President’s column
By Gail Phillips, ’67

The UAF Alumni Association is actively engaged in making your alumni experience more rewarding. Your association offers many opportunities for alumni to become involved with our university. One way is to assist with student recruitment. An alumnus communicating with prospective students is one of the best ways to excite new students. Letting them know how your experiences helped shape who you are, how your friendships allowed you to grow and how much your degree has helped advance your career goals are all important factors for future alumni to consider in their choice for higher education.

Another way to assist UAF is to advocate for the university to the Alaska Legislature. A strong voice of support from the alumni is needed as we work for a budget that will guarantee quality programs, excellent faculty and staff, and employment opportunities for our graduates. You can go to the alumni association website at www.uaf.edu/alumni/ to keep up on legislative issues of importance for UAF, and to see how you can help with our lobbying efforts.

Chancellor Brian Rogers and his wife, Sherry Modrow, both UAF alumni, are providing strong leadership for our university and support for the alumni association. Our association will continue a close working relationship with Chancellor Rogers as he works to promote UAF’s standards of excellence both nationally and abroad.

Police chief tackles tough issues
By Kim Davis

Fairbanks police Chief Dan Hoffman, ’88, ’08, recognizes many faces when he drives through downtown. One person in particular always makes him smile. Hoffman sees him walking briskly along the sidewalk, perhaps stopping and speaking with someone in Golden Heart Plaza. “Sam,” a spry and clear-eyed gentleman, left a life of chronic inebriation to complete his bachelor’s degree at UAF.

Partly because of this experience, Hoffman wrote his recent master’s thesis on the chronic inebriate issue in Fairbanks. Chronic inebriates are people who are repeatedly incapacitated due to severe alcohol or substance abuse, which is often accompanied by mental health disorders. They face substantial danger not only from Fairbanks’ harsh winter weather but from violent crime as well.

As a young patrol officer in the early 1990s, Hoffman and his fellow officers would often find Sam intoxicated to the point of unconsciousness, lying on the sidewalk, under a bush or huddled in an entryway. He would be taken to relatives, detox or, as a last resort, to the jail for a 12-hour hold. After literally hundreds of such visits, often via the emergency room, Sam woke up one day and decided, “I don’t want to live like this anymore.” He has been sober several years now and bears little resemblance to the sickly and frail figure that nearly died on the streets of Fairbanks.

Hoffman leads a cadre of UAF alumni in the Fairbanks Police Department:
Scott Adams, ’96
Allen Brandt, ’04
David Elzey, ’92
Jim Gibson, ’96
Pearl Holston, ’96
Stewart Lewis, ’97
Kurt Lockwood, ’99
Alana Malloy, ’02, ’05
Robert Thompson, ’91
Dan Welborn, ’94
Where do our alumni live?

Check out the map to see how many alumni live in your state. The map shows the number of known alumni in each state and Canadian province as of December 2008.

Contact the Alumni Association office at 907-474-7081 or 800-770-2586, or visit us on the web at www.uaf.edu/alumni/ or on Facebook. We can help you with career networking opportunities, assisting at college fairs or attending an alumni event in your area.

Get involved — join a chapter!

**Fairbanks chapter**
President: Jim Dixon, ’90, ’91 dixon@ieee.org

**Southcentral chapter**
President: DeShana York, ’95 deshana.york@alaska.edu

**Hockey chapter**
President: Scott Keyes, ’95 scott@pyounker.com
Hoffman has had long conversations with Sam, trying to determine the mix of factors that facilitated such a complete transformation. Unfortunately, there aren’t any easy answers. While some people have the constitution and self-discipline necessary for such an effort, there are many others who need significant intervention and help to achieve goals of this magnitude.

“These people should just be left alone,” say some. In conversations with Hoffman, Sam has said, “Thank God you guys didn’t do that. If you had left me alone and not brought me to detox, I’d be dead right now.”

Hoffman’s master’s thesis notes that, according to a 2003 cooperative research report by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies, Alaska is first among all states for alcohol-related mortality, alcohol abuse among mothers of newborns, and newborns with fetal alcohol syndrome. Moreover, Alaska rated second in chronic drinking and admissions to treatment, and fourth in binge drinking. Of 12 commonly used alcohol-abuse indicators, Alaska ranks in the top 10 in nine of them.

Hoffman wants to lower those figures. He offers several strategies based on his research into successes in other, similar communities in the U.S. One strategy is a comprehensive integration of substance-abuse and mental health resources, including a detox center providing services such as mental health screening. Other strategies include revisiting court-mandated or jail-induced long-term treatment acceptance; establishing long-term funding for community service patrol operations; and creating an “alcohol-free” area in Fairbanks where the sale and availability of alcohol is restricted.

To further these aims, Hoffman makes regular presentations to local community groups such as the city council, chamber of commerce and Rotary clubs. His work is well received, which, he believes, is partly due to the credibility that accompanies a master’s thesis. Hoffman says a local university like UAF lends significant authority to research that addresses large community issues.

“Having an objective, academic underpinning associated with this type of examination, particularly with an issue such as chronic inebriates that can be prone to strong opinion, emotion and even prejudices, really lends a lot of credibility. It’s objective data, not just my opinion.”

Of course, the solution to a problem this large and troublesome requires a firm commitment and appropriate levels of funding. After Hoffman announced his March retirement, Gov. Palin appointed him to the State of Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. As a trustee, he will continue working on chronic-inebriate issues statewide and hopefully bring resources and proven approaches to Fairbanks — on behalf of others like Sam.

