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Wrangell St. Elias News

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"

Volume Nineteen Issue Six November & December 2010

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Looking back at 2010



A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

It is October 26th and we woke to the look (and feel) of winter. Earlier this month the season attempted to arrive but it did not persist. As I look out the office window, I can see our field is white once again. An inch of fresh snow greeted us this early morning. Whether it remains is still unknown. It's a sure thing that winter is near at hand.

Rick and I are (thankfully) meeting our deadlines this issue—unlike the July/August *WSEN*! If you were keeping tabs on its arrival, you may have noticed it was late. It was our hope to have it in the mail on or about July 1st but the month started off in high gear and continued to build up momentum. By the morning of July 13th, I was knee deep in printed copies needing to be labeled for mailing on the 14th. Okay, so we were later than usual—no big deal, right? Except for the fact that both Rick and I had received jury duty summons and were expected to appear in Glennallen on the 13th. Even more important than the *WSEN* making the mail plane the next day, was the hostessing of our B & B guests that were coming and going. I decided to stay home. Rick traveled to the court house arriving in time for jury selection (he was chosen). He explained to the clerk that I just couldn't come.

I did manage to get the labeled *WSEN*'s to the mail plane on time the next day and take care of our guests. However, in September I received a certified letter in the mail signed by Magistrate Jean-maire Wilkinson of the Third Judicial District at Glennallen. I was ordered to appear at the Court-house on October 20th at 1 pm.—“To show cause why you should not

be held in contempt of this court or sanctioned by this court for failure to appear for Jury Duty on July 13, 2010, as ordered.” Oh, my...

Rick and I left home early that Wednesday morning, so we could do a few errands before my court appearance. When we arrived at Park's Place for groceries, two of my McCarthy area neighbors had arrived ahead of me. I asked each of them why they were in town. They both responded with, “Court hearing.” Hmm...I thought. At least I'll know someone when I get to court.

When I entered the court room, I was amazed to see the chairs full and people standing along the walls. But, even more to my surprise, was the recognition of two more of my neighbors. We were all there for the same reason, no-show for jury duty. Of course we all had different reasons, all of which seemed quite reasonable to me, but then I live in McCarthy and deal with the same issues. Mail that comes in twice a week and not always picked up on a regular basis, or mail that often

finds itself in someone else's box because of a missort by a well-meaning local sorter, or mail that just never appears. Also, traveling from Point A to Point B sometimes takes much longer than we expect, and this is not to mention the sketchy phone service at times—from our end and the other.

Needless to say, we McCarthy-ites had our day in court with each of us giving an account for our absence. We all received quite an education by Magistrate Wilkinson on the jury system and how it works—or is supposed to work. Everyone was given an option when they would like to serve. I chose April 18th. I pray the McCarthy Road is open for travel! If your May/June issue is late, you can figure I had to report for jury duty. This time I plan on appearing!

Wrangell St. Elias News welcomes aboard the following subscribers: Timothy Sullivan, Sr., AK; Allissa Corrow; Dean Messmer, AK.

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Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

Congratulations to Jeremy, Ally and Bjorn Keller! The Keller family is pleased to announce the birth of **Jacob Liam Keller**. Jacob was born on September 11th at 8:20 pm at the Geneva Woods Birthing Center in Anchorage. Jacob weighed 9 lb. 1 oz. and was 22 inches long, says Jeremy. Bjorn has quite a job in front of him—raising his baby brother and teaching Jacob the tricks of living in the Alaskan bush. The Kellers are back home at their Nizina River cabin and Jeremy reports that all are doing well.

Neil O'Donnell, Margaret Stock and daughter Catherine: The fall season always brings with it mixed feelings. Summer folks leave for their winter homes in the lower 48 while others, like the O'Donnells of Anchorage, leave the big city to relax in their McCarthy cabin.

They arrived on the 2nd of September, bringing their new foreign exchange student, **Asma Gabsi**. Asma is 17 years old and from Tunisia. She is in Alaska for a year while attending high school. This was her first trip to McCarthy.

Saturday, September 4th was a busy day for all four. Neil and Margaret participated in the annual McCarthy Kennicott Half Marathon race while Asma took in the local sights from the cockpit of an airplane—a flightsee with Wrangell Mountain Air. Catherine, on the other hand, chose to spend the time catching up on her homework. She actually “enjoys” homework, she says, and is exploring the depths of astronomy these days, desiring to become an astronomer in the future.

It sounds like the entire family had a great visit and probably already planning their next trip to our local area.

Helen Myers: Helen is a longtime WSEN subscriber and makes numerous visits to the McCarthy area—since the days of the Kennicott River tram, she says. Many locals know her as “Dan’s mom.” **Dan Myers**, that is. (Dan is a popular first name in McCarthy!)

Shortly after arriving at Glacier View Campground on the day of the Half Marathon, I spotted Dan who was preparing the racers for this year’s race. He informed me his mom was in

town and assisting him this year. When Helen and I greeted each other, I could certainly see the resemblance. This was Helen’s first time to visit Dan during the annual race event. She informed me he was doing double duty this year. Besides being the race organizer, he had donned #74 and chose to be a participant as well as instructor and encourager. Needless to say, Helen was thrilled to be on hand for the occasion.

For those of you new to the *News*, the Half-Marathon promotes the American Diabetes Association (ADA). Director Phoebe O’Connell was here, as usual, and said 74 racers, ranging from 8 - 76 years old, entered this year’s event, down from 90 last year.

Chris Epton, co-owner of the starting point, Glacier View Campground/grill, says he has a lot of returning runners who take advantage of his campground and outdoor restaurant.

It was great meeting you, Helen, and “welcome back” to McCarthy!

John and Barbara Rice and Marcheta Long: The Rices are summer folks, arriving in spring

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and departing in fall. While welcoming Helen in the precious *Item*, I couldn't help but think of Marcheta, who is becoming quite a regular visitor to our fine town. She and Barbara's friendship is a long-standing one, drawing her to McCarthy as often as she can leave her home in Battle Creek, Nebraska.

Marcheta arrived on the mail plane September 8th and said the flight to McCarthy from Anchorage was awesome. What a way to take in some extraordinary scenery!

The Rices kept Marcheta busy attending end-of-season social events. One of those events led to my cabin where the five of us enjoyed dinner and a rousing game of dominos. Marcheta "claims" to be a novice at the game, but she carried the lead until the very end, when somehow I managed to overtake her. We enjoyed her company and look forward to her next trip north.

The Rices took leave of their summer quarters and headed back down the highway to St. Louis, towing their 17' travel trailer. Marcheta accompanied them and visited mutual friends along the route.

Barbara and John were greeted with 95 degrees at home—a far cry from 68 in McCarthy on September 14, the day they departed.

Tom and Mary Kaye Golden: Facebook has arrived in McCarthy. "Friends" like Tom and Mary Kaye are learning their way around cyberspace. While I was typing on the last "item," I decided to take a break and check for messages or read the recent posts. Earlier in the day I had

received a message from Tom requesting information on future *WSEN* deadlines. It occurred to me to see if he and Mary Kaye might have something to contribute from way across McCarthy Creek.

Sure enough, on checking incoming messages I discovered they had sent an *Item*.

"This was a busy summer. We built a 6' x 24' addition to the deck and just finished a 14' x 16' greenhouse/shed—thanks to Dan (Elofsen) and family for their help. We tried 'square foot gardening' this year. It worked out pretty well. had 5 crops of radishes, all the herbs and lettuce we could eat. The broccoli and cabbage did well and we even had vine-ripened tomatoes. It should do better next year with the addition of the greenhouse. Next year a separate building for the generator and maybe I should schedule time to finish the trim on the cabin, too. Oh, I (Tom) drove our 26' cargo trailer off the McCarthy Road, scary. Thanks to Kaleb Rowland for getting us out without damage. The moral here is: don't get too close to soft shoulders."

The Golden's plan to leave McCarthy in a couple of weeks, spend about 10 days with family in Minnesota and then drive their RV to Florida where they will spend most of the winter. They seem to be extending their McCarthy time each year. They plan on being back here in late April and stay through Thanksgiving 2011. Have a great winter, Tom and Mary Kaye!

Kay and Holly Houghton: Kay and daughter Holly visited their McCarthy cabin the third week in September. It is always a

special occasion when Rick and I get to see the Houghton ladies. This particular trip allowed extra time for dinner, lunch and time to catch up on all the news from Holly and Kay's recent travels: Holly to Greece with sister Beth and Kay to Tanzania to help with the pharmaceutical needs of a remote mission clinic. There is never a dull moment for these adventuresome ladies.

Todd, Barb and Liam Bureau: The Bureau family stopped

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PS Form 3526, September 2007 (Page 2 of 2)

by mid-September while visiting their McCarthy area property. They had already been in town for about a week and were thoroughly enjoying the great fall weather. Summer is a busy time of the year for Todd and Barb. They own and operate Adventure Alaska Tours which is based in Hope. They always enjoy their "breaks" in McCarthy. This trip they made good use of the great weather and did several hiking excursions in the local area. Their winter plans include a 3 ½ month trip outside to visit family and friends. Liam, 8, will take his schoolwork with him, enabling him to stay caught up with the rest of his class back home in Hope.

It was great seeing and visiting with you. Have a great trip and a fun-packed winter!

Joan and Eric Wasserman: September was a month full of surprises. I had just finished cleaning one of our B & B cabins and was heading back to the house when a familiar voice (from my past) called out my name. It took me awhile to locate the source of the familiarity. Walking up the yard in my direction was a sight to behold—Joan Wasserman! She and hubby Eric were in town visiting their former home and making repairs on their front porch, she said.

Rick and I took her on a quick tour of our place since it's been a very long time when we were privileged to call them "neighbors."

When Rick, Rick Jr. and I moved here in 1978, the Wassermans were our nearest neighbors. Joan and I often walked to mail, which was a weekly event in those days. Daughter Shanna

used to accompany us, although she probably doesn't remember. Bundled up in warm winter gear, Shanna would ride along in an orange plastic sled, sleeping most of the 5-miles (one way) to our destination at the McCarthy airstrip.

Joan updated me on Shanna who is now married and mother of Joan and Eric's first and only grandson, Jack. At the present, Shanna, hubby Jarrett, and 17-month old Jack are living in Joan and Eric's home which gives both families quality time together.

Thanks for taking the time to visit, Joan. You can surprise me anytime you want!

Peggy Morsch: Another pleasant fall surprise for Rick and me was the visit we had with Peggy. She tries to travel up this way yearly from her home in Milwaukee. This year she arrived in early September and was here about a week. Besides visiting her neighbors and friends and taking hikes in the area, Peggy took advantage of several days of good weather by doing some outside and indoor chinking between the logs of her cabin. She did a great job and a huge job it was, too.

Rick and I took a short walk to her place to see her accomplishments and arrived at the right time. She had just finished baking a pan of brownies. We had a wonderful visit and a delicious treat, too. Thanks, Peggy; it was great seeing you!

Jim and Peggy Guntis: Peggy is also a popular name in our town. I finally decided to give Peggy Guntis a nickname—Peggy "G." She and hubby Jim are now back in sweltering Tuc-

son. They, too, left here in very comfortable temperatures only to arrive at their winter home and find it 105! Oh, my... The Guntis' left McCarthy on September 19th but not before Peggy gave a dinner party for a few of her immediate neighbors: George and Ted Cebula and Rick and myself. We had a great time with great food. Jim has a family of Gray Jays who frequent his deck looking (and finding) handouts. It was somewhat challenging eating our dinner that night. The Jay family thought they had surely died and gone to heaven. Six plates laden with all kinds of goodies just waiting to be sampled. Alas, but not by them. Thankfully for us diners, dog Sophie, kept the birds at bay while we adults enjoyed Peggy's delicious cooking and the beautiful fall scenery from their lofty hillside perch. Thanks, Peggy and Jim. By the way, your presence is missed already and, Jim, the Jay family has moved in on us. They now greet me in the mornings and evenings expecting their usual handout. I'm trying to accommodate them for you! Only until spring when you both return.

Neil Darish: As I type this "item," Neil is winging his way toward New York City and a special event at the James Beard Foundation. On Friday, October 29th. Executive Chef for McCarthy Lodge, Joshua Slaughter, is preparing dinner in the big city, featuring Alaska delicacies.

Neil was busy packing when I called. He is taking in his carry-on luggage, and sending on ahead via UPS, local produce which Josh will turn into such creations as: Pig Pavé with

Smoked Pasta and High-Bush Cranberry Jus; Halibut with Alaskan Carrots and Barley; Beets with Goat Cheese and Bacon, just to name a few.

