



**Her specialty is embarrassment, but Cell, the main attraction at the Bore Tide bar in Indian, says that's what keeps the customers coming back.**

From *The Bore Tide's Big Attraction* article by Pat O'Brien, photos by Jim Lavrakas.

*We Alaskans* magazine in the *Anchorage Daily News* – June 5, 1982



It's all an act, says Ceil — behind the bawdy behavior of her working hours is a shy person who prefers quiet times at home. Being so generously endowed nearly drove her to suicide as a teen-ager, but now she thinks of her enormous bustline as being 'like Joe E. Brown's mouth or Jimmy Durante's nose.'

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#### THE BORE TIDE'S BIG ATTRACTION by Pat O'Brien

She laughs when asked about giving an interview. "What for? You won't be able to print any of it," says Ceil, belle of the **Bore Tide**.

She seems coax able, though, and finally agrees, as long as there won't be hard feelings if her private brand of bawdy jokes, provocative gestures and rough language prove unpublishable.

To show she's not exaggerating, Ceil notes that a Los Angeles television station crew recently spent a great deal of time trying to tape a session with her but "only managed to pull six minutes out" adding "they wound up getting a little drunk."

After 26 years in the bar business, Ceil is more than just a purveyor of spirits. At the **Bore Tide** bar in Indian, about 26 miles south of Anchorage, she's performer, comedienne, a seller of laughs for those who wander in off the Seward Highway.

With an ever-changing audience of tourists, skiers enroute to nearby Alyeska, business travelers to the Kenai Peninsula and local residents, Ceil has become an Alaska landmark, an institution of sorts.

Undoubtedly, a good number of patrons at the small weather-worn bar – it's exterior, at least, is modest – are there for a glimpse of Ceil, the mini-skirted woman whose 49 ½ -inch breasts seem continually about to capsize out of her tight, low-cut blouses. Ceil and her skimpy costumes have been producing more stares and laughs for a long time; anyone who's watched the tops of her dresses agree – they are something of an engineering marvel.

“They don't drop out unless I want them to,” she says, but it's hard to be convinced. Yet she does manage to bend over and open a cooler without any untoward occurrences.

Some customers won't even believe the bulging appendages are natural. “People come in and ask if they're real. I say “No. It's done with mirrors.”

Don't make too much of Ceil's quasi-celebrity status, though Ceil certainly doesn't. “I really don't want to be an attraction. I just have a ball. Sometimes it (her notoriety) gets in the way, because there are times I would like to be by myself.”

The other side of the boisterous, performing Ceil is quite a different person, she says, someone who is very shy. “But you see, I'm on duty now. When I'm home, I'm very quiet. I read a lot.”

Inside the loud exterior, she's just a regular person, an old-time Alaskan, she chides, having a good time and sharing it with her customers. But there's more to her than jokes, racy costumes and warming the head of a red-faced oil worker with her Alaska “ earmuffs.”

Ceil Braund landed in Alaska 17 years ago in an old car, jobless and broke. “I came up here and didn't know where Anchorage was or anything.” Fresh off the road, she went into a saloon called Tips in Eagle River where a man named Darby was tending bar.

She wanted to ask if they needed a cocktail waitress, but couldn't get Darby's attention. “I asked this guy next to me how to get the bartenders attention. He told me the bartender was kind of deaf. ‘You have to ring the bell,’ the helpful fellow suggested. Ringing a bell in a bar signals a customer's offer to buy a round for the house. But Ceil didn't know that.

“Finally, Darby came down and asked me what I wanted. I told him I wanted a V.O. and water, but I noticed he was setting everybody else up. He came back and said that will be

\$27.50. Wow, I knew drinks in Alaska were going to be expensive, but this was ridiculous. Besides, I didn't have the money."

"Jokingly, I said 'We're going to have work this thing out,' and these guys started lining up at the back door. I said 'Wait a minute. I think you've got the wrong impression."

Meeting Darby turned out to be a lucky break. He found her a place to live and got her started on an odyssey that's taken her all over the state.

Her first of many bar and restaurant jobs was at the Forum Club, now the Black Angus Meat Market on Fireweed in Anchorage. "I was waitressing and at that time they didn't allow you to drink while you were on duty," Ceil says. But she managed to find a way around that policy.

"The bartender used to smoke real fancy cigars that came in glass tubes. He gave me three of them and I put V.O. in those things and stuck them down between my breasts. When no one was looking, I'd take a straw and sip the V.O. That was the only way to make it through a shift."

