, the height of horizon obstructions like mountains all work to reduce the available power from the ideal. The overall reduction for a site in the McCarthy area is about 40% to 50%.

Alaskan high latitudes pose some extra problems. The winter daylight is very short to nonexistent. The sun angle is low at all seasons of the year, but especially in winter. Solar panels work best when pointed due south and at right angles to the sun's rays. For optimum performance, the panel angle needs to be changed seasonally. For the McCarthy area as example, 48 degrees from horizontal in summer and 72 degrees in winter works well, with angle change around the equinoxes. Even a low-angle sun looking square at a panel produces a large percent of high sun angle power. This is not true for cloudy days, because the rays from a low angle sun must traverse a long path through cloud layers. With the sun high, the cloud path is much shorter. This means that as the season progresses into fall, the cloudy day output of solar panels drops off much faster than it does for sunny days. South-facing panels hung vertically work fine on sunny winter days, but are virtually useless under clouds — facing a

stand of spruce trees is a poor way to get solar energy. In such circumstances tilting the panel to look up at the scattered light from clouds can gain about 25% output over the vertical panel. The 48 and 72 degree angles mentioned above are compromises with these problems.

THE SUN'S NUMBERS

Now let's get down to some hard numbers to use in design. These data have been collected in McCarthy and should be useful at similar latitudes (61 degrees north) in South Central Alaska with allowances for local variations in cloud patterns. The following table shows the observed amount of power delivered per month in 1996 from a 50-watt photovoltaic panel facing due south and tilted at 48 degrees.

May	6.37 KWH	5.41 KWH
June	6.51	5.53
July	7.57	6.43
August	4.58	3.89
Sept.	4.44	4.19

The left column of numbers is the amount of power generated by the panel. The right column is the amount available after it has been stored in a battery. The storage and recovery from batteries is never fully efficient, usually entailing about the 15% loss calculated here.

Note that the available power does not fall off smoothly as the season advances. This reflects variations of cloudiness, which can change from year to year. The drop of available power with advancing seasons is highly asymmetric. Much less power is available in August or September, than in March and

April, which are more comparable to May and June. More clear weather occurs then, the snow-covered landscaped reflects extra light and the low air temperatures make photovoltaic panels work more efficiently.

A conservative design will allow for another 10% loss to dissipation of power in the wiring resistance. If an inverter is used to convert the power to 120 volts AC, a minimum of another 10% loss should be taken into account.

In practical terms, this means that a 50-watt panel is going to deliver four to five KWH of usable power per month during the summer in McCarthy. A household with a budgeted energy consumption of, say, 40 KWH per month should at a minimum use an array of at least ten 50-watt panels. More would be desirable in fall and winter. These figures emphasize the importance of designing efficiency into the loads, as mentioned in Part I.

SOME REAL EXAMPLES

Here are some typical solar power systems to serve various levels of power demand, again for latitudes around 61 degrees north in South Central Alaska. The 1997 approximate cost estimates are for hardware only and do not include incidental costs of hookup and distribution wiring or installation labor.

SUMMER CABIN MINIMUM:

One 50-watt photovoltaic panel and three 12-volt, 100 ampere-hour marine-RV deep-cycle batteries in parallel for a total of 300 ah storage capacity will support light loads March through September. These loads might include one

or two high- efficiency fluorescent lamps, a radio or small stereo, a CB radio on standby half-time, perhaps recharging a small cell-phone. This panel-battery configuration does not require a controller, for the maximum available current in below the trickle charge level. Do not use self-regulating panels, for they are not compatible with later expansion of the system. Cost around \$500.

SMALL RESIDENCE CABIN:

Panel array of 100 to 200 watts, with four 6-volt, 220 ah golf cart batteries connected in series-parallel for 12 volts and 440 ah storage capacity. In addition to the minimum loads outlined above, this system will support a laptop computer, a small printer (via a 100 watt pocket inverter) and a residential cell-phone installation. A charge controller is required. A back-up generator is required for battery charging late fall and winter. The higher array power is recommended if the phone unit is left on all the time or the computer gets frequent use. Cost around \$1700 including pocket inverter but not back-up generator or charger.

ACTIVE HOUSEHOLD:

Panel array of 400 watts, six 6-volt 375 ah L-16 deep-cycle solar system batteries connected in series parallel for 12 volts and 1125 ah storage capacity.

Charge controller plus 2500 watt modified sine wave inverter with battery charge option, plus 3 KW gasoline generator as winter back-up. Cost around \$7000.

A system similar to this has been in operation in a two-person McCarthy household for the past ten years. It very

satisfactorily runs several 12-volt lights, radios, stereo, CB radio, cell-phone recharge, two laptop computers, fax machine (not on standby), household appliances, power tools, 2.5 cubic foot deep freeze, high-efficiency washing machine and water pumps for gardening and showers. Generator back-up consists of battery charging for about 5 hours every 6 days from early November until late January, when there are no freezer or water pump loads and most of the power is consumed by lights.

