

Kasilof Community Church

Issue 21
December 2005

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KCC Newsletter Winter 2005

Here is a very brief Christmas quiz for you. To make it even simpler, you have a 50/50 shot at getting the right answer. Here we go. Don't peek at the answers. True or False.

1. The wise men followed the star as it moved from their eastern land to Israel.
2. Both Joseph and Mary were told that the baby was to be named "Jesus."
3. The wise men found Jesus lying in a manger in the town of Bethlehem.
4. Shepherding was considered a very noble occupation.
5. There are no records of Joseph speaking in the Christmas story.

Here are the answers

1. Apparently not. The wise men saw the star in the east (Matthew 2:2). But it did not take them to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem they asked for directions. Once leaving Jerusalem the star appeared again and led them to the house in Bethle-

hem (Matthew 2:9).

2. Yes. See Matthew 1:21 and Luke 1:31.

3. No, Jesus was in a house by this time (Matthew 2:11).

4. In first century B.C., shepherding was close to what we would consider garbage collecting. Shepherds were unable to remain ritually pure according to Pharisaic laws and so were considered unclean. Yet God chose them for His birth announcement!

5. I'm sure he said something, but there is absolutely no record of him speaking at all. So, how did you do on the quiz? It wasn't very hard, was it? The important thing is that you know who Jesus Christ is and why we are celebrating His birth. Yes, the holidays are to be happy and we should enjoy each other's company. But, let us never forget the shepherd's jubilation at the heavenly proclamation. They knew. We should too. **Merry Christmas**

Nativity, a Misunderstood Scene *by Brent Johnson*

The Scene of The Nativity is dear to Christians, having the combined drama of a birth —with the baby being God. Most people have a tender spot for children and the unique features of the Holy birth have been a useful tool for the Church for hundreds of years. How odd it is then, that the chronology of events surrounding the birth of Jesus are not understood by the majority of those who celebrate the event!

Two books cover the story with widely diverse details. I suppose that may infer the event has less than half the importance of the death and resurrection, which is described in far greater detail by four books; all with close unison of details. Be that as it may, this short article will compare Matthew and Luke in an attempt to reconstruct the first Christmas.

Luke says God sent an angel to Mary at Nazareth, where the virgin was engaged to be married. Both Matthew and Luke say Joseph took Mary home as his wife but had no union with her until after the birth of Jesus. By these Scriptures we establish that Mary lived with Joseph at Nazareth for less than nine months. Can we not conclude that Mary and Joseph lived at Nazareth?



Luke then says Joseph went from the town of Nazareth to Bethlehem to register for a census in the time of Quirinius. Bethlehem is about 70 miles ‘as the crow flies’ south of Nazareth. We could guess that such a journey might take four days

to a week if they walked and a little faster if they were blessed with donkeys to ride.

Both Gospels confirm that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Luke gives us the sole account of Jesus wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger, his parents unable to acquire lodging in an inn. By the same account, angels tip off shepherds to the Advent. Said shepherds in fact visit Mary, Joseph and the baby, in the quarters of the manger. And Luke tells us on the eighth day of Jesus' life He was circumcised and after the time of purification according to the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the priests. Luke concludes by telling us the Holy trio returned to Nazareth.

Matthew skips immediately from mentioning the birth at Bethlehem to a visit from Magi. In this account, the Magi have traveled from an eastern land to Jerusalem in

search of the King of the Jews. They are alerted to the event by the appearance of a star. Incidentally, at this point the star has not led them, only risen to alert them. We don't know how they knew about Jews or exactly why they went to Jerusalem. We should note that the star does not lead them to the baby, yet. So the Magi make a vocal inquiry at Jerusalem regarding this birth.

After Herod calls the Magi to him for a secret visit, he inquires as to when the star appeared. With this information, Herod sends the Magi to Bethlehem; Godspeed. Now, mysteriously, the star appears again! We note that this is a new event. Had the star been leading them the whole way, they would not have stopped in Jerusalem to ask directions. They may have stopped to give directions, but not to ask for them.

Emphasizing the same point from Matthew, the Magi leave Herod's Jerusalem, probably headed south, for Bethlehem. Now the star appears again! The same one they had seen in the east. This time the star does lead them. The star stops over the place where the child is. The Bible now refers to Jesus as a *child*. Shepherds visited a *baby*! Magi come to a *house*. Shepherds visit a *manager*. The Magi do not return to Jerusalem as Herod commanded, but return to their country by another route. Bethlehem is about six miles south of Jerusalem, Nazareth over 60 miles north of Jerusalem. Nazareth offers a better background to sneak out of.

One way to piece these accounts together, is to steer the Magi to Nazareth to visit Mary and Jesus in their own house. By this logic, the star appeared to them at Jesus birth, but the travelers don't reach the Lord until he is 2-years old. After leaving Jerusalem, God guides them north with his star. Perhaps they travel to Bethlehem first, but they find Jesus as a child with Mary in a house. They give gifts and sneak off.

This theory is supported by the next event in Jesus' life. Joseph is warned, immediately after the Magi visit, to flee to Egypt. He obeys. Had he been in Bethlehem at the time, how could they have returned to Nazareth, as Luke 2:39 tells us? Furthermore, Herod now kills the Bethlehem boys who are less than 2-years old. The upper age of the children killed suggests that Jesus might also be 2.

Traditionists might argue, why does Joseph flee to Egypt, if he is safely already at Nazareth? Here I can only guess. Those who kept the census may have noted the birth. They could provide information for tracking down young Jesus. And, of course, there is the little detail that God told Joseph to flee to Egypt.

To sum up, the traditional First Christmas is two or three years compressed into a single night. The doctrine, itself, is not particularly important, as is indicated by the inattention our Scriptures give the so-called nativity in comparison to the Perfect Passover/Atonement. In the end, far greater challenges exist in trying to fit the census mentioned by Luke into a rather reliable history established by Roman writers.

KCC BUS MINISTRY

In one of the most quoted passages in all of Scripture, Jesus issued what is referred to as the Great Commandment:

Matthew 28:19: Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Throughout church history, God's servants have endeavored to fulfill this request from our LORD. In doing so, much has been written about the various aspects of the command. For example, some focus entirely on the word, "Go." Great missions programs are the result. Ask others what it means to "make disciples" and you very likely could fill a large book on the various opinions that are in vogue today. "Of all the nations," seems pretty straight forward, but some programs tend to focus only locally while others think that this command means to only go where God's word is not being spoken. Finally, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit," well, suffice it to say there are definitely a few hundred different opinions about what this means and how to implement it.

At Kasilof Community Church, one ministry takes a simple approach. There were folks in our body who believed that within the Kasilof area we had children who would come to church if they only had a ride. From this benevolent and proactive attitude, our bus ministry was born. It took a couple of tries, but a van was finally located and purchased. Next, though, we needed bodies to drive the van every Sunday. No problem. Without a lot of fanfare, numerous people have volunteered to arrive early every Sunday, warm up the van, and then drive out into "Kasilof" to pick up children who need a ride to church. Then there are others that drive them back home when our services are over. Simple, right. Well, mostly it is, but were it not for all these volunteers this ministry would still be just a passing thought.

So, the next time you see the van pull up to the church and watch children begin heading out to their various Sunday School classes, you can be thankful for the servants of the Kasilof Community church bus ministry.

TWO BLASTS FROM THE PAST

It shouldn't be too difficult for most of you to identify the four individuals in this set of photographs that can be found wandering around KCC most every Sunday.

The photo on the left was taken in October of 1981. Aren't Sonny & Cher looking good on their wedding day?

The photo below was provided by a teacher from Skyview High School and is dated 1987. If you look closely you probably will be able to identify a couple of future "radicals," who would go on to a bright future at KCC.



If you would like to bless the pages of this Newsletter with a photo of one of your favorite people, we will scan it and return it to you, and for a small fee, we will not identify you as the villain.

The hunt for a first hunting rifle

by Jon Little

I'd lived in Alaska 17 years before I ventured moose hunting, and that was a one-day outing with a buddy who packed a .338 "Alaskan Special" while I carried only binoculars. I sat, listened, watched, learned and made it my goal to bag my own moose by next season. That was September 2004, and by the spring of 2005, I launched my quest the only way I know how. I annoyed people with questions. I peppered just about every hunter I met – most of my friends and neighbors – about firearms, bullets, ballistics, moose behavior and so on.

Bree and I had our goals firmly in mind: By October, our freezer was to be filled with home-grown peas and carrots, hand-picked blueberries and cranberries, fresh halibut steaks and moose meat, while the cupboard was to be lined with canned red salmon. Home-grown spuds were to be dried and stocked in our home's cool, dark crawl space. As we crossed off one goal after the other, I kept my sights on the biggest challenge: Bagging a moose. I was enrolled in my own, one-man, unofficial hunter education course. My diploma would have antlers.

The first thing I tried to zero in on was caliber, and I quickly found that every hunter has his own opinion on that meaty subject. Actually, most of them seem to be right, since it seems to be largely a matter of preference once you're in the ballpark for the type of game you're going after. I asked this question: "If you were to have just one all-around game hunting rifle, what would it be?" After talking with hunters and reading good advice from Cabela's Outdoors and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, I came away with the opinion that weapons should fit the target species, sure, but more importantly, they should match the size, weight, skill and temperament of the person pulling the trigger.

