

Den Nena Henash - Our Land Speaks  
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Yupit Qanlautciat - The Way Eskimos Talk  
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## *Nels Anderson was right*

To the editor:

Nels Anderson Jr. has always been known to put his money where his mouth is. His resignation from the American Legion because they opposed Japanese reparation was like Nels. It is what separates the men from the boys.

We lived in Tanana, and two men flew in without notice and took a man from the village. He was an old man who had been an Alaskan for ages. This with done without notice, without a chance to straighten out his little

cabin and few belongings.

Lon Brennan of Manley Hot Springs, the regional bush pilot, told me he had orders if a war emergency arose to fly the Tanana women and children to Fairbanks (the white women and children).

He was incensed, and so was his wife and business partner.

They were two great people, now dead, but remembered with respect and affection.

Mellie Terwilliger  
Tok

## *ICC was a joyful adventure*

To the editor:

Greenland is the world's largest island; two-thirds of it is located within the Arctic Circle, surrounded by the North Atlantic Ocean.

I attended the Inuit Circumpolar Conference in Sisimiut, Greenland, July 24-28. I was part of the Inupiaq and Yupik delegation as an observer with the Inuit of Alaska.

Little did I realize I was bound for the adventure of a lifetime when I boarded the ship anchored in the harbor at Sondre Stromfjord. The crew of the ship was of Danish origin and spoke a language foreign to my ears. This difference did not curtail the feeling of friendship that was ever present on this journey. The Greenlanders were outstanding hosts, and the feeling of hospitality came from the heart.

In the chill of the evening, cruising this latitude in another part of the world, I experienced an elevation to my spirituality. I was moved by the majestic beauty of this pristine Arctic world. Standing at the bow of the ship I felt as though I was on the threshold of the universe, looking into the face of God. For a brief moment, the world stood still as the moon appeared over

the rocky mountainous fjords.

The cold, the dusk, the wind and the moon glow, all came together and became a gift of natural beauty transcending anything I had ever experienced before. I was awestruck, and a feeling of serenity swept over me. Realizing I was celebrating the joy of life, I knew I was extremely fortunate to be traveling here at this time.

As the spirituality of nature surrounded, me, I knew this trip was the beginning of a joyful adventure that would last throughout the entire convention.

By 3 a.m., I was chilled to the bone, so I made my way to the cabin and drifted off to sleep as the waves in the Davis Strait rocked the ship and created havoc for those passengers who were not accustomed to traveling in rough waters.

Awakened by the stalling of the ship's engines, I headed toward the deck to view the city of Sisimiut. At dockside there was a multitude of people, all in a festive mood. Returning to the cabin, I gathered up the bags and prepared to leave the ship. Walking down the gang plank, I wondered

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# • Trip to Greenland for ICC was an adventure

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where I'd be staying and what might be in store for me here.

I didn't have long to wait, for there was a woman carrying a sign bearing my name. She was to be my host family for the week. By the time I was to leave, she would become my sister.

Sisimiut, Greenland's second largest city, is best described as a small seaport town of 5,000 persons. The primary language spoken is Greenlandic, the secondary, Danish or English. The outstanding quality of the area is evidenced by the respect for the Greenland culture and values. The Greenlandic language is spoken by everyone, which commands respect for the Inuit.

That feeling of reverence is conveyed to the visitors through the smiles and nods of greeting from the inhabitants of the land, its people.

This aura of respect for cultural values may be the reason we did not see any street people, panhandlers or drunks roaming the streets at any time. This positive feeling and the sense of self-respect is a quality desperately needed here at home in Alaska. It will come about when our government no longer is oppressive and racist toward Alaska Natives.

In 1979, the Greenlanders acquired home rule, similar to what Akiachak is advocating in their self-determination efforts, or sovereignty. For the Greenlanders, it is working. They are in control of their destiny, and their own language is spoken within their homeland.

The television and radio carry the news and events of the day in Greenlandic. This was a welcomed surprise for someone of Yupik origin who understands her language only as the second to English, just as her peers.

Evidently the early teachers didn't physically abuse those Greenlandic children by washing their mouths with soap to prevent them from retaining their Native language, culture and values. Their teachers probably had more compassion than the abuses our parents were saddled with just a short time ago.

Reinforcing the positive tone of the Greenlandic home rule government, the music of the day, rock and roll, is sung exclusively in Greenlandic. It was a joyous experience to hear Ole Khristiansen croon those tunes in his Native language. Some of the words I understood because of the similarity to Yupik.

The highlight of the trip was the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the fifth, which is held once every three years in a different country. This year the Soviets attended for the first time and entertained us with the ancient Yupik story-telling dances. Those dances were a celebration of globally completing the Circle of Inuit.

Now the union is bonded, with representatives from Alaska, Canada,

Greenland and Siberia.

We came a long way to begin the dialogue for peace and to support solidarity for all Inuit. The Inuit Circumpolar Conference is a forum for ideas, policies and issues that pertain to culture, language, values and economics that affect the lives of all Inuit.

Sisimiut was my first physical encounter with the Inuit Circumpolar

Conference, and I was impressed by its content and its hosts. Possibly one day we can host the ICC in Nome. It would be our chance to reciprocate the wonderful treatment we were given in Sisimiut.

Thank you for this grand adventure which I will hold ever so gently in my memory bank forever.

June I. Degnan  
Anchorage