



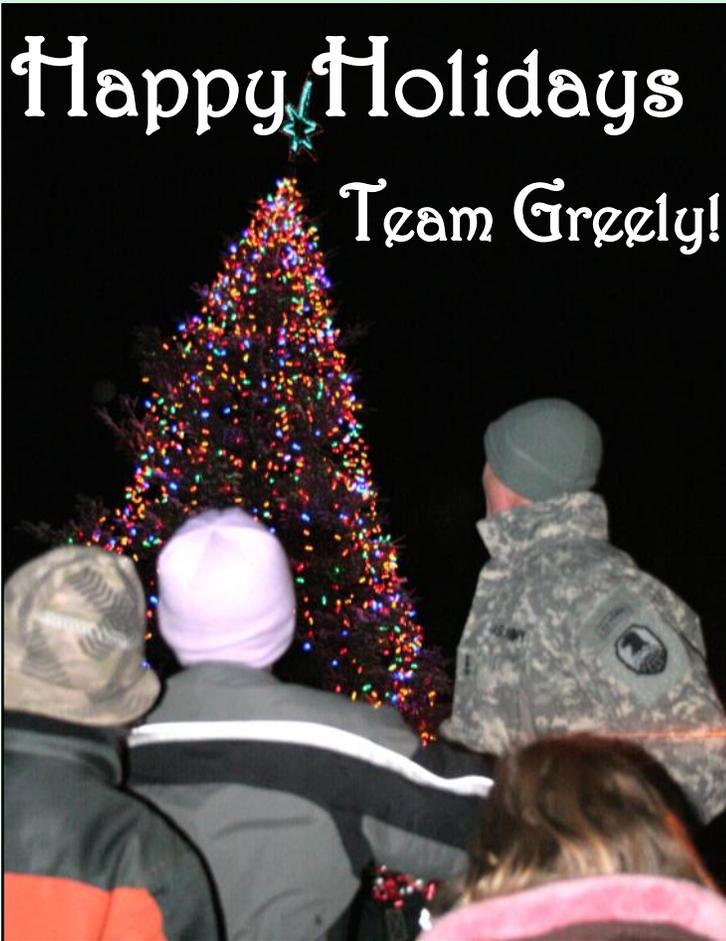
TEAM GREELY

INTERCEPTOR

ALWAYS ON GUARD DEFENDING FREEDOM

December 2008

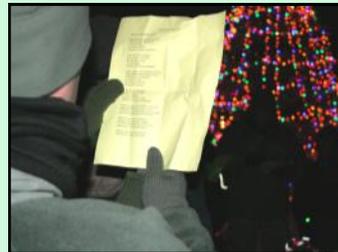
Happy Holidays Team Greely!



Photos by Kent Cummins



Lt. Gen. Kevin T. Campbell, Commanding General Space and Missile Defense Command, the 9th Army Jazz Band, and Santa Claus helped Fort Greely kick off the Holiday Season Nov. 26 with a special Tree Lighting Ceremony followed by family events at the Gabriel Auditorium.



Fort Greely privatized housing on track

Magan Wiggs
Marketing & Leasing Manager
North Haven Communities

Actus Lend Lease, one of the nation's leaders in creating superior public and private community developments, is pleased to announce the privatization housing project at Forts Wainwright and Greely is one step closer to being finalized. Actus Lend Lease has received Notice to Transition from the Department of the Army, indicating the Community Development and Management Plan is approved. The CDMP

outlines the scope of the project along with how North Haven will operate for the next 50 years.

The project, now known as "North Haven Communities," is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, a critical component in the effort to eliminate older housing and foster a better quality of life for U.S. Service Members and their families.

"This is a significant step in moving forward with the project," said Joe Sharp, Actus Lend Lease vice president. "This has been a team effort between the Army

and Actus Lend Lease, with a lot of people working very hard to get this project up and running. We will continue this partnership and continue to work hard to build and manage quality homes for Soldiers and their families."

Receiving Notice to Transition means Actus Lend Lease has 75 days to identify all employees and prepare to take over operations of on-post housing.

