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Q.
Where is this colorful spot on
the Fairbanks campus?

A.
See page 5 inside.

AURORA

Happy 50th Birthday, Alaska
The long road to statehood

Alumna Profile: *Lorena Hegdal*

A Legacy of Change
Ruth Lister Scholarship

BIOFUELS

Alaska's new power plants?



America's Arctic University



Alumnus within: see pages 21 – 24

Editor's Corner



Sustainability — a long word for a complex subject. What does it mean? *Webster's New World College Dictionary* defines sustainable as “designating, of, or characterized by a practice that sustains a given condition, as economic growth or a human population, without destroying or depleting natural resources, polluting the environment, etc.”

Some people can be a bit hypocritical in their fervor over “going green” — they talk about its importance, perhaps even serve on sustainability task forces at work or in their community, yet they still use paper or plastic at the grocery store. I can be as hypocritical as the next guy — while I use cloth bags, recycle religiously (to the extent possible in Fairbanks) and berate my family for leaving the lights on in an empty room, I drive a gas-powered SUV.

I don't have all the answers. But I do believe it's important to ask the questions.

— Kim Davis, *Managing Editor*

Letters

Dear editor,

Just for your information and not because it is a problem:

In 1962, while a student on the Fairbanks campus, I was a leader in an emerging all Alaska jurisdiction of the International Order of Rainbow for Girls. At that time I started a monthly state newsletter which I named *Alaska Aurora*. It is still being published as *Aurora* and as of last year, is also available in digital form. I obtained the signature black and white masthead of the aurora borealis from a photo from the Geophysical Institute. After all of these years, it has finally worn out and been removed from the masthead.

I was surprised that the accompanying photo/logo from you was sea-related rather than the magnificent rainbow of colors that I so fondly remember from the College/Fairbanks' sky.

Best wishes with the new publication. The name has many fond memories for me.

Mary Halm Writer (B.Ed., 1964)

Past Grand Worthy Advisor, Alaska

International Order of the Rainbow for Girls

Dear editor,

I really like the new format in the latest *Aurora* publication, it has a new alive invitation and great color.

Lois VanHyning



Send us your comments on any story or make suggestions for future stories at www.uaf.edu/aurora/, send letters to the editor to aurora@uaf.edu, or complete our reader feedback form online.

On the cover: Associate Professor Mingchu Zhang inspects barley grown in the fields of UAF's Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station.

Dear editor,

I recently received the fall 2008 edition of UAF's *Aurora* magazine. I was thoroughly offended by the short story on the back cover about Ty Keltner's LEGO® model of the Gruening Building. Specifically, I was offended by the comment that “the project was more ambitious than many graduate student theses.” This statement is extremely insulting, not only to the graduate program at UAF, but to the many graduate students that spend countless hours writing grant proposals, doing high-quality research, conducting labwork, performing analyses, and writing articles in peer-reviewed journals. In some departments, this LEGO® project may be comparable to what they require for a master's degree, but it is not what I experienced and witnessed in the sciences, where students put in thousands of hours and years of work in order to earn their degrees. If there are some departments where you can earn an advanced degree with as little work and thought as it takes to make a LEGO® model, I suggest you don't advertise that because it is insulting to the university as a whole.

Sincerely,

Andrew Borner (M.S., biology, 2006)

You Tell Us!

If your degree major differs greatly from your current career, what path did you take to get there?

For example, if you majored in biology and planned to do genetics research but now you're editor of a university magazine (true story), how the heck did that happen?

Thanks to Rick Conover, '84, for this question.

Send your story to aurora@uaf.edu with your name, address and e-mail for verification purposes. We'll print the weirdest or most convoluted pathways in our next issue — and send you a special UAF poster as thanks!

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AURORA

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Send comments or letters to the editor to aurora@uaf.edu. We reserve the right to edit for grammar and length. Visit us on the web at www.uaf.edu/aurora/.

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America's Arctic University

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ON THE WEB



Look for this icon for information about enhanced content, including multimedia, online.



Students launch Poker Flat season

UAF's Poker Flat Research Range roared to life with the successful launch of the Alaska Student Rocket Project's ISIS mission in early January.

ISIS — Ionospheric Science and Inertial Sensing — was the first of eight NASA sounding rockets scheduled to launch this year from Poker Flat, the world's largest land-based sounding rocket range.

The ISIS launch was the culmination of more than six years of work for student researchers.

"It's a 6½-year-old mission that we had going on, and I've been on it for four and a half," said Devin Hahne, a recent UAF graduate who went to work at NASA's Goddard Preflight Center in Maryland. "I'm happy it's done ... it didn't explode on the pad. It's really exciting to finally be done."

"One of the things this program does is it goes beyond the classroom. When students graduate, they can enter the job market and say, 'I'm ready to roll.'"

— Denise Thorsen, Alaska Space Grant Program director

 Watch the launch at www.uaf.edu/aurora/.

Students developed the instrumentation inside the payload, which included items to study the thinning of ultraviolet rays in the atmosphere, an experiment conducted in collaboration with Tokai University and the University of Toyama in Japan.

Senior Tess Caswell said the rocket project is the reason she decided to stay at UAF to finish her degree. Caswell plans to start her new job as an environmental and thermal systems flight controller at NASA's Johnson Space Center after graduation.

Following the launch, students began combing through the data. One student from the ISIS team planned to recreate the launch in a three-dimensional visualization that the team will study in the Arctic Region Supercomputing Center's Discovery Lab.

First accredited first responders

The Tanana Valley Campus paramedic program recently became the first and only nationally accredited paramedic program in Alaska. According to the program's medical director, Dr. William Wennen, certification has become the gold standard in virtually all forms of medicine. Students in the program spend at least 500 hours in the classroom and more than 700 hours in clinical and field internships. The third semester is spent in hospitals and EMS service locations outside Alaska. Following the successful completion of the required courses, TVC students are eligible to take the National Registry Paramedic Examination for certification as a paramedic. Once nationally certified, students can apply for licensure as a paramedic in the state of Alaska.



LOW-TECH LUMBERJACKS

Hundreds of spectators and amateur lumberjacks flocked to campus in early October for the Forest Sciences Department's Farthest North Forest Sports Festival. The annual event draws dozens of would-be loggers, who demonstrate their forestry prowess during a day of ax throwing, logrolling on land and on water, bow sawing and crosscut sawing, fire building and more. Faculty members and students started the competition as a way to commemorate old-fashioned forest festivals. While today's professional foresters and natural resource managers use high-technology tools, the festival pays tribute to simpler times when traditional woods activities were the basis for work and play, survival and revival.



See the festival at www.uaf.edu/aurora/.

KUAC celebrates statehood with film premiere

With his horn-rimmed spectacles and plain speech, Edward Lewis "Bob" Bartlett was Alaska's face in Washington for two decades. KUAC television's new documentary film, which premiered in January, explores Bartlett's life and celebrates his role in the creation of the 49th state. *Mr. Alaska: Bob Bartlett Goes to Washington* continues the narrative begun with KUAC's Emmy Award-winning production, *The 49th Star*.



Photo from the Wrede-Babcock family collection

See page 12 for a tribute to statehood.

UAF students go homeless

After spending a week working with homeless people in Washington, D.C., as part of the UAF Leadership Program's Alternative Spring Break, students Anna Dale and Mariah Acton (pictured) decided to bring home what they learned. The two students, along with a host of campus volunteers, spent a week in late November in a tent camp in the center of campus surrounded by a forest of homemade cardboard signs. In addition to raising awareness, the students organized a donation drive for several local nonprofits. Both students said they hope the tent camp becomes a yearly event.



CAMPUS BRIEFS

THE INTERNATIONAL ARCTIC RESEARCH CENTER CELEBRATED ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR. IARC's success is one of many examples of how UAF continues to be a leader in arctic science, with researchers recognized internationally for their work and expertise on the complex arctic ecosystem.

A \$1.35 MILLION AWARD FROM THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH will allow UAF to bring biomedical research education to Alaska's middle school and high school students. UAF's award will provide support for the Biomedical Partnership for Research Education Pipeline in Alaska.

