

Wrangell St. Elias News

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

VOL. THREE ISSUE ONE

JANUARY & FEBRUARY 1994

ONE DOLLAR

Best wishes for a Happy New Year!

The Close of the Season

When the nights grow long and frosty, in the flame of autumn glow
We braced our tents for the winter, against the coming snow.
The creek dropped down to a whisper, the ice on the edges grew
The slush ice started running, and the season's work was through.

Then we piled up our tools and boxes, and hung up long lines of hose
Put on our boots and followed the trail where the water flows
Wading the sunless canyons, through slush and aching backs
But our hearts were light within us, and we didn't mind our packs.

So we finally came to Dan Creek and entered the camp of a friend
Who was going to travel with us through to the Journey's end.
Then we felled a couple of spruce trees by the side of the old saw-pit,
Whipsawed some good clear lumber, and soon our boat was built.

Out where the creek meanders through the wide Nizina Bars
The last of the nails were driven 'neath the light of the autumn stars
And after strands of oakum were hammered into the seams
The gum of the spruce was melted and poured into the space between.

We fashioned with axe and drawknife, our oars from the clean spruce wood,
And when the work was finished we saw that it was good.

by Kendrick—a "McCarthyite"

from Volume One—Chilcoot Pass & Songs of Alaska

submitted by Cliff Collins

In This Issue

Adventure
in the
Arctic!



King Floyd

part six

An ingenious solution!

OUR TOWN

January &
February

1919



A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

Shortly after mailing you the November/December '93 issue of WSEN, Rick and I took off for warm, sunny Florida. We had a wonderful, refreshing time with our family—especially getting to know our grandson, Jonathan David Kenyon. He was 6 1/2 months old when I first held him. I will never be the same. We celebrated Thanksgiving in Daytona Beach at my mom's house. What a blessing to have all our family members present.

When we returned to Anchorage, we met with Eddie Strong and Don Goetz who work in the bulk mail acceptance unit of the U.S. Postal Service. We filled out an application for a Second Class mailing permit and submitted it at that time. Several hours were spent learning what was expected of us once our permit is approved and during the interim period. The January/February '94 paper is our first issue being mailed at this more economical rate. We trust your copies will still arrive in acceptable condition. Please let us know if you experience any problems.

When Rick and I left McCarthy on November 1, there was 2" of snow on the ground and the temperature was 26 degrees. The McCarthy Road was in good shape, so we were able to drive out from our cabin all the way into Anchorage. Starting back on December 3 was a different story altogether. By then the snow had accumulated to at least 15" and more in places.

The D.O.T. had plowed the first 20 miles in from Chitina. However, after we drove beyond the plowed portion, the truck got a real working out! We went another 10 miles and decided we better turn back. Roland Hammack, who lives

at Mile 27 and operates Hammack's Guide Service, showed up to help us get the truck turned around. We returned to Silver Lake (Mile 11) where Gene and Edith Coppedge live. Things slow down for them in the winter but come summer, they are two busy people! They own and operate Silver Lake Campground and pastor Silver Lake Community Church.

Gene invited us to spend the night (Edith was "outside" visiting her Mom), and he said he would try to drive us in the next morning with his truck. Needless to say, the promise of a warm bed and an evening to visit with our friend won us over. The next morning the fellas transferred our supplies to Gene's truck and we set off again. The 16 miles to Roland's place took us an hour and a half! What a ride. The various-sized ruts made the road a real challenge—even for Gene's 4-wheel drive truck. Stopping for a cup of coffee at Roland's, we all decided it would be better if Rick and I borrowed Roland's snowmachines and come on home. To make a longer story shorter, we did. Many, many thanks to Roland and Gene for taking such good care of us.

Two hours after leaving Roland's, we snowmachined up to our cabin. What a welcome sight! Mike MacDonald (our fill-in weather observer) and his wife, Ruth, had moved back to their cabin but had left our place toasty warm.

The next evening we got a call on the local CB channel from our neighbor, Betty Hickling, that Roland was in McCarthy. He had missed our turnoff but he wanted us to know all our supplies were in the back of his big truck! Would we meet him with one of his snowmachines? He and Gene had offloaded our things onto Roland's truck and Roland brought it the rest of the way. I hope Rick and I aren't the only ones that have such wonderful neighbors.

Roland's truck was loaded with our suitcases and various supplies. One item in particular weighed 263 lbs.—a Gestetner CopyPrinter—which we purchased while in Florida. This amazing piece of equipment is going to make printing the "News" easier and more economical. We trust you will find the quality as good if not better. This issue is our first on the Gestetner. The only drawback is finding a spot for it in our cabin. At the present, it is sitting in the living room! It came the last couple of miles on a snowmachine sled. Two other neighbors—John Adams and Patrick Sperry—were on hand to help Rick load and unload it into the cabin.

Once home Rick and I could hardly wait to read your letters, see who had renewed and be introduced to several new subscribers. Also, thank you for patiently waiting for us to fill your orders for back issues and the McCarthy Weekly News.



WSEN staff photo
New "printing press" hard at work.

(continued on page 28)

Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

Ken and Nancy

Rowland: Before Rick and I left on our vacation, we had a surprise visit from Ken, who owns property in McCarthy and is a frequent visitor to our area. Ken had stopped by to see if he could store an old engine here that he had acquired. A perfectly good reason to have a cup of tea and catch up on he and Nancy's winter plans. Ken says Nancy is teaching school at Two Moon Bay—near Valdez—this winter, and he would be joining her soon. There is a logging camp in operation here. Ken laughed as he told us what questions Nancy was asked prior to her being hired. 1) Was she opposed to clear cutting? 2) What about her attitude of bears—dead or alive? Ken said Nancy “can skin out a bear better than me!”

Erin Adkins and Aaron

Kulas: A visit from Erin and Aaron was another surprise but a pleasant one. They informed us they plan on building a 12'X12' log cabin on their property near us and a possible 16'X24' soon after. Looks like they're not wasting any time. The last week in October Randy Elliott did road work for them. That ought to make bringing in those logs much easier. Aaron said he has a winter job as a mechanic in Delta Junction. Erin took an asbestos course in Anchorage this fall and

hopes to get asbestos cleanup work this winter.

Mike and McKenzie

McCarthy: While some were stopping in for a chat, others like Mike and McKenzie were saying good-bye! Mike and son McKenzie were planning to spend Thanksgiving with Mike's brothers, parents and grandparents. Next on Mike's agenda was a trip to Vietnam. Maybe we can coax another travel story out of him when he returns this next month.

Andy Shidner: Andy made good headway on his cabin building project before taking off for the lower 48 to visit family over Thanksgiving and Christmas. He finished out the roof over the porch, got his door completed and had plenty of time to try out his double barrel woodstove. That ought to give him a bit more free time this summer to put in his desired garden.

Matt Hambrick: Matt left McCarthy the last week of October but not before completing his cabin. He certainly appreciated Andy Shidner's help and now will have his own place to hang his hat. Matt is due back anyday now. Hope his cabin-building tools aren't buried under too much snow. Seems another neighbor needs a hand building a cabin and Matt volunteered his assistance!

Howard Mozen: That other neighbor is Howard who says he has been busy this winter “playing with various house plans.” He's planning on building a log cabin and is eagerly looking forward to Matt's soon return.

Verna Lee Canter: Speaking of people returning... Verna Lee just made it back to her place in Kennicott. Now that is no easy task this time of year. Gary and Betty Hickling gave her a hand up the hill. Verna left for Anchorage the first week of November. Her mom was expected to meet her and Verna's sister in town for Thanksgiving.

Chris Richards: Chris had to go a little further than Anchorage to see his family. I'm sure his brothers in California were eagerly awaiting Chris' arrival so they could celebrate a joyous Thanksgiving and a chance to catch up on Chris' activities in Alaska. That may have taken awhile, but if there was enough time to spare, his plans included a side-trip to Mexico. Even though I haven't seen Chris yet, I have heard from a reliable source (Rick) that he arrived on the Dec. 17 mail plane. I'm sure Rudy (Chris' dog) is overjoyed to see him. Welcome home, Chris!

John Adams: Some people just don't know when to stop working! Fifteen inches of snow on the

ground didn't intimidate John from taking on a building project during these early winter months. He and Fred Denner have been busy building a cabin at Young Creek. John managed to drop in to see us several times in spite of his schedule. Things have slowed down now so he says he's off to Anchorage and more winter work. Hope this one will be an “inside” job.

Walt and Denny Vivian: Inside jobs reminded me of my phone conversation with Denny before I came back to McCarthy. She and Walt have taken on a remodeling project on a house they purchased from son John Adams in Wasilla. Walt may not have had much construction experience in the past, but he sure is building up some now. Denny says she's thankful for the time she spent building houses with John years ago. Maybe when the Vivians are done laying hardwood floors and remodeling their kitchen, they'll give us all a hand on our “unfinished” cabins! For those of you who don't know Denny and Walt, they are McCarthy regulars in the summer. Denny operates the Nugget Gift Shop located behind the McCarthy Lodge.

Ed LaChapelle and Meg Hunt: Ed writes from Olympia, Wa. that he and Meg got to spend a week in the Arizona desert, soaking

up some sun over the Thanksgiving holiday. Also spent time at the Organ Cactus National Monument down by the Mexican border. According to Ed, "this is a picturesque place with plenty of opportunities for mountain hikes." They took the opportunity to visit some of Meg's relatives in Phoenix as well. Even though they wished they could be here for Christmas, they planned on visiting Meg's parents in Indiana over the holiday to help her father celebrate his 90th birthday. Sounds like a great thing to celebrate! They sent their best wishes to the community for a fine Christmas and New Year and plan on seeing us in March.

Rans and Chris

Kennicott: I believe we'll be seeing a lot more of Rans and Chris—at least I hope so. In a recent letter Chris announced they are now the proud owners of 12 Silk Stocking Row in Kennicott. We send our congratulations via the "News" and welcome them to our community. Rans and Chris live in Kailua, Hawaii but seem to have left part of their hearts in Kennicott and so they keep returning for a visit. Perhaps it is because Rans' great-great-great uncle is Robert Kennicott for whom the town, river, glacier and Kennecott Copper were named! Their next door neighbor is Mike McCarthy. A Kennicott and a McCarthy living side-by-side.

Kelly and Natalie Bay: Kelly, Natalie and Tessa just returned from spending the

Thanksgiving holiday with Kelly's parents in Redmond, Wa. They report having a wonderful time. It sounds like Tessa was quite taken with her grandparents—Mel and Pat Bay—but, then, I'm sure they were just as taken with her. Grandparents make excellent playmates. As of Dec. 25, Tessa weighs 17 lbs., has sampled her first cereal (she wasn't impressed, says Natalie), is getting her first tooth and learning how to crawl. Sounds like a full-time job to me. Now if Kelly and Natalie can keep Tessa from diving off the couch—her first successful plunge came just the other day as I was talking to Natalie on the CB. I suggested it might be time to invest in some nice, thick carpeting.

Patrick, Phyllis, Rebekah and Sarah Sperry: This is the Sperry's first winter in

McCarthy and they are staying plenty busy. Sarah just finished this year's schooling and will be going into the 3rd grade. Rebeccah is finishing up her reading then graduates to the 2nd grade. Both girls are "enrolled" in Christian Liberty School out of Arlington, Va. Phyllis is more than satisfied with this excellent correspondence course. In between Patrick's teaching responsibilities, he is working hard on filling their woodshed. Phyllis says she is learning to bake bread in a wood cookstove for the first time and, thankfully, they are able to eat it! Sarah and Rebeccah really miss their "Grandma Edwards" so they are drawing pictures and writing her often.

Jim and Pat Edwards: In our last issue we told you Pat had broken her ankle and was in Anchorage recuperating. She was able

to come home early November but after about a week, she had to return. This time it was much more serious. A blood clot to her lungs. Miraculously her son, Joel, who was not expected till January, arrived just in time to drive his mom to Anchorage. "I don't know why I'm here, but I have 5 days," Joel commented when he showed up on his mom's doorstep. It wasn't long before Joel and the others knew why he had felt such a strong urge to go see his family in McCarthy! Leaving in a snowfall, it took Joel, Pat and Ruth (who went along to assist Pat), 13 hours to reach Anchorage! A very long day for all concerned.

Pat was admitted to the hospital and was there for about a week. At press time she is staying with her daughter, Nancy Farrell, in Anchorage. Nancy, who is a nurse, is taking very good care of her mom. Nancy's kids, Dana and Scott, are keeping "grandma" from getting too bored. I called Pat just before Rick and I left Anchorage for McCarthy (Dec. 1). She said, "I'm getting better and looking forward to coming home more than anything. I really don't want to stay in town all winter." According to KCAM radio clatters and reports from Jim's numerous trips to Chitina to call Pat, she is hoping to be back in McCarthy the end of December. Pat, we love you and pray for a speedy recovery!

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Adventure in the Arctic

BY BONNIE KENYON

If you had a couple thousand dollars to spend on a trip to a quiet, out-of-the-way spot, where would you go? Many Alaskans choose warm, sunny southern climates. Green grass, beaches...you know, places that enable one to get into a comfort mode where only one layer of clothing is required. There are others who do things differently!

