

1999 SUMMER IN THE GREAT NORTHWEST

Two Months of Friends and Flying, July 2 – Aug. 29)

(~37 pp., ~28,000 words)

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Friday, July 2, 1999 (Day #1) -- Off in the afternoon after two false starts with a non-functioning “transponder”, fixed after they installed a new, and larger circuit breaker. Much preparation to get my co-owned Cessna 182 “annualized” (FAA required inspection), and ready for the great odyssey. Two months of flying to Alaska and parts in between to visit friends and see the country. First stop, two hours flying to northern California, with friends, Dick and Audrey Eymann, at Trinity Center, right on the lake in the mountains. The adventure of the evening: another Cessna 182 ran off the end of runway into the lake. This happened while about 7-6 pilot families were all schmoozing at the home of a retired airlines pilot and once the news arrived partying stopped with a thud and we all raced down to the airport. The pilot appeared to be well into his 70s, perhaps early 80s, and rather shaken by the whole affair. The weather was excellent; he just landed long and didn’t react quickly enough to either take off again, put on the brakes, or do a controlled ground loop to avoid the water. I wouldn’t be surprised if this turned out to be his last flight as pilot in command, a sad way to end one’s flying career, as end it must for all of us. We pulled it back with a winch on a Jeep. It will clearly need some significant mechanical work but was surprisingly intact, having been stopped by a large stone at the water’s edge, down a 30 degree bank. I hope I do better at landings. (As a postscript, I later learned that when my sister-in-law, Lucille Hornby received the pictures from Seattle FilmWorks she had quite a scare, at first thinking that the photos of the accident were of my own plane.) Back to the party and then to the Eymanns for a nice chat and a very comfortable night in their guest room.

Saturday, July 3 -- Awake at 6, up at 6:30, it was a cold night and I had a dream in which I was running; unknown link with current reality. We had a breakfast of cereal and toast, a chat with Dick about his extensive trips in a

Cessna 150 and regrets that he had never gone to Alaska. He had a trip all planned but was reluctant to leave Audrey. He subsequently sold the Cessna and now occasionally rents aircraft. He lost eyesight in one eye several years ago due to a small stroke in the optic nerve. I checked with the weather, all OK, and so I launched at 9:22, climbed to 9500' where it was all smooth, and in 50 minutes I was on the ground in Ashland, Oregon. I was met by Lew (known as "Beaver") Nash, who took me to his new home at 80 Baum St. for a two-night stay with him, his friend Kate Thill, Lew's older brother Gordon (known as "Furry") and his wife Christie. Liz and I had met Lew and Kate during our last 10 minutes (just before our bus left) at a Sierra Club ski weekend last winter, Liz having learned that Lew had a Cessna 182. We stayed in touch by e-mail and this was our first chance to get together since then. Lew, born in 1932, had gone to UCB, studied premed and philosophy, later got a MBA, and finally ended up teaching philosophy and comparative religion at a community college. Kate had also gone to UCB and also SF State, majoring in bioecology, geography and rivers (but "not counting clicks on a water wheel"). She taught at a community college (80% blacks) in Oakland. Until the present they have lived in Ferndale, CA, but are now moving to Ashland. Lew sells low cost otoscopes, has one full-time employee plus some part-time staff. After a fine buffet lunch at an Indian restaurant I went, per Lew's suggestion, for a delightful 2.5-hour walk up behind his house. I went alongside a small irrigation ditch to a reservoir (where I took a snooze for 40 minutes) and then down beautiful Lithia Park. I had a fine time watching ducks and swans. Back at their home I chatted with Furry and Christie Nash. We all left for a Thai dinner in Medford but the restaurant was closed so back to a good Thai restaurant in Ashland and in the sack at 11.

Sunday, July 4-- Lew and I checked out the main street in anticipation of the 4th of July parade, returned for breakfast, and then all of us went down to the main street for the two-hour parade, old fashioned style. It was great: smoke generating airplanes, military formations, lots of floats sponsored by peace / gay / NGOs/ government agencies and commercial organizations, Shriners in their funny carts, Hells Angels types on their Harley hogs, the works....! We went our separate ways after the parade. I did a walking tour

of the town, had a late Mexican restaurant lunch, strolled up to see the ducks and swans, and called Liz. I then went with my hosts to a pot luck given by their friends in a new condo. I had quite a talk with a retired man who sold health and beauty aids in the Pacific Ocean (especially the Marianas) for 25 years. We walked home and then went by car to the high school stadium where we listened for two hours to the American Band Conductors' concert. They were very good! The band leader had developed a special relationship with musicians in Kazakhstan and we were treated to several pieces featuring long (~10') trumpets that produced single but very loud notes. At last the fireworks people got their act together and we were treated to 30 minutes of an excellent display. To bed at 11:15 and to sleep at 11:45, after some reading about Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

Monday, July 5 --Two hours of gorgeous flying, first through the coastal mountains and then up the Oregon Coast to Newport and to the summer home of Bob and Gail LeBow. A great walk on the beach with Bob talking about health care and other weighty matters, and then a bike ride with him out to the lighthouse. There were zillions of murre nesting on 300' cliffs; apparently when the young are ready to fly they flop off their home ledge, pretty much fall down to the water, and then those that survive the semi-fall, eventually learn to fly off the water. I then had a fine evening of schmoozing with the Bob and Gail, the LeBow's son, his wife and their two daughters. One in particular was much taken by me, and vice versa, and my videos of her elicited much interest. Her parents had to finally persuade her to not keep asking me for replays.

Tuesday, July 6 -- Low clouds in the morning and uncertain flying weather. We all piled into two cars and went south about 5 miles to Newport's excellent aquarium and marine museum. After several hours of seeing all the exhibits, the sea otters and seals being among the favorites, I checked the weather and concluded that except for the coastal overcast, it was quite flyable. Bob took me to the airport, we said goodbyes, I refueled and checked the plane, and to my dismay found I had left my flight case in his car. A call to his home and back he came and I was again "complete." I filed an instrument flight plan, entered the clouds at 1600', came out on top at

3000', and then climbed up to 9000' to clear with margin to spare the coastal range of mountains I had to cross. I flew two hours up the lush Oregon valley toward Mt. Hood and Hood River. After a trip of smooth flying I descended through strong and gusty headwinds to the Hood River airport. Jackie Wade came to meet me and once home, Jim joined us. Jim was a roommate at Reed College during the 1950-51 year and we have stayed in occasional contact ever since. After completing time in the service he became a family physician for most of his professional career. Jackie prepared an excellent dinner, followed by a fine evening of conversation – health care, children (they have one son in Hong Kong as a missionary, another as a PhD psychologist, and a third as a technician for an orthopedist, a job he came to after some years of “finding himself”), and other topics.

Wednesday, July 7 -- The weather was a bit uncertain and since I was in no particular hurry, I decided to stay the day. Jim and I had a delightful half hour steaming in his hot tub, Jackie prepared a full breakfast, a real treat for me, and then after some reading, I strolled the several miles to town. Jim had his scheduled annual physical exam that day so I met him on the return at the doctor's office and he gave me a tour of the hospital. Though 37 years have passed since I last worked in a small hospital, it is always a nostalgic experience to walk the wards, learn of the various diagnoses currently being treated, and talk with the staff. Jim then helped me look for a haze filter for my camcorder but no success. Once again Jackie produced a culinary triumph and more chatting and reading during the evening.

Thursday, July 8 – A fine start of the day in the hot tub; Jim and I savored coffee until it was time to join Jackie for breakfast. The Wades sure know how to live! I checked the weather, filed a IFR flight plan, and was off at 10:18 at 8000 feet. I had excellent weather though with some haze; the IFR was to ensure good flight following over and through the busy areas around Portland, Tacoma and Seattle. After checking in with Whidbey (Naval Air Base) Approach I closed my plan, did a circuit of Lopez Island to get the “lay of the land,” and then landed. Elf Fay, my daughter-in-law, picked me up at the airport, I had a late lunch, and together with Eric saw the 40 acres that they propose to buy, with my help. The land has a rather antiquated but

reasonably ample house, barn, two small ponds, a cistern, fine views to the north and east, and is surrounded on three sides by farms or environmentally protected areas. It is about two miles from the town and on a low travel paved road. A very promising area for Eric's dream, a berry farm. We also went to the supermarket, checked out the bookstore where I gave my grandchildren, Robin (15) and Molly (11) \$20 each so they could get the goodies of their choice, and admired their fairly new bikes. We had a fine evening, a vegetarian meal, and I retired to a tent that Eric had erected in the back yard of their small rental house on 512 Center Rd. Their back yard was frequently visited by rabbits and deer, and with a full moon in the offing, it was a fine evening.

Friday, July 9 -- After breakfast and a bike ride toward the NE down to the water's edge, Eric gave me a grand tour of Lopez. We had lots to talk about, the island, his hopes and plans, the children, new friends, his three-day a week work at the recycling center, the large estate under construction by Microsoft mogul, Paul Allen, and my trip. Around mid-day the overnight delivery company brought me special order locks for the troublesome cargo door on the Cessna; I was unable to reliably close it, and suffice to say I didn't want to leave it open or have it pop open in flight. I spent a frustrating hour or more trying to install it with Robin but found that a special wrench was needed to back off the nut, well protected by a cutout in the aluminum of the airplane. Fortunately, in the process I found that the reason it didn't close well was due to a screw that had been tightened too much at the time of the annual when they replaced the weather seal; I backed off the screw a bit and everything worked fine. An unnecessary \$100 down the tube. That evening I too all four out of Gail's Restaurant for a dinner on the porch overlooking the harbor, a treat for all!

Saturday, July 10 -- Up early and a 3-mile RT walk down to the water; a lovely island. The main hazard for Lopez Islanders is "repetitive strain injury" acquired by waving to everyone going the other way, whether walking or in an auto. One finally learns to limit hand movements to a flick of the index finger resting on the top of the steering wheel, or a partial flex of the hand while walking. A nice, and curious practice that is a long time custom on the

island. Eric and family had some minor errands in Anacortes and Burlington, and I wanted to visit Anacortes Yacht Charter with a view to chartering a boat next year for the Inside Passage to Alaska, so off to the ferry we went. There is something about ferry travel that is very relaxing and enjoyable -- beautiful scenery, a sedate pace, an inflexible schedule that enforces some discipline as to when one leaves home, and the fascination that comes with big boats on the water. The only caution: don't expect to get on without a substantial wait, often 2-3 hours long, when going on the peak routes at peak hours on a summer weekend. The AYC boats were splendid and the trip to Burlington a good reminder of what it is nice to live on Lopez. At the Target store Molly bought her first bra, at age 11 no less; big thrill! We returned at 6 PM in time to attend an open on-the-grass concert by "Spoons" in Lopez village. We met new friends, Iris and Jerry Graville who had helped Eric and Elf when they visited earlier in the year and then to get settled when they arrived in June. Together with them and some others we all went down a long trail through the woods to a small park on a beach at the NW end of the island. We had a fire with lots of drift wood, a beautiful sunset, and a fine potluck supper. Near dark a ranger came and gently admonished us regarding the fire and told us that the beach closed at dusk. We put out and buried the fire, and then cautiously, slowly, groped our way back through the woods. It was very dark and we had no lights whatsoever. Back to my tent after another fine day.

Sunday, July 11 (Day #10) -- A beautiful Sunday morning. Eric and family, with me tagging along, went to a Friends / Quaker meeting at the home of the Gravilles, near the coast. We were 10 adults, with the children staying for about 10 minutes and then departing with adult supervision to do some boating. We had a fine one hour meditation, with sun, garden, trees and a hardworking Graville son working outside in the garden. After 30 minutes of munchies and schmoozing post-meeting Robin and I returned to 512 Center Rd. by bikes to get the car and then we all went to the ferry terminal for a walk-on ride by ferry to Friday Harbor. No fuss, low cost, no waiting, and no being left on shore for lack of room when you are a walk-on. At Friday Harbor we visited the Whale Museum, I left a voicemail message for John Neal, Robin and I visited Ace Hardware, and by popular demand, I bought ice

cream cones for Robin and Molly. We watched float planes come and go, boats maneuvering about the harbor, and had a beautiful ride back to Lopez via stops at Orcas and Shaw islands, with a nun in full habit doing the ferry honors at Shaw. Unfortunately, Elf's shopping bag with a few new minor treasures was stolen from our bench seat on the top deck, a small reminder of the realities of human existence and cupidity. Back home we had a fine dinner and a post-dinner talk with Eric about his plans and financial needs for starting his berry farm.

Monday, July 12 -- A BIG day!!!! After breakfast all five of us went to the only bank on Lopez, talked with Joyce, the manager, I made calls to New York and San Francisco regarding the transfer of funds, opened a money market account in Eric and Elf's name, and within half an hour they were among the more prosperous and important bank customers on the island. It is amazing what the telephone, fax machines and electronic transfer of funds can do. Eric signed a five-year balloon payment loan note at the applicable rate of interest and with the sale of their Chapel Hill property will pay back much of the note. We then did some grocery shopping and Robin and I walked down to the Gravilles to collect two more bikes left over from our Sunday Friends meeting. Later that afternoon I took Eric, Robin and Molly for a half hour Cessna ride around Lopez Island, landing half way through so that each of the two children could have a time in the front right seat. Smooth flying, clear skies, and the lovely orange tint that comes with the late afternoon. We had a fine dinner, Elf was relieved that all her most important persons were back safely on the ground, and Eric and Robin gave a great display of their musical talents. Eric has a steel-case guitar that needs no amplification and Robin is learning to follow him on a base guitar I bought him a year ago in Ellsworth, Maine.

Tuesday, July 13 -- Lovely day, up early, weather check OK, so out to the airport and off around 10:30 after a very fine, and productive, visit with Eric and his family. After a short 20-minute flight I landed in Bellingham, called Larry Thompson, my former deputy and then successor at the Puget Sound Health Systems Agency, and he met me for a several hour visit and drive around town. We visited Northwest Yacht Charters to check out their

arrangements for boats; lovely boats but their costs were considerably higher than at AYC. We had lunch al fresco overlooking the harbor and then a circuit drive around Bellingham, including a stop at the hotel where his wife, Mays, works. We had a nice chat in the parking lot. Larry is now running his own show, going where angels fear to tread, i.e., the business of starting up HMOs for small communities, especially out on the Olympic Peninsula. Back to the airport and a short 20-minute flight to Anacortes. I called Jon Galt Bowman and Ann Bowman at their self-proclaimed castle and they had thoughtfully left a Jeep wagon there for me along with instructions. Out to their hideaway overlooking a lake with a C206 amphibian parked at lakeside. I had a fascinating tour of their home and talked about their years in the air show circuit, flying their British and French jet trainers. There are only about 250 pilots who regularly fly in shows, with a typical fee of about \$6K/show. Loads of aircraft pictures, trophies from hunts, rooms with many mementos and collectors' items; almost enough for a museum! Unfortunately the forecast of bad weather for the next several days obliged me to decline their invitation for the night so back to the airport, off mid-afternoon, and a three-hour flight to Everett, Snoqualmie, Ellensburg, Moses Lake, Spokane, and direct to the Cavanaugh Bay grass strip near the south end of Priest Lake. I landed close to dusk, tied up the airplane, called the Fenwicks, and soon Loel was there to bring me to their home. Liz and I had met Loel, Olson and their four children [Bjorn, 7/28/85; Stuart, 11/12/86; Hannah, 7/13/88; Axel, 3/29/90] two years ago, introduced (unknowingly) by a man we had just met a half hour earlier and who turned out to be a troublemaker for the Fenwicks. In 1997 we had spent a delightful three days, "weathered in" at Priest Lake, and had come to know the family reasonably well. The Fenwicks received me with warmth despite their usual frantic pace with house construction, business matters and the like. Olson cooked up a fine halibut dinner, which we ate in their dining room overlooking the hangar, filled to the brim with now two Grumman Mallards, one Grumman Goose, and a Lake Renegade. The first three planes are twins of substantial size and the last a four-seater single. For plane lovers, and especially those who like amphibians, this is a home to drool over! Loel and I had a lively talk about the state of maternal care and post-dinner went to their cabin for the night, 100 yards away.

