

BOUNTIFUL BUNTINGS



Photos by Eric Engman/News-Miner

Snow buntings take flight as they feed and sun themselves in the front viewing field of Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge on Tuesday. The small white-bodied birds with black wings migrate through Fairbanks only in the spring, usually arriving in late March and staying for just a few weeks before continuing on to the northwest coast to breed. Buntings take a different migratory route in the fall on their way back to the Midwest where they winter over, and aren't seen in Fairbanks like other migratory birds.

"This is the best snow bunting year in my recollection, and I've been stationed here 16 years," Mark Ross, wildlife biologist with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game at Creamer's Field, said of the number of buntings seen this spring. "This is a great opportunity to get out and see them," Ross said.



Board wants bond election

Seeks funding for more than \$68M in school projects

By MARY BETH SMETZER
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School board members unanimously passed a resolution Tuesday requesting the borough assembly to schedule an October bond election to cover major maintenance and upgrade projects on more than a half dozen district schools.

The requested capital projects bond of \$68,456,868 would cover roof replacements, mechanical and electrical systems, plumbing, lighting, finishes and exteriors.

The schools and projects include: Ryan Middle School, phase 2, \$40,255,645; Barnette Magnet School, phase 4, \$8,826,047; Tanana Middle School, roof replacement, \$4,745,778; North Pole Middle School, mechanical system and energy efficiency,

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Democrats, GOP disagree about outcome of session

By MATT BUXTON
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JUNEAU — "What a difference an election makes."

Those were the words of Sen. Fred Dyson, R-Eagle River, on the new Republican-led Senate majority's success in passing a slew of landmark legislation, including a bill to cut oil taxes, during the first session of the 28th Alaska Legislature.

Gov. Sean Parnell, who pushed for the oil tax cut, called it "the most productive session I've seen," but Democrats called it "the worst legislative session in recent history."

Other ideas that floundered during six years of bipartisan control of the Senate also found new traction this year. From legislation promoting an in-state, small-diameter natural gas pipeline to a bill establishing a right to "stand your ground," a variety of previously stalled measures sailed through.

With those priorities approved, it leaves the question of "what's next?"

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Experts explain science behind glacier holes

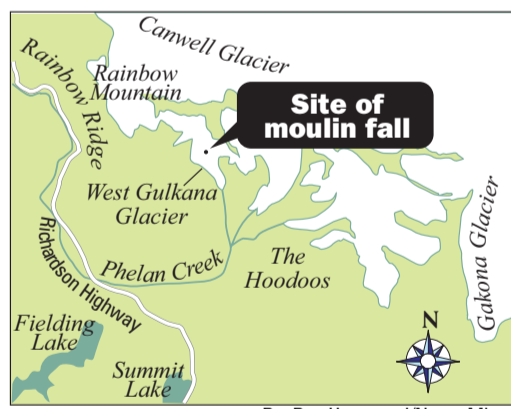
By TIM MOWRY
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There's no way to know the age of a hole in a glacier that fatally swallowed a Fairbanks boy last weekend, but the mountaineer who first climbed into the chasm doesn't think it was anything new.

"I think that moulin had been there for a long time," said Jeff Baurick, a former Fairbanksan who grew up climbing mountains in the area. "Moulin" is the technical term for the type of hole 9-year-old Shjon Brown fell into on Saturday while snowmachining on the West Gulkana Glacier.

Shjon was snowmachining with his father, Roger Brown, who had competed in the Arctic Man Ski & Sno-Go Classic the day before, at the time of the accident. The elder Brown had stopped and was watching his son ride when Shjon went around a mound of snow and never returned. The father followed the boy's tracks and discovered he had fallen into the hole.

Baurick, who was snowmachining nearby with his brother, Carl, and his family, was



DeeDee Hammond/News-Miner

the first rescuer on the scene. "It was shocking to me when I looked over the edge," said Baurick, an emergency room doctor now living in Anchorage. "It was very deep."

The moulin, a vertical shaft in the glacier caused by surface meltwater flowing through a crack in the ice during the summer months, was 20 to 30 feet across and about 120 feet deep.

It took a half hour to round up enough climbing gear to rappel down the hole, which Baurick did by tying off to three snowmachines.

At first, Baurick thought he saw the boy lying at the bottom of the moulin, but it turned out to be the snowmachine. Baurick, who taught crevasse rescue classes at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the late 1990s and was once president of the Alaska Alpine Club, said it was obvious the boy couldn't have survived. So he climbed back out of the hole. Brown's body was recovered late the next day by soldiers from the Army's Alaska Northern Warfare Training Center.

Other snowmachiners had avoided the same hole earlier, Baurick said. No other tracks were within 30 feet, he said.

"We rode all around that hole; it was just a spot you would avoid," Baurick said. "Any time you see a hole on a glacier, you avoid it. Everybody was kind of leery of it."

Baurick thinks the boy probably came

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Sourdough Jack sez:

"I've never made my own sea salt before. A little too much work for me."

Pressure cooker bombs suspected in Boston blast

By JAY LINDSAY
and EILEEN SULLIVAN
Associated Press

BOSTON — Federal agents zeroed in Tuesday on how the Boston Marathon bombing was carried out — with kitchen pressure cookers packed with explosives, nails and other lethal shrapnel — but said they still didn't know who did it and why.

An intelligence bulletin issued to law enforcement and released late Tuesday included a picture of a tangled pressure cooker and a mangled black bag the FBI said were part of a bomb.

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The Associated Press
Two men in hazardous materials suits put numbers on the shattered glass and debris as they investigate the scene of the first bombing on Boylston in Boston.