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# Wrangell St. Elias News

*"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"*

Vol. Eleven Issue Three

July & August 2002

Two Dollars

## The McCarthy Road—what will be its fate?



WSEN staff photo

Ironically, we shot this photo of a hapless tourist's vehicle as we were heading home to attend the Department of Transportation meeting in McCarthy after a night's stay at the new Princess Hotel in Copper Center. At the meeting it was announced that the Chitina Highway Maintenance Station will be closed July 1. This past month we also learned that the state may lack sufficient property interests in the right-of-way to complete proposed project. Details inside.

# A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

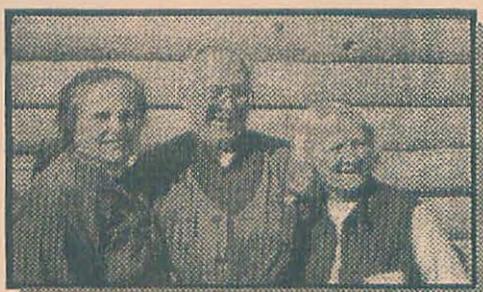
It is summertime in the Wrangells! In spite of the fact that our 81 degrees feels like 100, I am thrilled to see the wildflowers in bloom, the tree swallows feasting on our plentiful crop of mosquitoes, and the garden is beginning to look like a garden. I hope each of you are enjoying your summer season wherever you live and taking full advantage of the blessings this time of year brings.

I want to thank Inger Jensen Ricci for her write-up this issue on another Kennecott Kid Reunion (page 21). Rick and I were so pleased to find several of those "kids" on our doorstep one day. Barbara and Richard Osborne and Sissy Lommel Klueh dropped by to say hello and we had a great time visiting. Richard and Sissy were both born in Kennecott. You may recall the article entitled, *George Flowers - teacher and friend* by Richard which appeared in the September & October 1999 WSEN. Sissy has written her memories as a Kennecott Kid in a book called *Born in Kennecott*.

Nels Konnerup and his friend Hazel Brown also stopped by. Nels grew up in Kennecott. His father operated the company store until the mines closed in 1938. He is a regular visitor to the area and never fails to visit

us.

I want to thank you subscribers who have been sending in your recipes! Judy Fulton from Cordova is contributing to this issue (page 32) with a few rhubarb recipes.



WSEN staff photo

BARBARA AND RICHARD OSBORNE AND SISSY LOMMEL KLUH

I've already tried a couple of them more than once! Thanks, Judy!

We have subscriber Kim Williams to thank for submitting *the Ballad of Bobo* on page 23 which was written by a friend, Aimee Seaman, while visiting McCarthy the end of May. We are sorry we didn't have room for Kim's letter of intro-



WSEN staff photo

HAZEL BROWN AND NELS KONNERUP

duction to Aimee's poem. The Williams' cabin in McCarthy was the base camp for the junior high school youth group from Bethel Church in Fairbanks. *The Ballad of Bobo* was penned by Aimee, one of the adult leaders, after

listening to campfire stories of the youth staffers. I think she did an excellent job!

Wrangell St. Elias News welcomes aboard the following new subscribers: Deena Hurwitz and Doug Ford, CT; Chet Randall and Joan Fortin, OR.

## Wrangell St. Elias News

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## Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

**Doran Ward, Roni English and family:** Roni answered my phone call. I asked if this was a good time to visit and collect an item of interest. She replied that she was just cleaning up after finishing a window trim project and could use a break. Roni and Doran's main summer project is landscaping. (I guess I should say landscaping "McCarthy style.") With their log home pretty much finished now, Roni is pleased to focus her attention to the outdoors.

Doran is presently out doing his usual stint as a pilot for Alaska Airlines, but is due back shortly where, I'm sure, he'll dig into the outdoor project right along with Roni.

Son Adam, 15, has taken on a full-time job with McCarthy Lodge. He has become "a man of all trades." He started off as a dishwasher but it sounds like he is venturing out into the area of general labor as well. It's even possible you will find him waiting your table if you stop in for a meal. His home, which is located at the base of Fireweed Mountain, is approximately 8 miles (one way!) from downtown McCarthy. Roni estimates it takes Adam 3 hours round trip each day that he works. He bicycles to and from work and on occasion he gets a ride halfway home with neighbor Andy Shidner. Adam is one serious young man.

Becah is enjoying her summer vacation doing projects around the house and sampling various camping spots on the family property. In mid June Becah was invited along on a fishing/camping trip with Don, Lynn and Rene Welty. Becah had

a great time and even landed a King Salmon. Congratulations, Becah!

While Becah was fishing, the rest of her family went flying. Doran flew Roni, Adam and Long Lake neighbor, Tyee Lohse, to Cordova for an outing and a surprise visit to Tyee's dad, Ralph, who is a gill-net fisherman (during the summer). It appears Roni and family are taking full advantage of their summer vacation!

Don, Lynn, Rene and Sarah Welty: Daughters Sarah and Rene returned from their missionary trip to La Paz, Mexico on June 6. Shortly after arriving in Anchorage, Sarah caught a flight to South Carolina where she spent two weeks visiting a friend. (She should be back in



WELTY staff photo

RENE-SARAH

Anchorage as I write this.) Rene came home and soon went to work for John Adams at McCarthy B & B, enjoyed the family fishing expedition on the Gulkana River and then went to Long Lake where she assisted Cliff Collins in banding his flock of swallows.

Lynn says she is busy at summer projects which includes planting her garden. (Most McCarthyites are late in getting

their gardens and greenhouses going this year, including me.) In between Don's summer flying job with Wrangell Mountain Air, he and Rick (Kenyon) flew to Chitina for an exciting and very prosperous fishing excursion. Be sure to catch their story on page 22.

Chris Epton: Our summer neighbors are arriving, some to open up their seasonal businesses, some to improve on their cabins and property, others just to enjoy the change of pace the McCarthy/Kennicott area offers. Chris, part owner of Glacier View Campground was a week late this year which got quite a rise out of some of us. We are always eager to see the "Open" sign at the Glacier View Grill which announces those delicious Glacier Burgers that Chris is well-known for! As Rick and I were sampling one of those burgers the other night, I asked Chris what his winter months were like.

Although he puts his name on the teachers' sub list in Anchorage, he spends a great portion of his time driving and delivering pizzas for Pizza Hut. Last September he made his annual pilgrimage to Washington to attend a Husky football game. Chris says he has been doing this since he was 10 years old. Then he made his way to Oregon where he visited his sister. October he started delivering pizzas. This year he bought a new Ford Focus which is his new "Pizza Car." Delivering in style, I'd say!

When Chris isn't traveling or working his delivery business, he participates in Monday night jazz sessions with the Anchorage Jazz Ensemble which meets at the Diamond High School. Chris says

he had the opportunity to play drums this year which he thoroughly enjoyed. When I responded with, "Not piano?" he reminded me that he was a percussion major. Sounds like you had a full winter. No wonder you didn't get back to McCarthy on time this year, Chris!

**Kenny Smith:** Another late arrival this year is Kenny. Now his excuse is "a lifetime chance" at a cruise which took he and wife Donna from Asia to the USA. "It was a really, really good deal," says Kenny, and one that took them across the Pacific taking in many of the Pacific World War II battle sites. He and Donna flew from Seattle to Tokyo where they boarded the ship. The cruise lasted 34 days and from Kenny's description of the food served on board, Rick and I expected him to be on a major weight-loss program this summer. (It appears he ate wisely and doesn't have to resort to such measures.)

To he and Donna's surprise was the discovery that another couple with McCarthy area connections - Al and Mona Jantz - were also on board ship. (Most of you know that Al and Mona are our famous Potato girl, Denise's, parents.)

Kenny says the highlight of the trip was their stop at New Britain Island and the town of Rabaul. This site is "great for any war buffs," describes Kenny. Much of the wartime paraphernalia is intact and available for inspection at a local museum set up for the few visitors that do venture to this still fairly primitive village.

The cruise also made four stops in the Hawaiian Islands and the trip concluded at San Francisco. A trip that was certainly one of a kind!

**Denise Jantz:** Speaking of the Jantz family, Denise stopped by the other day and I quickly

grabbed my notepad so I could squeeze an item out of our famous "Potato" girl. For those of you who have not yet visited the McCarthy area, Denise owns and operates "The Potato," which serves a delicious variety of Mexican (and American) food. Spuds are a major fare at "The Potato" so Denise as well as her help acquire nicknames that seem to stick. This year Denise has hired a familiar face to the locals—Stephanie Piekert—who is now being referred to as "Spuddy." (Stephanie was Becah and Adam Wards' tutor winter before last. She is also giving the McCarthy Lodge a hand at baking this year.)

Al Jantz, Denise's dad, is here visiting for a couple of weeks so I'm sure he is filling Denise in on he and Mona's cruise!

Denise says she attended Claudia Haines and Steve Glasman's wedding in Homer this winter so I want to be sure to pass on big CONGRATULATIONS to Claudia and Steve. (Most of you will remember Claudia for her work with St. Elias Alpine Guides the past several years.)

Another business venture for Denise, that she says is up and running for the season, is Swift Creek Cabins. Operating both businesses keeps Denise more than busy, but with Spuddy on board, she assures me that come July 1, her new hours at The Potato will be 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

By the way, Denise is sporting a new hair-do which I think is terrific. She is also threatening to spend March through May at her McCarthy property. I wonder if you could winterize The Potato and open earlier next year, Denise????

**Peggy Morsch and Kathy Herson:** My immediate neighborhood is beginning to awaken after a long winter. Peggy

and Kathy, who come from Milwaukee, are in for a few week visit to their cabin. Peggy is a professional photographer and Kathy is an Emergency Room physician, who is taking a well-deserved vacation. They dropped by the other day and we had a nice visit. Kathy shared several stories of her ER experiences and had us in "stitches." (Well, not literally!)

I asked the ladies what they were doing since their arrival. Peggy says they are working on their cabin, painting, creating a rock walkway, planting grass, clearing brush and, of course, visiting their neighbors. Thanks for including us on your "rounds!"

**Doug Ford/Deena Hurwitz and Chet Randall/Joan Fortin and Michael:** Next door to Peggy and Kathy (and next door to us) are two new couples who Rick and I met for the first time yesterday. They went in together on a cabin and property and are finally getting out to visit the area and meet their neighbors. Deena and Doug are from New London, CT. where Deena teaches international human rights at Yale Law School. Doug works for Physicians for Human Rights based in Boston. Chet and Joan with their 9 month old son, Michael, are from Portland, OR. Chet used to work as a Public Defender in Anchorage but now works in Legal Services for the Office of Public Advocacy. Joan works for Municipal Law in a law firm.

Rick and I want to say welcome to our new neighbors and welcome to our town!

**Mark and Emily (Morrison) Bass:** Down the road a ways is Mark and Emily's place. Mark is presently in Anchorage and Emily was babysitting Avery Rose, Howard and Elizabeth's 2 year old daughter when I talked to her

on the phone just the other day. Emily called to invited me over to look through her and Mark's wedding pictures. I eagerly took her up on the offer! I took my camera in hopes I could get a good picture of Avery but she was sound asleep upstairs and didn't awaken the entire time I was visiting.

While Emily and I visited, Kris (Rueter) Gregory drove up and we three ladies had a time of "catching up" on activities and news items about each other. Emily and Mark were married May 11<sup>th</sup> in Massachusetts. (As a matter of fact, Sam and Kris attended their wedding.) The Basses are now back home here in McCarthy working on a variety of summer projects. Emily says they will be here until November which should give them plenty of time to complete their "to-do" list.

Thanks for such a relaxing and fun visit, Emily, and, by the way, those chocolate mint cookies are super. Rick's cookie did make it home intact and he sampled it immediately upon my arrival! Welcome home, Mark and Emily.

**Sam and Kris (Rueter) Gregory:** Since Sam and Kris married this last year they are now owners of two cabins—Kris' cabin is located on the hill behind my place and Sam's cabin is up above Kennicott. They have been splitting their time between both homes. I guess you'd say they have the best of both worlds.

Sam is a busy attorney in New York but he and Kris travel back and forth as often as possible. They love their McCarthy/Kennicott homes and friends. This summer is a very special time for the Gregorys as they are expecting their first child. The baby is due July 21 and Kris and Sam will soon go into Anchorage to await the

baby's arrival.

**Chris Harris and Howard Haley:** Chris (who owns a cabin a few "doors" down from us) is back in the McCarthy area – this time for a very special occasion! She and Howard are getting married on July 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:00 pm. The wedding will take place at the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church. Friends and family members are making their way to McCarthy as I write. A Barbecue reception will follow the wedding and is taking place at Chris and Howard's cabin.

Our sincere congratulations to this happy couple!

**Kevin Smith and Dorothy Adler:** Another upcoming wedding in our immediate neighborhood is between Kevin and Dorothy. It is scheduled for mid August with many family and friends planning to attend. This busy young couple divides their time between cabin building and working as guides for Kennicott Wilderness Guides (previously known as Kennicott McCarthy Wilderness Guides). Since the death of owner Chris Richards this last winter, former guides Kevin, Dorothy, Dave Williams and Mike Murphy returned to continue the services of glacier hiking, backpacking adventures and ice climbing in the area. Kevin and Dorothy purchased property this last fall in my neck of the woods and are making great strides to completing their cabin.

