

Tundra Times

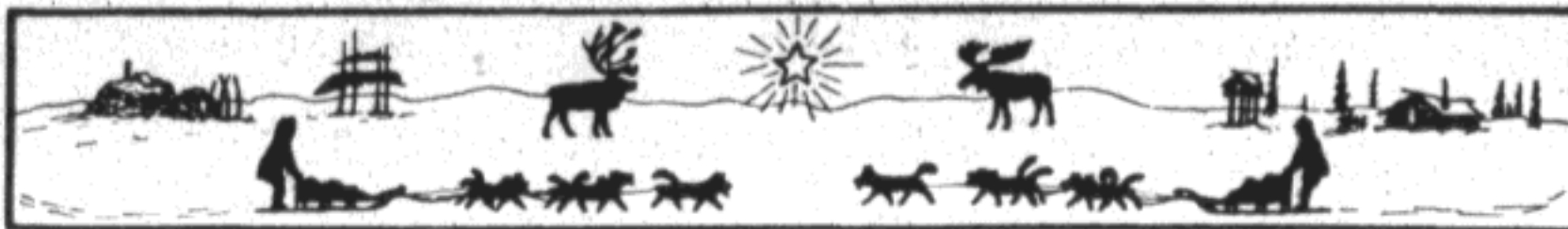
Alaskan newspaper

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Inupiat Paitot People's Heritage

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Tlingit
Ut kah neek Informing and Reporting

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Fairbanks, Alaska

Easement court fight here

Lawsuit is transferred to Anchorage courtroom

By Jeffrey R. Richardson
Staff Writer

"We're going to be in trouble."

This was the reaction of one Native corporation attorney to the announcement that one of two lawsuits over the issue of easements across Native lands was to be transferred from Washington, D. C. to Alaska.

The Tundra Times has learned that U.S. District Court Judge Oliver Gasch in Washington, D.C. ruled on December 22 that the two easements suits should be consolidated and tried in Alaska.

Natives filed suite in April to protest the policies of the Department of Interior in re-

serving easements across Native lands to provide access to public lands and facilities. The suit, Calista, et. al. vs. Kleppe, was filed in Washington, where it was felt the Native corporations could receive a fairer hearing.

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Hootch has its impact on Nunapitchuk

By Margie Bauman

NOME-Knapsack on his back, attorney Stephen Cotton was off again, en-route to Nunapitchuk and round two of the battle for equal high school opportunity for rural Alaska.

Nunapitchuk is a small village in southwestern Alaska and a 19-year-old high school student there played a key role in Cotton's successful fight for her right to go to high school at home.

Cotton, a Legal Services attorney with the Center for Law and Education, Cambridge, Mass., spent more than three years working on the case with his associate, Bruce Trombley, of the Legal Services office in Anchorage. An out-of-court settlement on the case was reached Oct. 27, after a hearing for the state of Alaska and Legal Services in Anchorage.

In a nutshell, the compromise said that unless a community takes affirmative action to send its children to high school outside the village and specifies that the community does not want a high school, they have a right to that school.

"Our job right now is to see that this decree which exists on paper is implemented as quickly as possible," Cotton said. "If there are any problems, present or looming, we want to be on top of them, to get them resolved."

All of which adds up to a lot of travel for Cotton. In the last two and a half years, he's logged more than dozen trips to Alaska, for periods of a couple of weeks to two and a half months.

Now he was back again, to check with the Legal Services Corporation in Nome on the progress of the settlement, then south to Bethel and Nunapitchuk.

It was Anna Tobeluk of Nunapitchuk whose name appeared on the revised class action suit against the Alaska Department of Education in a demand for high schools for 126 rural villages.

The suit, originally filed in 1972, was then known as the Hootch case, for a old girl named Molly Hootch, who wanted a high school in her village of Emmonek. Emmonek now has a high school but a number of other villages do not.

