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Karen McPherson, reporter

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October 12, 1979

Sound of fire engine siren. Karen McPherson talked about the Chena Goldstream Fire Department. The department has an old truck with flaking paint bearing a water tank, a used ambulance and a crew headed by Chief Harry Linfield. The fire station located in the Goldstream Valley looks like it could also serve as a place for a barn dance. The department was organized four years ago, but not much was going on until December 1978. The station has been up for two months. There are volunteers and six paid staff members through CETA funds. Linfield is charged with finding other funds. They provide firefighting, ambulance and medical services. Before the establishment of the department there was fire loss in the area. Every time a structure caught fire it would burn to the ground. There were fund raising events to raise money for the department. Linfield said up to recently anyone driving the engine to a fire had to gas it up out of his own pocket. Most of the equipment is a circulation of used equipment. In the Fairbanks area there are four firefighting departments composed of paid and volunteer members according to Linfield as well as departments in Delta, Healy and Nenana. Training for the Goldstream staff occurs on a weekly basis. People who are unable to attend the required training are able to participate. There are people who come out to a fire to assist. There are 35 trained volunteers and ten certified medical volunteers. Linfield said they are getting more volunteers than anticipated. They would like to have them all trained. Volunteers include a variety of people and including females. Most of the calls received by the department are ambulance services. Frank Nolan is the chief medic. He said in eighteen days they have had twenty-one calls. The department will pick people up regardless of their ability to pay. They do hope to break even eventually. Linfield talked about payment for the firefighting services. One person had his insurance rates go down because of the new firefighting department so he donated the difference to the department. Another person donated equipment. Linfield talked about the appeal of a volunteer fire department. He said the facilities are available for social functions.

Music

October 11, 1979

Karen McPherson talked about the record high of 59 degrees Fahrenheit yesterday in Fairbanks. The normal high temperature is 37 degrees and the temperature didn't drop below freezing. There are still cabbages in some gardens. The forecast was for more mild weather. Doug Bautner explained why the temperatures are warmer because of southerly winds.

October 10, 1979

Karen McPherson talked about Chief Henry who died in the summer of 1976. He was well known for his stories, his philosophy, his songs and his snowshoe making. Two years before he died some of his stories were recorded by the Alaska Native Oral Literature Project. Eliza Jones of the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks has been transcribing and translating those tapes. Chief Henry was Eliza's mother's cousin and his wife Bessie is her father's older sister. Chief Henry was Chief of the village of Allakaket. The January following his death a memorial potlatch was held in Huslia. The stories in Eliza's book are of old times recalled by her uncle who was born in 1883. Eliza grew up hearing those stories. Eliza said when she was growing up there were a lot of aunts and uncles from both her mom and dad's sides of the family. Her uncle lived a traditional life. She loved sitting under the smokehouse and listening to the stories. She said there are special kinds of stories where animals were people. They are only told during certain times of the year. She is working on stories about what life was like a long time ago. They could be told at any time. They told stories about events. Eliza tells a story in Koyukon and English about a nomadic hunt. She thinks people will get information about the stories. She puts in footnotes in her book about her interpretation such as correct behavior when going hunting. Eliza said oral history is important because some things are lost just by writing them down. She includes pauses in her writing. She talked about the differences in English and Koyukon. She has enjoyed working on this project.

October 10, 1979

Karen McPherson talked with Sheila Goderer, the state ombudsman in Fairbanks. The positions were created in 1975. In ten months she has received over 800 complaints. Goderer talked about her responsibilities as an ombudsman. They are fact finders. Their main objective is to investigate complaints about state agencies. Once they have completed an investigation they make a finding and make a report to the agency. They can not enforce their recommendations. They have options such as going to the Legislature or governor. She talked about a case of unfair hiring procedures at the university. As a result they found that interviews were not being conducted properly and there were problems with record keeping. Most of their investigations are every day kinds of problems. She said people might feel threatened by their office but they are more of a watchdog. She feels frustrated and challenged by her role and as an office they can make a change. They are always careful to be objective and neutral.

October 9, 1979

Karen McPherson said according to Fish and Wildlife reports unusually high levels of contaminants have been found in fish and birds in the Interior including PCB and DDE. She talked about the sources of PCB and DDE a derivative of the pesticide DDT. They have an accumulated effect on the environment. Fish which can live for up to 15 years can build up a considerable amount of the contaminants. Salmon is considered to be the least tolerant of any fish. Howard Metzger said salmon aren't likely to be affected because they migrate and contamination is a remote chance. Other species of fish may not fare so well. Grayling were found to be contaminated. There have been years when the fish were not considered safe for human consumption. If the levels reached the levels of being harmful to human health the contamination levels would be made available immediately.

October 9, 1979

Karen McPherson said the Federal Regulatory Commission denied a request by the state of Alaska to reconsider on a decision on the pressure of a gas pipeline. A decision which may make it infeasible to make a gas based petro-based industry in the Interior. According to state officials and experts in the field the pressure of 1260 pounds per inch is too low to allow the two billion dollar gas conditioning plant to be built anywhere but at Prudhoe Bay. However Northwest Alaskan Pipeline Company officials claim that even if the conditioning plant is at Prudhoe Bay there would still be enough gas liquids available for a sizable conditioning plant in the Fairbanks area. John Carlson said that this situation does not preclude a plant in the Interior though on a smaller scale than he had hoped. There are other possibilities for petro processing facilities.

October 8, 1979

Don Young said the 1980s and specifically 1980 will be the decision year as far as what direction this nation is going. Karen McPherson said Don Young spoke at a presentation at the Farthest North Press Club. Don Young said that we can continue our direction and improve upon the system that we have lived under or we will be going in the other direction of zero growth, regression, and lowering the standard of living. McPherson said Young cautioned that if the United States did not develop its own resources then we would be hovering on the edge of regression. Young said there will objection to this philosophy and he believes that if this nation doesn't turn in the 1980s and back to the idea that there is a way that an individual can improve upon his life and there is a way to ensure peace and freedom we will go into another system of government and that system is socialism.