



Alaska History News

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Quarterly of the Alaska Historical Society

Fall 2005

ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2005 CONFERENCE • KODIAK

Stepping Stones to History: Islands in Alaska's Past

Kodiak
Conference
Presentations
Schedule

*Thursday,
October 6
thru
Saturday,
October 8*

on page 5



Engraving of Three Saints Bay, from a drawing by Luka Voronin. For some years, Kodiak Island was the administrative center of the Russian American Company, first at Three Saints Harbor, then at Pavlovsk, the present townsite of Kodiak.

Alaska and Polar Regions Dept.,
Elmer E. Rasmuson Library,
University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Notes from around the state

The **Valdez Museum and Historical Archive's** major exhibition of *Quilt & Fiber Expressions* this year, "Stitches in Time", has a Manila connection. That's Manila, Iowa, where member Dorothy Clifton's grandmother had completed a quilt top representing the American flag. Seems the end of World War I came and the town had no flag to fly. Quilt to the rescue.

Over 40 pieces in this 21st annual display demonstrate the evolution of fiber arts from the traditional to the innovative and are shown throughout the museum. Even the miner's cabin has a quilt on the wall. It's not too late to get some raffle tickets at \$10.00 each or three for \$20.00. You'll not only support good Valdez causes but perhaps win a great wall-hanging too.



Sheldon Jackson was 171 years old this past May 18th. He hasn't been with us for a number of years, but this is the 16th year of the Native Artist Demonstrators Program at the **Sheldon Jackson Museum**. Over the summer the artists produce art as visitors watch, answering questions about

their work and demonstrating techniques. This year the program included Athabaskan beadwork and skin sewing, Tlingit beading, and Iñupiaq carving.

The Sitka newspaper continues to feature a different artifact from the museum each month. A word with your local paper might be worthwhile.



Compiling obituaries may seem a bit morbid, but they're invaluable to genealogists and historians. The **Resurrection Bay Historical Society** has been engaged in the project for some time now and reports 2,200 have been recorded. Write them at Post Office Box 55, Seward, Alaska, 99664 if you need some information.



At last an answering machine is installed in the office of the **Chugiak-Eagle River Historical Society**. Let them show it off by calling 907/688-4706 with questions, comments, or congratulations on the new service. It will be checked every day or two.

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Message from the President

This past year, the Alaska Historical Society lost two longtime friends, George A. Hall and Richard A. Pierce.

I am especially pleased that George Hall and Richard Pierce will be remembered by two special tribute sessions at this year's annual meeting in Kodiak (October 5-8). "Stepping Stones to History: Islands in Alaska's Past" is the theme for the Alaska Historical Society sessions. The session in memory of George Hall will explore Alaska's wilderness ethos and the other session in memory of Richard Pierce will be on Russian America. George was one of the founding members of the Alaska Historical Society and served as the executive director from 1967 to 1986. On a personal note, I will miss George's occasional informative telephone calls, encouraging words about the National Archives program in Alaska, and his sense of humor. Richard Pierce made tremendous, long term contributions to the history of Russia America as a history professor at Queen's University, Ontario, the University of Alaska Fairbanks and as editor, translator, or author of more than sixty books published by Limestone Press and the University of Alaska Press.

The Program Committee, chaired by Barbara Smith, has created a wide ranging and engaging collection of more than twenty presentations. Exploration of this year's conference theme will begin with a keynote address by Dr. Chris Friday, Professor of History at Western Washington University and Director of the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, titled "Islands, Frontiers, Peripheries and the Currents of History — Perspectives on Alaska."

I hope that you will also support this year's silent auction. Again, Candy Waugaman and other donors have generously contributed items of historic interest in support of the Society to be used for projects. Please show your appreciation for their efforts by bidding outrageously for these items, as any amount paid over the value of the items is tax deductible.

Finally, after two years as President and three terms on the Board of Directors, I am bidding you a fond farewell. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve this wonderful organization. See you in Kodiak!

Bruce Parham
President

Note: Don't forget to sign up for the annual conference, October 5-8, in beautiful and historic Kodiak. These meetings are more like family reunions, although the papers are more fun than most family stories.

