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Wrangell St. Elias News

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"

Vol. Twenty-Three Issue Five

Rick Kenyon (1947-2014) Memorial Edition

\$2.50



In Loving Memory of
Richard David Kenyon, Sr.
May 10, 1947
August 5, 2014



A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

It is with great sadness that I share the news that Rick Kenyon, Sr. passed away on August 5, 2014. Rick was my dear husband and very best friend. Many of our readers of the Wrangell St. Elias News knew him well and a lot miss him. Some of you know him only through this publication which is now approaching the end of its twenty-third year.

This issue is a tribute to Rick, filled with the remembrances of friends and put together with love. We invite you to celebrate a life with us, a life well lived, a life of love, faith, and community service.

Although this is the last Kenyon edition of the Wrangell St. Elias News, I cannot truthfully say it is the death of the News. There are folks in the sidelines that are cheering the continuance of this publication. For this reason, I am carefully guarding my subscription list. If, in fact, others step up to the publishing plate, you may be contacted with an invitation to join them in the rebirth of the Wrangell St. Elias News. I won't be wearing the publisher/editor's hat, but I may contribute an occasional Good News from the Wrangells article.

As a paid subscriber whose subscription is not completed, you are invited to write me for a refund. Please address your request to: Bonnie Kenyon, PO Box MXY, Glennallen, AK 99588, or you may call me at (907) 554-1194. If your address has changed in recent months, make sure you include your new contact information. A note to the online subscribers: You will receive a printed copy of this last issue instead of your online only email copy.

If I took the space to thank all those who have come forward to help Rick Jr. and I put this memorial issue into your hands, there wouldn't be enough room in this publication. It must be said, however, that without the invaluable help of our dear friend, Lee Ann Kreig, who fearlessly entered the arena of publishing and donned Rick's Editor's hat, this last Wrangell St. Elias News would not have been. Thank you, Lee Ann!

To all you precious subscribers, contributors and advertisers, your support over the years is a treasure that I will never forget. Somehow I believe Rick is adding a hearty "Amen!"

Dear Bonnie:

I was saddened to hear of the loss of your husband, Rick. He was such an important part of the community of McCarthy. As the publisher of the Wrangell St. Elias news, he wrote articles that kept the community informed and sparked some interesting conversations. He lived a rich and rewarding life and he will truly be missed by all who knew and loved him.

I hope you find comfort in the many memories you shared, and from the love and support of your family and friends. Please accept my prayers and condolences during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

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Love Letters

EMILY BASS, MCCARTHY, AK

I met Rick and Bonnie Kenyon my first year in McCarthy. I was just there for the summer and didn't know anyone. It was my first time to Alaska and I had become home sick, feeling quite misplaced in my first few weeks. I can't recall exactly why I landed in the Kenyon's kitchen but I clearly recall feeling safe and welcome there. It was early summer and much work was going on about the homestead. It was still the days of the CB and the tram and that part of the valley was accessed on a small bumpy road that had existed for over half a century. Four years later I bought land in that area and the Kenyon's were to be my closest neighbors. Things have changed a lot since then and there are neighbors in between and around us all. The Kenyon's always welcomed the new neighbors and the growth that was coming to the area, just as they welcomed me.

Having Rick right next door made me feel safe as a single woman buying land in the middle of nowhere. He held his own shooting practice every day for years-except Sunday. When I felt it was too early in the morning to shoot I told him so and he changed it to later in the day. He knew that I often walked up the hill behind his house and so he would call me when he was going to shoot to make sure I would be out of harms way. Eventually, he invited me to join him and he taught me how to improve my shooting and to shoot with different types of guns. He made his own bullets and was very gener-

ous to share them with me during practice. When I told him about my new purchase of a small pistol he appeared one day with a present. I'll never forget how he even wrapped it up and was excited for me to open it. It was a snake and brush for cleaning my new gun.

When we had bears in the neighborhood it was comforting to know Rick was near just in case. Even the Park Service called Rick one year to help take out the three bears who terrorized the end of the road for two summers in a row. When we brought Ross home to McCarthy, Rick and Bonnie came and sat on our porch swing to meet him and make him feel welcome. When we got our canoe, Rick offered us his secret spot and his little dock on Long Lake to tie it up for the summer.

When it came to philosophical worldviews Rick and I would often challenge one another, or rather I would challenge Rick. Although we were often on different sides of the spectrum we would hear one another and be sure not to let those differences come between us. We would discuss conflict among neighbors and within the community that would come up over the years but never did we walk away angry. We genuinely liked one another too much to let opinions come between us.

One thing that stands out about Rick is his relationship with our dog Lucy. Rick didn't dislike dogs but he had a rule that dogs should be on a leash in his yard because of the garden-ex-

cept for Lucy. As an old dog, Lucy is fairly aloof to most people but when she would see Rick she would bounce up to him and stay by his side. It was the funniest thing. And Rick would even break into a gushy welcome of Lucy. It was fun to see that side of both of them.

We will miss Rick being right next-door. I will miss Rick every time I need propane. I will miss having Rick's opinion available to me when I am wrestling with something I need further debate on. I will miss Rick's appreciation of the beautiful and simple yet rugged lifestyle of McCarthy! I will miss Rick's knowledge I often called upon for many things. I am grateful for knowing Rick as I did!

SUSAN SMITH, CHOKOSNA, AK

As I sat at Rick's memorial service in the church he worked so hard to establish and sustain, I was amazed to hear of the lifetime accomplishments of this very special man. Not only was he a pillar of the McCarthy-Kennicott community as a pastor, entrepreneur, negotiator, problem solver, and confidante, but in his role as editor of the Wrangell St. Elias News, I will always remember Rick, first and foremost, as a true patriot.

We heard Rick Jr. speak of the amazing impact of that little log cabin that the Kenyons call home upon his own life and the lives of others in the McCarthy-Kennicott area. But that little cabin was also the birthplace of Residents of the Wrangells during a time of crisis in our community.

Without hesitation, Rick and Bonnie opened up their home, their resources, and their newspaper to the cause, to help form and define this new inholder organization, reveal injustices actually happening on the ground in our park, get the word out to the WSEN national audience, and become a part of a decisive movement for change. Rick was instrumental in ultimately securing access certificates for all inholders of NPS units across the State of Alaska, in perpetuity without fees.

I have found that very few people have the time or desire in their busy lives to get involved in such issues. Rick made the time. He was a man of honor and integrity with a deep faith that emanated throughout every aspect of his life.

So, as we honor Rick, his character, and his long list of lifetime achievements, let us also celebrate the amazing, long-lasting positive impacts that he had upon our neighbors, our community, our park, and our state. Let us celebrate the life and accomplishments of a true patriot!

NEIL DARISH, MCDARTHY, AK

Rick Kenyon was a freedom fighter. One of the many important gifts Rick gave to our community is the newspaper you hold in your hands. While the WSEN represents many of the attributes of living in McCarthy, it also served as Rick's voice of freedom. Controversy over access and land use and the potential to negatively impact our rural lifestyle, were more than just a topic of discussion. For Rick, and many of our neighbors, access to our land equates to the most basic freedom: the right to

own the results of your productivity.

At the pinnacle of many of Rick's editorials and journalistic efforts was an idea he took very seriously: That the citizens of McCarthy had the right to be free from a coercive government. While this type of fight is emotionally charged on all sides, at the core of Rick's position in the argument is the idea that the cabin you build with your own two hands is not yours if you cannot freely access it.

When Rick's ideas were first expressed in editorials, he stood alone. Having spent decades carving his life in this wilderness, Rick understood the self-reliant work ethic that evades many: there is a direct correlation between hard work and results. Rick's editorials took the position of defending citizens' rights to be free of coercion from any outside force. That position is identical to the U.S. law enforcement's #1 purpose; to protect American citizens from coercion. The military protects citizens from foreign invasion, Police protect us against domestic coercion. The NPS protects the American ideals of preserving Heritage, Wilderness and Cultural resources.

What happens when noble intentions become overreaching objectives? Rick stood for a community who struggled to maintain access amid the political ambitions of well-meaning law enforcement. It's a tough battle. Rick deeply respected the ideas and the emotional substance of concepts as connected and seemingly opposite as an individual's right to live in this wilderness versus the government's obligation to preserve that same wil-

derness forever. Sustainability of a wilderness lifestyle can't exist without sustainability of the natural resources. Can we protect a lifestyle imbedded in nature as well as the nature we all value? On this earth, that was Rick's freedom fight.

KENNY SMITH, MCCARTHY, AK

Kennicott River floodplain, Staircase Icefall and Bonanza Ridge. Favorite vistas for Rick Kenyon over the past 36 years or so. Rick liked to talk about being called "Home". Well, Rick has been called "Home", as of Tuesday afternoon. I like to think he is up there somewhere in those rugged beautiful limestone spires and cliffs looking down on us here in the valley and winking.

Tuesday was a real downer for most of us after we learned that Rick had been medevaced into Anchorage where he subsequently passed away in the hospital there. A shock to say the least. Rick has many, many friends, albeit a few adversaries as well. Suffice to say, his longevity and presence for so long in McCarthy had made him a "fixture". Rick my friend, you will be missed.

