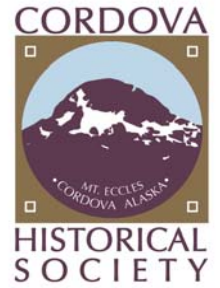




Volume 19 Issue 1
Late Winter 2008

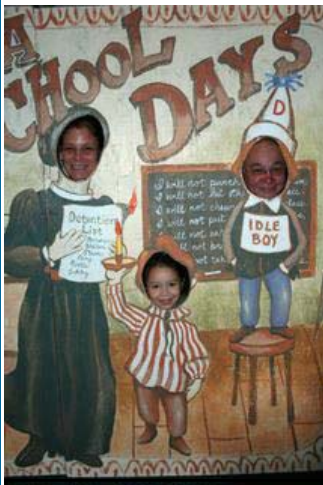
THE DISCOVERER



Published Now and Then.....

Readin', Writin', 'Rithmetic' and lots of laughs!

There were crayons on the tables and a dunce cap in the corner. A blackboard with a dusty eraser and small cartons of cold white milk complete with straws. And then there was the crabby old teacher with the fast ruler. It brought back too many memories for an awful lot of the dinner guests, but everyone in attendance at school that evening had a fabulous time!



The Hopkins Family

It was the Cordova Historical Society's annual dinner and volunteer appreciation celebration. The theme was 'Education in Cordova,' and surely someone learned something!

The annual history themed celebration was held appropriately enough in the oldest grade school cafeteria in Alaska—Mt. Eccles Elementary School. Principal Roemhildt and Teacher Violet Blum made sure the children minded all the rules (although the true teachers in attendance were certainly the most ill-behaved!) Despite the paper airplanes, chewing gum and all over rowdiness, dinner was finally served table by table on those wonderful compartmentalized cafeteria trays.

Like any typical school day there was a session of calisthenics offered up by former Phys Ed. Teacher Jerry Bendzak. There were school photo sessions; playground games; chalk boards and lunchbox appetizers to entertain the youngsters before the meal. Coloring on the paper tablecloths was encouraged and endorsed.

Principal Roemhildt also conducted the yearly spelling bee and while he discouraged cheating, there were some questionable activities in the audience. Only one student was sent to the dunce corner during the evening and only three-Ramona Kolenut earpulls were officially observed.



Spell: "Retirement," a challenge to retired Cordova teacher Tom Church.

The strong-armed, sweet-hearted cafeteria ladies ladled up an abundant pile of goodies for the students including roast turkey with all the fixings, green beans, applesauce and a cold pint of milk. Cobbler and ice cream finished off the meal.

After the meal there was the obligatory quiz that all the students were challenged to complete before attending the dinner and most did pass with flying colors thanks to the evening's program chock full of local history. The grand event of the evening was the awarding of the coveted Copper



Miss Snaggle (Gayle Groff) gives her opinion about the new grading system to Principal Roemhildt (David) in no uncertain terms!



(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)



Jim Casement and his copper spike!

Spike Volunteer of the Year. Appropriately enough, the award went to a community and society volunteer who had spent the last five to seven years researching the history of Cordova's schools and literally digging out of yearbooks and annuals a photo image of every graduate of Cordova High School since it was established.

Jim Casement worked on the photo project while still a teacher at CHS and then



CHS President Mike Webber, in a younger stage holds the hand of his lovely bride Toni Godes at the end of their school day.

continued his research as a member of the Cordova Centennial Committee to create an all-inclusive annual of all CHS graduates for the 2008 Centennial. He also has assisted the Historical Society with an endless amount of research on the history of the schools and the field of education in Cordova. In addition, Jim worked closely with the Historical Society and the Alaska Humanities Forum to complete a history of Pioneer Igloo #19 creating "Pioneering the Past" a documentary complete with oral histories about the Igloo and its role in the social fabric of Cordova.

