

ARCTIC-u-lation

Alaska Press Women

Vol. 30, No. 2 November 2000

A Look Behind the Crime Scene

November Speaker from Anchorage Police Department

by Asta Corley

Ron McGee often experiences action-packed days as public affairs director of the Anchorage Police Department (APD). Recently, three press releases were generated in one day. They involved a man wanted in a shooting, a string of burglaries in South and West Anchorage, and the arrest of a man answering trick-or-treaters while naked.

McGee, who always carries a beeper, can be called to the scene of a crime at any given minute. He also appears on television to comment on particular incidents.

"We are the people who get quoted more than anybody else in the Anchorage area," said McGee. "I hope I don't sound egotistical, but sometimes we get quoted more than the governor or the mayor."

McGee, who was the November luncheon speaker for Alaska Press

Women, has been public affairs director for APD for about four years. At the luncheon, he provided insight to what his job entails on a daily basis.

McGee attended Indiana University and earned a journalism degree in 1979. He also earned a master's degree in journalism from Ball State University. A retired Air Force major, his entire military career was in public affairs. His last assignment before retiring was as public affairs officer for Elmendorf Air Force Base. McGee also worked for three years as a general assignment reporter for the *Anchorage Daily News*.

McGee says that, in his present job, he usually gets caught in the

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On a Scale of One to Ten

by Ella Wright

National Federation of Press Women's headquarters had no problem "hand counting" evaluations after the conference. Less than half of the 200 evaluation forms were returned. Counting the returns, verbal comments, e-mails, and congratulatory notes, the Top of the World Communicators Conference was a huge success. Audiences rated everything from Alaska's weather to workshops.

On a scale of one to ten, Father Michael Oleksa's workshop, "The Iceberg Theory of Communication," scored a perfect 10. National and local members raved about his workshop. Some suggest that he present the workshop during the 2001 conference in Indiana.

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Door Prizes Needed

At nearly every luncheon meeting, APW has a drawing for two or three door prizes. Proceeds from these drawings benefit the APW Scholarship Fund. The drawings depend largely on the generosity of members who donate items. So, next time you spot a bargain book that a writer might like, feel the urge to knit, or realize you'll never use all the boxes of stationery your nieces have given you over the years, consider a donation to APW.

Thanks to donations from Emily McKenzie and Judy Griffin, the November meeting generated \$52 for the fund. Judy donated stationery and an address book, and Emily crocheted a beautiful cream-colored hat and scarf. Another hat and scarf that Emily crafted, done in red just in time for the holidays, will be offered at the December meeting. If you have donations, just bring them to a luncheon or call Doris Thomas at 694-3570.

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Averaging 9.65, "Alaska Women Writers" closed in on the "Iceberg Theory." Barbara Brown organized the group of women who read from their publications. Other affiliates talk of doing similar programs to introduce people to their states.

Near the top of the scale, with a 9.5 average, was "Jumpstarting Your Own Business." Rieva Lesonsky (California), the workshop presenter, "covered lots of ground quickly" for would-be entrepreneurs. Only two-tenths of a point separate Lesonsky and LaVerne Collins (Washington, D.C.). Averages for workshops on writing for the Web, outdoor and travel writing, copyright concerns, and environmental changes in journalism, averaged scores from 8.0 to 8.8.

Alaska Press Women's choice of featured speakers paid off. Lt. Gov-

ernor Fran Ulmer's focus on the media and public perceptions in her talk on "Technology in the 21st Century" scored one point less than perfect. And several people noted their delight with Francine Taylor's "Historical Perspectives." Libby Riddles, keynote speaker during the "Buttonhole An Expert" luncheon, averaged high marks for her well-timed and meaningful speech.

Twenty-nine APW members are listed on page 3 of the NFPW Top of the World Communicators annual conference program booklet. I appreciate your diligence and teamwork. Thank you for making the first NFPW conference ever hosted in Alaska a success.

