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STORY & PHOTOS BY JERRY BEGLEY

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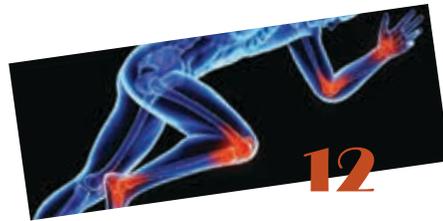
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Magazine

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Otter Tales

Welcome to the Fall issue of OTC! I'm getting ready for the fall events like football and some hunting. Boomer is eight months old now and progressing nicely. After much growing up (and all the work to go with that), he is turning into a very nice family dog first and loves to be outside, especially in the lake. I can't keep him out of there, which is good for a hunting retriever. The only down side is that ripe aroma he picked from all the lake time...he stinks! I'm sure all you dog owners know what I am talking about.

Next is the big test to see if he can figure out the hunting end of things. I have much more work to get him ready: polishing up on commands and getting some scented dummies to work on his seek-and-find retrieves. He is a smart dog and learns fast, so I'm thinking we will be OK. I'm not looking to enter any hunting trials or things like that, just want to have an average hunting dog that can find and retrieve birds, as any responsible hunter would do. I'm looking forward to the first hunt with him...most

likely end up as a training day, but that is part of it too.

As I see the moon just before opening morning, I will be reminded of this year's 50th anniversary of the first lunar landing. That was an amazing accomplishment and a testament to a nation's ability to figure things out and have success. With the way things are going now, we really could use another space mission to bring this crazy world together again. Not sure you knew, but our county has three local people with connections to the Apollo missions (see pages 8, 10 and 23). That's pretty unique for a little area like ours.

On page 20, we have the story of the Wasson farm, which celebrated its Century Farm designation this summer. As we dug into the history, it really developed into three great stories of pioneers struggling to put down roots and provide a better life for their families. I often wonder what it was like to live back then and have the bravery to do what they did.

Do you remember your first day back to school? The teacher would ask: "What did you do during your summer vacation?" Well, we know what Pam Larson did as she takes you along on her trip to Alaska. Alaska looks like a beautiful state and I hope I get to visit someday.

As usual, the summer went by too fast. I hope you all had time to soak it in. In Minnesota, we enjoy all four seasons, but I think our favorite is summer. Fall would be our second favorite with all the nice days, fall colors and yep, some hunting... gotta go...Boomer just ran down to the lake again.

— Ed Pawlenty, OTC Publisher



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*Dr. Karen Nyberg
Photo courtesy of NASA*

Vining Astronaut and Apollo Lunar Landing Celebrate 50 Years

STORY BY JERRY BEGLEY

PHOTOS BY JERRY BEGLEY AND NASA

Fifty years ago, between Apollo 11's landing on the moon in July, 1969, and Apollo 12's landing in November, the woman destined to be the 50th woman in space, Karen Nyberg, was born on October 7 in Parkers Prairie. Following these historic events, the Nyberg family has brought space recognition to the city of Vining and Otter Tail County.

During an address to Henning school students, Karen mentioned it was in her elementary years that she decided to pursue a career as a NASA astronaut. She did not waste any time preparing for the highly competitive career.

Graduating from Henning in 1988, she obtained a Bachelors Degree in mechanical engineering from North Dakota State University. She followed with a Masters degree and Doctorate Degree from the University of Texas to solidify her credentials.

While at NDSU, she entered a CO-OP status with NASA and spent three semesters studying in Texas. NASA engaged her as an Astronaut Candidate in July 2000, one of 17 selected out of 3,000 applicants. Obtaining Mission Specialist status two years later qualified her for future roles on STS 124 and STS 132. Promoted to Flight Engineer, she flew on ISS Expedition 36/37 in 2013.

While on this expedition, another 50th anniversary was observed - that of Russian cosmonaut Valentine Tereshkova's first solo spaceflight in 1963 that launched the era of women in space.

Dr. Nyberg has accumulated 180 days in space. Currently she serves as Chief of NASA's Robotic Branch. Competition in the field has increased as she recently helped screen astronaut candidates to select 17 from 18,000 applicants.

Karen returns home regularly to visit parents Ken and Phyllis Nyberg in Vining. They have proudly maintained meticulous albums, pictures and mementos from her accomplishments, and had the pleasure of watching two space shuttle launches.

Karen has provided wonderful space photos for display in the Landmark Center in Henning, motivated Henning students with assembly addresses, and served as Grand Marshall of the Vining Watermelon Days parade.

There is more space and universe recognition in Vining's Nyberg Park. A self-made mechanical engineer, Ken has created many displays of metal art, and several are related to his daughter's career.

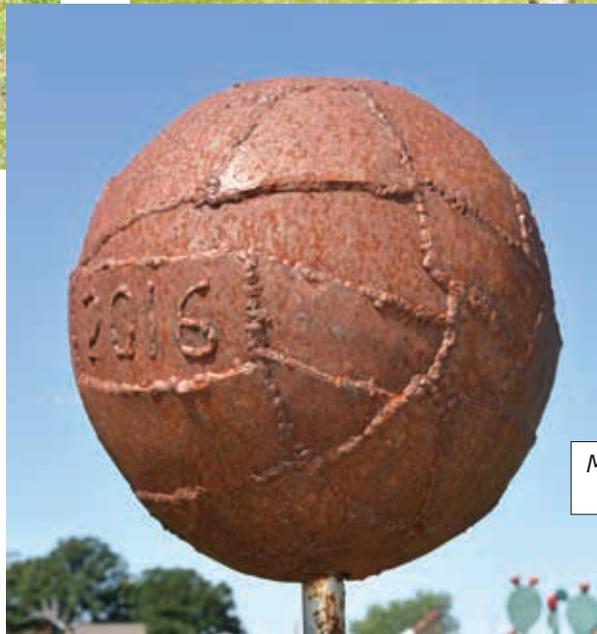
Of course, there is a replica of an astronaut in a space suit, standing on the moon surface holding an American Flag (shown on cover). There is a green



Alien in Nyberg Park



Earth sculpture in Nyberg Park



Moon sculpture in Nyberg Park

alien close by that 'just appeared', but everyone believes Ken crafted it.

