

Wrangell St. Elias News

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"

Volume Thirteen Issue Four

July & August 2004

Two Dollars

Kennicott River Service Bridge Some call it Freedom!

BY LAURIE ROWLAND

The Kennicott River valley has always drawn exceptional men—men of vision and indomitable will. Michael Heney, Stephen Birch, John Barrett—names from Kennicott and McCarthy's not-too-distant past, of men who saw the incredible potential of this far-flung, craggy wilderness, and defied conventional wisdom and the laws of nature in order to make their vision a reality. Some McCarthy residents of late are adding Keith Rowland to that list after he funded and almost single-handedly built a 220-foot vehicular bridge across the Kennicott River, performing the installation in an incredibly short 7 weeks. Now, if only the government would get things done that fast...

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Hoola on the mountain page 8



Photo courtesy Keith Rowland



Photo courtesy David Rowland



**McCarthy celebrates
4th of July** page 10

A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

McCarthy area residents cannot say they did not experience a genuine summer this year. In fact, McCarthy hit an all-time high of 89 degrees on June 19. Many locals dug out their shorts and went barefoot. Eleven days out of June were in the 80's and 9 of those days were in the mid to high 80's. According to the weather records for this area the previous high temperature was 87 and was set in June 1969. (This is beginning to sound like George's weather column. I better let him fill you in next issue — this is his area of expertise!)

On June 26 smoke from a variety of Alaskan forest fires blew into the McCarthy area and for about 5 days we lost sight of our favorite mountains. Eventually the rains came and the smoke gradually dissipated. We were glad!

With the summer season comes new faces, either visiting our area for the first time or ones that come to McCarthy/Kennicott every summer to work for a local business. Bryan McCully is a new face. He is a guide with St. Elias Alpine Guides. Skylar Kline, a guide for Kennicott Wilderness Guides, has been coming to work here for several years now. Both of these young men made several trips to the WSEN office to use our Internet service. Not only are they both mountaineering guides but they are each taking college classes online — complete with taking tests. Bryan is studying anthropology and Skylar, computer design. Starband services are certainly changing the opportunities for people in the McCarthy area. A few more dishes have popped up

over the last couple of months - right in the nearby neighborhood!

Rick and I enjoyed meeting Troy Hvass' mom and step dad. Sue and Ed Slater stayed in one of our B&B cabins. They live in Vancouver, WA. but keep up on the McCarthy news by subscribing to WSEN. Troy made sure the Slaters had plenty to do while they were here; in fact, they stayed an extra day because Troy kept coming up with exciting activities such as flightseeing, 4 wheeler trips, dinner parties and quality visits with Troy's friends and neighbors. The Slaters had a grand time in our town. They promised to return, but next time Sue is determined to make it in time for the July 4th festivities.

Speaking of July 4th, if you had been passing by the east channel swimming hole on Sunday night at 4 PM, you would have seen quite an interesting sight. Nearly 40 people gathered for a water baptismal service. The church group from Bethel Church of Fairbanks and their pastor Paul Holmes chose McCarthy for this very special occasion. Several of us from the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church attended the service and rejoiced with the 5 candidates and those who were celebrating the greatest of all freedoms—their spiritual freedom. It's very possible this was the first time the swimming hole was used for such a glorious event; I pray it won't be the last!

I know I have mentioned this before but this page is normally the last page that is written. This gives us one last opportunity to mention items that are very important to us (and some of you!). Many of these items would have

appeared in an item of interest or a separate article, but there just wasn't any more space. We just received news that Sally Kabisch, wife of WSEN subscriber Tom Kiz-zia, passed away on June 20. Our deepest sympathy goes to Tom and his family.

WSEN welcomes aboard the following subscribers: Jack Johnson, AK; Rose Cherrix, VA; Daniel Talcott, WA; Sharon Getz, MT; R. Dennis and Cynthia Wiancko, OR; Patrick O'Donnell, VA; David Felts, NJ; Rob Wesson, CO; Herman Kurth, WA; Craig Neill, TX; Richard and Elizabeth Barlow, AK; Virginia Phipps, PA; Ron and Loyce Krogel, OR; Dolan Collins, WA; Dale Merritt, WA.

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Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

Howard and Chris Haley:

There is terrific news out of the Haley household these days! Howard has retired from the teamsters after a long 30 years. He worked in Valdez at the Alyeska Oil Terminal and called Valdez home. Things are changing for the Haleys and they decided to celebrate with a trip – traveling to the beaches of Homer, Whiskey Gulch and Ninilchik to dig for butter and razor clams.

They are back home – meaning McCarthy now – and Howard is not wasting any time in making the most of his retirement. He and Chris are planning the new addition to their cabin which will (eventually) include an enclosed porch, master bedroom on the ground floor, a utility room and a bathroom.

Another “new” addition is the arrival of Abby, a 10 month old Blue Heeler lab mix. Abby was a surprise gift to Chris from Howard Christmas Eve.

It is apparent to all that the Haleys are looking good these days and wearing their retirement well. Congratulations, Chris and Howard!

Barbara and John Rice: The word retirement made me think of Barbara and John. The Rices are looking down the road and making their plans, too. John will be entering the retirement force in the next couple of years, and he and Barbara are wasting no time in deciding where they want to spend some of their free time. You guessed it. McCarthy!

Barbara drove up from St. Louis with a friend who kept her company on the long drive. Shortly after she arrived, Barbara set up camp at the West McCarthy Wayside. Because she and John hope to have a small custom house (on the pattern of a Kennicott cottage) built this summer on their property west of the Kennicott River, the decision was made for Barbara to stick around the area. Before long she landed a job at Mountain Arts Gift Shop in downtown McCarthy. In her spare time she visits the property, makes plans for their home-away-from home and is talking with local contractors – gleaned from their expertise. If all goes as planned, John will fly up in August and give Barbara a hand with further decision making and accompany Barbara back down the Alcan. By the time the Rices leave the area, they hope to see the start of their dream come true.

Barbara and John, we wish you both the very best!

Jim and Peggy Guntis: The Guntis' just arrived for the summer. Although Peggy is busy unpacking, she took the time to hop on their 4 wheeler and come over for a cup of tea! Jim and Peggy own and operate an electrical contracting business in Tucson and stay more than busy. Retirement may be in the picture but, like the Rices, it hasn't quite become a reality YET. However, I do see the signs of that happening. For instance, Peggy is stocking up on a library of good reading material and Jim continues to make life easier for them with his continual upgrades to their (and daughter

Kim's) home on the hill. That is one subject Peggy and I didn't venture into today – Jim's projects for this summer. I'm sure we will get there, however, as our Rummikub/chess games will begin this coming Thursday night. I'll keep you informed!

Welcome back, Jim and Peg!

Scott, Sally Wallin and daughter Anna: Writing about the Guntis's brings me to the Wallin family. As most of you know, Sally is Jim's daughter. The Wallins also live in Tucson. Last fall they (Scott, Sally and Anna) purchased a piece of McCarthy area property down the road from Jim and Peggy. If you've been reading WSEN for awhile, you would have come across an item or two of interest about this special family as they have made a variety of trips to this area.

Scott and Sally drove the Alcan in their “glorified” bus (a school bus made over into an RV) and Anna in her pickup truck. They made it here before Jim and Peggy. Shortly after their arrival, Rick and I walked down to say hello. Sally greeted us at the door of her “home” on wheels and invited us in for coffee.

Perhaps it is just a womanly thing, but I really wanted to see inside. I didn't waste any time before inspecting Sally's kitchen area and bathroom. Scott, with the help of his father-in-law Jim, outfitted the bus with all the amenities of home. I was impressed! Running water, a beautiful bathroom and Sally's kitchenette, complete with curtains and small vases of freshly-picked wildflowers.

Summer plans include a driveway (that is already done as of press time), a well, and a small cabin

where Anna, 23, will live through the winter months. This will be her first winter but certainly not her first visit to the area. Before Anna arrived she had acquired the receptionist's job at Ma Johnson's hotel. She loves meeting the guests and seeing that they are comfortable during their stay in McCarthy.

A big welcome to the Wallins!

Trig Trigiano: Another familiar face to McCarthy is Trig. Within a few years, the west side of the Kennicott may be referred to as the "retirement community." Although Trig enjoys his work with the University of Alaska, I am convinced he is plotting and planning his future days of leisure. With each trip to his cabin he brings in more building materials to make life easier. He has brought in so many supplies that the "old truck" just couldn't take another heavy load. It died! Trig is now sporting a new 1-ton Ford 350—his first truck with air-conditioning. (Works great for those dry summer days driving the McCarthy Road!)

Trig planned his trip over the 4th of July so he could take in the yearly McCarthy festivities. Welcome back to the neighborhood!

Drew Southard: Another welcome is in order for Drew Southard — official guide for Copper Oar. Last year he was running the rivers in Oregon for Destination Wilderness, parent company of Copper Oar. Drew hails from Colorado but told me he thinks Alaska is a great place to see, at least for awhile. He plans to return to Colorado when the season is over. In the meantime, he is staying more than busy. In fact, he says he arrived just in time to help the other guides move the Copper Oar office and outbuildings to a new location. They had been situated on the McCarthy Road near the footbridge but they are now on the new road that leads to the Kennicott River Service Bridge — informally dubbed "Freedom Lane."

Drew says the new location is "functional and good." Many long river rafting trips are planned this year from McCarthy to Chitina and Chitina to Cordova. A few day trips are also in the making.

A 14-day river trip starting from the head of the Nizina Glacier and ending at Cordova was expected to be completed on July 4th.

In spite of all the work Drew fell into on arrival to McCarthy, he finally was able to take some time off, he says, and visit the surrounding area. That included a trip down the road to see Mark Vail. He even squeezed in 5 or 6 river trips.

Welcome to the McCarthy area, Drew, and hope your season is full of adventure — the fun kind, of course!

41st Annual Long Lake Memorial Day Fly-in Breakfast: I received a phone call from Phil Collins the other day. It was perfect timing. I was planning to call him and his wife Carolyn for an update on this special annual event at Long Lake.

Phil and Carolyn's summer home is on the hill and overlooks the lake. As many of you know, Phil's dad, Cliff, passed away last year. This year's fly-in breakfast was in celebration of Cliff's life.

Good weather was of great importance to those who attended. The day before and the day after it rained but the day of the breakfast, the sun shone bright on the 143 in attendance. Truly an answer to prayer, says Phil.

Twenty-seven land planes, 1 float plane and 1 helicopter made their landings on either the Collins' grass airstrip or the nearby lake.

Long-time family friend, Steve Alexander, and associate minister at Christian Love Center in Wasilla, led the memorial service. Phil and son, Mike, and daughter Karen Collins Strahan, all shared special memories of Cliff and the things that he dearly loved doing each summer. The 70 swallow houses that Cliff so faithfully monitored,

diligently keeping records, the fish weir that he tended for 27 years and kept a data base for and the yearly garden that always produced extra produce for neighbors and friends, will be carried on by the family, says Phil.

A burial service was held later in the day and attended by family members and close friends of the family. Cliff's ashes were interred at the family cemetery which "Ampa" — a nickname used by family and friends — designed himself. Phil's first wife, Judy, is also buried at this site.

Comments were heard from several people, such as: "It was the nicest fly-in in years" and "it was an ideal service, one that really honored Ampa."

Kennecott Kid misses historic tour: Nels Konnerup, 87, who lived and worked at Kennecott on the aerial tram and in the mine system was scheduled to accompany Ron Simpson's special historic tour on June 4. Prior to the tour, Nels was in an automobile accident that prevented him from attending and assisting Ron in a tour of Kennecott. He was greatly missed!

Inger Ricci, another Kennecott Kid, was in attendance and writes, "Ron surely had some great slides. We had a wonderful trip." The only down side was Nels' absence.

If anyone — Kennecott Kid or others — who would like to drop Nels a note of encouragement, you may write him in care of his sister Yvonne Lahti, 20420 Marine Drive, Apt. B6, Stanwood, WA 98292.

We are praying for a speedy recovery, Nels!

NPS Regional Director meets with ROW

BY WSEN STAFF

Kennecott: – Approximately 40 people gathered on June 2 to meet with the National Park Service's (NPS) Alaska Regional Director Marcia Blaszak at the Kennecott Rec Hall in downtown Kennecott.

Ms. Blaszak offered an invitation to the Residents of the Wrangells (ROW) in a June 18th email: "I will be in the McCarthy/Kennecott area on July 2 and am interested in introducing myself to Residents of the Wrangells' members... I hope to meet as many of you as possible and share some of the current activities underway that I believe will help meet some of the objectives outlined in your mission statement. I will share with you where we are in our search for a new superintendent for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. I am also coming to listen."

