



February 2006  
Rick Hellings' Newsletter

# Heir-mail

A note from one heir in Christ to another, concerning God's work of creating more heirs in Alaska.

## The Box Run

During February I was able to fly along on this year's "Box Run". For those of you who do not know, the Bible Chapel (my church here in town) asks its members to assemble boxes for missionaries who serve in the bush villages. These boxes contain "need to haves" as well as "nice to haves", a pizza and a turkey. Everyone's favorite items seemed to be the duct tape, dessert mixes, coffee and tea. After the boxes are assembled MARC flies the boxes out to the missionaries and spends a few hours in fellowship with each family.

We split the box run up into several different sections, the South run, the North run, and coming soon the YK Delta run, Kodiak run, and Norton Sound run. We have to add more runs due to the increase in people participating. I was on the North/Norton Sound run with Mark Swenson, our pilot, and Budd Tressler the designated Bible Chapel representative.

What follows is the story of our run, how everything went "wrong" and yet was perfect in God's timing. As you read this story look at the map on the next page to follow along our route, and on the back of the page to see pictures of the missionaries and places along our trip.

Our trip was planned to be three days long, leave first thing Monday morning and be back Wednesday evening. Well we started off a little slow. Both planes came back from their weekend flights with problems, so we came in early on Monday to try and fix them and still salvage the day. This worked out great since it allowed Budd to run to the store and get Duct tape, flex gloves and good bungies (for the snow machines) from the hardware store before we left. After fixing the problems, but just before we took off Mark suggested that we install a spare seat, on the off chance we needed it for something.

Our intended route of flight was denied due to turbulence, so we headed south to go north with our first stop being Galena (1) for fuel. After filling we continued on to Huslia (2) where we were greeted by Don and Brenda Ernst with Interact Missions. Don came on his snow machine pulling a dog sled so we climbed on and in and took off for the house. We had a great visit, but the weather was bad at our next destination so we headed off to Nulato (3) instead. There we had the luxury of getting picked up in a pickup and decided to spend the night with Greg and Kim Joyce. Not only did we have a great visit, but Greg has a shop out back supplied with tools for the natives to come work on their snow machines or four-wheelers. While we were there I was able to watch/give opinions to Joe and Joey as they rebuilt their engine and was able to share a little with them.

Day Two looked bleak; there was only one open airport and it was way out of the way. So we set a course for Grayling (4), and Jim and Susan Manzella. Jim and Susan have a great testimony, and really enjoy sharing it with all who will listen. Saved at 60, they attended one year of Bible School, and at 63 sold everything and moved into the Alaskan bush. They have a wonderful ministry there with the children and youth, but do not often get visitors, so they were really excited to have someone to talk to all afternoon. Well the weather did not clear up on our route of flight so we headed to Unalakleet (5) to get fuel, drop off another box, position ourselves for the next days run, and spend the night.

In Unalakleet we enjoyed dinner and an evening of theological discussion with Joel and Olga Oyoumick. The missionaries from all the villages really seemed to enjoy discussing rather deep doctrinal issues. I assume this is because as the pastors in villages their discussions would usually be with their congregation, so this was an opportunity to see what outsiders thought. Joel and Olga were wonderful hosts, but we went to sleep praying for the better weather that was forecast for the week, but had yet to show up. So far we were two days into a three day trip and were less than half way done (4 of 9). At this rate we would not be home till Friday at best, and there were flights scheduled to leave this weekend.

Well God answers prayers, and Wednesday morning we woke up to clear skies all along our proposed route. Now a decision had to be made: either fly to Nome and then back east along Norton Sound to Koyuk or start in Koyuk and fly west to Nome. Mark decided that we should head to Nome (6) first so off we went. We got picked up by Nancy Fiskeux, and she happened to mention that Terry and Teresa Allen from Elim were there because Theresa was sick. They were the only missionaries we had a box for that we could not get to answer their phone so we dropped off their box at the same time. We were pretty excited since we had in one stop already met our daily average.

After dropping off the Allen's box we headed to the Fiskeux's, and sitting in their living room was Jerry from Golovin (7) our next stop. He had just gotten a ticket on the local charter service, and had to pay a lot of extra money for his overweight bags. But since Mark had decided to put an extra seat in the plane we offered him a ride. He was very excited, turned in his ticket got back his bags and overweight fees, and even did some grocery shopping for fresh produce. So after a nice visit with the Fiskeux's, we packed up with our new passenger and headed to Golovin.

