

Wrangell St. Elias News

'Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty'

Vol. Eight Issue Two

March & April 1999

Two Dollars

Kennecott Kids Wed



Frank and Jeanne first met at Kennecott in the early 1930's. They got reacquainted at the Kennecott Kid reunion in May 1998. Love blossomed and wedding bells rang! See their story on page 7.

A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

March is here already and I cannot help but wonder, "Where is this winter going?" I guess the saying, "Time flies when you're having fun," is playing out here!

Rick and I are enjoying the use of our new Arctic Cat Panther snow machine. It has a larger engine than our older machine. The other day Rick was taking off with the Panther and gave it just a bit too much throttle. I was quite impressed with the way the skis came up off the ground. I quickly decided to keep a light touch when operating that machine, unless I wanted to be airborne for some strange reason!

Next month Rick and I look forward to checking out some of our local ice fishing spots. In the meantime, we are trying very hard to finish up this issue of Wrangell St. Elias News. We apologize for the late arrival of our Jan/Feb issue. Our postmistress in Glennallen was on vacation. She, too, is sorry for the delay.

Wrangell St. Elias News is so proud to announce the marriage of former Kennecott Kids, Frank Morris and Jeanne Moore Elliott. Ever since the latest Kennecott Kid's reunion this last summer, Frank and Jeanne have had stars in their eyes. I was honored to be "in" on their secret with the promise we could print "their" story. I know you will want to read it on page 7.

A special thank you to

subscriber and also Kennecott Kid, Jim McGavock, for the information and pictures of our new Alaska ferry—the Kennicott. Read about the "Blue Canoe" (as Jim describes it) on page 20.

Those of you who operate businesses in the McCarthy, Kennicott, Valdez, Glennallen, Copper Center or Chitina area: Don't forget the *1999 Visitors Guide to Kennicott & McCarthy*. The *Guides* are distributed free to area visitors all summer. We need to hear from you if you would like to be included in this year's *Guide*. Phone (907)554-4454 for details. Or Email us at: wse news@aol.com.

For the benefit of recent subscribers, I would like to explain how you can tell when your subscription is up for renewal. In the right-hand corner of your white address label on the back cover of each issue is an abbreviated date. Our abbreviations are as follows: JF (January/February); MA (March/April); MJ (May/June); JA (July/August); SO (September/October); ND (November/December). Your subscription runs out WITH the bimonthly issue and year that is on your label. For example: if there is a MA99 on yours, that means your subscription includes the March/April 1999 issue but it is time to renew. I also place a reminder inside that particular Wrangell St. Elias News.

Subscription rates for the

USA are still only \$10 a year. If you are a Canadian subscriber, it costs \$12.50. Other countries are \$20.

Thank you for taking the time to check your address label and promptly renewing. It is a great help to our secretarial department (that's me!). We appreciate you!

I had just finished writing *Items of Interest* when we received an Email from subscriber and area landowner, Fred and Ann Dure. He asked our help in passing on the following information. Friends of the Dures, Pete and Tina Barela of Willow would like to house-sit or rent a cabin/house for the period of June 15 through July, or a time period within that range. Fred writes that the Barelas are "good people who would take care of where they stay." Pete is Fred's lead builder on his Nizina property's strawbale project that is starting up again in May. If you can help Fred and Ann's friends, you can call the Barelas in Willow at 495-7763!

Wrangell St. Elias News welcomes aboard the following subscribers: Jeremiah Kirchofer, AK; Robert Froeschle, CA; Katy Steger, AK; Ray Johnson, AK; John Strosahl, WA; Michael and Roxane Sullivan, CO; Andy Mullen, AK; Leah Lepinski, WA; J. C. Eisenmayer, IL; Mr. & Mrs. Howard Hodges, CT; Graham and Elizabeth Dugdale/Benson, AK.

Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

Fred and Irene Denner:

Once the rivers freeze over, we begin to anticipate Fred's first snow machine trip to our neck of the woods. Rick and I were just commenting that it was about time to see Fred's smiling face appear at our door. He didn't disappoint us! As usual, out came the coffee mugs and the fresh-perked coffee. Lots of chatter followed as we tried to catch up on a year's worth of activities.

We are happy to report that Fred doesn't look a day older and that all is well with him and Irene. Life is quiet at their Dan Creek cabin, says Fred. Irene is busy doing her beadwork and running her "one [sled] dog team."

Mark Vail: While I'm on the subject of dog teams, it sounds like Mark had quite an adventure with his team the other day. I heard they were out on the trail enjoying themselves recently when both dogs and Mark became separated. Well, to be more specific, Mark's team got away from his oversight and departed on their own adventure—without Mark, of course!

Mark walked back to Brooks and Diane's cabin and borrowed their snowmachine and went searching for the wayward team. His investigation brought him full circle. He discovered the dogs had returned home and were happily awaiting his appearance (maybe they thought it was time for supper!).

I suspect Mark has plenty of dog tales he could share with

us. Maybe this item will whet his appetite to jot down a few stories for Wrangell St. Elias News! How about it, Mark?

Brooks and Diane Ludwig:

Mark's nearest neighbors are winter residents Brooks and Diane. Diane tells me she now has 3 sled dogs of her own. Brooks got her a small sled so she and her team are taking short trips. They made it as far as Long Lake this last week and had a successful run up this way to visit the Welty family.

Brooks is presently in Delta for 2 weeks. His summer position as a ranger with the Alaska State Parks includes putting together a volunteer recruitment for the upcoming summer season. He is due back any time now.

Jim, Jeannie, Aaron and Matt Miller: Perhaps the local dog team "items" have stirred

your interest in having your OWN team. According to Aaron Miller, they have 5 "Kennicott Glacier" huskies up for grab. They are 7 weeks old (Feb. 20), already housetrained and "as smart as a whip," adds Jeannie. Because they were born right before Christmas, and seeing that it was so cold outside, she brought them in the house where they received early and personal attention.

Just in case you want to start making your own dog team adventures, you can give Jeannie a call at (907) 554-4455.

Welcome back: While I'm visiting with Jeannie, she informs me that several neighbors returned to the area this last week. A big welcome back to Lilly Goodman, Marci, Ben, Ardea and Gaia Thurston/Shaine, Ed LaChapelle, and Mike Loso! I was also told Ardea brought

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Contributors to this issue: Carly Kritchen, George Cebula, Dee Frady, John Killoran, Ned Rozell, Matthew Hambrick, and Andy Mullen. Subscription price is \$10 for one year in the USA.

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PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT GLENNALLEN, AK. 99588.

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

along a cousin and Gaia a girlfriend from Israel. A perfect time to see our town!

Tim Mischel: When I called Tim today to see what he was up to, I was surprised to hear him say he wasn't up at his place on the mountain but down in McCarthy for a short respite. (Thanks to cell phone technology having reached the McCarthy area, people like Tim can be quite mobile!) In spite of the fact Tim's cabin is located on a much higher elevation than us, he still was not spared the cold temperatures we were getting this winter. One good thing, says Tim, he is not experiencing the high winds that often accompany the cold temperatures.

When Tim is not enjoying his winter pastime of "billy goat watching" on the ridge, his hungry wood stove keeps him busy. Just staying warm can be a full time job!

Don, Lynn, Rene and Sarah Welty: Writing about our Alaska winter brings to mind a warm thought. Sarah is about to embark on a trip to Hawaii with her Girl Scout troupe from Cordova. She doesn't need to be in Anchorage until March 24 to catch her flight, but I think she is already packed! It's somewhat difficult for me to even imagine packing a bathing suit (I mistakenly started to type snowsuit!!) let alone wearing it, but I don't believe Sarah is experiencing that problem. We all pray you have a wonderful trip and adventure, Sarah. Please know we are not holding it against you that we must remain behind in the frigid north while you and your friends are basking in Hawaii's warmth! Have a great time!

Surprisingly, Rene doesn't

seem too heart broken to see her older sister leave. Come to find out, her 11th birthday is just 6 days away from Sarah's departure date. So, there is a happy ending in all this and Rene is finding the bright side!

Lynn is doing a great job as home school teacher. Although she stays quite busy at her job, she is finding time to go skiing or inviting Bonnie and Audrey over for a "sewing circle."

Don is doing wood detail and giving their snow machine a good workout. I understand that during our recent cold spell he was given a new computer game that is giving him great opportunity to develop (and challenge) his computer skills.

Terry and Dee Frady: Developing one's computer skills is exactly what is occurring in the Frady household these days. With the cold temperatures we've been experiencing, it is a plus to have inside projects!

I just got off the phone with Dee. I learned that she had taken a trip (via computer) to the northern coast of Maine and located distant cousins that she didn't even know existed until recently. "I never would have found this part of my family if I did not have the computer and the availability of the internet," commented Dee. What would have taken years, Dee has been able to discover in a short time, she says.

Now she and Terry are planning a fall trip to Maine to meet her cousins in person, check on family roots and see her birthplace in New Hampshire. One of her new-found relatives is 108 years old!

When the Fradys first got their computer, Dee wasn't much interested in it. But, now, well, I couldn't help but ask her

what Terry was doing while she "traveled." She informed me he is getting in a lot of extra fun time watching football games over their satellite dish. Dee agrees it is about time for "his and her" computers.

Matt Hambrick: When Matt came down the other day to put the finishing touches on his article for this issue, I asked him how his winter projects were going. He is recovering from the cold temperatures and loss of firewood by replenishing the woodpile, he says, as well as getting a head start on next year's wood supply.

As soon as the weather cooperates with warmer temperatures, he hopes to return to his cabin-building project. Purchasing 3-sided logs from Regal Enterprises at Kenny Lake, he managed to get the walls up and the roof framed in before winter hit. Now he's more than ready to install his windows, hang the door and frame in the gables—where are those above freezing temperatures, anyway? Don't fret, Matt; they always show up sooner or later.

Ken and Donna Smith: Email is quite an invention and a great way to keep in touch with our neighbors who don't live here year 'round. When Kenny isn't here at their Swift Creek cabin, he and Donna are (usually) in Anchorage. I write usually because they are known to take exotic cruises or go off on some adventure out-of-state.

Kenny's latest Email really surprised us so, with his permission, I pass on the Smith's latest plans.

"Donna and I are going to Santiago Chile on the 5th [of March] but leaving the 1st so we can spend a few days with Donna's sister in Tucson. We

leave Santiago on the 7th and go all the way around the Horn of Florida. We make a number of stops on the way, one in the Falkland Islands. We decided to see some of South America as we probably won't get down that way again. And I want to say that I retraced my great, great, grandfather's (Joseph Wolfe) path around the Horn which he accomplished 150 years ago," writes Kenny.

They hope to return to Alaska in early April when Kenny starts getting ready for his summer in McCarthy.

John and Carmen Adams: Because John or Carmen are not available for comment (or defense) of their news, John's sister Betty said I should go ahead and report the BIGGEST item of interest. JOHN AND CARMEN GOT MARRIED!

The reason the bride or the groom cannot speak for themselves is because they are living and working this winter in Adak, Alaska, which is in the Aleution Islands. Carmen, who had been working and living in Anchorage, is enjoying her new school teaching position and John is driving a shuttle van.

Rick and I did receive a post card from John recently and he writes that Adak is undergoing a lot of changes for a small place but he is finding it pretty nice. He did say it snowed 3 inches the previous night but the next day most of it was gone. He reports even being able to ride his bike.

John should be back in McCarthy in plenty of time to open up his McCarthy Bed and Breakfast for the summer.

Congratulations to both John and Carmen!

Al and Fran Gagnon: As I was working on Items, Al showed

up at our door. Naturally, I asked him how things were going for he and Fran at May Creek. "Life is good; we are living high on the land—eating spruce hen and burbot, enjoying life." In spite of the cold temperatures this winter, Al assures me he and Fran are keeping their snug log cabin a toasty 80 degrees.

Fran's eye operations were successful and she is doing fine and seeing well. Thanks for the good report from the May Creek area, Al and Fran!

George Cebula: Since George got back from Anchorage and his travels south, he brushed off his snow machine and has done a bit of traveling in the local area. He decided to take advantage of a break in the weather and cross the Nizina River for a visit with Al and Fran.

