

Page 6, Daily Sitka Sentinel, Sitka, Alaska, Tuesday, September 25, 1984

Bethel Police Chief Tenders Resignation

ANCHORAGE (AP) — After months of criticism and controversy, Bethel Police Chief Tom Varnell says he has quit Oct. 1, and his resignation has been accepted by the Bethel City Council. Varnell's department had been the target of criticism from the community newspaper, a grand jury and prosecutors.

Bethel City Manager Lyman Hoffmann declined to characterize the resignation as forced, but "I can say he was reluctant to resign."

"The press is really being tough the last year," Varnell said, adding that his resignation was "not for the community and the police department."

He said he decided to resign largely because the Bethel weekly newspaper, "The Tundra Drums," and its publisher, Rosemary Porter, continued to criticize him. "I feel all of this would have settled down about five months ago if it had let it," Varnell said.

Ms. Porter said her newspaper only reported what was happening.

"The way it's been reported, I just report on it. Am I going to ignore the stuff?"

Anchorage District Attorney Victor

Krumm earlier this year ordered the release of a Bethel man suspected of murdering his parents. Krumm said sloppy police work by Bethel investigators made prosecution impossible.

Krumm and other prosecutors have cited several cases of alleged illegal cooperation from the department.

In May, a grand jury condemned the antagonism between Varnell and the prosecutors as contributing to at least one of the deaths in the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta towns. The panel blamed the police department.

Varnell said his department had problems, but that they were caused by overworked and inexperienced officers and uncooperative or absent prosecutors.

He said there were eight homicides committed in Bethel over a period of 18 months, a staggering burden for a small, rural force.

In July, he asked for, and received, a brief emergency ordinance from the City Council banning temperatures of liquor into Bethel.

The ban was overturned in court.

Extradition For Accused Killer Signed

OLYMPIA (AP) — Gov. John Spellman has signed an extradition warrant that will allow a 36-year-old Washington man to be returned to Alaska to stand trial for murder in the 1963 deaths of eight people aboard the fishing vessel *Investor*.

Spellman signed the extradition warrant for John Peel on Monday afternoon, spokesman David Brice said.

Last weekend, a grand jury in Kodiak, Alaska, indicted Peel on eight counts of first-degree murder and one of first-degree assault. The *Investor* was anchored in the southeast Alaska community of Craig when the deaths occurred.

Peel, jailed in Bellingham on an Alaska fugitive warrant, was arrested Sept. 18.

He is accused of killing Mark and Steve Oudhurst, both 26, their two children, and four teenage crew members aboard the fishing boat as it sat tied to a dock in Craig. Peel also is accused of burning the vessel, which was based in Blaine, Wash.

He has been held in the Whatcom County jail in Ft. Collins, Colo.

Union Oil Seeks Permit For Toxic Mud Disposal

KENAI (AP) — The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADC) is considering a Union Oil Co. of California permit request that would allow burial of 120,000 barrels of toxic drilling muds in pits dug in the Kenai and Cantuary Loop gas fields.

Two years ago, the state threatened to sue Union Oil for disposing of drilling muds in unlicensed pits in that area. The company responded that it was not disposing of the materials, which contain caustic chemicals, but instead was storing them in reserve pits.

Today, the reserve pits remain in the same places, filled with the same drilling mud. The difference is that Union Oil now is seeking permission to bury the material.

Approval of the permit would turn seven unlicensed reserve pits into legal disposal sites. Some of the pits are water tables or in wetlands that serve as nesting and resting areas for migratory birds, environmentalists say.

The permit application is opposed by the Alaska Center for the Environment, the Kenai Peninsula Audubon Society and Dave Brown, the operator of the only licensed special waste facility on the Kenai Peninsula.

All say they are concerned that the corrosive chemicals, salts and mercury and other substances will get into the water supply.

Peter Nettich of the Alaska Center for the Environment claims approval of the permit will endanger the city of Kenai's water supply.

"High levels of toxic metals have been reported in wetlands and water," he said. "Many of these leached the levels set for safe drinking water," he said in a letter of objection to the state agency.

He said those metals could get into

Kenai's water.

Union Oil's application indicates only a few inches of earth and clay separate the drilling muds in some of the pits from the water table, but company officials say the city is impermeable and will protect the ground water from contamination.

Environmentalists have asked for an extension of the time allowed for public comment on the oil company's request.

