

JIM HELMERICKS FAMILY NEWS

Jim and Teena at home in the Colville Lodge in summer 2014.



We continue to be blessed - JESUS NEVER FAILS

The year 2014 was full and never boring. Life on the Colville River Delta continues to flow with many activities and duties interspersed with enough fun and relaxation to keep life in balance. As I write, we approach another Christmas in which we celebrate the earthly birthday of our Lord and Savior, Jesus. May His name be praised every day of the year! So what follows are some of the highlights from this past year.

In January, Teena headed off to work a 2/2 schedule during the winter ice-road season for Repsol E&P USA, INC. As two years ago, she managed remote camps and offices. Much of Repsol's exploration activities were within sight of our Colville home. With two weeks working at 12 hour/days, Teena is always more than ready for her two weeks at home. Jim continued to care for our large homestead, and always looked forward for our two weeks together each month.



Teena's transportation to and from work.

This year's "Breakup" was the second worst flooding event of our lives on the homestead. As spring melting and summer weather approached, the river reached 6.79 feet over mean sea level, which doesn't seem like much some places, but here at the mouth of the Colville River, it meant most of our island was under water. All our buildings except the main lodge was flooded with up to several feet of water. The final movement of ice out of the river was on June 3rd. Much of our summer was spent on cleaning up the mess.

Teena's wanderlust was fed in June when she traveled to Washington State to visit her mother and sisters. A bonus while in Washington was that she was able to travel with her longtime friend, Brenda! Once back in Alaska, that trip was topped off with getting all 5 grandkids together for a few days in Palmer for fun "cousin time". Then there was a get-together with Teena's brothers and much family at Harding Lake (an hour's drive from Fairbanks) for July 4th.



Brother Eldon and
Teena on jet ski.

One of our Colville summer jobs this year was to host a young film crew in July for a Yellow-billed Loon documentary. We enjoyed sharing our Arctic land and wildlife with the eager students.



While Jim "held down the fort" on the Colville Homestead, Teena made one more summer trip in late August with her sister Marti and her husband Dick to Denali Park in central Alaska. Friends Joe and Brenda Stoudt were also with us. We had spectacular fall-time weather to compliment the scenery and wildlife viewing.



Jim went to Anchorage to visit in October, and enjoyed time with family and friends there and got a breather from Colville duties. It was Teena's turn to "hold down the fort", although Jim makes sure she has plenty of cut firewood and whatever else he can do ahead for her. (What a deal!)

Jim at Hatcher Pass



Jim with Derek's kitty



In November, Teena had a special job to do. Jay had an opportunity to take Amy with him on his annual service trip to Antarctica, where he conducts maintenance on a UAF project he manages down there on the Ross Ice Shelf. It meant being away for over a month. Teena agreed to care for their 3 kids in Fairbanks for the first two weeks and then Amy's parents (who live in Fairbanks) would cover the later weeks. It was both a challenge and a delight to have that special time with Natasha (11), Melody (10), & Elisha (8). Back to the homeschooling routine, too. Teena was pleased to have her sister Merrily came north to spend the first week with them for extra company and help. Thanks Merrily!

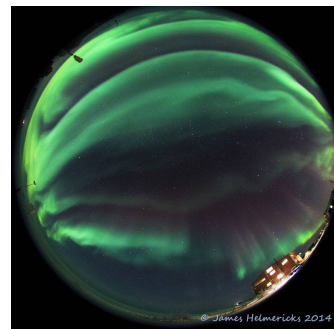


A quiet time at home in December for both Jim and Teena as the days grow darker and colder, surrounding lights of the spreading Oil Field creep closer, and Aurora dances above us nightly. Jim's Northern Lights pictures are becoming more appreciated all the time, as does his other Arctic Nature photos.



See Jim's photography at:

www.goldenplover.zenfolio.com



Finally for a brief synopsis on our kids...

Derek and Cindy continue to remodel and build additions to their house in Indian, Alaska, while keeping up on elaborate gardening and with their chicken/pigeon Aviary. Derek is Lead Environmental Engineer for Caelus Energy Alaska, the company that bought out Pioneer Natural Resources. This continues to be the oil company operating nearest to our Colville Homestead, plus Pioneer was the company that Teena started work for in 2006.



Jay and Amy just bought a new, larger home close to the university, and getting a move completed while Jay has had to work on projects out of state has made for extremely busy times for this family. (Teena was able to get acquainted with the new place during her time caring for the kids in November.) Jay continues in his job at the University of Alaska Fairbanks as Lead Engineer of Space Physics at the UAF Geophysical Institute, and Amy is about to publish her first novel.



Isaac and Crystal and their two kids have settled in well to life in Palmer and Isaac's two weeks away at work on his Slope job, managing the Kuparuk Airport, is well compensated by the two off-work weeks exclusively for family that follow. The "2&2" life does have its challenges and rewards.



Rhianna & Danian

Jim
with
kids
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Aaron and Autumn continue in their lovely home in Wasilla, as Autumn moves on into a new working environment and Aaron is now Director of the IT (Information Technology) department for Caelus Energy Alaska, the same company for which Derek works. Aaron rarely gets up on the Slope these days, as his time is dominated by work in Caelus' executive offices in Anchorage, or Dallas.



Autumn, Aaron, Grandma
(Teena's mother)

**We send all our friends and family
LOVE and Best Wishes for the
Coming year of 2015!**



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More pictures and highlights of
summer activities are on Teena's blog.