

Wrangell St. Elias News

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"

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Fun in the Wrangells

Fun in the Wrangells can mean a variety of adventurous activities: skiing, snowmachining, and snowboarding, to name a few. Capping these outdoor adventures is attending the annual Long Lake Fishing Derby, hosted by local resident Jim Kreblin. Jim's cabin is located on the lake shore. He is more-than-willing to share his special place with visitors—at least once a year.

Neil O'Donnell, an attorney from Anchorage, is fond of the outdoors. He and his family make the 300-mile long drive to their McCarthy cabin as often as possible. Catching fish (even the small ones of this year) and winning a new ice fishing rod was a highlight of spring 2011. Congratulations, Neil, and thank you, Jim, for another fun-filled event in the Wrangells.



WSEN staff photo

Neil O'Donnell (left) accepting his new fishing rod from Jim Kreblin (right).

Trouble at Yukon-Charlie

"I could not then imagine the Park Service doing something like rangers did on the Yukon last fall. Even less could I imagine the agency defending such behavior." — Craig Medred, page 14

"The case has stirred up Alaskans, including Gov. Sean Parnell and Alaska's three members of Congress, who question the authority and attitude of the Park Service to enforce federal regulations on state waterways. Parnell, as well as Rep. Don Young and Sen. Lisa Murkowski, have disparaged the Park Service over Wilde's arrest."—Tim Mowry page 11

"This development furthers my assertion that the NPS in the Yukon Charley area, and in many other areas across Alaska, is out of control. You continue to stand behind the actions of your employees though they are not properly trained, do not abide by the law, and have no regard for local communities. This is an outrage."—AK Rep. Don Young page 23

A note from the publisher

BY RICK KENYON

Bonnie normally writes this column but as she is buried beneath many pages that still need proofing, and I seem to be caught up with writing she asked if I would fill in for her in this issue.

As I write this we still have something less than a foot of snow on the ground, but the temperature is almost 50 degrees so as you can imagine things are melting. Thankfully we have had a good breeze and no rain, so it appears that spring breakup may be brief and relatively painless.

The situation in Yukon Charlie with the National Park Service has been painful to watch. It is too similar to what we saw here in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park half a decade ago. We are thankful for the turnaround here. However, the understanding among the NPS hierarchy that the parks are primarily for the people, not for the pleasure of the managers, is not as wide-spread as we had hoped.

One of our readers has asked that whenever we use the term NPS or National Park Service, that we use this format: nPS or national park SERVICE in the hope that directors and park superintendents in both Washington DC and Alaska would get the message. We will consider his request.

On a lighter note, it has been a very quiet winter here in the McCarthy area. While we have some drama going on in regards to activities at Dan Creek and transportation of freight and ma-

terials on the Nizina River, we have not heard any reports of rangers pointing shotguns at locals. Mostly folks have just been enjoying the splendor of this magnificent place and going about their business.

We have had several favorable comments on Rick Jr.'s first episode of his story about growing up in McCarthy. We trust you enjoy his continuing account of the trip north.

Each time I read one of Dee Frady's *Languid Lady* articles, I am amazed at the amount of knowledge and talent among the members of this tiny community! We first published her series in 1998 and I think I am enjoying it more this time!

We welcome neighbor Nik Merlino and his new venture of

guiding folks on the local rivers. The McCarthy area economy has not been one that attracts a large number of people willing to risk capital. Whenever people like Nik follow their vision for giving our area visitors something of value we are great boosters. You will enjoy Nik's story on page 22.

Finally, a word of thanks to another neighbor, Peggy Guntis. Her *Cooking with Peggy* column is always tastefully done (pun intended!) and she is always the first of our regular columnists to get her article to us. This issue is full of wonderful salmon recipes, and Bonnie and I even planted eggplant in our greenhouse so that we can try her eggplant with sweet onions and tomatoes recipe.

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Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

The Keller “farm”: The Kellers are up to a lot of good these day, or maybe I should say their 37 *ducks* are up to a lot of good—productive laying. When Jeremy called the other day, he was one excited farmer! The flock is averaging 34 eggs a day, obviously completely satisfied with their special Alaskan diet, and the 15,000 gallon pond dug for them last year.

Rick and I were pleased to sample a supply of these high quality eggs. I highly recommend them. Jeremy says his duck eggs are 1/3 larger than store bought eggs. The large eggs run \$10 a dozen; the small/medium size is selling for \$9 a dozen. He already has two contracts to provide eggs to McCarthy Lodge and Wrangell Mountain Center this summer. If the flock continues their prosperous laying, the Keller farm can still provide locals with about 12 dozen a week over and above the promised 75 dozen to the lodge and 50 dozen to the center.

If you are in need of fresh eggs or simply want to sample Keller duck eggs, give Jeremy a call at 907-440-7924, place an order in his McCarthy mail box or stop by their Nizina homestead.

Nik Merlino: Nik is back in the neighborhood after a family visit in Seattle this last month. Each of his

three grandparents are celebrating a long life at their ripe ages of 98, 96, and 93.

He experienced another successful raft trip in the Grand Canyon. January 20 through February 13 proved to be the perfect time for Nik and the 12 folks who took to the rapids in the canyon. Nik said there was not a single day of rain. The 5 rafts and a 10' paddle boat handled the last big rapid of the trip well, but Nik came away with a broken hand! Thankfully, he is healing up well and gearing up for an exciting summer season on the water with his new business venture, McCarthy River Tours and Outfitters. He has two guides on board with him this year. May 15th is the start-up, he says, and will run through September 30th.

Be sure to read Nik's story on page 22 and if you are interested in floating in the Wrangells, give Nik a call at 907-554-4407 or 554-1077.

Neil O'Donnell, Margaret Stock, Catherine and friends: “Spring break” showed up with gusto this year and so did the O'Donnell family and friends. Because Neil, Margaret and daughter Catherine enjoy visiting their McCarthy cabin as often as they can, they usually extend invitations to friends to come along for the adventure. They arrived March 6th and enjoyed a week of fun in the snow.

This particular trip included a classmate of Catherine's, Maggie Clark. Maggie and Catherine are both in the 8th grade and share several classes at school. This was Maggie's first visit to our area. Asma Gabsi, a 17-year old foreign exchange student from Tunisia, returned to experience another adventure before leaving Alaska to return to her home country. She says she has thoroughly enjoyed her stay and schooling in Anchorage and appreciates the slower pace of our state. She hopes to become a doctor some day and complete her medical training in Tunisia.

While there was plenty of time for relaxation (everyone brought their own special reading material) and the completion of a very challenging puzzle (just ask me how I know!), those who were up for adventure took advantage of the great snow conditions. Neil made sure Asma got a winter tour of Kennicott and a trip up the Nizina River. Kelly Bay and daughter Tessa met up with Neil and Asma and then the four continued their snowmachine excursion to Chittitu Creek then on to Dan Creek. Neil said he was pleased to meet Dan Creek resident Fred Denner for the first time. In spite of getting stuck (and unstuck, thankfully) a few times, the four had a grand outing.

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Topping off this year's McCarthy trip was the Long Lake Fishing Derby on the 12th. Rick and I were invited to ride along in Neil's truck with him, Margaret and Catherine. Asma and Maggie followed on two snowmachines which we used to ferry us all to the spawning grounds where the action was taking place. Each young lady and Neil won prizes, making the event quite a success in the O'Donnell household. (I'll complete the Fishing Derby news in the next item.)

I was honored to share a wonderful event in Catherine's life. On the 10th, she skied down to my cabin so she could check her email. She was waiting for a very *special* email. Sure enough, it was in her mail box just waiting for her attention. The subject read: Congratulations and welcome to Exeter! The look on Catherine's face was worth capturing, but, of course, I did not have my camera ready.

After much arduous labor filling out all the paperwork for acceptance to Phillips Exeter Academy, Catherine's efforts had paid off—she was offered admission and an invitation to visit the campus for a tour. Just what the future holds for Catherine and Exeter is still in the making, but I cannot help but congratulate this fine young lady.

Long Lake Fishing Derby: The morning of March 12th—from my warm vantage point “inside” the cabin—was a grand beginning for the annual Long Lake Fishing Derby. Blue skies and not a cloud in sight. Then I read the outdoor thermometer. -34 degrees F. Hmm...this was going to be interesting! Normally Rick and I assess snow conditions on the McCarthy Road before determining which mode of transportation we take to the lake. This year there was plenty of snow for snowmachines. Thankfully, however, an earlier invitation to ride in a warm truck with Neil, Margaret and Catherine was sounding even better. The two young la-

dies in Neil and Margaret's party were eager to each drive a machine giving us transportation once we arrived at the lake. Both girls were outfitted with warm winter gear. Even though the derby officially started at 10 a.m., we let Jim Kreblin, the derby host, know we were indeed coming, but not until closer to noon. By then the sub-zero temperatures were rising in the right direction.

By the time we arrived, several fisherfolk and participants were busy visiting and wetting their lines in previously drilled ice holes. A few others soon joined the festivities. This year's derby had an international touch to it with Asma from Tunisia trying her hand at ice fishing for the first time. The Ward family were well represented. Art Ward, sons Nelson (who flew his plane to the lake), Ben, and daughters Sarah and Mary Ann from Salcha; Art's brother, Doran, of Washington state and Cal Ward, Jr. of Fireweed Mountain. Ben was quite taken with ice bowling this year.

Jim Kreblin's daughter, Lindsay, and husband, Kurt Jensen, with son Luke Allen and baby daughter, Alayah Cecille, drove in from Palmer. Neil O'Donnell, wife Margaret, daughter Catherine and Catherine's classmate, Maggie, were visiting McCarthy for a week from Anchorage; Ralph and Linda Lohse of Kenny Lake/Cordova, and Jim Drewry, neighbor Paul Bowman, and Bodie and Sunshine from the Chokosna area. (Paul did an outstanding job keeping the bonfire well fed.)

Due to Mark Vail's absence this year, Kurt did the honors of preparing a delicious pot of hot chili. Roasting hot dogs and marshmallows kept the attendees warm inside and out.

Jim Kreblin presented several fisherfolk with prizes such as a tackle boxes, a special knife, and ice fishing poles. Catherine O'Donnell won a prize for building the one and only igloo at this year's derby.

Thanks to everyone who made the annual event a great success!

George Cebula, Shane, Art Phillips and Auggie: George returned from his annual trip to Arizona and beyond. He didn't come home empty-handed, either! A male, 2-year old Australian Shepherd named Shane accompanied him all the way up the Alcan. Thankfully, both George and Shane had companions on the long drive north—for George, Art Phillips, and for Shane, Art's dog, Auggie. Art and his wife Linda own property just down the road from us and are always a welcome sight whenever they visit their northern home in the McCarthy area. Art is presently working for the McCarthy Lodge, helping them get ready for their seasonal opening in May. Many days Auggie comes to “play” with Shane and take frequent walks with George. The dogs have become fast friends.

Welcome back George, Art and Auggie and a welcome to newcomer, Shane!

Dave Hollis: Speaking of returning neighbors...Dave is back home, too. He wrote us an updated “item” which I include in his own words:

“After visiting my mother in Edgewater, Florida, (Hi, Mom!) I rented a cabin in the rain forest on the Big Island. I enjoyed the company of a feral jungle cat that adopted me. Most of my leisure time was spent in Volcanoes National Park, hiking and playing with Pele—the goddess of lava and fire.

“I arrived back in McCarthy on April 1st. I'm keeping busy shoveling snow—digging out my property. Planning for ‘Far Out! In the Wrangells’—the fourth John Denver Tribute is underway. The event will be Friday, June 17th, in the Kenne-cott Rec Hall, 6 to 10 pm.

“I'm excited about my sixteenth season living in the area, and looking forward to ‘summer camp 2011’ in this wilderness heaven!”

A warm welcome home to you, Dave!

Neil Darish/McCarthy Lodge:

Neil is in Anchorage on a pre-season business trip, but prior to his leaving McCarthy, a surprise announcement about him and McCarthy Lodge came to my attention. The *Alaska Journal of Commerce* posted the following on their web site April 14th:

“The 2011 Alaska SBA (Small Business Administration) Financial Champion of the Year is Neil Darish, owner of McCarthy Lodge, located in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park in McCarthy. Last year, the state approached the Alaska Small Business Development Center (SBDC) with a mentoring opportunity for small business owners. The model allowed the SBDC to offer business advising in partnership with industry mentoring to be offered by Darish. The SBDC participated in the project with the state Department of Economic Development. The proposed project was focused on offering rural tourism businesses assistance in sustainability during a downturn in tourism in Alaska. The program included eight businesses from different remote areas of the state. Darish offered marketing expertise, operational suggestions and financial planning, and tailored his suggestions to the needs of each individual business. The overall results from the participants proved the project was a success, with increases in sales and profitability, decreases in operating costs.”