Last year, for example, there was no high school at Nunapitchuk. Now Tobeluk and 15 classmates are carrying a full load, albeit no frills, in a sparsely furnished schoolhouse so chilly the students wear parkas and snowpants indoors.

Cotton said teacher Shirley Grace told him "When the wind's blowing, they keep their mittens on."

But Cotton also noted in a telephone interview later from Bethel that there weren't all that many complaints.

The last time he was at Nunapitchuk, Grace tried to dismiss class early so the village council could meet in the makeshift schoolroom and some students didn't want to quit.

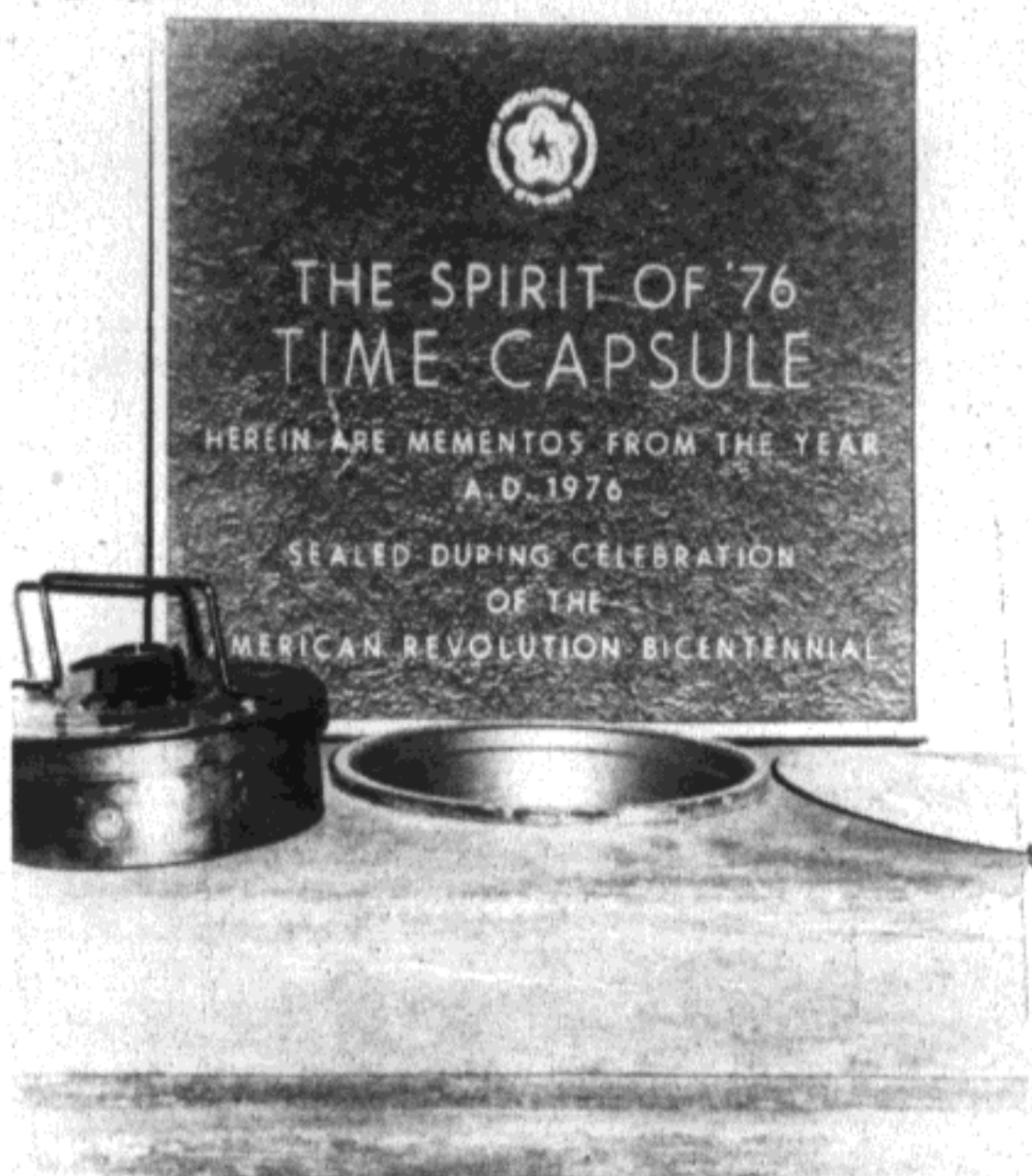
"The teacher had to physically take the typewriter away from the girl who was typing in order to get her to leave," he said.