The pigs were locally raised on Jeremy Keller's "farm," carrots came from Andy Shidner's garden, beets from a friend's garden in Fairbanks, and the halibut and salmon were provided by Ralph Lohse of Cordova. Other McCarthy Lodge kitchen staff are expected to attend as well: Angie Griffin, baker, and Kaitlyn Payne, Sues Chef. It should be quite a gala event!

Following his New York stay, Neil plans to make stops in Boston, Cape Cod and Seattle where he will visit with family and friends.

Have a great vacation, Neil, and come home refreshed and well fed for the long winter haul!

Nik Merlino: Another neighbor who has already completed one round trip full of adventure this fall, is presently making plans for another one.

On September 17th Nik, along with fellow neighbors, Ian Gioryi and Jim Drewry, launched a raft at the Chitina airport and traveled by water to the Million Dollar Bridge in Cordova. "It was an end-of-season trip with friends," said Nik. "It was the most beautiful stretch I've floated. It even rivals the Grand Canyon." They arrived safe and sound at their destination on the 22nd.

The 16' rubber raft, owned by Jim, carried the 3 men, 1 cooler, a dry box, 3 tents and Loma, Nik's dog. Sleeping all day on the water enabled Loma to carry out his nightly duties of guard-

ing the camp. You did a good job, Loma!

The next "float" is scheduled for January 20-February 13, 2011. The scenery and water make-up will be totally different. Rafting the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon includes white water with lots of rapids, says Nik. The trip will cover 265 river miles using 5 oar boats and one paddle boat. Sixteen folks are participating in this fun-packed private trip. Several are from the McCarthy area, and others are friends who Nik hasn't seen in over 5 years. He's calling it a mini-reunion.

Nik says he turns 31 on February 8th and he'll be spending another birthday—his second in a row—on the water. What a way to celebrate another new year, Nik, with neighbors and friends. Have a great, safe trip and Happy Birthday in advance!

Kennecott Mill Building gets attention: On October 3 and 4 a group of at least seven engineers as well as a contractor with his engineers converged on the McCarthy/Kennicott area. All eyes were on the Mill Building at Kennicott—a major historical attraction of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve. On assignment for the park service, Project Manager for Rim Architects of Anchorage, David Ziemer, and the others spent considerable time inspecting the present condition of the building, gathering detailed information to aid in the building's future stabilization and structural repairs' project. According to the park service, the Mill Building is scheduled for contractor work to begin in 2012.

M.A.C. is hiring! Recording Secretary Position for 2011. Position duties are: Announcing upcoming meetings by email/radio/posting; Attending MAC meetings and taking minutes once a month (March-Sept); Writing up minutes and sending out to MAC email list/posting publicly; Assisting President and/or Board with letter writing, correspondence; Organizing files, keeping records in order; and other miscellaneous administrative tasks pertaining to MAC business.

Pay is \$20/hour, up to 100 hours in the year. Candidate must have good note-taking and computer skills, must attend all MAC meetings (last Friday of each month, March-Sept) and should have Internet access and their own computer. Application will consist of a resume and letter of interest.

If interested, please contact President Mark Vail at markatfireweed@gmail.com

George and Ted Cebula: George enjoyed an extra long visit from brother Ted this summer. The Cebula boys roamed the local area (mostly by foot), visiting friends and neighbors. Ted said his goodbyes on September 20th after a great time in our local area once again.

Last—but certainly not least—are our heartfelt condolences to George at the loss of his dog Sophie on September 24th. She died peacefully in her sleep at their McCarthy home. George and Sophie were together for over 15 years.

McCarthy offers world-class scenery where tourists and locals co-exist

BY TIM MOWRY

If there is a prettier — and hipper — town in Alaska than McCarthy, I'd like to see it.

As you might have surmised, I just returned from a Labor Day road trip to McCarthy and I'm ready to pack up my bags and move to the tiny, old mining town nestled in the heart of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, 400 miles southeast of Fairbanks.

If only I had Jed Clampett's cash.

This was the second year in a row we — me, my wife, Kristan, and 11-year-old son, Logan — made the trip to McCarthy to join musician friends who play each Labor Day weekend at McCarthy Lodge in what is the town's last gasp of the summer.

After Labor Day, the town basically shuts down. All the National Park Service employees, guides and other seasonal residents that live in the town vanish. Basically, McCarthy turns into a ghost town with only a few year-round residents.

But in the summer, McCarthy is a bustling tourist town, offering world-class scenery of glaciers and snowcapped mountains. It's a place where locals and tourists manage to co-exist in a sort of symbiotic relationship.

What's so cool about McCarthy?

Well, pretty much everything. From the people to the history to the scenery to the atmosphere. Think Northern Exposure, only with real Alaskans instead of Hollywood lookalikes.

McCarthy is the kind of place where you can wear a tattered pair of cut-off blue jeans over long underwear all weekend long and feel right at home, which I did.

McCarthy is the kind of place where you can show up and join in the weekly Friday night softball game, which me and Kristan did.

McCarthy is the kind of place where you can let your 11-year-old son ride his bike around without worrying, which we did.

McCarthy is the kind of place where you can bring your dog and you don't have to worry about putting it on a leash, assuming it doesn't cause any problems with the local canines, which our two dogs didn't.

McCarthy is the kind of place where Xtra Tuffs and sandals are the preferred choices of footwear, depending on the weather.

McCarthy is the kind of place where you spend a weekend, leave and wonder why in the world you hadn't lived your life differently so that you could have moved there when you were 22, which I found myself doing for the second year in a row.

McCarthy is the kind of place where you can walk around and actually get a feel for what Alaska really used to be like 100 years ago.

Maybe it's driving the 60-mile McCarthy Road, an old, gravel railroad bed that is legendary for shredding tires and busting shocks on vehicles. (Fortunately, our Honda CRV made the trip without a problem and nothing fell off the sheet of plywood I had u-bolted to the roof rack with a pile of stuff ratchet-strapped

down.) Driving across the Kuskulana Bridge, an old railroad bridge that sits 238 feet above the Kuskulana River, made my butt pucker again this summer.

Maybe it's the incredible scenery once you arrive — jaw-dropping views of the massive, marshmallow-white Stairway Icefall, Kennicott Glacier and snow-capped 16,390-foot Mount Blackburn.

Maybe it's the goose bumps you get walking around the old, abandoned mining buildings at the Kennecott Mine, thinking about the miners who used to work there.

Maybe it's the airplanes buzzing around all day taking tourists out on flightseeing trips.

Maybe it's the lack of vehicle traffic due to the fact you can't actually drive to McCarthy and have to walk or ride a bike the last mile or so into town — unless you're a local who has paid an annual user fee to drive across a bridge leading into the town.

Maybe it's the laid-back attitude of the people who live there.

Maybe it's the lack of anything that resembles life in mainstream Alaska, which is getting more mainstream every day.

Whatever it is, it works for McCarthy and I can't wait to go back next year.

Reprinted from the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

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Used by permission.

The reds are back

BY STEFANIE TSCHAPPAT

The fish are in at Long Lake! It was no record year, but certainly the 10,652 sockeye salmon, and 323 coho salmon, that passed through the weir this season is something to bat an eye at.

The sockeye salmon stock that spawns within Long Lake is the largest salmon stock within the Chitina River drainage as well as the longest known annual spawning duration of any sockeye in North America.

The Long Lake weir was started in 1974 by the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game and was taken over in 1976 by Cliff Collins and run continuously by the Collins family until 2003 when an agreement was formed between the Collins Family Trust, the Wrangell St. Elias National Park/Preserve, and the Copper River Watershed Project. Thirty-five years of weir data records show a variation in abundance of Long Lake runs ranging from 636 in 2008, to over 50,000 in 2002.

The weir site itself is located on Collins Family Trust land at mile 45 on the McCarthy Road and since 1974 the structure has changed little. In 2003 a sampling box was constructed to facilitate the sampling of sockeye of age, sex, and length according to a sampling protocol established by ADF&G.

In the past, counting was done daily by a person monitoring the weir. This season, the Park Service installed an underwater camera to allow fish unin-

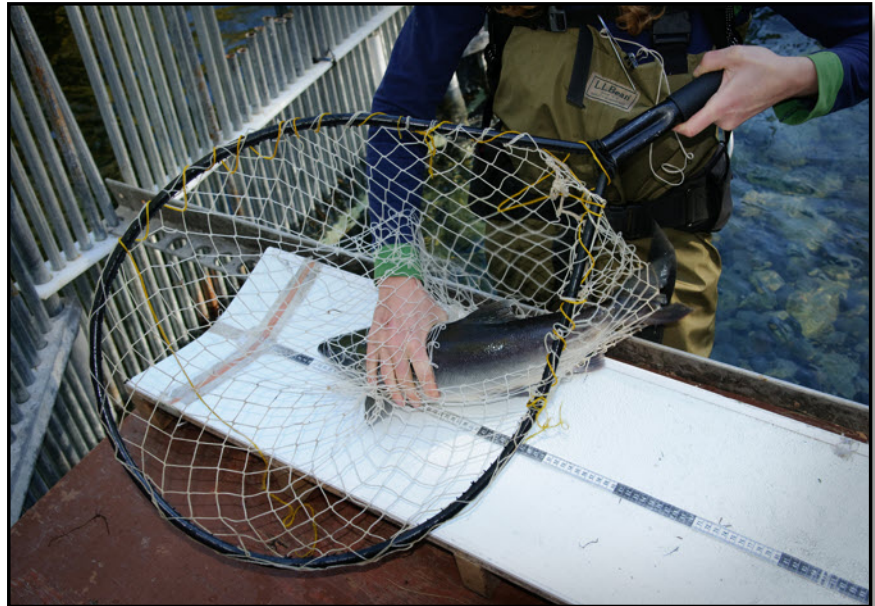


Photo courtesy Peggy Morsch



Photo courtesy Peggy Morsch

Stefanie measures a sockeye salmon at the Long Lake weir facility. Baby Hayden Lucille catches a few winks while mom works.

hibited travel through the weir. The video is recorded onto a DVR machine and then is reviewed daily to gather the num-

bers of salmon traveling through the weir hour by hour. The camera is powered by a solar battery setup and the whole system ran without any problems the whole season.

In 2007, otolith (ear bone) sampling was started to supplement the age data from scale samples to provide more accurate data. This sampling occurs after the fish spawn and carcasses are gathered as they float to the surface of the water. This year we are hoping to gather 400 otoliths through the winter and early spring.

This was my second year working as a Biological Technician for the Park Service and third year involved in the project.

Information was gathered from the National Park Service Annual Report by Fisheries Biologist Molly McCormick—my boss.

"If you are not prepared to use force to defend civilization, then be prepared to accept barbarism." — Thomas Sowell

Pebble's real problem is a different kind of 'green'

CRAIG MEDRED

PEBBLE —From the air, the old caribou trails are still visible as tracks across the dry tundra, though the caribou are largely gone.

Once the Mulchatna herd swarmed the surrounding hills 200,000 strong, but it began a steady decline late in the 1990s. Now the herd is about a quarter of its peak size, and the bulk of the population has moved farther southwest along Iliamna Lake. No one knows why.

“Everything changes,” says helicopter pilot Glenn Summa.

Ninety million years ago, dinosaurs roamed here, and beneath their feet the earth's volcanic core shot a stream of molten, copper-rich rock skyward. The dinosaurs didn't care. Neither did the mastodons or saber-toothed tigers or short-faced bears or any of the other animals that arrived later with the glaciers of the Ice Age only to follow the dinosaurs into extinction.

None of them knew what lurked beneath the ground. Nor did the miners who swept across the north in the 1800s, wandering constantly — much like the caribou — in search of mineral riches. They panned some gold out of the main creeks draining into salmon-rich Iliamna Lake, but there was never enough color to spark anyone's interest in large-scale mining. Cominco Alaska Exploration, a major mining company, did poke around in the area in 1986 and discover what was originally called the

Pebble Beach copper prospect in an area that reminded geologist Phil St. George of the Pebble Beach Golf Course in California. But by 1992, Cominco had rejected any idea of development.

The estimated 3 million tons of copper were bound up in a billion tons of rock in a place far from nowhere. Development costs for roads, a port and a mill were staggering. Cominco walked away, and by 2005 an Alaska state study land review for the area concluded “the most significant mineral occurrence within (the surrounding country) is perhaps the Fog Lake (Fog Pond) gold prospect, considered to be a gold-and silver-bearing prospect with minor copper values.”

