

Modest Heroine— PHS Native Woman Worker Saves Life

A single oar and an air-puffed nylon jacket figured dramatically last Saturday in saving Mike Andrews from drowning in Lake Aleknagik.

Heroine is Offeneshia Yako, long-time employee of the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital at Kakanak.

Mrs. Yako, 46, was at the lake's edge that Saturday morning to work on the motor of the 13-foot wooden skiff which she and her husband Anuska own.

Suddenly her son George, 11, yelled that Mike, 17, had fallen off his home-made raft some 50 feet out in the lake and was struggling, fully clothed, in the water.

Mrs. Yako and her son shoved the heavy boat out in the water to help the youth. With no motor and but a single oar she worked mightily to reach Mike.

"It seemed eight minutes or something like that," Mrs. Yako recalled as she described the difficulty of making time with only one oar.

By the time she got to him, Mike had stopped moving and was floating unconscious beneath the surface of the water. Mrs. Yako tried but could not reach him from the boat.

Just then, however, water currents caused the boy's body to roll and air inflated the shoulder of his nylon jacket as it came above the surface.

Mrs. Yako grasped this and pulled the heavy bundle to the boat. She managed to get the top half of him over the side so that "a lot of water drained out from his mouth and nose," she said.

"I watched him to see if he would breathe," Mrs. Yako continued. "If he didn't, I would blow him on his mouth." Fortunately, Mike began to gasp and Mrs. Yako then managed to pull him in the rest of the way and with her one oar worked the boat to shore.

There Mike's parents, Fred and Annie Andrew, summoned by watching lads on shore, claimed their son and took him

home to recover further.

The all-important single oar had been missing when Mrs. Yako first came to her boat. When Mike came along to launch his raft, she asked if he knew who might have borrowed it.

Mike did know and, fortunately, as matters later developed, retrieved it for Mrs. Yako before continuing on his mission.

Clumsy though the going had been with the one implement, without it Mrs. Yako could not have maneuvered her craft to save him.

Both Mrs. Yako and another PHS employee heroine, Mrs. Ella Kinegak of Bethel who earlier this summer saved a five-year-old boy from drowning in the Kuskokwim River, work in the laundry department of their respective hospitals.

And just as it was in the situation with the modest Mrs. Kinegak, word of Mrs. Yako's brave deed first came to the attention of hospital officials four days later and through the report of another person.

Hoonah Grant For Airport

JUNEAU — The southeast Alaska Tlingit community of Hoonah has been awarded a \$7,216 Rural Development Agency grant, Gov. Walter J. Hickel announced.

The grant will provide wages for Hoonah men working on a town airport. Also involved in the construction of the airport are the Alaska Department of Public Works, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Alaska Airlines and local civic and government organizations.

Hoonah, a town of about 900 persons, is 45 miles southwest of Juneau.

Earl Old Person Film Producer

Earl Old Person, tribal chairman at the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana has become a film producer.

Working with VISTA Volunteer Jim Ludwig, the chief is narrating a film on how the Blackfeet are preparing for the future with a 67-acre industrial park on the reservation. They are also planning to build an airport.

The 28-minute color film was financed by the tribe and Ludwig spent a year shooting it.

ST. MARY'S GETS RDA GRANT

JUNEAU— Gov. Walter J. Hickel last Friday announced the award of a Rural Development Agency grant of \$10,000 to the village of St. Mary's on the Yukon River.

The grant, the largest RDA can make, is in conjunction with an Economic Development Administration grant and loan. The grants and loan will enable the village to build a dock and storage building.