Wednesday, July 14 -- I joined the Fenwicks for breakfast and then spent most of the day with Stuart, their 2nd child. We rode our bikes several miles along the lakeside and then up a rough dirt road to a tumultuous falls, and then with Loel's help, managed to rig the 16' Hobie Cat for a brisk sail on the lake. Stuart led me on a tour of their new house, now several months from completion and quite unusual in its style of leaving the joists and other inner workings visible for all to see. It is almost like a cutaway engine, clock or electronic device; you can see how it is put together. I had a good talk with Randy, who is overseeing the construction project. Come dinnertime we all piled into the Fenwick's 38' ChrisCraft, built in 1929, for a fast 30-minute ride up lake to the Grand View restaurant. The boat stays in a covered slip, is in mint condition, and goes very fast for its size and age, perhaps 30+ mph. This type of boat was built for the "captains of industry" of the 20s and used to transport them across the Hudson from New Jersey to New York. They would typically have a polished full-time uniformed crew that would pick them up in the early morning or late afternoon to whisk them to the other side of the river. They were supposedly not racing boats but in effect each titan wanted one that was bigger, faster, and/or more opulent than those of his peers. We put on quite a show zipping across the lake, somewhat nervous and on the lookout for a "pesky" police boat that apparently lies in wait for those that travel "too fast". At the Grand View I had a chance to renew acquaintances with Robert and his wife, the owners, and also pilots with their own Lake Amphibian, parked beside their restaurant. Loel paid for our dinners and I bought the drinks and munchies, and we had the pleasure of being served by a bouncy, voluble part-time waitress who had a great repartee. Back across the lake in the total dark, navigation lights on and most of us in the cabin with a nice heater going full blast. It provided me with a chance for a good talk with Olson, and her efforts to ensure a good education for the children. Stuart will be going next fall to South Africa to a boarding school; Loel, an obstetrician, is originally from SA and has abundant contacts there. Loel unfortunately had to stay out in the intermittent rain. Another fine and eventful day!

Thursday, July 15 -- Some on-again, off-again rain today. I went Bjorn to the

plane to try and repair the chronic leak we have had from somewhere on the rear window. No sign of poor sealing but after every rain it is quite damp in the luggage compartment. Bjorn drove the Carryall truck to and from the paved road, with me in the right seat riding shotgun. Back at the Fenwicks I sampled some of their many airplane books and demonstrated on their TV set my video photos of their place. Meanwhile, Olson is pack an immense amount of stuff preparatory to their move to their new house, several months away. In the afternoon the weather improved so Loel flew Stuart and me in the Lake Renegade, taking off from the lake and landing at the Sand Point airport. We took a courtesy car to go shopping, topped off the fuel, and then flew back, though this time with hydraulic pump problems that required Loel to hand pump the landing gear up. A lovely 20-minute trip each way, with Stuart at the controls most of the time; he flies well and Loel did a great job of instruction. That evening we all piled into their speedboat (350 hp, >50 mph) and zipped up lake to the lakeside home of some friends. A great evening of conversation and a delicious salmon meal cooked by Barbara with help from Kathy. It was a great ride back to the Fenwicks on smooth waters and with a near full moon.

Friday, July 16 -- After breakfast, packing and warm goodbyes, I was off the Cavanaugh Bay airport at 10am for the one hour flight along Priest Lake and a deep valley to Cranbrook, BC, and my entrance into Canada. I checked in telephonically with Canadian Customs through their CANPASS system – a marvel of bureaucratic simplicity – checked with weather, and filed a flight plan to Red Deer via the canyons and then prairie. I refueled at Red Deer, check weather, filed a flight plan to Ft. St. John near the start of the Alaska Highway, and then launched for the trip. The trip was scenic and uneventful; a little bumpy, no lunch and as usual, no liquids to avoid the necessity of an early landing, and lots of travel within sight of the mountains but basically over flat or gently rolling land. West of Calgary I was over huge yellow and green fields, flying at 5500', though at the edge of Calgary airspace I came under positive radar control, squawked a unique code, and was advised to fly little more than 1000' over endless suburbs. Beyond Calgary I was mainly over sparsely populated areas, flying direct, with only occasional dirt roads below that connected the various gas/oil wells located in this area. For the

rest it was forest, muskeg, swamp, and the flash or glint of water, all with a background of green. I was feeling good and making fine progress when I came near Ft. St. John so I contacted Edmonton Center and amended my plan to Ft. Nelson, arriving shortly before sunset. On arrival I was flagged to parking by Esso (their competitor is Shell; depending on which taxiway is used by arriving aircraft one or the other gets the business), refueled, tied down, set up the tent in the grass behind the airplane, and then moseyed over to the tower for a nice chat with the under-occupied controller. I made four voicemail calls to Penny, Sasha, Dick Mazur and Liz, called Fred, and then returned to the tent and fought the entering mosquitoes to a standstill. It was a good night, but only potato chips for dinner; I need to get my nutrition under better control.

Saturday, July 17 -- Awake briefly at 4am, sunup just after 5, and up at 6. Another lovely day, great for flying! I woke up with a helicopter "floating around", back and forth, had a minimal breakfast without stove at Ft. Nelson, checked the weather with flight service up in the tower, and then off to Watson Lake, about 288 miles by road miles away, with Whitehorse another 250 miles further. I chatted a bit with a couple from Cranbrook who were returning from Alaska in their 1957 Piper Tripacer. The pilot had about 400 hours of flying time, no GPS(!!!), and the whole trip was by visual navigation. After takeoff I re-joined the Alaska highway, followed since Ft. St. James, and within about 50 miles came to its highest point, Summit Pass. A steep, winding road in between 7000' peaks, with the Cessna zipping along in still air. It was a beautiful flight; 6500' altitude, spectacular mountains, increasing evidence of snow and glaciers, lots of lakes, almost no population except for tiny hamlets along the way, many rivers to cross, and passes to traverse. I landed at Watson Lake, Yukon Territory, on runway 26 some 2.1 hours later. Watson Lake was the site of my memorable mosquito experience 22 years earlier when I camped at the airport at dusk in July en route to Alaska in a Maule. At that time I shut off the engine, climbed out to do a leisurely camp setup, only to be overwhelmed by mosquitoes. I set up the tent in record time, dived in, and didn't emerge until the morning; no supper that night. No mosquitoes this time so I refueled, chatted with Bob and Deb at the FBO and with two pilots in another Cessna 182 (1977 model)

returning to Seattle via the infamous “Trench”, read the brochures on the local attractions, and then departed at 11:10 for the 300 mile trip to Whitehorse, YT. More fuel for the plane, a good burger for me, a visit to the well-appointed flight service station for weather, and then back to following the highway for 200 miles to Northway, the entry point to AK. The highway route wasn't very direct but I was glad to do the extra miles to have the extra margin of safety of the highway, both for an emergency landing and for search and rescue (SAR). There was a fire at Lake Kluane which I had to avoid due to fire bombers in the area, and then blasting at Beaver Creek, with rocks reaching 5000' above the site. The skies were now clouded over, visibility was still good, but rain showers were beginning to appear. I landed at Northway and within 20 minutes the rain started and the field/area went IFR, instrument flight rules. Fortunately there was a small airport hotel right next to the field so I checked in for the night along with others stuck at Northway (including three V-tailed Bonanzas from Montana). The visitor arrangements were dismal and in the process of trying to move the plane by myself in the rain I managed to “ding” the green navigation light; no damage to the wing but I now need to replace the light.

Sunday, July 18 -- A fine morning so after a brief breakfast and a walk down to Flight service for a in-person weather briefing, off for a two-hour flight up the valley to Fairbanks. Unfortunately Isabel Pass on the route to Cordova was IFR, as were the mountains to Anchorage, so Fairbanks was the choice. A beautiful flight up, with huge snowy mountains to my left and BC to the right, and a nice landing on the shortish (3100') general aviation runway 1R. The rest of the day was involved with renting the last car available at Avis (\$59/day), making LD calls (including to former Fairbanks residents Mike and Lynn Rice), setting up my tent in the very well-appointed air camping zone at the end of the airport (3 Cessna 185s, a Piper Charger, and a oldish Maule), and some initial exploration of the city. I had dinner at Pike's Place Restaurant on the Chena River, where I watched golfers try to get the balls across the river (most didn't make it). I returned to my camp, had a last stroll to view the float planes returning at the end of the day, and then turned in at 11pm, with still lots of light available.

Monday, Tuesday, July 19-20 -- Two days, plus most of the 18th and half of the 21st in Fairbanks, held there by weather both locally and most everywhere else. I had hope to fly up to the Yukon River and beyond if I couldn't go to Cordova or Anchorage, but all three directions were not good. So, I checked out the area, starting by folding up my tent and moving to Becky's B&B so the forecast rain would not leave me a soggy mess. During the two days I had several minor airplane problems corrected at Larry's Flying Service (a broken Exhaust Gas Temperature gauge (\$300 for a new one; pricey plane parts); the navigation light; and "swinging" the compass to correct a 10-15 degree error), visited the Fairbanks Visitor Center, Rays Sporting Shop, the Alaska Lands Office's exhibit (very good), gold fields dredge No. 8, the pipeline and roadside exhibit, and best of all, the Univ. of Alaska Museum. I had a long chat with Eugene (Gene) Furman, CPA, of Anchorage at Becky's B&B about all kinds of developments in Alaska; fascinating! He is a certified financial examiner and diplomate of the Am. Board of Forensic Accounting (907/345-1755; 3500 Spinnaker Dr., Anchorage, AK 99516; furmco@alaska.net). Twice a day I checked the weather but still no luck, so Wed. night I hatched Plan B, go to Cordova via the airlines, leave the plane in Fairbanks, and visit Anchorage friends on the way. At last, a chance to get out of the weather-watching mode!

Wednesday, July 21 (Day #20) – A fast breakfast, lots of calls to Carol, Riki, the Clares, the ferry system for schedules to Cordova, Alaska Airlines, Avis (>\$1000 for 16 days of rental or \$950 for two one way rentals!), and then thinking about "Plan C". I went to the Fairbanks airport, arranged for reservations, went to the Cessna, did some rapid re-packing for the trip south, made arrangements for a longer term tie down with the airport management (my spot was to be cleared of airplanes for re-surfacing the tarmac), persuaded one of the airport managerial staff to drive about 4000' down the taxiway with me following in the Cessna to show me where to park, and then he was kind enough to drive me over to the terminal along with my two carry-on bags. I talked with Avis, Hertz, National and others to rent a car in Anchorage but no luck; finally Arctic Car Rental had an auto, for \$60 a day, and I took it! I called my brother John to learn of his biopsy results (positive, unfortunately) but due to miscalculation of the time zone

woke him up at 12:35 AM, ah well, it has happened to me. At last, on Alaska Airlines for the short flight to Anchorage. A taxi ride to Arctic and then a drive to John and Marium Clare, good friends from our sail to New Zealand. Their son John, his wife Ruth, and their daughter Hannah were there to pick up the parents camping trailer. Marium prepared a fine meal for all of us with lots of chatting, and then a tour to see Marium's ham radio "shack", monster rotating antenna, and flower beds. Young John has a 90hp Aeronca but would like to get a Super Cub. He and his family live in Soldatna on the Kenai Peninsula; he teaches school and also about conflict resolution. I believe it was this evening, or perhaps the next, when we were "shook up" with a 5+ earth tremor, the strongest I have felt since 1989. I started for the door but the others stayed put and said it was just a bit more than the normal shake.

Thursday, July 22 -- After breakfast I to the Captain Cook Hotel for an all-day conference of about 150+ environmental activists. Riki was an afternoon speaker and she had told me of the event. It was very interesting and encouraging to see the amount of effort going into environmental preservation. The Governor opened the conference and while his words were nice, I was told that his record, as might be expected, was "mixed." I ate lunch with the group and chatted with a tablemate who worked with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources; he told a tale of cutbacks, harassment, no love from the politicians or most of the citizenry, just a hard life trying to protect the Alaskan environment. After lunch I drove to Arctic and returned the car; one day was enough! They were kind enough to drive me back to the Captain Cook for the rest of the afternoon program. After the conference I went for an hour's walk with Riki, Richard (an economist working with Riki on environmental issues), and two women in their 80s who flew all types of military aircraft from Great Falls, MT, to Northway or Fairbanks during WWII. They now live in Fairbanks and are a lively, entertaining pair with lots of tales to tell. Tough flying, tough weather, tough being a woman in a man's world in the 1940s! Our trek was along the waterfront, greatly changed as a result of the 1964 earthquake, the most powerful one ever recorded in North America. I then took a taxi back to the Clares, dropping off Riki on the way, and had a light supper watching a TV

program about vice and the SF Vice Squad's work in San Francisco. Mariam continues her work as a nurse, three days a week. We talked about one of the doctors who prescribes magnets for many diseases...another case of Amway.

Friday, July 23 – John Clare drove me to the airport where I met Riki and together we made the 45-minute flight by Eva Air to Cordova. She drove us to her house, arriving about 9:30, and then she later went to the airport to meet Sarah Cohen, a 13-year-old from Haines, AK. Her father had worked on environmental issues with Riki and Sarah had saved up her own money for a year to pay for the air trip to Cordova to be with Riki for a week —Riki sure is a magnet for children “of all ages.” Riki, Sarah and I then joined the rest of the members of the “Camp Here-We-Are,” a week-long gathering of Cordova folk plus Sarah (and me!) for fun and games. The camp participants included Linen O’Toole, her daughter Melani and son, Melissa Deal and her son, Belle Mickelson (who runs a one week children’s summer camp for country music playing; she plays the fiddle), and several other children with ages ranging from 8 (at one time, down to 5) up to 13. Though I didn’t note all the names there were at least two older boys, two older girls, on young boy, and perhaps 1-2 in between. We all went in two cars about 10 miles out on a peninsula for a three-hour round trip hike up the mountain. It was quite a scene; lots of chatting, some noise making for the bears (none seen), beautiful forests, a gin-clear stream with a fine log bridge across it, open slopes in places with muskeg, small pools and ponds (the children went swimming in one of them), and at our highest point, meeting a summer trail maintenance crew of four men. They had been working hard, placing wooden steps in the muskeg, upgrading the bridges, etc. It was a golden road to the stars, a very impressive achievement. They were camped a bit below their highest point and carried guns lest the encounter an unfriendly bear. During the walk I talked quite a bit with Linden, who works as a realtor in a now increasingly competitive market with relatively few home turnovers. She has two brothers who are gay, one dying from AIDS, so we had quite a conversation about that infirmity. Her husband, Stewart, is a fisherman on a large seiner. On return from the mountain we went to Linden’s home on the shore of Eyak Lake, the base for the camp, and had a

great dinner, with lots of post-dinner music.

Saturday, July 24 – Breakfast at the O'Tooles, en famille, with crepes, no less; a fine feed! We had light on-again, off-again rain so it was a leisurely morning. I wrote up some of the early days of the trip on Linden's computer and sent them off for inclusion in the bikenfly.org website that Liz prepared. Riki and I left for a long hike in the late morning, climbing steadily up the Crater Lake trail on the steep mountain beside Eyak Lake. At the fork we took a left, climbed to about 1700', and then descended down via the ski lift to Cordova, all the while talking up a blue storm about the politics of the region, environmentalism, last wills and testaments, Alzheimer's (both our mothers), investments (her father sold some shares to help Riki get started in her Copper River Watershed project), friends, her book writing plans, final settlement in the Alyeska case, and war stories from the local battles. Lots of fun! We then went to her office, met Kristin and Marie. I then went to the Whale Book Shop and post office, followed by a fine dinner of venison stew, more music, and a late, late evening at the O'Tooles. The children never seem to want to go to bed.