Rick and Bonnie and son Rick Jr. came to Alaska in the latter 1970s from South Florida. He was a licensed aircraft mechanic, pilot, gunsmith, horse wrangler and all around very knowledgeable and talented individual. Soon after arriving here he moved to Valdez where he worked for Dave Kennedy as a mechanic for Kennedy Air Service. A bit later he moved to Long Lake and built a cabin there, Long Lake is just down the road from McCarthy, but eventually moved up to the Kennicott Valley where

he and Bonnie built another cabin and have made their home here for over three decades.

Amazing list of attributes those two have accumulated in order to eke out a living in this remote area of the world. Among them, B&B owner/operator (Aspen Meadows), aircraft mechanic, propane distributor, newsletter publisher (Wrangell St. Elias News), weather observers, gunsmithing, vegetable gardeners, airplane owner and I know I'm leaving out a bunch of stuff.

However, number one on the list is the fact that Rick and Bonnie are hard core Christians. They helped build the first ever church in the McCarthy/Kennecott area--"The McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church" (The Church on the Island). Rick has been chief pastor at the church for almost twenty years.

I was fortunate in having a nice hour long chat over tea and coffee with Rick and Bonnie about 72 hours before he passed, in addition I also talked with him on the phone 24 hours before. During tea he was upbeat and alert and still had his great sense of humor, although, during our phone conversation he did appear to be a little worn down. But don't we all at times?

At this time our hearts and prayers should be with Bonnie as she begins a huge readjustment phase of her life.

After I learned the news I stopped by the church to say a prayer for Rick and reminisce over the many times I had attended services there when Rick was present. Up on the pulpit I noticed his reading glasses, where he had set them after deliv-

ering his last message two days before. Hey Rick, you forgot something.

TOM KIZZIA, HOMER, AK

There was never any reason why the tiny town of McCarthy should be lucky enough to have its own newspaper, other than Rick and Bonnie Kenyon's passion and idealism. Bringing a church to a frontier settlement - that's a calling most of us can understand. The calling to bring journalism is tougher to account for. Yet newspapers were always quick to sprout up in America's frontier towns, as evidenced by the many old editions from Chitina and McCarthy reprinted in the Wrangell St. Elias News. And in our time, even as urban newspapers around the country were folding, the paper published on the west side of the Kennicott seemed to grow stronger and more vital.

The long hours, the headaches, the agonizing mistakes, sleepless nights, loss of friends, all these things take a toll on anyone doing newspaper work. Rick and Bonnie Kenyon persevered for so many years, inspired I imagine by the notion that McCarthy would be a stronger and better place with a public forum for news and conversation and grievance. Back at the old Anchorage Daily News, we used to talk about a newspaper's role as the "tribal fire" for a community. It was that notion of serving a public good - certainly not the money - that kept us fired up until the deadlines passed. I will leave it to others to explain Rick's concern for the hereafter, but I think I understand some of what drove him to look after the here-and-now.

When it came to controversies that Rick felt mattered most to the community, he could be a strong advocate. I could relate to that kind of watchdog journalism, having grown into the trade in the idealistic post-Watergate years. It's a tricky role for a reporter, but an essential one. Through the years, as a newspaper reporter based elsewhere in Alaska but with old ties to McCarthy, I would rely on Rick to tell me what was going on when I called to ask about a local story. This relationship frayed a bit as the story of the Pilgrim Family moved onto the front pages. Later, in my book, I poked fun at his one-sided coverage of the Pilgrim/Park controversies. But I did understand that, for Rick, the Pilgrims had brought out the worst aspects of an overbearing park administration. Rick Kenyon was not wrong in arguing that the federal bureaucrats poised to assume near-total control of life in McCarthy needed a close watch and an occasional push back. The community will be poorer without his counterbalancing force.

Rick contributed to McCarthy for so many years with his wonderful crazy improbable newspaper and with his presence in so many other ways. I recall the Christmas pageant at his church in 2001, a few months after the fall of the twin towers in New York drove home to everyone the vital importance of a community pulling together - "So with heavy winter coveralls and boots piled downstairs, the people of McCarthy stood side by side in their sock feet, fervent Christians and nonbelievers, and sang 'Silent Night' while outside the generator

rumbled through the darkest hours of an Alaska winter.”

The tribal fire flickers and grows dim. Thank you, Rick, for the light and for the heat.

Tom Kizzia is author of Pilgrim's Wilderness and was a longtime reporter for the Anchorage Daily News. He has a cabin at Fireweed.

TOM GOLDEN, MCCARTHY, AK

I lost a friend a friend today. Rick Kenyon passed away suddenly and unexpectedly. Not only did I lose a friend but McCarthy lost a pioneer.

Rick and I did not always agree on politics and religion, but we did agree on the more important aspects of life. We both loved gardens, guns, radio control airplanes, projects and our wives. Rick and I were always going to go fishing at Long Lake—won't get to do that now. He was going to teach me how to fly RC airplanes—won't get to do that now, but we did have some good times while he was here.

The last time I saw Rick, I went down to get my propane tank filled. Rick said, “You should have called; I'm out of propane.” One thing about Rick and Bonnie, I never felt the need to call ahead. They were always welcoming with coffee and a snack.

I'll always remember the work we did in the root cellar and the laminate floor in the trailer and the cabin. Just a couple old men from totally different backgrounds enjoying life in the here and now.

I'll miss Rick and regret the things we didn't get to, but I'll cherish the times we had together and always remember him as my friend and I know that if Mary Kaye was in the same position as

Bonnie is now, Rick would be the first to say, “What can I do to help?”

Rest in peace, Rick; I'll miss you.

PEGGY MORSCH, MCCARTHY, AK

When I heard that Rick had died, I was extremely saddened for those of us who will miss his presence here on earth—especially you and other family members. As Emily Bass said to me (she had called me to let me know), Rick was an icon in the McCarthy area! You are both living his passing, coming on the heels of Larry's, is especially tough for our West McCarthy neighborhood and the McCarthy/Kennicott area.

His passing has affected me deeply because he opened my heart more to God. How you might ask? It was certainly by getting to know him over the last 15 years through our annual visits and then recently our Florida gatherings. But it was my visit to your church in June that has stayed with me and moved me the most.

That Sunday in June, both you and Rick talked about how GOOD God was. that God's love was unconditional, always there for us, and limitless. His message was positive, joyful, and delivered with a smile on his face. Authentic! It included a part about how other pastors' messages might be more about how God will punish those that don't believe and how those negative messages don't show the true love God has for us. I also recalled how you were looking for that positive experience in a search for a church in Florida.

I sat there thinking about how, in my own experience, he was right. There were few priests that I heard that could relate God's messages in human, authentic ways. Rick's sermon met me at the place I was at that day. Perhaps I was ready and open to hear it but the message of “God's love is good” brings more joy to me in a heartbeat now than any other message I've ever heard. I have both of you to thank for that!

So you should know that I've often thought about attending your church while in McCarthy. Something in me always kept me from going. But I had decided I would go BEFORE you came over that day on the 4-wheeler and delivered Rick's invitation to come. Now I think that God was working His ways to get us together in your church!

As we shared dinner together at your home with Lindee Satterfield, I recall bringing up fishing in Florida with Rick and how I would love to go fishing with him in January, when I would bring my mom down for the winter. Besides fishing, I looked forward to talking more with him about spiritual topics.

Just before Rick's passing I finished the book “Proof of Heaven.” It's written by a well-respected, published, neurosurgeon who contracted – bacterial meningitis, which is extremely rare for a healthy person to have. He was in a coma for 6-7 days and writes about his journey to the afterlife and back. He says that he learned that when we die, our consciousness lives on. This flies in the face of the “science” he's seen but after his experience, he had to try to explain it to people.

So when I heard of Rick's passing, I knew it was only of his earthly body. While still sad about that, I found some joy in knowing that his consciousness, his presence, lives on and that his joy is overflowing with seeing/feeling the goodness of being with God. I am forever thankful for his invite to church AND the messages that both of you delivered!

RAY KREIG, ANCHORAGE, AK

Rick's impact extends far beyond being a small town pastor or newspaper editor and publisher, as important as these are. I'll mention a few things to indicate why this is the case.

I first heard from Rick Kenyon sometime in 1999 by phone call. He was trying to get information on a congressional bill that would increase federal government land buying in Alaska 30 times, obviously something that nearly everybody should be concerned about!

It was the beginning of a close relationship with Rick. Quickly, I could see that he and Bonnie were extraordinarily unique, valuable and important people.

The bill he was calling about was cosponsored by two thirds of the U.S. House of Representatives – that's not the vote, that was the bill's sponsors – even before there was a vote! It was supported by 95% of one party and by half of the other party. That's an overwhelming wave of apparent inevitability.

So many of our basic natural rights, human rights, constitutional rights, are taken for granted. Rarely will somebody take the trouble to stand up and do something to push back against

an abrogation of these rights or overreach taking them away.

But Rick was doing exactly that in 1999 when he called to get information about this bill to write a Wrangell-St. Elias News editorial. It turned out to be the very first editorial of any paper in Alaska against it – a bill which should have been blatantly obvious to be wrong – even though it was supported by two of the three Alaska congressional representatives. People were complacent. Rick's influential Wrangell-St. Elias News editorial was reprinted in the Anchorage Daily News, Voice of the Times, 3/12/99, **Feds Private Land Purchase Trust: a Bad Idea** (<http://goo.gl/nK5B6r>).

