

Summer of Our New Happiness

by Joseph James

I am fortunate in having plenty of time to read, to study and think. I can see things that I would not see if I was busy with just trying to stay alive.

I see something good happening in Alaska with the Natives, my own people. I see many of us looking around and seeing what has been happening to us, ever since the first white man came to our land. I see them gathering together and talking, asking hard questions about our future; what can we do for our people, what can we leave for our children, our grand-children?

I also see many mistakes, the mistakes of any "trial-and-error" learning process. But they are the mistakes of a people awake, who are doing something. They are good mistakes, not to be ashamed of.

There is much we must do to protect our future, our culture, our relationship with the land. There is much learning to be done; what do

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'It is coming, the Summer of our new Happiness'?"*

we really want? What do we really need? How do we deal with the white man and his "law" — his words on paper which sometimes do not really mean what they seem to?

We do not quite know yet, for sure, but we are looking. And as each day passes, we understand a little better. And as the moon follows the sun, as cause brings effect, I think that I can safely say that many of our problems, our sorrows will soon start to pass away.

Just as the flowers tell us that Summer is near, our children are telling us that a new season is near. We see our children doing two things; they are becoming educated with the knowledge of the white man and also with the wisdom of our elders. We see our children learning how to survive in two worlds.

This can mean only one thing, that a new season is near, a season that I would call; "The summer of our new happiness." A time in which our people will not hurt for food, for clothing, for warmth or for peace.

This "Summer of our new happiness" is not here yet, but we can see the signs of it's coming, we can prepare to welcome it with confidence. Yes, the signs are clear, just listen to Raven, hear for yourself in his words; will he not say "It is coming, the Summer of our new happiness?"
