

I'll Be 50 in 2003-

Dome Cities, Dead Villages, Etc.?

By MARILYN RICHARDS

Can you imagine what Alaska will be like in 30 years? Thirty years doesn't sound so far away, but when you say or hear the year 2003, it seems centuries away! Two thousand three!

In 30 years, still sounds incredulous, there probably will be many fantastic changes since the last few years held a few surprises in themselves.

There could be dome cities on the North Slope. No snow or wind. Some people say that the

villages will be dead, some say they'll thrive and become large urban populations.

There could be two or three bridges along the Yukon River. There might be a connecting network of highways in Nome, Barrow and Bethel.

Did I hear that Alaska will be putting out six million barrels of oil a day? Other possible sources of energy might be from volcanoes and the sun.

Over a million people will

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probably be living in Alaska. It was suggested that they might be living in skyscrapers, like Russia is developing Siberia to conserve space. They built up and not out. Living in high rise complexes would be cheaper and more convenient.

Inside would also be clinics and shopping centers. There would still be those hardy souls who like the wilderness and their privacy.

Those million people would be driving all those new roads or flying in supersonic transports or in monorails or snowmobiling, maybe even dogmushing.

Alaska will probably be industrialized. Living might be worth it! That is - cheaper

Some predict that there

won't be any more natives left any more. Some say that the native corporations might be controlled by non-natives or even non-Alaskans. But I didn't hear any natives say that.

These topics and others were tossed about in a panel discussion entitled "Alaska 2003" which was put on by the U of A's Geography Club. The impressive panel included Dr.'s Forbes, Brice, Wheaton and Moyer from the University, Commissioner of Economics Irene Ryan, Cliff Burglin, Jerry Smetzer and Dave Hinkley - a land examiner from the BLM.

These are plans, visions, dreams to some and nightmares to others. Thinking about the future is fascinating but what worries me is that in 30 years I'll be 50.