

Skyjack

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Walt Dotomain, a planner for the Alaskan Federation of Natives, who was sitting directly behind the hijacker on the flight to Bethel described him as a slim man, about 5'10" tall with a moustache and goatee who was "noticeably nervous" as the plane took off.

Bill Kristovich, 38, Wien Assistant Station Manager at Bethel was aboard the plane. He and another man who frequently takes the flight were prepared to subdue the hijacker if necessary.

When Don Peterson of Fairbanks, a senior pilot with Wien, signaled the Anchorage tower that a hijacking was taking place they first thought it was a joke. Wien had only recently distributed hijack procedures. This was the first skyjacking in Alaskan history.

"It's absolutely amazing that anyone would hijack a plane to Bethel," said Jerry White of Anchorage who was seated next to the hijacker.

Earlier that morning, reported Anchorage airport security officer Don Everly, Thomas's bags had been searched before he boarded the plane after a ticket agent became suspicious of the man's behavior.

The search produced nothing. Thomas was never bodily searched, a procedure allowed only if something registers on a metal detector. Wien has no metal detector at the Anchorage terminal.

Most of the plane's 30 passengers were unaware of the hijacking and slept till the plane landed in Anchorage.

From there, with the hijacker holding stewardess Nancy Davis hostage and three flight crew members, the plane proceeded to Vancouver B.C. for a refueling stop. It arrived there about 10:25 a.m. and disembarked about 20 minutes later. R.C. M.P. officers standing by made no effort to interfere with the hijacker. At that time, Wien Vice President A.E. Hagberg said the hijacker had demanded to go to Cuba and the airline would honor that request.

Upon leaving Vancouver, pilot Don Peterson filed a flight plan for Mexico City. With him in the cockpit were first officer Ray Miller and engineer Keith Forsgren.

But, 45 minutes after take-off from Vancouver the plane was headed back to the Canadian airport under orders from the nervous hijacker who had apparently decided he wanted a bigger plane to fly him to Mexico City.

At the time, a Quantas Airlines 707 jet was on the ground at Vancouver, hidden from the hijacker, though the Australian airline agreed to put the plane at Wien's disposal if necessary.

Instead, Thomas released the four crew member hostages and left the plane with a RCMP sub-inspector, Bruce Northrop.

Dale Lavon Thomas, a former Kodiak resident, was convicted in 1966 in the December 19, 1965 barroom killing of Kenneth Cherry at Kodiak, according to an ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS report.

On August 23 of this year he was released on parole from the Palmer work farm.

The F.B.I. filed air piracy charges before Anchorage U.S. Magistrate J. Douglas William II Monday afternoon. On Tuesday morning the Canadian Immigration board ordered Dale Lavon Thomas deported to the United States and he was put on a plane to Seattle where charges of air piracy awaited him.

At the days end, Wien Consolidated was just returning to normal. Bethel passengers had

been taken to their destination aboard F-27 turbo prop Monday afternoon. The hijacking is expected to cost Wien thousands of dollars.

According to a report, a man who fit Thomas' description tried to buy a ticket Monday morning for an Alaska Airlines jet from Anchorage to Seattle. He was reportedly refused a ticket when the agent said he became belligerent. Ticket agents then became suspicious when Thomas asked when the next jet departed—no destination specified.

Day Care...

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State regulations require one adult to be present at all times for each five children. The Day Care facility hopes to accommodate 14 children between the ages of three and five.

Mrs. Lowe reported on Monday that she was directed by Sam Kito to cancel out on any children who had registered for day care last Friday, when the center had announced it would be open for business Monday morning.

"We need an operating license first and we haven't passed our building inspection," she said.

"A day care center is badly needed in Fairbanks," said Mrs. Lowe who has almost single-handedly worked to put the center in business. "We have to get funding before anything can happen. The only people who are fully giving us support are the people on the board." The impromptu Day Care Center board is mainly composed of representatives of social service agencies and experts in the child development field.

Among the members of the advisory board are Laura Jenkinson, of the State Division of Child Welfare, UA Cooperative Extension Day Care Consultant Margaret Connet, Mary Cary of the Public Health Service and Head Start Project Director Betty Wescott.

Mrs. Wescott wrote the original day care proposal as a graduate school class project two years ago.

Since its inception, as part of the Fairbanks Native Community Center Model Urban Center plan, the day care center has suffered from inadequate financing and support from the FNCC staff. Unless Mrs. Lowe finds her own sources of financing the entire idea may be scrubbed for this year.

On Monday, Mrs. Lowe met with Dr. Niilo Koponen of the North Star Borough School System seeking help in her search for financial support.