Ceil moved from that job to the Elks Club, where other problems developed. "Most of the guys in the Elks Club were not really that young and virile, but I guess their wives felt threatened anyway." The ladies at the Elks Club got together, she claims, and decided she was to bust to be around their husbands. Ceil was invited to quit rather than be fired.

She worked in a number of bars over the next few years in several different Alaska towns, but quit to get married in 1971. For her honeymoon, Ceil and her new husband rode a pair of bicycles from Anchorage to Carson City, Nevada. "It was an adventure. I wouldn't trade it for anything. If I still had my health – I've had a couple of heart attacks – I'd do it again." Despite forest fires and equipment-wrecking bears, "it was a fantastic trip," she says, even though the marriage didn't survive. She wound up back in Alaska soon after finishing the trek.

It was but one of five marriages to go awry. The first, to a sailor, had lasted only 20 hours. "I was 14 and he was 28. After we got married we went to a hotel room and he called his mother long-distance and asked her what to do. So I packed my bags and had it annulled."

She stops talking for a moment. A customer needs a drink and Ceil must fill in as bartender. She jokes with a few of the drinkers seated around the triangular bar as she fills an order.

Stopping to mildly harass a man sitting alone, Ceil tugs on his beard. "I always did like hair on my chest, as long as it was somebody else's. You're kind of cute," she says, drawing laughs from others.

Ceil bends over the bar, lowering her chest to the counter until it touches his beer bottle. The man looks thoroughly intimidated.

When Ceil finally stops joking around with the embarrassed man, she returns to her seat. She's quiet. She talks of her disappointment with some of the changes she's seen in Alaska since 1965.

"When the pipeline boom started, I got out of Anchorage as fast as I could. I was working at the Reef, but I wanted to get away," she says, adding that she feels the pipeline has done more to harm Alaska than help the state.

"When I first came here, I could walk down a street downtown and say hello to four or five people I knew by name in every block. Any more, I could shoot a cannon off and never hit anybody I ever knew."

Many of those who stampeded to Alaska hoping for pipeline construction work, and those who arrived later because of further petroleum development, brought trouble with them, she contends. "I wish they had never found oil up here. I came up here to get away from the rapes, the murders and the robberies. And I'm right back in the middle of it."

Anchorage's growing urban problems are part of the reason she says she has continued to work in the Indian area for the past eight years. "We're still human out here," she notes, getting a few laughs from those listening. Many are regular customers.

Ceil was born in Nine Mile Falls, a small farming community near Spokane, Washington. Her Dutch and Irish parents were concert musicians with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Her father, Arthur Stimson, invented the electric guitar, she says. "I can't play anything. I can't even tune in the radio."

While growing up, Ceil had a difficult time adjusting to her quickly enlarging breasts.

Her overwhelming development resulted in a suicide attempt and two years spent in a mental hospital until she was 17. "I couldn't accept them," she says, glancing down.

But she came away from the hospitalization with a healthier attitude, one that allowed her to laugh over her endowment. "I look at them as being like Joe E. Brown's mouth, or Jimmy Durante's nose. I've got them and I use them to my advantage. I've had a ball with my breasts since I learned to live with them."

She takes a gulp of her drink and says her specialty is embarrassment. She believes a large part of her return customers are there because she has reddened their faces in the past. "Some shy guy comes in and I embarrass him and the next time he brings in someone even more shy," for the same treatment.

Ceil's had her own blushing moments, though – such as the time she was hired to work at a party at Fort Richardson. “They had this big cake and I had to crawl up underneath it. It's hot under one of those things, let me tell you.”

Despite wearing a see-through suit, the heat nearly overcame her, she says. “I was supposed to wait for this guy to say these certain words and he never said them. Boy, it got hot. There was this little window at the back of the cake that faced the bar. I yelled at the bartender that I was dying of thirst.”

The bartender helped her out – with massive doses of whiskey.

“Have you ever seen those comedy things where the bullet comes out of the end of the barrel and goes down like this? That's what I did with the cake. I jumped out and went smashing right down into the frosting. It was terrible.”

Mostly, though, Ceil has learned to enjoy such antics. “I love the little old guys who come up here from Florida and they want to take a picture back to the retirement home. I give them earmuffs and they just walk away happier than hell. To me, that's what my breasts are made for, happiness. I didn't always think that way.”