Final acknowledgments at the dinner were for retiring Board members including David Roemhildt, Chris Dunlap, Virginia Lacy and Gail Steen. Principal Roemhildt made sure the disobedient crowd helped with the clean up of the cafeteria before everyone bid adieu for the evening!



TO PARENTS OR GUARDIANS—

Please make sure your child arrives to the Cordova Historical Society Annual Dinner on time — promptly at 6:00 pm or they will need an excuse from the principal.

Homework must be completed OR you should come prepared with a *very good excuse!*

You **MUST** bring this report card to school so that the teacher can finish the grading.

School age attire (circa 1950) is encouraged.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN

First 6 weeks *Mrs. J. Hedstrom*
 Second 6 weeks *Mrs. J. Hedstrom*
 Third 6 weeks *Mrs. J. Hedstrom*
 Fourth 6 weeks *Mrs. J. Hedstrom*
 Fifth 6 weeks *Mrs. J. Hedstrom*
 Sixth 6 weeks *Mrs. J. Hedstrom*

CHS Annual Dinner "School Days in Cordova"

CORDOVA, ALASKA

REPORT

of *Elsie Hedstrom*
 Grade *Four* School Year *1926-27*

Promoted to Grade *Fifth Grade*

Retained in Grade

Conditioned in

Hortense Holland
Teacher.

Superintendent

2007 Accomplishments

- Republished Iron Rails to Alaskan Copper
- Completed Alaska Humanities Forum Grant to preserve and protect the photos and paper ephemera of Pioneer Igloo #19
- Received Alaska State Museum Grant-in-Aid to create a disaster plan
- Became part of a five member Alaskan museum team to work towards accreditation by 2010
- Republished Cordova to Kennecott
- Created 2008 Centennial Calendar
- Creating 2008 Centennial Ornament
- Continued providing cultural curriculum with a local history emphasis to the elementary students of Cordova
- Made a \$1500 profit on Fish Follies!! Local artist Barbara Hoover was juror and there were 46 entries from 13 states
- Sponsored Summer Art for Kids with over 75 children attending and we gave a burst of new color to the Fish Sculpture out front
- Held a Kids Art Workshop for Shorebird Festival
- Sponsored eight members travel to Homer for the Annual Museums Alaska/Alaska Historical Society Conference
- Completed updates of the Technology Plan; By-laws and the first part of the Collections Policy
- Joined a working group of Alaska Museums to participate in a nationwide survey to see how our museum is doing — based on visitor's comments. This survey will begin in December 2007 and continue until June 2008.
- Received and accepted two large donations from the personal collections of Mary Behymer and Gail Steen
- Continued work and fund-raising on the Cordova Center Project

We remember.....with fondness....these dedicated friends of the Cordova Historical Society and Museum



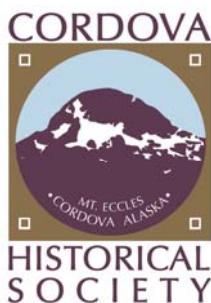
Pat Jones

Gail Osborne Steen



And Irene Behymer (seen here with Susanna Marquette)

Memorial contributions made to the museum in memory of any loved one are dedicated to the CHS Founders Endowment Fund created to foster the long term sustainability of the Cordova Historical Society and Museum. A great tribute and goal we are sure these three special women would celebrate. For more information about the CHS Founders Endowment, pick up a brochure at the museum.



Like our new logo? Designed by local artist Susan Ogle the image shows our beloved Mt. Eccles in the background with the dancing lady and the bear.





Anthony J. Dimond, Alaskan Pioneer

"A pioneer: One who goes ahead, marches in front into the wilderness of land or sea of thought or action and explores and clears the land, makes the roads, builds the bridges, so that others may safely follow." Anthony J. Dimond, 1923

Here's the second segment on Tony Dimond, part of our series of Alaskan pioneers who played a role in the development of early Cordova and Alaska.