We wish you all the very best in your business venture but also in marriage, Kevin and Dorothy!

**Jim and Audrey Edwards:** Audrey is presently in Anchorage at Providence Hospital where she is recuperating from surgery. Jim just returned to McCarthy and is keeping us neighbors informed. Our thoughts and prayers are with Audrey as we await her return.

**Ken and Carly Kritchen:** The Kritchens arrived back to their McCarthy west side cabin earlier this month from a winter spent in Bakers City, Oregon. From Carly's description of their newly-acquired property, it sounds like a wonderful place to winter and raise horses. They are even drawing up house plans. Since returning here both Ken and Carly have been back and forth to Cordova where they are pursuing their summer fishing ventures. We wish them all the best year 'round!

**Jim and Jeannie Miller & family:** I was in the midst of writing Items when Jeannie and her niece arrived for propane. Jeannie doesn't get to this side of the Kennicott River very often so I was thrilled to have her and Natalie come in for a visit. Natalie is Sam (Jeannie's sister) and Craig Anderson's daughter who is, along with a friend, Vicky Gay, running the Coffee Shop at Tailor Made Pizza. Sounds like Jeannie's baker, Ally McVey, is keeping the shop supplied with freshly-baked goods.

The Miller family business is pretty much that – a family business. Another sister, Terry Morrison, and her daughter Amy, are once again in town giving Jeannie a hand. Jeannie's mom, Jeanie Lindsey, from Republic, WA. is also coming up for a visit this summer.

Jeannie says since youngest son Aaron moved into his own cabin, their house has been extremely quiet (although I understand all the Miller young people frequent the main house often!). This summer Jeannie had to clean out the kids' rooms to make room for sisters and nieces. (Especially, Natalie's truck load of luggage.) Oops, I'm not sure I was supposed to write that.

Have a great summer, Jim

and Jeannie and family, and keep that freezer full of ice cream!

Neil O'Donnell and daughter Catherine: It is always a pleasure to visit with Neil, Margaret and Catherine when they travel out this way from the big city of Anchorage. Recently Neil and Catherine came to meet up with well driller Kirk Shively of Sourdough Drilling from Wasilla. In short order they hit water (I believe the end result was 37 feet.). Needless to say, Rick and I had to check out the progress and found a very pleased Neil and drilling crew.

Congratulations all the way around! Kirk and his wife Linda

have an ever increasing list of customers in the McCarthy area so we expect to see plenty of them this summer and probably next.

**Chad Reymiller:** Chad is here for a 10-day visit over the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. Rick and I took a walk to his cabin yesterday and found quite a lot of activity going on. Rowcon Services was well represented with Keith Rowland and sons Kaleb and David on site. A pad for a future workshop was done by the time we arrived and a septic system was in the making. Have a great visit, Chad, and hope you can fit in some rest and relaxation while you are here!

**The Keith Rowland family:** In the last issue of WSEN, the Rowland kids were just finishing up their school work and Laurie was beginning to pack up their belongings for a move from the

east side to the west side. I am pleased to report they are now settling into their new log home. The basement is their temporary living room, kitchen, bathroom



Photo courtesy Neil O'Donnell

**HAPPY FACES OF SOURDOUGH DRILLERS AFTER HITTING WATER AT O'DONNELL CABIN.**

and bedrooms. Finishing touches are being made on the main floor overhead. One of the first things Laurie purchased for their home was a brand new stainless steel tea kettle. She is always quick to let her neighbors know "the tea kettle is always on!" Many of us have taken her up on that invitation. Betty, Lane and Kaylin dropped over shortly after the Rowlands officially moved across the river and took part in a hot dog roast over a cheery fire and a dip in Swift Creek. Laurie says, "At first, our kids were the only ones brave enough to wade in the creek, but by the end of the evening, we all had our feet wet and were laughing like carefree children. It was so much fun, Betty suggested we do it every week!"

If you are hankering for a cup of tea with a terrific, fun-loving family and you are eager for a

million dollar view, take a drive up the mountain to the Rowland place. I can attest, "The tea kettle is always on!"

**The Pilgrim family:** In our March/April 2002 issue of WSEN, Neil Darish wrote an article entitled, "The Pilgrims come to McCarthy." That occurred the last week of January. Neil ended his story with: There is talk of a return trip with the rest of the family before too long, and even a look around the area for the right patch of land. Well, I am pleased to report that they found that "right patch of land" and have since moved

onto a beautiful piece of land up McCarthy Creek. Snow was still on the ground so snowmachines and their dogs were called into action to transport the 17 family members to their new "home." I was told it took them over 12 hours to reach their destination. Since then abandoned buildings from the mining era are being restored for living quarters and a garden is underway. The second day after their arrival, I'm sure they were pleasantly surprised to receive a visitor! None other than Keith Rowland who had decided to take a spin on his snow-machine which led him to their doorstep. He found the Pilgrim family safe and sound, although somewhat tired from the long haul.

We just want to say a big **WELCOME** to the entire Pilgrim family.

# Chitina Highway Maintenance Station closed

BY KEN SMITH

The highway maintenance station at Chitina was one of the oldest stations in the Alaska Highway maintenance system. It dated way back to when the Copper River and Northwestern Railway was in operation. It was originally located in lower Tonsina then moved to nearby Chitina in the early 1960s. On July first the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities will make official their April threat to close the station. In mid April (WSEN May/June 2002) they said legislative budget cuts could mean closure of the Chitina Station. DOT&PF District Manager, George Levasseur, spoke to a gathering of McCarthyites on June 6 and confirmed the bad news. Following are the main points of George's address:

- The DOT&PF is very sorry that the state fiscal situation has come to this but Levasseur's budget was reduced by about a million dollars and cuts had to be made. Levasseur thought that perhaps the next legislature would have some new blood, hopefully legislators that might look a little more kindly on the DOT&PF's budget.

- Levasseur said that the Chitina Station would not be gutted but mothballed. This would facilitate an easier startup in the future if funds were restored. However, all Chitina station personnel positions are eliminated and

the heavy equipment and consumables will be returned to the state equipment fleet for deployment elsewhere.

- The McCarthy Road will still be regarded as state maintained although Levasseur cannot promise much in the way of maintenance. The following is what he can and cannot provide:

- The closure does not take effect until July first, so Levasseur promised one complete grading before then. The next non-emergency maintenance will not be provided before next March when he sends a crew in to open up the road after winter.

- Levasseur explained that he has been able to put approximately two hundred thousand maintenance dollars into the McCarthy Road for each of the past four years. He will not be doing that in the future. When he did that he also bolstered the labor force on the work by supplementing the Chitina Maintenance staff with heavy equipment personnel from other stations. This also will no longer occur.

- In case of an emergency, like a washout or mudslide, Levasseur will endeavor to pull maintenance personnel from other projects and send them in to remedy the emergency. However, Levasseur cautioned that he has had to lay personnel off

in other areas besides Chitina. This reduces his overall staff to the point he only has a couple of paving crews on the Richardson and Glenn Highways. An emergency on the McCarthy Road might mean closing down one of the highway paving efforts. Therefore it is going to have to be a significant emergency before he can react.

- Since he will no longer have a maintenance foreman available for inspection patrols on the McCarthy Road he will have no idea of its condition unless locals contact his office. Therefore, it is most important that if and when an emergency condition occurs that somebody notify his office.

Levasseur was asked at the meeting what it would take to get the Chitina Station funded again. Levasseur urged contacting the Legislators. He said that in some parts of the state the Legislators put their maintenance stations off limits by introducing specific language in the appropriation legislation protecting them. When this occurred it forced other areas of the state highway system to absorb disproportionate levels of budget cuts. Neil Darish, co-proprietor of the McCarthy Lodge, stated that letters had been sent. The Coalition for Access to McCarthy also petitioned the legislature, but received no replies.

# Attorney General: State lacks property interests on McCarthy Road

BY KEN SMITH

The long awaited, but not surprising, opinion on the right-of-way width of the McCarthy Road was issued on May 17, 2002 by the Alaska Attorney General's office. The opinion was not unexpected since it essentially reiterates the decision rendered on August 25, 1993 by two US Department of Interior Law Judges. The law judge finding resulted from a Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facility (DOT&PF) appeal of a decision by the US Bureau of Land Management which declared that the State of Alaska's property interest(s) in the McCarthy Road amounted to only an easement. This width of this easement is 50 feet each side of the centerline of the road. The DOT&PF had been contending that it held fee simple title to 100 feet each side of the road center.

The legal subtleties of the two decisions are fraught with legalese mumbo jumbo, but after sorting through all of it one finds the end result not complicated and pretty much a matter of plain logic. Essentially, the DOT&PF had been claiming that the federal government transferred what was once the old Copper River & Northwestern Railway right-of-way to it at the time of statehood. The department contended that congress had converted that railroad right-of-way to a fee simple highway right-of-way with a width 100 feet each side of center. This opinion was based entirely upon a 1941

congressional act, which did exactly that. Unfortunately, and as the state now realizes, the same act also gave the Secretary of the Interior discretionary authority to re-designate road right-of-ways in Alaska.

The secretary used this authority, three times, relevant to the McCarthy Road. Under what the Department of Interior calls "Public Land Orders" the secretary first reduced the right-of-way to 50 feet each side of center under PLO 601 which also withdrew all lands within the 50 feet of center from all forms of appropriation. This withdrawal maintained the fee simple property rights for the McCarthy Road. PLO 601 also designated the McCarthy Road as a "local road" but not a "through" or "feeder" road.

Later, the secretary, under PLO 757, revoked the PLO 601 withdrawal and consequently the fee simple status of all "local" roads in Alaska. However, PLO 601 did maintain the withdrawal for "through" and "feeder" roads. At the same time the secretary issued Department of Interior Order, No. 2665, which established a basic easement of 50 feet each side of center for Alaskan local roads. This ruling included the McCarthy Road. When Alaska achieved statehood the Department of Interior issued a quit claim deed to the new State of Alaska transferring to it all federal interests in the McCarthy Road; these are defined today by the secretary's order No. 2665.

After the law judges had

rendered their 1993 decision the DOT&PF appeared to acquiesce to it as, for a few years anyway, it acknowledged the 50-foot each side of center right-of-way in public documents. But in 1995 the DOT&PF reversed itself and announced at a public meeting in McCarthy that once again it was contending that it owned 100 feet each side of center, fee simple. Apparently, the department failed to ask the attorney general's office to look into the matter in 1995 as it was only a year or so ago that this occurred. As a result, it has taken ten years or more for the DOT&PF to face up to and agree with an intuitively obvious circumstance that is of paramount importance to all maintenance, capital improvement or modification on the McCarthy Road.

An "easement" is a right or privilege one party has to the use of land of another for a special purpose. In contrast "fee simple title" is the maximum possible extent of ownership interest one can possess in real property. It appears the easement bestowed upon the McCarthy Road is classified as an easement appurtenant and a typical affirmative easement allowing for people to only walk or drive across someone else's property.

To what extent this lack of property right(s) revelation is going to have on the future of the McCarthy Road corridor is open to speculation. Obviously, regular maintenance is going to suffer, particularly since many gravel sources previously used

are now on private property (under an access only easement the state is not even entitled to take gravel within the allotted width). Any planned amenities, such as wayside pullouts, viewpoints, campgrounds and parking lots, are going to be much more costly and difficult to provide. The largest blow however is going to be suffered by those who have long supported safety upgrades and overall enhancement of the road since right-of-way acquisition is a time consuming and expensive process. The DOT&PF has long held to a policy of securing the entire bundle of property rights (fee simple) before engaging in capital improvements upon a road or runway.

The Alaska Legislature began planning for the McCarthy Road in 1960. A major upgrade on the McCarthy Road was scheduled to commence in 1996 but was postponed. This planned construction was replaced with further studies of the overall project. Unfortunately, plans resulting from a number of these studies were established on the premise that the state held fee simple property rights 100 feet each side of center on the McCarthy Road. Furthermore, the state has currently retained a contractor to develop an "Environmental Impact Statement" on the McCarthy Road. The contractor has stated that this EIS will conform to the McCarthy Road Scenic Corridor Plan released in 1997. However, the corridor plan was established under a land status assumption

that the right-of-way between Chitina and McCarthy was 200 feet, fee simple.

What is going to happen at the east end of the McCarthy Road is another interesting question. The Attorney General's office will be addressing the width issue on the small portion of the McCarthy Road, which traverses the McCarthy West Subdivision, in a future memorandum. For the past two years the DOT&PF has been conducting McCarthy Road Kennicott River Wayside Project meetings. At these meetings various alternatives for a state owned and operated parking and campground facility have been reviewed. The DOT&PF's preferred alternative is a campground and parking lot inside the subdivision, which utilizes one hundred feet of land on each side of the center of the road.

