

# Tundra Times (staffer) gets lucky in Nenana ice classic

**NENANA**—With the sound of the siren, triggered by sudden movement of the 40-foot tripod, the 62nd annual Nenana Ice Classic came to an end April 30. Nine ticket-holders had guessed with exact time when the ice would go out, signaling the official breakup of the Nenana River.

It was a dramatic end for the ice classic, an annual local fund raiser that has attracted thousands of folks to purchase tickets betting on the day, hour and minute the ice will go out on the river.

"We had nine winning tickets this year," said Jack Coghill, chairman of the ice classic board. "And it was a good breakup. The whole mass of ice just started moving down river at once, at 3:18 p.m."

Holders of the winning tickets shared the \$117,000 pot.

It was actually 4:18 p.m. daylight savings time and one winner who watched it all happen from the banks of the river didn't even know he's won. "I forgot they did it on standard time," said Sam Demientieff, Fairbanks. Demientieff had taken a look at the tripod, then looked away at his two sons playing on the bank. He turned back, saw the tripod had fallen and started running toward town when the siren sounded. He said he glanced at his watch, but still didn't think he had a winning ticket.

Demientieff was en route back to Fairbanks, 70 miles north of Nenana, when he turned on the radio and found out he was a winner. He was part of a group from the Interior Village Association which had pooled their tickets and agreed to share the prize.

What pleased Demientieff even more was that he'd entered his retired parents, Nick and Nellie Demientieff of Holy Cross, in the same pool, on the spur of the moment, and they too were winners. Others in the "Fairbanks IVA Super Guessers" pool were Walter Wood, Edie Mayo, Mike Andon, Louise Huelle, Debbie Ficus, Susie Pope, Terry Burris, Paul Costellow, Martha Starr, Sandy Farnsworth, Helen Barrett, Dave Paxton, Larry Wiggins, Pat Sweetser and Bill Ares.

Ares, who won a stereo in a Fairbanks store drawing a week earlier, said he must be having a lucky streak and hoped it would continue. He is the assistant to the publisher of the Tundra Times.

Three other winning tickets in the ice classic were held by pools. M&R Shops of Clear had a 15-member pool. Anchorage residents Robert and Carrie Smith and William and Louise Peters had another ticket. Mildred Mantle and Marge McCormick, both of Anchorage, shared another ticket and another winning pool was the W.B. Swanson Pool of Anchorage. Single winners with their own tickets were James Tudor, King Salmon; Stuart Godwin, Jr., Anchorage; Dorothy Revell, Anchorage, and H.E. Olson, Dillingham.