

# THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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

Spring 2005

VOL. 24 ISSUE 1

*Ed. Note: This is the first newsletter for 2005.*

## AAHP Welcomes New Board Members & Administrator

The Alaska Association for Historic Preservation is pleased to announce that it has received three new board members and one new advisory board member.

Michael Yarborough, Janet Matheson, and Bob Mitchell have volunteered their time to be board members. Grant Crosby of the National Park Service has also volunteered to be a part of AAHP's Advisory Board.

Mike Yarborough is an archeological consultant in Alaska and owner of Cultural Resource Consultants. Janet Matheson is an architect and Vice President of the Alaska Chapter of the Pacific Northwest Region of CEFPI—The School Building Association. Bob Mitchell has retired from being State Historical Architect in both Alaska and North Dakota.

We would like to welcome all four to AAHP and express our deepest thanks.

Cait Yarborough has accepted the position of Administrator for AAHP, replacing Melissa Workmon. Cait is the daughter of Mike Yarborough and a recent graduate from the University of Utah. She will be going to graduate school in the fall at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, to study exercise physiology. AAHP is pleased to have her on board.

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**Board of Directors**

Officers:

President..... Fran Seager-Boss

Vice President..... Rogan Faith

Treasurer..... Maire Rhode

Secretary..... vacant

Other Members:

Judith E. Bittner, <i>Ex Officio</i>	Sean M. Boily
Amanda Welsh	Mike Yarborough
Sam Combs	Janet Matheson

## **Administrative Assistant resigns**

AAHP's administrative assistant, Melissa Workmon, resigned May 21st. Melissa is a full-time student at the University of Alaska Anchorage and needed to devote more time to completing her Bachelors of Science in Anthropology. She had worked for AAHP since October of 2004.

## **Board member resigns**

Board Member Torgeir Robertson has resigned. Torgeir served on the board for close to two years as Board Secretary.

We would like to thank Torgeir for the significant contributions he has made to AAHP as a Board member.

### **Advertise in the AAHP Newsletter**

	<u>Members</u>	<u>Corporate Members</u>
Business Card	\$25	\$15
1/4th Page	\$50	\$30

Prices are for one issue of the AAHP Newsletter. AAHP has the right to refuse advertisements that they deem inappropriate for this venue.

### **Apply now for AAHP Board openings**

Have you considered serving on AAHP's Board of Directors? Interested individuals are encouraged to apply.

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 so far in 2005!" 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:

### **Contributor Members**

Chugach Alaska Corporation

Rogan C. Faith

William J. Flynn Jr.

Gary H. Gillette

Stuart C. Hall

James & Mary Lou King

Bob & Mary Ellen Mitchell

Old Inlet Trading Post

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### **Friend Members**

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### **Corporate Members**

Combs & Combs, AIA

Welsh Whiteley Architects

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**Many Thanks to All!**

## Annual Meeting held at Kincaid Park Feb. 27th

On February 27th, 19 AAHP members and members of the public gathered at the Kincaid Park Chalet for the 2005 Annual Meeting. The topic for the day— the Matanuska Colonists. AAHP President Fran Seager-Boss gave a short talk on the history of the colonist project and on the current activities in the colony area of Palmer. She also presented the interpretive board on the Palmer Colony Area, detailing the history of the Colony Projects designer, Mr. David Reichard Williams and the project itself.

The highlight of the meeting was Wayne

*Far Right: Mr. Wayne Bouwens, the 1935 Matanuska Colony child, standing in front of a display board which discusses the project that brought Wayne's parents, brothers and sisters, and himself to Alaska.*



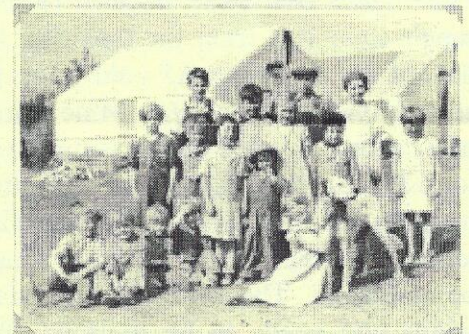
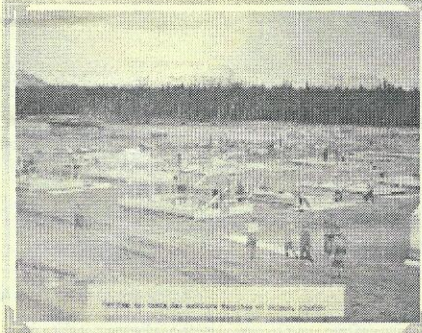
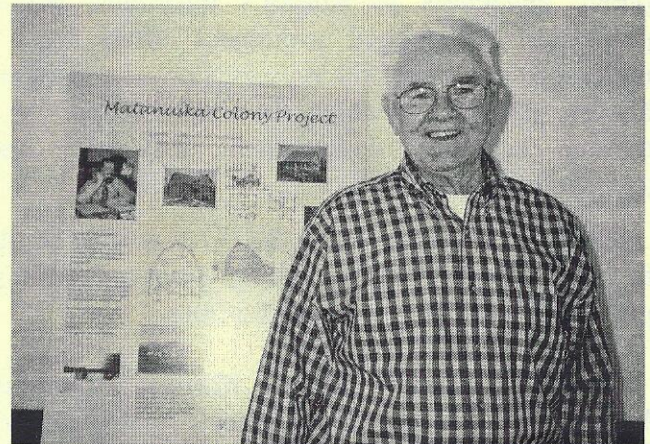
*Upper: Mr. David R. Williams*