LARGER HOUSEHOLD OR SMALL BUSINESS OFFICE:

Panel array 600 to 800 watts, eight or twelve L-16 batteries in series-parallel for 24 volts and 750 or 1125 ah storage capacity (equivalent to twice these capacities for 12 volts). Sine wave 4000 watt inverter with battery charge capacity and generator auto-start, 60 to 100 amp charge controller, and 6 to 8 KW diesel generator as backup. Cost around \$13,500 to \$17,500, including a good quality generator.

A system of this size will support larger domestic power consumption as well as desktop computers, a standy fax machine, communication equipment, more than one business cell phone and miscellaneous office electronics. The sine wave inverter is strongly recommended where many and varied electronic devices are used.

SOURCES OF MORE INFORMATION

While presenting an overview of system components and performance, this brief article obviously cannot give all the details of wiring and installation for solar power.

Home-owners with electrical and construction skills often build their own systems, taking advantage of several reference sources for information. Most of this route can be avoided, albeit at higher cost, by buying a complete power panel or power center offered by some manufacturers. These incorporate an inverter, charger, controller and associated fuses and safety disconnects in a single package built to electrical code standards. The installer has only to connect batteries, solar panel array and a standard AC service entrance.

Anyone contemplating sun powered electricity for their home is well advised to subscribe to *Home Power Magazine*, P.O. Box 520, Ashland, OR 97520, 800-707-6585, email: hp@homepower.org This excellent publications is filled with articles packing a high density of information and many how-to-do-it guides. Their advertisers provide leads to hardware, manuals and design services.

Real Goods Co., 555 Leslie St., Ukiah, CA 95482-5507 sells an extensive catalog/design manual (800-762-7325). They also have hotlines for product information (800-762-7325) and for technical information on design and installation (800-919-2400). A number of other companies fill mail and freight orders from the South 48, sometimes the easiest way for procurement from remote bush communities. Two companies that have provided satisfactory service in our locality are Jade Mountain, P.O. Box 4616, Boulder, CO 80306-4616, 800-442-1972 and Backwoods Solar Electric

Systems, 8530 Rapid Lightening Creek Road, Sandpoint, ID 83864, 208-263-4290.

Lead-acid batteries to meet most needs are available in Alaska and do not have to be shipped from Outside. Deep cycle marine/RV batteries are sold by the large membership warehouses such as Price-Costco. Golf-cart and solar system standard L-16 batteries are available from

Alaska Battery Manufacturing, 4109 Old Seward Highway, Anchorage, AK 99503, 907-562-4949. This firm also carries photovoltaic panels, inverters and other solar system components.

Once again, the closing advice is build carefully, use applicable fuses and safety disconnects, wire to professional standards and

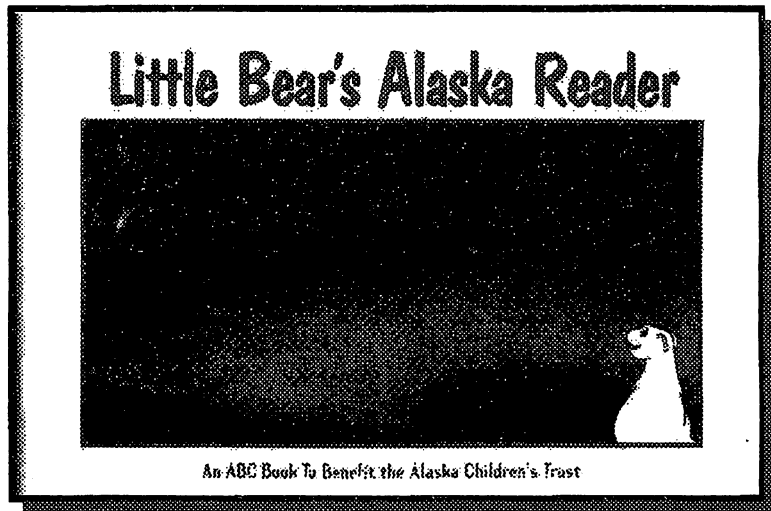
follow electrical codes. Rat's nest wiring and carelessness regarding fuses can lead to burned-out components and all too often to fires. Lead-acid batteries, especially the larger ones, store a lot of energy that can get loose all at once. One local musher discovered this when his dogsled caught fire while transporting a lead-acid battery.

Book Review

BY JOHN AND ANDY ADAMS

With the cold weather setting in and the snow falling, it's the time of year in McCarthy to sit down and catch up on some reading. This winter two local residents have literary works that have been published and are now available for your reading pleasure.

