

BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

GETTING USED TO . . .

Terror war

THE HEIGHTENED security measures during the 2003 holidays were a reminder that our nation is indeed at war both at home and abroad.

This is a war with terrorism and the enemy has a never-before-matched ability to bring death and destruction to the American homeland.

The only comparable threat existed during the Cold War, when long-range, nuclear-tipped missiles were deployed on both sides, but disaster was successfully averted off then by the reality of mutual assured destruction. Neither side could expect to attack the other without being attacked and destroyed in return.

That delicate balance does not exist in the war against terrorism. The enemy this time rejoices in suicide bombing and considers death an attractive reward for his sacrifices.

The great risk in this new war is that terrorist groups will gain access to weapons of mass destruction which have long been proliferating and may be in the hands of what amount to international street gangs.

Such terrorists may try to smuggle them into this country and unleash devastation on thousands of innocent people. If they don't yet have such capability, it seems just a matter of time.

Our military forces are once again putting their lives on the line in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. But this time they are not the only ones at risk, the enemy this time can bring the war to the folks at home in a very unique way.

Security forces both military and civilian are doing all they can to detect and deter any terrorist activity within the nation. The rest of us should also be vigilant. And we may just have to grow accustomed to a painful struggle that goes on for many years.

Alaskans grieve

A GAIN, ALASKA tragically loses one of its finest, in the line of duty.

Kenai police officer John Watson was slain with his own gun late on Christmas Day, his wife's birthday, as he fought with fishing guide David Foster, who is accused of shooting Watson in the back and then in the back of the head. Foster is charged with first-degree murder and four counts of third-degree assault.

The immensity of the loss is only compounded by the fact that the 43-year-old Watson, an 18-year Kenai Police Department veteran only months away from retirement, leaves behind a wife and children.

We pray that those who risk their lives daily to protect us are afforded a special place in heaven. They've earned it.

Varying standards for discrimination

By WALTER E. WILLIAMS

Early in our marriage, 40-some years ago, Mrs. Williams would return from shopping complaining about the unreasonable prices. Having saved her complaints, she'd then ask me to unload her car laden with purchases.

After the unloading, I'd ask her, "I thought you said the prices were unreasonable. Why did you buy them? Are you unreasonable? Only an unreasonable person would pay unreasonable prices." The discussion always headed downhill after such an observation. But let's look at prices.

I don't know about you, but I always try to get the lowest prices for what I buy and the highest prices for what I sell, and that includes my labor services. Is such a practice immoral?

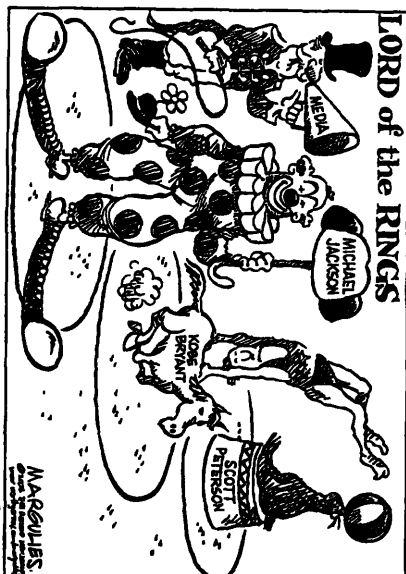
Nobody is forced to sell me anything at my preferred price, nor are they forced to buy from me at my preferred price. If we indeed transact, the only thing a third party could conclude is that we both saw ourselves as being better off than our next best alternative, or why would we have voluntarily transacted?

You say, "OK, Williams, you're right. But where are you going? How many times have we heard the accusation that a corporation moved overseas to take advantage of lower-priced labor or hired cheaper-prod Indians with H-1 visas to replace higher-priced American high-tech workers?"

You'd think that a desire for lower prices is somehow immoral. Why should a preference for low prices be OK for you and me, and not so for CEOs?

Another thing I wonder about are those life insurance company advertisements where they offer reduced rates for nonsmokers. Here are the facts:

According to an article in "Social Science & Medicine" in 1991 titled, "Life insurance and cigarette smokers and expectancies of cigarette smokers and



non-smokers in the United States," the life expectancy difference between new-er-smokers and current smokers is about seven years at ages 25-29, and three years at ages 75 and older. Thus, it makes actuarial sense for the insurance companies to charge smokers higher premiums.

According to a study titled, "The Longevity of Homosexuality," in the 1994, the median age of death from AIDS is 37, and death from other causes 42. In another study, "Does Homosexuality Shorten Life?" in Psychological Reports in 1996, the average life expectancy of homosexuals is 20 to 30 years less than heterosexuals.

Here's my question. How come life insurance companies don't advertise lower life insurance premiums for heterosexuals? After all, life insurance companies do ask applicants about other forms of behavior that have an impact on life expectancy, such as. Are you a pilot? Do you abuse alcohol and drugs? And do you have DUI arrests?

Why not also. Are you a homosexual? I think I know the answer. Life insurance companies would be charged with life expectancy discrimination. But isn't it also life expectancy discrimination to charge higher

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A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND ART CHANGES ...

Success path

THE ANCHORAGE Museum of History and Art is taking a thoughtful and cautious approach to its upcoming expansion.

The museum has commissioned an expert study on just how large an expansion it needs and can realistically afford. And Director Pat Wolf announced that a \$20 million municipal bond to help fund the expansion will be taken off this April's election ballot and moved back a year.

Some kind of expansion is essential, the museum is running out of room for its collections. And as the crown jewel of our community's cultural assets, it must keep pace with Anchorage's growing needs and do justice to the high-quality history, art and Native artifact exhibits available to it.

There are two good reasons for slowing things down.

To wait for a study commissioned in November on the economic viability of the expansion plans Wolf says the study will answer questions like whether the expansion is affordable, what budget level would be reasonable and whether expenses can be met after the facility is opened. The many of the nation's cultural facilities — including the Bellevue Art Museum near Seattle — have gotten in over their heads financially and been forced to close.

To give voters more time to develop an understanding of and approval for the need for the expansion. A recent poll showed that area respondents thought the Anchorage Museum is a worthwhile facility but they would not endorse a bond issue for it right now. The percentages were 57 percent opposing the bonds, 36 percent supporting and 7 percent unsure.

THE LOW level of support for the bond issue most likely relates to the current atmosphere of economic uncertainty, lean municipal and state budgets, and the unresolved issue of how the state will meet its looming fiscal gap — they wonder who will be asked to fill that gap.

The museum is well supported by the private sector. In 1999 it received a \$50 million gift from Elmer and Mary Louise Rasmussen. It is also generously supported by individuals, private companies and charitable institutions. Other funding for the expansion would come from federal, state and local government. The Anchorage public's share of the scheduled \$120 million total — the amount on the bond issue — would be just \$20 million.

Presenting the bond issue to voters prematurely could risk its failure and wrongly suggest that the community does not support the museum.

Tom Harris, the former J.P. Morgan vice president doing the study, is scheduled to present his first report to Wolf and the museum board this month. If changes are needed in current plans, those will take time.

"The goal is that whatever the organization does be successful," Harris said. "That's absolutely key."

Here's the way the New Year will go

By WILLIAM J. TOBIN

JANUARY — Gov. Frank Murkowski, in his second State of the State message to the Legislature, said the discovery of a creek full of grant-sized gold nuggets near Nome signaled a new era in Alaska's mining industry. Proposing a tax on all nuggets weighing more than 3 pounds, the governor forecast a balanced budget and urged legislators to complete their business and adjourn in 90 days.

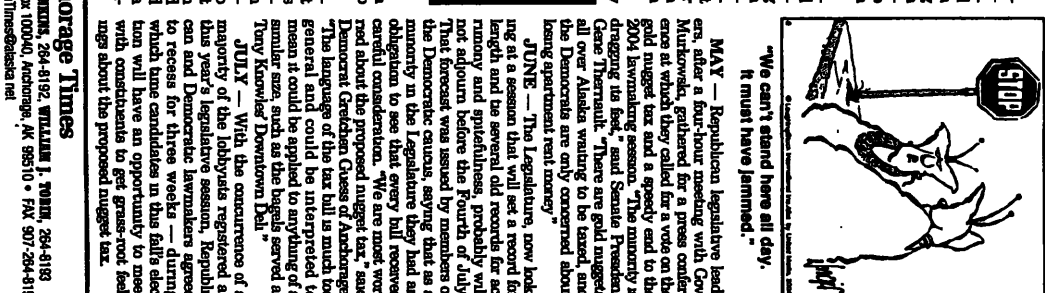
FEBRUARY — Democratic legislators, promising to serve as the loyal opposition in this election year's law-making session, voted overhauling to oppose the governor's request for a 90-day session. "We think a four-month session is required," said Democrat Ethan Berkowitz. Besides, most of us have pre-paid leases on our museum apartments, and see no reason why we should leave any money on the table.

MARCH — Sensational segment Tony Knowles, hoping to be the first to come Alaska's first Democratic member of Congress in 29 years, jumped into the Idaho Trail Sled Dog Race in a dramatic move to campaign at every check-point between Anchorage and Nome. "At one vote a mile," Knowles declared to cheering party faithful. "I'll be making off to Washington."

APRIL — U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, who led the rescue mission that saved the lives of Tony Knowles and his 13 trail-weary dogs after they floundered in a blizzard near Unalakleet, in last month's delayed race, told an audience in Fairbanks that she sought no political gain from her selfless act that pulled her Democratic opponent from the brink of death. "He's always needed all the help he could get," she said, "and I was just glad to be able to lend a hand." A thousand voters along the Idaho trail cheered her valor.

MAY — Republican legislative leaders, after a four-hour meeting with Gov. Murkowski, gathered for a press conference at which they called for a vote on the gold nugget tax and a speedy end to the 2004 lawmaking session. "The minority is dragging its feet," said Senate President Cade Threlkett. "There are gold nuggets all over Alaska waiting to be taxed, and the Democrats are only concerned about long-term political real money."

JUNE — The Legislature, now looking at a session that will set a record for length and be several old records for economy and spiffiness, probably will not adjourn before the Fourth of July. That forecast was issued by members of the Democratic caucus, saying that as a minority in the Legislature they had an obligation to see that every bill receives careful consideration. "We are most worried about the proposed nugget tax," said Democrat Christian Grees of Anchorage. "The language of the tax bill is much too general and could be interpreted to mean it could be applied to anything of a similar size, such as the beagles served at Tony Knowles' Demented Del."



"We can't stand here all day. It must have jammed."

JULY — With the concurrence of a majority of the lobbyists registered at this year's legislative session, Republican and Democratic lawmakers agreed to recess for three weeks — during which time candidates in this fall's election will have an opportunity to meet with constituents to get grass-roots feedback about the proposed nugget tax.

AUGUST — Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, in Sedona to meet with members of the local Democratic club, firmly declared that she is a candidate for president. "But if I were drafted," she said, "the only person thing for me to do would be to run with the support of all the people of America." Asked about her position on the proposed Alaska nugget tax, she told a television reporter: "I would defer on that issue to any very close and dear friend and good supporter Tony Knowles. On the other hand, my book is selling very well in Homer, Tik and Seward, and that's a golden moment for me."

SEPTEMBER — Gov. Frank Murkowski expressed appreciation to members of the Legislature, who adjourned over the Labor Day weekend after deciding to carry the nugget tax over for another year. "They worked diligently," the governor remarked, "and clearly said they see no budgetary problems in the state's immediate future. They have a different perspective than I have, but that's what comes when the loyal opposition is pig-headed and obstinate."

OCTOBER — Democrats, blustered by what they viewed as unjust criticism by the governor, vowed to launch a new get-out-the-vote campaign, especially targeting dog maulers. They were buoyed by Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's assertion that "Tony Knowles' problems on the Idaho trail were part of a great right-wing conspiracy designed to make Lisa Murkowski look like a hero."

NOVEMBER — A thousand or so numbers turned out at the polls in Nome in support of the election of Sen. Lisa Murkowski. "She ain't no right-wing conspirator," said one grizzled old Nome miner, raising the bar at the Board of Trade Saloon with a huge gold nugget. "She's a born and bred Alaskan."

DECEMBER — In a televised message, Gov. Frank Murkowski said the state would put a gold nugget in everybody's Christmas stocking this Yuletide. "It beats taxes every time," the governor proclaimed.

William J. Tobin is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

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A BIRTHDAY FOR ALASKA ...

45 years a state

STATEHOOD CAME to Alaska 45 years ago today. We are no longer young. Yet we still have not reached the maturity that was envisioned by those who fought so gallantly and long to rid Alaska of territorial shackles that held us in bondage to distant federal bureaucracy in Washington, D.C.

Of course the achievement of statehood changed life in Alaska in dramatically better ways.

Instead of a single non-voting delegate in the House of Representatives, the new state instantly had a three-man congressional delegation with the same rights and privileges as all other members of Congress.

For the first time, Alaskans could vote for president and could elect their own governor. In territorial days, we could not vote in presidential elections and our governor was appointed by the president.

Alaska became the owner of huge portions of its land — although much still remained, and remains today, in the hands of Uncle Sam.

As 1958 ended, Alaska was a territory with some oil and gas on the Kenai Peninsula — but with no immediate prospect for a great economic future. As 1959 began, Alaska was a brand new state with high hopes and soaring ambitions that it would become wealthy and strong — and a few years later Prudhoe Bay came along, and Alaska was forever changed.

IN THE 4 1/2 decades since statehood, nine men have occupied the office of governor: Bill Egan, Walter Hickel, Keith Miller, Jay Hammond, Bill Sheffield, Steve Cooney, Tony Knowles and Frank Murkowski.

In the U.S. Senate, Alaska has been served by E.L. Bartlett, Ernest Gruening, Ted Stevens, Mike Gravel, Frank Murkowski and Lisa Murkowski.

Four have served in the U.S. House: Ralph Rivers, Howard Pollock, Nick Begich and Don Young.

Over that same period, Anchorage has had nine mayors: George Byer, George Shattuck, Elmer Rasmussen, George Sullivan, Tony Knowles, Tom Funk, Rick Myrstrom, George Wierch and Mark Begich.

These, and many more Alaskans in all walks of life, have worked diligently to help the state achieve its destiny. The work continues. There are forces out there made up of people who do not regard Alaska as a full-fledged state, but rather see this as some kind of a political protectorate in need of saving.

They consider Alaska to be one gigantic national park, its wildlife part of a national zoo.

They are wrong. But they fight on for their misguided cause, as Alaska — for the next 45 years and more — will have to continue the battle for its own sovereignty.

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

Just say 'no' to state income tax

By BRUCE RAMSEY
The Seattle Times

William Gates Sr., head of the Washington State Tax Structure Study Committee and father of the state's richest man, recently said, "Washington has the most regressive tax structure in the United States."

"That is appalling to me. And that is the basic reason the commission felt we needed an income tax."

That is not reason enough to swallow an income tax.

A "regressive" tax means that the less you earn, the higher percentage of income you pay. That sounds pretty bad, but it is true of virtually all taxes, including the 25 cents for this newspaper. Some of the most popular taxes — the cigarette tax, particularly — are regressive.

In addition to its morally neutral meaning, "regressive" has a highly derogatory meaning that connotes backward, reactionary, bad — the opposite of "progressive," which connotes forward-looking, advanced, modern, good.

You cannot use these words in a morally neutral way. They're rigged. It is true that Washington's taxes are regressive, technically. It is also true that federal taxes are progressive, technically, and that the combination of federal and state taxes is progressive.

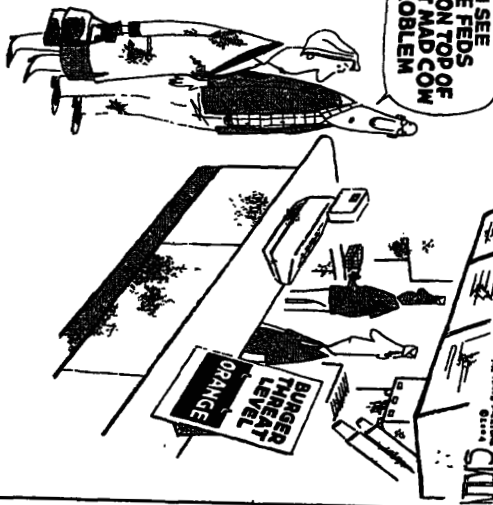
When Gates spoke Dec. 4 to the progressive Tanner Institute — "progressive" in a third, political sense of the word — I asked him whether he ought not include the federal numbers in his argument.

"Are you implying that all state tax systems should be regressive?" he said. "It's nonsense as far as I'm concerned."

I was implying that a state may want to offset the unfairly progressive federal income tax, which makes the top 50 percent of tax filers pay 96 percent of the taxes.

Several other states, including Florida, Nevada, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming, do that by relying mainly on sales taxes.

I SEE
THE FEDS
ARE ON TOP OF
THAT MAD COW
PROBLEM



It depends on what you think is fair. I think the "ability to pay" principle ought to hold at the low end, where it means what it says.

A flat percentage ought to hold among higher incomes, where "ability to pay" means a tax on success. Penalizing success is neither fair nor smart.

To me, having no state income tax is one of the delights of Washington. I think it also encourages venture capital, high tech and high wages in this far corner of America. Maybe I am wrong. Maybe we would attract more entrepreneurs here by taxing them more. But I doubt it.

A final thing about a state income tax. The political purpose, measuring the real purpose, is not to achieve some Platonic idea of fairness. It is to get the state more money.

And that is the main reason why a majority of voters oppose it. Said Seattle

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TONGASS DECISION BRINGS ...

A rare win

GREEN EXTREMISTS are gnashing their teeth over the U.S. Forest Service decision to allow logging on a relatively small part of the Tongass National Forest.

But most people in Southeast Alaska are applauding because the decision will open up 300,000 acres of the 17 million-acre forest and provide feedstock for the vestigial logging industry surviving after a long, ongoing political assault by the greens.

The Forest Service decision exempted the Tongass from the "roadless rule" issued during the Clinton administration which banned new roads in roadless areas of national forests.

The roadless ban is a key portion of the green political strategy aimed at making national forests into de facto national parks. The decision was rendered to settle the state of Alaska's suit arguing that the roadless rule violated the "no more" clause of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980.

The logging industry now provides just 650 jobs in Southeast, a shadow of the 5,000 jobs supported 10 years ago. Its demise has been a major drag on the area's economy.

The Forest Service noted in its announcement that 32 communities and their social and economic health, and that most of them lack road and utility connections. It said applying the roadless rule to the forest would cost a total of 900 jobs in the area.

THE REVIEW process leading up to the decision included 600 public meetings all across the country and including 17 in Alaska. More than 1 million public comments were received, most supporting the ban on building roads. Fortunately the Forest Service decided that the state's lawsuit had genuine merit and Alaska would prevail, so the exemption to the roadless rule was granted.

Environmental leaders are outraged, claiming that the Forest Service should not ignore the comments of so many people. But those attending most such hearings are likely to be critics, the active constituency for additional limited cutting in the Tongass is in Alaska. Those opposed — those who testified against it — are largely members of the cult-like green groups that can mobilize their followers with inordinate ease.

Those followers are fed a constant stream of marginal fiction about places such as the Tongass and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. So when testifiers are needed to support the extremist positions, they can be turned out with the touch of a computer "seal" button.

The reality of green mobilization is what terrifies so many members of Congress and gives the greens tremendous political power far out of proportion to their true numbers in the nation.

The Tongass decision is a rare and welcome victory for Alaska in its decades-long battle with environmentalist ex-

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All right, I finally get the picture

By PAUL JENKINS

There are misguided souls who seem to believe the photo that generally appears with my column is, to put it kindly, out of date, that perhaps I've aged over the years and it has not.

No matter to these misguided naves that I occasionally trip up in a column, no matter that I once even misspelled School Superintendent Carl Comas's name. No matter to them at all. Instead, they fret about my picture, with one even suggesting I swap it out because "your something" I prefer to think of it as a playful, sensitive look, but what do I know?

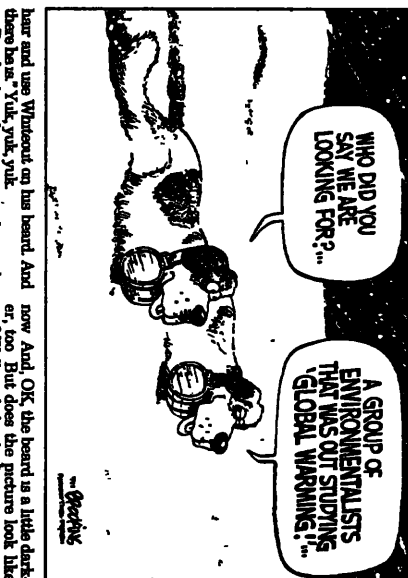
For the most part, these critics are not harmful. One bear of a guy I've never seen before in my life, or since, scrolls up to me in a store, throws his huge arm around my shoulders and, laughing, says, "Ya gotta do something about that picture. It's false advertising." Har de har.



Look, conservative!

Another guy calls on the telephone, compliments me for something one of the other guys did (I graciously accepted. What else could I do?) and then says, laughing, "You need to update your picture, ya know? It's a fraud." What? While I'm dead-brown calls me remembering a just-becoming French village, he hangs up and on and on. A "Wow, you look different than your picture," here. A "How old is that mugshot?" there. The really polite folks, ask, "Ose, when was that picture taken?" The mean ones? "Hey, is that really you?" My absolute favorite? "A person wouldn't know you were mostly bald from looking at your picture."

It's not just strangers, either. Oh, no. A bunch of us go to breakfast on Saturday and one of my motorcycle riding partners, lets me call him "Crash," announces to anybody who will listen, "If you want to know what Jenkins really looks like, take his picture in the paper, crumple most of the



here and use Whiteout on his beard. And there he is. "Yuk, yuk, yuk."

Do the baseless personal attacks bother me? Sometimes. After all, I'm a gentle person with real feelings. But I struggle along. I don't have time to worry about the stupid picture. I'm trying to work on my spelling. Besides, it kinda looks like my gentle countenance (It's a lot closer to looking like me than other columnists' mugshots are to looking like them. I may name names later.)

The latest vindictive attack comes from a Democrat lobbyist, a defender of none other than His Majesty, Alan Tuck. Mr. Lobbyist apparently was miffed with one of our editorials pointing out that his favorite assemblyman is a clown. He charges that the mugshot is my high school yearbook photo.

That is just so mean, so hurtful. Why anybody would stoop that low is beyond me, but it got me to thinking. Can all these people be wrong? The lobbyist is, that goes without saying, but what about the others? Could the picture be misleading? Out of date? Old? Could it be the photo of glories past?

I look a few moments this week to search my heart and clearly examine the 11- or 12-year-old mugshot that gets folks washed in a bunch. Oh, the hair in the picture may be darker. Granted, there may be more of it than I have

now. And, OK, the beard is a little darker, too. But does the picture look like me? Well, yeah, kinda, I guess.

Admittedly, if I robbed a bank, and the authorities had the mugshot as the only picture, I'd be home free. But in my defense, it is a dead ringer for me 11 or 12 years ago, before I put my prime

As the new year dawns, maybe I should just capitulate. It is after all, a magic time for beginnings. Perhaps a new picture, one that will show that, like fine wine, some of us only improve with age. And if it will make the winners happy, what the heck?

Now, all I have to do is find the right photographer, one with the right blend of sensitivity and experience, to present the current day me as I am — an aloof serious journalist (I don't own a suit) in an eternal search for the truth, one with feelings and fears and a doctor-certified colon, one who sometimes wears socks of different colors (There also was the incident with shoes of different colors, but that's for another time).

Oh, and having attributes to add to that, dark hair, while wiping out pesky white hair might be a good thing, too. With the right picture, I'll be just perfect.

Paul Jenkins is an editor of the Anchorage Times.

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THE NEW YEAR DAWNS . . .

Hope is high

EVERY YEAR AS the calendar turns, human nature urges each of us to be hopeful.

The old year is past history. Good riddance, in a lot of ways.

The new one is here. The slate is clean. We can write what we want — or more specifically, we can wish for good things and put them down so we can remember as the months roll forward.

Peace and health, happiness and smooth sailing for family and friends. No money worries. No hospital visits. Good grades for the children. A pet on the back from the boss — maybe accompanied by a raise. Pay off the mortgage. Keep the old car running with no major repairs. No leaks in the kitchen faucet, no loud bangs from the furnace.

Those are things we wish for.

Minor things these are, considering the ailments of the world. But they are the problems that plague us on a daily basis, and for the New Year we'd like to have nothing to do with them.

But we know better. No matter the good times, we know there will trips and stumbles, sickness and death, money worries and bills to pay.

With the celebration of the New Year, however, we put such concerns aside. We resolve to do better.

And we pray. We pray for the safety of our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and in other trouble spots around the world. We pray for safety at home, that America will be free of terrorist attacks. We pray for safety in our neighborhoods and for the safety of our loved ones as they drive on the streets of Anchorage.

WE HOPE that the leaders of our state and our city will serve us well, doing what is right and not what is expedient or the political thing to do. We hope there will be more civility in public discourse and less acrimony in the Legislature and before the Assembly.

And we look to our families and our dearest friends and pray that this New Year will be one of kindness toward each of them.

The greeting of the New Year, in other words, tends to be a very personal thing.

We wave goodbye to Father Time, we took a paper horn to welcome Baby 2004, wide-eyed and smiling. And we have a global view of what would be good for America and for the world.

But when all is said and done, we embrace our spouse, we kiss the children, we pat the dog and brush the cat, and say quietly to each other: Happy New Year.

It also is a wish we extend to you and yours on this day, as the old year dumps off the stage and the new one makes its debut.

Let it be a good one

Read quickly; things could change

By ELISE PATKOIAK

As always, I feel obligated to share with my readers my New Year's resolutions so that they may be similarly inspired to improve their lives over the course of the next year. So let's see what's on our plate for 2004.

Well, look at this. Danged if the first resolution doesn't look surprisingly like the first one from last year. Only this year I really will stick to some sort of diet that does not necessitate taking my dog on a 5-mile death march to work off the calories.

I have also resolved that this year I will not read or listen to any news that begins with the words, "Michael Jackson's attorney said . . ." If anyone should be facing criminal charges in this matter, it's any parent who actually allows Jackson unrestricted private access to their child for even a moment.



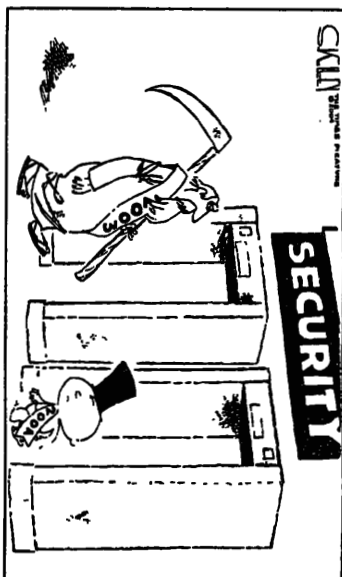
Patkoiaak

As for Jackson, my God, just look at that bizarre face and tell me any jury in the world will not find him mentally ill.

I also resolve to make a better effort at keeping my birds quiet. When on the phone with my relatives in the Lower 48, I will remember that while their loud shrieks and cries — normal sounds for parrots and cockatoos — make at certain times of the day — are the sounds of home to me, they are the sounds that might cause my relatives to finally put me in a home if I let them continue through the conversation.

And on this same note, I resolve to stop trying to convince my sister that birds are actually wonderful pets and that she should take the time to get to know and love them as I do. This just makes her nervous that I will leave them to her in the will, a thought that causes her to break out in a cold sweat.

In an attempt to run in my regent obsessive-compulsive behavior, I will make a concerted attempt to not feel obliged to have my house silver serve the daily papers when I'm gone for a month.



So that I can read them all when I return. And on the off chance I can't quite read in my compulsiveness to that level, I at least resolve to give myself more than a week to catch up on all of them.

So there are no more 4 a.m. attempts at doing the crossword puzzle on the comma page — because the answer to the clue "smoky substance used in church" is incense, not incendiary device, and no amount of forcing will allow you to fit all those letters into the space allotted. When your brain can no longer come up with the word incense, it's time to put the paper down.

I resolve to find a way to make a pot of hearty winter soup that does not end up involving my entire circle of friends drinking me because I am heading their way with another Tupperware full of soup. I don't know what I'm doing wrong, but no matter how much I try, any time I make soup, I end up with enough to feed the entire population of Bean's Cade.

Now I know that my cousin Tom would suggest that if I just followed a recipe this would not be a problem. But soup calls out for creativity, not recipes. Where's the fun in making soup if you can't runnage through your own recipes and try out some of those hidden ways, way, way in the back for which you've never been able to find a purpose. And maybe the use of leftovers in the refrigerator if you can't dump them in the pot to see

what happens. Soup is like writing a story. You kind of know where you want to end up, but getting there sometimes brings surprise changes, even to the author.

And finally, I resolve to never again let the snow build up so much on my deck that when I open the sliding door for the dog to go out, a mountain of snow falls on him and my dining room floor. For starters, this kind of negative programming makes it very hard to get the dog anywhere near the door for the rest of the year. And there is just something wrong in watching tropical parrots walking up to a pile of snow in the house and pecking around in it like they expect to find a nut hidden somewhere inside.

Most importantly, for my mental health and for yours if you follow my advice, I swear to hit the mute button every time a political commercial comes on between now and next November. It's the only way left to preserve my positive feelings for the democratic process.

So there you have it, my goals for improving the quality of my life and that of my pets over the coming year. And assuming you read this column before Jan. 3, there is every chance I will actually still be keeping them.

Elise Patkoiaak, an Anchorage-free-lance writer and author of *Smelled Logic*, a humor book, lives in Anchorage and owns Precious Cargo Ltd., a writing/graphics company.

The Anchorage Times

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BILL J. ALLEN
Editor

Editor

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

COURT HAS NOTHING ON ALICE'S ...

Rabbit hole

NOW AND AGAIN, the judiciary in this state does something so stunning, so breathtakingly odd that it leaves you wondering whether you've tumbled down the rabbit hole in "Alice in Wonderland."

The latest is a Nome judge's decision to reduce bail for a former police officer in that city. News stories indicate he will move to Anchorage, where he will be subjected to electronic monitoring in a house whose occupant would only be present in the evenings.

The 28-year-old former officer, Matthew C. Owens, is charged with murdering Sonya Ivanoff by shooting her in the back of the head in August. He pleaded innocent and was being held in lieu of \$500,000 bail.

His bail now reportedly has been slashed to \$30,000. That is a rare occurrence for an individual charged with the serious charges of first-degree murder, tampering with evidence and official misconduct.

Superior Court Judge Ben Esch said Owens has no criminal background and strong family ties to Alaska, and that there was no evidence of any threats. State troopers report they are investigating two earlier reports of stalking by Owens.

BUT THE MOST AMAZING, the most bizarre, statement from the judge was this gem: "Due to the circumstances of the case, he constitutes no further danger to the victim of this crime." No further danger to the victim? The girl is dead, executed. All of this calls to mind the old tale of the thug who murders his parents and then begs the court for mercy because he is, after all, an orphan.

One can only wonder at the mental exercise that led to the decision, but Esch's order amounts to a judicial slap in the face to the dead girl's family and friends, and, for that matter, all Alaskans. Further, it only adds to a growing perception that there is something dreadfully wrong with our legal system, that it somehow runs amok from time to time as it pursues angels on the heads of pins.

There can be no mistake, it was a ruling that tends to lend credence to those who would argue that Native, suspects and victims alike are treated differently and unfairly by Alaska's judicial system. It is hard to disagree with them in this case.

Mr. Owens' guilt or innocence eventually will be settled in court. But the severity of the charges against him surely warrant more than \$30,000 bail and house arrest with electronic surveillance in a mostly unattended home to ensure his arrival in court at the appointed time on the appointed day.

Time will tell

Hey, it's a great picture

On Christmas, Mr. Bill Allen (publisher of the Times) wrote, "It is our goal to build people up, not tear people down. It is all too easy to mock and criticize, to demean and ridicule. That's not the way for us."

Yeah, right. That lasted less than 24 hours. On Dec. 26, Paul Jenkins (I assume) wrote a cowardly attack on an elected official with whom he does not agree. Cowardly is an accurate description of someone who writes anonymous poison pen letters.

Assemblyman (Allan) Tesche can defend himself. However, I have a suggestion for Mr. Jenkins. Why don't you move to Mr. Tesche's Assembly district and run against him — if you think you can achieve more.

Of course, I can understand what a challenge that would be for Mr. Jenkins. For example, he would have to stop using the high school yearbook photo that he runs in the paper and instead use a recent photo on his campaign materials. Running would also involve a financial hardship. He would have to give up his parasitic relationship with the Anchorage Daily News.

After all, who would pay to read his venom if the Daily News didn't publish it? At least Allan Tesche puts himself out there and answers to voters. Does Mr. Jenkins answer to anyone?

William Bobrick
Anchorage

Editor's note: Alaska Public Offices Commission records show Mr. Bobrick listing his occupation currently as a government relations consultant, political lobbyist and municipal lobbyist.

Misguided attack

Your recent misguided attack on Supreme Court Justice O'Connor failed to put in context her advocacy of the use of decisions from international and foreign courts.

You called it frightening that the court would "even care what they think." O'Connor explained "When U.S. Courts are seen to be cognizant of other

Letters to The Times



judicial systems, our ability to act as a rule-of-law model for other nations will be enhanced."

Our ability to persuade others that democracy under law offers the best chance for all people to achieve a just and free society is particularly crucial at this time. Well-reasoned judicial responses to critical public issues such as accountability for war crimes and the prevention of human rights abuses should be welcome everywhere.

Your fears that reliance on international law will lead to "one-worldism" are overwrought. The U.S. Constitution, in Article 6, already makes the Constitution, laws derived therefrom and treaties the "supreme law of the land."

You embrace Justice Scalia's xenophobic condemnation of international law, including the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, as representing dangerous "foreign mores, fads or fashions."

Though not yet ratified, the convention has been signed by the U.S., ratified by 173 other nations, and has been reviewed favorably by President Bush.

What is so dangerous about the idea that women should be treated equally under the laws of each nation? Brant McCreedy
Andy Haas
Anchorage

Stupidhead

Your journalist tactics in publishing your Dec. 5 editorial, "Wolf wars about

more than wolves," surprises me for two reasons.

First, I am surprised that you would print a quote based on complete fantasy to butt up your argument in support of aerial wolf killing. "A day will come when the wolves get an Eagle River kid."

I can only assume, because the evidence against wolf predation on humans is so historically and scientifically overwhelming that you printed this quote as a scare tactic. Either that or you're a Stupidhead, but then calling you a name leads to my second point.

I am surprised that you would resort to name-calling in your article, which is laced with references to "wackos" throughout.

Are you so bereft in editorial skills (research, balanced interviewing, etc.) that you are reduced to name-calling? Anyway, I just wanted to share my reactions to your article, and because you'll probably consider me a wacko, you may not consider them. I guess that makes you a Stupidhead.

Cat Stephenson
Anchorage

Right wing nut job

It is pretty sad that in almost every editorial by Jenkins, he reverts to name-calling and insults instead of representing his opinion properly.

Why must he criticize people's names, thoughts or actions, referring to them as "nut-jobs," "wackos" and other personal attacks?

How can this sort of immature behavior bolster your argument? These attacks show me two things: your argument is weak, so you must divert attention to make sure you can draw attention to yourself, and you are only reaffirming the stereotype of a right wing nut job.

Please continue to lambaste people behind the issues, ignoring the real argument. Every day you discredit your ideas and opinions, people are reading and are turned off by your irresponsible use of print.

Dave Northrup
 Homer

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Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

Tuesday, December 30, 2003 **B-5**

MUCH GLOBAL WARMING FROM ...

Soot emissions

A FINDING BY two NASA scientists that a quarter of all global warming is caused by soot puts an interesting wrinkle into arguments over what to do about changing world temperatures.

The researchers said their studies showed that a huge and critical portion of any warming is caused by diesel engines in Europe and North America and burning of wood, coal, dung and other organic fuels in Africa and the Orient. That small change is believed to cause weather impacts such as floods, dangerous heat waves and violent storms.

If the NASA study is supported by other research, the findings could be especially important, for several reasons. One is that soot emissions could be reduced with cleaner-burning diesel engines and use of inexpensive heating and cooking stoves in developing countries.

Another is that the NASA scientists say soot is twice as powerful in causing temperature change as is carbon dioxide, the other primary emission believed to be impacting global temperatures. Much of that is attributed to exhaust from automobile tailpipes.

The new findings suggest that reducing atmospheric soot would have a more powerful effect on warming than reducing carbon dioxide emissions by the same amount.

AND EQUALLY important is the opinion of the NASA researchers that reducing the volume of soot in the atmosphere would raise the threshold at which temperature increases can affect weather. In other words, wild weather wouldn't be generated until the temperature rose higher than if carbon dioxide were the only cause.

Not all scientists agree that human activities are a major contributor to warming, their contention — backed by research — is that human-caused emissions have been an exacerbating factor in a natural warming trend, not the main cause.

The EPA and the National Academy of Sciences both seem to accept the theory that human activity is the primary cause of the worldwide 1-degree temperature increases, but both organizations often endorse the passionately held scientific belief du jour.

The green extremists, of course, would like to force all people — especially Americans — into small automobiles driven by small engines. So far, their demands have been little heeded, in fact, more drivers are opting for larger vehicles like SUVs, minivans and pickup trucks.

But a more promising way to reduce tailpipe emissions from gasoline-driven automobiles would seem to be continuing work on advanced technology rather than a revolutionary and oppressive downsizing of vehicles.

The NASA scientists' finding was a surprise to the scientific community. That demonstrates how little we really know about global warming and its causes.

Gaddafi change is no coincidence

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

Yeah, sure. After 18 years of American sanctions, Moammar Gaddafi randomly picks Dec. 19, 2003, as the day for his surrender.

By amazing coincidence, Gaddafi's first message to Britain — principal U.S. war ally and conduit to White House war councils — occurs just days before the invasion of Iraq. And his final capitulation to U.S.-British terms occurs just five days after Saddam Hussein is flung out of a rubble.

As Jay Leno would say, what are the odds? The nine months of negotiations with Libya perfectly frame the war on Iraq and the fall of Saddam Hussein. How is it possible to ignore the most blindingly obvious collateral benefit?

Imagine this kind of thinking 58 years ago: Japan surrenders — Years of War Dependent Power Too Much.

Dashline Feb. 14, 1945: Japan capitulated yesterday to the allies, won down by the accumulation of hardships from the war begun with the sudden outbreak of violence in Hawaii in December 1941. The housing shortage in Tokyo had become particularly acute, especially since the nights of March 9 and 10. And there also has appeared to be an abrupt downturn in recent economic activity in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Sen. John Kerry was equally ridiculous in his explanation of the Libya deal. "An administration that scores multilateralism and boasts about a rigid doctrine of military preemption has advanced in spite of itself demonstrated the enormous potential for improving our national security through diplomacy."

Unlike Howard Dean, Kerry is not a foreign policy ignoramus. Does he really believe that the Libyan surrender is a triumph of multilateralism? Does he really think that Libya's capitulation — occurring precisely with a preemptive war that destroyed Saddam Hussein — is a contradiction of the "rigid doctrine of military preemption?"

What kind of nut thinks that this is a triumph for "diplomacy," as if, say, Bill Clinton had sent Warren Christopher to Tripoli, and he'd instantly capitulated, rendering his WMD?

The Democrats seem congenitally incapable of understanding that force has not just the effect of deterring the unstable enemy but a deterrent effect on others similarly situated. Iraq was not attacked randomly. It was attacked as part of a clearly enunciated policy — now known as the Bush Doctrine — of targeting, by preemptive war, if necessary, hostile regimes engaged in terror and/or refusing to come clean on WMDs.

capable of understanding that force has not just the effect of deterring the unstable enemy but a deterrent effect on others similarly situated. Iraq was not attacked randomly. It was attacked as part of a clearly enunciated policy — now known as the Bush Doctrine — of targeting, by preemptive war, if necessary, hostile regimes engaged in terror and/or refusing to come clean on WMDs.

Mullah Omar did not get the message and is now hiding in a cave somewhere. Saddam Hussein did not get the message and ended up in a hole. Gaddafi got the message.

Diplomacy is fine. But we are dealing not with Canada but with gangster regimes. In regime states, the only diplomacy that ever works is diplomacy at the point of a bayonet. Why, even the hapless Hans Blix went out on a limb to speculate that "I would imagine that Gaddafi could have been scared by what he saw in Iraq."

Ashton Carter, co-director of the Harvard-Stanford Preventive Defense Project, agreed that "what we did in Iraq put countries like Libya on notice that we're really serious about countering proliferation." To be sure, Carter put aside this obvious truth with the Blix phrase "we certainly hopes that. But that is to be expected from an adviser to Howard Dean."

The Anchorage Times

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Do the Democrats really not see the larger picture, or do they pretend not to because it is an election year? The demonstrated effects of the Iraq campaign are shrewdly in clear view. It is no accident that Iran has agreed to surprise nuclear inspections. Mind you, I do not hold much hope for this, it will take far more to disarm the mullahs, possibly U.S. airstrikes during a second Bush administration. But for now, Bush's willfulness and determination in Iraq have persuaded Iran to grab a European plan for inspections rather than face the wrath of the United States.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, Hezbollah has been quiet since the war in Syria has made its first peace overture in years. Libya has now confessed and capitulated on WMDs.

And that's not counting Iraq, which with Saddam Hussein captured has finally turned a historic corner and may be on its way to establishing the first pluralistic, representative pro-Western Arab polity in the region.

These are not triumphs of diplomacy. These are the aftermaths of war.

Charles Krauthammer writes a weekly, nationally syndicated column for the Washington Post. His column is also carried by the Washington Post Writers Group. © Copyright 2003 The Washington Post Co.

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WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

Stays put

Too many Alaska politicians have yet to learn. Construction of the new training facility, near the existing Boeing assembly plant in Everett, is expected to begin in 2005.

By WALTER E. WILLIAMS

The Anchor



not an idea that had its origins in the South Infatuated by Thomas Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase, in 1903, the first

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BILL J. ALLEN
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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Sunday, December 28, 2003 13

BOYCOTT NEW JERSEY ...

Save the bears

WITH GREAT anticipation we await word that the animal rights flapdoodles are threatening to boycott New Jersey because of its plans to permit hunters to go after black bears.

Shopping tourists from visiting the Garden State actually shouldn't be too difficult, considering you hardly ever hear of anybody taking a vacation in Newark. The casinos at Atlantic City might be a target, but the suspicion is that the folks gathered around Donald Trump's slot machines don't give a whoop about bears.

Nonetheless, you'd expect the effort to be made — in view of the fact that these animal nutcases are threatening to warn tourists to stay away from Alaska where, goodness gracious, sound game management calls for predator control to reduce the population of wolves now preying on moose.

These rabid mouth-a-deers know nothing of game management, and nothing of Alaska, for that matter. A few wolves in their neighborhoods back East apparently would be welcome.

NO MATTER, Alaska is an easy target for anybody with a cause and a need to get a lot of TV and newspaper attention. It's good for raising money, too, from glibble but good-hearted people who will donate to almost any cause that promises to save something, anything, from rapacious and uncaring loners in the wilderness.

New Jersey, however, may be a different story. It's right across the river from Manhattan. Millions of people live in the environs and tens of thousands commute back and forth every day from New York and New Jersey.

These are city folks, and the prospect of having a black bear or two prowling their village boutiques and threatening soccer moms is not a good thing.

A boycott of New Jersey? Well, probably not.

Black bears are dangerous. Wolves, however, live in family groups and are playful. They make for wonderful adventure films on Saturday morning TV, when the kiddies are home and mom is getting ready to entertain friends at dinner that evening.

As these protesters gather around the table, some will no doubt say they are canceling plans to visit Alaska next season. It will serve Alaska right — so there, too.

Well, we wish New Jersey well in its first black bear hunt in 38 years.

And if, in spite, we decide to cancel a family vacation trip to Thailand next summer, that's just part of the price New Jersey will have to pay for its brutal bear hunt.

These are city folks, and the prospect of having a black bear or two prowling their village boutiques and threatening soccer moms is not a good thing.

No snow in the land of sunshine

By WILLIAM J. TOBIN

PHOENIX, Ariz. — It should be no surprise that in this land of sunshine and cactus New Year's revelers need not go plying with their boots on. Snow is not what Phoenix is all about, as any number of Alaskans have known for years. This — along with Tucson, Palm Desert, other points of Southern California and Hawaii — is where a lot of folks from the North have taken up winter living.

FOR OTHERS, who just drop in for a visit every 12 years or so, Phoenix is an astonishing place. Big it was on that first visit long ago, and huge now. It has become one of the nation's largest cities, with a population of 3 million when you count those who slumber in such attached suburbs as Scottsdale, Tempe, Mesa, Paradise Valley and other gated communities hither and yon. But this city is easy to navigate. Most streets are laid out in straight lines with seldom a twist or a turn. Traffic is a tad heavy, but less so than in other major metropolitan areas. And the sheer magnitude of the place ensures there are no frictions aplenty for anyone on a week's journey near year-end.

IN MID-NOVEMBER, as visiting Alaskans basked in 70-degree temperatures, the locals were apologizing for it. Being cold. No doubt, it seemed that way for those who were here in the summer, when the mercury climbed into the 107-degree range and stayed there for days on end.

The owner of a gift store in the upscale, 225-shop Scottsdale Fashion Square said she had moved here last winter from Seattle and confessed that when confronted with the fall blast of Phoenix's summer heat "I thought my eyeballs would fall out."

THE WINTER months are blissfully different, although the locals seemed to have a hard time adapting. Take, for example, an evening at one of the area's finer hotels, the beautiful Hyatt Regency Scottsdale at Gantry Ranch. While



"I didn't love you, I wouldn't eat your cooking, would I?"

happy guests enjoyed a martini at a garden table as the sky began to darken in the desert night, attendants came around lighting tall butane heaters to keep the chill away. Good grief. The heaters quickly look on a brilliant red glow and raised the temperature to what is required to cook a steak to the roek. Turn off the heat, please. Reheat the cool of the evening in Phoenix.

THIS PARTICULAR Hyatt hotel is an oasis of luxury, with 27 holes of championship golf and 10 separate swimming pools — including one with a sand beach — spread over a 2 1/2-acre water playground. It has towering trees, an astonishing variety of flowering cactus, walking paths and even a gondola for those who seek a romantic trip after dinner in the hotel's Italian restaurant. Even the standard rooms have balconies, a perfect place to sip a morning cup of coffee.

SCOTTSDALE BOASTS dozens of posh dining places, one of which is Un-Bacon, just a couple of blocks along Doubletree Ranch Road from the Hyatt Regency. For some mysterious reason, you won't find this marvelous restaurant listed in one of the town's most popular guide books, "Best Places Phoenix," which reports on attractions in the entire area. Even though it overlooked Un-Bacon, you should not if you're ever down this way. It's lively and romantic,

and features incredibly delicious Northern Italian dishes — as well as some great wines at reasonable prices.

THE ARRAY OF luxury hotels hereabouts is deep enough to satisfy anybody's desire for fancy accommodations. In Phoenix proper are two of the most noteworthy — the Phoenician and the Arizona Biltmore. The former is a stately place with something of a spooky air. The latter, part of architect Frank Lloyd Wright's legacy, is a sprawling resort that feels like it's caught somewhere in time — decades old, working hard to stay fresh. And after more than half a century, it's still a top attraction. A few weeks ago, the general managers of all the major league baseball teams were huddled here in mid-winter meetings.

BUT FOR CITY hotels pass up those two and stay in the Ritz-Carlton Phoenix, a haven of luxury. Having the Biltmore Fashion Mall just across busy Camelback Road. Shoppers at the Ritz, from the doorman to the front desk, greet every guest by name — and it's always "Mr." and "Mrs." as the case may be. And good restaurants abound, with an easy walking distance. The Capital Grille in the Fashion Mall is an outstanding steak house, with one of the best hot squash salads you'll find anywhere — and with a Pazzo pasta that will knock your socks off. On the same side of Camelback, just steps away from the Ritz along what is called the Esplanade, are Morton's of Chicago, Hooters, and McCormick & Schmick's. Take your pick. All great.

IF YOU COME this way in the New Year just ahead, count on one thing: Phoenix, already abounding in art galleries, museums and big-time sports attractions that include the major league baseball Diamondbacks, the Cardinals of the National Football League, the Arizona Stars of the National Basketball Association, and the Coyotes of the National Hockey League, will be bigger than it is now. It just keeps growing, with more and more things to do and see — in the heart of summer, or in the refreshing days and nights of winter.

William J. Tobin is an editor of The Anchorage Times.



Tobin

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

AMAZING ADVENTURES IN . . .

Snow driving

DECEMBER'S MASSIVE snowfall proves once again that Anchorage drivers are mathematically challenged. When the snow obliterates the lane markers, drivers must either remember how many lanes the roadway normally is divided into or judge for themselves based on the width of the road available.

Such judgments are complicated, of course, by the fact that the painted lane markers are all white and hidden under white snow, and the unpaved roadways generally are narrowed.

Sometimes, the average driver here seems to look at a street that normally consists of three lanes, divide the available space in his mind and come up with either two lanes or four. And inevitably, those who calculate at four lanes are in a hurry, speeding and swerving around two-lanes with total abandon.

Recently a line of drivers in what normally is a left-turn lane on Benson Boulevard startled drivers in the adjacent lanes by taking off straight ahead and cutting wildly into traffic.

Such adventures are part of winter motoring here every year, but some of the confusion seems unnecessary. For instance, the logic of painting lane markers while in snow country escapes us. It is apparently mandated by the bureaucrats who mandate such things.

That may make sense in Washington, D.C., where a rare snowstorm is cause for panic, but in Alaska it is one more reason for motorists to shake their heads in wonderment. Without lane markers to guide them, most drivers just follow the tracks of those who have gone before. That means the first ones out after a big snowfall are truly trailblazers. To those who make decisions like mandating white lane markers under white snow, we say there must be a better way.

Afghan highway

AN INTERNATIONAL construction firm based in New Jersey has opened a vital, 300-mile highway link between Kabul and Kandahar in Afghanistan.

Though largely unheralded by the world's news media last week, the newly refurbished highway cuts driving time between the two cities from about 36 hours to six.

The highway is much more than a road link, it was built with \$180 million in U.S. funding and represents delivery on a reconstruction promise by President George W. Bush to Afghan President Hamid Karzai last year.

Much more must be done in rebuilding devastated Afghanistan, but the Kabul-Kandahar road is an important step and the first highly visible sign of the overall effort. The improved road provides Afghans easier access to health care and markets, and links the two major ethnic areas of north and south. Much remains to be done, but the highway is a good start.

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Saturday, December 27, 2003 B-7

Property owners entitled to tax data

By MARK WEBER

One of the reasons given for a property tax assessment appeal fee is the high cost of processing such protests. According to a recent news article, the Anchorage assessor's office said the cost was from \$600 to \$1,000 per appeal.

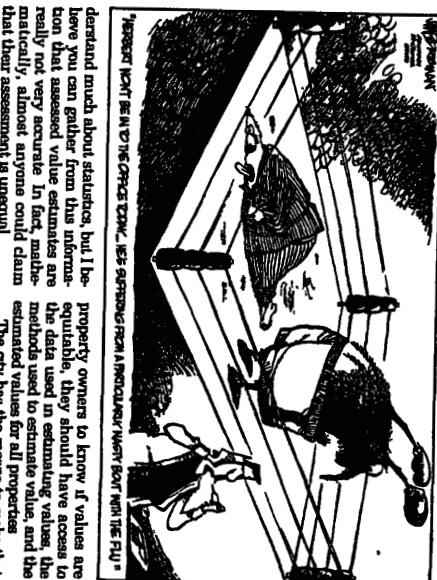
Why, I ask, are we spending this much money to process all these appeals when most never go to a hearing, and out of those that do, only a few appeals actually show up? The law is pretty plain that the burden of proof is on the appellant.

If the appellant produces no evidence in a timely manner that their value is "unequal, excessive, or improper," the appeal should be dismissed. If an appeal fails to show up for a hearing, the appeal should be denied. It did not require special legislation or a filing fee to accomplish that. The biggest reason appeals processing costs are so high is that the assessor has gone overboard in defending individual values before the Board of Equalization. Why is the assessor putting so much money and effort into defending individual values?

Mass appraisal for ad valorem taxation does not result in accurate and precise individual property values. Assessment performance is measured statistically by comparing assessed values to known sale prices. The assessed value divided by the sale price is called the assessment ratio, or "AV" ratio.

The typical method, used by the city, is to take all of the known valid sales over the last three years, adjust them for inflation over time, and then calculate the AV ratio for each sale using the current, assessed value. Usually this amounts to about 9,000 single ratios. Most of these are the average single-family home or condominium.

At this point, the median AV ratio is calculated, along with an average deviation from the median. About the best that any jurisdiction can do is a median ratio of 90 percent to 95 percent with an average deviation from the median of 7 percent to 10 percent. This is about as good as it gets, folks. An assessor of this can spend a whole lot more time and money without improving these statistics very much. You may not understand much about statistics, but I believe you can gather from this information that assessed value estimates are really not very accurate. In fact, mathematically, almost anyone could claim that their assessment is unequal.



"BETTER NOT BE IN THE OFFICE ROOM. LETS GET SOME FROM ANCHORAGE NEWS BOAT WITH THE TV."

While the assessor is directed by law to estimate the "full and true value" of the property, appellants only have to prove that their value is "unequal, excessive, or improper." What should be scrutinized by the equalization board is how the assessor estimated value for all properties and whether the appeal in question is "unequal, excessive, or improper" relative to all other assessed values. What the board and the appellant need to know is how the assessor calculated the value of their property, the method of estimating that value, and how the value of the property compares to that of all properties.

What's at issue here isn't so much that the assessor got the value right as it is that the methods and results used in valuing all properties are consistent. This is referred to as "equity in taxation." Equity in this case has horizontal and vertical components. That means that if one \$200,000 house is valued at 90 percent then all \$200,000 houses should also be at 90 percent, and the \$2 million commercial property should be at 90 percent as well.

In order for the individual and the equalization board and the taxpayer to have a fair hearing, the assessor must provide the data used to estimate values, the methods used to estimate values, and the estimated values for all properties.

The city has the means to make that information available, without subjecting property owners to the daunting task of having to search through each property record case by case. Why the assessor of fact does not allow free access to all assessment data and records is a good question.

If the city is going to change for filing an appeal, then it ought to open up that black box that values are coming out of, allow anyone and everyone to have a look inside and be prepared to come up with a satisfactory explanation for what it did and how it did it.

This is the basis for how much each property owner will have to pay to support government services. Each property owner is entitled to know how that number was arrived at and to have access to the methods used and values estimated on all other properties in order to fairly determine if their value is "unequal, excessive, or improper" with or without an appeal filing fee. If the city assessor is doing his job right, it shouldn't be costing \$600 to \$1,000 per appeal to come up with that information.

Mark W. Weber, an appraisal specialist, was until recently a deputy assessor for the Municipality of Anchorage.

The Anchorage Times

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

THAT ALLAN TESCHE ...

What a clown

ALLAN TESCHE is a madcap, a comedian's comedian, that rare humorist who could go far in a world desperate for laughs.

You know who this cutup is, of course. He is an assemblyman who has distinguished himself and our city on more than a few occasions. But it is his ability to speak a laugh that is his finest trait, one that far outshines his abilities in city government.

Some time back, for instance, we suggested the city charter should be changed to reflect political reality by requiring Assembly candidates to declare their political affiliations, or show their true colors.

In our opinion, truly nonpartisan elections in this city are nonexistent. The idea of such elections harkens back to when Anchorage was smaller and people knew each other. Today, pretending that our elections are nonpartisan is a convenient fiction for those who would rather hide their politics.

Not surprisingly, that was just for Tesche's comedy mill. The merry prankster reportedly started working on a ballot proposal to change the city charter to require Assembly candidates to gather in the Valley of the Moon Park, drop their pants and display their "true colors."

It seemed crude to us at first, but then we wondered: Why not? It certainly would allow Assembly incumbents running for re-election to put their best faces forward, or, backward. But, alas, Assembly Chairman Dick Traun, a lollipop, put the kibosh on the proposal.

MIND YOU, it is no surprise that Tesche, and most especially Tesche, would rather show voters his colors, than his politics. And with good reason.

After all, he was a ringleader in trying to destroy the Simonian Little League. In a move that surely will leave them shivering through history, he actually donned a Simonian baseball cap during an Assembly meeting and gave a pep talk to the politically shell-shocked league he and his green pals were trying to bury. The community laughed and laughed and laughed.

He also sought a tax break for his chimneys so they would construct an office building downtown. He didn't get it. They built the structure anyway. He wanted to prohibit the purchase of beer by the bottle or can from convenience stores to thwart drunken drivers. Instead, he wanted them to buy several. At one point, he wanted police to hand out warnings to street drunks rather than just enforcing the law.

And, of course, Tesche was out front in the attempt to stick taxpayers with a hydrant tax to save the jobs of 22 firefighters. We all know how that little joke turned out. He's a mischievous rogue, all right, but we think his character ideas has merit. Traun should relent.

After all, it would give the public its best picture yet of Tesche and too many others on this Assembly.

Give the gift of painless memories

By ELISE PATKOTAK

As best we can, those of us who work with troubled and abused kids try to get them as close to home as possible for the holiday season. It just seems wrong to leave a kid in detention over Christmas if it can be avoided.

Often, we can't actually let the kid go home for a variety of reasons — some related to the child and some related to the conditions in the parental home. But we try to find someplace close by where they can feel it's at least a little bit like Christmas.

Working with village kids makes this even more critical because Christmas in the Bush isn't like Christmas in urban or suburban areas. On the North Slope, most of Christmas Day is spent at church at a church feast.

Everyone brings some of the bounty of the year's subsistence hunt and you feast on duck soup and whale, mukluk and caribou. And just to be sure no one is hungry at the end of the day, there is usually a turkey roasting in the oven at home while the feast is going on.

No group home or foster home that isn't actually located in a village can simulate that atmosphere of fellowship and camaraderie. Just like for most of us, Christmas will forever be defined by the foods and activities our parents created for us. These village feasts define Christmas for these of the kids I work with.



Patkotak

In my childhood, Christmas meant getting to wear the new dress, coat, shoes, gloves and hat that had been alluring in my closet tantalizing me for the better part of a month. Christmas Pully to spend the day with all my relatives.

It meant going over the Tacoma-Palmira bridge and getting a candy cane from the man in the booth as he waved us through for free. It meant begging for Christmas cookies, figs and



"Fired already? You were only there five weeks."

gung moon for permission to eat the candy cane before we hit Aunt Ida's and had to have dinner.

After we got to Pully, we made the rounds of aunts and uncles who would not be joining us at the table because they would be with other family. This was the time for all cousins to inspect each other's hair and see who won. It was also the time to stuff down as many Christmas cookies as we possibly could before mom caught us and gave us a lecture about running our appetites for the dinner Aunt Ida had been slaving over for two days.

Once at Aunt Ida's, the big debate began about who was going to pick up Uncle Henry from the house and who was going to go get Aunt Adelaide, who, as usual, was saying she didn't feel like going out and just wanted to spend Christmas alone and quiet. Like she had a chance in hell of her family letting that happen.

Once we all gathered, the food came out. And it came out. And it came out. Course after course after course. Appetites followed by Christmas soup followed by pasta followed by a roast followed by dessert, followed by hot chocolate, Christmas cookies, figs and

gung moon for permission to eat the candy cane before we hit Aunt Ida's and had to have dinner.

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signature coffee that could keep your eyeballs at full salute for 72 hours.

Not that we kids ever got that far. Between the excitement of getting up early to open presents, the visiting with all the Pully cousins, the snatched cookies and candy canes and the smell of my Uncle Paul's homemade wine, anyone under 12 was usually snoring at the table by the time the subpar hit. We would be carried to the living room, deposited on couches and chairs and then the adults would return to a peaceful, quiet dinner.

Like the turkey my Inupiat friends have roasting in their ovens for when they return from the church feast, we had sandwiches packed to travel when we headed back out for Atlantic City so we wouldn't starve during the 90-minute journey. You got these sandwiches whether you had finished dinner three hours or three minutes before your departure.

That was Christmas for me and I can't imagine how I would have survived it being any other way. So I can't imagine how the kids who can't go home manage to keep a smile on their faces through Christmas day when nothing as it should be, nothing really means Christmas and home to them because they aren't home.

If I had one wish for each Christmas, it would be this: That all the kids in this state who are in group homes, foster homes and detention facilities could, for one magical day, be home with their families and communities enjoying the Christmas they remember.

And for those children whose parents have given them no good memories beyond drunken parties and holiday violence, I wish that they find a way to make peace in their lives with the pain they've been dealt so that someday they can give their own children wonderful Christmas memories.

Elise Patkotak, an Anchorage free-lance writer and author of *Parallel Logic*, a horror novel, lives in Anchorage and owns Precious Cargo Ltd, a writing/graphics company.

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WISHES TO ONE AND ALL FOR A...

Merry Christmas

YULETIDE GREETINGS never grow old, never seem dated. We have all grown up enriched year after year with the traditions of this great feastsday. We relish the snow, the jungle of bells, the colorful lights ablaze on trees and on house-tops. And amid the trappings and the glitter of the season, the rush to complete our Christmas shopping, the excitement of children eagerly awaiting the arrival of Santa Claus, the spirit of this day embraces us.

Despite criticism that Christmas has become too commercialized to have any real meaning (an allegation that has been around for years and years and years), most people know otherwise.

The truth, we're happy to note, comes through in the many ways that Christmas is celebrated in our homes and in our community.

