

Larry's
Club

OPEN 7 DAYS
2 P.M. - 5 A.M.

- FOOD
- LIVE ENTERTAINEMENT
- POOL TABLE



283-9735

KENAI

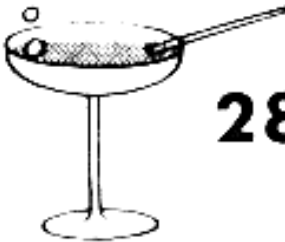
1st PLACE ON NORTH ROAD

From the Kenai Peninsula Yellow Pages – 1979

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From the Kenai Peninsula Yellow Pages – 1984



From the Kenai Peninsula Yellow Pages – 1985

LANDMARK KENAI BAR TO HAVE FIERY FINALE

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Friday, January 30, 1998

Author: Jon Little Daily News Peninsula Bureau; Staff

Larry 's Club, a slouching one-story Kenai bar, rode high during Cook Inlet's oil boom but couldn't survive the bust. Heavily in debt, it closed two years ago. But true to the club's rollicking past, it won't die quietly. Next week, the 45-year-old landmark will become its own funeral pyre.

Central Kenai Peninsula firefighters plan to torch the rotten old structure to practice their skills. After a series of small fires, they'll let it burn to the ground Feb. 5.

"It'll go out in a wild way," said the bar's owner Dave Charlesworth.

That's fitting, he said, since Larry 's Club was the hub of much that was wild in Kenai from the mid-1950s to the early 1990s. Rumors of pretty serious gambling survive from its earliest days; countless bachelor parties wound up there; at least one man was shot dead in the bar.

Beyond that, Kenai's longtime residents say, the bar was just a fun place to go where everyone knew everyone else. It was a time when Alaskans drank and smoked and smiled more than they do now, old-timers say.

"Most anyone who's been here any length of time has been in that building," Charlesworth said. "It was one of the few places in town that had entertainment."

Kenai's current Mayor John Williams was one of them.

"I've been to that bar so many times," he said. "When Sharon and I were young we used to go out to Larry 's Club and dance. There wasn't anything else in town."

At its peak in the late 1960s, the bar also had a restaurant that served steak, lobster and crab to a wave of hungry, well-paid construction workers who were building offshore oil platforms and the refineries that still operate in Nikiski.

"We served excellent food and we had a very nice dining room," said Florence "Rusty" Lancashire of Soldotna. Her late husband, Larry, owned the place and was its namesake. "Anybody who was anybody seemed to go there," she said. "It was a very busy place in those days."

Larry 's Club was born in the mid-1950s, at a time when the U.S. government, fearful of the Soviet air threat, had just built Wildwood Air Force Base north of town. The old base has long since been converted into a medium-security prison.

The place was called The Jet for a few years before Larry Lancashire bought it and named it after himself.

After a decade serving food and liquor accompanied by the twang of live country and western music, Lancashire sold the bar to Jay Jarvis.

The bar switched to hard rock 'n' roll in the mid-1980s and became a magnet for the 20-something crowd, said Charlesworth, who saw the old bar through its last years, first working for Jarvis then taking over the bar himself.

House bands with names like Avalanche and Lynx would play there. But perhaps the biggest band to perform also turned out to be one of the worst, Charlesworth said.

The Tubes, a 1970s rock act, somehow got booked at Larry 's Club shortly before the band broke up in the late 1980s. Nobody knew quite what to make of them. "It was a pretty unsuccessful night," Charlesworth said.

Charlesworth took control of the bar when it was already heavily in debt and tried to make a go of it as rock 'n' roll destination. But said he couldn't compete with the central Peninsula's low population and changing attitudes toward drinking.

"All the bars are in some kind of trouble or other," he said. "It's just not there like it used to be. Society has determined that it's not the thing to do."

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