Of particular interest are sculptures of an Earth Globe and Moon. Read the display closely and you will learn that each is sized to scale and the distance between is also to scale. The globe is missing a Space Shuttle orbiter, which Ken says he may add later.

The city of Vining and Otter Tail County residents are honored to have two mechanical engineers bring space travel and space recognition home.

If you want some space station participation right in your own back yard go to:

SPOTTHESTATION.NASA.GOV

The closest reference location will be Alexandria, then proceed to the schedule.

A compass, protractor and clear view of the western sky is handy to help find the correct spot.

Remember, the ISS is traveling at 17,500 miles per hour so viewing is quick.

Coincidentally, Italian engineer and astronaut Luca Parmitano is currently on the Space Station and was a crew member with Karen on ISS Expedition 36/37.



Ken Nyberg with a photo of central Minnesota taken from the International Space Station

Other Local Ties to the Apollo Missions



Astronaut Harrison (Jack) Schmitt, who has a family cabin on West Battle Lake, landed on the moon in 1972. Schmitt was a geologist who collected rock samples while on the lunar surface

during the Apollo 17 mission in 1972. He is one of only 11 astronauts to walk on the moon during the sixth and last successful trip to the moon during missions from 1969 to 1972.

In 1972, the Apollo 17 three-member crew included Schmitt, Eugene Cernan and Command Module Pilot Ronald Evans. While Evans orbited the moon in the command module, Schmitt and Cernan descended to the moon in the lunar module.

Six months later, Schmitt stood on the shore of West Battle Lake during summer evening hours and looked at the moon where he had walked, more than 238,000 miles away. He was 37 when he landed on the moon in December 1972. Today he is 84 and still in good health. Over the years, he has spoken to students in Battle Lake and to other groups throughout Otter Tail County.

THE EARTH SCULPTURE IN NYBERG PARK IS 4 FEET IN DIAMETER A SCALE OF 1-FOOT = 2000 MILE

Comparing Earth to Moon
Distance from the Sun* (millions of miles)
*planetary, lunar and solar size not to scale

Sun	93	Moon
		Earth

Diameter (thousands of miles): Moon 2,160, Earth 8,000

Average Temperature Variance (deg F): Moon 250, Earth 98

AT THIS SCALE, THE MOON WOULD BE 1-FOOT DIAMETER AT A DISTANCE OF 120 FEET

THE SUN, AT THIS SCALE, WOULD BE 144 YARDS WIDE, AT A DISTANCE CLOSE TO BATTLE LAKE

Information Card about Moon and Earth



Jerry Begley is a retired Regional Director for a telecommunications company. He resides with his wife Diane on Stalker Lake and enjoys all outdoor activities.



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Keep Your Active Life Active: *How to Protect Your Bones & Joints*

BY DR. CHRISTOPHER ROTT

PHOTOS COURTESY OF DR. ROTT & LRHC



Dr. Christopher Rott, Orthopedic Surgeon LRHC

Our bodies have more than 200 bones and 200 joints that connect them, including our feet, which have 26 of those bones and 33 of those joints. Many of us don't stop to consider how our bones and joints work to help us stand, bend, walk, reach, climb and move throughout our lives. That is, until something happens to one or more of them and stops us in our tracks.

5 Tips for Healthy Bones & Joints

Whatever your age, taking care of your bones and joints is critical to maintaining your strength and mobility. Whether you're healthy and want to stay that way, or you want to keep aches, pains and stiffness from progressing, here are some tips to help care for your precious bones and joints.

1. Build strong bones with calcium and vitamin D—the National Osteoporosis Foundation recommends women age 50 and younger get 1,000 milligrams of calcium from all sources daily (including food first and then supplements). Women age 51 and older should get 1,200 milligrams. Men age 70 and younger should get 1,000 milligrams, while those age 71 and older need 1,200 milligrams. Vitamin D enables the body to absorb calcium. Those age 50 or under need 400-800 international units daily. Those older than age 50 need 800-1,000 international units. It is recommended that you talk to your primary care provider before starting any supplements.
2. Keep your weight under control—extra weight puts stress on your joints. For each pound you lose, there is a four-fold reduction in the force on your knee when it steps into action.
3. Keep high heel wearing (and the shoes without arches) to a minimum—high heels, especially three inches or higher, put stress on your feet and are a major contributor to foot problems, including bunions. Shoes without arches like flip-flops can contribute to the development of plantar fasciitis and other foot problems.
4. Move as much as possible, but keep it low-impact—jumping, running, contact sports and popular high intensity training programs can all be high impact activities. Done repeatedly, high-impact activities can place strain on your bones and joints and may even lead to orthopedic injuries. Try switching to lower-impact forms of exercise including biking, swimming or yoga. Lifting weights is also an excellent exercise for protecting joints and increasing bone density.
5. Eat healthy, limit alcohol, soda and sugar, quit smoking—all those things that are healthy for us in general are healthy for our bones and joints too. Eating a more Mediterranean-based diet that includes fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, healthy

grains, fish, olive oil and small amounts of meat and dairy reduces joint pain and inflammation. Limiting alcohol, soda, sugar and smoking, which can all lead to bone loss or lower bone density, reduces the risk for fractures and the chance of developing many chronic health conditions. Sugar specifically has been shown to increase joint inflammation. Look for fructose and sucrose on ingredient labels.

What to Do If You Experience Problems with Your Bones or Joints

If you should experience an injury, pain, swelling or stiffness in your bones or joints, it is a good idea to make an appointment with an orthopedic specialist or a podiatrist right away, before the problem progresses too far. The team I work with at Lake Region Healthcare is a group of highly-qualified orthopedic and sports medicine specialists and podiatrists who are all ready to see you for any bone or joint concerns.

Meet Some People Who've Had Bone and Joint Problems — Read About Their Life-changing Experiences:



Anna Norgard

Young and active, Anna noticed something was wrong with her foot while playing sports. She endured the pain for a while, but when the opportunity to go on a class trip that included climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro presented itself, she knew she had to do something about her foot pain in order to do the

hiking required on the trip. Anna saw a podiatrist, who determined she had a bunion that would need surgery.

