

# Wrangell St. Elias News

*"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"*

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## Winter at McCarthy—and elsewhere!



Spring break in the north included a day excursion on the Nizina River (the old remains of the Nizina Bridge is in the background) for Cat O'Donnell and Haeyeon Jang. Snowmachines work much better when they are upright. Cat's machine took a slight tumble, or two or three, but Neil (Cat's dad) was thankfully nearby to get them on the right track once again. Be sure to read Cat's account on page 12.

Winter break in the south looked much different for the Kenyons. Keeping an eye out for critters such as this one and spending a week in what seemed like a Ma Johnson's sister hotel in Carrabelle, Florida, presents quite a contrast. Both are awesome places to visit and take in the sights. Read Rick's story, "Southern Exposure and McCarthy



# A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

March is one of the most beautiful months of the year, in my opinion. Longer days, more light, warmer daytime temperatures, a lot of blue skies and awesome scenery. Rick and I left McCarthy December 12th in a blinding snowstorm and were more-than-thankful we were able to drive the McCarthy Road safely. We arrived home March 7th after spending a wonderful time with family and friends in Florida, Georgia and Texas. The weather was unusually warm and the few cold spells were rare this trip.

It seems we always meet up with someone who has connections with our town. This year it was Peggy Morsch and Kathy Herson. When they aren't visiting their McCarthy cabin, they live and work in Milwaukee. On one of those visits, Peggy and I discussed meeting in the New Smyrna or Edgewater area for a winter visit and dinner with our moms. My mom lives in New Smyrna and Peggy's mom visits that area every winter. Our plans came to fruition and, we four, plus Rick and Kathy, met at a great seafood restaurant and our moms met for the first time. We had a very enjoyable time together.

As you can see and read on page 10, Rick and I did some traveling in Florida, visiting a couple of new (to us) areas and took along the fishing poles, of course. On one such trip, we drove to Donalsonville, GA where our son, Rick Jr., his wife, Maria,

and our four grandsons, Jonathan, Stephen, Joshua and Caleb, live. We were able to attend (for the first time) one of our grandsons' (Stephen, 17) ball games.

Another highlight of our family time was celebrating my mom's (Neta) 92nd birthday. Rick's dad, Carl, who is himself 93, took us out to eat at a new Golden Corral restaurant where we managed to celebrate the occasion with such a variety of foods.

Now that we are home and caught up on the shoveling and snowblowing, we are working on the March/April issue of *WSEN* and the upcoming annual Visitor's Guide to Kennicott & McCarthy 2013. If you are interested in being included in the "guide," please be sure to contact us at 907-554-4454.

Rick and I thank Cat O'Donnell, Sunny Cook and Patti

Polizzo for their contributions to this issue. Cat, 15, was in McCarthy for spring break and writes about a snowmachine excursion she, a friend and her dad took while here just recently. You will find her vivid account on page 12.

It's been a decade since Sunny wrote her story, page 7, about a "Raised in the Wrangells" oral history event that features Kenny Lake resident, Sharon Faverty. Thanks for your willingness to share your thoughts and insights, Sunny and Sharon.

Patti's true account of her first winter in McCarthy is on page 9. She does a great job describing her daily routine and reflections. Thank you, Patti, for telling us about it!

A heartfelt thanks to all our readers for your patience in receiving the March/April issue later than usual. I trust you find it well worth the waiting!

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# Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

**Neil O'Donnell, daughter Cat and Haeyeon:** Shortly after Rick and I arrived home Spring Break began with an influx of friends and neighbors returning to their cabins. March is a beautiful month to celebrate with outdoor activities.

Neil, his daughter, Cat, and her friend, Haeyeon Jang, decided to make the most of the occasion with a trip to the O'Donnell's cabin. Cat and Haeyeon, both 15, are students at Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, NH. They are in their Sophomore year and thoroughly enjoying their studies. This is Haeyeon's first visit to our state. She is enthralled with the scenery, much preferring the slower pace of McCarthy to the bustle of Anchorage's traffic. One of 4 sisters, she calls California "home" but mostly because many of her family members live there and she visits them as often as she can. Both Vietnam and Korea are familiar places for her. In fact, Haeyeon's parents are presently working and living in Korea.

Cat and her dad are introducing Haeyeon to a variety of "new" things: snowmachining, snowshoeing (breaking a trail in to their cabin) and crosscountry skiing. A recent snowmachine trip up the frozen Nizina River to visit Kelly and Natalie Bay gave each participant a chance to strengthen muscles they forgot their had. The trail condi-

tions looked good but contained plenty of opportunities for digging their machines out of the softer snow banks. (Be sure to read Cat's account of the trip on page 12.)

A trip to Kennicott gleaned more pictures for Neil's camera and added memories for the two young ladies. Haeyeon had her first opportunity to drive a snowmachine. She did very well!

It is always a special treat for Rick and I to spend an evening catching up with the O'Donnells. At dinner last night, the young ladies kept us quite entertained with their stories of life in the dorms and classes of Exeter.

Thanks for the wonderful visit, Neil, Cat and Haeyeon!

**Kelly and Natalie Bay:** Speaking of the Bays, I called Natalie to see how their winter travels fared. They left a few days before we did and arrived home January 12. Kelly, Natalie and daughter Tessa traveled to Cambodia where they celebrated Christmas with a family reunion. Approximately 12 family members gathered for the occasion. "We really enjoyed getting together with our Australian family," says Natalie. "Tessa, who was on college holiday, rarely gets to see her cousins. She, too, enjoyed the family time." Besides Cambodia, their travels took them to Thailand, Laos, Hong Kong and Macau.

Now that they are home on the Nizina, Natalie is busy doing "office stuff" and getting ready for what is "looking like a good summer season." When I called, Kelly was in the shop building a new bed, Natalie said. They are still on winter mode and enjoying the solitude of their cabin on the Nizina River. Before too long, the Bays will begin their migration to their summer headquarters in downtown McCarthy, operating Wrangell Mountain Air and their shuttle van service. Welcome home, Kelly and Natalie!

**Fred, Ann and Will Dure:** The awesome March month is here once again and the Dure family, Ann, Fred and Will, are back. In response to a request for an "item," Fred and Ann sent me the following update from their neck-of-the-woods: "Will's favorite activity is snowmachining, imagine that! Whether recreational riding or freighting, Will (now 12 and in 6<sup>th</sup> grade) loves the ride. He especially likes to get our vintage Bob Hammer 1984 red Bravos out of storage for a spin. They're lighter and he finds them easier to weight in the snow than our Skidoo Skandics.

Ann keeps the domestic front under control and helps the guys freight supplies and materials from the truck. With our canopy adventure effort going full bore for a mid-June opening, we are all working hard to get the new building and

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operations set up and in shape. And, our new website is up, too. Whew, it's good that we have boundless energy. The year 2013 marks our 19<sup>th</sup> year on the Nizina River bluffs. We look forward to more years of adventure, fun and, uhh, lots more work!"

Be sure to check out the Dure's new website at:  
[www.AlaskaBorealCanopy.com](http://www.AlaskaBorealCanopy.com).

**Neil Darish:** McCarthy Lodge owner and neighbor, Neil Darish, is expecting an exciting summer season. "Most of our old staff are returning and we have a couple new people joining us this year." Locals will remember Randy Collette. He fills the position of manager for the restaurant and bar. Jim Nyholm comes back to his post as executive chef. Patti Polizzo is heading up the hotel as manager.

Neil is eager to spruce up the exterior of some of his downtown buildings, he says. The grocery store and the gift store, for example, should receive a new look, if Neil has anything to say about it.

Thanks for keeping us updated, Neil!

**Trig Trigliano:** While many of us were traveling outside the state and beyond, Trig stayed close to home this winter. He actually took on extra duties to help keep the town moving in the right direction.

Mail days are twice a week and are very important happenings to McCarthy area locals.

With a good number of us missing in action, Trig and Kennicott resident, Jim Miller, did their best to take up the slack. Several times Trig was the only "sorter" on hand. Besides that extra responsibility, he gathered mail for several folks and forwarded it on to them. (Rick and I were one of those grateful neighbors receiving important mail while visiting family and friends.)

Our thanks to you, Trig, (and to you, Jim Miller) for all the help you gave to our town and its residents. Those wintery days sorting cold,

slippery catalogs and mail are not always pleasant. You are greatly appreciated!

**Mark Vail:** I called Mark today as I heard he had just returned from a working trip in Fairbanks. He's been going back and forth this winter, he says, and able to keep his trails packed down.

When I called, he was busy baking a batch of muffins to take to a neighbor's for dinner. Catie Bursech and her husband, Thom, who own a cabin near Mark, came in for a visit. Although Thom had to return to Homer early, Catie and a couple of friends remained behind.

Mark said his neighborhood is alive with folks making good use of Spring Break. The dinner was taking place at Catie's cabin with Art and Ann Ward (also visiting their place at Fireweed Mountain) joining in the festivities.

The Wards and Catie were due back from a skiing trip up the Nizina. Mark says Catie has a pot of chili already prepared and waiting for their dinner. Mark was waiting for a phone call to come join the party.

Usually Mark is busy planting vegetables for his garden but with his various trips to town, he is behind on that project. However, when he returns to Fairbanks soon, he plans on starting his garden plants in town and bringing them home with him. Not much can stop Mark from tending to his green thumb, especially when March rolls around.

**Paul Hanis and Jenny Rosenbaum:** In the last issue of *WSEN*, I left you in the middle of plenty of "Dog Drama" from the Hanis/Rosenbaum home on the Nizina. I thought you might be interested in the rest of the story.

After a phone call to Jenny and her announcement, "I'm a grandmother," I discovered that their dog Opus' treks to our neighborhood (13 miles away) have found an ending. Apparently, the results from a visit to a nearby veterinarian are

working, but not before dear Dot, the lady Opus so faithfully pursued, became the mother of 4 surviving pups. Jenny says she hears they have been spoken for. Opus appears to be content at home now.

Paul is up on the North Slope doing a work stint for about 3 weeks. Jenny is very busy in her tax season as an accountant and expects to be until April 15<sup>th</sup>. In between her computing, she and her dogs are finding time to hike to the rock glacier and sightsee.

Jenny traveled to Texas to spend Christmas with her family. One of the highlights was visiting her grandmother who is in her mid-90's and doing very well. Paul remained home to keep an eye on the homestead and their dogs.

The McCarthy Road was maintained well this winter, says Jenny, which enabled her to drive her Honda Civic in and out 5 times this year. One particular trip, however, took her 5 hours from home to Chitina due to icy conditions. She was thankful that Paul escorted her out that time.

A recent wind storm left behind icy trail conditions at the Nizina and several nearby tree tops were severed by the high winds. A styrofoam cooler escaped its storage spot and rode the winds along in the yard which created quite an uproar from her dogs. They just couldn't figure out what this strange flying object was. Jenny says it was a great source of entertainment for her.

Paul and Jenny are planning on doing something different this summer. They are going to add 1,000 honey bees to their homestead. A friend of theirs was quite successful at gleaning 7 gallons of honey from one hive. Perhaps they will meet with the same results! I hope so, Jenny! A wonderful addition to your ever-growing garden plot.

**Howard Mozen, Elizabeth Schafer and daughter Avery and son Owen:** The Mozen/Schafer family are now back home in Kennicott

from a very exciting 4-month vacation. I just got off the phone with Elizabeth who gave me the short version of their travels. This "item" would be better served as a full-fledged article, but neither Elizabeth or myself has the time to do so within the time allotted to get this issue printed and mailed. I am going to give more space to Elizabeth's account, knowing our "items of interest" readers enjoy the activities of McCarthy and Kennicott's local folks. What they do for entertainment, relaxation and exploration.

Howard, Elizabeth, Avery, 12, and Owen, 9, left their Kennicott home in time for the young folks to celebrate Halloween with their friends in Anchorage. November they flew to the Big Island of Hawaii and spent the month doing home school in the morning and hitting the beaches in the afternoon. The highlight of their stay was visiting Volcano National Park, hiking out to the flowing lava. Avery and Owen enjoyed poking sticks into the hot lava, says Elizabeth.

They made connections with Michael and Lilly Goodman/Allwright and family, spending Thanksgiving with them. The Allwrights are familiar faces when they visit their place in McCarthy.

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, Elizabeth says her family flew to Tahiti. Howard renewed an acquaintance who runs the University of California/Berkeley's research station. They spent 2 weeks visiting with him, renting a bungalow on the water's edge and taking in their friend's Tahitian family events. Snorkeling every day was a highlight and a relief from the 80 degree temperatures in spite of the fact the water temperatures were super warm.