On March 15, 1993, Malcolm Vance, 31, and Gary Hickling, 40, both of McCarthy, Alaska, did more than dream of a remote exotic destination. They actually set out on a two month trip that culminated a dream of Malcolm's—traversing the North American continent above the Arctic Circle. From Repulse Bay in the Northwest Territories to Kotzebue, Alaska.

In 1991, Malcolm and three others took part in the 1991 Northwest Passage Expedition from Prudhoe Bay east to Churchill, Manitoba, Canada. (See the July/August 1992 WSEN). Now he was ready to go west!

The two men loaded Malcolm's "dog truck" with his sled dogs. All 13 dogs were a mixture of Greenland Huskies and others. Gary would use 6 dogs and Malcolm the remaining 7. These animals and a sled a piece would be their only

transportation between Prudhoe Bay and Kotzebue.

They left Prudhoe Bay on March 18. Their first night on the trail was spent camped out at the delta of the Colville River. The Golden Polar Lodge is situated nearby. The

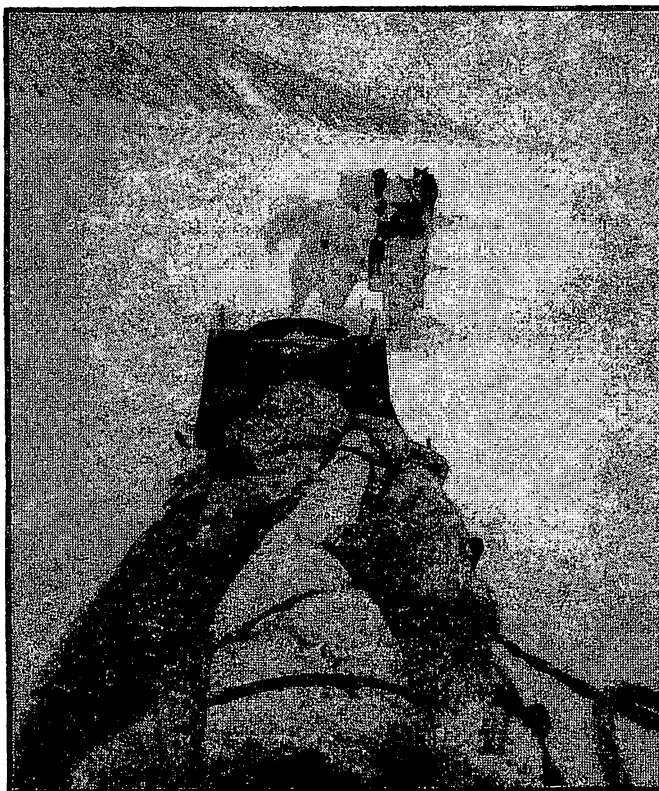
Expedition that went to the North Pole. Gary recalls, "When we wheeled in there, Geoff Carroll was doing dog sled rides with the native kids. Some of those kids had never seen dog teams."

"Most villages use snowmachines now. There

expedition with Steiger up north. He made the North Pole! So, it was fun to mush with him and see how he did things." The Alaskans stayed with Geoff in Pt. Barrow for 4 days as they prepared for the next leg of their journey.

The village of Wainwright was their next stop. Their quarters for two days was at the village Firehall. There is a DEW line station at Wainwright as well as a native population of 300. DEW is an abbreviation for distant early warning. These radar stations, located at about the 70th parallel across the North American continent, are designed to give advance warning of approaching enemy aircraft and missiles. Now, due to cutbacks in defense and the use of automated systems, these stations are maintained with a skeleton crew.

A bit of socializing was in store for the two fellows. Laughingly Gary recalls the night he and Malcolm went to a cake walk. "The cake walk was really interesting. All kinds of baked goods are brought. Cakes as well as frozen fish. Not everything was food related. Everybody buys tickets for a nickel apiece. Then someone goes up and calls the numbers." This particular cake walk was a fund-raiser for the clinics. Unfortunately, Gary and Malcolm didn't win even though they were mighty hungry for "one of those cakes."

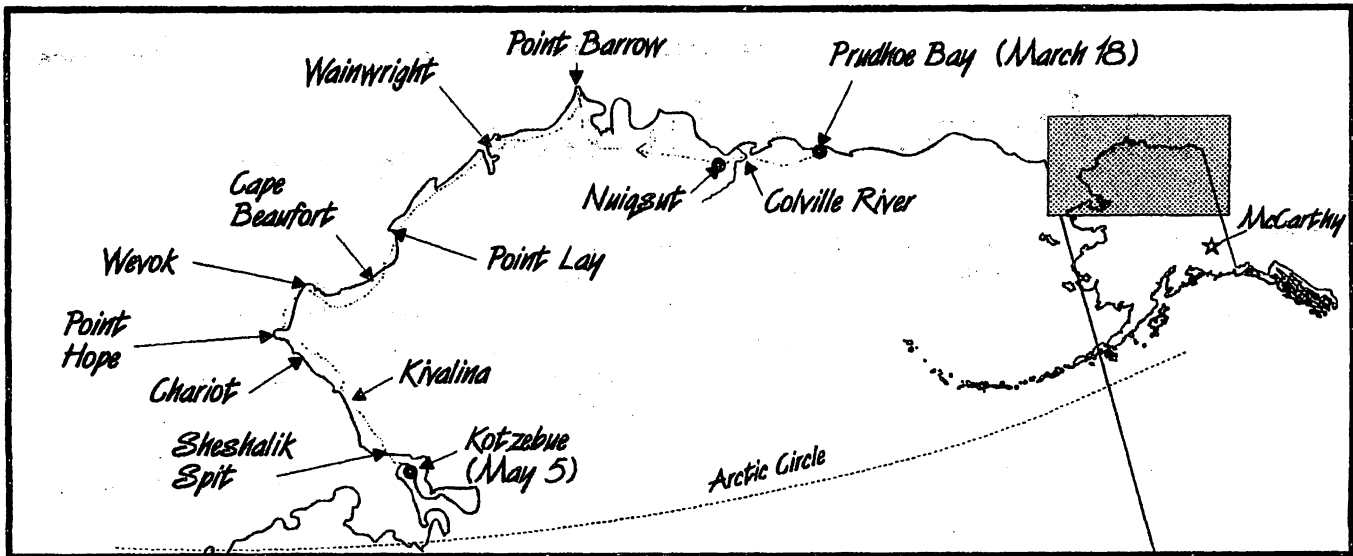


family-owned business attracts avid birdwatchers. Meeting this family was a real pleasure for Gary. According to him, they are the only white people living out there and have been since about 1954.

Nuiqsut, their first village, has a population of 170 Eskimos. Shortly after arriving, they were pleasantly surprised to meet Geoff Carroll, a team member of the 1986 Steiger

may be a token team or two around. Barrow has maybe three teams. Geoff's team is one of the teams used the most," explains Malcolm.

From Nuiqsut Malcolm and Gary mushed with Geoff to his home in Pt. Barrow. Carroll is a Fish and Game Biologist. To Malcolm mushing with Geoff was quite a thrill. "I'd been wanting to meet him. I had heard his name and that he had been on the



Heading further down the coast, the men reached Point Lay. "When we went into the old village site, it was totally deserted," remembers Gary. They wondered where everyone was. Whereas the old village had been out on the spit, the new village was now on the mainland. They stayed at the CPI Construction camp. Another DEW line station is located here. Basically, Point Lay is a small place. A few years ago a man was eaten by a polar bear in this area. "We met the guy who tracked down the bear and shot it," says Gary. Fortunately, the men didn't see one polar bear their entire trip.

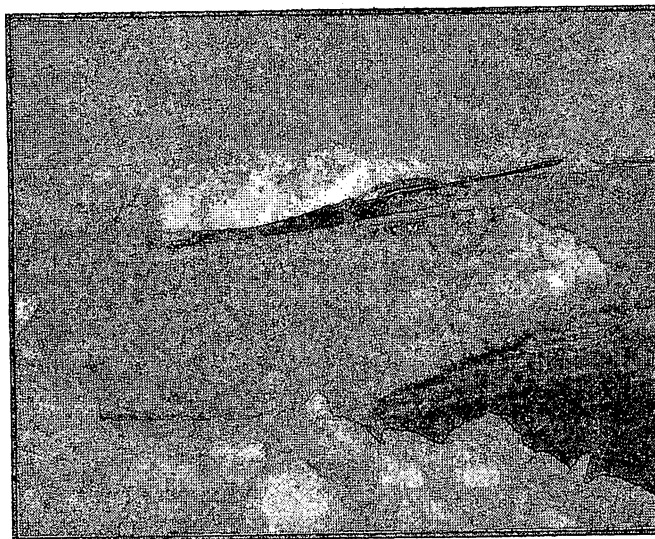
Nothing awaited them at the abandoned village of Noatak except empty houses. Deciding not to stay, they continued on down to Cape Beaufort. There was nothing but an old DEW line station there.

Easter Sunday, April 11, was spent in Wevok where a crew of four civilians maintain a DEW line station. "It was really incredible. It's been pretty desolate between points and

then we arrive in Wevok. It was like staying at the Captain Cook!" comments Gary. The facilities used to house 150 people. A huge bowling alley, barbershops, a school, dormitory, huge shops, a stainless steel kitchen—all reminders of what used to be a bustling

50 channel television set." It's hard to tell who was more surprised. The tired mushers were shown a room where they could stay the night. They all celebrated Easter with a fabulous meal. The next day they took off for Point Hope.

Both men had been



station. One man's job was to take care of all the equipment. He also operates a cat and a dozer to keep Wevok's large airstrip maintained.

"When we traveled up to it, we thought it was a prison," describes Malcolm. "We walk in and the men were relaxing in front of a

eagerly anticipating their arrival at this whaling village of 850. Malcolm and his brother, Mark, are commercial fishermen and have their own fishing boat in Bristol Bay. Joe Frankson, a native of Point Hope and a partner, has been encouraging Malcolm to "Come on up!" He finally made it. "Joe's a

whaling captain in the village. He gave Gary and I our own two-story house to use the entire 2 weeks we stayed in Point Hope. We had a great time!"

Gary enthusiastically describes his visit: "I found Point Hope to be really intriguing. The elders still have a strong hold on the community. I noticed it in the traditional way they whaled with their skin boats. The skin sewing was incredible. No motors; they still paddled. They were still into the crafts. The elders had a firm grip on their village and they were passing on their traditional views very well." Whaling is one of the main subsistence activities in Point Hope. According to Gary, everybody was involved or affected by whaling in some way. It's a real community-type effort.

When Gary and Malcolm arrived, they found themselves surrounded by all the excitement of the whaling season. Because whaling is strictly native use only, the two men weren't allowed to go out in the

boats. But, they were able to participate by observing the annual harvest. And that they did in abundance! "It was the most cultural thing I've ever seen in my life. It was just incredible," exclaims an excited Gary.

Their close observations bring us the following account: There were 20 whaling camps with 18-20 people in each camp. Each whaling boat contained 8 crew members which included a captain and other family members. Each member might have his own family as well, so each family member in turn would help maintain the whaling camp.

According to Gary, the person who makes the first strike on a whale qualifies for the head, tail and one of the fins. It's religious for them to have the head because of the jawbones. A whaling captain gets buried under the biggest set of jawbones he collects. Each whaling captain belongs to a clan. The rest of his collection of jawbones is used to create a fence around his clan's graveyard. It's very important to him.

Up to 8 boats share in one whale. That could add up to 64 shares per whale. Seems like a lot for one whale, but these Bowhead whales can weigh up to a ton a foot. The whale Gary and Malcolm witnessed being harvested was 36' long. That's a big fish no matter how you cut it! Because the sun didn't set until 11:30 p.m. or later and it really never did get dark, the people were able to work through the night.

This particular night the whale was taken about 8:30 p.m. Bowing their heads in prayer, the natives reverently gave thanks. While the whale was still in the water, the captain of the boat that had made the first strike marked the whale with shallow cuts for the sake of sharing. A big slab of fresh muktuk—the blubber, fat or skin—was cut off and sent to the camp. While the muktuk was being cooked, the others went to

and in minutes it was all gone."

"Muktuk is the best stuff I've ever tasted in my life. Delicious! When it's fresh, it just melts in your mouth. Once it is frozen, you eat it raw. If you try to cook it, it becomes rubbery," explains Malcolm.

Huge hawsers with block and tackles and sheer human manpower are used to pull the whale onto shore. Directions are shouted out

vary. This year it is 3-4 miles.

Whales are harvested in spring so the meat can be frozen, says Malcolm. The old-timers used old permafrost caches which are located back near the mountains. These are still used and cleaned out regularly to be ready for each year's bounty. Whaling takes up 2 months out of the year, says Gary.

Time flies when you are having a great time, but it was soon time to say their good-byes and push on. Gary's sled, which by now was broken beyond repair, was left behind in Point Hope. The two mushers decided to mush together with one big team. Chariot, the site where nuclear testing was done in the early '60's, was the next stop. No one lives here anymore, but the guys set up camp—choosing to remain apart from the remaining empty buildings.

