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Wrangell St. Elias News

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"

Vol. Twelve Issue Six

November & December 2003

Two Dollars

Pilgrim family airlift



Plus—Excerpts from a
book in progress—

An Angel Falls to Heaven

A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

It is a beautiful fall day here in the Wrangells. Rick and I are putting the final touches on this issue of WSEN. It seems like only the other day when we mailed the September/October issue to you.

Speaking of the last issue...our front page pictures took on quite a story of their own—one in particular finding its way to a variety of web sites and other media outlets. None of these photos were doctored.

After we published our last issue, *Washington Post* writer Blaine Harden, did a front page story on the Pilgrim family's situation involving the National Park Service. Contained in the article was this paragraph: "Rick Kenyon, publisher of a virulently anti-Park Service newspaper called the *Wrangell St. Elias News*, has published a series of hagiographic stories that describe the Pilgrims as simple folk bedeviled by heavily armed federal agents."

If you have to get your dictionary out and look up the words "virulently" and "hagiographic," don't feel bad. We did! Evidently in Mr. Harden's eyes our publication is extremely poisonous, bitterly antagonistic, full of hate and highly infectious (*Webster's New World Dictionary*). According to Rick, who had to search for the meaning as my dictionary didn't contain the word hagiographic, the meaning is a biography of the saints.

Many letters to the editor were sent to the *Washington Post* but only one was printed – one written by Rick, publisher/editor of WSEN. I would like to reprint a portion of that letter: "As publisher of the *Wrangell St. Elias News*, it was disheartening to have your reporter characterize our publication as a 'virulently anti-Park Service newspaper.' Nothing could be further from the truth. The WSEN has been published

since 1992. It is only this past six months that we have had to report what we consider to be abuse of power by National Park Service officials."

Rick and I counted the cost of what our reporting on this issue might produce. We concluded that to remain silent might be easier, but it would not be right. It has also been said our goal is to merely sell more newspapers. While it is true our subscription list is increasing, neither Rick nor I find enjoyment writing about what we consider scandalous behavior by certain NPS employees.

I cannot help recall the times when a friendly ranger – a true public servant – would visit our office/home and over tea, and maybe even lunch, we would discuss for publication the news from the NPS. In spite of Rick and I not always agreeing with park policy, this particular ranger's attitude remained warm and helpful. He certainly did not intimidate or harass us. He also never came armed for battle. This ranger is no longer an employee of this park but, interestingly enough, before he left he advised us to start an inholder's group—"for our own good." We were naive and, to be honest, a bit over-protective of our limited time for such things.

Although that has been several years ago, Rick and I are pleased to see the formation of Residents of the Wrangells. Please be sure to read Susan Smith's update on the newly-formed group on page 14.

Since the Pilgrim family/NPS issue has now traveled nationwide, we have met many wonderful people who support our efforts, and who, along with us, understand that as WSEN's motto reads on our cover, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." Thank you, each and every one, for your kind words of encouragement!

WSEN welcomes aboard the following subscribers: Brad and

Drena Brooks/McIntyre, AK; Terry Oberly, AK; Nick Liberati, IL; Annette Herron, UT; Dan Renshaw, AK; Miles and Becki Squires, AK; Mike and Loree Nelson, WA; Mark Nelson, WA; Mark and Helen Hegener, AK; Toby Miller, OH; Jonnie Gunther, AK; Tim and Jolie Rishel, AK; Walt and Dorothy Wamsley, AK; Katherine Kennedy, AK; Mary Duville, AK; Michael Dukes, AK; Glenn DeSpain, AK; Henry Hodges, CT; Ronald Cone, WI.; Tom Williams, AK; Kurt Stenehjem, AK.

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home a few minutes ago, Jim and neighbor Jürgen Oğrodnik were busy at work on a major fall project – constructing a 16' x 46' metal building which will house Audrey's ever-increasing fleet of machines. As petite as Audrey is you might get the impression that she and machinery don't go together. Wrong! She has accumulated two tillers, a snowmachine, 4 wheeler and now a tractor. I remind myself that Audrey used to be a truck driver.

Jim and Jürgen have their hands full of metal pieces and somewhere in the neighborhood of 4,000 bolts to match with those unwieldy pieces. I figure if anyone can put this kit together Jim can – after all he's only built two kit airplanes.

Don, Lynn, Sarah and Rene Welty: The fall season for the Welty family has brought a slower pace for Lynn but the rest of the Weltys are still in high gear. Sarah is enjoying her school year at Jackson Hole Bible College and is scheduled to come home for the holidays. Lynn tells us Sarah is having a wonderful time, learning a lot and making new friends.

Don and daughter Rene are at hunting camp with hopes that Rene will find a moose. She is becoming quite a hunter, bringing home meat for the freezer.

The family's flock of laying hens are certainly doing their thing these days. Lynn graciously shared a dozen of her bounty with us and Rick was thrilled with the double-yoked eggs he got for his breakfast the

other day. Thanks, Lynn, and thanks to your bountiful producers!

Neil Darish and Doug Miller: Although the owners of McCarthy Lodge are on "vacation" right here in their own illustrious town of McCarthy, they are spending their time going back in time. Doug is busy researching old maps, news-papers, old trails, roads, and access routes, and he feels like he is living in the early 1900's. Reading the weekly McCarthy-Kennicott newspapers from the 1900's, one becomes very involved in people's lives on a week to week basis. Doug says he hopes the result from all the research will produce a major events' time line for the McCarthy, Dan Creek and the Green Butte areas, as well as a better knowledge base of the founding families of the McCarthy area. Many illuminating facts about past residents have come to light from his research already. Neil and Doug plan on taking a trip to Fairbanks in the near future and more than one stop will be at the University of Alaska's archives. Good hunting, Neil and Doug!

ATTENTION SUBSISTENCE

USERS IN UNIT 13: Ramone Baccus McCoy, Field Office Manager for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), in a letter to subsistence users dated October 10th announced important harvest information regarding the winter subsistence caribou hunt in Unit 13.

"As stated on page 83 of the Federal Subsistence Regulations, the sex of animals that may be taken will be announced by the Glennallen Field Office Manager of the Bureau of Land Management. The winter caribou hunt for 2003-04 will remain *bull only*. The season dates for the winter season are October 21-March 31, 2004.

"The fall population estimate of the Nelchina Caribou Herd by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) is 30,141 caribou, which is below their management objective of 35,000. If the herd reaches the ADFG management objective in the future, the BLM expects that the Federal Subsistence Board will allow a limited either sex harvest."

Questions regarding hunt information or regulations can be addressed to Elijah Water of the Glennallen Field Office at 907 822-3217.

McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church says thanks: The church grounds received a face lift this last month and a new septic system is now in place. Keith Rowland (and his sons) of Rowcon Services has done a fine-looking landscaping job -- leveling, depositing loads of gravel and soil



WSEN staff photo

Landscaping at McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church

with a future prospect of planting grass seed. Thanks, Keith and boys, for such a fine job.

McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum updates: "Exciting things are happening at the McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum", writes Meg Hunt. "We'd like to share with you some of these changes.

"We have recently received a grant from the Rasmuson Foundation to complete work on the caretaker's cabin, an unfinished structure near the Museum which would provide housing for a volunteer caretaker/curator, and to repair the Museum roof. The foundation of the building also needs serious work. This summer the McCarthy Area Council board voted to allocate money for this work from the Capital Projects and Improvements grant which MAC has received from the Department of Community and Economic Development. John Adams has made great progress on the caretaker/curator cabin, which is now expanded and roofed over. Work will continue into the winter; the roofing and foundation of the depot building will take place in the spring. Meanwhile, we are rewriting the Kennecott Walking Tour, which has not been substantively revised since the National Park Service acquired the Kennecott National Historic Monument and began interpretive programs of its own. The McCarthy Walking Tour is being reprinted with minor corrections. Many thanks are due to the staff of Wrangell-St.

Elias National Park, who have given us substantive help with the first version and who tracked down the original computer file for us. NPS interpretive staff are also very supportive of our efforts on the Kennecott Walking Tour.

All this is good news. But it means that we must be better organized, with more people pulling the weight of running the Museum. In the past, we have been blessed with a number of individuals who have devoted tremendous amounts of their time, energy, and resources to the Museum. Through much of the Museum's history it has become, by nobody's plan, a one-person operation, with the rest of the community having the feeling that 'it's being taken care of.' This is no longer the case. It is time for everyone who cares about the history of the area to get involved. How can you help? We need membership and volunteers. We thank those who have helped us in the past, both financially and in other ways, and we look forward to your future involvement, as well as that of new people. Much work remains to be done in addition to the physical infrastructure work that we need so badly. We need to complete the work begun by a few dedicated volunteers and finish the cataloging of our collection. We need to find a good caretaker to be a Museum presence available for visitors during peak visitation hours throughout the summer season. We need to have our documents collection curated and, ideally, scanned

and somehow made available for study. We need interpretive commentary on the photos and objects in the depot building. We need a more orderly storage system for objects and documents not currently on display. As is apparent, we need lots of volunteer labor. (The current Board is Meg Hunt, Janet Hegland, Dianne Milliard, Bernd Hoffmann, Dick Anderson, and Ron Simpson.)"

Obituary

Catherine H. "Kay" Hodges, 1924-2003

Catherine H. "Kay" (Howard) Hodges, 79, of 25 Clark Hill Road, died Monday, September 22, at Hospital of St. Raphael, New Haven. She was the wife of Howard L. Hodges.

Mrs. Hodges was born January 17, 1924, in Kennicott, Alaska, daughter of the late Walter G. and Elizabeth (Austin) Howard.

She was a Marine Corp. veteran of World War II. She was a member of the Prospect Congregational Church and a Girl Scout leader in Prospect, CT. for many years.

Besides her husband, she leaves two sons, Stephen H. and Pattie Hodges of Barrington, R. I. and Henry C. and Beverly Hodges of Sherman, Maine; two daughters, Mary H. and Kevin Palmer of Watertown and Helen L. and Gary Hodge of Prospect; eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

The above obituary ran in the local newspaper in Waterbury, CT.

An Angel Falls to Heaven

by Kurt Stenehjem

*The following are excerpts from a book in progress, **An Angel Falls To Heaven**, being written by Kurt Stenehjem about his supply flights into Hillbilly Heaven, his week with the Pilgrims after his crash, his time in McCarthy waiting to recover the wreckage and his musings and observations of the family and the conflict. The book is full of drama, humor, romance, passion, and intrigue. Used by Permission. Copyright 2003*

I don't have the habit of reading the newspaper. I used to, but I've lost my stomach for it. I share a home with some friends who get the weekend editions of the local paper. That is how my eye was caught by a large photo of an even larger group of cowboy looking characters, many on horseback. The photo was emblazoned on the front page of the Sunday paper. I sat down, hooked, and read the multiple page story of a family in conflict with the National Park Service over access to the land they bought within the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. It became readily apparent to me that the local paper's slant was less than positive toward what I learned was the Pilgrim family.

The fact that the local paper didn't like them assured me these people were all right and I searched for a way I might find to help them. Mention was made at the end of the article that there was an airlift planned. Websites were listed for further information. Landrights.org sounded like just the folks who might know something about the airlift. I looked up the web site, got a phone number and was put in touch with a fellow named Ray Kreig. The airlift was to officially start over the weekend but supplies were being flown in already. I thought I would get out there early because the weather was looking good but there would be no

telling what it might do in the next couple of days. The website was calling the airlift pilots "Angels of Mercy." I'd never had an opportunity to be an angel before. This would be fun.

The next morning I loaded my Cessna 180 with survival gear and a few supplies for the Pilgrims. I set up my GPS for a direct course over the Chugach Mountains from Anchorage to McCarthy, two hundred sixty miles to the east. There was a palpable serenity in spite of the engine noise over such incredible topography. Glaciers lay out like oceans of snow. Peaks shrouded in clouds brought to mind marshmallow cream on a three-mile high pile of ice cream. The ribbons of rock swept along by the ice floes resembled chocolate sauce swirls. Man, I was starting to get hungry.

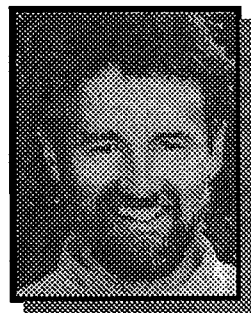
The hour and fifty minute flight went by quickly. The ceiling started to drop as I approached McCarthy. I crossed over the village at about 6,500 feet, giving me a chance to check out the area and the airstrip. Rounding the corner I flew up McCarthy Creek. The lower buttresses of the Wrangell Mountains are some of the most dramatic rock structures I have ever seen. Scattered around these slopes were remnants of century old mining buildings. My mind boggled as I considered the human effort expended to put these buildings in such

precarious and inaccessible places. It was as if there were wagers between crazy people as to who could build the most outrageous structure in the most ridiculous location. I'm not sure who won.

Below me a ribbon of road followed McCarthy Creek in places and left the creek to climb up and traverse rock slopes high above. There are some 17 river crossings and a number of small tunnels carved out by the rugged men who came here looking for fortune and adventure. Traversing this roadbed would be the adventure of a lifetime for most.

Up the valley I could see a tin roof come into view. Surrounding the cabin were a number of dogs tied to posts, outbuildings scattered around and children playing in the yard. Beyond the cabin a strip of gravel, some 80 feet wide and 2,000 feet long, stretched out before me. I was descending into Hillbilly Heaven. The word Heaven in Biblical Hebrew is interpreted literally as "heaved up things." If heaven is a place described as heaved up things, then this place is truly heaven on earth.

