
HARDWARE STORE HERALD

Volume 9

News from the Wrangell Mountains Center

Winter 2008/2009



Photo by Matty Holkeboer

2008 Alaska Wildland Studies students and faculty gather in front of the Old Hardware Store



Photo by Brian Herrick

A big thank you, but not a final farewell, to Jessica and Circe.

NORTHERN SUMMER— IN YOUR SERVICE, AN HONOR

By Jessica Speed

Mirroring the intensity of a brief northern summer, it was a busy yet accomplished season at the Wrangell Mountains Center (WMC). In August for example, we had only four program-free days. We offered three brand new courses that included an evening-long composting workshop with local Mark Vail and Jared Steyaert, a weekend yoga workshop led by Svia Rothstein of Laughing Lotus Studio in Anchorage, and a three day History of Kennecott and McCarthy Program coordinated by Lilly Goodman. We also had the rare pleasure of hosting the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute of Fairbanks's natural history program, based out of the Kennicott Glacier Lodge.

Some particularly amazing people graced our halls this year, making our busy lives better and more inspired. Resident Artists Brian Herrick and Sandra Alcosser, Mt. Arts for Youth kids and the Alaska Wildlands Studies staff and students reminded us, with their glowing faces, why our work is important.

Creating a foundation of competency and camaraderie upon which adjunct instructors and program participants flourished, our all-star core staff, Hardware Store Manager Jared Steyaert and Operations Interns Vanessa Wilcox-Healey and Kirstin Miller, made our summer successes possible.

Continued on page 8

JESSICA SPEED LEAVES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POSITION

By Megan Richotte

After two years of leading the Wrangell Mountains Center (WMC) with her boundless energy, infectious smile, and creative ideas, Jessica has left the position in search of new opportunities. The Board of Directors would like to take the opportunity to offer a heartfelt thank you to Jessica. Her hard work and inclusive spirit have widened the WMC community circle. She brought new faces to the work of the Center, inspired those who have worked on behalf of the Center for years (even decades), and helped to create a feeling of community at the Hardware Store in McCarthy. She has left the WMC a better place and a more effective organization than she found it. Thank you, Jessica! ☞



**WELCOME TO JEREMY PATAKY,
OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

By Megan Richotte

We are thrilled to welcome our new Executive Director, Jeremy Pataky, who comes to the Wrangell Mountains Center (WMC) with a wide variety of experience working with non-profits as well as teaching from the elementary through university levels. With a master of fine arts degree in Creative Writing from the University of Montana, two summers of guiding experience in the Wrangell Mountains, and a love for our community in McCarthy, Jeremy is ready to lead the Center forward. He looks forward to continuing Jessica's efforts to make the WMC a welcoming place in McCarthy that offers something to locals, visitors, and students alike. Jeremy will also be working on updating the WMC's web presence. He'll also be working hard on fundraising efforts in McCarthy and beyond to support the life and work of the WMC. Like Jessica, Jeremy is a person with a lot of energy, who likes to work on new and creative ideas. Please stop by the Hardware Store in McCarthy next summer or drop him an email to welcome him to his new position as our Executive Director and let him know how you are, or would like to be, involved in the WMC. Welcome, Jeremy! ☞

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HARDWARE STORE FACILITIES REPORT

By Jared Steyaert

In so many ways, we couldn't have asked for a better year for the facilities of WMC. Our gardens flourished, the compost just kept growing and growing, general improvements were made through the Rasmuson Grant.

Even despite the rainy (and snowy) summer, our gardens produced near-record yields. Once again, Mark Vail provided us with his magic starts for the garden and was there to help plant and teach us all the ways. No matter how much I learn every year about gardening in McCarthy, there is always something to be learned from both Mark and our wonderful neighbor, Meg Hunt.

The other exciting garden news of the summer was told by the stink that never stopped coming from the compost piles. This year we started collecting the compost from the McCarthy Mercantile, McCarthy Lodge, and the Roadside Potato. We were able to cook enough food scrap to have three heaping piles waiting to be used next year. In addition, we saw the full completed compost product from start to finish in a one month timeline. That is *great* for Alaskan gardens! Thanks a ton to Peggy Smith, Ian Giori, and Rebecca Bard for providing us with the food scraps needed to create our black gold.



2008 Artist-in-residence Brian Herrick's Hardware Store drawing

Special thanks to Mark Vail and Kirstin Miller (and all the volunteers who helped plant our garden in the spring) who rallied through the cold and wet weather to do the final and much-needed planting when vehicle trouble left us short-handed. ☞

By Jared Steyaert

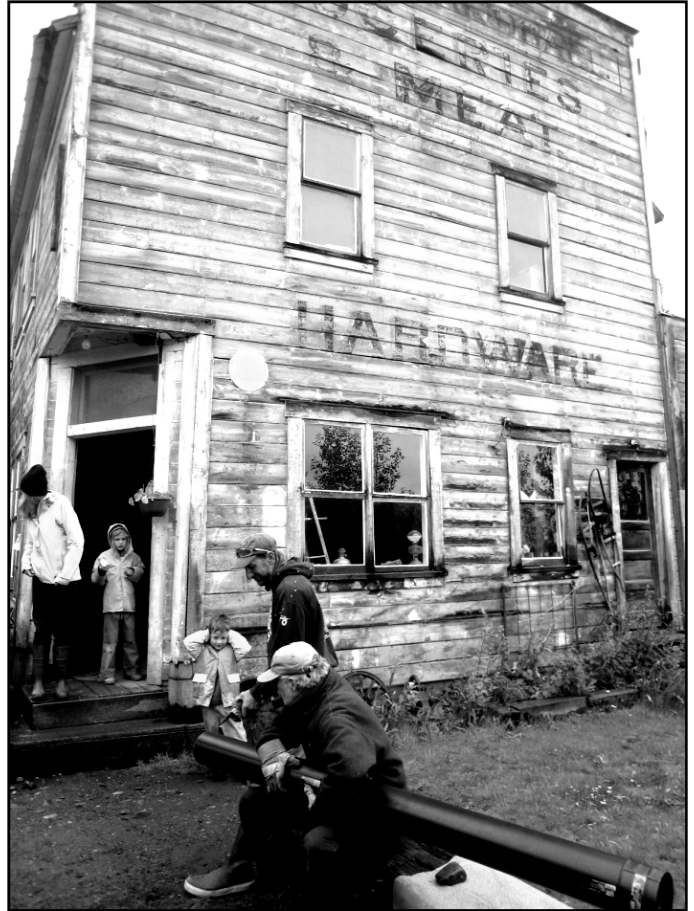
The Old Hardware store saw some new and exciting improvements this year. We successfully enacted the \$21,000 grant from the Rasmuson Foundation to improve the Fire, Health, and Safety status of the center. If you are planning on visiting WMC in the near future and you haven't been there for a while, you will notice a few new improvements.