At Kivalina they found another dose of good hospitality. By then it was springtime and both men felt the need to get moving. The snow was starting to melt; rivers were breaking up. It was now April. As they were hitching up the dogs, Malcolm noticed a group of villagers gathering around. He said to Gary, "You know, we're going to have an audience here, so don't mess up!" Most people's visualization of a dog team being hooked up is dogs lunging, plenty of barking and an abundance of energy—just waiting to happen. Gary did his best to

(continued on page 27)



work getting the whale out of the water. When the muktuk is ready to eat, an older native woman appears with a tray of it and screams, "Muktuk!" "It was unbelievable," Gary relates. "Everybody dropped what they were doing and literally ran to the woman. Hands reached out for the delicacy

for all to hear—such as, "Hands on" and "Walk away." By the time it is pulled up on to the beach, it's about 10:30 p.m. and by 8:00 a.m., the whale is totally butchered. Large chunks of whale meat each weighing approximately 150 lbs. is hauled back to the village with snowmachines. Each year the distance can

Lynx and snowshoe hare—their ups and downs

BY RICK KENYON

In early November I had the pleasure of meeting Bill Route. Bill is the Management Biologist for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and works out of the Copper Center office. One of the projects that Bill has been involved with is a study of the Lynx. This is a cooperative study with Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (Tok area office).

Although Bill stressed that this is an ongoing project, he did share some preliminary results. He said the final report should be available next year. Partly as a result of this study, the trapping season (on federal public lands) in Game Management Unit 12 was

shortened this year. Instead of opening on November 1, trapping began on December 1.



The study took place in an approximately 625 square mile area centered around the Jatahmund Lake area in Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge. The study area included parts of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Preserve along its northern border. Working with Bill Route were Craig Perham and Terry Doyle with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Lynx were radio-collared to determine home range characteristics, habitat preference, and daily movement rates. Twenty-two lynx were radio-collared between April 1990 and December 1992. The home ranges of the collared animals varied greatly. Six of the males had home ranges estimated between 5 and 93 square miles; five had ranges that exceeded 93 square miles,



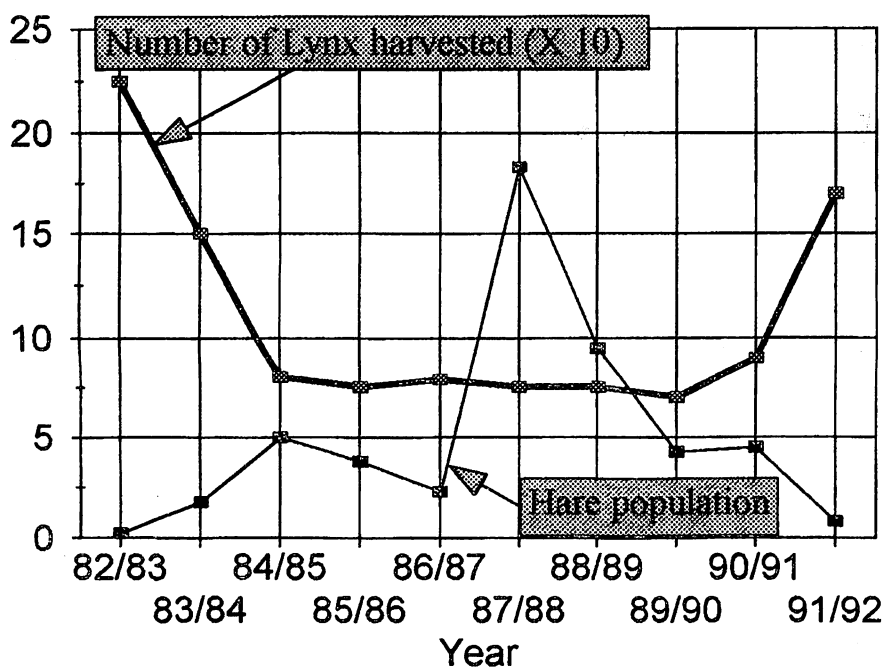
and four lynx dispersed from the study area. Three adult female lynx had home

ranges that averaged 22 square miles.

Snowshoe hare populations were monitored also, and appeared to be low throughout much of the study area. (Pockets containing high densities of hares were present until the winter of 1992-93.)

Although the lynx harvest during the 1991-92 trapping season in Game Management Unit 12 was up 83% over the previous year, the track counts in the study area were down. One explanation might be that transient cats are being harvested. Also, the study area represents a small portion of GMU 12 and therefore might not be indicative of the overall trends within the unit.

Normally the lynx are shy and it is unusual to sight one, but residents and guests in the McCarthy area have reported somewhat strange behavior of lynx the past two years. Twice we have had one of the large cats in the yard here at WSEN, and it seemed quite fearless. (Both times they were hunting voles.) One guest who had just driven the McCarthy Road from Chitina asked if someone in the local area had a "pet lynx," as they had observed one walking in the roadway. They reported that it also appeared to be unafraid of humans. I thought that the cats might be starving, due to the snowshoe hare being at such a low population level, but a local trapper said that the ones he had seen were in good health.



Jim Hummel—Man with a dream

BY BONNIE KENYON

How does a young man growing up in Miami, Florida end up becoming a park ranger in south-central Alaska? Perhaps because he dared to dream.

"I have a dream," says Jim Hummel, 38. "I've always wanted to be a ranger in Alaska. To have a ranger station on a lake with an airplane." Jim's dream may not be totally fulfilled yet but he's certainly making great strides on it.

Today Hummel's official title with the Wrangell-St. Elias Park and Preserve is Chitina District Ranger. His area covers Gulkana all the way to the Canadian border. McCarthy-Kennicott falls into Jim's jurisdiction.

Jim was born in Germany while his dad was there in the service. He was 6 months old when he and his family left. After spending 2 years in the state of Illinois, they moved to Miami. His grandfather and dad operated their own business—industrial sales.

When asked why he chose to work for the National Park Service, Jim says he feels the desire began when he was just a young boy. His involvement with the Boy Scouts pointed him in that direction, but the greatest influence was the "park hopping" he and his family did when he was growing up. His dad was able to take month long vacations, so that gave them plenty of time to find those out-of-the-way spots to pitch their tent. Jim says later on they upgraded to a camper. Needless to say, it's not surprising that today his hobbies still include outdoor activities such as camping and skiing.

When it was time to select a college, he chose the University of Florida where he majored in Forestry. His first job with the NPS was as a summer ranger at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. He then spent two summers working on Lake Superior in northern Wisconsin on Stockton Island. He was a

ranger for Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

From 1980-1986 Jim and his wife, Mary, lived on Ship Island in the Gulf of Mexico where Jim served as a ranger for Gulf Islands National Seashore. The island is 3 miles long by 1 mile wide, says Jim, and only had one lone tree on the entire island.

Changing location again, the Hummels moved to Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah, where Jim took on another ranger position. They stayed here for 2 years.

Finally in July 1988 Jim, Mary, and their sons, David Lynn and Robert Bryce, headed north. Slana, Alaska, to be exact, and another ranger job—this time for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve. Jim says he enjoyed the 3 years he spent there.

Since May 1991 the Hummel family—which now includes a daughter Rebecca Elias—have lived in Copper Center. They

purchased a home and are finding their way around the Glennallen area. Jim is on the school board. Mary, keeping her nursing skills sharpened, helps out at Cross Road Medical Center and even serves as a school nurse.

Before coming to Copper Center, Jim had acquired his private pilot's license. Now, however, he has gained his commercial rating.

For those of us who live within Jim's district, what can we expect? According to him, he is a field contact to Superintendent Karen Wade. He is willing to answer questions and even hear our "gripes." He further hopes to establish integrity with us—one on one. If you would like to contact Jim, you may do so at 832-2205 or write him: Jim Hummel, Chitina District Ranger, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve, P.O. Box 29, Glennallen, AK 99588.



A tribute to "Jake"

BY RANDY ELLIOTT

Last July we got the news that Severt Jacobson, "Jake" to all who knew him, had passed beyond this world.

Jake was a prospector and gold miner who hung out on Rex and Chittitu creeks. One of his most

famous stories involved three silver nuggets he claimed to have found while crossing Dan Creek—the first of which got caught in his shoe on the way across! I have heard him change the name of the creek, however, and I suspect there was more effort involved in their discovery than a country stroll.

Jake was one of the last living links to the real mining days, having been around during the efforts of Martin Radovan and Cliff Cayouette and the other pioneers. Most people don't even know who they are, but much of our local geography was named by them. Like the mining itself this is one part of the human

experience which is fast becoming extinct. We are all truly poorer without our past.

Good-by, Jake—I will try to keep some of your spirit alive.

Severt Jacobson
1913-1993



School news

BY KRISTEN JANSSEN

The Calvert Long Distance Education school is in full swing in Kennicott. This fall has been a busy period with Aaron, Matt and Stacie Miller working hard to learn lessons and mail tests off. We've missed Tyler Green the last six weeks as he's been traveling with his family.

Stacie has graduated to a new curriculum from the American School and is proceeding with the material at break-neck speed. Homework is standard, as are good grades, and the holidays have offered the students earned vacation.

The shorter days add discipline to our studies as we try to finish school and get outside before dark, but we have resorted to propane lighting most mornings and need it Wednesday afternoons, too.

Stacie, Matt and Aaron were wonderful dramaticians at a community Halloween party where they recited favorite authors' work.

They are active poets and artists as well. We're presently enjoying a week-long holiday and will return to school in the New Year with fresh vigor and vigilance.

Season's greetings from the Miller school!

The Spruce

by Stacie Miller

It grew out of a crack in the rock,
So little and so much,
So little dirt, so little water,
So much alone, so barren a spot,
So strong and proud,
Yet so fragile and weak,
Alone and lonely,
All by itself,
A baby spruce is trying its best,
To live one day at a time.

The wind sweeps across the rock,
It tugs at its fragile roots,
But the tree holds strong in the blowing wind,
Too proud to let go but too weak to stay,
As the season changes so does he
His roots run out of room,
Yet still he struggles on,
Too weak to live too proud to die,
As his needles turn yellow and drop off
You know his end is near,
And your heart goes out to this little tree,
Who held life so dear.

Mentasta caribou fall to predators

Life expectancy for newborn caribou in the Mentasta herd last spring was approximately one week, according to a preliminary study funded and conducted by the National Park Service in cooperation with Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Thirty nine calves, most less than 3 days old, were captured and had radio collars attached during the last week of May and the first week of June. By July 1, 32 of the 39 had died. By early August all but one of the small creatures were dead, for a mortality rate of 97%. The leading cause of death was the wolf, followed by the bear.

The biologists are examining vegetation composition at 6 vegetation exclosures constructed on the Mentastna range in 1983. They are also keeping abreast of monthly collections of fecal and forage samples, checking on diet composition and forage quality.

A reported \$160,000 has been designated for the study in 1994.

Sightings

Terry and Dee Frady report seeing a single **Snow Bunting** in a tree near their cabin the 3rd week of December. A rare occasion—especially to see one by itself.



Patrick Sperry reports seeing a **coyote** near their cabin on December 21. Nearby neighbors, Rick and Bonnie Kenyon, may have seen the same coyote twice—on December 22 and 27. Both times the animal was bold and made several attempts to come closer to the cabin. Whether it was the distraction from Rick's picture taking or the two brazen **magpies** who appeared to be challenging "their" territory, the coyote eventually ambled off.

Any animal or bird sightings in the Wrangells would be greatly appreciated.



More delays plague telephone installation

BY RICK KENYON

McCarthy and Kennicott residents who have been trying to get telephone service for more than a year were disappointed again this fall when the promised service was put on hold for an indefinite period.

According to Copper Valley Telephone Co-op General Manager Scott Smith, Mr. Paul Barrett contacted him and said that he represented a "large number of landowners in McCarthy." Mr. Barrett is a lawyer and lives in Washington. It was his grandfather who homesteaded the original townsite where McCarthy is now located. Questions were raised over the right-of-way needed to run phone lines to residents and power line to the telephone switch.

Town residents had agreed to write a letter supporting the phone lines at a meeting on July 23, but later withdrew the offer. Smith said the approval from the Alaska Public Utilities Commission had also been held up because of objections by "certain persons," but he expected to have the approval sometime in December.

In a letter dated December 17, Ed LaChapelle said that he and Paul Barrett had a "long, three-way phone conversation with Scott Smith." Ed said that Smith "agreed to review the option of wiring the phone system

to include the area across the river, predicated on getting the footbridge in to support a cross-river cable." He went on to say—"If the switch and dish do end up on the McCarthy side, there may be a chance to locate them farther out of town on Barrett-controlled land farther out Barrett Way. This could be combined with other town utilities like fuel storage, garbage-handling and maybe a community well." Ed further stated that the situation might be described as "negotiations in progress."

Smith said that the right-of-way problems do not preclude being able to eventually get service into McCarthy, but that CVTC did not want to enter into a fight because they were simply responding to requests from residents to bring telephone service to the area, not trying to expand the co-op. "There are other options—the board is committed to putting service in McCarthy," Smith said. He also said they had just completed the budget proposal for 1994 and that \$280,000 was earmarked for the project, money that had been in the 1993 budget and was not used.

There are alternatives to service by CVTC. The most common at the present is driving or flying to Chitina or Glennallen to make a phone call. Hardly a week goes by that this option isn't used by a McCarthy or Kennicott resident.

