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# ALASKA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

645 West Third Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2124

APRIL 1997

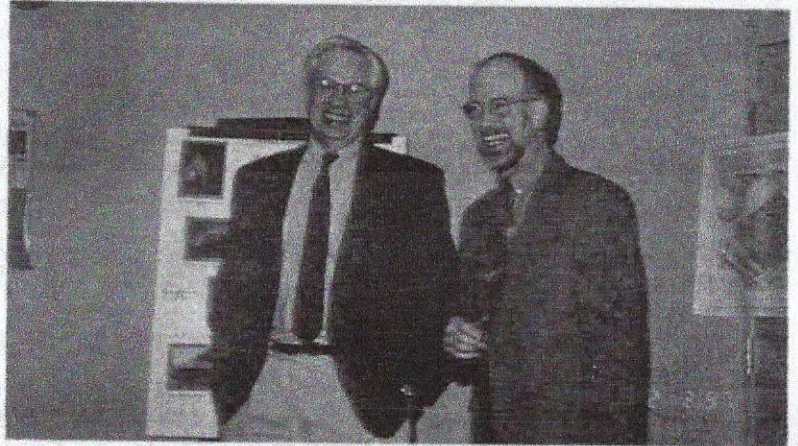
VOL. 16, ISSUE 1

## ANNUAL MEETING FEATURES TWO PRESERVATION LEADERS

The Alaska Association of Historic Preservation held its annual meeting at Loussac Library in Anchorage on Sunday, February 2. A gathering of approximately 30 preservationists was on hand.

Featured at the annual meeting were illustrated talks by two preservation leaders, Thad Poulson and Terry Hyer. Mr. Poulson, from Sitka, has edited the *Sitka Sentinel* for the past 28 years. An acknowledged community leader, he is also a strong preservationist—he lives, in fact, in a house that he saved from the wrecking ball by moving it to its present site. Poulson has

played a major role in preserving the Allen Auditorium, one of the major buildings on the Sheldon Jackson College campus. He noted that when he first heard that the college's Board of Trustees had voted to raze the auditorium, he asked the Board's chairman to delay any further action until the building could be assessed structurally. The Board granted his request. Then, with \$10,000 in grant funds, \$5,000 of which came from a National Trust Preservation Services grant, structural assessment and adaptive reuse proposals were prepared; the firm that did the work was Steven Peters and Associates of Ketchikan. The company's assessment concluded that the building was structurally sound. The only reason that the building had been deemed unstable, in fact, was that the original (1911) contractor had not followed its plans regarding the truss supports. The assessment recommended that the building continue as an auditorium. In response, the Board of Trustees rescinded its demolition resolution. The college is now seeking \$100,000 in renovation funding.



*Thad Poulson (left) and Terry Hyer*

The second featured speaker, Terry Hyer, spoke about both the Holy Ascension Cathedral in Unalaska and St. Joseph's Church in Nome. Hyer's firm has worked on both projects. The Holy Ascension Cathedral, built in the 1890s, was a major community landmark; it had both secular and religious significance to thousands who lived in Unalaska and the Alaska Peninsula-Aleutian Islands region. The building, however, had long been deteriorating and was nearing a state of structural collapse when rehabilitation efforts began a few years ago. Central to the restoration effort was a grant application which the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Restitution Trust made for Interstate Transportation Enhancement Act (ISTEA)



*Many preservationists attended AAHP's annual meeting*

funds. That application, which was successful, provided \$1.4 million for the restoration of six Russian Orthodox churches in the region. Mr. Hyer provided many details on the specific improvements which had been made using the ISTEA grant funds. Other Aleutian-area churches, including those at St. George and Atka, are in varying stages of restoration.

Another significant ecclesiastical restoration project involved Nome's St. Joseph's Church. The church, built in 1901 and used until the 1940s, has been neglected in recent years; in addition, it had suffered the indignity of having both its steeple and sanctuary replaced. Restoration was accomplished, however, thanks to a grant that the City of Nome made to the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The church, now moved to a new location, was skirted and placed on pilings; it received a new steeple and sanctuary; and a new stained-glass rose window is being created to replace the existing window, which had been boarded up for decades. The newly-restored building will be used to welcome and inform Nome's visitors.