"We're fortunate in Fairbanks in trying to start a day care center in that there are various experienced agencies to turn to for help—the university, social services agencies, etc. Also, there is a great deal of interest in the project. Eventually, we hope education for three to five year olds could be added to the borough education system. However, that is far in the future," said Mrs. Lowe.

The day care center hopes to serve mothers of pre-school children who work or are participating in job training or other programs. Ideally, the center will serve low income families. Charges are estimated at \$6 per day for the first child, \$2 for each additional child on a sliding scale based on family income. The Welfare Department will pick up charges for mothers eligible for help.

The original day care center proposal provided for two full time teachers, one part time teacher assisted by Work Experience Program trainees and unpaid volunteers.



DAY CARE DILEMMA—FNA Day Care Center head Bertha Lowe is trying to find funds so she can open a facility for 14 children ages three to five.

The center, at 1550 Gilliam Way in Fairbanks, was originally scheduled to open this week but postponed indefinitely due to lack of funds.

Claims...

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About 75 Alaskans sat in the House galleries during the two hours of land claims debate. Among them were AFN president Don Wright, executive director Harry Carter and Mrs. Nick Begich.

The house bill being considered tomorrow, H.R. 10367, provides for a land claims settlement to the Native people of Alaska of "title to 40 million acres of land, \$425,000,000 from the United States Treasury payable over a ten year period and an additional \$500,000,000 payable out of revenues received from the leasing or sale of minerals in the public lands of Alaska."

The bill provides for the Secretary of the Interior to divide Alaska into twelve geographic regions approximating the twelve regional native associations. These regions will form regional native corporations who will administer the land claims funds.

Land selection is divided into two parts. Initially, each village will select three to four townships, depending on population, per village, up to an estimated 16 or 17 million acres. After State selection authority expires in 1984 the remaining entitlement (22-24 million acres) is conveyed to the regional corporations (excluding Southeast) according to a land percentage formula.

In a dissenting view to the Report from the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs on the land claims bill, Cong. John Saylor attacked the size of the land settlement and the lack of comprehensive land use planning in the bill. He later introduced an amendment which would require comprehensive planning before any settlement could be distributed.

"The failure of the Alaskan Natives to document their claims is indicative of the insufficiency of such claims," Saylor charged. "If a strict test were applied in the consideration of this legislation, it is questionable whether the Natives could support an appreciable fraction of their claims. Through changes in their habits and mode of living over the last 30 to 40 years, the Natives have abandoned large portions of their ancestral lands..."

Saylor also charged that the amount of usable land in Alaska is not sufficient to cover a 40 million acre native land claims settlement and a 103 million acre state selection. Also, he charged, without comprehensive planning the land claims settlement will open up America's last wilderness to unrestricted use and ownership.



ON VACATION—In the absence of editor Howard Rock, who is in Washington D.C. on vacation all havoc broke loose on deadline day at Tundra Times offices this week. A belligerent waxing machine, a House of Representatives that put off action, all ganged up on the staff. Here editor Rock is seen with Puppy Number Two (as yet unnamed); a female malemute purchased for Mrs. Jeane Dixon.

Suit...

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Acting on a suit filed by the city of Nenana, Taylor ordered the new state school system established by the last legislature to stop spending money and furnishing transportation for the 20 students involved from the Clear-Anderson area.

The order will require that the students in question enroll in school at Nenana if they wish to attend a state high school.

The city of Nenana filed the suit against the SOS System September 15.

The city contended that it had been designated as the secondary attendance center for pupils in the area between the southern boundary of the Fairbanks North Star Borough and Rex Bridge, 30 miles south of Nenana, and that it had received \$850,000 from the 1971 legislature to educate the students.

However, the city said the state carried out a plan prior to September 8 to establish a ninth grade at Anderson, discontinue seventh and eighth grade at Brown's Court and combine the seventh and eighth grade at Brown's Court with a high school at Healy.

When school opened September 9 in Nenana, the city charged, the result of the state action was an 18 per cent drop in enrollment.

In his ruling last week, Taylor said that the SOS System's action required prior approval by the State Board of Education and that the board had not endorsed the plans.

In a letter introduced with the complaint, a state legislator from Fairbanks said the problem in the Nenana-Clear-Anderson area parents for their youngsters to attend Nenana schools which are approximately 50 per cent native students.

The contention was made by Rep. Mike Bradner, (D-Fairbanks,) chairman of the legislative budget and audit committee, in a letter to Darryl Peterson of Sand Point, the chairman of the State-Operated School Board.

Kotzebue News Hosts Contest

The KOTZEBUE NEWS announced a new contest last week entitled, "What will land claims settlement mean to me personally?" Essays will be accepted in two divisions: one for adults and one for children. There is no restriction on length. A five-dollar prize is offered in each division. Deadline for entry is November 1.

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