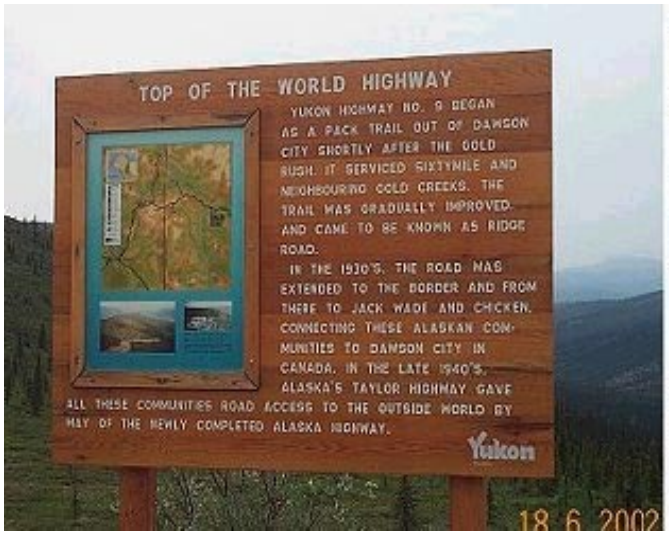
WE FINALLY REACHED ALASKA!

Tok and Delta Junction - on the way to Fairbanks

June 19 & 20

Today our four coaches (the Fursts were at a family reunion and rejoined us in Fairbanks) traveled the very scenic “Top of the World” highway. This part of our trip has been our GRANDEST, but also the most difficult.

The Monaco's went over the mountain to see what they could see.



"Top of the World Highway", it's dirt, it's very bumpy (15 mph) but it's absolutely BREATHTAKING!

And the view down below isn't bad either!

The Canadian stretch of this highway is seal coated and the Alaska side is gravel. The scenery is positively breathtaking and you truly feel as though you are on top of the world. However, the highway is closed from mid-October until April and it is difficult to keep the road in good order. Repairs are constant while it is open, and there are times when 15mph is necessary to go over the washboard areas of the road. Other travelers we talked with said the road was in excellent condition, but that had to be a relative term - excellent compared to how bad it could be. Fortunately it was dry, but that caused an incredible amount of dust.

Welcome to Alaska

A little town called Boundary is at the Canadian/Alaskan border, at an elevation of 4,127 feet. As we crossed the border, we were asked what citizenship we held, what our purpose in coming to Alaska was, and if we had pets; then told to have a nice vacation and off we went.

Our first stop inside Alaska was at “beautiful downtown Chicken”. “Why Chicken?” you may ask. Well, because the original settlers couldn’t spell Ptarmigan, which is what they wanted to call the town. You see, this bird was plentiful and it made many a meal for the miners. Chicken’s winter population is about 15, which soars to around 40 during the summer. Folks are here to mine gold. The town is closed during the winter since the road is closed. The temperatures may dip to -80 and soar to 45 degrees. There are NO telephones and NO flush toilets. Mail arrives by plane on Tuesdays and Fridays, if the weather is good. There are many 4-legged animals in the area, occasionally bears walk through town. The closest town is 78 miles away. Don’t you wish you were living in Chicken?

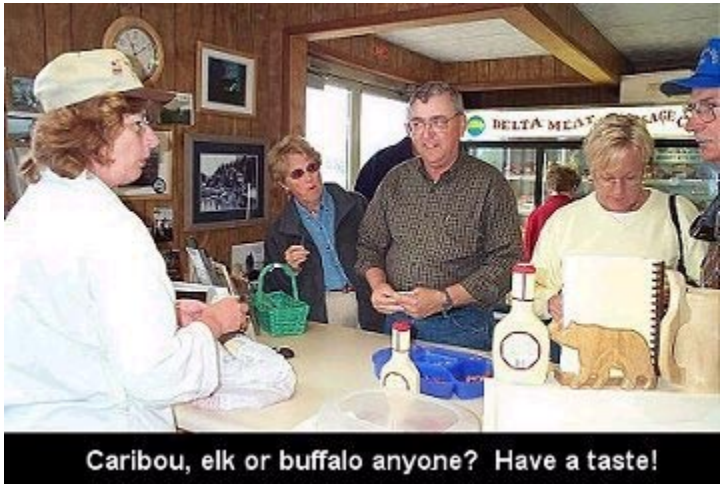
Tourists are encouraged to stop in "beautiful" downtown Chicken . . .
which consists of 4 buildings; a gift shop, bar, cafe and public restrooms!

And of coarse you want proof
that you have been there!