I touched down, rolled out and turned around to taxi back to a large horse-drawn wagon stationed on the side of the airstrip. Shutting down the airplane and climbing out I was greeted by a contingent of what



looked like Civil War throwbacks, young men in country looking pants, mismatched jackets, almost shoulder length hair. Tufts of facial hair adorned the chins of the older boys, reminding me of other old world religious followers who had never shaved a day in their lives. They introduced themselves with names straight out of the Old Testament. It would have been easier to keep track of which one was which if they had been named in Biblical chronological order but David was older than Moses and Moses was older than Job. I don't know how Israel happens to be older than Noah but at least Noah was older than Abraham and Abraham was older than Jonathan but Joseph and Joshua were older than the other six. I was instantly confused but pleased in the warm and friendly greeting. I have made a habit of collecting friends with large home-schooled families so I wasn't surprised by their confidence and eyeball-to-eyeball connection with adults. The home-schooled children I have had the pleasure to meet do not seem to consider grown-ups as aliens from other planets. There seems to be no "teen age."

The obvious patriarch of this clan came into view as he sauntered around the corner of the south end of the airstrip. In spite of his sixty some years, he seemed to be a man accustomed to work. Standing about six feet tall he was generally lanky with some of his early chest bulk redistributed to his belt area. He walked at a steady pace but with a slight limp, aided by a hand carved walking stick, the kind with a slight hook on the top end. It had a leather fob of some sort and leather fringes. He wore

blue jeans and a disheveled blue work shirt, the top few buttons undone, exposing a not too white tee shirt underneath.

He looked to be more of a hippie throwback than something from the Civil War era, mostly because of his age being akin to that period of time. Razor or shears hadn't touched his beard or head since the 60's, I was sure. A friendly and gracious man, he spoke with a casual southern drawl. There was a rasp in his voice. He spoke with a slight lisp for lack of some front teeth. You could not see words formed on his lips for a thick, long, gray moustache that matched his chest length beard shrouded them like baleen. I wondered how he could find his mouth with his fork.

He reached out and extended his hand. We shook. He introduced himself as Pilgrim. His children called him Papa. Exuding southern country charm, he welcomed me to Hillbilly Heaven and thanked me for coming. I felt at home.

After the greetings subsided and the plane was unloaded, the clan put their heads together and decided that Joshua and Moses would fly back out to McCarthy with me to drive a truck to Anchorage on a supply run. On the next load I would take Joseph and Israel out on the return flight so they could drive another truck to Glennallen to pick up supplies. On the third trip out I would take David and Job to help me load the plane on the McCarthy end. This was my introduction to the challenges of the management of such a large troupe and the awesome possibilities of being able to send out three contingents to accomplish such diverse tasks.

Empty of freight and loaded

with two Pilgrims I started my shuttles back and forth from Hillbilly Heaven to McCarthy. It took about nine minutes of flight time and five minutes to load and unload on each end. The skies started out clear, but by the fourth and final load, high clouds were forming in the waning light of dusk and spitting an occasional snowflake my way. A pile of dry goods was growing under the tarp at the south end of the Hillbilly Heaven runway. I had a very satisfying feeling seeing the desperately needed supplies start to accumulate high in the Wrangells.

I parked the airplane and we unloaded the last load. I was led back to the family cabin for dinner and lodging. The trail crossed a stream that was bridged by an old timber that appeared to hearken back to the mining days of the early 1900's. The creek was about fifteen feet across but the creek bed had been ravaged by one hellacious flood in the last year or so. Seeing that wash out, I knew that this land lets humans live here begrudgingly.

The next morning I wanted to get an early start so I piled out of bed, pulled on my clothes and stumbled for the door. I was at my airplane pre-heating the engine at 7:30AM. It was exhilarating sitting in the cockpit, warming up, looking up the valley at sheer rock walls with frozen icefalls clinging to their sides. I taxied to the north end of the runway, doing my run up and checklist on the way. I spun the tail around and firewalled the throttle. The twin-bladed propeller grabbed at the cold mountain air and hurled me down the runway. Two hundred sixty five horses galloped in harness. Light on fuel and with minimal survival gear the

aircraft jumped into the air. The southern departure took me down McCarthy Creek with the cabin just off to the left. I flew by doing 120 miles an hour, fifty feet higher than the cabin. I couldn't imagine what it sounded like to those sleeping inside. The ground fell away fast as I cruised down the valley. It took less than nine minutes to make the 14-mile trip and land at McCarthy Airstrip at the base of the valley.

David and Job were waiting for me there to help load supplies into the airplane. I tallied the weight of the sacks of dried goods as the boys passed them to me from the pile that they had assembled at the airstrip. We stacked in twelve or so sacks of flour, beans and popcorn into the Cessna 180. To top off the load we threw in fluffy stuff like quilts and toilet paper bales. I made about six trips before some of the children invited me to stop for breakfast.

It seemed Papa was quite curious about my motivations to fly in supplies for him and his family. I told him of my background in real estate and experiences with right-of-way issues and bureaucracy. I also told him of some assumptions I had made about his beliefs and his family. The newspaper articles I had read gave me the impression that the Pilgrims had a large family because they saw children as a blessing from God. Their lack of TV, their simple life, their separateness were all hints that this family was taking the Scriptures very seriously and trying to apply them in a very practical, if not unique, way. I wanted to help them because I sensed they were people trying to follow God, which made them my brothers.

We talked about the conflict they found themselves in. Papa didn't seem to understand why people were lining up against him and his family. I had a few ideas.

As I read the first full color cover story in the local Anchorage newspaper, I immediately picked up on a number of verbal land mines that the reporter had buried in his article. These I shared with Papa.

When the Territory of Alaska became a State it retained the mineral rights on land owned by the State. Thus the citizens of the State of Alaska own a stake in the vast oil reserves of the North Slope. Every year a portion of the proceeds of the sale of these minerals is divvied out to all residents who register to receive the "Permanent Fund Dividend." Since its inception there has been animosity over the uses of those dividends and the eligibility for the dividend. Many Alaskans would hold the Pilgrims in contempt because of their relatively recent arrival and the sheer size of their clan, as they covet the large amount of cash the family would receive. If compared to the typical Alaskan family Papa and Country Rose's brood of younger children plus their five independent adult offspring would be equivalent to six families who have thrown in together. It has always been shocking to me to see a Permanent Fund Dividend check casher defend his right to do whatever the heck he wants to do with his PFD, yet be Johnny-on-the-spot to criticize his neighbor for what he does with his. People can be a contentious lot. It appeared to me that the reporter mentioned Papa Pilgrim with a pocket full of \$30,000 dollars in hundred dollar bills, just to fan the flames

of jealousy among the other PFD recipients.

The full-page wide photo of the Pilgrim clan on horse back in the heart of a National Park would set off the over-crowded earthers. Imagine the number of humans this virus could grow to if not cast out immediately. Their goal of twenty-one children would send almost any reader over the edge.

Bible names like Joseph, David and Jonathan are common enough, but who could imagine naming their children Moses or Job or Lamb, for pity's sake? Some whacked out religious nut!

Long hair on boys is one thing, but all those boys had a style no one would recognize as normal. It must be another weird religion thing.

Movie stars like Mike Douglas marrying young women is strange but hey, if he can get away with it, good for him! On the other hand, a 32-year-old hippie marrying a 16-year old because she is strong and can make a bunch of babies is too much. Now he is 62 and she is 45 and still having kids, which just proves how wrong that is.

As one looks at all those people and horses living in the heart of a National Park it doesn't take much imagination to consider the level of defilement the park will endure.

Anyone who drives a bulldozer through a park must be a lawbreaker.

One who hears directly from God must be insane.

Subsistence certainly shouldn't be available for a bunch of New Mexico hippies that just showed up.

Virgin young adult children? Yeah, right! And what's wrong with my kids not being virgins? Are you saying that there is

something wrong with my kids?

Talk about repressed sexual feelings. Who but religious nuts would bathe with their clothes on? And what's wrong with the human body that children shouldn't look at it? It's a thing of beauty, isn't it?

Here you have a family that wants to cross park land and then they won't let a college group cross their land just because the college kids camp in the nude sometimes. Talk about hypocrisy.

They won't even let their own grandmother see the kids because they don't want her influence to rub off on them. Those kids are being raised as cultural illiterates.

They don't use the names of the days or the months? Good grief, why don't they move to another country if they don't want to speak English?

The Pilgrims say Alaska is the land of provision? Those are my salmon and moose they are eating!

Papa was shocked. He had read the article without realizing the hot buttons that would be pushed for many people over the many points the reporter was raising. "We think we are normal," Papa said with a glazed look on his face. "A hundred years ago everyone lived like this. We know the world is different now but we never imagined these things would provoke people to hate us."

Breakfast had taken more than an hour and a half and it was time to get back to work. Elishaba, Jerusalem, Noah, Abraham and I headed out to the airstrip. With the fast turnarounds it was decided that the Pilgrim "children" should just hang out at the wagon to help me unload.

It struck me that it was easy to forget that the six oldest "children" were actually adults. It is so uncommon to find young adults functioning as integral parts of a family. I think I was struggling to find a place to put them on my societal map. They were not children in the sense that they needed to be taken care of. They were not college kids laying a foundation for a career. They were not in the work force in the traditional sense as they were living a subsistence lifestyle. They were not in relationships with other young adults-as in dating or marriage. They were not parents of their own children yet they were parents-in-training, caring for their own siblings. I looked all over that societal map of mine and decided I would just have to draw in a whole new country. I think I'll call it "Hillbilly Heaven."

I took off and headed back down McCarthy Creek Valley. I don't know what it is about us boys but we sure do love making noise. The children spun as they watched me zoom by.

The skies were a beautiful deep blue, the air was crisp. Flying up and down the valley I would occasionally spot a group of moose standing in wetlands on the east side of the drainage. With each trip I felt more comfortable with my surroundings. I would announce my approach from the east as I came out of the creek valley and announce turning final over the Common Air Traffic Frequency. No one else was flying. The airwaves were silent.

The pile of goods was shrinking at the McCarthy airstrip; the pile was growing at the end of the Hillbilly Heaven airstrip. This was going real well.

The "boys" in McCarthy

handed me more sacks of flour and some whole grain wheat, which we stacked in the airplane. We topped the load off with some blankets and clothes stuffed in garbage bags. I hopped in, buckled my three-point seat belt with inertial reel shoulder harness, called my departure on CATF and took off for the homestead.

I climbed up the valley, enjoying the scenery along the way. The airstrip is lined up so the approach is directly over the cabin where the Pilgrims live. The creek drainage is off to the west and free of trees, so I made my descent flying up the creek drainage. A slight right turn was required to swing around the trees on the south end of the runway and line up with the touch down zone.

I had two notches of flaps and had slowed to sixty miles an hour. As I got close to the touch-down point I pulled another notch of flaps to slow the aircraft and flare the landing.

I touched down smoothly. My tires spooled up from a dead stop to match the forward speed of the airframe.

Milliseconds after the wheels made contact, the left landing gear snapped off along the top two axle mounting bolts. The tire, spinning at full speed, took off down the runway, scooting away from the aircraft, which was still slowing down from the touchdown.

A tremendous noise erupted inside the cockpit as the solid steel gear leg dug a furrow six inches deep in the dirt.

As the forward speed bled off, the drag induced by the left gear leg grinding in the dirt caused the plane to veer violently to the left. With the plane spun almost ninety

degrees to the direction of travel and not yet run out of forward momentum, the right gear stuck firm in the gravel, twisting under the fuselage and tearing from its mooring.

The fuselage then dropped to the ground, the propeller still spinning, both blades striking the earth. They bent like aluminum spoons.

The right wing tip struck the ground and bent up to the length of the aileron.

The tail wheel, also perpendicular to the direction of travel, folded under causing the right horizontal stabilizer to hit the dirt, chewing it up. This caused the empennage to stress just behind the extended baggage bulkhead, tearing it near full around and leaving the entire tail section attached to the rest of the empennage only by control cables and about six inches of sheet aluminum.

Then the noise stopped.

I sat there in disbelief. I had no idea the gear had snapped and the wheel had left me. I could not imagine how I could have been forced sideways so violently.

Sitting on the wagon waiting for my return were Elishaba, Hosanna and Noah. All eyes were on the airplane as I made my approach. At the moment of touchdown they saw the wheel break free and speed past them. Blinding terror rose up in Elishaba that the plane would nose over and cart wheel down the runway, crushing me inside.

Frozen with horror they watched the plane being thrown hard to the left. Then, as if in slow motion, their senses were assaulted as they watched the Cessna coming apart, the right gear collapsing, the right wing striking the ground, the tail

wheel being ripped over, then the tail violently striking the ground. The sound of metal plowing through gravel was replaced by the indescribable cacophony from the tearing and crumpling of aluminum.

And then, deafening silence.

This angel just fell to Heaven.

The Pilgrims have the habit of carrying little walkie-talkies. Running toward the wreck, Elishaba paused and called Papa and Country Rose back at the cabin. "He crashed, I can't believe it, he crashed!" She saw me unbuckling and climbing out, and exclaimed, "He's all right, he's all right!" She stood there not knowing what to do; the thought of fire flashed through her mind. She waited, thinking, "He can get clear of the wreckage sooner if we stay here."