Grateful for the opportunity to ease tensions between ROW and NPS, Chairperson Susan Smith responded to the Director's invitation with a resounding "yes."

First on the agenda was Director Blaszak's request for input describing desired traits for the next superintendent of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve (WRST). With the June departure of Gary Candelaria, past superintendent, and, due to the mountain of dissatisfaction that grew during his administration, ROW members were glad to participate.

In a prepared speech, ROW member Bonnie Kenyon addressed the Director:

"Director Blaszak, first of all thank you for extending an invitation to the Residents of the Wrangells to share several important traits that we would like to see in the next superintendent. It truly is an honor.



WSEN staff photo

Alaska Regional Director Marcia Blaszak

"Speaking of honor, we find this trait to be the most desired. We ask for a superintendent who is honorable — one we can show honor to. One who is not a slanderer but one who is upright, has integrity and moral character. Our hearts, as Residents of the Wrangells, is to respect the badge, the office and the person who sits in the position as Superintendent.

"Of great importance to us is a superintendent who respects and follows the law—in particular ANILCA, the constitution for this park, even if his or her personal philosophy might differ from the law.

"We request this superintendent have an administrative, not law enforcement background. A superintendent who will use his law enforcement rangers for legitimate law enforcement activities — not to intimidate and harass residents and visitors.

"The Residents of the Wrangells desire to work with the new superintendent and we request one who is willing to work with us and all residents, not just the environmental community.

"Last, but certainly not least, is a superintendent who has the heart of a public servant. In 1980 President Ronald Reagan told his new Secretary of the Interior that he

wanted the agencies under his control, which includes the National Park Service, to do two things: One: put people first. Two: become good neighbors. We would say the same things to our new superintendent whom you will choose."

Other traits that came forth from those in the audience included: One who understands Alaska bush and subsistence lifestyle, answers questions clearly and quickly, stays out of the residents' private lives, honest, people and user friendly, a local friend, uses funds wisely, has a vision for usage of the backcountry and local businesses, respects and embraces the values and resources of the community members and understands that this park is a different park than those in the lower 48 because of ANILCA.

The deadline for applications was midnight July 2. Both Director Blaszak and Deputy Director Vic Knox will evaluate the applications and make their selection. They hope to choose a new superintendent by October or November.

Knox, a 26-year veteran of the NPS, also addressed the group. He has been in Alaska for 2 years and hails from Salt Lake City where he served as an assistant regional director, a liaison between NPS, communities, the state, local and state delegates. A civil engineer, Knox also supervised construction projects.

According to Knox, because of a request from Governor Murkowski the NPS and the State are presently working on a user's guide for access to inholdings, statewide, hoping to make the process easier to understand. Taking a fresh look at the NPS regulations, Knox admitted they were "somewhat confusing." It is hoped that the guide will be available for public review sometime in December of this year.

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Kennicott River Service Bridge — ready to roll!

BY LAURIE ROWLAND

MCCARTHY, AK— Keith Rowland has a B.S. in Engineering and has designed and built several vehicle and pedestrian bridges, all still in service. Even so, the engineering, building, and installation of the Kennicott River Service Bridge have been a logistical challenge of staggering proportions for one man and a small fleet of equipment.

For the bridge decking, two pre-engineered 90-foot bridge spans were located in central Washington. The spans were trucked to the Seattle waterfront where they were loaded on a barge bound for Valdez. Once they arrived in Valdez, Keith picked them up and trucked them, one by one, to McCarthy, with his father, Ken Rowland, and I driving the pilot cars. Each span was so wide, long, and heavy that the State of Alaska required special over-weight, over-length, and over-width permits for their transport, as well as the two pilot cars. Because of the narrowness and tight corners on the 60 miles of brain cell scrambler known as the McCarthy Road, the longest trailer which Keith could use was 48 feet long, leaving a 35-foot overhang of heavy steel weighing down the rear axles of the trailer.

Once the bridge spans reached our equipment yard in McCarthy, the in-house work began. Roughly 10,000 pounds of structural reinforcing was added to the bridge in accordance with an engineer's specification to modify the spans for our application. Over 2000 pounds of welding rod were consumed in the process of making structural modifications on the bridge spans and



building the bridge piers.

The two piers which support the bridge spans were fabricated using four-foot diameter pipe with one-inch thick steel walls and an enlarged base. These piers were buried 12 – 15 feet deep in the river bed and protected by meticulously placed 6000 – 8000-pound armor rock.

Since 90 feet of steel decking is pretty heavy (55,000 pounds, or so), transporting just one of the spans the roughly one mile from our yard to the bridge site was a big job. With the deck suspended by chains between our loader and rock truck, Keith and his father, Ken, very slowly and carefully eased it along the road leading to the bridge site. It was pretty tricky going—our heavy

earth-moving equipment seems so big and beefy, but for this job what we have is painfully inadequate. The machines were maxed to the limit. Our 10-year-old son, David, and Grandpa Ken in the loader had a tense moment when the machine suddenly tipped forward, rear wheels spinning in thin air and front rigging gouging into the road with a bone-jarring *crunch!* It

took all day to carefully maneuver the span into place, but by the end of the day, they had it lying neatly across the river between the two piers.

The next chore—and one of the biggest challenges—was lifting the center span into place without the benefit of a crane. The following is an excerpt from a Rowland family



letter detailing the bridge building process:

“Question: How do you lift almost half a bridge without an industrial crane? Answer: A little at a time. First, Keith made a temporary ramp out of a 40-ft flatbed, which will eventually be one of the bridge spans. Because he didn’t want the heavy flatbed to exert too much lateral pressure on the newly set pier, he hung the ramp on chains from the pier cap (*below*).

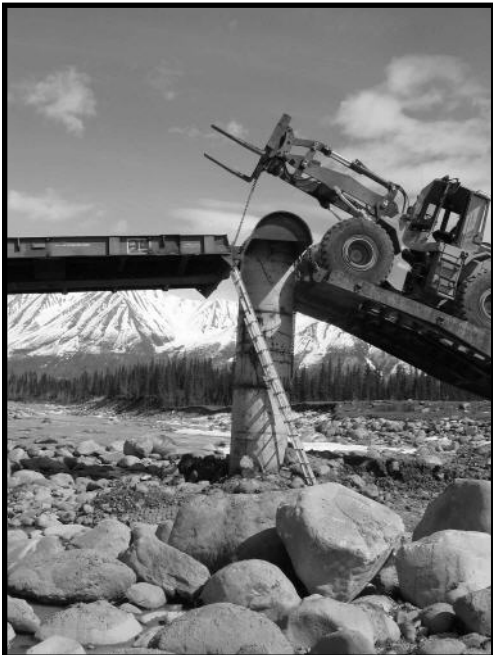
--Lifting the deck up... and up...

...and up... and up...

... and over the top!



Keith drove the loader up his “suspended ramp” and rigged up



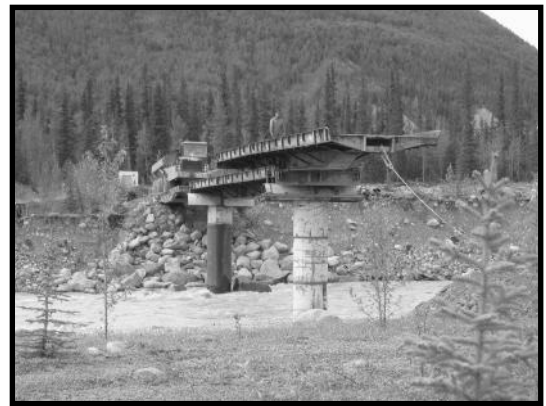
two sets of chains—one set attaching the bridge to the loader boom, and the other set attaching the bridge to the pier. Then he began lifting the bridge, only a couple feet at a time, resetting the pier anchor chain, then lowering the loader boom, then resetting the loader chain, lifting, resetting, lowering the boom, resetting, lifting... It was a l-o-o-o-n-g, tense day!

The next day, the suspended ramp was transported to the west pier, and the process began all over again...”

Between this stage of installation and the next, there were weeks’ worth of welding and fabricating to be done. Meanwhile, the Kennicott River was rapidly rising. Soon, another logistical challenge began to present itself—how to install the east span from the west side of the river. To accomplish this feat, Keith used the “piggyback and see-saw” method. From the west side of the river, he literally pushed that 28-ton chunk of steel across the west and central spans, until it hung, precariously balanced between river and sky, on the eastern end of the bridge. Then, using cables and chains for stability, he slowly eased

the span past its fulcrum. Ever so gently and carefully, he set the eastern end of the span on the ground, and before the day was done, the east span was properly set and pinned in place.

Now, the bridge was almost ready for use. All that remained was to install highway-grade guard



rails and new decking on the west span. With help from some good neighbors, this stage of construction was accomplished in “no time flat.”

Work still to be completed: a solar-powered keypad lock system for the gate (we’re currently using a padlock and handing out keys to those who have bought passes to use the bridge); painting the bridge structure; raising the approaches and east abutment approximately four feet; and installing signage.

Some have asked, “Just how strong is this bridge?” The answer: Very strong. The bridge has been specially engineered to support an 80,000-pound load and to resist a 25-year flood event occurring simultaneously with a Hidden Lake outburst.

The Kennicott River Service Bridge project has been 100% pri-
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Fun and games at 17,200'

BY DOROTHY ADLER

The story behind our May Denali climbing trip begins in Girdwood 10 days prior to the climb. Bethany Barnes and Meghan Seifert are busy dehydrating fruits, vegetables, tofu, salsa, tomato sauce, and homemade power bars. I arrive in town just in time to help finish off the shopping, run around REI and AMH, and make a trip to Girdwood to help pack the food. The food-packing day is a chaotic 12-hour day with a short break to visit Jim at Girdwood Ski and Cycle. There we decompress from the chore of packing for a 21-day mountaineering trip—Jim has an array of hoola hoops in different sizes and colors! We each pick up a hoola and Jim even joins in to show us some tricks. He finds us a hoola, which breaks into three lightweight sections to carry with us on the mountain. Meghan and Beth are hoola veterans; quite a scene together as they pass the 4-foot diameter hoola hoop back and forth.

Days later we arrive in Talkeetna, where we register with NPS and check in with Talkeetna Air Taxi for our flight the following day. It has been raining for days and the air taxi is backed up. They hint that we might not fly the next day. Because their bunkhouse is filled for the night, they give us girls the luxurious shed that has just literally been constructed (they were putting the roof on while we weighed our gear). It was a modest little building, plenty big for the three of us and our combined 375 lbs of gear; however,

somewhere during the night we took to duct taping the leaks in the roof. I finally took cover in my truck.

The next morning was bustling around TAT. Climbers were gearing up to go and planes were already flying. The weather was still improving and we were on the list to fly out later that day. After a big breakfast at The Roadhouse we did our last minute packing and hauled our gear to the runway. After a 45-minute

hoola hooping, and ski jumps, we finally left base camp in the early afternoon. After we were all roped up with sleds rigged and packs loaded, we debated for a good while over whether to wait for it to cool off or just go for it. Considering it was still May and cooling off a bit at night, we decided it was safe to travel and off we went. We were also traveling on skis, which make it safer through the crevasse fields. The route descends a well-known slope appropriately named

“heartbreak hill” and then climbs again slightly to a camp at 7800'. Some of the largest crevasses and snow bridges of the entire route exist in this area. We traveled cautiously and quickly, arriving at this next camp in about three hours.

The next morning we had our typical coffee routine and set off a bit earlier. Ski hill was the next challenge, a section of the West Buttress route that many parties double-carry; meaning that climb-



Photo courtesy Dorothy Adler

14,200-ft. camp with Mr. Foraker in background.

flight in the Cessna 185 we landed at the 7200-ft. Kahiltna base camp. It was quite a scene. Now you probably are under the impression that this is a climbing trip, meaning serious business, right? The following day becomes what is typical for us on the mountain—never start before noon and always drink coffee and giggle for a while before doing anything else. And to get the trip started on just the right note, Meghan participated in some ski-jumping events at base camp that fully impressed onlookers, all of whom were of the opposite gender. So after a full morning of coffee,

ers will carry some gear to 9700' and dig a cache and return to it the following day. We decided that there was no way we wanted to travel up this hill twice, so we single carried (125 lbs. each) with our sleds and packs. The conditions ascending ski hill were practically whiteout and quite windy, making a rest stop for food and water very short and cold. Arriving at 9700' in the early afternoon gave us time to start digging out a camp—until someone vacated, and we were able to move right in to an established area. Here is where we became known as the “hoola girls” and the

festivities began. The following day we decided to rest—partly because we needed it, partly we had a mini-blizzard going on and didn't want to travel. Besides, Meg and Beth were having too much fun greeting other climbers with the hoola hoop and trying to get those passing by to join in the fun. That night we had our first official dinner party on the mountain. Those of you who know me well know that I like dinner parties. This continued to take place on the mountain all the way up to 14,200' with 12 people sometimes getting cozy in the megamid (cook tent) for pot-lucks.