Sunday, July 25 – Gray skies but despite the weather, monster planning for an expedition of the Camp Here-We-Are crowd from Cordova to Strawberry Point on Hinchinbrook Island to pick, guess what, strawberries. When Riki gets in a frenzy of planning, look out all those of faint heart or in the way. We never knew whether it would happen until it indeed happened, and thereby hangs quite a tale. The berry pickers were to consist of Riki, Melissa, Linden, Tom, Jenny, Belle and five children, or 11 in all. But how to get there? The 27' bowpicker boats were rather small for such a crowd and in any event, it would be hard to get a fisherman to take us all to the island, over an hour away at 25mph, wait for us, and then take us back. But Riki and others worked over Stewart (Melissa's husband) and Danny Carpenter. Stewart's boat was not then in good shape for the trip and Danny was likely to be resistant. At last, after much uncertainty, not the least in the weather, Riki managed to get four of us, including me, a ride over in a Cessna 206 that was already chartered to pick up some people at Strawberry Point, so over we went at low cost on the empty outbound trip. Our pilot was a seasoned

veteran of flying these parts, with more than 20,000 hours in the air and 3 engine failures to his credit. The remaining seven were to come in Danny's boat, *Ambergris*. We aviators arrived at 2pm, stashed a backup tent and Belle's musical instruments (!), walked past the FAA remote controlled radio station, and then a one hour walk down to and along the windswept beach, all the time on the lookout for bears. There were plenty of signs, footprints, scat, and reports by the people who were picked up by the plane. The boys ran out into the cold water with nary a care while Belle and I chatted and enjoyed the scenery. Not many strawberries though. Progressively the weather worsened and in time the mainland was all clouded over, right down to the water, and we knew that our scheduled airplane pickup was "out". In time Danny's boat appeared and then commenced a long painful back and forth as he brought the rest of the crew ashore, one or two at a time, rowing a small inflatable dinghy. He had to leave his boat anchored out a way and what with the strong wind and eventually light rain, it was hard and wet rowing. Once all ashore, however, a fire was built with the abundant driftwood, we confirmed by radio with Cordova Air that the airplane could not come get us, and "jaffles" were cooked over the fire. They were very good! Made of bread, cheese, onions, mustard, tomatoes and salmon, they were cooked in special small clamshell-like irons that one put over the heat until the bread was lightly toasted and the cheese melted. In due course we were able to reach Stewart by radio and he was to leave and meet us half-way and lighten the return load. Danny repeated the slow shuttle service, accepting with grace his now unavoidable role as rescuer of the group. In due course we met Stewart and me plus others made the transfer to his twin-engine, fast bowpicker for the ride back to the harbor. Once again the Camp Here-We-Are crowd gathered at the O'Tooles for a fine dinner and evening. And oh yes, the children did get some strawberries, but not many (half went down the gullet), and Belle had to leave her musical instruments, tent and other items back on the island in the rain, to be picked up two days later with a return flight to the island.

Monday, July 26 – Riki and I went over to the O'Tooles for a cereal breakfast. Sam O'Toole was back from fishing on a seiner, the *Jimini*. We had a long talk about fishing, "the life" and its many problems. Most leave

fishing in less than 5-6 years. To control fishing special permits are issued and the number of days, or “openers,” available for fishing is closely regulated. Fishing permits can be sold from one owner/boat to another and fluctuate according to their perceived market value. Permit costs dropped from \$300K to \$15K as a result of the Exxon Valdez spill. I went with Sam to the boat where I met Mike, the owner, and two young naturopath students who were earning money as crew during the summer. After getting into a good conversation about health matters and fishing I (clearly) hinted that I had always wanted to go out on a fishing boat. No luck! The potential problems of liability are apparently too great. For \$90 I could get a non-resident “crew license” and then be covered by their workmen’s compensation insurance; perhaps someday I’ll be able to get a trip. I left the *Jimini*, did a tour of the marina area, checked out the elliptical orange lighters from a cruise ship and watched all the tourists coming and going; another world, and not one that appeals to me! I checked out the various stores (not many, usually just one of each kind), bought some “seconds” wool socks, returned to Riki’s and then joined her for a trip to her Copper River Watershed Project office. I met her new Executive Director, Kristin, and assistants Lisa Marie and Paul, and we critiqued a trial run of the forthcoming Seattle area slide show talk on the project. Back home for a fine salmon dinner, another game of Russian Bank with Sara (I lost), and reading.

Tuesday, July 27 – Rain, clouds, and more rain. Lounging around and reading during the morning, along with phone calls from Liz and Jeremiah. Liz and the Hornbys are west of Cleveland, back from Tamela Gorman’s fine wedding in NH. Apparently a good come-all-ya occasion that provided some needed play and rest time for the hot and tired cyclists. After a munchie or two, Riki, Sarah and I headed off to Saddlebag Glacier. The trailhead was about 27 miles toward the delta and then a mile off the dirt road that goes to the Million Dollar Bridge. We left the car at 1:10 and walked a good hour, mainly on the level. About half of the trek was through a fine conifer forest with abundant Devil’s Club greenery in the understory. Devil’s Club has big leaves, fine spines, and is 3-5’ high; it is a true pain to walk through. The second half of the trail was more out in the open with tall grass, alders, some cottonwoods in the streambed, and a birch forest. Much of the trip we

would take turns making noises to warn the bears of our presence. None seen, thank heavens. We had intermittent light rain. In due course we arrived at the glacier. We went out on a small spit that projected in the 20-30-acre glacial lake and ate our modest lunch. Back to the car, singing, reciting the Hermit of Shark Tooth Shoal, and just enjoying a walk in the woods. From there we went out to the famous Million Dollar Bridge, terminus of the Copper River Highway, started in 1945 with the intention of following the abandoned railroad bed up the Chitina, thus linking Cordova by land to the Richardson Highway coming down from Glennellen. Construction stopped when the 1964 earthquake dropped the farthest span into the Copper River. The bridge is 48 miles out from Cordova. The last part of the span has been fixed enough to accommodate one vehicle moving slowly over a “^” peaked road. We crossed the bridge, I took some pictures and then we returned to the Childs Glacier overlook, about a mile west of the bridge. Exiting the bridge we were stopped by Martin, a German cyclist we had passed on the way out. He had biked in the rain with full panniers all the way from Cordova via the dirt road, a real tour de force. He asked if we could take him back to town and we agreed, indicating that we would be at the glacier overlook. The Childs Glacier, with a 350’ high vertical face and with a racing (at 10-15 mph) torrent 1200’ wide flowing past, is quite a sight! Every few minutes we would hear sounds that were near duplicates of thunder; ice falls into the river. In 1993 a massive ice fall resulted in a 30’ wave that covered the opposite shore to a depth of 15’ and left salmon flapping and a woman visitor with a broken hip. Martin joined us, took off the panniers and partially disassembled his bike, and somehow we managed to fit him and bike into the Riki’s Ford Explorer. Back to town where we left Martin at Hippy Cove (near to the ferry, a homebuilt sauna available, and a few squatters living on the cheap); Martin was planning to take tomorrow’s ferry and the location was much more convenient than the city campground where he had stayed the previous nights. Riki, Sarah and I then went to the Ambrosia Pizza Parlor for pizza, followed by another game of three-way Russian Bank, which I lost as usual to the card sharks.

Wednesday, July 28 – A glorious day, not a cloud in the sky, and the only one of its kind during my stay in Cordova. Riki had checked with Gayle

Ranney, owner of a Cordova airport-based flying service, where there would be a trip to McCarthy that I could go along on. No luck with McCarthy, site of the now closed Kennicott copper mine, but her son, Steve, was going to do the weekly mail run around Prince William Sound and I was welcome to join him on the circuit. I zipped out to the airport soon was in the right seat in a fine Cessna 185 on amphibious floats. The airplane, N6JV, which rents for \$250/hour, is certainly a pricey vehicle for delivering the mail! Off we went from the land, retracted the wheels, and then for two hours did a 280-mile circuit of much of the Sound. Excellent weather, superb visibility, spectacular scenery along 20-mile-long Hinchinbrook Island, 40 x 5-mile Montague Island, then a water landing at the Port San Juan Fish Hatchery on Evans Island, then north along an extraordinarily beautiful Knight Island and across the mouth of the bay leading to Columbia Glacier to Ellamar, between the mainland and two islands, Bligh (of Bligh Reef fame) and Busby. We delivered and picked up mail at both locations, the latter mailstop being a 10' x 15' raft anchored a fifth of a mile offshore. Steve taxied up, shut off the engine, coasted beside the raft, hopped out, opened a box, removed a green bag and replaced it with another green bag, and off we went. Total time, about 2 minutes; four families served by the POB, weekly service, and mail rates the same as in the lower 48. The country's smallest post office! During our flight we saw a beached whale, some limited clearcutting, occasional cabins, a few fishing boats, and dense flocks of sea birds diving after fish. Back to Cordova via the rugged coastline. A great flight for only \$100 as supercargo to one paid for by the USPS. I returned to Riki's had a small lunch, and then at 2:40pm set out on a hike up to Crater Lake to join the Camp-Here-We-Are group, that left several hours earlier for a day excursion. I climbed alone in the dense forest, making nervous bear-scare sounds, singing despite the stress of steep climbing over a rough trail, but sadly took a wrong turn about 1400' up and then crested out (1700') at the same location Riki and I have visited several days earlier, above the top of the ski lift. At 4 PM I assumed it was too late to retrace my steps to the fork in the trail and then catch the group so descended down to about the 1300' level where I found a fine bench with a tremendous overlook to Eyak Lake and the Copper River Delta. I remained there from 4:15 to 5:45, enjoying a stupendous view and awaiting the return of the group. They were to be back

home by 6 PM but later learned that they had been greatly slowed by a 5-year-old member of their group, and didn't get down until around 7. However, I was visited by several groups of hikers, including 6 college-age youth working as volunteers on various environmental projects. When I asked one of them, a woman named "England", which organization supported her, she replied that she didn't have, and didn't want any support from anybody – too confining and restrictive! There was an Irish woman and Dave from Virginia; a good chat with them and then they set off for further heights, despite the rather late hour. I was next joined by Ellen and Dave from Oakland, and had a long chat with them as we descended the mountain together. As with many of my conversations they found my work with HIV, developing countries, health care costs and systems, and population growth problems of great interest so I was plied with questions all the way back; lots of fun! Riki returned with Sarah at 7:15 and we had dinner together. During the evening I received a call from Liz who was then near Grand Rapids, Ohio. She reported they were typically on the road at 6:30, were averaging 57 miles per day, and were encountering 95 degree temperatures and headwinds after about 11am. An exhausting ride. I also talked with Fred Padula who indicated that an eastern trip with the Cessna was not likely, but that he would have a final decision by August 5th.

Thursday, July 29 – A gray day, though no rain. I drove Riki to the airport for her flight to Anchorage and then Seattle. She will be speaking at several small gatherings of potential donors, and is all psyched up for her foray into big time money-seeking. She gave a couple of trial runs on her spiel, complete with slides and very appropriate background music from a CD by Lorraine Bayes. Though a frequent and accomplished speaker, we were able to help Riki tighten her presentation and its linkage with the slides. On the return trip Sarah Cohen (the 13-year-old from Haines, AK, who had been visiting Riki) and I visited Alaganic Slough, about 8 miles beyond the airport. We took a stroll on the extensive boardwalk but didn't see much in the way of wildlife. Back home I visited some more with Danny Carpenter, who told me more about the fisherman's trials and tribulations and loaned me some foul weather gear for the rafting trip down the Copper River and then went to the Killer Whale bookstore and deli for lunch. At 2pm David Grimes, the

raft trip leader, stopped by and we talked about needed equipment for the trip. He loaned me a tent, boots, and several other important items. Danny and Sarah left, Belle Michelson returned the tent from the eventful trip to Hinchinbrook Island, and I telephoned Penny to learn the bad news on house improvements (\$156,935!!! – later increased to over \$180,000) from the first and only bid. Too much, so back to the drawing boards. Jeremiah reported that the movers had estimated less than \$500 for the move. In the evening I went to the Ambrosia Italian Restaurant for spaghetti and arrived just as Don and Andy (his wife), new friends from the previous day's hike, were finishing their dinner. They stayed while I finished mine and we had a good chat about global and local affairs. I then joined them for a ride in their rental van down to the end of Eyak Lake and several miles up a inlet stream to observe salmon spawning, and if lucky, fishing bears. Lots of salmon, just barely covered by water, at least 4 other vehicles with the same plan, but no bears. Back at Riki's I spent my last hour reading her Whole Earth Catalog – a fascinating collection of good ideas for making a lighter impact on our planet.

Friday, July 30 – Eureka! A call from Liz, then in Ohio sweltering in 95 degree heat and humidity and with headwinds most days from 11am on. With only so many miles they can accomplish before the heat and headwinds set in they are being to question their earlier decision to bike from east to west. I start doing some serious packing for the river and chat with Danny. Mid-morning I drive to the Killer Whale bookstore and deli, browse around, buy three Alaska Geographic books (they are a wonderful resource on Alaska, with beautiful pictures), have a sandwich, and Danny introduced me to Jennifer Park, sole proprietor of Copper River Fleece, where I bought some bright red heavy fleece socks. I almost have a fetish about heavy socks, fearing cold feet in the uninsulated rubber boots I'll be wearing for a week on the river. I get some money out of the ATM (I still consider it a miracle!), and then drove about five miles to the end of the road, passing Hippy Cove, to a fish factory at the end of the line. I parked for about 15 minutes to watch the salmon jumping – an unexplained behavior during the spawning season. I returned, stopping at each of the various facilities to check them out, including about 15 minutes watching the outflow from the fish factory.

A zillion gulls of all types swirled around and dove for the fish entrails mush that swirls out of the underwater pipes. I then strolled over to the Coast Guard cutter and buoy tender, *Sweetbrier*. I asked if I might go aboard and to my surprise, it was "open ship." A rating, Matt Perry, gave me the grand tour of the 180', 1027-ton cutter, built in Nov. 1943. In 1944-45 it served in the South Pacific and experience heavy air attacks in the Ryukyu Islands and Okinawa. The cutter handles buoys up to 9' x 35', including their huge cement anchors. It spends about 200 days per year at sea, typical tours are of four days though last month it went up to the Bering Sea. The standby crew numbers 7, who could handle it in an emergency, but normal crew is 7 officers and 50 enlisted personnel. While in Cordova the *Sweetbrier* had a change of commander and next year will be replaced with a new cutter. I then moseyed over to the seiner dock, checked out the big seiners, kicked hawsers, watched while one seiner received its spotter Super Cub on floats, and noted the fast hands of fishermen repairing nets. Next on my tour was the Cordova museum, with a fascinating display of the town's colorful history. The museum shared a building with the library where I spent several hours reading about the massive 1964 earthquake, the just happened shootout in Atlanta by a day trader. My last stop was the local hospital with 23 beds, including 10 for nursing care. The hospital was built, by mistake, below the level assumed to be at risk of a major tsunami; presumably with a warning they would have to evacuate the patients to higher ground. Returning to Riki's home I then called Penny Depaoli about her efforts to get a reasonably priced bid on our house remodeling project; the first and only one to date was horrendous. Last stop was for dinner at Pam and Bob Smith's, along with other members of our raft trip. Pam is Dune Lankard's half-sister. Bob and I talked about handguns, prompted by the Atlanta shootings. Suffice to say that he, along with most other Alaskans with whom I talked about guns, was suspicious of government intentions, felt that guns had to be available in case the government interfered excessively with the citizenry, and was opposed to any further restrictions on guns. This is a topic that won't make me popular in Alaska.

