St. Paul people get behind KUHB radio

by Jack Kleinkauf
for the Tundra Times

ST. PAUL ISLAND — The people of St. Paul appreciate having their very own local radio station, and they demonstrated that appreciation during a recent fund drive.

The station, KUHB, depends on community support to stay on the air. The Pribilof School District holds KUHB's license, and the City of St. Paul provides the space and electricity.

The Alaska Public Radio Network sent a staff member to St. Paul recently to conduct a workshop for volunteers interested in helping out KUHB.

The workshop participants dreamed up a scheme to raise money for equipment and other things the station needed, and because they wanted to have some fun while raising the money, they dubbed their effort a "funraiser."

Radio staffers Alicia Misikin and Cecilia Galanin, aided by many volunteers, were on the air asking for pledges for three days from 8 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. They used all sorts of gimmicks and verbal gymnastics to urge listeners to pledge donations.

Twice each hour a trivia question was asked about people or events from the Aleutians and Alaska. Prizes included two round-trip tickets donated by Reeve Aleutian Airways and Peninsula Airways.

The people of St. Paul had a lot of fun challenging each other to pledge more. Agencies challenged other agencies, groups challenged other groups and pets even challenged other pets.

A cat named Spook McKurk challenged another cat named Kuska (the Aleut word for cat), and Kuska in turn issued a challenge to Bowser, Tootie and Monday.

Even a bird named Fruit Cake issued a challenge to the other birds on the island.

By the end of the three days, $14,481 was raised, far exceeding the station's wildest expectations.

The APRN consultant told the volunteers that another community attempted a similar effort, and that other community had raised $18,000.

The big difference was that they had a population of 10,000 to support their station, while only 550 live in St. Paul.