

**"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 —

### AFN Presidency

Congratulations are in order for two of our leaders. Sam Kito deserves a great deal of recognition for his performance as president of the Alaska Federation of Natives during the past two years. Byron Mallot is to be congratulated for his appointment to succeed Sam on February 1.

The job of president of the AFN is one of the most demanding and least rewarding positions a Native leader may assume during these times. As past presidents Roger Lang, Willie Hensley, Emil Notti and Don Wright will gladly confirm, an AFN president usually has to talk his successor into taking the job before the incumbent may leave and do other things.

Five years ago, the AFN president had to concern himself with a half dozen interest groups in advocating for a settlement of the land claims. Now, there are regional profit corporations, regional non-profit corporations, more than two hundred village corporations, a multitude of state and federal agencies and committees, educational organizations and entities—all demanding the attention of the AFN president to their particular problems.

Sam has done an outstanding job for us, for our corporations and villages and tribes, for our students, for our subsistence hunters, for all our varied peoples. His effectiveness in moving legislation through Juneau the past session with favorable programs for our people and with adequate budgets is a brilliant example of how Sam has been working hard to get the job done for us.

He has done equally well in Washington. Sam Kito cultivated relationships with key Members of Congress on important committees, and with decision-makers in both state and federal bureaucracies, which have proved very beneficial for Alaska Native interests.

Additionally, Sam has promoted an image publicly of the Alaska Native assuming his rightful place in the decision-making process. He has ably represented us to the press and public. And he has done this with little reward or acknowledgement of his efforts. Sam will tell you himself that an Alaska Native leader is "a guy who doesn't know whether he is being followed or being chased." Indeed, Sam has made great sacrifices in order to serve the Alaska Native people. He left the regional profit corporation activity, where the most of management talent has settled, in order to serve a term as an under-paid and continually harassed spokesman for Natives. We cannot imagine how Sam was able to talk Byron into assuming the job, but he must have had to talk fast.

Congratulations and thanks Sam Kito—for a job well done. We wish you well in your future endeavors.

We imagine that Byron Mallott is desperately trying to figure out how to grow a thicker skin before replacing Sam. At 33, Byron brings maturity, experience, administrative credibility, and strong leadership qualities to the presidency. A past Commissioner of Community and Regional Affairs in state government, he has comprehensive knowledge of the governmental process and how to influence it. He is chairman of the board of the Sealaska Corporation, owner of a boat charter business, a village corporation leader—and this depth in business activity will prove invaluable to his responsibilities in representing our profit corporate interests.

Byron enters the presidency at a time when social service needs are competing for attention with the requirements of the regional profit corporations. We believe that he will constructively resolve the controversy in a manner acceptable to most of us. We wish to commend him for accepting the new post.

## Joe Sunungetuk takes issue with Institute

December 9, 1976

Tundra Times  
Box 1287  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707

Dear Sirs:

This letter is concerning your December 1, 1976 cover story. At first I did not want to trouble myself in sitting down to write a belligerent note to a group which seem to be sold all the way to a federal and bureaucratic outside interest group—the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. But at the same time I have felt that someone needs to inform your readership about the fallacious nature of an Alaskan Native Arts Institute as it is now proposed.

First of all, who are the Alaskan Native Artists in the Native Arts institute committee? Laura Bergt? She shines in teaching Eskimo and Alaska Native girls in the appropriate swim suit walk while they suffer under hot lights and fur garments, strutting around for pleasing crowds who pay to see Native Cultures perform in a carnival atmosphere. Mary Jane Fate? She is the protégée of Ms. Bergt. Both are well to do and can afford to dabble in this and that and call it grass roots, Eskimo Power, Red Power or whatever. Tom Richards? Not an Alaskan Native artist unless he can stretch the meaning to include journalism.

Howard Rock? Well, ok, but his main thing again was journalism and Tundra Times social events. If he could have put his paintings into a real stiffly critiqued art show his paintings would maybe stay in. So the rest of the Alaskan Native artists today would probably still not feel rightly represented by this great man as far as fine arts are concerned.

The committee found "extensive support for the concept of setting up a statewide, accredited arts school for high school and college level students to learn traditional and modern Native art forms." That \$25,000 study was a waste of time and money. Where in the world can you find a study with 600 people for and 4, FOUR! against? When I look at that photograph of Howard Rock, Laura Bergt, Mary Jane Fate, and Tom Richards with the caption, "Editors Brainchild", they look like they just finished pulling the wool over Alaskan Native artists' eyes!