**GOLD MINING TO BE FEATURED AT MAY 5 AHPI MEETING**

In keeping with the Alaska State Gold Rush Centennial, Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc. (AHPI) is celebrating the Municipality's historic gold mines at its 1997 annual meeting, to be held on Monday, May 5, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Alaska Public Lands Information Center (APLIC) auditorium. Cynthia Toohey of Crow Creek Mine, and Debbie Knox of Indian Valley Mine, will talk about their respective properties and the roles they played in the history of this area. Both mines are open to the public, close to Anchorage, and provide fun and easy ways to learn about gold mining in Alaska. The APLIC office is located at 605 West Fourth Avenue, Suite 105 (at F St.). The program is free and open to the public!

**AAHP TO BEGIN OFFERING PRESERVATION SCHOLARSHIP**

The Board of Directors, recognizing the key role which trained professionals play in the preservation field, have voted to fund an \$800 scholarship to Alaskan undergraduate or graduate students in historic preservation, preservation architecture or conservation. This is the first scholarship of its kind to be offered by the AAHP. Application deadline is May 1. For more information, call Julie Johnson at 274-3600.

**JOIN US AND PRESERVE ALASKA'S HISTORY!**

Membership runs from January 1 through December 31. Benefits include...

- \* the quarterly AAHP newsletter
- \* annual meeting
- \* workshops and seminars
- \* historic preservation advocacy

___ Student .....	\$10	___ Contributor .....	\$50
___ Individual .....	\$15	___ Friend .....	\$100
___ Family.....	\$25	___ Sponsor .....	\$250
___ Non-Profit.....	\$25	___ Benefactor .....	\$500

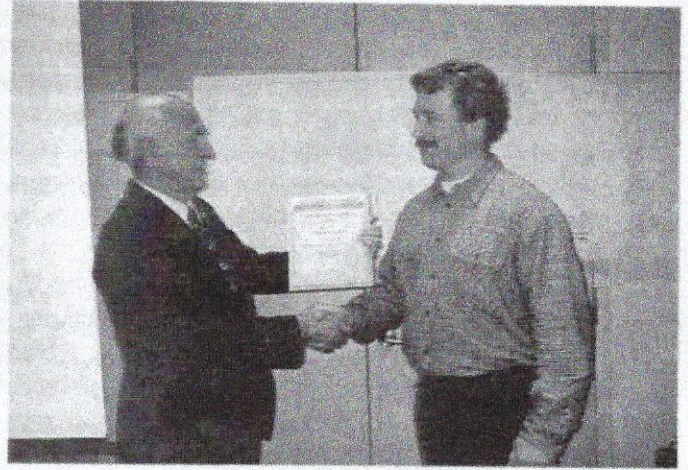
PLEASE NOTE ANY CHANGE TO YOUR MAILING LABEL.

Donations to AAHP are tax deductible as allowed under IRS regulations. I/we would also like to make a tax deductible gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the AAHP Top Ten Most Endangered Buildings preservation matching grant account.

Check enclosed for \$ \_\_\_\_\_. WE THANK YOU!  
 Please return to: The Alaska Association for Historic Preservation  
 645 West Third Ave.  
 Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2124

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COGHILL RECEIVES OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

At the recent annual meeting, AAHP Executive Director Bill Coghill was given the prestigious Outstanding Service Award for his many years of service to the Alaska Association for Historic Preservation. Bill has been active with our organization since 1986, and he has served as its executive director since 1990. The strong, healthy condition which our organization now enjoys is due largely to his many efforts. He, more than the other members, does the organization's work—or, through his cheerful demeanor, he serves as a catalyst for the efforts of the other board members. He is known by virtually all of AAHP's members, and because of his keen and easygoing skill as Membership Chair, many present members have joined our organization. Past and present board members have found him a pleasure with whom to serve. For all these reasons, President Pat Murphy found it an easy choice when he tapped him for the Outstanding Service Award.



*Longtime AAHP leader Bill Coghill (left) receives Outstanding Service Award from President Pat Murphy.*

Thank you, Bill, for your many years of service! We humbly appreciate your many efforts.

