

Land of the Midnight Sun



In Barrow, Alaska, morning takes on a completely new meaning. At 330 miles from the Arctic Circle and almost as close to the North Pole, Barrow is the real-life “Land of the Midnight Sun.” For 83 days, from May 11 to Aug. 1, the sun never sinks below the horizon.

The dark side to life exists at high latitudes. Each year on Nov. 18, residents watch the last sunset of the year as the sun dips below the horizon and will not return for more than two months.

While not pitch-black all the time, winter in Barrow is truly a season of darkness.

Temperatures dip so low that fuel oil congeals. Keys snap like toothpicks in frozen locks. Wind-chills near 100 below can cause frostbite in 30 seconds.

The perpetual dark, cold, and wind can seem oppressive to those who take the daily blush of the sun for granted. Residents admit that dreams of Hawaii are common.

Not everyone wants to leave, however. “Many people here truly like the winter, enjoying the peace and quiet,” said Barrow Mayor Jim Vorderstrasse. “A lot of it reflects on a person’s outlook on life. You can sit around being depressed, or you can get up and find something worthwhile to do.”



Seasons of darkness can occur in anyone’s life. Often our outlook determines how we handle those difficult times. We can shut ourselves in and yearn for another life, or we can rely on God’s Light to help us find a life of hope and serenity.

The choice is always ours.

– Beecher Hunter