Fog Lake today remains a potential mineral development lost in the fog like so many other mining dreams for Alaska. But about the time the state was noting the possible value of Fog Lake, the real value of something called the Pebble prospect began to explode onto the scene, 40 miles to the northwest on the opposite side of 77-mile-long, 22-mile-wide Iliamna Lake.

Further probing of Pebble by Northern Dynasty Minerals early in this decade revealed a concentration of copper beneath the old Pebble Beach, even more gold, and a lot of valuable molybdenum. At the same time, worldwide demand for copper was growing, shifting the economics of development. Development costs that had been too high for Cominco to even contemplate were starting to look like they might at least be worth investi-

gating, along with the size of that copper deposit.

All of which sparked a political explosion in what would come to be called “the headwaters of Bristol Bay.”

A simple issue

If you are a tried and true environmentalist, any question about developing the Pebble mineral deposit has a simple answer: The risk isn't worth it. There could be an accident. Mine waste could leak into surrounding waters. Some salmon — some portion of the 30 to 40 million that return to Bristol Bay every year — could be threatened. Serious environmental damage could take place. Yes, the mine would create some jobs, but they would be temporary. And, as is usually the case in the business world, most of the profit from the mine would go to the mining companies and their shareholders. As the television advertisement says, “they get the gold, Alaskans get the toxic waste.”

No such concerns were raised the last time Alaska saw the development of a major copper mine at the start of the 20th century. Between 1911 and 1938, the Kennecott Mine ripped \$200 million worth of copper out of the Wrangell Mountains near McCarthy, concentrated it in a most environmentally unfriendly way, dumped its waste into the headwaters of the Copper River, and shipped the ore Outside.

Today, the long-abandoned mine is a tourist attraction in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park

and Preserve, and the Copper River is home to the most valuable salmon fishery in Alaska. Copper River red and king salmon are worth so much as a brand that somehow more Copper River reds and kings are sold in America every year than are actually caught at the mouth of the Copper River.

Noted Summa, a helicopter pilot who flies wealthy skiers around some of the wildest and most beautiful parts of Alaska when he isn't flying around would-be miners, "everything changes."

The real Pebble problem

The biggest hurdle facing Pebble today isn't the gang of environmentalists, commercial fishermen and sport-fishing lodge fat cats constantly attacking it. The biggest hurdle facing Pebble is the same one that confronted Kennecott — economics. Pebble is the Kennecott of its time, a discovery in a wilderness devoid of infrastructure in a state of tricky politics.

There came a lot of the latter before Kennecott mined any ore — as well as an actual honest-to-God shootout between two companies, the Alaska Home Railroad out of Valdez and the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad out of Homer, trying to get in on the action. The situation at Pebble is only slightly different in that one financial interest is already in place in Southwest Alaska while the other is trying to gain a foothold.

The financial interest in place is the fishing industry, which is dominated by Pacific Northwest business interests. It attacks the would-be miners by noting they are led by Northern

Dynasty Minerals, a Canadian company, and Anglo American, a global mining giant based in London.

Longtime Alaskan Mike Heatwole, a spokesman for the Pebble Partnership, the Alaska arm of the two mining companies, said this shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone. Developing Pebble, he noted, will cost billions of dollars, if it is ever developed. Heatwole took this reporter and a couple of others on a tour of the Pebble prospect last week. There was really nothing new to see.

More than 20 years ago, I'd hunted caribou from a camp near Frying Pan Lake in the middle of the claims. The country was all too familiar. Summa said it's relatively rare to see a caribou there now, but there are still big flocks of ptarmigan, and the lake still drains into some of the best rainbow trout and salmon fishing water in the world.

It's easy to understand why ultra-rich Bob Gillam, CEO of McKinley Capital Management in Anchorage and a regular visitor to the area, would like to keep this place just like it is. It is, in talking to Heatwole, equally obvious why the Pebble Partnership is considering a mine.

Beneath the tundra and some old glacial till, there are now estimated to be about 72 billion pounds of copper, 94 million ounces of gold and 4.8 million pounds of molybdenum. Copper, a key component in modern batteries, has become an increasingly valuable commodity since hybrid cars hit the road, said Heatwole.

Pebble would probably only have to invest \$5 or \$10 billion, maybe more, to get the minerals

to market if the millions it is now spending on environmental studies can demonstrate mining is possible here without destroying the environment. And, of course, it is possible.

Just as it is possible, as Gillam and hundreds of commercial fishermen in Bristol Bay warn, that there could be an accident, and the mine could end up polluting streams in the headwaters of Bristol Bay. The commercial fishermen say that could destroy them. Heatwole, who has spent his life in Alaska, notes about half of those fishermen are from Outside anyway. The state has set up a system, limited entry, that sort of encourages fishermen to live Outside. A lot of people, if they can make a year's wages fishing a summer in Bristol Bay, would prefer to reside somewhere warm and sunny in the winter, it seems, than battle the long cold dark.

Likewise, most people, especially young people born into Bristol Bay can't come up with the funds to buy a limited-entry fishing permit now selling for \$130,000 to \$140,000, plus the \$50,000 to \$400,000 cost of a boat and fishing gear. Pebble likes to pitch itself as the viable job alternative, but even there, feelings are mixed.

Drilling for gold

On a hillside overlooking a valley where I once shot a bull caribou, Brian Janti heads a gang of three on a drill rig boring rock cores with which geologists assess the value of the ore beneath the ground. A bronzed and strapping young man, he grew up in nearby Newhalen on the shore of Iliamna Lake.

“I moved here in the eighth grade,” he said. “My mom’s a teacher.” Janti’s mom liked the place. So did he. He likes to hunt and fish and hang out in the wilderness.

“A wolf came by a couple weeks ago,” he says with a certain sense of delight. And then he tells about the coworker busy using the bathroom when he turned his head to stare smack into the face of a grizzly bear watching him from only feet away. It is simple story that easily illustrates the differences between this place and America.

But Janti likes his job, too. He likes his two Alaska Native coworkers. He likes what he has seen so far of the Pebble Partnership. He talks about the great lengths to which the company has gone to make its test drill sites as environmentally clean as possible.

Before drilling, topsoil is set aside and then replaced over the bore holes. The drill rigs arrive on platforms beneath helicopters, are set on the ground for work, and are then removed. The same goes for the outhouses, which are flown in and flown out, their effluent then collected and hauled to Anchorage for treatment. The rigs are onsite only a matter of days so they don’t kill any vegetation beneath.

“It’s funny going around to the old (drill) sites,” Janti says. “Even the ones I drilled myself, I can’t even tell where we were.”

Janti thinks Pebble is a pretty good company, but he is no company man. One of the first things he does is jump a reporter about a story that quoted his brother as saying that without a Pebble mine he’d have to leave the area for lack of work. Not true, Janti says. His brother didn’t say it, and mine or

no mine, he said, the Jantis are staying.

The Iliamna country, he said, “it grows on you.”

Everything is relative

The Kennecott mine ran for less than three decades before it was abandoned. That is a little blip of time even in Alaska’s relatively short history. Opponents of Pebble like to point out the here-today, gone-tomorrow nature of mining. But of the Kennecott mine, the National Park Service’s official history says this:

The impact of Kennecott on Alaska’s development cannot be measured by production statistics. Its importance in the territory’s economy can not be exaggerated. Kennecott’s operation commenced as placer gold production in several regions of Alaska was declining. Its large investments heralded a new era of corporate expansion and provided a much-needed payroll for many years.

Everything is economics. A Pebble development would pump billions of dollars into the state for a mine, a new port somewhere on the north shore of Cook Inlet, a road around the east of Iliamna Lake, and multiple pipelines to move fuel from tidewater to the mine and a slurry of ore back from the mine to tidewater.

The project would create hundreds of jobs that would spin out into thousands in industries that cater to miners and mining. The need for fuel to power the mine might even make it more attractive for oil companies to start looking for much-needed new natural gas in Cook Inlet or boost the chances for a liquefied natural gas plant if it becomes necessary for the region to import natural gas. Anchorage, once again this week, was asking residents to turn down their thermostats and shut off their lights to try to get a better

handle on how well conservation might work if a winter-time gas shortage develops. Such a shortage is enough of a threat that there are plans for rolling brown-outs if conservation doesn’t work.

But, of course, at the moment a possible future gas shortage really isn’t any more of a problem for Anchorage than is the struggling Lower 48 economy. The recession that has hit parts of America hard hasn’t been felt so profoundly in Alaska. There isn’t really much of a reason for anyone here to worry about jobs.

That Pebble might provide some? Big deal. That banning development of Pebble might foreclose job opportunities? So what? What does that mean to anyone living beyond the Iliamna area?

At the moment, nothing. At the moment, it is easy to be opposed to Pebble, especially if you fish the region or used to hunt caribou there. Why tear up a place attractive enough to give the geologist who discovered it thoughts of Pebble Beach only to create a huge, open-pit hole in the ground?

Those are the thoughts today. But what if the oil that flows through the trans-Alaska oil pipeline stops flowing in 2015, as some now worry, or not long thereafter? And what if the Alaska economy starts going in the tank, and the banks starts foreclosing on houses all over Anchorage, as has happened in the past? What will the thoughts about Pebble be then?

“Everything,” as Summa so aptly noted, “changes.”

The real questions are how and when and for what reasons.

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Contact Craig Medred at craig (at) alaskadispatch.com

the Languid Lady

Wildflowers of the Wrangells—Part 4: “Evergreen Plants”

BY DEE FRADY

As I look out the front door of our cabin, I only see gray limbs. November is fast approaching and all the deciduous trees have lost their colorful leaves. The flowers have faded and the short growing season is all but over. The snow has not yet arrived so it appears quite barren except for the green spruce. Do you think it is really as drab as it appears at first glance?

One of my treasures is a book printed in 1887, “Gray’s Lessons In Botany.” The book defines the word evergreen as holding the leaves over winter and until new ones appear, or longer. If you look closer at the small plants and ground covers, green leaves remain all through the woods. Even when the snow covers them, they remain green through the winter and become the first signs of green as the snow melts in the spring.

LARGE-FLOWERED WINTERGREEN (*Pyrola grandiflora*) Wintergreen Family

The Wintergreen family contains small plants often with simple evergreen leaves. This plant found primarily in woodlands or on mountainsides can also grow on dry tundra. The thick, round, evergreen leaves are a shiny dark green that grows around the base of the stem. At the top

of 5 to 10 inch stems are greenish-white, dark-veined, flowers with 5 petals. These flowers are larger and showier than the pink variety. They bloom in June and July. Typical of *Pyrolas* they have a pronounced style that curve at maturity. Although great for growing in shady places and transplants, these flowers are best enjoyed in their native habitat. *Pyrola*, from the Latin *pyrus* (“pear tree”), refers to the leaves of some species that resemble those of pears. Medicinal usage includes skin salves from leaves, tea for skin eruptions and mouthwash for canker sores and gum inflammations.

PINK PYROLA (*Pyrola asarifolia*) Wintergreen Family

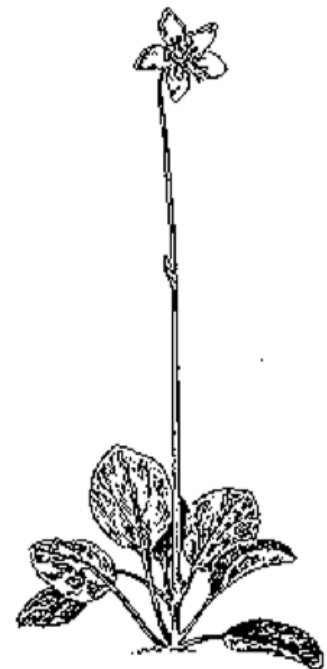
A dainty inhabitant of moist woods and meadows. The round, shiny leaves cluster around the base of the stalk. The straight 8 to 12 inch spike contains pink to reddish, slightly nodding flowers with 5 petals and protruding styles. The delicately scented flowers bloom in June and July. They make excellent cut flowers in a small vase. Some botanists believe these plants exist in a symbiotic relationship with conifers.

One of my favorite flowers to press as they turn a dark pink color. They press well as spikes or individual florets.

SIDEBELLS PYROLA (*Pyrola secunda*) Wintergreen Family

Also prefer a woody habitat, as many of the different species are found growing in the same area. A low plant with green, oval-shaped, smooth leaves that grow in a basal cluster. These evergreens grow from long, creeping roots. The small, green, bell-shaped, drooping blossoms hang to one side of a curved 3 to 6 inch stem. They also have a protruding style. Flowering occurs in June and July.