Neil commented on the news: “I’ve had a lot of other mentors in my life. I just wanted to share what I’ve learned. It’s been fun. A lot of my mistakes were seeds to benefit others.”

Congratulations, Neil!

Kennicott Wilderness Guides:

Congratulations and best wishes are in store for KWG these days. Ownership of this well-known guide service recently changed hands from **Mike Murphy** and **Paul Hanis** to **John**

“**Monte**” **Montepare**, **Betsy Bradbury** and **Jared Steyaert**. Mike has been with the KWG family for 6 years and Paul, 8.

Paul first appeared on KWG's doorstep immediately after a 160-mile solo trek from Nabesna, on the north side of the range. He is no stranger to adventure—skiing, snowboarding, ice climbing, alpine mountaineering, snow and ice sculpting or getting married to McCarthy local, **Jenny Rosenbaum**, this upcoming September. With Jenny at his side, Paul most likely has his next adventure all lined up!

Mike has 6 years of KWG management under his belt, a master's degree in counseling psychology and has recently become a new father. (Now that's a new adventure, Mike!) He and his wife, **Denise**, own property in the McCarthy area, love to garden in the summer months and plan on staying in the area. Best wishes, Mike and Paul, in all your future accomplishments.

Monte, Betsy and Jared are not new faces to KWG or unfamiliar names to our town. However, I did learn a few interesting items through KWG's web site. All three guides are bringing much to the future of KWG and its ownership.

Monte first joined the KWG crew in 2004. A native of Summit County, Colorado, he has been skiing and climbing since he was knee-high to a grasshopper. Since coming to the Wrangell mountains he has expanded his experiences in the mountains and explored the ranges surrounding Kennicott and McCarthy. In May of 2007 he successfully summited Blackburn (16,390) and skied the North Ridge back down to 7,000 feet with his friends and fellow KWG guides Chris and Taylor.

KWG experienced a true wind-fall in 2006 when Betsy, a 5-year rambler of the Wrangell mountains, signed on as an up-and-coming expert guide. She quickly proved her-

self to be a natural, particularly when it came to client care and consideration. Her enthusiasm for exploration, wilderness savvy, and rapport with people are unique and unparalleled.

Jared spent his first few years in the Wrangell mountains as the manager of the local non-profit Wrangell Mountain Center, based out of the old Hardware Store in McCarthy. This unique position gave him the great opportunity to converse with experts in various different fields, including botany, geology, and the natural and cultural history of the Kennicott/McCarthy area. He's spent a few winters skiing and climbing the mountains outside of Anchorage. He's walked hundreds of miles in the Wrangells backcountry. He's a top-notch rock and ice climber and a great musician.

Congratulations, Monte, Betsy and Jared!

Congratulations: Mike Murphy and **Denise Lopez** are the proud parents of a baby boy born on February 10, 2011, at Providence Hospital in Anchorage. **Rio Pax Lopez Murphy** weighed 6 lb. 5 oz. and measured 17 inches.

“He's been a real joy! It's been a great couple of months,” says Mike. All is well with mom, dad and baby Rio.

North American Outdoor Institute: NAOI is offering the following courses: Wilderness First Responder Course, July 5-15; Wilderness First Responder Recert/Wilderness First Aid Course, May 7-8.

The courses are being held in Palmer at Fox Run 4466 South Glenn Highway. Lodging and tent sites are available. The facility offers a comfortable learning environment and community kitchen. You may register online at besnowsmart.org or call 376-2898 for more information.

the Languid Lady

Trees and Shrubs of the Wrangells— Part 3: “Common Deciduous Trees”

BY DEE FRADY

As I write this article it is snowing one more time. Although technically it is spring, winter does not want to loosen its grip. We just finished the log work on our store addition and we are ready to start the roof. It is a good day to be inside.

For now, I will finish up local trees in this part by covering three populus members and the birch. These are the trees that cause the most summer inquiries. Looking outside I see many small trees, mostly aspen, bent over like someone was pulling them down. Actually they bend due to the weight of winter snow accumulation. Poplar reminds me of spring black bear. Many years we can look up the hillside and see a black bear hanging on a poplar limb to feast on new growth and buds. Birch brings pleasant winter memories of logging and cutting firewood. The area where we go has a lovely grove of large birch near the spruce stands. Most of all, birch reminds me of my early childhood in New Hampshire. In the yard were a big clump and a great example of birch growth my family named the “Seven Sisters.”

QUAKING ASPEN (*Populus tremuloides*) Willow Family

The aspen is a fast growing but comparatively short-lived deciduous tree known for its distinctive leaves. Aspen like south-facing slopes, benches, open woods and creek bottoms. The very straight

trunks grow to 12 inch diameters and obtain 20 to 40 foot heights. The bark is whitish or green-gray in color, appears smooth, and has frequent scars and black knots.

The 1 to 2 inch long leaves are almost round at the bases, have small rounded teeth along the



Quaking Aspen (Leaves “flutter” and cause a pleasant rustling sound.)

edges and short points at the apex. The leaves attached to slender twigs by 1½ to 2½ inch stalks are thin, flattened and set at right angles so they bend easily in one direction. That enables the leaves to receive sun on both sides. The slightest breeze causes the leaves to flutter, hence the name quaking. The pleasant, gentle, rustling sound gives this tree its distinctive characteristic. The leaves are a shiny, dark green on top, lighter underneath. They turn a brilliant yellow and sometimes a lovely reddish color in autumn. Legend has

it that aspen leaves “tremble” with memory of the crucifix (role as lumber in construction of the cross).

The 1½ to 2½ inch long, drooping catkins are dioecious. Dioecious means the plants have male and female flowers growing on different trees. Catkins are long clusters named for their resemblance to a cat’s tail, which form many, tiny flowers. They blossom in May before the leaves open. The catkins release tiny, cottony seeds in the summer. On a breezy day the profusion of these cotton seeds appears like snow in front of our store.

Aspen can produce many root suckers and as you may have noticed, new trees grow from these suckers. As pioneers of burned slopes, aspens grow in large stands after forest fires. Growth continues 80 to 100 years before these stands deteriorate. Very rare hybrids with balsam poplar are possible.

An insect pest of the aspen is the “Large Aspen Tortrix,” a leaf eating caterpillar. They defoliate the tree by consuming leaves and create extensive webbing in so doing. Fortunately, the aspen has the capacity to grow new leaves shortly after defoliation. We witnessed an excellent local and dramatic example of this in a band occurring along Swift Creek several years ago.

Aspen is used for pulp, lumber, matches, packing excelsior and wafer board; but not to any

great extent in Alaska. Walking through a stand of brilliantly colored aspen during a breezy fall day is one of my favorite things (pure sunshine, even if it's cloudy).

BALSAM POPLAR (*Populus balsamifera*) Willow Family

Poplar, found throughout the interior, is Alaska's largest hardwood. This deciduous tree can reach 100 foot heights with 2 foot wide trunks but, most commonly, reach 30 to 50 feet with 12 inch trunks. They grow in river valleys and attain the greatest size on flood plains of glacial rivers. Not only do they hybridize with aspen on rare occasions but also with black cottonwood. Poplar bark is a light to dark gray color, smooth when young and becomes rough, thick and deeply furrowed with age. The bark also has a whitish bloom that comes off on hands or clothing when rubbed. The trunks often have claw marks that age to deep furrows, created by bears.

Poplars have large 2½ to 4½ inch long leaves, shaped like arrowheads with toothed edges, tapering gradually to a sharp point. The dark green to rusty brown underneath leaves grows on 1 to 2 inch slender stalks. Young trees often have very noticeably large leaves appearing out of proportion. The autumn falling leaves are a brilliant yellow. Poplars distinguished by brittle branches which break away easily from the trunks.

The winter buds are 1 inch long, pointed and yellow with a very sticky resin. The pungent and sweet odor of this resin permeates the air with its distinctive smell in the spring. Aphids love them and they drip large quantities of this honeydew that is quite rough on cars parked underneath! You can always tell if a tree is a poplar because if you touch the buds on the end of the branches your hands

will get sticky. As with aspen, male and female catkins, 2 to 3½ inches long, are on separate trees (dioecious). They flower in May or June before the leaves appear. During mid-summer the female trees also release large numbers of big, fluffy seed capsules and fill the air with white, cotton-like material along with the aspen (my summer snow).

Like aspen, poplar suckers also grow from roots. If you ever see a burned area and some small trees are starting to grow they are almost always going to be balsam poplars because they are the fastest trees to regenerate.

The poplars provide valuable winter and spring food for grouse, hare, moose and of course, beaver. Poplar branches produce rooting hormones and placed in water with other plants induce roots. (They act much like purchased rooting powders and are free!) Populus bark and buds contain salicin and populin (aspirin-like compounds). Skin salves for sores, rashes and even frostbite responds to the action of the extracted resin, "Balm of Gilead." The salicin both disinfects the area and dulls pain. As a decongestant, Athabascans burned the heavily budded branches to fill the air with resinous perfume. Crafts use of the bark are for woodcarving and painting. Other uses are fuel wood, specialty lumber and logs in building cabins. Poplar logs are easier to work with as they are very smooth but I prefer the character of spruce logs and knots.

BLACK COTTONWOOD (*Populus trichocarpa*) Willow Family

Black cottonwood, although insignificant in our local area, grows in lowlands, river valleys and glacial plains. Huge black cottonwoods grow on flood plains of riv-

ers that drain the coastal mountains. This is the largest broadleaf, deciduous tree species in Alaska attaining 80 to 100 foot heights and massive 30 inch diameter straight trunks.

Black cottonwood mistaken for and not easily distinguished from its close relative, the balsam poplar, overlaps ranges. The leaves are broader and whiter on the bottom than the poplar. They identify mostly by locality or differences in seed capsules. Also dioecious, the cottonwood seed capsules are nearly round, hairy and split into three parts. As with aspen and poplar, black cottonwoods produce white, cotton-like seeds. It is this cottony aspect of the seeds that is responsible for the species being named cottonwood.

PAPER BIRCH (*Betula papyrifera*) Birch Family

One of North America's most loved and most widely distributed deciduous tree is the birch (also called white birch and canoe birch). Alaska has three varieties of the species that can hybridize. Birches grow best on warm slopes with moist soil but they are also very common on colder northern slopes. Growing 20 to 60 feet tall the trunks average 12 inch diameters.

The 1½ to 3½ inch long rounded leaves, are wedge-shaped at the base with coarse, sharp teeth along the edges and come to a pointed tip. They are dark-green or yellow-green and turn to yellow in the fall. The leaves grow on slender ½ to 1 inch stalks. The birch bark is mostly white with brownish areas and horizontal markings. The bark curls and peels off into thin strips very easily. If all the bark peels off the tree will die. The inner bark is orange in color. With birch the male and

female flowers are on the same twig and also occur in May to June before the leaves. The 1 to 2 inch long cylindrical fruits are like soft cones and contain numerous tiny seeds (nutlets) with wings. These seeds shed gradually into winter. Under a birch, on winter snow appear a carpet of these seeds that remind me of tiny airplanes. Did you know alder is a member of the birch family? Check out alder leaves and bark to find the resemblances.

Birch is a common invading tree past forest fires on east and west facing slopes. They will eventually dominate the forest in the process of change, known as succession. As birches mature their offspring cannot regenerate in the shade of their parents. White spruce, however grow well under this birch canopy. The birch and aspen now wait for fire, wind, wa-

ter or man to clear the way again. "Birch Leaf Rollers," an insect that can infect these trees, usually has minor effects.

Birch has a multitude of uses. Chickadees, redpolls and other songbirds feast on the seeds. The bark, especially on young trunks, also produces salicin. (That is why moose don't browse quite as heavily on these trees.) The inner bark of the birch is edible. Historically, as an emergency food, it prevented starving and was important during the Civil War. Birch syrup is a wonderful concoction and only half as sweet as maple. Small birch trees are easy to transplant for landscaping. The wood works easily and takes finishes and stains well. Birch has many uses; lumber, furniture, toys, handles, tooth-picks, veneer, carving, canoes and basketry. Birch scrolls found that

date back to the 16th century are still legible. Historically, cabin roofs had sheets of bark placed under the sod. Birch is the best fuel wood and well known for bark that ignites readily even when wet. Finally, birch twigs make a gold-beige dye. Whew!

