

Colville Update

Arctic Ploverland News

Spring, 2003

Greetings From the Jim Helmericks Family

Introduction

Wow! Another year has passed. We always enjoy all the news, pictures and updates we have received from so many of you during the past year. Friends and family are one of God's many blessings, and even though we live at the top of the world, we enjoy staying in contact by whatever means possible.

Family News

Life at Colville Village continues about the same as last year with Jim and Teena keeping the "homestead" running smoothly, although maintenance and repairs have begun to take precedence over any new projects. Things like the need for replacing an electric generator, a boat engine, a snowmachine, broken doorknobs, an old wood stove, etc. keep popping up.

All of our immediate family were "home on the ranch" at various times during this past year. Derek made several trips home, including one to hunt muskox for the family larder, one to do some kayaking on the Colville, and another to hunt caribou with his brothers. Both Isaac and Aaron were home for various visits, usually involving hunting of some sort, and bringing friends home to show off their childhood homesite.

Us "old fogies" always took advantage of any strong arms around to make sure the indoor water tanks were filled, fuel hauled and pumped into the generator's fuel tank, or any other strenuous chores needing done. Jay and Amy visited the Colville the first week of August, bringing Amy's parents along too. This was Amy's and her parent's first visit to the Colville during summer months. Winter and summer seasons on the Colville are like two completely different worlds, so we enjoyed showing off a significant reason for our love of the Arctic. Isaac, Aletha, Aaron and friend Karen, and Derek were also home for a stay in early August, so we had quite a house full.

One day in July, while Jim was gone flying, Teena was quite startled when she walked into her kitchen to find a young man warming himself by the woodstove. Derek had sneaked into the house to surprise his mom. He had driven all the way up the Haul Road from Fairbanks with his kayak strapped on top his truck, driven to the end of the road system in the Kuparuk oil field, and then paddled and pulled his kayak for hours to get home across the bay and sandbars. He got quite a kick out of surprising his mom.

Highlights

The most significant event in our lives this year was the addition of another member to the family.



Teena, Amy, Jay, & Great-grandma Bonnie holding Natasha Joy

Jay and Amy blessed us with a granddaughter when Natasha Joy arrived into the eager hands of her daddy at 5:17 P.M. on January 11, 2003, weighing 7 lbs. 14 oz., and stretching out to 21 ½ inches. She is a joy to us all.



Natasha Joy
4 days old

Travel

Travel out of the state was sparse this past year. Teena and Isaac made a weekend trip to Calgary in November to see Aletha Bennett off on a missionary trip and then Teena topped it off with a one day jaunt over to Spokane to see her mom and sisters. Aaron had a fun vacation in Michigan in March. Jay did make a second trip to Antarctica in November to service the array of scientific equipment he helps care for down there. He was in charge of the project this year and was gone over a month.

licenses. One day he hopes to fly for Alaska Airlines plus give his dad a hand with the family planes.

Jim has devoted a lot of time this winter working on museum



King Eiders at Colville

additions. He has added many new displays including ones of artifacts, prehistoric bones, and shells. He also keeps up his bird research as he bands and keeps records of our local birds each summer. We had a terrific return on our King Eiders this past summer and are looking forward to the coming summer's gang. For those of you who have followed our Eider duck "rear & release" program, you will recall that we hand-raised some baby eiders a number of years ago and then released them into the wild. Now it is a delight when many of these birds and their growing numbers of off-spring return to our lake every summer.

generally in favor of industrial development and all the benefits it brings, but we are also concerned that strong environmental safeguards are established to protect our local land and minimize the impact. Teena also continues her participation in oil spill response training, including trips for practice spill scenarios. No one wants a spill, but we need to be prepared just in case.

Good Bye For Now

Extra Tidbits

An interesting visitor here last June was a BBC reporter recording a program on our "Arctic lifestyle", which was aired on British radio stations.

Isaac reached a milestone in his pilot's training and received his private pilot's license in February. He is looking forward to continuing flying and his training toward his instrument and commercial pilot's



Natasha Joy April, 2003

Love,

Jim and Teena
Jay, Amy & Natasha
Derek, Isaac, Aaron

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Helmericks Family

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Natasha held by Grandma Teena
April 7, 2003

Teena has spent a great deal of time this past year participating in studies of oil and gas development vs. environmental protection issues - studying the issues, attending meetings, and submitting written comments to the various agencies who make the plans on how to best balance the use of our land here on the North Slope. Local people are