*Right: Colony Children at the tent camp.*

*Left: Construction of the tent camp.*

*Photos courtesy of the Matanuska Government.*

Bouwens, a 1935 Matanuska Colony Child and vice president of the Palmer Historical Society. He spoke briefly about coming to Alaska with his family and of growing up in the colony. He then presented a preliminary draft of "Alaska Far Away," an exciting video on the Matanuska Colony Project. This video included interviews with Colonists and their children, as well as diary entries and letter back home from the first colonists. The final version of "Alaska Far Away" is expected out this winter.



## Food, Fun, & History ? AAHP's Annual Picnic July 30th

AAHP's annual picnic will be held on July 30th at the Victor Holm Cabin. It will be a great chance to see first hand the results of dedicated historic preservation.

The Victor Holm property, located on the Kasilof River, is thought to be the oldest homestead cabin on the Kenai Peninsula. Victor Holm was a Finnish-American who traveled to Alaska in 1890 to help build and work at the salmon cannery at the mouth of the Kasilof River. In 1921, Holm acquired a homestead patent along the river and lived there until the mid-1940s. When Victor left Alaska, he left his belongings behind, including ingenious pieces of homemade furniture, old newspapers, maps, and much more.

In 1999, the 1.37-acre Victor Holm parcel and the historically significant buildings on site were donated to the Kachemak

Heritage Land Trust to maintain for historic and cultural values. The cabin and its surrounding buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the larger log cabin, an outhouse, the well house, and a locking dove-tail jointed log cache. In 2004, KHLT held a workshop entitled, "Stabilization and Restoration Techniques for Historic Log Structures." During this week, the trainee's learned about the restoration of historic buildings and replaced several courses of logs, among other projects. Work continues to document Victor Holm's life and times, and to restore the site with the intention of creating a small museum someday.

\* This article was written by Barb Seaman, Executive Director of the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust. Many Thanks!

# AAHP Names Alaska's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties for 2005

AAHP is pleased to announce the 2005 list of Alaska's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties. There are four new properties on this year's list: the Alaska Governor's Mansion in Juneau, the Cape St. Elias Lighthouse on Kayak Island, the Historic Soldotna Post Office, and the Nike Site Summit in Eagle River.

In the last 15 years, AAHP has named 72 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 2005 list will be eligible to apply for AAHP's matching grant program for preservation projects planned for 2006.

**Alaska Juneau Gold Mining Company Locomotive Repair Shop, Juneau** — *Also listed in 1997, 2003, and 2004.* 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. It is also one of only three buildings remaining of the Alaska Juneau Gold Mine. 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.

**Alaska Governor's Mansion, Juneau** — The Governor's House was constructed between 1910 and 1912 as a residence for the Alaska Governor. The building was designed by John Knox Taylor using the style of Greek Revival. The Mansion was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976. Over the years, the Mansion has been allowed to deteriorate resulting in cracks in the columns, rotted window frames and other areas and leaks in walls and pipes. First Lady Nancy Murkowski formed the "Friends of the Governor's Mansions Foundation" in 2003 to support preservation, maintenance, and enhancement of the Mansion.

**Bureau of Indian Affairs School, Unalakleet** — *Also listed in 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004.* 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.

**Cape St. Elias Lighthouse, Kayak Island** — the Cape St. Elias Lighthouse has been active since 1916 and is one of only 16 lighthouses ever built in Alaska. The lighthouse has been unmanned for the last 30 years when the Coast Guard installed an automatic light and solar panel for power. The St. Elias Lighthouse is cared for by the Light keeper's Asso-