Enough of trees, next issue I'll return to the subject of wildflowers. Although it doesn't seem so today, there will be a profusion of flowers in bloom by then. This flower, usually associated with Hawaii or hothouses, grows in Alaska with about 30 recognized species. (Several in our area, albeit many are quite tiny.) Can you guess what they are?

Reprinted with permission from the May & June 1999 WSEN.)

Guns on the homestead—make your own bullets

BY RICK KENYON

In our last issue we took up the subject of hand-loading our own ammunition. I have found over the years that I derive as much pleasure at the loading bench as at the shooting range. Add the pleasure of saving money by "rolling our own" and the benefit of loading ammunition soon add up to a substantial one.

This is true in spades when it comes to making bullets from scrap lead—typically automotive wheel weights. I have been casting bullets since the early seventies, and in fact still have the same Lee molds that I used many years ago. It is only the past few years, however, that the hobby has really captured my interest.

Perhaps it has to do with the increased cost of factory-made bullets, but I have to credit the Internet with much of the credit for this renewed interest. Specifically an online-forum where thousands of fellow bullet-casters gather and share information. It is called "Castboolits" and can be found at <http://castboolits.gunloads.com/index.php>.

At Castboolits you will find many willing casters who are willing and able to share information with the newcomer, as well as a number of folks who are always "pushing the envelope" when it comes to cast bullet manufacture and performance.

Another online resource especially suited to beginners is found at http://goatlipstips.eas_town.co

m/index.html. In fact there are numerous web sites that give both the beginning and the experienced bullet caster a wealth of information.

Then there is a DVD called *Bullet Casting 101* and is available from Amazon.com for \$17.99 with free shipping.

Another amazing resource online is found at Youtube.com. Just log on and do a search for "bullet casting." At press time this search found 614 results, with titles such as *Bullet Casting Part 1—Basic Equipment and getting started*, *Introduction to Bullet Casting*, and *Bullet Casting for Beginners*.

If you don't have access to the Internet, there are a number of books on the subject. At least some of them should be available

at your local or the regional library.

Bullet casting can be done with a minimum of equipment. A bullet mold with handles, something to melt the lead in (a cast-iron pot from the second-hand store will work), something to heat the lead with, something to cast ingots in (used muffin tins from the second-hand store work) and a ladle and you are in business.

Of course, as with any other endeavor, there are no limits to which you can take the accumulation of tools and equipment to further your enjoyment and production rate!

Molds come in numerous forms and are made from different materials. The most basic and economical molds come from the same company that gave us the Lee Loader mentioned in our last issue. I still have and occasionally use the Lee mold that I bought for casting 45-70 bullets back in the early 1970s. It is made of aluminum and has one single cavity that pours a 405 grain bullet. They are still available for about twenty bucks but now you can get a two-cavity for the same price, which helps increase output.

One of my recent acquisitions is a custom-made 4 cavity mold, again for the 45-70 but this one is made of brass. It is capable of casting both hollow-

point and flat nose bullets, and has two cavities that pour bullets that will handle gas checks and two that are plain base. One could, for instance, get two plain base flat point bullets and two gas checked hollow pointed bullets with each pour.

Once the bullets are cast, there is one and sometimes two things that still need to be done. For sure they will need some sort of bullet lube. Again, this can be as simple or more complex.

Again Richard Lee has made this phase of handloading simple and inexpensive. For about \$4 you can buy a bottle of his liquid alox, apply it to your bullets that you have put in an empty cool-whip type container, and swish them around until they have an even coating of the lube. Put them on a piece of waxed paper and let them dry overnight and you are ready to load them, if their diameter is suitable for the gun you are going to shoot them in. (In general, you want your bullet to be .001-.002" over the groove diameter of the firearm.) I have a number of bullets that I process just this way.

The other step that is often optional is to run the bullets through a sizer. Lee has a "push-through" model that you mount in your loading press, place a bullet on the stem that comes with the sizer die, and push it through nose-first. Then the bullets get another coat of the liquid alox and are ready to load.

Some folks don't like the liquid alox (detractors call it "mule-snot") and prefer other methods of applying bullet lube. A simple method is called "pan lubing" and only requires a small frying pan to melt the bullet lube. There are many commercial lubes available, and just as many recipes for making your own. I make mine from three parts of beeswax and one part of a mold lube available from a family that lives at Delta. (The Bullshop, HC 62 BOX 5640, 12011 Rapeseed Way, Delta Junction, AK 99737, 907-895-4739) Daniel Congioli is the owner of the Bullshop and he also markets this same lube under the name "speed green."

There are also lube-sizers that apply the lube and size the bullets with one pull of the handle. Each method is useful and has its pros and its cons. The point is you can get started very simply and at low cost. If you enjoy the hobby, try the more complex-expensive methods.

Likely someone will point out the hazards of lead. I will just say follow common-sense safety measures, read the books or watch the DVDs before you begin, and you won't unduly expose yourself to danger.

One of our readers has requested an article on airguns on the homestead. We hope to accommodate him in our next issue!

DNR/Forestry burn permits required

Burn permits for open burning are required each year from April 1 to August 31, unless otherwise designated by the Commissioner. Once obtained, the permits are good for three years.

Approved burn barrels do not require permits and are not subject to burn suspensions, but are subject to closures.

To obtain a burn permit and additional information, please visit the Alaska Division of Forestry website <http://forestry.alaska.gov/burn/>.

Alaska grown part 2

BY RICK KENYON JR.

As we continued our journey North through Canada, a few more memories come to mind. I distinctly remember the time our right rear wheel came bouncing off on the Alcan Highway. I was sitting in the backseat of the Suburban and just happened to be looking out the window when the wheel and tire went flying up in the air and rolled down into the ditch! I exclaimed, "There goes our wheel!" just as the vehicle settled down on the axle, sparks flying. Dad managed somehow to get over on the shoulder of the road without wrecking. Mom, Dad and I piled out of the crippled Suburban to assess the damage. Due to both the trailer and SUV being overweight, the lug nuts "sheared off" and the wheel was freed.

Here we were in the middle of wilderness with no telephones or houses in sight. (This was before cell phones were heard of!) Dad managed to hitch a ride back to the last town we went through while Mom and I waited with all our earthly possessions. After what seemed like eternity, Dad came back with some parts to allow us to turn around and

"limp" back to Charley Lake. He was able to get the Suburban repaired but overnight it snowed! We were stuck there for several days, waiting for the road conditions to improve before resuming our journey towards Alaska.

Another memory of that trip was a stretch of dirt road turned into mud by rain. There

brought us over mountain passes and down steep twists and turns on the Alcan Highway. Wildlife could be seen from my back seat "view" and the beauty of the Canadian wilderness was basically unscathed by development. Whitehorse, in the Yukon Territory, was our last major town to go through before arriving at the Alaska-Canada border.

It was with great excitement when we saw the words, "Welcome to Alaska" at the border! What a thrill to FINALLY arrive to the Last Frontier State after such a long journey. Our green suburban and trailer were covered in mud and dust and needed a good wash. We stopped in the city of Tok to clean up before driving the next leg of our trip.

Alaska was somewhat different from the cartoon

character images that I had as a young child. I had a great imagination, and thought there were polar bears, Eskimos and penguins behind every bush and igloo; yet these "Alaskans" looked just like us and spoke the same language! And where was the snow? (When we arrived in the summer, there was green grass and the temperature was comfortable). This was going to be interesting, indeed!

(next issue: Part III)



WSEN staff photo

Rick Jr., 9, (left foreground, if you can find him!). Smokey the Bear (right). June 14, 1976

were 18-wheelers and other cars getting stuck. I remember Mom praying out loud, and sure enough, an unseen angel pushed us through that stretch and we didn't get stuck. (The highway department was asked why they continued to spread water on the already-muddy road and their reply was, "if we don't water it, we don't get paid!")

The remaining trip through Canada was uneventful. As we journeyed northward, our route

Park Service rangers had detained another man on Yukon River before Wilde arrest

BY TIM MOWRY

FAIRBANKS - The two National Park Service rangers who arrested and handcuffed a 70-year-old man on the bank of the Yukon River last summer for refusing to stop for a boat inspection had a similar run-in with another man less than a month earlier.

According to testimony on Wednesday in the federal trial of Jim Wilde, now 71, of Central, rangers Joe Dallemolle and Ben Grodjesk detained and handcuffed another man, Tim Henry, for approximately two hours in August 2010 because he refused to identify himself.

The two rangers did not cite or arrest Henry, or brandish weapons like they did when they arrested Wilde in September, and he was eventually released. But the rangers' behavior suggests "a pattern of when somebody doesn't do what we tell him to, we'll show him who's boss," said Fairbanks attorney Bill Satterberg, who is representing Wilde.

Wilde was arrested Sept. 16 on a remote stretch of the Yukon River between Circle and Eagle within the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve that is managed by the National Park Service. He is being charged with four misdemeanors stemming from his refusal to stop for a boat inspection and is accused of trying to swerve his boat into the rangers' boat during a short chase.

The case has stirred up Alaskans, including Gov. Sean Parnell and Alaska's three members of Congress, who question the authority and attitude of the Park

Service to enforce federal regulations on state waterways. Parnell, as well as Rep. Don Young and Sen. Lisa Murkowski, have disparaged the Park Service over Wilde's arrest.

Day two of the trial began with Satterberg withdrawing the mistrial motion he made late Tuesday. Satterberg had asked Magistrate Judge Scott Oravec to declare a mistrial after it was revealed that prosecutor Stephen Cooper with the U.S. Attorney's office directed a ranger where to take several photos of the approximate arrest site that were then submitted as evidence.

But on Wednesday, Satterberg told Oravec the issue had been resolved because Cooper was withdrawing the one photo that could lead to him being called as a witness in the case.

Dallemolle, 28, and Grodjesk, 33, were both relatively new on the job when they encountered both Henry and Wilde, according to testimony from the rangers. Both rangers had been working in the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve only about two months prior to their contact with Wilde.

According to their testimony, Wilde refused to stop and cooperate with a request to do a safety check on his boat and sped away, leading to a short chase during which they say he swerved his boat at them.

It was only after Dallemolle pointed a loaded shotgun at Wilde during the pursuit that Wilde pulled his boat to shore, the two rangers testified.

Once on shore, the rangers said an irate Wilde questioned their authority to stop him and

approached them with his fists clenched, ready to fight. Grodjesk ended up tackling Wilde and wrestling him to the ground, where both rangers threatened to use Tasers on him if he didn't stop resisting.

But Wilde's 74-year-old wife, Hannelore, one of two passengers on Wilde's boat, testified Wednesday that she was "absolutely" certain her husband didn't swerve his boat toward the rangers' boat and that at no time did she feel her husband's boat handling jeopardized the safety of herself, fellow passenger Fred Shank or the two rangers.

"Are you sure of that?" Satterberg asked.

"I'm positive," she replied.

Both Dallemolle and Grodjesk testified that it was Jim Wilde's reckless boat handling that prompted Dallemolle to first pull a pistol and then a shotgun and point it at Wilde in order to get him to stop. Satterberg has suggested that the two rangers have fabricated their version of the story to justify their use of weapons.

Hannelore Wilde also denied that her husband's fists were clenched when he walked toward the rangers on the beach, though she did admit he was spewing expletives at them.

"He started walking toward the rangers and said, 'What is this all about' " she said, holding her arms and hands out.

"You're sure he didn't have his fists clenched?" Satterberg asked.

"I'm positive," she answered.

As the two rangers tried to handcuff her husband, Hannelore Wilde said he repeatedly asked, "Why are you doing this?"

Grodjesk's reply, she said, was "You're going to jail."

"How many times did he say it?" Satterberg asked.

"Three or four times," Hannelore Wilde said. "Every time Jim asked the question."

During his testimony, Grodjesk said Wilde repeatedly told the rangers during the scuf-

fle, "You do not have the authority to do this."

Editor's Note: This story originally appeared in the Fairbanks Daily News Miner on April 6, 1911. Used by permission

National Park Service pledges to change unpopular Yukon-Charley boat checks

BY TIM MOWRY

The National Park Service will continue checking boats on the Yukon River this summer in the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, but rangers will focus those inspections on shore, not mid-river.

Whether or not the two rangers who arrested and handcuffed a 71-year-old Central man for refusing to stop for a boat check last summer will be conducting any of those checks, however, is uncertain.

Preserve superintendent Greg Dudgeon said this week he doesn't know if rangers Joe Dallemolle and Ben Grodjesk will be working in the preserve this summer. The two rookie rangers were at the center of a highly publicized trial in Fairbanks last week that pitted the Park Service against 71-year-old Jim Wilde, the man who refused to stop for a boat check last September on a section of the Yukon River that runs through the preserve.

