

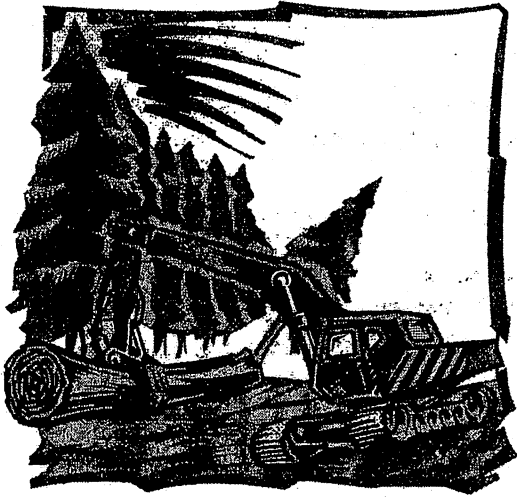
Wrangell St. Elias News

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"

Vol. Five Issue Six

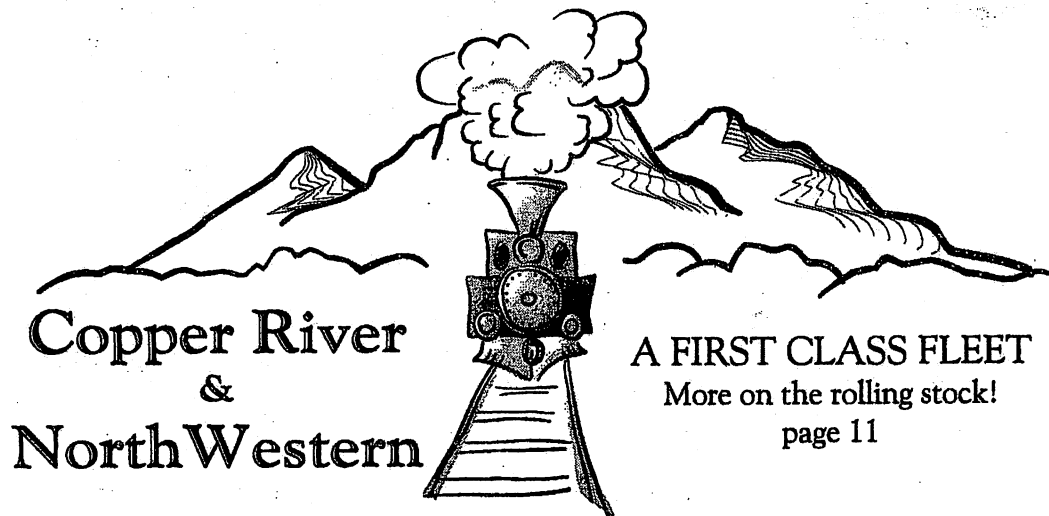
November & December 1996

Two Dollars



The fate of our forests

Research exposes past
and possible future
of white spruce in the
Kennicott Valley
page 7



Copper River
&
North Western

A FIRST CLASS FLEET
More on the rolling stock!
page 11



The care
and
feeding
of the
LEAD ACID BATTERY
page 21



Common sense
about
SNOWMOBILING
page 18

A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

Greetings from chilly McCarthy! It is October 18 and it was -16 degrees F. this morning — a sure sign winter is here.

Our first snowfall occurred on September 23. It didn't amount to much but it did succeed in spurring Rick and I on to finish pulling the Brussel sprouts and parsnips. We managed to get the garden all harvested and tilled before 6 inches fell on October 7. The snow has since settled to a nice, comfortable 4 inches.

I want to call your attention to a couple of articles in this issue of WSEN. First of all, my deepest apologies go to Nancy Ferrell who wrote "An Historic Event." Nancy submitted this article in plenty of time for our Sept./Oct. issue, and I typed it in on my computer. However, *after* the issue was already printed and mailed, Rick and I realized we had left Nancy's article out. (I forgot to save it on Rick's disk for him to layout.) Please be sure to read "An Historic Event" on page 5 and thanks, Nancy, for being so forgiving!

The next article I want to call your attention to is on page 7 — "The fate of our forest" by Mike Loso. This is the first time Mike has written anything for WSEN so I'd like to introduce him to you. Mike first came with a friend to the Kennicott Valley in the summer of 1990, climbing mountains and plodding around the back country. He worked the following summer for Bob Jacobs as a climbing guide and that

autumn as a roofer for Jim Miller's crew on the Kennicott Mill Building. Mike has been in and out of the valley since then, often just to visit or to fly out to the St. Elias range for a climbing expedition, and this past summer, he collected data for his thesis. To fund his research, Mike obtained grants from the University of Vermont and the National Park Service, and also taught part-time for Jenny Carroll in the Wildlands Studies Program at the Hardware Store.

You may notice there is no editorial this issue. Rick says, "If you miss this infamous feature of WSEN, please send one for next issue!" Truly, "For your consideration" is open to our readers to express their opinions on issues that affect the McCarthy-Kennicott area.

Speaking about issues that affect our area — we were sorry to hear about two incidents in September that greatly touched several people, two are well-known to us and one is from out-of-state.

On Friday, September 6. Denise Jantz and Kathleen Sustrich who own and operate the Roadside Potatohead, discovered that approximately \$3,000 of their earnings was missing. All of us who know Denise and Kathleen realize how hard they worked for that money. Denise is offering a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible.

The Alaska State Troopers in Glennallen were contacted on

September 16 by Gilbert Merritt of Nashville, TN. Someone had taken his red Trek 990 Mountain Bike in McCarthy from where he had locked it to a tree on the 9th. The bike was valued at over \$1,000.

We offer our sympathy to Denise, Kathleen and Gilbert for their losses and pray these kinds of events will not be a norm in our town!

Subscribers Charlie and Inger (Jenson) Ricci sent us a copy of the obituary of a former Kennecott Kid which I include a portion for the benefit of our readers who may have known Mary Jean Presley Vaudrin Bowles. "Pres" died quietly at home in New York City on Sunday, July 21, after living nearly two years with cancer. Pres was born in Latouche, Alaska, on November 14, 1922, where her father was manager of a copper mine. In 1925, the family moved to the remote mining camp at Kennecott, Alaska, now a national historic site. In 1932 the family moved on to Seattle. Her parents, BeVan and Margaret Thaanum Presley, died soon after arrival in Seattle. Her grandmother made her a loving home as she completed high school. After graduating from Scripps College for Women in Claremont, Ca., she went straight to New York City to find her way in book publishing. She worked for Oxford University Press, Simon & Schuster, Western Publishing, McGraw-Hill, and Vineyard Books.

(continued on page 31)

Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

Kris Rueter and Matt Hambrick: The fall colors were fabulous this year in the McCarthy area. One day in mid September, shutting my lawn tractor off, I sat admiring the hillside behind our cabin where Kris's cabin sits. From her direction I heard hammering and laughter. Somehow that day's weather succeeded in drawing us all outdoors to work on those end-of-the season projects.

A few days later Kris and Matt dropped in and brought Kris's dad, Eugene Rueter, of Barrington, IL to meet us and to join WSEN's list of subscribers.

Hoping Kris and Matt wouldn't think I was complaining about the noise, I asked them what all the hammering was producing. They informed me they, along with Eugene's timely assistance, were putting shingles on Kris's cabin.

After hearing Matt say he just purchased a new Bravo snowmachine, I realize he was doing his best to get those "fall projects" nailed down before the winter snow makes snowmachining a must! Congratulations all around and welcome aboard WSEN, Eugene!

Jim, Jeannie, Matt and Aaron Miller: I just got off the phone with Jeannie. She was somewhat distracted, I could tell. Matt and Aaron were trying to decide what they should sample first. You see, the Millers recently returned from their fall trip to the big city of Anchorage. When I called, Jeannie was "trying" to

unpack the groceries and get them stowed away before her hungry boys devoured everything in sight. I suppose now with Tailor Made Pizza closed for the winter, Matt and Aaron are having to look elsewhere for those in-between snacks!

I did discover daughter Stacie's whereabouts these days. Jeannie managed, "She is in Fairbanks attending college and liking it. She also has a job in a restaurant." Anyone who can create pizzas like Stacie shouldn't have any trouble finding a job.

I ask about the Millers' "animal kingdom" and I am informed that 2 out of their 6 pigs joined the list of fall harvest.

"It's also time to butcher chickens," says Jeannie. "They multiplied like rabbits this summer."

George Cebula and brothers:

Rick and I are always delighted when George's brothers visit George! Seeing that George lives next door, we get to enter into the "fun" they generate. Ray and Tom were here in June and after church one Sunday, Ray surprised us all with a demonstration of his fancy yo-yo tricks. (He collects yo-yo's.) Doyle Houghton and Rick were

chosen (I use that word rather loosely!) To participate in a yo-yo contest. If I remember correctly, Doyle won.

Ted, who is a twin to Tom, arrived on September 12 and brought his own toy! One thing is nice when "boys" grow up — they are quicker to share their toys. And that's what Ted did. He and George came over sporting a "potato gun." They wanted to know if Rick could come out and play! And play they did, using my newly-dug potatoes as ammunition. A shot of Lysol spray was supposed to act as the propellant, but it just didn't have enough zip to it. Someone suggested hair spray which isn't something one finds on the

shelves in McCarthy! However, in the back recesses of my bathroom closet, I found a near-empty can of Aqua Net hair spray. I can testify to the fact it works much better than Lysol.



WSEN staff photo

Ted Cebula shows Bonnie fine points of shooting potato gun

Things are much too quiet now in the neighborhood. The Cebula brothers returned to their homes in the lower 48 and George is presently house sitting for Gene and Edith Coppedge at Silver Lake. He should be back in our neck of the woods the end of November.

Andy, Cynthia and Matthew Shidner: One interesting and sometimes challenging aspect of our telephone service is remembering the correct number combinations. As most of you know by now, McCarthy's prefix is 554 and after that many of our phone numbers are only one digit different. That's the case between our phone and Howard Mozen's.

The other night the phone rang and after I answered I could tell there was a slight pause at the opposite end. (That's usually a sign to me, someone is trying to decide what they did wrong!) Anyway, this particular call was a blessing in disguise. It was Cynthia who was really trying to call Howard but, instead, got me.

She reports she, husband Andy and son Matthew are doing just fine and enjoying their winter employment in Teller, AK. Cynthia's teaching job consists of a combination of pre-school and kindergarten age children.

Matthew's not quite old enough to join his mom's class so Andy is getting a lot of quality time with him these days. The day prior to Cynthia's call, Andy had his hands more than full, says Cynthia. He filled in as a substitute teacher and school bus driver. I'm sure

Matthew gave dad quite a hand, however, to help make the day one to remember.

Kenny and Carly Kritchén: If you haven't been down to visit Ken and Carly recently, you probably won't recognize the Kritchén homestead. They are growing more than vegetables this year.

I visited a couple of times this summer and each time I noticed another project

underway. There's Kenny's new potato patch at the bottom of their hill, a small pasture underway with Carly's freshly-driven fence posts and green grass growing where it



WSEN staff photo

Big toys for big boys

hadn't been before. And, then, just the other day after we received our first significant snowfall of the winter, Rick and I decided we'd give the snowmachines a test drive down Kritchén's way. Wouldn't you know it! A new structure was going up and Kenny was hammering away on it. The barn, when done, will provide shelter for their ever increasing farm equipment and, would you believe, a horse or two?

Speaking of farm equipment — Kenny's most recent addition is a John Deere 350 dozer which he brought in from Palmer. He's been giving it a good work out since it arrived in September. In fact, Rick hired him to do some dirt work for us and Kenny and his new toy (I mean piece of equipment) did an earth shattering job. The only problem I can see for the Kritchén is that there just aren't enough hours in the day for them to do everything they want to do.

Wrangell St. Elias News

VOL. Five, Issue Six, November & December 1996.

Published every two months at McCarthy, Alaska. McCarthy, PO Box MXY, Glennallen, AK 99588-8998. Phone (907) 554-4454. FAX (907) 554-4454. E-mail Wsenews@aol.com. "Copyright © 1996 by Wrangell St. Elias News. No part of this publication may be reproduced by any means without the express permission of the publishers."

Contributors to this issue: George Cebula, Carly Kritchén, Mike Loso, John Killoran, Ron Simpson, Tom Betts, Nancy Ferrell, and Kim Northrup. Subscription price is \$10 for one year in the USA. Canada \$12.50. Other countries \$20. Advertising rates upon request. Deadline for publication in next issue is December 15.

Wrangell St. Elias News is wholly owned by Rick and Bonnie Kenyon. Publishers and Editors Rick and Bonnie Kenyon. Paid subscribers this issue 381. Complimentary copies 19. Issues sold through retail stores 45. Press run this issue 525.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT GLENNALLEN, AK. 99588.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Wrangell St. Elias News, McCarthy, PO Box MXY, Glennallen, AK 99588-8998.

An Historic Event

BY NANCY FERRELL

With a combined effort (an event right there in itself) several local businesses built the first, the one and only outhouse in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. Ya-hoo! The location of this monument, shrine, building for bodily functions is out by the Root Glacier.

