

Some ABC's in education

BY RON INOUE

The new year provides interesting opportunities for students to produce calendars of significant events in their home communities.

Most communities have their own versions of birthday calendars which list the names of residents who have birthdays on particular days throughout the year. That idea can be extended to include current events and local historical dates of importance.

For example: the founding of the first service organization, the date the store opened, or the date of a purely local event like "Naluk-ataq" in Barrow, "Beaver Roundup" in Dillingham, or the various "Salmon Derby" days of the coastal communities. Appropriate sketches or photographs would add visual interest. An annotation could indicate why the event is commemorated.

Current events could also be listed on the calendar. The days when clubs regularly meet, the dates of the village council meetings, the annual meeting of the regional corporation, school board meeting dates, etc., could all be included. Line drawings or photographs of community leaders might accompany the dates. Fishing and hunting season dates might be added as well as deadlines for submitting freight orders, and the like.

These student-produced calendars could be printed monthly and distributed to everyone in the community. The calendars could be made individually or run on mimeograph machines, off-set presses, or whatever duplicating equipment is available. The calendars could be provided free of charge or for a small fee based on the amount necessary to produce the next month's calendar.

Students in English class could write the narrative, research could be done by history students, the art could be provided by art or photography classes, journalism students could actually produce the calendars, and the financial records could be maintained by book-keeping classes.

If there is adequate time, a full-year calendar could be produced and sold as a unique community, Christmas, or birthday gift item.

Themes might be developed such as the bicentennial calendar which was produced by Ketchikan students; those students made a calendar with local events listed and a series of photographs of local places. Two pictures of the same place taken fifty years apart were set side-by-side with a short descriptor. Another theme could focus on community leaders with monthly pictures, biographies, and a statement about what they do in their elected positions.

Calendars are a way of getting students to learn and use skills which can then be shared with the whole community. The students learn more about their home community and the people who live there; the community can see and appreciate the results of the students' efforts in a handy calendar which reflects the uniqueness of their community.