

THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

200 West 34th Avenue #1184, Anchorage, Alaska 99503

FALL 2004

VOL. 23 ISSUE 2

Eventful spring and summer for AAHP

Ed. Note: This Fall newsletter is the second issue for 2004. There was no Summer 2004 issue.

Spring and summer 2004 were eventful for the Alaska Association for Historic Preservation and for historic preservation in Alaska. In April, AAHP partnered with Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park and the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology in putting on the "Saving Alaska's Past for the Future" conference in Skagway (see Page 8). During National Historic Preservation Week in May, AAHP announced Alaska's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties for 2004 (see Pages 4-7). Photos of the properties on this year's Ten Most Endangered list were on display at Cook Inlet Book Company in downtown Anchorage for most of May. Also in May, AAHP provided a scholarship for a local person to attend the "Stabilization and Preservation Techniques for Historic Log Structures" workshop at the Victor Holm cabin on the Kenai Peninsula (see Page 8). In June, AAHP awarded historic preservation matching grants to two properties that were on the Ten Most Endangered list in 2003 (see Page 7). In July, AAHP's Annual Picnic took place in Palmer (see Page 3).



AAHP Annual Picnic walking-tour participants at Colony House Museum in Palmer.

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Executive Director resigns

AAHP's executive director, Janine Dorsey, is resigning in order devote her full attention to the completion of her doctoral dissertation. Janine has served as part-time executive director since February 2003. During that time, she has worked with the Board of Directors to advance all aspects of AAHP's work in support of historic preservation in Alaska.

Two Board members have resigned

Two members of AAHP's Board of Directors resigned recently. Bruce Noble resigned in May after serving on the Board for two years. Yvonne Meyer, who served as AAHP's vice president for nearly two years, resigned in September and moved out of state.

Bruce left Alaska in May, after four years in Skagway as Superintendent of Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, to become Superintendent of Colorado National Monument. The monument is a 20,500 acre park unit that is significant for the evidence of the geological and erosional forces it contains. The scenic 23-mile Rim Rock Drive provides visitor access to the monument's unique landscape, which resulted from the uplift that produced the Colorado Plateau and created the spectacular landforms found within other national parks including Canyonlands, Arches, Canyon de Chelly, and Grand Canyon.

We thank Bruce and Yvonne for the significant contributions they made to AAHP as Board members.

Apply now for AAHP Board openings

Have you considered serving on AAHP's Board of Directors? Interested individuals are encouraged to apply. Elections will take place at the 2005 Annual Meeting.

Contact the AAHP office:
Phone: (907) 929-9870
Email: preservation@gci.net

Thanks for supporting AAHP!

To all AAHP members, "Thank you for your support in 2004!" Your membership is vitally important to AAHP's programs, which support historic preservation in Alaska.

A special THANK YOU! to those who joined at the Contributor level or above and to those who made contributions to AAHP or to AAHP's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties matching-grant account:

Marion and Randall K. Acord
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Many Thanks to All!

Annual Picnic held in Palmer on July 31

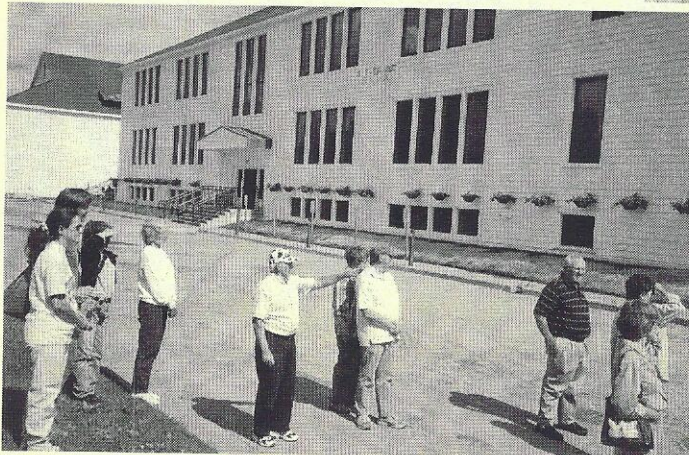
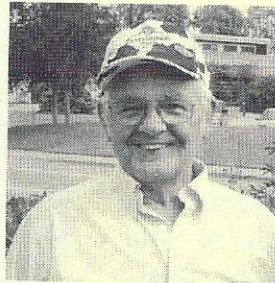


Pictured above are some of the AAHP Annual Picnic participants who enjoyed the sunny afternoon, delicious food, and fine program about the Palmer Historic District.