I don't know where I read this advice, but someone noted that hunters who are new to the sport tend to buy more gun than they need, and they compound the problem by making the big purchase right before a trip. These hunters wind up with a big gun with lots of recoil and minimal practice. I'm interested in eating moose, not wounding it, so that thought stuck with me as I began my search.

Most resident Alaska hunters advised me to buy everything from a .375 H&H, hefty enough to kill a rhino in Africa, down to a .25-06, which has little more recoil than a BB gun. Most opinion fell into the higher caliber range, .300 magnum and up. Their reasoning was that, yes, that's more than enough power to drop a moose, but a hunter in Alaska should consider a gun that's big enough to kill a brown bear in self defense. That makes sense. Grizzlies are fairly common here. On the other hand, those who promoted the lighter end of the spectrum were willing to take their chances on a brush with a bruin. It is a remarkably rare occurrence, and bears typically run the other way unless

you stumble onto a kill. I also observed that these proponents of smaller caliber were generally smaller and wirier men. And one of those candidly told me he just didn't want to deal with the recoil of a heavier rifle.

Since I'm 5-foot-11 and 155 pounds (I'm a sled dog jockey, after all), I listened hard to all the opinions, but listened especially carefully to my right shoulder and my accuracy as I tried out various rifles.

One gun enthusiast (Larry Lewis) was generous with his time, taking an afternoon off from work to lay out a few rifles for me to test at a firing range. I started out with a .223, then moved on to a .30-06, shot a few rounds with .338 and then pulled the trigger on his favorite, a .375 H&H. Being a novice, I leaned too close to the scope on that big game gun and it taught me a quick lesson, with only minimal loss of blood. I had to wipe a little eyebrow skin from the eyepiece.

One bit of advice that I took to heart was that a gun can sometimes present itself to you, once you pick a few up and get the feel for them. I went from store to store, visited a gun show and had friends let me examine their firearms and scopes. It was a slow process, and it took a measure of self-control to walk out of gun shops without a perfectly good rifle, but I was slowly getting a feel for stocks, scopes and bolt actions with the different brands, as well as the differences between light-weight and heavy rifles. I had to realistically think about my needs as a hunter. First of all, I was a beginner. As pleasant as those high-end rifles were to handle, they were more than I needed. It would be like giving a Ferrari to a student driver. And as much as a stainless/synthetic rifle makes sense in rainy Southcentral Alaska, I was told you can get along fine with a blued gun-metal/wood configuration if you take care of it. And I'd seen enough of those traditional old guns around here to figure that has to be true.

I had all but set my sights on a used Czech-made .300 Winchester Magnum on sale at a nearby store, but when I arrived to buy it, there was a new consignment piece on the counter: A no-frills but well-cared-for rifle with a wood stock and blued metal barrel. A customer had just traded in this 20-year-old Weatherby Vanguard .30-06. It wasn't the caliber I wanted, but I picked it up anyway and peered through the Leupold 2x7 Rifleman scope. My first reaction was to marvel at how clear and bright the view was, and how easily the stock nestled against my chin. I tested the bolt and it slid easily and smoothly, even as I kept my eye in the sights. Uh oh, my body was telling me this gun was a good fit, even though my mind was convinced I wanted a higher caliber.

Everything I'd read so far told me that a .30-06 is plenty of gun to drop an Alaska bull moose, which can weigh 800 to 1,600 pounds, depending on his age. But there was a part of me – the gear-head part – that wanted something bigger and better. After all, the .30-06 has been around for nearly a century. There's plenty of newer calibers on the

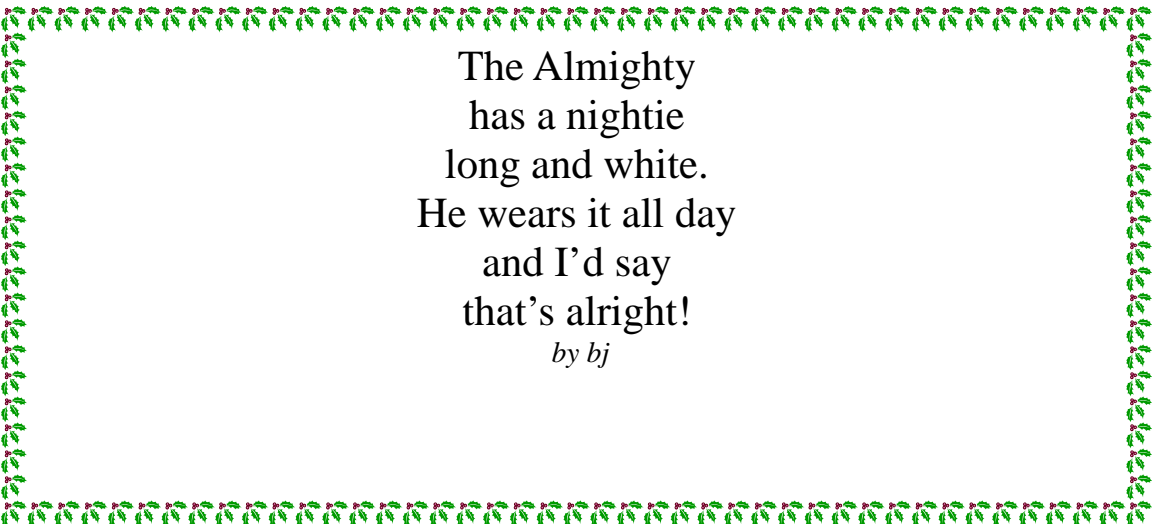
market that can fire farther, faster with more force and, apparently, less recoil. But the decision came down to what I needed, what I could afford and what felt right in my hands. Thankfully, I bought that simple, used rifle and spent the next couple of months getting acquainted with it and sighting it in.

I have since had the opportunity to test out a more elegant rifle, a friend's brand new Sako .300 Winchester Short Magnum. His rifle is a full two pounds lighter than mine, but has such a gentle kick, which may be due to the cartridge, spongy recoil pad and the addition of a muzzle break. I can easily see why a hunter would pay three times the amount I did for such a rifle; that gun is a pleasure. It comes down to a matter of personal preference, and, fortunately, there's a ton of choices out there.

By Aug. 20, the start of moose hunting season on the Kenai Peninsula, where I live, I was ready. Since I live near the edge of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, nearly 2 million acres of wilderness, I began patrolling trails near home.

Soon I spotted a legal bull, a youngster with two forked antlers, moving through the area. Since this was a freezer mission, he would be more than enough. I kept watch for a few days, and that moose returned to where I'd last seen him. I raised my rifle and placed a shot through his lungs at roughly 100 yards.

Now Bree and I are stocked for the long, cool season. Snow should fly by Halloween and it won't be gone again till Easter. If you stop by this winter, let us know in advance, and we'll fire up the crock pot with moose roast, some garden-grown potatoes, peas and carrots.



The Almighty
has a nightie
long and white.
He wears it all day
and I'd say
that's alright!

by bj

KCC SEWING CLUB

Led by the effervescent Miss Jane, a number of the ladies from KCC took a couple long days to get a head-start on some quilt tops.

Actually, that is just one of the projects these ambitious souls have undertaken. Every Wednesday morning for the past couple of months or so, they have been gathering together to fellowship over patterns and purring machines. I can't vouch for it, but I'm sure there has been a fishing story or two. . . . well, perhaps the stories were fishy, but they weren't about fish.



So, if you would like to learn how to make your hubby a new pair of long-johns or maybe it's a new sheepskin dress you're interested in, it doesn't matter, throw your sewing machine in your backpack and jog on down to the church and the ladies there will be glad to show you how to get started.

If'n you have any questions about the Wednesday morning sewing event, give Sharon Knowlton a call at the church or Jane Misner at home.

STRING MINISTRIES with David Titus

The purpose of David Titus' string ministries is to share the love of Christ through string figures, especially working with the people in developing nations, refugees, the oppressed, imprisoned or disabled. Some examples of these include leprosy patients in Mongolia, reindeer herders of Mongolia, Palestinian refugees, aids affected inner city children of New York, Alaska Children's Services group homes, children of prisoners, Pokera Drug treatment center in Pokera Nepal, isolated Alaskan villages, and East European children.

When we learned that David Titus, also known as "the String Man," was bringing his string program to Tustumena Elementary school this past October, and that he would be available for a Sunday evening program, we eagerly invited him to share with us.



David makes the AK state bird



Pastor makes a star



Walking the porcupine

New Life Fellowship Church agreed to serve as the host church and everyone who attended experienced an enjoyable evening. Mr. Titus' program is a "hands-on" adventure as he teaches you how to construct various figures from a piece of string. But, it goes beyond just learning how to "walk the porcupine," or "slap the mosquito." As he is guiding you through the process of learning how to make any number of various figures, he is also weaving a story of how Jesus Christ can change your life. The message is simple, but very effective. He shared of children taking their piece of string home to show their family what they learned, including word for word recitals of the stories that accompanied the figures.

