

# THE ALASKA FORUM

The Newsletter of the Alaska Forum for Environmental Responsibility

Fall 2000

## Pipeline Shifts At Atigun Pass

Collapsing Gas Pocket Blamed For Jarring TAPS From Its Supports

On May 15 of this year, Alyeska discovered that a one-and-a-half mile section of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline had shifted as much as 20 inches on the south side of Atigun Pass in the Brooks Range. Alyeska was unable at the time to pinpoint exactly when the incident occurred, only that it had to have happened between late February (the last walking inspection) and May 15 when it was discovered.

Ultimately, a collapsing gas pocket was deemed the cause of the shift. The incident, according to Alyeska, occurred when a rushing flow of oil coming down the pass met a wall of vapor that was resting atop a pool of oil at the bottom. The

(continued on page 6)



A pipeline shoe that slipped off the crossbeam during the shift. For more dramatic photos of this event, turn to pages 6-7.

## AFER Board President Honored With “Volunteer Of the Year” Award

Stan Stephens, longtime Alaska environmentalist and tour boat operator, has been recognized by the Alaska Conservation Foundation with this year’s *Celia Hunter Volunteer of the Year* award. The award is given annually to the Alaskan who best exemplifies the selfless devotion to protecting our state’s precious environment and ecosystems.



Stan is a founding member of the Alaska Forum and currently serves as its Board president. Past winners of this award include Riki Ott, another founding and current AFER Board member. The award will be presented at a banquet in Anchorage on September 30 (contact either AFER or ACF at (907) 276-1917 for more information).

For decades before and in the years since the *Exxon Valdez* spill, Stan has devoted himself to oversight of the oil industry. In addition to his work with the Alaska Forum, he has served on the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council since its inception. Stan’s straight-forward and honest demeanor has earned him the respect of countless

(continued on page 4)

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Message From the Executive Director .....	Page 2
A Matter of Propaganda: Alyeska’s New Ad Campaign.....	Page 3
North Pole Adventures of an AFER Board Member.....	Page10



## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

The Alaska Forum is the newsletter of the Alaska Forum for Environmental Responsibility, a nonprofit advocacy and education organization.

P.O. Box 188  
Valdez, AK 99686  
Phone: (907) 835-5460  
Fax: (907) 835-5410  
Email: [afervdz@alaska.net](mailto:afervdz@alaska.net)  
[www.alaska.net/~afervdz](http://www.alaska.net/~afervdz)

### Our mission:

The Alaska Forum is dedicated to holding industry and government accountable to the laws designed to safeguard the environment, provide a safe and retaliation-free workplace, and achieve a sustainable economy in Alaska.

### Board of Directors:

Stan Stephens, Valdez, *President*  
Dave Lacey, Fairbanks, *Vice-Pres.*  
Dan Lawn, Valdez, *Sec/Treas*  
Walt Parker, Anchorage  
Riki Ott, Cordova

### Staff:

Ross Coen, Fairbanks  
*Executive Director*

## A Message from the Executive Director by Ross Coen

As one who performs oil industry oversight, one of my principal duties is the collection of information. For this I rely quite extensively on entities such as the Joint Pipeline Office and the oil industry itself – and indeed I am quite pleased with the cooperative relationships I have established with both. With that in mind, let's examine two recent events, one pleasing and one quite disheartening in my information quest.

On June 28, I attended the JPO Executive Council meeting in Valdez – but only the first half. You see, the meeting was a two-day affair with the first day comprised of briefings and presentations on various JPO issues and actions. The second day included tours of Pump Station 12 and the maintenance activities at Squirrel Creek. When I expressed my interest in participating in these tours – what better way to gather information – I was told that it was for JPO staff and Alyeska personnel only. Yet the JPO invited representatives from the PWS Regional Citizens Advisory Council, so apparently it wasn't a closed tour after all.

Additionally, I was told that if they invited one environmentalist they'd have to invite them all. Well, they invited the RCAC but not me, so I guess they *didn't* have to invite them all. Furthermore, I was literally the only member of the general public to attend the first day of meetings. The theory that they would have hundreds of environmentalists beating down the doors of the tour bus simply isn't true.