Saturday, July 31 (Day #30) -- I started the day with calls to Lucille Hornby, who is gradually making progress with the conversion to Excel of my WHO

spreadsheet program, and with Jeremiah Paknawin-Mock, who is staying in our house during the summer. He has obtained an estimate from the Shamrock Moving Co. to the effect that three men for half a day would be required, for about \$635. I also called my mother, now in the Geer Nursing Home in Connecticut, and left a message for Liz. At last, calls made, it is up, out and away to the Cordova airport, named after Merle "Mud Hole" Smith, and packed into a Cessna 206 and Cessna 207, with a third trip to follow. Our total crew consisted of: David Grimes (our leader, Box 1636, Cordova; 907/424-5863); Dune Lankard (POB 460, Cordova; /424-5890; fax -5891; dune@redzone.org, or www.redzone.org); Pam Smith (Dune's half-sister, one year older; POB 251, Cordova, 99574-0251; /424-3520; kipkings@webtv.net; she is married to Bob and has an older son, Jim), Pam's daughter, Jennifer, 10; Carolyn Taormina (honeysuckle_dew@hotmail.com; David's free-wheeling friend); Amy Gilroy (203/877-8941; amyog@aol.com) and her daughters Shannon, 13, and Charlotte, ~10. It was an amazing packing job and I couldn't quite imagine how the Cessnas would fly. But fly they did, with me in the right front co-pilot seat of the 2nd plane, a 206. We left at 10:30 and arrived at 11:15 after a phenomenal flight up the Copper River, anticipating our trip back down by raft. I was totally enchanted, the trip enhanced by fine Baroque music in the headsets. I took some videos on the way up and after turning the corner, on our final approach to the dirt strip at Chitina. For the next few hours we carried all the baggage down to the river, inflated the two rafts, checked out the various fish wheels along the river bank, and finally, at 3 PM, launched on the river. I also had some time to check out the C152 and Beaver that were at the airport, but no other flying traffic. Our host, Dune Lankard, the son of a Kansan father, born in Germany, and a mother that was half Eyak and half Aleut Indian, had a long chat with some other Native Americans that came down to observe the doings. Once on the river we proceeded quickly with the fast current though it was quite deceptive; the riverbanks flew by, the distant scenery passed by at a slow pace, and yet all the time we seemed becalmed since the water around us moved at about the same speed. I shared a raft with Dune, Amy and Pam, and the children went with David and Carolyn. In the afternoons we even went backward on the local water since the strong up-canyon winds retarded our drifting a bit. We soon passed under the last bridge that

connects McCarthy with Glennellen and saw a fair number of fisherpeople along the banks with their RVs and pickups parked in choice fishing spots. The old railroad bed goes along the river from McCarthy to Cordova and during the first 10 or so miles below the bridge it is passable by vehicles but after that it becomes increasingly “bushed out” until eventually it is all but impossible for even those on foot. Along the way it crosses many streams and with disuse most bridges and trestles have rotted away. We reached a lovely campsite that was just at the limit of legal fishing, having made a brief stop 20 minutes before then to pick up a big pile of drift wood for use with the campfire. Dune put it all behind him on the raft and appeared to be quite the wood peddler. The night was pleasant, no rain but lots of bugs, including some very diminutive and dumb flies, whose bite was bad but who were very easy to swat.

[A brief post-trip note about the Copper River. The Copper River Delta, ancestral home of the Eyak people, is one of America's premier wetlands and an enormous sanctuary for migratory birds, salmon and countless other wildlife. The Delta forms an ecosystem with adjacent Prince William Sound and the little fishing village of Cordova sits between the two. The Delta and the Sound are ringed by mountains, glaciers and rainforests of Sitka spruce and Western Hemlock, and is the northernmost part of the 2500-mile coastal temperate rainforests that spans from Kodiak to the redwoods of California. The raft trips are offered on a graduated cost scale ranging from a minimum of \$300 to about \$600 per person, depending on ability to pay. The rafts are oar-powered though the swift river current does most of the work. Accommodations are adequate but very basic, the ecological footprint is light, and the raft trips are especially promoted to political decision-makers such as staff of Congress-people and the like in the hopes they will be better informed and motivated to save such pristine areas from adverse development.]

Sunday, August 1 – Up around 6:30 and despite having worked hard the night before to kill all the mosquitoes in the tent, there were quite a few blood-filled ones resting (and digesting) near the roof. As I zapped them one by one the blood spots marked their final resting places. We had a leisurely

“mobilization,” launching the rafts at 11:40. We made stops for firewood, R&R, visits to nearby canyons, and while the magnificent scenery slowly passed by, long talks with Dune regarding Copper River problems, threats, and opportunities. Dune’s German-born father married his Aleut/Eyak mother. There are a total of seven children by one father and several mothers, with vast differences in their aspirations, activities, and political views. Only Dune and to a lesser extent Pam, his older half-sister, are politically active. His brother Joe is very much on the other side of the political fence, an advocate of active “development” of the Copper River watershed. Fascinating tales of community and family dynamics! That evening David set up a net mounted on a raft, hoping to catch salmon swimming upstream near the river’s edge where the current is much less strong. In due course we caught two fine “reds,” or sockeye salmon. Pam cleaned them before an admiring assembly and soon we had one to savor for dinner.

Monday, August 2 -- After a fine breakfast, usually of cereal and fruit but at times with pancakes, bacon, eggs and other hot items, we embarked at 9:30. The river canyon became narrower and deeper, with the adjacent mountains reaching 8000’ or more into the sky. There were hanging glaciers galore, a moderate amount of snow on the northern sides of the mountains, long thin streams coursing down the steep mountainsides, quite a few waterfalls, and everywhere, a lush green almost soft appearance created by the dense alder forests. Of uniform height, color and consistency, the alder forests, with their curved trunks branching out in all directions from the soil, were almost impenetrable. Great to look at from a distance but very difficult to transit! We stopped for half an hour by a large sand dune near the old railroad right-of-way and while the younger set did running jumps off the dune I took photos of the flowers (and of the jumpers). It was a challenge, even in sheltered locations, to get the wonderful tall mauve flowers to stand still for the camera. Just when I had a flower well framed and in focus a zephyr breeze would come along and it would begin to sway. We went a bit further down the river until we came to a huge expanse of sand dunes, the “Big Sandy” stretch of the river. It extends eight miles to the confluence of the Bremmer, whose clear waters pour into the Copper from inside

Wrangell-St Elias National Park. We scrambled up a 45-degree 75' dune/bluff and then as far as the eye could see, fine, near-white sand. After doing some fine jumping off the edge – Dune made some especially dramatic jumps – we each wandered off in different directions. I headed downriver for about a mile, took videos of the endlessly shifting, changing mosaic of sand patterns as the wind blew over the sand ridges, and meditated in the lovely surroundings. It was quite warm, away from the cold water and wind while on the raft. Back to the bluff I watched the rafts and children while Amy did some exploring by herself. Again in the rafts, we headed a short additional distance down the river to a campsite on the west side, still in view of the sand dunes. From there we could see the massive sand-colored haze produced by the strong afternoon upriver wind. The haze was impressive, obscuring much of the upriver scenery. We had a nearby stream and though animal tracks were reasonably frequent, no sightings as yet. Two German kayakers, dressed to the “nines” in their wetsuits, joined us for our delicious salmon dinner, including fishhead and eyeball stew. David brought out his guitar and treated us to some of his own songs and I led the group in a few olde-tyme favorites. After supper the Germans, facing a tight ferry schedule to get them back to Anchorage, decided to head further downstream and shorten the distance remaining to their takeout; they will have to rely on finding a Good Samaritan with a pickup. As the long evening twilight commenced the bugs once again set upon us but what with long sleeves, pants tucked inside of my 14” rubber boots and the occasional use of a head net, I was reasonably immune to their predations. Today, as previously and on subsequent legs, I had long talks with Dune about the threats to the Copper River watershed and the difficulties he has had in recruiting support for his cause. He and Riki Ott are trying to work in tandem, each independent of the other but being mutually supportive. Dune assumes the frontal assault role, trying to stop clear-cut logging and the like by whatever means are possible – legal, political or direct action – while Riki works to build alternative non-destructive, non-extractive economic opportunities for the communities so that they will be more amenable to preserving the land.

Tuesday, August 3 -- A leisurely day since we had only a short distance to

the next camping spot. A beautiful early morning with low lying fog on the far (eastern) side of the river. Some of us donned mosquito headnets and despite the bugs, enjoyed some wonderful raspberry pancakes, the berries having been picked the previous day. We left at 3 PM and arrived at our next location a bit after 5. The river was wider, slower, and more open; the clouds were gradually increasing, signs that we were gradually approaching the coast. Chip, Amy, and Dune joined me on the raft and I took a turn at rowing. The other raft, with Dave, Carolyn and the children, was in almost constant laughter, Dave having a very willing audience for his antics. We passed high bluffs, "sandfalls" down the banks, and set up camp at a wide valley on the east side. We encountered a zillion bugs, including many of the hyper-dumb flies (easy to kill but with a painful bite so we had to keep on the lookout for their landings). I set up my tent in the shade of a tree but with a good view of the river. Despite a rapid entry I had to kill 39 flies before I could settle down for a read and short nap. We had a latish evening; Carolyn cooked a fine dinner of tofu, onions, herbs, and rice. We had a fine sunset and bed was later than usual at 10:45. Amy's husband died recently of a rapidly progressive prostate cancer. She is editor of a computer industry journal.

Wednesday, August 4 -- We had some light rain during the night. Despite the massive kill-off the previous afternoon and again at bedtime I found many blood-filled mosquitoes in my tent the following morning. More red spots on the tent as I got my revenge! I read two more chapters of Farley Mowat's book, *"The Boat Who Wouldn't Stay Afloat,"* a real panic about a ornery 30' schooner up in Newfoundland; said to be a true tale but hard to believe, though a delight to read. Dune had played some trick on the girls the previous day so they plotted their revenge, taking and hiding his shoes while he was still asleep. Much back and forth chasing, pulling, threatening to drag him in the river (they actually succeeded!), or vice versa, before the dust finally settled down and we had a breakfast of chocolate pancakes – actually quite good! David, Dune, Carolyn and I took a raft up one of the sloughs, and then waded up a small stream surrounded by thick alders, all the time making anti-bear noises. The stream finally became too small with no prospect of coming out into the open valley. During our passage down

the river we talked about parents, families and wills, a curious mixture in such a beautiful location. Dune and Pam had “challenging” childhoods, a stern father and a difficult step-mother. That evening David played his guitar, we had a great time doing the Macarena, and they provided me with a surprise birthday cake (the day is August 14th but this was their only chance). The girls put on a “show” for us and at various times reminded us of their life ambitions, to be a famous actress, famous singer, and famous artist; nothing restrained about these young ladies. Though we had intermittent light rain David had set up several large tarps and what with our own rain gear and the tarps we had no real problem with the wet stuff.

Thursday, August 5 – Last day on the river, with very mixed feelings. It has been a great trip, wonderful friends, fantastic scenery, a moving experience, literally and figuratively, but it will also be nice to get back to Cordova and the return trip to so-called civilization. It had rained a bit, on and off, during the night and it was a bit damp in the morning but nothing significant. Low clouds, and once again we are back into the coastal mountains and their effect on the weather pattern. We aimed for an 8am departure but it was after 9 when we made it onto the river, fast, deep gray, and intermittently turbulent. Within an hour or so we came upon the biggest rapids yet, though by taking the western side of the river we avoided standing waves of 5 or more feet high. As we zipped down through the narrows we saw our first and only bear, a young adult, who rather than run, stood up and watched us pass. We landed just below the rapids for 30 minutes and saw many bear and eagle prints in the sand, a great place for “fishing.” Back on the river and down past Miles and Childs glaciers, the latter in particular with huge ice falls and a face that was 300’ high. Near Miles glacier we threaded our way through ice bergs and sampled pieces of clear hi-density ice. At Childs we were a bit apprehensive and expectant of a ice fall. Several years ago a huge ice fall had caused a mammoth wave that crossed the 1200-foot river width and then rose up on the other side to a depth of 11 feet. A woman was injured and salmon were found flopping, high and dry, many 100s of feet from the edge. But no such luck, good or bad, to witness a fall while we passed. We estimated the river’s speed at about 15 mph for quite a long stretch. The river then spread out, with many channels and the

mountains well set back on the plain. In due course, around 5 PM, we came upon the take-out place and the two vehicles that had recently arrived. After an hour of deflating the rafts and packing the vehicles we were on our way for the 40+ miles back to Cordova. About 5 miles into our trip we came upon two men in a newish but battered pickup with a completely flat and destroyed left front tire. This was the result of traveling up to 90 mph on the dirt road and of literally flying/jumping through the air at a deep water crossing just beyond the Million Dollar Bridge. Dumb testosterone types! They were unable to find the jack. We helped them get the car up on their now found jack and then left them to change the tire. Back in Cordova a delightful decompression, shower, and clothes wash for me, and then over to Pam's for a pizza supper (I had contributed \$100 to treat the group to pizza) and, on request, a replay of my whole video tape. It was very well received! Back to Riki's for another night on the floor.

I've inserted below a longish description of the Copper River by Johanna Eurich, who rafted down the river earlier this year. Riki sent me her account which captures, far more eloquently the origins, effects, power, mystery and moods than I could ever do. I was going to shorten her piece but I speaks so well to the river that I have left it intact.

The Copper River, by Johanna Eurich

Dune says it simply. "You start in the Land of Summer, travel through Wind and Sand, then into the Land of Ice to come out in Rain." He says this as we eat dessert under the Million Dollar Bridge which spans the boundary between ice and rain, like a grand old rusty gate. Childs Glacier looms above, growling and thundering as huge slabs of ice slough off just out of sight. He forgets to mention one thing -- the size of the country.

The Copper River watershed is oversized even by Alaska standards, where bigness is commonplace. Then again, Dune may know the Copper River too well to think of it as merely big. He grew up here, as did his ancestors, the Eyak people, who were digging copper in the Wrangell Mountains long before white explorers "discovered" the motherlode

responsible for both the name of the river and the construction of this bridge. Maybe he is comfortable eating a fruit crumble, with one glacier breathing down on him, and ice from another bobbing by, after scratching and hissing like a grumpy cat as it's deflected by a huge triangular concrete pillar.

I am not comfortable.

I am numb, tired, dazed and dirty, after five days on the river doing nothing more than eavesdropping on the conversation between wind and water. I've scrambled to take notes, giving up at times and using my camera to record the effects of that conversation on the country around me, only to have it escape the frame, but not before the wind grinds silt into camera lens and body. I could spend a lifetime and never understand everything being said -- in the ripples, upwellings, clouds, silt, sand and dust devils here on the Copper.

But one thing I know -- five days have been spent floating and touching the edges of not one, but two rivers. One, of water and glacial silt, the color of concrete, follows the course drawn on maps; and another, of wind, unseen and unmapped, flowing in the opposite direction. I was prepared for the water but not for the wind.

The men who built the Million Dollar Bridge knew this wind well. They called it the Copper Wind and fought it during the winter of 1909 while struggling to sink pilings for this crucial link in the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad, designed to deliver copper to Corodova. Faced with subzero temperatures and howling tempests, engineers designed windbreaks to shield the men, but work had to stop when gusts blew them out. Men huddled inside wooden camp buildings waiting for it to subside enough to re-erect the wind-breaks before getting back to work on the bridge.

It's a huge river of wind blowing from Prince William Sound across the Copper flats, picking up velocity from the downslope catabatic winds off

Childs Glacier, and running across Miles Lake to tussle with other downslope winds from the face of the Miles Glacier before turning and cutting its way inland through the Saint Elias range, skirting the Wrangells, gathering the air flowing from dozens more glaciers, channeled by the same mountains that keep the Copper River in its banks. The Copper Wind does not appear on any of the state's weather maps.

I know I'm in trouble when I call the state climatologists and the receptionist asks me what company I'm with. When I finally get through to describe the wind to meteorologists, they tell me it's just a micro-climate. I am incredulous. Up until now I viewed micro-climates as small local phenomena -- the reason tulips on the south side of my house bloom earlier than the ones in the back. Micro-climates also explain other local phenomena like the way a lake can keep temperatures along its shores warmer in the fall and cooler in the spring.

The idea that an area as huge as the Copper River could be a micro-climate is staggering. It means there is less specificity in those weather maps I watch on TV than I was led to believe. It also means the Copper winds remain undiscovered territory blowing in plain sight.

Faced with limited science, I ask one of the state's climatologists for an explanation of what might be the mechanisms that would make clouds follow a river course? It's his turn to be incredulous. But I push on and describe my night-long vigil watching a soft breeze carry puffy clouds up river, chugging them upstream between the mountains. The clouds line up like ghosts of train cars which also used to follow this river on their way to the Kennecott Copper mine.

Sidestepping my atmospheric trains, he says he doesn't see any relationship between the river and the wind. I also begin to suspect he is losing patience and thinks me a fool. He explains that there are no instruments along the Copper to give meteorologists data to answer such questions. Their maps deal with large systems influencing huge areas. He's implying that their business is more serious, more practical than mine with

the wind.

“Don't ask us what's going on, ask the locals,” he advises. Clearly what scientists need is what a NASA engineer once called “ground truth”. Confronted by all the information they were getting from their satellites pictures of the earth, they had no idea what the images meant until they could pair them up with information from the ground or “ground truth.” Julie, who earned “ground truth” rafting many summers on the Copper, said, when the puffy clouds appeared, that they were a good omen and predicted rightly a beautiful and relatively windless day.

