

Wrangell St. Elias News

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"

Vol. Eight Issue One

January & February 1999

Two Dollars

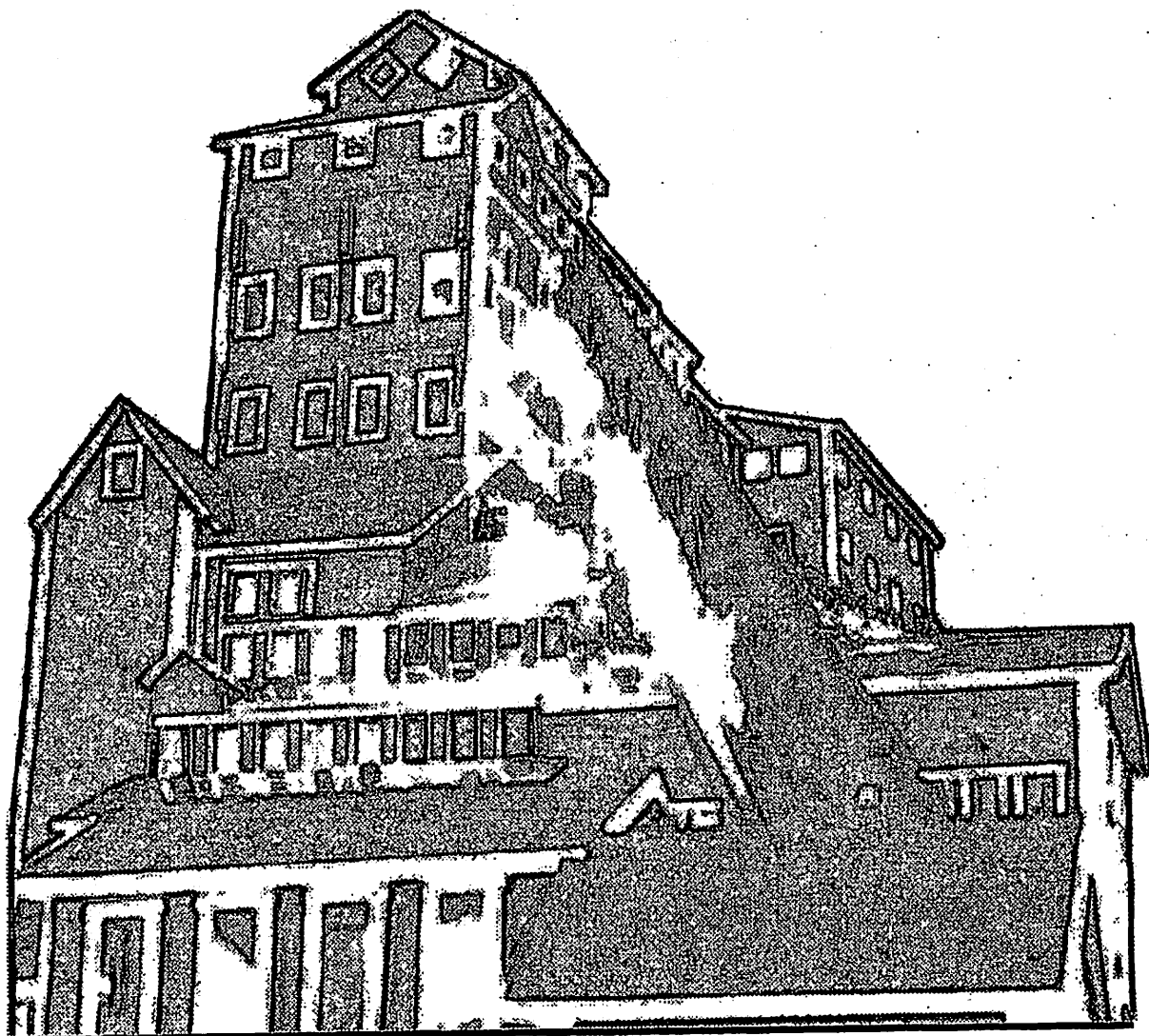


photo courtesy Ron Simpson
sketch by Rick Kenyon

Recreating Kennecott

**The story behind the
model railway structures**

story page 6

A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

This four days after Christmas and all through McCarthy it seems not a creature is stirring, since winter has settled! Outside, it's a blustery 17 degrees below zero. Inside, although the thermometer reads 73 degrees, Rick and I really appreciate the heated foot mats we have at our computer desks.

Since returning from our vacation on Dec. 4, we've gone through a major acclimatization process. Florida was experiencing warmer than usual November weather. Walking on sidewalks at 80 degrees in bright sunlight—wearing shorts and a T-shirt—is certainly different than our daily walks here in our northern home!



JOSHUA ANDREW KENYON

Our new grandson—Joshua Andrew Kenyon—was born while Rick and I were en route to Daytona Beach on Nov. 4. He weighed in at 9 lbs. plus. By the time, we made it to Donalsonville, Ga. where our son Rick Jr. and family live, Joshua was 10 days old. Naturally my job description as his grandmother included holding, rocking, singing, talking and encourag-

ing him to at least open his eyes once in awhile so I could see what color they were. Tough job, but someone had to do it!

Grandson Jonathan David, 5, went on daily deer hunting trips with "Grandpa Rick." Via the computer, that is! They both bagged several good trophies.

Stephen Joel, who turned 3 on Dec. 13, enjoys acting out the stories you read to him, so I got in on quite a performance of David defeating the giant Goliath.

Rick and I had a wonderful time with our family. The McCarthy Road didn't pose any problems this year and we returned to a warm cabin and a stack of mail which included many Christmas cards from our readers. Thank you all very much! And, speaking of thanks, Rick and I want to say how much we appreciate our neighbor and friend George Cebula who does an excellent job at reporting the daily weather

observations in our place.

I want to point out a printing mishap on page 20. Subscribers Jim and Marian Busey, inspired by the *Buzzword Technocabulary* in our last issue of WSEN, submitted several political speech "expeditors" that they had created. Rick printed one of them along with a note giving the Buseys credit, but when he examined the freshly printed page, he saw that his note had been accidentally dropped. Too bad we did not have your expeditors in time for the elections, Jim and Marian; who knows what might have happened!

Wrangell St. Elias News welcomes aboard the following subscribers: Peggy and Wilson Wessels, VA; Lucy Steger, PA; Carl Morgan, AK; Richard and Averill Gay, AK; Joe Prax, AK; Eloriese Fender, CO; Jodie Anthes, CO; Kristi Gill, CO.

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Contributors to this issue: Sarah Welty, Irma Padgett Haaland, Ryan Critchfield, Carly Kritchen, George Cebula, Dee Frady, Ron Simpson, Jim and Marian Busey and Ned Rozell.

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Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

Emily Morrison: It is not unusual to receive a phone call from Emily or have her pay us a visit—in the summertime, that is. Yesterday was December 28, the middle of winter, and there was Emily standing at my door! She tells me this is her first “winter” trip to Alaska, that she arrived in the area several days ago and, even though it will be a short visit, she will be back in the spring.

Emily spent a couple of days with the Morrison family at Crystal Creek and Christmas Day with Mark Vail at Fireweed Subdivision. She was excited about seeing her nearby property in the winter-time so that was going to be her next stop.

Emily says the upcoming summer includes site preparation and log gathering for her cabin. Daniel Morrison is in charge of the construction project and the actual building will not get underway until summer of 2000.

As we say our goodbyes, Emily promises Rick and I “dinner” once her house is built.

Jim, Audrey and Shelly Edwards: Not long after Emily left, I got a phone call from Audrey. She said she and Shelly, Jim’s daughter, wanted to visit us and I assured her I was in the visiting mode! With the tea kettle steaming, a plate of chocolate chip cookies on the table, mugs and tea bags ready, the ladies showed up in style—riding Audrey’s new Arctic Cat snowmachine.



Photo courtesy Audrey Edwards

THE “THREE MOUSKETEERS?”
JIM, MICKEY AND AUDREY

Shelly, who lives in Anchorage but still considers McCarthy “home,” arrived on Thursday’s mail plane to spend the Christmas holidays with Jim and Audrey. We compared travel adventures as Shelly recently returned from a trip to the Cayman Islands where she enjoyed scuba diving and cave exploring.

Jim and Audrey got home just shortly after Rick and I did after spending time at Disney World in Orlando and visiting family and friends. A highlight of the Edwards’s trip was their anniversary celebration. As you can see by their picture, Mickey Mouse got right into the middle of the action!

Nelson Corcoran: Another soon-to-be neighbor of mine is Nelson, who has been coming to the McCarthy area for a couple of summers now. She is once again spending the winter working at the South Pole. Instead of northern lights and lots of darkness, Nelson is “complaining” about having

100% “blaring sunshine!” Personally, I’m finding that hard to believe or at least grumble about!!

Rick and I are getting a steady stream of E-mail from Nelson. She is planning her first building project for this summer. At the present, she is drawing plans for a 12’ X 16’ building that will give her a place to hang her hat while she moves onto Phase 2—the main cabin.

This sounds like quite a challenge for a young lady like Nelson, but she assures me that Brandon, her special friend who many of you met last summer, will be on hand to help her.

Don, Lynn, Rene and Sarah Welty: The Welty family took a trip to Cordova to visit friends during the first week of November. Don got in some deer hunting, too, says Lynn, and was successful in bringing home a winter’s supply of meat.

Since they’ve returned, Lynn and girls have been working extra hard on home schooling. Sarah is putting in extra effort to get ahead in her studies. (Be sure to read *An Alaskan Sunrise* by Sarah on page 11.) She has quite an adventure coming up this March. As a Cadet in her Girl Scout troupe, she is invited to accompany them on a trip to Hawaii! Her troupe leader’s family has asked her to stay on a bit longer with them and enjoy a little extra sunshine. I’m sure you will miss your family, friends and school work, Sarah, but tough it out and bring us back some of that sunshine and warmth!

Rene's pet rabbit "Zhoo Zhoo" (Rene says this comes from a French word but the spelling is her creation) got promoted to house living. It didn't take her long to adjust to her new lifestyle and make herself right at home. Zhoo Zhoo sometimes gets to tag along to mail and participate in family outdoor activities. I wonder if this special rabbit knows how good she really has it??

Speaking of promotion... Don and Rene made a fall trip to the big city and came back with an additional mode of winter transportation—a snowmachine. Now all we need is a foot of that beautiful, white fluffy stuff called snow!

Ursel and Walter Mueller: E-mail is a wonderful advancement in communication for us "bush" folks. This last week we received a Christmas letter and greetings from our Swiss friends, Ursel and Walter. Although they live a great distance from us, their E-mail brought them right into our cabin and warmed our hearts. As they wrote, "It's the time to share friendship and we'd love to share it with you —well, there are thousands of miles between us, but our hearts can make this distance in a second, can't they?"

I'd like to pass on a few items of interest to you readers who have had the privilege of meeting the Muellers. Walter's back problem is doing much better. They still try to go to their mountain house most weekends and have been working on insulating it better for their winter

visits.

Switzerland got a lot of snow this early winter (maybe they could ship us some?) which is making the ski areas very happy.

Ursel and Walter say they are very homesick for McCarthy and their Alaskan friends. They hope to make another trip to see us this next summer. They extend a very inviting invitation to us: "You know that you would be welcome here at our home all the time, so if you ever consider jumping over the ocean to see Europe or Switzerland, here is the place you can live to get to know European culture." Thanks, Ursel and Walter, for thinking of us all! Happy New Year from your McCarthy friends!