The trial, which concluded last Friday and is now in a federal magistrate's hands, revealed that Dallemolle pointed a pistol and shotgun at Wilde, his 74-year-old wife, Hannelore, and 66-year-old friend, Fred Schenk, when Wilde refused to stop for a boat check in the middle of the river and turn

his engine off. Wilde claimed it was unsafe to shut down his heavily loaded boat in the middle of the river and said he was heading for shore when Dallemolle pointed his pistol and then a shotgun at him and at his passengers. The two rangers testified that Dallemolle drew weapons because Wilde swerved his boat at them at one point during a brief chase.

Once on shore, the two rangers tackled Wilde and threatened him with Tasers before handcuffing him and transporting him to Fairbanks Correctional Center, where he remained four days before being released.

Wilde pleaded not guilty and challenged the four misdemeanor charges against him, culminating in last week's four-day trial in Fairbanks.

Meeting in Eagle

During an almost three-hour meeting in the Yukon River village of Eagle last week, Dudgeon told residents in the community closest to the preserve that the Park Service will continue patrolling the river and doing boat and hunter checks as it has done the past three years.

He also indicated the two rangers were scheduled to return to work in the preserve this summer, which prompted an angry response from the audience, according to Ann Millard of local

radio station KEAA, who attended the meeting.

Don Woodruff, who has had a Park Service-permitted cabin on the Kandik River for the past 35 years, said bringing either one of the two rangers back to Eagle would "guarantee" more confrontations between residents and rangers. He said the decision to bring in new rangers was a "no-brainer."

In a phone interview earlier this week, Dudgeon was less clear about whether either of the two rangers involved in the Wilde incident would return to the preserve, a vast wilderness area east of Fairbanks that stretches to the Canada border and is bisected by the Yukon River.

Dallemolle was a temporary ranger and hasn't applied to come back this year, Dudgeon said. Grodjesk, a full-time ranger who spent part of last summer in Eagle, has not been assigned a post for the coming season but will likely work in either the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve or Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve northeast of Fairbanks.

"We are trying to ascertain where our needs are," Dudgeon said.

The superintendent also said rangers will "place a greater emphasis on shore contacts" rather than stopping boaters in the mid-

dle of the river, as they tried to do with Wilde.

“We’re not going to get in the way of a person out there who is navigating the rivers and is not having a problem,” he said.

At the same time, Dudgeon said, “If it’s necessary to make a stop of boaters, we could and would do that.”

“We’ve got national mandates and requirements,” he said, without elaborating on what those mandates and requirements are. “We have a job to do out there.”

Several of the 42 residents at the meeting said the Park Service should not be patrolling the river because it’s a state, not federal, matter. Park Service officials say — and courts have agreed — that their agency has jurisdiction on navigable state waterways that flow through federal land.

One of the messages Dudgeon took from the meeting is, “it’s not so much what you’re doing as it is the tone and tenor of how you’re doing it.” He said his goal is to improve communication between the Park Service and preserve users.

“We need to make sure law enforcement coming into these communities has the sort of ability to be effective and has a good working rapport with community members,” Dudgeon said.

Mending bridges?

Dudgeon characterized the meeting in Eagle, a community of about 150 residents 12 miles east of the preserve, as “mostly a listening session.”

“We wanted to hear what local folks were thinking,” he said. “We wanted to make sure we had an opportunity to talk to them and tell them what we’re looking at down the road.”

Eagle resident Mike Sager said the meeting appeared to be an attempt to “mend some bridges.”

“The perception people (in Eagle) have of the Park Service is not good at this point,” Sager said.

Bringing either one of the two rangers that were involved in the Wilde incident back to work in the preserve this summer would be counter-productive unless the goal of the Park Service is prove it can’t be influenced by public opinion, Sager said.

“If they want to make that point, leave them here,” he said.

And while the Park Service claims the boat checks are about safety, Sager called them “superfluous and annoying.”

“They seem like a good reason to stop you at any given time,” he said. “The whole idea (of the preserve) is to manage for future generations but with as little intrusion as possible. If you stop somebody on a regular basis and expect them to be cooperative, that’s an intrusion on your experience out there.”

The Park Service plans to move one of its senior rangers, Seth McMillan, to Eagle for the summer and fall seasons. One of McMillan’s primary roles will be to mentor younger rangers and provide oversight in the Park Service’s day-to-day operation, including river patrols, Dudgeon said. McMillan also will meet with residents in local communities such as Eagle, Central, Circle and Tok to hear concerns they have regarding how the Park Service is operating.

Moving McMillan, who is generally well-liked, to Eagle is a good move, Sager said. But he added that it will take more to gain the trust of locals.

“We’ll just have to wait and see,” he said. “They’re not going to solve this quickly. There’s too much bad blood.”

Willing to work

The Park Service is also establishing a “working group” selected by and consisting of residents to advise the agency on issues in the preserve. The group will be similar to subsistence commissions that advise national parks on subsistence matters.

While members of the Eagle Fish and Game Advisory Committee will make up the core of the group, Dudgeon said all residents are invited to join.

Woodruff, the Kandik River cabin owner, is a member of the Eagle advisory committee. He said he likes the idea of a working group — assuming the Park Service is willing to listen to its recommendations.

The three main reasons the preserve was established was to preserve peregrine falcon habitat, mining history and subsistence use, Woodruff said.

The Park Service has done a good job protecting bird habitat and preserving the area’s mining history by restoring several historic mining cabins and roadhouses, he said, “but they haven’t done much with subsistence.”

During the meeting last week, several residents said the Park Service is not acting in their best interests and doesn’t respect their rights as in-holders or subsistence users in the preserve, according to Millard, of the radio station. Woodruff was one of those residents.

“I just want to see my kids and grandkids able to use the preserve,” he said. “I don’t want it to become their park. It’s the people’s park.”

“We’re willing to work with the Park Service,” he added.

Editor’s Note: This story originally appeared in the Fairbanks Daily News Miner on April 14, 1911. Used by permission.

In remote Alaska, the Park Service wields too much power

OPINION BY CRAIG MEDRED

Possibly any of us who are Alaskans and run river-boats could be Jim Wilde, the Central man the National Park Service took down in September and is now dragging through a trial in Fairbanks. I sat in a courtroom in Fairbanks for two days this past week watching the prosecution put on its side of the case, and I couldn't bear to stay to watch the 71-year-old Wilde testify. I'd seen and heard too much already.

I have friends in the Park Service. I generally like the people in the Park Service, and I'm a big fan of the idea behind the national park system in this country. But what I witnessed in Fairbanks made my blood run cold and started me to thinking. What I thought about is where I go to do what I do in the Alaska wilds, and one of the things I realized is that I don't go to the national parks in this state.

Actually, that's not quite true. I sometimes go to the national parks, but I can't recall a time in years when I've done that other than in the company of someone in the Park Service. It's like going to Ted Turner's 2-million-acre ranch with Ted Turner. It's a lot of fun, but you wouldn't go on your own because it's not your ranch.

All of which led me to another simple truth: I generally don't feel comfortable in Alaska's national parks because they are controlled by an occupying army. Alaskans are not visitors in the national parks. They are invaders. They are people who, as Ranger Joe Dallemolle testified in Fairbanks, must be brought into "compliance." I don't know how many times he repeated how he had to point a loaded shotgun at the head of a 71-year-old

man to "gain compliance," but once was too many.

Thirty years ago, Secretary of the Interior Cecil Andrus, a driving force behind the creation of new parks and refuges in Alaska, warned me about this. Andrus wasn't exactly hot on the idea of new national parks here. As we cast flies for grayling on a lake in the Brooks Range, he confessed that if it was up him he would make all new federal reserves in Alaska nationally designed wilderness areas under the control of the U.S. Forest Service, and thus keep the over-bearing "managers" of public lands out of the country as much as possible. Andrus, the former governor of Idaho, was at the time a wise old statesman, and I was a young, or at least younger, reporter.

I could not then imagine the Park Service doing something like rangers did on the Yukon last fall. Even less could I imagine the agency defending such behavior. But it is. It has Wilde in court fighting for his freedom, and it is standing firmly behind the actions of its rangers. One of their superiors, in an email exchange, told me there had been an independent, outside review of the incident by federal law enforcement officials, and it concluded that the rangers followed federal policy and procedure. I have no doubt about that.

There are a whole bunch of federal law enforcement officials in this country today who see themselves more as an occupying army than Detective Columbo. I know an Anchorage businessman who got caught up in an undercover operation into trafficking walrus ivory years ago. He had in his house a tusk that hadn't been properly etched. That was enough to bring a SWAT team to surround

and invade his home because, well, he had guns in the house.

I have guns in the house. Most Alaskans reading this have guns in the house. Any of us could be visited by a SWAT team if the feds think we did something wrong. It's the way they do business. And apparently the Park Service thinks this is just fine. I think it's fundamentally wrong. I, frankly, think it is un-American.

There was some testimony in the Wilde trial you haven't read about yet because no one reported it. When I first heard about it, I was glad I wasn't at the trial when it happened because, as I said, I have friends in the Park Service. A reporter for the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, who was at the trial, said he couldn't bring himself to report the testimony because the Park Service has already taken such a beating in the press in Fairbanks.

But the more I've thought about what was said, and the more I've realized that this trial has at its heart issues that truly need a public airing in this state, the more I've come to understand that there are things that need to be reported whether a reporter likes it or not. In fact, there are a lot of those things. So I've taken off the hat of the simple, event-recording reporter—the public's ears and eyes in the courtroom—and injected myself into this affair as a commentator. Let the pieces now fall where they may.

The testimony no one outside of those in attendance at court have heard came from Wilde's wife, 74-year-old Hannelore, or Honey as she is known to friends. She is an immigrant to Alaska. She spent her childhood in Germany. Defense attorney Bill Satterberg put her on the stand to offer her ver-

sion of what happened on the Yukon back in September when she was a passenger in Jim's boat along with friend Fred Shenk.

She was subsequently asked a question to which everyone thought they knew the answer. She was asked if she'd ever had a gun pointed at her before. She was expected to say no, but her answer was yes. And the details were chilling.

She'd had a gun pointed at her before all right.

When she was 8-years-old.

In her homeland.

By Hitler's Gestapo.

Now, I don't think the Park Service is the Gestapo. But in their flack jackets and armament, and with the attitude they put on display in Fairbanks, they can sometimes do a pretty good job of playing the part. And I've been thinking about this a lot since the realization that I could be in the pickle Jim Wilde is in.

I used to spend a lot of time at the helm of a riverboat. I put in hundreds, if not thousands of hours, running the Susitna-Yentna-Talkeetna river system and the many of the tributaries to it. I was always, like a lot of those who've spent large amounts of time in-country, attuned to what was going on along the river, and who might be in trouble there. It's the code.

Alaskans are supposed to take care of each other out there where official help is far away. If you see someone stopped or waving, you stop to ask if they have a problem. And if they need help, you pitch in as best you can. This is what Jim Wilde started off doing on the Yukon.

He saw a boat drifting on the current, never a good sign, and someone on the bow waving at him, a signal of distress. At the time, he was on his way to a hunting camp upriver, and he had his

own things to do. But when he saw someone apparently in trouble he diverted his course and went out of his way to go see what was wrong and offer help if it was needed.

News-Miner reporter Tim Mowry, an underrated writer, stayed at the trial to recount Jim's version of what happened on the river.

Suffice to say, Jim's testimony does not differ much from the accounts given by two rangers. They baited Jim into coming to the aid of an apparently disabled boat, and then they announced they were the Park Service, and told Jim to shut off his boat so they could do a "safety inspection." I'm not sure that I wouldn't have said "screw you," and hit my throttle then just as Jim did.

What followed, of course, has been well documented at *Alaska Dispatch*. Honey's later testimony, which I did not attend, was reported in the News-Miner and only added—aside from the comment about the Gestapo—some detail to what park rangers had already said.

Jim hit the throttles. The rangers gave chase. Dallemolle pulled his pistol. That didn't make Jim stop. So Dallemolle got the shotgun, pumped a shell into the chamber and aimed it at the old man, which made him head for shore quick. Jim contends that's where he was headed all along. The rangers are of the opinion he was trying to flee for Canada, though for what reason has never been established, especially given that the Wildes are pretty well rooted in the tiny community of Central.

At the shore, Jim hopped out of his boat. The shotgun toting Dallemolle ordered everyone else out of the boat as well. Jim approached the rangers. They say in a threatening manner, everyone else says otherwise. The two young, fit rangers—Ben Grodjesk, 33, and the muscular Dallemolle,

28—tackled the elderly, visibly overweight Jim; took him to the ground; threatened to Taser him if he didn't stop struggling; cuffed him; and then hauled him tens of miles downriver to Circle and sent him on a road trip of more than 100 miles to the jail in Fairbanks.

