

Wrangell St. Elias News

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."--Thomas Jefferson

VOL. ONE ISSUE TWO

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 1992

ONE DOLLAR

California couple injured in single car accident on McCarthy Road

On the evening of July 26th a California couple was injured in a vehicle accident near mile 43 of the McCarthy Road. They were on their way to McCarthy when the Chevy van they were driving rolled down an estimated 100' embankment. Dale Lindseth, 37, who was driving was thrown from the car and sustained a head injury as well as a broken pelvis. His wife, Kathy, 38, who was in the back of the van, recalls hearing the sound of a passing motorcycle. She thinks it may have startled her husband into driving too close to the edge of the dropoff. Though she received a head injury and was bleeding from her nose, she was able to climb the embankment and flag down a vehicle driven by Bridget Brosnihan. As Bridget drove to nearby neighbors for further help, at least 3 other vehicles stopped to give aid to the injured parties. A stretcher was made and the man was brought up to the road. At this time, Bob Jacobs of McCarthy who was approximately 40 minutes behind Bridget came on the scene. Because of his emergency training, he was able to do some preliminary checks to determine the

extent of the injuries. The couple was placed in Bob's van and transported to Long Lake airstrip about 1-1/2 miles away. In the meantime, T.J. Wilson of Crystal Creek area was designated to go get further medical assistance from Dee Frady who lives at mile 55 and to use her CB radio to contact a local air taxi. Gary Green of McCarthy Air was finally reached and medivaced both people to Anchorage where they were taken to Humana Hospital. After learning the woman was 2 1/2 months pregnant and had medical complications besides, Dee, who is a registered nurse, volunteered to accompany the plane to Anchorage and give what support and assistance she could. According to her, the flight went quite well. Within a few minutes after landing at Merrill Field, paramedics arrived and transported the couple to Humana.



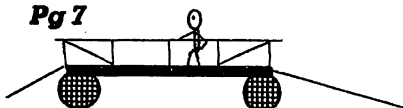
Chevy van after rolling down embankment at mile 43, near the Lakina bridge

Bridget visited Dale and Kathy about 3 days after the accident and reported they were in good spirits, and planned on leaving the hospital the next day. They wanted to pass on their thanks to all who had come to their aid. One hundred dollars was given to the community to help with any expenses that may have occurred. Someone has suggested a first-aid kit be purchased with the gift.

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Telephone service coming to McCarthy

Pending approval by the board of directors, the Copper Valley Telephone Cooperative will install limited phone service in the McCarthy area this fall.

In a "town meeting" held on August 7 at the McCarthy Lodge, Scott Smith and five other board members or managers from the cooperative talked with local residents about the possibilities of bringing phone service to the area. According to the dictionary, a cooperative is "an enterprise owned and operated jointly by those who use its facilities or services". Mr. Smith, who is the manager of the telephone cooperative, stressed that it is 100% member - owned. He also said that they respond to community requests rather than coming into an area on their own.

Mr. Smith said that they have plans to upgrade the present satellite

based system in Chitina, converting to microwave links. He stated that a satellite system with very limited service would be available for us in McCarthy in a few weeks. The system would only have 2 voice links, a fax line, and 2 9600 data lines available. They felt that this system could be in operation by the first of November if it is approved, and if the community showed support for it.



The satellite system would then be replaced next summer with a microwave hookup which would enable more users. The local system would likely consist of a mix of "hard line" connections for those in close proximity to the main service, and radio - link connections for the more distant customers. All lines would be single party lines. Mr. Smith stated that user fees would likely be in the area of \$50 - \$60 per month, but that the actual figure would be decided by the board of

directors.

Some concern for power requirements were voiced by residents. Jim Gifford, who is the engineer for CVTC, said that power requirements were modest, in the 1000 - 2000 watts range. Gary Hick-

(cont. pg. 13)

Young lady injured in McCarthy Road accident

On July 31st at approximately 9:30am a white Subaru driven by Patricia "Dawn" Goley of Santa Cruz, Calif. drove off the McCarthy Road just east of the Chitina bridge. The car rolled down a steep embankment to the river bed several hundred feet below. Miss Goley was able to climb up to the road where she began walking back towards McCarthy.

John Baalke of Glennallen was heading east on McCarthy Road when he encountered the injured woman. According to John, she had deep cuts and lacerations on her left arm, and seemed to be in shock. He drove her to Chitina where contact was made with the health nurse from the Chitina clinic. Miss Goley's arm was bandaged and said she had back pain and trouble breathing. Crossroads Medical Center was called and an ambulance was sent to Chitina. From Glennallen, she was flown to Humana Hospital in Anchorage.

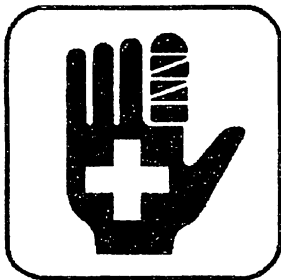
John Baalke said he saw Miss Goley on the 2nd of August and reported she was in good spirits and doing well. According to him, she fractured one vertebrae and damaged some cartilage. No damage was done to the spinal cord and surgery was not needed. Miss Goley is a graduate student in California and was up here visiting Jim Berkey in McCarthy.

Kennicott River Trams

There have been several serious accidents on the west tram this summer. Two people were injured seriously enough to require medical attention. At least one required fairly extensive surgery. In deference to the people involved in both incidents, and the strong local feelings concerning responsibility, Wrangell St. Elias News has elected not to cover the accidents in detail. (Yeh, we wimped out.)

However, there is little question that the present trams have outlived their usefulness. Even the most ardent defenders of limited access are

realizing that changes are needed in the very near future. Anyone trying to come into McCarthy on the 4th of July faced a long wait. The liability situation is very uncertain, and it is clear that the numbers of people depending on access for themselves and for freight will only increase.



Let's all be thinking of what the best solutions are, both for long term and more immediate in the event the tram is somehow put out of commission. We saw the problems that even a 3 hour loss of availability caused. 'nuff said.

McCarthy and Kennicott Celebrate!

In speaking of the Declaration of Independence, and its future celebrations, John Adams second President of the United States wrote in a letter to his wife: "I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forevermore."

McCarthy and Kennicott did their share of celebrating the Fourth of July beginning with a parade in downtown McCarthy. The Kennecott Avenue Marching Band led the way. Our own Meg Hunt kept this year's 3 member band in time with the snare drum, followed by Laura Nebesky on cymbals and Mary Nayokpuk on drum.

In the float division, Ken Rowland, a familiar face to the locals, demonstrated his "good ol' American Engine-nuity" - an engine of 1920 vintage 7 1/2 H.P. Fairbanks Morse 550 RPM. One couldn't help



notice the Jeep pulling Ken's showpiece. It was full to overflowing with approximately 17 occupants who had gathered in McCarthy for a family reunion. Appropriately dressed for the occasion, the group all wore matching T-shirts with an American flag design!



McCarthy Lodge's pickup truck carried a variety of Betty's guys and gals. One "gal" hails all the way from the Virgin Islands. Sara Glass is doing a fine job as a waitress at the Lodge this summer. One of the "guys" was and still is a well-known figure to Kennicott and McCarthy - none other than Chris Richards!