Recently he snow machined up to Silver Lake (about 50 miles from here), did a "180" on one of the infamous road glaciers, caught a ride into Chitina for a bit of grocery shopping with Gene Coppedge, visited the Chitina Post Office to have something notarized, gave the Coppedges a few computer lessons and returned home safe and sound—all in the same day. I think it took him several days to recuperate!

He tells me that three of his nieces are coming for a visit in June. I suspect the young ladies will be calling on his sightseeing expertise while they are in the area.

Jim and Audrey Edwards: Life has been fairly quiet at the Edwards' homestead these days. Audrey did catch the mail plane to Anchorage recently and had a real nice visit with her dad, she says. Jim is taking advantage of the extra daylight to refill their

wood shed. It seems like that is a project everyone around here is working on these days!!!

Audrey is really enjoying her new snow machine. She and I have made a few trips down to see Lynn Welty and compare sewing projects. Recently while on our way home, Audrey and I got a bit turned around looking for a shortcut through the woods to her place that Jim had so graciously made for us. Instead of the shortcut we ended up taking the longest way home. Laughingly, we assured each other that we needed the experience anyway!

Kelly, Natalie and Tessa Bay: The Bays are enjoying the winter at their homestead on the Nizina River. Spring and summer are busy seasons for them as they begin making their way back into McCarthy. Those days are not too far away! In the meantime, however, Natalie is staying near home and doing a great job as Kindergarten teacher for Tessa.

Today was one of our two weekly mail days and I was pleased to see Tessa. I asked her if she was having fun doing her school work. She didn't even hesitate in answering me. A big "Yes" told me Natalie must be doing something right!

When Natalie isn't instructing Tessa, she is on the computer trying to figure it out and get it to cooperate with her. Now that's a tough one, Natalie!

Rick and I had the pleasure of meeting Kelly while we were out snow machining in their neck of the woods. We had a nice, long visit until he decided he better get to work. He was supposed to be in the wood lot, he said, replenishing their wood pile. I hope you didn't go home empty handed, Kelly. Winter is

not over yet!

By the way, Natalie, happy belated birthday!

Ken and Carly Kritchen: Speaking of celebrations...Carly informs me Ken will be heading for Cordova this week to help celebrate his parents' 50th wedding anniversary. Ken's sister, Linda Lohse and her family of Long Lake, are going, too. Carly says she wishes she could accompany them but "no horsesitter!" (The Kritchens are owners of two fine-looking horses.) I think she is still going to have quite a hand in the festivities. Ken is taking a food list and a recipe for a delicious-sounding punch. It made me hungry just listening to Carly describe it!

Once Ken returns home, Carly is due to leave on her own adventure. She is going to meet her sister in San Diego where they will visit Carly's niece, nephew and his wife. She is looking forward to seeing her family and spending some quality time with them.

Have a great time, Carly! And our heartfelt congratulations to Larry and Kathleen Kritchen for 50 years of marriage!

Mike and Laura Bunnell/McCarthy and boys: Laura tells me things are really quiet up at their place in Kennicott so my report on them is that all is well. Rick and I met Mike on the trail the other day. He was returning from getting a sled load of fertilizer from the Kritchen's

horse lot. It's quite obvious Mike and Laura are gearing up for another prosperous garden this year. That got Rick and me checking our calendar to see if it was time to start our transplants yet. Sure enough, celery and early tomatoes were on the list! Thanks for the reminder, Mike!

Dave Hollis: Dave is usually a McCarthy summer regular, but he decided to check out a McCarthy winter this year and has been staying at Chris Richards' place in Kennicott. (I think he's making sure Chris's computer doesn't freeze up!)

Although I've only seen "Hollis" on several mail days, I feel quite confident that he is doing just fine and is looking forward to a fun-filled summer driving a shuttle van for Wrangell Mountain Bus.

Katy Steger: When I called Katy just now for an item of interest, I caught her in the middle of a home school session with Aaron Miller. (Maybe Aaron was glad for the interruption!) School is going well. Katy says she and (her dog) Cyrano are having great fun ski-jouring and not wanting the summer to end anytime soon.

This winter Katy has been grateful to have the use of Thea Agnew's Kennicott cabin. Thea and Tom are due back in the area this summer, reports Katy. She is also planning on giving Thea a hand at planting a small garden. The ladies are blessed to have avid gardener and neighbor Jeannie Miller nearby to give

them any needed advice!

McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum: Do you consider yourself a "local" or do you own property in the McCarthy/Kennicott area? If so, YOU are needed, says Betty Hickling, acting secretary of McCarthy's museum.

She is busy at work requesting additional community support. "We need your support not only financially but physically. If you would like to donate time we have several projects coming up," writes Betty in a letter to friends and neighbors in the local area. One such project on the museum's agenda is the building of a small facility to house summer curators.

Maybe you are interested in serving on the museum's Board of Directors. According to Betty, there are 6 seats that will need to be filled. The next meeting is scheduled for some time in May. If you would like to participate, please give Betty a call at 554-4402.

Annual individual memberships cost \$10 and family membership fees are \$15. If you are a local to the McCarthy/Kennicott area, a visitor or someone who is interested in seeing the history of this area preserved, please contact McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum, ATTN: Betty Hickling, McCarthy #60, P.O. BOX MXY, Glennallen, AK. 99588.

**WHEN SNOWMACHINES ARE OUTLAWED
ONLY OUTLAWS WILL HAVE SNOWMACHINES!**



Wedding bells ring for Kennecott Kids

BY BONNIE KENYON

The Kennecott Kids Reunion held this past May in Kennicott, Alaska, manifested a dream come true for two former Kids.

Frank Morris and Jeanne Moore Elliott were not strangers meeting for the first time. The cottage that Jeanne lived in with her family during the Kennecott Copper Corporations' heyday in the early 1900's was across the tracks from the Morris cottage. As playmates in their younger days, Jeanne admits to having stars in her eyes for Frank.

"I used to try to hit him with snowballs all those many years ago, because he was just a bit older than me and SO cute!"

Almost seventy years later in the same setting as their first meeting, Frank and Jeanne didn't exchange snowballs but they did take time to get reacquainted and visit the cottages they each used to call home. Walks on the glacier, hikes to McCarthy, delicious meals at the Kennicott Glacier Lodge and the pizza place in McCarthy, the two former "kids" shared old times with the rest of the Kennecott Kids.

Jeanne didn't need a snowball to get Frank's attention. He and Jeanne discovered each

other again. Love blossomed and these two kids used every available minute to just be together. "Jeanne finally got my attention," says Frank.

The normally-bothersome mosquitoes stayed away in droves. Maybe it was because of another bug that took preeminence – just for this

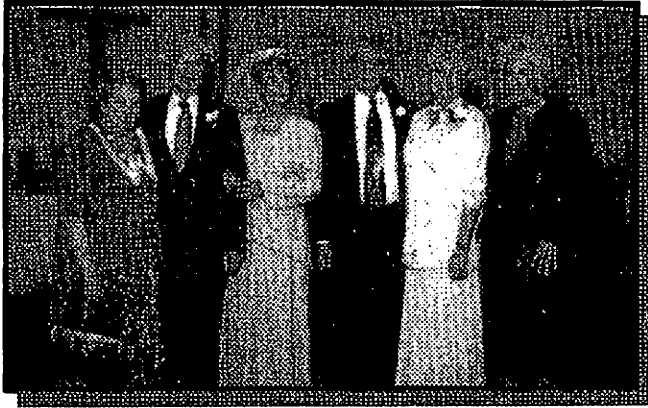


Photo by Fred Cannon

KENNECOTT KIDS UNITED IN MARRIAGE.
LEFT-RIGHT: CATHERINE HOWARD HODGES, FRANK AND JEANNE, JIM MOORE, NAN MOORE HENDERSON AND LYLE SCHINDLING.

special occasion! "We weren't bothered by any of those pesky mosquitoes," commented Frank and Jeanne, "we just got bit by that wonderful LOVE BUG!"

The reunion ended for most of the Kennecott Kids but not for these two love birds. The phone lines between Frank's home in Douglas, Alaska, and Jeanne's in Knoxville, Tennessee, stayed busy. It didn't take long for the couple to realize just where their new-found love was going. So...

Wedding bells rang at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Knoxville on Saturday, February 6th, 1999 for Frank and Jeanne. Family, friends and, of course, other Kennecott Kids were in attendance.

Frank's son, Allyn, who is presently living in England, was his dad's best man. Allyn's wife Michelle and their little son, Jack, were also there. Gail Elliott Hunter was the honor attendant for her mother. Jeanne was given in marriage by her son, Paul W. Elliott. Junior attendants were Jeanne's grandchildren, Braxton Hunter and Lauren and Hannah Elliott.

Frank's daughter, Virginia Callaway from Juneau and Jeanne's brother (and Kennecott Kid), Jim Moore from Atlanta did special readings during the service. Jim's entire family also came and joined in on the festivities. Jeanne's sister, (Kennecott Kid) Nan Moore Henderson was also in attendance.

Frank's sister, Lyle Schindling (a Kennecott Kid) and her husband Bob were there from Florida.

Another Kennecott Kid, Catherine Howard Hodges of Connecticut, who lived right next door to Frank and his family in their Kennicott days, came with her husband, Howard.

Following a few weeks in Tennessee and after a side trip to Florida, the newly weds will return to Douglas where they plan to live happily ever after. In anticipation of returning to Alaska, Jeanne laughingly admits: "I know that I am in for the adventure of a lifetime and I can't wait to get started. I am anxious to try snowshoes again, see the Northern Lights, and the moonlight on the snow. Who says you can't go home again? I have waited a lifetime and finally found my way back to him. You see—dreams really do come true!"

Kennecott steam locomotive operates passenger trains in 1999

It has been over 60 years since the last Copper River and Northwestern Railroad train left Kennicott for Cordova. Ron Simpson noted that the two groups of similar steam locomotives were manufactured practically together for Kennecott's new CR&NW and Nevada Consolidated Copper divisions.

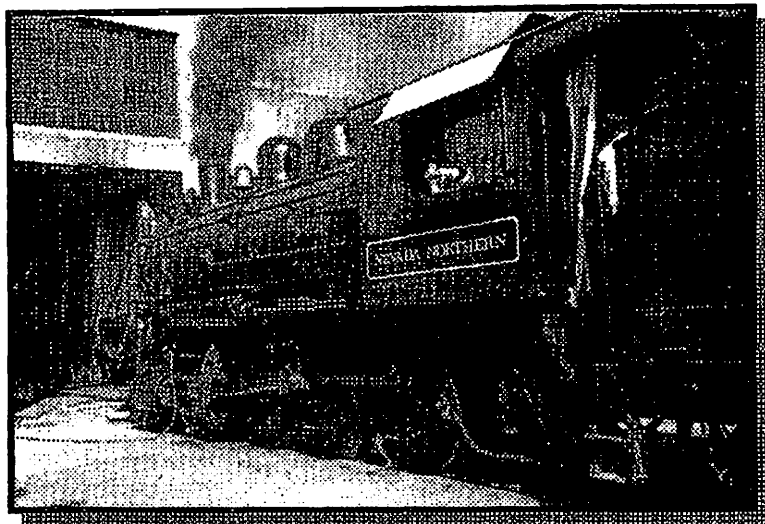
One of them is a key part of a Nevada museum and tourist railroad formed from the now-abandoned Kennecott railroad at Ely, Nevada. Without stretching the facts too much, you can still ride behind a Copper River engine - or its cousin. Here's the story.

BY JOHN KILLORAN
FEBRUARY 4, 1999

At the same time in 1907 that the new CR&NW was buying four new 2-8-0 type "consolidation" engines numbered 20-23 (builders numbers 44597-44600) from the American Locomotive Company, Kennecott's purchasing department in New York City was buying two nearly identical engines (#44603, 44604) numbered 92 and 93 for their new Nevada Consolidated Copper Company (NCC) mines at Ruth, Nevada. Eventually nine similar engines in the "90 series" pulled long trains of copper ore from the mines to the smelter at McGill, about 22 miles.

The engines also moved freight and ore over the company's 140-mile long Nevada Northern Railroad to interchanges with the Southern Pacific and Western Pacific Railroads.