Photo courtesy Margaret Stock

"LINCOLN LOGS" ARE FOR LOWER 48 CHILDREN— ALASKAN KIDS PLAY WITH THE REAL THING!

Neil, Margaret and Catherine Stock/O'Donnell: We are pleased to report that the O'Donnells' log cabin is well underway. We understand it is completely enclosed now and the wood stove is already in place. Neil, who lives in Anchorage with wife Margaret and baby Catherine, came out shortly after Rick and I left for Florida. We missed seeing him this time, but we know there will be many future visits.

Daniel Morrison and sons are heading up the construction project and doing an excellent job! As you can tell from this photo of Catherine, she is really keeping a watchful (and helpful) eye on her inheritance!

Community Thanksgiving Dinner: A community potluck dinner took place at "Tony's House" on Thanksgiving Day. Food was in abundance with a variety not unusual to the Alaskan "bush" life. Turkey, pork roast, moose and deer meat along with all the trimmings. The Bay family had been to Anchorage prior to the gathering and graciously brought back ice cream for the occasion.

The table was set with utmost care—linen napkins, table cloths and candles.

A splendid time was had by all!

Carly's Annual Christmas Cookie Exchange and Tea: On Friday, December 18, eleven ladies gathered together at the Kritch homestead to exchange Christmas cookies and conversation. Ladies are known to be qualified and dependable in providing both of the above items in



abundance so no one left empty handed or without a good laugh!

As usual, Carly provided an excellent luncheon which is always appreciated by each one of us. Thank you, Carly, for such a great idea and opportunity to just be together at such a wonderful time of the year!

Christmas Party: A McCarthy Christmas party, hosted by Betty and Lane, was held on December 5 at the McCarthy Lodge. An array of Christmas lights and decorations welcomed those who attended to celebrate the beginning of the holiday season.

A Chinese gift exchange took place and a huge display of fireworks livened up the festivities.

Happy Birthday, Jesus, party: Don, Lynn, Rene and Sarah Welty hosted a birthday party for Jesus on Christmas Eve. In spite of well-below zero temperatures, 9 people accepted the Welty's invitation to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas—the birth of Jesus.

The aroma of Lynn's hot apple cider simmering on the wood stove greeted us as we walked in the door, and it didn't take any of us long to sample it!

A perfect treat on a cold day.

Everyone joined in the games and Christmas caroling. Lynn treated us with a Christmas story.

A birthday cake was served with a delicious

fruit punch. Don made sure we all sampled Lynn's salmon spread and crackers which was a hit (especially with Elizabeth!).

Thanks to the whole Welty family for opening up their home on such a special holiday occasion!

Elizabeth Schafer: Shortly after Christmas Elizabeth left for Fairbanks where she starts her job of substitute teaching. Have a good winter, Elizabeth, and keep up that great laugh of yours!

Katy Steger: I just got off the phone with Katy who came in on the mail plane today. She has really been on the go since she left McCarthy before the holidays. A day in Seattle to gather information about a possible future job, a visit with Thea and Tom in Berkeley, Ca. where she ran into Nancy Cook who was passing through the area, on to New York City to see her brother and wife-to-be, took in a historical tour of Central Park with Richard Haggerty, saw Barbara Walters in person while in NYC (she says Barbara failed to recognize her! Oh, well...), from NYC she took a train to Richmond, VA. where she spent Christmas with her parents.

They also celebrated her brother's wedding. Katy says she had such a wonderful holiday season with her family.

Welcome home, Katy! (And, Aaron Miller, be forewarned. Katy is gearing up to start school again!)

Rick Jurick: Rick is doing well, working and living in Palmer for the present time. He's been hauling building supplies up to his place in Kennicott in preparation for next spring when his building project starts up again. In fact, Jeannie Miller just informed me Rick was in over Christmas but left once more.

According to a recent letter from Rick, he is hoping to return to this area the end of March to finish the interior of his building. We hope to see you then, Rick!

Jim, Jeannie, Matt and Aaron Miller: Jeannie and boys made it back from Anchorage just fine but she warned me that the road glacier that has gained the nickname of "Jurgen's glacier" is showing signs of a buildup. That's not good news! Also, she says she had to use chains on her truck when driving to mail from Kennicott to McCarthy. Time to get the dog team out, Jeannie!

Jim is due back around New Year's Eve when the Miller family will celebrate Christmas. Jeannie says she received a phone call from Sara Gray who is now living in Portland, Maine. Sara and husband James now have an 18 month old baby girl, Ava, and own their own photography business. (Jeannie, thanks for helping me fill out my "Items" column! As you know, I was getting desperate!)

The Story Behind the Model Railway Structures

BY RON SIMPSON

Over the course of the last three years I have produced photos in this publication showing historic model structures related to the Copper River & Northwestern Railway (CR & NW). It is an ongoing project, (as most model railroads are) which started nearly ten years ago when I began research at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks archives for photos related to Kennecott Copper Mines and its CR & NW Railway. It did not begin as a model railroad project. That evolved later.

At some point early on in my research it became apparent that a significant part of the railroad and Kennecott was actually gone. After considerable reflection on the



Photo courtesy Ron Simpson

THE GILAHINA TRESTLE (CENTER SECTION) WITH A "PACIFIC-TYPE" LOCOMOTIVE CROSSING THE BRIDGE.

implications of a large but disappearing historic site, I

concluded that building models of some of the missing structures would be the best answer to keeping that part of our history alive.

For maximum impact, the ultimate choice for model railway scale became "G," (sometimes referred to as "garden scale"), which for purposes of building structures I have defined as 1:24, or 1/2 inch equals one foot). The first structure actually built was the center section of the Gilahina Trestle. You see a part of this model in the first photo with a 1:29 scale "Pacific" type engine crossing the bridge pulling a "heavyweight" combination baggage and passenger coach. The engine is somewhat similar in appearance to the 95-ton "Mikado" type locomotives which the CR & NW actually used. The "heavy-weight" shown is a later version of the



Photo courtesy Ron Simpson

THE BONANZA BARRACKS IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION HERE IN STEVE KAMMERZELL'S "PEOPLE BEING SERVED" SHOP.



Photo courtesy Ron Simpson

THIS IS THE CORE OF THE MODEL BONANZA BARRACKS ON A STAND BUILT TO CARRY IT ON THE REAR OF THE RANGER PICKUP. THE ROUGHED-OUT BUILDING WILL BE RETURNED TO COPPER CENTER FOR PAINTING, TRIMMING, ROOFING AND LIGHTING.

wooden combines used by the CR & NW Railway. The bridge itself includes 102 pool cue sticks which were adapted for use as the vertical supports. This trestle is part of the model which runs in the "Copper Rail Depot Saloon" in Copper Center.

Some of the earlier building models were actually constructed with handmade siding and studded walls. This proved too labor intensive, and the later models are now all built of a high grade of 1/4 inch plywood, which is grooved to simulate the tongue-in-groove style used in the railroad and Kennecott structures. The windows are of plexiglass, and each window and door is still hand built. The core structure is built in a carpenter shop. I use plans that I originate, usually based entirely on the historic photos (unless the building still exists and can be measured, or a plan still exists).

Regrettably, very few architectural drawings exist. The exceptions I have found are

for the general office, the 1923 version of the power plant, and a 1917 version of the Bonanza barracks. Thus each one of those models had the benefit of an actual engineering drawing for reference. In the second photo you see the Bonanza barracks under construction in a carpenter shop in Fairbanks. Because I had the early drawings, I was able to place the inside walls according to

real plans. The large room closest to you is the gymnasium, which is above the dining hall. Walls for the third floor of the sleeping rooms are being built here. The carpenter is Steve Kammerzell, who assisted me in several of the later structures. In the third photo you see the core structure of the Bonanza barracks on the back of a Ranger pickup. This photo clearly demonstrates the relative scale of the rather massive structure.

This particular building is a perfect example of the problems encountered when reproducing historic structures. The plans I used were marked "obsolete" and did not represent exactly the building as it appears in the 1920's era photos which I consulted when making the model drawing. I chose the year 1924. This barracks was probably altered about 1920 to the look you see here, and it was certainly altered again during the 1930's.

The next photo represents the National Creek complex



Photo courtesy Ron Simpson

SOME OF THE KENNECOTT MODELS COMPLETED IN ADVANCE TO THE BUILDING OF THE MILL STRUCTURE. THESE BUILDINGS ARE ALREADY PLACED IN THEIR REAL RELATIVE LOCATIONS.



Photo courtesy Ron Simpson

RON SIMPSON IN THE GARAGE IN WEST LINN, OREGON WHERE THIS MILL MODEL WAS FINALLY CONSTRUCTED. THE ROOFS REMAIN TO BE ADDED. THIS IS APPROXIMATELY HOW THE MILL WOULD HAVE APPEARED IN 1920.

structures. Here you see the railroad station in the front. To the left is the electricians' warehouse (now gone). You can also see the hospital—the large white structure to the right. Uphill is the Stephen Birch ("Manager's House")—and to the center-rear is the three-story "Staff House." At the time these were built I still did not contemplate building the mill itself, which is notably absent in this photo.

The centerpiece for the Kennecott models (one piece of the large railroad model set) finally became reality two years ago when I visited my folks in Oregon. While on vacation there I designed a 1920-era version of the model, and my father and I built it over the course of five weeks in his garage. Here you see me with the nearly completed

model—only the roofs are awaiting the finishing touches. The mill is, of course, the best example of how a historic structure changes over time. The mill you can see now is considerably wider at its base due to the addition of the water-flotation system in 1923. My structure represents an earlier era. This model was built in five sections for ease of transporting, and was shipped back to Alaska on the rear of a Chevy S-10 pickup truck.

With the mill now in place to complete this part of our picture, you see the results in this shot, which includes the front of the hospital, the general office and the staff house. Even the flag in front of the office is the 48-star one of the type which flew over Kennecott during its heyday.

The last photo here shows the completed machine shop and 1923 power plant in place in the "Copper Rail Depot Saloon." The machine shop is the only model I have which I could actually photo and measure. The power plant here, while similar to the one now at Kennecott, is the one which burned down in 1924—one year after a major renovation. The distance from the front of the machine shop to the rear of the power plant is 16 feet.

Due to obvious space limitations, I am nearing the end of this phase of the model building project. Regrettably it is not yet possible to display the National Creek complex, which includes the mill. Plans will soon be underway to build an extension to the Saloon which will be able to house the entire



Photo courtesy Ron Simpson

THE FIRST MODEL OF THE KENNECOTT MILL KNOWN TO EXIST IS FINALLY IN ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE, DOMINATING THE SCENE ABOVE NATIONAL CREEK COMPLEX. THE MODEL IS NOT YET AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC DISPLAY.

These models are all wired for lighting, and are lit here to give even a greater sense of reality to the scene.

CR & NW Railway model where it will be possible to view it in its entirety. The ultimate model will probably include at

least one of the steel bridges and part of historic downtown McCarthy.

Editors note: Ron has a new website that features the CR&NW. Check it out at:

"<http://members.tripod.com/~Blackburn49/index.html>"

The site is an historic photo-journal of Kennecott Copper Company and its Copper River & Northwestern Railway, Cordova to Kennecott, 196 miles, 1911-1938.



