

Wrangell St. Elias News

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"

Vol. Eight Issue Five

September & October 1999

Two Dollars

Under siege—



Year of the bear

A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

Looking out the office window today (September 2), I see my garden in full bloom. I cannot help but wish my mom (who left for her home in Florida July 21) was still here to help me harvest and freeze all these good veggies!

One (there were many she tells me) of the highlights of mom's visit was meeting Nels Konnerup, and his son Christopher. Nels is a Kennecott Kid (even at 83!) and we all had a great time reminiscing about the early days when his father, Nels Martinus Konnerup, worked as storekeeper and purchasing agent of dry goods for the Kennicott Copper Corporation in the early 1920's. Son Nels attended the grade school in Kennicott from the 1st grade through the 8th. The "kids" went outside for high school - usually Seattle, says Nels. After graduating he returned to Kennicott where he worked with Frank Morris' dad, Jack, on the aerial tramway. Nels finally left in 1937 and now lives in Camino Island, Wa.

Kennicott must still seem like home to Nels. He attended the 1994 Kennecott Kid reunion.

In 1996 he returned with another son and this year he came back with Christopher. I could tell they were having a great time together. Says Nels, "The young tour guides in Kennicott are having a field day with me!" I suspect they just might have offered him a job!

We had hoped to get this



issue out much sooner because of the time-related issues we are covering. Alaska readers be sure to check page 22 for the pros and cons of the Permanent Fund Dividend's special election issue and Rick's article on the McCarthy Road on page 15.

One problem the editor of a news magazine *likes* having is too much good material. And, that is just what happened for this issue.

One particular article which will appear in our November/December issue is the story covering the Antique Auto Musers of Alaska's annual trip to, none other than, our town!! Peg Stout and Dave Syren have a great account to share with us all and it includes pictures so, be sure to tune in next time for their adventures on the McCarthy Road! I wonder which is older - the cars or the road?

Rick and I are sorry to report that our good friend and McCarthy neighbor, Doyne Houghton, passed away on August 24. Our summer issues usually cover the activities of the Houghton family so I know many of you have become acquainted with this family through *Items of Interest*. We miss Doyne very much!

Wrangell St. Elias News welcomes aboard the following subscribers: Marilyn and Gus Wall, WA; Mr. & Mrs. Roger Crawford, CA; Brandon Holton, AK; Poppy Seed Corcoran, RI; Amy Middleton, Glennallen, AK 99588; Arnold Griese, AK; Hazel Brown, AK; Jeff Sterba, MD; Mary Beth Alber, AK; William Vance, MI; Paul Wilfert, WI; Jim Williams, AK.

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Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

Jim, Jeannie, Matt, Aaron and Stacie Miller: I managed to catch Jeannie at home where she was relishing a day off from their family-run business in McCarthy. She said the garden was receiving some much-needed attention which has been difficult since her sister Terry left.

Jim's mom, JoAnn Collins and her husband Dolan arrived on schedule as well as Jim's two sisters, Evelyn and Lori and their families, but they are all gone now. Needless to say, the Miller household is missing their kinfolk!

A friend of mine, Julie Hardy, and I went out for pizza the other day and Stacie and dad Jim were minding the "store." I can testify that Jim and Jeannie are passing on their pizza-making abilities to their children. Stacie made our pizza and it was delicious! We'll be sorry to see her leave McCarthy, but Jeannie says daughter Stacie is returning to Fairbanks shortly after Labor Day to take another semester of school.

Don, Lynn, Rene and Sarah Welty: Rick and I were sorry to say our goodbyes to Lynn's parents, John and Nancy Burtch, today. Their three week visit to our state all began with a question John asked Nancy: "Where would you like to go for your anniversary?" (By the way, this year makes 48!) Nancy quickly responded with, "Alaska."

John didn't waste any time getting their travel arrangements underway. Frankly, between you

and me, I think John was praying Nancy would say just what she did, and he was determined to get the tickets in case she changed her mind!!

Both Nancy and John thoroughly enjoy visiting (and spoiling) their granddaughters, Sarah and Rene. The time went by much too quickly with John claiming he wasn't ready to leave

In fact, I just got off the phone with him and he is one excited young man. I asked him what it feels like to finally have a phone up at his cabin. His replied, "I love it and pet it each morning!"

I couldn't help but laugh at his exuberant comeback. It wasn't that long ago that McCarthy and Kennicott residents mainly stayed in touch with CB radios.

Jurgen said he is spending his summer composing music and working in his garden. His winter plans include a trip in mid November to Germany where he visits his parents. After that, he travels to Chile to play guitar at Malcolm Vance's restaurant.

Fred and Irene Denner: Gardening is a major operation for those in the Alaskan "bush" and, for many of my neighbors, a challenge they take up

readily year after year in hopes of harvesting a few vegetables for the long, hard winters.

Fred and Irene of Dan Creek are no exception. This year in particular is proving to be an adventure, to say the least. Fred writes: "We have had a great summer here at Dan Creek, and the garden is doing fine in spite of the RABBITS! The electric fence defense works okay but these Dan Creek bunnies are smarter than I thought and some of them have learned to jump over the wires. Therefore, we are allowed to harvest only 1/4 the cabbages we planted, very few



WSEN staff photo

NANCY & JOHN BURTCH, SARAH & RENE WELTY.

yet. I hear Don offered to build them their own cabin so they could stay as long as they wanted.

When Rick and I stopped by the Welty's house the other day, I couldn't help but wonder if Don has an ulterior motive in presenting Nancy and John with their own quarters. Nancy had just baked her son-in-law a couple of rhubarb pies "so he'd have something good to eat after they all left."

Jurgen Ogrodnik: Maybe you are one of those who wish you had never seen the likes of a telephone! Let me tell you...Jurgen is NOT one of those!

beets and not much chard.”

Hopefully the carrots, peas, turnips and potatoes can withstand the onslaught so that Fred and Irene will have something to show for their labors.

Kelly, Natalie and Tessa Bay: I happened to catch Natalie in-between flights. Actually I was surprised to hear her answer the phone. Today’s weather is great for flightseeing trips so I really did not expect her to be in the office. She reports the summer is going well for her and Kelly and their McCarthy-based flight and van service.

Although the Bays haven’t had time to visit their Nizina property lately, Natalie says they are looking forward to a quiet winter when they can do some catching up on things that just don’t get attended to in the busy summer season.

The big news for the Bay family is that Tessa, 6, is getting ready to begin 1st grade. Kelly and Natalie plan on homeschooling Tessa themselves. On the winter agenda is their annual visit to Washington state where they look forward to celebrating the Christmas holiday season with Kelly’s folks in Redmond, WA.

John and Carmen Adams: As I was typing on *Items* John drove up on his 3 wheeler to, as he puts it, “raid our garden.” He browses for awhile (I think it is only when Carmen is away!) and then fills his bag to take home for dinner.

While he was munching on green peas, I managed to get an item from him. He and Carmen will spend the majority of the winter in Cube Bay on Admiralty Island in Southeast Alaska. Carmen has already left McCarthy to get things in order

and John will follow soon. According to John, Cube Bay is about 30 miles from Juneau.

Last winter Carmen’s new teaching job took her and John to Adak Island on the Aleutian Chain. This year they get to sample the weather in southeast Alaska.

Plans are to, hopefully, spend December in McCarthy. Looks like you will get in some snowmachining after all, John!!



Jim, Peggy Guntis and Kim Northrup: Things are REALLY (literally) looking up at Kim’s place next door. Ever since local contractor Daniel Morrison arrived in July, all kinds of action began to take place. Walls on the three-story hillside home are now up; the roof is on and the next step is to begin installing windows.

There is still a lot to be done before Kim and her family can move in, but this is turning out to be a very productive summer season.

Kim is planning on spending the winter in Anchorage this year while Jim and Peggy return to their winter home in Tucson. According to Peggy, they still have a couple of weeks left before

Ed LaChapelle and Meg Hunt: We’ve seen more of Ed and Meg this summer than we usually do. Their recent project, *Porphyry Productions*, has brought them to our office to obtain copies for posters advertising upcoming arts’ performances.

Ed and Meg began *Porphyry Productions* for the purpose of providing our area with cultural events from time to time, Meg says. Each production is free and open to visitors, residents and even summer employees of the Kennicott/McCarthy area.

This summer’s performances which are being held at the Jurick Building in Kennicott, have included an evening of classical marimba which took place in June. The



PHOTO COURTESY PEGGY GUNTIS

JIM BUILT A SPECIAL LIFT TO HANDLE PROJECTS SUCH AS LIFTING THE RIDGEPOLE!

they need to head south.

Harold and Carol Michals: I received a phone call from Carol who informed me of Harold's recent accident at their cabin in Fireweed Mountain Subdivision. When the Michals aren't out in this area, they reside in Valdez. Carol said on Sunday, August 8th, Harold and neighbor Mark Vail were putting the final touches on Harold's shop roof when Harold lost his footing and fell 20'. Carol rushed him to Cross Road Medical Center in Glennallen where he was medivaced to Providence Hospital in Anchorage by Lear Jet. (According to Carol, it only took Harold 22 minutes to get to Anchorage but it took her 6 hours by road!)

Tests revealed that Harold had broken 2 heels, his collar bone and back. As of press time, Harold is back in Valdez at the community hospital in extended care. Carol says he is being well taken care of. She was planning on making a quick trip to their McCarthy area cabin and harvest her garden.

Harold, our prayers are with you for a speedy recovery and, Carol, for you that you can keep Harold in bed UNTIL that recovery is finished. (Harold loves to work!)

Dan Myers: As I was working on *Items* the phone rang and it was Dan. He told me he was working for Charlie O'Neill and Lyn Plomaritis on their building project in Kennicott. Dan (who is a west-sider this summer because he is temporarily living in his camper west of the Kennicott

River) says Charlie and Lyn are building a 32'X16' two-story cabin. This is their second cabin according to Dan, and it is turning out to be a fine-looking building.

It sounds like Dan is too busy these days to build a cabin on his property south of McCarthy Creek, but knowing what a hard worker Dan is, I'm sure he'll be back next summer ready to begin his own project. (That is, unless someone snags him for another construction job!) Glad to see you're so popular, Dan!

Kris Rueter: Kris just returned from a long weekend trip to visit her family in Fairbanks. Her brother and sister-in-law are building a new home and Kris and her dad decided to go and give them a hand. Between working in Kennicott this summer and being out and about the last few weeks, Kris is one busy lady. I'm sure things will slow down soon as this is the last day of August, Kris, and just in case you haven't noticed...the leaves are turning yellow already! Winter isn't far away. I'm wondering if you've had time to replace the snowmachine seat the bear ate this summer?!

Katy Steger: I finally managed to catch Katy as she was just getting off work at the NPS Kiosk the other day. I asked her what was new in her neck of the woods (which isn't far from me, by the way). Much to my surprise, she told me the truck load of lumber for her cabin had arrived. Katy says she is very grateful to several local people who have given her a helping hand on this project, of whom

were brothers John and Frank Adams.

She is having a good summer but admits she is eagerly looking forward to visiting her new niece of 3 months for 6 weeks this winter. The only "slight" drawback is that her niece lives in New York City – a far cry from the suburbs of McCarthy!

McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church hosts luncheon — On Sunday, August 22, approximately 40 ladies from the community attended a ladies' tea and luncheon held at the church. Following the Sunday morning service, the chairs were rearranged, the tables brought up from the basement and were soon filled with all manner of hors d'oeuvres and beautifully arranged trays of food.

Many thanks goes to Julie Hardy who came up with the idea for the ladies' get-together and for all her footwork in putting things in place. We cannot thank James Sill, chef from Kennicott Glacier Lodge, enough for his expertise in creating such delicious fare for we ladies. (To be honest, the food was *almost* too exquisite-looking to eat!) However, it didn't take us long to decide it was just too inviting to merely look at.

Thanks, also, to the ladies of the church who lovingly added their special touches to the luncheon.

The greatest of thanks goes out to all the ladies who took time out of their busy schedules to come and just be together!

Correction

In the July & August issue the article regarding what happened to the Copper River Railways' rail inadvertently indicated that in 1960 a fellow by the name of Joe Lynch came up and purchased the rails between McCarthy and Long Lake. It should have read Lynch purchased the rails between Long Lake and Chitina. Gordon Hizie had already removed the McCarthy/Long Lake rails in the early 50s.

McCarthy—under siege

BY RICK KENYON

JULY 31, 1999—MC CARTHY, AK

The phone was ringing, but was it in my dreams or was it real?

As I heard Bonnie's voice downstairs, I glanced at the clock—a few minutes past six. A few words drifted into my foggy brain, one of them being *bears*. But wait, what was that other ringing? The doorbell! Our neighbor, Nelson, was bare-footed and obviously in a state of anxiety. "The bears are tearing the car up! Brandon is there by himself," she was saying. Nelson had bravely run through the woods to our cabin by herself to seek help.

Quickly putting on jeans and a shirt, I tried to clear my head. Bonnie told me that Kenny Smith was on the phone. He had gotten a call from our other neighbors, the Edwards, telling of three grizzly bears they had just managed to drive away by shouting and beating pots and pans loudly. About that time Kenny had heard gunshots our way and was checking on us.

"The shooting was Brandon's shotgun. He was trying to scare them away," Nelson was saying. "They didn't scare," she continued.