Another option used by some is High Frequency (HF) Radiotelephone service. Although it saves frequent travel to make calls, there are some drawbacks. Because it relies on radio wave propagation, signals are not always usable. Also, the radio must be monitored for incoming calls as it does not "ring" like a regular telephone—rather, an operator in Anchorage calls you by your FCC assigned radio call sign, so you have to be listening for your call. Since some businesses had to monitor HF, CB and Aircraft radios last summer, it was not uncommon to hear someone pick up the wrong microphone to answer an incoming call. Most locals who use this service use a service called Trident. Basic service costs \$85 per month. You can either purchase a radio, or lease one from Trident. Contact Jack & Virginia Reed, Trident Radio, Box 111158, Anchorage, AK 99511.

KCHU nearly ready to transmit

BY RICK KENYON

Lee Santero, technician for the KCHU radio station in Valdez brought another piece of equipment for the translator station located on Fireweed Mountain. A thermal generator will back up the solar panels and the gas powered generator to provide power for the 5 watt transmitter.

Satellite telephone service is also available. One company that provides telephone service literally anywhere on earth is called Comsat Mobile Communications. They provide access to the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) by using the International Maritime Satellite (Inmarsat) Network. Inmarsat owns and operates four geostationary satellites. You use an "Inmarsat phone" to access the satellite, then your call is passed through to a Land Earth Station. From there, your call is routed no differently from any terrestrial based telephone call.

The special phones used to access the satellite cost between \$20,000 and \$30,000 and the service costs either \$5.50 or \$10.00 per minute, depending on the type and speed of data desired. For more information you can write to: Comsat Mobile Communication, 22300 Comsat Drive, Clarksburg, MD 20871. ☎

Santero made the trip by snowmachine the week of December 6. He made a brief test of the transmitter and said the translator will be ready for service when the FCC issues the permits. Terry Frady and Mark Vail helped carry equipment up the steep trail to the radio site. ☎

A special opportunity

BY BETTY HICKLING

In October I took a three week marketing trip to Germany and Switzerland. With a suitcase filled with brochures I set out to educate the foreign tourist industry about the McCarthy Lodge. After only a few days I found that the education was mine, and an idea conceived at a small bush Alaskan business is sometimes not totally realistic in the rest of the world. Here are a few thoughts I feel are worth sharing.

When you say work it means work.

The notion of work is a serious matter in both of these countries. In McCarthy we all work hard, but most of our work is physical labor with morning coffee think time. People in these two countries, both of which have one of the highest ranking standards of living in the world, do not need to pack water or cut firewood. They have highly skilled jobs in offices that I found were often powerful think tanks.

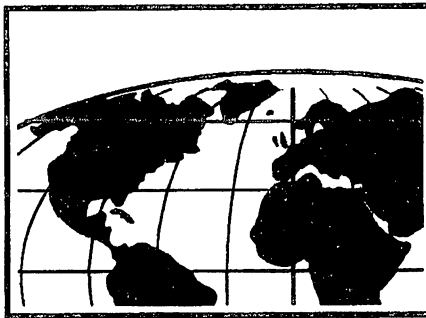
When I arrived at the Alaska Division of Tourism office in Frankfurt, which is operated under contract by the State of Alaska, I had a loose plan of possible meetings with a few tour operators. Mrs. Sommer had been advised by the Juneau Office of Tourism that I planned to visit. She had already organized an itinerary and was only waiting to fit the pieces together with my travel plans.

The next ten days, with the exception of the weekend off, were filled with meetings in many corners of both countries. In one day I had five appointments in Munich. This is a huge city by McCarthy standards, and one that I only arrived in for the first time the day of the meetings. I found that the German people were

extremely kind when you master the art of looking utterly lost.

Who do we do business with?

As I walked into the first office I was greeted by a familiar face, one I had seen in McCarthy. Ms. Gierlich had been to McCarthy the spring before on a familiarization trip arranged by the Division of Tourism. We spent some time in a conference room over coffee as I presented her with my marketing package, which covered our accommodations, rates and eating arrangement.



We then went out for a two hour lunch which became for me a private seminar. We covered how the overseas tour companies handle bookings, take deposits and set commission policies. We discussed the strict German travel laws that dictate how these companies operate.

In the following meetings with other companies, I learned that the Wrangell-St. Elias Park, though not as famous as Denali, is not unheard of. Overseas booking agents, some of whom I did not recognize, were already booking with McCarthy Lodge or Kennicott Lodge through incoming tour operators here in Alaska.

At one meeting I presented my marketing folder which contained a color photograph of our lodge. One gentleman excused himself and returned with a similar but larger

framed photo. It was a picture he had taken of the lodge on a trip several years earlier.

What we sell.

Why does a working professional in Frankfurt, Germany vacation in Alaska? They live in a country which has 70 million people and is about the size of Montana. They visit the Wrangell-St. Elias Park for the mystique of the vast wilderness and the unspoiled scenic beauty. Corny but true.

Most of the visitors booked here by the tour companies I spoke with have taken back with them a somewhat contrary picture than what I perceived. McCarthy Lodge was historic, a good place to eat and sleep with a fun bar. Kennicott Lodge was modern, professional, and had a good view from the front porch. Both lodges were doing a good job of providing the basic needs of the traveler though they have very different atmospheres. This I knew. Surprising, however, neither lodge was the sole reason for a visit. So much for vanity. This is when I discovered the essence of my plan had to be changed.

The activity businesses were commented on far more than the service businesses. Historical attractions provide a modest share of the interest, but the prized activities are flightseeing, glacier trekking and hiking—all things which allow visitors to experience the park.

Flightseeing was viewed as the finest way to understand the enormity of the park and well worth the cost. Guided hiking and glacier trekking were the best methods to get a safe, hands-on encounter with nature for those that were out of their daily environment.

After just two appointments, I revised my marketing plan. I was so glad that I had taken a stack of the Wrangell St. Elias News' *Visitor's Guide to McCarthy and Kennicott* with me. This became my most advantageous tool. I was no longer there to market just the lodge but to explain a destination which provides the visitors with some unusual obstacles and rare adventures.

I found myself asking where people would like to stay and what would they like to do. The visitor's guide covers transportation from Anchorage by air or bus, scheduling and rates. It includes the guiding businesses from river rafting to Kennicott tours and how to contact them. It explains how to use the trams and what the weather is like. In one meeting I was asked about big game guiding, and I could point out Roland Hammack who advertises in the

visitor's guide. It made my job much easier.

A final thought.

The McCarthy/Kennicott business community makes up a local tourist industry with which the stunning natural scenery combines to compliment one another. To the outside world we are viewed as a unique whole bound by the fact that we are home spun business people working hard to make it. This is what makes this a memorable town to visit. There are no Holland America Tours here.

One operator shared a specific story with me that we can all identify with. One of his clients had spent an hour in an air taxi office in McCarthy with the lady who owned it learning from her what we do in the winter. I laughed because this was in our

employee training manual as one of the ten most asked questions. That conversation was the most noteworthy thing that happened to him on his vacation.

Nature truly has the corner on what is marketable here, not any one business or attraction. What we have as individuals is a special opportunity to share a part of ourselves with people who really want to hear. That is a scarce thing in the world today and something that costs us nothing more than a little time to give to the travelers who have come so far.



"God loves everyone of us as if there were but one of us to love."

— Augustine

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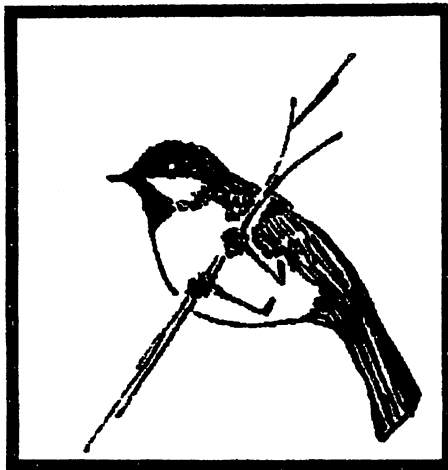
Outdoors in the Wrangells

BY AL GAGNON

The summer of 1993 at May Creek was a dandy summer—long, starting the middle of April with warm, sunny days week in and week out. Just when one started really worrying about forest fire danger, we would get an afternoon or night of rain. Yes, the summer was just great here at May Creek. I've heard most of the Wrangell-St. Elias Park had the same weather.

Our log cabin sits on the bank of May Creek in a small glenn—about an acre in size—with small clumps of willows here and there, as well as spruce—perfect habitat for the songbird community. In my glen and on my cabin, as well as the guest cabin, I have 10 birdhouses. They're designed for the Tree Swallow, a very aggressive mosquito eating machine. We pay a lot of attention to the upkeep and maintenance of these bird houses—cleaning every fall (as well as spring) the inside of the house with bleach.

Now and again, a Black-capped Chickadee will nest in one of these swallow birdhouses. The Black-capped Chickadee is an earlier nester, (being a local critter) than the swallow, which is a transient. Always, the swallow will run the Black-capped Chickadee off its nest, which by this time has 4-6 eggs. So, we are no longer excited about the Black-capped Chickadee when we seen these lovely little critters setting up house keeping in our glen.



This spring, about the middle of April, I noticed a pair of Boreal Chickadees checking out the Tree Swallow boxes. The cock (I assumed) stood guard while the hen went in and out of all the boxes—numerous times over a ten day period. Knowing the nesting habits of the Boreal Chickadee, I decided to put a bit of chain saw cuttings in a bird box right out in front of my west window to see if the pair would use the house to nest in.

The sawdust must have made this house very attractive. Soon the pair decided

to use the house as a nesting site. In a flash they were mating—putting a few nesting materials in the house—taking some sawdust out of the box. They were very busy for a few days. Then, the activity slowed to almost nothing. I had to watch closely to see their coming and going. Both of them were sitting I noticed—one bird leaving when its mate called from the immediate willow branch close to the box. I found myself excited and spending a good part of the day on watch.

The Tree Swallows arrived on May 5, right on time and en masse. The swallows immediately started

checking out all bird boxes including the Boreals' occupied house. For 2 weeks the sky was full of swallows, many more pairs than there were houses. Days and weeks of aerial combat—deciding who would have the use of the birdhouses. These swallows would land and poke their heads into the chickadees' house, then jerk back immediately with what seemed to be a dazed look about them—leaving as fast as they could. Yes, we decided the Boreal Chickadees were holding their own. By the way, the nest now held 6 eggs.

As the month of May ended, things had finally settled down and the swallows were leaving the chickadees alone. Now, instead of 6 eggs, there were 6 hungry babies which kept the parents pretty busy. About a week into June, the chickadee young were outgrowing their house, and instead of feeding them, the parents would call to them from outside—"Come on out into the world of flight and adventure!"

I didn't witness the young leaving, but noticed the lack of movement, and no more chickadees. Within 24 hours a pair of Tree Swallows were nesting in the box—busily hauling grass and feathers into the house as well as mating. I'm saying to myself, "No, it won't



work, it's too late to raise these young." After a few days, there was very little activity except for the changing of the guard. But, around the middle of July, out of the house

came the young, perching on our radio antenna wire—working on their feathers, then practicing flight maneuvers as well as feeding themselves!

Yes, the summer of 1993 was a lovely summer here at May Creek, and a productive one for these lovely little flying critters.

A bit more about the Boreal Chickadee. It is a year around resident here in the Wrangell Mountains. These birds gather in the fall and make up groups of 10-40 (based on my observations) and move in and out of an area as the temperatures change. Most often you'll see these critters feeding upside down on willow and alder seed pods. If you look closely after they have been feeding,

you will notice the ground covered with the seed pod bran-chaff. The birds move into the valleys when the temperatures rise and go high on the ridges when the temperatures are low. They are constantly on the move. The flock uses sentinels who stand guard while the rest feed.

Oh, they are a favorite of mine, and lovely to see on the trap line—with their cheerful calls and frantic activities. When seeing them on the trap line, with no movement, with the temperature around 30 below, I would always stop, get out the thermos of tea, light a pipe, and watch these hardy little balls of feathers. I find the Boreal and Black-capped Chickadee some of the most attractive and interesting creatures in these lovely mountains.



Al Gagnon

WSEN staff photo

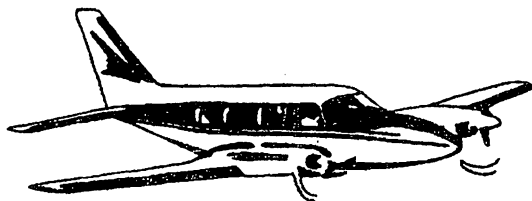
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Now you can leave Anchorage at 8:30 on Wednesday or Friday morning and arrive in Gulkana at 9:45, McCarthy at 11:00. Or, you can leave McCarthy at 11:15 and be back in Anchorage by 2:00pm the same day! (Leaves Gulkana at 12:45)
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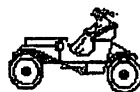
800-478-3368

OUR TOWN

January



1919



February

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU!



AMUSEMENTS

The Masquerade Ball given by the A.B.s on New Year's Eve was a highly successful function. A very large number attended, considering the quarantine which restricted other than town residents from being present. There were forty masqueraders and many onlookers.

NO INFLUENZA IN MCCARTHY

The town of McCarthy continues to be free from all symptoms of the influenza epidemic. The Board of Health is keeping a strict eye on all conditions and if things proceed as they are we shall escape the "flu" and be spared to die of "ennui."