And now they are saying "arts institute funds disappear" as they rub forefingers sideways at the States Council on the Arts (which at least has some practicing artists in its folds). Sue Greene is right when she states that this may simply be a problem of communications. Andy Hope and I and a few other Alaskan Artists, poets, writers and Native studies programmers have held at least three conferences and planning sessions to seek an outlet for voice from Alaskan Native artists and their non-Native friends. Laura Bergt was invited to at least two of them. Did she come around to

rap with Alaskan Native artists while they struggle to find a common and uniting spiritual force based on Inupiaq and Athapaskan and Tlingit and Aleut practitioners in dance, music, oral literature, poetry, sculpture, graphics and other Alaskan Native fields of study? I was there; the State Council on the Arts was there; many Alaskan Native artists were there. Frank Ferguson, Tom Richards, Mary Jane Fate, Laura Bergt and Indian Arts and Crafts Board were not there!

A little over a month ago we incorporated into a Native Arts Foundation at Anchorage. We call ourselves The Raven's Inc. We are currently planning a Native Arts Journal to be called The Raven's Bones. We will strive to be a true reflection of needs and opinions of Alaskan Native artists. We will not play politics with the sacred and spiritually infused nature of Alaskan Native arts. We will also set up a Summer Native Arts Institute to be held in Sitka next summer.

To get these things going we have had to fight hard to recognize and trusted by present day Alaskan establishments. The Sitka School District does not like Native stuff in it except only as a token program. The BIA at Mt. Edgecumbe is wary of forceful and verbose Native artists. Sheldon Jackson College likes the pomp and ceremony in shaking hands with alumni Native leaders but is strapped for earnest monies or physical space to allow growth for Native Studies. U of A and AMU like to present "Festivals of Native Arts" but cannot seem to instill a viable Native Studies. And so goes the list—most of Alaska's educational institutions need a lot of pressuring to get them to work with Alaskan Native educators. If the Native Arts Institute is successful in setting up a Native Arts in the manner which is expressed in their preliminary study, all of these labors of pressuring these

schools will go to naught. The schools then simply can say "Go away—you have your own school. With your own Board of Directors: Fate, Bergt, Richard and whomever else is the tools of Indian Arts and Crafts Board!"

I hate to put all this down this way. Personally, I do not have a grudge against any of these non-artists. But I feel it must be said and must be heard by all Alaskans. I know this is not going to be front page neither. But—what the heck—they can get in touch with me % SJC Box 479, Sitka, Alaska 99835 until February 1977 when I expect to move to Anchorage. All that I say is from my heart which has witnessed so many God-awful things happening in the name of Alaska Native Art.

Sincerely yours;

Joseph Senungetuk

## Bethel wants ideas for children's show

December 6, 1976

Dear Editor

There are a few of us here in Bethel who are working on putting together a weekly half hour radio show for children to be aired Saturday mornings at 9:00 a.m. There is a lack of local programming for children here on both radio and television so we would like to take advantage of the accessibility of KYUK to provide some entertainment for kids and to establish a means by which interested children and adults can participate in such programming.

To help get the ball rolling with a little more direction, we are asking you to send us ideas for what you would like to

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## Book Review

by Wally Olson

ALASKA REGIONAL PROFILES - published by the University of Alaska, Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center for State of Alaska, Office of the Governor and Joint-Federal Land Use Planning Commission for Alaska

Through the Office of the Governor, the State of Alaska is sending out regional profile studies of all areas of Alaska. These big beautiful books take each geographical area of the State and look at it in terms of the natural environment (climate, land features, geology, water, plants and animals) and the man-made environment (people, history, economy, government, land use, services).

The Division of Planning and Research that distributes the books wants them to be used by local people to plan for the future. By studying the reports and using local information and knowledge of the land, village corporations can see where they are in the big picture of the region.

For high school students, and just about anyone interested in Alaska, these books are a goldmine of information, and just a lot of fun reading and looking at the pictures. If your village has not received a copy of your regional profile yet, you might want to check to make sure you get one. If they are at the local school, village people can go there and look them over.

The writers and researchers wanted to get in just about everything about each region, so if you have questions on anything from the weather to the scientific names for local birds and fish - here is where you can find it.

Wally Olson  
Juneau-Douglas Community College