Eventually, probably less than 50 people across America working on this issue, just like Rick Kenyon, stopped it.

The next call I got from Rick was in June of 2003 about the National Park Service closing off access up McCarthy Creek. He said, "You may not remember me, blah blah blah" and I said, "Of course I remember you, absolutely!" This was another case where Rick got up and said, "you know, this is not right."

My wife, Lee Ann, and I wound up coming to McCarthy, at his request, to help explain the environmental, technical and legal aspects of the situation to two reporters, one from the Anchorage Daily News, another from the Washington Post, that were to take an inspection trip up McCarthy Creek. This was my first visit to McCarthy, in August of 2003, and it was also the first time that Lee Ann and I personally met Rick and Bonnie. And this cemented a relationship of friend-

ship and awe and amazement at what they were able to do.

The outcome of that, I think everybody knows. Rick and Bonnie and the Wrangell-St. Elias News performed a professional news reporting function that filled an obvious gap in the ongoing coverage at the time by, not only most of the Alaskan, but also the national and world media. (**Rick Kenyon interview, Pilgrim McCarthy Creek access events** on BBC Radio Five with Anita Anand on 9/29/03 <http://goo.gl/Ahflh9>)

Rick's reporting on property rights, access and the promises of the Alaska Lands Act (ANILCA) was excellent. Without the Wrangell-St. Elias News, without Rick Kenyon's writings, understanding and experience with these key issues, I think it highly likely the outcomes would have turned out very differently. Rick and Bonnie and the Wrangell-St. Elias News provided balance to what was basically a dishonest and biased mainstream media.

So what are the things that have been written about Rick and folks like him? They are described as "activists", even called "agitators". They are derided and dismissed in attempts to imply they are just troublemakers...out there like Don Quixote flailing away alone against the conventional wisdom, government, all of the media — this sort of thing. It is mentioned that Rick came to McCarthy after getting direction from God, subtly worded in such a way as to leave the impression that he, robot-like, takes direction from voices in his own head.

But it is very clear to me that Rick made decisions and acted

boldly based on the ethical and moral framework derived from his faith.

In Rick's case, he was not alone for long. On the McCarthy Creek access issues and the other things that were going on in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park at that time, he articulated very clearly things that needed to be said that woke up this state to what was going on. Rick, ultimately, was standing there along with the State of Alaska, native corporations, University of Alaska Land Management, numerous associations, and many businesses and people in this community and elsewhere that understood the public had a lot to lose if these oppressive moves by the NPS had not been turned around.

Rick was not alone, he was just early...and I'm still fascinated to observe and try to know how it comes about that folks make those early, first clear-headed moves to stand up against conventional wisdom for what is right.

Rick is a true treasure and leader. He will be sorely, sorely missed. He is my friend, and Lee Ann's friend, and we're so glad that we got to know him and that we wound up coming to McCarthy, which changed our lives. We love and treasure Bonnie who is inseparably part and parcel of that friendship.

RALPH LOHSE, MCCARTHY, AK

Rick Kenyon— my friend, my neighbor, my teacher, my student— but most important to me, my brother in Christ Jesus. So many interests we shared (woodworking, fishing, guns, hunting, etc.) but marveling at God's

goodness was the most enjoyable and profitable.

Rick and I were born in the same town, in the same month, a few years apart. Like most Alaskans, "it was a good town to be FROM." However, we first met in the winter of 1977 in Alaska while we and our families were living in little log cabins we each built with the help of our wives. At that time we were about a mile apart near Long Lake on the Lakina River drainage. Rick and Bonnie were excited about what they were learning concerning the goodness of God and, as in the rest of their lives, couldn't wait to share it. The excitement was contagious and how can you not listen when God sends someone 5,000 plus miles to share it with you.

My take on Rick's main message in a nutshell: God is good and wants the best for you (after all, He loved you so much that He was willing to die for you). Kind of like a father who has a son that needs a heart transplant and says, "Take mine." We're the sons and He did.

The picture Rick saw of God was not some judge focusing on things we've done wrong so He can condemn us. Nor was He a school teacher grading our life and telling us we deserve an F because we sure messed up. So do it over, only this time work harder, try and get your spelling and punctuation right, make sure you get your facts correct, and we'll see if I can't give you a passing grade. That was Rick's picture of "religion" and he didn't have any use for it. It's funny how we as humans seem to prefer it. Maybe something to do with saving our ego.

Instead, the picture of God I got from Rick was a father saying, "Son, you've messed up again, but I know you aren't capable of doing it right, so I'll do it for you." That's hard on our ego, but it's the only way that works. When you can't do it yourself, "Ask Dad for help."

This is another picture Rick shared with me on faith and God. You are bankrupt (if you know history at all, you know bankruptcy carried a lot larger penalties in the past) and I (God) love you enough and am rich enough that I can tell you I've deposited money in your bank account to cover all your debts. Now you've got 4 choices, you can disbelieve me and go bankrupt, you can believe me but be too proud or lazy to use the gift and go bankrupt, you can believe me, use the money and not go bankrupt but insist it's a loan and spend the rest of your life trying to "pay me back." Does that sound familiar? Kind of like the picture of religion most of us have? Or, you can say, Thanks; accept the gift and start writing checks rejoicing in the fact that you have such a generous friend.

To some that would sound like "Cheap Grace," but Rick knew grace was the most expensive gift ever given, and even "cheap" is too expensive for us. Grace isn't "cheap"— it's a gift— it's FREE, and it's all we can afford and it's sufficient. By grace alone.

Well, that's just the tip of the iceberg of things we shared, and marveled at about God. Our lives went in different ways in the past years and we didn't get to spend much time together, but when we did it was like, "Let's continue

where we left off yesterday.” I’ll miss my friend but always be thankful for what I learned from and with my brother. I won’t say, “God bless you, Rick,” because I know he’ll answer like he always did, “He already has!!” And, I’m sure He has!!

“Neither life nor death, nor principalities, nor powers, nor anything can separate us from the love of God we have in Christ Jesus.”

Be seeing you one of these days, Rick, and we can continue where we left off “yesterday.” We’ve got lots to learn.

LINDEE SATTERFIELD, MCCARTHY, AK

“Chew On This”

The last service that Rick pastored was a special one. In his last few minutes of talking with us he requested that we read Romans 12 - the whole chapter. We should read it through the month and kinda “chew” on it, (chew, being one of his favored buzz-words...) and absorb what its telling you. Rick didn’t specifically request that we read any one scripture through a week or month, but that Sunday he did. I read through it the day after he passed - and it was like he was giving us his last message through Romans 12 that sums it all up...and that is, on how to be a Christian.

He got the message across to me...now, I take it from there. I have challenges ahead, but, I will always be grateful to Rick for getting me this far, to really reading the scriptures, and to “chew” on them. Because of Rick, I now know more than ever before that Jesus Loves Me, this I know... because the Bible tells me so.

Larry and I will miss Rick and his emails...spiritual, bible

related, political, photos of moose or bear that would venture into their yard, or just humorous cartoons.

Kobuk will miss running full bore up Kenyons’ yard to greet Rick...(hoping Kobuk would NOT knock him down in the process!)

You are missed Rick...I wish Heaven had visiting hours...

DOROTHY ADLER, MCCARTHY, AK

My friendship with Rick Kenyon began about 15 years ago. It was a time of transition for those of us who lived and worked in the Wrangell Mountains. The National Park Service was becoming a presence in Kennecott and McCarthy, the footbridge bollard issue was an ever present controversy within the community, and other access issues began to stir the pot between locals and the NPS. Rick, of course, was a key figure in many of these issues. While his outspokenness might have caused friction with some, Rick was always a crusader in fighting for what he believed in.

Rick loved to engage in conversations about local politics. I first learned this when I would go to the Kenyon Homestead to fill propane. Rick and I would have quick, but heated conversations about local issues. I didn’t agree on a lot of things, but we sure enjoyed our debates!

Over the years, I became very close with Rick and Bonnie. Rick and I would spend hours discussing verses in The Bible and The Old Testament. I think we both found that while our ‘religions’ were different, we could still find some common ground in our beliefs. Rick was scholar, a wise man, one with conviction, and one who did not judge.

Through the years, Rick and Bonnie were always there for me. Sometimes I’d go hang out with Bonnie, enjoy her snickerdoodle cookies and chat over a cup of coffee. Or I’d hang out with Rick, helping him on one of his B&B projects, discussing his fishing trips, talking about guns, hunting, and of course, God. After my son was born, Rick and Bonnie both entered into a sort of ‘grand-parent’ role with Logan.

Rick’s passing became very real to me several days after he departed this earth. I was questioning something, and I thought to myself “what would Rick say to me about this?”

Well, Rick and Bonnie both had come to know my stubborn side through the years. I remember one day several years back Rick said to me “when you come to me and ask for advice, you end up doing the opposite.” So he started using reverse psychology on me and we began to joke that he was my ‘Alaska Dad.’ I witnessed Rick change and grow through the years and I know we felt a mutual respect and admiration for one another.