The night of June 19th, we stayed in Tok (rhymes with poke), which was originally a construction camp on the Alaska Highway (also know as the Alcan). The town name was taken from a young husky pup that was the beloved mascot of the US Army's 97th Engineers Corp. This corps was responsible for building the highway and naming points along the way. Tok is a major overland point of entry into (and exit from) Alaska. It is the only town in Alaska that the highway traveler must pass through twice.

The next day we traveled approximately 100 miles north to Delta Junction. This was a beautiful ride with snow-capped mountains paralleling our route as we drove northbound. An overnight rain in Tok was likely snow in the higher elevations because the peaks were covered in fresh snow. It was a gorgeous sight on a clear morning with the sun hitting the mountaintops. The actual end of the Alaska Highway is in Delta Junction, not Fairbanks as has been reported on occasion. In the early 1980's the Alaska Department of Transportation made some highway sign changes that caused a lot of confusion for travelers. This misunderstanding was easily remedied with a trip to the Visitors Center in Delta Junction where one can see the monument for the official end of the highway.

As we neared Delta Junction, we stopped at the Delta Meat and Sausage Company. They make homemade smoked and fresh sausages. After sampling their products, most of us purchased several items including caribou and elk sausages.


Caribou, elk or buffalo anyone? Have a taste!

On arrival in Delta Junction, we headed for Rika's Roadhouse, located on the banks of the Tanana River. The Roadhouse is a large building, constructed of logs in the early 1900's. It gave travelers a place to stay on their way from Valdez to Fairbanks. John Haidukovich originally owned the homestead. He would leave it in the care of Rika Wallen while he was trading in the winter and guiding in the summer. After 5 years of hard work with no pay, she asked for and received the homestead in place of back wages.

We toured some of the historic buildings of this 10-acre park and visited the gift shop. Inside, Connie Rishell introduced herself to Vicki Greenleaf, wife of Connie's second cousin Ron. In 1982, Ron and his brother Richard Greenleaf, with their wives and one child each, moved from New England to Alaska, where they have lived for 20 years. Both families are active in a non-denominational Christian group that runs and manages the Roadhouse and buildings via a lease with the state of Alaska. Vicki accompanied us to the restaurant for lunch and then very graciously gave our group a guided tour, encouraging us to try on some of the beautiful items in the gift shop.

Rika's beautiful Roadhouse and Landing - a state historical park.

The Greenleaf clan chowing down.

Hummm. What should we buy?

The Rishell's were invited back to the Roadhouse for dinner that evening with the full Greenleaf clan. The young Greenleafs (4 from each family plus Gabriel's wife) prepared and served a feast of sockeye salmon including all the trimmings. On the way back to the campground a moose crossed the road in front of the car and lazily dined on the marsh grass not far away.

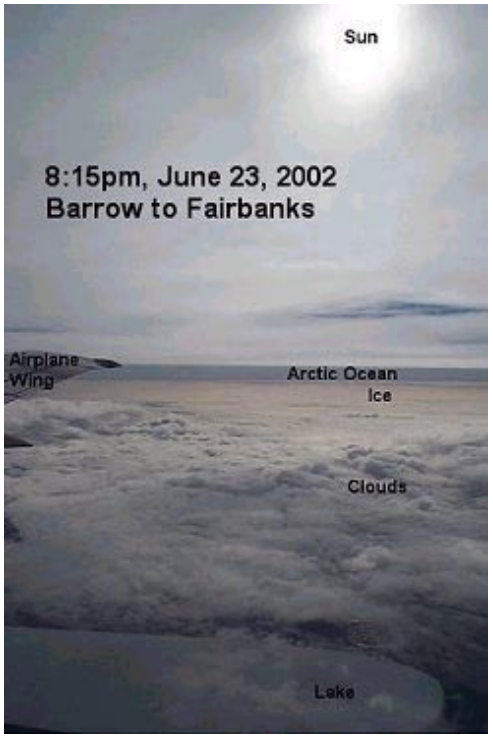
Fresh vegetables like these would almost make one become a vegetarian.

What, you may ask, can you do with only one skin? A bikini!

Other activities during the day included a stop at Nickay's Country Garden. Here we toured an immaculate set of gardens and hydroponics greenhouses. It was interesting to see how well things grow under the midnight sun. While we were there we stocked up on fresh lettuce, onions, cucumbers and tomatoes.

Several of us also checked out the Fur Shack, the Delta Junction furrier that makes coyote headbands and earmuffs. This mom and pop company operates at a roadside stand near the Alaska Pipeline. This is our first viewing of the trans-Alaska pipeline and here it crosses the Tanana River.

