

From Jack Hakkila —

An "Irreverent view" of Limited Entry

(Editor's Note: Tundra Times Advertising Manager Jack Hakkila continues his 'Irreverent View' column this week with some observations about a "Limited Entry" program for Alaskan politicians. Of course, his views do not necessarily represent those of the Tundra Times)

(c)1978 By JACK O. HAKKILA

Some of my friends in the villages have asked for an explanation of the political system.

Its workings have increasingly become a focal point of interest because of the close primary elections and because of the importance of the bush vote.

The most important point to begin with is that Alaska is a large state but small in population.

Consequently, a system was established early in the state's history which allowed only a small number of politicians to run for statewide elective office.

This "Limited Entry" system operating through the political parties and the primaries assures us that all politicians will receive some votes.

As the system was originally designed no consideration was given to the fact that, since only so many people would be allowed to become politicians, that these Limited Entry permits would increase very rapidly in value.

Since he was the first governor and because he solicited votes throughout the bush in Eskimo and Athabaskan, Bill Egan's permit carried quite a lot of prestige.

All of the Democrats were eager to use it once Bill stopped politicking. Bill gave his permit to Jay Kerttula. Kerttula had his own permit for politics since statehood but, until Egan gave him the one allowing him to run for governor, he was limited to campaigning in his own backyard.

A valuable permit indeed would have been the one Walter Hickel had from his first term as governor. However, he turned his permit over to Keith Miller so that he could fish in Washington, D.C.

No one is quite sure if Keith has turned that permit back over to Wally now that he is running again. I did see Keith speak with Jay briefly at an impromptu campaign gathering at Talkeetna. It was quite the source of speculation whether this permit was discussed there. In any case, Wally did regain a permit to campaign in Anchorage and did very well there.

Many people feel that Jay Hammond has done the most remarkable job of amassing Limited Entry permits. Some feel that he has used his job as governor to influence people in the rural areas to turn over their permits to him. This, however, is not the case at all.

Chancy Croft is fishing all over the state, using Frank Ferguson's and John Sackett's permits. Even though Sackett and Ferguson have never used their Limited Entry permits for statewide office, they are invaluable for Chancy since he has never fished outside of Anchorage before.

Ed Merdes would probably have to agree that Chancy's permits work better than his. Ed bought his permit from Joe Rothstein in Washington, D.C. Joe's permits had been good enough to place eight senators in Congress, but do not seem to attract voters as well in Alaska.

Considering the heavy trading in permits and the high prices paid for them during this political season, some Alaskans are calling for strict gear restrictions and sweeping reforms in the Limited Entry Commission.

As Advertising Manager for the Tundra Times, the large trading and high stakes helps me to keep up our ad lineage. So, I must now make my pitch to our readers — **SUPPORT LIMITED ENTRY!**