In 1977, the DOT&PF told surveyors representing the owners of this subdivision, Lester and Alvin Syren, that the width of the McCarthy Road was two hundred feet. Based upon this misinformation the Syren brothers submitted their subdivision plat to the state Division of Lands for approval. Now that it has been determined that the Syren surveyor's information was erroneous, will the DOT&PF still claim ownership of the two hundred feet of roadway based upon the reference to it in the McCarthy West Subdivision plat? If so, will the DOT&PF then contend that it retains more than an ingress and egress easement? The

DOT&PF's preferred wayside alternative necessitates that the DOT&PF hold fee simple property interests if it is going to develop and operate campgrounds, vehicle parking, etc.

If the Attorney General makes the same determination for the McCarthy West Subdivision as it just did on the rest of the road then the DOT&PF could be placed in an embarrassing predicament regardless of what it wants to do with a future vehicle parking/camping lot. In 1995 the DOT&PF began efforts to construct a narrow bridge across the west channel of the Kennicott River. Funds for this project came from federal highway trust fund money administered by the Federal Highway Administration. A requisite for securing these funds is adequate property interests. If it is determined that the DOT&PF holds only a 100-foot easement across the West McCarthy Subdivision then it might have built part of this bridge on private property.

In addition, the DOT&PF has also maintained that its fee simple property interest in a two hundred foot right-of-way within the McCarthy West Subdivision has allowed it to allow others to park vehicles, place signs, etc. If the DOT&PF does not hold fee simple status to this property then it has been in error allowing activities other than access since those property rights are retained by owners of the underlying property, in this case: the McCarthy West Subdivision.

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*"The real democratic American ideal is, not that every man shall be on a level with every other man, but that every man shall have liberty to be what God made him, without hindrance."—Henry Ward Beecher*

## Clearing the right-of-way

In our last issue most of you saw the half-page advertisement taken out by the DOT&PF, Right-of-Way division, advising people that they must clear "illegal encroachments, including abandoned cars, illegal signs, etc., from the 200' McCarthy Highway right of way." (The half-page ad cost \$37.50.) At that time we tried to get some guidance from the right-of-way department as to what constituted illegal, as opposed to legal, signs or parked cars. They would not give us any details, only advise us to have each person personally phone them to see if their car or sign was legal or illegal. They also

told us that if an individual did not act promptly, DOT&PF would contract with Mr. Randy Elliott to have the offending material hauled off.

After the Attorney General opinion that the right-of-way is actually only 100', not 200', and the fact that it appears to be an easement, we went back to DOT&PF and asked if they would like to clarify what they want people to do in another advertisement in this issue. They declined, saying we were just trying to solicit business. Given the financial problems of the state, we would be happy to run a clarification at no cost, as our readers have been left in a

quandary. One official told me that we could write the story ourselves.

We would be happy to write the story, but we don't know what the story is. (We suspect DOT&PF doesn't know what the story is, either.) So, if you are wondering if your sign, car or etcetera is in violation, and in danger of being hauled away by Mr. Elliott, you can phone Pete Eagan, Pat Thayer or Sig Strandberg and ask for a personal analysis of your situation. Call 1-800-475-2464, or if you want to save the state a bit of change, use the toll number (907) 451-5400.

## Wayside project forging ahead amid opposition

BY RICK KENYON

Officials from the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) came to McCarthy June 5 to present their "preferred alternative" for the Kennicott River Wayside project. Also present was the consultant who has been hired to start on the Environmental Impact Statement for the McCarthy Road upgrade.

Project Manager Janet Brown gave a broad overview of the proposed wayside project, but the details were quite sketchy. In a nutshell, they include parking for 94 cars and 12 "large vehicles," toilets, trash, interpretive signs and a turnaround/loading zone. A wayside shelter similar to the one in Chitina is also proposed. The parking area would be short-term only, no overnight parking allowed. The proposal is for the National Park Service (NPS) and DOT&PF to jointly fund the

management of the parking lot and facilities, which would be built in the McCarthy Road right-of-way adjacent to the present Copper Point parking facilities in the area now used for camping.

Some of the comments raised by those attending the meeting were:

- Community already has parking facilities, with local management, project would pit state against local businesses.

- Proposed parking lot is undersized, doesn't address community needs.

- NPS and DOT&PF had jointly sponsored toilets at the end of the road in the past—it was a disaster and they pulled funding.

- Why build wayside when road is so bad?

- How would state enforce day parking only?

- Impact is too great on private business. How can DOT and NPS help local business

rather than hurt them?

- No community needs met by project.

- Could state lease existing parking lot instead?

- Current parking is unobtrusive, new lot would block view.

- Many current wayside parks are being closed, why build another now?

- Litigation issues about right-of-way. Project likely would end up in condemnation proceedings.

- There was discussion of the possibility of leasing the existing parking lot, rather than building new facilities.

Although it was not mentioned at the meeting, documents handed out by the DOT&PF showed that the preferred alternative includes a small parking lot on the east side of the river, about the size and in the same general area as that currently used for parking.

## New York City firemen visit McCarthy

BY EMILY MORRISON

In early June, Sam Gregory hosted five NYC firemen; Andy Serra, Kevin Dillon, Larry Rooney, Sean Halperin, and Bob Mastrano, from Engine 279/Ladder 131. The firemen were directly involved with rescue efforts on September 11 and spent a long winter working on the clean-up and recovery effort.

When they arrived in Anchorage they set off to enjoy rafting and fishing in both Talkeetna and Hope

compliments of Jay Doyle with Chugach Outdoor Center. Three of the firemen traveled out to McCarthy with Sam and stayed at his cabin on Bonanza Ridge. Bob Jacobs of St. Elias Alpine Guides donated glacier gear for an adventure and Andy, a guide for St. Elias, volunteered to take them out on the glacier. They spent the rest of the time helping Kris and Sam work on their house and enjoying the hot tub.

Thursday night was a night of socializing in town at the Pizza Parlor and the bar. They enjoyed meeting everyone and felt very welcomed. The day they had to leave they were able to take advantage of the sunshine and go flightseeing with McCarthy Air for a great ending to their McCarthy stay. The firemen said it was very hard to leave and were content to stay a few more days enjoying McCarthy's hospitality and the slower pace of life.

## Marimba ensemble to perform

Porphyry Productions announces the presentation of juJuba, Alaska's premier marimba ensemble on Tuesday, July 23, at the Jurick Building in Kennicott at 8:30pm. Admission is free.

JUJUBA plays joyous, foot-stomping traditional African music on marimbas (wooden xylophones) and percussion. The six-member group will perform with their teachers, Michael and Osha Breez, who studied with

Dr. Dumisani Maraire, a master marimba player who came from Zimbabwe to the United States in 1967 as artist-in-residence at the University of Washington in Seattle. Based in Homer, Alaska, juJuba has performed around the state to enthusiastic audiences.

Members of juJuba will also teach a participatory workshop in Zimbabwean marimba playing on Sunday, July 21, from 1 to 4 pm in McCarthy, exact location

to be announced. Previous musical training is not required. The cost of the workshop is \$25 per person.

Porphyry Productions (Meg Hunt and Ed LaChapelle) is committed to promoting the performing arts in the McCarthy/Kennicott area. (Porphyry (POR fa ree) describes a type of rock and is the name of the mountain to the east of McCarthy.)

### CLASSIFIEDS

**Property Wanted**— Looking for property in the McCarthy Kennecott area. 5+ acres, with or without a cabin. 314-849-8419 or 314-369-8419 Email [JMR-BKR@worldnet.att.net](mailto:JMR-BKR@worldnet.att.net).

**Subscribe to the Copper Valley Weekly.** \$15.00 for one year, 25 issues. Keep up with what's going on in the Copper River Area, everywhere north of the Million Dollar Bridge. Call 907-822-3927, write Copper Valley Weekly, HC 60 Box 229, Copper Center AK 99573, e-mail [cweekly@cvinternet.net](mailto:cweekly@cvinternet.net) or stop in at Lightwood's Mile 6 1/2 Edgerton Hwy.

**For Sale**— Prime Location in Downtown McCarthy. Cal Eva @ 835-3274 daytime or weekend and evenings at 835-2003.

**Yard Sale**— July 2-August just past MP 50 McCarthy Rd. See display ad this issue.

**Back Issues**— We have many back issues of the *Wrangell St. Elias News* available. They are \$2.50 each postpaid, or any single year (1993 to present) for only \$10. WSEN, Box MXY, Glennallen AK 99588. Call (907) 554-4454 or email [WSEN@starband.net](mailto:WSEN@starband.net).

**Web Sites**— Web site design and hosting from \$100/page/year. Free layout and design. Or link to your current web site from [mccarthy-kennicott.com](http://mccarthy-kennicott.com). Text link only \$25/year. [WSEN@starband.net](mailto:WSEN@starband.net).

## Geologists in Alaska— part two

BY GENE LABERGE

You may have noticed that I haven't mentioned McCarthy or Kennicott. Although the road from May Creek was open most of the time we were in May Creek, we never did drive over there. The bridge over the Nizina—actually the causeway out to the steel bridge—did get washed out both summers I spent in May Creek. When Skolai Lake would burst through along the Nizina Glacier the high water took out the causeway, but it was repaired within a few weeks. As I recall there were about a dozen people living in McCarthy at the time, however, I was never actually in McCarthy. I did fly over it quite a few times in the

helicopter when we were working up by Donoho Peak and in the Fourth of July Creek and Hidden Creek areas. I was in Kennicott only once briefly, and took some pictures of the buildings. I don't recall that anyone actually lived in Kennicott then, although there may have been folks living there. There was some small scale mining up at the Bonanza Mine but I never met any of the people who did the mining. There were a number of ladders at the mine site that were used to carry the ore down from the workings. The ore was all hand-picked, and very rich— over 50% copper. The ore was hauled down to the McCarthy airstrip and shipped to Glennallen on Cordova DC-3's, and then carried by truck down the Alaska

Highway to a smelter in Washington (Spokane, I think). The road from McCarthy to Chitina was not open during this time. When we flew out to Chitina I took a picture from the chopper of a caterpillar bogged

evidently ran a saloon and a bawdy house. She told us how some of the young miners who lived in the bunkhouses (I guess most of them did) would ride the aerial tram down to the mill, then walk the five miles to

McCarthy. They'd spend some time in the saloons, or with the women, then walk back to Kennicott and ride the tram bucket back up to the mine. I'll bet they were sober by the time they got back to the bunkhouse!! As I recall, she said this activity went on all year 'round, not just in the good weather. When the mines closed in the late '30's she decided to stay on in the area. I don't

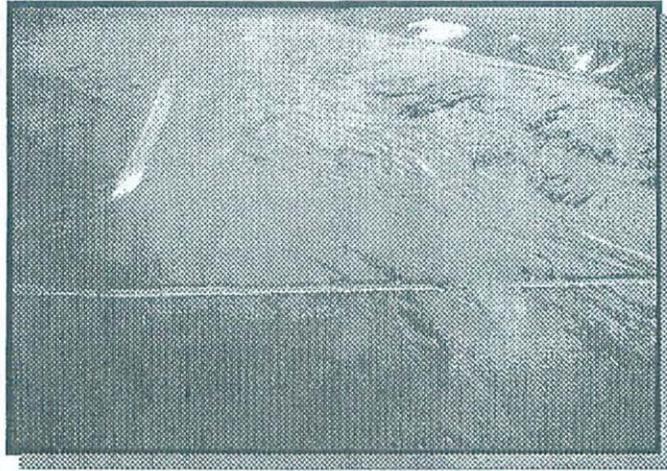


Photo courtesy the author

NIZINA RIVER BRIDGE WITH THE CAUSEWAY WASHED OUT.

down in the mud along the old railway. The entire tracks of the caterpillar were buried in the swamp, so the ore had to be flown out to Glennallen.

But back to May Creek. When we first set up our camp by the airstrip May Creek had a population of two—Walt and Tess Holmes. They lived about half a mile north of our camp. They came over to our camp occasionally, or some of us would go over to their home in the evening. As I recall, Walt was "guarding" some placer gold claims on Dan Creek at the time. They liked to talk about "the old days." I believe that Tess had worked in some of the saloons in the Yukon as a young woman, and then came over to McCarthy in the 1920's, where she

recall her telling how or when she and Walt got together.

We were not the only geologists working in the Wrangells during this period. Several other companies had exploration crews camped out. I know that one group was working out of Nabesna. During stretches of bad weather, when we couldn't fly up into the mountains we had visitors in camp. Once I believe we had five helicopters at May Creek from several different companies. It was nice to see a new face once in a while. We never ran into them when we were working, but then, the Wrangells are a large area.

There were also several crews from the U.S. Geological Survey working in the area. They did not have helicopter support, and I

know that they spent countless hours in climbing to get TO the areas where they were mapping. I recall that Ed MacKevett and another fellow had a camp in the Nizina valley near "Mile High Cliff." They were mapping the area from our claims (Nikolai Ridge) north to West Fork Creek. They left for work early in the morning and climbed for more than six hours to get to their mapping area. Whenever we were in the area we'd have the chopper fly them up to where they wanted to go—in about five minutes! I still hear from Ed occasionally. And David Jones, a paleontologist, was studying the fossils in the area. Davy Jones was one of the geologists who first recognized that many of the rocks in the Wrangells had fossils that "didn't fit." Also, the magnetic properties of the rocks indicated that they had actually formed thousands of miles away, in the site of present day Indonesia. They must have "drifted" northward to collide with rocks farther north, in the Yukon Valley. This was especially true of the lava flows of the Nikolai Greenstone, which is a major rock unit on the south flank of the Wrangells. We carried Davy around in the chopper occasionally, too, and helped transport fossils back to his camp.