Diesel engines took over after World War II. Almost all



of the steam locomotives were scrapped in 1951 except for Number 93, which was donated to the White Pine County museum in Ely. Engine 81, a 1917 Baldwin 2-8-0, joined the 93 in 1959. Passenger locomotive 40, a ten-wheeler, remained active on the railroad roster for special operations.

Kennecott's Nevada mines closed in 1978. Five years later the last ore was milled at McGill and the company's Nevada Mines Division closed down. Two years later Kennecott donated much of the old railroad facilities and equipment, including 30 miles of track, to a new local historical foundation. The museum restored all three locomotives and operates scheduled excursions with them every summer. Tours of the old shop facilities and railroad

buildings are also offered.

The Ely shops and yards were built at the same time that the CR&NW was constructed. So it's no surprise they used the same buildings architecture, the same red paint with white trim, and the same type of equipment in Alaska and Nevada. The resemblance between the two properties is more than striking, it's overwhelming!

Like our Copper River country, Ely is far from everything. Ely about 200 miles from Salt Lake City and 275 from Reno. There's not much in between. Like Kennicott, time has tended to pass East Ely by. For more information, and schedules, write the Nevada Northern Railway Museum; P.O. Box 450040; East Ely, NV 89315-0040. The 1999 season begins on May 15 and ends September 18.

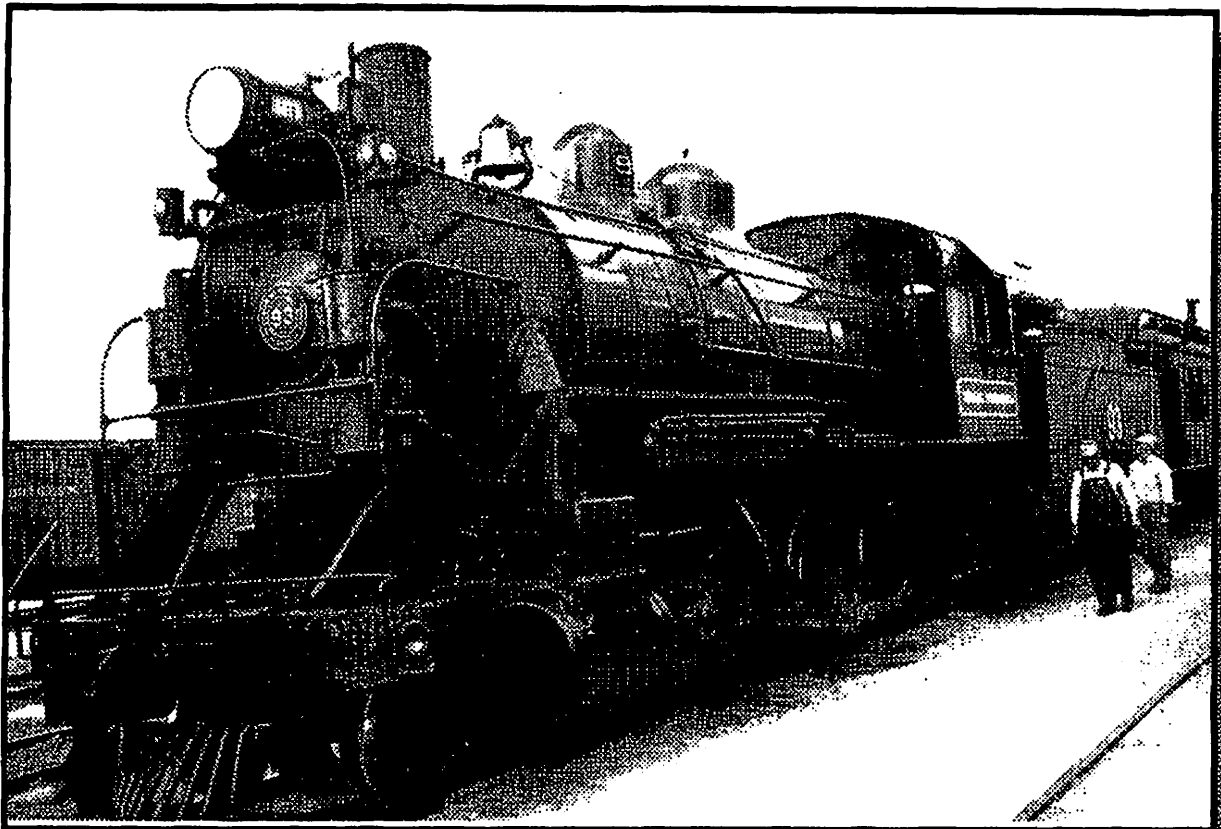


photo courtesy John Killoran

First cousins—Engine #93, (serial number 44604) above, hauled ore from the Nevada Consolidated Copper Company mines at Ruth, Nevada, to the smelter at McGill—about 22 miles away. This engine is still running today at the Pine County museum at Ely.

Engine #23, (serial number 44600) below, hauled copper ore from Kennecott to Cordova.



Anchorage Museum of History & Art, BL 79.2.1550

NPS seeks comment on draft regs

COPPER CENTER—

This article contains the DRAFT wording of regulations for the Kennecott National Historic Landmark. We would like you to read these DRAFT regulations and to help us make them better. We are worried about the safety of visitors and the security of the Kennecott buildings and mine structures. We do not want to keep people out of the area; after all it is a National Historic Landmark and a tourist destination. At the same time we do not want people hurt or the buildings defaced or destroyed. As you know, when the buildings were privately owned they were secured as best they could be. We are working toward the day that some of the buildings will be open to the public. Until that time we will need to lock and board up the entrances to some of the buildings just as the former owners did. Visitors will still be welcome to walk around the grounds of the mill town and the historic site.

We plan to publish these regulations and post them on bulletin boards in the mill town and near the mines. They will apply to National Park Service property in Kennecott. We are not trying to tell private property owners how to manage their private property.

We would like your comments on these restrictions.

Please tell us how they could be improved. We are trying for the minimum number of restrictions and the clearest language possible.

Please send your comments to:

Chief Ranger Hunter Sharp
Wrangell-St. Elias NP/P
P.O. Box 439
Copper Center, AK 99573
E-Mail: hunter_sharp@nps.gov

The conditions are shown in bold print with an explanation of the reason for the condition in Italics.

The Park Service will continue to permit public access to the grounds throughout the historic site.

1) Entry is prohibited into buildings that are barricaded or signed as closed. Do not pass beyond barricades, climb through windows or remove boards to enter closed buildings.

This closure protects both the historic structures and contents from vandalism and the public from the safety hazards found in these unstable buildings.

2) Mine tunnels and other openings within the Kennecott Historic Site are closed to entry.

STAY OUT AND STAY ALIVE. These abandoned mines contain hazards that could result in serious injury or death. They have decayed support

timbers, unsafe ladders, rotten structures, unstable explosives, deep pools of water, cave-ins, rock fall from unstable ceilings and walls, deadly gas, lack of oxygen, concealed or thinly covered vertical shafts in tunnel floors. YOU ARE COURTING SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH BY ENTERING THESE OPENINGS. STAY OUT AND STAY ALIVE.

3) Camping is not permitted in or on any of the historic structures in the Kennecott National Historic Site. Camping is not permitted in the mill town. The mill town is the collection of buildings clustered around the mill on both sides of National Creek.

Part of the attraction of the Kennecott Mill Town is the historic scene presented by the mill buildings. Camping is prohibited to preserve the historic scene and to lower the temptation to use the buildings for shelter. Camping is permitted north of Jumbo Creek.

4) Fires are not permitted inside of any building or within 300 feet of any of the historic buildings or structures in the Kennecott National Historic Site.

The historic buildings and structures are made of wood. Currently, there is no way to put a structural fire out.

CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE:

91 Ford XLT 15 pax van. Also 5 acres land west side of Kennicott River near McCarthy. Call 781-2389.

WANTED:

Cabin or house to house-sit or rent June 15 through July. /call Pete or Tina Barela at 495-7763 (Willow)

M.A.C. sees completion of aquifer study

BY MATTHEW HAMBRICK

As part of its efforts to keep pace with the increased development and interest in the area, the McCarthy Area Council has recently seen the completion of a comprehensive study that addresses the health of the aquifer that supplies the residents and businesses of McCarthy with clean water throughout the year. The report, entitled *Hydrologic and Hydrogeologic Factors Affecting Aquifer Protection, McCarthy Area, Alaska*, was prepared for M. A. C. by Barry Hecht and Ed LaChapelle with sections by Roger Elconin and Dan Doak. In addition, a number of familiar McCarthy faces contributed labor and resources. Jim Miller dug the test trenches with the Kennicott Glacier Lodge backhoe and the Kenyons and George Cebula provided weather data. The DEC grant was procured and administered by Patty Yould. Elizabeth Schafer, Chris Richards and Michael McCarthy assisted with various tests and data gathering. And students from the Wrangell Mountains Center assisted with field observations under the direction of Jim Berkey.

Nearly 100 pages in length, a large portion of the report consists of graphs, maps and other forms of data summary that may initially intimidate a reader inclined to a more "abstract" thought process. However, a concise, readable summary that begins on page four provides a working knowledge of the text and goes a long way toward alleviating any anxiety the more "abstract" reader may encounter when confronted with "...[t]he

conductivity values were then adjusted to a standard 25C relation." So, fear not.

According to the study, the "hinge" point between McCarthy's two most predominant natural boundaries, McCarthy Creek and the Kennicott Glacier, or where these two systems have crept beneath McCarthy and nearly met is Clear Creek as we know it: a spring the result of the "recharge from a complex system which has developed at the junction of the two valleys." The sources for the continual "recharge" flow into the Clear Creek springs have their origins within these natural boundaries. The McCarthy Creek Fan-Delta Domain supplies the springs in the southern half of town while the Kennicott Glacier Outwash Domain (including Porphyry Mountain) services springs on the way into town.

Snowmelt and precipitation on Porphyry provide recharge while the Kennicott Glacier has formed "narrow and continuous relief alluvial channels...[that] meander within relatively impermeable glacial deposits." This series of groundwater flows is "presumed to be restricted to these channels." The McCarthy Creek Fan-Delta Domain collects recharge flow from "at least eight distinguished terraces [that] have been cut by McCarthy Creek on the fan delta" (Hecht and Garb, in prep). Because these minimally sloped "treads" do not allow runoff it is assumed "that nearly all of the snowmelt and rainfall occurring on [these] terraces is either used by vegetation, or percolates to groundwater."

While the Kennicott Glacier

and McCarthy Creek remain dynamic so, too, have the respective levels of the groundwater systems they recharge. In the one time McCarthy suburb of Blackburn dry wells at the ten foot level point to a drop in the water table levels. And evidence of moisture levels around the old McCarthy cemetery points to a drop of nearly fifteen feet. While the McCarthy Creek domain remains an independent contributor of recharge, it too shows an apparent drop in the level of groundwater it supplies. The Doze homestead upstream from McCarthy also contains dry wells around the main cabin site.

Why the decrease? Since there has been no previously documented record of the Clear Creek flow and levels the report is able only to make informed speculations as to the causes behind the drops in water level and flow. The earthquake that rocked Alaska on Good Friday in 1964 is a possible cause for the drop in water levels of Clear Creek. This particular earthquake "may have been one of [the] largest events since many of the outwash and fan-delta deposits were laid down." However, sole responsibility for such a drop in water levels is considered unlikely. The construction of the McCarthy number two airstrip in 1965 is believed to have "altered rainfall percolation and surface flow patterns in a significant recharge area for at least parts of the aquifer," but the lack of documented water levels prior to construction of the strip make it impossible to make a comparative study and label this as a cause with any degree of certainty. Perhaps the only

historical documentation the study is able to make use of are the photos of McCarthy towards the end of the Kennicott era in the 1930s. Ironically, the gradual reforestation of "dense stands of water-loving trees (such as willows and poplars) [and their] increased consumption of percolating rainfall and snowmelt" could theoretically "noticeably reduce recharge."