Hosanna watched in horror as she exclaimed, "Oh my God, Oh my God, he crashed." Noah could not believe his eyes as he watched the airplane come apart. Tears streamed down his face. I opened the door and piled out. Looking upon the faces of the Pilgrims there, I knew they were very shaken. I put my arm around Noah, hugged him and assured him I was all right. His tender young heart was buoyed. He stopped crying.

Papa had just picked up the phone and was dialing a reporter in Anchorage when he heard the radio transmission from Elishaba. "He just crashed!" she exclaimed.

"What did you say?" Papa radioed back.

"He just crashed," she repeated. "He's all right."

How could he crash his plane and be all right? Papa queried in his mind. The two thoughts

seemed incomprehensible in the same sentence. He couldn't believe his ears, but he knew he could rely on Elishaba for the truth.

Papa was near weeping as he ran out of the cabin toward the airstrip, limping slightly because of his bad knee. Visions of smoke rushed through his head. He knew he would know the severity of the crash as soon as he rounded the corner, just past the creek. Jerusalem raced out in front of Papa, but stopped when she thought about his physical condition. I mustn't leave Papa in case something happens to him. Together they hurriedly walked to the accident. When they got to the corner, they saw the Pilgrim children and me unloading the freight from wreckage. That sight told him immediately that everything was all right. "This is good," he said to himself, "This is reasonable. No smoke." His heart leaped.

Papa approached me, his voice trembling. "Are you all right?" He hugged me, crying, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry."

"It's just a piece of metal; I'm all right," I tell him, wanting to put his heart at ease.

Papa told me later that the Bible verse from Mark 8:36, which quotes Jesus, popped into his mind. "For what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own life." He had a sense that my priorities were straight, that my heart was not all wrapped up in my airplane. That sense about me would play heavily in the week to come.

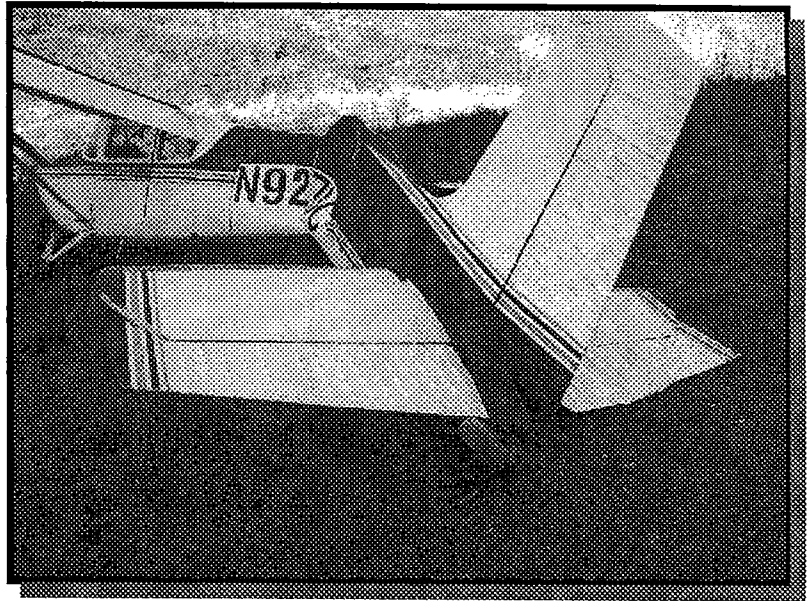
I can assure you, I would have my moments over my loss later...

Elishaba confided in me that the feeling she experienced most was hurt, deep hurt as she saw

my beautiful Cessna crumple before her eyes. She knew that I was there risking my life and losing my airplane as a direct result of the NPS blockade. She was incensed by the "ungodly oppression" of the NPS denying them their God-given, federal and state constitutionally guaranteed, lawful right to operate vehicles on the McCarthy- Green Butte Road to their home.

Papa told me that Wrangell St. Elias National Park Superintendent Gary Candelaria knew last summer that the Pilgrims were running out of supplies. Candelaria was intentionally squeezing them by refusing their right of passage. He even refused granting them a temporary emergency permit. The risk of catastrophe the Pilgrims were forced into had just become a severe loss of property and narrowly missed a tragic loss of life. Papa's frustration was now growing into anger over my unnecessary, substantial loss.

An hour after the crash, the reporter who wrote the original Anchorage newspaper stories about the Pilgrims "just happened to call" asking about the progress of the airlift. We wondered if he had heard about the accident somehow. Papa shared with him details of the flights prior to mine and of the



WSEN staff photo

loads I had brought in, but did not mention the mishap. The writer didn't bring it up so we concluded he did not in fact know about it. The senior Pilgrim was irritated because he sensed his clan's peculiarities were being used to confuse the reader's understanding of public access rights within national parks. If the main line Press could demonize the people using the road, they could get public opinion to support the blockade of the road. Armed with his new insight into how he believed the author of these "news stories" was manipulating Americans Papa was not willing to give the

journalist any more ammunition to use against his family. The conversation ended cordially.

This was the dawning of a new era for Papa Pilgrim. For the first time, he had an awareness that he was being manipulated and used for some devious purpose. For the first time, he did not tell the press everything they wanted to know, assuming they would treat him fairly. For the first time, he took control of his life that had, without his consent, gone public.

(You can contact the author at anangelfallstoheaven@yahoo.com)

"Not too long ago, two friends of mine were talking to a Cuban refugee, a businessman who had escaped from Castro, and in the midst of his story one of my friends turned to the other and said, 'We don't know how lucky we are.' And the Cuban stopped and said, 'How lucky you are! I had someplace to escape to.' In that sentence he told us the entire story. If we lose freedom here, there is no place to escape to. This is the last stand on earth."—Ronald Reagan

"[M]ore and more we need understanding and appreciation of those principles upon which the republic was founded. What were those 'self-evident' truths that so many risked all for, fought for, suffered and died for? What was the source of their courage? Who were those people? I don't think we can ever know enough about them."—David McCullough

CLASSIFIED

Wanted: 5 to 60 acres in McCarthy area. Contact Ron @ (303)940-6539

Pilgrim family airlift news

BY LAURIE ROWLAND, LOCAL AIRLIFT COORDINATOR

OCTOBER 21, 2003—

BACKGROUND (from the American Land Rights Association web site):

The Berlin Airlift in 1948 was America's response to a communist blockade of free Berlin. A totalitarian top-down command and control regime tried to starve out the citizens of Berlin after World War II. The Soviets closed the roads, cut the railroad tracks and all other means of access. Heavily armed military guarded the access routes into Berlin.

They could not shut down airplane flights. For many months, America and other countries joined to keep a starving city alive and supplied with food, fuel and other materials.

Now the citizens of America and especially Alaska have risen up again against a top down command and control heavy handed bureaucracy, the National Park Service, to keep the Pilgrim Family and their animals from being starved out in the Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve. As in Berlin, heavily armed Park Service personnel dressed like a S.W.A.T. team are preventing access for the Pilgrims.

After closing the only road to their property in April, NPS interim regional director Marcia Blaszak refused to consider the situation an emergency and insisted on continuing a protracted bureaucratic permitting process that has stalled the Pilgrims' multiple requests for access all summer and fall. Bear in mind that the 'access' requested is a designated RS 2477 right-of-way that is also protected under the



WSEN staff photo

Pilot Roland Hammack loads freight. "When I broke my leg, the Pilgrim's brought me groceries—and they didn't even know me," said Roland.

terms of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Winter is near and the situation was becoming dire.

A committee of Alaskans, with assistance from the American Land Rights Association, has organized an emergency relief airlift of critical supplies, including food, clothing, medicines, money, and materials. Beginning October 8th, volunteers have been flying these resources to the marooned Pilgrim homestead located 14 miles up McCarthy Creek from the town of McCarthy.

We can't possibly get all the supplies that are needed in with this airlift. That can only come with the park service coming to their senses and stopping this heartless war against this family.

This is a humanitarian effort to relieve a family in distress in response to an NPS-caused and instigated crisis.

UPDATE from Laurie:

I am happy to report that the Pilgrim Family Airlift has been a "flying success!" To date, we have had four volunteer drivers and eight volunteer pilots who have ferried at least 51 plane-loads of supplies to Hillbilly Heaven, the Pilgrims' home.

The majority of needed items have been safely delivered, but there are still several plane-loads awaiting transport. Some items, such as hay and construction materials, are difficult or impossible to transport by small plane, so we are still hoping for a pilot with a larger aircraft, such

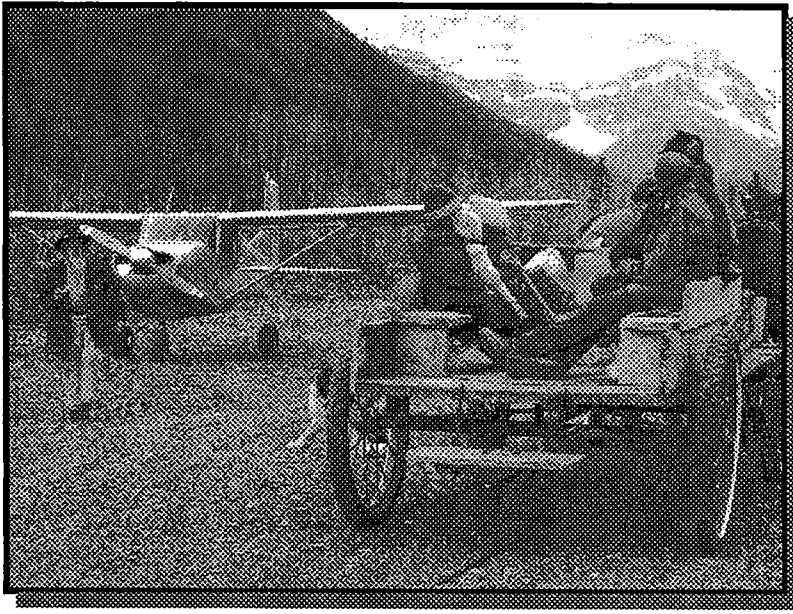


Photo courtesy Dan Sentz

A horse-drawn wagon was used to haul people and supplies from the airstrip to the cabin.

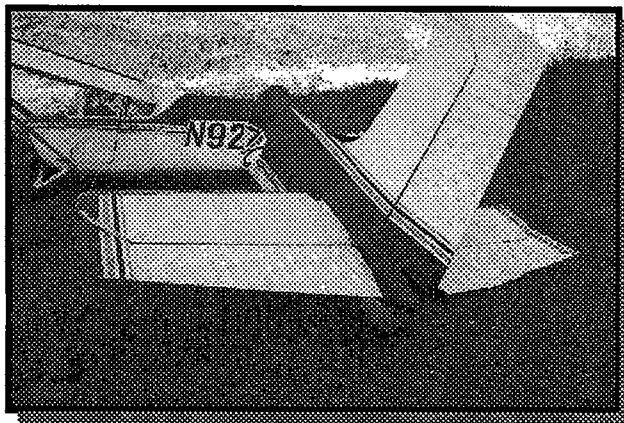
as a helicopter, twin otter, or caravan, to volunteer.

In an effort to facilitate cooperation and good will between park personnel and the Pilgrims, I asked WRST Superintendent Gary Candelaria on an NPR call-in show if the NPS would consider helping out our airlift efforts with an aircraft such as a helicopter. He politely but firmly declined.

There has only been one mishap involving one of the planes, an Anchorage-based Cessna 180. In the words of pilot Kurt Stenehjelm, "Upon landing, the landing gear suffered a structural failure, and the plane ground-looped." Although there were no injuries as a result of the accident, the damage to the plane was extensive. Amazingly, our hero pilot

expressed little regret about the loss of his \$100,000 plane. "What frustrates me the most is I am grounded and I can't fly this mission of support," Stenehjelm said.

The outpouring of support has been encouraging, as donations of food, clothing, supplies and money have come in from both near and far. One



WSEN staff photo

"What frustrates me the most is I am grounded and I can't fly the mission of support," said pilot Kurt Stenehjelm.

Oregonian expressed her feelings in the hand-written note which she slipped in an envelope along with her support check: "The extent to which members of our government are going in denying the Pilgrims the freedom to live on their own land is a disgrace to our country. I am a 90 year old widow of a veteran of 22 years service to his country. I'm glad that he didn't live to hear of this! He would wonder whether the years of suffering because of his service were justified by these results! Would Hitler have done any worse? We need a public outcry and protest to put a stop to such persecution."

If you would like to help with the airlift, please call Laurie Rowland at (907) 554 - 4498.

For more detailed information regarding the airlift, see:

<http://www.landrights.org/ak>

If you are interested in sending a donation to help with the Pilgrim Airlift or the Pilgrim Legal Fund, send donations to: McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church, Box MXV, Glennallen, AK 99588. Be sure to designate

your gift so we can direct every penny toward helping the Pilgrim Family and protecting our legally guaranteed access rights.

And finally, to all the hero pilots, drivers, organizers and donors, here's a big hearty

Thank You!

You're the best!

ROW inter-community meeting

BY SUSAN SMITH

The Residents Of the Wrangells (ROW) held their third meeting at the Caribou Restaurant Banquet Room on October 25 at 2:00 p.m. Seventy-five people from across the community, state, and country met to discuss access and other problems that we are encountering with state and federal agencies, the National Park Service (NPS) in particular, within the Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST).