There we dropped a box for Jerry and Lucy Daniels, had a visit, and decided that we should try and make one last stop for the night in White Mountain (8). The landing in White Mountain is a landing I will never forget. First I must say that runways in the bush are a little shorter and narrower than in the big cities. And as it is winter they are now covered in snow and ice. Well we landed with a pretty good cross wind, and on the ice it started to spin us. Mark did a great job, and just let us slide down sideways, but just before the end of the ride, he unconsciously (in fact he still does not remember) said "Oh, that is not good." That of course almost gave Budd and me a heart attack. In the end there was plenty of room and we were totally safe, but Mark sure scared us.

In White Mountain, we stayed with James. He had just gotten back from a conference and found all his pipes in the house burst. So he had left his wife and kids with her family while he was trying to get the plumbing up and running. For the record, an outhouse in freezing conditions is COLD. He seemed to really enjoy the company and I was able to look over his 4-wheeler situation, and hope to find him some parts here in town to fix it.

The next morning we left White Mountain, flew over Elim (9) where we did not have to stop due to God's provision of finding Terry and Theresa in Nome, and landed in Koyuk (10), where we were going to stay due to bad weather back in Soldotna. God really directed our travels. The night we spent in Unalakleet there was a shooting in Anchorage between two natives from Koyuk and Shaktoolik. Our route of travel allowed Wass, the pastor, to spend time with the family. Both men survived, and were doing fine when we got there. On top of that Wass had taken apart his snow machine to grease all the wheels and we were able to help him reassemble. This was another of God's provisions because it took four of us to come up with the proper assembly technique. Wass and Jean Mute were a great couple and lots of fun. After a 3+ hour choir rehearsal in their living room, we decided to play SKIP-BO. They taught us their rules and we laughed and played well into the night. The next morning Budd even got to take the snow machine several miles out of town to gather wood for their sweat room and wood stove. All of this would have been missed if the weather had been good back home.

Unfortunately another low pressure system started forming over the Aleutian Islands and started heading our way. God, however, cleared up the sky over Soldotna and we jumped into action. Racing to the plane we took off, did a quick stop in Unalakleet for fuel, and continued on home, arriving late Friday night.

It was a wonderful trip, and was a real blessing to see how God lead us to each stop, even when it seemed to not make sense from the ground. I really enjoyed being able to visit with the pastors and missionaries, to deliver boxes of goodies, turkeys and pizza, to help with snow machine and 4-wheeler maintenance, and see the people that are affected by the planes that I work on in the hanger. It sometimes is a struggle to feel that what I am doing matters in God's kingdom, but a trip like that puts it all back into perspective. I also want to pass on my appreciation for all of your prayers and support. Without you I would not be here and these people would not be served either. So what I saw is really your ministry also and I hope this rather long narrative gives you a glimpse of what goes on out there.

**P.S. Make sure you get to the website for more and larger sized pictures.**

## Prayers

For my transportation-- The truck I got as a replacement is a great vehicle, but some problems have crept up. Pray that the issues will be easy and cheap replacement parts. Praise that I have been able to borrow Jim Harden's truck while I work on mine.

Training-- With Jim going away for a couple of months MARC now wants me to get my IA, (the top rung on the maintenance ladder), and put my flight instructor rating on hold. Pray that I will be able to quickly learn the new information and do a very thorough job with the inspections. **UPDATE:** step one has been completed. I have permission and the forms from the FAA to take the IA test. Currently I am waiting for them to schedule a day. This will require me to travel to Anchorage, so travel safety will also be appreciated.

## Praise

While Jim has been away, everything in the shop has been running smoothly. We have started to catch up on our backlog of work. This is actually a double bonus since it also means that our planes have not had many mechanical problems, requiring us to stop our commercial work to fix them. Praise the Lord for keeping the planes flying safely.

For the opportunity to go into the bush, encourage the missionaries there, and have the fire in my heart for missions and the people in the villages stoked again.

For the prayer and financial support that has continued to come in and the new supporters. As winter problems arise – icy roads, moose, the darkness – I can see God protecting me, and really appreciate your prayers.

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