On the way to Circle, of course, the two rangers with only a couple months of Yukon experience between them, got lost on the river and had to be helped out by Jim. He directed them to the channel that would take them into that community, though Grodjesk on the witness stand testified the rangers were not lost. I can sympathize. I've never been lost here either. I've always known I was somewhere in Alaska, and it's really hard for some of us to admit we've ever done anything less than perfectly.

The rangers then took Honey and Shenk to a ranger station at Slaven's Cabin upstream from the site of the arrest. Along the way, they convinced themselves Jim's heavily loaded Woolrich inboard-powered riverboat was faster than their lightly loaded outboard-powered riverboat and could have outrun them all the way to Canada. And never you mind the issue of load, which anyone who has spent much time in riverboats knows, plays a key part in determining speed. My old Hewescraft with a 115-horsepower jet was a speedboat when I was in it alone, and with three people and gear for a weekend, it was a tug.

A certified, expert witness for the defense later testified that despite the opinions of the rangers, the Park Service boat was faster. He also noted it had a 200-horsepower motor hung on the stern, though the boat was legally rated for only a 115-horsepower motor. I have to defend the Park Service on that. Those horsepower ratings are based as much on horsepower as

weight, though larger outboards are heavier than smaller outboards. Still, that difference isn't as much as the difference in horsepower when you take an outboard and put a jet unit on it. There is a typical power loss of 30 to 40 percent. So that 200-horse motor was more like a 120- or 140-horsepower outboard, and 120 is awfully close to the rating of 115. And besides, the horsepower ratings are only "advisory."

The Coast Guard has no regulations against exceeding the horsepower sticker, though some states do. Alaska does not appear to be one of those states. Maybe it should become one. The state and the feds are already in court arguing over who has authority to police the Yukon, a navigable river and thus state property, running through a national preserve, which is federal property. Wouldn't it be fun if Alaska State Troopers were allowed to stop and arrest park rangers for running boats with too much horsepower?

Be that as it may, as concerns this case, all that matters is that rangers had plenty of horsepower on a lightweight boat, and that translates into speed. The fact that they caught Wilde within seconds of the start of the chase—as all testimony agrees—sort of puts an end to any arguments about which boat was faster. The rangers clearly could have followed the Wildes for miles. The rangers arguably could have followed the Wildes all the way to where they planned to camp for the night, and there asked them, "OK, what's the deal? Why did you have to go and lead us on this wild chase?"

But they didn't do that, because as Dallemolle testified, they had to "get compliance." And it is obvious from their actions they had to get it damn quick. This whole Yukon River encounter, by everyone's agreement, lasted less

than two minutes from when Wilde first turned his boat to greet the rangers until he was on the ground in cuffs.

Two minutes for an encounter on the river to turn into a chase, for guns to be drawn, for an old man to be taken down and handcuffed, for his elderly wife to be traumatized. And all of this to "get compliance" with a boat safety check in a place where there are almost no people.

The rangers testified they were on patrol on the Yukon for about a month, and they saw about 20 boats. Twenty boats. That's less than one per day. It would make a reasonable individual, in these days of concerns about the federal deficit, question why the rangers were out there at all. Protecting the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve? From who or what exactly? Poachers maybe? But there's hardly any game left in the country but bears and wolves. You barely see a moose track these days along the riverbanks from Eagle to Circle, and if someone shot a bear or wolf—both of which dine as best they can on the few moose left—there wouldn't be anyone in the Alaska Department of Fish and Game complaining.

Or were the rangers out there, as Dallemolle testified, to "educate" Alaskans? I hope not, because the only lesson I can see them teaching anyone is that you should avoid people who appear to be stranded because those people might be rangers trying to bait you into going out of your way so they can perform a "safety inspection." And as one who has spent a lot of time in the Alaska backcountry, I don't want Alaskans being taught that lesson.

It's not a worry for rangers. They travel in teams. They have satellite phones for constant communication with headquarters. They can call in air support from

the U.S. Department of the Interior's Alaska air force if they need it. They check in and check out with their offices regularly, and file trip itineraries, and if they're not heard from promptly someone goes looking for them.

This is not the case, however, for everyone. There are still people who set off on adventures, sometimes even alone, in the Alaska wilds. And if one of them gets stuck on the Yukon in late September, and passersby wishing to avoid being hassled by the Park Service, are trained to ignore signals for help, someone might end up trapped where he or she is until his or her cold, frozen body is finally found after freeze-up. If, of course, the body is found at all.

What I saw in that courtroom in Fairbanks troubled me, even more so as I have thought about it in the days since. I hold no malice against the Park Service people involved, or the patrician U.S. Attorney Stephen Cooper. I believe they are all confident they are doing the good and right thing in trying to nail Jim Wilde's hide to a wall. But this is the problem with government; it is full of people who believe they are doing the good and right thing while seemingly ignorant of how easy it is to overrun the essence of our democracy in so doing.

And the essence of our democracy is that the government works for the citizenry, not the other way around. The reality here is that Jim Wilde committed no crime that warranted rangers pulling guns on him, let alone handcuffing him and hauling him off to a jail cell hundreds of miles away. He didn't threaten anybody. He didn't assault anybody. He uttered some swear words. Big deal.

Rangers in Fairbanks, of course, tried to argue Jim "swerved" his boat into theirs. But that simply doesn't wash. They

(continued on page 23)

Don Young turns up heat on NPS over Yukon Charlie incidents

Letter from AK Rep. Don Young to NPS Director Jon Jarvis

April 15, 2011
Mr. Jon Jarvis
Director
National Park Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240
Director Jarvis,

Once again, I am writing in reference to the National Park Service (NPS) operations in Alaska relative to the Yukon Charley Rivers National Preserve and the ongoing law enforcement issues on the Yukon River.

As reported in the Alaska Dispatch, the GPS Specialist for the National Parks Service (NPS) in Alaska testified in federal court that the NPS invaded Canadian Territory starting in 2007. This is known due to the fact that this is the same GPS unit on the boat utilized in the Jim Wilde case on the Yukon River. That GPS unit has been turned off since 2007 when the GPS last located the boat 10 miles into Canada on the Yukon River. The unit has not been turned on since; therefore there is no telling the whereabouts of the NPS officers on the river at any given time. I can think of no good reason for this unit to be turned off for four years.

This development furthers my assertion that the NPS in the Yukon Charley area, and in many other areas across Alaska, is out of control. You continue to stand behind the actions of your employees though they are not properly trained, do not abide by the law, and have no regard for local communities. This is an outrage.

I am gravely concerned about the safety of your rangers, the supervisors, and those who live in the communities of the Yukon River as this situation continues to escalate, and the relationships seem to diminish. A shining example of this is proven by the reports associated with a recent Community meeting in Eagle. While I thank the NPS for finally engaging the local community, much more than merely listening to their concerns is going to be necessary to mend relations. In addition, I note the absence of senior level NPS employees from the meeting, most notably Alaska Regional Director Sue Masica. A situation as serious as the one continuing to develop on the Yukon should warrant attention by senior level employees.

As a result, I request that you provide me with all documentation relative to law enforcement activities on the Yukon Charley Rivers Preserve dating from 2008 to the present. These shall include but not be limited to the following:

1. All incident reports;
2. Transcripts of all radio communications between employees in the Park;
3. All electronic records between Park staff, the Supervisor's office, and the Regional office;
4. All equipment maintenance records;
5. Transcripts of all phone conversations of Park employees.

I cannot reiterate enough how important it is that you change the attitudes within the NPS and employ those who truly know how to serve the public. I hope you share my concern over this situation.

Sincerely,

DON YOUNG

THE McCARTHY WEEKLY NEWS

1920 May & June editions

PERSONAL

Mrs. Walter Sommer is leaving on the next train en route to Los Angeles to spend the summer with her mother and sisters.

Mrs. Ahrens and her two little daughters leave on Monday on a short visit to the States. Her father, Mr. Sylvester, will return with them and make his home in McCarthy.

Knowles and Williams have gone to handle the extra teams at Rex Creek.

Carl Engstrom is a town visitor today, also Bill Longley. Jack Hayes and Jim Morres, all from Kennecott.

Charley Anderson has been repairing Marshall's refrigerating plant yesterday.

Joe Goodman, Mrs. Woodin's son, was an arrival from California yesterday and he intends to spend the summer in Alaska.

The Seltenrich family left to spend the summer at their ranch this week. The calf, cow, pigs and human freight all landed in fine shape. They have sold their town real estate to Mrs. B. V. Erickson.

The boys at Kennecott and the mines have demonstrated their sympathy for Dan Campbell in every practical manner, having raised a subscription for him which may reach a thousand dollars.

Dan and Jimmy Brown were in town yesterday, feeling fine in spite of crutches, and with the highest praise for Dr. Gillespie and staff.

May 1

PERSONAL

Our townsman John E. Barrett who has been on a sixty day trip to California and the Pacific Coast, returned on Wednesday night. His account of his travels and experiences is most interesting. One of the chief of these is an airplane trip he took over the city of San Francisco, during which he saw more of the city than he had

ever seen before. At an elevation of 3000 feet and within a radius of 15 miles, Mr. Barrett found the flying sensation very agreeable. This trip was made with Lieutenant Coffey of Oakland. In San Francisco he was interviewed by a representative of the Examiner, and after the interview he was deluged with enquiries concerning the resources and conditions in Alaska. More interest than ever is being taken in the North and there is every indication of a rush this way.

LOCAL NEWS

A number of Kennecott ladies have taken advantage of the beautiful weather to make visits to McCarthy this week. Madames Wilson, Gillespie, Erickson, Dillon, King, Knapp, and Miss Schultz among the number.

Hand made invitation cards decorated with pen and ink sketches are out for the Annual Staff Dance at Kennecott to be held next Saturday evening.

The outbreak of influenza at Kennecott is now well over and the several patients are beginning to feel much better. Mr. Douglas is still feeling very weak and has to take things easy. Mr. Wilson is doing splendidly.

A very delightful dinner party was given last Thursday evening at the Merchants Cafe by Mr. Martin HARRAIS of Dan Creek. The guests were Mr. and Mrs. J. B. O'Neill and Deannie & Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Murie and Elizabeth.

Ed McMullen arrived from Chisana after nearly a year spent in prospecting. As there is so much water to contend with in the warm weather, Ed will spend the summer in the vicinity of McCarthy and return to continue his investigations on Notch creek next fall.

Mrs. L. McAllister has taken over the Home Restaurant from Mrs. Williams, and it will now be known as the Grand, which was the original name. Mrs. McAllister was the Chef last summer at the lower camp for the Nizina

Mines Co. Chititu creek, and is quite a welcome acquisition to town.

May 8

PERSONAL

Joe Craig, who prospected the head waters of Dan creek in 1910, is in town for the first time for several years. He is now blacksmith for the telephone gang and says he prefers it to mining, at the present price of bacon and beans. Joe was the hero of one of the good Nizina bear stories, which leading part he took in the summer of 1912, most of one day of which he spent in a tall tree waiting for the bear to move.

Cap. Hubrick returned from his bear hunting trip at Icy Bay with five brown bear to his credit.

The school term was completed yesterday. Dora and Mary McDonnell and Victor Marshall have passed the eighth grade and are ready for high school. All the other pupils have also shown great merit.

May 15

KENNECOTT NEWS

The annual ball given by the Staff last Saturday evening was a brilliant affair. The decoration scheme, programs, refreshments were unique, and the music of the Kennecott Jazz orchestra, led by Miss Schultz, which performed in public for the first time, was pronounced wonderful.

The Jumbo tram shuts down today for improvements and alterations to the tram house to be made.

Dr. Gillespie successfully performed an operation on a valuable cow at Kennecott this week removing an eye but owing to an overdose of the anesthetic, the animal died.

May 22

PERSONAL

Swan Olin was in town yesterday after spending the winter at the Jumbo. He will put in the summer at his ranch on Sourdough Hill.

Charlie Lubbe returned from the ranch yesterday, where he has been ploughing and planting for 2 weeks. He says everything is looking fine.

News has been received of the death of Claude James, the brother of W.E. James of Chisana.

Deceased had many friends in this section of the country, as he spent several years here until he enlisted in 1918. After receiving his discharge he located in Washington, where he died.

Mr. Goodwin is spending a part of his vacation at Strelna, where he is at present the guest of the Dwyers.

Cap Hubrick underwent an operation at Kennecott hospital last Tuesday, and is now rapidly progressing towards recovery.

