

Native Affairs Officer Slot for Borbridge

John Borbridge Jr., long active in matters concerning Natives in Alaska, has been appointed to fill the newly-created position of Native

Affairs Officer with the Alaska Native Health Area under the program of the U.S. Public Health Service in the state.

Although similar in nature to work of the Division of Indian Health Tribal Affairs Officer in the South 48, the Alaskan post is unique.

Here instead of dealing with one tribe in a reservation situation, the appointee will work with members of several ethnic groups and many differing communities spread over a wide area.

Borbridge will work with Dr. Holman R. Wheritt, Director, Alaskan Native Health Area Office, acting as liaison to village councils and Native organizations.

Because villages are considered by PHS as dominant factors in determining the type and location of needed health services and



John Borbridge, Jr.

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their success, Borbridge will seek to involve Native leaders as advisors in information of new health program changes.

He will stay long enough among village people to interpret PHS plans and the reasons underlying them as well as learning the people's views both as to support and objections.

In his field studies, Borbridge will help to define social and cultural anthropological patterns, such as Native medicine beliefs, attitudes, opinions and practices which have a bearing on their reaction to proposed health programs.

The field studies will also enable Borbridge to recommend methods of working more effectively among the Native people by taking into account behavior which they consider normal. Results, it is expected, will be more felicitous for all concerned.

Borbridge comes to Anchorage from Juneau, his birthplace, where he has

taught high school for the past six years.

He did his undergraduate work at Sheldon Jackson Junior College in Sitka, North East Missouri Teachers' College and the University of Michigan from which he received his bachelor of arts degree.

His graduate work was completed at the University of Washington.

The new officer's first teaching assignment was at his alma mater in Sitka in both the high school, now discontinued, and the junior college.

This experience, Borbridge believes, is particularly helpful to his new job in that he had the opportunity to meet with and know students from many different cultural groups and geographical areas in Alaska.

He has held various offices in the Alaska Native Brotherhood in southeastern Alaska. He is presently a member of the Board of Directors of the recently-

organized Alaska Federation of Natives and is President of the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska.

These experiences too, Borbridge feels, are important background for his new assignment. He will continue to hold the offices as long as they "contribute to the purposes of his job."

Borbridge's own ancestry blends robust Scandinavian blood with stalwart Tlingit. He is descended from the frog clan and his indian name of Took-Sah-Aut refers to the coho, a subdivision of the clan.

His wife Emma Christine Nicolet is Eskimo and Swiss. She was born in Bethel but her mother came from the village of Quinhagak, pronounced "queen-hock."

The couple has four children, Charles, 8, John Edward, 12, Linda, 14, and Sandra, 16. The family is now residing in Anchorage.