Pat Heller, head of all Alaska offices of Senator Lisa Murkowski, was in attendance as well as Malcolm Roberts, Senior Fellow for the Institute of the North, Wayne Anthony Ross, attorney and former gubernatorial candidate, Teresa Sager Albaugh of Slana Alaskans Unite and the Alaska Outdoor Council, members from McCarthy area groups MAC and CAM, several members of the Pilgrim family, and at least one NPS employee.

A panel of speakers addressed the group, many with more than 25 years of experience in state and national lands' rights and access issues: Paula Easley, board member and former Executive Director of the Resource Development Council for Alaska and monthly columnist for the *Anchorage Daily News*; Chuck Cushman, Executive Director of the American Land Rights Association (ALRA); Russell Brooks, managing attorney of the Pacific Northwest office of the Pacific Legal Foundation (PLF); Ray Kreig, inholder, Chairman of the Kantishna

Inholders' Association, and head of the Alaska offices for the ALRA; J.P. Tangen, Anchorage attorney, currently representing the Pilgrim family; and Rick Kenyon, editor of the *Wrangell St. Elias News*.

After ROW members took a few minutes to explain the goals of the organization and list the issues of immediate concern, the audience was encouraged to share their problems and document them by filling out ROW's NPS Land Use Questionnaire (printed in the July/August issue of the *Wrangell St. Elias News*) in hopes of compiling a data base of community problems.

Neil Darish spoke of his access problems for his business in McCarthy and the importance of preserving the unique culture of our communities. Doug Frederick of the Nabesna area gave an account of his family's long battle to maintain their right to operate their business despite NPS's restrictions to their access. I described problems that my husband and I are having with right-of-way permit and access fee requirements to reach our homestead off the McCarthy Road. Papa Pilgrim stressed the importance of bonding together to solve access for everyone and related some stories of their personal struggle. Rick Kenyon spoke of his and Bonnie's role in reporting NPS issues over the years in their newspaper.

Ray Kreig, active in lands' issues for more than 20 years, opened by describing how NPS

spent ten to twenty million dollars to drive the miners from the Kantishna area after Denali National Park was formed and how the fishermen were forced out of Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. He cited NPS abuses over the last eighty years in conservation units across the country affecting tens of thousands of people. Ray explained the ANILCA 1110(b) provisions for special access and access to inholdings and cited cases of crushing Environmental Impact Statement and permitting processes as well as exorbitant right-of-way permit fees.

J.P. Tangen, involved in ANILCA and D(2) issues since the early seventies, defined the original RS2477 right-of-way legislation. He stressed the urgency in bonding together now while we have a sympathetic and favorable climate in Washington, an Alaskan congressional delegation willing to stand up for Alaskans' rights, and positive legislators in Juneau. Tangen feels we have a rare "window of opportunity" to settle a national issue that has been debated for decades.

Russell Brooks praised the audience for being there to uphold their constitutional rights. He stressed the importance of seeking cooperation from the federal government to protect our rights and the importance of allowing us to be stewards of our land, allowed to care for our own legitimate needs. PLF is a non-profit organization, funded by private donations,

which has been helping to resolve the access issues of private citizens for 30 years.

Chuck Cushman, appointed by Ronald Reagan to The National Park System Advisory Board, has a special insight into park procedures. He has been called to intervene in access issues across the country, where ALRA finds peaceful and often humorous ways to create an environment where citizens can get the help they need from their legislators. He stressed the importance of working as a team and knowing that winning is possible. Cushman cited numerous ALRA success stories where their involvement has cut land acquisition funding for NPS, saved areas of Washington and Oregon from wild and scenic river status, saved private lands from park encroachment, and changed the mindset of legislators.

The meeting was long, but many people stayed on to participate in a discussion period during which many residents came forward to share their personal problems with the NPS over the course of the

last twenty years. Many topics were covered:

- NPS interpretation of ANILCA regulations.
- Selective enforcement.
- Legality of access fees.
- NPS vehicle access to Kennicott during reconstruction.
- Attempts by NPS to change federal subsistence boundaries.
- Inappropriate NPS behavior.
- NPS harassment at hunting camps.
- Excessive shows of force and weaponry.
- Illegal trail closures.
- The ALRA-organized Pilgrim airlift.
- The need for legislative action to settle RS2477.
- The inappropriateness of current inholder permitting requirements.

Our panelists suggested that a first course of action for anyone experiencing problems with NPS or other agencies

should be to write to their congressional delegation, explaining their situation in a concise, one-page letter, followed up by other letters, stressing the urgency of legislative action needed to resolve our issues. Dealing with large powerful agencies can be intimidating, but through the cooperation and unity of community members and the help of ALRA and PLF, we can see hope in resolving our issues. Anyone interested in joining ROW or ALRA may contact ROW at PO Box MXV #63, Glennallen AK 99588 or www.residentsofWrangells.bravepages.com or visit the ALRA website at www.landrights.org/ak/. Future meetings of ROW will be announced to discuss our course of action to resolve our communities' problems.

One final thank you must be extended to Bonnie Kenyon and Lee Ann Gerhart for their diligent efforts behind the scenes to welcome everyone to the meeting, build our mailing list, accept membership applications, and pass out information.



WSEN staff photo

Chuck Cushman addresses crowd at Residents of the Wrangells Meeting.

Want to go home? Just get a permit!

BY RICK KENYON

When the Pilgrim family found the only ground access to their home "closed to all motorized vehicles" by the park service, they were told they needed a permit. (Although the notice posted by the National Park Service said the route was an "illegal route" and was "closed to motorized vehicles," NPS later said the route was not closed to motorized vehicles—only to the Pilgrims. Others who were local residents were free to travel in pursuit of subsistence activities.)

State officials were only mildly supportive of the Pilgrim's right of access. Bob Loeffler, Director of the Alaska Division of Mining, Land & Water said, "Since...the park service appears willing to give a permit, we recommend people just go ahead and deal with the Park Service and get on with their life."

On June 13, Papa Pilgrim, David Pilgrim and their attorney J.P. Tangen, met with NPS Regional Director Robert Arnberger in his Anchorage office about access to their property in the McCarthy Creek valley. At that meeting Mr. Chris Bockmon stated that all ANILCA permits ever done by NPS went through him. In response to Mr. Tangen's questions as to what form the Pilgrims should use to request access, Bockmon and Director Arnberger said there is no particular form and to just send something in asking for access.

Based on the comments made by Bockmon and Arnberger

at the June 13 meeting, Pilgrims emailed the original access permit request to Superintendent Gary Candelaria asking for emergency access.

07/08/2003 08:48 PM PST

Subject: Permit

From: Pilgrim AKA Robert Hale
PO Box MXV

Glennallen, AK. 99588

To: Regional Director Rob
Arnberger and Superintendent
Gary Candelaria

I want a permanent permit to "dead" head a bulldozer with a trailer from the town of McCarthy up the Green Butte-Mother Lode Road to where my wife and younger children live at the Marvelous Millsite, to provide our daily needs and to return the same way I came; in other words, bring "dead headed" dozer and trailer back to the town site of McCarthy on the same road, to make this trip whenever I feel it is necessary.

[signed] Pilgrim AKA Robert Hale

Superintendent Candelaria had different ideas from that of Director Arnberger and his solicitor of how a permit should be requested. Pilgrim got the following response:

To: Pilgrim AKA Robert Hale

From: Gary Candelaria,
Superintendent, Wrangell-St.
Elias National Park and Preserve

Thank you for your email. From the content of your message, it appears you are seeking a Right-of-Way permit. We will be happy to assist you and/or your attorney in completing the necessary

Right-of-Way Permit application and facilitating the required coordination with other affected federal and state agencies such as the Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife Service, etc. This is a complicated process, but one we have been through before and are willing to assist you in following. It would be most helpful for you or your attorney to contact the park, specifically Ms. Vicki Snitzler, Park Planner and Chief of Compliance at 907-822-7206, for details and to set-up a meeting to begin the permit application process. Ms. Snitzler can explain the process and its components.

Gary Candelaria

Superintendent

Solicitor Bockmon subsequently offered a form SF 299 and offer of help to Mr. Tangen in completing the application, which was again submitted to Superintendent Candelaria on September 2. This time the request was for temporary emergency access, and on the specified form. "Please understand that these delays have now caused the situation to become very urgent for us with winter coming on," wrote the Pilgrims. "An application for permanent access requirements will be submitted at a later date."

Candelaria responded on September 8 with a request for more information. Questions about which route the family wanted to take, how many trips and when, specifically what size and type of equipment, what does "deadheading" mean were

posed to the Pilgrims. "Please explain the nature of the emergency," wrote Candelaria. The letter also implied that further studies would need to be done. "Recent fisheries inventories lead us to believe that McCarthy Creek may be inhabited by spawning anadromous fish," said the Superintendent. "The presence of an anadromous fishery requires that we consider the stream crossings under the National Environmental Policy Act."

Pilgrims responded with a 9-page, handwritten letter expounding on answers to each question posed in the Candelaria letter. To the question of which route: "You know as well as I, that you have not only allowed others to use this road constantly...for over 60 years after the close of the Green/Butte and Motherlode Mines. I personally know of only one road that accesses the Motherlode properties. It is the shortest, and most expedient, as well as environmentally safe... But after your own multi-thousand dollar assessment of the road you should be able to determine this for yourself!"

"Deadheading means blade up and not used except for emergency application. Blade would be up except when encountering rock slides which are very few indeed."

Under "explain the nature of the emergency," the Pilgrim

letter set forth three categories.

1. The actual physical needs
2. The unfeasibility of winter travel to supply emergency needs.
3. The "open window" concept so indigenous to Alaska bush living.

As to the claim of anadromous fish, Pilgrims wrote, "I would like to receive proof of spawning anadromous fish in McCarthy Creek." To which NPS responded by sending rangers wielding fish nets in a helicopter to see what they could find. Apparently they found some native Dolly Varden Trout, but no anadromous fish such as salmon, because in a follow-up letter written by NPS Acting Regional Director Marcia Blaszak, she states that, "Park biologists have documented Dolly Varden spawning habitat and observed spawning-size adults in the stream." (Anadromous means fish that migrate up rivers from the sea to breed in fresh water, which does not apply to native trout.)

Blaszak also stated that NPS departmental guidance on what constitutes an emergency includes situations where federal action is required "to prevent or reduce risks to public health or safety or serious resources losses, particularly if there is a possibility of imminent loss of life, property or resources." She went on to say that "[it is] our determination that this situation

does not constitute an emergency." And though she is the one who responded to the emergency request, she then referred them back to Superintendent Candelaria as "your point of contact."

Candelaria followed with a letter to the Pilgrim's attorney, J.P. Tangen, in which he reiterated that NPS did not consider the Pilgrim's situation an emergency, that no permit could be forthcoming in less than 9 weeks, but that the NPS did offer to "waive these costs for processing this application for a temporary permit."

Since there was no possibility of obtaining a temporary permit during what the family considered the "window of opportunity," and based on the suggestion of their attorney, the family elected to decline the offer. Instead, Chuck Cushman, of the American Land Rights Association started an effort to mobilize volunteers for what became known as the "Pilgrim Airlift." Friends and neighbors of the Pilgrim family, along with many who had been following the story on the Internet, offered help. As we go to press more than 60 flights from McCarthy to the Mother Lode Mine have been completed. One volunteer lost his Cessna 180 when the landing gear failed during landing. Fortunately there were no injuries. NPS has been asked to help with the effort but so far has declined.

"Every logical position will eventually lead you into trouble, and heresy, and chaos. Every logical position is consistent, but it is logic which is in the human mind, not God's logic. The human mind is finite and cannot grasp eternity, and therefore the finite mind sees the infinite as not graspable coherently. If we could grasp it all coherently, without contradiction, we would be God. The person who insists on being logical to the end winds up in a mess. I am not saying that we should not be rational. I am not anti-intellectual. I am saying that the intellect by itself is helpless to arrive at total truth."—Kenneth L. Pike

Local classical guitarist releases second CD

BY DOROTHY ADLER

When one is in the company of a great artist, it is hard not to feel insignificant. Of course, everyone is an artist in his or her own right. But few, by comparison, seem to master their art. And while in our amateur eyes or ears these artists are indescribably magnificent, to them, their art form is never quite mastered and ones life as an artist is always work in progress.

In our modest little community of McCarthy, friend, neighbor, and local classical musician Jürgen Oğrodnik has begun to promote his second released CD, recorded in April 2002 in Germany. This CD of 15 classical compositions ranging from the greats like Bach to the more recent Lobos, was recorded and produced entirely in Germany by Jürgen's good friend Helmut Alba. Six hundred copies recently arrived in McCarthy ready for distribution. Recorded in a 150-200 year old stonewalled Protestant Church in a rural farming community close to Jürgen's hometown, it is also the site of many other musical productions because of the church's great acoustics. Jürgen is preparing to tour Alaska with his CD and guitar and will play at various places in Alaska this fall/winter, beginning with a show in Kennicott on October 31st.

