

Some ABCs

By RON INOUE

in education

Editor's Note: Should you have questions or suggestions about this or future "ABC's" articles, please let the author know by writing him at the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies or by calling (907) 479-7185.

As a parent, teacher, or youth group leader, do you use Alaska's physical phenomena to discuss science principles with youngsters? Our sensory perceptions and reactions to the environment affect us every day and offer an opportunity to discuss these phenomena with others.

An excellent source of information about the geophysical environment of Alaska appears in the "Community Science Forum". This weekly feature, written by Dr. Neil Davis of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Geophysical Institute, discusses northern phenomena such as earthquakes, auroras, permafrost, bird migrations, and UFO's. The features are written in non-technical language, often have illustrations, and sample many field of geophysical science.

The "Community Science Forum" is distributed to sixteen newspapers and radio stations in Alaska and Canada; e.g., radio station KNOM in Nome

prepares short spots from the articles and broadcasts these to the population of Seward Peninsula. Among the most accessible of the newspapers carrying the "Forum" are the *Anchorage Times* and the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*.

Parents, teachers, and youth group leaders could build a file of these columns for reference. The phenomena described in the features are usually in the immediate environment, so filed trips and outings might be enhanced by prior preparation. Teachers might consider having their students adapt the "Community Science Forum" for use in the local media. Students could adapt the material for use on the local radio station or in the community/school newspaper, or as a regular feature on the mini-watt or cable TV. Teachers and students should query Dr. Davis about adapting the "Community Science Forum" for local use.

Observing and investigating the physical environment provides opportunities for youngsters and their parents and teachers to learn about muskeg, tundra, volcanos, glaciers, and other natural phenomena. The "Community Science Forum" is an excellent source of information on these phenomena.