"Having bunion surgery allowed my body to reach its limits," says Anna. "I hiked Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania four months after I had bunion surgery at Lake Region Healthcare. The door of opportunity is now open for what I can do for the rest of my life."

Being a grandmother who could run and play with her grandchildren was important to Terri. Progressively worsening pain in her hip kept her from doing what she wanted. When it got so bad she wasn't able to stand at work or even get out of bed

properly, Terri saw an orthopedic specialist. An anterior approach hip replacement was determined to be the best procedure for giving Terri back the ability to work, play and live the way she wanted to.

"Before surgery, you can ask my granddaughter, she used to say 'Oh, grandma can't play, her hip hurts,'" says Terri. "Life after my surgery has been 100 percent better."



Terri Randall



Matthew Drechsel

Matthew had lost one leg in an accident when he was younger. When the knee on his other leg became so painful that he knew he needed to get it replaced, he started doing research on the best place to get the procedure done. He determined the orthopedic team at Lake Region Healthcare was the most highly qualified.

"I had good confidence in the team," says Matthew. "I had surgery over a year ago and I can't say enough good things about it."

Be kind to your bones and joints. Give your bones and joints what they need to stay healthy and you'll be able to count on them to keep you standing, bending, walking, reaching, climbing, moving and doing all the activities you love for a good long time. And, if you should have an injury, pain, swelling or other concern, be sure to see a specialist before your mobility and your way of life become compromised.

OTC

Dr. Christopher Rott, DO, has provided orthopedic and sports medicine care since 2013 at Lake Region Healthcare, where he helps people diagnose, treat and recover from bone and joint pain—and prevent it.

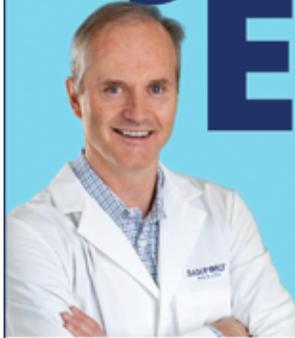
He is married with three boys and loves water sports, gardening and biking.



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BY SANDRA THIMGAN
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“AB FAB” Slab Pie



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(Recipe on next page)



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“AB FAB” Slab Pie

Crust:

4 cups all-purpose flour
2 T. granulated sugar
2 tsp. salt
3 sticks butter, very cold and cut into ½” pieces
1 cup water, ice cold

(If your processor is too small for 4 cups flour, divide ingredients in half and do each crust separately.)

Put the flour, sugar, and salt into the food processor, pulse a few times to mix. Add the butter and pulse until crumbly. With processor running, drizzle in the cold water until the dough forms a ball. Remove dough to a lightly-floured surface and roll into a cohesive ball. Divide in half (or process the other half of the dough), wrap each piece in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 45 minutes or until the next day.

Filling:

4# apples, peeled, cored and cut into thin slices
(My favorites are half Granny Smith and half Braeburn, but use what apples you like.)
1 ½ T. fresh lemon juice
¾ cup granulated sugar
Pinch salt
3 T. cornstarch
1 ½ tsp. cinnamon
¼ tsp. nutmeg

For the top of the crust later:

1 egg, beaten
Granulated sugar for sprinkling

Glaze:

1 cup powdered sugar
1 T. milk
2 tsp. vanilla

Place rack in the center of the oven, preheat to 375°. Prepare a 10” X 15” jelly roll pan with cooking spray and set aside.

In a large bowl, mix apples, lemon juice, sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt. Set aside while you roll out the crust.

On a lightly floured surface, roll one pie crust into a rectangle about 18” X 13”. Roll the dough around the rolling pin and transfer to the prepared pan.

Line the entire bottom and sides of the pan and trim off any overhang.

Pour apple mixture over the crust and spread evenly. Roll the top crust into a 16” X 11” rectangle to cover the top of the pie. Roll dough around rolling pin and transfer to the top of apple mixture. Tuck edges between the bottom crust edge and the pan, pinching edges to seal the filling inside. Brush the entire top crust with beaten egg and sprinkle with a light coating of granulated sugar.

Bake until crust is golden brown on top and filling is bubbling, about 45-50 minutes. Remove the pie from the oven and cool on a rack until room temperature.

While the pie is cooling, stir ingredients for the glaze together in a small bowl (adjust milk to get proper drizzling consistency). Drizzle glaze over the crust while the pie is still warm. Cut into squares and serve.



