

"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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CVS Graduated Many Natives— Closing of Copper Valley School Tragic

Sitka, Alaska
Box 495
March 23, 1971

Editor
Tundra Times
Fairbanks, Alaska

Readers of this weekly are aware that Copper Valley School at Glennallen will close its doors to Alaska high school students this coming June. That another Catholic boarding school disappears from the landscape is no big news any more, and is perhaps of little consequence to many people. But in this State, private effort and support of secondary education in accordance with state requirements and accreditation is as rare as palm trees on the tundra. The phasing out of this or of any other such school ought not to go unnoticed.

At a time when minority groups clamor for recognition, it could be said that Copper Valley was an attempt to respond to the educational needs of Alaska Native people. It was one of the few schools built on the idea of integration of the races, which for formative high school boys and girls is a sort of mutual recognition. The notion of college-prep was strong, and the ability and potential was recognized in any student who wanted to take the opportunity to polish up his or her talents.

Ted Mayac of Nome and Anna Patsey, formerly of Holy Cross, were the first graduates in 1957. From then on, readers will recognize names of graduates through the years: Demoski, Demientieff, Schaeffer, Norbert, Sipary, Hunter, Snow, Pitka, Stickman, Semaken, Solomon, Napoleon, Jorgenson, Olson, Bell, Wassilli, Aloysius, Harry, and many others.

Thomas Gemmell III of Clear is now completing his course at the Coast Guard Academy and graduated in 1967. Eileen (Norbert) Appolloni who won the Voice of Democracy contest for the State of Alaska graduated from Copper in 1964. And both Anna Patsey, '57, and Margaret Semaken, '65, were able to complete registered nurse's training outside after their high school years at Copper Valley.

It seems untimely that this effort toward secondary education should now end. There is more money in Alaska now than when the school was beginning in the middle '50's, more talent, more resources and more people. And the educational needs of the native minorities are greater than ever.

We are all wrapped up in Native Land Claims and that pipeline. The whirlpool of progress is upon us and when the bulldozers have finished the job, will big brother be here to stay? The promise of gold in every pot and two ski-doo's for every family may sound fine, but will it come at the price of computer credit-card culture? Copper Valley escaped all that. It was one of those impossible Alaskan pioneer adventures: drop in for coffee and pick up a hammer, grab a paint brush, fix that flat, skin the moose. If Jake Spils ever caught you around there, you'd spend the day pushing a loaded cement buggy for standing idle. In some sort of miraculous way, the whole place was patched together with volunteer help, and year after year, teachers and staff would come and go from all over the States, all volunteers, keeping the school alive. One wonders if such kind of spirit and character is soon to go the way of the dog team.

If some day you get the chance, stop in at Mile 111, Richardson Highway, at the Tazlina Bridge. Take a look at the place, rather large and sprawled out, like seven spokes coming from the hub of a great wheel, and government-issue pink all over. It's home-made and very plain and it has the generous character of every one who stopped by to lend a hand or leave a hand-out. No amount of oil money, no efficient computer system will ever come up with anything quite like it.

Letters from Here and There

Hits Rothman

Box 488
Aniak, Ak. 99557
March 15, 1971

Dear Editor:

I don't think that I'll make a long emotionally charged rebuttal to Stu Rothman's testimony on the oil pipeline; because I thought that that type of thinking went out ... a century or so ago.

Although I may not agree with everything that Charlie Edwardsen may say; I feel that he is right in being overly emphatic or even reactionary. We all have to draw the line somewhere and take a person such as Mr. Rothman on immediately. To let something go on like that, is to

allow the situation to become worse.

One only has to read the letter from Frederick Paul, Esq., to see what advances are being made by educated thinking. This is the type of men who must be heard.

I doubt if the committee could lead any credence to such a blatant lack of currency in the testimony of Mr. Rothman.

Sincerely,
Fred A. Notti

Greek Couples Look for Jobs

New York, March 17, 1971

Dear Sirs:

We will sincerely appreciate, if you kindness let us know, about job opportunities in Fairbanks, Alaska.

We are two young couples, looking for a job down there. We are permanent residents of the United States, and for now we live in New York City, but originally we come from Greece.

We are hard worker men, and we do not mind if the job is really hard. At the present time, we do not have childrens, which makes more easy for us to come anywhere.