C.F.M. Cole has been a patient at the hospital this week with an attack of lumbago.

May 29

FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION

It is practically decided that the McCarthy celebration will take place on Monday, July 5th.

The Kennecott Copper Corp. will declare that day a general holiday closing in all departments.

It is expected that Kennecott people will visit McCarthy enmasse. A cordial invitation is extended to everyone within a hundred miles to attend. There will be races for the children, athletic events for both sexes—a baseball match between picked teams from Kennecott and McCarthy.

In the evening a Grand Ball will be given in the A.B. Hall at which the Kennecott Jazz orchestra has kindly consented to furnish the music. A fitting finish for a Glorious Fourth.

Strelna will celebrate on Sunday the Fourth, with a general good time. All kinds of amusements and contests and a chicken dinner at Dwyer's Inn will be one attractive feature.

KENNECOTT NEWS

Dan Campbell threw away his crutches this week and is now walking proudly with the small aid of a cane.

Harry Reynold, Jack Reynolds eldest son, arrived this week to spend the summer.

Mr. Paget has been appointed chief electrician, succeeding Mr. Knapp, who has left for the States.

A party of Kennecott ladies Mesdames Kay, Olsen, Overgarde, Schneeberger and Little visited McCarthy this week & enjoyed an auto ride several miles up the Mother Lode trail, the guests of Henry Olsen.

Williams and Lubbe have secured the contract for cutting and hauling 850 cords of wood and mining timbers for the Mother Lode Coalition Mines Co. Mr. and Mrs. Williams were sent to the Lower Camp this week to establish a camp.

A wedding took place on Thursday afternoon at Mrs. Pete Johnson's when Charlie Martin, a trackwalker in the employ of C.R. & N.W. Ry was married to Bessie Escalita, daughter-in-law of Chief Escalita. The ceremony was performed by U.S. Commissioner C. Parker Smith. The bridegroom is a Finlander and the bride a Copper River Indian.

June 12

KENNECOTT NEWS

Harry Wilson (Scotty) is an inmate of the hospital through colliding with an ore bucket. He hopes, however, to have recovered sufficiently to give a wrestling exhibition on the 4th.

Capt. and Mrs. Richard Osborne are rejoicing over the arrival of a little son yesterday.

Mrs. Schwartz and little baby daughter have made such wonderful progress in the last two weeks that they leave on tomorrow's train for their home in Chitina.

Dick Woodman has secured the contract for removing insulators and wire from the old Mother Lode telephone line and has started the work.

June 19

ABOUT THE CENSUS

The census returns show McCarthy with a population of 127 and Chitina with 163. This is a surprise and a pleasant one, but our population is increasing rapidly, so maybe some day Chitina will be the other way.

565 is the census return for Kennecott. At the same time, we venture to say that McCarthy will poll as many votes on next election day.

The combination of New York and McCarthy census returns shows a total of five million, six hundred and twenty one thousand, two hundred and seventy eight.

PERSONAL

Mr. and Mrs. John Amber our former townfolk, are now located at Iowa Park, Texas and conducting a soft drink parlor and rooming house.

Ira B. Hurd, a former McCarthy merchant, is also in Texas where he was interested in three oil properties, all big money makers. He is now investing in an airplane manufacture.

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Rowe, who spent several years in this section of the country, and left here about eighteen months ago, are now in California where they intend to invest in a fruit ranch. Mrs. Rowe made a trip to Scotland last summer and also visited the battlefields of Europe and her brother's grave on the Somme, where he was killed in action—a lieutenant in the Canadian artillery.

Word has been received here of the death in Seattle of Alfred Forsberg, an old resident of McCarthy and employee on the railroad with the section crew. The deceased left here in poor health two months ago hoping to benefit by the trip. He leaves an estate valued at eight thousand dollars.

Mrs. L.H. Carvey is a passenger on the Alaska, and will arrive in McCarthy next week on her way to Nizina to spend the summer. This is Mrs. Carvey's first visit North since 1916.

Bill Weyers arrived from Canyon City last week. He spent the winter hunting and trapping.

Two trains in yesterday, one local, and the special from Cordova with mail from the Northwestern.

June 26

Bringing the world to a standstill

BY NED ROZELL

On a fine June day about 100 years ago, in a green mountain valley where the Aleutians stick to the rest of Alaska, the world fell apart.

Earthquakes swayed the alders and spruce. A mountain shook, groaned, and collapsed in on itself, its former summit swallowing rock and dust until it became a giant, steaming pit. About six miles away, hot ash began spewing from the ground in a colossal geyser. During an eruption that lasted three days, one of the most vibrant landscapes in Alaska in 1912 became the gray badlands known as the Valley of 10,000 Smokes.

The great eruption that created the valley came from a smallish clump of rocks called Novarupta. Nowhere near as grand as the nearby Mount Katmai (the mountain that lost its top), Novarupta spewed an ash cloud 20 miles into the atmosphere, belching 100 times more ash than did Mount St. Helens. Though few people know its name, Novarupta was responsible for the largest eruption of the 20th century.

In the wake of the 2010 eruption of the Iceland volcano, Eyjafjallajökull, that paralyzed air travel around Europe and the North Atlantic, Rebecca Anne Welchman took a look at what might happen if Novarupta happened today.

Welchman is a graduate student from Devon, England who became enchanted with volcanoes at the age of 13 when she traveled with her family to Hawaii. There, she saw the ocean quenching molten rock and the hook was set. More recently, she hiked with volcanologist John Eichelberger on his annual summer field trip to the Valley of 10,000 Smokes. It was like throwing dry pallets on a bonfire.

That trip inspired her to muse about the effects of a Novarupta eruption happening today, which is quite possible. She presented a poster on the subject at the American Geophysical Union's 2010 Fall Meeting in San Francisco.

"I think people in Europe and Asia don't realize what Alaska could do," she said in a cavernous poster hall amid hundreds of other scientists. "Another Novarupta would be bad news."

Welchman was referring to a similar eruption's effect on air travel. When Novarupta erupted, the sky was still the exclusive realm of birds and insects — Alaska was still a decade away from Ben Eielson's first mail flight from Fairbanks to McGrath.

"Now, the North Pacific is one of the busiest air corridors in the world," Welchman said. "More than 200 flights a day go overhead."

To calculate the effects of a modern-day Novarupta eruption on today's air travel, Welchman used a computer model called Puff developed by University of Alaska Fairbanks scientists and refined by Research Assistant Professor Peter Webley of the Geophysical Institute.

She used the model to spew ash from Novarupta's vent once a week for five years. She wanted to see which airports in the world would be affected.

"Most airports in the Northern Hemisphere would close," she said. "Europe seems to get the brunt of it, but ash even reached Australia."

Welchman, who hopes to visit more Alaska volcanoes someday soon, summed up the return of Novarupta as follows:

"An eruption of Novarupta scale in today's society has the potential to bring the world to a standstill by affecting the majority of airports in North America and Europe for several days at least," she wrote on her poster. "The worse case scenario . . . would cost in excess of \$300 million just in terms of passengers and delayed flights."

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

"To take from one, because it is thought his own industry and that of his fathers has acquired too much, in order to spare to others, who, or whose fathers, have not exercised equal industry and skill, is to violate arbitrarily the first principle of association, the guarantee to everyone the free exercise of his industry and the fruits acquired by it."—Thomas Jefferson

Seeking musicians for 4th annual John Denver Tribute Concert in Kennecott

The communities of McCarthy and Kennecott, Alaska will host their fourth annual John Denver Tribute starting 6 p.m. on Friday, June 17, 2011. The event is part of the Summer Arts and Lecture Series sponsored by the Wrangell Mountains Center and National Park Service.

Denver visited the remote, wildly spectacular area in 1975 for his filming of the feature-length documentary *Alaska—America's Child*. For several days he stayed, worked and played with McCarthy residents. Denver also filmed a comic chase scene in the historic Kennecott copper milling town where the Solstice Eve tribute will be staged.

Following a potluck dinner in Kennecott's restored Recreation Hall, scenes from the film featuring Denver in the Wrangell Mountains and Kennecott will be screened and local residents will

share remembrances. Then local musicians and vocalists will present about two hours of Denver's music.

Performers of Denver's music interested in donating their talents are invited to contact the organizers to learn more about the tribute. They should contact the Wrangell Mountains Center before June 1 at info@wrangells.org.

The evening will conclude with an audience sing-a-long medley, including the "Wrangell Mountain Song," inspired by the grandeur of the Wrangell Mountains and John's experiences with the "strong and gentle people" of McCarthy living "beside the glacier."

A \$5 donation per person is suggested and additional support is welcome. For more information contact Jeremy at info@wrangells.org or call (907) 244-7717.

The Wrangell Mountains Center is a nonprofit organization



Far Out!
in the
Wrangells

John Denver Tribute IV
Kennecott, Alaska
June 17, 2011
6-10 p.m.

* Potluck Dinner and Social
* Movie clips from "Alaska—America's Child"
* Live concert with local performers featuring John's music

Email: info@wrangells.org

which fosters understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of wildlands and mountain culture in Alaska through artistic and scientific inquiry in the Wrangell Mountains. Learn more at www.wrangells.org.

Gardening in Alaska—May 25-26, 2011

The Wrangell Mountains Center (WMC) located in the Old Hardware Store in McCarthy is offering a workshop on Gardening in Alaska on May 25th and 26th at 9:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Learn the fundamentals of vegetable gardening, composting, soil science, and greenhouse and season extenders. Do you know "the law of tens" when it comes to gardening? Did you know that efficient composting takes place in weeks rather than months and years? What is in your soil and do you need fertilizer? How can you eek out a few more days and weeks out of the growing

season? These topics and many more will be covered in a fun-filled two-day workshop.

The workshop will be instructed by Dr. Jeff Smeenk, who is an assistant professor with the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service and serves as the State Horticulture Specialist; and Dr. Steve Brown, who is an assistant professor with the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service and is the Copper River/Mat-Su District Agriculture Agent.

The cost is \$84. (WMC members receive a 10% discount) The price includes dinner on the first

night for students. Your family is invited to dine for an additional modest fee.

A 50% deposit is required upon registration with the balance due at the beginning of the workshop. Register by contacting the Wrangell Mountains Center at info@wrangells.org or call 907 244-7717.

(NOTE: For those of you intent on attending the McCarthy Area Council meeting on May 26, don't worry! Many workshop participants plan to do that, and the workshop will be scheduled accordingly that day.)

River Raft Adventures Abound in the Wrangell's

BY: NIK MERLINO

Well, it is that time of the year again, when the snow starts getting crunchy and begins to disappear around the trunks of the trees, the rivers are still frozen over but the rumbling noises below the ice belie the coming spring thaw. It is almost hard to believe that just two months from now our little town will be flooded with the sounds of summer, seasonal workers and tourists all coming to enjoy our little part of Alaska.

I often find myself reflecting on my own history here in McCarthy/Kennecott and how I came to live here during these warming months of spring. I first came out here when I was ten years old, thanks to my father, whose friend used to own the one room school house in Kennecott. Our first trip was the beginning of a life long love affair with the Kennicott Valley and the 13.2 million acres of wild lands around here. I would return three more times with my father, when I was eleven, twelve, and another time when I was fifteen. The next time I came I was alone, a high school graduate and worked the summer at Kennicott Glacier Lodge, prior to attending college and entertaining the dreams and possibilities that adult life would present to me.

Departing for college, I was unsure when I would return here to McCarthy and the places I love so much. However, I forged ahead, earning an Anthropology degree from Northern Arizona University and in the mean time discovering another love in life, river rafting. Honing my skills on the whitewater and flat water riv-

ers of the southwest, I first put a paddle in my hand at the age of twenty one, learning how to negotiate the rapids in an inflatable kayak. Thanks to encouragement from boating friends, I eventually began captaining paddle boats, 12-16 foot inflatables with a group of eager paddlers hopefully listening to the commands I'd call out from the back, and landed my first guiding job on the class III-IV Salt River in eastern Arizona. The Salt River was also the place where I first picked up the skills of rowing a heavily laden oar boat down a narrow, rocky river.

After six years in the desert southwest, having secured my degree, picked up the rafting skills that have lead me across America, and one unsuccessful run for mayor, I decided that it was time to come back to Alaska with the goal of making it my permanent home. I packed up my most important belongings, sold the rest at a yard sale, and made my way North. Five years later, I have made a home for myself tucked away here in the woods along the Kennicott River.

