

Whaling Commission reviews top issues

(Editor's Note: Because of significant statements by Dale Stotts of the AEWC on the bowhead whaling issue, we are printing it in its entirety despite our usual 200 word limit on the length of letters. We encourage our readers to give their attention to this significant issue.)

May 31, 1979

Dear Editor & Times Readers,

This is an open statement intended to ease the confused communications concerning whalers activity. If questions arise after you read the contents, we would appreciate contact from you (the reader).

Recent inquiries and various allegations have come to us relating to many aspects of the Inupiat lifestyle, and present objectives in our program of self-regulation, scientific research, and what impacts our communities feel from outside actions...whether physical or otherwise how do Eskimos feel about it.

The interrelated social issues can not be separated, however they are best understood by description of the human elements in the Arctic. For this will show the personalities in motion and where there is conflict, it will be evident.

Basically there are two groups of people residing in Arctic Alaska. The indigent Eskimo, whose culture and conservative native existence is characterized by the elements directing his lifestyle. And other worldly cultures, alien to the Arctic, but whose combined character can be described as transitory. Their nature is based upon the reasons for their corporate introduction to the Northland. The goals of both groups are easily defined in terms of values associated to individual life sustaining systems.

Here is where Eskimos will make some allegations and predictions of our own. If emphasis continues to be placed on the commercial interests in the Arctic then we are put in a cultural disadvantage. Why people in our country should be forced into a "cash income society" is not understandable. The practice of enormous wealth accumulation is foreign to agrarian cultures. The Eskimo is not against distribution of resources, having always shared the resources equally up here.

However, the United States has been derelict in its responsibility to the citizens more and more, by giving special preference to the giant corporations that command and set policy on supposedly national interest development activities. This "oppression" is adversely affecting the diverse cultural wealth of America, and is eroding away the sound conservative attitudes the citizens have had.

About Inupiat. Whalers would like to prevent biased opinionating on their way of life from suppressing its naturalness. Inupiat have never underrated the importance of living things to one another, and have evolved a conservative maintenance of their own livelihood through the seasonal harvest of migrating animal populations. As it has been from time immemorial, the success of, and progression of the hunts are critical. The environment itself dictates human activity in the far north. The lifeblood of coastal Eskimos is in the sharing of the bowhead whale catch. We have been raised with an appreciation and understanding of these

whales that far exceeds concerns expressed by distant observers. These animals are held in high societal esteem. The upbringing of the whaler includes learning the evolutionary, biological, and behavioral sciences of many arctic species. This learning includes a complete study of the physical environment of the Arctic sea. Unlike most other seas ours is often solid or moving ice. Like any other interdisciplinary scholar the Eskimo hunter spends a long, arduous apprenticeship to achieve proficiency. The collective observations that Inupiat have made throughout their Arctic reign are today the basis of our unassumed science. The Eskimo tradition of teaching orally has enabled Eskimos to accumulate data since "prehistoric times."

The Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission is charged with accounting for whaling activity in Alaska, to include researching the status of the bowhead. The AEWC is a tribal organization. Whaling captains and their crews have registered their support of a well developed conservation regime which allows for a maximum 2% of recruitment stocks to be harvested. We would like to stress that this is a voluntarily accepted plan, and the most conservative of any management plan in use in any whaling country.

The entire whaling community is the AEWC's enforcement group.

The integrity of Eskimo whalers to maintain sensible agreements has proved its effectiveness in the past and is the foundation of our self regulation today. If the regulations adopted by the whalers are not abided by within any community, then severe treatment results. Punishment could be nearly as harsh as an IWC moratorium.

What Inupiat would like is to express their knowledge in many languages, but that takes time and capital. The logbooks of Eskimo captains will begin to show a presently uncalculated biomass of species migration in the Arctic. This information is needed if the maintenance requirements of international treaties are to be fulfilled. That will take time. It will take however long genuine interests take to understand the complexities of the arctic. If everyone spoke Eskimo it would be no problem, for the Eskimo language is the memorable experience of the people from a first person observation geographically. We believe that all knowledge (as shown by achievement) and concepts of property should not be used to the detriment of natural systems.

