

Colville Update

Arctic Ploverland News

Spring, 2004

Greetings From the Jim Helmericks Family

Introduction

Spring of another year is here and finding time to write a newsletter is hard. How in the world do we manage to keep so busy! I know computers have changed our lives considerably, both for the good and bad. Those of you who spend lots of time sitting in front of a computer screen know what I mean. I often resent that time, however it has surely made some things easier, like creating this newsletter or staying in close touch with family and friends. Email spam and viruses are part of the "down-side". But they have become an undeniable part of life nowadays.

Family News

We've had an eventful year, spanning from spring 2003 to spring 2004. Fortunately Teena continues to maintain a family journal of daily events, or remembering even the highlights



Teena & Jim 2003

would be difficult day to day, let alone by month or year. When not hosting guests or family members, Jim and Teena continue to live at home alone on the "homestead". Just daily chores continue to keep us physically fit, (or should we say physically exhausted.) We had a number of birding groups during the summer as usual, and special guests in the fall also. Jake & Christy Ketscher and their 1 year old son, Paul, stayed with us for 10 days in October. It was fun to have a little tike in the house again. Christy enjoyed learning how to carry Paul on her back Eskimo style for their daily walks. Jake was a big help to Jim with the fall commercial fishing. We were blessed with another baby at Colville in late October when Jay and Amy brought 10-month old Natasha for her first visit to the Colville. That time of year means a snowmachine ride over the frozen prairie and river to Grandmother's house.

Jim maintains his daily bird and other wildlife records. His survey flying continues and he is often consulted about any number of Arctic topics. Teena continues her involvement in Oil Spill Response training and other activities pertaining to the oil and gas industry. It is our family's desire to find a good balance between environmental protections and industrial development.

More family news and pictures are posted on the family website. See end of newsletter.

Highlights

The biggest events of the year were two family weddings. Derek married Elizabeth Tallman on December 31st. They had a small but fun celebration on New Year's Eve at a resort outside of Anchorage. Fireworks were



Beth & Derek

appropriate to mark Beth's initiation into the Helmericks family, as she quickly won the hearts of all the family by just being her wonderful self. Beth has an engineering degree, as does Derek, and they presently live in Anchorage and work for two different engineering firms. Derek and Beth look forward to spending some time on the Colville this coming summer, Beth's first time.

Then Isaac married Crystal Blish on February 21st at a lovely ceremony held at the Anchorage Museum of History & Art, bringing a third wonderful daughter into our



Crystal & Isaac

family. Isaac and Crystal live in Anchorage, as Isaac continues his university studies in Aviation technology and professional piloting. Isaac still works full-time for Alaska Airlines as a ramp service agent and Crystal also works at the airport for UPS in their Flight Operations office.

Another highlight of the year is Aaron's graduation with honors from the University of Alaska Fairbanks on May 9th. He now boasts a BS in Computer Sciences, and looks forward to putting his skills to good use as soon as he returns from an extended vacation in New Zealand.

Travel

Besides the usual trips back and forth to Anchorage or Fairbanks, family members made three major

trips this past year. Derek and Teena spent a week in Germany in August. They attended the wedding of Derek's close friend Sascha plus had a wonderful time traveling around Bavaria with our dear friends, the Weiskers and Haakes. That week's travel was during Europe's terrible heat-wave, so most days were in the 100's F. Then Isaac and Aaron made a fun 10-day trip to Cancun, Mexico, in May, 2003. Lastly, Derek and Beth went on a delayed honeymoon to Equador in March, which included an 8 day cruise to the Galapagos Islands, a place they both have always wanted to visit. Oops, 4 trips if Jay's annual trip to Antarctica is included. He headed up the team to service the array of atmospheric equipment down there again this November.

Extra Tidbits

Something new for Jim and Teena this past winter has been work for Teena that takes her to Deadhorse (Prudhoe Bay) for part of every month. Although she is able to complete much of her work via phone and computer at home, she spends some of every month at the Colville, Inc. facility in Deadhorse. Her travel to Fairbanks and Anchorage on business has also increased. All and all, this means more time alone at home for Jim, but he's being stoic about it, knowing that change is inevitable as we strive to maintain a livelihood that will sustain our life on the Colville.

We had no ice road nearby our home on which to easily drive our truck home to the island this winter. When Teena went to work

in Prudhoe Bay she drove her snowmachine 5 miles across the frozen river and tundra to the closest oil-drilling pad, transferred to her waiting truck, and then drove east over 60 miles on the gravel road system. This was reversed to return home. She made this trip even in -42 F. temperatures, thanks to super-warm fur clothing. When making such a trip with babies, such as last October, the baby rides on Mom's back under a warm fur parka, Eskimo style.

Bye until next time.

Love,

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

Helmericks Family

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Teena & Natasha on New Year's Eve 2003