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Tlingit playwright and performing artist Diane E. Benson recently appeared in "Spirit of Woman" at Out North Theater in Anchorage. The play, written by Benson, addresses Alaska Native stereotypes and realities.

Photo by Patty Culleney

Lawmakers set for rough session

by TundraTIMES staff

Like the tense pre-snap rippling along a football scrimmage line, there were some last minute movements before the Alaska Legislature opened this week.

Democratic Sen. Dave Donley filled out a new voter registration card and became a Republican. Rep. Carl Moses of Unalaska remained a Republican, but declined to rejoin the conservative coalition of House Speaker Gail Phillips.

Just looking at the way the numbers stack up after last fall's elections, it seems unlikely that these adjustments will affect the outcome of play during this year's session. But, like any match-up between long-time rivals, the very intensity and rigor of the game can sometimes produce new openings and turn-

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RurAL CAP to host statewide meeting on subsistence

In order to address Alaska Native concerns about proposed changes to federal legislation, the Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP, Inc.) will coordinate a statewide meeting on subsistence in Anchorage, Feb. 15-17.

"Our Board members represent Alaska Native villages, and they are very concerned about amendments being proposed to the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act by Senator (Ted)

Stevens," Jeanine Kennedy, RurAL CAP's executive director said. "They feel that the amendments as proposed could weaken legal protection of subsistence hunting and fishing in rural Alaska.

"RurAL CAP has worked for over 30 years with Alaska Native villages," said Kennedy, adding that villagers rely on subsistence gathering activities to bolster local economies. "The Board feels that village people will need adequate time to learn what specific amendments will be proposed and why, and then they should have time to determine if they can reach a statewide consensus for appropriate action."

The meeting, called the "Subsistence Roundtable," will be held at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel. The roundtable format will allow a more detailed discussion of subsistence issues than the busy agendas of other statewide conferences allowed in 1996, according to Kennedy. The meeting agenda contains presentations from state and federal representatives as well as Alaska Native leaders.

"Villagers who continue to depend upon hunting and fishing for physical, economic and cultural survival need to be able to receive complete information, ask questions and discuss options for protect-

ing their way of life," said Kennedy. "We expect several hundred people to attend the roundtable."

Vernita Herdman will serve as conference coordinator for RurAL CAP. Invitations have been sent to several hundred Native organizations, including village and IRA councils, ANCSA corporations and natural resource associations. Interested person can contact Herdman in Anchorage by calling 279-2511. People living outside Anchorage may also call Herdman at 1-800-478-6343. Those with Internet access may address e-mail to Herdman at vernitah@ruralcap.com.

Kake woman hired by SJC for external relations post

Sheldon Jackson College announces that the position of Coordinator of External Relations has been filled by Della M. Cheney, who will begin her work in the Office of the President on Jan. 20.

Cheney comes to Sitka from Seward, where she has been serving as tribal administrator for Qutekca Native Tribe. She received her bachelor's degree in sociology at the University of Hawaii in Hilo, but she is no stranger to Sitka or Sheldon Jackson.

Born and raised in Kake, Alaska, both of Cheney's parents, Mona Frank Jackson and Thomas L. Jackson Sr. graduated from Sheldon Jackson High School. Cheney at-

tended classes at Sheldon Jackson in the Teach Aid programs during the early years of the junior college.

Cheney worked for 10 years in the Office of the Governor, working her way up to the executive secretary for the Office of Management and Budget. She has also worked for the City of Kake, for Kake public schools and helped run the family grocery store before leaving in 1981.

"I am delighted that Mrs. Cheney has agreed to come work with me as I prepare my administration to embrace the challenges ahead of us," said Dr. Kenneth M. Cameron, president of Sheldon Jackson

College. "The skills and talents she brings to this position will help us in our efforts to reunite SJC with all its former students, as we seek to improve our current offerings for current and future students."

Cheney's husband, William, is a retired fishery biologist for the State of Alaska. He is presently self-employed as a consultant for aquacultures and fish hatcheries. They have two daughters: Gail, who graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is working at Kake Tribal Corporation, and Liz, who is attending the Institute of American Indian Arts in Sante Fe, New Mexico.

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