Through all of those celebrations, the central focus remains this: a day to rejoice, knowing that Jesus Christ was born into the world two thousand years ago, a babe in a manger in Bethlehem.

The Gospel writers tell the story, and the familiar words bring unceasing comfort and joy. The carols we all know so well and the popular songs of Christmas are deeply embedded in our celebrations. No matter how many years we have heard the music and sung the words, they are not old. Every year, they are new.

In a world filled with trouble, and in lands of peril and evil, there still comes with each Christmas a sense of spiritual peace — and an urge to continue to work and pray for international peace among the nations and the people of the world.

FOR MOST OF US, this is a day to be with family and friends — a day to gather around a gaily decorated tree and to relax before a crackling fire, exchanging gifts with family and friends. It is a day for candle-lit church services, a day to share a traditional meal of turkey or ham or roast beef. For many, thank goodness, it is a day to reach out to others — to share some of the bountiful benefits of a good life with those less fortunate. Christmas, indeed, is a time for giving.

Happy days of childhood, and the joys of Christmases past, are evoked on this day, along with the knowledge that youngsters of this generation are just now beginning to build the memories they will have on Christmases yet to come.

We hope that this Christmas will be a rich one in your life, a day filled with love for those dear to you — those close at hand, and those far away.

We pray for the safety of those men and women in uniform who serve our nation in harshest way on this day. And we fall back on the oldest greeting of them all as we pause to extend warm wishes to each of you.

Simply and sincerely, we wish you a Merry Christmas.

And blessings for the year ahead

By BILL J. ALLEN

This is the 12th time that I have been privileged to extend warm greetings to readers and supporters of The Voice of the Times. You are special people in my life and in the lives of the staff of this unique journalistic venture.

Those who have been regular readers since this half-page section began on June 4, 1992, know the background of how we came to be and the mission we seek to fulfill. For those who were not here at the beginning, or remain somewhat confused about who we are and what we believe in, let me simply say we are a continuation of the editorial voice of the old Anchorage Times.

When the Times ceased publication 12 1/2 years ago, it was the desire of all those involved in the sale and purchase of The Times to keep alive in Anchorage and Alaska an editorial view that differs from that found in the Anchorage Daily News.

That has been, and is, the result, and in pursuit of this goal the publisher and corporate owners of the Daily News have been fully supportive. It has been, I believe, an extremely valuable addition to the media scene in the 49th State.

In the process, we have continued to speak out on those issues we find important to Alaska and its future.

We strive for balance and fairness, but our agenda is not hidden. We believe in the necessity of economic development that will provide Alaskans with jobs and a fruitful way of life. We support environmental conservation, but being extreme. We stand firm in our pride in Alaska and in America, and give our full support to military in Alaska — and to the individual men and women who serve here in uniform in all branches of the armed forces.

Call us traditional, if you will. I am backed by a staff of newspaper veterans.



Allen



who believe with me in old fashioned values — the strength of family life, a commitment to God and country, and an unshakable conviction that great things can be achieved by those who believe in hard work, loyalty, dedication, and service.

It is our goal to build people up, not tear people down. It is all too easy to mock and criticize, to demean and ridicule. That's not the way for us.

I have spent many years of my life in work that supports the oil industry, so it should be no surprise that I am convinced by decades of experience that exploration and development of our natural resources can be done with all due respect for the beauty and richness of Alaska's environment.

But that is a view that was long held by the Anchorage Times, in the years in which it played a leading role in the fight for statehood and the battle to build an economy in this state that would provide employment opportunities for all.

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Yes, Virginia

The following editorial appeared in the New York Sun on Sept. 21, 1897. It endures as a Christmas classic.

WE TAKE PLEASURE in answering at once and thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of the Sun.

Dear Editor
I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?"

Virginia O'Hanlon

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith, then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus? You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world, which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, may ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.



On This Holy Eve, As We Await The Dawn Of Christmas Day, The Opportunity Comes Once Again To Extend Warm Wishes To Those Who Have Been Faithful Readers Over Many Years. This Custom Began 40 Years Ago And This Little Tree Has Been A Part Of Most Of Those Christmas Seasons Now Past. Really Being What It Is, It's Likely This Will Be The Last Tree We Will Decorate In This Corner Of The Times That's Not A Sad Thing, To Be Sure. But It's A Reminder There Are Special Reasons To Rejoice Once Again In The Beauty And Majesty Of Alaska And At The Same Time To Raise A Yuletide Toast To Friends Made Over The Years, In Places Far And Wide.

To All It's A Time And To All It's A Time To Say Thanks To Mayors And Governors, To Senators And Congressmen, To Doctors And Priests, To Firemen and Policemen, To Sergeants And Generals. To Those Who Pick Up The Trash And To Those Who Plow The Snow From Our Streets. We Offer Warm Thanks To A Host Of Newspaper Colleagues Of Years Gone By And Double The Wishes For Those Who Make The Voice Of The Times What It Is Today.

In A Very Personal Way, Extraordinary Thanks Go To Marge And Mike And Dave And Val And Beth And Erika And Colin And Grace For Them And For All As Has Been Done Annually Here At Christmas Time. We Offer Once More The Special Prayer Of St. Francis Of Assisi:

Lord Make Me An Instrument Of Your Peace Where There Is Hatred, Let Me Sow Love, Where There Is Injury, Pardon, Where There Is Doubt, Faith, Where There Is Despair, Hope, Where There Is Darkness, Light, And Where There Is Sadness, Joy. Oh Divine Master, Grant That I May Not So Much Seek To Be Consoled As To Console, To Be Understood As To Understand, To Be Loved As To Love, For It Is In Giving That We Receive, It Is In Pardoning That We Are Pardoned, And It Is In Dying That We Are Born To Eternal Life.

—William J. Tobin

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

LOS ANGELES TIMES ARTICLE WAS AN ...

Unfair attack

SEN. TED STEVENS was unfairly attacked last week by the Los Angeles Times

The newspaper spent six months reviewing Stevens' voting record and Alaska business interests. It concluded that some of his votes benefited businesses in which he had an interest. While that might sound scandalous to readers in a state of 3.3 million like California, it is just a fact of life in a state with only 620,000 people. Alaska is a small place and anything that boosts its overall economy helps most businesses.

The most ludicrous example of mud-slinging was trying to gather Stevens' support of Alaska Native regional corporations and the fact that the Arctic Slope Regional Corp. occupies an office building in which Stevens has an interest.

The implication was that Alaska's senior senator carried favor with ASRC by supporting Native corporations in their efforts to win federal contracts and that ASRC leased the building as a quid pro quo.

But the Native corporations are essentially the home team in Alaska's business community. They have provided jobs for thousands, helped many villages rise from poverty and become foundation stones in the state's economy.

Stevens' advancing their cause would be comparable to Sen. Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts advancing the cause of the Boston Red Sox, if he could. Whether the Los Angeles Times likes it or not, there is no shame in Stevens' actions.

THE NEWSPAPER also claimed that Stevens used his political horsepower to force the Air Force to accept a proposal by Anchorage developer John Rubini, his business partner. But Stevens says the Air Force was dragging its feet on the bid because an official didn't think National Bank of Alaska provided sufficient financial backing for the project.

"When I heard about that, I went ballistic, as you know. I can do once in a while," Stevens said. He said he would have stood up for any business that he thought was treated unfairly by the Air Force.

Stevens rightly argues that it would be difficult for him to invest in any Alaska business that did not benefit somehow from his legislation. He has lived in Alaska for 50 years and served in the U.S. Senate for 35 years. His work there has had a powerful effect on Alaska and its economy.

That has also brought him criticism, including from the Los Angeles Times, which makes much of the fact that federal spending in Alaska is something like 70 percent above the national average. But that is because Alaska has such a small population and because — as Stevens has often said — the need is so great.

Despite large federal expenditures in Alaska, the state's transportation infrastructure is still primitive, its schools are under-funded and many of its rural people live in poverty. Ted Stevens is scrupulously honest and the attacks on him are undeserved.

Hussein oral exam a brilliant stroke

by CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

The race is over. The Oscar for Best Documentary, Short Subject, goes to Saddam's Dental Exam. Screenplay: 1st Brigade, U.S. 4th Infantry Division. Producer: P. Bremer Enterprises, Baghdad.

Director: The anonymous genius at U.S. headquarters who chose this clip as the world's first view of Saddam Hussein in captivity.

In the old days, the conquered tyrant was dragged through the streets behind the Roman general's chariot. Or paraded shackled before a jeering crowd. Or, when more finally was required, had his head placed on a spike on the lower wall.

Irq has its own ways. In the revolution of 1958, Prime Minister Nuri Said was caught by a crowd and murdered, and his body was dragged behind a car through the streets of Baghdad until they were nothing but a big leg.

We Americans don't do it that way. Instead, we show Saddam Hussein — King of Kings, Lion of the Tigris, Sultan of the Arabs — complacently opening his mouth like a child to the universal indignity of an oral (and heard) exam.

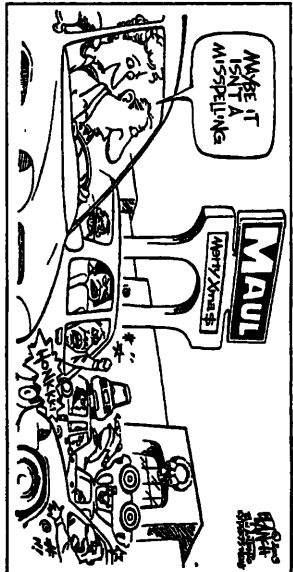
Nothing could have been better calculated to demystify the all-powerful tyrant. It was a beautiful sight. But it was more than that. It was a deeply important historical moment. More than the fate of a man is at stake here. At stake is the fate of an idea, an idea of ungovernable Iraq that has cost the Arabs not just countless innocent lives but a half-century of progress.

Hussein was the most aggressive and enduring exemplar of a particular kind of deformed Arabism, a kind that arose in the post-colonial era, appealed to the greater glory of the Arab nation and promised a great restoration. Ironically, its methods and ideology were imported from the West, the worst of the West.

The Baath Party was modeled on the fascist parties in early 20th century Europe. Its economies were Western socialism at its most stifling and corrupt. Hussein then created the perfect fusion of the two, producing a totalitarianism of surpassing cruelty modeled consciously on Stalin.

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Hussein's destiny is important because he was the last and the greatest of these pan-Arab pretenders, though he gave it a psychically endless character, unmitigated anywhere in the Arab world. This stream of Arab nationalism brought nothing but poverty, corruption, despair, torture and ruin to large swaths of the Arab world. The mass graves of Iraq are its permanent monument.

This is why it was important not just to capture Hussein but to demystify him — and with him, the half-century spell that radical pan-Arabism had cast over the entire Middle East. It was important that the god-kung of pan-Arabism be shown as the pathetic coward he was. It was important to finally shatter what Fouad Ajami called "the dream of the Arabs." And to banish the grotesque fantasy, perpetuated by Hussein and his acolytes in the Arab intelligentsia, that Arab greatness — once built on a magnificent civilization of science, culture and tolerance — is to be rebuilt upon blood, power and cruelty.

It seemed as if that fantasy had been dealt a fatal blow when Baghdad fell so suddenly on April 9. Instead of the promised battle of Baghdad, confronting and perhaps even stopping the Americans in heroic street-by-street combat, there was nothing but ignominious collapse. The Arab media, particularly the al-Jazeera that had long lionized Hussein and promoted Baghdad Bob's unshakable claims of Iraqi war victories, were shocked and humiliated. They then set out to staid that this was the greatest political blow to Arab na-

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Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

A GREAT CHOICE . . .

For the House

WHEN THE new Legislature convenes in January there will be a freshman in the House with a name familiar to those who treasure Alaska's historic past.

Thing the oath as a new representative will be Nick Steporovich, the 45-year-old owner of Steeply Smith's Pioneer Restaurant in Fairbanks. He's more than just a small-business owner, however. His qualifications for office are deeply rooted.

Steporovich is a long-time Republican leader in Fairbanks, where his family's name is a household word. He's the son of Mike Steporovich, who was a dynamic member of the territorial House in 1961 and the territorial Senate in 1963, 1965 and 1967 — the last four territorial sessions before statehood.

Appointed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to the post of governor, he was the last person to hold that title before statehood. In his role as territorial governor, he was a powerful leader in the fight for statehood — both in Alaska and on the national scene.

The elder Steporovich, a retired lawyer, was a Republican nominee for the U.S. Senate in the first statehood election in 1958, losing to Democrat Ernest Gruening. He made two other runs at statewide office, losing in bids for governor in 1962 and 1966. But through the years, he remained an effective voice in state politics.

GOV. FRANK MURKOWSKI two weeks ago picked Nick Steporovich to fill the District 10 House vacancy created when Rep. Jim Whittaker resigned after being elected mayor of the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

The younger Steporovich was born in Juneau when his father was territorial governor. He grew up in Fairbanks, graduated from Monroe High School in 1976 and four years later earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Southern Oregon University.

He will serve in the 2004 legislative session, but will have to stand for election next fall if he seeks another term.

His appointment came at a time of grieving for the Steporovich family. A week prior to his selection, his mother, Marilda, died after a lingering illness at Medford, Ore., where she and Mike Steporovich had been living in retirement for the past decade.

She was a most remarkable woman. The mother of six daughters and seven sons, and proudly a grandmother of 55, Marilda Steporovich was like a rock on which her family was based. She was a down-to-earth, non-nonsense lady — with a marvelous sense of humor, a sharp mind, and a steely hand.

Gov. Murkowski did well by honoring her and Fairbanks, with the appointment of Nick Steporovich to the Legislature. The freshman legislator follows in the footsteps of a great Alaska governor of days gone by.

Jefferson was right about courts

BY WALTER E. WILLIAMS

Last week's column provided unsavable evidence that the protections of liberty envisioned by the Constitution's Framers mean little today. I was pleasantly surprised by the responses from fellow Americans expressing disgust and fear over what our nation is becoming. Several asked how we can regain our liberties. My short answer is I'm not sure they can ever be recovered. Let's look at it.

We all have a moral obligation to pay our share for constitutionally mandated functions of the federal government, but we have no such obligation to have Congress take the earnings of one American and give them to another American. Forcing one American to serve the purposes of another is one way slavery can be defined.

I'm an emancipated adult fully capable of taking care of my own retirement. Why should I or anyone else be forced to pay into the government's Social Security? Do you see any signs on the horizon that such practices are coming to an end? The list of encroachments on personal liberty like these is virtually endless.

Self-determination is a human right we all should respect. If some people want socialism, that's their right — but it is not their right to use brute government power to force others, who want liberty, to be a part of it. Liberty-minded Americans might organize to acquire government power to impose their will on socialist-minded Americans, but that's not right either. A far more peaceful method is simply to part company.

That's an idea already being explored by Free State Project. Their plan, as stated on their Web site (freestateproject.org) is "20,000 or more liberty-oriented people will move to New Hampshire, where they may work within the political system to reduce the size and scope of government. The success of the Free State Project would likely entail re-



ductions in burdensome taxation and regulation, reforms in state and local law, an end to federal mandates and a restoration of constitutional federalism."

In 1788, during New Hampshire's ratification convention, a concerned people said "tamendments AND alterations in the said Constitution would remove the fears and quiet the apprehensions of the good People of this State and more Effectually guard against an undue Administration of the Federal Government. The Convention do therefore recommend that the following alterations and provisions be introduced into the said Constitution (among them) First That it be Explicitly declared that all Powers not expressly and particularly Delegated by the several States to be, by them Exercised." The Ninth and Tenth amendments, which mean virtually nothing now, were added to our Constitution in response to these fears.

While members of Free State Project have not proposed it, I would imagine that if New Hampshire's elected representatives couldn't successfully negotiate with the U.S. Congress to strip the Constitution, the only other alternative would be that of making a unilateral

declaration of independence and go our own way just as our Founders did in 1776. Many people might argue that it's the U.S. Supreme Court that decides what is constitutional or not. Here's what Thomas Jefferson said about allowing the Court to hold a monopoly on the interpretation of the Constitution — the opinion which gives to the judges the right to decide what laws are constitutional and what are not, not only for themselves in their own sphere of action but for the Legislature and Executive also in their spheres, would make the Judiciary a despotic branch.

The history of the court, not to mention last week's decision on the constitutionality of the McCain-Romney campaign finance reform that attacks free speech, is proof that Jefferson was right and Alexander Hamilton wrong in his Federalist Paper No. 78 prediction that the judiciary would be the "least dangerous branch of government."

Walter E. Williams is a professor at George Mason University in Fairfax. His column is distributed by Crestview Syndicate Inc., 6777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90046. (310) 337-7003

The Anchorage Times

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

SEN. LISA MURKOWSKI DOING A . . .

Great job

THE U.S. SENATE race between Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski and former Democratic Gov. Tony Knowles likely will be a barn-burner, but it also will affect this state in ways that only political junkies can truly imagine.

A recent effort by Murkowski to address a critical teacher housing shortage in rural Alaska is a great example of the nasty partisan politics we can expect in the coming months. Murkowski authored legislation that would have authorized \$50 million to ease the housing problem that only adds to the growing difficulty of finding teachers for some of Alaska's far-flung villages. Sen. Ted Stevens put his name on her bill because of a Senate rule that would have required Murkowski, who was out of town at the time, to present the measure. She became the secondary sponsor.

So far, so good.

Nobody really objected. After all, Democrats like to spend money on such things, and Republicans could see that the funding would do enormous good. Because it did not look like the bill was going to cause sparks, it went on the "Hot Line," and was set for the Senate's "Unanimous Consent Calendar."

Such measures routinely are passed by the Senate on a voice vote, but there is a catch. Any senator or staff member can anonymously derail the legislation with a mere telephone call of opposition. One call and that's it.

WHO KNOWS what really happened, but the story is that when a Democratic staffer learned Murkowski had something to do with the rural teacher housing legislation, despite Stevens' sponsorship, he lobbied it. "The reason?" Democrats could not allow her to have anything good on her record because of next year's election.

All is not lost, however. Murkowski managed to get \$10 million for the housing inserted into the omnibus appropriations legislation that will get a vote next year. She wedged another \$2 million into an appropriations bill that already has passed. With any luck, the effort to derail the measure was only an ill-advised, temporary setback.

It will not be the last such episode, you can bet on that. With the U.S. Senate's majority teetering in the balance, Alaska is a key state to Democrats and Republicans alike in next year's election. The relatively small number of voters in the state makes it attractive because candidates and parties and political action groups can get the biggest bang for their campaign donation buck. As far as costs for Senate campaigns go, Alaska's will be a bargain.

Murkowski so far has done a great job for the people of Alaska, especially for a Senate freshman, and she can add funding for rural housing for teachers to her list of accomplishments.

Christmas week brings a gift of joy

By WILLIAM J. TOBIN

DAWNS NOW THE week of Christmas, a beautiful time to be in Alaska. Preparing to celebrate the birth of the Christ child in the little town of Bethlehem two thousand years ago brings forth a renewal of traditions that are rich in the lives of all of us. Candles sung by choirs whose voices fill our churches. Candles that glow on the altars, and bells that ring in the steeples. In our homes, great or small, there is the joy of children laughing and the warmth of greetings among family and friends.

TOO MUCH commercialism in Christmas? Not by a long shot, so long as the spirit of giving extends all through our town. There is nothing so precious as a grandfather's drawing of a Christmas tree, a fireplace and through a window. Santa and his reindeer flying by a son's farm hand on the shoulder of his mother is a touch more precious than the jewels in the Tower of London. A Christmas dinner served by volunteers to those in need reduces the true meaning of this holy day — a gift of love, a gift of hope, a gift of cheer.

THE GENEROSITY of Alaskans in extending a helping hand at Christmas is a special sign of the good in this state. It is a gift of good in the week, and a tremendous amount of good in our own community. This past week alone, six different agencies joined once again in providing food and toys for more than 11,000 Tobin



through a program known as GIFT. It's a joint effort by Catholic Social Services, Food Bank of Alaska, Lutheran Social Services, the Salvation Army, the United Way of Anchorage and the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots. More than 400 volunteers from Fort Richardson and Eielson Air Force Base assisted in distributing packages of food and toys to the needy from the ACS garage, turned into a Christmas wonderland for the 13th annual event. The distributions



"Fortteen shopping minutes to Christmas" took place last Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

AND WHERE but here, in all the world, is the glory of God's majesty so evident? We are blessed by beauty beyond measure in the white-clad mountains to the north and the sea, in the fresh snow that blankets our neighborhoods, in the frost that glistens on our trees, in the blazing cold of our starlit nights, in the brilliant blue of the sky during our sunny winter days. The joy of this Christmas season is everywhere, of course — but the celebration surely can't be the same in warmer climes. What Santa have trouble landing on a rooftop with no snow under his sleigh?

THAT'S NO problem here. And as you go on your rounds of holiday parties, as you gather before a crackling fire at home on a chilly evening this week, as you wrap the last of the gifts and finish decorating your tree, it would be a good time to pour our traditional quaff, the Santa Claus cocktail. Three sips and Ho! Ho! Ho!

BUT THAT COMES with an admonition. Do not drink and drive. For many, this is a week for a full slate of holiday parties — from the office variety to those in the homes of friends. The police, we pray, will be especially vigilant between now and New Year's Day. While enforcement of laws against drink-

ing while intoxicated is an important tool in making holiday streets safer, the best way to avoid heart-breaking tragedy is to not get behind the wheel in the first place if you've had more than your share of Yuletide cheer. But everybody knows that, right?

AND WHILE celebrating the Yuletide, let's all raise a Christmas toast to the Alaska Community Foundation, which by year-end will have an endowment fund totaling the \$6 million mark. That represents astonishing growth since Bob Bulmer assembled a founding board and got the organization rolling in the spring of 1995, after two years of preliminary work on his part. Bulmer drew his inspiration from his brother-in-law in Denver, where a similar foundation had been a huge success for years, and from friends at the Seattle Foundation, one of Washington state's most respected charitable organizations. It took the Seattle Foundation, by the way, 40 years to reach the \$5 million level. Its endowment now exceeds \$300 million, and is one of the nation's largest.

The foundation here uses proceeds from its endowment to fund a broad range of charitable activities. Mike Burns is the foundation's current president. Five long-time board members, including Bulmer, will finish their terms this spring. Others bowing out to make way for new blood on the board: Sterling Taylor, David Shafel, Bill Banterton, and Bonnie Mahner.

AND DON'T forget to thank your lucky Santa that you won't be in Haines on Feb. 1 for Super Bowl XXXVIII at Reliant Stadium. If you were, you'd be paying a 17 percent hotel room tax, an 8.2 percent city sales tax and what the Wall Street Journal describes as "a stiff, rolling markup level on airport car rentals. As for hotel rooms, well . . . The 268-room Marriott Sugar Land Town Square, for example, has a posted rate for Jan. 29 to Feb. 2 of \$2,995 per person, single or double occupancy — and weeks ago it reported it was fully booked. Anybody around who still thinks Alaska sends it to tourists and visitors?

William J. Tobin is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

The Anchorage Times

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

MURKOWSKI BUDGET PLAN IS A...

Good try

GOV. FRANK Murkowski's proposed new budget was both encouraging and discouraging.

It was encouraging in that it continues his effort to remain overspending by state government. Alaska has been living beyond its means for years and fiscal downsizing is very much in order.

The budget was disappointing in that it neglected to mention the obvious need to use a portion of Permanent Fund earnings to fund state government.

That is hopefully an element in Murkowski's fiscal strategy, but failure to even mention it suggests that he is not ready to support the many civic and business groups advocating that cause.

Timidity on the subject by any politician is understandable. Permanent Fund earnings have long been used only to write individual dividend checks and to inflation-proof the fund. And the annual dividends are the Holy Grail of Alaska politics.

Murkowski's focus is on economic growth and that is both commendable and appropriate. The bulk of the Permanent Fund represents the state's share of past oil and gas production. And in the long run, the state's future will depend on new private initiatives and investments, in new jobs and in the taxes and royalties generated from future resource development.

But neglecting to use Permanent Fund earnings to pay a portion of state government expenses breaks faith with those Alaskans who voted to establish the fund in the first place.

THE FUND was established by voters in 1976, and virtually all of those who voted for it thought they were setting up a rainy day account, a place to squirrel money away for future use and keep it from being spent before it was really needed.

There were proposals to pay dividends even then, but few if any of those who voted for the Permanent Fund thought its only purpose would be to pay such dividends. The payments were advanced by Gov. Jay Hammond and others as a way to give individual Alaskans a stake in the fund's success and motivation to monitor its governance.

But the ball is now wagging the dog and paying dividends has become essentially the fund's only purpose. The time has come to return to the original intent and use at least a portion of the earnings for spending on a government sized for the state's real need, not on the inflated structure built up when money flowed freely.

The Legislature can — if it has the political courage — allocate part of the earnings for state needs. It should do so. If nothing else, that could open the way for discussion on ways to institutionalize and protect dividend checks while using a portion of the earnings for the fund's original purpose, funding state government.

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

Saturday, December 20, 2003 **B-9**

Here's hoping for a white Christmas

By LEW M. WILLIAMS, JR.

This last column for 2003 wishes all of our readers a Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2004.

Unfortunately, this holiday finds American young men and women again in foreign lands protecting our security. Most American Christmas trees have been peaceful, white. But people of ill will provided a few blue ones.

On Christmas Day, 1916, near El Paso, Texas, Mexican snipers fired across the border into the Third Kentucky Infantry camp. No Americans were killed. American commanders restrained enlisted men from pursuing them across the border.

Christmas, 1917, found our nation at war. Nineteen days earlier, Halifax, Nova Scotia, was victim of a disaster that matched 9-11 and Pearl Harbor. An American freighter collided with a French munitions ship carrying 3,000 tons of TNT. The resulting explosion leveled 2 square miles of Halifax and killed nearly 2,000 people.

Fund drivers were held for the survivors. Kelchikan editor J.E. Beward cataloged the Japanese Empire for its coverage.

The Empire reported that \$1,267 was collected in Alaska for Halifax Christmas.

From Anchorage and \$437. From other sources. "The other sources" in this case was Wrangell, which resented its new name.

On Christmas Eve, 250,000 fresh American troops were in Europe. They prepared a large Christmas tree in a French town close to the front and headed it with more than 600 presents distributed to as many French orphans.

Twenty-four years and a day after the Halifax disaster, the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor. On a blue Christmas Eve, they captured Wake Island. A front page story in the Kelchikan Chronicle "White Christmas? Sh-h-h, it's a Military Secret. Ordinary weather forecasts over the entire United States have been banned. Such information would be of value to the enemy, hurting off our coasts."

The next Christmas Eve, 1942, was not so blue. Col. E. B. Post of the Alaska Defense Command said there was no more threat to the West Coast from the Japanese base on Kiska. American troops secretly established a base in the Andaman Islands, neutralizing Kiska.

The Chronicle again reported weather. There was enough snow on the ground to guarantee Kelchikan one of the whitest Yuletides in 25 years.

The Associated Press reported on Christmas Day, 1943, "Bethlehem, blacked out by war for the last three Christmases, burst into candlelight from 10,000 windows as submarines lifted restrictions this year. Americans of all ranks, converging from their battle stations in stored Persia, Syria, Egypt and other African points thronged with other humble pilgrims to this shrine of Christianity to pay homage to the Prince of Peace."

Christmas 1944, another blue one. The German's launched an attack on Christmas Eve across a 36-mile front in the famous "Battle of the Bulge." By the next Christmas, the war was over. More than 1 million Chinese communists were massed north of the 38th parallel for a second invasion of South Korea, expected on Christmas Eve. The so-



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WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

Merry Christmas to American troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, South Korea, Bosnia and at other foreign posts striving for peace on earth.

May God speed them home in 2004 for a white Christmas, which, thanks to them and their predecessors, American newspapers are free to report.

Lew Williams Jr. is a retired publisher of the Kelchikan Daily News. His e-mail is lmw@worldnet.att.net

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BILL J. ALLEN
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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

CHARGING FEES FOR TAX APPEALS IS A...

Lousy idea

WHILE IT'S easy to understand the need to establish exactly what the city's Board of Equalization is supposed to do and recognize the city's urgent need to reduce its program of property tax appeals, the Assembly has gone to far in an ordinance approved Tuesday, that august body attached fees to property tax appeals — a payment, if you will, to seek redress from the government.

Property owners who believe they have been wronged by the city's tax assessment will be forced to pay anywhere from \$30 for a house valued at less than \$100,000 to \$1,000 for property valued at \$2 million — just to be heard.

The money, it should be noted, will be refunded — but only if appellants win. The new system, seemingly designed to discourage appeals, serves as a sort of fine for those with the audacity the cheekiness to challenge government and lose.

The idea may have been to head off frivolous appeals, punish those who fail to show up when their case is called and speed the process — and who could object to that? — but the Assembly's approach is abhorrent. There is something repugnant about requiring a citizen to, in effect, post a bond before he or she can even challenge a city assessment.

Further, the Assembly's action is unfair on its face. It penalizes owners of expensive property, serves to intimidate property owners of every economic stripe and forces all property owners to come on bended knee before city government if they feel they have been wronged.

What next? Will those who disagree with the Assembly on various issues be forced to pay a bond to speak at public hearings?

The plan is a lousy idea and wretchedly wrong public policy.

Better memory

FORMER MAYOR George M. Sullivan has called us to task over an unwitting error in a Wednesday editorial on the Anchorage bed tax.

We said the tax was instituted in 1979 at the urging of the tourism industry as a way to fund tourism marketing and help fund municipal government.

Sullivan, for whom Sullivan Avenue is named, reports that the 5 percent bed tax was first approved in about 1972, and initially was opposed by the visitor industry.

The tourism companies came on board supporting the tax in the late 1970s when they proposed increasing it to 8 percent, with half to be used for tourism marketing.

Sullivan served as Anchorage mayor from 1967 to 1982 and was later chairman of the Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau. He has a sharp mind and wit and an institutional memory that encompasses much of our city's modern history.

We gladly defer to his recollection and correct the record.

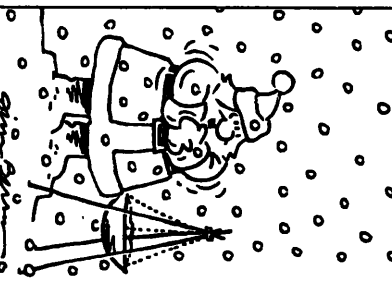
Smile: You're on colon camera

By PAUL JENKINS

Every now and then, something reminds me that at the heart of it all, at the very core of my being, I'm chicken. No kidding. If it looks like it's going to hurt, forget it.

The latest thing to peg my wussometer was my doctor's insistence that I have a colonoscopy because my Dad had colon cancer. I figured it was the Doc's payback for calling him "Thumper" one lousy time in a column. Once but he never gave up. That's right, Doc would say, a colonoscopy, you're at risk.

I'm thinking, a tube the size of a baseball bat with lights, cameras, clamps and God knows what else going where absolutely nobody should ever, ever be going? My naked posterior in a compromising position, and in front of people I don't even know? While I'm knocked out? Get real. This isn't prison, pal.



"HO, HO, HO - NOT LONG TO GO!"

It was clear that while I could keep dodging Doc (and he gets cranky when I do) it was not in my best interest at home. I got an appointment. There was no way out.

The very nice patoot guy spent an hour with me a few days before the procedure, explaining in great detail its risks and benefits. It did not sound like such a big deal, but what else could he have told me? "Listen, old guy, we're going to take this telephone-pole-size, preflexed, coiled, cost-retro-looking thing and..." He also demurs saying, "You may feel a little discomfort, just as they rip out your gums."

But the use was cast. A few days later, it was 24 hours of clear liquids, tasty stuff like Jell-O and yummy chicken broth. Then, the indignity of swelling stuff that makes you want to, not to be indecise, move the TV into the bathroom.

It was dark and cold the morning I arrived at Providence Alaska Medical Center. Sign in. Meet the nurses (they were great, by the way). Put on a nifty gown with an air-conditioned back. (Get hooked up to an IV for the ever-popular Joy Juice. Then it was Show Time, the



Jenkins

My brother had one. No big deal, he said. Guys I worked with had them. No big deal, they said. My father has had maybe a million of them to be sure he won his bout with cancer. No big deal, he said. Even Kato Couric had one on national TV and said it was no big deal. Ain't happening, I said.

Then, my wife decided she would get one. I was corrected like Sardan Hiseen. Sure, I said, go ahead and make that a double appointment. I'll go and get one, too, at the same time. Yeah. In a fortuitous musing, the doctor's office made one for her, but not for me. Hal-leluah. Yeah, yeah, I'll get one soon. I said. How about them Patoots?

After the colonoscopy, she, too, said it was no big deal.

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Paul Jenkins is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

My colon worries are behind me.

Tom sorry

Now, all I have to deal with is an insane fondness for chocolate chip cookies and Jack Daniel's (in moderation, it goes without saying. Mmh. Blah. Blah.) because, ladies and gents (a drum roll please)

Colon worries are behind me.

My colon

Though near-perfect, I'm loathe to give advice, but if you have a family history of colon cancer or you're 50 or so years old, get checked out. If you have a problem, catch it early. Most colon cancer is preventable. As a weasone of the Nth magnitude, if I can have a colonoscopy, anybody can. Getting your teeth cleaned is worse. Hooah.

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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

ON BED TAX, STATE SHOULD ...

Butt out

G.O. FRANK Murkowski should ditch his proposal to impose a 5 percent state bed tax on top of Anchorage's existing 8 percent tax.

Pursuing such a state tax would jeopardize the proposed new Anchorage convention center and muddy a long-established compact between Anchorage and its tourism industry. The municipality was already planning to ask voters next year to approve increasing the bed tax from 8 percent to 12 percent, with the additional proceeds used to build a new and larger convention center.

Murkowski's proposal would raise \$15 million for the state budget, but its cost to Anchorage would be far greater. The city's tourism marketers, primarily the Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau, maintain that a new convention center would open the way for bringing much larger gatherings than can fit into the existing William A. Egan Civic and Convention Center.

A new center would be an essential element in future growth of the visitor industry, especially in the lucrative convention business, much of which comes outside the busy summer season.

ADDING A state tax on top of the municipal tax is not an option. Anchorage must compete with convention cities all over the nation — and in some cases abroad. Meeting planners keep a sharp eye on taxes their members are asked to pay in convention cities.

Anything more than a bed tax of about 12 percent is considered uncompetitive. So the bottom line is that convention-goers can reasonably be asked to pay a new state tax or an increased municipal tax, but not both. Otherwise they are likely to stay away in droves.

The Anchorage bed tax was approved by voters in 1979 at the urging of the tourism industry. The industry wanted to tax itself because half of the proceeds would go to tourism marketing and half to help fund municipal government. The original tax was 5 percent and that was later raised to 8 percent.

The bulk of the marketing, done by the Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau, has been very successful, resulting in steady growth in tourism through the years. That success is what has brought the need for a new convention center to allow further growth and the ability to reach larger and more lucrative markets, which would generate both private industry jobs and more taxes.

The municipal tax and the relationship between Anchorage and its visitor industry have worked well and should be maintained. The state of Alaska should butt out and find other ways to fund state government than dropping a destructive state bed tax on hotels and motels in Anchorage.

Those other ways should start with using a portion of the Permanent Fund earnings to pay state expenses.

Painful reflections at Holocaust Museum

By ELISE PATKOLAK

I think it was the picture of the kids that got to me and brought it all down to a painfully human level. My sister has a similar picture in her living room. It's a picture of six cousins lined up on Cayuga Street in Philadelphia sometime in the very early '50s.

One cousin, Joe, has struck a brutish pose with a hand behind his head and another on his hip. The rest of us, my cousins Marlene, Tom, Joe (a very common name in our family), my brother Philip and I, all stood obediently in a row smiling at the camera, dressed in our Sunday best.

So when I stood in the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., and looked at a picture of another group of kids, obviously all related, standing on grass in another time and place, posing for a picture, I suddenly connected with them in a very personal way.

They were just kids posing for a picture for their parents — a picture they would never survive to enjoy, a picture they would never look at with nostalgia because they did not have enough time left in the world. They were all killed by the Nazis in the Holocaust.

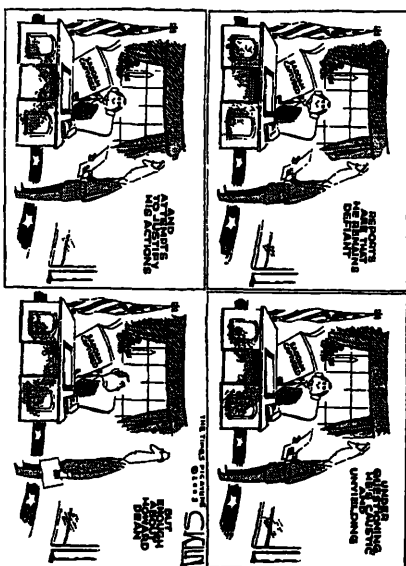


Patkolak

I stood there with tears streaming down my face while clutching a piece of paper with the Crynburn's boy on it. Each visitor to the museum picks one up. Each paper represents a victim of the Holocaust. He died at age 17 in a concentration camp.

I was already feeling vulnerable because I'd been to the Vietnam Memorial. I'd never gone before, since I wasn't sure I could face it. Then, standing there in front of all those names I thought, "This isn't so bad. I can deal with this." Right about then I found Paul DuCharme's name. He was a friend of mine who died within days of landing in Vietnam.

When I saw his name, when I touched his name, I lost it completely. I doubted even see it coming. One minute my finger was tracing his name and



thinking that his 57th birthday would have been on Dec. 15, and the next minute I was sobbing.

I walked over to the Lincoln Memorial and composed myself in the peace and dignity that pervades this space containing the image of a man of great peace and dignity. Then I walked back to the hotel and with each step my sadness grew.

Everywhere I looked there were barbed wire fences in a country that long ago rejected royalty and proudly referred to the White House as the people's house. People are now kept as far in the distance from the seats of power as the peasants of France once were.

In Philadelphia, I went to see the Liberty Bell with my sister and some cousins. When I was young, we could just walk up to the bell. It was under a stone arch and accessible to the people whose freedom it represented.

Now it's been moved indoors and can only be viewed after passing through security. As for Independence Hall — barbed wire now surround it, barricades now keep people from a hall in which the power of the people was first proclaimed. I understood the reason it has to be this way. Security requires greater vigilance nowadays. But that doesn't make the loss any easier to accept.

In fact, on some levels, it seems as though terrorists have already won when we, the people, can no longer access our history but must stand across a street behind barricades and stare longingly at it in the distance. Yet all this pales into annoying background noise after seeing the Holocaust Museum.

By the time I had walked across cobblestones from the Warsaw Ghetto, passed through a train car like those used to deport Jews to death camps and reached the bin full of shoes and human hair taken from victims before they were gassed, I found myself walking faster and faster. I couldn't wait to get to the end so that I could leave the horror behind me and emerge into the sunshine of a D.C. morning.

When you think about it, all war is insanity. But there is an especially evil insanity to a war based on racism. Because the logical end of racism is a Holocaust, and there simply is no logic to that.

Elise Patkolak, an Anchorage free-lance writer and author of *Parallel Logic*, a novel, lives in Anchorage and owns Precious Cargo Ltd., a writing/graphics company.

The Anchorage Times

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Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

SMALL COMPANIES SHOW PROMISE AS...

Big industry

GOV. FRANK MURKOWSKI, as part of a new initiative to grow Alaska's energy industry, met last week with more than a dozen small companies searching for oil and gas in Alaska.

The meeting was aimed at learning what the smaller companies — known as independents — need to encourage increased investments in Alaska.

It was timely recognition of the fact that much of Alaska's economic potential lies in exploring for and developing smaller oil and gas fields. Most of those accumulations are too small to interest the giant companies but could be bonanzas to the independents.

Make no mistake, giants like BP, ConocoPhillips, Exxon, Total Energy, Unocal and Marathon seem certain to be mainstays of the Alaskan economy for years to come. Most have large investments here and generate the bulk of the state's tax and royalty revenues.

But large companies primarily are interested in large oil and gas fields. And Alaska almost certainly holds many lesser energy accumulations, perhaps enough to build a major industry composed of small- to moderate-size companies exploring in so-called frontier areas, those relatively distant from currently producing fields.

INDEPENDENTS already have made a significant start in Alaska. They are exploring and producing in frontier areas from Prince William Sound to the Alaska Peninsula, the Anchorage and Mat-Su areas and the North Slope.

Those already operating here include Anadarko, Evergreen Resources, XTO Energy, Forest Oil, Aurora Gas, Pelican Hill, Pioneer Alaska Resources, Encana, Armstrong Oil & Gas, Talisman Energy, Winstar and Casandra Energy.

In their meeting with the governor, the independents expressed interest in reviving the tax credit incentive to improve its utility to them and to the state — for instance, by allowing them to sell credits to producers for application toward production taxes.

They asked for access agreements that would enable smaller companies to ship oil through the trans-Alaska pipeline and to use available spill cleanup equipment. They also complained about pipeline tariffs and problems with the Jones Act, which generally prohibits using foreign-built vessels from carrying cargo between American ports, and what the independents consider inequities in valuing oil for tax and royalty purposes.

Which incentives would make sense for the state, as well as for the independents and the other parties involved, remains to be seen. But moving ahead in resolving the issues is a positive next step in expanding a promising and relatively new industry.

The independents could hold the key to Alaska's future.

A moose with murder on its mind

By TOM BRENNAN

Getting chased by a moose first thing in the morning is nature's deathblow. It's a surefire way to get your heart started and pumping furiously, and it requires no electricity, fancy paddles or skilled operator. I found this out the way I learn most of life's lessons — the hard way.

My yard has an ancient crab apple tree right beside the garage door. Early last Saturday morning I stepped out at my front door with the dog on one of those long retractable leashes.

When the dog approached the side of the house, a huge dark shadow came lumbering out toward us. Now many dogs would have run barking toward the moose, but mine evidently decided that when I go windmilling off through the snow, it's best to do likewise.

The moose was apparently satisfied with chasing us out of our own yard, stopped after about 20 feet and went back to eating crab apples.

I headed off for our walk and on the way back approached the house with great caution. But the big animal was gone.

Next day I left for the morning walk at full alert, watching all the shadows for signs of wild animals. After a few blocks of not seeing any, my mind began to wander, as it always does.

When we were on a side street on the way back, my reverie was interrupted by a loud snort. It was two moose right beside us and objecting to our presence. Once again I ran for my life, dragging a very confused dog along behind me.

Ever since then, I have been getting unrequested advice from one and all about their favorite moose deterrents. My mother in Virginia wants me to carry a duck call because she knows my wife once drove a moose out of our yard with one.

Howard Dean and I both opposed your Iraq war. I do favor some pre-emptive attacks.



But that moose was setting our nose bushes, so my wife grabbed a duck call — even though I told her the neighbors would think she was a fool. She leaned out a window and gave the moose a blast in the ear.

Apparently the moose thought it was being attacked by one very large duck, it was frightened out of the yard and didn't show down until our place was out of sight.

But I don't think that would work when I'm on a walk. I have no window to lean out of and believe that walking up to a full-grown moose and blowing a wind instrument in its ear is not recommended for anyone who aspires to growing older.

Moose aren't vicious at heart, but they are wild animals and get upset if you invade what they consider their space. If you get too close, you could be dealing with 1,200 pounds of meat with murder on its mind.

People have been killed by them in Alaska. In 1995, an elderly Oriental man was trying to enter the Sports Center at the University of Alaska Anchorage and came within 10 feet of a cow moose and her yearling calf. He

apparently considered them to be like domestic animals. A fish and game biologist later watched a video of the event and determined that the cow felt trapped and stomped the man to death. Other people have been attacked when they approached too close to moose in their yards or while trying to photograph them.

Such stampings are fortunately rare, but they were much in my thoughts when I was trying to find a moose-free way to get back into my house.

And moose aren't the only safety concern when walking a dog. Speeding drivers are even worse. My wife got worried about that and gave me one of those blinking safety lights that clip on to your clothing.

I haven't convinced myself to wear it yet. I'm afraid the blinking light on the tail end of my pants would make me look like a piece of heavy equipment, which would be too close to the truth for comfort.

To my thinking the best way is just to be careful out there.

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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

SADDAM CAPTURE CHANGES ...

Many things

THE CAPTURE of deposed Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein changes many things

First and foremost, it changes the way much of the world will look at the Iraq war and the occupation by American troops and participating allies. It verifies that Saddam is, in fact, now powerless and can almost certainly never return to dominate the country.

That frees the Iraqi people to move on with their lives, to seek new leaders and a new political system. When he was still out there, an uncertain force they might need to reckon with, moving on was pretty much out of the question.

It also brings to an end Saddam's 35-year reign of terror, a reign during which he oppressed and robbed his people, used poison gas to kill thousands of them and killed enough by various means to require at least 210 mass graves.

The capture also gives a major boost to President George W. Bush, whose leading Democratic opponent, Howard Dean, is a critic of the war effort. Bush already was favored to win in a possible match-up next November with Dean, and routing Saddam out of an Iraqi hole should tip the scales even more in the president's favor.

HAVING SADDAM

out of the way also strengthens the hand of the new Iraqi leaders of the Governing Council, leaders who are trying to assemble a stable government to replace the dictator's iron hand.

It also makes far more plausible arguments by Bush that the job of governing Iraq can be turned over to the Iraqis themselves and the allied occupation can be phased down. Undoubtedly the danger is far from over. The insurgents will almost certainly continue attacking the occupying forces — and may even increase their attacks. Additional lives could be lost and pressure could build up at home to remove American troops more quickly.

Saddam's scruffy appearance and the conditions under which he was living suggest that he was not in command of the insurgents. He seemed to have neither the requisite communications equipment nor the support staff to direct such operations. Instead he seemed more like an unwashed and nearly solitary bedraggled man cowering in a rathole, a man without power or prestige.

One of the questions to be answered about Saddam's future is who shall put him on trial, and when and where. We feel that obligation should rest with the Iraqi people and their new government. That will mean waiting until they are ready to deal with a trial, but speed is not necessary. In fact, time could be on the side of the allies. They will need time to question their presence, to evaluate the evidence they already have and to track down and neutralize his bloodthirsty supporters.

But for now it is comfort enough just to celebrate the long-sought capture.

Dean hopes Gore is a kingmaker

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

Al Gore's dramatic endorsement of Howard Dean catapults Dean to the status of prohibitive favorite because, according to conventional wisdom, it connects the outsider campaign to the ultimate insider.

The insurgency gains access to the centers of party power — the unions, ethnic constituencies and big donors close to Gore.

This is all very true. But the special power of this endorsement is less structural than symbolic. The story of this campaign is the energy and anger of the Democratic base. It is the reason an unknown and undistinguished former governor of Vermont is now the front-runner. He captured and then bodied the anger.

The anger appears odd, given that George W. Bush is fairly mild-mannered. He is no Richard Nixon. Democrats did not hate him in 2000. Yet many hate him now because of 2000, because they believe his entire presidency to be illegitimate.

The Democratic base is agitated as in few other elections because of a burning belief that Bush stole the presidency. Then along comes Gore, chief witness to and, indeed, victim of the crime — Dean introduced him at the Harvard endorsement ceremony as the elected president of the United States — who declares that Dean is the one to carry the fight to depose Bush and vindicate the betrayal of 2000.

Gore's moral authority as the man who was robbed makes his endorsement unique. It is in fact an endorsement. And who better to be associated than Dean, the man who has given expression to protest by the anger born of Gore's victimization?

From Gore's viewpoint, it is also a political master stroke. After all, where was he? He was last seen in a hot tub on "Saturday Night Live." He has since popped in and out of popular consciousness with the occasional speech, but he did not seem very content to spend his life as a visiting professor of journalism somewhere. The Dean endorsement, dramatic and unexpected, makes him a player again. A big player.

If he had waited a couple of months until Dean had already gathered irre-



assible momentum by winning the early primaries, it would have meant little. But by endorsing before the first vote is cast and thus making Dean the presumptive nominee, Gore becomes kingmaker.

It is good to be king. It is almost as good to be kingmaker. Gore makes him self consigliere, elder statesman, the James Baker of the Dean administration. And if he wants it (Baker did), Gore just got himself the second-best job in America, secretary of state.

But the Gore strategy works only if Dean wins the presidency. The idea that Gore is now positioned for 2008 if Dean loses is fanciful. Political parties have little tolerance for people who lose even once, as Gore did inexorably in 2000.

But to be associated with a second loss — one that gives Bush not just another term but historical legitimacy — is unforgivable. It would be more liability than anyone could bear, let alone a man as characteristically challenged as Gore.

Is it over? Yes, except for one possibility. With the Gore endorsement in hand, Dean has everything going for him. Not just money, but an Internet money machine. Loyal grass-roots troops. Connections to the party establishment. A huge lead. A sense of inevitability.

Indeed, he is now heading for the first time in the national polls, not just in the two small states, Iowa and New Hampshire, that he has practically lived in for

Charles Krauthammer writes a weekly, nationally syndicated column for the Washington Post. His column is also carried by the Washington Post Writers Group. Copyright 2003 The Washington Post Co.

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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

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Senior Editor

STATE SHOULD RULE OUT...

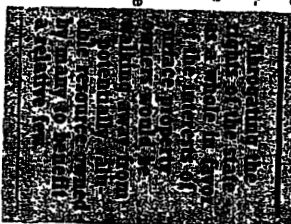
Buying leases

THE STATE should ignore pressure to buy back the coal-bed methane gas leases issued for the Mat-Su Borough and Homer. The conflict needs attention but the possibility of buybacks should be taken off the table altogether.

Some area residents are irate at the possibility that gas wells may be drilled near their homes — and their concerns are understandable. Those worries ought to be addressed, but they should rightfully be addressed by assuring that the environment and the rights of homeowners are protected while drilling proceeds.

The possibility that gas exploration might occur near their property came as a surprise to many people. But that is almost solely because they were not aware that, though the property owners may own surface rights, any gas or oil beneath the surface is owned by all the people of Alaska.

And because all of Alaska owns those resources — and because coal bed methane drilling could become the foundation for a new and valuable industry in Alaska — the leases should be explored and the resource developed.



SUCH SHALLOW-GAS drilling is potentially a good source of jobs, economic development and natural resources for the Southcentral region, and taxes and royalties for the state treasury.

By all means, the appropriate state agencies should work with Evergreen Resources, the primary leaseholder, to assure that the area's environment and the interests of surface property owners are protected.

But the property owners are not the only stakeholders in this matter. The ownership interests of the state as a whole should also be protected. And that almost certainly rules out any lease buybacks.

Abrogating the rights of the state as a whole in favor of the interests of surface property owners would be walking away from a potentially valuable resource owned by many to benefit a relative few.

The impact on the surface owners can and should be minimized, but — in effect — giving them the wealth below should not be seriously considered.

It belongs to all Alaska.

Nation is straying from Constitution

By WALTER E. WILLIAMS

I'd like to enlist the services of my fellow Americans with a bit of detective work. Let's start off with hard evidence.

The Federalist Papers were a set of documents written by John Jay, Alexander Hamilton and James Madison to persuade the 13 states to ratify the Constitution. In one of those papers, Federalist Paper 45, James Madison wrote "The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the Federal Government, are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State Governments are numerous and indefinite."

The former will be exercised principally on external objects, as war, peace, negotiation and foreign commerce, with which last the power of taxation will for the most part be connected. The powers reserved to the several States will extend to all the objects, which, in the ordinary course of affairs, concern the lives, liberties and properties of the people, and the internal order, improvement, and prosperity of the State.



If we turned James Madison's statement on its head, namely that the powers of the Williams are numerous and indefinite and those of the states are few and defined, we'd describe today's America. Was Madison just plain ignorant about the powers delegated to Congress? Before making our judgment, let's examine statements of other possibly misinformed Americans.

In 1796, on the floor of the House of Representatives, William Giles of Virginia condemned a relief measure for the victims saying it was neither the purpose nor the right of Congress to "attend to what generosity and humanity require, but to what the Constitution and their duty require."

In 1854, President Franklin Pierce vetoed a bill intended to help the mentally ill, saying "I cannot find any authority in the Constitution for public charity," adding that to approve such spending



"would be contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Constitution and subvertive to the whole theory upon which the Union of these States is founded." President Grover Cleveland was the king of the veto. He vetoed literally hundreds of congressional spending bills during his two terms as president in the late 1800s. His often given reason was "I can find no warrant for such an appropriation in the Constitution."

Today's White House proposes and Congress taxes and spends for anything they can muster a majority vote on. My investigative query is: Were the Founders and previous congressmen and presidents, who could not find constitutional authority for today's bread and circuses, just plain stupid and ignorant?

I don't believe in long-run ignorance or stupidity, so I revised the Constitution, looking to see whether an amendment had been passed authorizing Congress to spend money on bailouts for auburn, prescription drugs, education, Social Security and thousands of similar items in today's federal budget. I found no such amendment.

Being thorough, I revised the Constitution and found what Congress might interpret as a blank check authorization — the "general welfare clause." Then I investigated further to see what the

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

BAD BEHAVIOR IN SCHOOLS IS DOWN ...

Safety is up

WITH ALL THE mindless violence in our community of late, our schools may offer a ray of hope.

The Anchorage School District is reporting student suspensions in the first quarter of this school year are down 17 percent, when compared to last year. But the best news is that the number of children suspended for fighting has plummeted 55 percent, with the most impressive declines reported at middle and high schools.

Suspensions for fighting and assaults dropped from 429 in the first quarter last year to 193 this year. Drug and alcohol violations also dropped 13 percent below last year's level, from 148 to 129.

Superintendent Carol Comeau credits teachers, counselors, administrators and the Anchorage Police Department's School Resource Officers program, funded by a \$1.6 million federal grant, as being key in bringing down the numbers.

Having the police officers in the schools this year to help keep order and, more importantly, protect students is proving a good idea.

OFFICERS DID a great job in quickly and effectively quelling a fight at Bartlett High School on Nov. 6 that had the potential to get out of hand because a large crowd had gathered to egg on the combatants.

Each high school has two officers assigned who also have responsibilities in middle and elementary schools. It looks as if they are having a positive impact.

Comeau says the schools have worked hard at conflict resolution, anti-bullying programs and presenting a united front in not tolerating fighting. It's having a positive effect, Comeau says. "To me, it is absolutely enhancing the teaching and learning environment, and ensuring that our schools are safe for teaching and learning," she says.

All in all, the first quarter numbers are more than encouraging. Congratulations to the teachers, staff, police and administrators — and the kids themselves.

Goodbye, primary

JUST TO CLOSE the record, be advised that the Washington Legislature has voted to cancel the state's scheduled 2004 presidential primary election.

A waste of money, those with common sense decided. For one thing, the Democratic Party on the national level let it be known that Washington's primary results would have little to no effect on the nomination process. For another, the Republicans said President George W. Bush would be the GOP nominee again next year, so why bother with a state primary?

Irrelevant, in other words. In the Senate at Olympia, the vote was 25-22 to dump the election. In the House, the vote to scrap the whole affair was 84-7. And thus Washington will save \$6 million, the anticipated cost had the election gone forward.

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

It's that happiest time of the year

By WILLIAM J. TOBIN

SET YOUR CLOCK, start the countdown. There's just a week to go. At precisely 10:04 p.m. next Sunday, winter officially begins. And that, dear friends, means that our days will start getting longer and that spring is just three months away. So what that some cold days and nights and probably a ton of snow are still on the agenda? There's something magic about the big switch from long hours of darkness into the longer days ahead.

THERE'S ANOTHER kind of magic on the horizon, too — the kind that comes when rabbits pop out of top hats, silk scarves turn into bouquets of flowers, and playing cards change their spots right before your eyes. On tap: The Alaska Magic Kids, performing at the Snow Goggles Theater at 717 W. Third Ave., opening Friday night, Dec. 26, with a 7 p.m. show.



Tobin

The following Saturday, Sunday and Monday there will be two shows each day, at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. There also will be a special Kids Day matinee at 11 a.m. on Monday, Dec. 28, with talks from youth service agencies and child care centers invited to attend on a "pay-what-you-can" basis. Otherwise, show tickets are only \$3 for children, \$5 for adults, and \$10 for families.

THE MAGIC SHOWS over the Christmas season holiday will feature Anchorage's finest young magicians, performing individual routines and illusions. As an added attraction, there will be two top young national magic headliners on hand, winners of the Society of American Magicians Junior National Stage Contest held last July in Las Vegas. The visiting stars are Matthew McArthur of Tucson, Ariz., presenting an award-winning dove act, and Tyler Yonke, a Hawaiian with a whole stage act of his own. Don Russell, one of Anchorage's top professional magicians, is the guiding force behind the Magic Kids.



"Here, work your way through that lot and I'll go easy on you next year."

Kids production. Tickets are available in advance at Northwest Kids/Magic Castle, 279-4386. Over the Rainbow toy store, 522-8184, My Gym, 222-0777, and the Magic Kids, 522-1364.

ALSO ON THE holiday agenda: The Oscar Anderson House Museum at 420 M St. in Eldersberry Park, will be open from noon until 4 o'clock this afternoon for its annual Swedish Christmas tour. It's a chance to see how Anchorage residents decorated their homes for the holidays back in 1915. The cost is \$3 for adults and \$1 for children. Down in Homer, the Land's End resort is preparing for a big New Year's Eve party, complete with a gourmet champagne dinner — as a way to prepare, no doubt, for breaking ground early in the New Year for construction of 34 new, two-room guest suites and a whole new lobby for the hotel.

IN THE BIG world of the media, Kay Cashman and the Petroleum News are setting some kind of circulation record. That's her assessment, at any rate, of a new sales program that has prompted a whole lot of major oil companies, some of the big independent petroleum firms, and a number of big government agencies to subscribe to Petroleum News for each of its employees, all via the internet. The upshot, she says, some 500,000 new readers, all over the U.S. and Canada and now into Mexico. That reflects the change in focus for the weekly tabloid newspaper. Until last

April, it was known as Petroleum News Alaska. It dropped Alaska from the name, and began providing in-depth oil patch news from well beyond the 49th State. Its new slogan, "North America's source for oil and gas news." You can order Petroleum News in printed form for \$2 a year.

THINGS TO LIKE about Anchorage: The sunlight on the Chugach Mountains, fresh with snow. The new look at the Kenai Chalk Chalkdown, that divided the front dining room and that really opened up the area. Actually, he made the changes last July — but if you haven't been there since, the new decor is a bit. And he still serves the same great food for dinner, Tuesday through Saturday. Juliana Os- tuch's lovely piano music when she's on stage in a concert hall. And Juliana's warm smile, offstage and over a glass of wine with friends.

WHILE TALKING about things we love, Vera Crane adds some items to our list of Anchorage attractions: The mass from the old days. Her entrance. The Bar driven on Northern Lights Boulevard, the Jones Brothers wildlife showman on Fifth Avenue downtown, the old Shady Laurens Auditorium, and the Ellis Club golf course with sand greens, where the Alwood house now stands.

APROPPOS OF nothing as the last two weeks of the year arrive, please note that Seoul is now the largest city in the world, with a population of 10.2 million. São Paulo, Brazil, claims second spot, with 10 million, followed by Bombay, India, with 9.9 million. New York is the 11th largest city on the list — but actually ranks No. 1 when considering its full urban area. Let's be happy with the tie of Anchorage.

SUNDAY PUNDAV: King James had deer, water buffalo, faxes and a host of other wild game running loose on his castle lawn. The people of the kingdom, finally fed up with it all, determined the king and tried all the animals. It was the first time in history that the reign was called on account of the game.

William J. Tobin is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

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BILL J. ALLEN
Pulitzer

GARDEN STATE GRAPPLES WITH...

Black bears

NEW JERSEY may have to redo its image. Where once the greatest hazards there were considered to be high-speed turnpikes and mobsters, the state now is having problems with bears.

That's right — just like in Anchorage — bears are raiding trash cans and getting into urban mischief. Those are black bears and not their larger cousins the browns and grizzlies or, as in the case of North Slope communities, polar bears.

The bear problem in the Garden State is a sign that much of the nation is returning to wild conditions not seen in hundreds of years. With large-scale agriculture a thing of the past, in many areas and trees growing that would once have been cut for firewood, huge areas are returning to forests.

AND WITH the return of forests come the wild creatures that inhabit them, including black bears. The animals are also rummaging through campsites, attacking livestock, raiding bird feeders and beehives and chasing pets.

The state recently scheduled a hunt and offered permits, but New Jersey hunters are experienced mainly in stalking deer, pheasants and ducks. They no longer know anything about bears so many of the permits went unclaimed.

Perhaps Alaska should send fish and game managers down there to lecture the Easterners about bear-proof trash containers, not storing dog food on porches and keeping bears away from bird feeders.

Postal workers

ONE OF the minor miracles of the Christmas season every year is that so many postal workers manage to remain cheerful despite heavy workloads and giddy customers.

A visitor to the Airport Post Office the other night found a line of patrons trying to mail everything from large unwrapped boxes of detergent and sacks of dog food to fully mounted mag wheels and tires.

In each case the customers wanted to just slap mailing labels and postage on their unwrapped gifts and put them in the mail. Surprisingly most of the goodies were accepted as offered, though the postal clerks insisted that the tires be de-lated and a 50-pound sack of dog food be secured in a cart-board box.

Such a scene could have been a minor horror if everybody were cranky. But the postal workers maintained their sense of humor, talked the customers through their mailing problems and cheered up those waiting in line with their own lines of banter.

One clerk looked at a small child waiting for his father, put his tongue in his cheek and told the parents, "We could mail him to his grandparents for the holidays. Postage is cheaper than an airline seat."

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

Electronic gaming could be win-win

By FRANK DAHL

A recent poll showed that 59 percent of Alaskans are in favor of electronic gaming as a way to raise revenue for the state. Some say this figure may be high.

