

'Eskimo Boy Today' Portrays Life Style of Eskimo Children

Children's books about Eskimo children, especially ones which portray them accurately, are rare to date. So, when a book comes around with dozens of pictures and a text which gives a good portrayal of Eskimo children, it is a welcome sight.

ESKIMO BOY TODAY is such a book. For this, designed for young readers, two white photographers followed 10 year old Gary Hopson of Barrow through his summer and winter activities. Bob and Ira Spring filmed Gary's life in the transitional village he calls home—taking pictures of his home, his family, his classmates, his surroundings during the long arctic winter and the short, brilliant northern summer.

Though a full text was written by travel writer Byron children and adults. The focus is on Charles Gary Hopson, sixth grader, son of Mr. and Mrs. Al Hopson of Barrow, known as Ahniksuak by his Eskimo grandparents descendent of hunters and whalers.

As a resident of Alaska's largest Eskimo village, he lives with an age of jet planes, educational television and in an electrically powered home with a refrigerator.

At the same time, they portray Gary Hopson as a boy whose traditions are those of his

Eskimo grandparents, who will learn the ways to hunt and survive in the north as well as the lessons from the lower 48 he learns in school. In the summer, Gary may go caribou hunting. Or, he may spend a day at the Barrow airport where his father works for Wien Airlines.

For many stateside children, **ESKIMO BOY TODAY** will provide their first accurate picture of the life style of their contemporaries in far off Barrow, on the edge of the Arctic Ocean, where the ice surrounds the village most of the year.

In school, as the text explains, Barrow children learn the same lessons as their stateside contemporaries, unfortunately. They've never seen cows, cities, or common midwest farm animals except in pictures.

They've never seen an igloo either, until they see one white man built at the Naval Arctic Research Institute in Barrow.

Through the long northern winter, with the sun barely above the horizon, and the short arctic summer, the cameramen followed Gary Hopson and his

classmates. Included are pictures of the children as they explore the beauties of the tundra on a class nature trip. They examine the low clinging arctic willows and the brilliant tundra wildflowers. In the below zero cold, they may bring ice cream home from the village store, or learn Eskimo dances and stories from their grandparents.

In another book we reviewed recently, an Alaskan Eskimo wrote about reading in his schoolbooks about some strange uncivilized northern people who lived in igloos and ate raw meat. Perhaps this generation of children will be able to read more accurate books about themselves.

Byron Fish explains to young readers how Barrow's civilization was already old when New York was a tiny trading post. Eskimo people conquered the cold for thousands of year, built houses near Barrow 400 years ago. He also explains the scientific reasons behind the low hanging

sun of the arctic and the long polar night. Although written for children, the book is interesting to adults as well.

Gary Hopson, the Eskimo descendent of an ancient culture is portrayed as a "typical American boy" who happens to live on the edge of the Arctic Ocean. Alaskan readers will see pictures of the children of Barrow and what they do with their days, children typical of almost any village of the northland.

Designed for stateside readers, **ESKIMO BOY** should prove highly popular with Alaskan children who find so little in their schoolwork with which they can identify.

NOTE: ESKIMO BOY TODAY. Photos by Bob and Ira Spring. Text by Byron Fish. Available for \$4.20 postpaid softbound and \$7.20 hardbound from Alaska Northwest Publishing Co. Box 4-EEE, Anchorage, Alaska 99509.

Alcoholism Is Family Disease

(Editor's Note: This article is part two of a two-part series printed as a public health message at the request of the Barrow Council on Alcoholism.)

Because it is important for the alcoholic to get into treatment as soon as possible, it is essential for the family to understand that any protective devices are detrimental. One of the most difficult principles a counselor must teach is that it is necessary for the alcoholic to hurt deeply in order to get well. "Take your hands off him and let him suffer." The sooner the alcoholic gets into treatment, the less permanent physical damage there will be.

