

# Colville Update

*Arctic Ploverland News*

*December 2016*

## Greetings from the Jim Hemericks Family

### Introduction

Years come and go and we get events mixed up more and more as to how many years ago something actually occurred. Teena was reminiscing about a certain event recently and commented about it being “a couple” of years ago. Derek quickly commented, “Mom, that was six years ago!” WHAT! Thanks goodness for our daily journals. If someone truly needs to know accurate dates, we can always pull out an old journal and look it up.

Highlights this past year for our family has centered on acquisition of various new properties. Plus, we continue to be so thankful for great communication devices that keep us connected with family and so many friends. It is pretty mind-boggling to realize how much time we spend on computers and other digital devices. Teena is especially grateful for her Kindle Reader, with which she can increase font size as her eyes get weary.

### Family Highlights

**J**im and Teena continue residence at the Colville Village “homestead”. Jim keeps busy with maintenance duties, hosting boarders, and many photography and bird-related projects. One noteworthy land acquisition was the final resolution of contested land here on the homestead from

extended family trust issues. This has been a family burden for a number of years, but finally the entire original homestead property now belongs to Jim and Teena, the only ones to live here continuously.

Teena still works part-time on jobs away from home when she can. In January, she took a crash course on weather observation in Anchorage and became a certified weather observer. Then she went directly to work for Caelus Energy (the same company for which Derek and Aaron work) on a remote exploration oil drilling project at Smith Bay, located along the coast 80 mile east of Barrow, and 91 miles west of our home on the Colville River Delta. She worked as Travel Coordinator, and managed all the flights in and out of that remote location. That job ended in May as the exploration season wound down, and ice roads and trails over the frozen tundra began to melt. If you are interested in learning more about that project you can google “Caelus Energy” and “Smith Bay” and find out more.

Jim with Rhianna & Danian



Teena at Gunflint hanger

Jim made several

trips to the Anchorage area during the past year, as did Teena, mostly for family visiting. Teena also spent time in Fairbanks for her family's 4<sup>th</sup> of July reunion, and also when she and Isaac made a leisurely trip down the Haul Road the end of June. Our truck needed some TLC in a shop in Fairbanks and Isaac and I enjoyed taking in all the spectacular scenery, camping, and birding along the way.



Another family land acquisition this year was the purchase of land in Wasilla, AK. This land is in the Meadow Lakes area off Visnaw Lake and includes a big hanger

to hold both our planes, now cared for by Isaac and Aaron. There is a connecting runway, many beautiful trees, and lovely scenery around the whole area.



Pilots Isaac & Aaron



**D**erek and Cindy continue work on the remodel and addition to their Indian house. It is a slow process when the couple have regular jobs and are doing all the work themselves. Much of the finish construction work is unique art work especially designed by them. Derek still works for

Caelus Energy as their lead environment engineer,

working a 2&2 schedule on and off the Slope. Cindy worked for the Chugach National Forest this year, plus maintained her Master Gardener title as she produced the usual amazing garden and flowering plants around the house and yard.

Derek and Cindy were excited to be able to over double their property size this year by purchasing the adjacent neighbors house and land. Although they are renting out the second house, it still gives them a nice working addition to their own yard, for which Derek has wished for a long time. He is already planning additional landscaping projects.

Derek continues to raise many kinds of chickens, quail, and pigeons. He loves outings with his boat, usually out of Whittier:



## Jay, Amy and kids

have now been settled two years into their new home along the Chena River in Fairbanks. Living back in town, puts Jay's commute to work to the UAF campus only a short drive. Jay has completed a lot of remodeling and upgrades to this house since they moved in, and it is always fun to





visit and see all the new improvements. Jay recently added solar panels to augment their electric power system.



Natasha is 13 and attending a local charter school. Melody is 12, and Elisha is 10, and they are in homeschooling again this year. Jay remains at his "Lead Engineer for Space Physics" job at the UAF Geophysical Institute on the Fairbanks campus. He often travels to share his expertise with people on other projects or do maintenance on his own. This year it has taken him to Diego Garcia south of India, Wake Island in the Pacific, the high desert of CA, and the Ross's Ice Shelf in Antarctica, where Infrasound (low-frequency sound) arrays are located. Jay runs these grids remotely, but must perform annual maintenance duties at each site. He did not have to accompany his crew to Antarctica in 2015, but this fall he did spend a month down there servicing all the equipment. He flies to Christchurch in New Zealand and then on a military transport to McMurdo, and from there he camps out on the Ross Ice Shelf. From the camp he works on the array of equipment installed in 2001 that monitors infrasound from around the world.

Jay continues to fly every opportunity he gets, such as flying his mom to Wasilla in our Cessna 206 during her July trip. Lots of fun!

**I**saac, Crystal, and kids have been enjoying their home in Palmer and they have added a lot of new landscaping with new trees, bushes and flowers. Plus, Isaac has upgraded their home to a 5-Star rating in heat-saving efficiency. His



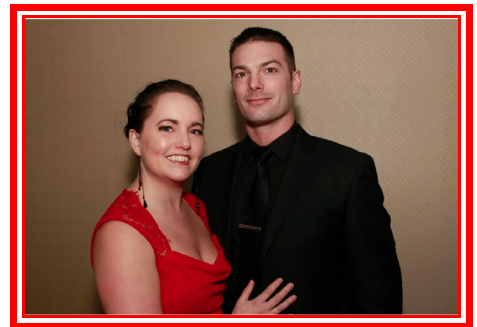
Airfield Manager job for ConocoPhillips on the North Slope is already in its 5th year. Isaac has upgraded his pilot ratings to include flying a floatplane. Rhianna is now 8 and Danian is 5. They both attend nearby charter schools.

One of this family's extra projects is raising and selling exotic chicken breeds - mainly for laying hens. The brooders always seem to have cute little peepers running around in them.



Rhianna & Danian on fun ride in Dad's Rhino ATV.

**A**aron and Autumn have worked steadily on landscaping projects and upgrades in their north Wasilla home. Hummm...wonder from where all this building and improving propensity comes? Perhaps their Grandpa Helmericks' construction "over-drive" influenced them all? Aaron's "Director of IT" job with Caelus Energy keeps him very busy, plus involves frequent travel to his corporate office in Dallas. Autumn is



Autumn & Aaron

busy and happy in her baker/operations job at Sophia's Café in Palmer. We all love to stop in for the yummy bakery goods she creates.



A&A  
yard

## Extras



Photographer Jim in  
winter garb.

***Jim's Photography website:***  
<http://goldenplover.zenfolio.com/>



***Teena's Blog:***  
[http://teena-  
arcticalaska.blogspot.com](http://teena-arcticalaska.blogspot.com)

***Family website:***  
<http://goldenplover.org>



Anachlik Island  
and Helmericks  
Homestead.  
June 2016, lake  
still with ice.

Jim and Teena are both on Facebook with  
many picture albums there.

***Love,***

***Jim and Teena  
Derek and Cindy  
Jay and Amy  
Natasha, Melody, Elisha  
Isaac and Crystal  
Rhianna, Danian  
Aaron and Autumn***

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***God Bless You All***