

Letters from Here and There

Eielson, Alaska
Feb. 27, 1971

Tundra Times,
Fairbanks, Alaska

Dear Friend:

In 1953, that's 17 years ago, I started having trouble keeping a job on account of the union here in Fairbanks. In 1952, I worked for Pacific Construction Co. at Seward. That's how I came up here from Nulato 1953. We tore down the old Peerless Coffee Shop. It took us exactly one month. That's when I was pulled off the job when I started on the Chena Building.

Now 17 years later the natives or Indians at Valdez started to have the same trouble I went through. That's how I went to work for USAF.

They sent me to Barter Island. When I got there, they were building a new site. About one hundred men were employed from Fairbanks and not one from Barter Island. Although it was none of my business, I got a hold of Chief Vincent and went to the company about the hire. Next day they hired all available 7 persons. Two were working for Air Force with me.

I also went to Egigig and did the same, put Indians to work.

In 1955, one construction company came to Galena to put up new barracks, mess hall, supply buildings. Job for two years. At the time I was getting ready to go fishing for 13 dogs, when several boys came back from Galena that couldn't get a job on account of the union and that company wouldn't hire Indians, I think because they had trouble with them in Fairbanks. They don't know there were some good workers in some of the villages.

After I put away my fish for the winter, I went up there to Galena. I asked for a carpenter's job. First thing they asked me was, are you in the union. Of course not.

The foreman and I went to the superintendent. He said, try him for 2 days. The second day I got notice I was on steady.

After my son was in the U.S. Army for 3 years, the labor foreman would not hire him because he was not union member. I dropped my hammer. I told the carpenter foreman that I wasn't going to work any longer if they wouldn't hire my son. So they hired him as a carpenter.

After I worked two weeks I started on the labor foreman to hire Indians from the village as I was packing my own lumber which a carpenter was not sup-

pose to do. So I hired 4 men for him.

The next year I started to have trouble with the union workers because I wouldn't join. I was last one laid off and first one to hire. Then they got jealous of me. This is how I finally went to work 1958 at Galena for the U.S. Air Force. I'm still with them. I worked every year since then.

The reason for me writing this is, people don't know what they're talking about. It's not schooling that's keeping us from working. The best workers are the ones that's got no schooling.

Since I started to work 1926 for Alaska Railroad on the Steamer Davis, I always worked hard. They put me on as a waiter because I worked too hard to suit them. But I didn't like it because I always wanted to be a tough guy.

The reason I wrote, or writing this letter, is this is the way the white man is beating us to get high wages, same as the land settlement. They're trying to beat us out of our land. They know they have to settle with us but you know just as well as I do the government is always slow to settle. I myself I don't give a damn. They can wait till I croak, but they can't win. God gave us this land, and now it's time for us to sell it before they spill all the oil over it. We don't care after we sell it.

Best regards to all and good luck. We sure need a lots of luck, especially old man Stickman, Sr.

Fred Stickman, Sr.

P.S. The superintendent took me out to the labor union hall. He said, "I want this man in the union." He said no, I have 300 men on the bench. Good men. My superintendent told him. You send me 6 men I fired all of them. All winos. "This is a good man."

He said sorry.

Three months after that, a student lawyer went up there with me. He said, "I want this man in the union." He said OK. I laid down \$50 and I was in.

February 23, 1971

Senior Class of '71
Saint Mary's High School
Saint Mary's, Alaska 99658

Representative Martin Moore
Alaska State Legislature
Pouch Y, State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Sir:

We, the Seniors of 1971 of Saint Mary's High School appeal to you for the renewal of the grant through the legislature which was previously funded under Title I for the senior trips to Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau.

Our opinion of the refusal for renewal of this grant is a case of discrimination. The money has not been used for school materials, books, or supplies of anykind, but for the benefit and educational insights that we, individually from the bush, have gained on such educational trips.