There is a new propane refrigerator to keep food fresh. Gone are the days of bending awkwardly down into the hold in the floor to get a few eggs. There is also a new water filtration system that works on demand. Even though we pump from Clear Creek (a clean drinking water source), we can rest assured that our water will flow into our glass even cleaner. Thanks to Howard Mozen, we were also able to install a wood stove in the main room.

In addition, there is a new fire escape staircase on the back side of the building. Thanks a ton to Kurt Smith for helping me design the new stairs. And last but not least is the brand new power system we have. With the grant, we were able to purchase 16 new batteries, a large and efficient inverter, two new solar panels, a plethora of wires, and the necessary parts and pieces to wire in proper lighting into the building as well as a few new outlets.

Even though all of these modern improvements are taking place, we have tried hard to keep the philosophy of voluntary simplicity a central focus and not lose sight of our efforts to keep unnecessary consumption to a low.

A special thanks to Leith Kramer, Greg Runyan, Chris Smith, Monty, Jenny Rosenbaum, Christine Johnson, Matthew Emht, Ben Shaine, Howard Mozen, Nancy Cook, Kurt Smith, and everyone else who enabled this grant to be a success. ☞



Many Hands Make Light Work...

The WMC cannot achieve its most basic dreams without the volunteerism of so many people. As we publicly recognize the work of others, please know we couldn't be more grateful for the contributions of all.

If you would like to volunteer for the WMC, get in touch!

Top (photo by Brian Herrick): Ben Shaine and Howard Mozen & family maneuver the new stove pipe into the Hardware Store. Above (photo by Jared Steyaert): New Rasmuson-funded fire escape stairs built by Jared and company.

CLEANING UP OUR ACT...

By Jessica Speed

Like most McCarthy residents, the WMC has owned some older vehicles with, shall we say... much character? This year we have improved our vehicle footprint by selling or properly disposing of inoperable and unsuitable vehicles. Special thanks to Chris Epton of the Glacier View Campground, Keith Rowland, Stephens Harper and Arlene Rosencrantz with the Copper Valley Development Association's Abandoned Vehicle Removal Project. The WMC is also indebted to Art Davidson and Best Storage in Anchorage for their years of free automobile storage. Their friendly and professional service exceeded any call of duty, including vehicle start-ups in the spring and readying them for our use (not a simple task for old and cold vehicles). ☞



PHOTO BY BRIAN HERRICK

The expanded composting program at the WMC also inspired an evening workshop hosted by Jared Steyaert and Mark Vail designed to help community members improve their garden soils and production through composting

NEW ED LACHAPPELLE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AND GRANT PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

By Jeremy Pataky

The Wrangell Mountains Center is pleased to announce the creation of a new scholarship fund for WMC program participants and researchers in the park. The Ed LaChapelle Memorial Snow Science and Glaciology Scholarship and Grant Fund was initiated by a generous donation from John Bosshard III, who recognized the need to formally honor the memory of Ed LaChapelle. Ed was a pioneer in avalanche research, an expert glaciologist, a beloved resident of McCarthy, and a vital supporter of the WMC.

Students and researchers whose work relates to glaciology or snow science are eligible to apply for support through this new fund. If you would like to support WMC programming and contribute to the ongoing life of this fund, or apply for funding, please contact the WMC at info@wrangells.org. ☞



Photo by Dennis Hartmann, 2006

Ed LaChapelle holding one of the stainless steel rings placed in the Blue Glacier in 1963.

Want to join the team?
The WMC will be hiring
Interns and Hardware Store Staff
for Summer 2009.
Hiring begins in February.

By Jeremy Pataky

Since I began visiting McCarthy several years ago, and especially over the last two summer seasons of guiding, I've become increasingly aware of the importance of the Wrangell Mountains Center in many people's lives. It is, of course, the combination of the Wrangells landscape and the people attracted there that captivates and enriches those of us lucky enough to spend time in Wrangell-St. Elias.

One person who is very much a part of the place, and who has made the place a part of herself, is Jessica Speed. When I learned that Jessica had decided to move on from her role at the helm, I knew it signaled a loss for the Center, in many ways. The prospect of becoming involved myself, however, felt both exciting and appropriate. Already I can say that I'm very happy to be a part of the organization. I am settling in as the new E.D. with a great deal of optimism and eagerness about our future. And as I start getting oriented into the particular institutional landscape of the WMC itself, the same blend of satisfactions that had me hooked on the Wrangells in the first place—landscape and community—seem to be defining my relationship with the Center. I share with the people I've been working with—members of the board and advisory board, program directors, community members and volunteers—a love of that place. That love of place comes with a sense of community for those living out there. I'm very pleased to be part of the WMC community, and I'm eager to share and celebrate the mountains, valleys, glaciers, creeks, rivers, and old boom era buildings that have changed many of our lives in beautiful and irrevocable ways.

My embarkation has been timed well. Many people have put in a lot of hard work at the Center that will pave the way for many successful years. I am also “inheriting” a strong foundation on which to build in the future, and I know that all of the successes to come owe a debt to those who came before (many of whom are still involved in various capacities). Jessica's love of the WMC has manifested in many ways during this transition period, and I look forward to sharing common ground and experiences with her — thankfully, she's in no way “done” with the Center, and she's been gracious enough to make herself

available for advice or assistance. The dedication and longevity of staff like Jared, who gave three hard-working years, has left obvious legacies that will improve the experience of everyone spending any time at the Old Hardware Store. And I have been humbled and inspired by the commitment and generosity of many members of our dynamic board who have already demonstrated their talents, insights, and passion for what is truly a group effort. I am lucky to be involved and to feel well-supported, and I imagine that things can only improve from what has already been an auspicious beginning.

