

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

Tundra Times



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For Rural Teaching—

Teacher Corps Training

By MADELYN SHULMAN
Staff Writer

Alice has a goal. One day she will be a certified teacher in the SOS school in her village, or one of the villages nearby.

While she is working toward this goal, she lives in her village for most of the year, teaching and learning in the village school in a new pilot program.

She receives a good salary for her work in the school and during the summer will attend classes at either the University of Alaska in Fairbanks or Alaska Methodist University in Anchorage.

Eleven Alaskan villages are part of a unique program to train village residents and other Native and non-Native young people as teachers for the state's rural schools.

Participants in the Teacher Corps/Career Opportunities Program will work while they study, to devise new methods of teaching which may be more successful than traditional methods being used in Alaska's villages.

TC/COP trainees will be teachers' aides and interns and later will student teach as their education progresses, assuming increasing responsibility till they earn their B.A. and teacher certification.

In the past, many Native people have been involved in the education of their children—as teachers' aides, Head Start teachers—but rarely were able to afford four years of University education.

Many young people, who might make fine teachers in their home villages, can't adapt to the alien environment of four years of college. TC/COP

will enable some of them to become teachers by working in the villages.

"This is a high risk program," according to SOS (State Operated Schools) program director D.M. "Mike" Murphy. "Most of our students wouldn't

be admitted by conventional standards. We found them by recruiting directly in the villages in which we would operate, and by giving an edge to applicants who knew the language of each village."

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LETTERS FROM HERE AND THERE

Ouzinkie, Alaska, 99644
October 14, 1970.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH:

Advance publicity for the recent Borough Assembly meeting to discuss proposals for a new high school complex failed to mention the inclusion of the new school for Ouzinkie. Apparently, inclusion of Ouzinkie school in the bond issue brought forth many questions, and some adverse comments. Since we had no one present to present our case, the Ouzinkie Advisory School Board wishes to confront the entire Borough with the urgency of a new Ouzinkie school—NOW.

Reasons? First and foremost, the SAFETY of our children, and our teachers. Ouzinkie's school building, the oldest in the entire Island school system, has two classrooms, plus one combination library-recreation-classroom, each heated by an oil space heater located directly in FRONT of the EXIT. Since school opened this fall, there have been four soot fires in the stovepipes of these three heaters; any one of which could have been disastrous.

During the night of September 28, teachers John and Chris Bailey, and their five-year-old son woke gasping and coughing,

to find a serious soot fire in the classroom adjoining their tiny three-room apartment. Aside from the danger to the life and health of this family, had this night fire occurred in a more distant classroom the entire building might have been ablaze before the fire was discovered. On October 8, a sootfire in the middle classroom made it necessary to evacuate the children and leave the room unheated. Repeatedly, downdrafts fill the classrooms with dangerous fumes, sometimes so irritating that school must be dismissed.

The windows are in such condition that most have been nailed shut, cutting off the only possible escape route. A health authority recently advised the teachers to purchase axes to keep beside the windows in each classroom, to chop a wall out in case of fire. The school structure does not have a stable foundation because it was built on a swamp. Wind, and even tremors, make the building shake, causing danger from overhead lighting fixtures. On one occasion, a fixture fell to the floor; another time an electrical fire was started. The bathrooms, built as an after-thought, are unventilated; the plumbing freezes up in cold weather.

The swamp is the children's playground; it is also their access to school. After the Borough Assembly refused to provide funds for an access walk, a Kodiak businessman LOANED the Ouzinkie school planks for a boardwalk, the planks to be returned in two years; by which time we were promised a new school in a new location. Nearly three years have passed; the businessman would like his planks returned...

More than four years ago, the City of Ouzinkie set aside ten acres of land in a higher, more desirable area for a new school. Repeatedly, Borough Assembly and School Board members have assured us that Ouzinkie school is a first priority. On February 20, 1970, Ouzinkie's City Council, School Board and residents were called to the school to view plans for a new school, with construction to begin in May or June, 1970. A school administrator assured us at that time that the construction of Ouzinkie School was not dependent on sale of the bonds; that funds from sale of the downtown school in Kodiak were earmarked for Ouzinkie School construction.