Photo courtesy Ron Simpson

THE MACHINE SHOP AND 1923 POWER PLANT SUSPENDED OVERHEAD NEXT TO THE TRACK IN THE "COPPER RAIL DEPOT SALOON." THE RAILWAY RUNS ABOUT 82 INCHES ABOVE THE FLOOR. THESE MODELS WERE INSTALLED IN EARLY DECEMBER, MEASURING 16 FEET END TO END. THE EXPANDED SALOON WILL INCLUDE THE REMAINDER OF KENNECOTT ALONG WITH PART OF MCCARTHY, WHICH IS NOT YET BUILT.

Drink clean water with help from DEC

ECOSYSTEM NEWS

Small communities (with less than 2500 residents) may receive assistance as they work to solve their public health and environmental compliance problems.

The new program is called the "Small Community Environmental Compliance Assistance Program" and will be piloted this fall by its developers at the Division of Statewide Public Service of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The main targets for compliance assistance will be drinking water, waste water

disposal, and solid waste land fills.

Each participating community will form a work group (a DEC representative, community leaders, community groups, local businesses, and individuals) to focus on facilities owned and operated by the local government. The group will determine a priority of urgency and set a schedule of manageable targets for raising their facilities to compliance levels.

DEC will offer technical assistance in identifying needed repairs, funding sources, and alternative energies.

"It's a partnership," said Alan Wien, the main force behind this program at DEC. "The community definitely has to commit to solving its problems. It's not a free ride just to gain time."

Wien added, "No enforcement actions will be taken (by EPA or DEC regulatory programs) as long as the community actively participates and shows progress and good faith."

For more information, contact Alan Wien, DEC-Palmer at 907-376-5038.

"When the water of a place is bad it is safest to drink none that has not been filtered through either the berry of a grape, or else a tub of malt. These are the most reliable filters yet invented." — Samuel Butler

McCarthy cellular repeater site getting major re-work

BY RICK KENYON

Rumors have been floating around the McCarthy area of activity at the problem-plagued Sourdough Ridge repeater site. I called John Monfils at Copper Valley Cellular to see what was happening. Mr. Monfils confirmed they had removed some of the equipment at the site and were in the process of replacing it with a system by a different manufacturer. He said the electronics would be similar

to what has been in use at the main site in McCarthy for several years.

Also slated for replacement is the microwave link that connects the remote site with the main equipment. According to Monfils they are also planning to replace the engines on the propane-powered generators at the Sourdough Ridge site. The new engines were designed to use propane fuel, rather than converted gasoline units.

Two things have been hindering the progress the past month—poor flying weather conditions between Valdez and McCarthy, and the short daylight hours of an Alaskan winter. The company is hopeful they can have the new equipment installed and operational “sometime this winter—perhaps February.”

We'll be watching anxiously for that helicopter heading up the ridge!

NPS news

BY JON JARVIS—SUPERINTENDENT,
WRST

Explosives mitigation

Eight abandoned explosives disposals were conducted in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST) between July 20 and July 24, 1998, by Logan Hovis, the Alaska Regional Blasting Officer and NPS licensed disposer. The eight sites included two in the upper Kotsina River drainage, four at Kennecott, one at Green Butte, and one in the Bremner area. In total, 200 pounds of nitroglycerin (NG) based explosives and 67 blasting caps were examined, collected as appropriate and destroyed.

All known explosives on the NPS Kennecott acquisition, primarily blasting caps, were destroyed. While more explosives will undoubtedly be found on the site, everything that was known at the time of acquisition was mitigated quickly once the NPS took responsibility for the property.

The Green Butte disposal, conducted on short notice, removed 100 pounds of high explosives from an area frequently visited by the public and used in connection with private educational efforts. In the Bremner area, explosives located underground at the Sheriff mine were detonated in preparation for mine closure operations. The two disposals in the upper Kotsina River valley involved sites which proved to contain the oldest explosives yet found in WRST. On these last two sites the amount of explosives destroyed was lower than the amount reported which suggests that the BLM geologist who made the discoveries exercised appropriate caution in investigating his finds.

Kennecott news

Ron Dorsey has been hired as the project manager for Kennecott Stabilization and Lead Paint removal for next summer. He will be hiring locally for crew members to work under his supervision through the summer. Look for announcement of the

opportunities in the late winter/early spring. Mr. Dorsey visited Kennecott last fall and is a specialist in historic preservation.

Fire Management

FROM ECOSYSTEM NEWS

A fire management position has been added to the staff of WRST. The position, filled by Marsha Lutz, is the first in the Alaska national park system and will be shared with two other parks, Gates of the Arctic and Yukon-Charley.

Lutz will coordinate with the interagency Alaska Fire Service with does the actual fire suppression. “I’m currently looking at all the structures in the park, especially back-country cabins of historical significance that we don’t want to lose. Some of the state’s information is outdated on what we want done if a fire is moving toward those structures.”

Eventually the park’s fire management program will incorporate resource management tools such as prescribed burns.

An Alaskan Sunrise

BY SARAH WELTY

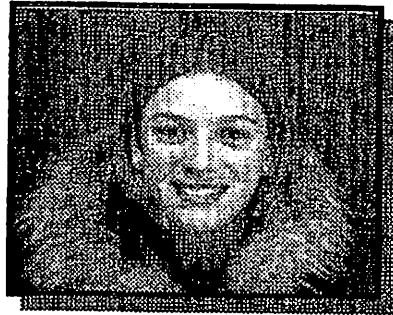
It was a crisp, cold wintery morning. The frost nipped at my red nose as I walked towards the river. Birds were soaring everywhere, singing "chika deede, rikwi reeereee, the sun is here, the sun is here." It was as if they were warming up in the sunrise that was just starting to send orange rays across the blue-green sky. Pulling the fur-lined rim of my green parka tighter to my face, I stepped out onto the ice of a small tributary off the Kennicott River. I drew in a breath. The beauty was overwhelming. The sun was peeking its head over the black and white ridge, silhouetting it.

The orange rays reflected off the mountains to the north casting an orange glow over the whole valley, and in the shadows was the unmistakable shade of blue. It was an image true to the color laws—an orange light will always make a blue shadow. I turned to the right. I could see the aspen trees surrounding our house. They were bright red.

It looked as though the trees were on fire. The frost on the trees shone like sparks. It seemed to warm the chill in the air. I stood there for a while, taking it all in.

I turned back to the sun. It was coming up fast. It was like a slow-motion peekaboo game. I sighed. It seemed as if the beauty of the sunrise wiped away all bad in this world, making it more beautiful, more real. As though God was sitting there painting this unexplainable beauty himself. A warm feeling, being so close to God, to nature that you could reach out and touch it.

The frost of the trees shimmered, creating rainbows in the snow. Leaning down I tried to catch them in the palm of my hand. They weren't as pretty there, though, so I let them go and laid down in the snow. Looking up into the sky, I tried to find shapes in the red clouds. Once I saw a lion shape that almost seemed to run in the rippling rays of sunshine. I would have given anything to stay here



in the midst of all this beauty. But there were things to do. Reluctantly, I got up and made my way toward home taking as long as I could—always turning around to look at the sun that was now high in the sky.

I returned the next morning and the next, because to me the sunrise that follows every dawn will never become a bore to watch. It will only become more inspiring with each new ray.

Editors note: An Alaskan Sunrise was written by Sarah as a Writing Class assignment. She and her sister Rene are being home schooled by her parents, Don and Lynn Welty. Sarah is 13 and is in the 8th grade.

Natural Wonder Found In Alaska

MCCARTHY WEEKLY NEWS—1924

Alaska is rich in natural history marvels. We have the webfooted cat, the ski-horned sheep, the ice worm, the porcupine owl, fish with gizzards and the scoop billed ptarmigan, but wonderful as these creatures may be, they fade to insignificance, when compared with the flying wolverine, which is a habitant of the more mountainous districts. The wolverine, as all naturalists know, has a propensity for traveling a straight line. Owing to the number of cliffs in the Wrangell range a wolverine had a hard time in ages past. Instead of being able to travel in straight lines it was continually compelled to detour the cliffs. Nature has provided a remedy however, for in the

last few years a new species has appeared. Hunters who have seen it declare it possesses a strip of hide attached to the fore and hind legs in the same manner as a flying squirrel, save that the wolverine's ailerons are more efficient. It is said that in a high wind, the animal can float long distances. Trappers have seen it calmly launch itself off the highest of cliffs and waft away on the breeze, and seeing, have declared it to be the most remarkable thing ever witnessed.

When killed, the loose skin between the legs shrinks, in spite of efforts to hold it in shape, so that when dry, the pelt presents the same appearance as that of the common cache robbing variety, which carries a can opener on each foot.

the Languid Lady

Trees and Shrubs of the Wrangells- Part 1: "Conifers"

BY DEE FRADY

Today brought the first significant snowfall of the season. As Christmas fast approaches—the world takes on a beautiful mantle of snow, especially on the trees and shrubs. Today, Terry and I found and cut our Christmas tree. This time I planned to write a simple botany lesson but became drawn to the subject of trees instead.

Alaska does not have many types of trees. The Aleutian Islands and the far north reaches of our state have relatively few native trees. Most of the varieties of Alaska's trees are relatively slow growing. Nevertheless, we have several types in the Wrangells that are important to our surroundings, wildlife and lifestyle. The area comprises vegetation species of spruce-hardwood forests, alpine tundra, coastal spruce-hemlock forests and, of course, ice and snow. Smaller patches of bog, wet tundra and shrub thickets also occur. I am going to focus on the spruce forests first.

WHITE SPRUCE (*Picea glauca*) Pine Family

The white spruce is an evergreen and considered the most common tree of interior Alaska. As well as being the most abundant, it is also the most important commercial tree species. These conifers grow 40-70 feet high with trunks averaging up to 18

inches in diameter. On good sites, white spruce may grow to 115 feet high with 30 inch trunks. On the other hand, they can become a prostrate shrub at timberline. They are 100 to 200 years old at maturity. These trees grow best on well drained, south-facing slopes and seldom grow where permafrost is close to the surface. White spruce can also hybridize (cross-breed) with black spruce where their ranges overlap.

The character of spruce "leaves" comprises sharp, stiff needles, $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long, blue-green in color with whitish lines and grow on all sides of the twigs. These needles shed quickly when dry and have a sharp odor when crushed. The outer bark is gray and smooth or scaly plates. White spruce has whitish inner bark (cambium), and nearly white wood. (Note: The cambium layer typically shows up as darker patches on log cabins when not fully peeled off.) The brown cones are cylindrical, without stalks, up to $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches long with rounded scales that hang down on the branches. Mature cones fall off in the spring—that is, the ones that remain after the squirrels finish tossing them off in the fall. The seeds produced in the cones are brown, $\frac{3}{8}$ inch long with a large wing. The periodic seed production occurs about once every three years. Slightly

drooping branches with upturned ends produce many, small, drooping side twigs. The young, small spruce transplants well as long as you get plenty of roots and give them plenty of water.

White spruces have shallow root systems that grow in the top few inches of soil. When the soil temperature reaches 41 degrees Fahrenheit or less the roots cannot grow, that is why the roots search through the warmer topsoil, avoid permafrost and grow near the surface. Of course this trait makes them susceptible to high wind damage. It is not unusual to find wind blown spruce lying with the uprooted base intact and out of the ground. Spruce roots also release an acid into the soil that helps deter encroaching competition from other plants.