KTVU-TV, Channel 2, did its own unsentimental poll and that one reflected that 56 percent favored EGMs. We can split hairs all day long, but the bottom line here is that Alaskans want moderate gaming as a way to resolve our states' deficit.

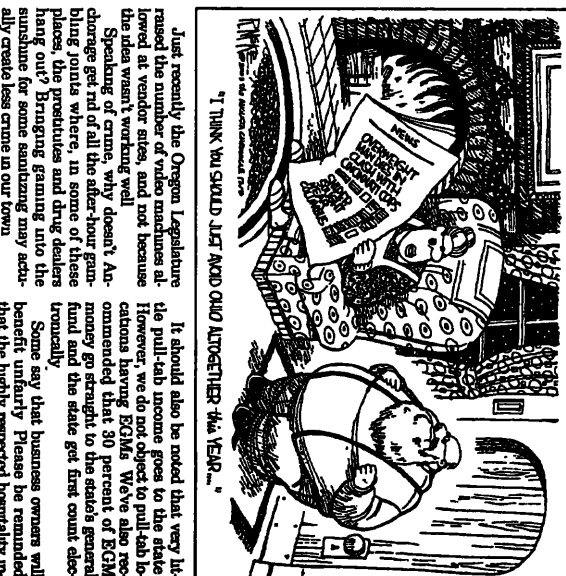
Citizen groups have been asked to think of new revenue raising methods, and told that every idea was going to be put on the table and be considered. Our idea may raise \$50 million to \$100 million annually for the state of Alaska. Naysayers claim it may be closer to "only" \$30 million.

I ask, since when is \$30 million not a lot of money? Most of this opposition is just a smoke screen.

Anchorages should be reminded that the city could see \$5 million to \$10 million each and every year brought in by EGMs. Other communities throughout Alaska would also prosper, however local opinion would prevail.

Some of the money could go straight to social programs and more police on the street. However, at the recently held Alaska Municipal League meeting in Nome, Assemblyman Dick Tremaine's amendment shot down any chance of a resolution favoring the idea. His participation and closed-mind approach resulted in a deal-breaker and loss for all of us.

Some claim that social ills may outweigh any benefit. Instead of unsubstantiated scare tactics, let's look to other states that have this type of gaming. Oregon, for instance, has had EGMs for several years and studies show no serious addiction or crime issues have been associated. Naturally, isolated cases are often touted.



Just recently the Oregon Legislature raised the number of video machines allowed at vendor sites, and not because the idea wasn't working well.

Spending of crime, why doesn't Anchorage get rid of all the after-hour gambling joints where, in some of these places, the prostitutes and drug dealers hang out? Bringing gaming into the sunshine for some sanitizing may actually create less crime in our town.

Some politicians have cried out that their home states down south have seen much hardship due to their full-blown gambling.

Most of these states had their share of crime and underground addiction long before they had EGMs. To now say that Alaska politics could be much like the political graft and corruption black home is ludicrous. We know better.

A few charities have been misled into thinking they will lose income due to EGMs being too much competition for pull-tabs. Competition is not a good enough argument, as the consumer usually is the one to benefit by it. They should be reminded that we have recommended that charities get 30 percent of the EGM monies. Actually they will be making a lot more money than they are currently. Some people just don't want them to know it.

It should also be noted that very little of the pull-tab income goes to the state. However, we do not object to pull-tabs having EGMs. We've also recommended that 30 percent of EGM money go straight to the state's general fund and the state get first count electronically.

Some say that business owners will benefit unfairly. Please be reminded that the highly respected hospitality industry in Alaska is the largest private employer in the state and adds much to the economy.

Vendor sites will provide the square footage necessary for the machines, insurance, supervision and, by the way, the customer! But some folks just can't stand to see anybody else make a buck. Hopefully the state will not cut off its financially broken nose to spite the cost-ridden face.

This poll shows most find the good far outweigh any bad. We've all been asked to do some transforming to come up with ideas. This is one worth serious consideration. **CHAIR** would like to hear yours.

Frank Dahl is past-president of Anchorage Chamber of Commerce and Restaurant Association, and owner of Blues Central & the Chief's Inn.

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SUPREME COURT RULING SUPPRESSES ...

Free speech

THE U.S. SUPREME COURT, which is making a habit of showing its disdain for the Constitution by dabbling with the latest legal fads, decided Wednesday to abuse the First Amendment.

The court's majority ruled the national interest in wiping out corruption, or even its appearance, justifies a more extensive role in the political process for government — even if it limits free speech. The ruling amounts to little more than the rankest do-goodism.

The 300-page ruling on the so-called McCain-Fengold election financing reform law — more properly known as the "Incumbent Protection Act" — means government can ban unregulated, unlimited donations to political parties, or "soft money" that does not fall under limits of individual contributions.

In the past, those funds were seen as political free speech and had been allowed as long as the money was spent for get-out-the-vote efforts and party-building. Democrats said such money was often targeted at specific political races.

Perhaps even more astonishing was the court's restricting broadcast of "issue" ads by interest groups. The justices prohibited such ads from mentioning federal candidates' names in their districts — a month prior to a primary election and within two months of a general election.

IN ESSENCE, the court majority tied your political purse strings and hamstringing your ability to speak out before an election. Instead, it is handing that power to newspaper editors, television news directors and the candidates themselves.

"This is a sad day for the freedom of speech," Justice Antonin Scalia lamented in his dissent. "Who could have imagined that the same court which, within the past four years, has sternly disapproved of restriction upon such inconsequential forms of expression as virtual child pornography, tobacco advertising, dissemination of illegally intercepted communications, and sexually explicit cable programming, would smile with favor upon a law that cuts to the heart of what the First Amendment is meant to protect: the right to criticize the government."

In his dissent, Justice Clarence Thomas worried that the court's action portends Congress' outright regulation of the press because, it, too, is influential in elections. Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, said in his, "The court, upholding multiple laws that suppress both spontaneous and concerted speech, leaves us less free than before."

As we continue our journey down the dark path to serfdom, leaving one freedom here, another there, Justices John Paul Stevens, Sandra Day O'Connor, David Souter, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer seem more than pleased to serve as tour guides.

Time to take on animal rights bullies

By PAUL JENKINS

Ah, it's déjà vu all over again. Friends of Animals, which threatened an Alaska tourism boycott more than a decade ago in response to planned predator control, is again that Alaska is ignoring the group this time around.

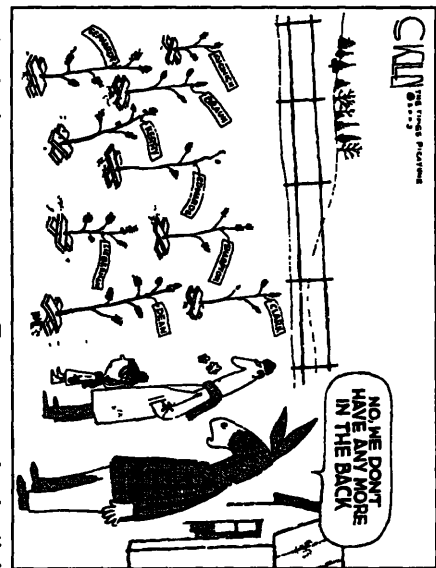
The multimillion-dollar Connecticut-based group formed in 1957 and headed by Priscilla Feral (can that possibly be her real name?) is in a suit over the state's plan to reduce the wolf population by 40 in a 1,700-square-mile area near McGrath. The aim is to improve moose numbers in the area. There are, by the way, perhaps as many as 11,000 wolves in Alaska.

Feral, as she did before, is wowing a tourism boycott and warns she is scheduling "Howl-lan" in New York, San Francisco, Sacramento, Colorado Springs and in, of all places, Lansing, Mich. Pardon me for wondering, but who cares? So a bunch of nut jobs parade around in wolf suits. So what?

Are we to believe hunters and fishermen and those who want to experience Alaska will see these clovers and numbedly plan trips elsewhere? The only people likely to feel any effect from such a boycott would be ecotourism operators whose clients probably include folks most likely to share some of Feral's views.

Gov. Frank Murkowski, bless his heart, pretty much has told Feral and her organization to pound sand, that the state's predator control program will continue, boycott or no boycott, that it's business as usual here.

Feral (that simply cannot be her real name) and her group have a long history of being stupid in Alaska, including being ordered to pay, along with biologist Gordon Haber, some \$170,000 in damages to a trapper some years ago for releasing a live wolf from a snare. They voraciously have gone after the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, attacked Make-A-Wish for arranging for a child



weakened by bone cancer to go on a moose hunt, protested a Round Island estuarine walrus hunt, opposed Native wildlife hunts and howled about wolves in Denali National Park.

With all that, you'd think we take up most of their time. Hardly. This bunch can be stupid almost anywhere.

In Canada, they oppose the spring seal hunt. In Ohio, it's an ordinance regarding animal control officers to pick up free-roaming cats. In Oregon, it's a plan to kill nuisance black bears. In Connecticut, it's pig racing.

They even went after People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, another bunch of weak-jobs. Why? Well, PETA suggested Burger King's veggie burger might not be such a hard thing. Feral et al. countered that because the burger was cooked on the same grill as meat and the bun contained butter, the sandwich was not vegan, after all. Butcher, she pointed out, explains the reproductive cycle of cows.

These folks are never satisfied. If they were not riled up about wolves, it would be bears, or beavers or garden algae. This is, after all, how they make their living: playing the suckers for, well, suckers.

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Publischer

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

ANIMAL RIGHTS-LED BOYCOTT WILL HURT . . .

Eco-tourism

Such a boycott might occur and could be expensive for Alaska's tourism industry, but the irony is that the people it would hurt most here would be those most likely to support or sympathize with their cause.

visitors who come here to hunt and fish would almost certainly come anyway — and could even be encouraged by publicity about wolves, moose, caribou and small airplanes — but those most likely to stay away are the ecotourists

An animal-rights lab boycott would keep business away from those who guide kayak trips and offer whale watching, beer watching, bird watching and the rest. Not all eco-conscious operators sympathize with the animal-rights groups, of course, but the "non-consumer" visitors that are the core of their market are the ones most likely to heed the call to stay away.

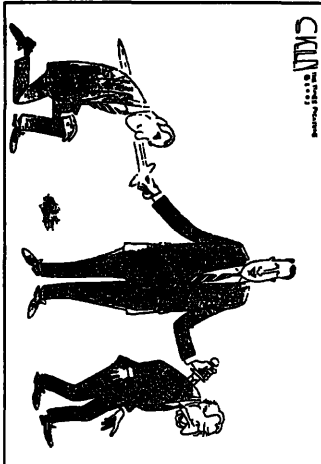
Don't expect Friends of Animals to cancel their boycott in deference to their human friends, that's not the way they do things.

What a guy

ON TUESDAY, Al Gore endorsed Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean without first calling to give his former running mate Joe Lieberman a courtesy heads-up.

Yet earner in the campaign former vice-presidential candidate Lieberman held off on announcing his own candidacy for president until he was sure Al Gore would not be running for the job again.

That confirms what millions of Americans have thought for years — that Al Gore is a jerk.



Blasts from past cause for pause

By ELISE PATKOTAK

**"Slip sliding away, slip sliding away
You know, the nearer your destination,
the more you slip sliding away"**

these words to my generation, the dedication seemed very far away. Now, 30 years later, not so much. It's not that we're not slip sliding anymore, it's just that our destination is much, much closer.

I went to see Simon and Garfunkel in concert a week ago. It was quite a blast from the past. For many of us, if there ever was a defining word for our generation, it was "past." As we look to the future, it was "past," and all the horror that word has come to for both Benjamin and us. And of all the songs that truly spoke to us, certainly among the top 10 are two songs from "The Graduate." "The Sounds of Silence" and "Mrs. Robinson."

Comments on records from the

Comparisons to concerts from the '60s and '70s were inevitable. For instance, at a time when everyone in the hall would have once flicked on a lighter to symbolize peace, at this concert only about three lighters appeared.



My first reaction when they were flunked on was to wonder how those people got through security with them and then to wonder if the fire marshal would coming running up to them and extrajust them in a blast of power. But mostly I was concerned that they were probably people who were still smoking — and not the fun stuff of my past but that hard-core tobacco stuff.

Somewhere in the beginning of the concert, the Everly Brothers made an appearance and sang a few songs. That's when the varicose veins in my legs seemed to pop out with renewed vigor and enthusiasm. It's simply no fun to suddenly feel your age.

My sister said what we concert wasn't like most that she attended in that it never really got to rocking. While admitting that Art Garfunkel still had a magnificent voice, she was disappointed that Paul Simon wasn't allowed to cut loose

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BUT THE THREAT OF POWER GAMES ON TV WAS SIMPLY TOO MUCH TO BEAR



with some of the songs from his *Grace* land album, which she claimed would have brought the crowd to its feet.

average age I was estimating for breaking out into rock music could be dangerous unless they were chiropractors and cardiologists standing by in the wings. After all, most of the younger people there had obviously been brought by their grandparents, not their parents.

It was a funny time for me to attend this concert. The past few years have seen the reappearance in my life of old friends from my dim and distant past — people who were just struck by the impulse to contact me and managed to find a way to do so. A friend from New York City appeared after a 20-year absence, a friend from the old neighborhood after

Right before I left Anchorage to travel east, a college friend contacted me about hearing about me from a publicist. That friend, Nancy, had asked the question if she ever heard of anyone named Elise Serran since the last time Nancy had heard about me I had been in Anchorage, Alaska. She eventually found me through the Internet.

I'd lost Nancy when I visited her last year. I had been in Anchorage and had her new husband just months after

"Now the years are rolling by me, they are rockin' even me
"I am older than I once was, and
"Younger than I'll be, that's not unusual
"Nor it isn't strange, after changes
"Upon changes, we are more or less the
"same"

Elise Patkotak, an Anchorage freelance writer and author of *Parallel Logic*, a humorous look back at her 28 years in Barrow, lives in Anchorage and owns Precious Cargo Ltd, a writing/graphics company

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Publisher

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Senior Editor

MEDIA GRINCHES IGNORE . . .

Good news

YOU MIGHT want to take some of those bad-news stories out of Iraq with a grain of salt, if not more. Some of them are pure media hype.

Many news reporters tend to think that the only real news is bad news, so they are constantly on the prowl for just that. In the process they ignore 99 percent of the overall picture, most of which tends to be what the average person would consider good news.

It's difficult to know what's actually happening in that distant land without being there, but enough does filter through the editorial screening process to know that American troops are accomplishing great things and many Iraqis appreciate them.

The media tendency to find an ounce of bad news in a ton of good showed itself in some coverage of the Thanksgiving visit to Baghdad by President George Bush.

MOST OF the early coverage focused on the delighted response of the American troops whose hands the president shook and to whom he served turkey.

But quickly some misanthropes among the reporters managed to find a few Iraqis who were willing to say they were offended by the fact that the president visited only his troops and didn't stop by to see any Iraqis.

The reporters didn't mention how difficult security would have been for such a visit — especially since it would have had to be unannounced. And though we here don't have any Iraqis on our e-mail or Christmas card lists to tell us for sure, we suspect most Iraqi citizens were just delighted that our president was able to visit their country, however briefly. So take the bad news from Iraq with a grain of salt, at the very least.

Similar Interests

THE BUDDING relationship between Alaska and the Yukon Territory is a promising development and a contrast to worsening relations between Canada and other parts of the United States.

Alaska and the Yukon have much in common and a mutual interest in many economic growth projects like construction of a gas pipeline from the North Slope to the U.S. Midwest, extension of the Alaska Railroad to be up with the White Pass & Yukon Railroad, improvement of the Taylor Highway and construction of a bridge over the Yukon River at Dawson.

Both Alaska and the Yukon Territory will be working with their federal governments on projects of such mutual interest. Where the relationship might lead is hard to predict, but Gov. Frank Murkowski and Yukon Premier Dennis Fentie are already working on a summit in Juneau this winter with British Columbia, Alberta and the Northwest Territories. On the agenda will be a number of emerging developments in the North.

More daylight just around the bend

By TOM BRENNAN

I think my dog is depressed! He acts like he doesn't like me. I know he's a liberal but we declared a truce on politics long ago. And besides, I control the biscuit jar, how could he not like me?

It's not that I'm slow about feeding him the treats. In fact, he is gaining weight, which is another sign of depression. He also seems grumpy and sleeps all the time. I know sleeping all the time is what dogs do, but in the evening he'll go off by himself and huff the sack while my wife and I are still watching television in the living room.

And the other day I tried to take him for a walk when it was 12 below zero. He gave me a rude gesture that I didn't think dogs knew about. This despite the fact that I always put booties on him when it's cold. They're mismatched booties but they keep his feet off the snow and are presumably warm.

We've concluded that he has seasonal affective disorder or SAD, as it's known. That's the reason nobody likes anybody else very much at this time of year, except for those relentlessly cheery people who would smile, laugh and pass out chocolate-chip cookies while waiting in line outside the Gates of Hell.



My wife wanted to Brennan

buy the dog one of those SAD lights that are supposed to improve your mood when the night is 20 hours long and the sun just slides along the top of the Chugach Mountains during the brief time it's visible at all. But I reminded her that she already gave him a reading lamp so he wouldn't have to sit in the dark all day while we are at work.

I've told him not to worry, that psychological winter is almost over, even though true winter doesn't technically start until Dec. 21. The reality is that psychological winter starts in mid-October as the days start to get seriously shorter and peaks in late November and early December when the nights never end.



The days from mid-December on don't count as real winter because Christmas is coming and even normal people are inclined to be cheerful, short days or not. After that comes New Year's Eve, the Super Bowl, Fur Rendezvous and the Iditarod — and they will all seem to come one night after the other, each with the sun higher in the sky and the days growing longer.

And though the calendar gurus say winter solstice is the official start of winter, even grinchers like me consider it the first day of psychological spring. For at least a week beforehand we look forward to it as hump day, the time on the calendar when the worst is over and the days start getting longer. And they'll keep getting longer until they last all night and the kang salmon are running on the Kenai Peninsula.

By about Jan. 10 the days will become noticeably longer, not long enough or bright enough to break out the suntan lotion, but by then the last traces of seasonal depression should be almost entirely gone and you can turn off your SAD light. This applies only to optimists, of course.

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Senior Editor

Tuesday, December 9, 2003 **B-5**

PRESIDENT SIGNS BILL FOR ...

Healthy forests

THE HEALTHY FORESTS initiative signed by President George W. Bush last Wednesday contained important protection against forest fires for Southcentral Alaska.

The initiative is aimed at improving forest health and reducing fire hazards on public lands, especially near communities. Though the president's original plan called for selective cutting on public lands in much of the West, environmentalist complaints prompted Congress to limit the areas where remedial work will be allowed.

The final bill also calls for expedited court decisions on the inevitable green appeals attempting to block forest fire fuel reduction projects.

One measure that made it into the final bill was a provision to remove dead trees in this area that were killed by the years-long spruce bark beetle infestation. The Southcentral measure was advanced and shepherded through the legislative process by Sen. Lisa Murkowski.

Such pro-active protection is long overdue. The problem of forests choked with explosive fuels was caused by decades of aggressive firefighting in areas where occasional wildfires once kept them thinned and healthy.

FIGHTING SUCH fires has a very large downside because it results in thick and dry undergrowth that can become extremely dangerous when fires go out of control, as they often do in such areas.

The risk was dramatically demonstrated here in 1996 when the Miller's Reach blaze scorched 37,000 acres and destroyed 400 homes, cabins and other buildings and in California this fall when raging fires took 22 lives, destroyed more than 3,600 homes and scorched 750,000 acres.

Environmentalists argue against cutting trees for fire protection or any other reason. They claim that fuels reduction opens the way for commercial logging. But Murkowski counters that the Healthy Forests Restoration Act will save people from the human tragedy associated with wildfires — the heartbreak of losing one's home and possessions, the economic losses, and the dangers that wildfires pose to wildland firefighters.

The risk of disastrous fires in Southcentral Alaska during the spring and summer dry season remains high. Area residents should not have to depend on luck and favorable weather on avoidable risks that could kill people and destroy property.

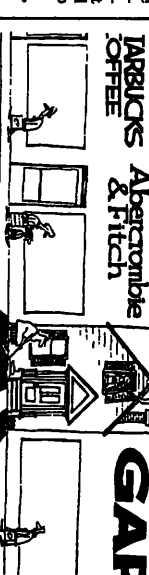
It's time to get on with removing dangerous dead trees and thinning combustible undergrowth that threaten Alaska communities. Doing so will protect the public and improve the health of our forests.

Democrat Dean goes delusional

By **CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER**

Diane Rehm. "Why do you think he [Bush] is suppressing that Sept. 11 report?"

Howard Dean. "I don't know. There are many theories about it. The most interesting theory that I've heard so far — which is nothing more than a theory, it can't be proved — is that he was warned ahead of time by the Saudis. Now who knows what the real situation is?"



Dec 1
It has been 25 years since I discovered a psychiatric syndrome (for the record, Secondary Mania, Archives of General Psychiatry, November 1978), and in the interim I haven't been looking for new ones. But it's time to don the white coat again. A plague is afoot in the land.

Bush Derangement Syndrome, the acute onset of paranoia in otherwise normal people in reaction to the policies, the presidency — nay — the very existence of George W. Bush.

Now, I cannot testify to Howard Dean's sanity before this campaign, but five terms as governor by a man with no visible ties and no history of involuntary commitment is pretty good evidence of a normal mental status. When he averts, however, that "the most interesting theory as to why the president is 'suppressing' the Sept. 11 report, is that Bush knew about Sept. 11 in advance, it's time to check on thorazine supplies.

When Rep. Cynthia McKinney, D-Ga., first broached this idea before the 2002 primary election, it was considered so nutty it helped make her former representative McKinney. Today the Democratic presidential front-runner professes skepticism as to whether the president of the United States was tipped off about 9/11 by the Saudis, and it goes unmentioned that the virus is spreading.

It is, of course, epidemic in New York's Upper West Side and the inner parts of Los Angeles, where the very sight of the president — say, smiling while holding a tray of Thanksgiving turkey in a Bageloid mess hall — caused dozens of cases of apoplexy in otherwise healthy adults. What is worrying epidemiologists about the Dean

incident, however, is that heretofore no case had been reported in Vermont, or any other dairy state.

Moreover, Dean is very smart. Until now, Bush Derangement Syndrome (BDS) had generally struck people with previously compromised intellectual immune systems. Hence its prevalence in Hollywood. Barbara Streisand, for example, wrote her famous September 2002 memo to Dick Gephardt warning that the president was dragging us toward war to satisfy the usual corporate male factors who "clearly have much to gain if we go to war against Iraq," the beguiling industry — lumber being a major industry in a country that is two-thirds desert.

It is true that BDS has struck some pretty smart guys — Bill Moyers ranting about a "right-wing wrecking crew" engaged in "a deliberate, intentional destruction of the United States way of governing," and New York Times columnist Paul Krugman, whose recent book attacks the president so virulently that Krugman's British publisher saw fit to add the cover with images of Vice President Cheney in a Hitler-style mustache and Bush straddled up like Frankenstein.

Nonetheless, some observers look that to be satire, others wrote of Moyers and Krugman as simple aberrations, the victims of too many years of neurologically hazardous punditry.

That's what has researchers so alarmed about Dean. He had never opened for a living and has no detectable sense of humor. Even worse is the fact that he is now exhibiting symptoms of a related illness, Murdron Derangement

Syndrome (MDS), in which otherwise normal people believe that their minds are being controlled by a single, very clever Australian.

Chris Matthews. "Would you break up Fox?"

Howard Dean. "On ideological grounds, absolutely yes, but I don't want to answer whether I would break up Fox or not. What I'm going to do is appoint people to the FCC that have democracy depends on getting information from all portions of the political spectrum, not just one."

Some clinicians consider this delusion — that Americans can get their news from only one part of the political spectrum — the gravest of all. They report that no matter how many times with flash cards with the symbols ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN, MSNBC, NPR, PBS, Time, Newsweek, New York Times, Washington Post, L.A. Times — they remain unresponsive, some in a terrifying near-catatonic torpor.

The sad news is that there is no cure. But there is hope. There are many fine researchers seeking that cure. You do not have to be small, can help. Mailings address Republican National Committee, Washington, D.C., Attention psychiatric department. Just make sure your amount does not exceed \$2,000 (\$4,000 for a married couple).

Charles Krauthammer writes a weekly, nationally syndicated column for The Washington Post. His column is distributed by The Washington Post Writers Group. Copyright 2003 The Washington Post Co.

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A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

Friday, December 5, 2003 **B-7**
WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

ASSEMBLY CANDIDATES SHOULD ...

Show colors

EVER WONDER why at least seven members of Anchorage's 11-member Assembly are liberals? And thus in a community that is largely conservative?

Blame the nonpartisan elections called for under the municipality's home rule charter in effect since 1975. Nonpartisan elections are a nice idea and made good sense in years past when the politics of most candidates were well known. But the system has outlived its usefulness.

We hesitate to suggest changes to a charter that has served the community for 28 years, but an obsolete system is very much a real problem when candidates can run for and get elected to office without declaring a political philosophy. In fact, many get elected without showing their true colors at all.

Candidates in a nonpartisan election can claim to be all things to all people and generally get away with it. They can sound conservative to conservative audiences and liberal to those who lean in that direction. Or they can use smoke and mirrors to make themselves look good to almost everybody but provide no useful information about what direction they will take once in office.

These days, the voters rarely know what they are getting when they choose a candidate. And since Assembly debate and decisions almost never get the kind of public attention given the activities of the mayor and other high-profile politicians, average citizens know little about what is being done on their behalf even when the candidates are in office. Such a charter change should not be made lightly — and even the political realities may be all but impossible to pull off — but it's time for the discussion to begin.

Political candidates should be required to show their true colors before they are elected.

Recipe for disaster

IN CASE YOU are wavering in your conviction that the world is going insane, consider this: Canadian judges soon will be enforcing Islamic law in disputes between Muslims. WorldNetDaily reports that Muslims must submit to Islamic law, called Sharia, but are excused in nations where they are a minority under a non-Muslim government.

The Internet news report, citing the "Canadian Law Times," says Canada is working to set up a system where cases "will be decided by a Muslim arbitrator, but the local secular Canadian court will be the enforcer" for that nation's 1 million Muslims.

You have to wonder how a nation that polices speech, and enforces multiculturalism and political correctness as religions, can long endure — even without the burden of legal systems for different cultures and religions. It is another ingredient in Canada's recipe for disaster.

Wolf wars about more than wolves

By PAUL JENKINS

First, let me say for the record that I have nothing against wolves. Nothing I wouldn't want my schmeazer to marry one. In fact — and I usually don't share the usual about-damn-No. 6 — in a past life, I was a wolf, a dark, cranky German wolf with a taste for BMWs and blonde babes hawking Heinemanns to their grandpa's house. I think I may have come to a bad end. But I digress.

Wolves, or rather the sensible thinning of wolf numbers in a 2,200-square-mile area near McGrath, are making headlines again, and animal wackos have their under in a bunch. They promise, as usual, to boycott Alaska tourism if the program is not shelved — hurting, in their zealotry, those who had no part in the decision to reduce the wolf population.

What triggered this most recent round in the endless bout over predator control in Alaska?

Rolls in McGrath say they harvest up to 90 moose a year in Game Management Unit 19D, but need more. The state just coughed up more than \$100,000 to remove 78 black bears and nine brown bears from the area (without much in the way of protest, you may note), and planned to allow three aerial permit holders to shoot about 40 wolves in the area as the predator control program's second step.

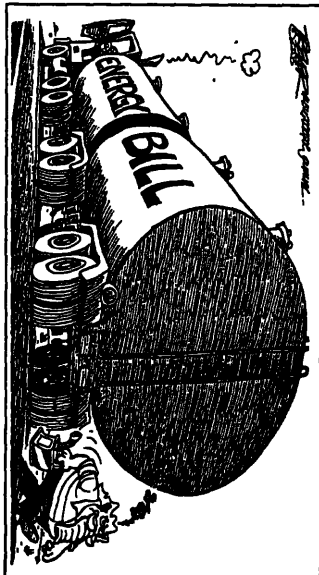
Opponents clamored over hunting is the problem, that moose numbers have improved because the bears were taken for a ride. They asked Superior Court Judge Sharon Gleason to rule that the Board of Game did not follow the law in instituting predator control, and they want her to block the much-mooted second step.

No matter how ruling this week, the Wolf Wars will rage on. At their very core are power and money. Let's concede this point to the wackos: Alaska would not be Alaska without wolves, and bears and crazies, oh my. Nobody in their right mind wants to whack all 7,500 to 11,000 of them.

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Jenkins



them roaming the state. (The wolves, that is, not the bears and crazies. We can talk about them later.) Despite a predator campaign that would have wiped out the last of the wolf population, wildlife buckery of the wolf population. From the start, it was planned that the McGrath hunt would involve only 0.38 percent of the state's land and target, at most, about 0.53 percent of its wolves.

It is easy to understand the wackos' fascination with wolves. Forcunipies, plums and garden slugs do not fire the imagination, much less fifteen bank accounts. When you need something sexy to wring your hands about, to help milk the hapless rubes, to tap those fat checkbooks in New Hampshire, Connecticut and other points south and east, well, wolves fill the bill nicely.

For many who rarely encounter wolves while motoring over the river and through the woods, the predators are magic, the wilds primal, dark essence, its blood-chilling soul, effortlessly, silently, seamlessly gliding as rapacious sharks through the falling shadows in an eternal hunt. In their view, without wolves, without the promise of them forever, Dearth might as well be Detroit.

In that, they may be right, but others more grounded in reality see wolves for what they are — opportunistic killers whose numbers can get out of hand. "I wonder how many activists have ever seen a real wolf?" John Jamieson of Ambler asks in a recent letter. "They

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Paul Jenkins is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

It's more like the Kachemg of a cash register.

But more importantly, it would put an end to the sound they so dearly love. No, no, no, not the howl of the wolf.

That's been the wackos' aim all along, I suspect, to never actually find out what would happen if predator control increased hunting opportunities near McGrath and wolf numbers rebounded because more prey was available? What could they say then? The possibility of such a success must be their worst nightmare. It would reduce their power to tell us how to live. But more importantly, it would put an end to the sound they so dearly love. No, no, no, not the howl of the wolf.

There is nothing wrong with the predator control program slated for the McGrath area, but if the judge shuts down the effort today because of procedural problems, its outcome will forever be in doubt.

We can only hope he is wrong, but if not, you can bet some would fight wolf calling in Eagle River Valley, saying the critics have the right to eat children.

Read "Little Red Riding Hood," they'd say. And wolves were, after all, here first.

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

Thursday, December 4, 2003 **B-7**

PEOPLE MOVER SYSTEM A...

Success story

ONE OF Anchorage's more interesting success stories is the People Mover bus system.

Started up in 1974 after a vote of the people the previous year, the People Mover will carry about 3.4 million passengers this year. About 12,000 passengers per day ride the buses on 17 different routes.

The system was once considered an expensive concession to political correctness and seemed to be used largely by greens for trips too long for their bicycles. In the early days, the sight of mostly empty buses caused many of our more practical citizens to grit their teeth.

But nowadays, the People Mover is more heavily used and promoted as a work force delivery system, carrying people to work who either don't have cars or are unable to drive for some reason.

The system isn't cheap. Its operating budget is more than \$17 million and the cost is heavily subsidized. The total includes passenger fares of about \$2.5 million, federal support of \$3.1 million and about \$11 million in municipal funds. West-urdon looks in another \$5 million for capital investments.

Among those who appreciate the People Mover system are managers at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, where many employees from one-car or no-car families would otherwise face expensive options for getting to work.

The bus system will probably never be self-supporting, but it seems to be filling a legitimate need and doing it rather well.

Open meetings

THE ALASKA Natural Gas Development Authority's board is toying with the notion of seeking exemptions from the states open meeting and purchasing laws.

We think that is a dangerous step that should be taken with utmost care.

The gas authority, established by voters, is seeking to build a \$12 billion project that would move natural gas from the North Slope to Valdez for liquefaction and transport to market.

"I personally believe the (open-meetings law) is a significant impediment to what we are doing," said Chairman Andy Warwick in a "Petroleum News" story by Larry Pearl. Warwick also said state purchasing laws could slow the authority's work.

The open-meetings law ensures adequate public notice of state board meetings, and generally keeps them open to the public. State purchasing laws ensure accountability and fair dealings. Their provisions may be a stumbling block in the private sector, but the authority is not a private entity.

We believe that changing those laws simply because they are an inconvenience may not be the best public policy decision, and it certainly is not a change aimed at promoting public confidence.

Fund change would ease finances

By LEW M. WILLIAMS, JR.

Gov. Frank Murkowski presents his budget and a plan for funding it on Dec. 15. It will be interesting but it is up to the Legislature to craft the real budget for the state.

The governor has some control in that he can introduce a budget and legislation and can veto actions of the Legislature. He also doesn't have to spend all of the money appropriated. But lawmakers are the ones who approve a final budget and pass any laws affecting dividends and taxes.

Earlier this year, the governor's budget drafters hunted at cuts of up to \$250 million in order to avoid withdrawing more than \$400 million from the Constitutional Budget Reserve, which runs dry if revenue and spending don't soon match.

Fortunately, the price of oil has stayed near \$30 a barrel for the past few months, putting \$100 million more revenue into the state treasury than anticipated earlier. So the governor now says it may not take up to \$250 million in cuts.

The governor last year offered several ideas for increasing revenue to avoid reducing the individual income tax. He suggested a seasonal sales tax, a fee for varying Alaska game, an increase in the gasoline tax. None of which caught on with the lawmakers.

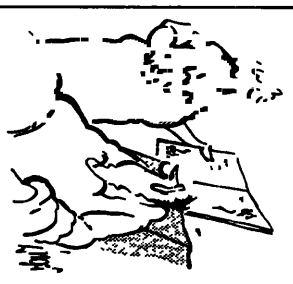
So the governor vetoed money for the seniors longevity bonuses and cut funds for power incentives. Those and other cuts gained the attention of lawmakers, who should be telling their lawmakers to get busy. It doesn't do to challenge Murkowski on budget cuts if he says he will do it, he means it.

A well-publicized plan offered to the governor, the lawmakers and the people of Alaska by the trustees of the Alaska Permanent Fund solves the problem until increased resource development, boosted by infrastructure upgrades, pays off.

The trustees propose paying dividends from the Alaska Permanent Fund to the state's residents.

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"Mother sent us such a Christmas card."

Fund based on the market value of the fund rather than on annual cash earnings. If the system used by the University of Alaska Foundation and most other foundations in the United States.

They pay out, for example, 5 percent of the market value of the total fund. Most trust funds, including Alaska's, average 8 percent or more per year in earnings. So, if 5 percent is taken out, 3 percent stays in the fund for inflation proofing and growth. To guard against occasional years when trust fund earnings less than 8 percent, the payout is based on the average fund value over five years.

For the next five years, Alaska Permanent Fund trustees estimate the five-year average value of the fund at \$27.5 billion. (They are a little conservative. Earlier this year, they projected the market value of the fund at \$25.1 billion next June 30. The fund value went over \$26.1 billion last Tuesday. It's reported daily at www.apf.org.)

If the percent of market value went into effect, 5 percent of that \$27.5 billion would provide \$1.375 billion for dividends and state spending. Using one-half of that for dividends means \$1.145 for each of the 600,000 recipients, compared with the most recent dividend of \$1.10756.

The other half of the \$1.375 billion, or \$687,500,000, would eliminate the need

for \$400 million from the budget reserve and \$250 million in cuts. It also means no need for a state individual income tax or state sales tax.

The co-chairman of the state House Finance Committee, Bill Williams, R-Saxman (and a candidate for the state Senate) proposed last year a different split of an appropriation from the Permanent Fund: 40 percent to dividends, 40 percent to state operations and 20 percent to finance the capital construction budget.

If that 20 percent financed general obligation bonds over 20 years, billions of dollars in schools, clinics, highways, ferries, power grids, natural gas pipelines and other infrastructure could be built to promote development. That's jobs during and after construction and more revenue for the state, including corporate income tax from construction companies and their suppliers.

Because withdrawals from the Permanent Fund on market value means dividends won't increase as fast as they did a few years ago. They also won't crash back as fast as they have. The question for Alaska is whether to pay dividends that increase gradually or to pay an individual income tax or state sales tax, or both.

Alaskans will have a chance to vote on changing management of the Permanent Fund to a percent of market value. Lawmakers have before them legislation offering the plan as an amendment to the constitution. It is a simple fiscal plan, not complex like the idea 85 percent of Alaskans rejected several years ago.

To show best intentions to Alaskans who worry that lawmakers are after their dividends (which, incidentally, they could take right now along with inflation-proofing funds, if brave enough), the lawmakers should pass legislation guaranteeing the amount of the 5 percent from the fund that will go into dividends in the event the voters approve the constitutional amendment in November of 2004.

Great inducement to vote.

Lew Williams, Jr. is a retired publisher of the Kenilworth Daily News. His e-mail is lmw@earthlink.net.

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WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

Check impacts

First things last

The political climate, bad now, will be even worse next year as election campaigning begins to boil over Energy bill? Politics comes first in the Senate And here's mud in your eye, America

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

CULTURE SHOCK FOR...

Trial lawyers

GOV. FRANK MURKOWSKI, bless him, wants to sock a big group of Outside lawyers in the chops. Or, to be more precise, he wants to chop off their claim to \$12 million they think they deserve for losing big-time in court here.

They are the plaintiff attorneys who convinced some Alaska fishermen that they could win a billion dollars or more from processors, contending they were the victims of price fixing. No matter that the market, as usual, sets the price.

Well, they didn't win. But in the process of pursuing the case the lawsuit disrupted the fishery scene and consumed weeks of wasted court time.

Nonetheless, two of the defendant processors — apparently fearing the outcome of the trial — settled before the case went to court. They agreed to pay \$40 million, which most people assumed would all go to the fishermen.

Think again. The lawyers claim that \$12 million of that should be paid to them in fees and another \$4.5 million to cover costs.

The upshot is that the 4,500 fishermen who were named as plaintiffs would each receive a little more than \$2,100 each, according to the governor. The lawyers would take home many many times that.

SAID MURKOWSKI, "I believe the fees should be shared by those who have been hurt by this exercise in poor judgment, namely, the fishermen and the processors."

He proposes adding \$6 million to the take of the fishermen, which, he said, "could make a significant difference to many of them." For the rest, "And I think it only fair that the processors should get the other half," the governor said.

"They had their industry turned upside down. Their managers were sitting in depositions and in court, instead of attending to business. They now have to reconstruct an industry left in shambles, while Outside lawyers left town in a limousine. That's not justice."

Murkowski has asked the state's attorney general to make that argument when the proposed financial split is submitted for judicial approval in Superior Court in Anchorage on Thursday.

Maybe justice really will prevail.

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

New Israel 'treaty' is a suicide note

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

On Monday, a peace agreement was signed by Israelis and Palestinians. This "Oslo Accord" has gotten much attention. And the signing itself was greeted with much hoopla. Journalists were down in from around the world by the Swiss government. Jimmy Carter headed a list of foreign dignitaries. The U.S. Embassy in Bern sent an observer.

This was all rather peculiar. The agreement was signed not by Israeli and Palestinian officials, but by two people with no power.

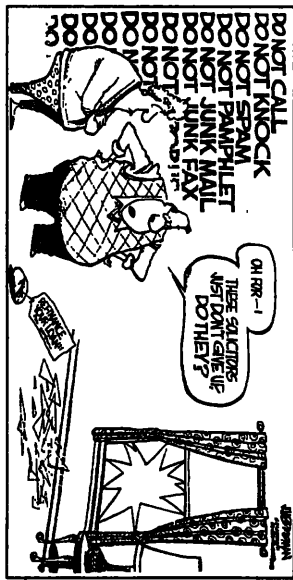
On the Palestinian side, the negotiator was former information minister Yasser Arafat. On the Israeli side, however, was led by Yossi Beilin, a man whose political standing in his own country is so low that he failed to make it into Parliament. After helping bring his Labor Party to ruin, Beilin abandoned it for the far-left Meretz Party, which then did so badly in the last election that Beilin is now a private citizen.

There is a reason why he is one of Israel's most reviled and discredited politicians. He was the principal ideologue and architect behind the "peace" fiasco on Israel in 1993. Those Oslo agreements have brought a decade of the worst terror in all Israeli history.

Now he is at it again. And Secretary of State Colin Powell wrote a letter to Beilin and Rabin expressing appreciation for their effort, and is now planning to meet with them.

This is scandalous. Israel is a democracy, and this agreement was negotiated in defiance of the democratically (and overwhelmingly) elected government of Israel. It is a private U.S. citizen negotiating a treaty on his own, he could go to jail under the Logan Act. If an Israeli does it, he gets a jail on the back from the secretary of state.

Moreover, this "peace" is entirely halfhearted. It is written as if Oslo never happened. The Palestinian side repeats solemn pledges to recognize Israel, renounce terror, and anti-Israel incitement, etc. — all promised in Oslo. These promises are today such a dead letter that the Palestinian side is openly bragging these days again, as if the Is-



raelis have forgotten that in return for these pledges 10 years ago, Israel recognized the PLO, brought it out of Tunisian exile, established a Palestinian Authority, permitted it an army with 50,000 guns and invited the world to donate billions to this new Authority.

Arafat pocketed every Israeli concession, turned his territory into an armed camp and then launched a vicious terror war that has lasted more than three years and killed more than 1,000 Israelis. It is Lucy and the football all over again, and the same chorus of disillusion who so applauded Oslo — Jimmy Carter, Sandy Berger, Tom Friedman — is applauding again. This time, however, the Israeli surrender is so breathtaking it makes Oslo look rational.

A Palestinian state of course. Exactly every Jewish settlement in new Palestine, of course. Redividing Jerusalem, of course. But that is not enough. Beilin gives up the ultimate symbol of the Jewish connection and claim to the land, the center of the Jewish state for 1,000 years before the Roman destruction, the subject of Jewish longing in poetry and prayer for the 2,000 years since — the Temple Mount.

And Beilin doesn't just give it up, say, some neutral international authority will give it to sovereign Palestine. Jews will wait at Arab surveillance.

No satisfied with having given up Israel's soul, Beilin gives up the body too. He not only returns Israel to its 1967 borders, arbitrary and indefensible, but

he does so without any serious security safeguards. Palestine promises to acquire and buy no more weapons than specified in some treaty annex. This is a joke. Oslo had similarly detailed limitations on Palestinian weaponry, and nobody even pretended to enforce them. Last year, a massive illegal hoard came in from Iran on the Karine A. What did the world do about it? Nothing.

Yet, however, Israel still has control over Palestine's borders. Under Beilin, this ends. Palestine will be free to acquire as much lethal weaponry as it wants. And on the crucial question that even the most dovish Israelis insist on — that the Palestinians not have the right to flood Israel with Arab refugees — the agreement is utterly ambiguous. Third parties (including among others the irredeemably hostile Syria and its puppet Lebanon) are to suggest exactly how many Palestinians are to return to Israel, and the basis for the number Israel will be required to accept will be the mathematical average!

This is not a peace treaty; this is a suicide note — by a private citizen on behalf of a country that has utterly repudiated him politically. That it should get any encouragement from the United States or from its secretary of state is a disgrace.

Charles Krauthammer writes a weekly, nationally syndicated column for the Washington Post. His column is distributed by the Washington Post Writers Group. Copyright 2003 The Washington Post Co.

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Monday, December 1, 2003 **B-5**

ALPINE OIL FIELD . . .

Earns respect

ALPINE IS TURNING out to be the little oil field that could — relatively little, that is. It deserves respect. Once expected to produce 80,000 barrels of crude oil per day, Alpine has maintained average daily production of 100,000 barrels for the last two years, approximately 10 percent of Alaska's overall production. And Alpine's output is expected to climb another 5,000 barrels per day next year, when a new high-tech facility comes on line.

The field recently gave up its 100 millionth barrel. Discovered in 1994 and pronounced commercial in 1996, Alpine started operations in 2000 and is currently projected to yield a total of 429 million barrels.

Though small by comparison to the 14 billion-barrel Prudhoe Bay field, Alpine was — when tapped — the largest onshore oil discovery made in the United States in more than a decade.

Alpine is unique because it lies beneath the environmentally sensitive delta of the Colville River near the border of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. It underlies a 40,000-acre section of the delta, but surface facilities occupy just 97 acres, two-tenths of 1 percent of the field area.

ConocoPhillips Alaska, which operates the field for itself and Anadarko Petroleum, brags that Alpine is a near-zero discharge facility. It says all waste generated there is reused, recycled or properly disposed.

Alpine is a good example of modern oil development in a sensitive area.

Predator control

NO DOUBT about it, predator control is politically incorrect. That doesn't mean it's not the right thing in some situations, just that it offends the hysterics among us. And the wildlife protectionists are all about about newly approved plans to allow aerial hunting of wolves to increase the moose and caribou populations upon which they prey. They concede that increased game counts would benefit subsistence hunters, but they look down their noses at so-called sport hunters, who hunt to fill their freezers as well.

The fact is that reducing predator numbers in areas like those in question will increase game populations to the benefit of both urban and rural resource users. Testimony at the recent Board of Game meeting suggested that the two groups are in agreement on the issue, though some activists would like to drive a wedge between them.

Allowing wolves to live out their lives unfazed by aerial hunters will not allow them to die in peace. Life in the wild is never a placid existence. Wolves that might be killed were not headed for quiet retirement without predator control.

The activists are threatening to launch a nation-wide tourism boycott. That would hurt, but it may just be the cost of doing the right thing.

Many job loss laments are overdone

By **WALTER E. WILLIAMS**

In 1970, the telecommunications industry employed 421,000 switchboard operators. In the same year, Americans made 9.8 billion long distance calls. Today, the telecommunications industry employs only 78,000 operators. That's a tremendous 80 percent job loss.

What should Congress have done to save those jobs? Congress could have taken a page from India's history. In 1924, Mahatma Gandhi attacked machinery, saying it "helps a few to ride on the backs of millions" and warned, "The machine should not make atrophies the limbs of man."

With that kind of support, Indian textile workers were able to politically block the introduction of labor-saving textile machines. As a result, in 1970 India's textile industry had the level of productivity of ours in the 1920s.

Michael Cox, chief economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, and author Richard Alms tell the rest of the telecommunications story in their Nov. 17 New York Times article, "The Great Job Machine."

Spectacular technological advances made it possible for the telecommunications industry to cut its manpower needs down to 78,000 to handle not the annual 9.8 billion long distance calls in 1970, but today's more than 98 billion calls.

One forgotten beneficiary in today's job loss demagoguery is the consumer. Long distance calls are a tiny fraction of their cost in 1970. Just since 1984, long distance costs have fallen by 60 percent. Using 1970s technology to make today's 98 billion calls would require 4.2 million operators. That's 3 percent of our labor force. Moreover, a long distance call today costs 40 times more than it does



Finding cheaper ways to produce goods and services frees up labor to produce other things. If productivity gains aren't made, where in the world would we find workers to produce all those goods that weren't even around in the 1970s?

It's my guess that the average anti-free-trade person wouldn't protest, much less argue that Congress should have done something about the job loss in the telecommunications industry. He'd reveal himself an idiot.

But there's no significant economic difference between an industry using technology to reduce production costs and using cheaper labor to do the same. In either case, there's no question that the worker who finds himself out of a job because of the use of technology or cheaper labor might encounter hardships. The political difference is that it's easier to organize resentment against India and China than against technology.

Both Republican and Democratic interventionists like to focus on job losses as they call for trade restrictions, but let us look at what was happening in the 1990s. Cox and Alms report that recent Bureau of Labor Statistics show an annual job loss of 27 million in 1993 to a high of 35.4 million in 2001. In 2000, when unemployment reached its low,

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

KING COVE ROAD OPPONENTS . . .

Risk lives

Y A GOTTA love Sen. Ted Stevens. He's a guy who works long and hard to protect the interests and lives of his constituents in the face of environmental groups that could not care less about Alaskans.

The interminable battle to link the small, remote village of King Cove to nearby Cold Bay by road to ensure access to that community's all-weather runways for medical help and economic growth is a great example.

Alaska's senior senator inserted into an energy and water spending bill a directive that the U.S. Corps of Engineers — already evaluating six alternatives to be the two Alaska Peninsula communities together — adopt the one known as Alternative 1, a single-lane, gravel, 17-mile road that would cross private land from outside King Cove to the edge of the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge and Wilderness.

The rider's language also prohibits lawsuits challenging the selection. The measure won approval in both chambers and is on its way to the president.

In addition to the road in Alternative 1, there would be hovercraft service from where the single-lane route would end at the refuge border to Cold Bay, six miles away across sometimes treacherous seas.

None of this sits well with the folks who say they want to protect the refuge. They fret that such a road would be the beginning of a drive to build the originally proposed 33-mile road that would follow the southeast edge of the refuge and link Cold Bay with King Cove. That would have been King Cove's first choice.

IF WILDLIFE protectionists and environmentalists had their way, they would leave King Cove residents forced to depend on a ferry or hovercraft that starts at Leaning Harbor — making the trip 16 miles across often-dangerous Cold Bay. Ridiculous.

The effort to link Cold Bay and King Cove primarily is aimed at saving lives, not putting them in more peril. More than once, people in desperate need of medical help have been forced to wait for improved weather before they could leave King Cove to reach medical facilities. And people perished on an emergency flight trying to fly from the village's about 200 days a year. Their only alternative has been to wait — or risk their lives in tumultuous seas.

Sen. Stevens understands that Alaskan lives are at stake in this debate, that his constituents deserve the same access to medical help as any other Americans. He should be commended for his effort.

We've asked the question before, we'll ask it again. When does concern for the environment or protection of wildlife become something else, something that values human life and suffering so little? Is it a twisted religion? Zealotry? Insanity? Whatever it is, its adherents appear more than willing to sacrifice Alaskan lives for their beliefs.

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

Big doings in Anchorage 83 years ago

(Editor's Note: There was no attention given, officially or otherwise, that last Sunday, Nov. 23, was an important day in the history of Anchorage. Well, maybe not a really momentous occasion. But something happened on that day in 1890 that merits a footnote in the annals of Alaska's largest city, even as the years roll by. We were reminded of this by a faithful reader who sent along a clipping of a Saturday Sunday column that appeared in the Anchorage Times on Oct. 17, 1970. Now, 33 years later, we reprint that column discussing that historical day 83 years ago.)

By WILLIAM J. TOBIN

LOUSAC'S DRUG store, located at Fourth and D Street opposite the Harmony Theatre, noted that there were only 31 days left before Christmas — and advertised Victoria, "the Christmas gift that lasts a lifetime," for only \$5 down — for any model from the Victoria IV at only \$25 all the way up to the fancy Victoria XI cabinet model for \$150.



Tobin

THE MOVIE AT the Empress Theatre, and playing for the last time that night, was "Should a Woman Tell?" a "sex-reel" Mexican super-production with an all-star cast headed by Alice Lake in a "sensationally dramatic romance of New England fashion, if you will, of the 'thirties'."

THE DATE WAS a Tuesday, back there half a century ago, and the Harmony — across the street from Lou's — was presenting Booth Tarkenton's "The Conquest of Canaan," starring Jack Sherrill and Edith Tashiro in the "story of a Discarded Boy who leaves his Native Town under a Shadow and returns to win his Reluctant Though Whole-Hearted Admiration." It was a film of "Turkington At His Best."

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There's six billion of them down here! Make sure none get on the ship before we take off.

THE TEMPERATURE at 8 o'clock that morning in Anchorage was 5 degrees above zero, and the sky was cloudy and the winds were calm. It was 16 below at the same time in Fairbanks, and because this was a railroad town the Times carried the thermometer readings of points up the line — 6 below at Matanuska, 18 above at Wasilla, zero below at Talkeetna, 14 above at Cold Creek, 2 below at Hurricane, minus 10 at Summit, 4 below at Healy and 12 below at Nenana. On that chilly November Tuesday in Anchorage, the businessmen of the day could have dashed out for lunch at the Fresno Cafe, which was "open day and night" and featured "everything in season and service the very best" — "business with your meals."

BROWN & HAWKINS, the "store for all the people," was advertising dog harnesses, dog collars and low limes, plus "the most perfect snow shoe made" — average weight per single shoe one and one-quarter to two pounds, 50 to 60 inches long and 9 and 10 inches wide. The advertisement also featured "Dog Feed Cereals, Yellow and Corn Meal."

AND IT TELLS us something about Anchorage of the old days to report that the Brown and Hawkins advertisement of dog food and rags was the largest of all the ads in that day's six-page edition of the Times — which

also found room to report that young Harold Segal fell off a ladder while helping decorate the new Anchorage school gym, "with the result that his right wrist was broken in two places."

ALL OF THIS through the pages of the past is a reminder that the big news of that particular Tuesday was contained in the thick type in the middle of Page One which proclaimed "Anchorage Is Incorporated." The story under that headline was brief, "Col. F. Meers is in receipt of the following self-explanatory cable from Judge Fred M. Brown of Valdez: 'Anchorage was duly incorporated today.'"

AND SO ON this Nov. 23, 1970, our old home town of Anchorage will celebrate its 83th birthday. And to do things properly, as befits a town of railroad men and dog mushers that grew up into the modern metropolis of the north, we'll start the celebration a little bit early — on Nov. 13 — and recall the glory days of old, with a big winking of a time. It will be a big party to remember, a Golden Anniversary in which everybody can participate, a time of fun and festivity for young and old, pioneer and cheechako.

AS PART OF the 11-day celebration, there will be old movies shown at the Fourth Avenue Theatre, a carnival daily in the business area, snowmobiles (what, no dog sleds?), the grand opening of the Royal Inn Hotel, exhibits and displays of all kinds and sorts, honorees for former mayors and city councilmen, visits by foreign dignitaries, dancers and lunchboxes and balls and parties, an excursion train trip to Seward, with music and refreshments and souvenir that will light the winter sky above downtown Anchorage.

TRUE, it's all a month away. But nobody likes to be invited to a party at the last minute. It's time now to begin making plans to attend as many of the functions as possible. The program will be completed shortly — and the word is out. It'll come.

William J. Tobin is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

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BILL J. ALLEN
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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

TEMPORARY SETBACK ON . .

Energy bill

THE U.S. SENATE'S failure to pass an energy bill this year was a disappointing but unsurprising development in the long struggle to increase the nation's domestic energy supply.

The bill is now delayed until at least January and perhaps later, leaving — among other things — the question of building a gas pipeline from Alaska to the Midwest up in the air. The gas isn't going away, nor is the need for it in the Lower 48, but pushing the bill into an election year could make a sensible resolution even more difficult.

Alaska's congressional delegation worked hard to get the bill passed before Congress' winter break, but their efforts were thwarted by obstructionists and environmentalists intent on blocking the bill.

Passage of meaningful energy legislation this year became difficult because the package appeared to be a grab-bag of legislative pork assembled to appease regional interests.

And since perception often tends to outweigh reality in the world of politics these days, use of the "pork" label created perceptions that became difficult to overcome even for projects that were anything but pork.

An important case in point, some media critics labeled the \$18 billion in federal loan guarantees for an Alaska Highway gas pipeline as pork. But the cost to the federal treasury of such guarantees would almost certainly be zero so the justification for the label is difficult to understand.

THE LOAN guarantees would reduce the cost of borrowing for the gas pipeline project by the major energy companies involved, improving the line's economic viability and bringing Alaska gas into the nation's marketplace at a competitive price.

Undoubtedly some advocates of a liquefied natural gas pipeline from Prudhoe Bay to Southeast Alaska will use the energy bill delay as an opportunity to advance their case. But the economics of such a line strongly suggest that its gas could not compete in the marketplace, so their efforts are unlikely to succeed.

What might be more useful would be for the state to proceed with its negotiations with the energy companies to bring to bear the economic leverage offered by its tax and royalty share pending resolution of federal issues.

Bringing Alaska's North Slope gas to market and opening the coastal plan of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas exploration are both proving to be long struggles similar to the years-long battle for statehood.

That struggle ultimately was won over long odds. Alaska is accustomed to such fights and should continue these two for as long as it takes to achieve victory.

The state's economic future hangs in the balance, so giving up is not an option.

Sorry...

I am sorry that I will no longer be able to read your articles printed in the Anchorage Daily News, as I have just cancelled our subscription to that publication.

Last July, when the News ran the big article on two homosexual men who went to British Columbia to get "married," I came close to canceling.

Then, later in the summer they ran another big article about an older man who married a girl who was a minor. He served prison time for this, and I felt the writer went overboard making it a "love story."

The final straw came when they ran a photo of those two men who went to British Columbia to get "married," and put it right there on the page devoted to weddings, engagements and anniversaries.

What these homosexuals did is not legal in Alaska. We went to great efforts to not accept such unions. I am especially disturbed because the News trumpet their use in the classrooms and I feel giving extensive coverage to underage marriage and homosexual marriage are not something the school children need to be reading about in the paper.

It has become obvious to me that the Anchorage Daily News has an agenda going here that I want no part of, nor will I choose to give any financial support to further.

Joann Odd
Ninotchka

Steam

(RE) "The way we see it, the more the market," Nov. 21. Nov. 21. Delusions. I'm still chattering, visualizing certain feel faces and steam coming out of ears.

Josel Holbert
Anchorage

Attaching?

I was disturbed by the Nov. 13 Times editorial attacking Mayor (Mark) Begich for his support of the "Trust the People" initiative. The initiative would allow Alaskans to choose their senator rather than rely on a governor's appointment.

Letters to The Times



The Times writer feels that the initiative is embarrassing to Republicans, who allowed Frank Murkowski to appoint his daughter to his own U.S. Senate seat. I disagree. I think the initiative is embarrassing to anyone who supports a democracy in a government that strives to be democratic.

Let me point out that both parties have been suckered in on this one. In 1976, the Democratic governor of Minnesota appointed himself to a vacant Senate seat, to the fury of his constituents and his subsequent denunciations.

Steve Compton
Anchorage

Editor's note: We do not question Begich's right to support the initiative, we pointed out that using his position as mayor of Anchorage for fund raising was a misuse of office.

Wolforth deal

(RE) Begich gives Wolforth a sweet deal. Thursday Nov. 20. Thirty-thousand dollars is peanuts compared to the \$66,000 past administrations have been paying an engineer for doing nothing. Thirty-thousand dollars is just making a living here in Alaska. I know, I work for the state and I make a comparable amount and still have to work a part-time job to make ends meet. At 30

Ga, it sounds like Mr. Begich gave the man a job, not a sweet deal.

Graduated License?

Do you own a restaurant or a store at the mall? The graduated drivers license or House Bill 213 is going to affect you.

Restaurants and stores employ teens. Also, teens are the majority of the customers. A graduated license will keep teens off the roads, meaning less business. If you're an employer, you'll lose a lot of employees. The time you get the most foot traffic is around 5:30 p.m. The graduated license would restrict teens from being on the road at night.

This program says someone older than 25 must accompany teens for six months. If they get a ticket, it becomes their time up to a year. If parents can't find anyone older than 25 to accompany their teen, how are they going to get to their social events? You can't say, "Take the bus," because teens need driving experience in order to pass the test.

Teens can't drive together, so parking lots will fill up faster and will be using up more gas and oil. In the winter, the roads have ice, with more cars with studs we'll have more road work.

Say "no" to House Bill 213.

Jordyn Steele
Anchorage

Just say no

House Bill 213 would put in place graduated driver's licenses, an unfair three-step program that discriminates against new drivers.

The licenses would keep teens from driving together and driving at night, which in the end will affect us by raising valuable and non-reusable resources (allegedly), put more cars on the roads, and keep teens from working night jobs.

Such licenses also are very unfair because teens that get into trouble while on provisional license will have to pay three times — once to pay off the ticket (if they get one), once to pay insurance fees and last they will have to wait an extra six months to get a full license.

The proposal is unfair to young drivers and will hurt the economy.

Justin Oller
Anchorage

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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Friday, November 28, 2003 B-7

A LEGISLATOR WITHOUT PEER:

Ramona Barnes

WHEN RAMONA BARNES first went to the Legislature in January 1978, the state of Alaska was exactly 20 years old. When she died Wednesday morning, the state was just 5 1/2 weeks shy of its 46th anniversary. For a quarter of a century, even as her health declined in recent years, she remained one of the most powerful political figures in Alaska history.

She knew the Legislature's workings like the captain of a battleship knows every gear and motor that keeps it in fighting trim. Like a sea captain at war, she was a fighter. Never one to mince words, never one for subtleties when a direct hit would win the day, Ramona — everyone called her by her first name — was not a timid lawmaker.

Her colleagues admired her tenacity and skill, and gave her credit for being what she was — an up-front, no-holds-bar person who knew the ins and outs of legislative operations as few others have, before or since.

Some in Juneau feared her. Her wrath could be biting, her tongue sharp, her memory long, her tolerance of fools extremely limited. Yet, for all her gruff demeanor, she had a tender side that made her beloved to friends who stood by her, in her vigorous days of leadership and in the days of late when she became physically frail.

In Juneau and on the campaign trail in Anchorage, she was tireless. A Republican through and through, she was a leader in the fight to toughen the state's anti-crime laws, particularly during her service as House Judiciary Committee chairman. Among other things, she led the fight to make it a crime in suspected drunken driving cases to refuse to take a breath test — a measure now in place in all 50 states.

An avid supporter of environmentally sound development of Alaska's natural resources, she was fully aware of and responsive to the plight of those in need.