In a word, I feel grateful — grateful to live in McCarthy, grateful to spend time in the Wrangells, grateful that a lot of people who came there much sooner than I did have done the hard work to create something as vital as the Wrangell Mountains Center. I am grateful, too, that I have been offered an opportunity to add my abilities and vision to that communal and ongoing effort.

I hope all who are interested or invested in or inspired by the Wrangell Mountains Center will get in touch in the coming months — I look forward to learning more about our expanding community and our corner of Alaska, and to working toward making something already solid and strong even stronger.



PHOTO BY JO FRALEY

Above: Caribou on the run near Chitistone Pass, mid-July. Caribou and grizzly sightings were common in that area this season. Below: A lone caribou walks through a fresh dusting of July snow near the entrance to Hole-in-the-Wall.



PHOTO BY JEREMY PATAKY

MOUNTAIN ARTS FOR YOUTH

By Suzanne Drinen

Wrangell Mountains Center's Mountain Arts for Youth, with the generosity of O'Hara Flemming and the National Park Service, was privileged to host amazing and generous artists for the 2008 summer programs. Despite wind, rain, and snow, everyone came with warm smiles and exuberant spirits.

In Late June, Mark Vail and I prepared a natural fabric dye session for participants of all ages. Locals and visitors gathered in the yard outside of the Tony Zak house, dipping fabrics into jars and buckets full of natural dye stuffs cooked down to concentrated liquids. We used cranberries, dandelions, rhubarb leaves, yarrow plants, chives, spinach, and other plants to make liquid dyes. Red, green, yellow, and brown splashed and spiraled on the square pieces of fabric. The group met again the next day to draw scenes and symbols on the square blocks before stringing them on a hemp line to make a prayer flag for the Wrangell Mountains Center Garden.

Local and visiting children and parents gathered in July to brighten the cloudy skies. Native Alaskan and current San Francisco elementary school art teacher, Brian Herrick, shared his talents and energy. Participants used crayons to draw mountains, trees, leaf tracings, and local scenes. Then they painted watercolors over the crayon drawings, which resisted the paint, creating instant magic and fun artworks.

With a crackling fire warming the Tony Zak house, youth of all ages carved, inked, and pressed rubber and foam blocks onto rice paper. The well known and loved Kris Gregory came all the way from New York to share her talents with Mountain Arts for Youthers. With the gentle guidance and expertise of Kris and the locally famous Mark Vail, participants successfully made multiple prints of their original creations. ❧

GLACIERS, GRIZZLIES, AND GRUBSTAKES

By Faith Nava

Exploring the McCarthy & Kennicott area can be wet but still a lot of fun. For four days in August our Osher Lifelong Learning group thoroughly enjoyed the program offered by the Wrangell Mountains Center, despite the rain.

Though we didn't get to see the mountain tops, we had beautiful views from our rooms at the Kennicott Glacier Lodge of the glacier and the incredible moraine that fills the valley floor. The dining room cuisine at the lodge was first class, the old mining memorabilia décor very interesting, and the sociable staff made us feel right at home.

The Wrangell Mountains Center's talented leader, Jessica Speed, presented a well-planned program, and under her enthusiastic leadership we learned all about Wrangell-St. Elias. Her extensive knowledge and easy manner made each day enjoyable and filled with interesting activities and entertainment.

Ben Shaine taught us about the geological history of the area. Ben's mother-in-law, Doris, led a lively poetry workshop, and Nancy Cook took us through the old copper mining ghost town buildings and taught a writing workshop. Memorable Mark

Vail gave a presentation on subsistence living and led an interesting walking tour through the unique town of McCarthy.

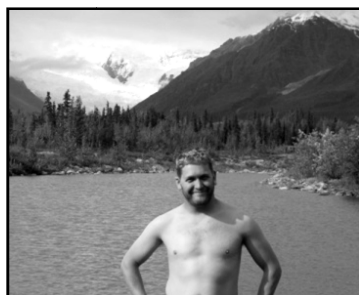
I think the highlight of the trip for me and many others was strapping on a pair of crampons and walking on the Kennicott glacier, experiencing the frozen gleaming world of ice underfoot and the awesome power of nature. The trip made me want to explore the area more, and I hope to get back there soon. ❧



Eva (left), her mother, Kris Gregory, and brother Emmett, along with Avery and Owen Mozen, let out their inner artists in the Old Hardware Store. (photo by Brian Herrick)

By Brian Herrick
2008 Artist in Residence

Most artists work in a vacuum. You hole up in your studio and work long hours, hoping to turn out something worthwhile. And when you do emerge from your studio, you are starved for human interaction. It's not uncommon for me to "talk the ears off" of the checker at the local grocery store while the line stacks up behind me. The balance of work and human interaction made the Wrangell Mountains Center the perfect place for me this past summer.



My days were every artist's dream. After the morning lighting of Bertha for the day's chores, I would take a cup of coffee up to my room and get to work on some landscapes while my ipod pumped out some music. Back in the kitchen at lunch, I would find Jared making the biggest tuna melts I had ever seen, after a morning of building the back stairs. Jessica would be coming into the kitchen at this point with an armful of paperwork and an empty coffee mug, ready for a refill. Kirsten would be pulling out some baked items for the next re-supply to the students in the backcountry. Vanessa would come in with a colander of greens from the garden, or a basket of clean linen from the clothes lines. After a little chit chat and some Pilot Bread and cheese, I would walk down to McCarthy Creek with some watercolors and my sketchbook, or ride a bike up to Kennecott to draw those wildly crafted red company buildings. Upon returning to the kitchen in the evening (everyone always ends up in the kitchen) I would find the crew getting ready to make dinner after a day's chores.

