

First Woman Council Member

Mrs. Paula Ayunerak of the village of Alakanuk has the distinction of being the first woman village council member in the history of Alakanuk. She was elected to the council early in January this month for a two-year term.

Paula was born in the now abandoned village of Fox near Black River. She went to school at St. Mary's Mission for her early years of education. She then traveled to Stadium High School in Tacoma, Wash. to complete her high school education.

She returned to Alakanuk and married John Ayunerak. Paula has served her people for four years as a village health aide. She is also the president of the Ladies Club in her village.



PAULA AYUNERAK

As a council member, Paula said she was really looking forward to serving her people.

Reports Hearing...

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suspend further dissipation of Native lands and erosion of their land rights.

At this moment the State of Alaska has selected about 20 million acres of land, much of which is claimed by Native groups. Also, private companies have applied for federal mineral leases on an additional 5 to 10 million acres. If Secretary Udall's order were to be "undone" by the new Secretary of the Interior, these 20 million acres of valuable mineral lands could be patented to the State and the mineral leases could be approved despite the claims and the protests of the Native groups.

In the light of Governor Hickel's statements and actions opposing any delay in giving title to the State, the Alaska Native leaders considered that the Native land claims were in very great danger of being, in the words of Governor Hickel himself, "irretrievably lost" to the Alaska Natives.

The Native leaders believed that the most effective way to safeguard the Native land claims was to secure from Governor Hickel, reliable assurance that, as Secretary of the Interior, he would protect the Native-claimed lands from further disposition until Congress had a chance to settle the entire Native land claims question.

To accomplish this, an open letter was delivered to Secretary of the Interior-designate Hickel, asking him a series of questions about his attitudes and intentions as to Native land claims.

Also, the Alaska Native leaders made a trip to Washington, D.C. and met with members of Congress, particularly members of the Senate Committee of Interior and Insular Affairs, which was about to hold hearings on the confirmation of Governor Hickel as Secretary of the Interior. This Committee will also lead in the determination of the final solution of the Native land claims.

At these meetings with the several Senators the Alaska Native leaders explained the dangers threatening the Native land claims and suggested measures to safeguard against these dangers. Written materials were prepared and provided to the Senators.

I am happy to report to you that these efforts have met with substantial success. After close questioning of Governor Hickel as to his attitudes and intentions concerning Native land claims and disposition of Native-claimed lands, the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs secured from Secretary of the Interior-designate Hickel a firm pledge that, as Secretary of the Interior, he would take no actions to lift the land freeze or otherwise change the status quo until Congress has an opportunity to act on the problem during the 91st Congress.

If it appears necessary to modify the freeze in order to serve essential public purposes, such as roads and airports, Mr. Hickel agreed to consult with the Senate Committee in each case to obtain the committee's approval.

In turn, Senator Jackson, as Chairman of the Committee, and Senator Allott, the ranking Republican member of the Committee, pledged their best efforts to assure that legislation will be enacted in the current session of Congress to settle the Native land claims. Senator Jackson expects to hold hearings on such legislation in the next month or two.

On the basis of foregoing pledges, which were publicly made in open hearing, the Alaska Native leaders gave their endorsement to Mr. Hickel for Secretary of the Interior.

I believe that the efforts of your leaders were primarily responsible for these favorable results. I also believe that this dramatic and far-reaching victory will become a significant organizational effort. All of us can now concentrate on achieving a prompt and a fair and equitable settlement without the continuing threat of further losses of lands.

We have the pledges of both the Secretary of the Interior and of the Senate Committee that they will do all they can to expedite a just and equitable solution of the Native land claims.

There will be much for us to do in the coming months to secure a just settlement. With the cooperation of the Congressional Committees and the Secretary of the Interior, we think we now have a reasonable basis for hope that we will succeed.

The following appeared in the Anchorage Daily News, Saturday, January 18, 1969.