But what's the mechanisms at work? I find some answers at the Prince William Sound Science Center where Stephen Bodnar, a former commercial fisherman, is studying the winds bedeviling Prince William Sound. Fascinated by weather since he was a child, and with 17 years of fishing behind him, Bodnar is the closest thing there is to a local weatherman in the Sound. He has years of “ground truth” under his belt.

“They use the same gap,” Bodnar says pointing to the map and the mountain ranges which rim the Sound. “These are tremendously tall mountains.” They include the 19,000-foot peak of Mt. Logan in the Saint Elias range and the slightly smaller 13,000-foot peaks of the Chugach range.

“Not only are these mountains big but they rise out of the sea with huge glaciers at their hearts. They wall off interior Alaska from the coastal climates and the North Pacific storms.”

Driven by huge pressure differences, air closer to the surface is forced to use the same gaps in the mountains used by rivers to travel between the two systems. And a big river like the Copper, cutting through big mountains like the Wrangles and St. Elias ranges, has a big wind traveling above it.

I first met the Copper Wind before my rafting party even got to the river. We had just turned off the main highway and descended into a valley

when we dived into a pool of silvered air. Through the van windows we saw a soft-focused landscape with hillsides bathed in a haze of suspended silt.

Not until we arrived in Chitina and looked along the river did we feel the wind. The dirt road to our put-in took us out of town and past steep overlooks revealing a panorama of dust. We descended into the maelstrom buffeted by winds that seemed capable of lifting grit from the tops of waves.

Jeff and Julie, the two guides who had gone ahead to get the rafts built and loaded, were sheltered inside of their truck cab. They walked over, burnished by the Copper Wind, looking like hardrock miners with gray silt rimming the edges of their sunglasses. After eating lunch inside the van, we retreated to town, to organize our gear and put on the wetsuits and the rest of our river outfits. Impatient to get on the river, none of us wanted to get back into that wind.

Soon enough, we would get to know both the Copper River and its wind. Inside the "Chitina Emporium", a shop in an old railroad era log building, I buy a package of "Summer Wind", a tea made of mint chamomile, sprucetips, fireweed, rosehips, yarrow, clover, wormwood, coltsfoot, and raspberry leaves. For me, it's a prayer because the name evokes a gentle breeze - not the blow rattling blue plastic tarps and other makeshift wind-shelters erected by fishermen hoping to catch Copper River reds in the first dipnet opening of the summer.

Finally, late in the evening, we push off in our bright blue rubber rafts. On the water the winds seems less angry, less gritty. It's cooler and softer. The dust devils swirling on the bar leave us alone to float around the corner into the relative shelter of Woods Canyon.

It's as if the river and the wind have an uneasy détente. It's gentler here on the water. On land it releases its full fury. But even here the occasional gust scatters a flock of windwaves before it like a school of sardines fleeing a barracuda.

"It's always windy at this put-in. But today is one of the worst I've seen," says Julie. "Tomorrow we should get on the river early, because the wind usually picks up in the afternoon."

I imagine that in the sections of slow water, one can be stuck paddling hard to get nowhere. I am grateful for the swift current at our put-in and settle back to enjoy the canyon. Fishermen hang off its sides, anchored to rocks with ropes they have used to rappel down from the old railroad bed, once an engineering marvel of its time, now a crude dirt track -- all intent on netting salmon. Only a few succeed.

Somewhere inside Woods Canyon the wind leaves us. We emerge into a calm evening. We camp on a beach of fine silt at the top of a steep gravel bank marking the extent of the river's normal level. Above, the beach is covered with wind rippled sand. Below, the current has carried away the finer material leaving behind heavier stones.

Normally these stones would be under water, but it is early June and the Copper is low. The glaciers that feed it have not yet melted enough to raise the water level and we scramble up twelve feet of steep slippery gravel. While one part of my mind tries to estimate the water velocity that would leave just this size of stones behind, the other part ponders the marks left by the river of wind flowing overhead.

Just as glaciers can increase the flow in the Copper River they can do the same to the Copper Wind. Big glaciers, like the Miles which reportedly has more ice in it than the European Alps, and ice fields, like the Bagley, one of the largest in the world, can increase the wind's velocity. Ice supercools the air making it denser, heavier, and generating its own high pressure areas. Ice fields and large glaciers, acting like huge refrigerators or islands of cold air can rev up the wind and drive it up the river like a race car.

I tasted some of that cold air on one of the hottest days of our trip down the Copper. We started off several miles upstream of Abercrombie rapids in the hot sun. Some of us stripped down to shorts as we floated

around the corner into an open refrigerator. The sun was still bright, but we were shivering and putting on layers fast. Though we could not see the glacier responsible, we had just entered the gateway to the Land of Ice.

In the summer high pressure cells sitting over the Gulf of Alaska drive the Copper Wind through the gaps in the mountains towards the Interior's low pressure systems which hungrily suck it in. I watch this breeze, in one of its gentler moods, tow clouds upriver on a magical morning when the sun gilds the mountains and the air is so crisp you can almost hear it crunch.

Stephen Bodnar at the Cordova Science Center knows the Copper Wind in all seasons. He says this huge weather pump reverses in winter, when interior Alaska becomes a giant freezer, producing huge high pressure cells pushing out towards the warmer lighter air on the coast. On the Copper River, the temperature differential can be as much as 70 degrees. While Chitna shivers at 50 below, the Copper flats enjoy 20 above. On those days the cold air jets through the mountains reaching velocities of 100 miles per hour as it crosses Miles Lake. When the Copper and Northwest Railroad was running they used a chain as a wind gage. If watchmen saw the chain, at the 27-Mile Bridge also known as "Flag Point", flying straight out in the wind they would stop the train and wait for the wind to die down before proceeding on to Childs Glacier and Miles Lake.

Making the switch between seasons can be violent. Commercial Fishermen like Bodnar have long known that the Equinoxes, both spring and fall, bring big storms to the Sound and the Gulf of Alaska. He wants to place instruments on the Sound and on the flats to better map the Copper Wind and all the other rivers of wind in his "micro-climate".

"It's awfully big for a micro-climate," I observe.

"Well it depends on how you think of the country." He chuckles, "All of Prince William Sound is my backyard."

On the Copper River, I watch wind and water chatter on like two old friends repeating the same phrases, the same patterns, both exhibiting a fondness for scalloped ripples. The wind shapes them on the river surface as it does in the sand on shore. The water also leaves them behind frozen hard in silt-mud. I find a rock imbedded in mud like a book turned up on its spine. Water had split the rock into thin pages which wind-driven sand wedged open as if to add a word or two to the journal.

One night we camp in a sandbox the two forces played in. We pitch our tents among their tiny sand castles, less than a foot tall. We feel bigger than Gulliver, walking over miniature sliprock canyons and buttes made out of sand by water and wind. The river had deposited ground rock, sorting it to the perfect consistency for their play. Then rain had soaked the top, cementing the grains together into wild drippy shapes. Then wind stole the dry sand out from under, causing the crust to curl. Some sections are layered as sandstone and tipped on edge. The whole is so fragile. A careless touch or step could crumble it.

One day I watch rocks being carried in the white foam of a waterfall, listen to boulders grinding the river bottom, and ponder the rhythms in the conversation between water and wind. One would move faster than the other. Then the roles would reverse. Both move rock. Only the time scale is different. One might think the wind is faster, but water is stronger. Moving in concert, as any sailor can tell you, they are formidable, pushing sea water into unbelievable rogue waves, up to a hundred feet high or more.

Though less dramatic than a rogue wave, several times during our trip down the Copper, we heard the cannon shot of rock losing its hold and saw the sun on boulders as they fell -- giant golden flakes of dandruff. That was water's work, seeping in, freezing and shoving its way deep into stone to break its grip. Wind can only grind at the mountain's flanks.

It's wind-sorted soft sun-warmed silt which seduces me on the second day of our trip. I walk off during lunch to wiggle my toes in talcum so fine I could swim in it. I dive in and, lying on my stomach, fall asleep puffing gray clouds with each breath.

I should have saved my breath. Why lull around in sand when the next day the wind will scour us with it all day? It will start early and end late. A blow will catch us at breakfast and we will leave camp, powdered gray immigrants trying to sneak across the border to refuge. Silt will grind its way into my nose, hair, teeth, and gear. Our crucible, the wind will stop thought.

Numb, we pass hanging glaciers, mountains, waterfalls, fishwheels stranded on gravel bars and eagles airing themselves in the tempest. They will fly sideways hardly moving their wings as the wind keeps them aloft a few feet above the waves. We will stop early at Surf creek, named for the sand dunes in back.

But this day the campsite shows a mean face, wind-carried silt has conspired with a late spring to bury our refuge in a mountain of snow. Our campsite looks like the terminus of an avalanche chute, a moonscape of snow and grit. A thin ridge protects us from the now familiar ghostly haze of windblown sand. Looking across the river, the green hillside on the other side is replaced by a solid wall of chaotic grit the same gray as a late night TV screen after signoff -- and equally devastating. Unknown to us, a hundred miles away high winds driving a forest fire will force the Army to evacuate Fort Greely outside of Fairbanks. Even if we had known we would have been too tired to care.

Deep in the Land of Wind and Sand, we enjoy a near breezeless day. The water slows and we float by "gumdrop" mountain and recall another peak which looked like a chocolate and vanilla soft ice-cream cone. We reach a place I'll call "Big Sandy" - a huge forty-foot -high bluff of sand. The face turned to the river by an eight-mile-long peninsula of sand at the confluence of the Bremmer and the Copper. I row against a back eddy -- another lesson on the power of water and my puny abilities to do in the face of it.

All day this more placid Copper River impresses me with its power and mystery. The water is so opaque that we are careful not to step out in it because it's hard to know how deep it is. Teka, who organized this trip and my guide on the big white water of the Talkeetna canyon, teaches us to read the river.

Standing at the back of the raft she picks out a “v” in the water with the tip pointing upstream. She says it is an obstruction in the water and to avoid it. Then she picks out a huge downstream “v” and explains that it's a channel. She tells me to row into it, so we can use its currents to help push us along. In white water there are constriction currents, the force that pushes water into a hump. The danger in a “hole”, the depressed areas near constriction currents, is that it can suddenly expand. If you stick your paddle into one, it can stop you cold and throw you out of the boat.

The Copper is so big it has multiple currents traveling at different speeds and directions. One morning in an otherwise steady current, I watch a lens of flat water, an embryonic whirlpool, pass me and another form in the distance. They well up from the bottom. Jeff, one of our guides, says “the topography of the bottom shapes the water.” And is shaped by it.

In its quieter moments the Copper comes alive, breathing, sighing, like some slumbering beast. Bubbles gurgle out of nowhere. I feel like a snail making my way down the length of a whale.

“Those upwellings are mysterious,” Tika says. “No one knows exactly why they occur.”

They probably reflect some morphology of the bottom, but it could also be the water traveling in different directions at different speeds, rubbing against itself, jostling and pushing itself up to the surface to find a new place in the flow to the sea.

We know so little about what is going on in the depths of the

Copper River. Despite being mapped, it, like the unmapped Copper Wind above, is undiscovered territory. On the water, for the first time since we started out four days ago, I find the size of this country soothing. It no longer overwhelms. It fills me up and I am content.

Others have different reactions. The sand dunes, turn one of the girls in our party into a leaping maniac. Alexandra flails out over the edge, to slide to a stop on her ass ten feet down the mound of sand. Marybeth, my friend who is normally so contained, also has to take the leap. She jumps over and over, lengthening her reach. Then like the North Carolina girl she was, she walks off barefoot to meander, with warm sand between her toes.

Writing about the dunes of the Outer Banks of North Carolina, Jan DeBlieu describes restless moving mounds. The wind blows away the sand from their steep faces and deposits it on their shallower back sides. Towns built in the protective lee of those dunes battle advancing sands.

Miles from the sea, the dunes on the Copper do not have the same shape as those on the Outer Banks. Looking up at the mountains and glaciers surrounding us, I wonder about the forces that shaped this beach, and inspect the willow and equisitum imitating oceanside plants like sea grape and dune grass.

The dunes of the "Big Sandy" stretch eight miles to the confluence of the Bremmer, whose clear waters pour into the Copper from inside Wrangell St Elias National Park. The largest national park in the United States, it backs up to Kluane Park in Canada. Together they make the largest continuous park areas in the North American Continent. Inside are unclimbed peaks and unexplored valleys - terra incognita.

Not that there isn't plenty of terra incognita to discover here on the Copper. There are no maps of the Copper Wind, and, though the Copper River has been mapped, the ground beneath its surface is unknown, ready for someone to decipher its restlessness.

Maybe it's a boy thing, but terra incognita seems to attract many men. They want to "go where no one has gone before". - to be Sir Edmund Hillary as he steps on Everest, or, better yet, to be a scout for Lewis and Clark as they map the continent. Hillary stepped in the realms of Gods. Those who follow die as often as they return... and Lewis and Clark, like ambitious street punks, they scouted someone else's neighborhood. Native American tribes had lived there and already named the rivers and mountains.

I am not interested in tempting the Gods and have been brought up too well to trespass. I would rather ask permission, walk with those who are there, enjoy their company and learn the history of their paths.

In a way that's what I've been doing here on the Copper, listening to Water and Wind. While puzzling out their relationship I've begun to understand their anima, their aliveness. Sharing their living room, walking their paths, sleeping in their sandbox, listening to them talk, I no longer view them as inanimate forces. These are beings, big beings, different than you or I, different in their beingness, but nevertheless beings.

It's important to be here, to touch, to smell, taste, see and listen. Aliveness doesn't survive the virtual. Pictures and graphs rob them of their anima. How would you like to be known only through graphs and medical charts, and, if you're lucky, a snap shot or video? To know these beings I have to get out and be in their presence. It's not always comfortable but it is an honor. Seldom in a snail's lifetime does it get a chance to crawl over the full length of a whale -- but here I sit, listen and travel, with not one, but two huge beings, through their neighborhood.

Usually I have been content with a sense of place limited by my own perceptions. This time I am glimpsing a little of the sense of place expressed by Wind and Water. This is Terra incognita and Being incognita all wrapped up in one. I don't know if there is a lens big enough to capture it.

Friday, August 6 – Up early in the morning to the sequential parade of three women to the bathroom, located at the foot of my bed. Riki now had her

friends Lorraine (a feminist singer / guitarist) and Kate from the Seattle area visiting with her, and they were bedded down upstairs while I occupied the floor downstairs. Riki had raised more than \$6000 from her fundraising in Seattle and was ecstatic! Two more meetings are planned and Lorraine may also appear and sing at them. We had breakfast, I saw Danny again (who got his deer on the hunting trip), talked with Liz just before she, Rob and Catharine left Seattle by ferry for Victoria, BC, and then was picked up at 11:00 for a brief stop at the Smiths before heading to the airport. With Amy, Shannon and Charlotte all heading back to Connecticut and me for Fairbanks, two cars were necessary. Pam gave me six cans of hand-packed, hand-smoked, and personally labeled salmon as a parting gift. I went with Bob Smith while Pam and Dune, my raft partners, took the others. Bob and I talked about the relative merits of different types of motors and fishing boats during the 11-mile ride out. Our Alaska Airlines plane was delayed about 45 minutes so we had more chat time at the airport before boarding the big silver bird. Though I had a window seat all was in clouds, the usual situation in the Prince William Sound area, and further evidence that it was just as well that I didn't fly the Cessna to Cordova. I changed planes at Anchorage, called John Clare and the von Hippels (speaking with Marianne, since Arndt was away), and then flew to Fairbanks, arriving around 4 PM. I got a sandwich to take to the plane for my supper and then went by taxi to the plane -- \$11+ to go to the other side of the airport. My driver ("Santa's Cab") was Mario Martinez, a Cuban-born American who had been a fiber optic technician on submarines and then worked in the Contra war against Nicaragua. He was full of tales of derring-do, top secret things that he would allude to but not detail, and it was all I could do to exit the cab after at least 30 minutes of chatting about his exploits. His now retired wife, Barbara Haney, PhD, was an economist hired by my long-time friend Michael Rice, then Vice Chancellor at the Univ. of Alaska at Fairbanks. Mario was going to retire soon (in his late 40s) and enjoyed his home in Fairbanks. I walked over to the airplane camping area, a great place with full facilities, checked out a location, taxied the plane to the chosen spot, set up the tent, ate my sandwich, and then enjoyed the slowly setting sun and the homeward bound land and float planes, back from their remote destinations. An occasional Boeing 747 would land or depart, shaking the whole area with

their sound, but otherwise the evening was quite peaceful – certainly for those who like the sound of small aircraft engines.