Last night a special train arrived bringing two nurses who will inoculate all railroad employees. Mr. Corser, Superintendent of the Railroad, having made it compulsory that

all railroad employees and their families take the serum.

Almost all the residents have been inoculated. Dr. Hill has finished McCarthy and Kennecott, is now at Bonanza, and then will treat all the employees at Jumbo. Latest reports from those towns where the influenza serum has been used, show a marked difference in harm that the epidemic does. In Cordova the disease is well under control, only 30 cases confined to their rooms, & only three new cases in the last few days, two of which landed from one of the incoming boats.

NEWS ITEMS

Frank Iverson is having good success with his chicken ranch, getting several fresh eggs daily and says if he had electric lights he could hypnotize the hens to double the output.

The Seldenrich family are occupying the log residence opposite the school, for the winter months.

ARE YOU CONTENT?

There was a time, and not so long ago, when every day the remark was heard that if the war were only over, every one would be happy. The war is over, the winter is mild, the days are lengthening the whole population is healthy and well, still we are fretting and never satisfied. Doesn't it beat all?

Jan 4

Comfort Joe is on a hunting trip to Chittistone. Just before this he took a tramp thru the hills nearby and returned with six ptarmigan.

BRING MORE PEOPLE TO ALASKA

It is now time to take up the cause of the many people who might be populating the vast expanse of unoccupied Alaskan Territory and enjoying the benefits of the untold resources of its country.

There should be great pleasure in reawakening the good old pioneering instinct, which lay dormant during the period of the war.

When such a handful of people as we, who have such a territory as this, lose the craving to see it full of cities, farms & manufactories, we are either aging too rapidly, or something has "got our goat."

Jan 11

BULLETIN



This Bulletin is sent you to announce that "The McCarthy Weekly News" will not be published this week, because C.F.M. Cole is laid up with an

acute attack of sciatic rheumatism, or lumbago, inflammatory rheumatism, or whatever it is which attacks all who have spent many years on the trail, swimming rivers and traveling glaciers and sleeping on a mattress of spruce boughs on ice springs.

Cole is the fellow who sets type and manipulates the press in this office, so when he is on sick list and no one can be got to take his place, we are forced to disappoint our subscribers with this bulletin instead of the weekly sheet.

Nothing short of death or sickness could make us do this. We have struggled with broken machinery and other impossible conditions, but, in the sixty three editions somehow we always made good.

Now we are up against it but next week we will come up smiling, anyway we are thankful we haven't got the "flu."

January 18

FLU NEWS

First Class ROOMS

IN CONNECTION WITH
CHARLEY'S
PLACE
RESTUARANT

McCarthy, Alaska

Chitina. Jan. 25. Special to the News.

Dr. Krauss and 2 nurses, the Misses Nelson and Oaks from Seattle, have been in Copper Center for the past ten days, treating the influenza patients of which there are 42 natives and 2 whites.

The Roadhouse is quarantined. Doc Billum, the old chief of the Tonsina Indians is dead and ten other natives. Conditions are much improved.

The doctor and his assistants leave for Upper Tonsina on Monday, where there are 30 cases and 2 natives died.

One case of influenza has developed at Taslina. There are none at Gulkana.

In order to prevent any risk to our residents by any Indians traveling through from Copper Center, guards have been stationed by the Local Board of Health.

Jas. Hussey and J.W. Nickell are city guards.

The large outside mail which was distributed yesterday had been treated to an extra strong fumigation, so those who got the most mail got the most sulphur.

January 25, 1919

MCCARTHY SCHOOL HONOR ROLL FOR JANUARY

Victor Marshall
Lawrence Barrett
Arthur MacDonnell
Walter MacDonnell
Fred Seltenreich
Ted Seltenreich
Laura May Fry
Dorothy Lubbe
Dora MacDonnell
Mary MacDonnell
Marion Wills



The boys were perfect in attendance and punctuality during month. Only one boy was absent during December and that for one day.

The pupil's report cards distributed this week, show remarkable progress made in the half year completed, reflecting great credit on the teacher and scholars.

WINTER RECREATIONS SKATING

Some of our energetic citizens, headed by Doc Brehmer, conceived the idea of a skating rink on McCarthy Creek.

With this end in view they have been working for over a week and have a large area prepared and flooded. The skating is fine.

Skating contests and exhibitions will be given during the season and later on valuable prizes will be offered for championship and fancy skating.

SKI-ING

Skiing is the fashionable exercise these days and the favorite skiing ground is the glacier hill opposite the town.

Yesterday afternoon a dozen enthusiasts were enjoying the sport, and gave credible exhibitions of skill.

COURT NEWS

In the Commissioner's Court on Thursday last, on the complaint of one Thuro Linstrum, one of the residents of Front St. was charged with selling liquor.

When the case came up for hearing, the complainant had mysteriously disappeared, so it was postponed till Saturday, today the same condition exists, and another postponement was made till the 6th. The defendant is still under bonds.

NEWS ITEMS

Mike Molenski, one of the Nizina placer operators is spending a few days in town.

He has been employed by the Kennecott Copper Corporation for the last few months.

He will proceed to Nizina very shortly, and prepare for next seasons work.

Although some of the other operators are likely to sell out their holdings, this is not Mike's intention. He is now trying to secure options on some of the smaller holdings and work more extensively.

Feb 1

PROSPECTOR RETURNS

Sam Means returned to our city on yesterdays train, having spent several months on the

coast, part of which time at Latouche during the influenza epidemic.

Although there were one hundred cases there, Sam was not a victim which he considers due to fresh air treatment, tho we think he might have talked the germs to death.

He wishes to emphatically refute the statement that he has come back to go to work as he is equipped with 100 pounds of rabbit wire and bait.

He will leave soon for his rabbit patch on the Nizina flats.

LOOSE FOWL

A crate of live poultry shipped in by the Dan Creek Mining Co. created a sensation at the depot this week. They were liberated in the warehouse pending instructions from the owner, but it was a harder task to muster them again.

After a strenuous chase in which Al Doze had to climb the rafters and Murie and John Nelson were floor managers, the wily chickens were corralled & were taken to new quarters, all except three, which took refuge and were found next day, under Amber's steam laundry machinery in storage.

Feb 8

A hundred small accounts make a bank stronger than a dozen large ones aggregating the same total of deposits, That is why we are constantly seeking new customers while retaining our old ones. We want as wide a circle of friends and customers as possible we will appreciate your account

BANK OF ALASKA

Capital \$170,000.00

Alaska's Branch Banking System
Cordova Skagway Wrangell Anchorage

King Floyd

THE TALE OF A SMALL TIME DICTATOR

Part six — An ingenious solution

BY RANDY ELLIOTT

"Mega?!" the Duchess of Distortion cried over her squawk box, "I need you in here!" The door to her office flew open and Mega Patience entered breathlessly.

"Yes, ma'am."

"They're doing it again," the duchess said peevishly.

"What?" Mega said perplexed.

"Those birds, the gray ones, they're eating again without permission. They were already here once this morning." Mega rolled her eyes and studied the errant birds.

"I know you think I'm harping," her boss continued, "but we have a responsibility to manage this office the same as the essential land even if we are fifty miles away. We simply haven't got the budget for this unauthorized feeding."

"Yes, ma'am," replied the secretary uncertainly. "I'll have the rangers shoot a few of them right away."

"Oh no, we can't do that," the duchess cried aghast. "You know how much the senators liked the wildlife on their junket!" Mega's cheeks reddened at her own impropriety. "If the birds were gone it would affect our ability to get funding," the duchess finished primly.

"Get me Norm," she screeched as new birds returned for yet another mouthful. Mega scuttled out and a small man in coveralls scuttled in seconds later. Normal Journeyman waited quietly as the duchess scribbled on her blotter.

"Have you been thinking about the problem?" she queried imperiously. Normal shifted from one foot to the other.

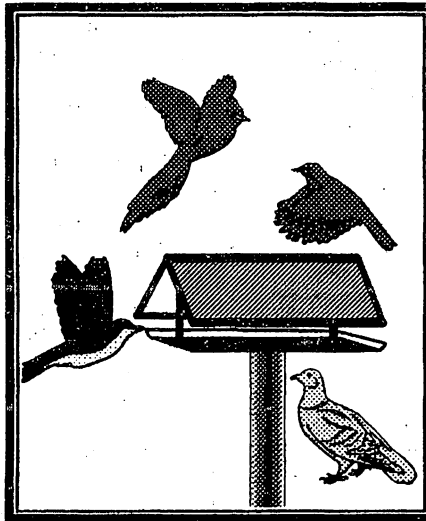
"Ahhh... yes, your grace."

"Good. What do you propose?"

"Propose?"

"Yes, what can you do about it?"

"About what?" Normal said in a small voice.



"Those gluttonous birds, of course!" the duchess said, exasperated.

"Oh," Normal relaxed, "I can nail the feeder shut."

"Will the birds come if you do?"

Normal shook his head no. "Well, that's out, people would wonder why it was up there."

"I could take it down."

"Oh no! You know our congressmen like to see a wildlife friendly environment when they visit."

"Ah..." Normal had an inspired flash. "I could super glue the seeds to the feeder, that way the birds would still come but they couldn't eat." The duchess paused in thought and a crafty look came over her face. Normal squirmed under her gaze.

"Yesss... I think that is the solution. Do it at once!" she commanded and Normal scuttled out. The duchess keyed her box again.

"Mega?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"I want you to schedule a meeting for the office personnel to discuss how we can best utilize the birdseed budget in the future."

"Won't we be using it for birdseed?" Mega asked innocently.

"No, I think Normal has found the 'final solution' for the problem."

"Yes, ma'am. There is a man from Mooringtown Headquarters waiting for you."

"Oh, yes, send him in," the duchess said gaily, for nothing improved her mood more than efficient management resulting in a windfall budget item.

A loose-jointed man with red hair sauntered into her office and she rose to greet him.

"Welcome aboard, Mr. Ratt. The baron says you can help us with our 'problem royale?'"

"My friends call me Whitey," he said in a broad cockney accent, flashing an oily-toothed grin. The duchess waved him airily to a chair as she sat down, resting her chin on steepled hands. She contemplated his shifty countenance. He squirmed a bit as the moment wore on, and finally she gave him another tiny smile as she pulled a manilla file open before her.

"Did Lord Fedgov brief you fully?" she asked.

"As to what?"

"I see," she sighed, for the baron was notoriously stingy with information and he left it to his minions to decipher how much to give out, always with the unsaid threat of termination should they make a mistake and reveal too much of Fedgov's real agenda.

"The problem is really quite simple. One of the squatters has taken

the law literally. This has caused confusion, to say the least.

Unfortunately, we have our hands tied officially by all those silly constitutional rights, archaic as they may be, and, therefore, the baron felt it more appropriate to work sub rosa on the problem."

"Sub what?"

"Undercover," she sighed again. "He sent you to us because all of our agents and rangers are known to the squatters. Are you qualified for NSA operations?"

"What?"

"NSA operations," she repeated with growing irritation. He gave her a blank stare. "Nefarious spying activities," she elaborated.

"Uh, not exactly."

"Mr. Ratt, Whitey, why exactly did the baron send you out here?" the duchess asked sweetly. Whitey ducked his head sheepishly and tinged a pale red before replying.

"Well, I owed Fedgov a bit of bail money and the baron and I spent some time in nick a few years back, you know, when he was in for that extortion bit, so he asked if I wanted to square things. Well, actually he said I could pay or spend some time counting belugas from a glacier in the Bering Sea. This sounded a bit more interesting."

"I see," said the duchess glacially. The baron had sent her this idiot just to collect a debt! His heinous hidden history had haphazardly

harmed her having his helminthic hebetating hypnopompic henchman heriting her highly honed hypogeously hatched hyperborean happening.

"As I was saying, the only way we can deal with these people is to work undercover, so you will be inserted near the essential lands and you must infiltrate the man's organization. You will be given a small radio and a camera. I want prompt reporting on the activities of this would-be king."

"Ah, what am I looking for?"

Whitey asked tentatively.

"A violation, of course."

"A what?" he said.

"A violation. You know, a crime against Fedgov's resources," she said, piqued at his ignorance.

"What crime?"

"Lots of crimes—cutting wood, tying dogs, trespass, burning, killing animals, raising animals, farming, mining, logging, using water, crossing water, damming water, selling water." She saw complete ignorance written on his face, and taking a book resembling the New York Telephone directory from her wall shelf, she handed it to him.

"This is the abridged fourth congressional copy of the Actual Neccesarily Insidious Legal Collusion Act which allows us the right to move these squatters. It contains all the squatter rights and the regulations to be used on non-fedgov land or in times of war, etc."

Whitey took the enormous tome hesitantly and she gave him an inquiring look.

"Well, I don't read so good," he said hotly.

"How good?"

"NOT GOOD."

"At all?"

"NO."

"Nuts," she said, taking the book and putting it back on the shelf.

"Well, it doesn't matter anyway since NSA operations are neccesarily above the law, in order to preserve the law." The duchess repeated the maxim respectfully. "Let's get working on your cover and then you can do us some good," she said cheerily.

"My what?"

"Your cov... nevermind! Come with me, Mr. Ratt, I want you to meet the head hunter." And she swept regally from the office, her leopard skin cape flying bravely behind her.