Due to Howard's spear fishing excursions, they ate fish nearly everyday. The kids learned to weave hats from the many palm fronds.

They all enjoyed the availability of the many fruit trees and sampled them frequently.

Elizabeth says she and Howard wanted Avery and Owen to be immersed in the Spanish language so their next leg of the vacation took them to Argentina/South America. But, prior to arriving they decided to take a 5-day layover on the way. Easter Island was their pick. They loved it! According to Elizabeth the island is small, about 15 miles long and 7 miles wide. There is a good-sized town on the island so they rented a guest cabin within walking distance of the market everyday. "It was a phenomenal visit, so pleasant and such impressive history," says Elizabeth.

There are about 5,000 permanent residents on the island which has quite a tourist trade, although they arrived during the off season.

I asked her if there were many vehicles on the island. She said a few and many of them reminded her of our older McCarthy cars. They did manage to rent a car so they could see every bit of Easter. The history of the Polynesian people and the settling of the island was a great boon for Avery and Owen's cultural education, says Elizabeth.

They flew into Chili, then took a bus to Argentina where they met up with a past Kennicott local, Elizabeth Horan and her partner Francisco. (Elizabeth is still guiding, and plans to visit McCarthy in September to attend Monte and Candyce's wedding.) They all traveled to San Juan arriving on Christmas Eve. They were soon introduced to Argentina's "hot winds" which drove the temperatures up to 113 degrees F. Now that was an experience, says Elizabeth! Talk about hot. Thankfully, it didn't last too long and the average temperatures dropped to the 80's.

They spent 6 days working on an organic farm and spent several days at a hostel in the country.

Heading south, they met up with another Kennicott family, Mike and Karen Loso. The Losos are wintering in North Patagonia. Elizabeth and family spent 3 weeks taking backcountry trips in the mountains and doing a lot of hiking. "It is so unlike Alaska. No bugs, and we didn't even need a tent" described Elizabeth of their camping-out adventures.

Their next stop was Buenos Aires for a week. Howard's dad, Milt, met them there. They had a great time visiting other relatives living in the area.

Peru was the next destination. They spent 10 days in the mountains. The altitude was 11,000 ft. which was a challenge until they got adjusted to it. It sounds like they would like to return to the area someday.

It was time to head home, but before returning to Alaska, they made a stop over in Sarasota, Florida, to visit Howard's 90 yr. old aunt. That was another highlight of their trip, says Elizabeth.

Now that they are finally home in their Kennicott quarters, there is a lot of catching up to do. They are busy settling in, making trails, hauling water and getting the snowmachine up and running. When I first called Elizabeth the other day, she, Howard, Avery and Owen were visiting Jenny Rosenbaum on the Nizina. They needed to pick up Dori, their husky (retired) sled dog who still does a great job ski-jouring with the family. Elizabeth says Dori kept up with their snowmachine all the way home, a long 15 miles.

Homeschooling is on the priority list. In fact, when Elizabeth called today, Howard (teacher) was in their guest cabin heading up Avery and Owen's studies. I guess vacation is over for the mom, dad and kids! Welcome home, Elizabeth, Howard, Avery and Owen.

# Alaska Grown-1979

BY RICK KENYON JR.

The long nights and short days of Alaska's winter gave many residents good cause for "cabin fever." Thankfully, the large glass windows in our new cabin helped to alleviate the winter blues. Those, in addition to our walking to town once or twice a week to get mail, made the winter go by with little anxiety on our part.

Spring came slowly at first—then small signs of its approaching became clearer. The daylight grew steadily longer and the temperatures climbed up higher on the thermometer. Soon the days were above freezing and dipped below during the nights. The snow got a "crust" on the surface and allowed me to walk on top in the early mornings. I thought that was great stuff.....almost like walking on the water. It didn't last long, though, and the spring breakup was in full swing. It was several weeks before the grass would appear and regular shoes could be worn.

Even after the majority of the snow melted, the "summer creek" was still frozen up the mountain at its source. I continued to haul water from the "winter creek" by 5-gallon buckets. Dad had the idea to craft a yoke out of wood with a short piece of rope on each end. I used it for several weeks until we could get water from the summer creek.

Robins came back in the neighborhood by the dozens. Swallows zoomed overhead in search of nesting homes. The swallows ate mosquitoes, a curse of locals and visitors alike. That summer was another bad year for mosquitoes. I recall hearing them buzz at night (as I tried to sleep) and pulling the sheets over my head for safety from the small pests. We discovered Amway had an excellent spray-repellant

called "D15." It worked better than major brands of repellent.

As the ground thawed, Dad and I worked on a garden plot with shovels. It was slow, hard work as the soil had not been turned over in 40-50 years. I thought how nice it must have been when those horses and mules pulled a plow instead of resorting to the back-breaking work I was doing! Since this was our first 'real garden' in Alaska, we asked our neighbors for advice. Maxine Edwards was a great source of information and let us borrow her seed catalog to order vegetable seeds. An order was mailed out by the mail plane and several weeks later, the package arrived. Maxine gave us a few starter plants that were extras and soon our little garden began to take shape.

Alaska has a short growing season, and some vegetables would not grow in that short of time. As years went by, we would plant most of our 'cole crops' indoors 4-6 weeks before the last frost, then transplant them into the garden. Other plants such as tomatoes and cucumbers would go into a greenhouse that was later erected. The long summer days were welcomed and helped the plants to grow that were conditioned to the extremes of Alaska's weather.

Sam was thrilled to have the grassy field back at his command. The field mice were once again terrorized by his snout and paws that often times found their prey. He would grab the mouse and toss it up in the air! It was comical to watch him try to play with the small mouse; only to find it was not quite



WSEN staff photo

The author today.

challenging enough for a hundred-pound dog. Once the "hunt" was over, he was off to bigger and better things.

One summer evening, a strange pickup drove up in the yard and a tall, middle-aged man got out. We

walked out to meet him and he introduced himself as Jack Pasture from California. He informed us that he had bought a piece of property down the road near the Edwards'. I recall him as a funny fellow who constantly gestured while talking. He stayed for supper and we spent the evening listening to stories of Belgium and California. He made plans to build a cabin on his property and to stay there during the summers. Swift Creek went through his property; a small, gravel airstrip bordered the south side of it. Jack parked a travel trailer on his land until his cabin was built.

Grampa and Grammy purchased a log home and property in Montana and wrote with pictures and details. They did not come up for a visit that summer as they had their hands full with moving into their new place. Their neighbors from Englewood, Florida, also lived nearby. Grammy wrote, telling of her garden and the chickens her and Grampa were raising. Their nearest town was Hamilton and right at the edge of a mountain range.

I enjoyed the break from home schooling and dreaded the fall when it was time to hit the books again. The summer flew by quickly and the trees were making their annual change of colors. We drove into Glennallen for fuel and supplies and a stop by the Copper River School District office. Books were picked up for my 5th grade schooling.

## Sharon's voice

BY SUNNY COOK

“I was humiliated when I first learned as a young girl in school that for a sack of flour, sugar and tea, Nicolai traded information on the whereabouts of the copper beneath Bonanza Ridge to McClellan and Millard.” Sharon's words spoken at the Park Service "Raised in the Wrangells" oral history event etch themselves on my mind. With women of all ages sharing very diverse experiences, she sits up front alongside her friend Dorothy, their round copper-toned faces so alike, but Sharon's hair as silver gray as Dorothy's is jet black. Dorothy was born in a tipi. Their Ahtna-Athabaskan voices are heard again in Kennecott for perhaps the first time in the century since their forefathers, Chiefs Hanagita and Nicolai of Taral, first encountered white men interested in the source of copper they traded. As Sharon and Dorothy speak I visualize their ancestors hunting moose and sheep in the 7000' mountains visible from our log cabin window, their grandmothers gathering tart wild cranberries as red as the historic buildings in the Kennecott Copper Company ghost town.

While others speak, I think back to the writing workshop in McCarthy a year earlier when Sharon almost went home the second day. Sitting in front of the Hardware Store she told me, "Mine is only one voice." She did stay through the week, working hard to overcome a natural hesitance of people raised in the oral tradition to write things down—and a learned distrust of giv-

ing too much information to white men.

An hour after the "Raised in the Wrangells" discussion, Sharon and I are sitting together on Silk Stocking Lane where Kennecott Copper Company management lived during the copper mining years. "Save my chair while I get my manuscript." Sharon's voice conveys her nervousness about sharing her story with the group of mostly white strangers gathering for dinner. I empathize with how she feels. After attending dozens of feasts in a Yakama long-house in White Swan, I have never found the courage to speak.

After dinner around a blazing camp fire Sharon reads aloud from her "Reflections of Kennecott" manuscript, her voice growing stronger as she turns each page. The image of Sharon looking for her reflection in the dusty warped windows of the Kennecott Company General Store strikes me like an arrow. Sharon, at 50, seeing the sun set rather than rise behind 16,000-foot Mt. Blackburn for the first time is a significant one-line commentary on the recent history of her people. Hunter-gatherers, her ancestors may have walked annually for eons on both sides of that quiet mountain before Russians and then Americans claimed the land and changed their lives forever more.

Haunted by Sharon's images I look forward all year to meeting her again at the 2002 Wrangell Mountains Center Writing Workshop directed by my daughter Nancy. The workshop opens on Sunday night in the old Hardware Store. Late on Monday morning I overhear a voice in the adjacent kitchen, "The bridge will go soon." Will go soon, will go soon, it echoes in my head. A few hours earlier, my younger daughter Laura and I had bravely crossed McCarthy Creek on the little hand-made bridge in knee high rubber boots. The creek was flooding, rushing water covering the wide

rocky creek bed, spilling over and threatening the boulder-protected south shore of McCarthy.

With each break in the day's activities I pull on my raincoat and hasten 75 yards or so to the creek, watching the flooding water rise and rise and rise, splashing on the 52-foot hand-made aspen bridge, splashing over the aspen logs, splashing away any lingering hope that the only bridge to our log cabin on the other side might survive the flood. The bridge gives away late in the day. Suddenly Laura and I are refugees in need of a bed to sleep in, a toothbrush..... Awake at dawn surveying the flood scene, I notice a lone white bird, a seagull perhaps, gliding back and forth just above the cresting water downstream. I can't be sure, having never noticed seagulls in this alpine wilderness before, but I take it as a good sign.

"I like to be alone," I hear Sharon say in the day. We spend a lot of time alone, together on the side of the creek that week. "I want to save our family stories for my children," she says quietly, "lest they be further lost as the elders pass away and the Copper River and its tributaries erode the shores where my people lived." Listening over the roar of the creek, I nod my understanding, having observed several of McCarthy's historic houses and a hand-full of bridges disappear in the near-annual floods.

In a mid-week writing circle I wonder on paper: How did Sharon's people cross the flooding rivers and creeks on their annual travels between Taral, some 60 miles distant on the Copper River, and Skolai, one of the Ahtna settlements reported by Allen in 1889. Skolai must have been located about 20 miles from here. Having been there myself, I wonder if Sharon has. In writing circles we read aloud from our journals. At lunch Nancy compliments me on making the connec-

tion between Skolai and Spruce Point.

Later that afternoon we are together by the creek when Sharon asks, "Do you want me to tell you how they crossed the flooding creeks and rivers?" (Paraphrasing perhaps) "They carried a tree stripped of its branches, a group of men all in a line, lifting up the one(s) in the deeper water." We talk with our hands, trying to imagine crossing the flooding creek before us in the seesaw manner she has once heard an elder describe. I ask, "Have you ever been to Spruce Point on the Nizina?" "No, but I hope to go there one day."

As the flood water recedes I am amazed to see how the deep channel has altered course. Two years earlier the Ahtna Corporation had been low bidder on a contract to divert the deep channel away from the eroding McCarthy town shore. Dressed in her gray hooded Ahtna sweatshirt, Sharon shrewdly observes, "The boulders worked, but I guess Mother Nature gets to decide on which side of the wide creek bed she'll flow."

Both interested in genealogy, I ask about her family's last name. "We didn't have last names in earlier times when Hanagita and Nicholai lived in Taral, the most important village on the lower Copper River. Nicholai's name shows the Russian influence. In the generation after the Americans took over, Hanagita's son, my grandfather, was named Tonsina Bell. Before I married I was Sharon Bell." Appropriately named, I think, the great granddaughter of a traditional chief: Sharon, princess in Hebrew, Belle, beautiful one in French. In 1899 Hanagita guided Gates to Nicholai's winter village at Skolai. He was last seen two years later at the potlatch for his better-known brother, Nicolai. Sharon can read about her ancestor and look at Hanagita Peak, but she has no knowledge of when or how he died and where he was buried.