We face the reality that none of these promises could be kept. We know that our school is dependent upon the November 3rd passage of the school bonding issue. Our children DESERVE the education which would be possible in a modern school facility. They have a RIGHT to attend school without endangering their lives. And the Ouzinkie School Board and parents have the OBLIGATION to insist on a safe school for our children NOW, or we may find it necessary to remove our children from school.

In deep concern,
Ouzinkie Advisory
School Board

Editorial—

A Respite from A Feverish Rush

At this point of the congressional lame duck session, it is quite dim that there will be an Alaska native land claims bill coming out of the U.S. House of Representatives. While keeping a wary eye for any eventuality, all those concerned with Alaska's land matters might as well sit back and start thinking of what to do when the new Congress convenes next year. It looks more and more each passing day that Congress will have to work on the claims bill in 1971.

The delay of the bill in the House, although agonizing to some, might turn out to be a blessing in disguise in the long run. It could be a beneficial respite from a feverish rush to settle the claims in one fell swoop no matter what during this session of Congress. The delay could have been a device to squash the pressure tactics that might have tended to cause injustices in the long run if the bill had been ramrodded through Congress. Some of the provisions in the land measure that might have bedazzled the senses may have been avoided by the delay of the bill.

The respite is also a most opportune time for the officials of the Alaska Federation of Natives to have a series of meetings and prepare to meet with the new William A. Egan administration in Juneau that is scheduled to take over the governing reins on December 7. Governor-elect Egan has already established a new amicable working level with the AFN. The opportunity is prime for a renewed effort which has the finest chance at last to approach the land solution with the unified effort. But first—the AFN has some homework to do.

There is a partial split the AFN is experiencing with the Arctic Slope Native Association at the moment. The crux of the matter is the distribution of lands as proposed by the statewide native group once the land claims settlement has been established.

We feel that ASNA has legitimate reasons for dissatisfaction with the AFN distribution plan. We also feel that the group is being arbitrary in its attempt to impose the plan. It seems to us that it was done as an easy way out of a more complex matter—the proper consideration of land uses as they apply in different native areas of the state. Land uses in the Arctic, as well as the northwestern and the Seward Peninsula areas, are uniquely different than other native areas of Alaska. Since they are, they bear special attention and consideration and AFN and its regional membership are the proper entities in which to thrash out the differences. Since this is a potentially complex undertaking, early preliminary meetings should be conducted and which should be followed by a general policy-making conference on land distribution.

There is a House delay on the native land claims bill. We are prone to view it as an interim in which a more unified effort of all concerned can be established toward solution of the great land problem. While this is being done, we hope that the Department of the Interior will continue to discharge its duties and protect the land solution effort into the year of 1971.

Reception Exceptional—

Village Youngsters Enjoy Live Entertainment

Hap Ryder of the Fairbanks Drama Association, came back with the group of players recently from the outlying areas full of praise for the fine reception they received in the villages.

"For some reason I'm now known by the kids in Kotzebue as Rumpel 'seal' skin," Ryder told Tundra Times last weekend.

On the swing of the drama group last year to the villages, Ryder directed a play based on Rumpelstiltskin.

"Up in Ft. Yukon," Ryder added, "I'm known simply as Rumpel 'steal' skin. I wasn't even in the play. I just directed it."

This year, the group present-

ed "Kings and Things" in Nome, Kotzebue, Tanana and Ft. Yukon. They were not able to perform at Unalakleet because of inclement weather and Barrow because of the recent explosion of a gas facility there.

Ryder said that the drama group was thoroughly sold on the idea of bringing live enter-

tainment in villages.

He said the native children thoroughly enjoy the plays and can't quite believe that the players were real people.

"After the plays are over," Ryder explained, "the kids come to feel if you are real and then put their arms around you."