These charming plants appear in abundance around our



Shy Maiden (Star-shaped flower also called Bethlehem Star)

store in areas of disturbance. They are interesting to press for miniature work.

Two other common evergreens are: Green Pyrola (*P. chlorantha*) which has yellowish-green flowers and Shy Maiden (*Moneses uniflora*) which has one very fragrant star-shaped flower per plant. (Also called Single Delight or Bethlehem Star.)

TWINFLOWER (*Linnaea borealis*) Honeysuckle Family

This trailing shrub (a woody perennial) prefers woods and dry, open slopes in the mountains. The small, dark evergreen leaves oppose on stems. The stalks, 3 to 6 inches tall arise from the stems and contain one or two sets of leaves topped by two pale pink, bell-shaped flowers. (Always appear in pairs, thus the common name.) Large patches of Twinflower abound and are as fragrant as a delicate perfume. This delicate little



Twinflower (Flowers appear in pairs)

beauty flowers from mid- June to early August. Named in honor of Swedish botanist, Carolus Linnaeus (1707-78), father of botanical names. It is said he liked to pose for his portrait with a sprig of Twinflower in his hand. This beautiful ground cover is easy to transplant. It grows around the world in northern latitudes. The foliage resembles that of Kinnikinnick.

KINNIKINNICK/BEARBERRY (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) Heath Family

The Heath family contains shrubs, often evergreen and includes blueberries, huckleberries and cranberries. Kinnikinnick, commonly seen in dry spruce forests or sandy, open sites is a sprawling, evergreen shrub that has a main tap root and woody, trailing stems that form large mats. The rounded, oblong leaves, tapered at one end have a leathery top and rough underneath. The small, pink, Chinese lantern-shaped flowers bloom in May and June. The dull, reddish-orange, mealy berries form in August or September. They are insipid in flavor and not generally used for food. However, during poor berry production years they are useful as a filler. The berries persist on plants throughout the winter providing forage for spruce hens, moose and sheep. The plant by itself is sometimes confused with Twinflower or Lowbush Cranberry. Found also in northern Europe and Asia, Kinnikinnick is an Indian word meaning "smoking mixture." Reportedly, the dried leaves once were crumbled and used as a substitute for tobacco. Leaves are grown commercially for use

as a diuretic and astringent for relieving kidney and bladder problems. One alleged medicinal use included the control of several sexually transmitted diseases. A tea was concocted by Alaskan homesteaders by soaking the leaves in brandy and consuming for minor health problems. In Greek *arctos* is "bear" and *staphyle* "grape" whereas in Latin *uva* is "a bunch of grapes" and *ursus* is "bear." The berries are indeed commonly eaten by bears. One other use is to plant on slopes to prevent soil erosion.

LOW-BUSH
CRANBERRY/LINGONBERRY
(*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*) Heath Family

Also called Mountain Cranberry this plant likes acid soil of a rocky, dry, peaty nature and grows in woods. A low, evergreen shrub that creeps from horizontal roots, the 3 to 8 inch branches have many, small oval, shiny leaves with rolled edges that alternate. Brown spots on undersides of the leaves distinguish this plant from *uva-ursi*. The pink, bell-shaped flowers cluster at branch ends in June and July. They produce round, firm, dark red berries that ripen early in September. They are best picked after a frost. The berries are similar in appearance to the commercial cranberry but much smaller. They also range across northern Europe and Asia.

Since they contain benzoic acid, the berries can be kept without preserving by storing in a cool place. Cranberries are easily frozen or successfully dried. Esteemed by Hudson Bay Company and sent as gifts to

England. Chew the berries for a sore throat as they contain Vitamin C. Munch on berries to relieve an upset stomach as they stimulate gastric juice production. The acidic fruit often persists through the winter and provides a source of food for ptarmigan, grouse and bears. I have found flocks of Bohemian Waxwings and voles to consume large quantities of these fruits. The foliage may be useful to reindeer and caribou as winter browse. Boiling the leaves and stems with alum produces a red dye. Easy to transplant they are a fine ground cover for full sun to partial shade. Bog Cranberry

(*Oxycoccus microcarpus*) is also an evergreen that grows on boggy hummocks, produces flowers that resemble tiny Shooting Stars followed by edible fruit.

Probably the most useful of Alaska's berries as well as having a superior flavor over commercial cranberries, nothing heralds the holiday season any better. Cranberry sauces to go with Thanksgiving turkey is a must, not to mention it is also a good digestive aid. Cranberry liqueur is a wonderful accompaniment for Christmas. How about Cranberry Waldorf, muffins, nut breads, preserve for toast or the best of herbal teas? The recipes abound.

Worth mentioning is one last evergreen family, useful in holiday arrangements. The Club Moss family grows as a low, creeping plant that has spike-like branches or can resemble tiny pine trees. Creeping Jenny (Christmas Greens) has branched leaves resembling cedar. These plants have no flowers as they are a moss and produce spores. They make lovely arrangements around candles or with spruce boughs for Christmas wreaths. Happy Holidays!



Editor's Note: This story was originally published in the November & December 1998 issue of WS-EN.

Lakina River bridge opens with new load limits

BY BONNIE KENYON

The Department of Transportation (DOT) has announced the opening of the Lakina River bridge located at milepost 44.3 of the McCarthy Road. The bridge was closed to all vehicle and pedestrian traffic beginning Sunday, September 26 at 9 pm. The bridge was tentatively scheduled to reopen October 4th but, by the morning of September 29th, the DOT repair crew had completed the critical bridge repairs. Operating hours on the bridge are now unrestricted.

The Lakina River bridge was severely damaged in late July when a vehicle hauling heavy equipment hit some vertical truss members. According to DOT, as a result of the incident and the bridge's age, some of its structural elements are now compromised, requiring new load limits.

When the bridge opened on the 29th, the limited weight load of

6,000 lbs. was increased to 40,000 lb. Since the repairs were completed, the bridge was re-evaluated. In an October 8th press release, DOT announced the new load limits to be between 19 tons and 32 tons. Meadow Bailey, Northern Region Public Information Officer, stated: "Weight limits are dependent on wheel configuration. Vehicles over 32 tons need to coordinate with Commercial Vehicle Enforcement to get a permit." Permits are available at:

<http://dot.alaska.gov/mscve/main.cfm?go=permits>.

Bailey further explained that the 32 tons is "not necessarily depending on the wheel configuration, but any load above 32 tons MUST be approved and authorized with a permit.

Weight limits are posted on the bridge. Permits are monitored by Commercial Vehicle Enforcement, but personnel are not stationed at the bridge."

In an earlier conversation with Clark Milne from the Northern

Region's Maintenance division, he stated that even with repairs the Lakina River bridge is not expected to measure up to the former 100% capability. Therefore, it more than likely will be replaced. DOT applies to the Federal Highway Administration for a bridge replacement—a process that could take up to 5 years.

Bailey responded with: "The bridge has been requested in the 2011 STIP which is how projects in Alaska are funded. Ethan Birkholz, DOT&PF Planning Chief for Northern Region is the contact; his number is 451-2381."

The Lakina River bridge is located about 15 miles west of McCarthy. For more information contact: Meadow Bailey at 907-378-2340 or email her at meadow.bailey@alaska.gov.

Clark Milne can be reached at 907-451-5285.

Guns on the homestead

Part three—THE PACKIN' PISTOL

BY RICK KENYON

One of the big problems with guns in bush Alaska is having one at hand when it is needed. When you are out cutting firewood and Mr. Big Bruin pops up behind a bush ten feet away and decides that you are either a threat or lunch, most of us would agree that we would prefer a 12 gauge shotgun or large, powerful rifle. Problem is, it just is not very convenient to go about our daily business in the backwoods encumbered by a "big gun." Hence the popularity of the .44 magnum, and more recently the .454 Casull type revolvers. These are usually regarded as minimum stopping power for large beasts with sharp claws and teeth at close range.

Note we are not talking hunting here, but rather everyday carry for either defense against animals or for use on small game or predators. In past years, I had settled on the ruggedly built Ruger Blackhawk in .45 Colt caliber, using heavy bullets. With the proper loads, the old Colt caliber can match the .44 magnum in stopping power, and the Blackhawk .45 weighs 39 ounces compared to the Super Blackhawk's 45 ounces. While not a great difference, that six ounce saving is welcome after a long day afield. When Smith &

Wesson and Taurus started using titanium in their revolvers, I had hoped that Ruger would follow suit in their Blackhawk line. Perhaps they will some day, but for now 39 ounces is the best we can do without extensive work by one of the sixgun gunsmiths (like Hamilton Bowen) who specialize in custom work on the single actions.



**Model 425 Tracker
.41 Magnum 5-Shots
Total Titanium**

Enter the Taurus Tracker in .41 magnum. At twenty-four ounces with a 4" barrel and adjustable sights, this gun is just too good to pass up for those of us who "carry lots, and shoot little." While the .41 magnum may be a bit smaller than ideal, believe me when I say that you would not enjoy shooting a gun of this size and weight in a heavier caliber. (The Tracker is also available in .45 Colt, but not yet in titanium. I almost went with the aluminum frame gun in this caliber, but I was concerned that the alloy frame would not hold up to heavy loads.) With 250

grain bullets at 1200 feet per second, the .41 magnum is no slouch. I normally carry a 325 grain bullet in my Ruger at around 1100 fps, so the .41 isn't giving up too much in the way of power. When you consider that the Taurus weighs 28.5 ounces fully loaded, compared to the Ruger's 48 ounces, (the Taurus carries 5 rounds, the Ruger 6)

two things become immediately apparent: The Taurus is a lot more comfortable to carry, if somewhat less comfortable to shoot!

Actually, the recoil of the Tracker is not as bad as you would think. Taurus has done a wonderful job of taming recoil by using a combination of porting, to take much of the upward barrel "flip" out of the equation, and a unique grip

called the "Ribber." The Ribber grip's backstrap is molded from a soft-textured elastomer rubber and is thickly cushioned around the reduced-dimension inner titanium grip frame. The front and sides of the grip are formed by wraparound, closely spaced small elastomer "ribs." These soft, flexible ribs deform and squeeze together when grasped, and actually form finger grooves that conform to the size and shape of your hand. When released, they return to their natural shape. These Ribber grips are considered state-of-the-art in revolver grip design, and they

really work at reducing the "bite" of the magnum caliber.

I found that with 210-220 grain bullets, the gun is not uncomfortable to shoot, even when fired rapidly in double-action mode. Federal markets a 250 grain lead bullet "hunting load" that definitely has a bite to it, but is in no way uncontrollable. When facing the big beasties, a heavier bullet is to be preferred in most cases.

Being a handloader, naturally I started perusing the catalogs for a similar bullet to the one that Federal uses. It had been a few years since I had owned and reloaded for the .41 magnum, so I had to get reacquainted with the round. After being somewhat spoiled by the number of components on the market for the .44 magnum and the .45 Colt, I was at first a bit disappointed at the lack of bullets on the market for the .41. But a bit of research turned up an almost identical match to the Federal bullets in the famous Cabella's catalog. A company called LBT makes a "heat treated solid" bullet that almost perfectly matches the bullet used by Federal in their excellent hunting load. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if it is the same bullet. For the .41 mag-

num, they have two offerings. Both are solid lead with gas checks and have a wide metplat, or bullet face. One weighs 250 grains, the other 265. I ordered a box of both.



WSEN staff photo

Tortilla holster by El Paso Saddlery.

Cabella's being Cabella's, a box arrived in short order. Both bullets are nicely cast, but it was soon apparent that the heavier, 265 grain version is made for revolvers with longer cylinders than the Taurus. I think they can be made to work, but it will take some experimentation with seating depths below the crimp groove and carefully working up a load for the compressed charge. I set them on the shelf for the time being. The bullets come with load data, which I followed closely, and came up with 1180 fps on the chronograph. Group size at 25 yards ran 2" to

2.5", shooting over a rest from a bench.

Other than light weight, the proper holster is one of the most critical factors in carrying a packin' pistol. Oh, sure, for trips to the outhouse they carry fine in a jean's pocket. But for every day use, I want a holster that sits high enough that the barrel doesn't drag on the truck seat, and with enough security that the gun is always where it should be. I enjoy leather work, and often make my own holsters, but I ran across an item by El Paso Saddlery that looked too good to pass up. Their

Tortilla model rides high on the belt and has a thumb-break style retaining strap. It's listed on their website for \$50, complete with soft leather lining. They were running a sale when I ordered mine, just \$40 plus shipping. It wouldn't hurt to ask if the sale is still going on.