In a Newsletter put out by David Titus, we find out that he attends Lawton Heights United Methodist Church in Lawton, OK. This is a small church of around 70 members, but they have an active ministry. David shares that besides conferences, school residencies and bookings, as well as church and camp bookings, he will be traveling outside the 48 contiguous states in the following ministries:

October 2005: two weeks in **Alaska**

February 2006: he will be going to **Liberia, West Africa** to attend the Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church of Liberia. He will be sharing string stuff there and then traveling on to **Guinea, West Africa** to be with the missionary that he formerly worked with in **Ghana**. David will travel to a number of places in Guinea. This trip will be about a month long.

May 2006: he will be returning to **Nepal** for the Annual Conference of United Missions to Nepal and a youth meeting of the Raute people. He met a local pastor there on his last trip and this pastor has asked him to come to the foothills and work with his people.

October 2006: he will be returning to **Mongolia** to teach at rural boarding schools throughout the countryside.

If you have suggestions or connections with somewhere that you think needs me to visit, please let David know.

For more information about String Ministries, please visit www.StringMinistries.org

3 Kinds

by Brent Johnson

Our world offers three kinds of people in regard to Christ. At least I think it does.

The first includes those who love Jesus. They are proud of Him and confident of Heaven. This group is a happy lot numbering in the millions, I suppose. They often attempt to convert friends and neighbors, as well as strangers, to their strange belief in a God whom hates human sacrifice and yet sacrificed his own human son. These happy folk are harmless, holding no threat to governments, to economies, nor to poor, sick or otherwise unfortunate individuals. They make every attempt to treat others as they, themselves, like to be treated. Unfortunately, these good people still find selfishness cropping up within them and continually struggle against this vice.

I've been in this group and know their peace. Anyone who wanders from them wants to go back. Yet the way is never easy. Open, but not easy.

A second group isn't sure about Jesus. Some, if not most, in this group have never heard of Him. How can one be sure of something they've never heard of? Still others, a lot of others, have heard of Jesus and, in fact, know quite a lot about Him. These people tend to be miserable. They feel a longing for God, which is probably the Holy Spirit tugging at their hearts. Yet they have questions. Lots of questions.

These folks don't preach to others. They like to listen to spiritual debates. They hope to have their questions answered but meanwhile they must focus on business at hand. Lots of business.

No, these folks aren't bad. At least not as the world defines badness. They have a conscience, like the first group. And they struggle against selfishness. Sometimes. At least some of them do. Their success of the strugglers is almost as good as the first group. I would guess they number in the billions.

I've been in this group and know their misery. Everyone in this group wants out. But the way isn't clear. Yet nothing blocks the way, all obstacles having been removed by Jesus.

The third group hates Christians. They are mad at Christians because they fully believe that Christ is a farce. It irritates them that people follow a fallacy, even though the

so-called fallacy actually makes people good citizens, and some in this group want very badly to be good citizens. This group views us like we view a cult. Beguilers! They try to convert everybody to their belief, in spite of the fact that converts gain nothing. Nothing to help them live and certainly nothing to help them die. These people also have a conscience. At least some do. And they think they are lights shining in a forest of stupidity. Maybe this is the least numerous of the groups but its growth is the fastest.

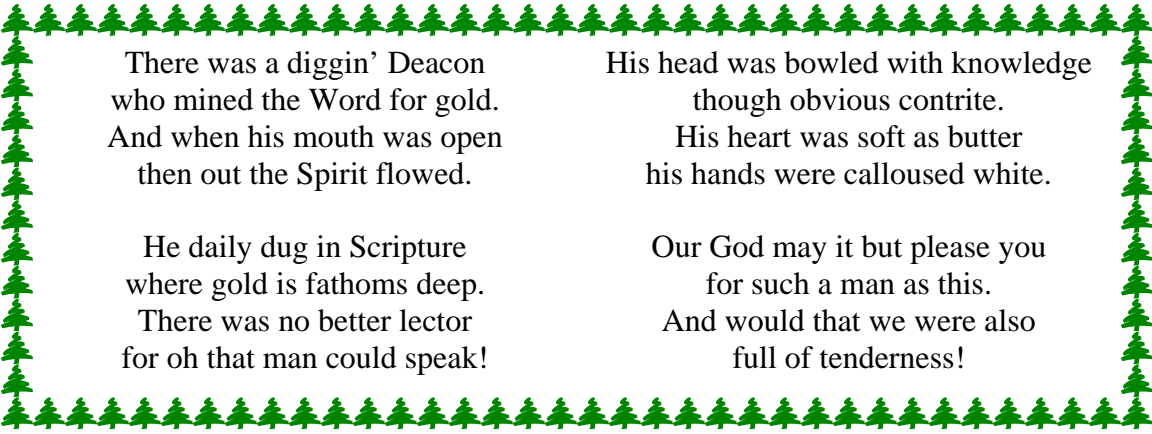
I have never been in this group and so know of them only by observation. People leave this group at times to join the first group. And make some of the best Christians. Paul of Tarsus was once one of this group.

People in this group are miserable. They have nothing to look forward to, especially as they age. And they do age. Every day their hour glass gets more bottom-heavy.

Perhaps lines between the groups get fuzzy, like lines in a rainbow. Centers are obvious. Weirdly, a person can't change groups by their own volition. Changes happen in the heart and hearts are outside human control. Oh, we can steer actions. We can be true to spouses. We can obey laws. Those things we do control. But belief itself is in the hands of God.

DEACON

by Brent Johnson



There was a diggin' Deacon
who mined the Word for gold.
And when his mouth was open
then out the Spirit flowed.

He daily dug in Scripture
where gold is fathoms deep.
There was no better lector
for oh that man could speak!

His head was bowled with knowledge
though obvious contrite.
His heart was soft as butter
his hands were calloused white.

Our God may it but please you
for such a man as this.
And would that we were also
full of tenderness!

Roast Mutton and the Good Shepherd

by Molly Aley

When we first moved up to Alaska and began attending our community church out in the woods, I handed out copies of Watchman Nee's, "*Sit, Walk, Stand*" to folks with gusto. You see, if struggling Christians could just *read* about the truth of who we are in Christ, then they'd just get it, right? Because obviously they didn't (poor struggling Christians), and obviously *I* did (wise and spiritual one that I am), and so... It was just a matter of sharing the right information, that's all.

And when I had my first child, it was just a matter of applying the right principles and techniques. First I was on the Attachment Parenting side, and then I swung over to a more ordered/scheduled side. Finding the "right" side was very important, because everything hinged on finding it. In my mind, it was all about simply following the right "way" of doing things. When I thought I found the right way, I preached, promoted and defended it as if a child's future depended on it. Which, actually, I thought it did.

In an attempt to make a long story short (and spare more embarrassing details about my previous pomposity [is that a word?]), there is a very patient Shepherd who guides the flock I'm in. If I were shepherding a sheep like myself, I'd have long since decided the effort wasn't worth it and enjoyed a nice dinner of roast mutton.

I'm not handing out books anymore. (Well, I *loan* out books all the time, but NOT the way I used to, where I thought reading one certain book would "fix" all the problems). I'm not dispensing mothering advice as if I am certain I have all the answers, or even correctly understand the problem, nor do I have a specific parenting camp I belong to. Heck, I don't even have a denomination or a solid theological camp to belong to.

It's funny. The older I get, the less it appears I actually know. And yet how much more confident I am—REAL confidence, not foolish confidence based on a shaky foundation, but a confidence based in the One I am following, the One who engulfs me, the One who lives in me.

He's taken His pesky know-it-all sheep and loaded her down with more than she can manage. Five children in seven years, a talented husband who is currently gone a **lot**, sleepless nights with Fat Happy Baby (who seems to be unaware of the fact that he shouldn't be waking up *all night long* at 5 months old), action-packed days (homeschooling, baking, cleaning, three *very* energetic little boys, two 'Let's do another craft, Mom!' girls, etc.), and one reeling swirling head at all the NOISE, the MOVE-MENT, the NEEDS, the JOYS, the FRUSTRATIONS, the FULLNESS of it all.

And all of a sudden that verse has become like a rope to me, something I grab hold of and hang onto and find peace and rest and sanity in.

"Not by might, not by power, but *by My Spirit.*"

He said that. But for so long, I wasn't able to hear it. *I* was busy being mighty and powerful. *I* was busy handling it all. *I* was busy conquering. *I* was busy making it. *I* was busy stealing God's glory and giving it to a technique, a book, a method, an energetic body, an "I can do it!" attitude.

Nothing wrong with those things. It's just that IF my testimony was like gold at the end of my days, I would have pointed to a book somewhere. IF my children "rise up and call me blessed," I would have pointed to a parenting philosophy. IF my marriage was wonderful, I would have pointed to a few principles. IF my home was always spotless, I would have shown you my daily to-do list. It was all about the formula and the one who followed the formula, with a quick little, "thank you," prayer thrown in for good measure.

But now it's *all* up for grabs. It's not about my philosophies, my cleaning lists, my marital principles, or my theological opinions. If anything good comes from this ground, you can know with assurance that, sure, perhaps a certain one planted and another watered, "but **God** giveth the increase." And I'm just still amazed that I'm not mutton.

In Praise of the Church Lady

God manages to use dubious characters to shape our lives.

by **Mark Linville** | posted 11/15/2005 09:00 a.m.

I was overchurched as a child. The prevailing ethic of our church community dictated that "every time the church doors are open you should be there." Whether our family actually succeeded in this, I am not sure. But, at any rate, my childhood memories are filled with those of my reluctant but compulsory attendance at more church gatherings than I thought I could bear.