"We are continuing to identify local subcontractors to help us provide an enhanced level of service to the Soldiers and families

See HOUSING, Page 4

Command Corner

Commander Sends Holiday Message

Happy Holidays Team Greely! Over the past several weeks, Fort Greely has welcomed the holiday season with gusto ... a USO Show, American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Celebration, a fantastic Tree Lighting Ceremony, Thanksgiving Dinners at the Chapel and on the MDC, and a successful holiday party with the 9th Army Jazz Band and a visit from Santa at the Gabriel Auditorium.

Everyone should definitely be in the holiday spirit. If all those events, plus the great decorations around the installation, don't get you in the holiday mood, you need to get "re-focused" trooper.... and I can send my Sergeant Major around to help you!

It doesn't get any better – you live in THE "winter wonderland." There are people living in the Lower 48 wishing for a white Christmas ... look outside, the Army has provided you with one!

Please take time to spend with family and friends during the holiday season and recharge your batteries. An exciting and challenging new year is just around the corner. Fort Greely is on the move with many initiatives from privatized housing to a new community activity center, indoor running track, and new ATM. So take time to enjoy the holidays and prepare for a great 2009!

Also please take a moment to reflect on those in harm's way. Right now our comrades in arms are fighting in two wars in very distant lands – and they are away from their families and our nation.

Our thoughts, prayers and support need to go out to all the military members serving around the globe who are fighting the war on terrorism. Take the time to send a Soldier a holiday package – those of you who have been deployed to combat know what a package from a total stranger can mean during the holidays.

Just as we can relate to the service, dedication and commitment of Soldiers serving today, we also can recall the feelings that come with being far from home, especially at this time of year. It is this sharing of sentiment and experiences that make us a team — an extended family who will always share a special bond.

I am proud to be the commander of Fort Greely and thankful for the many sacrifices you and your families make every day. Our mission here is critical and we have to stay the course. Please keep safety in mind as you travel and remember not to drink and drive – there is no excuse. I want everyone to have a safe and joyous holiday season.

As another year draws to a close, I also want to offer season's greetings and best wishes to the members of the Delta Junction community ... you are our neighbors and partners. Happy Holidays!

- Lt. Col. Chris Chronis



Lt. Col. Chris Chronis
Garrison Commander

ICE Customer Corner

Please remember ICE is an **interactive** customer service based program. In order to respond to your comments you must leave contact information. For those who choose not to leave their name but want a response, you should consider another avenue to voice your comment, i.e. your chain of command, call or make an appointment with the Garrison Commander, write your congressman, contact your union representative, or see the Equal Opportunity Officer.

FMWR Gym: The gym staff is providing excellent service to the community. The only area I would like to see improvement on is enforcement of the daily-use rule on lockers. This morning I noticed that with only four men in the gym nearly all of the large lockers have locks on them. My suggestion would be to enforce the daily-use rule twice a week, perhaps on Wednesday and Saturday. Yes there are plenty of smaller ones available but when you have arctic wear and a gym bag, it won't all fit. Thanks for your help on this!

Response: Effective Nov. 18, lockers will be for daily use only.

Wood Shop: I don't know if I can say enough about Robert and Joe in the wood shop, their knowledge is unsurpassed. I don't think you would find two people more helpful than them. These two individuals are a credit to the Fort Greely staff.

DOIM: Thank you to Mr. Rich Garrett and staff. After what appeared to be an array of miscommunications among many, Mr. Garrett and staff expeditiously installed a temporary LAN drop; imaged new computers; and installed the computers in the barracks to support the new barracks program. Thank you for the continued hard work and support.

Delta Junction Medical Clinic: Dr. Armitage always is available for emergencies and is extremely professional.

Office of the Commander: Outstanding Holiday Events for adults and children Nov. 26 at Fort Greely! Commander's leadership and efforts are improving the Quality of Life for Team Greely!

To submit an ICE comment visit <http://www.greely.army.mil> and click on the ICE logo.