This summer marks another new beginning in my life in McCarthy. McCarthy River Tours & Outfitters, offering both guided river rafting trips and outfitting for private rafters, such as boat rentals and trip planning, is celebrating its inaugural season in business here in the Wrangell's. The company was born out of my love of both rafting and McCarthy, and my desire to share the experience with others coming to visit this beautiful place.

The rafting possibilities from here in McCarthy are endless, a true outdoor lover's dream. With plentiful rivers within this

area, all skill levels can be accommodated. From the boater who enjoys a scenic trip and ample time to take in the flora and fauna, to the avid adrenaline seeker, looking for the rush that class IV and V whitewater provides. Our multitude of river trips, the Copper, Nizina and Chitina rivers to the unparalleled excitement of the big water of the Tana, rivers here in the Wrangell's are remote, wild, untamed and certain to please all those with the adventurous spirit to explore the wilderness here in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve.

Our multi-day trips, anywhere from 3-15 days, compliment our 1/2 day and full-day trip options. We are proud to be the first raft company in the Wrangell's to offer both dry-suits and helmets for all guided customers and to offer paddle boats on both our single day and multi-day adventures. We strive to offer the very best meal options for our full day and multi-day guests, we try to source our products and buy Alaskan grown meats and vegetables, supporting our neighbors and offering you the highest quality, truly unique Alaskan adventure.

Although I still try to pay homage to my rafting roots, returning to Arizona the last three years to navigate the turns and drops of the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, I am always drawn back home to the possibilities of the rivers in my back yard. What better way to experience the Alaska wilderness than on an Alaskan river trip? To find out more about the exciting river adventures around McCarthy, find us online at www.raftthewrangells.com!

(NPS wields too much power continued from page 16)

were chasing him upriver against the 6-knot current of the Yukon. As someone who has spent a lot of time at the controls of a riverboat, I can tell you it would be almost impossible to swerve into someone in this situation. All the chase boat has to do is chop power for a second in the current, and a boat-length gap will open to the boat in front quicker than you can blink your eye.

Rangers were either playing loose with the truth, or believed what they were saying and just hadn't spent enough time at the helm of a riverboat to know otherwise. Grodjesk, the man at the controls, said he got three days training, and admitted he never did learn how to use the craft's GPS— other than to turn it on, look at it, and follow the map. But that's neither here nor there.

Because the real training these rangers seemed to lack was training in how to deal with Alaskans, especially rural Alaskans, in a reasonable and effective manner for the good of everyone. Or maybe they did get training in how to deal with Alaskans. Maybe what we saw on the Yukon is official Park Service policy. Maybe there is a reason I don't feel welcome in this state's national parks and rarely visit them.

I am sure now that these words have been written there will be those in the Park Service who think I am the devil. I have already heard from some who thought *Dispatch* coverage of the trial in Fairbanks was biased because it tried to describe exactly what transpired in the court room in Fairbanks, instead of reflecting the story the government wanted told. The government, with its spin doctors pumping out the paper, is used to the story being told the way it wants the story told.

If those people thought the coverage of what happened in the courtroom was biased, they will probably go ballistic at this.

But as a journalist, I have a responsibility to tell the truth, no matter who my friends might be. And the truth here is complicated and unsettling and, in the end, all too simple. The Park Service tricked Jim Wilde into detouring his trip up the Yukon River to help someone in need, and then they got in his face. He did not take it well. How many of us would? And he decided to go back to doing what he was doing before the Park Service called him over.

And for this he is on trial, spending thousands of dollars to defend himself against charges he threatened the lives of government

officials? Wilde committed only one "crime" here. He failed to legally register his boat. He should have been tracked down and given a ticket and sent on his way. Instead, he was threatened with guns and handcuffed, and the government then proceeded to spend tens of thousands of dollars of taxpayer money, if not hundreds of thousands, to prosecute him.

It's enough to make a reasonable Alaskan think someone should threaten the livelihoods of government officials, as in zero-out the enforcement budget for the Park Service in Alaska and just get these guys out of here.

Andrus's fear all those years ago was that the people who like to run the wild places, instead of watching over them, would arrive to take charge of the wild places, by God.

It's almost making me ill to think he might have been right, because this is simply not the way Alaska's parks should be run.

This article originally appeared in the Alaska Dispatch and is used by permission.

Craig Medred's views are his own and don't necessarily reflect those of Alaska Dispatch. Contact him at [craig\(at\)alaskadispatch.com](mailto:craig(at)alaskadispatch.com).

Cross Road Medical Center returns

Mobile clinics are returning to the McCarthy community this summer, says Davanea Bush, RN, Mobile Health Program Coordinator, for Cross Road Medical Center in Glennallen. The clinics are scheduled for June 17, July 15 and August 19, to be held at the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church.

"We will be offering routine health services: sick visits and check ups, adult physicals, school/sports physicals, well child checks with immunizations and adult immunizations. We are also able to draw blood for some labs and have it tested at Cross Road Medical Center. It is preferable that people make appointments, but we see people who walk-in. Appointments are en-

couraged for immunizations and any blood work. A social worker will be available to answer questions regarding Medicaid, Medicare, and WIC. We are looking forward to seeing you this summer," says Davanea.

Folks are encouraged to telephone Cross Road at (907) 822-3203 for appointments or further information.

Kenny Lake documentary crew tackles film about Copper River & Northwestern Railway

BY RAY VOLEY, KENNY LAKE

What do a Cordova coal party, a staged smallpox epidemic, and a shootout in Keystone Canyon have in common? Better yet: Which Alaskan event included an Ahtna chief who agreed to reveal the location of his copper claim in exchange for a supply cache and a railroad contractor who threatened to use dynamite on anyone or anything that stood in his way? The answer? All these events had something to do with the construction of the Copper River and Northwestern Railway.

It's a great story that few fully understand—unless of course—you belong to a group of 14 Kenny Lake student filmmakers who have spent the past year digging into the story. The crew hopes to present the event in an engaging, informative and entertaining way. The students are part of a documentary film class that has spent the year reading and writing about the people, politics, and obstacles connected with the construction of the 196-mile railroad that stretched from Cordova to Kennecott.

These students have learned about Michael J. Heney, the railroad contractor who bet that with enough dynamite and snooze he could build a railroad to hell—not to mention one that weaved its way by Miles and Child's glacier and along the unruly Abercrombie Rapid. There's H.D. Reynolds, whose dream of a railroad from Valdez to the Ken-

necott copper claims provoked a shootout with another railroad team in Keystone Canyon. The students also read about a company doctor who staged a bunk smallpox epidemic in Cordova to keep railroad workers from fleeing to more lucrative jobs.

The sheer magnitude of this railway project is a testament to the power of human ingenuity and tenacity. Some 6,000 workers were drawn to the project. There were 129 bridges along the 131 miles between Cordova and Chitina with approximately 15 percent of the 196-mile railroad was built on bridges or trestles. The contractors and engineers did not seem to be burdened by the limits of conventional thinking, exemplified by the moving of a 5700-pound boiler across the Marshall Summit pass, or the fight to finish the railroad on time even if it meant building bridges in minus-50 degree conditions.

The greatest test was to build the Million Dollar Bridge and the construction of breakers used to protect it from the icebergs floating down from the Copper River from Miles Glacier.

The student filmmakers explored the railway story from a multitude of angles. They have learned about how the early Ahtna used copper, and how a decision by Chief Nicolai helped alter the way of life for his people. They have examined explorers such as Lieutenant William Abercrombie, and Lieutenant Henry Allen who journeyed up the Cop-

per on expeditions that rivaled the journey of Lewis and Clark. The students have also looked at how power and politics came together to shape not only the construction of the railroad, but also the route selection. The railroad, indirectly, also impacted the decision by the federal government to build the Alaska Railroad between Seward and Fairbanks and the presidential election of 1912 between Woodrow Wilson, Teddy Roosevelt, and William Taft.

The students have completed their research, and have started on the script. The documentary will be entirely homegrown: Students will be responsible for the actual narration and production of the video. Even the musical score will be composed by local musicians. Students will design the costumes, record the sound narrations and music, create animations and special effects, and design the documentary artwork.

Iron Rails will conclude the documentary trilogy produced by Kenny Lake students on three of the most important events that helped shape Copper Basin history. Kenny Lake students have so far produced "Bonanza: The Story of Kennecott," and "Stampede: The Story of the 1898 Valdez Gold Rush." Iron Rails will bring the story of the Valdez gold rush, and the Bonanza discovery full circle.

One of the high points of the project will be a seven-day raft trip down the Copper River in early June. Kenny Lake School

has teamed up with the Alaska Humanities Forum, the Wrangell Institute of Science Education, the Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Park Service to outfit the trip. If everything goes according to plan, the students will float the Copper River from Chitina to the Million Dollar Bridge or Flagg Point. The team will experience firsthand the country the railroad crossed, while collecting scenic video and character re-enactments along the way.

Students will hold carwashes in the spring to help raise funds

and business and corporate sponsorships are also available. Organizations donating \$500 will receive special recognition at the beginning of the documentary and business sponsors who donate \$100 will receive recognition in the closing credits. Please contact Ray Voley at Kenny Lake School if you are interested in supporting the documentary students.

This project, in one small way, will encourage Alaskans to tell the stories of Alaska rather than filmmakers who come from outside the state and invariably

get it wrong. It will also provide an antidote to the sad perception that local history is tasteless and dull. There are plenty of historical nuggets the students plan to bring to life through the power of film. But perhaps one of the most ambitious goals of the project is to help re-ignite the true Alaskan spirit in our young people—a spirit shared by the brave and tenacious men who built the Copper River and Northwestern Railway: the belief that anything is possible when you refuse to let obstacles get in your way.

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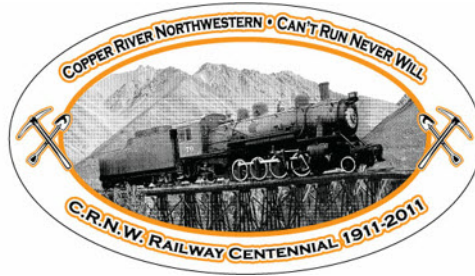
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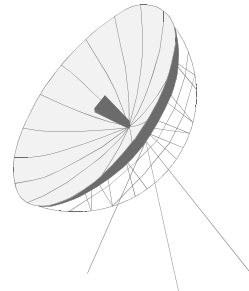
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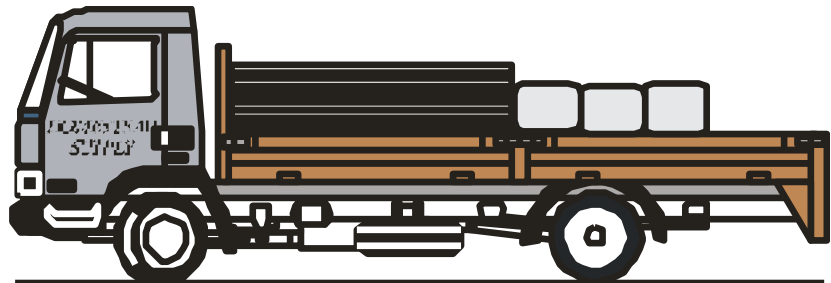
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A Visitor's Guide to Kennicott and McCarthy

Time is running short. If you would like to be included in the 2011 edition of A Visitor's Guide to Kennicott and McCarthy contact us at 907-554-4454 or email WSEN@wsen.net.

Cooking with Peggy

BY PEGGY GUNTIS

Happy Spring everyone! I say that with tongue in cheek though, because today is April 9 and I'm sitting here in Arizona with a jacket on thinking of the 45 degrees the news predicted this morning and, even though we here in Tucson probably won't get snow, those people who live a little further north, will. We're supposed to have blooming cactus all over the yard right now. Oh, well, I put on a pot of chili this morning and I'll think positively about tomorrow.

Since we are heading into summer, I've already started anticipating the fresh salmon and plentiful supply of vegetables. I've put together several recipes that my good friend, Shari, gave me for the salmon and pulled a couple for vegetables out of my hoard of favorites. Here goes.

SALMON WITH SWEET AND SOUR GLAZE

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- ¼ cup fat free low sodium chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice (I use bottled if I don't have fresh)
- 1 tablespoon low sodium soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce (oyster sauce will work)
- 2 garlic cloves minced
- 4-6 ounce salmon fillets about one inch thick
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¾ teaspoon black pepper

Shari's note: I bought the oyster sauce at Albertsons. It's a

Kikoman brand in the Asian food section. Any Asian market should sell both fish and oyster sauce. It is a great additive to different sauces. It isn't fishy tasting at all.