In territorial days the United States commissioners performed the functions of a justice of the peace along with other duties of lower court judges and they received no salary and had to rely on fees collected for services rendered. Dimond realized that the Chisana position would be a gamble - if the camp turned out to be profitable he could make a lot of money, but if it was a failure he would lose all the money it took to get him there - Chisana was one of the most remote gold camps in Alaska. Dimond decided to take the chance.

Dimond arrived in Chisana with Frank Hoffman, the new deputy marshal, in November 1913. By the spring of 1914, Chisana had a population of about 500, several stores, roadhouses, saloons and a hospital but the mining did not live up to expectations and many stampeders started moving away to new prospects. Dimond could not support himself on the fees he received, but a letter from Donohoe gave him an alternative.

John Ostrander, Donohoe's partner had died of stomach cancer and Donohoe wanted Dimond to join him in the Valdez office as junior partner! Donohoe agreed but stayed in Chisana until a replacement was found and arrived in Valdez in later spring 1914 deeply in debt.

Valdez in 1914 was hoping to be a boom town, but Cordova beat the community out for the railroad to the interior and the federal government's decision to use Seward as the port to run the government railroad up the Susitna Valley was another hard blow and the future for Valdez looked bleak.

Tony Dimond was part of the hard core that stayed in Valdez and he demonstrated his commitment when he married Dorothea Miller, whose father had been a prominent local merchant. After his marriage, Dimond became even more socially and politically active in Valdez.

During his first six years as Donohoe's law partner, Dimond earned enough to support his growing family, finance a trip to Seattle for more surgery on his leg, grubstake Murray, and pay off his debts. He also earned a reputation as a formidable courtroom lawyer.

While practicing law with Donohoe, Dimond became progressively more active in the Democratic Party. During President Wilson's tenure, Dimond was in charge of appointing marshals, magistrates, postmasters and other officials. Although, he resisted suggestions that he run for territorial office, Dimond soon became active in local politics and was elected to the Valdez city council in 1917, 1918, and 1919. Because he was the largest vote getter, that meant he got to be mayor two of those years as well.

Dimond continually said he expressed that he had no political inspirations, but he faith in the future of Alaska and hoped to contribute to the territory's growth. His time as mayor of Valdez taught him how to run a government efficiently with a very small budget. His positions with the courts and his travels allowed him to make friends with people all over the territory - friends who would be come part of his constituency. Dimond won his election to the territorial legislature



(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

in a time when Democrats were generally considered the weaker party.

His role in Valdez politics continued in 1924 when he was reelected mayor. He served as toastmaster at the annual Moose Christmas dinner; served in the Valdez Chamber of Commerce; rode in the car with President Harding during his visit in '23; was elected grand president of the Valdez Pioneers and gave the baccalaureate address at the agricultural college in Fairbanks. He was a busy man!

The territorial senate, as established by the 1912 Organic Act consisted of 8 members, two from each judicial district – southeast Alaska; southcentral Alaska; Nome and Fairbanks. The territory and its municipalities were very limited in their powers. As a freshman senator, Dimond served on the Mining, Manufacturing and Labor and chaired the Committee on Judiciary and Federal Relations. He spent a time dealing with efforts to resolve inconsistencies and gaps in territorial law and to strengthen legal codes.

One important change Dimond made included randomly selecting jurors from a pool of registered voters. He also introduced a bill to increase the bounty on eagles, which were harassing the fur farmers in Prince William Sound, from fifty cents to one dollar.

His legal practice was still his main means of supporting his family now consisting of a son and two daughters. In August 1923, Dimond and Donohoe accepted a retainer from the Kennecott Copper Corporation to be resident legal representatives for enterprises which included the Copper River and Northwestern Railway and the Alaskan Steamship Company. People in Cordova commented that the Kennecott management was losing so many injury cases to Dimond that they need him on their side instead!

Dimond continued his service in the territorial legislature and by 1932 decided he would run for territorial delegate to congress. He faced James Wickersham, Alaska's former congressional delegate.

Dimond planned an extensive campaign with visits to towns throughout Alaska, most of which involved travel by plane. In September after stops at McGrath and Takotna, his plane landed on the river at Iditarod. While attempting to throw a rope to people waiting on shore, Dimond stepped on one of the floats, slipped and fell in backwards. He was struck on the head by the plane's propeller and got thrown into the river. He was rushed to Flat where he received first aid and was later flown to Fairbanks where he learned he had broken his scapula in three places.

Being injured didn't keep Dimond from the campaign trail and he continued to impress voters around the state. Dimond won the election easily with over 72% of the vote.

Dimond arrived in Washington at the same time as Franklin Delano Roosevelt and he quickly became an ardent proponent of the New Deal. As the territory's sole representative in the nation's capital, Dimond had the dual responsibilities of serving as an advocate for Alaskans when dealing with various federal agencies and of interpreting New Deal programs for his constituents back home. He took time to learn all about the new federal programs and how they would affect – good and bad – the territory.

Dimond's secretary was E.L. Bartlett and the two of them sent regular copies of the Congressional Record to interested parties back home. They sent reports to local newspapers nearly every week.

The Dimond and Bartlett families became close personal friends during their time in Washington, but Bartlett was not the only future Alaskan leader with whom Dimond worked. In 1934 Presi-



Anchorage Museum of History & Art, Library & Archives.

(Continued on page 6)

dent Roosevelt appointed Ernest Gruening to the newly-created position of Director of the Division of Territories and Island Possessions in the Interior Department. Gruening and Dimond worked closely with Dimond particularly with the construction of a highway to Alaska and military and naval defense in the territory.

Dimond was one of the first to recognize that Japan posed a potential threat to the United States, but congress ignored his repeated pleas for more military and naval present in Alaska until war with Japan was imminent.

Gruening and Dimond did not necessarily always agree on Alaskan matters.

Dimond opposed the Interior Department's actions that interfered with the activities of Alaskans, such as the toll on truckers using the Richardson Highway from Valdez to Fairbanks (a move to stifle competition with the unprofitable Alaska Railroad.)

Dimond regularly complained about the appointment of non-Alaskans to federal positions in the territory and pushed for the transfer of control over fish and game from federal to territorial management. Although Dimond did not see these changes, Alaskans applauded him for trying to make the changes!

Roosevelt's New Deal monetary measures though had increased the price of gold to the benefit of Alaskan mining ventures and Public Works Administration projects provided work for Alaskans making Dimond very popular!

Dimond was so popular with Alaskans that many sought to emulate his style and personal. Both Bob Bartlett and Bill Egan, Dimond's godson who grew up with Dimond's children in Valdez.

Delegate Dimond's popularity in Alaska was so great that he was frequently mentioned as a candidate for appointment as federal judge or as a possible successor to Governor Troy. Dimond was truly considered the Democratic leader in Alaska.



In one of the snowiest Iceworm Festival's ever, a blast from the past came walking down Cordova's streets! Just in time for the Centennial celebration ole' Doc Chase came marching down First Street a little larger than life (which kind of says it all about Cordova's famous first doctor). Created out of paper mache and numerous other accoutrements, Doc Chase wandered up and down the streets on his towering long arms offering immunizations with the biggest hypodermic you've ever seen. Created by artist Paula Payne and a myriad of talented CHS volunteers, Doc Chase grew weary by the time he reached the library and has come to rest in a comfy chair where he reads books to kids, sans the hypodermic needle.

The Cordova Museum Store NOW ONLINE!

Visit www.cordovamuseum.org and check out our new webpage including our own museum store. You can purchase numerous unique Cordova items online through the store. Also on the web page — Fish Follies art; school visits to the museum, program and exhibit schedules, plus just a little bit of history too!

www.cordovamuseum.org





Fish Follies '07

Our fun and always surprising exhibit - Fish Follies was another huge success in 2007 and we're well on our way to this year's show. The idea for a "fish-related" art show in a true fishing town became a reality six years ago. Paula Payne, a local artist and also the Program Leader for the Museum wanted to sponsor a juried art show, one that we advertised nationally. With logistics semi-worked out, we began and it has turned into a huge success and we've mastered those logistics. It also provides some wonderful, new and inspiring art all seafood, fish or sea-related for a community who loves art!