And how about the star of the case, Anna Tobeluk?

"School's good; lots of fun," she said.

And what would she tell students in villages that don't have a high school? "I'd tell them to tell their parents to fight for it. It's good," she said.

But if the legal matters were ironed out in the Oct. 27 compromise, the financial end was not totally resolved.



BICENTENNIAL TIME CAPSULE-What do you enclosed in a bicentennial time capsule at Fairbanks, Alaska at the close of old 1976? Well, it wouldn't be complete without a copy of the June 30, issue of the Tundra Times. That was the opinion of the Fairbanks Bicentennial Commission headed by Helen Walker. So in went Tundra Times, along with several dozen other mementos of 1976 in Fairbanks. The time capsule is to be on display at the new library for the next 100 years, then opened so the new crowd can see what they did back in the pipeline era.

—photo by Margie Bauman

UFO chases ambulance

By JANICE HAMILTON
and ANDREW HUME

From the Whitehorse, Yukon
STAR

Santa, was that you heading back to the North Pole? That's what two ambulance attendants, Tom Banks and Ken Scholfield, might very well be asking themselves right now, following a UFO sighting Sunday night.

The two were heading towards Haines Junction around 7:30 p.m. to pick up a patient when they first sighted the bright, white object a few miles north of the Takhini Bridge.

According to Scholfield, "We saw what we thought at first was a very bright star. It seemed stationary, then all of a sudden it started to move and was right down in our area in no time."

"We were in a flat area—the mountains were maybe two miles from the highway—and the object seemed to be travelling maybe a couple of thousand feet above the ground. It was travelling maybe a couple of thousand feet above the ground. It was travelling slow. It looked to me like it might be lost."

Scholfield said they discussed what it could be and thought

it might be a plane. Then, suddenly the object took off with great speed over the mountain and they realized it could not be a plane.

At this point they decided to report in to the ambulance station in Whitehorse.

According to the report the two attendants made to the RCMP, the speed, colour and manoeuvrability of the object was "like nothing we had ever witnessed."

"It did not turn, but instantly reversed its course."

The object "buzzed" them several times, and they had no control over the ambulance's electrical system.

Banks and Scholfield were now reporting each sighting by radio. At one point the UFO seemed to be coming right towards them. As Scholfield told the story Banks decided to turn on the ambulance beacon to see what would happen, but for some reason the beacon went off. The object then stopped and went in reverse.

Banks told the RCMP he tried to flash the beacon at the UFO and the object paced their vehicle and a bright light flashed back.

State wins selection extension

From our Anchorage Bureau

Interior Secretary Thomas Kleppe has granted the State of Alaska an extension of time to select lands previously set aside for Native selections under the land claims act. According to a press release from the Office of the Secretary in Anchorage, the state will have preference to select lands not selected by Native corporations until April 1, 1977.

The Alaska Federation of Natives may take legal action to revoke the extension.

Withdrawals of federal land, from which Native selections were to be made, were originally supposed to end December 18, 1975. However, the Interior Secretary extended the deadline for certain types of Native selections until October 1 of this year. Starting October 2, the state was to have first chance at lands not selected by Native corporations for ninety days. The state maintained, however, that ninety days was not enough and requested the additional time, which Kleppe granted last

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TT Tickler

"We'll know Natives have really arrived in Alaska when we start seeing ugly Native receptionists."

T. A. Fox