



HAPPIER HERE — Alaska's Native youngsters go south each fall to go to school. These youngsters pictured here are happier because they are

on the way home from school.

—Wien Consolidated Photo by FRANK WHALEY

Audio-Visual Communication Viewed...

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response to the existing programming.

Mary Matthews said, "There is a whole level of educational resources we're not using on the satellite program. And the regrettable thing is, that the people not being used are not made aware of the program."

She told of two bush legislators who were exposed to the program in Juneau. "They were fascinated by what could be done," she said, "and their support and enthusiasm were marvelous."

Bob Arnold, executive director of the Alaska Educational Broadcasting Commission, introduced Dr. Jim Potter and Dr. Jim Peterson from the Federation of Rocky Mountain States who are conducting a similar program in telecommunication using the ATS-F satellite in New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana.

Jim Peterson, in charge of the early childhood portion of Rocky Mountain's project, felt that the Alaska group and his own could share mutual resources available to both organizations, as their interests overlapped in several areas.

"If you're going to head off a lot of educational problems," said Dr. Peterson, "you need to begin in the early phases."

The Rocky Mountain project is directed at remote, rural areas inaccessible by existing broadcasting facilities, and this area is populated primarily by reservation Indians, Spanish-speaking peoples, migrant workers, and rural-isolated groups.

They, like the Alaska project said Peterson, want the "nitty-gritty input of the people who are going to be the ultimate users of the system."

He pointed out that although there is some excellent programming available for early childhood, it has some culture relevancy problems. "Sesame Street," aimed primarily at urban ghetto kids, may not have the same relevancy for Arctic Slope Eskimo children or Navaho reservation children.

Bilingual programs and culture relevancy need to be explored. "But whatever you do for kids," said Peterson, "it doesn't matter whether you have good, culturally relevant shows unless you get on top of two variables: parents and teachers."

"You have to get parents involved in developing and in looking at health and education

needs."

In looking at long-range educational needs, Peterson condemned the fire-hose approach. "We can't continue to spend dollars to fight fires when we could spend dollars to prevent those fires."

Forty per cent of the Indians in the nation live in the eight Rocky Mountain states.

"They are very condescending," said Dr. Potter, "about white-eyes ideas. Therefore we need feed-back from them."

He related a conversation he had with an Apache leader whose people had been extensively studied by anthropologists. The Apache said:

"We would like 20 anthropologists to come live with us so that we could study them." Curious people, anthropologists.

The Alaska Telecommunications Consortium was in full accord with local involvement. Sam Kito, executive director for the Tanana Chiefs, and Georgianna Lincoln, also of the Tanana Chiefs, spoke to the panel on precisely this issue.

Mr. Kito reminded the group that he had appeared before them at their last meeting to urge "participation on the board at the grass roots level."

He asked that programs developed and utilized in the satellite program come to the office of the Tanana Chiefs for final approval, with the option to delete.

"If you're going to use the village people as guinea pigs, it's up to the leadership to control that action."

He pointed out that ten of the most active sites in the program were located in the Tanana Chiefs region, and he requested that there be a change of direction in putting people on the board of the Consortium from the villages.

Immediately following Mr. Kito's speech, a motion was made to add to the agenda a reconstituting of the board along the lines recommended.

This was accomplished toward the end of the meeting to include the addition of the executive directors of each Native Association in which the program operates.

Sue Pittman, Project Director, introduced Georgianna Lincoln who has been broadcasting in connection with the Tanana Service Unit Board of Health.

Mrs. Lincoln, representing what she called the consumer

aspect, told of her experience on the program.

"Most of the people we are reaching are Native population. I can see a brand new outlook on the satellite project. I wonder if we should hit the family unit. We're now hitting the child and the village health aide. What about the parents?"

"I've been listening to what the people want to hear. Wanted: a program on VD, on impetigo, on the employment aspect, what to expect if they come into an urban area, what are housing costs, a program revolving around Boarding Home students who need to say, Hi, Mom and Dad, and hear their parents' voices, similar to hospital calls, preventive medical care, cultural heritage, Patsy Wiley is doing a great job there, community programs not aimed at one segment like the health aide."