John Adams, owner of McCarthy Trail Rides B & B, contacted the National Park Service (NPS) in June of 1995 and asked to build an outhouse where it would really do some good.

It was fairly obvious that most people just couldn't hold it long enough for that hike back to town.

The project actually has two purposes. First—to improve the sanitation of the area. Second—(don't ask me how they do it) to be able to determine how much human waste was

being deposited in the area.

With lightening speed, NPS

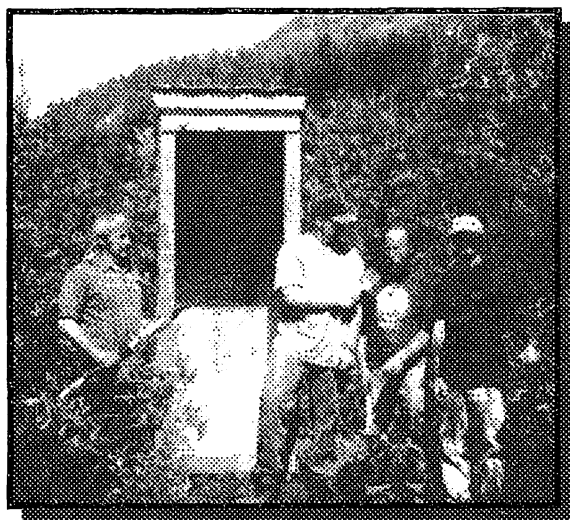


Photo courtesy John Adams

Left to right: John Adams, Scott Ferrell, Chris Richards and Adam Adams

approval was granted in June 1996. John Adams prefabricated an outhouse at his shop in McCarthy. Chris Richards and Cobi Harris from Kennicott-McCarthy Wilderness Guides volunteered to dig the hole. Scott Ferrell from McCarthy Lodge and Adam Adams from

McCarthy Trail Rides B & B were conscripted for the labor to carry the parts and pieces of the outhouse from the end of the road out to the building site (and what a gorgeous sight it is; it looks right out onto the glacier. It's as pretty as a picture!).

The outhouse was assembled, placed over the hole and painted green. Direction signs have been provided by the NPS, so that you don't miss it. No kidding folks, hike on out there to see this outhouse. IT'S THE ONLY ONE IN A 12 MILLION ACRE PARK.

Take a picture of it. Hey, you could be the FIRST.

Now hiking to the Root Glacier will be much more enjoyable. But you will still have to watch out for the bear scat.

P.S. Bring your own T. P.

Kennicott River footbridge goes to bid

BY RICK KENYON

After several delays, the footbridge project was offered for bid on October 2, 1996. Bids were accepted until October 22.

Engineer's estimate is

between \$1,000,000 and \$2,500,000. All work must be completed by October 31, 1997.

As we go to press the bid has not been awarded, but several

construction firms have come to look at the project site. It is not known if construction will begin this fall or next spring.

"Money may be the husk of many things, but not the kernel. It brings you food, but not appetite; medicine, but not health; acquaintances, but not friends; servants, but not faithfulness; days of joy, but not peace or happiness."

— Henrik Ibsen

University moves on to Phase II of land sale

BY BONNIE KENYON

McCarthy: — Surveyors under contract to the University of Alaska (UOA) arrived in McCarthy on September 27 to begin Phase II of University land development in the McCarthy area. Kean and Associates of Anchorage are presently surveying a couple hundred acres located on the east side of the McCarthy/May Creek Road known as the Sourdough Subdivision.

The initial land sale under Phase I resulted in 7 out of 28 lots selling at an average cost per acre ranging from \$2,600 to \$3,500. At least 3 of the 7 were purchased by familiar faces who

either consider McCarthy home or their home away from home.

Mari Montgomery, Senior Property Manager, for the University's Statewide Office of Land Management, says UOA will be going at a slower pace on this particular tract which consists of 18 lots of 9 to 10 acres each. "We have no plans to sell this in the next several years."

Sensitive to the input and impact to the community, Ms. Montgomery has visited McCarthy often to answer questions and address local concerns for UOA land

development. In a recent telephone interview, Ms. Montgomery told WSEN the University recognizes the "well-traveled trail" that meanders through 15 acres of the above property. "The University wants this particular acreage to be public property and desires to preserve the existing trail which goes to the lake."

A public easement will be provided around the lake. It is the University's hope that the state will take this land back after the plat is completed.

McCarthy phone service area to expand

BY BONNIE KENYON

McCarthy: — How about a phone call to a neighbor at May Creek, Dan Creek or on the banks of the Nizina River? Well, it's not possible yet, but it looks like a soon-to-be dream come true for some of our outlying neighbors.

Al and Fran Gagnon who make their home at May Creek at the present must rely on the unpredictable CB radio to contact a neighbor, or fly or snowmachine to the nearest phone in McCarthy some 11 miles away. Kelly and Natalie Bay whose home is approximately 9 miles out the McCarthy/May Creek Road lose their McCarthy phone privileges once they move back to the homestead for the winter. Their summer business which is located in downtown McCarthy has phone service, but

it is not available at their homestead. All this could change within the next few months if New Horizons Telecom, Inc. and Copper Valley Telephone (CVTC) have their way.

Two helicopters and 3 semi-tractor trailers arrived on the west side of the Kennicott River on September 20 to begin transporting buildings, propane tanks, solar panels and other necessary equipment to a site on nearby Sourdough Ridge.

Superintendent Hal Gilmore of New Horizons Telecom from Palmer, AK was on the scene supervising the operation and wishing they hadn't gotten such a late start on this particular project. According to Gilmore, New Horizons Telecom services

other areas for CVTC on a regular basis. The Sourdough Ridge repeater site is located at the 3550' level and, says Gilmore, is expected to reach out and include McCarthy's surrounding areas such as Dan Creek, May Creek, Long Lake and much of the McCarthy Road.

A Bell 204 helicopter was brought in to do the work of slinging such things as two 8' x 10' fully-assembled buildings, 2 1,000 gallon propane tanks and solar panels. A Star helicopter shuttled a crew of at least 4 construction workers back and forth from John Adams's place on the west side to the remote mountain site.

New Horizons plan to return in about a month to transport the radio gear to the new site.

The fate of our forest

Research exposes past and possible future of white spruce in the Kennicott Valley

BY MIKE LOSO

What is the future of our spruce forests? Does it matter that the local populations of spruce bark beetles, local residents, and summer tourists are simultaneously exploding? Are the days of the wood-burning stove nearly over?

Should we learn to love alder?

Prompted by these questions and more, I spent this past summer bushwhacking through the spruce forests of the eastern Kennicott Valley, seeking answers. Armed with the tools of the forest ecologist's trade (canvas overalls, mosquito netting, bear spray, and a lot of tobacco), I peered into our forest's past, hoping to predict its future.

What I found surprised me. Most white spruce forests (in fact, most forests) burn regularly. The frequency of fire varies from place to place, but it is becoming a well-known fact that a century of fire suppression has created very unnatural conditions in forests throughout the western United States. Fire suppression has been less effective in the vast boreal forests of interior Alaska, but the general rule holds true: Alaskan forests love to burn, despite the massed efforts of our 20th century technology to stop them.

So what I expected to find in the Kennicott Valley was this: a forest composed of numerous discrete stands in which the ages

of the trees are almost identical, dating back to the last major fire. Foresters call this a mosaic of even-aged stands, and it is not what I found. The Kennicott Valley turns the general rule on its ear. Before the miners arrived, most of our forests hadn't burned in centuries, if they ever burned at all.

Using a combination of tree ages, buried charcoal, historic photographs, and old newspaper articles, I found evidence of only five fires, burning only 39% of my study area (forests of the Kennicott Valley east of the Kennicott Glacier and north of McCarthy Creek — see figure 1). Moreover, three of those five fires, covering 2/3 of the burned area, were either accidentally or deliberately set by people. The timing of the 1906 fire that burned much of the McCarthy area strongly suggests that it was set by John Barrett to clear land and provide firewood for his homestead. The McCarthy Weekly News blamed a 1923 fire that burned across the south ridge of Porphyry Mountain on arson. And a fire that burned the upper reaches of Sweet Creek in the late 1920's or 1930's was probably started by a spark from the CR & NW railroad. In other words, what little fire has occurred in the valley was mostly caused by people.

Physically isolated by glacial ice and tundra, broken up by avalanche paths and rock glaciers, and protected by a persistent down glacier wind, a majority of the spruce forest we

currently see was not initiated by fire. Some (20% of the study area) developed on the barren, recently exposed moraines and river channels of the retreating Kennicott Glacier, which as recently as 1860 covered most of the land below the Blackburn Road. But most of the unburned forest, more than 40% of the entire study area, is composed of a mixture of young and old trees that date back as far as 1564 AD. Some of these trees have been cut for firewood or building, but surprisingly few. In the mining era, most firewood was supplied by the standing dead trees on old burns, or was gotten outside of the valley; now, what little wood is harvested comes from small pockets that are generally near roads or trails. I wouldn't have guessed it, but in spite of a century of mining, burning, and cutting, those deep, dark woods on the hillsides above Kennicott and McCarthy are largely old growth forest.

The term "old-growth" conjures visions of the Pacific Northwest, spotted owls, angry loggers, and 200 foot trees. Old-growth has a different meaning in the boreal forest, where white spruce less than ten inches in diameter might be 430 years old (like two trees I found slightly north of, and above, the new airstrip). In reality, no one really knows what old-growth means in the Alaskan interior, because most forests burn down before they ever reach that stage. That's what's interesting,

and exciting, about the forests in our own backyard.

This might seem irrelevant in the face of a devastating spruce beetle outbreak. After all, beetles have already killed between 10 and 40% of the total useable volume (trees greater than 4.5" diameter) of white spruce in the old-growth, hillside stands of the study area, and experience from the Kenai Peninsula suggests that these numbers may ultimately reach as high as 80%. Especially since beetles typically attack and kill the oldest, largest trees in a stand, the immediate prospects for old growth are poor. Ironically, it is the rapidly growing young trees of the burned and cut-over and glacially scoured lowland stands that are, so far, surviving the beetle outbreak. Much of the rest is dying, prompting the question: what can a bunch of dying trees tell us about the future of our forests?

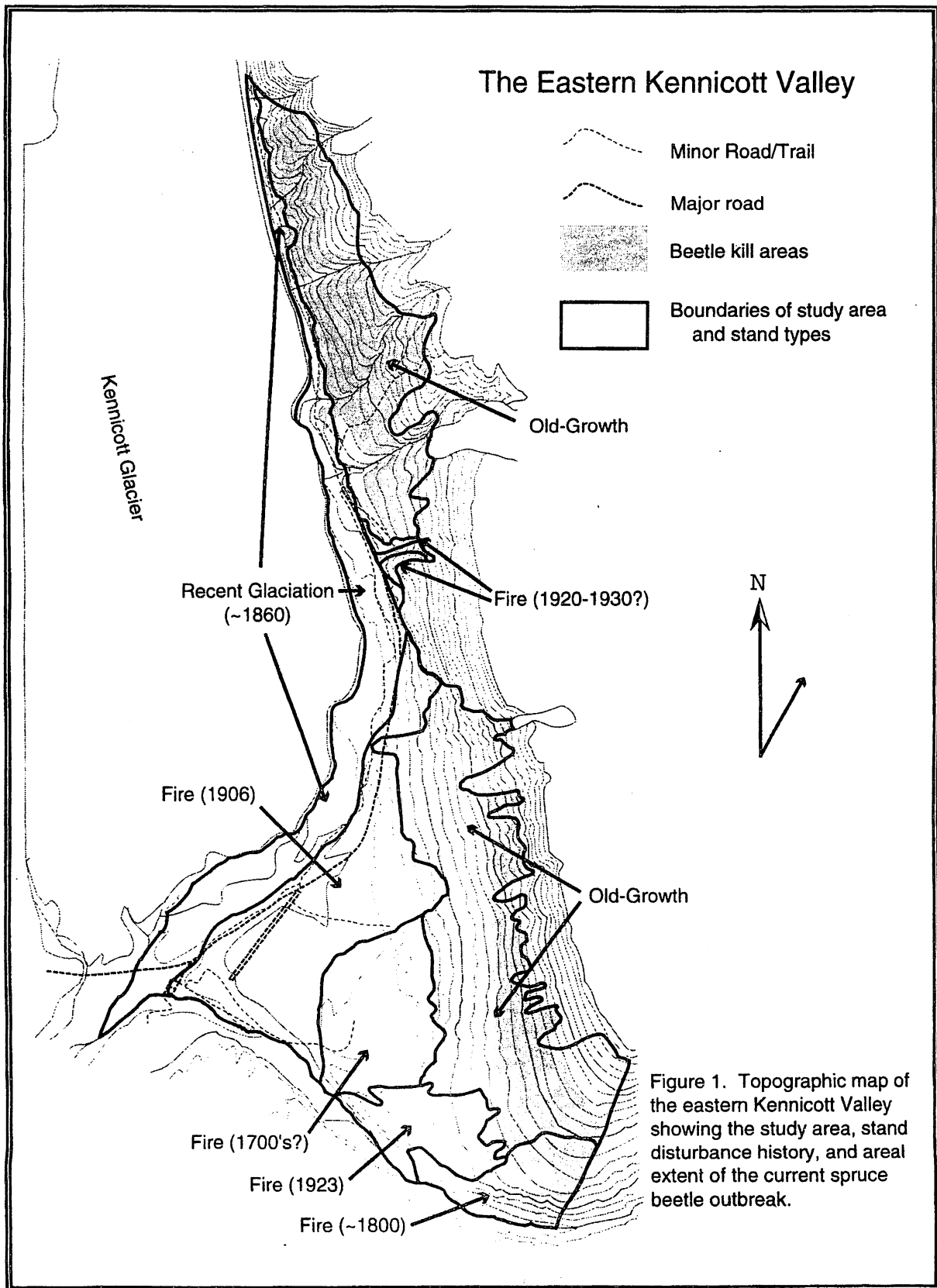
A lot. To understand why, we must consider the ways that spruce forests grow: individual trees get larger (volume growth), and new trees are added to the population (recruitment). Volume growth isn't really an issue in the Kennicott Valley. Spruce do grow slowly in this part of the Copper River basin, more slowly than in the Matanuska, Susitna, or Tanana valleys, but the current rate of firewood harvest in our valley (around 50 cords/year) could be supplied sustainably by as little as 1/10 of the study area if trees kept growing at the current density. But maintaining current densities requires continually adequate recruitment, and

