

# Reopen probe into mine practices

**W**e believed Echo Bay Alaska. We told readers it was a responsible mining company with every good intention and ready to jump through any hoop for the community of Juneau.

When Echo Bay decided to abandon its efforts to reopen the A-J mine, we described the company, in an editorial, as "a good corporate citizen."

The FBI reports of interviews and work logs, obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, tell us a different story about Echo Bay. They tell us workers have testified that the company knowingly violated the federal Clean Water Act under cover of night.

According to the documents, workers released contaminated water and other chemicals, including several hundred gallons of hydraulic fluid, from the old A-J mine into Gold Creek, above the area where the city collects its drinking water.

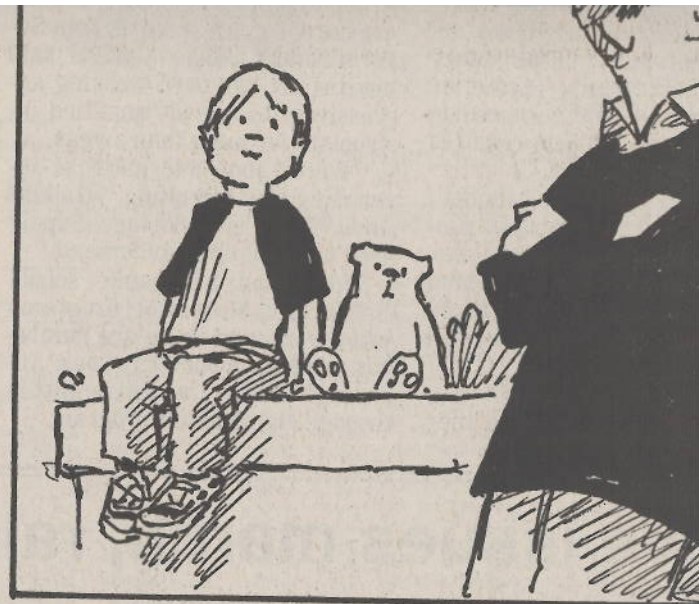
Some of the spills were already documented, and the state fined the company \$250,000, after 300 fish turned up dead in 1994. That's what prompted a federal investigation, too. The FBI then expanded its investigation to see what else was going on at the mine. Apparently when the state settled with Echo Bay, it didn't have access to what the feds had uncovered, and the feds, looking at the state settlement, decided the fine was enough to get Echo Bay's attention.

The apparent pattern of Echo Bay sneaking around to avoid notice, of possible dumping of chemicals and other contaminants, leaves us in dismay. We don't know if our water supply was affected, and no one knows if the fish that mysteriously died in the creek in 1994 were victims of mine toxins, mine work-related turbidity or just a cold winter. But we are troubled that a mining company might behave in such an apparently reckless manner, and that federal investigators would walk away from the case in light of such evidence.

Many who support the mining industry as a good industry for Alaska are disheartened to learn that Echo Bay may not have been a good neighbor in some regards. We were promised better. We had expected better. The mining industry, which has come a long way to repair its previously poor environmental record, deserves better.

In light of new evidence obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, we urge the investigation be reopened by the FBI, the Environmental Protection Agency and/or the state Attorney General's office. Let's have a full airing of what happened prior to 1994.

The citizens of Juneau have a right to know all matters that relate to their drinking water. As far as many are concerned, the case is not closed.



# Israel's ongoing

**WASHINGTON** - It has been said that mankind hopes vaguely but dreads precisely. Surely that is especially true of Jews, various of whose religious observances commemorate calamities or narrow deliverances from calamities. Hence the necessity of a Jewish state.

Jews were 10 percent of the population of the Roman Empire. If today they were the same proportion of the world's population that they were then, they would number 200 million. They number 13 million. The world was a much more dangerous place for Jews before they had a national home, even though that home is in a rough neighborhood. The problem of stateless Jews is no more. The long rescuing arm of Israel can reach even into Chechnya.

History became pregnant with Israel when Zionism was energized by Theodor Herzl, reacting to the anti-Semitism swirling around the 1894 Dreyfus trial in France. But, in a sense, Israel is a lingering echo of the French Revolution's idea that a people find true fulfillment only through revived nations. Zionism is an especially defensible nationalism. Having had a uniquely hazardous history, Jews deserve a common future.

The lash of events as well as the Zionist idea brought Jews to Palestine, where in the 1930s Jews asked newcomers, "Kommen Sie aus Uberzeugung oder kommen Sie aus Deutschland?" (Do you



**GEORGE F. W.**

come from conviction Germany?) When Israel was founded, by a declaration of independence 50 years ago, one-sixth of 1 percent of the world's population, 13 million square miles of what is too casually called the Arab world, it was a gulf in war.

It has experienced at least three wars (1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973 if you count the 1969-70 Yom Kippur War). Six if you count the continuing conflict with the PLO remains committed to Israel's destruction.

If peace is understood as the absence of clashing armies, Israel has never known a moment of peace. There are few forms of peace more deserving of disapproval than the recurring American intervention - from a powerful superpower isolated by two broad oceans to two friendly neighbors - Israel should "take peace." Israelis take

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