The North Pole, Barrow and Fairbanks - June 21 to 24



"North Pole, Alaska" - That has a Christmassy ring, don't you think? Bon Davis homesteaded this area in 1944. A development company bought the property and named it North Pole, hoping to attract a toy manufacturer who could advertise products as being made at the North Pole. The toy maker concept fell through so the town incorporated in 1953 and adopted the theme: "Where the spirit of Christmas lives year round." You know you have arrived at the North Pole when you see the world's tallest Santa, which stands over 40 feet high.

"Ho, ho, ho! Greetings!"

We didn't know we would get this far north.

"You think the book should say "Nice"?

In 1949, Con Miller began wearing a Santa Claus suit as he traveled on business trips. He found this rewarding because many children were learning about St Nicholas from him for the first time. So, in 1952, Santa Claus House was constructed. This quaint "home" provides millions of guests with an opportunity to visit Santa and his reindeer (which are really domesticated caribou). Santa is a fun person to talk to. It seems he stopped by here to purchase some postcards 13 years ago. A clerk asked his name. He replied, "St Nicholas, of course!" and was immediately hired. He is great with the kids. In a soft-spoken voice, he encourages them to be thankful for what they receive and to help their parents as much as they can. He told us he was so thankful to God for his job and that he finds it a great way to witness. What a great Santa!

One couple in our group, the Nelsons, lived in Fairbanks from 1959 to 1961. They traveled the Alaskan Highway a total of four times when it was all dirt (approximately 1500 miles each way). Now it is a composite of gravel and sand covered with oil. This seems to handle the weather conditions better and is easy to repair. Many of the curves and dangerous areas have been changed, which has shortened the highway by approximately 20 miles. First published in 1949, the "Milepost" gave mile-by-mile information on all major highways and roads in Alaska and northwestern Canada. Early travelers relied heavily on it for gas, food, repairs and lodging information. Today the "Milepost" is directed more toward tourists and is therefore full of advertising. After 43 years, the Nelsons are seeing many changes.

Fortunately most of the highways are paved; however, there are some areas that are dirt as in days of old.

In 1959, Fairbanks was home to approximately 6,000 people. Today, there are over 83,000 in the Fairbanks North Star Borough, with 30,000 living downtown. Fairbanks was founded in 1901 when a steamship traveling up the Yukon River could not navigate the fast-moving, shallow Tanana River beyond the mouth of the Chena River. A passenger, E. T. Barnette, was dropped off at this point. His baggage was the beginning of a trading post, supplying the gold miners during the gold rush days. Mining is still evident today with production from the newest Fort Knox mine. The city holds a yearly 10-day Golden Days celebration in recognition of its mining heritage.

Fairbanks functions as a hub for the interior of Alaska, via river, road and rail and is the second largest city in Alaska. It held a key role during the construction of the trans-Alaska pipeline in the 70's. Extractive industries such as oil and mining continue to play a major role in the economy. Government employment, approximately 50%, is a big boost to the economy along with the University of Alaska and retail businesses. Ladd Field, now known as Fort Wainwright, was the first Army airfield in Alaska and is the city's largest employer.

Temperatures in Fairbanks can dip to 60 below in winter and rise to 90 above in the summer. You haven't lived until you've driven on tires that have frozen flat on the bottom - thump! thump! After months of only a few hours of daylight, returning sunlight in late winter is a welcomed sight. On June 21st Fairbanks has 21 hrs and 59 minutes of sun. There never seems to be a "time" to go to bed.

Fortunately we were in Fairbanks on Saturday, which gave us the opportunity to explore the Tanana Valley Farmers Market. This market began in the mid 70's with the purpose of showcasing a wide variety of "Alaska Grown" produce and "Made in Alaska" arts and handicrafts. It is the oldest established farmers market in Alaska, and the only one located in its own permanent building. We had great fun there, buying more fresh produce from our Delta Junction hydroponics gardener, wild berry jams and jellies, baked goods, reindeer sausage, pottery and a handmade fleece coverlet.

Notice most of the women are missing!

From there we went to the Great Alaskan Bowl Company (see their website at http://www.woodbowl.com). This company can take a single split log and cut up to 8 solid one-piece birch bowls. The bowls are made from freshly cut trees with a 13" or greater diameter. The logs are cut in lengths and then split for turning. The wet bowls are then stacked in a kiln, which monitors the heat and moisture. This is the most critical step in the bowl making process because if it is done incorrectly the results are many cracked bowls. The bowls are removed from the kiln when the moisture content reaches 6-10%. They are then sanded, branded, inspected and lastly dipped in block oil. Each bowl actually goes through 22 individual steps before they are ready to be sold. The bowls can be used for hot or cold foods. Clean up is easy. Simply hand wash in warm, soapy water. Towel dry and oil occasionally. We were impressed and most of us purchased bowls.

