

VISTA Volunteers Requesting Village Control of Program

As the controversy over VISTA continues, 24 VISTA volunteers have challenged the VISTA administration to meet the requests of native villages asking for local control of the program.

In a letter addressed to the Tundra Times, the volunteers wrote, "We challenge Mr. White, Mr. Allen, Mr. Cox (Office of the Governor), and Mr. Mercer (Regional OR OEO) to meet with the Native leaders in Bethel and develop a strong program centered around the principle of local control."

Jerry White is the director of OEO for Alaska, and Willie Allen is the coordinator of the VISTA program in Alaska.

The village of Bethel is one of 51 villages in the Yukon-Kuskokwim area which last month asked for no more VISTA volunteers unless the program is administered locally.

The controversy first came before the public eye last month when several past and present volunteers issued a position paper criticizing the administration of the program and calling for local control. In Alaska, the program is sponsored by the State and funded primarily by the Office of Economic Opportunity.

The paper was then followed by the resolution from the villages in the Yukon-Kuskokwim area organized as the Association of the Village Council Presidents (AVCP), calling for local control.

Both villages and volunteers alike have charged that the program operates without regard to the wishes and needs of the native people.

The letter sent to the Tundra Times by the volunteers was in response to a Jan. 23 article in the paper exploring the VISTA controversy.

Although the three-page single-spaced letter could not be printed in full due to a lack of space, some of the points raised in it

will be mentioned in the following paragraphs.

The volunteers commended the administration's ideas that VISTA be developed on a project basis, such as education, and that it become a two-year, rather than the current one-year, program.

However, at this point agreement between the volunteers and the administration seems to cease.

Allen said that he felt the attack upon the administration was blown out of proportion in the press because only a small number of volunteers had signed the critical position paper.

The volunteers said that the original signers of the paper were in Anchorage at the time and that, as more of the volunteers from the rural areas come into Anchorage for training, they will be given the opportunity to support the paper.

"It is expected," the letter says, "that at least half of the volunteers will support the paper and most, if not all, will support local control of VISTA Alaska."

Their expectations were in part born out last week when 31 of 34 volunteers in Anchorage went on record supporting native control of the program in the lower Yukon-Kuskokwim area.

Second, for the Tundra Times article the administrators discussed several changes that they would like to see made in the program.

And, while the volunteers agreed with some of the suggestions, as mentioned earlier, they contended that changes, when they occur, "are done secretly and without consultation with the village councils, volunteers, or the volunteer leaders" even though the village people have asked time and again for more participation in the programs that affect them.

Third, the volunteers disagreed

with White's statement that the program is essentially one of local control now and that the village council has the power to direct the activities of the volunteer.

To support their contention, the volunteers cited the case of Blanche Andrews, who was originally fired against the expressed wishes of the village council.

Fourth, Allen was reported to have said that the volunteer leaders who supervised the volunteers in their district did not understand the problems of the entire region because, as a previous volunteer, they had lived in only one village.

It is "absurd," the letter stated, for any volunteer leader to be expected to be a local expert on the problems of every village in his district.

Furthermore, the letter held that the administration's new policy of hiring supervisors to replace the fired volunteer leaders has not provided the necessary contact with village leaders.

The one supervisor who has been hired thus far, the letter stated, has done little in the way of contacting villages or volunteers.

In reply to Allen's comment that the volunteers and the administration need to work together, the volunteers wrote that they have tried to work with Allen but that he "has taken no action to incorporate suggestions, plans, pleas, requests, or demands coming from either volunteer leaders, volunteers, or village councils."

Never promise more than you can perform.
—Pubilius Syrus

Barrow Scouter Meets President Dick Nixon

Fifteen-year-old Luther Leavitt, Jr. returned to his home in Barrow this week after an eight-day trip from New York to Washington highlighted by a visit with President Nixon.

The son of Luther Leavitt, Sr. the youth was one of 17 top Boy Scouts and Explorers chosen nationwide to report to top government officials in observance of Boy Scout Week, Feb. 7-13.

Before leaving on his trip Jan. 30, the eighth grader stopped in Fairbanks for interviews.

At that time, he mentioned that more than anything else he was looking forward to talking with President Nixon.