Conference contributors and sponsors included SKW Eskimos, Inc.; BP Exploration (AK), Inc.; Alyeska Pipeline Service Company; First National Bank of An-

chorage; Alaska Newspapers; Morris Communications Corporation; University of Alaska, Anchorage, Journalism Department; *Anchorage Daily News*; Alaska Housing Finance Corporation; Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau; Newseum Newscapade, Virginia; NANA Management Services, LLC; Phillips Alaska, Inc.; Alaska Travel Industry Association; Pen Air; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; National Park Service; USDA Forest Service; Northrim Bank; Alaska Native Heritage Center; Carolyn Rinehart; National Bank of Alaska; Udelhoven Oilfield Systems; Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute; Alaska Airlines; The Andrews Group; Bagoy's Florist; Barnes & Noble; Fourth Avenue Theater & Gifts; Cook Inlet Book Co.; and Copyediting Services.

December's Luncheon Speaker to Present "Chilling" Information

by Asta Corley

On December 7, mystery writer Dana Stabenow will tell APW members and guests about the Left Coast Crime 2001 mystery writers conference, which Alaska Sisters in Crime is hosting February 15-18 at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage. The conference theme is "Death Below Zero." Sisters in Crime expects at least 100 authors to attend; while they are here, the host group plans to send them out to the Bush.

Stabenow, who is based in Anchorage, was raised on a 75-foot fish tender in the Gulf of Alaska. She graduated from Seldovia High School in 1969 and received a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Alaska in

1973. Stabenow then spent one more summer "knee-deep in humpies," she said, and spent her earnings on a four-month backpacking trip to Europe.

In 1982, she enrolled in UAA's master of fine arts program and graduated in 1985. She wrote *Second Star*, which was bought by Ace Science Fiction in 1990. In 1991, her editor at Ace "sniffed out the existence" of *A Cold Day for Murder*, according to Stabenow, and offered the writer a contract for three books featuring Kate Shugak as the main character. *A Cold Day for Murder* won an Edgar award.

Stabenow is really churning out tantalizing mystery novels. Her third in the Liam Campbell series,

Nothing Gold Can Stay, was released in September, and *Singing of the Dead* will be released in May of next year.

Alaska Press Women luncheons are held the first Thursday of every month.

11:30 a.m.

Golden Lion Hotel
36th and New Seward
Anchorage

\$15.00 members

\$16.00 guests

\$6 coffee/dessert

Reservations:

274-4723

(leave message)

Membership in APW

Do you know someone who should be part of Alaska Press Women?

If so, contact APW Membership Chair Elise Patkotak at 344-2113 or at TheParrot@aol.com and let her know.

Elise can review the qualifications for membership with you, send the prospective member information on the organization, and get a membership processed from start to finish.

Remember, our organization is only as strong as its members,

so we all need to be working on recruiting new ones. Oh yes, in case there is any doubt in your mind, men are welcome to join, too!

Do you need to change your phone number, job title, e-mail address, etc.?

Again, just contact Elise Patkotak with any changes to information about your whereabouts and “reachability” or about your professional status. She will make those updates in the APW directory as well as let NFPW know.

The Prez Sez

APW is growing up . . . and it's time to decide what we want to be!

In this newsletter, you'll find a request to step forward if you'd like to serve on a committee identifying directions for APW and a survey that seeks your input. Please speak up. The input of every single member is important.

Our organization benefitted immensely from the successful hosting of a national conference. Now is the time to make the most of the opportunities that we can pursue.

What would you like to see happen in the years to come? Here are some ideas to consider: more scholarships, larger scholarships, major workshops, travel-study programs, weekend retreats, representation at other conferences, subsidized conference fees for APW members, APW-hosted social events.



Qualifications for APW Membership

Membership in APW is open to those professionally employed in the following communication fields:

- print
- broadcast
- public information
- public relations

Membership is also open to professional

- writers
- photographers
- graphic artists
- journalism educators
- video producers
- web designers
- student journalists



Which Alaska Press Woman was once arrested and jailed? (see answers on last page)

Send in the Clown . . . er . . . News!

We're counting on you to provide *Articulation* with content. Please send materials by December 12 for the December issue (due on the APW Web site by the last week of the month) to Karen Lew <karenllew@micronet.net>.