I recently caught up with Jürgen at his "castle" on the hill to talk about his new CD and his plans for the future. He was still harvesting his garden on October 12th when we arrived for dinner and conversation. For

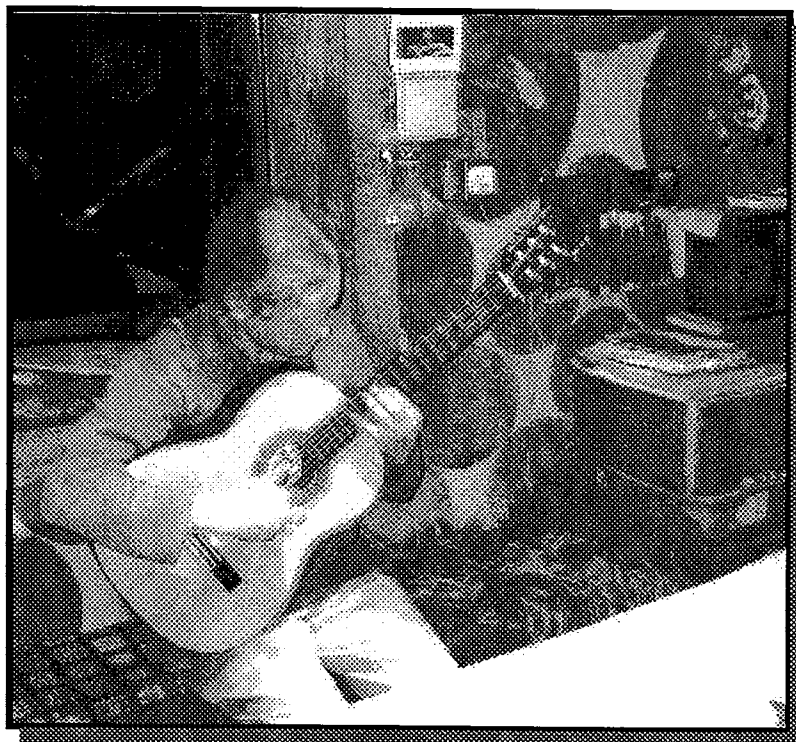


Photo courtesy Greg Runyon

those of you who don't know Jürgen, aside from being an amazing classical guitarist he also has a green thumb, is a creative carpenter honing his European upbringing into a splendid log, cordwood, and rock home that some have dubbed the "castle," and an amazing historian, especially when it comes to the great composers. A wealth of knowledge and practical information, Jürgen has gained much insight from both his culturally-rich European rearing and his hands-on self-sufficient lifestyle in the Wrangell Mountains. Discovering this area in 1979, he soon after purchased his hillside property and made it his home. "I fell in love with this place and made the big move. I like to live in the wilderness and kind of

check things out, you know." Twelve years working as a commercial fisherman helped sustain his lifestyle but did not afford him enough time and energy to fully pursue his passion for classical music. Now entirely devoted to his music, he practices on average six hours per day. Still, the struggle to make it as a musician, let alone a classical guitarist, exists. Classical musicians often make ends meet by playing in orchestras. Living in the remote Wrangell-St. Elias Mountains doesn't exactly allow for such an opportunity. Still Jürgen has traveled a bit in Alaska playing in Valdez and the Anchorage area, and it seems as if his talent is called upon during the thriving summer months in McCarthy to play at weddings and the like.

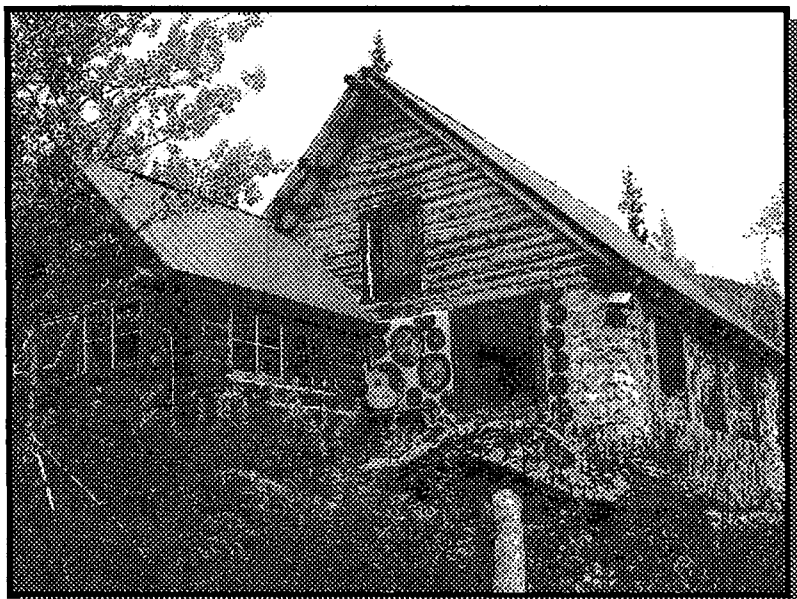


Photo courtesy Greg Runyon

Jürgen's "castle."

He's attempting to break free of the "starving artist" motif with the release of his new CD and the optimism that he can make it as a classical musician.

Jürgen's life on his hillside is not met without the challenges that accompany all of us who choose to reside in this magnificently remote mountainous region of Alaska. A foot trail leads to his cabin perched on a steep hillside with fantastic views to the south of the Chugach Mountains. It's only a five to ten minute walk up the hill, but yet it keeps folks who don't like hill climbs from visiting. Jürgen's 20 year old three-wheeler makes the journey up and down the hill to help haul supplies, but most things, including much of the building materials for his home were hauled up on the backs of strong willed mind and bodies. His cabin is filled with the aroma of harvest time, and from various locations hang bundles of herbs from his garden, salmon that he caught, and vegetables also from his garden. After a feast of a

dinner, five of us are sitting around the table listening to Jürgen pontificate about the influence of classical composers. He treats us to the fragrance of mason jars filled with dried veggies from his garden, and cup after cup of his famous herbal tea which a friend calls "St. Jürgen's tea." Tea becomes a late night coffee session and the conversation turns to Bach, whom Jürgen says is the "Everest of composers. I really cherish the classical composers. But Bach is my hero." I notice throughout our conversations that he is creating analogies for us four mountaineers to better understand his relationship to music. It is through these many comparisons he makes to climbing or skiing that we begin to understand his passion for music. As for his other musical inspirations? "The work of the Beatles is totally unique," Jürgen says, but he also lists The Rolling Stones and The Who as some of his personal favorites.

Jürgen began playing guitar at age thirteen. At 15 he began

to study with the Japanese master Reisuke Gakon. For the next seven years Jürgen would study under the tutelage of this great man and it is here that he began to value the relationship between teacher and pupil. Jürgen was able to identify with his teacher, who like himself was one who had difficulty with authority figures. In the future Jürgen plans to become involved with the "artists in school program," which sends Alaskan artists/musicians to remote areas (in Alaska) to perform and teach music at local schools.

Developing his technical skill as a classical guitarist has required an amazing amount of time, dedication, and sometimes a bit of sacrifice, but taking it to the next level, which is how the artist interprets the music is another level in and of itself. As I listen to Jürgen's CD over and over again, I can hear his style and interpretation in there...as he says, "the note is fixed, but it's how you play the note..."

To purchase Jürgen Ogrodnik's CD write to him at:

Jürgen Ogrodnik
Box MXV #2
McCarthy
Glennallen, AK 99588

The CD is \$15, or \$20 to cover shipping costs. If you are interested in purchasing a CD during the winter months while Jürgen is traveling, just send a note to the above address and he will mail you a CD when he returns from his travels.

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."—Theodore Roosevelt

"The wise person questions himself, the fool others."—Henri Arnold

THE CHITINA LEADER

November 1911 December

CHITINA LOCAL HAPPENINGS

The last stage of last week brought in five boxes of gold dust valued at \$160,000 and yet the muckrakers say that Alaska is costing the government more money than the miners are taking out. It should be remembered that the muckraker will say nothing to make his point stick.

Dr. Thom has secured from C. A. Simons a large double cabin on Chitina Heights which will be converted into a hospital where those who require can have the best of attention. This will fill a long felt need in Chitina where those who are without a home here can go to a quiet, well appointed retreat when unable to care for themselves.

Judge Healy has completed his new building which will be used as a court room.

The recent thaw nearly ruined the skating on Lake Chitina as a heavy snow was falling when freezing began, the surface was left very rough.

Dr. W. W. Council made a trip over the line to Kennicott the first of the week.

Will A. Steel, of Seattle, made a business trip to Chitina Monday, going on Tuesday to his mining property in the Nizina.

Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Burgun have disposed of their hotel at Strelina and passed through Chitina Monday en

route to Ketchikan where they will make their future home.

The absence of Governor Clark from the capital has delayed the appropriation for the school house but it is thought the money will be in the hands of Treasurer Schaupp in a few days, when building will be rushed to completion.

John McCrary of the road house at Copper Center is in town this week trading with our merchants. Mr. McCrary is farming on quite an extensive scale and has been very successful with all kinds of vegetables as well as oats, barley and peas. He has a cellar under his house where he keeps vegetables growing all winter. Besides supplying his own roadhouse he sells several hundred dollars worth of produce to his neighbors every year. He has been a resident of Copper Center for eight years and is well known in this section.

Nov. 11

CHITINA LOCAL OBSERVATIONS

Clarence D. Stair made a dash into the Spirit Mountain country Monday, returning with sixteen ptarmigan. He says the birds are plentiful but very wild.

Nels Tjosevig, who was brought to the Chitina hospital Sunday from the Mother Lode mine on McCarthy Creek in a very critical condition, is

improving. His brother John, who is head cook at Gray's is with him.

John E. Barrett, of Dan Creek, went out to the states Tuesday and reports that Billy Crum, who went out in October with 100 pounds of ore from their Dan Creek property, will be back in the spring. The ore assaying \$314.00 to the ton. The sample displayed by Mr. Barrett is the finest piece of rock we have ever seen from any section this fall.

WANTED

One Million Feet of Logs
The Kennecott Mines
Company will receive bids
from contractors desiring
to supply logs suitable for
mine stalls or for sawing

into lumber. For
conditions, etc.,
communicate with
A. B. EMORY, Manager
Kennecott, Alaska
Nov. 18

CHITINA HAPPENINGS DURING PAST WEEK

Emile Larson, who has been working at the Mother Lode mine, is in town for the winter.

Chester Hull of the Chitina Trading Company has purchased as fine a collection of marten skins as ever came to Chitina. The furs came from the vicinity of Copper Center

and are remarkably matched for size and color. The fur industry in this section, while not large, is quite an item when taken as a whole and will bring considerable revenue to those who take the trouble to trap.

The enterprising Louis Bregeze has placed on sale at his market a choice lot of chickens, turkeys and geese besides fresh fish and oysters and at prices so reasonable considering the great distance they must be shipped that many Chitina residents are enjoying a feast of good things.

Al Church returned to Kennecott last week after having attended court at Cordova. He reports business flourishing at his store in Kennecott.

Nov. 25

LATEST HAPPENINGS IN CHITINA

Frank Iverson, of Kennecott, one of the owners of the Bonanza Gold Mining company, was in Chitina on Thursday en route to Cordova.

Mrs. Wallace is again in Chitina where she expects to spend the winter. She has accepted a position as matron at the Lakeview hospital.

Work on the tunnel is rapidly nearing completion and will be so far advanced as to admit the passage of trains in a couple of weeks.

HAPPENINGS AT CHITINA

Nels Tjosevig, who came here from the Mother Lode mine with a severe case of typhoid pneumonia, is sufficiently recovered to be out a little each day. He will soon go to his home in Valdez.

The Red Dragon is now open for visitors and is supplied with lights, fuel and writing material as well as books and papers. Don't forget the Red Dragon when you want to spend a quiet hour. You are cordially welcome whether anyone else is there or not.

Dec. 2

HAPPENINGS IN THE LIVELY TOWN OF CHITINA

Robert McIntosh, with his freighting outfit, consisting of twenty head of horses, sled, etc., is now on his way from Valdez to Chitina, where he will engage in business this winter. He will be accompanied by his crew consisting of Fred Collins, Phil Wilson, Guy Birch, Charles Ritz, Cliff, Post and Jack Silverman.

Dec. 9

HAPPENINGS IN THE LIVELY TOWN OF CHITINA

The extremely mild weather has tried the patience of many Chitina residents the last few days owing to the many leaky roofs. Large quantities of snow had collected on the roofs when the heavy rain set in and the best roofs in town were hardly equal to the test while those of inferior construction leaked like sieves and rendered many cabins and business places almost uninhabitable. Everybody is sincerely wishing for cold

weather again.

John Nagel, who was caught in the snow slide at Copper Mountain, was brought to the hospital in Chitina Thursday evening where he received treatment for numerous minor bruises about the body and a badly wrenched back which will lay him up for several days. He was very fortunate to escape without more serious bruises.

Mrs. Forrester is conducting a class at her home for an hour each day just as an accommodation to the little folks in her neighborhood until such time as the regular school can get underway.

William Price and James Feaney, of Seward, came in on Monday night on their way to Long Lake where they will join the gangs of Charles Davids who has a contract for supplying the Kennecott mines with logs. Mr. Price says that Seward is enjoying a good substantial growth and the mining prospects are improving all the time. He is surprised at the activity and bustle of Chitina and thinks this a good town to invest in for the future.

LOCAL INTERESTING DOINGS

The first train through the Chitina tunnel made the trip Saturday morning though the timbering will not be finished for several weeks. This will save a great deal of labor and expense and obviating the danger of getting off the track on the switchback.