McCarthy Air was represented by Kira Olsen, 4 year old daughter of Lisa and Kirk Olsen of McCarthy. Kira, whose father flies for McCarthy Air, actually "wore" an airplane in the parade. Nancy Green designed and handcrafted the cardboard plane just for this year's occasion. All onlookers were encouraged to have a happy 4th.

Other entries were St. Elias Alpine Guides/Wilderness Bed and Breakfast of McCarthy and Little Did They Know, Inc.

At 1:00 pm the games started and lasted till late afternoon. Gary Hickling, owner of McCarthy Lodge, hosted, gave instructions, and helped judge the participants. Prizes were given out to the winners in each event. There were different age groups represented, from 4 years old and up. Everyone could find his or her place or favorite contest.

One winning 4-man team nicknamed "Stars and Stripes" (of Ken Rowlands' group) took several games. One in particular - the Volley Ball Tournament - got them a flightseeing trip with McCarthy Air. Kennicott's own Matt Miller won the Kids' Nail Driving Contest in 1.79 seconds. Guess it shouldn't surprise

us because his dad, Jim Miller, led the men's team who won the Men's Nail Driving Contest. Jim must provide Matt with a lot of nail - pounding experience!

After some 13 games were concluded, the bus from J & J Transportation filled

with guests desiring to take in the activities at Kennicott. Kennicott Glacier Lodge provided a BBQ Dinner between 5:00 pm and 8:00



pm. Approximately 150 people stayed for the dinner. Capping it off, Chris Richards of Kennicott put on a display of noisemakers and, later on near dark, some actual fireworks.

For those who stayed behind in McCarthy, Volley Ball games between residents and visitors took place as well as a BBQ dinner at the McCarthy Lodge.

We couldn't have asked for nicer weather this year. The maximum temperature rose to 80 degrees, cooling off to 42 degrees. According to a few local residents, the number of visitors did not exceed the visitors from previous years. There were 162 cars counted at the trams. The number of airplanes on the McCarthy Airstrip was greater than 25.

Mysterious Fire at Kennicott

July 4th produced more than noisemakers and firecrackers at Kennicott! Shortly before midnight, in a dump area containing discarded glass, bed framing, wood, and old oil cans, a fire broke out. No one seems to know who or how it started. According to Nicole Koons and Molly Case, two waitresses from Kennicott Glacier Lodge, the fire started at the bottom of the dump and started rising to span an area of at least 3 or 4 feet and spread to 6 or 7 feet. Rich Kirkwood, owner of the lodge, along with guests and tourists helped put the fire out. Hoses attached to a water supply as well as Rich's backhoe were used. In about an hour and a half the fire was under control. Another 45 minutes was spent spraying the area with additional water. A couple of tourists with shovels and Rich with the backhoe, covered the fire with dirt until it was completely out.

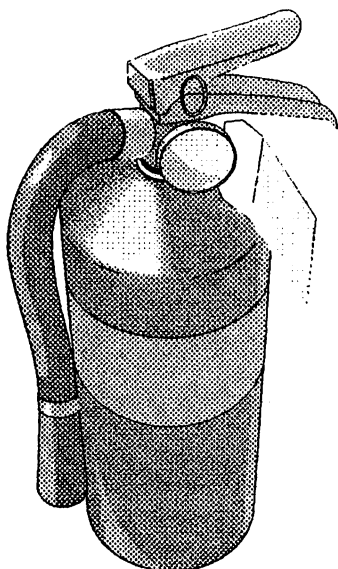
The dump - not used to burn trash but only to put discarded items - is located near what locals call "Tim's barn".

"There were a lot of flames and smoke everywhere," said Molly.

At first it was guessed to be caused by the fireworks but they were aimed at the moraine glacier. The fire was in an out-of-the-way place compared to the firecrackers.

Other thoughts included someone starting it intentionally thinking the dump was a burn pile. Or the mishap of a tourist.

One thing is sure: no one was hurt, neither was there great damage done. Many thanks to all who came to Kennicott's aid!



Smoldering Campfire Put Out

On July 6th a smoldering campfire apparently left by departed tourists nearly got out of hand. Terry Frady, who maintains the toilets and trash cans located in the upper parking lots west of the trams, found 4 fire pits that had been built back in the peaty area under small spruce trees. Two of the fire pits still contained hot coals. According to Terry, the fires must have been quite intense because of the burnt spruce needles overhead. Smelling something, his attention was drawn to an area around the fire pits. He discovered the fire had traveled underneath and through the peat and was still smoldering 10-15 feet away. Concerned of the possible consequences, Terry dug the ground up and put water on it. Both campfires had started to travel, but were thoroughly put out. Terry has since contacted the National Park Service and the Department of Transportation requesting signs prohibiting campfires in this area. D.O.T. said they would contact the Forestry Service.

An Oxford University Expedition

"The Chancellor of Oxford University, The Rt. Hon. Lord Jenkins of Hillhead", "The Royal Geographical Society, The British Ecological Society and The Scientific Exploration Society"

These are the names that grace the cover of the 13 page booklet prepared by the "Oxford Group", as they are known to local residents of the McCarthy area. Richard M. Clements, age 20, was the leader of the group of 5 Oxford undergraduates.



The aim of the Expedition was to "study and assess the distribution of vegetation and small herbivorous mammals on the South West slope of Fireweed Mountain". Among the objectives was to compare and identify the vegetation along various gradients, and to determine the type and population density of small mammal herbivores at various altitudes on the Southern slope. After 3 weeks of high activity from the base camp, the consensus of the group was "mission accomplished".

According to Sally Francis, the 20 year old Scientific Officer (Botany), she was able to identify 60 plant species. "The lower altitudes were predominantly white spruce, giving way to Alders and Willows, then dwarf birch, dryas and saxifrage, and finally alpine flowers as one approached the higher areas."

Leader Clements said that at 750 meters elevation, the vole population was almost entirely of the "red back" variety, but at 1100 meters the mix was 50/50 red back and tundra voles. One of their scientific advisers, Dr. Joe Cook of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, had requested specimens of the voles. This they were able to accomplish, in spite of several problems relating to bears and a dwindling supply of liquid nitrogen, needed to preserve the specimens.

Vice-Leader Mark Winterbottom and Scientific Officer (Zoology) Richard B. D'Eath both emphasized the large number of letters that had been written to obtain support for the expedition. The difficult task of support and logistics had to be completed in England before any of the field work could begin in Alaska. Even something as seemingly routine as obtaining a permit from the National Park Service required 4 months and numerous letters to Glennallen.

Helen Yates, who was the Treasurer/Medical Officer, celebrated her 20th birthday in the Wrangell Mountains with a "caribou clatter" from mom and dad back in the old country. She holds the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award and has done marine biology fieldwork in South Wales.

The group expressed their heartfelt thanks to Jim and Pat Edwards who provided transportation and a base camp off the mountain, Mark Vale who assisted in field siting and plant identification, Ed LaChapelle who provided advice about the field site, and others who helped and assisted the group.

There is a significant Latin proverb; to wit: Who will guard the guards? --Josh Billings



NOAA Regional Cooperative Program Manager George Cebula with a "Fischer & Porter" rain gauge

Weather Observation Station gets O.K. for another year

The McCarthy area National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reporting station had its annual station inspection on July 21 and 22.

