

"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—

Is Bowhead Whale an Endangered Specie?

(Continued from page 1)

Hope and Barrow.

The two communities have long histories of the whale hunt starting somewhere back 1,500 years. The struggle of learning to take the great whales must have been a major effort — trial and error period where many lives were lost. Those intrepid whalers used nothing but bone and ivory harpoon heads. They got the whales nevertheless. They got them by thoroughly studying the habits of the great mammal. They learned proper approaches for the attack. To err was to invite death. Even the proper approach didn't always work.

The grandfather of the editor of this newspaper was a victim of a freak reaction of the whale he struck. The flukes caught his umiak squarely in the middle killing him and four other crew members. Three young boys managed to come out of this tragedy because they wore thick-haired caribou parkas, leggings and mukluks that kept them afloat. One of the boys was the editor's father. He was 14 years old. His wounded and dying father shouted directions to the boys how to get to the anchored ice or shore ice.

The editor's father hunted whales throughout his life, ever haunted by the personally close tragedy. He, nevertheless, got his good share of the whales as a captain.

The whaling is continuing today with some improvements weaponwise. They are using the darting and shoulder guns introduced somewhere around 1870's. That was the period when the white whalers came up north to hunt the bowhead because their women back home wore the bowhead baleen for corsette stays.

The corsette period decimated the bowhead whale population endangering the existence of the great mammal. That would have, or should have been the time to classify the animal an endangered specie. But nothing like that was done. When someone invented plastic that worked better than baleen for corsette stays, the bowhead was reprieved. The Eskimos continued to hunt the whale. Even at the greatly reduced numbers, the whale continued to exist and even under the Eskimo hunting pressure.

Today, the pressure on the mammal is believed to be no longer critical. The bowhead numbers in the thousands. Biologists are saying the bowhead herd is increasing — that the animals taken by the Eskimos does not hurt it. In fact, they said, it might even be beneficial to the herd. Eskimos are saying there are more whales than ever before. This opinion should be respected because by necessity, the Eskimos observe the animal that gives them the most important source of sustenance.

Whaling is a way of life among the Arctic Eskimos. It is a tradition as sacred as beef. Take beef away from the world and there would be calamity. Take the bowhead whale away from Alaska Natives, and there would be more than calamity. It would be genocide. It would be the end of the rich cultures. It would end the spirit and drive of those people.

There should be reasonable approach to the Eskimo whaling. The evaluation of it should be realistic. Let reason be the foremost approach in dealing with the sea mammal bill.

WHALE Committee Sends Open Letter

May 10, 1972

OPEN LETTER TO ALL CONCERNED

RE: Sea Mammals Legislation

As you know, hearings on the Sea Mammals Legislation will be held in Alaska May 11 and 12 in order that voices of Alaskans will be heard on these bills affecting Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts. What impact these hearings will have on a National level, and at the Washington, D. C., scene, is yet to be seen.

A bill that would prohibit the use of ocean mammals was passed in the U. S. House of Representatives in March by a vote of 362-10. A similar measure that would allow subsistence use of certain species and for continuance of the Native crafts industries for local marketing only is now pending in the Senate's Commerce Committee.

The Senate Commerce Committee held an Executive Session on Sea Mammals Legislation on May 8. Then, on May 22, the Full Commerce Committee will meet for final deliberations on the legislation, in hopes to vote on the bill in late May or early June. Shortly thereafter, Free Conference Committee will meet and Congress hopes to have this legislation become law before recess in

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Times Readers Urged to Write

1003 Cushman St.
Fairbanks, Alaska

May 10, 1972

Dear Sir:

I urge readers of Tundra Times to write their senators to allow subsistence hunting and fishing of ocean mammals by Eskimos. Anyone living among Eskimos as I have, realize how important the hunting of whales, walrus and seals are to their lives. Most of our Eskimos live on a hunting economy; they average about \$3,000 a year when they work. Hunting mammals of the sea was part of their heritage long before the first white man set foot on Alaskan soil. Haven't we done enough to destroy their culture,

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Letters from Here and There

Mt. Edgecumbe School
Mt. Edgecumbe, Alaska 99835
April 28, 1972

Morris Thompson, Area Director
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Box 3-8000
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Mr. Thompson:

The Mt. Edgecumbe-Wrangell School Board has agreed at a duly called meeting on April 28, 1972, that the move should not be made from Mt. Edgecumbe to Wildwood for the following reasons:

The Kenai Borough School system appeared to be a very traditional school with no apparent individualized instruction.