Visit our Website:
www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org

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It's quick, it's easy, and you receive the semiannual *Alaska History*, the quarterly newsletter *Alaska History News*, and discounts on publications.

Right now a number of back issues of *Alaska History* are on sale; \$6.00 each to non-members, \$4.00 to members. As interest and writing on Alaska history seem to be sprouting like fireweed in the spring, a useful and popular feature is the listing of new books and publications found in each issue. Send your application to Alaska Historical Society, P.O. Box 100299, Anchorage, Alaska 99510-0299; remember to include your address and students, the school you're attending.

Notes from around the state

Continued from page 1

The society also came to the rescue of students at the high school. Their assignment was to interview longtime residents. Unfortunately, most didn't know any such, so the society galloped up on virtual white horses and took care of the problem.



An exhibition, *Spot the Dog*, runs through May, 2006 at the **Anchorage Museum of History and Art**. It supposedly is for children, but parents will also enjoy the marvelous photographs, sculptures, art, and the fine catalogue available.

Of course, the usual fare of films, classes, and visiting performers continue at this busy place. Check out www.anchoragemuseum.org, phone 907/343-4326,

or drop by 121 West Seventh Avenue when you're in town.



Most Alaska museums would kill for a chance to have a 200-year-old building as their headquarters (well, perhaps not kill; maybe maim, or at least whine), but the new exhibition, *An Island on Guard: Kodiak During WWII*, at the **Kodiak Historical Society Baranov Museum** fast-forwards to World War II and the dramatic changes in the old Russian center. Both the Navy and Army hastily built fortifications, beginning in 1939. A local favorite was the road from Kodiak to the navy base. Built with no guardrails on a mountainside 500-feet above the bay, it was an especially exciting drive at night when blackouts were imposed.

The navy fleet seems rather lacking to us today; eight WWI-vintage destroyers, six old small submarines, and various local commercial fishing boats painted Navy gray patrolled the 1,100 miles of the Aleutian Islands.

Today the remains of the various forts are still evident, but we aren't told if guardrails have been added to the road.

One very positive aspect of the military on Kodiak, as far as the females were concerned, was the demand for young women for dances and other social events.



When it is the off-season for dog mushing, the trails can be very handy for walking. This message is brought to you by the **Iditarod**

National Historic Trail people in conjunction with the **Seward Museum**. There is a good display and summer slide show in the museum, and you can pick up items in the gift shop to reward yourself for all that walking. Right now, interpretation of the Seward-Girdwood portion of the trail is the big project. Have a look at www.iditarodhistorictail.org.



The **Anvik Historical Society** likes to keep track of the villagers, especially the elders who contribute so much traditional knowledge. Rita had a tragic life, indicative of so much that disrupted Native life after whites showed up. Born in 1910, her mother died shortly after from an epidemic and a sister, adopted as she was by an aunt, died early of tuberculosis. She herself, married and with young children, spent a year in the hospital with the same disease. So she was a sad, withdrawn person — right? Not at all. She remembered her childhood with joy. She got her first snowshoes when she was so young they were about the “size of big wooden spoons”, and she walked out on the river on them “just showing off.”

She saw her first moose when they were just coming into the country, and didn't know what the huge creature was. She was told to shoot it, but it was so big she was afraid. Her mother scolded her, so she went back, thinking to herself, “Well, if she doesn't care what happens to me...” and shot both of them.

Ellen, born in 1919, spent her childhood in Anvik before moving to Anchorage. However, she never forgot the old ways and stories and spent much of her later life recounting them.

Both died last year and are missed.

The museum has two Billy Williams masks, and is eager to obtain more of this famous Anvik carver. Contact them at Post Office Box 110, Anvik, Alaska, 99558.



“Seattle Dog,” ink jet print by Charles Mason, is part of the Anchorage Museum of History and Art's exhibit *Spot the Dog*.

(right)
Invitations announced weekly social dances in Kodiak during 1942-1945. A scrapbook of Marie Olsen (Chandler) is part of the exhibit, *An Island on Guard: Kodiak During WWII*, at the Baranov Museum.

