

Nunivak Busy With Seal Hunting, Trapping, Reindeer Butchering

By LINCOLN J. SHAVINGS

George Williams, Edward J. Shavings Sr., Bob Edwards and some other men took time out to check and re-set their fox traps. The men using snow planes, traveled across the vast barren and wind swept tundra and across many rough, rugged trails to take their freshly caught white foxes out of the traps. The price of the white fox is slightly higher than last year and prices are likely to go a bit higher this year. This is good as the price of the foxes has declined year after year, and now slowly, but steadily going up.

March 3rd found majority of the local men butchering reindeer on the tundra working for Bureau of Indian Affairs, Reindeer Service Project which it's main office is at Bethel, Alaska. After the meat is cleaned it is wrapped for shipment to various locations and outlying villages such as Mountain Village, Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay,

Tunanuak (Nelson Island), Marshal, St. Marys and many other Eskimo villages on the coastal, interior and Bering Sea areas.

Our local airport which is located about seven miles out of village here is often filled with snow when the winds pick up. Since it is on the low level ground, it is often hampered by winds, blowing snow and drifting snow--filling it fill you could almost wade knee deep. George King, our village president, has complete charge of the airport's maintenance section. I, too, take part in the airfield program. I operate the snow blower (Sigard Jr. Snow Remover) and clean the runway of snow prior to the arrival of the Northern Consolidated Airlines F-27 prop-jet mainliner mail plane. I used to get up as early as 5 a.m. when expecting mail plane and when the snow has fell in large amounts.

On March 3rd after the snow was cleared off the runway, the F-27 mail plane came

with mail, freight and passengers. Among the incoming passengers were: Mrs. Emma Moses, Sophie Weston, Masters Earl A. Ernest, Evan Williams, Eric Hager, and Jerreson Kaehon. The two men Eric and Jerreson are VISTA men who hail from lower United States. We are proud indeed to have with us these fine talented men assisting us in every way they know how. They have taken major roles in community action here. Among their pass-time "happy-go-lucky's" trek, these men take to "ice fishing" as their main pass-time when not working at school or teaching ladies "how to sew."

How lucky we are to have these fine working men teaching us "how to sew." First, you find a suitable needle, try to poke the thread through the eye and if you don't succeed--then "sewing is not for you." As for myself, I don't even know "what the needle and thread" term is.

Before I get too carried away, I would like to welcome these fine men back to "Alaska's only Hawaaiian island," and incidentally if any person would like to take a vacation, here is an ideal spot for honeymooners minus the moon.

The personnel leaving for Bethel on the NCA's F-27 were Esther, Edward and Hilma Shavings, Edward Kio-kun and Nellie Joshua. We will miss these people and hope to see them in fine health in the near future.

Also leaving for Kipnuk on the same day was Alma (my mother) Shavings, Excelsior Kolero, Lilley Jones, Hannah Jones, Dora H. John who left via Jimm's Cessna 180 Charter Service on clear day of March 3rd. Hurry back, "Ye'all" and we will have piles of dishes waiting for you upon return. How nice and kind of us to leave something for you to work on.

March 5th. The men continued to butcher reindeer, some of which worked for Bureau of Indian Affairs, Reindeer Service, while others butchered reindeer for their own use. It turned out to be nice day although it was a little cold. There wasn't a speck of cloud in the sky except for the vapor seen coming from smokestacks nearby.

Charlie Quinn, Maintenance Supervisor for Bureau of Indian Affairs and John Moore, BIA Education Specialist came in on Cessna 180 ski plane to inspect the newly improvised school teachers apartments. After their short tour, they left on the same plane. They have been coming in and out of Bethel this year as this was often necessary when the construction of a new school was in process.

The 8th of March was indeed a nice sunny day for

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seal hunting and among many men who went seal hunting were Ed Shavings Sr., and J. George Williams. Ed caught a spotted seal and also brought home a white fox. Eddie is my brother and is the owner of the "Shavings Trading Post" here in Mekoryuk. His store handles fresh produce, groceries, clothing, gasoline, and general merchandise. Trading native goods is his aim, and is pleased that he is able to serve the lower United States and Alaska as well.

Alma Shavings, Excelsior Roberts, Mattie Hendrickson and Hannah Jones came in on Jimm's Cessna 180 charter plane. After attending the Kipnuk Youth Rally and after being weather bound they made it "home."

Henry Shavings Sr. (senor!) one of my brothers, went to check his traps and came back with one white fox minus a leg.

Henry has his own "Gospel Singing Trio" and does well as his records are well known all over the Interior, Coastal, and Bering Sea areas.

"Henry Shavings and His Trio" as they are known all over Alaska has had to struggle to live during the days when the "Shavings" family had nothing. He brought home game using bow and arrow and hunting whenever he can so the family can eat. After many long, hard and sorrowful years he has finally made it to top and is currently holding a job as a

Northern Consolidated Airlines agent, weather observer for FAA, pastor for Mekoryuk Covenant Church, and his own recording company.

His wife assist him with his everyday chores and keep his stomach full. They have six children in tow and possibly more, that is if mother nature decides to bring the

stork this way!

This is all the news for now, and I wish to extend my sincere thanks to my puppy "Spark Plugs" who has continued to keep my nose warm by licking it and making the typing of the "news" easier.

Till next time, bye for now and will see you in the next newscast.