

Wrangell St. Elias News

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"

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McCarthy locals explore nearby ice caves

BY BONNIE KENYON

With the closing of winter 2014 and the onset of spring, the discovery of numerous ice caves motivated McCarthy area residents to don their exploration hats and that extra ounce of courage. Roger Rowland, on his annual spring-time visit from Dutch Harbor, made the remarkable discovery, says John Adams. He soon passed on the good news to local folks. Due to the fact conditions were just right this year, making the elusive ice caves accessible by snowmachine, local folks ventured out to take in the amazing sights for themselves.

John took to the air first in his airplane, locating the ice caves on the westside of the Kennicott Glacier, then returned for his snowmachine and a couple of friends to accompany him. The area was located a few miles from the Kennicott River footbridge. Some of the caves were easy to get to and thought to have been there a long time.



Photo courtesy of Jenny Rosenbaum

"I like this one for scale," says Jenny Rosenbaum of this photo of Jeremy Pataky in the entrance of this enormous ice cave on April 2.



Photo courtesy Jenny Rosenbaum

Jeremy Pataky and Dustin Horn inspecting the insides of one of the ice caves, April 2nd.



Photo courtesy Jenny Rosenbaum

Jeremy Pataky inspects ice formations. "It was impossible to capture the amazing hoar frost crystal structures— so complex and perfectly formed," says Jenny.

A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

Greetings from McCarthy! Rick and I arrived at our cabin on April 14th after spending a long winter vacation in Florida. The snow level was 15 inches on the ground when we got home. Thanks to our neighbor, John Adams, the driveway was plowed and access to the cabin was easy! Unpacking the truck at 47 degrees (above zero) is much different than at -30.

Today is May 5th and our high temperatures the last couple of days have risen to 70 degrees. It is a beautiful spring day in McCarthy. Balmy— McCarthy style! The snow is melting quickly and our iced-over creeks are running already. Our first tree swallow of the season flew around our cabin yesterday. I suspect he is the scout for the nesters which should arrive any day now. Spring is here.

This morning Rick Jr. emailed us the news that his usual article for the *WSEN* just isn't going to happen for this issue. Since we are well past our deadline, we agreed to let him off the hook. I know this is disappointing news to many of our subscribers. You let me know how much you enjoy Rick's account of his growing up in McCarthy. Rick Sr. and I pass on your numerous compliments to our son. He is fully aware of how popular his written memories are to each of you. Yesterday he was more-than-busy dealing with the results of storms passing through Donalsonville, Ga. where he and his family live. Wind and a lot of rainfall left

behind large puddles in their yard and plenty of mud in their driveway. He was digging trenches to help alleviate the standing water, hoping the mosquitos would not find a resting place! Rick's plan is to pick up with 1983 in the July/August issue.

I do want to thank Jenny Rosenbaum, Jeremy Pataky and John Adams for their input for the cover photos and the information accompanying them. The photos Jenny and Jeremy posted on their Facebook pages are awesome and were challenging to pick from. At least you get the idea of the magnificent scenery that awaited these local adventurers. The event was dubbed by Jenny as *spring ice cave exploration*. Very appropriate, indeed!

Our thanks to Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Superintendent Rick Obenesser and Ranger Stephens Harper for getting Rick's annual community letter to us in time to be included in this issue. The paper was nearly full when it came in, so we had to edit it down to fit. It was chocked full of news well worth the wait. I'm sure if you contact either Rick or Stephens you can get the full letter.

Wrangell St. Elias News welcomes aboard the following subscribers: Dan Bull, WI; Jack and Jeannie Haun, FL; Tom Peppel and Mary and Kay Miller (online).

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Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

Matt, Amber, Riley and Katelyn Vial: It seems appropriate to begin “items” with the Vial family. Since last summer more than one change has occurred in their lives. Let me start with the arrival of Katelyn.

Writes Amber: “Our baby girl was born December 6th during a snow storm (Lake Tahoe). Our plan was to do a home birth with a mid-wife, but the storm delayed the mid-wife in getting to our house in time, so Matt ended up delivering the baby. It was just the two of us and, looking back, it was definitely a memorable moment. Katelyn weighed a healthy 8 lbs. 12 oz. and she’s a beautiful lil’ one. Riley has been a wonderful big sister so far and has done really well with adjusting to life with another kiddo around.” Congratulations to the Vial family!

Matt and Amber have a lot of family and friends in California but the traveling back and forth to Alaska has its challenges. Therefore, another change includes relocating to Alaska year ‘round — Anchorage for the winter months and returning to McCarthy for the summer. Says Amber, “It’s a big decision for us, but we are really excited to try it out and be in one state for a change.”

Matt is also excited about their new business venture, MV Services, which will be doing everything from construction projects to fixing cars and other mechanical issues. Be sure to check out their ad in this issue of *WSEN* and throughout the summer.

“We are looking forward to another summer in McCarthy,” writes Amber, “and seeing everyone again. It really has become a place that’s home to us!”

Jim and Jeannie Miller: When I called the Miller household, I caught Jeannie busy at work— raking her yard. I couldn’t help but question her on that project since I still had 6 inches of snow covering the majority of my yard. She clarified that she was only raking the yard that was showing. Her idea is to hasten the break-up season that is upon us. What a good idea, I said.

Knowing that Jeannie is always a step ahead of me when it comes to planting her garden and greenhouse starts, I asked if she had any extra tomato plants. She did.

Since Rick and I are later than usual in returning from winter family visits, and the planting time for starting tomato plants is past, I thought I would check with Jeannie. She is always willing to share her extras. And, I am always willing to take them. She graciously un-

loaded two of her tomatoes with me. Thanks a lot, Jeannie!

Spring time has certainly sprung at the Miller’s Kennicott residence. Their living room is taking on the look of a greenhouse setting these days. The south window is full of garden starts and flowers, says Jeannie. She finally had to move the begonias, a flowering rose bush, glads and the Apple tree which wintered over in cold storage, to the front porch. As long as the temperatures don’t drop below 32, they should do fine, says Jeannie. Jim might have to move to the garage if she has to bring all those flowers and a tree inside!

The subject changes to her livestock. “Do you have any chickens left?” I ask. “Yes. Twelve hens and they laid eggs all winter long.” Rick and I used to winter hens but it was a challenge to have just the right conditions to encourage those ladies to do their thing. Jeannie discovered that if she keeps a propane light on in their coop for 8 hours, it gives her flock enough light and heat. Selling what extra eggs she retrieves helps pay for the chicken feed, she says. I’m sure the locals who get their names at the top of the list are happy to get the fresh eggs.

The Millers are heading into Anchorage soon to see family mem-

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bers that are gathering for a reunion. While they are in the big city, Jim and Jeannie will celebrate 40 years of marriage. Best wishes to you both and “congratulations!”

Jim and Audrey Edwards: Even though the Edwards are spending their winters in Anchorage, they find time to visit their Swift Creek homestead as often as possible. They made a quick trip in the other day but expect their next visit to be a longer stretch.

Riek and I were glad to have a visit with them over lunch when we flew back to Alaska earlier this month. It gave the four of us time to catch up on our winter ventures. We had hoped our paths would cross when Jim and Audrey traveled to the Orlando area in the fall but we didn't make it down there in time to rendezvous. Maybe next winter!

In the meantime, Jim and Audrey, it was good seeing you again and looking forward to tea next visit. I'll bring the cookies.

Jeremy, Allie, Bjorn and Liam Keller: We are in the season called “break-up.” There is plenty of mud, melting snow and water puddles (or what we call lakes) in our yards and roads. The Keller family farm is nearly 12 miles from us with more-than-enough of the above challenges to go through before getting to our place. If Jeremy had not wanted to get a bottle of propane filled, I expect he would have waited until things dried out.

His right-hand man, son Bjorn, 9, came along for the ride (or adventure might be the better word). I was glad, of course, because Bjorn is a very special young man. While Riek and his dad do business, Bjorn and I have fun catching up. He always comes prepared to give me the family item of interest. Liam, 3, stayed home with his mom, says Bjorn, since he was a bit under the weather.

Before he could make the trek with his dad, he did his morning

farm chores, he said. I asked him to expound on just what that entails. “Bird chores” was his answer. Filling me in, he explained that the birds consisted of 8 laying ducks and 3 drakes, 5 chicken hens and 2 geese. Collecting the eggs from all the hens is first on the list, then replenishing their water dishes and food. The ducks receive whey and ground barley. I know that wouldn't do me for breakfast but they seem to thrive on the fare. I asked him how many eggs were collected this morning and, if I got my numbers right, he brought his mom 7 duck eggs and 4 chicken eggs. I'm impressed!

Nibbles, Bjorn's pet goose, is quite amiable but it sounds like Graysha is just the opposite. When entering the duck/geese quarters, Bjorn is sure to be on the lookout for her. (It's possible this disgruntled female may end up on the family table!)

The Keller farm is about to increase by one in the near future, says Jeremy. They presently have a 13-month heifer, which they got last fall. They are planning to bring in a 17-day old bull calf weighing approximately 125 lbs. They are purchasing the animal from a farmer at Port McKenzie. Plans include breeding them next winter.

In-between their everyday chores of running a small farm and completing spring projects, the Keller family, especially Jeremy, is taking time to welcome the Discovery Channel crew to their homestead. In the last issue of WSEN, we covered the news that McCarthy, along with several of our folks, are going to be subjects of a new documentary series. A lot of filming is taking place, says Jeremy, and they are having “super fun.”

There wasn't time for our traditional cup of hot chocolate, but Bjorn and I took a rain check. He promises to come back when he has more time to visit. Thanks, Bjorn

and Jeremy, for allowing us to take a peek into your neck-of-the-woods.

Mark Vail: Touching bases with Mark in the springtime is a smart thing to do. He usually is our local wildlife herald, giving us a heads-up to bears emerging from their long winter rest. His first bear sighting was April 28th this year, thankfully, through his binoculars! He periodically glasses the hillsides nearby. He found a rather interesting scene on Fireweed Mountain. A sow had climbed an Aspen tree to take in a delicious meal of its fresh buds. Her two cubs followed their mom up the tree to see what she was finding so intriguing. Mom was evidently courageous enough to venture out on the limbs, but the kids decided not to follow suit.

Earlier in the week Mark spotted Grizzly bear tracks crossing the McCarthy Road— certainly a sign for all of us to keep our eyes and ears open, and moose tracks in the snow.

Mark was at mail delivery yesterday and received a box that contained a most interesting instrument. A Frog Monitor. Barbara Rice and I both said, “What?” Mark repeated himself and left us with quite a few questions. I asked him if I could call him later that day for an “item of interest.” He graciously accepted.

Unknown to me, Mark has been journaling frog sounds for some time. Most folks don't realize we even have frogs in our area. Somehow the news made it to the right folks. It appears there is a State-wide program that is gathering data on frogs in Alaska. The Herpetological Society of Alaska and Alaska's Fish and Game teamed up on the project.

Mark is now the first citizen scientist (Alaska) to deploy a frog monitor in his nearby pond to record frog croaking and noise level. According to Mark, the monitor comes on once an hour and records for five minutes. They hope to de-

termine the peak hour for frog noise and then estimate how many frogs are present. Apparently this is the third year of the on-going study. There is also a monitor on the northside of the park, Mark says, with 6 total now in the state. With Mark in the program, our area will help monitor how widespread the frog's area is. Thanks for sharing this great item, Mark, and please keep us informed of your findings.

Mark's "spring report" always helps me keep an eye out for our returning wildlife. White Crowned Sparrows, juncos, robins, Trumpeter swans, to name a few, have been spotted and/or heard, says Mark. His returning pair of swans (7 years now) brought their last year's baby. This was the first time for that occurrence. He also spotted a flock of about a dozen swans flying over his area, heading for Chitina.