The next day's move to 11,000' was fairly mellow. We actually set our alarms for 5 AM, thinking we might get an early start that day, but didn't leave camp until 8:30. That was a record for us and I think the only time we left before noon. From 9,700' to 11,000' is a gradual slope, getting steeper just before reaching 11,000'. This is a beautiful camp and gives one the feeling that you are finally gaining elevation and moving up the mountain. There were many people at this camp, international climbers as well as friends from Alaska. We were greeted as the "hoola girls" as soon as we rolled in. The next day the hoola hoop came out and people gathered to try their hand (I mean hips) at this collapsible party favor that brought us so much notoriety. We didn't intend to try and carry it to the summit, but here is where we began to formulate the idea to be the first to hoola hoop on Denali's 20,320-ft. summit.

After another rest day we were really feeling like we were on vacation and ready to carry a load of gear to 13,500'. We ascended Motorcycle Hill and worked our way up Squirrel Hill. The next major obstacle was Windy Corner, a section of

the climb that has claimed lives in the past. As the name indicates, it can be tremendously windy and with the exposure and potential icy conditions it can be necessary for the leader to place protection in case one should fall. Fortunately, the conditions were perfect each time



Photo courtesy the author

Bethany & Megan on the headwall above 14,000-ft. camp.

we traveled this section of the route. The Alaska Range saw a lot of snow this year, which made sections that are often icy, quite perfect for us. We slept at 11,000' again to better acclimatize and then moved to 14,200' the next day and picked up our cache along the way.

We were all beat when we arrived at 14,200'. I remember this as being one of the most tiring days of the entire trip. The altitude begins to affect your breathing and you feel like you're moving incredibly slow, like you are walking through quicksand. Fortunately, we had 5 days of chillin' to get our bodies used to the altitude. The weather was fairly good at this elevation and we had some bluebird days where it reached over 100 degrees inside our tent. There is a ranger station at this camp where climbers can check the weather and chat with the climbing rangers. It's a mini city with people from all over the world gathered for the same reason. We stocked up on

chocolate at this camp, as climbers coming down from the 17,200-ft. camp are anxious to get rid of food and fuel so they don't have to descend with it.

Once the megamid was erected, kitchen counters and seating for about 12 sculpted from snow, the dinner parties began. We would have several MSR stoves going at once and a potpourri of food to eat. The meals always began with melting snow for water and the making of hot drinks. The cooking and eating of these meals lasted several hours with the grand finale being some no-bake desserts that were out of this world.

So here we are at 14,200' feeling like we are on vacation. Yoga sessions, hoola hooping, and skiing by day and dinner parties and card games by night.

We had Jiffy Popcorn delivered to our tent at midnight by friends looking for a card game and got to hang tight with two other rad women who were skiing some big lines from 18,000'. Then we decided to make the move to 17,200'—and the vacation became more like the mountaineering trip that it was.

The day we moved up to 17,200' was absolutely stellar. We ascended the fixed lines between the 14,200-ft. camp and the 16,200-ft. ridge. We had made a cache two days prior and the day before we gorged on rich foods all day long. We brought only 3-4 days of food and fuel, thinking the good weather might last and we'd make a quick ascent and then be back to our big cache of food at 14,200' in no time. We also had added an interesting dynamic to our all-girls team and I only mention it because it became in some ways, the greatest challenge of the trip. We called him "the hitchhiker," someone we had befriended at the previous camp whose partner be-

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4th of July at McCarthy

WSEN STAFF

McCarthy: — Fourth of July celebrations at McCarthy received high marks from the approximate 200 plus attendees this year. Jeremy Keller and Denise Jantz were the Masters of Ceremony for this year's festivities. They did a fine job keeping things moving and organized. Many participants are voting for their return next year.

Launching the annual event at noon was the McCarthy Marching Band leading the float procession down McCarthy's main street.

First place in the float competition this year went to the team of Jim and Peggy Guntis, Kim Northrup and Scott Wallin. The coveted prize was 20 yards of gravel donated by Rowcon Services. The Wallin's converted school bus (no longer yellow but a deep green) made a perfect Giant Green Mosquito, complete with moving wings (operated by Jim and Kim), huge eyes and a long snout which constantly probed for a soft spot in its desired victim – Peggy who was out front of this huge insect-looking monster. Outfitted from head to toe with mosquito netting pants, jacket and hat, Peggy was armed for battle – a can of bug spray and the weapon for the season, a bug

zapper! Her antics of fending off the brute caused much laughter from the onlookers and (in my opinion) won the hearts of the judges.

The stretch of road in downtown McCarthy soon cleared and a variety of contests and games were set up for the enjoyment of all. Hungry folks lined up outside in front of the McCarthy Lodge to sample the food specially prepared for the joyous occasion. Inside the lodge, long-time local resident Jim Edwards entertained folks with his stories of the early days when McCarthy and Kennicott were more-or-less ghost towns.

The competitions included Nail Pounding and Doubles Horseshoes which were sponsored by McCarthy Lodge; the Pie Eating Contest (congratulation to Kaylin Moffitt who won the kids' first place class!); Jalapeno Eating Contest

sponsored by Meg Hunt and McCarthy Air; Spuddy's Hot Potato sponsored by (guess who?) The Potato; Potato Dump Relay; The Hunker Hawser and the Monkey Log sponsored by the Rowland family; Janet Hegland's card game on The Green; the Orange Relay sponsored by Glacier View Campground and to end the celebration...The Historic Egg Toss. The adult class winners of the egg toss were Keith Rowland and brother-in-law Dave Person. Prize was lunch for two at Kennicott Glacier Lodge. (I'm wondering which two will get the lunch. Just in case you didn't know your husband won, Laurie, you might want to get in on this one! After all you are related to both these gentlemen.)

To cap off the day's festivities, the Pilgrim Family gave an outdoor concert.

The smoke from northern Alaskan forest fires that had hung in the valley for the week preceding the holiday lifted, the heavens opened and watered the drought-stricken forests – all in time for Glacier View Campground to add their final touch with a grand display of fireworks.

Another year, another 4th of July, another celebration – all McCarthy style, of course!



Search for Missing Climber on Mount Sanford

BY KEVIN SMITH

Jason Harper was dropped off on May 4 at 3,000 feet at Windy Ridge on the side of Mount Sanford in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. Pilot Harley McMahan of Gakona dropped Jason off alone with skis, five days of food, climbing and camping gear.

Jason's plan was to climb and ski the heavily-crevassed Sheep Glacier route from the summit, if possible, going fast and light.

Growing up in Idaho, Jason, 28, had done many impressive climbs and ski descents with friends as well as solo in various places such as Girdwood, Valdez, Europe and South America.

The Sheep Glacier route has more than 10,000 feet of vertical drop, making it one of the longest runs anywhere. It was first climbed in 1938 by Bradford Washburn and Terris Moore who also skied parts of it. The first solo ascent was by legendary Japanese mountaineer Naomichi Uemurg in 1968.

On May 9, Jason did not meet McMahan for his scheduled pickup. McMahan searched on foot near the airstrip and in the air with his plane. After a few days of not seeing any signs of Jason, he called the National Park Service (NPS).

On May 12 NPS pilots searched the Sheep Glacier route and other possible descent routes, but saw nothing.

An Air National Guard Blackhawk H-60 helicopter with forward-looking infrared radar joined the

search on the 13th. They flew the entire route up to the summit without seeing anything. Jason's father, Doug Harper, and his brother, Doug, Jr. also served as spotters in the search.

In the early morning of the 14th, Kelly Bay of McCarthy-based Wrangell Mountain Air flew Matthew and Kevin Smith from McCarthy to Gakona to meet up with Dan Vandermeulen to help with the search. Dan requested them to do a ground search, which had not been done yet, on the Sheep Glacier.

The high altitude Denali Lama helicopter was brought in. Incident Commander Pete Dalton of NPS, consulting with Rich Richotte, gave the approval to fly Matthew and Kevin, Dan and Doug Harper, Jr. to ground search the heavily-crevassed ice fall area between 7,500' and 8,000'.

After being dropped at 8500' by the Denali Lama, the team roped up and spent 5 hours skiing down the glacier searching into crevasses, calling and even using an avalanche beacon search. Nothing was seen or heard of Jason's whereabouts.

Search and rescue dogs were also used around the Windy Ridge airstrip and farther up where a few of Jason's tracks had been found. All searchers were safely flown back to Gakona for the night.

The next day Denali climbing ranger, Joe Reichert, with volunteers Robb McLean, Rob Klimek, and Dexter Hale, along with McCarthy's Matthew and Kevin Smith, were flown by the Denali La-

ma to 7,500' with 5 days' supplies. The team was divided into two parties with Joe leading one up the glacier while Matthew, Kevin and Rob skied, roped together, down the glacier. At 7,000' Matthew located an old snow cave that was thought to be left behind by a previous climbing party in April. Upon probing, a bag of food was uncovered as well as Jason's sleeping bag and wallet.

This proved Jason had been on the Sheep Glacier and was probably farther up. Joe's group didn't find any evidence, however. The plan that night was to get the Denali Lama to fly the group higher on the glacier. In the morning the summit was covered in lenticular clouds as was Mount Drum. This is always a sign of very high winds.

The search could no longer continue and everyone was safely flown back to Gakona – ending the search. Jason was never found.

Efforts between pilots, NPS personnel, Alaska State Troopers, Air National Guard, the dog team rescue crew, and friends and family all worked together exceedingly well and made for a safe and thorough, if unsuccessful, search.

Jason Harper will be missed greatly by family and friends that had come to know and love him.

Kevin Smith is a long-time guide for Kennicott Wilderness Guides of Kennicott, Alaska. He and his wife, Dorothy Adler, are year round residents of McCarthy.

"A man who has nothing for which he is willing to fight; nothing he cares about more than his own personal safety; is a miserable creature who has no chance of being free, unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself." —John Stuart Mill

"I don't make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts." —Will Rogers

"Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety." —Benjamin Franklin

Residents of the Wrangells update

BY SUSAN SMITH

CHAIRPERSON, ROW

As reported in the last issue of WSEN, Governor Murkowski wrote to Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton on April 15, asking her to launch an investigation into allegations that the National Park Service (NPS) has shown "...various patterns of misbehavior and abuse, including unreasonable right-of-way closures and restrictions; undue delays in the issuance of permits; and intimidation, harassment, and selective law enforcement..." in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park (WRST). He calls for further direction to NPS personnel in administering the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) access provisions, stating, "If these reports of arbitrary and sometimes abusive behavior are accurate, they raise serious questions about the Park Service's implementation of ANILCA..."

Armed NPS rangers frequently make unannounced visits to local residents and make low-level flights over private property which tends to harass and intimidate targeted inholders. Annual access fees are demanded on rights-of-way cleared and continually used since long before the park was established. Costly five-and six-figure NEPA EA's and EIS's are being performed on these access routes, with residents often responsible for all costs.

The governor has called for proper notification by NPS personnel before visits onto private property or low-level flyovers, and for minimal or no fees associated with the permits. He has also asked for the NPS to devise a new, standardized, more relaxed procedure for inholder access. With respect to NEPA compliance, the governor calls for DOI to specify cases where no environmental study is neces-

sary, and to give a Categorical Exclusion to residents trying to reach their homes. These exclusions can be granted for activities having minimal impact to park resources. The Park Service often uses them to allow NPS personnel to conduct their duties without going through assessment procedures. They used a Categorical Exclusion to cut a swath of trees nearly two miles long around the Pilgrim property last summer.

Many inholders didn't know they needed access permits. For over twenty years, residents used their traditional means and routes of travel without any NPS notification to let them know what was expected. Now, by submitting a permit application, residents open up a bureaucratic snarl of red tape. Once permits are granted, short terms, continual renewals, possible revocation, and sometimes impossible stipulations accompany them. The governor seeks to eliminate these problems by establishing an appeals process with an Alaskan oversight committee to make rulings on any ANILCA-related issues. He also calls for NPS selection of the applicant's chosen route, and time limit restrictions for the permitting process.

We were disappointed to receive a letter from the Inspector General for the Department of the Interior in late April. He wrote to Residents of the Wrangells (ROW) saying his department would not review the allegations. Instead, he referred the matter back to NPS for "appropriate action" on their part. We didn't exactly expect them to be readily willing to conduct an investigation, but we looked forward to their response to the governor's letter. This failure of the Department of the Interior to "police their own house" opens the door to an investigation by Congress, a matter which ROW is pursuing.

