

"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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Food Discrimination?

The Natives of Alaska, especially the Eskimos, have been undergoing through some difficult obstacles lately. One of them, of course, was the feverish effort by the major oil companies, and some private individuals, to block the formation of Arctic Slope borough. The Arctic Eskimos managed to win a great victory over this challenge this week when the State Supreme Court Justice Roger Connors refused the oil companies' petition for a stay on certification of the North Slope borough election held last week.

And now there is another challenge afoot and this one hits one of the main food sources of the Eskimos — muktuk of the great bowhead whale. Ken Torgerson of the State Division of Environmental Health, said the muktuk is "inherently unsafe." In declaring that it was so, he also said things like this:

"It's stripped (the meat) out on the beach, where there is not a great deal of sanitation or care. Eskimos will eat a seal after deliberately letting it bloat."

This is another:

"The way the food is handled, throwing fish or game on the ground where dogs can urinate on it or in the neighborhood of dog feces."

These are indeed slanderous statements. They can even turn the stomachs of the Eskimos. Coming out of the mouth of a person we should respect, we now find it to feel a twinge of loathing attitude. We can't help this one because we feel degradingly insulted. The man is obviously not the right person to evaluate the worth of Native foods. He does not have the dignity to work with this assignment. He is obviously biased.

Muktuk of the bowhead whale is harvested out on Chukchi Ocean ice — not on the ground. It is then stored in underground meat caches fashioned generations and generations ago. The Eskimos have found this to be the best way to keep the muktuk and meat — in the permafrost temperatures so the contents are frozen even in the summer.

As the editor of this newspaper who grew up in the village of Point Hope, a whaling community, I still have to see any Eskimo who deliberately bloated a seal before eating it. That the Eskimos do so, is the most degrading statement. Also, I have never seen a dog urinate on any kind of food he craves for food — and any kind of food was, and is, his lifeline.

Perhaps Alaska Native foods should certainly be evaluated for their worth to humans but we do not see it the way it is being done by Ken Torgerson. We need to be informed properly and with dignity. We don't need insults along with the work.

Native Myths of Alaska

The Poetry Society of Alaska has announced it will sponsor a contest on the subject of Native Myths of Alaska. All authentic myths of Indian (including Athabaskan), Aleut, and Eskimo heritage are open to interpretation, in any form or style.

In judging, emphasis will be placed on authenticity as well as poetic form.

All residents of Alaska and members of the Poetry Society of Alaska everywhere are eligible.

Contestants are to submit one poem each, not to exceed 100 lines. They are to send one original and two copies. The

title of the poem and the writer's name and address are to be included in a closed envelope.

The writer's name is not to appear on the poem itself, only the title. Submission fee, for handling expenses, is one dollar. Manuscripts will not be returned.

Entries must be received by August 15. The winners will be announced at the World Poetry Day Festival in Juneau October 14 - 15. Judges are to be announced.

All entries, with submission fee, are to be sent to: Mrs. Billie Perkins, Contest Chairman, Box 1661, Juneau.

Jane Pender Reviews Events

By JANE PENDER

KOTZEBUE — When I returned home after three weeks Outside, I learned I had been the center of a controversy.

As nearly as I can reconstruct, our mayor did an interview which was published in the ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS, later in the KOTZEBUE NEWS. Some local people disagreed with his viewpoints and wrote letters to the editor of the OTZ NEWS, which were published. (These were bynalfide letters, with signa-

tures, are on file, and the editor had nothing to do with them except receive and publish them.)

At the same time, since I did agree with the mayor's evaluation of the atmosphere of our town: that it was tense and uneasy, and that the white population was defensive, I wrote a column which speculated on why that was. Somewhere along the way, TUNDRA TIMES got a few words in, and finally, the mayor whipped out a strongly worded protest about the col-

umn which was printed in the ANCHORAGE NEWS and reprinted in KOTZEBUE NEWS.

I have no intention of reopening the issues, which are by now pretty well larded with assertions pretty well larded with assertions and rhetoric. The mayor was an angry man, and when I read the column which had stimulated so much overkill, I could understand why. I was guilty (though accidentally) of a gross misrepresentation which singled out the mayor, and the agency

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Letters from Here and There

TT Agitates Racial Tension Says Writer

INUPIAK DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, INC.