If there is some uncertainty as to the extent of the drops in the water levels of Clear Creek, the fact that the levels are dropping is as clear as, well, Clear Creek itself. This understanding coupled with an extreme susceptibility to contamination places the sole source for a clean, practical and economically feasible water supply for McCarthy in a fragile state. Springs along the major

thoroughfares of town are difficult to protect and permeability of the aquifer's surface deposits result in a vulnerability to infiltration of contaminants "so rapid that virtually no runoff occurs during major storms." Ed LaChapelle gets right to the point; for McCarthy "there is no alternative to Clear Creek."

With this in mind steps have already been taken to protect the aquifer. The new vault toilets have been placed in areas found in the study to be the least sensitive areas around the aquifer in the event of a compromised vault. Fuel tanks at the airstrip are now set atop specially lined berms and aesthetically pleasing informational signs have been posted along several springs around town. And M. A. C. has

begun preliminary discussions with the University of Alaska about the possibility of acquiring through a land exchange a forty acre parcel east of the airstrip that borders a "presumed aquifer area."

In the commission and completion of the aquifer study the McCarthy Area Council has taken the important first steps towards the development of a policy that insures the responsible development of McCarthy and the protection of everyone's water. The integrity of this study and the dedication of those responsible for its completion deserve nothing less than the continued awareness and contribution the protection or Clear Creek requires. Contact Carly Kritchen for a copy of the report.

Eureka to Valdez snowmobile safari-1999

VALDEZ — Looking for a little winter adventure? Do you want to see the heart of the incredible Chugach Mountains? This is your chance. The Valdez Snow Mobile Club has again teamed up with the Valdez Convention & Visitors Bureau to organize a fully guided and insured snowmobile trip from Eureka to Valdez.

This year's spectacular round-trip ride will take place over March 13 & 14, 1999. Each

days ride should be about 5 hours in length and will cover over 100 miles.

Beginning at Eureka Lodge on Saturday morning the route of the trip will traverse the Nelehina River Trail, the Nelehina Glacier, the amazing nine mile wide Tazlina Bowl, the Stephens Glacier, and the Stephens River. From there the route will retrace the steps of the 1898 gold seekers and head

over the Klutina Glacier, and finally the Valdez Glacier.

After an overnight stay in Valdez during the Region III basketball championships the safari will head back to Eureka over the same route.

Registration information and trip details for this event are available from the Valdez Convention & Visitors Bureau at 1-800-770-5954.

"Of all tyrannies a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end, for they do so with the approval of their own conscience." —C. S. Lewis

the Languid Lady

Trees and Shrubs of the Wrangells- Part 2: "More Cone-Bearing Evergreens"

BY DEE FRADY

Winter has now made the turn and already the lengthening daylight is obvious and welcome. Cold weather, however, has had the whole state in a relentless grip. Even so, it is a beautiful time and it won't be long before spring will arrive. Indeed it is even time to start thinking about planting those early seeds such as celery. Anyway, to my way of thinking, spring in Alaska is a season with plenty of snow left on the ground providing easy access to the woods. It means bright and sunny longer daylight hours with deep blue skies and mild temperatures in the 20 or 30 degree range. That is a far cry from daffodils and crocus but could be most Alaskans' mentality.

Continuing with the subject of conifers, I'll continue the evergreen shrubs and trees that grow here and on our coastal areas.

COMMON JUNIPER (*Juniperus communis*) Cypress Family

A shrub frequently seen in our area is the common or mountain juniper, a low, prostrate, spreading evergreen. The juniper grows to 2 feet high forming 10 foot sprawling mats. The shrub produces whorled awl-shaped needle-like leaves in groups of three that are extremely sharp. The bark

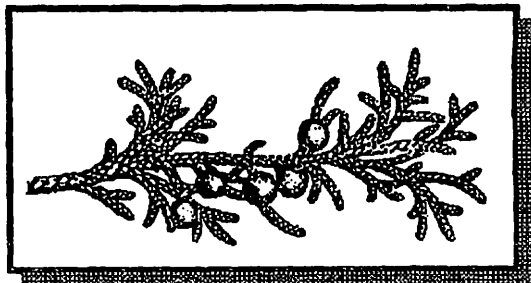


COMMON JUNIPER
(SPREADING WITH NEEDLE-LIKE LEAVES)

is a dark reddish brown to gray, rough and scaly. The small cones, at first glance resembling blueberries, "juniper berries", are round and dark blue. These hard, mealy, berry-like cones mature in 2 or 3 years. The seed containing cones are green the first year ripening to black in the 2nd or 3rd year. The juniper favors dry places such as sunny slopes with stony mountain soil in subalpine locations. This species is the most widely distributed conifer in the world and the most widespread tree species in the north temperate zone.

The cones are edible and used in meat dishes as a seasoning. The fruit, whose flavor and aroma are familiar to anyone who has ever tasted or smelled gin, will recognize the flavor used in gin. Birds and mammals eat the fruit of this shrub. The major use of juniper by herbalists has been for its stimulant effect on the urinary tract as a diuretic. Juniper oil is one of the ingredients in many patent remedies and widely used historically in various concoctions for colds, skin diseases and other treatments. Needles burned on top of a hot stove work as an incense. An ingredient in 16th century blends to fumigate rooms; in fact, this evergreen does give off a disinfectant gas that destroys infectious fungi. Hospitals burned juniper in the rooms during epidemics.

CREEPING JUNIPER (*Juniperus horizontalis*) Cypress Family



CREEPING JUNIPER (TRAILING WITH SCALELIKE LEAVES)

A prostrate or trailing evergreen shrub with long horizontal stems often rooting and short erect twigs. Unlike common juniper these leaves appear very different. They are mostly scale-like, blunt, blue-green in color, spreading and more closely resemble cedar leaves. Sharply pointed leaves sometimes do occur on very young plants. The berry-like cones are light blue. They prefer rocky and sandy habitats such as along the Copper and Chitina Rivers. Junipers used as an ornamental ground cover, are difficult to transplant as the roots reach out a long way and it is hard to get enough.

BLACK SPRUCE (*Picea mariana*) Pine Family

Another one of our common area conifers, considered to be the strongest tree per square inch in North America, is the black spruce. That fact seems contradictory to the scraggly appearance of this evergreen that is often plagued by deformity. These trees occupy a niche that's relatively free of competition.

Sphagnum mosses, sedges and grasses make up vegetation in black spruce stands. These spruce, usually found in a different habitat of cold wet flats, muskegs, lake margins and north facing slopes, favor acid soil. These resinous evergreen averages 15 to 30 feet in height with trunk diameters to 6 inches that seldom exceed 8 inches. The needles, 1/4 to 5/8 inch long, are blue-green with whitish lines and grow on all sides of the twig. Distinguishing black spruce from white spruce are shorter and blunter needles. The twigs are hairy, rusty

colored and are also tougher to break. The branches are shorter and sparse. The bark consists of gray scales that are brown underneath. The inner bark is yellowish. They have very fine, almost microscopic, growth rings that show just how slow they can grow. A two inch diameter tree can be a hundred years old!

The gray to black cones are round or egg-shaped and 5/8 to 1 1/4 inch long and curve downward on short stalks. They contain brown 1/2 inch large winged seeds. Mature cones may remain closed, in clusters near tree tops, for years. Black spruce comes in abundantly after a fire because the cones then open and spread seed. Fire killed stands can remain for decades and provide good firewood.

Clusters of black spruce are common because the roots radiate out from the parent tree and produce a ring of small trees. This tree is a prime example of northern trees adapting to their environment and can tolerate permafrost (permanently frozen soil) better than other species. The trees are unable to sink their roots very deep so instead make an extensive network barely below the surface of the soil. Certainly reflected in the size and appearance of the black spruce is the lack of abundant nutrients available!

Black spruce can hybridize with white spruce. These trees do not make good logs for cabins. They twist as they dry producing spiral checks. We have a couple of examples of these in our house. The crosses do better and can be much larger in size. In spite of the white cross these logs, when

dry, twist to spiral checks causing a different appearance as well as problems with fit.

SITKA SPRUCE (*Picea sitchensis*) Pine Family

The next few trees mentioned comprise part of our coastal spruce-hemlock forests. The Sitka spruce is our official state tree and lives to be 500 to 750 years or more old. These evergreens average 100 to 160 feet in height with 3 to 5 foot diameter trunks and, on occasion, grow considerably larger. They grow in coastal forests starting at sea level to about 1,500 feet in elevation. Recorded high above ice fields, examples of dwarfed spruce grow. The needles appear slightly flattened, dark green, 5/8 to 1 inch long and stand out on all sides of the twigs. These needles are stiff and sharp. The branches droop down more than other species. The smooth bark is gray that becomes dark brown with scaly plates on older growth.

Cylindrical hanging cones with fluted edges are 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 inches long. The cones are prolific seed manufacturers and produce 1/2 inch long winged seeds. Sitka spruce can propagate by layering, as well as by seeds. Branches that touch the ground become covered up and develop roots and a new stem. Interestingly, sprouts from stumps occur. Sitka spruce can also hybridize with white spruce. Another fact is that this is the only conifer growing on Kodiak or Afognak islands.

Closely spaced, the Sitka spruce growth rings produce a strong, fine-grained wood. These long fibers have resulted in extensive manufacture use in

newsprint. During the first and second World Wars this spruce became important in aircraft construction. The wood now primarily consists of piano and guitar sounding boards, gliders, boats and construction. Many years of logged Sitka spruce occur from Alaska's coastal forests. The bark and twigs of this tree also produce tan to brown dyes.

WESTERN HEMLOCK

(*Tsuga heterophylla*) Pine Family

The coastal forests composed primarily of Sitka spruce and western hemlock has a scattering of mountain hemlock and Alaska cedar. Western hemlock is a large evergreen averaging 100 to 150 feet tall with a diameter of 2 to 5 feet. The trunk often becomes fluted when large. Amazingly, some of these trees grow to be 1,000 years old or even older.

The shiny, flattened, dark green and soft needles attach by slender stalks to the twigs. The twigs have fine hairs and rough bases where old needles fell off. The very top twig of a hemlock (leader) appears curved down and droopy. The rough scaly bark is reddish or gray-brown and the inner bark is red (not found in spruce). The non-resinous outer bark contains tannin. The cones grow to 1 inch long and hang down from the ends of the branches. This tree tolerates shade well and thus has the ability to slowly grow under dense canopies in coastal forests.

To avoid confusion, this hemlock has no relation to the poison hemlock. Poisonous hemlock is a member of the parsley family. The western hemlock infused as a tea with wide historical uses for colds, flu, fevers and prevention of scurvy. Other uses found include a preservative, red-brown dye and for tanning. Distilled hemlock oil is an ingredient in veterinary liniments. Alaskan Indians made a coarse bread from the inner bark. The species honors the German naturalist, Karl Heinrich Mertens (1796-1830), who discovered the conifer near Sitka, Alaska in 1827.

MOUNTAIN HEMLOCK

(*Tsuga mertensiana*) Pine Family

Closely related to western hemlock, but a much smaller tree, mountain hemlock grows 50 to 100 feet tall with 2 to 3 foot diameter trunks. They also grow above timberline, where they grow stunted to dwarf *krumholz* (low-lying shrubs). The short stalked, blunt (flattened on top, angled below) needles are blue-green and grow on short, slender twigs. The bark is thick, gray to dark brown and deeply furrowed into scaly plates. The heartwood is red-brown with lighter colored sapwood. The wood is slightly more dense than the western variety. The stalkless cones hang down, are purple in color when fresh, then turn brown producing seeds with long wings. In the past, railroad ties were made from

the lumber. The tree transplanted and pruned, makes a nice bush shape.

ALASKA CYPRESS

(*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*) Cypress Family

A slow growing cedar that attains heights of 40 to 80 feet and diameters of 2 feet or less. A 15 to 20 inch trunk can be 200 to 300 years old. Some very notable specimens recorded are 120 feet with 8 foot diameters! The leaves are scale-like, a dull yellow-green color and 1/8 inch with spreading tips. The sprays appear flat and become drooping branches. This cedar has gray or brown bark, not at all smooth composing shreds and fissures. The heartwood is a bright yellow. Near the tips of the limbs the sprays scattered with 1/2 inch or less round cones grow. The cones are two years old before the seeds ripen. The tree is very distinctive for its wonderful aromatic essence. Japan prizes cedar as a very durable wood. A traditional use was native canoe paddles.