"When the Russian Orthodox established churches in the Copper River Valley the priests said cranberries were like the blood of Jesus Christ on earth. My family did not pick or eat any more cranberries until the Kenny Lake Roadhouse started buying them and we picked to earn money." It is Thursday afternoon. I look up and see my husband Bob building a new bridge platform on the opposite side of the creek while I read Sharon's Peanuts and Cranberries manuscript.

"What?" I interrupt her concentration. "Because of the Russian Orthodox Church your ancestors stopped eating cranberries? Cranberries had to be a sacred food for your people, akin to chokecherries and huckleberries for the Yakama people in Washington State, plentiful, rich in vitamins, probably essential to human survival in this inhospitable winter environment. I am astonished!" Her face shows no expression; she merely shrugs her shoulders at me.

Friday night I pace for hours along McCarthy Creek as the aspen span is pushed and pulled back across, an incredible engineering feat. My husband on the far side, walkie-talkie in hand, appears to be directing the operation. Just at dark I see the lone white bird fly gracefully by, clearly a gull, apparently surveying the unusual human scene. Taking it as a hopeful sign, I breathe a bit easier. The following afternoon, I carefully cross the tenuous bridge, heading home for the first time in nearly a week to wash my hair and change clothes.

The workshop ends on Sunday afternoon and Sharon crosses the creek with me to visit our cabin. Over lunch we talk about Ron Simpson's historical novel. Since reading *Legacy of the Chief* earlier in the summer I have been vaguely disturbed by the suggestion of a raven curse put on the land by Nicolai in the early years of the last century. Sharon has not read the book and makes no comment about my concern.

Weeks later, sitting alone at our computers in Kenny Lake, Alaska, and Richland, Washington, our emails virtually cross in the air. Sharon writes to thank me for the photograph of her looking for her reflection in the window of the Kennecott Company General Store. Perhaps responding to my question about a raven curse, she writes: "Our clans are divided into two moieties: Raven and Seagull. Under the Raven moiety are the Eagle clans including Naltsiine or Sky Clan, my clan. Under the Seagull moiety is Udzisyu or Caribou, Nicolai's clan, I believe, from stories I have heard. When an Ahtna marries, the proper marriage is between the two moieties." With her brief explanation of the moiety, somehow my mind is a bit eased of the raven curse.

We have much to learn about Raven and Gull, Black and White, Male and Female, Ying and Yang, Wisdom of the Ages that must not be lost. I am haunted by Sharon not disturbing more than a dusty cobweb as she looks for her reflection in the warped windows of our nation's ravenous industrial past. I want her to embrace the past and share her innate native wisdom with her children and mine. I find a sense of balance in hearing Sharon's quiet human voice juxtaposed opposite the louder Mill Building story Kennecott shares with visitors from around the world.

Sharon Bell Faverty, Child of the Ancient Ahtna People  
Find Your Voice. Reclaim Your Past. Define What Haunts You.  
Write Your Truths. Share Your Stories. Right the Balance.  
Storyteller, Writer, Teacher,  
Mother, Daughter, Friend  
For Whom the Bell Tolls  
She Tolls For All.

*Sunny Cook lives in Spokane, WA and spends summers in McCarthy, AK, which is the setting for this story. She is collecting her essays and poems in memoir form, "Piecing a Life," to share with her children, grandchildren and friends.*



# Southern Exposure and McCarthy connections

BY RICK KENYON

It seems more and more McCarthy residents are heading south in the winter. Many to far-away places such as Equador or even Cambodia. Our travels also took us south, and while perhaps not as exotic as some destinations, we did manage to find areas in the south that rival McCarthy's solitude and scenery.

As many WSEN readers know, Bonnie and I have made trips to Florida each year for the past several years. Normally we stay in Daytona Beach, where my father lives. Bonnie's mother lives nearby in New Smyrna Beach.

Several years ago we teamed up with neighbors John and Barbara Rice and visited Everglades City, dubbed by a few McCarthy locals as the "McCarthy of the south." (See story in the January & February 2009 issue.) John brought his boat all the way from St. Louis, and we enjoyed fishing the everglades. That experience proved that not all of Florida consists of concrete and high-rise condos. Our local Chuck Gretske, partner at the Glacierview Campground, spends his winters there running a float-plane charter operation. In the summer he operates from Lake Hood in Anchorage and helps his partner Chris run the campground in McCarthy..

This year we decided to explore the eastern Florida Panhandle region, again looking for a place that shared at least some of the desirable attributes of the McCarthy area but where the sun provided some of that vitamin D in January!

A small town on the Gulf coast called Carrabelle caught our attention. The local Chamber of Commerce described it as "the last vestige of Old Florida, a haven for discriminating people who love the

coastal outdoors but shy away from crowds."

We looked for something resembling our local Ma Johnson Hotel and found it in a place called the Old Carrabelle Hotel.

Built in the late 1800s, the Old



Carrabelle Hotel actually predates the Ma Johnson. But, like our local landmark, it has been totally refurbished and brought (mostly) up-to-date. The owners, Skip and Kathy Frink were offering a special of "stay two nights, get one free," so we signed up for 6 nights in February.

One of the secrets to the Carrabelle area's lack of crowds is similar to that of McCarthy's—the main highways are some distance away. Although only slightly more than an hour's drive from the state capital of Tallahassee, the trip requires driving entirely on two-lane roads. The roads are quite good, but they are narrow and winding.

The town lies on the Carrabelle River, which feeds a steady supply of fresh water to the St. George Sound. The Sound is bordered on the south by Dog Island, which serves as a buffer when the hurricane season arrives.

To the west are the towns of Eastpoint, Apalachicola and the 22-mile barrier island called St. George Island. Apalachicola Bay lies between St. George Island and the

mainland, and has a constant source of fresh water flowing into it from the Apalachicola River. This fresh water mix provides the ideal habitat for oysters, and it is said that 90% of the oysters consumed in Florida are harvested here. A long bridge connects St. George Island to the mainland at Eastpoint, and from this bridge we could see several dozen small skiffs with one or two-person crews harvesting oysters in the shallow water. Over 2.6 million pounds of oyster meat is harvested annually by these small boats.

Sections of the old bridge have been left in place in order to serve as fishing piers. We spent several pleasurable hours fishing from the longer of the two and visiting with others doing the same.

The St. George Island State Park occupies the far eastern end of the island. The park shoreline stretches for 9 miles of undeveloped shoreline, majestic dunes, a bay forest and salt marshes. The park has a series of hiking trails, boardwalks and observation platforms.

Back in Carrabelle, we secured the services of local fishing guide Captain Cody Cash Moody who operates My Fishing Adventure Charters. The weather turned blustery and cold the day of our adventure, but Captain Cody did put us on both redfish and spotted sea trout. The area definitely lives up to its billing as a top fishing destination.

Several people told us not to miss Wakulla Springs just north of Carrabelle. After a scenic drive of about 45 minutes we arrived at the state park surrounding one of the largest and deepest fresh-water springs in the world. We took a scenic boat ride starting at the spring and traveling down the Wakulla River, where we saw lots of alligators and a variety of birds and turtles. We even saw an otter, which according to the guide is unusual. A local

ranger told us that although the river is fresh-water, a number of salt-water fish come as far as the spring, including redfish, trout and sheepshead.

We decided to rent a canoe just outside of the park and do a little exploring on our own. Sure enough, we saw sheepshead in the clear water, and saw several largemouth bass caught from a small boat drifting the river near us. I tried my hand at fishing but had no success. Captain Moody told us that he enjoys fishing the lower parts of the river in the summer for tarpon.

Like McCarthy, there are no traffic lights anywhere near Carrabelle. Also like McCarthy, the area is largely made up of public lands. Of the 348,000 acres that make up Franklin County, 202,180 acres belong to the state.

Tate's Hell State Forest lies just north of Carrabelle. North of that is the Apalachicola National Forest. To

and they seem to be increasing in numbers quite rapidly.

We did see wild turkeys along the highway. In fact they can now be spotted even along some of the freeways in the more populated areas of Florida. Wild hogs are also quite numerous.

One of those "McCarthy connections" occurred the last morning of our stay at Carrabelle. The night before we awakened to a real heat wave in our room at the hotel. It wasn't due to warm weather outside; in fact, the outside temperatures dropped to the low 30's. It was a mystery to us since our previous nights had been more on the cooler side.

As we came out of our room on our way to our last breakfast in town, a lady exited the room directly across the hall from us. We greeted each other and I couldn't help but ask her if she, too, had experienced an usually warm room at some point during the night. She was quick to exclaim that it had. She and her husband had opened

their windows to find some relief. During the conversation (and laughter), we discovered they were from North Carolina. We told them we were from Alaska. She perked up instantly and said that her husband had just recently renewed an acquaintance with a friend who was, also, from Alaska. In fact, he and his wife lived in a small copper mining town.

A coincidence, of course, but we told her it couldn't be the same town as ours because our town is quite small. She said, "Let me ask my husband. He is in the shower." Returning to the hallway, she said, "The name of our friends are Terry



WSEN staff photo

Author caught several of these spotted sea trout near Carrabelle.



WSEN staff photo

It doesn't get much better than this! Floating the Wakulla River in a canoe.

the west is the Apalachicola River Wildlife and Environmental Area.

Bear warning signs can be seen along the highway leading north. Although we didn't see any of the Florida black bears, our fishing guide told us they are a real nuisance and frequently cause problems in downtown Carrabelle. So far Florida has not seen fit to implement a hunting season on them,

and Dee Frady of McCarthy, Alaska."

The shock on our faces must have been glaring! "Terry and Dee Frady?"

"Yes," she said! We explained that the Fradys live about 2 miles from us and we know them quite well.

I couldn't help but ask, "Do you happen to believe in miracles?" Another "yes" from our newfound friend.

Needless to say, the four of us decided we couldn't end our conversation on that note. Instead we met for breakfast at the local café in town to sort out this amazing connection.

Mike and Barbara Miller of Clyde, NC plan on visiting Alaska sometime in the near future. McCarthy is on the list as well as their friends, Terry and Dee, and, hopefully, us.

What a small world!

For those who enjoy hiking, there are many miles of trails in the Carrabelle area. Wildlife is plentiful. Canoe and kayak rentals abound. Fishing is awesome. The local lifestyle is laid back. Any questions?

# My McCarthy Winter

BY PATTY POLIZZO

What does one write about living in McCarthy in the winter? Although everyday is an adventure it feels alarmingly “normal.” I miss some things...like fresh vegetables and laundry facilities, but I truly embrace the lifestyle of living without electricity, running water and grocery stores. Most days are filled with daily chores – chopping wood & hauling water. Each day is unpredictable, thus alleviating boredom—the plan to cut wood can be changed in a heartbeat when the chainsaw won’t start (Which happens quite frequently for me. I have a long way to go to learn about chainsaws, generators, and snow machines); hauling water is sidelined because of the creek icing over and I can’t chop through it (I melt snow in pots on the stove); the “quick” run to a neighbor’s turns into an all day event when I go down the wrong trail, get the snow machine stuck and need to walk out to get help; the temperature is still 40 below so my day consists of reading all day and stoking the woodstove; or there was a good snowfall the night before so I spend the day keeping my trails open around the cabin and out to the creek by snow shoeing or walking.

I must admit I stare out the window quite a bit. I am fascinated by the changing light and shadows over the course of the day, or the gray jays that astound

me because it’s 40 below and they are out there flying around. I tend to read for 4 hours at a time (I’ve read about 30 books since October!) or just lie on the bed for a bit – just because I can. I love the fact that I don’t have to commute anywhere unless I decide to go to mail plane. So when it snows I am excited and usually go outside and play...really! I delight in the very smallest things again, such as the time a neighbor shared 3

“Instructions for Life:

Pay attention

Be astonished

Tell about it.”

—Mary Oliver

oranges, some carrots and a few potatoes. I got to the cabin and put the oranges on the table to stare at them for awhile.

The locals are so gracious and welcoming. I walked over to one neighbor’s house to charge my phone. It was 40 below and I couldn’t start the generator. I just showed up unannounced. I was warmly ushered into their wonderful cabin, the kettle was put on for tea, and then we shared good conversation. I was invited back whenever with offers of help when needed. Another neighbor came to check on me. They knew it was my first winter and it had been 40 below for at least a week. She wanted to make sure I was doing okay. Another time, in February, a neighbor came by with a pres-

ent! There was a big smile on his face and he clearly had something behind his back. It was a small head of lettuce. Joy!! We later shared a salad.

