



STOPPING THE CLOCK — Miss Fairbanks 1976, points to the winning time last year as Orie Williams, Secretary of the Ice Classic and president of Toghotthele Native Corp., looks on. The clock is stopped by an intricate series of ropes and pins when the tripod goes out on the ice and signals the beginning of breakup. The deadline for guessing is April 6.

Ice Classic deadline is today

Nenana's mechanism for stopping the clock which records the official time of the spring breakup of the Tanana River ice is a "classic" piece of machinery which was devised many years ago. The main piece of "machinery" is an 18-gauge wire stretching from the tripod imbedded in the river ice to the tower on the bank, a distance of approximately 400 feet.

Thirty feet out from the tower is the main rope—5/8" manila—which travels through two pulleys to a 2000-pound weight to keep it taut. Between the two pulleys are a series of smaller ropes. The shortest one is attached to the siren, so that when the tripod moves about

ten feet, the rope moves, pulling a pin, and the siren begins to howl—and everyone gathers on the bank of the river to watch the ice go out.

The middle-length rope is attached to the pin which holds a guillotine in place. When the tripod moves about 90 more feet, the pin is pulled and a butcher-knife affair drops and cuts the 5/8" main rope (every-

body with us?). The longest rope is connected to the pin in the clock, and is activated when the knife has cut the main rope.

There is also a manually-operated clock next to the mechanical one which can take its place if somehow it doesn't operate. These clocks are synchronized daily, so that the manual breakup time is as accu-

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Ice classic ...

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rate as the mechanical one, should it need to be used.

April 6 is the statewide deadline to put a guess in one of the many bright red cans placed throughout the state. After that, it's keep an eye on the tripod, clock, rope, pulleys, etc., etc!