

More than the 3 R's

Children living in floating timber camp attend survival classes

Associated Press

ALASKA — The three R's are just so much kid stuff to the youngsters at this Fire Cove floating timber camp. They must pass a tough swimming test — 200 yards to shore and back in frigid waters — before they can walk around without life jackets. Survival skills and learning to cope with the environment come early to the 19 students who tread the wooden sidewalks at this temporary community, anchored off Revilagidedo Island, about 30 miles north of Ketchikan.

The students who reside at timber camps like Fire Cove are part of a logging tradition that brought their parents and their parents' parents to

the woods and waters of southeastern Alaska.

There are 489 students in the 20,000-square mile Southeast Island School District, which stretches from Dixon Entrance to the Frederick Sound. Of that number, 399 students attend classes in the district's 16 school buildings while 90 are in correspondence study.

Eleven of the schools are in logging or fishing camps with the rest in permanent locations. Most of the communities are accessible only by floatplane or boat.

District Superintendent Bob Weinstein said the programs are a bit more irregular than those offered in urban areas.

Camp teachers are augmented by three music teachers, two special education teachers, a language specialist, a kindergarten specialist, a librarian, a correspondence study teacher and a nurse. All regularly fly the logging camp circuit to provide their special kinds of expertise.

Most of the people living in the logging camps live in mobile homes because much of the area is federal forest land where no permanent dwellings are allowed.

The Fire Cove operation includes 20 families and about 20 workers assigned to bunkhouses during the height of the logging season.

The community has 24 mobile homes, four regular houses, a gym,

multi-grade school and playground. All sit on decking lashed to massive logs which float the entire village on the water.

Don and Biz Robbins are the husband-wife team who teach grades one through nine at the camp school. Their trailer is just a few yards from the gym and classroom. The camp playground, consisting of a few swings and a small merry-go-round, is in their front yard.

Robbins says the job requires some skills not needed at most schools — like fixing the furnace.

"But you've always got the community to fall back on if you've got a mechanical problem," he says. "Everyone is willing to pitch in."

Car cruises shop from outside in

Associated Press

AUSTIN — An auto parts shop official says his storefront has a special attraction for speeding vehicles — three have crashed through the front window within the past six months.

Moses Saldana, assistant manager of the southside Western Auto store, said the first time a car crashed through the front window, he thought it was a freak accident; the second he attributed to bad luck.

But after the same thing happened a third time Monday, Saldana said he's beginning to wonder if he's not living right.

"We must be doing something wrong," Saldana said after the latest accident sent a car careening through the front window of the store, causing \$2,500 to \$3,000 in damages.

Saldana said the latest accident, about 5 p.m., occurred as he drove his car through the parking lot. The man had a stereo speaker fell under the dash and lodged between the brake pedal and floorboard.

The driver, who police did not identify, was not injured, and were any store customers, Saldana said.

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