Having been in scouting seven years, Luther is now the junior assistant Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 58.

He was selected for the trip on the basis of his outstanding record in scouting, school, church, and community services.

The rather shy five-footer mentioned that he is in the choir, youth club, and student council and that math is his favorite subject.

He is also in the top 20 per cent of his class.

No doubt he will have a lot to tell his four brothers and five sisters about his trip last week. Three of his sisters are currently living in the lower 48.

In addition to the visit with Nixon, Luther and the other scouts spent two days in New York where they met with United Nations' leaders, toured the New York Stock Exchange, and visited the Ed Sullivan show. They were also, each presented with a \$300 scholarship by the Readers' Digest Foundation.

Stops were made in North Brunswick, N.J. at the national BSA headquarters and at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland.

In Washington, the group met with members of Congress and department heads and visited the Supreme Court.

While in Fairbanks, Luther discussed some of the activities he had participated in as a scout.

The Barrow youth, who is a Star Scout, two steps below an Eagle Scout, listed wood carving, wood work, painting, first aid, and scholarship as areas in which he had earned merit badges.

He also has two other awards which many people would be reluctant to try for—a 40 below and a 100 below certificate.

To earn the first award and thus become a member of a "40 below club," he had to spend no more than two nights outside and accumulate temperatures of minus 40. For the 100 below club, he could spend no more than 5 nights out while accumulating minus 100 degrees.

And, unlike scouts who camp in the lower 48, in the winter Luther and his troop sleep in snowhouses, similar to igloos, rather than tents.

He explained that in the summer the troop does even more camping at which time they live primarily off the fish they catch.

And, for Luther, the warmer temperatures call for another kind of fishing as he often accompanies his father on whaling trips.

When asked what he does on the trips, the youth smiles and said, "I just make coffee and wash dishes."

ANG Men Decorated For Outstanding Work

ANCHORAGE—Private First Class Vincent T. Beans of Company E, Second Scout Battalion of the Alaska Army National Guard, and Private Joseph A. Ballot of Company C, First Scout Battalion, have been awarded the Brig. Gen. John R. Noyes medal as the most outstanding members of their battalions.

Beans is from Mountain Village, on the lower Yukon River. His father, Ignatius, is a staff sergeant in the Second Battalion and his brother, Joe, is a second Lieutenant in the same unit.

Ballot is from Selawik, near Seward Peninsula in Western Alaska.

The awards were made at a parade conducted by the two battalions at mid-week during their two-week encampment at Camp Carroll, near Anchorage. Camp has just ended for the scouts.

Reviewing the parade were Maj. Gen. C.F. Necrason, Alaska state adjutant general, and Brig. Gen. C.E. Reid, assistant adjutant general and commander of Camp Carroll. The John Noyes medal is named in honor of Gen. Noyes, who was state adjutant general during the fifties, and who was killed in an aircraft accident while on duty.

In addition to the Noyes awards, Alaska Commendation medals, for meritorious service to the Alaska Guard, were presented to ten men from the two battalions.

