

**"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." — Voltaire**

# Tundra Times



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## Editorial—

# Hot Lunch Program in State Operated Schools

It looks as if quite a number of state rural schools will be getting hot lunch programs going in not too distant future. State Commissioner of Education, Clifford R. Hartman and his department, has included in a proposed budget for next year, \$2,684,000 for this purpose. If the 1970 state legislature approves the proposal, 90 out of the 107 state operated rural schools will get hot lunch programs.

If the program is implemented, it will be a step that will mean a great deal to the rural communities. Many of the parents there can not adequately nourish their children at home. There are also many parents who can afford good food for their youngsters. As in any community, there are very poor people in the villages. There are also those who are not too poor.

Commissioner Hartman in releasing the news to the press said that he will leave it up to the local education advisory boards in villages whether to charge youngsters for hot lunches. He said his department will not dictate a policy that children should pay. He also said the following thought-provoking remark:

"I feel we need to dwell on the principle that all in life isn't free. How are we going to continue our democracy if all is supplied by the state?"

We are sure that the villagers will agree with Commissioner Hartman on this fact. Thousands of people have made the \$2 million plus available for the hot lunch program through hard work. The money will have come from taxpayer's paychecks, including all of us who are able to pay taxes.

We already have pretty good examples in villages. For instance in the town of Bethel, parents pay 25 cents per hot lunch. In the town of Ft. Yukon, parents pay 10 cents per lunch. This is based on the ability of the parents to pay. We think it is a pretty good idea. The education advisory boards in those villages that will get hot lunches in the future should begin to think of this and decide what to do, taking into consideration those parents who can not afford to pay. Those parents who can pay, should. They can feel so much the better for it and knowing also that those children whose parents are not able to pay will not go hungry.

## OVERSIGHT ON CREDIT LINE

The Tundra Times staff is blamed on an oversight due to feverish effort in getting the special issue off the press last Friday on December 19. The staff failed to give a credit line to the fine photography of Joe Rychetnik whose picture appeared on page 24 titled, "1970—Deadline for Justice."

Rychetnik's photograph graphically and dramatically portrayed the abject poverty of many of our native people in Alaska. We hope that his fine work will help to open the eyes of those who may seek to help.

Thank you Joe Rychetnik.

## Benefits for Scout Battalions

Sen. Ted Stevens, we believe, came up with an excellent idea when he proposed in a form of a bill that Alaska National Guard members who have served six years become eligible for veterans benefits. The matter is noteworthy and its consideration seems to be in line.

Sen. Stevens brought out the unique situation many people have hardly thought about because hardly anyone knew about it. From this vantage point, it seems it's a service that would be well applied if Stevens gets his wish.

The Scout Battalions now headquartered in Nome and Bethel, are superb outfits. The men serving in them are dedicated, loyal and able soldiers. The native men who take part in them do it with pride and in doing so, make their units admirably efficient.

We hope the bill, S.3224, will get favorable consideration and provide benefits for the members of the "Tundra Army." It would be a plaudit added for Marvin (Muktuk) Marston who organized it during World War II. The Tundra Army men would get well deserved benefits and a well earned feather on Sen. Stevens' hat.

## He Comes Via Helicopter—

# Elmendorf Brings Santa to Native Children in Bush

HQ AAC, ELMENDORF AFB, Alaska, Dec. 18—When a small Alaskan native child is asked to explain what Christmas means, he might just say, "Christmas is an Air Force helicopter."

The story behind this strange definition will seem natural when you know the Alaskan Air Command's interest in making everyone's Christmas a merry one.

Four years ago, members of what is now the 5040th Helicopter Squadron, 21st Composite Wing at Elmendorf AFB, together with the men stationed at King Salmon Air Force Station, began a program entitled "Operation Santa Claus."

King Salmon, a remote Air Force station located approximately 250 miles southwest of Anchorage, has about 20 native villages scattered within a 100 mile radius.

The population of these villages, which in some cases are accessible only by helicopter, ranges from a gathering of less than 15 persons to a village with a little over 200 inhabitants.

"Operation Santa Claus" was initiated to provide 1200 native children, aging from one to fourteen years old, with Christmas gifts and a Santa Claus to deliver them.

Major Byron W. King, Jr., this year's project officer, recalls his personal memories of a former year:

"I was on alert in the King Salmon area and was not going home for Christmas. I was selected to be part of the crew which airlifted Santa and his packages to the native villages. It was really gratifying to see the kids' eyes light up when they saw Santa Claus step off the helicopter. At one village the children stood out in sub-zero weather to sing Christmas carols to us. Seeing these happy children actually made up for my being away from home on Christmas."

The H-21 helicopter, with Santa Claus aboard, arrives in each village between the hours of eight and four o'clock and lands as near to the schoolhouse as possible. At some villages, the H-21 lands in the schoolyard itself.

Each of the 1200 children receive from Santa personally: an apple, an orange, crackerjacks, mixed nuts, candy, and a candy-cane. Some of these items, which we take so very much for granted have never been seen before by these native children.

The deliveries are made as

close to Christmas as can be arranged without conflicting with the regular operations of the helicopter squadron.

The funds to purchase the contents of each package are donated by members of the 5040th Helicopter Squadron and men assigned to King Salmon Air Force Base. King Salmon also provides a Santa.

Throughout the state of Alaska, many units of the Alaskan Air Command are supporting Christmas programs like "Operation Santa Claus" with the hopes that Christmas will be made a little brighter for those who are less fortunate.