In the JPO's defense, they explained that to add an environmentalist to the tour would change the communication dynamics between the JPO and Alyeska and could make a potentially contentious atmosphere even worse (though this argument still is refuted by the invitation to the RCAC). They also offered to conduct another tour specifically for myself and any other folks who were interested. While I appreciate the offer and understand their explanations, it doesn't abate my frustration at seeing a public agency deny the public.

Contrast this with what happened to me the following week. I asked Bill Howitt with Alyeska if I might stop at Squirrel Creek (see story page 5) and take a look around. He said no problem and put me in touch with Ron Miller and Jim Criner at Pump Station 12. Jim, who was already giving a tour to industry personnel, took me along and spent an hour explaining the maintenance and answering my questions. Think of it – he was candid and forthright with me in the company of BP executives. Not every day that happens.

I should mention that often the roles are reversed – the JPO grants me access to information while Alyeska puts up a stone wall. But in this case, Alyeska gets passing marks and the JPO...well...they don't. ❖

## A Matter of Propaganda

by Ross Coen

### Opinion

A stute readers of Alaskan newspapers may have recently noticed a new ad campaign by Alyeska. The ads are all of the same format and are titled, "A Matter Of Fact." Each ad tackles a different issue, from the pipeline's zig-zag route to how much a holding tank holds, and offers a brief, cursory explanation of the topic du jour. You might call the ad campaign the "Idiot's Guide to TAPS" or "Learn About the Pipeline In Only 30 Seconds A Day!"

At the risk of being overly cynical, I would like to take a moment to examine the substance of these Alyeska ads and suggest that they are thinly-disguised propaganda intended to lull the public into submission. The ads are often filled with half-truths and selective omissions that present a less than complete picture. After all, when the text of the ads is usually less than 75 words, one can't expect a detailed analysis.

Take the ad entitled, "Who puts pigs in a pipe?" The text of the ad proclaims that Alyeska uses mechanical and "smart" pigs to make the pipeline safer and more efficient. Well, yes, that is true. But they fail to mention that just last year they had a pig fall apart in the pipe with the pieces randomly appearing in Valdez (those pieces, by the way, damaged a series of back-pressure valves, resulting in the violent shaking of the pipeline at Thompson Pass). They also failed to mention that another pig appeared in Valdez with a valve ring securely notched around its snout. Or that they lost control of one of the scraper pigs which wound up stuck in a pipe less than half its own diameter.

Longtime TAPS researcher Richard Fineberg also recalls how Alyeska bragged of their "state-of-the-art" pig technology back in the 1970's. They claimed that their pigs would detect the slightest abnormality – yet they failed to detect the pipeline weakness at Atigun Pass which resulted in

a 210,000-gallon spill in 1979. Today, Alyeska admits that their pig technology wasn't that great back then. So what will they be admitting in another 20 years? That the pigs of the year 2000 weren't really that great either, despite what that glossy ad in the newspaper claimed?

For the record, I think it's great that Alyeska runs pigs regularly. I've no doubt that the pipeline is safer with the pigs than it would be without them. I only wish that when Alyeska speaks publicly about the pigs, or anything else, that they refrain from platitudes and self-congratulatory rhetoric that tell only half the story.

Another of the ad campaign's sins is that it leaves the reader with the misconception that Alyeska is taking such great care of the environment *of their own volition*. It must be noted that nearly every environmental safeguard of which Alyeska boasts was mandated by pipeline regulators, often with the TAPS owners kicking and screaming the whole way. They don't mention that in the ads.

A good example is the one entitled, "Fish matters." This ad boldly asserts that Alyeska will "assess the almost 800 fish streams that the pipeline crosses [which] support 25 species of...fish." The stated goal is to guarantee "safe passage" for the fish. Sounds good, right?

Well, before we pat Alyeska on the back too enthusiastically let's look at a report prepared by Phil Brna of the Alaska Department of Fish and

The Alyeska ad campaign is thinly-disguised propaganda intended to lull the public into submission. The ads are often filled with half-truths and selective omissions that present a less than complete picture.