## COME TO EAGLE, ALASKA, FOR THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION!

Elva Scott, part of the Welcoming Committee for the Eagle Centennial Commission, reports that Eagle—an 1898 gold rush town, home of Fort Egbert, one-time headquarters of Alaska's Third Judicial District and the site from which the completion of the first trip through the Northwest Passage was announced to the world—is planning its Centennial Celebration this June and July with a two-week re-enactment of its founding. Many Alaskans have said, "oh yes, Eagle, I have always wanted to go there." So this is your special chance!

The celebration will begin on the summer solstice, June 21, with a river flotilla, floating from Dawson City to Eagle on your own private boats—canoes, kayaks, rafts, river boats—at either your own speed or with the group. Stops are planned at historic sites along the way, and those traveling with the group will receive interpretive information where appropriate.

On June 23, a tent city will be set up in Eagle City; the tent complex will feature Barney's Saloon (where non-alcoholic beverages will be served). The land registrar will also be there to sell property. Free ground sleeping space will be available in the tents, but make your reservations in advance.

The remaining 10 days will include daily continental breakfasts; tours of the museum, the city, of gardens, of the area's natural history, etc.; plus hikes and other recreational activities. Evening programs (readings, historic melodramas, musicals, videos, etc.) will be held in the historic Redman Hall from 7 to 9 p.m., after which Barney's Saloon will host live music, an art and craft show, and similar events.

On July 3, there will be a special potluck dinner, followed by dancing with Athapaskan Fiddlers—authentic, old time music—from Fairbanks.

Finally, there will be an old-time patriotic celebration on July 4<sup>th</sup>. Featured on the program will be a parade, a fleet-of-foot race, a concessions stand (includes famous local home made root beer floats), volleyball and baseball games, and a raffle shooting contest with targets across the river.

Eagle City, Elva notes, is easily reachable by car, boat, or small plane. It has "one of the nicest campgrounds in the state" and there's plenty of room for RV's and tents. (There are also several lodges or bed and breakfasts in town.) For more information, or to secure wall tent reservations, telephone the Eagle Historical Society and Museums at 547-2325, or fax them at 547-2232. See you there!

## FAIRBANKS COAL BUNKERS FACE MAY 30 DEMOLITION DEADLINE

(adapted from Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, April 3, 1997)

The Alaska Railroad coal bunkers, located at the corner of Illinois Street and Phillips Field Road in Fairbanks, has been the subject of controversy since last fall. At that time, the railroad decided to sell the land on which the coal bunkers are located to a nearby lumber yard, and plans were set to demolish the facility. But the coal bunkers, which were built in 1932, soon stirred up a group of stalwart defenders, and the Fairbanks Historic Preservation Foundation forged a letter of agreement with the family that now owns the structure. That agreement delayed any demolition until May 30, 1997, in hopes that an alternate location might be found for the coal bunkers. Since then the Foundation and the Friends of the Coal Bunkers, headed by local resident Patty Piersol, have been searching for alternate sites, thus far without success.

In order to publicize the beauty of the coal bunkers, and its value to Interior history, the Fairbanks Community Museum is now showing an exhibit, "Beauty and the Bunkers," at its facility at Fifth Avenue and Cushman Street. The three-gallery exhibit, much of which has been compiled by history student Janine Dorsey, features paintings, photography, blueprints, newspaper articles, and other historical paraphernalia, and in order to increase the realism to visitors, the crunch of gravel is felt underfoot.

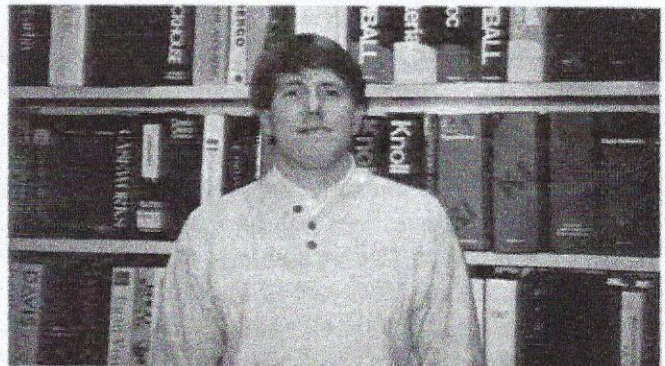
The exhibit runs through April 27. The museum is open from Wednesday through Saturday, 12:00 noon until 4:00 p.m.