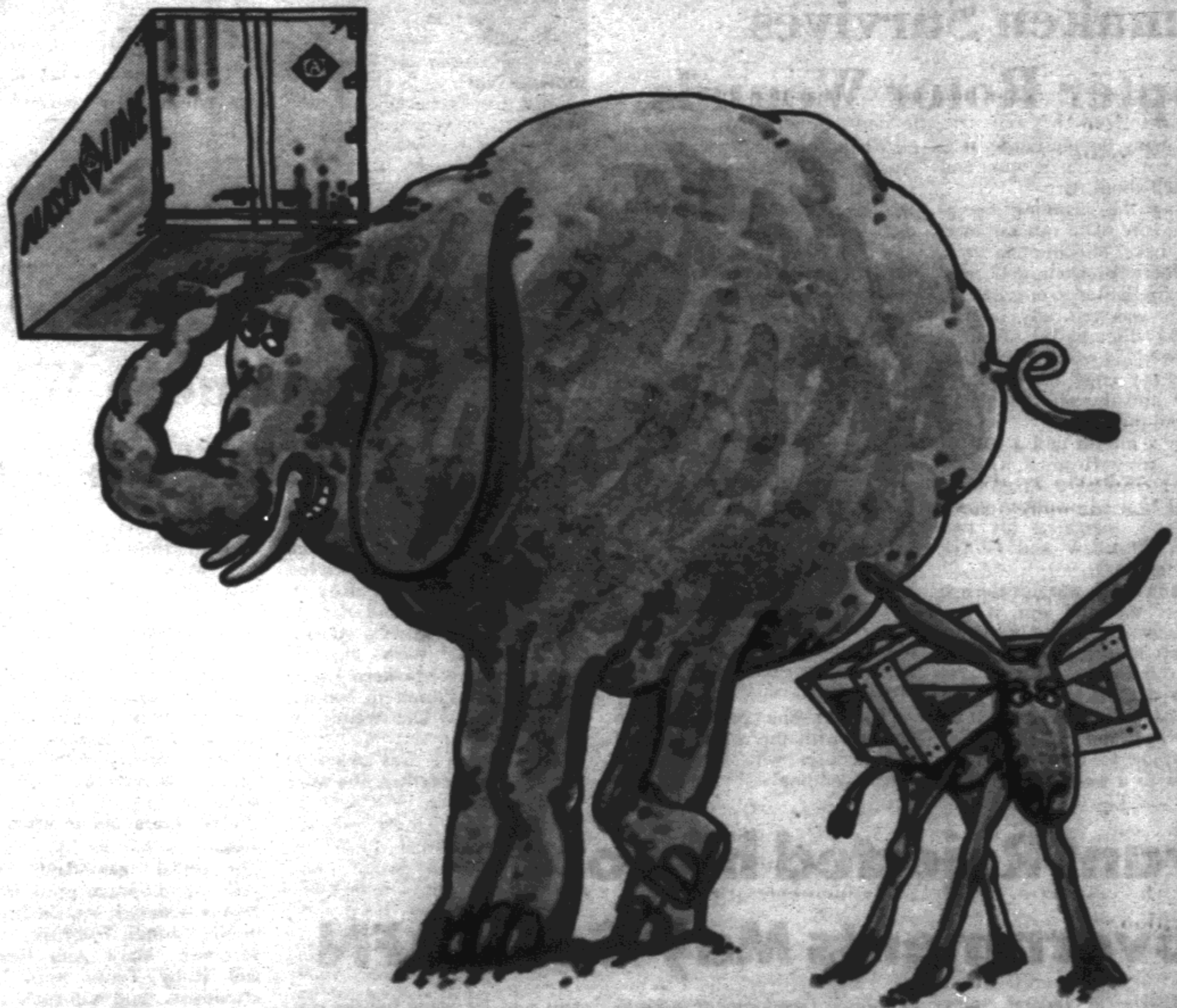
The new facilities will be used by St. Mary's residents to process and market fish.

The RDA grant will pay the wages of village men cutting, peeling and stacking logs for the dock, stockpiling gravel for the cement foundations of the cold storage and a community hall, helping surveyors, moving village buildings and aiding in drafting and planning.

St. Mary's, a village of 225 persons, is approximately 145 miles southeast of Nome. The grant announced last Friday is the fourth RDA grant St. Mary's has received.

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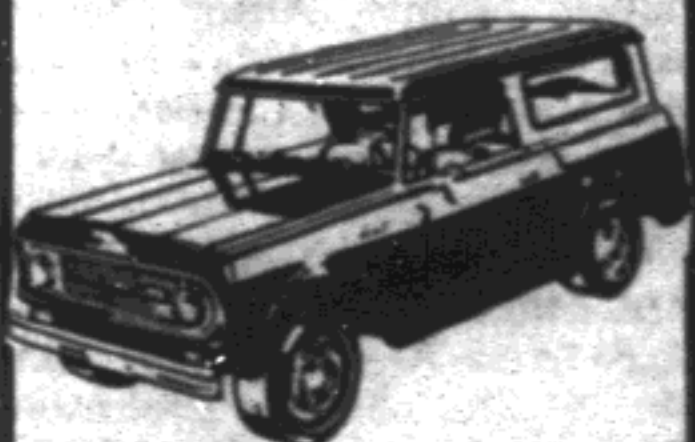
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