We're looking for these items:

- Professional or personal news about members
- Short tips on writing, editing, or graphics
- Reviews of books or other material in our professional field
- Jokes or other tidbits about our field
- Articles about any aspect of APW or NFPW
- Activities of related organizations
- Job, education, training, or other opportunities for members

Be a FAN of Freedom

FAN: Your Voice on First Amendment Issues

by Doris Thomas

“You’ve got (e-)mail”???

If so, the National Federation of Press Women encourages you to get FAN mail, too! Those of you with e-mail have no doubt seen occasional notices sent out under APW’s E-Mail Express that are labeled “NFPW FanNet” or “FAN Alerts.” These messages from NFPW alert members to pending legislative or court actions that might impinge upon open government or the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution.

The NFPW First Amendment Network (FAN) was formed about a year ago to provide a forum for spreading the word among members when threats to our freedom and freedom of the press are perceived. In most instances, the NFPW president sends a letter supporting or denouncing the proposed action, and FAN members are urged to do the same. Recent issues have included library censorship, FBI agents posing as journalists, and government secrecy.

Just recently, NFPW President Vivien Sadowski sent a letter to President Clinton urging him to veto HR 4392, a bill that, in her words, “would create the equivalent of an Official Secrets Act in the United States.” Mr. Clinton vetoed the bill. We will probably never know what role the NFPW-generated letters played in that decision, but it’s a great feeling to know NFPW leaders and members might have had some impact.

Though not technically a First Amendment concern, even the issue of Scholastic Magazine leaving kids from Alaska and Hawaii out of its writing contest led to a call for fairness by NFPW members. This issue, in which Scholastic capitulated, came to NFPW’s attention at the conference APW hosted in Girdwood in September and serves as a reminder that any one of us can submit Alaska issues to NFPW for consideration as a FAN Alert.

FAN alerts members to actions that might impinge on freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment.

The reason for this article is that often these alerts are issued at the 11th hour. Crucial time may elapse before I, as the FAN point of contact for APW, and E-Mail Express guru Thetus Smith arrange to rebroadcast an alert. So, I urge you to sign up to receive FAN directly. It’s entirely free to members. Nonmembers can subscribe for an annual \$100 fee.

To receive FAN news directly, go to the NFPW homepage, <<http://www.nfpw.org/FAN/fan.htm>> and follow the instructions on how to sign up.

For those who find the current delivery method adequate, FAN Alerts will continue to be sent via E-Mail Express as quickly as we can get them out.

WANTED: Communications Contest Chair

APW needs a volunteer member to lead the committee that conducts APW’s annual communications contest.

The committee will set state deadlines to mesh with national contest dates (March 15 and April 2, 2001), provide information for newsletters and the Web site, identify judges, ensure that entries are in correct categories, package entries for judging, receive judged entries, and present awards.

Information about the national contest, categories, and deadlines is available at <www.nfpw.org>.

Joy Cunningham, who served as chair of the contest for three years, will be available to share her successful methods and provide other coaching. Call Judy Griffin at 345-0900 for more information.

Thanks!

- to John and Nancy Killoran for successfully re-establishing the APW Web site and posting *Articulation* thereon
- to Doris Thomas for making hard copies and mailing *Articulation* to those who cannot access the Web site
- to Kent Lew for “cleaning up” the *Articulation* flag and providing advice on handling photos for the online newsletter

(Crime Scene . . . continued from p. 1)

middle in terms of information dissemination.

“What we have going on is a continuing struggle . . . between the police department and the media. The police think that I release too much, and the media think that I release too little. It’s a hard balancing act,” he explained.



Ron McGee, Anchorage Police Department public affairs director, speaks at the November APW luncheon

Dealing with the media is the most visible part of his job, according to McGee. The other aspect involves representing APD at schools, to the Chamber of Commerce, to community councils and patrols, at the Alaska Injury Prevention Center, and to other organizations.

One activity provided by APD is a Crime Prevention Fair, which is held annually at the Dimond Center. One of its major goals is to attract teens; the event also includes entertainment.