All this talk of trees reminds us it's time to hit the wood lot. We enjoy every aspect of harvesting trees for logs to build with or firewood for fuel. March (our spring) is our favorite month for this detail and so will occupy much of our time for the next few weeks.

Next issue, as the time of new growth and green leaves approach, I'll cover our most commonly seen deciduous trees.

"Why are there trees I never walk under but large and melodious thoughts descend upon me?" — Walt Whitman

OUR TOWN

March 1924 April

WAGE CUT WILL BE SETTLED BY ARBITRATION

The C. R. & N. W. Ry and the employees, who were to have gone out on a strike today on account of the cut in wages, which was to have been effective March 1, have decided to settle the matter by arbitration.

There has been no train thru from the coast since last Monday owing to snow slides; but it was reported that the track is clear and the train will leave Cordova Sunday, arriving at this end of the line Monday with mail and freight.

CHITINA BREVITIES

The baby son of O. A. Nelson is reported to have been blinded in one eye with a knife in the hands of their older son. The babe and mother are said to be on their way to the states to see eminent specialists, in hopes that the child's sight can be restored.

The accident, for such it was, is to be regretted, and the News joins the Nelson's friends in extending sympathy.

The Kennecott surgeon gave Mrs. Nelson hope that there was a chance to save the eye from total blindness, even if a complete cure is not effected.

TIS SAID THAT...

Pete Erickson, who is employed as night watchman by the Kennecott Copper Corporation, was

down for a few hours yesterday attending to personal business and visiting friends.

Shushanna residents are in receipt of communications from Lyle Brown a former resident of the district, inquiring about the possibility of hauling freight by caterpillar from Chitina into Shushanna by way of Nabcsna.

March 1

CHITINA BREVITIES

Ed Holmes who has a trap line along the Hanagieta valley arrived in Chitina the first of the week. He came across the Chitina River and into Strelna then into Chitina by train. Trapping was very good and Holmes has a large catch to show for his winter's work.

Chitina progresses, now when milady wants a choice cut of porter house she phones to Louis Bregozze and gets it or mayhap the old man wants a clean shirt; he merely steps to the phone, and tells Billy Tibbs to send up the best. The two merchants have recently installed phones, so now everyone in town is on the directory, except residents of the Heights.

LOCAL COUPLE MARRIED

Tuesday evening Miss Vera Siebert and Walter Holmes, both of McCarthy, were joined in matrimony by U. S. Commissioner Sundmacher. Miss Siebert was a former Seattle girl

and has parents residing in that city. Since her arrival here last fall she has been employed at the Alaska Café and more recently has conducted the McCarthy Rooms.

Holmes has been employed at the Green Butte and during the past winter, by A. E. Trimm.

Both the newlyweds have the best wishes of everyone and it is hoped they enjoy a happy and prosperous career.

Wednesday evening a party was given in honor of the happy event and about forty guests were invited. Mrs. Sam Seltenreich acted as hostess, ably seconded by Sam. Refreshments were served throughout the evening and an excellent time was had by all.

'TIS SAID THAT...

Johnny Hill is going to the Green Butte Monday to construct a log building at the lower camp. He is to do the work on contract, it is understood, and if things go right he will make out pretty well.

Mrs. Kate Kennedy is having her house which was formerly located on third street, moved to her lot on Second. Johnny Hill has the contract and will have the building in place Sunday.

MONEY SPENT ON NIZINA ROAD AND BRIDGE

From the annual report of the Board of Road Commissions for Alaska, for 1923, we quote the

following:

McCarthy - Nizina Road (8 miles road, 8 miles trail) General repairs to the completed section of the road were performed. Additional work done on the river end enabled supplies to be freighted to the bridge site. Expenditures: \$4,639.55.

Nizina River Bridge. This important project to bridge the dangerous Nizina River and make accessible the mineralized section of the upper Chitina Valley progressed satisfactorily during the past year. Reconnaissance was completed and the crossing located. Expenditures: Alaska Road Commission \$36,076.94.

Territory of Alaska \$20,000.00.

Total \$56,076.94.

ATTENTION!

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN FOXES

IF YOU WANT A PAIR OF GUARANTEED SILVER BREED PUPS FROM THE LARGEST RANCH OF ITS KIND IN ALASKA

WRITE FOR PARTICULARS 1924 PUPS FOR 1925 DELIVERY

P.O. BOX 424 MCCARTHY, ALASKA

March 8

EXCELLENT RECORD MADE BY CONTRACTOR

A contract for the Kennecott Copper Corporation, which has just been wound up by A. E. Trimm, sets a record that bids fair to stand for some time to come. In the past two months he shipped fifteen cars of stulls and lagging from McCarthy, the cars averaging eighty tons to the car. All this wood was hauled from two to five miles by four horses. It was loaded by means of a boomrig. When the work was finished the horses were in good shape.

Just previous to this, the stock worked seventy days straight on three hundred tons of freight. They landed it at the Erie Mine, about eight miles from Kennecott, over the glacier. During this time the horses also pulled a large number of stulls from the railroad to the tramhouse. The aforementioned accomplishment certainly speaks well for the ability of both the skimmers and the livestock.

Trimm will spend the coming summer on his ranch on the Kennecott River. Next winter's plans are not settled yet, but there is some talk of a contract in the near future.

'TIS SAID THAT...

Mrs. Nels Tjoscvig entertained at a very pleasant evening of cards Wednesday evening.

By all tokens spring has come. Ted and Fred Seltenreich, who received new bicycles a week or so ago spend most of their spare time making pretty tracks on the roads.

Friend Bill wants to bet a suit of clothes that the Nizina Bridge won't be

finished by 1927, but so far he has found no takers. Bill figures that it is a darn good bet if he loses.

James Goodlataw, member of the Taral tribe and brother of Chief Goodlataw, recently arrived in Anchorage with the finest catch of fur brought in for some years, consisting of mink, martin, fox and land otter.

Local weather prophets are busy prophesying an early summer. In view of the fact that pussy willows have been out for some time and the patches of black on the hillsides are daily growing larger, it is quite safe to agree with them.

March 15

SNOWSLIDE BLOCKS ROAD 24 HOURS

Monday evening a small snowslide came down Porphyry Mountain and completely blocked the railroad track at mile 193. The engine laying over at McCarthy was dispatched south the following morning and shortly returned with a work car and section gang which was set to work.

The train was able to get through to Kennecott Wednesday morning, the shovelers having put in a double shift.

NEW CAR ARRIVES THURSDAY

Henry Olsen received a new Chevrolet on last Thursday's local. The new machine will be used in connection with the McCarthy Stage Service.

'TIS SAID THAT...

J.B. O'Neill and wife were overnight guests at the Green Butte Wednesday. They reported an enjoyable

trip.

March 22

BLACKSMITH SHOP RENTED TO HARRY MUDGE

Art Powell states that he has rented his blacksmith shop to Harry Mudge, an expert smith and mechanic in the employ of the Kennecott Corporation. At present, Mudge is installing a compressor at the Bonanza, but as soon as the job is finished, he will come to McCarthy.

MISS SMITH HAS ENJOYABLE OUTING

Miss Mary Stuart Smith of LaTouche and Kennecott left with a dog team for the glacier last Monday afternoon and returned to McCarthy Friday. A very enjoyable trip was reported, but owing to high winds being encountered, the summit was not reached.

Andy Taylor chauffeured the dog team on the trip.

March 29

IVERSON BRINGS LIVESTOCK FROM STATES

Arriving from the states today F. A. Iverson, who has been touring California during the past winter, brought in a shipment of horses, dairy stock and poultry which will be used to restock his ranch located three miles down the river. One of the horses is the property of Pete Johnston, it is understood.

Mrs. Iverson arrived in McCarthy about a week ago, but Iverson came north on a freighter.

RAT FARM TO BE STARTED NEAR TOWN

About a mile from town Nelson Kunkel will string a fence around a little lake and then import a stock of muskrats. It is his intention to begin work in a short time. According to him there is no reason why the rats shouldn't thrive in the place he has picked.

Kunkel's brother is slated to arrive in a short time to assist him in the new project.

BRIDGING THE KENNECOTT

Since there has been a farmer located on the other side of the Kennecott River a continual question has been asked "when will a bridge be built?" The answers have varied from a flat refusal to a tentative promise, yet nothing has been done.

At present the energies of the Commission in this part of the country are being directed towards the construction of the Nizina Bridge, and according to all reports, good progress is being made this spring. Naturally, this project is about as important as any in the country, but when it is completed, wouldn't it be a good plan to give the farmers on the other side of the Kennecott a little aid in the matter of summer transportation.

The way matters stand now the farmers are compelled to walk across the railroad bridge or take their stock around on the glacier, above the Pothole, and either preceding is dangerous.

April 19

The Physics of Life at Forty Below

BY NED ROZELL

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

A father wakes, rolls out of bed, and steps on a cold carpet. He grabs a flashlight, and shines it outside the window. The thermometer reads 40 below zero, the only point at which the Fahrenheit and Celsius scales agree. The red liquid within his thermometer is alcohol; mercury freezes at 38 below.

His little boy wakes, dresses, and hands his father birch logs to add to the wood stove. The logs are heavy, cut last fall and not properly dried. The green wood contains almost 50 percent moisture, compared to about 30 percent in cured wood. The logs hiss amid other burning logs. They give off no heat until the moisture is driven off.

Outside the car is plugged in. The father remembered the night before to activate the heating element that warms his antifreeze, which in turn keeps his motor oil just viscous enough to allow the pistons to move. A heat blanket, another northern adaptation, has kept the battery at about 20 degrees Fahrenheit, just warm enough to permit 50 percent of the cranking strength available in summer.

After breakfast, the mother dresses her boy so he can wait outside for the school bus. She pulls a big pile hat over his head, knowing that's where the human body loses the most heat, followed by his neck, the sides of his torso under the arms, and his groin. Mother and son walk outside, crunching the snow on

the driveway as they break the bonds between snow crystals. The dry snow is cold enough to prevent skis from gliding. The air is so cold it robs the interface between ski and snow of heat produced by friction that creates melt water on which to glide in warm temperatures.

On the road, car headlights cut through the ice fog that hangs over the road like cotton candy. Exhaust, about 250 degrees in the tailpipe, cools to minus 40 in less than 10 seconds after it comes out of the vehicle. Water cooled that fast turns into tiny particles that make up ice fog. Cars and trucks aren't the only things that make ice fog. Any source of water vapor will do, including people.

Waiting for the bus, mother and son turn to the sound of a nearby train. Though the train is more than five miles away, a temperature inversion makes it sound as if it's coming down the street. The inversion, created when warm air rests on top of colder air, acts as a tunnel in which sound waves bounce for great distances.

The boy sees a raven flying above the ice fog and points to it. Ravens often roost close to town during a cold snap. As the black bird flies through the air, its hyper metabolism keeps its body temperature at about 107 degrees. Through various adaptations, most animals are bothered very little by the cold, though chickadees adapted to life at bird feeders will probably

die if people stop feeding them now.

School is rarely closed by cold weather in Alaska (the Fairbanks North Star Borough has no official temperature cut-off), so the bus arrives on time. The mother walks back into the house, her toes tingling as her extremities go through a normal cycle of warming and cooling. Her toe temperature rises to 68 degrees after falling to 50 while waiting for the bus. She goes inside and moves toward her husband to give him a kiss. Before their lips touch, an arc of electricity bridges the gap, mildly shocking them both. Cold, dry air is a perfect environment for the generation of static electricity.

The father starts a sluggish car engine. During the cold start, his engine spews a large amount of carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and a whole slew of hydrocarbons. After five to 10 minutes, heat from the engine warms the gasoline, which changes more readily to vapor, allowing more gas to ignite and reducing the pollutants out the tailpipe. As he pulls out of the driveway and into the fog floating above the street, his car bounces due to a tire that has retained a flat spot. He bumps down the road slowly until the tire warms enough for the rubber to become more flexible. It's tough, but weather like this may be the best deterrent to overpopulation in Alaska.

A winter adventure

BY ANDY MULLEN

Doug Schrage invited three of his friends to join him on a three day trip to his cabin in McCarthy the second week in February. A few days before the trip, two of the guys backed out. I didn't.