The **INTERCEPTOR** is an authorized unofficial publication for military and civilian members of Fort Greely. The **INTERCEPTOR** is published monthly by the Public Affairs Office, Fort Greely Garrison. Contents of this publication are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Army. While contributions are welcome, the PAO reserves the right to edit all submitted materials, make corrections, changes, or deletions to conform with the policies of this paper. Articles and photos submitted by the 20th of each month will be considered for publication in the next issue of the **INTERCEPTOR**. Submit via email to fgapao@greely.army.mil, or mail to: Garrison Commander, ATTN: Newsletter, PO Box 31269, Fort Greely, AK 99731.

- Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Chris Chronis
- Deputy Commander Louis Roach
- Public Affairs Officer Kent Cummins

A Message from the Chaplain ...

“The Perfect Gift”

Capt. Vince Cepeda
Chaplain

Where has this year gone? Thanksgiving came and went and now in a few weeks we will be celebrating Christmas.

Christmas is my favorite special holiday because it puts everything into perspective. As the year winds down, this time of year allows us to step back and focus on our family traditions, our friends, and the birth of our Savior.

As usual, many will be caught up with the giving and receiving of gifts. Please don't misunderstand me ... I enjoy giving and receiving gifts, but it is my opinion that Christmas has become so commercialized that we often forget the true meaning of this special day.

It has become common in our society for “Christmas” to be referred to as “X-mas” and for people to say “Season Greetings” instead of “Merry Christmas.”

Christmas is a time to remember “God’s Perfect Gift”...

What constitutes a good gift? Would it be its price, its usefulness, or its sentimental value?

I have received many gifts from my loved ones which were given sacrificially and from pure motives. Unfortunately, many of these gifts have been lost, broken, or soon forgotten.

At this time of year, it is fitting for us to be reminded about God’s gift to us: His Son.

Christmas provides a wonderful opportunity for us to reflect on the meaning and purpose of Christ’s birth.

Scripture tells us, *“But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law. (Galatians 4:4)”*

The Gospel of Matthew reveals the true meaning of Christmas: *“And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for He shall save his people from*

their sins ... Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” (Matthew 1:21,23)

These are powerful verses that remind us that Jesus was born to die for our sins (He is our Savior), and that He also gives us comfort and courage because we have Him as our Emmanuel.

Without a doubt, the greatest gift ever given to us by God the Father is His Son, Jesus Christ.

As accurately stated in *James 1:17, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”*

Twenty-eight years ago I accepted “God’s Perfect Gift” without any regret or reservation. This gift of eternal life is FREE!

Romans 6:23 tells us that

“ He has offered us a special and unique Perfect Gift. The joy of knowing and receiving this Perfect Gift is an honor and privilege. ”

“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Christmas is a time for us to remember God’s plan to give us peace and salvation.

He has offered us a special and unique Perfect Gift. The joy of knowing and receiving this Perfect Gift is an honor and privilege.

Have you received God’s Perfect Gift of Salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ? If not, what joy and satisfaction await you!

From the Fort Greely Chapel family and Chapel staff, we wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a New Year full of God’s blessings!

Snowmachining tips from the Safety Office

by Colleen Pugh
Fort Greely Safety Office

Here are some tips if you and your family go snowmachining over the holidays.

Check the weather. If the report warns of severe wind chill or low temperatures, consider waiting until the weather improves.

If you ride in the mountain areas beware of avalanches.

Also be aware of hypothermia, snow blindness and frostbite. Keep warm and dry by dressing in layers. When you're not wearing your helmet make sure that

you wear a hat and a scarf to keep your neck warm. Below are some symptoms of hypothermia:

- Complaints about being cold
- Uncontrollable shivering
- Impaired or slurred speech
- Blurred vision
- Clumsy movements
- Also can include stiff muscles, dark and puffy skin, irregular heart and breathing rates.

So be careful and watch for some of these things and you will have a good time without someone getting hurt.



For more information, call the Garrison Safety Office at 873-5239 or 5031.



Photos by Merri Darland

USO Show!

