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DON WRIGHT AFN PRESIDENT

Donald R. Wright became the president of the Alaska Federation of Natives last Friday in Anchorage after the statewide native organization experienced its hottest and most intense po-

litical maneuverings among three candidates for presidency, Don Wright himself, John Borbridge, Jr., and Rep. William L. (Willie) Hensley.

Wright and Borbridge dead-

locked on the first ballot each failing to reach the absolute majority vote of 275. On the first tally, Wright received 271, Borbridge, 171, and Hensley 106.

After caucusing among the

regional groups, second balloting between Wright and Borbridge was conducted and the tally read: Wright, 282, and Borbridge, 267.

Another deadlock occurred

on the first ballot for the office of secretary of the AFN between Elizabeth Bean of St. Mary's and Frances Degan of Unalakleet. The first ballot vote read:

(Continued on Page 6.)

Wright AFN President..

(Continued from page 1)

Bean 273 and Degnan 256.

On the second ballot, Frances Degnan pulled ahead of her opponent by the vote of 280 to 266.

The most popular vote getter of the AFN election was Frank Degnan of Unalakleet for the office of the AFN Sergeant-at-arms. He was opposed by Charles Edwardson of Barrow. Degnan's vote was 517 on the first ballot.

Don Wright is the president of the Cook Inlet Native Association and he succeeds Emil Notti who chose not to run this year.

John Borbridge was the first vice president of the AFN and he is also president of the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska. He is from Juneau.

First vice presidency of the AFN went to Phillip Guy of Quethluk, a village near Bethel, with the vote of 295 on the first ballot. He was opposed by Joe Upicksoun of Barrow, Alex Shadura of Kenai and Alfred Ketzler of Nenana.

Second vice presidency went to Tim Wallis of Fairbanks with the vote of 280. He was opposed by George Walters of Seattle, 156 votes, and Frank Dennis, 86 votes.

The office of the AFN treasurer went to Nels Anderson, formerly of Fairbanks, now of Anchorage, with the vote of 468.

Block voting among the regional organizations dominated the AFN election. That in itself was the cause of intense political maneuverings for the presidency of the statewide group.

Some members of the AFN expressed dissatisfaction with the procedure since the casting of votes was announced as secret.

"When a person tells you how to vote, it is no longer a secret vote," charged Gilbert Olsen of the Chugach Native Association.

He made the statement on the floor of the convention saying he would not have done so if the person who asked for the association's block vote did not make strongly worded remarks as the group refused to switch vote.

Emil Notti who did not run for the presidency of the AFN this year, evaluated the post election results partially.

"We have very capable guys who can take the AFN from where it is and follow the land claims through to final settlement," Notti stated.

He said that the new slate of officials would build on to the existing programs and "provide more to the services that we have been contracting for."

"I have been in the chair for five years and five annual meetings," he continued. "I've been privileged to be the president of AFN as it grew from a young struggling organization to an organization that is administering over \$1 million in programs."

When asked about the results of the elections, John Borbridge had the following to say:

"My reaction to that is to extend my congratulations and best wishes to the newly elected president and the executive officers of the AFN.

"I personally viewed my candidacy as one of offering services and experience and ability within the context of a recognition that it is the people who make the choice.

"They have chosen and we now look forward to continuation of our fight as a people for our land rights. We must be unrelenting in fighting for an extension of the land freeze until the land claims are settled.

"We must continue to advance without thought of basic compromise on the AFN land claims bill.

"It has been said that we need a land claims bill that will benefit all Alaskans. The land claims is an issue pertaining to the land rights of the native people. It is to us that justice must be done."

"Don Wright had the following to say:

"I know how hard Emil, John, Willie and others had worked and I intend to continue the work before us in full cooperation with the existing structure of the AFN and only intend to fulfill my duties as directed by the AFN Board of Directors."

Wright was raised in the town of Nenana and lived several years in the village of Minto. He went to high school in Fairbanks. He received his private license in flying at the age of 16.

"Before the Federal Aviation Administration regulations on aircraft became really enforced, I flew as bush pilot serving villages, trappers, prospectors for five years, logging 3,500 hours," Wright added.

"So I know conditions in the villages," he added. "I've been working with the native people all my life."

Wright said he would be working with the AFN board as structured at the present time.

Twenty-four native associations qualified as bona fide members of the federation. They are: Alaska Native Brotherhood, Alaska Village Council Presidents, Atka Village, Arctic Native Brotherhood, Central Council of Tlingit and Haidas, Chugach Native Association, Cook Inlet Native Association, Copper River Indian Association.

Kuskokwim Valley Native Association, Native Village of Tyonek, Arctic Slope Native Association, Upper Kuskokwim Native Association.

Tanana Chiefs Conference, Fairbanks Native Association, Washington Chapter of the AFN, Kenaitze Indian Association, Native Association of St. Lawrence Island, Aleut League, Kodiak Area Native Association, Navillage of Eklutna.

Kenai Peninsula Native Association, and Bristol Bay Native Association. The only changes from last year's list involved adding the Washington chapter and dropping the Alaska Peninsula Native Association.

The largest block of votes belonged to the Bethel area with the second largest going to the Tlingit and Haidas—104, Tanana Chiefs and Fairbanks Native Association—65, the Cook Inlet Native Association—45, Kotzebue—39, Nome area—34, Washington chapter—34, Bristol Bay—31, Arctic Slope—22, Aleut League—18, Kodiak—14, Unalakleet—13, Kenai—7, Cordova—7, Copper River—4, Upper Kuskokwim—4, Tyonek—2, and Eklutna—1.

Delegates were allowed to vote either as a block or individually, but block voting seemed to prevail.