On July 31 two-dozen AAHP members and friends gathered in Palmer for the 2004 Annual Picnic. AAHP president Fran Seager-Boss (second from right in the photo above) grilled hamburgers and hotdogs, and AAHP members provided an assortment of delicious salads and desserts.

Following the picnic, there was an informative three-part program about the Palmer Historic District. First, Mike Chmielewski and David Holladay (back row in the photo above), described the Matanuska Cultural and Historical Project's goal of

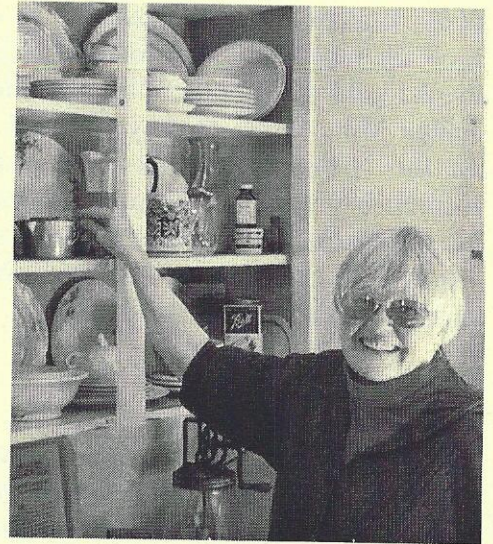
Wayne Bouwens (right), who came to the Matanuska Colony with his family in 1935, drew from decades of first-hand knowledge as he led a walking tour of the Palmer Historic District. Wayne described the rationale behind the Colony, its design and layout, and what it was like to live there. He pointed out the sites of many of the original buildings. Some are now gone; others, such as the school (below), have been converted to other uses.



The Mat-Maid Warehouse is behind the interpretive sign.

saving the historic Mat-Maid Warehouse (pictured above) to use as a space for the visual and performing arts, public meetings, and a museum about Alaska and local history.

Then Wayne Bouwens, vice president of the Palmer Historical Society, led a walking tour of the Palmer Historic District that ended at the Colony House Museum. There, Gerry Keeling, president of the Palmer Historical Society, spoke about life in the Colony community.



Gerry Keeling (above) is pictured in the kitchen of the Colony House Museum in Palmer. Gerry invited those on the tour to walk through the cozy home and see its period furnishings. She then shared stories of life in the Colony community.

AAHP Names Alaska's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties for 2004

AAHP announced the 2004 list of Alaska's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties during Historic Preservation Week in May. Three of the ten properties are new to the list this year. They are the Arctic Brotherhood Hall in Skagway; Clover Pass Community School in Ketchikan; and Kake Cannery National Historic Landmark in Kake. Two other properties were listed in the early 1990s: the old Bishop Rowe Chapel in Arctic Village (1991 & 1992), and Flat City Historic District (1994 & 1997). The remaining five properties were listed in 2003.

In the last 14 years, AAHP has named 62 historic properties to Alaska's Ten Most Endangered list. The primary purpose of the list is to bring more public awareness to Alaska's threatened historic properties. Heightened awareness often leads to increased support for the preservation of endangered historic properties, which are assets important to tourism, economic development, and the cultural heritage of Alaska.

Historic properties on the 2004 list will be eligible to apply for AAHP's matching grant program for preservation projects planned for 2005.

Alaska Juneau Gold Mining Company Locomotive Repair Shop, Juneau — *Also listed in 2003.* Built in 1916, the locomotive repair shop was used for repairing locomotives that hauled ore from the AJ gold mine to the mill. The shop is part of the Jualpa Mine Camp Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The locomotive repair shop's rotting foundation needs to be stabilized. The roof has been damaged by high winds and needs to be replaced. Windows, doors, and siding also need rehabilitation.

Arctic Brotherhood Hall, Skagway — Constructed in 1899 as a meeting hall for Camp No. 1 of the Arctic Brotherhood (a large and influential Klondike Gold Rush fraternal organization), the building has a unique rustic driftwood façade that was added in 1900. The façade is composed of more than 9,000 pieces of locally harvested driftwood that were arranged in shapes of mosaic letters, gold pan, and square basket-weave patterns. Portions of the

driftwood façade have deteriorated, and some driftwood sticks have begun to dislodge from the horizontal projections. In addition, those areas that have suffered from perpetual exposure to moisture drainage may have impacted the substrate. The A.B. Hall is a contributing element of the Skagway and White Pass District National Historic Landmark.