Time has a different meaning here. I often go for walks at night...like midnight or so. The stars are glorious! I’m often up at 3 or 4 am to stoke the fire, so I stay up and read or have a cup of tea knowing I can go back to bed and sleep more.

What is so very different is there are no distractions. Or I should say less/different distractions. I don’t have television. I don’t have internet. There is more time to take long leisurely walks actually looking at the details of my surroundings. The quiet allows for more room in my head to contemplate and sort some things out that may have been troubling in the past. I find myself relaxed and eager to chat with my daughter or sister on the phone without worrying about being somewhere else or getting to work.

Although I don’t consider myself a creative person, this lifestyle lends itself to at least trying new things like drawing, writing poetry, and knitting. My days are busy and often fly by.

It’s March already and soon the summer season will be upon us, which brings an entirely different experience. Part of me is sad...the winter is over already? Yet I know the summer will bring different adventures and I’ll meet more people that will continue to make my life better.

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"A government big-enough to give you everything you want, is big-enough to take everything that you have."

--President Gerald Ford (1913-2006)

# Snow Machines and Burglar Alarms

BY CAT O'DONNELL

The snow machine is sitting on its side, one ski up in the air like the leg of a dead bug. A little way ahead Dad turns off his own machine and comes to join us, shovel in hand. Behind him the frozen Nizina River stretches. Black Spruce cover the mountains in the distance, looking like someone had painted toothpicks black and stuck them up through the ground.

After a few moments of digging we have more or less righted the snow machine. We arrange ourselves around the side, bracing our feet against the snow in preparation to push.

"Ready?" Dad says after a moment, and Haeyeon and I nod. The roar of the engine grows as Dad hits the throttle, the three of us pushing the four hundred and fifty pound machine back onto the trail. The snow machine starts forward again, only to take another nose dive into the sugar snow a few feet ahead, ski sticking up in the air again.

Haeyeon grabs the shovel again and we start digging, eventually righting the machine and gearing up for another push. Haeyeon and I plant our feet in the snow to the side of the machine, waiting for Dad to hit the throttle again. Instead he pulls out his ringing cell phone.

"Hello?" he says as he turns the snow machine off. The engine dies down with a gentle hum. "The alarm on my house? Where's Margaret?"

I can hear a tinny voice from Dad's phone but I can't understand anything other than alarm and Margaret's number and snow-

storm. After a few moments Dad rattles off my mom's number and puts his phone back into his pocket.

"What was that about?" I ask.

"The alarm on our house in Anchorage is going off and the alarm company can't get a hold of your mother." Dad replies, "That was Jerry. He's swinging by our house to check if Mom's car is in the garage."

"Where's Mom?"

"They can't find her." Dad turns back to the snow machine and hits the throttle again. The snow machine doesn't move forward, just burrows itself deeper into the snow. Then there's the sound of rocks grinding and the engine dies down. River-smooth rocks peek out from between bits of snow underneath the machine.

"I think we're on the edge of a gravel bar," Dad says. "We're going to have to use the other snow machine to tow it out." I nod and fish the rope out. Then the loud ring of Dad's cell sounds and Dad pulls it out of his pocket.

"Jerry? ... Did you try calling Margaret? ... Oh, no luck then, what about her car? Was it in the garage?... No, I'm actually in McCarthy, in the middle of the Nizina River, digging out my snow machine... Call me if anything changes." Behind him, Haeyeon has wormed into the snow, a chunk of snow crust sitting on her head. Her puffy baby blue coat makes her resemble a newly hatched chick complete with the piece of egg shell all the chicks on Easter candy boxes have on their heads.

"Do we know where Mom is?" I ask as Dad puts away his phone.

He shakes his head. "Her car was in the garage, but they

couldn't get a hold of her on her cell."

We spend a few moments digging out the front of the snow machine before tying the rope to the skis. Ahead, Haeyeon sits on the other snow machine, watching us for the okay to go. Dad nods, and the hum on the engines grow as the rope slack disappears. The snow machine lurches forward a few moments later, dragging itself back onto the trail. The hum of the engines dies down and then disappears entirely, swallowed up by the snow and clear, frosty sky. It's replaced by the ring of Dad's cell a few moments later.

Dad pulls his phone out of his pocket and answers it with a "Jerry? Anything new?" Dad's silent for a while, nodding along to whatever Jerry's saying. Ahead, Haeyeon has leaned back on the snow machine and appears to be napping. A small plane flies by somewhere above, the drone reverberating around the landscape. Dad puts his phone away after a long moment.

"Good news," he starts, "Your mom has been located."

"Where was she?" I ask as we untie the rope and stash it back into the snow machine.

"Went running and forgot to turn the alarm off. She had her iPod in, so she didn't hear the alarm. But Jerry managed to call her and turn it off, so it's all good now."

I nod, then walk over to the other snow machine to wake Haeyeon up. Soon we're driving again, a brisk wind blowing, the rumble of the snow machines echoing over the river and over the mountains, disappearing into the silent woods.

# Alaska Again

*This is the second installment of the adventures of Ocha Potter, transcribed from his own journal.*

BY OCHA POTTER

Our party sailed from Seattle in early February (1906). There were four of us, "Bill" of the former expedition, two Michigan College of Mines engineers, "Pike" and "Jim," and myself. We stopped at Victoria, B. C., a beautiful residential city as typically English as any city in England, then over to Vancouver and north through the Island Passage. One night I went to sleep with the rhythmic beat of the ship's engines for a lullaby and woke in broad daylight to complete silence. Wondering what had happened I rushed out of the cabin door and there within ten feet of me was a forest of towering pine trees above a fifteen foot vertical wall of solid rock, an odd situation for a 2,000 ton steamship supposedly at sea. The mystery was soon explained. A dense fog had descended. We were in dangerous poorly charted and worse marked waters. Knowing there was deep water at the base of a nearby cliff the captain had simply edged into shore and tied up to the trees for the night, a unique experience in ocean travel. We cast off while the fog was still thick and I was to see another example of the ingenuity and resource of the pilots of those Alaskan waters in the early days. The ship proceeded at reduced speed. With a stop watch in his hand the pilot would blow the whistle and note the time required to get the echo. From this he figured the distance to shore and took his course.

We stopped at Juneau and then went on up to Skagway where the famous trail of the storied rush to the Yukon began in '98 at the foot of White Pass. Steaming westward we stopped at a salmon cannery at Yakutat. Across the bay a solid wall of ice hundreds of feet high rose out of the sea and extended westward as far as the eye could see—Malaspina Glacier. Ice fields extended up and up into the sky with occasional masses of dark rock looking like dotted islands, culminating in cloud-tipped Mt. St. Elias, 10,000 feet, nearly four miles above sea level. For hours we sailed along the base of Malaspina Glacier, keeping a respectful distance away to avoid the danger of huge waves caused by occasional falling masses of ice weighing thousands of tons.

Arriving at Valdez we added another member to our party, A. J. (Tony) Dimond, a high school graduate from upper New York state. More of Tony later.

By mid-March we were only about sixty miles out of Valdez when we were astonished to see our old promoter, H. H. Greer, pass us on the trail with a dog sled. That night I learned from friends camped near us that Greer had boasted in Valdez that he was going in to the Chitistone River country to jump some copper claims we had discovered the previous year but failed to stake. Next morning Bill and I hit the trail before daylight with packs, snowshoes, and my Colt .44, for a 300-mile trip over unbroken trails through forest and over the frozen rivers.

We took no tent or blankets, depending upon axes for "lean-to" shelters of spruce boughs and open fires for our night camps. The three men left in our party were to keep our outfit moving and say nothing as to where Bill and I had gone. We passed Greer in the night and

reached Chitistone River five days later, an average of over thirty miles per day on snowshoes. A few hours to take the claims, a full night's rest, and we started back to rejoin our party at a more leisurely pace. Next day we met Greer and his Indian guide on the river flats about ten miles below our claims and gave him a cheery "good morning." He was a much surprised and disappointed looking "sourdough." I guess he thought he was "seeing things" for he gave us no answer, just stood and watched until we were out of sight. I never met him again. He and two other prospectors were killed a year or so later in a snowslide on Kennecott Mountain.

Our outfit followed a big party sent out by a company which later became and still is, one of the largest producers of copper in the world's history—the Kennecott Copper Company. There was only one unusual incident. In a cluster of spruce trees on a bank of the Chitina River, a young Indian woman was found, dead with her new-born child beside her. We learned later that she had been with a party of Indian hunters looking for sheep up in one of the valleys at the base of Mt. Blackburn, had become too ill to travel on the return journey and had been left behind to die. These Copper River Indians were very superstitious. If a member became sick it was because evil spirits had taken possession of his body. Too close association with him was dangerous. Perhaps smallpox which occasionally ravaged their camps may have led to this practice.

It was well along in May 1906 when we finally reached the site of our proposed camp on the Chitistone River only a few miles from a pass to the Yukon Valley and about 255 miles by trail from Valdez. As we had planned to make this our headquarters for the next fifteen

months we erected a substantial log cabin for living quarters. It must have been well built as it was still standing thirty years later when, so I am informed, bears finally tore it down.

All that summer was spent prospecting. We followed principally a limestone-greenstone contact through valleys and over mountains up the head waters of rivers and small streams always searching for ore, ore of any kind. We found many traces of copper, occasional flakes of gold in creek beds, and a narrow coal seam on a high plateau but nothing of commercial value.

In August I decided to go over the Scolai Pass and try the Yukon Valley side of the mountains. Bill, Pike and myself made up the party. We took two pack horses with us and only a canvas "fly" for shelter. In the pass lay a glacier about twelve miles long. From one end of this glacier the melting ice fed the Chitistone River flowing west and south into the Pacific Ocean. The other end formed the head water of White River, a tributary of the Yukon flowing north and west into Bering Sea.

Our passage of the glacier was made without much difficulty and as we were then only a few miles from the American-Yukon Territory boundary, we turned west to keep within the United States. There was now no timber, only occasional alder brush for fuel. Still worse, there was no feed for our horses except on the gravel bars of White River. So we cached most of our camp equipment, hobbled our horses and turned them loose to shift for themselves, and started out on foot to explore territory which we had been told no white man had ever visited. But we found nothing of interest. All the exposed rock formations were of recent lava flows, shales, and conglomerates in which we knew there would be no metal deposits.

One day we passed over a low divide into a barren basin-like valley. From around a big rock perhaps two hundred yards away, lumbered one of the famous Alaskan brown bears. He stopped to look us over and for a few moments appeared uncertain as to just what we were. A bear's eyesight is not particularly keen. We stood perfectly still as there was no possible shelter and knowing something of the Alaskan brown's reputation, we were more than pleased to be neutral. But apparently he decided that Bill might be good eating for he suddenly charged down the slope toward him at full speed. Bill emptied his 30-40 Savage rifle at him, then threw it away and ran. One of his last shots must have taken effect for the bear suddenly turned and ran on a level line toward and above me, whereupon I cut loose with a 30-30 carbine. Twice, after a shot, he turned a complete somersault landing on his feet and continuing at full speed. He soon passed around the end of a low ridge. I ran up the ridge hoping to get another shot at him going down the other side. Peeking over, I found him coming slowly toward me not over a hundred feet away. I kept shooting until a sharp click told me the magazine was empty, then flopped flat on the ground behind a rock and drew out my Colt .44. He couldn't see me but he knew I was near by. He would stand up on his hind legs—he looked as big as an elephant—and turn slowly around trying to locate me. By that time he was not more than thirty feet away. Every time he had his back turned toward me, I gave him a shot until finally a bullet through his neck ended the battle. There were fourteen bullet holes in his hide.

I wanted that bear skin for a souvenir. He measured about twelve feet from tip to tip and was so heavy it was all the three of us could do to turn him over in the skinning process. That night Pike wrapped himself up in the skin, flesh side out, and slept like a log, while Bill and I

shivered by the side of a small camp fire fed with willow twigs. We packed the hide back with us to our Chitistone camp.