THE UA MUSEUM OF THE NORTH'S ORNITHOLOGY LABORATORY WAS DEDICATED IN HONOR OF HENRY SPRINGER, museum research associate, by the UA Board of Regents and the museum. For more than 40 years, Springer has donated his time and expertise, as well as specimens, to the museum's bird collection.

A \$1 MILLION GIFT FROM THE BERNARD OSHER FOUNDATION provides an endowment to support the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UAF, educating the Interior's older adults. Classroom topics include art, computer technology, health, history, music and philosophy.

Swim team makes a splash

The swimming Alaska Nanooks set myriad school and individual records in their fourth season of competition. Six swimmers qualified for the NCAA Division II championships: Samantha Zinsli (pictured), Mar Brunet, Courtney Nichols, Mariya Pavlovskaya, Abbey Jackson and Jacqueline van Driessche. This is the most national qualifiers since swimming originally became a UAF sport in 1968.



In her senior year of competition, Zinsli garnered the Nanooks' first-ever monthly conference honor by being named the Swimmer of the Month for October. The team earned a Division II Academic All-American title from the College Swimming Coaches Association of America for the seventh consecutive semester. The swim team has helped UAF increase scholarships for women by 81 percent since 2005, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* recognized UAF for Title IX compliance in "Turnaround Stories" in 2007.

Editor's note: This publication went to press before the NCAA championships in March. Visit www.alaskananooks.com for final Nanook sports results.

Seeing stars in rural Alaska

A \$488,000 NASA grant will enable the UA Museum of the North and scientists at the UAF Geophysical Institute to bring the state's only digital portable planetarium to communities in rural Alaska. The grant will support the development of an Alaska-specific planetarium program and "NASA Days" in rural communities over the next three years. Project organizers hope the traveling planetarium show and related community activities will inspire students, particularly Alaska Native students, to choose careers in science and engineering.



© Susan Farnham, www.farnham-art.com/susan/

Exhibit connects art and arctic science

Bodil Bluhm and Rolf Gradinger, biological oceanographers at the UAF School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, teamed up with Fairbanks artist Susan Farnham on an exhibit that celebrates the northern creatures they study. Farnham's paintings are based on the findings of the Arctic Ocean Diversity project, an international effort to catalog life in arctic seas and sea ice.  View more paintings at www.sfos.uaf.edu/news/2008/farnham/.

.....
 "This very selective honor by the leading national scientific association illustrates the strengths of UAF's research in environmental and marine sciences."

— Larry Duffy, interim dean of the UAF Graduate School and executive secretary for the AAAS Arctic Division, commenting on the selection of John Kelley, Michael Castellini and John Walsh as American Association for the Advancement of Science fellows.

Agroborealis turns 40

UAF's oldest magazine, *Agroborealis*, turns 40 this year. *Agroborealis* is published twice yearly by the School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences and the Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station. Since the first issue in 1969, both UAF and SNRAS have expanded, addressing the research needs of a modern world. Visit www.uaf.edu/salrm/afes/pubs/agro/ to subscribe to this free publication.



Google™ maps change learning landscape

A team from Google's Geo Education program and the University of Alaska Geography Program traveled to Barrow, Kotzebue and Nome last fall to demonstrate technology that helps students and teachers develop content in Google Earth™

"The idea is to encourage teachers to incorporate new technology in their classrooms," said Mike Sfraga, director of the UA Geography Program and associate dean in UAF's School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences.

The students participated in hands-on training to learn how to overlay existing information into Google Earth™ and create their own maps using the My Maps feature.

"Students love to view things in 3D," said John Bailey with UAF's Arctic Region Supercomputing Center. "If they can fly around the slopes of Denali or tour down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon it seems so much more real than if they just view flat



pictures on a screen. When you combine this landscape with features, such as placemarks, which have pop-up balloons that contain text and videos telling you about that mountain or canyon, you get a truly immersive multimedia experience."

"If they can fly around the slopes of Denali ... it seems so much more real than if they just view flat pictures on a screen."

— John Bailey, Arctic Region Supercomputing Center

The program is part of the Alaska Geographic Alliance, a UA Geography Program K – 12 initiative funded by the National Geographic Society. Significant support was also provided by Google™

 Fly over the places the team traveled with a Google Earth™ movie at www.uaf.edu/news/download/releasevideo/google_earth/.

Rural students float salmon data

Schoolchildren from a village on the west coast of Alaska are helping UAF's School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences scientists learn where young salmon go when they enter the ocean. Since June, students from Quinhagak have been sending out buoys that track ocean currents into Kuskokwim Bay. Led by Terry Reeve, UAF's Marine Advisory Program agent in Bethel, the students released 32 buoys last fall. The buoys float at the sea's surface and transmit location information via satellite to oceanographers on the Fairbanks campus. By recording location data every 30 minutes, the buoys help oceanographers determine the ocean currents that carry juvenile salmon from the Kuskokwim River into the coastal waters of the eastern Bering Sea.

50 years of music

The Fairbanks Symphony Orchestra celebrates its 50th season this year, led by music director and conductor Eduard Zilberkant (pictured).

The Fairbanks Symphony Association, the parent organization of the orchestra, was founded in late 1958. Today, more than 70 musicians from the community volunteer their time and energy during an eight-month season to perform classical concerts for the greater Fairbanks community.


Zilberkant said his goal for the season was to highlight the strengths of each section and "feature the orchestra over the past 50 years — how it's grown and what it's become."



Back cover photo answer

"Graffiti hallway" is located downstairs in the Fine Arts Building, just outside the Theatre Department offices.



 View more photos of the hallway and read about its history at www.uaf.edu/aurora/.



BIOFUELS

Alaska's new power plants?

Growing research may offer alternatives to fossil fuels in Alaska.

Story and photos by Todd Paris

Chris Garber-Slaght let out a slight groan as he hoisted a five-gallon jug of syrupy brown liquid and emptied it into a large, filter-lined funnel near eye level.

“This stuff’s pretty disgusting,” he said, turning his nose away from the source. “But it’s free.”

Garber-Slaght was in the midst of a twice-weekly stop at the filling station where he gets fuel for the 400-mile-a-week commute from his Fairbanks home to Eielson Air Force Base, where he teaches high school English. This particular “filling station” is in a south Fairbanks warehouse donated by ABS Alaska, and the “free” fuel he was filtering is waste vegetable oil, known as WVO, from a local restaurant.



Left: A ton of barley delivers the BTU equivalent of 125 gallons of home-heating oil. Above: Raw canola seeds.

“It takes a little time — we were here about 20 minutes to get five gallons of fuel,” he said on a cold November day. “And it takes a little effort. But I just put in five gallons, which sells for about \$4 at the pump, so that’s \$20 worth of fuel for free. Since I have more time than money these days, it works out pretty good for me.”

Garber-Slaght and his wife, Robbin, are members of Fairbanks Biodiesel, a nonprofit organization that encourages recycling and sustainable development through the local production and use of biofuels from WVO. The group is part of a growing movement to investigate and use various biofuels for transportation, electricity generation and space heating.

The group has equipment that can produce both biodiesel and straight vegetable oil (SVO) from the same waste material, but biodiesel takes more time and money to produce and can only be used in the summer since it gels at low temperatures. (Biodiesel also requires an alcohol additive, most commonly methanol, which is expensive to buy and ship to Alaska, and the process produces a byproduct — glycerine — which can be a problem to dispose of.) Since Garber-Slaght is the only person in Fairbanks who uses SVO during the winter, he gets pretty much all the fuel he can use once the snow flies.



Canola has one of the highest oil contents of any domestic crop.

To get his Ford F-250 heavy-duty diesel pickup truck to run on SVO, Garber-Slaght spent about \$1,000 on a kit that he attached underneath the truck’s bed. Since SVO has a higher freezing point than regular diesel, the alternative fuel has to be heated in a separate tank to keep it from gelling. The kit filters and preheats the oil on its way from the tank to the engine. Garber-Slaght said it takes about five minutes driving on traditional diesel before the recycled oil has warmed up enough to burn, but other than that he said it’s been smooth sailing.