Three bowls will come from this piece of wood.

Searching for the perfect bowl to woodburn and paint.

After lunch, the group enjoyed the Riverboat Discovery Cruise on the Chena and Tanana Rivers. On boarding the boat we were told that this family-owned operation began in 1950 and that the captain was from the fourth generation. Donuts and coffee were complimentary at all times. This won the hearts of those in our group that have a sweet tooth.

Oh my, what a short runway.

At Susan's home we see the "exercise-go-round". If a dog gets tired he just rides. This "baby" loves attention.

The trip included a bush pilot demonstration; a visit with Iditarod champion Susan Butcher and her dogs at her home; a demonstration on filleting and smoking salmon, and a walking tour of the Chena Indian Village where we learned about Native Alaskan fishing, hunting, clothing and shelters. We also saw the wedding of the Chena and Tanana Rivers. There we noticed the color changes from blue to milky gray, which is caused by glacier runoff. This excursion is rated the #1 boat tour in North America and after our trip we understood why.

The Discovery Riverboat and it's super narrator.

A native Alaskan shows off her needlework and beading skills.

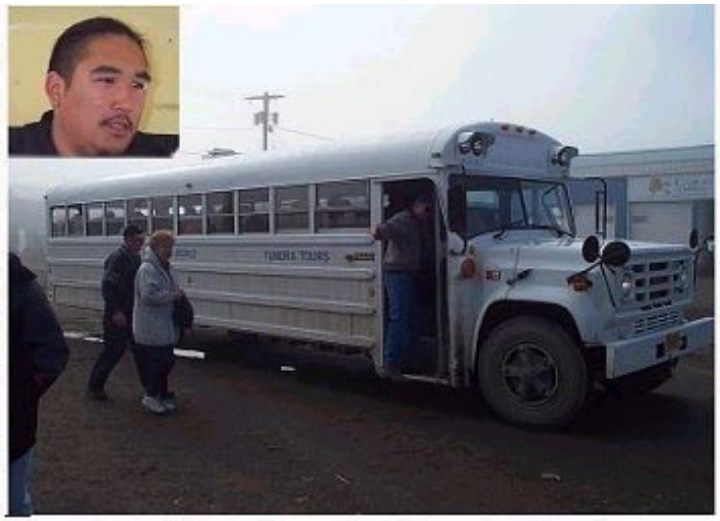
Most everyone visited the University of Alaska Museum where we learned about the history of Alaska. The University of Alaska, home to about 8,000 students, was founded in 1917. It sits on a 2200-acre site with two lakes and miles of trails. Some of the highlights that we saw at the museum were: the states largest gold display, a special section on the northern lights, and information on the building of the Alaska pipeline.

On Sunday, June 24th, three couples climbed aboard an Alaska Airlines plane and ventured to Barrow at the “Top of the World” - which we all decided was more like the END OF THE WORLD. Barrow is 330 miles above the Arctic Circle and is the northernmost settlement on the North American Continent. Even though Barrow is only accessible by air or barge it still boasts a population of 4,500 people, most of which are the Inupiaq people.

Barrow has an airport, city hall, police department, hospital, elementary, middle and high schools, a two-year college, hotel and inns, a few restaurants, and a recreation and senior center. Modern facilities include water, sewer, cable TV and advanced communications, made possible by satellite dishes aimed almost parallel to the ground because of being so far north. Weather in Barrow can change by the hour. Summer temperatures vary, but average around 40 degrees. There are NO trees in the Arctic, the waters are icy and the land is mushy tundra.

In Barrow, we found that native culture is still the center of their life. Festivals are held throughout the year celebrating these traditions of the native people. One celebration is held in honor of a successful whaling season and another celebrates the return of the sun after 65 winter days when the sun never shines.

Arriving at a new adventure.



The guide and transportation for the day.

Proof we're actually there.

It didn't take long to tour Barrow, since there is a total of only 52 miles of road. This place has 16 taxis and $5.00 will take you anywhere in town. They also have a bus system that picks you up right outside your door - pretty handy when it's 40 below. Our first stop was the Fresh Water Lake, one of the original sources of drinking water. Along the way we spotted a few snowy owls out in the tundra.

Hurry with the picture before this becomes an iceberg.

A whale of a picture, wouldn't you say?

My foot is deeper than your foot!