### COME TO THE EARLY SUMMER CELEBRATION AT THE OSCAR ANDERSON HOUSE!

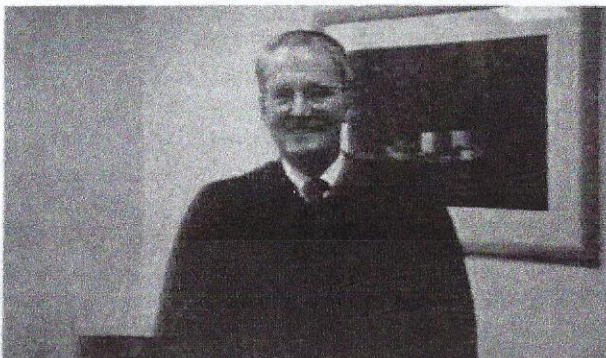
The Oscar Anderson House Museum will herald the arrival of spring at its Annual Early Summer Celebration the weekend of May 10 and 11, from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. Visitors can tour the 1915 house and the rustic tent display. The Aurora Borealis Lacemakers will be demonstrating their craft each day. Admission is \$3 for adults, \$2 for seniors, and \$1 for children (ages 5-12). Since Sunday, May 11 is Mothers' Day, moms get in free!

### SEAN BOILY, JAMES WANAMAKER NOMINATED TO THE BOARD

At the February 2 annual meeting, Sean Boily (*right*) and James Wanamaker (*below*) were elected to AAHP's Board of Directors for three-year terms, replacing Russ Sackett and Maria Wisdorf-Strobel. Sean is a bright young architect; he lives in Anchorage and works for ECI Hyer, Inc. He has agreed to head the organization's all-important Projects and Issues Committee, where he will work on the nomination of the annual Ten Endangered Properties list and the choosing of a building which will be the recipient of AAHP's annual preservation grant.



Judge Wanamaker, a District Court judge, has lived in Alaska for 37 years; in several past instances, he has provided helpful legal advice to our organization. We look forward to their contribution on our revitalized board.



NOTE: As this newsletter went to press, we were informed of the resignation of one of our board members. So if any member would like to be considered for the board, contact executive director Bill Coghill (333-4746) for further information.

## CANDIDATES FOR THE 1997 TOP TEN ENDANGERED PROPERTIES LIST

The nominations are in for the 1997 AAHP Top Ten Most Endangered Properties list! A total of 16 properties were nominated.

The Top Ten list will be selected from two sources: 1) new nominations submitted in early 1997, combined with 2) projects elected from the 1996 list. The ten selected properties will be chosen by the AAHP Board of Directors and Advisory Board members, who will review all submitted projects; the list will be announced during Preservation Week in mid-May. Sadly, one of the Top Ten properties for 1996—the Skagway Fire Station—will not be included in this year's nominations as it was demolished last September. But on a brighter note, the Seward Railroad Depot will also be removed from the list because solid arrangements have been made for its restoration and adaptive reuse. Work on the depot will be completed by the spring of 1998.

The new project nominations include:

- \* Alaska Juneau Gold Mining Company's Locomotive Repair Shop, Juneau
- \* Saints Sergius and Herman of Valaam Church, Nanwalek (English Bay)
- \* Matanuska Colony Creamery/Cannery/Warehouse, Palmer
- \* Flat City Historic District, Flat (near Iditarod)
- \* First Avenue Historic Streetscape, Fairbanks
- \* Nike Site Summit, Anchorage
- \* CAA Generator Building, King Salmon
- \* Alaska Railroad Coal Bunkers, Fairbanks

Projects from the 1996 list that will automatically be re-nominated this year are:

- \* The Improved Order of Redmen Lodge, Eagle City
- \* Alaska Nellie's Cabin, Lawing (Moose Pass)
- \* Independence Mine Camp, Hatcher Pass
- \* St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Seward
- \* Erskine House, Kodiak
- \* Victor Holm cabin, Kasilof
- \* Masonic Temple, Fairbanks
- \* Sheldon Jackson College, Sitka

PRESERVATION GRANT APPLICATIONS have been submitted for three properties from last year's Top Ten list: Alaska Nellie's Cabin in Lawing, The Improved Order of Redmen Lodge in Eagle City, and the Old Bunkhouse in the Independence Mine State Historic Park, Hatcher Pass. All are excellent, well-prepared applications. A committee from the Board of Directors will choose the winning candidate(s) prior to Preservation Week in mid-May.

