



Tyonek fisherman Ed Deck hauls in his net, as he assists other residents in fishing for the people of Prince William Sound.

Tyonek helps feed villages

by **Bernadine F. Shade**
for the *Tundra Times*

TYONEK — The disastrous oil spill in the Prince William Sound and its devastation to traditional ways of life for the people in the villages of Tatitlek, Chenega Bay, Port Graham, and English Bay have left an emptiness and uncertainty for the residents' immediate future.

The Native residents of Tyonek, concerned about the cultural needs of those affected by the spill, have pledged to donate subsistence salmon.

Tyonek, a small Athabaskan village

of 300 on the west side of Cook Inlet, is one of the first of the three Native villages in Alaska to donate part of their subsistence salmon harvest.

It all started when Coordinator Father Simeon Oskolkoff, a Russian Orthodox priest well known to the Anchorage area for more than 20 years, was requested by Sen. Mike Szyman-ski, D-Anchorage, to go to Chenega Bay and conduct a group counseling session for the village people.

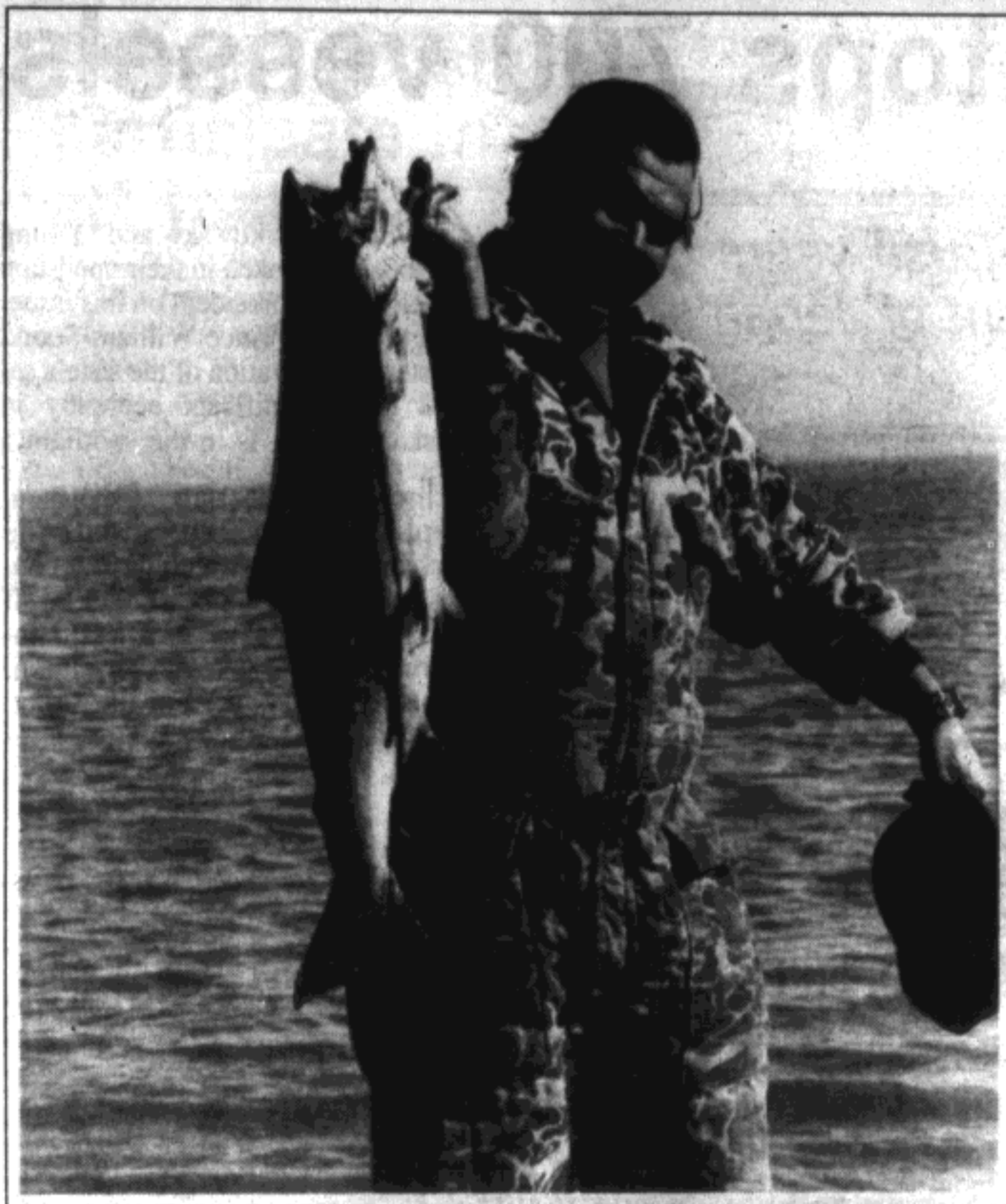
"I requested everybody to speak out and vent their feelings of sorrow, grief, anger on this senseless

catastrophic oil spill," Oskolkoff said.