They look like bowling pins sitting out there. Other birds and three species of flowers were pointed out along this road. To them, this is beauty; but to us, who are used to lush green and lots of color, it seemed a bit unusual. Also along this road was the Imiqsaun Cemetery. Embalming is not required here since burial is in the permafrost where bodies keep forever.

The different schools and other noteworthy buildings were pointed out as we drove around. We stopped at the college, a dog musher's residence, and for lunch before heading out to the northern most point where the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas come together at the Arctic Ocean. A couple of us dipped our toes in the 32-degree ice filled water. On the way back to town we stopped at the Whale Bone Arch to have our picture taken.

Sushi anyone? We ate at the Japanese place.

Looks like Gene made a friend.

Not a tree in the whole town. Is that Barrow? Or Barren!

Our last stop was the Inupiat Heritage Center, the town's main attraction, completed in 1999. This houses an exhibit of ancient times to the present. We were entertained with native dances, games, blanket toss (scouting groups did this to help locate food) and a chance to buy native arts and crafts.

The music is a type of chanting with drums. The female dancers move everything but their feet.

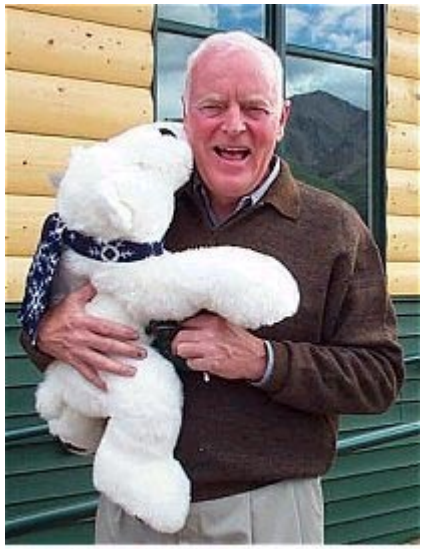
Wheeeee! That was fun! Do it again!

Across the street was the “Walmart” type store of Barrow. Everything from ATV’s to ice cream cones was sold there. After about 8 hours in Barrow we were all ready to get back to the airport and to the REAL WORLD.

Other things we did in Fairbanks included visiting the El Dorado Gold Mine and playing a round of golf under the midnight sun at the North Star Golf Club which is America’s northernmost golf course. And, of course, we dined at many of the local hot spots, including the Pumphouse and Pikes Landing. The Nelsons, remembering what it was like 40 years ago, found an entirely different city unfold before their eyes. Very few familiar sites remained downtown, mainly due to a flood of the Chena River in l967. The last night in Fairbanks, they had the pleasure of dining with the widow of Lolly’s boss from those days and were given a narrated tour of the old and new.

Denali National Park - June 25 to 28

It was exciting to arrive in Denali National Park and Preserve. Snow capped peaks, vast wilderness and spectacular wildlife define its magnificence. The park is larger than Massachusetts and has North America’s highest peak, Mt. McKinley (Denali), which is 20,320 feet high. This mountain’s vertical relief of about 18,000 feet is greater than that of Mount Everest. Permanent snowfields cover more than 75% of the mountain and contribute to the many glaciers that surround its base. The mountain consists of granite and slate, which is covered by ice that is hundreds of feet thick in some places.



Bill's new buddy, Denali.

Denali, meaning “The High One”, is the name Athabasean native people gave the massive mountain. In 1896 a prospector named William Dickey named the mountain for presidential nominee William McKinley of Ohio, although McKinley had no connection with Alaska. Protests arose quickly, but it was not until 1980 that the name was changed back to Denali. Through the years the park’s boundary has been enlarged from 2 million to 6 million acres.

The park is managed as three distinct units: Denali Wilderness maintains the undeveloped wilderness character of the park; Denali National Park allows customary and traditional subsistence uses by local rural residents; and Denali National Preserve controls sport hunting, trapping and fishing.

Denali National Park Visitors Center

Denali is one of the world’s last great frontiers for wilderness adventure. It remains largely wild and unspoiled. This expansive wilderness landscape is habitat for caribou, moose, red fox, wolf, lynx, black bear, Dall sheep and grizzly bears. A diversity of wildlife includes 161 species of birds, 37 species of mammals and 450 species of plants. The timberline in the park is at 2,700 feet. Below the timberline are vast areas of taiga and sub-artic tundra. “Taiga” is a Russian word that means northern evergreen forest. In Denali, taiga consists primarily of white and black spruce. “Tundra” is shrubs and small plants. There are two types of tundra, moist and dry. Although small in statue, plants of the dry tundra are important because

their nutrients provide food for many species of park wildlife, both large and small. Deep beds of intermittent permafrost underlie portions of the park and preserve. Permafrost is formed when the soil temperature is about 27 degrees and ice slowly forms in the poorly drained soils.