Still not thinking too clearly, I strapped on my Ruger Blackhawk, grabbed the Marlin 45-70 rifle, and jumped on the 4-wheeler. Two hundred yards from our cabin I stopped short—there were the three bears, milling around another neighbor's camp. Brandon was another 200 yards away, on the other side of the bears. I yelled, waved my arms, trying to herd the bears off the road and into the woods. The effect on the

bears was that they started coming my way, occasionally standing on their hind legs to get a better view. Discretion being the better part of valor, I retreated back to our cabin and the pickup truck, which would afford some measure of protection lacking with the ATV.

A number of thoughts were going through my mind. The prior evening the McCarthy grapevine had reported that two Fish & Wildlife troopers were in the area. Several black bears had been killed in recent days and apparently someone had called the Park Service, who in turn called F&W. Word was they were here to "put a stop to these bear killings." Great. Just great.

Emboldened with the sheet metal between me and harm's way, I was able to reach Brandon. He was standing in the bed of his pickup, shotgun in hand. The bears were about 50 yards away. They were making noises that to me sounded like 400 pound geese, angry at some trespasser. Loud cracks of brush and small trees being broken were mixed with grunts and barks. I joined Brandon at his post as he described the morning's amazing events up to that point. The bears had crawled over their other vehicle, a Honda Prelude, and tried to pry open the trunk, which had food stored in it. They had actually bent the metal lip of the trunk several inches, but amazingly, the latch had held.

Brandon and I discussed strategy. We decided that we would protect a 30-yard perimeter around our location. The bears continued to mill

around and make their honking and thrashing sounds, but eventually moved out of sight into the woodsy area next to the road. We talked it over and decided to abandon the area to the relative safety of our cabin.

Safely at home, Bonnie had found the phone number of F&W in Glennallen. At least we thought it was Glennallen. A dispatcher from Anchorage took the call and advised us to just stay inside the cabin, and not to bother the bears. My question of "how long?" brought no response. Finally the voice on the phone said he would contact someone and have them call us.

By this time another neighbor, weather columnist George Cebula, had arrived. Someone said they thought the troopers had stayed in the area overnight, and a phone call to the Hostel found a volunteer, Mark Wacht, who was willing to find the officers and bring them over. Within a half hour or so they arrived, shotguns in hand. Apparently, shortly after their arrival the evening before, they had learned of the trio of rogue grizzlies and had spent the night awake, watching an improvised bait station, at yet another neighbor's camp where the bears had done even more damage during the past few days. Trooper Greg Fisher related how the bears had been terrorizing Cobi Harris and Chris Williams. Cobi and Chris had partially buried a 55 gallon drum in the ground, securing the lid with a locking band. The bears had dug and ripped the barrel out of the ground, then pried open the lid. The couple had moved the food to the cab of their pickup truck. The bears

had then rammed both doors, broken a side window out of the truck, then proceeded to eat the food, rip out nearly half of the seat, the headliner, and bitten the dash. "These bears have to go, or someone will get hurt," said Fisher.

Unfortunately, the bears were now nowhere to be found. The troopers searched for several hours, and Jim Edwards offered to take to the air with George spotting to see if they could locate the trio. Nothing. They had disappeared into the woods. The officers decided to go back to where their bait station was in case they were heading that way. Nelson and Brandon went back to work on their cabin, George to his projects, Bonnie and me to ours.

McCarthy and the surrounding area had seemed to be under siege the past few weeks. While we had not had any bear problems at our homestead, daily reports of bear sightings and encounters were common. The three grizzlies seemed to know when Kenny Smith made a trip to Valdez for supplies. Twice, shortly after he returned home in the early morning hours, the bears had shown up. Kenny had managed to run them off using his shotgun and cracker-shot or shooting into the ground with buckshot. He reported that they seemed to grow more brazen, apparently becoming accustomed to the noise.

While we have always had bears in the area, the number of encounters during the past two years have increased greatly. McCarthy is not unique in having an unusually large bear

population. Glennallen F&W officers report a similar situation in the Glennallen area. Bear encounters have been increasing in Anchorage. Even many states in the lower 48 are reporting record numbers of bears, with the inevitable human/bear problems that follow. Pennsylvania and West



AUTHOR WITH SOW GRIZZLY.

Virginia both had record black bear harvests last year. California reports black bear populations of between 18,000 and 23,000, compared to 10,000 to 12,000 in the early 1980's.

Shortly after 5:30 that afternoon the phone rang again. It was Kris Rueter, one of the seasonal NPS employees in the McCarthy area. She said that Katy Steger, who had been manning the NPS kiosk, had just called and reported that the three bears were at John Adams house—about two miles to the north from our cabin and directly across the road from the kiosk. John was out of town—would I come and shoot the bears? After some deliberation I agreed. John was my friend, and the bears were definitely a menace to society. No one else was willing to do the job. I asked Bonnie to run down and get Brandon to back

me up with his shotgun, while I again strapped on the Ruger and checked the Marlin to be sure it was ready for action.

By the time Brandon and I arrived on the scene a small crowd had gathered. The bears were still there, pawing the buildings and milling around. It was not an ideal situation; the NPS campground was to the north, another private campground to the east, and the road with several onlookers to the west. The only clear field of fire was to the south. Brandon and I approached the bears from the north, trying to get into a position where all three were grouped together. It was not possible. They kept milling around, and the small trees and vegetation hindered our view. Soon one of the

cubs went over a small bank, and climbed up on a bag of cement. While Brandon kept watch on the other two, I dropped over the bank, and shot the intruder. It ran to the north and disappeared. I also ran, back up the bank where the other two bears were still milling around. Two more shots, two more bears running, then down. No, one is running again. Another shot. Two bears down. Where is that first bear?

We communicated with Kris and Katy, who had been watching the road to the west. No bears had come that way. Where is that first bear? I know it was a good hit. We circled the area, looking for blood or tracks. Nothing. Cautiously, senses alert, we worked our way to the south, visibility hindered by the trees and brush. No tracks, no blood. Oh, no, not a wounded bear on the loose. I cannot believe he could have come this

far. We got to the road and there were several neighbors there, guarding the escape routes. No one had seen the bear. They all agreed to go back to the point of origin and form a line, and again we would search the wooded area.

We drove back to John's house and climbed the bank. I pointed out where the two bears had fallen, as well as where the first had been shot. Chris Williams said, "Wait a minute—what about the bear lying over the bank—next to the woodshed? Doesn't that make three?" Relief flooded over me. The first bear had fallen a short distance from the woodshed, behind some equipment. That's why it had seemed to disappear.

"Thank you, Chris," was all I could say.

Now that the intense action was over, my mouth felt like it was full of cotton. Katy graciously got me a glass of water. Things were returning to normal. The only problem now was that state law requires bears shot in defense of life or property be skinned, and the hides—along with attached skull and feet, be turned over to F&W. Anyone who has taken big game knows that the real work begins after the animal is down. And this wasn't just one bear—there were three!

At this point I found out that my neighbors were more than that—they were true

friends. "You shot the bears—we'll skin them," said Kris Rueter. The assembled group of six or eight quickly agreed. We loaded the animals into the back of Chris Williams' truck and hauled them to the Kennicott River bank. This was the same truck the bears had damaged so badly, which seemed somehow appropriate.

The next morning NPS District Ranger Tom Betts flew the hides out to Glennallen, where he turned them over to the Wildlife biologists, completing a truly community effort. My heartfelt thanks to all of you who helped. Let's hope that we don't have to do it again for a very long time.

Mail day message

BY FRED DENNER
DAN CREEK—

Leathery black fur-edged footpads moving to the tune of purpose can tell a story, the medium not printers ink and paper but sand, mud, humus and snow. Tracks upon tracks record generations of movement across the land, moments of a lifetime captured for a while—only to vanish under the workings of wind, sun and weather.

Bear tracks—especially *large* bear tracks—often evoke a sense of apprehension, and rightly so. Visions of an omnivore five times our size stalking about on the same piece of real estate we occupy can be very disconcerting. These same tracks—large or small, can also provide some insight into bear doings, revealing a character more interesting and complicated than the usual bear-human confrontation might disclose.

One short story was decipherable several years ago on an early-October mail day. About half a mile from the May Creek airstrip the road passes through an open area of sparse second-growth spruce trees, with knee-high soapberry bushes hugging their boles. Hiking along the road on our way to the mail shack, we cut a large set of grizzly tracks coming the opposite way. Backtracking the pigeon-toed, long-clawed footprints in the shallow snow, we could see by the way the pad area was melted out that this track was probably two days old, so there was no need to be apprehensive. Farther along it appeared that the bear had detoured off the trail and went directly over to one of the second-growth spruce and had done a typical bear thing. Back squarely centered on the tree, a foot firmly planted to each side of the trunk, he apparently had

commenced to scratch his back, as many a human has done on the doorpost of a building.

Wait a minute! Did I say detoured directly? Closer examination revealed that Bruin had shuffled *past* this bear tree a good 10 to 15 feet, turned, came back, scratched his back and then went on his way. Now this might not seem like a big deal, but we wondered what had been going on in this bear's head. Certainly the tree was there, plainly visible, before he got to it, and he did become aware of it at some point, otherwise he would have kept going. Was his head so full of some other pressing bear problems that the presence of the tree didn't register until he was well past it? Was the tree scratching connection slow to register because he was big, old and slow, or was he already half asleep and absent-mindedly on his way to his winter den?

While this incident didn't offer up any discernible facts about this bear's life, the questions posed in an attempt to define his action did add a

depth and mystery that transcends the ordinary human-bear interaction. Consider this as one moment in a continuous history recorded on the land of

incidents both benign and savage, of a lifetime in the country, of the country—a history of which we know so little.

Bear scare tactics

BY KENNY SMITH

The tenacity of the two grizzly bear cubs that frequented the west Kennicott River area this summer, along with their sow mother, gave me reason to reflect upon the wildlife control measures that I learned while working with the state airport system.

Wildlife problems on airports in Alaska generally involve bird hazards, however moose and deer also create significant difficulties. During my tenure managing airports, I have had the opportunity to attend international wildlife control seminars and listen to some of the world's leading experts lecture on the subject.

It appeared to me that our two grizzly cubs reacted to human control measures in much the same way gulls do. Note, I use the past tense as sow and cubs are no longer among the living. As the season progressed, what fascinated me the most was that the cubs became less and less fearful of the noise making we employed to scare them away. That is exactly what happens with gulls. Biologists call this habituating.

At airports we established "shotgun patrols" where personnel are trained to scare the gulls away by using a variety of techniques including noise-making and scare devices. However, no matter how loud or ominous the scare device(s) are, gulls soon habituate to the

situation. In order to maintain control, bird patrol personnel have to occasionally destroy a bird or two in a flock while, at the same time, make noise and use scare devices. The remaining birds witness this, and it doesn't take too long for them to equate all the ruckus with death. It does not do any good to destroy a lone bird when others are not around. Without accomplishing some bird depredation, an airport can be guaranteed that its gull patrol will soon become ineffective.

With other species of wildlife it is not necessary to kill or maim. A little pain sometimes does the trick. Therefore, I am a little sad that I didn't have a gimmick ready when the cubs visited my place twice this summer. Like everybody else I simply made a lot of noise and they finally left. Unfortunately, with each visit it took more and more noise. It was obvious the sow was more skittish than the cubs and she usually ran off first. It was also obvious the cubs were becoming more and more brazen, and the sow was losing control of her offspring.

Next season I intend to try something different in the event we encounter a similar grizzly bear experience. I want to try and use beanbag bullets in my shotgun along with cracker-shot or scare cartridges. The bean bag bullets will supply the pain and the cracker-shot the noise.

I know individuals who have

successfully used light loads of small bird shot, such as number 7s, to sting bears. However, I am a little nervous employing this tactic because it takes a great deal of skill and calculation. Distances must be exact and the loads not too potent. Visions of gut-shot bears running through the woods harassing my neighbors go through my mind when I consider this option.

I already have the cracker-shot, which I used this summer. Cracker-shot comes under a number of different trade names. These are simply seal bomb type firecrackers loaded into a shotgun shell. When discharged the bomb travels about 150 feet and detonates in the air, which makes the concussion much more effective than that of a large firecracker thrown by hand. [Editor's note: Please don't fire over the bears head—it likely will run towards you when the explosion takes place!] Firecrackers thrown by hand usually explode on the ground, which muffles much of the retort. In addition, during the stress of a bear engagement it is much more likely that the firecracker might go off in ones hand.

Of course, all of our bear hazing efforts will be for naught if the bears manage to get into offal or other edible goodies. After these animals find a good meal around a cabin site they begin to cue on human activity. This normally results in the bears having to be destroyed.

Bean bag shotgun shells and cracker-shot can be purchased at Northern Security Supply Inc., 360 E. Inter-

national Airport Rd. in Anchorage, Phone 907 561-5602. 12 gauge cracker-shot run \$27.50 for a box of

twenty-five and the Bean bag shells are \$29.95 for a box of five.

A Politically Correct Bear Story

Editors note: Regular readers won't need to be told that political correctness is not one of our guiding principles at WSEN. However, one of our subscribers submitted the following story and we thought this month's issue the appropriate time to publish it. Reed Hellman is a freelance writer.

BY REED HELLMAN

In my formative wilderness years, good scouts still cut pine boughs to cushion their sleeping bags and trenched deep around their canvas pup tents. Wildlife was more often referred to as "game," and endangered species generally did not long suffer their endangerment. No one had environmental awareness, ethics, or agendas, or even knew what "environmental" was. Even Jacques-Yves Cousteau dove for the French oil companies.