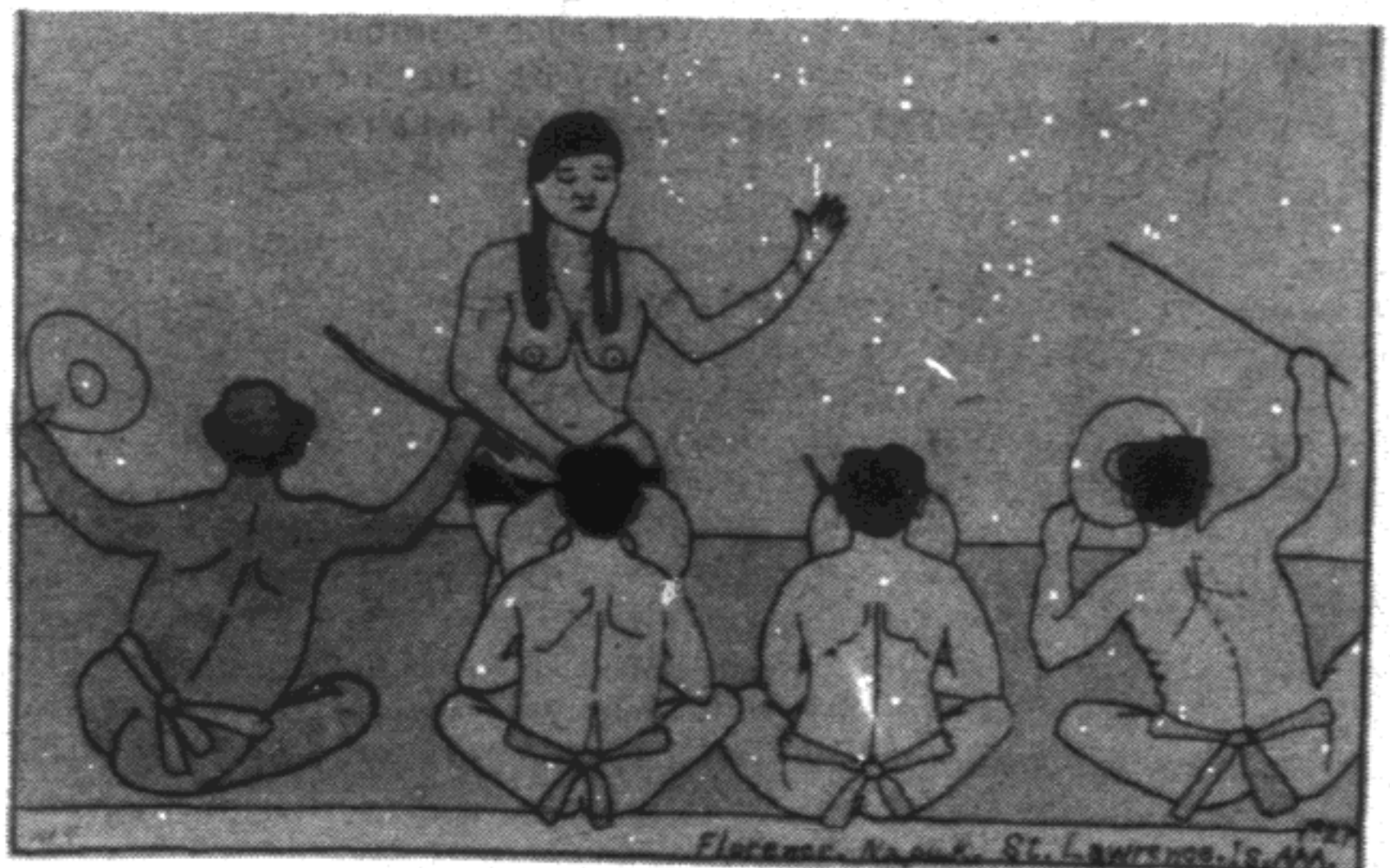
They were: Sergeant Major Christopher Mandregan of Bethel; First Sergeant John A. Hanson of Alakanuk; First Sergeant Adolph Johnson of Quinhagak; First Sergeant Nicolai E. Nicolai of Kwethluk; Master Sergeant Carl A. Kwagley of Bethel;

Master Sergeant John Nicori of Bethel; Platoon Sergeant Matthew Peterson of Mountain Village; Platoon Sergeant Timothy Williams of Akiak; SP4 James Tom of Akiak, and SP4 James Waska of Akiak.

These villages were represented in the Second Scout Battalion at camp this year: Akiak, Kasigluk, Napakiak, Napaskiak, Kwethluk, Akiachak, Tuluksak, Quinhagak, Dillingham, Eek, Togiak, Kiphuk, Chifornak, Kwigillingok, Tuntutuliak, Toksook Bay, Mekoryuk, Newtok, Tununak, Hooper Bay, Chevok, Mt. Village, Scammon Bay, Alakanuk, Emmonak,

St. Marys, Goodnews Bay, Kotlik, Nunapitchuk, Nightmute and Bethel (Battalion headquarters).

From the First Scout Battalion, headquartered at Nome, these villages are represented: Stebbins, St. Michael, Shaktolik, Koyuk, Elim, Nome, Teller, Brevig Mission, Wales, Shismaref, Deering, Kiana, Ambler, Shungnak, Pt. Hope, Kivalina, Noatak, Barter Island, Ft. Yukon, Tanana, Nulato, Diomed, Gambell, Savoonaga.



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