Our students need special education in Developmental Reading and other specialized programs and these programs will take time and money to implement.

In order to educate our students in Alaska, we should think first of bringing Alaska students from Chemawa and Chillico back to our state rather than eliminating an educational institution in Alaska that is already established.

Wildwood could be an additional boarding facility in Alaska, but it should not replace Mt. Edgecumbe School. There should be a comparison made of operational expenses at Mt. Edgecumbe and Wildwood and further study on the impact on students, personnel and community.

Sincerely yours,

Nicholas Kompkoff, Chairman
Mt. Edgecumbe-Wrangell School Board

Pet Pride Orphans Committee of Alaska
1½ Mile Peger Road
Fairbanks, Ak. 99701

Howard Rock
Editor
Tundra Times
510 2nd
Fairbanks, Alaska

Dear Mr. Rock,

Our committee would like to thank you for the publicity we have received from the Tundra Times. It was greatly appreciated. As you may know, the object of our organization is to vastly improve the plight of the cats of Fairbanks and surrounding areas through the education of the public, establishment of additional mini-shelters to house strays, and the creation of a big clinic-shelter. With the help of your generosity, we feel that we are at last off to a promising start towards accomplishing these goals.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Rebecca Arteaga
(Secretary)

HOPE CENTER

May 9, 1972

President
Chamber of Commerce

550 1st
Fairbanks, Alaska

Dear Sir:

The Fairbanks Rehabilitation Association, Inc., of which Hope Center and Hope Industries are a part, wishes to commend your efforts in behalf of the handicapped by your sponsorship of the Walk for Hope. Any effort which brings to the community an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the problems of the handicapped is very much appreciated by those working in the field.

We trust that in your campaign for Walk for Hope you will point out that the funds to be raised apparently will go primarily to Hope Cottage in Anchorage, an institution for the profoundly mentally retarded. We ask this because many Fairbanksans who are concerned about mental retardation confuse the purpose of this fund drive and believe that money raised by it will go to Hope Center here in Fairbanks. Hope Center and Industries together offer the only fully integrated rehabilitation program for the mentally retarded in Alaska. The purpose of the Fairbanks Rehabilitation Association's program is to provide the training needed by the mentally retarded to become as self-supporting as possible. We believe a majority of the mildly and moderately mentally retarded can, with appropriate rehabilitative services and training, become employable and self-supporting to a degree, either through employment in the community or in a workshop such as Hope Industries.

The Fairbanks Rehabilitation Association, Inc., through Hope Center and Hope Industries does, of course, need the support of the community of Fairbanks, financially as well as in increased acceptance by Fairbanksans of the mentally retarded working and living among them. Therefore, we should appreciate your making it clear to those participating in the Walk for Hope that their efforts will not be in aid of Hope Center of Hope Industries but in aid of Hope Cottage of Anchorage.

Sincerely yours,

Mary A. Nordale, President
Fairbanks Rehabilitation Association, Inc.

Poem—

SONG OF THE NIGHT

(From the American Indian Cultural Group Newsletter)

The night is hushed,
And the dreams hide in silence.
The moon is rising —
She has eyes to watch the day.

Come, daughter of the fields,
And let us go
Into the vineyards
Where the lovers meet.
For it may be
That there we, too, may quench
With love's good vintage
The drouth of our desire.

Harken, the nightingale
Pours forth his song
Into the valleys
Which the hills have filled
With the green scent of mint.
Fear not, beloved,
The stars will keep the secret of
our meeting,
And the soft mist of night
Veil our embrace.

Fear not —
The young bride of the djinns
In her enchanted cave
Lies sleeping, drunk with love,
And well-nigh hidden
From the houri's eyes.

And even should the king of the
djinns pass by,
Then love will turn him back.
For is he not a love as I am,
And shall he disclose
That which his own heart suffers?

— KAHLIL GIBRAN