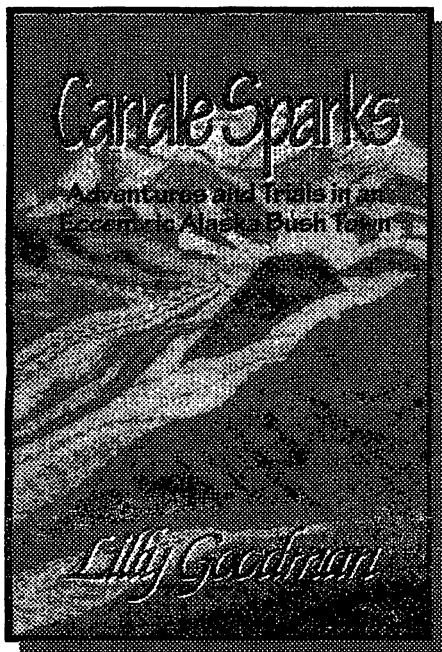
Thea Agnew provided the verses for the children's book *Little Bear's Alaska Reader*, an ABC Book to Benefit the Alaska's Children's Trust. This Alaskan version of an ABC book has pictures of Alaska's people and scenery, and each picture corresponds to a letter of the alphabet. Along with teaching children their alphabet through verse, this book provides some great pictures to show



children while you read together.

The next work written by a local resident is *Candle Sparks* by Lilly Goodman. This book is about a young woman's adventures in a small Alaskan town, and reading this book one cannot go

without trying to assign some local resident to the so-called fictional characters in the story. This book is fictional, but its vivid descriptions of places and events sound a lot like our little town. The story line shows a community that is split between accommodating the tourists and keeping them out to preserve their lifestyle. As the squabbling between residents increases, so does the outside interest of tourists in the town of Candle. The book also shows that disagreement and over reacting can lead to throwing rocks, which eventually leads to disaster. Overall the book is interesting reading, but there were some words and language used in the book that this reader skipped over.



November 26, 1997

Wrangell St. Elias News

Attn: Editor

Geneva-Pacific Corp. was a firm doing general exploration work in the Glacier Creek-Chitistone River area. This is the area in which the prospector, Martin Radovan, worked for so many years.

In about 1979 we found a package of old photographic negatives that were apparently taken somewhere in the McCarthy Quadrangle in the late 1920s.

Some people believe that one of the women in the photograph is Mrs. Martin Radovan. She was the Postmistress in the Peavine-May Creek area for many years.

It appears that the ladies and their dogs were out for a Sunday afternoon stroll on their snow shoes.

Can any of your readers identify these well dressed women?

Please feel free to use the photograph.

Sincerely,

Theodore W. Van Zelst

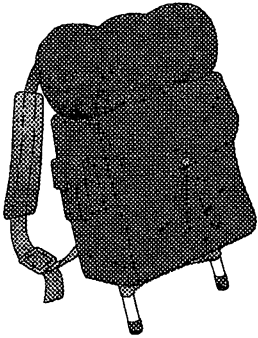
1213 Wagner Rd.

Glenview, Illinois 60025-3297

(847)724-7640



SNOW



"Snow, snow, beautiful snow,
Where is the fellow that wrote,
"Snow, snow, beautiful snow?"
I'd like to get hold of the goat!
I'd roll him well in his beautiful snow;
How'd he like to be me,
Breaking this trail with a pack on my back
In snow well over the knee?"



Sixty full miles to the railroad track
In snow to the top of the hill,
With a seventy pound pack on my bloomin' back
Up a grade that's fit to kill.
Snow on the trail and snow in the trees
That falls with a thud on your head,
You can't stop for a sneeze or you badly will freeze,
So you plug to the top half dead!
(From McCarthy Weekly News 1923)

**Kennicott-McCarthy
Wilderness Guides**

*"In the heart of the
Wrangell Mountains"*

Chris Richards
Box#1, Kennicott via Glennallen, Ak 99588
(907) 554-4444

Glennallen Building Supply



We deliver to McCarthy

Box 729 • Glennallen, AK 99588
(907) 822-5005 fax 822-5883

Kenny Lake Mercantile

RV Park—Water & Sewer Dump for Campers—Hotel

Laundry and Showers

Patty Ryan's "Silver Fox Cafe"

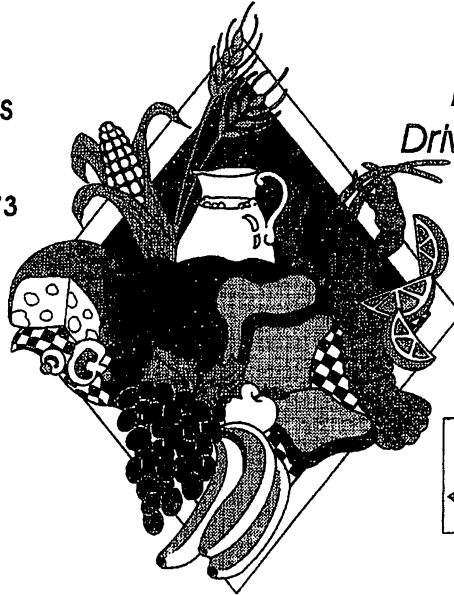
Propane-Hardware-Gas-Grocery-Auto Parts-Feed