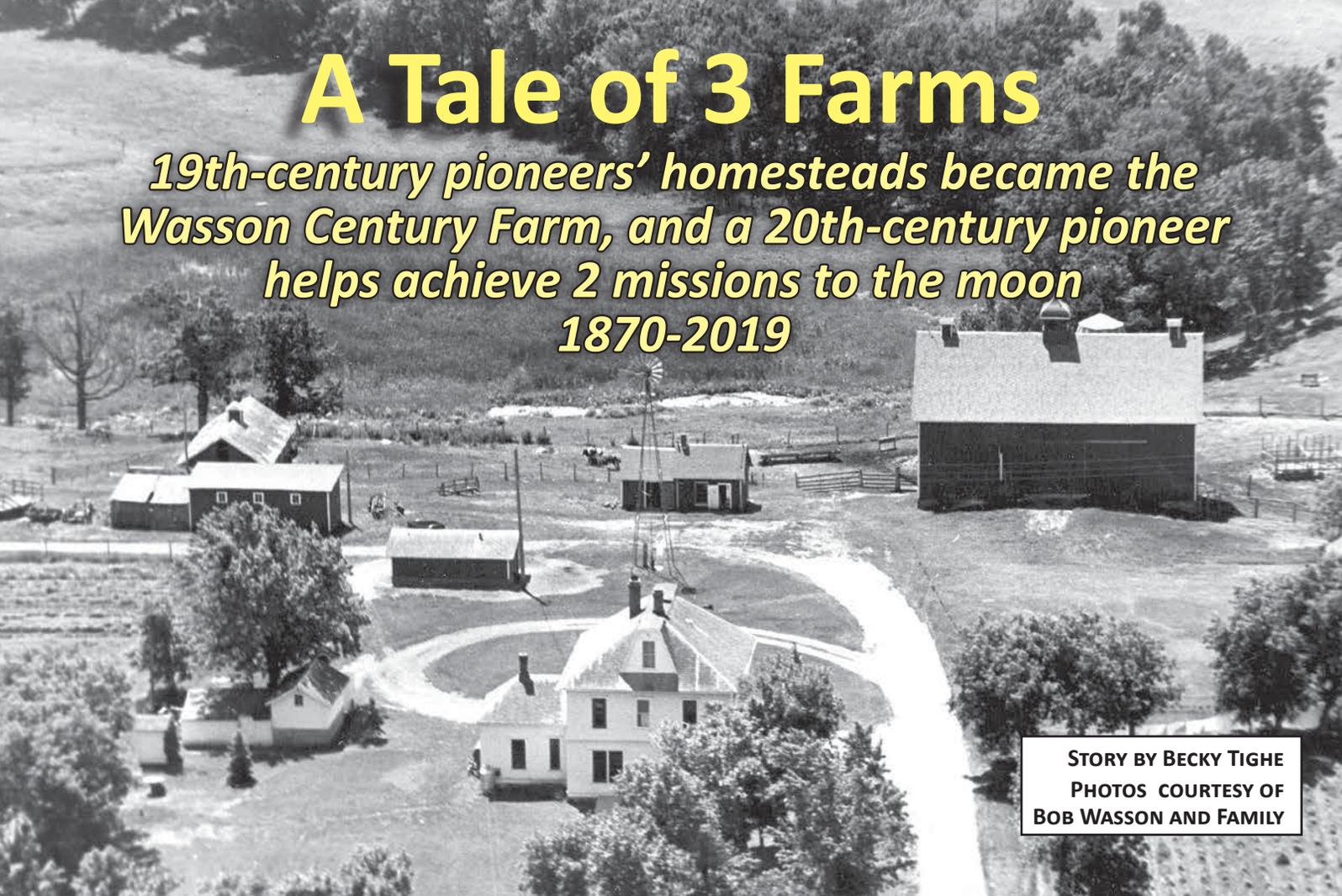
OTC

I normally wouldn't think of the word "slab" for a recipe I would share, but this time — it's a winner! Make this and serve up an "Ab Fab Slab" to anyone who shows up! Enjoy! Sandra Thimgan lives on Silver Lake with her husband/photographer/taster, Dan.



A Tale of 3 Farms

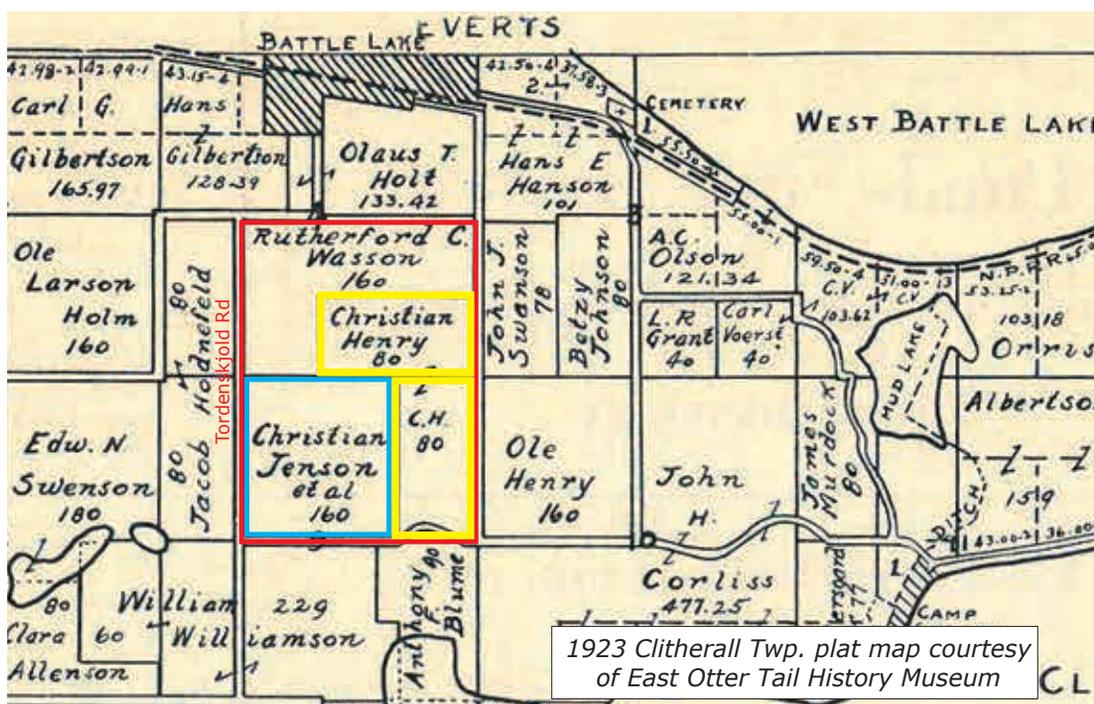
19th-century pioneers' homesteads became the Wasson Century Farm, and a 20th-century pioneer helps achieve 2 missions to the moon
1870-2019