Mr. George Cebula, the newly appointed Regional Cooperative Program Manager did the inspection. George has been coming to the McCarthy area as the Quality Control Specialist since 1979. He has been with NOAA for 24 years, 23 in Alaska.

Barometers are among the priority items each year. The station has two barometers which are used to report altimeter settings for pilots. The two instruments must agree within a very small tolerance, and are checked and recorded on a log each evening. Each visit George brings a very sensitive calibrated unit and calibrates the station units.

Wind direction and wind speed instruments require a trip up the 40 foot tower where the sensors reside. Thermometers are checked and replaced or repaired as necessary. The automatic recording rain gauge, or "Fischer & Porter Gauge" gets its batteries and solar panels checked, anti-freeze as required (depending on season), and a fresh recording tape if it is needed.

George had done an inspection at a station in Tonsina on Tuesday, and was headed for Slana for another on Wednesday. He covers the state of Alaska from Anchorage to Bethel, and all areas north.

Kennicott River Flood

BY MEG HUNT

On Monday, July 6, the annual "Hidden Lake dump" occurred; the lake formed where the Kennicott Glacier dams Hidden Creek, on the west side of the glacier, broke out through the glacier, causing a flood in the Kennicott River.

Local residents are familiar with this yearly event, which usually lasts from 24 to 36 hours and occurs at some point between early July and mid-August (although in recent years it has tended to be in early to mid-July). Sometimes the river level raised quite dramatically, muddying Clear Creek in McCarthy and cutting off access to the trams for a short time; other times it seems as though the flood is trying to sneak past without anyone noticing. This year's flood was about average, by local standards, in height and intensity.

The day of the flood had been cloudy and not very good for flight-seeing, so local pilots had not been in a position to notice any change in the iceberg-filled lake. The first alert to the community came in the late afternoon from resident Dan Doak, who was walking across the Kennicott and lower Root Glaciers; he heard and saw ice cracking under his feet, and he found that the small lake below the waterfall near the junction of the Kennicott and the Root was much fuller than usual. Since outburst floods always affect the glacier "plumbing" rather dramatically, it was easy to guess what was probably happening. That evening Gary and Nancy Green flew over Hidden Lake and found it half empty. Tuesday morning the water in the Kennicott River reached its height, flowing through the usually dry channel between the roadhead parking lot and the west tram.

Glaciologists have a name for the outburst flood of a glacier-dammed lake: *jökulhlaup*. This difficult Icelandic word refers to the event, not to the lake itself. At any rate, it is a common enough feature of glaciers to warrant its own piece of terminology. Around this valley, however, it is usually just called a *dump*; after all, it's the only one we have.

"The most dangerous thing in the world is to try to leap a chasm in two jumps."

—William Lloyd George

Say that again?

From the Sunday, July 12, 1992 Anchorage Daily News:

Wrangell-St. Elias and Denali, like many parks in Alaska, surround parcels of land that weren't acquired by the government when the parks were formed or expanded. Many of these parcels are homesteads, but some have business operations, including lodges and mines. The federal government, says geologist Phil Brease of the National Park Service, is actively trying to buy the land it doesn't already have.

But for now, some property owners at the end of long dirt roads make it easy for guests to kick back and see wild Alaska.

"This country has come to feel the same when Congress is in session as when the baby gets hold of a hammer."

--Will Rogers

NPS Superintendant Karen Wade discusses the McCarthy Road, Trams, and May Creek

Rick: Can you tell me briefly what your attitude about the McCarthy road is?

Karen: The State had done an environmental impact statement back in the 70's related to the improvement of the McCarthy Road and that occurred prior to the time that the Alaskan Native Land Settlement Act had taken place and it was prior to the Park so while all those issues related to ownership were being taken care of they kind of put the plan for the upgrade of the road aside and waited until this Park was established and then they came back and did a reconnaissance study and discussed that with the Park Service and the local residents. Since there didn't seem to be great enthusiasm for going ahead with the upgrade, back in the early 80's and because there was so little traffic on the road, it kind of languished. There wasn't a whole lot done with it. But we've all seen a dramatic increase in travel on the road. Locals are complaining because they are being run off the road by huge motor homes. They feel like it is unsafe to share the road when people really aren't familiar with it and aren't prepared to drive it. So the Park Service and the State Department of Transportation planners got together and did a field trip and we evaluated what would be necessary to look at the road comprehensively from the standpoint of trailheads, viewpoints, perhaps some slight relocations to take advantage of scenic views - that sort of thing. Maybe some places where we could build a trail head that would allow folks to stop and walk up to some historic trestle and something like that. And build in some aesthetic facilities to kind of enhance the

road as an experience to get people to slow down and do some other things en route and then it wouldn't be so much of a destination road; it would be a part of experiencing the area.

Rick: This is not the study that we saw several years ago on the 50 mile road and a 40 mile road.

Karen: That was probably the reconnaissance study. Is that what you're talking about - early on - 3 or 4 years ago?

Rick: I thought it was 2 but this has been since then?

Karen: Yes and we agreed that - the planners agreed that there would be a lot of benefit if the Park Service and the State entered into an agreement to develop a comprehensive plan for the upgrade of the road including all the public participation and the environmental evaluation so that's what we're going to do and the States supply for funding for that. They'll begin that kind of planning next year in cooperation with us and we'll be looking towards an upgrade beginning in 1998. It'll probably be done in sections - you'd probably have 10 mile sections at a time and it would be done to a standard that's agreed on through this process.

Rick: Am I correct that the State has the right-of-way?

Karen: They have the right-of-way. Correct.

Rick: Would the Park Service be financially involved in it other than studies?

Karen: Yes. It'll be upgraded with federal money and since we're the Federal landowner we would have some involvement then in helping establish the standards.

Rick: Ok, then along the same lines do you see any long term changes at the river as far as the trams?

Karen: Oh I think we are

already seeing there is a need for some careful planning and construction of some facilities at the trail head.

Rick: Like some sort of footbridge?

Karen: Oh, as far as crossing we would have to look at a number of alternatives. I don't think the Park Service or the town wants to see the bridges put back in for car access. Vehicle access by the general public.

Rick: Do you think the trams are going to be ok for another 10 years?

Karen: I think we need to evaluate whether they can deal with significant increases in numbers of people who want to come to McCarthy. And what the alternatives would be -- I don't know if the alternatives would be adding another tram, building a foot bridge, or something else.

Rick: You mentioned some development on the other side of the trams?

Karen: That's what we're talking about is the road head -- not development but some kind of parking, in that area perhaps some kind of campsite whether it's walk-in. Again that would be part of the planning process for the McCarthy Road. It would probably not be a part of the planning that goes on from the river back to the Kennicott property. They'd be two separate planning processes. They'd have to link together.

Rick: Seems logical that if Kennicott would ever get developed at all..

Karen: Right, but you'd like to try to tie as much as possible to Federal highway funding and so whatever you could link to that kind of money you'd want to try to do that at the end of the road.

Rick: They don't think that much of footbridges and trams, do they? Isn't it harder to get..

Karen: Who?

Rick: The Federal highway people

Karen: Well, I think they - whatever the Park Service and State D.O.T. work out I believe we could convince the Federal Highways Administration that this is a desirable thing.

Rick: They're normal mode of thinking is big, isn't it?

Karen: Well, not necessarily. We have Park roads that are constructed in parks in the lower 49 that are built to park standards so they'll downgrade or downsize as long as they've got a convincing reason to do so.