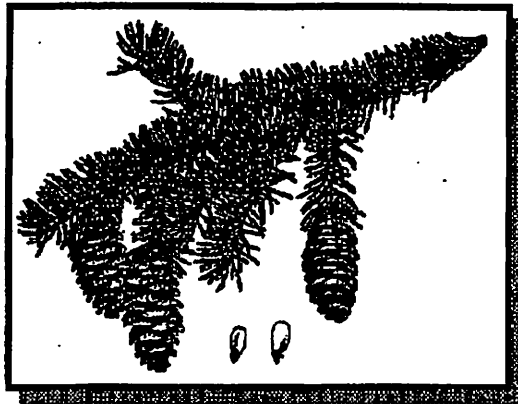
There are many pests that attack our spruce trees. Among them are spruce budworm (eats buds and needles), gall aphids (cause galls on twigs) and woolly aphids (appear as woolly tufts on branches). Spruce needle rust occurs fairly often and it also attacks Labrador Tea as part of the life cycle. The rust produces bright orange spore masses that only attack new needles. Another rust called "broom rust" is a very common disease that invades

the woody parts of spruce and results in dense branch clusters, locally known as "witches' broom." This oddity results in frequently asked questions. We have them on most of our spruce in this area and they can grow to great proportions with many dense, twisted, intertwined twigs. Another frequent question concerns burls that cause a large growth on or encompass the trunk of the tree. This particular oddity has no known cause but the theory is that a growth over an irritant, similar to the formation of pearls in oysters. Carpenter ants are a serious problem for these trees as they tunnel into the heartwood for shelter to make nests for their young. Very impressive is finding a broken spruce trunk that has a honeycomb system inside tunneled by these ants. No question about it, the spruce beetle tops the list of pests and causes the most damage. This bark beetle bores through the bark and feeds and breeds underneath. This kills the tree by girdling and destroying the layer of tissue that transports the nutrients by the roots to the needles. This pest can increase to epidemic numbers. Great stands of dead spruce blanket many areas and occur locally near Kennicott.

Worth noting is the conks that grow on some spruce trunks. Conks are fruiting bodies of decay fungi. Woodburning and painting on conks are popular craft uses. Finally the lichen trailing gracefully from the branches has the common name "Old Man's Beard." If you see a tree

with a distinctive curve or bend in it (like an elbow), the cause is not by any disease or pest but, rather from snow load when it was a sapling.

White spruce has many uses. They provide shelter and homes for many species of birds and mammals. Grouse eat the needles. Squirrels build nests, gather the cones and eat the



WHITE SPRUCE (BROWN SEEDS HAVE A LARGE WING)

seeds. Found beneath older spruce are huge piles of the cones and their remains, collectively called a midden. Porcupines feed on the inner bark (cambium layer) that results in some interesting growth areas in later years.

An important traditional and current use of these conifers includes house logs for cabin building. Log furniture constructed to furnish these cabins are another use. The roots, peeled and woven, make unique baskets. Did you know that spruce tips are edible and make tea, jelly and beer? New growth on the tips of spruce branches collected in late spring makes spruce tip beer, a popular alcoholic beverage with early settlers. It's an excellent source of vitamin C and on Captain Cook's expeditions the beer was important in the

prevention of scurvy. My friend Mark has made this beer and Terry can attest to its good taste! Many other uses abound such as lumber or fuelwood and historically, corduroy roads, spruce gum and a source of fuel for steam engines.

As you might have guessed, this was a subject near and dear

to me. These trees have helped to make ours and other lives possible here. My spouse, Terry, and I were able to build and create a home, business and guest cabin from spruce logs. These trees heat our home and cook our food. I have used a wood cookstove and its oven for nearly fifteen years now. We have been able to live a much more self-sufficient lifestyle and create our niche in the

Wrangells. Our log walls have porcupine "chews" and each log brings memories of place and time. Our store sign hangs from two logs with burls that visitors enjoy. We have large patches of spruce around us and the wildlife associated with them. A large and deadly wildfire swept our area in the early part of this century. Many enormous stumps and charred trunks still remain on this hillside. The willow, birch and other deciduous trees reclaimed the forest first. Next in succession came the spruce and although not yet as large as their predecessors they have grown to a good size. The mountainside covered with small spruce, grows for future generations to enjoy.

National Park Digital Guide

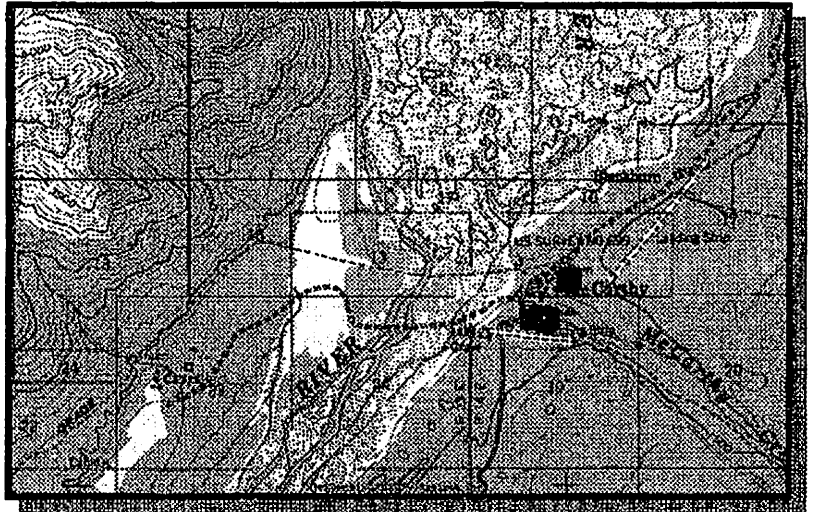
New CD by Maptech covers Wrangell-St. Elias

BY RICK KENYON

Anyone who tries to travel around the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park (WRST) using United States Geological Survey (USGS) maps soon realizes that it takes a passel of maps to get very far. Enter the digital age. While the information is still contained on many maps, all of the maps that comprise the WRST area are now at your fingertips on a single CD-ROM.

Called the National Park Digital Guide, the program contains both 1:250,000 and the more detailed 1:63,360 scale maps. (The booklet says they contain 1:24,000 and 1:100,000 maps. Perhaps other, smaller parks use these more detailed scales.) It also includes an "official park map," created by the National Park Service. This "official" map is mainly useful for finding the approximate boundaries of the Park, Preserve, and Native Corporation lands. Once you find the area you want to explore, a double-click of the mouse takes you to the USGS topo.

The topographical maps can be viewed in any of 4 different "zoom" levels. On my 17" monitor, the 2-1 view filled the screen with approximately two and a half sections of land at the 1:63,360 scale. Zoom out to 1-4 and you see an area 12 ½



miles wide.

An interesting feature is called the "distance tool." You can select a line between any two points, or draw in a trail or route using the mouse, and this tool instantly tells you the distance (in both miles and kilometers), the bearing and the elevation of both start and finish points. An option labeled Profile gives you a cross-section of the elevations along the route.

Another useful tool is the Marker Tool. With it, you can enter your own data on any of the maps. Click the mouse on the spot you want your marker, double-click on the spot marked, and a dialog box opens with the latitude and longitude of the specified area, and you can name the marker and enter any information in a note area.

These markers are saved to your hard drive so they are available any time you bring up a map containing one.

According to the literature, the program can be interfaced with most GPS units by using a data interconnect cable. Routes plotted on the map can be sent to the GPS, or, you can save a course with the GPS, connect to the program, and it automatically draws the course on your map! Since I already have a GPS, the data cable is now on my wish list.

All of the maps can be printed at nearly any zoom level desired. Routes and Markers will show on the printed maps.

Priced at \$29.95 plus shipping, the Digital Guide is available from Maptech at 1-800-627-7236.

"The whole object of travel is not to set foot on foreign land; it is at last to set foot on one's own country as a foreign land."—G. K. Chesterton

Good News from the Wrangells

A Christmas story; may it warm your heart as it did mine.

RELATED BY JERRY SUNDERLAND

EDITED BY DAVE SYREN

In 1994 two Americans responded to an invitation from the Russian Department of Education to teach morals and ethics (based on biblical principles) in the public schools. They were also invited to teach at prisons, businesses, the fire and police departments, and orphanages. At a large orphanage consisting of abused and abandoned children they shared the Christmas Story and told how one child understood it to be.

It was near the holiday season, 1994, time for the orphans to hear, for the first time, the traditional story of Christmas. We told them about Mary and Joseph arriving in Bethlehem. After finding no room in the inn they settled in a stable where the baby Jesus was born and placed in a manger. Then shepherds and wise men came to worship Jesus, God's son and gift to the whole world.

Throughout the story, the children and orphanage staff sat in amazement as they listened to this wonderful story. Some sat on the edge of their stools trying to grasp every word. After completing the story, we gave the children pieces of yellow napkins for straw (no colored paper was available in the city) and pieces of cardboard to make their own simple manger. The children tore the napkins into strips and carefully laid them in the mangers they crafted. Small

squares of flannel, out from a worn out nightgown, were used for the baby's blanket and doll-like figures were cut from the felt to represent the baby Jesus.

The orphans were busy assembling their mangers as the Americans walked among them to help or answer questions. All went well until they got to one table where little Misha sat. He looked to be about six years old and had finished his manger. As they looked they were startled to see not one, but two babies in the manger. Thinking there had been some misunderstanding, a translator was found and they asked Misha why there were two babies in the manger.

Crossing his arms in front of him and looking at the completed manger scene, he began to retell the story very seriously. For a young boy, who had only heard the Christmas story once, he related the events very well—until he came to the part where Mary put baby Jesus in the manger. He then went on to tell his own ending to the story. "And when Maria laid the baby in the manger (because there was no other place), Jesus looked at me and asked me if I had a place to stay. I told him, I have no mamma and no papa, so I don't have any place to stay. But then Jesus told me I could stay with him. But I told him I couldn't because I didn't have a gift to give him like everybody else

did. But I wanted to stay with Jesus so much; so I thought about what I had that maybe I could use for a gift. I thought maybe if I kept Jesus warm, that would be a good gift. So I asked Jesus, 'If I keep you warm, will that be a good enough gift?' And Jesus told me, 'If you keep me warm, that will be the best gift anybody ever gave me.' So I got into the manger with Jesus and Jesus looked at me and he told me I could stay with him for always and he would take care of me."

As Misha finished his story, his eyes brimmed full with tears that ran down his little cheeks. The little orphan had found someone who would never abandon or abuse him, someone who would "stay with him for always and take care of him."

It's not *what* you have in your life but *who* you have in your life that really counts.

Editor's note: The above story certainly did warm my heart and give me a prospective for the new year. I once told a neighbor that if I lost everything in my life, I would still have the most important possession needed to live the rest of my earthly life in peace and joy. That "possession" is a person. His Name is Jesus Christ and He wants you to start your new year with Him at the center of it. Let Him be the Who in YOUR life that really counts!

OUR TOWN

January 1924 February

LOCAL LAD MAKES SPLENDID RECORD

Grenville Emery, Head Master of the Seale Academy, a military school located at Palo Alto, California, where Lawrence Barrett is attending school, has sent up Lawrence's report for the past six weeks. It is one that any boy might well be proud of.

In English II, Spanish I and Algebra II a grade of A is shown and in Spanish II and Physics, A. Lawrence is the only boy from Alaska at the Seale Academy, and it is apparent that he is maintaining the high standard of the majority of Alaska's youth attending outside institutions of learning.

TOWN TALK

Mrs. J. E. Barrett went to the Green Butte Wednesday for a short visit with her husband.

Mrs. A. V. Doze has been on the sick list this week, suffering with a severe cold.