“I converted to veggie oil back in early summer,” Garber-Slaght said. “So far I’ve driven about 7,000 miles and made trips to Anchorage, to Chitina and daily trips to Eielson without a single problem. Even at temperatures down to minus 10 degrees it’s been trouble-free. We’re good to go.”

UAF alumni featured in this story: Robbin Garber-Slaght, '08; Rich Seifert, '73; Mark Wiebold, '81, '96

What's good for the Garber-Slaghts might soon be good for others in the area as well. Reports estimate as many as 10,000 gallons of WVO are generated by commercial kitchens around Fairbanks every month. Since WVO is considered a toxic waste, vendors are prohibited from using drains or the landfill to dispose of their leftover oil. The borough maintains a collection site where businesses can dump their waste veggie oil at a cost of around \$15 per gallon, but a fledgling industry has sprouted to collect waste oil from local businesses and turn it into biofuel.

Francis Collins is a local landlord who got the idea a couple years ago to collect waste oil and use it to heat her apartment buildings. She started Arctic Biofuels, a two-person business that collects waste oil from local restaurants for free, processes the waste into both biodiesel and SVO, and uses it to heat apartment buildings. She's generating enough biofuel to supply a few clients with oil for their home-heating needs at prices well below commercial heating oil. "I want it [waste oil] and the restaurants don't, so it works out well for both of us," Collins said. "And it keeps it out of the landfill."



Ten thousand gallons of waste vegetable oil (WVO) are generated by commercial kitchens around Fairbanks every month.

Firewood — the original biofuel

The cost of energy in the Fairbanks area was termed a "crisis of generational proportions" by Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor Jim Whitaker in May 2008, when rising fuel costs around the globe showed no signs of stabilizing. High energy costs spurred Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin and state lawmakers to pass emergency legislation for a \$1,200 "energy rebate" added to every resident's 2008 permanent fund dividend to help Alaskans deal with unprecedented fuel costs.

The spiraling cost of conventional heating sources and an influx of cash into residents' pockets has led to a surge in the use of the most traditional biofuel — wood. Reports indicate almost 2,000 wood heat appliances were sold in the Fairbanks area in summer

2008. The rush on wood stoves and wood furnaces has resulted in a shortage of dry firewood, which is crucial to reducing the amount of pollution.

Experts who monitor air quality warned that the added smoke from hundreds of new wood-burning stoves and outdoor furnaces — some burning green fuel — would cause a serious spike in Fairbanks' air pollution problem during the winter.

Mark Wiebold sells wood and pellet stoves at The Woodway in Fairbanks. He fears the rush on wood energy could carry a serious unintended consequence.

"I'm afraid what we have now is a bunch of people who are all of a sudden burning wood as an alternative to more-expensive fossil fuels. Even though we're selling state-of-the-art wood stoves that exceed [Environmental Protection Agency] standards when used properly, it's up to the individual to make a personal commitment to learn how to use it and maintain an adequate supply of dry firewood. The air quality in Fairbanks is a real issue and I'm not sure how it'll be addressed."

Barley — not just for beer anymore

Barley is another source of locally grown biofuel making an impact this winter in the Interior. Gary Sonnichsen, a farmer in Delta Junction, has been growing barley for the past 12 years. He's one of dozens of area farmers looking for a market for their grain now that the state-supported dairy industry has just about dried up. He thinks he may have found a market in the energy-hungry homes of Fairbanks.



"It's hard to predict precisely, but I expect to sell about 250 tons of barley for fuel this year," Sonnichsen said in November. "That's up from zero tons last year."

At a price of about \$200 a ton, which delivers the BTU equivalent of 125 gallons of home-heating oil, Sonnichsen says he can grow and sell enough barley to make a profit. He's excited about the prospects for future growth.

"I absolutely think it's feasible for Delta-area farmers to grow barley to sell for home-heating fuel. We've been growing barley here for 50 years, through all kinds of weather and tough conditions. We've pretty much got the economics of it figured out."

Sonnichsen is partnering with Don Trometter of North Pole Pipe and Supply, who's acting as a local supplier for the North Pole/Fairbanks area. Trometter makes the drive to Delta each week, bringing back 12 to 15 tons of the dried, easily combustible grain that burns in specific models of stoves and furnaces (see sidebar on page 11). He sells the grain to area homeowners in bags of 50 or 1,500 pounds.

According to Wiebold at The Woodway, local barley is a clean-burning, affordable, easy-to-handle alternative to wood pellets, and he likes the idea of buying fuel from a local supplier.

“When you spend a hundred bucks on fuel from a local source, that money turns right around and gets spent in other local businesses,” Wiebold said. “I kind of like the idea of my energy dollar staying in the local economy.”

Sonnichsen sees a future in developing barley to be used specifically for fuel.

“What we’ve been growing here for decades is aimed as a livestock feed. If we get a variety better suited for fuel it would make barley an even more viable long-term energy solution.”

Rich Seifert is one local expert who disagrees with that assessment. Seifert, an energy specialist with UAF’s Cooperative Extension Service, is convinced that the idea of burning grain as fuel makes no sense.

“I think that’s just a bad path for us to take,” Seifert said. “The amount of fossil fuel needed to produce a crop through modern agricultural techniques throws the whole idea of using grain as a fuel out of balance. Why would you use fossil fuels to run the tractors and combines and trucks to get the grain to market, when you could be growing native species of trees instead, and then burning the trees for heat? The farmers may be able to make a profit in the short term, but sooner or later a market correction will have to occur and the idea will have to fizzle out.”

It’s the same problem with growing corn for ethanol Outside, Seifert said. “You can’t violate the physics of it. It’s the basic law of thermodynamics.”

Alaska grasses and grains may hold the key to rural fuel woes

Seifert isn’t alone in his contention that burning fossil fuel to transport biofuel can be both economically and environmentally unfriendly. UAF’s Professor Stephen Sparrow and his colleague, Associate Professor Mingchu Zhang, are studying a variety of local grasses and grains to determine if there’s an untapped energy source that’s readily available in many parts of Alaska.

“The energy content in these biofuels is simply not comparable to coal or oil, so it makes no sense to try to transport it long distances,” Sparrow said. “We’re looking primarily at local usage as a supplement to existing sources, rather than a sole energy source. But in rural Alaska if we could substitute, say, 30 percent biofuel for diesel, that would be fantastic.”

“There’s a lot of interest in utilizing biofuels in Western Alaska, near Bethel and on the Seward Peninsula,” Sparrow said. “They’re particularly interested in willows and native grasses that are well



Bob Vanveldhuizen, a research technician with UAF’s School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences, harvests canola as part of a research study to determine the viability of biofuels.

adapted and easy to grow in that environment. We're just trying to get a handle on whether these plants can produce enough energy to be worth carrying out some more detailed studies at the next stage."

Zhang's work includes studies of canola, or rapeseed, which has one of the highest oil contents of any domestic crop. Growing canola in Interior Alaska has been tried before without much success, primarily because of a short growing season that doesn't give seeds enough time to mature, resulting in an unappealing green oil. But Zhang says biodiesel may be a viable alternative market for Alaska canola. "If it's going into a fuel tank, it doesn't matter what it looks like."

Zhang said another benefit of growing canola in the Interior is that it provides a valuable rotational crop for local farmers.

"Most of the farmers in Delta have only been growing barley, but it would be good for the soil to rotate their fields with another marketable grain."

And Zhang said he's not ready to give up on canola as a source of commercial-grade food oil.

"Canola oil from central Canada sells for about \$15 dollars a gallon in local grocery stores. I think the opportunity exists to be able to

compete with that and create a market for locally produced, 'Made in Alaska' canola oil."

Biomass may be the only alternative to petroleum

Meanwhile, at UAF's Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station in Palmer, research Assistant Professor Andy Soria is breaking new ground with his work in biofuels. Soria came to UAF's Department of Forest Sciences after working in the alternative energy field in several corners of the world.

Soria's research in Palmer involves breaking down the chemical components of various species of Alaska wood to create not only energy but other resources as well. Petroleum isn't just what makes your car run — it's also in the car's steering wheel, seat cushion and floor mat. Energy can be derived from wind, sun and water, but products like plastic can't, so Soria is investigating the possibilities of replacing hydrocarbons — the petroleum-based building blocks of products ranging from plastics to ingredients for lipstick — with plant-based materials.