Land maintenance has long been an Inupiat profession, and the primary motivation of Eskimos is to maintain the peaceful sovereignty and well being of his own society.

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● Our readers write to us

(Continued from page Two)

Human equality is an unconscious tool in an Eskimos mind, and a natural pursuit of happiness is inherent with them, for their forefathers have never trespassed against any other race. Not against their lands, their religion, or their governments. Until very recently, Eskimo economy has not clashed with multinational interests. We wish to note that we are not the causation of the conflicts over our whales.

We have co-operated with various levels of government, and administered to their needs, which are, for the most part scientific and social data gaps. We still feel that with truth, time, and effort, Eskimo lifestyles will be understood, but in the reality of today, the propaganda and intimidation from special interest groups, profit corporations with conflicting desires for Eskimo territory, corrupt officials, and outright racism continue to plague our people. White collar crime is the biggest offender, and as soon as positive steps are taken to eradicate that element, even better co-operation will result, between us and our governments.

We feel that the oppressive competition for industrial rights of way to offshore areas will bear us burdens, not riches. From our present knowledge on the Arctic ecosystem, and of the hazards and effects of pollution (all types), we can assign the areas of critical habitat to be the few northern flowing estuaries and their deltas. These rivers are the production backbone of our food chain, and the mainstay of our sparse fishery.

We anticipate imminent degradation to our environment with the present push to develop arctic energy resources. WHO is going to pay the damages?

The AEWC maintains that the hearings being held to discuss exploitation of our submerged lands and minerals are proceeding illegally the same way Prudhoe Bay trespass was achieved. These agencies of the State of Alaska and U.S. Government have exceeded their authority or else the logical course of approaching the Eskimo for their approval is being ignored, because there is procedure for administrative handling of this type of activity. So it seems that the North Slope Eskimo is faced

with threats of trespass even more hazardous to his society and environment than the massive industrialization occurring on lands whose true ownership is yet to be resolved. Pro-industry bureaucracies are conversing with the public and private interests to show a seemingly legal approach to development through the environmental impact hearing process. That is an abuse of office and oath.

Consider the total environmental question. There are damages that are not being taken care of in the Arctic which demonstrate the real fears of our people. The destruction of fish spawning areas the scale of TESHEKPUK LAKE and SAGAV-ANIRATOK RIVER. These losses have literally ruined the seasonal income and activity of many families. The incidence of dislocated families is high on the North Slope. We term this dislocation as pollution. Let's get a few things straight before our people cease to exist as they choose. The U.S. should not be practicing cultural genocide. In an environment that naturally discriminates against the presence of viruses it is appalling to note the high incidence of common colds and exotic flus. Is a high technology country like America truly incapable of maintaining standards of health that is various cultures live with? We have been denied lately a continued use of traditional foods for nutritional and cultural needs. Eskimos are a separate and distinct culture residing in the Arctic in its entirety and are dependent upon the oil and gas industry for their profits, and we will not willingly let them take it.

Springtime has always been crucial to the prosperity and health of

the entire natural order in the Pacific northern hemisphere. The special connection to the life sustaining northern food chain to the southern areas is little understood and talked of even less, but we Eskimos know the full significance of our lands and waters to other distant cultures, not just in energy consumption terms.

You should be aware that as a race of people we have learned to share our wealth of resources in a perpetually conservative but equal manner with our neighbors. We will not administer to the selfish goals of those seeking to steal our resources. As Inupiat (real people) we can, in the national interest, distribute these resources to the needy in a manner which does not belittle their culture, nor inflate their precious lifestyle. We can effectuate realization of these superior goals but in the U.S. citizenry must understand our position. We wish to maintain a higher standard of corporate and official governmental relationship than presently in force.

Remember, in the United States, the Constitution is culture.