We started the five hour drive from Anchorage to Chitina with some apprehension—Doug had just purchased the truck that we were using to tow the snow machines & trailer and this was its maiden voyage. With the temperature at 20 degrees below on the drive, we were both hoping that the new-used truck didn't turn out to be a lemon half way down the highway.

We arrived at Silver Lake (mile 11 on the McCarthy Road) just before 4 p.m., where we transferred our gear to the snow machines and tow sled and left the truck in the capable hands of Gene Coppege, who graciously offered to plug in the engine heater when we returned. We were bundled up pretty good for the 50 mile ride to McCarthy. About half way there it got dark, and the temperature dropped to minus 30. We both stayed warm except for a tiny space between my goggles and multiple face coverings. It didn't take long for a spot on my cheek the size of a nickel to develop frostbite. After repositioning the face masks, we rode on.

Doug's cabin is on the Kennicott River "island," right across from the McCarthy Church. We pulled in around 6 p.m. and it seemed like there were a million stars out. The

weather was brisk, to say the least, but I was happy to finally experience McCarthy in the wintertime.

This was not my first trip to McCarthy. I had been coming here once or twice a year since the late 80's, but always in the summer. It's my favorite place to hike and camp. Whenever I see a painting or picture in Anchorage of the red buildings of Kennicott, I can't help but stop for a second, and imagine myself hiking between them with my backpack on.

Doug got the wood stove going while I carried our gear in. He also started a propane heater to speed up the heating process. It wasn't long before we were shedding layers of coats as the log cabin warmed up. After a hot meal, and a little reading in several of Doug's books about life in the area when it was "booming," we soon dozed off.

The next morning the thermometer outside read minus 40 degrees. The pull starts on the snow machines wouldn't budge an inch. It was just too cold. Doug and I both had some great winter gear, including several instant handwarmers which I stuffed in my mittens. We hiked around for over an hour, under the new foot bridge, and up the frozen river.

When we got back to the cabin, Doug started up his generator, and we put a heat lamp next to the snow machine engine. It didn't take long before the cold engines limbered up enough to allow us

to pull the cords and shortly after that we were headed up toward Kennicott, ducking under branches weighed down with snow.

We rode through Kennicott, and up the ridge trail behind it. The trail was already packed. We went all the way to the top of the ridge. The view was outstanding as usual, but the wind was blowing so we didn't stay long. We looped through McCarthy on our way down. A few smoking stove pipes proved people were around but smart enough to stay indoors.

We headed across the river where we visited with the Kenyons at their log cabin. After a cup of hot chocolate, a warm room, and interesting conversation, the last thing I wanted to do was go back outside. My face mask was still a frozen clump of ice from my breath. It was still 40 below as we rode back to Doug's cabin. We spent the evening eating, chatting and playing Scrabble.

The next morning the thermometer was up to a whopping minus 15. You could really feel the difference from the previous morning. The snow machines started right up, and I wished we had another day to explore before we had to head back. We took our time on the way out. Doug's truck proved to be a good one and got us back to Anchorage with no problem.

My wife, after hearing of the extremely low temperatures and examining the frostbite bruise on my cheek, questioned our judgement in the timing of the trip. I just gave her a big grin.

The newest boat—the Kennicott

MARINE HIGHWAY NEWS 1998

The 380-foot Kennicott is not only the newest ferry in the state's fleet, it's also the only one with a landing pad for helicopters and the ability to transform itself within 24 hours into a command center in the event of a big oil spill.

Also among the vessel's unusual features is an elevator massive enough to carry 18-wheelers.

The gargantuan vehicle elevator was designed, in fact, to serve ports in Southwest Alaska. Unlike in Southeast, Southwest ports don't have floating docks that rise and fall to adjust to the widely varying tides. The elevator allows vehicles to drive onto the ferry even without a floating dock. An 18-wheeler would roll onto the elevator, travel to the vessel's car deck, where the elevator rotates on a 54-foot-wide turntable so the truck can drive off.

Such an elevator, one of two in the state ferry fleet, is unique to the Alaska ferry system, said Mike Aholt, a naval architect and marine engineer for Glosten Associates, based in Seattle.

The ninth vessel in the state's fleet was designed for ocean waters, unlike most of the other ships in the Alaska Marine Highway System. It will serve Southeast Alaska and make some summertime trips from Juneau to Valdez and Seward.

Besides the Kennicott's normal mission of carrying passengers and cars, the vessel was designed as state headquarters in overseeing emergency efforts after a major

oil spill or other catastrophe.

After the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, state officials found out just what they needed to more effectively handle such a disaster.

Another feature new on the Kennicott—not as impressive as its high-tech emergency response system, but to be used more often is its food court, instead of the standard ferry cafeteria.

The food court was designed to serve people the way they're used to getting food in the 1990s. Passengers will be able to head for the soup-and-salad station, the pizza line or the counter for dinner entrees.

The new state ferry also offers a new kind of place to sleep, called a "roomette." The ship's 24 roomettes each have a table that can be lowered so it can be used as a bed. Another bunk folds down out of the wall.

"It's kind of like a little camper you put on your pickup truck, but it's on the ferry," said Gerry Egan, project manager for the state.

The roomettes are snug, planned for the budget traveler who doesn't want to pay for a stateroom, but wants a little more privacy than would be found sleeping in one of the lounges.

The new ferry is decorated with 61 pieces of art by 23 Alaska artists, paid for by the state program that sets aside one percent of capital costs on most major projects for art.

Art pieces include glass panels decorated with wildlife that could be seen from the ferry, an intricately woven

Kennicott Facts

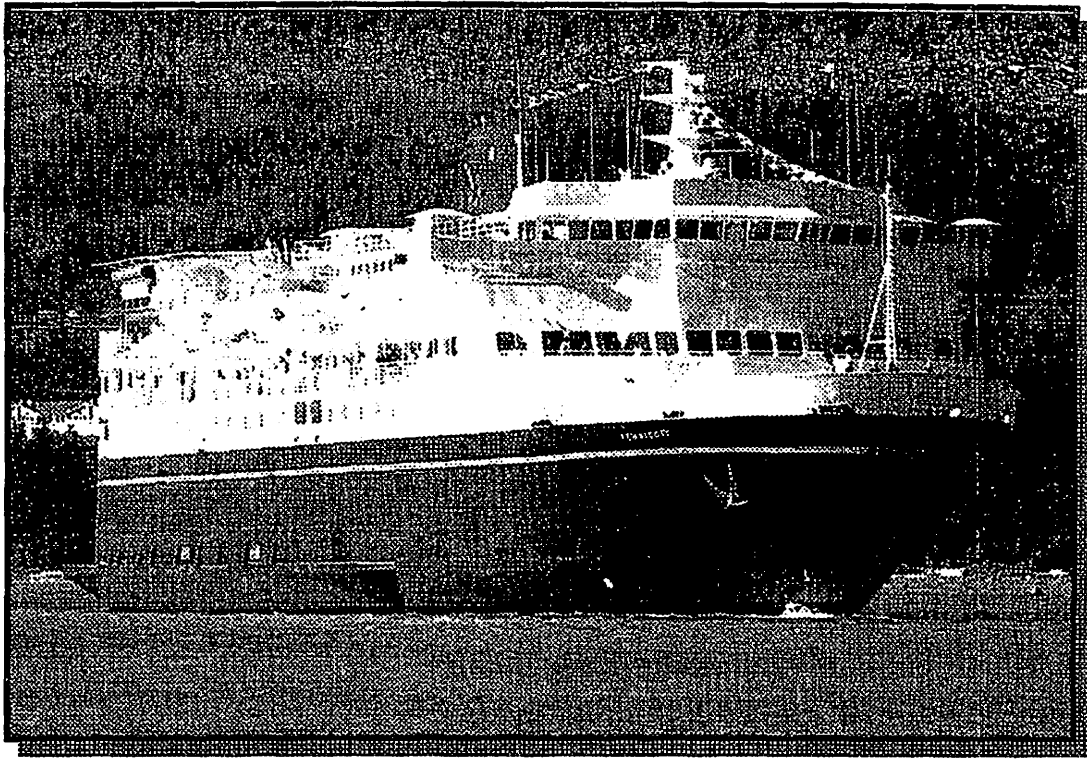
- Length: 380 feet.
- Number of passengers: Up to 750 in Southeast, 500 while on the ocean.
- Number of vehicles: up to 120 cars, or 39 cars and 20 vans.
- Number of cabins: 109.
- Top speed: 19 knots.
- Special features: An elevator that can carry an 18-wheeler; the ability to change into command headquarters for an oil spill within 24 hours.
- Cost: \$80 million.

spruce root hat, an 11-inch carved bone halibut hook, a carved 11-foot-long cedar panel, among other pieces.

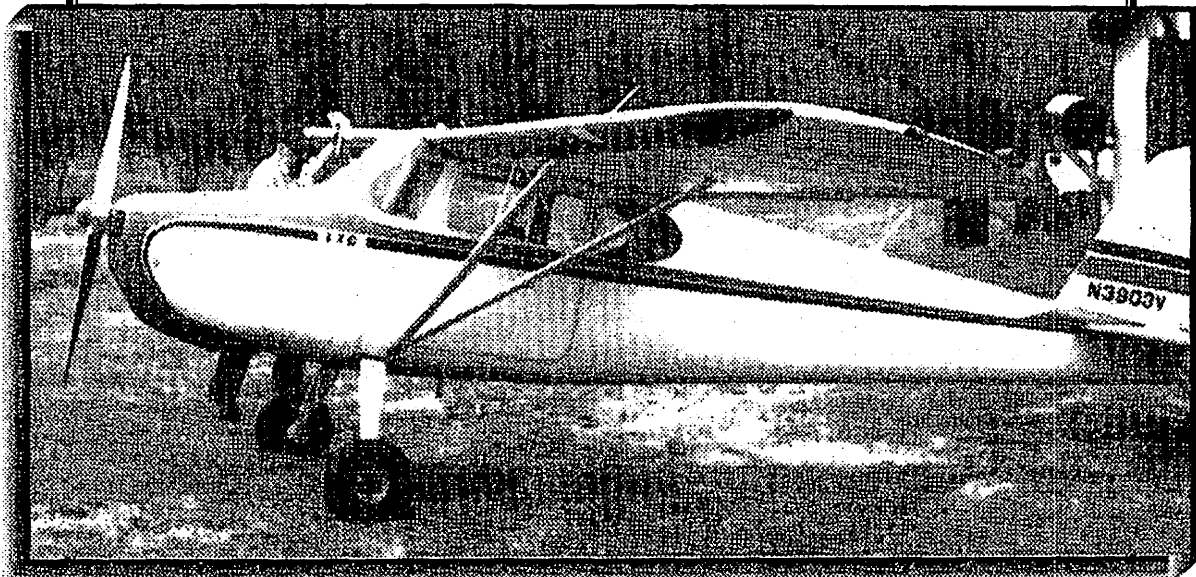
The ferry also displays the top 10 entries in the essay contest for naming the new state ferry. Out of 200 students, sixth-grader Leah Jarvis of Glennallen Elementary School won with her entry on the Kennicott.

All state ferries must be named after an Alaska glacier according to state law.

The new ferry is the first one designed for people with disabilities. Five staterooms are handi-capped-accessible. Wheelchairs can get to each level of the ship and to areas open to passengers, such as the lounges and dining room.



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New State Representative Has Big Assignment

(JUNEAU)—

The Representative of District 36 in the Alaska State House, Representative Carl Morgan Jr., has been given a wide range of responsibilities. "There's an awful lot to learn and short time to do it but I like the challenge," said Morgan. A Republican from Aniak, Morgan not only has the largest legislative House District in the nation, he also sits on several key committees in the majority leadership.

Morgan, 49, is a husband, father, and grandfather. He was born and raised in the interior of Alaska. His wife, Angie, of 26 years is also from the interior. Together they have raised five children. He is not a newcomer to politics or leadership having served as the Mayor of Aniak; member, Aniak Traditional Council; Board of Directors, Calista Corp.; Chairman, Executive Committee, Kuskokwim Native Assn. "I believe leaders must do more than talk. They must listen and be able to make tough decisions," said Morgan.

