

Life in Alaska has purpose for woman far away

By June Iue Degnan

To gaze upon the heavens, while the northern lights dance across them as though they were paying homage to a sage.

In the frosty chill of the evening, surrounded by loved ones to romp and roll in God's white harvest of new fallen snow. Piercing through the silence, the melodious sound of the snowy arctic owl, calling to her mate, "Who-oo, Who-ooo, it's cold, come near."

Far off in the distance, the highest peak in North America, Denali, home of the Gods, rests peacefully as though she has just caught her breath from the last blustering williwaw.

It is a midnight spectacular, transcending all of technology with its plastic television. Nature, the beginning and center of all creation. The natural state of life offers tranquility and value for those who are brave enough to venture from the safety of self and hustle of Capitalism.

The brave, the Eskimo, chosen by God to live nearer to him, at the top of the globe, far away from the circus of civilization. There was a reason and a purpose for this tribe to occupy the northernmost sector of the State of Alaska.

The Eskimo, because of his unfaltering reverence and allegiance to God and Mother Nature, who views the two as one whole combined entity and Supreme, live in Nature's sanctuary known as Alaska.

As a student of the combined deity, one whose life travels has allowed her to examine the entire continents of the Western Hemisphere and its inhabitants, I can now reflect and confirm that her homeland of Alaska is a sanc-

tuary for God and Mother Nature.

God and Mother Nature, the beginning of life, the giver of hope, the warm hand of encouragement, the kiss on the cheek, ever abiding, assurance that you are never alone as you travel through life.

The entire state of Alaska is a mirror to the beauty and strength of God and Mother Nature. Words fail to give adequate description to all that the eye will behold and the peace it offers one's soul.

Beauty and peace would suffice if only two words were allotted to describe this sanctuary located just below the Arctic Circle, on the Norton Sound, washed by the frigid Bering Sea, where the tundra meets the timber and the rivers run clear.

Located in this vast wilderness is Unalakleet, a reservation village whose population is a mere 450 Native global aborigine, namely Eskimo, huddled closely in what Arnold Toynbee refers to as a primitive culture.

Unalakleet, in the Yupik dialect of Eskimo means the "north wind." How it acquired the name is reinforced daily, for the north wind doth blow sometimes within the 24-hour period known as day.

Aside from its natural beauty, excellent climate and extreme remoteness, the area is known as the migrating bird and duck sanctuary, their summer nesting roost. Herds of caribou can be observed roaming across the endless plains of the tundra.

Within the hilly timberline, moose and porcupine share the space as blood brothers, although they differ in stature.

The balance of life here in the arctic has always been symbiotic, mutually beneficial,

the shared responsibility for continuity of life, is reflected in the lifestyle of the tiniest lemming to the massive polar bear.

There is a time and space for all of God's creatures and all proceed as though they felt the pulse of creation ever-present on the earth's surface.

With life, as in the living, there is rhythm, just as the heart has a beat, so does the whole of creation beat rhythmically since the beginning of time.

Life has a purpose, just as it has a beat; it is rhythmic, harmonious, simplistic and peaceful when one has a purpose in living. To live, to love life, to feel, to laugh, to cry, to sigh then die, it's life, it's now, not yesterday or tomorrow, but today!

Today, what does it mean to a member of a primitive culture of global aborigine? A day to rejoice, shouting tumultuously across the tundra, or silently serene in meditation of life's past experiences, prayerful gratitude for life-giving breath, to see, to feel and to know it is God's storehouse that she has access to in her search for the truth.

The cultural religion of symbiotic interdependency and sharing of all of life's bounties places one on an equal foundation with all of creation.

To look upon man as an upright creation of God, who may have progressed educationally, but not spiritually, or he would not be abusing the bounties of nature as he is so blatantly doing, now.

The abuse of the land within the arctic was the building

of the oil pipeline, scaring the fragile tundra, which only seeds once in a lifetime, never to appear again after a ravage of a tractor blade has scraped her tender virgin complexion of moss and lichen.

With the tundra you are given one chance; abuse it and it disappears, just as the sun disappears during a thundering storm.

Mother Nature, gentle, loving, yet firm and commanding, a balance to insure the continuity of life, love her and she returns the love abundantly; abuse her, and she retaliates, revere her and she'll guard you with her life.

Friendship, mutually beneficial; symbolic the only kind of love given in the Arctic, my ideal for love and life.

After tasting all of this you ask, would I want to do it

again? The same way, having tasted the fruits of nature, heard the symphony of our feathered friends, drink the wild lue tea from the tundra, and caught the red salmon from the Bering Sea?

You bet I would, over again and follow the same path with its tears, cheers, fears, laughter and love; for I have only just begun to live!

At this time in my life to have experienced all of this and still continue to grow, to look upon life with hope, to love God and Mother Nature more deeply each day and still enjoy the humor of life and understand how fortunate I am to be loved in return.

Oh yes, again! Fully, completely and in the same moccasins as I wear now, Thank God for life, love, you, me, us, and Today!