Game. The report, dated February 2000 (a few months before the ad appeared), evaluated whether Alyeska was in compliance with federal and state permits with regard to fish passage at culverts and low water crossings. Brna found

that of the 36 culverts and low water crossings that were sampled, 19 of them – *more than half* – were not in compliance with fish passage requirements. The report also states that "complete and up-to-date surveillance and maintenance records...were found to be absent." These deficiencies, noted Brna,

(continued on page 8)

## Gouges Discovered In Pipeline

### Damage Likely "Covered Up" During Construction Days of 1970's

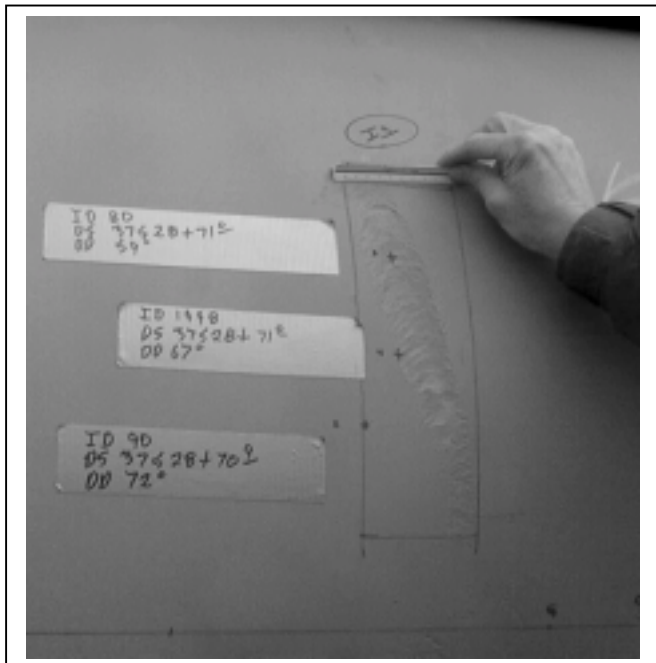
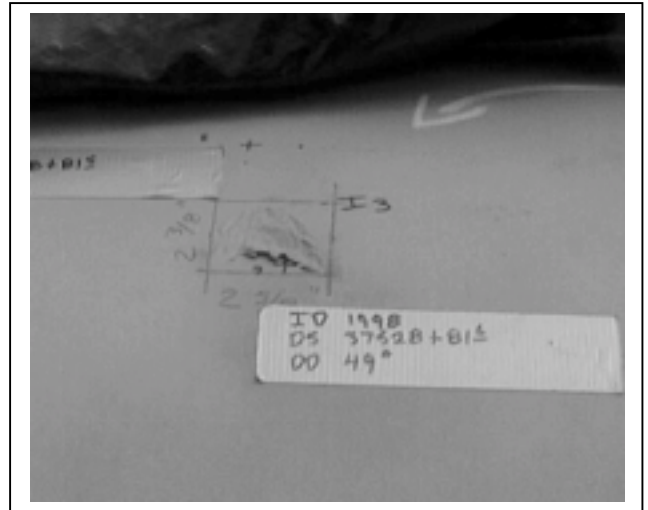
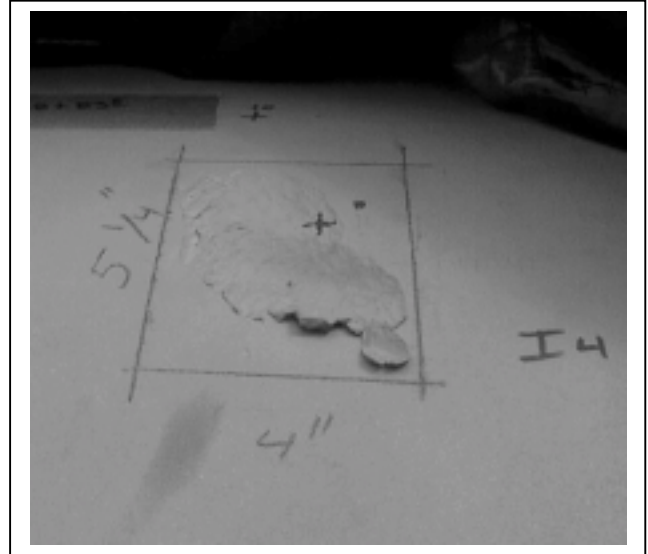
In late May, Alyeska reported to the Joint Pipeline Office that they had discovered "gouges" in the outside of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline at Milepost 710 (near Copper Center). The pipe is buried at this location and was excavated when Alyeska's corrosion pig detected some wall loss. Instead of finding corrosion from the inside of the pipe, the wall loss was the result of these exterior defects.