Notes from around the state



Students in the Native Arts Studies Classes at the Totem Heritage Center in Ketchikna display their work.

The **Tongass Historical Society** newsletter discusses the founding of Saxman, the site near Ketchikan that combined the Cape Fox and Tongass Tlingit groups for school and missionary purposes. The land was set aside by Congress in 1882 and the community begun in 1895. Today it is the site of some spectacular totem poles.

A display of popular illustrator and artist Evon Zerbetz will enliven the museum this autumn.

Native Arts Studies Class registration for Fall, 2005, and Spring, 2006 was in August. The popular classes are held at the **Totem Heritage Center**. Certificates can be earned through them or the University of Alaska Southeast. Contact them through city.ketchikan.ak.us/departments/museums/index.html, or if your attention span is short, try 907/225-5900, or, sigh, write them at 601 Deermount Street, Ketchikan, Alaska, 99901.



Esther Birdsall Darling was the author whose books on sled-dogs, *Baldy of Nome* and *Navarre of the North*, enchanted generations of children. After years in Nome, where she co-owned a kennel and was a founder of the Nome Kennel Club, she retired to California. The **Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum** in Nome is now the proud recipient of the Darling journal and other memorabilia, courtesy of her grandnephew.

On the one hand, it was great to be a member of the dog teams in the famous Serum Run to Nome in 1925, the relay commemorated in the Iditarod race today. On the other, at least three wound up stuffed. Balto and Togo are well-known, but oddly, Fritz, a Siberian Husky acknowledged as a key sire of the breed, was forgotten. Stuffed and in a New York State roadside theme park, he was recently found, purchased, and returned to Nome and is now in the museum.



R.N. (Bob) De Armond, historian extraordinaire, chronicling Alaska for over 70 years and still active, is the subject of the **Gastineau Channel Historical Society** current project. His many, many articles will be digitized and placed in full-text-searchable form on a public Web site with the great name of *Digital Bob*. The first installment should be out by the end of this year.

A small serving of the delectable treats in store can be found in the current newsletter. There's also an article on the Alaska Native Arts and Crafts Clearing House, usually known as ANAC, the program established in 1938 to help Native crafters sell their products and guarantee authenticity to the buyer. The article is written by a woman who as a child napped on reindeer skins and a rabbit skin pillow; her father managed the program.

April is a great time to contact the society if lighthouses are your passion. The tradition of an early May lunch and boat trip to at least three lighthouses in the vicinity is not only deeply satisfying to the beacon brethren, but raises money for restoration.

Send an e-mail to ghnews@attglobal.net or phone 907/586-6790, or write them at P.O. Box 21264, Juneau, Alaska, 99802 for copies of the newsletters.



The **Juneau Gold Creek flood of 1918, looking down 11th Street from Calhoun Avenue**. This image appeared in Bob DeArmond's "Juno's Days of Yore", a weekly column he wrote during 1985-1991 for *Info Juneau*, a local television guide.

Photo courtesy Alaska State Library, PCA 01-29B.



ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2005 CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS SCHEDULE

Stepping Stones to History: Islands in Alaska's Past

Note: This only a provisional schedule. Some presentations and times may change. The final schedule will be in the presentation packets that can be picked up at the Welcoming Reception at the Best Western Hotel, Wednesday, October 5, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 6

8:00-9:30 a.m.

Session 1

Rediscovery of the Kad'yak, a Ship Linking Kodiak, Woody, and Spruce Islands: Brad Stevens, Dave McMahan, and Evgenia Anichtchenko

Creating Alaska: The Origins of the 49th State
Joseph Hardenbrook and Terrence Cole

Session 2

Alaska's Digital Archives

Kay Sheraton, Airline Stimulated, and Anne Foster

10:00-11:15 a.m.

Keynote Address

Islands, Frontiers, Peripheries and the Currents of History: Perspectives on Alaska

Dr. Chris Friday, Professor of History, Western Washington University, Bellingham

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Plenary Session

State of the State's Cultural Agencies
Kay Shelton and Judy Bittner

2:45-5:30 p.m.