Bureau of Indian Affairs School, Unalakleet — *Also listed in 2001, 2002, and 2003.* Built in the 1930s, the two-story building, with its Georgian Revival elements, including a cupola with functioning bell, is a distinct landmark in the community. Many residents attended elementary school there until its closure in the 1980s. Harsh weather and lack of maintenance are causing the building to deteriorate. The Native Village of Unalakleet is working towards acquiring and restoring the building for use as office space and a center for community activities.



Arctic Brotherhood Hall, Skagway

Photo by Michael Catsi

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2004 Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties, cont'd.

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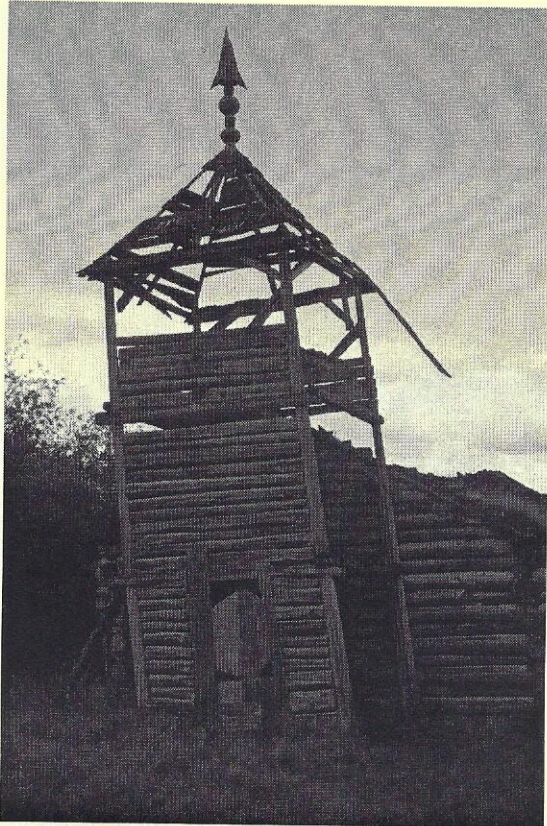


Photo courtesy of Steven Dinero

The old Bishop Rowe Chapel was in a state of severe disrepair prior to reconstruction and preservation work in July and August 2004.

Bishop Rowe Chapel, Arctic Village — *Also listed in 1991 and 1992.* The chapel was constructed in 1916-17 by the Reverend Albert E. Tritt and his followers. Services were held there for nearly 40 years, until a larger church was built in the village in the late 1960s. The old log chapel was then vacated and has since fallen into severe disrepair as a result of the stresses of gravity and harsh weather. In 2002, an architect surveyed, recorded, and assessed the condition of the building in order to create a detailed plan to preserve it. In 2003, the logs were labeled, the building was disassembled, and a gravel pad was created. In winter 2003-2004, villagers cut logs in preparation for the building reconstruction and preservation work that took place in July and August 2004. The goal is to eventually convert the reconstructed building into the Gwich'in Cultural Heritage Center.

Ed. note: For more information about this project, see article in the Aug. 15, 2004 Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