For the most part, this is how my days went. The result was a stack of paintings, drawings, sketches and memories. I can't think of a more perfect place to spend three weeks being creative. Artists need their creative "cups" to be refilled. Thanks to the friendly and supportive folks at the Hardware Store, this artist left with his creative reservoir overflowing. How lucky I am to have spent time in this unique and wonderful place. ☞

By Howard Mozen

"Welcome, welcome welcome... come in. Sit down, have some homemade pizza, fresh salad. Check out this new art project a student just finished." That was the type of welcome many coming into the Hardware Store and meeting Jared got during his three years at the Hardware Store. There was always something good cooking, or music playing, or a building project going on; Jared was often at the center of these activities. For the past three years that Jared has been working long summers at the Hardware Store, the place has been the soulful



*Left: Brian enjoys the swimming hole.
Right: Jared working in the August snow on the new stairs*

center of a warm, welcoming and productive community. He was a master of logistics, and had the gear and food and general supplies always flowing in the right amounts. Along with all that, Jared was the centerpiece of the 2008 Rasmuson grant, which enabled the biggest upgrade in heating and electrical appliances in that building since the 1930s. I am reluctant to consider this a farewell to that amazing Jared energy. I am hoping that he'll be back and working again with the center. So this is a thank you; I hope for more of that jaunty, jubilant, mountain jock Jared helping us keep the soul of the H-Store fat and happy. ☞

NORTHERN SUMMER *Continued from Page 1*

Jared quickly taught Vanessa and Kirstin to run the hardware store. They baked, wielded chainsaws, handled big and finicky vehicles, hauled compost, prepared backcountry drop offs, and even (my favorite) did carpentry while reading romance novels to each other. All of the staff, from the above mentioned, to the adjuncts, to the artist in residence, were phenomenal.

The WMC served, and received the honor of connecting in some fun and different ways with our local and regional community this summer. Our Alaska Wildlands Studies Program did a volunteer project for the Tony Zack Community center, and we developed a composting service. We enjoyed, through the completion of the Rasmuson Foundation Facilities Grant, being able to provide more jobs in the community while utilizing more local services. Through the motivation and generosity of a longtime community member, the WMC began the creation of an Ed LaChappelle Memorial Scholarship fund. We did our first joint fundraiser with the Volunteer Fire Department with a reinstating of the historic 4th of July baseball game that occurred between the Kennecott Bears and McCarthy Tiger Cats. Through the John Denver Tribute we were able to share a dream with some inspired local residents who organized it into a WMC fundraiser of their own volition. Just when we thought we'd reached the pinnacle of community generosity in 2007, you surprised us once again with astounding support at the 2008 Tall Tales Contest and fundraiser which raised \$3,600 in one night.



Photo By Brian Herrick

2008 Hardware Store Staff: Kirsten, Vanessa, Jessica, & Jared

It is my hope that together we can continue to nurture the WMC and as the community asset that it is. I will look forward to being a part of this effort in a new role, and not as the Executive Director. Thank you, everyone—staff, board, program participants, volunteers and community members—for all you have given and created these past two years. It has been both a pleasure and an honor serving the Wrangell Mountains region, and all those people who love and care for this place. ☞

*Mike Loso's
APU students
helping to
install the new
community
medical cache
at the WMC.
(photo by
Jared Steyaert)*



Volunteer Spotlight

The Wrangell Mountains Center is lucky to have a great deal of supportive friends in the communities of McCarthy and Kennecott, and beyond. We could fill an entire newsletter singing all of your praises – for now, we'll start with these two....

If you don't know this already, **Christine Johnson** is a workhorse! Since arriving for the spring work party in May, she has sanded, painted, designed and built grand rock staircases to the compost, ran errands for WMC in Anchorage, served as a Tall Tales judge, jumped in as a snicker doodle dessert queen and provided key support in the kitchen for new staff. Christine has been a fantastic friend and support to all the staff this summer.

Speaking of support, Board Member **Lila Vogt** has long been operating above and beyond the call of duty for the WMC. She's been providing book keeping, tax, winter mail collection and bill paying services for many years. Lila has been, and still is, the WMC mom. When something comes up, Lila is there to help.

Thank you!

ALASKA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY PROGRAM

By Mike Loso

For the fourth year running, Alaska Pacific University professor (and president of the WMC board) Michael Loso brought APU undergraduates to the Old Hardware Store for almost two weeks of fieldwork as part of APU's Natural History of Alaska course. The theme of this year's course, as it turned out, was black bears: everywhere. The students saw bears in McCarthy, on Porphyry Mountain, in Bonanza Bowl, on the edge of the glacier, and on almost every trail near Kennecott. During a three day backpacking trip in Bonanza Bowl, the students were in sight of foraging black bears for almost literally 24 hours of every day. The opportunity to see so much bear behavior, and fortunately without any adverse or threatening bear-human encounters, was a real treat which exemplifies APU's philosophy of active learning. In this regard, the developing partnership between APU and WMC is an obvious and happy one. Another example of this is the growing trend of the course's alumni to return to McCarthy in various capacities. This summer, APU students who first came to McCarthy as part of this course returned as climbing guides (for Kennicott Wilderness Guides), as interns (for the Wrangell Mountains Center), and as independent climbers/backpackers. Their enthusiasm is spreading throughout the university by word of mouth, and enrollment in Natural History of Alaska is likely to grow even more next year. ☞



Photo by APU student Dustin Merrigan

APU geology professor Michael Loso discusses rock glacier formation with APU student Peter Moore during a backcountry trip in the Bonanza Creek drainage.

EDUCATORS STUDY AREA'S PAST

by Lilly Goodman-Allwright

Can you think of a year, besides 2008, when Alaska had a major influence on our national and global scene? The story of how the Kennecott Mine was tied to the U.S.'s role in WWI is just one of many amazing tales participants learned during this year's accredited workshop for educators. During an inspiring two days, nine teachers studied McCarthy and Kennecott's flavorful history from the turn of the century to the 1960s. NPS interpreter Dianne Milliard, pioneer mountain climber Dora Keene (E.D. Jessica Speed in character), and long-time local sourdough Jim Edwards weaved one fascinating tale after another for participants.