When she arrived in Juneau for the first time, as a freshman member of the House in the 11th State Legislature, she joined some of Alaska's most storied political leaders. Republican Clem Tilton of Fairbanks was the president of the Senate, serving with such luminaries as Jalmar Kerttula of Palmer, Bill Ray of Juneau, Artiss Sturgis of Edna, and Ed Dankworth of Anchorage. In the House, Democrat Terry Gardner of Kotzebue was speaker, and among her new colleagues were Sam Cotton of Eagle River, Joe Montgomery and Terry Martin of Anchorage, Jim Duncan of Juneau and Hugh Malone of Kenai.

It was a rich training ground, one that paid big rewards when she was elevated to House speaker in the 1983-84 sessions.

Ramona's last bid for re-election was in 2000, and she came up 745 votes short of winning another term. "I've had the privilege to serve for over 20 years," she said, "and I'm extremely grateful for that."

She served long and well. Alaskans everywhere have reason also to be grateful.

Senate Democrats rig appeals court

By PAUL JENKINS

Of the three branches of government, you would hope that the least untied, the least corrupt, the least political would be the judiciary. It is that expectation, I suppose, that keeps angry nodes with picketers and torches away from government's front door.

So, you have to wonder what Democrats in the U.S. Senate, and their masters, are thinking when they try to manipulate court cases by sealing judicial elections, tamper with nominations for political gain and turn the process into a bitter, personal joust.

We know they do those things because the Wall Street Journal did this nation a huge favor Nov. 14 by running on its editorial page excerpts from leaked Senate Judiciary Committee staff strategy memos dating to when the Democrats were in charge of that panel in 2001 and 2002.

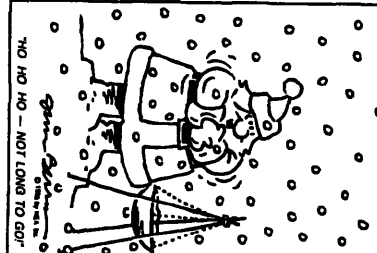


The memos clearly show who's pulling the strings on Senate Democrats, telling them which nominees to attack and when and how and how often to schedule hearings, when to delay and when to proceed.

"Their real boss," the Wall Street Journal notes, "are JENKINS the liberal interest groups that more or less tell the senators when to sit, speak and roll over — and which Bush judges to confirm or not."

The groups in question, some with laughably misleading names such as People for the American Way, mostly support abortion on demand, affirmative action and gay rights — but with Democrats in their pockets they can be effective. Their manipulation of the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals case involving affirmative action at the University of Michigan is a startling case in point.

The journal reported that on April 2002 memo to Sen. Ted Kennedy, "Rhonda Jones of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund tried to call you today



Blame would like the Committee to hold off on any 6th Circuit nominees until the University of Michigan case regarding the constitutionality of affirmative action in higher education is decided by the en banc 6th Circuit. The thinking is that the current 6th Circuit will sustain the affirmative action program, but if a new judge with conservative views is confirmed before the case is decided, that new judge will be able, under 6th Circuit rules, to review the case and vote on it."

The nominee in question was District Judge John Smith Gibbons from Tennessee. Staff members, the memo said, were concerned about the propriety of scheduling hearings based on the resolution of a particular case. We are also aware that the 6th Circuit is in dire need of judges, but, "nevertheless we recommend that Gibbons be scheduled for a later hearing. The Michigan case is important."

The Democrats obliged Ms. Jones Gibbons and four other nominees had judicial hearings April 25, 2002, with a vote May 9 on all but Gibbons, whose Michigan case was decided. Gibbons was not confirmed until July 28, when the Michigan case already was history.

The Journal reported that in a June 2002 memo to Sen. Ted Kennedy, "Rhonda Jones of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund tried to call you today

12, 2002, memo, again to Kennedy, on the timing of a Judicial Committee hearing for Timothy M. Tymoczko for the 10th Circuit, the staff member says. Tymoczko is (Chairman Pat Leahy names on having an August hearing it appears that the groups are willing to let Tymoczko go through (the sense of the coalition made that decision last night, but they are checking with the gay rights groups)."

Tymoczko was confirmed April 1 of this year. Mr. Tymoczko, the Journal wrongly noted, apparently got the gay OK.

The memos also show that the groups wanted Democrats to stall nominees because of election politics. Moving on one of the nominees (6th Circuit nominee Deborah Cook) before the 2002 election "would demoralize Democrats' key constituents — in particular, labor," a memo to Kennedy lamented.

There is no need to go into Kennedy's clumsy referral to Bush's nominees as "neoliberal" or the groups' reasons for labeling of nominees Michael Eckstein as a "T. alibi" and a "stealth, right-wing zealot." (Have you ever wondered why nominees, treated routinely with contempt by the left, continue to support Democrats? Yes, too.)

Eckstein was nominated to the powerful U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, seen as a stepping-stone to the Supreme Court.

In one memo, a staff member says Eckstein must not be confirmed because "The White House is almost telling us that they plan to nominate him to the Supreme Court. We can't repeat the mistakes we made with Clarence Thomas."

We should be so lucky. The picture that emerges from the documents is of a process far, far removed from what the Founding Fathers envisioned. If you listen real hard, you can almost hear them spinning like puppets in their graves.

Or is that the sound of an angry mob picking up its pickets and lighting its torches?

Paul Jenkins is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

OLD WOES, FRESH SNOW . . .

We give thanks

THE WORLD STILL is a perilous place, and on the domestic scene the rumor of ugly partisan politics, the shameful actions of highly paid entertainers and the petty tantrums of ultra-rich professional athletes engulf the newspaper headlines and the television newscasts. All things seem depressing. Yet it should not be so.

In our town, fresh snow blankets the city and the mountains. The air is crisp and the chilling temperatures of early winter invigorate the spirit. In our homes, and in those many places where good people serve others in need, we have a multitude of reasons to give thanks on this Thanksgiving Day.

This great American feast, in itself, is cause enough to make us pause and say a prayer of thanksgiving. The celebration of this day is a tradition not in the fabric of our lives as inheritors of a land settled by pilgrims who came to a new world seeking freedom and opportunity.

From the Atlantic to the middle of the Pacific Ocean, from the Arctic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico, Americans find relief from the troubles of the nation and the world as they gather today with family and friends. Turkey and other bounty from this land of plenty will grace tables in homes great and small.

For those who lack the warmth of a loving home, and for those who have no home at all, men and women with caring hearts will provide Thanksgiving meals — in churches and in halls and public places, the needy will not be forgotten. We give thanks for those who serve them.

LET US GIVE thanks in many more ways, too

We give thanks to the men and women in uniform who stand in harm's way in nations torn by oppression and brutalized by terrorists who care not for human life.

We give thanks for the families left behind by our sailors, airmen, soldiers, Marines and Coast Guardsmen who are on duty far from home. They serve their country in a special way — sacrificing for each of us so that freedom will prevail. We give thanks for the freedoms that we do enjoy, freedoms other people in other lands desperately seek.

We give thanks to those who serve on the homefront, many in ordinary ways that all too often draw little thanks or praise. Our letter carriers, our snow plow experts, our school bus drivers, those who collect our trash, those behind-the-scenes who keep our light bulbs powered and the natural gas flowing to heat our homes.

We give thanks every day for the police and the firemen who protect our homes and our city — and for the teachers, the principals, the coaches, the priests, the ministers and the rabbis who serve in our schools and churches and chapels and synagogues.

Mostly, we give thanks for America and thanks for its people.

Thankful for the blessings of family

By ELISE PATKOTAK

Since mom's death, my sister, brother and I have gotten into the pattern of spending Thanksgiving together. Christmas is not a holiday I enjoy, and after spending one with me recently, my sister suggested I just shut myself up for the season so as not to poison it for others.

But I like Thanksgiving. To me it's the perfect holiday. Not too much decorating. No presents to buy. And if you're lucky, a great meal full of traditions and memories that stretch back through your whole life. What's not to like?

One year Judy came to Alaska to share Thanksgiving with my friends here. My cousin Tom came up too. They were both properly horrified to learn that we were going to have a dinner made by a restaurant and picked up on Thanksgiving Day.

My cousin made her chestnut stuffing anyway. She just didn't know how it could so easily be Thanksgiving if she didn't.

This year, we will spend Thanksgiving with my cousins — the old-fashioned way — with my cousins. It doesn't matter whose home we're in. Whether it's Joe's or Rob's or Tom's, or whether we all squeeze into my sister's tiny home, the one constant at all the locations is that we will be spending it together, the way family should.

The faces that I will look at around that table will be older than my memory ever lets me remember they are. When I think of my cousins, I still think of the boys and girls we were, not the men and women we are now.

So there's always that moment when I first see them again after a year, has aged by and I wonder who that middle-aged man with my cousin's face is. Then the hugs and laughs start, and the years melt away and I'm looking at the boys and girls I grew up with again.

There's an ease that comes with so many years of familiarity. When you



Patkotak



once had your dampen changed side by side, it's hard to take on airs with each other. And if you do, there is always someone around to remind you of one of your life's more embarrassing moments so that you are quickly brought down to reality.

I watch my cousins' children and wonder if they have any idea what a great gift their parents are giving them by giving them cousins as friends. When your brother is really annoying you, there is no more landlady ally than your cousin, who is always ready to get even, especially if she gets to get even with her brother at the same time.

The alliances and friendships forged at family dinners throughout childhood are the ones that have stood the test of time and are still the ties that bind me the closest. My cousin Joe was at a military college during the 60s while I was in the middle of the peace movement.

We could not have been further apart in philosophy and our lives could not have taken more different roads. Yet the minute we are together again, the years melt away and he's Schmoose again — the 5-year-old who got in trouble with me when our mothers caught us playing doctor and nurse together.

My cousin Tom is not a 50-something lawyer but a 15-year-old teaching me how to put rollers in my hair and sleep

on them. My cousin Marina is not the mother of four but the little kid that trailed after us older cousins and made us feel so grown up — we tell her she was her mother's "afterthought."

Each face at the table carries the full lifetime of my childhood memories in it. We've eaten turkey together more often than we can count. We know that cranberry sauce is supposed to be round and in a can, not that fresh stuff the new healthy-eating philosophy tries to fast on us.

We know that the appetizer on Thanksgiving is my dad's clam casino and none other will do. And we know that after dinner, we get up groggy and collapse into chairs in the living room wondering when we became our parents. If their children are lucky, and I believe they are, they will watch us closely and learn that this is what family is. And if they are really lucky, 40 years from now they will be sitting together in someone's living room sweating nerves to overeat, again and wondering when they became their parents. But only if they are very lucky like I am.

Elise Patkotak, an Anchorage free-lance writer and author of *Parable Logic*, a humorous look back at her 28 years in Barrow, lives in Anchorage and owns Precious Cargo Ltd., a writing/graphics company.

The Anchorage Times

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

MIMS OFFERS MAJOR GAS LEASES IN ...

Cook Inlet

THE MINERALS Management Service says the area of Cook Inlet proposed for a new offshore oil and gas lease sale could provide more than 1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas for Southcentral Alaska homes, businesses and industries.

By comparison, the Prudhoe Bay Field contains 26 trillion cubic feet of gas, enough to provide feedstock for a major pipeline from the North Slope to the U.S. Midwest. Though the estimated potential of the Lower Cook Inlet leases is considerably less, gas discoveries of such magnitude could have a huge impact on the financial fortunes of Southcentral.

The Lower Cook Inlet sale tentatively is scheduled for next May and isn't likely to be an economic boon for some years to come, if ever. But the prospect of such a huge gas reserve so close at hand is a welcome reminder that Cook Inlet remains a place of great resource potential.

The area proposed for leasing is in federal waters and covers about 2 million acres extending from south of Kagalga Island to just northwest of Shuyak Island in waters depths ranging from 30 to 650 feet. It does not include Shelikof Strait.

MMS removed from its proposed sale a narrow band of blocks offshore of the lower Kenai Peninsula and the Barren Islands, which are considered critical habitat for Steller sea lions, an endangered species. Those areas are also used by the residents of Port Graham, Nanavalek, Seldovia and others for subsistence. The withdrawn areas are believed to have a very low chance of containing significant oil or gas resources.

Announcement of the sale brought a predictable and hysterical response from green groups that oppose new oil and gas development in the area. Among the most vocal was Bob Shavelson, a spokesman for the self-appointed guardian group Cook Inlet Keeper, who denounced the sale and the Bush-Cheney administration in a single breath.

The sale announcement came just a day before Unocal Corp. announced its discovery of a major gas field seven miles southeast of Ninilchik on the Kenai Peninsula. The Happy Valley field, as it is called, is estimated to contain 75 billion to 100 billion cubic feet of recoverable natural gas. A Unocal spokeswoman said the find was its largest gas discovery in Alaska in 20 years. "We're pleased," she said with justifiable pride.

The Unocal discovery is a welcome sign of life in the Cook Inlet oil and gas industry, which has been largely overshadowed by North Slope developments for many years. Hopefully it will increase interest in next May's Lower Cook Inlet lease sale.

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

Tuesday, November 25, 2003 B-5
WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

Russell Crowe naval film a classic

By CHARLES KRUTHAMMER

The great director Billy Wilder was once asked about subtlety in movies. "Of course, there must be subtleties," Wilder said. "Just make sure you make them obvious."

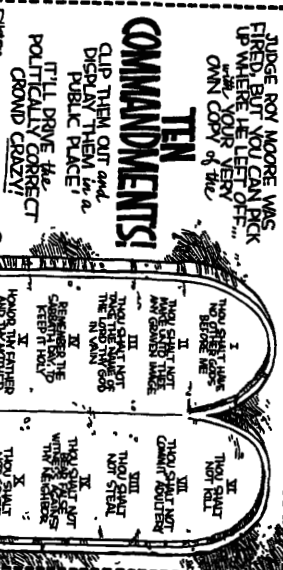
The trailer for "Master and Commander," the seafaring epic, can hardly be described as subtle. It is a dazzling montage of dramatic scenes of early 19th-century naval warfare, with cannon-battle, bodies, furniture and music flying all over the place. Nonetheless, my first reaction to a screening of the film was that it was beautiful and brilliant, but I was not sure it would find a mass audience because of its subtlety.

Perhaps subtlety is the wrong word. It perfectly describes director Peter Weir's mind and manner, but perhaps not the film's commercial success. Weir gives us some magnificently choreographed naval mayhem, but it is spread over two hours of thoughtfulness and restraint.

The story, drawn from the Patrick O'Brian novels, is framed by battle scenes between a British and a French warship. The TV trailer promises "Clash at sea." But the movie is really about the nature of naval life in the age of sail, the nature of command and the nature of friendship between the ship's captain and the ship's doctor.

Although entirely fictional, "Master and Commander" might be considered the most dramatic and brilliant naval documentary ever made. It should be on the reading (viewing) list of every college course on the history of naval warfare. Weir has given unbelievable attention to every detail of the period — the cookware, the rigging, the uniform buttons, the drinking songs, the instruments of surgery.

And the mode of speech. This is where I worry about subtlety. I speak English reasonably well, but I could only make out about half of the dialogue. That is because Weir has maintained an unwavering fidelity to the period dialect (the 1805 action is situated about halfway between us and Shakespeare's time, and so are the diction and syntax). Pepper that with nautical nouns you



have never heard of, often issued in place then in a company of ship sounds (another example of Weir's fidelity to authenticity), and you sometimes wish that the movie had been accompanied by subtitles.

Weir's restraint carries into a remarkable subtlety regarding women. In the movie's version of a love interest, a Brazilian beauty in a small boat sells her wares offshore to the sailors of Captain Aubrey's ship catches Aubrey's eye for a moment at a considerable distance for about five seconds you see Aubrey (Crowe) returning her glance.

And that is it. Indeed, that scene marks the only appearance of women in the entire two hours of the film, setting a new record for sexual austerity in an epic, a record previously held by "Lawrence of Arabia."

The austerity works as film, as does the fidelity to detail. My only worry is that it won't sell to the kids who flock to see "Pirates of the Caribbean," who expect sea and swashbuckling between their bubble scenes, and whose patronage is needed for the movie to recover its \$135 million cost.

It is perhaps odd to worry about a film's box office, but when a film is as splendid as this one, you want it to succeed. Perhaps it will be helped in the United States by its timing. We are at war, and this is a film not just about the

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

Monday, November 24, 2003 **B-5**
WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

TIMING PROBLEM MAY HAVE HURT...

ANWR effort

THOUGH THE pending energy bill does not authorize oil and gas drilling on the coastal plan of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the ANWR issue is by no means dead.

Failure of Congress to address the issue seriously this year was a painful, if predictable, setback in the years-long struggle to develop the coastal plains' enormous oil and gas potential.

But green activists who have convinced many members of Congress that the coastal plan is some kind of enchanted Arctic paradise may want to postpone their celebration. The battle is far from over. Gov. Frank Murkowski and Alaska's congressional delegation have vowed that the fight will go on and won't end until Alaskans prevail and the economic potential of the area becomes a reality.

The bleak and frozen coastal plan is believed to contain oil and gas in substantial quantities, enough to create thousands of jobs and generate tax and royalty revenues for Alaska for many years to come. ANWR could become a major new source of energy for Alaska and the nation, one large enough to offset the decline from aging North Slope oil fields.

THE REASON for this year's defeat on the ANWR issue may not relate entirely to the persuasive arguments of Alaska's opposition, the timing of the discussion may have had a lot to do with it.

The threat of a Democratic filibuster kept the ANWR provision out of the energy bill, but Sen. Lisa Murkowski reports that some of the Senate votes needed to thwart the filibuster held back because the senators were already voting for measures to encourage construction of an Alaska gas pipeline.

"The truth is," she said, "that it is very difficult to convince members of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, that an Alaska gas pipeline and ANWR should be enacted in the same year. They begin to see Alaska as asking for too much."

Though the gas pipeline provisions worked against progress on ANWR this year, the fact that the pipeline will hopefully be off the congressional table next year may strengthen the state's hand in future discussions on the ANWR issue.

And if construction of a gas pipeline is imminent or under way when the ANWR issue next comes to the fore, the nation may once again perceive Alaska as a major energy state able to meet an even larger portion of the nation's oil and gas needs.

Alaska's ANWR cause is just. Too much is at stake to walk away from the fight now. The struggle should continue no matter how long it takes.

Protect private property rights

By WALTER E. WILLIAMS

The largest, loosest of America's anti-tobacco crusades aren't tobacco companies and smokers, it's the American people who are incrementally giving up private property rights.

You say, "Hold it, Williams. I agree that people have the right to smoke and harm themselves, but they don't have the right to harm others with those noxious tobacco fumes." Let's look at it, because harm is a two-way street.

If you're allergic to tobacco smoke or just find it odor unpleasant, and I smoke in your presence, I harm and annoy you. However, if I'm prohibited from smoking a cigarette in your presence, I'm harmed because of a denial of what I find a pleasurable experience.

There's an obvious conflict. One of us is harmed. How can it be resolved? There are several ways. You might consider the harm I suffer trivial compared to yours. You could organize a sufficiently large number of people and lobby lawmakers to enact smoking bans in bars, restaurants and workplaces.

Alternatively, I might consider the harm you suffer trivial, and organize a bunch of people and lobby lawmakers to mandate that smoking be permitted in bars, restaurants and workplaces.

Let's think about this for a moment. If you owned a restaurant, and did not allow smoking, wouldn't you find it offensive if a law were enacted requiring you to permit smoking? I'm guessing you'd deem such a law tyrannical.

After all, you'd probably conclude, it's your restaurant, and if you don't want smoking it's your right. Similarly, I'd deem it just as offensive if smoking were allowed in my restaurant and a law were enacted banning smoking in restaurants.

The totalitarian method to resolve the conflict is through political power and guns. In other words, the group with the greatest power to organize government.

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Whether a smoker is harmed or inconvenienced by not being allowed to smoke in his restaurant is irrelevant. Similarly, if a restaurant owner wishes to permit smoking, it is his right, and whether a nonsmoker is harmed or annoyed is also irrelevant.

In the interest of minimizing possible harm either way, it might be appropriate for restaurant owners, by way of a sign or other notice, to inform prospective customers of their respective smoking policy. That way, customers can decide whether to enter upon the premises.

In today's America, the successful anti-tobacco campaign has become a template for conflict resolution through the forcible imposition of wills through the political system. It's part of a continuing trend of attacks on private property rights.

Private property rights are the bulwark for liberty, and should be jealously guarded and not be sacrificed for the sake of expediency.

Walter E. Williams is a professor at George Mason University at Fairfax, Va. His column is distributed by Creators Syndicate Inc., 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. (310) 337-7003.

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BILL J. ALLEN
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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

BLM REVIEWS RULES FOR DRILLING IN ...

Oil reserve

THE BUREAU OF LAND Management is doing the right thing by reviewing rules for oil exploration and development for the Teshikpuik Lake area of the North Slope. The area is inside National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska and appears to have major oil reserves beneath its tundra, perhaps 3.2 billion barrels of recoverable oil. It is also rich with wildlife and is an important subsistence hunting and fishing grounds.

Some North Slope residents are concerned that oil development there will harm fish and wildlife populations and jeopardize their subsistence activities. Those are important concerns and the BLM should — and most certainly will — take them into consideration.

But the bottom line is that the area contains important natural resources both on the surface and deep below ground. The federal agency responsible for those public lands needs to take a hard and thoughtful look at how both resources can be made available for public use.

Oil development need not interfere with fish, wildlife or other surface resources. That has been proven elsewhere on the North Slope, which has been a major source of the nation's oil since the trans-Alaska pipeline began operations in 1977.

Important natural resources exist in, around and below Teshikpuik Lake. The BLM needs to consider both industry's ability to operate without interfering with surface resources or subsistence activities and whether the subsurface oil and gas resources can be developed in harmony with the surface world.

Years of experience have shown that such harmony is not only possible but quite likely. Surely enough harmony can be achieved to allow a major source of oil to be developed within a national petroleum reserve.

Young trappers

THE ANIMAL protection people are collapsing in a faint over news that Alaska Girl Scouts are learning to trap beavers.

Granted, trapping is not a traditional Girl Scout activity, at least in places like Boston, Los Angeles and New York. It is, however, a respected Alaska tradition that can engrain young women with respect for wild creatures and understanding of how to utilize them.

The girls of Scout Troop 34 in Fairbanks are learning to find the animals' dens, lay the traps, skin the beavers, tan the pelts, make hats and mittens from the hides and cook the beaver meal.

The scouts — ages 10-12 — are learning their skills under the state-run Take a Kid Trapping program, which is aimed at controlling flooding and other damage caused by a growing population of beavers.

To those aflutter at the thought of young girls trapping, we say get over it.

Another book of great pioneer memories

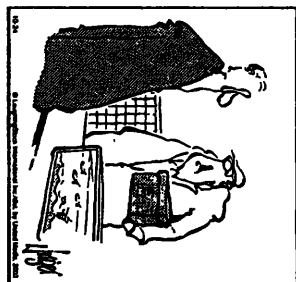
By WILLIAM J. TOBIN

THIS IS THE Sunday before Thanksgiving, and this afternoon you need to hustle on down to Pioneer Hall at Sixth Avenue and F Street, right across the street from Covenant House, and pick up the second volume of "Fond Memories of Anchorage Pioneers." It's a wonderful book, filled with stories and photos of hundreds of the people who came here in the early days and helped build Anchorage. The first volume was a sellout through two printings in 1986, and this edition — with completely new stories from a whole different collection of pioneers — looks like another best seller. This time, 5,000 copies of the \$29.95 hardcover book were printed, but 600 of those already have been sold through pre-orders. The rest will be on sale from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at a reception sponsored by Igloo 15, Anchorage 4, of the Pioneer Association.

ONCE AGAIN, A reproduction of a marvelous Byron Birdsell painting, "Anchorage Land Auction, 1915," graces the dust jacket of the new volume — and that scene alone is worth the price of the book. On the back cover is a wonderful photo of Anchorage City Hall, as it stood in 1936, with Fourth Avenue a dirt road at the front door. Inside are scores more photos and snapshots of people and places that were and are part of Anchorage's living history.

Credit a whole bunch of people for this work, members of the Historical Committee of the Pioneers of Alaska auxiliary, Fond Memories Volume II is dedicated to the late Key Linton, who was one of those who pulled the first book together and who worked on this second edition until shortly before her death last January.

THIS BEING THE start of Thanksgiving week, Fond Memories II would be a great book to have on hand Thursday as your family gathers around the table to celebrate this great



"Do you buy used cats?"

national feast. And if you're looking to start your Christmas shopping, the 2003 edition of Fond Memories of Anchorage Pioneers would be a nifty gift under anyone's tree. And as of today, if you need a reminder, there are only 32 shopping Sundays until Christmas — counting Sundays.

BUT THERE'S good news, too. The arrival of Thanksgiving, we're happy to report, means that in just four weeks — plus a day or so — the days will start getting longer. So much for winter, eh?

THE DAYS DO fly by, in other words, with considerable speed. But, alas, Brad Phillips' great cruise ship, the Klondike Express, isn't really as fast as was reported here a few weeks ago. It didn't really travel between Valdez and San Francisco in less than 24 hours. No, no. Of course not. The speedy californian made that fast trip between Seattle and San Francisco. Which is still a mighty good clip, nautically speaking.

IT WAS DARN quick, too, all things considered, that our town's newest high school, South Anchorage, came up with a mascot and its school colors — a full year before it opens for its first classes. Wolverines, eh? Black and gold, eh? Well, they'll work fine, no doubt. But what a missed opportunity. Instead of cheering for the South Wolverines, we might have been shouting a rallying cry for the South Seagulls. Or maybe the Starbushes, Stachens, Swans.

LOOKING AHEAD to events scheduled for 2004, make a note that the western branch of the Council of State Governments will hold its annual meeting in Anchorage the week of Sept. 25. State Rep. Lesel McGuire is a member of the council's executive committee.

FOR RIGHT NOW, however, it's time to update your Christmas card list. Santa will drop off Yuletide bundles for Phoebe and Mark Wood at 1045 Alta Vista Road, Louisville, KY 40205. She was head of AICO's financial affairs here before the company morphed into ConocoPhillips. Their phone number, by the way, is (502) 891-0064.

Ralph Noga, retired general manager of the Hilton Anchorage, and his wife, Dorothy, are now cooing living Santa will call on them at 4654 Majestic Dr., Bellingham, WA 98226. Deliver your greetings in person by calling (360) 733-4707.

SPEAKING OF the Noga, many households will remember the son and daughter-in-law, Steve and Sandy, as the host and hostess at the Inn at Langley, a gorgeous boutique hotel on Whidbey Island, north of Seattle in the San Juans. After more than a decade of superior service, they have gone out on their own — opening their own restaurant, 3 1/2 weeks ago in Whitefish, Mont. It's called Magary's Roadhouse, and if you're in the neighborhood, it's located at 510 Wisconsin Avenue in that scenic northern Montana recreation haven.

SUNDAY PUNNY: A fellow wearing a ConocoPhillips baseball cap was seated at the counter at the White Spot, the other morning enjoying his breakfast. "I love scrambled eggs," he announced to his friend in a BP jacket seated next to him. "No me," said his buddy. "As far as I'm concerned, hard boiled eggs can't be best."

William J. Tobin is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

Saturday, November 22, 2003 **B-7**

MUNDLESS AND HATEFUL PROTESTORS ...

Who are they?

HAVE YOU ever wondered who the media are referring to when they talk about "protest organizers" behind demonstrations like the ones aimed at President George W. Bush in London that put about 70,000 useful idiots in the streets?

In this case, it is an umbrella group calling itself the "Stop the War Coalition," a collection of leftists, socialists of every stripe and communists with a visceral hatred for this nation, Bush and freedom.

The steering committee includes a Marxist, a member of the Communist Party, a Trotskyite, the editors of "Red Pepper," a publication for the "green and radical left," a book store with "literature for socialists," and the editor of the British Communist Party newspaper, "Red Star."

Then there is George Galloway, a British member of parliament tossed out of his own Labour Party after it claimed he incited Arabs to fight British soldiers and incited British troops to disobey orders. He is involved in a lawsuit with a newspaper that alleged he was on Saddam Hussein's payroll.

But that is only part of the freak show. There is a representative from the London Council of Mosques, someone from the Campaign for Palestinian Rights, and an author whose latest book has a cover showing a young Iraqi boy urinating on the head of an American soldier. War, there's more. The group's steering committee is replete with members of the Socialist Labour Party, the Socialist Party, and on and on.

ITS WEB page links read like a "Who's Who" of leftists in every shade of pink, including International Answer (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism), a Stalinist group closely tied to the International Action Center and the Workers World Party. This bunch organized most of the anti-American rallies in this country during the past year.

The good people who mindlessly march and chant in these demonstrations have no clue that if they were to succeed it would plunge Iraq back into the same madness and brutality it suffered under Saddam Hussein. They likely have no idea they are doing so at the behest of folks who are the direct political descendants of the bloodiest butchers in freedom-loving people of their liberty and plunge them into the Dark Ages.

So, you have to wonder why the news media refers to these folks only as "organizers." Why pretend they are something other than what they are? Are the media editors too lazy to find out who is pulling the strings? Or do they tacitly approve of them and their tactics?

You'd think they would be more than interested. If the "organizers" succeed in their ultimate mission, editors will be among the first marched off for re-education.

Southeast Alaska is faring well

By LEW M. WILLIAMS, JR.

Eight of Alaska's business leaders asked Gov. Frank Murkowski in a letter this week to take three steps to solve the state's fiscal problem of spending more than it takes in. Control spending, tap the Permanent Fund and consider a broad-based tax.

What the business leaders missed was a fourth step that Murkowski advocated when running for election. Market more of Alaska's resources to bring jobs and revenue to the state. A subsection of that step is to build infrastructure to make marketing more economic. That step earned him support of 70 percent of the Republicans in the primary and 65 percent of all Alaska voters in the general.

The governor worked on that fourth step in the weeks before he received the letter. Early last week he hosted the president of Tarran and Tarran's business leaders to sell them on Alaska's seafood and energy resources. The sales pitch the week before was to the Japanese.



Williams

Aside from that, the governor has been busy with in-state programs boosting Alaska. An example is in Southeast Alaska, which despite collapse of its timber industry and threats to its salmon industry from farmed salmon, is benefiting from Murkowski leadership.

Saturday, the governor flew to Sitka to announce Sitka businessman Bert Steadman as his choice for the state Senate. A seat, which Robin Taylor vacated to accept a mission with the Department of Transportation. When District One of Two Republicans submitted suggestions for a replacement, they voted Rep. Peggy Wilson of Wrangell first, Steadman second, and Jim Elkins of Ketchikan and Rollo Pool of Sitka last for third.

Murkowski at first picked Elkins, then had second thoughts. Wilson was drawn her name so the governor went to second on the list. Congratulations to Steadman, active in local elective offices.



"Can you change a \$100 bill?"

and with roots going back to Petersburg where he spent his early school years. The governor then flew to Ketchikan to meet with local Republicans disappointed that the governor had withdrawn Elkins' name for the job. The meeting was cordial. Elkins spoke and shook hands with the governor, as did other Republicans, at the end of the meeting. To Elkins' credit, he took an approach a little classier than many politicians. Instead of blaming the media by claiming he had been misquoted in statements that were unacceptable to the governor, he went to media outlets and publicly thanked his supporters.

Now representation in the Legislature is fairly distributed along the Peninsula. Ketchikan and Saxman have Rep. Bill Williams of Saxman, Wrangell has Rep. Peggy Wilson and has Jean Elkins of Petersburg as chief of staff. Albert Kookesh of Angoon represents Southeast's outlying points from Hyder to Haines. Steffy Juwana, the most popular in Southeast area, has two representatives, Beth Kortula and Bruce Weyrauch, and a senator, Kim Elton. And now Sitka has Steadman.

Southeast Alaskans really have no complaint about the Penland's treatment by the Murkowski administration. It's evenhanded and progressive. Sitka got the Senate seat and Juwana gets the ferry to share with Skagway and Haines as well as Sitka. It looks like Ketchikan might become the ferry stop.

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ten headquarters. Wrangell, Petersburg and Plover of Wales have Robin Taylor at Wrangell working full time to bring about construction of the Bradford Road connection to the Canadian highway system. The governor has renewed the study on a road from Juneau to Skagway. Those road projects will improve access to Southeast, lowering the cost of living and promoting the visitor business.

When Murkowski was a U.S. senator, he obtained federal authorization for the Southeast Alaska Power Interco, the first phase of which is under construction and the second phase is in planning.

Southeast residents also are happy about the governor appointing the new Marine Transportation Advisory Board, on which a few of them sit. Appointment of such a board has been long overdue to examine statewide ferry system operation. In Southeast, the system has experienced a disastrous 10-year downward trend.

Passenger boardings have dropped from 972,680 for 1992 to 263,040 for 2002. Vehicle boardings are down from 97,239 in 1992 to 76,364 in 2002. Whether the new high-speed ferry will reverse that trend by providing frequent, affordable service is yet to be seen. To make ferry travel affordable is why some roads are being pushed.

The ferry system operates managers that are older than most of those ships, affectionately called "rust buckets," that Alaska Steamship Co. used to carry passengers until 1961. Cheaper air transportation, high cost of crewing old, inefficient ships and opening the Alaska Highway — road — ended Alaska Steam passenger service.

The Marine board was created by Administrative Order 204 in January. Also created was the Aviation Advisory Board, another tasked board to get the voice of the people affected by transportation heard by public officials. Administrative Order 204 is the same concept. Gov. Tony Knowles used to name advisers for trails, which defines the difference between the two administrations.

Lew Williams Jr. is a retired publisher of the Ketchikan Daily News. His e-mail is lew@earthlink.net.

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A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

THE WAY WE SEE IT, THE MORE...

The merrier

A SUPERIOR COURT judge did the right thing in issuing a temporary court order allowing the Green Party of Alaska to remain on the 2004 primary election ballot as an official party.

The state Division of Elections in February bumped the party from the ballot. State law seemed pretty clear. To win a spot on the ballot as a party, a group must field a gubernatorial candidate who wins 3 percent of the votes cast or be able to boast a number of registered voters equal to that number, which in the last governor's race was 6,945.

The Green Party, which won its party spurs in 1990, fell short on both counts. Only 4,778 people are registered as Green Party — that's 103 percent of the total — and far short of 6,945. And last year, Diane Benson, the party's gubernatorial candidate, crinkled with only 13 percent of the votes cast. Clearly, the Green Party's message is a resonating like a concrete bell with Alaska voters.

Under the law, the party appeared to be toast. Not to be deterred, the Greens went to court and argued that basing the party requirement only on gubernatorial elections was wrong. Jim Sykes, party co-chairman, argued he won 724 percent of the vote when he ran for the U.S. Senate in 2004.

HOW PERFORMANCE IN the governor's race became the benchmark for party status is unclear. Judge John Reese said linking party status to only one election race could be unconstitutional. He opined that the state has an interest in guaranteeing that parties with even a "modicum" of support have a spot on the ballot.

We think Reese probably did the right thing. The entire issue likely will be fought out in court at some later date for political justices and to the delight of lawyers, but for now what can allowing the Greens on the ballot hurt? The more the merrier in the arena of political ideas, even if some of them stink.

From the perspective of wanting what's best for the state, we could only hope that someone in the future there would be a stableful of left-leaning "parties" on the ballot with a "modicum" of support to draw votes from Democrats who tirelessly work for more and bigger government.

Dozens of anti-development, tax and spend parties trying to peddle one goofy scheme after another would be a good idea. They would only make the case for Alaskans with ideas, vision and a sense of what Alaska could be. What can be bad about that?

The entire issue

likely will be fought out in court at some later date for political justices and to the delight of lawyers, but for now what can allowing the Greens on the ballot hurt?

Our hearts and innocence were shattered

By ELISE PATKOTAK

I was a 17-year-old high school senior getting ready for opening night of my high school play the day Kennedy was shot. I recently found the paper I wrote that year about those events. Kennedy's death was a defining moment in American life whether you liked him or not. It marked the end of the 50s and the beginning of a decade that, for better or for worse, would redefine America.

Here, edited for length, is some of what I wrote then. The piece starts as we are finishing final rehearsal for the play.

"Just before we began the finale our vice principal entered the auditorium. We thought he was going to wish us good luck. But his face was clouded and troubled. He whispered a few words to the director. The director turned to us. His words — 'The President has been shot'."



Patkotak

"Before we had time to fully comprehend all that had occurred, the auditorium was filled with students who had come to pray a rosary for him. As we took our seats, our principal entered, and stepped up to the microphone on the stage."

"He was, as usual, a great jumping figure of a man. Tall, straight, a former football player, he gave one a feeling of strength and solidity. But even he seemed strangely stooped and broken in a few moments we discovered why. With a dull, flat voice he announced, 'We will now recite a rosary for the repose of the soul of our late president, John F. Kennedy.'"

"Now the silence was broken by muted sobs and the responses to the rosary. We were shaky and tearful. Father himself found it difficult to control the emotion stirring within him."

The director asked the cast members to get their books and then return. As soon as the cast had assembled again, the director spoke. He said it would cost the school almost three thousand dollars to put off the play because the costumes



and so on were rented from New York. We had to put it on that night and the next two nights as planned.

"The bus I took home from school was strangely quiet. Through filled with teenagers, it pressed the quiet of a funeral home. Heads rolled silently down some people's cheeks as they were crying but the pain was too deep and too cutting for relief."

"As I dressed to return to school after dinner, I found myself thinking, 'Is this right? Should I be doing a play on this night? Should I desperately wanted to stay home, to lock myself in my room away from all the newspapers, TV and radios. I wanted to be on my bed and think, think of all that had happened and of all that was to happen. But as that little old saying declares — the show must go on.'"

"I was only on the stage four times but each time I had a few moments to observe the audience. The house was packed. Yet it seemed more packed with robots than with people. They clapped in the right places, and looked appropriately horrified when Paul slumped. But, somehow I felt it was merely reflex. They were only there because a relative was in the play. They only re-

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Elise Patkotak, an Anchorage free-lance writer and author of *Parallel Logic*, a two-murder look back at her 28 years in Barrow, lives in Anchorage and owns Precision Cargo Ltd., a writing/graphics company.

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

STEVENS PUSHES FOR NEW RULES ON...

Air cargo

SEN. TED STEVENS is pushing hard for liberalized cargo transfer rules that would allow Anchorage International Airport to compete effectively with foreign airports for major cargo handling business.

The change would allow international airlines to carry cargo between Alaska and other U.S. airports if the foreign lines have a revenue-sharing agreement with a U.S. carrier serving Alaska. It applies to cargo passing through Alaska and relieves Anchorage from rules that otherwise would prohibit foreign carriers from hauling cargo between U.S. airports.

The measure is an important one and would put Alaska on an equal footing with airports in Russia and Europe that aggressively are trying to capture cargo business that might otherwise come to Alaska.

ANCHORAGE has become an important cargo hub since 1996 when the U.S. Department of Transportation granted foreign air carriers authority to transfer cargo between airports in Alaska en route to their final destinations.

Anchor Manager Mort Plumb reports that the more liberal rules would create jobs here for ground crews, logistics workers and pilots. Such a change is essential to keeping the airport named for Ted Stevens competitive in a changing world.

Chances for passage of the measure appear good since Anchorage's increased competitiveness will not come at the expense of other U.S. airports. The only losers will be Alaska's foreign competitors.

Alaska is strategically located on the great circle air routes. With reasonable rules and good management, Alaska's airports are well-positioned to become key players in the world cargo handling business.

Refreshing change

IT IS INDEED refreshing when a candidate for Assembly works so hard to be open and forthcoming about his campaign finances that he goes above and beyond the law's requirements to keep the public informed.

Dan Coffey is pledging that he'll be filing monthly disclosure reports with the Alaska Public Offices Commission now instead of waiting until February 2004, when the law requires the reporting to begin.

Coffey, an Anchorage lawyer, is running against Assemblyman Doug Van Eiken, who, you may recall, was not nearly so forthcoming on his campaign finance and conflict of interest forms.

In fact, he was fined \$11,000 by APOC for his failures. The city ethics commission also found he had violated the city's ethics code, but gave him a pass.

We much prefer Coffey's approach to such matters.

Begich gives Wohlforth sweet deal

By PAUL JENKINS

When red ink starts to ooze from your family's checkbook, what do you do? Stop spending? Try to cut your debt? Do you scrimp or find ways to save, or search for extra work to produce more income?

Well, forget all that. Instead, do what Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich did when faced with the prospect of ballooning into a \$33 million tab of red ink next year. He upped his belt and tried his old budget trick, former Assemblyman Charles "Don't Call Me Charlie" Wohlforth, as a spokeswoman and adviser.

Spinning the budget shortfall for us rubes, especially with high-paid help, must be deliciously tempting, but spinning does not come cheap nowadays — even when you're hiring old pals.

As it turns out, mayors in this city can sign self-source contracts of up to \$30,000 with very little oversight. The contracts simply are reported monthly to the Assembly. It has been done by other administrators and is nothing new. What's new is that this administration, which wants us to believe the \$33 million budget tab is a reality, is laying off librarians, but still managed to pay losses enough for retroactive pay for Wohlforth.



Why Wohlforth? All bets are that David Ransauer, Begich's then-attended chief of staff who is meeting in City Hall at taxpayer expense, will fly the coop when his old boss, Tony Knowles, begins his campaign for Senate next year. (He was that guy's chief of staff, too. Ransauer, you may remember, caused a stir with a letter urging department heads to do whatever they could to make the Legislature look bad.) With Ransauer gone, Wohlforth would be a likely replacement. Of course, I could be wrong.

Begich says Wohlforth worked for him without pay for a few months, and has been invaluable in such tasks as sorting out Department of Transportation and Public Facilities maintenance problems with the city and the inter-



city of a long-range transportation plan now being crafted.

"He's getting paid for the work he has done," Begich said Monday. "I'm getting a lot of work out of him for not very much."

The freelance, however, ended in September when Wohlforth was given the \$30,000 contract for a year's worth of writing and policy advice and trucking and doing that. The contract, at \$2,500 a month, runs from July 1 of this year — Day One of Begich's term in office — until June 30, 2004. He received \$5,000 retroactively for July and August.

In an e-mail to Ransauer, Wohlforth said he would prefer a monthly check, "although the first check would have to be more to go back to July 1, am keeping track of what I am doing by task, not by hours. Trucking by hours is a big hassle. I don't want." And who could blame him?

In addition to Wohlforth's, there has been at least one other self-source contract signed by Begich's administration. It went to Jewel Jones, former head of the city's Department of Health and Human Services, and that one actually makes sense. She agreed to finish several projects under contract, including overseeing completion of the new Health and Human Services building. Without her help, who knows what would have happened?

You have to wonder about the public's perception of the Begich administration. He sweeps into office with barely 45 per-

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Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Wednesday, November 19, 2003 B-7

ENERGY BILL COULD ENABLE...

Gas pipeline

DESPITE what you may read elsewhere, the gas pipeline from Alaska's North Slope to the U.S. Midwest is not necessarily dead.

It may, in fact, be very much alive. The energy bill now pending in Congress contains some important provisions for the pipeline and may actually make its construction possible.

The bill does not contain the tax relief to dampen the risk of ultra-low gas prices that ConocoPhillips has said is critical to make the huge construction project a prudent investment.

Included, however, are construction loan guarantees on the \$18 billion to \$20 billion project and allowances for accelerated depreciation on some multibillion-dollar gas facilities.

While those incentives alone are unlikely to make the pipeline a good investment for the North Slope producers, they may bring it close enough to being feasible that Alaska could bring its own economic leverage to bear and push the project into the win column.

The state's leverage could, for instance, allow it to provide investors up-front tax and royalty relief to be paid back in later years. Alaska may also be in a position to provide the pipeline investors a measure of the low-price protection cited by ConocoPhillips as so essential.

THE STATE has much at stake in having the gas pipeline venture move forward. If the line becomes a reality, Alaska stands to gain billions in property and severance taxes, corporate income taxes and royalties in the years ahead.

The project would bring clean-burning fuel to a vast area of the state and create thousands of jobs and opportunities for generations to come. It would also open the way for tapping other Arctic gas reserves and starting a new gas industry in Alaska.

If the energy bill passes in its present form, the state of Alaska should immediately begin negotiations with the producers and potential pipeline investors to determine what tax or royalty deferrals are required — details that could benefit both the investors and the state — to close the deal and get the line under construction.

Construction of a pipeline to carry North Slope gas reserves to market could be the most important economic development since the discovery at Prudhoe Bay in 1968 and construction of the Trans-Alaska oil pipeline in the following years.

If a newly passed energy bill puts the ball in Alaska's court by allowing the state to make the critical decisions on moving the pipeline forward, such discussions with the producers would become a matter of utmost importance.

HB 69 would protect land rights

By REP. VIC KOHRING

When reading the newspapers, my e-mail and attending local meetings, it's clear there are a number of Valley residents with doubts about how shallow natural gas extraction might affect the Mat-Su area.

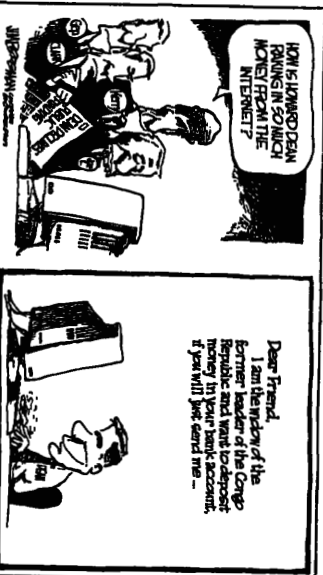
There has been an abundance of misinformation on this issue. As people read about how their property could be "bulldozed, drilled and covered with gravel pads, pumps and compressors" or their wells polluted by Evergreen Resources or some other company, they are legitimately asking questions about what could happen to their property and water rights.

Underlying the whole problem is still another, more basic challenge: Alaska's constitution and the Statehood Act grant most subsurface rights to the state in a grant sweep, leaving all the almost unsolvable problems we now face. If the "people of Alaska" own the subsurface, then individual property owners cannot. Thus we have an ongoing, constant struggle over who and how the subsurface will be used.

With government ownership, this problem will always remain. Changing the constitution and Statehood Act should be examined because private property owners ought to benefit from what's found under their land, but that's another fight for another day.

We have to deal with present laws as they stand. That's why the Property Rights and Water Protection acts have been proposed to clarify and strengthen in statute private property owners' rights as much as the constitution and Statehood Act permit.

A key issue is whether a borough can make and enforce regulations governing SNG. The answer is yes, despite misperceptions to the contrary. The state, through the Department of Natural Resources, does ultimately have the authority to override local ordinances (though unlikely), regardless of House Bill 69, because of the constitutional role of local governments as "subdivisions of the state." The primary intent of HB 69 was not to give developers permission to run roughshod over one's property or foul their water in the course of exploring for



gas. It was to trim redundancy in the permitting process so entrepreneurs are not hounded by the state bureaucracy. But since some still aren't convinced this is the case, the proposed bills will place private property and water protections clearly in "black and white" so property owners can see that they do indeed have state laws and regulations protecting them. It will also consider additional provisions identified in the current review process being done by the Department of Natural Resources, which is exploring ways current protections may be improved.

While Evergreen has said it will not drill on private property without permission, protections should be beefed up. The new legislation will make it clear that no developer can so much as walk on your private property without adequate notice and consultation. It will also contain specific language that a "surface use agreement" being negotiated with SNG is acceptable to property owners before drilling occurs.

And it will place clarifying language in statute to provide assurances that the state is compelled to protect water supplies from SNG development and that such protections already exist. Lastly, the acts will introduce amendments to the state's SNG leasing program requiring additional public notice and public comment to encourage more participation by those affected.

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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

Tuesday, November 18, 2003 **B-5**
WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

COMMISSIONER OFFERS GREENIES A...

Reality check

ERNESTA BALLARD tells it like it is: Alaska's commissioner of environmental conservation told the Alaska Miners Association earlier this month that environmental activists and the news media have been fear-mongering about the condition of the natural world.

We couldn't agree more. The *Chicken Little* approach to environmental issues over the last generation has resulted in an unprecedented flood of bone-headed public policy decisions that are costing the nation dearly. Among those mistakes are the proliferation of unnecessary wilderness areas and monuments — and campaigns for locking up areas like the high-potential oil province in the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Ballard told the miners that such a lock-everything-up approach "demonstrates that we have lost our national resolve to develop our resources."

That approach distorts national public policy toward Alaska, but it has an immense cost. Among other things, it forces the nation to get a larger portion of its energy and mineral resources from foreign sources like the Middle East. And that ultimately costs the lives of American military forces who must try to keep the peace in volatile areas on which we are dependent.

Blocking resource investment here and encouraging it overseas may give the environmentalists a comforting feeling, but that nice warm buzz often comes at a significant cost to the wild areas of distant nations.

ENVIRONMENTAL leaders in Alaska were predictably all aflutter over Ballard's comments. One said she needs "a reality check," apparently referring to the fact that her comments were out of step with the politically correct green policies that dominate so much of American life. But Ernesta Ballard understands that quite well and her comments were a refreshing dose of reality that the nation needs as much as Alaska.

Anyone standing in a city in America's Lower 48 can easily understand why sentiment can be so easily whipped up to lock away more of Alaska. The frontier has been pushed back in urban areas and wild country seems especially precious to people trapped in concrete canyons.

But locking more of Alaska away does not resolve such problems. In fact, it exacerbates them by blocking energy and mineral development in America and encouraging it in competing nations where government policy toward environmental protection is far more lenient than it is here.

Blocking resource investment here and encouraging it overseas may give the environmentalists a comforting feeling, but that nice warm buzz often comes at a significant cost to the wild areas of distant nations.

That may make sense to some folks, but to us it seems nuts.

Democrats fight over pickup trucks

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

Howard Dean wants the white trash vote. That's not exactly what he said, but that's clearly what he meant when he said he wanted the votes of guys with Confederate flags in their pickup trucks.

It was a beautiful moment. It produced at the very next Democratic debate the perfect liberal storm: a comedy of class snobbery, regional condescension and political correctness, with a touch of race-baiting thrown in for good measure.

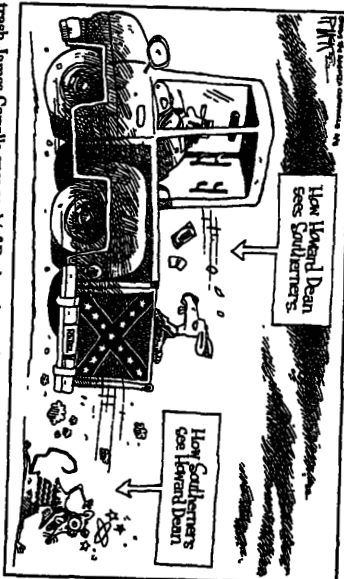
It began with a student at the CNN debate declaring himself offended by Dean's remark. It included the ever-reliable Al Sharpton charging Dean with cuddling up to Stonewall Jackson. It was highlighted by Dean saying, in essence, that he is not a Confederate. In essence, that he is not a Confederate. In essence, that he is not a Confederate.

Then, the foulest touch of them all: Condemned by the ruling Democratic dogma that everyone, even your rebellious neighbor, is a victim, Dean absolved these yahoos of responsibility by explaining that responsibility lies with those nasty Republicans who taught them their racism. "I think there are [a] lot of poor people who fly that flag because the Republicans have been driving us by race since 1968 with their southern race strategy."

And to show how concerned he is he left an outreach, he cited the fact that Jesse Jackson had just last week visited a trailer park full of white, um, folks. "We need to reach out to these people, too."

These people? All this proved a bit much for John Edwards, whose knowledge of the South is firsthand and not anthropological. Edwards, who grew up white, working class and southern, made the devastatingly correct observation that Dean's problem is not racism but condescension.

Edwards is too polite to say it, but it's not hard to read the subtext of his remark — that this snob from New England thinks we Southerners are the kind of



trash. James Carville once said (of Paula Jones) you find by dragging a \$100 bill through a trailer park. You could almost hear Edwards saying, "Vote for me, another Southerner like Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton — winners both — rather than another effete Northerner, this one from the mean streets of Montpelier."

It was quite a show. As always, the Democratic candidates were trying to play Everyman. Edwards, like Dick Gephardt and Joe Lieberman, can carry it off because his humble roots are genuine. Dean has succeeded in playing Everyman by being Angry Man. But anger is a somewhat thing, hard to sustain day in and day out, while Dean's false, money-bled roots (remarkably similar to those of the man he would like to run against) are forever.

They came bursting out with the pickup truck remark. Is he disappointed enough to keep himself from dropping the mask again? I doubt it.

The bigger problem for all of them, however, once they work out their personal, is, what are they going to talk about? The recent economic news was a devastating blow to their White House chances. The Democrats tried the worst economy since the Great Depression in 1982 and it worked. They have been trying that theme again all through this year. Alas, it becomes an absurdity when the economy grows at 7.2 percent. It must be admitted that rarely have

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Voice of the Times

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

U.S. SUPREME COURT IS FOLLOWING...

Scary track

SUPREME COURT Justice Sandra Day O'Connor in a recent speech said the nation's courts must pay more attention to international court decisions to make a better impression on other nations.

The 73-year-old jurist joins Justices Anthony Kennedy, Stephen Breyer and Ruth Bader in making such startling statements in public forums and in high court decisions. They and Justices David H. Souter and John Paul Stevens see the Constitution as a "living" document that can be shaped by the latest legal fad or variously ignored, if the need arises.

O'Connor, speaking at a dinner before the Atlanta-based Southern Center for International Studies, said the high court considered European Court of Human Rights decisions in overturning Texas' sodomy law. In upholding affirmative action at the University of Michigan Law School, Breyer and Bader cited the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, a treaty the U.S. Senate has refused to ratify for more than 20 years.

"I suspect that over time we will rely increasingly or take notice at least increasingly, on international and foreign courts in examining domestic issues," she said, according to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Doing so, she said, "may not only enrich our own country's decisions, I think it may create that all-important good impression."

A good impression?

AT WHAT POINT did creating "that all-important good impression" become an integral part of a Supreme Court justice's job description? Where is that in Article III of the Constitution? It is frightening that a majority on our high court would consider decisions from countries less free than ours. It is frightening that our high court would even care what they think.

Americans shed blood to be free of Europe and now our Supreme Court majority, in a breathless, heady embrace of "one-worldism," would dump our hard-won freedoms in the blender of international public opinion — to make a good impression.

Our Founding Fathers must be spinning like windmills in their graves.

Thank goodness for Justice Antonin Scalia, a conservative constitutionalist, who can read the Constitution and understands the court's role in the U.S. judiciary. In a scathing rebuke of the court's overturning Texas' sodomy law, he wrote "The court's discussion of these foreign views is meaningless dicta. Dangerous dicta, however, since this court should not impose foreign moods, fads, or fashions on Americans."

If the high court does not reverse its ominous affection for decisions European, if the Constitution no longer is the law of the land, America's freedoms will vanish, and, as Ronald Reagan once said, "If we lose our freedom here, there is no place to escape to. This is the last stand on Earth."

Politician's public service speech

By WALTER E. WILLIAMS

Presidential aspirant Rep. Dick Gephardt, D-Mo., unwittingly performed a public service in his address to the Teamsters Local 238 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, last month. He revealed the true agenda behind so much of the support for minimum wages.

He pledged that if he became president, he'd press the World Trade Organization to establish an international minimum wage — one that he says is high enough so that American workers are not competing with slave, sweatshop and child labor around the world.

History has seen many calls for minimum wages for the same reason — to eliminate competition with workers who'd work for less. During South Africa's apartheid era, white unionists argued "in absence of statutory minimum wages, employers found it profitable to employ highly trained (and usually highly paid) Europeans by less efficient but cheaper non-whites."



One South African union leader said, "There is no job reservation left in the building industry, and in the circumstances I support the rate for the job (minimum wages) as the second best way of protecting our white artisans."

The South African Nursing Association condemned low wages received by black nurses as unfair. Wage increases until the wages of black nurses were raised. These are but several of numerous examples of calls for minimum wages cited in my 1989 book, "South Africa's War Against Capitalism."

You can bet the farm that these calls for minimum wages for blacks didn't represent white compassion for the welfare of blacks. Minimum wages are simply one of the most effective tools in the arsenal of racism everywhere.

I'm not charging Gephardt with racism. He claims he just wants to end policies that have left millions of Amer-



The Partnership for a Canadian Drug-free America

can suffering economically and workers overseas denied opportunity for a better standard of living. That's his stated intention, but when we analyze the effects of policy, we can almost always ignore policy intentions.

One effect of minimum wages is that of discrimination against the employer, or more precisely, against the worker. If the law requires me to pay, say, \$9 an hour, no matter whom I hire, does it pay me to hire someone who has skills enabling him to produce only \$5 worth of value per hour? Most people would now hiring such a worker as a losing economic proposition.

Are low-skilled workers made better or worse off as a result of the \$9 minimum wage? It's almost a no-brainer to conclude that being hired at \$5 an hour puts more food on the table than being hired at \$9.

What's more, minimum wages reduce training opportunities. Most of us

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WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Feature Editor

CIVIC GROUPS DEMAND FIX FOR...

Fiscal gap

GOV. FRANK MURKOWSKI should pay close attention to the message sent him on the fiscal gap recently by eight business, industry and civic leader groups. We agree with the petitioners on at least two of their three major points — that a fiscal fix should involve increased budget discipline and some use of Permanent Fund earnings.

We are less comfortable with their suggestion that eliminating the fiscal gap should involve a broad-based tax like a sales or income tax. It is perhaps inevitable that the state will be forced to tax its residents once again, but with \$25 billion in its Permanent Fund, Alaska should be able to defer that day for some time yet.

The need for a new approach is obvious, the looming deficit hangs over the business climate like a dark cloud, frightening away potential investors who fear they will be handed the bill.

As we've mentioned before, changing the Permanent Fund earnings calculations to a percent of market value would allow the state to pay dividends of more than \$1,000 and still free up something like \$625 million per year to reduce the deficit.

THAT CHANGE would be relatively painless since this year's dividend was \$1,107.56, but the conversion needs to be made soon. Waiting could alter the calculations and the pain could be considerably greater. Facing the state now is a window of opportunity not to be missed.

Budget chief Cheryl Prasca said the Murkowski administration is "not there yet" on such a plan. But the governor and his team should consider getting there as quickly as possible. Going slow seems a recipe for making things worse than they need to be.

The business and industry leaders also expressed concern that the state might try to raise revenues with new taxes on the oil and gas industry. We share that concern — since industry already pays heavy taxes — and think such an approach would be almost certain to torpedo the governor's plan to raise revenues through increased resource development.

Signing the letter to the governor were the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, Associated General Contractors, the Association of Alaska School Boards, the Council of Alaska Producers, the Alaska Support Industry Alliance, Eagle River and Chugach Chamber of Commerce, the Resource Development Council and the Juneau Economic Development Corp.

Though some politicians are still dragging their feet, the drive to resolve the fiscal gap seems to be approaching critical mass. Hopefully that will result in sensible decisions during the upcoming legislative session.

Expect a lot of rain on the Oregon Coast

By WILLIAM J. TOBIN

CANNON BEACH, Ore. — At this time of the year, huge, breaking waves roll in from the Pacific Ocean and wash across the wide sandy beach that extends for miles along this part of the Oregon coast. Rain can come in torrents, followed by splashes of sunshine before more rain falls in cascading sheets. In other words, it's a wonderful time to be in this special part of the world.

FOR THE MOST part, tourists are long gone, their summer fun over. During June, July and August the crowds are heavy in the little towns of Cannon Beach and Seaside, just to the north of here. The shops — and there are hundreds of them, many upscale and others a tad less so — do a heavy seasonal business in expensive art works, pricey curios and the usual clutter of resort-area souvenirs.



Tobin

But as winter sets in, many merchants reduce their hours and others simply lock their doors, content to wait until another summer rolls around.

THE ABSENCE of throngs on the sidewalks and cars on the streets makes it easy for late-season travelers. You'll encounter no crowds while walking the beach. And if the rain is too heavy, you can find haven in a friendly grocery shop — or by the fire if you're lucky enough to be in the Stephanie Inn, one of the most gracious and luxurious small hotels on the West Coast.

IF YOU HAVE never done so, and ever have the opportunity when a Permanent Fund dividend check will cover the fare, do come this way — and do stay at the Stephanie Inn. It's a romantic getaway, as fresh now as it was on opening day in April 1993. An oceanfront room on the third floor comes complete with a huge deck, a fireplace, and a jacuzzi. Wonderful complimentary breakfasts are served daily in the dining room, and in the evening executive chef



"Here's one you'll love! Two weeks in an open boat without food or water."

John Newman serves a four-course prix fixe dinner that's four-star in every way.

BEFORE DINNER, complimentary dry wine and hors d'oeuvres are served in the library, with wide windows overlooking the ocean, a warm fire, and a piano in which guests can belt out a tune or two. If you're lucky enough to be traveling with Jeanette Nelles, formerly of Anchorage and now at Bellevue, Wash., you're in for a special treat. She's a wonder at the keyboard, with a magical way to entertain a handful of wine-sippers. Strangers quickly become friends, and the early evening hours become moments to treasure.

THE CITY OF Portland is the start or finish of any trip to the Oregon Coast. And that's a very good thing too. It's a wonderful town — and if shopping is your thing, there are plenty of attractions and no sales tax. You and your money will be welcomed at Nordstrom, Meier & Frank, Saks Fifth Avenue, Kohlberg's of Dublin, and in each shopping mall as Washington Square, in the western suburbs, and the Lloyd Center, across the Willamette River from downtown Portland. The Doubletree Hotel and the Oregon Convention Center are nearby. And everywhere there are fine restaurants galore.

PAZZO RISTORANTE is a splendid Italian trattoria in the heart of downtown. It offers hearty cocktails, an excellent wine list, and such entrees as Baccarat Alla Marinara, a fabulous

spaghetti-like pasta in a Roman sauce of parmesan, red onion, red wine and tomato, generously sprinkled with pecorino romano. With a glass of good chianti, it's a meal fit for a Roman emperor.

