

Wants to move AFN convention to Barrow

Dear Editor:

I have a proposal to make to the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), the community of Barrow, the Arctic Slope Native Association, the Northwest Alaska Native Association, the non-profit organizations associated with Arctic Slope Native Corp. and NANA Corp., and all people concerned about our subsistence rights being lost. I realize that the theme of the 1977 AFN convention is on subsistence but we should view this as only the beginning of a long fight.

All of the Native associations are finding it necessary to regroup and reunite because of the subsistence issue. The most pressing infringement of the Native culture has been the U.S. government not objecting to a whale ban. If the whale ban becomes a reality, then the northern people have lost one of their more valuable subsistence staples. We as Alaskans can show support to continue the taking of whales for subsistence by meeting in Barrow next spring as a unified group of Native peoples.

The AFN has been the spokesman for the unified front so I am asking the AFN to hold a convention at Barrow next spring timed around a whaling festival. I would like to interject that I have never been at a whaling feast but have been told that I am really missing something. Howard Rock is one in my mind that has experienced many, and I am sure he would tell me that not only am I missing something but that I am crazy not to have attended a whaling feast.

I may be putting the City of Barrow on the spot but in listening to the testimony of Native leaders the crews will plan on hunting as usual this spring. If this is the case then it is paramount that we be there to give Barrow a show of support. We know that when a whale is caught, the whale is divided amongst the community. Knowing how Alaskans share their catch, I am sure the Barrow community or crews would have no objection to sharing with the entire Alaskan community. In light of events that have happened in Barrow the past year, people have a distorted view of life in Barrow. This would be a good time for Barrow to clear misunderstandings about their hometown by being hosts for the convention.

AFN along with the Native associations would sponsor the week event (culminating of course with the Tundra Times banquet). Early in the week, seminars and workshops would be held under the direction of the non-profit associations. Late in the week would be the annual convention with its usual business plus summaries of the workshops presented at this time. Of course speeches would also be given.

Leaders of all types would be invited. Jimmy Carter, the Department of Interior, members of the International Whaling Commission, Governor Hammond, members of Congress, conservation groups, ADF&G people, Alaskan leaders of subsistence (our elders), would all be invited to share the conference and the good food. The elders would be there to share their stories of subsistence living to show other people that our lifestyle is towards subsistence in one degree or another. Prior to the convention, various people would submit articles to the Tundra Times on subsistence weeks before. This would prepare everyone and generate interest for the convention.

Oh how I wish this convention would be held because it would help to document our fight for subsistence rights and to show the whaling crews that we are all behind them. To make the hunt legal a special permit to hunt whale should be sought. There are too many variables to make this spring convention a reality but with the help of the people, our leaders can set the initiative by introducing the idea at the November '77 AFN convention.

Sincerely,
Sam Towarak

P.S. Can a resolution be introduced at the 1977 AFN convention showing support of the striking Wien pilots? They are Alaskans too.

A letter to the United Nations

The Honorable Andrew Young
U.S. Ambassador to
The United Nations
United Nations Building
New York, New York 10017

Dear Ambassador Young:

The United States has, of late, expended an extraordinary amount of energy and money defending the rights of Black citizens of South Africa, Rhodesia and Botswana, while ignoring, if not downright backstabbing an equally critical problem at home.

I speak of the recent State Department decision not to defend the right of Alaskan Eskimos to hunt the bowhead whale; of our own government's decision to allow the International Whaling Commission to speed the genocide of the Eskimo people. It may well sound like a bunch of poetic rhetoric to you folks, our talk about the relationship of whale hunting to the existence of a people, the Alaskan Inupiat Eskimos, but that is what it is. We don't want our children and grandchildren to have to remember our history as a sequel volume of "Bury My Heart at Wounded

Knee." Our culture, our lifestyle, is still very much alive and well, with no thanks to the United States government, and we would like to keep that core of our lifestyle to pass on to our children.

While the life of the Eskimos in the arctic has changed in the past 20,000 years, there are some things basic to that lifestyle which have not changed. Eskimos in the coastal villages still hunt bowhead whale, in very limited quantity, because it is not only an important source of nutritious food, but one of the few available sources of food near the community. A whale is not shot, stuffed into an individual's private freezer and kept as a delicacy for special days. It is shared with fellow villagers almost immediately as a staple of the food supply. Also with other sea mammals, fish and land mammals (some of which are not often found near coastal villages) these form the basic protein contribution to the diet. The alternative is, the white man's multi-million dollar industrial society. To our older Eskimo people especially, the alternative is greeted with the same enthusiasm as folks in Al-

bany, Georgia, might greet the sudden switch from their favorite foods to a diet of whale meat and blubber, seal oil, walrus and seal meat.

The whale hunt is not only a source of protein; it is a teaching tool. In the whaling camps, the preparation before and the activities that follow, we are passing on our history to our children. In the hours before the hunt, young people and older hunters have time to talk about survival, arctic wildlife and all other matters related to our history. I'm sure you understand that these are much more relevant to us than having our children in a government school, learning the history of the Spanish American War, the stock market crash in 1929 and Harry Truman's decision to drop the bomb on Japan.

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Is the harpoon mightier than the sword

Dear Editor:

I find your editorial (A Whaling Challenge) in the November 2, 1977 issue of the Tundra Times in very poor taste. It is self-evident that the shoes you stepped into are much too large apparently causing your disorientation. Or could this be due to your over-indulgence in what you accuse the Regional Corporation Presidents of doing (cocktail hours).

A poison pen is not mightier than the sword. Your call for unity among Alaskan Natives after using snide adjectives to describe our revered leaders stinks. I suggest you put the pen down until you learn how to use it.