Only as we learned did we develop the awareness, ethics, and agendas, and begin correcting our notion of the environment. The scouts learned minimum impact, wildlife became biota, and environmental correctness became the backwoods rendering of political correctness. But in changing our attitudes, we lost a traditional folk craft: telling bear stories.

Used to be, every old hand hiker had at least one solid, rousing bear adventure; trotted out as the campfire lifted sparks into the closing night. The tale—and the tale's telling—could become competitive. However, as environmentalism grew, our view of bear confrontations underwent radical revisions.

Now, anecdotists risk being viewed as blundering eco-swine who can't move ten feet without [ticking] off the wilderness inhabitants.

Telling major encounter stories has become tricky; you've got to deal with a whole culpability issue. You must ask yourself, "Did this confrontation occur because of something *dim* I did? Am I truly a heroic Nimrod, or just a thoughtless [jerk]?"

But admit it: Bear encounters still make superior stories. Nothing focuses attention during campfire bragging tournaments like a crisp yarn that begins: "We were camped up above (Kennicott, LeConte, Pitamakin Pass: pick a good one), and this subadult male brownie comes rumblin' outa' the thicket..." That's great stuff! The audience immediately recognizes that you've "been there."

Accomplished bear storytellers can exercise dominion over an entire evening's campfire. "I spooked up a sow with twins over by the big bend on the (Musselshell, Goose Creek, Tanana River)..."

Bear stories are trump cards: all other fireside yarns lose to a bear story. But an environmentally correct confrontation epic requires a

strong dose of inevitability and conformance to Nature's ways. The story must minimize personal culpability; things happen because they happen. The narrator must remain blameless yet the narrative must have all the required ingredients: the bear's proximity, activity, direct interaction, the narrator's flagrant courage, and an amusingly ironic denouement: Try something like this:

There was this scoundrel black bear living in an alder thicket beneath the old Erie Mine, uptrail from Kennicott, Alaska. His front yard was the only place that was flat, had easy water, and wasn't out on a glacier. He knew backpackers had to camp right there and he probably watched us straggle in, pitch tents, and cook dinner.

We laid out a standard bear-safe camp: Tents a hundred yards up wind from the packs and cooking area; our food cached high on the scree slope under a cairn of heavy rocks.

Just at dusk, this robust black bear slams out of the drizzle and goes straight for our packs. Our greenest hiker had foolishly stashed peanut butter in her pack; we heard the bells hanging on our packs jingling as the bear began his mauling.

His name was Fearless and he was brawny. He had earned his name by holding fast against buckshot fired at his feet by a local citizen. Not knowing the bear's reputation, I bounced a rock off his flank, distracting him from the packs. By then, Donna had cleared away our emergency stash of firecrackers and pitched a lighted mat under his chin. The spastic explosions chased him past the tents, but he circled up the treeless scree slope, then rushed us from the side. Donna lofted another mat and Fearless pulled up short, glaring. At that exact moment, he smelled our food cache.

In the lowering darkness we could just see him bat at the heavy slabs of rock covering our cache. Donna sighed: "As long as he gets our food stash, he leaves us in peace. If you want to alternate two-hour shifts, keep the fire going, and guard the camp, help yourself. I can stand guard just as good from inside my warm, dry tent."

I slept well that night, but every hour Fearless woke me by

tipping stones off the cache and rummaging for another food bag. By daylight, nothing was left but some eviscerated freeze-dried dinner sacks, tooth-punctured cooking gear, and a trail of debris leading up and laterally across the slope to Fearless's alder thicket. He had trashed our cook kits and a week's worth of food for four people.

My partner, Bruce, rummaging through the leftovers, abruptly wailed: "My stove! That bear snatched my brand new, micro-miniature, incredibly expensive back-packing stove!" We had to go get it and we had to make some attempt to retrieve salvageable gear, but we could see Fearless striding up the rock slide above the thicket's tangle. To approach the alders, we needed to keep him up there. Throwing rocks and firecrackers obviously wouldn't command much respect, but we had a last ace—a pack of emergency sky flares.

If Fearless started down, I could pop a flare in front of him.

If he attacked, I could aim right at him. Shaped like chunky marking pens with a pull chain dangling from one end, the flares carried a written warning promising something between a flame thrower and a Stinger missile. I had three. Bruce started up the trail, picking through the junk, while Fearless darted from boulder to boulder like a wild west bandito. I kept slightly above Bruce, covering him as we climbed, tracking the bear with the poised flare.

As we reached the alders' fringe, Fearless finally ducked from sight behind a rock pile. Maybe I projected such a fearsome aspect that he chose not to come down and challenge us. Or maybe Fearless just wanted to celebrate another successful camping trip by sleeping off his big dinner.

We had to push into the alders before we found Bruce's stove, along with some pots and pans, an intact container of cinnamon, a bear-bitten fuel bottle, and, most mercifully, our sack of coffee.

Friends of Kennicott makes progress toward management role

BY SALLY GIBERT
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In a string of three evening meetings on July 13, July 19 and July 22, the Friends of Kennicott Board of Directors and a number of other McCarthy/Kennicott residents met to further discuss the future of the Kennecott National Historical Landmark. In the wake of last year's acquisition by the National Park Service, the NPS and Friends of Kennicott have continued exploring options for locally-based, non-profit management of the site.

The meetings revolved around consideration of the June

1999 Partnership Management Strategy report prepared by Mike Loso under contract to Friends of Kennicott. From the beginning of the meetings, it became apparent that some aspects of the report, especially portions of the detailed implementation plans at the end, were questioned by the community or were felt to be premature. In particular, there was concern that the Wrangell Mountains Center, an educational institute based out of the Old Hardware Store in McCarthy, would have too much influence over the use of some Kennicott buildings.

Since these concerns were

not made known during a limited community review of the draft report this spring, the July meetings presented the opportunity to clarify that the WMC had no intention of "taking over" Kennicott. It was further confirmed that detailed decisions about adaptive reuse of individual structures would be decided by the Friends Board of Directors on a case-by-case basis on their own merits at appropriate points in the future. All locally-based non-profits will have equal opportunity to participate.

(Continued on page 37)

GUNS ON THE HOMESTEAD

Part three—the handgun

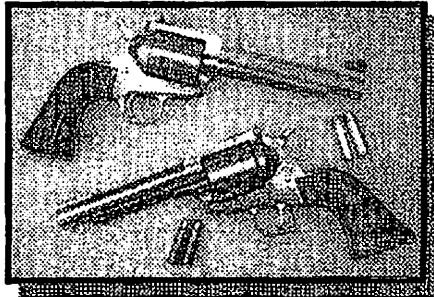
BY RICK KENYON

In this third segment on bear-defense guns for the homesteader, it is time to discuss what might be termed the “minimum” that could get the job done. The first rule of a gun fight is to have a gun. The problem is that you never know just when you might need it, and after a while you get tired of toting your shotgun or rifle to the outhouse or cache. You also may not like the looks you get with a long gun slung over your shoulder as you walk through town to get an ice cream or pizza, after a two mile hike through bear country. These are some of the reasons why many people rely on handguns for self defense when a shotgun or rifle would do a much better job. “Better the (small) gun you have with you than the (big) one sitting at home.”

The main problems with using a handgun for bear defense are twofold: It is the hardest of the three main gun types to shoot accurately while at the same time being less powerful—which requires *greater accuracy* in order to stop a determined target! The benefits of portability must be weighed against these penalties. My solution to this dilemma is also twofold: To use the largest, most powerful caliber that I can control—in a gun light enough to be comfortable packing regularly; and to practice, practice, practice.

As with the other types of guns, there are several options when it comes to handguns. The basic action types we will consider here are the revolver and the semi-automatic pistol.

I am a great fan of the semi-automatic pistols in general, and the .45 Automatic Colt Pistol (ACP) in particular, but in this situation it is just simply not enough gun. There are, however, several large magnum semi-autos that should make fine bear-defense guns. One is based on the tried and true 1911 design and is called (appropriately enough!) the “Grizzly.” It shoots a cartridge called the .45



Winchester Magnum (rated at 1,000 ft. lb. energy) or the .50 Action Express (.50AE) which is rated at over 1,400 ft. lb. of energy at the muzzle. In .50AE it weighs 64 oz. with 6 rounds loaded. In .45 Win. Mag it weighs in at 53 oz. when loaded. I don't have a current price but I believe it sells for around \$1,000.

Another semi-auto called the Desert Eagle is chambered for the .50 Action Express, .440 Cor-Bon Magnum, and the .44 or .357 magnum cartridges. The .440 Cor-Bon is the .50AE necked down to take .44 magnum bullets (which are not really .44 but .429 caliber. Go figure.) The Desert Eagle is a neat looking gun and should have plenty of power in any but .357 magnum caliber. It sells for around \$1,000, depending on caliber and barrel length (6-inch or 10-inch).

If money is no object, you can get the basic gun with all 4 calibers and both barrel lengths for around \$3,500. The main drawback to either of these semi-autos is their size and weight. You might be better served with a shotgun or rifle than with a handgun that is not comfortable wearing at your side all day. On the other hand, shoulder holsters are available that shift the weight from your belt to your shoulders and are an option.

Turning to revolvers, there are two basic types: The single action and the double action. Both have their supporters and detractors. I happen to like single actions, while my friend Don Welty (who helped immensely with information for these articles) prefers the double action. And what is the difference? Basically, with the single action you must cock the hammer for each shot, while the double action gives the option of simply pulling the trigger to fire the gun.

To many people, a revolver for bear country means a .44 magnum. As Dirty Harry once said, “The most powerful handgun on the face of the earth.” Of course that was several decades ago, and is no longer true. It is still the most widely used of the big bores, but it has recently been eclipsed by the .454 Casull Magnum, the .50AE Express, and several others. There are a variety of both single action and double action guns made by Smith & Wesson, Taurus, Ruger, Colt and others are chambered for the .44 magnum that sell in the range of \$350-\$600. Any of these make fine carry guns for bear country,

if you are willing to shoot enough to become proficient with them. For a number of years I carried a Ruger Super Blackhawk with a 7" barrel and never felt under-gunned. Later I had the barrel cut to 4.625" to make it a bit easier to carry. For those who prefer double-action revolvers, the Smith & Wesson "Mountain Guns" in .44 magnum are both accurate and handy to carry. Most authorities consider this caliber the absolute minimum for stopping bears in a defensive type situation.

Taurus Firearms has recently come out with a double action .454 Casull Magnum called the "Raging Bull." They come in several barrel lengths as well as blue or stainless steel. On our last trip to Anchorage they were available at Fred Myers or Wal-Mart at prices starting around \$650. (Unfortunately K-Mart has given in to the liberal anti-gun movement and no longer stock handguns in their stores.) I was able to fire a Raging Bull this past week when neighbor Paul Barrett came over and happened to have his 6" stainless "Bull" with him. I found it quite pleasant to shoot in the single-action mode. Double-action shooting is not really an option when using full-power loads, at least in my opinion. One nice thing about the .454 is that it also fires .45 Colt loads which are much less expensive and certainly more comfortable to shoot while you develop proficiency with the gun. It has a ported barrel and soft rubber grips that help keep the "kick" to a manageable level. The gun is beefy, and requires a sturdy, preferably shoulder-type holster if comfort is important to the wearer.

Freedom Arms has the reputation of building the finest handguns in the world. They

make a variety of single action guns in .454 Casull Magnum and have recently come out with a gun chambered for the .475 Linebaugh. My good friend Doayne Houghton (who has moved to his mansion in heaven since I wrote this story—I miss you, Doayne!) brought his .454 model out this winter and we gave it a test with several brands of ammunition. Even with barrel porting and the guns substantial weight, the barrel rose appreciably with each shot. The grips were comfortable, though, and the gun is completely controllable with practice. These finely crafted revolvers start around \$1,100 and go up from there.

The .41 magnum is generally considered the minimum power level for taking black bear in a *hunting type* situation. It has slightly less recoil than the bigger magnums, and might be considered if recoil is a problem for you. Unfortunately, it never became as popular as the .44 so there are fewer choices. Ruger makes their Blackhawk single action in .41 magnum, and it is a fine gun. I used to have a pair of them—one with the short 4 5/8" barrel and another with a 7" barrel. Like the .45 Blackhawk, it is light and handy to pack all day, but I prefer a bit more power. Remember, we are talking defense, not hunting.

While many "experts" will argue unceasingly about what calibers are best, nearly all will agree that for dangerous 4 footed game the .357 magnum is simply too meager. I classify this caliber alongside of bear spray. It may give you some sense of security to have it, but I sincerely pray you never need to test its mettle. Unless you are very good, you will wish you had chosen a more powerful weapon. Like the

.45ACP mentioned earlier, it is a very good people-stopper, but lacks the penetration needed for tough critters.

So what is my choice? For the past year or so I have been carrying a Ruger single action Blackhawk chambered for the old .45 Colt cartridge. Why? For one thing, it is much lighter, therefore comfortable to carry, than any of the .44 magnums that I am aware of. Mine has the 4.625" barrel and I have no problem carrying it all day in a high-ride hip holster. I was talking with Ralph Lohse the other day and he told me he carries his Blackhawk in a front jeans pocket. A bit skeptical, I tried it and sure enough it rides comfortably there for those short trips to the back forty! Another factor in choosing the Blackhawk was the relatively low cost. I bought mine new for less than \$300, and spent about \$60 having the trigger pull smoothed and lightened, and another \$20 for rubber, oversized grips. The Ruger is strong enough to use heavy .45 Colt loads that are roughly equivalent to the .44 magnum, so it is a tossup as far as power. I would love to have the increased energy of the .454 Casull magnum, but so far the difference in both price and weight has caused me to stick with the little Ruger for daily field carry.