Karen: We don't envision here developing tourist facilities on Federal land. What we envision is those services being provided by local people. And what we would like to see is those services provided for in a way that kind of maintains the bush flavor the experience that is becoming more and more rare in Alaska. I think our concern is that we might end up with development that attracts people and gives people the same kind of experience they can have in one of the lower 49 National Parks or Denali but isn't specific and special to the Wrangells. Because there is an experience you have here which attracts people. That's why they keep coming. And that's provided by small businesses.

Rick: If somebody privately wanted to do a campground over there would they need any kind of park approval?

Karen: No

Rick: As long as it is on private land. We could definitely see a need for a campground on the other side. The controversy around-local controversy - has been

Kennicott River East Branch Spanned by Local Effort

The East Branch of the Kennicott River is dying.

BY ED LACHAPPELLE

Ever since settlers first came to this area, an island has divided the Kennicott River into two branches just west of the McCarthy townsite. Present-day access crosses this island, as did the Copper River and Northwestern RR grade. The famous

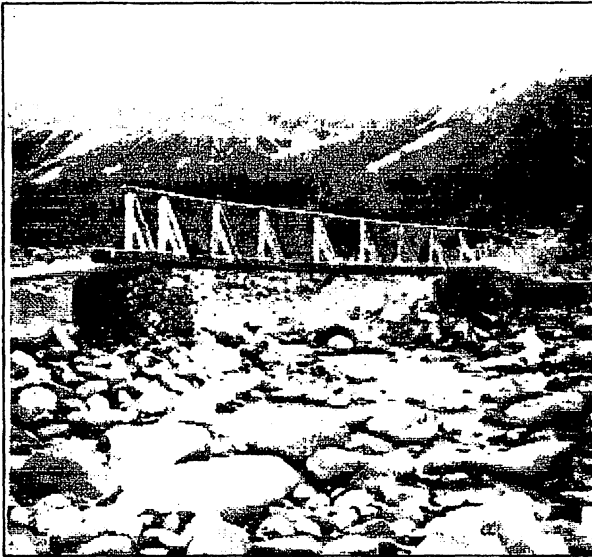
McCarthy trams connect the island to the river banks on either side. The Kennicott Glacier, which formerly rested on the north end of the island, has retreated over the years and allowed a

bypass stream to develop around the island. During the last three years this bypass has rapidly grown in size and diverted much of the East Branch flow into the West Branch.

For the past couple of years the East Branch flow has been significant only during flood periods and high water from summer melt. The rest of the time a vehicle ford has allowed direct access to the island from the east, bypassing the east tram. Foot crossing has made use of planks randomly laid down over the river rocks to span the remaining trickle of water, used by locals and visitors alike to save the delays of tram operation.

When it became obvious in July that some major maintenance work was coming due on the east tram tower, an informal consensus developed among local interests that the foot planks ought to be improved

to the point that the river could be crossed during summer melt conditions. Work parties of volunteers were organized to shift rocks around to provide the foundations and to fill two gabions serving as abutments for an improved footbridge. In the best bush tradition, this became a community effort that attracted enthusiastic participation by local businesses, residents, guests and visitors to the area. Once again the



"Chinese coolie" method of moving small rocks by hand instead of large ones with machinery proved highly effective. With an available steel I-beam pushed

into place to span between the gabions, donations of assorted wooden beams, bolts, planks and nails began to appear at the construction site. A work party lasting several hours on July 18th completed the decking and hand rail. The "formal opening" took place at the end of the work party, when the bridge-builders sat around drinking some well-earned beers, discussing the prospects of attracting a resident troll and watching the first use of the bridge by numerous visitors.

Though a big improvement over the former planks, this footbridge adjacent to the vehicle ford is regarded as temporary, pending a hoped-for installation of culverts and fill at this site to provide year-around and easy vehicle access to the island.

USGS Services Seismometers

Probably most of you that live in the McCarthy area have asked yourselves this question: "Since helicopters are forbidden from landing in the National Park without a permit, why do we hear them operating almost daily? Is it the Park Service spying on us?"

During the month of July there were several helicopters operating from the May Creek or McCarthy airstrips. One was apparently involved in some sort of wildlife research, although we were unable to interview the participants.

The second, operating the week of July 15 from McCarthy but refueling at May Creek, was an Era helicopter piloted by Walt Woodrow. Walt is the Base Manager for Era Helicopters in Valdez. His passenger was John Rogers, an Electronics Engineer for the United States Geological Survey. John has been coming here for a number of years to service the many seismometers that are located in the Chugach Range to the south of McCarthy.

Part of his mission this year was to replace the "air cell" batteries that power the remote sites with lead-acid batteries and 40 watt solar panels. The old batteries had to be replaced every 2 years and were not rechargeable. John says he expects the 80 amp-hour lead-acid batteries to last for 5 years.

There are 7 remote sites on our side of the Chugach Range. Five of these sites have seismometers and radio transmitters. Two sites are radio repeaters only. The seismometers send data continuously via VHF radio signals to a receiver in the Glennallen area, which then re-transmits the signals to Fairbanks. The Alaska Earthquake Information Center in Fairbanks monitors the signals using a computer interface.

Other than being a federal agency, there is no affiliation between the USGS and the NPS. The Park service offered assistance in the form of re-fueling facilities at May Creek, and of course issued permits for landing at the 7 sites.

John said that there are several earthquakes each week in the area covered by these recording instruments. Nearly all of them are too small to be felt.



Saturday & Sunday Night

9 'til ?

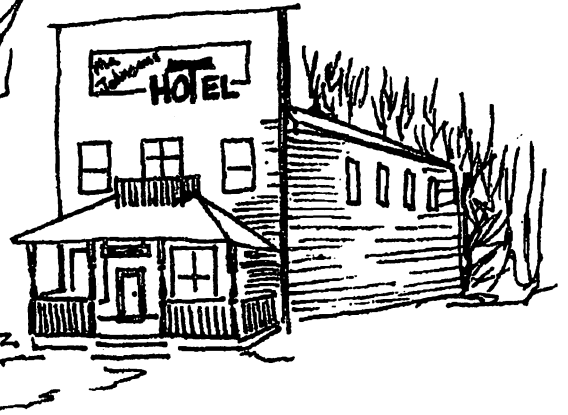
Cover Charge Saturday Night

BBQ Saturday

Games

Your hosts
Gary & Betty Hickling
invite you to relax and
enjoy the atmosphere of
the early 1900's at the

Johnson Hotel



Peter Johnson and his wife had a homestead and sawmill at the base of Firweed Mountain during the early mining days. They sent not only lumber, but also home grown vegetables to McCarthy on the train. After Peter suffered a stroke and became invalid, the miners helped "Ma Johnson" build a boarding house in town where she cared for her husband and housed boarders.

Now renovated and modernized, the Johnson Hotel still maintains the atmosphere of 1916, the year it was built.

Relax, close your eyes and imagine that you hear the old CR&NW train give its special whistle to warn the local bootleggers that the "feds" were on board.