FOR STEAK lovers, Portland diners for years have swarmed by Rungside Steakhouse. But newer on the scene — is Ruth's Chris Steak House, one of a number of the same name butler and you around the country, much like Sullivan and Morton's of Chicago. The one here is second to none. Another popular dining spot for lunch or dinner is the Portland Steak and Chophouse, with an entrance off the lobby of the Embassy Suites Hotel Downtown.

THIS IS NOT your usual Embassy Suites — but it has all the expected amenities such as a beautiful free breakfast buffet, and free cocktails every evening. But this branch of the Embassy Suites chain occupies one of Portland's most historic properties, the old Multnomah Hotel, which opened in 1912 and was a center of Portland's social and political life for 50 years. Portland author Carl Curtin calls it "the Grand Lady of Fourth Avenue." The hotel was served as a government office building. After standing empty for four years and following two years of multimillion-dollar renovations, it reopened as an Embassy Suites on Nov. 16, 1987 — bright and shiny and still grand.

THE MULTNOMAH has a bit of an Alaska connection, through Edward "Eddie" Carlson. He started a hotel career as a ballman at the Ben Franklin Hotel in Seattle and eventually became president of Western Hotels and then president of United Air Lines when those two companies wound up in the same corporate bundle. Along the way, Carlson expanded the company's hotel ownership to include the Multnomah and the old Anchorage Westward, which we now know as the Hilton Anchorage.

BUT THERE'S A mystery here. Gasoline prices here are 10 cents a gallon cheaper than in Anchorage. Go figure. William J. Tobin is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

The Anchorage Times
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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

DEFENDING FREEDOM IN . . .

Afghanistan

MORE THAN 800 soldiers from Fort Richardson are in Afghanistan for a scheduled six-month deployment. Their mission is to support Operation Enduring Freedom and the Global War on Terrorism.

The use of capital letters in that description is not only intentional, it is mandatory. Those are not pretentious words, plucked from an ad-man's copy book. That is the official title of the activities in which U.S. troops are engaged in that harsh land.

The assignment is dangerous. The young men and women from Fort Rich, combined into Task Force 1-501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, serve in harm's way. They will be on the front line in the nation's battle to preserve freedom and fight terrorism in a country that harbors Osama bin Laden and has committed killers who have declared war on the United States and every American, civilian or soldier.

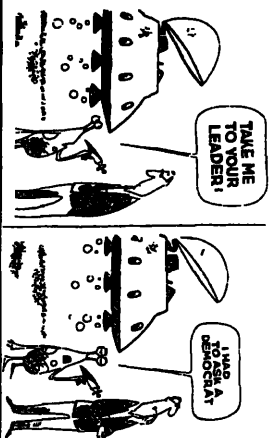
THERE IS reason for confidence. The 501st's 1st Battalion, which makes up the basis of this deployed unit, is well-trained, its soldiers ready for whatever contingency presents itself. Its ranks have been supplemented by other forces — artillery, engineers, air defense and maintenance units, plus medical personnel.

In Afghanistan they will join the 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division — one of the Army's most famous commands. They leave behind their families who will endure the separation that comes to those who serve their country in any one of the branches of the military. While waiting for their loved ones to return from this assignment, we are confident they will have the support of the Army and the civilian community to help offset the temporary pains that come with overseas missions.

Our prayers are with our Alaska troops. We know they will perform well, as have all the other active duty, reserve and National Guard units that have been deployed in this fight against terrorism.

We look forward to their safe return home.

CALL 7-1111



Subverting Constitution via filibusters

By **BRIAN C. ANDERSON**

Everyone has commented on the unprecedented filibuster campaign against President Bush's appellate court nominees — the latest of whom is Justice Janice Rogers Brown, a black veteran of California's Supreme Court. What hasn't sufficiently been understood is that the filibusters rest on a novel jurisprudential concept, call it "Schumersism," after Chuck Schumer, the New York senator who is its most strident proponent.

Schumerman has wrought irreparable damage to our political fabric. For two years, Sen. Schumer has waged a campaign to subvert the criteria by which the Senate ratifies presidential judicial picks. For much of American history, the Senate, in its confirmation of judges, has relied on principles laid down by Alexander Hamilton in "The Federalist," integrity, intelligence and temperance, and faithfulness to the rule of law — terms on which President Bush's picks, Justice Brown included, pass with high marks. But instead of Hamiltonian standards, Mr. Schumer insists that senators must make a judge's "ideology" their principal concern. By this he means the judge's private political opinions, as well as the political results his decisions have led to in past cases and could lead to in the future. Judges whose views on affirmative action and abortion are outside the "mainstream" should be disqualified from sitting on the federal bench, regardless of competence. As for the definition of "mainstream," Schumersism simply holds that conservatives are ipso facto "extremists."

Schumerman is now the reigning, jurisprudential philosophy among Senate Democrats. Indeed, a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, John Kerry, has said he'll filibuster any Supreme Court nominee who wouldn't uphold abortion rights or "laws protecting workers and the environment." This partisanship goes beyond anything the Democrats have asserted in earlier judicial battles. In defeating the Supreme Court nomination of Robert Bork and in trying to defeat Clarence Thomas, the Democrats still fell constrained by Senate tradition to argue against confirmation primarily on grounds of temperament and integrity.

No longer. They justify the filibuster of Priscilla Owen because she argued in one case that parents should play a role in the decision-making process for their minor daughter's quest for an abortion. More, Americans support parental notification laws for abortion, yet any judge willing to contemplate any limitation on abortion at any time is a "right-wing extremist." Miguel Estrada was filibustered because he's reputed to be conservative in his political views (as if many Americans didn't share similar values). And in justifying opposition to Justice Brown, Mr. Schumer described her as an "out-of-the-mainstream activist of the first order," even though she won more than 75% of the vote in her last reconfirmation and frequently writes the majority opinion in California Supreme Court decisions. She has drawn the ire of Democrats above all for her willingness to uphold California's Proposition 209, in which state voters halted group preferences and racial quotas.

For decades, liberals have happily watched an activist judiciary twist the Constitution to make it produce "progressive" policy outcomes—from affirmative action to partial birth abortion—that the left never could have won from voters. Lib-

erals have defended the judiciary's expansive policymaking by saying that it simply grew out of a "living Constitution" — a document whose principles, interpreted by wise judges (i.e., those with a "progressive" world view), could adapt to the needs of every era. Conservatives have lamented this trend toward legislating from the bench, they want the courts restored to some semblance of what the Framers intended courts to be — neutral referees, applying the law not creating it. The conservative jurisprudence of "originalism," favored by Bush judicial appointees, directs judges to stick to the Constitution as the Framers understood it, and to read statutes to a limited range of meaning, which can be rightly or wrongly glossed. The prospect of an originalist bench depolarizing the law gives the left nightmares, since it could sweep away some court-sanctioned liberal policy gains as unconstitutional.

So Schumersism have trained their fire on originalism. They argue that all approaches to law are at bottom a matter of power politics. The originalists may claim to be faithful to legal texts, but that's a delusion. Judicial interpretation is unavoidably "ideological." What the Bush judges, like all judges, are really up to, Schumersism avers, is constructing the law so that it produces their favored policies. And since what's at stake is so momentous — abortion, affirmative action, vouchers — and since judging is just a form of politics, Schumersism licenses the use of any means necessary to retain a liberal judiciary. This includes calling Bush nominees "extremist right-wing ideologues" out to "attack working families," denouncing originalism as "right-wing judicial activism," snarling nominees as closet bigots, trying to create by filibuster a new supermajority requirement for judicial confirmations, and proposing, as Sen. Schumer has done, to take away the president's constitutional power to select judges and turn it over to state committees, equally divided between Democrats and Republicans, making impossible the appointment of a judge unacceptable to Democrats.

Republican efforts to defeat the filibusters have, also, failed. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist and 10 other senators had proposed a change to Senate rules on filibustering judicial nominees that would gradually lower the votes required to end a filibuster, but changing rules requires at least 60 votes, making Democratic resistance impossible to get around. The best course for the GOP may be to use the filibuster debate and take their case to the public in the next election. Sen. John Cornyn, who chairs the Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on the Constitution, says that "it may take an intervening election, bringing a bigger Republican majority, to resolve the judicial crisis."

There's good reason to think that the filibusters could hurt the Democrats' chances for retaking the Senate in 2004. With more than half of next year's 34 contested Senate seats currently held by Democrats, and the Dems confident of holding only nine of those, the GOP may be able to build a filibuster-proof majority and restore sanity to the judiciary, right up to the Supreme Court. The biggest gain of all, however, would be the death of Schumersism.

Brian C. Anderson is senior editor of City Journal.

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The Anchorage Times

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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Friday, November 14, 2003 B-7

JUSTICE BROWN DESERVES ...

Senate vote

HOLY COW! Even Al Sharpton, one of the loner hopefuls running in a pack of loonies seeking the Democratic presidential nomination, says the Senate should vote on Janice Rogers Brown's nomination to a federal appeals court.

Brown, an associate justice on the California Supreme Court, has been nominated by President George W. Bush to sit on the powerful U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C. That court, considered the second most important in the nation, deals with many of this nation's high-profile public policy cases. It also is seen by some as a pathway to the U.S. Supreme Court.

South Dakota Sen. Tim Wirth, the Senate minority leader, and other members of the left's lynch mob, have indicated they will filibuster to block a floor vote in the Senate on her nomination. If they succeed, she would be the fifth nominee Democrats have denied Bush. Her nomination cleared the Senate Judiciary Committee last week.

Sharpton said he does not agree with Brown's politics, but thinks she deserves a floor vote. The Washington Times quoted him as saying, "We've got to stop this monolith in black America because it impedes the freedom of expression for all of us. I don't think she should be opposed because she doesn't come from some assumed club."

He is absolutely correct, although it is painful to say. No court nominee should have to conform to the religious or political beliefs of a radical handful in the Senate who would abuse their constitutional duty.

BROWN'S CRIME is that she is not a black liberal who believes judges, in her words, should act as "philosophers kings." She does not believe courts should engage in social engineering or implementation by decree of the latest legal fad. Instead, she thinks courts should confine themselves to the law.

"The quixotic desire to do good, be universally fair and make everybody happy is understandable," she wrote in an oft-quoted dissent. "Indeed, the majority's zeal is more than a little endearing. There is only one problem with this approach. We are a court."

The daughter of Alabama sharecroppers, Brown by all accounts is an independent thinker who predictably has drawn the enmity of the National Organization for Women and the likes of Sen. Dianne Feinstein and so-called civil rights groups that would be unable to fast their agendas on Americans with judges like Brown on the bench.

And what's not to like? She's smart. She's tough. She has a clear perspective of what courts and judges should be. We need more Browns, not fewer, to ensure individual rights, property rights and freedom in this nation. With a high court replete with "philosopher kings" giving precedents from foreign courts more weight than our Constitution in making decisions, judges like Brown may be our only hope.

Public needs to keep a close eye

By DAN SULLIVAN

Politicians become very attuned to the weather. Assessing the political climate and determining which way the political winds are blowing are two necessary skills of the successful politician.

Mayor Mark Begich made an assessment of the political climate last week, saw that a big storm was brewing in opposition to the proposed fire hydrant tax, and asked the Assembly to consider cancelling the Nov. 25 special election.

The mayor stated that he was confident the voters would have approved the new tax, but it was clear to just about anyone paying attention that there was substantial public support for the idea. And for good reasons.

First, the public process was not well served by the Assembly's abbreviated deliberations on the important subject of raising taxes. There was no work session on the issue and many questions regarding the details of the tax proposal remain unanswered.

During the Assembly's debate prior to the final vote, discussion was cut off before each member had an opportunity to ask questions and present other points of view.

The public test: Sullivan money was over-whelmingly opposed to the special election, as were the phone calls and e-mails that were received from our constituents. Eight Assembly members, with the support of the mayor, clearly had already decided that this election was going to happen.

Second, holding a special election in November made little sense because the Assembly doesn't convene until December. Public testimony on the budget has not been completed, and been submitted and reviewed by the administration.

The need for more revenues and the amount of the budget that would be cut or increased are not decided until the final vote. It is premature to tell the public we need to expand the tax cap or lay off



firefighters when our budget deliberations are still in progress. Additionally, it's quite likely that holding an election during the Thanksgiving holiday week would have resulted in one of the lowest voter turnouts in the history of Anchorage.

The public doesn't take kindly to being played for fools. When they see that seven members of the Assembly department are traveling to Nashville for a non-essential conference, when they see special contracts going to friends of the mayor, when they see a \$100,000 price tag just to hold a one-issue special election, it's very hard to convince them that there is a budget crisis.

Any proposals for generating new revenue from the taxpayers must be accompanied by an honest budget presentation that avoids political gimmicks and demonstrates the risks before cutting essential services or asking for more money.

The budget priorities put forth by the mayor and endorsed by his Assembly majority are cause for concern. The mayor's initial budget proposal cut 23 active firefighter positions yet left the horticulture and transit budgets, among others, virtually untouched.

When asking the Assembly to call off the special election, the mayor said he had put forth cuts in other areas, cuts he had

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A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Thursday, November 13, 2003 B-7

BEGICH FUND-RAISING LETTER WAY ...

Out of bounds

MAYOR MARK BEGICH was dead wrong when, in 3,000 letters to political campaign contributors, he urged donations to "Trust the People," a group founded by three Democrats ostensibly aiming to change the way US Senate vacancies are filled.

After all, it was only a few days ago that Democrats were howling for the head of Alaska Republican Party chief Randy Ruedrich who sat on the state Oil and Gas Commission. He had forwarded a fund-raising letter for the Republican Party. Democrats claimed it was a conflict of interest because these Ruedrich helped regulate might feel obliged to donate to avoid problems.

Begich said in the letters, to his campaign contributors and those of the three lawmakers pushing for the change, that "Trust the People" needs \$50,000 to pay signature gatherers if it hopes to obtain by Jan. 12 the 24,000 signatures needed to put the Senate vacancy question on the ballot next year.

Begich, who signed the fund-raising letter as mayor of Anchorage, did exactly what Ruedrich was accused of doing — drumming up money from those who might feel obliged to donate to carry favor or avoid problems with his administration.

In using his office to urge the donations, Begich — who only a few days ago asked Gov. Frank Murkowski for help in fixing state regulation of the Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility to help resolve this city's fiscal woes — might as well have slapped the governor in the face.

WHY? THE INITIATIVE primarily is designed by Democrats to embarrass Murkowski and keep his appointment of his daughter to the US Senate in the headlines to help the Democrat candidate for Senate next year. It also would give Democrats their only hope for a shot at Sen. Ted Stevens' seat if he were to step down any time soon.

After time-consuming missteps by the Democrats, the initiative petition failed constitutional muster with the state attorney general and was denied certification by Lt. Gov. Loren Leman, but a judge appointed in 2000 by then-Gov. Tony Knowles allowed signature gathering to begin.

Begich has the chutzpah to say those opposing the petition have made the issue political. We find ourselves wondering what is not blatantly political about a savvy politician who uses his public office to tap contributors to Democrats for a Democrat cause aimed at doing damage to Republicans and helping a Democrat Senate hopeful? If all that is not political, what is? So much for the charade of non-partisan mayors.

Mayor Begich embarrassed this city, likely making its plight with the state's legislative and executive branches even worse. Moreover, heating the Democrat bushes for donations presents the appearance of a flagrant conflict of interest, and an abuse of his office.

Ruedrich stepped down. What about you, Mr. Mayor?

Abuse thrives in isolated villages

By ELISE PATKOTAK

The Nov. 2 front page of the Anchorage Daily News featured a story on village justice. It related the difficulties faced by small villages in coping with violence when they have no police and a trooper is stationed a plane ride away if the weather is good. As always, the main violence encountered in these villages is alcohol-fueled domestic abuse.

You would think that living near family would provide a buffer zone for abused women in small villages because they would always have somewhere to go. But the truth of the matter is that in most Native villages in this state, family doesn't make a great deal of difference in the level of domestic violence women must endure.

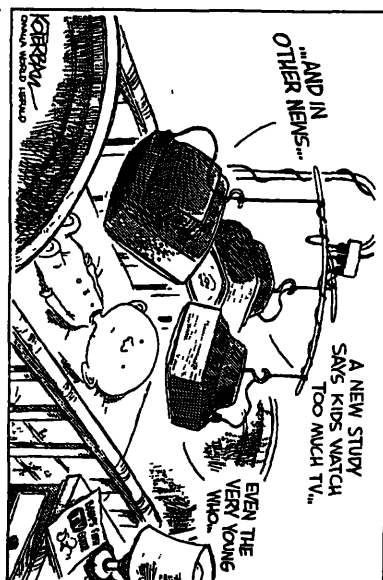
When I was growing up, I had an aunt who was a victim of domestic violence. Her husband would get drunk and punch her out. She would go home to her mother when that happened. Her mother would let her stay overnight till her husband sobered up and then send her right back to him.



This was the school of thought that believed that once you made your bed, you had to lie in it. If she left her husband, Patkotak and the well-known secret of his abuse became public, it would disgrace the family.

This is often how domestic violence still plays out in Alaska villages. It's not that the woman is isolated from her family. It's that her family, in order to survive, has to get along with all the other families and so doesn't want anyone saying publicly what everyone knows privately. It would shame them and shame the family of the abuser to have the words spoken about that are only otherwise whispered by women as they sit together.

In small villages where everyone is related, where your life revolves around your relationships in the village, any breach in those relationships can be devastating. Being ostracized in a vil-



lage with no roads leading anywhere else means you are completely isolated and alone. For most village women, that is a fate much worse than the routine beatings they endure.

When I lived in Barrow, one of the things that used to drive me the craziest was watching abusive men suddenly turn into respected elders because somehow, somewhere between 40 and 60, they finally sobered up and stopped hitting their wives. Of course, by then the damage had been done.

Not only had another woman lived a life of quiet despair and pain, but their children had grown up in a culture of violence and abuse. Anyone who doesn't think that domestic violence creates generations of abusers is simply not paying attention.

I have never in my life met stranger women than the Inupiat women I know from the North Slope. Unfortunately, that strength is often used to survive years of abuse. Then they spend more years raising grandchildren who have been taken from parents raising them the only way they know how — with alcohol and violence.

I have watched them do this for 30 years now. They get hit, they get slammed down and then they get up and go on doing the best they can. Those

of us who encounter these women in the work we do repeat over and over, "You don't have to live like this." But often times they do because they live in a village that is their whole world.

If they left that village, they would leave their lives, their families and their culture behind and be forced to live in a strange world where every house does not contain a neighbor, friend and relative. For many women from small villages, the thought of living like that is just too hard to comprehend.

So they stay in abusive relationships because they see no other door open that offers something better on the other side. They get hit and they take it and when he's done hitting them, they make him breakfast. They live lives of quiet despair that will never change until the villages of Alaska agree that domestic violence is a crime against women and children that no family or village should excuse.

Until then, many women will simply choose to drink with their abuser because then, when they get hit, it doesn't hurt so much.

Elise Patkotak, an Anchorage free-lance writer and author of *Paradise Lost*, a memoirs book based on her 28 years in Barrow, lives in Anchorage and owns Pheasant Cargo Ltd., a writing/graphics company.

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A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Staff Editor

Wednesday, November 12, 2003 **B-7**

SULLIVAN ARENA CONTRACTORS NEED ...

New orders

DO THE managers of Sullivan Arena and other municipal buildings need new marching orders? Perhaps they do. Though a flap erupted recently because the Sullivan Arena lost \$300,000 in 2002, when its operators projected a \$675,000 profit, we should not lose sight of the fact that the arena and other municipal facilities were not built to serve as profit centers. They were erected to serve a community purpose.

Their managers are instructed to make the facilities profitable to avoid their being a financial drag on the city, but their success should actually be measured by how well they serve that community purpose. Profitability is a secondary, if important, consideration.

The fault lies with the marching orders given SMG, the contractor. The firm is a major national facility management company and is fully capable of managing Anchorage's municipal buildings to accomplish the goal.

Perhaps SMG should be directed to follow the example of the company's predecessor, Ogden Facility Management, which held the contract from 1986 to 1999. The key to Ogden's success was the community orientation of its manager, Tom Anderson, former director of Alaska State Troopers and a long-time community leader.

ANDERSON COULDN'T stand to see the buildings under his management sit dark and unoccupied when they could be filled with lights and people coming for community functions. The marching orders he gave his team were to encourage activities that would bring in vendors, hobbyists and trade shows, anything that could break even or come close. During Anderson's time with Ogden, trade and hobby shows flourished, promoters became a main industry and the municipal buildings rarely sat empty. The activities put many people to work and the buildings were almost always profitable despite the marginal economics of some events. Sullivan Arena made money every year except one, and that year the building was out of service for a time due to construction.

SMG says low attendance at Alaska Aces hockey games and falling beer sales are affecting the bottom line. The irony there is that the Aces were formed in 1988 as the Anchorage Shooting Stars by Anderson and his marketing manager, Al Anker, as a way to keep the building busy and crowded. The hockey players were not a major draw in their early years but eventually several entrepreneurs stepped in and the Aces became an institution.

SMG's orientation toward managing the buildings has been quite different. The company has seen its mission as turning a profit for the municipality, though the 2002 results were a major disappointment in that regard.

Anderson and his management team had against SMG when the contract became available in 2000. They have since gone on to other things, but the Begich administration might want to give SMG new marching orders — to follow the example set by the old Ogden team.

Golden barrel had dents and dings

By TOM BRENNAN

When the tanker *Manhattan* was on its way through the Northwest Passage in 1969, somebody at Humble Oil & Refining came up with a bright idea. Why not have ARCO deliver a symbolic barrel of oil to the vessel when it arrives off Prudhoe Bay?

As Alaska public relations guy for ARCO, newly arrived from my first stint at *The Anchorage Times*, the gesture fell to me so I set out to arrange it. There were a few problems, including the fact that "barrel" is a 42-gallon measurement, there is no such thing as a barrel container in oil patch inventories. The closest the company's field people could come was a 55-gallon drum, which were plentiful in North Slope warehouses.

A few days before the *Manhattan's* arrival, I received a call from the Slope. Many of the petroleum products used in the field were made by Chevron and all of the drums they could find were painted with Chevron's logo. That wouldn't do at an ARCO-Humble affair.

The field people had decided to paint one of the drums and wanted to know what color it should be. I talked to my staff and offered our brilliant idea, gold. Everybody at ARCO thought that gold would be perfect, most appropriate for the occasion.

So when the ship anchored 20 or so miles off Prudhoe in early September, its officers helicoptered in to meet assembled dignitaries at the ARCO dock. I was introduced to my newly arrived counterpart, Hank Rosenthal, public relations guy for the Manhattan project and for Humble in Alaska.

At the appropriate point in the festivities, the painted oil drum was rolled out and prepared to be slung under a helicopter for delivery to the ship. I was horrified. Like all other drums on the Slope, this one had numerous dings and dents. And the gold paint contributed away one like a Broadway floodlight. The drum looked like a giant bad girl's piggy bank.



Brennan



I glanced at Rosenthal to see if he shared my alarm, but Hank was pre-empting the ghastly thing was just beautiful. So was everybody else at the ceremony. And since this was long before the news media became the nipping-and-tucking we know today, the lucky paint job on ARCO's grand gesture went unmentioned. My budding industry career was unaffected.

After the ship returned through the ice to the East Coast, Humble recycled the barrel and used the oil to make small plastic keepsakes, each with a small amount of encapsulated crude. They were labeled "Oil from the Golden Barrel." I've still got mine in a drawer somewhere.

One of the reasons Humble wanted its own public relations representative here was that ARCO was getting all the credit for the big discovery at Prudhoe Bay. ARCO had been the operator on the discovery well, but Humble had put up a bunch of money for it.

In those days I was allowed to use ARCO's small business jet about once a week to take media people and visiting dignitaries to Prudhoe for VIP tours. Hank started coming along and every time I said "ARCO" he said "Humble." Hank became my hunting and fishing partner as well as my industry colleague. He had more experience than I did in the oil patch as well as in the out-of-the-world, so he was my mentor in those times.

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Tom Brennan is an editor of *The Anchorage Times*.

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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

Tuesday, November 11, 2003 **B-5**
WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Editor

SAY THANKS TO THOSE WHO ...

Served nation

FREEDOM ISN'T FREE and a large portion of the price is paid by the men and women who wear our nation's uniform. Today is Veterans Day, a time to honor and thank all those who have served in our armed forces.

Some people are confused by the fact that both Memorial Day and Veterans Day honor our military. Obviously Veterans Day is aimed at those who served and lived, while Memorial Day honors those who died in all wars since 1776.

The confusion comes because it is difficult at times like this for those who served and lived not to remember their companions, their friends and neighbors who fell. So Veterans Day inevitably becomes a time to honor both the living and the dead.

The burden of military service does not fall evenly on all Americans despite efforts to make it as equitable as possible. Inevitably some will wear the uniform in time of war, others will serve during peacetime and still others will never be called to serve in their lifetimes.

Just a few years ago virtually all American men spent time in the military, though the demands of modern warfare and the rise of professional military men and women resulted in an end to the draft long ago.

Even in wartime some soldiers never go near a battlefield while others find themselves fighting their country's enemies in the most horrific of circumstances. Such inequities are virtually impossible to eliminate.

But while America cannot make up for every difference in burden, the nation can and does acknowledge that all those who served — in whatever capacity — deserve its thanks.

Oil spending

NEWLY RELEASED figures show that energy company spending is still a major factor in the Alaska economy.

Petroleum News reports that the three major North Slope producers alone still spend well over \$1.5 billion a year on goods and services purchased from Alaska businesses.

ConocoPhillips Alaska Inc. spent more than \$600 million with Alaska businesses in 2002 and BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc. spent more than \$800 million.

ExxonMobil doesn't break its spending down between in-state and out-of-state vendors, but the company pays a significant share of North Slope field unit costs.

The producers try hard to keep spending down to improve profitability, which also keeps the state's share of revenues from oilfield operations. But Alaska's vendors are quite happy about the fact that spending with them remains high.

America owes veterans its freedom

By PAUL JENKINS

Munching on a hot dog, I watched a slight, curly haired man in the newspaper cafeteria fastidiously arrange his silverware around his plate and place a single cigarette on a napkin. I shook my head and wondered, "Good grief, what is this guy's story?"

As we came to know each other over the years, he confided he had been a prisoner of war in World War II, that upon his return he had been in the German camp. His particular hell had left its mark. But that was about all he would say.

A wisp of a man I met as a young reporter asked me, I suppose because of my long hair and beard at the time, if I had been to Vietnam. I told him yes, and he looked away. A moment later he said, very quietly, "I was in the Philippines. I survived the Bataan Death March." We both just sat there. He with tears in his eyes, me with a knot in my stomach, feeling the ghost of the horrors he, too, had lived through.

Then there was the former Marine, if there actually is such a thing, who was on gunboats in China, Guadalcanal, in World War II and fought his way back from the Chosin Reservoir in Korea.

He carried an ugly scar from a white phosphorus burn on his leg. We would sit for hours drinking his booze, smoking my cigarettes — his wife would have killed him — and he would talk about some of it. But not much.

There have been so many others. A Scottish lawyer who wore his shirt sleeves down all the time to cover the huge Black Watch Regiment tattoo on his forearm. "I was younger then," he said. Or the young Vietnam veteran who lost his right leg to a mine that straddled his leg, and took up sky diving because his doctors said he could not.

Generally, if I prodded, they would share their experiences. But only to a point. Like my father. He now is in his late 80s. He was in the 8th Air Force, a pack of all trades unit, flying photo reconnaissance in the South Pacific. About B-7's early on, then B-24s and B-29s some time later, he island-hopped, made a side trip to North Africa, and wound up on sinking little dots in the ocean with their names buried into history.

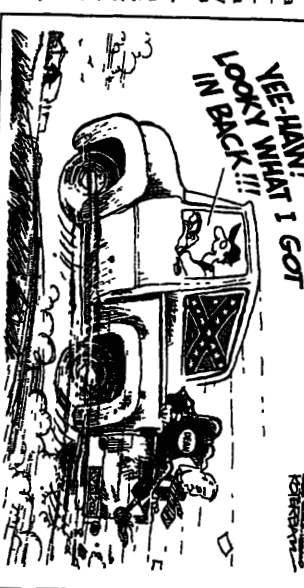
Over the years I've managed to pry loose precious little else, and he has been clean. There was that stubbornly clean-like thing in New Guinea. A broken jaw. A plane's crew standing in line before a B-24 with their arms in slings, heads bandaged, leaning on crutches. The nose at the bottom? "4-2."

The only alternative was to ship out to the Philippines where he, too, a few months later could have joined the Death March. Lucky chance.

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38 and what I know about his World War II activities you could lose in a minute, but I'm slowly starting to piece together a picture.

He left Oklahoma to join the Army in January 1940, a dirt poor, 5-foot-3, 135-pound beanpole. He enlisted to go to Panama, he said, because it sounded exciting. But there were more pressing reasons. "We were in a swifly bad shape," he said. "There were no jobs. It was the best way I could send money home to Mom."

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The Anchorage Times

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God bless them all. God bless our men and women in harm's way on this very day. And God bless America.

Paul Jenkins is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

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BILL J. ALLEN
Editor

Voice of the Times

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

THE WORST DAMAGE IS TO ...

Credibility

WHILE IT MUST have been a bitter pill to swallow, Mayor Mark Begich is scripping the scheduled Nov. 25 election that would have asked voters to approve a tax on fire hydrants to avoid laying off 22 firefighters.

Tax proponents said the levy, if it had been approved in the special election, would have raised about \$2.9 million, the amount needed to offset Fire Department payments to the Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility. Under a 1977 agreement, the department pays the utility to maintain the city's 6,500 hydrants and the water lines feeding them.

Begich, whose administration is facing \$33 million in red ink next year, said he believes he can come up with savings in the budget. When those are added to increased fees, the amount will total about \$1.3 million. He said he thinks he eventually can find the rest elsewhere in the budget.

The mayor said in a news release that he wanted to avoid further dividing the community. "The debate under way threatens to needlessly polarize our community," he said.

His supporters would have you believe it was a courageous decision. That seems like spin to us. It would seem more likely that he, like the rest of the city, could see the handwriting on the voting booth wall. The tax had no chance. The more it was talked about, the less chance it had.

OPPOSITION TO the tax — immediate and vocal — was grounded in the belief that the threat to lay off 22 firefighters and abolish 27 other positions unless the levy was adopted was nothing more than a local version of the Washington Monument ploy. From the outcome, the critics appear to have been right on target.

Was there any political damage caused by Begich's pulling the tax iron out of the fire? Did he shoot himself in the foot? The answer to that has to be an unequivocal yes. It was his administration's first real political test, and it wound up on its back like a dead cockroach. Even going to the polls and losing outright likely would have been a better outcome.

That, at least, would have salvaged some credibility. To the army of skeptics out there, it looks as if our city leaders knew all along that the money could be found in drabs and drabs here and there in the budget without threatening layoffs or trying to hold up taxpayers. In fact, it looks exactly like what the tax opponents have been saying: It was a way to end run the tax cap that ruins in property taxes.

Probably the worst damage to overcome will be to the credibility of those who backed the tax idea. Who will believe the Assembly or the mayor when they beatifically stare into a television camera and say "There is no more money? Who will believe them when they say "We need new taxes?"

There may come a time when a new tax actually is needed, but we would not want the job of selling it to voters. Especially now.

Uphold true meaning of Constitution

By WALTER E. WILLIAMS

Several weeks ago, I discussed how Congress systematically abuses the Constitution's "commerce clause" to control our lives in ways that would have been an abomination to the Framers.

Quite a few readers pointed to my omission of Congress' companion tool to circumvent both the letter and spirit of the Constitution, namely the "Commerce Clause." The Constitution's Article I, Section 8, paragraph 3 gives Congress authority to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

During the war, the 13 colonies formed a union under the Articles of Confederation (1778) whereby "Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every power, jurisdiction, and right, which is not by this Confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled."

The Treaty of Paris (1783) that ended the war between the colonies and Great Britain recognized 13 sovereign nations.

A key failing of the Articles of Confederation was the provision of states to erect protectionist trade barriers. When the Framers met in Philadelphia in 1787 and wrote the constitution that governs us today, they addressed that failure through the commerce and the privileges and immunities clauses that created a national free-trade zone.

Thus, the original purpose of the Commerce Clause was primarily a means to eliminate trade barriers among the states. They didn't intend for the Commerce Clause to govern so much of our lives.

Indeed, as James Madison, the father of our Constitution, explained, "The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite."

For most of our history, the courts ruled congressional attempts to use the "Commerce Clause" to sabotage the clear meaning of the Constitution, particularly the Ninth and 10th amendments. The courts began carving in to congressional tyranny during the 1930s that tyranny was sealed in 1942, by a little-known U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Wickard vs. Filburn*.

The Department of Agriculture had set production quotas. Filburn harvested nearly 12 acres of wheat above his government allotment. He argued that the excess wheat was unrelated to commerce since he grew it for his own use. He was fined anyway. The court reasoned that had he not grown the extra wheat he would have had to purchase it — therefore, he was indirectly affecting interstate commerce.

If that's any good news, it's the tiny step the U.S. Supreme Court took in its *US vs. Lopez* (1995) ruling. In 1990, Congress passed the Gun-Free School Zones Act, citing its powers under the "Commerce Clause." Namely, the possession of a firearm in a local school zone substantially affected interstate commerce.

Why? Violent crime raises insurance costs, and those costs are spread throughout the population. Violent



crime reduces the willingness of individuals to travel to high-crime areas within the country. Finally, crime threatens the learning environment, thereby reducing national productivity.

While all of this might be true, the relevant question is whether Congress had constitutional authority to pass the Gun-Free School Zones Act. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled it didn't, saying, "If we were to accept the government's arguments, we are hard pressed to posit any activity by an individual that Congress is without power to regulate."

In other words, the hours children spend studying the amount of risk they get and what they eat have something to do with learning. Congress could easily manufacture a case for the regulation of these activities based on its perceived interpretation of the "Commerce Clause."

While the *Lopez* ruling is a tiny step in the right direction, there's much more to be done. Constitution-respecting Americans should demand the impeachment of congressmen and other elected officials who ignore their oaths of office to uphold and defend the Constitution.

Walter E. Williams is a professor at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. His column is distributed by Creators Syndicate Inc., 6777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045, (310) 387-7002.

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WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

Winning course

We need to remind ourselves of this every day, and not let ourselves be bogged down by depressing events that are overplayed by media people who have forgotten, or have never known, what Alaska used to be like.

The Anchor
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there very mostly land a hand to make the nationals from the respective countries they saw, folks passing through and needing diplomatic or legal assistance while in Alaska. The Resource Development Council's 2004 conference, "New Frontiers, Expanding Opportunities," is set for the Sheridan Nov. 21-22. Sooner or later, says a retired colonel from tank corps days, is president of the Last Frontier Chapter of the Association of the United States Army

Up at Chena Hot Springs 60 miles northeast of Fairbanks, folks are planning to build a 300-room, folk-high, ex-room hotel out of sea sawed timber. To serve winter tourists who come to town for overnight stays to view the northern lights. Silence bars and

years has been publisher of the *Walrus* in the town of Ythorne. To accept the job at the Empire, Hale also stepped down as president of the Georgia Press Association last June. All told, his career has taken him to some different states before the move to Alaska—which he describes as “a wonderful opportunity professionally and an incredible adventure to live and work in that kind of environment.” Hale has big shoes to fill. Immediately turned the Empire into a strong advocate for business, economic development and multiple uses of Southeast Alaska’s abundant natural resources.

have a lot of time and money—plenty of both, as a matter of fact—you can hurry on down to Punta Arenas, Chile, and sign up for a flight aboard a Learjet and take off for the South Pole. Chile Airline 8340 to the South Pole departs on Nov. 23 at a total cost of \$10,000. The flight, operated by Chile Airline, is booked through Travelquest International, a book-and-travel agency based in New York City. The flight, limited to 75 passengers, 70 of whom will take 14 hours, and the plane will cruise at an altitude of 38,000 feet, says the polar region. A whole parcel of Antarctica also will be aboard. The price of the flight is \$10,000. The price of the flight is \$10,000. The price of the flight is \$10,000.

ALASKA NOTEBOOK: The UAA Seawolf hockey team lost one of its all-time home biggest fans with the death of Pat McTerny on the last day of September. The 61-year-old retired nurse was the wife of Anchorage broadcaster executive Tom McTerny, owner of KBYR. Steven Summoff, honorary consul general for

But for \$8,000 you can sign up a professional astronomer to come to your house for a standing room (no kidding) position at a bulkhead window. You'll experience just 2 minutes and 26 seconds of total eclipse time — 23 seconds more than if you watched from the ground.

Russian Anchorage, has been decorated by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In ceremonies at Seattle, he received a medal commemorating the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the ministry by Tsar Alexander I. He has served as honorary consul since 1996, one of 18 Anchorage residents who represent foreign governments.

SUNDAY PUNDAY: A fellow went to the Army Navy Store on Fourth Avenue to buy a pair of camouflage pants. But he had no luck. "The clerk said over the store," he complained to a friend, "I don't see them."

William J. Tobin is an editor of *The American Heritage Times*.

BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

William J. Tobin
Senior Editor

GAS TAX BREAK CRITICS...

Blow smoke

CRITICS OF proposed federal tax credits for an Alaska gas pipeline are using smoke and mirrors to support their positions and block the project.

They now argue that the incentives already in the energy bill — like accelerated depreciation on the project and loan guarantees on 80 percent of the cost — should be enough to make the pipeline viable.

The critics claim that a federal tax credit based on well-head values — which would lock in if gas prices tank — is unnecessary, that the state of Alaska could provide adequate downside protection for investors by manipulating the state's severance tax and royalty share of production. But ConocoPhillips says that the federal credit is essential and the gas pipeline will be uneconomic without it.

Prospective investors in the line are concerned because of the historic fluctuation of gas prices. The proposed tax incentive in the energy bill is the only mechanism that would adequately protect investments during periods of ultra-low gas prices.

To our thinking, ConocoPhillips is right. The federal incentives already in the energy bill will improve the economics of the line and the state could and should negotiate its own incentives, those will be an essential part of the final economic package. But the state's 10 percent severance tax and 12.5 percent royalty share of the gas would not be enough to provide the economic safety valve needed to make the project viable when prices are low.

BOTH THE severance tax and the state royalty are based on wellhead values. So when wellhead prices drop, the amount of the tax and the royalty also go down. Once they decline significantly, as they would in the situation against which the federal tax break would be aimed, the state's leverage to affect project economics drops with them.

Even if the states take dropped to zero, federal taxes on the pipeline would still be an onerous burden. And since the federal government's financial take from a pipeline that isn't built would be zero, Congress should — in the national interest — approve federal participation in downside price insurance.

Critics claim that such a measure would give Alaska gas an unfair advantage in the marketplace. Whether that's true we have no idea, but the big loser if the pipeline is not built will be the American consumer, who already faces higher prices than winter due to gas shortages and even tougher days ahead.

We find it hard to believe that there is not ample precedent for Congress to allow the wellhead tax relief. It dispenses federal favors to the various states all the time and the likelihood that all are equally beneficial to everybody is so unlikely as to be ludicrous.

Thus would be a perfect time for Congress to get its act together, look hard at the national interest and approve incentives sufficient to get the pipeline built.

Destructive wildfires are preventable

By STEVEN MILLOY

"Our forests are detonating like atomic bombs. We need to remove dead and dying bug-killed timber," said Rep. Wally Herger, R-Calif.

Is this Monday-morning quarterbacking spurred by the wildfires in California? Hardly.

The Northern California congressman uttered those words in August 1994 as part of his demand that Congress declare a state of emergency in federal forests to permit quick removal of dead trees, fallen branches and other debris that fuels wildfires — like those that burned 3 million Western acres and killed 14 firefighters that year.

A spokesman for the Natural Resources Defense Council responded at the time by calling Rep. Herger's demand "a pretext for accelerated logging in the Sierra Nevada." Nine years later, though, Rep. Herger is looking pretty present.

More than 700,000 acres have burned so far this year in California alone, 20 people have died and 2,600-plus homes have been destroyed. Last year, wildfires burned nearly 7 million acres, killed 23 firefighters, destroyed more than 800 homes and cost taxpayers over \$1.5 billion.

So what do the environmentalists have to say? A spokesman for the Natural Resources Defense Council calls President Bush's proposed plan to prevent forest fires by thinning excess growth "a Trojan horse" for sneaking through logging projects.

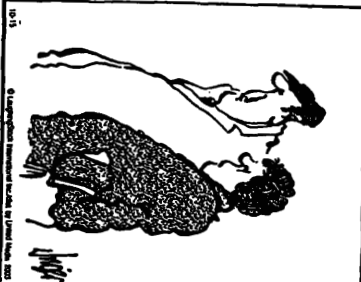
As the Western forests burn — and people die and homes are destroyed — environmentalists and their allies in Congress only seem concerned that some "old-growth" trees may be cut in the process of thinning the nation's undergrowth.

Their nonsensical opposition to thinning only makes it easier for wildfires to spread out of control. That's positively curious.

"We need to do some active management to prevent unnatural fire" that occurs as a result of dense undergrowth.

The Anchorage Times

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"I know it's your birthday soon, but what can I buy a woman who has everything?"

brush and trees built up over decades, U.S. Forest Service chief Dale Bosworth says. "If that means cutting a 14-foot (diameter) Sequoia, that's reasonable."

Annex, brother Thinning forests works — and it's actually more effective over the long term than simply fighting forest fires every year.

A 1910 wildfire in Idaho, Montana and Washington burned 3 million acres and spurred the federal government to spend money to aggressively fight forest fires.

Thus policy has had an unintended result: Forests become overgrown with trees and vegetation that could serve as fuel for more catastrophic fires.

In forests that have only dozens of trees per acre, flames tend to stay close to the ground. But in crowded forests with hundreds and thousands of trees per acre, such as we have today, the flames can easily move across tree tops.

"Flames are 80 feet tall instead of 3 feet tall," according to the University of Idaho forestry expert Leon Neuenhofer.

A bill under current consideration in

Congress calls for aggressive thinning of up to 20 million acres of federal land at high risk of fire. The bill would reduce bureaucratic reviews and limit appeals — the tools environmentalists use to block rational forest management — so that some thinning efforts could be completed within months.

President Bush urged the Senate to pass the legislation — last May. "For too many years, bureaucratic tangles and bad forest policy have prevented foresters from keeping our woodlands healthy and safe," Bush said.

"This year's fire outlook seems less severe, and that's good news," the president added. "Yet the danger persists, and many of our forests are facing a higher-than-normal risk of costly and catastrophic fires." California is apparently one of the areas of elevated risk referred to by the president.

Putting aside the environmentalists' general anti-industry — especially anti-logging — political agenda and accepting the argument's sake, their alleged concern about the need to preserve "old-growth forests" for "future generations," the bill before Congress does not permit unrestricted clear-cutting of old-growth forests.

Rather, it's a limited measure intended to prevent the spread of forest fires and it has the collateral benefit of helping the timber industry, which has lost 47,000 jobs since 1989.

Let's also not forget that trees — even old growth — are not irreplaceable. New trees will grow in their place. Forest products grant Weyerhaeuser plants 120 million seedlings every year.

Under President Bush's proposal for thinning overgrowth, we'll still have venerable "old growth," but also reduced vulnerability to annual, unpredictable and destructive wildfires.

Environmentalists squawking about thinning overgrowth reminds me of the Santa Ana winds — hot air that only fans wildfire flames.

Steven Milloy is an adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute and the author of *Dark Science*. Also

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Friday, November 7, 2003 B-9

FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR . . .

Jerry Hood

DONT COUNT Jerry Hood out just because he is being ousted from his powerful post as secretary-treasurer of Alaska Teamsters.

Hood lost a re-election bid to challenger Michael Kenny and will leave office Jan. 1. But it's entirely possible his next position will be even more powerful than his last.

Jerry Hood is a unique character, a savvy political strategist who recently became a Republican and has a likable personality and strong ties to Alaska's labor movement. He lost the Teamsters election by just 145 votes out of a total of 2,072 votes cast.

Kenny said he thought Hood lost for a number of reasons, most prominently his long absence from the state and his support for Gov. Frank Murkowski in the last statewide election. The Teamsters are traditionally Democrats and have been unhappy with some of the governor's decisions.

HOOD AGREES that his support for Murkowski may have cost him votes, but he doubts union members counted the absences against him. Most of that time he was in Washington lobbying to open the coastal plan of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. Opening ANWR would create many Teamster jobs, so his efforts were very much in his members' interest.

Jerry Hood was on Frank Murkowski's list of candidates for appointment to the U.S. Senate seat he eventually gave to his daughter Lisa — and Hood was one of very few on the list who were considered to have a real chance at getting the job.

Alaska Labor Commissioner Greg O'Clary described Jerry Hood's future prospects well when he said "Talent like that doesn't fade off into the sunset."

A turning point?

MANY PUNDITS are predicting that the mounting casualties in Iraq will weaken America's commitment to finishing the job there.

But the chances are at least as good that terrorist successes and tragedies like the 16 deaths from downing of a Chinook helicopter last weekend will simply strengthen the nation's resolve.

Casualties are an unfortunate cost of war and American occupation of Iraq is an essential part of the ongoing war on terrorism. The jury is still out on whether modern America can accept such casualties under such circumstances and go on to the finish the job.

But those who would kill our troops may just find that their limited successes so far will work against them in the long run. Hopefully we will now go after them with renewed vengeance.

Letters to The Times

Devise a better plan

In short, using the so-called POMV (Percent of Market Value) would mean larger dividend checks and taking a huge bite out of the state's fiscal gap." (Times, Nov. 3 editorial)

Yeah, just what we need — bigger dividend checks to attract more losers to Alaska. We don't have enough parasites living off state social programs already, we need more.

And as far as taking a huge bite out of the fiscal gap, it may do that, but it won't eliminate it. So, I guess those of us who have worked the hardest to get someone in life will end up paying an income tax, so losers can keep collecting multiple dividend checks on bids they had no business having in the first place.

Great plan

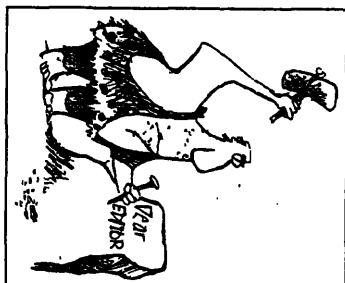
Nancy Cuddeback
Anchorage

Hands off my dividend

At statehood, a major portion of our private property mineral rights were negotiated away. We properly own our mineral rights for the benefit of all. We would receive a dividend, much like a stock dividend, to compensate us for loss of this significant right.

Now, unrestrained state spending threatens our dividend. The proposed and highly-promoted POMV is not the answer. Alaska spends more than twice as much as any other state per person, and for what? Our roads are bad, our schools do not educate, only war-house, Office of Children's Services (formerly known as Division of Family and Youth Services) is out of control, bureaucrats at all levels justify their existence by promoting "good ideas" that are only good on paper.

Witness the Anchorage fish processing plant, Healy coal-fired power plant, the Delta barley project, the Valdez grain elevators, the Palmer parking house and many other high-profile and expensive projects, and just generally excessive state employee hiring and spending, etc.



So stop spending. Just freeze spending at this year's levels until we can get this spiral stopped. Or have the oil companies pay citizens the royalty checks directly and we will submit to an income tax to run the state. Hands off my dividend.

Ruby Kune
Ninabuk

Rules to disagree by

I read Attorney General Gregg Renkes' piece defending his rejection of the "Vote for your U.S. Senator" initiative. This issue has been around since 1998. I authored amendments to bills (like SB 307 in 1998), and sponsored bills (HB 345 in 2001 and HB 63 this year) to allow for direct election to fill vacancies. Unfortunately, they never quite seem to pass.

Given that history, it is peculiar that Renkes lights out after Rep. Eric Croft, for seeking success through the initiative process. I wanted to suggest some rules before the attorney general creates a free-for-all.

First, stick to the issues. Personal attacks and innuendo may play in Washington, D.C., but have no place in Alaska. We all live together and inevitably need to forge alliances to solve problems. Second, stick to the facts. This initiative survived because Democratic efforts in the Legislature to provide for direct elec-

tion to fill Senate vacancies have been buried. Third, don't hide the ball.

Rep. Les Gara has asked Renkes to release memos regarding the Department of Law's analysis of the initiative. Rather than hiding behind attorney-client privilege, it would be better to show the people what advice the attorney general received. Then there might be confidence in the administration's position rather than suspicion that rejecting the initiative was a political result-driven decision.

Rep. Ethan Berkowitz
Anchorage

Say it ain't so

It's with no small amount of consternation that I find myself in agreement with the Voice of the Times (Nov. 5 editorial) in regard to the planned trap by some of our esteemed Assembly members. It seems that these are the people who are telling us we can't afford our firefighters yet they can spend money that could be used for the protection to go have a good time in some other state.

I would also suggest stopping by the Assembly chambers at the library to view the new carpet. And while you're at it, check out those really comfy Herman Miller lumber support chairs at \$1,150.00 a pop, nice enough to pump up even the most pompous politician.

It seems this sort of plundering of the public dole has become so commonplace that it passes without notice more often than not.

Republican or Democrat, it doesn't seem to matter, once elevated to seats of power as one of the chosen political elite there seems to come along with the bargain a sense of entitlement, whether it was Tony Knowles lavishing himself with a \$500,000 office renovation at a time when we being awarded of the coming billion dollar deficit or our current governor's trips to Asia.

We have all seen our elected officials claim these things as their due at the same time they are busily blaming the other side for wanting their cut.

Lynn Hall
Chugach

The Anchorage Times

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Thursday November 6, 2003 B-7

ATTACKERS SHOULD BE PUNISHED USING ...

Existing laws

WHILE OUR COMMUNITY wrestles with the fallout from what appears to be a cowardly and racially motivated paint ball attack on a young Native woman, let us not fall victim to the usual suspects who cynically use such incidents to further a political agenda.

Specifically, we should turn a deaf ear to what surely will be impassioned pleas at some level for more useless, criminal and dangerous hate crime legislation at the local, state and national levels.

The carload of young white males who yelled racial slurs at 19-year-old Sonya Wharton from a car and fired at least nine paint balls at her were jerks. Now they are criminals. They should be caught, tried and, if convicted, punished to the full extent allowed by law. But should they be punished more severely because of their motive? Hardly.

Noted social scientist James Q. Wilson, writing in the "National Review" some time ago in opposition to hate crime laws, used Buford O. Furrow Jr.'s killing of a Filipino letter carrier in California to wonder:

"Suppose there were three men named Furrow, each of whom killed from a different motive. Alford shot a letter carrier because he had taken out a life insurance policy on him and wanted to collect the benefits. Buford shot one because he disliked people of different ethnic backgrounds. Charles shot one because he wanted to prove to fellow gang members that he was a tough guy."

LEGALLY, Wilson said, each crime is the same — pre-meditated murder. In each, the intent is the same — to kill. The outcome is the same. The motive is unimportant.

Hate crime laws, he says, "are an effort to make the subjective motive matter. But why should it? Why should hating unimprisonable be a worse motive than stealing money or eating into a criminal gang?"

Hate crime laws, in our view, simply are the left's answer to political and judicial impotence — affirmative action for the criminal justice system, as Wilson puts it. Such laws put a different, higher value on individuals based on what group they belong to, something that is accepted in the Third World, but that flies in the face of American ideals. Because of the left's pandering, no longer are we all considered equal by government.

Giving prosecutors, bureaucrats and judges the power to decide motive in determining how severely to punish is a dangerous mistake.

But even more fearsome is that hate crime laws can be — and undeniably will be — misused to deny rights such as free speech and freedom of religion. It already is happening in Canada and Europe.

The things who fired the paint balls should be punished because they broke existing law that applies to all of us. If we are displeased with the penalties involved, we should stiffen them, not further corrupt the justice system.

Urban moose flee from barfly banter

By TOM BRENNAN

Dealing with moose in an urban yard seems a problem unique to this corner of the world. Everybody has a favorite approach.

The other day I was about to head for work and reached to hit the garage door opener when I noticed two moose standing in the driveway just outside the door.

I almost hit the opener anyway, thinking that the moose of the motor and the rising door would frighten them away. Then it occurred to me that they might run away — or they might run into the garage.

And Murphy's Law being ever in force, I would probably pause and hit the button to close the door just after the moose came in, effectively trapping them inside the house. That would have been great fun for the dog, but would almost certainly have put me on my wife's X List for the rest of my life.

Instead I went up stairs and onto a deck just over the annual heads. I tried shouting and waving my arms, but was completely ignored.

The moose had been eating crabapples from our tree and were standing around digesting them. They were disinclined to run from my feeble threats.

Then I remembered a self-defense mechanism from my long-ago bar-topping days for times when I was seated at the mahogany and wanted to be left alone — name: barfly banter.

So I leaned over the railing and said softly to the big one: "So, how do you like being a moose?"

The moose moose looked up at me and began edging nervously out of the yard with her adult calf following close behind. The two headed for my neighbor's ornamental shrubs while I jumped in my car, opened the garage door and drove off to work. The play worked exactly the way it used to in the taverns a few hours later — too late to do



any good — I remembered the time my wife sent a moose stampeding down our street. The animal was eating our rose bushes, so Marlene grabbed a duck call, leaped out a window and blew a blast in her ear. That big brown critter turned and went flying out of our yard.

I know the method works because my son Peter tried it the following Easter Sunday when a moose was standing on his front porch while my wife and I were waiting to come in for brunch. Peter grabbed a duck call and let the moose have it. The porch emptied instantly, though the animal left behind a pile of its best fertilizer.

Both systems work, but I like mine better. Issue chatter is more subtle and dignified (a duck call makes an embarrassing "that" sound) and it brings back memories of single days in quiet bars ...

My dog is apparently conducting a study on conditional responses. He has figured out that I will automatically give him a cookie when he comes in from outdoors, so he is trying to determine how long he must stay out in the yard to qualify for the treat.

I realized the study was going on recently when he pointed at the door, which meant he wanted to go out, and I

opened it as usual. He headed out but turned back just five feet onto the deck. Before I could return to my chair, he barked to come in and I went sleepily back to open the door again. He then scooted in and went directly to his accustomed spot below the cookie jar.

This was not a one-time thing. I realized he had been doing it every day recently and the interval between barking out and barking at the door was getting shorter all the time. It was only when he hit the five-foot mark that I caught on.

Now that I know what he is up to, I'm not sure what to do about it. If I don't let him have the cookie, he will give me a look good for a major guilt trip. A dog's expectations are a delicate thing and not to be trifled with.

But if I let him to skip the whole charade and just give him a cookie without going out, I would be encouraging delinquent behavior. My upturning won't let me do that.

My understanding of dog studies and science is rudimentary at best, so for the time being I'm just taking longer to answer the door.

Tom Brennan is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

The Anchorage Times

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALABAMANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

TEMPERS FLARE OVER ...

Assembly trip

YOU HAVE TO wonder what gets into the heads of some of our elected officials.

Take Dick Tremaine, for instance (Drum roll, please, take him).

A guy fires off an e-mail to him, angry that five Assembly members are planning to attend the National League of Cities convention in Nashville, Tenn., with taxpayers picking up the tab. In an editorial, we urged those going to pay their own way to show leadership in these troubled fiscal times.

To do otherwise, we noted, would endanger the proposed fire hydrant tax that the city says is absolutely necessary to save 22 firefighters' jobs. That vote, if the administration of Mark Begich cannot magically come up with \$2.9 million to shelve it, is slated for Nov. 23. (We're betting the money can be found.)

Assembly members Dick Traun and Allan Thasche already were paying for everything on their trip but the \$400 registration fee. But Tremaine, James Shanberg and Fay Van Gemmingen would be going on our dime, to the tune of about \$7,200. The steaming taxpayer is having none of this.

He tells Tremaine:

"Did you folks read the Anchorage Times editorial in the Sunday paper? I did. I'm appalled that some of our Assembly thinks it's okay to waste taxpayer's money to attend this convention at a time when the city is threatening to lay off firefighters unless voters agree to the fire hydrant tax."

"I particularly find it ludicrous that our lame duck Assemblywoman Fay Van Gemmingen is going to the convention at taxpayers' expense, considering she is leaving office in April. Got to get that last free ride in at taxpayer's expense, Fay?"

"If part of our Assembly is so lackadaisical about the city's financial woes, guess what folks, I'll burn in hell before I will vote for the fire hydrant tax."

Whew.

WELL, ONE can find deep insights into the minds of great men, great politicians and great statesmen just by reading their letters. But, of course, we are talking here about a member of the Anchorage Assembly.

Here's what Tremaine fired back:

"So sweet of you to write us. Have you written to Governor Murkowski with the same message about his recent trips to Asia? Please remember that the state budget is in such poor shape that he cut over \$10 million in revenues to the city. That is one of the reasons we in Anchorage are in the situation we are in. Do take an ice bag."

Ah, the arrogance.

Taxpayers now find themselves at a critical juncture. They can either pay the \$8,000 for the trip to Nashville—or they can pay considerably more and send Tremaine and a few other Assembly members on a long, long trip.

We're betting Begich's administration would go for the latter. With Tremaine exercising his considerable people skills to back the hydrant tax, it already smells like roadkill to us.

Show the results, no.

Lingering lyrics drive me crazy

By ELISE PATKOTAK

One of my friends recently announced she was moving to Tucson, Ariz. Too bad she's not moving to Phoenix. Because that's where I've placed her in my head. And once she's been placed there in my mind, it's a pretty good bet she will be retired and living in the Bahamas before I correctly remember her new hometown.

I don't know why Phoenix got stuck in my mind other than it being the first Arizona city I think of when I think of Arizona cities, which is admittedly not all that often. But I have found that as I get older, it's something gets lodged in my brain, rightly or wrongly, it has the striking power of crazy glue. And no matter how many times she repeats the word "Tucson," I will hear "Phoenix."

This annoying habit seems to be gathering steam as I age and has become particularly irksome when it comes to songs that get stuck in my mind. I will get a phrase going round and round and it will stay with me for days. I'll go to sleep with it playing in my head and wake up with it still there. Sometimes it will even be with me in my dreams.



Patkotak

I think along with this problem, I have also slowed down somewhat in my comprehension of the world about me. For instance, every once in awhile I am tempted to turn on a music station and watch a video to see what all the excitement is about. Unfortunately, I've never actually been able to get completely through one.

I find myself confused by imagery that may or may not have anything to do with the lyrics of the song—which I may or may not actually be hearing correctly. Reading lips doesn't seem to work because I know they can't say the words on TV that my lip reading seems to indicate they are saying.

I thought I would like music videos because I like dance but I find that you



Leslie Ann, 100% of children under 3 have a television in the bedroom

don't actually get to see a dance. You get to see a foot here, a leg there, and then some unmentionable or indecipherable body part thrown in to just confuse us older folks who are staring at it and wondering how it we don't recognize it.

There was a time when I could have kept up with all this. It was probably the same time when the "Matrix" movies would have made sense to me. But time is speeding up for me while my body is slowing down and I find the resulting reality confusing.

It's bad enough to go into a room and stand there blankly wondering why you entered it. It's even worse to drive to the mall and then stand there blankly looking around and wondering why you needed to be there. All you notice the bank deposit slip in your hand.

I have reached a point where drive-up windows at fast-food establishments intimidate me. I used to like occasionally going to those drive-thru places just because I go so rarely that it was a fun treat. Since I'm not familiar with their menu, I need time to read it and decide which food of fat and carbs I want that

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Have a wonderful 48 hours

Elise Patkotak, an Anchorage two-tenor writer and author of Parallel Logic, a humorous book back at her 23 years in Barrow, lives in Anchorage and owns Previous Cargo Ltd., a writing/graphics company.

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Tuesday, November 4, 2003 B-5

INITIATIVE BACKERS MAKE...

Phony claims

A CHANGE IN election law concerning how vacant U.S. Senate seats are filled in Alaska, a switch desperately sought by Democrats, might wind up costing Alaskans a pretty penny.

State records show that in 1993, when Alaskans marched to the polls to defeat a controversial long-range fiscal plan—the only question on the ballot—the Legislature set aside \$839,000 for the statewide vote. The Division of Elections actually spent \$743,000. Today a special election likely would cost even more.

Democratic lawmakers Eric Croft and Harry Crawford of Anchorage, and David Guitenberg of Fairbanks, want to change the law that now fills vacant U.S. Senate seats by gubernatorial appointment if the officeholder's term has less than 30 months to run. Instead, they want special elections. The unstated aim is to give Democrats at least a shot at the seat held by Sen. Ted Stevens, if he were to step down.

It has not been easy for them. Clanking the lieutenant governor and attorney general were attempting to derail their petition, they managed to get Superior Court Judge Mark Runder to force a decision on certifying the petition by a certain date. When it was not certified because of constitutional questions, the Democrats won Runder's permission to proceed anyway.

AS THE DEBATE heats up about whether such an expensive fix to election law is even needed, we wonder how a judge can order a member of the executive branch to end a complicated review process, especially when there has been no undue delay. Such interference deprives the public of thoughtful, reasoned outcomes in favor of slapdash decisions hurried along by a court.

Despite the Democrats' phony charges, they can blame only themselves for delays in their petition drive. They started late, they screwed up their first effort, they filed in the wrong place in their second attempt. With the clock running, they howled "conspiracy" and hustled off to court to stampede certification to make up for their goods.

And their allegations against Attorney General Gregg Benkes and Lieutenant Gov. Lennan are laughable. Since 1996, and excluding the petition at hand, the attorney general's office has averaged 63 days to render opinions in 22 initiatives. A property tax relief petition took 168 days, protection of the Permanent Fund dividend, 137 days, and one to decriminalize marijuana, 92 days.