As a new member of the House majority Morgan holds seats on three standing committees, one special



committee and three budget sub-committees. "When you work with 59 other legislators you learn real fast that knowledge is essential. I promised to work hard and now I have the chance," said Morgan. This unusually heavy load reflects the confidence the majority has in the freshman Representative.

Representative Morgan has three staff to assist him; Lori Nottingham, Sue Mossgrove, and Connie Keithahn. Both Nottingham from Juneau and Mossgrove from the Copper River Valley have worked for the legislature in various capacities.

"My staff are totally involved in the priorities I have laid out for the district. They are here with me to serve as a team for the people of our District," said Morgan

Morgan sees a need for quality education, good jobs and stable economies for the 75 small communities he serves. "We need opportunities for our young people so they do not have to leave their communities and family areas. Living an honest lifestyle close to the land is something we must protect and treasure," said Morgan.

Morgan serves on the Community & Regional Affairs, as the Resources, and Health, Education & Social Services committees. He also sits on the House Special Committee on Fisheries. His budget sub-committee assignments include Fish & Game, Transportation and Community & Regional Affairs.

Representative Morgan encourages people of the District to contact him. He can be reached in Juneau at 1-800-491-4527, fax 465-2197, or e-mail: Representative_Carl_Morgan@legis.state.ak.us

Register that snowmachine

BY RICK KENYON

The number of registered snowmachines in Alaska has doubled in the past three years. Note that I said registered snowmachines, not snowmachines. Authorities and snowmachine distributors credit the rise to a new law that requires point-of-sale registration and adds a stiff fine for noncompliance. Any owner caught riding an unregistered snowmachine can be hit with a \$300 fine. Under the old law, the fine

was \$20. Point-of-sale registration, strongly supported by snowmachine dealers and distributors, has been the law since September. A buyer of a new snowmachine must fill out the official paperwork and pay the \$10 fee—good for two years—at the dealership. Otherwise the new machine cannot leave the showroom. The dealer records the transaction and forwards the documents and payment to the DMV.

Troopers say a registered snowmachine, whose serial number is listed with the state, is more likely to be recovered if stolen than one not registered.

Northern lights over Kennicott

BY RICK KENYON

Last fall Bonnie and I met a young man by the name of Todd Salat. We struck up a conversation and learned that he was a photographer, and had been at Kennicott shooting northern light photos. When Todd learned we published the Wrangell St. Elias News, a barter agreement was soon reached—a subscription to WSEN in exchange for a promised photo.

In the course of time we meet a lot of people who promise lots of things. Some deliver, many don't. But believe me, Todd "delivers." We were not prepared for the package that arrived in the mail just after Christmas. Inside was the most incredible 8X10 matted photograph of Kennicott with brilliant northern lights in the sky, and the big dipper resting over the old buildings.

I know many of our readers

would be thrilled with one of Todd's photographs. He can provide sizes up to 20x26. Believe me, we have enjoyed looking up from our keyboards here in the office and beholding this wonderful scene. You can reach him at: Todd Salat Shots, 733 W. 4th #798, Anchorage AK 99501. Phone (907)250-4711 Email tsshots@alaska.net. I think you will enjoy his story, told below in his own words.

The "Kennicott Treasures" experience

BY TODD SALAT

Autumn was here. Ahhhhh. After a typical crazy Alaskan summer it's always nice to see darkness return to the skies—and with it, the Aurora! This year's fall project was to explore the Kennicott area in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. Built in the early 1900's on a huge copper deposit, the Kennecott Mine (note spelling difference) has partially withstood the test of time... and partially weathered into a captivating ghost mine with a very nostalgic allure to it. The artistic appeal had me hooked, and with it, an uncontrollable desire to photograph the Aurora dancing over the rustic red structures. It was going to be a treasure hunt.

On a September backpacking trip I didn't get lucky with the Aurora so October 1st found me once again driving down that 60 mile stretch of gravel road from Chitina to the McCarthy area. I

parked at the Tram Station and now had to face a dilemma. After crossing the footbridge over the Kennicott River, how was I going to get 2 weeks worth of food and gear, probably a 150 pound load, up the little 5 mile gravel road to Kennicott. At this point I struck a great fortune—the operator of the Tram Station offered me his Subaru, which was on the other side of the river. Yes! (Thanks Randy!!). The vehicle also served as a huge bear-proof container to store my food in. I threw my sleeping pad in the back and that Subaru became my home away from home.

On that very first lucky night, the treasure was uncovered. I drove up the hill to the mine, found my favorite northward viewing angle, set up both tripods & cameras, and cooked up some noodles. The sky was clear, and just as I finished up my meal, a green Auroral band materialized out of thin air, right

over the mine! It got brighter and brighter... then faded... then returned with a few of its friends and soon four bands were dancing through the Big Dipper and over the mine. A full moon in the sky lit up the snow on nearby Mt. Donoho and on the surrounding Wrangell Mountains, but the mine was just not quite catching the moonlight. I thought it might be like this so I had thrown in my 12 volt spotlight. I plugged it into the Soob's cigarette lighter, and after clicking the camera shutter open, I would "paint" the buildings with a beam of light for several seconds. I experimented a lot since this was the first time I've tried this technique but was quite happy with the results. From the very beginning this whole experience was truly treasurable and the photographic reward is depicted in "Kennicott Treasures."

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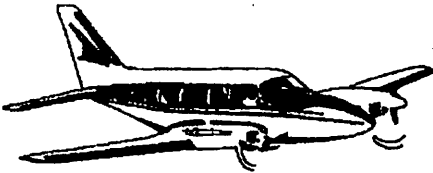
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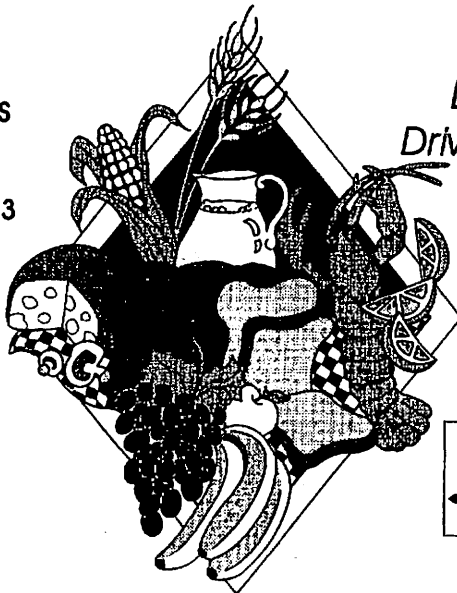
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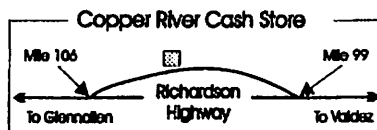
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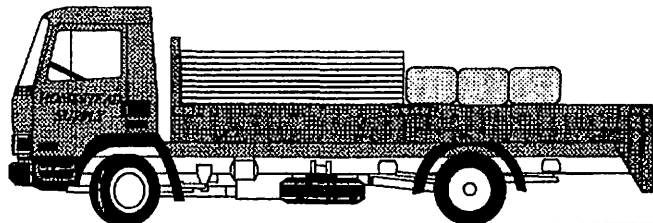
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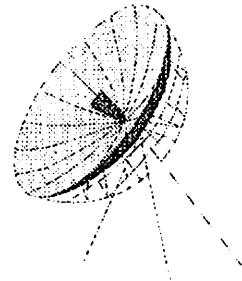
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Cooking with Carly

BY CARLY KRITCHEN

Although it has finally warmed up a little, we are still in the depths of winter here in this part of Alaska. I've been pouring over seed catalogs, picking out what seeds I'll order for this summer's garden. I noticed that in Washington state, it's almost time to plant peas, while we'll still have at least a couple more months before we can even think about planting anything! I suspect it's all those beautiful pictures in the seed catalogs that make me long for some fresh vegetables!

Now, if I lived in the big city, I could run down to the local supermarket and purchase some semi-fresh broccoli or something to satisfy my craving. Here in McCarthy, it's not really that easy. Although we can order fresh fruit and vegetables through the mail, it's a matter of knowing what the store has in stock, and then getting the box of produce home before it gets frozen! So, I did a quick inventory of the contents of our root cellar, and as far as vegetables, we're down to carrots, a couple of sad kohlrabis, a pretty dubious looking cabbage, and a lot of potatoes. Thank goodness for the old faithful potato!

Here are some potato recipes that'll bring out the Irish in you!

This recipe will work with just about any root vegetable or squash - or even just potatoes!

Roasted Vegetables with Garlic

4 tablespoons olive oil
6 to 8 red potatoes, cut up
4 to 6 large carrots, cut up to

about the same size as potatoes

8 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced
1 tablespoon sugar
¼ cup balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons dry cooking wine
1 tablespoon dried basil
1 tablespoon dried parsley

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Put 2 tablespoons of olive oil in the bottom of a large baking dish and heat in the oven for 5 minutes. Add potatoes and carrots, tossing to coat them with oil. Roast, turning occasionally, for 30 minutes or until tender. While the vegetables are baking, prepare the garlic: in a small skillet, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil, and add garlic. Cover and cook over low heat for 5 to 8 minutes or until tender. Add vinegar, wine, basil, and parsley and simmer 2 minutes. Spoon over roasted vegetables and serve while hot. Serves about 6.

Originally, this recipe calls for sauteing the onion in the bacon grease, but I like to cut a little fat out by draining the bacon grease and just using a little olive oil.

Easy Potato Soup

4 potatoes, peeled and cut up
2 cups boiling water
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 onion, chopped
4 cups milk
1 tablespoon dried parsley
4 slices bacon
salt and pepper to taste

Cook potatoes in boiling water until soft. Drain and mash half of the potatoes. Fry bacon until crisp. Drain grease and wipe out pan. Heat olive oil in the pan and saute onion

until soft. Heat milk and add the reserved chopped potatoes, cooked onion, bacon, and parsley. Stir in the mashed potatoes until blended. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serves about 4.

This recipe really is Irish, and is really good served as a main dish with just some good crusty bread!

Colcannon

6 medium potatoes, peeled
1 medium onion, chopped
½ head cabbage, shredded
2 large carrots, coarsely grated
¼ cup water
¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup milk
⅓ cup butter
salt and pepper to taste

Boil potatoes until tender and drain. Cook onion, cabbage, and carrot in the ¼ cup water and salt until tender but still slightly crisp, about 5 minutes. Drain. Mash potatoes until smooth. Beat in the milk. Add butter, and salt and pepper to taste. Beat again until light and fluffy. Fold in the onion mixture, and dot with butter. Serve hot, about 6 servings.

Another easy main dish, I like to serve this with warmed tortillas on the side.

Spanish Potato Omelet

½ pound red potatoes
1 medium onion, sliced
2 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped

3 tablespoons olive oil
6 eggs
salt and pepper to taste

Slice (do not peel) potatoes and cook in boiling water until still lightly firm. Heat a no-stick pan, and saute the potatoes, onion, and garlic in the olive oil

just until hot. Beat the eggs with salt and pepper and pour over the hot vegetables. Raise the edges of the omelet with a spatula so that the uncooked

top will flow under the omelet. Flip the omelet by placing a plate over the pan and inverting, then slide back into pan and

cook the other side for about two minutes. Serve with sour cream and salsa. About 4 servings.

A LOOK AT THE WEATHER

BY GEORGE CEBULA

December at McCarthy saw colder temperatures and light precipitation. January was a bit colder with average temperatures and precipitation.

The average December temperature was -3.3, compared to 9.2 in 1997 (-9.2 in Dec '96 and -5.1 in Dec. '95). The high was 34 on December 9 (37 on Dec. 25, '97 and 26 on Dec. 18, '96) and the low was -31 on December 25 and 26 (-28 on Dec. 31, '97 and -45 on Dec. 31, '96). Five days had low temperatures of zero or above and eight days below minus twenty. Two days had high temperatures of thirty or above and fourteen days zero or below. *Silver Lake had a average temperature of -5.7 (8.9 in Dec. '97 and -10.7 in Dec. '96). The high was 36 on December 5 (36 on Dec. 24, '97 and 24 on Dec. 19, '96) and the low was -34 on December 26 (-24 on Dec. 17, '97 and -46 on Dec. 31, '96).*

December precipitation was below average with 0.51 inches of liquid precipitation, (1.01 in Dec. '97 and 0.29 in Dec. '96). All precipitation fell as snow with 8.4 inches (13.3 in Dec. '97 and 4.0 in Dec. '96). The snow depth was 2 inches at the beginning of the month, increased to 7 inches on the 9th and ended the month at 7 inches. *By comparison Silver Lake had 0.39 inches of liquid*

precipitation (1.65 in Dec. '97 and 0.45 in Dec. '96) and 5.0 inches of snow (18.5 in Dec. '97 and 5.0 in Dec. '96). The snow depth was 4 inches on the 1st and 9 inches on the last day.