A week or so later I started for Dan Creek, about ten miles away, to send out some mail. An old Yukon prospector, Montgomery, who with his wife and two-year old son, had found their way over to our side of the mountains, was with me. We were passing through heavy spruce timber when Montgomery suddenly made a warning sound. He was pointing directly ahead of me. Three black bears were standing in a row, a mother bear in the center with a yearling cub on each side of her. Before I could move she dropped on her four feet and charged. I had no time to climb a tree and she could run twice as fast as I. So I pulled the Colt .44 and waited. At perhaps twenty feet distance she lost her courage and turned sideways. At my shot she stumbled but kept going. I emptied the Colt before she dropped dead. We found she had been hit just once—through the heart. My hands were shaking. I was shaking all over and Montgomery said all my shots except the first one went into the sky. A few minutes later I shot one of the cubs out of a nearby tree. The other cub was also in a tree but he was crying like a child and I had had enough of murder.

We took the skins back to camp and I had visions of sitting by a fire-side some day telling my family the story of the three beautiful bear rugs. Montgomery was leaving with his wife and child in a few days to go out to the coast in a handmade row boat and offered to take the big bear skin with him and send it on to my wife. I went down one morning to see them off. They had another man in their boat, a placer miner, and two more boats made up the party. Five months later, I learned that Montgomery's boat had capsized while running the Nizina Canyon rapids only a few hours after we parted and that he, his wife, and

child had been drowned. The bodies of Mrs. Montgomery and the child were found and buried at the mouth of the canyon and two years later I stood with bared head, my own wife and child at my side, before the little wood cross that marked their lonely grave. A prospector had carved in crude letters on the cross "Requiescat im Pace."

In the main, our routine was made up of hard work and adventure often skirting on tragedy, but there was a humorous side—not always appreciated at the time—to many of the incidents that occurred. After nearly 35 years I can still chuckle at the vision of Bill throwing away his empty rifle and running in one direction while that wounded and badly seared bear ran in the opposite direction. And I never see or hear of red flannel underwear without a reminiscent smile. Here's the story:

Bill and I took a couple of pack horses and headed for our old camp on the Lakina River about 80 miles away, crossing two mountain ranges and three rivers, to get some required equipment we had left behind. Our second night out we camped alongside the Kennecott Glacier in a steady drizzle. We put up a "tarp" (small square of canvas) and built a good fire. I took off my corduroy pants and hung them to dry on some stakes under the tarp. Some time in the night I stirred and looked up at what I thought was a full moon. Suddenly I realized something was wrong as there was a heavy fog. Sitting up to investigate I discovered my pants were burning. A rim about three inches wide around the top was all that was left. Even my suspenders had burned.

We were 40 miles out from headquarters with 120 miles yet to go, and I had no pants. But we had an empty gunny sack. So I cut off two corners of the sack, shove my legs through, pulled it up around my waist, tied it with a strip of cloth for a belt and then put on my car-

tridge belt and Colt .44. I was wearing a suit of bright red flannel underwear which relieved the gravity of the situation for Bill and disturbed me not at all.

Late that afternoon down in the heavy timber along the Lakina River we met a small pack train with three men. It was headed by the late Dr. Alfred Brooks, for many years Director of the U. S. Alaskan geological survey. We stopped and casually exchanged information regarding trail conditions. I wanted to get news of the outside world as we had been isolated for months. But after a few words Dr. Brooks said something about being in a hurry and we went on our respective ways.

We did not meet again until I was in Washington several years later and called on Dr. Brooks in his office. When I entered unannounced he looked up puzzled for a moment and then we both laughed until we were almost in spasms without a word having been said, while his astonished and bewildered secretary looked on.

"Potter," said Brooks, "when we saw you in that gunny sack and red flannel drawers with a big six shooter strapped around your waist and that packer of yours with his year old whiskers, we were sure you had been in the mountains so long you were crazy. Anyway we were taking no chances."

Six years later, in July 1913, Dr. Brooks and I went out over the trail together from Kennecott to Tonsina. He had a small pack horse and I was afoot traveling light. When we came to the Lakina, scene of our first meeting, we found it in flood. I succeeded in getting across on a log but Brooks and his horse swept downstream out of sight. I sat on the bank under a spruce tree with my head in my hands wondering what to do when finally I heard the brush cracking and up came Dr. Brooks leading his horse. They had managed to struggle ashore a half

mile or more below. Wet clothing and equipment was an old story, but Dr. Brooks' new camera, film and equipment, costing over \$600.00 were ruined and that meant no photography for that year. He also had about \$1000.00 in currency for the season's traveling expenses. That, too, was thoroughly water soaked. We built a fire and carefully, one by one, unwrapped the bills, hung some of them on the bushes and others we held on sticks to dry—a curious scene had anyone been there to witness it. Five days later, we parted company at Tonsina, he headed for Fairbanks, I for the coast.

I had planned for three of our party to spend the winter on the Chitistone developing the copper prospects discovered the previous summer. So in early September we prepared to store up a fresh meat supply for the long, dark months ahead. Bill and I, with a couple of pack horses and a dog, left with us by a wandering prospector, went down to a clear spring water tributary of the Nizina River to catch a supply of salmon. The water was shallow, not over five or six inches deep on the riffles, and literally thousands of salmon weighing three to five pounds each were crowding their way upstream to spawn. I had a pair of rubber boots and the fishing process consisted of walking out into the stream, putting my toe under the big fellows and tossing them out on the bank as fast as Bill could put them into the bags we had brought for the purpose. The dog soon took part in the work. He would wade out, grab a salmon by the tail and drag him out to Bill with the fish struggling desperately. In perhaps half an hour we had fully 400 pounds of fish—all we needed. It was a decidedly cold-blooded business and it spoiled fishing as a sport for me forever. I have caught just one fish since that day—and that one was for business reasons.

Then three of the boys went up to the Nizina head waters where

(Continued on page 20)

# The McCarthy Weekly News

## 1922 March & April editions

The Alaska House is being thoroughly renovated, making it more attractive for the guests and incidentally easier for the chef.

The worst is over in McCarthy now. Spring is almost here. The work of drilling for the Nizina bridge site will begin this month. There will be increased activity at the various copper mines.

Placer camps will reopen and things will soon be humming. It is up to us all to help things along, and if we concentrate on our own affairs and spend our spare time in boosting, we will find that a lot of the grievances we have are purely imaginary and the fruit of the long, dull winter.

New Books at the Post Office Store: Zane Grey's "To the Last Man" a story of the Pleasant Valley feud. "The Mucker" by Burroughs of Tarzan fame. "The Brimming Cup" "Beau Rand" and others. \$2.25.

The 1922 World's Almanack is now on sale at the Post Office Store. Price 75 cents. Big shipment of fresh candy at Hubrick's including the famous Helen Ardell chocolates.

March 4

After a very enjoyable winter spent in Vancouver, B.C. Ed Bassett returns to his old stamping grounds this week. The outside always looks good to Ed in the fall, but in the spring he never fails to respond to the call of the North.

Today is a big day in McCarthy with outside mail and lots of people returning from the states, a bridge crew en route to the river. Many callers at the News Office today,

hence no editorial, which will never be missed, when there are so many topics of conversation.

### OF TRAVELERS AND TRAILS

Ed Briggen was in town yesterday from Bonanza, he is preparing to leave for his mining property in Chisana very soon.

Jack O'Hara of Chisana, who has been spending the winter outside, is an arrival on today's train, he will leave for the interior camp as soon as possible.

George Maxwell left this week on a prospecting trip to the Kiagner, a tributary of the Chitina River. With an outfit of 1600 pounds he & his partner expect to do considerable work in that section. Roy Snyder is hauling their freight by dog teams.

Frank Farnan, who has been at Kennecott for the winter, is in town getting an outfit ready for a season's prospecting across the Chitina River. He will build a boat and make a start as soon as the water runs.

Warren Nelson, who is spending the winter prospecting his property on Copper Creek, is a visitor to town this week. In a new shaft he has sunk 23 feet and there is every indication that he is close to bed rock.

### RANGERS SAVE ELK FROM SNOW

Quilcene, Wash. After an arduous trip of fifty miles into the mountainous region at the headwaters of Dungeness River two forest rangers released a herd of eighty wild elk, snowbound in a draw. By a queer coincidence Eddy Hubbard carrying mail between Seattle and Victoria by airplane routed his

homeward trip inland over the foothills of the Olympic Mountains to avoid the strong gales on Puget Sound. Skirting close to the tops of the forest trees he observed the wild elk snowbound in a natural enclosure of drifted snow. He notified the State Commissioners Alex McPersonn and George Gates who started at once over a trail carrying provisions on pack horses. The fifty miles into the wilderness was made in two days and the elk found. The animals were belly deep in snow floundering about subsisting on fir boughs and moss. Breaking through a snowdrift barrier, the elk followed the two men and their horses down into the valley where grazing was good.

The Olympic elk usually foretell big snowstorms and hurry into the valleys, but this bunch herded up together in a sheltered hole and were cut off from food.

March 11

### COURT NEWS

In the U. S. Commissioner's Court on the 15th inst. before Judge Coppennoll, Gust Johnson miner from the Mother Lode, was charged with assault and battery, (on the complaint of Steve Plem). The accused pled not guilty and was tried before a jury consisting of: O. T. Thoreson, Louis Wick, Pete Erickson, Harold Cabot, Fred Parnthek, Joseph Sommers, F. A. Douglas, Tom Lillehang, M. S. Wilson, Fred Erickson, W. Sommers and L. Winert, who returned a verdict of not guilty.

### TRAIL NEWS

Bill Berry, Jack Dolan and Dan Campbell arrived from Chisana on Monday evening, making a quick



trip. Jack Dolan left for Chisana again next morning.

Shorty Gwinn and Charles Lubbe left with their teams on Monday morning with four tons of freight for the Glacier for Carl Whitham of Chisana. They are expected to return today and leave at once with freight for Ed Briggen and Jack O'Hara for Chisana.

Dan Campbell who has spent nearly two years in the White River District prospecting returned to McCarthy by dog team. He seems in the best of health and shows no ill effects from his terrible experience of the winter of 1920 when he and Jimmy Brown were storm-bound on the Rohn and had their limbs frozen, necessitating a long hospital treatment for both of them. Dan is very reticent as to the result of his labor but seems very optimistic of the future of that section.

Mike Knowles arrived in McCarthy at midnight last night with mail from Chisana. Leaving that camp on the morning of the 15th, he made a quick trip.

Sam Means will leave next month to prospect May Creek, a tributary of the Nizina. He has secured an engine and drill and is going to give the ground a thorough test.

#### AT DWYER INN, STRELNA

Sparks from a stove pipe at the Dwyer Inn, set fire to the roof during a wind storm on Monday evening, many hands promptly extinguished it, but not before several hundred dollars worth of damage was done.

March 18

#### FIRE IN WELL'S CABIN

What might have been a serious fire occurred last Saturday night when a fire broke out in the roof of the cabin occupied by Mrs. Wells and her children just at dusk. It was caused by a spark sifting

down into the chinking. In a few minutes the roof was ablaze. The Fire Department, in fact the whole town, were soon on the scene and forming a bucket brigade soon had it extinguished. Only Mrs. Wells, Marion and Verna were home at the time and are now the guests of the Hotel Golden till the cabin is put in shape again, everything being pretty well soaked in water.

March 25

Harvey Anderson came to town last Tuesday from the Mother Lode, where he had been working for some time, and immediately proceeded to test the "high tension." Deputy Marshal Kavanaugh took him before Judge Coppernoll, where he pleaded guilty. The court gave him 30 days in the Federal jail. On complaint of Harvey Anderson, H. Olsen, charged with assault was fined \$100 and sentenced to 30 days in the Federal jail by the U. S. Commissioner Coppernoll, on pleading guilty.

#### LOCAL AND PERSONAL

A sale of the one-half interest in the seven placer claims on Rex Creek, belonging to Oscar Hanson, deceased, were sold to James McGavock, of Kennecott, by Peter Erichson, Administrator, at a sale held last Wednesday under order of the Probate Court. The price paid was \$450.00. The sale of the lode claims was postponed one week, there being no bids at the last offering.

#### ABOUT MINING & FREIGHT RATES

John E. Barrett, accompanied by his wife, arrived at his home last Sunday after an extended visit to the States. Mr. Barrett is more than confident of the future of this section; especially since the discovery of a large body of ore in the Green Group which has justified him and his associates in making preparations for developing the property on a large scale this com-

ing season. The work planned for this year will be mainly devoted to determine the volume of ore accessible and not with an intention of shipping immediately. By the introduction of a compressor, the old method of drilling by hand will be eliminated.

Prior to leaving Seattle, Mr. Barrett had a long conversation with Mr. Stannard, President of the Alaska Steamship Co. On the general mining situation in this section, Mr. Stannard stated this his Company was looking forward to increased activity in this section and particularly pleased to hear that the Green Group would ultimately become a shipper.