Gardening is an ever present project for Mark this time of year. He's up to 18 trays of starts now but that will continue to increase in the days ahead. He says he's cutting back to about 40 this year! He gets his daily exercise hauling the trays in and out of the cabin. Once it warms up enough at night, he can leave them outside or in his greenhouse. In the meantime, he has his work cut out for him.

Thanks, Mark for being a courier between Jim Kreblin and us, by bringing two tomato plants from Long Lake to our end of the road. They will find a good home in our little greenhouse and, hopefully, produce plenty of good fruit!

Jenny Rosenbaum and Paul Hanis: Jenny is busy "multi-tasking" these days. When I contacted her for an item from their homestead, she was ready to check the taps in their birch trees. She writes her results: "The birch tree tapping is a great thing for us. Last year was our first year to tap and we were surprised by the quantity of sap we got off of just two trees. Though it takes a lot of sap to make any

amount of syrup we actually just drink the sap instead of water—a good replacement for the muddy spring melt water that flows in our creek this time of year. I also sometimes cook it down enough to make a sweet drink out of it but don't really have the patience to go full bore with the syrup (or willingness to inundate my house with that much water vapor!)...maybe sometime in the future."

The next chore on her to-do list was "check on her bees." I asked her if they had wintered over her bees from last year. "We were not successful with that though we did not try too hard. We purchased two new hives of bees— both of which had to be snowmachined home from McCarthy to the Nizina— 10 miles of seriously rough trail this time of year! But now that they're home both hives are doing fantastic. Even though there's still snow on the ground, they're out and about and bringing home pollen in the heat of the day. I'm excited to see how much honey we get this fall. On top of that I really do enjoy having them around and watching them work."

If you are a gardener in the Copper River Basin, you will be interested to know that Jenny just started a new group on Facebook called, Copper Basin Gardeners & Gatherers. I quickly joined since Rick and I garden and can always use some input. Says Jenny, "I've been wanting to have some sort of info-sharing forum for all of us gardeners out here that do similar things but live so far apart. I thought this would be a good start. I'm hoping people will really get into it and get excited about posting photos of their projects and other things, too."

Adding to her busy schedule, Jenny is doing a bit of work with the Discovery Channel crew. Of course, that has to fit in between all the above chores and more. Transplanting her tomatoes and other

garden starts are pretty high on the list these days. With all the extra summer light arriving, Jenny's days get longer for outside chores. By the time supper rolled around the other day, the lateness of the time demanded a quick, but nourishing meal— grilled cheese and smoked salmon. Nothing wrong with that menu in my book, Jenny! You are one busy, productive woman, but it sounds and looks like you are having fun.

Copper Valley Telecom's 2014 Customer Appreciation Picnics:

Come have CVTC staff serve you hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, cookies and drink from noon to 1 pm at the following locations:

June 27, Cordova, Hollis Hendrich Park; July 10, Valdez, 10-mile Fire Station, Richardson Hwy; July 11, Valdez, CVT Business Office; July 17, Copper Center, Kluti Klaah; July 23, Glennallen, CVT Business Office; July 24, Chitina, Wayside; and July 25, McCarthy, Community Center.

McCarthy Creek Packrafting Race: Kennicott Wilderness Guides is once again teaming up with McCarthy River Tours & Outfitters to present the second annual Packrafting Race and Whitewater Festival.

This year's race will take place on July 18-20. Be sure to watch for more information on KWG's web site at:

<http://kennicottguides.com/packrafting/race>.

The New Roadside Potato: According to Ian Gyori, he and co-owner, Rebecca Bard, have taken on a couple new partners which resulted in "A New Potato!" Valdez is the home of the second Potato. Although Ian says he has plenty to do to get it up and running for the summer, he is determined to provide the folks of Valdez the same good food that we McCarthyites and our guests get to sample each summer. Congratulations, Ian and Rebecca!

Fisheries Research in the Copper Basin

BY: MARK SOMERVILLE (ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME)

This past year was filled with fisheries research in the Copper Basin. Fisheries research projects looked at hatchery sockeye salmon contributions to area fisheries, stocked waters productivity, spawning escapement of sockeye and king salmon, lake trout, whitefish and king salmon genetics, Dolly Varden anadromy (rear in ocean and spawn in freshwater), lake temperature profiles, and rainbow trout population structure. These projects were conducted by Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) personnel from Glennallen, Fairbanks and Anchorage, as well as personnel from Wrangell St. Elias National Park (NPS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Fish and Wild Service (USFWS), Native Village of Eyak (NVE), and the College of William and Mary. The projects were funded by those organizations and with grants from Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund, USFWS, Federal Office of Subsistence Management, and cooperation with Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation (PWSAC) and Biomark, Inc.

ADF&G continued an ongoing project to monitor the contribution of hatchery sockeye salmon in the personal use dip net fishery. This project also collects age, sex and length data on king salmon. In 2013, the project was expanded to include the subsistence fish wheel fishery. ADF&G hired three field technicians who collected otoliths (or earbones) from sockeye

salmon. The otoliths are used by ADF&G to age the fish and then a portion are sent to PWSAC to be sectioned, polished, and examined under an electron microscope for a strontium mark applied to all hatchery fry prior to release from the Gulkana Hatchery. Hatchery sockeye salmon contribution to the personal use dip net fishery has averaged 20% from 2008-2012.

Since 2002, ADF&G, in cooperation with the BLM, has been operating a counting tower for king salmon on the Gulkana River. ADF&G uses the counts to estimate spawning escapement of king salmon. In recent years the tower counts have also proven valuable as one of the inseason measures of king salmon run strength upon which management actions can be made to ensure desired escapement levels are achieved. This project employs four ADF&G Fish and Wildlife Technicians and two BLM seasonal technicians.

The Gulkana River counting tower assumes that 70% of all Gulkana River king salmon spawn upstream of the tower. Periodically this assumption must be tested. In 2013 ADF&G initiated a three-year study to tag 100 king salmon each year at the mouth of the Gulkana River with radio tags. The progress of these tagged salmon is then monitored to determine how long they stay in various parts of the river and where they spawn. This project employs 1 - 2 seasonal technicians.

Dr. Patty Zwollo, a professor at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, has been con-

ducting research on the immune system of sockeye salmon. She is investigating the role played by the immune system in the homing of sockeye salmon to their natal spawning areas. She collected samples this summer from the East Fork of the Gulkana River and from Fish Creek near Mentasta Lake.

ADF&G has been collecting baseline genetic samples from sockeye and king salmon in the Copper Basin for the past decade. It is hoped that this baseline data will one day assist fisheries managers to determine stock composition of harvests inriver or in offshore fisheries. In 2013, the Glennallen ADF&G staff helped the Genetics Lab collect king salmon genetic samples in the West Fork Gulkana River, Spring Creek in the Gakona River drainage, the Gilahina and Tana rivers.

Jason Everett, a biologist with the USFWS, has been running a long term collection program for genetic samples of various freshwater fishes across Alaska. This past September, Glennallen ADF&G staff assisted Jason with collecting genetic samples from lake trout and whitefish in Paxson Lake. These data will be used to determine the genetic relationship of lake trout populations from the mid-west through Alaska.

ADF&G once again relocated thousands of rainbow trout from Summit Lake, in the Chitina River drainage, to Silver Lake on the McCarthy Road. Although sport anglers benefit from this transfer, the project's objectives are more extensive. This 10-year



Long Lake Creek Weir

Photo courtesy the author

project is designed to see if removal of smaller fish from Summit Lake will allow the size structure to change from a population of stunted individuals to one made up of large predatory individuals and a smaller prey base that is kept in check by the larger fish.

In the fall of 2012, Glennallen ADF&G staff collected 20 large Dolly Varden from the mouth of Klutina Lake. The otoliths were removed from these fish and analyzed for a strontium signature as well as other microchemicals. None of the 20 fish were determined to be anadromous, but their microchemistry suggests they have a dynamic life history that may include migrations within the Copper River drainage.

ADF&G has been monitoring the temperature profile of Mentasta Lake since 2003. This project was initiated over concerns of eutrophication in the lake and the potential for water temperatures to rise to levels lethal to sockeye salmon. Our data indicates that the lake temperature profiles fluctuate with air temperature, but have remained well

within the temperature range needed for spawning, incubating or rearing sockeye salmon.

The NPS operates salmon weirs on Tanada Creek and Long Lake. These weirs have been in place since 1997

(Tanada Creek) and 1974 (Long Lake) and provide spawning escapement data on sockeye, king, and coho salmon. The NPS has also been collecting otoliths from sockeye salmon in Tanada Lake and Long Lake for age analysis. For the past two summers the NPS has collected burbot and lake trout from lakes within the park to test tissues and organs for chemical contaminants.

NVE continues to operate a king salmon mark/recapture project in the Copper River to estimate the total number of king salmon entering the upper Copper River drainage. NVE has also been testing an inriver antenna array, built by Biomark Inc., in the Gulkana River to detect the pit tags they place on king salmon. The array

has successfully detected the tags and the study is continuing.

Finally, ADF&G staff monitors stocked lakes each year. Local area staff collect dissolved oxygen and temperature data from most area stocked lakes each spring to see which ones have winter killed or not. During the summer 1 - 3 area stocked lakes are sampled to determine survival and growth of fish stocked in those lakes.

Research on area fisheries will continue in 2014. Many of the projects highlighted here will continue while some will have completed their data collection goals. ADF&G will continue to develop new projects to monitor the health and sustainability of our area salmon and resident species fisheries and seek the funding for those projects. If you have further questions on fisheries research or management in the Copper River Basin please contact Mark Somerville at mark.somerville@alaska.gov or 907-822-3309.



Klutina Lake Dolly Varden

Photo courtesy the author

Do-it-yourself electric power—small diesel gensets

In our last issue, the late Ed LaChapelle gave us an overview of various methods of generating electricity. This time we will look specifically at small generator units, or “gen-sets.” Although the China diesel in the article is no longer readily available, there are numerous replacements now available. (Hint: Do a Google search!) Also, bear in mind this story was written in 1997 so the prices are not current.

BY RICK KENYON

When Bonnie and I first moved to the McCarthy area in 1977, we went “cold turkey” off electrical power. The nearest power lines were 75 miles away. (Now they are only 60 miles away—at that rate we may have electric service here in about a hundred years! So much for Rural Electrification.) In the summertime this was not a major problem. Alaska's long summer days provided plenty of light as soon as we got up in the morning until well past bedtime. Of course no electricity meant no freezer meant no frozen foods, so we learned how to put up a moose into quart jars, salmon into pint jars or tins, and root vegetables into a root cellar. Food that we used to keep in a refrigerator went either on the floor, or in a shallow hole in the ground on the north side of the cabin.

The winters were a horse of a different color. With the sun rising after 10 a.m. and setting by 3:30 p.m., light in the cabin was a real necessity. Kerosine lamps seemed to be the local preference, so we ordered several types. An “Aladdin” lamp for the kitchen table, where most projects are done in a one room cabin, because they put out more light than an ordinary kerosine lamp. Several “regular” kerosine lamps placed around the room, and a kerosine lantern for working outside and for those trips to the outhouse. We soon learned why there was not much human progress until this century when electricity was discovered. Every day it was a ritual to clean the lamp globes, fill the lamps with oil, trim the wicks, adjust the wicks, and

then be rewarded with barely enough light to walk around the room without running into something. We soon replaced the Aladdin with a “Coleman” lantern, preferring its constant hissing noise to the idiosyncracies of the Aladdin.

We soon learned that some type of portable generator is almost a necessity, even for the most hardened bush types. We got a 2200 watt Briggs and Stratton powered model which lasted for several years before it blew up. It used a lot of fuel and was terribly noisy. We replaced it with a small Honda unit which was pretty fuel efficient, and somewhat quieter, but would not run our power tools. The Honda was a step up though, because we could hook up 3 or 4 electric lights in the cabin and not feel too guilty about letting it run for several hours in the evening. The kerosine lamps went into storage. One thing we learned about gasoline powered generators—don't be too concerned if you pick the wrong one—they don't last very long and in a few years you can try a different model!