Your misuse of the Pen may well have written the epitaph of the great traditional culture of our friends on the arctic coast. Therefore I recommend you join Jeffrey under his rock (he should have found one by now) but first inscribe it with "A Whaling Challenge."

Sincerely,
William P. Johnson
Dillingham

Cheap whaling shots?

Dear Editor:

I read with considerable disappointment your references to me and members of the AFN Board of Directors in your November 2 editorial.

In the interest of unity and because I can't believe you really were serious in making what can only be termed cheap shots, I will not respond to the really saddening references you make to AFN, myself, and individual board members.

I would like, however, to refresh your memory regarding AFN's involvement in efforts to convince the federal government to object to the IWC resolution banning the taking of bowhead whales. First, it was in a meeting in my office on the bowhead whale crisis that I suggested to you that an editorial in the Tundra Times inviting Assistant Secretary of State Patsy Mink to come to Alaska personally to meet with Eskimo leaders might be a good idea. Second, I personally urged Governor Hammond to send senior members of his staff to the August 31 Barrow meeting. Third, you will recall that when AFN was notified of the August 31 meeting in Barrow, I immediately called you to inform you that AFN had at a much earlier time scheduled a Board of Directors meeting for August 31 and that it was not possible to reschedule the AFN meeting on

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U.N. . . .

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They do learn a great amount of history about the rest of our country in public schools, and we want them too, but nowhere, but in the traditional village atmosphere do they learn Eskimo history as it is; as only the elders can tell it.

Ours is not a dead culture, ready to be included in the latest American best seller on the history of the First Americans. The Alaskan Eskimo is alive and well, but still needs more than token support from the government that has professed to respect, but tried unendingly to destroy Native Americans. One of the great chiefs of a great tribe of Native Americans put it succinctly when he said that the government in Washington made Indians many promises, but only kept one: to take the land. In Alaska, the United States government has relentless-

ly kept up that tradition; abandoning our people, who lived here long before America was "discovered" so that Washington won't tarnish its economic relations with other monetary economies.

Eskimos are a proud people, but without the money to organize a nationwide march on Washington to protect our right to exist. In fact we are having a difficult time getting the federal government to live up to its promises in the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Everyone knows it was a "one billion dollar, 40 million acre settlement to Alaska Natives," but few people know how slow that money is in coming, that most of it goes to corporations instead of the people, and that for all practical purposes, **NONE OF THE LAND THE GOVERNMENT PROMISED TO RETURN HAS BEEN RETURNED.** It is all still tied up in a wad of federal and state red tape.

I would hope that the Carter administration would try to turn a new leaf in calculated federal destruction of Alaskan Eskimos. Help us. Don't destroy us. Give us our right to hunt bowhead whale, as we have always done, so that the Eskimos, so proud of being Americans, don't have to ignore the law to survive. In number, the Eskimos are few and in a poor year, there may be less than a dozen whales taken along the arctic coast of Alaska.

Is the United States government, defender of human rights for people everywhere, going to wilfully destroy us, being too busy with other people whose human rights are being violated, to look in its own back yard—to defend the first citizens of its proud Northland?

Sincerely,
John L. Heffle Sr., president
Association of Interior Eskimos

shots . . .

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such short notice. I informed you that I would immediately send a telegram to each member corporation of AFN urging that each send a representative to the Barrow meeting. The telegram was sent, and as I recall, most AFN corporations did have a representative at the Barrow meeting. Fourth, at its July 25 meeting of the AFN Board of Directors, the Board unanimously adopted a strongly worded resolution urging the federal government to object to the IWC resolution and to ignore the resolution as it might apply to Alaska Eskimo taking of bowhead whales. A copy of the AFN resolution is enclosed.

In response to your challenge to engage in civil disobedience by coming to Point Hope for the spring whale hunt should no satisfactory resolution of the

whaling ban be reached by that time, I solemnly accept. If by the time of the spring hunt Eskimos are still legally not allowed to hunt the bowhead, I believe that civil disobedience will be the only avenue left us. Such civil disobedience is in keeping with the highest and most fundamental principles of American democracy. It should not be engaged in frivolously. There is no question, however, that in this circumstance we will have pursued vigorously all administrative and judicial remedies and exhausted them. Eskimos must be allowed to whale to survive as a people. It is a simple fact. It cannot be violated. Therefore, if by the time of the spring hunt in Point Hope civil disobedience is the only response left, yes, I will be there with you.

Sincerely,
Byron I. Mallott
President

Likes Stickman

Dear Editor:

I'm sorry I don't have a typewriter to type this letter. I enjoy your paper and especially Fred Stickman telling 'em like it is.

The reason I'm writing this letter is to blast B.I.A. After being disable to work the last 11 years, I've ask them to give me assistance for some winter clothing, and they tell "go out and work."

I get a social security disability check each month of \$101.90. I'd like to give those people working at B.I.A. that amount and make living on that see how far they can get.

There's no money or justice for the handicaps.

All of them people getting fat and wealthy on my money and yours. When there was B.I.A. housing in our village they never built me one.

So I must make do with what I got.

Sincerely,

Morris O. Ewan
Gulkana, Alaska

Lynx exports extended

ANCHORAGE--The commercial export of lynx and river otter will be allowed under present permits until November 30, a month beyond the date previously announced by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Endangered Species Scientific Authority (ESSA) as the cutoff date for such shipment. After that date no permits will be issued for the export of lynx and permits to export river otter will be restricted to 2,114 pelts.

For further information, trappers, fur brokers and other interested persons are urged to contact the Federal Wildlife Permit Office in Washington, D.C. at 202/634-1496 or a local Law Enforcement office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska.