

Sealaska plans second celebration of clans

from The Sealaska Shareholder

Clan elders of the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian Nations are planning a second gathering in the history of the three nations—Celebration '84. The elders have set May 9, 10, and 11 as the date at the Juneau Centennial Hall.

Celebration '82, the historical first gathering of the three nations, led to three days of sharing songs, stories and histories. Portions of the '82 gathering were televised live statewide and the entire three days were video taped by the Sealaska Heritage Foundation (SHF). Sound tracks of the ceremonial songs recorded have been transcribed in English as well as Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian and are in the archives of the Sealaska Heritage Foundation.

The Clan Elders who planned Celebration '82 feel the event should take place at least once every two years. The Sealaska Heritage Foundation has indicated that it will support efforts on part of the three nations to plan a gathering every two years.

Judson Brown, Chairman of the Elders Advisory Board said, "The involvement of elder representatives from the three nations will enable this event to adhere closely to a traditional agenda. It will have two Naa Kaa Nee's (Master of Ceremonies): Dr. Walter Sobol-

eff and Cyril George. They are both well versed in traditional ceremonial proceedings and will do much in keeping things on track," Brown said.

There is emphasis placed on the gathering as being a cooperative effort on behalf of the three Southeast Nations of Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian people. The Sealaska Heritage Foundation is maintaining a low profile in the planning process. Rather than doing the planning, the Foundation is coordinating the efforts of the actual planners that include Paul Henry of Yakutat, Austin Hammond of Haines, Willis Peters of Hoonah,

Thomas Young of Sitka, Helen Sanderson of Hydaburg and Russel Hayword of Metlakatla. Judson Brown of Seattle chairs the committee.

David Katzeek, President of SHF said that this year's festivities are shaping up to be similar to '82's but with some changes. "We're trying not to make the same mistakes we made in '82. The Foundation's role is clearer in this event. . . it will be that of a tool for the elders of the three nations to use in the preparation of their gathering and to be on hand to record the event for historical purposes," Katzeek stated. He also

said he hopes that some of the noted artists and craftsmen of the three nations will be on hand during the event to share their ideas and display their work.

SHF's cultural data-base development project will have their Apple II computers set up and will be demonstrating their development of instructional materials for those interested in the latest instructional aids to learn to speak Tlingit, Haida or Tsimshian.

A major development is the well-rounded spectrum of Native craftsmen and artists who have donated some of their best

creations to the Heritage Foundation to use at the celebration's fund raising events. Notable artists who have contributed work include Frieda Deising, Robert Davidson, Nathan Jackson, Jo Ann George, Steve Brown, Esther Littlefield, Robert Davis, Susan Beck, Kate Waters, Mich Beasley, Myron Johnson, Fred Bemis, Ernestine Glessing, and Norman Jackson.

Austin Hammond of Haines said the Gei Sun Dancers may perform a play based on the traditional story of how Raven stole the box containing the sun, moon and stars for Celebration '84.