Very truly, your
Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission
Dale Brower Stotts
Secretary/Treasurer

Fish plan problems

David B. Nanalook
Togiak, Alaska 99678
June 1, 1979

Mr. John Twiss
Executive Director
Marine Mammal Commission
1625 I Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Mr. Twiss:

We strongly urge that an emergency meeting of the Marine Mammal Commission and its Scientific Advisory Committee to investigate the serious deficiencies in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Ground Fish Management Plan, for the following reasons:

1) the plan does not show effect of fish harvest on marine mammals as required by the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972.

2) the plan does not provide for stability of marine ecosystems as required by the Marine

Mammal Protection Act of 1972.

3) the plan does not demonstrate the goal of obtaining an optimum sustainable population of marine mammals as required by the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972.

4) the plan is geared to a pulse fish effort of foreign fishing fleets, in detriment to marine mammals.

5) the Environmental Impact Statement is incomplete as regard to local communities, marine mammals, endangered species and other species such as maritime birds.

6) the plan promotes management of fisheries toward production of small sized or younger year class pollack, which may have serious adverse impacts on marine mammals.

7) the plan does not address the impact on native use of marine mammals for subsistence or to socio-economic needs, as required in the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972.

8) no studies, no hearings and no inquiries were made by the North Fishery Management Council and Planning Team on the economic, social and cultural impacts of the plan on local communities; and

9) there was no direct participation of marine mammal scientists in the development of the plan, and there are no marine mammal experts on the scientific and statistical committee of the Council.

In drawing up this statement of request we were able to meet in Anchorage on May 31, 1979 with Dr. George Rogers, member of the scientific advisory committee to the NPFMC, Dr. Richard Cooley, recently on the Marine Mammal Commission, Mr. Mike Barrow, TDX Village Corporation, St. Paul Island, Dr. Steve Langdon, professor of Anthropology, University of Alaska, Anchorage and other concerned individuals. There was a consensus of agreement and concern on the serious nature of this problem.

The situation is urgent. We are confident the Marine Mammal Commission will act immediately to investigate and correct these deficiencies.

Most Sincerely,

David B. Nanalook
Mayor of Togiak, Alaska
Vice President of Western
Alaska Mayors,
Association
IRA Village Council
President,
Eskimo Walrus Commission

Mike Swetcoff
Fisheries Representative
TDX Village Corporation
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Our readers write

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Disappointed

(Note: the following was submitted as a letter to the editor.)

May 1, 1979

Anchorage Times
820 W. 4th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Sir:

I am writing to disagree with the article about me in the Sunday Times for April 22, 1979. I object to the cultural stereotyping in the article. I had hoped that the article would combat stereotyping and not contribute to it.

I had suggested the title "C.I.N.A. is Culturally Alive" but the writer played up the vanishing American stereotype and failed to view the dynamics of culture and the complexity of Ethnic Heritage.

I object to the slant of the article "The Heritage Preserving Business," and to the attitude that culture is something that can be processed and preserved in containers like berries, because that is inaccurate and misrepresents my work.

I also disagree with the following quotes:

"The Native languages are already dead and hardly anybody but a few old grandmas remember the dancing."

"As for the languages they would eventually have died out as more and more whites moved into Alaska."

"In Anchorage there is almost nobody she can talk with in Tlingit"

The above are the writer's attitudes and not mine. To say the least, I am disappointed.

Sincerely yours,

Nora Dauenhauer
Cultural Coordinator
Youth Services Department
Cook Inlet Native Association

Phantoms

Dear Editor:

Natives are now confronted with published reports, taken from confidential government findings, that an Alaska Native development corporation has attempted to expropriate the government out of 600,000 acres of valuable public land by setting up phantom native villages to claim the land.

The Native corporation involved was asked by Congressman Morris K. Udall (D-Ariz.), Chairman of the House Interior Committee, to respond to these public charges. So far, response by the corporation "Significantly....could not rebut the basic charge we reported - that some of the corporation's villages were phantoms."

