

Soviet writers discuss role of perestroika

By Jennifer Gordon

Tundra Times reporter

Soviet journalists have more freedom since the initiation of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, but the press is only now exploring the limits of this new freedom and many are cautious of the new ideology, journalists from the Soviet Union, Alaska and Canada said Wednesday night.

They spoke as part of a panel sponsored by the Alaska Press Club to discuss Soviet journalism.

"When Americans speak of *glasnost*, we think they enjoy it maybe more than we do," said Gennady Alferenko, chairman of the Fund for Social Invention.

For the first time, he said, people in the Soviet Union have the freedom to speak their beliefs, and thanks to journalistic power, they have the power to act on those beliefs as well.

Aleksy Bukalov, a correspondent for the Soviet journal *Novoye Vremya*, meaning "New Time," said that there is another side to *perestroika*. He said he works at a Soviet journal that only printed international politics before the change. Now, the journal has a page on local news — a change created for the people's interests.

Bukalov said that Soviets are interested not only in the problems of their country, but in the facts.

Facts and Arguments, a weekly paper in the Soviet Union, printed 800,000 copies last year, Bukalov said. This year, the circulation went up to 20 million copies.

Yuri Ustmenko, correspondent for the news agency "TASS," said that one reason that the people of the Soviet Union are concerned with figures and facts, is that they still do not trust Soviet journalists.

He said that to him, *glasnost* means that when Gorbachov speaks, the reader gets the correspondent's view of the speech, not the government's view.

Valentina Golubchikova, assistant editor in chief of *Severnaya Prostory*, meaning "Northlands," said that *glasnost* will be the link between the Soviet Union and Alaska to find ways to help the Native communities of both countries. There are 26 minorities in the Soviet Far North, she said and added that many people in the Soviet Union view the Natives as people condemned to disappear.

She said she believed when she came to Alaska that the problems facing Natives would be solved in this country. She said she hopes the two countries will research Native pro-

(Continued on Page Seven)

• Journalists

(Continued from Page Four)

blems together.

"I'm old journalist wolf," said Vasily Peskov, observer for the *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, Moscow.

He said living in a country going through radical changes, as the Soviet Union is now doing, is like living in a house while completely rennovating it. Peskov said there are many discomforts, and people are always afraid that the roof will cave in.

"Our journalists are the avant-garde of *perestroika*," he said. He said, the latest saying in Moscow is: Maybe it is not so interesting to live here, but it's very interesting to read about.

Daniel Saddler, a reporter for the Anchorage Times, said that his impression of the Soviet press before *perestroika* was comparable to a newspaper being owned by an advertising agency — they could only print good news. Today, however, he said that Soviet journalists are digging out the stories that they could not write before.

Anthony Wilson-Smith of McLean Publishing in Canada said he has been based in Moscow for a year. He said that to him the Soviet Union is only 5 years old.

Wilson-Smith said that before *perestroika*, foreign correspondents read the Soviet press because that was their only source of information. Today, he said, they read the Soviet press because it is quality reporting.

He said that while the Soviet press is "freer," it is not yet what Americans and Canadians would consider free.

Alexandra McClanahan, editor and publisher of the Tundra Times, said that she believes that while peace and *glasnost* are good things to strive for between the Soviet Union and the United States, there are many issues in the world that must be addressed, such as solid waste disposal and air pollution. She said the world is in danger, and journalists must work together to shed light on these problems.

Hal Berton, a writer for the Anchorage Daily News, said that he has seen *glasnost* at work in the small villages as well as the big cities in the Soviet Union. He said that to extend relations between the countries further, Soviet journalists need to have freedom in America to study the culture. He added that Americans need the same in the Soviet Union.

Howard Weaver, managing editor of the Anchorage Daily News, moderated the panel discussion, and Dr. John Strohmeyer, visiting Atwood professor for the University of Alaska Anchorage, was chairman for the event.