There is a word in Yiddish that we use to describe someone who is compassionate and practices acts of kindness towards others. Rick was a Mensch. In the past several years, Rick softened. He seemed to be at peace, always smiling. He lived his life as a crusader and found in that, a deep relationship with God that resonated from him, allowing him to love, forgive, and be a Mensch! I am deeply grateful for the friendship I shared with Rick and the lessons I learned through watching him live with an open heart and unconditional love.

Rick Kenyon, a life remembered



Our dear friend, Rick Kenyon, Sr. passed away at Alaska Regional Hospital in Anchorage, Alaska, on August 5, 2014 after suffering a heart attack in McCarthy. We knew him as pastor, newspaper editor, propane salesman, official weather observer, outdoorsman, and most particularly, as a warm and loving friend, husband, father and grandfather, a man we will all dearly miss.

Richard David Kenyon Sr. was born on May 10, 1947 in Flint, Michigan to Carlton Wayne and Virginia Lee Kenyon. Rick graduated from Waterford Kettering High School in Pontiac, Michigan. He then attended Oakland Community College in Pontiac and Daytona Beach Junior College in Florida. There he married the love of his life, Miss Bonnie Lynne Schafer, in 1967.

foreman at Executive Airlines. He owned and operated his own gun shop called "Muzzle Services", which he shared with "The Lighthouse," Bonnie's Christian book store. Rick also served on the Sarasota police force.

In 1976, the family moved to Valdez, Alaska, where Rick worked as airplane mechanic for Kennedy Air Service and obtained his private pilot's license. The next year was spent at Long Lake (Mile 45 McCarthy Rd.). Then the summer of 1978, Rick and family moved to their permanent McCarthy home.

Rick flew for a group of salmon fishing boats in the Prince William Sound as a fish spotter. He and Bonnie became contract weather observers for NOAA in 1983. In 1992, they began a bimonthly news magazine called "Wrangell St. Elias

News" and a yearly visitor's guide, "A Visitor's Guide to Kennicott & McCarthy." He founded and served as Pastor of the McCarthy Kennicott Community Church since its start in 1994, previously holding Sunday meetings in their home.

Rick did many different things throughout his life. In Florida, he was an airplane mechanic for Cavalier Aircraft and a maintenance

News" and a yearly visitor's guide, "A Visitor's Guide to Kennicott & McCarthy." He founded and served as Pastor of the McCarthy Kennicott Community Church since its start in 1994, previously holding Sunday meetings in their home.

His joys of life were building and flying radio control airplanes, fishing, gardening, target shooting and gunsmithing. He was also a ham radio operator.

Rick is survived by his wife of 47 years, Bonnie Lynne Kenyon; his father, Carlton Wayne Kenyon of So. Daytona, Florida; his son Richard David Kenyon, Jr. and wife Maria of Donalsonville, Georgia; Grandsons, Jonathan David, Stephen Joel, Joshua Andrew, and Caleb Matthew of Donalsonville, Georgia. Rick was preceded in death by his mother, Virginia Lee Kenyon.

Faithfulness, honor and perseverance were of utmost importance to Rick. For those of us whom he welcomed into his heart, we found deep, intense compassion and tenderness. His greatest passion in life was faith in God's love and growth in the knowledge and experience of God's amazing grace through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rick will be remembered for many things, but Bonnie says that she most wants that her husband be remembered for his faith. It is what drew them to McCarthy, Alaska, and what inspired every cause Rick took on in his life.

Rick Kenyon, a Celebration of Life

A celebration of life was held for Rick Kenyon in the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church on August 23, 2014, officiated by Pastor Steve Alexander of Wasilla, Alaska, with musical accompaniment by his wife, Tonia, on guitar and Kay Houghton on piano.

The church was packed to standing room only and hummed with conversation as friends gathered to share remembrances of Rick.

Several people brought beautiful flowers from their yards and placed them at the altar.

The service began with "It is Well With My Soul". Rick Kenyon, Jr. spoke about his father's life. Pastor Steve spoke to the grace of God and Rick's founding principal, that God is Good.

In the Alaska tradition, people were invited to share their stories about Rick, and many rose to the occasion.

Bonnie spoke about the Rick that she met and married, obviously still quite smitten with him, and shared a bit of Rick's heart, that he would not wish anyone to have regrets, feelings of guilt or condemnation, that all is forgiven.

The service ended with the songs, "God is Good" and "Great is Thy Faithfulness."

The service was followed by a cover-dish luncheon reception and picnic. The weather was glorious!





A Tribute to a True Patriot, Husband and Father

BY RICK KENYON, JR.

(Author's Note: On the evening of August 5, 2014 I received a short phone call that most folks dread and hope they never get: Dad passed away. It was unexpected and I was not mentally prepared to hear that news. I do recall the very time (12:15 am) and the place (in my living room) and what my reaction was. That memory is seared into my consciousness forever. Never have I felt so helpless and so far away from Mom as at that very moment. It would be 2 weeks before I could make the trip from southwest Georgia to McCarthy, Alaska and re-visit my childhood home. That ten-day trip included an amazing memorial service in Dad's honor, and was jam-packed with meeting new faces (and old); and taking in the changes to the community that are apparent after being away for 22 years. My camera was busy taking pictures and capturing those wonderful moments of the updates and many faces that I have heard of in the WSEN and via my parents, Rick and Bonnie Kenyon.)

One word in particular stands out in my mind when I think of my father, Richard D. Kenyon, Sr. and that word is integrity. Dad was one of those from the “old school” in that aspect—you could take his word to the bank. Even when it would have been convenient to re-tract his word or to change his mind, I do not recall a single instance that he did; yet if he was wrong, he was man enough to apologize. That consistent value system shaped my behavior by the



way he raised me. If he told me not to touch something around the house that was “off-limits,” he was fully prepared to enforce those rules—if necessary. Those values instilled in me at an early age helped steer me through many pitfalls that I would encounter in adolescence and early adulthood.

I recall conversations with Dad regarding the McCarthy road and access to this bush community. He felt that the road needed improvement and upgrading; not only for the benefit of the locals, but for the rest of the world that came to visit. He felt strongly that everyone should have the same opportunity to come and visit or live (just as he did back in 1977). Equal access to private property was also high up on the list of his beliefs. When this became an issue with park authorities several years back, Dad did not back down or shut up; he made contacts statewide and used the power of the press to reveal the “other side of the story”. While some may not have always

agreed with him, he won respect by many for his fairness and tenacity to his ideas.

Dad’s faith in God was the backbone to his fundamental beliefs. His daily Bible study and his personal prayer life were priorities that could not be left out, no matter how busy his schedule might be. I recall when we started meeting in our cabin in those early years for spiritual encouragement. Sometimes it was just the three of us: Dad, Mom and me. We might listen to a tape of a minister or study a book in the Bible, verse by verse. As locals began to come and join in, it eventually led to a need for more space and the result was a community effort to build the McCarthy-Kennecott Community Church in a central location. That church was also used as a place for school testing, medical clinics, and other community activities.

When I recall how my folks and I left the comforts of city living in Sarasota, Florida to move to Alaska in 1976, it still

amazes me to think of the great faith it took to make that transition. Back then, as an 8 year old child, it was just an adventure and one full of excitement. Today, as an adult, I can fully appreciate the challenges Dad faced by moving his family 5,500 miles to parts unknown to us at that time. There were no friends or contacts waiting to guide us once we arrived in Alaska. No jobs were promised. Yet Dad had a dream to come to Alaska and the confidence that God would bring it to pass. Opportunities unfolded and doors opened that eventually led my folks to settle down in the McCarthy area.

As I look back over the 38 years since then, that dream has been an amazing saga that has touched countless lives. When I attended Dad's memorial service in McCarthy on August 23, 2014, I was stunned by the numerous faces that I saw in church that day. My emotions let loose and the love I felt hit me like a tidal wave that washed over my soul, drenching every part. One thing I brought home that day: Relationships are the most valuable commodity we can obtain. Dad understood that. Somehow, I believe Heaven opened a window to that service and allowed him to see the fruit of his labor.

In dealing with Dad's passing, one thought has brought much comfort: He lived a full life. He did many things during his 67 years that many never accomplish in 90 years. When I surveyed the homestead and saw all the buildings, those were built by his hands and each had a unique style. I assisted in

building some of the older ones and many came later after I left home. Dad also had a gift to read a book or article about a project and then build or craft it. He put up solar power panels, installed generators (rebuilding when necessary), did the plumbing for the shower and toilets, repaired the snow machine, vehicles and various pieces of equipment often needed in bush living. Then there were airplanes rebuilt, repaired and flown. He understood machines and could fix just about anything that needed it.



There were many hobbies that Dad enjoyed. Ham radio was important for communication in those early years. We had antennas strung all over the property at one time. It looked like an "antenna farm" for several years.

Guns and ammo also had a major role throughout his life. He taught me how to reload ammunition during my teen years and we shared the hobby of target practicing in the backyard. Hunting was important too, for it put food on the table.

Fishing was another favorite sport and he used or gave away whatever he did not release. Flying model airplanes were also sandwiched in there



somewhere because I discovered a fleet of small planes and radios when I visited recently.

While all this was amazing in itself, he never could have accomplished so much without the support of a loyal and faithful wife. Mom was the "other half" and complemented Dad in so many ways. They never made major decisions without each other's consult and agreement. Mom brought the balance necessary that all husbands need in order to be well-rounded. Her quiet strength was like a deep well and I saw my dad draw out of it on many occasions.