Come and relive history with us in *downtown McCarthy!*

McCarthy Lodge

Gift Shop - Liquor Store - Restaurant & Bar
Write: c/o McCarthy Lodge, P.O. Box 870393, Wasilla, AK 99687



"It takes you back"
Home Cooked Food

Phone: 907-333-5402
FAX: 907-694-6788
Local: CB channel 5

(NPS, cont.)

well, if you upgrade the road the people will come. What we've seen, is the people are coming. Road or no road. Airport or no airport.

Karen: I think that's really true but you kind of have to decide - you'll have to look at the McCarthy Road - you'll have to say well, what should that road do? Should it be a destination road to get people from Chitina to McCarthy and all the services be provided at the end of the road. Or should it be a road that kind of absorbs different kinds of uses as you go along and then at the end of the road you have a particular kind of place with certain kinds of services. What I can see is that you might have I'll say 10 miles out or 20 miles out you might have the old RV facility and you then might have a shuttle from the old RV facility into here - a lesser parking lot. Continuation of trams, a more primitive kind of end of the road like we have now. And the camping that's here might be simply tent camping, something that is very compatible with what we're doing right now. But in a way that is on land that is managed specifically for that purpose and that's in some way funded so it isn't -- so that's assured, that the services are assured it is taken care of.

So that's one way to look at it. Then the other way to look at it is, well, you put all the facilities at the end of the road and everybody drives like mad to be sure they get out here so that they can come to the one thing or the two things- McCarthy and Kennicott- to take care of their activities so that's what I'm really saying. You need to decide how you want it to be.

Rick: You'll almost have to force them to do anything other than that because there's nothing for them..

Karen: Sure, or provide

them the facilities that they come for then provide them an alternative that's compatible with the experience you want to maintain.

Rick: Are there any thoughts of a visitor's center over across the river or something like that - anything other than McCarthy - Kennicott?

Karen: Yes, we're planning now for a visitor's center in Glennallen.

Rick: But I mean somewhere out the road -- only not McCarthy.

Karen: No, we don't plan anything like that. We've done a "rehab" of the little ranger station in Chitina and that's going to be open next year. And that's the only thing we really plan at the present time.

Rick: And your new facilities will be what? Next year?

Karen: No, I imagine it will be '96 or '97 before they're operational.

Rick: Will they be in Copper Center or Glennallen?

Karen: In Copper Center; actually, right near our office. And I think again I feel like we've got a real opportunity in the Wrangells that hasn't existed in the more traditional parks where you draw this boundary-it's all Federal land inside -Federal government takes care of everything and that the communities sprout up around those national parks not on Federal land and they provide services to the Park. Here we've got an opportunity to integrate the Park with the communities and give people the feeling that comes with community. Because that's going to be a real oddity in the future.

There aren't going to be very many communities left to. . It's a rare thing where people are inter- dependent and where they are self sufficient.

Rick: Would you please tell me about your facilities at May Creek.

Karen: We have what

serves us as an operational center. It's a staging area for projects we have going on in the Park. We will - if we have resource management projects we usually stage out of May Creek and we put fuel there, we shuttle our staff in and out from there to whatever remote location they're working. That's been it's primary purpose in the past. In the future, we're envisioning its use on each end of the field season like in May and September for organized educational groups perhaps something like elder hostel or students from some kind of organized environmental education type association.

Rick: How much land do you have there?

Karen: 40 acres maybe

Rick: Does the Park actually own the airstrip?

Karen: Yes, it's Federal. We'll continue to maintain the May Creek airstrip, and the Chisana airstrip to a higher standard than any of the other airstrips on Federal land. Primarily because they serve enclaves of private owners in the vicinity of those airstrips. And they were constructed originally to a fairly high standard so our desire is to keep them quite safe, keep them dependable, so that people know they can fly in and out of there without any problem. To that end, we have a maintenance program going on this summer to do some brushing, clearing, make sure the rocks are off the field.

Rick: Won't you need to get some kind of equipment eventually to grade or anything like that?

Karen: We've got some equipment that we can use on both airstrips but what we've done is to contract with local people who have heavy equipment. We don't have anything there. It'll be done with small equipment and with field labor.

Center to host discussion of Wrangell Mountains Stories

On August 28-29, the Wrangell Mountains Center will host an informal discussion entitled "Stories We Tell: Perspectives on the Wrangell Mountains" at the Old Hardware Store in McCarthy. The purpose of the gathering is to increase our understanding of the many, different stories that can be told about this place, including accounts of its human and natural history.

The McCarthy-Kennicott community is invited to join in a potluck dinner and evening of story telling at the Old Hardware Store, beginning at 6pm Friday. Members of the community are also welcome to participate by attending all three discussions on Friday and Saturday.

The sessions follow a three-week story telling and nature illustration college course being held at the Old Hardware Store. The discussion is scheduled so that staff teaching that course can participate. National Park Service staff interested in public education and interpretation opportunities in the Wrangells will also attend.

Questions covered in the conversations will include: How might the way we tell about the area influence the experiences of people who come here? How can what we say about the Wrangells help people expect that this park is and should be different from Denali or Yellowstone? What relationships might there be between the stories we chose to emphasize and the educational, interpretive, research and development activities in the park?

Please see Jenny Carroll, Meg Hunt, Ed LaChapelle, Marci Thurston, Ben Shaine or Dan Doak for more information.

Will it Rain Tomorrow?

BY ED LACHAPELLE

One of the most frequent questions heard in the McCarthy area, from visitors and local residents alike, is "What is the weather going to do?" The answer is available from a surprising number of sources. Persons long familiar with the Chitina Valley sometimes express a skeptical view of the official weather forecasts, based on hard experience. In fairness to the National Weather Service, forecasting for remote areas among huge mountain ranges is one of the tougher jobs in meteorology. In any case, the NWS weather reports and forecasts can be obtained from several places.

The AM radio stations KCHU (770 kHz) and KCAM (790 kHz), broadcasting respectively from Valdez and Glennallen, serve the Copper River Basin and many parts of the Wrangell-St. Elias National

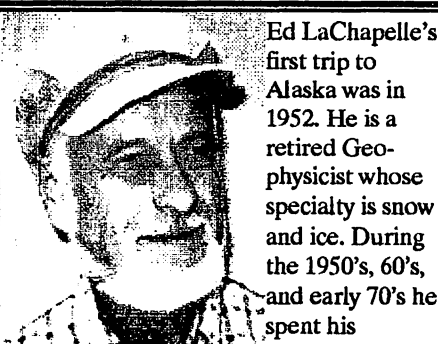
Park. Their 7 AM, noon and 5 PM news broadcasts include weather reports for the Basin along with recreational forecasts for much of South-Central Alaska. KCHU usually has more detailed reports including weather synopses and information for the Gulf coastal area.

Pilots have access to a variety of reports and forecasts. Aviation weather is broadcast on 247 and 395 kHz, with the former frequency giving local data for Gulkana Airport. The world-wide VOLMET net broadcasts Anchorage data at 25 and 55 minutes after each hour on upper sideband at frequencies 2863, 6679, 8828, 10048 and 13282 kHz. NOAA has an excellent state-wide aviation and marine weather program on the state TV network. It is carried on the Aurora satellite at 6:30 PM on week-days.