As August drew to a close, the snow was moving progressively down the mountains, and it became ever more difficult to get

the work done. So, again, on Labor Day weekend I flew back to Anchorage with Jack Wilson and took the jet home. By the fall of 1961 I was about done with the course work I needed, and was



Photo courtesy the author

JACK WILSON'S PLANE AT MAY CREEK TO TAKE ME TO ANCHORAGE IN SEPTEMBER 1961. VIRG MANN IS AT LEFT.

concentrating mainly on the research for my thesis. Also, by this time, Sally and I had become very good friends, but neither of us were contemplating marriage just yet. But I think she was definitely "on the scene" by this time.

Late May of 1962 saw a revival of activity at the camp in May Creek. Ed Berdusco and Hixon told us their stories of wintering over in the tents at May Creek and there were some exciting ones! For example, Ed told of going out of the tent to relieve himself and make a yellow hole in the snow. When he turned to go back to the tent about a hundred feet away, a large wolf stood between him and the tent, and a pack was howling in the distance. Since it was about 40 below zero, he realized that he had to get past the wolf, so he walked back to the tent, passing within about fifteen feet

of the wolf. It never moved when he went past. We had almost the same crew back again, so, in large part we continued the geophysical studies we had begun the previous summer.

One notable difference in camp was the appearance of two dogs sometime over the winter. One was a black, Spaniel-Scotty mix named "Willy" and the other was an old Samoyed named "Chocko" who was supposedly a former sled dog that used to bring mail into McCarthy. They were both friendly, and

provided a nice diversion around camp. Texas Gulf Sulfur was establishing their camp up on the claim area. They had moved their drilling rig up to the site by helicopter — one part at a time. It had been flown into May Creek in pieces, carried up onto Nikolai Ridge by helicopter and was assembled there.

I made two visits to the Kennecott mines during 1962. On one of them we went to the Jumbo and Bonanza Mines, where we did some geophysical measurements. We went into the bunkhouse at the Bonanza (I think) and looked around. There was still a lot of old clothing and other items scattered around. The building was rather rim raked from being hit by avalanches. There weren't any "souvenirs" that were of interest—or that were small enough to carry—so we left everything as it was. Well, that

isn't quite true, I did find one item that I took. It was a page-size blue ozalid copy of the local "telephone directory" on the wall, indicating the long and short rings used with the old wall

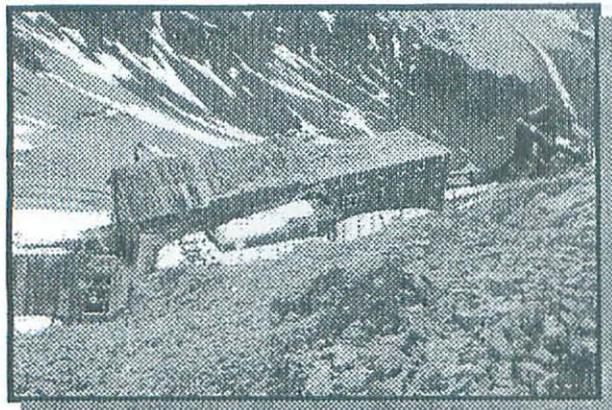


Photo courtesy the author

BUILDINGS AT THE BONANZA MINE 1962.

telephones with the crank. We also found several outcrops of the ore and loaded our packs with about 80 pounds of chalcocite, which we had to carry quite a distance through the snow to get it to the helicopter.

My visit to the Erie Mine was quite memorable. The chopper could not land on the narrow ledge by the portal, so the pilot, Bob Nokes, told us that he would hover as close-in as he could, and we should jump from the helicopter onto the ledge! This was a brand new experience for us, but we threw our packs out first, and then, standing on the skid, managed to summon the courage to jump the six feet or so to the ledge — making sure we didn't go up hill into the rotor blades. We went into the portal a ways, but didn't have adequate light to do much exploring, so we left again. I do recall wondering how in the world they got the huge "bull-wheel" for the aerial tramway up on that mountain, and I still wonder how they did it! Now we had the next step of our

adventure—to get back into a hovering helicopter! First, we had to approach it from underneath, to keep away from that rotor blade again. The task of actually getting aboard was rather tricky,

because we couldn't upset the balance of the chopper by jerking on the skid. We first put our packs on the cargo rack, and next, with some rather acrobatic maneuvering managed to pull ourselves onto the skid,

and then into the cabin of the chopper. Thanks to Bob Nokes' ability as a pilot and some luck, we completed the exit and reentry of a hovering helicopter on our first try! But I'll bet my finger prints are still on those skids!!

We also did some work in the Mother Lode Cirque, but not as much as we originally planned. Our first task was to survey a line down toward McCarthy Creek, along which we were going to do some geophysical studies. Because the snow was quite soft, we bolted two 12-inch planks between the skids to support the chopper. They worked fine, and we used snow shoes for our own support.

We'd land with the chopper and climb out on the skids and unload our packs, the snow shoes and the transit from the cargo rack. The first piece of equipment we put on was the snow shoes. One time I thought I'd put my pack on first, and stepped off the skid. In a split second I was head-deep in snow, and had to grab the skid to pull myself back up. We finally got all our gear assembled, and I took the stadia rod and went out in the lead down the slope. As we were working in the cirque, a small avalanche came sliding down the slope toward us, but never really threatened, and we continued running our line. The next day we were going to do an EM traverse along our surveyed line. However, when we flew into the cirque we were amazed to see that a LARGE avalanche had come down after we left the



Photo courtesy the author

THE ERIE MINE AT THE CONTACT BETWEEN THE DARKER NIKOLAI GREENSTONE AND THE CHITISTONE LIMESTONE.

previous day, totally wiping out our surveyed line. We were lucky that we were not in the cirque when that big one came down, believe me. After talking things over with other members of the crew we decided that maybe we weren't all that interested in doing an EM traverse down Mother Lode Cirque after all!

In July, pilot Bob Nokes received a communication from the Army that he was to meet with a delegation in Anchorage. So he missed several days of work while we all wondered what this was all about. All we knew about him was that he flew the KING 'copter for the television station in Seattle. When he returned to May Creek we learned that the purpose of his trip was to receive the Silver Star for gallantry in action in Korea! Then he told us that he had joined the Army when he was 16, and was actually in Korea when they discovered that he was under age and sent him home. As soon as he was 18 he enlisted again, this time in the Rangers, and went back to Korea again. It was during his tour of duty as a Ranger that he was awarded the Silver Star. It was near the end of the Korean War that he decided to learn to fly helicopters. He also told us that the delegation that presented the Silver Star to him asked if he was interested in going to a place called Viet Nam as a "volunteer." The pay would be very good, and the job sounded exciting to him. He seemed tempted, but I do not know if he accepted their offer. However, I would not be surprised if he did.

We also met several other memorable people out in the mountains. We learned about two old prospectors (I think from Jack Wilson) named Otto

Halvorsen and Neil Finnosand, who wanted to show us some of their prospects. So Ed Berdusco and I flew out to their camp to talk with them and to look at some prospects. After the introductions and some discussion, we left—on foot—to one of their prospects. One of them was 78 and the other was 84 years old. I was 30, and considered myself in pretty good



Photo courtesy the author

OLD PROSPECTORS NEIL FINNOSAND AND OTTO HALVORSEN AT THEIR CAMP IN 1962.

shape, but I had all I could do to keep up with them. Their optimism regarding their prospects was really infectious, although, in the end, we were not able to do much additional work on their prospects. They groused that their families wanted them to go into a nursing home in "the lower 48" (Seattle, I think). They felt that they would die in less than a year in a nursing home. Frankly, they preferred to die prospecting in Alaska, doing what they loved to do, where they loved doing it. I hope their wishes came true, they were some delightful old men.

We checked in on the TGS drilling progress up on Nikolai Ridge a number of times during

the summer. Of course we had high hopes of finding a spectacular copper deposit, maybe even as big as the Jumbo or Bonanza. After all, several geophysical techniques had indicated that there was a "conductor" where the drilling was being done. Now, a chalcocite ore body like those at the Kennecott mines would certainly be a great conductor of electricity. However, after drilling several core holes through our "target zone," we found absolutely nothing! Not only was there no ore body, there was nothing that we could find to account for the anomaly that prompted us to drill there in the first place. The company had invested many hundreds of thousands of dollars in the exploration and the drilling, and we were left with a puzzle for which we

had no answer. So, terribly disappointed, we decided to close down the May Creek camp and look elsewhere.

The most tragic experience we were involved with was when Don Miller and his assistant were killed on the Kiagna River. They had been in our camp in May Creek less than a week earlier. Our first realization of trouble came when Howard Knutsen landed at May Creek in his Super Cub and told us that Don and his partner were not at their scheduled rendezvous site. He said he saw their rubber raft caught on some rocks a number of miles downstream. He wanted to know if he could use one of the helicopters to do a closer

search. Within a few minutes they left May Creek with Ray Hausmann as pilot, along with Eiler Henricksen and Howard. They flew up and down the Kiagna and found the bodies several miles downstream from the scheduled rendezvous location. After they recovered the bodies Howard took them back to Glennallen. It was a dreadfully sobering experience for everyone in camp. A spell of unusually warm weather had caused all the streams in the area to be much higher than usual. This high water might have contributed to the tragedy.

About the first of August we loaded as much of our gear as we could into a twin Beech (I think) airplane and flew back to Anchorage. We left behind a lot

of equipment that I'm sure the Holmeses and the residents of McCarthy made good use of—like a gas cook stove with several tanks of propane, a gasoline-

almost like a "home away from home," and it seemed a bit sad to leave. I wrote and told Sally that we were heading out for some new adventures.



Photo courtesy the author

LAST TRIP OUT OF MAY CREEK IN LATE JULY, 1962. THE GEAR WAS CARRIED TO THE AIRSTRIP IN THE JEEP AND LOADED INTO THE TWIN ENGINE AIRPLANE FOR THE TRIP TO ANCHORAGE.

We flew from May Creek to Anchorage, and after a night in town, we flew across Cook Inlet and worked about ten days near Tyonek. Following that project we went out to Platinum near Good News Bay on the Bering Sea coast, and worked there until Labor Day. When I left Anchorage at the end of the summer, I thought I might return again the following year for

powered generator, a refrigerator, the tents and tarps over them, all the cooking utensils and dishes, etc. Hixon, the cook, took "Willy" the black dog along, and "Chocko" went to live with the Holmeses. After five months in those tents they did feel

more work. However, as things worked out, it was 37 years before I was to return. After retiring, I wanted to show Sally some of the areas where I had worked many years earlier. Now we make regular trips back to see the areas.

### ***More on the Don Miller tragedy***

*Editor's Note: We shared Gene's story with Howard Knutsen, and he sent us the following account of the tragedy from his point of view.*

Hi Rick: In the interest of keeping the record straight I'll detail the facts concerning the Don Miller tragedy: First, Gene is absolutely correct, the helicopter was chartered by Fremont Mining Company. It may have been in the best interests of Fremont to cooperate with the USGS, but regardless of that, they were just plain nice guys and it was their policy to help anybody in the area. USGS adopting a new policy of providing helicopters

for their field personnel was a direct result of the Don Miller tragedy.

[Let me talk about the] raft first. When I flew Don Miller and Bob McColl to their first camp site about half a mile below the mouth of Canyon Creek on the Chitina, the raft was part of their gear. The purpose of the raft was to carry camp and supplies only, not to be ridden. The method was to keep a line on the raft and walk along the stream. Don intended to use this method on

Canyon Creek first and then the Kiagna. I told Don there was no way he was going to walk down Canyon Creek, even at low water. Don, not being convinced, I put him in the back seat of the Cub and flew him low and slow down the canyon of Canyon Creek. He didn't have to take a second look to change his mind. As a result they spent approximately two weeks at that camp hiking out from there to study the geology of the area.

When they were finished there, the next part of the plan was for me to fly them to the head of the Kiagna and they would then use the raft for the purpose originally intended. During the 30's, there was an airstrip up towards the head of the Kiagna and the assumption was that it was still usable. I checked it out and due to brush and wash outs I determined that I could not make a safe landing there and went back and told Don as much. Don said maybe he could get Fremont to fly them in and then I would check on them at specified times and we worked out a signal system for communications. I didn't even have to contact the Fremont guys because they stopped by Don's camp for a visit and the arrangements were made. I don't remember just how much time they spent on the Kiagna but I know I checked on them at least three times. The last time I found their camp, they were down in the canyon about 7 miles (that's a guess it could be 10 or more) from the mouth of the river. They signaled for me to pick them up the next afternoon at the mouth of the river. I was greatly troubled by that signal because I knew they couldn't walk along the river thru some of that canyon and there was no way they could climb out of the canyon, go around these places and make it to the river in one day. To walk around these places and thru the brush would

require more like three days. When I came back the next afternoon, I couldn't find them. I also didn't find the raft at that time. I was light on gas because I was expecting to pick them up off a short sand bar so I had to go to May Creek for gas. I didn't hurry back as I wanted to give them time get to some place where I could spot them. My assumption then was that they had climbed out of the canyon and were in the brush. When I came back, I immediately spotted the raft deflated and upside down with a bunch of cooking utensils tied to it, less than half a mile from the Chitina River.