15 June 1972

Mr. Howard Rock
Editor: Tundra Times
Box 1287
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707

Dear Sir:

Since you invited comments regarding the Kotzebue situation mentioned in Tundra Times June 7 issue, here are some.

According to the article written by Jane Pender and the subsequent reply by Bobby Schaeffer regarding interracial relations in Kotzebue, it would seem that racial tensions are on the rise there. Both the article and the reply were pretty vague in several areas but from all appearances the argument seems to be more on a personal level involving two people rather than full-scale race warfare as your glaring headlines suggest. From personal experience in the area and knowledge of the parties involved I have seen nothing to indicate that "racism is stirring in Kotzebue."

Your reporter quotes a "bush traveler" who says that at least "one white businessman is carrying a gun in his car." You qualify this particular quote as second-hand yet you include it in the article anyway. The fact is that many people in Kotzebue as well as many parts of rural

Alaska, white and Eskimo alike, have carried guns in their cars for years for hunting purposes only. Certainly Miss Morgan knows this and she should not have included it to substantiate her allegation that trouble exists in Kotzebue.

The format of the Tundra Times has in the past been marked by attempts to agitate racial relations in bush areas but this kind of dangerous sensationalism can do nothing but create tensions where none existed before. I trust that despite this issue the great majority of Kotzebueites will continue to live harmoniously.

In the future it would be wise to relegate a personal argument of this nature to a minor level where it belongs; stop implying that armed warfare is imminent in a peaceful town.

Sincerely yours,
Thomas Trainor

Natives Involved, Charges of Prejudice Begin

Box 156
White Pine, Mich. 44971
June 15, 1972

Gentlemen:

I have just read the two articles by Jane Pender and Bob Schaeffer. I went to school with Bob and know his relationships with whites was very good. I am proud and pleased to learn he is Mayor of Kotzebue. I am pleasantly surprised because how many Eskimo mayors are there? Hooray and loads of luck for Bob. It is unusual for Natives to get so involved with politics. I am glad we are finally taking a hand with our destinies.

Isn't it strange that when the Whites were in power there were no sad and trembling sighs of racism heard in the newspapers? Now that we are getting involved and naturally our first commitment is to our people, we are accused of prejudice! We have improved and advanced, I feel, more quickly and more meaningfully because our own people are working for us and understand our true needs.

Bob and I and others like us owe a lot to Whites and will always be grateful. The White people who truly understand and want to help are the first to encourage self government and independence. They want us to get in the driver's seat. Natives who love their people can combine their cultures and education to serve Alaskans and I feel are better suited to govern we can give our people pride in being themselves and have their own to govern them, someone who understands and loves them. We

are not White. We are Alaskan Natives who should take pride in our cultures and preserve them. It is important for all people to be proud of their race and to respect all other races. We can all work together for improvements.

Let's throw our all the stupid, whimpering about prejudice and get to important matters.

Barbara Demoski Paquette
Athabaskan Indian

Eskimo Olympics Seeks Queens

The Tundra Times is once again looking for a queen. On July 27, 28, and 29 the 1972 Eskimo Olympics will be held in Fairbanks. During the week's festivities, a new Miss Eskimo Olympics Queen will be chosen to reign over the traditional games of strength and endurance and Native dancing.

The queen must be 17 to 21 years of age, single, and at least one-quarter Alaskan Native. The contestants will be competing in Native costumes and will be judged on knowledge of their local area and culture, as well as on beauty, poise, and personality.

Any village, Native association, regional corporation, or Native organization may sponsor a contestant. Entrants must provide their own transportation to and from Fairbanks, but housing and meals will be provided and paid for by the Eskimo Olympics.

Contestants will be met at the airport and taken to the University of Alaska where they will be carefully chaperoned by the queen committee.

Arriving on July 24, the contestants will take part in a program of modeling, speech lessons, hair grooming, and luncheons prior to the judging.

The queen will be awarded a scholarship, prizes, and a trip to Lancaster, California to attend the Antelope Valley Festival and Fair.

Villages and Native organizations are urged to enter a contestant as soon as possible. Complete rules and an application blank will be sent on request. For further information, write:

Chairman
Eskimo Olympics
Queen Committee
P.O. Box 1287
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

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