(Above) Comedians Gabriel Iglesias and Edwin San Juan sign autographs after the Fort Greely USO Show in November at Gabriel Auditorium. (Right) Ultimate Fighter Chuck "The Iceman" Liddell poses with Spec. David Gulley of the 49th Missile Defense Battalion. The USO group also included Mayra Veronica, recording star and model, and Atlanta-based rap duo, the Ying Yang Twins. Since before the United States entered World War II, the United Service Organizations, or USO, has been a bridge between the American people and the U.S. military. In times of peace and war, the USO has consistently delivered its special brand of comfort, morale and recreational services to service members and their families. Historically, few events have left a more lasting emotional impression on service members and their families than USO celebrity entertainment tours. Since the USO's inception in 1941, thousands of celebrities have boosted the morale of troops in times of peace and war.



HOUSING, from Page 1

of North Haven Communities." said Chris Anderson, North Haven Communities director of property management. "To this end, we have started the hiring process to fill the nearly 60 operating and maintenance jobs that will be created from this project. Our operations budget alone will mean more that \$3.1 million in salary to local people, since the vast majority of people hired are local."

During NTT, Actus Lend Lease will also finalize the scope of the project. Currently, the privatization effort at both posts includes construction, renovation and property management operations for more than 1,800 homes in a sustainable 50-year development and management real estate transaction. The project has an initial

development budget of approximately \$420 million. In April 2009, construction will begin for more than 600 new homes, including 126 at Fort Greely, and more than 400 dwellings will undergo renovations. More than 13,000 square feet of community center space will be developed at both installations, together with about 10 miles of trails and other community amenities

As part of the project, homes for all ranks will be constructed, ranging in size from 1,737 square feet to 2,500 square feet. Vibrant master planned communities will be built with today's military families in mind. The homes, mostly three and four-bedroom models, will feature walk-in closets, master bathrooms and garages or off-street

parking. New homes will include a minimum of three bedrooms. Each home will feature spacious, inviting floor plans, arctic foyers, roomy master bedroom suites, roomy kitchens with ENERGY STAR appliances, and ample storage. Homes will be situated within welcoming communities highlighting walkable neighborhoods, lively community centers, attractive open spaces and hiking and biking trails which allow for Resident interaction.

As part of the housing agreement, Actus will not only build homes, but communities. A Welcome Center at Fort Wainwright and a Community Center at Fort Greely with fitness facilities, meeting spaces and other amenities will be constructed during the initial devel-

opment period. The centers will serve as a hub of activity for Residents and house property management staff, allowing Residents the to better know their community managers.

The neighborhoods are being designed with the environment in mind. New home and renovation plans incorporate sustainable materials and best practices that will extend the lives of the homes and support the surrounding ecosystem.

Tentative design plans include wind turbines at the Fort Greely community center, tankless water heaters, light fixtures with compact fluorescent bulbs, and high efficiency mechanical equipment which will take advantage of alternative energy and insulate against rising utility costs.

Holiday Mail for Heroes campaign underway

*Cards must be postmarked
no later than Dec. 10*

Walter Reed Army Medical Center is supporting a national effort by the American Red Cross and encourages all interested persons to send holiday cards to the address listed below.

**Red Cross Holiday Mail for Heroes
P.O. Box 5456
Capitol Heights, MD 20791-5456**

Cards should not be mailed or delivered to Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

The American Red Cross is working with military hospitals, veterans facilities and military support organizations across all military services and will ensure that all wounded servicemembers as well as other servicemembers receive mail from the American public.

Please spread the word to your neighbors, family members and coworkers who may be interested.

The national "Holiday Mail for Heroes" campaign to receive and distribute holiday cards to service members and veterans both in the United States and aboard.

Holiday Mail for Heroes, which began on Nov. 11, Veteran's Day, is a follow-up to the successful 2007 effort that resulted in the collection and distribution of more than 600,000 cards to hospitalized servicemembers. This year's program will expand its reach to not only wounded servicemembers but also veterans and their families. The goal is to collect and distribute 1 million pieces of holiday mail.

"As we enter this holiday season — a time to celebrate with family and friends — it's important to remember the thousands of men and women who serve our nation in harm's way and those who are recovering in military and veterans hospitals," said Army Col. Norvell V. Coots, commander, Walter Reed Health Care System. "The Holiday Mail for Heroes program is a wonderful outreach effort and a great way to acknowledge the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform."

