



# Seldovia Gazette

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### Cledia Larrison . . . "I survived!"

by Mary Glover



Exactly two months to the day, Cledia returned to Seldovia. It has been two months of her life that she did not expect to spend in hospitals, let alone experience a life-changing drama. Yet, as Cledia so clearly expressed, "I survived!"

"On Tuesday, June 19th a Cessna 206 was flying out of Seldovia to Homer and experienced serious mechanical difficulties forcing the pilot, Jennifer Foltz, 30, to land the plane on the shoreline of Yukon Island. The plane was owned and operated by Smokey Bay Air. There were three passengers aboard: Cledia Larrison, 52, of Seldovia; Teresa Cook, 24, of Nanwalek; and James Pastro, 53, of Homer. As of the printing of this paper all four persons are in stable but critical condition. The airplane was a total loss. Jennifer (known as Jenn) is now out of surgery at Alaska Regional Hospital. Cledia Larrison was flown to the Alaska Native Medical Center, James Pastro was flown to Providence Alaska Medical Center and Teresa Cook, who was pregnant and lost the baby, is at South Peninsula Hospital in Homer." *Seldovia*

They splinted her leg with wood found on the beach. She said, "The early medical assistance saved their lives." Cledia received two letters from two of the medics who helped her. She told me about these letters with great affection. She said that a visiting priest said, "God must still have a purpose for you." Cledia's husband of five years, Ray, was by her side. After being moved from intensive care, Ray was at her bedside and helping her everyday, all day long. She said he was wonderful to her.

Cledia is on her way to recovery. It is hard to be patient while thinking of all the things she once could do (such as her outdoor gardening). She has a beautiful crochet project in progress. She also does feather painting (see picture below), which are just beautiful. However, the feather painting is going to have to wait until she can sit up and bend over any work in progress. She still gets around slowly and wants to gain 20 pounds. Cledia is thinking about what she can do to

*Gazette, June 21, 2007*

Many of us in Seldovia were concerned for the injured and we have not received much news about the outcome of the individuals involved in the accident. Thus, when Cledia called and granted me an interview, I was very pleased to learn that she did indeed survive and she came out a winner!

On June 19th, Cledia stated she was traveling to Pebble Mine where she has a job in housekeeping. She works 20 days on and 10 days off, 11 hours a day. Then the crash brought her job to an abrupt halt. Now after eight surgeries, Cledia is still recovering. Initially she sustained internal bleeding and was in critical care for one month. She is still recovering from a severely broken right ankle and damages resulting from injuries to her upper gastric area. Two of her vertebra were also fractured. She said, "They did a good job putting her back together. It is a hard thing to go through. I had a lot of support, tons of people came to see me...a lot of my relatives and friends...even my boss came to see me."

Cledia said when the plane was going down, she was praying. After that she did not remember anything. She said the people who were on the beach were medics from Indianapolis and Seattle. They had everyone extricated from the wreckage and ready to transport by the time the additional rescue persons came.

occupy her time until she totally recovers. [See Claudia's letter to Seldovians.](#)

Cledia said, "I have been in Alaska all my life and flying has been my way of traveling. I do not like to be on the water." However, she is now hesitant about flying. Cledia said that Jenn Foltz visited her in the hospital the day Jenn was being discharged and Jenn said, "You fall off the horse, you get back on."

Ray and Cledia came to Seldovia because they "Got tired of Anchorage." They bought Sue and Dan Hecks house and live in a beautiful spot overlooking Lake Susan. Ray has a boat and Seldovia's harbor was perfect for the boat. Cledia has five children: two live in Alaska; one lives in Oregon; one lives in California; and one lives in Washington. She also has some very cute grandchildren!

Cledia, we Seldovians offer our support and we applaud you. Many of us will continue to pray for your total recovery.



**Cledia and Ray Larrison**

*photo by Darlene Crawford*



**Cledia's feather paintings. These two are on display and for sale at Herring Bay Mercantile in Seldovia.**

**(Cledia also paints eagles on feathers which are very striking.)**

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