Going up, just like in an elevator!

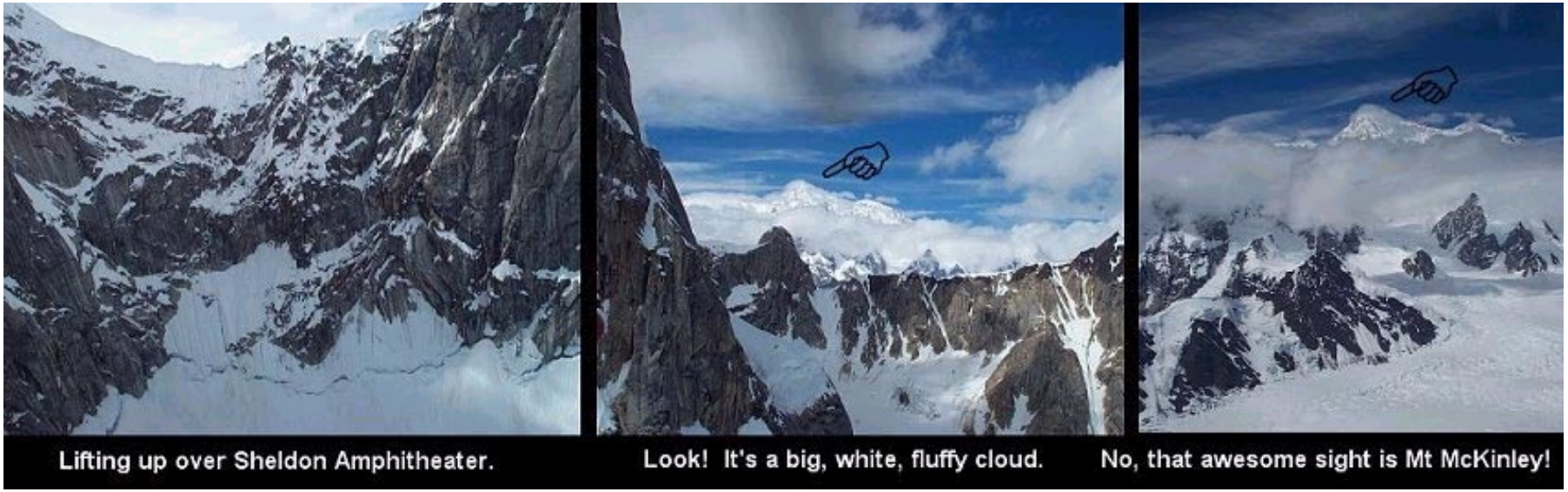
Things are kind of cozy inside the helicopter.

You can barely see the bear.

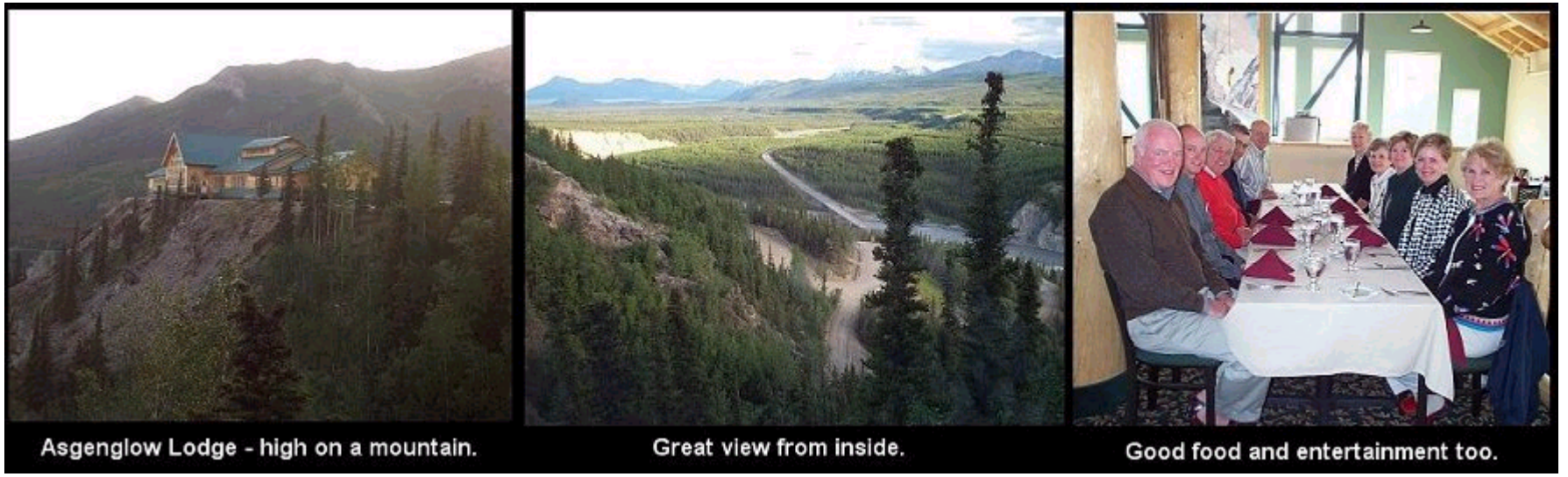
While in Denali, we found a nice variety of sightseeing activities. The first day we were there, several couples got off to a fine start with a helicopter ride to Mt. McKinley. We lifted off from Chulitna Base and almost immediately spied black bears. Forging ahead, we soon encountered Eldridge Glacier. While hovering on one side of the glacier so it could be studied, we were pleasantly surprised as a huge chunk of ice fell down one side. This process is called “calving”, and it was learned that this is rare for this particular glacier.