therein lies the rub: there are precious few white spruce seedlings in those hills. Spruce seeds germinate and grow best on bare soils in moderate sunlight, so spruce seedlings are most commonly found where the forest canopy is sparse and the thick, moss-covered organic forest floor is somehow disturbed. Glaciers, fires, roadcuts, and clearcuts create these kinds of conditions, and that is why there are 3-4 times more white spruce seedlings and saplings in the lowland stands than in the hillside stands. In the absence of these large-scale disturbances, however, favorable conditions for the recruitment of young trees rarely occur, and recruitment rates gradually decline. Consider the future of the Kennicott Valley: a readvance of the Kennicott Glacier is unlikely, the valley is now a complete fire suppression zone, road-building has mostly ceased, and clearcutting isn't allowed in the National Park. Neither can we expect beetle outbreaks nor winter firewood gathering to disturb the forest floor enough to create favorable germination sites. The point is this: over the next few centuries, it is reasonable to suspect that nearly all the forest of the eastern Kennicott Valley will gradually take on the characteristics of old-growth forest, and one of those characteristics is a very low recruitment rate.

With this in mind, I asked myself two questions: A) is the low recruitment rate of an old-growth forest sufficient to balance the natural mortality of white spruce and maintain current densities? And B) how

will the increasing local demand for firewood and house logs affect that balance? And that brings us right back to those dying trees. By examining the distribution of tree ages in the hillside stands, I was able to construct a mathematical model of the recruitment and maturity rates that have prevailed in these old-growth stands over the last few hundred years. Based on the assumption described above, that these rates (derived from old-growth stands) provide a suitable model for the conditions that will develop valley-wide over the *next* few centuries, I was then able to answer these questions. In simpler terms, I counted the itty-bitty growth rings from four hundred and twenty-four white spruce trees under a cheap microscope, stumbled up to Dan Doak's cabin with blurred vision, a terrible headache, and a computer disc full of tree ages, and worked with him to develop a scary looking equation that further blurred my vision, intensified my headache, and ultimately convinced me that yes, we better learn to love alder.

Why? Because there isn't even enough recruitment in the old-growth stands to maintain current densities of mature white spruce, *even if there was no beetle outbreak and no human harvest*. There are simply not enough young spruce being "born" to keep up with the number of old spruce that are dying. The margin is relatively slim, however— according to my calculations, a thirty-six percent rise in recruitment might be sufficient to maintain old-growth white spruce in some sort of



equilibrium. Given the potential for error in my model, this figure isn't too alarming. It simply explains a puzzling aspect of our valley's forests, the fact that older stands are actually the most open spruce forests in the valley, choked with alder but ironically lacking the great numbers of spruce trees found in younger, lowland stands. But this result is based upon the assumption that there are no beetles and no people. If woodcutters kill just one percent of the mature trees each year, less than one tree per acre, the recruitment rate would need to rise one hundred and forty six percent to maintain long-term equilibrium. And right now, beetles are killing trees at more than three times that rate, many, many times faster than the young trees can replace them.

We all know which shrub is likely to replace them.

Of course, it could be argued that it doesn't matter, because the current bark beetle outbreak has provided such a wealth of standing dead spruce that we could build a thousand saunas and still have enough wood left over to fire them for

decades, all without ever killing a tree. That's true, except this firewood bonanza won't last that long. The dead trees will decay, and within fifty years we'll be stuck with a much thinner forest of young, green, healthy spruce and a lot of rotten logs. If you want to burn a spruce or build with it, you're going to have to kill it.

That's the problem. In the short term, a few local residents cutting a few beetle-killed spruce for firewood and houselogs isn't any cause for concern. But if my data are correct (and who knows? even the best mathematical models are mighty poor substitutes for the complexity of real ecosystems), cutting live spruce at even moderate levels is an unsustainable practice in the Kennicott Valley.

That doesn't necessarily mean the days of the wood-burning stove are over, but it does mean that local landowners should at least start thinking about some creative solutions.

- ♦ Like burning more willow and poplar.
- ♦ Like a program of small controlled burns to

mimic wildfire and bring recruitment rates back up.

- ♦ Like the establishment of small community woodlots (essentially small clearcuts) that are accessible by a summer road, thus providing spruce and at the same time causing the soil disturbance necessary to spur recruitment.
- ♦ Like the greater use of heating oil and natural gas, and/or firewood from outside the valley.
- ♦ Like a limit on the valley's population.

There are other options, and quite fortunately some time yet to think about them. At this point, the discussion moves from the realm of science to policy, and into the hands of the local community. What will it be? Spruce forests or alder thicket.

With ideas, questions, or to see a copy of my entire report, you can reach me at the Field Naturalist Graduate Program, University of Vermont, Botany Dept. #MLS, Burlington VT 05405; (802) 656-2930. Or keep an eye out for me around town.

Kennicott-McCarthy Wilderness Guides

*"In the heart of the
Wrangell Mountains"*

Chris Richards
Box #1, Kennicott via Glennallen, AK 99588
(907) 554-4444

Wilderness rafting in the
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park

Copper Oar

PO Box MXY McCarthy
Glennallen, AK 99588
1-800-523-4453 or (907) 554-4453

A first class fleet

More on the CR&NW rolling stock

BY JOHN P. KILLORAN

Ron Simpson's article on the CR&NW equipment is superb. Some additional information may help round it out.

"Old Number 50," which was clearly the pet engine of Michael Heney and his construction crew, was not a Mogul (2-6-0) but a Ten-Wheeler (4-6-0). It was, as noted, engine 50 of the Valdez-Yukon Railway. It was probably a Southern Pacific locomotive originally, though this is not indisputable. Number 50 was the CR&NW's only engine of this wheel arrangement. It also served on the Alaska Central out of Seward. If any historic Alaskan locomotive should have been preserved it was engine 50!

I cannot debate history regarding the car used by Stephen Birch on his honeymoon in 1916. However, it wasn't car 100. Car 100 is a standard heavyweight office, or business, car. It was constructed by the Pullman Company in 1923 for the CR&NW and named *Stephen Birch*. It is typical of such cars, having an open observation platform at one end and containing several bedrooms, a dining room, porter/cook quarters, and a large observation room. It is of all steel construction, 85 feet long, and weighed about 80 tons.

The former *Stephen Birch* is unquestionably the finest example of equipment built for the CR&NW which survives today. It is in magnificent

operating condition and was a star in a recent Emmy-award-winning television mini-series.

Car 100 was sold to the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy R.R. in 1940 and renamed *Aleutian*. In 1966 it was purchased by the Missouri Portland Cement Company and operated as their private car *Accommodator*. Four years later they donated it to the St. Louis Museum of Transportation where it was renamed *Barrett Station*.

The CR&NW's only office car achieved recent fame as a stand-in for the presidential office car *Ferdinand Magellan* during the filming of the 1995 mini-series "Truman" by HBO. Actor Gary Sinise, who played Harry Truman, received an "Emmy" award for best actor earlier this month. The *Barrett Station* is back on display at the St. Louis museum, far from the Copper River country where it once served.

I said that the car was the "only" such car on the railroad. Actually, it probably was not, but I have seen no description of the other car, except for some published notations that the private car "Kennecott" was used by Mr and Mrs. Birch for their honeymoon trip. I assume it was also an office car.

It is correct, however, that the "Stephen Birch" is car 100. Records at the St. Louis Museum of Transportation clearly delineate the heritage back to its construction in 1923 for the CR&NW as car 100.

What happened to the

"Kennecott" and what did it look like? One possible scenario is that the car was numbered 100, and retired in 1923 when the "Stephen Birch" was built? Someone may know: I am certainly curious. I plan to do some research, and I'll let you know. If you find out, I'm certain I can look for it in a future WSEN.

American Locomotive Company records indicate only six ALCo-Dickson 0-4-0 "standard construction" locomotives were built for the Katalla Company, contractor for the building of the CR&NW. They were shipped new from the Scranton (Penna.) works in January and May 1907. While several were also used on later Bering River coal projects the engines were originally used for construction of the main rail line.

Engine 6 (builder number 42767) was later abandoned in a marshy field about 80 miles east of Cordova by the Alaska Anthracite Company, a subsequent owner.

The company failed to complete a 1920's rail line project from Goose City (an undeveloped town site) to the Bering River coal fields. An uncompleted attempt was made in 1986 to move the engine to Cordova for display. Little Number 6 still sits in the wilderness awaiting rescue. It is the only surviving locomotive used on the CR&NW.

Other remaining equipment includes two of the wooden box

cars that the CR&NW converted into bunk cars for work train service. They are restored and on display at the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry near Wasilla. A similar car is abandoned in Chitina, and the remains of another are near the site of the McCarthy turntable. Other hulks are in McCarthy, along the right of way in various spots, and in Cordova.

The famed "Chitina Auto-Railer," a 1935 Ford bus with guide wheels allowing it to run on the track or highway, is also restored to full operating condition and on display at MATI. The bus was used on the Chitina-Kennicott line after abandonment in 1938.

It was saved by famed aviator "Mudhole" Smith, and eventually

restored by the museum and Alaska Railroad volunteers. When it was moved to the museum in the late 1980's, it was driven over the Alaska Railroad mainline to Palmer with passengers that included the railroad president and Alaska's Governor. It is driven occasionally in parades and for special events.

One of the railroad's truly magnificent rotary snow plows probably exists. That a 196-mile railroad owned four of these awesome machines is testimony to the severe operating conditions in wintertime. The plows were of a standard "Leslie Patent" design with 12 foot, 6 inch cutting blades, powered by their own steam boiler, but

propelled by a brace of locomotives behind it. As recently as five years ago, former Copper River plow X-4 was still in service on the Burlington Northern Railroad as their No. 972559, stationed at Alliance, Nebraska. It was sold in 1940 to the Northern Pacific Railroad as their No. 47. They converted it in 1966 from steam to electric power. A total of three of the CR&NW plows went to the NP but two were scrapped in 1962, and in 1970. There is no record of what happened to CR&NW X-1.

I hope this helps round out the colorful history of the rail equipment. It was, as Ron Simpson wrote, "a first class fleet."

Editor's note: I faxed a copy of John's letter to Ron Simpson thinking he might want to respond. Typically for Ron, he went beyond the call of duty, made a trip to Fairbanks and researched the newspaper archives there. Here is his response.

My sources for the CR & NW article include original CR & NW documents, Lone Janson's "The Copper Spike," Alfred O. Quinn's "Iron Rails to Alaskan Copper," two CR & NW engine rosters provided by Lone Janson and the Anchorage Museum, a letter written by C. L. Siebert, Jr., who was in charge of army operations at Cordova during the early part of World War II, numerous interviews with A. C. Swalling who worked on the railway from 1928 until its closing in 1938, and extensive photo analysis of the CR & NW rolling stock from my own collection.

He is correct about "Old Number 50," in that it really was a "Ten-Wheeler," not a Mogul. This engine was cut up for scrap in Cordova by the army soon after they arrived.

The rosters I have do indicate that there were seven Dickson Saddletanks in possession of the CR & NW, but according to Lone Janson, this is disputable. She referred to Number 50 as the "Seven Spot," because it may have actually been the seventh of the original group even though it was an entirely different type of locomotive. The Dickson Saddletanks were all shipped to Katalla in 1907, as this was the original "mainline" route (if you don't count Valdez) from port into the interior. A storm in November wiped out the breakwater and port at Katalla, convincing the railroad owners to pick up their option with

Mike Heney and resume his original construction from Eyak, which was renamed "Cordova." One of the photos in "The Copper Spike" shows one of the original Saddletanks on its side at Katalla after the November storm.