Saturday, August 7 -- It rained quite a bit during the night but I remained dry and warm in the tent. I awoke to low clouds but no significant rain. A quick trip by bike over to Flight service, about 4000' away along the runway and behind the tower, and a long chat with a lady about the weather prospects. Sadly, my preferred destinations of Eagle, Ft. Yukon, Circle, or even Bettles were all IFR with no prospects of improvement, so my plans to follow the Yukon River down to Whitehorse were "out". However, the prospects of heading south to Northway (ORT) seemed OK. Though there were some uncertainties the weather got better toward the south and so I filed a VFR flight plan. Just after entering the plan the briefer noted, with surprise, that Fairbanks had just gone IFR. Since the weather was reportedly OK after leaving the Fairbanks area I filed IFR and the briefer said that once I was in the clear I could change my plan to VFR. However, and this later became very significant, she did not cancel my VFR plan! Off I went after getting my IFR clearance and up to 9000', the MEA (minimum enroute altitude for the FAI/ORT segment). Twenty minutes after takeoff I was in the clouds and soon thereafter, in heavy but intermittent rain. With the freezing level at 9000' I could see myself getting into clear ice, the worst kind, which can load up an airplane lacking de-icing equipment in as little as two minutes to the point of being unflyable. I immediately called Anchorage Approach Control, requested lower, and she asked if I would like to land at the air force base near Delta Junction, since she could not let me go below 9000' and continue to Northway. A good airport in the hand is worth a lot more in the bush so down I went, and once out of the clouds, cancelled my IFR plan and landed at the dirt strip at Delta Junction rather than making an (unnecessary) instrument approach to an air force base with all the problems that would later entail. On the ground with rain showers and low scud in the skies, I chatted with a local pilot working on his Super Cub and then walked into town for a lunch at the Buffalo Grill. After lunch I went on to do a bit of shopping, visited the local visitor information shack, visited the log cabin "roadhouse" museum erected by the Sullivans to serve the coaches/sleighs that stopped enroute to Fairbanks, and then headed back toward the

airport. The museum was very well preserved, having been moved, log by log, from a nearby location to its current position at the official terminus of the Alaska Highway. It was staffed by a tiny lady, probably well into her 80s, who was most attentive and knowledgeable. While walking back to the airport past a motel (Kelly's Country Inn) I had a sudden hint of impending GI upset so decided a motel was a better location to handle such problems, perhaps induced by the Buffalo Grill's fare, than a tent on a sodden dirt strip without even privy facilities. I checked in, relaxed for several hours, and then returned to the plane in the latter afternoon to taxi it to the far end of the field and tie it down for the night. A Good Samaritan names Brandt came by in a pickup and gave me a ride back to town, saying that his expensive "toy" was a twin airplane. I spent the evening watching a fascinating PBS special on Vietnam at the time of the TET offensive, a most sobering experience. At the end of the program I called the Fairbanks FSS to ask about the next day's weather and was surprised to learn that they had been searching for me. Apparently the FAI tower opened my VFR plan as well as the IFR plan, and though the latter had been cancelled the former had not. In their initial check they called the airports, and subsequently the state police, who found my Cessna at the Delta Junction airport. The Flight service briefer said there was a problem with the lack of communication between "Air Traffic Center", which handles the actual flights under radar control, and Flight service radio stations, that provide the briefings and handle flight plans. I later found out they had also called Fred Padula in San Francisco and until they called him back an hour later with the good news, he thought I was "down". I have always been compulsive about closing my flight plans and have never had a problem before. A lesson: be sure that you don't allow two plans to be filed. All is well that ends well, and I'm just sorry for the unnecessary alarm (though good to know the system works!).

Sunday, August 8 -- I awoke to low fog and stratus, though with a few "holes" in the clouds. After checking with Flight service and finding it OK to Northway, I filed a VFR plan and had a fine one hour flight there. I refueled and then walked over to the Flight service office, one of the few left in the US that actually has a person in it thanks to the Alaska Congressional delegation, and filed a plan for Whitehorse, YT. I flew the Alaska Highway

through and between lots of rain showers, at times with reduced visibility though never below about 10 miles, passing Beaver Creek, Burwash, Destruction Bay and Silver City. The mountains to my right were often obscured and the rain was much more intense to the south than to the north – the good old “rain shadow” phenomenon. I was increasingly concerned during the last 50 miles to WH about the possibility that it would be “socked in” with strong rain showers but after turning the bend there it was, two runways, one long and one short, and I was given clearance to land on the long one, 31R, in parallel with another Cessna landing on 31L. Though I was preparing in those last miles for a possible ILS (instrument landing system) approach to 13L, coming from the south, it was not necessary. Indeed, it would not have been possible! The next day I learned that both the ILS and VOR omnirange had been out of service for the last month. Amazing to find that the two radio aids for landing at a commercial airport that has jet flights landing between high mountains were inoperative! After refueling and checking with FSS I decided to stay for a day since the weather prospects were not good. I was delighted to learn that for C\$35/night I could stay in the FBO’s (“fixed base operator) building in a clean but very simple “airport motel”, much less expensive and much more handy than the two hotels across the street from the airport terminal. I could even see the Cessna from my window! I ate dinner at the hotel restaurant across the way and then had a fine evening yarning with another American pilot and a new Canadian pilot from Faro, YT, en route to Atlin, Dr. Dick Fast (Box 388, Faro, YT, Y0B 1K0; 867-994-2564; faro.doc@gov.yk.ca). The “war stories” flowed thick and fast, the American pilot and his wife now returning from Alaska in a Piper. He regaled us with tales of his crash landing across the rows in a vineyard and other incidents, and with his flights from S. California to his dentist in the Sierras who was implanting a cow bone anchor in his jaw to hold his new teeth (his wife said he was on the verge of saying “moo” as a result). The Canadian pilot, with only about 150 hours of flying time, remained quiet most of the time as we recounted all the perils of flying.

Monday, August 9 -- The weather is not too promising, with the passes blocked by low stratus and only one reporting point between Whitehorse and Watson Lake. So, might as well see Whitehorse, which has a population

a bit over 20,000 or about two-thirds of that of the entire Yukon Territory! I assembled the bike and off I went to the town, down Two-Mile Hill Rd., and through the town via Fourth Ave. At Robert Service Way I turned left and visited the Klondike II, a 240-foot, 1500-ton shallow draft paddlewheel steamer, now restored and up on the ground. The video of her and like boats in their prime, as well as the tour, were most interesting. With a speed approaching 10 knots it took 1.5 days to go downriver to Dawson and 3.5 days upriver to Whitehorse, fueled by trees at the rate of one cord per hour. Tree-cutting areas were spaced <10 hours apart to feed the two 500hp steam engines. Klondike I hit a sandbar when the experienced pilot left a trainee in command and they came around a corner, sluing under inadequate control. With only a 4-foot draft, no proper keel, 4 rudders in front and 2 in back for reverse travel, they are hard to control precisely. The travel season lasts only a few months after ice breakup (hastened in Lake Lebarge by old oil spread in rows on the ice to generate more heat from the sun). As a result there was much competition among the shipping companies (until one "took over") and with shifting sandbars, changing water levels and inexperienced pilots, the disasters were common. Apparently the paddle wheel pilot that grounded and sank the sister ship, "took the fall," was let off work, but then was re-hired the next year as a (now) experienced pilot. The Klondike II was built in 1936 and after some time out for the war was put back into service until 1957 as a tourist boat. We saw her tourist cabins and the main deck space for many cords of wood and tons of supplies. Four men worked full-time carrying large logs on 4-hour shifts while one man worked two-hour shifts putting them into the boiler. This type of paddle boat also carries large poles that can be winched out like stilts to raise it high enough to float free. When stuck they also try using the paddle in reverse to blow out the sand under the hull. From the boat I went to the McBride Museum for a fine display of the wildlife of the region and on all aspects of mining and minerals. After a quick yogurt and corn chips I then biked several miles upstream past the ever-interesting seaplane area on the lake formed by a low dam across the Yukon River for power generation and river control purposes, and then up to the Miles Canyon overlook. The canyon was the big peril for the stampeders and it was only when the Northwest Mounted Police finally required river pilots to

take the rafts through that the death rate by drowning was stopped. The canyon is still impressive but since it feeds into the lake the rapids are gone. The river is clear at the Whitehorse level and it is only further downstream that all the silty rivers empty into the Yukon to make it the gray river that empties into the sea. Back up/down two big hills and then re-joining the highway I made a 30-minute detour to check out a mini-car race track, with low Honda racing cars. Fortunately for both me and the proprietors a family of five came in, including the father, several children, a young woman, and a dootsie-bug. The bug went around the track with the father and the rest fought it out for first place at \$5/5 minutes. At 5 minutes all came to a stop and that was that. Noise, fun, 15mph speed, and reasonably safe. The owners were of Scottish descent and seemed to have an OK business, at least on the weekends. There were about 20 cars ready and up to 15 can be put on the track at one time. Back to town, into a store to buy film, a demonstration of the Bike Friday to the persons who sold me the film, and then back up Two-Mile Hill to the airport. I visited Flight service, went up to the tower for a half hour chat with Jim, the controller, and then over to the hotel for a dinner. Apparently two planes were "lost", though one, a twin Otter with 9 persons and an experienced pilot, was presumably down on a lake because of weather or mechanical problems and would be found OK. (The next day I learned from a pilot at Watson Lake that a Cessna 185 hit the trees near Anchorage due to low clouds/fog, and all four occupants were killed. I met several lower-48 C185 pilots and families in Fairbanks, including two from Maine, and hope they were not involved. Reportedly Alaska loses an airplane every several days, which would mean about 180 per year!) We talked about the fire bombers, refitted EA-6B radar planes, and the very large SAR (Search and Rescue) planes that operate out of the area. Then a bit of stroll to "kick tires", i.e., see the airplanes, and into the sack. A beautiful vintage Swift with 180hp was passing through (a record run at 199.99 mph between Fairbanks and somewhere), as well as an experimental aircraft.

Tuesday, August 10 (Day #40) -- Up around 7 and generally clear skies, so off to Flight service to see if the weather required a very rapid start or would permit a breakfast. The highway route was not too promising (though

several itinerant planes had already headed both east and west) and a breakfast was indicated to let some of the low Watson Lake stratus burn off. After breakfast at the terminal (with a monster cereal) I went back to Flight service and per their recommendations, filed a VFR plan to Dease Lake, British Columbia, with the intention of going further south to Smithers and then Prince George. This would take me down the center of British Columbia and presumably avoid the less favorable weather to the west. Suffice to say I was nervous about leaving my umbilical cord highway and proceeding for >100 miles over totally wild, uninhabited country, but decided I couldn't stay glued to the road forever. Off I went with good weather down to Teslin Lake, where I left my highway security blanket and set off into the unknown. Forty more miles down the lake and then another 40 over a wide, low valley with winding streams and small puffy cotton-wool clouds. I entered three latitude / longitude waypoints into the GPS and kept track of my times in case a return were indicated. The land slowly rose and some significant roundish mountains up to 7000 feet were on my course as I reached my first turn point for a left turn to Dease Lake, There was good visibility, however, some shoulders I could pass through, and all went very well, with nary a skipped beat in either the engine or my heart. After passing the last "hill" there was Dease Lake airport, deep in the valley and, surprise, at the southern end of Dease Lake; the wonders of GPS! I refueled, had a chat with the line attendant, checked the weather by phone, and filed VFR for Smithers, this time following the road (IFR means "I follow roads" in this country), since instrument flying requires high altitudes for radio reception and the freezing levels are relatively low). The start was propitious but starting about 40 miles south the clouds began thickening and a low level stratus was forming over my route. At 80 miles, and at a unservicable airport) I did a 180 degree turn and headed back to Dease Lake; it was clearly not possible to fly under the scud (I was down to about 1000 above ground level with patchy stratus and not much further it was solid and even lower stratus, with rising terrain). So, 160 wasted miles, but a life saved, my own. I over-flew Dease Lake, called Whitehorse Radio on 126.7, and amended my plan to follow the Dease River route up to Watson Lake. Perhaps 40 of the 100 miles were away from the road but by now I was a (semi) experienced bush pilot. I arrived about 2:30, saw Deb Hadwen and

her 6-month son Robby for a second time, and refueled. Deb and her husband Rob run the Watson Lake Gas Shack and I had met them on the outward bound leg but this time had a better opportunity to chat. After checking with Flight service I decided that despite the fine appearance of the local weather, it was risky to go any more to the east, and indeed several hours later the skies darkened and a front, complete with wind and rain, passed over us. I had a long chat with Deb about living in Watson Lake, the pluses and minuses. Her first child was now 18 and this was her 2nd one, the first with her husband Rob. I nuked a club sandwich, drank an ice tea, tried to get on her internet (we couldn't get connected, apparently a frequent problem with an ancient phone system, though her husband uses it frequently), and had a fine talk. She and Rob also run a freight-handling/forwarding service and would very much like to have mobile phone service. Watson Lake has long, cold winters, and the costs of airplanes and the seasonality of service makes it difficult to survive economically. There are at most two commercial flights per week and they are only to Dease Lake and Smithers, so getting out of the area is difficult. There are quite a few German immigrants and tourists in the area and indeed the Whitehorse tourist information is both in English and German. Apparently the wild, remote, rugged region appeals to Germans, used to living in a very high density country. Several German pilots and a resident South African pilot (Atlin) passed through during my chat with Deb. A young helicopter pilot came by, having trailered his machine up from way south, and readied it for flying into the bush. With only two hours of flight endurance and long distance flying can be very expensive and complicated; he would have had to carry extra fuel in the cockpit for roadway refueling. A Cessna 206 arrived with two young parents, Rob and Amanda Setili, and their daughters, Alison (3) and Shannon (almost 5) (1286 Oakdale Rd, NE, Atlanta, GA 30307; rsetili@gmail.com). We got to chatting and then, prompted by an approaching rainstorm, I headed at high speed on the bike back to my tent while they taxied to the campground. I guided them into a tie-down and then rescued my tent which by then had blown over with the bottom tarp on top and heading toward the lake. I stacked down the tent and then we all joined in the large campground cupola for chatting and fire-building in the iron stove. While they prepared dinner I went back to Flight service and

chatted for about 45 minutes. Watson Lake gets about 100 planes per day in the summer and much less in the winter though I saw only about 10-15 take-offs and or landings in the eight hours of daylight that I was there. The full services FSS was closed some time ago and now they have just a limited service person there 24-hours a day throughout the year. Back to the campground by around 7:30 and then chatting until 11:44, briefly interrupted by the arrival of a third Cessna, a 172 that a contractor was flying down for a friend who had purchased it sight unseen in Alaska. He was “building time”, seeing sights, and having fun at other people’s expense. He decided to sleep in his plane and didn’t join in the conversation. Rob and Amanda were engineers who gave up the field some years back to get MBAs, and who now work in consulting. A fine evening and a scenic, and eventful day.