Phone 822-9863 Mile 7.5 Edgerton Hwy. May 31-Sept. 30 Hours 9-9 7 days a week

Copper River Cash Store

We handle BUSH ORDERS
with SPECIAL CARE!
PO Box E
Copper Center, AK 99573

We take VISA
Master Charge
Alaska Option
FAX 822-3443



Everyday
LOW PRICED ITEMS:
Drive a little & SAVE \$\$\$\$

Stop by and Check
for the Weekly
IN-STORE SPECIALS



Downtown Copper Center 822-3266
Store Hours 9 am to 7 pm, Monday - Saturday

Historic Kennicott Bed and Breakfast

Come experience the Wrangell St. Elias Park while staying in our 1918 Kennicott Mine house. We are located on Silk Stocking Row in the Old Town of Kennicott.

Your hosts Michael P. McCarthy and Laura Bunnell welcome you.

Call or write for Information
907-554-4469

Historic Kennicott Bed and Breakfast
McCarthy #4 Box MXY
Glennallen, Alaska 99588
e-mail kennicotbb@aol.com

McCarthy-Kennicott Tours & Transportation



BACKCOUNTRY CONNECTION

Scheduled Van Service & Day Trips

P.O. Box 243 Glennallen, Ak 99588
Phone or FAX (907) 822-5292

ST. ELIAS ALPINE GUIDES



Full range of guided trips available
Phone (907) 277-6867

Bob Jacobs, Owner, Certified Alpine Guide



Service Oil & Gas

RESIDENTIAL ● COMMERCIAL

- Heating oil
- Gasoline and Diesel Fuel
- AvGas and Jet Fuel
- Chevron Lube Oils and Greases
- Fuel Tanks and Accessories

*Service sometimes
means going more than
the extra mile.
"We appreciate all our
BUSH CUSTOMERS"*

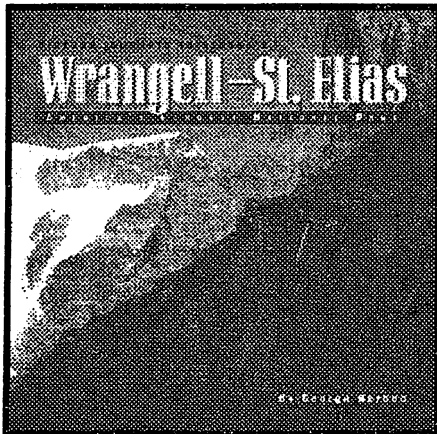
**For the First Name In Service, Call
SERVICE OIL & GAS**



Chevron

PHONE: 822-3375
Mile 188.5 Glenn Highway
Box 276
Glennallen, AK 99588

Picture Journeys in Alaska's Wrangell-St. Elias America's Largest National Park



"Much more than a book of beautiful outdoor photographs, this is a personal account of one talented man's 40-year love affair with a place." — The Oregonian

"The photos offer breathtaking views...Most of the scenes are shot from the air...on flights that were adventures in themselves." — Wisconsin Bookwatch

"Herben embodies a rare combination: a decent photographer who can write well." — Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

By George Herben
ISBN 0-88240-490-3, 128 pages
\$24.95 Softbound, \$35.95 Hardbound

**Ask for it at your favorite bookstore or call
1-800-452-3032 to place your order.**

Published by Alaska Northwest Books™ 203 W. 15th Avenue, #108, Anchorage, AK 99501



*We at Copper Valley Cellular
wish you all a healthy, happy
& safe 1998.*

*Call us at 1-800-235-5414 for more
information on how affordable the
convenience and security of cellular
phone service can be.*



Get Out Into The Park

Copper Oar Adventures invites you to explore the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park on fully guided wilderness floats and hikes. Check out our full day float and flightsee, or our multi-day hike/float combos.

Located on the west side of the Kennicott River, near the new footbridge. Walk-ins welcome.

1-800-523-4453, or in McCarthy 554-4453
howmoz@aol.com

Howard Mozen Owner/Guide
McCarthy Box MXY, Glennallen, AK 99588

Wrangell Mountain Air

"From the world to the wilderness"

- Glacier Flightseeing
- Fly-in Wilderness Hiking
- Daily Service from Chitina
- Direct Service from
Anchorage
Glennallen
Valdez
- Van Service to Kennicott

If you're planning a trip to the Wrangell-St. Elias Park & Preserve, give us a call.

1-800-478-1160

**Wrangell Mountain Air
McCarthy, PO Box MXY
Glennallen, AK 99588**

Snowmachining the Wrangell Mountains!