Pierce Memorial Papers

Running Amuck in Kodiak: Managing the Russian American Company's Kodiak District

Katherine L. Arndt, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Russian America in the Post-war World: The Legacy of Richard Pierce
Marvin Falk, Professor of Library Science and Curator of Rare Books Emeritus, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Richard Pierce: A Scholar's Life Well Lived

Lydia T. Black, Professor of Anthropology Emerita, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Richard Pierce and the First Russian Voyage Around the World

Victoria Joan Moessner, Professor of German, University of Alaska Fairbanks

The History and Architecture of Building No. 29, Sitka

Katerina Solojeva-Wessels, National Park Service

The Scholar and the Soudrel: Reflections on Richard Pierce's 40-Year Search for Ivan Petrov

Terrence Cole, Professor of History, University of Alaska Fairbanks



"Chart of Northwest Harbor, Resurrection Bay, Alaska," illustration by Rockwell Kent from *Wilderness, A Journal of Quiet Adventure in Alaska*.

(Friday continued)

1:30-3:00 p.m.

Islands in Hot and Cold War

The Sinking of the Phyllis S: Mail Boat and Naval Vessel Activity in Kodiak during World War II

Mike Burwell, Mineral Management Service, U.S. Department of the Interior

Mission to the Kurile Islands: An Exercise in Deception

John Hail Cloe, Historian, Elmendorf Air Force Base

Alaska and the Space Sentinels: Tracking CORONA and MIDAS Satellites
Kathy Price, Cultural Resources Specialist, Fort Wainwright

Nuclear Weapons Tests and the Environment of Amchitka Island
Theodore Merrell

3:15-4:30 p.m.

Annual Meeting and The Alaska 67: Great(est?) Books About Alaska History

4:45-5:45 p.m.

Living the Good Life on Kodiak Island: The Elders' Perspective
Dennis Knagin, Roy Madsen, Myrtle Olson

Friday, October 7

8:30-10:00 a.m.

Islands and Alaska's Wilderness Ethos In Memory of George Hall

Wildlife Conservation Programs of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Since Its Inception in 1913

Vernon Byrd, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge

Shrouded in Fog, Shrouded in Memory: The Lost Aleutian Villages
Annaliese Jacobs Bateman, National Park Service

An Island-like Paradise: Rockwell Kent, Fox Island and Wilderness
Doug Capra, National Park Service

Father Hubbard's Geological Wonder World: Perpetuating the Moon Crater Myth in Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve
Katherine Johnson, National Park Service

10:15-11:45 a.m.

Plenary Session

Barbara Franco, President, Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission

12:00-1:15 p.m.

Lunch

Coast Guard History in Alaska

Rear Admiral James C. Olson, Commander,
17th U. S. Coast Guard District, Alaska

Saturday, October 8

9:00-10:15 a.m.

Islands in Russian America

The Diomed Islands in the Early Exploration of America
Chris Allan

Alaskans on the Islands of California
Dan Murley, Curator, Healdsburg Museum

The Retirement of Alexander Baranov
Allan Engstrom

God's Island

Norman L. Smith (paper to be read by Karl Gurcke)

10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Islands: Virtual and Real

Ship of Dreams, Islands of Hope: The SS Dora in Alaskan Waters
Penelope Goforth

Rowboats and the Bird Sanctuary: The Salmon Troll Fishery at Forrester Island, 1912-1914

Robert W. King

St. Matthew Island: The Most Remote Spot in Alaska
Daria Carle and Elaine Rhode

An Island of Community Values and Independent Thought: A History of Chugach Elementary School in Anchorage
Frank Norris

News & Information



Juneau sculptor
R.T. Wallen works
on a statue depicting
Russian aviator
Alexander Pokryshkin.
Photo courtesy R.T. Wallen.

LEND-LEASE COMMEMORATIVE STATUE

One of the nearly forgotten incidents of World War II was the aircraft Lend-Lease program that sent planes from the United States factories to Russia via Alaska. Now a statue commemorating that event, designed by Juneau sculptor **R.T. Wallen**, is going to be placed in a Fairbanks park during the summer of 2006. A pilot will stand in front of a larger-than-life propeller.