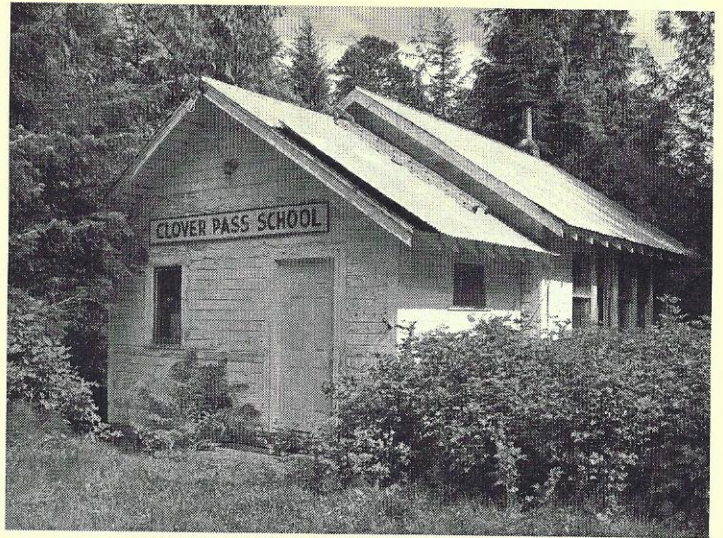


Photo courtesy of Historic Ketchikan

Clover Pass Community School, Ketchikan

Clover Pass Community School, Ketchikan — Constructed in 1947 by homesteaders in the Clover Pass area northwest of Ketchikan, the Clover Pass Community School is an 18' by 24' single room schoolhouse. It operated into the early 1960s and then closed when road improvements made it easier to attend schools in Ketchikan. The building later served as a community center, polling station, and lending library. Vacant for the past decade, it is beginning to deteriorate. The main danger to the property is the fact that the land is currently owned separately from the building. Historic Ketchikan recently gained title to the building with the intent of preserving and renovating it.

Japonski Island Boathouse, Sitka — *Also listed in 2003.* Built prior to World War II, the boathouse was part of the Sitka Naval Air Station. It was used during the war to repair Navy and Army boats and later to maintain shore boats that ran between Sitka and Japonski Island. In 1984, the Navy and Army installations, including the boathouse, were designated a National Historic Landmark. The building is deteriorating as a result of lack of maintenance. Development pressures also pose a potential threat as the City of Sitka plans to upgrade Japonski Island's infrastructure, including building new roads and rerouting old ones.

Continued on Page 6

2004 Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties, cont'd.

Continued from Page 5



*Sandra Miscovich photo. Courtesy of Office of History & Archaeology
"July 4, 1999 Tug of War" in front of the Moose Hall in Flat.*

Flat City Historic District, Flat — *Also listed in 1994 and 1997.* The town of Flat, located in the Iditarod Mining District, includes 72 buildings, 4 structures, and 23 sites dating from 1909 to 1940. The historic district includes commercial, public, residential, and mining properties. Prominent buildings include the Moose Hall and two general stores. The town of Flat was the largest community and the principal mining camp in the Iditarod Mining District from the 1920s through the 1950s. The Flat City Historic District contains the largest concentration of historic buildings associated with the Iditarod National Historic Trail. The historic district is threatened by neglect, the elements, vandalism, lack of maintenance, and uncertainties associated with land ownership. Some repairs have been made to some of the buildings, but additional repairs are needed.

Jesse Lee Home, Seward — *Also listed in 1993, 1994, 2001, 2002, and 2003.* Built in 1926 to accommodate Alaska Native children orphaned by rampant tuberculosis and the 1919 influenza epidemic, the Jesse Lee Home in Seward replaced a school of the same name that was built in Unalaska in 1890 by the Women's Home Missionary Society of the United Methodist Church. The school site included dormitories, agriculture, animal husbandry, and a territorial school. An average of 120 children lived at the

home. Among them was Benny Benson, Jr., designer of Alaska's flag. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It has been vacant for a number of years and is deteriorating. Interior finishes and all windows and doors have been removed.



*Photo courtesy of Organized Village of Kake
Kake Cannery National Historic Landmark*

Kake Cannery National Historic Landmark, Kake — The Kake Cannery Complex is located on Kupreanof Island adjacent to the community of Kake. The complex consists of four large warehouses and a number of smaller support buildings, including bunkhouses, bungalows, bath & laundry house, blacksmith shop, generator powerhouse, cookhouse, docks and boardwalks. The Cannery sits on a foundation of piles and projects out over the tidal waters of Keku Strait. The first cannery on the site was built in 1906 and later changed hands. Developed and modified over the years to accommodate new machinery, labor practices, and fishing technology, the Cannery Complex reflects social and technological changes that took place in the first half of the twentieth century. The cannery occupied a place of central importance in the economic life of the Kake community. Since the late 1970s, neglect and lack of use have caused many of the buildings and adjoining docks to deteriorate. Roof sections that are worn or missing allow water to enter the buildings. Some pilings are missing, as are many doors, windows, and decking pieces. Docks, boardwalks, and pilings are rotting.

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2004 Ten Most Endangered, cont'd.

