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Russians still hold ship's 5 members

United Press International

JUNEAU, Alaska — While friends and relatives prayed Sunday for the well-being of five crewmen of an American supply boat detained by Soviet authorities in remote Arctic waters, the State Department pressed Moscow for their return home.

The 120-foot motor vessel Freida K. out of Homer, Alaska, was believed taken to a Russian port somewhere on the Chukotsk Peninsula, 50 miles across the Bering Strait from Alaska.

Communist Party Central Committee adviser Stanislav Menshikov, interviewed Sunday on ABC's "This Week with David Brinkley," said he could not confirm the Soviets were holding the crew but added that his government had little interest in detaining fishermen.

"I assure you that there is no desire on the part of the Soviet government to hold any fishermen, American fishermen, as captives in the Soviet Union," he said.

He said the only reason they might be held was if they had fished too close to a military installation. The U.S. State Department also had little information.

Asked if the vessel could have foundered and been rescued by the Soviets, State Department spokesman Joseph Reap said, "We cannot rule it out and we cannot rule it in."

Experts familiar with the routes in the area said ships could get off track but it happens seldom.

U.S. officials, however, stressed it was not clear if the Freida K. had strayed into Soviet territory. The boat apparently was returning from a voyage supplying water and fuel to seismic research vessels doing oil exploration work in U.S. waters of the Chukchi Sea.

Reap predicted it would be several days before U.S. officials would be able to talk with crew members.

Ken Halpin Jr., 23, whose brother Mark Halpin, 19, was one of the seamen missing, said, "We're getting a lot of calls, a lot of calls. Pretty much everybody in town knows these guys and they call to say they are praying for them and they are concerned."

He said the fishing and tourist town of about 1,500 people has rallied around the relatives of the detained men to offer support.

Halpin said the crewmen had been reported "alive and well" by U.S. government officials.

Terry Thoms, the father of brothers Tab Thoms, the vessel's skipper, and Tate Thoms, a crewman, said Sunday, "My mood is always upbeat. I always knew they were safe."

The Coast Guard identified a fourth crewman as Robert Miller, a deckhand, age unknown, and relatives disclosed the name of the fifth man as Charlie Burrall, 29, the cook.

Coast Guard Petty Officer Mike Hilley said the State Department wanted none of the identities made known but did not inform the Coast Guard until the first four names had been released.

Hallett Burrall, father of Burrall, said Sunday in a telephone interview from Geneva, N.Y., "I'm in a blank,

I'm in the dark, I don't know if my son is dead or alive, I don't know what the situation is."

The State Department continued pressing Soviet officials for the release of the detained men, last heard from by radio on Tuesday, a spokesman said Sunday in Washington, D.C.

"I really have nothing new to report. There have been no major developments," State Department spokesman Joseph Reap said.

Radio Moscow said the capsized boat from which the four American fishermen were rescued was called the "Golden Provided."

A woman pilot, Ann Porch, was also rescued by a Soviet transport vessel in the Pacific Ocean south of the area, according to Radio Moscow, "after her sea plane made a forced landing on water during a flight from California to Hawaii."

The State Department confirmed Saturday that the Soviet Union seized the five American citizens and their 120-foot motor vessel Freida K. in Arctic waters and detained the men near the Bay of Providence on the Chukotsk Peninsula, 50 miles across the Bering Strait from Alaska.

"The Soviets informed the State Department of the seizure through the U.S. Embassy in Moscow," Reap said.

Boats seized by the Soviets in the region in the past had allegedly strayed into Russian waters, but the last radio contact from the Freida K. came from "well within American waters," Hilley said.

The five men were "well above the Arctic Circle" and were returning from Point Lay on Alaska's North Slope to Nome about 375 miles to the south when the seizure occurred, Hilley said.

The vessel had to pass through the Bering Strait, where the Soviet Chukotsk Peninsula and the Seward Peninsula of Alaska are only 50 miles apart.

The last reported detainment of Americans off the eastern Soviet coast was in July 1983 when seven activists of the environmental group Greenpeace were held for several days after they purposely entered Soviet waters in the Bering Sea west of Alaska to protest Soviet whale kills.