First upclose sighting of a glacier, Eldridge . . . and it calved just when we started to leave.

From there the pilot headed by the Moose's Tooth up to the Sheldon amphitheater. Swooping up over the amphitheatre, we got our first glance of Mt McKinley. Words and pictures cannot begin to describe the feelings that were felt at that moment. The return to the base was hardly remembered after that awesome sight.



That evening, we spent some time at the Alpenglow Restaurant and Lodge on a bluff with incredible views and a décor emphasis on mountain climbing. Entertainment following dinner was held in the "Peak Experience Theater", where we learned about the challenges of climbing Mt. McKinley from a local climber. He showed us his equipment and related its importance in the climb. He also showed us some slides and shared some of his unique experiences on the mountain with his companions. The following night, we saw a dinner show that gave us insight into the first successful climb of Mt. McKinley.



A rafting trip was an event for some of us down the Nenana River. This river flows south from Fairbanks to the Denali Park entrance, and then continues eastward. The river is glacial water and very cold, near 37 degrees. Our wet suits were difficult to get on, but we found they were airtight. Our float was scenic with mild, white water.

Rocking and rolling down the river.

Not even their children recognize them in this gear!

An 8-hour wildlife tour thru the park was our next delightful experience. Visitors are only allowed to drive into the park 15 miles to the ranger station; beyond this point our licensed tour took us an additional 50 miles on dirt roads. Barry, our driver-guide said, “It might be a mountain day”. There is never any doubt which peak is Mt. McKinley. It is so tall it creates it’s own weather patterns. The peak is only visible 20% of the time; otherwise clouds obscure it. The thought on our minds, “Would this be the lucky day?” Barry calls out at mile marker 11 “it’s out!” Now we’re all gazing up at this beautiful mountain, all white against the contrasting blue sky, a sight to behold.

Continuing on to Sable Pass, we have our first bear sighting, a sow with 2 cubs, sitting in the sun on a mountain meadow. As our tour continued we saw an abundance of Dall sheep, moose, caribou, another sow and cubs (most often they have twins) and a golden eagle. What an exciting day and a thrilling experience!

Sheep - licking the salt from the road.

Here moosey, moosey, moosey!

And last but not least, on our list of great things to do at Denali, was hiking. Stopping in at the visitor's center, we obtained maps and suggestions of trails. Some of the trails have ranger guides to point out things the average hiker might miss. Several of us took some of the hiking trails and were rewarded with some great views (and some good exercise, too).

Pic-1: We hiked to the top of the mountain on the right. Pic-2: Once we got there, we decided to go to the top of the one on the left. Pic-3: At that top, boy did we have a magnificent view. (Note: Mountain on the right of Pic-1 is same mountain on right of Pic-3!)

As we departed Denali, we all considered ourselves very lucky because all of us had seen Mt. McKinley on at least two days. Seventy percent of the visitors to the park never see the mountain at all.

Talkeetna and Anchorage

June 29 to July 2

Going to Talkeetna, this is what we saw. We pulled over, got out of the motorhomes, and stood in awe. Later, we ate at this quaint cafe.

We left Denali National Park feeling completely overwhelmed by the grandeur of Mt. McKinley, the Alaskan Mountains, the parkland, and the wild animals. Our group decided to pause at the tiny village of Talkeetna on our way to Anchorage. A wayside stop just before the village offered another splendid view of Mt. McKinley and the Alaskan Mountain range.