Solar electricity was just becoming popular, and I wrote to everyone I could think of to gather information on a solar-powered electrical system. Everyone had the same answer—“You're in Alaska? You'll have to back it up with a generator in the winter.” Lots of power in the summer, just when we don't need it, other than to run a freezer. To put together a solar powered system that would do what we wanted would cost close to \$10,000, and that was in the early 1980's.

We looked into diesel powered generator sets (gensets) and learned that they, like solar, were

quite expensive, although not as high as solar. Then, in the early 1980's a friend of ours started importing diesel engines from China. He constructed mounting stands for them and mated them to Winco generators. Then he sold them for about half of what a comparable American or European made genset went for. With some trepidation (China—aren't they made with slave labor?) we ordered a 4kW unit. (I was assured any “slaves” would be making socks, not diesel engines.)

The first order of business was to build a “sound-proof” room to put the unit in. I had heard about using a buried 55 gallon barrel for a muffler, so I dug a hole next to the generator room. I knew there was no practical way for me to build a truly sound-proof room, so I located the 4'X4' building about 150' away from the house—midway between the cabin and the workshop. The result? From inside the cabin no noise could be heard at all. Outside, in the yard, the noise could be heard but was acceptable since we didn't run it all the time. (Much quieter than our old gas unit sitting outside.)

What a change in our lifestyle. We found the 4kW unit would run about 5 hours on a gallon of diesel fuel. Each evening, just before dark I would start the generator and let it run until bedtime. From inside our cabin the generator could not be heard at all. This was really living!

As the years went by, we added a small battery bank and a Trace model 812 inverter. This is their 800 watt model and is very efficient. By running the generator 4-6

hours a day and charging the batteries at the same time, we could run the inverter for several hours a day. A freezer was next on the list. Although the 800 watt inverter is a bit too small to run a freezer, we found that our 4-6 hour running time per day on the generator was enough to keep the freezer at least below 20 degrees. Not ideal, but not too bad. Now Bullwinkle could go in the freezer instead of the 10 to 12 cases of canning jars it used to take.

Eventually I moved the generator room to the far side of our workshop, but attached to the shop in order to allow the heat from the engine to flow into the shop. This greatly cut down on the noise that could be heard from anywhere in the yard. I discarded the buried barrel in favor of an above-ground barrel shot full of .45 caliber holes. (This is amazingly effective as a muffler!) As I write this the outside temperature is minus 45 degrees F, and our little China Diesel has been running for about 4 days straight—when it is this cold we now let it run around the clock. A 300 gallon fuel tank gives about 1500 hours of running time, which works out to around 3 to 5 months, depending on the weather.

As the years went by we picked up several more used units similar to our original model. (The one running right now came from the Kennicott Glacier Lodge.) A few years ago Winco quit making the little 4kW 1800 rpm model, and a few were imported with Chinese electrics. Unfortunately, the Chinese make much better diesels than they do generators. While the engines are simple, efficient and “bulletproof,” the electrical systems tend to be crude and complicated.

Our original engine (and Winco unit) have somewhere in the neighborhood of 40,000 hours on them. I have overhauled the engine twice, a procedure that takes about 4 hours.

The first time was not at all necessary, but the engine had 5,000 hours on it and I just knew it must be worn out! Since the engines come with enough parts for an overhaul, and since my friend was available to guide me, I tore the engine down—only to find the parts still pretty much like new. After that experience, I ran the engine another 30,000 hours before rebuilding it. As for the Winco unit, it is going strong with only a new set of bearings and a diode in all those hours.

2014 update: My friend the importer has now moved south and retired. I couldn't find any importers for the little units, though apparently you can buy them directly from China if you want to try your hand at importing yourself. But used ones are still floating around, and as we will see there are several alternatives that are reasonably priced.

Diesel engines are much simpler than gasoline powered ones, burn less than half the fuel to do the same work, and normally outlast them ten-to-one or more. The only maintenance generally required is changing the oil, and changing the fuel, air, and oil filters—much the same as on a gas engine. China Diesels also require periodic adjustment of the valves. What you don't have to deal with is tune-ups. Since there is no carburetor, it never needs adjustment. The same is true for the ignition system—there isn't any! To be fair, however, some China Diesel owners have had more problems than I have had. These units seem to be happiest in the hands of owners who have a certain amount of mechanical ability.

If you require a machine that you can just set-up and use with nothing more than routine maintenance, the name-brand commercial units may be a safer bet for you. Be prepared to pay for the convenience, both in initial purchase price, and often in higher fuel consumption and lower life expectancy.

One of the more popular units in Alaska is the Northern Lights 6 kW generator set model NL673. This model has been advertised for \$4896 at Alaska Diesel Electric in Anchorage. The rated fuel consumption is two hours per gallon of fuel at full load, and less at lower loads. (Remember, we average 5 hours per gallon with our 4 kW China!) Contact Alaska Diesel Electric at 1-800-478-3006. (*This is what we eventually replaced our China diesel with. It seems to average about 4 hours per gallon at the loads we run it at. Figure an additional \$1000 or so from 1997 prices.*)

Another well known brand in Alaska is the Lister Petter. They have a 7.5 kW model that runs around \$5,000. The fuel consumption on this model is listed as 2.1 liters per hour at 75% load, which would be less than two hours per gallon of fuel. They are available from Bowers Engine Division in Kent, Washington. Phone 1-800-858-5881 and ask for David D. Rowland.

I have heard good things about the Onan Model 8.OHDKAQ. It is an 8 kW single and three-phase generator that's designed for continuous duty applications. All controls are waterproof and sealed for safe and trouble-free installation. It uses the proven Kubota three-cylinder diesel engine, and at about a 75% load, will reportedly run four hours on a gallon of fuel. Price is around \$7,000.

No matter which diesel you choose, there are a few things to keep in mind. One is that these engines do not like to be run for short periods of time. They are much happier running all day and night than they are being started and stopped every 15 minutes. You might want to keep one of the gas-powered units just to use for those short jobs that require more power than your inverter will handle.

Regular oil changes are a must. Be sure that the oil you use is rated for diesel service, which is more severe than for gas engines.

Spend some time designing and building a structure to put your generator in that will keep the noise contained, while still providing enough air circulation to keep

the engine happy. While most people find the noise of these 1800 rpm units less obnoxious than the sound of the 3600 rpm gas units, no one wants to hear any kind of engine running for very long. Two things that I have learned over the years; isolate the engine from the building by using rubber or springs, and put as many layers of material

between you and the engine as possible. The more times that sound has to change directions to reach your ears, the more it is dissipated. I believe the mechanical noise of the engines is harder to deal with than the sound of the exhaust, which a good muffler will take care of.

Mercury in Fishes Study Released

Measurable Levels Detected in Alaska National Parks

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA —

Fish sampled in four Alaskan national parks have tested positive for mercury and in some cases exceeded State of Alaska unlimited human consumption thresholds for women and children.

The testing was part of a multi-year U.S. Geological Survey and National Park Service study of fish in remote, high elevation lakes and streams in 21 national parks across 10 western states and Alaska. Mercury was found in all fish sampled though levels of the chemical harmful to fish, other wildlife and humans, varied.

“Although fish mercury concentrations were elevated in some sites, the majority of fish across the region had concentrations that were below most benchmarks associated with impaired health of fish, wildlife, and humans. However, the range of concentrations measured suggest that complex processes are involved in driving mercury accumulation in these environments and further research is needed to better understand these processes, and assess risk,” said USGS ecologist Collin Eagles-Smith, the lead author of the publication.

The Alaska surveys took place at Denali National Park and Pre-

serve, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve and Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. Mercury concentrations were measured in lake trout, arctic grayling, kokanee, Dolly Varden and northern pike.

Some fish in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and Lake Clark National Park and Preserve exceeded thresholds recommended by both the State of Alaska and the Environmental Protection Agency for unlimited human consumption by women and children.

State of Alaska human consumption thresholds start at 150 parts per billion. Lake trout, with average concentrations as high as 417 parts per billion were found in one lake in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. The average concentration in lake trout in Lake Clark was 365 parts per billion. Mercury levels were low in Denali National Park and Preserve and Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve.

Lake trout are a relatively long-lived fish species at the top of the food web, and as such are more likely to accumulate mercury and other toxins over their lives than other species of fish. They are not consumed in great quanti-

ties by either sport or subsistence fishermen so the risk to people is likely low, but variable given location and frequency of fish consumption. The extent of the effects on fish-eating birds and mammals that depend on lake trout for survival is unknown.

Fish continue to be a nutritious food source. Many fish species, including salmon, are low in mercury. Women who may become pregnant and parents should reference fish consumption guidance developed by the State of Alaska at <http://www.epi.alaska.gov/eh/fish/default.htm>.

The study, “Mercury in fishes from 21 national parks in the Western United States – Inter and intra-park variation in concentrations and ecological risk,” is available online at <http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2014/1051/pdf/ofr2014-1051.pdf>. For more information visit <http://www.nature.nps.gov/air/studies/ToxicEffects.cfm>.

Stay connected with AlaskaNPS on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr. Links to the social media sites are available at www.nps.gov/akso.

WRST Park news

Editors note: The following is excerpted from the most recent letter from the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Superintendent Rick Obernesser.

COPPER CENTER, AK—

This year, District Ranger Stephens Harper will continue to serve as the Kennecott/McCarthy Liaison to the park leadership team. Elizabeth Schafer will support Stephens in his role as Liaison and will assist with implementation of the Kennecott Operations Plan and additional park planning efforts.

Kennecott District Interpreter, Erica Edmonds, has resigned her position at the park. The park has hired a temporary seasonal to take over for the summer, until a permanent replacement is selected. Jamie Hart, a Kennecott seasonal in 2011 and 2012, will return to manage the interpretation functions in Kennecott. The rest of the seasonal staff has been hired and most of them are returning employees from last year.

Visitor and Resource Protection:

Courtney Eberhardy, Elizabeth Schafer and Matthew Emht will be returning this year.

The Kennecott Visitor Center will be open for business on Friday May 23rd from 9:30am to 6:00pm. It will close for a few days after Memorial Day for staff training but the visitor center will be open daily until Sunday September 7th. The historic

buildings will be open the same hours as the visitor center.

The McCarthy Road Information Station will continue to be an unstaffed visitor service kiosk and information station. We will still have an outhouse and free day parking. The Chitina Ranger Station is open Thursday to Monday from 10:00am to 4:30pm and it is a great place for Kennecott /McCarthy visitors to get the latest road information, learn a little of the area's history, and pick up the latest area's services list.

Planning:

The Kennecott Operations Plan was signed last November and will provide guidance for management of the Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark for the next 10 years. The Kennecott Operations Plan is a cooperative NPS/community effort and the final plan reflects the input received from the community. The NPS is committed to maintaining a high level of communications with the community, as specifically described in the plan. Aside from continued stabilization of historic structures in Kennecott, here are some items we will be following up with this summer:

- Exploration of a potential cooperative road maintenance agreement for lot owners in Kennecott above the State right-of-way. Stephens Harper and Elizabeth Schafer have sent out messages to solicit your thoughts and comments on the issue.
- An educational brochure to be developed in partnership with the community. The brochure is

meant to convey the following vision; Access to the millsite subdivision is predominantly through shuttle services and other non-motorized means. Vehicle access and parking will be managed to minimize impacts to visitors and residents, minimize congestion and maximize safety.

The brochure will include information on the following: Community values and why this place is different. This is a community; respect that there are people walking on the roads, it is a shared trail. Describe physical characteristics that lead to safety concerns. This would not be an advertisement brochure, rather a brochure that educates visitors about the area land status, safety considerations, and the fact that the area is within a National park but also a community. The concept is to provide a nice, cooperatively produced, educational brochure that can help visitors plan their visits and access to the site. Elizabeth will be taking the lead on producing a first draft of this.

