

Googie blends traditional with modern world

By BILL HESS

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As she sat dressed in a -skin parka beneath hot television lights, outgoing Queen Googie Glazier epitomized the blending of an ancient subsistence culture with an on-rushing modern world. A second year student in business administration at the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, Glazier had tanned and smoked the moose-skin which made her parka herself, along with some help from her mother.

She had labored over the outstanding Athabascan, flower-design beadwork upon it for over a year, and now sat before the most modern television and still cameras, having her work and personality preserved for future generations.

This mixture of old culture and new technology was most appropriate, for Googie believes that the subsistence culture and the modern world must advance side by side into the future, or much of value will be lost.

"I think the most major concern of Native people today is preserving their culture," she had explained earlier from the lobby of the dorm in which she and the contestants who were hoping to replace her as queen were staying. Here, she wore a sleek pants outfit, in which she would have looked fashionable and sharp in the heart of New York City.

"I feel a lot of it is slipping away as the older people are dying. The younger people aren't keeping it all."

Yet, said Glazier, much is being done to keep the traditions alive. "There are classes in school which are being taught by village people. Language. Cultural enrichment." Although she speaks with fine English and radiates a poise which would be appreciated in just about any group, Native or otherwise, Glazier claims the subsistence lifestyle as her own.

"I have grown up with Native culture," she stressed. "With subsistence hunting, berry picking, beading, with the songs and dances, and many of the other traditional customs." She has heard first hand what the elders have to say, hopes to learn more from them, and then to teach it to those coming up behind her.

Although she can not speak the Athabascan language fluently, Glazier knows many words and would welcome the opportunity to receive instruction which would allow her to become fluent. "Maybe someday they'll teach Athabascan here at the University, she noted.

Certainly, the traditional clothing which Glazier wore to win her title and then as Queen speaks well of her subsistence lifestyle. Not only did she do the tanning, beading, and sewing, but her brother, Tim, shot the moose from which the hide came. The entire outfit was trimmed in beaver, the ruffs of the parka were made of wolf, and the mukluks were sewn by Lily Northway, wife of traditional Chief Walter Northway.

"In our village of Northway, we have a store, and we go to the movie, but we still turn back to our traditional ways. We hunt, we fish, we have the potlatch."

Some opponents of Alaska's subsistence law claim village people do not need the priority, saying that Native corporations supposedly have lots of money and village people can get along just fine by going to the store like everybody else.

Not so, said Glazier. Native corporations must keep re-investing their earnings to try and build themselves up, and individual stockholders see little if any money returning in. Without that subsistence

fare, many would not be able to afford much nutritious food at all.

Besides, Glazier stresses, subsistence is much more than just hunting and fishing. "It's been our way of life for hundreds and hundreds of years. The corporations may be able to make the villages better, but we still want to live off the land, even if we are developing."

It'll take a great deal of effort from many people, Glazier says, to protect and keep the subsistence lifestyle strong. "I don't feel I myself can do much about it. But if we all get together, and work hard at it, we can get something done!"

Glazier has not decided what she wants to do with her life once she is finished with college. She feels she would probably like to find work which would allow her to "help with my corporation."

She is certain she will stay in Alaska, and she is certain her reign as Miss WEIO will help. "When I was first asked to run, my first words were, 'are you crazy?' I was very shy . . . being queen has really brought me out of my shell." Glazier gained confidence through speaking to crowds of people, and by modeling her traditional clothing before the eyes of many.

Besides appearing at WEIO events, Glazier won the talent award during the National Congress of American Indians pageant, attended the Festival of Native Arts as a VIP, handed out the medals for Native sports during the Arctic Winter Games, spoke at Native Youth Leadership Conference in Anchorage and participated with the Native Dress Review.

"I'd like to encourage other Native girls to enter. It has

really helped me. It has opened my eyes to Native issues."

Before, Glazier says she was unaware of just who many of the Native leaders were, and she did not know there was an NCAI, advocating for all the Native peoples of Alaska and the Lower 48.

The response from others has been rewarding. "A lot of people will tell me they are very proud of me for being Queen, and they encourage me. Little kids will say, 'you're Queen? What's it like? Older

people will smile and shake my hand."

Pageant coordinator Ardrey Armstrong praised Glazier as one of the best Queens ever, and hopes to help her enter more pageants, perhaps including Miss Alaska. Armstrong feels Glazier has excellent chances of winning.

It has been good for Glazier, and she expresses sadness at leaving. "I had my year. Now we should give the new queen a chance at representing her people."



Outgoing Queen, Googie Glazier

PHOTO BY BILL HESS