Finally, there is the matter of Car 100. I have seen one other reference to such a car which may have been built in 1923. I have never found any photos of this car, as described by John Killoran, to prove such a car was ever shipped to Cordova. All the original coaches were wood-sided 70 foot Pullmans, of which the earliest photos seem to date their arrival to 1910.

After reading John Killoran's letter, I researched the "Cordova Daily Times" for the year 1923, and found absolutely no reference to the arrival of such a car. In that year President Warren Harding did visit

Cordova. On July 17 he rode the rails to the Miles and Childs glaciers at Mile 49, site of the famous Million Dollar Bridge. If the car was to ever be used in Alaska, one could safely assume it would have been shipped to coincide with the arrival of the president. Again, no reference is available in the Cordova paper to this elaborate business car.

I have a copy of a letter from Eugene McCracken, dated 1937, to F. A. Hanson, the last superintendent of the CR & NW, in which McCracken (an early Alaskan Railway buff) asks Hanson about the existence of such a car. Hanson replied that no such car existed, but the original coaches still on hand consisted of three combines, one day coach and one observation car.

These were all on hand when

the army took over the railway facility in 1942, and according to C. L. Siebert, Jr. (captain, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and head of the project at Cordova), the combination observation and dining car was numbered 100.

An eighty foot car of the type John Killoran described would not have been practical on the CR & NW in any case. The railway line, particularly west of Chitina was not designed for such a long coach. In fact, there were even problems with the seventy foot coaches early on which required modifying the trucks on all those coaches.

Bear in mind that the CR & NW was actually headquartered at New York City, with operations headquarters in Seattle. The president of the line was in New York, the vice-president in Seattle. Assuming

this coach was purchased by CR & NW and then named the "Stephen Birch," it would be a safe guess that this was actually the personal business car of Stephen Birch himself and other high banking members of Kennecott Corporation for use on the stateside railway lines.

My collection of photos, books and documents is available here for anyone who wishes to view the sources for themselves. I can be reached via the "Copper Rail Depot Bar," formerly the "Copper Center Bar," at 822-3522, or at my home at 822-3647, or by mail: P. O. Box 265, Copper Center, AK 99573.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond.

Ronald N. Simpson
Kennecott-Alaska & Copper Rail Project

ST. ELIAS ALPINE GUIDES



Full range of guided trips available
Phone (907) 277-6867

Bob Jacobs, Owner, Certified Alpine Guide

McCarthy-Kennicott Tours & Transportation



BACKCOUNTRY CONNECTION

Scheduled Van Service & Day Trips

P.O. Box 243 Glennallen, Ak 99588
Phone or FAX (907) 822-5292

Kenny Lake Mercantile

RV Park—Water & Sewer Dump for Campers—Hotel

Laundry and Showers

Patty Ryan's "Silver Fox Cafe"

Propane-Hardware-Gas-Grocery-Auto Parts-Feed

Phone 822-9863 Mile 7.5 Edgerton Hwy. May 31-Sept. 30 Hours 9-9 7 days a week

Body of British hiker found in Wrangell-St. Elias

GULKANA, ALASKA - NPS RELEASE

On September 8, National Park Rangers at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park positively identified the body of a David Richard Harrison, a 31-year-old British hiker reported missing in Alaska. His body was located from a helicopter in a steep ravine north of Dixie Pass in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. He is presumed to have fallen in the ravine while on a solo trek in the region in early August.

Park Service officials received a call from Harrison's father, Peter Harrison of Lancashire, England, on September 2, when he failed to return to his job in Shrewsbury, England after a month-long solo trip to Alaska. Harrison was a math teacher at a private school.

According to the elder Harrison, his son had mailed a postcard from Glennallen on August 3 indicating that he planned to hike in the 13 million-acre Wrangell-St. Elias, the largest National Park in the U.S.

No "Trip Itinerary" was located for him in Park Service files. The park does not have a mandatory permit system but does encourage hikers to file a trip itinerary if they are going into the Park's backcountry.

"It is difficult to track visitors to Alaska who do not have a specific itinerary," said Wrangell-St. Elias Chief Ranger Jay Wells. "After several days of intensive investigative work the search area for this case was limited from a state-wide search, to a Park-wide search, and finally, to a particular drainage." National Park Service in-

vestigating Ranger Tim Saskowsky followed a series of leads that eventually narrowed the search area to the Rock Creek drainage in the Dixie Pass region of the Park. The first lead came from a friend of Harrison's in Great Britain who found records of USGS maps purchased by Harrison before his Alaska trip. When comparing this list to a stack of maps Harrison had left at an acquaintance's home in Anchorage, it was deduced that he most likely was hiking either on the Nabesna Road or in the Dixie Pass area.

On September 5, Saskowsky learned that Harrison had purchased a one-way ticket to the Dixie Pass trailhead on August 3. This information came from Saskowsky's search of credit card charges made by Harrison in early August including a charge to a Glennallen-based transportation service which drives the McCarthy Road into the Park daily and offers trailhead drop-offs for hikers.

Harrison had also purchased an Alaska guide book that describes a number of hikes in the Park. The guidebook describes a 45-mile trek which drops north from Dixie Pass into the rugged Rock Creek drainage. This trip matched the adventurous type of hiking Harrison enjoyed, according to friends in Britain. This route begins at the Dixie Pass

Trail. Most hikers hike to Dixie Pass and return the same way back to the trailhead.

Based on these facts the Park Service sent a 2-person ground crew in to hike up Rock Creek from the Kotsina River on Friday, searching for evidence of Harrison's passage. Within three hours the search team found a packed tent in Rock Creek matching the description of the tent Harrison was believed to be carrying. A helicopter was then called in to survey the gorge area of Rock Creek, which was inaccessible to the ground crew, and spotted a body wearing a backpack on Saturday afternoon.

On the morning of September 8, the recovery team reached the body and identified it as Harrison's. Rangers involved in the recovery included District Ranger Tom Betts, Seasonal Rangers Scott Krull, Janette Chiron, Rich Richotte, and Volunteer Vlado Vancura.

ICEBOUND • EMPIRE

Industry & Politics on the Last Frontier

For each copy
send \$23 to:

Elizabeth A. Tower
6761 Round Tree Dr.
Anchorage, AK 99516

Also—Big Mike Heney
& Ghost of Kennecott \$10 each

Two die in airplane crash in park

BY RANGER TOM BETTS

At 3:45 pm on September 16, the National Park Service (NPS) received a report of an overdue Aeronca Champ aircraft. The pilot, Peter Murphy, age 33, and passenger, John McCune, age 45, both of Valdez, departed Valdez for a sheep hunting trip in the Preserve on Thursday, September 12, and were to return to Valdez on Sunday. When they failed to return by Monday, their wives called the park to report them overdue. In a telephone interview, Mrs. Murphy provided detailed information of their planned itinerary.

Alaska State Troopers (AST) and the 11th Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) in Anchorage were notified of the missing plane. RCC reported that they had received three "first alert" ELT satellite hits emanating from the area identified by Mrs. Murphy, but were not able to confirm the reports. NPS pilot, Jim Hannah, flew a hasty search with the park

C-185 at 4:50 pm. The aircraft was not found at any of the airstrips identified by Mrs. Murphy by the time darkness fell.

A full scale search was begun at 7 am. on September 17, coordinated with AST, RCC and Civil Air Patrol (CAP). The NPS C-185, AST Helicopter One, a Blackhawk helicopter and a C-130 communications/refueling ship from Air National Guard (ANG) 210th Rescue Squadron were in the air by 0900. Two CAP aircraft joined the search by 1100 hours, however low clouds, ground fog, and high winds limited the use of the CAP aircraft.

At approximately 11:35 the C-130 picked up a faint ELT signal coming from the cliffs above the Hawkins Glacier. The Blackhawk worked the weather and confirmed a crash site at about the 5,500 foot level, but was unable to land near the crash site due to the rugged terrain. They put two crewmen on the ground at

about the 5,000 foot level who hiked to the crash site, identified the plane and victims. Both men died in the crash.

The bodies were removed through a cooperative effort with NPS and AST personnel using the AST helicopter. They were carried to Bear Island, transferred to a Beaver aircraft owned by Ultima Thule outfitters, and flown to the Gulkana airport. Even though the ELT was working properly, its location in the airplane and the position of the wreckage prevented good reception by the satellites. Specialized radio equipment in the C-130 and the weather flying ability of the Blackhawk provided a quick end to a search which could have gone on for days.

The cause of the accident is under investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board. Murphy is survived by his wife, Kara, and three children. McCune leaves his wife Karen and two older children.

M.A.C. news

BY CARLY KRITCHEN

The McCarthy Area Council held its Annual Membership meeting on October 11. New officers were elected, including Howard Mozen, president, Thea Agnew, treasurer, Ed LaChapelle and Carly Kritchén sharing the vice presidency, and Laura Bunnell and Meg Hunt as joint secretaries. The job sharing concept was used to accommodate residents who have an interest in working with the Council, but who may have limited time to give.

Ed LaChapelle gave a short update on the Aquifer Protection study, which is in its final stages. The deadline on the study has been extended to June of 97 to allow for the museum display to be prepared, and for the final coordination of information and paperwork.

Members expressed appreciation to Richard Villa for his work on the Fourth of July festivities in McCarthy. He organized most of the activities, including a bachelor auction which raised \$450.00 for M.A.C. A committee was formed to

look into uses for the money.

An update was given on the new vault toilet facilities proposed for the McCarthy area. The tanks have been buried in the site across from the museum, and NPS hopes to have the facility finished before the start of the summer of '97. Plans were discussed for another facility located in the area of the second crossing.

For additional information write to the Council at M.A.C., McCarthy 31, Box MXV, Glennallen, AK 99588-8998.



OUR TOWN

November 1921 December



PERSONAL

James Morris left on yesterday's train en route to Seattle, on a business trip.

John E. Barrett left on last Monday's train, to spend the winter in the States. He will stay over at Juneau for a short visit on business.

Al Doze is planning on leaving on a trip to the outside about the latter part of this month. He will visit Colorado for the first time in twenty years.

Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Ahrens have been receiving the congratulations of their friends upon the arrival at their home on October 15th, of a fine baby girl of eleven pounds. She will be named Helen Rose.

An eight pound son arrived yesterday to Mrs. Matsukura at Kennecott Hospital. Matsukura is contract cook for the C. R. & N. W. Ry at Chitina.

SCHOOL NEWS

The following have neither been absent nor tardy this school month:-

Wilbert Lainen
Buddy Seltenreich
Fred Seltenreich
Ted Seltenreich
Frank Wills
Geraldine O'Neill

We are going to try to make our record better next month.

FALL WEATHER

Not since 1914 have we had such a wonderful Fall. Here it is the 5th of November and not an inch of snow on the ground. In South Africa an unprecedented fall of snow occurred in the Natal and Cape Colony region, snow falling for 15 hours continuously, and Pieter Maritzburg, capital of Natal, was cut off from rail and telegraph com-

munication for several days.

Even tho we live adjacent to glaciers the climate in the McCarthy section cannot be equaled.

Nov. 5

This issue of the McCarthy Weekly News is Number 1. Volume 5. And here we start on our fifth year of publication. It is a coincidence that this is also the week of the nationwide movement backed by the National Editorial Association for the boosting of home town papers.

Boosting your home paper is really boosting your town and district. The newspaper prints all the news that's fit to print and has been a great help in keeping the district known. Births, marriages, deaths, discoveries, journeys and news sad and glad appear in our columns as the weeks go by and the paper plays no favorites.

Our special correspondent in Seattle telegraphs us the news of the outside world every Saturday morning. Our correspondents in the various camps keep us posted as to the news there.

Altogether we endeavor to give our subscribers good news service in this little sheet. But it takes dollars to buy fuel and light, not to mention paper and telegraphic service and as "every mickle makes a muckle" won't you drop in and renew your subscription.

PERSONAL

Martin Radovan killed a silver tip bear last week on

Dan Creek. Warren Nelson, who came into town last evening claims it is the largest bear ever killed in that vicinity.

Miss Jacobs, school mistress at Kennecott, was a visitor to McCarthy today, the guest of Miss Stuart.

OF LOCAL INTEREST

Pete Johnson will soon have his sawmill running which he purchased from George Anderson last summer, and is now installing down on the farm. Oscar Anderson, an expert in that line of work, is chief engineer.

Quite a number of improvements were noticeable in town this week.

A large tank heater was installed last week in the basement of the McCarthy Garage, which will keep the cars in good shape and ready for use at any time, no matter how cold it may get.

A 10 by 12 addition was added to H. H. Mitchell's residence on Front Street. Knowles and Fogelberg were the contractors.

The Alaska Soda Fountain has been thoroughly renovated inside with a new coat of paint which gives it a much brighter appearance. Felix Sabis was the artist.

Cap Hubrick has so much wood on hand for the winter that he has installed a heater at the back of his store.

BANKRUPT SALE

The entire stock, furniture & fixtures of the Brehmer Drug Co.