These guidelines below should be followed to enable a quick reviewing process as well as to ensure that cards are not offensive in any way to anyone who might receive one:

■ Please ensure all cards are signed.

■ Please send cards as opposed to long letters which delay a quick review process.

■ Please do not include e-mail or home addresses on the cards as the program is not meant to foster pen pal relationships.

■ Please do not insert photos, money, religious articles (i.e.-rosary beads, prayer cards, etc), glitter, 'snow' or like items in cards as these items will be removed during the reviewing process. Phone cards or gift cards will not be accepted with cards.

All cards must be postmarked no later than Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2008.

Those wishing to send calling cards or gift cards/certificates should go to www.aafes.com scroll down to AAFES Community Connection' and click on Help Our Troops Call Home or Gift Cards/Certificates for Our Troops' in order to send such items No 'Care Packages' will be accepted at this address.

Those interested in sending care packages should go to www.AmericaSupportsYou.com and click under Homefront Groups to find out how to send care packages

For more information, visit www.redcross.org/holidaymail or http://www.wramcamedd.army.mil/WRResource/Holiday_Cards_2008.pdf.
(Walter Reed Army Medical Center Public Affairs)



Photo by Michele Atkinson

Honoring our native peoples

Kenny Thomas leads a dance during Fort Greely's National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month Celebration Nov. 21 at the Gabriel Auditorium.

Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Chris Chronis gave special recognition to Thomas, a Tanacross veteran, during the event. Thomas is a World War II Veteran and recipient of the Purple Heart for wounds received in action on Okinawa while he served in the Army.

Hundreds gathered to taste Native food samplings and peruse art displays to learn more about American Indian and Alaska Native heritage. Fort Greely members were treated to entertainment by the Tanacross Dancers and special guest speaker, local artist and rancher, Ruby Hollembaek.

Force Protection is Everyone's Responsibility

Report

● Any unauthorized or suspicious person attempting to gain access to a U.S. military installation.

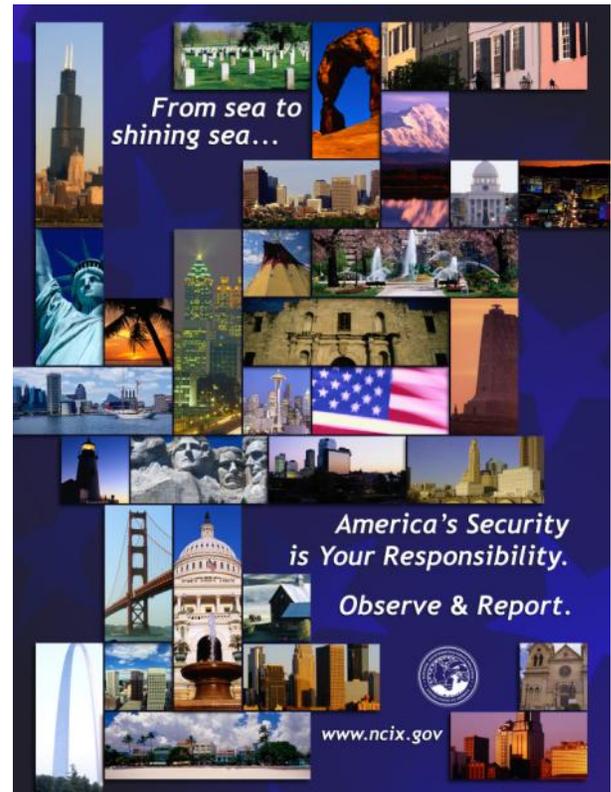
● Any observations of individuals taking photographs, sketches, notes, or diagrams of any U.S. military installation, personnel, activities, and entertainment districts.

● Any person attempting to gather information, via direct questioning, telephone, e-mail, or surveillance, concerning U.S. military installations, personnel, operations, activities, equipment, or facilities.

● Observations of suspicious behavior by any individual in on-post and off-post establishments, to include the entertainment districts.

● Any incident in which you believe someone is following you.

If you observe any of the above, or any other suspicious activities, call 873-2600 or Police Desk 873-9126.