The recent warm weather put the tunnel out of commission for a time this week and made it necessary to see the switchback again in taking trains to the front. Almost four feet of water collected in the main part of the tunnel which had to be pumped out. When the work is finished this trouble will be obviated by sufficient drainage. The heavy

timbering in the structure is nearing completion and work on filling the vacant places above with similar timbers has begun.

Dec. 16

LOCAL INTERESTING DOINGS

The money for the school at Chitina has arrived and the lumber for the new building is expected to arrive any day. Meanwhile there are several children in Chitina who should be in school.

Dec. 23

HAPPENINGS IN THE LIVELY TOWN OF CHITINA

There was no public entertainment of any kind this Christmas in Chitina, but there were many private dinner parties and everybody was full of holiday cheer, while many of the boys were full of other things. Still, the day passed on very peaceably, which disproves the impression that has been recently given out that Chitina was a most terrible place to live. There are many good people in this little burg, after all.

Bob McIntosh, who recently came to Chitina with his freighting outfit to operate from here, will move his family here in a few days and occupy the residence of Geo. Shade. As soon as the school gets under way there will be several families move to Chitina who have children that will attend.

E. C. Hawkins, the friend of the Copper River valley, wired a Christmas greeting to all his friends in Chitina through Operator Brown. It would surely make the heart of a less genial man than Mr. Hawkins glad to know that his friends include every resident of Chitina.

The first snow plow to arrive

in Chitina this winter came in last week.

Lieut. G. F. Waugh, U. S. A., who has been stationed at St. Michaels, is in town. He reached Chitina Thursday morning, having covered the distance of nearly 1,100 miles by dog sledge in 21 days. He drove a five-dog team which, perhaps, was one of the finest ever seen there. They were Russian Huskies and were a part of Lord Ramson's, which made a record of 125 miles in the steeple chase at Nome two years ago. Lieut. Waugh has been ordered to join his command at San Francisco.

THE NUGGET IN SAFE KEEPING

Some weeks ago a great commotion was raising over the loss of a gold nugget valued at \$42 by John L. McGinn while he was stopping at the Hotel Chitina and the management was sharply criticised and even charged with harboring crooks to relieve guests of their valuables. Many people jumped at conclusions and everybody talked, but, Messrs. Palmer & Cloninger quietly set to work to clear the matter up and the following excerpt from a letter received from Fairbanks and written by L. L. James to the Chitina Hotel proprietors is self-explanatory.

"According to promise I interviewed Capt. Donovan upon my arrival here and find that he has the large nugget that was supposed to have been stolen from Mr. John L. McGinn while at your place. It gives me pleasure to notify you of this fact after the hasty way in which I spoke regarding my suitcase. It simply reminds one that they should not be too hasty or too willing to accuse others. Every chance that I have to put in a good word for your hotel I will certainly do it."

Dec. 30

Chickadees Shun 'Snowbird' Label

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

Their fair-weather cousins have long since departed, migrating for warmer climes and a more varied menu. They stay, appearing as little puffballs at bird feeders from Ketchikan to Barrow. Black-capped chickadees aren't built to take an Alaska winter, but they thrive with unique adaptations to life in the north.

Bigger is better when it comes to surviving an Alaska winter without artificial heat, said Pierre Deviche, a former associate professor of animal physiology with UAF's Institute of Arctic Biology. Just like a large cup of coffee cools more slowly than a small one, a moose retains body heat more efficiently than a fox, Deviche said. A fox needs to produce more heat relative to its body size to keep warm.

Weighing about as much as a handful of paper clips, a chickadee overcomes its size disadvantage with physical adaptations and by using its tiny, black-and-white head. Beginning in late July in the Interior, chickadees begin wedging seeds, insects and other food into tree bark and other crevices, said Susan Sharbaugh of UAF's Department of Biology and Wildlife.

Unlike squirrels, which create massive mounds of spruce cones for munching later, chickadees "scatter hoard," Sharbaugh said, leaving thousands of seeds cached

throughout the half-mile range in which they spend their entire lives. Later in the winter, perhaps when a bird feeder runs out of sunflower seeds, a chickadee is somehow able to find seeds cached months earlier.

"These guys have a fantastic memory," Deviche said. Studies of chickadee brains have revealed that the volume of the hippocampus, an area of the brain linked with memory, varies with the season. In fall, when a chickadee is hiding food, the hippocampus expands. In the spring, when there's no more need to find cached food, it contracts.

In addition to brains that bulge with the season, chickadees adjust to a cold climate by shivering. Chickadees' chest muscles, called the pectoralis, repeatedly flex to generate heat. Air trapped within a chickadee's downy coat traps that heat with amazing efficiency. When it's 40 below Fahrenheit outside and a chickadee's feathers are raised to create an inch-thick coat, the difference in temperature of the chickadee's body core and the environment an inch away is 148 degrees.

Unlike common redpolls, one of the other tiny species of songbirds that winters in Alaska, chickadees don't have an internal bag for storing food, called a crop. Instead, chickadees must eat small meals, digest them, and

then eat again. Because they only feed in daylight, their window of opportunity is woefully small in winter.

To compensate, they eat as much as they can, adding fat each day that amounts to 10 percent of their body weight and burning it at night. This is like a 150-pound person eating enough to weigh 165 by day's end, then using enough energy at night to be back to 150 by the morning.

"It's a huge physiological feat," Sharbaugh said.

Where Alaska chickadees spend the night is a mystery, but Deviche and Sharbaugh believe they ball themselves up in a crevice or cavity by themselves or perhaps roost in spruce branches. Once down for the night, chickadees turn down their internal thermostats to save energy, Sharbaugh says.

From a normal body temperature of about 108 degrees, chickadees cool down to about 90 when roosting. Despite the energy savings of this method, Deviche said in winter it's almost impossible to find a fat chickadee in the early morning.

During extreme cold snaps, researchers have found that birds show up less often at the feeder, but they also don't spend any time messing around, concentrating solely on filling up rather than interacting socially.

"Liberty, the greatest of all earthly blessings —give us that precious jewel, and you may take every thing else! ... Guard with jealous attention the public liberty. Suspect every one who approaches that jewel."—Patrick Henry

John "Cap" Hubrick remembered

(Reprinted from The Cordova Daily Times—January 23, 1930)

Capt. John Peter Hubrick Dies in McCarthy Last Night

Captain John Peter Hubrick, noted Alaskan guide, naturalist and photographer, died at his home in McCarthy at 7 o'clock last night after a long illness. The immediate cause of death was apoplexy.

Captain Hubrick was born in Danville, New York, March 30, 1858, and is survived by his widow, Mrs. Emma Hubrick, who was at his bedside when he died, and two daughters, both by a former marriage; Mrs. Ida Wagner, Spring Green, Wisconsin; and Mrs. Clara Kapalka, Avoca, Wisconsin; and a sister, Mrs. Katherine Snyder, of Richland Center, Wisconsin.

Captain Hubrick's life was replete with adventure, starting from the time that he was a mere youngster when his mother and father emigrated from Danville, New York, to Wisconsin, in 1862.

At the railroad station in Buffalo, New York, the captain was kidnapped, later to be recovered by the police. His parents then continued to the town of Avoca, Wisconsin, where they engaged in the hotel business.

Captain Hubrick remained with his parents until he was fourteen years of age, but in the year 1872 he left home to visit an uncle, then located at Pike's Peak, Colorado, where he assisted his uncle in packing and freighting merchandise over the plains of Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska. He later became a plainsman himself, carrying the U. S. mail in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Following this work, as a young man he emigrated to Texas, then an Indian territory, as a buffalo hunter, and still later as a cowboy or herd driver of cattle over the Chisholm cattle trail from Texas to Abilene, Kansas, and other stock cities of Kansas.

When twenty-two years old the captain returned to his former home at Avoca, Wisconsin, for a visit with his parents. He remained there for two years during which time he met and married Miss Louise Schwingle, and to them was born the captain's two surviving daughters.

When twenty-four years old the captain and his wife emigrated to Laramie, Wyoming, and he entered the railroad service of the Union Pacific, where he soon advanced to conductor and operated trains between Laramie and Austin, Utah.

Later the captain and his wife pushed further west and migrated to the territory of Oregon, settling on the Columbia River, and entering the steamboat service, where he soon won his papers as captain on the Columbia and Snake rivers, where he navigated between Lewiston, Idaho, and Portland, Oregon.

Upon news of the gold strike in the Territory being received in the States, the captain again pulled up stakes and came north in 1897, reaching Dawson via Chilkoot Pass, Lake Bennett and the Yukon River, where he became a roadhouse keeper and

prospector. The fame of his roadhouse at Hunker Creek still lives in the memory of his friends.

During the years of 1900 and 1901 the captain built the Dawson ferry and operated the same, later selling it to the Canadian government, who are still operating it.

Captain Hubrick was the first man to transport an automobile into Dawson, his car afterwards being known as the "Red Devil." When the Dawson boom died out the captain moved to the Copper River Valley in 1912, during the construction days on the railroad, and settled at Long Lake, Alaska.

Receiving news of the gold strike at Sheshana, the captain was one of the first to stampede into that district, returning to McCarthy when it blew up, and entering into the drug store business in 1913.

After operating the store for several years the captain made a trip to the States in 1917 to visit friends and relatives. There he met Miss Emma Amos, and they were married in the spring of 1918. Miss Amos, or the present Mrs. Hubrick, is his surviving widow.

During the same year the captain became a licensed guide for Alaska big game, and for several years thereafter he managed and conducted big game hunts, handling many of the largest parties of the United States.

In 1922 the captain and his

wife journeyed to Rochester, New York, taking a course on photography from the Eastman Kodak Company, and becoming very successful in this work. As a result of these studies the captain leaves to perpetuate his name, many wonderful panoramic views of Alaska, some of which were taken from great heights of the mountains.

Captain Hubrick was a

pioneer of the early days, a thorough sourdough and an active member of the Arctic Brotherhood and the Pioneers. He loved the northern country, as all pioneers do, and during his sojourn in the North made at least three fortunes, all of which were reinvested in the country. The captain's death will be regretted by many friends and by

all of the old timers of the northern country.

Thanks to Adina Knutson who passed the above information on to us as it was given her by Captain Hubrick's daughter Mrs. Gus Wegner, and as it appeared in *The Cordova Daily Times*.

Book review – *Mercy Pilot: The Joe Crosson Story*

BY BONNIE KENYON

Mercy Pilot: The Joe Crosson Story, was written by Dirk Tordoff of Fairbanks, a native Alaskan who researched the Joe Crosson biography as part of his studies that led to a Master of Arts degree in Northern Studies from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

It tells the exciting story of Joe Crosson, a brave and skilled pilot who became a national hero between the world wars flying mercy missions in the North, but is not widely known in Alaska. Crosson also pioneered air routes throughout Alaska and was a man of vision who foresaw the future of commercial aviation.

In 1929, Crosson generated newspaper headlines worldwide flying a long, dangerous, and unprecedented search in the Siberian winter darkness for a lost pilot and friend, Carl Ben Eielson. Crosson also made a bitterly cold weather flight in an open

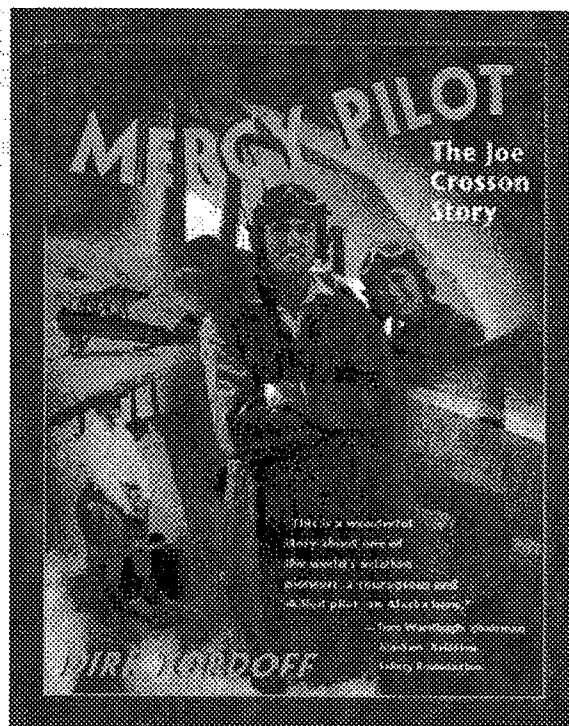
cockpit carrying life-saving serum to Barrow, flying through the then uncharted Brooks Range without navigation or communications.

yet unrecognized, and Joe Crosson was one. He was one of the great bush pilots," according to Dee Hanson, executive director of the Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum in Anchorage.

Crosson thrived on adversity and overcame tragedy, and was influenced by two extraordinary women – his sister, Marvel, a contemporary of Amelia Earhart, and Lillian Osborne, the beautiful and able young woman who became his wife.

The 254-page book sells for \$17.95 and contains more than 150 photos, numerous maps, charts and extensive appendices. The publisher is Epicenter Press. To order from the publisher directly, visit EpicenterPress.com or call toll free 1-800-950-6663.

Enjoy WSEN? Give your friends a gift subscription this year. Only \$10 and they will remember you 6 times a year!



He also had the sad duty of bringing the bodies of Wiley Post and Will Rogers Jr. back from their fatal crash in northern Alaska.

"We search for heroes as

Customary and Traditional access in WRST—a primer

BY RICK KENYON

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve (WRST) is America's largest conservation unit. At somewhere in the neighborhood of 13 million acres, it is considerably larger than the nation of Switzerland. But, while Switzerland has something over 45,000 miles of road, WRST has only about 120 miles of unpaved, dirt and gravel routes accessible from the major highway system.

