

**"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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## Priest Pin-Points Native Harmony with Nature

(Rev. Fr. Michael T. Irvin of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church, Diocese of Sitka and Alaska, Box 697, Sitka, Alaska 99835, wrote a guest editorial in "Orthodox Alaska," a publication of the Diocese printed six times a year. The following excerpt is reprinted from the Guest Editorial in which Fr. Irvin wrote about harmony with nature of Alaska's native people.)

... The native was almost universally conceived by the non-native to be ignorant, savage, superstitious, hopelessly primitive and barbarian. One particular facet of native culture which has, until this day, escaped the understanding of most non-natives, is that special relationship which exists between the native and the natural world in which he lives. The native has an awe for the world, an attitude which expresses itself in respect and love.

Examples easily come to mind of this unique relationship, and can be found among all the native peoples of Alaska. Among the Tlingit, their totemic emblems are themselves expressions of the oneness which these people feel with the natural world. In the old tradition, their young were taught a quiet and reverent respect for all forms of life—for they understood that they shared the same life with all living things.

The Eskimos express their own particular sense of oneness with that harsh land which they love so strongly in the chants which they sing to the animals of the hunt as they search for them on the seas. These chants call to the whale or sea lion or walrus to come and feed them and their families, expressing, at the same time, their own gratitude to the animals for the food, housing, fuel and clothing they provide.

These people do not despoil the land and then cast it aside as so much garbage. They live on the land and off it. They realize very well that the ruin of the land is their own death. They respect the land. They love it, and because of that the land is allowed to flourish; and they survive.

Now, facing the reality of what we have done to "the good earth," we have come full circle and it is time for we who thought that we knew all things to learn from those whom we have despised as simple and uneducated. Our technology will never be able to return to us what we shall destroy, just as it can never return to us what we have already obliterated and exterminated. Only the simple understanding of these people who have lived for centuries upon centuries upon their mother, the land, will create a new context in which we might learn to widely "subdue" the earth. . .

—REV. FR. MICHAEL IRVIN

## Comical Harlem Clowns to Play Series to Benifit Hope Cottage

The Harlem Clowns, a professional comedy basketball team, will play a series of benefit basketball games for Hope Cottage this weekend in Fairbanks.

Games are scheduled for Thursday, March 26 and Saturday, March 28 at the Patty Gymnasium at the University of Alaska at 8 p.m. Tickets will be sold at the door.

Fifty per cent of the proceeds from the games will go directly to Hope Cottage, Alaska's only home for mentally retarded and multi-handicapped children. With the remaining half, the Clowns will pay their transportation expenses to and around Alaska and will provide their own housing and eating arrangements.

Located on Slater Drive in Fairbanks, the cottage presently serves 30 children. As the only place in Alaska where retarded and handicapped children can go who need foster care, special education classes and/or special medical attention Hope Center

draws children from towns and villages throughout the state.

According to a spokesman at Hope Cottage, there are 66 Alaskan children now being boarded out in an Oregon hospital for lack of facilities here. They are cut off from their parents and a home-like atmosphere for months and possibly years.

Furthermore, there are an estimated 1,200 to 1,500 more such children who need the type of care given at Hope but who are receiving no help whatsoever.

In another effort to raise funds, Hope Cottage is scheduling a Walk for the Children of Hope in Anchorage May 2. Similar walks are also being organized in Fairbanks, Gambell, Seward, and Unalakleet. Hope Cottage is already programmed for Fairbanks in 1971.

Others are needed in Juneau, Sitka, and the Kenai Peninsula, in order to keep the children as close to their families as possible.

## Rural Unorganized Boroughs May Be Basis for New Rural Government

Rural Alaska will have a new form of government and money for improvements if a bill now in the Alaska House passes.

The proposal is currently in the House Health, Education and Welfare Committee where it reportedly received favorable testimony at a public hearing last week.

The measure would create new entities called regional unorganized boroughs out of what is now known as the unorganized borough of Alaska.

Presently, all areas of the state not within the boundaries of any of Alaska's 10 organized boroughs are part of the unorganized borough. The ten boroughs are centered around the following cities or areas: Bristol Bay, Fairbanks, Anchorage, Juneau, Sitka, Haines, Kenai Peninsula, Ketchikan, Kodiak Island and Matanuska Valley.

Thus, most of rural Alaska is placed in the unorganized borough, where any form of government has, for the most part, been nonexistent. According to the State constitution, the legislature is supposed to meet as the assembly for this borough.

However, economist Greg Erickson of the University of Alaska reminded the committee at the hearing that the legislature has not met once in this capacity and has failed to carry out its responsibility in rural Alaska.

According to the House bill, boundaries would be drawn for the regional unorganized boroughs with consideration for the desires and wishes of the residents of the proposed boroughs, existing Alaskan Native associations, regional boards and corporations, land claims settlement areas and existing ethnic and fraternal groupings.

A regional council would be elected with the power to decide how the borough will spend its money.