The gouges probably occurred during construction in the mid-1970's when some piece of heavy equipment collided with the pipe. Curiously, the gouges seem to have been leveled out with some kind of cement-like material. Clearly, the contractor laying this section of pipe found it easier to cover up the problem than report it and have it corrected.

The wall loss in some places at Milepost 710 approaches 80%. That is, instead of 1/2" thick steel, the pipe is barely 1/10" thick.

The Alaska Forum is compelled to wonder how many other contractor cover-ups are out there, undetected since the 1970's, that Alyeska has yet to discover. ❖

Photos courtesy of Joint Pipeline Office.



*(Stan Stephens, Continued from page 1)*

Alaskans, including those within the oil industry. Always one to praise the industry for the things they've done well, he still pushes for improvements in the safe transportation of oil across the land and through the waters he loves.

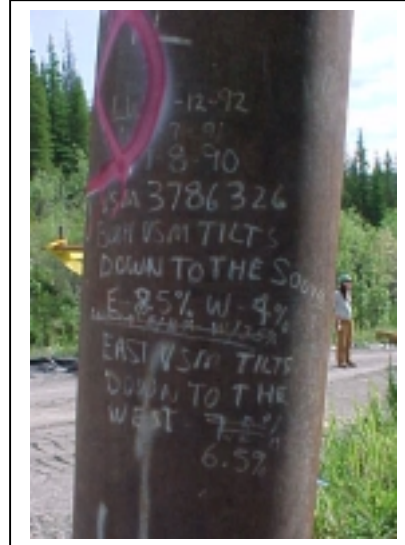
While Stan accepts this award with his predictable humility, the Alaska Forum extends its thanks and congratulations to a true Alaskan hero. We invite each of you to send along your own congratulations to Stan at (907) 835-2700 or stanstep@alaska.net. ❖

# Leaning, Twisting, and Sinking At Squirrel Creek

This summer, Alyeska launched a major maintenance effort at the Squirrel Creek pipeline crossing (near the Edgerton-Richardson intersection, south of Glennallen). Maintenance crews replaced 20 Vertical Support Members (VSMs) that were in various stages of leaning, twisting, sinking, or some other condition not perfectly vertical.

When originally constructed in the 1970's, the VSMs were sunk to a depth of 22 feet. This proved problematic over the years as permafrost conditions changed. Beginning in 1990, Alyeska monitored the shifting VSMs, deciding to replace them this year and sink them to 50 feet. While they insist that the line's integrity always comes first, Alyeska did acknowledge that this year marked the point where it became more expensive to perform annual maintenance than simply replace the VSMs.

The Alaska Forum has been monitoring this situation closely; we will continue to do so and bring you relevant updates. ❖



The technical history of this VSM, written on its side and dating back to 1990, reads in part: "BOTH VSM TILTS DOWN TO THE SOUTH / E - 8.5% W - 4% / EAST VSM TILTS DOWN TO THE WEST 6.5%"



In the first week of the maintenance project, an inattentive equipment operator struck the pipeline with a backhoe bucket. Here Alyeska has removed the sheath and insulation to check the condition of the pipeline itself. No damage was found.



This VSM, labeled number 33, is leaning slightly to the right of vertical, while the VSM behind it is leaning to the left of vertical.



Visit the Alaska Forum on the Web!

[www.alaska.net/~afervdz](http://www.alaska.net/~afervdz)

To reach us by email: [afervdz@alaska.net](mailto:afervdz@alaska.net)

*(Pipeline Shift, continued from page 1)*

resulting pressure wave was enough to shift the entire pipe.

Troubling questions abound following this incident. First, the pressure wave that moved a mile-and-a-half of pipe was no small entity – so why did the incident remain undetected for so long? One would expect that a pressure wave of that magnitude would set off bells and whistles at Pump Station 5 or Operations Control at Valdez or both. Why didn't it?

And although no oil was spilled above ground (always an Alyeska mantra), one could argue that the line was at significant risk of a spill because: (1) the pipe was both unsupported (or poorly supported) and wedged up against its anchors; and (2) the line was at least initially over-pressurized. Combine these factors with an Alyeska inspection program that allows such a condition to go unnoticed for nearly a month and the risks are

substantial indeed.

Alyeska Senior Vice President Bill Howitt, in a classic example of gross understatement, commented: “The good thing is we learned a lot from this incident” (*Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, 6/21/00). One would certainly hope that Alyeska has learned from an incident for which it was so woefully unprepared. Other comments from Howitt included the sublime, “The great thing is the support system for the pipeline worked exactly as it was supposed to.” The reference here was to the manner in which steel connecting bolts sheared off and the pipeline withstood the tremendous impact.

Alyeska has announced that it will mandate lower surveillance flights to periodically inspect the line and will paint orange alignment stripes to make that visual inspection more reliable. ❖

**The photographs of this incident at Atigun Pass are the best medium to tell the story of what happened. The photo below and those on the next page illustrate the force that moved the pipeline – and also the risk this event posed to Alaska's environment. All photos are courtesy of the Joint Pipeline Office.**



The sudden shifting of the pipeline caused it to move laterally and contact the Vertical Support Member (VSM), cracking the sheath and exposing the line's insulation.



*(Propaganda, continued from page 3)*

are “indicative of a systemic failure of the [Alyeska] Quality Program.”

So while Alyeska brags in the “Fish Matters” ad that they have crews out along the line protecting the fish, they fail to mention that they were legally required to do so – or that the reason those crews are there in the first place is due to the extraordinarily poor job they’ve done up to this point.

Another prime example is the ad entitled, “How long will the pipeline last?” The ad states that “with proper maintenance” the pipeline will last for “many years to come.” One could argue that while that assertion is indeed true, it remains to be seen whether that “proper maintenance” is being done. The ad also states that Alyeska fights corrosion in the pipeline through a “comprehensive program of monitoring, inspections and maintenance.” Here again, Alyeska had to be pushed, prodded, and cajoled into implementing that corrosion monitoring system by the Joint Pipeline Office. I’m certain that the good folks at the JPO don’t care that the ad fails to give them credit...but it should.

We must finally ask ourselves the most basic question: *why?* Why is Alyeska spending all this money for newspaper ads (I am told there are TV commercials as well, though I have yet to see one) simply to give the public a basic lesson on the pipeline? It appears that there are two possible answers to that question. Perhaps they are genuinely trying to inform and educate the public – but the oil still flows and the profits still roll in even if the public knows nothing. And an educated public is more likely to ask questions – and tough ones at that – so it would seem that Alyeska benefits from a public that doesn’t actually know much at all.

The other explanation is that Alyeska is coyly trying to convince the public of something.

A little history will go a long way to understanding just what these ads are intended to make the public believe. In 1974, Alyeska was granted, via right-of-way permits, the right to cross federal and state land with the pipeline. These permits were given a 30-year life, meaning that they must be renewed in 2004. The importance of this

renewal – to the state, the federal government, and the oil industry – cannot be overstated. The right-of-way permits are to Alyeska the very franchise to operate the pipeline; to the state and the feds, the meal ticket that keeps those revenues coming in.

The process by which the permits will be renewed is at the same time very complex and remarkably simple – Alyeska will be evaluated for their compliance (or *non-compliance*) with the original permit stipulations. An Environmental Impact Statement will also be prepared, complete with public hearings. These studies, culminating in the permit renewal, will all affect the environmental standard to which Alyeska will be held for the next several years.

And that’s where the new ad campaign comes in.

Alyeska knows that for the next four years, their operations will be studied, scrutinized, evaluated, and inspected to a degree not seen since the 1970’s. Every fault and shortcoming in their 30-year history will be potential front-page fodder for the media. Thus, a few dollars spent today on an ad campaign – one that will indoctrinate the public with a feeling of contentment and well-being – will pay great dividends later. ❖

### **Alyeska...are you out there?**

The Alaska Forum believes that there are two sides to every story, at least. In that spirit, we contacted Alyeska and offered to provide space in this newsletter for them to discuss any issue of their concern. We were willing to grant as many words as needed, along with the assurance that their piece would run as submitted, unedited by us. Despite several contacts, emails, and phone messages with this offer, Alyeska failed to respond. Should anyone at Alyeska read this newsletter (and we know they do!) – the offer **still stands** for the next edition of *The Alaska Forum*. Contact Ross Coen at (907) 479-6946 or by email at: [aferfbx@pobox.alaska.net](mailto:aferfbx@pobox.alaska.net).