"MAINTENANCE of the freeze represents a tremendous tactical victory for the four man delegation of the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) that came to Washington last Wednesday seeking 'clarification' of Hickel's position on the matter before proceeding with an AFN endorsement of the governor. Against tremendous pressure, the group...AFN president Emil Notti, and board members John Borbridge, Eben Hopson, and State Rep. Willie Hensley held out, visiting various members of the committee and consulting with their attorneys.

Friday, after Hickel's commitment was obtained, Notti and the other members of the delegation took the stand and endorsed the governor's confirmation."

VILLAGES CERTIFIED FOR FOOD STAMP PROG.

Mrs. Martha Teeluk, Eligibility Worker II, for the food stamp program in the northern region, said that Barrow, Wainwright and Kaktovik on Barter Island, have been opened and certified.

Mrs. Teeluk said she had already visited those communities. She and another worker cover the northern region that includes Barrow district, Tanana district, Ft. Yukon district, Tok district,

Miller Pleased...

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humbled as I assume the great responsibilities of the governorship. I am heartened by the expressions of support I have received from Alaskans in every walk of life. With God's help and with the help of all of you, we will carry forward the programs and policies of progress that will provide a better life for Alaska's growing population.

"As my thoughts turn from the events in Washington, D.C. to the convening of the 6th Alaska legislature on Monday, I am convinced that a spirit of mutual cooperation will mark the deliberations of state government in the coming months."

Millers swearing in ceremonies will take place Friday at 4 p.m. in the superior court chambers on the fifth floor of the state capitol.

Chief Justice Buell Nesbett will officiate.

Home...

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serve basis.

"The need for the home in Bethel is very great, not only because of the lack of public housing but also because of the need for teaching," said Mrs. Toomer.

At the present time, the home provides an excellent opportunity for teaching the native women who are interested.

"For obvious reasons a pregnant woman is extremely interested in every facet of health involving her and her baby," Mrs. Toomer stated.

"This ranges," she continued, "from the development of the unborn baby, good prenatal care, infant care, sanitation at home, nutrition, etc. We try to approach in some manner all of these things here at the home. Besides this type of class we also have sewing, cooking demonstrations, handicrafts and knitting yarns available."

The home services an area of 100,000 square miles and approximately 60 villages. It does not discriminate between races nor economic levels.

According to their ability the women and their families donate native foods and \$1.50 per day for their stay at the home. It has been estimated that it costs \$18 to \$20 per day to support each woman.

The Bethel Prematernal Home has found favor among the native people in the southwest area of Alaska.

Mrs. Toomer thinks the future will definitely prove the need for enlargement of the facility if it can keep going.

The home strongly depends on the donations of native foods, money, and the funds from various organizations.

"This often makes us an insecure organization but in no way changes the dire need of the prematernal home in Bethel," Director Toomer said.

"The Bethel Prematernal Home is an organization formed to satisfy a direct need here in Bethel," Mrs. Toomer added. "Basically, it provides housing and food for pregnant women from the outlying villages who otherwise would be living in abandoned shacks, cars, etc., or sharing already overcrowded homes with families in Bethel."

and Fairbanks district.

She said she will work the Tanana district next and meet with the village councils that in turn pick a local food stamp agent. The agent then gets applications and sends them to Mrs. Teeluk in Fairbanks.

The applications are then processed and certified according to income.

Interior Secretary...

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of Alaska being his concurrence on continuing the land freeze imposed by the outgoing Sec. Stewart Udall.

The four man delegation of Alaska Federation of Natives, Emil Notti, John Borbridge, Rep. Willie Hensley and Eben Hopson, considered Hickel concurrence to maintain the freeze as a signal victory for the native people.

Anchorage Daily News last Saturday printed the following:

"MAINTENANCE of the freeze represents a tremendous tactical victory for the four man team of the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) that came to Washington last Wednesday seeking 'clarification' of Hickel's position on the matter before proceeding with an AFN endorsement of the governor. Against tremendous pressure, the group...

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Isaac Okleasik

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manner.