Benkes' office turned out its decision in the Democrats' initiative in 46 days, not counting two holidays during the time. That is 30 work days—well below average time and three days before Runder's deadline.

The only person fooled by the Democrats, apparently, was a judge.

Car bombs aimed at U.S. morale

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

It is possible to win a counterterrorism war. The British did so in Malaysia in the 1950s. The United States may succeed in doing so in Iraq today. It is far more difficult, however, to defeat the car bomb. It is on the car bomb, therefore, that the Saddam Hussein loyalists' hope for victory rides.

The guerrilla war in Iraq is wearing and painful for Americans. The enemy plants the roadside bomb and succeeds with the occasional ambush. The losses are mounting. What makes success for the saboteurs all the more difficult, however, is that they do not represent a true guerrilla force. They are nothing like the successful Vietnamese, Chinese or Cuban guerrillas, who were, in Mao's famous phrase, "fish swimming in the sea of the people."

The Saddam loyalists swim in a small lake. They represent the deeply hated Baathist regime, with just a small constituency at home—bolstered by foreign terrorists who may speak for a general hatred of Islamism but are no more loved by Iraqis than they were by the Afghans who despised them.

There is no general uprising among the Iraq people. On the contrary, 80 percent of the country is either Shiite or Kurd, far from a century ruled and repressed by the Sunni Arab minority. What is why most polls show a very substantial majority of Iraqis want the American and British to stay and are pleased with the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

The resistance to the U.S. occupation is overwhelmingly Sunni Arab. But it represents only 15 percent to 20 percent of the Iraqi population. For 30 years, through their own Saddam Hussein, they used their power not just to rule but to rob. They greased themselves on Iraqi oil wealth. That was a shrewd turn of fire Saddam rose from it to Saddam's god king and proved not only privilege, power and protection into their and onto their. But vast amounts of money as well.

The Iraqi resistance, such as it is, is rooted in Sunni Baathists who have everything to lose if the Americans succeed. But it is precisely because they represent so small a minority that they



are likely to fail, barring a collapse of American will at home. Which is why the enemy has turned to the car bomb. The car bomb does not require a constituency. It does not require popular support. It requires only one person who knows explosives and another who is willing to drive and perish to die.

The car bomb is the nuclear weapon of guerrilla warfare. The 1983 car bomb attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 241 Americans, drove the United States out of Lebanon. Commemorated here on its 20th anniversary just last week, it has long been celebrated by jihadis as proof of American weakness. But there was another car bomb in Beirut in the early 1980s that was just as significant. It is now largely forgotten in the West, but well-remembered by the Arabs.

It, too, had quasi-nuclear effect. In 1982 a car bomb blew up Phalange Party headquarters, killing Bashir Gemayel, the newly elected pro-Western, pro-American, pro-Israeli president.

Syria was deeply unhappy with him. The car bomb soon took care of business, wiping out an entire office building housing not just Gemayel but many top aides and government officials. It was the perfect political decapitation. With Gemayel gone, and a year later the Americans too, Lebanon inarguably fell into Syria's lap. It remains a Syrian colony.

Our enemies in Iraq have learned these lessons well. The car bomb of Oct.

12 was aimed at the Baghdad Hotel, housing not just large numbers of Americans but much of the provisional Iraqi government. It would have been the equivalent of the two Beirut bombings in one, a psychologically crushing massacre of Americans—which would have sparked immediate debate at home about withdrawal—and the instantaneous destruction of much of the pro-American government, a political decapitation that would have left very few Iraqis courageous enough to fill the vacuum.

The bomber failed. Most significantly, it was Iraqi police who rushed in stocking up the car at a relatively safe distance and thus preventing a catastrophe. The car bomb campaign has, however, continued with singular ferocity since. The war in Iraq now consists of a race. The United States is racing to build up Iraqi police and armed forces capable of taking over the country's security—before the Saddam loyalists and their jihadist allies can produce that single, Beirut-like car bomb that so discourages Americans (and Iraqis) that we withdraw in dismay.

Who wins the race? If this president remains in power, the likelihood is that we do.

Charles Krauthammer writes a weekly, nationally syndicated column for the Washington Post. His column is distributed by the Washington Post Writers Group. © Copyright 2003 The Washington Post Co.

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BILL J. ALLEN
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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

Monday, November 3, 2003 **B-5**
WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Staff editor

LET'S GET SERIOUS ABOUT ...

POMV system

A LASKANS MAY get a dramatic demonstration next year on how the Permanent Fund can be better managed and put more money in their pockets.

And — in our book far more importantly — the fund could at last be put to the use for which it was originally intended, paying a portion of the cost of state government.

Under the existing system, the Permanent Fund Corp projects that \$564 million will be available for dividend checks next year, 18 percent less than this year's \$648 million.

Just a few weeks ago, each of the 598,813 eligible Alaskans received payments of \$1,107.56.

But next year's \$564 million would provide money for dividend checks of only about \$343, about \$165 less than this year's payments. That would be the first time dividends have been less than \$1,000 since 1995.

If the proposed "percent of market value" approach were used and 5 percent of the total value of the fund were counted as earnings — and the 5 percent divided between dividends and paying for state government — the checks would be roughly \$1,082 and another \$648 million would go into state coffers to pay for government.

In short, using the so-called POMV would mean larger dividend checks and taking a huge bite out of the state's fiscal gap.

IN SHORT, using the so-called POMV would mean larger dividend checks and taking a huge bite out of the state's fiscal gap. The fund itself would remain healthy and able to grow. As it grows, so would the dividends and the amount available for state expenses.

The reason for the smaller checks under the existing system is that the formula involves using a five-year average for calculating earnings, five years during which the international investment markets were largely in the tank.

The dividend money comes from the fund's Earnings Reserve account, which is funded by sale of profitable investments. Unfortunately that tends to encourage the Permanent Fund managers to sell profitable investments and hang onto the bad ones, since selling the dogs does nothing for the Earnings Reserve account.

The window for a painless move to the POMV approach is relatively narrow. It would not have been painless a few years ago and it probably won't be a few years from now. And the changes could not be made quickly enough to affect next year's checks, since it would require legislative action and a vote in next fall's election.

But it's time for the Legislature to do its part and pass legislation that would put the POMV question on next year's ballot.

Part 2: No excuses for academic failure

By WALTER E. WILLIAMS

Last week's column discussed parts of Abigail and Stephen Thernstrom's new book, "No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning." It's a gap that finds the average black high-school graduate having achieved only what the average white youngster has achieved by the seventh or eighth grade.

Popular recognition of the education meltdown has led to calls for student testing as a condition for high school graduation. The public education establishment resists such tests.

TheodoreSizer, former Harvard Graduate School of Education dean, in his opposition said, "The myriad, detailed works of whatever state curriculum framework, of whatever scholarly brilliance, are attacks on intellectual freedom."

Adding, "High stakes tests arising from these curricula compound the failure."

Deborah Meier, founder of New York's Central Park East schools, condemned standardized tests as failing to "measure the only important qualities of a well-educated person: Life scores (not math scores) based on living."

should be the educator's concern.

Peter Sacks, another educationist, argues that testing is "arbitrary," "unreliable," "misleading" and "a highly effective means of social control." Sacks concludes that tests amount "to the academic lynching of children of color." Opposition to tests, as a condition for graduation, has supporters among most members of the faculty at the leading graduate schools of education.

The education establishment has also opposed teacher certification tests and often labeled them as merely discriminatory. Perhaps it's because of the large failure rate among prospective teachers, particularly minority teachers. In 1998, of 1,800 Massachusetts teachers taking the test, 60 percent failed. According to Education Week, "Seven states use the National Evaluation System's tests."

SPEAKING OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION...



ton's tests, 27 use the National Teachers Exam, 43 ask new teachers to pass basic skills tests, and 32 require teachers to demonstrate proficiency in the subjects they teach. Teachers have not done well on those tests. Failure rates are between 20 and 30 percent on the basic skills and proficiency tests and 50 to 55 percent on the National Teachers Exam.

Keep in mind that to pass the teacher certification test you need only eighth-grade math — and, at best, 10th-grade skills. For example, a multiple-choice math question asks, "Amy drinks one-and-a-half cups of milk three times a day. At this rate, how many cups will she drink in one week?"

America's public education not goes beyond incompetent teachers. According to the Sept. 2 New York Post, in the school year 2002-03, "1,456 Department of Education employees and other school workers were arrested — 228 more than the previous year — an 18 percent increase."

Those arrested included teachers (371), custodians (243), paraprofessionals (181) and school aides (106). Among the charges were assault (313), drugs (435), robbery (180), weapons (88), sex abuse (36) and falsifying documents (74). How representative New York's school system is of other big city school systems is hard to say.

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How's my question? Do parents, particularly black parents, know or even care about what's being done to their children in the name of education? Do they know that the A or B on their children's report card is worthless?

Don't say the solution lies in more money unless you're prepared to show me great results with expenditures of \$15,000 per student in Massachusetts and \$13,000 in Washington, D.C., and skyrocketing education budgets elsewhere.

Walter E. Williams is a professor at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. His column is distributed by Creators Syndicate Inc., 6777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045, (310) 397-7003.

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

IT'S TIME TO SHOW LEADERSHIP...

Stay home

AS CITY VOTERS wrestle with the question of whether to adopt a fire hydrant tax to avoid threatened layoffs in the Fire Department, five members of the Assembly are planning a trip to the National League of Cities convention in Nashville, Tenn.

It is providing fodder for talk radio and those who question whether the city's assertion that 22 firefighters will be laid off and 27 other positions eliminated without the levy is just a Washington Monument ploy to dodge the city's tax cap, which restricts property taxation.

The proposed tax, sponsored by several Assembly members and slated for a vote Nov. 25, aims to take in \$2.9 million, the amount the fire department now pays the Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utilities to maintain the city's 6,500 fire hydrants and the water lines they tap.

The tax already is a tough sell, but having five Assembly members traveling in December to Nashville on a trip that will have little direct effect on the city only makes it tougher. Moreover, it plays into the hands of those who say the tax and threatened layoffs are a scam.

What possible benefits can justify the costs? One of the members, Fay Van Gemmenen, is leaving office in April because she has served three terms and cannot run again.

IT SHOULD be noted that two of the members, Dick Trautman and Allen Tesche, laudably are paying their own way except for the \$400 registration fee. The average costs for each of the others — Janice Stenberg, Dick Trautman and Van Gemmenen — is expected to be about \$2,400, says Assembly Budget Director Elvy Gray-Jackson.

Is \$7,200 an amount that will solve the fiscal problems for a city wedging into a \$33 million vat of red ink next year? Hardly. It's peanuts. But leadership must start at the top if officials expect city residents to bite the bullet.

It is difficult for most of us to imagine firefighters being laid off or adopting a new tax before every piece of budgetary flab is trimmed, and paying for three Assembly members to go on a trip at our expense is unnecessary.

Each Assembly member is paid \$1,900 a month, or \$22,800 a year. The chairman is paid \$2,100 monthly, or \$25,200 annually. Additionally, each of them receives \$8,000 a year to spend pretty much as they see fit. Many members use the money to hire assistants. Gray-Jackson says the Assembly also has a \$40,000 travel budget — cut by half for next year.

If the Assembly hopes to persuade voters they should allow a levy outside the tax cap by voting "yes" on the proposed hydrant tax, having the city lay out a single dime for a trip of this sort is a lousy idea.

The best these Assembly folks could do at this point would be to pay for the trip out of their own pockets — or stay home.

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Sunday, November 2, 2003 H-3

Things are looking up down in Seattle

By WILLIAM J. TOBIN

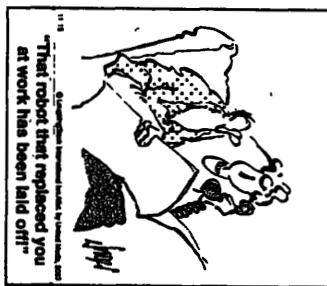
SEATTLE — Not everything is going badly for the poor folks in Seattle, even though they suffered through a late fall heat wave only to be hit by record rains in late October. In a single day, more than five inches fell at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, and Shelton — near Olympia — had 6 inches of rain in one 24-hour period. Other than that, there are some bright spots on the scene.

ONE UPBEAT item is that plans continue moving ahead for construction of a third runway at Sea-Tac. A federal judge tossed out the latest move by environmentalists to halt the project. The greens argued that the Corps of Engineers had done bad things by granting the Port of Seattle the right to fill in 18 acres of wetlands for the 8,500-foot runway.

They submitted what they called expert testimony that the work would cause great damage to plants and critters. The corps, quoting other experts, said otherwise. The upshot: a ruling by Judge Barbara Robinson that it wasn't her job to settle squabbles between scientists. All she had to do was decide whether the corps' decision was arbitrary or capricious. It was not, she held.

MEANWHILE, because of delays caused by environmental objections and lawsuits, the expected cost of the new runway has soared to \$1 billion — up from \$430 million when it was first proposed in 1986. As things now stand, the runway is supposed to be finished in 2008. It will be parallel to Sea-Tac's two existing runways.

ALSO ON THE flying scene, King County and the Port of Seattle are unable to bring Boeing Field, now operated by the county, under the wing of the port authority. Boeing Field, as every body flying to and from Alaska knows, is an airport of some consequence: a couple of miles north of Sea-Tac. It handles a lot



of private corporate jets, a whole cadre of other commercial businesses, and a goodly number of general aviation takeoffs and landings. Can't imagine that putting the port in charge would make a whit of difference to Alaska passengers, one way or another. But stay tuned.

BUT THERE are some clouds on the waterfront. The Seattle Symphony Orchestra wound up its 2002-03 season \$464,000 in the red. That comes on top of a previous deficit from the 2001-02 season, giving the symphony an accumulated debt of \$1.16 million. Not much to the ears for concert patrons. This season's budget is \$21.6 million, an increase of \$2.7 million from last year. Despite the red ink, officials are optimistic. The orchestra's 220 performances last season drew more than 325,000 people, and ticket sales for this year — the orchestra's 100th season — are up and expectations are down. And a new executive director has been hired to take over Jan. 1 — Paul MacLean, now the general manager of the New York Philharmonic.

MEANWHILE, NOT MANY heretobates are happy with new census reports that say 1,700 people are moving to Washington state from California every month. But that's better than it had been. From 1995 to 2000, Californians were flocking in at about 2,600 a month.

SPORTS FANS were disappointed that the Seattle Mariners failed to make the baseball playoffs for the second

straight year. But more than 3 million people attended regular season games at Safeco Field — including sailors for the final home stand, even when the team was out of contention. One reason, Safeco Field is a joy to visit, one of the best ballparks in the nation. Meanwhile, a solid start by the Seattle Seahawks — playing in another magnificent stadium next door to Safeco — has energized local hopes for a great National Football League season, despite an upset loss to Cincinnati a week ago.

ONE OF THE most famous of all former Seahawks, Hall of Famer Steve Largent, has a new career. After retiring from football a decade ago, he returned home to Tulsa and served as an Oklahoma congressman from 1995 to 2001, stepping down to make an unsuccessful bid for governor. He's unemployed no longer. In August, he signed on as president and CEO of the Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association — a trade group representing cellular providers.

AS SEATTLE'S gloomy days of winter set in, the economy looks stronger than earlier forecasts. The Elton John hit "Greatest Hits" has been in the heart of downtown, had a full house a few weeks ago — perhaps the first time since its opening three years ago. And the Fairmont Four Seasons — the four Seasons Olympic until the ownership changed hands this summer — is completing the transition from one management operation to another while maintaining its four-star traditions and its four-star rates.

TO THE NORTH, things are booming in Everett. A month ago the \$83.3 million Everett Events Center opened after being under construction for 17 1/2 months. It offers a 14,000-square-foot convention center, a community ice rink, a grant ballroom, and meeting rooms that spread over two city blocks. The city hopes hotel-motel tax revenues and a 5 percent admissance tax on events will repay the cost. It's a big deal for Everett, which usually plays second fiddle to Seattle.

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BILL J. ALLEN
PUBLISHER

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

Saturday, November 1, 2003 B-7

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Editor

GIVE A HELPING HAND ...

To Hilltop

WITH WINTER apparently still some days away, skiers and snowboarders are on hold awaiting the first heavy snowfall. But in anticipation of things to come, a project is under way right now to get ready for the season at Hilltop, the ski area right off Abbott Road.

At hand is a party scheduled for Nov. 13 at Hilltop's Stevens Family Chalet. The event is a fund-raiser, and make no mistake — money is needed to help Hilltop recover from a series of tragic happenings.

This past summer, three separate vandalism and theft attacks caused heavy damage to this in-city recreational gem. Consider the windows in the chalet were shot out by vandals. The Owl's Nest and other outbuildings at the top of the chair lift were destroyed in other acts of vandalism. To make matters worse, Hilltop all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles were stolen.

The vandals and thieves have not been caught, more's the pity.

But volunteers, aided by Boy Scouts, students from the King Career Center and donations from local businesses, have begun the job of putting Hilltop back in shape for the season yet to come.

THAT'S WHERE the Nov. 13 party comes in. Food and beverages will be offered, and tickets are priced at only \$20. There will be an auction — and Hilltop volunteers are asking the community to contribute items for auction in advance of the fund-raiser.

Hilltop, which was the snowboard venue for the 2001 Winter Special Olympics, is operated completely without city or state tax revenues. Its activities and maintenance costs come from those skiers and snowboarders who use the slopes and its triple-chair lift, and from revenues derived from rentals of the Stevens Family Chalet.

Contributions to Hilltop, a non-profit organization, are tax deductible.

Tickets for the fund-raiser can be purchased by calling 346-1446, and that's the same number to be used by those who have auction items to offer.

Hilltop is one of the city's treasures, an in-town ski area that has been a winter attraction for more than 20 years.

Given a bit of snow and cold weather, and some dollars from generous and eager skiers and their families, it will be a jewel of a place again this season.

Mark down the date. And y'all come.

Affordable access in Southeast needed

By LEW M. WILLIAMS, JR.

Gov. Frank Murkowski supports road access to Juneau. It is so serious about roads into Southeast Alaska to shorten ferry runs, that he has appointed former State Sen. Robin Taylor to push that program.

Taylor, a Wrangell attorney, is a leading proponent of a road up Bradfield Canal, between Wrangell and Ketchikan, to give southern Southeast access to the Canadian highway system and the Lower 48. Opponents of Southeast roads ignore Alaska history.

Sitka was the headquarters of government for the District of Alaska after its purchase in 1867. It was never officially named the capital but it was where the governor and other federal offices were located. In 1898, gold rush stampedees headed for Wrangell, Juneau, Skagway, Dyea, and Haines aboard steamships.

Steamship companies, eager to haul as many passengers as they could, were reluctant to waste time going out of their way to Sitka on the outside of Baranof Island. Some services to Sitka continued, but infrequently, making it difficult to do business there.

In 1900, Congress passed legislation increasing the number of federal judges in housing Alaska and to enable incorporation of communities included in the legislation was this sentence: "The seat of government shall remain at Sitka until suitable buildings shall be obtained by purchase or otherwise at Juneau."

The court system and the marshal's office immediately moved to where the action was — Juneau. The governor's office remained at Sitka because the governor was a Sitka businessman. He was replaced in 1906 by a Juneau businessman who found suitable office space in Juneau. Sitka died economically for 30 years.

Arguing over the location of Alaska's capital is as old as civil government in Alaska. Most of the arguments for moving the capital are over accessibility between Juneau and Sitka.



"The malman's been here."

location of the capital precipitated a lot of debate in the First Territorial Legislature in 1913. It started when a memorial was introduced asking Congress to appropriate funds for the construction of a federal building in Juneau.

Rep. Hunter Ingraham of Valdez called the idea preposterous. "If we must have a new capital building let us build it in the central part of the territory. Build it in Valdez," a point equally distant from all parts of the territory.

The memorial was unanimously approved, but Juneau didn't get its federal building (the state Capitol) until 1939 when Juneau landlords, profiting from government rent, quit opposing the project for fear of a capital move.

The debate now is whether a ferry system provides sufficient access to Juneau, or whether a road is needed. Current ferry figures support a road system for Southeast. That includes a road to Juneau, also better roads and short-run ferry access to Green's Creek and Hoonah from Juneau, a road from Kake to Petersburg and the Bradfield Road.

Merchants in Haines and Skagway, fearing loss of business to Juneau via a road, and some Juneau environmentalists, are fighting any road. Fortunately, the state administration and a large segment of the Juneau community favor the road. Figures on the Department of Transportation Web site show that ferry traffic has dropped dramatically between 1992 and 2002. Whether new

high-speed ferries will reverse that trend is questionable. Short-run ferries are more affordable but ferries of any kind cost money. That cost hurts Juneau, Haines, Skagway and other Southeast towns.

The round-trip fare, for two people and a car, between Ketchikan and Haines last summer was almost \$1,000, without state income or meals. Southern Southeast residents have found that it is cheaper to ferry to Prince Rupert and drive British Columbia Highway 37 to visit northern Alaska than go via Juneau, Haines or Skagway.

In spite of the price advantage of reaching northern Alaska via Prince Rupert, ferry loadings at Prince Rupert dropped from 26,000 in 1992 to 16,000 in 2002. What should scare Juneau, Haines and Skagway residents is that the Juneau boardings in that same time frame were down also.

Poor Haines. It wooed and lost before. After Congress authorized construction of a railroad to Interior Alaska in 1912, its newspaper, the Pioneer Press, campaigned that Haines, on the protected Inside Passage, was a better terminal port for the railroad than Cordova. Valdez or Seward. The editor of the Press, H. P. Burkhoun, encouraged the railroad game, not only to Parkash but on to Nome. He predicted that his newspaper would become as large as the New York World.

President Woodrow Wilson, however, selected Seward for the railroad. Haines lost. Burkhoun suspended the Press and went into another line of work. Haines survived and prospered. It will again with completion of a road between Juneau and Skagway, boosted by a short, affordable ferry ride between Skagway and Haines.

However, if no road is built to Juneau and other roads in Southeast and elsewhere in the state are completed, Juneau, Haines and Skagway will become as isolated as Sitka was from the main routes of commerce in 1898. The trend is there.

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WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

False claims

It's a shame that Du Pont's otherwise thoughtful article was spoiled by the misinformation about Alaska's gas pipeline route options

By CHUCK HAWLEY

Early land plans addressed conventional coal mining and oil and gas development. We now know that much of the natural gas in the Cook Inlet region is ultimately derived from coal. Conventional natural gas probably can further be developed in deeper parts of the Cook Inlet geologic basin. Possibly but not certainly commercial coal-based methane

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may be found in the shallow deposits that are currently being evaluated. The state land selection has not been random. Lands have been chosen for community expansion, for transportation, and for both surface and subsurface resources. The state has also set aside conservation lands of about 10 million acres where subsurface development is precluded by mineral clearing orders. The reality, however, is that much of Alaska's land-dollar wealth will continue to come from the state-owned subsurface.

At a minimum, a geologic note should be attached where a possible subsurface resource exists advising the surface owner that subsurface resources could exist that would have priority for development.

But in order for the Alaska economy to continue to prosper, they must also recognize that they cannot reasonably delay evaluation of a scarce resource that is owned by all Alaskans. Efforts to

In summary, local input must always be part of successful resource development, but under the concept of ownership developed in the Alaska Constitution and law, local input should not be used to delay development of subresources while waiting for all Alaskans

Chuck Hawley is an Anchorage-based consulting geologist and long-time leader in Alaska's mining industry.

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BILL J. ALLEN
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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

ALASKA FACES HIGH RISK FROM ...

Forest fires

ONE MAJOR source of fuel for the raging California fires is pure and fir trees weakened by drought and killed by bark beetles.

The problem in California is much like that in Alaska where bark beetles have killed more than 3 million acres of spruce trees and created vast brown landscapes that could easily erupt in dangerous wildfires.

Many of the dead trees in Southern California are on state and private lands. Programs were in the works to remove them and reduce the fire danger, but the approach was inadequate to the problem.

In Alaska, most of the devastated trees are on federal lands, much of it managed by the U.S. Forest Service. The agency would like to reduce the fire risk, but environmental groups adamantly argue against removing the trees, calling it a back-door approach to logging and road-building.

All of that is interesting, but doing nothing, it would seem to us, is a front door approach to disaster. Fires burning in beetle-killed areas burn hotter and faster because of the increased fuel loads on the ground. When there is a fire in such an area, it clears the way for grass, which generally is dry in the spring fire season and can help start flash fires.

WHILE THE level of active infestation has declined statewide since the mid '90s, the amount of damage is staggering. Federal forest officials say the beetle-devastated acreage includes 85,000 acres in the municipality of Anchorage alone — 35,000 acres of that in the Hillside Bowl, where the biggest danger would seem to be on the Hillside.

There remains some 80 acres in the city where the beetles are still munching away and there are active infestations on 92,000 acres across the state. Though the city is actively working to reduce the fire danger on the Hillside and in other areas, it may not be enough.

The environmentalists here so far have been successful in blocking most efforts to remove the trees and reduce the fire danger. You have to wonder what they will be saying if the unthinkable happens.

Where lives and homes are in jeopardy there can be no excuse for failing to do what is necessary to reduce the danger. Removing the beetle-killed trees where possible is the best option.

Wildfires are a fact of life in Alaska. In the last few years weather conditions have reduced the frequency and risk, but such conditions are a temporary phenomenon and high fire danger will certainly return once again.

Alaska has been lucky in avoiding many disastrous blazes like those in California. But our luck may not last forever.

Aunt Adeline's barriers were the norm

By ELISE PATKOTAK

When my aunt contracted polio as a child in the early years of the last century, the idea of any special accommodations for people with handicaps was still over 50 years away. So she grew up learning how to make do in a world that didn't quite know what to do with her, the braces on her legs or the limits they imposed.

We now live in a country where every new public building automatically accommodates handicaps needs thanks to federal law mandating that it must. If there are stairs in the building, you'll find a ramp or an elevator nearby.

Public restaurants have stalls that allow wheelchair access and bars that allow the people to transfer themselves to the toilet seat without risking injury. Newer restaurants even have a sink set at a lower level so wheelchair-bound people can wash their hands in comfort and a towel dispenser that they can reach from their seat.

These things have become so much a part of our lives that we can quickly forget that it was not all that long ago that none of these amenities existed for the handicapped. In fact, times have so changed that using the word "handicapped" is now politically incorrect.

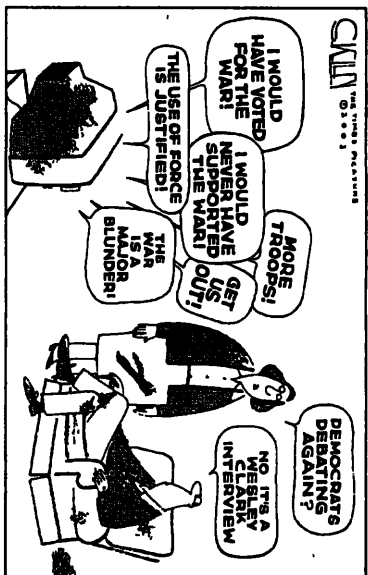
While I'm all for people being called what they want to be called, I'm not sure my aunt would have scored many points with her favorite term for herself. She used the word "gimp." As I grew older and realized that the word could have a negative connotation, I often wondered if she didn't use it as a form of self-protection. Call yourself a man before anyone else does.

When you are raised with someone like my aunt in your life, you grow up thinking that the things they do are normal. Nothing stands out as odd because for as long as you can remember, that's the way it was.

I knew to automatically go ahead of my aunt when we were going up stairs



Patkotak



because she needed to swing her broad leg out behind her to get to the next step. If I was behind her, I'd get beamed and I'd get no sympathy from anyone because I was in the wrong place and should have known it. I know that coming down those stairs, I also had to be in front because she had to sit and haul herself down on her butt.

With the passing of the years, I look back now and wonder just how much pain she was hiding under her sense of humor. I know she was self-conscious about the brace. When my mother was still alive and we were looking at pictures of her and her sisters on the beach, I commented that Aunt Adeline didn't have any braces on her legs. My mother told me that before she would let anyone take a picture of her, she made sure the braces were hidden.

If she was wearing a dress, she stood behind someone so only her head and shoulders showed. If she was in a bathing suit, she took the brace off, propped herself up carefully next to her sisters, had the picture taken and then put the brace back on.

When she was young, her parents would not give her permission to marry because they thought that she would pass her crippled legs on to any children she might have. When, in later life, she did marry, she directed everyone to the

wedding by telling them to look for a storefront with a lot of wheelchairs and ramps heading inside. Her reception was in a storefront because it had no stairs and both doors opened wide so the wheelchairs could get in.

It's like I said, when you grow up with someone like my aunt, you take the way they are for granted. As kids, all we needed to know about her was that she braced and she had a magic rug that could make candy appear in her bureau drawer whenever we went for a visit.

I'm glad that there are laws now that require us all to make accommodations for people with different types of ability. I'm glad those laws allow everyone their right to see a movie, use a public restroom or go to a restaurant with their dignity intact.

I just wish it had happened sooner so that my aunt could have enjoyed those benefits. Not that she would have ever complained. She was too ornery, independent and downright funny to want anyone to think she couldn't do anything she wanted.

But the truth is, she couldn't. Because there were just too many barriers. Elise Patkotak, an Anchorage free-lance writer and author of Parallels 1, a humorous look back at her 28 years in Barrow, lives in Anchorage and owns Precision Cargo Ltd., a writing/graphics company.

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WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

Senior editor

JURY MADE RIGHT DECISION IN . . .

If prosecutors were right to require Mielke to put his action that night to legal tests and trial by a jury of his peers. The decision by that jury seems equally right.

Prosecutors were right
to require Melke to put
his actions that might
lead to legal tests and trial by a
jury of his peers.

seems equally right. Though Mielke did several things wrong

After he heard noises inside the chapel and saw the burglars rding auto-mobile outside, he admnits he should have called for trooper help and waited outside

BUT HINDSIGHT allows for near-perfect vision on matters that seemed not so clear at the time. Muelke armed himself, entered the church and encountered the robbers in a narrow and dark hallway.

Melke told the jury he thought the burglars were attacking him, he panicked and began shooting Christopher Palmer, 31, died at the scene. Francis Jones, 23, died hours later at a friend's home. Jones bled to death after he refused to allow a friend to seek medical attention for him, he rightly feared he would be arrested for his crime.

There are several lessons to be learned from the early-morning tragedy at Big Lake. One obvious one is that police should be called in such a situation and citizens should not try to respond to invaders alone.

Another is that burglary is a dangerous business and those who engage in it deserve the lion's share of the blame for any consequences.

A black and white portrait of a man with a beard and a cap, looking slightly to the right. The man has a full, dark beard and mustache. He is wearing a dark cap with a brim. The portrait is rendered in a sketchy, high-contrast style with heavy black lines and shading. The background is white.

**FREELY EXPRESS OPINIONS,
FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY...**

AND TO RISE UP AGAINST
OPPRESSIVE
REGIMES!

A black and white caricature of a man with a large nose and a hat, looking down. The drawing is done in a sketchy, expressive style with heavy black lines. The man has a large, prominent nose, a small mouth, and is wearing a dark hat. He is looking down and slightly to the left. The background is plain white.

THE NEXT THING YOU KNOW
THEY'LL WANT TO BE
OUT OF JAIL!

Close competition in Initiative Olympics

Under the pretense that it was taking too long, Rep Croft, D-Anchorage,

Under the pretense that it was taking too long, Rep Croft, D-Anchorage, went to court to pressure the Department of Law from doing its job of reviewing his initiative petition to change the way vacant US Senate seats are filled (Our review was completed in less than half the time of similar reviews in the Knowles administration)

but that was before the Anchorage Daily News editorial "Initiative thwarted." Its editor's view is that following and enforcing the plan language of the United States Constitution is a "creative legal argument." He probably doesn't think that "God" belongs in the Pledge of Allegiance, either.

For me, the language of our Constitution is a lot more than a "creative legal

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BILL J. ALLEN
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9th CIRCUIT SHOULD BE OVERBLOWN ON ... Felon freebie

THE 9TH U.S. CIRCUIT Court of Appeals has declared unconstitutional a law requiring federal prisoners and parolees to give blood samples for the FBI's DNA database.

The 9th Circuit is the most liberal and frequently overturned federal appeals court in the country. Let's hope they are overturned in this case as well.

The DNA database is used much like the FBI's fingerprint database, which has been used countless times to apprehend criminals. DNA evidence is often left at crime scenes and can be used to identify possible suspects who were at the scene.

Apparently the 9th Circuit read tea leaves in a cup used by the U.S. Supreme Court. It looked at a related blood samples case and decided that requiring the blood samples amounted to illegal invasion of privacy because the samples are taken without legal suspicion that the convicts were involved in crimes other than the ones for which they were sent to prison.

In other words, the court wants the prisoners to commit another crime before their DNA is taken, meaning that DNA evidence left at the new crime scene could not be tracked to them until they were identified by other means. That would make the new crime a lot like the extra golf stroke called a mulligan, a free one.

IF THE 9TH Circuit's decision is upheld — which hopefully is unlikely — it would undermine laws in many states requiring such samples. The rules vary from state to state, but Alaska requires that DNA samples be taken from those convicted of violent felonies. We agree absolutely that government must protect and observe the privacy of all Americans. But the one liberties activists would disagree, our feeling is that once felons are convicted they should automatically forfeit their privacy right. Felon fingerprints and DNA samples should be routinely taken and placed in the FBI's national database for use in criminal investigations at all levels.

It supposedly is a fundamental rule of law that the right to swing your arms stops at the end of the other guy's nose. In other words, you can swing your arms all you want as long as you don't whack somebody.

And those who have proven they are willing to commit a felony have taken that step too far and should be forever trackable through fingerprint and DNA databases. Giving samples should be a basic condition under which they are released from custody.

The 9th Circuit Court will never see things this way, but there are more sensible heads in the judicial system. Let's hope they weigh in on this issue soon.

Voice of the Times A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Easterbrook gaffe was overblown

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

After seeing the box office hit "Kali Bul Vol 1," New Republic writer Greg Easterbrook was so furious at those who would produce and promote it that he was moved to write a denunciation on Easterbrook, the New Republic Web log.

How can people in good conscience be asked to watch such bloody and disgusting movies for reasons of commerce?

Except that he put the question this way to Disney and Miramax, makers of this particular movie "Disney's CEO, Michael Eisner, is Jewish, the chief of Miramax, Harvey Weinstein, is Jewish."

"Yes, there are plenty of Christians and other Hollywood executives who worship money above all else, promoting for profit the adulation of violence. Does that make it right for Jewish executives to worship money above all else, by promoting for profit the adulation of violence?"

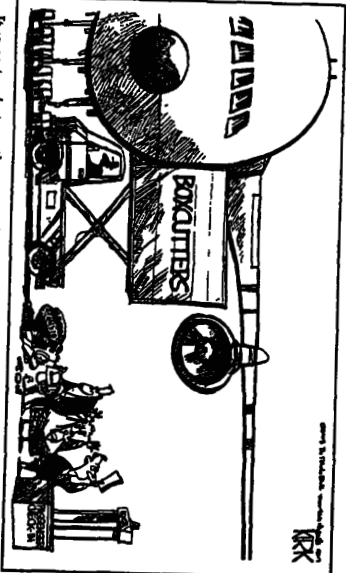
Such is clumsy and stupid — what does Jewishness have to do with this movie? Moreover, Easterbrook's resort to a classic Slyboothian stereotype was somewhat shocking, coming from a guy who really should know better.

And he has paid. He has been victimized. He has been called an anti-Semite. The Anti-Denatation League issued a statement saying that "Mr. Easterbrook's remarks reflect either absolute ignorance or total bigotry." He has been fired from his job at ESPN.

What is going on here? Jews are being attacked in Germany. Synagogues are being torched in France. Around the world, Jews — such as Daniel Pearl — are hunted and killed as Jews.

The prime minister of Malaysia tells an Islamic summit that "1.3 billion Muslims cannot be defeated by a few million Jews. We are up against a people who think they have now gained control of the most powerful countries. We cannot fight them through brawn alone" — and gets a standing ovation from the heads of state of 57 countries.

And amid all this, the Anti-Denatation League feels the need to wax indignant over a few lines on a Web log?



It is certainly true that a single antisemitic statement can be the slip that reveals the real heart of a person who has simply been careful in public about his prejudices. A person who has been working at the edges of bigotry for years can inadvertently and thus revealingly cross the line. Then you have a dropped mask, and can fairly attribute malice.

Pat Buchanan, for example, has called Guynol Hill "Jewish-occupied territory." He declared that the only people who were in favor of the 1991 Persian Gulf War were "the Israeli Defense Ministry and its aman corner in the United States." He used the case of a stalled train in a D.C. tunnel to dispute the fact that Jews were gassed at Treblinka — after citing "Holocaust Survivor Syndrome" involving "group fantasies of martyrdom and heroics." If such a man then you might have a case.

But Easterbrook is no Pat Buchanan. Apart from those clanging three lines, there is not an ounce of evidence of anything anti-Semitic in Easterbrook's entire life.

The man has written millions of words, none of them remotely anti-Semitic. I hardly know him, but people who do testify that in private life, too, he is free of prejudice.

We have become touchy about ethnic slurs in recent years. And that is not entirely true.

Charles Krauthammer writes a weekly nationally syndicated column for the Washington Post. His column is distributed by the Washington Post Writers Group. Copyright 2003 The Washington Post Co.

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PARTIAL BIRTH ABORTIONS TO END ...

It's about time

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH is doing the right thing in signing legislation that would end the brutal, barbaric practice euphemistically known as "partial birth" abortions.

The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons and the American Medical Association do not support the medical procedure, and in national polls it is opposed by the majority of respondents. Legislation to ban the merciless practice has been long overdue.

The Senate voted 64-34 on Tuesday to ban the abortions, generally carried out in the second or third trimester of a pregnancy. Seventeen Democrats joined 47 Republicans to win passage. The House approved the measure earlier 281-142.

Such legislation, spawned in 1995, has been to the White House before, but then-President Bill Clinton twice vetoed similar bills. He argued the measures lacked a provision to protect the health of the mother.

Abortion rights advocates, unsurprisingly, have vowed to sue when the president signs the measure, claiming it is a first step in dismantling the 1973 Supreme Court decision, *Roe vs. Wade*, that legalized abortion. The new legislation corrects faults found by the U.S. Supreme Court in a similar 2000 Nebraska law.

WHILE WE understand the adamant resolve of some to retain women's abortion rights, and recognize that there is a fear of those rights being swept away at a time, it is difficult to grasp any defense of killing late-term babies in such a hideous manner. Surely, even the most ardent, passionate defense of a right must not ignore humanity.

With all the information now available about partial birth abortions, information that seemingly has shot holes in most of its proponents' arguments, its defense has fallen on increasingly deaf ears — in Congress and across the land. Despite its supporters' assertions to the contrary, there are in-porter's assertions to the contrary, they are carried out on healthy fetuses in healthy women.

It remains to be seen what the Supreme Court will say if and when it is called upon to weigh in on partial birth abortions, and it is unclear what the effects of outlawing the abortions will mean in the fight over women's rights to control their bodies.

But this much is clear: Partial birth abortions are abortion and indefensible. Punishing hopes for the continued recognition of abortion rights on fighting to successfully retain such a savage medical procedure would seem a risky course — and would appear to be a losing proposition in the court of public opinion.

No excuses for academic failures

By WALTER E. WILLIAMS

Excellent schools deliver a clear message to their students: No Excuses. No excuses for failing to do your homework, failing to work hard in general, no excuses for fighting with other students, running in the hallways, dressing inappropriately and so forth.

That's part of the prescription for ending educational mediocrity discussed in *Algebra and Stephen*, a new book by No Excuses Closing the Racial Gap in Learning (Simon & Schuster, 2003).

It's no secret that, as the *Thermostats* point out, the education achieved by white students is nothing to write home about. In civics, math, reading, writing and geography, nearly a quarter of all students leave high school with academic skills that are "Below Basic."

In science, 47 percent leave high school with skills Below Basic, and in American history it's 57 percent. Below Basic is the category the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) uses for students unable to display even partial mastery of knowledge and skills fundamental for proficient work at their grade level.

As dismal as these figures are, for black students it is magnitudes worse. According to NAEP findings, only in writing are less than 40 percent of black high school students Below Basic. In math, it's 70 percent, and science 75 percent. Black, completing high school perform a little worse than white eighth-graders in both reading and US history, and a lot worse in math and geography.

The *Thermostats* report, "In math and geography, indeed, they know no more than whites in the seventh grade. From these data, the *Thermostats* conclude, 'The employer hiring the typical black high school graduate (or the college that admits the average black student)' is, in effect, choosing a youngster



who has made it only through the eighth grade."

At the other end of the NAEP academic scale, Proficient and Advanced, nearly half of all whites and 40 percent of Asians score in those categories in reading, compared to less than a fifth of blacks. In science and math, 3 percent of black students display more than a partial mastery, in contrast to seven to 10 times as many whites and Asians.

The dismal performance of black students translates into at least two devastating consequences. First, gaining racial double standards are needed if more than a handful of black students are to attend the nation's most prestigious universities. Second, if one hasn't mastered high school pre-calculus, high-paying careers such as engineering, medicine and computer technology are hermetically sealed for life.

These outcomes are not preordained, and the solution is not more money, as the educationists would have us believe. Were that the case, academic achievement wouldn't be a problem. In the last two decades, educational expenditures have doubled, yet academic performance has declined.

The route to greater academic excellence is nearly a no-brainer: There are three vital inputs to education: parents,

The Anchorage Times

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

DAMN THE COSTS . . .

Enforce safety

THE COST IN lives, suffering, property damage and simple anguish from traffic accidents in Anchorage is simply incalculable

The life of a 13-year-old girl is priceless, yet one died recently while crossing a street. There is no way to put a price tag on the loss felt by her family or the life-long scar left on the driver of the car that struck her.

Yet she was not the first — and sadly will not be the last — person to die in a traffic accident on our streets. Every year there are fatalities from collisions, from single-vehicle mishaps in town and on the highways out of Anchorage.

Daily there are non-fatal collisions all over town — some more serious than others, some that cause grave injuries but thankfully, no one hurt.

The actual cost in smashed automobiles and trucks must run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars every year — if not, in fact, every month. Any single accident with even moderate damage to one or more of the vehicles involved represents a huge loss. Replaced a fender lately? How about a front end — or maybe a rear axle and two side panels?

OUR POLICE department has decided it no longer has the time to respond to minor fender-benders. But the fact is that most fender-benders are going to cost those involved, and their insurance companies, a lot of money — not to mention lost time and aggravation involved in getting repairs made.

From this comes a few thoughts:

• The police need to increase, not lessen, their enforcement of traffic laws. We need police who are actively and aggressively chasing down those who run red lights, who speed on city streets, and those who recklessly weave in and out of traffic.

• We need to somehow find a way to keep a running total on the actual property damage resulting from traffic accidents. The suspicion is that we all would be stunned at the magnitude of the loss — many times greater, we'd be willing to bet, than the size of the budget gap the Assembly is trying to close with a new tax increase.

• There needs to be a concentrated, continuing safety education program — in our schools and throughout the community — on the need to bring safety back to our streets. This city is infested with bad drivers, with careless drivers, with all too many people behind the wheel who have adopted the attitude of Admiral David Glasgow Farragut: "Damn the torpedoes. Full speed ahead."

That made sense when Adam Farragut led his fleet into Alabama's Mobile Bay in August, 1864.
But it's a lousy — and costly and deadly — attitude to have on the streets of Anchorage in October, 2003.

Brad Phillips sails slowly into retirement

By WILLIAM J. TOBIN

AFTER 45 YEARS of cruising Alaska waters in service to tens of thousands of visitors, Brad Phillips has sold his business. You know it as the 26 Glacier Cruise — a magnificent journey aboard the Klondike Express, a high-speed, 137-foot catamaran sailing from Whittier each day during the summer tourist season on 4 1/2-hour trips more than 135 miles through Prince William Sound and into the far reaches of Colville Fjord, to Harvard Glacier and then into Barry Arm and Hartman Fjord on the trip home. Passengers get up close and personal with glaciers, sea otters, porpoises, an occasional humpback or a killer whale, and birds by the dozens — bald eagles and clouds of kittiwakes on noblesse that leave astonished visitors in awe.

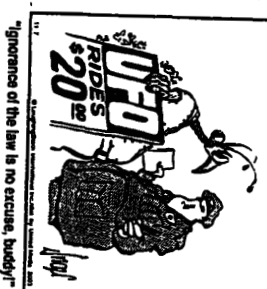


Tobin

HIS COMPANY, formally known as Phillips Cruises and Tours, will continue operating under the same name during tourist seasons yet to come — but under the ownership of Bob Newman. In his own right, he's a veteran of serving the public through his three well-known downtown operations — Grizzly Gals, the Anchorage Hotel, and the Rummungum Old Towne Bar.

They're all within steps of the Phillips Cruises office, all clustered around the intersection of Fourth Avenue and E Street, and all close neighbors of Old City Hall.

THE SALE, which closed a week ago Thursday, marks the end of an era in Alaska's visitor industry. Captain Brad has been more than a pioneer in developing coastal cruises in Alaska. As he scribbled and toiled to build his business, he was a visionary risk-taker who sailed a lot of heavy seas. All told, he owned a succession of five ships over the years before finally smooching out all the waves with the 342-passenger Klondike Express. In fact, Phillips has



"Ignorance of the law is no excuse, buddy!"

been so long in the cruise business that many have forgotten — or never knew — that he once was a major figure in Alaska political affairs. Among other things, he was a Republican candidate for lieutenant governor on a ticket headed with the late John Buttrick of Fairbanks in an unsuccessful bid for the statehouse in 1968. Two years later he was elected to the state Senate, and wound up a decade-long lawmaking career as Senate president in 1969-70.

AT THE SAME time he pursued a political career, he got his feet wet in the cruise business — going to Los Angeles in 1958 to buy the MV Gypsy, an ocean-going yacht built for actor John Barrymore. Phillips brought it to Alaska and began a summer cruise operation between Whittier and Valdez. That came to an abrupt end when the Good Friday earthquake struck in 1964, wiping out Valdez with a giant seismic sea wave. "I had a call from a friend who said he saw the Gypsy beached out to sea at the height of the wave," Phillips says. "Who would have thought you'd need earthquake insurance on a boat?"

AFTER THE LOSS of the Gypsy, Brad and his wife, Helen, got back through all these adventures, got back on their feet with the MV Glacier Queen, a built-to-order ship they operated under the banner of Columbia Glacier Cruises. In 1985 and 1986, they tried their hand with summer cruises on the Yukon River — but in 1987 they were back in Prince William Sound.

ONE THING is sure: Come next spring, he'll be back aboard the Klondike Express — under contract to board host to thousands of new tourists getting an eye-popping look at some of the world's most glorious scenery, while riding the fastest, smoothest-running cruise ship in Alaska waters.

William J. Tobin is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

Saturday, October 25, 2003 **B-7**
WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

DEFENDING FREEDOM: OFF TO ...

Afghanistan

MORE THAN 800 soldiers from Fort Richardson are on their way to Afghanistan for a scheduled six-month deployment. Their mission is to support Operation Enduring Freedom and the Global War on Terrorism.

The use of capital letters in that description is not only intentional, it is mandatory. Those are not pretentious words, plucked from an ad-man's copy book. That is the official title of the activities in which U.S. troops are engaged in that harsh land.

The assignment is dangerous. The young men and women from Fort Rich, combined into Task Force 1-501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, are going into harm's way. They will be on the front line in the nation's battle to preserve freedom and fight terrorism in a country that harbors Osama bin Laden and has committed killers, who have declared war on the United States and every American, civilian or soldier.

THERE IS reason for confidence. The 501st's 1st Battalion, which makes up the basis of this deployed unit, is well-trained, its soldiers ready for whatever contingency presents itself. Its ranks have been supplemented by other forces — artillery engineers, air defense and maintenance units, plus medical personnel.

In Afghanistan they will join the 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division — one of the Army's most famous commands. They leave behind their families who will endure the separation that comes to those who serve their country in any one of the branches of the military. While waiting for their loved ones to return from this assignment, we are confident they will have the support of the Army and the civilian community to help offset the temporary pains that come with overseas missions.

Our prayers are with our Alaska troops. We know they will perform well, as have all the other active duty, reserve and National Guard units that have been deployed in this fight against terrorism.

We look forward to their safe return home.

Strange people

LAST JULY, a man entered a Missoula factory, killed three people and wounded five others. Then he committed suicide.

Ten days later, the man's mother filed a claim for workers' compensation payments. She said her son suffered "death by gunfire" at his workplace.

That's like the supposedly mythical character who killed his parents and demanded clemency because he was an orphan.

Where do these people come from?

Rob Robertson might have been right

By LEW M. WILLIAMS, JR.

R. E. "Bob" Robertson might have been right.

Robertson was the founder of one of Alaska's oldest and most prestigious law firms, Robertson Monagle and East. He died in Juneau, and was a delegate to the Alaska Constitutional Convention over the winter of 1955-56. He resigned three days before the convention ended because he disagreed with some features and was reluctant to vote against the entire constitution.

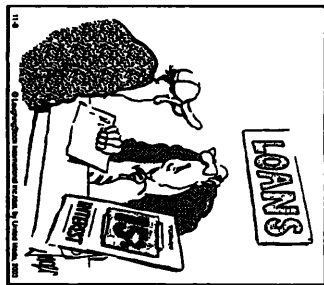
One of his concerns was the section covering initiatives, which he thought was too loosely written. Alaska's procedures for voter-initiated law might not be as bad as California, where much of its fiscal problems are blamed on initiatives limiting taxing but not spending. But Alaska's procedure needs some tightening and District 1 Rep. Bill Williams, R-Seward, has proposed that in House Bill 31.

Meanwhile, five ballot initiatives, with the required 100 sponsors, have been certified by the lieutenant governor. Supporters are seeking the 23,148 signatures of registered voters needed for each to qualify for the Williams

Certified are Campaign finance reform, marijuana decriminalization, taxation of cruise ships, prohibiting bear hunting and exempting Alaskans from registering for Selective Service.

A proposition requiring an election to fill a vacant U.S. Senate seat fell victim to a Department of Law opinion and was not certified. Three other rejected initiatives included requiring a 75 percent vote to raise taxes, requiring the state to seek independence and protecting the earnings and dividends of the Permanent Fund.

The campaign finance reform initiative would overturn the easing of campaign rules by the Legislature. The tax on cruise ships, \$50 per passenger, also repeals an exemption to the corporate income tax that the cruise com-



"In your case, we have no interest at all!"

panies were granted by a previous Legislature (they pay for shore-side operations but not for ship business).

Decriminalizing marijuana comes back to Alaskans as the result of court action. Alaskans approved medical use of marijuana in 1998 but defeated decriminalizing marijuana in 2000. A Superior Court judge has ruled that the issue can go back on the 2004 ballot.

Bear-baiting and exempting Alaskans from registering for selective service are less controversial except among hunters and animal rights and peace activists.

Filling U.S. Senate vacancies by election is a reaction to Gov. Frank Murkowski, a Republican, appointing his daughter to his Senate seat. It is pushed by Anchorage-based Democratic legislators who really are looking at Alaska's other U.S. Senator, Republican Ted Stevens, who is 89.

Stevens himself was appointed by Gov. Walter Hickel, a Republican, after the death of Sen. E. I. Bartlett, a Democrat. Stevens subsequently won election and re-election — to Alaska's good fortune.

Supporters of each issue have until Jan. 12 to qualify an issue for the ballot by collecting the signatures of registered voters equal to 10 percent of those voting in the last general election. The sig-

natures must be collected in two-thirds (27) of Alaska's 40 election districts. Actually, most can be collected in a few districts around Anchorage, adding only one signature from each of the rest.

Rep. Williams' proposal, if passed by the Legislature and approved by voters, would require that signatures be collected in three-fourths of the districts (30) and the signatures in each district must total at least 7 percent of those balloting in the last election.

The Southcentral (Anchorage) area continues to outpace Southeast and rural Alaska in population growth. Williams reasons that Anchorage urban residents could end up distorting law relating to rural areas. Activists are working on hunting and tourism.

A capital move initiative might appear again. This Southeast resident shouldn't give our northern neighbors ideas but we do advance it to support Williams' proposition to tighten up initiative requirements.

Such tightening also is warranted by what is happening in other states. Six major nationwide companies now make a business of collecting signatures for ballot propositions. Initiative supporters say paying for signatures is their biggest expense.

Two of those companies collected more than a million signatures for the recent California recall. One company brags that in a year it has collected 2.6 million signatures in 22 states between Massachusetts and California.

The problem is that many of the signature solutions hired by the companies are otherwise unemployable and commit fraud by copying a phone book or bomb-stones. The fraud is undiscovered until after they collect their pay and are long gone.

As for Bob Robertson, his resignation was never accepted by the Constitutional Convention. A year after establishing he did sign the parchment copy of the constitution that is on display in the state museum.

Lew Williams Jr. is a retired publisher of the Ketchikan Daily News. His e-mail is lmw@worldnet.att.net.

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A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

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DEMOCRATS ATTACK ...

Voting law

DEMOCRATS SCURRYING to toss mud on the Murkowski name and to rig an eventual slot at Sen Ted Stevens' seat in the U.S. Senate have pinned what hopes they have on the initiative process.

They have come up with an initiative that would change a law that calls for the governor to fill vacant Senate seats.

The Dems want the seats filled by election.

Getting an initiative on the ballot requires review by the attorney general and certification by the lieutenant governor. When that process did not move fast enough to suit them, petition backers accused Gov. Frank Murkowski's administration of conspiring to slow the process so that they could not collect the needed signatures before a Jan. 12 deadline.

At their behest, a judge ordered the certification completed by Oct. 27. The Department of Law recommended last Tuesday against certification, saying a change of voting law by initiative would violate the 17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Lt. Gov. Loren Leman denied certification.

As for any delays, the petition sponsors can blame themselves. They turned in their application before TV cameras on Aug. 6 in Anchorage instead of shipping it to Juneau where it needed to go. State records show it arrived at the lieutenant governor's office in Juneau on Aug. 11 and was turned over to state lawyers the next day.

THE DEMS yanked back their application after it was pointed out that their petition failed to repeal the law they were trying to replace. Ooops. They resubmitted Sept. 4. It was forwarded to the attorney general's office the next day.

Attorney General Gregg Renkes in this case had to decide several complicated issues, including whether voting laws can be instituted by initiative, and whether, by changing the way voting law is applied, the matter must win U.S. Department of Justice approval.

Under the Voters Rights Act of 1965, Alaska is a "covered jurisdiction" that must ask for "preclearance" from the U.S. attorney general or the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia before it can change its voting laws. The aim is to protect minorities.

Such reviews take time. But did Renkes take too long, as the Democrats claimed? Hardly. An opinion on a property tax relief initiative in 1998 took 168 days. A family land entitlement initiative took 125 days, another aimed at protecting the Permanent Fund dividend took 137 days.

You also have to wonder why the sponsors waited so long to make a fuss. The law in question has been on the books since 2002. Why wait?

It is obvious. Politics. Their agenda is to do whatever they can to hurt the governor and Sen. Lisa Murkowski in an effort to help their present and future candidates for the U.S. Senate — even if it includes donning unfilial caps and yelling "conspiracy, conspiracy."

What's next?

Cuts threaten safety

The recently proposed budget cuts to the Anchorage Fire Department are simply unacceptable.

Although our city faces a significant fiscal crisis, it is not acceptable to attempt to alleviate this gap by threatening the safety of the public. The proposed cuts will affect fire suppression and emergency medical response in every part of the municipality. By having fewer personnel to respond, the time it takes for fire and emergency medical service units to reach an emergency will ultimately increase.

As a taxpayer/property owner of the municipality, I consider it simply unacceptable for elected officials to offer or support budget cuts that directly threaten the safety of myself, my family and my friends.

Mike Davidson
Girdwood

No revenue from parts

I found Paul Palmer's column on Oct. 8, "Lies put some parts into the tax base," highly instructive. If you simply take what the Assembly has proposed to lock up in new parts since May 2000 and do the math, we are eliminating nearly \$20 million of potential property tax revenues in the future — more than enough to make up for any budget deficit today or in the future.

If you divide 750 acres into 7,500 square foot lots (about six per acre) and build \$250,000 homes on all of those lots, you create a lot of new places to live. You also add a lot to the property tax rolls.

At the current valuations, these new homes will bring in around \$19,300,000 in new property taxes every year for as long as there are houses. If you use a quarter of the land for roads and easements, you still bring in nearly \$15 million in new revenues.

Parts cost money, and the economics of taking land off the table is never discussed when new ones are proposed. I

Letters to The Times



would think that the current 235 parts here in the Anchorage Bowl are sufficient for our needs.

You want to balance the budget quickly and painlessly? Quit building parks and start building homes.

Alex Guncarz
Anchorage

Projections are illusion

I have to respond to an inaccuracy in your editorial about the Permanent Fund Percent of Market Value proposal. In your column you state, "Critics of the plan maintain that the public would not accept such a change since dividend checks would otherwise be larger in the future."

This is a common misperception that simply isn't true. It implies that the status quo with respect to the Permanent Fund is somehow sustainable. It isn't.

The fact is that, without using some Permanent Fund earnings to pay for government, the Constitutional Budget Reserve will be drained within three to four years, which will require the Legislature to go to the Permanent Fund Earnings Reserve to balance the budget.

Even if you raise taxes, there is no place else to go. Any use of Permanent Fund earnings will reduce the dividend. Dividend projections under the status quo more than a few years out are an illusion and should be adjusted for money coming out of the Earnings Reserve.

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serve to balance the budget when the Budget Reserve is drained.

Brad Pearce
Alaska Office of the Governor

Library consequences

Your recent editorial on the layoffs at the library contains an erroneous assumption concerning libraries and technology. The Internet and online services have not caused a decrease in the need for reference service.

Indeed, reference questions at Louisiana and the branches are up 3 percent so far this year. That figure does not even include when a librarian helps a patron use a computer for e-mail, type a document, etc.

Technology has increased use of all library services like a tide raising all ships. The only thing decreasing is revenue.

While some of the layoffs at the library would have been inevitable because of the budget gap, the restructuring going on right now is hasty and reckless.

These cavalier actions will have long term unintended consequences.

Mike Robinson, Librarian
Anchorage

Letters

We encourage our readers to write letters to the editor to express their views on various issues.

Letters for publication must contain the writer's name, address and telephone number. They should be no longer than 250 words, but being better and even shorter is best.

We reserve the right to edit them for libel, grammar and good taste. Letters can be sent by e-mail, mail or by fax using the address and telephone numbers on this page.

Of course, as always, those accompanied by charitable chip cookies get extra consideration.

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Thursday, October 23, 2003 **B-2**

SIMPLY PUT, THIS IS JUST ...

Too funny

THIS JUST IN from our "Ya Gotta Be Kiddin' Depart-ment" — Assemblyman Doug Van Ertten is scheduled to speak to a roomful of Democrats about "Campaign Ethics and Reality."

Honest. We're not making this up. The assemblyman will be speaking before the Bartlett Political Forum at the Royal Fork eatery at noon. It said so in the newspaper's "Community Datebook" yesterday.

You may remember that Mr. Van Ertten failed to fill out his conflict-of-interest forms for a three-year period and did not fill out his campaign finance disclosure forms correctly in either of his Assembly election campaigns. That violates state election law.

The Alaska Public Offices Commission rightly took of- fense but, although it could have hammered him with \$122,000 in fines, let him slide with a \$11,000 slap on the wrist. Based on the blatant violations found by the APOC, the city ethics panel found that he had violated the munici- pal ethics code, but recommended no further punishment.

So this is a guy who can lecture on ethics over lunch? What's next? Bill Clinton speaking on marital fidelity?

The good news is that Mr. Van Ertten will be addressing a friendly crowd.

Animal rights

THE ANIMAL rights people are back at it again. This time they attempted to rescue 10,000 mink from a farm in Washington state. But their efforts, while temporarily suc- cessful, are getting a lot of the animals killed.

The Animal Liberation Front claimed responsibility for the hare-brained rescue attempt. The FBI is investigating but no arrests have been reported yet.

About 9,000 of the freed mink were recaptured and re- turned to the Roesler Brothers Fur Farm in Sultan, Wash. But the would-be rescuers made it all but impossible to keep the animals from killing each other off.

Normally, only siblings are caged together. And since farm workers have no way to determine which of the recaptured mink are related, many of the returned mink are necessarily caged with non-relatives.

The problem is that mink are vicious cannibals. While they don't eat their brothers and sisters, they go after un- related cage-mates with a vengeance. The casualties are mounting.

And the victims include more than just the mink. Days af- ter the animal rights raid, the freed animals were starving. They attacked exotic birds, a flock of chickens and even a Labrador retriever.

The fact that the people claimed noble intentions doesn't help the dead animals or their owners.

If the end is near, have a Pop-Tart

By ELISE PATKOTAK

According to *Newsweek* Magazine (Oct. 13), in the face of natural disaster Americans stock up on batteries, water and Pop-Tarts. Yes, Pop-Tarts. A wholesale club back east noticed a 20 percent jump in sales of Pop-Tarts right before a hurricane. The theory for the jump is that they are cheap, stay fresh up to a year and are tasty even when not toasted.

The government apparently ap- proves of this because they fit the gov- ernment requirement to have "high en- ergy, stress/comfort foods" around in case a hurricane is about to blow you to Kansas or a nuclear bomb is threaten- ing to rearrange your landscape.