"In the interior of Alaska," said Mrs. Lincoln, "communication was and still is a sporadic thing. There are 12 villages on Satellite communication. What happens to the other 26? Communication is a top priority in interior Alaska."

Glen Stanley responded with a strong point about the limitations of the system as it is now operated.

"I must emphasize," he said, "the experimental nature of the satellite program. You cannot make a service out of it. Putting more stations in the Tanana district might do more harm than good. We are rapidly learning what a difference a satellite can make. Its usefulness at this stage is for getting information for the potential of a communication system for the whole state."

A member of the Consortium observed that there has not been the commitment in Juneau to the program.

"The State," he said, "has the capability to make a commitment, to say: We are resolved to solve the problem of communication in rural Alaska. The federal government is not going to continue to meet the needs of Alaska. Alaska must begin to meet her own needs."

Jim Peterson expressed the opinion that satellite communication could be developed with the sole function of meeting community needs.

"In military development," he said, "cost is not a criteria, as opposed to privacy, preven-

Always Goodbye— Children Go South Like Geese Each Fall

"For many years Eskimo, Indian, and Aleut parents in rural Alaska have been faced with the sad experience each fall of saying good-bye to their children who board planes and fly, like geese going south, hundreds and even thousands of miles away to attend high school.

"The time has come to ask ourselves is this heart-breaking leave taking necessary? Is this the only way our students can get a high school education? There is an alternative. Perhaps your children can and should go to high school in their own community. What can you do to have a high school in your village?"

This is the question as posed by the District One Education Association (the teachers of the State Operated Schools) and Alaska Legal Services. Together they have prepared an excellent booklet on the Alaska Small High School Program.

It is also a question which the village of Kivalina answered in a unique way. Kivalina, a

small Eskimo village of 188 persons located 75 miles northwest of Kotzebue, added two teachers and began high school classes for their students who did not want to go away to school.

For many years Kivalina had a two teacher school which offered first through eighth grade. When a student finished eighth grade, he had to leave Kivalina to go to high school.

Some went to the BIA schools at Mt. Edgecumbe near Sitka, some to Chemawa in Oregon and some, many, many miles from home to Chillico, Oklahoma. They could also choose Beltz School in Nome or enroll in the Boarding Home Program in Anchorage or Fairbanks.

Some of the students became homesick, some were frightened by the large size of the schools and the different way of doing things in the city, some felt ill at ease in their boarding homes. Several dropped out of high school altogether and went home to Kivalina.

There one of the village teachers was concerned about these high school students who had come home. On his own time, he began to help them with correspondence courses.

When he was transferred in the spring of 1971, the correspondence courses ended.

Chris Cooke of the Alaska Legal Services in Bethel heard about these students, some of whom he knew from his days as a VISTA lawyer in Kotzebue.

More and more, he became convinced that everybody has a right to education in the place where they live, a right guaranteed by the laws and constitution of Alaska and the United States Constitution.

The Alaska Constitution requires the legislature to establish and maintain a school system open to all children in the State. Furthermore, school children are entitled to go to school in the district in which they reside under Alaska statute 14.03.080.

Another statute says that the school district must provide classes where students live wherever there are more than three elementary pupils in a grade or more than five high school students.

Mr. Cooke, working with the parents and students of Kivalina, discussed the problems with the Boarding Home Program, why the students had come home, the fact that there was no school for them in the village, and why the correspondence courses had been stopped.

There were seven students who wanted classes in ninth grade work in Kivalina. The northwest regional administrator of the State Operated Schools ruled that supervising correspondence courses was not part of the regular teacher's job.

Kivalina decided to go to court for their children's right to education where they lived. Before the case was heard, the state at last agreed to provide Kivalina's students with all they had asked.

They sent two more teachers and made arrangements to ship in additional classroom facilities. Ninth grade is now offered and plans are being made to offer other high schools grade classes as the students need them.

Many students from Kivalina still go to boarding schools or the Boarding Home Program. But they no longer have to leave home to get an education if they don't want to.

Should others drop out of the boarding programs, they can continue their high school work in the village. No one is forced to go to boarding school if he

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