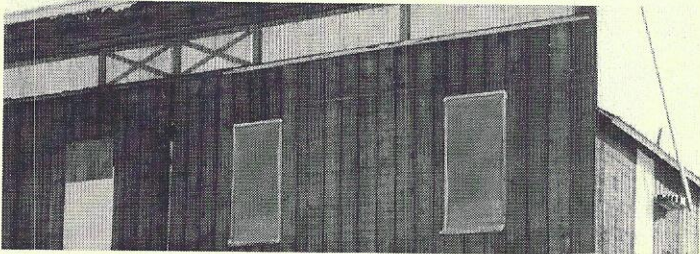
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Kasilof Winter Watchman's House, Kasilof — Also listed in 2001, 2002, and 2003. Built in the 1890s, the Kasilof Winter Watchman's House is one of only seven known pre-1900 structures surviving on the Kenai Peninsula. It was the home of the Alaska Packer's Association cannery superintendent, Harry Weatherby, whose historic photos of the fishing industry are in the State of Alaska archives. After the cannery closed, the building was used by local homesteaders through the 1930s and then abandoned. In 1962, the State of Alaska gained title to a 44-acre parcel, including the house. In the 1990s, the site was designated for a state park. The house has been heavily vandalized over the years. All windows and doors are gone, exposing the interior to the elements.

Preservation grants awarded

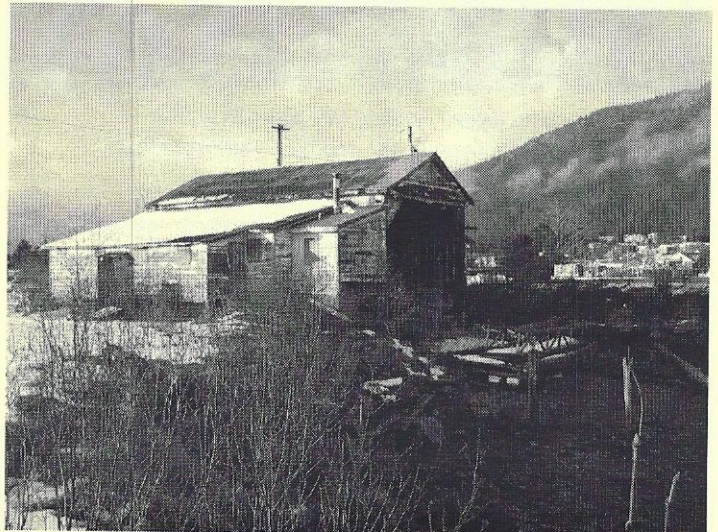
AAHP awarded its 2004 preservation grants to Portland House, in Skagway, and Japonski Island Boathouse, in Sitka. Matching-grant awards of \$1,500 each will go to those properties. Portland House and Japonski Island Boathouse were named to AAHP's list of Alaska's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties in 2003. Those ten properties were eligible to apply for grant assistance with preservation projects planned for 2004.

Portland House is a historic retail building within the Skagway Historic District. The grant funds will assist with stabilization of the building's false front and reconstruction of a vertical extension on the top of the north elevation that is visible in historic photographs but is no longer present.



Portland House, Skagway. Detail of the building's false front.

Japonski Island Boathouse is a significant World War II era structure in a prominent location in Sitka. The grant funds will assist with a project to clean up, repair, and paint the building. That project is part of a larger project to rehabilitate the building for use as a maritime museum.



Rebecca Poulson

Japonski Island Boathouse, Sitka

AAHP awards historic preservation grants annually to one or more of the properties that were listed as Alaska's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties in the previous year. The grants are awarded on a 50/50 matching basis. Since inaugurating the grant program in 1995, AAHP has awarded more than \$40,000 in matching-grant funds to help save threatened buildings in Alaska.

The grants are made possible by AAHP members' generous contributions to the Ten Most Endangered grant fund. Contributions to this fund can be made by completing the donation section of the AAHP membership form located inside the back cover of this newsletter.

For further information, contact AAHP at (907) 929-9870 or e-mail: preservation@gci.net

April historic preservation conference held in Skagway



Conference participants arrived in Skagway to find preparations under way for the summer tourism season.

A highly successful statewide historic preservation conference took place in Skagway in April. More than 40 people from around Alaska and the Yukon attended the conference, including representatives from Certified Local Governments (CLGs), members of the Skagway Historic District Commission, city officials, park staff, and Skagway residents and business owners. Partners in putting on the conference were Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology, and AAHP.

Nationally known speakers shared their expertise on topics such as National Register criteria, the roles and responsibilities of historic district commissions, historic preservation tax credits, heritage tourism, compatible design practices within historic districts, and the roles of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Preservation Action. Preservationists who attended found the meeting inspiring and very helpful. They came away with lots of good technical information.