With an alcoholic father and an emotionally obsessed mother, children are naturally confused, hostile towards their personal situation and insecure about their personal worth. The shame and hurt of living with a chronic alcoholic, who is totally inconsistent and unable to give love, is difficult to bear. The relationship to the mother, whose life is centered on the disease of her husband, spans a complete spectrum from overprotection to complete rejection. As we remember that the mother's life is centered in the alcoholic, every relationship to her children is governed by how she feels about him at that moment. Her happiness and resentments are reflected in her treatment of her children.

Children in alcoholic homes also suffer the indignity of being used by both parents to meet their own needs and as weapons against each other. A mother may use her children for her personal sense of failure. She may attend to their physical needs to show she is a success and all is well. The alcoholic may use them as a means of striking out at the wife, to vent his resentments, or in order to make her angry and thus have another excuse to drink.

Because the alcoholic is unable to blame himself for his alcoholism, he seeks excuses for his unreasonable addiction. The object for most of the blame is his wife. No matter how hard she tries to please, he continually reacts to her with hostility. Her failure and his constant faultfinding lead her to such personal despair and hopelessness that she may finally seek help.

The members of the family are often anxious to deny the true nature of the husband's disease as he is. The old image of the skidrow bum, or the hidden alcoholic, black-sheep relative, makes it difficult for them to admit that he is an alcoholic. Until alcoholism is accepted as a disease by society, the fear of attaching a stigma to a loved one is very real. There-

fore, when a member of an alcoholic's family seeks help, she deserves such understanding as will enable her to accept the real problem in her home.

The obsession with booze in the alcoholic or the obsession of the non-alcoholic relative with her alcoholic, is the same basic spiritual problem. Both obsessions are expressions of total self centeredness. There is no place in either way of life for other people or for God. The alcoholic looks into the bottom of the bottle for peace and serenity. His wife has fallen into the trap of believing that her happiness depends on his sobriety.

The desire for her spouse's sobriety is not adequate motivation for sustaining the wife in treatment. If she seeks peace of mind, a new spiritual way of life freed from her obsession, she will find it in the truth about the disease and in changing her thinking and her reactions, whether the husband gets sober or not. Alanon is full of living examples of this promise.

Since families are seriously affected, any alcoholism rehabilitation program will have to include most of the following services; family interviews; home visitation by a trained worker; individual counselling and/or therapy for the wife and the children; group counselling without the alcoholic; marriage counselling for couples—with a therapist for the wife and the children; group counselling without the alcoholic; marriage counselling for couples—with a therapist alone and later in supportive therapy groups; referral to Alanon, Alateen, and other helping agencies.

Rehabilitation workers will have to accept the responsibility of monitoring the growth of the entire family. No other serious health problem has such a record of half treatment. No one would consider treating a tubercular father without testing the other members of the family and placing those affected by the disease under treatment. Nor would any health officer assume that the family had recovered without following through and proving that the recovery had taken place.

Because alcoholism is a family disease, any rehabilitation program should include rehabilitation for the family. Alanon has shown us that non-alcoholics need two things: (1) alcoholism information, and (2) help with their own problems. Both are needed whether the alcoholic gets sober or not. Therefore, it is essential that any alcoholism program be prepared to treat the family even if there is no opportunity to treat the alcoholic.

Health Council at Mt. Edgecumbe

Health council presidents, health aides and Native Board of Health members attended a workshop sponsored by the community health services branch of P.H.S. Mt. Edgecumbe service unit in August.

The two and a half day workshop coincided with the week-long orientation of new PHS workers and public health nurses run by the state.

Preventive medicine was the theme. Sessions focused on aspects of the community health services program for 8 Southeast villages—what it is like to live in a village having only minimal medical care: a video tape recording demonstration; problems needing interagency cooperation; identification of community health concerns, setting priorities, and planning to meet the identified health needs.

Planning for the medical and dental clinics to be held in the villages this year was another major topic.

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