

Full House Hears Story of Fischer's 'Journey'

Former state Senator Vic Fischer makes book tour stop at UAS



Victor Fischer

By Mark D. Miller,
Juneau Empire

Nearly every seat in the lecture hall of Egan Library was filled Friday, February 22 for a book talk by former state Sen. Victor Fischer, one of Alaska's "founding fathers."

Fischer, who helped write the Alaska Constitution, was in Juneau to talk about his autobiography, *"To Russia With Love: An Alaskan's Journey."* His appearance at the UAS was part of the university's "Sound and Motion" spring event series.

Fischer was born in Germany in 1924 and

spent much of his childhood in the Soviet Union, before his family emigrated to the United States. While serving in the U.S. Army during World War II, he said, he became fascinated by the idea of becoming a town planner and moving to territorial Alaska.

"Just as I had been looking for jobs, had job offers, a notice went up on the bulletin board: Interior Department Bureau of Land Management town planner for Alaska. And I pulled the notice off the bulletin board," said Fischer to laughter from the audience.

Fischer moved to Alaska for the job in 1950 and was eventually elected to serve as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention.

While taking questions from the audience, Fischer was asked several times for his opinion of the Constitution and how it has held up over time.

"I would revisit some parts," Fischer replied. "I think as a whole, it's worked very effectively. I think having a strong chief executive, strong governor, despite my dislike of some — it's worked well."

Fischer also praised Alaska's judicial system, which he said was the main reason why he has never voted for a new convention despite wishing some elements of the Constitution were different.

Among the changes Fischer would like to see, he identified the glossing over of Alaska Native history in the preamble and the Constitution's failure to outline a strong role for tribal governments. He also said he would like to revisit the state's decennial redistricting process.

University Hosts Sea Otter Symposium

By Mark Miller, *Juneau Empire*

Photographs of frolicking sea otters projected onto a screen greeted students, staff and members of the public coming into Egan Library Thursday, February 21 for the "Sea Otter Symposium" hosted by the University of Alaska Southeast.

Meanwhile, posters at the back of the room described studies done and conclusions reached by University of Alaska Fairbanks and United States Fish and Wildlife Service researchers, many of them on the impact of surging northern sea otter populations in Southeast Alaska.

Six sea otter experts gave presentations on the marine animals, which were eradicated from Southeast Alaska by overhunting during the height of the commercial fur trade, but have thrived since their reintroduction to the region in the 1960s.

National Student Exchange (NSE) Service Award

At the 45th Annual NSE Placement conference in Orlando, Florida in March Academic Exchange and Study Abroad Coordinator Marsha Squires was recognized for 10 years of service to the consortium. She has worked with hundreds of students through the national program, served three years on the governing board as a member of the Council as well as Council Chair, continually assists with the Mentor Program, is a member of the Encouragement Team, and has presented and led workshops and orientation sessions at the annual conference over the years. Squires is the recipient of the UAS 2012 Staff Make Students Count award.

Tallmon Appointment

NMFS Alaska Scientific Review Group

Biology faculty member David Tallmon was recently appointed to the National Marine Fisheries Service's Alaska Scientific Review Group, which reviews the status of imperiled marine mammal stocks in Alaska and makes management and research recommendations to federal agencies based on these reviews.

Lemon Creek Exchange Participant Wins Woosh K Poetry Slam at UAS

By Sol Neely, Assistant Professor of English and Philosophy

For the first time ever, the monthly Woosh Kinaadeiyi Poetry Slam in Juneau was held on the University of Alaska Southeast Auke Lake campus as part of the Sound and Motion Spring Arts Series February 15. Eminent poet-MC's were UAS Art student Kate Laster, Class of '13 and alumni Jacques Boucher, Class of '12 and Outstanding Graduate in Humanities.

The slam winner was Nathan Block, a talented Iraq war veteran recently paroled from Lemon Creek Correctional Center (LCCC) who participated in the Fall 2012 "UAS-LCCC Education Exchange Project," where he first met many of the student organizers of the monthly poetry slam.

The "UAS-LCCC Education Exchange Project" program brought UAS students inside the prison for an "integrated" classroom experience. The opportunity to bring university students inside the prison for collaborative study with inmates was co-organized by Dr. Sol Neely and Mr. Paul McCarthy (education coordinator at LCCC) as a component to Prof. Neely's ENGL 418 course—"Fugitive Thought: Philosophy and Literature Born of Prison"—which studied culturally significant literature and philosophy born of the prison as a privileged perspective from which to open meditations on questions of justice, hope, redemption, and ethical responsibility.

Reaching across the profound social barriers that separate the prison and the university, students inside and outside prison learned from each other, working to address and change misconceptions about education, incarceration, and power. During the final week of the education exchange, students shared their own poetry and original creative works, which brought the program to an especially intense and emotional conclusion.

When learning of Nathan's release from LCCC during the winter break, UAS students who met Nathan through the "UAS-LCCC Education Exchange Project" encouraged him to attend the poetry slam. With heartening hospitality, UAS students have made a campus community for Nathan, who is enrolling in summer classes at UAS and preparing to pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and philosophy.

Meanwhile, Prof. Neely and Mr. McCarthy are resuming literary and philosophical studies inside LCCC, working to organize with UAS students another "integrated" three-week creative writing workshop in April. UAS and JEDC Innovation Summit



Nathan Block. Photo: Daniel Kantak

Innovation Summit

Chancellor John Pugh moderated a session at the second annual Innovation Summit Feb. 11-12 at Centennial Hall in Juneau. UAS School of Management Dean John Blanchard was involved in planning the conference, hosted by the Juneau Economic Development Council. Leaders in business, government, and education cultivated ideas and developed strategies to strengthen key industries in Southeast communities. Strengthening regional industry clusters is one of the ways in which JEDC hopes that the Innovation Summit can help to nurture an "innovation ecosystem."

Kh'unei Named to Top 40

Lance A. Twitchell "Top Forty under 40"

Assistant Professor of Alaska Native Languages Kh'unei Lance A. Twitchell appears on the Alaska Journal of Commerce's 2013 list of "Top Forty under 40". The program seeks to recognize Alaskans who make a positive difference in the future of our state from the private, public, and non-profit sectors. Twitchell has been instrumental in renewed interest in Alaska Native language learning and a new designated emphasis within the Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree in Alaska Native Languages and Studies. This year's class will be honored April 5 at the Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage.



Lance Twitchell

Coeur Check to UAS High School Mining Training

Coeur Alaska Kensington presented a check for \$7000 to UAS

Coeur Alaska Kensington Mine General Manager Wayne Zigarlick presented a check for \$7000 to UAS Center for Mine Training Director Mike Bell at a recent Alaska Miners Association meeting in Juneau. The contribution is for tuition and travel to mine tours for Southeast Alaska high school students that are enrolled in the Introduction to Mining Occupations and Operations course that Bell teaches at UAS in partnership with the Alaska Learning Network and the Alaskan Mining industry. "Coeur's contribution is really appreciated and demonstrates the commitment of the mines in our area to develop a local Alaskan workforce and to help students to understand the career pathways that the mining industry can offer," said Bell.