But, let us think the government has finally given us carte blanche to en- joy ourselves in what might be the last moments of our lives, nutritionists have weighed in with the statement that since Pop-Tarts are high in sugar, saturated fat and calories, they are "everything we don't want people to have."

Although the nutri- tion community con- cedes that you could survive for months on Pop-Tarts and water,

you might (gasp) ha- ro!) gain weight. Jan Hanger, a nutri- tionist at Boston's Children's Hospital, is quoted as recommending dried fruit, nuts and lean beef jerky instead.

OK, so let me see if I've got this straight. I'm in a situation where I might either die or have to survive some emer- gency condition for months only to fin- ally encounter a nuclear winter. And there are actually people out there who want me to worry about whether I will enrage them from that situation with my stifle figure instead, people who want me to forgo my comfort food so I can gnaw on lean beef jerky and dried fruit and nuts for the good of my cholesterol levels.

Excuse me, but are these people crazy? If I am ever in a situation where I need to hunker down and survive some natural or man-made catastrophe for



Patkotak



months on end, trust me when I tell you I want all the comfort foods I can get. Give me Pop-Tarts and Twinkles and HotTots and Tasty Kakes. Give me pas- las and breads, and sodas full of sugar. Give me chocolate and pizza and throw in a few Mickey D's. Because should I not survive, I sure as heck don't want my last meal to be one that was good for me. I find myself wondering if that nu- tritionist is a long-lost relative from my mother's side of the family. They would understand and approve of what she was saying.

I can remember the first time I saw a picture of my great-grandmother. I don't know her real name. I never met her. Everyone called her Mamma Nina. She is not only out smiling in the few extant pictures we have of her, she is positively scowling. When I pointed this out to one of my uncles, he told me that back then people had nothing to smile about. That about sums up the darker side of my mother's family psyche.

This same uncle, when his wife was feeling ill one day and didn't get out of bed, thought to motivate her by showing up in their bedroom with an iron and a shirt. He informed her he needed his shirt ironed so he could go to work. The wasn't trying to be mean. In his world, the greatest motivator of all is work. That there is a job that needs to be done

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

TO HANK ROSENTHAL, WE FONDLY ...

Say goodbye

HIS WIT WAS charming, his love of the outdoors was total, his Texas accent was infectious, his knowledge of public issues was broad, and his penmanship was difficult to offset when he spoke in favor of a particular cause. In short, Hank Rosenthal was an ideal representative of those who believed in development — and protection — of Alaska's natural resources.

He got his first look at Alaska by coming here across the top of the world — as the pilot man assigned by Humble Oil to seal with the tanker Manhattan in 1969 to determine whether the state's vast North Slope oil riches could be moved to market by an ocean route eastward across Canada.

The answer was "no," but the Manhattan's trip was a grand adventure — and Rosenthal loved it, and the people he met here. When Humble Oil became Exxon, his Alaska years were extended — with a slight corporate detour to Florida, before he returned in 1975 to work with Alaska Northwest Publishing Co. In 1980, he joined AKCO as a public affairs official and lobbyist — an 11-year career marked with distinction.

A New Jersey native who grew up in Galveston, Rosenthal and his wife, former Anchorage Assemblywoman Heather Flynn, returned to his Texas roots, spending most of the years there.

His life ended tragically a week ago Tuesday in Prague, capital city of the Czech Republic, where he and his wife were on a European holiday. Rosenthal was fatally injured when struck by a van that jumped the curb as he walked along a city street. He was 72. And he was one of the Good Guys.

A national mission

PRESIDENT GEORGE Bush, appearing with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in California, delivered yet another stirring speech that clearly identified our great national mission in a troubled world. Too bad the gaggle of Democratic presidential candidates ignore what he says.

At the nation's peril, however, they continue to dismiss out of hand one of the president's recurring statements — one he repeated again in his remarks at San Bernardino, his last stop before leaving on a six-country trip to Asia and Australia.

The U.S., he said, must — the emphasis cannot be too strongly stressed — develop its oil and gas resources in an effort to become less dependent on foreign energy imports.

That essentially means one thing: the discovery of new petroleum sources in Alaska.

The Democrats, indebted to environmental campaign dollars, turn deaf ears to the president's message.

Too bad for the country.

Too bad for Alaska.

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

Wednesday, October 22, 2003 **B-7**
WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

Graduated licenses would save teens

By JOAN DIAMOND

In early October, two vehicles, both carrying young people, collided at Northern Lights and Minnesota. Since no one died, the incident would have gone unnoticed had it not involved the son of Paul Jenkins, an editor of *The Voice of the Times*. He experienced every parent's nightmare because his son was "labeled" by a "Young, drinking, red light runner" who was celebrating his 21st birthday.

His published remarks emphasized relief that his son and the young man's friends escaped severe injuries, but he voiced outrage at the state's inability to prevent this criminal behavior from happening again and again. I agree with Mr. Jenkins that "too many kids die each and every year because of stupidity on the highway." However, there is more to the story.

Young drivers crash more than other drivers, especially those younger than 18, because they lack the judgment that comes with age and the skill that comes with experience. If they also learn to accountably, then young people are more likely to become the drinking driver.

The whole dilemma demands more time than this space allows, but it is worth talking about one part of the solution that can be fixed. Best known as the "graduated driver's license," this system is designed to delay full licensure so that novice drivers can build experience before they hit the roads unsupervised.

It happens in three stages: a minimum supervised learner's period, an intermediate license (after the driving test is passed) that limits unsupervised driving in high-risk situations, i.e., night driving and limiting teen-age passengers, and a full privilege driver's license available after completion of the first two stages.

Beginners must remain in each of the first two stages for set minimum time periods. This system can be established if parents are willing to get involved in the legislative process. Alaskan legislators expect very little from young people before they hand them a license to drive. Compared to 38



other states and the District of Columbia, which have enacted graduated systems, Alaska has a "marginal" rating by the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety for our absurd system that lacks any design for beginning drivers to obtain their initial experience under lower-risk conditions.

In Alaska, with a six-month driving period beginning at 14 years, a teenager, at 16, can obtain a permanent driver's license with little or no experience driving. States such as North Carolina and Michigan, which have all three stages in place, have reduced deaths from car crashes involving teen drivers from 20 percent to 34 percent. It was reminded that this data also includes adults who survive collisions with teen-agers, not just teens hurting teens.

Many parents in these states realized that their kids were not ready to make split-second decisions in emergency situations without risking serious damage to their bodies and property. Even more important, they realized that their own efforts to stage driving privileges were undermined when other parents refused to set the same limits.

The obstacles and news reports remind us why we need to "act as a village."

The Anchorage Times

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large" rather than independent Alaskan towns to protect our children.

Last May, four Juneau teens were injured when the car they were riding in hit a guardrail after midnight and flipped in Kodiak. A 15-year-old driver and passenger died when their compact car veered off a road and crashed into a tree. A 17-year-old driver was injured in a 42-year-old crash in Anchorage, an early morning crash in which a 17-year-old girl driving a pickup toward Eagle River on the wrong side of the road. This is not about one town, one village or one city.

Legislation, House Bill 213, "An Act relating to a provisional driver's license," sits in the House Transportation Committee waiting for Alaska's parents to act. If we want our teen-agers to grow up safer, they need our help.

We can work toward a graduated driver's licensing system by letting our legislators know that we are concerned about our kids' welfare. We must let them know it is about saving lives.

We must persuade them that it is the right thing to do.

Joan Diamond has worked in Public Health for 23 years. She and her husband are raising two teen-agers.

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BILL J. ALLEN
Pulitzer

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

TONIGHT IS THE NIGHT FOR . . .

Tax talk

I F YOU HAVE an opinion on whether the city should levy a special fire hydrant tax, tonight is your night to sound off.

The Anchorage Assembly last week introduced an ordinance that would put such a tax on a Nov. 25 special election ballot and scheduled a public hearing on the proposal for tonight. We're betting its members get more than an earful.

At issue is whether property taxpayers should pick up a \$2.9 million tab for maintaining the city's fire hydrants, a task that the fire department now pays the Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility to do. The deal was put together decades ago when the AWWU was running in the red, officials say, and the money now is part of the utility's rate structure. Any change would require a complicated and lengthy rate adjustment process at the state level.

The efficiency of one city department being forced to pay another is something that can be argued, but fire officials say if they had the money now paid to AWWU, they would not have to lay off 22 firefighters, cut 27 other positions and reduce equipment.

With the city facing \$33 million in red ink next year, Mayor Mark Begich trimmed the fire department's \$54 million budget request to \$47.9 million. That would include the increased costs of operating two new fire stations, a \$2 million payment to the police and firefighters retirement and medical fund and \$500,000 in debt service.

Enter the tax proposal, sponsored by at least six members of the Assembly.

Many in the community remember Begich promising no new taxes when he took office and believe that the hydrant proposal is a scam, a way to end-run the tax cap that strictly restricts how much the city can levy. They believe using the potential layoff of firefighters to push the tax is nothing short of a local version of the Washington Monument ploy, that there are pots of money here and there that could be tapped to solve the department's problem.

Examples abound in recent city history to support their view. "Miracle money" in the past has appeared suddenly from leftovers in this account or that.

For his part, Begich, facing the first real political test of his administration, has pledged to avoid using "one-time" money to patch budget problems because it does nothing to solve the same problem the next year. He says it is time for that practice to stop and that he supports the tax.

The question is this: Can the Assembly and the mayor sell wary taxpayers on the necessity of the tax and convince them that there is no pot of gold tucked away in the bowels of City Hall to fix the problem?

Tonight is the night to let the Assembly know what you think, whether you believe the story so far, whether you are willing to take the first step away from the tax cap.

This is no time to be hesitant.

Maybe the best baseball week ever

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

Bill "Spaceman" Lee was a pretty good pitcher for the Boston Red Sox in the 1970s. He is better known, however, for the Delphic pronouncements that earned him his nickname and that made him sound like Yogi Berra on acid.

It was therefore fitting that with the Chicago Cubs and the Boston Red Sox fighting for pennants — within Chicago last won the World Series, Mark Twain was still living, Boston last won 10 years later, with Babe Ruth pitching — the Spaceman should be asked for predictions. On National Public Radio, he took the long view.

"Spaceman," Uranus is in an 84-year cycle, and the last time Uranus was in this position after a loop around the sun was in 1919 — the Sox last World Series victory, beating (who else?) the Cubs — "so the moons are positioned that, you know, in — they're suspending all weddings in India right now in the Hindu religion because of the proximity of Mars and the way things are going. You know, things are really agitated."

Spaceman, "What does that mean?" It could be the end of the world. If the Cubs and the Red Sox get into (the World Series), there could be a gun, grut and hurricane.

I've heard less plausible theories about the end of the world.

I like Spaceman's perspective, and I cite him approvingly because I drank the craziness of the past week — from the Yankees-Red Sox Game 3 throw) to the Cubs' cosmic Game 6 meltdown — let many people addled.

Much of Chicago remains under a curfew. And over in the American League, the mayor of New York suggested that he would have arrested Pedro Martinez for throwing 72-year-old Yankee coach Don Zimmer to the ground after Zimmer impudently rushed him, or as Tom Boswell of The Post put it, "made a full-size beeline — at perhaps 1 mph."

When the Boston police responded by threatening to arrest Yankee pitcher Jeff Nelson for his role in the later bullpen fight, you know it was time for distance, for a bit of Spaceman-like equanimity.



The way I see it, a splendid time was had by all. Here is my argument. With war in Iraq, war in Afghanistan, and al Qaeda bent on blowing us up here at home, we should be grateful for the few-very-dusky. It was perfect comic relief, a bunch of grown-ups in pinstriped pajamas pretending to have a fight.

The bottom line here is that nobody was seriously hurt. Afterward, Zimmer spruced a Band-Aid on his nose the size of a piece of low-fat pasta.

Before we talk about the decline of civility, sportsmanship and decency itself, we need to put this in a bit of perspective. 175 Cubans went 12 rows into the stands to attack a heckler. Juan Marchetti swatted Dodger catcher John Roseboro over the head with a bat. The infamous Yankees-Red Sox brawl of 1976 left the Spaceman himself so injured that he was never the same pitcher again.

These days Pedro Martinez plunks the Yankees' Karm Garcia (I love that name. The melting pot in two words) with a high hard one and the umpire comes running out waving his arms, warning both sides that there will be no more retaliation. Well, in the old days, when men were men, there were no disallowances. Before 1976, the retaliation would go on until no one was left standing. The old Pacific Coast League once

had a baseball fight — an orgy, wrote the Los Angeles Daily News, "of going, going, and slugging" — that took 501.4 ops to break up.

Now, that was a fight. The Fenway fiasco was postmodern shadow-boxing, which to my mind is the best of all possible worlds. You get your fight and nobody gets hurt.

Indeed, it was the best of all possible baseball weeks. Could have been the Sox and the Cubs. You got the rubbers and the curses. You got a mayor ready to arrest Cy Young's successor. You got a fan (a Chicago fan, no less) reaching out to take a foul pop away from a Chicago outfielder — and on this I shall brook no opposition — costing the Cubs their first pennant since 1905.

This is craziness. This is karma. This is as good as it gets. Cubs fans may be crying, but America is once again in love with baseball. As a Los Angeles Times sports reporter wrote about that glorious Pacific Coast League brawl, "Who says that baseball is dying?" That was 1953.

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Monday, October 20, 2003 B-5

IF THE RECALL PETITIONERS ASK ...

Just say no

ONE OF THE many problems with holding a statewide vote on whether to oust Gov. Frank Murkowski would be its almost certain impact on future governors.

First and foremost of the negatives is that state leaders in the years to come would be reluctant to make tough decisions. And those are often the decisions the state needs most. But if unpopular decisions will send recall petitions flooding into the streets, future governors are far too likely to be watching polls instead of doing what's right for the state.

The writers of Alaska's constitution decided that the governor's term should be four years. That allows the state's chief executive to do what seems right with the knowledge that he or she must face the voters after four years in office, not whenever any dissatisfied elements decide they want a new election.

ALASKA NEEDS governors with real guts, people willing to make unpopular decisions that will improve the state and the lives of its people. After making such a decision, each governor should have the balance of his or her term to try to convince voters that the decisions being made are right for Alaska.

The classic example of a political leader who governed with his eye on the polls, who pandered to the largest voting blocs, was President Bill Clinton. His idea of getting tough on terrorists, for instance, was a rocket attack on a desert tent and then making his tent blitz look like an act of courage. After his term ended came 9/11 and it then fell to Clinton's successor, President George W. Bush, to do what needed to be done on the terrorist issue.

Now a small group of activists are threatening to launch a recall campaign here, hoping they will benefit from the tendency of many people to sign any petition they are presented. Ordinarily such an effort would be largely ignored by the news media, but coming right after the successful recall and special election in California, the Alaskan dissenters have received even national mention.

Such petitions would need 57,871 signatures to put the recall question to voters. They are unlikely to get even a fraction of that number, but the best answer to those asking for your signature is an emphatic "No."

Now a small group of activists are threatening to launch a recall campaign here, hoping they will benefit from the tendency of many people to sign any petition they are presented.

Liberals have selective view of racism

By WALTER E. WILLIAMS

Rush Limbaugh's comment on ESPN regarding Philadelphia Eagles' quarterback Donovan McNabb was "I don't think he's been that good from the get-go. I think what we've had here is a little social concern in the NFL. The media has been desensitized that a black quarterback do well."

Kwesi Mfume, NAACP's president, criticized Limbaugh's remarks as bigoted, ignorant and racist. Democratic presidential hopefuls chimed in with their criticism, and Eagles' owner Jeffrey Lurie called Limbaugh's comments "despicable."

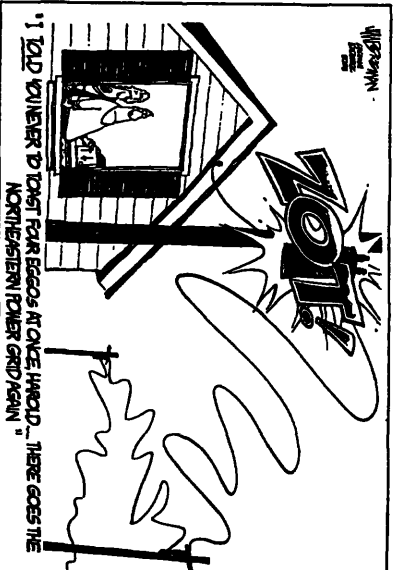
Being 67 years old, I've personally experienced racist language as well as racist acts, not only in my hometown of Philadelphia but during my 1959 to 1961 stint in the Army while in South Carolina, Georgia, Korea, and California. I'd like someone to tell me precisely what it is that Limbaugh said that can be rightfully be characterized as racist.

For the life of me, I can't find it. Limbaugh's statement is opinion that can be characterized as correct or incorrect — but racist, no.

The true tragedy of the flap over Limbaugh's remarks is that it's reflective of an ongoing process in our increasingly politically correct world where people are losing the freedom to say what they think lest they be subject to intimidation, extortion and other costs by our well-established grievance industry.

On an earlier ESPN show, Limbaugh criticized the NFL's new hiring rule that turns black prospective coaches into diversity pawns. Under the NFL's "diversity" program, the Detroit Lions were fined \$200,000 for failing to interview minority candidates before hiring their new coach, Steve Mariucci.

Limbaugh pointed out that the reason no black coaches showed up for the interview was because they knew president Matt Millen was interested in Maruca.



The message to other teams, not wanting to be fined, is to interview black coaches even though they might have no talent whatsoever in hiring them. That's a despicable practice that I can relate to.

While interviewing for jobs early in my career as an assistant professor, there were at least two different universities where I suspect I was only wanted to interview a black candidate so as to keep the affirmative action lady off their backs. I was simply a statistic. Now my question to you: Does Limbaugh's criticism of the NFL's diversity policy also make him a racist?

Liberals are selective in terms of what they deem racist. Take Dusty Baker, the black Chicago Cubs manager, who said "Personally, I like to play in the heat. It's easier for me. It's easier for most Latin guys and easier for minority people." Baker added, "You skin color is more conducive to the heat than it is to the night-shinned people, right? You don't see brothers running around burnt and stiff, running around with white stuff on their ears and nose and stuff."

Then there was New York City

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Here's my challenge: Ask liberals in the media and elsewhere who are demanding Limbaugh's head, why they didn't demand the heads of the authors of these clearly racist remarks.

Walter E. Williams is a professor at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. His column is distributed by Creators Syndicate Inc., 6777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045, (310) 337-7003.

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

MANY QUESTIONS NEED ANSWERS BEFORE...

Raising taxes

THE ASSEMBLY and Mayor Mark Begich have a tough row to hoe in the coming weeks as they work to persuade Anchorage voters to adopt a fire hydrant tax to replace 23 firefighters.

The Assembly last week approved a ballot proposition for a special election set for Nov. 25. It would levy a tax on property tax of about \$1.08 a month, per \$100,000 of property value. Officials estimate it would raise \$2.9 million in 2004.

The fire department had asked for \$5.4 million to operate next year at the same level. That figure included a \$2 million payment to the police and firefighters retirement and medical fund, costs of operating two new fire stations and about \$500,000 in debt service. Begich cut the amount to \$4.7 million.

The fire department says that means layoffs, a loss of another 27 positions and 22 firefighters now on duty being assigned to the new stations. It says trucks and medic units will be taken out of service, and there will not be much in the way of backup.

The department says it can make do if it has \$2.5 million more. That is the amount it now must pay the Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility to maintain fire hydrants. The deal was cobbled up in 1980, when AWWU was running in the red, officials say. Now it is part of the utility's state-regulated rate structure and it apparently would be months before the money could be paid loose from the utility.

ALTHOUGH MOST people probably would say they want to see firefighters and their equipment stay on the job, it may not be that simple. There are going to be problems selling the tax.

The skeptical will argue there is no emergency and that the tax is simply an end run around the tax cap to avoid laying off city workers.

Others will wonder why the city — facing a \$33 million shortfall next year — cannot cut more. How many pot holes do we need to fill? How many flowers are necessary? Why do we need all those city workers?

Those with long memories might ask why the city cannot scrape up the \$2.9 million needed by the fire department without implementing a tax. It has happened before. Funds appeared, seemingly out of thin air, to complete the Performing Arts Center. Officials later said the money was left over in various municipal accounts. And when voters a few years ago said "no" to a bond for police equipment, officials found the money elsewhere.

Cynics will argue that the tax is a scam, a first step in dismantling the tax cap a piece at a time.

Begich and the Assembly have their work cut out for them in fielding those questions, and others, in the coming days. How well they do will go a long way toward determining whether voters will approve a new tax.

It will not be easy. But it can be done.

Time for the fall chore with the clocks

BY WILLIAM J. TOBIN

DON'T WANT TO get too far ahead of things, but this is a reminder that we begin today our last week on daylight time. By the time you go to bed Saturday night, you should have turned all the clocks in your house back an hour. Your wristwatch, too. And Halloween, for crying out loud, is a week from Friday. Anybody around here remember summer?

BEFORE WINTER rolls around, let's pause to hail Danny Coyte's new book, "Watching Samuel," a first novel for this prolific writer whose essays and reports in Outside magazine have won high praise. He will be on hand this coming Friday at Title Wave Books to present a reading from this gripping thriller published by Bloomsbury at \$23.95.



Danny Coyte

Coyte's first book, "Hemlock: A Season in the Projects," was a non-fiction best seller four years ago and was later made into a movie by Paramount. Tobin — one now playing almost nightly on cable TV. Sporting News called it the best book of the year. Coyte began his writing career as an East High correspondent for "The Anchorage Times" a couple of decades ago. He now lives in Homer with his wife, Jenney, and their four children, ranging in age from 1 1/2 to 8.

AS WINTER BEGINS to set in, there's nothing like a hot toddy and a satisfying meal to warm the heart and chase away the chills. You'll find both at Mick's at the Inlet, the new upscale restaurant in the Inlet Towers at 1200 L Street in the downtown area. Executive chef Mick Hug is winning buzz from patrons who are becoming regulars. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are offered — and there are some stunning items on the menu in this place with a French, bistro feel. The best tomato soup you've ever tasted is \$6 at lunch. The wild mushroom deconstructed appetizer at dinner is an amazing bargain at \$7. Dinner is an amazing bargain at \$7. Dinner is an amazing bargain at \$7.



"The malmen's been here."

trees include roasted duck Wellington for \$20, blackened prawns and chorizo for \$23, and a melt-in-your-mouth, blue magnolia for \$24. Hug is back in town after seven years of teaching duty in Portland. One earlier he was a chef at the late Brian Carr's Manna Nooks and later at the 7 Glaciers at the Alyeska Prince Hotel. At Mick's, the bartender pours a good drink, the wine list is excellent, and the service — by a lot of those with faces familiar to the Anchorage restaurant scene — is first-class.

DID-YA-KNOW DEPT.: The UAA Aviation Technology Division operates a simulated air traffic control tower in its classrooms at Merrill Field. Chris von Imhof represents Alaska, Hawaii and the Pacific Northwest on the U.S. Travel and Tourism Promotion Board, a 15-member advisory agency to Commerce Secretary Don Evans. Von Imhof is president and CEO of Alyeska Resort and the Alyeska Prince Hotel. Owen Brown, new chief financial officer for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, is the daughter of Sandra and Bill Styles of Anchorage. A graduate of East High, she had been VASA's deputy chief financial officer for financial management. Gary Holt is the new Alaska state president of the Air Force Association. He's a member of the AFA's Edward J. Monaghan chapter in Anchorage.

DATE BOOK: The 10th annual Mayor's Charity Ball is scheduled Nov. 1

at the Hilton. It will be the first for Hizoner Mark Begich and his wife, Deborah Bonito. The ball has raised more than \$600,000 to support local non-profit and charity organizations. Proceeds this year will be divided among the Anchorage Concert Chorus, Covenant House, the Inupiat, and Pleasant Parenthood of Alaska.

IN OUR DEPT. of Things We'd Like to Have Back Again: the Nikko Garden restaurant on Sprague and Road the Chart Room in the old Anchorage-Westward Hotel. K-9 Road, which has a little more connection to our past than West Northern Lights Boulevard. The International Airline Six Races. Legislative sessions that last only 60 days. A City Council, elected at-large, the Oriental Gardens.

ONWARD & UPWARD: Maj. Gen. Jonathan S. Gremont, commander of the 3rd Wing at Elmendorf from June 1998 to January 2000, has a new Pentagon post. For the past couple of years he has been director of regional affairs in the Office of the Deputy Undersecretary of the Air Force for International Affairs — with time out for a six-month assignment earlier this year as commander of Joint Task Force-West, Southwest Asia. Now back in Washington, he has stepped up to be Assistant Deputy Undersecretary of the Air Force for International Affairs in Air Force Headquarters.

"International Affairs," in the formal language of Pentagonese, "is responsible for formulating and integrating U.S. Air Force policy with regards to politico-military affairs, security assistance, technology and information disclosure issues, and attaches efforts in support of U.S. government objectives." Gremont is a command pilot with a Purple Heart among his many decorations. He logged more than 274 combat missions over Iraq.

SUNDAY PUNDAY: A lady walked into Sheri Crawford's beauty salon on Seventh Avenue without an appointment. "It's an emergency," she told the receptionist. "I just spotted a gray hair and I thought I'd dye it."

William J. Tobin is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

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A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

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ALASKA'S BIGGEST CULTURAL GATHERING...

Welcome

THERE WAS no certainty back in 1966 that the first statewide convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives would be a big success. In truth, there were some fears the gathering might end without much being accomplished. There should have been no worry. Over the years, the annual meetings have been marked by achievements and by an increasing public awareness of the richness of the Native cultures that are part of the fabric of Alaska. There have been occasional fireworks and a touch or two of controversy, but overall the conventions have earned huge marks.

The 38th renewal of this October event opens in Anchorage Monday, and the five-day convention will bring to town more than 3,000 Natives from throughout Alaska.

They will listen to discussions of major policy issues facing the state and Native groups. They will participate in conferences involving elders and young people. They will entertain each other with performances of traditional dances. They will dine together and salute leaders and friends singled out for special awards and honors.

They will, in short, attend to business — and along the way have a good time in the big city.

We extend to Julie Kotka, AFN president, and all her convention planners a wish that this 2003 convention runs without a hitch.

Ahead to convention delegates, we offer a welcome to Anchorage. It will be good to have you here.

City of Lights

IT'S TIME TO get those winter lights up. The official kickoff for the annual City of Lights beautification and morale-boosting campaign is Monday at 5:45 p.m. in Town Square Park.

City of Lights is a 20-year-old program of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce. Each year as the days grow short, homes and businesses push back the darkness by stringing tiny white lights on trees, shrubs and buildings.

Many neighborhoods have elaborate lighting displays that make sightseeing tours of the community an enjoyable way to spend an evening.

The traditional end of the City of Lights season — the time to take down the lights — is when the last dog team reaches Nome during the Iditarod Race next March.

For those wanting to keep their electric bills in check, timers can turn the lights off during the day and in the wee hours when few people are awake to enjoy them.

Aid for those needing help with decorating design, lighting consultants and lightscapers are available to put the professional touch on home and business displays.

What was life like before e-mail?

BY ELISE PATKOTAK

Septentrio (sep-TEN-tree-oh), noun — the north. From Latin *septentrionalis*, from *septentrio*, singular of *septentrio*, one, originally septem (seven), the seven stars of the constellation Ursa Major, the Great Bear, from septem (seven) and *triones* (a team of three plow oxen). These are the principal stars of the Great Bear, which is located in the region of the north celestial pole. These stars are more commonly perceived as the Big Dipper.

I learned all that and much, much more about the word *septentrio*, which I'd never heard of before, thanks to an e-mail buddy. It's the kind of critical e-mail that I receive all day. The kind of critical e-mail that we all receive all day at work that must be read and responded to with some immediacy.

Reading his e-mail and responding to it took about 10 minutes. That would be 10 minutes when I wasn't writing a column, working on my book, interviewing a family on my case load, producing a court report or taking my dog for his daily constitutional.

Ah, e-mail. The most fun way to waste time during the workday ever conceived short of the three-martin hunt. I even have two e-mail addresses just in case one is out of commission. I carry my laptop with me at all times when I travel so I don't miss any messages. They keep me up on important things in the life of my family and friends — things that I need to immediately respond to no matter what my work demands are.



Patkotak

Like when my friend in San Diego has found a particularly good latte place for us to try the next time we're there. Or when my sister has had a rough day and wants to tell me about some particularly difficult moment in the world of

Anyhow, as I was saying, I carry my laptop with me at all times when I travel so I don't miss any messages. They keep me up on important things in the life of my family and friends — things that I need to immediately respond to no matter what my work demands are.

Like when my friend in San Diego has found a particularly good latte place for us to try the next time we're there. Or when my sister has had a rough day and wants to tell me about some particularly difficult moment in the world of

The Anchorage Times

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gambling and conventions. Or when my friends in Barrow want to update me on the weather.

These are all critical occurrences that I need to know about the minute they happen. After all, how would I know if I was even from New Jersey unless I read the list of ways I can know that for sure as compiled by some expert on New Jersey and their peculiarities?

How could I know if I was a real Italian if I didn't get the criteria for being one from an old neighborhood carry-out? And what kind of an old friend would I be if I ignored this information and chose to keep working instead of responding?

How rude of me. To say nothing of the need to make sure that I kept the list alive by sending it to at least 50 people in my address book. Work cannot possibly compete with these responsibilities.

There is also the fact that e-mail proves conclusively that there truly are only five degrees of separation in this world. If that weren't so, how could I receive the same list of sayings about the women from people I met in Barrow, people I met in New York City, people I know from college in Philly and friends I grow up with in Atlantic City. It's just one big party.

One day I had to take that last e-mail. It was an old neighborhood friend looking for advice on how to get her mom to move out of her house and into a nice

condo on the beach. Since I never convinced my own mother to do that, I had no real advice to give her. But I needed to tell her my travel plans for going east, and now seemed as good a time as any to finish this column but then my cousin e-mailed me about plans for my aunt's 80th birthday party. And while I was responding to that, my niece sent me photos of her new dog celebrating his first birthday.

I had just finished downloading them when my other cousin e-mailed to tell me she'd just gotten her dog's first report card from doggy day care and was proud to announce that the teachers said he used his time well. Which is good for the dog because, as my cousin so wisely pointed out, she wouldn't know what to do with an inefficient dog.

Anyhow, I'll simply have to finish this column later because I want to get back to my sister about her new red tractor and she only has e-mail at work and there's a four-hour time difference to take into account.

E-mail. How did we ever fill our workday without it?

Elise Patkotak, an Anchorage free-lance writer and author of *Parallel Logic*, a humor book, has been in the business of writing for the Anchorage Times and owns Precious Cargo Ltd., a writing/graphics company.

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WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

Senior editor.

PREGNANT MINORS NEED LEGAL . . .

But, for instance, Monday's 39-page decision by Supreme Court Justice Sam Thum striking down as unconstitutional a state statute requiring a pregnant mother to obtain the permission of a parent or judge before having an abortion. The judge said the the Parental Consent Act fails to further compelling state interests "using the least restrictive means."

After an evidentiary hearing, he recognized that the state had compelling interests in many areas, but found the law in question did not pass constitutional muster.

IF TAN'S decision stands, it will be another blow against the sanctity of the family and what passes for common sense nowadays. A pregnant 14-year-old would be able to get an abortion without telling a parent or a judge who could look out for her best interests. In fact, the only people she likely would discuss it with would be those who are in the abortion business.

Kids, regrettably, have little to say about most aspects of their lives because we, as parents and adults, are responsible for guiding and educating them to maturity so they can make their own decisions. Yet, a 12-year-old would be allowed to march into a clinic and have an abortion on her own if Tan's ruling stands. Go figure.

It is like this case again is headed to the idle Supreme Court. Good. The current law certainly provides safeguards for children while at the same time allowing abortions without parental consent if it comes to that. But giving a child carte blanche to have an abortion on demand demeans us all. That's ruling reduces our society and our relationship to our children by another notch.

By TOM BRENNAN

My dog Jack has his own cookie jar and has learned that if he points at it, I will give him one. Of course, when I give him one he snaps back on point as if to say "Another one and keep them coming."

I've asked him whether his ancestors had servants who waited on them the way I do him, but he doesn't know. His mother never mentioned it and neither did the breeder who handed him to me six years ago at Ted Stevens International Airport.

Brennar

ing one doesn't like cold water or sitting in damp duck blinds, so he often stays at home while I go out in the rain. He prefers ducks that sit on small potatoes rather than the ones that fly over the big ponds. That way he can run up to the birds, stick his nose in their faces and freeze on point.

The ducks don't wait to see what the rude pointing is all about, but at least he lets me know they are there. That way I can give them an appropriate shotgun salute as they fly off to other places, usually shaken but unharmed.

I've found that if I make duck wait in a blind and sit on a wet log until a duck succumbs to my calling and flies into the decoys, he will sneak back and forth

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THE JUST WENT UP HERE & GOT ANOTHER COME- I TOLD HIM THE GIGS HAD BEEN TAKEN CARE OF. RIGHT AFTER HE WAS BEING INTERVIEWED FOR A DRUG CHARGE AND RAVENED FOR A REVENGE. I'VE BEEN CALLED IN FOR A CONFERANCE AT CALIFORNIA - AND NOW HE THINKS HE'S HALLUCINATING.

PHIL WITTE

pressed against the glass in our dining room door

When the dog and I came downstairs for our breakfast and constitutional, Jack ran to the door and pressed his nose against the handle of the glass, less than an inch from the cat's face. The cat looked up the staircase and realized the thing was not a dog, but he was weighed in on so many times that he expected him to bark and yowle the

We encountered the bear while walking on a gravel road on the Kanan Plateau. The brownie became intensely interested in me and probably wondered why my dog was pointing at him. I suspect pointing is considered impolite even among bears. The dog froze and I walked slowly away from him. I was alone on my morning walk.

When I called him, he burned away and came running back to me, the bear then wandered off while Jack and I scouted back to camp. A friend pointed out that a more long-jawed pet would have run barking after the bear and come running to me only when the barking was tucked off and following close behind him.

Then the other day I got home and found on the table a booklet about the classes being offered through the Anchorage Community Schools program. Now I'm pretty sure the dog can't read, but somebody had drawn a circle around a course on how to give your dog a massage. My wife dances doing it, which narrows the suspects down to him.

Evolution has not made my dog a genius, but he's already smarter than some of the guys I went to high school with.

Tom Brennan is an editor of The Architectural Record.

BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

NATIONWIDE GAS PRICES JUST KEEP ...

Going up

WITH THE price of heating Lower 48 homes now about double what it was just a few years ago, you would think Congress would consider the Alaska gas pipeline an urgent matter.

If it does, the urgency is not obvious from here. Far too many members seem bent on killing provisions in the energy bill that would make the line possible. The line would provide a secure and continuing source of natural gas, which could hold retail prices relatively steady.

Alaska's delegation is trying to hold the feet of pipeline food-draggers to the fire, but whether they will be successful is not yet clear.

The Energy Department estimates that if this winter's weather is severe, the average residential user will pay nearly \$1,000 to heat a home in the coming cold season, up from about \$800 last year.

Just a few years ago, the price of natural gas was around \$2.50 per 1,000 cubic feet, compared to the predicted \$4.50 to \$5 per mcf this year. The lower price was painful for producers while the higher price is in their favor. Consumers, of course, liked the lower prices and will be complaining mightily about the higher ones.

Whether their congressional representatives understand it or not, building the pipeline would be beneficial to all Americans.

Rumsfeld's big ax

A NOTE TO ALL the anti-fence folks out along the edge of Fort Richardson

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld let it be known this week that he plans to close more than 100 military bases — including as many as one-third of all the Army bases in the U.S. The new base closure ax will fall beginning in 2005. The targets, says one senior defense official, will be bases that have "one particular purpose, one particular unit, one particular mission that could be accomplished somewhere else."

As we have suggested here on more than one occasion, any move that would seem to impair the military's opportunities to train at Fort Richardson could put the Alaska base in peril. The Not In My Backyard crowd in Anchorage that is raising a ruckus over the Army's plan to fence in its training grounds is not doing the rest of Anchorage a favor.

Don't underestimate the power of Rumsfeld. Fort Richardson narrowly escaped inclusion on the last Base Closure and Realignment List in 1995.

The speculative question remains: Do you want the Army and a fence, or no fence and no Army?

It may not be that cut and dried, of course. But should we be willing to gamble?

Alaska recall effort is unfounded

JUNEAU EMPIRE

Recall fever seems to be spreading in the wake of California's historic recall of Gov. Gray Davis. Now it appears that it is the ambition of a dozen people here in Alaska to mimic what happened in California by suggesting the recall of Alaska's governor. To most people across the land, California's recall was a gut-wrenchingly painful process to witness.

Soren Wuerth, an Anchorage activist with a long involvement in the initiative process, is on a mission to discredit Gov. Frank Murkowski by raising the far-fetched possibility of a recall.

State law includes a tough but fair set of tests necessary to justify a recall. The criteria necessary to justify a recall of officials in Alaska are lack of fitness, incompetence, neglect of duties or corruption.

Wuerth listed Murkowski's elimination of Longevity Bonus payments to seniors and his decision to appoint his daughter Lisa Murkowski to his vacant U.S. Senate seat last year as two reasons to recall the governor.

Wuerth was quoted as saying, "Neglect of duties is sort of what we're after here."

Wuerth has chosen a couple of hot-button issues to capture the media's attention, but neither reason cited passes muster as "neglect of duties" or even sort of neglect on the governor's part. The governor's appointment of his daughter may have raised some eyebrows, but he didn't break any laws or rules in doing so, and Lisa Murkowski arguably was the person best qualified to assume his vacant Senate seat.

Similarly, the governor's plan to phase out the Longevity Bonus is without question a very sensitive and controversial action to consider, however, the effort is a legitimate expression of financial responsibility to the state, and the winding history of the bonus is illustrative of how far a well-intentioned law can stray from its original intent.

The Longevity Bonus Program was originally intended to reward the pioneers over the age of 65 who had been in Alaska for 30 or more years for enduring the hardship of settling Alaska, and



serve as an enticement to remain in Alaska after retirement.

On a slow news day, a political activist succeeded in capturing headlines, but it is obvious from Wuerth's "leaked" comments to the press that his recall strategy has no real legal foundation and amounts to little more than an effort to besmear the Murkowski administration. Alaska politics as usual.

Many valuable lessons can be taken from the California recall experience, but Alaskans should consider a few important distinctions before they put the state's future in jeopardy by considering such a drastic step.

The mostly democratic architects of Alaska's constitution left it to the Legislature to adopt far more stringent criteria for the recall of an elected official than California's law requires. Both states have an initiative process, which at its best serves as an important check in the system of checks and balances necessary for good government.

At its worst, the initiative process can paralyze government and, as was the case in California, can lead to widespread systemic chaos. In some measure, grassroots initiatives prevent elected officials from executing the duties they were elected to uphold.

If Gov. Davis had possessed the will and courage to do what was right to

head off California's catastrophic financial crisis instead of what was politically popular, he would have remained governor. He was ultimately deemed to be neglectful, irresponsible and unpatriotic.

By contrast, Gov. Murkowski ran, on, and was elected by a wide margin based on the prescribed course he had set in his campaign to keep Alaska out of the porthouse and avoid mindlessly saddling working Alaskans and businesses with the cost of operating a government that had grown too large for the state's dwindling oil money to support.

The governor of Alaska has the will and courage to do what he promised even though he is fully aware that along with the resolve to reduce the size of government and balance the collective family checking account would come painful and politically polarized resistance.

The Alaskans entrusted to lead their state into the future would be well served to take a hard look at what led California to the brink of disaster and avoid making the same tragic, political, by motivated choices.

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A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

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VAN ETTEN GETS OFF EASY ON . . .

Ethics lapses

THERE IS BAD news and good news if you are considering a run for municipal office in Anchorage.

The bad news is you would have to work with an Assembly majority that regularly embarrasses itself. The good news is that, if your politics wander off to the left of center, you can break the law with virtual impunity.

Take Assemblyman Doug Van Ethen, for instance. He now is the poster boy for ignoring Alaska state election laws. The Alaska Public Offices Commission found he failed to complete conflict-of-interest statements over a three-year period and did not file complete campaign financial disclosure forms for his 2000 and 2001 Assembly election campaigns. The state agency fined him \$11,000, even though the violations rated more than \$122,000 in levies.

Then, there was a complaint to the city Board of Ethics about the violations. The usual suspects, the left and its lap dogs in the media, immediately harumphed that Van Ethen had been punished enough, that the advisory board to the Assembly should recommend he get a break.

The ethics panel met recently and its chairman, Jim Maley, says it found Van Ethen, indeed, ran afoul of the city ethics codes, "but found no evidence that he deliberately misled anyone. The panel also acknowledged, Maley says, that Van Ethen committed 'comprehensive' APOC fouls.

THE RESULT? The board recommended the Assembly take no additional action. Will the Assembly rear up and at least slap Van Ethen's hands? It's about as likely as Gray Davis ever holding elective office again in California. After all, the Assembly majority takes care of its own.

What puzzles us is that Van Ethen broke the law over a period of years, and yet the ethics panel saw no evidence he tried to mislead anyone. In two election campaigns, he failed to tell voters exactly who was giving him money and how much. He did not fill out completely his conflict-of-interest forms. And there was no intent to deceive?

Van Ethen can read. How can it be that he failed to fill out all those forms without intending to mislead anyone? It begs the imagination.

Can you picture the hubbub if Van Ethen's politics were right of center? The outrage. The wailing. The pontificating. The demands for his resignation. A furious Assembly voting to toss the rascal out. But have you heard a peep?

What the Assembly needs to do is sit down and decide which laws can be broken by which members with absolute impunity, kind of a get-out-of-jail-free card. It will save time and effort in the future. We already know election laws and the ethics code do not mean much.

What voters need to do at the first possible moment is clean house.

Duped by Sullivan Arena managers?

By TOM ANDERSON

The losses at the Sullivan Arena are no surprise to anyone knowledgeable about Sullivan Arena operations.

In 2001, when SMG filed its bid for management of the Sullivan Arena, the company projected a net profit of \$674,767 for calendar year 2002. Now it reports a loss of \$300,000, almost a million-dollar difference.

Thus from a company that represents itself as one of the best arena management companies in the business. The question for the Municipality of Anchorage and the people it represents is: How could this happen? The answer is simple: the projected \$674,767 profit which helped SMG get the bid, somewhere never materialized.

SMG won the contract in competition against local bidders that well understood the capacity of Sullivan Arena and the other municipal buildings involved to generate profits. And the local bidders had long experience in seeking out and encouraging activities that would maximize profits for the building owners, the people of Anchorage.

George Wierzb's administration, led by Parks and Recreation Manager Jim Reese, awarded the management contract for Sullivan Arena to SMG on the basis of its hand-picked evaluation committee due to naive and high-horsepower SMG salesmanship.

SMG's primary competition was a company I formed with the former staff of the Sullivan Arena who had operated the arena profitably from 1986, thru 1989. During those years, the only losing year was the time when the arena was shut down to replace the ice floor.

Our bid would have cost the city less and guaranteed a successful management approach. Our team was composed of seasoned professionals and we were partnered with Doyon Universal Services, a financial powerhouse with proven Alaska credentials.

Our approach was to immerse ourselves in the community, to develop local events, to joint venture and make deals to keep the arena busy. Our goal was to never have a dark weekend. The result was a profitable building and a well-used public facility.



Most of the existing trade shows were joint ventures between the Sullivan and the show promoters, an approach that got the trade shows started. We initiated the Aces Hockey Team to compete with the Fairbanks Gold Kings. In short, we were proactive in arena management.

Contrast that to SMG's performance. As best I can determine, they are not involved in the Anchorage community. I personally offered to introduce the current arena manager to Kofsky and he declined. In his bid, after acquiring Ogden Facility Management of Alaska, SMG claimed the following: "The company believes in active community involvement." But though they may be paying dues to some organizations, they are virtually inactive and invisible to the community they supposedly serve.

SMG has not been interested in weekend-filling events. It would rather see the arena dark. It has not brought in concerts even though in its bid the company claimed to have strong affiliations with the Lower 48 concert promoters.

For many years, the Sullivan Arena hosted eight to 12 concerts per year. Does anyone really think 911 was the reason concerts have stopped coming to the Sullivan Arena? The best example of the problem occurred in February 2003, the 20th anniversary of the Sullivan Arena.

Understandably, this isn't the first time a large lower 48 company has won a contract here with salesmanship and failed to deliver on promises.

Tom Anderson is former general manager of Ogden Facility Management of Alaska, Inc.

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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

Tuesday, October 14, 2003 B-5

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES FROM ...

Cash program

THE SAGA of the Pilgrim family is the most dramatic evidence yet that Alaska's Permanent Fund dividend program is having unintended consequences.

The Pilgrims made the news recently in their ongoing battle with the National Park Service, which is upset about what it views as damage and rule violations by the family in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park.

The dividends come into the picture because the 17-member family, a couple with 15 children, moved to Alaska in 1998 and is using the state's free-money program to buy a 420-acre mine and homestead property inside the park.

Papa Pilgrim, father of the family, took possession of the property after handing its owner \$30,000 in \$100 bills from cashing in the family's state dividend checks, the Anchorage Daily News reported recently.

The Pilgrims have pledged to pay the balance of the \$450,000 asking price for the property with future state checks.

IN SHORT, the dividend program eased the huge family's move to Alaska and the state is buying it a 420-acre wilderness estate inside one of the nation's most rugged and beautiful parks.

The Park Service is preventing the family from moving heavy materials and supplies to its homestead with a bulldozer, but a land rights group called the Land Rights Network organized an airlift last weekend to help the Pilgrims prepare for winter.

The land group conducted a campaign to bring in donations of cash, supplies, equipment, food staples, clothing, dog food, hay for horses, chainsaws and first aid supplies. Those were flown to the Pilgrim property in last weekend's airlift.

We wish the Pilgrims well in their endeavors, especially in their dealings with the National Park Service, and we applaud the neighborly approach taken by the Land Rights Network. But we wonder if it is not perhaps time that the people of Alaska ask themselves what is wrong with this picture.

The dividend program supposedly is a way to provide Alaska residents with a cash payout from their state's oil development.

Is that what's happening here?

The dividend program supposedly is a way to provide Alaska residents with a cash payout from their state's oil development. Is that what's happening here?

Hussein weapons justified invasion

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

Rolf Ekeus, living proof that not all Swedish arms inspectors are fools, may have been right.

Ekeus headed the U.N. inspection team that from 1991 to 1997 uncovered not just tons of chemical and biological weapons in Iraq but a massive secret nuclear weapons program as well.

Thus after the other Swede, Hans Blix, then director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, gave Saddam Hussein a perfectly clean bill of health on being non-nuclear. Indeed, Iraq had a seat on the IAEA board of governors.

Ekeus theorizes that Hussein decided years ago that it was unwise to store mustard gas and other unstable and corrosive poisons in barrels, and also difficult to conceal them. Therefore, rather than store large stocks of weapons of mass destruction, he would adapt the program to retain an infrastructure (factories, equipment, trained scientists, detailed plans) that could "break out" and ramp up production when needed.

The model is Japanese "just in time" manufacturing where you save on inventory by making and delivering stuff in moderate response to orders. Hussein's business was done, not theirs.

The interim report of chief U.S. weapons inspector David Kay seems to support the Ekeus hypothesis. He found intact factories, but as yet no finished products. As yet, no finished products. As yet, no finished products.

At the point where we can say definitively either that such weapons stocks do not exist or that they existed before the war and our only task is to find where they have gone, Kay finished last week.

Thus is fact, not fiction. How do we know? Because Hussein's practices were to store his chemical weapons unmarked amid his conventional munitions, and we have just begun to understand the staggering scale of Hussein's stocks of conventional munitions.

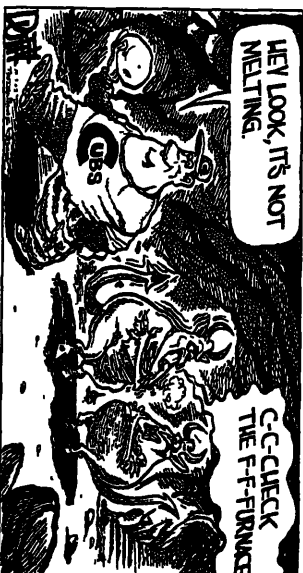
Hussein left behind 130 known ammunition caches, many of which are more than twice the size of Manhattan. Imagine loading through "500,000 tons of artillery shells, rockets, aviation bombs and other ordnance" — rows and rows stretched over an area the size of even one Manhattan — looking for barrels of unmarked chemical weapons.

And there are 130 of these depots. Kay's team has so far inspected only 10. The question of whether Hussein actually retained finished products is still open. But the question of whether he was still in the WMD business is no longer open. "We have discovered dozens of WMD-related program activities," Kay testified, "and significant amounts of equipment that Iraq concealed from the United Nations during the inspections that began in late 2002" — concealed, that is, from the hapless Hans Blix.

Kay's list is chilling. It includes a secret network of labs and safe houses within the Muthanna, the Iraqi foreign intelligence service, bioparameters kept in scientific forms, including a vial of the botulinum toxin, and my favorite, "new research on BW (biological weapons) applicable agents, Brucella and Congo Crimean Hemorrhagic Fever," and continuing work on ricin and all-taxis — all not declared to the U.N.

I have been to medical school, and I have never heard of Congo Crimean Hemorrhagic Fever. I don't know one doctor in 100 who has it. It is a rare disease, and you can be sure that Hussein was not seeking a cure.

He was not having the Nobel in physiology (Vassar Award) already won the peace prize. He was looking for a way to turn these agents into killers. The fact that he was not stockpiling is irrelevant to the question of why some prevent intelligence was wrong about Iraq's WMD program. But it is not relevant to the



question of whether a war to prevent his development of WMD was justified.

The fact that Hussein may have decided to go from building up stocks to maintaining clandestine production facilities (may have remember, Kay still has 120 depots to go through) does not mean that he got out of the WMD business. Otherwise, by that logic, one would have to say that until the very moment at which the plutonium from its 8,000 processed fuel rods is welded to waiting nuclear devices, North Korea does not have a nuclear program.

Hussein was simply making his WMD program more efficient and comparable to the United Nations (I do not, but many administration critics have a weakness for legal niceties). Resolution 1441, unanimously passed by the Security Council, ordered Hussein to make a full accounting of his WMD program and to cooperate with inspectors, and warned that there would be no more tolerance for concealment or destruction.

Kay's finding of dozens of WMD-related program activities concealed from UN inspectors constitutes an irretrievable material breach of 1441 — and an open-and-shut justification for the U.S. decision to disarm Saddam Hussein by force.

Charles Krauthammer writes a weekly, nationally syndicated column for the Washington Post. His column is distributed by the Washington Post Group. © Copyright 2003 The Washington Post Co.

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A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

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LNG GROUP TRIES TO COERCE ...

Oil companies

ANCHORAGE LAWYER Bill Walker and a newly formed pressure group are trying to coerce the North Slope energy companies into supporting an all-Alaska liquid natural gas pipeline to Valdez.

Walker and his group, which he calls "Backbone II," want Alaska to force the major companies to provide gas for an LNG pipeline with questionable economics, or face a punitive tax on reserves in the ground.

Backbone II began its campaign with full-page newspaper ads asking the governor, legislators and all Alaskans to force producers to sign a pact committing a portion of potential North Slope gas output (1 billion cubic feet to 2 billion cubic feet daily out of a total 8 billion to 9 billion daily) to the line.

The group wants a reserves tax to be imposed if the producers don't provide gas for an LNG line and if any of them contract to bring gas into the U.S. market from anywhere other than Alaska. The tax would cost the companies \$500 million to \$1 billion per year, though state revenues from an Alaska Highway pipeline—if built—could apply against it.

The ads say the producers would not be required to build the LNG pipeline. But, they added, "This agreement must be made in time to allow Alaska's gas to be contracted to the newly permitted SEMPRA ENERGY LNG receiving terminal on the West Coast."

ALASKA is one of several gas sources Semptra is considering for its planned terminal in Baja California, though competing sources may have a price advantage due to their location.

Walker claims that financing the pipeline and associated facilities would not require pledging the Permanent Fund's assets. He says they would be financed by outside investors buying bonds to be repaid through project earnings.

The plan ignores a \$100 million industry study showing that such an LNG project would be a major money-loser for its investors. If the industry figures are correct—and Alaska would ignore them at considerable risk—somehow bonds would have to be sold to cover \$14 billion in total costs. That would cover \$2 billion for a processing plant, \$4 billion for the pipeline itself, \$2 billion for an Alaska terminal, \$4 billion for LNG tankers and \$2 billion in other costs.

One major concern in the hard-ball approach is that adversarial tactics could deter industry from making billions in future investments still in the planning stage. A changing political climate could be seen as a signal that Alaska is a risky place to invest.

Walker says the friends involved are primarily members of a group formed several years ago to oppose BP's acquisition of ARCO's Alaska assets. It includes various corporate executives and individuals, including several well-known Alaskans, among them former Gov. Walker J. Hickel.

The approach being taken is unfortunate. Using a reserves tax as an economic bully club could jeopardize many things, perhaps including any gas pipeline whatever.

High price for trashing rule of law

By WALTER E. WILLIAMS

For most of our history, we followed the British system of common law, including laws dealing with tort liability. This heritage has been attacked by courts and plaintiff attorneys so much that it is barely recognizable.

One such doctrine of tort liability is the assumption-of-risk doctrine. Simply put, the assumption-of-risk doctrine holds that if the user of a product or service is aware of the danger, and nevertheless proceeds to make use of the product or service and is injured by it, he is barred from recovery. In other words, assumption-of-risk doctrine holds that people bear some accountability for the results of their actions.

As a result of the successful lawsuits against tobacco companies, assumption-of-risk doctrine is a skeleton of its past. For decades, under our traditional tort regime, if a plaintiff knows the risks of smoking, yet still smokes and contracts a tobacco-related illness, he had no claim against the tobacco manufacturer. That all changed. The courts have all but said that it's the tobacco company, not the smoker, who's responsible for the smoker's plight.



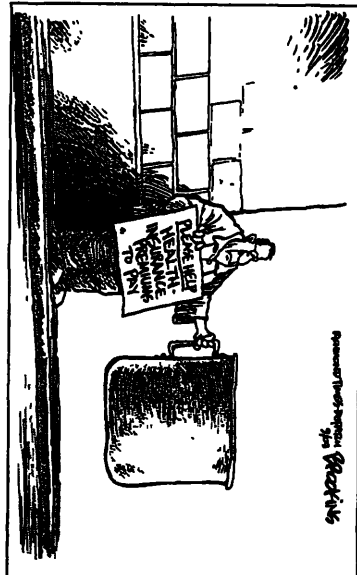
Americans are quite pleased with the success of the political and legal attack against an unpopular industry. They're pleased by smoking regulations and the near compulsory cigarette taxes levied in the name of protecting children and recouping health-care expenses.

In some jurisdictions, taxes have made a pack of cigarettes sell for \$7, and predictably a flourishing black market, along with its associated violent crime, has emerged. The question I ask is: Will Americans be just as happy if the cigarette attack is carried to other products?

Sam Katzman, attorney for the Washington, D.C.-based Competitive Enterprises Institute, says, "The tobacco litigation campaign is most significant."

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impact may well be not its effect on the tobacco industry or on smokers, but its creation of a template for attacking other industries.

The tobacco litigation made the case for diminished personal responsibility and the "social costing" of products. In other words, all a lawyer has to successfully argue is that a product such as tobacco, hamburgers, casinos, cars, etc., are addictive. That means individual responsibility for his lifestyle choices is out the window. Lawyers then have "expert" witnesses to argue that the product imposes costs on society.

Attorneys general and politicians come out of the woodwork calling for taxes to recover those costs. The song on the cake is to somehow argue that America's precious children are harmed by the product. Success is nearly a foregone conclusion.

The nation's tyrants have already begun using the tobacco litigation template against the food and beverage industries. In addition to obesity lawsuits against McDonald's, Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Nabisco and others, they're calling for the labeling of fat content.

Conwardly executives are complying by providing additional nutritional information and even downsizing some of their products. If they think oppression will deter the tyrants, who know

what's best for Americans, they have another think coming. Decades ago, the government conducted costly education campaigns and mandated labels on cigarettes warning about the dangers of smoking. That didn't deter successful lawsuits against tobacco companies and fat content labeling, deter lawsuits against the food industry.

Assumption of risk means Americans pay more, and will pay even more, for the goods and services. When we do, we risk breaking a leg—but since we have diminished responsibility, the higher liability insurance premiums paid by all lodges travelers into higher life ticket prices.

If food companies are to stay in business, they too will have to pay higher liability insurance premiums and have teams of lawyers to defend themselves. Who do you think will bear the final burden of these costs?

Nullification of responsibility for our actions has had a devastating effect on our economy, not the least of which is international competitiveness. When are we going to call for a halt?

Walter E. Williams is a professor at George Mason University in Fairfax. His column is distributed by Creators Syndicate Inc., 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045, (310) 537-7000.

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

CALIFORNIA MAKES ALASKA...

Look rich

WHILE THE talking heads and pundits try to spin for their own purposes Arnold Schwarzenegger's overwhelming victory in his race for California governor, Alaskans can take heart.

California's fiscal woes, the catalyst for Gov. Gray Davis' ouster by voters, dwarf ours. The Golden State went from boasting a \$10 billion surplus in 2000 to wading into a sea of red ink about \$8 billion deep.

Davis was tossed out largely because California voters know that when the bill comes due for his largesse, they will have to pay. And pay. And pay. They at long last have grown weary of a tax-and-spend government that hurts the economy and costs jobs in the sixth-largest economic engine in the world. Davis, in their view, squandered the state's surplus and lied last fall about the state's financial condition.

Our budget deficits in Alaska, thankfully, have been much, much smaller. It was less than \$400 million last year. It's expected to be about the same next year.

The money to sop up our red ink comes from the Constitutional Budget Reserve. It totaled about \$2.2 billion last year. This year it has already rebounded to about \$2.1 billion. With minimal withdrawals, the fund may last longer than expected. Add to that the giant Permanent Fund and our fiscal house is not in total disarray.

HOWEVER, THAT should not keep government from attempting to balance its books without making an annual withdrawal from the CBR. Alaskans expect government to live within its means. So do the state's creditors, the bonding agencies we depend on for large projects such as ports, harbors and schools. They told the state last year to close the gap, and soon.

Instead of a Gray Davis, who tried to hide California's fiscal follies from voters in an attempt to curry favor, Alaska is fortunate in many ways to have Gov. Frank Murkowski, who came into office, stepped up to the plate and started doing what needed to be done. He made some tough decisions despite carping from the usual media suspects who will not be satisfied until every working Alaskan is taxed to the eyeballs.

Arguably, cuts eventually began to do more damage than good. Murkowski, who wisely sees income taxes as nothing but a pay cut for working Alaskans, has supported a seasonal sales tax, a \$100 head tax for schools and increased development of Alaska's bountiful natural resources.

Yes, there has been pain. To be sure, there will be more. That's what comes from living beyond our means for all these years, and burying our heads in the sand about dealing out revenues. But the good news is that the state's fiscal problems finally are being addressed and, in time, will be resolved.

Californians in the coming months and years may wish they had it so good.

Abracadabra: this is a magical town

By WILLIAM J. TOBIN

THERE IS NOTHING like a rabbit from a hat, a scar that turns into a dove, a playing card that vanishes in a puff of smoke, or a lady who is sawed in half only to be restored in one piece. You probably don't see such wonders every day — but you would if you spent much time with Anchorage's magic community, a group of men, women and children who delight in baffling each other and everyone else with masterful mysteries, devilish deceptions of hand, and a bag of two filled with tricks and assorted wonders.

DON RUSSELL, who bills himself as Alaska's Wildest Magician, is one of these. He's a full-time professional magician and an ambassador of magic wherever he goes. He has performed at hundreds of birthday parties, before countless school assemblies, outdoors at company and family picnics, indoors at stage shows, and now he appears at Tony Roma's every Tuesday from 6-8 p.m.

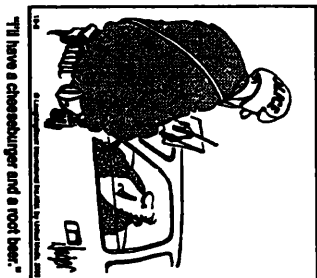


Tobin

He'll do magic anywhere, in fact, that he can unpack a deck of cards, sprinkle a little white dust, and open a red velvet purse in which things vanish and reappear.

WHEN HE ISN'T performing, Russell is busy promoting magic as a wonderful hobby for young people, teaching boys and girls simple tricks that captivate and amuse themselves and their friends. He also finds time to help organize get-togethers with his fellow magicians under the banner of the Alaska Magic Circle. And when otherwise not engaged, he puts all kinds of energy into producing one of the best annual magic shows in town, the Magic Kids Holiday Extravaganza, which this year will be staged at the Snow Goose restaurant's little theater.

THESE ARE THE post-Christmas dates. An evening performance on Friday, Dec. 26, matinee and evening shows on Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 27-28, and on Monday, Dec. 29, a late morning kids' day performance for



"I have a cheeseburger and a root beer."

child care agencies and youth groups, followed by a matinee and an evening finale. The shows will feature about 15 young Anchorage magicians ranging in age from 9 to 17. Headlining the show will be a nationally known teen-age wizard, Matthew MacArthur of Tucson, Ariz., who won the 2003 Society of American Magicians Junior Stage Contest in Las Vegas in July, wowing audiences and fellow magicians with an amazing act with live doves.