I very soon found a partially exposed body about half a mile upstream. At that point I went to May Creek and requested assistance. I flew the Cub back to the bar and the helicopter pilot picked me up. It took quite some time to find the second body but as it was late in the day, the water was going down and it finally became exposed. After picking up the bodies I decided it was best to haul them to May Creek in the Chopper as I had to go back and get more fuel for the Cub anyway. The rest is history, however, there is an interesting, recent sidelight, which I will relate for what it's worth. But before we get into that, I'll speculate as to what really happened to Don and Bob. The reason I had a troubled mind

when they signaled to be picked up the next day, was that I knew what was ahead of them, and they maybe didn't. First, there were canyon walls that they could not get around without getting in the water. Second, about a mile or so below where they were camped was a huge boulder in the middle of the stream with water pouring around it on both sides and dropping at least six feet. If they rode the raft, which I think we can assume they did, their odds of surviving the trip around that rock was about nil.

Now for the rest of the story: A couple of years ago, the Clauses contacted me and requested that I fly up to their Lodge to meet Bob McColl's sister and her husband who were there visiting. This is her story now; I hope I can relate it accurately. Bob was either fresh out of college or close to it when he took the job with USGS and wanted to go to Alaska. However, his father did not approve. In fact he was so distraught over the death of his son that he would not allow the subject to be brought up or allow any of the family to visit the area. He has now passed on and Bob's sister came, flew over the area, visited, and I think the experience was a closing for her. McColl Ridge is named after Bob McColl. A mountain in the Chugach Range between the Chitina River and the Coast is named after Don Miller.

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**Be there, or be square!**

# OUR TOWN

March 22, 1938

The Kennecott Star  
Published, Edited and  
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Blackburn School  
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## Charlie Chang Goes to His Final Rest

Charlie Chang died two weeks ago. A short while before he passed away, Cliff Ciyonet went over and saw him and found him sick. So he chopped some wood for him and left.

When Ciyonet called again a few days later, he found the body.

Charlie Chang was well known in this section, as he has been in the region since the very early days. He had been living and working for the past few years on some private claims in the McCarthy-Dan Creek section.

## Jim Moore leaves middle of April for Tennessee & family.

## Quarantine Nips Measles At Start

About the middle of February Pat Hooks was sick. Dr. I. S. Egan found he had the measles. So

John Pytel from McCarthy, staying with the Hooks family so he could go to school, was quarantined by the doctor for a week. Tommy O'Neill's parents, in McCarthy, decided that Tommy should also go home, so that he wouldn't spread the measles around. Pat is now well and running around again and Tommy and Johnny are back in school.

100% of the pupils of Blackburn school found to be free from T. B. germs in the lungs.

## Kennecott Gets Eggs Weekly

THEY LACK OLDTIME  
FLAVOR  
SOURDOUGHS  
COMPLAIN

By Our Poultry Editor  
A few weeks ago Pilot Smith of the Cordova Air Service landed the biggest cargo of fresh eggs ever flown to McCarthy, thirty cases at one lick.

Last year the boys were willing to bet that the eggs could make the trip under their own power. John Letendre says he likes them that way, and he has no use for an egg

that won't stand up for itself. He says he once had a trained egg that would roll over at the word of command.

He spent a long winter training the egg but while showing it off to some friends one day, he made it roll over so many times it became scrambled. As it had been a pet he couldn't eat it himself, but, being short of grub, he gave it to his malemute dog. Later in the same evening he was thinking sadly of his lost pal and happened to say the same words he used with the egg. The dog rolled over just the same as the egg had done. John felt better after that as, he says, he knew the egg had found a good home. - Fond Parent

Because of bad weather and poor landing conditions, Pilot Kirkpatrick of the Cordova Air Service was held up in McCarthy on the 25th, 26th and 27th of February. Pilot Smith was also held there a short while, but both Smith and Kirkpatrick finally got back to Cordova.

## Coyote Chases Hound

On March 11 Chris Jenson saw Tam, Charlie Hooks' sleek greyhound, come charging out of the brush with a coyote behind him. When Chris came out of his house to watch the excitement, the coyote ran back into the woods. Tam the bloodhound fled for Farley's house and wouldn't leave until Mr. Ken Farley took him home. He was as pale as a ghost.

## "Vic" On Vacation

C. W. Vickery left for Seattle on March 19. "Vic" left to see his family and also for a short vacation. He hopes to return about the first of May. Mr. Vickery was the first person to order a KENNECOTT STAR gotten out on the press.

## Water Thawed Out

The Kennecott water supply from National Creek, frozen in February, has just been thawed out. The shop gang went up and put in a new boiler, and from below the yard gang thawed out the pipe by turning steam into it.

Alfonse Nikolaus is a frequent week end visitor to Kennecott. Al is timekeeper at the mine. He comes down on the tram.

Sig Wold, ex-taxi driver from McCarthy is back for a visit. Sig expects to go to Fairbanks and open a transfer service.

#### Foot Frozen

Emo Izison froze his foot and had to come up to the doctor on Feb. 27. Dr. I. S. Egan operated on him the next morning. His farm is about four miles down the railroad track from McCarthy. - LM

#### !!Unbeaten Terror!!

The tennis court was opened March 6. The snow shoveling was done by Herb Rogers, Werner Henschel, Clarence Oneal, and John Cope. Werner and Herb played three sets. All were won by the unconquerable champion, Herb Rogers.

#### Trainmen Here

The trainmen came up by plane the first part of the month from Cordova to run the train. They pulled up 40 cars from the McCarthy yards and then flew back to Cordova. The conductor was George Scott; engineer, Tom Burchitt; fireman, Alva Larson; hostler, George Larson;

brakemen, Tim Ekstrem and Charles Hawkins.

#### Jim Murray Leaves

Jim Murray left last January for San Francisco. He went for medical treatment. Murray has been in McCarthy and at his Dan Creek road house by the Nizina River for a long time. He owned The Golden, in McCarthy, for awhile. Then he sold that to Steve Pytel and got The Club. Mrs. Murray is still in McCarthy, working in The Club. - LM

#### Howling Gale Causes Chaos

#### CHATTERING STEVE FACES BLAST IN PAJAMAS

A big wind storm up at Angle station blew over a tower thirty feet high that was two towers down from the station. It was No. 25. The wind also blew one window out of the kitchen and blew two out of the tramhouse and one out of the engine room. Steve Guitana had to get up at four o'clock in the morning and oboy was he mad. It took the trammen a day and a half to fix the tower again. The wind also blew the telephone line down. They got that fixed up again. - LM

**Pops Out, Ducks In**  
On Feb. 2, Mrs. Geo.

Birch came out and went to the store. She had been quarantined with the mumps for six weeks. When she came out the sun was shining. She saw her shadow and hasn't been seen since.

#### Joe Meloy Visits

Joe Meloy, from the Bremner mine, was in McCarthy for supplies the early part of February. He came for food stores and for his aerial tramway made of Kennecott tram parts. Joe came on his small tractor. He had to leave as soon as he could so as to set up the tram on his claims.

#### Boss Butchers, Butcher Bakes

"Scotty" Inoye, the baker, had all his teeth pulled out on Feb. 16. Frank Uyehara, the butcher, was the baker while Inoye was in the hospital, while E K Chivers, the steward, was the butcher. "Scotty" is out now but he can't eat very much but soup and other liquids. - LM

#### Stewart Injures Foot

Henry Stewart broke his foot up on the tram on February sixteenth. A water barrel fell down and landed on his foot before he had time to get out of the way. Jack Morris, the boss of the tram, took off Stewart's shoe right away. He rode

down to the hospital on the truck.

The doctor was pulling the cook's teeth and he had to leave him on the operating table and fix Henry Stewart's foot. - LM

#### MEN BATTLE AGAINST FURY OF RUTHLESS NATURE

Herb Rogers, the electrician, and Bob Gallun, assistant, went up the Erie trail the other day to fix a power line where the fuses would not stay in. After struggling frantically for hours through drifts and slush, they managed to get to the trouble. The cross arm on a pole was burned off because the insulator was gone. They got back to camp that night, completely worn out.

The Kennecott Star  
Blackburn School,  
Kennecott, Alaska  
Editors & Publishers  
Pupils of Blackburn  
School  
Tom O'Neill, 1st Grade  
Ronald Brososky, 2nd  
Grade  
John Pytel, 3rd Grade  
Wm. Humpheries, 4th  
Grade  
Lyle Morris, 6th  
Grade  
Bruce Morris, 9th Grade  
Frank Morris, 10th Grade  
Initialed Items Are  
Written By Elementary  
Pupils; All Others Are By  
High School Pupils.

## Glaciers No Obstacle for CR & NW Railway

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

Home of the trans-Alaska pipeline, Alaska has been the setting for a few epic engineering battles rendered against nature. The Million Dollar Bridge, standing almost intact on the lower Copper River, is a reminder of another improbable Alaska construction project.

Completed in 1910, the Million Dollar Bridge was the crux of the Copper River and Northwestern Railway, built to carry copper ore 196 miles from Kennicott to Cordova. Along that route were some of the greatest obstacles Alaska offers—steep canyons, rivers, hurricane-force winds, mosquitoes, and dozens of glaciers.

A fortune in high-grade copper locked deep in the Wrangell Mountains inspired Outside investors, including the Guggenheim family and J.P. Morgan, to risk building a railway from an ice-free port on Alaska's southcentral coast to the rich copper deposits at Kennicott. In 1906, planners recommended four possible routes to the copper—including two from Valdez to the Copper River via 2,000-foot passes—but railroad builders chose a route from Cordova that would follow the Copper River north to Chitina, then continue 60 miles to Kennicott.

Glaciers stuck out their tongues in defiance along the entire route, but the pull of financial gain and human ingenuity overcame them. In one case, workers laid tracks across the debris-covered ice of Allen

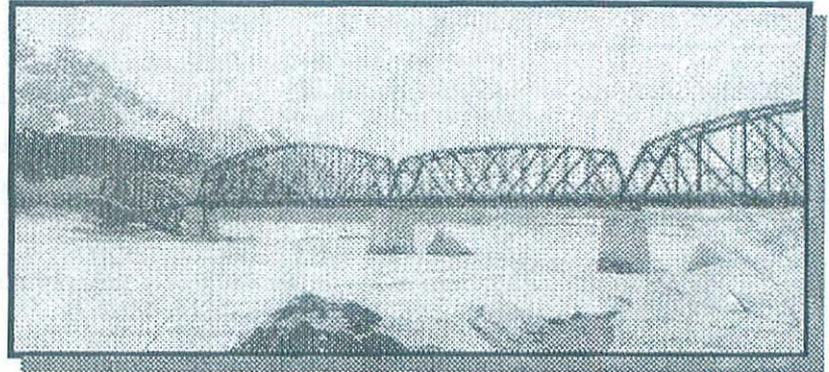


photo by Ned Rozell

THE MILLION DOLLAR BRIDGE, BUILT FOR \$1.4 MILLION AND COMPLETED IN 1910, WAS THE LARGEST CONSTRUCTION CHALLENGE OF THE COPPER RIVER AND NORTHWESTERN RAILWAY. THE NORTHERN SPAN FELL IN 1964 DURING THE GOOD FRIDAY EARTHQUAKE.

Glacier for five-and-one-half miles, according to my two sources for this column, *The Copper Spike* by Lone Janson and *Iron Rails to Alaskan Copper* by Alfred Quinn.

Two of the largest obstacles on the route were Miles and Childs glaciers, both of which calve icebergs into the Copper River from opposite banks. Erastus Hawkins, the engineer in charge of the railroad project, and Michael Heney, the construction contractor, preferred to run the railroad alongside the Copper River, but the Miles and Childs glaciers sprawl over both shorelines at a pinch-point about 15 miles from the river's mouth. Not listening to other engineers who thought the problem was insurmountable, Hawkins designed a 1,550-foot steel bridge to span the Copper River at a river bend between the two glaciers.

Geologists had found that the glaciers had fused during the past several centuries, and the leader of a U.S. Army expedition up the Copper River in 1885 reported that the nose of Miles Glacier was then about 120 yards from the site of the bridge. By 1908, both glaciers had receded to provide a gap of about three miles.

Starting in April 1909, workers scrambled to complete the Million Dollar Bridge, spurred on by a U.S. law that gave railroad developers four years to complete a designated route. After four years, the government would tax them \$100 per operating mile per year. Contractors finished the bridge by midsummer of 1910.

Soon after construction of the Million Dollar Bridge (which cost \$1.4 million to build), the glaciers threatened the railroad.

In August 1910, two glaciologists from the National Geographic Society studied the sudden advances of both Miles and Childs glaciers. A northern lobe of Childs Glacier began creeping toward the bridge in June, and by August it was moving eight feet per day. On August 17<sup>th</sup>, the 200-foot face of the glacier was 1,624 feet away from the bridge.

