

A tourist's view of Barrow - warm and friendly

Summertime brings numerous tourists to the state and many of those Lower 48 residents take advantage of the many tours of villages north of the Arctic Circle. Airline tours offer short stops in Kotzebue, Nome and Barrow.

The Tundra Times thought that it might be interesting for residents of one of these villages to hear and see what is shown and told about to the average tourist on such a tour so we asked Janice L.L. Hudetz, a free-lance writer for our paper to take such a tour and write only about what was shown to her and told to her.

The following is her brief account of her trip to Barrow, the biggest of Alaska's Inuit villages.

By Janice L.L. Hudetz
Tundra Times

Barrow, the farthest north city in the United States, is an interesting attraction to many tourists. The idea of going above the Arctic Circle combined with the opportunity to

see the Eskimo culture in their own land has great appeal to a traveler.

Now is an excellent time of the year to take advantage of the mild weather and off-season thrift rates offered by Alaska Exploration Holidays of Anchorage. For \$331.36, a person may spend four hours in the city of Barrow and see the outlying tundra and the Arctic Ocean. After June 16, the peak season rates begin, at \$407 plus tax for the one-day tour.

The ways of Barrow life and Eskimo culture were related to us by a young tour guide from Sacramento, Calif., who had just moved there in May for a summer job with the touring agency.

The day happened to be quite hot by Arctic standards. At 38 degrees above, the touring group became somewhat warm in the colorful Eskimo parkas lent to each of the tour-

ists by the tour company.

Our guide told us that alongside the Eskimo hunting and trading culture there is a very advanced space age technology in existence here. There are no sidewalks and pavement in Barrow but their cable TV system is ahead of Lower 48 offerings.

The houses are not exactly Beverly Hills nor the weather, for that matter, but the citizens exude charm and graciousness as they share different cultural aspects and activities in dance, music and craft demonstrations.

There are no roads connecting the seven North Slope Borough villages, but the communication between them is done by satellite teleconference.

To a Montana Indian who has to travel anywhere from 40 to 70 miles one way to communicate with and see others, that is quite an interesting ac-

complishment. s However, in Montana, gas is sold at \$1 for a gallon whereas in Barrow it costs \$2.41.

Barrow has the only skyline in the North Slope, an area which comprises 88,850 square miles. In fact the Arctic Slope Regional Corp. has an elevator for its four-story building, the only one in all the Eskimo villages of the borough.

As we neared the end of the tour, the guide stopped to pick up each of the Barrow Native Dance Club members and brought them to the club building for an afternoon of dancing, singing and an arts and crafts sale.

Olive, one of the dancers, places a two-foot narrow board against the outside of her doorway as an indication that she is not home. When she returns she will remove the board as a sign that she is back. It is customary, according to the guide, in such a place where

you don't worry about break-ins while you're out.

Jane Brower, our hostess, introduced the dance group which performed the welcome dance. She then demonstrated the makings of a mukluk, while her friends displayed their rich fur coats. The children's role in the culture was not forgotten. They had their turn in showing the group toys and playthings.

The arctic tour was too short. Three hours is not enough time to spend in this cultural goldmine of a place.

As I listen to the other tourists on the way back to Fairbanks, I am glad I chose Barrow to visit. One San Diego couple expressed their view that of the three places they had been, Kotzebue, Nome and Barrow, it was the latter which made the biggest impression. As for Prudhoe Bay, she said, "I did not enjoy it at all."