We are ready for make the trip, but of course we would not like to make such a long trip for nothing. This is one of the reasons I have for to write this letter. We guess this is the best way to find out the truth about job opportunities in Fairbanks.

Besides this, we would like to know how much it will cost us to get a subscription to your newspaper, by week, or month, any how.

Hoping to hear from you soon, we give you the thanks in anticipation.

Sincerely,
George Christofilopoulos
452-60th Street
(Bay Ridge)
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11220

3 Youngsters Write to Editor

Churchill Road School
McLean, Va.

Dear Mr. Rock

I am doing a school project I might not spell all the words right but forget that. I went to the book fair with my friends yesterday. It was fun. We liked your paper. It's the greatest. It sure is comfortable in here. We got to work on rugs. They sure have long letters in your newspaper. This one will look stupid against all those long ones. You sure have good ads too.

Sincerely yours,
Karen Bieber

Dear Mr. Rock,

I am working on a school project. We are having a book fair. There are used books at the book fair for only 5, 10, or 15¢. If you were there you would have lots of fun too. I wrote this just so that you would know about it.

Mr. Rock, I like the ad about Yuk Eskimo Dialect in three schools is a good one and all the rest are good too. Karen Bieber, Robyn Shubert and I think that you right good ads in your newspaper. But my only problem is that the newspaper doesn't come to my house because I live in Burke, Va.

Sincerely yours,
Sharon Martin

Dear Mr. Rock,

I am working on a school project. We are having a book fair and a man named Ranger Rickes showed us a fulm in our cafeteria. We had a fun time. If you were here I'm sure you would enjoy it to. The book fair ends March 19. I guess that's enough about the book fair. But I'm writing this letter so you would know about it.

Now I'm going to tell you about your collom. I enjoy all your pictures. They are good pictures. My friends Karen Bieber and Sharon Martin are writing to you to. I hope you get our letter soon.

Sincerely yours,
Robyn Shubert

Poem—

While My White Brothers Speak

"One for me (oil wells for leasers and businessmen),
one for them (oil companies)..."

The FIRST AMERICAN says, "Where is mine?"

Upon the face of the whole earth,
There's no land so great and good.
Under clean air and sky, birth after birth.
From time immemorial, our life and food.

Peace with Mother Nature for all these years,
No trophies or idle sport we sought.
Now, from peace on land to frustrating tears,
In the death grip of ruthless progress we're caught.

Some say we are a detriment to America's health,
Unloyal because no oil lines can cross our lands.
Until we get equal distribution of potential welath,
Our sacred land must remain in our hands.

Dear Public, does it matter this land is ours?
Already leases and oil wells you are staking,
None for us who own the land, all is yours.
Lawfully and morally is it yours just for the taking?

One lease and well for me, one pair for them.
This dividing all by parties second and third,
While the First Party sings the age-old anthem—
When, oh Great America, will we be heard?

Scientific reports and interminable hearings,
The ultimate goal, take out the oil and gold.
You take our land like wool from sheep at shearings,
The Rich own and sell, we stay poor and cold.

Until that bold and earthshaking day
When our lands are recognized by all,
You'll understand we've come well over half-way.
"Who is really guilty of a 'grandstand' stall?"

These are days of serious and sober thought.
We must let reason and love overcome our natural greed.
America—generations for her honor did fight,
Land of justice and equality, a beautiful creed!

One day an architect showed me some plans,
Scientifically developed, technically sound.
Agreed, his plans could benefit many Alaskans.
One ingredient lacking, for free he wanted my ground.

ARE OUR PLEAS FOR JUSTICE ACTS OF INFAMY?
You way, we are holding back development and jobs,
That we act like we are America's enemy,
Because oil is the lifeline of America's heart throbs.

Capitalism! Obstructionism! Emotionalism! Preservationism!
And other such words to describe differing stands.
Let's share our resources equally! Remove Alaska's schism!
Oil wells? YES! Is also one is ours, as you divide, on our lands.

—PETER P. THREE STARS
Ogalala Sioux
3-4-71

One feels quite sure people like Bishop Gleason, Fathers Jack Spils, Jack Buchanan and Frank Fallert, as well as Sisters Mary George, Ida, Alice and Eulelia, and so many, many others, would like to say: "Thanks for all the help."

Thomas N. Gallagher, sj
P.O. Box 495
Sitka, Alaska 99835