

Siberian writer wants to tie knots with Alaska Natives

A small office in Fairbanks was one of several locations where Alaskans took part last week in a modest but gratifying effort to strengthen ties between two peoples who once were much closer.

The Tundra Times hosted a small reception for Yuri Sergeevich Rytkheu, a Chukchi-Eskimo writer who is visiting Alaska for a month in an attempt to open lines of communications between the Natives of Alaska and the Natives of Siberia.

The reception provided a meeting place for Rytkheu and representatives of the Association of Interior Eskimos, based in Fairbanks, and the North Slope Borough, headquartered in Barrow. Both organizations have attempted in recent years to include Natives of Soviet Siberia in a variety of cultural activities.

Rytkheu recalls extensive communication between the Chukchis of his home region of East Cape and the Eskimos of Little Diomed, St. Lawrence Island and the northwest coast of Alaska before the end of World War II. Interspersed with descriptions of Native life in Siberia, the prolific writer listened to John Heffle, chairman of the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics (and president of the Assoc. of Interior Eskimos) describe his five-year effort to bring Siberians to the annual Native games. Rytkheu proposed bypassing normal diplomatic channels at the invitational stage and writing directly to the president of the autonomous region where most of the 13,000 Chukchi people live.

Greets Native

representatives at

Tundra Times

reception

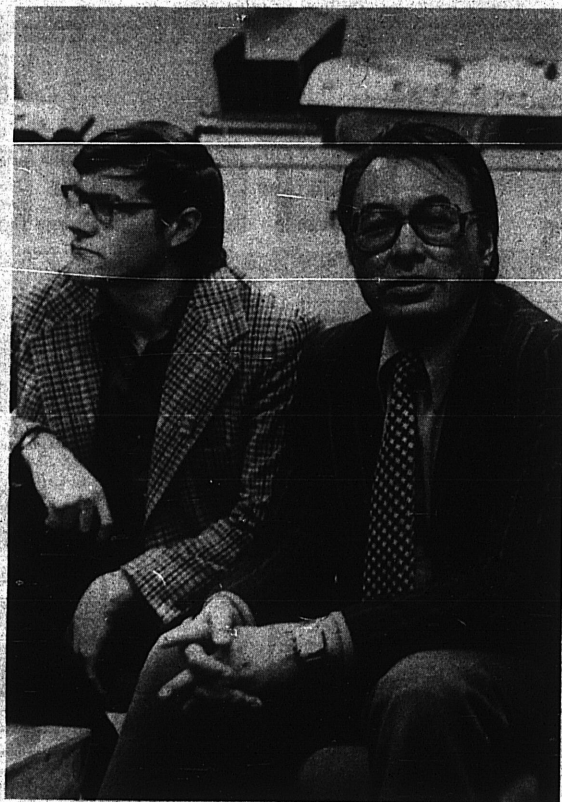
Rytkheu also listened intently to a description of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, an ongoing political effort to unite Eskimo peoples under all flags to solve common problems and carry out cultural exchanges. He indicated that since the president of his native region is highly placed in the Soviet system of government, she may be able to contribute significantly to improving communication between American and Soviet Native people.

Rytkheu was born in 1930 in Uelen on East Cape, directly across from Alaska, worked in Provideniya during World War II, and in 1948 went to the university in Leningrad, involved in the development of Chukchi dictionaries and literature. He became a writer, novelist and journalist of national and international stature during the 1950's. He has written many books, novels, short stories, newspaper and magazine articles on Native life in Siberia amongst the Chukchis and Eskimos of Chukotka, with frequent reference to Native life in Chukotka under communism and in Alaska under capitalism. He is vice president of the Soviet Writer's Union. He now lives in Leningrad with his wife and two sons, but maintains close ties with his Native Chukotka and with Chukchi and Eskimo villages.

Rytkheu speaks Chukchi, Russian and English and will visit at least Fairbanks, Nome, St. Lawrence Island, Wales and Diomed.



Rytkheu scans literature on the Inuit Circumpolar Conference at Tundra Times reception. Photo by Bryant Tikik.



Yuri Sergeevich Rytkheu, with his interpreter, Dan St. John. Photo by T. M. Galileo-Richardson.



A man and his dog team in the snows of Alaska, accented by a bright sunset, is the subject of the newest Kodak Colorama, on display at Grand Central Station in New York Jan. 16 through Feb. 20. The photo was taken by Bob Spring during the 1100-mile Iditarod Trail Dogsled Race from Anchorage to Nome. The Colorama, measuring 18 feet by 60 feet, is the world's largest transparency. Courtesy Eastman Kodak Co.