NWS and the U.S. Coast Guard cooperate to broadcast facsimile transmissions of weather maps and forecasts aimed primarily at marine

interests, but giving an overview of weather conditions throughout the state of Alaska and the North Pacific. The maps are prepared by the NWS office in Anchorage, transmitted by phone lines to Kodiak and broadcast there by Coast Guard station NOJ on upper side bands of frequencies 4296.1 and 8457.1 kHz. Additional maps relevant to South-Central Alaska are available from Canadian Forces station CKN on Vancouver Island, U.S. Navy stations NPM in Pearl Harbor and Adak, and U.S. Air Force transmissions from Elmendorf AFB near Anchorage.

Two local residents of the McCarthy area use computer and facsimile printer facilities coupled to shortwave receivers to pick up the Kodiak maps on a regular basis. An example is shown here. Persons interested in the details of receiving such maps may contact the Wrangell St. Elias News.

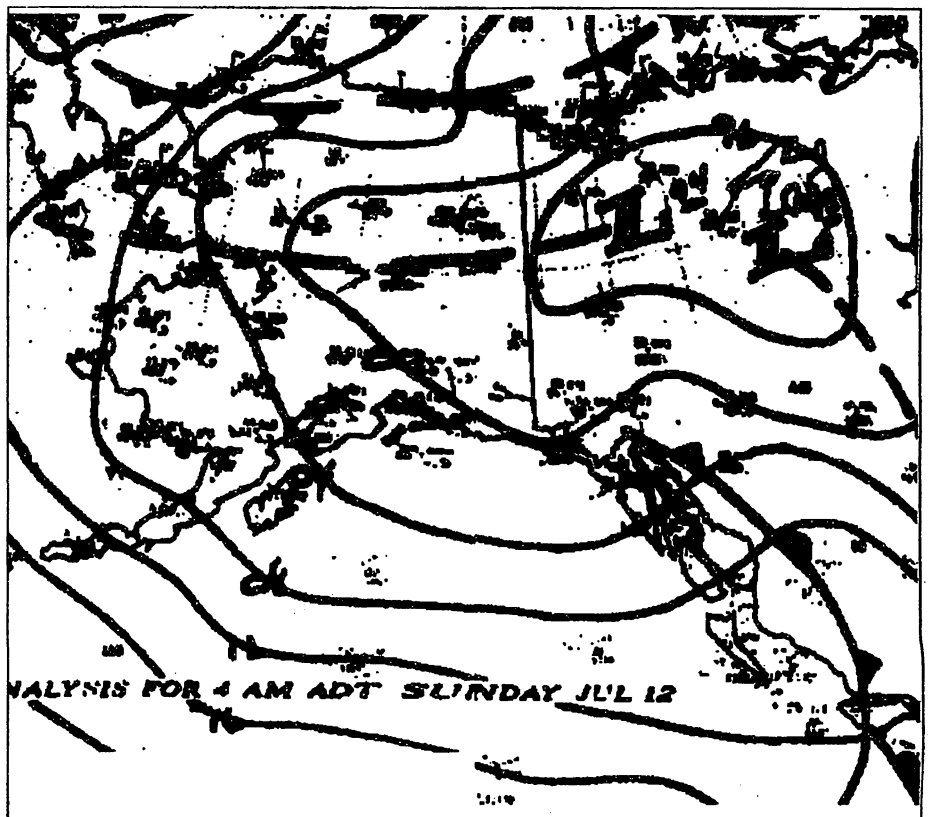


Ed LaChapelle's first trip to Alaska was in 1952. He is a retired Geophysicist whose specialty is snow and ice. During the 1950's, 60's, and early 70's he spent his summers doing

glacier research in Alaska, Greenland, and western Washington State. The winters were spent doing avalanche research for the U.S. Forest Service. He has a BS in physics and mathematics, and a DSC in geophysics.

Ed first came to McCarthy in 1980 on a backpack and climbing trip. He says it was while sitting on Donahoe peak and contemplating the beauty of the area that he decided to eventually own a cabin here. Two years later he purchased a small cabin in McCarthy, and in 1986 moved into a larger cabin where he now spends a considerable portion of each year.

Ed's recent interests have been in the area of alternate energy sources, particularly solar power. Current projects include a solar powered "4 wheeler".



Section of a weather map received in McCarthy. This map shows surface pressure distribution, fronts and a low pressure area in the Yukon associated with a storm that brought over one inch of rain to the McCarthy area.



Steve Mitchell was aboard the winning bike

Fat Tire Festival Comes to McCarthy!

For the past 4 years Steve and Teresa Mitchell of Borealis Backcountry Cycling have sponsored the Fat Tire Festival. Starting at noon August 1st at the Chitina Campground, 74 participants - the largest turnout to date - began the bicycle race which ended just west of the first tram (mile 59 of the McCarthy Road).

The fastest time was done on a tandem bike by Steve Mitchell and Chris Yelverton. The winning team made it in 3 hours 10 minutes 34 seconds. Three tandem bicycles entered this year.

In the men's single class, Zak Houghton came in at 3 hours 17 minutes and 35 seconds. Shirlee Evans from Fairbanks took the women's with 3 hours 39 minutes 57 seconds.

Out of the 74 participants, 12 did not finish. No trouble with traffic was recorded or serious accidents. For the most part, the weather was cooperative with just a rain shower or two. In his exuberance to finish speedily, one bicyclist did cut the yellow line as he came to a crashing stop. He experienced only a few minor cuts and scrapes.

Much preparation is needed to obtain permits, etc. from the D.O.T. and state troopers, taking anywhere from 6 to 8 weeks. One million dollars liability insurance is required and supplied through the National Offroad Bicycle Association (NORBA).

A BBQ was prepared near the finish line on the evening of the 1st. Activities were planned for the next day which included a hill climb from McCarthy to Kennicott using the Old Wagon Trail and an event called "Observed Trials". This involves an obstacle course making balance and accuracy crucial. About 40 of the total race participants were expected to stay and take part in Sunday's events.

Med-i-vacs



Wrangell Mountain Air reports the following medical evacuations:

July 18, 1992 - Woman staying at Kennicott Glacier Lodge suffered serious nose bleed. Kelly Bay handled the flight to Anchorage.

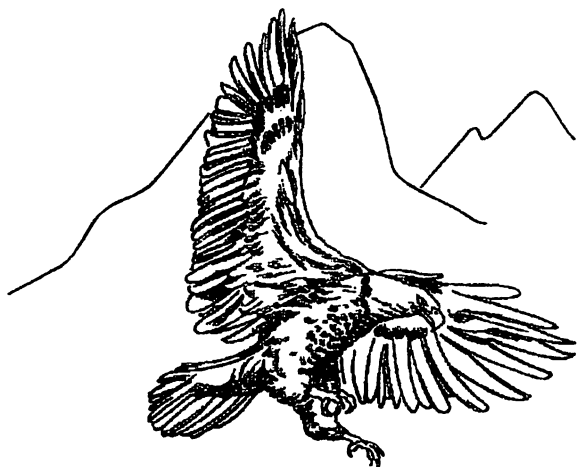
July 19, 1992 - Young lady bicycling downhill from Kennicott fell breaking her jaw and losing several teeth. Natalie Bay handled the flight to Anchorage.

July 20, 1992 - Young woman from Fairbanks injured finger on tram. Natalie Bay attempted to fly her to Anchorage but had to turn back due to weather.

August 8, 1992 - Gary Hickling of McCarthy Lodge suffered a sprained ankle. Was flown to Anchorage by Kelly Bay.