To quote the late poet Edwin Markham, "Ah, great it is to dream the dream when you stand in youth by the starry stream; but a greater thing is to fight life through and say at the end, the dream is true!" For Richard D. Kenyon, Sr., that dream came true. Dad, what a full life you lived. Thanks for the legacy you left, the memories that we made and dreams that we shared. I can hardly wait until we meet again and catch up on what's happened since the last time. Until then,

Your son,
Rick Jr.

Anchorage Daily Times

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ALIEN ENEMIES CAUSE KENNECOTT STRIKE

STRIKE TROUBLES IN GUGGENHEIM COPPER PROPERTIES TO BE LAID BEFORE THE FEDERAL AUTHORITIES

NEW YORK, June 19. – It was announced at the headquarters of the Guggenheim mining interests here today that the management of the mines in Alaska had been instructed to lay all the facts in the strike troubles there before federal authorities in the territory. The strike may involve 500 workers in the Cumbe, Bonanza and Erie mines at Kennecott.

It is stated by officers of the company that the German element among the miners got control of matters and have been dictating the strike policy. The men are demanding a further bonus of 50 cents

a day above the present bonus of \$1 and in addition ask that the bonuses be made permanent even in normal times.

STRONG WORKING ON STRIKE.

Seattle, June 19. – Governor Strong, now in Washington, has had his attention called to the Bonanza strike situation and is at work on it, in conjunction with other officials in the east.

E. T. Stannard, manager of the mining properties in the north, left for Cordova on the Northwestern this morning, having been here keeping the wires hot to New York. The government has been aware of the northward movement of Germans for some time and is not unmindful of the importance of protecting the Alaska mines, especially the copper workings.

WSEN note: The above snippet of old headline-news is in keeping with Rick's tradition of sharing headlines from the past from such papers as the The McCarthy Weekly News and Our Town. This article reminds us of McCarthy's importance in the wider world and the great national significance of the Alaska Kennecott copper mines to America's war effort. Now, for the rest of the story . . .

From the Annual Report of the Secretary of Labor, Volume 5, Part 1917, page 40-41:

Kennecott Copper Co., Kennecott, Alaska. – On the 30th of June, 1917, a telegram was received at the Department from the miners' committee of the Kennecott Copper Co., of Kennecott, Alaska, relative to a strike pending at the mines of that company. The strikers requested that arrangements be made by the Department whereby their dispute

might be submitted to arbitration, or, that failing, the Government to take over the management of the company, in order to insure a full production of copper for the Government and a living wage for the employees. Realizing that considerable time must be consumed before a conciliator could get to the scene of the strike, the Department requested the miners to return to work pending the arrival of its representative. This they readily consented to do. A

new difficulty then arose from the fact that the company refused to take back the strikers except as individuals. Such was the situation on July 18, when Mr. Charles T. Connell was assigned to the case as conciliator. Upon his arrival at Kennecott Mr. Connell found that about 700 men were affected by the strike. The demands of the miners were for a flat rate of \$5.75 per day in lieu of the bonus system then maintained by the company and for an

improvement in their working conditions. The company had offered an increase averaging about 50 cents per day over the former scale, and the president of the company had guaranteed personally that the sum of \$35,000 would be spent for the improvement of the bunk houses and for better bathing facilities. A joint conference was arranged, at which the conciliator presided, and matters were freely discussed. Later Mr. Connell was invited to speak to the strikers at a great mass meeting, and on this occasion the position of the company and the result of the conferences was explained in detail. The needs of the Government relative to the production of copper were set forth and the men strongly advised to settle their

differences with the company as speedily as possible, in order that full production might be resumed. The matter of returning to work was freely discussed by the strikers; and being submitted to a vote, the strike was declared off. The settlement of this strike had a very favorable effect upon the general labor situation in Alaska.

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From the Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1917 by George Curtis Martin, pages 17-19:

COPPER.

The copper production of Alaska in 1917 was about 88,793,400 pounds, valued at about \$24,240,598. This is less

than the production in 1916, which was 119,854,839 pounds, valued at \$29,484,291, but is greater than the production of any other year. The reduction in total output for the year was due largely to scarcity of labor and to a strike at the Kennecott-Bonanza mine. During the year 17 copper mines were operated . . . , three in the Chitina district. . . . The decrease in the content of copper for 1917 was due to the smaller proportion of high-grade Kennecott ores in the total production. . . . Among the noteworthy features of copper mining in Alaska in 1917 was the continued enormous output of the Kennecott-Bonanza mine in the Chitina district, which, as in previous years, overshadowed all other operations.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

KENNECOTT'S OUTPUT SHOWS BIG INCREASE

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August Production of Alaska Mines On Par With First Three Months of Year – Corporation Has Made Progress in Recovery From Strike

Kennecott's production figures for last month, showing an increase in the output from Alaska of 3,468,000 pounds over July and 1,200,000 pounds over June, are on a par with production for the first three months of this year, indicating that the corporation has made substantial progress in recovering from the strike which began on June 18 and ended July 7. The Alaska properties are practically running at normal capacity, and Kennecott officials see no reason why mine output should not continue at high levels.

Kennecott Copper Corporation produced in August, 7,048,000 pounds of copper.

Production by months is as follows (pounds):

	1917	1916
January	7,080,000	10,000,000
February	7,090,000	9,750,000
March	7,076,000	10,150,000
April	7,180,000	10,500,000
May	7,208,000	10,500,000
June	5,848,000	10,500,000
July	3,580,000	10,750,000
August	7,048,000	10,200,000
September	8,000,000
October	7,300,000
November	7,080,000
December	6,806,000

NOT a Religious Guy!

BY PASTOR STEVE ALEXANDER

I am so happy that my friend, Pastor Rick Kenyon, was not a religious guy! More on that later, but first - having already once presumed to speak for my friend of 37 years at his memorial service, I would like to again claim that I know a couple of thoughts Rick Kenyon would be thinking right now. Though most WSEN readers would know Rick as a firmly principled man - and be quite right in their assessment - I also know him as one of the most compassionate men I have ever met. For that reason, I can say of a certainty that his eyes would be brimming with tears of gratitude and appreciation for how the McCarthy-area people have shown their personal support and physical assistance for Bonnie during this time. I would like to repeat, as it were, that appreciation and say thanks to all of the McCarthy community friends who have collectively done many more acts of kindness than I could have imagined. I dare not start to make a list; but every phone call to our friend, Bonnie, has new reports of your gracious assistance. Thank you all.

A brief bit of history may help readers to understand my thoughts here. Much has changed from my first contact with Rick and Bonnie in the Chitina valley in 1977. I now also function as Rick did, as pastor of a small church, and I work many hours weekly with prisoners and addicts whose lives hardly resemble anything

approximating "normal." My calling and capability to function in those levels of service to others has significant root in the hours of fellowship that my wife, Tonia, and I had with Rick and Bonnie. Values that enable my function today were either sown or prodded to life in some large measure because of their example and exhortation in the truth of the Scriptures and the grace of the Spirit of God. Within the context of a real and enduring relationship with two honest people like Rick and Bonnie, we grew with them to grasp the Goodness of a God who could choose to love broken people so much that He gave all He has to incentivize their return to wholeness in relationship with Him.

As an extension of that history, there is one most valuable attribute of my friend that I would like to emphasize. I earlier mentioned how Rick was a significant part of my "greater conscience." By that I meant, his internal sense for detecting when something was a "half bubble off" from real truth or when something was simply appealing to the human tendency for self-righteousness - whether in his own thinking or in that of others - was a great help for me. I watched him and was helped by him to cultivate the accountability for living a public life that was less about meeting the expectations of others and more about meeting the needs of any who will allow it, to experience the unearned and unlimited grace of Jesus.

Invariably and specifically,

when Rick could target some wrong thinking about God or God's high evaluation of all of us, I would also find I needed to tweak my thinking and throw away some assumed and functionally codified religious misbeliefs. Over the years, nothing became quite so frustrating to us in terms of our own spiritual state as finding that we still did not grasp the full willingness of God to value each person well beyond our ability to imagine that willingness or finding that once again we had just devalued one of these God-imaged beings because of our own preconceived religious bias. We grew to have a real distaste for such legalistic religiosity in ourselves or wherever we found it. This willingness to first, question most anything that presumes to mandate religious standards onto others before valuing them, and then second, find the preferred relational tools in the Scripture for administering the grace, love and goodness of God was what I came to enjoy most about my friendship with Rick. It is why, with very little "tongue in cheek," I say that Rick was actually trying not to be "religious" for this little bush community of people that he grew to love. Rather, he was simply trying to be real with the revelation of a God who is so thoroughly good and loving that nothing could possibly prohibit His acceptance of anyone of us who will simply receive His grace shown through the sacrificial death and resurrected life of Jesus. I think Rick did a good job of living that out.

What We Have Are Memories

BY TERRY AND DEE FRADY

When all is said and done, what we have left are memories. I kept a daily diary of our first decade in McCarthy starting in 1981. Terry first met Rick Kenyon on May 29, 1983. Rick was on his way to Long Lake with Bonnie and Ricky. A wheel came off their rig so Terry stopped to help them fix the problem. Turns out we had a



CB chats, trails thru the woods from house to house, holidays, birthdays, making ice cream, soil and sod for our place, processing moose, skinning a bear, flying, a bouquet of sweet peas and lots of moral support.