A meeting with area businesses who operate within WRST under a Commercial Use Authorization will occur at the Kennecott Recreation Hall at 1 pm on June 4th. Access to the Mill Building, for guided tours, will resume this summer. Access will likely be restricted again in 2015 due to work planned for that year.

Three short films are to be produced this summer that will address proper stream crossing techniques, glacier travel and safe behavior in bear country.

We intend to make these films available to visitors via the park website and at visitor centers.

Part of the Kennecott Operations Plan implementation this year includes establishing a 10 mph speed limit for the NPS managed portions of the easements within Kennecott.

Kennecott Stabilization (Maintenance):

Mill Building related work and planning will include:

Phase I: NPS maintenance staff will be completing minor tasks in the mill to finish Phase I of the Line Item Construction (LIC) project which stabilized the building's foundation. This will include restoring shelving and equipment that was relocated during the construction project and painting new hardware.

Phase II: NPS recently conducted an in-house design meeting with consulting engineers to continue the scoping Phase II of the LIC project which will relate to fire and building security detection and notification. The timeline of the design has been set back due to scheduling and the construction phase of the project will not be obligated in FY14. There will be another Value Analysis in June to look at alternatives for this project before heading into the construction document phase. Members of the public will be included in this process.

Phase III: The Pre-Design component of Phase III (Upper Mill Repairs) will begin this summer and will include a site visit by consulting engineers to determine the scope of the project. Phase III will be addressing the mill building's tram deck which has not had a roof in over 50

years. It will also address structural concerns in the mill's main ore bin.

Additional maintenance work will include:

- Continue with Power Plant and West Bunkhouse window repair and painting
- Shore up Lab and Warehouse on Mill
- Touch up paint on Dairy Barn, Depot and Rec Hall
- Ore Chute Stabilization (the one between the Mill and Leaching Plant)
- Vault toilet construction at the Root Glacier Trailhead
- Bonanza Trail improvements. Trail work will include correcting drainage issues in the road corridor and repair of the road/trail in the damaged wet areas in the first portion of the trail and then complete cyclic brushing and tread work (drainage) on the foot traffic portion of the trail.

Resource Management:

The final report of the WRST-ADF&G subsistence survey, which occurred in McCarthy in spring 2013, will be completed this fall and made available to the community.

The Federal Subsistence Board recently voted to establish a winter moose hunt (Nov 20 to Dec 20) in the southern portion of Unit 11 (mostly, although not entirely, south of the Chitina River). We will announce the harvest quota and set the reporting period in the future. Your local representative on the WRST Subsistence Resource Commission, Don Welty, spearheaded this effort. Nice job Don.

Inventory, monitoring, and hand removal of invasive weeds will continue. The park has a new

invasive plant lead, Peter Frank, who will be out in the park with an intern and various volunteer crews throughout the season. As part of our fight against invasive species we will again organize a volunteer "Need for Seed" native plant collection designed to benefit both the community and the NHL in mid-August (contact:Peter_Frank@nps.gov). We expect to follow through with some efforts outlined in the KOP such as planting screening material near the generator building.

NPS will continue to operate the Long Lake salmon counting weir in cooperation with the Collins family.

Inventory and monitoring network staff will be conducting annual maintenance of weather and climate stations utilizing a helicopter in July.

Eastern Area Fire Management (EAFM) has three projects planned in the McCarthy-Kennecott area. The first project is burning 40 debris piles at the Kiagna Cabin located on the Chitina River south east of May Creek. This project is weather dependent; EAFM staff will access this site via helicopter. No official dates have been set for ignition. The second project is fuels removal around the Kennecott National Historic Landmark (NHL). The goal of this project is to remove fuel (spruce trees) near park service buildings. This project will begin September 9th and last through September 18th. The University Subdivision fuels break will have standard maintenance (limbing and bucking down trees on the fuels break) implemented on it. This project will be during the same time frame as the fuels reduction around Kennecott (NHL).

Par for the Classic: Competitors suffered, endured and conquered

Editor's note: This story was reprinted from the Fairbanks Daily Newsminer April 4, 2014.

BY TIM MOWRY

FAIRBANKS — As usual, the Alaska Mountain Wilderness Ski Classic didn't disappoint.

The longest, unsupported, winter wilderness ski race in North America doled out the usual dosages of suffering and euphoria to those who chose to accept the challenge that is known in Alaska's backcountry skiing circle simply as "The Classic."

"Awesome," is how winner Brad Marden, of Homer, described it shortly after arriving at the finish line at the Old Log Cabin Wilderness Lodge at 94.5 Mile on the Tok Cut-Off last Friday.

There were the usual assortment of aches and pains, gear malfunctions and route-finding challenges that come with skiing 150 to 200 miles through one of the most rugged mountain ranges in Alaska.

As they do every year wherever The Classic is held — it switches courses every three years to make it interesting — racers climbed mountains, skied across glaciers, forded open rivers and creeks, dodged crevasses, avoided avalanches, marched and skied through glacial moraine fields and careened down creeks covered in glare ice.

"Hands-down the most challenging outdoor event I have ever undertaken," Classic rookie Matias Saari said.

Racers battled headwinds strong enough to bring them to their knees and endured overnight temperatures that dropped to 20

degrees below zero. The scenery was spectacular, just like it always is in the Wrangells. There were glaciers and snow-covered peaks for as far as the eye could see. There were beautiful, blue skies during the day and awesome aurora at night.

"A life-changing experience," is how rookie Sarah Histan, who finished with her brother, Ben, almost two days behind Marden, put it.

It was, to put it simply, The Classic.

Record field

A record field of 25 racers, including a record five women and nine rookies, showed up for the start of the race in downtown McCarthy on March 23. Of that number, 18 made it to the finish, including all five ladies and eight of nine rookies.

Classic veterans Marden and Josh Mumm, also of Homer, teamed up to win this year's race with a time of 5 days, 4 hours, 20 minutes. It marked the second Classic victory for both men — Mumm was on last year's winning team and Marden was part of the winning team in the Brooks Range in 2011. They led a pack of five racers who finished within 50 minutes of each other even though they took three different routes.

Fairbanks' Andrew Cyr, who traveled with fellow Fairbanksan Danny Powers, was officially the second-place finisher, 10 minutes behind Marden and Mumm, while Powers and Miles Raney, who traveled solo and caught up to the other four racers on the final night, finished together 40 minutes later in third place.

But anybody who knows anything about The Classic knows it's not about winning as much as it is about doing. It's not a race as much as it is a test of physical and mental stamina, winter survival skills and backcountry know-how. Just reaching the finish line is a major accomplishment.

All 18 competitors who finished the race did so in seven days, the first time that's happened in several years.

"Conditions were good," reported race organizer Dave Cramer. "It wasn't perfect, but it was pretty darn good."

The seven competitors who dropped out of the race did so for the usual sort of reasons, he said. Eben Sargent, a member of last year's winning team who was teamed with Marden and Mumm, turned back after breaking a boot 30 miles into the race. Seth Adams, of Fairbanks, Thomas Bailly, of Anchorage, and John Wros, of Anchorage, bailed out in Chisana with frostbitten and blistered feet. Rob Kehrer, of Palmer, and Greg Mills, of Anchorage, turned around after Kehrer got a stomach bug. Steve Duby, of Nulato, pulled out because he didn't think he would finish in time to get back to work on Monday.

Oh sure, there was a little bit of drama here and there, like when Raney, traveling solo, stabbed himself in the face with a ski tip after crashing on Platinum Creek on the last night of the race. He gave some of his fellow racers a pretty good scare when he stumbled into their camp with his face and bushy beard covered in frost and blood. The injury looked a lot worse than it really was,

though, and Mumm and Marden cleaned and patched Raney up so that he was able to finish with no problem.

Likewise, there were lots of blisters and a few frostbitten toes and fingers in this year's race but that's "par for the course" in a race like The Classic, Cramer said.

"Generally speaking everybody came through unscathed," he said.

Brutal winds

The biggest challenge racers faced this year was strong winds on the second and third days of the race. The 20-30 mph winds prompted several racers to alter their plans by going over Skolai Pass instead of taking more technical, higher-elevation routes that traversed glaciers, which they thought would have exposed them to more wind. As Classic luck would have it, the wind turned out to be worse on the Skolai Pass route than either of the glacier routes.

Both Classic veteran Brian Jackson, of Fairbanks, who teamed up with the Anchorage duo Chris Wroble and Kevin Postma to finish in fourth place about eight hours behind the winners, and Histan, who completed the race with her brother, Ben, described the wind as "brutal."

"It was brutal — sandblasting us with rocks and ice so that we had to cover every bit of exposed skin, and blowing us backward so that we had to take off our skis and backpack to make forward progress," she wrote in an email.

Classic veteran Kate Strong, of Anchorage, who was partnered with Hilary Eisen, of Bozeman, Mont., called it "knock-you-down wind."

The sustained headwind made for slow, miserable travel but there wasn't much to do but keep your head down and plow forward,

Raney said. At one point, as he attempted to climb up over the top of a ridgeline, Raney said he had to sit and wait for 20 minutes for the wind to let up because it was so strong it was knocking him down.

Only the teams of Marden/Mumm and Cyr/Powers ended up taking glacier routes. Marden and Mumm went up Regal Glacier and over the 8,200-foot Presidents Chair mountain while Cyr and Powers pioneered a new route that traveled up the Kennicott Glacier and traversed Packsaddle Glacier. Both teams ran into wind, but not as strong or prolonged as those who traveled over Skolai Pass.

"We had 30 to 40 mph winds but we were in it for only three-quarters of a day," Cyr said.

Likewise, Marden and Mumm were forced to spend a night in a snow cave on Whiskey Glacier to escape the wind because they chose not to carry a tent in order to travel lighter and faster but it wasn't a big deal, Marden said.

Fortunately for racers, the winds died down on day four of the race and it was smooth sailing from there, or at least as smooth sailing as The Classic can be.

Madman on skis

Despite the strong winds, Cyr and Powers stuck with their original plan to try a new route over the Packsaddle Glacier.

"It turned out to be a lot less technical than we thought it would be," Cyr said. "It was still technical, but we did it with sort of minimal equipment and were expecting to have to turn around and go back to the start line."

He and Powers had "the standard assortment of small gear breakages and sore feet" but other than that it was a typical Classic, said Cyr, after completing the race for the fourth time. The snow

conditions were decent; other than the wind, the weather was perfect; and the scenery was stunning as always.

"It was a spectacular race," he said, and pioneering a new route made it all the more special.

"It was pretty cool to try something new," Cyr, a 34-year-old graduate student at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, said. "Coming into the race it was a big question mark but that's part of the spirit of the Classic, going to the mountains and exploring, trying to do something new."

Cyr and Powers were the first ones to hit Platinum Creek, where they bumped into Marden and Mumm. The four racers traveled together the next 2 1/2 days to the finish, with Marden and Mumm shouldering the bulk of the trailbreaking duties.

A bloody-faced Raney caught up to the group late on their final night of the race. Raney had crashed on the ice coming down Platinum Creek, stabbing himself just below the right eye with one of his ski tips. Immediately after the crash, Raney was scared he had done permanent damage.

"I saw stars," he said of the crash. "I thought there was something seriously wrong with my eye. It wasn't really working at first but then it came back."

The five racers made it to a cabin at about 3 a.m., where Marden and Mum proceeded to patch Raney up with some Band-Aids. By the next morning, the swelling had gone down and Raney could see fine.

It was Raney's Herculean effort going up and over Skolai Pass that was the talk of the race. That route is about 200 miles long, which is about 60 miles longer than the route Cyr and Powers took and 30 miles longer than the

(continued on page 19)

Stephen Dale Syren 1955 - 2014

Palmer resident Stephen Dale Syren died in his sleep at his home on February 28, 2014. A Funeral Mass was offered by his brother, Fr. Kermit Syren, L.C., at Holy Family Cathedral on March 8, 2014 at 2 p.m., preceded by the rosary at 1:30 p.m. Reception followed immediately in the church basement.