McCarthy Air reports the following medical evacuation:

July 26, 1992 - A California couple injured in a car accident was flown to Anchorage by Gary Green.



***Kelly & Natalie Bay
invite you to enjoy
the scenic beauty of
the Wrangell St.
Elias National Park
from the vantage
point of the eagle...***

Flightseeing Tours

from \$35

- Fly-in Wilderness Trips
- Seat Fares to: Chitina, Copper Center, Glennallen and Anchorage

Wrangell Mt. Air

Across from the McCarthy Lodge in Downtown McCarthy

CB channel 5

McCarthy to get phone service (cont. from pg. 2)

ling said that would be no problem and he could guarantee power 12 months a year. There was also concern about access needed to install and service the system. Mr. Smith said that they were comfortable with the current access, that they had service at Tatitlik which is only accessible by air or boat, and it had been no problem. Also addressed was the technical aspect of baud rates for digital communications. Jim Gifford said that the initial satellite - based system could handle 9600 baud, and the larger system would handle anything that other phone systems could.

A vote was taken of those supporting telecommunications in the area. There was a very strong majority support, with only 3 dissenting votes of the approximately 40 people present. About 20 hands were raised saying they would like to have year around service when it became available. After the vote, Ben Shaine asked if he could express his sadness about telecommunications coming to the area. He said he felt it was the end of an era, that it would open the "flood - gates". Someone said they felt the flood gates had been opened in 1980 when the Wrangell St. Elias National Park was formed,

and now the community has a responsibility to deal with the effects of it.

In response to a question, a board of directors member said that the National Park Service had declined to become involved in the decision making process concerning telephones, but would abide by the decision of the community.

Long time area resident Al Gagnon summed it up as he left, stating that in 30 years he had never seen the community so nearly united in support of any issue.

"In this act we see what real love is: it is not our love for God, but his love for us when he sent his Son to satisfy God's anger against our sins."

-- 1 John 4:10 TLB

Wrangell St. Elias News is published 6 times a year by Rick & Bonnie Kenyon, McCarthy, PO Box MXY, AK 99588-8998.

For a one year subscription send \$8.50 check or Money Order to the above address.

We would like to have items of interest concerning the local area. Suggestions, comments, and news clippings are all appreciated.

Thanks!

Long time resident Chris Richards invites you to join him in **Historic & Nature Hikes and Tours** in the "Heart of the Wrangell Mountains".

Kennicott - McCarthy Wilderness Guides

Take a Historical or Nature - History Tour through Kennicott, Alaska. On the National Registry of historic places, located in the Heart of the Wrangell Mountains - Wrangell St. Elias National Park. Enjoy our beautiful scenery and awesome "Ghost Town" experience with the only "year-around" resident of downtown Kennicott.

I enjoy living here in the largest National Park in the U.S. and hope to share that experience with you.



person* - 2 person minimum. Group rates available. Includes "Historic Tour" above and will identify most local flowers, shrubs, trees and animal sign.

Other hikes and tours offered on request basis. I will alter tours to fit your desires or physical fitness.

Fully insured

Commercially licensed with National Park Service.

*Kids: ages 3 to 12 are 1/2 price

Historic Tour - 1 1/2 to 2 hrs. - \$12.50 each person* - 2 person minimum. Group rates available. Experience the world's largest "Ghost Town" through my 13 years as a resident. Extremely easy walk.

Nature - Historic Walk - 2 - 2 1/2 hrs. - \$22 each

Chris Richards
Box # 1
Kennicott, Alaska 99588

OPINION

It is our desire to report the news in a fair and accurate way. If you think that we got something wrong, please let us know and we will fix any errors.

There is a place, however, for opinion, and that is the "editorial" page. The opinions expressed here are not necessarily the opinions of the editors, unless of course we write them!

Last time we had a guest editorial written by Randy Elliot of Dan Creek. Were you able to guess the author?

If you feel strongly about something that is of interest to the community, this is the place to be heard. Address your letters to :

WSEN

McCarthy

PO Box MXY

Glennallen, AK 99588-8998

This has been a very eventful summer, and it might be good to reflect on some of our long-held opinions on community affairs.

McCarthy - a Unique Community!

It's a pretty common expression around these parts: "We are unique..." the follow-up is usually centered around the poor condition of the McCarthy road, or the trams that folks need to use to gain access to our fair city. These things make us unique. Or do they? I wonder.

It seems that at the heart of those kinds of statements is the thought that we are unique because we deny access to others. Oh, not ALL others, just those who may not agree with our sense of priorities. Those who are willing to "pay the price" of a 3 hour drive from Chitina to the Kennicott River (less than 60 miles) and then pulling a rope on the trams and daring the power of the mighty Kennicott River - these are

worthy of our little town. It's OUR town, OUR mountains, OUR rivers and valleys. Share? Only with the dedicated, physically fit adventurers. To the pilgrims who journey to Mecca to worship. The more difficult the trek, the more worthy the pilgrim.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, the word unique means: 1. Being the only one of its kind. 2. Being without an equal or equivalent. It seems to me that the word "exclusive" might be a better choice (1. Not divided or shared with others. 2. Admitting only certain people; select). At the heart of denying others is a word and concept that is anything but unique. Selfishness.

If our sense of worth depends on things like trams and undeveloped roads, it is shallow indeed. Look around and you will find that selfishness is not all that unique in our world. McCarthy and New York City or Los Angeles - peas in a pod. Selfish. If we want to truly have a "unique" city for our guests to "experience", why don't we try an attitude of sharing. You have to admit, it would make us pretty unique among the peoples of the world!

Think of it: what are we saying to the young lady from Fairbanks who does not want to ride the trams, finally gives in and has her and her family's vacation cut short when her finger gets smashed. They wanted to share our community - they weren't worthy.

How about the family from California who end up in intensive care trying to drive our narrow dirt road with no guard rails or other safety features. "Hey, if you can't make it on the road without falling into one of the many traps along the way, well you just are not worthy of our town." Emergency Medivac at night? "No way, lights on the airstrip

would be bothersome. Ruin our viewshed, you know."

WAKE UP! WAKE UP! Roads and bridges are not our enemies. Families in motorhomes are not our enemies. Development of natural resources is not our enemy. The only enemy that can truly cause us lasting harm is our own deception. The McCarthy area has had a long standing reputation for selfishness that has been well deserved. It need not continue. The little foot bridge over the East Branch of the Kennicott is a good first step. Built without a big government grant or years of "environmental impact" studies, it serves people well, if admittedly only temporarily. The notion that anything other than a tram or narrow foot-bridge over the Kennicott River will open the doors to a "different" crowd is certainly correct. The inherent implication that they would be less desirable is not. America became the greatest nation on the face of this globe when we followed an "open - door" policy. Our community can become great with the same policy. Great in quality, not just quantity.

We have been only fooling ourselves when we think that the handicapped have equal access to this area. Normal, healthy individuals turn around rather than run the gauntlet of our access, let alone those who are disadvantaged. Sooner or later, that access will be forced on us if we continue in our attempt to deny it.

Why don't we stop, take a good look at ourselves and our motives, and see if we like what we see. We would do well to remember the lines from the poem we learned in grade school:

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift
my lamp beside the golden door!"

America fared extremely well when she followed that philosophy. It will work for us as well.