Kim Davis is special projects director for UAF Marketing and Communications.
I began my career with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation in 1989 as an environmental technician in the Douglas Laboratory. Following my tenure at the laboratory I became an environmental specialist in the Juneau district office, performing a wide variety of duties for most of the core programs in the department — solid waste, air, drinking water, hazardous waste, water quality, domestic wastewater, industrial wastewater, contaminated sites and oil programs. In 1995 I joined the Southeast Area Response Team for ADEC’s Prevention and Emergency Response Program and was promoted to the section manager level as the Southeast state on-scene coordinator. In June 2008 I became the manager of the Prevention and Emergency Response Program and am responsible for directing the state’s response to oil spills statewide. I am a past member of the National Ski Patrol and am an ongoing active member of the Civil Air Patrol and U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in Juneau. Maria is also an active member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the League of Women Voters.”

**Terry Strle, ’84**, mayor of Fairbanks, donated a kidney to her cousin, Kathy Strle, in fall 2008.

**David Kingsland, ’88, ’94**, principal of the William H. Seward Elementary School in Kenai, was presented a National Blue Ribbon School award on behalf of the school by Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski in fall 2008. The award was one of only two presented to schools in Alaska.

**1990s**

**Kathie Horrace-Voigt, ’94**, is the chief resident at Bay Area Hospital in Corpus Christi, Texas. She will complete her current assignment and graduate from her residency in July. Kathie has traveled to Fairbanks each of the past two years to present information sessions to UAF students about the path to a medical degree.

**Sam Enoka, ’95**, returned to UAF from California in November 2008 to offer his company’s sponsorship for improving alumni mentorship. Sam is the current president and CFO of VIASYN, a company focusing on renewable energy markets, located in the San Francisco Bay area.

**Michael Orr, ’98**, was named by Wells Fargo as senior business relationship manager for its Alaska Commercial Banking Group. Michael was cofounder of Financial Alaska and served as commercial loan officer for Alaska Growth Capital and director of development for Alaska Village Initiatives. He began his banking career with Wells Fargo’s predecessor, National Bank of Alaska, as a management trainee, and served as a personal banker and commercial relationship associate. Michael earned his master’s degree at Alaska Pacific University after earning a bachelor’s degree in economics from UAF.

**2000s**

**Sara Harriger, ’03**, is a political officer at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi for the next two years. Last fall she took part in a three-day tour of Varanasi, India, as part of America Days, a program that attempts to help spread American representation in second-tier India cities. Prior to her new post, Sara spent a year at the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where she helped to set up Laura Bush’s visit to the first breast cancer detection center in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**Brian Jones, ’07**, recently made headlines in Japan for his skill at Go. Go is a Japanese game of strategy where white and black stones compete for territory. It is the oldest board game that still exists today. It is practically a national sport in Japan, similar in popularity to the Western game of chess. A quote from the Kyoto newspaper article said, “Brian comes from the state of Alaska, in America, where you can see the aurora.” Brian currently lives in Japan and works at a junior high school.

**Da-ka-xeen Mehner, ’07**, was included in a group of artists featured in the i-den-ti-ty show at the Alaska House in the SoHo District of New York, curated by the Alaska Native Arts Foundation. The show’s promotional website states, “The show features work that articulates identity through the lens of the artist. The exhibit includes video, digital photography, 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional work by Alaska Native artists and illustrates the painful and sometimes ironic definitions of identity and how, and/or if it is measured. The construction of identity, whether it be racial, legal or cultural and the deconstruction of it vis-a-vis the artists’ perspective provides a new pathway to view identity as it relates to indigenous peoples and reconceptualizes the colonial and racial notions of identity.”

**In memoriam**

- James G. Ambrose, ’78, ’85, Nov. 4, Anchorage
- Stephanie L. Foint-Richey, ’95, Oct. 31, Fayetteville, Ark.
- Micki Kohylk, ’02, Nov. 13, Sterling, Alaska
- Harvey W. Marlin, Jr., Matric, Nov. 5, Palm Desert, Calif.
- Phil Rounds, battalion chief at the UAF Fire Department, Nov. 21, Fairbanks
- Heinz Wiechen, research faculty, Nov. 23, Fairbanks
- Karen Wood, ’03, Nov. 17, Boise, Idaho

**Career check**

Siemens Building Technologies specializes in facility infrastructure, providing energy and environmental solutions. Siemens employs 13 alumni and three interns in its Alaska offices as of December 2008.

- Tiffany Allen, ’07, Fairbanks
- Jeremy Bloomstrom, ’08, Anchorage
- Bill Brown-Farrel, UAF student, Fairbanks (intern)
- Chong Choi, ’99, Anchorage
- Mike Elbert, UAF student, Fairbanks (intern)
- Ed Harris, Matric, Anchorage
- Ben LaRue, ’99, Fairbanks
- Tram Lind, Matric, Fairbanks
- Jon Martin, ’02, Fairbanks
- Amber McDonough, ’98, Anchorage
- Larae Minteer, ’08, Fairbanks
- Tim Porritt, UAF student, Fairbanks (intern)
- Nicole Putnam, ’98, Anchorage
- Doug Schutte, ’98, Anchorage
- Chad Stadig, ’05, Fairbanks
- Mike Weinant, ’02, Fairbanks

Submit your own class notes at www.uaf.edu/aurora/.