Stephen was born on June 13, 1955, in Anchorage, the third of 8 children of Lester and Anita Syren. He was in the first class of seniors to graduate from Service High in 1973. He worked as a surveyor during construction of the Alaska Pipeline. He and his brother Kermit began a successful water well drilling business. Eventually, Stephen became a journeyman welder and worked in the oil industry. He often mentored other welders in training.

During summers, he operated a campground on his property at the end of the road in McCarthy. He was an accomplished snowmachiner. His family writes that he was well-known for his sense of humor, storytelling and generous heart. The loves of his life were his children. He was a wonderful father, and gave them his utmost support whenever they needed it.

He is survived by his daughter, Carly and son, JonPaul, stepdaughters, Jenny Cramer and Jesse Ulofoshio; sisters, Karyn Wise and her husband Mike, Therese Syren and Wyn Froelich and her husband Greg; brothers, Fr. Kermit Syren, L.C and Les Syren and his wife Nicole; and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Jon Syren

and sister, Sr. Gail Marie of St. Joseph. Funeral arrangements were through The Cremation Society of Alaska. In lieu of flowers, the family asked that donations for the children be made to The Stephen D. Syren Memorial Account, Wells Fargo 2054117516.

JonPaul Syren, Stephen's son, posted the following words on his home page on Facebook and is reprinted here with his permission:

"A tragedy has struck my family. On February 28th, 2014, I lost my father to natural causes. He is by far the biggest influence on my life and shall always be. He put every waking second to teaching, supporting, and caring for us kids and was by far a father figure to most of my friends. Everyone who he has touched was mentored by him in some way. In some sense a piece of me died that day and, in other ways, it has given me peace and will always live forever! I love you dad, father, padra, my rock, Stephen. You will always be in my heart." March 5.

Kenny Smith on Facebook March 4.

On March 4th, longtime friend, Kenny Smith, also posted his thoughts on Facebook and is shared with his permission: "In the event some McCarthyites have yet to learn about this, I received some sad news Sunday. An old friend, Steve Syren, passed away unexpectedly. I have many a fond memory of sitting by Steve's campfire at McCarthy and shooting the BS. I can't recall ever there being a harsh word exchanged between the two of us. Of course we cer-

tainly didn't see eye to eye on everything, haw. Rather, we shared lots of laughs and good yarns.

"Steve, was to some, a little controversial at one time. But that was almost entirely due to his ownership of the property at the end of the McCarthy Road where he acquired property on which a for profit campground operated. Unfortunately, Steve had leased out the place to an entity who didn't do such a great job operating it. Then, when Steve decided to move out there himself during the summers, in order to clean up the mess, he rankled more than a few feathers. Even with a degree of acrimony in the air, I witnessed a Steve who would virtually give the shirt off his back to near strangers at times. Eventually, he got things under control and strong feelings moderated.

"In order to raise his kids, JonPaul and Carly, and get them good educations he moved back into the Palmer area full time. He turned operations at McCarthy over to his long time friend Jim Drewry who has accomplished a very respectable and admirable job running the campground. That worked out very well since Jim lives just down the road toward Chitina at Chokosna.

"Since Steve did that our paths have crossed only once and that was season before last when he and Carly came up for a couple of days. At that time he looked more relaxed and healthy than I had seen him in years. No doubt their father's passing is going to make it very difficult for JonPaul and Carly. Please keep them both in your thoughts and prayers over the coming months."

The McCarthy Weekly News

1923 May & June editions

LOCALS

George Nickels arrived in the city the first of the week from Nizina, after four years on the payroll of the Nizina concern, he has severed his connection with that company. Later in the week he left for Dan Creek, where he has been offered a position with the Dan Creek Mining Company.

Bob Johnston arrived in the city the first of the week and after spending a few days in the city, returned to Dan Creek.

Mrs. Johansen and Mrs. Schneabarger of Kennecott were guests of Mrs. Roberts of Blackburn Tuesday afternoon. After an enjoyable afternoon at Mrs. Robert's home the ladies spent the evening at McCarthy.

McCARTHY FORMS BASEBALL TEAM TO CLEAN-UP ALL OPPONENTS

The meeting of those interested in athletics resulted in the forming of an athletic association last Thursday evening. Jack O'Neill was appointed the chairman for one evening. The meeting came to order, and after the chair appointed Chas. Boroughs to act in the capacity of clerk, the meeting was opened for discussion as to ways and means of raising money for new equipment. It was finally decided to appoint a committee to take a collection from all the business houses to cover expenses incidental to putting the diamond in shape and fixing the back stop, getting new equipment etc.

A grounds committee was also appointed to make arrangements for leveling the field and keeping it in shape.

A manager and assistant manager was voted on, Boroughs and Hussey being elected. The matter of new uniforms then came up for discussion and it was agreed that everyone buy his own, and the club will repay in the fall, if there is any money left. Accordingly, a wire was sent to Portland and the

club will dress up for the first game about June first. After the contest there will probably be a baseball dance given, and the proceeds turned over to the team. Practice will begin in a short time and will be kept up throughout the season. The club intends to play the different teams in this section and has hopes of going to the coast for a few games.

May 5

Celebration Off To The Races

While at Kennecott discussing road conditions with Mr. Neiding Wednesday, the Commercial Club's committee broached the subject of the Independence Day celebration. The upshot of the conversation was that the head of the corporation pledged the company to a \$250.00 donation.

Plans for the coming festivities are under way, and from all indications they will surpass anything given in the past. Collections will be made in a short time, and present plans matured. Judges will be chosen from Kennecott and McCarthy.

Youngsters Have School Picnic

Yesterday dawned rainy and sorta daunted the kids who were all set for the annual school picnic, but the clouds were scared so bad by nine o'clock, by the black looks being sent in their direction, that they left for parts unknown. Around eleven the kids and chaperones climbed into trucks and were whirled away to the great outdoors. The old-fashioned children's games were the order of the day the grownups participating, "to amuse the kids." We wonder if it wasn't another case of the whole family taking Johnny to the circus. There were about thirty people out and everyone had a dandy time. Mrs. Reifer will teach next year in McCarthy and states that she will make her home in town during the summer vacation.

May 19

First Pack Train Leaves For Chisane

Monday morning Pete Brenewick left for Chisane with five horses and the mail. The train was accompanied by Harry Borden and Scotty Atchinson, who are headed for a horse pasture near the border, where they wintered their stock. Pete expects a good trip both ways.

LOCALS

A man has been on the road during the past week taking out the larger rocks. It is said the trip can be made now without jarring more than two teeth out.

Molly MacDonnel and Marian Wills were passengers on today's train, en route to Anchorage. They will make their home with an uncle who resides in that city, and in the fall Molly intends to go Outside to attend school. Both girls leave a host of warm friends, and their absence will be felt by all.

Baseball will be real now that the uniforms have been received today by Jack O'Neill. A regular suit practice boys.

Today a regular crew left the village to work on the Kennecott Road.

May 26

Work on Kennecott Road Nearly Completed

Work on the upper end of the Kennecott Road was finished last Wednesday after several days labor had been expended by as many men as could be persuaded to come to work. The Kennecott Corporation paid \$150.00 for the work done on their property and also contributed a box of powder to be used for blowing the large boulders that are distributed so freely along the trail.

Schultz, who has the contract for the work on the lower end of the trail has all but finished his end of the job, and is doing some pretty fine grading.

The work on the upper end consisted mainly of draining, scraping off mud, and hauling in gravel, while most of the work on this end consisted of getting rocks, large and small out of the way. Cars can now make good time between Kennecott and McCarthy, without anyone becoming seasick.

McCARTHY CLEANS KENNECOTT

The score at the end of the game Thursday stood, McCarthy, 8 Kennecott three, and the last half inning remained unplayed. There were nine hits and five walks chalked against Selmyhr the Kennecott twirler, and six hits and four walks against Earnie Lottsfeldt the McCarthy's thrower. Both Bill Hair and Fleagle showed good catching throughout the game. Hair making some very good catches, at times when Lottsfeldt gave away with a few wild pitches.

The rest of the lineup was as follows: Kennecott: Gilkey, first; Wilson, second; Fleagle, third; Lawrence, short; Ellis, r. field; Nujak, c. field; and Nish, l. field. McCarthy: O'Neill, first; Nickels, second; Snyder, third; Gerken, short; Sommers, r. field; Reid, c. field; and Olsen l. field.

Plenty of errors were made but no record was kept. On the whole, however, both sides put up a good game.

Jack Bishop, the teamster, who "lines 'em out" and the ex-catcher on big time circuits was the boss of the diamond, and rendered some good decisions. His impartiality pleasing everyone.

LOCALS

Al Doze came in from the Green Butte Friday to plant his crops.

John Barrett is in town for a few days.

Al Jackson returned on Wednesday to Chittitu, where he will put in a new pipe line for Art Powell.

Carl Anderson returned to his home on Young Creek Monday.

Jack Bishop is spending a few days in town; he will return to the road camp soon.

June 2

Trapper Believed to Have Been Killed by Bear

Word was received yesterday that a trapper named Heimer, partner of Louis Rudolph, trackwalker at mile 39 has been missing since May twenty-fifth. About June first, his absence caused apprehension as to his safety, so a search party was sent out to scour his trapping grounds, which lie between 39 and Katella, but no evidence of the missing man was found. It was known that he went out to get a couple of cubs, so it is feared he was killed by an old bear or was drowned.

Dr. and Mrs. Mohr Hike

Saturday morning Dr. Mohr, who substituted Doctors Gillespie, of Kennecott; and Council, of Cordova, during their vacations, accompanied by his wife hiked out of Chitina toward Fairbanks.

They expect to walk to the last mentioned city, and at that point return to their home in Seattle. If the weather holds good they are assured of a very pleasant trip.

Copper Shipment Made

Friday the Green Butte Mine shipped a carload of high grade copper ore to the smelter. The entire car load was hand sorted and according to the oldtimers, about as rich as anything that has gone down the valley. With all the new machinery, such as hoists, trams, etc, that are being installed, the mine should be a steady producer. The transportation problem bids fair to be eliminated within a short time, after the Road Commission begins operations.

LOCALS

Pete Brenewick left with the Chisane mail yesterday. He took in four horses. It is understood that this is Pete's last trip. Harry Boyden now having the contract.

Bill Lang, the trapper and inventor of the already famous Lang trap, arrived in town a couple of days ago. After a trip in the hills that has lasted three months, Bill is so thin he has to stand twice to make a shadow.

Rumor has it that there will be another newly wed couple at Kennecott when Mines Supt. Morris returns. It is understood the bride to be is Miss Michael.

There will be a dance this evening at the Kennecott Hall, after a ball game on the Kennecott park.

All ladies are to wear gingham dresses and the men are to be minus coats.

June 16

Blacksmith Injured

One of the blacksmiths at the Mother Lode Mine received a painful injury when a revolving emery wheel broke, a fragment entering his lower jaw and knocking out two teeth. The accident occurred during the early part of this week.

Shushanna stampede

McCarthy owes its existence primarily to a boom – the Shushanna stampede. That particular boom has come and gone; but McCarthy remains. Not as large as she was, but enough to convince even the most skeptical that the germ of a permanent community is here. Activities of a more lasting nature are gradually centering here. Mines whose wealth cannot be carried out in pokes are being operated more and more extensively. The homesteader has come to stay, to far, not merely to clear an acre, build himself a hut, plant a few potatoes, buy himself a gun and a fish pole and "let the rest of the world go by." The time will come when all we need from California will be strawberries in January.

Of course, the question of roads to enable the farmer to market his produce is always with us, but with increasing mining activities, with agriculture becoming a real factor, and with an occasional reminder, we will not be forgotten; and after the novelty of a strictly modern railroad penetrating the heart of Alaska has worn off, McCarthy and the Copper River valley are bound to get their share of attention and money.