This response to those basic charges remains absent the requested corporative reaction, contains limited knowledge, yet provides comfort in proclaiming there exists no "phantom native villages" in Alaska. When a village is destroyed by the guns of war; fallen to shambles by earthquakes; deprived of existence by famine; are these hereafter to be forgotten, as phantom villages? Are the hopes and dreams of those who survived to be deemed as nothing more than a living part of those phantom villages?

If this be so, would Chicago, following its destruction by fire, have become a phantom city,

would San Francisco, kneeling to the demands of earthquake, or Honolulu, bending to the winds of war, or Israel, forgotten and deserted, would all of these have become phantom communities, had it not have been for the living dreams of those who survived?

It now appears these "phantom" villages were not listed in the official 1970 census as having the Land Claims Settlement Act requirement of 13 residents needed to qualify as a village entitled, says the disputed article, to thousands of acres of public land. As to the new born child who maintained a garden each summer, hunted deer, elk and rabbit, can we ignore the fact were these things not done for the child, there would now be no child? Were the hopes, fears and prayers of those who looked to the future in developing the nation we now cherish, not have become a reality, could we still be a phantom nation?

This writer, an Alaska native from the village of Yakutat, has failed, through undesired experiences, to reside in Yakutat before, during nor after any official census. Is he, therefore, a phantom name on paper? Is his registration as a shareholder of Yak-Yat-Quann, the village corporation, to be disputed as a fallacy? The blood, sweat, and tears of those who walked that land before me are now the spirit absorbed within the ground of that land and, the same as Voltaire, I will defend to the death my right to call that land my land, in the future, my sons land.

The question then, remains. What is a phantom community? Is it to become the awakening of a dream turning into reality, only to become slaughtered by the use of words? There must be a better way to resolve the problems of Alaska Natives,

or else we, like our villages, become phantom's.

Sincerely,
Ronald Mallott

Doctors

June 1, 1979

Dear Editor:

Several local doctors (???) have made a startling momentous, far-reaching, and simultaneous discovery advancing ?? medical science several hundred years by their diagnosing and discovery of Blue Flu in about 100 cases.

They should immediately be hailed and lauded - that is, they should be hailed with paving bricks and lauded by the State of Alaska Medical Board to do their quacking south of the 50th parallel.

Yours truly
J.W. Graham

Long dog ride

Star Route A Box 252
Willow, Alaska 99688

Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission
Box 570
Barrow, Alaska 99723

Gentlemen:

We have just completed 2100 miles of dog sledding from Anchorage to Barrow in Support of subsistence life-style and Eskimo Whaling, which included 1049 miles of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race from Anchorage to Nome.

We would like to extend our thanks to the village people for the hospitality extended to

us along the trail. Their welcome made all the trail hardships worthwhile and the trip most enjoyable. And we want to thank the Alaska Federation of Natives and their President, Morrie Thompson, for their endorsement of our travels.

We thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to visit first hand the villagers and whalers along the coast of Alaska's North Shore and see the need for the whale for food and by-products for village life-style. To personally experience a whale hunt at Point Hope with Joe Towkshpa and crew was one of the highlights of our trip. Your people are not only hardy people, but have demonstrated to us their ability to be conservative of the Arctic wildlife.

The need for subsistence life in the Arctic has been impressed upon us after experiencing the hardships of the region. The dependence on wild life is the mainstay of the Eskimo culture and life-style. We find it impossible for persons of another region to be capable of establishing rules and laws for people of such far removed areas as the Arctic. The opinion shared by us has been that the Eskimos should have first-say about the use of the animals of their region and we continue to have that opinion. And we feel your efforts to continue subsistence life-style should be greatly supported by all people of Alaska.

The attitude of your people holds a great promise for your future success.

Sincerely,

Del Allison, Musher
Anchorage to Barrow,
Feb - May 1979

Ron Aldrich, Musher
Anchorage to Barrow,
Feb - May 1979