As stated in the measure, the council shall "prepare, review and approve the budget of the regional unorganized borough."

Also, it would review and approve all state agency plans which affect its development and welfare. It would prepare and submit the priorities and needs of the communities and people living in the borough and would coordinate federal and state activities with regional and local programs.

To assist the regional boroughs and existing municipalities, a Department of Regional and Community Affairs would be created with a commissioner of regional and community affairs at its head.

Revenue for the new boroughs, as well as the already existing boroughs, would come from a fund composed of 40 per cent of all state revenues derived from the sale, lease or disposition of natural resources.

### Center Grant For Ft. Yukon

The city of Fort Yukon recently received an almost \$300,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the construction of a neighborhood center.

To be built adjacent to the Fort Yukon school, the nearly 11,000 square-foot structure will include facilities for a tuberculosis clinic and X-ray testing, remedial and adult education, a non-profit laundry and child care, recreational activities, employment counseling and welfare services.

Half of the 40 per cent would be distributed to each borough on the basis of population.

The other half would be allocated in terms of the degree to which a borough's average per capita income falls below the average for the state.

Furthermore, 10 per cent of the total money going to each unorganized regional borough in proportion to their respective populations.

Under the bill, the Local Affairs Agency, the Rural Develop-

ment Agency, the Alaska Planning and Research Division and the planning assistance authority of the Alaska State Housing Authority would be transferred to the new department.

At the hearing some objection was raised to the fact that the powers of taxation were not allowed to the proposed boroughs.

Rep. John Sweet, R-Anchorage, said he felt that everyone ought to pay part of their share no matter how small.

## Letters to the Editor

### Contrasting Differences Between Village and City Life

Bethel, Alaska  
Box 432  
March 16, 1970

Dear Editor:

Alaska and Village life is different from other states not to mention the variation between Village life and Anchorage life. Life in the Villages is as different from night to day compared to life in the cities. When you go to a Village; from Anchorage it is like going to a different country. Living off the land, roaming the country for food; and yes, they have been free to travel as they please. I would like you to envision the following pictures in your minds.

City life is very confusing, hectic and depressing. Everywhere you go you see people, strange people, and you don't dare smile at them like you do in the Villages. When you smile at somebody in the cities, he looks at you like you were crazy. In the cities you don't trust anybody and you keep your doors locked or you get robbed.

Also, you are very nervous because of all the strange people and the traffic. You move with the clock and you become part of the machinery you work with at some big industry. After a while you are like a machine yourself; you quit living and merely exist. You don't even have to smoke cigarettes because you are smothered with filthy smoke and inhale it every day. This is big industry and city life.

The other picture is completely different, Village life. In the Villages everybody smiles at you and are willing to help you any time you need help. Anytime you feel like being alone you go off to some place and be alone with mother nature. You look at the sky and it is clear blue and you enjoy the most beautiful sunsets.

There is wild life all around you because the land and water is still livable for the animals and you. You are not smothered by filthy smoke and not beclouded by smog. You don't feel like being closed in by some incredible smoke, you feel very free. You don't have to lock your doors, in fact, you're relaxed and trust your neighbor. This is what I call living and not existing.

For many years we have lived and eaten from the land that we now occupy and utilize. Our food is from the land; the wild life of the country that we love dearly. WHY DO WE LOVE OUR LAND? GOOD QUESTION! THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE!

It is what has and what is keeping us alive today. Without the land and its wildlife we are as good as dead. If the land had not kept the Native people of Alaska alive, I would not have been born.

We are a part of the land and its wildlife. Why can't your govern ment see this? How do you convince them? Why should we have to convince them? Good questions! When you start talking about Alaska land, you are not just talking about the land, you are also talking about people who depend on the land for their meals.

Are we, Alaskan Natives, not considered citizens of the United States? We don't seem to be considered so. We keep on talking but nobody listens, instead they listen to dollars. It is too bad we don't have dollars and nobody seems to trust us with dollars not to mention the land. They tell me that I don't have a piece of paper that says I own my land. The Eskimo, Indian, and Aleut way has been no pieces of paper for thousands of years.

Upon the North Slope oil companies are busy drilling and spoiling the land. I imagine we will be smothered by smoke and oil before long. This brings another question. Where will the Native people get their food! Perhaps, we will all go on welfare, after all, we are a very rich state.

—MARGARET NICK

### Little Girls Want Pen Pals

Los Angeles, California  
March 11, 1970

Tundra Times  
Fairbanks, Alaska

Dear Sirs:

We are sisters, 9 and 10, wishing to write to Alaskan pen pals. Do you have a column where you could print our names and address, or any other way of helping us? We would like girl pen pals between the ages of 9 and 11 and are interested in all kinds of

things. Our names and our address are—

Jackie Soble  
208 N. Glenroy Ave.  
Los Angeles, California 90049  
(age 10)

Patty Soble  
(address same)  
(age 9)

Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,  
Jackie and Patty