Regarding the freight rates for shipping ore from McCarthy to Tacoma, Mr. Barrett understood they were governed by the market price of copper and at the present price of that metal the rate is \$17.50 per ton for high grade and \$10 for low. The freight rates on mining machinery, etc. from Seattle to McCarthy were also brought to Mr. Stannard's attention and he said that these rates would in time be adjusted in favor of the shipper, especially if the country developed more ore, thus giving the Copper River & N. W. Ry Co. more tonnage, which would not only help them but would be a benefit to the smaller operator.

April 8

#### ONE BRIGHT SPOT

The fact that McCarthy is not an incorporated town, although often regretted by the residents, is a matter of thanksgiving to the property owner, who does not have to pay taxes during the dull times. Many owners of real estate in incorporated towns have found the payment of the taxes beyond their means and had to surrender properties.

April 15

# Alaska's contradiction? Lots of guns, few homicides

CRAIG MEDRED

Can someone familiar with the country's latest gun-control debate explain Alaska to me?

This is a gun-crazy state. Guns are everywhere. About 58 percent of Alaskans own a gun, according to the Washington Post. Given that the U.S. Census says the average household size in the 49th state is 2.65 people, there is, on average, 1.53 guns per household.

Or to make this simple, there is basically a gun in every house.

And yet, the Alaska homicide rate for 2011, the latest year for which figures are available, was 4 per 100,000 people. That's significantly lower than the 6.4 per 100,000 people for New York City, where Mayor Michael Bloomberg likes to brag about how many guns the New York Police Department has taken away from the citizenry, and about a fifth of the homicide rate for Chicago (19.4 per 100,000), a city with stringent gun control that has been labeled the world's "Deadliest Global City."

But none of that really concerns the question that begs an answer.

If guns in and of themselves are evil, if more guns means people are more likely to kill other people, why does the death toll for Alaska "firearms homicides" stand at 2.6 per 100,000? Actually, the number is probably lower than that now. The data on specifically how people kill each

other—with guns, knives, beatings—dates to 2004, and the Alaska homicide rate has fallen about 25 percent since then. But suffice to say, fewer than half the people killed in homicides in Alaska are killed with a gun.

The state's gun-homicide rate is a low number. At 2.6, your odds of being shot and killed in Alaska are lower than your odds of being murdered in the European principality of Liechtenstein (2.8 per 100,000) and about the same as your odds for being murdered in Luxembourg (2.5 per 100,000). Neither country is known as a hotbed of violent crime.

Then again, the chances of being killed with a firearm in Alaska—or in Liechtenstein or Luxembourg, for that matter—are a lot higher than the chances of being murdered in Switzerland. The death rate there is 0.7 per 100,000, and gun ownership is mandatory for men of military age, some of whom are volatile young men. Some studies in this country have pinpointed men between the age of 21 and 30 as responsible for 40 to 50 percent of all homicides. The Swiss, however, arm them. And they don't only arm them, they give them assault rifles.

"Between the ages of 21 and 32 (all) men serve as front-line troops. They are given an M-57 assault rifle and 24 rounds of ammunition which they are required to keep at home," according to the BBC. The 24 rounds is a government requirement. People can buy more if they want.

(A personal note here. Young men casually handling automatic weapons in train stations and elsewhere in Switzerland always scared the [blank] out of me. It isn't so much that they are armed with automatic weapons, but that their handling sometimes seemed inattentive, even careless. Nonetheless, there do not appear to be a lot of accidental shootings in Switzerland, or at least people dying from accidental shootings.)

The Swiss clearly illustrate there are factors other than the simple availability of guns in play when it comes to violence, death and firearms. And so, it would seem, does Alaska. With all the guns around in the 49th state, why do slightly more people die due to knifings, beatings or other violence—3.05 per 100,000—than shootings—2.58 per 100,000?

Or maybe the better question is this:

Why is death by firearm so much more prevalent in major U.S. cities, most of which have made it harder for people to legally obtain guns than in the Wild West of Alaska? Wouldn't you think that given gun control in those places, the ratio of knife, beating and other deaths would increase in proportion to gun deaths?

Or have gun bans, helped by pop culture, simply made it something of a status symbol to kill someone with a firearm in urban America?

Published on Alaska Dispatch (<http://www.alaskadispatch.com>) February 6, 2013.

# Arctic Flight: A Century of Alaska Aviation

WSEN readers have enjoyed numerous stories over the past years regarding the role the McCarthy area played in early aviation in Alaska. If you have a chance to visit the Anchorage Museum between February 9 and August 11 of this year you will have the opportunity to see some of that history displayed in artifacts and stories.

Here is the museum's press release.

## ARCTIC FLIGHT: A CENTURY OF ALASKA AVIATION

On view Feb. 9 through Aug. 11

In 1913, a group of Fairbanks merchants shipped an airplane from Seattle to Fairbanks via steamboat. A pair of Lower 48 barnstormers flew the biplane 200 feet above Weeks Field, putting along at 45 miles per hour.

The merchants sold tickets to the show: The flight was considered nothing more than a spectacle. Those Alaskans had no concept of how the technology of air would completely alter life on the ground.

On the 100th anniversary of that historic flight, the Anchorage Museum opens Arctic Flight: A Century of Alaska Aviation, an exhibi-

tion that tells compelling stories of survival, adventure and ingenuity. The exhibition is co-curated by the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum and features objects from the Smithsonian and several Alaska museums, including the Alaska Aviation Museum and Pioneer Air Museum.

Historical artifacts, video footage and photographs reveal the state's remarkable aviation history, including its pioneer bush pilot era. From their open-air cockpits, Alaska's early pilots faced some of the planet's most inhospitable weather and challenging terrain without maps or accurate weather information. Airplanes broke the isolation of communities previously accessible only by boat in summer or by dog team in winter. Bush pilots became conquerors in the air and heroes on the ground.

Because of its strategic location as an aerial byway, Alaska played an important role in World War II. As a result, the federal government helped fund 50 Alaska airports and thousands of miles of navigational airways.

Arctic Flight illustrates the state's early aviation history through

artifacts including wreckage from the Will Rogers/Wiley Post crash of 1935, a military-issued electric flight jacket from World War II, and the exhibition's centerpiece, a 1920s Stearman C2B biplane. Film footage includes a 1927 clip of the first airplane to fly over the North Pole and newsreels of the World War II campaign in the Aleutian Islands. Children can play pilot in a replica antique cockpit and conduct experiments that explain the physics of flight.

Today Alaskans fly 30 times more per capita than other U.S. citizens. In rural Alaska, people still greet airplanes, anxiously awaiting mail, fresh food and a glimpse of the pilot. Air traffic is at the center of the state's economy and lifestyle, whether it's a commercial airline delivering cargo, the U.S. Air Force moving a family to Anchorage, or a flightseeing service offering tours of Mount McKinley.

This exhibition demonstrates how, in just 100 years, airplanes have evolved from frivolous spectacle to crucial part of the Alaska way of life.

## Museum needs caretaker

The McCarthy - Kennicott Historical Museum is looking for a Summer Caretaker. The position is for 40 hours a week spent in the Museum greeting visitors and keeping the Museum tidy. Normally the Museum is open seven days a week 11:00 AM until 7:00

PM and workdays could be a little flexible with remaining hours covered by Museum volunteers. Benefits include a \$150/wk subsistence stipend and living in a rustic cabin near the Museum. The cabin is close to a public outhouse and the public water source, and has a small storage

battery for limited lighting. The summer season runs from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. For further information, please contact Museum president, Sunny Cook:

gramasunny@hotmail.com

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"A free people ought not only to be armed, but disciplined; to which end a uniform and well-digested plan is requisite; and their safety and interest require that they should promote such manufactories as tend to render them independent of others for essential, particularly military, supplies.."—George Washington

(Continued from page 15)

they shot sixteen bighorn sheep and stored them in a crude log cache which they built for the purpose. A few weeks later we went up with hand sleighs to get them and found that bears had broken into the cache and dragged off three or four of the sheep.

Bill and Tony left in mid-September with the horses for the coast. Pike, Jim, and I stayed behind to carry on the work. We had built a canvas-covered winter camp 1,200 feet in elevation above the river on a shelf on the mountainside to be closer to our claims. From this camp up to the claims was another climb of fully 1,500 feet. We dug paths across rock slides, blasted a path out of the face of a rock cliff and fastened ropes to which to cling and placed ladders at several places too steep to climb. Finally we started our tunnel in the ore body. Routine for each man consisted of two days mining and one day housekeeping and, gosh, how Pike hated that day in camp, cooking, washing dishes, and sweeping.

We were just below the Arctic Circle and the sun soon disappeared completely behind a mountain range across the valley. Each morning about ten o'clock the sunlight would appear on the cliffs thousands of feet above us, getting brighter and brighter only to fade and vanish by two or three o'clock in the afternoon. The temperature dropped steadily but we were surprised to find that it was much warmer at our mountain shelf winter camp than in the valley below.

By late December we had proved our claims to be only small deposits having no value and it was useless to continue work on them through the winter as originally planned. So we piled our camp and equipment on log skids, lowered them with ropes down the mountainside to the valley below, and moved into our old headquarters across the river.

It was now necessary to get in touch with my employers in Michigan, explain conditions, and make new plans for the coming season. So, on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1907, I left Jim and Pike to guard our camp and supplies and started alone for Valdez, 235 miles by trail, the first white man's camp being at Tonsina, 145 miles away.

The weather was cold but I didn't know how cold it really was. A common practice among gold placer prospectors was to hang a small bottle of mercury, (used in their work), on a nearby tree or stake. If the mercury froze solid they knew it was at least 60 degrees below zero and too cold to travel or work safely outside. Months later I learned that a bottle of mercury in a camp on a tributary of the Chitina River remained frozen during all the days of my journey out to Tonsina.

To prepare for the trip I put on two suits of heavy wool underwear, two pairs of pants, two wool shirts and a khaki parka, fur-trimmed around the face—but no coat. Heavy fur mittens, three pairs of wool sox and rubber-bottomed leather topped "mushers"—(swampers in Michigan)—completed the costume. For equipment I carried a sharp axe, the inevitable Colt .44, several small waterproof cans of matches and a few tin boxes of small squares of gunny sack charred and soaked with kerosene to burn quickly in starting camp fires. There was also a small tin can for making tea and of course, snowshoes. For food, I carried a pack of small baking powder biscuits, a few pounds of bacon, tea and sugar.

I found an abandoned cabin in which I stayed the first night. The second night I made a "lean-to" camp of spruce boughs in the timber at the mouth of Nizina River. I spent most of the night chopping logs to keep the fire going. Going down the Chitina River next day I came to an open channel but finally found a narrow ice bridge across the

swift water. I could have gone up into the side hills and made my way down the river to the solid ice again but I knew that meant a day's delay and a day's delay might be serious. So I took a chance on the ice bridge. Just as I reached the far end the bridge dropped. I threw myself forward on my face and landed on solid ice with one snowshoe dangling in the river's current.

That night I made camp again in a clump of spruce trees. But I was tired and I went to sleep, the first time in thirty-six hours. The fire died down and toward morning the cold woke me to the discovery that sometime during the night my food pack had been pushed into the fire and with the exception of one or two small biscuits, completely burned.

I knew of an Indian camp on the Copper River about forty miles away and on my route to Tonsina. Pulling in my belt I started out again. At the junction of the Chitina and Copper rivers the water was open and I took to the bank around to solid ice again. By this time it was dark and I was many miles from the Indians. Suddenly, the ice began to move under me and I thought, "This is the end." But, it stopped just as suddenly and about nine o'clock that night I saw lights in timber along the shore. It was an Indian camp I had never heard of but a half hour later, I was welcomed by the Indians, and was drinking hot tea and chewing dried salmon. I have never had any food that tasted better.

There were about fifteen Indians in the camp which consisted of a low log building of two rooms. One room was a sort of combination kitchen, dining room and living room. There was no stove, only a big hole in the center of the roof for the smoke from the open fire among the rocks on the dirt floor. The second room was heated by a small sheet iron stove. This room also had a dirt floor. Around the four sides

ran a bench about three feet high made of small poles with dirty cloth drapes hanging down from the front edge.