So there you have one man's opinions. Bear in mind (pun intended) that these articles have been directed towards those with limited firearms experience, and I am well aware that many of you hold strong opinions that are different from those that have been set forth. Others have indicated that the articles have helped them make decisions. We would love to hear from you either way. ♦

Bears and the big city

BY NED ROZELL

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

I know an artist who recently had to abandon her studio because a grizzly killed a moose calf a few steps from her window. She doesn't live in Alaska's bush. She lives in the largest city in Alaska.

In this land of contradictions, one of the most bizarre involves Anchorage, a city of 250,000 people surrounded by some of the best bear habitat in the world. When bears and people cross paths in Anchorage, the man most likely to be called is Rick Sinnott. Sinnott is the Anchorage area state Fish and Game biologist who responds to people who tell him a black bear is stealing sunflower seeds from their bird feeder. Last summer, Sinnott and other Fish and Game employees answered more than 1,500 phone calls about black bears and 300 about grizzlies in the Anchorage area. On heavy days, the phone rang 20 times with people asking for help with bear encounters.

Most of the bears who meet Anchorage residents come from Chugach State Park, a 500,000-acre preserve that provides bears with thick alders for shelter, devil's club berries and cow parsnip seeds to eat, and good water to drink. Like a cupped hand extending from Eklutna to Girdwood, the park wraps around the densest cluster of people in Alaska. At last count, Sinnott estimated

that 250-300 black bears and 55-65 grizzlies live within mingling range of Anchorage.

When bears get a taste for dog food, bird seed, and garbage, they lose. Fish and Game officers shot 48 blacks and five grizzlies in the Anchorage area from 1995 to 1998. As of mid-July, six black bears and two grizzlies have been killed this year. Because the city meets the ocean on one side, people have nowhere to move but into bear country. Problem areas include Anchorage's Hillside region, Girdwood, Indian, Rainbow, and Eagle River.

Bear conflicts in the Anchorage area have increased steadily in the 1990s. About three black bears were killed each year during the summers of 1991 to 1994. During the next four years, Fish and Game officers shot an average of 13 bears each year. Sinnott said the increase happened because bears have become conditioned to human food and because hunting seasons have been closed both in the park and expanding residential areas. Chris Kleckner is working with Sinnott to find out more about urban bears. A graduate student at the University of Alaska Anchorage, Kleckner has radio-collared 13 black bears. Each week, he tracks them to discover where they move and what they eat. Kleckner also sets up bear traps (often baited

with donuts) in people's backyards. "The main part of the management program is to educate people," he said. "Human behavior is the initial cause of bear encounters. It's a lack of thought—leaving out garbage when you live in bear country, filling a PVC pipe full of sunflower seeds for birds." When a bear shows a preference for garbage or goes porch-to-porch munching bird seed, it usually becomes one of the bears killed "in defense of life or property." Sinnott said relocating bears is expensive, and it rarely works. Bears have returned home after being moved 100 miles, and the danger of placing a bear with bad habits in someone else's backyard makes it an option Fish and Game almost never chooses. Most problem bears end up like the one that was shot by Fish and Game officers on June 22, 1999, because it was feeding from garbage cans in an Eagle River subdivision. Some people think bears have no place in Anchorage, but Sinnott said a recent survey indicated that many in the city enjoy the novelty of living in an urban area bounded by a wild one. "I think most people realize the risk of them being injured by a bear is extremely small, and they think having bears in town is kind of neat," he said. "They like to write home about it."

"There being no end to good causes, government will always find promises to exchange for your freedom." — Jack Fuselier

McCarthy Road—what is going on?

BY RICK KENYON

People driving the McCarthy Road this summer have been greeted with a hand-painted sign that says, "Worst Road in Alaska." Not too comforting to first-time visitors to the nation's largest National Park. Whether you agree with the sign painter's assessment or not, you might be interested in what plans are underfoot for the road.

The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) has announced its latest schedule of projects for the years 2001 to 2003. Called the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the document is at press time only available in electronic form at the State of Alaska's Web site (<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/>). Printed versions should be available in the near future, however the comment period closes on September 20, so those without access to the WEB are at a disadvantage.

STIP's are like the magician's hat—projects seem to appear and disappear as if by magic. In the version published in 1997, the McCarthy Road was scheduled for Milepost 0-4 reconstruction with the design to begin in 1998. Improvement and resurfacing of the entire road was slated to begin the design phase in 2002. The STIP published in 1998 added McCarthy Road Safety Improvements with a design date of 2002, and pushed the road improvement project back to 2003.

If you read the new STIP you will find that all of these projects have disappeared. In their place is something called McCarthy

Road: MP 0 to MP 1.7—*Major improvements from Chitina to the Kuskhuna Bridge.* Where did the other projects go? No one seems to know.

Only two McCarthy area items have remained in the STIP. **McCarthy Road/Richardson Highway Interpretive Waysides—*Install interpretive signs along McCarthy Road, Edgerton Highway and Richardson Highway, and in McCarthy and Kennicott, and McCarthy Road: Kennicott River East/West Wayside—On east Wayside construct sanitary facilities and provide trash cans. On West Wayside construct parking area with sanitary facilities at the terminus of the McCarthy Road.***

Other road news includes a letter from DOT&PF Regional Director Anton Johansen last June to the effect that there would be no scheduled road opening next spring on a number of roads, including the McCarthy Road. "The snow will be left to melt and run off in the course of normal spring break-up, at which time the Department will begin summer maintenance," wrote Johansen. Even more distressing are persisting rumors that if the state's budget crises worsens, the Chitina Maintenance Station may be closed (see story next page).

The Chitina maintenance folks have been working on the road this past month. The Long Lake hill (about mile 48) got quite a bit of attention with a new, larger culvert and lots of fill which makes the grade less steep. Many areas got ditches alongside the road, and several areas subject to winter road

glaciers were raised. A number of new culverts were installed and much of the road has been graded.

Unfortunately, the road has not gotten safer. The smoother surface encourages higher speeds and the local towing service reports 5 vehicles involved in accidents that required assistance.

Last week several people were in the McCarthy area surveying business owners as well as residents and visitor's as to their feelings about improvements to the McCarthy Road. I talked with Patrick Burden with a company called Northern Economics who was under contract to DOT&PF and the NPS to "study the issue." Mr. Burden said their report was due the end of 1999.

If you would like to comment on any of the projects in the STIP you can contact any of the following:

Tom Brigham, Director
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3132 Channel Drive, Suite 200
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Phone: 451-5308
Fax: 451-2313

Chitina Highway Maintenance Station—how secure is it?

BY KENNY SMITH

Along with trepidation packed accounts concerning Alaska's current fiscal gap comes a rumor that the Alaska Department of Public Facilities' maintenance station at Chitina may be closed.

Six DOT&PF stations were closed beginning state fiscal year 2000 (July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2000). These stations were part of the cuts the DOT&PF was forced to make as a result of the 3.8 million dollars eliminated from their budget during the last session of the Legislature. Apparently, the Chitina station was one of those considered for closure.

Chitina is an Edgerton Highway station in the South Central District of the DOT&PF's Interior Region. The headquarters for that district is in Valdez while the headquarters for the Interior Region is in Fairbanks. I spoke with the manager of the South Central District, George Levasseur, concerning the likelihood that the station at Chitina might be eliminated. George indicated it is indeed a possibility. If he is forced to close a station the two most vulnerable are Chitina and Ernestine. Ernestine is at mile 62 on the Richardson Highway. It sounds to me like Chitina is first on the chopping block.

At the time we spoke,

George was optimistic that this wouldn't occur as the price of oil was approaching twenty dollars per barrel and, because of that, perhaps the Legislature would look more kindly on the highway budget next session.

If Chitina closes, personnel intending to accomplish summer maintenance on the Chitina/McCarthy Road would have to travel either 44 miles from the Ernestine Station or 60 miles from the Tazlina Station before they even begin work on the road. George's operating budget is already in a decimated state. The additional travel will further burden his budget due to added per diem and wasted man-hours. This all will undoubtedly result in even less summer maintenance on the McCarthy Road.

As far as winter maintenance is concerned, the DOT&PF has informed the McCarthy Chamber of Commerce that in the future there will be no winter maintenance past mile 15 nor will there be any early opening spring maintenance. Any summer maintenance will be accomplished once nature has thawed glaciers and the snow pack.

So, what are the possibilities that the next Legislature may lay waste to the DOT&PF budget again, thus forcing

closure of the Chitina station? The way I understand it there are four scenarios worth looking at:

The first would depend upon the price of oil going to \$28 per barrel and staying there. This would place the state in a break even fiscal posture and current agency budgets would probably remain status quo for a while.

The second would be if the public votes yes, in the September 14th advisory election, on the plan to use Permanent Fund earnings to pay for government. However, it is my understanding that even if this plan is fully developed that it still calls for some very significant budget reductions over the next few years as well as modest taxes.

Third, is that the public will vote no on September 14th (current polls indicate a no vote as two-thirds of Alaskans oppose the plan). If this occurs many economists argue the Legislature will have few alternatives other than to make enormous cuts in state services as well as initiate a heavy broad-based tax.

Last, is the chance that the "other guys ox might get gored." Cuts to state services could be taken in areas other than highway maintenance.

The Copper Spike—alive and well in Utah

BY JOHN KILLORAN

In the July & August issue of WSEN Jim McGavock asks what became of the famous "Copper Spike" driven at the completion of the Copper River and Northwestern Railway? I can happily report that it is alive, well, and on public display at the great Bingham Canyon copper mine in Utah.

After the spike was driven by Chief Engineer E.C. Hawkins and Superintendent Sam Murchison the spike was sent to Kennecott Copper President Stephen Birch in New York. The spike remained filed away in the company's collection for the next 82 years.

In 1993 Stephen Birch was inducted into the National Mining Hall of Fame. That this honor arrived 53 years after Birch died is probably another monument to his passion for anonymity. Though he created, built and headed the Kennecott Corporation he was seldom recognized or publicized. This was his desire.

During the ceremony six

years ago two presentations took place. The first was inscribed on a plaque accompanying the spike: "Presented to the family of Stephen Birch, the first president of Kennecott Mines Company — 1906 and Kennecott Copper Corporation — 1915 upon his posthumous induction into the National Mining Hall of Fame. Sunday, September 19, 1993."

The second was the family's placement of the spike in Kennecott's Bingham Canyon Mine Visitor Center in Utah. It is displayed alongside a large panel entitled "Kennecott's Alaska Roots" as a part of this fascinating interpretive center. The panel explains the fact that the Alaska mine fueled the financial growth of Kennecott, its importance to the company, and contains multiple color illustrations of the mill, glacier, and early scenes in Alaska.

The Visitor Center is open twelve hours a day, seven days a week, from April to the end of October. A modest entry fee of \$3 per car is donated to local charities. The center was

relocated in 1995 when the ever-expanding copper pit claimed the site of the older and smaller building. It was rebuilt higher on the slopes of the pit and doubled in size. It is one of the Salt Lake City area's premier tourist attractions. Several hundred thousand visitors see the Copper Spike each year.

Incidentally, the man who introduced me to the WSEN years ago is Bruce Whitehead of Salt Lake City. He is the designer and creator of the Bingham Canyon interpretive center and his firm is the caretaker of the extensive Kennecott collection of historic photos and artifacts. Bruce has a deep respect and great knowledge of the company's Alaska history.

He was instrumental in the emphasis of the Kennecott mines in the displays and in the public presentation of the legendary Copper Spike.

A visit to the mine is an awesome experience. If you are in the Salt Lake area, it is a must!

Syren family reunion

BY DOUG SCHRAGE

On the weekend of July fourth, the Syren family celebrated Independence Day with a family reunion in McCarthy. The McCarthy area has always figured prominently in the Syren family history, and so it was an especially fitting setting in which to gather for a reunion.

In attendance were Mrs. Claris Syren, our hostess and organizer; her daughter Jane with her husband Larry Langston and son Neal; her son Dave Syren; her daughter Wanda with her husband Russell Lewis and son Jon Glover; her daughter Mary with me and our children Calvin, Benjamin, and Aaron; her

daughter Heidi with her husband Andy Linton, daughter Nina, and sons Kyle and Samuel; and her daughter Rebecca with her husband Ken Layering.

Accommodations for all but the last night were divided between the Kennecott Glacier Lodge and Ma Johnson's Hotel, except for that we, the Schrage family, stayed in our own cabin. The family split up to enjoy many of the outstanding recreational activities available in the area on Friday and Saturday, and on Sunday we all attended church services at the Community Church. Afterwards, the kids launched some model rockets (in lieu of fireworks), and then piloted the family "float" in the parade. The weekend culminated

in a family barbecue at the Glacier Lodge where we all stayed up late to watch the fireworks display and then spent the night.

This was the first time that the whole family had assembled since Mr. Alvin Syren's funeral two summers ago. The joy that we all experienced by being together in beautiful McCarthy and Kennecott was really a celebration of Alvin's life, for not only was this his family but it was he who had made the area so special to all of us. For us, the McCarthy area will always serve as a bit of a tribute to him, and this reunion as a reminder of all the special qualities we each bring to his family.

George Flowers—teacher and friend

BY RICHARD H. OSBORNE

My mother, Margaret Hazelet, remembered one summer day in either 1910 or 1911 when an exhausted and lost George Flowers wandered off the Eagle Trail and into her parents' mining camp on the upper Chisna River. His destination: McCarthy, after his long walk all the way from the States. With food, a few days rest, and re-outfitting, he went on his way.