"Nobody's really looking at a tree or a plant from that particular perspective," Soria said. "Once we understand what its makeup is, we can truly zoom in and figure out what products we can get out of it."

Even though biomass has potential as both a sustainable energy source and hydrocarbon replacement, Soria said convincing decision makers is one of his biggest challenges.

"We're so intertwined with a petroleum-based economy it's really difficult," he said. "We're dealing with a complete multitrillion dollar infrastructure and we're suddenly starting to develop something completely from scratch."

For some, the switch to plants, trees and grasses for a range of uses is inevitable. The question for Alaskans is just how homegrown the new economy will be.

"The only source of energy that competes in real terms — based on the potential products — is biomass. It's the only long-term solution for everything we use petroleum for — that's it, plain and simple. There's no other alternative."

Todd Paris, '83, is a freelance writer, professional photographer and photo manager at UAF Marketing and Communications. He recently installed a pellet wood stove in his home.

Glossary of Terms

Alternative fuels

Fuel sources that appeal to unconventional or nontraditional interests, such as nuclear energy, biofuels, etc. (as opposed to fossil fuels, the traditional source of most fuel).

Biofuel

Any fuel derived from renewable biological sources, as plants or animal waste; esp., a liquid fuel for automotive engines made from corn or soybean oil.

Biomass

1. the amount of living matter (as in a unit area or volume of habitat) 2. plant materials and animal waste used especially as a source of fuel.

Renewable energy

Energy that can be replenished naturally, as solar, wind or water power.

Sustainable

Designating, of, or characterized by a practice that sustains a given condition, as economic growth or a human population, without destroying or depleting natural resources, polluting the environment, etc.

— per Webster's New World College Dictionary and Merriam-Webster Online.



Watch the making of canola oil and other biofuel processes at www.uaf.edu/aurora/.

PELLETS

little, lumpy and hot



By Tori Tragis

Fuel oil is normally a viscous, slow-moving material, more syrup than quicksilver, but the price of it sure has a way of defying gravity. In the past year, its budget-busting ascents into the atmosphere have sent hundreds of households in Interior Alaska scrambling for other, cheaper ways to heat their homes and businesses.

Electricity's out — it's inefficient and expensive, and those little portable heaters can be fire hazards. Wood stoves are popular, but getting the wood can be costly if you don't cut it yourself, and labor-intensive if you do. (Though there is that old, ahem, saw about cutting your own wood and heating yourself twice.) Wood stoves have widely varying degrees of efficiency, and can contribute to dangerously poor air quality.

Which brings us to pellets. Fairbanks-area merchants are doing a roaring business with pellet stoves and pellet boilers, which heat water for baseboard pipes as well as household use. Pellet stoves are the most popular, and can be found at smaller Fairbanks businesses like Ferguson Enterprises and The Woodway, and at box stores like Home Depot and Lowe's. North Pole Pipe and Supply sells barley-fueled boilers as quickly as they come in (the barley comes from Delta Junction farms), and they're considering adding a wood-pellet stove to their line-up.

Common among retailers is their forecast for continued demand for pellet stoves and boilers, and a corresponding need for a steady, plentiful and reliable supply of wood pellets.

Wood pellets are ground-up material compressed into uniform lumps that resemble beefed-up bran cereal; sometimes the wood is mixed with an adhesive material. Pellets' efficiency and heating value vary depending on the kind and quality of material used, and how it's made and burned, but in general, pellets can and should be considered a legitimate alternative to heating oil, especially in cold climates like Alaska where staying warm is tantamount to staying alive, and where the cost of fuel is creating ever-greater economic hardships.

Forests abound in most of Alaska. The entrepreneurial spirit abounds as well. Dry Creek, a small community south of Delta Junction, is already producing pellets for its residents. NPI, a timber and port systems operator based in Wasilla, is exploring the possibility of opening a pellet plant in the Fairbanks area, taking advantage of the waste byproduct of local sawmills and land-clearing projects. According to NPI's Chad Schumacher, virtually any of the Interior's tree species — aspen, spruce, cottonwood, birch and willow — are candidates for pelletizing. The trick is to identify what mix of materials produces the best, most consistent product.

Finding local solutions is crucial, notes Ron Brown, a wood-energy expert with the Alaska Energy Authority. Rural villages are desperate for relief from high fuel-oil costs. Freighting in pellets is a problem in the Bush because of a lack of adequate storage, which should be warm and dry. Even small homes need a few tons of pellets for a year, and large buildings like schools and community centers need much more. Finding space for all that isn't easy, but local production would mitigate some of the problem — and add to the local economy at the same time.

Steve Sparrow's work on local pellet production is still putting down roots, literally, in willow research plots around Alaska. Sparrow, of UAF's School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences, and the Alaska Plant Materials Center are growing and testing six different willow species to see if they'd make a viable industry for growing and pelletizing in rural Alaska. The first harvest isn't until 2011 — a long time for financially strapped villages — but it's progress.



Tori Tragis, '94, '99, is a writer and editor for UAF Marketing and Communications.

HAPPY 50th BIRTHDAY

By Megan Otts

The long road to statehood

For many Alaskans, admission of the state into the Union in 1959 represented the end of a long, hard-fought battle to be considered first-class citizens in America.

As a civil district and later a territory, Alaska had been under the direct control of the United States federal government since 1867, but was denied the rights and privileges conferred upon states, such as having a voting member in Congress. The territorial

March 30, 1867

Secretary of State William H. Seward purchases the territory of Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million, an act that becomes known as “Seward’s Folly.”



1897 – 1900



The Klondike gold rush brings attention to the territory’s natural resources and causes an influx of prospectors to the region.

1916

The first bill for Alaska statehood is introduced to Congress.

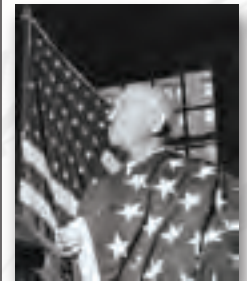
1927



Thirteen-year-old Benny Benson wins a contest to design the Alaska flag. His entry states, “The blue field is for the Alaska sky and the forget-me-not, an Alaskan flower. The North Star is for the future state of Alaska, the most northerly in the union. The Dipper is for the Great Bear — symbolizing strength.”

1949

Territorial Gov. Ernest Gruening establishes the Alaska Statehood Committee to make Alaska statehood issues more visible.



1867

The First Organic Act is passed, making Alaska a civil and judicial district and providing the territory with marshals, clerks and judges.



1884

The Second Organic Act is passed, conferring official territory status upon Alaska and creating a legislature and government for it.



1912

1946

Alaskans pass a statehood referendum with 9,630 votes in favor and 6,822 votes against.

For more information

Creating Alaska: www.alaska.edu/creatingalaska/

The 49th Star: www.uaf.edu/kuac/49thstar/

Eight Stars of Gold: www.alaska.edu/8stars/

The Alaska Statehood Celebration Commission: www.gov.state.ak.us/ASCC/history.php

Mr. Alaska: Bob Bartlett Goes to Washington: www.mralaska.org

THDAY, ALASKA

government also had little influence over decisions regarding federal funding and resource allocation, though the federal government regulated many of the region's natural resources, like its fish and game.

In a 1946 Alaska Statehood Association publication, Judge Anthony Dimond said, "With statehood, Alaska is no longer a beggar at the national table but a recognized member of the household, eligible to share in all the benefits and all the responsibilities of the nation."

During the golden anniversary of the admission of the 49th state, we celebrate the decades-long struggle for Alaska statehood.



Megan Otts, '08, is the multimedia coordinator for UAF Marketing and Communications.



Learn more about the long road to statehood at www.uaf.edu/aurora/.

Feb. 6, 1956



Nearly 1,000 people show up on campus to witness the signing of the Alaska Constitution. Because of the large turnout, the event is moved to the gymnasium, which becomes known as Signers' Hall.

March 23, 1957

The Associated Students of the University of Alaska begin a letter-writing campaign to colleges around the country asking other student governments to endorse statehood and to share that endorsement with their respective senators and representatives.