“[On] that Saturday, you cannot walk in the mall because of the teenagers,” said McGee.

Other outreach efforts of the department include the “On the Beat” television show, which allows discussion of problems within dis-

tricts, and citizen-participation programs involving safety efforts such as seat belt checks at schools and the Red Light–Running Program.

According to McGee, one initiative that is currently being developed is a Citizen Academy. “We’ll give them in-depth knowledge about what’s going on in the police department,” he said. McGee hopes that more community members will be advocates for the Anchorage Police Department.

A police department representative also has a group of volunteers that looks for lost people. A man with Alzheimer’s disease, for example, had wandered away from home recently, and this group found him. The APD Crime Stoppers program, which encourages people to call in with tips on crime suspects, has been instrumental in apprehending criminals.

“Anchorage’s Most Wanted,” which airs after “America’s Most Wanted,” is another effort. One recent case involved a Minnesota prison escapee who had been a fugitive for 21 years. During the 1970s, he was convicted of manslaughter in the shooting death of a family member in Pennsylvania. A lead indicated that he was in Anchorage. The ad was broadcast on “Anchorage’s Most Wanted,” and it prompted an outpouring of responses.

“We got about 15 phone calls immediately after this was on TV,” said McGee. The man was caught.

APD also has a “Most Wanted” web page <www.muni.org/apd>, which includes a sex offender registry and other information. That Web site is “the most looked-at web page in the city,” according to McGee.

Being a primary spokesperson for APD allows McGee to keep his finger on the pulse of the community, crime-wise and otherwise. Each week, he also gives an introduction at newcomer briefings on Elmendorf Air Force Base.

“There are a lot of different people coming in. I probably talk to more military people than I do anyone else one-on-one,” he commented. McGee begins by informing military personnel that Anchorage is the 72nd largest city in the United States and that, of the top 100 cities nationally, it ranks 84th in violent crime.

“I don’t think any American city can brag about their violent-crime rate, but we don’t have a very high violent-crime rate in this city,” he concluded.



Top of the world writers

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Diane Walters

News and Notes of and for Members

Call for Literary Artists:

Alaskan Literary Artists Wanted for New Workshop/ Presenting Roster

The Alaska State Council on the Arts (ASCA) is looking for professional writers (Alaska residents) who can present their work with enthusiasm and are able to help others with the craft of writing. ASCA wants to augment its roster of writers who represent different genres: poets, fiction or nonfiction writers, publishers, playwrights, bilingual writers, children's book writers, and storytellers.

A literature advisory committee, appointed by ASCA, will select roster participants based on the following criteria:

- Quality of writing sample
- Ability to read work, lead workshops, and interact with a variety of audiences (all confirmed, in part, through references)
- Experience
- Published author (self-publication excluded)
- Proposed program description

The selected artists will remain on the roster from March 1, 2001, to June 30, 2002.

To apply, send ten collated packets of the following required application materials to the Alaska State Council on the Arts, 411 West 4th Avenue, Suite 1E, Anchorage, AK 99501:

- Typed writing samples—do not exceed the following length limitations:

- Poetry: 8 pages
- Fiction, creative nonfiction, or other prose: 17 pages
- Play writing: 20 pages
- Publication and/or award list
- Short narrative biography—no more than two pages
- Proposed program description
- Three names and contact information of references who can address your qualifications (reference letters are not required at this time)
- If available, video or cassette tape of performances or workshops

ASCA is aware that there are some literary professions that do not match the criteria above. If this is the case, selection will be based on some measure of professionalism and achievement in your field, as determined by the panel. If there are questions, please contact ASCA staff: <info@aksca.org> or call, toll-free in Alaska 1-888-278-7424 or, in Anchorage, 269-6610. Deadline is January 8, 2001.



HAIR, the Singalong: It's a Happening!

Let the rest of the world sing along with *Sound of Music* (or, more likely at this time of year, "The Messiah"), but in Anchorage, we sing along with "HAIR," the movie.