In 1924, four years after I was born at Kennecott to Margaret and "Cap" Osborne, we went down to Long Lake for a week's fishing. Who walked into camp (again) but George Flowers! My mother and grandmother and George recognized one another immediately, and I had both a friend and a fishing partner.

George cut me my first fishing pole, baited the hook, and gave me my first fishing lesson.

By 1926, I had graduated to dry fly fishing. George put a McGinty dry fly on my line, and in my first attempted cast I caught myself in the nose! I was panicked, but George took me on his knee, calmed me with his wonderful chuckle, and with gentle hands removed the fly without damage.

George and I were life-long friends and correspondents up to his death in 1943 at age 71. (George's 1938 and 1940 letters were published in WSEN, July-August, 1999)



Photo courtesy Richard Osborne

GEORGE FLOWERS SHOWS RICHARD OSBORNE THE FINER POINTS OF FISHING IN THE LAKINA RIVER.

Doyne Houghton 1938 – 1999

Doyne LaVal Houghton died at his home in Valdez early Tuesday morning, August 24, 1999, of heart complications.

He was born in Yakima, Washington, on February 8, 1938, and moved to Alaska for the first time in 1947. Doyne graduated from high school in old-town Valdez and later barbered for several years in Anchorage.

Doyne was ordained as a minister in 1983 at Abbott Loop Christian Center and moved to Valdez to pastor Valdez Christian Fellowship. He retired in 1992 and opened his current barbershop the following year.

Doyne was completely devoted to both the Lord Jesus Christ and his close-knit family,

and his favorite days were spent with them and the two golden retrievers at his cabin in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park



near McCarthy, on thirty acres of land that he called Swiftwood.

Doyne loved to be outside and spent many days from the

time he was a teenager hunting and hiking through wilderness in Alaska.

Doyne is survived by his wife, Kay, and his five daughters, Beth, Annalisa, Kristi, Holly and Rebecca, all of Valdez. A daughter and son, Cathi Chapman and Dan Joos, from a previous marriage, also survive, along with his father, Les, a brother Stan, and sister Anita, all of Oregon, as well as seven nieces.

Doyne will be remembered by his family and friends as an easy-going man with a steadfast faith, gentle spirit, and loving heart. His wisdom and quiet sense of humor will also be sorely missed.

McCarthy Kennicott Community Church News

BY BONNIE KENYON

Doyne Houghton not only served on the Board of Directors for McCarthy Kennicott Community Church, but he faithfully attended Sunday services throughout the summer months while visiting his McCarthy "home" on weekends and during vacations.

When Rick and I first heard of Doyne's certain "home-going" in the early hours of the morning of the 24th, our faith in God's Word assured us that our devoted friend was now in the presence of the Lord.

As Rick and I think about

Doyne, there are primarily two words that best describe his input into our lives—faithfulness and loyalty. I'm sure you can agree that these are the greatest attributes for a good friend and brother in the Lord.

Several of us from McCarthy (Kenny Smith, Don Welty, George Cebula, Audrey Edwards, Rick and myself) attended Doyne's Memorial Service in Valdez on August 28. It was decided that none of the churches in town were large enough to accommodate the many who would be attending, so the Houghton

family chose the Valdez Civic Center.

I was not surprised to see the room fill with those who, like Rick and me, were so enriched by this one man. Also, I was not surprised to hear others express the same kind of friendship, faithfulness and loyalty towards them as we had experienced in our walk with Doyne.

Daughter Kristi best describes why her father was able to be that faithful and loyal friend and such a devoted father: "He was close to the Lord." †

OUR TOWN

September 1924 October

WHO'S WHO

Business picking up, Poker Sam arrives in town.

A new Café was opened up by Mr. Bill Johnson, to the disgust of some of the older restaurateurs.

Word was recently sent to us that the Dick Lander Jr, formerly of this town, had been awarded the baby prize at Anchorage, beating all comers to the first prize out of a thousand other competitors. We extend our congratulations to the little feller and his proud Mother, and his old Dad.

The two Engineers, that came up to McCarthy with the former Governor of New York, pulled in from the White River country this week; they were looking at the various prospects in that section of the country with the idea purchasing some of the larger ones.

They were very well satisfied as a whole with the country.

Harry Boyden took them in with his pack train and he was accompanied by his wife and Bill Loubey, who was their cook.

Harry Mudge of this town and Mr. Joes of Dan Creek, have gone out on a few days hunt on Chitistone for sheep.

Jimmie Hussey of the Golden and Roy Snyder have installed a power plant of the Kohler system and has the Delco system beat a mile.

Sept. 6

WHO'S WHO

Jimmie Hussey of the Golden went on a flying visit to Strelna.

Mr. Marwood who is employed at Dan Creek was a visitor in town Wednesday.

Walter and Bill Lubbey, have been out leveling the giant timbers on the Sourdough Hill this past week.

GREEN BUTTE MINE WORKS ON 25TH

The Butte Mine is expected to start work full blast once more on the 25th as they will by that time have received power from the Kennecott Plant, where they have made tremendous headway on their new power station.

NOTICE

On and after September the 30, midnight 1924, this Publication, will change ownership.

HUNTING PARTY RETURNS

J. W. Nickell, Andy Taylor, Jimmie Brown and Joe Meloy, arrived on today's train via Chitina, and Gakona, from the Nabesna country, where they had gone with the Baldwin Madery party. They report a very successful trip, having bagged two large grizzly bears, six sheep and one caribou. The boys are loud in their praise of Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Madery as being gentlemen of the finest quality and thorough sportsmen.

Mr. Baldwin is from Fredericksburg, Virginia, and Mr. Madery from Philadelphia, Pa.

Jimmie Brown returned to Chitina on the train enroute to Nabesna, where he is wintering his horses.

God help the man whose life is aimless. Find a hobby that will broaden your outlook on life, if you can, but any kind is better than none at all.

Search for a hobby that will be constructive. Then every day will be a building-up process. You will grow stronger in mind, and body day by day and year by year. So, if you are hobbyless try to arouse interest and enthusiasm in some form of pleasure or even work.

Sept. 20

WHO'S WHO

Mr. T. H. Huddleston Superintendent for the Alaska Road Commission for this district, paid a hurried visit to McCarthy Wednesday. He instructed the Engineer in charge to begin pile driving at once at Nizina. The Hawetruss spans will arrive soon and will be hauled by caterpillar tractors to the bridge sight.

Charley Chong is not to be outclassed by the other citizens in regards to power plants and so is putting in one, too.

AUTOS

Towns with government autos are given as follows: Juneau 9; Ketchikan 8; Hyder 2; Haines 6; Nome

and vicinity 8; Valdez and vicinity 23; Seward 7; Anchorage and vicinity 16; McCarthy and vicinity 22; Fairbanks and vicinity 17; McKinley Park 1.

On the morning of September 25 McCarthy got up to find 4 inches of snow on the ground.

Sept. 27

WHO'S WHO

Mr. and Miss Lamell returned to Kennecott last week after spending a two month vacation in the States. They say they are glad to be back.

Mr. Emmett McConenell and his wife returned to Kennecott this week after spending the last year in Latouche.

Mr. and Mrs. Art Powell came in from Rex Creek Wednesday. Art made quite a clean up this time, struck what he has been looking for a good many years. Good luck, Art.

The McCarthy Weekly News changed hands this week and we did not get started on this issue till late in the week, so we have been crowded for time, but we hope to get a better start next week.

The mines started to work again in full blast after a two month shut down caused by the fire at Kennecott. Green Butte put on about twenty men this week.

Hurray: Folks we have a new Depot which is quite a contrast to the old ramshackle thing which has been called a Depot here for

the twelve years.

Thank you Mr. Hanson.

NOTICE

Mr. Harry Bosch severed his connection with the NEWS this week. Any debts contracted by him will not be recognized by the present owners.

Mr. John Lucky, Contractor for the Alaska Road Commission, has delivered enough piles to allow the commission to start driving immediately. It is the intention of the commission to try and get all the piles driven before the freeze up, and erect the span in the latter part of the winter.

Mr. Fred Anderson previously foreman for the Alaska Engineering Commission will arrive in McCarthy and start framing of the span.

Oct. 4

MCCARTHY LOCALS

James Hussey of the Golden is installing another Kohler electric light plant.

The "Terrible Herman" and a companion shot 44 low bush moose in three hours. A record?

WEEKLY NEWS UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

Since its birth some fourteen years ago under the able guidance of Cap Hubrick the McCarthy Weekly has had a varied and hectic career. It has seen days of prosperity and plenty and has reared its head proudly among its brethren and flourished.

It has come thru dark and troublous times, and at irregular intervals, so feeble has it become that scant hope has been held out for its recovery, but it still retains a spark of life and where there is life, "There is

HOPE," we are told by sages with long and hoary beards.

Once again the News has changed hands for better or for worse and the new management has gritted its teeth and resolved to fan the spark into life and our earnest endeavor will be to foster the "infant" into lusty childhood and coax it into full maturity.

There are many difficulties to overcome. We are strangers to the district and it is always difficult to break into the full confidence of the public, as there is always a natural reserve to overcome. But our first visit to McCarthy impressed us greatly. Everyone was friendly to strangers and seemed glad to welcome them so that we are very confident that we will have the backing and support of every member of the community, without which any venture of any kind is doomed to failure beforehand and with which nothing is impossible of achievement.

It is our chief aim to publish a paper which will be a benefit and a thing of pride to the community. We want everyone to look forward to each issue with interest and not look on it as a matter of charity to a poor and struggling editor. (Though, frankly, we do like to see the subscriptions come in.)

A newspaper can be a great force for good to a community for by no other medium can ideas and news of progress from every part of the world be transmitted to a large number of people with the facility of the newspaper.

And in this way (we blush as we say this on account of our shy and retiring nature), WE SHALL SUCCEED. (Oct. 25)

OF INTEREST TO TOWN AND DISTRICT

Mrs. Dr. W. W. Council of Cordova is visiting with Mrs. J. B. O'Neill this week.

Word has been received by Cap Hubrick that Mr. J. Schultz and bride who are on the S. S. Yukon are on their way back to McCarthy from Seattle.

Mr. Harry Bosch, former editor of the NEWS and Herman Hill left for Long Lake on Wednesday where they intend setting out a trap line for the winter.

Mr. Fagerberg of Long Lake arrived in town on today's train and will spend a few days.

Bertha Simon returned from Cordova today where she attended the funeral of her brother, accidentally drowned last week. The American Legion conducted the funeral.

Mrs. Nels Tjosevig who has been spending some time in Seattle with relatives leaves for Alaska October 25th.

NEW LAUNDRY FOR MCCARTHY

Mr. K. of the Alaska is busy putting the old laundry building into shape preparatory to opening an up-to-date laundry. K. is an experienced laundry man and has modern equipment. This has been one of McCarthy's chief needs and we wish K. every success in his undertaking.

Oct. 18

OF INTEREST TO TOWN AND DISTRICT

Pete Johnson has purchased the cottage opposite Widing and Nelson Bldg. formerly owned by Mr.

Hussey. Mrs. Johnson expects to move into town for the winter.

Mr. Harry O'Neill of Cordova made a combined business and pleasure trip to McCarthy Tuesday returning on Wednesday's train.

AWAKE MCCARTHY

You have been slumbering over long, Village of the Hills, and amidst your peaceful dreams you are forgetting that the world is prospering, advancing and leaving you asleep by the road side.

Awake, ere your rose-tinted visions fade and become horrible nightmares as the air castles of the dope fiend fade away leaving his opium clouded brain a little more stagnant than before.

We know your reason of being and that it has gone but are you content then to wait and linger by the way, scanning the horizon in the vain hope of seeing in the offing another incentive to goad you into activity? Be up and doing! Fortune has knocked and is not far away but getting just a little farther, a little farther; and his daughter (misfortune) follows close in his footsteps. If incentive will not come unbidden, create your own incentive and do not lie dormant while opportunity is winging.

You have beauty unsurpassed. Do not waste Heaven's gifts. Gird up your loins and hasten into the fray. Brush the dust from your costly raiment and shine forth in splendor so that all may see and know you. There is time. Awake McCarthy!

Oct. 25

Permanent Fund future

While not a local issue, the upcoming vote on the Permanent Fund is important to all Alaskans and WSEN is departing from our normal policy in order to include some information on the subject. The following is a slightly edited version of an article that appeared in the August issue of the Resource Review. While perhaps slanted towards a "yes" vote, we thought it did set forth the issues fairly clear. We have also included are arguments both for and against the measure.

“After paying annual dividends to residents and inflation-proofing the Permanent Fund, should a portion of Permanent Fund investment earnings be used to help balance the state budget?”

This is the question Alaskans will answer in voting booths this fall as Governor Tony Knowles and the Alaska Legislature seek the public's judgment regarding a stable and sustainable long-term budget plan. If voters approve the advisory question, the Legislature and the Governor will set into motion the Balanced Budget Plan.

The plan will restructure the Permanent Fund into an endowment that will generate a healthy, growing dividend, protect and inflation-proof the fund's principal, and produce a sustainable revenue stream to help fund essential state services.

This change is endorsed by many former Permanent Fund trustees, staff and consultants.

Two central features of the plan are combining of reserve accounts and restructuring distributions from the Permanent Fund.