Although we drifted apart over the years to follow different paths it does not matter. Because we had those meaningful moments in time. Thanks so much for that, Rick.

mutual friend in Anchorage. That started a close friendship which made our early years very special and welcoming here.

On May 15, 1986 Rick and Terry went out to Valdez, then Anchorage, to bring in our airplane. We became partners and Rick was our pilot and mechanic! Lots of fun and flying. Fishing trips to Summit Lake and Silver Lake are most memorable. Rick made a set of excellent

wheel skis for the Pacer.

After reading my old diaries, I relived the profound impact Rick and his family made on our lives here. We did so many things together. Entries of ham radios and Morse code, gardens and flowers, chickens ("Buffy"), ice fishing, "Bait" Lake,



Rick and Bonnie Kenyon, Our Friends and "Secret Sponsors"

BY NEIL O'DONNELL

We planned to spend New Year's at our cabin in McCarthy. Lynn Ellis, of Ellis Air in Gulkana, said he would fly my wife Margaret, our daughter Catherine, and myself in on December 27, 2003. When I first spoke to Lynn on the phone we chatted a bit about our background, where we were going in McCarthy, and who we knew out there. Although he didn't say so, I think Lynn was worried that we city folk might promptly freeze to death once he dropped us off at the McCarthy airport and that would be bad for everyone involved. As I later discovered, I apparently did not completely reassure him on that point.

When we got to Gulkana on the morning of December 27, Lynn said it was our lucky day because he doesn't fly below minus 40 and it was only minus 38. So off we went. When we landed in McCarthy it was equally chilly. We had our skis, packs, and two small plastic sleds. We loaded up our gear and started off on the six-mile ski down-valley to our cabin. Catherine, then six-years-old, decided she had had enough skiing after about a mile. We put her – still in her snow suit – inside a sleeping bag. We then redistributed the gear from one of the sleds into our packs and put Catherine in the sled. We skied on. Catherine promptly fell asleep. I was vaguely wor-



ried that Catherine was in the later stages of hypothermia as her head would gradually work its way off the sled (while still covered by the sleeping bag) and bounce along on the ground without any visible reaction from her. I woke her up a few times to confirm that she was indeed alive. She was annoyed and made it clear she did not want to be further disturbed.

Although Margaret and I had done a number of multi-day ski mountaineering trips in our prime, we had not done any significant skiing at 40 below. One thing we learned that day was when you are working hard at 40 below, carrying a pack and pulling a sled, your glasses promptly frost over from the moisture in your breath and you cannot see anything. Fogged eyeglasses required us to stop time and time again.

We had told the Kenyons that we would be heading straight to our cabin but Margaret was beginning to think we should not miss a wonderful opportunity to drop in unannounced on Rick and Bonnie. It was cold and getting colder, the daylight was quickly fading, and it was going to take hours to heat up our cabin. So visit we did. The Kenyons, as always, were wonderfully hospitable and great fun to visit. Rick further insisted on firing up his snowmachine and hauling me and our gear down to our cabin. Margaret and Catherine decided that the polite thing to do was to stay in the Kenyons' warm home and visit some more with Bonnie. Rick helped me get the stove going and start a portable propane heater at our cabin. Rick then returned to his house to ferry

Margaret and Catherine down to our cabin.

A week later we needed to be at the McCarthy airstrip early in the day to meet Lynn for our flight back to Gulkana. This was going to be a challenge given the amount of time it would take to get the cabin



closed up, our stuff packed, and ski the six miles back to the airport. Without any request by us, Rick and Bonnie offered to come get us in their snowmachines and haul us to the airport. We took them up on their very kind offer.

After we got back to Anchorage, Rick mentioned to me that he had gotten a call from Lynn Ellis prior to us flying in. Lynn had wanted to make sure that we at least had passable survival skills. He also wanted someone in McCarthy to agree to be our "secret sponsors" and keep us out of trouble. The Kenyons, unbeknownst to us, told Lynn they would look out for us and, of course, they did an excellent job of it.

This was but one of a long list of occasions over the past two decades where Rick and

Bonnie have been tremendously helpful to us on matters both great and small. Rick helped us figure out how to wire our breaker box, set up a 12-volt shower system, and troubleshoot our snowmachines. Rick has often set a trail into our cabin in the winter and turned off our propane valves when we got back to Anchorage and remembered we had forgotten to do that. Rick suggested where to get things fixed, how to get them fixed, and how to avoid breaking them in the first instance. We have tried to return their many favors over the years, but we have never come close to catching up.

Despite all the help and advice the Kenyons have given us over the years, the best part of being friends with Rick and Bonnie has always simply been the time spent visiting with them. The Kenyons have always been friendly, warm, welcoming and upbeat. Speaking of Rick (and saving my compliments of Bonnie for another day), there seemed to be few topics that did not interest Rick. He was perpetually inquisitive. His range of interests included all manner of devices, tools, and projects that could be put to useful application on a McCarthy homestead. He was up on the newest technology, gardening, guns, model air-

craft, construction techniques, Alaska history, goings on in McCarthy, the weather, the McCarthy Road, and local, state and national politics. And, of course, he was an accomplished writer and publisher. What also always impressed me was the way Rick would seriously listen to and consider my wayward political views, and take no offense at the messenger. He delighted in the conversation and set an example for me on how to respectfully consider the views of others. In short, it was hard to find a topic that was not fun to discuss with Rick.

Rick got a great deal of joy out of every day and was able to convey that joy to the people around him. He was tremendously intelligent, independent, inquisitive, and self-motivated. Rick worked hard to put his faith into practice every day of his life. His life was one of adventure, accomplishment, and assistance to others. We will always cherish the time we spent with Rick, and we look forward to the time we will still have with Bonnie. Margaret, Catherine, and I are all deeply grateful that Rick and Bonnie brought us into their large circle of friends. We have been greatly enriched by their friendship.



Hangar Flying

BY DOREEN POULSEN FOR THE
VALDEZ VANGUARD
OCTOBER 3, 1979

This is a story of a moose hunt as told to me by Mike Case.

“Rick Kenyon and I were working like dogs trying to get my plane fixed before the end of moose season. By Sept. 15 we finished and on the 16th we went on our hunting trip.

We got there, and spent a rainy night in my tent under the wing. The next day we spent hunting, but saw nothing.

My Dad showed up on the second day and surprised us. He flew in his PA-12.

On the third day, we spotted a big bull moose, but had to walk through about four miles of water and bush. I was the only one with hip boots.

We spent an hour stalking him and getting in range to shoot. He looked huge. We wanted my Dad to shoot him, but Dad’s too short and couldn’t see over the neck-high brush.

So I shot the first shot, wounding him in the neck, and Rick finished him off. That moose was so big he made a 63-inch rack look small. I had guessed it maybe was 48 to 50 inches in the field.

That’s when the work started. We made an airstrip

near where the moose was—a real short one, no more than 500 feet, if that far.

I felt like I aged a year every time I landed there. It took nine ferry trips to get all the meat and horns back to the main camp.



Dad’s PA-12 couldn’t get in and out of that short strip, but my Supercub did.

That night the wolves got about 15 pounds of meat in Dad’s raincoat but didn’t rip one hole in the coat. Must have been friendly wolves.

We had to leave Rick out there one night, as we had to go to town and renew our flight plan (didn’t want the wife to worry) and refuel.

We couldn’t get gas until the next day, so stayed the night. Rick had one moose, six guns, four sleeping bags, and

two tent (and some friendly wolves?), so we weren’t too worried about him.

Only thing he didn’t have was a hot shower like we had!

It was really cramped in the plane cabin with those horns. Had to lean over the

dashboard, with the control stick under me, all the way home.

It was hard working the trim and carb heat controls, too.

We had some turbulent weather on the way, but we each ended up with about 300 pounds of boned moose meat, so the trip really paid off.

Rick says he’s never going moose hunting anywhere again without hip boots.”

Packrafts in national parks?

Paddling ‘dirtbags’ press their case with bureaucrats and politicians for the chance to float rivers in our national parks

BY KRIS FARMEN

REPRINTED FROM 8/31/14 OUTDOORS SPECIAL TO THE ALASKA DISPATCH NEWS, WITH PERMISSION FROM MANAGING EDITOR.

The morning sun was just breaking over Bonanza Ridge when a group of wilderness racers gathered last summer in the decommissioned copper mining town of Kennicott in Alaska’s Wrangell Mountains. The iconic red-and-white industrial buildings from nearly 100 years ago, now a national historic monument and undergoing restoration by the National Park Service, glowed in the light of the new day as Monte Montepare, co-owner of Kennicott Wilderness Guides, faced the crowd. Everyone had gathered for

a one-of-a-kind race, a dash on foot up Bonanza, then down the backside to the upper reaches of McCarthy Creek.

McCarthy Creek parallels the spine of Bonanza Ridge for several miles until it curves like a fishhook around the base of Sour-dough Peak.

