

Letters to the Editor

Contrasting Differences Between Village and City Life

Bethel, Alaska
Box 432
March 16, 1970

Dear Editor:

Alaska and Village life is different from other states not to mention the variation between Village life and Anchorage life. Life in the Villages is as different from night to day compared to life in the cities. When you go to a Village; from Anchorage it is like going to a different country. Living off the land, roaming the country for food; and yes, they have been free to travel as they please. I would like you to envision the following pictures in your minds.

City life is very confusing, hectic and depressing. Everywhere you go you see people, strange people, and you don't dare smile at them like you do in the Villages. When you smile at somebody in the cities, he looks at you like you were crazy. In the cities you don't trust anybody and you keep your doors locked or you get robbed.

Also, you are very nervous because of all the strange people and the traffic. You move with the clock and you become part of the machinery you work with at some big industry. After a while you are like a machine yourself; you quit living and merely exist. You don't even have to smoke cigarettes because you are smothered with filthy smoke and inhale it every day. This is big industry and city life.

The other picture is completely different, Village life. In the Villages everybody smiles at you and are willing to help you any time you need help. Anytime you feel like being alone you go off to some place and be alone with mother nature. You look at the sky and it is clear blue and you enjoy the most beautiful sunsets.

There is wild life all around you because the land and water is still livable for the animals and you. You are not smothered by filthy smoke and not beclouded by smog. You don't feel like being closed in by some incredible smoke, you feel very free. You don't have to lock your doors, in fact, you're relaxed and trust your neighbor. This is what I call living and not existing.

For many years we have lived and eaten from the land that we now occupy and utilize. Our food is from the land; the wild life of the country that we love dearly. WHY DO WE LOVE OUR LAND? GOOD QUESTION! THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE!

It is what has and what is keeping us alive today. Without the land and its wildlife we are as good as dead. If the land had not kept the Native people of Alaska alive, I would not have been born.

We are a part of the land and its wildlife. Why can't your government see this? How do you convince them? Why should we have to convince them? Good questions! When you start talking about Alaska land, you are not just talking about the land, you are also talking about people who depend on the land for their meals.

Are we, Alaskan Natives, not considered citizens of the United States? We don't seem to be considered so. We keep on talking but nobody listens, instead they listen to dollars. It is too bad we don't have dollars and nobody seems to trust us with dollars not to mention the land. They tell me that I don't have a piece of paper that says I own my land. The Eskimo, Indian, and Aleut way has been no pieces of paper for thousands of years.

Upon the North Slope oil companies are busy drilling and spoiling the land. I imagine we will be smothered by smoke and oil before long. This brings another question. Where will the Native people get their food! Perhaps, we will all go on welfare, after all, we are a very rich state.

—MARGARET NICK

Center Grant For Ft. Yukon

The city of Fort Yukon recently received an almost \$300,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the construction of a neighborhood center.

To be built adjacent to the Fort Yukon school, the nearly 11,000 square-foot structure will include facilities for a tuberculosis clinic and X-ray testing, remedial and adult education, a non-profit laundry and child care, recreational activities, employment counseling and welfare services.

Little Girls Want Pen Pals

Los Angeles, California
March 11, 1970

Tundra Times
Fairbanks, Alaska

Dear Sirs:

We are sisters, 9 and 10, wishing to write to Alaskan pen pals. Do you have a column where you could print our names and address, or any other way of helping us? We would like girl pen pals between the ages of 9 and 11 and are interested in all kinds of

things. Our names and our address are—

Jackie Soble
208 N. Glenroy Ave.
Los Angeles, California 90049
(age 10)

Patty Soble
(address same)
(age 9)

Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,
Jackie and Patty