

"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." — Voltaire

Tundra Times Questions Pre-School Training



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A Book Review— The Glimpse of the Circumpolar Peoples

By WALLY OLSON

Circumpolar Peoples: An Anthropological Perspective by Nelson H.H. Graburn & Stephen Strong. Goodyear Publishing Co., Inc. Pacific Palisades, Calif. 1973 236 pp.

For many years there has been a serious need for a readable work which covers all of the Polar Peoples, since they share many things in common. This present work has many good points and yet is weak in many others. The various chapters consider such Polar Peoples as the Samek (Lapps), Yakut, Chukchi in the Old World and Eskimos, Kutchin, Naskapi in the New. Out of each group they lift various aspects of their life and culture and expand on them.

For example, from the Tungus they speak of Shamanism; bilateral relationships among the Chukchi; an economic history of the Kutchin of Alaska. The reader has a feeling that they have expanded on certain points for one of two reasons, 1) either they happen to have studied the material in one aspect on depth, to the neglect of others 2) or they are trying to illustrate certain factors by their emphasis. Even though they claim to be working from the second point of view, it appears that they have written from the first.

However, this reviewer may be mistaken, since their expanded bibliographies following each chapter seem to indicate that they have looked at the literature; at least they have looked at bibliographies. In fact, the list of books and articles following each chapter is one of the strong points of the book. At least it gives the reader some direction for further study. For example, the last chapter has 30 pages of text on modern conditions, but 10 pages of bibliography listing other books and articles.

Perhaps because Alaska has always been sort of a neglected step-child of the rest of the United States — until most recent times — many Alaskans have come to feel that their situation is unique among all Peoples. With little or no exposure to what has happened in other parts of the Arctic, they have tried to formulate ways of solving their problems on a separate basis. This book is useful, if for no other reason, in that it does give some comparative descriptions of how the U.S.S.R., Denmark and Scandinavian countries have tried to

solve their difficulties and where they have succeeded and failed.

It might pay Native leaders to start looking at educational programs in Russia (even though they may not agree with Communism) and see how their bilingual programs have operated over the past 40 years. Americans may not agree with the Danish control of Greenland, but there may be many lessons to learn there.

What strikes this reviewer as an anthropologist, is the fact that the book is written by and for other students of anthropology. Most of the references are to works written and published by people who were really "outsiders" or simply historic observers of certain ways of life. The contributions by Native Peoples to a study of their own way of life has remained minimal.

From personal experience, this writer knows that many Natives of Alaska complain because what is published and written about them is done by an outsider. This is not all bad! Possibly the best observer of American life was a Frenchman, De Toquville. But now it is time for Native Peoples to write their history as they see it, to describe their cultures from the inside, for some of the young people to be trained in anthropology and history so that they can correct our mistakes as "visiting anthropologists."

The author has several times recommended to the University of Alaska and others that we begin two-and-four-year training programs for Natives interested in their cultural history and its relationship to other Peoples of the Arctic.

The book is a start on a good study of Circumpolar Peoples; it is not the last word. But at least Graburn and Strong have made a good start. For the readers of Tundra Times it's rewarding to read their advice on page 210:

"For the views of native peoples of various issues, consult the newspaper of the Alaskan natives: The Tundra Times, Box 1287, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701."

How about having some Native read the same text and review it? It may be the first step in balancing the views from the "outsider" and "insider."

By MARY MOSES

No one ever seems to argue about pre-school training for little children. It is simply assumed that Head Start and other pre-school programs are best for the children.

But some parents secretly wonder, "Why?" If parents are not working, and have time for their little ones, why should they have to go away part of the day when they are still so very young? Especially, why in the smaller towns, where the children all play together anyway?

Perhaps the most important reason is to get ready for school. At home, our children often play many games, but rarely play the games that teach them what they need to know to start school. Their teachers often simply assume they do know these things when they start. It makes school very hard for the children if they do not.

Pre-school programs are designed to help teach the little

ones these basic things. In the cities, they also let them get used to being with others of their own age. They become ready to pay attention to school work, not to learning about being in a group.

Can the children get ready for school without the pre-school? Of course. Many children do a very fine job of being ready without ever seeing a pre-school of any sort.

What things can parents do to help their children get ready? The most important thing is talk to them a lot. Talk about everything, all kinds of things. TV, radio and movies are good things to talk about.

So are daily chores at home, and absolutely anything and everything a child sees or does. The important thing is that the child get used to talking about things. How well he uses words when he enters school may make the difference whether he has an easy or a hard time learning to

read.

Other things a child should learn before school include how to color (and names of colors), how to count simple groups of objects, how to cut things out, and how to listen to a story read or told by an adult.

Parents can help a lot by reading to him, or just looking at picture books with him. And, of course, the mother or father can teach a little child to look forward to the time when he can really go to school!

Ryan Changes Alaska Night

FAIRBANKS — Faculty at Ryan Junior High School have changed the weekly date of Alaska Night at that school from Wednesday to Tuesday, 7-10 p.m. A number of Native students residing in the Fairbanks area attend the weekly sports and recreation sessions.

"Out of sight, Out of mind"

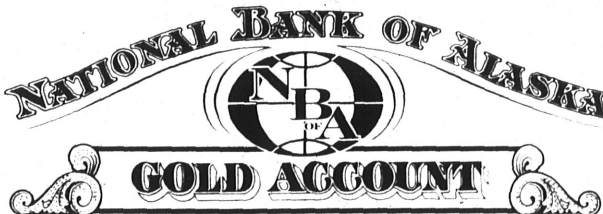
Don't forget your furnace and air conditioner filters just because you don't see them every day. If they're dirty, they waste fuel energy and money. Today that's doubly serious, because the cost of living is rising and because America's domestic energy supplies are falling far behind demand.

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