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**Personal recollection from Doug Vandegraft:** My friend Gary Nichols and I were at the Bore Tide bar, and Ceil was waiting on us. The proportions of her body were truly unusual. To this day, I have never seen such large breasts on such a small woman. I remember thinking she had very thin legs. Gary was a very ‘stout’ man, with a huge waist. Ceil looked at him and said “Wow. We should have sex sometime. With your gut and my chest we'd fit together perfectly.”

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SO LONG, CECILIA

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Friday, March 20, 1987

Author: DEBBIE MCKINNEY , Daily News reporter; Staff

She preyed on flat-chested women: "Wanna hear a joke that will make your boobs fall off? Oh, I see you've already heard it."

And she was quick to divulge the facts: "Get the vital statistics down straight. My measurements from the bottom up are 37-29-49 ½ with a bra on. Without a bra on, I'm 37-46-32. On my hands and knees, I'm 37-29-63."

Cecilia "Ceil" Braund used to say if her age ever caught up with her bust size, she's throw "one hell of a party."

She didn't make it. Ceil died Monday morning of kidney failure. She was 46.

Ceil was an institution in the watering holes around Indian, most recently as manager of the now defunct **Bore Tide** bar. The few who knew the woman behind the antics saw a sensitive, warmhearted person who valued her time alone, devoured books and expressed herself best through poetry. The countless many who didn't saw only the flamboyant wigs, fur lined miniskirts and mammoth-sized mammaries. But then, you'd have to be blind not to see them. They weighed more than 14 pounds apiece and were insured by Lloyd's of London.

Ceil's clothes were custom made to flaunt what she considered her best attribute. Consequently, she always looked on the verge of falling out of her dress. But that only happened when she wanted it to.

Particularly during the pipeline days, men would line up to be photographed grinning with their heads buried amid Ceil's appendages, one on each side. "Alaska earmuffs," she called them.

Ceil especially liked the little old men from Florida who wanted Alaska earmuff pictures to hang in their retirement homes. She'd give them their earmuffs and they'd hobble off as happy as could be. That's what Ceil decided these anomalies were for to make others happy.

She also liked to embarrass people. "Is that a package of Roloids in your pocket?" she'd ask men. And she was always dropping things down her blouse. "If you can breathe through you ears, boy, you can go for it."



"That was Cecilia. God, what a character," says her brother, Randy Stimson of Portland, Ore. "She was a wild one. That's the only way you can put it."

Ceil was born in the farming community of Nine Miles Falls, Wash., at midnight on May 21. That put her walking the fine astrological line between Taurus and Gemini.

"Which is why I'm so screwed up, I think," Ceil said in the memoirs she taped before she died. "Leastways, it gives me an excuse. I should have known right off my life was going to be a little messed up. Being young and innocent, I went ahead with it anyway."

Ceil's father was an electronics genius who did secret work for the Navy during World War II. He had one of those mad-scientist personalities, her brother says. Preoccupied. Rather absentminded.

"I'll tell you a little story about him," Stimson says. "He was so forgetful that when he got married, he went home without mother from the reception. He forgot her."

One day when Ceil was an infant, her parents accidentally left her on the couch and took a bundle of diapers to church instead. No, this wasn't your typical family. "Screwiest outfit you ever met in your life," Stimson says.

He describes Ceil's childhood as "horribly complicated. Cecilia was too sensitive. When you were watching a football game and the teams huddled, they were talking about her."

Ceil's was embarrassed by her breasts. At one point, she bound them to try to make the growing stop. She also force-fed herself, thinking she could grow into them. She once pushed her 5 foot 1 frame up to 195 pounds. But her breasts just got bigger and heavier.

"Her shoulders would bleed from carrying a brassiere around," Stimson says. "I'm talking about when she was in the sixth grade."

Ceil once told a reporter she tried to commit suicide. But instead of dying, she learned to think of her breasts like Joe E. Brown's mouth, or Jimmy Durante's nose.

"The alternative was to be a real (jerk)," Stimson says. "Ceil and I are an awful lot alike. We found that laughing and telling jokes is the best way in the world to keep people away. And drinking . . . It's the best way to hide.

"I think Cecilia found her niche up here," Stimson says. "There's just no doubt in my mind. She loved the people up here. And they accepted her. Whatever the hell she wanted to be, she could be up here.

