



Arctic Quest Tour

January Update

January 6, 2016

Happy New Year, to all 2016 Arctic Quest participants!

We wanted to send you some additional information and reminders to help you prepare for the trip, starting in just three weeks! Please read it through and let us know if you have any questions.

Tour Participants:

Bill Bernard and Mary Harney	Springfield, IL
Mike and Ginny Borner	Easton, MD
Stan and Sharon Dardis	Woodbury, MN
Chester & Suzanne Harris	Dayton, OH
Kris & Ernie Salmon	Thousand Oaks, CA
Collin & Marisa Fay	Fairbanks, AK

Payments Due:

Some of you have not already paid in full; if not please send your final payments of \$2200 per person us at your earliest convenience to:

Parkwest Air Tours
PO Box 81527
Fairbanks, AK 99708

Meeting in Anchorage:

As you know, this trip starts in Anchorage, AK on January 28th. Because we know that flight schedules can be bizarre getting to the 49th State, we purposely scheduled nothing but your hotel room for that day. We will be staying at the Historic Anchorage Hotel, located at 330 E Street. Originally built in 1916, the hotel stands as a classic example of Anchorage's rich heritage and commitment to preservation, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is conveniently located to all the downtown action as well as the railroad depot. A deluxe continental breakfast is included at the hotel, along with free newspapers and wi-fi.

The easiest way to get to the hotel would be to catch a cab from the airport. There is also a cheap bus option but cabs are relatively inexpensive and certainly more convenient.

Friday morning, breakfast hours are 6:00 – 10:00 am. Whatever your breakfast schedule, let's all plan to all meet in the breakfast area for a mini briefing at 9:30 am; we will depart at 10:30 for our docent-led tour at the Anchorage Museum.

Travel Schedules:

I already have the itineraries for Borner and Dardis. If you others could send me your arrival and departure information, that would be appreciated. Collin and I will be arriving about noon on January 28th from Fairbanks.

For those of you arriving early enough that day, I wanted to toss out the option of going to see "Happy Birthday Wanda June" at the performing arts complex (walking distance from the hotel). A brief description is below and show time is 7:00 pm. Ticket prices are \$25 for adults, \$23 for seniors 65 and older.

Primal Man vs. Refined Culture

Kurt Vonnegut's only play, written in the 1970s, is hilarious, surreal, and thought-provoking! We've come a long way--or have we?



Any interest from you? If so, I'd be happy to book/pay under one reservation and we can settle up later.

Clothes Refresher

We've already covered the obvious stuff, but I want to send you a reminder on the not-so-obvious stuff, such as.....bathing suits! Yes, if you plan on soaking at Chena Hot Springs (which I recommend that you do), you will need bathing suits/shorts for this. Also, on super cold days, novelty photos such as this one are commonly taken at the University.

Also, the folks at the Fairbanks Curling Club sent me the following helpful information for our time with them:

- **Footwear:** CLEAN shoes. Street shoes are not allowed on the ice. Clean sneakers are perfect.
- **Pants:** We recommend yoga pants, track pants or sweat pants; something you can move in easily.



- **Shirt:** We recommend layers on the top. It's about 36F on the ice, so it's chilly, but when you start moving, it warms up. Layer up and remove as necessary.
- **Included:** grippers, sliders, brooms and stabilizers

So great news, folks—you can leave your grippers and brooms at home!

Arctic Fly Day

The charter company needs to know our individual weights for planning purposes on our Arctic fly day. Can you send me those via email as soon as possible? Also, you will each get an Arctic Circle certificate so please let me know if you would like your names to be printed any differently than I have them listed in the participant section of this Tour Update.

Final Notes:

I can't tell you how much we are looking forward to this one-of-a-kind adventure with you all! We're starting to get race fever here in Fairbanks. Official registration for the Yukon Quest have closed and there will be 25 mushers—14 dogs each— (that's 350 dogs!) at the starting line. For a fun analysis of sled dog placement, read [The Mathematics of Mushing](#) on the Yukon Quest website.