Peggy's note: I Googled to see exactly what fish sauce is and if there is a substitute for it. It seems as though it does have a very distinctive strong odor (in the bottle) and is used to make a recipe taste Asian, especially Thai. Those who like that flavor and do a lot of Asian cooking have it on the shelf and use it often. For those of us who don't, the main suggestion for substitutes were to use a combination of two parts soy and 1 part lime juice or just leave it out of the recipe and see how it tastes. Since both soy sauce and lime juice are in this one and since I hate to buy a bottle of sauce that I may never use again, I'm going to try increasing the soy and lime juice in the proportions suggested and try it that way when my daughter brings me fresh salmon from Homer this summer. I'll try to remember to let you know how it is.

1. Heat the oil in a large nonstick skillet over low heat.

2. Combine broth with brown sugar, lime juice, soy sauce, fish sauce and garlic. Increase heat to medium high and heat three minutes.

3. When the pan is heated, sprinkle the fillets with salt and pepper. Add the fillets to the pan and cook four minutes on each side or until the fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Remove

the fillets from the pan. Drain the fat from the pan and discard (the fat, not the pan!).

4. Add broth mixture to the pan, scraping to loosen browned bits. Bring to a boil to deglaze. Cook about thirty seconds and remove from the heat. Serve the sauce over the fish.

Now, here's another Shari gave me that I can hardly wait to try. Freeze up that salmon, Kim, your mother's coming back to Alaska! Shari's recipes always have what I call "gourmet" items in them that I don't have so if you are the same as I am, be sure to read my notes.

BLACKENED SALMON LASAGNA

- 2 pounds salmon fillet, cut into ¼ inch thick medallions, cutting from top to bottom
- 2 tablespoons Cajun spice
- 4 tablespoons grapeseed oil, divided
- ¼ cup white wine (suggested: chardonnay)
- ½ cup small diced yellow onions
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 16 whole wheat lasagna noodles, cooked
- 2 cups fresh spinach
- 2 cups nonfat cottage cheese
- 2 cups plus 3 tablespoons low-fat mozzarella
- 12 fresh basil leaves
- ½ cup goat cheese
- 2 cups sliced Roma tomatoes
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh chives

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Peggy's note's: Substitute for grapeseed oil—Grapeseed oil is used in recipes that require very hot temperatures so if you substitute something it must have the same quality. Olive oil is just the opposite—high temperatures burn it. Canola oil can be used for either high or low temperatures so use that as the substitute for the grapeseed oil.

A dry white wine substitute: Use the same amount of substitute as the amount of white wine called for by the recipe. Substitutes that could be used are plain water, undiluted chicken or vegetable broth, white grape juice and ginger ale. I found a number of substitutes listed as possible for the goat cheese: feta, mozzarella, gorgonzola, ricotta, and cottage cheese. What is your favorite? I'll probably use the ricotta since it feels more like lasagna to me or maybe I'll just increase the amounts of cottage cheese and mozzarella. For those of you who are wondering about Kosher salt—because I am somewhat limited by space let me just say that chemically there is little difference between kitchen salts but because of its fine grain, a single teaspoon of table salt contains more salt than a tablespoon of seasalt or Kosher salt so just keep that in mind when making a substitution.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Lay the salmon medallions on a flat surface and dust both sides evenly with Cajun spice. In a saucepan over high heat, heat 2 tablespoons grapeseed oil to the verge of smoking, then add the salmon medallions. Reduce

the heat to medium, cook for 2 minutes, flip the fish with a spatula, then repeat the process on the second side. Once the salmon is cooked on both sides, remove the pan from the heat, remove the salmon from the pan, and allow the fish to rest on a plate. Return the pan to the heat for 1 minute over medium-high heat, then add the white wine, scraping down the sides of the pan (thus deglazing the pan). Allow the wine to cook off, then add the remaining 2 tablespoons of grapeseed oil. Once the oil has heated, add the onions and garlic and continue to cook until the onions are semi-translucent, 7 to 8 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and place the onions in a small bowl.

Spray the bottom of a 10 x 10 inch casserole dish evenly with nonstick spray. Add 4 strips of noodles to cover the bottom of the dish, trimming any excess from the edges. Add half the onions, then 1/3 of the cooked salmon to cover the noodles. Scatter the spinach and half the cottage cheese and mozzarella. Place another layer of noodles, salmon, basil, and goat cheese. Add a third layer of noodles, and add the remaining onions, salmon, spinach, cottage cheese, and mozzarella.

Top with a final layer of noodles, sliced tomatoes and evenly sprinkle with the remaining 3 tablespoons mozzarella, Parmesan, parsley, and chives and bake for 18 to 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to rest for 10 minutes before serving.

O.K. now for one that is a little quicker and easier and right out of the garden. Bonnie and Rick, you are planning to

plant again this summer aren't you!

STUFFED TOMATOES

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Cut the tops off and scoop out 6 tomatoes.

Mix the pulp with:

½ cup fried bacon
¼ cup chopped celery
1 small onion, chopped
1 cup Pepperidge Farm herb dressing
½ teaspoon salt
Pepper

Stuff the tomatoes and top with shredded cheddar cheese.

Bake for 30 to 60 minutes or so (depending on how soft you like the tomatoes etc.)

And another one which Jim and I both love:

EGGPLANT WITH SWEET ONIONS AND TOMATOES

1 medium eggplant, sliced in ¼ inch thick rounds

Olive oil

1 can (14.5 ounces) diced tomatoes, with juice (you can use 2 cups of peeled and seeded fresh tomatoes in place of the canned tomatoes if you prefer.)

½ medium sweet onion, cut in thin slices

1 clove garlic, minced

pinch dried leaf basil
Salt and pepper to taste

3 slices Mozzarella cheese or about 1 cup shredded

Layer eggplant slices in a colander, salting each layer generously. Let stand for 30 minutes. Rinse and pat dry.

Heat a thin layer of oil in a large skillet over medium heat; add eggplant to the hot oil and cook, turning once, for about 5 minutes, or until lightly

browned. Repeat until all eggplant slices are cooked, using as little oil as needed to brown the slices. Transfer to a plate. Add more oil to the skillet if needed; add onions and garlic. Cook until tender. Combine tomatoes with onion mixture, basil, and salt and pepper, to taste. Layer eggplant slices with the onion

and tomato mixture in a shallow casserole.

Bake for 20 minutes at 350 degrees. Top with sliced or shredded Mozzarella cheese and cook for 8 minutes longer, or until cheese is melted.

Serves 4.

As the saying goes, "That's all folks!" While I'm in McCarthy this summer, I'll try to get some more recipes from everyone. I think Barbara Rice is going to be cooking pancakes for hundreds of people during the Railroad Centennial. I hope I never have cook for a hundred people but I'll check out the recipe for you. Have a great spring.

A LOOK AT THE WEATHER

BY GEORGE CEBULA

February and March 2011 were below average in temperature and about average in precipitation.

The high temperature for February at McCarthy was 40 on the 2nd (43 on Feb. 18, '10, 38 on Feb. 18, '09 and 41 on Feb. 18, '08). The lowest temperature recorded in February was -36 on the 15th and 16th (-10 on Feb. 13, '10, -11 on Feb. 5, '09 and -10 on Feb. 9, '08). The high was 30 or above on only 6 days and the low was -30 or lower on 3 days. The average February temperature was 5.4 (16.5 in '10, 13.2 in '09, 6.8 in '08, 1.7 in '07, 11.6 in '06 and 12.3 in '05). This is warm compared to -5.9 in '99.

The February precipitation was 1.88 inches of liquid (0.78 in '10, 1.01 in '09, 0.81 in '08, 0.05 in '07 and 1.72 in '06). Total snowfall was 16.7 inches (9.7 in '10, 14.4 in '09, 9.9 in '08, 2.5 in '07 and 8.6 in '06). McCarthy began February with 21 inches of snow on the ground, increased to 31 inches on the 19th and ended the month with 28 inches.

March was a continuation of February in temperature and well below in precipitation.

The high temperature for March was 49 on the 29th (49 on Mar. 28, '10, 45 on Mar. 26, '09 and 47 on Mar. 9, '08). The low temperature for March was -34 on the 12th and 13th (-13 on Mar. 13, '10, -25 on Mar. 3, '09 and -11 on Mar. 11, '08). The average March temperature at McCarthy was 9.6 compared to 23.0 in Mar. '10, 15.0 in Mar. '09, 21.7 in Mar. '08, 4.2 in Mar. '07, 10.0 in Mar. '06 and 28.7 in Mar. '05. The high reached 45 or higher on only 2 days and the low was -30 or lower on 6 days.

March liquid precipitation was 0.13 inches (0.03 in Mar. '10, 0.93 in Mar. '09, 0.51 in Mar. '08, 0.21 in Mar. '07 and trace in Mar. '06) and snowfall was 2.7 inches (0.7 in Mar. '10, 15.4 in Mar. '09, 11.3 in Mar. '08, 3.7 in Mar. '07 and 0.1 in Mar. '06). March started the month with 28 inches of snow on the ground and ended the month with 22 inches.

The first 12 days of April have seen a continuation of be-

low average temperatures. The highs have been in the mid 40s, but the lows have been in the teens. The Kennicott River ice is still solid and the snow depth on the ground is 17 inches. Just over a trace of precipitation has occurred.

I still have a lot of missing data for November, December and January. I'm working on getting this data and hope to summarize the winter months in the next issue.

The snow is usually gone by the end of April, but that might not occur this year. The low temperatures need to stay above freezing at night, so far that is not happening.

May should see a rapid increase in temperatures with highs in the 60's by mid month. Precipitation is usually on the light side with an average amount of less than an inch.

June is usually the warmest month at McCarthy with an average temperature in the mid 50's, highs in the 70's and about 2 inches of rain.

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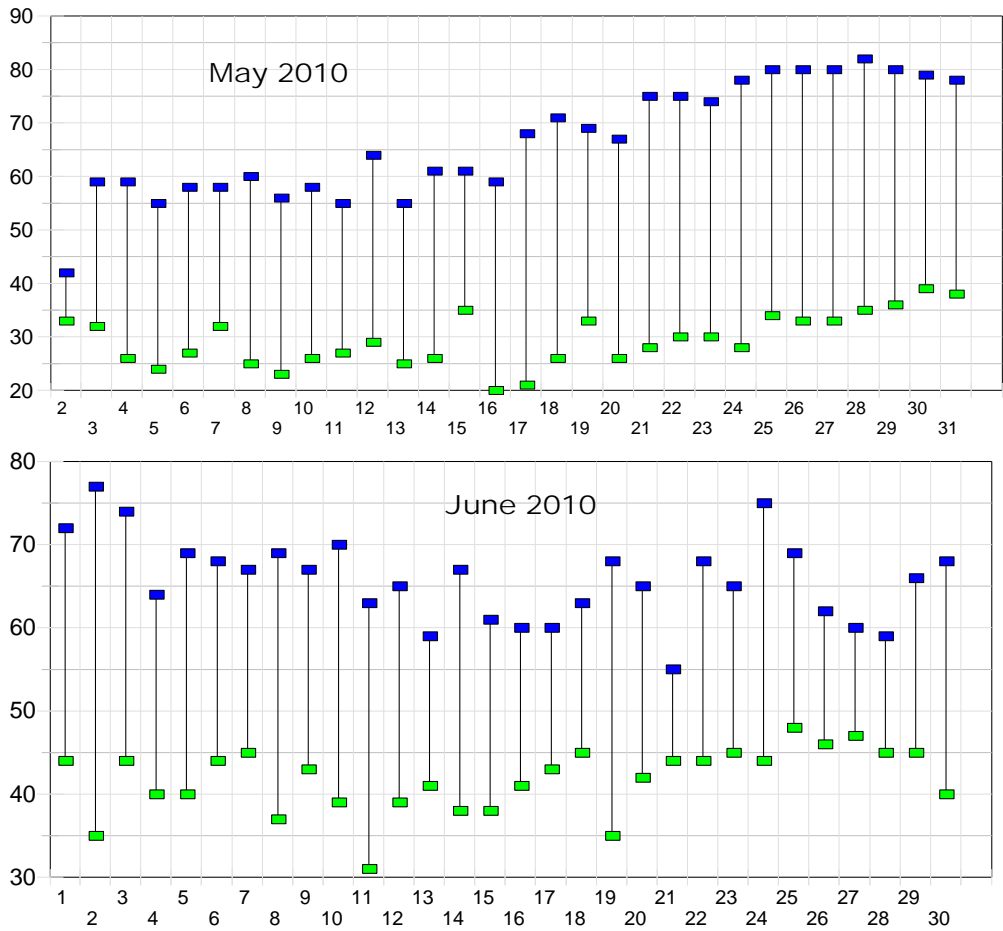
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