

Director's Message

| *Randy Zarnke - Alaska Trappers Association President*



Hope you had a great summer. I sure did, even if the weather wasn't the greatest. Now, I'm looking forward to the best part of the year ... namely, trapping season. With each passing year, I have a greater feeling of anticipation for the start of the season. I hope you feel the same way.

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I stayed very busy with ATA business this summer. Busier than I ever remember in the past. Part of that was due to the fact that we are always trying to make ATA bigger and better. That part felt good. Another reason that I stayed so busy is that things continued to go wrong for trappers in Alaska. Traps were left out over the summer and caught animals, which were found by members of the public. You can imagine how much our enemies love to find those situations. Please don't ever contribute to scenes like that.

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Just as summer was starting here in the Interior, we had a stark wake-up call. Board of Directors member JR Pederson was diagnosed with cancer. Faster than an eye blink, he was under-going surgery and follow-up treatment. Suffice to say that the last few months have been tough for JR. Luckily, he had tremendous support from family and friends. We're all wishing him a complete recovery.

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Many of our members utilize NAFA to market their furs. The NAFA folks are implementing some changes in their Alaska operations, which will be especially important for Interior trappers. They express confidence that this change will be "... an outstanding addition to NAFA and an excellent resource to the Alaska trapping community." See their ad inside the front cover for more info.

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I'm hoping that some of our long-term members from South-Central can help us track down a former member. Several months ago, a friend gave me a copy of the October 1976 edition of our magazine. That was nearly 40 years ago, and shortly after ATA had formed. The mag was addressed to: Joe Holdman, Eagle Trappers Association, Eagle River, AK 99577. If possible, I'd like to talk with Mr. Holdman, who is no longer a member of ATA. Lots of things could have changed in 40 years. I've contacted a few people who live in that part of the State, but no luck so far. If you recognize the name, please contact me (452-6857).

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We're developing a media-based campaign to help enhance our image with the general public. This idea arose during a special meeting of your Board of Directors. This realm of media campaigns is totally foreign to most of us. Thus, the process has been a challenge. However, we expect to have something ready for public release prior to the end of the year, and will build from there. We'll report more on this project as we get closer to completion.

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We continue our effort to build a bigger and stronger ATA. We've reached out to trappers in regions of the State where membership has lagged. We believe that by helping them solve their problems, we will attract more members. Success has been mixed. We will continue in this direction.