Partly for this reason, when Congress created the park in 1980, they provided for people to continue to use other means of transportation. Dog sleds, snowmachines and airplanes are commonly cited as examples. They are by no means the only examples, however, so the language of the enabling legislation for the park, the Alaska National Interest Lands Claims Act, commonly referred to as ANILCA, used the terms customary and traditional.

Customary and traditional are words that are easy to understand. Customary means, "commonly practiced, used, or encountered; usual." Traditional comes from tradition and means, "a time-honored practice or set of such practices." Simply put, Congress mandated that access in WRST continue to be that which it had generally been in the past.

But how do we know what type of access was common in the areas that are now encompassed by the park? I'm glad you asked that question, because we have a documented

answer in the form of a governmental study.

In 1995, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) in cooperation with the National Park Service, published a document with the title: PILOT PROJECT: DOCUMENTING TRADITIONAL AND SUBSISTENCE ACCESS IN WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE.

According to Tina Cunning, who is the ANILCA Program Manager with ADF&G, the project was funded by the legislature and conducted by two ADF&G employees (Terry Haynes and Stan Walker) in close cooperation with NPS at both the region and the park.

"The then [NPS] superintendent was very helpful with support of staff and access to files," said Cunning, "and NPS staff assisted in phases of the project." Many of the documents were NPS publications and files only available through their assistance in addition to cited source documents available in libraries, DOT, and BLM.

The study documents access and subsistence tradition in the area of what is now the park going back to the Aboriginal Period. ("A well-worn trail system connected Copper Basin villages and facilitated foot travel within the region and to neighboring areas.")

The Contact Period (1732-1898) deals mostly with the Russian influence, foot and river travel.

The European Settlement

(1898-1940) talks about the transportation network expanding to provide access to furs, copper and other resources. Road building commenced, and of course the famous Copper River & Northwestern Railway was built during this period. The Nabesna Road was also constructed during the 1930s.

The period of most interest to us today is called the Contemporary Period (1940-1980). This is the 40 year period just preceding the area becoming a park. According to the authors, dog teams were a major means of transportation during World War II. Horses were also used to haul freight over the Cooper Pass Trail to Chisana.

Soon after the war, civilian use of aircraft resumed and light track vehicles ("weasels") replaced dogsleds for ground transport of freight in the north Wrangells area. Weasels pulled wagons with aircraft tires mounted on double automobile wheel rims. The large tires enabled the wagons to travel easily over soft ground and in marshy areas.

Use of small aircraft and swamp buggies expanded in the 1950s and 1960s as a mode of transportation for accessing the mountainous and more remote areas of the Copper River Basin.

One respondent described the use of tractors, caterpillars, dog teams and pack horses during this period. Another household in the Nabesna-Nutzotin area used dog teams or tracked vehicles as their

Getting the lead out...and more

BY ARLENE ROSENKRANS

Local volunteers joined efforts with staff from the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT) and the National Park Service (NPS) to "Get the Lead Out" of McCarthy. Over a hundred discarded batteries, most of them old and cracked, had been left in the "boneyard" on the east side of the Kennicott River. On a wet and cool Thursday morning, September 25th, Rick Kenyon, John Adams, Doug Miller, Rob Terwilliger and Elizabeth, Israel and Hosanna Pilgrim worked with NPS staff Vicki Snitzler, Marshall Neeck and Stephens Harper to move over a ton of lead out to the DOT trailer where they were loaded into plastic totes. DOT personnel Steve Chmielowski and Rick Wilson assisted in the stacking and transport of the batteries.

Interstate Battery in Anchorage will pick up the batteries from the DOT facilities in Tazlina and prepare them for shipment and recycling. Efforts were coordinated by the Copper Valley Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program, which works with the Copper Valley Economic Development Council.

RC&D Coordinator Arlene

A group of young students were asked to list what they thought were the present "Seven Wonders of the World." Though there were some disagreements, the following received the most votes:

1. Egypt's Great Pyramids
2. Taj Mahal
3. Grand Canyon
4. Panama Canal
5. Empire State Building
6. St. Peter's Basilica
7. China's Great Wall

While gathering the votes, the



Photo courtesy Arlene Rosenkrans

Volunteers load old batteries on DOT&PF trailer for removal from McCarthy.

Rosenkrans is working with the Council on a larger project to remove and recycle abandoned vehicles in the southern part of the Copper Valley, from McCarthy to Copper Center. It is expected that up to 500 vehicles could be crushed and transported out of the Valley in this project. Almost 100 have already been identified and

inventory work has already begun in McCarthy and Chitina. If you have junked cars on your property that lie in this project area and would like to have them considered in this project, or if you are interested in State programs available for hazardous waste removal for your community, you are encouraged to call the RC&D office at 822-5111.

teacher noted that one student had not finished her paper yet. So she asked the girl if she was having trouble with her list. The girl replied, "Yes, a little. I couldn't quite make up my mind because there were so many."

The teacher said, "Well, tell us what you have, and maybe we can help."

The girl hesitated, then read, "I think the 'Seven Wonders of the World' are:

1. to see
2. to hear
3. to touch

4. to taste
5. to feel
6. to laugh
7. and to love."

The room was so quiet you could have heard a pin drop. The things we overlook as simple and ordinary and that we take for granted are truly wondrous! A gentle reminder – that the most precious things in life cannot be built by hand or bought by man.

(Submitted by Trig Trigliano)

Superintendent Candelaria responds to "Concerned Citizen"

BY SUSAN SMITH

Previous WSEN articles by "Concerned Citizen" and Rick Kenyon addressed the legality of wooden bollards and "No Motor Vehicle" signs posted on trails along the McCarthy Road. Both articles encouraged Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Superintendent Gary Candelaria to respond.

Well, we ALL got his answer!

Superintendent Candelaria attended a meeting on September 5th in Kennicott to explain future development plans for the Kennicott area. A question and answer period followed his presentation which led to discussion of backcountry management plans to control visitor flow and whether such plans would affect subsistence hunting within the Park. I took the opportunity to ask him about the trail postings, questioning whether they were an effort to control visitor usage or subsistence usage. I told him that we subsistence hunters felt the signs were prohibitive. We felt we were risking NPS citations when taking ATV's past the signs on trails we were legally allowed to use.

After the meeting, Vicki Snitzler, Park planner,

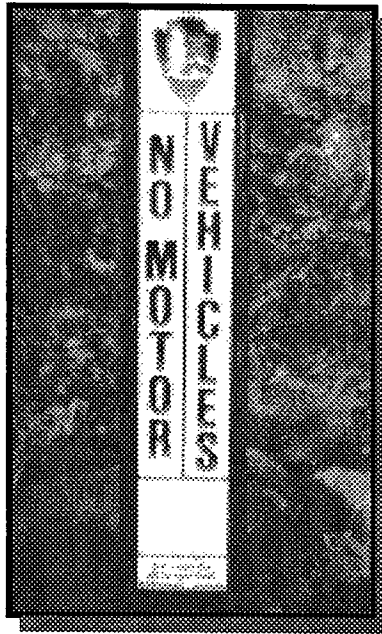


Photo courtesy Trig Trigianno

OLD SIGN.

approached me and asked for a list of the McCarthy Road mileposts where the blocked trails were located so that NPS could investigate. She and Candelaria both seemed unaware of their locations.

Within two weeks, all of the signs were changed! Now, instead of "No Motor Vehicles," the signs read, "Recreational Use of Off-Road Vehicles Prohibited." Now, we subsistence users can go around the wooden posts and use the few trails that we have available – with peace of mind.

Thank you,
Superintendent Candelaria!
Your quick action and positive response help to

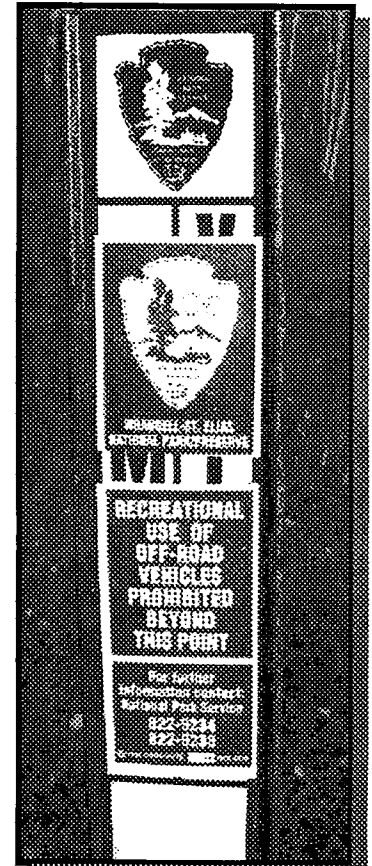


Photo courtesy Susan Smith

NEW SIGN.

protect the access rights of all subsistence hunters and gatherers in the Park. We are grateful to you for hearing our grievance and taking action to change trail postings which have apparently been incorrect since their placement several years ago.

Cooking with Peggy

BY PEGGY GUNTIS

Editor's note: Peggy and husband Jim had a safe trip down the Alcan highway to their winter home in Tucson. According to Peggy, "The trip was beautiful and uneventful (except for a broken windshield); the roads were good and so was the weather." If you read Peggy's cooking column last issue you will recall she has successfully lost a tremendous amount of weight—85 lbs. to date, she informed me today—by using the Weight Watchers' diet. In this issue, Peggy continues to share further tried and true recipes that keep her looking slim and trim!

Turkey Sloppy Joes

No way does this recipe make 8 servings. I take my 1/8 and Jim eats the rest!

- 1 lb. ground turkey breast
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1/4 cup chopped ground pepper
- 1 can (10 3/4 oz.) reduced-fat, reduced-sodium condensed tomato soup, undiluted
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons prepared mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 8 hamburger buns, split

In a large saucepan coated with nonstick cooking spray, cook the turkey, onion, celery, and ground pepper over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain, if necessary. Stir in the soup, ketchup, brown sugar, mustard and pepper. Transfer to slow cooker. (In McCarthy I just cook in the oven on low for awhile.) Cover slow cooker and cook on low for 4 hours. Serve on

buns. 8 servings.

1 serving equals 5 WW points, includes bun, 247 calories, 7 grams fat, 32 carbohydrates, 2 grams fiber.

Chicken à la King

Great with green beans or corn on the cob.

- 1 teaspoon butter or margarine
- 3 cups sliced fresh mushrooms (about 8 oz.)
- 1/2 cup finely chopped green bell pepper
- 1/4 cup minced green onions
- 1/3 cup all purpose flour
- 1 cup 2% reduced fat milk
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 3 tablespoons dry sherry
- 2 tablespoons (1 oz.) one-third less fat cream cheese (Neufchatel)
- 2 cups cooked chicken
- 1/2 cup chopped bottled roasted red bell peppers
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- toast
- parsley

1. Melt butter and saute mushrooms 8 minutes. Add green peppers and onions and saute 2 minutes. Stir flour into mushroom mixture; cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Combine milk, broth, and sherry. Gradually add milk mixture to sauteed veggies; stirring with whisk until blended.

Bring to a boil over medium heat; cook until thick (about 3 minutes). Add cream cheese, stirring until smooth.

2. Stir in chicken, red bell peppers, salt, and nutmeg. Cook 1 minute.

3. Pour over toast.

Makes 4 servings. One serving equals about 3/4 cup and 1 piece of toast and 8 WW points.

390 calories, 10.9 grams of fat, 3 grams fiber, 44.6 carbohydrates

Island Spiced Salmon

I don't even like salmon very much. I know those are swear words in Alaska – but I loved this one!

- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 salmon fillet (2 lbs.)

In a small bowl combine the first five ingredients; mix well. Rub over flesh-side of salmon; refrigerate for about 30 minutes. Place skin side down in a 9 x 13-in. baking dish, coated with nonstick cooking spray. Bake at 375 degrees for 20-30 minutes or until fish flakes easily. Makes 8 servings. One serving (4 oz.) equals 5 WW points. 229 calories, 13 grams of fat, 5 grams carbohydrates, 1 gram of fiber.

Tuna Noodle Casserole

I love this because it doesn't call for cream of celery soup as usual and I hate cream of celery soup!

- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine
- 3/4 cup diced onion
- 1 cup 2% milk
- 1 (10 1/2 oz.) can reduced fat, reduced salt cream of mushroom soup, undiluted
- 3 cups cooked egg noodles (about 6 oz. uncooked) cooked without salt or fat
- 1 1/4 cup frozen green peas, thawed
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 2 (6 oz.) cans tuna (packed

in water), drained and flaked

1 - 2 oz. jar diced pimento,
drained

1/3 cup fresh bread crumbs

2 tablespoons grated
Parmesan cheese

Melt butter over medium
heat, add onion, saute 3 minutes.
Add milk and soup, stirring

constantly with whisk. Combine
soup mixture, cooked noodles
and next 6 ingredients in a 2 qt.
casserole, coated with butter
spray. Combine bread crumbs
and cheese, sprinkle over the top
and bake 15 minutes at 450
degrees or until bubbly.

Makes 4 servings. One

serving equals 1 1/4 cup and is 8
WW points. 402 calories, 7.7
grams of fat, 5.2 grams of fiber.

