

# adventure

# ALASKA

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## Slower, yes, But not quieter . . .

In what was a quieter year as far as numbers, suddenly became very noisy due to single number, one. Yes, for Adventure Alaska the roster has grown, with the new position added of, king. Liam the Loud ascended the throne on February 11th, and immediately began arranging the kingdom to fit his tastes, and ordering about his minions likewise. So far he has proven a benevolent ruler, and we feel quite fortunate to be his subjects. And we're not the only ones experiencing "regime change".

As for commerce in the kingdom, visitation to Alaska was down considerably again this season. For an oft conjectured mix of reasons, from psychological to economic, the phones were not as intrusive and the roads noticeably less traveled. The mosquitoes though, seemed unmoved and were ever militant, even with the scaled down buffet.

All was not woe, and with fewer clients there was correspondingly a bit less chaos, and thus the opportunity to take a few more breaths (and change diapers). Ours is a business that includes many moments of reward, from the individual epiphanies of guests during a trip, to the thoughtful words of past clients long after their visit. The summer season is so full of all the little memories that make up that heightened sense of living that is the best of travel. It's that, "I can't believe we've only been here a week" observation that makes it all worthwhile. While it may be home for some of us, it's the visitor's enthusiasm



Florida meets the Yukon



### *The Management*

that keeps it new and wonderful for all of us. For those of you that have joined us this season or in the past, we thank you for choosing our small company. We feel privileged to do what we do.

Next year is of course always a question mark, but we'll see! We're in it for the long haul (13 years now ---gasp!) and the mountains promise to remain magnificent . . .

## Old News New News

A first for all of us was an unscheduled highlight for one trip, in the form of a wedding. A young couple who had been contemplating matrimony for some time decided to take the plunge during their trip, after hearing that in Alaska, anyone filing the proper paperwork can perform the ceremony. Sheri as their guide was so dubbed, and through a flurry of faxes to a remote lodge on the Denali Highway, the legalities were dispatched with and a moving moment of vow exchange was witnessed on the deck at Discovery Cabins. Move over Las Vegas, we're putting in a drive-thru chapel. Elvis may even guide a trip.

As for other changes, they've been happening unsettlingly fast at a favorite destination McCarthy, with a deep pocketed change of lodge ownership. Construction projects everywhere and big plans by the new owners. In a bid to keep our guests somewhat separated from the fray, after ten years of keeping an eye out, we've secured a nice piece of land on the island between the foot bridges. Plans are initially to camp a few folks and maybe just maybe,

build a cabin or two. Stay tuned, this is a multi-year one.

As you may have noted, last year's announced "In-House Employee Breeding Program" is off to a smashing start. Yup, that's right, start'em from scratch and groom'em all the way. Liam and Erin and Joe's Jack, both got to witness a few trips this summer and should be qualified to lead them next season. They've been on a tight schedule, working on their driving lessons in between feedings and naps. Updates sporadically available at: [www.AdventureAlaskaTours.com/specialprojects](http://www.AdventureAlaskaTours.com/specialprojects).

Happy news of another sort, in the form of a departure, was that of our nasty neighbors, bane of our existence. Increasingly irrational and disturbingly so, they moved to a new compound elsewhere, and we, and the whole town, are gratefully relieved. Our celebratory dance was both of joy and pity for those unfortunates to now be their neighbors. Parting is such sweet sorrow.



*Left:* Matrimony on the Deck - Parson Sheri performs the marriage rites for Jody & Ed as the other group members, by virtue of proximity, round out the wedding party. Attire strictly formal.

*Right:* Crack new staff members Jack Schumacher (left) and Liam Bureau confer privately after recent board meeting. Motions passed include company provision of blankets and pacifiers to all that request them.

## Staff Updates

The roster this year at Adventure Alaska sported the same crew in its employ. Masochists they must be, and we're hoping that will continue . . .

**Jeannine** continues to avoid total retirement (when is a mother ever really retired?) doing occasional phone duty. Alas, this year's trip up the Alcan highway to deliver a van was postponed until next. Her little cross continent odyssey has always been popular and there remains a waitlist. . . . six ladies in a van, ranging from past clients to childhood cronies ---understandably, no men are allowed (or willing). Miss **Sheri** Bluestein endured her third season with us in dandy fashion, unfortunately having to eat her words to the effect, ". . . that it never rains on my camping trips." To help fill a mid-summer void she did service on the Denali Highway, wearing all manner of lodge related hats, and has a new appreciation for that world. Her address the past winter and this next, is Amsterdam learning Dutch, privately "tutored" by her beau and more, Michiel. She

anticipates a change of pace next season helping out a youth program in Borneo, and we wish them both the best.

**Barbra** and **Todd** still pretend to direct matters, holding down the office world and taking orders from, The King. His realm is not a conventional one, in that the term, "playing outside" means things like going winter camping at six weeks of age. Todd did managed another quick trip to Russia, flying himself and a couple of others on a test flight trying to open an air corridor between former adversaries for private aircraft. Barbra has held up quite well in motherhood, flipping pancakes with one hand, and the baby with the other. Todd continues his winter commute to Anchorage working on an aircraft mechanic license as part of his passion, while developing a laser-



based landing system for our wee airstrip. **Patrick** once again received the Most Masochistic Award, returning for his 9th season. He spent a wonderful few months in the nether regions of Australia, and this winter has purchased a vehicle that he intends to see how far south it will go. . . We're never sure where he's at until a random update arrives from some remote cyber cafe. **Joe** was back at it this summer, assuming the mantle for Yukon River trips. He found a much better niche in the Anchorage School District, while he and Erin proudly steward young Jack toward guidedom. **Kathleen** is back in her "real" job, teaching in the Wasilla school district. She attended Liam's entry into the world, and has affectionately earned "aunt" status. This past year **Lorraine** sold her dog sled tour business to aspiring Iditarod mushing couple Jason & Kelly and we look forward to working with them. **Mark Bass** successfully wedded this spring and they're spending summers in McCarthy building their shangri-la. As for **Heidi**, she continues grad school in environmental studies in New Hampshire. And that's all from us.

### !!! Repeat Offender Program !!!

*ANNOUNCING JUSTIFICATION FOR THOSE GLUTTONOUS ENOUGH TO THINK OF RETURNING FOR A TRIP WITH US* —If you've survived one before, you get a 10% discount on the next one. If you've already stumbled back before this offer, apply it to the NEXT trip. We'd love to see a few of our friends again!