Under the plan, the Earnings Reserve Account (most earnings from the Permanent fund are currently held in this fund for a specific period) and the Constitutional Budget Reserve (presently, the only major fund the legislature can tap each year to offset the

budget deficit) will be combined and renamed the Alaska Income Account (AIA). The AIA will then be invested with the Permanent Fund principal and all earnings will go into the AIA. The AIA will generate income to ensure inflation-proofing, payment of dividends and funding of essential government services.

Under the new method, dividends will be based on a five-year market value of the total fund each year, an amount equal to 5.88 percent of the total market value will become available, half for payment of dividends and half for essential services.

Over the long term, the plan inflation-proofs the principal of the Permanent Fund in two ways. First, all earnings in excess of 5.88 percent of the market value stay in the fund. Second, whenever the liquid portion of the fund (the AIA) equals more than 40 percent of the total fund, the excess will be deposited into the principal.

Fund managers favor this approach because, historically, it provides better protection for the principal, ensures growth and produces a reliable income stream. This approach is similar to that used by foundations, endowments and pension funds all over the world.

Under the new plan, dividends will be lower in the short term, but will grow over the long haul.

Each year's Permanent

Fund Dividend is currently based on a rolling five-year average of the fund's realized earnings. For several years, the trustees of the Permanent Fund have recommended the system be changed to a calculation based on the fund's market value because this methodology protects the principal better and generates dividends that are less volatile, more reliable and more predictable.

Alaskans have become accustomed to an ever-growing dividend, but the current system in no way guarantees a bigger check every year. Declines in the stock market and years of high inflation can put the dividend on a roller-coaster. According to a computer model built for the Permanent Fund Trustees, there will likely be years in which the dividend drops to zero because of market conditions and inflation.

Under the status quo, dividends are expected to peak at \$1,856 in 2001 and begin dropping after that point. Unless significant new sources of revenue are found, the dividend could disappear by 2013 as fund earnings are used to pay for essential services.

The Balanced Budget Plan provides stable and predictable dividends, at least \$1,700 in 1999 and 2000, and approximately \$1,340 in 2001. After 2001, the dividends would grow gradually but steadily.

Fact Sheet

Alaska Permanent Fund

- The Permanent Fund was created by amendment to the Alaska Constitution in 1976.

- The original intent and purpose of the fund was to save a portion of Alaska's revenues from its petroleum resources, invest that revenue, and use the earnings to help provide essential public services in the future when petroleum revenues decline.

- In 1998 earnings from Permanent Fund investments exceeded oil revenues. The gap between oil revenue and Permanent Fund earnings will continue to accelerate.

- The principal can never be touched unless and until voters vote to do so by constitutional amendment.

- The Legislature has the authority to appropriate all earnings from Permanent Fund investments at any time.

- The Permanent Fund is currently valued at \$25.8 billion. The total includes the fund principal (\$18.6 billion) and earnings (\$7.2 billion). One third of the principal came from dedicated oil revenues with the remainder by legislative action in the form of inflation-proofing and special appropriations.

Why budget cuts alone won't close the gap.

- Alaska cannot whack \$1 billion off the state budget without throwing the state into a recession. We cannot cut our way to a sustained balanced budget. The following are sample scenarios of the magnitude of cuts that would be required to close the fiscal gap.

- Stop paying K-12 education, the Medicaid match, general funds appropriated by the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and all general fund appropriated to the University of Alaska.

- Eliminate all general funds from every state agency except the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education.

- Eliminate all general funds in the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education.

- Institute a head tax of \$1,799 for every person in Alaska, including children or eliminate the Permanent Fund dividend.

- Many changes and improvements have occurred in Alaska over the past 20 years. Going back to pre-oil spending levels is not a realistic option.

***Oil prices could double and Alaska would still not have enough money to provide essential government services to its residents.

JUST SAY NO!

BY SENATOR ROBIN TAYLOR

Over the last three and a half months 80% of the folks I've talked to said thanks for trying to stop and voting against the legislation to provide for an Advisory Vote on the Permanent Fund. A few asked why I opposed the vote. Well, there are several reasons. Probably first and foremost is the fact that no voter in District A has ever asked me to take \$500 out of their Permanent Fund dividend check and give it to the state's general fund. Second, it is a thinly disguised tax that as my friend Senator

Rick Halford says, "it's just a baby tax—it taxes every Alaskan Baby!" Over one third of those paying this tax are 0 to 20 years of age. I have consistently voted against every tax increase for several years. Third, I believe that we need to reduce our total dependence on oil, diversify our economy and reduce the size of state government. We need to sell some state land (we own over 103 + million acres), sell some state timber (we have over 14 billion bd. ft. of dead and dying state timber killed by beetles), and we need to assist and encourage the mineral industry

and the fishing industry. Finally, I think Alaskans need their Permanent Fund Dividends more than BP and the Queen of England need a tax break.

My recovery plan involves Cuts and Consolidation, Privatization and Resource Development (C.P.R). Our resource based economy is declining and stagnant, we need to breath new life into Alaska. I believe we need to continue making a smaller, smarter, more efficient government by continuing to cut waste and consolidate depart-

ments for efficiency. We need to privatize some functions. All 49 other states have found significant savings through this approach. Often state employees form their own company, as they know best where efficiencies can be found. Unfortunately, by order from Governor Knowles, our state employees are prevented from even talking to the legislature about ways to save money. Finally, our forefathers selected 103+ million acres of resource rich land and they told the Federal Government that if Alaskans received this land we would build an economy and a state that would not be dependent on Federal largess to operate. We discovered oil and immediately forgot about all of our other resources. A consistent program of land sales alone will generate over 150 million dollars per year and even at that rate of accelerated disposal at the end of 400 years we would still own more state land than 50% of the other states do today. By building the economy and reducing the size of government we can balance this budget.

The big scare behind the push to take your dividend is that an income tax will occur. **WRONG, WRONG, WRONG** — the Senate just this last session unanimously voted to defeat Governor Knowles's bill to impose an income tax. There was not one Senator, Republican or Democrat, who supported an income tax! The same people will return to Juneau this January. They won't support an income tax next year either. There is little to no support for additional taxes in either house of the legislature and as mentioned above there are many alternatives other

than taxes to gain new revenue for the state. But the big government spenders will never look at any of those alternatives when it's easier to open the golden door to the Permanent Fund and take whatever they want. Alaska has a spending problem, NOT an income problem.

Under their worst case scenario the state won't run out of savings (reserve) monies until the year 2007, that's 8 years from now! These scare mongers assert that there will be, NO reduction in the size of government or its cost (NO-C=Cuts), NO privatization or consolidation of government functions for efficiency, (NO-P=Privatization) and NO oil from ANWAR, NO timber sales, NO increased land sales, No lottery, they tell us that they will not diversify our economy or develop any of the lands or resources we own (NO-R=Resource Development). This billion dollar horror story is based on oil selling at last years historically low prices, today it's selling at over \$20 per barrel. Over 30% of this billion dollar scarecrow deficit has disappeared in just the last four months.

I will be voting NO. I hope my fellow Alaskans will join me in that vote. Let's send a clear message to the legislative leaders and to Governor Knowles that taxes of any kind should be the last choice. Lets ask them to remember their campaign promises. They pledged to prioritize spending, take care of our roads and marine highway, our schools and our public safety. They promised to trim the administrative overhead. Take the action necessary to diversify this economy and use our land

and resources for the purposes for which they were selected. Your NO vote will tell them to enact a program of C.P.R.. When, they have honestly done all they can, then if they still need more money from the Alaskan voters, give Alaskans a **BINDING VOTE** on a **DEDICATED FUND**. That way Alaskans will know that this money is being spent on (i.e. schools, roads, marine highway, capitol projects, troopers, etc.) and finally give Alaskans a constitutionally binding spending limit that works. Like the old western song we need "a little less talk and a lot more action."

Until this Governor and our legislature can honestly say they have done all that, we should, say NO to taking the Permanent Fund earnings and send them back to the drawing board to seriously consider more palatable alternatives.

Unfortunately, big money is trying to buy this election, according to the Alaska Public Offices Commission "the oil industry paid about \$166,000 over one half the total" of the \$265,000 the Yes campaign has already raised. In the next few weeks I believe that number will double as the Governor twists arms to get more money to make you vote yes. Had the legislature passed the last five budgets and supplementals submitted by Governor Knowles, the state would be spending over \$750 million more per year above the current budget. When you see those stick TV ads, remember who paid for them. I don't believe that Alaskans are willing to give them the key to the vault at the Permanent Fund. Like those drug ads on TV — on September 14th just say NO.

Vote "yes" to protect the economy and balance the budget

BY KEN FREEMAN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

The September advisory vote asks Alaskans if they support using Permanent Fund earnings to pay dividends and support essential state services. A "yes" vote sets the stage for the Balanced Budget Plan that creates a new, sustainable revenue stream for essential state services, ensures a healthy dividend program and inflation-proof's the Fund. The plan also includes continuing budget cuts, additional revenue enhancement, and creates a Citizens Budget Task Force to find additional reductions and revenues.

The plan is not perfect and certain specifics are still forthcoming, but it does serve as a crucial step to balance the state budget and bring long-term stability to Alaska's economy.

This September Alaskans have a choice between a sustainable dividend and a balanced budget or a big gamble where the odds are stacked against us.

Alaska's fiscal gap is real and it's not going away. Oil revenues, which used to account for 85 percent of all state revenues, now totals 70 percent and are declining daily. Oil production from the North Slope is half of what it was ten years ago and will continue to fall. This time Alaska will not be saved by rising oil prices because there is not enough oil production to produce the revenues needed to fund vital

state services.

The state could raise oil taxes, but such action could accelerate the production decline. Instead the state needs to encourage industry to continue an aggressive investment policy to bring smaller, more expensive fields into production. Alaska, however, has one of the highest oil tax structures in the world. If we increase taxes, Alaska would risk sending future capital to more friendly oil provinces abroad.

We could cut the budget more, even though state spending has been reduced \$235 million since 1996 and the General Fund portion of the budget is now \$1,700 less per capita than it was in 1979, the year before oil revenues started to flow into the state treasury. Alaska, however, cannot whack \$1 billion off the state budget without causing major disturbances and throwing the state into a recession. Many changes and improvements have occurred all over Alaska. Going back to pre-oil spending levels is not a realistic option.

We could revert to a state income tax or statewide sales tax, but neither would close the gap.

The problem is not going away. Alaska now has huge deficits and declining oil production which translates into falling revenues.

Fortunately, Alaskans prepared well for this day.

There's the Constitutional Budget Reserve. Unfortunately, this account will be used up soon if we don't do something now.

We established the Permanent Fund to save a portion of our oil wealth for this and future generations. The fund has two parts—the principal, which cannot be tapped without a vote of the people, and the earnings reserve account, which is annually available to appropriation by the Legislature. September's vote applies to the earnings reserve.

The Balanced Budget Plan preserves, protects and grows the principal of the Permanent Fund. It sustains a healthy dividend. Yet a "no" vote supporting the status quo jeopardizes the dividend program. The budget deficit could grow so severe that the state may eventually be forced to tap all the Fund's earnings to pay for general government services. Several years of poor financial markets and escalating inflation could also bring down the dividend.

A "yes" vote this fall would change the dynamics. Voters have the opportunity to turn the Fund from an annual savings account into a long term revenue generator, just like a pension fund.

The plan is a step in the right direction, one which we need to take to help secure a stable future for Alaska.

Trail access across Alaska expanded

Knowles Signs Bill Granting Immunity for Public Access across Private Land

ANCHORAGE —

Gov. Tony Knowles signed legislation on July 9th that is intended to improve the network of trails across Alaska. Under Senate Bill 45, private landowners, municipalities and state agencies offering trail easements across their lands for recreational purposes will be immune from liability for any resulting injuries to trail users.

During the bill signing ceremony at Elderberry Park near the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail in downtown Anchorage, the governor noted that Alaska has many wonderful areas of public land suitable for recreational activities, such as hunting, fishing, snowmachining, skiing, dog mushing, and hiking.

"Unfortunately, some of Alaska's prime recreational areas, particularly near urban centers, cannot be reached

because the only access is across private land," Knowles said. "Alaskans are a generous people and owners of some of these lands are willing to allow the public access across their land as long as they know they are not liable for any damages or injuries that may result."

In offering this immunity, Alaska joins every other state in the nation in recognizing the benefits of making recreational land as accessible as possible. The immunity is granted as long as there is no recklessness or intentional misconduct by the landowner and no charge to the trail user to cross the land.

In 1996, members of the Trails and Recreational Access for Alaska Board, better known as TRAAK, realized that the state needed to provide private landowners a level of immunity from liability if they were willing to grant easements across their

property for recreational users. Knowles introduced a measure in the House this year and Sen. Rick Halford (R-Chugiak) introduced a similar measure contained in SB 45.

The legislation was supported by a broad spectrum of Alaska organizations, including the Municipality of Anchorage, the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, the City of Wasilla, the Wasilla, Palmer, Fairbanks and State Chambers of Commerce, the Alaska Snowmachine Association, the Mat-Su Motor Musers, the Alaska Boaters Association, and the Alaska Outdoor Council.

Knowles urged landowners, municipalities and the state to implement the goals of the TRAAK program and expand Alaska's trail system for use by residents and visitors.

National Park Service announces new Plan

MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK, WA—

National Park Service (NPS) Director Robert Stanton announced on August 12 a major change in how the NPS manages the natural resources under its care. Called *The Natural Resource Challenge: The National Park Service's Action Plan for Preserving Natural Resources* the new plan addresses the challenges of caring for our country's natural heritage within the complexities of today's modern landscapes.