SOME OF THE expenses for the show are covered by revenue from tickets, which go on sale Thursday at \$5 for adults, \$3 for youngsters, and \$10 for families. But Russell covers a major portion of the costs out of pocket, and is looking for sponsors to help underwrite the show. Meanwhile, he helps develop the routines presented by the young magicians — and also will be on stage himself for an act or two, assisting the audience by adding a touch of professionalism to the performances.

RUSSELL HAS been a professional magician since 1989. He prefers to do what he calls "intimate stage" material — not the huge illusions of Lance Burton and David Copperfield, but numbers big enough to fill a theater yet still small enough to involve the audience. Russell has a bachelor of science degree from Southern Illinois University and a teaching certificate from the University of Montana. He came to Alaska 20 years

ago as a teacher — developing his magic as he went along, finding it a special way to communicate with troubled kids. Now with two sons of his own, Tyeague, 15, and Zane, 13, he devotes himself full-time to magic while his wife, Jan, works at Providence Alaska Medical Center as a mental health technician.

TWO OTHER highly skilled professional performers are Mike Robbins, who specializes in comedy magic that has won praise from a wide variety of audiences, and Steve Pradell, who in real life is a lawyer but whose avocation calls him to put on a top hat and white tie and tails. With a wand in his hand, Pradell, with style and class, has mystified audiences at trade shows, corporate gatherings, family parties, and on stage all around Alaska — performing since 1987 under the banner of Abracadabra Entertainment. Among his most recent performances were shows at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer.

THIS COLLECTION of local magicians is a real Alaska mix. One is known as Magic Mac, but in real life he's Hugh McClement of Peters Creek, who specializes in magic using ropes and spooze balls. Another is London Swank of Wasilla, an up-and-coming young magician now enrolled at UAA. Others include Ken Macksky, a baker by trade, who earlier this year received the Order of Merit from the International Brotherhood of Magicians, and Joey McIntire, who performs amazing close-up magic as a hobby and who by day works at the Midtown Post Office. And Anchorage magic is far from being a man's game. Two well-known women on the business and social scenes — Jean Shadach and Vera Crews — are avid magicians who have performed in many stage shows around town and often travel together to national magic conventions.

THROUGH THE ages, performers have astonished and mystified royalty and the common man. There is no royalty in Anchorage, but there are many magicians ready to delight us all. Take a card, any card.

William J. Tobin is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

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Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Saturday, October 11, 2003 B-5

STEVENS' WAY IS JUST ...

Common sense

IT IS UNCONSCIONABLE that some in the Native community who find themselves at odds with Sen. Ted Stevens would actually stoop to slander by calling Alaska's senior senator a racist.

Their racism stems from a disagreement over how federal money is spent in rural Alaska.

Tribal sovereignty advocates want the money handed directly to Alaska's more than 220 federally recognized Native tribes. Stevens, in the name of efficiency and effectiveness, wants it disbursed through a regional organization. That would ensure the tribes with the most need do not lose out to those with the best grant writers. At last year's Alaska Federation of Natives convention, Stevens even asked the Native community to come up with such a plan.

That does not interest tribal advocates, who would like to increase the power of federally recognized tribes — even through the scope of those powers is far from settled.

Stevens, of course, is absolutely right when he reminds us that there is no free lunch. Those who want to spare no effort in finding reasons to take offense — that there simply would not be enough money to go around if the sovereignty advocates had their way.

He even had the audacity to suggest the obvious, that the Native sovereignty movement that is pressing for the money is dangerous to statehood and could be bad for Alaska. More than 220 sovereign tribes in Alaska can have no other effect but to erode state power. He pointed out that with an increasing Native population will come demands for more government, more courts. Right again.

HE LOGICALLY wants to avoid spreading tribal government to every nook and cranny in Alaska. To do otherwise would be monumentally wasteful and duplicative. Of the 227 federally recognized tribes in Alaska, 65 are in villages with fewer than 100 residents, 39 of the villages have fewer than 50, 16 have no year-round population at all, six have fewer than 10, and, three have only three residents. Scores of the tribal villages have only 200 to 300 residents.

Stevens' way is just common sense. Anyone without an axe to grind would see it that way.

Folks can disagree, and in Alaska there always will be more arguments than people. There is nothing wrong with that, but what is disgusting about this latest rhetoric is not the disagreement itself, but the cheap, unfortunate rhetoric aimed at Stevens. And they want an apology?

Sen. Ted Stevens, in his 35 years of service to this state, has done nothing to warrant such a base attack. Every single Alaskan, no matter their race or creed, has been touched in one way or another by the hard work and long hours Stevens puts in for his state.

In our view, and likely in the view of most Alaskans, if there is an apology in order it should come from those who embarrass themselves by turning civil discourse into a mud fight.

The Russians could already be here

By LEW M. WILLIAMS, JR.

U.S. Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, a South Dakota Democrat, said there is no way he will abandon his opposition to drilling for oil on the coastal plain of the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge, not even "to advance the energy bill's ethanol provision."

By opposing ANWR production, Daschle transfers our nation's security from the Middle East to Russia. Some say the Iraq war is "all about oil." But Middle East oil is more important to European nations than to the United States. So are we fighting to protect European oil supplies? If so, we are getting little thanks for it.

Canada provides more oil to the United States than does the Middle East. So do Mexico and Venezuela. And U.S. dependency on Middle East oil is decreasing even though the United States is importing more than half of its daily oil needs.

After Prudhoe Bay went on line in the 1970s, Alaska produced more than 2 million barrels a day to U.S. refineries. That was about 20 percent of the daily U.S. demand. After 30 years, Prudhoe production is down so Alaska provides only about 1 million barrels a day. If ANWR were opened to oil production, it could increase oil through the trans-Alaska pipeline to more than 2 million barrels a day, offsetting the 1.5 million barrels a day the United States imports from Saudi Arabia.



Williams

ANWR production requires a footprint the size of Dulles International Airport on ANWR's coastal plain — which one New York Times reporter concedes is a desolate area out of a 19 million-acre preserve that is three times the size of the state of Maryland.

Forget the Middle East. The Russians are coming and have much to gain with Daschle's stand on ANWR development. The Wall Street Journal reports that ExxonMobil, well known in Alaska, is negotiating to develop oil resources in Eastern Russia and seeks a 25 percent interest.



Also, officials of ConocoPhillips, with an interest in Alaska gas reserves along with ExxonMobil, have held talks with the Russian gas monopoly, Gazprom, about developing a giant gas field in the Barents Sea. Gas from the \$12 billion project would be liquefied and shipped to the United States, which the Wall Street Journal says "is hungry for new supplies."

Daschle and others who say there are alternatives to Alaska's oil and gas ignore the basic fact that aside from gasoline, plastics for everything from baby pacifiers to jet aircraft come from coal, oil and gas, not from windmills or corn.

Russian oil and gas companies announced plans months ago to build a pipeline and port to send Russian crude to the United States, the Journal reports, with a goal of eventually supplying 10 percent of our nation's demand.

This could be a double whammy for Alaska. First, as part of the United States its security will depend upon a new foreign port. And second, oil and gas from Russian fields will be bought by American companies, especially when American companies are invested in them.

This means that Alaskans must enter the international economic hall game with regulations and incentives that make Alaska oil and gas competitive. The sooner the better, because the Russians might already be in the game.

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BILL J. ALLEN
 Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

Friday, October 10, 2003 **B-7**

KATMAI TRAGEDY SHOULD BE A...

Wake-up call

TIMOTHY TREADWELL, and his girlfriend were killed and eaten this week by the brown bears they loved in Katmai National Park and Preserve.

The photographer from Malibu, Calif., gave the bears names, such as Boobie, Aunt Melissa, Mr. Chocolate, Freddie, Molly and Downy. It's unclear whether he and Anne Huguenard were attacked by any of them.

We don't want to make light of the couple's tragic end, which resulted in the shooting of two of the bears Treadwell held dear, but the killings were entirely predictable and unnecessary.

Treadwell had been told many times by many people — including park rangers — that he was getting far too chummy with the dangerous creatures. He liked to ease up close to the bears and chant "I love you" in a high-pitched, singsong voice.

Treadwell was an author and filmmaker who gained national fame for his exploits among Alaska's brown bears, which he claimed were nowhere near as fierce as their reputation suggested. The Discovery Channel did a show on him, Delphine NBC did a report and he was interviewed on David Letterman's show and The Rosie O'Donnell Show. On each occasion he showed footage of himself getting up close and personal with the bears.

UNFORTUNATELY, Treadwell's naive attitude reflected and encouraged the widespread but nonsensical notion that Alaska is some kind of Disney theme park, where all creatures are friendly and no place is dangerous.

That notion has resulted in numerous deaths in the past, both of humans and wildlife, and is often the foundation for misguided public policy. It has, for instance, played an important role in the success of environmental groups in convincing Americans that the coastal plan of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is some kind of enchanted place where drilling should not be allowed.

In fact, the coastal plan consists of bleak and relatively featureless Arctic tundra with minimal scenic value. It is unlike the scenic and mountainous portion of ANWR to the south, which is often shown in video appeals to protect the coastal plan.

The plan is seasonally visited by a large caribou herd and other wild creatures that could easily be protected against harmful impact from oil exploration and production, just as they were at neighboring Prudhoe Bay.

The deaths of Timothy Treadwell and Anne Huguenard should be a wake-up call for the nation, one that would encourage a rational look at Alaska, its hazards and its resources.

But don't hold your breath.

Cost of social engineering sky-high

By WENDY McELROY

The modern two-income family is no better off than the one-income family from decades ago.

Indeed, family finances are edging ever closer to disaster. So say Elizabeth Warren and Amelia Warren Tyagi in their controversial book "The Two-Income Trap: Why Middle-Class Mothers and Fathers are Going Broke."

But they omit a major reason why families are struggling: the increased size of government and governmental spending. Basically, they argue that the cost of essentials — e.g. housing, education, insurance, medical care — have increased more quickly than wages.

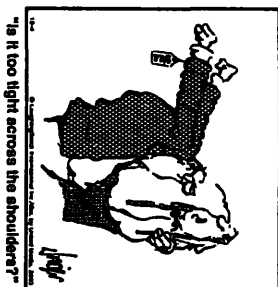
And they offer compelling evidence. The Bureau of Labor Statistics finds that families in 2000 spent 44 percent less on household appliances than families in 1973. 22 percent less on food, 21 percent less on clothing.

It is reasonable to conclude or, at least, strongly suspect that discretionary income has decreased. Other evidence supports that conclusion: over 1.6 million bankruptcies were filed last year, up 7.4 percent from the year before.

But the book goes short shrift to other impoverishing factors, such as the soaring tax rate, the proliferation of government fees and fines, as well as the staggering load of regulations under which businesses must struggle to remain profitable. The book, which draws on pre-9/11 data, does not reflect the price tag of war in Iraq. Rather, it points to the cost of social programs instituted in the name of political correctness, many of which became entrenched during the Clinton administration.

That social engineering includes the Child Abuse Industry and the Sexual Harassment Industry. Critics refer to them as "industries" because their enforcement policies have established bloated and expensive bureaucracies that stomp the public trough. The cost to taxpayer families is immense.

Consider one small example from just one bureaucracy. In 1997, the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) promoted a new adoption policy for the record number of children stranded in foster care as a result of "removal" up-



"Is it too tight across the shoulders?"

der expanding definitions of "abuse." In a press release, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services declared its goal to double by 2002 the number of children in foster care who are adopted or otherwise permanently placed.

A financial incentive was offered. The ASFA (Sec. 201) states that "\$4,000 to \$6,000" will be given for each child adopted beyond the state's "base number." It also provides "technical assistance" to help states raise those numbers. Thus the ASFA created its own child-abuse industry with an incentive to remove children from their families.

Those whose salaries and prestige derive from a bureaucracy have a built-in incentive to continue that bureaucracy. The agency may be incompetent or inflict damage but its tendency will be to continue and grow. The direct tax support rendered to social engineering is only the most visible price tag. The hidden costs are as significant. Consider the hidden costs imposed on the workplace and so, on the family, by the Sexual Harassment Industry (SHI).

They include red tape and lawsuits that make business less profitable — less likely to hire and more likely to raise prices, marginal businesses that collapse from the strain of fulfilling government requirements, less productive employees who are hired or promoted because of gender bias thus lowering the general productivity of society.

The iconoclastic feminist, Daphne Patai chronicled the hidden cost of SHI to women in her book "Heterophobia: Sexual Harassment and the Future of Feminism."

Agan, just one small example the school at which she teaches, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, paid \$1,250 to \$1,800 per day per teacher for a course on sexual harassment prevention. The university paid an additional \$10,000 for expenses such as travel, hotels and meals.

The course was merely one aspect of a broader SH program at merely one university. Families bore the brunt not only in taxes but also in increased tuition.

There is a palpable upsurge of economic fear among the middle class. Some people blame the dark-ridden barrier for its own financial woes. A new term has entered the North American dialogue. Affluenza is defined primarily as "the bloated, sluggish and unfulfilled feeling that results from efforts to keep up with the Joneses."

But most people I know are not competing with their neighbors. They are scrambling to meet a mortgage, provide for their children's education, juggle two jobs, and care for an elderly parent.

Statistics back up this anecdotal observation. According to the recent survey "Retail Ruins Women's Changing Attitudes Toward Shopping," 60 percent of women have radically altered how they shop over the last two years. Researchers at St. Louis University and Louisiana State University canvassed 753 women and found 30 percent now view shopping as a chore rather than a pleasure. 33 percent demand at least half-off before they will seek out a specific store, and 18 percent say that their more conservative approach is due to economic fear.

It is wrong to blame families for their own victimization. It is time to eliminate social engineering from the stack of "overdue bills" that families must pay. Even if families could effect the bureaucratic agencies that arose during the drunken spending spree of decades, today's children cannot.

Wendy McElroy is the editor of *frontiers.com* and a research fellow for The Independent Institute in Oakland, Calif. Reprinted with permission.

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A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

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NEW HYDRANT AGREEMENT COULD PROTECT ...

Public safety

AN OLD AGREEMENT between the Anchorage Fire Department and the Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility may hold the key to heading off draconian budget cuts that could seriously affect public safety.

Under the pact, hammered out in the late '70s or early '80s to provide, some say, an ailing AWWU with a source of income, the utility maintains fire hydrants and the area around them. The fire department picks up the tab — this year to the tune of \$2.5 million. The utility has built that amount into its rate structure.

The fire department, funded only by property taxes, asked for \$54 million for next year to continue operating at its current levels. That includes the increased costs of operating two new fire stations, \$2 million to the police and firefighter retirement and medical fund and about \$300,000 in new debt service.

The administration, up to its eyeballs in red ink and facing a budget deficit of about \$33 million, wants to reduce the request to something like \$47.9 million.

What would that mean to the department? Twenty-two layoffs. Twenty-seven additional positions scrapped. Twenty-two firefighters still on duty being reassigned to the two new fire stations at Tudor and Baxtor roads and in Southport in South Anchorage.

THE PUBLIC, make no mistake, will feel those cuts. Truck 11 in Eagle River will be out of service. Squad 1 from the downtown station, as will Truck 5 in Spenard and Rescue and Medic 4 in Midtown will be gone. There may be other changes as well.

The net result will be a loss of depth, firefighters say. While initial responses to calls may be the same, there will be little or no quick backup or additional units. At Station 10, on Rabbit Creek Road, for instance, there were 15 firefighters assigned. After the cuts, there will be eight.

If the city could pay the \$2.5 million out of the AWWU, Mayor Mark Begich says, it would head off the layoffs and put some of the equipment back in use. The problem: It is a utility regulatory issue and could take months for the Regulatory Commission of Alaska to undo the old deal.

Begich and others say they hope eventually to make fire hydrants part of an areawide service district that would tack \$1 or \$2 onto each property owners' bill, and end the fire department payment to AWWU. Failing that, Begich said, the wants to re-examine how the bill is paid.

There is no doubt that this city needs more firefighters and medics, not fewer, and Begich and the Assembly have their work cut out for them.

If they are unsuccessful in keeping firefighters and their equipment on the job, the city and those in desperate need of help will suffer. And that is unacceptable.

If that's the way they want to play

By ELISE PATKOTAK

I've written about the lack of service provided to customers by American businesses before. But every once in a while, a business will do something so egregiously that it deserves special notice. There always seems to be some big corporation that thinks it can go one better than its rival in extending its middle finger of courtesy to its customers. So what has started my ranting this year?

Well, it's based on my perception of how major businesses in this state, and probably in the rest of the country, treat customers who make the mistake of being loyal to them. And boy is that a mistake.

All the deals go to new customers. Once you become an old customer, you basically shoulder the cost of the company's enticing new customers with great deals. Deals for which you may be eligible, but at a cost not incurred by the new customer.

Here's what happened. I called one of our corporate grants to ask about some deals they had been touting in big print in your local papers.

I'd been a customer of this particular company since I moved to Anchorage. I got all my services from them — TV, Internet, phone, fax — Patkotak



They were quite eager to have my participation in the new offer till we reached the point where I was told I'd have to discontinue my current equipment, bring it to them, pick up new equipment, take it home, hook it up and program it myself. You have to idea how enlightening that sounds to a person who once wiped out her entire hard drive running a spring-cleaning program.

I expressed my discomfort and asked for the free installation advertised in the paper. That's when I found out that the free installation was only for new customers. Old customers, those of us they'd already hooked, would have to



pay if we wanted an actual service person to cross our thresholds. "How much would that service visit cost?" "Well, they said cheerfully, '\$20.' "So," I responded, "under the mistake on belief that they would want to keep the business of a good and loyal customer, for \$20 you will come and hook everything up and program the remote?"

"No," they said happily. "That's only for one box. You have two boxes and it'll cost you \$40." "Let me see if I have this straight," I said incredulously. "Your serviceman will come to my house and hook me up downstairs and then you will charge me another \$20 for him to walk upstairs and do the same thing? Both of which operations you are telling me shouldn't take more than 10 minutes each if you know what you're doing — and I assume you servicemen does."

"But, they said, I am a faithful and loyal customer who fills your coffers every month to the tune of well over \$200 when all the services I get from you are added up. Doesn't that count for anything? Don't you feel at all obligated to not screw me so blatantly and at least, pretend to treat me as keeping me as a valued customer?"

The last sound that customer service representative heard was the click of my phone as I hung up right before calling that other company to see how much they wanted me as a customer.

Do I think this other company will treat me any better once I become their customer? Not really. But it will amuse me to jump back and forth every 90 days or so just to annoy them all. And, I'll get free installation every time I do.

Elise Patkotak, an Anchorage free-lance writer and author of *Parallel Logic*, a humorous look back at her 28 years in Barrow, lives in Anchorage and owns Precious Cargo Ltd., a writing/graphics company.

The Anchorage Times

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

SOMETHING IS ATTRACTING . . .

Idiotic drivers

ONE OF OUR READERS frequently takes us to task, chiding that we are much too soft when it comes to the issue of the Permanent Fund dividend. Our stance is that we hope it can be preserved, but the fund was set up to pay for government when oil revenues decline.

In her view, and we cannot be as colorful here as she is in her missives to us, the dividend is nothing more than a magnet for undesirable from parts south and, in her view, their hordes of nasty, needy little kids. We are aiding and abetting the ruination of Alaska, she says, because we do not demand the dividend be ended — and right now.

Everybody is entitled to his or her opinion, and we find ourselves chuckling at the woman's letters, trying to figure a way around her very pithy, but straight to the point, language and then going on about our business.

After the last week or so, however, we find ourselves beginning to see things her way.

Several traffic lights were without power the other day in Midtown. As we all know, when that happens the intersection turns into a four-way stop. No big deal, even with the construction and increased traffic. It has not been all that big of a problem in the past. First, traffic in one direction would go, then the other. Patience and courtesy more often than not saved the day.

But something has changed.

HERDS OF DRIVERS practicing vehicular anarchy ignored the four-way stop rule the other day and charged into the blacked-out intersections, snatching traffic. Those with the biggest, most rusted-out vehicles were kings in the game of multidirectional chicken in those intersections. Drivers who apparently did not care whether they killed themselves or anybody else also had an advantage.

The cops (and where are they when you need them?) could have racked up a fortune in tickets.

All of that is bad enough, but lately, even when the lights are working during rush hour, many of the city's intersections are snarled because motorists allow themselves to be trapped in the intersection when the light for them is red. They do not stop short on yellow lights to allow cross traffic to pass. Oh, no. They wait in the intersection, blocking traffic from the side. That is gridlock, or idiosyncrasy, at its finest.

The Anchorage Police Department is reevaluating its Traffic Division, and not a minute too soon from the looks of things. It should be a gold mine for the city's treasury.

Which brings us back to our letter-writer's observations that this state is going to heck (she would have been more colorful, much more colorful) in a handbasket because the dividend is attracting the sort of people Alaska can do without.

That may or may not be true, but there must be a reason why we are drawing some of the most discourteous, brain-dead drivers on the planet.

Let's put some parks into tax base

By PAUL PALMER

Only 6 percent of the land in the Municipality of Anchorage is taxable. Does that figure surprise you?

The municipality contains 1,955 square miles, or about 1.25 million acres of land. Eighty-two percent of that land is classified as parks and open space, leaving just 18 percent — 223,000 acres — as theoretically available for commercial, residential or public facility use.

Chugach State Park covers 40 percent of the municipality, 773 square miles, another 42 percent is in other parks and open space, another 6 percent is military, 3 percent is mudflats and tidal water, and only 9 percent is developable.

Not all of the land classified as developable can generate taxes. The non-taxable acreage includes land used for wetlands, churches, non-profit organizations, Native lands, roads, schools, government land and buildings, universities, public institutions and the Alaska Railroad.

Removing all those lands from the tax rolls leaves just 5 percent of the municipality's land base to serve as its tax base.

Good vacant land available to develop becomes more difficult to obtain as demand increases and availability decreases. The lack of tax-generating property — and the need to expand the economic base of the community — places an immense burden on those upon whom the tax burden falls. In 2003, the owners of taxable land were tapped for \$169.4 million in taxes.

Only about 78 percent of the "developable" land in the Anchorage Bowl is actually taxable. The balance, over 11,000 acres, is in parks or open spaces, not including Chugach State Park or Chugach National Forest.

The most important land planning issue for Anchorage is how to grow, especially for homes. Almost 80 percent of the Anchorage Bowl's 64,400 acres is already developed.

About 6,200 acres — less than one-tenth of the bowl — is vacant and suitable for development. Another 5,000



"I hear you're looking for an aggressive salesman."

acres are marginal for development and 3,150 acres are unsuitable due to steep slopes, soils, wetlands or natural hazards.

Of this vacant land, 8,525 acres are either suitable or marginal for development and zoned for residential use. About two-thirds of this acreage is on the Hillside, and more than half is zoned for single-family homes on acre-plus lots.

Anchorage's population is forecast to reach 385,700 by 2020, an increase of 107,000. About 75 percent of this population increase (80,000 people) is projected to live in the Anchorage Bowl, with 30,000 additional housing units needed for them. The rest would live in Eagle River, Chugach and Girdwood.

But if all vacant, residential land in the Anchorage Bowl is developed as it is now zoned, that would allow the bowl to accommodate only 57,000 more residents and 21,000 more homes. That means we can accommodate far less than the projected 2020 population growth and housing demand.

The municipality adopted a parks plan in 1965, with the goal of dedicating parkland at a rate of 25 acres per 1,000 people. The municipality currently contains

4,061 acres of parkland per 1,000 people — more than four acres per person.

People complain that taxes are too high but they also want more land to be dedicated as parks and open space. They don't understand that adding parks rapidly depletes the potential tax base.

Since May 2000, more than 750 acres have been dedicated or proposed for additional parklands. But it would make far more sense to commit money and manpower resources to improvements and maintenance to existing parks, so they are more useable for taxpayers.

How many people do you see using all of our 235 parks and why aren't more being utilized for other forms of recreation? Why should the taxpayers have to buy additional land when more ball fields are supposedly needed, though we already have 47 baseball fields, 26 softball fields and 33 soccer fields?

Anchorage cannot expand its urban area like other cities in the U.S. It has Cook Inlet on three sides and mountains and military land on the fourth. Alaskans must make efficient use of their limited land area in order to support tax requirements.

But if nearly one-fourth of the Anchorage Bowl is already classified as parks and open space (not including Chugach State Park), how can only 5 percent of the land in the municipality generate 100 percent of the taxes?

As voters, we must each decide what is important. I, too, love parks, but how much is enough and at what cost? When is our municipal government going to act responsibly to protect our tax base?

More unnecessary parks mean higher taxes. It's time to sell some of the larger, mostly unused tracts. Let's make them productive by broadening the tax base and helping close the municipality's fiscal gap.

Paul Palmer mapped Anchorage for the Greater Anchorage Area Borough in the 1970s and currently is an associate real estate broker specializing in land sales and development.

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A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Tuesday, October 7, 2003 B-5

LESSONS FOR MANAGERS IN ...

Library layoffs

THE LAYOFFS in the Anchorage library system are traumatic to those losing their jobs and to the co-workers they leave behind, but the library shakeup should send a message to managers at all levels of government — local, state and federal.

The message is that public services can and should be delivered professionally, efficiently and cost-effectively, and doing so requires keeping up with changes in public needs and in their own fields.

Managers who fail to keep their organizations configured for evolving missions and technology should understand that reality will eventually set in, especially at a time of falling government revenues and shrinking budgets.

Unfortunately, the pain of facing reality is likely to fall on valuable employees who have been made superfluous by change. Though they didn't cause the problems, they are the ones on whom the greatest burden comes to rest. But the library is a tremendous cultural resource, perhaps our city's most important, and the morale of its staff is important to its successful function.

The library layoffs eliminated 30 jobs, putting 22 people out of work and dropping eight unfilled positions. Many of those losing jobs are college-educated, higher-paid professionals. Some are taking advantage of their option to move into lower-paid positions and bump those with less seniority

WHILE THE library system is eliminating higher-level positions, it will add 10 workers for lower-pay jobs. Municipal officials said the staff reductions will be achieved without closing libraries or reducing library hours at any facility, but some programs will be affected.

Circulation of books and other library materials is on the rise, not declining. The restructuring was made possible by increasing use of the Internet and the ability of patrons to locate library materials through online services. Such innovations reduced the need for highly educated reference personnel.

The layoffs were necessary because the municipality is facing a budget shortfall of at least \$30 million. They will reduce the library's salaries and benefits spending by \$1.25 million, a significant saving.

Mayor Mark Begich may be reluctant to take credit for the layoffs because of the pain inflicted on library staff, but he deserves kudos for making a difficult decision. Other departments can expect restructuring because the Begich administration is taking a similar look at the municipality's parks and recreation operations, assessment, treasury and employee relations.

Such large-scale pain could be avoided if government managers did a continuing review of their operations, their relevance to public need and the tools and techniques available to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Pundits ignore Iraqi peace progress

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

On the reconstruction of Iraq, everybody is a genius. Every pundit, every ex-official and, of course, every Democrat knows exactly how it should have been done. Everybody would have had Iraq up and running by now and as safe as downtown Singapore.

Everybody, that is, except the Bush administration, which in its arrogance and stupidity has so botched the occupation that it is "in danger of losing the peace" — so says John Kerry, echoing Howard Dean, Ted Kennedy and many others down the Democratic food chain.

A bit of perspective, gentlemen. What we came upon in Iraq was a country that had just emerged from terror and totalitarianism — largely physically intact (as a result of an unprecedented precision military campaign) but decaying because of the neglect and abuse of the pingers who had run it for more than 30 years.

It was as if, when the Soviet Union imploded in 1991, we had somehow found ourselves in Moscow in charge of the place. The critics are complaining that we are six months into Iraq's reconstruction and it has not been reconstructed. The Russians are 12 years into theirs and they still are not close to success.

Yes, the administration has made mistakes, indeed two very large ones. But it pays to understand how and why they were made.

Error No. 1 was the appointment of Jay Garner to run the reconstruction. The reason he was chosen was his success in rescuing the Kurds after the calamity of their failed 1991 anti-Saddam Hussein uprising.

Figuring that the Iraq war would be bloody, difficult and destructive, we expected a smaller humanitarian crisis — hunger, epidemics and refugees. These were perfectly reasonable assumptions.

The problem was that none of these crises materialized. There was no lack of food, no health disaster and, amazingly, no refugees (a tribute to the Iraqi trust in America's intentions and humanity).

Garner was the right guy in the wrong place. There were other ways to do what Garner could not do then, and his error cost us a month, a crucial month.

His successor, L. Paul Bremer, has done remarkably well. Consider the task



he faces. He has had to rule on privatization, the currency, the establishment of a central bank, the structure of the oil industry. These are just the economic questions. Daily, he has made political, infrastructure, security, religious and ethnic decisions with profound effects on Iraq's future.

In the United States, any one of these decisions would take months of deliberation, hearings and arguments. Bremer has to make them within hours or days. The re-emergence of life and order in a country that sat moribund for 30 years is a society at all is testimony to his success.

His major mistake was disbanding the army. And even this judgment should be reevaluated with a bit of humanity. At the time, it seemed the right thing to do in the Middle East, a major obstacle to democracy has always been the military's military power, military autonomy, military coups. Keeping Hussein's army intact was the worst possible outcome: a failure return to power of a Baathist army. For the long-run health of the new Iraq, it made eminent sense to abolish the army and start over.

The problem is you only get to the long run if you make it through the short run. And the challenge in the short run is putting down Sunni Thug resistance. Had we retained the old army, we might have had ready-made military units suitable at least for guarding strategic targets such as oil pipelines, thus reducing coalition troops to go after the enemy.

Charles Krauthammer writes a weekly, nationally syndicated column for the Washington Post. His column is distributed by the Washington Post Writers Group. Copyright 2003 The Washington Post Co.

Learning the peace? No matter what anyone says now, that question will be answered only at the endpoint. If in a year or two we are able to leave behind a stable, friendly government, we will have succeeded. If not, we will have failed. And all the geniuses will be vindicated.

Charles Krauthammer writes a weekly, nationally syndicated column for the Washington Post. His column is distributed by the Washington Post Writers Group. Copyright 2003 The Washington Post Co.

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior editor

WHAT IF THEY HELD AN ELECTION AND...

Nobody came?

ONE OF THE brighter developments on the political scene is the prospect that Washington state will cancel its primary election, scheduled for next March 2.

Why? Simple. The idea was to poll Washington voters about their presidential preferences in the 2004 run for the White House. But in the Evergreen State, it turns out, nobody cares.

Republican leaders say the GOP nominee will be President George W. Bush. So they don't need a primary.

Democratic leaders on the national scene told party faithful in Washington that the outcome of the primary would have little effect on what happens at the nominating convention later in the year. So what good is a primary?

None, say state Democratic and Republican leaders Gov Gary Locke agrees. He wants the whole thing called off. It would be a waste of \$6 million, he said — the estimated cost of running the election.

The only official who seems to favor staging the election, anyway, is Washington's secretary of state, Sam Reed. But that's no surprise. He's charged with running elections, and the more the better when it comes to job security for him. No decision has been reached. But giving the option of an election or saving \$6 million, the outcome seems obvious.

Good catch

THE "COPS IN SCHOOLS" program proved its worth recently when it bagged a 19-year-old suspected drug dealer entering Bartlett High wearing gang colors and carrying a loaded gun and crack cocaine.

The bust occurred on one of the first few days of the first full year of the program, which uses a federal grant to post 12 police officers in Anchorage schools. Typically, two officers are assigned to each high school, but the officers also keep their eyes on activities at the middle and elementary schools. The man was kicked out of Bartlett when he showed up wearing a red hat and other red clothing, which is against the school's dress code, and was recognized as not being a student at the school.

He returned the next day and police stopped him in his white Cadillac when the car was seen driving erratically in the school parking lot.

That's when the officers found the pistol and drugs, and arrested him. The suspect was indicted on federal charges for possession of crack cocaine with the intent to distribute and with possession of a handgun at a school in a drug offense. If convicted he faces the prospect of up to 40 years in prison and fines totaling \$750,000.

The Cops in Schools program is off to a good start.

Mandates: Are they permissible?

By WALTER E. WILLIAMS

We all can agree that having money to pay our mortgage or rent on time is very important. Since some people are spendthrifts and don't manage their money well, what about a congressional mandate whereby mortgage or rent money is deducted from our paychecks each month and sent directly to our mortgage holder or landlord?

The medical profession advises that a vigorous 30-minute physical workout three or four times a week is important to the maintenance of good cardiovascular health. Not all of us heed that good advice.

Wouldn't it be a good idea for Congress to enact a law mandating that each able-bodied person perform some type of fitness exercise — such as running a brisk walk, swimming or biking — at least three times a week? In addition to making Americans healthier, it would put a big dent in the nation's health-care costs.

Were a congress-man to introduce bills calling for payroll deductions for housing expenses or mandated exercise, what would you hope Williams would be the focus of the legislative debate? Would you be astounded if the congressional debate centered on whether housing expense deductions and mandated exercise were, in fact, good ideas?



Then, if congressmen agreed that mandated exercise and payroll deductions for housing expenses were good ideas, and enacted legislation to that effect, would you be happy? If not, why not? After all, it would be the result of a democratic process by our elected representatives.

Where such a bill introduced, whether it's a good idea shouldn't enter the debate at all. Whether it's a good idea or not is irrelevant. The relevant issue is: Is it permissible, under the U.S. Constitution, for Congress to enact legislation mandating exercise and payroll deductions for housing costs? The unanimous answer to that question is a big fat no. I challenge any congressman to point us to even a hint of constitutional authority for such a mandate.

The fact of business is that Congress is authorized to do only those things enumerated by the Constitution. The unmentioned might say "Williams, you're right."

But here's where you're wrong. Article I, Section 8 of our Constitution says, "The Congress shall have the power to provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States." The general welfare clause has become the standard excuse for controlling our lives, and as such, it shows how ignorance and deception have become an important part of today's America.

James Madison is the Constitution's acknowledged "father," and here's what he had to say: "With respect to the two words 'general welfare,' I have always regarded them as qualified by the detail of powers connected with them. To take them in a literal and unlimited sense would be a metaphorical phrase of the Constitution into a character which there is a host of proofs was not contemplated by its creators."

Thomas Jefferson echoed similar sentiments, "Congress has not unlimited powers to provide for the general well-being."

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Voice of the Times

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

HARD TO FIGURE WHO'S RIGHT AND ...

What's wrong

WE HAVE BEEN taken to task by Stanley E. Sanner, the executive director of Audubon Alaska. He was steamed because in an editorial a week or so ago we said the Bernard N. Baker Sanctuary in Michigan is owned by the National Audubon Society.

That's what Congressman Richard Pombo of California reported, in offering comparisons between the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and other well known areas across the country. This particular Michigan sanctuary covers 26,800 acres, many more than the 2,000 acres of ANWR's coastal plain, where oil and gas exploration and development is envisioned.

And he said for 50 years the sanctuary had produced oil wells that enriched the treasury of the National Audubon Society.

Well, that fired up Mr. Sanner. The sanctuary, he protested, is not owned by the National Audubon Society and none of the oil money ever benefited the society.

So we looked it up. Gracious. It turns out Congressman Pombo erred. The sanctuary is owned by the Michigan Audubon Society, or so it is reported on the Web.

Presumably we are therefore to believe that the Michigan branch of the national organization has never done anything to benefit its big brother. And that none of its money ever went to help the national cause.

Another case, perhaps, of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing.

Oil lease sale

LAST WEEK'S Beaufort Sea oil and gas lease sale was an encouraging sign of continuing interest in Alaska's Arctic by corporate oil explorers.

The sale, held by the federal Minerals Management Service, netted \$8.9 million that paid for 181,000 acres of submerged lands off the Arctic Coast. The service noted that it was the largest sale in the last 10 years.

One good reason for the encouragement is that the three companies that bought the leases are active explorers and experienced in Alaska's Arctic. Those were ConocoPhillips, Armstrong Alaska and EnCana Oil and Gas, a Canadian company.

The acreage leased extends from an area offshore from Barrow and east beyond Prudhoe Bay. The most intense interest, and highest bids were on tracts near Sandpiper, an undeveloped prospect where Shell and Murphy Oil discovered oil in the mid-1980s.

The sale was not a bonanza event, but it was a welcome sign of life in Alaska's maturing oil patch.

Voice of the Times

WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

Fabulous dining at the Barking Frog

BY WILLIAM J. TOBIN

WOODINVILLE, Wash. — This is Napa Valley North, Washington state's version of California's most famous wine cellar. It's not quite as lush and (full-bodied) — to use a couple of phrases from a label on a bottle of red wine — but its amenities are plentiful, including a luxury lodge, two world-class restaurants, a cluster of fine wineries and for those who like a more humble drink, a handy-dandy brewery.

ONE OF WOODINVILLE'S biggest attractions is its location — maybe 30 minutes up I-5 and 1-405 from Seattle, 10 minutes at the most from Kirkland, the wonderful little city on Lake Washington just north of Bellevue. Easy, in other words — anytime you happen to be in Seattle for work or play, and are looking for a weekend getaway.

THE FOCAL POINT of Woodinville's emergence as a favored destination is the Willows Lodge, a 3-year-old mixture of the rustic and the modern. It's an 86-room, two-story lodge on five acres of beautifully landscaped gardens along the Sammamish River.

Tobin

There's a Northwest flair to the lodge, a wonderfully warm and hospitable staff, a big stone fireplace in the lobby, and great beds and linens. The ground-floor rooms with big jacuzzi tubs, however, are a bit odd. Dark slate floors, modern light fixtures that are confusing to operate, a bathroom sink with an artistic marble basin on top that is more of a nuisance than a blessing, and a big mirror so poorly illuminated that it challenges a woman doing her makeup.

BUT DON'T LET the minor drawbacks keep you away. You'll love the place, and its other attractions. Turning into the lodge's driveway — marked by the shell of a 1,500-year-old cedar destroyed in a long-ago forest fire — you'll see immediately on your left one of the most acclaimed restaurants in all the selections of Washington wines are suit-



land, the Herbfarm. It's a AAA Five Diamond Award winner, the only dining place in all of Washington state that holds that distinction. Reservations are required about six months in advance — but it's not for everyone. It's one of those elegant, nine-course, four-hour extravaganzas that pairs special wine selections with each serving. There's one seating a night, and the tab ranges from \$149 to \$189 a person, not including tip and tax.

It compares with Charlie Trotter's in Chicago and the French Laundry in Napa, designed for real gourmet diners who enjoy feasting at the top of the food chain. Chef Jerry Trautfeld combines an Herbfarm tradition begun by the restaurant's founders, Ron Zimmerman and his wife, Carrie Van Dyke, when they first opened in 1986 in Fall City, 30 miles east of Seattle. That restaurant was destroyed by fire in January 1997, and two years later the Zimmermans re-opened in a leasing room at Hodges Cellars in Issaquah, a temporary location while their new restaurant at the Willows Lodge was under construction. It reopened in May 2001 to the highest of local and national accolades.

IF SUCH GRAND dining is not your cup of tea, you're in luck at the Willows Lodge. Right next door to the Herbfarm, and just across the driveway from the lodge entrance, is the Barking Frog, a casually elegant bistro. The menu, the meals, the service, and the selections of Washington wines are suit-

ply marvelous. The Barking Frog, named the 2003 Restaurant of the Year by the Washington Wine Commission, is by itself worth a drive up from downtown Seattle. Executive Chef Fran Black and his staff serve wonderful dishes. For lunch, enjoy an Open Face Dungeness Crab Melt (\$17) or a Sausage Croque Madame — sliced sausages atop a thick slice of toasted French bread, topped with two fried eggs and melted Emmental cheese (\$12). As a dinner entree, offerings include such dishes as Wild King Salmon with a Dungeness Crab Crust (\$34) and Roasted Half Rack of Lamb with black trumpet mushrooms (\$35). Match those with some local wines — maybe a 1997 Dungeness Proprietor's Blend Columbia Valley red or an Aged 2000 Valhalla Valley red or an Aged 2000 Valhalla Valley red or an Aged 2000 Valhalla Valley red or an Aged 2000 Valhalla Valley red.

NEXT DOOR to the lodge's scenic layout is the Redhook Brewery, a grant of a place that is open for tours and a sampling of its products. Its moderate neighbor is the Columbia Winery, offering a big tasting room, a gift shop, and weekend tours. Directly across the road is another of the neck's most noted wineries, Chateau Ste Michelle — at 69, the oldest winery in Washington state. It has splendid grounds — along with a major tasting room and gift shop — and is a favorite spot for wine festivals and picnicking under the trees.

THE TOWN OF Woodinville is still rural, with farms scattered among some grand homes back along winding, tree-lined streets. But it's a crazy place for visitors, easily confused by streets and roads that almost all bear a numerical name and crosses each other in mysterious ways. There's NE 145th Avenue NE — and good luck making sense of it all. Stick to the highways that take you easily to the Willows Lodge and the Barking Frog. You won't get lost. And you can't go wrong.

William J. Tobin is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

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A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

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GIRDWOOD MAY HAVE TO CHANGE...

Street names

SOME GIRDWOOD residents are unhappy because the municipality wants to change their street names. Their displeasure is understandable since the names of some of the 17 streets in question have historical significance and were adopted before the names they duplicate in Anchorage or Eagle River.

The *Turnagain*, *Times* reports one irate Girdwoodan argued that some of the names have been in use for more than 100 years and were assigned when Girdwood was an active mining community and Anchorage did not exist.

The problem is that duplicate street names can confuse emergency service dispatchers and slow responses. And since up to half of all 911 calls come from cell phones — which don't give locations — a dispatcher may have difficulty determining whether an emergency is being reported on Dawson Street in Girdwood or Dawson Street in Anchorage.

City code requires that each street name be unique. It also defines the criteria for deciding which one must change, generally the street with the fewest residents or where change will have the least impact. Since Girdwood doesn't have house numbers, the lightest impact would fall on streets there.

At risk are venerable Girdwood street names like Alpine Avenue, Glacier Drive, Loveland Road, Mann Street, Nancy Circle and Timberline Drive.

Gizmo needed

TELEMARKETERS MUST know that they will lose in the end.

Despite their courthouse successes so far, there is no way that their constitutional right to annoy consumers at dinner-time can trump those of individuals to be left alone if they prefer.

Congress will probably sort out the legal conflicts, but if it can't, the gizmo industry will almost certainly come to the rescue.

One item that might do the trick would be a gadget that requires callers to identify themselves before the telephone is answered. Before getting on the line, the holder would have to hear something like "Grandma, it's Joey."

Otherwise the phone would not be answered. Or better yet, the caller could be cut off. Such a gizmo would be much like message machines already in use and often used to screen unwanted calls.

Quite often, callers who hear the answering machine kick in must say things like "Pick up, Mom. It's me."

A few rules for carrying concealed

By ROB HEUN

Deputy Chief Anchorage Police Department

The recently adopted state law on concealed carry provides greater flexibility for citizens who carry concealed firearms for personal protection.

It also puts a greater responsibility for safety on the part of the person exercising his or her Second Amendment rights under the law. For one, each individual must decide what training to take in order to attain a level of safety and competency with the weapon of choice.

There are also certain considerations that must be given to preclude potentially tragic misunderstandings when dealing with police officers while carrying a concealed firearm.

First of all, the fundamental rule for officers is to assume all guns are always loaded. This basic safety premise determines the level of respect that a police officer shows a firearm when either handling it or when spontaneously encountering a gun on the street.

The Anchorage Police Department is unyielding in its insistence that this perspective is instilled in officers from their earliest days of training, and ensures that the mindset is maintained throughout their careers. Citizens would do well to adopt this philosophy themselves and assume that all guns are always loaded.

And never point the gun's muzzle at anything that you are not willing to destroy. A citizen's inattention to where the gun is pointed can often precipitate a lethal response by a police officer.

In the split seconds afforded to assess a threat, the officer has no time to second-guess the intention of the person holding a gun. The bottom line is that if you point a gun at a cop, you will find yourself on the receiving end of deadly force.

Armed citizens must also keep their fingers off the trigger until they have determined a necessity to shoot. Too often weapons are accidentally discharged when fingers are rested on the trigger when there is no intent to shoot.

Keeping your trigger finger extended straight out above the trigger guard, you are telling the officer that you are



along the top of the gun's frame, is an effective way to ensure the trigger is not inadvertently depressed.

Should you ever find yourself in a situation that justifies the use of lethal force and you have made the decision to use your weapon, be sure of your target and your surroundings.

Firing shots willy-nilly with no control as to their intended placement, or having no consideration for the surroundings in which misplaced bullets might strike an unintended mark, is irresponsible and potentially deadly. Practice with your weapon so that you are competent with the end result, whether you are at the range or engaged in responding to a lethal threat to yourself or another person.

Under the new law, if you are contacted by a police officer, it's your responsibility to advise the officer that you are carrying a concealed weapon. At the time of contact, please do exactly as the officer tells you.

Do not reach for the gun to show the officer you have it before you advise him of the fact. Do not reach for the gun as you are telling the officer that you are

carrying one. Do not ever handle the weapon in a manner that allows the muzzle to be pointed at the officer or anyone else.

Officers responding to calls for service cannot immediately ascertain the good guys from the bad guys. We do not have the luxury to determine if a gun is loaded or not.

This is the short version of what we are taught and conditioned for. It makes a good list for anyone handling a firearm.

• All guns are always loaded.
• Never cover anything with the muzzle that you are not willing to destroy.
• Keep your finger off the trigger until you have decided to shoot, and.

• Be sure of your target and your surroundings.
If you, as a responsible citizen, exercise caution while maintaining a concealed handgun regarding the handling and use of firearms, you will strike a safe balance between your rights and responsibilities.
That balance could save a life, perhaps your own.

The Anchorage Times

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BILL J. ALLEN
Editor

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

WILLIAM J. TODIN
Senior editor

NEW ROAD PROJECTS CAN CURE ...

Gridlock

WHILE WE ANXIOUSLY await construction of the long-suffered Bragaw Road extension to the south, it is worth noting that there are several other important projects under discussion that could go a long way toward easing the city's growing traffic woes.

Public safety, stop and start traffic and increased pollution demand that this city act — and soon.

The draft East Anchorage Study of Transportation, put together by HDR Engineering, is a much-needed first step. It recommends the city's long-range transportation plan include a Boniface-Dowling connector, Seward Highway interchanges from 36th Avenue to Potter Creek, improvements to collector roads and extension of 36th Avenue east to improve access to the city's university and medical districts.

Perhaps the most exciting proposal calls for an eight-lane, divided highway linking the Glenn Highway at Airport Heights Drive to the Seward near Chester Creek, allowing motorists to skirt the most congested areas of the city.

It is nice to talk about them now, but these projects were needed years ago, and the city instead has relied on minor fixes here and patches there in an effort to keep traffic moving on the cheap. That time is long past. Anchorage no longer is some small burg on the edge of the wilderness. It is a growing city, a growing city with a small-town transportation system that simply no longer works.

IT IS NICE to talk about them now, but these projects were needed years ago, and the city instead has relied on minor fixes here and patches there in an effort to keep traffic moving on the cheap. That time is long past. Anchorage no longer is some small burg on the edge of the wilderness. It is a growing city, a growing city with a small-town transportation system that simply no longer works.

You can see it every day. Traffic snarls. Waiting through three lights, four lights to get through some intersections. Gridlock caused by frustrated drivers. Waiting, crawling along, waiting. And the bad news is that it will only get worse.

There has been more than enough planning, study and public input over the past few decades. It is time to break out the bulldozers and get started. If we do not, this city likely will be unlivable in 20 years, or even 10. While those who work hard to beat back any development in their zeal to see the state turned into a park might appreciate that outcome, it will do the rest of us no good.

If Anchorage is ever to become a world-class city, one that will continue to attract business and commerce, it will first have to improve its transportation system. Nothing else can be expected to work if people cannot quickly and efficiently get where they want to go.

The projects proposed in the EAST study are an excellent start, but only if we can get them under way.

Drunken killers reduce your odds

By PAUL JENKINS

It was a parent's nightmare. A jangling telephone at 3 a.m. Our youngest son shouting into a cell phone that he had been in a serious car crash. In that mind-numbing split second, all you can do is struggle for a breath, pray he is OK, that his friends are OK, that nobody was killed or seriously injured. In our case, we were lucky. Very lucky.

A drunken young woman in a Ford Mustang had been out celebrating her 21st birthday that night a few weeks ago. She blew through a red light at the intersection of Minnesota Drive and Northern Lights Boulevard and T-boned the Honda Accord my 20-year-old son and three of his friends were riding in.

Ironically, they were hit on their way to pick up a friend who called from a party to say he had been drinking and did not want to drive.

The Honda was reduced to a metal sculpture, a smashed homage to excellence in design and engineering. There were cuts and bruises all around and a broken bone or two, and Zach's best friend since elementary school was hauled to the hospital in an ambulance. The others went a few moments later in a police car. But nobody was killed, nobody was maimed. In fact, after six anxious hours at the hospital, we were able to have breakfast together. It was nothing short of a miracle.

We talked over sausage and eggs about what my son remembered. He said he saw it coming. His head shattered the passenger window, knocking him out briefly. The large, deep cut on his thumb that has left it partially numb? He did not have a clue.

He understandably was angry that somebody would drink and then try to kill him. I wondered what about the young woman? What will happen to her? How will her life change? She's facing jail. She's facing a financial disaster and



Jenkins



of that. She nearly killed my son while she was celebrating her birthday. Here's a present for you, pal, a dead kid. I hope she never drives again.

Too many people, too many kids die each and every year because of stupidity on the highway. Too many die because people get drunk and drive, and nodding seems to deter them. Still, fines, jail sentences, Financial ruin. Risking their own deaths. Nothing.

The reason we have not gotten serious about the problem is that most of us, lawmakers and laymen alike, have at one time or another driven after drinking too much. We don't have the stomach to slam the jail cell door on somebody who has done what we have. We need to get beyond that. We need to get angry. After all, we are dealing with potential killers.

People who drive drunk must square how be damned vehicles for long periods of time. Those who do it repeatedly — and they have caused tragedy after tragedy in this town — must not be able to own them or drive them or get insurance for them. Ever. Or not in jail.

Of course, we could continue taking our chances, gambling that none of our loved ones will be among the 17,000 killed by drunk drivers every year.

My family was lucky. Too many have not beaten the odds.

Paul Jenkins is an editor of the Anchorage Times.

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EXPLORATION LICENSING PROGRAM OFFERS ...

More eggs

THOUGH THE prospect of gas drilling in the Matanuska and Susitna valleys has ruffled the feathers of some surprised homeowners, the state's effort to encourage wild-oil and gas exploration is proceeding apace.

The exploration licensing program under which the new leases were issued is a good one and was created by the Legislature in 1996 to encourage oil and gas exploration in areas of the state remote from existing production.

The latest initiative was awarding of three exploration licenses in the Susitna Valley — two to Forest Oil Corp., an experienced Alaska operator, and one to Clearflame Resources LLC, both of Denver, Colo.

Forest Oil's licenses were for 858,000 acres and require the company to spend \$5.5 million exploring there. Clearflame's license covers 476,000 acres and requires the company to spend \$2.5 million on exploration.

All the land involved is west of the Parks Highway. The leases held by Evergreen Resources that ruffled Mat-Su leathers are conventional rights acquired from another company. The concerns of the valley homeowners are understandable, but the subsurface leaseholders must take those concerns into consideration in making drilling plans. And they must show the state they have reached agreement with the surface land owner before they can proceed.

AWARDING OF the Forest Oil and Clearflame leases brings the total acreage under exploration licenses to 2.2 million acres. Others were awarded last year in the Nenana and Copper River basins, though drilling has yet to begin. Exploration licensing involves awarding leases based on commitments to invest in exploring on the acreage rather than bonus payments to the state. The investments can be in seismic studies, exploratory wells and other evaluation techniques.

The program is aimed at diversifying Alaska's oil and gas economy by reducing the state's dependence on the exploration plans of major companies in known producing areas. It could also be described as putting our eggs in more than one basket.

Though the major companies have been a mainstay of the Alaska economy for nearly a half-century, there was a time when small companies like Richfield Oil were the only ones interested in exploring here.

Richfield discovered the Swanson River field in 1957 and its successor Atlantic Richfield found the Prudhoe Bay field in 1968. Those successful wildcat ventures made ARCO a major company that was later absorbed by BP and ConocoPhillips. The odds of Forest Oil or Clearflame making such history-changing discoveries are undoubtedly long. Even much smaller finds, however, could pay off for them and make a real contribution to the economies of the state and the Southcentral Alaska region.

But let's hope luck is with them and they hit it big.

Moms and babies need sober dads

By ELINE PATNOI AK

A couple of weeks ago, I wrote a column about the cost of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder to our society and to the children involved. The column spoke about the damage done by a mother's drinking during pregnancy.

I got a very interesting e-mail soon after that column ran asking why the father was not mentioned at all in it. The writer wanted to know where the father was and why society was not holding him as responsible as the mother, why society was not blaming and shaming him.

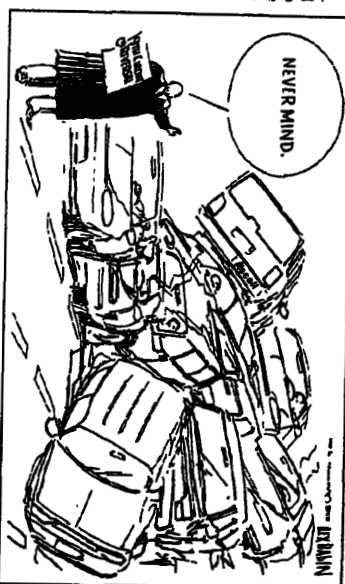
The writer asks very good questions for which there are not very many good answers. The reality is that our society, and most societies in the world today, holds a mother primarily responsible for her children and their upbringing.

In fact, most societies hold women responsible for what happens to them even if it was against their will. We have a prime example of that in Nigeria, where a mother was scheduled to be stoned to death after she weaned her child because the child was born out of wedlock. The father was not prosecuted because the judges said there was no evidence he did it. The idea of DNA matching apparently never occurred to them.

There are some countries in this world where a woman who is pregnant through rape faces ostracism and death despite the violence perpetrated on her that resulted in the pregnancy. She is still viewed as the person bringing disgrace on her family — not the man who raped her.

So holding a woman solely responsible for the damage done to her unborn child when she drinks through a pregnancy is not all that unusual. But, just because it's done, doesn't make it right.

I actually interviewed a father who proudly told me how he beat his wife up when she tried to drink while pregnant. The father readily admitted he was drunk at the time. To his way of thinking, she



was the one pregnant so she had to stay sober while he sat there and got wasted.

Now, anyone who doesn't drink and has ever gone to a party where alcohol was flowing freely can tell you that there is little that is more unattractive than watching people's faces melt as they get drunker and drunker while you sit there sober.

If you are a pregnant woman with an alcohol addiction watching your husband getting drunk and knowing that there is a good chance he's going to turn mean and hit you when he is drunk, the incentive to drink for outweighs the incentive to stay sober. The baby might be months away but the man sitting across from you is drunk right now.

Many fathers feel they are doing the right thing by insisting that their pregnant wives or girlfriends stay sober during the pregnancy even though they are not willing to stay sober themselves. They do not see their behavior as making it more difficult for her to stay sober.

It is the underlying premise of all so-called sober programs that no one can make you stop drinking. You have to want to be successful at best. There is no doubt this is true.

But it is also true that your chance of achieving sobriety is much greater if you have the sober support of your family and loved ones. It's hard enough to stay

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Eline Patnoi, an Anchorage free-lance writer and author of *Parallel Logic*, a humorous look back at her 28 years in Barrow, lives in Anchorage and owns Precious Cargo Ltd., a writing/graphics company.

Fathers are critical in this process. They just aren't the ones who get pregnant so society seems to let them off the hook. It shouldn't.

Men do play a critical role in the prevalence of FASD in our society. There is no doubt about that. There may be no physical evidence yet that ties their drinking to birth defects passed through their sperm, but there is a world of evidence that their lack of support for their pregnant partner's sobriety can be the critical difference in whether that child comes into the world whole and is raised in a sober, loving home or comes into the world damaged and enters a home of alcohol-fueled violence and neglect.

Many fathers are critical in this process. They just aren't the ones who get pregnant so society seems to let them off the hook. It shouldn't.

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BILL J. ALLEN
Publisher

Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

Wednesday, October 1, 2003 **B-7**
WILLIAM J. TOBIN
Senior Editor

RETIREMENT TIME FOR . . .

USS Anchorage

THE VENERABLE warship USS Anchorage will be formally decommissioned today in San Diego.

The Anchorage was the first ship to be named after Alaska's largest city. It was launched in May 1983 at Pascagoula, Miss., and commissioned the following year at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, homeport for the Navy's Atlantic fleet.

The Anchorage is a dock landing ship, a 609-foot vessel used as a floating dock in combat operations. It can launch our cushion vehicles, conventional landing craft and helicopters onto hostile shores. The ship and her crews went in harm's way numerous times in their more than three decades of service to the nation. The Anchorage patrolled in three of the world's oceans and many trouble spots.

The vessel's deployments included assisting in the evacuation of Americans from Vietnam in April 1975 and supporting shore operations in the Gulf War of 1990-91. It assisted the USS Cole after the guided missile destroyer was devastated by a terrorist attack in the port of Aden, Yemen, in 2000.

MOST RECENTLY, the Anchorage supported combat amphibious operations in Operation Iraqi Freedom earlier this year. The ship is the oldest of five vessels of her class and the last remaining on active Navy duty.

The ship has earned many awards and commendations, its Web page boasts that she is "the most decorated ship on the waterfront." The Anchorage's motto is "First in Class, Second to None."

The USS Anchorage visited the Port of Anchorage in 1992 and its crew presented the city with one of its 11-ton anchors. The anchor is now on permanent display in a pocket park near the boat launch at Ship Creek Point.

Our namesake ship has served her country well and will retire from the Navy this week with full honors. Following the ceremony, the Anchorage will be towed to Hawaii's Pearl Harbor and mothballed until a decision is made on any future use the ship might have.

New to Alaska

WELCOME TO Alaska waters two great new ships — an 895-foot, state-of-the-art tanker built for the oil trade and an 840-foot cargo container ship.

The tanker Polar Discovery is a double-hull vessel, the third of five \$200 million oil carriers being built for ConocoPhillips. The container ship is the North Star, one of two \$175 million cargo vessels being added to Alaska service by Totem Ocean Trailer Express.

The Polar Discovery is en route from the East Coast and the North Star made its first visit to the Port of Anchorage earlier this month.

We wish both vessels and their crews fair winds and following seas.

They're popular for good reason

By TOM BRENNAN

Harold Bloom is a horse's patootie, which he proved with a recent column for the Los Angeles Times that was reprinted in the Daily News last Thursday.

Bloom's piece was an extended lament about the National Book Foundation awarding its 2003 medal for distinguished contribution to American letters to suspense writer Stephen King.

A Yale professor and literary critic, Bloom writes King off as "a writer of penny dreadfuls." In the same column he gives similar treatment to J. K. Rowling, British author of the the-huge-by-popular Harry Potter book series.

Professor Bloom derides the work of King and Potter as representative of the dumbing down of our cultural life. But in my book, Bloom's column is a classic example of the snobbing up of some parts of the literary world.

As you may have guessed, I am a fan of Stephen King. I also read one of J. K. Rowling's books and thoroughly enjoyed it. (Our Senior Editor, Bill Tobin, has read the series in an attempt to keep up with his grandchildren, he heard me one of his volumes.)



Granted, neither King nor Rowling's Brennan writing is great literature, it's great entertainment. Both are extremely skilled writers whose work is spellbinding. They use words in a remarkable way that virtually enchants readers by the millions.

Appealing to mass markets is undoubtably a sin in Bloom's eyes, perhaps because he hasn't been able to do it himself — unless you count the Los Angeles Times.

He also seems to lose sight of the fact that the classic books only became classics by appealing to substantial audiences in their time. They are classics because they have enduring qualities that appeal to readers of successive generations. Those qualities may or may not include heavy-weight messages that remain valid through the ages.

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When the classics came out, there were undoubtedly blue-nosed critics who denounced the then-new work as nothing like the good old stuff that came before, whatever it was.

Whether the works of King and Rowling become classics will depend on whether they have continuing appeal to future novel fans.

They might or might not, but one thing is certain. The fact that they did or did not meet with Harold Bloom's approval will play no role in decisions by readers yet to come on which books to read by flashlight under the covers of their beds.

One of Bloom's favored authors, Philip Roth, author of "Goodbye, Columbus" and many other novels, won the National Book Foundation medal last year. But other winners have included mass-audience writers like Tom Morrison, Studs Terkel and Ray Bradbury.

What the good professor thinks of them is unknown.

As an author, I generally find critics infuriating, especially the ones who suggest how you could have written your books better, how they would have done it if only they had the book contract. And, as you can tell, I am infuriated by Bloom's comments. He ignores the fact, if he knows it, that once Stephen King fans

love and collect books. This is not a bad thing, it may not mean royalties for Bloom's favorite authors, but it is good for the world of books, writers and readers.

And if Rowling's skill with words can draw children into reading a 766-page book, the author is by definition one of the most accomplished writers of the last century. Her success is not a rant or a freak thing; it derives from writing with near-universal appeal, whether professor Bloom likes it or not.

Stephen King's medal will be presented on Nov. 19 at the National Book Awards Ceremony and Banquet Dinner in New York. If life were a Stephen King horror novel, Harold Bloom would be chained to a chair in the front row while the audience of 1,000 authors, editors, publishers, friends and supporters of books and book publishing gave King a standing ovation.

This may be more than you wanted to know about my preferences in literature, if you can call it that. But when I read Harold Bloom's column, I had to get it off my chest.

I'm not sure what an intellectual is, but I hope Bloom is one, I hope I'm not.

Tom Brennan is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

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