**The place to stay during your
snowmachine visit to the
McCarthy area.**



Local trail information and assistance

McCarthy Trail Rides

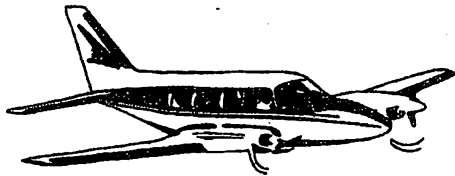


**John Adams
PO Box MXY
Glennallen, AK 99588**

(907) 554-4433

Scheduled Air Service from Anchorage to McCarthy with stopover in Gulkana!

**Now you can leave Anchorage at 8:30 on
Wednesday or Friday morning and arrive in
Gulkana at 9:45, McCarthy at 11:00. Or, you can
leave McCarthy at 11:15 and be back in
Anchorage by 2:00pm the same day! (Leaves
Gulkana at 12:45)
This service is year around.**



Rates:

Gulkana/McCarthy	\$56*
McCarthy/Gulkana	\$56*
Gulkana/MayCreek	\$60
May Creek/Gulkana	\$60
Anchorage/Gulkana	\$105*
Gulkana/Anchorage	\$105*

*** Ask about special round-trip rates**

Baggage allowance 40 lbs.

(charge for excess baggage)

Rates do no include tax @ 10%

Ellis Air Taxi, Inc.

Phone 822-3368

800-478-3368

Gulkana Airfield Box 106, Glennallen, AK 99588

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEPARTURES, ARRIVALS, CONNECTIONS.

Ellis Air will not be responsible for damages resulting from the failure of flights to depart or arrive at times stated in this timetable, nor for errors herein, nor for failure to make connections to other airlines or of this company. Schedules are subject to change without notice. Schedules shown are based on expected flying times. Because weather and other factors may affect operating conditions, departures and arrivals cannot be guaranteed.

Cooking with Carly

BY CARLY KRITCHEN

Sometime back, I was asked to write a column on hamburger recipes. I wasn't using very much burger at the time, but this winter we're lucky enough to have a freezer full of delicious moose meat. My husband was drawn for a hunt down in Cordova, and he got a nice young bull that provided some of the best meat I've ever eaten. So I've been digging out a few recipes I haven't used in quite a while, plus tried some I hadn't used yet.

Moose burger is usually quite lean, so it's perfect to substitute in recipes calling for lean beef. For those of you who weren't lucky enough to get a moose this fall (or not lucky enough to live in moose country!) just use beef burger in the following recipes.

My dad was also a hunter who went deer hunting each fall, and this is my Mom's recipe for meatloaf. It's my favorite meal served with mashed potatoes, green beans, and fresh french bread. I just wish we had some of mom's pie for dessert!

MEATLOAF

1 teaspoon vegetable oil
½ cup onion, chopped
1 pound burger
1 large egg, beaten
1 cup bread crumbs
½ cup ketchup

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon black pepper

Cook onion in vegetable oil until softened, about 5 minutes. Combine with remaining ingredients in a large bowl and mix well. Pat mixture in a loaf pan, and bake at 350 degrees for about 50 minutes to 1 hour. Cool for about 5 minutes before un-molding. Serves about 8.

Here's another recipe from my mom. We were a real plain meat-and-potatoes kind of family, and I thought this recipe was pretty exotic when I was young.

TAMALE PIE WITH CORNMEAL TOPPING

1 pound burger
1 medium onion, chopped
¾ teaspoon salt
1 ½ teaspoon chili powder
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

1 tomato, diced
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup cheddar cheese, diced
Saute burger and onion together in a large skillet. Stir in salt, chili powder, Worcestershire sauce, tomato and flour. Turn into a 1½ quart baking dish. Cover with cornmeal topping. Sprinkle with additional grated cheddar and sliced black olives, if desired. Bake covered at 375 degrees for ½ hour, then uncover and bake for an additional 10 minutes. Serves

about 4.

CORNMEAL TOPPING

1 cup milk
¾ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon chili powder
2 tablespoons butter
⅓ cup cornmeal
1 egg
1 cup diced cheddar cheese
Combine milk, salt, chili powder and butter and bring to a boil. Stir in cornmeal and cook until thickened. Stir in egg and cheese. Remove from heat and stir until cheese melts.

Here's another easy recipe. I've also used left-over cut up chicken or roast in place of the burger. If you like spicy food, add a couple of diced up chilies.

1 pound burger
1 medium onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, minced
1 14 ½ ounce can chopped tomatoes
1 ½ cups water
1 cup uncooked rice
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon chili powder
½ teaspoon basil
¼ teaspoon thyme
¼ teaspoon pepper
½ can tomato paste

Cook burger, onion and garlic in a large skillet until meat is browned; drain. Stir in all ingredients except tomato paste and bring to a boil. Cover and simmer for about 30 minutes or until rice is tender. Stir in tomato paste and reheat. Serves about 4.