Finally, attached is a wonderful article in today's ADN, Alaska Dispatch News. It confirms two things of interest:

- 1) Fairbanks is beautiful in January, and
- 2) We're having a mild winter thus far!

See you in Anchorage!

Sincerely,



Marisa L. Fay

Alaska Dispatch News

Published on *Alaska Dispatch News* (<http://www.adn.com>)

Dark days getting you down? Don't forget the other northern lights *Dermot Cole, January 5, 2016*

FAIRBANKS -- The endless talk about the dark days in Alaska sometimes keeps us from seeing the light.

Or at least appreciating the ethereal qualities of this season of long shadows, when the sun hits everything from a low angle, casting a subdued peach-like glow on the hills and valleys that landscape artists will forever be trying to preserve with paint.

It's a sunrise or sunset -- take your pick -- that just happens to go on for four or five hours. It's one of the bright spots about winter in this part of Alaska, one that many people miss because they have indoor commitments that keep them working or otherwise occupied, basking in the glow of computer screens.



Fairbanks on Tuesday morning. To prevent the dark from becoming all-encompassing this time of year, which it can be, it's important to escape the electronic glow and get outside sometime between dawn and dusk.

We know it's January because of the balance between day and night, a reliable celestial pattern. It's reassuring because everything else about this winter is out of sync -- with temperatures and snow conditions that we normally don't see until late March or early April, disrupting the notion that Fairbanks is dependably cold.

Without a 40-below cold snap, this is not a season that can be called winter, if you ask Fairbanksans who fall into the die-hard category and deserve that adjective more than a mere battery or Bruce Willis. As is true elsewhere in Alaska, the not-so-peaceful Pacific winds have driven away the chill, if not the snow. We've not seen anything chillier than 29 below, and that only for a moment, the equivalent of shirtsleeve weather. For the most part, we've avoided the four-letter word that terrorizes the populace -- rain.

If this keeps up, we could have a full-blown identity crisis by the spring. But don't worry -- the bottom can always drop out in late January and February.

That brings us back to the more predictable matter of light in short supply. To prevent the dark from becoming all-encompassing this time of year, which it can be, it's important to escape the electronic glow and get outside sometime between dawn and dusk, especially when the sun is shining. When the cloud cover is complete, a January day outside Fairbanks is grayer than my hair. But when the sun breaks through, the colors emerge.

On Tuesday, just after 10 a.m, a bank of clouds above the southeast horizon exploded in shades of orange and red with the sun still below the horizon. The brilliant light show faded as sunrise approached at 10:48 a.m., only to reappear about four hours later in the southwest after dusk. I think of it as compensation for the limited daylight, which is weak on Vitamin D, but strong on aesthetics.

Fairbanks has gained nearly a half-hour since the low point two weeks ago, closing in on four and a half hours. By about 1 p.m., the center of the sun reaches 3 degrees above the horizon, a high point for the day.

From March to September, we take daylight for granted. Not so during January, when the beauty of the day is marked by light conditions equally as impressive as those created by those other northern lights.

We have had many spectacular displays of the aurora this season and, as is always the case, they appear more striking in photographs than in person. I take it on faith that these are real depictions and that our eyes can't compress 15 or 30 seconds of light in the same way as a camera.

When it comes to the daylight, however, human eyesight surpasses the camera's reach. I have yet to see a photograph or a video that captures the full beauty of the winter glow of sunshine in Interior Alaska.

The winter brings long days, often derided as dark and depressing, but don't forget about the light.

Columnist Dermot Cole, a resident of Fairbanks, has been a reporter and columnist in Alaska for 40 years. The views expressed here are his and are not necessarily endorsed by Alaska Dispatch News, which welcomes a broad range of viewpoints.

Source URL: <http://www.adn.com/article/20160105/dark-days-getting-you-down-dont-forget-other-northern-lights>