Mr. Pete Johnson and wife arrived from their ranch Wednesday evening. They are taking back a load of supplies to the place.

J. B. O'Neill has been quite ill with a cold during the past week. He is much better now.

Jan. 5

JOY RIDE TO GREEN BUTTE

It is said that a crowd from Kennecott intends to take a ride to the Green

Butte tomorrow morning bright and early. Pete Brenewick is to haul the joy riders with his team. About twenty people are contemplating the trip.

TOWN TALK

Al Fagelberg arrived from his ranch at Long Lake on today's train. After attending to business which called him to McCarthy he will return to Long Lake.

The way Pete Brenewick is hauling ice into town it looks as though this year's crop will soon be harvested.

While we have been watching Jack Frost flirt with Zero, other parts of Alaska are reporting some of the coldest weather experienced in years. After all, McCarthy isn't the worst place to live in the territory.

Axel Backman has been helping Pete Brenewick pack ice in a few of the ice houses around town.

In spite of the trail which was softened by the rain today, Bill Berry delivered a load of supplies to the Green Butte with a car.

Jan. 12

Mr. and Mrs. J. B. O'Neill of this town spent Sunday and Monday at the Green Butte as the house guests of H. I. Gaskill.

PIONEERS HOLD ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Tuesday evening the local Igloo of Pioneers held its annual election of

officers and as the result of the votes cast the following men will handle the destinies of the lodge during the year of 1924: Jas. Hussey President, John E. Barrett Vice President, John Nickles Secretary and Treasurer, J. B. O'Neill Chaplain and Ernie Gerken Historian.

Captain Hubrick wishes to announce that next Saturday being Derby Day he would like to get a picture of every dog team in town. The teams should be out in the afternoon as the light is better at that time. The pictures are to be sent outside for print in eastern papers. As there are more dogs here than in Nome, probably, the town by this method would receive some much needed advertising.

Jan. 19

GEORGE FLOWERS RETURNS FROM THE OUTSIDE

George Flowers, the Long Lake trapper, hunter and farmer, returned from a trip to the Virginia Mason Hospital of Seattle last Sunday, much improved in health. While out he underwent an operation of a rather serious nature, for abdominal trouble. He states that outside of being rather weak, he is perfectly well and that he will be as strong as ever. George left McCarthy for Long Lake on Monday's local for his home where he would finish the winter on the trapline he has out.

BIG SMOKER ON LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY

Through the efforts of Andy Taylor, and Mylon Jones of Kennecott the interest in a smoker reached such a pitch that last Tuesday evening a meeting was held at the Golden, and a committee appointed to arrange for the proceedings.

The meeting was called to order by Jas. Hussey, and Cap. Hubrick was elected Chairman, Lander Secretary, and the sporting committee consisting of Billy Myers, Bill Longley, Andy Taylor and Sig Wold, was appointed to arrange the events.

Some discussion regarding date finally decided Lincoln's Birthday the day for the events. Arrangements were turned over to the committee; they have been busy. The present plans elect four men at McCarthy. They are also planning a wrestling match, if Otto Amalong can be matched either at Kennecott or Green Butte.

TOWN TALK

The latter part of last week, a new addition to the Howard family arrived at the Kennecott Hospital, in the shape of a fine 9 1/2 pound baby girl. Both mother and daughter are doing fine, and Jack has recovered the buttons that came off his shirt, when his chest expanded.

The new wood saw made its initial appearance on the streets yesterday, and is said to be a fine machine. Pete Brenwick, the owner received the 6 H.P. engine last Sunday, and during the past week has had Dick Woodman at work on the machine building a frame and lining up the engine.

The warmest place in the country is the Green Butte bunkhouse, according to arrivals from that mine. The only fault the men have to find with the new building is the fact that the windows have to be left open if anybody throws a stick of wood in the furnace. That's a good fault to find with any building when it's forty below.

THE BRIDGE

Local prognosticators predict that the A. R. C. will commence operations in the near future and continue activities throughout the summer, on the Nizina Bridge. Already there are three men in town who are employed on the Road Commission Force, and it is expected that Mr. Huddleson the Supt. for this district will soon be on the scene of activities. The work outlined for this summer on the Nizina Bridge includes the pouring of concrete into the steel caissons that were driven last winter and spring, and the completion of the approach on this side of the river.

Jan. 26

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Morris of Kennecott are the proud parents of a brand new son, who made his appearance at the hospital early this morning. Mother and son are doing well and little Frankie has set aside

his most beloved toys to give his little brother when he comes home.

CHITINA

About a foot of the "beautiful" floated down at Chitina the first of the week and in consequence John McCrary, the genial mail man is now using his "little house on wheels," instead of the usual "flivver."

The rotary snow plow came up from Cordova Sunday ahead of the train.

SKIING GAINS IN POPULARITY

Mrs. Duffey, Miss Burns, Eric Danielson and Jim Dineen of Kennecott, were guests of Mr. and Mrs. J. B. O'Neill last Sunday. The party, accompanied by other local lovers of outdoor sports spent the afternoon, an ideal one and typical of McCarthy's unexcelled climate, in skiing. The hill was in fine shape, a recent fall of snow having filled in every crack and crevice. The hill is a long straight stretch and some very pretty ski riding was witnessed by passers by. And then, of course, there were some tumbles - one or two - ; but those added zest to the sport and everyone declared, "This is the life!"

NOTICE

If the man who walked out with my 45 cal. U. S. Army pistol, will call around he can also have the holster and a box of cartridges that I have no further use for. As I have the number of the gun, I can identify it.

Wm. Johnston
Feb. 2

A LITTLE BIT OF GOSSIP

It is reported that the laundry will open in a short time under the efficient

management of Walter Chong, the chef of the Golden lunch counter. Pete Brenwick is hauling in the summer wood for the new management.

Considerable use has been made this week of the ice on Kennecott River by local skaters.

Mr. and Mrs. J. B. O'Neill skied to Kennecott Wednesday for the afternoon performance of "The Cheechakos."

BLACKBURN TO BOOM AS TOURIST CAMP

Mrs. Roberts, who recently received patent on her homestead which takes in the now defunct town of Blackburn, states that plans are perfected for the establishment of a tourist resort.

She states that in a short time she will let a contract for a sufficient number of logs to construct a large hotel capable of accommodating all the tourist travel in this section. In addition to the hotel, it is planned to renovate and refurnish the good cabins at Blackburn for the use of any families that may wish to use them. There will be the added attractions of a skating pond for winter and a ball diamond for summer with a fine golf links, if that animal is demanded by tourists from the states.

Mrs. Roberts has kept close tab of the number of tourists and travelers that came up in this district last summer, and she reasons that if there were interesting trips into the surrounding sections arranged for, a great many people would visit this district each season.

Feb. 9

LOCAL HAPPENINGS

Ted Seltenreich is now employed as a delivery boy after school and on Saturdays by O'Neill's.

Feb. 16

A. R. C. LOSES GARAGE IN CHITINA

The most disastrous fire that has occurred in these parts, for some time, took place at Chitina Sunday afternoon, when the A. R. C. garage burned to the ground.

Harry Hoyt, who is employed by the Commission as mechanic in charge, opened the stove to replenish the fire, and there was an explosion. The building being of lumber, was soon wrapped in flame, the heat and sparks momentarily threatening the Commissioner's office and stable. Through the good work of the townspeople these buildings were saved but owing to the explosive material stored in the garage, nothing was done to check the conflagration.

The loss is estimated at about ten thousand dollars. When the fire occurred, there was a couple of cars and a tractor stored in the building, as well as a large supply of spare parts, a complete assortment of repair tools, etc. The building itself had a high valuation being constructed of "outside lumber."

There is a scarcity of fur in all parts of Alaska. Martin is practically non-existent. The only meat that is plentiful is rabbit.

Feb. 23

Some Alaskans see a change in the weather

BY NED ROZELL

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

At winter solstice, the Arctic Circle represents more than a dotted line on the map. On that day, it becomes the line north of which the sun won't rise. On winter solstice, December 21 this year, the sun will make an appearance for five-and-a-half hours in Anchorage, a little less than four hours in Fairbanks, and zero hours at the Arctic Circle and points north.

The darkest day in the Northern Hemisphere is officially listed as the beginning of winter, but you'd have a hard time telling someone in Barrow—where the sun set November 19 and won't rise until January 23—that winter hasn't started yet. Alaskans have a different definition for the onset of winter, and it depends on who you ask.

Jan Curtis of the Alaska Climate Research Center at the Geophysical Institute said a good Alaska definition of winter is the day when our maximum temperatures don't exceed 32 degrees Fahrenheit. When that day comes, he explained, all precipitation is in the form of snow.

According to Alaska weather records from 1949 to 1998, September 23 is the average date the high temperature stays below 32 in Barrow.

Fairbanks typically gets no warmer than the freezing point on October 17, followed by

Nome (October 24), Anchorage (November 5), Seward (November 30), and Juneau (December 27). Using Curtis's definition, winter never happens in Ketchikan, which has a lowest average maximum temperature of 37 on January 5. I asked Glen Woodall of the National Weather Service in Fairbanks his personal definition of winter. He said winter is here when the snow stays on the ground. Woodall checked the 1998 weather summaries and found that at least a trace of snow fell and remained in Fairbanks on October 14, in Barrow on October 13, in Anchorage on October 17, and in Juneau on November 27. No snow stuck in Ketchikan.

Pat Holloway, a horticulturist at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, looked at winter from the perspective of Alaska plants. Holloway said she's heard of spruce trees shutting down their growth in late July, instead using the sun's energy to form buds that will become needles in the spring. Some plants, such as raspberries, keep chugging along until September and even early October, but snowfall either shocks them into dormancy or kills them.

Wood frogs would certainly argue that winter begins before December 21. The only amphibians in the Interior find their winter homes in forest duff well before the arrival of snow. Brian Barnes, a professor

at the Institute of Arctic Biology, said large wood frogs dig into forest litter in mid-August, while smaller frogs hop around until the first frost hits, usually in mid-September. For Arctic ground squirrels, winter starts in the middle of summer, Barnes said.

That's when squirrels begin eating everything they can to store up fat and protein for the winter. In studies done at Toolik Lake on Alaska's North Slope, adult female ground squirrels settle down for the winter in early August, while males may not hibernate until early October. Winter begins about the first of October for inland brown bears, said Harry Reynolds, a biologist with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Like other hibernators, the bears begin preparing for winter at the end of July and early August, eating everything they can. Black bears generally den up in mid- to late-September, Reynolds said, though any species of bear may put off hibernation if there's a good source of food nearby.

Non-hibernators like me like to mark the winter solstice with a bonfire, lit sometime near the exact moment when the North Pole begins its nod back to the sun. Woodall of the Weather Service said that moment happens at 4:58 p.m. Alaska Standard Time on Dec. 21. *

New telecom partnership looking for opportunities in rural Alaska

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA—United Native American Telecommunications, Inc. (UNAT) an Anchorage-based telecommunications company has reached agreement in principle to join forces with EDS in jointly providing a variety of telecommunications services to rural Alaskan communities.

EDS, the official information technology services provider for the World Cup 1998, is a leader in the global information services industry. The company's more than 110,000 employees specialize in applying a range of ideas and technologies to help business and government clients improve their economics, products,

services and relationships. EDS, which serves clients in 45 countries, reported revenues of \$15.2 billion in 1997. The company's stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE:EDS) and the London Stock Exchange. Visit EDS via the Internet at <http://www.eds.com>.