Upon his return to Anchorage, he wrote a report on the conditions in Chenega Bay. The report proposed measures to be initiated immediately for the people of Chenega Bay. This report was then forwarded to a temporary mental health office in Valdez, and action was taken by Charles Rampage, alternate disaster coordinator officer for the State of Alaska.

Rampage corresponded with one of Exxon's public relations officers, Dutch Holland, and Holland contacted

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Oskolkoff and asked if he would be willing to coordinate the donating pledges from Tyonek.

Oskolkoff contacted long-time friend, Emil McCord, president of the Tyonek Village Council, and told him about the conditions of the people of Chenega Bay. Without hesitation the Native people of Tyonek were willing to donate subsistence salmon to those four communities in need.

"We will sacrifice whatever it takes to help our Native people of those villages who cannot utilize their subsistence way of life," McCord said. "We have agreed to send 600 or more fresh king salmon and other traditional Native foods, but as long as there's a need we will continue to send them what is needed."

McCord also stated that the village of Tyonek is not worried about the effects on their subsistence harvest for the village.

Tyonek's Native people subsistence setnet fish three days a week. They started May 15 and will continue through mid-June. So far, about 200 king salmon have been sent to Tatitlek

and Port Graham.

Tyonek residents hope to give at least 400 kings to English Bay and Port Graham, 120 kings to Chenega Bay, and 80 kings to Tatitlek. The king salmon are ranging from 40-50 pounds.

However, all the people of Tyonek are willing to help, McCord says. Even the elderly people are helping the younger generation.

Art Standifer and Harry Bartels, both subsistence fisherman in Tyonek, have been doing outstanding jobs hauling the king salmon to the airport, McCord said.

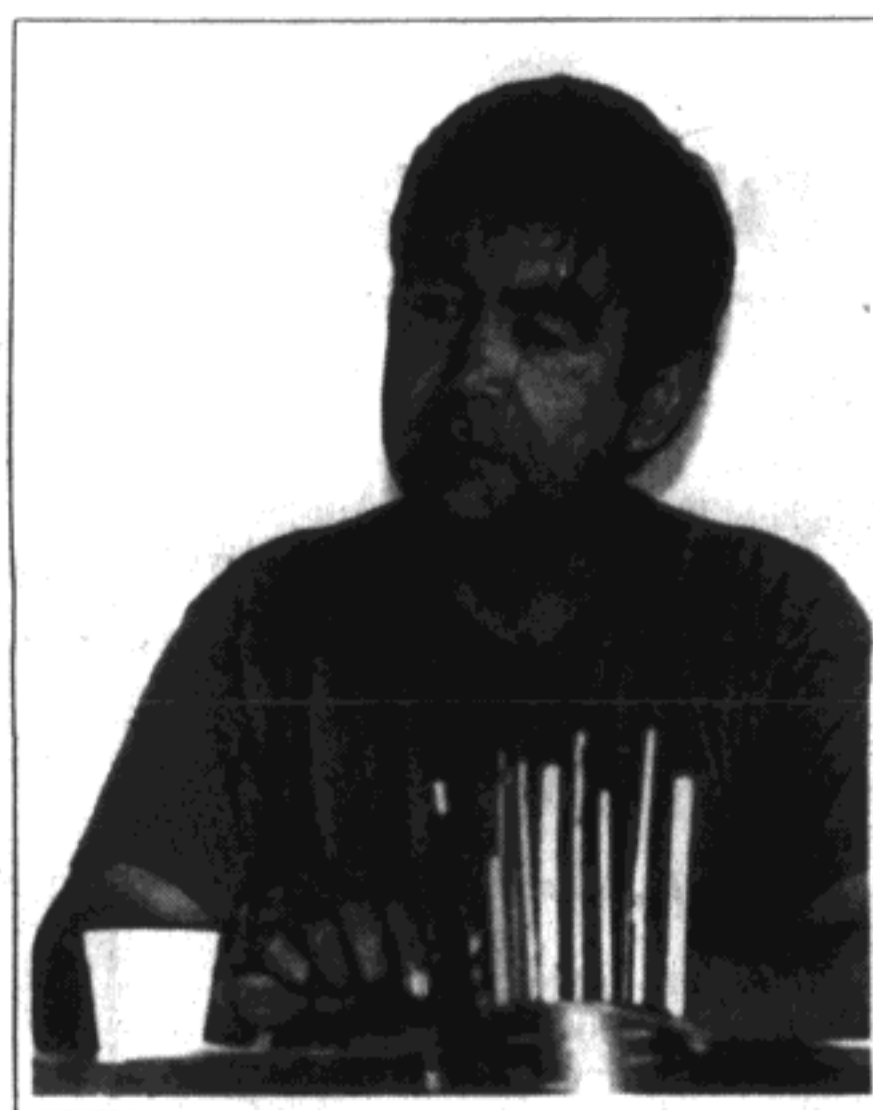
McCord says they should be recognized for their 12 to 14 hours a day of long hard work.