The jurors for the shows have been some pretty outstanding Alaskan artists: Evon Zerbetz, Rie Munoz, Todd Sherman, Ray Troll and Cordova's own Barbara Hoover. This year's juror Daniel DeRoux, was born in Juneau Alaska in 1951 and except for 5 years in San Francisco, has been painting in Alaska all of his life. His work is in the collection of the Butler Institute of American Art in Youngstown, Ohio, the Morris Museum in Atlanta and all the major Museums in Alaska.

His exhibition record includes many awards in International and National competitions, including; The Florence International Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary Art, A Gold Medal for "Most Accomplished Artist" in the Los Angeles International Art Competition, also in that competition he won a Bronze Medal in "Mixed Media" and Certificates of Excellence in Painting and Drawing.

The 2007 show opening was a festive evening with the gallery packed with Cordovans and visitors to hear the juror's remarks, sample the cheesecake and admire the artwork.

Barbara awarded the Major Prizes to the following:

- Best of Show—Donald Roller— "Esther Island"
- Second Place—Carol Haywood— "Blue Berry"
- Most Fishy—Wolfgang Hagmuller— "Hooligan Under Cracked Ice"
- Honorable Mention Susan Ogle— "Swimming Against the Rank & File"
- Monika Malewska— "Fish Heads and Popsicles"
- Terry Leberman— "Yelloweye Rockfish"

As many of our jurors do, Barbara awarded some extra categories for fun:

- Most Whimsical Judi Miller— "Fish Goddess"
- Best Fabric Riki Ott— "Kindred Spirits"
- Most Creative Shawn Ardoin— "Postcard from Fish Town #23"

A number of the pieces sold opening night and we raised over \$200 by selling delicious, homemade slices of cheesecake with locally made "sea-shaped" chocolates. Last year during the summer we had over 8500 people visit the show so we're looking forward to this season as well.

Missed it? Fish Follies of year's past are posted on our website:

<http://www.cordovamuseum.org>



Do these look like students on their 'best' behavior?
 There were a few detentions issued at the annual Historical Society dinner with the theme: 'Readin,' Writin' and 'Rithmetic' - a history of education in Cordova.
 The teachers had their work cut out for them!



***Cordova
 Historical
 Museum
 2007-2008
 Program/Exhibit
 Schedule***
**All programs
 and exhibits take
 place in Cor-
 dova's
 Library Meeting
 Room unless
 noted.
 The programs
 start at 7:30pm.**

June 11, 2008
 Opening Reception
 Fish Follies '08
June 19, 2008
 "History of Fishing
 in Cordova"
 Exhibit: Fish
 Follies
July 17, 2008
 "Nirvana Park"
 Exhibit: Fish
 Follies
August 21, 2008
 "History of Aviation
 in Cordova"
 Exhibit: Fish
 Follies

CHS Trustees 2008
 Torie Baker, Treasurer
 Deb Eckley, Vice President
 Ira Grindle, Trustee
 Rita Gunderson, Trustee
 Linda Kelly, Secretary
 Verla Pirtle, Trustee
 Mike Webber, Vice President

Director: Cathy Sherman
 Collections Manager: Judy Fulton
 Museum Attendant:
 Frances Mallory
 Museum Assistant: Sharon Ermold

Cordova Historical Society
 PO Box 391
 Cordova, AK 99574-0391

Non-Profit Org.
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Permit No. 15
 Cordova, AK
 99574

Cordova Historical Museum
Memorial Day to Labor Day

Seven Days a Week !!

Monday-Friday 10-5

Saturday 10-5

Sunday 2-4

Winter Hours:

Tuesday -Friday 10-5

Saturday 1-5

Archive Hours:

By Appointment Only

Phone: 907.424.6665

Fax: 907.424.6666

museum@cordovamuseum.org

www.cordovamuseum.org