Editors Note: This article was first published in the September & October 2002 WSEN. Expect current prices to be considerably higher than those quoted.

Do you have a favorite Guns on the Homestead topic? We would like to hear from you.

"Those who have been intoxicated with power ... can never willingly abandon it." —British statesman Edmund Burke (1729-1797)

"Everything is changing. People are taking the comedians seriously and the politicians as a joke."—American humorist Will Rogers (1879-1935)

CLASSIFIED—HOUSE SITTING JOB WANTED

Medical professional would like to house sit in Alaska for the winter. 822-3302, extension 403.

Elizabeth Ann Tower (1926—2010)

We note the passing of long-time Alaskan, physician and distinguished Alaskan historian, Elizabeth Tower of Anchorage. Her books Icebound Empire, and Ghosts of Kennecott: The Story of Stephen Birch are must reads for anyone fascinated with the history of the Kennecott copper mines and the Copper River and Northwestern Railway.

Longtime Alaskan Dr. Elizabeth Ann Tower, 84, died Sept. 27, 2010, at her home in Anchorage.

Elizabeth (Betsy) Tower was born Aug. 1, 1926, to Edna and Robert Bingham of Shaker Heights, Ohio. She attended the Laurel School in Shaker Heights and Vassar College, from which she graduated Phi Beta Kappa after three years, in 1947. She then attended medical school at Western Reserve (now known as Case Western Reserve), graduating in 1951.

Betsy was married in 1949 to John C. Tower. Both Betsy and John completed medical internships and residencies at Grace New Haven Hospital in New Haven, Conn., where their first child, Christina, was born in 1953.

After completing their medical training, in 1954 the Towers moved to Anchorage at the urging of pioneer Alaska physician Dr. C. Earl Albrecht. Their first home and office was on Second Avenue in downtown Anchorage. While raising four children, Betsy began a varied career in medicine and public health.

In her early career, Betsy briefly practiced medicine at the Anchorage Medical and Surgical Clinic. For many years, she served as public health officer for South-

central Alaska, supervising Alaska public health nurses in Southcentral Alaska, Southwestern Alaska and the Aleutians. During her 25-year career with the Alaska Division of Public Health, she traveled widely in Bush Alaska and developed a statewide vaccination program for hepatitis B.

Betsy and John both fully embraced their new life in Alaska. They were enthusiastic supporters of the statehood movement. They both earned pilot's licenses and enjoyed hunting and fishing. In 1959, they built the first of several recreational cabins at Christiansen Lake near Talkeetna, which their children and grandchildren continue to enjoy. They formed lifetime friendships with many other young couples who came to Anchorage before statehood and shared the challenges and adventures of Alaska's first 50 years of statehood.

After retiring from the Alaska Division of Public Health in 1986, Betsy pursued her longstanding interest in history and writing. She received the Alaska Historical Society's 1996 Historian of the Year award for her book "Icebound Empire," a history of the Kennecott Copper Co. She also wrote biographies of notable Alaskans Sheldon Jackson, Stephen Birch, Michael Heney, Austin E. "Cap" Lathrop and William Egan; a guide to skiing in Alaska; a history of Anchorage; a novel set in the Aleutians; and several prize-winning magazine articles. Her most recent book, "Over the Back Fence," is a history of the Canadian-American border and reflects her longstanding interest in and admiration for Canada. In 2004, she established the Elizabeth Tow-

er Endowment in support of the UAA Canadian Studies program.

Involved in many community activities, Betsy was a founding member and past president of the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage and a longtime member and past president of the Cook Inlet Historical Society.

Family and friends remember Betsy as a person of many and diverse athletic, artistic and other talents. She enjoyed downhill and cross-country skiing, tennis, golf and swimming, and was an active golf and tennis player well into her 80s. Her annual woodcut Christmas cards told the story of Alaska from statehood through the earthquake, the Iditarod, the pipeline, the oil spill and much more. On patriotic occasions, she would recite the Gettysburg Address while standing on her head.

In 2010, Betsy was inducted into the Alaska Women's Hall of Fame, which celebrates women who have shaped the state.

Betsy is survived by her husband of 61 years, Dr. John C. Tower of Anchorage; her children and their spouses, Chris Tower Zafren and Dr. Ken Zafren, Dr. Stephen S. Tower and Janice Tanaka Tower, and Alice Tower Knapp and Gunnar Knapp of Anchorage and Charles Cramton Tower of Valdez; and her six grandchildren, Jonathan James Tower, Elizabeth Baldwin Knapp, Dana Rose Tower, Christina Paulsen Knapp, Nathaniel Tower Knapp and Rachel Alicia Zafren.

Her family has established a Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage scholarship in her memory.

THE McCARTHY WEEKLY NEWS

1919 November & December editions

TOWN TALK

Mrs. J. E. Barrett entertained at dinner on Thursday evening in honor of Mrs. Hubrick, on the eve of her departure for the East. The guests present were: Mr. and Mrs. J.P. Hubrick, Mrs. Refior, Mr. Longley, Mr. Doze, and Mrs. Barrett and Lawrence.

Mr. Walter Sommer has purchased the Schultz cabin next door to the Hubrick residence. They moved into their new home early this week. Some improvements and an addition are to be added to the building in the near future.

Mr. and Mrs. Grant Reed have moved into the house on the heights formerly occupied by the Lysle Browns.

Ed Fundeen and family left on last Sunday's train for Chitina where Ed will make his headquarters while driving stage on the Fairbanks Trail this winter.

Ernest Gercken underwent an operation for appendicitis at the Kennecott hospital and is now progressing favorably.

Lou Anderson has gone to Long Lake this week to join the woodcutters.

Gus Johnson and Billy Woodin are cutting wood at the Mother Lode on a contract.

Lack of snow is delaying sledding this season, consequently there is a shortage of firewood till snow falls.

Last Sunday Deputy Marshal Kavanaugh searched a cabin near town, seized a still and fittings and some liquor, and placed the owner under arrest. Bail was allowed. The hearing was held on Monday before U.S. Commissioner Graber, when H. Esterbruich was fined one thousand dollars and costs.

Nov. 8

The Dzaboeff brothers have purchased the interest of Fred Meyer their partner. He left on the last train for the States. The brothers will take out a big dump on Dan Creek and as they start the winter with everything paid for, expect to make big money in the spring.

A.E. Trim and Mike Knowles left this morning for the head of the Chitina by dog team, on a trapping and prospecting trip and will return about Christmas.

Nov. 15

THANKSGIVING BALL

A Grand Ball will be held at the A.B. Hall on Thanksgiving Night under the auspices of the Arctic Brotherhood: Everything is being arranged to make this one of the most successful affairs.

Refreshments will be served by the ladies. Dancing will begin promptly at nine.

AUTO SERVICE

For the benefit of Kennecott patrons the proprietors of the McCarthy Garage announce that on Thanksgiving evening two cars will start from Kennecott at 6:30 and two more will be in readiness at 8 p.m. to bring those who are coming to the dance. Prompt service is promised.

SCHOOL NEWS

Honor Roll for November: Dora MacDonnell, Mary MacDonnell, Elizabeth Murie, Marian Wills, Laura May Fry, Laurence Barrett, Victor Marshall, Walter and Arthur MacDonnell, Frank Wills.

There was one day's absence during the month, and tardiness on the part of primary pupils. With their help we hope to go "over the top" next month. Twelve new desks will be in place on Monday for the higher

grade pupils. A vote of thanks is extended to the Board of Directors, not only for these, but for their co-operation and interest in all matters pertaining to the comfort and welfare of the pupils. One parent visited school during the month. How many shall we be able to report next month?

Nov. 22

DANCING SCHOOL AT KENNECOTT

The dancing class which has been started by Mrs. A. H. McGill and Mrs. C. V. Goettel, with Mr. J. Morres as business manager, is supplying a long felt want in the camp, and many of the boys are availing themselves of the opportunity to be instructed in the poetry of motion.

Among the most promising pupils are: Messrs Con Miller, H. Olsen, Jack Howard, George Huston, Henry Edler, Ben Centino, Vernon Anderson, K. Cole. Mr. and Mrs. Aron Ericson and Mr. and Mrs. Huntington were visitors at the last class.

THANKSGIVING in McCARTHY

"The best Thanksgiving we ever had" was the unanimous verdict in our city yesterday.

Mr. W.M. Goodwin entertained the younger population with a sleigh ride in the forenoon.

His guests were Margaret & Jean Woodin, Elizabeth Murie, Laura May and Billy Fry, Dean O'Neill, Marion, Verna & Frank Wills, Catherine and Margaret Cole, Frank Johnson.

At dinner Mrs. O'Neill had as guests, Mrs. Refior and Mr. J.P. Hubrick. The Jack Lauries entertained Mr. and Mrs Aron Ericson and Mildred, Mr. Widing, and their nephews, Leo and William. Messrs. W.H. Longley and Gus Carlson were

guests of the Barretts. At the Woods extra covers were laid for Gus Johnson and Warren Nelson.

The dance in the evening was a tremendous success, music, floor and lighting of the best, a home cooked lunch served by the ladies. About fifty Kennecott guests were present. The heavy snow prevented the automobiles from making the last trip to Kennecott, so a Lubbe's four horse team was provided and a sleigh ride make the "end of a perfect day".

Nov. 29

J.H. Murie is hauling machinery from the Mother Lode camp to McCarthy.

The Seltenreich family has returned to town for the winter after spending the summer at their ranch.

DANCES AT KENNECOTT

The Mechanical Department of the Kennecott Copper Corporation is entertaining this evening with a Grand Ball to be held at the Kennecott Recreation Hall. The Grand March is to start at 9 p.m. This is to be a very fine affair as the boys have made great preparations. The hall is gaily decorated and a large crowd has been invited. Messrs. Healy and Schneeberger will furnish the music. Refreshments will be served. A large party from McCarthy will attend.

The pupils of the dancing school will make their formal debut on the following Saturday evening December 13th at a dance which has been arranged by their teachers. They announce that something unique is to be expected. Everyone is given a cordial invitation to attend. Admission for gentlemen will be \$1.50 including refreshments and for McCarthy guests sleigh transportation. Ladies Free.

The first dog team from the Chisana drove into town at three thirty this afternoon. Joe McClellan was the driver and carried mail. He reports an unusually mild winter and

the trail almost bare with all the rivers wide open.

Dec. 6

Mr. and Mrs. Martin V. Lattin announce the marriage of their daughter Helen Marie to Mr. Harry Spencer Grande on Tuesday the twenty fifth of November 1919 at Seattle, Washington.

The bride was for some years a resident of Alaska and was the only little girl in McCarthy in 1911, when her father came here as the first depot agent. The News joins their hosts of friends in hearty good wishes to the young couple. Their home is 3520 Burke Avenue. Seattle.

SOCIAL NEWS

The dance which will be given this evening at Kennecott by the Dancing School is the great attraction this week. Elaborate preparations have been made for a large number of guests, who are all sure to have a wonderful time.

Last Saturday night's dance given by the Mechanical department at Kennecott was a great success. Over 100 were present who were loud in their praises of the management for everything was carried out in great style.

Mr. and Mrs. Radavan were in town for a few days this week. They report some good pay has been found by the laymen on Cayouette's property on Dan Creek.

Dec. 13

Nice young Turkeys, Geese Fryers, young Roasters, and Fowl. Finnan Haddie, Kippered Herring and Salmon, Fresh Oysters. New Stock of Canned Goods. Prices Attractive. R. L. H. Marshall.

Mr. and Mrs. R.H. Williams announce that they have taken over the lease of the Golden Cafe and solicit your patronage. Steady board-

ers are desired and orders for private catering taken.

In connection with the cafe is a new and commodious bath, with hot water at all hours.

SCHOOL NEWS

Honor Roll for December

Elizabeth Murie
Marion Wills
Joan Woodin
Margaret Woodin
Laura May Fry
Laurence Barrett
Victor Marshall
Arthur McDonnell
Walter McDonnell
Frank Johnson
Fred Seltenreich
Ted Seltenreich

At present there are nine boys and ten girls belonging. The boys are still ahead in attendance, having had one half day's absence during the month. One boy caused two cases of tardiness and three girls were tardy, a record we hope to improve next month. One parent visited school this month.