## POGO Vs. Don Young Part II

*(Editor's Note: In the last edition of this newsletter, we reported how Rep. Don Young, Chair of the House Resources Committee, launched a "witch hunt" against the Project On Government Oversight (POGO). Their indefensible crime, according to Young, was the discovery that oil companies were cheating the American people out of hundreds of millions of dollars and their subsequent rewards to the whistleblowers who brought the abuses to light.*

*The following is an excerpt from the remarks of Rep. George Miller, the Minority's senior ranking member, made at an oversight hearing before a Young subcommittee chaired by Rep. Barbara Cubin (R-WY). His remarks illustrate the pattern of harassment that Young's committee has employed against POGO. To review the full text of Miller's remarks, please contact the Alaska Forum.)*

Madame Chair and fellow Members, I am attending today's oversight hearing to express my very strong concern about the manner in which this investigation is being handled. I believe the rights of witnesses have been abused in the process of this hearing and I believe the Committee has been derelict in its investigative responsibilities.

Let me describe some of the actions by the Majority that should concern every objective Member of this Committee.

Dina Rasor, a member of the Board of the Project on Government Oversight, was contacted by Mr. Casey of the Majority staff who reportedly dismissed her repeated requests to consult with her attorney.

Ms. Rasor is a private investigator, and more than a little familiar with appropriate interrogation methods and witness rights. Mr. Casey reportedly became belligerent when Ms. Rasor insisted that he speak with her attorney, and the conversation was terminated. Soon thereafter, Ms. Rasor received a subpoena to appear today. She was not afforded an opportunity to voluntarily appear as a witness. Further, due to an error by the Majority staff, the

subpoena was sent to a Southern California branch of the U.S. Marshals' Service, and was not properly delivered to Ms. Rasor, who lives in my Bay Area district, until April 21.

The Majority did not inform Ms. Rasor, nor the other out-of-town witnesses they subpoenaed, that under House Rules, the Committee must pay their actual travel expenses and a federal-rate per diem. My understanding is that the Majority staff in fact refused to pay these expenses until my staff cited the House Rules.

Only on April 26 did the Majority finally concede the point, and even then, they refused to reimburse actual expenses and instead offered each witness the value of a government-rate "e-ticket." Of course, having first been informed the Committee would not pay their travel expenses, most of the witnesses had already made their own travel arrangements.

The Majority staff told my constituent, Ms. Rasor, to take the overnight "red-eye" from San Francisco to Washington, appear before the Subcommittee, and return to California the same day, presumably to avoid having to pay per diem expenses.

This not only ignores the clear Rules of the House, but comes close to harassing witnesses that the Majority summoned to appear in the first place!

The Committee should not force witnesses it has compelled to testify, and whom it has misinformed about the conditions of that testimony, to bear the financial brunt of the Committee's incompetence.

I ask that the Committee reimburse the actual transportation cost and regular government per diem expenses, consistent with the House Rules, for any witness it has subpoenaed to be here today. I also submit, for the record, the correspondence from POGO's attorney, Mr. Stanley Brand – former Counsel to the House – outlining his objections to the manner in which this inquiry has been conducted – the latest of which is the Chair's refusal to allow the witnesses time to make oral statements.

I find it appalling that the Committee would summon these people to participate in a clearly adversarial proceeding and then deny them the opportunity to make a statement on their own

*(continued on next page)*

(Rep. George Miller, continued from previous page)

behalf.

As I said at the outset, I cannot help but wonder why the Committee is expending substantial amounts of time and money to investigate people who exposed hundreds of millions of dollars in royalty under-payments, but has utterly failed to focus on those who illegally shortchanged the taxpayers in the first place!

Mobil settled its False Claims suit last year for \$45 million. Altogether, the oil companies have already coughed up over \$300 million dollars in settlement costs.

But where are the witnesses from the oil industry today? When is the Committee going to focus on the systematic cheating of the American taxpayer?

The only attention this subject has received so far is the Majority's ceaseless promotion of its sham Royalty-In-Kind scheme which the Department of the Interior and the General Accounting Office say would cost taxpayers \$330 million a year.

Madame Chairwoman, I would hope this committee would devote at least as much energy and money to investigate the hundreds of millions of dollars the oil industry has underpaid the federal taxpayer, state governments, Indian tribes and school children of this country as it has investigating the people who revealed those under-payments in the first place. ❖

## ACTION ALERT!!!

### Young's Inquisition Needs to Be Reigned In – Now!

As we prepare this newsletter for publication, Don Young is attempting to bring "contempt of Congress" charges against POGO up for a vote on the House floor.

Young's proof? For one, that POGO failed to turn over subpoenaed documents – never mind that POGO either didn't possess the documents or that they don't even exist!

Some documents POGO willfully refused to turn over, such as the home telephone records of its executive director. The First Amendment and "right to privacy" implications are clear, that is to everyone but Young.

### Please act on behalf of POGO!

We ask all Alaska Forum members to phone House Speaker Dennis Hastert and tell him to reign in the renegade actions of Don Young.

Those outside of Alaska can phone their U.S. Representative asking that they oppose any contempt charge against POGO, should one come to the House floor.

And any intrepid souls who want to phone Rep. Young himself may do so and tell him to drop this embarrassing charade.

Rep. Dennis Hastert (R-IL): (202) 225-2976  
Rep. Don Young (R-AK): (202) 225-5765  
U.S. House Switchboard: (202) 224-3121

## Walt Parker: North Pole Explorer *Par Excellence*

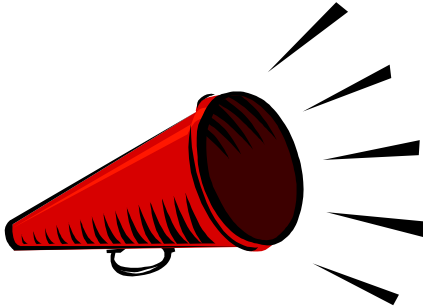


(Note: In March of this year, Alaska Forum board member Walt Parker traveled twice to the North Pole with 5 others, while en route from Anchorage to Svalbard and back again. Walt estimates that he is the oldest person to visit the Pole, certainly to do so twice in one week. The following is a brief summary of his adventures – his plane breaking through the ice, flying with no power and fuel gauges reading zero, etc. -- written by Walt himself.)

On March 8, 2000, departed for the North Pole. Flying in Antonov 2 and a Cessna 185. Both fitted with fuselage tanks and have about 2500 miles range. Ron Sheardown, my next-door neighbor, is pilot of AN2 and Lee Wareham of the Cessna 185. Others along are Jim Bowden of Anchorage; John Pletcher, local attorney and Gruman Goose owner; and Dick Rutan who flew an experimental aircraft nonstop around the world at the equator in 218 hours.

Departed Barrow at 12PM on the 11th. Brilliant clear weather to the Pole. Landed 1.2 miles from the Pole on nearest good lead. Temp -14C, +10F; with 15-20 knot winds. There (continued on next page)

## We'd like to hear from you!



As a member of the Alaska Forum, you have a say in how the organization operates, which issues we work on (or don't), and every other aspect of our activities on behalf of Alaska's people and environment. We'd love to hear your feedback, so please feel free to call, write, or email about anything that interests you and we promise to address your concerns.

### Fairbanks Office:

P.O. Box 82718  
Fairbanks, AK 99708  
Phone/Fax: (907) 479-6946  
Email: [aferfbx@pobox.alaska.net](mailto:aferfbx@pobox.alaska.net)

### Valdez Office:

P.O. Box 188  
Valdez, AK 99686  
Phone: (907) 835-5460 OR  
1-888-885-5460  
Fax: (907) 835-5410  
Email: [afervdz@alaska.net](mailto:afervdz@alaska.net)



This newsletter is printed on recycled paper



*(Walt Parker, continued from previous page)*

was a lone camper at the Pole who we did not visit because of not wanting to let engines get cold.

Arrived back at the Pole (on return trip) on the 15th. Wareham landed first and was testing ice thickness with augur. Ron landed immediately without an ice report and pulled up alongside 185. Wareham and Pletcher were frantically waving him on and he gunned it but after 150 feet or so the wheels went through and the prop hit the ice with predictable results.