## THE LATEST MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the 237 members that have paid their dues for 1997. We still have a number of old (1996) members who have not renewed, and we encourage your early renewal, as this is the major source of funds with which we operate our organization. So please check your mailing label ... if it indicates "97" on it, then you're paid up for the year; if not, why not join up right away?

Donations to the Matching Grant Program this year total \$1,500. As a result of your generosity (thank you!), the Board of Directors will likely approve adding \$1,000 worth of donations to the \$3,000 of existing funds which AAHP expects to put into the program this year. Thus, the winner of this year's Preservation Grant will probably have \$4,000 with which to refurbish an endangered Alaskan property. The property—one of those which were included on last year's Ten Endangered Properties List—will be selected shortly and announced during National Historic Preservation Week in mid-May.

Since reporting to you in the last newsletter, we have received the following additional members (either new or returning members) at the Friend (\$100) level: *Janet McCabe, Rebecca Mix, Paul Sincic, Maria Wisdorf, Lynn Dixon, and Barbara S. Smith*. And at the Contributor level, we are glad to have received memberships from the following people or organizations: *Judy Bittner, City of Seward, Sally Ramagalila, Steward Title Company, Earl Beistline, Emily DeForest, James Wanamaker, Mary and George Ford, C. C. Hawley, Stephen Peters, John Chenoweth, Jennings Graham, Sylvia Broady, and James Harvey*. Many others have joined at the Family (\$25), Nonprofit (\$25), or Individual levels. To each of you, MANY THANKS!

*Alaska Preservation Progress!*

## ULATKA HEAD SITE DESIGNATED AS NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AFFILIATE

by Rebecca Goodrich, Dutch Harbor *Fisherman*

The anti-aircraft installation at Ulatka Head, a former military site on Amaknak Island owned by the Ounalashka Corp., has been designated as an affiliate of the National Park Service. Unlike most NPS units, an affiliated site remains the property of, and is managed by, its owner. Ulatka Head is one of just 25 such affiliated sites nationally.

Now that the park unit is a reality, the next step is a cooperative agreement between the Park Service and the Native village corporation. Ounalashka Corp. CEO Dick Davis told the Unalaska City Council that he was pleasantly surprised by Congress's rapid passage of the legislation. NPS historian Linda Cook said the affiliate was first proposed in a 1990 study on the preservation of World War II sites. The legislation was submitted earlier this year. NPS officials discussed the 81-acre site's new status Sunday at the Parks, Culture, and Recreation building in Unalaska. About 20 residents attended.

"We're here to help," said Dwight Pitcaithley, the NPS's chief historian. "The landscape is very dramatic," he said. Pitcaithley has visited other World War II military sites, but said he finds Ulatka Head strikingly unique. "There are still ghosts out there," Pitcaithley said. "Like Ellis Island before it was renovated." Asked his opinion about Ulatka Head's future, Pitcaithley said, "Off the cuff, I'd recommend minimal development." He went on to say the "ghosts" are "something to keep in mind in regards to development. No one wants to destroy what makes it an evocative site. We could re-create it, re-build it 'just the way it was' and ruin it. You can't create integrity, you can only take away from it," he said.

Pitcaithley stressed that the land owner will shape the direction of what happens at the site, not the Park Service. Davis mentioned an interpretive center as one possibility at the city council meeting.

The designation of an affiliated unit allows for protection, preservation, and interpretation of the location, with NPS acting as a consultant, and ensures local involvement in the process of development.

Pitcaithley recommends sensitive development, beginning with surveying, drawing and preservation. Protecting the site's integrity means preserving the atmosphere and mood, he said.

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