



TWO WOMEN OF CHEVAK — Mrs. Mary Pongayak, above, and Mrs. Mary Kokrak, below, appear to be caught up in the spirit of the upcoming holiday season. The two women are from the village of Chevak, located on the Aphrewn River in southwestern Alaska. The region is noted for the production of Native craft, such as the basket which Mrs. Pongayak is making. Mrs. Kokrak, in the photograph below, seems to be giving greetings of the season to the photographer. However, she also may be telling him how she feels about her life in Chevak.

-- Photo by BUD SMITH



Project To Promote Better Understanding

By MARILYN RICHARDS

Over one hundred high school and college students from all over the state were in Fairbanks last week for the three day educational seminar, "Statewide Students Cross-Cultural Conference".

Both native and non-native students discussed their leadership and relationship with their schools, and how to make their curriculum more relevant. The conference was the first of its kind.

The Alaska Educational Program for Intercultural Communication, AEPIC, an expansion of the Center for Northern Education Research housed at the University of Alaska, sponsored the seminar which started Wednesday and ended Saturday. Head of AEPIC is Frank Berry and Kay Hinkley is its education specialist.

Opening the conference was Dr. Fritz George Peters, a human relations consultant with the Institute of Reality Therapy in Los Angeles. Peters, who likes to be known as "Mr. Reality Therapy," spoke Wednesday night on "Effective Student Leadership or Everybody Can Be a Leader."

Peters said he "knows reality therapy because I suffered pain." He said the main reason for student turmoil on campuses was "role not goal."

The older generation Peters explained, was after "goal not role." They had no room for excuses, they set a goal and stuck to it, but many failed.

Reality therapy, Peters said, "is a posture toward life in terms to learn how to grapple with life successfully while learning to be someone and not to interfere with anyone." Reality therapy "is learning to love, learning to be a human being and to develop a sense of worth," he added. Peters said schools need to teach the students to learn how to love.

The goals students set for themselves should be relevant, involving, and would enable the students to do some thinking, Peters said.

A student should evaluate, his life, make a decision and go on to the next challenge without someone there to direct him. A limit should be set so the student wouldn't damage himself or others or property, said Peters. If he doesn't reach his goal, he doesn't fail, he sets another.

Schools, Peters continued, should be a place that reinforces self identity, and a place to generate responsibility. At a classroom meeting, students should talk with each other about issues, generate trust and learn how to be responsible, he said.

Through talking and listening, a trust is built up and then the student can realize that other people around him are resources and they will value him as a human being, Peters said.

Schools should create a situation where a student can go and get credit for what he does and not get downgrading. "Punishment defeats itself. Schools should create an atmosphere to achieve," he said.

Schools should take a team approach. The teachers listening to the students, the principal listening to the teachers, and through seminars and classroom meetings, Peters said.

Peters told the students that while at the conference they should think about changing, sharing ideas and being friendly. "Think, as an Eskimo or Indian, how can I get a curriculum that applies to me."

Peters said, before in school, minorities denied their ancestors and who they were to get through the system. Peters, a black, said when he was in school it "was a waste of time to be black." The school system should reflect who the students are, he said. "You are

unique to yourself — a history, a culture and a thought process."

When the students first registered, they were divided into two groups for the rest of the conference. The first group was their regional group. The second group was color coded by name tags. This group mixed the students from different places, age groups and schools.

These two groups met frequently and discussed what they had learned and what aims they might have. They evaluated their progress and problems daily.

Other featured speakers for the seminar included Richard Frank and Bob Jenks, of Doyon Limited on the land claims act, Gil Lucero, a Juneau probation officer on drug abuse, Chuck Fields of the University on student services, and Rod Boutin and Mike Pavich on students rights.

Bob Eagen, Alice Cook, and Phil Gilbert spoke on relevant education. Al Hill, Karen Eddy, Bob Sam and Bob Gregory spoke on statewide student organizations.

Also attending were Libby Benjamin of the University's Financial Aids office, Tom Jones of University's Student Orientation Services, and Laura Walker, an educational specialist with the Alaska Federation of Natives.

The students toured the campus and KUAC, the University's radio and educational television station. A banquet was held Friday night. Mr. and Mrs. Amouak, formerly of Barrow, John and Theresa Pongayak, and the U of A dance class entertained after dinner with native dance demonstrations.

Maggie Andrews, a 19 year old senior from St. Mary's High School said the conference "was worthwhile but I expected more to do with school business. As a whole, it was fun and a good experience."

It was the first time Maggie had been out of St. Mary's and she also got to travel through Anchorage. She is the president of the town's Teen Club. St. Mary's is a private Catholic school with grades 7 through 12.

The most important thing Maggie says she learned was "the values of our school, and I was made more aware of what's going on now with my teachers, school and classmates."

Maggie said she has heard of talk of drugs in St. Mary's though she has never seen any but said drinking was a problem with the students. She said race was not a problem at St. Mary's.

"We accept everybody. We have some students from Pt. Barrow, Nelson Island, Diomed and the Bethel area."

If she plans to attend college after graduation, she is thinking about majoring in sociology at Alaska Methodist University. She chose AMU because it is smaller than the other schools in the state. Maggie is the daughter of Pete and Margaret Andrews. There are two older brothers and one younger sister in her family.

Virginia Oktoyak is a 19 year old sophomore at Mt. Edgecumbe, a BIA boarding school near Sitka. She is from Emmonak and the oldest daughter of Bernard and Theresa Oktoyak. There are six younger sisters and three younger brothers in her family.

Virginia said the most important thing she learned from the conference was "how to communicate." Both Maggie and Virginia were impressed with meeting all the people and the various native leaders. They did not understand the land claims before and now they say they do. Both had never heard of Doyon before.

Virginia said that she learned of different racial problems at different schools. Her solution would

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