This year's content workshop was part of our continuing effort to provide a diverse array of courses for educators seeking to expand knowledge and gain teaching resources about the local area. We look forward to meeting more educators at the action-packed "FIRE in Alaska!" and "Changing Landscapes" courses at the Center in 2009. ☞

2009 Wrangell Mountains Center Wish List

Support the WMC's hard work by sponsoring or donating an item on the following list:

Air compressor	Sawzall
Chopsaw	Electric Bear Fence
Framing Gun	Nail Gun
Large-capacity van	1/2 ton truck
Chainsaw	Portable Table Saw
Digital projector	Hand Planer
Cordless Drills	2 Satellite phones
Functional bicycles	Bike tools
Brother Laser printer	Twin sheets/pillows
Small USB-powered ext. hard drive	

Contributions to the WMC are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

Please contact info@wrangells.org or 907-554-4464 to help.

HARD TO SWALLOW

By Anna Forsman

If you have visited the Wrangell Mountains Center during summer, you are bound to have seen multitudes of swallows flying overhead, busily tending nestboxes placed around McCarthy for them. There is a reason these swallows are in such a hurry. They have traveled thousands of miles to take advantage of the insect abundance that the relatively short Alaskan summer offers. Another benefit of nesting in Alaska may be a decreased risk of attracting pesky parasites and pathogens to the nest, which may be more abundant at lower latitudes. This hypothesis is one that graduate student, Anna Forsman from Cornell University, is investigating.


During June 2008, Anna visited the WMC to collect microbial samples from the nests of tree swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*) and violet-green swallows (*Tachycineta thalassina*) at Long Lake. These samples are now being analyzed for microbial diversity and will be compared to samples collected at other swallow breeding sites throughout North America. Future study of the Wrangell Mountain swallows will involve investigating immune compounds that females allocate to their eggs, which protect developing embryos and young nestlings. For more information on New World swallows, visit <http://golondrinas.cornell.edu> 



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNA FORSMAN

Researcher Anna Forsman holds a violet-green swallow.

SKIING BY MOONLIGHT

By Sandra Alcosser

Gray cloud like a sweater pulled over the heart of the moon.
High-napped purple sky. Why are so many friends
Leaving or getting left behind?

Mao's anti-sparrow campaign: to kill and eat the birds
That were eating the grain. Winter sun drifts away
Leaving thin taffy light. Venus Mercury Jupiter—

Three pearls in the morning sky. By thinking herself
Invisible, the fox walks over hoarfrost not breaking
Morning's delicate lace. Leaving no trace. Lace is beautiful

Because of absence, the place that lets the light through,
Gives it strength. Mother Teresa in the hospital
Watches the annular eclipse. Once every twenty thousand years—

A portion of the sun visible as a ring surrounding the dark moon.
The doctor tells her—protect yourself, hold an x-ray of your lungs
Up to the window, let only the waning light pass through.


Fast trail down the mountain -10 degrees. Starving vole
Tracks ornate Victorian filigree. What is the bearing weight
Of an ice crystal? Why will a person freezing to death

Inch into the false warmth of the moon? Eros is the wound.
White will go to shadblow. White will go to orchid bloom.
Except by nature—as a woman, I will be ungovernable.




PHOTO BY JEREMY PATAKY

Mark Vail relaxes in the Great Room by the new wood stove after delivering his talk for the Summer Arts and Lectures Series in the Hardware Store.

2008 marked the 26th year of the celebrated and accredited seven week intensive Alaska Wildlands Studies Program. Hosted by the Wrangell Mountains Center, AWS students earn upper division college credit amid the peaks, glaciers, meadows and forests of the Wrangells wilderness. Dividing their time between the backcountry and the WMC in McCarthy, students explore geological, ecological, and cultural processes that shape the Wrangell Mountains. The interdisciplinary approach utilizes rigorous natural history observation, writing, science, and the arts. 

rapidly transient weather. We sat on moss that was far more comfortable than the chairs I use at school. Spirits were high, knowledge and information was at our feet.

This magnificent site at once held our attention and distracted us. We each took away far more than a test-prep from that moment. I believe that we were reminded that text books are filled with information regarding real things that can be heard, seen, touched, and experienced outside of the classroom. This study session married the real world with academics in a special way that I am grateful for. 

AUDITORIUM PASS

By Ryan Edwards
 Written 7-18-08, 2100h
 at an unnamed pass in the Wrangells

Tonight I witnessed and participated in a beautiful display of academics. Our group of 11 students, plus instructors Megan, Leif, Dave, and Jess, held a study session after supper from about 1930h to 2045h. We were on the north end of a pass south of the Kuskalana Glacier and north of Mill Creek Valley, perched on the west side of the river.

We held an open question session that was very helpful; the students helped each other out and Megan chimed in when necessary. We discussed past readings and clarified any hiccups in our knowledge. To finish the session, we held a multiple round game of charades. The study time was important and should not be understated, but I wish to clarify what made the experience as a whole worth writing about.

The pass where we studied sloped gently and made us feel like we were in an open auditorium. It was the most beautiful academic site I have ever encountered. Clouds swept through the valley so close to the ground that the mountains around us and our tents beside us disappeared. Blue skies shined above us while snow capped peaks proudly revealed themselves when the clouds passed. Every five minutes brought a new scene due to the



*Above: Alaska Wildlands Studies Students make their way along Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve's Kuskulana Glacier.
 Below: Bill Morris teaches students about alpine plant ecology as they look East from Bonanza Ridge toward Mounts Bona and Churchill.*



WRANGELL MOUNTAINS WRITING WORKSHOP!

by Nancy Cook, Workshop Director

In the Druid calendar of Celtic traditionalism, August is the Moon of Claiming, and in the Kennicott mining valley, August is the moon when writers stake their claims. With nationally acclaimed poet Sandra Alcosser presenting her theme *How to Love this World*, the 2008 Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop was a true Bonanza! This year's workshop gathered fifteen full-time writers, including many beloved alumni. Thanks to Kari, Patt, Maria, Doris, Paul, Sherry, Jim, Sunny, Carol, Deb and Cindy for making this workshop a real annual tradition. And thanks to our new writers, Michelle, Grace, Marie and Nancy P, for spicing up this delicious writer's stew. And special thanks to board member, friend and mentor Lila Vogt who, along with our indefatigable intern Kirsten Miller, lovingly welcomed my Baby Izi into the workshop world.