What stands out in my boyhood memories is an assortment of odd characters. I can recall being sternly warned by one member not to eat snow because it had been poisoned by Nikita Khrushchev. An elder of the church adamantly maintained on more than one occasion that we had not "evolved." A brigade of lay evangelists confronted devout Lutherans or Presbyterians—or even people who had been baptized in the right way but with the *wrong* idea—on their doorsteps, unblinkingly informing them that they were destined to be cast into the lake of fire unless they converted (i.e., joined our church). These guys made the Sanctified Brethren of Lake Wobegon look like Unitarians. There was Al, who, upon greeting you at the church door with a handshake, would inexplicably pull your hand up into his moist underarm. I learned quickly to enter church through the side door. There was Mr. Reed, an elderly man who sat in the choir, facing the congregation, and had the rather dispiriting habit of elaborately—even ceremoniously—hacking phlegm from his deepest recesses and then, predictably, leaning forward to spit it into the carpet in front of his seat.

We also had our share of hypocrites: the volunteer youth sponsor who, though recently married, attempted to seduce half of the teenage girls in the youth group; the other volunteer youth sponsor who succeeded in seducing another man's wife and running off with her. I can recall more than one occasion on which some of the churchmen traded racist jokes—featuring, of course, the n-word as a kind of verbal centerpiece. Then the minister took an inordinate interest in the contents of a skirt or two in the congregation and was soon seen loading a U-Haul bound for another state.

There was also the Church Lady, who, outfitted with horn-rimmed glasses and a flannelgraph lesson, taught my Sunday school classes. If every believer is graced with some spiritual gift, such as hospitality or encouragement, hers was the gift of disapproval. This woman never understood that good behavior in little boys did not entail their acting like little girls, so I am sure that her reprimands brought out the worst in me. I could never seem to escape the Church Lady as she was also perpetually involved in vacation Bible school, that bane of summer; a whole *week* of daylight stolen from the

middle of a sandlot-baseball-playing boy's vacation. Under her direction, we pledged allegiance to the Bible ("God's Holy Word") and to the Christian flag ("and to the Savior for whose kingdom it stands"), drank green Kool-Aid from Dixie cups, and glued macaroni to plates to form crosses.

As a child, I was dragged involuntarily to a plethora of gatherings and placed under the authority of dubious characters, many of whom might have made interesting studies in abnormal psychology. Some of this is perhaps the stuff cited by members of Fundamentalists Anonymous, a support group for people who have finally escaped the clutches of the religious authorities of their childhood, but who are still nursing old wounds.

But this company of the strange, the judgmental, and the hypocritical—in cooperation, of course, with the not-so-strange nor hypocritical—managed somehow to do me the invaluable service of laying a solid foundation for the faith of my adult life. Indeed, these imperfect people instilled within me my basic worldview by the time I was 4 years old. That worldview has undergone a bit of fine-tuning since then, but by age 4, I had the deep conviction that there is a God who is supremely good and wise, that he created us out of love, and that he wishes for us to learn to love one another in the same way that he loves us. This early orientation on my proper place in the grand scheme of things has been a keel that has directed safe passage through a variety of intellectual and emotional crosscurrents.

I suspect that the Church Lady—who in my memory is more an amalgam of many people who had an early influence on me than an actual person—had something less than an articulate and carefully reasoned theology. I would not be surprised to learn that she harbored some religious beliefs that were downright silly. But she is yet another example of those crude earthen vessels in which God has placed his treasure, and which he is able to use for his good purposes. Everywhere I looked, it seemed, there were examples of people struggling to live lives of discipleship as best they understood it. In short, I grew up in the midst of a community of people who embraced essentially the same Christian worldview, however imperfectly, and I am the better for it.

In addition to this network of believers who shared the burden of directing my earliest steps, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, there was the sense that those authority figures beyond the church walls—schoolteachers, for example—were very much in league with my parents. But the winds have changed in our culture. The teachers in charge of our children may be more interested in dismantling their politically incorrect Christian convictions than encouraging them. And while I am not interested in joining a critique

of today's children's cartoons for purportedly promoting the gay lifestyle, I do believe there is a cynical atmosphere that pervades many of the forms of entertainment to which today's children are exposed. It is the cynicism that marks our postmodern times and that promotes a sort of ironic detachment from any form of deep conviction and commitment. It is "hipness unto death." Our children are alive to it at earlier ages, with the result that the old loyalties can appear to them as quaint, hopelessly naïve, and easily parodied ("Sounds like *The Waltons!* Goodnight, John Boy!"). Thus the natural trusting innocence of childhood is lost.

The Church Lady is needed today more than ever. It would be the height of foolishness for us to expect to engender a robust faith in our children today without simply immersing them in a community of believing people as I was. There may be attempts within the home to instill faith and Christian virtues, but the prevailing winds of our culture are blowing strongly in the opposite direction. Young saplings are nearly certain to bend to and be shaped by those winds if not sheltered. And the only proven shelter is marked by a steeple.

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November 2005, Vol. 49, No. 11, Page 64*

Some Wisdom for Married Men

by Brent Johnson

If you are seeing flying saucers around your home, don't call the news media! Try taking out the garbage and bringing back flowers.

If you find yourself being accused of "never" listening, listen attentively. A dissertation is sure to follow. Afterward, smile. At this time it's important to overcome the urge to present the fact that you have just listened, which would of course, negate the accusation. Instead say, "Thank you! I needed that!" Give her a big hug. Now everyone will be confused, which is better than the normal outcome where just you are confused.

If you feel you are still misunderstood after explaining something 5 times, do not try for 6. Stop and realize the world will rotate fine without understanding you. Instead, go back to the basics. Try kissing. Remember, a picture is worth a thousand words and a touch is worth a thousand pictures.

If you notice many unwanted plants in your house, do not mention it. Be thankful. Plants are therapeutic, cheap, and know more than psychiatrists. And you don't want to go there.

If you are not used to diapers, dishes and dust clothes; your marriage may not be 3-D.

Over My Head and Under My Feet

by Molly Aley

He is. Over my head and under my feet, that is. Because sometimes I just feel like *I* am. In over my head, metaphorically speaking, with the rug swept out from under my feet. Five voices wanting me, demanding me, needing me. Not like they shouldn't--*I am* their mother, after all--but sometimes I get lost in it all.

Sometimes it's just a matter of doing a quick mental check and deciphering which need is top priority. Is it the baby signaling to breastfeed, the disobedient toddler who just (purposely) smashed the Lego contraption of his (now-howling) preschool brother, the kindergartener wanting to cuddle and tell me all about her latest discovery, or the 2nd grader's (close-to-tearful) math question? (Do you know the answer? I still don't!)

Solutions *are* available for each need, yes, but not all at once--not all at the same time. But sometimes they all need me at the same time. Sometimes the needs are all very valid. Sometimes I want to run into the bathroom and hide.

It is at moments like these when I understand *why* Susanna Wesley, mother of the famed John and Charles Wesley, mother of many more than I could ever dream of having (17 children, I think it was?), would stop in the middle of the kitchen and throw her apron over her head to pray.

I used to think that "Time With God" was something special. In Bible College, I would neatly lay out my books--the Strong's over here, the lexicon there, commentaries neatly piled and a ready notebook on the right to contain my Scripture-searching discoveries. Only I've since learned that discoveries made on paper are not quite the same thing as those forged on the anvil of life. God doesn't live in paper. He lives in the hearts of His people. "Time With God" is *all* the time.

Speaking of time, I don't *have* time for lexicons right now. There is no room right now for leisurely jaunts through pages of Scripture. I come at His book now like an athlete, sweating and thirsty from the game. I open the Word like the basketball player grabs his water bottle, and I squeeze out the precious fuel, feeling the pleasure of it going down, the cold overflow running off my face and dripping down, my body enjoying the momentary peace from the battle. Momentary being the key word, because before my last gulp is down, the referee blows his whistle, time-out is over, the game is back on and I'm out on the court again running, moving, playing with purposeful intent (because who goes on the court to lose?).

Sometimes I just feel lost in it all. It's too much. Too overwhelming. Too demanding. But before the waves pull me under, He reminds me that I'm in over my head *in Him*. I'm swept off of my feet *by Him*. He is before me and behind me, around me and within me. And nothing is impossible for Him, just as nothing is impossible for them that believe. And so *it* can't be too much, because *He* is too much.

I walk in a bubble, so to speak. And, yes, it's true--*I am* lost in this place. Overwhelmed. Out of my league. Beyond what I can do. But I have this funny feeling this is *exactly* the place He's been trying to get me in for years.

Elusive Moose Makes Mistake, Gives Novice Hunter A Second Chance

by Jon Little

We sat in the rain for hours, waiting, watching, hoping a legal bull moose would amble into our field of view. As the gray day gave way to dusk, we were rewarded. As I got up from a stump to stretch, I turned to my left and saw the brown hulk of a moose's back through the gloom, maybe 150 yards away.

My father in law, from Boise, and I were hunting moose near my home off Pollard Loop. But I was optimistic and enjoying the moment, despite the relentless downpour. After all, this was my first time hunting with my first gun, a used Weatherby Vanguard .30-06. I didn't know a thing about calling in moose by slapping old antlers against trees or grunting like a bull in rut. So I kept it simple. We had sat, waited and watched.

