

Klukwan artifact controversy continues

A controversy which concerns the ownership of a number of valuable artifacts kept in the Whale Clan house in Klukwan,

a small village north of Haines, has caused the village to block its roads off to the outside world.

Estella Johnson, Whale Clan leader, who lives in Arizona for health reasons, sold the artifacts to a Seattle art dealer for \$700,000, the Southeast Alaska Empire reported.

When the villagers heard that a truck was on its way to Klukwan to pick up the artifacts they put several trees

across the only entrance to the village.

The villagers claim that the artifacts belong to the entire clan and the leaders are only caretakers.

A spokeswoman for the Michael Johnson Art Gallery in Seattle said the company had no part in the sending of the truck to remove the artifacts. She indicated that it was probably sent by Ms. Johnson.

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Klukwan artifacts . . .

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The chief concern of the gallery was that the artifacts not be lost. The spokeswomen said that threats had been made against the property by members of other clans.

A Haines magistrate has refused to issue an injunction

sought by the Seattle art gallery for the removal of the artwork.

Joe Hotch of Klukwan said Monday afternoon that the blockade had been removed from the road and as of then no legal actions had been taken.