"He who is good at making excuses is seldom good for anything else."

— Benjamin Franklin.

A LOOK AT THE WEATHER

BY GEORGE CEBULA

October 1997 will be remembered for the heavy snow about the middle of the month. It started to snow about 2 a.m. on the 14th and by the time it ended just before noon on the 17th, 30.3 inches has been recorded. Total snowfall for the month was 36.7 inches.

The average temperature for October was 20.8 (17.0 in Oct '96 and 30.9 in Oct. '95). The high was 50 on October 1st and 4th (46 on Oct. 8, '96 and 56 on Oct. 3, '95) and the low was -22 on October 18th and 27th (-22 on Oct. 28, '96 and 1 on Oct. 16, '95). There were only 5 days with a low of zero or lower and 9 days with the high of 40 or above. *This compares with Silver Lake's average temperature of 21.5 (16.5 in Oct. '96 and 32.5 in Oct. '95). The high at Silver Lake was 50 on October 1st and 2nd (46 on Oct. 8, '96 and 60 on Oct. 4, '95) and their low was -15 on October 28th (-21 on Oct. 28, '96 and 9 on Oct. 16, '95). Silver Lake had 6 days with a low of zero or lower and 9 days with a high of 40 or above.*

The total liquid precipitation 2.72 inches, just 0.05 inches less than the 2.77 in October, 1996 (0.21 in Oct. '95). Most of the precipitation fell as snow with a total snowfall in October of 36.7

inches (17.4 in Oct. '96 and 1.1 in Oct. '95). *Silver Lake had only 1.70 inches of liquid (1.21 in Oct. '96 and 0.42 in Oct. '95) with 12.1 inches of snow (10.9 in Oct. '96 and 4.5 in Oct. '95).*

The snow depth at McCarthy began with 4 inches on October 14th and increased to 25 inches by noon on October 17th. With the help of some warmer temperatures and rain it decreased to 17 inches on October 20th and ended the month at 17 inches. *Silver Lake began with 2 inches on October 14th, increased to 11 inches on October 17th and ended the month with a snow depth of only 5 inches. Silver Lake was still free of ice at the end of October.*

November was warm and wet with most of the precipitation falling as rain and freezing rain. The November average temperature at McCarthy was 14.2 (3.7 in Nov. '96 and 1.5 in Nov. '95). The high temperature was 39 on November 6th (37 on Nov. 4, '96 and 40 on Nov. 1, '95). The low temperature was -12 on November 25th (-33 on Nov. 24, '96 and -37 on Nov. 29, '95). The record temperatures for November are a high of 48 on November 1, '70 and a low of -46 on November 11, '89. *Silver Lake had an average*

temperature of 15.9 (2.8 in Nov. '96 and 2.2 in Nov. '95). The high was 49 on November 9th (41 on Nov. 1, '96 and 45 on Nov. 1, '95) and the low was -15 on November 25th (-32 on Nov. 25, '96 and -37 on Nov. 30, '95).

The total liquid precipitation for November was 1.50 inches (0.16 inches in Nov. '96 and 0.46 inches in Nov. '95). 1.25 inches fell as rain and snowfall was 3.3 inches (2.2 inches in Nov. '96 and 3.9 inches in Nov. '95). *This compares with 0.65 inches of liquid precipitation at Silver Lake (0.71 inches in Nov. '96 and 0.60 inches in Nov. '95). Snowfall at Silver Lake was 5.5 inches (5.6 inches in Nov. '96 and 4.0 inches in Nov. '95). The snow depth at McCarthy was 17 inches on the 1st, decreased to 13 inches on the 12th and ended the month with 14 inches. Silver Lake started the month with 6 inches. All the snow was gone by the 9th. More snow arrived on the 21st and there were 4 inches on the ground at the end of the month.*

December and January are usually the coldest months with the lows falling to -50 and colder. Daylight is down to just under 5 hours by December 21, before it begins to increase again. *

"There is so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, that it ill behooves any of us to talk about the rest of us!" - unknown

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

OP-ED LETTER TO DOT

I am writing to you because I understand that the Department of Transportation is attempting to set priorities for the coming year and this includes deciding what to do with the McCarthy Road. As you know, Margaret and I have owned property in the McCarthy area for several years and visit the area regularly. I am writing to urge that the state upgrade the road from its present poor condition.

Because of [our daughter's] birth in June, we did not get out to McCarthy this summer until Labor Day. The condition of the road when we did go out at the end of August was the worst I had ever seen it. It was badly potholed, areas were washed out, the washboarding was terrible. Sinkholes had appeared in some areas of the road. Prior travelers had marked some of these holes by placing a stick with surveyor's tape in the holes. The road had been recently graded from Long Lake to McCarthy, and this helped a little bit in this area. The problem, however, is that the gravel is basically gone and there is not much left to grade anymore. The grader is now essentially grading packed dirt. My thoughts at the time was that driving the road was essentially like sitting in an automatic paint can shaker for hours at a stretch.