June 30, 1958

The Senate approves statehood.

Jan. 3, 1959

President Eisenhower signs the statehood bill. Alaska is officially admitted to the Union.



1959

Nov. 8, 1955



Fifty-five territorial delegates converge in Fairbanks to draft a proposed Alaska Constitution. The Constitutional Convention is held on the University of Alaska campus in the newly constructed student union building, later named Constitution Hall.

Jan. 14, 1957

Alaska's congressional delegation (Rep. Ralph Rivers and Sens. William Egan and Gruening) is introduced to Congress by a friendly senator, and 12 others speak in favor of statehood for Alaska. Though the delegation cannot vote in Congress, the trio spends time in Washington, D.C., lobbying for Alaska statehood.

May 28, 1958

The House approves statehood.



Photos courtesy of UAF Rasmuson Library and Alaska State Library

SHARING STRENGTH



Lorena Hegdal turned a life of challenge into a life of abundance she shares with everyone around her.

By Lynne Snifka



The sink in Lorena Hegdal's kitchen is bright yellow — crazy yellow. It's just a sink, but in Hegdal's otherwise traditional kitchen it stands out like a red spot on a Dalmatian. The kitchen is on the north side of her Fairbanks home, and "I wanted it to always be bright and sunny," Hegdal said. Paint seemed ephemeral. Towels not enough. A sink, however, feels permanent. "I had to order it special," she said.

On a Sunday morning in early November, the smell of sourdough pancakes and fresh coffee filled the kitchen. At 9:30, the first shift of breakfast — two friends staying with Lorena and her husband, Ian — was finished and headed home to Anchorage. The second shift, including Hegdal's sister, Ruth, had just arrived.

"Take some water," Hegdal said to the travelers as she followed them to the door. "Do you want some chips or anything?"

"She likes to give," Ruth said. "I tell her, 'You know, you can come over to my house and not bring anything.'"

Hegdal returned to the kitchen, a red apron tied loosely at her waist. With her wide eyes, weathered hands and natural blush on lightly freckled skin, she seemed like an average woman in her 50s, which is what Hegdal insists she is.

But she's also been the director of engineering at Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. She's a one-woman support system for college students from villages across Alaska. She's raised two sons. She's the first Native woman to graduate with a civil engineering degree from UAF. She's a skin sewer, berry picker, hunter, fisher and role



UAF alumni featured in this story: Ian Hegdal, '78; Lorena Hegdal, '77

“I wanted to talk to them all, tell them they

model. She is all these things despite circumstances that would have crushed a lesser woman. What's more, Lorena Hegdal is, by most accounts, magnanimous beyond compare.

“She's always done exceptionally well at whatever job she's been doing, and she's been a homemaker and mother on top of that,” said Chuck Coyle, Hegdal's longtime friend and former supervisor at the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. “And she takes care of *everybody*. Not just family. Friends, people she gets to know. I've never known anybody like that.”

Smart enough

Hegdal grew up in Nome, in a family of nine children. She remembers summers at fish camp on Salmon Lake, 40 miles north of Nome, as the best of times. There, Hegdal learned to hunt and fish and pick berries. She spent weekdays with her grandmother, Kayagosee, often wondering why Kayagosee sat on Salmon Lake's gravel beach every day, staring at the mountains.

Hegdal's childhood friend, Barb Earp, sometimes went to Salmon Lake, too. They were outdoorsy, Earp said, “not into girly ‘frou-frou’ stuff. We were more about getting out on motorcycles, snowmachines, crabbing and fishing.”

At home in Nome, things weren't as bright. Lorena and her five older brothers were treated differently by their stepfather. There was alcoholism, and abuse was part of that.

“Anything that you can imagine in a Bush community that was bad probably happened in that family,” Coyle said.

Young Lorena spent much of her time with her Aunt Matilda, her mother's adopted sister, often sleeping in the same bed, always absorbing her aunt's wisdom. Auntie Mutt taught her about generosity, understanding and patience.

“She disciplined me, but she never hurt me or hit me,” Hegdal recalled. “Alcohol was always an issue [in Nome], but my aunt only drank once a month or once every two months. But still she never hurt me.”

As she got older, Hegdal thought about college. She wanted an education, and to stay near her family and Salmon Lake. At first she thought her only option was teaching. Then she remembered the highway department. They didn't have to bring people from Outside to build roads, she thought. She could do that! So Hegdal enrolled in engineering courses.

“I wasn't real smart,” she recalled. “But I was smart enough.”

At UAF, some professors and students were supportive. Hegdal remembers Professor John Zarling as being particularly encouraging. Still, it was the 1970s, and women — let alone Inupiaq women — weren't common in the engineering program.

One professor told her that she wasn't going anywhere in life. Hegdal ignored her detractors. “I thought, ‘I'll show you!’” she said.

She did. Hegdal graduated from UAF in 1977 and headed back to Nome, where she worked for DOT&PF as an engineer.

“Be respectful and honest, learn how to make the right choices, how to love and care for yourself so that you have the strength to love and care for others.”

Perspiration, motivation, inspiration

Hegdal worked for DOT&PF for 24 years in Nome and Fairbanks before going to work at Alyeska. Recently she left her position as engineering director to become director of right of way and emergency preparedness and compliance. As engineering director, she traveled nearly every week, always visiting schools in Bush communities to talk about careers like hers.

“But I did it my way,” Hegdal said. School officials wanted her to speak only to certain classes, conference only with the most gifted students. She refused. “I wanted to talk to them all, tell them they could all do this if they wanted to.”

Now she mentors Native students at UAF. The Hegdals have regular barbecues and dinners for Bush students at their Fairbanks home, complete with a “muktuk bar” that offers the traditional delicacy cooked and raw in a variety of preparations.

“You never have met a more caring person, you know, just concern for people,” Ian, her husband, said. “And great concern for helping other Natives succeed.”

The Girl Scouts named Hegdal a Woman of Distinction in 2008, in part because of support from nominations from current and former students.

“She naturally moves people to action,” one wrote. “She inspires me, in and outside of the workplace,” another said. “Her kindness and compassion have made an indelible mark on my life.” “The world needs more people like her ...”

they could all do this if they wanted to.”

Finding a place of peace

In Hegdal’s crowded sewing room is a “parka” she’s working on to keep her propane tank warm. It’s the only project she can show off. She’s given the rest away.

It’s a choice she makes, this giving. It sustains her, as does the photograph of Salmon Lake that hangs in her Alyeska office. It reminds her of the place where she feels most grounded. She knows now, that’s what Kayagosee was doing staring at the mountains all those summers. It was a place of peace for her grandmother, an immovable spot — not unlike that crazy yellow sink in her own kitchen.

In 2007, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society named Hegdal its Professional of the Year. There was a big awards dinner in Arizona and Hegdal was asked to give a speech. She showed slides of Alaska so people could understand her home, she said.

“I encourage and challenge each of you to cherish your past while embracing the rapidly changing future,” her speech reads, in part.

“Be respectful and honest, learn how to make the right choices, how to love and care for yourself so that you have the strength to love and care for others.”



Editor’s note: Hegdal received a 2008 UAF Alumni Achievement Award for Business and Professional Excellence.

Lynne Snifka teaches journalism at UAF. When she’s not in the classroom, she enjoys freelance writing, travel and being trained by her Jack Russell terrier, Bailey.



A LEGACY OF CHANGE



Photo by Susan McInnis

Ruth Lister Scholarship

By Susan McInnis

Ruth Lister arrived in Fairbanks with her 15-month-old daughter, Cady Sky, on her hip. She was a tallish, willowy Canadian, a hippie girl with long blond hair.

In time, Lister would transform the university's Tanana Valley Campus, and make a broad range of positive changes for Alaska women, children and families. But in 1976, she really had just two concerns: a job and child care.

Enepe'ut Children's Center, at the foot of College Hill then and now, answered both. Lister worked at her daughter's daycare until friends who ran a garage in Fox got a contract to rebuild engines and build and refurbish trucks. The owner wanted to hire women, which suited Lister fine. She pulled on overalls and began fabricating dashboards and fenders, and doing the electrical and plumbing work on big rigs.

