

Are you caught up in the *holiday rush*? But wait, just a “few weeks” ago weren’t we in the *summer rush* known best only by professional learning experts like us? The chaotic summer was followed by the *August rush* when we all scurried around starting the year in hundreds of schools across this state.

Believe it or not, the calendar does say DECEMBER with autumn ending and winter beginning on Friday, December 21, 2007. Before we all *rush* into a new year, I ask you ... do you recall the most famous evaluation guru of all? He visited Georgia in September when we gathered together in Savannah to learn more about evaluating professional development. Soon after that learning experience, Dr. Thomas Guskey sent to me two of the most beautiful and amazing photos I have ever seen. I quickly thanked him by email only to receive a second message containing a brief summary of his camping trip in Alaska.

With Tom’s permission and the GSDC Board’s approval, I wanted to share the pictures and paragraphs to remind you of the beauty in this world and the power of peace, taking time for reflection and the benefits of renewal. Enjoy!

From Lynn Seay, GSDC Historian

#### **Photos and Reflections from Dr. Tom Guskey**

**Dear Lynn,**

**I'm so glad you liked the photos. As you can tell, there in Alaska autumn was much further along and the smell of winter definitely hung in the air. All the aspens and alders had already turned, and we had a hard freeze every night, usually with a dusting of snow. Then, during the first four days, the snow turned into a cold rain during the day – 6 inches in 4 days! But despite the terribly harsh conditions, you cannot help be awed by the vastness and the immense beauty of that country. Nor can you help be humbled by it.**

**On the evening of the 4th day, just as we had ended hunting and were about to head back to camp, the sky cleared and the sun broke through just before setting. It was like a brief glimmer of hope that seemed to taunt us saying, "So, you're still here, eh? Congratulations! The weaker and less persistent have all gone back to their warm and comfortable abodes long ago. But always remember, the line between brave and foolish is very thin and easily crossed!"**

**Then the wind calmed and it became completely silent. For the first time in days, sunlight streamed across the broad valley stretched below us. And then, from the far hillside across from us, came the howl of a wolf - a long, lonely, eerie sound that makes the hair on the back of your neck stand on edge. Within seconds, another answered. For half an hour we listened as they called back and forth.**

**I know that I could not live in a place so wild and harsh as that. A week exhausted me, almost completely. But going there, and knowing something of places like that, truly enriches my soul. It helps me realize in the clearest terms what a fortunate person I am ...**

**From Dr. Thomas Guskey, Autumn 2007 Camping Trip in Alaska**