D* ARMOND 70TH ANNIVERSARY

Bob and Dale De Armond, historian and artist, celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary in this past July. Both have contributed mightily to Alaska; Bob through his exploration of history and editorship of magazines, and Dale through her art. *The Daily Sitka Sentinel* ran a nice article on July 29.

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MUSEUM FLOOD DAMAGE

Want irony? A construction crew at the **University of Alaska Museum of the North** in Fairbanks broke a water pipe last summer and sent thousands of gallons of water through the ceiling panels of the basement. Thousands of artifacts and documents detailing their finding were drenched. Fortunately, this happened at a time when staff was in the building. Total damage is still unknown.

A similar catastrophe happened at the State Library last winter. Nearly all of the documents were salvaged, as it happily turned out.

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ALASKA-YUKON PIONEERS

As mentioned before, the **Alaska-Yukon Pioneers** newsletters keep oldtimers in touch, include personal reminiscences, and generally provide some green trees along Memory Lane. Subscription is a small \$10.00 per year for 12 issues. Write them at 2725 East Fir, Unit 71, Mount Vernon, Washington, or phone 360/428-1912. For the impatient, try aypvera@isomedia.com.

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SAVE OUR HISTORY GRANTS

This year, The History Channel will award \$250,000 in **Save Our History** grants to history organizations that design and execute local history education and preservation projects in collaboration with schools or youth groups. History organizations will be able to apply for grants of up to \$10,000 to help fund unique, hands-on student projects created to teach students about important aspects of their local history and to actively engage them in the preservation of significant and potentially endangered pieces of their local heritage. The Sheldon Museum at Haines received one of these grants last year.

Save Our History grant applications are available online at www.saveourhistory.com. The deadline for submitting an application for the 2005-2006 grant cycle is October 21, 2005. For guidelines and criteria, important dates, and other information please visit www.saveourhistory.com.

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CREATING ALASKA

Creating Alaska is a University of Alaska project charged with noting the 50th anniversary of the Constitutional Convention convened to plan for Statehood in 1955. They have several traveling displays in mind and a Conference of Young Alaskans planned. For more information see www.alaska.edu/creatingalaska or e-mail creatingalaska@alaska.edu. If you insist, write them c/o University of Alaska, 202 Butrovich Building, Fairbanks, Alaska, 99775-5000, or telephone 907/450-8599.

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GEOPHYSICAL INSTITUTE QUARTERLY

Fascinated by the news that contrails (those white lines left in the sky by jet planes) can affect the weather below? Want to know how the firefighters kept track of their location during the smoke in the Interior last summer? How about earthquakes? Then the *Geophysical Institute Quarterly* is for you. It's put out by the **Geophysical Institute** at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, 903 Koyukuk Drive, Fairbanks, Alaska, 99775-7320, and is free. (No agent will call, but neither will the geophysical mobile to announce you've won a prize.) Get a preview at <http://www.gi.alaska.edu>, or call 907/474-7558, fax 907/474-7290.

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WRANGELL HISTORY PAST & PRESENT

Another fine Alaskan historian, **Pat Roppel**, and the **Friends of the Wrangell Museum**, continue the monthly *Wrangell History Past and Present*. Over the summer subscribers have read about the transfer of today's Wrangell from the Russians to the Hudson's Bay Company, the arrival of the Army at Fort Wrangell in 1868, the fortunes of various salmon canneries, biographies of several town worthies, and the origin of several place names. All this for \$20.00 per annum, the proceeds to the museum. Visit the museum at www.wrangell.com, e-mail is museum@wrangell.com, phone 907/874-3770, or drop by 318 Church Street when you're in town.

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Diving for pennies on the Fourth of July at Kodiak.
Photo courtesy University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts UAA-HMC-0186.

