

"I may not agree with what you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it" -VOLTAIRE

Editorial Comment

THE ALASKA NATIVE COALITION IS A NEW VOICE FOR TRIBALISM

'In its present form, we believe the legislation will lead to the concentration of the control of the ANCSA corporations in the hands of a few and the disenfranchisement of many Natives from their land and their heritage.' Those were the words of David Case, well known Anchorage attorney, as he concluded his analysis of S. 2065, a bill, otherwise referred to as the '1991 Legislative Package,' which many hope will amend ANCSA.

That analysis was delivered to a new organization calling themselves the Alaska Native Coalition representing tribal governments, traditional councils, and IRA's. This new group met in Anchorage April 9 to formalize final plans for the April 17 House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee hearing in Washington, D.C. where the House will take up H. 4162, the companion bill to S. 2065.

Accompanying Case's analysis was a memorandum from Bob Anderson and L. Aschchenbrenner of the Native American Rights Fund, which concludes 'S. 2065 fails to accomplish its stated objective --- to protect Native lands. Instead it perpetuates the second class treatment of Alaska Native tribes. Major tribal concerns as to the extend of Indian Country and the protection of subsistence are not even addressed. In short, S. 2065 is simply unacceptable unless substantially amended or separate legislation such as that sponsored by the Alaska Native Coalition is passed.'

The new group is not, as some have suggested, the United Tribes of Alaska recycled. Strikingly absent is the fiery and sometimes reckless 'make my day' rhetoric espoused by UTA's leadership. UTA is defunct, and in its place is another voice speaking for tribalism of Alaska Native lands.

At the helm of ANC is Willie Kasayulie, a quiet activist from Southwest Alaska who will travel to D.C. next week along with John Borbridge, Jr. an articulate Southeasterner who has a wealth of experience on ANCSA issues, and Al Goozmer from the Native Village of Tyonek.

The leadership of ANC does not see themselves as 'anti-AFN,' and they appear willing to work with all sides of the 1991 issues. In turn, AFN's President Janie Leask pledged cooperation with this group and invited a representative to AFN's Board meeting in May.

AN ATTACK ON SENATOR SACKETT: WHAT'S THE POINT?

Once again, an influential Alaska Native leader has come under attack by Anchorage's 'Good Morning Newspaper.' In an April 10 front page story, the Anchorage Daily News charged Senator John Sackett from Ruby with spending contributions on his own, staff's expenses. Although the Alaska Public Offices Commission was quoted in that same story to say 'Sackett doesn't appear to have violated state law, though his expenditures reporting may be technically incorrect,' the Daily News article implies that Senator Sackett is somehow behaving improperly if not illegally.

Anchorage's second largest newspaper, in its frenzy to inform the public will view with alarm the withholding of any scrap of paper by our public officials and has been known to fish notes out of garbage cans. Woe to those who don't cooperate with their zealous reporters. They could find themselves, like Senator Frank Ferguson from Kotzebue, the subject of viperous editorials and tasteless cartoons.

What is the point of the front page story on Senator John Sackett anyway? So he campaigns on a Bush schedule, does that make him a bad guy?