While the death of a

parent is to be expected,

the loss of a brother is

another matter altogether.

On Oct. 22, 1939, Warren

and Logan Varnell were

driving on the ice of the

Kotzebue lagoon. They

had run rope to the

Ferguson tug, the Helen

Lee, and were trying to

pull it ashore. Suddenly

The truck sank 15 feet

and both men came out,

clawing for the surface

against the tide.

Fortunately for Varnell,

there were some Eskimos

nearby at the time. One of

them, Duffy Henry, could

But then again, it was

Archie's nature to do

anything to create

confusion. He never told

anyone his birth year and

was equally as reluctant to

tell anyone his middle

name. For years, one of

his mechanics, Ed Yost,

tried to find out what the

"R" in Archie's middle

name stood for. Whenever

he asked Archie, Archie

would give him a strange

look as if the middle name

was something exotic or

embaressing, a name like

Rupert or Ringermorton.

All Archie would ever say

was the "R" of his middle

name was the same as his

While Archie may have

been able to insinuate he

hade a name of which to

be ashamed, his pilot's

certificate recealed nothing

exotic at all. The "R'

stood for "Robert." But

for years, Yost called

Archie by a middle name

he concocted to fit the

"Archie Ferguson, The

King of Kotzebue," by

Steven C. Levi, @ 1993 by

Steven C. Levi and E.I.A.

Publishing Co., Anchorage.

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the author and publisher.

letter R: Rustguard.

father's , F.R.

By Georgiana Moto

Special to the Tundra Times

Where I'm from which is Deering, we travel to other villages or go hunting and you have to know the trail if you

want to go anywhere. Some people don't know the direction of places and so people, for instance elderly men who know the trail to places go out and bring tree branches, pieces of long sticks and reflecting tape along and they mark the trail and they put on the reflections. Their called steaks. (They're

called stakes.) They help a lot The City League basketball team travels to other villages by snomachine and they sometimes travel in the dark and so the piece of reflection tape helps a lot so they can see the steak. The rides would be

long, hard, bumpy, cold and

boring, so I use to just count

Editor's note: The 12 year old author is a sixth grade student at Inlet View Elementary School in Anchorage. She was Student of the Month for Dec. She and her mother Marlene Moto travel frequently by snow machine.

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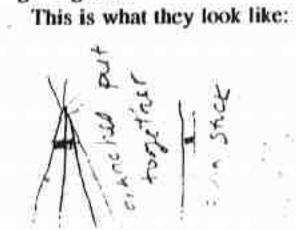
Sewing Skins for the Villages.

Creative activities

count, and so on and so on. But they tell you which direction to go. They help so much that I can even travel someplace myself without

the steaks, just count, count,

getting lost.



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he was trusted in

Kotzebue. He was a sharp

businessman but without

Archie's infamous

conniving streak. Even

so, recalled Shafsky.

Warren was "just as

neurotic and just as crazy

as Archie." The Eskimos

particularly liked Warren

and gave him the

affectionate nickname

"Ongooporuk" (sic)

which fit him perfectly

because of his size, body

shape and warmth of

personality. The Inupiat

term (sic) term meant

boss man."

"bossy little man" or "little

Warren's death may have

also created both a

financial windfall and a

curse for Archie. Warren

was an astute money-

handler and at the time of

his death, the Fergusons

had accumulated an

empire estimated by Little

at an amazing \$7 million.

But Warren's death

created a major problem

for Archie. Warren had

three children - - Don,

Ray and Frank -- and an

undependable wife.

Archie immediately moved

to Kotzebue from Selawik

permanently and

established the three boys

in his house where he and

Hadley raised them as his

sons, adopting the

"Eskimo style," ie. with

no paperwork.

in the words of Kotzebue

Bush pilot John Cross,

then went to Fairbanks,

where she "made a fool of

herself." She worked at

the Wonder Bar Cafe in

Fairbanks for years before

returning to Kotzebue

where, in 1991, she was

living in the Senior

Minnie's lack of a grip

on reality was apparently a

1990, she told this author

Warren "committed

suicide" and she and

Warren had "five children:

three boys and a girl."

One of Warren's

grandchildren, Hadley

Hess, responded to

Minnie's comments by

saying she was "crazy"

and the fact had been well-

known for quite a while

string of deaths must have

been devastating. In a

period of four years he

lost a son, a brother, both

parents and acquired

responsibility for three

boys, the oldest one, Don,

death, Archie managed to

find a silver cloud. For

years afterwards, any time

one of his pilots asked for

a raise, Archie would

unreel a long, tearful story

of how Warren died with

"thousands of dollars" in

his pocket, money which

was never recovered and

how he, Archie, was still

struggling to recover from

the terrible loss. Archie

was still using this excuse

as late as the 1950's,

almost 20 years after

But even in Warren's

being four years old.

For Archie, the awful

by the rest of the family.

lifelong affliction.

Citzens Center.

the lagoon slightly below in the ice froze closed. the level of the ice. When Warren's body drifted by, Brown was able to snag Warren was sorely missed by the residents of Kotzebue. Unlike Archie,

lasted long under the ice. It was so cold within minutes of coming out of the water, Varnell's clothing became so frozen they had to be sawed off

Warren could not have

Though Archie was able to retrieve the truck Warren's body could not be found before the hole

Knowing if the corpse could not be retrieved before spring it would drift out to sea with the shore fast ice, Archie put out a \$100 reward for retrieval of the body. The next spring, Harold Brown recovered the corpse by stretching some nets across the mouth of

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for Warren.

clear ice and pounded an

escape hole open with a

two-by-four. Varnell came

out of the water and dove

back through the hole

made by the truck looking

But Warren was gone.

swept under the rougher

Warren's body recovered in the spring

the truck went through the figure through a section of

clearly see Varnell's ice where his struggles

shadowy, struggling could not be seen.

M. ALLEN

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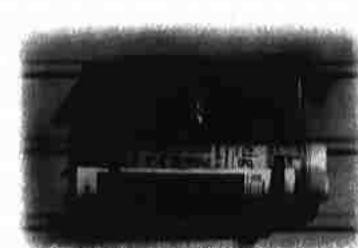
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... Warren was affectionately nicknamed 'little boss man' . . .

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Warren's death. Warren's wife, Minnie,



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. ●Monday, April 5 General Public Comment Status of Regional Advisory Council Member Recommendations Review Statewide and Fish/Shellfish Proposals for change to 1993-94 seasons and bag limits for Federal Subsistence Regulations Reconsideration of Rainbow Trout in Kuskokwim Bay drainages Tuesday, April 6 Review Wildlife Proposals Southeast, Southcentral • Wednesday, April 7

Review Wildlife Proposals Kodiak/Aleutians, Bristol Bay Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Western Interior Thursday, April 8

Review Wildlife Proposals Seward Peninsula, Northwest Arctic, Eastern Interior, North Slope