*Photo by Gary Gillette*

*The Alaska Juneau Gold Mining Company Locomotive Repair Shop in Juneau.*



*The Alaska Governor's Mansion. Photo by Karen Newton.*

## 2005 Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties, cont'd.

Continued from Page 4

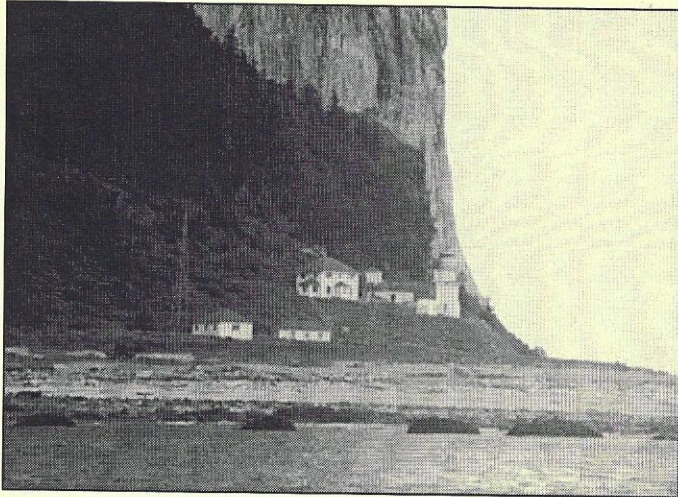


Photo courtesy of Toni Bocci

*The Cape St. Elias Lighthouse and outbuildings.*



Photo courtesy of Sitka Maritime Heritage Society  
*Japonski Island Boathouse*

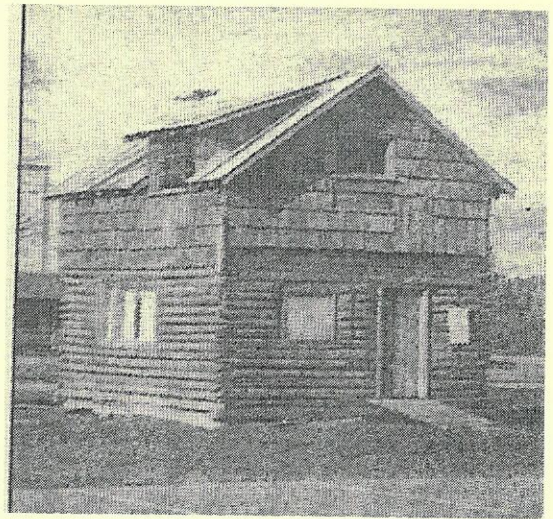


Photo courtesy of Soldotna Historical Society

*The Restored Historic Soldotna Post Office.*

ciation who raise funds and volunteer their time to preserve the Lighthouse and its surrounding buildings. The most current threat to the Lighthouse is a cracked foundation which is resulting in the building becoming structurally unsound.

**Flat City Historic District, Flat** — *Also listed in 1994, 1997 and 2004.* 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 threat-

ened 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.

**Historic Soldotna Post Office, Soldotna** — This two room building served as Soldotna's first post office from 1949 to 1951. Constructed in 1949 as the Howard and Maxine Lee Homestead, the Post office has served as home to Soldotna Post Master's Maxine Lee and then Eleanor Faa from 1949 to 1967. The building also served as a retail yarn shop in the 1970's. The Post Office is currently owned by the Soldotna Historical Society. The Society is planning on getting the Post Office listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but has managed to restore the cabin to its original condition.

**Japonski Island Boathouse, Sitka** — *Also listed in 2003 and 2004.* 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.



## 2005 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.

**Jesse Lee Home, Seward** — Also listed in 1993, 1994, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004. 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.

**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, a bath & laundry house, a blacksmith shop, a generator powerhouse, a 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.



Photo courtesy of Organized Village of Kake

Kake Cannery National Historic Landmark



Jesse Lee Home, Seward

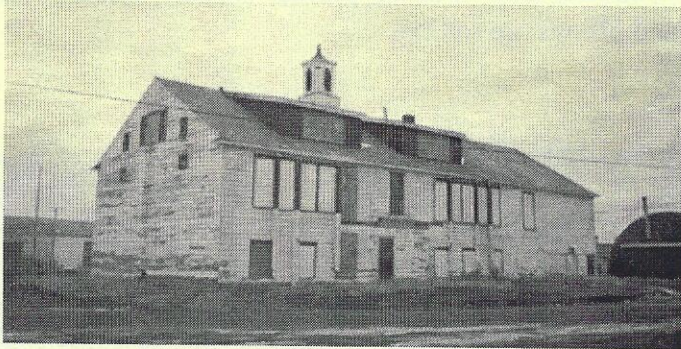
**Nike Site Summit, Eagle River** — Site Summit is an abandoned Nike missile site located on Mount Gordon Lyon in the Arctic Valley, north of Anchorage. Site Summit was built between 1957 and 1959 and is one of only two Nike Missile sites in the USA to hold live practice firings. The site was deactivated and abandoned in 1979 and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in July 1996. Due to its closeness to Anchorage, Site Summit is a very

Continued on Page 7

## 2005 Ten Most Endangered, cont'd.

*Continued from Page 6*

popular spot for hikers, most not very historically minded. All windows have been broken and other extensive vandalism has occurred. The Site is in need of new roofing and building siding, as well as sealing off the buildings and reinforcing the fence to keep out trespassers.