I grabbed my binoculars and saw, yes, the brown thing across the gully was a moose, a young bull. I made out a few small tines, but was it legal?.

No doubt this wasn't a trophy bull. But neither of us could tell through our rain-soaked binoculars if it was a legal yearling, and night was fast approaching. My partner, Jim, moved in for a closer look, and got too close: The moose caught his scent or heard a twig or the rustle of wet grass. I don't know what spooked it, but through my glasses, I saw the bull's head swivel up, and whirl around. The bull bolted back into the dark forest and vanished.

That stung. Had we missed our only opportunity? We consoled ourselves with the truth: We had not been able to confirm if this little guy had a forked antler on one side, which would make it legal.

Both of us would have been more than satisfied with the tiny bull. Our family loves the taste of fresh game meat, and this hunt was all about stocking up for the winter and sharing.

Even though the moose hunting season here lasts for a month, only one in seven hunters is successful, according to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Only 15 percent of hunters who buy a moose tag are lucky enough to fill it out each fall. (Roughly 500 moose are taken each year on the Kenai Peninsula, out of a population of maybe 7,000. Other regions of Alaska have significantly higher success rates, but this area remains a popular destination, especially for residents, since it's on the road system.)

I didn't have those numbers pasted in my memory, and I have no history as a hunter, but I knew as I rode my ATV through 2 miles of deepening mud puddles toward home that you don't get many second chances. As we pulled into the driveway, there standing in the beams from the headlights of our four-wheelers were two moose: A cow and a calf

lazily munching willow leaves just a few feet from my vegetable patch. We laughed, and went inside. I wasn't worried about my garden. The patch of peas, cabbage, broccoli, and lettuce was surrounded by what I thought was a moose-proof fence.

But by morning we discovered that the moose had found a chink in the fence's armor. It wasn't firmly fastened at the bottom. They nosed under it, easily lifting the webbing with their heads, and spent the night decimating our vegetable crop, departing the garden the same way they got in. This was insult to injury. Not only did we miss a chance at putting moose meat on our menu, but our menu was slashed of home-grown broccoli and peas – at the hooves of a moose. The way I saw things, the score was now Moose 2, Humans 0. This was getting personal.

I was determined to find that young bull again, and went back to the same location before dawn and a few hours before dusk the next day. I figured it might be dumb enough to return to the same spot, but I began to feel like the dummy. Not a twig moved. It was dead quiet the next morning, too. But my fourth time out, two nights after I'd seen that bull, I heard branches snapping in the forest for about 15 minutes before the bull strolled out to the same clearing it had visited before, at the same time of night. This night, though, it was clear and calm. I was also alone, since my hunting partner had opted to sit on another stump about a mile away.

Initially, I had a bout of buck fever. My pulse raced and I could barely steady my binoculars, especially once I realized this moose had an obvious fork on the right side of his head. That's all I needed to know.

This part of Alaska allows hunters to take yearling bulls with a spike or a fork on either side, or a mature bull with a rack over 50 inches across. Since about half the yearlings grow a paddle in their first rut, there are always plenty of new recruits in prime breeding age that are safe from hunters, and most hunters wind up culling surplus young bulls. It allows us to keep a month-long hunting season without lotteries or permits, and it protects the prime breeding age bulls.

Right as I realized this bull was fair game, he actually did me a favor, although it didn't seem like it at the time. He walked swiftly across my field of vision from left to right about 150 yards away, in and out of a small clearing. Then he disappeared into another stand of trees. He was gone. I was beginning to think it was going to be Moose 3, Humans 0, but that breather while I calculated my next move also gave me time to relax and clear my head. I jogged silently to my left on bare patches of dirt to get a better view of where he'd gone, saw nothing, then jogged right, downhill. The stand of trees ended here, and I cut left, and tiptoed forward. I was approaching a small grassy swamp, and was rewarded as the swale came into view. My bull was standing at the far end of it, staring my direction. I kneeled and took aim, wishing like heck I had a hunting partner

to bounce ideas off, but also relieved to be free of any intrusion. Through the cross hairs of my Leupold 2x7 scope, set at the highest power, I had a good view of the bull about 100 yards. It turned to its right, exposing its left flank and I thought, "This is it," as I targeted the belly just behind its shoulder: A lung shot. I squeezed the trigger the way I'd practiced scores of times at the range. A blast echoed across the landscape, and the bull bolted forward out of my line of sight. The 180-grain Nosler Partition bullet had penetrated its hide, punctured both lungs and shattered one rib as it departed, leaving a roughly two-inch exit wound. But I didn't know all that until later.

I padded farther ahead and caught sight of it. It was standing, head down with labored breathing. If I'd been more experienced, I would have known with certainty that the bull only had a minute or two to live. As it was, I was confident. The experts warn hunters to hold their fire and wait. One shot usually is all you need.

Then the bull turned and wheeled to its right and bolted toward a small rise. Several thoughts flashed through my mind in a flash: "Is it only wounded?," "Did I miss the lungs?," "Am I going to be chasing this animal all night?" With nobody around to bounce ideas off, I made an executive decision. I fired one more shot at the lungs, then bounded after the moose as it ran up and over rise and out of sight.

When I caught up to where I'd last seen him, I was relieved to find the bull lying on its side, breathing its last. Since this was my first big game kill, I expected to feel remorse. But my reaction was quite the opposite. I was calm, very relieved and felt a kind of primitive satisfaction and respect as I told the animal it was all right. It was time for it to die.

My hunting partner had been a mile away and heard both shots. He pulled up on an ATV within a minute, and we started field dressing the small bull as the last daylight faded. That's when I was able to see that, indeed, the first shot had killed it. The unnecessary second shot would have, too. It was a little closer to the neck. No meat was damaged except a little near the two exit wounds.

I was grateful then and have remained so, especially since hearing that hunters are skunked more often than not -- at least around here. Two fellow hunters saw lots of cows, calves and illegal bulls during our hunt, but weren't able to pull the trigger on a legal animal. They aim to be back, and this time we may put in for a permit hunt in a trophy area and, who knows, maybe I'll practice my moose calls.

Captain Brent on *Fear*

A fearful dog is ferocious but the dog of fears is death.

A fear of poverty is the bread of fools, but a foolish spender is bred to be poor.

A fear of flying is aviaphobia, but a flyer's fear is crashing.

If a fear of nuclear weapons is nucleomitiophobia, is that about A bomb?

If all we have to fear is fear itself, is that a hobby phobia, a hokie phobia or just stupid?

If for the fear of war there is no word, is that because such a thought is beyond expression?

A fear of strangers is xenophobia and a stranger to fear is bravery.

A fear of heights is acrophobia and the height of fear is terror.

If a crashing fear fell on a dashing deer, would we have a fallen doe, a startlin' foe, or buckshot?

A fear of food is cibophobia but the food of fear is shadows.

A fear of falling is altophobia but a fallen fear is a victory.

There is no such thing as a fear of pets, but pet among fears is the dark.

Phobia is a fear, fibea a bone, and the fear of bones is grave.

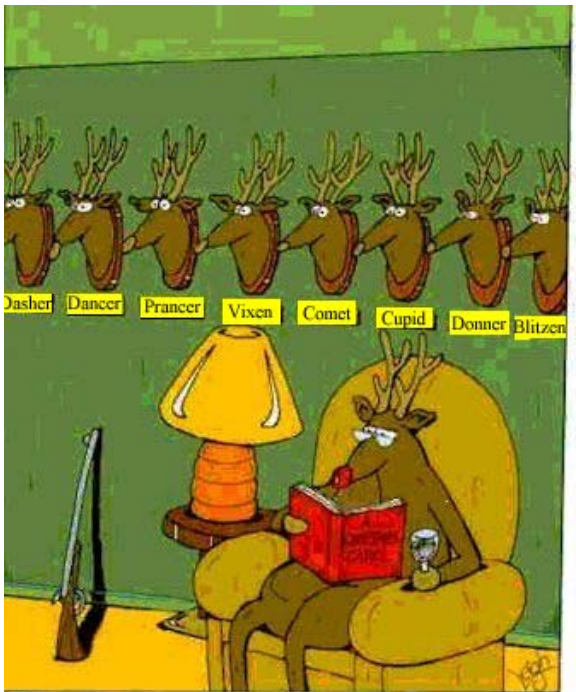
A fear of enclosures is closterphobia but cluster-boxes are a multi-mail safe box.

A friend of fears is imagination but a fear of friends is trust.

A fear of death is thanatophobia but the death of fears is knowledge.

A fear of God is wise and the wise know no other fear.

SEASONAL HUMOR



All of the other reindeer used to laugh and call him names.