1999 at McCarthy began on the mild side, but cooled to -39 by the morning of January 7th. Precipitation for January was just about average.

The average January temperature at McCarthy was -4.5, just about 3 degrees warmer than January 1998 and January 1997. The high temperature was 35 on January 23 (34 on Jan. 31, '98 and on Jan. 13, '97) and the low temperature was -50 on January 21 (-45 on Jan. 6, '98 and -48 on Jan. 8, '97). There were 6 days with the high temperature 20 or above and 6 days with the low temperature -30 or colder. *Silver Lake had a average temperature of -7.7 (-10.7 in Jan. '98 and -10.5 in Jan. '97). The high was 33 on January 24 (15 on Jan. 30, '98 and 38 on Jan. 13, '97) and the low was 52 on January 21 and 22 (-46 on Jan. 6, '98 and -50 on Jan. 8, '97).*

January precipitation was average with 10 days of measurable amounts. The total liquid precipitation was 1.06 inches (0.42 in Jan. '98 and 1.20 in Jan. '97). Snowfall was 17.7 inches (5.6 in Jan. '98 and 15.9 in Jan. '97). 1998 started with a 7 inch snow cover,

increased to 16 inches on January 9 and ended the month with 14 inches. *Silver Lake had a little less precipitation than McCarthy with 0.91 inches of liquid (0.38 in Jan. '98 and 1.13 in Jan. '97) and 9.0 inches of snow (5.0 in Jan. '98 and 13.0 in Jan. '97). Silver Lake started the new year with 9 inches of snow on the ground, increased to 16 inches on January 10 and ended the month with 18 inches.*

The first part of February was very cold with ten days seeing highs never reaching zero. Lows of -47 and -48 were recorded on the 9th and 10th. The afternoon of the 15th it finally reached 25 for a high. Snowfall for 98-99 as of February 15 at McCarthy has been 34.1 inches. This is less snow than we received in October 1997. Snow depth on the same date is 16 inches. *Silver Lake had 20.3 inches for the same period with a snow depth of 19 inches.*

February shows a steady increase in daylight and sunshine, but well below zero temperatures are still common. March is usually the beginning of the warmer temperatures with highs reaching into the 40's.

Finally I would like to wish Frank Moore a Happy 85th Birthday. Frank is a good friend and subscriber who lives in Spokane, WA.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Government Private Land Purchase Trust: A bad idea

BY RICK KENYON

An ancient by the name of Agur said there were four things that were never satisfied—Hell, the barren womb, a barren desert and fire. If he lived today he might have added a fifth—the bureaucrat. Over 66 percent of the state of Alaska (more than 230 million acres) is already in Federal ownership. 103 million is in state ownership. Private non-Native Corporation land is less than three-tenths of one percent. Yet some are not satisfied.

According to the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA), there are more than 1 million acres of private lands within the boundaries of the national park system that should be acquired for public use. Alaska's own Representative Don Young and Senator Frank Murkowski are making plans to give the federal land managers all the money they need to buy up that million acres and more, and with few strings attached.

Rep. Don Young, Chairman of the House Resources Committee, introduced his version of what some call the "Billion Dollar Trust Fund" — HR. 701. If passed, many fear this off-budget land acquisition entitlement will ultimately grow to become a \$1 billion per year slush fund for federal, state and local land agencies. It supports the concept President Clinton and VP Gore are proposing with their Lands Legacy Initiative. Senator Frank Murkowski along with Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and others have introduced a similar companion bill, S. 25.

"Once the Trust Fund is signed into law, no landowner will be safe," said Chuck Cushman, executive director of the American Land Rights Association. "Park Service, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and BLM land agents will become tyrants far exceeding even the aggressive Carter Administration."

Senator Frank Murkowski and Representative Don Young have a long record of being the friends of landowners and users of the Federal lands. They helped draft the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) which, along with setting up the massive new federal parks and preserves, incorporated many "protections" for the Alaskan way of life. Then, they held hearings when the federal land managers twisted and sometimes just plain ignored the protection provisions.

Witness the most recent Park Service action at Denali. Superintendent Steve Martin arbitrarily closed 2 million acres of the "old park" to access by snowmachine—an area where, by his own admission, "snow-machines have rarely been used..." Senator Murkowski immediately addressed the issue: "ANILCA guarantees Alaskans the right of reasonable access. I am distressed by the continuing efforts of this Administration to erode that right. We've seen it in Glacier Bay, and now we are seeing it in Denali. The Park Service's actions establishes a dangerous precedent—an erosion of the rights guaranteed under ANILCA. The issue will now move to the courts and I'm

hopeful that the court will overturn the Park Service."

Senator, do you think these types of actions, actions that you rightfully call an erosion of the rights guaranteed under ANILCA, will become less frequent when the federal land managers are handed a bag of money marked THIS MONEY IS FOR PURCHASING INHOLDINGS IN FEDERAL UNITS? I think not.

"This money," you tell us, "is not earmarked for a federal land grab. I believe the federal government already owns too much land." I respectfully submit that is double-speak.

"Many inholders," you tell us, "have been waiting for decades to receive compensation from the federal government for their property. In many instances those landowners must suffer restrictions on access to and use of their lands while they wait endlessly for the funds to compensate them for their lands." That's just the point—these landowners have become "willing sellers" because of restrictions on access to and use of their lands. Some say the willing seller provisions will not survive the legislative process, and that a final bill will include condemnation. Are we to be heartened to know we won't have to wait long to be compensated for the land we are no longer permitted to own?

As in the case of Kennecott, money *can be* and *is being* appropriated for legitimate land deals. It is not necessary to set up a multi-billion dollar entitlement to take care of the few so called "hardship" cases. The word is that *another* \$1.5

million has been appropriated to purchase additional lands in Wrangell-St. Elias (WRST). But the money to purchase land is only the tip of the iceberg. Although only \$3.2 million was needed to purchase the Kennecott property, many times that amount will now be required in order for NPS to responsibly manage it. If you want to hand them a bag of money, label it **THIS MONEY IS FOR BUILDING AND MAINTAINING VISITOR FACILITIES IN FEDERAL UNITS—IT IS NOT TO BE USED FOR BUYING MORE PRIVATE LANDS!**

During the early years of WRST (and other Alaskan park units), NPS was busy running the miners out of the park. During the debate of ANILCA Alaskans were told that mining was a "protected" activity. Only a few years after the compromise passage of ANILCA, federal managers started to undermine this compromise by maneuvering to end mining in the parks. So the rules started changing. Even

folks with small "recreational" claims suddenly found out they had not met the requirement of burdensome new rules. Of course not, they had never been told about the rule changes. Finally, in frustration, they gave up. They relinquished their claims to the federal government. Although park managers will tell you there is still mining in the parks, everyone knows it's a joke. Most of the miners are no longer mining—they are running parking lots for tourists.

Now it's the inholders turn. Groups like the NPCA and the huge environmentalist land trusts are drooling at the thought of a permanent pipeline of money earmarked for private land acquisition. Just as the land managers in their hearts did not agree with Congress that mining be allowed to remain in Alaskan parks, now those behind this latest move apparently think that private property owners themselves are something that is unacceptable.

My wife and I have lived here

in the Alaskan bush for over twenty years now. When we built our log home this was not a national park. If any of these massive land acquisition trust funds become law, the best we can hope for is increased harassment and burdensome new rules. If, as some believe, the final legislation contains language that allows condemnation, then our lifestyle is over.

Senator Murkowski, Representative Young, I don't know what to say. You have been our friends and allies, and without your support many of us would have been forced off our land long ago. Some say the siren song of distributing vast sums of money has caused you to cast aside your principles. They say you are willing to sacrifice inholders, our communities, lifestyles and culture. I don't know. I can only wonder, as the Apostle Paul did about the church at Corinth when the believers wandered from the faith: Who has bewitched you?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gwynn Oak, MD
January 24, 1999

Dear Kenyons:

Happy New Year! I hope 1999 is a healthy and creative year for you both.

Enclosed is my \$20 check for a two-year subscription to WSEN. What about this year's calendar? I truly enjoyed the 1998 calendar—it hung in my office, reminding me that this paper bound word that I inhabit is not the only reality. I would enjoy a 1999 version.

I look forward to my

monthly update from you folks. Each issue gives me a mini-vacation. For an hour or two, I am once again on the razor-ridge above the mines, staring down on Kennecott's faded red relics. I appreciate your efforts to convey the events and personalities of one of the most magnificent and singular areas I've ever visited. As a professional freelance writer, I also appreciate the high level of your journalistic skill and integrity. Though I disagree with most of your editorial positions, I thoroughly agree

with your overriding passion for Wrangell-St. Elias, Alaska, and our natural world.

Best wishes,
Reed Hellman.

Superior, CO
February 4, 1999

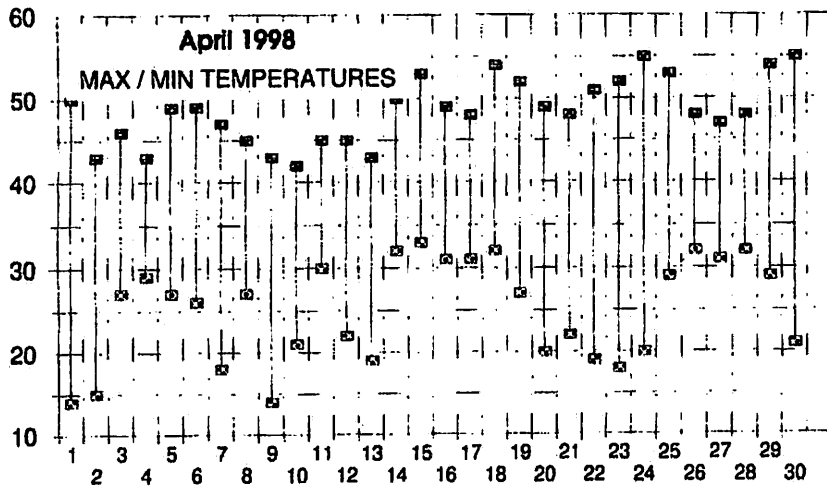
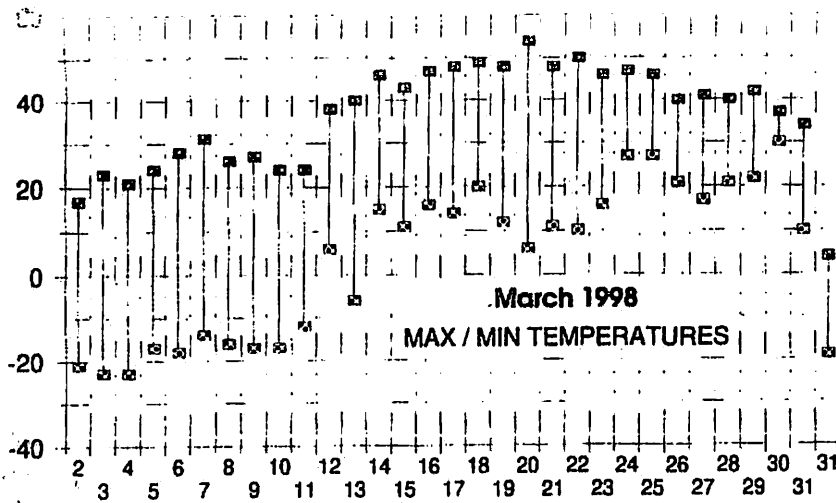
Dear Editors:

Please renew my subscription.

I have very much enjoyed Dee Frady's articles on flowers.

Sincerely,
Mary Ellen Clark

Weather - What can we expect?



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