STORY BY BECKY TIGHE
 PHOTOS COURTESY OF
 BOB WASSON AND FAMILY



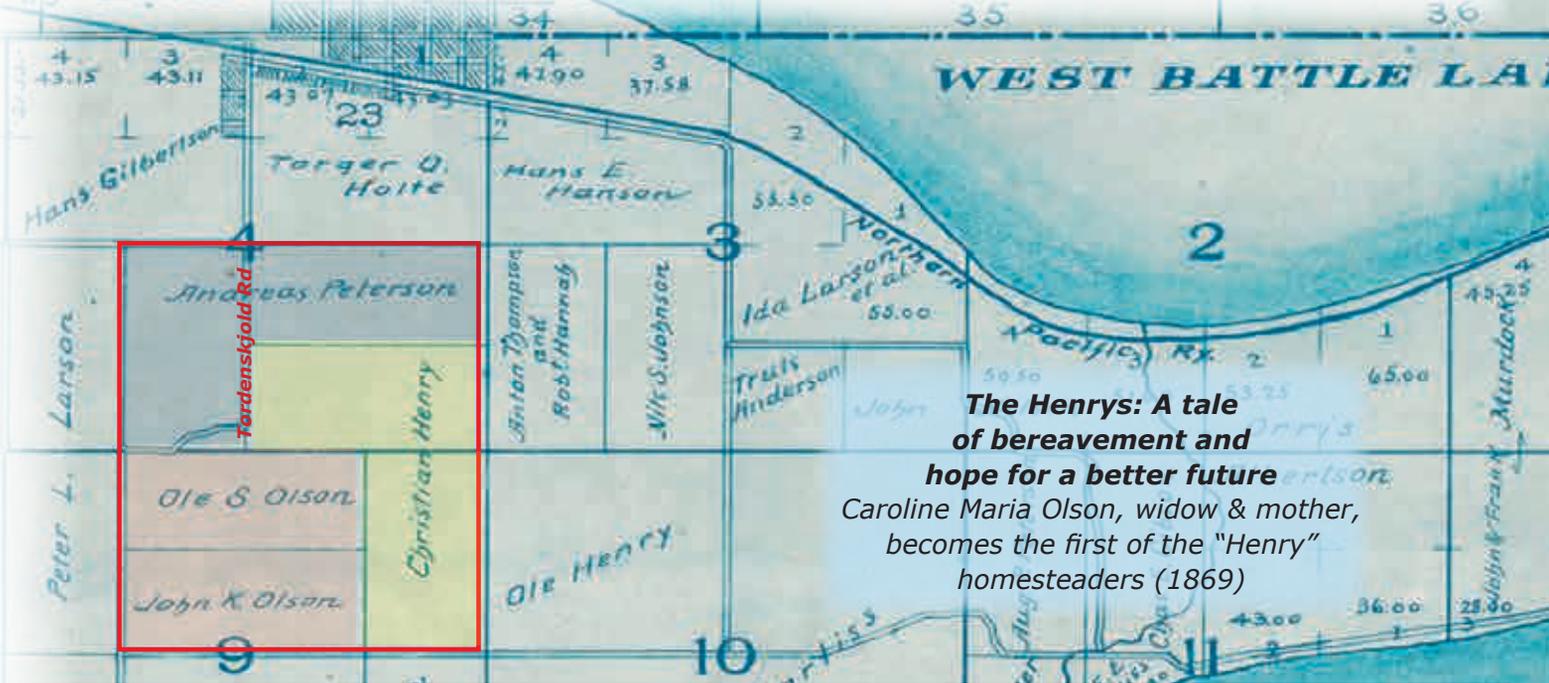
Top: the Wasson farm in 1950 (from north). New barn built; little house not built; log cabin still stands under trees (far right). Left, new arrivals: the Wasson family pause for a picture at the Battle Lake train station. l-r: John, Loren, Florence, Myrtle and Rud Charles Wasson (Sr.). Below: 1926 plat shows original acreage (marked Rutherford C. Wasson 160 acres); the land homesteaded by Finkel Finkelson in 1875 (Christian Jenson et al 160 acres) and the Christian Henry land (2 x 80: 160 acres).



1923 Clitherall Twp. plat map courtesy of East Otter Tail History Museum

Pioneer Homesteaders of Wasson Century Farm

☼ Caroline Olson 1870 ☼ Finkel Finkelson 1875 ☼ Andreas Peterson



The Henrys: A tale of bereavement and hope for a better future

Caroline Maria Olson, widow & mother, becomes the first of the "Henry" homesteaders (1869)

Henry Pederson, Caroline's husband, was a tanner in Norway. They had four children: Martin, Ole, Christena (daughter) and Christian. Widowed in 1869, she took the children to Otter Tail County, Minnesota, where Martin (age 22) was working. It took months, including the voyage to New York. They may have joined homesteaders coming north as those of the Trefoldighed congregation had.

The following is derived from *History of Trefoldighed Congregation Est. 1870*.

Norwegian settlements in Illinois, Wisconsin, and southern Minnesota were getting overcrowded as the wave of immigration from Norway and Sweden surged. Several Swedish, Norwegian and Danish families migrated from Iowa, Wisconsin and southern Minnesota into largely unsettled Clitherall, Tordenskjold and Eagle Lake townships. They rode and walked, not wealthy, but strong. Arriving, they cut trees for their cabins. Some lived in cellars until their homes were built.

The nearest railroad was in St. Cloud. There were no towns, just a trading post and post office at Old Clitherall. Mail came by stagecoach; travel was mostly by trails. Rev. T. Vetleson organized Trefoldighed congregation in 1870.

Ole, 16, was too young to claim land. Caroline claimed a widow's allotment of 80 acres.

Ole later claimed 80 acres, which they made one farm. Author Mason knew and admired the "adult" Ole. He wrote that for 12 years the Henrys used a team of oxen to clear roads and cut large tracts of timber land. Their first home was a 12 x 14 ft. log cabin, to which they added several times. Perham, the nearest station, was "a tiresome and dangerous journey." Ole remembered Indians in the forests then, but said he had only "pleasant memory" of contact with them.

Ole married Thea Ellwanger in 1895 and had two sons: Harold, or Harald (1897) and Irvin (1901). To Mason, the Henry farm with its fine barn represented "everything new in modern improvements." Ole Henry was a member of a "Synod congregation" (Trefoldighed), and a Republican. Christian Henry homesteaded 180 acres, bought by Bob Wasson, grandson of Rud Charles Wasson. The barn burned while rented out in 1937.

There is a Henry plot in Trefoldighed Lutheran church cemetery where the Ole (1854-1933), Martin (1848-1893), Clarence Irvin (1901-1950) and Harald (1897-1918) Henry graves lie.