When we were ready to “go to bed,” the women, children and dogs crawled under the bench and the men and older boys lay on top of the bench. The old chief of this group was sick and lay over in one corner bundled up in rags and skins. I had barely closed my eyes when he began to howl. “Howl” is the only word I know to describe the noise he made. I expected someone to get up and wait on him but no one stirred. Finally I couldn’t stand it, so I got up, put some fresh wood in the stove, and examined him. His eyes were swollen shut and his lips were puffed so sadly I could scarcely get water into his mouth. He apparently had a bad case of scurvy. His teeth had dropped out of his gums. A few potatoes would perhaps have saved him but there was little I could do under the circumstances except to ease his pain. I heated water and wrung out hot cloths which I packed on his face and neck. He stopped howling and went to sleep and I lay down to rest again. In perhaps a half hour the cloths had cooled and he started yelling again. Again I got up and packed his face with hot cloths. This process was repeated until about three o’clock in the morning. Then I lost my temper and pulled the youngest of his three wives out from under the bench and showed her what to do. Finally, I went to sleep. an hour later the old man started howling again and there was no wife in sight. That was enough for me. I put on my snowshoes and started upriver in the dark for another Indian camp about twelve miles away. I learned months later the chief died two or three hours after I left.

In my condition those twelve miles were a long, long way. When I finally reached the camp I found it deserted with the exception of two squaws. They gave me hot tea and dried salmon roasted over an open

fire. They brought skins and blankets and I don’t think I moved during the next fifteen hours. Before daylight, next day, I left for the thirty-five mile stretch to Tonsina which I reached late that night—and my troubles were over as I was on the Fairbanks-Yukon trail with comfortable road houses every ten or twenty miles to Valdez.

Bill, Tony and I reached our Chitistone camp again in late April with our four horses and additional supplies, ready for an exceptionally busy prospecting season as this was to be our last chance—by agreement with my employers.

As soon as we could travel we started toward the head waters of the Chitina River, stopping occasionally, and thoroughly searching the surrounding mountains and valleys for evidence of mineral deposits. One day our pack train worked its way up a small stream, finally cutting steps in glacial ice to get footing for our horses. Across the pass and starting down the other side we suddenly heard several rapid shots apparently only a few hundred yards away. Crossing a small intervening ridge we were astonished to find a lone prospector with a pack horse standing beside the big yellow “glacier bear” he had just killed. He was as surprised as we, as he, too, had thought there were no other prospectors within sixty miles.

We found interesting big warm water springs and mineral springs but no evidence of ore deposits. Just below the Chitina Glacier we made a temporary camp, hobbled our horses and turned them loose. Then we cut spruce trees and “whip sawed” lumber for a boat to cross the river which was too wide, deep, and swift to ford. Landed on the other side, we started exploring a narrow valley up toward Mt. St. Elias in territory which we were confident no white man had ever before seen. We discovered several small deposits of copper ore, evidently of no commercial value, and beside a cliff

at the foot of the St. Elias glacial field we came across a crudely made hand sled. We learned later it had been left there by a party of three or four prospectors who had several years before made their way from Yakutat Bay on the coast over the ice fields and across the St. Elias range to the Chitina River where they had built a raft and finally found their way out to civilization. I salute them for their courage and hardihood although I have never learned their names. They were of the breed that extends frontiers and builds empires.

With no luck in the Chitina basin we turned back and headed into the Kennecott River district where the enormously rich Kennecott copper deposit had been discovered near the top of a mountain several years previously. Permission to visit the mine was refused for which I was later very thankful, so we made our way up McCarthy Creek, a small stream tributary of the Kennecott River and running parallel to it. Camping near the headwaters I took one of the boys with me and during the night—daylight in that latitude—we made our way across a small glacier and over the mountain arriving at the mine about 1:30 a.m. The mine crew was sleeping and there were no guards. I had brought candles and we climbed down the one small shaft and thoroughly inspected the deposit, with conscience untroubled by the graduate mining engineer’s professional ethics.

The ore was rich beyond belief. It was probably the highest grade copper ore body of its size ever discovered. Its profits paid in less than two years for a railway from the coast costing over \$20,000,000 and from it arose one of the world’s greatest and finest mining organizations.

Studying the faults in the formation I jumped at the conclusion, later proved to be correct, that the published geologists’ reports on the

Kennecott copper deposit had been wrong in their conclusions regarding its character. I decided the ore body ran across the mountain range and not parallel to a limestone-greenstone contact as described in all official literature on the subject. If I were right, then the Kennecott claims had not been properly staked and government mining regulations would limit their mining to their side lines only, a few hundred feet down.

I found that three old prospectors had located fractional claims on small outcrops of ore on the McCarthy Creek side of the range. And then I started a systematic search for proof of my theory. Climbing peaks and cliffs I found plenty of evidence to support my belief and then I started staking the entire top and McCarthy Creek side of the mountain for two or more miles along the Kennecott claims but at an angle of 90 degrees from them in

accordance with my ideas of the nature of the deposit, a perfectly legal but not too ethical procedure. This work completed we started for Valdez to record our claims. In September I sold our horses and outfit, laid off the crew and sailed for Seattle. Arrived at Houghton, I made a complete report to the syndicate, sent for my wife and son, and entered the Michigan College of Mines again, a few days late for the fall term.

## NPS/ADF&G Subsistence Survey coming soon

**MALLA KUKKONEN, SUBSISTENCE RESEARCH SPECIALIST, ADF&G**

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Subsistence, working with the support and partnership of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, have been surveying residents of four Copper Basin communities this winter and spring about their subsistence harvest activities.

The survey efforts started in the Kenny Lake/Willow Creek area on January 18 and in Gakona on February 20. The additional two communities of Chitina and McCarthy will be surveyed at the end of March and in the beginning of April 2013. A similar survey took place in Chistochina in 2010 and in the communities of Copper Center, Slana, Mentasta Lake, and Mentasta Pass in 2011. The Chistochina report is now complete and available while the report for the 2011 study year is in the process of being finalized.

The main purpose of the survey is to provide updated information on the estimated harvest, use and sharing of wild foods in the area. During the household surveys, researchers collect information on where and how resources are harvested as well as on communities' subsistence economies. Many of the questions concern harvests of the past year, but researchers are also interested in whether and how subsistence harvests might have changed in recent years and if area residents have any other issues of concern related to subsistence. Participation in the survey is voluntary, although research staff hopes that most people will be willing to be interviewed. The data is collected in a way that the names of households or families are not associated with the results. In other words, no individual household will be identified and all who participate will remain anonymous.

In addition to the household surveys documenting house-

holds' subsistence harvests and activities, this project involves analysis of the collected data, a review of the survey results by participating communities, and the publishing of a technical report. Survey results will assist state and federal resource managers in their subsistence management responsibilities. The collected information will also be used by local and regional advisory councils in making recommendations regarding the management of fish and wildlife in the region.

Preliminary findings from the first two study years indicate not just a continued reliance upon wild resources, but it appears that the harvest of subsistence foods by Copper Basin residents has increased since a similar survey was conducted in 1987. For additional information, contact Barbara Cellarius, the park's subsistence coordinator, at (907) 822-7236, or Robbin La Vine, ADF&G Division of Subsistence, at (907) 267-2362.

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"Without education we are in the horrible and deadly danger of taking educated people seriously." —English writer G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936)

# Transition Underway at the Wrangell Mountains Center

## WMC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Wrangell Mountains Center is undergoing an active restructuring effort, including the evaluation of new partnership opportunities beyond McCarthy/Kennecott, and new staffing configurations. As part of this transition, Jeremy Pataky will step down as Executive Director on April 30, 2013, following four and a half years of dedicated service to the WMC.

Howard Mozen, President of the WMC board, states: "We are continuing to work with Jeremy to transition to a new staff structure which will include a new Executive Director. As we do this, Jeremy is continuing his committed work for the WMC, and, with the full support of the WMC, is exploring his next career moves."

Jeremy led the WMC with passion and dedication through tremendous organizational growth during his tenure. WMC programs increased in number and variety, and Jeremy teamed up with the Board on an unprecedented capital campaign resulting in the acquisition of Porphyry Place, which expanded the WMC McCarthy campus.

As both Jeremy and the Board move in new directions, the Board acknowledges his leadership role in a number of other major WMC accomplishments, including:

The first-ever Wrangell-St. Elias Research Summit.

New residential programs, such as UAF's International Summer School in Glaciology, numerous new field courses, and the Wrangell Mountains Poetry Workshop, and more.

Partnership programs in Nabesna, Copper Center, and McCarthy.

Completion of capital projects benefiting the Hardware Store and Porphyry Place, plus comprehensive facility rehabilitation plans to enhance safety, efficiency, and program delivery.

Expansion of the Mountain Arts for Youth Program and the Summer Arts and Lectures Series.

Maintaining ongoing community access to the park-owned Kennecott Recreation Hall.

In addition, Jeremy advanced the WMC's organizational health and maturity, increased year-round and seasonal staff size, instituted rigorous training and orientation procedures, and improved seasonal staff retention.

The board appreciates Jeremy's willingness to stay on as Executive Director through April 30 to help us build on his achievements and prepare for our upcoming organizational changes. We wish him well as he takes advantage of this transition to explore new interests and opportunities.

Jeremy Pataky says "For four and a half years, the Wrangell

Mountains Center has been so much more than a job. My tenure has been fulfilling and challenging, and I've grown personally and professionally in many gratifying ways. Having achieved a number of goals for the organization set years ago, this upcoming period of transition presents a natural opportunity to invite new energy into WMC leadership. I wish the board of directors well in their reinvigorated efforts to govern the organization and explore new structures and partnerships. I'm looking forward to remaining in the McCarthy community, supporting the WMC in new ways, and pursuing personal goals, like working on my cabin, writing, teaching, and exploring new professional options."

While growth and change are nearly always challenging, we look forward to more community engagement, partnerships and program enhancements.

As part of our transition, new year-round, seasonal, and/or part-time employment opportunities will be announced in the near future. The WMC Board of Directors is also working to improve its effectiveness, and is seeking new board members to help steer the organization through this important transition. See [www.wrangells.org](http://www.wrangells.org) for board application information and upcoming job announcements.

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"All I have seen teaches me to trust the creator for all I have not seen."—Ralph Waldo Emerson

"The only way to have a friend is to be one."—Ralph Waldo Emerson

# Kennecott Operations Plan released for public review

COPPER CENTER, AK —

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST) has released the Kennecott Operations Plan and Environmental Assessment for public review and comment. The document presents alternatives for management of the Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark (NHL) and considers the environmental consequences from implementation of those alternatives. The document also includes proposals for historic structure stabilization, management of cultural resources, vegetation, access and parking, interpretation, utilities and infrastructure.

The document represents several years of collaboration between WRST, staff at the Alaska Regional Office, and the McCarthy/Kennecott community. The planning pro-

cess has involved intensive public involvement and review, including the following opportunities for public input:

- Project scoping, which helped to define the parameters of the project and the issues to be addressed.
- Review and comment on the National Park Service proposed action for management of the NHL. This was a summer-long process and involved community meetings as well as review and comments by a sub-committee of the McCarthy Area Council.
- Workshops on interpretation, management concepts, transportation and access, parking, and the shuttle turnaround.

The Kennecott Operations Plan and Environmental Assessment is available for public review and comment for six weeks. All comments must be submitted by April 30, 2013. Public comments will be addressed in the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) that will accompany the final Kennecott Op-

erations Plan and Environmental Assessment.

The document can be accessed in several ways:

- Electronically through the park's website at <http://www.nps.gov/wrst>.
- Electronically through the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=34130>.

Request a hard copy by calling Bruce Rogers at 907-822-7276 or e-mail: [bruce\\_rogers@nps.gov](mailto:bruce_rogers@nps.gov).

Comments may be submitted in the following ways:

- Electronically through the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=3410>.
- E-mail: [bruce\\_rogers@nps.gov](mailto:bruce_rogers@nps.gov).
- Mail to the following address: Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve; ATTN: Bruce Rogers; P.O. Box 439; Copper Center, Alaska; 99573.

## 2013 Alaska Mountain Wilderness Classic 10.23.12 - 11:16 am

BY TIM MOWRY

OK all you backcountry hammerheads out there, mark it on your calendars.

The dates have been set for the 2013 Alaska Mountain Wilderness Classic from Thompson Pass to McCarthy, the state's premier summer wilderness race.

The race will begin June 23 on the Richardson Highway atop Thompson Pass, just north of Valdez, and the finish will be at the Lakina River bridge at Mile 44.3 on the McCarthy Road.

It's the same route racers followed last year but the start date

was pushed up two weeks earlier, perhaps in part because racers ended up getting caught in a snowstorm last year that dumped 12 inches of fresh snow in the middle of the race.

