

"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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Other Voices—

One of the most pressing issues: Rural education

One of the state's most pressing issues involving education continues to languish in legal and economic arguments: the Molly Hootch case, a plea by bush parents that secondary schools establish in rural villages for their children.

For the most part, high school students from rural Alaska — estimated to be about 3,000 youngsters — are required to leave their homes and be placed in boarding homes or dormitories to obtain classroom instruction. Otherwise, they must subscribe to correspondence courses to meet state educational standards.

The state clings to this system despite overwhelming documentation that it impedes the students' education and disrupts their family life and culture.

After all, would any of us in Anchorage tolerate a system that forces us to send our children away for nine months each year to attend high school? We think not.

The history of the case clearly shows it is far from over despite an Alaskan Supreme Court ruling last year which rejected one of the plaintiff's arguments. In that opinion, the court warned it wouldn't hesitate to intervene if students' rights and equal treatment were not forthcoming. And it endorsed a legislative solution for the pressing problem.

In a dissent by then Chief Justice Jay Rabinowitz, practical answers were supplied: the availability of elementary school facilities where secondary instruction could be supplied, and the use of programmed texts and television (via satellite) for instruction. Moreover, the operating costs for rural high schools undoubtedly would be comparable to the present per student cost of the boarding program since the student's family could bear living accommodation costs, according to Rabinowitz.

Further court tests are open to plaintiffs. Because of that, the state would like to settle the case swiftly. To do so the Hammond Administration has asked the legislature to authorize the sale of \$20 million in state general obligation bonds toward partial settlement in the Hootch case. The money would be used for construction of rural high schools.

Certainly, there is only expense, risk, and hardship if the case is languish.

The legal costs are obvious.

The risk is that the state could lose the case in court, and should that happen, the supreme court might intervene, putting the courts in the business of education. That is what has happened in Boston in the controversial busing issue. Finally there is the hardship: why should the state continue a system of education which is known is harmful to a substantial group of citizens on the mere chance that it might prevail in court?

—The Anchorage Daily News

When I Have Fears

From: T.O.F.F. NEWS

When I have Fears
of the moment I'll cease to be;

I console myself with vanished Years,
remembered laughter, remembered Tears;

And remembered friends who are dead and Gone.

How happy they are I cannot Know;

But happy am I who loved them So.

Letters from Here and There

Letter to feel out boarding home program

Mr. Ed Wilson
Principal Teacher
Rampart School
Rampart, Alaska 99767

February 19, 1976

Dear Mr. Wilson:

In response to your letter to Mr. Dickerson concerning the Boarding School Student questionnaires that were sent out to all principals. I believe there is a misunderstanding and I apologize for any inconveniences.

Our sole intentions for taking this survey was to get the students feelings on the boarding home program that is in existence now. To help the Regional School to up-grade the Education of our boarding home students and all students to meet their needs. To many times we assume we are providing the best education for our kids without no input from all involved and especially the students themselves.

I'm sure once the REAA School Boards are elected it would be up to the parents and individuals involved to demand where their students should go to school whether it be at home, Fairbanks, Tanana, Fort Yukon, or anywhere else.

In general the requested survey would help us to start planning how to better approach the REAA School Board with needs. In this way we don't have to wait and see what happens but let's do something about the boarding home students now and not wait until the state decides what to do about the problems.

Sincerely,
Nancy James, Executive Director
3 G's Box 134
Fort Yukon, Alaska 99740

Re: Historic Preservation Study

Box 961 Auke Bay, Alaska 9982
Feb 21, 1976

Rep. Helen D. Beirne
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

Representative Beirne:

I am writing in response to your request for information and suggestions regarding the "Historic Preservation Study" and specifically in regard to the question, "Do you want the historical societies to become a quasi-governmental agency?" My basic response to this latter question is a flat "NO!"

I agree that there is a great deal of duplication in the present program for historic preservation within our state. I think that there should be a reorganization of the structure and functions within our various departments.