In addition to the above-described recent deterioration, the road has its well-known and long-existing problems. The road is extremely narrow and has numerous blind curves, the culverts are inadequate and several creeks regularly flood the road. Old railroad spikes regularly appear in the road bed and puncture car tires. (I have had two tires go flat on one trip into

McCarthy.) These conditions all make the McCarthy Road very dangerous to drive even without the recent deterioration in the road.

As I understand the problem facing the Department of Transportation, maintaining a gravel road is very expensive. It is all the more expensive when the road is inadequately designed to begin with. Improving the road base and adding a chip seal surface would substantially reduce DOT's maintenance costs. I am strongly in favor of such work. I understand many business and land owners in the McCarthy area have also recently sent DOT a petition supporting upgrading the road. I enclose for your information the copies of the petition that Margaret and I received and signed.

Aside from the cost issue, I understand that some people may argue that the road should be left in its present abysmal condition in order to discourage people from entering the park and to preserve the "wilderness experience" of this remote and difficult road. My view is keeping people out of the park is not a legitimate public policy goal and that driving the McCarthy road is not a wilderness experience. McCarthy and Kennicott are being represented by the State of Alaska, the National Park Service, and local businesses as major scenic and historic attractions — which they are. Visitation to the McCarthy/ Kennicott area is increasing as knowledge of the area grows and because of overcrowding at Denali. McCarthy is the primary destination for visitors to the park. It is also the transportation center for the park. Several flying services operate out of McCarthy, along with

rafting and guiding services. The area is a world-class historical area. This road has been used as a transportation corridor for 90 years now. I believe it would be irresponsible to intentionally subject park users to a dangerous—and at best an unpleasant—driving experience as a public policy goal.

As previously noted, I do not consider sitting on my rear end in an automobile on a dangerous, rutted, and dusty road for hours at a time to be a wilderness experience. Appreciation of the wilderness characteristics of the park would only be enhanced by an improved road with scenic views and turn-outs (and surrounding vegetation that was not covered with a thick layer of dust.) Margaret and I also consider the purpose of our visits to the park to involve getting out of the car and enjoying the wilderness and historic sites in the park. Spending extra hours in the car due to the terrible condition of the road only detracts from our enjoyment of the park.

I appreciate your consideration of this letter. I recognize that the state has many pressing transportation needs and cannot do everything. I also recognize, however, that input from citizens is important in prioritizing the state's work plans and thus these types of letters are important. From my experience, I think that the McCarthy Road in dire need of improvement and that such work would only save the state money in the long run. I hope the state will be able to perform the suggested work on the road in the near future.

Very truly yours,
Neil T. O'Donnell

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Kildonan School
RR1 Box 294
Amenia, N.Y. 12501
November 26, 1997

Dear Wrangell St. Elias
Newspeople,

Last summer my wife and I flew out to visit our daughter, son-in-law, and newborn granddaughter, all of whom live in Valdez (he's one of the doctors there, she works at the Valdez Museum). We stayed in Alaska for three weeks, one of which we spent on the road — including THE road to McCarthy. We stayed there two nights, loving every minute of our visit. Afterward, while still traveling around the Copper River region, we came across your newsletter lying on B & B coffee tables. Once we began reading it, we couldn't stop. One of our standards for an outstanding B & B was whether they had issues of your newsletter or not.

To make a long story short, my wife absolutely fell in love with the newsletter. I would like to present her with the back issues plus a subscription for her special Christmas present.

I appreciate your help. Needless to say, I hope I haven't initiated this project too late and that I've given you enough time to send the back issues by Christmas. I know my wife will be thrilled. Thanks.

Ken Borden

focused on the unfortunate situation KCHU radio faces in light of continuing budget cuts.

I worked for KCHU for 4 years off and on prior to moving to Fairbanks. My job there led to my decision to pursue a Journalism Broadcast degree and gave me the opportunity to learn professional skills that I still use as a Public Relations Coordinator. Higher education plays a vital role since KCHU teaches audio production classes to students graduating with a Broadcast Communications degree from Prince William Sound Community College.

There are so many reasons why the community needs to support this station and all seven communities should sit down and think about it right now. KCHU serves as a major news source to those who cannot receive television or chose not to watch television. Likewise, it provides alternative entertainment than commercial radio stations.

Beyond that KCHU commits themselves to services not offered at any other radio station. Every weekday they dedicate time to read messages and announcements in the public's interest. This is their Billboard, everybody's heard it at some time, and tons of people who don't support KCHU use it. I hope every time someone sends to the station a public service announcement they consider this. I remember reading countless announcements from the cities of Cordova, Glennallen, Copper Basin, and Valdez and the different college campuses.