The Christmas tree and entertainment will be held on Christmas eve at 8 o'clock in the A.B. Hall.

Mantles, chimneys etc. for Aladdin Lamps at Post Office Store.

Dog Salmon and Tallow at Marshall's.

Why Freeze These winter nights? When you can buy COAL. \$40 a ton, \$3.25 a sack. KENNEDY and FOWLER

Cabins and 2 and 3 room nicely furnished cottages for rent. Apply to Mrs. K. Kennedy.

The largest black spruce in Alaska

BY NED ROZELL

Forester Tom Malone once guided me on a trek to see Alaska's largest black spruce tree. It was a short adventure. The 71-foot tree is a two-minute walk from my office.

The Alaska champion black spruce tree stands on the campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The tree lives in a mixed forest next to large white spruce trees, mature birch and a few alders and willows. The tree leans uphill, and its trunk is 45 inches around. When I hugged it, I could barely clasp my hands together. The largest black spruce in Alaska is a lucky tree, because its neighbors to the north are gone, removed in the mid-1990s during the installation of a power line.

The Alaska champion black spruce stood exposed for a few years before a researcher visiting from Iceland, a land of many volcanoes but few trees, pointed it out to forest geneticist John Alden as they walked by in the spring of 2001.

"He said, 'That's a black spruce,'" Alden said. "I said, no, it was too large. I didn't think it could be a black spruce."

Alden, a longtime university forest geneticist, thought the tree was a type of white spruce that is darker green and has coarser bark than other white spruce. When the snow melted, Alden walked back to the tree

and saw beneath it the telltale sign of black spruce — pudgy cones, about one inch long. White spruce cones are longer and pointier.

Alden nominated the black spruce in "The Big Tree Challenge," a nationwide program that was run in Alaska by Tom Malone of the UAF Department of Forest Sciences. Malone used a laser-measuring device to confirm the tree's height of 71 feet, which bested the old record of 65 feet, set by a tree that stands near where the Tolovana River empties into the Tanana River in Interior Alaska.

Alaska's largest black spruce stands up against national competition. The U.S. record is a 78-foot black spruce in Taylor County, Wisconsin, according to the National Register of Big Trees. The tallest trees are not always the winners of The Big Tree Challenge; foresters score trees on height, circumference and the spread of a tree's crown.

The black spruce on the UAF campus is taller than the state record western paper birch, a 67-footer near Haines, and Alaska's tallest balsam poplar, a 60-foot tree on the Kuskokwim River. Alaska's current champion



Photo courtesy Ned Rozell

The largest black spruce tree in Alaska lives on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus. Forester Tom Malone stands beside the tree.

white spruce will soon give up its title, Malone said. The 112-foot tree in the floodplain of the Tok River is dying from an exposed root system.

Other Alaska state champions are a 126-foot quaking aspen off Cache Creek Road, west of Fairbanks; a 132-foot black cottonwood providing a lofty perch for eagles in Haines; a western hemlock standing 150 feet tall on Admiralty Island; and a Sitka spruce near Exchange Cove on Prince of Wales Island — perhaps the tallest tree in the state, at 185 feet.

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.

McCarthy area postal customers—'heads-up'

BY BONNIE KENYON

Local residents are more than thankful for the ability to receive and send mail from our humble location at the end of the McCarthy Road. Recently, however, the lack of status as a “postal facility” is beginning to settle in on us.

At the present time, mail service includes a twice-weekly delivery and pick-up by Copper Valley Air Service based out of Gulkana, 14 miles north of Glennallen. The mail pilot drives to the Glennallen Post Office, McCarthy's assigned true postal facility, each mail day and picks up McCarthy's incoming mail.

In the fall we were notified by telephone and letter of a few, but significant, changes to our mail service. Printed documentation and even forms to assist us in following the rules also accompanied the correspondence from the Anchorage postal management. Although we were grateful for the “heads-up,” it meant being educated to the whys and the wherefores of the changes.

According to Edna Cockerham, Manager of Post Office Operations, “A community (such as McCarthy) without any postal facility where the Postal Service only assumes responsibility for the transportation of mail to that community is called a ‘No-Office Point.’ This service mode is provided when a considerable number of people would be seriously inconvenienced if required to travel an unreasonable dis-

tance to receive and deposit mail.”

Because our mail comes by air and not by road, the nearest post office is in Glennallen, 125 miles away (one way).

One of the changes concerns mail “forwarding.” Our communities of McCarthy and Kennicott swell in the summer season when area businesses hire outside help and part-time residents to augment the hiring of locals. The amount of mail increases significantly. Also, local folks who work outside the McCarthy area in the winter need their mail forwarded in some form or fashion. In the past, some contacted the Glennallen Post Office and filled out the proper paperwork to help meet these needs. Others might depend on a neighbor to carry out their requests.

In her letter of October 7th, Cockerham explained the new rules: “There are no provisions for mail forwarding outside the no-office point. The Postal Service's responsibility ends when the mail is delivered to the community. Someone from the community can write the customer's new address on any forwardable mail item and return it with other prepaid mail to the administrative post office.

“The Postal Service will no longer be honoring any change-of-address requests from no-office points. Any such requests received by the Glennallen Post Office will be returned to McCarthy as invalid. Those moving from McCarthy can, however, designate a friend, relative, or other responsible party within

the community to forward their mail for them. To do so they need only to write the new address on the mail piece, obliterate any barcode associated with the McCarthy Zip Code, and see that it gets dispatched on the next mail plane.

“Any Express Mail, First Class, or Priority Mail item is forwarded free. Any item posted at surface rate, with the exception of bulk business mail bearing no endorsements by the sender, can be forwarded, but will require additional postage to do so. Forwardable surface-rated items will be sent ‘postage due’ to the addressee.”

The next issue concerns McCarthy outgoing mail parcels. Pamela Moody, Manager in Customer Relations, addressed McCarthy postal customers in a letter dated September 23rd. She said that all parcels weighing over 12 ounces must be accompanied with a form filled out that answers questions relating to any possible hazardous, restricted and perishable items. Forms were provided and are now found at the McCarthy mail “shack.”

Moody explains further: “Please bear in mind that the reason we are required to ask the hazmat questions is because we are mandated to do so by federal regulation. With certain limited exceptions, the federal law... declares it a crime to mail anything that may kill or injure persons or harm property... Because all mail pieces originating in McCarthy must go by air, and because these are FAA regulations governing all air flights—

whether those flights carry mail or not—all mail originating in McCarthy must be classified as mailable via air. Some items are acceptable by surface means only. For instance, hair spray can be mailed by surface means, but not by air. So, if an item is shown on Poster 138 as mailable

by surface, but not by air, it is not mailable from McCarthy.”

The “Keep the Mail Safe” poster contains a comprehensive listing of the mailing standards for hazardous, restricted, and perishable items. A copy is posted at the McCarthy mail shack.

If any one has questions about these changes or any other postal matter, you may call Bonnie Thomas, the Marketing Secretary, at 907-564-2832.

Both letters from Moody and Cockerham are also on display at the mail shack.

New Study Finds Katmai NP Visitors Benefit Local Economy

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA—

Katmai National Park’s visitors are playing a larger than expected role in supporting the economy of the region, according to a new report released.

The study calculated that park visitors have more than double the economic impact than previously estimated by a National Park Service model. The value added to the Alaska economy by Katmai’s visitors is about \$37 million, according to the study; previous estimates had pegged the number at closer to \$15 million.

The study was prepared by economist Ginny Fay of EcoSystems of Anchorage, and Christensen Research of Missoula, Montana, in collaboration with the University of Alaska’s Institute of Social and Economic Research, for the National Parks Conservation Association. The research contract was funded by the National Park Service.

“Katmai wasn’t established to be an economic engine for

Southwest Alaska,” said Superintendent Ralph Moore, “but park visitors and spending by the NPS have grown to be a key component of the region’s economy.”

Fay and Neal Christensen found that Katmai’s visitors spend about three times more per trip than the average Alaska travellers. That spending takes place in the park, and also in neighboring communities. The report notes that Alaska’s Katmai visitors spend three out of every five dollars in the five boroughs surrounding the park, including the Municipality of Anchorage. Visitor spending was also found to have supported 647 jobs, 60 percent of which are in the five-borough region.

“We’ve known for a long time that Alaska’s national parks provide tremendous economic advantage to local gateway communities,” said Jim Stratton, NPCA’s Alaska and Pacific Northwest regional director.

“Now we have a detailed analysis showing that Katmai’s impact is twice the amount previously esti-

mated. We are anxious to apply this new model to other parks in Alaska as we expect those parks have been under-estimated as well.”

The researchers found that previous economic models were better suited for road-accessible parks with well-defined entrance points. Katmai is off the state road system and reached primarily by air. Beyond visitor spending, Katmai brings other economic benefits to the region that are not accounted for in the study. In addition, the park employs up to 40 people, and pays more than \$2.5 million per year in salaries and benefits.

Alaska’s national parks see about 2.3 million visits per year. Katmai NP was established in 1918 and covers about 4 million acres in southwest Alaska. It is best known for its brown bear viewing, fishing and hiking opportunities.

Copies of the report and executive summary are at <http://www.npca.org/alaska/>

“In reality there is perhaps no one of our natural Passions so hard to subdue as Pride. Disguise it, struggle with it, beat it down, stifle it, mortify it as much as one pleases, it is still alive, and will now and then peek out and show itself.”

Benjamin Franklin

Recreational ORV use in the park—a thing of the past?

BY RICK KENYON

Is the use of “Recreational Off-Road-Vehicles (ORV) compatible with the purposes of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park? The answer to that question will be one of the results to the more than 4-year long process that has led to the Nabesna ORV Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) public draft.

The Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST) is the largest of our nation's parks, encompassing an area larger than the nation of Switzerland. Access to this huge area of spectacular natural beauty has always been limited. There is the 60 mile-long gravel road that runs between Chitina and McCarthy, and the 42-mile gravel road from Slana to Nabesna. There are also something less than 100 miles of trails in the Nabesna area — trails that predated the park's creation in 1980. Since then, they have been open to “recreational use” by folks wanting to use ORVs for activities such as hunting, fishing and berry picking. These recreational users were required to get a permit from the National Park Service (NPS) before using the trails.

On June 29, 2006, a coalition of three environmental groups—the National Parks Conservation Association, Alaska Center for the Environment and the Wilderness Society filed a lawsuit against the NPS regarding recreational ORV use on nine trails within the boundaries of WRST. In this complaint, the

plaintiffs challenged the method used by the NPS to issue recreational ORV permits. They asserted that in issuing recreational ORV permits, the NPS failed to make the required finding that recreational ORV use is compatible with the purposes and values of the park. Also, that the NPS failed to prepare an environmental analysis of recreational ORV use as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

In a settlement agreement announced on May 15, 2007, the NPS agreed to suspend issuing recreational ORV permits for three specific trails unless the ground is frozen until an EIS is completed and a decision is made regarding future authorized uses on park ORV trails.

The EIS and public comment will form the basis for a decision by the NPS Regional Director for Alaska on the final ORV Management Plan and EIS. Will “recreational users” continue to have access to the park, or only local residents who qualify for subsistence use or who use the trails to access their own property?

Just what is “recreational use?” According to the draft EIS, it is limited to sport hunters in the National Preserve, or those wishing to use ORVs for “access to backcountry destinations for fishing, hiking, dispersed camping, float trips, mountaineering or other non-motorized recreational pursuits.” Just “riding around in the park” is not considered a valid recreational use.

Or, as the NPS puts it, “Trails will not be managed or maintained to accommodate motorized recreational ORV use as an activity unto itself.”

At least one of the parties bringing the lawsuit has made it clear that although they consider recreational use of ORVs in the Preserve to be legitimate, they continue to oppose their use in the Park.

“NPCA supports improvements to the Nabesna trail system that both stops off-road vehicle damage in wetlands and provides continued access to private property and for qualified subsistence users,” said Jim Stratton, NPCA's Alaska Regional Director. “While our 2006 litigation challenged the Park Service's permitting of recreational ORV riding, we support the plan's proposal to allow recreational ORV use on trails in the national preserve once they are improved to sustainable conditions,” said Stratton. “However, we continue to uphold the nationwide standard that recreational ORV riding in national parks is inappropriate and illegal.”

At least some in the NPS view that statement as a threat of further lawsuits if the outcome of the EIS process is not what the environmental groups want.

Many view the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) as the governing document for WRST. However, there is a maze of federal regulations and executive orders that

make management decisions anything but straightforward.

