

What! The Nenana Ice Classicalready?

NENANA — Seems a bit early to start thinking about when the ice will go out, when the tripod is going to fall, who is going to win, and how much, you say? Maybe it's too early in some parts of the state, but not in Nenana. Preparation work is already beginning for the 1981 Nenana Ice Classic!

At the annual general membership meeting on November 12, five new members were elected to the board of directors. Those elected were Dale Ridlington, Jim Coghill, Jed Reagle, secretary, and Jim Coghill, treasurer. Buki Wright, manager of the Ice Classic last year, was awarded the management contract for 1981.

Ice Classic officials expect a good year for Alaska's favorite guessing game in 1981. 1980 was a year of rebuilding and expanding. "There were three areas we felt needed work," Wright said. "We needed more

ticket outlets. We needed better direct communication with those selling tickets around the state. And, we needed to better inform the public just what the Nenana Ice Classic is."

"Back in territorial days and in the days of early statehood, everybody in Alaska was familiar with the Ice Classic. It was a household word," commented Bob Coghill. "It still is, but there has been a tremendous influx of new people in Alaska in the last ten years who are not familiar with the traditional background of the Nenana Ice Classic. Those are the people we have to start reaching."

"Last year, we increased the number of statewide ticket outlets by more than 30 per cent," Wright stated, "and in 1981, we'll add more. We also redesigned our promotional material and expanded our statewide advertising program."

"The Nenana Ice Classic

is one of the few Alaskan traditions that has been able to remain virtually the same today as it was when it was started back in 1917," Coghill added. "The tripod is still built out on the ice by hand, using twenty foot spruce logs. The tripping

mechanism used to stop the clock when the ice goes out was designed back in the 1930's and it's still being used today. All the tickets from around the state (over 100,000 of them!) are still gathered here in Nenana and sorted by hand by the

people of Nenana. The Nenana Ice Classic is an Alaskan tradition the people of Nenana have offered the state for the last 65 years." Coghill concluded. "And we intend to keep at it for the next 65... and the next 65 after that!"