We, the Seniors and future graduating classes are the leaders of tomorrow. To that effect, whatever you can do for us as young people will not only be to our benefit, but to the people of the state.

You know that this school has graduated Seniors who have been an unusually high credit to their home villages or towns.

They have become and are becoming the leaders of their villages; are training for much needed positions in the working world; are going to college to become professional teachers, nurses, and so on; and have shown good example to their families, friends, and community in some way.

Seeing that the former graduates were of such high caliber, and that the future shows more promising graduates, we unanimously recommend that you pursue this very profitable experience of the Senior Enrichment Program for the Saint Mary's Seniors. We are confident in your ability to accomplish whatever you can for this Enrichment Program, especially for this year, and the years to come. Thank you for your efforts.

Yours truly,

SENIOR CLASS OF '71
SAINT MARY'S

Agnes Pete
Freddie Pete
Cornelius Dan
David Friday
Robert Beans
Eric Olson
Mary Ellen Beans
Rita Ann Paul
Jenny Andrews
Louis Paukan
Marcia Stevens
Olga Mike
Ursula Patsy
Nita Prince
David Ulroan
Peter Tuluk
Jim Akaran
Ignatius George
Tony Tangiegak
Matthew Andrews
Ignatius Matthias

Newtok, Alaska 99559
February 8, 1971

Senator Mike Gravel
United States Senate
Washington 25, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Gravel:

In answer to your letter of Jan. 20. I am glad to be kept up to date on your efforts to improve mail service to Alaskans.

I've got two Tundra Times newspaper clippings, which I am sending to you. One is of the Newtok Village Children asking Tundra Times for help for improved mail service (Jan. 13) and the other is of Mr. Andrew Chikoyak of Tununak, a letter written to you (Jan. 20).

I agree this is a small village and is scheduled for mail delivery once a week. The Government is paying Wien Consolidated Airlines good money. It takes only 1 hour and 40 minutes to get here and back to Bethel. But why wait 16 days to get 1 hour and 40 minutes to get here and back.

Like the village children wrote our weather has been good, it really has been good. It is simply that the other end simply refuse to believe our weather whenever it is relayed through the B.I.A. radio. That is also the reason why the children were asking for an airline radio. We (Village People) also know they were flying (by listening to our transmitter shortwave radio) to other villages once or twice a day with weather no better than ours, between December 19 and 24.

Wien Consolidated Airlines mentioned delivering on Dec. 12, 1380 pounds of mail on the regular Wien plane and 101

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Letter to Editor...

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pounds on the Cessna 180 and forgets to mention the passengers. Wien Consolidated Airlines also forgets to mention how many more thousand pounds of mail and freight was scheduled to be delivered between the dates Dec. 19 and 24, and how many pounds added by Dec. 28.

Mr. Andrew J. Chikoyak of Tununak, should have mention the United Village Corporation of Nelson Island, instead of three village on Nelson Island. Aren't we one with the other four? Yes.

We frequently get perishable items, but when we do they are spoiled, I've been to Tununak for food supplies. It's hard buying fresh vegetables and fruits without having to dig to the middle or bottom of a case to find five or ten good ones.

I remember a couple of snow machines arriving by air covered with snow and a little rust on the body.

On the back page of Tundra Times you'll see an advertisement on why Wien hires so many Native Alaskans. Because they do a good job. But does the Vice President, pilots, stewardesses, mechanics, station managers accounting personnel and ground crewman care if our perishable items are spoiled, snow machines and other expensive items are damaged, scuffed, or covered with snow? If one Wien Station can't live up to that advertisement, I do not think it is a good one.

Mr. Chikoyak ask whether the freight owners should sign the air bills. I too would like to know the answer to that question. Correction on Mr. Chikoyak mentioning postmasters signing air bills. It isn't postmaster who signs the air bills, but the village Wien Agent or Acting Wien Agent...I would gladly appreciate an answer.

Thank you,
Sincerely,
John J.P. Charles
Postmaster