Ninilchik Girls Varsity Basketball Schedule

Day	Date	Place	Opponent	Time
Saturday	17-Dec	Away	Nikiska	4:00 p.m.
Thursday	21-Dec	Away	Homer varsity	4:00 p.m.
Friday	23-Dec	Home	Alumni game	6:00 p.m.
Tuesday	27-Dec	Away	Sitka Tourney	TBA
Wednesday	28-Dec	Away	Sitka Tourney	TBA
Thursday	29-Dec	Away	Sitka Tourney	TBA
Thursday	5-Jan	Away	CIA Classic	TBA
Friday	6-Jan	Away	CIA Classic	TBA
Saturday	7-Jan	Away	CIA Classic	TBA
Saturday	14-Jan	Away	Lumen Christi	2:00 p.m.
Tuesday	17-Jan	Home	Nikolaevsk	4:30 p.m.
Friday	20-Jan	Away	Seldovia	TBA
Saturday	21-Jan	Away	Seldovia	TBA
Wednesday	25-Jan	Away	Galena (at Lumen Christi)	5:00 p.m.
Tuesday	31-Jan	Home	CIA	4:30 p.m.
Friday	3-Feb	Home	Mead River	TBA
Thursday	9-Feb	Home	Ninilchik Tourney	TBA
Friday	10-Feb	Home	Ninilchik Tourney	TBA
Saturday	11-Feb	Home	Ninilchik Tourney	TBA
Saturday	18-Feb	Home	Seldovia	5:00 p.m.
Tuesday	22-Feb	Home	Bristol Bay	5:00 p.m.
Monday	28-Feb	Away	Nikolaevsk	4:30 p.m.
Saturday	4-Mar	Home	Lumen Christi	2:00 p.m.
Thursday	9-Mar	Away	Region Tourney @	TBA
Friday	10-Mar	Away	Region Tourney @	TBA
Saturday	11-Mar	Away	Region Tourney @	TBA
Thursday	21-Mar	Away	STATE @ ANCHORAGE	TBA
Friday	22-Mar	Away	STATE @ ANCHORAGE	TBA
Saturday	23-Mar	Away	STATE @ ANCHORAGE	TBA

Skyview Girls Varsity Basketball Schedule

Day	Date	Place	Opponent	Time
Saturday	10-Dec	Home	Grace Christian	1:00PM
Friday	16-Dec	Away	Kenai	6:00PM
Saturday	17-Dec	Away	So-Hi	3:00PM
Tuesday	27-Dec	Away	Sitka Tourney	TBA
Wednesday	28-Dec	Away	Sitka Tourney	TBA
Thursday	29-Dec	Away	Sitka Tourney	TBA
Thursday	5-Jan	Home	Peninsula Challenge	TBA
Friday	6-Jan	Home	Peninsula Challenge	TBA
Saturday	7-Jan	Home	Peninsula Challenge	TBA
Friday	13-Jan	Home	Kenai	6:15PM
Saturday	14-Jan	Home	Wasilla	4:00PM
Friday	20-Jan	Home	Homer	6:15PM
Saturday	28-Jan	Home	Homer	3:30PM
Friday	3-Feb	Away	Palmer	6:00PM
Saturday	4-Feb	Away	Colony	1:15PM
Thursday	9-Feb	Away	Valdez Elks	TBA
Friday	10-Feb	Away	Valdez Elks	TBA
Saturday	11-Feb	Away	Valdez Elks	TBA
Friday	17-Feb	Home	Kodiak	6:00PM
Saturday	18-Feb	Home	Kodiak	1:00PM
Friday	24-Feb	Home	Soldotna	6:00PM
Saturday	25-Feb	Away	Homer	4:00PM
Thursday	9-Mar	Away	Regions @ Colony	TBA
Friday	10-Mar	Away	Regions @ Colony	TBA
Saturday	11-Mar	Away	Regions @ Colony	TBA
Thursday	23-Mar	Away	state	TBA
Friday	24-Mar	Away	state	TBA
Saturday	25-Mar	Away	state	TBA

Skyview Boys Varsity Basketball Schedule

Day	Date	Place	Opponent	Time
Saturday	10-Dec	Home	Grace Christian	2:30PM
Friday	16-Dec	Away	Kenai	7:30PM
Saturday	17-Dec	Away	So-Hi	5:30PM
Tuesday	27-Dec	Away	Sitka Tourney	TBA
Wednesday	28-Dec	Away	Sitka Tourney	TBA
Thursday	29-Dec	Away	Sitka Tourney	TBA
Thursday	5-Jan	Away	Sohi Tip Off	TBA
Friday	6-Jan	Away	Sohi Tip Off	TBA
Saturday	7-Jan	Away	Sohi Tip Off	TBA
Friday	13-Jan	Home	Kenai	8:00PM
Saturday	14-Jan	Home	Wasilla	5:30PM
Friday	20-Jan	Home	Homer	8:00PM
Saturday	28-Jan	Home	Homer	5:15PM
Friday	3-Feb	Away	Palmer	7:45PM
Saturday	4-Feb	Away	Colony	3:00PM
Thursday	9-Feb	Away	Valdez Elks	TBA
Friday	10-Feb	Away	Valdez Elks	TBA
Saturday	11-Feb	Away	Valdez Elks	TBA
Friday	17-Feb	Home	Kodiak	7:30PM
Saturday	18-Feb	Home	Kodiak	2:30PM
Friday	24-Feb	Home	Soldotna	7:45PM
Saturday	25-Feb	Away	Homer	5:45PM
Thursday	9-Mar	Away	Regions @ Colony	TBA
Friday	10-Mar	Away	Regions @ Colony	TBA
Saturday	11-Mar	Away	Regions @ Colony	TBA
Thursday	23-Mar	Away	state	TBA
Friday	24-Mar	Away	state	TBA
Saturday	25-Mar	Away	state	TBA

So-Hi Girls Varsity Basketball Schedule

Day	Date	Place	Opponent	Time
Saturday	10-Dec	Home	EAGLE RIVER	5:00PM
Tuesday	13-Dec	Home	Seward High School	6:00PM
Saturday	17-Dec	Home	Skyview	4:00PM
Thursday	5-Jan	Away	Pen. Challenge @ Skyview	TBA
Friday	6-Jan	Away	Pen. Challenge @ Skyview	TBA
Saturday	7-Jan	Away	Pen. Challenge @ Skyview	TBA
Saturday	14-Jan	Home	Homer High School	4:00PM
Thursday	19-Jan	Away	Kotzebue Tournament	TBA
Friday	20-Jan	Away	Kotzebue Tournament	TBA
Saturday	21-Jan	Away	Kotzebue Tournament	TBA
Friday	27-Jan	Home	Colony High School	6:00PM
Saturday	28-Jan	Home	Palmer High School	4:00PM
Thursday	2-Feb	Away	Kenai	5:00PM
Tuesday	7-Feb	Home	Nikiski	6:30PM
Friday	10-Feb	Away	Kodiak	7:00PM
Saturday	11-Feb	Away	Kodiak	5:00PM
Friday	17-Feb	Home	Grace Christian	5:30PM
Saturday	18-Feb	Away	Homer	5:00PM
Friday	24-Feb	Away	Skyview	6:00PM
Saturday	25-Feb	Home	Kenai	4:00PM
Friday	3-Mar	Away	Wasilla	6:00PM
Saturday	4-Mar	Away	Houston	TBA
Thursday	9-Mar	Away	Region Tourney @ Colony	TBA
Friday	10-Mar	Away	Region Tourney @ Colony	TBA
Saturday	11-Mar	Away	Region Tourney @ Colony	TBA
Thursday	23-Mar	Away	STATE @ ANCHORAGE	TBA
Friday	24-Mar	Away	STATE @ ANCHORAGE	TBA
Saturday	25-Mar	Away	STATE @ ANCHORAGE	TBA

So-Hi Boys Varsity Basketball Schedule

Day	Date	Place	Opponent	Time
Saturday	10-Dec	Home	Eagle River	6:30PM
Tuesday	13-Dec	Home	Seward	7:30PM
Saturday	17-Dec	Home	Skyview	5:30PM
Thursday	5-Jan	Home	SO-HI TIP-OFF	3, 3:45, 6:30, 8:15
Friday	6-Jan	Home	SO-HI TIP-OFF	3, 3:45, 6:30, 8:15
Saturday	7-Jan	Home	SO-HI TIP-OFF	11, 2:30, 4:15, 7:00
Friday	13-Jan	Home	Dimond	7:00PM
Saturday	14-Jan	Home	Homer	5:30PM
Thursday	19-Jan	Away	Kotzebue Tournament	TBA
Friday	20-Jan	Away	Kotzebue Tournament	TBA
Saturday	21-Jan	Away	Kotzebue Tournament	TBA
Friday	27-Jan	Home	Colony	7:30PM
Saturday	28-Jan	Home	Palmer	5:30PM
Thursday	2-Feb	Away	Kenai	6:30PM
Tuesday	7-Feb	Home	Nikiski	8:00PM
Friday	10-Feb	Away	Kodiak	8:30PM
Saturday	11-Feb	Away	Kodiak	6:30PM
Saturday	18-Feb	Away	Homer	6:45PM
Friday	24-Feb	Away	Skyview	TBA
Saturday	25-Feb	Home	Kenai	5:30PM
Friday	3-Mar	Away	Wasilla	7:30PM
Saturday	4-Mar	Away	Houston	TBA
Thursday	9-Mar	Away	Region Tourney @ Colony	TBA
Friday	10-Mar	Away	Region Tourney @ Colony	TBA
Saturday	11-Mar	Away	Region Tourney @ Colony	TBA
Thursday	23-Mar	Away	STATE @ ANCHORAGE	TBA
Friday	24-Mar	Away	STATE @ ANCHORAGE	TBA
Saturday	25-Mar	Away	STATE @ ANCHORAGE	TBA

Gin Gin 120 - Part 2

by Karla Hudson

I have been super busy since the last newsletter was published. I thought maybe I should get a head start on this second edition of my story. I ended my last report with the declaration that I'm going to be running a women's sled dog race, that is, if I don't chicken out. As it stands right now, I am still in training for this race, which goes by the name of Gin Gin 120. We haven't gotten a lot of snow, which has made training difficult. All we really have for snow is ice and an occasional dusting or brief flurries. Josh has made a new sled for me to run this race, as I was required to have a sled with a five foot basket and we didn't have one that big. I even helped Josh build it, although I should note that it would have been better if I had just stayed out of his way. He seemed to get more done on it when he wasn't showing me how to do something and correcting my mistakes. So I have a beautiful new sled and no snow to use it on.