Must be sold to satisfy the Creditors

WE, the Creditors, sacrifice the freight.

You can MAKE One hundred and one hundred and fifty per cent on your money By Buying Your DRUG NECESSITIES and XMAS GOODS NOW.

THIS SALE TO LAST BUT A FEW DAYS

Nov. 12

OF LOCAL INTEREST

Mr. and Mrs. Trim and family who have been several months at the Mother Lode Lower Camp came into town day before yesterday and are staying at present in the Sullivan cabin.

Cap Hubrick has purchased all the beautiful fixtures of the Brehmer Drug Co. As well as a large portion of the stock.

Combining these with his present stock of jewelry, Indian Curios and Kodak supplies, makes a very attractive showing.

Nov. 19

OF LOCAL INTEREST

The Bridge over the Copper River has been causing a great deal of anxiety this week, owing to the fact that ice jams had rendered it unsafe. An immense volume of water which had dammed up above the bridge broke out on Thanksgiving Day and the water under the bridge rose fourteen feet.

The North end local came from Chitina to McCarthy

Copper River and Northwestern Railway
THROUGH SERVICE TO CORDOVA TWICE WEEKLY
CALEB CORSER Supt. F. W. SOMMER Agent

Thursday evening returning yesterday morning, the train crew fully expecting to have to remain on this side of the bridge. But the water receded yesterday, & the pile driver which was in readiness, made the necessary repairs so that the train bringing passengers, mail express and freight, made good time in crossing this morning.

Outside mail which left Seattle November 19th reached McCarthy today.

Nov. 26

OF LOCAL INTEREST

With the thermometer at 60 above and a heavy rain it was unusually warm last evening for this time of year.

BUSINESS QUIET BUT STEADY

Business conditions during the past month have been very firm notwithstanding the fact that many of our residents are spending the winter outside.

The Christmas spirit is in the air, and a prosperous month is anticipated by the merchants in December.

For the past two years our little town has been very quiet, the local business houses just holding their own, but there is no reason to assume that whatever situation exists at this moment is going to continue.

McCarthy has many advantages which will be utilized in the near future. In addition to its untold mineral wealth which first put it on the map, it has three great assets, water, fuel and farm land. It takes time tho to develop, especially under conditions that have existed during the past. The World War of course was the main factor in retarding the development of our farm lands in this section.

For over five miles down the railroad the smoke from the farmhouses can now be seen from McCarthy on a clear day.

In the other direction,

practically every foot of ground on Sourdough Hill, adjacent to the main Nizina trail, has been taken up by genuine homesteaders as far out as the Nizina River, the ones who are farming on the banks of that treacherous stream are just as much interested in the future development of McCarthy as the ones who live at this end.

The Kennecott Copper Corporation has been, in more ways than one, a big factor in all this development. For instance, a homesteader has been able to sell all his surplus wood, cleared off his land, to this company, receiving the cash at the time he needed it the most, enabling him to purchase his seed grain and then selling the products to the same company.

It has been remarked that too many farmers would overstock this section, but one must remember that there is a large population at the other end of the line for surplus home grown products. We feel sure that the farmers could get a very satisfactory rate from the Copper River and Northwestern Railway Co. on their products for the Coast trade.

The local business will always adjust itself to surrounding conditions and our little town is in a strategical position to take advantage of any material benefits that may come in the near future to this section — and they will surely come.

Dec. 3

OF LOCAL INTEREST

(The Juneau Sunday Capital) Nov. 13th.

The first arrivals in Dawson direct from the placer camp of Chisana reached here yesterday in a small boat in which they traveled practically the full length of the White River as well as the remainder of the distance from the mouth of the White to that place.

The party includes Bill Berry, Miles Atkinson and R. F. Snyder. Accompanying

them on the trip down the White were four men from McCarthy who recently crossed the divide via Scolai Pass and on arrival at Stewart City took the launch Flamingo there for Mayo.

The four men are John Larson, Tom O'Leary, Williams and Carl Erickson, all hard rock miners from the Kennecott district, who will try their luck in Yukon's new silver camp.

Jack Schultz intends to spend a few days at Sam Seltenreich ranch, next week, helping Sam to fix up the house, as the Seltenreichs plan on moving to the ranch after New Year.

The Trim family left this week to spend the winter on the ranch. Mr. Trim is finishing his wood contract for the Kennecott Corporation.

Jas. Hussey of the Golden is making some improvements to his place, it being his intention to install a lunch counter at the rear of the pool hall.

Dec. 10

FATAL ACCIDENT

Gust de Vost, a miner at the Mother Lode Coalition Mines, was accidentally killed last Thursday evening through miscalculating the time on a fuse. The funeral took place today.

Dec. 17

OF LOCAL INTEREST

Several parts of the drill that was in operation several years ago on Dan Creek are now at the mouth of Young Creek, the balance will be freighted down from the head of Young Creek as soon as trail conditions improve. The drilling on the Nizina River bars will commence in earnest for the site of the new bridge.

The Golden Hotel lunch counter was opened this week. Doc Brehmer is the new chef and from all accounts is delivering the goods.

Charley Erickson, an old

employee of the Kennecott Co. and Miss Martha Rwaeno, a charming young lady who arrived on Tuesday's train from Cordova, were united in marriage by the U. S. Commissioner in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Hubrick. After the ceremony a dainty lunch was served by Mrs. Hubrick at her residence on Riverside Drive.

The newlyweds will occupy the apartments at Kennecott.

The funeral of Gust de Vost which took place last Saturday afternoon at the Kennecott Cemetery was attended by a large number of his friends from the Mother Lode Camp. William Godfrey who conducted the funeral read the burial service in a very impressive manner.

Dec. 24

A TOUGH TRIP

Roy Snyder, Miles Atkinson & Bill Berry, returned to McCarthy on Christmas morning, after a trip of several months to Dawson and surrounding country. They made the trip over in two weeks from here to the mouth of White River; visiting many camps on the Canadian side and spending over a month in Dawson.

Returning by the way of the Rohn Glacier, which has not been staked yet for winter travel, Berry fell into a crevice over eighty feet deep, where he remained for several hours. With the aid of a nail he found in his pocket, he managed to dig steps in the sides which afforded him protection until his partners appeared. With the aid of a long lash rope and all the dog chains he was hauled up to safety. Excepting a few bad bruises and the partition of his nose being broken, Berry is all right. He is notoriously venturesome, but admits that when he reached the top he had plenty of that experience.

Common sense about snowmobiling

Snowmobiles are for many the vehicle of choice from November through March in the McCarthy area. Vast areas that are not accessible in the summer become within our reach when the snow covers the ground and the rivers freeze over. If you are planning a winter trip to McCarthy aboard that shining new machine, consider the following information condensed from *Common Sense About Snowmobiling* — A guide to trip preparation, on-the-trail travel, and survival information from the Alaska State Troopers.

Trip Planning:

Every time you plan to travel long distances, you should let a responsible person know where you are going and when you will return.

Your travel plan should include this basic but important information:

THE ROUTE YOU'LL USE

WHEN YOU EXPECT TO ARRIVE

WHAT GEAR YOU HAVE WITH YOU

WHO IS WITH YOU

Complete a SAR Prevention Travel Plan Form (available at State Troopers office); or leave a list of the information with a responsible adult.

This information could save your life in case you become lost or disoriented and a search is necessary. The rescue team will know where to begin looking, if you are reported overdue, and how well equipped you are to survive until help arrives.

Every time you travel outside of your community, file a new travel plan to make sure the rescue team has the most current information.

Equipment and supplies:

An emergency is defined as an unexpected event. When you have prepared for the unexpected, a situation which might have been a

life threatening situation, might be only an inconvenience. Common sense about snowmobiling includes making sure you have the gear and equipment you need to survive in open country, and the tools and parts you might need if your machine breaks down. Check off these items:

Personal Survival Equipment:

Personal survival gear can be stored in a day pack so that it is accessible and easily stowed on the snow machine for each trip. If you don't have it with you, it won't do you any good when you need it the most.

Personal Snowmachine Equipment Kit:

TUBE TENT OR TARP

EMERGENCY BLANKET

GAS STOVE

SIGNAL FLARES OR ELT

WATERPROOF MATCHES OR LIGHTER

CANDLES

COMPASS

FOOD BARS OR CANDY BARS

TOILETRIES

THERMOS BOTTLE OF WATER

SIGNAL MIRROR

WHISTLE

FLASHLIGHT

PORTABLE RADIO

SNOWSHOES

SUNGLASSES

SUN BLOCK

CHAPSTICK

Clothing :

It is important to understand how your body can overheat even in cold weather. If you do get stuck in the snow, get caught in water overflow or the weather gets warmer than you expected, you might begin to get too warm and perspire. When you layer your clothing, you can remove some layers of clothing while you work to free your machine or allow your body temperature to moderate and avoid the possibility of hypothermia.

The first layer of clothing, next to your skin, should be something that ventilates. Begin with a layer of underwear with a wicking ability. This allows moisture from your skin to be absorbed by the underwear to maintain your body temperature.

The second layer should provide comfort, utility and durability. This is usually several garments such as a turtleneck, or flannel shirt, a wool or pile sweater, jacket or vest. Wear wool or insulated pants, wool gloves with liners and a wool or pile hat.

The outer layer of clothing should be water repellent and/or wind proof. It should be snug fitting so it doesn't catch in the machine but it should be loose enough to allow free movement.

Choose outer wear appropriate for the weather: for cold and snow wear a synthetic or down parka, double boots with super gaiters, wool or silk balaclava and mittens; for wind or rain wear a rain parka or gortex/nylon with wind breaking capabilities, gaiters, mittens over your gloves, and a hat.

Don't just dress for the weather at the time of departure but carry gear needed if weather changes. Carry extra clothing and gloves even on a short trip.

If you routinely ride on rivers, streams, lakes, pack ice, or any waterway, consider wearing flotation coveralls. If you break through the ice and fall in, these coveralls will help keep you afloat with some degree of warmth, and usually come in colors appropriate for high visibility.

Rules of the Road

If you must travel on an established roadway shared with cars and trucks, there are some laws and some common sense guidelines. These laws are described

completely in Alaska Statute 28.05.30. 13AAC02 and 13AAC04, and they include:

Bring your snowmobile to a complete stop before crossing and yield to any traffic on the highway.

Cross at a right angle to the roadway.

If crossing a bridge or culvert on a highway, drive only at the extreme right-hand edge of the bridge or culvert and only when the crossing can be completed with safety and without interfering with other traffic.

A snowmobile may be used on a highway when use of the highway by other motor vehicles is impossible because of snow or ice accumulation or other natural conditions.

A snowmobile can be used on a highway when it is posted or otherwise designated as being open to travel by off-highway vehicles.

A person driving a snowmobile may ride only on a permanent seat attached to the vehicle.

A snowmobile can not be used to carry passengers unless the vehicle is designed and equipped with a seat for a passenger.

A snowmobile needs to be registered with the State of Alaska if operated in any area other than on private property. Registration will assist in determining ownership if the vehicle is stolen and will provide documentation in the event the machine is involved in an accident.

Common sense guidelines to make your traveling safer.

Make yourself and your machine visible by wearing bright colors and using reflectors.

Do not travel in whiteout conditions or when a snow storm is either predicted or ongoing.

If you have a mechanical break down, stay with your machine. You have a better chance of survival and being located.

Determine the distance to be traveled and fuel needed to travel that distance under all conditions including changes in the weather or trail conditions.

Slow down and use extra caution when traveling unfamiliar or seldom used trails. Snow or ice may cover hazardous wires, trees, or rocks which might otherwise have been visible. At slower speeds, you'll also have greater reaction time for trail dangers.

Be familiar with commonly used and standard trail signs and markers including directional arrows and barrier or hazard markers.

Travel at night only when necessary. Allow more time for slower travel. Obstacles and road hazards tend to be harder to see in the dark.

If you become disoriented or lost in a snow squall or darkness, stop until you regain your sense of direction.

Do not drink alcoholic beverages before or during a snowmobile trip. Driving a snowmobile under the influence of alcohol or drugs is illegal.

Alcohol slows you down physically and mentally so that you may not be able to react to trail conditions and emergencies.

Cold temperatures can cover up the effects of alcohol; you might feel warm when you're really freezing.

The combination of wind, sun, glare, vibration, motion and cold temperatures can make you feel tired faster. Your vision, judgement, decision-making ability, balance and reaction time can all be effected.

Thin Ice:

People routinely cross the ice on foot, 3-wheeler and snow machine to hunt, trap, fish, or just for personal travel. There are some common sense things to

make your travel across ice safer.

Ice on a lake or pond is generally consistent with the weather. If it has been cold, the ice is probably stable. If it has been warm and sunny, the ice may be varied in thickness depending on the depth of the water and closeness to shore.

Ice on rivers and streams, where there is a current or tide, tends to be most unstable and unpredictable. The condition of the ice can change quickly and without warning. Strong river current combined with warm temperatures and sunshine can weaken ice in a matter of hours.