Personal Protective Measures

Security While Traveling

Airport Terminals

♦ Use concealed bag tags and neutral designs (no military crests, logo's defining you as American).

♦ Spend minimal time in large crowds and baggage claim areas.

♦ Find a seat that affords you a good view of the area. If possible, sit with your back against a wall.

♦ Remain vigilant — observe your surroundings but do not cause suspicion by obvious gawking.

♦ Hide your military ID card and sit in the middle near a window when possible.

♦ Only small amounts of liquids, aerosols and gels are allowed in carry-on baggage. See the [Transportation Security Administration \(TSA\) Web site](#) for up-to-date information on items permitted and prohibited on airlines.

Hotels

♦ Request no visitors unless the lobby calls your room first.

♦ Request that no information such as room number be provided by the staff

♦ Leave lights on when room is vacant.

♦ Arrange distinct knock signals.

♦ Pull curtains closed and stay away from windows when possible.

♦ If you suspect someone is observing you, get off at different floors and vary your pattern.

At all times

♦ Vary eating establishments and where you sit.

♦ Alternate all patterns (shopping, leaving your billets, lighting).

♦ Have post office hold your mail and have reputable person pick up your papers.

♦ Refuse first taxi offer when possible.

♦ Avoid crowded areas (theaters, market place, bars, and lobbies)

♦ Know how to use local telephone service.

Foreign Travel

Force Protection Plan

Anyone going overseas visiting family members, or on a tour, including civilian employees, must have an FP traveling plan before taking off. This rule has been passed down by JTF-AK, and each service is tasked with making sure its members, family members, and civilian employees comply.

A plan is required for travel everywhere except Japan and the United States ... and the travel plan is not optional or open to debate.

Military members can be punished under UCMJ and family members can face administrative action for not complying.

NOTE: See the security manager or antiterrorism officer to accomplish a plan not less than 45 days prior to your flight, per Defense Department guidelines.

Christopher E. Ruffin

Antiterrorism and Intelligence

(907) 873-5032

“Situation Awareness saves Lives”

Maria Lester
Security Manager

Harlem Ambassadors Fort Greely show Dec. 6

The internationally-acclaimed Harlem Ambassadors will be visiting Fort Greely for a game in the Fitness Center at 7 p.m. Dec. 6.

The Harlem Ambassadors offer a unique brand of Harlem-style basketball, featuring high-flying slam dunks, dazzling ball-handling tricks and hilarious comedy routines.

The Ambassadors feature non-stop laughs and deliver a positive message for kids wherever

the Ambassadors play. "At our shows, we want the kids to know that they're part of our team too," Coach Ladè Majic said. "We invite as many kids as we can to come sit on the bench, have a front row seat during the show, and get involved in all of the fun stuff we do."

The Ambassadors have worked extensively with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Boys & Girls Clubs,

Big Brothers Big Sisters and American Red Cross as well as Rotary, Lions and Kiwanis Clubs in communities throughout the U.S. and perform more than 200 shows a year.

Those shows have helped raise millions of dollars — an accomplishment of which Ambassadors President Dale Moss is very proud.

"It feels good to be able to provide quality entertainment and create memories that the

fans will take with them," Moss explained. "We're able to give even more when we can help provide funding for a Habitat for Humanity house or new computers for the school library, and that feels great."

Advance tickets are: Military/Students: \$4; Adults: \$8. At-the-Door: Military/Students: \$5; Adults: \$10. Kids under 3 admitted FREE.

For more information, call 873-3405.

News Notes

Positive Control

A Positive Control Class is 10 to 11 a.m. Dec. 9 at the Gabriel Auditorium

Do you feel surrounded by negativity? Or think there is not enough positivity in your life? Do you avoid the news just to keep from feeling down? We can't always change our environment or reality, but we can change how we process things and/or find the positives around us.

Start a New Year's resolution now. Call 873-4346 to sign-up.

Winter blues

A Seasonal Affective Disorder class is slated for 10 to 11 a.m. Dec. 11 at the Gabriel Auditorium.

With the lack of sunlight and harsh winters, Seasonal Affective Disorder can claim you and your family without you knowing it.