Over the years, I've learned that hosting a committed teacher is equally important to hosting a talented writer, and Sandra Alcosser was a truly generous teacher: approachable, inspired, and deeply inspiring. As former Poet Laureate of Montana, Sandra was no stranger to our rustic mountain setting; still, we felt fortunate to host her first-ever journey to Alaska, walking her atop her first valley glacier and even finding some wolverine prints in the periglacial silts. In return, Sandra gave an amazing crash course in the craft of contemporary poetry. And writers of all genres received heartfelt guidance through innumerable hours of one-on-one attention. This was a special opportunity to spend quality time with a truly precious American poet—and bonus!— a precious poet-husband. True to the Hardware spirit, Philip Maechling, photographer and Historic Preservation Planner for Missoula, Montana, shifted right into volunteer gear and kept himself useful the whole week through. Thank you, Philip! And really, everyone who attended this year's workshop worked really hard. That is our success: talented writers producing new, important, courageous work. "The writer is an excitatory complex," says Sandra. And a group of writers is a gathering of consciousness allowing itself to creatively evolve: working and reworking words, speaking with intention, listening

with attention, staking a loving claim upon this world. Kudos, and, by all means, Come on back! We've confirmed essayist Scott Russell Sanders as visiting writer for August 12-18, 2009. Check out his bibliography at www.scottrussellsanders.com. And thanks again for a wonderful week! ✂



2008 Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop participants gather at the Old Hardware Store.

Learning the Wings

By Grace Danborn

Along the low trails, wild geraniums opened
into tiny blue bowls and the first run of kings
silvered the water, wanting home.
I wanted to offer myself like that.
If someone said, Return to the place that shaped you,
Where would I go? And also I had not loved.
I dreamed of a table, two spoons, a cracked bowl.
Piled by the door, four brown shoes—
the worn toe of a boot propped
beneath a clog's heel as if listening
for an evening, cheek pressed to chest,
the message already known. For seven seasons
I kept expecting wrens to fly out of my hair
and give me guidance, and still I am learning
the wings will not come. Listen. Always this world
goes on without you. Always petaled faces
lean into light. Always the slim fish learn
their purpose, slipping through water to stone.



Grace Danborn wrote this poem during the Writing Workshop before heading out on a backpacking trip in the Wrangells. (photo by Jeremy Pataky)

NAMING THE WRANGELLS

By Winsie Carroll

In the Wrangell Mountains, most place names derive from the four main communities that have been present here over the previous two centuries – native peoples, Russians, prospectors, and US explorers.

Mount Wrangell: Named for Admiral Ferdinand Petrovich von Wrangell, the governor of Russian America (based in Sitka) from 1830 to 1835. Named by any of a number of Russian explorers in Alaska during the 1830s, '40s and '50s; by the time US Lieutenant Henry T. Allen saw the mountain in 1885, its name was established on Russian maps. At least six places in Alaska bear the name Wrangell, in honor of the widely respected governor.

Skolai Pass: “Skolai” is a more accurate representation of what Ahtna people in Taral (now Chitina) called their leader, known among non-native explorers as Chief Nikolai. Named by Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka and Dr. C. Willard Hayes during an expedition to the Yukon via the White River in 1891.

Dan Creek: Named in 1901 by two prospectors, Clarence Warner and Dan Kain, who staked a claim after finding gold. Other prospectors called the area Dan Creek in reference to Kain, and the USGS formally adopted the name in 1911.

Mount Blackburn: Named after the Honorable Joseph C. S. Blackburn, a Democratic Senator from Kentucky and chairman of the Congressional committee that funded the 1885 Allen expedition to explore the Copper River. Lieutenant Henry T. Allen himself was from Kentucky; it is unclear whether the two men knew each other personally.

Kennicott Glacier: Named by USGS explorer Oscar Rohn during the summer of 1899. Named for Robert Kennicott, who died in 1865 while directing the Western Union Telegraph Company’s efforts to connect to Russia via the Bering Sea. When high-grade copper ore was discovered near the glacier in 1900, developers adopted the name Kennecott in reference to the glacier, but with an unintentional misspelling. Today, the spelling Kennicott refers to natural features and Kennecott refers to the historic copper company; the townsite can be arguably spelled either way.

The custom of deriving place names from human names reveals a tension between the human and non-human – much of what makes these places unique and valuable to us are non-human qualities, yet the names attached to places rarely reflect those unique features. Instead, names frequently serve to honor a person, often one without a personal tie to the place, a custom that emphasizes a place’s human history over its natural history. All this begs the question: how would our experiences change if all place names were descriptive or if there were no names at all?

Community Word Jam

by Nancy Cook

On August 14, the warm and cozy Great Hall was transformed to host the Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop’s increasingly popular Community Word Jam. This open mic event attracted a full house of diverse listeners and presenters. Local youths Avery and Owen Mozen shared a song, alongside our beloved elder/poet Doris Thurston. Sandra Alcosser shared a startling poem about an intimate encounter with a goshawk; McCarthy Area Council President Jeremy Keller wowed the audience with an amazing pair of performance poems, and visitors to the Park were duly impressed by the array of colorful literary talent from workshop participants, locals, and everyone who felt the urge to share the word. This was a truly wonderful community event.



Look forward to next year’s Word Jam and more WMC-hosted open mics next season. ☞

Poet Sandra Alcosser graced the 11th annual Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop.



Yoga on ice; Svira Rothstein of Laughing Lotus Yoga of Anchorage taught a three-day yoga retreat this July through the Wrangell Mountains Center.

Thank You, Generous Donors, Members, and Volunteers

Our membership is an integral part of our financial and organizational stability. Revenue you provide supports the community by enabling our efforts throughout the winter and our busy summer season. For those members who haven't yet renewed their membership this year, and for those interested in becoming a member for the first time, please mail in your tax-deductible donation using the form.