In reaching the agreement, UNAT President James Bradley stated: "We are pleased to be associated with such a global leader in computing and communications. Through UNAT's understanding of Alaska's unique communications needs and EDS's industry insight, we are

now in a position to provide state of the art technology to even the most remote Alaskan site".

"We're looking forward to working with UNAT to improve telecommunications services and opportunities for the people of Alaska," said Ken Bassmann, EDS program manager for TELIS, the federal contract under which the services will be provided.

According to Bradley and Bassmann the two partners are currently evaluating opportunities throughout Alaska and plan to launch their first project early in 1999.

Snowmobiler's ask for help

ASSA (VIA EMAIL)

The Alaska State Snowmobile Association (ASSA) needs your help. We are putting together a mailing to all groups, organizations and individuals that may assist us in our struggle with the National Park Service to keep at least part of the Denali wilderness zone open to snowmobiles. As you have probably seen in the media, the NPS is attempting to prohibit snowmobiles in the wilderness zone in violation of the provisions of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Please understand, in spite of the incorrect and misleading statements from the NPS and other opposition groups, we have NEVER advocated keeping the entire 2 million acres open to snowmobiling. We have,

since mid-1997, tried to work out an agreement with the NPS to close much of the wilderness zone but leave some of it open to snowmobiles, as long as the access provisions of ANILCA would not be compromised. The NPS has refused to consider this option, preferring to ignore the specific instructions included in section 1110a of ANILCA and issue a blanket closure order, using flawed and erroneous reasons.

The ASSA has established a Denali Access Defense Fund, to be used for the battle that will most likely ensue and is asking your help to identify groups, organizations and individuals who will support our effort. What we need now is any information you can provide, including name, address and telephone number, with a

contact person if available. We will send them a letter explaining the situation and ask for their moral and monetary support. If there is any question about providing contact information to us, please get permission first. We don't want to contact anyone who doesn't want to hear from us. Time is critical, as we hope to get our first mailing out before the end of the year. Please help us to fend off this assault on our right to access our federal lands. We need your "friends list." For additional information, call 1-888-825-7669 in Alaska, or 1-907-566-0210 if you are out of the state.

Alaska State Snowmobile Association
P.O. Box 210427
Anchorage, Alaska 99521-0427

HANDY DANDY POLITICAL SPEECH EXPEDITER

Do you want to be elected to public office or become a political speech-writer? Just select any phrase from each column from left to right and string together. You can go on almost indefinitely.

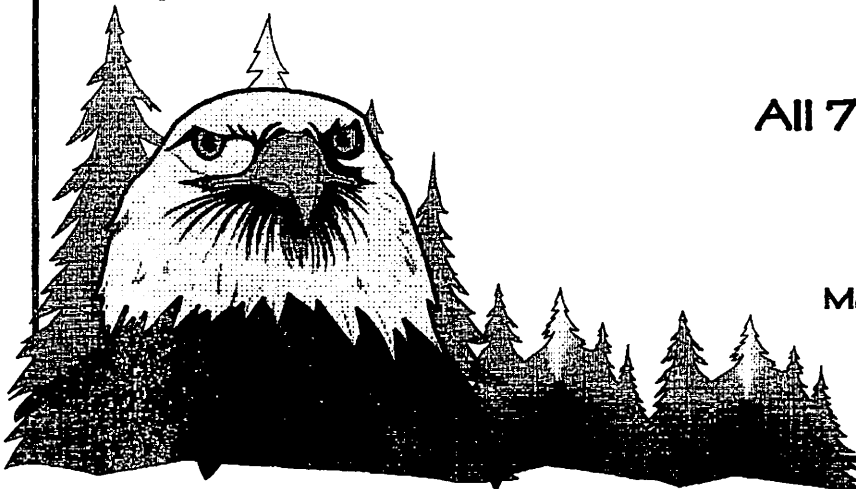
THESE GREAT AND BRILLIANT PRINCIPLES
 THE GLORIOUS AMERICAN PEOPLE
 THESE FABULOUS FIFTY STATES
 OUR UNPARALLELED, GLORIOUS TRADITIONS
 OUR HIGH AND MIGHTY PRINCIPLES
 THE LESSONS FROM OUR FOREFATHERS
 OUR HEROIC PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS
 OUR GREAT AND HONORABLE LEADERS
 THE IMMUTABLE LESSONS OF TIME
 THE FREEDOMS WE ALL HOLD DEAR
 OUR HAPPY, PROSPEROUS PEOPLE
 OUR GREAT CONSTITUTION AND LAWS
 THE NEW BREEZES THAT ARE BLOWING
 THESE HIGH, MORAL PRINCIPLES

CONTINUE TO GUIDE US
 PROVIDE THE NEEDED BEACONS
 SET THE PATHS WE MUST FOLLOW
 GUIDE THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD
 WILL BRING ALL OF HUMANITY
 CONDUCT US ON THE GREAT HIGHWAY
 WILL GUIDE THIS GREAT LAND
 PROVIDE US WITH OUR NEEDED GUIDANCE
 PROVIDE THE CHARTS FOR ALL HUMANITY
 ARE LEADING US ALONG THE HAPPY PATHS
 WILL INEXORABLY DIRECT US
 WILL DOUBTLESS CONDUCT US
 WILL MOVE THIS PROUD, FREE NATION
 PUSH HUMANITY ON TO GREATER FREEDOM AND

TO THE REALIZATION OF ALL OUR HOPES
 AWAY FROM DOUBT AND CONFUSION
 THROUGH ALL THE CORRIDORS OF TIME
 TO LONG-TERM PROSPERITY AND SECURITY
 TOWARD BOLD NEW CHAPTERS IN OUR FUTURE
 IN THE DIRECTION OF PEACE AND HAPPINESS
 TO A BRILLIANT NEW SUNRISE
 TO PEACE, FREEDOM AND PROSPERITY
 TO SOLUTIONS TO ALL HUMAN PROBLEMS
 TO A VERITABLE HEAVEN ON EARTH
 TO COMPLETE SECURITY AND PROSPERITY
 INTO THE SUNSHINE OF OUR GOLDEN DREAMS
 TO THE DOORWAY TO PROSPERITY
 TO A KINDER, GENTLER FUTURE

AND IN THE SAME VEIN. . .
 BUT THEN AGAIN. . .
 FURTHERMORE, LET ME SAY THAT. . .
 IT IS ALSO UNDOUBTEDLY TRUE THAT. . .
 BUT WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT. . .
 AND, IN ADDITION IT MAY BE SAID THAT. . .
 ON THE OTHER HAND, LET US RECALL THAT. . .
 AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS ARGUABLE THAT. . .
 I MIGHT ALSO BE SO BOLD AS TO ADD THAT. . .
 LET US ALSO CONSIDER THAT. . .
 ON THE OTHER HAND. . .
 BUT IT MUST BE ADMITTED THAT. . .
 HOWEVER, WE MUST REMEMBER THAT. . .
 AND WE KNOW IN OUR HEARTS THAT. . .

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Kennecott Kids Korner

BY IRMA PADGETT HAALAND

Back to Kennicott – 1994

The 68 years disappeared as I walked again the former railroad bed at 11:30 PM, in broad daylight, from the Kennicott Glacier Lodge to the boardwalk on the hillside across from the power plant. My father's spirit walked at my side so real I talked to him about the crumpled stairway to the walk on which five company cottages were located. I peered up through the underbrush, barely able to discern the red and white-trimmed cottage we lived in from 1919 until 1926.

My father, John Howard Padgett, was Chief Electrical Engineer at the Kennecott Copper Mines. My mother was Irma Frances (Brickell) Padgett and my two brothers, Chester John Padgett and Kenneth Howard Padgett, were five and six years older than me.

Next door lived the Osbornes. This cottage had been restored, in red with white trim, on the unusable boardwalk, looking forlorn. Next were the Dennises and one or two others, now totally in ruins. I would walk up to the last house and watch the owner tend his beautiful pansy garden.

We were lucky to have bathrooms in these boardwalk houses. I used to stand on the radiators, in beloved felt ankle boots, to watch the trains not 25 feet below, between us and five other cottages—their outhouses precariously perched on the edge of the Kennicott Glacier. Next to them was the big 4-stacked power plant.

Mother told me how frightened she was when Ken and

Chet would play "chicken" between switching cars.

It seems unbelievable, but the Kennicott Glacier is 325 feet LOWER than we left it in 1926. Then I remember seeing only white peaks beyond. Now I stand on the veranda of the Kennicott Glacier Lodge and take a panoramic picture of Fireweed Mountain entirely visible to its base—across a gray, moraine-covered glacier.

The 1994 reunion of 21 Kennicott Kids witnessed Kennicott officially proclaimed a National Historic Landmark. A plaque presented to us with our names on the back hangs proudly in the Kennicott Glacier Lodge.

Back to Kennicott—1998

Now it's 1998. This time this Kennicott Kid has her Kennicott grandkid to experience the lifestyle of his great grandparents and his grandmother. Ryan Critchfield, 8 years old, from Auburn, California, is a delightful travel companion, a beloved grandson.

Again, with Ryan, I revisited the family cottage my family occupied from 1919 through 1926. I was born in the little, white hospital in 1920. While our cottage, the first on the boardwalk against the hillside, was still barely holding upright, we walked across its rickety floors and I recounted to Ryan my childhood memories, 72 years ago.

While the restored cottage next door remained, others on up the boardwalk had either crumbled in a heap of wood or

were leaning until the next bout of snow brought them down. While Ryan was hiking the glacier with the competent guide, I climbed the 208 steps of the mill. The handrails were glossy, edges rounded and so highly polished by 27 years of workers' hands that they resembled marble.

Memories included the movies with Mary Pickford, or Our Gang. Once there was a movie about gambling, wherein someone lamented about losing his shirt. Next morning, searching for my undershirt, I started chortling, "I've lost my shirt," to the great glee of my brothers. I still feel the warmth of pleasing them, since their 5 and 6 year ages advantage normally left me totally ignored. My father operated the movie projector upstairs in the back of the rec center. Once following a movie we were all told to report to the hospital for smallpox vaccinations and my "scar" is still evident.

My father made a crystal set and camp friends came to the house to listen to the "outside." He made my mother a floor lamp from pipes; I believe the only one in camp.

Ryan's recollections— 1998

The end of last May, I went to Alaska with my grandma. It was a real adventure! My grandma (whom I call Nana) grew up in Kennicott, which is about 312 miles east of Anchorage. It took three planes to get there. My favorite was the last plane because it went over the mountains and the ocean.

When we got to Anchorage, we had dinner. Then we went to bed at midnight because it was still so light outside and we were not used to the new time zone.

When we finally got to Kennicott, I was amazed how old it was. But I could also imagine when the mill and mine were working. Nana's house seemed so small. Some bushes were growing over the walls and roof, and the boards creaked when we walked inside. All the buildings in town were red with white trim. I haven't seen a whole town painted this color before.

During our two days in Kennicott, we hiked a lot. My favorite hike was the Kennicott

Glacier. I climbed a long ways up with the "Kennicott Kids." It was the first time I had ever climbed a glacier and wore crampons.

Almost everybody who once lived in Kennicott worked for the copper mine, including Nana's dad (my great-grandfather). She said he was an electrical engineer there.

It was fun walking around the town because there were pieces of copper on the ground. I picked up some pieces and brought them home to my family.

I feel very lucky to have gone to Alaska with my Nana. It's a trip I will never forget!