“Are you going to stand outside and bash at problems, or are you going to get into the system and start making change?”

Lister stayed with Truck Services about four years, dropping Cady off at Enepe'ut during the day. She also volunteered at Crisis Line twice a week, and at a fledgling women's crisis center. She lobbied the hospital administration for a good birthing room.

When Enepe'ut's founder decided to move on, Lister took over, managing a free-spirited, whole-wheat-and-fruit-for-snacks business where she learned budgeting and staff management on the wing.

A mechanic with a Ph.D.

Probably no one at Enepe'ut knew she had done her graduate work at Cornell, or that her Ph.D. was in micrometeorology and mathematics. She had grown up in an intellectual and creative, if rigorous, Toronto household. Her mother studied economics at Cambridge and Radcliffe before shifting gears to become an accomplished landscape architect. Her father studied at Oxford, and was a professor of chemistry at the University of Toronto for more than 30 years. By the time she earned her Ph.D., Lister was headed for research or a professorship.

But she had worked on women's health and poverty issues in New York while in grad school. They were the issues that galvanized her passion and intellect. In a 1995 interview with Pete Pinney, now associate dean for UAF's College of Rural and Community Development, she said, “Coming from the '60s, the question was, ‘Are you going to stand outside and bash at problems, or are you going to get into the system and start making change?’ And I think what happened to me was that I tried to get into the system and tried to make some change.”

She worked on women's issues in Fairbanks when she took over as executive director at the women's crisis center, now known as the Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living, about the time Cady started school. In six years there, she steered the domestic-violence shelter and rape crisis center into maturity. She built lasting coalitions among agencies — law enforcement, the courts, the military, Native organizations, social and children's services — forging new protocols and relationships, and helping responders find and work towards common goals, all of which meant they could better serve the people who needed them.

She helped establish the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, which at its height represented 21 programs, in Emmonak, Barrow and Homer, as well as in Fairbanks and Anchorage.

In the mid-1980s, Alaska Gov. Steve Cowper hired Lister to chair the Alaska Women's Commission, where, according to Sherrie Goll, then lobbyist for the Alaska Women's Lobby, Lister was instrumental in many legislative changes, including protecting women's rights to pensions, inheritance, child support and child custody, and equal pay. Said Goll, “That so many of the bills on her list passed is a legacy left Alaska by the Women's Commission and by Ruth herself.”



Ruth, seen here with her granddaughter Iva Karoly-Lister, worked hard to create opportunities for future generations.

Photo courtesy of Louise Barnes

UAF alumni featured in this story: Cady Lister, '99, '01; Pete Pinney, '88

Life-changing diagnosis

Just before taking that job, Lister learned she had breast cancer. She said it broke her heart, but she took it on like she did everything else. She learned as much as she could, got the best doctors and support network she could find, and fought to win. She did win, against bad odds, for nearly 18 years. Before her death in 2002, she raised Cady and then delighted in two granddaughters. She worked, as she always had, as long as she could, committed to changing for the better whatever came into her hands.

When Lister took the helm at UAF's Tanana Valley Campus in 1991, she applied much of what she had learned in her previous professional and volunteer work to move TVC beyond college prep and continuing education courses.

She talked with Interior employers about the skills they needed in employees. TVC subsequently developed two-year programs in technical, vocational and career studies. She said in 1995, "We want businesses to know that the courses we provide benefit not just students. Employers gain trained staff and create a workforce with upgraded skills. The training we provide can save employers money in the short- and long-term." Students, she said, needed to be prepared for both life and work. "In addition to career and technical skills, students need math, communications and problem-solving skills if they want to be a part of a 21st-century workforce."

Today TVC graduates paralegals and paramedics, chefs, mechanics, IT specialists, bookkeepers, welders, health care workers and more. The success at TVC is the kind Lister liked best — everybody gets something useful: students, faculty, employers, the community and the economy.

In the 1995 interview with Pete Pinney, Lister said that the times "and personal experiences, too, led me to want to try and make change. I felt fortunate to be educated and was pretty competent at doing things, so I had the opportunity ... And I guess I have a very strong belief in trying to use the political process to make change." Asked about a mark of success, she answered simply, "There are resources for people."

Cady, who spent many hours as a child under boardroom tables looking at people's shoes while her mother built coalitions a few feet above her, said, "She told me from the get-go that people have a duty to give back to their communities. That there's a bigger picture and a greater good to think about."



Susan McInnis, '76, '99, is an instructor for UAF's Center for Distance Education.



Inspired by this story? Support this or other scholarships at UAF at www.uaf.edu/giving/.

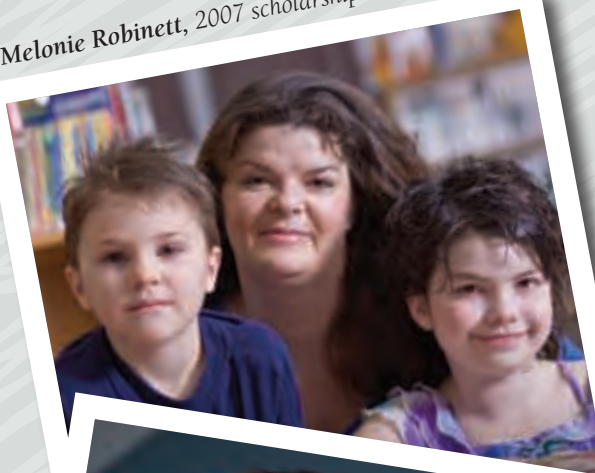
Ruth Lister Memorial Scholarship

The Lister Scholarship benefits single mothers attending the Tanana Valley Campus who are in good academic standing and who demonstrate motivation, academic and leadership potential. The endowment has reached \$100,000, and has awarded \$6,700 since 2004, to Judith Sam (human services technology), Muriel Bell (registered nursing), Vanessa Derendoff (applied accounting), Melonie Robinett (paralegal studies), and Hope Roberts (applied business).

"In my education I hope that I am also an example to my children. I hope they will internalize what they have seen in what I am doing to become all they want to be in life." — Muriel Bell

"This world is so different from that of my ancestors. Back then it was about survival and staying healthy. We have a lot on our plate today. We not only need an education to survive, but we also need to keep the Native culture alive to pass what we know on to our children." — Vanessa Derendoff

Melonie Robinett, 2007 scholarship recipient



Hope Roberts, 2008 scholarship recipient

President's column

By **Gail Phillips, '67**

The UAF Alumni Association is actively engaged in making your alumni experience more rewarding. Your association offers many opportunities for alumni to become involved with our university. One way is to assist with student recruitment. An alumnus communicating with prospective students is one of the best ways to excite new students. Letting them know how your experiences helped shape who you are, how your friendships allowed you to grow and how much your degree has helped advance your career goals are all important factors for future alumni to consider in their choice for higher education.

Another way to assist UAF is to advocate for the university to the Alaska Legislature. A strong voice of support from the alumni is needed as we work for a budget that will guarantee quality programs, excellent faculty and staff, and employment opportunities for our graduates. You can go to the alumni association website at www.uaf.edu/alumni/ to keep up on legislative issues of importance for UAF, and to see how you can help with our lobbying efforts.

Chancellor Brian Rogers and his wife, Sherry Modrow, both UAF alumni, are providing strong leadership for our university and support for the alumni association. Our association will continue a close working relationship with Chancellor Rogers as he works to promote UAF's standards of excellence both nationally and abroad.



**September
24 – 26, 2009
Save the date!**



Photo by Johnny Wagner/Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

Police chief tackles tough issues

By Kim Davis

Fairbanks police Chief **Dan Hoffman, '88, '08**, recognizes many faces when he drives through downtown. One person in particular always makes him smile. Hoffman sees him walking briskly along the sidewalk, perhaps stopping and speaking with someone in Golden Heart Plaza. "Sam," a spry and clear-eyed gentleman, left a life of chronic inebriation to complete his bachelor's degree at UAF.