Details about the Henrys were taken from *The History of Otter Tail County* by John W. Mason, 1916: pp. 500-501. Details about Trefoldighed migration and settlement are derived from *History of Trefoldighed Congregation Est. 1870*.



Finkel Finkelson built "a good house" and helped establish a church before establishing his own home.

Mr. Finkelson had not yet homesteaded his land when he was hired by his neighbor, Knute W. Bondy, who, "After living in Grant county for several months, in 1870 ... came to Otter Tail county and homesteaded 160 acres in sections 17 and 18, ... largely covered by timber. A cousin of Bondy lived nearby in a large log cabin ... There Mr. Bondy and his family spent several months while ... Mr. Finkelson, a carpenter, assisted ... in building the new home. Finkelson had no homestead of his own until 1875, but helped construct 'a good house' on the Bondy land in 1870" (Bondy needed one: he had nine children). Bondy "became one of the largest and most influential farmers in this community and was prominent in the educational and religious affairs of the county."

Still without land, Finkelson was one of five men who met September 14, 1873, at Anders Oestby's home to establish the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran church of Battle Lake (now known as First Lutheran Church of Battle Lake). Rev. J.A. Bergh was elected pastor. Salary: \$24 a year, expense shared by the five who signed the document: Anders Oestby, F. Finkelson, J. Larson Frislov, Carl Nelson and Ole Hoff. The church was built on the cemetery site in 1883. Destroyed by storm in 1887, it was completely rebuilt.

Finkelson got his homestead in 1875. The plat is labeled Christian Jensen et al. Bob Wasson purchased the 160 acres in 1988.

Details about Finkelson from *The History of Otter Tail County* by John W. Mason, 1916; p. 377, 33b, and from the history of First Lutheran Church of Battle Lake. This writer was unable to find information on the original 3rd homesteader, Andreas Peterson.



I-r: John Bruce, Jack Wasson (father), Rud, Bob with Barbara, Bill, Betty



Rud (Rutherford) Charles Wasson Sr., with steam thresher, 1900, in Lyon County (he took an engineering course at the University of Minnesota to learn how to operate it). Moving to Battle Lake, he purchased what once was the Andreas (or Andrew) Peterson (or Pederson) farm. He was highly successful at diversified farming, setting a record in pork production.





Lt. Commander Dr. Bob Wasson, Sr. Medical Officer, age 34, after Apollo 11 module landed and astronauts had exited. I-r: Module in water; module on deck of USS Hornet; module beside trailer in which Apollo 11 astronauts were quarantined.

20th century: Helping Apollo 11 & 12 go to the Moon!

Robert (Bob) Wasson started life in Morris, MN, but his family moved to Battle Lake in 1945. He graduated high school in 1953, became a doctor, joined the Navy, and was a U.S. Navy flight surgeon serving on the *USS Hornet* during Apollo moonshots 11 and 12.

In the 20th century, **Robert (Bob) Wasson** became a pioneer of space rather than land. As Senior Medical Officer he was 10 years into his career as flight surgeon on the *USS Hornet* aircraft carrier. He was present while recovery drills were practiced before Apollo 11 and 12, and when the

astronauts were recovered from the module at the conclusion of both missions. After serving 10 years in the Navy, he received psychiatric training, serving another 10 years as a psychiatrist, and retired as a Captain in U.S. Navy Medical Corps.

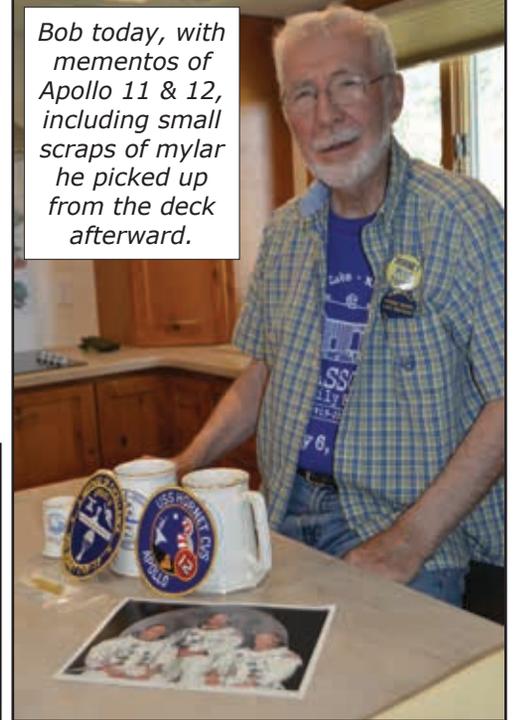
The farm belonged to Rud (Rutherford) Charles Wasson Sr. until his death in 1948, when it passed to his wife Myrtle. Their son, John (Jack) R. Wasson, owned it from 1950-82, and his wife Lucerne owned it until 2000, at which time Bob and Karen bought it, later adding the Henry and Halverson acreage for a present total of 460 acres.



Crops



I-r: Bob, Rud, Barbara Wasson Dahms, Bill



Bob today, with mementos of Apollo 11 & 12, including small scraps of mylar he picked up from the deck afterward.



Beekeeping



Prairie



Becky Tighe left advertising to volunteer with Christian non-profit ministries in Romania and Austria for 7 years. Returning to Minnesota, she settled in Battle Lake. She likes spending time with her 10 grandkids and living among BL's wonderful people.



Travel Destination:

Alaska!

Story by Pam Larson

Photos by Pam & Larry Larson



Mountains and fireweed

Alaska, the Final Frontier, got its name from an Aleut word *Alyeska*, meaning *great land*. It is the largest state in area, has more than 40 active volcanoes, and has most of the glacial ice in the U.S. Alaska has more than 3,000 rivers and 3 million lakes, the largest of which is about the size of Connecticut. In January 1959 it became the 49th state in the union, and in July 2019 it was our 49th state to visit. We cruised the Inside Passage from Vancouver,



BC, stopping at Ketchikan, Juneau, Skagway and Glacier Bay National Park before taking a bus from Seward to Denali National Park.