The state Republican Convention was held on May 27 in Soldotna. ROW was delighted to see that a resolution was adopted to call upon our state representatives to come forward and help all Alaskans defend their ANILCA rights. Another impressive resolution was passed to urge our representatives to block passage of the Get Outdoors Act (HR 4100) which would provide billions of dollars annually for fifteen years, in unappropriated funding, to purchase inholdings in conservation units, sanction further condemnations of private property, and enhance the powers of the Endangered Species Act, all under the guise of curing obesity! For more information about this dangerous bill, go to the American Land Rights Association website at <http://www.landrights.org>. We encourage you to write or e-mail our Congressional delegation to voice your opposition to this legislation. Also, check out related issues in the McCarthy area at <http://www.mccarthy-kennicott.com>.

I had the opportunity to speak with Senator Lisa Murkowski on the Valdez public radio "Coffee Break" program at the end of May. She assured us that she stands behind every Alaskan's right to access; her office has been in touch with ROW several times to keep abreast of recent developments. Senator Ted Stevens has asked his staff to contact NPS in an effort to resolve some of our problems in the park. An aide from Congressman Don Young's office will be in the McCarthy area in August to hear our grievances.

Superintendent Gary Candelaria was transferred last month out of WRST; Hunter Sharp is Acting Superintendent until the position is filled. NPS Regional Director Marcia Blaszk invited ROW to meet with

her at the Kennecott Rec Hall on July 2, from 10 a.m. until noon, to discuss what traits residents would like to see in a new superintendent. She was accompanied by NPS Deputy Regional Director Vic Knox and Tina Cuning from the Department of Fish and Game.

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources has issued a permit to the Pilgrim family to clear brush and do minimal maintenance of the 14-mile state road to their home. (See story below.) Now, NPS will have to decide whether they will honor the DNR permit and allow work to proceed on the controversial route.

In one year's time, ROW has achieved many of its goals. We have established a substantial membership list and we have networked with many of you in the community. Our entire Congressional delegation and governor are aware of our situation and speaking on our behalf with the Department of the Interior.

Many trail postings have been changed to more clearly allow for subsistence use. We have strong alliances with the American Land Rights Association, Alaska Land Rights Coalition, Pacific Legal Foundation, and Slana Alaskans Unite. The NPS has "promoted" Gary Candelaria from Superintendent of the Park to a Deputy Director position at Harpers Ferry Historical Park. Through the internet and press coverage, our stories in the WRST are being read across the country. Our collective voice is being heard!

Environmental groups are fighting even harder now to buy inholdings in our park and to force NPS to restrict or deny our access. The battle is far from over. Advocates of viewshed restrictions, light pollution regulations, noise pollution regulations, wilderness protection, national parks free of human habitation, and expansion of conservation units through unlimited purchases of private land are gaining momen-

tum, backed by vast financial resources. However, no national special interest group should be allowed to have the power to deny Alaskans what Congress insisted on protecting by law in 1980; the preservation of a truly unique Alaskan bush community which delights and amazes visitors to our area just as much as the landscape, flora, and fauna.

If you live or own property in or near the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, we encourage you to join the Residents of the Wrangells. Dues are only \$10 per year which is used to offset the cost of mailings. Contact Susan Smith, Chairperson, Residents of the Wrangells, McCarthy #63B, Box MXY, Glennallen AK 99588 or email residentsofwrangells@yahoo.com.

DNR approves road work on McCarthy-Green Butte

In a letter dated June 9, 2004, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has granted approval to the Pilgrim family's request to do required maintenance on the McCarthy-Green Butte Road, RST 135.

The letter, addressed to attorney J.P. Tangen, provides "any authorization needed from the Department for removing overburden and underbrush and performing other incidental improvements on the state's right-of-way to provide for reasonable access to your client's property."

Several cautions were given, such as notifying landowners of property that the road passes through, including the National Park Service (NPS), who has the ability to "reasonably regulate" the manner of access.

The definition of "reasonable regulation" has been the source of much controversy since the NPS posted notices last year saying the road was closed to all vehicular traffic. Acting Superintendent Hunter Sharp (then Chief Ranger) later said that the notice did not apply to subsistence activity, but that it was

merely intended to keep the Pilgrims from accessing their home by vehicle.

The Pilgrims have brought suit against the Park Service and the case is now before the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. The Pacific Legal Foundation is handling the case. The state of Alaska has filed an *amicus curiae*, or "friend of the court" brief on behalf of the Pilgrims litigation.

"Ronald Reagan's final sunset service included a perfect Golden State sunset. Yes, Hollywood could have scripted this... but only God could have pulled it off."

—Chuck Muth

"Freedom is a lonely battle, but if the United States doesn't lead it — sometimes imperfectly, but mostly with honor — who will?" —Cal Thomas

In 2004, as America celebrates the 200th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Alaskans can take pride in our own state's great journey of discovery, the Allen Expedition of 1885. Though it occurred eight decades later, it has sometimes been called

Alaska's 'Lewis and Clark Expedition'

BY ROBERT E. KING

The 1885 Allen Expedition also entailed exploration of uncharted terrain and resulted in many new discoveries. It was the first time westerners traveled from the coastal regions of south-central Alaska northward through the Alaska Range into the Yukon drainage. From there the expedition continued westward to the Bering Sea — completing a total of 1,500 miles in less than 20 weeks. It was a remarkable achievement.

Allen's distinguished career

Henry Tureman Allen, born in 1859 in Kentucky (11 years prior to the death of the last member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition), graduated from West Point in 1882. During the next 41 years, he would serve his country in various military capacities, ending his distinguished career as commander of the American Occupation Forces in Germany during 1919-1923 after World War I. Yet arguably his most exciting assignment was one he received in his mid-20s as a young lieutenant serving as an aide to veteran Indian fighter, Gen. Nelson A. Miles. In 1880, Miles was put in charge of the U.S. Army's operations in the Pacific Northwest. This was after leading numerous campaigns against Indians in the American West, including the Cheyenne, Comanche, Sioux tribes under Sitting Bull (who defeated Gen. Custer in 1876), and Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce in 1877. However, Miles had other interests as well, including exploration. He was fascinated with reports of Alaska Territory and in 1883 sent Army Lt. Frederick Schwatka on an expedition to explore the Yukon Riv-

er basin, an area only partly traversed earlier by the Russians, British and Americans. The trip was a success.

A dangerous plan

With the encouraging results of the Schwatka Expedition, Miles set his sites on a new and much more ambitious goal to explore an area of Alaska where no westerner had successfully gone before — the Copper River country and points beyond. The plan was to send a party to ascend the Copper River and find a passable route through the unexplored Alaska Range to the Yukon drainage. If successful, it would be a major achievement.

The trip was not without danger and uncertainty. Earlier, at least three groups of Russian explorers had perished in the Copper River country, where the Ahtna Indians of the Copper River were known to be fiercely territorial. Also, no British or Americans had successfully made the formidable journey despite some attempts. To Miles and the military, it was a challenge with no guarantee of success. It was in this less-than optimistic setting that the Allen Expedition was launched and its start clouded even further.

Lt. Allen was not Miles' first choice to follow up on the successes of the more modest Schwatka Expedition. That assignment had gone to Lt. William Abercrombie who left in 1884. But as weeks passed with no word of his fate, Gen. Miles became concerned and sent Lt. Allen to investigate. Accordingly, he sailed north in late 1884, thereby getting his first taste of adventure in Alaska. While Abercrombie and his men did return safely, they nonetheless

failed in their quest. Abercrombie's report painted a gloomy prospect for further exploration in the region. He concluded that the route they had tried to pioneer was not practical due to overwhelming obstacles of high mountains, glacier-filled valleys, and daunting rivers beset with swift rapids which had forced the group to turn back. This was certainly discouraging news. Had it not been for Gen. Miles' continuing interest in Alaska and Lt. Allen's newly-found excitement for the territory, it would have ended there.

A second attempt

Instead, Miles persisted and soon was able to win support for one more attempt to explore the Copper River country and beyond. But it was to be a more modest expedition of only three men. Lt. Allen was selected to lead it and he handpicked two other men to come along. They were Cavalry Sgt. Cady Robertson, a fellow soldier from his own unit, and Pvt. Frederick W. Fickett, a signal corpsman, whom Allen had met in Sitka during his trip to determine Abercrombie's fate. Both turned out to be good choices.

The small party wasted little time in starting north to Alaska. Lt. Allen received official orders on Jan. 27, 1885 authorizing the trip. Two days later the three men were on a steamer headed for Alaska. They would not return to Allen's post at Vancouver Barracks in Washington Territory until later that year. And what they did during their time away made history.

As expected, the primary purpose of the expedition was to learn about and map unknown terrain

including a pass through the Alaska Range and beyond into the Yukon Basin. But there was another reason, a military one. By the terms of their official orders, Allen and his men were to report on the Native people, including information on how much of a future threat they might pose to other westerners that would later venture into this region. Memories of the ill fated Russian expeditions lingered. Also, this was a time in America when conflicts with Native peoples elsewhere were still occurring in some areas. After Allen returned, his commander, Gen. Miles, was sent on a special mission to fight Geronimo.

Natives contribute to success

Thus, the military's concern for what they might face in Alaska was understandable given the times. But, in view of Lt. Allen being authorized only two other men for his expedition, this order to assess Natives from a military standpoint was a bit ironic. Later, it would become even more ironic in light of how well Allen and his men were treated by the Natives they encountered. Had it not been for the Alaska Native people encountered, at times the small group of travelers might have perished. Similar situations occurred during the Lewis and Clark Expedition, some 80 years earlier.

With full knowledge of potential problems he might face, Lt. Allen nonetheless saw this trip as a great opportunity. The expedition eventually succeeded where all others before them had failed. Not only did Allen and his men record information on the people they encountered, but they became trusted

enough by Ahtna Chief Nicolai that he led them up the Chitina River to a secret outcropping of nearly pure copper. Allen's record of this remarkable place helped inspire later searches for copper in the region leading to the later discovery of the Kennecott Copper Mines, one of the richest deposits of high grade copper ever found in North America.

Among the other notable discoveries made by the men was Sustuta Pass, a usable route from the Copper River County into the Tanana and Yukon Valleys. Most remarkable of all was their mapping for the first time of the Copper, Tanana and Koyukuk Rivers. And all this in less than 20 weeks while traveling overland for more than 1,500 miles!

An invaluable report

Two years after their return, Lt. Allen completed an impressive 172-page report, accompanied by detailed maps. It was modestly titled "Report of An Expedition to the Copper, Tanana, and Koyukuk River, in the Territory of Alaska, in the Year 1885, for the Purpose of Obtaining all Information Which will be Valuable and Important, Especially to the Military Branch of the Government." While the document contained around 20 illustrations, including sketches of terrain they encountered as well as depictions of some Natives, Allen and Fickett were greatly disappointed by one unfortunate event. They had brought along a camera, but the numerous glass-plate photographs they made with considerable effort were later lost by a messenger.

Today, Allen's well-written report remains an invaluable document for Alaska. It provided not only a history of prior exploration in the Copper, Tanana and Koyukuk River areas including oral history anecdotes, but a compelling narrative of their harrowing trip. It also recorded invaluable observations about the Natives encountered along the way and their cultures, which were already undergoing changes due to contact with outsiders. Allen, not unlike early cultural anthropologists of the time, even speculated on connections between various peoples of Alaska and their prehistoric movements based on "general appearance and manner."

In addition, Allen's report included observations on animals, geology, volcanic activity, glaciers, minerals, and even the weather. Altogether, the Allen Expedition created the first written record for much of interior Alaska, a remarkable accomplishment that places it among the greatest journeys of discovery in American history. It was indeed Alaska's own Lewis and Clark Expedition!

Footnote: While Robert King, BLM's State Archaeologist for Alaska has great admiration for Lt. Henry T. Allen and the remarkable achievements of his expedition, he also has a special interest in the Lewis and Clark Expedition as he is a distant relative of Meriwether Lewis.

(Reprinted from the *BLM Alaska Frontiers* Summer 2004.)

CLASSIFIED

WANTED: Five to sixty acres in McCarthy area. Contact Ron at (303)940-6539

FOR SALE: Ruger Old Army .45 cal black powder revolver. 7.5" barrel with adjustable sights. Appears to be unfired. \$350 OBO contact Rick at (907)554-4454

FOR SALE: Beretta 3032 Tomcat with custom grips and action work by Bill West of Wild West Guns. Like new. \$250 OBO. Ruger Old Model Single Six .22 magnum with scope. Nice condition. \$275. Call Rick at (907)554-4454

WRST superintendent leaves under cloud

WSEN STAFF

Gary Candelaria has stepped down from his position as superintendent of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park (WRST) and taken a position as Deputy Director for Harpers Ferry Center in West Virginia. There he will direct a team of technicians who provide audiovisual assistance throughout the National Park System.