KENNICOTT GRAND-KID RYAN CRITCHFIELD—AGE 8.

Photo courtesy Irma Haaland



Dividend application forms to be available on-line

ALASKA DEPT. OF REVENUE

Alaskans will be able to fill out their 1999 Permanent Fund dividend application forms on-line starting Saturday, Jan. 2. The new Internet service will allow Alaskans to complete the forms at their computer, print the applications and send them to the Permanent Fund Dividend Division.

"The software will ask questions and prompt people to fill in the correct boxes," said Nanci Jones, director of the dividend division at the Department of Revenue. "A big benefit is ensuring that people fill in their applications completely. The system will not let someone print an incomplete application."

The division is working toward someday making it possible for Alaskans to actually file their applications on-line, but is waiting for technology that

would enable people to transmit an "electronic signature" and allow the state to receive and verify the information, said Paul Dick, operations manager for the dividend division. In addition to an adult applicant's signature, two other adults also must verify the information and sign each application.

In addition to offering the standard adult and children's applications on-line, the new system also will provide the supplemental application form required by first-time filers for the dividend, Alaskans who traveled out of state 90 days or more in the past year, and others.

Computer users will need Netscape Version 3.0 or Internet Explorer Version 3.0 or higher to access the service. The address is <http://www.revenue.state.ak.us/pfd>

The new service is optional, and Alaskans can still use the forms they receive in the mail. A

complete set of forms for adults and children, instruction materials and rules will be distributed to every residential address in the state, with delivery expected to begin Jan. 2, Jones said. "People have the option of getting their forms from the booklet or trying out our new on-line service," she said.

Additional forms and application booklets also will be available starting Monday, Jan. 11, at dividend division offices in Anchorage, Juneau and Fairbanks; at the governor's offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau; at legislative information offices and city clerk offices statewide.

The deadline for applications is March 31, 1999. The amount of the 1999 dividend will be announced the last week of September, and Alaskans who select the direct-deposit option will receive their dividend Oct. 6.

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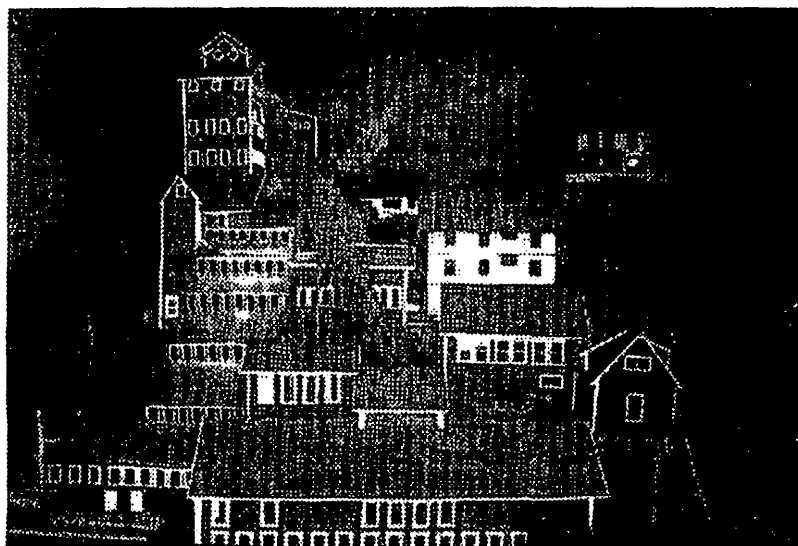
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Young investigates Denali snowmachine decision

BY RICK KENYON

According to a story in the December 29 issue of the Anchorage Daily News, U.S. Rep. Don Young has launched a House Resources Committee investigation into what he calls a "poor decision" by the National Park Service to keep snowmachines out of the wilderness portion of Denali National Park.

"This is going to be a thorough inquiry," Young, the committee chairman, said in a written statement issued Monday. He said the inquiry is intended to determine how the agency has handled snow-machine access in the park, "and why the agency has apparently misapplied the access provisions" of the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands

and Conservation Act, or ANILCA.

In early December Young urged Don Barry, assistant Interior Department secretary for parks, to drop the proposed regulations. In his latest letter, announcing the inquiry, he said the Denali snowmachine issue "has wide implications on the proper recognition of ANILCA access guarantees that pertain to all national parks, refuges, and wilderness areas throughout Alaska."

Denali Superintendent Steve Martin this fall proposed temporary regulations continuing a ban on snowmachines in the original 2 million acres of the park for two to three years while the park studies the issue. Chief Denali Ranger Ken Kehrer

said that as far as he knows the Park Service has never conducted a specific study of snowmachine use in Denali.

Predictably, environmentalists have sided with the closure. "Very simply, it has never been open and should never be open," wrote Allen Smith, Alaska director for The Wilderness Society. The National Parks and Conservation Association, asked members to write letters supporting the closure. If the Park Service can't keep snowmachines out of the original core of Denali, the group said, "then park advocates have no hope that snowmachine use will ever be managed to protect the natural and other values" in Alaska's national parks.

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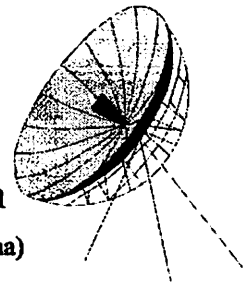
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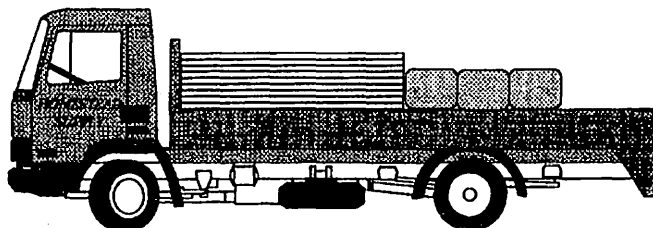
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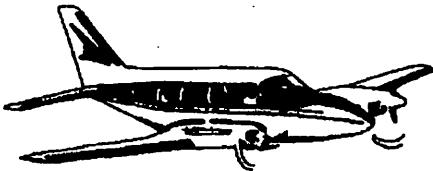
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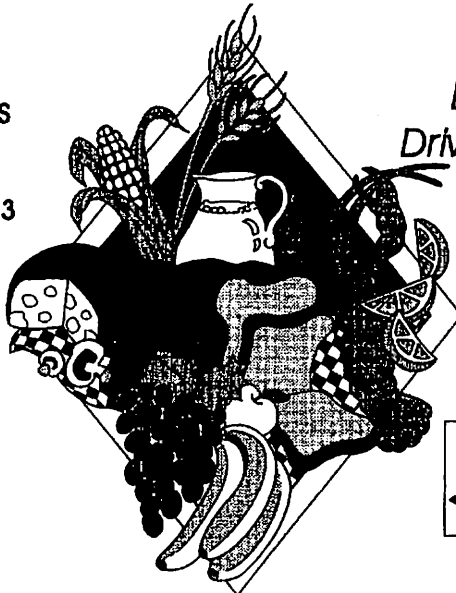
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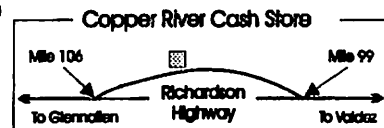
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Cooking with Carly

BY CARLY KRITCHEN

One of my favorite things to do when it's too cold to go outside is to brew up a cup of tea, and curl up next to the wood stove and thumb through my collection of old cookbooks. I have several cookbooks that used to belong to my mother and grandmother, and also a few interesting ones I've bought at used book stores. When my niece and nephew used to visit us in McCarthy they loved to make recipes from some of the old books; so they could "eat like the pioneers," and they especially enjoyed making different puddings.

When most of us today think of pudding, we think of the dried stuff in the box that is easy to mix up for a quick dessert. These recipes may take a little longer to prepare, but I think you'll agree that they're worth the extra effort!

This recipe is from my Grandma Price. She must have had more time to prepare meals than most of us do today!

EASY INDIAN PUDDING

2 tablespoons butter
 4 tablespoons corn meal
 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 dash of nutmeg
 dash of salt
 ½ cup molasses
 ¼ cup honey
 1 quart milk
 ½ cup raisins

Mix dry ingredients with

molasses and honey. Scald milk and add to dry ingredients and blend well. Add raisins. Pour into a greased 1½ quart casserole dish and bake at 300 degrees for 2-4 hours. Test as for custard. The longer the baking, the better the flavor. Serve with heavy whipped cream. Serves about 6.

I like this recipe—I always have extra carrots and eggs!

CARROT PUDDING

1 cup sifted flour
 ½ teaspoon baking soda
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ½ cup shortening
 ½ cup brown sugar
 2 cups grated raw carrots
 2 beaten eggs
 ¼ cup orange juice
 rind of ½ orange, grated

Sift flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt together. Cream shortening and brown sugar. Mix carrots, eggs, orange juice, and orange rind. Combine the carrot mixture with the sugar and shortening and mix well. Add the dry ingredients to this mixture and blend well.

Pour into a greased casserole. Bake at 350 degrees for about 45 minutes. Serves 6-8.

This next recipe is a fun one to make with kids because they can do most of it themselves.

MANDARIN ORANGE BREAD PUDDING

½ cup butter
 1 cup sugar
 4 eggs
 1-11 ounce can Mandarin oranges, drained
 1-13 ounce can crushed pineapple, crushed
 6 slices bread, cubed

Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs, one at a time, mixing well. Add remaining ingredients and mix. Place in a greased 2 quart casserole and bake, uncovered, at 350 degrees for 50-60 minutes. Serves 6.

One of our family's favorites when I was small—my mom doubled the raisins so we could all get lots!

5 cups water
 ¼ teaspoon salt
 ¾ cup rice
 ¾ cup sugar
 1—13 ounce can evaporated milk
 3 eggs, beaten
 1 cup raisins
 1 tablespoon vanilla
 cinnamon

Bring water and salt to a boil. Add rice and simmer until rice is nearly done, about 30 minutes. Add sugar and evaporated milk. Bring to a boil again. Add eggs, stirring constantly so it doesn't scorch. Fold in raisins. Cool to lukewarm. Add vanilla and sprinkle cinnamon on top before serving. Serves about 6

"Eating is not merely a material pleasure. Eating well gives a spectacular joy to life and contributes immensely to goodwill and happy companionship. It is of great importance to the morale." —Elsa Schiaparelli

A LOOK AT THE WEATHER

BY GEORGE CEBULA

October 1998 was rather warm and wet with little or no snow. It was a big change from the 36.7 inches of snow received in October 1997.