Randy Elliott is one of the few remaining gold miners in the area. When he isn't busy picking gold nuggets from the sluice or sharing the beauty and rich history of the Dan Creek area with visitors, he can be found at the keyboard of his laptop computer. Don't miss part seven in the next issue.

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A look at the weather



BY GEORGE CEBULA

October at McCarthy was a continuation of some great fall weather. It was rather warm and wet with only 6 days of measurable snowfall.

The October average temperature was 33.0 (24.8 in Oct 92). The high was 61 on October 1 (52 on Oct 6, 92) and the low was -2 on October 24 (-15 on Oct 18, 92). All time high for October was 67 on Oct 7, 1967. *In comparison Silver Lake had an average temperature of 33.8, with a high of 56 on Oct 2 and low of 7 on Oct 24, 25 and 26.*

The total liquid precipitation was 4.09 inches (0.64 in Oct 92) and total snowfall was 16.9 inches (2.3 in Oct 92). *Silver Lake had 3.29 inches of liquid and 9.1 inches of snow.* Greatest snow depth was 8 inches on Oct 4 with 10.5 inches falling on the 3rd and 4th. The snow was gone by the 12th and the month ended with only 2 inches on the ground.

Winter finally got a firm hold in November and the weather returned to normal. The November average temperature at McCarthy was 16.5, the very same as Nov 92. The highest was 38

on Nov 10 (41 on Nov 25, 92) and the lowest was -34 on Nov 21 (-22 on Nov 13, 92). The all time high was 48 on Nov 1, 1970 and low was -46 on Nov 11, 1989. *Silver Lake had an average temperature of 15.9, with a high of 40 on Nov 10 and low of -25 on Nov 21.*

The total liquid precipitation for November was 2.00 inches (1.35 in Nov 92) with 24.5 inches of snow (10.3 in Nov 92). *This compares with 1.80 inches of liquid and 21.7 inches of snow at Silver Lake.* The greatest snow depth was 17 inches on the 19th and the

month ended with 15 inches on the ground.

Snow depths on December 1 at area stations ranged from 10 inches at Nabesna to 20 inches at Slana and Tonsina. In between was Old Edgerton at 14, McCarthy 15, Silver Lake 17, and Gulkana 19.

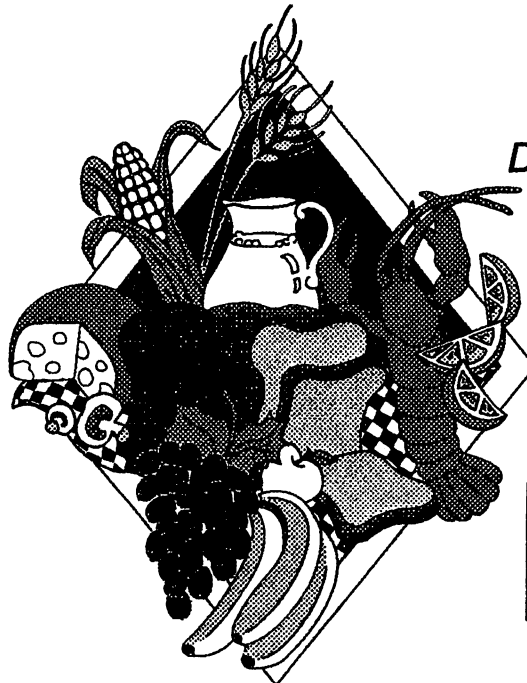
December and January are usually the coldest months with the lows falling to -50 or lower. Daylight is down to just over 4 hours by December 21, before it begins to increase again.



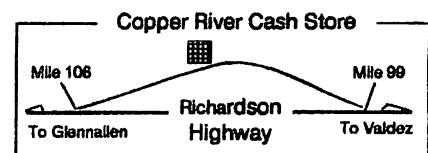
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The Spruce Beetles - Why are they here?

BY RUTH MACDONALD

I wrote an article about spruce beetles earlier this year and was asked, "What made the beetles an epidemic?" The information I had at the time did not address this. I wrote for more specifics and this is what I found.

Spruce bark beetles are natural to the area. They prefer downed and large slow growing trees. These could be stands that are naturally older and weaker, or those cleared by man. These forests are more susceptible to fire. Wildland fires used to cause the forest to recycle itself so newer more vigorous stands could replace them.

But the wildland fires in the area have been suppressed since 1952. The stands aged and the beetles are having a heyday. In addition, milder winters have not culled the populations (-35 will kill the larvae, -70 will kill the adults).

There are lots of theories and variations on what happens to trees in nature, but this is a simplified, straight-line synopsis. In the natural course of things, if an area is cleared by fire or some other disaster, willows and aspens dominate for the first 80 years, (which may be followed by

other hardwoods, depending on the area). Spruce trees, (usually white spruce) eventually take root, out-compete, and overtop the hardwoods. Seedlings (of any kind) can no longer compete for the nutrients and sun, and a groundcover of moss forms, cooling the soil. If nothing interrupts their growth, white spruce eventually stagnates and dies. The cool soils lead to the dominance of black spruce.

With all our black spruce, we may be in the final stages of this succession (or just have really cool soils). If fire, logging, blowdown, or other disaster doesn't expose the soil for new growth, the spruce will just grow old and die, or will be killed by beetles. The recycling will happen with or without our help.

For more information, write:

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Roger Burnside, Entomologist
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Anchorage, Alaska 99510



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USDA - Forest Service
State & Private Forestry
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Anchorage State Office
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Wayne G. Vandre
Horticulture Specialist and
Pesticide Programs Coordinator
Cooperative Extension Service
2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd., #118
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Or ask Bonnie and Rick Kenyon
for the pile of stuff I got from these
guys.



When visitors check in at the Valdez Hotel in Valdez, Alaska, hosts Jack and Dorothy Devault lay down the law. It reads like this:

Rules of the Hotel

1. Please treat our chambermaids as if they were your own sisters.
2. No shooting permitted in the rooms. If the cockroaches annoy you, cut their heads off.
3. Don't use gas for committing suicide. A rope is provided for that purpose.
4. Please don't stick hatpins through keyholes. A man lost an eye that way last year.
5. Divorcees will leave photographs of ex-husbands at the desk for identification. No more than six photographs permitted.
6. Guests are not permitted to invite their brothers to take baths in their rooms.
7. Guests occupying adjoining rooms will kindly call the house detective as a chaperone while making social calls after one o'clock.
8. It is strictly forbidden to use bed sheets as towels.
9. Guests who walk in their sleep should have their room number on a card in their pajamas.
10. Please do not forget the name under which you registered.
11. Guests are warned against playing strip poker on Mondays. We test our fire alarm bells on that day.
12. Jack's junk shop connects with the hotel lobby. You are welcome to browse at your own risk.

(Submitted by Chuck LaPage)

Book Review -- Historic McCarthy, The Town that Copper Built, written by M.J. Kirchhoff



BY NEIL O'DONNELL

M.J. Kirchhoff's new book, Historic McCarthy, describes the colorful history of the Town of McCarthy from the first non-native explorations of the upper Chitina Valley, through the town's boom years, to the town's slow decline after the closure of the Kennicott Mine in 1938. It is an engaging and well-written account that will captivate both the casual visitor to McCarthy and its long-time residents.

The book carefully interweaves stories of influential citizens and colorful characters with an account of the economic forces behind the creation and abandonment of the Town of McCarthy. The founder of the Town of McCarthy was John Barrett, a miner and trapper who preceded surveyors from the Copper River & Northwestern Railroad to the strip of land between the face of Kennicott Glacier and McCarthy Creek. Barrett claimed a 296-acre homestead on land the railroad had to cross to reach the Kennicott mines and thereby ensured his financial prosperity. The railroad leased part of Barrett's homestead for a depot, switching turntable, and water tower; Barrett leased other land to individuals and businesses who took up residence around the depot; and the Town of McCarthy (named after a popular local prospector) was born.

M.J. Kirchhoff reports that John Barrett was an indefatigable promoter of McCarthy's commercial and agricultural interests. Potatoes grown on his homestead won first place at the 1909 Alaska-Yukon Exposition in Seattle; Barrett was always willing to put up a grubstake for needy miners, and Barrett gave deeds to all his leaseholders once he received the patent to his homestead in 1917. As a result of business generated by the Kennicott Mines and the 1913

Shushanna Gold Rush, McCarthy flourished. The population careened upwards to nearly 300 people and the local paper, the Copper Bee, opined: "Will some intelligent person show us why McCarthy is not going to make a Butte, or an Anaconda? We have more copper in the immediate vicinity than all Montana holds."

The Copper Bee was, of course, mistaken. Kirchhoff reports that a dramatic slump in copper prices occurred at the end of World War I when the high grade ore was also playing out. Fewer men at the mines meant fewer customers in McCarthy. The Great Depression further punned copper prices, and the mine shut down altogether in 1933 and 1934. While the mine reopened upon

agents were aboard, thus ensuring that moonshiners had ample time to hide their stills. In the 1930's, O.G. Watsjold would leave his general store open when he was out of town. His son reported that "People just came in, purchased their goods, and left the money on the counter. We were never short."

Historic McCarthy also touches on the early history of aviation in McCarthy. The first pilot to fly a mail route to McCarthy was Harold Gillam, a local hero who would fly in weather conditions that grounded all other pilots. Gilliam's exploits earned him the nickname "Thrill'em, Spill'em but never Kill'em Gillam." Kirchhoff also describes pilot Merle K. ("Mudhole") Smith's efforts in the 1950s to establish

"Tourism has had a long tradition in McCarthy. The C.R. & N.W. billed itself as "the route of scenic and natural wonders," and every summer tourists flocked to Cordova to take the train ride through the interior to McCarthy."

President Roosevelt's lifting of copper price controls in 1935, the mine never resumed year-round operations. The mine closed for good, along with the railroad, in 1938. McCarthy faded into obscurity after the Cooper River bridge washed out the following spring.

M.J. Kirchhoff's history of McCarthy is enlivened by numerous anecdotes and insights. For example, Kirchhoff reports that Barrett's homestead was not particularly scenic by modern standards as it was covered by dead, standing, blackened spruce -- the result of earlier prospectors burning the forest to encourage the growth of grass for horses. Kirchhoff relates that engineers on the C.R. & N.W. blew a special code on their train whistle whenever federal revenue

a tourist industry in McCarthy.

Tourism has had a long tradition in McCarthy. The C.R. & N.W. billed itself as "the route of scenic and natural wonders," and every summer tourists flocked to Cordova to take the train ride through the interior to McCarthy. Interestingly, Kennicott Copper Company hired a contractor in 1957 to raze the tourist-attracting Kennicott townsite. Apparently they hired a less than diligent contractor.

Early mountaineering achievements are also recounted in Historic McCarthy. McCarthy served as a base for Dora Keen's two expeditions to Mount Blackburn. Her second attempt on this 16,390 foot peak proved successful in 1912. Today a sub-range of the Chugach Mountains

located east of Port Wells in Prince William Sound bears her name. The first ascent in 1925 of Mt. Logan, the second highest peak on the continent at 19,850 feet, was also staged from McCarthy. The expedition was led by long-time McCarthy resident Andy Taylor, who also climbed Mt. McKinley and Mt. Fairweather.

M.J. Kirchhoff has written a fascinating account of a town with a fascinating history. If a criticism can be found, it is that the book is only 100 pages long. The reader will undoubtedly wish the book continued. A great deal of interesting McCarthy history is likely left untold -- ready for the next researcher. Mr. Kirchhoff writes in the introduction that "if the reader should have as much fun reading this story as I had in researching and writing it, then I should judge it a success." This reviewer thoroughly enjoyed reading Historic McCarthy and judges it a success. This book is recommended for anyone with an interest in the history of McCarthy and Alaska.

* Historic McCarthy is available from Alaska Cedar Press, 506 W. Ninth Street, Juneau, Alaska 99801. The book, in hardback, is \$17.95 plus shipping. The author is listed in the Juneau phone book.

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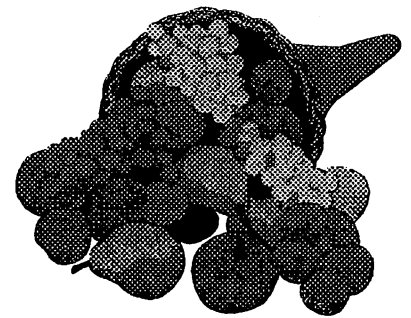
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1918 - The four story bunk house and the mess house at Bonanza Mine are destroyed by fire.

1918 - Flu epidemic in coast towns -- all mail coming into McCarthy fumigated.

1918 - Copper River Bridge collapses, sending Engine No. 74 and two flat cars into the river.

1918 - Free survey of homesteads in Alaska is authorized.

1918 - The ladies of McCarthy & Kennicott knit 70 pairs of socks for American soldiers in France.

Read all about it -- in Highlights from the McCarthy Weekly News

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Sudden Salmon!

BY CARLY KRITCHEN

There are times when you've either been away from home all day or are just plain busy, and you suddenly realize it's time for dinner and you don't have a clue what to fix! One of the easiest (and healthiest!) things to do when this happens is to pull out a couple of cans of salmon.

I'm sure you all got some of those great Copper River red salmon put up this summer, and there are lots and lots of easy, quick recipes for pastas, casseroles, loafs, and even salmon pizza that I've tried. And if you're really hungry, you can just get a fork and some crackers, and dig in!