"This Action Plan represents our strong commitment to preserving our country's precious natural heritage for this and

future generations," said Stanton. "Preserving our natural resources far into the future now requires active and informed management based on sound science."

The Action Plan calls for substantially increasing the role of science in decision-making, revitalizing and expanding natural resource programs, gathering baseline data on resource conditions, strengthening partnerships with the scientific community, and sharing knowledge with educational institutions and the public.

The Action Plan will seek to address the major challenges that the NPS faces in preserving natural resources and will outline strategic approaches to be undertaken over the next five years. The challenges include protecting native species and their habitats, providing leadership for a healthy environment, and connecting parks to protected areas and parks to people. Within the broad context of these challenges, the plan specifically addresses protecting habitat for endangered and native species, targeting non-native species for removal, inventorying natural

resources and monitoring their condition, monitoring air and water quality, collaborating with other natural resource experts, and utilizing parks as scientific laboratories and classrooms.

In response to these challenges, the Action Plan lists specific actions that are to be taken immediately. These include implementing an *Environmental Leadership* program to reduce the impact of park operations on the natural environment, implementing a new and uniform scientific research and collecting permit process, merging resource preservation into mainstream park planning, and establishing a Sabbatical-in-Parks program for visiting scientists.

The President's FY 2000 budget includes nearly \$20 million in increases that would begin to implement the Action Plan. These funds will help complete natural resource inventories so that park managers have critical baseline data available for informed decision making.

They will increase funding for large-scale preservation projects and target restoration of threatened and endangered species and restoration of areas damaged due to human disturbance. Future budget requests will increase park base-funding, expand the air quality monitoring network, establish water quality

monitoring stations in 75 park units, and enhance NPS capability to prevent and prosecute resource crimes such as poaching.

"Parks are extraordinary places from which to acquire knowledge and learn about the natural world. They provide unparalleled opportunity to understand the complexities of nature, while also ensuring that our generation and future generations can learn from them," said Stanton. "With this effort the national parks will remain not only scenic vacation destinations but also natural laboratories, libraries and classrooms."

Grants for recreational trail projects announced

JUNEAU—

Tony Knowles announced in August that 25 Alaska communities and organizations received 1999 Recreational Trail Grants to groom and mark winter trails, brush and maintain hiking and mountain biking trails, build bridges, and develop safety and education programs for trail users.

The governor praised the work of the Trails and Recreational Access for Alaska (TRAAK) Citizens Advisory Board who recommended this year's projects from 59 applications. The 1999 grants range from \$6,000 to \$30,000 with recipients required to provide at least a 20 percent funding match.

"The individual grants may be small, but they support projects that make big differences in people's daily lives," said Knowles. "The fact

that trail enthusiasts are willing to work so hard to win these small grants and continue to provide the required matching money and labor to complete the projects is a testament that Alaskans have a great outdoor spirit and love their trails. I want to commend the organizations receiving these grants."

Communities receiving grants are Anchorage, Barrow, Big Lake, Bethel, Clam Gulch, Cordova, Eureka, Fairbanks, Homer, Juneau, Kodiak, Palmer, Seward, Unalakleet, and Wasilla.

The recreational trail projects are part of Gov. Knowles' plan to involve citizens and agencies in developing and promoting a statewide system of summer and winter recreational access and trails. TRAAK cooperatively involves multiple agencies in the development of

TRAAK projects. These agencies include the Departments of Natural Resources, Transportation & Public Facilities, Fish & Game, and the Division of Tourism. One of the intended outcomes of Gov. Knowles' TRAAK initiative is for Alaska to maintain its position as a world class tourist destination.

Knowles also announced that year 2000 Recreational Trail Grant applications are now available. Interested communities or organizations should contact Ron Crenshaw at Alaska State Parks (907) 269-8704, by e-mail at ronc@dnr.state.ak.us, or on the Internet at www.dnr.ak.us/parks/grants. Applications for the year 2000 trail grants must be completed and postmarked no later than midnight, October 15, 1999.

Snowmachine ban gains momentum

33 Representatives support environmentalists call for snowmobile ban

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—

Representatives Bruce Vento (D-MN) and Christopher Shays (R-CT) have sent a letter to National Park Service (NPS) director Robert Stanton asking that the park system be “protected from snowmobile damage.” The letter, cosigned by nearly three dozen Republicans and Democrats, expresses concern that “recreational snowmobile use in the National Park System has made it difficult for the NPS to manage and preserve the national and natural heritage in accordance with the Organic Act.” The Representatives state that NPS management of snowmobiles is inadequate and “the resources and visitor experiences of our nation’s parks are seriously threatened [by snowmobile activity].”

Bluewater Network, the leader of a coalition of over 60 environmentalist organizations working to prohibit snowmobiling in the park system, has spearheaded the attack on snowmobile use in the parks. “Snowmobiles are high speed, multiple impact, adrenaline pumping thrill-craft,” according to Sean Smith, Bluewater Network Conservation Director and former Yellowstone park ranger. “Unfortunately, those thrills come at a high price for the park system’s air and water quality, public health and safety, area wildlife, natural quiet and visitor enjoyment.”

The group has been making some pretty wild claims. They say that the 60,000 snow-

mobiles entering Yellowstone each year release 100,000 gallons of unburned gas and more than 2,000 gallons of unburned oil into the park’s environment. “At Old Faithful, one weekend’s worth of snowmobile traffic produces the equivalent of a years’ worth of automobile pollution released in the park, and threatens the health of park visitors, rangers, concession employees, park wildlife and snowmobilers themselves,” according to Bluewater literature. “The Vento/Shays letter reminds the park service that park resources must be left unimpaired,” continued Smith. “Evidence is mounting which irrefutably demonstrates that snowmobiling causes lasting damage to park resources. Snowmobiles must be banned.”

At least one manufacturer is fighting back. Bombardier Recreational Products announced an initiative to assist snowmobiling organizations in communicating to policy makers the “truth about snowmobiling” at the recent International Snowmobile Congress (ISC), in Reno, Nevada.

“As a snowmobile manufacturer and member of the snowmobiling community, we have a responsibility to fight for accuracy in the way our sport is portrayed,” Bombardier Public Relations Manager, David Thompson said in his speech to the Congress. “Snowmobiling is under attack by extremist groups whose real goal is to limit the public’s access to public lands. We have to get

our story out.”

“Elected official, the media and general public must be educated about our comprehensive network of trails, the vital economic impact snowmobiling has on hundreds of local communities, and the tremendous technological strides the industry has made in safety, sound and emission control.”

“You need to tell your legislators how important snowmobiling is to your local economy and how responsible snowmobilers are,” Thompson said. “They need to know that we are the ones that maintain multi-use trails that are used by bikers, hikers, in-line skaters and cross-country skiers year-round. Most of all, they need to know just how much your family enjoys this sport.”

Litigation is ongoing concerning NPS’s closure of over one million acres in Denali. The Alaska State Snowmobile Association filed suit, asking that the Court find that the NPS did not follow the law (ANILCA) in closing the Old Park and to reverse the closure.

The Wilderness Society filed cross-claims, arguing that the current closure stand, as well as closing two “slivers” that remain open.

“It appears to us their ulterior motive is to establish precedent that would severely limit the access guaranteed by ANILCA to all conservation system units (in Alaska, over 100 million acres of federal land!),” said Joe Gauna, speaking for ASSA.

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- McCarthy Creek Subd. (Wrangell-St. Elias National Park)
- Seldovia (0.5 miles E of Seldovia)
- Skwentna Station Subd. (3 miles NW of Skwentna)
- Snake Lake Subd. (20 miles NW of Dillingham in Bristol Bay)
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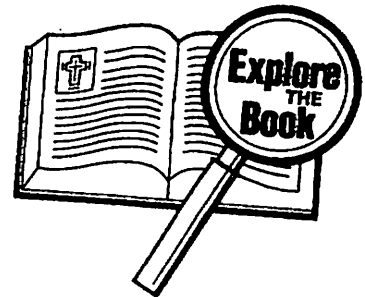
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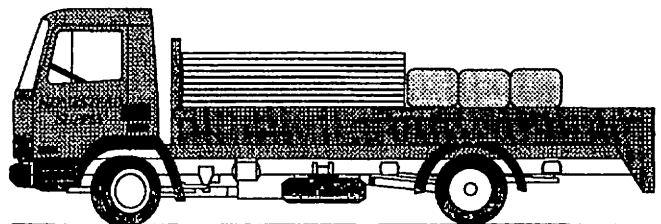
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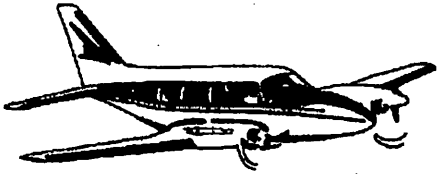
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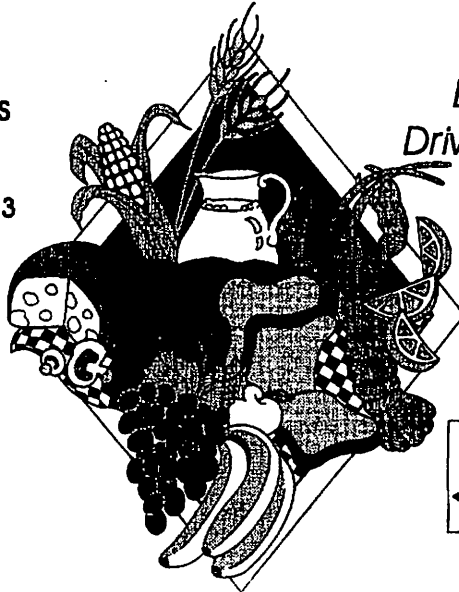
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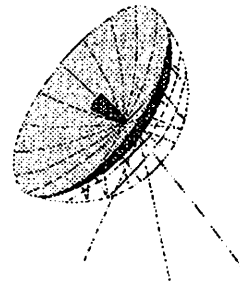
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Cooking with Carly

BY CARLY KRITCHEN

It's that time of year when you could almost eat a complete meal just standing in the garden and browsing on whatever is ready to eat. Although my garden is beginning to look a little scanty because of the vegetables I've already picked to freeze or can, I can still pick lots of good fresh ingredients and make a salad hearty enough to be a main dish.

I've chosen these salad recipes because I'm able to grow the ingredients listed in my own garden. If you have different vegetables in your garden, or access to a good farmers' market, be creative and substitute anything else that sounds good!

I wrote this recipe on the back of an envelope as I was watching some cooking show on TV—I don't watch much TV so I have no idea who the chefs were, but I love this salad and I guess they did, too! I added the pea pods as I think there is too much salad dressing for the amount of salad.

Love Salad

1/2 cup olive oil
 2 Tablespoons sesame oil
 1/4 cup rice wine vinegar
 1 Tablespoon soy sauce
 1 Tablespoon Dijon mustard
 1/4 cup honey
 1/4 teaspoon pepper
 1 Tablespoon toasted sesame seeds
 1 pound broccoli florets
 1 cup chopped cabbage
 1 cup small snow pea pods
 1 cup raisins
 1 cup sliced pecans
 Mix olive oil, sesame oil, rice wine vinegar, soy sauce,

mustard, honey, and pepper in a medium bowl and whisk until well blended. Add sesame seeds. Toss the rest of the ingredients in a salad bowl; then add olive oil mixture and toss until all the salad is coated.

I love the flavor of kohlrabi and was happy to find this recipe. Although it says to blanch the kohlrabi, I just use them raw.

Kohlrabi Salad

2 1/2 pounds kohlrabi (about 4 small)
 2 small white onions, thinly sliced
 1/2 cup white wine vinegar
 1/4 cup sugar
 2 teaspoons sesame seeds
 1/2 teaspoon grated gingerroot
 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 pinch of tarragon

Trim and peel the kohlrabi, then cut into strips about 1/4 inch thick and 2 inches long. Drop into boiling water for 1 minute. Rinse under cool water and drain. Put cooled strips into a bowl and add onions, then toss until mixed. In a small bowl, combine all the remaining ingredients. Pour over the kohlrabi mixture and toss the salad. Chill for 2 hours or more before serving.

This salad is easy to make using left-over rice—it reminds me a little of tabouli without the mint!

Basmati Rice Salad

Dressing

2/3 cup plain yogurt
 2 Tablespoons lemon juice
 1 small clove minced garlic
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 1 1/2 teaspoon dill seed

1/3 cup chopped black olives
 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
 1/4 cup chopped celery
 1/4 cup chopped red pepper
 2 green onions, chopped
 1 tomato, chopped
 1/2 cup fresh peas
 2 cups cooked and cooled Basmati rice

Prepare dressing and let stand while chopping vegetables. Mix vegetables with rice, add dressing and toss.

I like the way this salad looks in the bowl. I usually add a few nasturtium blossoms for extra color.

Garden Vegetable Slaw

1 1/2 cups finely diced green cabbage
 1 1/2 cups finely diced red cabbage
 1 cup thinly sliced carrots
 1 medium zucchini, matchstick cut

Dressing

1/4 cup rice wine vinegar
 1 Tablespoon lemon juice
 3 Tablespoons sugar
 3 Tablespoons mayonnaise mixed with 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
 1 teaspoon salt
 2 Tablespoons chopped cilantro
 1 tablespoon chopped raw cashews, toasted

In a large bowl combine cabbages, carrots, zucchini, and bell pepper. In a smaller bowl, whisk vinegar, lemon juice, sugar, mayonnaise, pepper, salt and cilantro. Pour this mixture over prepared salad and toss well. Refrigerate 30 minutes before serving. Add cashews just before serving.