June 23

It is reported that Mrs. Radovan has had a siege of sickness, but is now on the road to recovery.

McCarthy had a very severe wind and dust storm Monday.

June 30

Inside the Gray Matter of an Arctic Grayling

BY NED ROZELL

On the south bank of the Klutina River, near Copper Center—I'm sitting on a muddy rock, trying to think like an arctic grayling. Nothing's coming to mind.

A couple of guys expended a bit more energy trying to understand grayling in the late 1960's. They emerged with some interesting insights into the behavior of one of Alaska's most popular game fish.

Gian Vascotto, then with the

fish hung at medium depths. The real shrimps were found near shore.

Vascotto and Morrow were able to recognize individual grayling, and they found that grayling usually had a favorite spot they occupied all summer. If a fish was caught, "the subordinate ranks moved up and occupied new territories."

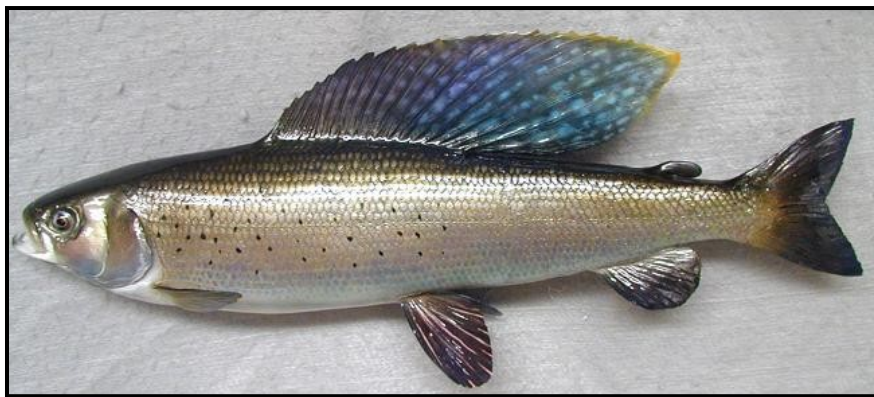
If a pool was disturbed, the grayling all congregated in the deepest part of the pool. When the coast seemed clear, the smallest fish were the first to

ling. The larger grayling then rose from below the smaller one, which then drifted backward. The smaller one would then drift out of the picture or pull up parallel and take the lead role in the same strange ritual. The researchers watched the rapid display five different times.

They also watched the grayling feed and checked the stomach contents of the fish to come up with the following conclusions, which may interest a few anglers:

- ★ Grayling fed very little, if at all, on rainy days.
- ★ Large grayling at the head of a pool rarely traveled far to check out drifting food items. Instead, they turned to face the oncoming object and waited for it to reach them.
- ★ When large grayling went up for food on the surface, they ascended slowly, mouthed the food slowly, and sank only slightly faster than they rose.
- ★ Smaller grayling subject to more competition, would often leap out of the water to chase flying insects. In one case, "a 10cm fish chased a crane fly for 2 ½ meters, jumping out of the water four times and capturing the insect in the air on the last leap."

I'll need the same determination as that grayling to cross the roaring Klutina River tomorrow. Or maybe I'll just use the bridge.



University of Manitoba, and James Morrow, then a researcher with the University of Alaska Fairbanks, spent much of the summer of 1968 on their bellies, peering into McManus Creek in Interior Alaska Using "a brushy barrier for concealment," they studied six pools of the river in great detail, lying motionless to watch grayling for up to 14 hours at a time

In what must have been a buggy but rewarding summer, the researchers found that the biggest grayling seemed to call the shots. Large grayling always lurked closest to the bottom of the deepest pools, while smaller

venture back, boldly occupying the choicest parts of the pool. Then the researchers noted an odd ritual as the larger grayling returned. A larger grayling would move alongside the smaller grayling as if it were preparing to parallel park. The larger fish drifted sideways toward the smaller one until they were practically touching. One of the fish, usually the large one, would then swim about 15 centimeters ahead and arch its body into a bow, with the concave side toward the smaller fish. Holding this half-moon position, the larger grayling drifted backwards and sank below the smaller gray-

Alaska Wilderness Ski Classic (continued from page 15)

route Marden and Mumm followed.

A “madman on skis” is how Powers described Raney.

Eye-opening experience

While Classic veterans like Marden, Mumm, Cyr and Powers knew what they were getting into the race was an eye-opening experience for rookies.

Saari, formerly of Fairbanks and a two-time champion of the Equinox Marathon and one of the state’s foremost mountain runners, made his first foray into wilderness racing by teaming up with another former Fairbanksan, Christie Hauptert, who has a fair share of mountaineering and winter camping experience but was also a rookie to The Classic.

The Classic was the hardest thing he’s ever done and most rewarding to complete, Saari said in an email. The physical demands of traveling through such rugged country for 15 hours a day were “considerable,” but the mental demands of the race were even greater, he said.

“Balancing the mental roller coaster of how one moment things would be going great and the next everything would be haywire; taking care of body and gear with a thin margin of error; and camping six nights in temperatures of around zero degrees,” Saari said.

There were some sketchy moments, to be sure, Saari said, such as camping out in the wind going up Skolai Pass on the second night; having to walk down a canyon of glare ice on Cooper Creek wearing Microspikes over his down booties because one of his ski boots was frozen into its binding; and breaking through the ice on the Nabesna River up to his knees, which resulted in frozen ski boots that nearly froze his feet when he took off the next morning.

Saari “could not conceive” doing the race solo and said he relied on Hauptert’s winter traveling skills often during the trip. They benefitted from having racers in front of them breaking trail, he said.

Hauptert, who has wanted to do The Classic for several years, said it’s more of a mental and physical survival test than a race.

“It’s not just about endurance, but the ability to innovate field fixes, ride the dramatic emotional roller coaster of each day’s high and lows and most importantly take care of any issue early on so it doesn’t become a problem later,” she said in an email.

Hauptert and Saari, who finished in fifth place, a little over a day behind the leaders, spent the race leapfrogging with the teams of Kate Strong and Hilary Eisen and Stephanie Schmit and Chuck Lindsay, a couple from Homer.

Strong, Eisen, Schmit and Lindsay finished tied for sixth, only about 10 minutes behind Saari and Hauptert.

Quite a challenge

Strong, who finished last year’s race with Wros, talked Eisen, a climbing buddy from Bozeman, Mont, into coming to Alaska for the race this year.

Traveling with another woman, instead of a man, was empowering, both Strong and Eisen said.

“It’s sometimes difficult to find strong women partners,” Strong said. “It’s nice to go out and feel completely equal with a partner and have somebody you’re making decisions with rather than asking them what they think and following their lead.”

For Eisen, who doesn’t consider herself an endurance athlete, the race was a challenge. There were a few times, like getting knocked down by the wind while

hiking across the Russell Glacier moraine, that Eisen questioned her decision but all in all it was a super positive experience, she said.

“I’d never done anything like it before so it was quite the experience,” Eisen said. “It was one of those things where it was like, I’ve got to do this; there’s no turning back.”

It marked the first time in her life that Eisen, an experienced skier and hiker, has had a blister.

“I’d never had a blister in my entire life,” she said. “I wasn’t mentally prepared to deal with them. I’ve got quite a few blisters in between my toes and underneath my toes, in spots I wasn’t expecting to get blisters.”

Unlike the lead racers who hit the trail early in the morning, took few rests and traveled late into the night, Eisen and Strong took a more leisurely pace. They were usually in bed by 9 p.m. and slept until 6 a.m. While they experienced a few little problems, i.e. a broken tent pole and a broken ski tip, that was about it.

“It almost felt like there wasn’t enough suffering for a Classic,” Strong said. “I wasn’t ready to be done at all. I was actually kind of bummed to be done.”

Even so, it wasn’t easy, said Strong, an attorney in Anchorage.

“It’s still 200 miles,” she said. “It’s not like we were sitting around drinking cocktails in the evening.”

Cool finish

Bringing up the rear were the Histan siblings and Chris Zwolinski, of North Pole. The Histan siblings finished in a little over seven days while Zwolinski, who started the race with Mills and Kehrer and ended up traveling solo after they

turned back, came in five hours later.

Sarah Histan called The Classic the most challenging outdoor adventure she's ever done. The whole thing, the physical and mental demands of the race, the size of the country they were traveling through, and the varying conditions, is hard to put into words, she said.

"One of the greatest successes of the race for me was the opportunity to come face to face with all of the different environmental challenges (wind, snow, ice, rocks, etc.) and use such a wide variety of winter travel skills to find creative ways through them," Histan said in an email. "We covered so much different terrain in any given day that we had to constantly adjust our tactics to make the most efficient travel possible."

Nobody was happier to reach the finish than Zwolinski, who was attempting the race for the third time. Twice before, three years ago in the Brooks Range and in last year's race, Zwolinski had to hitch snowmachine rides to the finish only a short distance from the end. Three years ago he fell ill

about 30 miles from the finish and last year he, Mills and Kehrer ended up bailing out when they got stuck in fog for a full day on Noyes Mountain about 30 miles from the finish.

"This is the first time I finished without a snowmachine ride," Zwolinski said. "To finally come in under my own power is pretty cool."

He'll be back next year, Zwolinski said.

"I just love doing this race," he said. "Even if I do the same route next year it will be just as spectacular. It's just beautiful."

Contact outdoors editor Tim Mowry at 459-7587. Follow him on Twitter: @FDNMoutdoors.

2014 Alaska Mountain Wilderness Ski Classic

McCarthy-Nabesna-Old Log Cabin Wilderness Lodge Route Race Started On March 23

1. Brad Marden, Homer, and Josh Mumm, Homer, March 28, 3:20 p.m., 5 days, 4 hours, 20 minutes.

2. Andrew Cyr, Fairbanks, March 28, 3:30 p.m., 5:04:30.

3. Daniel Powers, Fairbanks, and Miles Raney, Wasilla, March 28, 4:15 p.m., 5:05:15.

4. Brian Jackson, Fairbanks; Kevin Postma, Anchorage; and Chris Wroble, Anchorage, March 29, 12:40 a.m., 5:13:40.

5. Matias Saari, Anchorage, and Christie Hauptert, Anchorage, March 29, 7:18 p.m., 6:08:18.

6. Hilary Eisen, Bozeman, Mont.; Chuck Lindsay, Homer; Stephanie Schmidt, Homer; and Katie Strong, Anchorage, March 29, 7:30 p.m., 6:08:30.

7. Sarah Histan, Valdez; Ben Histan, Anchorage; and Nicholai Smith, Chugiak, March 30, 4:15 p.m., 7:05:15.

8. Chris Zowinski, North Pole, March 30, 9:30 p.m., 7:10:30.

Did not finish — Seth Adams, Fairbanks, 3/26; Thomas Bailly, Anchorage, 3/26; Steve Duby, Nulato, 3/25; Rob Kehrer, Palmer, 3/26; Greg Mills, Anchorage, 3/26; Eben Sargent, Anchorage, 3/24; John Wros, Anchorage, 3/27.

Wilderness Act 50th Anniversary 2014 Digital Photo Contest

COPPER CENTER, ALASKA—

In honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve invites photographers to enter its 2014 Digital Photo Contest.

The photo contest is open to ALL photographers, except employees of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve and their immediate family members. We

are looking for striking digital images that include designated wilderness of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve. Please do not include photographs of other wilderness areas, other public lands, or areas of Wrangell-St. Elias that are not designated wilderness. The contest started on April 19, in honor of National Park Week. Entries will be accepted until May 31, 2014. Winner will be announced

in June, 2014. The winner's image will be printed on large postcards, to be distributed free to the public in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Winner will also receive a framed copy of their photo. Please see our website (www.nps.gov/wrst) for more information and contest rules. If you have questions, please email us at wrst_tweet@nps.gov or call the park at 907-822-5234.

