

Did You Have a Merry Christmas?

TUNDRA TIMES hopes you all had a MERRY CHRISTMAS.

We thought you might appreciate knowing about our Christmases—ours and some of the people we know—and know about.

Here in Fairbanks, there was lots of Christmas cheer—warm temperatures for the weekend. Last Wednesday, students from the University together with the Fairbanks Native Association and local civic groups sponsored a gala Christmas party at Alaska-land.

Then, Saturday afternoon, Christmas Day, our Native Community Center hosted a Christmas dinner. The volunteers who ran the affair estimate three or four hundred native people attended the dinner—demolishing almost unlimited quantities of turkeys, hams, moose, bear, salads fish and other goodies.

Of course, not everyone had a Merry Christmas. Tony Evans down in the Boarding Home Program office estimates there were 25 or 30 village high school students who couldn't raise the money to go home for the holidays.

With the rest of the 200 or more boarding students in the city busily hopping chartered planes, Wen flights and car pools, it may just have been a lonely Christmas for these young people.

Kiwanis Club in Fairbanks

collected money for weeks before Christmas to try to provide some holiday cheer for people in town who don't have much money. We don't know how successful they were.

Not very, reports Mrs. Josephine Van Reenan, an Aleut woman from King Cove and South Naknek who lives in Fair-

banks.

She reports that the Fairbanks Kiwanis Club had planned to bring about \$100 worth of presents to her neighborhood, but only brought about \$19 worth. Her children, she said, had a very bare Christmas.

So bare that she and some

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other people planned to picket the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, center of the Kiwanis campaign. However, Monday morning, they weren't there yet.

Last year, we received a report from one village of a Christmas fire that killed several children in one family—bringing tragedy to their village as a Christmas present.

This year, we're afraid tragedy has hit Barrow—where Charles Muller, age 5 and his sister Susan, age 3, died in a fire at their home Monday morning. They were the children of Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Muller of Barrow. When the fire occurred, Mrs. Muller was at work and Mr. Muller was down in Oklahoma City for FAA training. A babysitter was with the children, but escaped.

"In Vietnam, along with fighting and death, Christmas was

crepe paper and plastic Santas at a Long Binh quonset hut hospital ward, a Saigon sparkling with tinsel and Christmas trees," wrote the Associated Press.

Last week in Fairbanks one of the woman leaders of the native community talked about Christmas in her home village in the interior,

"I've never felt that sense of expectation anywhere else," she remembered. "There won't be a Christmas for me again till we move back to the village."

There, she said, where the whole village traveled 60 miles to midnight mass and exchanged presents like one family she felt a Christmas spirit that hasn't appeared anywhere else.

We hope you all had a very Merry Christmas and wish you joy, happiness and peace in the coming New Year.