Bruce Noble, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park superintendent, said, "The conference was a great success in that it brought together excellent speakers, along with outstanding participation from Skagway residents and Alaska's CLGs. It exemplified the partnership that exists between the National Park Service, the State Historic Preservation Office, the CLGs, and the statewide historic preservation organization, both in Alaska and across the United States."

In addition to the presentations and discussions, conference participants enjoyed guided tours of historic Skagway and an evening of Robert Service entertainment presented by Buckwheat Donahue. Virginia Long gave a tour of Portland House, which was on AAHP's Ten Most Endangered list in 2003 and received a Ten Endangered matching grant award this year.

Log-building preservation workshop held in May

Kachemak Heritage Land Trust (KHLT) — in partnership with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Kenai National Wildlife Refuge and SHPO — held a historic log building restoration workshop at the Victor Holm Cabin on May 10-14, 2004. Fifteen people attended. AAHP provided a scholarship for a local person to attend the workshop.

The workshop began with introductions of the trainers and a description of the workplan for the week by primary trainer Gary Titus. Participants then spent four days at rotating work stations where they learned to safely jack and crib the building for fitting new logs, to create a professional structural assessment and report, to accurately measure and hew logs, to scribe joints to accurately match the ones needing replacement, and to carefully excavate and document artifacts. Dr. Ed Berg of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge taught participants how to take core samples and "cut cookies" to use to date historic structures. During the week, the sill logs on the cabin were replaced, test areas were dug and items found were photographed and otherwise documented, the small cache building was assessed, disassembled, documented, moved and new logs were hewn to replace rotten ones. Core samples were taken from several log buildings on the site to try to date later.

The Victor Holm cabin was on AAHP's list of Alaska's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties in 1995, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2001, and 2002.

Ed. Note: Thanks to Barb Seaman, executive director of KHLT, for providing information for this article.



Photo courtesy of Kachemak Heritage Land Trust

Workshop participants learned preservation methods for historic log structures at the Victor Holm cabin.

*To renew now for 2005, complete the form below and mail it with your payment.
Also, please consider making a donation to the matching-grant account. Thank you!*

AAHP MEMBERSHIP 2005

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Membership \$ _____
 Donation \$ _____
 Total Enclosed \$ _____

**I/we wish to make a tax-deductible gift to the
 AAHP Top Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties matching-grant account.**
(Donations to AAHP are tax deductible, as allowable under IRS regulations.)

I also wish to participate in AAHP activities in the following areas:

- Fund Raising Membership Education Legislation Public Relations Projects & Issues

Please return to: The Alaska Association for Historic Preservation • 200 W. 34th Ave. #1184 • Anchorage, AK 99503

U.S. Army Garrison, Alaska receives Army's top Cultural Resources Management award

U.S. Army Garrison, Alaska received the Secretary of the Army's Environmental Award (FY2003) for Cultural Resources Management, Installation, which is the Army's highest award for cultural resources management. The award recognizes U.S. Army Garrison, Alaska for outstanding growth and stewardship between 2001 and 2003. During that time, the Cultural Resources Management program increased its staffing from one part time to seven professional staff positions, published seven historic studies, and completed its historic building survey, in addition to numerous other achievements. The award was presented at the 2003 Secretary of the Army Environmental Awards Ceremony, which was held on June 1, 2004, at Elmendorf Air Force Base. Also, U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, Fort Richardson received the "Citation for Meritorious Achievement in Recognition of Outstanding Accomplishments during 2003 in Cultural Resources Management in Support of the Environmental Programs of the Department of Defense," and "Honorable Mention 2003 Secretary of Defense Environmental Award—Cultural Resources Management (Installation)."



Photo by Mike Davis

From left: Colonel Donna Boltz, U.S. Army Garrison Alaska Commander; Kristy Hollinger, Cultural Resources Specialist; Russ Sackett, Cultural Resources Manager; Aaron Robertson, Donnelly Training Area Archaeologist; and Colonel Craig Firth, Deputy Director of Pacific Region Office of the Installation Management Agency.



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Mat-Su students created posters for Historic Preservation Week

Third grade students at Tanaina and Pioneer Peak schools created posters illustrating a historic preservation theme as a social studies project. Their artwork was displayed at Cottonwood Creek Mall in Wasilla during National Historic Preservation Week. Twelve of the posters were selected for a calendar commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Mat-Su Borough.

National Historic Preservation Week is sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This year it was celebrated on May 3-9. The theme was "New Frontiers in Preservation."



Mat-Su students' Historic Preservation Week posters on display at Cottonwood Creek Mall in May.