Last year was the first year the Thompson Pass to McCarthy route was used and it posed a significant challenge. Only seven of 18 racers who started the race finished, led by Luc Mehl and Josh Mumm with a time of 3 days, 22 1/2 hours.

Racers have their choice of two basic routes — a 120-mile overland route with maybe 30 miles of river travel or a 170-mile glacier route with 80 miles of packrafting. Last year, racers experienced some in-

tense bushwhacking, a mid-race blizzard and the usual assortment of difficulties associated with light-weight backcountry travel in Alaska.

"The overland option is a candidate for the hardest Classic route to date," Mehl, the race organizer, wrote on his web site announcing the start date. "If you are looking to test your wilderness skill set, this is a good one."

For more information and accounts from last year's race, go to <http://thingstolucat.com>.

*(Reprinted from the Fairbanks Daily News Miner with permission)*



# 26th annual Alaska Mountain Wilderness Ski Classic

The date and course for the 26th annual Alaska Mountain Wilderness Ski Classic have been set.

This year's Classic will start in McCarthy on March 31 and finish at

the Old Log Cabin Inn at 96 Mile of the Old Tok Cutoff. The course, which has never been used before, is roughly 160 to 185 miles long, depending on which one of several route choices participants choose.

For more information on the course, call event organizer Dave Cramer at (907) 291-2339 or go to [www.scalaska.com/ski/default.asp](http://www.scalaska.com/ski/default.asp).

# Copper Valley Telecom announces wireless tower additions & upgrades

VALDEZ—

Copper Valley Wireless reported today that its new wireless site located at approximately Mile 7 of the Richardson Highway above Deep Lake Drive is now in service. The site provides wireless voice and data to residents of Deep Lake Drive subdivision, fills in what has been a coverage gap

between Alpine Woods subdivision and Robe River subdivision, and supplements capacity for Alpine Woods residents.

Chris Mishmash, Copper Valley's Wireless & Facilities Manager, said "Copper Valley antennas are situated about 200 feet above the highway on a pre-existing TV tower. They are not easily visible

from the road, but provide excellent coverage of the area."

Mishmash also reported that the company has received its first shipment of electronics for the upgrade of Valdez, Prince William Sound, and Cordova towers to 4G LTE wireless data. "We're working hard on the design and engineering for our 4G upgrade and are currently on schedule for completion in the latter part of 2013."

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

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

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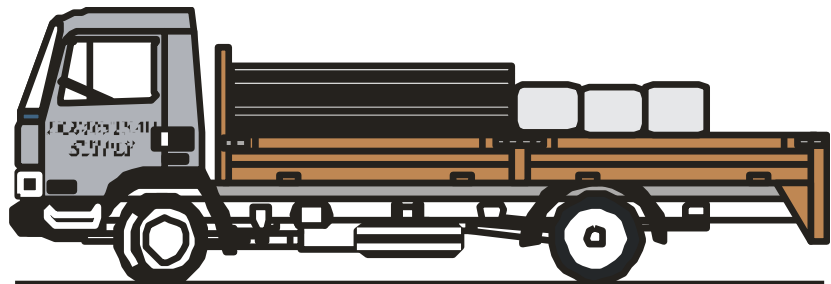
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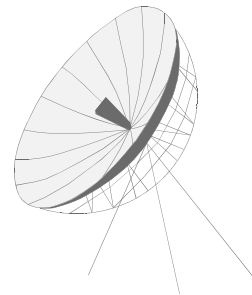
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# Cooking with Peggy

BY PEGGY GUNTIS

**D**ear Cooking and Eating friends, At the moment it is the end of February and I am in Tucson. Even though we had snow last week (yes, SNOW!) it is about 70 today. One day you feel like curling up and eating nothing but hot soup and the next, you feel like big salads and burgers! Somehow I have to come up with some recipes you might like regardless of the weather! Here goes.....

*Kim and her family were coming in from Alaska on Super Bowl Day again so the family came here to meet them, see the game and eat, of course. Since my sister hates beans and I wanted to have chili, I decided to see if I could find a recipe that satisfied my sister, me, and my crockpot. I FOUND ONE! Everyone loved it and it was easy.*

## NO-BEAN CHILI

- 2 pounds beef stew meat
- 10 ounces smoked andouille sausages, sliced
- 1 (14 ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 1 onion, peeled and diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced (or about 2 teaspoons garlic powder)
- 1 tablespoon cumin (I love cumin so usually add a little more)
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt (I used regular and it worked out fine)
- 2 cups beef broth

Load all the solids and seasonings into a 6-quart crockpot. Stir in the broth. Cover, and cook on low for 8 to 10 hours.

When it's tender and ready you can shred the meat a little if you want and serve. Actually I love it when all the flavors have had a chance to really melt together so I cooked mine the day before, refrigerated it overnight and then heated the day of the party. It was wonderful! It freezes well too.

*A friend passed along this next one that is easy and delicious. It's a snack that is easy to fix but better if you have a little time to get it nice and cold before you serve it.*

## PUMPKIN SNACK

- 2 (1 pound 13 ounce) cans of pumpkin
- 1 (8 ounce) container of Cool Whip
- 1 small box of vanilla pudding

Pumpkin pie spice to taste (The flavor won't come out until it is very cold. I probably added about 4 hefty tablespoons).

Use an electric mixer and blend well. Be sure it is cold before serving. You can dip graham crackers, or sliced apples in the mix and just sit and enjoy this treat for a snack anytime.

*Now, I would be remiss if I didn't pass along this next one because I eat it almost every day! I know, you'll think there's something wrong with me but I love it and why not! First I'll give you the recipe as it appeared in print and then I'll give you my version which has a lot fewer calories.*

## BUTTERNUT SQUASH CASSEROLE

- 3 cups mashed, cooked butternut squash

- ½ cup white sugar
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup margarine, melted
- 1 (8 ounce) can crushed pineapple with juice
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/3 cup chopped walnuts

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Grease one 2 quart casserole dish and set aside.

2. Combine the butternut squash, white sugar, brown sugar, margarine, pineapple, cinnamon, vanilla and nutmeg. Mix well and pour into casserole dish.

3. Sprinkle with chopped nuts and bake for 40 to 45 minutes.

*I know I've complained before about the difficulty of peeling and cutting the squash. I was thrilled when I went to Costco and discovered a container of fresh, cut-up, peeled squash that when cooked and mashed equals about 4 cups. I treat myself once in awhile, adjust the recipe a little and cook, mash, and use the whole package and am just done in no time. Don't you just love how "little" things mean alot!?*

## (MY) BUTTERNUT SQUASH CASSEROLE

- 3 cups mashed, cooked butternut squash
- ¼ cup (+ a little) Splenda White Sugar Blend
- 2 tablespoons melted margarine
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease one 7 X 11 casserole dish and set aside.

2. Combine the squash, Splenda Blend, margarine, cinnamon, vanilla, and nutmeg. Mix well and pour into casserole dish.

3. Bake for 40-45 minutes.

*Now I know I don't give you many recipes for desserts and I think that's because I very seldom make them any more and eat them even less often so I just don't think of them but....I want to share one I found online for gluten free peanut butter cookies. I made them at Christmas time when I knew my granddaughter, Anna, was coming to visit. I had never made them before but the family loved them.*

**FLOURLESS PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES**

- 1 cup peanut butter, smooth or chunky (almost all are gluten free)
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon vanilla (gluten free - most are)

1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips -either regular size or mini (optional) (gluten free)

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Mix all the ingredients (except the chocolate chips) well. Last, add chocolate chips if you want them and mix well. Grease or moisten hands slightly and form dough into 1 inch balls. Place balls on ungreased cookie sheets. (DO NOT press down as in some traditional recipes. If you choose to use a natural peanut butter you must press them down a bit before baking with a fork or the bottom of a glass for them to spread enough ). Bake 8-10 minutes or until golden brown and cookies look "set," but not done. Do not overcook. Then allow cookies to sit on cookie sheet for 5 minutes. (This step is very important because cookies finish cooking during this time and totally set up.)

Remove cookies for cooling. Makes about 24-30 cookies. We really did like these.

*Now I just have a little more space but I came across a recipe that my boss' wife, my friend, my co-worker gave me when my sister requested recipes for a book she was making for me many years ago when I got married.*

**FRIED CHICKEN**

- Phone Book
- Car
- Cash

Look up address of nearest Church's or Kentucky Fried Chicken. Drive car to address. Place order. Pay. Take home and enjoy.

You can always do that, unless you're in McCarthy, and not even have to wash the dishes! See you in a couple of months. I'll probably be packing for McCarthy! Enjoy cooking and eating, everyone.

**CVT Store Remodel is Open for Business**

Copper Valley Telecom reported today that its newly remodeled store and office is open for business. Located at mile 188.8 Glenn Highway, the store now provides customers and cooperative members a more spacious environment in which to browse products, sign up for and make changes to their telecommunications services, and conduct business related to their accounts. To create a larger area for customers, Copper Valley's engineering and plant personnel have moved into a new facility located directly behind the existing building.

"I think customers will find the space more comfortable and inviting." Said Tabitha Gregory,

Copper Valley's Chief Customer Relations Officer. "In the past, there was very little room for customers to move around. Now, customers will be able to see the full line-up of wireless phones and accessories and there is more space for customers to interact with our customer service representatives."

Glennallen contracting firm, D.B. Enterprises, won the contract for the store remodel. Zastrow Enterprises of Valdez constructed the new building. Both companies primarily em-

ployed area residents for these projects.

Copper Valley will host an open house on Thursday, January 24 from 3:00-6:00 p.m. to introduce customers and members to the new store.

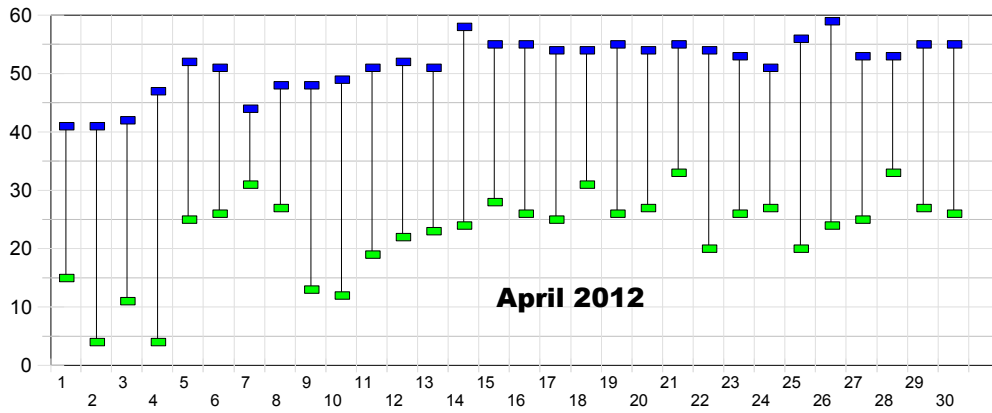
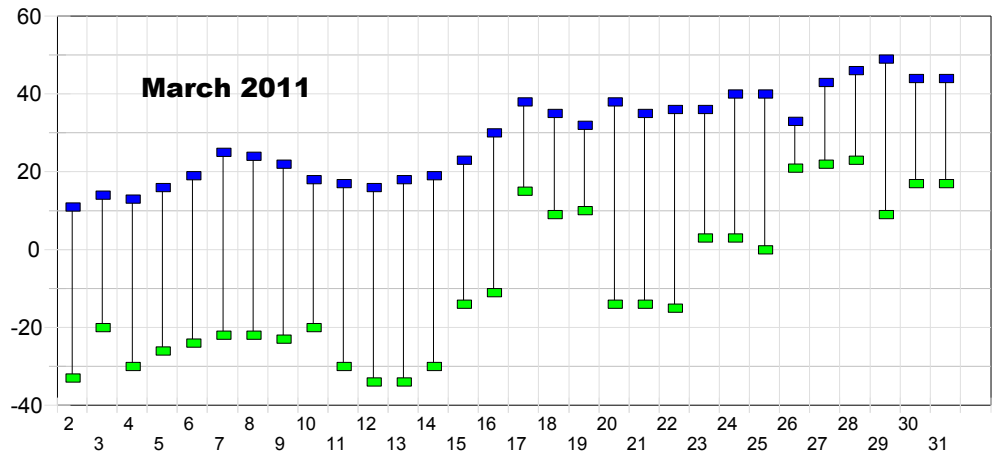


*Please Help*

Former McCarthy resident Israel Hale, age 25, newlywed, victim in tragic accident resulting in loss of both legs.  
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