

## We as Alaska Natives must keep Informed

There are many things happening across the state that directly affect the future of Alaska Natives. For example, subsistence legislation is pending in the Alaska Legislature, 1991 amendments to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act are now being considered in Congress and there are attacks being waged, through the budgetary process, on federal programs administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Health Service for the benefit of Alaska Natives...

We as Alaska Natives must keep informed of the events and issues that affect us and determine the ways in which we wish to respond to the events affecting our lives. Hopefully this column, which appears twice a month through the courtesy of the *Tundra Times*, will supplement other sources you already rely on to keep yourself

informed.

But I prefer this not be a one-way process. I choose column topics primarily based on current happenings and current concerns. If you wish to express a particular viewpoint, I would appreciate hearing from you. While I hope column subjects will spark your interest, if you have suggestions for other subjects, please feel free to bring them to my attention.

As you might expect, from time to time I plan to bring you up-to-date on happenings among AFN boards. Many of the groups — such as the tribal government and 1991 steering committees and the village board — meet monthly and their progress is swift. I may also wish to inform you on the progress of legislative issues similar to those mentioned above.

However, there are other items which I want to include — mainly the

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good things happening among our people. For example, young Alaska Native athletes will soon be gathering in Anchorage to compete in the 16th Annual Statewide Native Youth Olympics. NYO organizers expect about 200 athletes in the seventh through 12th grades to compete in nine traditional Eskimo events April 18 and 19 at the University of Alaska Sports Facility.

The NYO presents a unique opportunity for our youth to increase their knowledge of their own heritage and through the competition, share our

culture with others.

1986 has already been a year of accomplishments for Alaska Natives. In February, the Alaska Congressional delegation introduced legislation into the U.S. Congress which, if approved, will correct deficiencies in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. However, as I look ahead, 1986 will also be a year of hard work for Natives. We will have to work together to see that the 1991 legislation is approved as you, the delegates to the AFN conventions, wanted it to be. We will also have to work hard to assure that federal programs are adequately maintained and thus continued assistance to Alaska Natives remains in place. We will also have to closely follow the progress of the subsistence legislation in the Alaska Legislature to assure that our lifestyle is preserved.