

# Film makers seek money for all-Native production

by Carl Gidlund

Tundra Times

A group of independent film makers is attempting to raise \$2.5 million for a movie on a 17th Century Yupik leader that would be shot in Alaska next year.

New York producer Lois Dino of the newly formed Dancingbear Productions said an all-Native cast of 150-160 would be used in the two-hour theater and television film "Winter Warrior."

Other Natives would be involved in technical aspects of the production, she said.

The film would be based on legends of the Yupik hero Apanuugpak passed down through about 20 generations, then finally recounted by Toksook Bay village elder Billy Lincoln to Juneau author David Hunsaker.

Shooting would begin early next spring on Nelson Island, about 75 miles west of Bethel, with Lincoln as the principal narrator of the story.

His tale describes how Apanuugpak took part in, then finally ended, regional wars.

Lincoln, in his 80s, speaks only Yupik, Hunsaker said. English "voiceover" translation would be provided by one of the 400 residents of Toksook Bay.

According to Dino, she and fellow producer Jim Simard of Portland, Ore. have already secured partial financing from the National Public Television series American Playhouse.

Although the level of American Playhouse funding can't be determined until after that organization collects from its contributors, Dino said the organization typically provides about \$500,00 for such projects.

According to Dino, the film would be released in early 1988 to motion picture houses before being televised.

She said after production is complete next November, major contributors would be given many of the "museum quality" props and costumes being made for the film by Toksook Bay villagers.

Nelson Islanders also are building a 17th Century Yupik village that will be used as the primary set for the film and later maintained as a museum.

Hunsaker said he was approached by village elders about the film project after completion of his 1984 play "Yup'ik Antigone." Since then, he said, he has been working with Lincoln and other elders to adapt

Apanuugpak's story to screen form.

Dino, who formerly produced for New York City's public television station WNET, spent the last two years with the Sundance Institute in Utah.

That organization was formed in 1980 by actor Robert Redford to encourage and support the work of talented independent American film makers, she said.

"Winter Warrior" was one of nine projects selected out of 600 to participate in Sundance's 1986 Script Development/Film Laboratory Workshop, according to Dino.

Sundance also is contributing a \$50,000 Panavision 35mm camera package for use in "Winter Warrior," she said.

Alaskans with questions related to the project may write or call Dancingbear Productions, Box 796, Juneau 99802, phone 789-3486.

Checks should be endorsed to the Association of Village Council President's Winter Warrior Fund (ACVP — Winter Warrior) in care of that address.