A LOOK AT THE WEATHER

BY GEORGE CEBULA

So far the summer of 1999 has been a bit on the cool and wet side with June and July temperatures and precipitation just about average. The high temperature for June was 84 on the 12th (84 on June 30, '98 and June 26, '97). The low was 28 on June 6th (27 on June 1, '98 and 26 on June 2, '97). The average temperature for June was 53.7. This compares to 54.9 in June 1998 and 54.8 in June 1997. There were only 3 days with a high of 80 or above and 8 days with a low of 32 or lower. The total precipitation was 1.93 inches. This was $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch more than the 1.22 inches in June 1998 and 1.58 in June 1997. *Silver Lake had a high of 84 on June 13th (80 on June 30 '98 and 85 on June 28, '97) and a low of 32 on June 4th (32 on June 1, '98 and 29 on June 2, '97). The average June temperature at Silver Lake was 54.4 (54.5 in 1998 and 55.8 in 1997) and the total precipitation*

was 1.29 inches (0.25 inches in 1998 and 0.66 inches in 1997).

July was a bit warmer and wetter than last year. The high for July was 84 on the 3rd and 15th (85 on July 3, '98 and 84 on July 1, '97). The low was 31 on July 22nd (30 on July 9, '98 and 37 on July 10, '97). The July average temperature 56.0, compared to 55.5 in 1998 and 54.8 in 1997. There were 5 days with a high of 80 or above and 2 days with a low of 32 or lower. The total July precipitation was 3.34 inches (2.09 inches in 1998 and 3.49 inches in 1997). *Silver Lake recorded a high of 87 on the 4th (82 on July 4, '98 and 83 on July 2, '97) and a low of 36 on the 22nd (35 on July 9, '98 and 41 on July 10, '97). The average July temperature at Silver Lake was 56.7, compared to 58.1 in 1998 and 59.9 in 1997. The total precipitation recorded at Silver Lake for July was 2.11 inches (2.20 inches in 1998 and 1.75 inches in 1997).*

Hidden Creek Lake was

early this year releasing its water on July 17th (August 10, '98). The water in the Kennicott River began to rise during the afternoon and didn't crest until the next afternoon. The increase was just under 2 feet in 24 hours. The crest was about two feet lower than last year and there was no flooding. The river was back to its normal level by the morning of July 20th.

The first week of August was hot with temperatures in the 80's. The second week was cloudy and wet with over 1.25 inches of rain. It's about time to think about covering the plants in the garden. The first frost and freeze is due any day now. The lowest as of the 15th has been 35.

Freezing temperatures will begin to appear by early September and the first snow should arrive by the end of September. Summer is just about over and winter around the next corner.

Friends—(continued from page 11)

After pinpointing the concerns, the majority of meeting time was used to confirm and clarify the many underlying points of agreement which formed the basis of the report. The Board also developed a new, simpler community-based process for making future implementation decisions that incorporates

direct community involvement. By the end of the meetings, there was substantial if not unanimous agreement on nearly all conceptual points presented in the report, while remaining flexible about exactly how each building might be used.

Finally, the Friends of Kennicott Board of Directors agreed it was ready and willing to enter into a formal cooperative arrangement with

NPS for management of the Kennecott National Historic Landmark, and agreed to create a part time staff position devoted to implementation. Six people have since applied for the job and the Board expects to spend the month of September reviewing applications, conducting interviews and making a selection. □

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BY WSEN STAFF

One thing almost everyone interested in our area can agree on is that it would be terrible to lose our vehicle access—particularly in the summer. We only seem to disagree on the standard of road.

So the recent road news, whether rumor or fact, can only be regarded as unfavorable for most of us.

The first bad news came with the announcement that there would be no winter maintenance beyond mile 15 and that the normal early spring road opening would no longer take place.

Then came the partially confirmed rumor that the Chitina Maintenance Station may be first on the list for closure if the next session of the Alaska Legislature cuts the DOT&PF's budget again.

Now we learn that the proposed Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for state fiscal years 2001-2003 shows no road work at all through FY 2003. All previous planned improvements including the safety improvements have been deleted.

The proposed 2001-2003 STIP does indicate that some funding may be available in a future STIP. Projected for FY 2004 is preliminary design and planning work between Chitina and the Kuskulana Bridge. It also indicates that a major upgrade may be funded on that segment in FY 2006. However, the project has a low score, which means it will be near bottom priority when competing with other state projects.

Folks can determine from all this: For those who want a major

road upgrade things are looking pretty bleak unless you plan to live a very long life. For those who prefer just a minimum access these recent events are remindful of happenings back in 1979/80 when the DOT&PF blocked off the road at the Lakina, after most of the bridge washed away, and announced that the road would officially end at that point.

The following often heard statements reflect views of local residents and businesses pertinent to the road status:

- Parking lot business is down approximately 30%.
- The rest of the state appears to be enjoying a banner tourist season while McCarthy road traffic is regressing.
- Particularly on the west side of the Kennicott some businesses report significant declines in revenue.
- Travel agencies are warning against traveling the road.
- Over the years, knowledge of the roads notorious reputation has become wide spread. Some motorists turn around when the road conditions are bad but when it is graded they continue on. However, because they were not certain whether or not they could make it, they did not schedule enough time to stay long enough to enjoy the area.
- The Rent-a-Car companies are dead set against allowing use of all but their most expensive SUVs on the road.

Previously, much ado was made over the possibility that road traffic would increase faster than the McCarthy area could

establish an infrastructure adequate enough to support increased visitation. It now appears portions of the local business community may have been overly optimistic in this regard and infrastructure has outpaced demand.

Some people have said to us, "The NPS won't let the road deteriorate; after all they just made a substantial purchase in the Kennecott acquisition. Why else would they buy it?"

Judging by past actions, the NPS is not promoting access to the Park. Their rationale (as published in their Park Management Plan) for acquiring the Kennecott property seems to support this fear: "Acquisition of the non-mineral interests is needed to prevent changes in use that will result in significant population increases, land speculation, or other development that will be incompatible with the existing rural landscape and lifestyle as well as place increased pressure on the resources of the surrounding park/preserve lands (e.g., wildlife, scenic quality)."

In 1971 Governor Bill Egan announced that the new highway bridge across the Copper River at Chitina would once again open up the Wrangell Mountains to economic development. In 1973 he followed up on this by completing the first ever vehicle access road into McCarthy. Now, at a time when the state is supposedly going broke, it would appear logical that essential economic diversification could be achieved through the significant improvement of roads like this one into the nation's largest park and preserve. Yet the state appears reluctant to do so.

Things may not be as bad as they appear. On the Chitina to Kuskalana project the DOT&PF is talking about using a new Hi Float type surface material on the road which looks a lot like a gravel surface but will reduce highway maintenance costs, flat tires, broken windshields and dust. The window for your comment on the FY 2001-2003

STIP is still open. September 20, 1999 is the cut-off date. It might be possible to convince the DOT&PF to move the Chitina to Kuskalana work up a fiscal year or two and, most importantly, convince the DOT&PF that this project deserves a much higher priority.

Another consideration: Since we already have a parking lot at

the end of the road, it may be possible to take the money earmarked for purchasing a parking lot and use it for road improvements instead? A government-owned parking lot could be funded later on—after it looks like road conditions will facilitate a traffic increase, not a decline.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Bonnie & Rick:

Yesterday I received my first issue of WSE News in the mail. I just visited Alaska this June after years of dreaming about it and was able to see pretty much all that I had hoped—except Wrangell-St. Elias. The closest I got was Copper Center, where I stayed at the Copper Center Lodge one night and found your subscription information. I'd read all about McCarthy and Kennecott in the guides, but I was curious about the actual, pragmatic reality of life there.

Last night I sat up and read your July & August issue cover to cover, including the advertisements. What a blast! From Ed LaChappelle's tales of solar-powering his electric car to Kristin Nygren's article on Alyeska Central School to Rick's practical advice on guns and bears, I felt like I was peering through windows into a fascinating new world. I particularly enjoyed the paper's historical focus and sense of community camaraderie.

As an English professor, I was delighted to read the late Rodney Lloyd's clever versifying ("The Glacierback Ride of Mt. Magee") and to see the fine use of literary quotations sprinkled throughout the paper. And of course, I was tickled to be

welcomed aboard (by name!) among the new subscribers.

It's an honor to meet y'all, even indirectly, and I hope to actually visit in the not-too-distant future. In the meantime, I'll look forward to the next issue and pause every once in a while among the steamy pines and rush-hour traffic of suburban Birmingham to wonder what interesting adventures the good folks in McCarthy are up to today.

Warmly,
Mark Jeffreys
Juneau AK

August 20, 1999

Dear Editor:

Please vote NO cut to PFDs.

Oil prices rose. Last winter oil prices sank to \$9: someone suggested raiding the Permanent Fund; people predicted oil prices would stay down for years. That prediction was badly mistaken—oil prices usually change ... and did change. Higher oil prices means government does not so desperately need money now. Vote NO.

Even if government needed money, you should vote NO because this plan hurts most our low-income Alaskan neighbors and Alaskan children. PFD cuts drop each person's

income an equal number of dollars, but equal-dollar cuts hurt most people with fewest dollars. If PFDs drop \$700 each, that's 41% of a baby's \$1700 PFD check, 20% to a subsistence user receiving \$3500, just 1% to someone earning \$70,000 a year, but only .0005 of a millionaire's \$1,400,000 income. This backward plan hurts hardest Alaskan people with lowest incomes. Vote "NO."

This plan's loose language gives legislators almost total freedom. There's no limit to "yes." It's just an "advisory" vote, but your advice should be "NO."

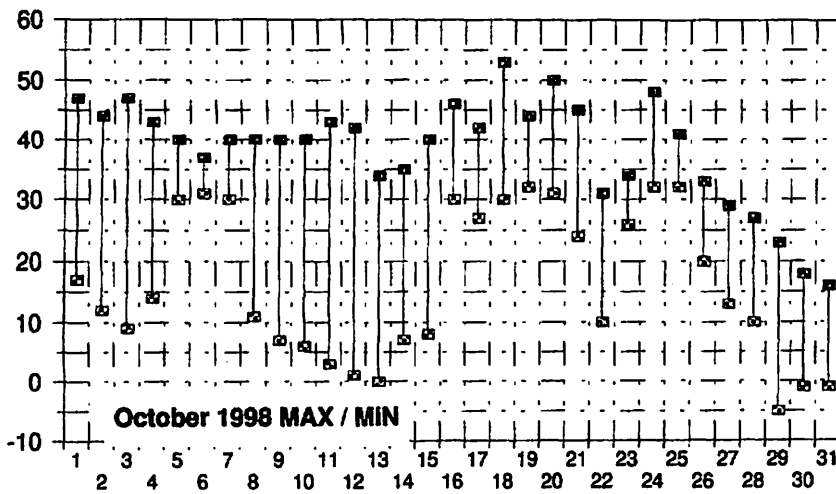
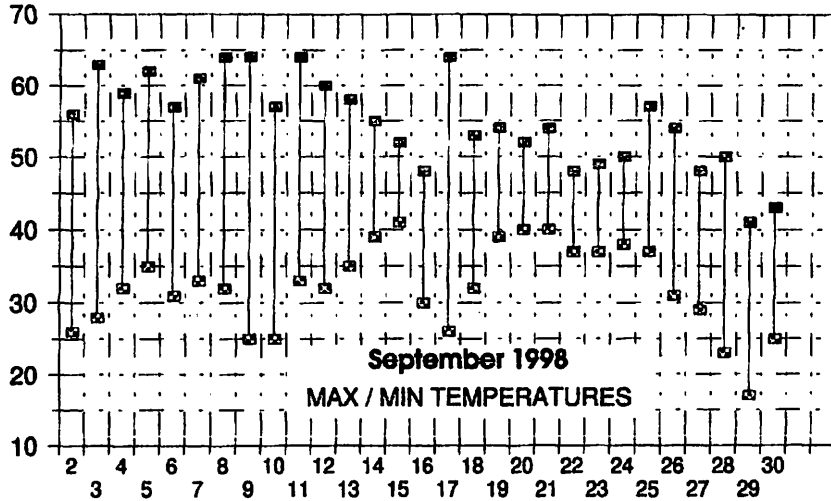
The other side's TV ad claims voting "yes" will "save" PFDs. Save PFDs by cutting them? Save PFDs by giving legislators unlimited discretion? Save PFDs with cuts when oil prices are high? Can those TV claims be true? Vote "NO."

The other side also talks about "original intent," but things have changed. Vote "NO" on September 14.

Don't let them cut your PFD! Vote NO.

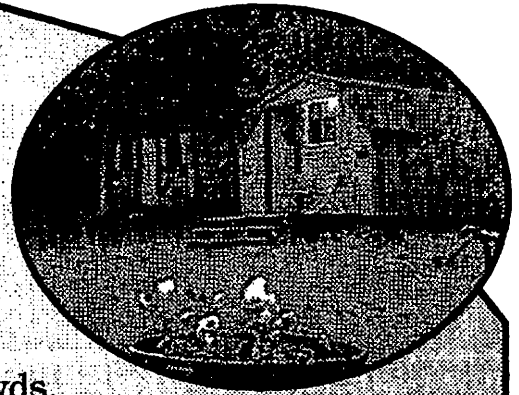
Sincerely and cordially,
Joe Sonneman

Weather - What can we expect?



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Your hosts, long-time residents Rick & Bonnie Kenyon.