Ralph Tarr, one of the

glaciologists, speculated on what would happen if the glacier continued to advance in 1911.

"It is absolutely certain that no corps of engineers could save the bridge and railway if the glacier should advance that far," he wrote.

Childs Glacier did not engulf the bridge, but the glacier crept to within 1,475 feet in June 1911. Childs and Miles glaciers

have since retreated, sparing the Million Dollar Bridge, which served the railway from 1910 until 1938, when low copper prices forced the shutdown of the Copper River and Northwestern Railway. The bridge survived nature's whims until March 27, 1964, when the Good Friday Earthquake knocked the northernmost span from its concrete piling.

## Kennecott Kid Reunion

BY INGER JENSEN RICCI

It was the morning of Monday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 a.m., finally! A group of excited seniors met, hugged, exclaimed and laughed. This occurred at the Millennium Hotel in Anchorage. A lovely breakfast buffet quieted them down for a short time.

Three vans were loaded, luggage in a pickup, and the caravan took off for Kennecott, several stops being made on the way - one of which was a stop at Ron Simpson's bar at Copper Center to view the Diorama of Kennecott, with its two trains encircling the picnic area. Lunch was provided by the Kennicott Glacier Lodge. The weather was fantastic!

Dinner awaited the hungry travelers just after eight at the Lodge. Those who had arrived earlier by plane or driving in themselves, greeted them joyfully with more hugs. All enjoyed the delicious dinner. It was difficult to retire amid all the renewed friendships and the beauty of the area.

Tuesday, following a lovely breakfast buffet, guests signed up for the many activities planned for the day. These included flightseeing, a glacier walk, tour of the town, hiking to

McCarthy, or just reminiscing. Husband Charlie took his usual flightseeing trip and yours truly took the usual hike to McCarthy by the Wagon Trail Road. There were five on the hike and the heat overwhelmed a couple of us, slowing us down so we arrived just in time to view the museum and get on the bus to shop at the Fireweed Mountain Arts and Crafts gift shop, about 3 miles out of McCarthy. A picnic buffet was served at the McCarthy Lodge to a bunch of hungry people.

Wednesday dawned with the same cloudless sky and the fantastic scenery. Pictures and memories were shared and everyone did their own thing. A trip to my old home was on my agenda, as well as viewing the new lodge that is in the process of being built. Following a delicious turkey dinner with all the trimmings, story night was the evening's entertainment at the Rick Jurick Building just across from the Lodge. This was enjoyed by local residents, as the Kennecott Kids shared their stories and told how and when their parents had arrived in the area.

Total attendance was about 48, but only 23 of these had been

born in Kennecott, attended school or worked there at various jobs for shorter or longer periods. Only one teacher was in attendance, Jim Busey, the last one before the mine closed down. Many brought family members to enjoy the peace and beauty of this paradise. There were also several Kennecott Kids who had never been to a reunion before and some who had not been contacted before.

The food at the Lodge was outstanding, as always, and the service exceptional. All those attending appreciated all that was done for them and this wonderful time of sharing and renewing old friendships, as well as new ones.

Thursday morning the vans filled with reluctant Kennecott Kids returning to Anchorage. They were treated to a short visit to the new Princess Wilderness Hotel at Copper Center. All arrived back at the hotel in good time. What a tremendous reunion at one of the most beautiful areas in Alaska. It will be a long remembered experience.

## Publisher goes fishing

BY RICK KENYON

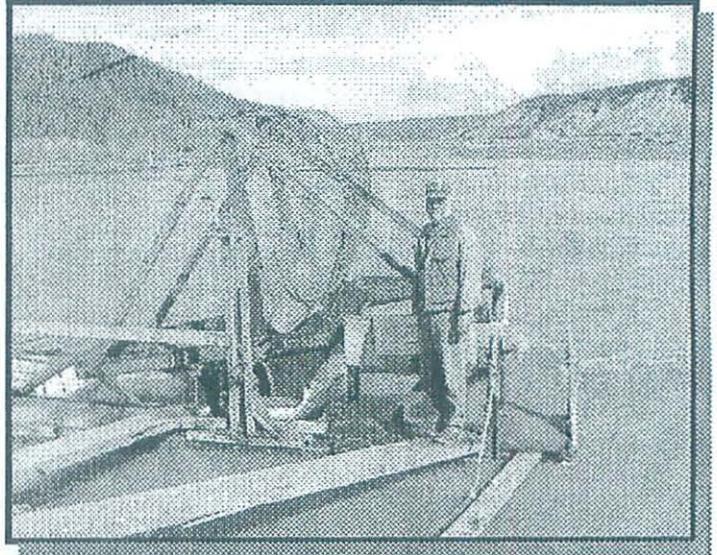
“We better shut this thing off—we’re catching fish faster than we can clean them!” I have to admit, this was the first time I had heard that kind of statement while fishing. But it was true. Even with two of us cleaning sockeye and chinook salmon, the fish were accumulating in the fishwheel box faster than we could empty it. If we didn’t stop that wheel from turning we would never reach the bottom of the box.

It had started earlier this spring. On a trip to Valdez, Bonnie and I stopped at the Chitina Ranger Station to visit with Ranger Neil. We got to talking about salmon, and Neil showed me the list of fishwheel operators in the Chitina area. Several familiar names came up, and when we returned home I gave one of them a call.

“Sorry, the wheel is booked until August.”

“Well, if you get an opening give me a call.”

About a week later we were awakened from sleep at 6 am to a voice on the phone saying, “Do you still want that wheel?” Being a bit groggy, I didn’t recognize the voice and wondered what kind



WSEN staff photo

WSEN PUBLISHER RICK KENYON OPERATING A FISH WHEEL NEAR CHITINA. LOOK CLOSELY AND YOU WILL SEE A SALMON JUST ENTERING THE “BOX” ON THE NEAR SIDE OF THE WHEEL.

of wheel I had ordered. “The fishwheel,” said the voice on the phone.

“Oh, right, I’ll be there as soon as I can,” I replied. Apparently the person who had been using the wheel overnight caught all they could use and had pulled out.

Bonnie and I talked it over, considering the nearly 3 hour drive to Chitina over a road that had not been graded in some time. She suggested I call friend Don Welty and see if he would like to go “fishing,” and I readily agreed that was a good plan, especially since Don has a Super Cub and an aversion to driving the McCarthy Road, preferring to fly whenever possible.

Don had the day off and we made plans to meet right after a quick breakfast. Actually there was one more obstacle to overcome, since I had to get a permit from the Chitina Ranger Station which didn’t open until ten and is about 5 miles from the Ranger Station. A call to the Chitina One Stop gas station and grocery secured a promise from manager Daniel Boone, Jr. to pick me up at the airport at 9:30. In short order I had



WSEN staff photo

DON WELTY WITH NICE KING SALMON. WE HAD TO CLIP THE CORNER OF THE TAILS TO SHOW THESE FISH WERE TAKEN FROM A FISHWHEEL.

permit in hand and was back at the airport where Don was waiting near the wheel.

It was a new experience for both of us, and we just happened to hit it at exactly the right time. Copper River Reds and Kings were both running strong, and were fresh, looking as though they were still in the ocean rather than having just come up the Copper River from Cordova. We were getting one king for every four reds. By shortly after noon we had all of the fish we could handle and had to thank our host and head for home.

It didn't take long to realize that running a fish wheel, at least when the fish are running real good, is a lot like shooting a moose—the real work

starts *after* the hunt. We spent the rest of that day vacuum-sealing the chinook salmon for the freezer, and the entire next day putting up pint jars of delicious sockeyes. But what rewarding work. An entire year's fish supply laid up in just two days. One would think we would be entirely spoiled, and content to lay aside fishing for a while. Not really.

The next week I got a call from Don. "Want to run over to Teabay and see if the kings are in?"

"Sure."

Well, the kings were not in, but we did catch dinner—two nice rainbow trout each. It's a tough job, but someone has to do it!

## The Ballad of Bobo

BY AIMEE SEAMAN

JUNE 1, 2002, MCCARTHY, ALASKA

Early in the summer of twenty-aught-two  
the Bethel youth staff went camping.  
Over hill, over dale, through rain and through wind  
the intrepid staff went tramping.

Now, Beth, Jim and Richie are uncommonly bright,  
and Jeff surely isn't a fool,  
But, on the fateful day of the Nizina bike trip,  
they neglected to stow the cooler!

They pedaled off happily into the woods,  
with nary a thought of provision,  
And a wily old black bear came sniffing about,  
his nose tuned with bearish precision.

"Aha!" thought the bear, "here's a savory snack!"  
as the burgeoning cooler he opened.  
"There should be some hamburger here in this box,  
and some sausages, too, I'm a-hopin'."

Sausages, hamburger, hotdogs and more –  
some lettuce and turkey and ham!  
As he nibbled some cantaloupe he licked his chops  
and thought he, "How lucky I am!"

He sat on his haunches and then licked his paw,  
a singularly contented beast,  
And had started to think of the upcoming course  
when Beth interrupted the feast!

With shivering ankles and trembling knees  
the campers confronted the bear,  
But he snorted and grunted and thus signified  
his intention to stay right there.

With shouts and loud noises and, finally, gunshots,  
they endeavored to send him away,  
But the bear just sat back in anticipation  
of renewing his scrumptious buffet.

Despite the best efforts of Jim, Jeff and Richie  
he lingered a night and a day.  
The bear watched and waited and bided his time,  
but the goodies were locked up to stay.

The campers went hiking and planned their return,  
determined to even the score.  
As they girded their loins and reentered the camp  
they discovered the bear was no more!

Beth, Jim, Jeff, and Richie then started up thinking,  
deciding he needed a name.  
Jeff christened him "Bobo" and, from that time on,  
they vowed he would live in fame!

Thus ends our tale, the Ballad of Bobo,  
this chapter of Bethel youth lore.  
May the exploits of Bobo, Beth, Jim, Jeff, and Richie  
be sung of forevermore!

# Copper River Princess Grand Opening

BY BONNIE KENYON

Several days prior to the Grand Opening of the Copper River Princess Wilderness Lodge on June 5, Rick and I received a phone call from a representative of Princess inviting us to attend the celebration. Part of the welcome package included a night's lodging, dinner and breakfast the next morning. Needless to say, we decided to attend the festivities and get a good look at our new neighbor down the road.

By the time we arrived that Wednesday afternoon, the lodge was quickly filling up with a variety of locals, area business people partnering with Princess, media, Park Service and Ahtna representatives, and Princess executives. We found our room simply elegant with touches of Alaskan decor that made me feel right at home. I was impressed.

Dinner wasn't until 6:45 pm so Rick and I walked around the grounds, inspected the awesome views of the Wrangell-St. Elias mountain range as well as the confluence of the Copper and Klutina Rivers. Breathtaking!

We decided to take a closer look at the inside of the lodge and hoped to find at least one familiar face in the crowd. That was accomplished when we discovered Ed and Suzanne Wilson at their Backcountry Connection booth. They are handling the Historic Copper Valley Sightseeing Tour which makes stops in Copper Center



WSEN staff photo



WSEN staff photo

ED AND SUZANNE WILSON—  
BACKCOUNTRY CONNECTION



WSEN staff photo

KATHY MACKAY—COPPER OAR



WSEN staff photo

DAVE AND CARLA PARMENTER—  
COPPER VALLEY AIR SERVICE,

and Chitina giving guests glimpses into the history of the Valley — mining, subsistence hunting and fishing — and takes in, first-hand, the lifestyle of how Alaskans live today. Suzanne, who is doing most of these tours herself, encourages everyone to take their cameras so they can capture this scenic and picturesque journey. The local people here in McCarthy know

Backcountry for their scheduled van service to our neck of the woods.

In the booth next to Backcountry was a well-known business name but a new face. Copper Oar, who has an office here in McCarthy, was represented by Kathy Mackay. (The first clue we had that Copper Oar was on the scene was the impressive canoe that was sitting out front of the lodge.) After making our acquaintance with Kathy, she described the Wrangell Lakes Canoeing excursion that they were doing with the Princess guests. It is a half-day guided tour that explores Willow or Phippen Lake by canoe. Interesting and unique natural history is also provided with great opportunities to view wildlife.

We met Dave and Carla Parmenter of Copper Valley Air Service, based at Gulkana Airport, who are offering a one hour and a three hour flightsee of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, including views of Mt. Drum, Mt. Wrangell and Mt. Sanford. They also fly over

the Nadina and Sanford Glaciers where it is likely their passengers will spot sheep, caribou and grizzly bear.

Among the several new acquaintances we made, was Doug Vollman, Staff Writer for the Copper Valley Weekly. Rick and I are avid readers of the newspaper and had a great time comparing notes and the challenges of keeping deadlines!

As Rick and I made our way to the Two Rivers Restaurant dining room, we were pleasantly surprised to see Carol and Sy Neeley of Glennallen heading in the same direction. Carol owns and operates Carol's Bed and Breakfast and Sy, Copper Basin Sanitation, which makes several annual trips in and out of McCarthy. We enjoyed spending the rest of the evening visiting and enjoying the entertainment that followed a delicious buffet. It was hard to choose between reindeer, buffalo, shrimp, and several other dishes that rarely find their way to our McCarthy homestead dining table!