Candelaria came to WRST in 1999. During his first several years he kept a low profile, forging alliances with the local environmental community, the Wilderness Society and the National Parks and Conservation Association, and quietly working to buy up land in and around the park with the help of various environmental land trusts.

Then began a spate of actions against the community and local residents, such as Candelaria's infamous McCarthy Green Butte Road closure, which outraged many McCarthy citizens and brought national attention to WRST. He also approved a SWAT-style helicopter team of heavily armed rangers and technicians that harassed the Pilgrim family for weeks while trying to find "damage" to park lands that could be charged against the Pilgrims. At the same time, Candelaria approved a damaging land survey, including a wide clear-cut swath around the Pilgrim property so the NPS could "keep an eye on the family from the air." In so doing, the

WRST destroyed more natural, undisturbed vegetation and left more visual impact in the McCarthy Creek valley than anyone likely has in the last 50 years.

Candelaria wrote an incredibly unprofessional and slanderous "Open Letter" in which contained untrue charges against the Pilgrims and ugly personal comments. Then Candelaria ordered his staff at the Kennicott Visitor Center to show it to tourists that asked questions about the Pilgrims.

Last year, while spending an admitted half-million dollars attempting to bring a case against the Pilgrim family, he authorized the closure of the newly-constructed visitor contact log cabin at the end of the McCarthy Road, supposedly because of "budget cuts."

While Candelaria was superintendent of WRST, the park also spent \$420,000 building and renovating thirteen "public-use cabins," only eight of which are listed in the 2004 Superintendent's Compendium. Some area residents have charged that the four unlisted cabins were built for exclusive use of NPS employees rather than the public.

On the north side of the park he oversaw a process where the WRST called a public meeting and workshop with citizens, ostensibly to come up with ways to repair and protect trails from ORV impacts. Slana resident Doug Frederick and other volunteers constructed an in-

novative trail protection demonstration and sent photos of their work to the NPS. Instead of thanking Frederick, Candelaria had Frederick charged as a criminal for building a structure in the park. In Frederick's trial the NPS admitted it wasn't really interested in repairing or protecting the trails, it just wanted them closed and that the (undisclosed) purpose of the "citizen workshop" was to satisfy an ANILCA requirement that the NPS have a public meeting before closing trails.

All of these events as well as many other abuses on Candelaria's watch generated an unprecedented groundswell of local outrage and the formation of a new organization, the Residents of the Wrangells, or ROW. ROW took public testimony on NPS abuse in the WRST at several heated meetings and submitted its findings to the congressional delegation and the governor as well as asking for a Department of the Interior Inspector General Investigation.

When asked why Candelaria has left WRST, NPS spokesperson Jane Tranel said, "Gary took a promotion to take a position at the Harpers Ferry [NPS] Service Center." Director Blaszak had this to say, "Gary's with a soulmate that he's going to marry this summer; now they're both in the DC area and can be together."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR continued from page 35

What's wrong with this picture? We keep hearing the NPS wants to be our friends. Why can't they act like friends and treat residents with

respect? They have other options that they choose not to take.

The area in question is purposefully left out of this account to protect the privacy of the gentleman in-

involved. But the story speaks for itself. It should outrage every one of us.

Concerned Citizen

In memory of Karen Woodruff Long 1957-2004

BY LYNN WELTY

Karen Long continued her journey into eternal life on May 21, 2004. She had spent 47 years on earth and touched many lives during that time. She was a loving daughter and sister, a devoted wife and mother, but I knew her best as a caring teacher.

When our family moved out into the bush of Alaska, education became our responsibility. There is no public or private school in McCarthy or Kennecott to send your children to. There are many schools that will help bush families by providing a curriculum and a teacher to grade the students' work, make sure required tests and classes are taken, and hand out the high school diploma. We chose to go with the Chugach Extension School out of Valdez and, hence, Karen walked into our lives.

Karen made two trips a year to our community in order to meet with her students and their families. Chugach does not have one certain curriculum all the students must follow, so Karen would spend time with each student to see where their interest lay and how they learned. She also took into consideration the parents, the ones who would be doing the actual teaching. She spent time with the parents, listening to their thoughts of what is important in the education of their children. She would see the families' morals and values by spending time with

them in their homes. Then she would show them a choice of curriculums from which to set up their education according to their needs and abilities. If something didn't work then we would stop and try something else. Her desire was for the students to enjoy learning and to take an active part in their own education.

Karen spent time working to give the students opportunities to learn new things. She set up a technology camp so students could learn to do Power Point presentations on their computers. She set up Artists-in-the-Schools programs which allowed the students to work with professionals and learn how to paint with water colors, carve native masks, work with ceramics, play musical instruments, and perfect their writing skills. She encouraged students to take part in the Voyage to Excellence program run by the Chugach School District. We will all miss Karen and her group get-togethers that always included a science experiment or group project and, of course, hot dogs and s'mores around the fire.

Karen continued to care about and help her students long after they graduated. She has helped many children reach their dreams. She was our helper, our advisor, and most importantly, our friend.

When Karen knew her time on earth was soon to be over, she shared with her family what she wanted included in her memorial

service which was held June 6 at Hermon Hutchens Elementary School in Valdez. Even in passing, she comforted those who loved her. I will end with a Bible verse Karen chose to leave with us. The words of Jesus Christ:

"Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14: 1-6.

Karen is survived by her husband, Richard C., and sons Alexander W. and Justin W. Long, all of Valdez; mother Geraldine Woodruff of Concord, Ohio; brother Robert Woodruff of Sagamore Hills, Ohio; sisters-in-law Nancy Woodruff of Ohio; and Sandra Hawkins and brother-in-law Edward Long, both of Alaska and many nieces and nephews.

She was proceeded in death by her father Robert E. Woodruff.

Al Swalling 1910 - 2004

Al Swalling, who worked on the CRNW Railway from 1928 until 1938 and who was also on "the last train out," died July 3. He was one of the great Alaskan pioneers who went on after his decade of work with the CR&NW

to become a major industrial contractor in Anchorage.

Al Swalling's company built the walking bridges which cross the Kennicott River, and it was also Swalling Construction which voluntarily set the museum box car onto the tracks in front of the McCarthy-

Kennicott Museum. Although he was no longer wellknown locally, Al himself was present at McCarthy on the day the box car was set in place. He often referred to his railroading days as one of the best times of his life.

THE CHITINA LEADER

July 1912 August

Strike Ore at Kuskulana

George Love is in receipt of a letter from Ole Berg, in charge of the properties of the Kuskulana Copper Company, stating that he has broken into a large body of the finest ore yet uncovered in that section. A number of eastern capitalists interested in the properties are now on their way out from Boston. — Valdez Prospector.

July 6

NEW BALL PARK FOR CHITINA

Chitina is going to have the best baseball park in Alaska. No sooner was the matter mentioned than everybody became interested. A good level plat of ground one half mile north of town has been selected and good progress is being made clearing it. In another week trees, brush and stumps will be gone. Two of Chitina's leading women were out the other day swinging axes in a most enthusiastic manner. It is now proposed to have a tract of forty acres including the ball park set aside by the government as a park for the town of Chitina. The ball grounds will be finished in time for some good games this summer.

The following letters remain uncalled for in the Chitina post office: A. Berry, John Bergen, Tim Cronin, John S. Dorwin, Fredric Fre-

dricken, H. Sutherland, Gust Swersten, Svenson, Charles Ckoftland, Warren Taylor, Louis Wick, Christ Wold, H. Wrarar.

The crew of men under Fred Walters have covered about three miles of this end of the trail and are now camped at the old site at the southend of the third lake. The crew under Billy Cameron are working at Tonsina and have covered about four miles of the trail. The work consists largely of ditching and putting in small bridges.

Since Miller and Chamberlain arrived in Chitina the streets and hillsides have been so full of cows, horses, sheep and calves that those passing through here think this is a ranching country. It will be some day.

The bridge crew now has everything in shape on the railroad and will go to work on the reconstruction of the big concentrator at Kenne-cott.

A WINTER WATER SUPPLY

Henry Gessner, proprietor of the Chitina Bakery, has just finished digging a well on his property. After going down through forty feet of frost the water was reached, which rose to within fifteen feet of the surface.

Chitina lies in a narrow valley that was once a channel for a part of the Copper River. The river gravel is now

covered with the slowly accumulated layer of partly decayed vegetation or "muck." This water-tight covering of frozen muck varies in thickness from a few feet on the sides to nearly eighty feet in the center of the valley. Several small streams at the upper end of the valley find their way under this frozen layer and work down through the old river gravel to the Copper River which has cut its later channel 200 feet below this old one.

Malcolm Nelson, who had a contract to get water, thawed and dug through 27 feet of frozen muck and partly rotted stumps, then through three feet of moss, which was only slightly decayed. Under the moss was eight feet of frozen boulders and sand. When this layer was punctured, the water bubbled up in a fountain, and his assistant saved himself from drowning only by climbing out.

Henry has now enlarged the holes in his doughnuts a quarter of an inch to pay for his hole in the ground, but his coffee and bread are as good as ever.

MISS KEEN'S ASCENT OF MOUNT BLACKBURN

Miss Dora Keen, who is the daughter of an eminent Philadelphia surgeon, is writing a series of articles on her recent successful conquest of Mount Blackburn, Alaska, in *Scribners*.

In her most recent article she says:

Steep and badly broken glaciers, steeper ridges all crested with ice, and a fairly smooth snow summit, such was the sight that Mount Blackburn presented to our view. It was the fifth day, with food for only eight days more, and every route looking hopelessly difficult and dangerous for men with heavy packs. The sled and all else possible would have to be left at this base camp and from here at 6,600 feet, food, fuel and shelter would have to be carried by men and dogs nearly to the top. Progress would be so slow and the liability to blizzards so great that it would never be safe to be far from shelter, and this very necessity for heavy packs would compel the choice of route which would be neither too steep nor too difficult if we were to advance at all. Nearly 10,000 feet of snow and ice remained to be climbed with the certainty of such frequent snowfall that the snow would have no time to harden, would make the ascent laborious and would slide with the first hot sun. To climb at night was impossible. Such routes could not be attempted in the dark. Indeed one of the best gauges of the difficulty of a mountain ascent is the elevation remaining to be climbed above the snow line.

It is chiefly the 10,000 or 15,000 feet that have to be climbed above the snow line that make the high mountains of Alaska the most difficult to climb.

Above 12,000 feet ascent would be easy. This was one reason why I had chosen to try this mountain by this side. Experience in the Alps and the Andes had taught me to avoid difficult work above 15,000 feet. The maps of the United States geological survey – made from near our first camp – showed the contour lines to be gradual above 12,000 feet, that was the problem. With all the routes alike looking hopeless, the shortest seemed the best to try first.

July 16

BOUNDARY SURVEY PARTY ESCAPE DROWNING

Dan Creek, July 12.

Asa C. Baldwin reached here last evening with his party of boundary survey workers and proceeded toward the head waters of the Chitina to co-operate with Mr. Eaton's party, now in that field. Mr. Baldwin's work on this trip was particularly hazardous owing to light but continuous falls of snow up to as late as July 10.

The high water in Scolai creek and the upper Nizina caused considerable delay, the ice backing up the water and then coming down with lightning speed with the break-up of the jam. On one occasion an ice jam gave way while the entire party were crossing the river and they only reached the shore with the greatest difficulty.

Mr. Baldwin speaks in the warmest terms of the undaunted courage of the

men of his party, who did a lot of perilous mountain climbing in the Scolai mountains without ever flinching. The foggy weather proved a great drawback in taking observations, and the party was considerably later arriving here than they expected. In the upper Chitina it is expected that the work will be completed early in September and that both parties will reach McCarthy about September 11.

July 23

LOCAL HAPPENINGS IN AND AROUND TOWN

Nels McCrary, of Copper Center, was in town this week. He found the trail in good condition. The McCrary's have 6 acres of oats sown this year, which are doing well and promise to make a good yield.

July 23

HAPPENINGS ABOUT TOWN

The warm weather for the last week has raised the rivers and thirteen bents of the bridge were taken out, but were replaced in a few days. This bridge continues to be an expensive nuisance.

TWO MAILS ARE DUE TO ARRIVE MONDAY

The steamer Bertha will reach port early Monday morning and the steamer Alameda later in the day. Each vessel carries four days accumulation of mail from Seattle, which will mean a busy day at the local post office.

July 30

LOCAL JOTTINGS ABOUT TOWN

Pete Schneider, the Taslina rancher, came to town this week for a mower and rake. He brought some

garden stuff he has raised and which can't be beat anywhere in the states. He sold \$22 worth of lettuce the day he arrived. He expects to get thirty or forty tons of hay. Next year he will start his cattle ranch.