GRANTS

Alaska State Council on the Arts \$1,500
National Park Service \$3,500

2008 SUPPORTING MEMBERS

Mount Blackburn \$100-\$499

Nancy Cook, Chris & Sam Gregory, Leo & Diane Jacobs, Milt Mozen, Keira Armstrong, Ruth and Cliff McHenry-Eames, Ralph and Marjorie Koldinger, Sally Gibert, Dick Mylius, and Sally Rubin.

Mount St. Elias \$500+

John Bosshard III, Ben Ciampa, Doug Clark, Fred and Ann Dure, Mary O'Hara Flemming, Barry Hecht, James and Ann Johnston, Ruth Schmidt, and Maria Shell.

Supporting Members

Steven and Jane Allenson, Carolyn Ames, Justin Auld, Bob and Suzanne Anderson, Peter Bartholomous, Timothy Bartholomous, Richard Barnes, Jenine Beecher, Annaliese Beery, Josh Birdsall, Melinda Bell, Will, Thea and Noah Bemben, Joe and Sue Bemben, Amanda Blake, Geoff Bleakley, Leslie Buchanan, Bill and Dolores Butler, Charles Carroll, Jeremy Cohen, Julian and Patricia Cohen, Devin Coogan, Judith Cook, Kevin Ewing, Katie and Rick Fournier, Susan Georgette, Sophie Gilbert, David Hollis, Gabriel Hoyt, Christine Johnson, Wendy Langseth and family, David Mitchell, Caroline Stasemicz, Barbara and John Rice, Megan and Richard Richotte, Jake Schlapfer, Jared Steyaert, Martin Dodge, Alan Goldfarb, Steven Goudreau, John Havelock, Hawley Resource Group, Brian Herrick, Sherilyn Kochanski, Peg and Jules Tileston, Sid Kacir, Allegra Willison, Joe and Jo Sullivan, Mary Louise Symon, Suzie Hanlan, Paul Boos & Janelle Eklund, John Bosshard III, Judy Cook, Julie Erikson, Barry Hecht, Daryl Kaufman, Jane Koepke, Eileen Kiera and Jack Duffy, Marvin, Meg Hunt, Keith Lim, Leigh Lubin, Stephen and Linda Malone, Robin and Daniel Magid, Clark Maser, Richard and Helen McCammon, Ruth McHenry, M Mense, Melissa and Kenny Miller, Howard Mozen, Jim Nichols, Shawn Olson, Mia Oxley, Doug Pope, Earl Sanders, the Schafers, Ruth Schmidt, Karen and Howard Schwartz, Ben Shaine and Marci Thurston, Laura Sharpless, Marilyn Sigman, Vicki Snitzler, Lisa Stelzner, Susha, Dave Syren, Maxwell Taylor, Margaret Tileston, JT Thomas, Derek Teare, Lila Vogt, Steve Thompson & Keira Armstrong, Total Trec Alaska, Maureen Huggard, Genevieve Clark, Tamara Byrnes, Amy Rauth, John and Barbara Rice, Ruth Schmidt, and Geoffrey Bleakley, Paul Winkel and Sherry Eckrich, Joey Williams, Malcolm Vance, Valerie Vanbrocklin and Karl Johnstone, Robert Wesson, Robert Smith, Jim Stratton, and Sherry and Charles Yates.

In-Kind and Material Donations

Jim Kloss of Whole Wheat Radio, McCarthy Lodge, Terry Blosser, Dave Williams, Kennicott McCarthy Fire Department, McCarthy Mercantile, David Hollis, Denise Lopez, Cynthia & Andy Shidner and Currant Ridge Cabins, US National Park Service, Kennicott Glacier Lodge, Fireweed Mt. Arts and Crafts, Art Davidson and Best Storage, National Parks Conservation Association, Great Land Trust, Copper Oar, Kennicott Wilderness Guides, Diane Malik, Paul Hanis, Rebecca Boniek, Jake Schlapfer, Chris Olson, Mehmet Celiktaş, Kathy Hindeman, Mike Murphy, Jessica Speed, McCarthy Air, Brian Herrick, Roadside Potato, Maria Shell, Mark Vail, Rick & Bonnie Kenyon, St. Elias Alpine Guides, Dianne Milliard, Wrangell Mountain Air, Jeremy & Ally Keller, Marci Thurston, Meg Hunt, Spirit Mountain Artworks, Winslow Carroll, Parks Place, Liz Roth, Bill McKinney, Lynn Plomaritis, Neil Darrish, Bill Morris, Connie Rizzo, Molly Mylius, Rick Jurick, John Watson & Donna Weagel, Moose's Tooth, Grace Danborn, Randy Services, Curtis Nelson, Peggy Smith, Ian Giori, Jo Fraley, and Rebecca Bard.

Volunteers

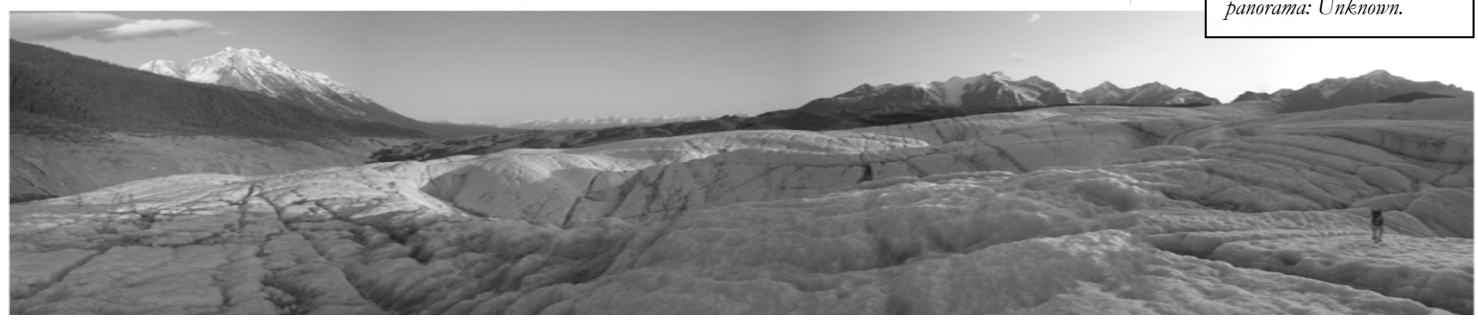
Curtis Nelson, Tony D'Aoust, Calvin at Nine Star Education and Employment Services, Meg O'Mullane, Kurt Smith, Keith Rowland, Neil Darrish, Barbara Morford, Christine Johnson, Meg Hunt, Mike Monroe, Jim Nicholls, Brian Quigley, Elizabeth Schafer, Chris Farman, Jim Baker, Ken Hutchinson, Imogen Daly, Mike Monroe, Barbara Morford, NPS interpretation staff, and student work crew, Ed Pfeifer, Brian Herrick, Tamara Harper, Grace Danborn, Marci Thurston-Shaine, Madra and David Carbino, Dianne Milliard, Nancy Cook, Mark Vail, Beth Cleary, Jeremy Pataky, Nabil Kashyap, Kennicott-McCarthy Volunteer Fire Department, Kevin Del Duca, Minot Maser, Julie Elliot, Julie Soforenko, Tina Wang, Cody Grout, Colby Anton, Daniel Cassman, Mark Wilson, Alaska Battery Supply, Cynthia Shidner, Jennifer Jolliffe, Howard Mozen, Jenny Rosenbaum, Greg Runyan, Sonny Asbury, Kevin Ewing, Philip Maechling, Leith Kramer, Colin Warren, Matthew Emht, Emily Bass, Karen Loso, Walt Tague, Jeremy Cohen, Kristen Richardson, Todd Boagan, Winsie Carroll, and Faith Nava.