"God almighty, the people she knew. I went to the coroner's office to get her death certificate, they know Cecilia. The mortuary knows Cecilia. Just say 'Cecilia' and off you go."

Ceil was married five times. Her first marriage to a sailor lasted about 20 hours. "I was 14 and he was 28," she once said. "After we got married, we went to a motel room and he called his mother long distance and asked her what to do. So I packed my bags and had it annulled."

In 1971, Ceil and another husband honeymooned by bicycling from Anchorage to Reno, Nev. They divorced immediately upon arrival, but it was an adventure nonetheless.

Ceil had started writing a book before she died. A description of the bicycle trip was the last thing she wrote:

"We had four water jugs, one with VO and one with vodka and two with water. Let me tell you, you cannot drink and ride. It zaps all your strength. Plus, it seems your bike doesn't want to go straight. Neither did my (breasts). And wherever (they) go, I go and my bike and half the traffic."

But during her last couple years, Ceil became less anxious to display her breasts. "She got really tired of always having to be the life of the party," says her friend, Josue Altig. "It's a lot of work to make people laugh all the time.

"She was hounded . . ." adds Steve Altig, who tended bar with Ceil. "Show us your (breasts). Give this guy earmuffs. Let us take your picture.' And she got tired of people saying, 'I've known Ceil for 20 years and they didn't even know her (last) name.' "

Ceil also started worrying about getting old. Four years ago, her doctors suggested she undergo a breast reduction for health reasons. But Ceil refused; it had taken her that long to get used to them, she said.

"That also was the year she had to get glasses, her doctor told her she was going through menopause, and Medicare sent her an application for a plot," Josue Altig says.

"But I think one of the hardest things for her was, she'd finally found a place where she had a family. And then the **Bore Tide** was sold and she had to leave."

After the **Bore Tide** was sold last May (1986), Ceil worked briefly in Seward and Homer, then became ill and moved to Anchorage. Not only were her kidneys failing her, but her liver was shot.

"She drank a fifth of VO a day," Stimson says.

"I said, 'You know you're killing yourself? You're going to pay the fiddlers.' And she said, 'I know that. When the time comes I'll just die.' And she did just exactly what she said she was going to do. She drank herself to death.

"Ceil wanted to donate her parts to science. Doc and I talked about that. He said, 'There's nothing here worth donating.' I mean, she used them up."

Stimson flew up Tuesday of last week to be with her at the hospital. "When I got up there, she sat right up in bed and gave me the biggest hug and she wouldn't let go," he says. "Then she laid down and said, 'Now I'm going to die.' That was a hard time. I sat and held her hand for a week."

On Monday morning, Stimson went downstairs for a coke. By the time he got back she was gone.

Ceil was cremated Wednesday. On that day, Stimson carried her death certificate home on the plane to Portland in his briefcase. He'll find a place for it in the Stimson family trunk along with the miniball that killed their great, great grandfather in the civil war.

Ceil's friends are planning a wake in May. They want to scatter her ashes in Indian. At that time, tables will be set up with miniskirts, wigs, gag gifts and other memorabilia. Donations will go to the American Kidney Association. And, after all that, of course, there'll be a party. A huge party, the kind that would make Ceil proud.

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## OBITUARIES

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Author: Staff

## CECILIA "CEIL" BRAUND

Memorial services for well-known bartender Cecilia "Ceil" Rose Braund, 46, will be conducted in the spring.

She died March 16 at Providence Hospital after a long illness.

Ms. Braund was born May 21, 1940, in Spokane, Wash. She came to Alaska in 1963 and worked as a bartender in many different cocktail lounges including Cantwell, the original Black Angus in Muldoon, the Sourdough Bar, Diamond Jim's, Indian House, the **Bore Tide** and George's Homestead.

In 1968 she took a bicycle trip from Anchorage to Reno, Nev. She also enjoyed knitting and crocheting.

She leaves two children, Erick Brown of Palmyra, Mo., and Edward Brown of Norfolk, Va.; her brother, Randy Stimson of Portland, Ore.; two sisters, Catherine Stimson of Spokane, Wash., and Valaine Stimson of San Jose, Calif.; and one grandson.

The family has requested that memorial contributions be directed to the Alaska Kidney Center, 4000 Laurel Street, Anchorage, 99508.

Cremation was conducted at Witzleben Family Funeral Homes and Crematory, Bragaw Chapel.

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Ceil Braund tending bar at the Bore Tide.