The president of Princess Tours, Charles Ball,

was on hand for the ribbon cutting ceremony as well as Gary Candeleria, superintendent of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. The Ahtna Dancers performed and musician Earl Hughes from the El Dorado gold mine in Fairbanks played a variety of stringed instruments.

After visiting the gift shop, sampling the chocolate-covered strawberries, a cup of coffee, Rick and I decided it was time to call it a day and a long one it had been for this McCarthy couple! The king-sized bed was calling and, in spite of the fact we regretted seeing the day end, we headed for our room.

The next morning we thoroughly enjoyed the buffet breakfast and on our way out of the dining room, Rick made sure Jim Bankson, General Manager, had a sample copy of the recent WSEN which led to us leaving a batch in the gift shop.

It appeared all 85 rooms in the lodge were filled for the event. The service was excellent and we counted it an honor to have been invited.

---

*"History fails to record a single precedent in which nations subject to moral decay have not passed into political and economic decline. There has been either a spiritual awakening to overcome the moral lapse, or a progressive deterioration leading to ultimate national disaster." --General Douglas MacArthur*

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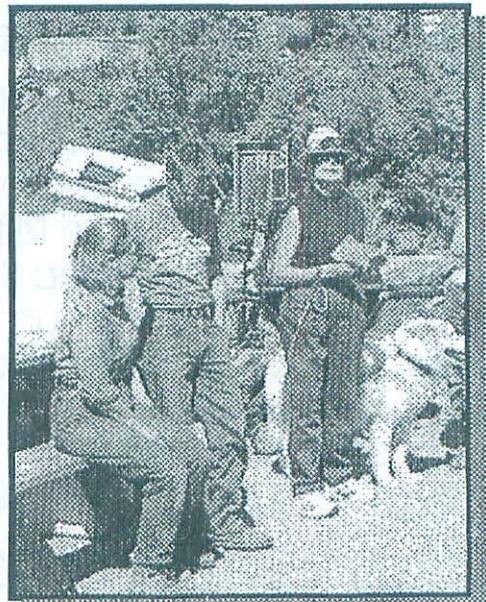
## Memorial for Chris Richards well attended



WSEN staff photo

On Saturday, June 15th, approximately 100 friends, family and area residents spent the afternoon at Chris' property in downtown Kennicott to share memories, stories and photographs. A traditional Kennicott potluck dinner followed.

Duston (Chris' brother) and Ann Richards of Berkeley, CA. and Judy Richards (Chris' mom) from Marina Del Rey, CA. hosted the Memorial service. Other family members in attendance were: Mr. and Mrs. Ray Richards (Chris' father) of Toledo, OH along with Mrs. Richards' son and grandson, and Mrs. and Mrs. Mark Richards (Chris' brother) from Sacramento, CA.



WSEN staff photo

ANN, DUSTIN AND JUDY RICHARDS

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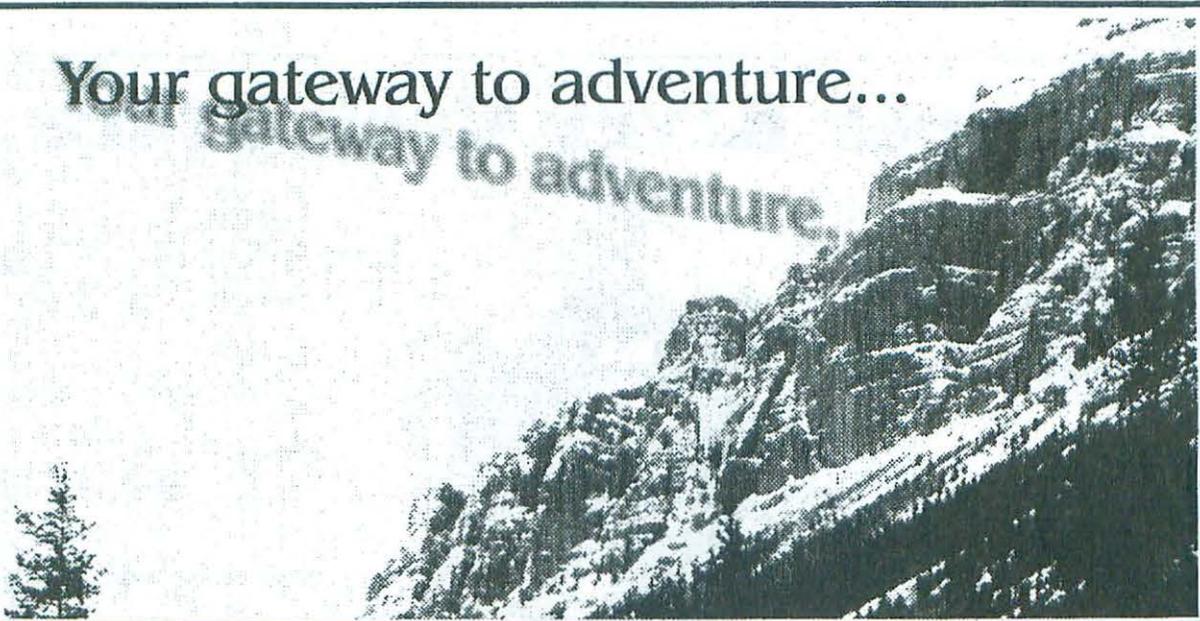
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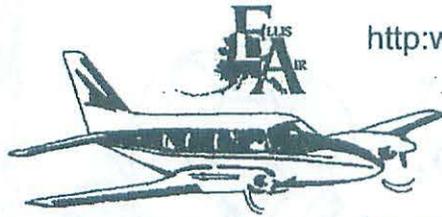
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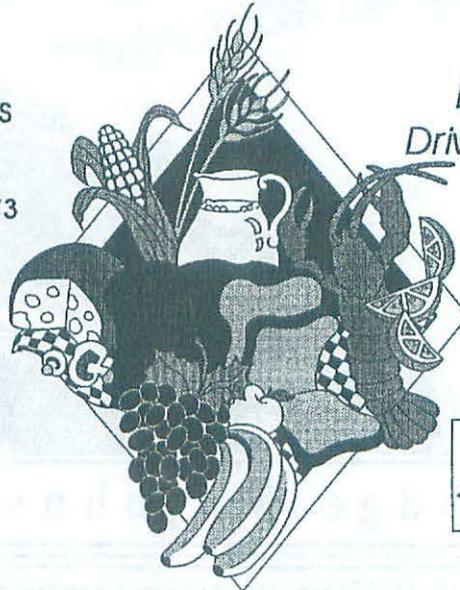
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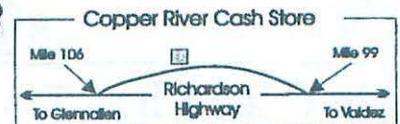
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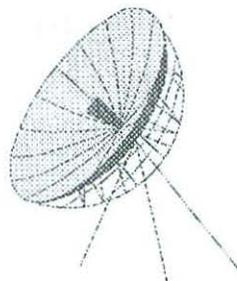
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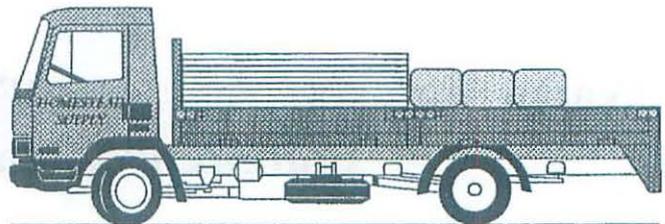
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# Cooking with Judy

BY JUDY FULTON

I am the Collections Manager at the Cordova Historical Museum where we subscribe to WSEN. Each issue we receive, I bring home and share with my husband Al. We enjoy reading it, and often discuss articles afterwards.

In 1983, my good friend, Judy Collins, invited my two children and I to spend the summer at Long Lake. The Collins' guest quarters was a little log cabin near the banks of the Lakina River.

My husband worked long hours at the cannery in Cordova, and flew his Super Cub up to spend the weekends with us. We took a dozen chickens, and planted a little garden. I have many fond memories of that particular summer. My son Russel learned to ride a bicycle at Long Lake. My daughter Nicole celebrated her birthday at Long Lake. We had many outdoor cookouts at the lake, and made friends with Harley and Jo King.

One particular memory that I have is when Judy's daughter, Karen, and my daughter named all the chickens, and painted their toe nails with different color polish so they could remember who was who.

I now have Long Lake rhubarb growing in my yard here in Cordova. Each spring when it comes up, it brings back Long Lake memories. I would like to share some rhubarb recipes with you. The first one is a recipe that Judy shared with me many, many

years ago. Because rhubarb was so accessible that summer, everyone who celebrated a Long Lake Birthday had a Rhubarb Birthday Cake.

(In memory of Judy Collins)

## Rhubarb Cake

1 ½ cups brown sugar  
 ½ cup shortening  
 1 egg  
 1 teaspoon baking soda  
 1 cup sour milk  
 1 cup chopped nuts  
 1 teaspoon vanilla  
 ½ teaspoon salt  
 2 cups flour  
 1 ½ cups chopped rhubarb  
**Topping:**  
 ½ cup sugar  
 ½ cup chopped nuts  
 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Cream sugar and shortening; add egg. Combine baking soda, and sour milk, add to creamed mixture. Add remaining ingredients. Pour into 13" x 9" pan, and sprinkle with topping. Bake @ 350 degrees for 35 - 40 minutes.

## My husband Al's favorite Rhubarb Pie

Beat 3 eggs.  
 Into beaten eggs add:  
 2 cups sugar  
 ¼ cup flour  
 ¾ teaspoon nutmeg  
 Then add 4 cups cut up rhubarb.

## Pie Crust

2 cups flour  
 2/3 cup shortening  
 6 - 7 Tablespoons cold orange juice (can use cold water)

Bake at 375 degrees approximately 45 minutes.

(My Favorite - in fact, I just took a batch out of the oven before sitting down at the computer!)

## Rhubarb Muffins

2 cups finely chopped rhubarb  
 ¾ cup loosely-packed brown sugar, divided  
 1 teaspoon grated orange peel (fresh is best)  
 2 ½ cups flour  
 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder  
 2 eggs, beaten  
 ¾ cup low-fat sour milk  
 3 Tablespoon oil (or melted butter)

1 teaspoon baking soda  
 ½ cup chopped nuts (optional)  
 Combine rhubarb and orange peel with ¼ cup of the sugar and let sit while mixing rest of batch.

Blend ½ cup sugar, baking powder and soda with the flour. Combine beaten eggs, sour milk and oil. Add all at once to the "well" in dry ingredients, stir until moistened. Very carefully fold in sugared rhubarb and nuts. Fill paper-lined or greased muffin cups 2/3 full. Bake at 375 degrees for 20 - 25 minutes.

In closing, I wanted to say that my son Russel enjoyed his summer at Long Lake so much, that when it was time to come home to Cordova, he ran into the woods and hid himself. It was a paradise for a little boy, and he still talks about it to this day.

---

*"I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress and grow brave by reflection. It is the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death."—Thomas Paine*

# A LOOK AT THE WEATHER

BY GEORGE CEBULA

As in the past, April saw the end of a long winter and the last of the snow. April 2002 was the third coldest on record. The high temperature for the month was 61 on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> (52 on Apr. 23, '01 and 56 on Apr. 27, '00). The low was -17 on the 1<sup>st</sup> (0 on Apr. 2, '01 and 8 on Apr. 10, '00). The average temperature for April was 24.9, compared to 34.4 in '01 and 34.6 in '00. The lowest average temperatures for April were 22.4 in 1972 and 24.7 in 1986.