Learn how to recognize the symptoms and ways to minimize its effect.

A necessary training for first-timers in Alaska or a great refresher for those who have been here.

These classes are free and

open to all Fort Greely residents and personnel.

Holiday Gala

A Holiday Gala is slated from 8 to 10 p.m. Dec. 19 at the Gabriel Auditorium.

Tickets can be pre-purchased at MWR for \$10 per person or \$20 per couple (cash or check).

Ticket price covers one glass of champagne or sparkling cider per person and hors d'ouves.

Tickets on sale now through Dec. 12.

The CDC will be having children's holiday craft activities for anyone requiring childcare. Regular fees apply.

The deadline for childcare sign-up and registration at the CDC is 5 p.m. Dec. 12.

For more information, call Jessica Smith at 873-4336.

Chapel Events

The Delta Community Christmas Choir is 7 p.m. Dec. 12.

The Fort Greely Chapel Children's Christmas Pageant is 6 p.m. Dec. 21.

The Fort Greely Chapel Christmas Eve Service is 6 p.m. Dec. 24.

Fort Greely recycling made easy

Sandi DeLong
Recycling Coordinator

The amount of "recycling rules" may seem overwhelming or just too complicated to some of us. So if you or your family members are wondering about how to get started with recycling, here are a few hints that I hope you find helpful.

STOP STRESSING – Do what you can, every little bit helps.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT – We aren't asking for perfect, just keep trying and soon you won't have to even think about, you'll just do it.

KEEP IT SIMPLE – Have a separate waste basket for each recyclable product, once you start separating, it becomes a natural habit. Make it a family project.

We recycle several items at Fort Greely and hope to add some others to our program this coming year. The following is a list of items you may or may not be aware of that gets shipped out for recycling: Inkjet and Toner Cartridges, Computer Equipment, Eye Glasses (Lion's Club), Cell Phones, Mixed Paper/Newspaper, Corrugated Cardboard, Aluminum Cans, Copper and other metals. Don't forget about our turn-in and exchange program for any Household Hazardous Waste at Bldg. 637 (ECC). Recycling dumpsters are located in several areas around post, with the main transfer site at the end of Denali and First Street. **GREEN** dumpsters are marked for corrugated cardboard and mixed paper, while the **BLUE** containers are for aluminum cans.

Although our recycling totals have increased over last year, there is so much more of the waste stream that can be diverted from the landfill and eventually made into new products. An aluminum can is recycled and back on the grocery shelf in as little as six weeks! That same can saves enough energy to power a TV for three hours and is the equivalent of a half gallon of gasoline.

If you have questions or would like more recycling information, please call the DPW Environmental Office at 873-4664.

Outsmarting Murphy: *Ice Fishing in Alaska*

Nancy Sisinyak

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

“I’m going to try a Cheeto.”

This was the remark made by an especially bored 6th-grader on one of our Alaska Department of Fish and Game sponsored ice fishing outings. The fishing had been slow and the kids were all sitting around their ice fishing holes eating lunch. Richard Barnes, Fairbanks-based fisheries technician, replied, “You can’t catch a fish on a Cheeto.”

“Why not? Have you ever tried it?” “Well, no.” Richard responded, “But...”

Richard never got to finish his sentence. The Cheeto-baited hook had barely cleared the bottom of the ice when the young angler was hauling it back out with a feisty, albeit small, coho salmon clamped onto the hook.

Richard and I simply looked at each other knowingly and shook our heads. We had been here before. We are constantly learning things like “Cheetos DO make good bait.” Useful, perplexing, and troublesome things like ... a power auger, which has been performing well all winter, will choose not to start on the trip 75 miles away from home with 17 boy scouts depending on you for a day of ice fishing; an ice fishing ladle, when kicked by a 6 year old, is guaranteed to gee and haw across the frozen landscape with a mind of its own until it finally splunks down a hole with a resounding slurp and disappears forever; you are guaranteed to drive your auger into the silt only on those occasions in which you do not have extra blades; no matter how many times you stress wearing proper clothing, someone in your group will show up for the day’s ice fishing in tennies and spandex; and Murphy’s Law is always in effect ... if anything can go wrong, it will.