And Finally...

Thanks to all the folks who made 2008 great. *Staff:* Kirstin, Jessica Speed, Jared Steyaert, Vanessa Wilcox-Healey, Tim Bartholomous, Meg Gahl, Dave Mitchell, Leif Mjos, Ben Shaine, Lilly Goodman-Allwright, Nancy Cook, Mike Loso, Suzanne Drinen. *Guest Instructors:* Sandra Alcosser, Doris Thurston, Dianne Milliard, Marci Thurston, Paul Thwardock, Mark Vail, Svja Rothstien, Brian Uher-Koch. *Scholars:* Barry Hecht, Bill Morris, Julie Elliot. *Our guest speakers and artists for the Summer Arts and Lecture Series:* Barbara Morford, Terry Blosser, David Hollis and performers, Paul Hanis, Greg Runyan, Tim Bartholomous, Brian Herrick, Julie Elliot, Meg Gahl, Nancy Cook, Sandra Alcosser, Tall Talers, Mark Vail; artist in residence Brian Herrick; the Board of Directors and Advisory Board.



Photo credits top row L to R: Tim Bartholomaus, Kira Coopersmith, Lila Vogt (x2). Middle row L to R: Jared Steyaert, unknown, Tim Bartholomaus. Bottom panorama: Unknown.



YES! I want to facilitate understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of the lands and communities of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve TODAY.

Name _____ Email _____ Phone _____

Summer Address _____

Winter Address _____

Membership Support Level

- Subsistence \$15 Basic \$25 McCarthy Creek: \$150 Kennicott River: \$250 Fireweed Mountain \$500
- Donoho Peak \$1,000 Wrangell Mountain \$5,000 Mount Blackburn \$10,000
- Other \$ _____

- My employer, _____, has a matching gift program.
- I am interested in making an endowment gift; please contact me.

I can help with the following volunteer tasks. Please contact me:

- Newsletter Special Events Board of Directors Carpentry/work party in McCarthy
- Other _____

Please mail this form with check payable to:
Wrangell Mountains Center

Attn: Membership Committee, 2104 Lincoln Ave, Anchorage, AK 99517

We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

THE WRANGELL MOUNTAINS CENTER WILL NEVER SHARE YOUR INFORMATION WITH ANYONE.

2009 Summer Programs

Our tentative program list for summer 2009. For updates and details, please visit our website www.wrangells.org or contact us at info@wrangells.org or 554-4464. And watch for new programming not yet listed here!

Mountain Arts for Youth

Youths of all ages will explore a variety of cultural and bush arts. Day sessions throughout summer.

Summer Arts & Lectures Series

June-September

Learn about the world and celebrate life in the Wrangells through a series of special arts and science events in McCarthy and the Kennecott Recreation Hall. Sponsored by the National Park Service.

Wrangell Mountain Walks

Interpretive natural history programs throughout the summer. Free for WMC members (\$10 for others).

FIRE in Alaska!

1 optional ED 580 credit

June 5 – 7

An action-packed workshop introduces innovative ways to teach about all aspects of fire, including behavior, ecology, physics, management, and how to make our homes safe. Folks who live within the wildland/urban interface are invited to join in the burning fun. Co-sponsored by the Alaska Division of Forestry.

Changing Landscapes

1 optional ED 580 credit

June 7–9

Glaciers, landslides, rivers, volcanoes, and succession! Two days of intensive and interactive field-based learning about these exciting and dynamic processes.

Sustainable Design Studio

TBA

University architecture students will study and apply their skills toward off-the-grid green design and building practices.

John Denver Tribute fundraiser

June 19

Locals and visitors will remember John Denver through songs and stories and learn about his connection to the Wrangells and Kennecott/McCarthy. Special Guest of Honor Tony Oney.

Alaska Wildlands Studies Program

18 quarter credits/12 semester credits

June 22–Aug 9

This seven-week intensive, backcountry-based program studies the geological, ecological, and cultural history of the Wrangells, while also examining contemporary land management issues.

Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop

2 optional credits

Aug 13–19

Explore your creativity, writing craft, and the Kennicott Valley with master essayist and instructor Scott Russell Sanders, author of *Hunting For Hope*, *The Country of Language*, *A Private History of Awe*, and many others.

Tall Tales Storytelling Contest & Auction

Late Aug TBA

Storytelling fun and fundraiser for WMC. Co-sponsored by McCarthy Lodge. Raffle, live, and silent auctions. Come on out!

WMC Open House

Early Sept TBA

Alumni, friends and community members are invited to a gathering to learn about the latest programs and projects at the Old Hardware Store.



WRANGELL MOUNTAINS CENTER
PO BOX MXY, MCCARTHY #20
GLENNALLEN, AK 99588

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED