

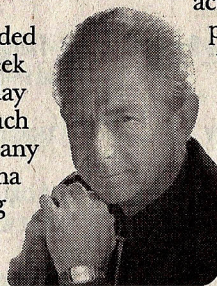
Remembering the Past

*"Oh, it's a long, long time
From May to December,
but the days grow short
When you reach
September."*

September is nearly here and December is not that far away. The beloved ballad above, however, refers more to the passing of one's life than to a simple change of seasons.

Grey hair abounded in the room last week during the two-day "Federal Overreach Conference". Many Alaskans in the Denali Center meeting were closer to the ends of their careers than the beginning. Those hearing the wisdom of these 'elders' and learning Alaska history through their words, know that when their voices vanish, newer Alaskans will have lost a lot.

The purpose of this summit – in my own words – was to learn how the Federal government is violating Alaska's Statehood Compact and how



By Dave Harbour

the state should respond to assaults on its sovereignty.

The organizers (i.e. Citizens Advisory Commission on Federal Areas, CACFA), arranged for many older Alaskans to recall earlier days when Alaska's Statehood Act was still fresh in their minds. Most speakers either deal today with the federal government or previously worked on legislation and regulatory action – in public and private sectors – involving Alaskans' rights under the Statehood Act.

Governor Parnell, Senator Murkowski and Congressman Young described examples of Federal overreach and Senator Begich emphasized Alaska's dependence on Federal spending. But the most impassioned voices came from retired participants in post-statehood battles—and a video with Senator Stevens' warnings of federal overreach.

As I listened, I thought of the September Song and how important it is for one generation to pass on its knowledge to the next—before it is too late, before December.

The Statehood Act gave cultural, recreational, employ-

ment, financial promises to Alaskans of natural resource development control over about 104 million acres of the State's 365 million acres. In addition, the people of Alaska would enjoy traditional use of – and a 90% share of revenue flowing from – mineral leasing on Federal lands.

The Statehood Act recognized Alaska's reliance on resource development – as did Alaska's Constitution – both of which were approved by Alaska voters (i.e. the Alaska Compact). For nearly six decades since then, thousands of pages of new legislation, regulations, Presidential Executive Orders and agreements between agencies have created changes to human activity on federal and state lands in situations where they felt the environment may be impacted.

Everyone reading this column depends on Alaska natural resources. The greatest infusion of cash into the state and many local governments comes from the oil industry.

Education, social services, transportation, construction and maintenance, real estate, professional services, government jobs, public safety, non-profit work – depend on oil money. Remember, we don't pay state sales or income taxes. Oil pays FOUR times to the state: royalty revenue,

income tax revenue, property tax revenue and production tax revenue.

The critical stream of oil tax revenue is dropping fast and we have two opportunities to assure continued prosperity for our kids and their offspring.

1. We can attract more investment to produce energy on state lands.

2. We can attract more investment to produce energy on federal lands.

With adoption of state oil tax reform legislation last spring, we are seeing signs of more oil investment into North Slope energy projects. More Cook Inlet exploration is making South Central Alaska's energy supplies more viable.

But federal policies continue to block or delay access to natural resource and other human and traditional activity on federal and state lands. The federal blockade affects many land uses from energy to mining to rights of way to traditional use of navigable waters to fishing and hunting and winter sports, and, as Senator Murkowski has reported, to a kindergarten class' use of a picnic table without a permit.

Those interested in the

We encourage interested readers to review the Federal Overreach Summit video for its rich history of statehood, here: <http://tinyurl.com/n79vova> Here you will find links to other videos documenting our history through the mouths of Alaska's early leaders familiar with the statehood promise: <http://tinyurl.com/k95xaza> If this is an energy related column, why do we focus so much here on the "Federal Overreach Summit"?

subject of energy, should be very interested in the result of the "Federal Overreach Summit". Iliamna Native Corporation's Lisa Reimers told of the Environmental Protection Agency's effort to prohibit the development of a mine on Alaska's own state property before that mine has even filed for the first permit! Federal agents could use the same technique to shut down energy, mining, recreational, fishing, and hunting, cultural or transportation projects or uses before they even get started if there are concerns about safety or environmental impact.

In the summit's concluding "Roundtable" discussion, Tina Cunning, Former State ANILCA (Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act) Program Coordinator, summarized federal overreach problems and offered solutions.

She reported that federal regulatory agencies in Alaska are, "...making fewer and fewer decisions," while deferring decisions to Washington.

After covering a number

of federal abuses, including violation of their own regulations and violations of law, she emphasized, "...the importance of common sense and ... working together." Cunning suggested that State and Federal staff need more education and training on ANILCA and its special provisions to protect Alaskans.

Let's enjoy September and help fellow citizens remember the past; for December is coming and then a new year will bring new government officials to the workforce. Without our encouragement, they may never read the Alaska Statehood Act or know the federal promises made to all future generations of Alaskans.

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The opinions in this column are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the editors.