Rick Kenson

Letters to the Editor

This comes from an Alaskan who has revisited the McCarthy area for the first time in thirty years.

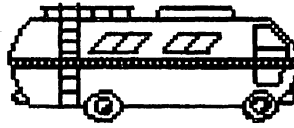
I found the road to be not nearly as bad as was "advertised", true it is gravel, and muddy in spots, but hey this is the Alaskan Wilderness. It is narrow, in most spots, with an occasional pullout for passing oncoming vehicles.

Several observations:

1. Please drive with your headlights on! It makes your vehicle a lot easier to see! Especially in some of the darker areas where the tree's keep the sunlight from illuminating the road.

2. Do not assume that your half of the road starts on the left side and continues across to the right side. Except in wide open stretches, drive on the US accepted right hand side of the road. This is especially important on the numerous blind curves on the road. Nothing causes more gray hairs than to come around a blind curve and find not one oncoming vehicle, but two, and one is using "your side" of the road.

3. Please, if you must stop and take pictures of the beautiful Alaskan wilderness, do not stop in the middle of a blind curve, or the middle of a bridge, and open both doors and then stand in the middle of the road. Use one of the pullouts, or at least one of the wider spots in the road on a straight stretch. Even at 25 MPH, when you come around a blind corner and find the entire road occupied by several people taking pictures, with the car doors wide open, your options become extremely slim. Considering the considerable drop-off on many portions of the road, you must almost immediately decide if bowling for photographers, or becoming and airborne (and soon to be) hunk of junk is the lesser of two evils.



The "Winnie" menace

I was driving out the McCarthy road the other day and chanced to meet one of the land yachts we refer to as Winnies in deference to the company that defined this type of rec vehicle. The license plate explained that this man was retired and from Texas. I have to admit that I find the passage of these vehicles somewhat irritating since I like to go faster than 10 miles an hour and they quite often can't let me by unless the road is particularly wide, a rare occurrence. The man from Texas did let me by, creeping so far off the road I was tempted to stop and tell him I would wait to see if he was stuck in one of those famous soft shoulders. But I couldn't be bothered to ruin my tight schedule for a man who was in no hurry at all. I believe that sums up the attitude of many in this part of the woods. Tourism is one of those grin and bear it necessities.

I saw an article in the "big city" newspaper complaining about the impact of the Winnies and how they were ruining the road and destroying the natural experience of all the tent crowd. People who can't be bothered to live in tents shouldn't be allowed to visit the remote areas. Why go if you are going take your house with you, is the way I have heard it put. The reason to take your house with you is to preserve nature that's why. Preserve nature? Yes.

People who load up their car with "camping" gear usually take lots of things that they may need only once or twice and can't be reused. They also buy special foods which are quite often heavily processed and

packaged to make them transportable and able to keep fresh without refrigeration. That packaging and those unneeded bits are the basis of the tons of garbage littering the trails and campsites. The winnies have lots of nooks for things like that garbage and you don't need a ground sheet for the yacht. They encourage the use of cheaper less packaged goods, and quite often burn propane for cooking and heating which saves a lot of impact by ending the brush picking and the smoke of a thousand campfires. Since they have toilets and so on they also don't leave behind the little piles of buried you know what all over the pristine wilderness. When they live for a week in one spot they keep their garbage etc. inside the rig preventing the garbage bears from getting addicted to the camping lifestyle.

As far as the impact on the experience of other park users the Winnies are naturally concentrated on good roads and parking areas. Seeing as how there aren't any in our newest parks that leaves a lot of unspoiled wilderness for the rest of us. I am amazed at the places you can find a tent in the wilderness. The Winnies do use a lot of gas its true. But they move a lot more around for the money than the car set who need "facilities" like gas stations provide. Going ten miles an hour would seem to be a minor improvement given the nature of the McCarthy road just now. I am afraid I have to admit nearly having killed myself and others going thirty on those blind curves. The winnies are like mobile speed bumps.

Why don't we stop complaining about people who are just trying to save the environment and afford the wilderness at the same time.

Randy Elliot
Dan Creek

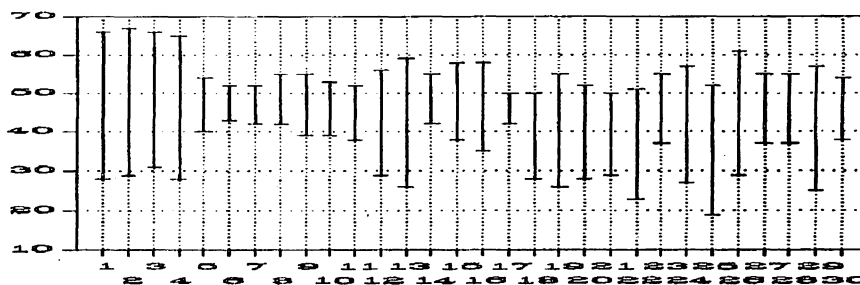
This Time Last Year

The first snow last year fell on October 7. The first snow that stayed on the ground was October 9, and by the end of the month we had three inches of snow on the ground.

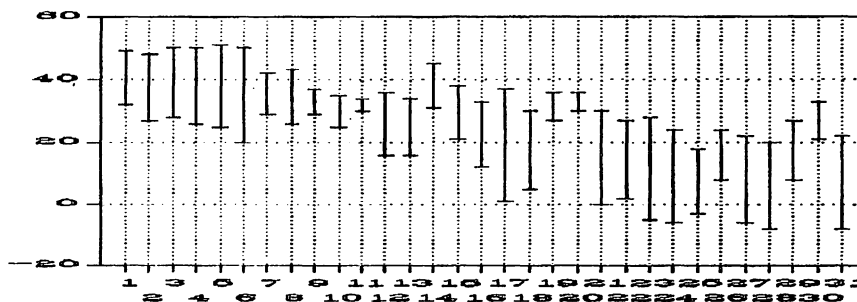
1991

Don't knock the weather; nine-tenths of the people couldn't start a conversation if it didn't change once in a while.
-- Kin Hubbard

September Temps
MAX/MIN



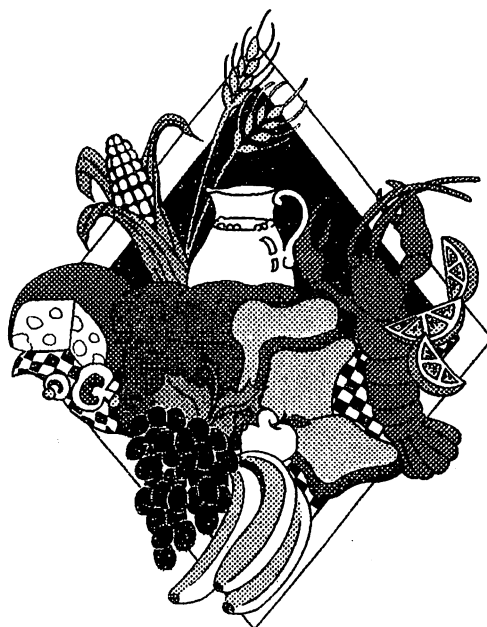
October Temps.
MAX/MIN



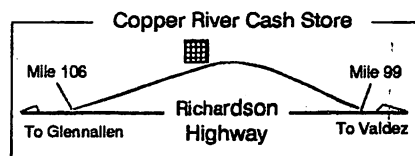
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