Meetings of Interest

as reported by the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology

October 5-7

Preservation Trades Network: International Trades Education Symposium, St. Clairsville, OH (*Bryan Blundell, 866-853-9335 or info@ptn.org*)

October 6-8

Society for the History of Discoveries 46th annual meeting, Williamsburg, VA (*Ralph Ehbrenberg, 703-538-0948 or rebrenberg@aol.com*)

October 12-15

Western History Association 45th annual conference: Western Traditions and Transitions, Cultural Diversity and Demographic Change, Phoenix, AZ (*WHA, 505-277-5234 or wha@unm.edu*)

October 16-19

National Scenic Byways Conference: Rock and Road 2005, Cleveland, OH (*800-429-9297 or www.bywaysonline.org*)

October 17-21

ICOMOS 15th General Assembly and Scientific Symposium: Monuments and sites in their setting: conserving cultural heritage in changing townscapes and landscapes, Xi'an, China (*cccb@xauat.edu.cn*)

October 20-23

Society for American City and Regional Planning History 11th biennial meeting, Coral Gables, FL (*sacrp@usc.edu*)

October 29-November 19

46th Seminar for Historical Administration, Indianapolis, IN (*AASLH, 615-320-3203 or nicholson@aaslh.org*)

November 2-6

Oral History Association annual meeting: Voices of Dissent, Voices of Hope, Providence, RI (*OHA, www.dickinson.edu/oha*)

November 3-6

American Studies Association: Social Movements and the Cultural Politics of Land Use, Washington, DC (*Laura Barraclough, barracl@usc.edu*)

November 3-6

Society for the History of Technology and the History of Science Society joint annual conference, Minneapolis, MN (*Daniel Holbrook, Holbrook@shotprogram.org*)

November 4-7

Association for Preservation Technology annual conference: Raising the Grade of Preservation, Galveston, TX (*APTI, 630-968-6400 or www.apti.org*)

Obituary

Jay Hammond

Jay Hammond, a quintessential Alaskan and the most beloved politician in the state, died at his home on Lake Clark August 2, 2005, at the age of 83. His charm, self-deprecating humor (during his re-election campaign in 1978 he referred to all the candidates as “the Gubes” and said they were sitting “like crows on a fence”) and above all, his love of Alaska, made him an icon and now a legend. He believed in development, if it could pay its way, and the right of all Alaskans to a share in the oil wealth. He co-founded the Permanent Fund Dividend, and demanded complete honesty in government. During his two terms as Governor, at a time when the serious oil money was rolling in, he made it clear that any deviation from the law by anyone in his administration would not be tolerated. There were no scandals.

He delighted in telling of his meeting with other Republican governors in Washington. When the topic turned to airplanes, several governors spoke of their jets. He was asked if he had a plane, since Alaska has vast distances to cover. Yes, he did — he owned a Cessna 172, and was very proud because he had just rebuilt the engine.

The two books he authored, *Tales of Alaska's Bush Rat Governor* and *Chips from the Chopping Block*, tell more wonderful anecdotes of this true Bush Rat, a term all seasoned Alaskans know.



Jay and Bella Hammond take a break from tending their set-net site at Naknek. From *Tales of a Bush Rat Governor, The Extraordinary Autobiography of Jay Hammond.*

Photo courtesy Heidi Hammond.



ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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See you there!

Alaska Historical Society 2005 Conference
Kodiak • October 5-8

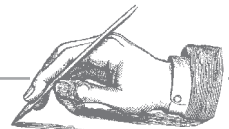
Editor's Comments

The sad signs of autumn are unmistakable. Fireweed blooms are now a ghostly white, leaves are beginning to turn, sunrises arrive later, sunsets arrive earlier, school is starting; wait! School is starting; that's a good thing. Visitors are beginning to thin out, and that's not all bad. Our pathetic collection of truly summer clothes will soon be retired (as someone noted, since we wear them so rarely they last for decades, a truly depressing thought), and we're getting tired of eating fresh fish. Hiking, biking, boating,

gardening are winding down; time to rest our tired knees and feet. So, when you think about it, things are looking up.

A sure sign of fall is the annual Society meeting. This year it's in Kodiak, the Russian capital until upstart Sitka took it away in 1808. I can't think of a better way to make the transition to winter than the educational, informative, newsy get-together the annual conference brings. We will all be there, if not in person, certainly in spirit.

Dee Longenbaugh



We welcome your letters, news and pictures. Please send them to the editor:

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