Upon reaching the creek, the racers would dump their packs, inflate the boats they carried with them, then shoot down 10 miles of rapids to Kennicott’s sister town of McCarthy. The finish line, not coincidentally, was right in front of the town’s only bar.

The boat carried by each of these racers is the 21st century incarnation of a design concept that’s been around for a couple decades now. Packrafts are lightweight (about 5 pounds), compact, and easily stuffed into a backpack. Essentially, they’re super-tough one-person rubber rafts, the diminutive cousins of the 16- and 20-footers used for more mainstream river trips. Small size is the secret of their advantage: A packraft gives the wilderness traveler the sort of amphibious

capability that humans have longed for since the earliest days of our species. A hundred years ago, your only real option was to build a raft or hope you could find a canoe cached on your side of the river. Now, with a packraft, the backcountry trekker can go virtually anywhere, including a fast boogie up and over a mountain, then downstream through some substantial whitewater in time for beer-thirty.

Montepare welcomed all the racers and laid out the rules in front of the Kennicott Wilderness Guides main office; then head ranger Stephens Harper got up and delivered a safety and environmental briefing every bit as mandatory as the helmet and dry-suit each racer was required to have. The first annual McCarthy Creek Packraft Race, which started as a way for Kennicott Wilderness to promote its guiding business and have some fun, had grown in importance from being just a bunch of whitewater bums looking for a thrill.

Pretty much by accident, the company and its owners, as well as the racers, found themselves front and center in a rancorous debate over land use, backcountry permitting and public lands policy taking place thousands of miles from the Wrangell Mountains. The jaundiced eyes of nonprofit conservation groups were watching.

GRAND CANYON EPISODE

Back in 2011, an erstwhile river warrior hiked down into the Grand Canyon with a packraft, blew it up, and shoved off into Hance, one of the longer and more difficult rapids. Within seconds he’d dumped his boat and was being sucked down into the gorge

Photos by ARTURO POLO-ENA / Kennicott Wilderness Guides



McCarthy Creek packs plenty of punch, despite its diminutive size.

below while his girlfriend stood helplessly on the bank.

He made it out by the skin of his teeth, with the whole thing on tape, thanks to a GoPro cam. And, of course, what good is a near-drowning experience if you haven't posted the video on YouTube? It didn't take long for the National Park Service staff at the Grand Canyon to see it and decide, based on this one incident, that packrafters were a menace both to themselves and to public lands. The video was pulled after a few days but the damage was done.

This tale might seem familiar to readers here in Alaska, given the recent tragic death of Rob Kehrer while packrafting in Wrangell-St. Elias as part of the Alaska Wilderness Classic race. Earlier this month he launched his packraft into the treacherous Tana River and disappeared behind a wall of whitewater. His body was found on a gravel bar downstream.

One can understand how NPS managers might take a dim view of packrafters in their parks, given events such as these. But as with most thorny management issues, there is a lot more to the story than those few incidents that make the headlines.

'FREELANCE DIRTBAGS'

We're more like backpackers with boats," says Brad Meiklejohn of Anchorage, president of the American Packraft Association, the organization that convinced the Hance swimmer to remove the helmet-cam footage. The packraft association has been at the forefront of an effort to lift bans on paddling and packrafting in many national parks in the western U.S., most prominently



Kennicott Wilderness Guides owner Monte Montepare delivers the safety briefing prior to the start of the race.

Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks.

Packrafting in Alaska's national parks involves a different set of legal circumstances than in parks in the Lower 48, mainly because the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act that created most Alaska parks specifically protects non-motorized boat access on park waters. Park managers in the rest

of the country, however, have it entirely in their power to ban any user group they see fit, including packrafters.

The organization's quest to gain access to Yellowstone and Grand Teton has been arduous, and packrafters' renegade reputation has not helped.

"Packrafters tend to be freelance dirtbags," Meiklejohn says. "We're not organized people



The packraft racers hoof up the west face of Bonanza Ridge above Kennicott in the morning sunshine, bound for the top of National Creek Pass.

by nature." It might be said, probably with some justification, that much of the opposition to allowing packrafters in national parks stems from a disdain for what might be called them and their ilk. Columnist Todd Wilkinson of the Jackson Hole News & Guide described packrafters as "a narrow fold of self-interested boaters," a condescending description that misses the fundamental point that packrafters are conservationists and land stewards at heart. The packraft association, of course, can't necessarily speak for every single packrafter in the world but it does speak for a great many of them, and their feet are firmly planted in the ethos of Leave No Trace. The tiny size of their boats and the fact that everything they carry (including the boat) has to go on their backs mean that packraft journeys are by definition low impact. With space and weight at such a premium, you aren't taking cases of beer and shrink-wrapped steaks, then leaving the refuse behind on the bank.

When the packraft association approached Yellowstone and Grand Teton management about allowing packrafts on their rivers, they were, in Meiklejohn's words, "blown off." At the core of the issue in these two adjacent parks was a ban on all river craft in Yellowstone that has been in place since 1950, and a congruent ban in Grand Teton dating to 1962. These regulations were originally created to protect the parks' rivers from overfishing. In fact, park managers claimed they were specifically prohibited from even studying the possibility of allowing river paddling of any kind in either unit.

With park management and other conservation groups unwilling to listen, the packraft association took its case to Congress. The association found an unlikely ally in Wyoming Rep. Cynthia Lummis, a Republican. In 2013, Lummis introduced the River Paddling Protection Act, also known as HR 3492. The summary of the bill states that it "opens the rivers and streams of Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming to hand-propelled vessels." It also "declares specified regulations (meaning the 1950 and 1962 river traffic bans) to have no force or effect with regard to the closing of rivers and streams of such parks to such vessels."

The bill sailed through the House of Representatives and went over to the Senate this February. Now known as S 2018, the bill is in the Senate Energy Committee. Meiklejohn gives it a 50-50 chance of passing.

If that happens, the act would take effect three years after being signed into law. The idea is to allow Yellowstone and Grand Teton staff time to conduct appropriate studies and prepare a sensible management strategy. It's worth noting that the packraft association is not necessarily asking for all rivers in these two parks to be thrown wide open to every yahoo with an inner tube and a pair of swim trunks. Park managers would retain full regulatory authority, something the packraft association agrees with.

"There's a lot of places in Yellowstone where paddling shouldn't take place," Meiklejohn says. "We're willing to be respectful of those places and recommend they remain closed."

Furthermore, he adds, "If studies say river traffic is going to degrade Yellowstone, APA would live by that."

Ultimately, the packrafters want nothing more than the opportunity to have their case considered.

PACKRAFTERS' REPUTATION AT STAKE

National park superintendents in Alaska may not have the authority to ban packrafts but they still have plenty of jurisdiction over back-country travel. Park staff at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park had plenty of worries about the McCarthy Creek race, and the packraft community had a vested interest in dealing with those worries, given that their reputation in the rest of the country was at stake.

"The main concerns from the get-go were safety concerns and then the possible impacts to alpine territory up high in National Creek Pass," says Stephens Harper, the lead Kennicott ranger, who delivered the briefing before the race. McCarthy Creek runs through a narrow valley with only one primitive airstrip, so if anyone got injured along the route, it was almost certainly going to mean a helicopter rescue, which does not come cheap. With this in mind, Kennicott Wilderness Guides and the Wrangell-St. Elias staff pursued a strategy emphasizing prevention.

McCarthy Creek is not especially large -- you can easily throw a rock across it -- but for a small one-person craft, it packs plenty of punch. The Kennicott guides knew the race route well but all the same began their safety

assessments all in advance. Small as it is, the creek can be deceptive; just a half-mile down from the put-in, it rumbles into a canyon barely 10 feet wide.

"We don't even know what's in it," says Jared Steyaert, co-owner with Montepare. He and some of the crew rappelled down into the gorge to try to scout the danger level but there's only so much you can tell when you're dangling from a rope tied to a spruce tree. Clearly, there were hazards. Steyaert's voice lowers half an octave when he describes the water: "The entrance into the canyon is this drop that hits a sieve -- all the water pounds into this cave. If you swam there, you'd get pinned."

The gorge was just too gnarly, and Steyaert did not relish the prospect of having to go down into it to rescue a boater in distress. They marked the trail along the side of the canyon and made it a mandatory portage. As extra insurance, they stationed a support crew at the top of the gorge with throw bags and rescue gear just in case someone got swept down and couldn't make the last eddy in time.

A PERILOUS PRECEDENT?

The Paddling Protection Act has been met with sharp criticism, notably from the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, but much of its rhetoric simply doesn't hold water, this being an apt metaphor given the subject material. The coalition's website claims that the act "strips away the discretion of the National Park Service and sets a perilous precedent for legislating uses into some of our nation's most cherished natural areas without a public process or adequate analysis." This statement is patently false on



This rock glacier spills down the east side of Bonanza Ridge from the top of the pass. Though technically difficult to navigate, it forms the most feasible route down to McCarthy Creek.

many levels. As noted earlier, all regulatory authority remains with the National Park Service. However, it is the coalition's claim about the lack of public process that truly reveals the nature of things. The Greater Yellowstone Coalition does not quite seem to grasp the scenario: The whole reason the packraft association chose to pursue legislation is because it was being denied a public process, to say nothing of the fact that processes do not get much more public than moving a bill through Congress.