My reason for not desiring to see the historical societies made quasi-governmental in nature is the fact that they do not represent all the people of Alaska equally. It is true that the organizations do not discriminate, and they actively

encourage participation on the part of all, but in fact the proportion of Native Alaskans in the societies is very small. On the other hand, a large portion of the pre-historic sites and archaeological finds, along with much of the historical material are part of the heritage of our Native people and they should have an equal voice in its preservation. I would recommend that the Alaska Historical Society undertake an extensive program to enlist the participation of a more representative number of Natives in the societies and then the question can be re-examined.

Perhaps compromises might be worked out temporarily. For example, a commission may be set up to coordinate historic preservation activity, but have among its members at least one representative from each Native Regional Corporation.

Sincerely,
Wallace M. Olson

cc: Alaska Native Regional Corporations

Sheffield signs

ANCHORAGE, Sheffield Enterprises, operators of Alaska's largest hotel and restaurant chain, has signed a cooperative hotel reservation agreement with Avis Rent-A-Car.

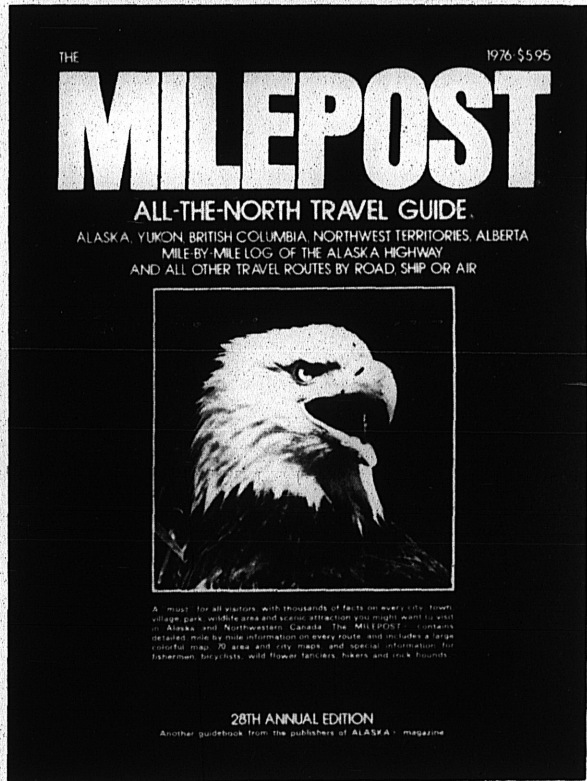
According to Bill Sheffield, president of Sheffield Enterprises, the cooperative agreement offers direct room reservations through any of Avis's outlets throughout the state of Alaska.

"We have been looking for some time to find some means of making reservations easier to obtain for the traveler when coming to Alaska," said Sheffield. "With the kind of assistance that we have received from Avis, we are now able to offer the only service of its kind

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A Book Review--

The MILEPOST



Cover design of The MILEPOST

Although the continent is destined to shortly switch to the metric system, the North's most popular travel guide will continue to be known as The MILEPOST, according to Robert A. Henning, publisher.

"We kicked it around but the staff felt that naming a publication 'The Kilometerpost' just wouldn't convey the historic reputation of our travel annual. The MILEPOST," said the publisher. "Besides, 'milepost' has become an acceptable word in discriminating dictionaries."

The 1976 issue of the All-The-North Travel Guide is being released this week to bookstores and other retail outlets throughout the United States and Canada.

Revised annually, The MILEPOST, covers mile-by-mile the Alaska Highway as well as other access routes for

highway-borne traffic. In addition, the lavishly illustrated travel guide thoroughly covers other modes of travel—air, cruise ship and ferry.

"We attempt to give pictorial and editorial coverage on every city, village, park and point of interest in the North," reports Henning. "Our field editors covered every inch of highway in the North this past year and our 28th annual MILEPOST is the most complete travel compendium for Western Canada and Alaska ever offered."

Copies of the 500 page, large format publication are \$5.95 plus 75 cents for postage and handling from the publisher, Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, Box 4-EEE, Anchorage, Alaska 99509, if the stocks of local newstands and bookstores are depleted.