"It has been a source of great pain to me to have met with so many among [my] opponents who had not the liberality to distinguish between political and social opposition; who transferred at once to the person, the hatred they bore to his political opinions." —Thomas Jefferson, letter to Richard M. Johnson, 1808

Intrepid gardeners, hardy vegetables

Editors note: This article originally ran in our July & August 1997 issue of the WSEN. The information seems as appropriate today as it did then. If some of you current gardeners would like to offer any updates we would be happy to print them in our next issue!

BY MEG HUNT

Visitors to this area are often amazed to see local gardens thriving in this cool climate; they may be surprised to learn that we grow almost everything here that is grown in the lower 48. Of course, that means heavy use of greenhouses, cold frames, row cover, and indoor starting of seeds. It means soaker hoses, barrels, and other means of warming our local water, which comes out of the ground at about 38 degrees F. It means frosts in June and in August. It also means finding the warmest, most protected spots on our land and doing lots of experimenting in pursuit of good food and flowers.

How do we do it? An unscientific survey of local gardeners reveals a variety of styles, techniques, and conditions. I spoke with Diane, at 3000 ft. elevation on the mountainside, and Marci and Jeannie, lower down the slope; Laura, Mike, and Luke in Kennecott; Jenny in McCarthy, where I also garden; Carly and our editor Bonnie in the lower Kennicott valley; and Mark, who gardens on the Nizina river bluffs. We each have a slightly different climate; on a recent cold night, McCarthy had a 35-degree low, Kennecott 33, and Mark's place 26.

Despite the lush vegetation you see in this valley, soil conditions

vary widely. The mountainsides often have very good, fairly deep soil, while the glacier margins, including the two townsites, have none to speak of. Scrounging dirt and composting become art forms. Several local gardeners have benefitted from a pile of very old horse manure from the mining days which was once available in Kennecott. And when Carly got horses, everyone suddenly started coming down to visit!

Most local gardeners turn vegetable kitchen scraps into soil by one means or another, even if they have plenty of soil. Jenny and I make layered compost piles and let them work the whole summer. Jeannie does it the easy way by feeding everything to her chickens, who turn it into a rich manure. Marci buries vegetable scraps in the walkways between garden rows and, despite the cold ground temperature, finds them turned to humus by the next spring's tilling. Neither Jeannie nor Marci want to set up a pile that might attract bears—another issue we must always think about around here.

What are the favorite local crops? Most of us love rhubarb, which is a very hardy perennial clear up to Diane's elevation. Everyone grows a lot of cole crops—cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts. Salad is high on the list, since it comes in early and doesn't bolt as fast here as in hotter climates. Some people grow enough potatoes, carrots and onions to feed the family all winter—Jeannie gets up to 300 pounds of Iditareds, a favored local potato, while Bonnie has success with the Lemhi variety. Jenny grows salad and some cole crops for 20 or so participants and staff of a summer institute.

Alaska is blessed with fewer pests than warmer places, but we

have our scourges. Cabbage maggot is a worry for all of us because of the large proportion of cole crops. Flea beetles eat our bok choy and mustards. Voles often mow down our tender starts when they are just set out. Carly battles cutworms, Luke battles rampant fireweed, and I use netting against white-crowned sparrows. Mike's spinach was ruined when a bear stepped in it. Then there are the non-living hazards: snow and hail bombard Diane's crops frequently in the early summer. And Mark, when asked about scourges, reports, "I have to get up at 5 a.m. to wash the frost off my plants!" You have to be tough to make it as a vegetable—or a gardener—in this country.

Even the most practical of us have our favorite flowers. Jenny and Jeannie grow dahlias, despite the fact that they don't stand up to even a hint of frost. Jeannie has little flower beds tucked in everywhere around her yard, while Luke grows sunflowers along with his salad veggies. Marci is trying to integrate some native wildflowers with her domestic plants. Carly's yard and deck are a riot of color, and she doesn't mind all that watering. Bonnie is nursing a lilac bush, hoping it will take hold and flourish; Mike has one that has made it for three years so far.

Gardening isn't just about growing plants. Many local gardeners talk of deeper satisfactions—of creating a sense of balance, being aware of nature's processes, fulfilling a childhood fondness for playing in the dirt, loving the peace and quiet of patiently weeding while listening to birdsongs, and the joy of spring's renewal. Despite aching backs and late frosts, we will never quit!

WRST to conduct re-assessment of eligible wilderness lands.

COPPER CENTER, AK—

As required by ANILCA, the 1986 General Management Plan (GMP) for Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST) included a determination of lands eligible for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Eligibility determination was based on criteria in the Wilderness Act, which were elaborated in the GMP. The GMP identified 2,243,800 acres within the park/preserve that met the criteria and were determined eligible for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Due to changes in land status and improved mapping technology, the park will re-assess these eligible acres. The following question and answer format provides some clarification about the process.

Why is the park doing a re-assessment of eligible wilderness lands?

The short answer is that we are doing this to increase management efficiency and minimize potential conflict. Here are some specific reasons:

- The park has had to make adjustments to eligible wilderness lands on two occasions since

1986. These adjustments were made through specific project planning (the 2011 Nabesna Off Road Vehicle Environmental Impact Statement and the 2012 McCarthy Communications Sites Environmental Assessment). Adjustments to eligible wilderness made through these projects required NPS Director approval. A more comprehensive approach to this issue is preferable.

- Since 1986, some selected lands have been conveyed as privately owned Native Corporation lands within the park. Other lands that were selected for conveyance have been retained in federal ownership. Land status has been updated and in some cases has created isolated or semi-isolated parcels that would be unmanageable as wilderness.

Is this a wilderness study and will it result in more congressionally designated wilderness in WRST

In the wilderness designation process, eligibility determination is followed by a wilderness study and a recommendation by the Secretary of the Interior to the President. This effort is not a wilderness study, and our eligibility re-assessment will not result in more congressionally designated wilderness in WRST. At this time, we're not sure whether it will re-

sult in an increase or decrease in eligible acres. But it will result in eligible acres that are more efficient to manage.

Will this process affect my ability to utilize subsistence resources within the park?

No. Subsistence activities have been and will continue to be allowed in eligible as well as designated wilderness within WRST.

Will this process affect my ability to access my private land within the park?

No. The park has and will continue to permit access to private lands through eligible and designated wilderness, consistent with the access provisions of section 1110(a) and (b) of ANILCA.

How will the public be involved in this process?

The park will notify the public of our intentions through this article and through other contacts such as the park's Subsistence Resource Commission. Once the park goes through the process, we will compile the conclusions in a report that will be available for public review and comment. Recommendations made in the report must be approved by the National Park Service Director. If approved, we will publish the results in the Federal Register.

Park Visitor Centers hours

COPPER CENTER, ALASKA —

The summer is fast approaching and with that the following Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve Visitor Centers will be opening:

Wrangell-St. Elias Headquarters Visitor Center in Copper

Center: April 1 - May 17, open Monday-Friday 9am-4pm. Starting May 18, open daily 9am-6pm.

Slana Ranger Station — April 6, open daily 8am - 5pm. Hours may be inconsistent due to limited staffing so please call ahead — 907-822-7401.

Chitina Ranger Station — May 23, open Thursday - Monday 10am - 4:30pm. Closed Tuesday and Wednesday.

Kennecott Visitor Center — May 23, open daily 9:30am - 6pm. The Visitor Center will be closed May 27-30.

New Superintendent Selected for Glacier Bay

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA —

Philip Hooge, assistant superintendent at Denali National Park and Preserve, has been selected as the new Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve superintendent.

“Philip brings a considerable amount of marine and terrestrial knowledge and experience to Glacier Bay. Taking the helm of one of Alaska’s premier national parks in order to bring understanding and attention to climate change, oceans and coastal issues is a timely opportunity,” said Joel Hard, acting regional director for Alaska’s national parks. “I’m very pleased to welcome Philip to this great assignment.”

Currently Hooge oversees the Center for Resources, Science and Learning, including Interpretation and Subsistence at Denali National Park and Preserve. His responsibilities and park influence are highlighted by his strategic approach to improve science-based management at the park.

Prior to his appointment at Denali, Hooge was the Research Population Ecologist at the USGS Glacier Bay Field Station. He also has been an ecologist with the National Park Service, National Biological Survey and the USGS at Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. He is known for having co-produced an award-winning underwater film in Glacier Bay, “Beneath the Reflection.”

“I am excited to return to Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve and connect again with the people and place. As a former marine ecologist for the park, the responsibility of managing this large marine protected area is especially meaningful to me. I am inspired by the spiritual ties of the Huna Tlingit to their ancestral homeland and the depth of the connections of the local community to the park. I look forward to connecting with the community of Gustavus and introducing my own children to this special place,” said Hooge.

Philip, his wife Elizabeth and their two children will arrive in the park in mid-June.

A Visitor’s Guide to Kennicott & McCarthy 2014

If you will be a visitor to our area this year, be sure to ask for your free copy of *A Visitor’s Guide to Kennicott & McCarthy* at area Visitor’s Centers in Tok, Valdez and Glennallen as well as the National Park Service Welcome Center in Copper Center or Chitina. Also many businesses in those areas distribute the *Guide*.

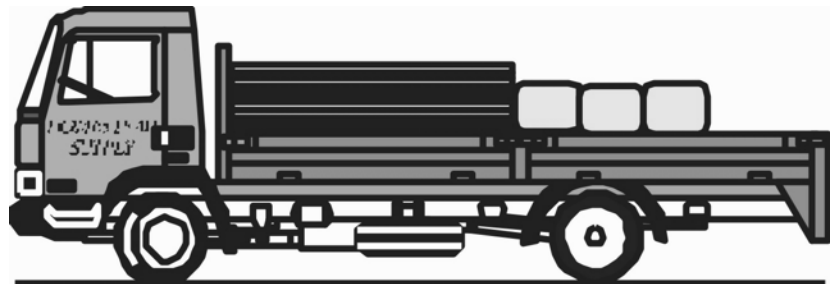
Or, you can request a copy via first class mail by sending \$2 S&H to Kenyon Services, PO Box MXY, Glennallen, AK 99588. The new Guides should be ready for distribution about May 15.