I have been on numerous training runs with the four wheeler. Josh has taught me the dog's commands. This is interesting. It's not just about commanding them to do something, it's the tone in my voice with which I make the command. There are several other tidbits of information I needed to know. Sometimes it seemed so ridiculous. I remember one day I felt comfortable taking charge of a situation when I had some dogs goofing off. I shouted out, "Let go, hike." Of course there was a reason why they were messing around, but it didn't seem fair to me. It's as if they knew that if Josh gave them an order there was a good reason for it. But, if I yelled out an order I didn't know what I was talking about. I got so frustrated with it one day I just walked home. Not all the way, but I did walk a couple of miles before I was picked up by my neighbors. Now rest assured animal lovers, Josh had the dogs. I didn't just leave them. Josh told me that when he started heading back to the house that the lead dog wouldn't turn to go home, she turned in the opposite direction to come look for me (Dainty would have never gone in a different direction if she was on a course for home). So when they didn't find me walking down the road they just went home. If you're wondering if I felt bad, the answer is yes. How was I suppose to know that Dainty was going to come looking for me? I didn't think she cared. For all I knew, the dog's were relieved that they had a lighter load.

I have only had one day for training on a dog sled. We had to go up to Caribou Hills. Josh took a team of five dogs, as did I. There was a good amount more snow up there. I thought the sled training was going well. I remember thinking this isn't so bad. It was peaceful. Josh was leading the way since he was the one who knew where we were

going. We were about 10 to 12 miles into this run when suddenly Josh yells back to me something like “jump, cliff, drop-off.” I didn’t know exactly what he said other than he yelled something. I didn’t have time to figure it out because no sooner did he yell than I was upon this uneven drop-off that was about 2 feet high (it doesn’t sound bad, but when you’re on a sled, it’s not good). The Left side of this drop-off actually dropped-off before the right side of it did. Perhaps if it was just a clean cut drop I might have just flown through the air before I crashed. But it didn’t work that way. What happened is that the sled turned over on its left side. Now here is where things get interesting. Josh had given me some tips before we left with the dog teams. Lesson number one is don’t trust your snow hook to hold. Lesson number 2 don’t ever go back for anything. If you drop something leave it. Well Josh had loaded both our sleds with a couple bags of dog food. He strapped two bag of food to his sled and put one bag in my sled bag. So everything was cool. After we took off Josh realized that my team needed another bag of food. My team was going faster than his and we need to slow them down some or make them work a little harder. Josh just took one of his bags of dog food and laid it on my sled. I wanted to put it in the sled bag with the other dog food but I couldn’t because Josh hopped on his sled and took off. So I just took off too trying to get the dog food in the sled bag as we traveled. But my efforts didn’t work. It was just left laying on top. So back to my crash. There I was laying on the ground needing to get the sled back upright and the dog food back in the sled. Let me tell you that this is not as easy as it sounds. The dogs fought the whole process. They just wanted to go. Sled dogs don’t hold still, at least Josh’s sled dogs don’t. I couldn’t pull the sled up and hold it in place too. I was trying at all cost to avoid the \$30 dollar bag of dog food getting behind the sled. So, I was trying to pick up the sled plus 50 lbs of dog food and hold the sled in place all at the same time. Ha! What was I thinking? So it didn’t work. The dog food got behind the sled, but I did get the sled up and I set the snow hook. I was being cautious. I wasn’t trusting the snow hook to hold, but I had to do the forbidden. I had to take a step back behind the sled to pick up the dog food. I wanted to be fast. If you could see the huge marsh mellow suit Josh had me in to stay warm you would know that speed wasn’t on my side. So the dogs pulled the snow hook loose. I was watching. I jumped for the sled. I caught the brake. There I was holding onto the break and being drug behind the sled. I’m yelling at the dogs to stop, which they did, but only when they caught up to Josh. All they wanted was to be close to Josh. So he held the dogs and I went back for the dog food. When we finally got back to the dog truck Josh told me that when I yell at the dogs to stop they don’t know what I’m talking about. They think they’re doing something wrong and speed up. That is how they have been trained. They are trained to run

and to run fast. Not to stop. *Sorry! My mistake.*

A Week later Josh and I were talking about the race. Josh was making comments about his concerns involving me and the race. I was making light of his concerns because he has said the same thing numerous times. I jokingly said “Josh, you are going to be so worried about me being out there. You’re not going to know what to do with yourself.” He responds with “Ya, I’m sure they will find you pretty easily, it’s the dogs I’m worried about.” My first response was to stare at him with the thought rolling through my mind.....why would you say that? Josh has never been great with words of encouragement. After a moment he did look at me and laugh. But as I think about it, he’s right. If I fell off the sled, I would be easier to find than the dogs. I was just trying to stay focused on more positive thoughts. *I will be praying that it doesn’t come to that.*

There was another training run we went on. We hooked all 14 dogs to the four wheeler and tied the sled behind it. The point of this was to have all the dogs training, but not to over power me, that is not to give me more than I could handle. That day didn’t go real well. The sled fell over a lot. We went up to the Caribou Hills again and did a 50- mile loop. We went 25 miles to get to four corners. I was constantly having to use my whole body to drive that sled. I didn’t realize that it took so much effort to control a sled. When we got up by high country it got real cold. We stopped to rest the dogs and give them some water that we brought with us. Josh and I had a sandwich. It was so cold that the sandwiches were freezing as we stood there trying to eat. The dogs didn’t like being there either, so we left and rested them later. After going about 30 miles I noticed my hands were hurting from holding on so tight to the handle bar. We went another 10 miles and my whole body was sore. We had to stop often to let the dogs go to the bathroom. Or something would happen and Josh would have to stop again. Every time we started to move again I would get jerked relatively hard. After doing that for hours, falling over, being cold, and being sore all over, I started praying, “God, please don’t let this sled fall over again.” If the sled dumped over I would have to hold on to it or I would loose my dog team, even though Josh had the dogs tied to the four wheeler. This was training. If I can’t hold on to that sled, then I’m in deep trouble. I just didn’t know if I could hold on if I fell again. We finally got home. The dogs were fed and watered. We came inside to get warmed up. Feeling the way I did during that training run, I found myself wondering if I have gotten in to something way over my head. I only had two week until the race. I still haven’t run my team of 10 dogs. I haven’t taken the dogs out by myself. The way it was looking, I would go on one more training run with Josh next weekend, and then the race. There I would be taking the team out *for the first time*. Running the team by myself *for the first time*. In the middle of nowhere. I would be

unable to escape the cold. We have been keeping track of the weather up in Denali National Park and it has been COLD! -35 degrees, and that's not including the wind chill that is very common in that specific area. Of course, this wasn't the first time I have had doubts about running the Gin Gin 120. Perhaps my uncertainty about all of this was brought on by my first time experience of feeling the fatigue of being on a dog sled for hours. And, knowing that I felt this way having only gone 50 miles, which was the longest run we have been on this season. Will I be ready to do a 120 mile race in two weeks? Especially when the longest this race should take is 24 hours, including 8 hours for my mandatory layover. And especially since the second part of this race is going to be in the middle of the night. So, I guess the decision I was leaning towards was becoming obvious.