Wednesday, August 11 -- Up around 7, clear skies to the east and pretty good to the west, and a very cold night, clothed in most everything I had. I rode the bike to flight service, checked the weather (OK), and since I had lots of miles before me, decided on no breakfast (trail mix in the airplane) and a prompt departure. I completed packing and at the last moment, just before waking them, Rob sallied forth from his tent to take his daughter to do wee wee. I provided him with some stove gas, exchanged addresses, completed prepping the airplane, said goodbye to Amanda and the daughters, who by now were up, and then took off for Ft. Nelson. A fine flight at 5500’ until I was near the closed Liard River airstrip, when it became obvious that I would have low stratus ceilings over the passes, perhaps down to the road. The next 40 miles involved rising terrain, terminating in a 90 degree turn north through Summit Pass, bounded on both sides by peaks close to 8000’. The alternatives were either to return to Watson Lake or perhaps a dirt strip and wait it out, or fly over the stratus with the risk that a forced landing would require me to descend the last several hundred feet through fog, with a low chance of survival, or take a different route. Fortunately I was able to contact flight service on 126.7 and change my plan to follow the Victor airway, which goes more or less over the Grand Canyon of the Liard river canyon. I joined the airway about 10-15 north of the highway and then with an ever-diverging course, flew the 100+ miles to Ft. Nelson. Great views,

lonesome country, and low stratus in the valleys. At Ft. Nelson I got my briefing which forecast MVFR (minimum visual flight rules) ceilings at Ft. St. John and Grande Prairie, but no serious weather. I filed instrument direct to Grand Prairie, with Whitecourt as alternate, and about 2:50 on the time. I climbed out in good sunshine and up to 9000' altitude, the minimum allowed enroute altitude, but soon found myself in bumpy cumulus clouds with light rime ice forming (20 degrees F). I requested and got 11,000 from Edmonton Center but soon not even that could keep me out of the clouds, so up to 13,000, where I stayed for the rest of the trip. Fortunately the clouds did not continue to rise and there always a few "holes" in the broken clouds and a good ceiling below them. Arriving near Grande Prairie I was advised to go into "hold" over the Garth Intersection and that I was #4, awaiting the departure of a medivac airplane. I descended to 9000' and before completing one circuit was told I was cleared for the approach on runway 07. I had prepared for runway 11 per the ATIS so had a bit of readjustment. Fortunately I was given photocopies of all the approaches to the two airports and so was adequately equipped. I found a hole in the clouds, descended VFR, and then landed without event. Over to Swan Aero where I refueled, and after checking with flight service, decided to stay the night, though with little hope for better weather on the morrow. I erected the tent near Swan's hangar and in the area where all the medivac twins are refueled and await their clients. Doug helped me push the plane in place and showed me around the ample arrangements for executive pilots, including two beds, coffee, 100+ videos, umpteen airplane magazines (the number and costs of the bizjets is obscene), and lounges. I put up the tent and hope the medivacs don't blow it down, though the wind in the area was bad enough. I had to put pegs all around and a tarp on top of the tent to cover a substantial rip that developed recently. I had a rather dismal chicken burger and too many fries at the airport cafe, went back to Swan and read airplane magazines until at 9:30 I settled into a rip-roaring video of Harrison Ford in "Airforce One." The night was OK and no planes came in to wake me up.

Thursday, August 12 -- In Grande Prairie, Alberta, low clouds and on-off again rain all around. I woke up to rain and after pondering the options,

decided to have breakfast and check out the weather. Essentially all bad; I could probably get to Regina, but then would encounter lots of thunder-bumpers in North Dakota, and any flight toward Denver was out of the question. There might be a slight chance of flyable weather tomorrow, but only a narrow “window”. So, over to Canadian Regional Airlines and after initial “sticker shock” (C\$2700 RT to Denver), I worked out a C\$300 RT to Calgary and then 25,000 frequent flyer miles via United to Denver. Back to Swan Executive Aero via the maintenance hangar, where I arranged for an oil change with Troy Girand, and then to “rearranging the deck chairs”, i.e., re-packing for my trip south. I can’t stay in the building overnight and can’t rely on my watch alarm to wake me so will go to the nearby Lodestar Motel; I have a 6:20am departure! (A nice agent from Canadian Regional offered to come over to my tent and honk her horn when she arrived for work at 5:30 the next morning; she came, honked at the wrong hangar, just as I was coming in from the motel. I was very appreciative!) For the rest of the day I had fun yarning with several pilots waiting for passengers or whatever, and especially with a duo that flies a Citation. Peter Shearing (Vancouver way) was the name of a senior pilot who plied me with umpteen questions about medicine, HIV, Harvard, etc., and who knew about Dr. Churchill at the MGH and Don Trunkey at the SFGH! He sure was widely read and we had a great chat. He departed, I talked some more with Ellery Murphy, owner of Swan Aero, about the trials and tribulations of having airplanes available for hire. Costs are high, many of the flights are on short notice, you have to pay the pilots salaries whether they fly or not, and even so, they are just “building time” for when they can get an airline job, and then as luck will have it, he has a short, low cost reservation just at the time a big job comes in which he has to turn down. I’m glad I didn’t accept the presidency/CEO position of Seattle Pacific, a fixed base operation at Boeing Field in Seattle way back in 1981; I would have expired of ulcers or a heart attack in just a few months. I had been offered the job by a retired Boeing engineer who was running the operation until a severe tachycardia episode led him to cut back his activities.

Friday, August 13 – Up at 5 AM, a short trip to the Grande Prairie airport, I checked the plane and retrieved some air maps for my trip south, left the

courtesy car at Swan Aero, and headed to the check-in counter. The flight left on time, rising through a 100' ceiling and through more layers to get "on top", and then south to Edmonton. A change of planes, some more waiting, and then off to Calgary, with by now improving weather. Another change of planes to United Airlines, and then south for two hours to Denver. Sitting in row 3 I had a fine view of the plains and mountains. At Denver I waited an hour for the Boulder bus and then off to Rachel and Andy, arriving in Boulder about 5 PM, 12 hours since waking in Grande Prairie. Rachel picked me up and after some chatting about her new career in real estate, and the 168 hours of correspondence course preparation for the exam, we were joined by Andy and went to the Hungry Toad restaurant. They are "early-to-bed" folks so after some chatting about the bike business and bike racing, we sacked out, I on the futon in their back room of their small, single-story house.

Saturday, August 14 – My 68th birthday; time marches on! I had even forgotten about the day until Rachel reminded me. I went with Rachel to see Bailey, her third horse since her arrival in Colorado. As with the others, Bailey has leg/h hoof problems so Rachel chose to do some low impact riding (bareback) near the pasture. Bailey walked in one track and I in the other, beside his head so he could see me and not get spooked, both of us in a trail of horse manure put there by spreader from the barn's "output." While Rachel tended to Bailey's other needs, grooming, etc., I watched Karl give his hi-powered dressage lesson, at \$200/hour. He lives in Massachusetts but comes twice a year to Autumn Hill Farm and other Colorado localities to give lessons. He is German-born and was trained in the Spanish Riding School. A hard taskmaster with a steady, unremitting patter, he drilled the lessons into his students. Rachel has had several lessons by him and showed me an hour-long video of her (beneficial) ordeal. I also spent some time reading about horse-related real estate – quite the business in Colorado. We then went to the Boulder County Fair to listen to Rachel's neighbor James Young do his guitar and singing gig. James' tri-athlete wife abruptly left him and some of his songs reflected the pain of her departure. Rachel said that a common problem among high level athletes is self-centeredness and much preoccupation with their own needs to the exclusion of those of others.

Though Rachel's husband, Andy Ames, is a high level runner, his low key attitudes, humility and focus on the next race rather than the last one makes it possible for them to have a fine marital relationship. We then visited an open house in the Mapleton section of Boulder, way overpriced (in my view) at \$895,000, returned home, had a spaghetti and corn on the cob dinner, and then an evening walk with the dogs, Midnight and Dewey. What with a strict poop-picking-up ordinance, Rachel and Andy had green plastic baggies and did their duty as the two dogs did theirs. I concluded my birthday with some more reading about dressage, cycling (Tour de France and the drug scandal of last year), and mountain climbing (Reinhold Messner, the first to climb all 8000'+ meter peaks).

Sunday, August 15 -- Up at 8ish, out to the garage and on one of Andy's many bicycles (they have 11 in all!), and then a 5.8-mile RT bike ride behind Rachel as she ran up Boulder Canyon beside Boulder Creek. Andy went off for a longer, faster run. Good exercise to start the day and lots of other runners and bikers. Back for breakfast and then out to the stable, with a stop along the way to visit an open house (\$268K, and very attractive; much nicer than the one for \$895K!). We then retrieved Bailey from the pasture, "fly-coat" and all. Bailey had a more pronounced limp so Rachel did some low impact lunging in the barn arena and then returned him to his stall. Rachel and I talked about the fates of her Mercer Island friends, visited her office at Fowler's real estate office, did a search on the computer for houses in the \$600-800K range (44 in all!), noted the rapid growth being experienced by Boulder with condos practically filling up all the 35 miles of distance between Denver and Boulder, and then visited with her neighbors across from her house. The woman was in the wedding catering business, with the average wedding party now at \$15,000 (versus several thousand when Rachel and Andy were married in 1989). After supper Rachel, Andy, the two dogs and I then took a longish walk up one of the many trails that start just a few blocks from their house. The climb was good exercise, the views great, and the dogs had a great time swimming in an irrigation brook and sniffing all the other dogs.

Monday, August 16 – Up at the usual time, breakfast, paper, Andy went out

for a fast 20-mile bike ride while Rachel and I chatted and she handled some telephone calls. Her realtor's license came through and she was in realtor heaven. I filled out 50+ flyers with "Rachel Ames" and "Associate Broker" to spare her hand, she made a trip to Fowler's for a required educational session, and then she left me at the bus depot at noon. I took the 12:30 bus to Denver and then after some difficulties finding a taxi at the Union RR Station, I made it to Ding's for a bit of R&R and reading the voluminous materials on the proposed conservation easement for the Great Pine Farm Limited Partnership, and on Simon Rock's proposal to the MKB Foundation for support to implement a comprehensive landscaping plan. At 5:30 Ding returned and together we went out to a fine Italian restaurant, Cucina Colore, had a great dinner al fresco, and then stopped by the supermarket to replenish the larder.

Tuesday, August 17 – Up at 7 AM, breakfast with Ding, and then reviewing plans for the day. She will be working through Thursday while I enjoy the pleasures of Denver. During the morning I read voluminous materials prepared by Ding about Simon's Rock, and Peg about a possible land conservation easement for Great Pine Farm. It put me to sleep for almost an hour. I made a sandwich and then headed over to REI to get a bike for Ding. Much reviewing the models and trying to guess whether the 18" frame would be big enough (it wasn't). I bought a few items for myself, including a new set of two-piece pants, and then headed downtown to the Colorado History Museum, arriving about 2:30. I deposited all the quarters I had, good for 1:27, and then had a fine visit to a well-appointed museum. I left in a dissipating rainstorm, returned home and awaited Ding's arrival, around 5:45. We had a summer of pork chops and corn-on-the-cob, then off to REI for the bike purchase. The 18" bike was indeed too small so after much trying on of various bits of hardware, left the REI store for another one which had a 20" bike in stock. We bought it just before closing, returned home, and I spent most of the rest of the evening reading and listening to all the accumulated voicemails in my Univ. of California system. Nothing of consequence; only one voicemail was for me, and they will call again after I return.

Wednesday, August 18 – Another morning of slogging through the remarkably weak offering of Denver's two papers. Ding left for work and I, after a fine telcom with Liz (she is near Sand Point, ID), several more days of update on the diary and another chapter in "Choice", about the Clinton/Dole runup to the 1996 election, and then went off to REI to leave Ding's bike for completion. From there to Foley's to get some more socks (to match my suit at Adam's wedding), and pajamas, and then to the Denver Museum of Natural History. I arrived around 11:00 and stayed until almost 4 PM, taking in the IMAX movies of "Mysteries of Egypt" and "Alaska," along with the usual fare of the marvelous dioramas, Botswana, South America, and the Egyptian mummies. Back to REI, got the bike, went home, read some, napped some, test rode the bike, and then Ding returned around 7, and off to the Tattered Cover Book Store, a great innovation, complete with multiple floors, easy chairs for reading, and good service. I bought the last copy of Farley Mowat's book on the *"Boat Who Wouldn't Float"*, another by him (*"Never Cry Wolf"*), and a well-reviewed book (*"Godforsaken Sea"*) on the Vendee Globe round-the-world boat race. Most of the time, however, I sat in an easy chair reading sections from David Duke's book, "My Journey," with his appalling views about race, "the only issue before us." I also read a history book about the conservative movement during this century, with special focus on Taft, Goldwater, Reagan and Gingrich; sober and somber reading. A quick stop at the ATM to replenish, and then back for some more chatting, reading, and a test sleep for my new pajamas.

Thursday, August 19 – A morning filled with diary updates, re-packing to send items back to SF, a call to my bank to check on the accounts after 6 weeks away, and calls to Anacortes Yacht Charter to reserve for the period May 28 – July 22 an Island Gypsy 44 (with the infelicitous name of "Petty Cash"). I'll get the details on costs in due course. After a sandwich at noon I packed and mailed books to SF, took a 40-minute test ride on Ding's new bike (the handlebars "collapsed" as I went over a bump; they have a spring-loaded device to take up road shocks and were not adjusted tightly enough), I took it over to REI for adjustment of the headset, read some more in "Choice," and then had dinner with Ding. We called our brother John in Israel who had just had prostate surgery for a newly discovered cancer

(though subdued, he was is in reasonably good spirits and the path report was favorable).

Friday, August 20 (Day #50) – What a day! Over to the DIA airport in plenty of time, on the airplane for Moline, 2.5 hours sitting waiting for repairs to the radar, and finally they cancel the flight. Over to the service counter where they advised us of a connecting flight via Chicago that would put us into Moline at 9:30pm or a direct flight that arrived at 10 PM; we took the latter and then spent the day reading in the United Red Carpet Room. United advised me that my membership had expired but I later found out it hadn't, and hence had paid the \$400 renewal unnecessarily. I hope we can extend the membership for a year. We arrived at the Abbey Hotel, a former convent abbey, around 10:30 and had a fine come-all-you with my sister Peg, Tom and Anne Bryant, Lissa Richardson, and others.

Saturday, August 21 – A breakfast swim, with views to the bridges crossing the Mississippi River, breakfast at 9, and then with Peg and Ding to the church for pre-wedding photos at 11:15. Lots of Resnick family (about 150+ Resnicks and about 8 from the Hall/Reeves side of the family; we now know what Custer felt like!), lots of photos and schmoozing, and then the wedding from 1:30 to 2:30. It was a great show, a fine priest and an excellent homily! Maggie fainted/sagged, though fortunately not quite to the floor, about 3/4ths through the wedding. She had little breakfast, few fluids, is subject to hypoglycemia, and had been kneeling before the priest for some time, so apparently just low blood sugar. She, and we, survived. The post-wedding reception was at the Abbey Hotel and was a great occasion, followed by a fine dinner, toasts, and a great night of dancing. With leather shoes I amazed myself; I kept up with most of the younger generation and though I don't like the loud, jarring music, it sure makes one want to dance and jiggle. At the end of the evening we called John Hall again, and his post-op voice sounded much stronger.

Sunday, August 22 – We had a brunch during 10:30 – 12:30, with Maggie, Adam, their friends and my sisters. After eating we strolled over to the "President" sternwheeler casino and suffered the expected culture shock of

folks without much extra money, spending it all on slot machines, video poker, and the like. What on earth do they find pleasurable about such a one way transfer of money? Ding's camera had to be kept by the guard – “no pictures allowed.” Peg and I each contributed 50 cents and Ding played a single turn at a \$1.00 slot machine; no luck, but at least Peg and I didn't suffer opprobrium of having bet money; Ding did it! Then to the airport for the short flight to Chicago. Peg rented a car for the trip to Parker and Julie Hall, Parker (66) being one of our three cousins. He was an executive at the Harris Bank and Trust Co. and now runs his one “high end” investment firm, Lincoln Capital Management. He has about 100 clients. Minimal investment is \$100 million and the firm has about \$6 billion under management, for an average of \$60 million per client; a bit out of our league! Julie is headmistress of the North Shore Country Day School, K-12, with 430 students. We had a fine evening of chatting, and were joined by another cousin, Bronson Hall, and his son, Christopher. Bronson and Christopher were with us in the 1990 four-day raft trip down the lower half of the Grand Canyon.

Monday, August 23 – Parker and Julie left early. After breakfast we drove over to the apartment of Aunt Francis, 95-year-old wife of our uncle Parker, (92), known as Uncle Bro, now in a nursing home. Francis visits with our uncle daily so we made the trip with her and visited about 20 minutes; Bro was alert and very pleased with our visit, and Francis, very appreciative. This will likely be the last time we see him. He is now the same age as our own father when he died, and like our father, has spent the last several years in a nursing home. From there we went to the North Shore Country Day School for a lunch alfresco with Julie. She told us of all the trials and tribulations of private school administration; teachers who resign at the last minute just before the start of the school year; parents who sue because their child is not accepted; managing security in the age of school shoot-ups, rising parental expectations of what schools can do, etc. Peg then drove us to O'Hare airport and off Ding and I went to Denver where we managed to get an earlier flight but then spent an hour waiting for the thunderstorms to the west to decline. That evening: packing, calls with Fred and Liz (at Glacier Park), and washing laundry.