John Coffen from the Philadelphia Steam Division of the firm and R.T. Killen of the Seattle office were in Anchorage in connection with the city's installation of a new Westinghouse gas turbine.

Their visit coincided with the the Rony festivities including the exciting dog race events.

Two Anchorage businesswomen, Mrs. Paula Pence and Mrs. Kelly Martin, were talking with Al Courtney, then with the state's development office and the Westinghouse visitors.

The three Alaskans almost simultaneously suggested that the firm sponsor a dog team for the next year's race. Response, recalls Mrs. Martin, was immediate—and affirmative. Next question: Who shall we sponsor?

The two women both recalled Okleasik from the Iditarod race and realized that he had not been able to get to Anchorage in 1968 for lack of a sponsor. They suggested his name—and it was done.

The two women are acutely aware that there are other colorful mushers with hard-running teams who need sponsors. But at least they were instrumental in bringing back one outstanding musher from a distance. Now they assume new responsibilities among their many other community activities: dog team managers.

Actually, they are the go-betweens for the distant sponsor, Okleasik at Teller and Walt Stephens in Anchorage. Stephens is an old friend of the Eskimo and will be both his host and dog handler. The women will pay the costs of the venture from the \$1,200 sponsor donation.

They are also giving their minds a workout to find names the twenty dogs expected for Rendez-vous might use as they run for Westinghouse. Perhaps the lead dog "Peggy" might not mind being "Jenny"—sort of short of short for "generator."

They say "We can be sure of Isaac's dog power if it's Westinghouse!" And if he wins, think of the possibilities of that slogan.

"if an applicant makes too large of an income, he's not eligible," she said.

She said that applications were considered also by family sizes and those persons who work in stores were not eligible.

"Weather permitting, we are working as fast as we can," Mrs. Teeluk said.

committee and consulting with their attorneys.

"Friday, after Hickel's commitment was obtained, Notti and the other members of the delegation took the stand and endorsed the governor's confirmation."

This week, Eben Hopson on his way home to Barrow from Washington, said of the hearing and how Gov. Hickel conducted himself.

"He stood up under it, I thought, pretty good," said Hopson.

Hopson added, "Possibly, we have gained a million dollars worth of publicity on native land claims during the hearing. The press was very favorable to us."

He said Sen. Henry Jackson's Interior Committee was very thorough and calculating.

"Each senator questioned Hickel on one facet of national situation at a time, such as pollution, conservation and native land claims," observed Hopson.

He said that at one point Sen. George McGovern questioned Hickel and then Sen. Jackson picked up the questioning and pinned Hickel down on his position on the land freeze.

"The understanding now is that the land freeze will stay until Congress acts on the land legislation," said Hopson.

He said that the AFN delegation went to Washington "to ascertain certain matters. We went to Washington to ask questions. The endorsement was a secondary matter. We were bothered by certain statements Hickel made before we went there."

"Biggest reasons were those statements he had made publicly," added Hopson. "When he retracted them, we were happy."

Congressman Howard Pollock said the approval of Sec. Hickel by the U.S. Senate was a substantial victory judging from the margin of the vote.

Nixon...

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nation to go forward as a peacemaker and together, both whites and blacks.

"For the first time, because the peoples of the world want peace and the leaders are afraid of war, the times are on the side of peace," Nixon stated.

"We are caught in war, wanting peace," he said. "We are torn by division, wanting unity. We see around us empty lives, wanting fulfillment. We see tasks that need doing, waiting for hands to do them."

He added: "To a crisis of the spirit, we need an answer of the spirit. We cannot learn from one another until we stop shouting at one another."

Nixon promised to "press urgently forward" toward such goals as rebuilding cities, better housing, strengthening education seeking full employment and protecting the environment.

"No man can be fully free while his neighbor is not," Nixon declared. "This means black and white together as one nation, not two. The laws have caught up with our conscience. What remains is to give light to what is in the law; to ensure at last that all are born equal in dignity before man."