

Notes from Elise:

Be merciful - it's budget time at Health Dept

I can remember a time — long, long ago when I was young — when spring meant happy thoughts, warm pretty flowers and singing birds. Now, in my declining years, spring has developed a whole new meaning that can be captured in one word — budgets. From February to June, we do Borough budgets, state contract budgets, state grant budgets, federal budgets and when it's all done, we start all over again, re-doing the budgets to match the monies received. A calculator becomes our best friend and the long ago, not taken, college accounting course — scorned as useless to a HEALTH PROFESSIONAL — becomes my biggest regret.

Long forgotten math principles nag at the corner of my brain as I try to understand why the numbers won't come out even. Calculator tape decorates offices and the happy mood of spring evaporates as staff is heard muttering vile phrases like "fringe benefits," "indirect cost," "budget cuts" or that most dreaded phrase of all — "Reaganomics."

**"Nothing is easy,
but we try to achieve
some humor and order
from the chaos"**



At times like this, I find myself dreaming of a lost innocence — of a time when I actually did work in the field

of health — of a time when thermometer and bedpan and penicillin were relevant to my world. Now, I find that days and weeks go by when thoughts of health never enter my mind because it is so cluttered with percentages and cost/benefit analyses.

So please, be merciful to Health Department staff during this trying time. If we look dazed or confused, or are seen stumbling down the street muttering in a low voice — understand that this department has approximately 20 budgets that get re-worked on an average

of 5 times over a period of 4 months, multiplied by the percentage of indirect equal to the fringe benefit rate . . . or is that the fringe rate multiplied by the 3rd power of the cost benefit ratio over the . . . ?

What ever happened to my stethoscope and thermometer? What ever happened to the pretty flowers and singing birds? What ever happened to simple adding and subtracting? Till next month . . .

Elise Patkotak



VILLAGE TRAVEL SCHEDULE

Kathy

Anaktuvuk Pass

March 20 — March 26

Atkasuk

May 25 — May 27

Lois

Kaktovik

March 16 — March 18

Rapid City, South Dakota
(Training)

March 29 — April 2

OPENING! FOR AN ITINERANT HEALTH AIDE

Qualifications:

- 1) Should have completed Sessions I, II, and III in Anchorage.
- 2) One year's experience as Primary CHA.

Responsibilities:

- 1) Same as Primary CHA
- 2) May be sent to any of the six North Slope Villages for assignments from two weeks to two months.