Tuesday, August 24 -- I was up at 6 in the morning and Ding put me on the shuttle at 6:50. I arrived at Denver airport at 7:40 went, went to the Red Carpet Club, called Ellery Murphy at Grande Prairie, and verified that the oil had been changed on the airplane. My window seat on the trip north provided me with spectacular views of the Great Plains. At Calgary I waited four hours and then took the Canadian Regional plane to Grande Prairie. I immediately proceeded to flight service where I was greeted with the query, "How was the wedding?" The flight service briefer recalled my visit some 10 days earlier. The briefing was favorable for travel to the south and there was a chance that tomorrow might be worse so I filed a flight plan to Red Deer, Alberta. After a brief talk with Ellery Murphy and Doug, paying the bill, and finding the key to the plane, I headed southeast. The first part of the trip was at 5500 feet, later climbing to 7500 over some very lonely territory pockmarked with occasional oil rigs and dirt roads to the rigs. There were lots of forests and swamps, quite a few rivers, and then gradually increasing evidence of grain fields. After passing by Whitecourt I went direct to Red Deer, arriving at 8:50, about 20 minutes after sunset. I parked the Cessna on the grass and then had a good chat with the man in the flight service station. Red Deer has no commercial flights but did have a nice terminal with about 100 aircraft movements per day; three Catalina flying boats, 6 WW II B-26 firebombers, and several large search and rescue airplanes were nearby. I slept under the Cessna with a tarp over the sleeping bag to protect from the dew, but no tent. The wind funnel effect of the wind hitting the Cessna's side and then coming under the fuselage seemed to help keep the mosquitoes to a minimum. After talking with flight service I left a message for Liz and listened to Penny's expanded message on the discovery of much dry rot in the house.

Wednesday, August 25 -- I was up at 7 and immediately went over to flight service for a check on the weather. A good day was forecast but there was likely to be a lot of wind, especially downwind from the Rockies. I was surprised to find a cafe in the airport, even though it had no commercial traffic, and during my breakfast had a nice chat with a former pilot. He had been in an auto accident and injured his leg. He walked with a limp and later

flunked the check ride that he needed to retain his pilot's license. According to him, the examiner found he had attached his good foot to the rudder pedal so that he could both push it and pull it. I refueled the Cessna at the very active flight school and added a quart of oil. I then set a course of 130 degrees for Lethbridge and for the next several hours crossed many, many grain fields, lakes, and a gridwork of roads. There was a very strong cross wind component of 20-30 knots, and radioed pilot reports indicated that the mountain passes to the west were subject to severe turbulence and essentially impassable. I traveled around the east side of the Calgary airspace, just east of Lethbridge, and by prior telephone arrangement with customs, landed at Ross International / Sweetgrass airport to enter the U.S. Normally custom inspection is at Cutbank, Montana, but apparently the resident inspector is away on extended leave. Rather than ask the Sweetgrass inspector to make the 2:30 hour road trip to Cutbank, I agreed to land at Ross International. It was quite an experience! The town was very small and despite its impressive name – Ross International Airport -- the airstrip was a relatively short grass and gravel runway marked by pylons and pockmarked by gopher holes. The single runway is actually located right on the border with the north side in Canada and the south side in the U.S. The wind was very strong and gusty, with 30-40 degrees of cross wind. The approach to the airport runway was right over the town and I could just imagine myself having a landing accident with damage to the airplane in a location without any mechanical services and all for the convenience of the customs inspectors. All is well that ends well, however, and the landing, though "exciting," went actually quite well, though it was a challenge to taxi back to the customs vehicle what with the strong gusts. With minimal formality by two inspectors (only about one plane a month lands at Ross International!) I was again legally in the U.S. The inspectors helped me push the plane over a shallow ditch so that I didn't risk the prop, and then watched me takeoff for the 35-mile flight south to Shelby, Montana. Once again I had strong crosswinds for runway 25 but this time I had a much better approach and runway surface, and managed to land without problem. After tying down the Cessna I assembled the bicycle, brought my log book up to date, sorted out the U.S. and Canadian air maps, read some aircraft magazines, and then headed into town, two miles away. I first went

to the Visitor Center where I had a long talk with Jean about the town and area. The population is a bit over 2000 with perhaps another 2000 and the service area. Shelby used to be in oil country but soon the wells went dry and now it survives only as a dry farming agricultural area and as a transportation crossroads for East-West traffic across northern Montana and North-South traffic via Interstate 15 between the U.S. and Canada. The region is very dry, has little snow accumulation, and some years there is hardly enough rain for even dry farming. The winds are very strong both summer and especially winter, and reportedly logging chains were used as wind socks. I learned also that Shelby, feeling economically very vulnerable, aggressively sought and eventually succeeded getting a new prison built in the town as a source of employment. The 500-bed prison was to open next week, preceded by a Saturday night festival / open house in the "Big House". Despite the promised big employment apparently there will only be about 100 new Shelby hires since many of the required positions are being filled with persons already working in other locations with the private prison corporation – the transfer being a way to obtain a promotion. Reportedly the original capacity of 500 can be expanded to 1500 prisoners and starting next week prisoners will be coming from as far away as Louisiana. What a sad commentary -- that small towns must look to prisons as a major source of employment. I next went to the Marias Museum (named after the Marias River, originally named Maria's River after the name of Lewis's true love, who later spurned his advances and married another). The museum was a gem for such a small town. It had loads of memorabilia dating back to the early 1900s and before, livened by nice thematic exhibits and mannequins dressed in period costumes in most of the rooms. One of the major pieces of history concerned the Dempsey/Gibbons flight of July 4th, 1923. Apparently several Shelby developers, unhappy with declining real estate values, suggested (apparently by way of a joke) that it would be nice to have the world-class boxing match in Shelby Montana. Much to their surprise, the offer was taken up by fight promoters on the east coast. Jack Dempsey was then the reigning boxing champion and Tom Gibbons was a rather low level challenger. The town had to pledge at least one hundred thousand dollars up front as prize money and then went on to build an outdoor stadium for >40,000 people. On fight day only 15,000 people were in the stands and of

these, only about 7000 had paid for tickets. As a result, the town and the promoters lost a lot of money and though Shelby was for some time the laughing stock for being taken in by the big city folks, it also established Shelby in the national consciousness. The Museum closed at 5 p.m. so I had to leave before seeing all the exhibits. I returned to the Visitor Center where I spent another two delightful hours chatting with Melva Cox, an 85-year-old widow who talked to me at length of the difficult cards she had been dealt in life. She had been abandoned by her mother at the age of two and her father left while she was still in utero. Various people brought her up and for some years she worked as a waitress or as a salesperson. While at the Visitor Center I viewed several videos on Montana and had a delightful conversation with an Idaho woman (Carol) and her two children. I gave each child 25 cents and asked them to keep an eye out for Liz and her fellow cyclists. If they saw them they were to say "hello" and that I would be riding west to meet them on the next day. (I learned the next day that Liz did not see the children.) I then biked to the railroad crossing, watched while the 3 locomotives and 89 double-stacked container cars passed, and then to the Pizza Depot for a not very tasty chicken dinner. I talked with Fran Fitzgerald at the Totem motel, made arrangements for the following day when Liz, Rob and Catharine come to town, and then went back to the airport. The wind had declined somewhat so I spread out my sleeping bag under the wing. At 3am the rising wind obliged me to relocate to the airport building. The noise and light of the Coca-Cola cooler machine obliged me to lay my sleeping bag in the hallway with my head by the door to the ladies' room and my feet by the door to men's room.

Thursday, August 26 -- Lizzie Day!!!!!!!!!!!!!! After breakfast at the Pizza Depot, (my fried eggs had black rings around the edges) I biked against a strong wind for about 16 miles, with a short stop at Eldridge, Montana, population 12, to chat with the postmistress, drink her Gatorade (left by a daughter) and eat a fudge bar. Shortly thereafter I met Liz, Rob and Catharine cycling east and we had a fine photo session with lots of hugs and kisses and a glorious ride downwind back into Shelby. After a lunch at a for-sale Mexican restaurant we went to the Marias Museum to complete the tour of the collection and then to the Visitor Center and motel. After a one-

hour rest and shower we all biked two miles up hill to the airport. Although the wind was still rather strong it was not excessive so I took Rob and Catherine out for a 50-minute flightseeing trip, first to some buttes off to the Northeast next to the Canadian border, then to Cutbank and finally, back to Shelby. Liz had the hand-held radio and we were able to communicate with her while she stayed at the airport watching our materials and reading. Then back to Pizza Depot for a pizza with lettuce on the top and to bed at 9 PM, a great day for all of us! Fran, the owner of the Totem Motel, was pleased to see that the persons I brought to her motel were of Irish dissent.

Friday, August 27 -- Up at 6:30, breakfast at 7:30, parting photos and hugs, and we went our several directions at 8:44. I went to the airport, re-loaded the airplane with the bicycle, checked with flight service, refueled, chatted with the airport manager and was off the ground at 10:52. I first went east following Rte. 2 toward Chester, MT, and found the cyclists only seven miles short of the town; they had made very good time since the parting Shelby. I then flew south via Fort Benton, Lewistown (where there was a 90-date standoff with a militia group), Wheatland, Big Timber and finally to Livingston. The topography, despite being relatively flat, was very scenic. Dry farming interspersed with deep, very winding small rivers flowing toward the upper Missouri, the Missouri itself, small towns and a few isolated ranches, and large round mountains further south marked my travel. After landing I called Karl Knuchel but only got a recording at his home number. I was able to contact his office and found that he was in court in Columbus, about 40 miles to the east. Karl is lawyer who spends about 25 percent of his time on criminal cases and most of the rest on real estate matters. I left word with his office, proceeded to refuel the airplane and check on charts, and before long, he arrived at the airport and we met for the first time. I learned about Karl two years earlier when Liz and I visited Livingston on our trip following the route of Lewis and Clark. On landing at Livingston, there was the same Maule airplane (N9149E) that I had purchased new in 1977. I subsequently traced the owner, Karl, through the FAA. We had been in telephone and letter contact and he had given me standing imitation to visit him sometime in Montana. He invited me to his home and so for the rest of

the afternoon I accompanied him on errands and then back to his house and airstrip in his Paradise Valley location, 10 miles south of Livingston. Paradise Valley provides the northern entrance to Yellowstone national Park and is a relatively narrow valley between mountains reaching to at least 8000 feet. Karl's wife, Amanda, soon returned; she used to work at a fitness center and now works in Bozeman at a small company that makes a moving climbing wall that mountain climbers can use for practice. Apparently it is an endless, revolving wall; users can adjust the speed and difficulty level, and since you never rise more than a few feet above floor level, you don't need a safety rope or a bevy of lawyers concerned with liability suits. In the evening we all drove 25 miles west to Bozeman in the company of Amanda's mother. We were to see a scrimmage football game at Montana State University. One of the players was a relative of some of their friends but we arrived at the end of the game, just in time to hear the MSU band play very loud music below the grandstands. A group of friends and relatives of the Knuchels gathered in a nearby restaurant where we'll had a fine dinner and returned back to Livingston for the night.

Saturday, August 28 -- I awoke to low clouds and intermittent heavy rain so after a check with flight service, it was an easy decision to decide on spending the day in Livingston. Karl, Amanda and I had breakfast at the Pine Crest café (Amanda's appetite was turned off on finding a hair on her egg), and then Karl and I went to Livingston for a short round of errands, including a visit to the sporting goods store, the supermarket, and to get propane for his barbecue that evening. The town of Livingston lives off of cattle, a major railroad repair and maintenance facility, and its proximity to Gardiner, the northern entrance to Yellowstone Park. The Knuchels have an African Gray parrot with reportedly more than a 300-word vocabulary, including some Spanish. It was rather disconcerting to talk with Karl in his living room while hearing a human-like voice in the next room. The parrot would make a sound just like someone knocking on the door and then would answer with "hello." Or, if the phone rang, he would also say "hello" and then a greeting such as "how are you?" During the afternoon I took a long walk two miles up a dirt road on the east side of the valley. I passed several cattle and horse ranches, a llama ranch, some farm machinery, an irrigation ditch, finally

reaching the end of the road at a trail head into the mountains. The views were great and I meditated for a while. Back down to the Knuchel home where they were preparing for a barbecue for approximately 20 friends. I joined in with the festivities and had a delightful conversation with several, including Dan Todd, brother of Christine Todd Whitman, governor of New Jersey. He now works as a fishing guide during the summer, having ended his a hunting guide activities because most of the hunters were “jerks”. They expected to be waited on hand and foot, complained much, and almost wanted the animals to be brought to them. He is also a pilot and has a number of other skills. After the barbecue Karl cleaned up the debris, I chatted with him about diverse subjects, and Amanda returned the 13-year-old (overweight) disadvantaged girl who she is serving as a kind of mentor, big sister. Another fine day of visiting.

Sunday, August 29, 1999 (Day #59) -- My last day! I awoke to reasonably clear weather to the south but over Livingston the clouds were low and it was clearly not flyable. However, a call to flight service indicated that the weather should improve and so by 10 I was at the airport and ready to leave. My flight followed Interstate 15 via Bozeman, Three Rivers, Dillon, Dell, Idaho Falls and then on to Pocatello, Idaho; it was beautiful and as I cut the corners following the road I would zip along the mountain crests. There were some scattered low level clouds over parts of the route but I flew well above the clouds and always had good visibility. The flying was quite smooth until I started over the flat lands of southern Idaho, including large areas of black lava that had covered the area several thousand years ago. It was as if hot fudge had flowed over the land, forming and stopping in a totally arbitrary fashion. At Pocatello I refueled the plane and myself, checked weather, chatted with a woman geologist (married to a working geologist) who loved to observe the geological formations but was now working at the airport. I filed another flight plan and headed southwest for Battle Mountain, Nevada. By now the temperature was high, around 90-95 degrees, the density altitude was several thousand feet higher than the actual altitude above sea level which degraded the Cessna's performance significantly, and there was light to moderate turbulence. At times I had difficulty holding my altitude within 500 feet. The stationary high pressure

system created quite a bit of desert haze though my flight visibility never was less than about 30 or 40 miles. Out over an increasingly bleak and barren desert, occasionally flying along an interstate but most of the time over very small, isolated dirt roads with occasional ranches set in small valleys or near intermittent streams; it would be hard making a living in these parts. I finally came to Battle Mountain and again joined the interstate highway. Once again, refueling, checking the weather, drinking some water (when flying, I tend to drink limited fluids to avoid a premature necessity to come down), and then for my last leg back to San Francisco. I was uncertain whether I could make the three-hour flight and arrive before dusk. The weather forecast projected low clouds in the Bay Area so I was prepared to land at Nevada City, California, or some other airport if only I could get to the western side of the Sierras. The flight actually went very well; I had moderate head winds such that at times I was making only about 90 knots speed over the ground instead of my usual 115, but it was very smooth over the Sierras at my high altitude of 12,500 feet. Reno, Nevada, was wall-to-wall developments, massive airports, and of course, lots of gambling (and perhaps, gamboling) down on the ground. Once on the western side of the Sierras the high population density immediately became apparent and I knew I was back home. The flying was very smooth until I was down to only several thousand feet altitude and then I was bouncing all around, especially as I circled and landed at the Smith Ranch/San Rafael airport. What an irony it would have been to mess up the final landing after my long trip. With help from several others I pushed the Cessna back in the hangar, packed the car with all the trip gear, and headed home. I was delayed getting out of the airport since they now lock the gate over the bridge after 8 PM. I was on the verge of resigning myself to a night on the floor of the hangar but managed to find the caretaker, who loaned me the key to exit the airport. I ate a spaghetti dinner had a nearby restaurant and then arrived back home at 10 clock to "Chaos Central" that is now at 1515 – 16th Avenue, San Francisco. 29 Aug. 1999