The following are letters written by the children of the villages to Helicopter Santa Claus:

Dear Santa,

Thank you for coming to see us. We appreciate your coming to our village of Ekwok and I wish you could come next year. We might have some surprise for you. It was very good to have a Santa Claus come to our village. "Koy-yanna" for the gifts that you brought us. P.S. "Koy-anna" means "Thank You in native."

Your Friend,  
George Nickolai  
Grade Three

Dear Santa Claus,

Thank you for the stocking and doll and the toys.

When I ran up to the helicopter I did cry because I was so happy. My father and mother were so glad. I was so glad when you came on Friday! How come you didn't come with your reindeer?

Your Friend,  
Margie Marie Walcott  
Grade Three

Dear Santa,

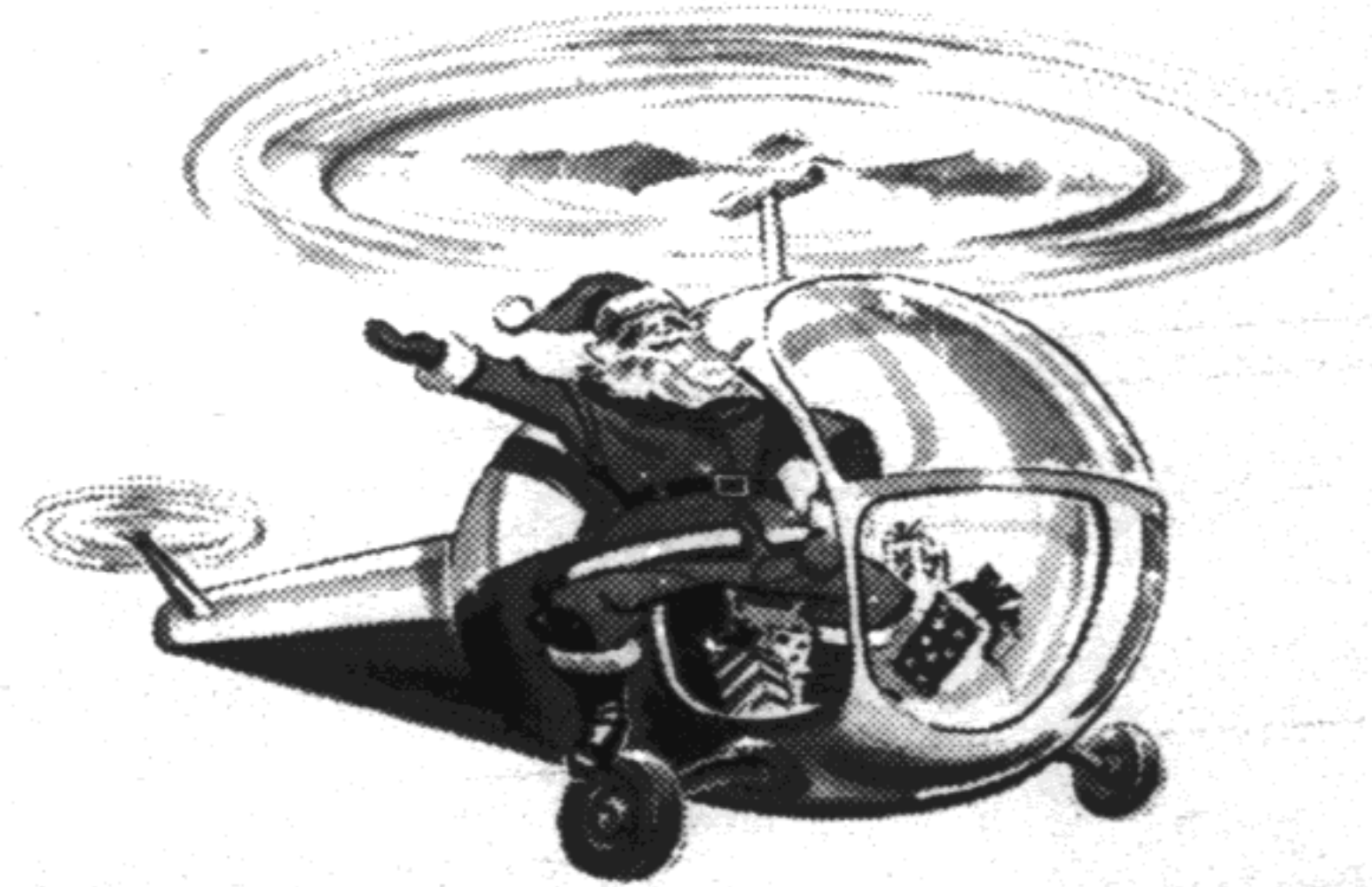
Thank you very much for coming to our village. Also thank you for the candy, apples, oranges, peanuts, and the toys. It wouldn't have seemed like Christmas if you hadn't come. I hope you come next year. We'll have hot chocolate or coffee to warm you up.

A Friend,  
Juanita Hurley  
Grade Three

Dear Santa Claus,

Thank you for the toys you gave me. Please let your servant help you when you go to the villages. I had a clothespin. Where are your little elves? I was so excited when the helicopter flew over the school. I did drive nine dogs and Richard drove three dogs.

Your Friend,  
Peter Orloff  
Grade Three



**ARTIFACTS WANTED!** If you are going to sell old-time objects, please contact the Alaska State Museum first. If you have old-time things that need special care, you can lend them to the Museum for safe-keeping and display. If your things are in the Alaska State Museum, they stay in Alaska. Contact: Jane Wallen, Director, Alaska State Museum, Pouch FM, Juneau, Alaska 99801, phone 586-1224.

