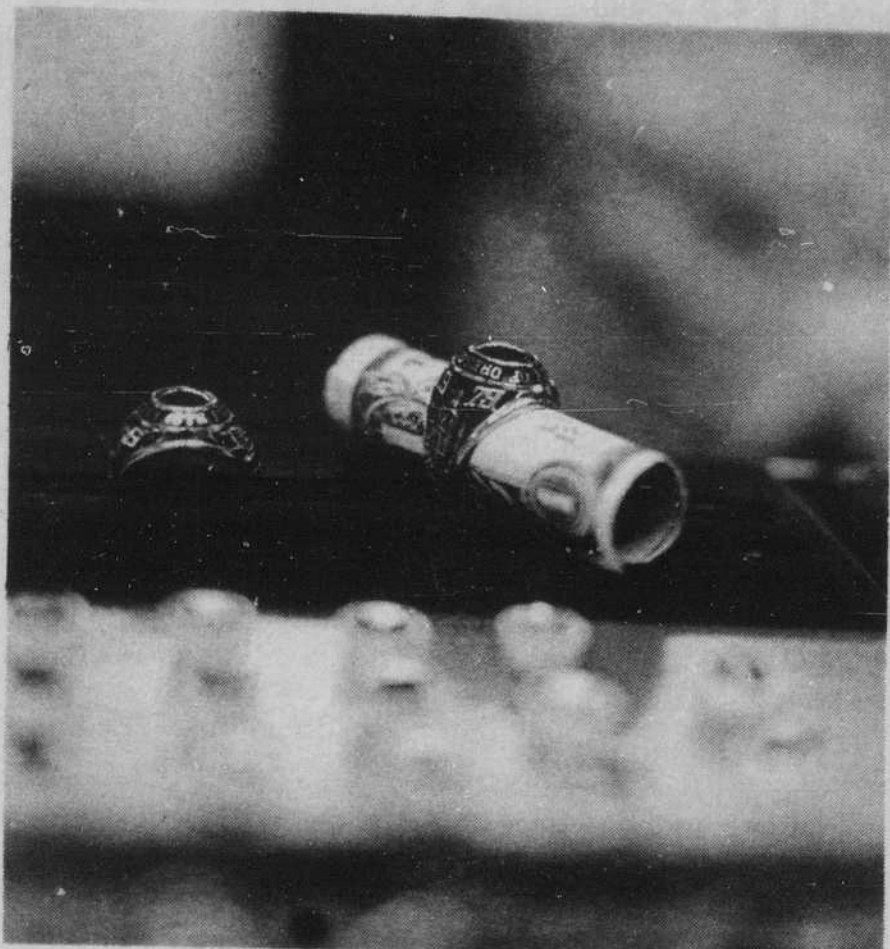


# Memories melted away for quick cash



Many people have found that their rings can quickly lose their sentimental as well as their dollar value. Local pawnbroker Matt Anderson says people desperate for cash are willing to sell him rings at a fraction of their real value.

By RICHARD WIENS  
Of the Emerald

Most people attach sentimental value to their wedding, engagement and school rings, but the folks who visit Matt Anderson measure the worth of their rings by the amount of gold used to make them.

Anderson, co-owner of A&B Gun Shop in Glenwood, buys about a thousand rings a year from people "out to make a quick buck," and sends them to a refinery in Washington where they are melted down.

He pays as little as \$5 for rings that may have cost several hundred dollars when they were new.

Many of Anderson's purchases are class rings of high schools, colleges and military academies. A steady stream of young people bring in school rings, most often from out-of-state institutions.

"Usually, they've had the ring about eight years and it doesn't mean anything anymore," says the 32-year-old melter. "They're more interested in buying gas or feeding a kid. Besides, their parents probably bought it in the first place."

Not everyone waits eight years to cash in. "Sometimes," says Anderson, "their class is yet to graduate. One girl brought in seven different rings — from seven different boy friends."

Anderson also buys a lot of wedding rings, although he seldom pays more for them than class rings. Occasionally, he buys a ring set that has never been worn — evidence of shattered marriage plans. More often, the sellers are divorced or widowed.

The burly gun shop owner does not think highly of

people who pawn their rings after their marriage has ended. He has even less respect for still-married couples who sell the "token of their love" for quick cash.

As if on cue, a barefoot, 22-year old girl walks in with an obviously used set of white gold wedding and engagement rings and thrusts them at Anderson.

"How much will you give me for them?" she asks.

"How much do you want for them?" he replies. "I-I have no idea," she says with a nervous laugh.

"Well, they're worth about \$15 to me," he says.

"That's fine," she says. "That's great. I need some money."

She completes an identification card, takes the money and walks to a dirty Pontiac where a man with shoulder-length hair is waiting.

"That's the way of the world," says Anderson. "Her wedding rings meant so little to her that she took \$15 for them."

Anderson keeps many valuable rings and other jewelry in a locked vault. His collection includes a gold chain from Vietnam, a 21-jewel pocket watch, a gold coin and dozens of jade, ruby, sapphire and diamond-studded rings worth thousands of dollars each — all from people who needed quick cash.

Why do people pawn their rings and jewelry for a tiny fraction of their original cost? Anderson blames "a society that causes people to be less than qualified to deal with life. They don't know how to manage their money."

## Ski resort's big day ruined by robbers

GIRDWOOD, Alaska (AP) — Chris von Imhof went to bed a happy man. He awoke to a living nightmare.

Von Imhof, manager of Alyeska Ski Resort, said robbers wearing ski masks held him and his family captive for four hours early Monday in "the worst nightmare I've ever experienced."

Alyeska had had its biggest day ever Sunday with 5,000 persons in attendance at the resort's annual spring carnival.

But shortly after midnight, "I was awakened by two masks and guns staring me in the face," von

Imhof said. The robbers blew up the resort safe and took an undisclosed amount of money.

"My wife was hit over the head when she wouldn't cooperate and threatened hysterics," he said. She was not hurt seriously. But she was "afraid I would play hero and get hurt. I fortunately saw that I was a little outnumbered," he said. The robbers tied the couple up with wire. The children were left untied, but ordered to stay in bed. One of them fell asleep during the robbery.

Von Imhof said the intruders demanded the keys to the resort office and the combination of the safe. One man went inside the office and tied and gagged the night auditor while the other stood guard over the family.

## FDA says 'fizzy' candy safe to eat

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two new candies, "Pop Rocks" and "Space Dust," have made an appearance around the country and an investigation by the Bureau of Foods in the Food and Drug Administration indicates they are safe to eat.

The candies are processed with carbon dioxide to provide a crackling sensation in the mouth and FDA said it checked on them after receiving some complaints.

The agency said the amount of carbon dioxide in a package of the candy is only about one-tenth that found in a can of carbonated soda.

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