Partly because of this experience, Hoffman wrote his recent master's thesis on the chronic inebriate issue in Fairbanks. Chronic inebriates are people who are repeatedly incapacitated due to severe alcohol or substance abuse, which is often accompanied by mental health disorders. They face substantial danger not only from Fairbanks' harsh winter weather but from violent crime as well.

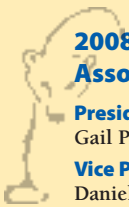
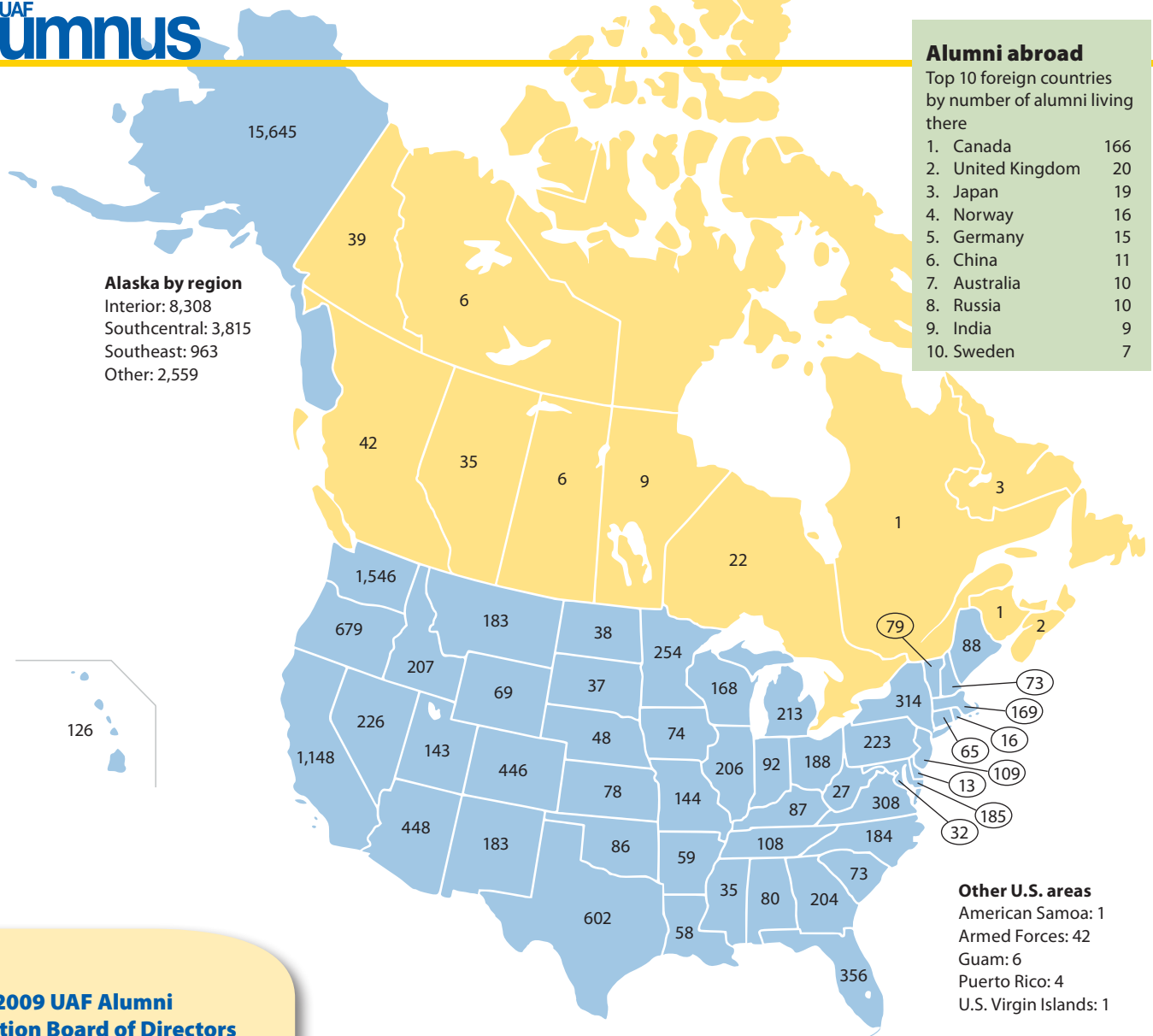
As a young patrol officer in the early 1990s, Hoffman and his fellow officers would often find Sam intoxicated to the

point of unconsciousness, lying on the sidewalk, under a bush or huddled in an entryway. He would be taken to relatives, detox or, as a last resort, to the jail for a 12-hour hold. After literally hundreds of such visits, often via the emergency room, Sam woke up one day and decided, "I don't want to live like this anymore." He has been sober several years now and bears little resemblance to the sickly and frail figure that nearly died on the streets of Fairbanks.

Continued on page 23

Hoffman leads a cadre of UAF alumni in the Fairbanks Police Department:

Scott Adams, '96
Allen Brandt, '04
David Elzey, '92
Jim Gibson, '96
Pearl Holston, '96
Stewart Lewis, '97
Kurt Lockwood, '99
Alana Malloy, '02, '05
Robert Thompson, '91
Dan Welborn, '94



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www.uaf.edu/alumni/

Where do our alumni live?

Check out the map to see how many alumni live in your state. The map shows the number of known alumni in each state and Canadian province as of December 2008.

Contact the Alumni Association office at 907-474-7081 or 800-770-2586, or visit us on the web at www.uaf.edu/alumni/ or on Facebook. We can help you with career networking opportunities, assisting at college fairs or attending an alumni event in your area.

Get involved — join a chapter!

Fairbanks chapter

President: Jim Dixon, '90, '91 dixon@ieee.org

Southcentral chapter

President: DeShana York, '95 deshana.york@alaska.edu

Hockey chapter

President: Scott Keyes, '95 scott@pyounger.com

Police chief, continued from page 21

Hoffman has had long conversations with Sam, trying to determine the magic mix of factors that facilitated such a complete transformation. Unfortunately, there aren't any easy answers. While some people have the constitution and self-discipline necessary for such an effort, there are many others who need significant intervention and help to achieve goals of this magnitude.

"These people should just be left alone," say some. In conversations with Hoffman, Sam has said, "Thank God you guys didn't do that. If you had left me alone and not brought me to detox, I'd be dead right now."

Hoffman's master's thesis notes that, according to a 2003 cooperative research report by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies, Alaska is first among all states for alcohol-related mortality, alcohol abuse among mothers of newborns, and newborns with fetal alcohol syndrome. Moreover, Alaska rated second in chronic drinking and admissions to treatment, and fourth in binge drinking. Of 12 commonly used alcohol-abuse indicators, Alaska ranks in the top 10 in nine of them.

Hoffman wants to lower those figures. He offers several strategies based on his research into successes in other, similar communities in the U.S. One strategy is a comprehensive integration of substance-abuse and mental health resources, including a detox center providing services such as mental health screening. Other strategies include revisiting court-mandated or jail-induced long-term treatment acceptance; establishing long-term funding for community service patrol operations; and creating an "alcohol-free" area in

Fairbanks where the sale and availability of alcohol is restricted.

To further these aims, Hoffman makes regular presentations to local community groups such as the city council, chamber of commerce and Rotary clubs. His work is well received, which, he believes, is partly due to the credibility that

accompanies a master's thesis. Hoffman says a local university like UAF lends significant authority to research that addresses large community issues.

"Having an objective, academic underpinning associated with this type of examination, particularly with an issue such as chronic inebriates that can be prone to strong opinion, emotion and even prejudices, really lends a lot of credibility. It's objective data, not just my opinion."

Of course, the solution to a problem this large and troublesome requires a firm commitment and appropriate levels of funding. After Hoffman announced his March retirement, Gov. Palin appointed him to the State of Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. As a trustee, he will continue working on chronic-inebriate issues statewide and hopefully bring resources and proven approaches to Fairbanks — on behalf of others like Sam.



Photo courtesy of Fairbanks Police Department



Kim Davis is special projects director for UAF Marketing and Communications.

