

# Alaska and Jell-O

by Lynne Belluscio

People have been asking why we have a sign up that says "Looking For People From Alaska." Well, this past weekend we were able to take the sign down. We finally had visitors from Alaska - Fairbanks to be specific. They are relatives of Emily Gernold who has been volunteering at the Historical Society for her requirements for a history class at GCC.

Caroline and Frank Maniaci usually come down to the lower 48 to visit relatives and Emily brought them to the Jell-O Museum. They arrived just as Ruth was closing, but when she learned they were from Alaska, she presented them with Jell-O shirts and boxes of Jell-O. She didn't have a camera, so we weren't able to capture them for posterity, but they promised they'd send pictures from their iphone when they have a chance.

So once again we have all 50 states and over 20 foreign countries. The last couple of years, it's been North or South Dakota or Montana that have been the last to visit. But we usually reach 50 by the end of the summer. We always laugh when folks come here from Buffalo and think they're from a "long way away."

Jell-O marketed their products in Alaska in the 1920s - even before Alaska was a state. The 1924 recipe book featured a picture of a man bringing home



Original oil painting by Angus MacDonell.

a wooden box of Jell-O. The caption reads: "Far fetched. Not a bit of it except in the sense that this box of Jell-O has been brought a long, long way. For we do have customers who live within the Artic Circle and who say cold hard things of us if

we do not arrange for shipping connections before the trails are closed with the winter's snows."

I also found on the internet, copies of menus served aboard the Alaska Steamship Lines which operated twenty years between

1939 and 1959. It was customary to serve Jell-O on board, including Cherry Jell-O with Nabisco wafers and stewed white figs. More often it was a dish of Jell-O with whipped cream.

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