And, yes, this does have a tie-in with professional communicators. The Alaska Library Association, Anchorage Chapter (there's the tie-in: books!)—those wild librarians

we know and love—is holding a fund-raiser at the Bear Tooth Theatrepub on Thursday, December 7, and the special attraction is "HAIR," the American tribal love-rock musical of the '60s.



Come in bell-bottoms, come in granny glasses; come in tie-dye, mini-skirts, or dashikis; come to sing and dance in the aisles! Get a group and singalong together.

The fund-raiser starts at 7:45 p.m. on Thursday, December 7, at the Bear Tooth Theatrepub, 1230 W. 27th Avenue in Anchorage. Tickets are only \$6, and they're available at the Bear Tooth, Borders Books & Music, and the Friends of the Library Gift Shop at Loussac Library. Barbara Brown will also have tickets for purchase at the December APW luncheon.



Call For Plays

The Last Frontier Theatre Conference, to be held at Prince William Sound Community College in Valdez June 16–23, 2001, has issued a "Call for Plays."

Original plays are sought for the 2001 Play Lab, which will be held during the conference. The lab is a workshop for the staged readings of new works.

For complete submission information, see the Web site at <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/pwscc>

more News and Notes

Great American Book Contest 2000

The Great American Book Contest is the only national literary contest providing an annual forum for unpublished book-length prose manuscripts—fiction and nonfiction—with American settings. It gives authors with all levels of experience an additional incentive (and deadline) for completing their literary works.

The Grand Prize winner will receive \$3,000, an editorial meeting with a book editor from a

leading New York publisher, and a film-development meeting with a feature-film scout. Young writers (30 years or younger) entering this contest will also have the opportunity to compete for the Honorable Mention for New Talent award.

Contest deadline is December 31, 2000. Send request for entry form and contest details along with a SASE to Great American Book Contest 2000, 417 N. Sangamon St., Chicago, IL 60622; or e-mail GreatAmericanBk@aol.com

Coordination Needed for Writing Rendezvous

The Alaska Center for the Book is preparing for its annual writers conference, “Writing Rendezvous,” to be held April 28 and 29 at UAA. (UAA will be bring up author Sherman Alexie.)

Needed: one coordinator to arrange and schedule workshops, create panels, arrange for meals, volunteers, rooms, etc., with a committee, plus other duties to make the conference happen.

A small honorarium (\$1,500) is available, and previous years’ coordinators are available to advise and assist. If interested, please contact Pam Cravez at [<pam-glenncravez@gci.net >](mailto:pam-glenncravez@gci.net).



Which Alaska Press Woman was formerly an employee at the *Sacramento Bee*? (see answer on last page)

How to Contact APW Officers

Have a question? Suggestion? Contact one of the APW officers by e-mail. Here are the names, positions, and addresses of all elected and appointed APW board members:

Elected Officers

Judy Griffin, President jfgriffin@chugach.net
Diane Walters, 1st Vice President—Public Relations Diane.H.Walters@poa02.usace.army.mil
Carol Gales, 2nd Vice President—Regional Member Liaison gales@nshcorp.org
Asta Corley, 3rd Vice President—Programs acorley@adn.com
Barbara Brown, Treasurer brownbs@ci.anchorage.ak.us
Dianne Barske, Secretary dbarske@alaska.com

Appointed Officers (alphabetical by last name)

Carol Day, Historian carolday@chugach.net
Carol Gales, High School Contest Chair gales@nshcorp.org
Connie Graffis, Scholarship Chair connie_graffis@KAKM.pbs.org
Jan Ingram, Communicator of Achievement Chair impact@ak.net
Chrystal Jeter, Nomination Chair JeterCC@ci.anchorage.ak.us
John Killoran, Web Master jpnbk@gci.net
Nancy Killoran, Web Master jpnbk@gci.net
Karen L. Lew, Articulation Editor KarenLLew@micronet.net
Elise Patkotak, Membership Chair TheParrot@aol.com
Pat Richardson, Archivist patricia.l.richardson@poa02.usace.army.mil
Thetus Smith, Reservation & E-Mail Express Manager thetus@gci.net
Doris Thomas, Immediate Past-President sethomas@alaska.net

Been There; Done That. Now What?

by Karen L. Lew

Alaska Press Women spent most of the past several years planning, preparing, and hosting the National Federation of Press Women's annual conference. It was highly successful; we done great.