Add to the mix the diverse users or potential users of the trails. At least some of the local residents in the Slana area have sided with NPCA in an effort to keep the non-locals from using the trails. They voice fears that money will not be available to do the proposed upgrades, and the trails will end up being closed to everyone.

Another local resident's group, the Residents of the Wrangells, (ROW) has no problem with the recreational users but are concerned that the EIS will result in tighter management of ORV use for subsistence users. Under current regulations, off-trail use of ORVs for subsistence is allowed as long as it does not cause damage to the resource. The new language states that, "On the trail systems in designated wilderness, subsistence ORV users would be required to stay on designated trails."

ROW also challenges the addition of over 16,000 acres of eligible wilderness in the Nabesna district of WRST. They point out that ANILCA allowed for wilderness reviews to be conducted only up until 1985, not 25 years later.

The NPS has come up with 5 alternatives in the current draft EIS. The first three call for little to no trail improvement. Most of the attention has focused on alternatives 4 and 5, which are similar to each other with the exception of whether recreational use of ORVs will be allowed in the Park. Both call for "hardening" much of the trail system in order to prevent dam-

age to the environment. Some areas of trails that stay wet much of the time have become unsightly when seen from the air, with multiple "braids" resulting from areas becoming impassible, and users "going around" the mud bogs.

Alternative 4 would improve eight of the nine trails (57.5 miles) to a design-sustainable or maintainable condition in order to provide access while protecting park resources. Most trails within the area would be managed in the maintainable condition, while all new construction, major re-constructions, and/or re-routes would be constructed to meet a design-sustainable condition.

Once improvements are in place, recreational ORV use would be permitted on trails in the National Preserve but not trails in the National Park (Tanada Lake, Copper Lake, and Boomerang). This represents 61.2 miles (65 percent) of the trails where recreational ORV use would not be authorized.

Subsistence ORV use would be allowed on improved and unimproved trails, subject to monitoring/management actions by the NPS.

A trail use fee would be implemented to help offset the costs associated with improvements to recreational ORV trails. All recreational ORV users would be required to pay a user fee. The fees assessed to users would be applied to the cost of continued recreational access through improvement and maintenance of trails.

A total of 48.1 miles of non-motorized routes or trails would be added.

Alternative 5

This alternative would improve most degraded segments of the nine trails to a design-sustainable or maintainable condition in order to provide reasonable access while protecting park resources. This would result in 58.5 miles of trail being improved. On unimproved trails or trail segments, impact standards would be applied to ensure that resource impacts do not expand, that unimproved trail segments improve in condition over time, and that unmanaged proliferation of trails is minimized.

Once trails are improved to at least a maintainable condition, this alternative would permit recreational ORV use on both National Park and National Preserve trails. Recreational ORV use would not be permitted on 7.3 miles (8 percent) of the trails. Subsistence ORV use would continue on improved and unimproved trails, subject to monitoring/management actions by the NPS.

Once trails are improved to at least a maintainable condition, this alternative would permit recreational ORV use on park trails within the National Preserve and National Park. This alternative would also implement a trail use fee. All recreational ORV users would be required to pay a user fee.

On the trail systems in the designated wilderness (Black Mountain and the trails south of Tanada Lake), subsistence ORV users would be required to stay on designated trails.

A total of 76.9 miles of non-motorized routes or trails would be added.

The Park Service says that Alternative 5 is the agency's preferred alternative "because it best meets the purpose and need of the project as well as the objectives identified in Section 1.1.3. Alternative 5 addresses the resource concerns associated with existing trail condition by improving trails through a combination of reroutes, trail hardening, and trail reconstruction. In doing so, access is provided

for backcountry and wilderness activities, which also accommodates subsistence uses and access to private inholdings. Alternative 5 also proposes to enhance non-motorized opportunities in the area."

You may comment on this draft ORV Management Plan/EIS via the Internet at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/wrst>, or you may mail or hand-deliver

comments to the address below. Comments must be received by November 10.

Bruce Rogers, Project Manager
 Bruce-Rogers@nps.gov
 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve
 P.O. Box 439
 Copper Center, Alaska 99573
 Phone: (907)-822-7276

Alaska sues NPS

Anchorage, Alaska – Governor Parnell announced on September 30, 2010 that the State of Alaska will take action to challenge National Park Service regulations that violate ANILCA, usurp state sovereignty, and infringe the liberty of Alaskans.

"The State of Alaska does not accept Park Service officials stopping Alaskans on Alaskan waterways that are state-owned and subject to state authority," said Governor Parnell. "In Alaska, our waterways are our highways, and we need to keep them free of unwarranted federal regulation that is inconsistent with state management authority."

The Department of Law filed a formal petition with the Department of the Interior to rescind or revise the regulations that the Park Service contends give it enforcement powers on state-owned navigable waterways. State officials have attempted to engage the Park Service for months in discussions about the regulations but to no avail.

Meanwhile, the state also has filed a friend-of-the-court brief in a criminal case in which the Park Service is charging an Alaskan for violating Park Service regulations while on the Yukon River, a state-owned waterway.

The governor thanked Anchorage Rep. Mike Hawker, sponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 10, which called on the administration to vigorously defend state authority against federal intrusion. The Legislature passed the resolution with only one dissenting vote.

Attorney General Dan Sullivan said that the Park Service regulations being challenged are inconsistent with the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980. "The Park Service is attempting to extend its law enforcement authority beyond National Park lands and into state-owned waterways, which, under ANILCA, are not subject to Park Service authority."

Sullivan said the Parnell administration's posture has been consistent on all issues involving

potential federal overreach in issues affecting state resources. Examples include proposed wilderness designations in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, stonewalling of ConocoPhillips' drilling plans in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, and unwarranted listings under the Endangered Species Act.

"We closely monitor federal activities and decisions," Sullivan said. "And we work cooperatively with the feds when we can. Meanwhile, we research our legal options and prepare a strategy to protect Alaska's right to control and develop our resources. And when appropriate, we strike with legal action that is backed up by strong evidence and expertise."

The Friend of the Court Brief in U.S. v. Wilde and the Petition for Rule Making to Secretary Salazar are available at:

<http://gov.alaska.gov/parnell-media/resources-files/gov-letterandamicusbrief.pdf>

All about land surveys

BY ALLEN MINISH

I need a land survey. Can you do that?

This question is asked of me many times. My question is what type of land survey? There are several types of surveys: bound-

ary (property), subdivision, as-built, elevation certificates, construction and topographic, to name the most popular.

A boundary survey is the most common for this part of Alaska. The boundary survey consists of setting the property corners. This process entails finding two or more property corners that can be used to control the survey. Ideally the control property corners are on the lot, block or exterior of the subdivision that needs other corners set. But many times the controlling property corners are a far distance from the lot and need the corners to be set.

Many plats are known as a paper plat. This means there was never any lot corners set at the time of subdivision; Kennecott River Land Tracts plat in McCarthy is an example. These types of areas require the extensive research at times both in the field and in the office. The extensive research is needed to ensure another surveyor has or has not established corners within the paper platted area. Once the control corners have been found the surveyor will measure to the lot that needs its monuments. The monuments that will be set depend on the requirements. Typically a 5/8" rebar with a plastic cap will be set. The plastic cap should have the land surveyor's license number imprinted on the cap. Many times, not always, a record of survey is generated. The record of survey is a recordable plat. The record of survey shows what corners were found and what corners were set. The record of survey will show the distances and directions measured.

A subdivision survey is the breaking down of a larger tract into smaller lots. This type of survey requires extensive surveying, research and requires state of Alaska Department of Natural Resources approval. The Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has fairly strict requirements for subdivision that need to be met.

An as-built or as some know it a mortgage survey is the location of improvements on a lot. The improvements are typically the house or houses, sheds, fences, decks or any other structure. The driveway and any other access is shown. The as-built is used by mortgage loan companies to ensure that the main structure is located on the property and that it means any setback requirements and that there is nothing on the property that may cause a cloud on the title. Property corners are typically not set during an as-built survey.

Elevation certificates are used by flood insurance companies.

Construction surveying is the setting of grade and alignment points on the ground. Boundary surveys are usually accomplished prior to the construction survey. Construction survey requires having known locations and elevations. The construction survey is based on engineered designs.

Lastly, topographic surveys are the creation of contour maps. Topographic surveys are used to develop engineered designs. Topographic surveys also identify all the items as an as-built and could be called an as-built survey with contours.

There are several other types of surveys but are a little rare in this part of Alaska.

The equipment used to conduct the surveys can either be the old transit and chain; theodolite and tape, total stations, robotic total stations and global satellite positioning (GPS). Most up to date surveying companies use total stations, robotic total stations and/or GPS.

The cost of the surveys will depend on what type of survey is needed, the distance to controlling corners, how much brushing of the property lines is needed, computations, drafting, travel time, hotel and per diem. When calling a surveyor have as much information as you can. Taking photos of the site

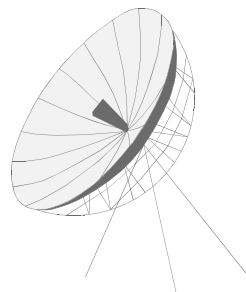
and emailing them helps. Knowing your legal description prevents the surveyor from having to spend time researching it. If you remember in an older WSEN the real estate agent gave the wrong legal description that causes a little stir. In that case the real estate agent did not give up the selling owners name so it could not be researched. All the information that you provide aids the surveyor in estimating a cost. Please be aware the surveyor will probably give a range on the price. There are way too many unknowns to give a low fixed price. If you require a surveyor to provide a fixed bid the price will be higher to cover unknowns.

Something to think about when the surveyor gives you a price that you think is high. The survey grade GPS systems cost around \$50,000, robotic total stations cost around \$30,000, total stations cost \$15,000. All of which need repairs through the year. Just the tripod costs over \$250. A survey prism and the survey pole cost around \$500 together and if it is dropped and broken that can wipe out the little profit and in the some cases can wipe out even your pay itself. Add in gas at over \$3.75 a gallon and the purchase of a vehicle. Then think insurance—not just vehicle but equipment and business. If your project required drafting, the drafting program cost \$8500; add in computers, printers and plotters that all require updating every few years. Lastly, add the flagging, stakes, monuments, etc. With this type of overhead the final take home pay of the surveyor is not that much.

Allen Minish, owner of Wrangell Mountain Technical Services in Chitina, provides the full range of land surveying services as described above. Wrangell Mountain Technical Services also provides civil engineering services. Locally owned and managed with extensive experience in the McCarthy and Kennecott area and throughout the state.

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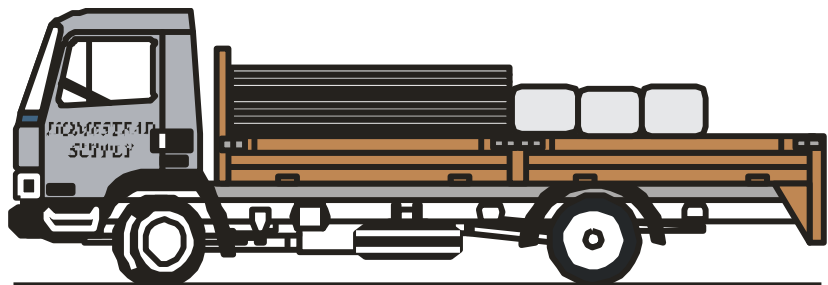
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8/1/1926—9/27/2010

Alaska Historical Society Historian of the Year, 1996.

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RAILROAD AND HISTORY BUFFS — PLAN AHEAD

You will not want to miss the Centennial Celebration commemorating completion of the 196-mile Copper River and Northwestern Railway. Dubbed "*Can't Run and Never Will,*" it did run 196 miles from Cordova to McCarthy and Kennecott, Alaska, from 1911 to 1938.

Representatives of the McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum and the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park are meeting together to plan a gala weekend full of events on **JULY 8-9, 2011**

Watch future *WSEN* issues for updates on events planned. For more information and/or to offer your own ideas/help with the planning, **CONTACT:**



McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum

ATTN: Patt Garrett

PO Box 671643

Chugiak, AK. 99567

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve

ATTN: Erica Edmonds

PO Box 439

Copper Center, AK. 99573-0439

crnw2011@gmail.com

Cooking with Peggy

BY PEGGY GUNTIS

Hi Everybody. Here I am again sitting upstairs in our McCarthy house getting ready to pack to head south. I'm sitting in our brand new leather desk chair purchased at a garage sale in Homer for \$25, looking out the window at the miles and miles of fantastically beautiful yellow trees. Any day now the wind will probably blow them all to the ground but right now the view is breathtaking. The town is very quiet, the tourist season is over, the McCarthy Center (our store) is closed, so the four or five of us that were at mail last Friday couldn't end our morning with a chat and an ice cream cone. Hope the summer was a good one for all of you reading this.