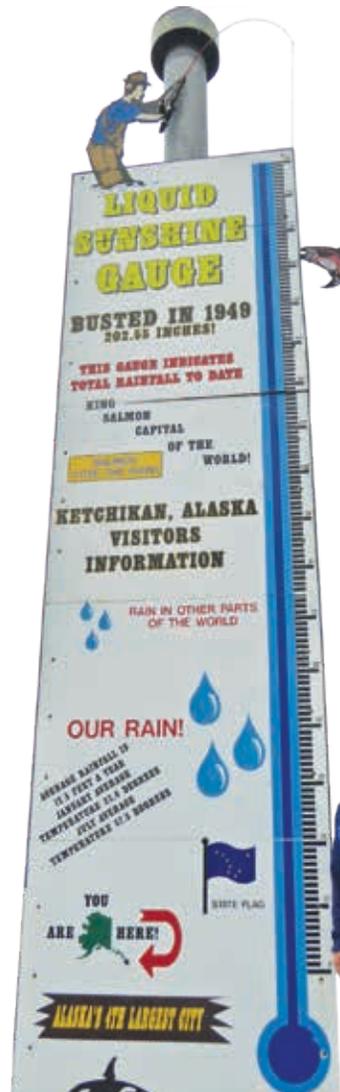
Brockton Point Lighthouse

It was our first cruise and we had a wonderful time, but I won't dwell on that part of our trip since it could be its own article. One thoughtful touch on the ship was the daily rug change in the elevator, so that those of us on vacation-time could keep track! Departing Vancouver, we passed the Brockton Point lighthouse and cruised into the sunset.



Elevator rug

Our first port of call was Ketchikan, where the "Liquid Sunshine Gauge" was added to my photo collection of roadside attractions and of course it was raining!



Gorgeous sunset!

Larry beside Ketchikan rain gauge



Totem Bight SHP

From a tour boat, we saw Totem Bight State Historical Park, which was created to preserve the native culture. Totems had been neglected and overrun by the forest, so CCC funds were used to hire native artists to salvage and reconstruct these pieces of history. A representative clan house was also built on the site. I was delighted that the boat tour also included passing the Guard Island Lighthouse, adding to my count of lighthouse sightings!



Guard Island Lighthouse



On the way to whale watching



Tail fluke



Whale head

There are many totems around the town of Ketchikan. Totems are carved to honor deceased ancestors, record history, social events, and oral tradition and were never worshiped as religious objects. This totem is a crane, thunder-bird and brown bear to honor the Tongass Tlingit Chief George Kyan.



Kyan Totem



Rain forest

Next stop: the capital city of Juneau, which is land-locked and can only be reached by water or air. Our shore excursion at this port was a hike through a rainforest and a whale watching cruise. Coastal temperate rainforests only occur in six places outside Alaska, which has mostly old-growth forests. Even though they had been experiencing a lack of rain, the forest was lush with green moss and growth. When walking anywhere in Alaska, one must be aware of the possibility of sharing the space with wildlife!



The Alaska state marine mammal is the bowhead whale, but we searched for humpback whales. The locals have names for the whales and we saw Sasha and Baby Bunsen, whose mother was Flame. There was no big-splash breaching, but we did see heads, middles and tails!



Mendenhall Glacier



Mendenhall Glacier near Juneau with boat in front to show scale

The Skagway winter climate isn't particularly harsh, but getting rail passengers through the 3,000-foot White Pass Summit to the Yukon with an average snowfall of 140 inches required a specially built engine, called Rotary Snowplow #1. It was used from 1898 until 1965 to efficiently clear snow from the tracks.



Rotary Snowplow in Skagway

We took a bus trip to the Yukon where we saw lovely glacial-fed lakes with the bluish tint caused by glacial silt. We saw a marmot and a ptarmigan, which is the state bird of Alaska and turns white in the winter for camouflage against the snow. The 18 hours of midsummer sun yields lovely wildflowers, including the pink fireweed that was blooming everywhere!

Mendenhall Glacier is easily reached from Juneau. Some glaciers, which are compressed snow and ice, appear blue because water molecules absorb other colors more efficiently than blue and also there is a lack of air bubbles.

Gold is the state mineral of Alaska. In 1896 gold was discovered, prompting an exodus of over 100,000 people to seek their fortune in the forbidding conditions of the Alaskan wilderness. Limited communication at the time prevented current updates, and many didn't even make it to the area until the rush was nearly over. Nonetheless, the movement did build up the population in the area. Skagway is home to the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, with stories of the gold-seekers.

Glacial lake



Pam with statue of unsuccessful gold-seeker

Ptarmigan



Fireweed



Our cruise ship spent almost an entire day in Glacier Bay National Park, which is easiest to see from the water. Ranger/naturalists from the park had quite a commute to the ship. Their boat bumped right next to the hull, a door opened, a rope ladder was lowered and they climbed up to spend the day on the ship giving narration and answering questions. At the end of the day, the thrilling sequence was reversed.

Rangers departing the cruise ship



Rangers safely on board their boat



About 27% of Glacier Bay National Park is covered with glaciers—over 1,000 of them. There are 50 named glaciers, and seven of them are tidewater glaciers, which ‘calve’ icebergs into the sea. We spent most of our time near Margerie Glacier and saw some minor calving. It is tricky to see because you hear the crashing sound of it after it has already happened. We saw some distant sea otters and sea lions, with only gulls coming close to the ship. The vastness of the place was spectacular.



Bald Eagle—they were everywhere!