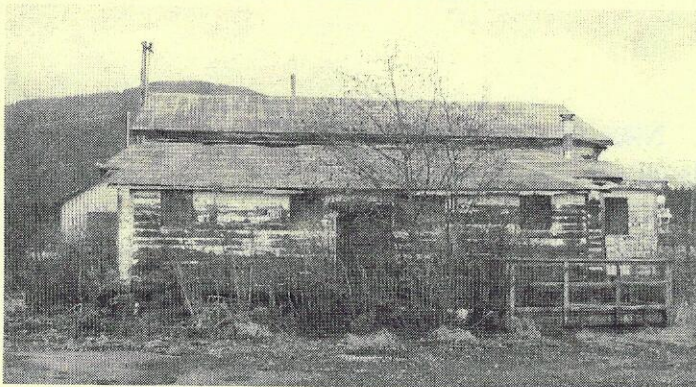


*Bureau of Indian Affairs School, Unalakleet*

## Japonski gets Grant for Second Year in A Row

AAHP awarded its 2005 preservation grant to the Japonski Island Boathouse, in Sitka. The grant is a matching grant worth \$2,500. Japonski Island Boathouse were named to AAHP's list of Alaska's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties in 2003, 2004, and 2005. Those ten properties were eligible to apply for grant assistance with preservation projects planned for 2005. The properties named to this years list will be eligible to apply for the 2006 grant.

Japonski Island Boathouse is a significant World



*The South wing of the Japonski Boathouse, Sitka*

War II era structure in a prominent location in Sitka. The grant funds will assist with hiring an engineer to repair the foundation of the main building and south wing. It will also go for repairing and replacing the five windows in the building.

AAHP awards historic preservation grants annually to one or more of the properties that were listed as Alaska's Ten Most Endangered Historic



*Photos courtesy of Rebecca Poulson  
Japonski Island Boathouse, Sitka*

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 \$42,000 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 on Page 9 of this newsletter.

AAHP would like to thank the other two properties who applied for this years grant: the Bishop Rowe Chapel in Arctic Village and the Arctic Brotherhood Hall in Skagway. We wish both organizations the best of luck with their efforts to preserve Alaska's architectural past.

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



To renew now for 2005 or 2006, 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

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Membership term is Jan. 1–Dec. 31.

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$15  | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor \$ 50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$250            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20   | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend \$100      | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor \$500 & above |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit* \$25 (*includes federal, state, & municipal agencies) |  |   |
- Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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.)

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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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. 34<sup>th</sup> Ave. #1184 • Anchorage, AK 99503

**The National Preservation Conference 2005  
Portland, Oregon**

The National Preservation Conference is being held September 27th to October 2, 2005 in Portland, Oregon. The conference is the premier educational and networking event for community leaders, volunteers, and staff of the historic preservation movement.

- LEARN how the historic city of Portland has used urban growth boundaries, transportation, and other innovations to protect adjacent farmland and open space, and create one of the most delightful downtowns in the country.
- EXPLORE cutting-edge adaptive use, infill, and mixed-use projects that use a range of state/local financial incentives, public sector leadership, and green architecture.
- UNDERSTAND the intersections of sustainability and current needs in cultural heritage tourism, historic sites, and historical education.

For more information about the 2005 Conference contact the National Trust for Historic Preservation at 800-944-6847 or on the web at [www.nthpconference.org](http://www.nthpconference.org) or e-mail them at [conference@hthp.org](mailto:conference@hthp.org)

**DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

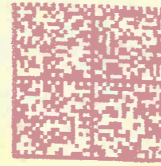
The National Trust for Historic Preservation is offering a scholarship for those who want to attend the 2005 Preservation Conference in Portland, Oregon. The scholarship is geared toward preservationists from diverse racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds.

Applications must be postmarked by June 1, 2005. If you are interested in receiving an application contact the National Trust at (843) 722-8552 or e-mail [scholarship@nthp.org](mailto:scholarship@nthp.org). You may also contact AAHP for a copy of the application.



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## History Day in Alaska

History Day in Alaska started in 1990 and is a theme based, academic competition held every year among middle and high school students, with the 2005 topic being "Communication in History: The Key to Understanding." The winners will go to the National competition held at the University of Maryland in June.

AAHP has the privilege of helping to sponsor 19 students from Anchorage, Eagle River, Haines, Fairbanks, and North Pole to attend the National

competition this year. The students' topics include presidential debates, communication through Braille, and a history of WAMCATS in Alaska.

AAHP's contribution will help pay for room & board at the University of Maryland and registration fees for students attending the contest. The National Park Service is able to pay this for all 19 students attending the National contest this year, and AAHP's contribution helped make that possible. We wish these students the best of luck!