

Whom did we honor at Celebration '82

To the Editor:

I am Tooksa.at. I am a Tlingit.

The history that leads into my mother Kajeet.woot.duyuh and my grandmother Kintoo and my great grandmother and the ones who came before comes down the stream into me.

I am a L'uknax.adee, a true Coho. My uncle Kots.Kowu, charged me to speak the truth for our tribe and to be in charge upon his death. In confirmation thereof, he bestowed the Chilkat Blanket upon me.

The tribal elders of Angoon from whence came my father, who was Wooch.Keytan, honored me with the name of Kich.tuyee, the brave and fearless Tlingit Warrior who would not allow his people to be enslaved.

The respected tribal elders of Angoon ceremonially charged me with completion of the ongoing fight for justice and land claims. This I did.

My words are the words of Tooksa.at and Kich.tuyee. I speak the truth that is in my heart and intend no hurt to the tribal elders and our young people.

We share a rich heritage. We know who we are and from whence we came. Because of

our culture, we retain knowledge of our tribal origins. Because of our culture, we will have a compass as we and those who come after journey into the future.

We, our children and our grandchildren will not flinch, though the winds of change buffet us.

Our tribal leaders, whose accomplishments live on in our history and songs, possessed courage, a vision of what the future could be — and integrity.

I rejoice that the Tlingit and Haidas and Tsimshians could come together to celebrate their pride in their heritage. I rejoice that friends and relatives could visit one another and honor Juneau with the presence of so many distinguished visitors, among whom I number many relatives and many friends.

But I must respectfully express my disagreement with certain parts of this celebration.

Mike Chittick, the non-Native President of Sealaska Corporation, and his wife were honored in a Tlingit ceremony. Who is he, what has he done and how long has he been among us?

He lives rent-free in a large

\$390,000 home that was built with our Sealaska shareholders' money. He was paid \$128,000 last year and also received fringe benefits. He received a bonus of \$55,000.

He has done very well for himself, but does that merit honor from us? Who among you has received a dividend payment under the leadership of Chittick and Mallott, whose wife was also honored? The answer — no one has.

Judson Brown and other Sealaska board members and the Sealaska administration received a great deal of political exposure and benefit at this celebration.

As one tribal elder said to me, "It's like Sealaska leaders helped to set up a big potlatch to honor themselves." I object to the intrusion of politics into this celebration.

The celebration of our heritage should not have been used so. When I say this, I do not question the good faith intentions of the elders.

I am not a candidate for the Sealaska Board this year. So my utterances are not politically motivated.

Respectfully,

John Borbridge, Jr.
Juneau

Tundra Times enhances knowledge

To the Editor:

Through my friendship with Father Greif, S.J. in Nome, I became very interested in the Arctic and for the past five years have been going to various libraries in our area, reading about the Far North.

Among my favorite books are: "Eskimo Boyhood," a true story told by an Inuit tuberculosis patient — about his boyhood in the 30's and 40's

on St. Lawrence Island; "Where the Sea Broke Its Back" by Corey Ford — the story of Georg Stellar and Vitus Bering; and "Four Seasons North" by Billie Wright of Anaktuvuk Pass.

I also read books about the Canadian Arctic and Greenland. Most of these books were written quite a while ago, so I started sending for copies of current magazines like "Inuit

Today" (Canada N.W.T.) and "Them Days" (Laborador).

Last year I subscribed to your wonderful newspaper, through it I am learning about Alaska NOW: land claims, education, and cultural "happenings."

Recently I found "Children of the Raven" at our library — about the seven Indian Nations of the Northwest (Continued on Page Nineteen)

Paper adds life to book readers

(Continued from Page Eighteen)

Coast. This book by H.R. Hays is divided into two parts: past history and present day development. There are wonderful photographs of totem poles, one of Mr. Andy Schooner holding his hereditary ECHO mask, button dance costumes for Tlingit children made by Mr. Joe Williams and what interested me the most, an intricate eagle-human transformation mask made by Mr. Ken Mowatt.

Can you imagine how thrilled I was to receive your March 10th "Tundra Times" and

see in your "Tribal News" section photographs of the button robes, masks and dances that I am learning about from this book.

It is wonderful to know that these Indian nations are holding fast to their culture and are so proud of it.

Through the pages of "Tundra Times" I feel I am learning about past and present Alaska and it's fascinating.

Thank you for your great publication.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Lottie Donner
San Lorenzo, Calif.