The village is a few blocks long and the main street is the only one that is paved. The buildings are of yesteryear, quaint and folksy. We found local arts and crafts, gift shops, and a lovely café for lunch. The people were friendly and obviously happy to live there. The village was summertime busy, but the real activity and excitement was at the small airport on the edge of the village. Talkeetna is the spot from which mountain climbers fly to the Mt. McKinley base camp at 7200 feet. About 1000 climbers each year attempt the climb from the base camp to the top (20,320 feet and the highest peak in North America).

After an enjoyable few hours, we headed on to Anchorage, which sits at the base of the Chugach Mountains along the coast of Cook Inlet in South-central Alaska. Anchorage, Alaska's largest city is about the size of New Jersey and has nearly 261,000 people - 42 % of the state's population. Protected by the mountains and warmed by Japanese currents of the Pacific Ocean, Anchorage enjoys a temperate, maritime climate with summer highs close to 80 degrees and winter snows, which often cause the temperature to dip into the twenties. Low humidity also contributes to this more comfortable climate.

On arriving in town, we were greeted by Marti's sister. Joanne and her husband, Tom, moved to Alaska in 1967. He is a pilot and she works for the post office. Thanks to Joanne, the ladies had beauty salon appointments at the largest mall in town. After getting beautified, they all met at the food court for lunch and then took advantage of being at the mall. What a rejuvenating and fun way to start off our time in Anchorage.

The ladies fresh from the saloon. No, that's salon!

On the second day in town, many of us chose to take a narrated trolley tour of the downtown area. We started the tour by going to Lake Hood Air Harbor. This is the largest and busiest floatplane base in the world and is a popular starting point for flightseeing and fly-in fishing trips. Our next stop was Earthquake Park, which is an area destroyed and later dedicated as a park to commemorate the Good Friday Earthquake of March 27, 1964. The highlight of the tour was the visit to the 4th Avenue Theatre. This building is a historic landmark, which was built in 1947. This grand building was the first million-dollar building built in Alaska and was one of the few to survive the 1964 earthquake. There we saw floor to ceiling brass and copper murals depicting life in Alaska during the 1940's. After the tour we had a delicious halibut buffet and a very entertaining show at this theatre. The best part of the show was when the fiancée of one of the young ladies in the show appeared unannounced and proposed to her, right there in front of everyone. Wow! What a surprise. Of coarse it was not until the end that we knew for sure that it wasn't just another part of the show. It certainly brought happy tears to more than one pair of eyes.

Unsuspecting

Popping the question.

She says "Yes!"

Soooo happy!

The show must go on.

The next day we visited the Alaska Experience Center. Our first stop was “Alaska the Greatland”. We were seated in front of a 180-degree wraparound screen, which was three stories high. There we saw the majesty of Alaska’s wildlife, scenery, and people.

The other part of the Experience Center was the Alaska Earthquake exhibit. We learned that on Good Friday, March 27, 1964 an earthquake lasting 5-1/2 minutes rocked Anchorage. This quake that measured 9.2 on the Richter scale was the strongest ever-recorded in North America. Areas in Anchorage dropped up to 100 feet and nine people lost their lives. Tidal waves ripped through the coastal cities wiping out entire towns and adding 154 more fatalities. At the “Experience Center” we relived this history through a

movie presentation that had the added feature of shaking and rumbling our seats for an authentic effect. We were glad we were not in Alaska during the earthquake and were amazed that there were not many more people killed.

On another day several from our group toured the Alaska Native Heritage Center. They learned a great deal about Alaska's eleven indigenous cultures through exhibits, displays, dance, storytelling, and recreated village sites.

One night we dined at the Sourdough Mining Co. and our lighter side was explored through attendance at the Dusty Sourdough show. Dusty told jokes, sang and played his guitar. At the end of the show Graham won a very small (one square foot) gold mining claim in Talkeetna, AK. After the show we moseyed over to Wild Berry Products. This was one of the many shops available that feature native and other Alaskan made products.

After chowing down, we were entertained by the adventurous Dusty Sourdough.

During the summer, Anchorage is noted for the profusion of flowers and hanging baskets that decorate homes and businesses. Parks, street medians and lampposts are vibrant with the colors of millions of flowers. An estimated 100,000 hanging baskets are seen everywhere. It is obvious that residents love their flowers and are proud of their city.

Millions of flowers.

Say, aren't either one of you guys going to share that reindeer sausage?

Over 100,000 hanging baskets.