The strike at Teikell has caused a stampede in that direction and has renewed interest in the territory between that point and Mile 109, in which several good prospects were found last summer.

E. A. Patrick, who is doing development work at Long Lake was in Chitina this week. He is well satisfied with what he is showing up.

Joe Feister of Cordova will take the management of the store of M. Finkelstein. Jack Laurie will enter business at McCarthy.

Frank Iverson has recorded eight claims this week.

August 6

PRICES ARE REASONABLE IN TOWN OF CHITINA

Business conditions have been surprisingly good this summer. The Chitina Cash Store reports a big trade so far this month. Operators are beginning to realize that they can save nothing by sending to Cordova or the outside from the above. The following prices from the above firm will show an average of Cordova prices plus the railroad freight from Cordova to Chitina:

Article	Cordova	Chitina
Flour	\$3.50	\$5.50
Sugar	8.00	10.00
Bacon	.23	.26
Milk	4.50	5.75
Butter	.40	.45

Eggs

14.00

The railroad freight on groceries runs 16 2/3 per cent of their value. On clothing 3 1/2 per cent, which is sold at Cordova prices. Competition has greatly reduced the cost of living in Chitina.

CHITINA BREVITIES

Several people have been attacked by grouse lately. Of course the grouse got the worst of it.

Harry Dean left Saturday for the Dean's Basin country, back of Taval, where he will do assessment work on his copper property.

Dick Gilneau brought down some good samples of his copper on the Kotsina, which are on exhibition at the Chitina Hotel.

GOOD RANCH AT TASLINA

Mr. Kiltske, who runs the Taslina road house, was in town last week for supplies from the Chitina Cash Store. He has a ranch at Taslina and has good prospects of a paying crop this year. Mrs. Book returned with him and will be engaged as cook for the road house.

August 13

Hart D Ranch controversy

Some area residents say that an aggressive campaign to build another visitor complex for the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park (WRST) is being handled in an unethical manner, and may be illegal.

Like the recently constructed \$7.6 million Copper Center Complex, this one is also outside of the park boundaries.

When Congress turned down a request for \$4.5 million to purchase and refurbish the Hart D Ranch near Slana, flyers began to appear soliciting private funding through the Trust for Public Land, a group that has been working with former superintendent Gary Candelaria for several years to acquire additional property for the nation's largest national park.

(Although Senator Lisa Murkowski's office told us that the Park Service has requested money for the purchase, NPS Regional Director Marcia Blaszak had a different story: "When Ms. DeHart approached us we thought it might be nice but we told her she must either find someone to purchase and donate to the park, or find another buyer," said Blaszak.)

"The Wrangell St. Elias National Park would like to refurbish the Hart D Ranch Complex located on the Nabesna Road so it could function as this Visitors Interpretive Center / Campground / and very much needed employee housing," says a beautiful full color poster that is circulating in the area. The poster asks for people to either donate funds for the project, or write the Alaska Congressional delegation with a "support letter showing immediate need."

The National Park Service (NPS) has been quietly acquiring land in the Slana area over the past few years. Much of that land lies outside park-preserve boundaries. Since WRST, at 13.2 million acres already comprises 16.3 percent of the en-

tire national park system, critics are suggesting that no more additional land be added.

Slana has had a visitor contact station for many years, the Slana Ranger Station. But Ms. DeHart says that it is not easily accessible by large motor homes.

The Slana Ranger Station was built in 1993 after the existing Ranger Station burned down. Then Superintendent Karen Wade had been asking for funds to replace the aging structure, but Congress turned her down. After the fire, NPS was able to get an immediate grant of \$229,000 to build the beautiful new structure. Park historian Geoff Bleakly suggests the fire was the work of an arsonist in his book *Contested Ground*, but some locals tell a different story. According to the bartender at Duffy's Tavern, the Ranger who was living at the station was sent home from the bar in the early hours of the morning after consuming too much alcohol. Several hours later the Ranger Station sat in ashes. The official word at the time was that it may have been caused by an electrical fire.

Critics also say they believe the fund-raising effort violates NPS regulations. They point to the NPS Director's Order #21, which states that "Donations of land, buildings, and other property must be within the boundaries of the park unit..."

NPS does not have Congressional authority to solicit gifts. Their personnel are restricted to educating the public about their ability to accept gifts, and specifying their needs. Congress has chartered certain partner foundations which may accept and solicit funds for NPS, and certain funding sources are prohibited.

No public announcements of fund-raising efforts are allowed until final approval of a written agreement.

Campaigns should also not solicit funds for projects included in

the Department of the Interior's budget request to Congress. NPS's request of Senator Murkowski to fast-track funds for the Slana project leads some to believe that they have already asked for an appropriation.

NPS Director Fran Mainella came under fire at a House Appropriations subcommittee hearing in March which was called to scrutinize the agency's spending. Her announcement of plans to cut back on visitor services due to lack of adequate funding were met with criticisms of mismanagement and misplaced priorities. Partly as a result of those concerns, House bill (HR 4578) was enacted on June 21 to further regulate NPS expansion and construction spending. Under this new bill, NPS may not accept donations or services for the planning, design, or construction of new facilities without advance written approval of the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations. Just this past week, the Park Service turned down an offered \$10 million donation from the Oneida Indian Nation and canceled fund-raising for the American Revolution Center at Valley Forge.

The Residents of the Wrangells (ROW), a local citizens group, has asked Senator Murkowski's office to look into the project.

Susan Smith, Chairperson of ROW said, "Going for the Hart D is an underhanded, aggressive move to enlarge even further this gigantic park and squeeze more private visitor services out of the Slana/Nabesna area. It's an outrage that the NPS is attempting to circumvent process by trying to slip this by Congress and bloat the WRST with more maintenance costs at the same time it is constantly whining about not having money to maintain what they already have."

(Bridge —continued from page 7)

vately funded (cost so far: over \$250,000). In order to recoup some of this cost, the bridge is set up on a fee-for-use basis. The first personal use pass was sold on June 6 to Rick and Bonnie Kenyon, and the first business pass was sold to Doug Miller at McCarthy Ventures, LLC.

Keith and I are very thankful for all the practical help, input, ideas, and encouragement which have come from the McCarthy community. We would like to express special gratefulness to the following people:

To Rick and Bonnie Kenyon and others in the Wednesday night prayer group—for upholding in prayer the permit process and workers' safety during construction. Herein lies the secret of our success!

To Ken Rowland—for expediting materials, expertise in welding and fabrication, and assistance in bridge construction.

To Doug Miller and Neil Darish at McCarthy Ventures—for unrelenting enthusiasm.

To George Cebula—when Keith took the final permit documents to our local public notary to be notarized, George stamped the papers, and then kindly refused payment.

To McCarthy Area Council—for finding the owner of a key piece of property needed to be acquired for legal bridge access. Because the records at the Chitina Recorder's Office are not complete, this required some detective work. MAC hired an agent to investigate into the matter. The agent eventually succeeded in locating the owner of this key lot, a woman from New York named Tibby. We then contacted Tibby with an offer to buy her land. As soon as she heard of our plans to build a service bridge, that pleasant little lady got on board! She cheerfully agreed to sell us the property, with the stipulation that we would pay for her round trip from Anchorage accommodations in

McCarthy—complete with a personal guided tour of the new bridge—after the project was finished.

To Ed LaChapelle—for all his help and research on the solar-powered keypad lock system.

To Lane Moffitt—for all the grader work done on Freedom Lane which leads to the bridge, for the proudly-waving Freedom Flag, and for coming to the bridge construction site nearly every day to check progress.

To Betty Adams—for beautifying the bridge with her cheery flowers.

The Kennicott River Service Bridge has been well received in our community. Kennicott resident James Sill summed it up best as he drove through the gate and across the bridge for the first time. "*FREEDOM AT LAST!*" he whooped exultantly.

(Director Blaszak meets ROW continued from page 5)

Knox responded to a variety of questions from individuals on issues such as RS2477, ANILCA, and on how he sees the present communities of McCarthy and Kennicott. According to Knox he is committed to ANILCA's 1110B's access to inholdings, recognizes Alaska's parks as different because of ANILCA, and he values the present residents and desires to build dialogue, working with the people and finding places where they and NPS can agree.

Tina Cuning is Alaska Fish and Game's "expert" on ANILCA. She reported to the attendees that she and Sally Gibert were diligently studying ANILCA's 1110B. The desire is to bring clarification to those areas that are unclear and misunderstood by many.

Of great importance to ROW members was the opportunity to present the groups' list of concerns and receive the feedback promised by Director Blaszak. But, as the

meeting's closing time approached and Ms. Smith asked to read the list the Director suggested the list be given to her but not read. Ms. Smith said she would keep it brief. Once again Ms. Blaszak tried to discourage the attempt.

Smith said she came away from the meeting confused. "Marcia knew we wanted to talk to her about a number of concerns," said Susan, "and she said in an email that, 'We will also have a time for listening to concerns from the group.'"

Many in ROW believe tensions can be relieved; they have hope things can be better between residents and the National Park Service. They feel the meeting in Kennecott was a step in the right direction, but several members have said they were confused by Ms. Blaszak's unwillingness to talk about allegations of wrongdoing on the part of current and past WRST administration.

Others thought the Director seemed unwilling to admit that there had been any problems at WRST.

Laurie Rowland, who is a member of the ROW Advisory Board, had this to say: "In essence, she told us, 'Let's not go back to the past, but instead press forward.' What an outrage! It would be impossible to accurately convey the changes we would like to see in a future superintendent without referring to misdeeds of past personnel to express what we do not want in a superintendent. This was, after all, the primary purpose of the meeting!"

Ms. Blaszak has offered to hold a meeting in the Slana/Nabesna area in the near future. The time and place has not yet been decided.

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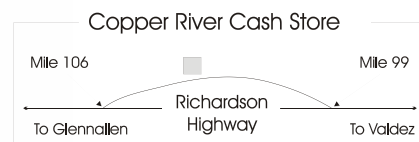
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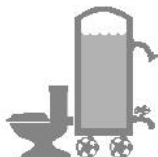
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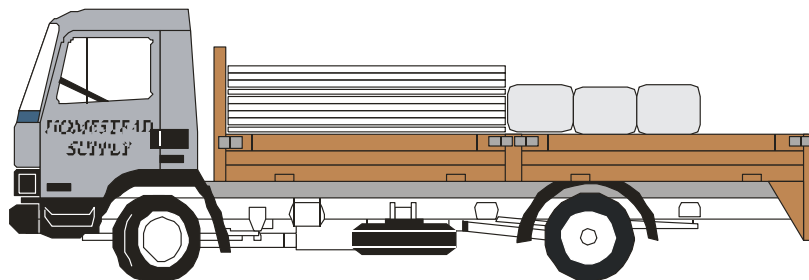
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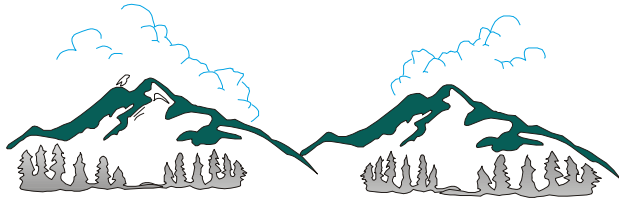
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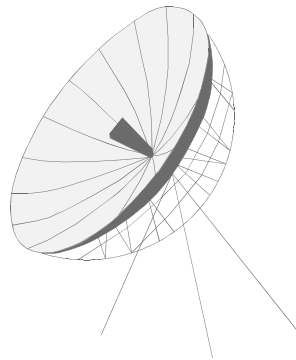


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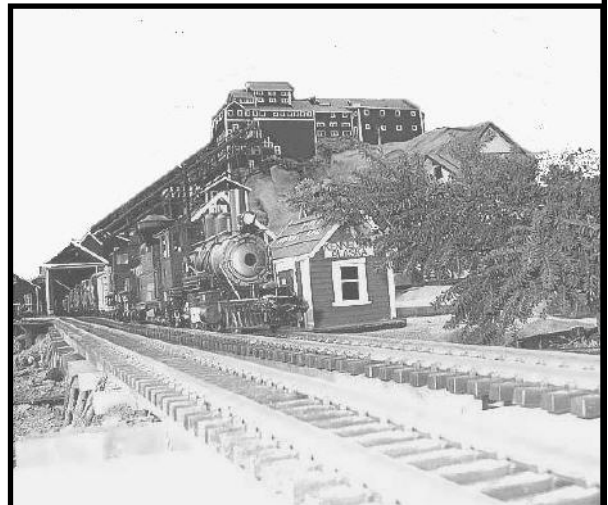
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came ill and descended. He asked us if he could join our team and we almost instantly all agreed, realizing not too much later that we had taken on too much. It didn't take long for him to move into our three-person tent and join our team. We moved up to 17,200' with him attached to our rope, changing the dynamic of the entire climb. The ridge between 16,200' and 17,200' is the most magnificent part of the West Buttress route. Meghan and I were flipping coins for that lead before the trip even began. It just so happened that on that day Meghan was suffering a bit from an altitude headache and gave up her lead to me. I was recovering from some nausea that I experienced all the way up the fixed lines earlier in the day, but was starting to feel good again and took the lead. The ridge can be threatening in bad weather. In some places it is not much more than three feet wide and drops off 2,000' on one side and slightly more on the other. Climbers have been blown off this ridge. There was no wind that day until we rounded the corner to 17,200-ft. camp, then the wind blew mighty cold and I remember thinking my hands might get frostnip before reaching camp. They didn't, but it was that painful feeling of your hands rewarming after they've been so cold. The weather on Denali is the primary factor in what makes it a mountaineering trip vs. a vacation. So far we had been on vacation.