When you get the *WSEN* this time you'll probably all be preparing for or at least thinking about the holidays. I don't know about your house but at mine the holidays mean FOOD.

First I thought I'd give you a couple of recipes for appetizers. They're all easy but good.

CHILI CHEESE DELIGHT

1 can (average size) Hormel chili with or without beans
4 oz. cream cheese, softened
4 oz. shredded cheddar cheese

Place cream cheese in bottom of small glass baking dish, 8 X 8. Cover with chili and cheese. Place in microwave for 5 to 7 minutes. Serve with crackers or tortilla chips.

PARTY REUBENS

1 can drained sauerkraut
1 package dried corn beef
1 loaf party rye
1 package Swiss cheese
½ cup mayonnaise

Combine sauerkraut, corn beef, Swiss cheese and mayonnaise in crock pot and cook until cheese has melted. Serve on party rye.

SHRIMP OR CRAB BITES

1 cup butter
2 cups crab meat or cooked shrimp, minced (or a combination of the two)
1 tablespoon mayonnaise
3-4 oz. sharp cheese spread
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
Lemon pepper seasoning to taste
Paprika for garnish
8 English muffins, halved

Mix all ingredients together except the muffins. Spread mixture on English muffin halves. Bake at 400 degrees for 10 minutes, or 15 minutes if the muffins are frozen. Cut each muffin half into quarters to serve.

FRUIT AND CHEESE APPETIZERS

8 oz. cream cheese
½ cup Miracle Whip
½ cup (2 oz.) shredded sharp cheddar cheese
½ cup chopped apple

Combine softened cream cheese and salad dressing; mix until well blended. Add cheese and apple; mix well. Chill. Serve with apple wedges, crackers, and/or party rye bread.

I know you all have your favorite holiday turkey, ham, and

potato recipes but I'm always looking for recipes for those leftovers. I have two I'd like to share for that leftover ham. I may have given you one of them before but since I'm not sure and since we love them both, here they are.

HAM LOAF

2 pounds ground beef
2 pounds ground fully-cooked ham
3 eggs
1 cup oatmeal or crumbs
¾ cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon mustard
¼ cup vinegar
¼ cup water

Combine the beef, ham, eggs, and oatmeal. Form into two loaves and place in 9 X 13 pans. Bake at 350 degrees until almost done (about 50 minutes).

While baking, prepare sauce by combining the brown sugar, mustard, vinegar and water. Slice the loaves thin and pour sauce over the sliced loaves. Continue baking until done (about another 15 minutes).

I often cut this recipe in half and just make the one loaf and it works well.

HAM LOAF

2 eggs
2 small carrots, shredded
1/2 cup chopped onion
2/3 cup seasoned bread crumbs
2 tablespoons dried parsley flakes
2 teaspoons prepared mustard
1 pound ground fully-cooked ham
2 cans (8 oz. ea.) unsweetened sliced pineapple
2 tablespoons brown sugar

2 teaspoons cornstarch
 2 tablespoons butter
 2 tablespoons lemon juice

In a small bowl, combine the eggs, carrots, onion, bread crumbs, parsley flakes and mustard. Crumble the ham over this mixture and mix it well. Shape it into a loaf and place it into a greased baking dish. Bake it at 350 degrees for 20-30 minutes.

While the loaf is baking, drain the pineapple, reserving the juice; set pineapple aside. In a small saucepan, combine the brown sugar, cornstarch and the reserved juice until smooth. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for

1 minute or until thickened. Stir in butter and lemon juice.

Brush over ham loaf; top with about six pineapple slices (you'll have a few left over). Bake 15 - 20 minutes longer or until a meat thermometer reads 160 degrees. Let it stand for about 5 minutes before slicing.

Now just a quick rice side dish. One of my girlfriends (Don't you love that word! Doesn't it make you feel young!) gave it to me years ago.

RICE

(The recipe is as uncomplicated as the title!)

¼ cup raisins
 ¼ cup thinly sliced onions
 1 1/3 cups rice - cooked
 ¼ cup slivered almonds
 2 tablespoons butter
 1 teaspoon salt

Cook the rice. Saute onions and almonds in butter. Add raisins, heat through and mix in the rice.

I'll be writing from Tucson next time. Have a great fall and send me any recipes you'd like to share or questions you might have. My email is guj1072@q.com.

▲ LOOK AT THE WEATHER ▲

BY GEORGE CEBULA

August 2010 will be remembered for its cloudy and wet days.

The high temperature for the month was 82 on the 3rd and 15th (83 on Aug. 4, '09, 73 on Aug. 8, '08 and 81 on Aug. 17, '07.) There were 9 days when the high was 70 or higher. The first freeze was on the 24th as the temperature fell to 30; this was enough to kill a few of the garden plants. There were 3 days when the low was 32 or below. The low temperature for the month was 29 on the 31st (32 on Aug. 1, '09, 28 on Aug. 11, '08 and 28 on Aug. 29, '07). The average monthly temperature at McCarthy was 55.1, compared to 52.4 in Aug. '09, 51.7 in Aug. '08, 54.2 in Aug. '07, 51.5 in Aug. '06, 54.8 in Aug. '05 and 56.2 in Aug. '04. At Kennicott, the high was 81 on the 15th, the low 37 on the 24th

and the average temperature was 55.7.

The August precipitation at McCarthy was 1.85 inches, compared with 3.64 inches in Aug. '09, 4.17 inches in Aug. '08, 1.86 inches in Aug. '07, 3.24 inches in Aug. '06, 3.90 inches in Aug. '05 and 0.74 inches in Aug. '04. There were 20 days with a trace or more of rainfall recorded. The average precipitation for August (1984-2010) is 2.69 inches. Total precipitation at Kennicott was 2.00 inches compared to 5.35 inches in Aug. '09 and 4.30 inches in Aug. '08.

September 2009 will be remembered for the sunny and warm days.

The high temperature at McCarthy was 72 on the 16th (71 on Sept. 6, '09, 67 on Sept. 1, '08 and 68 on Sept. 12, '07). The low temperature was 18 on the 25th (14 on Sept. 29, '09, 22 on Sept. 25, '08 and 21 on Sept. 30,

'07). There were 16 days with the high of 60 or above and 7 days with the low of 25 or lower. The average monthly temperature at McCarthy was 43.9 (44.2 in Sept. '09, 45.1 in Sept. '08, 44.6 in Sept. '07, 45.9 in Sept. '06, 47.4 in Sept. '05, 40.5 in Sept. '04 and 42.1 in Sept. '03). This was about 10 degrees warmer than the record low of 34.3 in September 1992. At Kennicott, the high was 67 on the 12th, the low 21 on the 25th and the average temperature was 44.7.

The first snow of this season was observed on the 26th and 27th, with 4.0 inches of snow recorded at McCarthy in September (00 in Sept. '09, 1.0 in Sept. '08, trace in Sept. '07 and Sept. '06, 00 in Sept. 05, 8.2 inches in Sept. '04, 1.1 in Sept. '03, 00 in Sept. '02 and '01, and 29.5 in Sept. '00). The total precipitation for the month was 1.82 inches. The average for Septem-

ber (1984-2009) is 2.95 inches and compares with 0.40 inches in Sept. '09, 2.18 inches in Sept. '08, 4.76 inches in Sept. '07, 2.70 inches in Sept. '06, 2.82 inches in Sept. '05, 4.95 inches in Sept. '04, 0.98 inches in Sept. '03, 1.47 inches in Sept. '02, 2.07 inches in Sept. '01 and the record 10.82 inches in Sept. '00. There were 7 days with measurable rainfall, compared with 9 days in Sept. '09, 16 days in

Sept. '08, 18 days in Sept. '07, 15 days in Sept. '06, 23 days in Sept. '05 and 13 days in Sept. '04. Total precipitation at Kennicott was 2.20 inches and 6.0 inches of snow, compared with 0.40 inches and no snow in Sept. '09 and 2.90 inches and 6.3 inches of snow in Sept. '08.

A few interesting weather facts for the Summer of 2010. The high temperatures May thru August reached 70 or higher on

37 days (51 in '09, 22 in '08, 59 in '07, 45 in '06, 59 in '05 and 83 in '04) and 80 or higher (May thru August) on 9 days (24 in '09, 2 in '08, 9 in '07, 2 in '06, 9 in '05 and 31 in '04). The all time high of 88 was recorded on July 8, 2009. Total precipitation May thru August was 8.23 inches (5.68 in '09, 10.26 in '08, 6.03 in '07, 7.06 in '06, 12.37 in '05 and 4.06 in '04). Have a great winter.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wrangell St. Elias News
PO Box MXY
Glennallen, AK. 99588-8998

Sept. 17, 2010

Dear Bonnie & Rick:
Please find enclosed my check for two more years of enjoyable reading in the *WSEN*. I look forward to receiving each copy and don't stop reading

them till the end....Hope you have a good winter and keep the *News* coming,

Sincerely,
Allen Showalter

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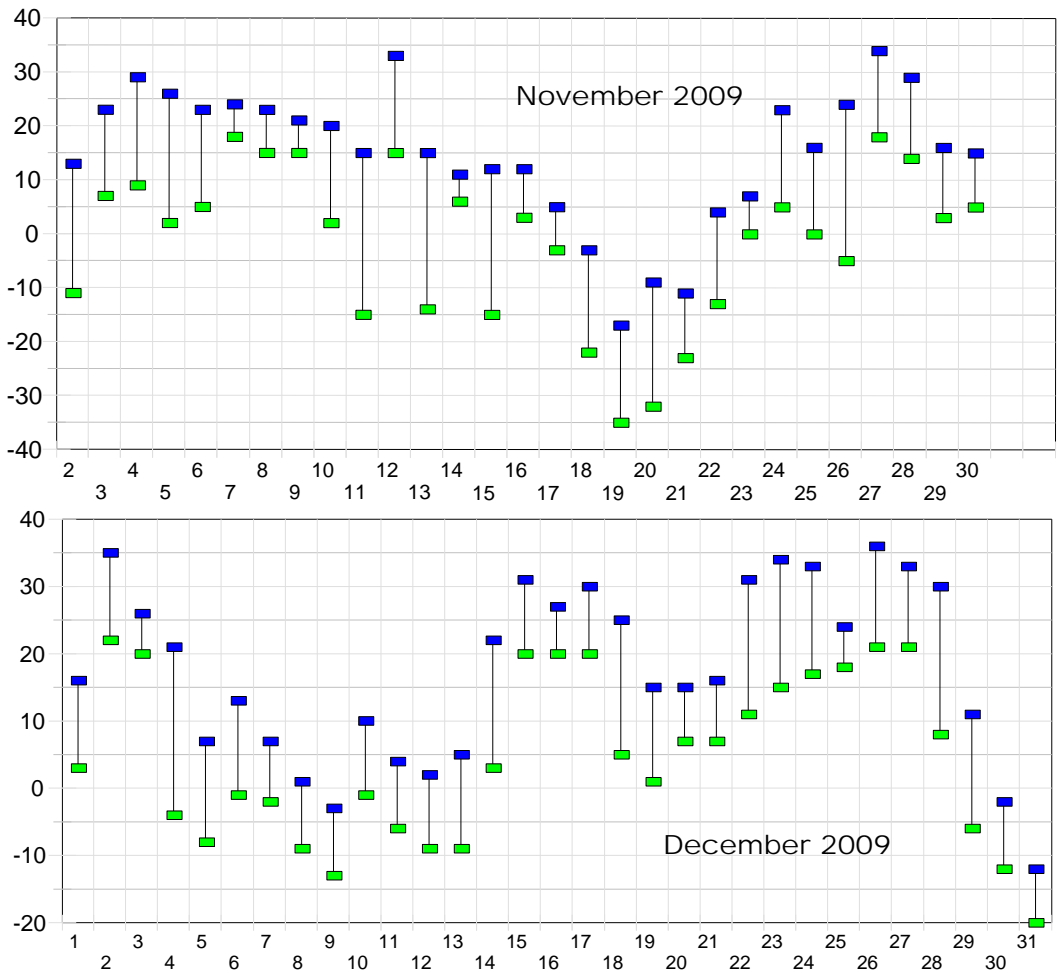
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