Okay, so now what?

Over the past 30+ years, APW has done lots of innovative things to further professional communication. We've held workshops for our members; we've sponsored workshops for the public; we've had fun with Know-It-All Bowls; we've participated in Journalism Week; we've held annual communications contests for our members; we've sponsored communications contests for high-school students; we've offered scholarships to up-and-coming journalists; we've recruited enough members to have APW chapters in Southeast Alaska, Fairbanks, and Mat-Su Valley; we've even adopted and tended a park on Government Hill in Anchorage.

Some of these things cost lots of money; some take lots of effort or require lots of volunteer time. All of them have been worthwhile—for us and for our greater community.

Do we want to revive any of these “campaigns?” Do we want to plunge into a massive recruitment project around the state? Do we want to make the effort to open our communications contest to professionals outside of APW? Do we want to offer more or greater scholarships? Do we want to set up additional programs such as those Dalene Perrigo arranged as pre- and post-conference tours? Do we want to explore more of what technology has to offer and broadcast our workshops or speakers across the state? Or maybe we want to do more socializing—or more “social-service-ing.”

Our organization is fortunate to have members who have been with the group since the 1970s as well as newer members who constantly revitalize APW. There's value in the wisdom of time-in-grade, and there's value in the excitement of new blood.

Now it's time to look at not only *who* we are, but *what* we want to do. Where do we want to put our energies, our finances, our time, our image?

Our brochure lists these benefits of membership: exchanging professional ideas, ideals, and experi-

ences; promoting the highest standards of professionalism; encouraging career development of members and student communicators; providing a newsletter, seminars, scholarships for Alaska college students, and yearly state and national communications contests; providing nationwide affiliation with other professional communicators through NFPW; providing monthly luncheon meetings in Anchorage with speakers on subjects pertinent to the communication field.

It's not too difficult to see how our past and current efforts match up with those benefits. But making decisions to provide these things and then doing all the planning and preparing that follows must begin with an overall goal. Our brochure also says, “Alaska Press Woman . . . [has] the goal of promoting a greater understanding and appreciation of the First Amendment by both members and the public.” What does that mean? How do we manifest that goal?

We've taken a breather, and had a celebratory party, after our NFPW conference undertaking. Now it's time to take another deep breath and move forward. We need to determine APW's goal (or goals) for this new millennium. Perhaps we need to create, as the jargon of the day puts it, a mission statement.

Who will do that? Which of us will sit down and think it through, consider the ideas and suggestions from others, and make recommendations to the APW board?

To mangle a line from a bear friend of mine, “Only *you* can prevent stagnation.” Or, better yet, only *you* can provide our future. On the following page is a three-part survey you're asked to complete (not to worry, it's guaranteed to be more fun than work):

- How do you envision APW's goal(s) for the future?
- What sort of activities or projects would you like to see APW provide/present/sponsor to fulfill its goal(s)?
- Are you willing to be part of a committee that sorts through these ideas and comes up with recommendations to be presented to the board?

Remember, only *you* can make my heartoops, sorry; that's a different theme entirely.

APW Survey for the Future

Please complete this survey and return it to

Survey
Alaska Press Women
P.O. Box 104056
Anchorage, AK 99510

or e-mail your responses to Judy Griffin at jfgriffin@chugach.net

Here's how I envision APW's goal(s) for the future:

These are the types of activities or projects I'd like to see APW take on (see suggestions in the article on the preceding page):

Yes, I would like to be part of a committee that addresses these ideas and makes recommendations to the board (note: this does not necessarily mean you have to be involved with actually producing the activities or project). I'll proudly add my name on this form:

Name (optional, unless checking box above): _____



And now the answers:

Barbara Brown was arrested and jailed for "jaywalking" during a protest in Berkeley, California. Doris Thomas had a student intern position in the newsroom at the *Sacramento Bee*.