*Peggy says the recipes,
Chicken á la King and the Tuna
Noodle Casserole, came from the
Weight Watcher's cookbook
entitled, Just Like Home.*

▲ LOOK AT THE WEATHER

BY GEORGE CEBULA

August 2003 will be
remembered for its
cloudy and rainy days.

The high temperature for the
month was 80 on the 8th (81 on
Aug. 4, '02 and 80 on Aug. 13,
'01). The first freeze was on the
22nd as the temperature fell to
29, this was only for a short time
and most of the garden plants
were spared. The temperature
fell to 27 on the morning of the
23rd and some of the plants were
killed. There were only 4 days
when the low was 32 or below
and the low temperature for the
month was 27 on the 23rd (27 on
Aug. 26, '02 and 27 on Aug 31,
'01). The average monthly
temperature at McCarthy was
51.5 compared to 51.7 in Aug.
'02, 55.0 in Aug. '01 and 51.5 in
Aug. '00. *Silver Lake had a high
temperature of 80 on 9th, 10th ,
and 11th (81 on Aug. 4, '02 and
80 on Aug. 14, '01). The low
temperature at Silver Lake was
30 on the 23rd (29 on Aug 15, '02
and 30 on Aug. 31, '01). The
Silver Lake average temperature
was 51.9 (53.2 in Aug. '02, 55.0
in Aug. '01 and 52.5 in Aug. '00).*

The August precipitation at
McCarthy was 2.30 inches
compared with 4.86 inches in
Aug. '02 and 0.60 inches in Aug.
'01. There were 21 days with a

trace or more of rainfall
recorded, the same as in Aug.
'02. *The precipitation at Silver
Lake was lighter with 1.64 inches
recorded (3.08 in Aug. '02 and
0.47 in Aug. '01). There were 14
days at Silver Lake with a trace
or more recorded compared to 12
days in Aug. '02.*

September 2003 will be
remembered for plenty of
sunshine and average precipita-
tion. The high temperature at
McCarthy was 66 on the 11th (67
on Sept. 3, '02 and 64 on Sept.
15, '01). The low temperature
was 12 on the 17th (20 on Sept.
22, '02 and 16 on Sept. 30, '01).
There were 12 days with the high
60 or above and only 8 days with
the low of 20 or lower. The
average monthly temperature at
McCarthy was 42.1 (44.6 in Sept.
'02 and 43.9 in Sept. '01). This
was about 8 degrees warmer than
the record 34.3 of September
1992. *Silver Lake had a high of
66 on the 12th (65 on Sept. 5, '02
and 64 on Sept. 11, '01) and a
low of 14 on the 17th (24 on Sept.
22, '02 and 22 on Sept. 30, '01).
The Silver Lake average
temperature was 40.7 (44.8 in
Sept. '02 and 43.6 in Sept. '01).*

There was 1.1 inches of snow
recorded at McCarthy in
September (0.00 in Sept. '02 and

'01 and 29.5 in Sept. '00) and
the total precipitation was 0.98
inches. The average for
September (1968-2001) is 2.56
inches and compares with the
1.47 inches in Sept '02, 2.07
inches in Sept. '01, 10.82 inches
in Sept. '00 and 2.77 inches in
Sept. '99. There were 12 days
with measurable rainfall,
compared with 16 days in Sept.
'02. *Silver Lake's total
precipitation was 0.94 inches
(1.51 inches in Sept. '02, 1.49
inches in Sept. '01 and 6.12
inches in Sept. '00). Silver Lake
had 7 days with a trace or more
of rainfall. Snowfall at Silver lake
was 1.5 inches.*

The first 15 days of October
have seen a beautiful Indian
summer, with record high
temperatures. The total
precipitation so far is light with
only 0.31 inches of rain (no
snow). There has been 8 days
with a trace or more. The high
temperature has been 75 on the
2nd, followed closely with 73 on
the 1st. Both are record highs for
October. The old record (68-03)
was 69 on Oct. 6th and 7th '69.
The low temperature has been 7
on the morning of the 15th.

Winter should be here to stay
any day now.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

An airplane is an airplane

BY FATHER J. MICHAEL HORNICK, J.C.L.

Reprinted from Recarpeting ANILCA: Is it the carpet or the carpet layers that need replacing?

In the late 1980's Senator Stevens carried on considerable negotiations with Federal managers over several aviation issues. Federal managers refused to recognize helicopters as having been included in ANILCA's term "airplanes;" and aircraft access was being managed too restively.

Regional Director Stieglitz of the USFWS responded to Stevens' challenge in a letter claiming their position was moderate and in line with Department of the Interior directives. However, Stieglitz did concede that the USFWS would no longer require permits first before helicopters could respond to medical emergencies or rescues within Wildlife Refuges. God forbid if you needed a helicopter permit for a rescue or emergency after 5:00 P.M. on a Friday night.

In November and December of 1993 the Magazine of the National Park and Conservation Association protested a proposed \$600,000 FAA grant to the State of Alaska for "planning airports" in Denali and Wrangell-St. Elias Parks.

The NPS and the NPCA insisted that the FAA had no authority to issue such grants and "strongly opposes building state-owned commercial airports in the heart of two of the country's premier wilderness parks."

Chip Dennerlein, Alaska regional director of NPCA, complained: "The FAA has taken from the Park Service and given to the State the authority to control access to these parks." The NPCA claimed it was the NPS who operated a small airstrip in Kantishna and another in Chisana. In August of 1993, Dennerlein and Alaska Regional NPS Director Moorehead wrote the FAA asking the grants not be issued because the airstrips were on Park Service land. The FAA responded that Alaska held rights-of-way to both airstrips.

The duplicity of the NPS and NPCA becomes a bit more evident if you recall the battle of the Kantishna airstrip during the summer of 1990. In June of 1990, State DOT workers took a roadgrader, a loader and dump truck to Kantishna to maintain the road between the Wonder Lake Ranger Station and Kantishna. While there, they also undertook brush clearing and maintenance of the gravel runway. Brush, last cleared by the State in 1974, was encroaching on the runway. NPS officials summoned a van-load of armed rangers who confronted and threatened the road crew as they worked on the airstrip. Work was temporarily halted until the Governor and the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation intervened, and the innocent maintenance was allowed to proceed. Ironically, DOT officials had

notified the NPS of their intended work three weeks in advance.

The Chisana airstrip was not the only one at risk in Wrangell-St. Elias. Judy Miller and her family lived in the Wrangells long before the Park Service arrived. While living in McCarthy, she, at first, even obtained employment with the NPS. She suggested that the NPS should tread lightly while getting established in the Wrangells. "I suggested the Park personnel should not assume rights to trespass on private property, but was instructed to do so anyway." Her family became frustrated with the NPS' continuous creation of restrictive regulations. The family moved further back into the bush.

In May of 1995 Mrs. Miller came to Anchorage to testify at the Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearings hosted by Senator Murkowski. Mrs. Miller's testimony expressed concern: "There has been an ongoing effort to force this strip from the long existing lease into NPS control. The Park now claims it is theirs but I urge this committee to further investigate this."

For the Miller family the May Creek strip was their official mail address and passenger access. "Air-taxi operators have been told they cannot land at May Creek without a Park permit. Doesn't this infringe on our right of access?"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

October 8, 2003

Dear Bonnie and Rick:

I am following your, and the newspaper, story of the Pilgrims, with avid interest. I was raised on a ranch/farm in eastern Montana. Just over the hill were our nearest neighbors, a family (the Cains) from Texas. They had 15 kids...some older than me and some younger. We went to the same log one-room school that my father had donated from his land. These kids did not carry a Bible but they were fun-loving, hard-working people and grew up to be a credit to the community.

They probably would have had more kids but the father died at a young age. The mother raised those kids out there in Montana with whatever they could scrounge or raise off the land. Welfare was not in vogue in those days. But I think they got some help from the government. At one "inspection" from the government, the kids were found running barefoot through the snow (our temp could easily get to 50 below zero). They had no shoes. Their house was just the outer siding without insulation.

I remember visiting them one day when Mrs. Cain was making a new dress for one of the girls. She laid the material out on the big dining room table and when she laid the pattern on it, instead of using pins, she laid table knives around the edge. This was quick, made no holes in the pattern, and easy to adjust in case the pattern "moved." I was totally intrigued and have used table knives in my sewing ever since.

I can't help but compare the Pilgrims to that family I knew and love in Montana. And what does what he (Papa Pilgrim) did as a youth have to do with who/what he is today? The NPS certainly are scraping the bottom of the barrel to find something against that family, aren't they?

Some wonder why they would live in such a remote place. We lived 60 miles from town (Miles City) and it was a real adventure to go there maybe once or twice a year. It was a major trip. My mother would give me a nickel to spend. I did not want my mother's scraps from other material. I wanted to cut into a brand new piece. And I still do today.

Our families out there practiced true subsistence. The Game Wardens turned in those who killed for fun, and wasted the precious meat. In or out of season.

Keep up the good work for the Pilgrims. I pray that they prevail in this harassment and that God takes care of the NPS in a very fitting way!!!! They should reap what they sow.

Sincerely,

MKL

Anchorage, AK.

10-14-3

Enclosed is a money order for \$35. I'd like a 2-year subscription to your *Wrangell St. Elias News*. I'd also like the following back issues: Sept. & Oct., March & April, May & June, July & Aug. all 2003. The \$5 can go for postage. I read your current issue online and think

what the NPS is doing is way wrong.

RC

Williams Bay, WI

October 19, 2003

via email to WSEN

My name is Henry Hodges, my mother was one of the Kennicott kids. Her name was Catherine Howard Hodges. She passed away last month. I have made 2 trips to Alaska and loved the area. Please send me information on a subscription to your wonderful newspaper... Thank you and keep up the good work.

Sherman, ME.

October 3, 2003

Letter of Appreciation

With all of the negative things going on in the Copper River Basin with the Park Service, etc., we need to know that there are positive things occurring here also.

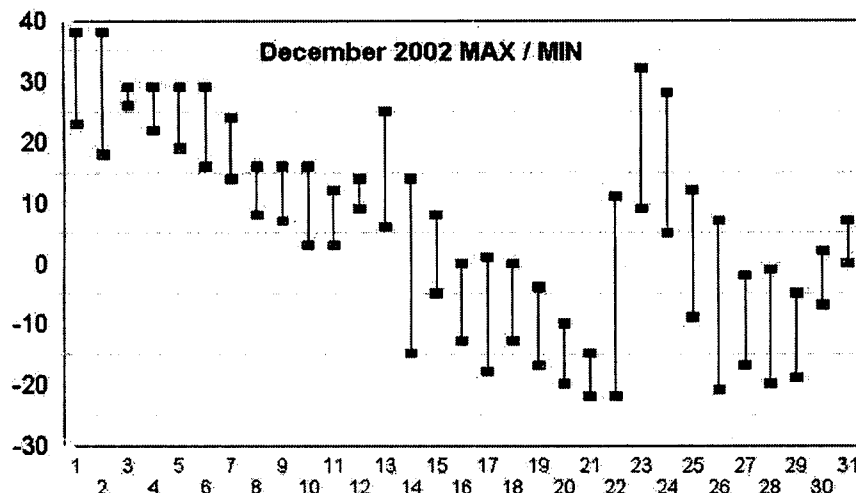
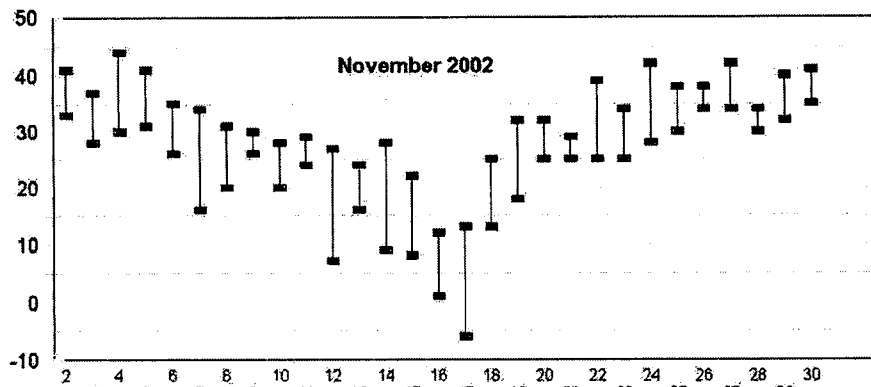
One of these positive things is we have a BLM Ranger HERE that loves his job. He cares about the community and its people. He does his job with passion and high degree of professionalism. This individual could and should be teaching the NPS personnel how to conduct themselves when dealing with the public. The standard has been set and the marks are high.

A warm deep-hearted Thanks goes to that BLM Ranger.

Thank you Rohn Nelson, for being that Ranger!

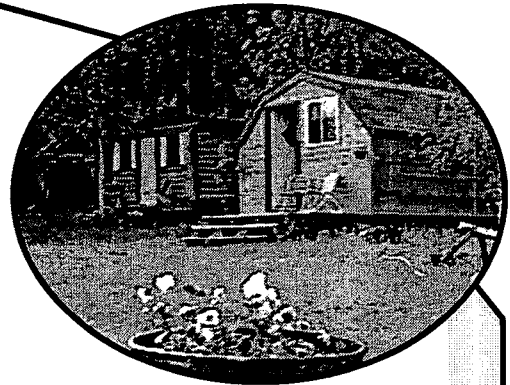
(Signed by 11 area residents)

Weather - What can we expect?



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