I was riding up front sitting on the fuselage tank and had gone back to get out when Ron gunned it. I opened door which is normally two feet above ground and it was level with the ice with water beginning to lightly flood. Everybody got out and surveyed things. It was apparent aircraft had stabilized so I got back in and began to throw things out; we rotated some, no more than two in plane at one time.

It was decided Lee and I should go back with 185 to organize rescue which didn't take much doing because Lee had already made contact by ham radio. While en route we had good communications with both hams and Arctic Radio at Resolute so knew that rescue Otter was in the air 4 hours after we took off. Lost our alternator three hours out of Deadhorse so came in with no electric power and fuel gauges indicating empty for last three hours. We were pretty sure we had 30 gallons or so in reserve, but Lee took no chances overheading Deadhorse and spiraling down over the runway.

Got up late at Deadhorse, fixed the alternator and departed at 5PM on the 16th, arriving at 10:30 AM at Birchwood. Knew that the rest of the gang was safe before we landed so were able to get a good nights sleep. ❖

# Please Join Us In Our Efforts to Sustain Alaska's Future.

The Alaska Forum needs your help. Your membership dues directly support our work to protect the rights of conscientious employees to speak the truth about threats to worker safety and the environment in Alaska. Please join by filling out the membership form below and returning it to us. The Alaska Forum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Donations in excess of benefits are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

\_\_\_\$25 \_\_\_\$50 \_\_\_\$100 \_\_\_\$250 \_\_\_\$500 \_\_\_\$1000 \_\_\_Other

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank You! Please mail this form with your check to:  
Alaska Forum, P.O. Box 188, Valdez, AK 99686*

**Because some of our members are concerned about maintaining their confidentiality, the Alaska Forum does not share its mailing list with other organizations.**



Non-Profit Org.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
Valdez, AK  
Permit No. 16

P.O. Box 188  
Valdez, AK 99686

## In This Issue...

- ⇒ Trans-Alaska Pipeline "Shifts" At Atigun Pass, Undetected by Alyeska
- ⇒ More Pipeline Problems: Construction-era Coverup of TAPS Damage

# THE ALASKA FORUM

The Newsletter of the Alaska Forum for Environmental Responsibility

Fall 2000

## Pipeline Shifts At Atigun Pass

Collapsing Gas Pocket Blamed For Jarring TAPS From Its Supports

On May 15 of this year, Alyeska discovered that a one-and-a-half mile section of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline had shifted as much as 20 inches on the south side of Atigun Pass in the Brooks Range. Alyeska was unable at the time to pinpoint exactly when the incident occurred, only that it had to have happened between late February (the last walking inspection) and May 15 when it was discovered.

Ultimately, a collapsing gas pocket was deemed the cause of the shift. The incident, according to Alyeska, occurred when a rushing flow of oil coming down the pass met a wall of vapor that was resting atop a pool of oil at the bottom. The

(continued on page 6)



A pipeline shoe that slipped off the crossbeam during the shift. For more dramatic photos of this event, turn to pages 6-7.

## AFER Board President Honored With "Volunteer Of the Year" Award

Stan Stephens, longtime Alaska environmentalist and tour boat operator, has been recognized by the Alaska Conservation Foundation with this year's *Celia Hunter Volunteer of the Year* award. The award is given annually to the Alaskan who best exemplifies the selfless devotion to protecting our state's precious environment and ecosystems.



Stan is a founding member of the Alaska Forum and currently serves as its Board president. Past winners of this award include Riki Ott, another founding and current AFER Board member. The award will be presented at a banquet in Anchorage on September 30 (contact either AFER or ACF at (907) 276-1917 for more information).

For decades before and in the years since the *Exxon Valdez* spill, Stan has devoted himself to oversight of the oil industry. In addition to his work with the Alaska Forum, he has served on the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council since its inception. Stan's straight-forward and honest demeanor has earned him the respect of countless

(continued on page 4)

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Message From the Executive Director .....	Page 2
A Matter of Propaganda: Alyeska's New Ad Campaign.....	Page 3
North Pole Adventures of an AFER Board Member.....	Page 10