The first night at 17,200' was still clear, but cold and windy. Four of us squeezed like sardines in the tent warmed things up a bit, although it was almost too tight to sleep at all. That combined with the altitude and we barely slept at all

while at this elevation. This was the first of 7 nights that we would spend here. We were all still fairly chipper and spent hours late that night giggling, melting snow, and cooking dinner. The next day the weather

that it isn't an ideal situation to be stuck in a storm at 17,200' with four of us in a three-person tent. He decides to descend with some rangers going down. We learn that it is OK to say "no," and we should have done so at 14,200' instead of trying to be nice.

So, back to the climbing. The storm picks up some force. Winds are blowing at least 60 mph through camp; snow is falling upwards of 3-feet during the time we spend up high. We spend time everyday doing something physical so that we don't lose our fitness. We build snow walls, bomber snow walls. We hoola hoop and take walks. But sometimes we don't get out of the tent for more than 3 hours a day. Food

and fuel are running low, but we are able to acquire both from parties going down. Some were strange, unidentifiable dehydrated things that we wouldn't normally eat. My favorite was the chicken noodle soup we had for dinner one night.

I should also mention where the idea for this trip originated. Last year Meghan's boyfriend died in a tragic accident in McCarthy. She put this trip together in his memory and carried some of Chris' ashes to scatter at our highest point on the mountain. We also lived in Chris' tent while on the mountain, spoke a lot about him, and shed some tears thinking of him. This is important because the first day the weather cleared where we could make a potential summit push from 17,200' was the year anniversary of his accident, June 12th. This was always the day we had in our minds for our summit attempt and it just so happened that the weather was offering



Photo courtesy Dorothy Adler

Dorothy (front) Beth and Megan with the hoola hoop at the 17,200-ft. camp.

made an appearance and really didn't let up at all while we were up high. We managed to acquire an extra tent for one night, which gave us all some elbow room and I think some of us might have even slept a little. By now it has become apparent that "the hitchhiker" is draining us all and we need to address the situation with him. Privately the three of us girls talk and decide we want our original team back, thus meaning that we need to find a different situation for our hitchhiker, which we don't feel so good about. The vibe between the three of us is changing a bit from being real light-hearted to more serious and there is some grouchiness between us. Ah, morals and values on the mountain—what is the right thing to do here? The situation begins to resolve itself. The four of us sit down and talk real honestly and gently. The hitchhiker is aware that we want our trip back and realizes

us a window. However, the winds were still raging up high and although others made summit pushes that day, after spending hours watching the wind tear up the upper mountain, we opted to wait one more day because the winds were forecasted to die down some.

The next day was day 7 up high. This is quite some time to be spending at this altitude. In fact the average time spent at 17,200-ft. camp is 5 days. We woke at 6 AM and prepared for a summit bid. We left camp a bit after 12 noon with the hoola hoop and all of our warm clothes. Meghan led up the autobahn, a traverse protected with 12 snow pickets, also another potentially dangerous section of the route. We all felt strong, considering the amount of time we spent at altitude and being tent bound for so long. Despite the lack of oxygen and the shortness of breath you experience, I remember listening to Beth sing as we reached 18,000' and thinking "how sweet is that."

The weather was beautiful at first and the wind really seemed like it had slowed down. Then we reached Denali Pass and the wind began to rage. Leaning over my pack to pull out my warm mittens and goggles I was almost blown over. There was a party of three just ahead of us and they weren't turning back so we decided to continue on. We had reached 18,200' and had only a bit more than 2,000' to go. We stopped at one point to hydrate and eat a power bar, and we were all in our own worlds fighting to stay warm and wanting to hide from the wind. We couldn't carry on a conversation because it was so windy. At about 19,000' the wind progressed a bit. We kept expecting it to let up, but it never did. We could see the summit ridge and the summit and then

suddenly it was a whiteout and those images were gone. Our main goal of the trip was to have fun. Beth reminded us that it wasn't fun anymore and we made the call to turn around. By that point it seemed like go on and risk frostbite, or turn back. We made the right call. Descending was a bit crazy and the trip continued to border on almost being an epic.

Day 8 at 17,200' we packed camp and began descending to 14,200' just after 1 PM. I forgot to mention that we ran out of good coffee and were drinking instant Folgers by this time, combined with

The wind would come up like a freight train and we would hit the deck, hiding and holding onto rocks. I would sling the rope around rocks so that if one of us were blown off the ridge, the rope would hopefully catch us. We belayed each other from one safety zone to the next until we were out of the narrowest part of the ridge and into a more comfortable place. Then we got stuck for an hour behind a guided group on one of the fixed lines, meanwhile the wind is howling and we are marching in place to keep the feet warm. We finally made it to 14 camp many hours later, dug up

our cache, brewed some coffee, and ate an amazing dinner. Then we beelined it for base camp at 7,200' in one long push to try and beat some weather that was approaching. We made it to base camp early the next morning and flew out on one of the last flights before the weather closed in.

We were greeted by summertime in Talkeetna. Flowers and trees and life and colors and all those bright things you miss when you are living in the snow and ice world for some time. We ate chocolate

cake, walked along the river, and reunited with our family and friends. It's good to go out, but it sure is sweet to come back.

Look for our Denali slideshow sometime this summer in the McCarthy/Kennicott community. Details will be posted.



Photo courtesy Dorothy Adler

16,000-ft. ridge as seen from 17,200-ft. camp.

hot cocoa. Ghetto mochas got us through, but I couldn't wait for a real cup of joe at 14 camp. Before we left camp we scattered some of Chris' ashes at the edge of camp overlooking the Alaska Range and looking down towards the 14 camp. It was a special moment for all three of us that I felt honored to be a part of.

As soon as I turned the corner to gain the ridge, the wind blew me back and I walked back to the other girls thinking "there's no way we can descend in this wind." But we waited for a lull and rounded the corner onto the ridge to experience a heart-pounding descent to 14 camp.

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WSEN staff photo

Kennicott-McCarthy Museum is getting a workover from top to bottom. Folks from St. Elias Alpine Guides and the Wrangell Mtn. Center helped lighten the building by moving heavy objects prior to Rowcon Services raising the building and putting in a new foundation. John Adams and Carmen Russo of McCarthy Building Services repaired the roof and are in the process of crowning the building with a new metal roof.



Photo courtesy Craig Neill

Left to right: Kaylin Moffitt, Matthew Shidner, Carter Neill (mudface), Conner Truskowski, John Paul Syren. Photo taken June 16 at the glacier mud "swimming hole."

WSEN staff photo

Right — Alaska Department of Natural Resources Forestry division is constructing an informational kiosk near mile 56 On the McCarthy Road. They have made a nice pull-out area and are seeking funding to install vault toilets.



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Cooking with Peggy

BY PEGGY GUNTIS

I tried to plan this month's recipes around one main ingredient but first I had to choose it! I wanted something most people like, something that was in season all year and something that could be an ingredient in breakfast, lunch, dinner, etc. Guess what I came up with – CHOCOLATE CHIPS! I tried hard to come up with recipes that were a little different after reading literally hundreds of them for chocolate chip cookies.

Now for breakfast. How about Chocolate Chip Pancakes with honey syrup? I found this one on the Internet. This makes about 3 servings.

Chocolate Chip Pancakes

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 egg
- ¾ cup milk
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- ¼ cup miniature chocolate chip baking bits
- ½ cup honey
- ¼ cup butter or margarine
- ½ to 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

In one bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. In a separate bowl, combine the egg, milk and oil.

Add the combined wet ingredients to the bowl of dry ingredients. Mix well and stir in chocolate chips.

Pour the batter by ¼ cupfuls onto a lightly greased hot griddle. Turn when bubbles form on top; cook until second side is golden brown. Keep warm.

Now, combine honey, butter and cinnamon in a small microwaveable bowl. Microwave, uncovered, until butter is melted and syrup is hot. Serve with pancakes.

Or for brunch, how about a recipe for Chocolate Chip Coffee Cake I

found in an old Taste of Home magazine.

Chocolate Chip Coffee Cake

- 1 cup butter or margarine, softened
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1 ½ cups sugar, divided
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 cup (6 ounces) semi-sweet chocolate chips
- ¼ cup chopped pecans
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

In a mixing bowl, cream the butter, cream cheese and 1 ¼ cups of sugar. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; add to creamed mixture alternately with milk. Stir in chocolate chips. Pour into a greased 9-in. Springform pan. Combine the pecans, cinnamon and remaining sugar; sprinkle over batter. Bake at 350 degrees for 50-55 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool for 15 minutes. Carefully run a knife around edge of pan to loosen. Remove sides of pan. Cool completely before cutting. Yield: 10-12 servings.

For lunch, short of one of you coming up with a chocolate chip soup or something, how about serving Giant Chocolate Chip Banana Muffins with a salad. (If you don't have the giant muffin pan, figure you will get about 18 large ones in your regular muffin pans instead of the nine 3" ones in the giant ones.)

Giant Chocolate Chip Banana Muffins

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup mashed ripe bananas (about 3 bananas depending on the size, of course)
- ½ cup butter, melted
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate morsels
- ¾ cup nuts or 1 cup raisins (I used the nuts.)

In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon and salt. Make a well in the center.

In a small bowl, combine milk, mashed bananas, butter and eggs. Add to well in flour mixture. Add semi-sweet morsels and ½ cup nuts (or raisins); stir well until dry ingredients are just moistened. Spoon mixture into greased or paper-lined muffin cups, filling each ¾ full. Sprinkle about 1 teaspoon nuts over each muffin. Bake at 400 degrees for 18-20 minutes. Cool 5 minutes in pans, then remove and cool on wire rack.

For dessert after dinner, I want you to try the Double Decadent Brownie Torte with Chocolate Glaze that is served by the Alaska Wolf House B & B in Juneau. It's so good that I decided if their rooms are even half as good as dessert, I'm going to sell my house and move in at the B & B! Try it, you'll like it!

Double Decadent Brownie Torte

- ½ cup butter
- ½ cup light corn syrup
- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans

Butter and flour a 9" round cake pan. In a sauce pan, heat butter and corn syrup until butter is melted. Add chocolate chips and stir until melted. Remove from heat. Add sugar and eggs. Stir until well blended.

Stir in vanilla, flour, and nuts. Pour batter into pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes, until center springs back when touched. Cool in pan for 10 minutes. Turn out of pan onto rack. Frost top and sides with Chocolate Glaze. Chill until set. Garnish with sliced strawberries. Cut into wedges and serve with whipped cream.

Glaze

½ cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
2 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon corn syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla

Combine chocolate chips, butter, and corn syrup in saucepan. Stir over low heat until chocolate is melted. Remove from heat and add vanilla. Frost top and sides of torte. Chill and garnish.

What I don't do for you folks! I HAD to make and eat all these recipes AND all the calories! Next issue you will get lighter ideas.

sugar and gave the wrong amount of sour cream. Susan Getz, daughter of WSEN subscriber Rusty Imlach, called my attention to the error. Thank you, Susan! The amount of sugar (I mistakenly omitted) is 1 ½ cups of sugar and the correct amount of sour cream is ½ cup. By the way, Rusty is related to John O'Neill of historic McCarthy days' fame.

CORRECTION FROM BONNIE:

In the May/June issue, Peggy included a Banana Nut Bread recipe. When I typed it in on my computer, I made two mistakes! I omitted the

A LOOK AT THE WEATHER

BY GEORGE CEBULA

As in the past, April saw the last of a long winter and the end of the snow. April '04 had both normal temperatures and precipitation. The high temperature for the month was 60 on the 30th (71 on Apr. 27, '03 and 61 on Apr. 29, '02). The low was -14 on the 1st (-18 on Apr. 2, '03 and -17 on Apr. 1, '02). The average temperature for April was 36.1, compared to 32.8 in '03 and 24.9 in '02. The lowest average temperatures for April were 22.4 in 1972 and 24.7 in 1986.

Silver Lake had a high of 54 on 30th (71 on Apr. 28, '03 and 60 on Apr. 29, '02) and a low of -14 on the 1st (-12 on Apr 2, '03 and -18 on Apr. 1, '02). The April average temperature at Silver Lake was 32.7 (31.7 in '03 and 22.8 in '02).

The precipitation for April was about average with 0.77 inches (trace in '03 and 0.39 in '02). There was also 8.7 inches of snow (trace in '03 and 7.1 inches '02). *Silver Lake had 0.43 inches of precipitation in April (none in '03 and trace in '02) and 4.5 inches of snow (none in '03 and '02).*

Again the total snowfall at McCarthy for '03- '04 was 110.6 inches which is a new record (46.0 in '02- '03, 74.2 in '01- '02, 85.2 in '00- '01, 65.8 in '99- '00 and 38.9 in '98- '99). *Silver Lake's snowfall for '03- '04 was 55.5 inches (51.0 in 02- '03 and 57.5 in '01- '02).*

McCarthy started the month with 34 inches of snow on the ground, increased to 42 inches on April 2nd and ended April with 7 inches still around. *Silver Lake had 11 inches of snow on the ground as April arrived, increased to 15 on the 2nd and was clear of snow on April 22nd.*

The temperatures were above average for May. The high temperature for May was 73 on the 15th, 21st and 22nd (70 on May 29, '03 and 80 on May 25, '02). The low temperature was 25 on the 4th (21 on May 6, '03 and 15 on May 5, '02). The May average temperature was 49.3. This compares with 44.4 in '03, 45.9 in '02 and 41.8 in '01. There were 8 days with a high of 70 or above. *Silver Lake had a high of 72 on the 22nd (67 on May 29, '03 and 80 on May 26, '02), a low of 26 on the 3rd (25 on May 19, '03 and 14 on May 5, '02) and an average temperature of 49.3 (44.0 in '03, 45.0 in '02 and 42.0 in '01).*

The May precipitation at McCarthy was below normal with 1.05 inches of liquid. This compares with 1.42 inches in '03 and 1.79 inches in '02. There was no snow recorded in May at either McCarthy or Silver Lake. McCarthy had 5 inches of snow on the ground on May 1st and it was gone by the 5th. *Silver Lake recorded 0.95 inches of liquid (0.62 inches in '03 and 0.96 inches in '02). Their snow was gone by May 1st.*

The ice on the West Fork of the Kennicott River began to break apart around April 15th and water was moving over the top. The river was clear of moving ice by April 28th and all the shore ice was gone by May 8th. *The ice on Silver Lake was too soft for travel in late April and it was completely gone the morning of May 14th (May 5, '03 and May 21, '02).*

The first half of June was warm and dry with highs in the high 70's to low 80'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 (until this year) 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!

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Let national park residents thrive

BY NEIL DARISH

(Published: May 8, 2004)

Many people dream of living in the wilderness. Residents inside Wrangell-St. Elias National Park are examples of “self-reliant living” made real. The National Park Service is mandated to preserve not only wilderness but also heritage and culture. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park contains a remote wilderness culture, deep within America's largest national park. Should this community be allowed to continue?

In the 1960s, conservationists considered man a threat to the wilderness. Old Park Service management philosophy marginalized or eliminated locals. New Park Service management ideas incorporate cultural assets, and some parks are “run with, for and, in some cases, by local people.” Management by Park Service is changing to better realize the value of indigenous cultures and local residents as stewards. Man is not always a threat to preservation, especially when communities are part of the landscape.

The George Wright Forum is a Park Service institution. It acts as a think tank, a place where ideas about conservation and managing national parks are developed. By publishing studies on “evolving living landscapes” where residents are “inclusive and constructive elements” to protected areas, they help mold the future of our National Park Service. In Europe and much of the developing world, “living landscapes” and residents are embraced as an essential part of their national parks; and it has been that way for the last 50 years. America's Park Service still struggles with

thriving cultures as a resource worthy of preservation.

In the Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Ohio, there is fresh thinking about the notion of a “lived-in” park. The superintendent, John Debo, views continued occupancy, in certain circumstances, to contribute to the purposes for which the park was created. He uses the terminology “residents” and “partners” rather than “in-holders,” the latter implying something to be eliminated. Debo emphasizes that each park must carefully evaluate how the natural and cultural resource protection mission of that park can best be accomplished, and that a “one size fits all” approach is the antithesis of good park management. By the 1980s Cuyahoga had eliminated most of its residents, condemning and burning down their houses to bring the land back to wilderness. Today the Park Service regrets those actions.

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) enshrines Alaska's preservation of the cultural elements of remote living. The Park Service did not welcome private property in parks when Wrangell-St. Elias was formed. Congress created ANILCA to protect against the old Park Service management objective of eliminating all private land. Alaska, with its huge distances and lack of paved roads, has a flourishing remote culture, dependent on motorized vehicle trails like any other community on Earth. Locals aren't asking for new land or roads, just continued use of private land, roads and trails pre-dating the park, thus safeguarding a uniquely Alaska lifestyle. For 100 years residents have broken

trail, and “subsistence” has required driving funky vehicles somewhere unpopulated. Today these same trails and access seem lined with unbreakable red-tape.

Park Service rangers share with local residents the love of nature, local history, the appeal of self-reliant living and the importance of preserving this for future generations. The Park Service can become our hero if we as resident stewards are treated with respect by the Park Service — here and in Washington, D.C.

Nature and thriving pre-existing communities are not mutually exclusive concepts. Around the world, administrators of protected areas have proven this. Current access issues, visitor kiosk closures and lawsuits reflect a need for a more inclusive agenda. Management actions reflecting the 1960s philosophy of “man is a threat to the wilderness” instead of the worldwide standard that “the residents are a resource” are counterproductive. Marcia Blaszak, the new Alaska regional director for the National Park Service, could set the tone for better cooperation between local residents and managers of Wrangell-St. Elias. Why move to Alaska if not for the love of nature? Who better to partner with than those who choose to live a wilderness lifestyle?

What is needed is a clear statement from our Park Service Alaska regional director that her philosophy allows the residents in this park to thrive.

(Originally appeared in the Anchorage Daily News May 8, 2004)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

June 9, 2004

WSEN,

What an interesting sword you wield. The *News* may be a humble instrument, but hopefully it reaches a few in powerful places who might be interested in the citizen's side of issues hidden in the shadow of "giants in the land." Caleb and Joshua would be approving and very proud of your report.

There are articles not only of many contentious struggles, but then the view is lifted to include a panorama of this wonderful place in time and the very common men and women who wish to call it home. This all works very well together, and I wish to commend your efforts.

As a separate page to this brief letter, you will find comments regarding a recent article found in the May & June issue of *WSEN*.

Yours Truly,
Dan Renshaw

Alpine Kameroff

Thirty-six years ago I stopped at the old Alpine Inn at Sutton for breakfast. I was acquainted with many cafe regulars who worked at the Evan Jones Coal Mine, and I noticed their conversation was more lively than normal for that early morning hour. I listened for the reason. It seems that but a few hours previous, the Alpine Inn had witnessed an unusual event. A couple from the Copper River Valley had lost a race against time and the stork. Their son was born on the pool table right here at the Alpine Inn.

Over breakfast and additional coffee, I was appraised of all the details: this couple had driven for many miles down the Glenn High-

way hoping to reach a hospital, the new mother just could not delay the delivery process any longer, the Alpine Inn had become delivery room of last resort. The finale of the story was a parting comment made by the new mother. Her boy would be named "Alpine."

A friend listening to the story then turned to me in typical dry humor, "sure a good thing they hadn't stopped at the Moos-abou Lodge." Some readers of the *News* will remember, many years ago there was such a place. But Alpine was his name. Having no knowledge of a last name, I always hoped one day to meet a man named Alpine, that I might ask how he had obtained such an unusual first name.

I was saddened to learn of the passing of Alpine Kameroff on April 18th. The article on page 16 of the *News* for May and June of 2004 told me a little about this man of such auspicious beginning. From that article I now understand I am the poorer for never have met Alpine Kameroff in person. Because of the article he now seems an acquaintance of long standing, just not seen or heard from in recent years.

WSEN

Most of us look forward to our golden years. Here in the WRST, by the time we're in our late sixties, we have to live a careful balance between our Social Security stipends and the costs of running a homestead. It's not easy in our world of rising fuel costs to keep generators running and vehicles roadworthy.

Well, the NPS just made life quite a bit harder for one of our neighbors in the park. At the age of 68, he has been living in a cabin on what he thought was a native allot-

ment, with the permission of the owner, for 17 years. She wanted no rent from him, but was happy to have him there caretaking the property.

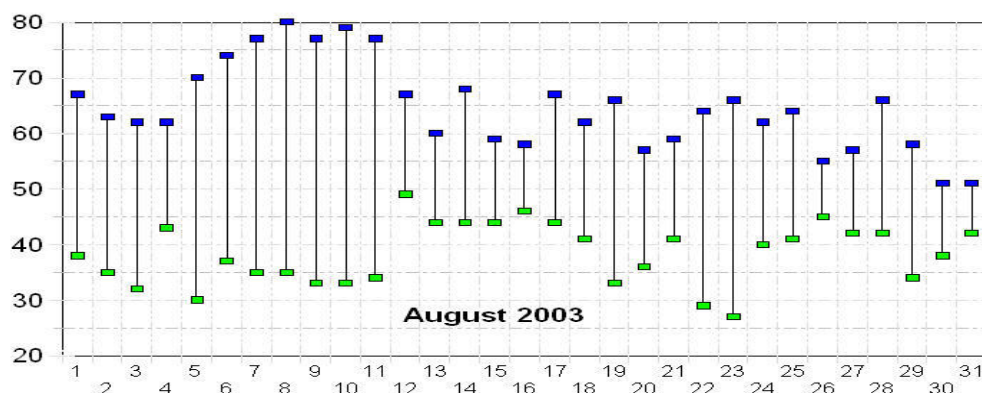
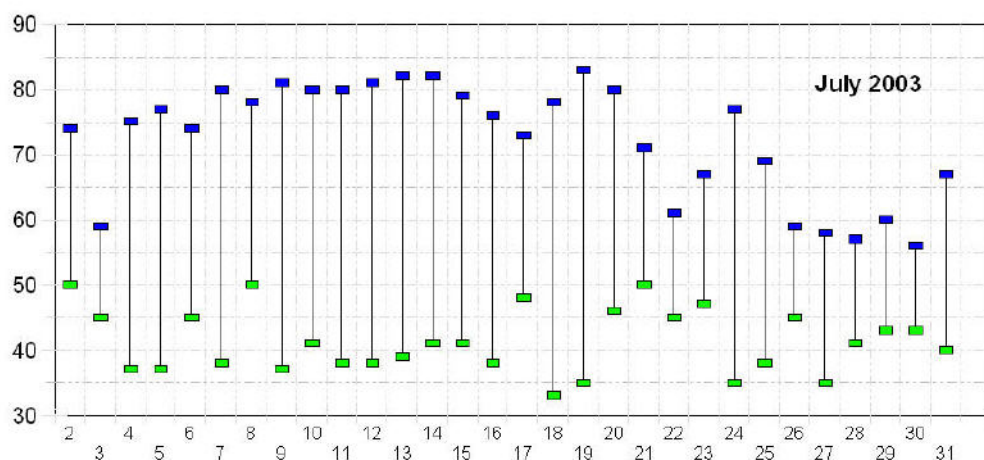
Apparently, while investigating a recent number of land sales on the McCarthy Road, NPS found out that the native allotment was de-nied by BLM in 1994. The woman failed to tell our friend that the land was never conveyed to her. It didn't take long for Tom Betts, Chitina District Ranger, and Richard Larabee, NPS Criminal Investigator from Anchorage to come out and advise him that he had until October 1st to vacate the premises. They were kind enough to mention that they weren't going to prosecute him for being there!

Now, this kind and generous man must come up with the financial resources to set himself up somewhere else before winter. He must find either a rental in the area or try to purchase a piece of land of his own. His quiet life of solitude and enjoyment of his simple pleasures and animals has been turned upside down. No mention of a lease agreement was even suggested. Just a demand to leave. So much for his golden years.

This same native allotment denial is wreaking havoc with other local residents. They are being told that since their access road crosses a portion of the newly-recognized federal land, they must all pay annual access fees to NPS reach their homes. The road could easily be moved to avoid the 100 yards of federal land. I imagine a simple request from NPS would have probably done that. But instead, the steamroller tactic is used again. More fees to reach our homes.

(continued on page 16)

Wrangell St. Elias News
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