

"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 Comment—

Natives & North Star III

There has never been such an uneasiness stirred in the villages especially those along the coast. The cause of this disturbed status is the possibility of discontinuing the annual voyages of the Bureau of Indian Affairs supply ship North Star III that brings year's supplies to Alaska Native Industries Cooperative Association native stores, BIA day schools and Public Health Service hospitals.

The crux of the matter is that some private carriers are wanting to take over the supplying services of the North Star from Annette Island (Metlakatla) to Unalaska to Barrow at the top of the world.

The villages are alarmed that they will never get the services they have gotten used to since back in 1920's. They have welcomed the supply ships beginning with the small U.S.S. Boxer that was succeeded by the original wooden North Star I which in turn was succeeded by North Star II and the latter was succeeded by the present North Star III.

The villagers are afraid that if the private carriers take over, the services North Star gives, which in many cases approach personal services, will not be continued by those that would take them over. Many times North Star delayed its sailing date for days on days waiting for favorable weather which a private carrier probably would not do because of expenses. There has been many instances when the North Star sails on a mercy mission involving doubling back from Nome to Little Diomedes to bring a dangerously ill Eskimo to the Nome hospital, as one example.

The continued services of the Boxer to the present North Star III have become a tradition and, certainly, filling important facets of everyday life of thousands of Alaska native people from the Tsimshians, Haidas, Tlingits, Chilkats, Aleuts and Eskimos.

We are very much in sympathy with the alarms of the folks. We ask for continued services of the famed North Star.

Christmas at Gambell

By GRACE SLWOOKO
Gambell, Alaska

The year 1971 is just at the closing. Cold as we are, we enjoy our winter as ever.

We run around in a frosty fog, getting our Christmas presents into the post office and some to the school rooms where we exchange gifts. It is another enjoyable time of the year.

Although the mail planes were held by the fog, we enjoyed going to watch Christmas programs the school and the churches gave.

The Santa Claus this year was Ellis Oozeva, 9 years old. He was dressed part in Santa's suit and part in raven.

They had our Eskimo tale, "The Raven," who was going to be the tale down to the ages by jumping down to the fire. But this time he had a better way. Instead of jumping into the fire, he shouted, "Merry Christmas!"

We enjoy Christmas time, always.

So we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from our island home.

Poem—

MEMORIES

Memories dear
and memories fair
Are the treasures everywhere.
Memories near
and memories far
Are the pleasures here and there.
Memories here
and memories dear
Are the echoes of the year.

—GRACE SLWOOKO

Letters from Here and There

December 30, 1971
Mr. Henry Benson
Commissioner of Labor
State of Alaska
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Mr. Benson:

I am writing in regards to a condition existing on the Alaska State Housing Authority village housing programs, and on behalf of an injured friend, Mr. David Frankson of Point Hope, Alaska.

I am personally aware of two different individuals who have been seriously injured during the time that they were working on Remote Housing programs sponsored by ASHA, in their villages. Mr. Frankson is one of these men, and there was a similar occurrence at Toksook Bay this past November. I am not familiar with the man's name but do know that he was seriously ill.

The stated position in these cases as stated on ADL 150, Alaska Department of Labor, is that these people are working for a "sweat" equity, and are not in fact employed, or covered by the ASHA Workmen's Compensation program. Several aspects of these conclusions bother me and I would appreciate your looking into this matter:

(1) The "sweat" equity is based on an hourly rate of pay and records are maintained on that basis for both men and women workers in the villages. Women only receive credit at one-half the hourly rate that men do.

(2) Participation in the ASHA Remote Housing programs prevent a man in the village from going out and seeking employment to support his family. If he is injured and cannot complete his homes "sweat" equity, he loses everything. A situation that I doubt is explained as a possibility prior to a man beginning construction of one of his new homes.

If, indeed, there is a State of Alaska agency, or agencies, that are party to letting a man get injured in a remote village, possibly seriously enough to make him unemployable for years to come, or the rest of his life, then that possibility should be clearly spelled out to the men and women involved prior to their picking up the first board on their new homes. Indeed, this would be a strange thing for a State of Alaska agency to be party to when it is the State that has written the Workmen's Compensation laws to protect the working man.

Both Mr. Frankson and I anxiously await your reply to this query.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Donald S. Dorsey
Manager

January 3, 1972
Gentlemen:

I am wondering if there are any women in your reading area who would care to correspond with a woman in her forties down in Florida.

Alaska has always fascinated me and I would love to learn more about the state.

Hoping to receive a lot of letters.

Yours truly,
Mrs. Dorothy Agerholm
753 Lynndale St. North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33703

Alaska State Housing Authority
December 18, 1971

Mr. Donald S. Dorsey
Manager
Alaska Native Industries
1306 Second Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98101

Dear Mr. Dorsey:

I am very sorry to hear that you feel the Alaska State Housing Authority "copped out" on assisting the village stores in purchasing and financing their oil supplied when we are not funded for that purpose. Also, I am sorry to hear your comments regarding the other agencies as we have usually found them more than willing to cooperate to the fullest extent possible within their funding limitations.

From my travels to many remote villages in Alaska, I know that your organization has been providing a much needed service and I can appreciate your frustrations in attempting to solve the oil purchase and storage problems. As an example of our desire to work with you and to avoid compounding the oil and gas shortages, in the

villages which are receiving housing under our 1971 Program, we shipped in our anticipated oil and gas supplies needed to complete the construction of the homes along with the materials. In Toksook Bay, we had the same problem as the village in that the vessel with our oil on it could not land because of bad weather. So, we are currently arranging to have our gas flown up, and will buy our oil from AVEC, which to my knowledge, the village is also doing.

Although I cannot guarantee it, I do feel there is a good chance some of these problems regarding oil and gas supplies for the villages can be resolved, if we could work together. Therefore, if possible, I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss these problems with you at your convenience.

In the meantime, I would like to wish you and your staff a Happy New Year.

Sincerely yours,
Alaska State Housing Authority
Charles R. Booher
Coordinator
Alaska Remote Housing Programs



GLIMMERING, RIPPLING—The beauty of the shimmering aurora borealis (northern lights) was caught by Lee Snyder of the Geophysical Institute of the University of Alaska. Snyder took the picture on November 24, 1971 at 8:30 p.m. He set his lens at f.2.8. with the exposure of 8 seconds on Kodak Tri-x film. The exceptional picture amply illustrates Robert N. Zimmerman's poem, "Under the Northern Lights."

—LEE SNYDER Photo

Poem—

UNDER THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

In the valley, a snow covered roof is slanted, gabled over a log cabin.

The chimney is straight, against a dim moon.

A pillar of smoke drifts upward—into the night.

Along the ridge, a lone figure in fur parka stands at the edge of the shadowed woods.

Across the sky, like great, billowing clouds, the northern lights are spread.

Pinnacles of green foam rise, while tinged, red slices appear among the stars.

Pale orange emerges, envelopes: whisps of blue fog gathers, always changing.

Draping the heavens, then nearly disappearing, a yellow, flushed light weaves and waves.

Giant streams of purple become a lustre, then fade

Gradually violet—across a center, above the hills—nearly overtakes all, suddenly recedes, into the shifting, misty hues.

The smoky rainbow surges, dies, and grows again . . .

Did one of the old tree spirits cast you across the sky like colored treasure, that the People in the old times might see the beauty?

Oh, lone figure near the shadowed woods, you walked tonight from among the silent spruce trees.

The white crusted pinnacles are jagged beneath the sky.

But out of the great stillness a breeze will stir; and the wind will sift snow across your single trail.

—ROBERT N. ZIMMERMAN