Use these common sense guidelines for safe ice travel:

Never trust ice. It is unpredictable. Open leads and thin spots could take you by surprise.

Warm sunshine and unseasonably warm temperatures can make ice thin in some areas and not so thin in others.

Check the ice before you head out. Look for overflow (pools of water on top of the ice), ice crystals and cracks.

Learn to identify "clear ice" and the weaker "cloudy ice."

A thin cover of ice or light snow can disguise an open lead and make travel hazardous.

Limit the weight on your snow machine.

Travel single file with a companion. Each of you should have a 50 to 100 foot piece of heavy rope and other survival gear.

Never stop your snowmachine on the ice and let it idle.

Listen for the sound of ice cracking. If you hear it, don't panic. Spread your body weight evenly across the ice and slide yourself back in the direction you came; you know that ice is safe. Slide yourself to a stronger location and proceed with extreme caution.

Hypothermia:

Learn how to identify and treat hypothermia. This is the loss of body heat caused by exposure to cold and made more hazardous by wet, wind and exhaustion. If the body temperature is lowered too much and efforts not made to restore it, mental and physical collapse can occur.

Watch for these signs in yourself and in your travel companions:

UNCONTROLLABLE FIT OF SHIVERING

VAGUE, SLOW, SLURRED SPEECH

MEMORY LAPSES, INCOHERENCE

IMMOBILE, FUMBLING HANDS

FREQUENT STUMBLING

DROWSINESS, EXHAUSTION

Avoid hypothermia by staying dry even if it requires changing

into dry clothing outdoors. Insulate against the cold by wearing layered clothing, wool and waterproof outerwear, and a cap. If you think you are getting too cold and can not get indoors, build a fire and make camp while you still have the energy, and attempt to drink hot liquids.

Treatment for hypothermia must be made with great care. Shelter the victim, get him/her into warm, dry clothing, and keep them awake. Seek medical attention as quickly as possible.

Avalanche:

Avalanches occur when loose snow or a slab of snow starts moving down a slope. They are triggered by a variety of slope, snow and weather conditions,

and many times by loud noise like a rifle shot or machine engine.

If you travel in areas where avalanches can occur, get to know the local and specific locations and then avoid those areas, even if it makes your trip a little longer. Learn what you need to do if you or a companion are caught in an avalanche.

It's your responsibility to use common sense in planning your trip, carrying enough survival gear, operating your machine in a safe and courteous manner, maintaining your snowmobile, understanding and remembering the limitations of your machine, and of yourself.

Have a safe journey.

"The trouble with being poor is that it takes up all your time." — Willem de Kooning

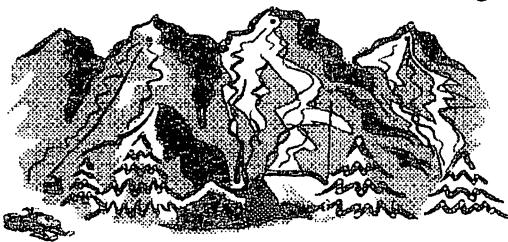
Snowmachining the Wrangell Mountains!

**The place to stay during your
snowmachine visit to the
McCarthy area.**



Local trail information and assistance

McCarthy Trail Rides



John Adams
PO Box MXY
Glennallen, AK 99588
(907) 554-4433

The Care and Feeding of Lead-Acid Batteries

BY ED LACHAPELLE

Lead-acid batteries are what start our vehicles, anchor our solar power systems and run just about everything else requiring 12 volts direct current. If properly maintained and used, they will last for many years. If abused, they die early and quick. The funerals (replacements) are expensive. Given the number of stalled cars, expensive funerals and accumulated piles of dead batteries around a bush community like McCarthy, it's time for a review of basic battery care.

Basic Chemistry

A storage battery has positive and negative plates immersed in an electrolyte. In a charged lead-acid battery the positive plate is lead peroxide and the negative plate is lead. The electrolyte is sulfuric acid with a specific gravity about 1.280 to 1.300. A chemical reaction takes place during discharge, generating an electric current and converting both plates to lead sulfate, using up the sulfuric acid and leaving the electrolyte mostly water. Charging puts a current into the battery and reverses this process. It also electrolyzes some of the water, breaking it down into hydrogen and oxygen, which escapes through vents and must be replaced by adding more (distilled) water. Like all chemical reactions, the speed of this one depends on temperature. The lower the temperature, the slower reaction. This is important—the reasons why will appear below.

Kinds and Sizes of Batteries

Batteries are designed for two basic kinds of service, float and deep cycle. In float service, a battery is connected to both a

charging source and a load at the same time and serves an electrical flywheel, providing current (discharging) when the load current exceeds the charge and absorbing current (charging) when the charge current exceeds the load.

Such batteries normally operate off the top 25% or less of their capacity. In a deep cycle battery, the battery is drained down 75% or more of its capacity and then separately recharged. Examples of float service are auto batteries and telephone batteries such as the ones supporting our local cell phone sites. Fork lifts and electric vehicles use deep cycle batteries. Solar power systems also use deep cycle batteries but if properly designed will operate most of the time closer to float mode to improve battery life.

Regular lead-acid batteries have removable vent caps that allow distilled water to be added to replace water lost during charging. The so-called maintenance-free batteries are sealed except for a small, one-way vent which allows gases to escape but not the addition of water. Sealed, or gel-cell, batteries have no vent at all but can be operated in any position because the electrolyte has a jelly-like consistency.

Construction of Batteries

Auto batteries have the extra requirement of being able to deliver very large starting currents for very short periods. This is met by having many thin plates to achieve a large surface area. This leaves the plate assembly mechanically weak. A small amount of antimony is alloyed with the lead to stiffen it.

The plates become even weaker as they convert to lead sulfate during discharge. For this reason, auto batteries do not stand up well to prolonged high current use (warped plates) during deep discharge. Auto batteries should not be used in deep-cycle service; they have no more than 25 or 30 deep cycles in them before they die.

Deep cycle batteries are built with much thicker and heavier plates and with a higher antimony content. They are mechanically much stronger and electrically much more durable. It is easy to recognize a deep cycle battery because it has a lot more lead and weighs a lot more than an auto battery of the same size. Such batteries can last through many hundreds of deep discharges, depending on the kind of service they are in. The batteries supporting the new Sourdough Ridge cell site near McCarthy (3½ tons of them) are deep cycle L-16 batteries operated in float service. Their expected life is 20 years.

Self-Discharge

All lead-acid batteries slowly discharge themselves. The internal chemical reaction proceeds even when no current is flowing out of a battery. At room temperature, the loss is around 6% of capacity each week. The chemical reaction, and this discharge, slows down as temperature falls. Below freezing, there is hardly any self-discharge. At warmer temperatures it is necessary to recharge the battery occasionally or maintain it with a constant small current called a trickle charge.

Batteries intended for standby service, say in back-up

telephone service, are sometimes made of lead alloyed with calcium instead of antimony. This reduces the self-discharge rate by a factor of about five at any given temperature and hence greatly reduces the recharging requirement.

Low Temperatures and Freezing

A fully charged lead-acid battery (sulfuric acid specific gravity close to 1.300) will not freeze until the temperature falls below -70 degrees Celsius (-103 degrees Fahrenheit). If your battery is up, don't worry about the weather. Starting your car at low temperatures is another matter. Low temperatures mean low battery capacity (the chemical reaction slows down). At 32 degrees Fahrenheit a battery has already lost almost 20% of its capacity. At 40 below Fahrenheit it has lost 60%. This is why the smart Alaskan car owner installs a battery heater along with an engine block heater for cold morning starts.

A fully discharged lead-acid battery will freeze at 17 degrees Fahrenheit. Now you do worry about the weather. Freezing will destroy a battery. Remember the self-discharge business and don't let a low battery and low temperatures sneak up on you at the same time. Top off charge on all your batteries in the fall.

Sulfation

When a battery sits around partially or fully discharged, some of the lead sulfate tends to recrystallize into a form that resists the reversion to sulfuric acid during charging. This is called sulfation. A badly sulfated battery quits working and the acid concentration in the electrolyte remains low even after charging, making it vulnerable to freezing. Sulfation is a common cause of battery death.

Battery Capacity

A battery's capacity, the amount of electrical energy it can store, is measured in ampere-hours (ah). The rated capacity is usually figured at a fairly low discharge rate, say 5 amperes. A 100 ah battery would be able to deliver this 5 amperes for 20 hours ($5 \times 20 = 100$). As the discharge rate goes up, the capacity goes down. At 20 amperes discharge rate, this same battery might last for 4 hours, not five. At 200 amperes it might last for 8 minutes, not 30 minutes. These numbers vary with the design of the battery. The symbol for ampere-hour capacity is C, which will be discussed below in regard to charging.

Some batteries are labeled as offering so many "cold cranking amps." This is the ability to deliver large amounts of current at a specified low temperature and is not the same as ampere-hour capacity. To get ampere-hours, divide cold cranking amps by 5.25

State of Charge

How can the state of battery charge be determined? The only reliable way is to measure the electrolyte specific gravity with a hydrometer. Full charge is 1.280-1.300, full discharge is about 1.150. This obviously is impossible in a maintenance-free or gel-cell battery because the electrolyte is inaccessible. An alternative is to measure the voltage at the battery terminals. This depends in a complicated way on battery temperature and rate of charge or discharge, the scope of which is beyond the present discussion.

Charging

Optimum charging rate is around C/20 to C/10. Thus a 100 ah battery should be charged

at a rate between 5 and 10 amps. If the battery is fully discharged, an initial "hot" rate higher than this can be used, but must be tapered off as the battery becomes charged. It must be tapered off even more as the battery approaches full charge. Overcharging at any state of charge, and especially near full charge, is bad. If severe it can permanently damage or destroy the battery. At any level, it causes rapid electrolysis, excessive venting of gases, and loss of water from the electrolyte. In maintenance-free or gel-cells, this alone can be terminal.

"Cooking" a battery with too powerful a charger leads to a lot of funerals.

Summary of Battery Care

1. Choose the kind of battery designed for the intended use. Do not use auto batteries for deep cycle service. Do not use batteries for very high current demands, such as engine starting, that are not designed for it.

2. Select a size of battery suitable to the power demands. Auto batteries are typically 60 to 90 ah. Marine/RV deep cycle batteries, usually 90 to 120 ah, are a hybrid with improved deep cycle capacity but still able to deliver heavy starter currents. Golf cart batteries, typically 220 to 260 ah at 6 volts (you need two of them in series to get 12 volts), give medium-grade deep cycle service at reasonable cost and are often used in solar power systems. Industrial-grade deep cycle batteries are the optimum for long life and for economy in the long run, although they have a higher initial cost.

3. KEEP YOUR BATTERIES AS FULLY CHARGED AS POSSIBLE. This is the single most important rule for long battery life. If a battery is deeply dis-

charged, recharge it immediately. Don't let it sit around discharged. All sorts of bad things can happen to discharged batteries, some of which are described above.

4. Don't overcharge batteries, either at too high a rate or for too long. A good charger or charge controller appropriate to the battery size is the best way to do it right.

5. Add distilled water (fil-

tered clean rainwater or snow-melt will do) periodically to keep the electrolyte level well above tops of the plates. Keep the terminals and cables free of corrosion. A good coating of Vaseline on all the exposed metal helps a lot.

Here is an object lesson in battery care. In 1985 I bought a used van which included the usual used battery. I immedi-

ately replaced this with a top grade new battery, but kept the old one since it still worked. I used it for years to start my generator. Today, in 1996, I am still using it for auto and generator starting and miscellaneous light 12 volt loads. All I have done to it over 11 years has been to keep it FULLY CHARGED at all times. It's not ready for a funeral yet.

Kennecott land deal at Park Service for review

BY RICK KENYON

The recent land appraisal of the nearly 3,000 acre tract of land at Kennecott is being reviewed by the National Park Service. That's the latest word from Brad Meiklejohn, Alaska representative for the Conservation Fund.

The fund is a Virginia-based non-profit group that has purchased historic sites, wildlife habitat and open space in more than 30 states, reselling or do-

nating the property to the federal, state or local government.

Wrangell-St. Elias Park Superintendent Jon Jarvis told WSEN in March of 1995 that there had not been a clear consensus within the park service concerning the acquisition up to that time. "Frankly, the agency is concerned about costs to the taxpayer — the cost of acquisition, the cost of management, liability, stabilization. So there's been a pretty heated internal debate going on over that," said Jarvis.