Wilkinson, the Jackson Hole columnist who called packrafters a "narrow fold of self-interested boaters," argues passionately against the act but much of his rhetoric amounts to a bunch of carping about the fact that the packraft association chose to ally itself with a Republican. To be fair, Lummis is clearly a member of the kill it, drill it, spill it, mill it crowd. She's been at the forefront of the movement to gut the Endangered Species Act, among other things.

But the opposition seems to have made the mistake of conflating packrafters with the Ted Nugent demographic. It is among the oldest of chestnuts that politics can make for strange bedfellows; the packraft association has a legitimate case, and nobody in mainstream conservation circles cared. In parks like Grand Canyon and Dinosaur, for instance, the packraft association is actively working with park managers to find ways to allow packrafters into the backcountry within existing permitting regimes, a point that seems almost willfully overlooked by the Yellowstone crowd.

Critics have also questioned why it is that paddlers must have access to Yellowstone, particularly when only five of the park's 168 lakes are closed to boating. Setting aside the fact that a lake doesn't take you anywhere like a river does, Yellowstone, Meiklejohn contends, is one of the last very few big wild areas left in the Lower 48 where you can do

packraft journeys: "It's like the director of the Smithsonian saying, 'No, there's plenty of other museums, you don't need to come in here. We think you're going to degrade the exhibits and offend the other patrons.'"

ONLY ONE MAJOR ACCIDENT

The July day turned out to be long and hot as the racers picked their way down an enormous rock glacier to the put-in beach at McCarthy Creek. They could not have asked for better weather but the park's safety concerns did prove well founded. One boater lost his raft at the midway rapid, the next station below the gorge and mandatory portage. The support crew had to fish him out of the creek with a throw bag. Fortunately, he was unhurt. This was the only major incident, and all's well that ends well. Everyone made it down to the bar to laugh and toast their success. The fastest time was four hours and one minute, a blistering pace when covering 17 miles of country and 3,500 feet of elevation.

As for the race and the Wrangell-St. Elias management, Harper and his staff were satisfied.

"We all thought it went really, really well," Harper said. "The final outcome was really good. Everybody thought it was a great race and nobody got injured."

Things went so well, in fact, that KWG just hosted the second-annual McCarthy Creek Packraft Race on July 19. Lessons learned during the 2013 race had an impact. This year, organizers held the prerace briefing the night before, and made a point of stressing that this is very much a wilderness race, meaning that the

racers had to be responsible for looking out for themselves as well as the ecosystems through which they pass. Organizers also staged more support and rescue teams along the route in response to concerns by the Wrangell-St. Elias management.

Safety will no doubt continue to be the watchword for the event, given the death of Kehrer in the Tana. It's

worth noting that the Alaska Wilderness Classic is a very different event from the McCarthy Creek Race. The Wilderness Classic covers more than a hundred miles of terrain over several days, with no support system along the way, while the McCarthy Creek event is a one-day race over a well-established route with plenty of safety personnel present to help out should things take a turn for the worse. It's a classic case of comparing apples to oranges, and both head ranger Peter Christian and Harper say the Wrangell-St. Elias management has no plans to put the brakes on the McCarthy Creek race.

"It's going to be an ever-evolving thing," says Jared Steyaert about the planning and permitting process with the



Racers go with the flow down McCarthy Creek.



A racer crosses the finish line at the bar in McCarthy.

National Park Service. "There will be minor tweaks and adjustments but we've got a good foundation locked in to build upon."

Now, with the second McCarthy Creek race in the books, and the Yellowstone-Grand Teton paddling legislation still waiting for its day on the Senate floor, the hope of all involved is that this race can serve as an example of a sustainable and healthy relationship between the packrafting community and the National Park Service.

Kris Farnen is a novelist, award-winning freelance journalist and former resident of McCarthy. His books include "The Devil's Share," "Turn Again" and "Weathered Edge." He divides his time among Homer, Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Cooking with Peggy

BY PEGGY GUNTIS

To all my Faithful
Cooking Friends,

This summer has brought sorrow to many people in McCarthy and around the country, but it has also stirred up some wonderful memories. The passing of Rick, my neighbor and friend, is very difficult for all of us. I have wonderful memories of him so to all of you who love recipes and the stories that go with them I would love to share some of Rick's favorites.

I'm one of those people who write notes on recipes. It brings back memories when I see: "Mom used to make this because Daddy loved it; my friend Trish gave me this recipe back in the 70's; I served this to Bonnie, Rick, and George the summer of 2013; and those that say "one of Rick's favorites."

As most of you know, Rick was an outdoorsman who loved to hunt and fish. Earlier this summer on one of our colder days, I asked Rick if he was looking forward to their winter in Florida. His face lit up and he said "I'm going to fish EVERY day." I know I've given you some of these recipes before but in his memory I would like to share them with you again.

SHRIMP AND MACARONI SALAD

Ingredients for 8 portions

Dressing:

- 1 1/4 cups mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons ketchup
- 1/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- cayenne to taste

The rest:

- 12 ounce package pasta shells
- 1 pound bay shrimp, or other small cooked shrimp, drained well
- 1/2 cup small diced red bell pepper
- 3/4 cup diced celery
- salt and pepper to taste

Rick said you could make this up earlier than you need to serve it. Refrigerate it and the flavors will blend nicely.

CRAB, MACARONI, AND BROCCOLI CASSEROLE

- 1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup milk
- 1 (10 3/4 ounce) can of cream of onion soup or cream of mushroom soup
- 4 tablespoons butter (*divided*)
- 2 cups diced broccoli, uncooked
- 2 medium tomatoes, diced
- 1/2 pound elbow macaroni, cooked and drained
- 1 pound imitation (*or real*) crab meat
- 1/2 cup fine bread crumbs

1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

Combine shredded cheddar cheese, mayonnaise, milk, and soup in a bowl and mix well. Melt 2 tablespoons of the butter in a skillet and saute the broccoli until tender crisp (*about 3 minutes*). Remove from heat.

Add the broccoli mixture to the cheese mixture, tomatoes, crab meat and macaroni. Place in a casserole dish (*I used an 8" x 11" size*). Melt the rest of the butter, and mix with the bread crumbs and Parmesan cheese.

Sprinkle the crumbs on top of the casserole mixture and bake at 350 degrees for 35 to 45 minutes.

And now for one of Rick's very favorites:

SALMON PATTIES

(*Makes 4 - 6 servings*)

- 1 can (15 ounce) salmon
- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup minced onion
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 tablespoons salmon juice

Drain salmon and save 2 tablespoons of the juice.

Mix salmon, egg, onion, and flour.

Add the baking powder to the 2 tablespoons of juice and add to the salmon mixture.

Form patties and fry in olive oil. Serve with white sauce.

WHITE SAUCE FOR RICK'S SALMON PATTIES

(This recipe makes 1 cup.)

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- dash white pepper
- 1 cup milk.

Melt the butter in a saucepan over low heat. Blend in the flour, salt, and a dash of white pepper. Add milk all at once. Cook quickly, stirring constantly until mixture thickens and bubbles.

This being the last issue of the Wrangell St. Elias News, may I say how much I've enjoyed the opportunity Rick and Bonnie gave me to express my love of cooking with you.

Make a note on these recipes that will bring back a memory of a moment you shared with Rick, whether by his side or through the WSEN.

Your friend, Peggy



1995



1983



2010



How to report an **EMERGENCY** in the McCarthy/Kennicott area

PROVIDED BY STEVENS HARPER

Medical

Call 907-554-1240 (local EMS dispatch)

If this fails, contact one of the EMS responders on the community EMS/Fire responders list (updated annually). Additional contacts, 911 or NPS 24 hr. dispatch 907-683-9555 for EMS incidents on NPS land.

Fire

Call 907-554-2102 (fire chief)

If this fails, contact one of the Fire responders on the community EMS/Fire responders list. Additional contacts are Alaska Division of Forestry 907-822-5534 or 911.

Law Enforcement

On NON-NPS LAND

Call 911.

If the State Troopers cannot respond quickly and the incident is an immediate threat to public safety, the State Troopers can request that a law enforcement ranger (NPS) respond.

On NPS LAND

Call 907-683-9555 (24hr NPS dispatch)

Or call District Park Ranger (907-554-1144) or Area Park Ranger (907-960-1027).

Search and Rescue

To report an overdue person or aircraft within Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve.

Call 907-683-9555 (24hr NPS dispatch)

Or call District Park Ranger (907-554-1144) or Area Park Ranger (907-960-1027).

Additional contacts are 911 and Rescue Coordination Center 1-800-420-7230.

The Impact of One Life

When a stone is dropped into a lake,
it quickly disappears from sight –
but its impact leaves behind
a series of ripples that broaden
and reach across the water.



In the same way,
the impact of one life lived for Christ
leaves behind an influence for good
that touches the lives of many others.

Poem by ROY LESSIN

Rick, it was a great honor and joy to know you as friend, mentor, and homesteading advisor, and to stand with you on what is right. We salute you in the Great Hereafter, but know that here, you are really, really missed!

MOTHER LODGE COPPER MINES COMPANY OF ALASKA
201 Barrow Street #1 • Anchorage, AK 99501

**FIRST BE SURE YOU'RE RIGHT,
THEN GO AHEAD.
~ DAVY CROCKETT**