The average temperature for October was 27.2 (20.8 in Oct '97 and 17.0 in Oct. '96). The high was 53 on October 18th (50 on Oct. 4, '97 and 46 on Oct. 8, '96) and the low was -5 on October 29th (-22 on Oct. 18, '97 and -22 on Oct. 28, '96). There were only 4 days with the low zero or lower and 2 days with the high of 50 or above. *This compares with Silver Lake's average temperature of 27.4 (21.5 in Oct. '97 and 16.5 in Oct. '96). The high at Silver Lake was 47 on October 25th (50 on Oct. 2, '97 and 46 on Oct. 8, '96) and their low was 1 on October 30th (-15 on Oct. 28, '97 and -21 on Oct. 28, '96). Silver Lake had 10 days with the low 10 or lower and 14 days with a high of 40 or above.*

The total liquid precipitation for October was 2.50 inches (2.72 in Oct. '97 and 2.77 in Oct. '96). Most of the precipitation fell as rain, with a total snowfall in October of only 1.7 inches (36.7 in Oct. '97 and 17.4 in Oct. '96). *Silver Lake had 1.36 inches of liquid (1.70 in Oct. '97 and 1.21 in Oct. '96) with 1.0 inches of snow (12.1 in Oct. '97 and 10.9 in Oct. '96).*

The snow depth at

McCarthy began with 1 inch on October 26th and ended the month with 1 inch. *Silver Lake began with 1 inch on October 5th. It melted the next day and there was no snow the rest of October. Silver Lake was completely ice covered on October 29th.*

November was rather mild with average temperatures and very little precipitation. The average temperature at McCarthy was 8.9 (14.2 in Nov. '97 and 3.7 in Nov. '96). The high temperature was 32 on November 19th (39 on Nov. 6, '97 and 37 on Nov. 4, '96). The low temperature was -16 on November 26th (-12 on Nov. 25, '97 and -33 on Nov. 24, '96). 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 9.4 (15.9 in Nov. '97 and 2.8 in Nov. '95). The high was 33 on November 29th (49 on Nov. 9, '97 and 41 on Nov. 1, '96) and the low was -19 on November 26th (-15 on Nov. 25, '97 and -32 on Nov. 25, '96).*

The total liquid precipitation for November was 0.13 inches (1.50 inches in Nov. '97 and 0.16 inches in Nov. '96). Most of it fell as snow, with freezing drizzle observed on November 15th and 20th. Total snowfall was 1.8 inches (3.3

inches in Nov. '97 and 2.2 inches in Nov. '96). *This compares with 0.33 inches of liquid precipitation at Silver Lake (0.65 inches in Nov. '97 and 0.71 inches in Nov. '96). Snowfall at Silver Lake was 4.6 inches (5.5 inches in Nov. '97 and 5.6 inches in Nov. '96). The snow depth at McCarthy was 1 inch on the 1st, increased to 2 inches on the 22nd and ended the month with 2 inches. Silver Lake started the month with no snow. One inch was recorded on 11th, increasing to 2 inches on the 16th and to 4 inches on the 27th. There was still 4 inches on the ground at the end of the month.*

The first vehicle to safely cross the Kennicott River ice this winter was Ken and Carly Kritchman on their way to mail the morning of November 18th. Al Gagnon safely navigated the ice-covered Nizina River with his snow machine on November 30th. It was a bit early for Al, but he was after his TV Dish that was stored in my garage. I'm happy to say that the dish was installed and service activated by 3rd of December.

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. ❄

"The root of the word miserable is miser"—Cullen Hightower

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Editor's note: The following is reprinted from the January 12, 1924 issue of the McCarthy Weekly News

Alaska First

The suggestion of Dr. Davis of San Francisco, who has been making an extended trip through Alaska, that a Territorial Chamber of Commerce would be of greater practical benefit, in many respects, than a Territorial legislature has possibilities. Dr. Davis stated in Ketchikan, according to the Chronicle "there is lack of co-operation between the various communities..."

No one can deny the truth of this assertion: there is lack of co-operation not only between the coast and the interior, but between communities in the same region, whose interests are similar. In fact, it would scarcely be an exaggeration to state that at the present time but one or two towns of any size in the Territory, are not engaged in airing their grievances or coveting their neighbor's possessions. Such proceedings may be highly interesting to those concerned and highly amusing to the rest of the country, but it is hardly the best way to advertise Alaska. If we hope ever to gain even a small part of our desires, we must do something so that people traveling through the Territory do not leave with the idea expressed by many others besides Dr. Davis: that lack of co-operation

is one of Alaska's chief ailments.

During the past year every town has shown what can be done by local co-operation. Because every businessman was willing to sacrifice time that perhaps meant the loss of dollar or two, and was willing to forget personal grievances, Alaskan towns today have better prospects for solid, substantial development than ever before. The businessman has been well paid for his time; his grievances have vanished. Civic pride has sprung up; and the world outside knows that we have learned the secret of success in our cities.

But, however thriving each community is, there can be no permanent progress for the Territory until local patriotism is subjugated to patriotism for Alaska. The day is past when each settlement was isolated, and when men came here to make a stake and get out. Men are coming here because they have learned that it is a good country to LIVE in. While making a living is naturally their first concern, they are not building for themselves and for the present alone. They have vision; they see future generations continuing and improving the structure for which they have laid the foundation. At present, it

seems that each artisan has become so engrossed with his own little wing and cornice that he has lost sight of the main structure - ALASKA'S future.

If this continues, we will find, instead of a harmonious whole, built to endure the strain of years, a flimsy unbalanced foundation that will topple over in the first storm. What each community needs is a new perspective to get off a ways and look at the thing it is doing—to see its relation to the big thing we are all working for: the progress of Alaska.

The best way to do this is that suggested by Dr. Davis - a Territorial Chamber of Commerce.

An exchange of ideas and a discussion of plans by the leading business men would surely result in some good. It would dissolve much ill will; it would stimulate friendly interest between communities and might result in the formation of definite unified suggestions to present to Congress, when the time comes. Above all, it would show the outside world, Washington in particular, that we are not "a house divided against itself," and as such, deserving of but little aid.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Nov. 13, 1998

Dear Bonnie,

Thank you so very much for mailing the Wrangell St. Elias News—all those wonderful copies have made fascinating reading for us, and I have been thrilled to find in each issue the names of my family: Jack and Geraldine O'Neill or sister Geraldine (Jeannie) and also, my very own birth announcement—April 10, 1922—at Kennicott Hospital. (Issue March & April 1997)

I read each issue from start to finish (including the ads) and have so enjoyed all the news items. You and your husband do a great job of publishing Wrangell St. Elias News!

Also, on the cover of May & June 1995 there is a picture of 4 men—long ago—displaying the latest in men's fashion wear. I am positive that the gentleman second from left is my father—Jack O'Neill—pictured in front of his store in McCarthy. If no one else has "claimed" him, that is my beloved father!

Thanks again so very much.

Molly O'Neill Huckins

Nov. 14, 1998

Dear Wrangell St. Elias News

The snake that I found at Solo Creek this summer finally came back from a herpetologist in Texas. It was a racer, Coluber constrictor. That was all the information that I received from UAF. It took quite a while because there just aren't any herpetologists in Alaska, at least that make their living at the university.

Things went very well at Solo Creek this summer. We got the roof on the new barn and the plague of grasshoppers did not strip all of the vegetation from

the lower river like they did in 1996, so that was a real blessing.

The weather on the White River took a turn for the warm in September with the coldest recorded temperature at 26 degrees on the 13th. Other than that it was very seldom colder than 32. In fact, the water systems just were not freezing.

Tom Vaden

Nov. 15, 1998

Eagle River, AK

Dear Rick and Bonnie,

Please renew me for 2 years. I enjoy the WRANGELL ST. ELIAS NEWS publication very much and as a retired Alaska DOT geologist find much of the information useful.

The Eugene McCracken story was very interesting. I have spent many days working on the highway from Cordova to McCarthy and had some very close calls in the Delta area and at the Million Dollar Bridge.

By the way: the DOT drilled for a new bridge and the Million Dollar Bridge does not rest on bedrock—but on a very, very dense bouldery gravel. During the '64 earthquake this gravel acted much like bedrock and the foundation of the bridge did not fail.

I have property (9 acres) on the island between the two bridges just downstream from the church.

Sincerely,
Monte Weaver

Editors note: This next letter was written in 1924!

Editor McCarthy Weekly News
My Dear Sir:

As long as we are having dances, smokers, and more dances, and also a lot of talk about "The Dog Race," why not

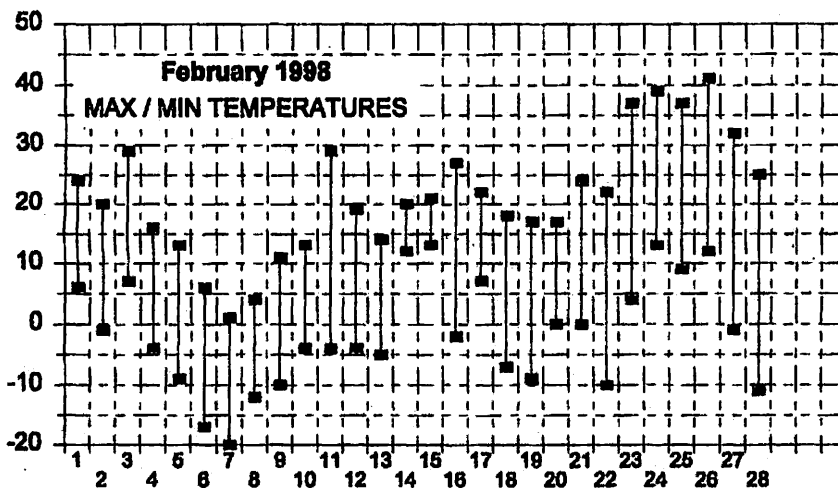
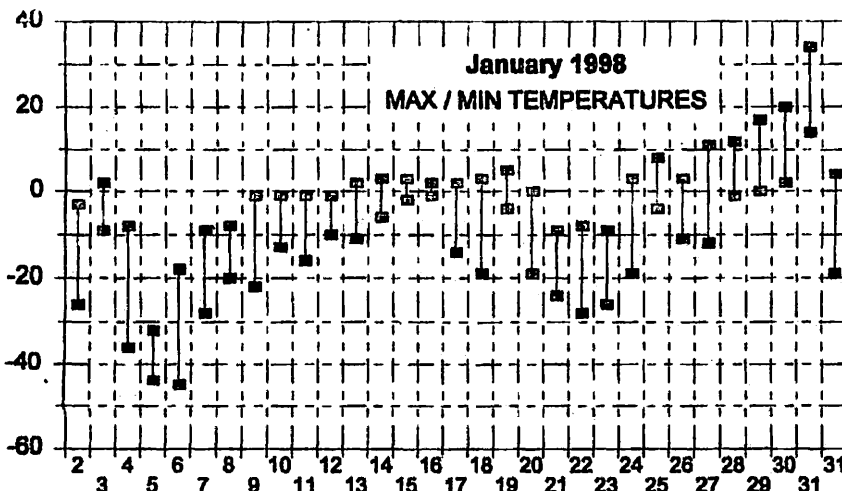
have a big day for everybody? Say a dog race, a skiing contest, then a dance in the evening. The writer on several occasions tried his "derndest," to get a few of the dog mushers to hitch up their teams, all at the same time, for a picture; but so far has only succeeded in getting Walter Eng to hitch up his pups. There seems to be a lack of interest; or is it selfishness? I am sure I cannot understand why we should not get together and have everybody make a showing.

Regardless of weather conditions, with the country under a white blanket, we can always get a good picture for newspaper reproduction, and I am willing to take the pictures, make the prints and mail them to some of the larger publications, gratis. This would be quite an advertisement for the "burg." It would at least put it on the map, and perhaps the secretary for the Commercial Club would hear from some inquiring tourist party.

Just think what a trip we could give a party coming here. They could see the greatest scenery in all Alaska, by taking saddle horses across the Nizina, up the Chitistone, over the goat trail into the Skolai Basin, thence down the Skolai to the Frederika Glacier, and across the Nizina Glacier, down the Nicolai trail, thence over Nicolai Hill and down McCarthy Creek.

All the other towns are boosting and advertising for the tourist trade, but poor little McCarthy sits tight. She has nothing to offer but a little good advice—Which of course is cheap. A Subscriber.

Weather - What can we expect?



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