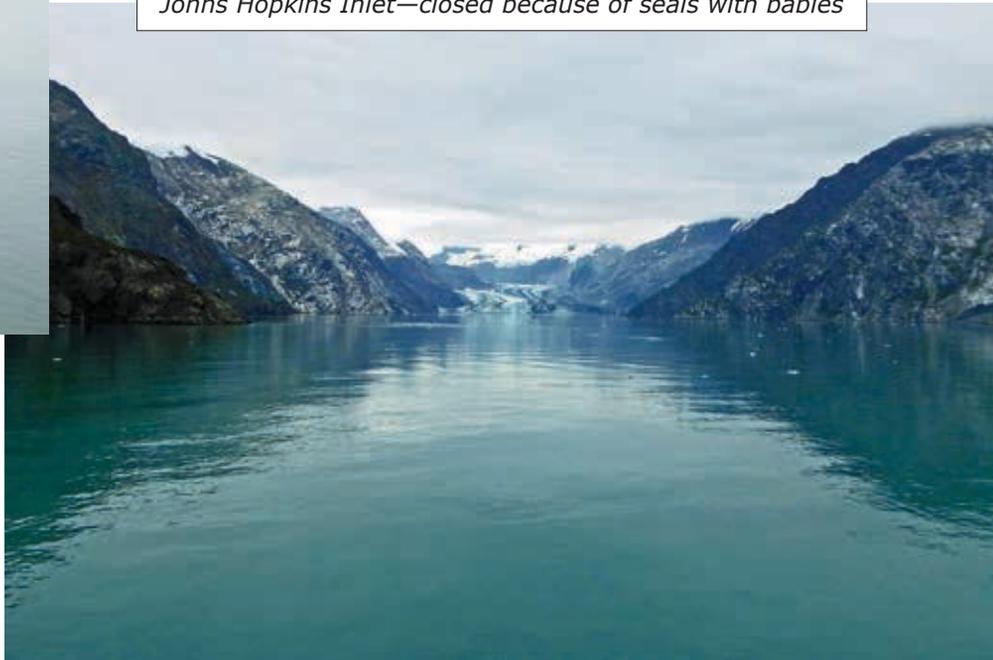


Margerie Glacier calving

Glacial silt water meets seawater



Johns Hopkins Inlet—closed because of seals with babies



Glaucous winged gull



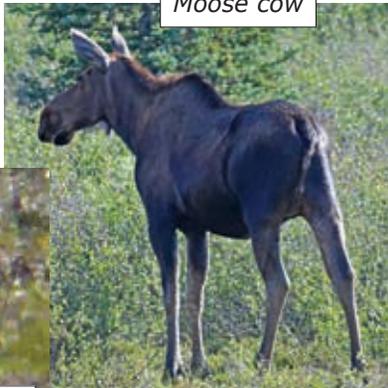


Denali Mountain

The water portion of our trip ended at Seward, where we boarded a bus for the trip to Denali National Park. There were moose caution signs all along the way, with good reason—we saw several over the next few days! We had a day-long Tundra Wilderness Tour in Denali National Park. We saw moose, grizzly bears and caribou. An interesting fact: reindeer are domesticated caribou. Denali, also known as Mt. McKinley, is the tallest mountain in North America. It's often covered with clouds, so we were happy to see it, even if we were very far away.



Caribou bull



Moose cow



Grizzly Bear sow

The Husky Homestead Tour gave us insight into preparations for the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Socialization is a big part of training, so visitors are encouraged to hold the husky puppies—pretty fun to help them out! The dogs love to run, and in the summer they exercise by pulling a four-wheeler and running on a treadmill.



Pam with husky puppy



Huskies on treadmill

The domed train, McKinley Explorer, returned us to Anchorage for our flight home. It was a pleasant way to travel and soak in some final views of the countryside.



In 2016, decorated "Bears on Parade" statues were placed around Anchorage to show the co-existence that the community has with the surrounding environment. This one was in front of the city hall.

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A mural on the side of a building in Anchorage showed life-sized marine mammals.



Since much of Alaska is inaccessible by road, there is one pilot per 61 people compared to the U.S. average of 1 in 400. There is also an average of one airplane for every 60 people. Youth can get a solo pilot license at age 14, meaning they could fly into an airport, but would have to have someone take them into town because they aren't old enough to drive a car! That many aircraft can result in interesting road signs, such as 'yield to aircraft'. Parking for that many planes is scarce and there are year-long waiting lists for some spaces.

Although the population density of Alaska is only about 1.3 people per square mile, compared to an "average" of 87.4 for the rest of the country, we found Alaskans to be friendly and enthused about their place in the 'final frontier'.



OTC



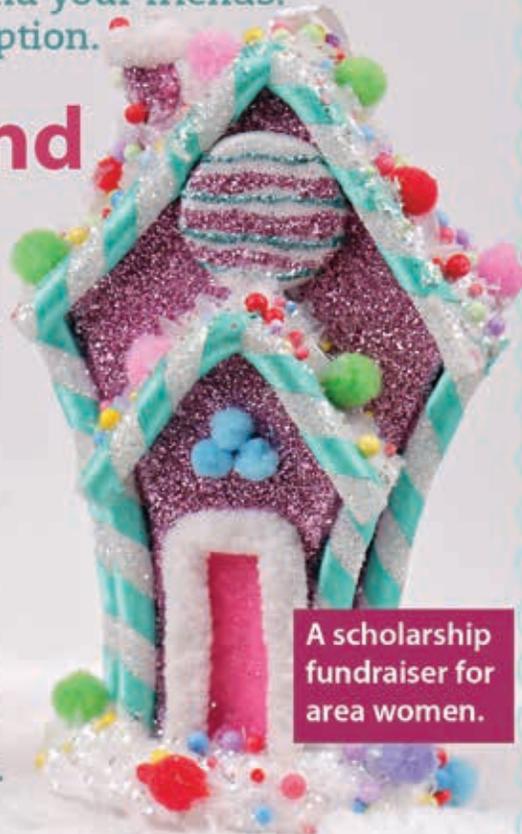
Alaska has been on our travel wish-list for quite a while and we feel fortunate to finally visit. Who knows if we will make it to State #50?

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TERRI'S **HIP** KEPT
HER FROM TWIRLING
WITH HER GRANDKIDS.

Terri takes her job as "super nana" very seriously. When hip pain severely restricted playtime with her grandkids, she rewrote her story with an anterior hip replacement performed by orthopedic surgeon Dr. Christopher Rott. The new procedure meant less pain, faster recovery and a better range of motion for Terri. Four weeks after surgery, "super nana" was back in action.

Rewrite your bone & joint story. Call 218.739.2221 for a consultation today. Or learn more at LRHC.org.



Lake Region
HEALTHCARE