1930s



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George "Tex" Polk, '38, was recently honored by the U.S. Postal Service as one of five American journalists to have a stamp created in recognition of their achievements. Tex

was the first editor of the student section of the *Farthest North Collegian*, the official UA newspaper under President Bunnell. Tex died in 1948 under mysterious circumstances while working as a CBS radio correspondent in Greece.

1960s

Walter Soboleff, '67, was honored by Bill Martin, president of the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes, at the 96th Grand Camp Convention held in Ketchikan in October 2008.

Clara Johnson, '69, was honored at the 2008 Alaska Federation of Natives annual conference with the Eileen Panigeo Maclean Education Award. The award honors recipients for their commitment to and accomplishments that improve educational opportunities for Alaska Natives. Clara is the director of UAF's Interior-Aleutians campus.

1970s

Jim Madonna, '73, won the 70 – 74 age division of the October 2008 St. George Marathon in Utah by 9 minutes with a time of 3:54:34, only two weeks after he set a new 70-plus age group record of 4:55:36 at the Equinox Marathon in Fairbanks.

Joyce Mann, '74, and **Kurt Pfitzer, '75**, are enjoying the country life at their family farm in Quakertown, Penn. Their 8-year-old grandson, Dustin, is the "love of our lives. I'm celebrating four years cancer-free from an aggressive breast cancer. Love those Phillies!"

1980s

Bob Mattson '79, '85, and **Maria Byrnes Mattson, '86** — "In 1986, after Maria graduated from UAF, we teamed up and moved to Japan where we taught English in Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto until the spring of 1989 when we returned to my hometown, Juneau. Maria and I married and have based our lives in Juneau. Maria spent 13 years in real estate specializing in property management. In 2004 she took a long break and took a 7-month "drive-about" across the United States from Juneau down the West Coast, across the South to the East Coast and back. I joined her in Seattle for the final leg up Vancouver Island and back to Juneau. Refreshed, she began a new career joining a commercial electrical contracting firm in Juneau where she works as a bookkeeper.

Continued on page 24

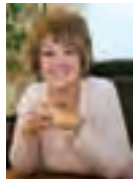
Mattson, continued from page 23



I began my career with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation in 1989 as an environmental technician in the Douglas Laboratory. Following my tenure at the laboratory I became an environmental specialist in the Juneau district office, performing a wide variety of duties for most of the core programs in the department — solid waste, air, drinking water, hazardous waste,

water quality, domestic wastewater, industrial wastewater, contaminated sites and oil programs. In 1995 I joined the Southeast Area Response Team for ADEC's Prevention and Emergency Response Program and was promoted to the section manager level as the Southeast state on-scene coordinator. In June 2008 I became the manager of the Prevention and Emergency Response Program and am responsible for directing the state's response to oil spills statewide. I am a past member of the National Ski Patrol and am an ongoing active member of the Civil Air Patrol and U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in Juneau. Maria is also an active member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the League of Women Voters."

Terry Strle, '84, mayor of Fairbanks, donated a kidney to her cousin, Kathy Strle, in fall 2008.



David Kingsland, '88, '94, principal of the William H. Seward Elementary School in Kenai, was presented a National Blue Ribbon School award on behalf of the school by Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski in fall 2008. The award was one of only two presented to schools in Alaska.



1990s

Kathie Horrace-Voigt, '94, is the chief resident at Bay Area Hospital in Corpus Christi, Texas. She will complete her current assignment and graduate from her residency in July. Kathie has traveled to Fairbanks each of the past two years to present information sessions to UAF students about the path to a medical degree.

Sam Enoka, '95, returned to UAF from California in November 2008 to offer his company's sponsorship for improving alumni mentorship. Sam is the current president and CFO of VIASYN, a company focusing on renewable energy markets, located in the San Francisco Bay area.

Michael Orr, '98, was named by Wells Fargo as senior business relationship manager for its Alaska Commercial Banking Group. Michael was cofounder of Financial Alaska and served as commercial loan officer for Alaska Growth Capital and director of development for Alaska Village Initiatives. He began his banking career with Wells Fargo's predecessor, National Bank of Alaska, as a management trainee, and served as a personal banker and commercial relationship associate. Michael earned his master's degree at Alaska Pacific University after earning a bachelor's degree in economics from UAF.

2000s

Sara Harriger, '03, is a political officer at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi for the next two years. Last fall she took part in a three-day tour of Varanasi, India, as part of America Days, a program that attempts to help spread American representation in second-tier India cities. Prior to her new post, Sara spent a year at the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where she helped to set up Laura Bush's visit to the first breast cancer detection center in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Brian Jones, '07, recently made headlines in Japan for his skill at Go. Go is a Japanese game of strategy where white and black stones compete for territory. It is the oldest board game that still exists today. It is practically a national sport in Japan, similar in popularity to the Western game of chess. A quote from the Kyoto newspaper article said, "Brian comes from the state of Alaska, in America, where you can see the aurora." Brian currently lives in Japan and works at a junior high school.

Da-ka-xeen Mehner, '07, was included in a group of artists featured in the *i-den-ti-ty* show at the Alaska House in the SoHo District of New York, curated by the Alaska Native Arts Foundation.

The show's promotional website states, "The show features work that articulates identity through the lens of the artist. The exhibit includes video, digital photography, 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional work by Alaska Native artists and illustrates the painful and sometimes ironic definitions of identity and how, and/or if it is measured. The



construction of identity, whether it be racial, legal or cultural and the deconstruction of it vis-à-vis the artists' perspective provides a new pathway to view identity as it relates to indigenous peoples and reconceptualizes the colonial and racial notions of identity."

In memoriam

James G. Ambrose, '78, '85, Nov. 4, Anchorage

Stephanie L. Foint-Richey, '95, Oct. 31, Fayetteville, Ark.

Micki Kobylk, '02, Nov. 13, Sterling, Alaska

Harvey W. Marlin, Jr., Matric, Nov. 5, Palm Desert, Calif.

Phil Rounds, battalion chief at the UAF Fire Department, Nov. 21, Fairbanks

Heinz Wiechen, research faculty, Nov. 23, Fairbanks

Karen Wood, '03, Nov. 17, Boise, Idaho



Submit your own class notes at www.uaf.edu/aurora/.

Career check

Siemens Building Technologies specializes in facility infrastructure, providing energy and environmental solutions. Siemens employs 13 alumni and three interns in its Alaska offices as of December 2008.

Tiffany Allen, '07, Fairbanks • **Jeremy Bloomstrom, '08**, Anchorage • **Bill Brown-Farrel, UAF student**, Fairbanks (intern) • **Chong Choi, '99**, Anchorage • **Mike Elbert, UAF student**, Fairbanks (intern) • **Ed Harris, Matric**, Anchorage • **Ben LaRue, '99**, Fairbanks • **Tram Lind, Matric**, Fairbanks • **Jon Martin, '02**, Fairbanks • **Amber McDonough, '98**, Anchorage • **Larae Minter, '08**, Fairbanks • **Tim Porrit, UAF student**, Fairbanks (intern) • **Nicole Putnam, '98**, Anchorage • **Doug Schutte, '98**, Anchorage • **Chad Stadig, '05**, Fairbanks • **Mike Weinant, '02**, Fairbanks •

Events SPRING/SUMMER 2009

athletics

JUNE 1 – 29
Alaska basketball camps and clinics (girls' and boys')

JULY 6 – AUG. 14
UAF Recreational Camp

JULY 6 – 23
Alaska volleyball camps



arts

APRIL 17 – 18, APRIL 24 – 26
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari
— Theatre UAF

MAY 3
50th Anniversary Concert -
Fairbanks Symphony Orchestra

JULY 19 – AUG. 2
Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival



special events

APRIL 18 – 23
Sustainable Living Conference

MAY 10
Commencement

MAY 26 – July 9
Rural Alaska Honors Institute

JUNE 7
TOTE Family Fun Fest at the UA
Museum of the North

JULY 20 – 31
Alaska Summer Research Academy



exhibitions

Through **OCT. 4**
UA Museum of the North special
exhibit — “The Last Polar Bear:
Facing the Truth of a Warming World”



For more events, visit
www.uaf.edu/events/.

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Nivia Modelo-Martin, guidance and counseling graduate student, scholarships recipient

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