*Silver Lake had a high of 60 on the 29<sup>th</sup> (53 on Apr. 27, '01 and 55 on Apr. 28, '00) and a low of -18 on the 1<sup>st</sup> (13 on Apr 1, '01 and 10 on Apr. 10, '00). The April average temperature at Silver Lake was 22.8 (33.9 in '01 and 34.3 in '00).*

The precipitation for April was below average with 0.39 inches of liquid (0.07 in '01 and 0.56 in '00). Snow was observed on 7 days with a total of 7.1 inches, this compares with 1.2 inches of snow in '01. *Silver Lake had only a trace of liquid (trace in '01 and 0.20 in '00) and a trace of snow.*

The total snowfall for '01-'02 was 74.2 inches (85.2 in '00-'01, 65.8 in '99-'00 and 38.9 in '98-'99). *Silver Lake's snowfall for '01-'02 was 57.5 inches.*

McCarthy started the month with 27 inches of snow on the ground and ended April with 9 inches. McCarthy was clear of snow by May 10<sup>th</sup>. *Silver Lake had 32 inches of snow on the ground as April arrived and was reduced to trace by the end of April.*

The temperature stayed rather cool the first 10 days of May with highs in the 50's and lows in the 20's. Then summer arrived rather suddenly. The high temperature for May was 80 on the 25<sup>th</sup> (68 on May 28, '01 and 67 on May 30, '00). The low temperature was 15 on the 5<sup>th</sup> (18 on May 18, '01 and 20 on May 11, '00). The May average temperature was 45.9, this compares with 41.8 in '01 and 42.7 in '00. There were 10 days with a high of 70 or above. *Silver Lake had a high of 80 on the 26<sup>th</sup> (68 on May 29, '01 and 65 on May 29, '00), a low of 14 on the 5<sup>th</sup> (18 on May 5, '01 and 24 on May 8, '00) and an average temperature of 45.0 (42.0 in '01 and 43.3 in '00).*

The May precipitation at McCarthy was about normal with 1.79 inches of liquid. This compares with 2.13 inches in '01 and 0.34 inches in '00. A trace of snow was recorded on the 1<sup>st</sup>. *Silver Lake recorded 0.96 inches of liquid (0.52 inches in '01 and 0.91 inches in '00). A trace of*

*snow was observed at Silver Lake on the 1<sup>st</sup>. May 3<sup>rd</sup> saw the ice on the West Fork of the Kennicott River begin to break apart and water was moving over the top. The river was clear of moving ice by May 15<sup>th</sup> and all the shore ice was gone by the 17<sup>th</sup>. The ice on Silver Lake was too soft for travel in late April and it was completely gone the morning of May 21<sup>st</sup> (May 15, '01).*

The first part of June was warm and wet with highs in the 70's. The lows were in the mid 30's to low 40's. Summer should be in full swing by late June. June and July are the warmest months with the highs usually in the low 80's. The temperature begins to cool in August with highs only getting into the low 70's. The all-time high recorded at McCarthy was 87 on June 21, 1991. Freezing temperatures should be back by the end of August, although they can be observed at any time. Average monthly rainfall is about 2 inches (June-August). Hidden Lake should empty sometime in July, with a rapid rise of the water level in the Kennicott River and some possible flooding. The first snow usually arrives sometime in late September.

ENJOY THE SUMMER  
WHATEVER THE WEATHER!

---

"Most Americans are so steeped in egalitarian thinking that they like to delude themselves that they share in running the country. We ordinary folks, in fact, don't run the country and have a slim-to-none chance of even influencing its direction. ...So the individuals who occupy these 7,000 positions of power are the elite who run the country. Therefore, it is the character of these members of the elite that will determine the character of the country. What you see in government policies, in cultural products and in education policies are the direct result of the decisions made by this relatively small elite. ...Our problem is that most of our elite have become corrupted. Many are nihilistic and hedonistic. The leadership of a country always leads the masses, and they can lead them to high ground or into the swamps. And there's not much I can see that ordinary people can do about it."—Charley Reese

# FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

## *Preferred alternative not preferred*

This past month the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) issued their "preferred alternative" for the Kennicott River Wayside project after several years of the "public process." One can only wonder why the public has been subjected to endless meetings and pleas for input, since nearly all of the public comments have been pretty much ignored in this final proposal.

Take, for instance, the "Issues and Options" questionnaire sent out last year. Over 130 people responded to this appeal for ideas. The largest number agreeing on any one option, 48, opined "make the bridge a vehicle bridge, with parking on the east side." The second most popular theme was for the state to purchase the existing parking lot, with 41 respondents. *Only one person was in favor of building a parking lot in the right-of-way, yet this is the state's preferred alternative.*

A public meeting in Anchorage last September showed little support for the project, and plenty of opposition. By far the most popular theme was to use any available monies to upgrade the road rather than for additional parking facilities at the Kennicott River. Meetings in McCarthy last November and again this past week showed strong opposition to the project and little support. Typical was this comment documented in the DOT&PF May 2002 newsletter: "Everyone in attendance is against condemnation of

property and it wouldn't pass in court, as there is already an existing alternative, which is the current parking facilities." (It is almost certain that the state does not have sufficient land ownership of the right-of-way to build the proposed facilities, and will eventually have to embark upon condemnation proceedings to complete the project.) And this one: "DOT&PF should not be competing against private enterprise that is already providing parking facilities."

The Wayside project was nominated a number of years ago by the National Park Service (NPS) and the McCarthy Area Council (MAC). There was some need for additional facilities at that time. Remember, this was before the NPS began providing free day parking near their kiosk, and before Glacier View Campground opened their free or minimal charge parking area. Perhaps just as importantly, before the owner of the parking lot at the river took over management and started cleaning up the area. Now NPS says they still want some additional amenities, but even they are not happy with the preferred alternative, particularly the daytime restriction on parking. Most of the support from MAC seems to have evaporated also, with the announcement that the new parking lot would provide short-term parking only.

NPS was chastised several years ago for competing with local businesses when it opened its free campground across the road from Glacier View Campground. Senator Murkowski sent an aide to investigate, and a short time later NPS announced

that camping would not be allowed during the months that the local campgrounds were open. (Why they built the campground in the first place is a mystery, since the NPS management plan calls specifically for private enterprise to handle camping and parking needs west of the Kennicott River.) Now, the logic coming from NPS and DOT&PF both is, "yes, things are working pretty well now, but what if the current businesses *stop* providing their services." In other words, we need to *drive* them out of business because otherwise they might someday *decide* to go out of business?

In light of all of this, why is the DOT&PF determined to forge ahead and spend a half-million dollars on something almost no one wants? Especially after they have spent a hundred thousand or so on meetings and correspondence to learn that almost no one wants it? Obviously *someone* must want it! We can only speculate that pressure is being put on the planners in Fairbanks from the governor's office, or perhaps from the planning bosses in Juneau. Efforts to redirect the focus to a Wayside midway between Chitina and McCarthy, where it clearly is needed, (and well documented in the recent McCarthy Road Scenic Corridor Plan), have been rigorously opposed. Likewise the considerable public support for upgrading the bridge to vehicular traffic has been ignored.

Which brings us full-circle. The current debate over parking would never have occurred had the state built the right bridge in the first place. After all, in

1979 the Alaska public had overwhelmingly voted to fund a vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River—which would have allowed for parking on public lands on the east side of the river, and eliminated all the heartache over trespass and illegal bridges and fords—but the state transferred the money to a different project, (an action

which the Department of Law found to be unethical if not actually criminal). The DOT&PF ignored the public process and did what they wanted to do. Lately they have been telling us that they had to make the current bridge off limits to vehicular traffic because of the results of the public process.

They say they cannot change the status or design because of the results of the public process. Yet when asked about the results of the public process in the case of the Wayside project, they tell us, "It is not a vote."

I am reminded of that grand old Italian word—*Baloney*, with a capital B.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

May 23, 2002  
Tunkhannock, PA

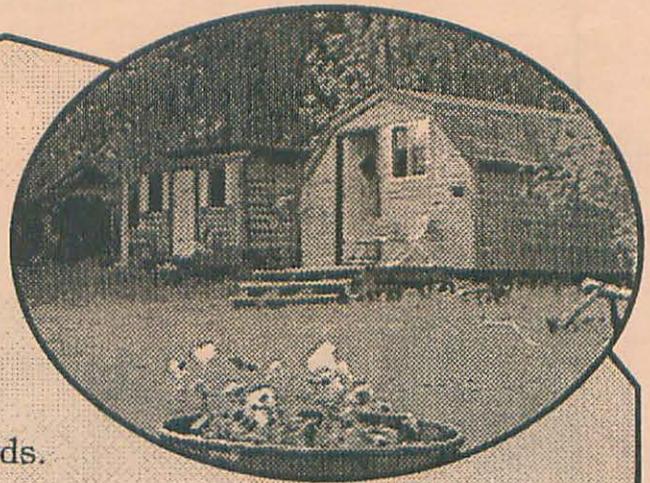
Hi WSEN,

I'm writing from a "chilly" (record low temperatures 4 days in a row) Pennsylvania. I had a good laugh when I sat here looking at the frosty rooftops and heard on the weather channel that AK was enjoying 75 degree plus in some areas.

Please make the change in my address, we'd hate to miss any news. We especially enjoy your Items of Interest and were saddened to hear about the passing of Chris Richards.

Sincerely,  
Connie Lanning

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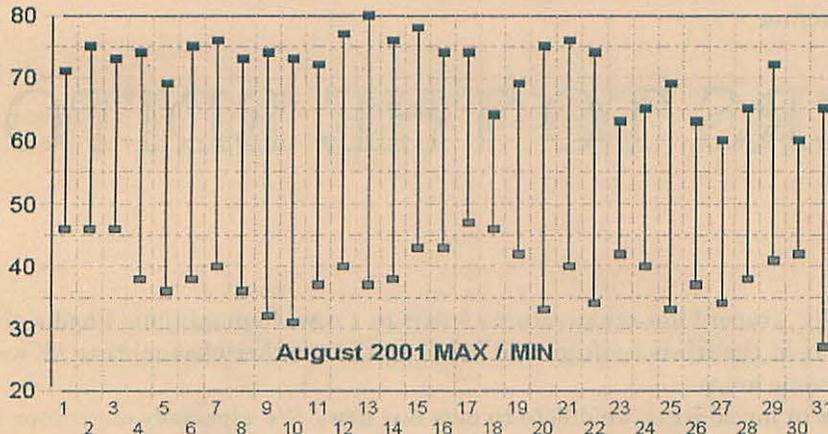
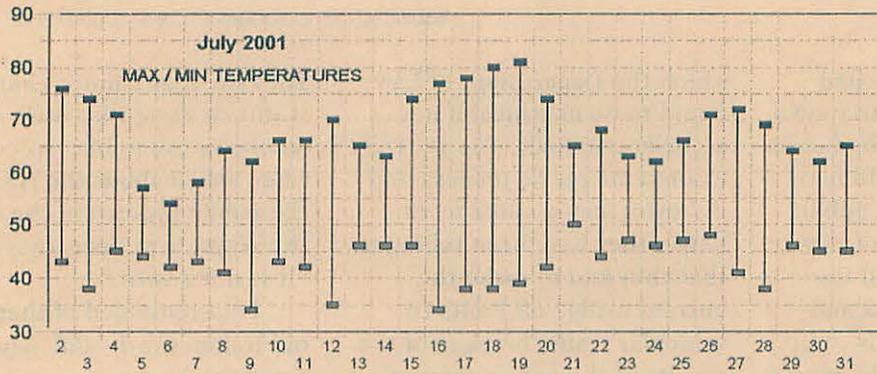
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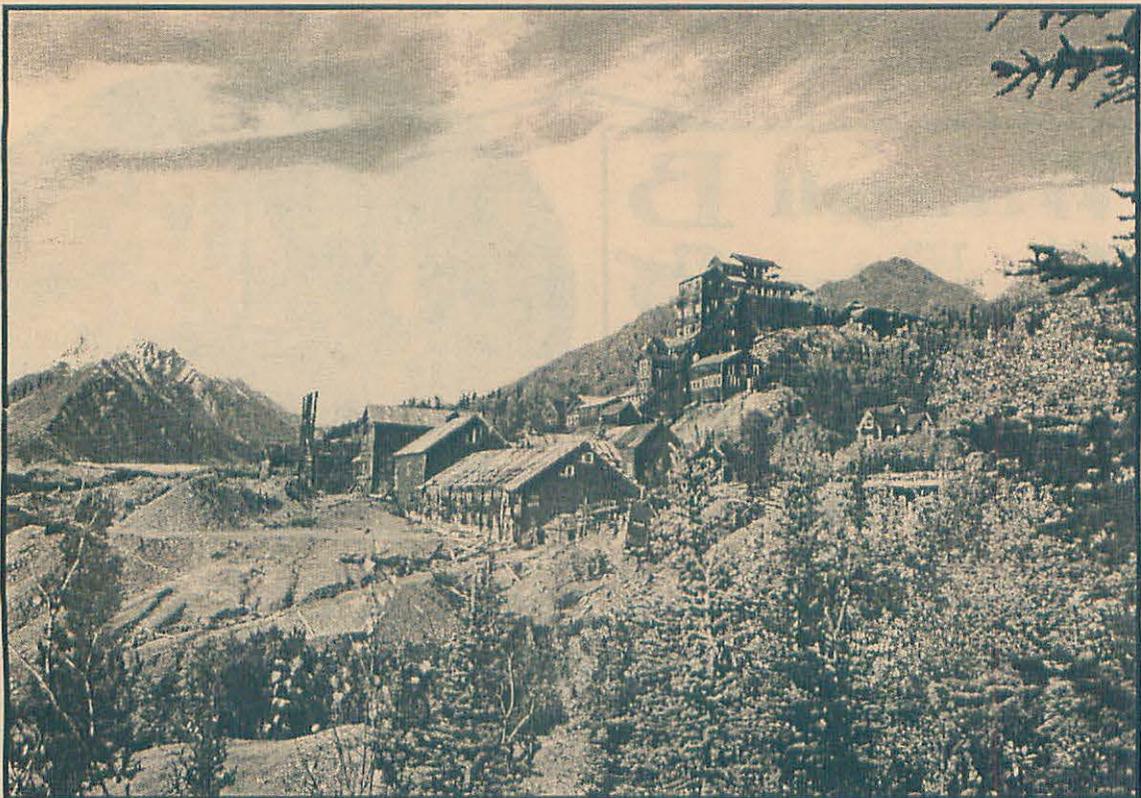
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