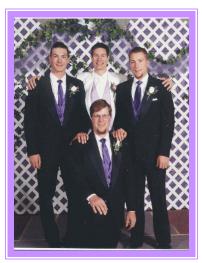
Colville Update

Arctic Ploverland News

Greetings From the Jim Helmericks Family

Empty Nest

The day has finally come that Jim and Teena are "home alone". All parents must have the similar reaction of, "where in the world did the years go?" All the boys are pretty much out on their own now, although our two youngest still



Helmericks Brothers

consider the Colville their primary home and have not completely moved out or given up their rooms, even though they are away at work or college most of the time.

Family News

G od blesses us with good health and active lives. ♦ <u>Teena and Jim</u> stay busy at the Colville homesite, and have had to pick up on the chores that the absent boys no longer are here to do. ♦ <u>Derek and Melanie</u> live in their home just outside of Fairbanks, with Derek involved in mining and taxidermy work on the side, and Melanie

busy with her geology studies and art projects. Melanie will receive her master's geology degree from UAF this May. **◆Jay and Amy** have a small apartment near the university where they both work and attend classes.

Jay will have his master's engineering degree in May, and has continued to work for the rocket research lab on campus. Both Jay and Amy stay very involved in various church activities **♦Isaac** enjoys his job with also. Alaska Airlines in Deadhorse, the many new friends he's made, and the flying privileges available to him. (Many family members have also enjoyed flying privileges, thanks to Isaac.) \diamond **Aaron** graduated with a 4.0 GPA and was honored with a Wal-Mart Competitive Edge Scholarship for \$20,000 for his college days ahead. His "edge" has remained sharp, as he has maintained top grades his freshman year at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. \diamond Throughout the year, oil spill training and activities were often attended by Teena, Isaac and Aaron. Aaron even worked for the Spill Response Team at the near-by Alpine oil production site during the summer. ♦ We had two special people staying with us as extra help over the summer. Roger Wieland from Michigan was our all around "fixit, build-it" man who contributed a great deal to the Colville complex. He enjoyed some canoe/fishing trips up the Colville during his stay too. Aletha Bennett, from Washington, was Teena's right arm help, and was loved and appreciated by all. Such a cute 17 year old couldn't

be



help but bring out the competition between two brothers vying for her

Spring, 2001

attentions. \diamond We enjoyed a great deal of company this year including Teena's mom & sis Marti and her husband Richard, who survived a boat outing in extreme high wind and waves. What a day! Also Teena's older sis Merrily & niece Grace helped out in October and

experienced wild snowmachine rides among many other Colville adventures. Craig Bennett hunted caribou with his cousin Isaac in the fall. Sascha Seehaus, a friend from Germany, accompanied Derek & Mel to the Colville in September. Jay and Amy had a long visit at the beginning of the new year. Moreover, we shared our home and museum with many others to numerous to list.

Special Events

D ne big event this year was the addition of another daughter to our family. Jay married Amy Jane Wilcoxson on August 31st in Fairbanks. It was a lovely wedding with many friends and family attending.

Amy's family Amy lives in

Fairbanks and many Helmericks and Wartes f a m i l y m e m b e r s were there too. \$Two other

events were rather



2 Arctic Ploverland News

Spring, 2001



dramatic during our summer. On June 11th a second wave of breakup flooding totally covered the island we live on and flooded up to 14" inside all our buildings except the main house, which had its entire insulated foundation under water. Jim had to evacuate the Cessna 206 and ended up operating out of Deadhorse for nearly two weeks while those of us left at home struggled to repair the devastated runway with shovels, rakes, and a wheel barrel. Our walkways had to be rebuilt and a great deal of hard clean-up work ensued both inside & out of the buildings. Mud, mud, mud! We suffered some loss of equipment and supplies, but were fortunate things weren't worse. I could write a whole chapter on all the fast paced events of those days. A second natural disaster struck in August, when a storm-tide flooded us again and we were out at 3:00 A.M. rescuing boats and outboard motors from swamping and securing the floatplane in 80 mph winds.

Travel

A ll the family enjoyed various trips here and there. Teena made several trips to Barrow and one to Pt. Hope (on Alaska's western coast) in connection with local political activities. She made another trip to Valdeaz to go out on her brother Mark's boat and catch the biggest Silver Salmon of the day. There were trips to Fairbanks and Anchorage for the wedding, for shopping and visiting, and other town activities. Salas and Derek went on a kayak trip in Prince Williams Sound in May, and each shot a black bear, among other escapades. \$Jay went to W. Virginia for a NASA rocket launch with his newly designed GPS guidance system on board, and then did a bit of touring while there on the East Coast. \$Jim feels like he's on one big extended trip while flying all summer. Fortunately he does get home most nights. \$Isaac made several trips to Washington State for visits with family and friends.

Extra Tidbits

C omething that is commonplace to us, **b**ut might be interesting to others is how we get about during the winter months when our planes are hangered for the cold, dark days. A typical trip to the post office to pick up and deliver mail is usually a day-long expedition. There is a period of several weeks to a month when we are unable to cross the frozen river ice because it is unsafe. Once it freezes thick enough to support the weight of a snowmobile and sled, we can drive over to the mainland and make our way the 8 miles to the closest oil drilling site that is connected to the permanent gravel road system. This is where we leave our pickup truck until needed to travel to Deadhorse (in Prudhoe Bay) where the post office is located and other supplies may be obtained. There is no grocery store there, but we can order groceries and other supplies from Fairbanks to be delivered there for pick-up. ♦When we reach the truck, we park the snowmachine and transfer gear for the remainder of the 70 mile drive to Deadhorse. Once all the errands are done, we reverse the routine to get home. We never make the trip without returning with a worthwhile load which may include scrap firewood for our stoves, or fuel for the generator, besides mail and other supplies. The drive and transfer of goods between truck and snowmobile sled both coming and going is always time consuming, and can

become harrowing if the weather deteriorates. \Rightarrow In mid-winter when the ice is thicker, the truck can sometimes be driven right to the house over the ocean and river ice. That makes the mail run easier, but wind-driven snowdrifts, or overflow water can become so bad that negotiating this terrain becomes impossible. Then it's back to the relay scenario. Access to the oil industries' winter ice-roads January through May has been a big help to us in recent years for travel and hauling supplies directly to the house with our truck and trailer. (Thank you Peak, BP, and Phillips Alaska.) Around May 15th we have to be ready for the river to start flooding and travel on the ice stops. Air travel is again the only way in and out of Colville Village until boat travel by mid-June adds another option lasting through freeze-up around late September.

GOOD BYE FOR NOW!



Our house (left of center) in July

Love,

Jim & Teena Derek & MeLanie Jay,& Amy Lsaac, Aaron

Helmericks Family Colville Village via Pouch 340109 Prudhoe Bay, Alaska 99734 Tel: (907) 659-2622 E-mail: <u>teena@astacalaska.com</u> http:/www.AlaskaOne.com/goldenplover