"The Native people's efforts are outstanding in the village of Tyonek," McCord said.

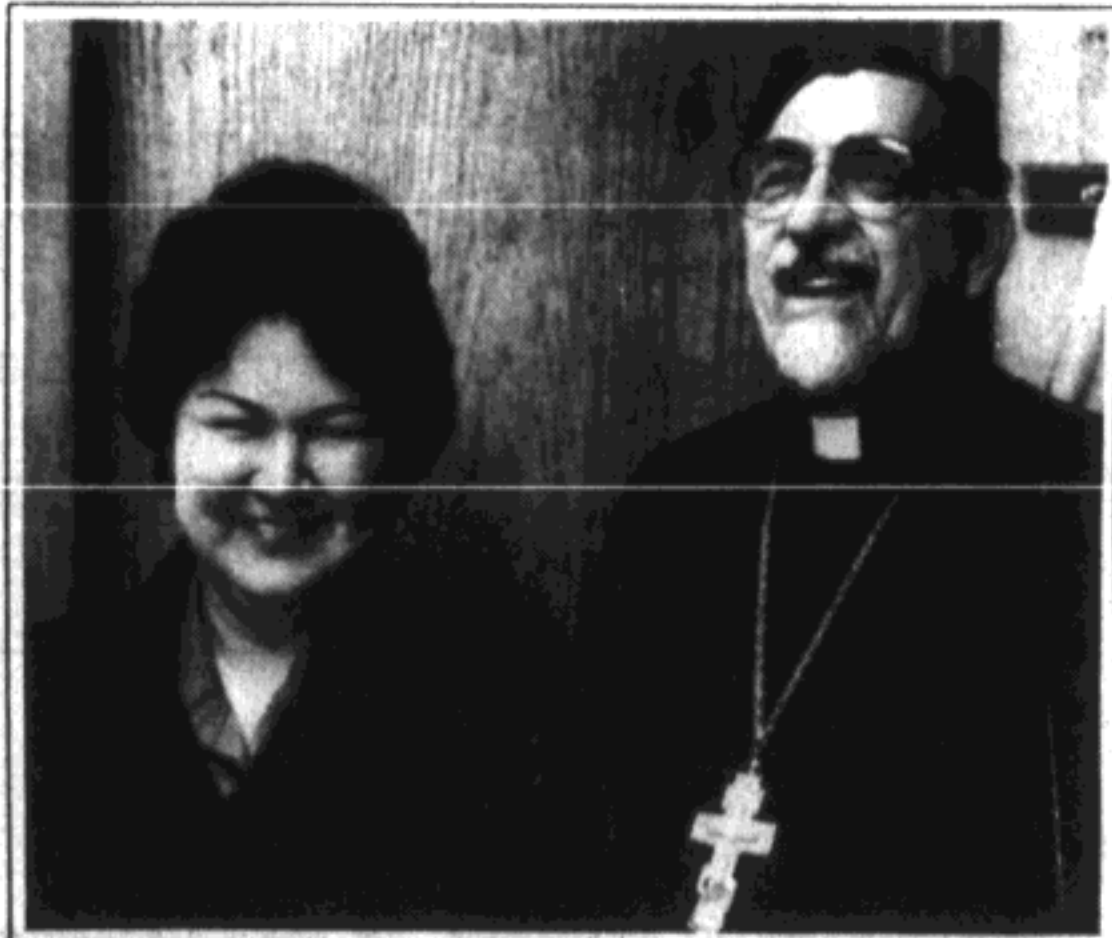
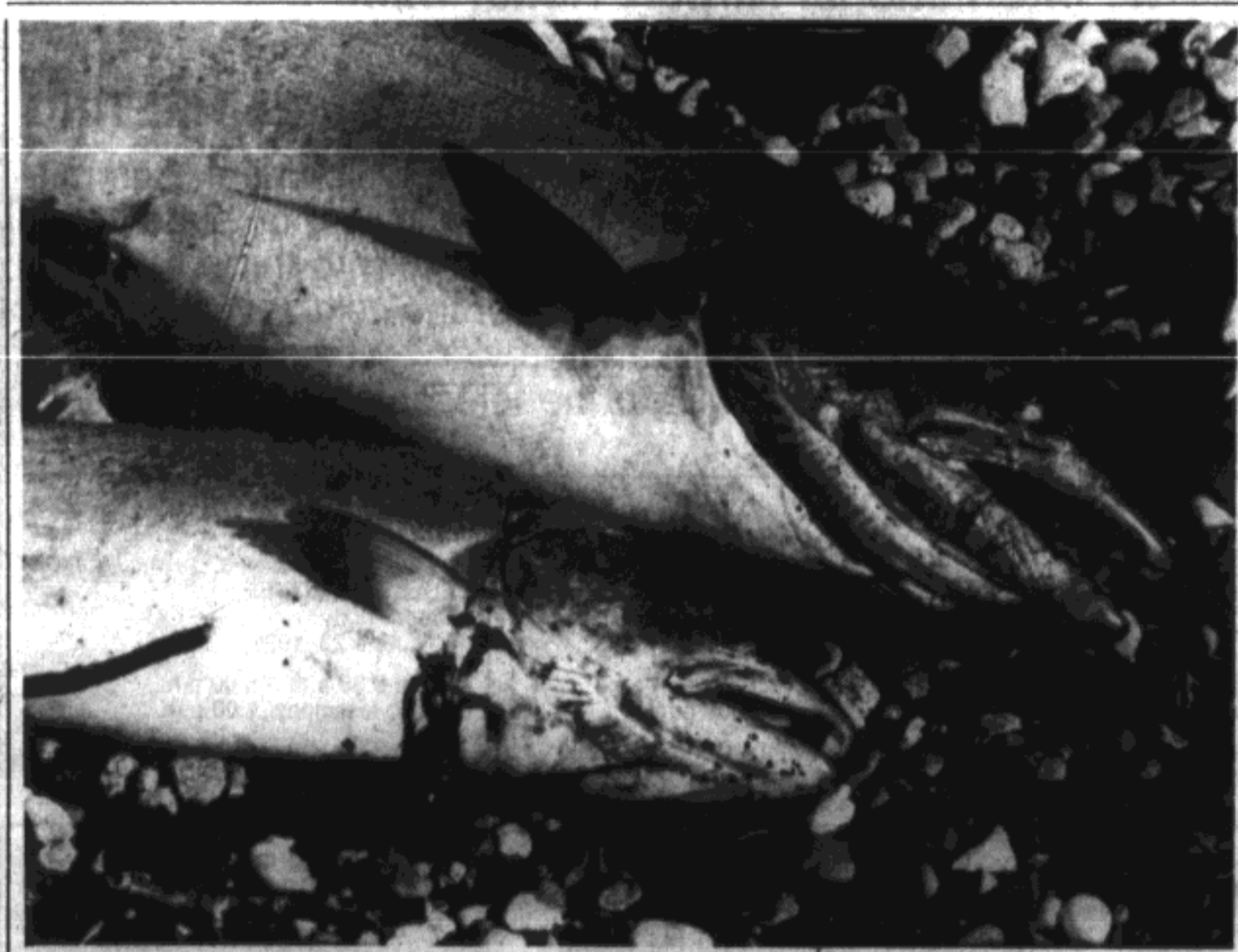
Ketchum Air has a contract with Exxon to fly out the salmon to the villages on the Prince William Sound areas.

"We know if we were in the same situation, the other villages would help us out.

"That's what being Native is all about," McCord said.



photos by Barbara Crane



Tyonek fisherman Ed Deck, top, shows off one of his king salmon. Other photos include, moving clockwise, Emil McCord, village council president; Father Simeon and Lubov Oskolkoff; two of the 600 king salmon headed to villages in Prince William Sound; and Les Standifer, 9, left, and Randy Standifer, 12, at their family's fish camp, south of Tyonek.