The three recipes I've selected use plain canned salmon, although I've used lightly smoked salmon and it works just as well. The first recipe is actually my favorite salmon appetizer. It's easy to make, and transports well.

Salmon Appetizer (with a Mexican flavor)

- 2 small cans (or about 15 oz.) salmon
- 1 8 oz. package cream cheese
- 4 Tbsp. salsa
- 2 Tbsp. chopped parsley (fresh, if you have it)

- 1 tsp. Cilantro
- ¼ tsp. ground cumin
- 8 flour tortillas

Drain salmon and remove any bones. Combine salmon, cream cheese, salsa, parsley, cilantro and cumin. Spread about 2 Tbsp. of the salmon mixture over each tortilla. Roll each tortilla up tightly and wrap individually with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Slice each tortilla into bite-size pieces of an inch or so.

Mexican Salmon Loaf

This recipe also has a Mexican flavor. (As you can tell, Ken and I like fairly hot seasonings.)

- 15 oz. (approx.) canned salmon
- 1 ½ cups cooked rice
- 1 can cream style corn
- 1/3 cup chopped green or red pepper
- 2 Tbsp. chopped onion
- 3 Tbsp. diced green chilies
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- 1 egg, beaten
- ¼ tsp. seasoning salt
- 3 drops Tabasco



Drain and flake salmon, saving liquid. Combine salmon and reserved liquid with remaining ingredients. Turn into a small casserole dish, or a loaf pan. Bake at 350 degrees for about 1 hour. Remove from oven and let stand five minutes before serving.

Here's another salmon loaf recipe with a completely different flavor! You can use up those pieces of dried up bread from the end of the loaf, or use purchased bread crumbs.

- 15 oz. (approx.) canned salmon
- 2 cups bread crumbs
- 2/3 cup sliced black olives
- ½ cup minced onion
- ¼ cup milk
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 Tbsp. parsley
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- ¼ tsp. dill weed
- dash or two of pepper

Drain and flake salmon, save liquid. Combine salmon, 2 Tbsp. reserved liquid and remaining ingredients. Mix well and shape into a loaf in a greased pan. Bake at 350 for about 45 minutes. You can also shape this mixture into patties, and fry in a greased skillet on both sides until golden brown. ☺

Announcement

To be available for the 1994 summer season—our area cookbook featuring recipes and tidbits of local interest. One last plea—you are most welcome and encouraged to submit recipes.

Deadline for submission is February 2, 1994. (All "Kennicott Kids" input especially welcome!)



Comments or suggestions appreciated. We thank everyone for their help, support and participation.

Mail to:

Terry & Dee Frady
Willow Herb Mountain Depot
P.O. Box MXY-McCarthy
Glennallen, Alaska 99588-8998

Park Service fights airport improvements

BY RICK KENYON

According to an article in the November/December issue of *National Parks* magazine the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced \$600,000 in grants to the state of Alaska this fall for "planning airports" inside Denali and Wrangell-St. Elias national parks and preserves.

Last fall the Department of Transportation submitted an application to the National Park Service for the right-of-way to operate and maintain the Chisana Airport. According to Dave McCaleb, Pre-Construction Engineer for DOT/PF, the application was filed in accordance with Title XI of the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act (ANILCA), which provides a process to obtain right-of-ways on federal lands. He

said the action was in response to "interest expressed by the residents and property owners at Chisana," who apparently were afraid of losing access to their property if the park service continued to claim control of the airstrip.

McCaleb said that although the airport is defined in the Alaska Supplement of U.S. Flight Information Publication as an existing 4200 ft. by 75 ft. runway, only 2200 ft. by 75 ft. is usable at this time. He said the DOT would like to bring the full 4200 ft. into a usable condition, if they can obtain the right-of-way approval.

And what is the Park Service response? According to the article in *National Parks*, "The National Park Service and NPCA (National Parks and Conservation Association) insist the FAA has no authority to issue such grants. They also strongly oppose building state-owned commercial

airports at the heart of two of the country's premier wilderness parks." The article goes on to quote Russell Lesko of Wrangell St. Elias: "We don't believe that significant development would be appropriate or in concert with the purpose for which the park was established."

In August, Chip Dennerlein, NPCA Alaska regional director, and John Morehead, Alaska regional director of the Park Service, wrote the FAA asking it not to issue the planning grants. They cited evidence that the airstrips are on Park Service land and that federal laws do not permit the FAA to issue grants for such projects on park land. The FAA responded by saying "The fact that a responsible public agency...does not yet have title to a specific tract of property is...not a valid reason for denying a planning grant application."

Wrangell St. Elias News



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do his part right. He noticed everytime Malcolm hitched a dog, it would quietly sit down. Each dog acted in the same well-behaved manner. Naturally, the onlookers must have been quite impressed, but not as much as Gary and Malcolm. The team sat looking as proud as could be, says Gary. Even when Malcolm reached down and pulled the snow hook, the dogs didn't even move. Usually, you prepare to hold on to the sled or you could get left behind! At Malcolm's signal the dogs all stood—right on cue. "That's one thing about Alaskan dogs. In the villages no one gets a dog team they don't use for racing. They hook up these dogs and never train them to stay," says Malcolm.

Gary and Malcolm proceeded down to Sheshalik Spit, crossed the straits and came on into Kotzebue about 2:00 a.m. on May 5. A good trip. One that worked out well, too. On their best day they were able to make 40 miles. Their worst day was 18 miles.

Years of experience assisted Malcolm in planning his cache of dog food. "After 12 years of owning dogs, I've kind of got it down to how much they use in a week. We mailed a ton of dog food around the Arctic—forty bags... They were addressed to Malcolm Vance, General Delivery. I wrote each place and told them we were on our way through. No problems. As soon as we got there it was right at the post office." Commercial dog food was used.

Speaking of food...what do two men traveling alone in the Arctic eat and how did they get their food? Besides supporting village stores, they mailed boxes of food that accompanied the dog food. Things like butter and cheese and some staples that they knew would be very expensive up north. "Actually, we had too much food the whole trip," explains Malcolm. "On a trip like that you can't eat

did that in any way affect the reception they received? Were two white men considered an oddity when they arrived in a 100% native environment? Malcolm says, "No, you're accepted on a totally different basis when you come the long way with dogs. You're not just somebody that flies in on a mail plane and starts observing them. To them you've done something that

have dogs. It's too much work now. The dedication of raising dogs and using them is a lot of work."

Snowmachines are the norm now. Igloos aren't. According to Malcolm, the whole Arctic in Alaska is in the North Slope Borough which is so oil-money sponsored these days. Villages have brand new clinics, schools and fire departments. All the area they were in—except Kivalina—was located in the boundaries of the North Slope Borough.

Malcolm finds the community lifestyle of these villages a plus. "People live in such close proximity that they overlook so many faults within each other."

Once in Kotzebue they loaded the dogs into an Alaska Airlines plane. Of the 13 dogs they started out with, 11 came home. Malcolm gave 2 dogs away on the trip. One at Point Hope and one at Kivalina. However, while in Point Barrow, he acquired a puppy.

They flew to Anchorage where they picked up Malcolm's dog truck and headed back to McCarthy. Malcolm, in time to get ready for his commercial fishing season, and Gary, to his wife, Betty, and their busy summer project—operating the McCarthy Lodge. *



too much. Everything tastes frozen. Village stores had freezers so you could pick up a package of chicken and corn. Throw it all into one pot, boil it up with rice and spices." Gary added, "Lots of pasta, too. Seven grain cereal for breakfast. Malcolm was a real good cook."

Because all the villages the men passed through were native communities,

they respect. A lot of the young generation now haven't even been up to Point Lay—even with snowmachines. They may have flown up there for a basketball game or something, but they've never gone overland. So, they'll ask you, 'What's it like up along that beach?' They think it's pretty neat—especially with dogs. Dogs have a real romance up north. Everybody used to

A note from the Publisher (cont. from page 2)

I always love hearing from you former "Kennecott Kids." Yvonne Konnerup Lahti writes, "I do enjoy your newspaper-especially the Items of Interest pages where I get to know all you young, brave, 'pioneers!'" The history tid-bits you send are priceless to those of us who look upon you as the "real" pioneers. For instance, Tim Eckstrom sent me a copy of his parents' marriage certificate. Tim and Anna (Ildhuso) Eckstrom were married on August 13, 1914, at McCarthy, Alaska. F. A. and Anna Iverson witnessed the wedding. According to son Tim, Anna Iverson was his mom's cousin and the reason for her coming to McCarthy. Frank and Anna Iverson had a big farm a few miles down the "track" and supplied the area with milk, meat, berries and vegetables in season until the mines and railroad ceased operating. Rick and I live about 1/2 mile from where the Iversons lived.

A special thanks to you subscribers who are sending us your personal stories—such as Al Gagnon's contribution to the Outdoors in the Wrangells column on pages 14 and 15. The poem on the cover of this issue was painstakingly handcopied by Cliff Collins and submitted to us for reprint. Neil O'Donnell so graciously accepted our request to write the book review found on pages 22 and 23.

When we went to press on the November/December '93 issue, we had 218 subscribers. That number has now grown to 251. We were sorry to say good-bye to former subscriber Wes Bloom who passed away August 28 of a heart attack. Our condolences to his family.

Wrangell St. Elias News welcomes the following new subscribers:

Juliet Hikmate, Alaska; R.J. Nelson, Alaska; Scott Proctor, Penna.; Tim Rennie, Alaska; Sally Stredny, Montana; Dorothy & Milt Mozen, Calif.; Craig Tillery, Alaska; Jill & Steve Rebillard, Alaska; Cindy Correll, Colorado; Phil Vermeyen, Calif.; Lillian Tatum, Wash.; Donna Cowand, Virginia; Bill Sherwonit, Alaska; Wayne Wilber, Florida; George Whalen, Alaska; Michael Rathkey, Oregon; Mary Knoll, Alaska; Chris & Phil Gordon, New York; Mark Kirchhoff, Alaska; Jeff Bailey, Alaska; Laurita Hefner, Alaska; Gary Hitchings, Alaska; Elaine Seager, Alaska; Jean Sagan, Alaska; Carol Armstrong, Kansas; Denman Smith, Wash.; Terri Raudenbush, Alaska; Alvin & Claris Syren, Alaska; Doug & Mary Schrage, Alaska; Dave Syren, Alaska; Jerry Tollman, Alaska; Tony Knutson, Alaska; James Whalen, Alaska.

Letters to the Editor (continued)

You are hereby directed, "NOT TO USE" Technic Services Inc. name, any of its employee's names and or reference to the project in any manner without the written consent of Technic Services Inc.

Further be advised that disregard for this directive will prompt further legal actions against your New Company.

Rick Rushing
General Manager

Nov. 15, 1993
Anchorage, AK
Attn: Mr. Rick Kenyon
Publisher and Editors
RE: WSEN
Vol. Two Issue Six
Subj: Your article: Page 6 "It's in the bag(s)"
Dear Mr. Kenyon:
I would like to take this opportunity to express my concern on

the above referenced article. Specifically, the manner in which information has been presented is simply not correct. Clearly, portions of the article are based on the writer's presumptions and misconceptions rather than facts.

For instance, yes, some double bagged asbestos material does remain in select demarcated work areas in Kennicott. The only reason these bags remain is that they were covered with an unexpected 12" snowfall and because of additional snow careening from the adjacent building roofs we were unable to locate these bags and store this material in the "reefer" building prior to departure. Additionally, our exodus was not a "rapid exodus" as indicated in your column. We had planned to leave when conditions existed that would not properly allow us to remove asbestos. The snows of October 3

made that decision for us. In hindsight, had we known that the snows would melt and the weather remain favorable until Nov. 14, 1993 we would have been more than happy to remain. Last, but not least, the article appears to have negative overtones. These are neither appropriate nor are they deserved. In an effort to be positive, I am, at this point in time, inclined to believe that these errors are simply an innocent oversight by your unnamed reporter.

As you so proudly indicated, WNES (sic) is "NEWS from a different perspective". Given the fact that WSEN is a bimonthly publication we remain hopeful that future issues will confirm the above.

Respectfully,
Gary C. Hitchings
President

That's incredible! (a fowl decision)

Retiree raises cane, ruffles feathers, does time

BY MARK MILLER

(Reprinted with permission from the Daytona Beach News-Journal, Nov. 20, 1993)

NEW SMYRNA BEACH — Richie Birmingham's frustration with freeloaders boiled over one day last month, and his life hasn't been the same since.

After a lifetime of abiding by the law, the 79-year-old retiree now must report regularly to a probation officer for killing one of the annoying moochers — a pigeon.

Birmingham and friend Charles Collins, both of Edgewater, were eating lunch as usual Sept. 17 at the Sea Harvest restaurant on the Indian River.

And, as usual, somebody thought it would be nice to feed the beggar's gallery of pigeons, gulls and other birds that wait near the outdoor tables for handouts.

Scraps were tossed near the table where Birmingham and Collins were eating, disturbing their lunch and peace of mind.

The mild-mannered Birmingham grabbed Collins' cane in frustration and took a swing — just to shoo the pesky creatures away, he said. The flock of

pigeons flew up, and one flew into the cane, he said.