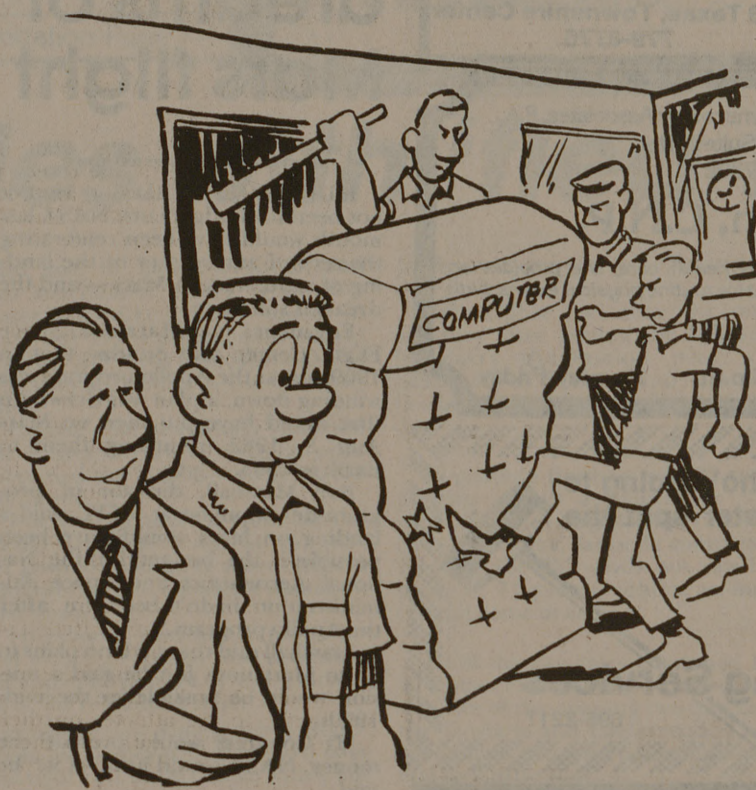
The vessel is owned by Kemp Palucci Seafood of Duluth, Minn., and was leased to Larry Edmondson and Terry Thoms, Hilley said.

Hilley said the vessel with a black hull and white stern cabin was equipped with radio communications on three separate bands, had three engines with four generators, and was equipped with automatic pilot functions and an "emergency locator" device that sends beacons to authorities if the ship founders.

The vessel contained 15 cold-weather survival suits and a 15-person life raft, Hilley said.

Slouch

By Jim Earle



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MDA golf tournament raises hole lot of cash

By ANN BRIMBERRY Reporter

The Muscular Dystrophy Association and 7-11 raised about \$1,000 at the first Freedom Scramble Golf Tournament at the Bryan Golf Course Saturday.

Forty players were divided into 10 teams and had the opportunity to win prizes for "closest to the hole" and "hole in one" on given holes.

The entry fee was \$40 per person which was a donation to MDA and covered the green, fees, carts, and a dinner held after the tournament.

"The Muscular Dystrophy Association, along with a lot of other non-profit organizations have found golfers to be wonderful as far as supporting us in what we do," Diane Maxwell, MDA program coordinator, said. "Golfers come out and they have a good time and also want to help raise money for us."

"The players can also buy mulligans, which is an opportunity to hit again, if they don't do as well as they would have liked to. It's an additional way for them to have fun and raise money for us."

Dale Morgan, Bryan Golf Course professional manager, said the timing of the tournament could have been better.

"Timing was a little bit off because we had it after the telethon," he said.

"This is a tough time of year to have a golf tournament because of dove season and football. We hurt this time of year."

Texas A&M Golf Coach Bob Ellis and three team members participated and aided the golfers who were mostly local businessmen.

The first place team included Larry Jones, David Lish, Bob Coen and Texas A&M team member Jorge Coghlin; the second place team was Nathan Cook, Bob Calvert, Ron Yokem and Bob Ellis; third place team was Jeff Endrick, Richard Alexander, Bob Graff and Sam Enloe.

Julie May Young, the only female participant, won a gold putter on the third hole, and Texas A&M Golf Team member Roy McKenzie won a filled ice chest on the 12th hole. Both prizes were donated by Brazos Beverages.

"7-11 is a national corporate sponsor for MDA," Maxwell said. "We receive no government funds or United Way funds, so all our money comes from donations."

Maxwell said he's impressed with the work that went into the tournament.

"Folks here just make my job a little bit easier; and that's great," he said.

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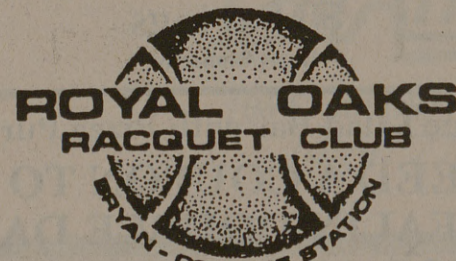
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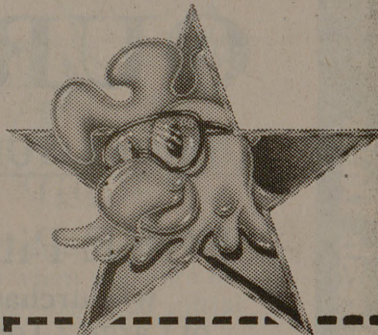
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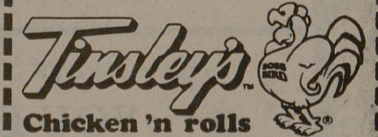


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