Much to my dissatisfaction, I withdrew from the race. I gave it my best effort to train and to make myself ready for this. I suppose there are people that would have followed through with it. Yes, I felt like a loser for quitting. I truly do not like giving up on projects that I have started. But, I believe if I was suppose to be there, then that's where God would have me. Instead, he has me at home with my kids and that's where I like to be. To try and use this newsletter for what it was intended for. I would like to note that I took on this project so that I could find some kind of common interest with my husband. Or to take part in something that he enjoys doing. A couple years ago I prayed to God that he would give me a heart for these dogs or just take them away. While I'm not head over heels in love with the dogs, I think God has brought me to a space of acceptance. Well, kind of. I'm grateful for God's goodness. *Psalm 139:17-18 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.* Psalm 139 is called God's perfect Knowledge of Man. I am confident that God knows more about what my limitations are than I do. He understands my thoughts afar off and comprehends my path. *Verse 7-12 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And your right hand shall hold me. If I say "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me; Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.*

I am confident that regardless of what I did that I am in good Hands. *Thank God For Being You.*

Note: I wrote the following after arriving home from our annual Hidden Lake Camping Trip this past summer (05). Some names have been changed to protect the innocent - Molly Aley

The Simple Woman's Guide to Camping With Many Young Children

- 1.) Remember Boy Scout Motto, "Always Be Prepared."
- 2.) Oh yeah. You weren't in Boy Scouts.
- 3.) Make a list of items to bring.
- 4.) When in doubt, include the kitchen sink.
- 5.) *Remember* to refer to above list when packing.
- 6.) Camp with a lot of friends. Multi-family camping--it's super fun. :o)
- 7.) ...Except that you need to be prepared to get flack when you divulge that *your* family's hotdogs are *organic*.
- 8.) Don't attempt to explain to a certain deacon *why* you paid THAT much for organic hotdogs when you're just going to wash them down with hot cocoa and roasted marshmallows.
- 9.) When packing children's clothing, pack as if each child will get the stomach flu, have a potty accident and fall in the lake, all three of those things every day for three days in a row.
- 10.) Borrow a really, really, really expensive Cabelas tent from a very generous soul. Pray fervently each night that the children *won't* get the stomach flu.
- 11.) Bring leash for large family dog (who generally runs free at home) because campground rules prohibit dogs running free.
- 12.) Feel sorry for said dog and unleash him, vowing internally to keep a close eye on him. Get sidetracked when your two preschoolers get into an argument. Husband finds dog at (the rather grumpy) campground host's campsite. Put dog back on leash.
- 13.) Loudly scoff at Arnie's idea to hang baby's car seat from a tree branch in order to get baby to sleep. Rub aching shoulders as you go on your fifth hour of wearing baby in the front pack. Arnie, father of seven, gets out rope and begins fashioning swing. Shake head at his stupid ideas.
- 14.) Humbly sit in camp chair pulling the rope that swings baby from the "hanging car seat" (which baby loves *and* which sends him off into peaceful slumber *every time*). Make mental note to keep loud scoffing to self in the future.
- 15.) Wonder why friend Lynn (wife of above-mentioned Arnie) spends practically two *weeks* planning and preparing for a simple three day camping trip? After all, it only takes you a couple minutes to make *your* list...
- 16.) Try to avoid glares from children as your family eats bagels and cream cheese for lunch while *Lynn's* family gathers 'round the fire for yet another culinary delight.
- 17.) Act as if you're not ravenously hungry for said culinary delight.

- 18.) Attempt to accept Lynn's gracious invitation to join their feasts nonchalantly. Ignore husband and children's joyful whoops.
- 19.) Wake up at 2 am to the sound of a loud snuffling creature outside tent. Reflect deeply on the delicate penetrable nature of tent walls. Wish that you wouldn't have had that full glass of water right before going to bed.
- 20.) Wake up husband. Well, *somebody's* got to stick their neck out of the tent and find out what the snuffly creature is, and if *you* move, you'll wake up the nursing baby next to you. Husband is rather difficult to rouse. Snuffly creature is gone before husband wakes up enough to investigate. Husband doesn't appear too upset about this.
- 21.) Wake up at 3am. Bladder is close to bursting. No sound of snuffly creature, but campground bathroom is a long walk from where you are, and it's dark. Find large plastic cup. Fill. Dump in bush about ten feet from tent.
- 22.) Next day, realize that the toddler has been eating berries picked from above-mentioned bush. Decide not to think about it.
- 23.) Tell fellow campers that you think a bear was outside your tent last night. Be object of fellow-campers laughter. Swear that you heard loud snuffly noises. Be informed that it was probably a porcupine. Swear that you heard loud TALL snuffly noises. Be informed that it was probably a dog. (Come to think of it, why *didn't* your dog bark at mysterious loud snuffly creature)...?
- 23.) Oldest daughter begs to be allowed to go climb sides of mountain rock with other youngsters. Realize that she *is* growing up and you need to let her go. Fight off visions of her at bottom of ravine with broken leg. When she skips happily into camp later, try not to hyperventilate with relief. At least not in public.
- 24.) As you pack up to leave camp, feel thankful for the group of families that God has knitted you in with. Enjoy watching your children climb and romp and giggle with the other children and adults. Be thankful for your husband's thoughtfulness (including, but not limited to, his willingness to investigate animal noises in the dark). Appreciate the camping friends who brought coffee to brew every morning (thanks, Lea), and who shared a cup or two (or five) with you. Delight in deepening bonds with all, even the dog. Feel warm fuzzies.
- 25.) Pack up to head home. Wonder why van is making funny clicking noises. Be glad for jumper cables and men around who perk up with interest when a vehicle won't start. Start wondering what you'll do if something is seriously wrong with the van and the men can't get it to start. Decide not to think about it. Breath sigh of relief when van finally starts. Guys are wonderful creatures. Load up sweet family and the dog. With fond memories (and the lingering smell of camp smoke in all articles of clothing), head for home.

THE 2005 CHRONICLES OF NARNIA EXTRAVAGANZA

KCC joined with other area churches in hosting an event centered around the movie of C.S. Lewis' *"The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe."* We bought all the tickets for the movie on its first night and had a social followed by a red-carpet premiere entry at the movie theatre. From the looks on the faces of those attending, it was a huge success.



A formal desert social and spirited trivia competition was held at the Challenger Center before the show.



Kasilof's 3-stooges preparing the theatre for the red-carpet "premiere" grand entry.

The trivia championship team, including Grant Blossom and Ben & Cody Brown.

JEFF ALEY GRADUATES

After approximately six months of intensive training, Central Emergency Services were proud to invite the public to the Soldotna firehouse so we could be part of the celebration honoring the graduation of seven newly trained firefighters. Our very own Jeff Aley completed the training as a way to be involved in his community and to serve as a volunteer fire fighter.



2005 KCC Christmas Program

The 2005 KCC Christmas program featured a classroom full of children who had written letters to various people from the Biblical Christmas story. Interspersed with traditional Christmas carols, the children were then presented with written responses from the Biblical characters they had written to, including a final message from God.



**Dave Horne in the role of God;
Chuck Morse as Herod; Pat
Shields as the Magi; Chase
Carter as the shepherd boy;
Brent Johnson as the innkeeper;
and Pastor Paul as Joseph.**



**Mrs. Jane and Mrs. Molly as the classroom
instructors. These two had it easy as being the
boss comes quite naturally.**



Lydia Bower As Mary



Jessie Brown reads her letter.



Jeff Aley and two of his boys (holding Jireh and Emmanuel) grab a seat before the pro-



Monica Hutchison & Chloe Nelson



Noah Nelson & Seth Hutchison



The children listen as a letter is read out loud.

Jason M. Schmidt's "*Merry Christmas, My Friend*," was published in *Leatherneck* (Magazine of the Marines) in December 1991. It has been a holiday favorite among "leatherneckphiles" for nearly the time it takes to complete a Marine Corps career. Few, however, know who wrote it and when. Former Corporal James M. Schmidt, stationed at Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C., pounded it out 18 years ago on a typewriter while awaiting the commanding officer's Christmas holiday decorations inspection . . . while other leathernecks strung lights for the Barracks' annual Christmas decoration contest, Schmidt contributed his poem to his section.

For more information, browse to: <http://www.snopes.com/holidays/christmas/soldier.asp>

Twas the night before Christmas,
he lived all alone, In a one bed-
room house made of plaster &
stone.

I had come down the chimney,
with presents to give, and to see
just who in this home did live

As I looked all about, a strange
sight I did see, no tinsel, no pre-
sents, not even a tree. No stocking
by the fire, just boots filled with
sand. On the wall hung pictures of
a far distant land.

With medals and badges, awards
of all kind, a sobering thought
soon came to my mind. For this
house was different, unlike any I'd
seen. This was the home of a U.S.
Marine.

I'd heard stories about them, I had
to see more, so I walked down the
hall and pushed open the door.
And there he lay sleeping, silent,
alone, Curled up on the floor in
his one-bedroom home.

He seemed so gentle, his face so
serene, Not how I pictured a U.S.
Marine. Was this the hero, of

whom I'd just read? Curled up in
his poncho, a floor for his bed?

His head was clean-shaven, his
weathered face tan. I soon under-
stood, this was more than a man.
For I realized the families that I
saw that night, owed their lives to
these men, who were willing to
fight.

Soon around the Nation, the chil-
dren would play, And grown-ups
would celebrate on a bright
Christmas day. They all enjoyed
freedom, each month and all year,
because of Marines like this one
lying here.

I couldn't help wonder how many
lay alone, on a cold Christmas
Eve, in a land far from home. Just
the very thought brought a tear to
my eye. I dropped to my knees
and I started to cry.

He must have awoken, for I heard
a rough voice, "Santa, don't cry,
this life is my choice I fight for
freedom, I don't ask for more. My
life is my God, my country, my
Corps."

With that he rolled over, drifted
off into sleep, I couldn't control it,
I continued to weep.

I watched him for hours, so silent
and still. I noticed he shivered
from the cold night's chill. So I
took off my jacket, the one made
of red, and covered this Marine
from his toes to his head. Then I
put on his T-shirt of scarlet and
gold, with an eagle, globe and
anchor emblazoned so bold. And
although it barely fit me, I began
to swell with pride, and for one
shining moment, I was Marine
Corps deep inside.

I didn't want to leave him so quiet
in the night, this guardian of
honor so willing to fight.
But half asleep he rolled over, and
in a voice clean and pure, said
"Carry on, Santa, it's Christmas
Day, all secure." One look at my
watch and I knew he was right,
Merry Christmas my friend,
Semper Fi and goodnight.