"Unfortunately, one of the pigeons got in the way, and I killed it," Birmingham said. The pigeon died instantly, he said.

But a witness told police Birmingham hit it again as it lay injured on the ground. Birmingham swears that isn't so. And his luncheon companion is sticking with Birmingham's version of how the pigeon came to expire.

"He took my cane and swung it above the pigeons to try to frighten them away," said Collins, 70. "One of the pigeons, as the cane was coming around, jumped in front of it. And he did not swing the cane again."

Whatever the facts of the matter, Birmingham finds it hard to believe he has been convicted of a crime for killing a pigeon.

"You know, up in New York, they give you a Silver Star for killing pigeons," he said Thursday from his home in the Hacienda del Rio subdivision south of Edgewater.

Retired from a career in aviation engineering, he has lived alone since his wife died six years ago.

Birmingham pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor charge of animal cruelty on Nov. 12. County Judge Michael McDermott sentenced him to six months probation and 120 hours of community service with the Salvation Army and ordered him to pay a \$200 fine.

A court clerk said adjudication was withheld, meaning Birmingham's guilt or innocence was not determined.

"I think the sentence was unjust," Birmingham said. "I did kill the pigeon, but it was

accidental. I never hurt anybody all my life, or an animal, and all of a sudden, I'm a criminal."

"I have never been in trouble before," he said. "I think it was unfair. He (the judge) didn't give me a chance to explain or anything, that it was unintentional."

Frankie Robert of New Smyrna Beach swore in a complaint affidavit she saw Birmingham "using a cane to strike at the pigeons. As I yelled at him not to do that, he hit one of the pigeons. As the pigeon wriggled on the ground, he struck and killed it."

When she threatened to notify authorities, Birmingham said to go ahead, "the pigeons were full of disease and a nuisance," according to her affidavit.

Birmingham denied Thursday he hit the bird as it lay on the ground. "No, no, that's not true," he insisted.

The State Attorney's Office contends the prosecution of the 79-year-old man was proper.

"The statements the witness made indicated a prosecution was necessary," spokesman Steve Cotter said. "It's pretty difficult to call that second whack an accident."

Chief Prosecutor Ray Warren agreed. "If the person who swore out that document is correct, then that bird got beaten to death," he said.

Cotter said people tend to get upset when an animal is harmed.

Birmingham said his only other brush with the law was a speeding ticket he received for going 25mph in a 20-mph zone more than 30 years ago.

Birmingham reported to his probation officer Thursday.

"You know," he said, "all this is ridiculous for a lousy pigeon."



"Justice is a commodity which in a more or less adulterated condition the State sells to the citizen as a reward for his allegiance, taxes and personal service." --Ambrose Bierce

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

BY RANDY ELLIOTT

The latest turmoil over the article in Alaska magazine has given all of us a golden opportunity to see ourselves and our community through a tourist's eyes. That the observer was a professional writer may have affected the style of reporting but the facts were accurate enough. Living at Dan Creek I was insulated from the events of the summer including the eventual article and the reaction which became the letter to the editor signed by many of the residents in the area. After having both read to me and now possessing copies, I cannot help but marvel at the similarity of both.

For example, the *article* claims local residents recognized change was inevitable when the surrounding land became park in 1980. I doubt most residents thought about the inevitability of change as being a result of creating a national park. I personally find people resist change more as they get older. Ten years ago we were all younger and the park seemed less threatening. The article misses this by generalizing and assuming an "average" resident exists.

The *letter* begins by saying "As a community we agree" which is followed by the list of people who were at mail and a few who were contacted later about the

letter. Whether or not I agree with the message I don't like having my opinion reduced to this consensus as the letter implies. Evidently neither did the persons in the article—none of whom signed the letter. Any

article as being unfair to everyone who tried to make McCarthy a nice place to visit. True enough, but looking down your nose at other "tourist towns" confirms the writer's unstated attitude that the

I am amazed at how many of us refuse to recognize the debilitating effect of the McCarthy rumor mill. The dispute described was only one of the most visible. This article should be a chance for us to truly consider what sort of town we want to be a part of.

My main objection to the *article* was the underlying "disappearing earth" language. The "gloom and doom" stems from all the language about how McCarthy is being ruined by visitation and lost "forever." This is a popular theme with wilderness preservation people who are reacting to an increasingly crowded world. If there was a heart to McCarthy it was truly torn out in 1938 when the mill closed. Now that it is becoming an active, vibrant community of people trying to do something it is regaining the spirit in which it was begun. After all, Kennicott and McCarthy were the most single-mindedly industrialized sites in Alaska for many years.

Bearing this in mind, I truly hope that the difference between wilderness and McCarthy becomes more pronounced in the future. Not only will that restore it to life, it will truly serve the tourists and the residents best interests.

To the editors of Alaska Magazine,

As a community we agree together that Alaska Magazine's November article on McCarthy was irresponsible insofar as it highlighted the disputes between members of our community. This emphasis can only add to the burdens placed on the involved individuals and the community. We ask that publishers and writers carefully weigh the good and harm done by such reporting. As a community we extend support to all our members to continue the process of healing our wounds together. This is a process that occurs in all healthy communities.

We understand that change is coming to our community. Much of the solitude that we enjoyed in the past will be lost. But at the same time, we believe that McCarthy and the Wrangell Mountains can continue to contribute increasingly and positively to the lives of the people who live here and who visit here. We make McCarthy something other than just another tourist town by developing a sense of community among ourselves and by helping visitors enjoy a truly unique town surrounded by a magnificent wilderness. Please de-emphasize the doom and gloom and join us in our effort.

Residents of the McCarthy-Kennicott Area

community response should involve everyone, and if they aren't available to participate, how can there be a consensus?

The *letter* does point out the bleak nature of the

town is self-centered enough to squabble in public. The dispute of last summer should be ended or carried on privately unless you enjoy hearing about it from your guests as I have at Dan Creek.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Oct. 1, 1993

Novato, CA

Dear Bonnie and Rick,

Now, I know why Malc loves McCarthy and all of Alaska—it's beautiful country.

I enjoyed meeting you folks, as well as everyone else in McCarthy—you all made me feel so at home. Hopefully, I'll make it up there again and again in the coming years.

Please renew our subscription—I now feel like I can give a face to the names I read about. I thank all of McCarthy for making my trip up there so great.

Sincerely,

Suzy Lundberg

Thank you Suzy. Suzy is Malcolm Vance's mom and we enjoyed meeting her this summer.

Oct. 22, 1993

Gig Harbor, WA

Dear Rick and Bonnie,

I was delighted to receive the November *Alaska* with the article of McCarthy and Kennecott.

My interest in McCarthy is long standing due to my father, John H. Reynolds. He was U.S. Marshall during McCarthy's heyday.

Most of the photos in the museum are from my archives which he gave me when coming outside to retire.

Best regards,

Lillie Tatum

Oct. 23, 1993

Virginia Beach, VA

Wrangell St. Elias News:

I picked up your September-October '93 issue during my stay at Kennicott and enjoyed reading it upon my return home. It's like bringing a bit of Wrangell back to Virginia.

Many thanks,

Donna Cowand

Oct. 30, 1993

Palmer, AK

Dear Editor,

Bird watchers around McCarthy might find some useful guidance in the bird checklist, "Chitina River Birds." The checklist shows that 124 bird species are documented for the area from Chitina Glacier to Long Lake, including Kennicott, McCarthy, May Creek and the major rivers. Some records go back to specimen collections in McCarthy and field expeditions up the Chitina River during the 1920's. Other observations were made by Cliff Collins at Long Lake, the Foleys at May Creek, and myself on the rivers during the 1970's and 1980's. Cliff and I assembled all these records and put them into the form of a checklist in 1988.

Your readers with documentation of important observations of birds are welcome to send their notes to me or Cliff. Together perhaps we can make the checklist of 1988 obsolete. New records would let us produce an updated checklist.

To get a copy of the current checklist, drop me a note or talk to Cliff Collins.

Sincerely,

Mike Bronson

P.O. Box 2176

Palmer, AK 99645

October 31, 1993

Valdez, AK

Dear Rick and Bonnie,

We like your newspaper and read every page. I'm sure more local people of the Copper River Basin would be interested in it also.

We were disappointed though in your report on the KCHU translator project being on schedule. Nothing was said about how those heavy batteries were transported up that steep grade or what was used or where it came from. (Page 11 Nov/Dec issue) The batteries would

never have made it up without Mark Vail and my Polaris 4 wheeler, which I gladly donated for the job.

Sincerely,

J. Harold Michal

Fireweed Mt. Subdivision

Nov 3, 1993

Camano Island, WA

Dear Bonnie,

Writing "Bonnie" brings back all my old memories of Kennicott as when I was young I was known as Bonnie by all my relatives and many friends.

I had such a wonderful time revisiting Kennicott—first with Inger and Charlie Ricci and later with the big reunion of the "Kennicott kids" a few years ago. Hopefully we can have another one soon. And hopefully we will have the time (and energy) to make it up to one of the mines.

I do enjoy your newspaper—especially the Items of Interest pages where I get to know all you young, brave, "pioneers!" And of course any mention of Kennecott catches my eye.

Thanks again for sending me the two copies—and I think your wise to keep it a 2 month issue—as you say each month would be "burn-out" time as there are so many other activities for you to take care of.

Keep up the good work,

Yvonne "Konnerup" Lahti

A Kennicott kid

Nov. 4, 1993

Anchorage, AK

ATTENTION: EDITOR

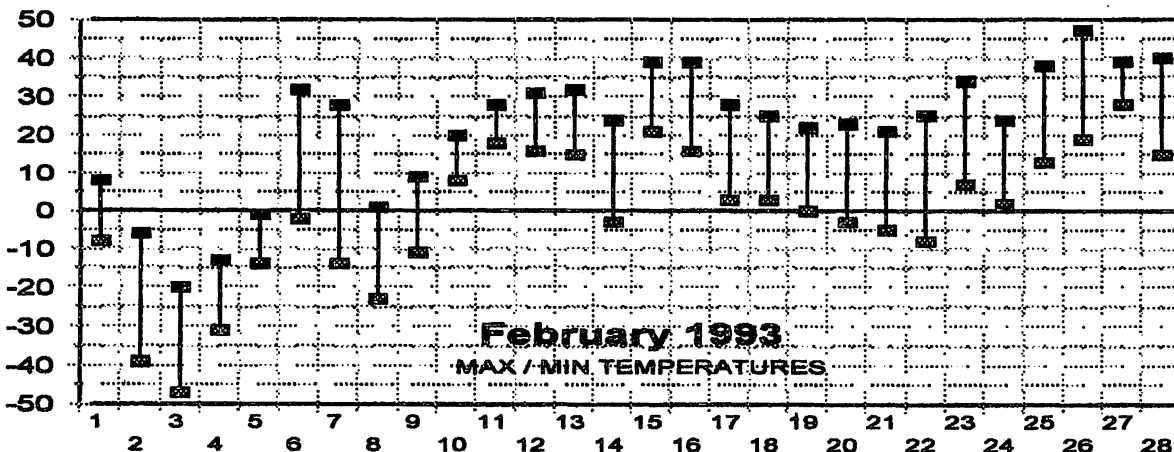
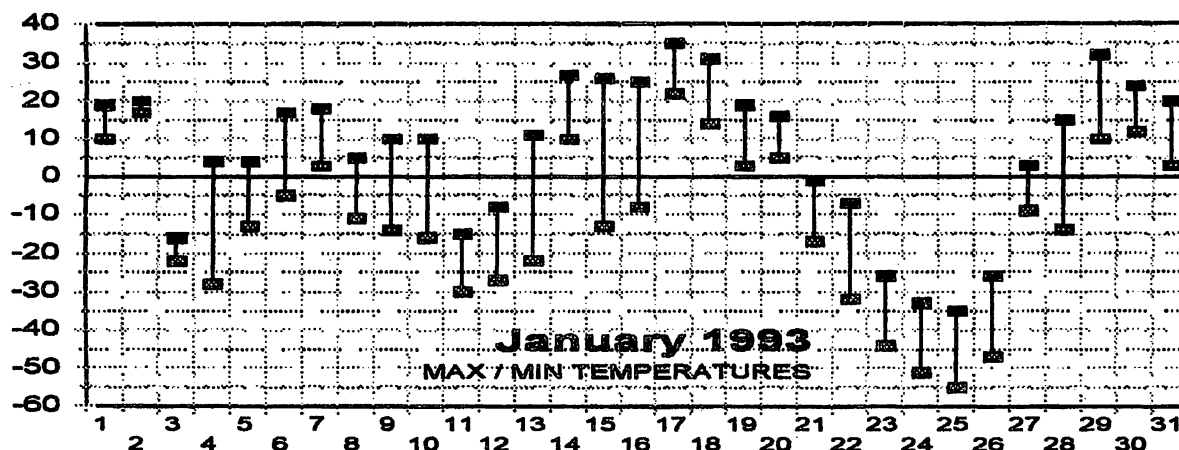
Gentlemen,

Technic Services Inc. has reviewed your VOL. TWO ISSUE SIX editorial regarding the asbestos project on-going at Kennicott.

We find select language used in this editorial Offensive, Compost and without Merit!

Weather - What can we expect?

Warrigell St. Elias News
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