Given these and other dilemmas that plague the ice fishers of Interior Alaska, the following are some tips and tricks to make your ice fishing outings more enjoyable and hopefully more successful.

► Do all of your prep work before leaving the warmth of your home or cabin. Simple things like tying on a lure are considerably more difficult out on the ice at 20 below.

Check your tackle and make sure you have all the necessary jigs, bait, hooks, ladles, etc. Start the auger to make sure it is running properly. Check the blades. Top the auger off with properly mixed fuel. Make sure everyone is dressed for the weather.

► Alaska statewide regulations allow you to ice fish using two rods, or one rod and one tip-up, provided only one hook or artificial lure is used on each line, and as long as both set-ups are closely attended. When fishing in a party, have each angler fish at two different depths. You will be able to find fish faster using this strategy.

► One of the really fun things about ice fishing is being able to see your quarry. Shovel a wide area down to bare ice around your ice fishing hole. Cover your head with a heavy quilt and look down the hole. Light penetrates the ice that has been cleared of snow, and since you are under the blanket in the dark, you are able to see into the water and watch the fish as they investigate your bait.

► Different ice fishing lures give you different action when you jig. Spoons tend to flutter, flashing as the light bounces off their surface. Airplane jigs spiral up and spiral back down in a circular motion, attracting fish with their acrobatics. Jigging Rapalas mimic the movements of a small feeder fish. It is hard to tell which lures or action the fish are going to respond to and when. The trick is to be patient and change lures and attractors when the one you are using isn’t producing results.

► Most fish use the senses of sight, sound, and smell to locate food. Attracting fish to your hook by targeting two or more of these senses should increase your catch. For sight, use a colored hook or jig and a smooth jigging motion. For sound, try using a sound chamber (a small plastic tube with a few BBs in it that knock together when the line is jigged. When initially dropping your lure/bait in the water, do so with a resounding plop. For smell, use oily bait that gives off good scent such as squid, raw shrimp, salmon eggs, or Power Bait.

► Use all resources at your disposal when thinking about fishing a lake you are unfamiliar with. ADF&G has bottom contour maps of many area lakes available. Talk with local tackle shop owners and find out where and what is hot.

► Have you ever accidentally kicked your ice ladle down your fishing hole? Has junior ever dropped your lucky pole into the murky depths of your favorite lake? Try tying a small, empty, capped plastic beverage bottle to your ladle and the kids’ ice rods. When that well placed kick sends those hole-seeking items across the ice and down into the water, the home-made bobbers will keep them afloat at the top of the hole for easy retrieval.

► Keep the blades on your auger sharp. When fishing an unfamiliar lake, drill your first hole far off shore to avoid grinding the auger blades into the silty bottom. With each successive hole you can work your way toward shore. While drilling your ice hole, pull the auger up several times during the drilling to clear the hole of ice shavings. Just before you break through the lower edge of the ice, remove the auger from the hole and shovel the ice shavings and snow, from around the ice hole. Return to the auger and punch the hole through the bottom of the ice. By clearing the ice shavings and snow from around the hole before it is soaked with the lake water, you have a flat, comfortable area from which to fish.

► Except in areas of upwelling from springs and areas around inlet streams, the temperature throughout a given lake in the winter is relatively homogeneous. Fish that may only be found in certain areas or depths of a lake, due to a favored water temperature in the summer, do not have that limitation in the winter. Your lucrative summer fishing hole may not be as productive in the winter since the fish are not limited to holding in deep, cool holes.

► When taking kids ice fishing, have alternative ideas for something to do in case the fish are not biting or Murphy sabotages your trip in some other creative manner. Take snowshoes and or cross country skis. Have them race each other. Look for and identify tracks in the snow. Slide on the ice. Go on a little hike. Play Simon Says ... anything to keep them moving.

► If you use a portable heat source to keep your ice house warm, be sure to maintain proper ventilation. Carbon monoxide can overcome conscious and sleeping individuals. Step outside the house occasionally, crack the door, and/or cut a vent in the roof and along the floor line.