According to Jarvis, the fund was approached with the idea that the Melon Foundation, who works closely with the fund, would put up the money for the purchase. Later, however, the foundation decided that Kennecott did not meet its criteria for donation. The

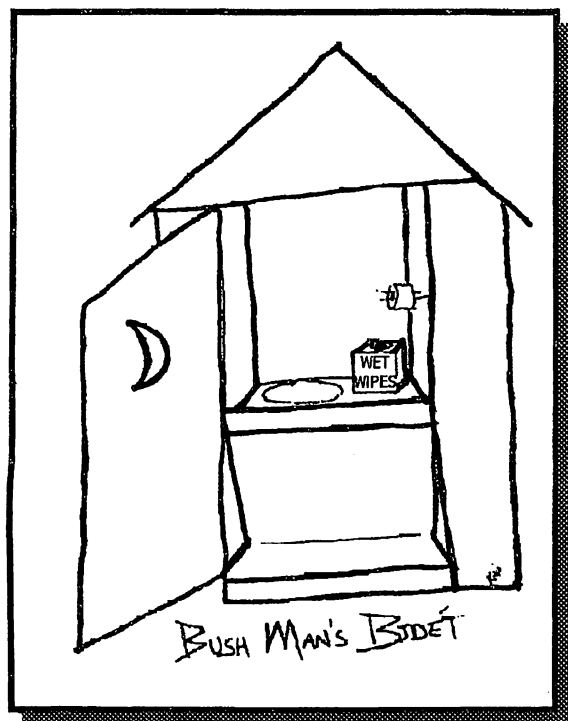
fund decided to go ahead with the project anyway, but to rely on the federal government — rather than the Melon Foundation — to pay for acquisition.

In June, the fund put up \$10,000 in earnest money for an 18 month option on the property, giving the government until November 1997 to come up with the balance of the purchase price.

In August, a preliminary appraisal of between \$4 million and \$4.5 million was completed and turned over to NPS for review.

The subsurface rights are still owned by the Kennecott Copper Corporation. Meiklejohn believes they will be willing to donate the rights in return for a tax write-off.

"I will be disappointed if the government does not appropriate the money, but not surprised," said Meiklejohn. He said it has at times been frustrating working on this project. "I come to McCarthy and people tell me they believe this is the worst of a bunch of bad options."



Church update

BY BONNIE KENYON

There is a song in our hymn book that reminds us to count our blessings, name them one by one. That particular phrase came to mind as I sat down at the computer keyboard to begin this issue's church page. WSEN is bimonthly and a lot can happen in two months time — so I must backtrack and literally recount the blessings since our last issue. The thought also occurred to me how honored I am to regularly write this column and share with our readers the "good news" of what is happening with the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church. Of all the items I may write, this is the dearest to my heart!

On September 6 we had the pleasure to welcome to our area Danny Green, youth group leader at the Valdez Assembly of God Church, along with some 13 young people who gave

of their precious time and talents (and plain old hardworking labor) to us all. Out came the paint brushes, paint and varnish, and by Sunday morning service on the 8th the inside and outside of the church building had received a fresh coat of paint. The young people shared their faith in song and testimonies and Danny gave a message which

encouraged us all to look to Jesus as our first love. He must increase in our lives; we must decrease. We cannot thank Danny and his youth group enough!

In September we received word from the Internal Revenue Service that McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church, Inc. now qualifies for the tax-exempt status as an organization described in section 501 (c) (3). The church is grateful to attorneys Margaret Stock and Neil O'Donnell of the law offices of Atkinson, Conway & Gagnon, Inc. of Anchorage who assisted



photo courtesy Julie Hardy

Happy congregation. Near center is Al Nikolaus, who worked at the Bonanza Mine in the late 30's. Al is 84 years young.

us in our paperwork and were wonderful examples of faith and patience!

Because we do not have a heating stove in the church yet, we are now meeting back at the Kenyon's cabin until spring. Services are still at 11:00 a.m. and everyone is welcome. If you desire any information, you may call (907) 554-4454.

Another blessing of this summer, was meeting and fellow shipping with the guests who took time out of their vacation to the McCarthy-Kennicott area to attend Sunday service at our little church on the island. Kathy Millar and her sister were two such people. I would like to end this issue's church page with a portion of Kathy's recent letter:

Dear Church,

What a blessing it was to come across your church during our Alaskan adventure. You blessed my sister and I both with your warm & friendly congrega-

tion, joyous music & message & simple life. McCarthy was the highlight of our trip & it will never be forgotten.

I'd like to share my tithe with your church when it's possible — in some little way I'd love to be a part of the great work

that you are doing...

Thank you again & I wish you all of God's finest. I'm sure I'll be back.

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Hebrews 11:6

September 4, 1996

Phone: 269-8775

**-NOTICE-
OF FINAL DETERMINATION
OF STATE LAND AVAILABLE FOR
EXPLORATION LICENSING**

The Department of Natural Resources gives formal notice under AS 38.05.945(a)(7.) that the commissioner has made a final written determination that, unless otherwise withdrawn, all state-owned or state-selected land, including Alaska Mental Health Trust land managed on behalf of the trust by the department, shall be open for oil and gas exploration licensing under AS 38.05.132 - 134 and 38.05.801 except:

- 1) All land on the North Slope north of the Umiat Baseline and all land in the vicinity of Cook Inlet within the area bounded by the north boundary of Township 17 North, Seward Meridian; the Seward Meridian; the south boundary of Township 7 South, Seward Meridian; and the west boundary of Range 19 West, Seward Meridian, are excluded by statute, in accordance with AS 38.05.131.
- 2) All submerged land within the area designated as the Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve is excluded in accordance with the policy set forth in AS 38.05.140(f).
- 3) The Alaska Peninsula/Aleutian Island chain south of 55 degrees 30 minutes north latitude and all land east of 138 degrees west longitude are excluded as a result of negligible oil and gas potential.

In addition to submitting a proposal for an exploration license to the Division of Oil and Gas, proposals affecting Alaska Mental Health Trust Lands are to be submitted to the Trust Land Office of the Department of Natural Resources. Exploration licensing statutes and regulations applicable to other state land will be applicable to Alaska Mental Health Trust Land if consistent with trust principles imposed upon the state by the Alaska Mental Health Enabling Act.

Kenneth A. Boyd
Director
Division of Oil and Gas

Stephen C. Planchon
Executive Director
Trust Land Office



Service Oil & Gas

RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL

- Heating oil
- Gasoline and Diesel Fuel
- AvGas and Jet Fuel
- Chevron Lube Oils and Greases
- Fuel Tanks and Accessories

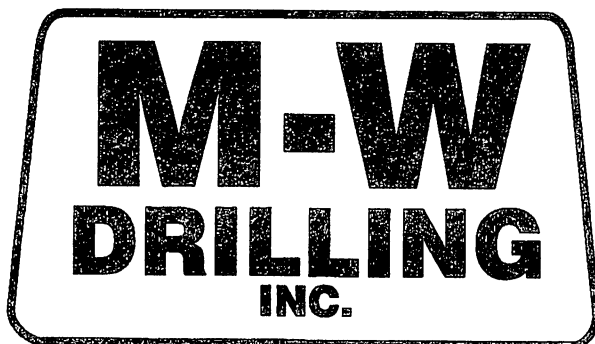
Service sometimes
means going more than
the extra mile.
"We appreciate all our
BUSH CUSTOMERS"

For the First Name In Service, Call
SERVICE OIL & GAS



Chevron

PHONE: 822-3375
Mile 188.5 Glenn Highway
Box 276
Glennallen, AK 99588



P.O. Box 110-378
Anchorage
Alaska 99511

- Ground water specialists
- Complete well systems
- Well pump service & repair

Wayne E. Westberg

(907) 345-4000 FAX 345-3287

Alaska Natural History Association Releases New Book

Mountain Wilderness

**An Illustrated History of Wrangell-St. Elias
National Park and Preserve, Alaska**

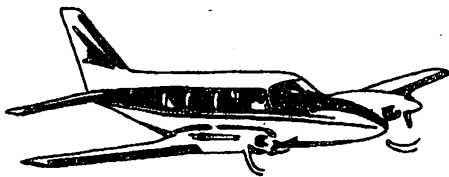
by William R. Hunt



Available at local bookstores and at Alaska Natural History Association outlets in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Copper Center, Slana, Chitina and Valdez. To order by mail send a check for \$19.95 plus \$3 shipping and handling to Alaska Natural History Association, Wrangell-St. Elias Branch, P.O. Box 439, Copper Center, AK 99573.

Scheduled Air Service from Anchorage to McCarthy with stopover in Gulkana!

**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)
This service is year around.**



RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEPARTURES, ARRIVALS, CONNECTIONS.
Ellis Air will not be responsible for damages resulting from the failure of flights to depart or arrive at times stated in this timetable, nor for errors herein, nor for failure to make connections to other airlines or of this company. Schedules are subject to change without notice. Schedules shown are based on expected flying times. Because weather and other factors may affect operating conditions, departures and arrivals cannot be guaranteed.

Rates:

Gulkana/McCarthy	\$56*
McCarthy/Gulkana	\$56*
Gulkana/May Creek	\$60
May Creek/Gulkana	\$60
Anchorage/Gulkana	\$105*
Gulkana/Anchorage	\$105*

* Ask about special round-trip rates
Baggage allowance 40 lbs.
(charge for excess baggage)
Rates do not include tax @ 10%

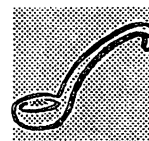
Ellis Air Taxi, Inc.

**Phone 822-3368
800-478-3368**

Gulkana Airfield Box 106, Glennallen, AK 99588



Cooking with Carly



BY CARLY KRITCHEN

One of my favorite things to do on a snowy winter day is to bake up a batch of cookies. I can't personally think of anything better than a chocolate chip cookie warm from the oven with a cup of hot chocolate (and maybe a couple of marshmallows!). Since I'm pretty sure that you all already have a favorite chocolate chip cookie recipe, I'm going to give you some other chocolate cookie and candy recipes that are great for gifts and special occasions. They're also all good with a cup of hot chocolate!

These fudge balls are time consuming to make, but they're absolutely delicious and make a great gift at Christmas time. Make sure to grease your hands well before trying to roll them!

Caramel Fudge Balls

- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 3/4 cup sour cream
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Melt butter in a large heavy saucepan. Add sugars, salt and sour cream. Stir over low heat until the sugars dissolve. Cover and boil slowly for 5 minutes. Uncover and cook rapidly without stirring to soft ball stage (236 degrees). Be careful not to scorch! Remove from heat and cool to lukewarm. Add vanilla and beat until mixture is creamy and begins to stiffen. Stir in 1/2 cup of chopped walnuts. Drop by rounded teaspoonfuls onto waxed paper. Let firm up slightly and quickly shape into a ball.

Roll in remaining 1/2 cup of chopped walnuts. Let stand until completely firm. Makes about 24 balls.

If you like chocolate, you'll like these cookies! I got this recipe off a Hershey's Cocoa can about 15 years ago, and it's the one I make for friends who really love chocolate.

Chewy Chocolate Cookies

- 1 1/4 cup softened butter
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 2 cups flour
- 3/4 Hershey's cocoa
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 cup chopped nuts (optional)

Cream butter and sugar in a large bowl. Add eggs and vanilla; blend well. Combine flour, cocoa, baking soda and salt; blend into creamed mixture. Add nuts, if desired. Drop by teaspoonful onto ungreased cookie sheet and bake at 350 degrees for about 8 or 9 minutes. The cookies should still be soft when they come out of the oven, be sure to not over bake them. Let them cool briefly and remove from sheet. Makes about 4 dozen.

This recipe for homemade candy was really popular a few years ago, and I still like to make it when I don't have much time. It's fast and really good.

Almond Roka

- 1 pound butter
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup chopped almonds
- 1 small package chocolate

chips

Combine butter and sugar in an iron skillet over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally about 20 minutes or until a brownish color. Check frequently to make sure the mixture is not scorching. Add almonds and cook 5 more minutes. Pour onto ungreased cookie sheet. Sprinkle chocolate chips over hot mixture, give them a minute to melt, then spread over the top of the mixture. Chill for a couple of hours and break into pieces.

My husband loves chocolate and peanut butter equally, and this easy recipe is one of his favorites.

Peanut Butter Chocolate Bars

- 1 cup chunky peanut butter
- 6 Tbsp. butter
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup flour
- 2 cups chocolate chips

Beat peanut butter, butter, brown sugar, granulated sugar and vanilla in a large bowl until creamy. Beat in eggs; then add flour. Stir in 3/4 cup of the chocolate chips. Spread into a greased 13" x 9" baking dish and bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes or until edges are slightly browned. Remove from oven and immediately sprinkle remaining chocolate chips on the hot cookie mixture. Let stand for 5 minutes, then spread evenly over the top of the cookie mix. Cool in pan, then cut into bars. Makes about 2 1/2 dozen.

A look at the weather



BY GEORGE CEBULA

August 1996 was cool and cloudy with above average precipitation. There were only 3 days when the high temperature reached 70 or above and 7 days when it only made it into the 50's. The high temperature for the month was 74 on the 16th (73 on Aug. 11, '95 and 76 on Aug. 9, '94).