I know that you've heard

repetitively through the fund drive and there is a reason for this.

I would like people, surrounding city councils and city dignitaries to try to find alternatives to the services KCHU provides to others. They won't succeed, so they should support it instead.

Thank you,
Rachael Bermudez
Former KCHU Volunteer
Coordinator/Operations
Assistant.

November 10, 1997

Dear Bonnie,

Thank you so much for sending me the November & December issue of WSEN. I hadn't realized that my subscription had expired.

We especially enjoy "Items of Interest" and look forward to reading it. We were truly surprised to learn that news of our \$333,000 outhouse had traveled all the way to AK. I guess bad news really does travel fast.

Enclosed is my check for a two year subscription. Hopefully, this will lessen my chance of missing any issues.

Thanks again!

Connie Lenning
Hunlock Creek, PA

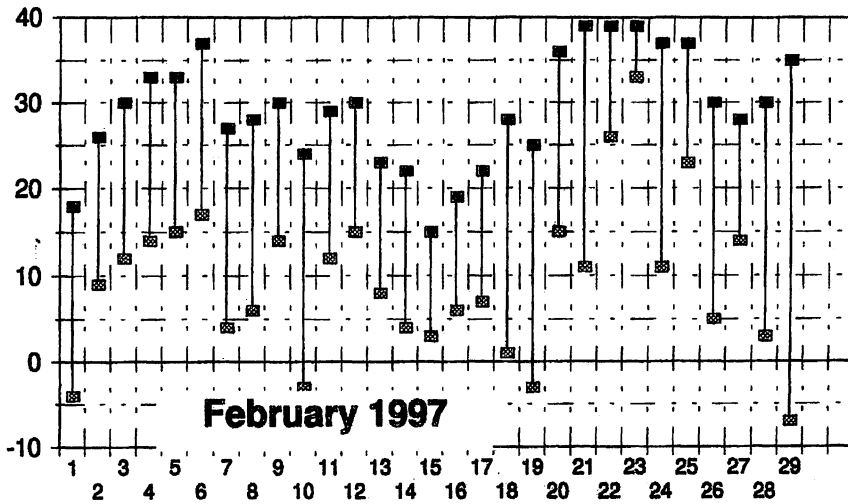
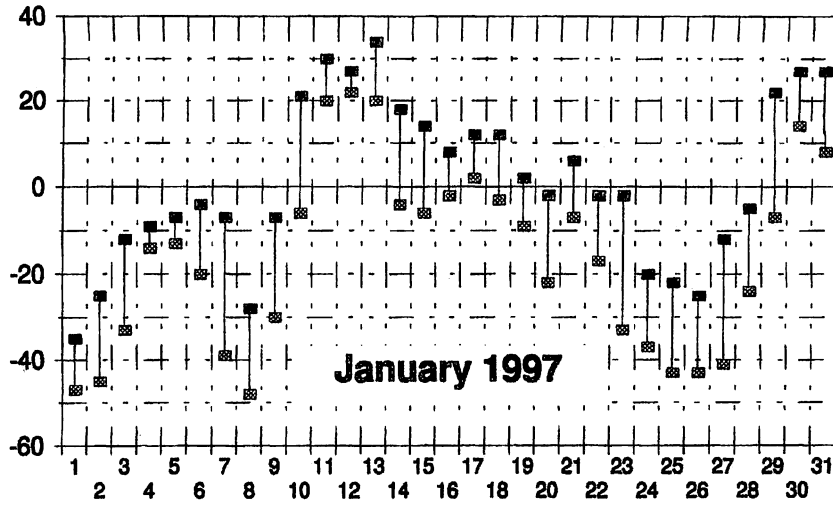
November 18, 1997

To the Editor:

It broke my heart the other day when my fiancée called my attention to an article in the Fairbanks Daily New-Miner. I

"It often happens that I wake up at night and begin to think of a serious problem and decide that I must tell the Pope about it. Then I wake up completely and remember that I am the Pope." — Pope John XXII

Weather - What can we expect?



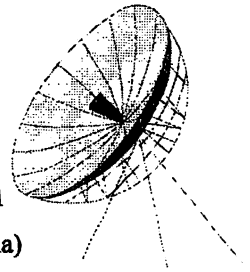
Wrongeil St. Elias News
McCarthy
PO Box 144
Glennallen, AK 99588

The New

Caribou Hotel

*Icy roads? Snowing? Getting tired?
Stop at the Caribou Hotel!*

1/2 PRICE SPECIAL! January—February—March
Local Residents 1/2 Price (822 phone area, 99588 zip code & Chitina)



Warm atmosphere — Hot Tubs — Satellite TV
Full Menu Restaurant

Mile 187 Glenn Hwy 822-3302 Glennallen, AK