

Colville Update

Arctic Ploverland News

Spring, 2009

Greetings From the Jim Helmericks Family

Introduction

This newsletter covers approximately the time period from Spring 2008 to Spring 2009. Some years ago our annual newsletter slipped from being a traditional Christmas letter to one more around Easter or spring-time. It has been a year with many blessings, which include challenges and changes all around us. We are thankful to God for his loving care and guidance in all we do.

Family Highlights

♦ **Jim and Teena** continue living full-time at the Colville Homesite. Teena was laid off her job as Logistics Coordinator for Pioneer Natural Resources (PNR) in October as the company transitioned from construction to production phase on their Oooguruk Project. (See last year's newsletter) Since then she has been enjoying time off from full-time work away from home. Jim remains busy with the never-ending maintenance of the homesite and other work that comes our way throughout the year. We continue to host guests or clients for birding tours or scientific projects. Jim hauled freight by snowmachine for PNR

again this past fall in October and November. Jim's love and talent for photography has prospered this year as he has developed an internet presence for displaying and marketing many of his wonderful pictures. He has also gotten into some nature blogs. Below are links to some of his sites if you are interested:

1. *Arctic Smoke Signals* at <http://kingeider.blogspot.com/>

2. *Golden Plover Photography* at: <http://speikiei.zenfolio.com/>

3. *Speikiei's Arctic Weather Blog* <http://www.wunderground.com/blog/speikiei/show.html>

♦ **Derek and Beth** started a new adventure this past winter by buying some land in northern Washington state on which to spend a few of Alaska's coldest months in a bit warmer climate. It's called "snow-birding." by those who like to find a bit of relief from winter's harshest weather. This beautiful little "get-away" has several ponds, lots of greenery, and of course winter birds. Life at their Fairbanks home continues with many "irons in the fire" and busy work schedules. Activities include Derek's many bird interests, building projects, gardening and other yard work. Beth is trying out a new sewing

hobby along with her many interests.

♦ **Jay, Amy, and children** continue their busy lifestyle in Fairbanks. **Natasha** is 6 years old now, **Melody** is 4 (5 in June), and **Elisha** is just 3. With a dog and cat too, it is a busy household. Jay still works as Project Engineer at the Geophysical Institute for the University of Alaska Fairbanks plus manages Chaparral Physics. Amy hopes to publish her first children's book soon. She is a wonderful writer.

♦ **Isaac and Crystal** moved permanently to Adak in October, after Isaac took over the Customer Service Manager position full-time with Alaska Airlines on this remote Aleutian Island, nearly as far away from Anchorage as Seattle. They bought a home there and Isaac calls it his island paradise, since he loves the many birds, other wildlife, hunting opportunities, and other joys special to a wilderness bred boy. Crystal and Isaac had to return to Anchorage for the birth of their little girl, and they stayed with Aaron and Autumn as they waited for the baby. On November 16, Rhianna Belle joined the family. Grandma Teena was delighted to arrive the day after her birth to spend the first week with all the family enjoying the wonder of another precious

gift from God. Later Teena accompanied Isaac and family back to Adak and spent a week there too, having the joy of more time with Rhianna plus enjoying the beauty of Adak to boot.

♦ **Aaron and Autumn** celebrated their first year wedding anniversary in August, and have enjoyed settling into their home in Wasilla. Aaron advanced into a permanent IT position with Pioneer Natural Resources, which includes travel and work on other projects besides the Oooguruk Project on the North Slope. He had one job in Tunisia, Africa in November that included interesting travel through several foreign countries. Autumn continues to work in Wasilla as a case manager for SED (Severely Emotionally Disturbed) children. She suffered a severe cut on her left hand in October that required surgery and therapy, but thankfully her hand has healed well. Their house has experienced quite a whirlwind recently when a new little puppy joined their household. Trinity, a Miniature Poodle/ Blue Heeler cross, has had some difficulty taming the cat, who is still bigger than she.

Travel

Trips to Fairbanks are usual occurrences, since it is our "big town" for supplies, appointments, plane maintenance, etc., plus lots of family resides there. Besides the Anchorage and Adak trips in honor of Rhianna's arrival, Teena made one other major trip the first week of March to visit family in Arizona and Washington State. Crystal

accompanied Teena and they both enjoyed showing off baby Rhianna. She spent many hours riding in the car-seat, and getting passed around between relatives and was generally a happy girl. Jim made a trip to Adak the end of April to meet his new granddaughter and experience the beauty of the Aleutian Islands with all the returning of vast numbers of migrating birds to Alaska. Derek was also able to be in Adak at the same time, so there was a trio of photographers assaulting the island.

God Bless You All!

Love,

Jim and Teena

Derek & Beth

Jay, Amy, & children:

Natasha, Melody & Elisha

Isaac, Crystal &

Rhianna

Aaron & Autumn

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Pictures



Teena

Jim



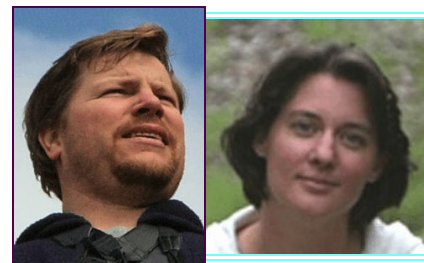
Isaac

Jim

Derek



Teena with grand-daughter
#3, Jan. 2009



Derek

Beth

Pictures continued



Derek & Beth's place at Birch Bay, WA



Bird Mount by Derek



Elisha



Melody



Natasha



Crystal & Rhianna cruising an Adak beach in their Rhino ATV



Crystal and Rhianna enjoy Arizona in March 2009



Jay and Amy
Natasha, Elisha, Melody



Rhianna newborn
& Mom



Rhianna Belle & Dad



Rhianna in car-seat in WA



Rhianna with G-ma Teena and Great-G-ma Martha in AZ



Aaron & Autumn



Aurora over lake at Helmericks



Rhianna with Daddy -
home in Adak , 4-18-09



Sunrise On Colville by **Jim**



Rhianna with Great-Grandma
Bonnie (Aaka) in Colbert, WA



Beautiful Adak Scenery
by **Jim**



Aaron & Autumn's pets