Judge OKs Agent Orange Settlement

NEW YORK (AP) — A federal judge yesterday approved a proposed \$140 million settlement in a suit by Vietnam veterans who said they and their families were harmed by the pesticide Agent Orange.

The decision by U.S. District Judge Jack B. Weinstein of Brooklyn would, if he gives his final OK, effectively end the 5-year-old legal battle between the veterans and the seven companies that manufactured Agent Orange.

Veterans and the companies are still suing the U.S. government.

Weinstein must still establish a mechanism to determine which veterans and relatives qualify to receive money from the settlement fund, and how much. He said he might still reject the settlement if a satisfactory plan for distributing the money is not developed.

Weinstein will hold hearings, starting Wednesday, on how much of the \$140 million will go to hundreds of layers for the veterans, who have submitted claims estimated at more than \$30 million.

Agent Orange was sprayed over millions of acres of Southeast Asia to destroy jungle vegetation that sheltered Communist insurgents.

Though it was supposed to have been safe for humans and animals, it was later found to be carcinogenic and a highly toxic form of dioxin.

About 15,000 veterans filed lawsuits beginning in 1978, charging that their exposure to Agent Orange caused them to suffer ailments ranging from birth defects to cancer. They also blamed the pesticide for miscarriages by their wives and birth defects in their children.

The chemical companies insisted that Agent Orange was safe when the government said that any harm by the chemical came from misuse.

Rehab Home Fire Arson?

FAIRBANKS (AP) — Arson was the cause of a weekend fire at a home for the developmentally disabled, fire officials say.

But July 25, the home's program director, says Sunday morning fire was accidental. He said she was meeting with fire officials to discuss their findings and she declined further comment.

Susan Siles, 26, a resident at the Fairbanks Rehabilitation Association group home, suffered from smoke inhalation and was listed today in serious condition at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital.

Fireman Thomas Helmers found Siles on an upper floor and carried her out of the home. The four other residents and a counselor were in the home when the blaze began but escaped without injury, authorities said.

According to fire department reports, the fire started in a closet of a bedroom on the second floor of the house. The specific cause of the fire has not been established, but investigators say the cause was arson.

The Fairbanks Rehabilitation Association provides facilities and training programs for mentally handicapped and elderly persons.

Adopted Son Accused In Writer's Death

By HECK HAMPSON
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — When Paul Rogers finally got his soul published, he dedicated it to his adopted son, "with my love and devotion, now and forever."

But on Monday, in a tale as equal as any in Rogers' prize-winning novel of the seedy Times Square underworld, 19-year-old Chris Rogers and another man were accused of beating his reclusive mother father to death and stealing his wallet.

The younger Rogers and Nicholas Oudhurst, 27, were charged with homicide in the death of Rogers' 46, "very, very sick man" who was dying of cancer. They also were charged with robbery and conspiracy for allegedly taking Rogers' wallet and automatic pistol.

A former school teacher and social worker about whom little is known, Rogers adopted Chris three years ago and dedicated his novel, "Dad's Book," to him. It won the 1981 *Edgar's* Best Book Award, which is presented annually for an outstanding manuscript overlooked by major commercial publishers.

Police said the writer appeared to have been dead for more than a week when his decomposed body was found Saturday in a closet of his Queens apartment building by the building superintendent.

According to Detective Lt. James Campbell, Rogers was beaten to death with a plank which his son and Oudhurst later burned in an incinerator. Police said they did not file murder charges until an autopsy indicated Rogers was killed a blow to the head.

The son was at the apartment when police arrived and Oudhurst, whom Campbell characterized as "a drifter," was arrested in a park near Rogers' apartment, the detective said.

Moose Unit to Meet

Women of Moose are reminded that meetings are held 8 p.m. on the first and third Wednesdays and chapter nights are on the first Wednesdays, with formal required.

Those needing more information may call Yvonne Anderson at 747-6885.

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Baptist Church Sites Revival

Sides First Baptist Church will hold a revival meeting Oct. 15-21.

Pastor John McChase of the First Baptist Church in Eagle River will hold the meeting. He is a native of Ponca City, Okla., and graduated from Northern Oklahoma College and Oklahoma State University. He received his seminary training at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary at Fort Worth, Tex.

Services will begin at 7 p.m. each evening at the church which is located at 4th and Main Street.

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