

Page 8, Daily Sitka Sentinel, Sitka, Alaska, Monday, November 18, 1985

# State Panel Upholds Comparable Worth

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — The "comparable worth" theory of equal pay for similar work got a boost Friday when the Alaska Human Rights Commission ruled that state-employed public health nurses should get the same wage as male physician's assistants.

The commission upheld a claim by about 75 female nurses, who work mostly in rural communities, that their jobs had similar requirements as those of male physician's assistants, who work mostly in state prisons and earn about \$1,000 more per year.

Either party may appeal the decision to Superior Court. Lawyers for the state attorney general's office, which represented state agencies employing the physician's assistants, could not be reached Friday for comment.

The case was first brought by 11 nurses in 1978 and was extended to 182 in 1979 and 1980. The case created the unusual situation of pitting staff lawyers of one state agency, the Human Rights Commission, against lawyers for another state agency, the attorney general's office.

The three human rights commissioners — James Chase, Verge and Jacqueline Landauer — are appointed by the governor and work separately from commission staff.

The nurses' claim was rejected last November by a hearing officer who said they had not proved their jobs were similar enough to those of the physician's assistants.

But the Human Rights Commission turned around the decision, saying it is the state's responsibility under civil rights laws to ensure that its workers are paid fairly.

"With this decision, our state becomes a forerunner in the difficult battle to eliminate sex-based wage discrimination," Chase said. "The commission claims its decision makes Alaska the first state to determine that state laws requiring equal pay for work of 'comparable character' fail under the comparable worth theory."

Women continue to be seriously underpaid in relation to men — particularly those women working in jobs traditionally viewed as "women's work."

Implementation of the comparable worth theory in Alaska will help eliminate this history of wage discrimination, Chase said. The commissioners also said the nurses are entitled to back pay, which has been estimated to be more than \$1 million with interest included.

"We're very pleased with the result," said Mark Erdreich, a Human Rights Commission staff lawyer who represented the nurses. "I've only given the case a quick review, but right now, I don't see anything we would want to appeal."

The state's argument that its wage rates were fair because they reflect the prevailing market wage was rejected by the commission. The state "has a special duty to ensure that there is an equitable relationship among the salaries paid state employees," the commission said.

"Historically entrenched undervaluing of women's work makes market rate reliance unacceptable," the commission said.

State government, Alaska's largest employer, said it would create a non-union method of evaluating job requirements and pay, it should "have the effect of eliminating sex-based wage discrimination in all sectors of the Alaskan economy," the commission said.

Recent court decisions elsewhere in the country have rejected comparable worth analysis as a federal requirement.

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# Fishermen ...

(Continued from Page 1) very changeable and we don't see any solid policy on it. "We have traditional fisheries and we have a big investment, humanly-wise and financially, and a great many people depend on fishing in the North Pacific. If there is a surplus, it should be made available for fishermen and particularly those who have fished traditionally in the area."

Yorocaza and other delegates expressed pleasure over an agreement on seafood industry development and trade signed by the state, the Japanese Fishery Cooperation Foundation and the Japan Fisheries Association last week.

A committee created by the agreement will work on the following projects: a feasibility study for the development of a mariculture and sea farming industry in Alaska; assistance in the development of a curriculum for basic vocational training of Alaskans in marine products processing, such as salmon; discussion of the needs of the Japanese fishing industry so that economic disruption and dislocation

should be minimized as U.S. participation develops in the fisheries of Alaska; and a discussion on the needs of Alaska regarding the orderly and timely development of the seafood industry. "It sets eyes on long-term relationships between the two countries."

"It's a very good agreement," said Yorocaza. "It sets eyes on long-term relationships between the two countries."

The overall objective of the Asia-Pacific trade and investment program is to assist each major Alaska industry in at least one area of international trade within an 18-month period.

"For the fisheries industry, this program will assist in attracting investment capital for the development of primary and secondary pollock processing facilities in Alaska, Lacharum and salmon-based products," says a statement from the governor's office on the trade program.

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# Archbishop's Envoy Returns to Lebanon

LONDON (AP) — Terry Waite, the Archbishop of Canterbury's special envoy, will return immediately to Lebanon to meet again with kidnappers of four American hostages, the church announced today after Waite met with U.S. administration officials.

Waite will fly to Beirut tonight, via Paris. There were no other details immediately available.

Waite had said he made progress in his meeting with the kidnappers holding American hostages in Lebanon, and urged the hostages' families to keep their hope.

But Waite, speaking to reporters at London's Heathrow Airport on Sunday night, warned that lives still were at risk.

"We have breathing room. I don't know how much, but we have some space," Waite told reporters.

He said he would meet with U.S. officials today to discuss his five-day mission to Beirut. He did not identify the officials.

He reported immediately to Archbishop Robert Runcie at Lambeth Palace, London, residence of the spiritual head of the Church of England.

Waite refused to say whether he had seen the hostages and also would not talk about their condition. "But don't read anything into it," he told reporters.

"I know what it is for families of those who have been taken hostage," he said. "It is very, very hard. I would like to say to them, 'Keep hope, because we are working hard to get them back to you.'"

Waite refused to say whether he had seen the hostages and also would not talk about their condition. "But don't read anything into it," he told reporters.

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# Emergency Calls

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# McDonald's Manager Murdered by Bandits

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — The manager of a fast-food restaurant who offered himself as a hostage for a pair of robbers, who made his first trip to Indiana, was shot and killed Monday, a detective said Monday.

Investigator said a preliminary autopsy performed Monday showed the manager, 39-year-old Deweyne P. Cooper, was shot twice behind the right ear with a .40-caliber gun.

"To me, it looks like an execution-style killing," said Lt. Jerry Cooper of Marion County sheriff's department.

Cooper, who is heading the investigation, said he believes Binis was no empathic about being of the freer that he might have spent the rest of his life in prison.

Binis, another investigator said, was shown on television and praised in newspapers, prompting several calls to the sheriff's department, said Sgt. Neil Sullivan, who added that police have also heard from three customers in McDonald's restaurant when the robbers entered early Sunday but who left before trouble started.

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# Peel Trial Scheduled

KETCHIKAN (AP) — John R. Peel's murder trial has been rescheduled to start on Dec. 21, despite defense requests for more time.

Peel, 25, of Bellingham, Wash., is accused of murdering eight people aboard the fishing vessel Invader in September, 1982, near Craig in southeast Alaska.

Defense attorney Phillip Paul Weidner and Brent McGehe had asked Schult to delay the trial by up to nine months as they sought more time to prepare their case and to raise more money with which to defend Peel.

Schult in late August dismissed the September 1982 indictment against Peel, blaming prosecutors for misleading grand jurors on circumstantial evidence that Peel might have learned the fishing vessel Invader to hide members of the McComb family and the four-man crew.

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