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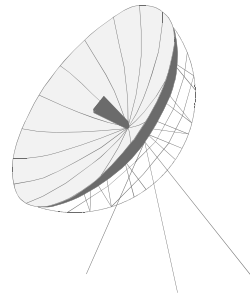
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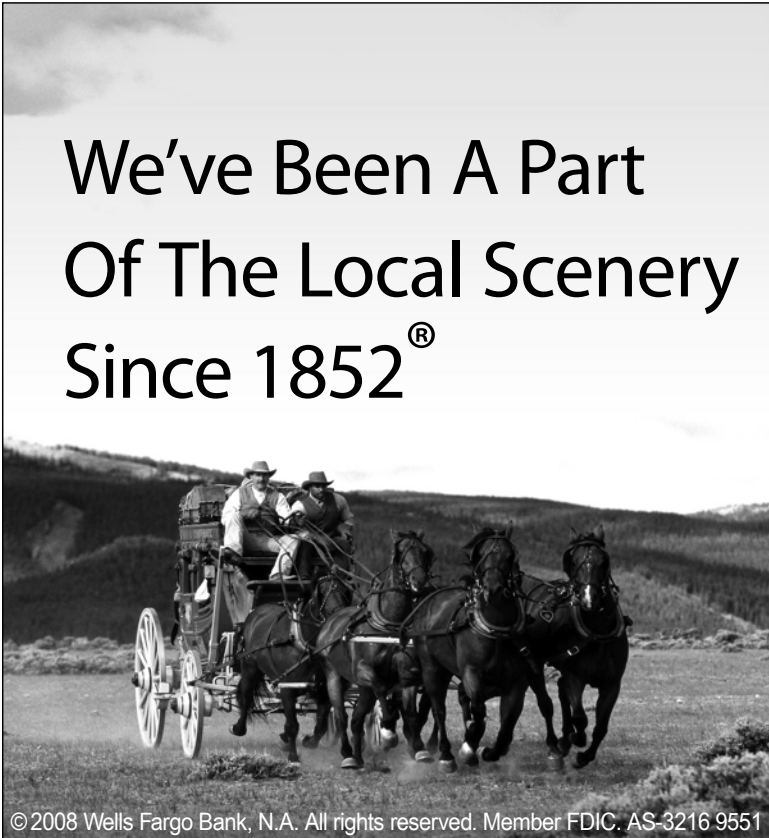
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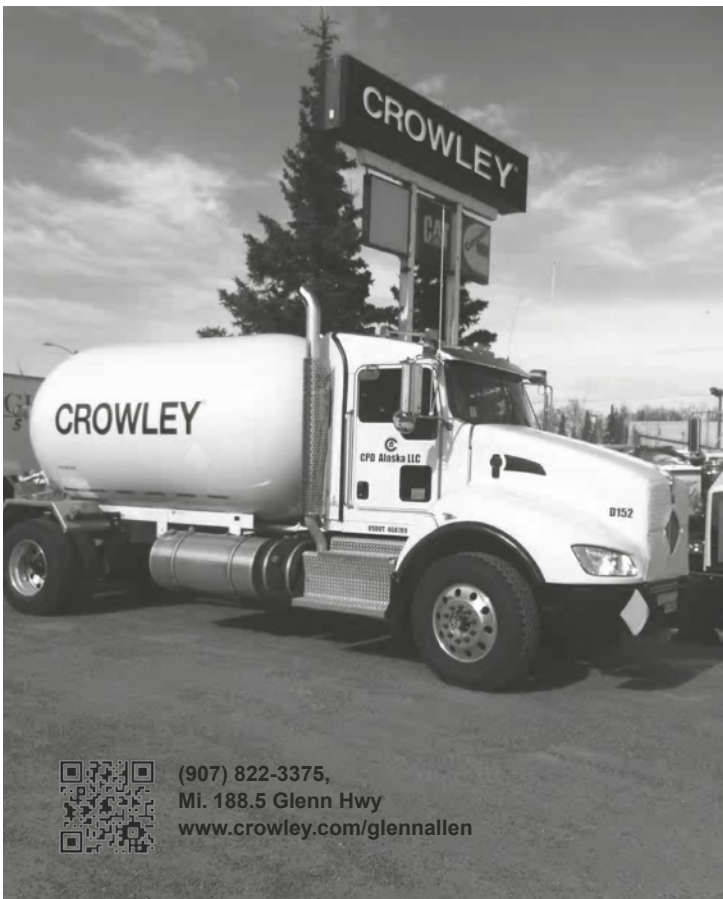
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Cooking with Peggy

BY PEGGY GUNTIS

Happy Spring everybody...or is it summer now! I'm writing this at the end of March and it's in the 80's already so I'm not sure what season it is. It's been such a good day that I thought I'd sit down and give you a few recipes that I think really taste good. And, of course, Jim thinks they're wonderful! Do you think he says that to make sure I cook him another meal?

Let's start with one I gave you back in 2012. I cooked it again the other night for some of my family and it reminded me how much I like it. Of the three young people at dinner (Jim and I aren't included, of course) two of them loved it and one didn't like it at all so you are on your own, folks, and I can only hope you'll like it. The tangy sweet and sour sauce make the fresh green beans a special complement to almost any meal!

ZIPPY GREEN BEANS

4 cups fresh or frozen green beans (I use fresh), cut into 2-inch pieces
 2 bacon strips, diced
 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
 ½ cup white wine or apple juice (I use the juice)
 3 tablespoons sugar
 3 tablespoons tarragon vinegar or cider vinegar (I use the cider vinegar)
 ¼ teaspoon salt
 2 teaspoons cornstarch
 1 tablespoon cold water

Place beans in a saucepan and cover with water; bring to a boil. Cook, uncovered for 8-10 minutes or until crisp-tender. Meanwhile, in a large nonstick skillet, cook the bacon over medium heat until crisp. Remove with a slotted spoon to paper towels. Drain, reserving 1 teaspoon drippings.

In the drippings, saute onion until tender. Add wine or apple juice, sugar, vinegar and salt. Combine cornstarch and cold water until smooth; add to the skillet. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Drain beans; top with onion mixture. Sprinkle with bacon; toss to coat and serve.

With the beans I served a casserole that I remember making for George Cebula, our McCarthy neighbor, back in 2008 and one that Jim and I have enjoyed ever since. I have no idea who gave me the recipe but, thanks, whoever you are! It used a lot of low calorie items but that's the way we like it.

CHEESY CHICKEN FETTUCINE

8-ounces uncooked fettucini
 2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms and 1 tablespoon butter or margarine (or instead of the fresh mushrooms and butter you can use a 4 ½ ounce jar of mushrooms, drained).
 1 can (10 ¾ ounces) cream of mushroom soup, undiluted
 1-8 ounce package cream cheese, cubed
 2 cups fat-free half-and-half

¼ teaspoon garlic powder
 2 ½ cups cubed cooked chicken breast
 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
 ½ cup shredded Mozzarella cheese
 ½ cup shredded Swiss cheese

TOPPING:

1/3 cup seasoned bread crumbs
 1 tablespoon butter, melted
 1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese

Cook fettuccine according to package directions. While it's cooking, in a large kettle, saute mushrooms in butter until tender. Add the soup, cream cheese, milk, half-and-half, and garlic powder. Cook and stir over medium-low heat until smooth. Remove from the heat. Add chicken and cheeses; mix well. Drain fettuccine; add to chicken mixture and stir gently to coat.

Transfer to a shallow 2 ½ quart baking dish coated with nonstick spray. Combine topping ingredients; sprinkle over chicken mixture. Cover and bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes. Uncover; bake 5-10 minutes longer or until golden brown. This serves about 6 or 8 (small eaters!).

Now, I'd like to share two recipes for slow cooker roasts that my girl friend gave me the other day. The first one I have cooking right now for dinner tonight. Both are easy and Vicky says they're wonderful.

(This one doesn't have a name so let's call it...)

**EASY SLOW COOKER
BEEF ROAST #1**

- 1 boneless beef roast (I use chuck)-2 to 3 pounds. (Mine is a little bigger so I'll cook it a little longer.)
 - 1 can cream of onion soup (I found at Walmart)
 - 1 can french onion soup
- Put the roast in the crock pot, pour the two soups on top, put the cover on and cook for 4-5 hours.

Can it get any simpler than that!
(Again my friend didn't give this one a name so.....)

**EASY SLOW COOKER
BEEF ROAST #2**

In a slow cooker, pour out 1 envelope onion soup mix and place a 4 pound boneless beef roast on top. With a spatula,

spread cranberry sauce over the roast (will be gloppy). Cook on medium for 5 or 6 hours or until done. Do not open cover when cooking.

Now, how about some dessert! In 2003 I gave you this recipe and it is so decadent that I can't resist giving it to you again. It's sweet, so if you have a sugar problem maybe you shouldn't cut yourself too big a piece!

GERMAN CHOCOLATE UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE

- 1 cup flaked coconut
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 package German Chocolate cake mix
- 1 stick butter or margarine
- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 (pound) box or 3 and 3/4 cups confectioner's sugar

Combine coconut and pecans, spread evenly on bottom of a greased 9 x 13 x 2 inch pan. Mix cake mix according to directions on package and pour over the coconut-pecan mixture. Put butter and cream cheese into a saucepan; heat until mixture is warm enough to stir in confectioners' sugar. Spoon mixture over top of cake batter. (As cake bakes, the cream cheese mixture will settle to bottom with coconut and pecans, making a delicious "Frosting"). Bake at 350 degrees for 50-60 minutes, or until done. Serve from pan, do not cut until cake is cooled.

O.K. everyone, that's it for today. I'm off to eat the Slow Cooker Beef Roast #1. Have a wonderful summer and enjoy your food.

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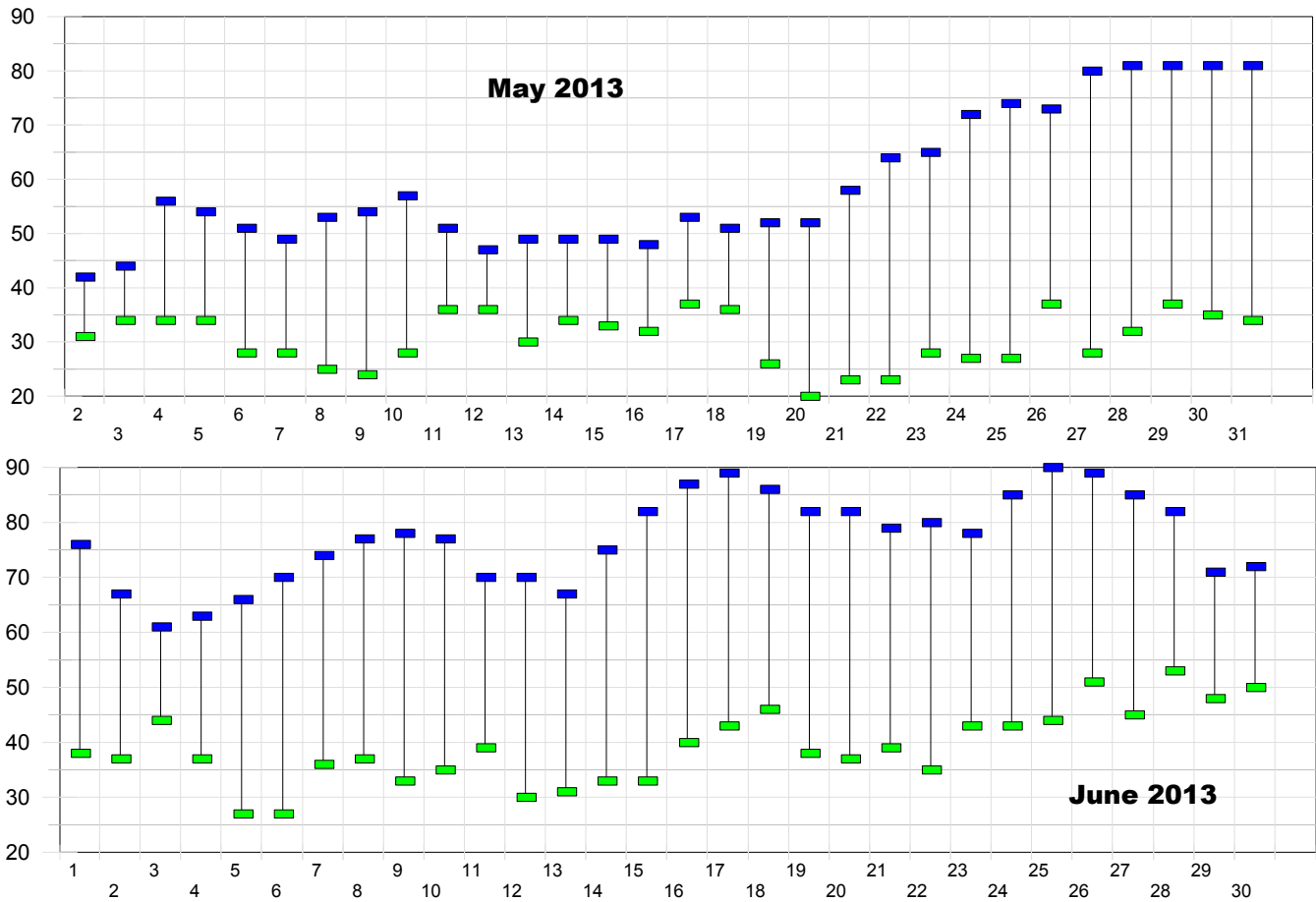
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