There was an early freeze on the 8th as the temperature fell to 28 and killed some of the plants in the gardens. The low temperature for the month was 28 on the 8th and 28th (28 on Aug. 22, '95 and 31 on Aug. 24, '94). The average monthly temperature at McCarthy was 50.5 compared to 51.8 in Aug. '95 and 56.2 in Aug. '94. *Silver Lake had a high temperature of 74 on the 16th (73 on Aug. 22, '95 and 86 on Aug. 6, '94). The low temperature at Silver Lake was 33 on the 28th (32 on Aug. 22, '95 and 33 on Aug. 30, '94). The Silver Lake average temperature was 51.9 (52.9 in Aug. '95 and 58.7 in Aug. '94).*

The August precipitation at McCarthy was above the average with 2.30 inches recorded (1.43 in Aug. '95 and 1.51 in Aug. '94). There were 23 days with a trace or more of rainfall recorded. *The precipitation at Silver Lake was lighter with only 1.57 inches recorded (2.61 in Aug. '95 and 1.14 in Aug. '94). There were 15 days at Silver Lake with a trace or more recorded.*

September 1996 was an average month in both temperature and precipitation. The high temperature at McCarthy was 69 on the 4th (70 on Sept. 20, '95 and 65 on Sept. 5, '94). The low

temperature was 8 on the 30th (25 on Sept. 28, '95 and 9 on Sept. 30, '94). There was 6 days with the low below 20 and only 6 days with the low 32 or above. The average monthly temperature at McCarthy was 40.2 (48.0 in Sept. '95 and 42.3 in Sept. '94). This was still 6 degrees warmer than the record 34.3 of September 1992. *The high at Silver Lake was 70 on the 5th and 6th (71 on Sept. 21, '95 and 65 on Sept. 11, '94). The Silver Lake low was 15 on the 30th (30 on Sept. 28, '95 and 15 on Sept. 30, '94). The average temperature at Silver Lake was 42.0 (49.5 in Sept. '95 and 43.7 in Sept. '94).*

The first snow of the season fell on the 22nd with only a trace recorded at McCarthy and 0.2 inches at Silver Lake. It melted rapidly and there was no snow left by evening. The total precipitation at McCarthy was 1.26 inches, a far cry from the 4.32 inches of Sept. '95 and 2.54 inches of Sept. '94. There were only 8 days

with any measurable precipitation. *Silver Lake had the same total precipitation as McCarthy of 1.26 inches (2.44 in Sept. '95 and 2.55 in Sept. '94), with only 7 days of recorded precipitation.*

As we approach the middle of October, McCarthy has a snow cover of 3 inches with only a trace on the ground here at Silver Lake. As of the 11th of October, the lake is still free of ice and I expect the ducks and swans to be on their way south very soon. It looks like winter is just about here.

"Is today's crisis really earthshaking? Will you still think so next week? Next month? Next year? — A.I. Velandar

Wrangell Mountain Air

"From the world to the wilderness"

- Glacier Flightseeing
- Fly-in Wilderness Hiking
- Daily Service from Chitina
- Direct Service from
Anchorage
Glennallen
Valdez
- Van Service to Kennicott

If you're planning a trip to the Wrangell-St. Elias
Park & Preserve, give us a call.

1-800-478-1160

**Wrangell Mountain Air
McCarthy, PO Box MXY
Glennallen, AK 99588**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

8-23-96

Salcha, AK

Dear Rick & Bonnie,

We do enjoy WSEN and think it's great that you've spearheaded publishing it — and done so well with it. It's very informative and educational, as well. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Art & Ann Ward

8-28-96

Fremont, MI

Dear Bonnie,

Thanks for the reminder! Only in McCarthy, AK would a service continue, even though renewal funds had not yet been received!

I didn't get to AK this summer — first miss after three consecutive summer visits. Hopefully will be back in a year or two!

Many thanks again.

Sincerely,

Chuck Witteveen

Oct. 1, 1996

Hunlock Creek, PA

Hi,

Enclosed is my check for another year's subscription.

We really look forward to each issue and catching up with all your news.

I do have a confession to make though — my first subscription was a desperate attempt to keep our vacation memories alive.

God willing, we'll visit AK again soon and your area will definitely be in our travel plans.

Sincerely,

Connie Lanning

September 9, 1996

Eagle River, AK

Dear Editor:

During the last weekend of August 96, my husband and I visited McCarthy and had an extremely interesting and pleasurable time. Our plan is to continue to visit the area when more time allows us to stay longer.

Enclosed is my check for my subscription and back issues of your newsletter.

Thank you and I look forward to conversing the Internet with you and receiving my back issues.

Respectfully,

Laura M. Haws

Editor's note: Occasionally we hear from a few of the super adventurous folks who decide to stretch out their visit to the McCarthy-Kennicott area by taking a seasonal job with a local business. Rick and I were pleasantly surprised to find a letter from Dave Hollis in our mail box and thought you all might enjoy his comments. Dave had the pleasure of working for Wrangell Mountain Bus and was one of their most popular van drivers.

Sept. 26, 1996

Fairbanks, AK

Bonnie/Rick...

How are you? It was nice to meet you this summer. I had a great time at summer camp '96!

Thanks! For the excellent job on the Wrangell St. Elias News...I enjoy it very much. I plan on looking through the back issues this winter.

I figure I drove at least 350 shuttles from McCarthy to Kennicott this summer. Double

that coming back down to McCarthy means I had about 700 chances to hit a chicken crossing the road at the Miller's Place... I didn't hit any, plus I never got caught (yelled at: Slow Down!) breaking the 5 MPH speed limit.

Have a nice autumn!

Dave Hollis

Editor's note: Another piece of mail graced our mail box recently. It was a video entitled "Cool Places to Fly in Alaska" and was sent to us by Glenn McGovern, president, of Alchemy Video Productions. Whether you are a pilot or not, we thought you would enjoy Glenn's letter which contains information on how you can obtain their most recent production.

August 19, 1996

New Orleans, LA

Dear Rick & Bonnie,

Enclosed herewith you will please find a copy of 'Cool Places to Fly in Alaska,' Vol. 1, which features McCarthy, which we shot last year. We also finished selling through the Alaskan Airmen's Association, "Flying to Alaska," which is a 2 ½ hour video showing pilots how to fly to Alaska via the Alaska Highway and the Trench routes.

"Cool Places to Fly in Alaska, Vol. 1" features airports that a single engine pilot can safely go into in Alaska. The video also shows things to do when a pilot arrives in Alaska, including accommodations, bed and breakfast, airport FBO's, useful information about the peculiarities of each airport.

Each tape also has extensive footage on what to do after a pilot arrives at each airport, for

example, in Skagway, it not only shows the town, but shows the helicopter flight into the mountains and valleys adjacent to Skagway with some breath-taking views.

The section on McCarthy features the famous McCarthy hand-tram, the only mode of access to McCarthy besides the airplane and also glacier hiking.

The tape is available in VHS,

NTSC color and is approximately 52 minutes in length. The tape retails for \$24.95 plus shipping and is available through Alchemy Video Productions Corp., PO Box 29569, New Orleans, LA 70189-0569. Phone 1-800-721-3992. FAX: 504-241-3872.

Also, I am interested in purchasing a subscription to the Wrangell St. Elias News. Please

let me know the cost for said subscription.

I will try to make a special effort to list all of the businesses' addresses and telephone numbers in McCarthy to help the locals.

I remain,
Sincerely yours,
Glenn C. McGovern, President
Alchemy Video Productions

A note from the Publisher (continued from page 2)

Pres is survived by her husband, Newton Rowell, nephews BeVan Presley of Minnesota and Richard Presley of New Mexico and niece Lisa Presley of Michigan. She was predeceased by her brother David Presley of Connecticut. A memorial service was held at First Congregational Church in Washington and Connecticut on Saturday, September 14. Memorial

donations may be made to your community women's shelter or another charity of your choice.

Wrangell St. Elias News welcomes aboard the following new subscribers: Bea Cooper, FL; Beth Houghton, FL; John Monfils, AK; Alice Bayless, AK; Laura Haws, AK; Valdez Consortium Library, AK; Mark Hanley,

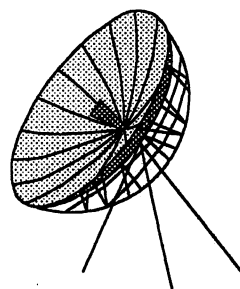
AK; Eugene Rueter, IL; Ken Shapiro, CO; Steve & Lana Edwards, AK; Lou Kifer, AK; Minot Maser, WA; Pat McEntee, AK; Karen Strahan, AK; Pat Lynn, AK; David Ashbaugh, WA;; Rob Kendall, AK; Jack Chamberlain, OH; Tom Golden, MN; Norman Bean, AK; Bruce Eckholm, WA; Bryan & Evelyn Saunders, WA.

Seasons Greetings from the staff at WSEN

The New

Caribou Hotel

*Icy roads? Snowing? Getting tired?
Stop at the Caribou Hotel?*

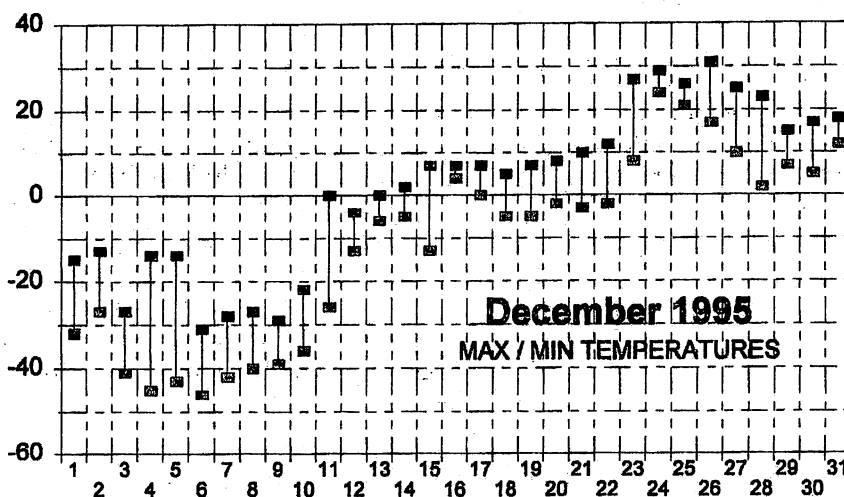
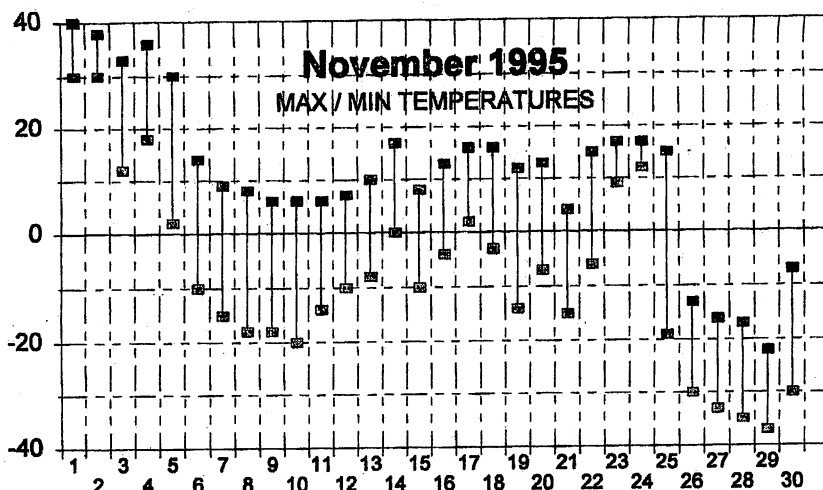


**Warm atmosphere — Hot Tubs — Satellite TV
Full Menu Restaurant**

Mile 187 Glenn Hwy **822-3302** Glennallen, AK

Weather - What can we expect?

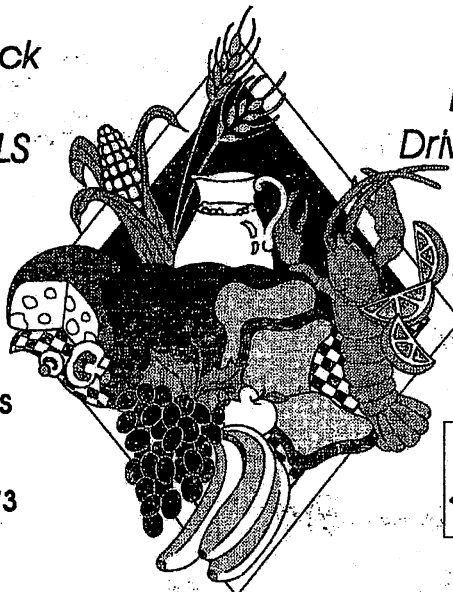
Wangell St. Elias News
McCarthy
PO Box MXY
Glennallen, AK 99588



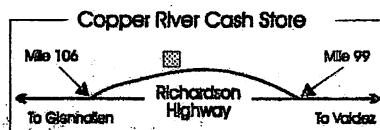
Copper River Cash Store

Stop by and Check
for the Weekly
IN-STORE SPECIALS

Everyday
LOW PRICED ITEMS:
Drive a little & SAVE \$\$\$\$



We handle BUSH ORDERS
with SPECIAL CARE!
PO Box E
Copper Center, AK 99573



Downtown Copper Center 822-3266
Store Hours 9 am to 7 pm, Monday - Saturday