

# Support Eskimo athletes at World Olympics

The following letter was sent to Alaska Sen. Frank Ferguson:

As you know, the United States will be hosting the 1984 World Olympics in Los Angeles. Athletes and spectators from all over the world will be there to observe these athletes compete for top honors. There will also be numerous types of social and cultural activities for these people.

Alaska also has an Olympic event each year. The World Eskimo-Indian Olympics. This is an event held at the end of each July in Fairbanks. Athletes and Eskimo and Indian dancers gather from all over the state and Canada for three days of competition.

These games are games which have been played by the Alaskan Native people for centuries. These were more than just sport as we know it, but were a means of demonstrating the various types of skills needed in order to survive in this harsh arctic environment. Games of endurance, strength, agility, balance, all of which demanded total concentration.

Surviving was the way of life, there were no set hours or pay in terms of dollars. One

had to be a good hunter and with that came those skills mentioned. Through these games, the young people were able to learn what types of skills were needed to survive. It was quickly learned that people of the north had to be tough of body and mind, otherwise chances of survival were greatly reduced.

In 1961, Frank Whaley and the late Bud Hagberg organized the Native games because they felt that they would be lost, also they were going to be used to promote tourism. The Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce also was involved in the annual event.

Then the Tundra Times, with Howard Rock, took over these games, which became known as the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics. Each year, these games grew in the number of participants, to the point where the Olympics IS the largest Native social event in the state. The Olympics are now on their own, and continue to grow in popularity, inside the Native community and out.

People of all ages compete in these games and in watching, one can picture the types

of life that our ancestors lived. But, there is something more. Even during the stiffest of competition, there is a SHARING of techniques and coaching between the athletes. This is something rarely, if ever, seen in other sports. But we must share so that these games can grow. Sharing was and still is, a very important part of our lifestyle today.

We would like very much to be able to share our games with these other athletes who are coming from all over the world. To be able to promote our State of Alaska. More importantly, to promote our culture together with our young and old alike.

We seek your help in allowing us to demonstrate these Native games and dance to the 1984 World Olympics. We realize that they are still two (2) years away, but action needs to be taken now.

I am sure that there will probably be many questions in regard to this. Please feel free to contact me at anytime. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Reggie Joule  
Vice President  
World Eskimo-Indian Olympics

## Keep Tanana Hospital open

To the Editor:

Keep Tanana Hospital open! It has been very helpful to Alaskan Natives for so many years.

The hospital stands tall and proud for as long as I can remember. The management has been excellent, acceptable, etc. . . .

The Natives are totally dependent of the hospital. Hospitals in Alaska are pretty scarce and highly expensive.

The old Native people feel at home when under medical care at Tanana Hospital because the town is located at an Indian village. Prejudice is somewhat a problem in large

city such as Fairbanks, etc. So undoubtedly unexpected occurrence may come up.

Little is really known about the mind of a white person. I myself experience that tragedy.

Please take my support and use it with your action as much as you possibly can.

Thanks for your concern.

A Concerned Person