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## NEWSLETTER

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## BUSH JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETS IN BETHEL

You too can be one--

## Alaska's Native American Dentist Fort Yukon next

By NANCY BRELSFORD

"For too long, most people in top professions have looked upon Native Americans as ethnic liabilities. By ethnic liability, I mean that our nation and culture has been evaluated as a way of living that has worked to one's disadvantage.

"Acculturation and assimilation haven't worked. We live, we die as Native Americans. Most people don't see us potentially growing into a healthy self-determined nation."

These statements are the views of Dr. Herman Fredenberg, a Menominee Indian dentist.

Dr. Fredenberg is a highly trained health professional at Alaska Native Medical Center, Anchorage. He is one of two Native American doctors of dental surgery in the United States. The first is Dr. George Bluespruce, D.D.S., director, Office of Native American Programs, Washington, D.C.

Dr. George Bluespruce is a very significant individual in Dr. Fredenberg's life. Because of his encouragement and example, Dr. Fredenberg decided to become a dentist, a doctor whose specialty is the care of teeth and surrounding areas, including the prevention and elimination of decay, the replacement of missing teeth with artificial ones (prosthodontics), and the correction of malocclusions, which are the improper meeting of the upper and lower teeth and bone (orthodontics).

Dr. Fredenberg's earlier ambitions to become a dentist go back to childhood experiences at Keshena, Wis. on the Menominee Reservation. He distinctly remembers that all the kids on the reservation were afraid of the dentist, who was used as an example of a bad medicine man.

That's when he decided that he could change the picture of the mean dentist to that of someone helpful and caring. The rest of his earlier life experiences were spent at Window Rock, Ariz., and He Dog, S.D.

He graduated from the University of New Mexico with a bachelor of arts degree in liberal arts. He applied and was accepted into the dental school at the University of Kentucky, Lexington. He completed his dental school in three years, as this university had an optional three or four-year program.

As he remarked, "If a person can do it in three years, let him do it. Some others may take four, some five."

Dr. Fredenberg is one of a number of Native Americans who discredited the "ethnic liability" concept of the American education system. His own life says that Native Americans can become a very strong



**CHECKING THE FEEL**—Dr. Fredenberg likes working with older people. "I can give them something they haven't had before. There's a great sense of satisfaction in doing this." Background, his right-hand assistant, Nancy Craig.

part in national health delivery, and education of their own people.

Of his own dental school training, he said, "Even if a person didn't pass the required Dental Aptitude Test (DAT) the first time, it doesn't prove he wouldn't be a good dentist. I myself failed it twice before I passed it."

He goes on to say, "Nowadays, the DAT is not the only requirement to get into dental school. American education system has finally gotten around to using an idea called 'social sensitivity,' which means that they personally evaluate a student's over-all background. Grade point average isn't the only criteria they are using today."

In order to pass the DAT, he himself found study materials. "They have review books and mammals to study different sections of the test. A lot of it has to do with how well you understand the statement or paragraph.

The test covers college level math, chemistry, physics and interpretation of data. This is by no means all of it. The review books help you to organize and understand what you read. In this way, it helps you get prepared to know how to take the test."

Alaska Native health consumer groups have placed a high priority upon the need for dental services. Out of a national total of 120,000 dentists, only two are Native Americans. Based on a U.S. population of 210 million, that means 540 additional Native American dentists are needed to take care of approximately one million Native Americans.

As the Association of American Indian Physicians says, "The need for American Indians to become health professionals is enormous. The need becomes emphasized even more by the future needs of the Indian com-

munity.

"Nearly every undertaking in Indian life — education, housing, employment, transportation, art, or other — can be accomplished to a greater degree by a healthy people. For this reason alone the need for American Indians as health professionals is deserving of everyone's fullest concern."

Native Americans in dentistry. Where are they? Out of a staff of nine dentists, Dr. Fredenberg is the only Native American at Indian Health Service, Anchorage. Recorded dental patient visits are approximately 23,000 per year, or about 100 patients per working day, which would average out to about 12 patients per dentist per day.

The type of services performed could be anything from prosthodontics, orthodontics, endodontics (root-canal treatment), periodontics (concerned with diseases of the bone and tissues supporting the teeth), oral surgery, fillings, and extractions, removing of teeth.

For a person interested in the field of dentistry, there are approximately 58 dental schools in the United States. They have all different admission requirements, and the information they send should contain all information, including available scholarships.

The field of dentistry is wide open for Native Americans. As Dr. George Bluespruce, D.D.S., and Dr. Fredenberg, D.D.S., have shown, it can be done. They were ethnic liabilities that turned this profession into a positive experience for Native Americans.

You, too, can put D.D.S. (Doctor of Dental Surgery) after your name.



Galen, the celebrated Greek physician, was convinced that pearls had therapeutic value.

The Bush Justice Implementation Committee (Gordon Jackson, Phillip Guy, Timothy Towarak and William Tegoseak attending) met in Bethel on the 30th and 31st of October. The committee held hearings and conducted investigations of the juvenile group home and jail in the community.

The committee adopted resolutions supporting village hearings by the Marine Mammal Commission prior to transfer of federal jurisdiction to the state, and supporting placement of a Native Fish and Wildlife Protection officer for the Bethel Service Area.

The committee adopted a resolution based on its jail investigations advocating a grant from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration to construct a second group home in Bethel to eliminate the present practice of lodging juveniles in the jail due to lack of room in existing group home facilities.

The commission staff followed-up these resolutions with testimony before the Marine Mammal Commission in Anchorage and a presentation before the Human Resources Committee of the Alaska Federation of Natives.

The staff has learned that the Departments of Interior and Commerce will hold formal hearings on the transfer of jurisdiction sometime after April 1976.

Those persons or organizations who want hearings held in their area should write Mr. Robert Eisenbud, General Counsel, Marine Mammal Commission, 1625 Eye Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

The committee staff also testified before the Governor's

Commission on the Administration of Justice in Sitka on Nov. 26 regarding the Bethel Group Home.

As a result of that testimony, the Criminal Justice Planning Agency will send a technical assistance team of three to Bethel to assist the community in development of a grant application to renovate an existing structure as a group home.

Since the Bethel Committee meeting, the Bush Justice field workers, Joe Curran and Evan McKenzie have made a 10-day field visit to Ft. Yukon and the village of Chalkyitsik.

Joe and Evan are now in the Nome and Kotzebue area and will remain in the area until Dec. 19 visiting the villages of Kivalina and Teller. Joe will spend Christmas with his family in Nome and return to Anchorage via Unalakleet.

The project expects to put out its reports on the Dillingham and Ft. Yukon field visits during the months of December and January.

The committee's next meeting will be in Ft. Yukon during Jan. 10 and 11. There will be public hearings and the public is invited to attend to inform the committee of the particular criminal justice problem of the area. Kathy Wood of Gwitchin Ginhyke is co-ordinating arrangements for the committee meeting.

## NCAI picks Gordon Jackson

Gordon Jackson, executive vice-president, Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc. recently received word of his election as Alaska area vice president, National Congress of American Indians (NCAI).

"I intend to accept this position and use it to feed Alaska Federation of Natives' and region's positions into the nationwide Indian organization. I personally believe it has been one of our weaknesses as a statewide organization — we haven't been in touch or utilized nationwide organizations to advocate our priorities," said Jackson.

"Examples of what happens when we aren't involved in nationwide discussions include; being left out of proposed Indian legislation, or situations like the definition of 'Indian tribe' in Public Law 93-638.

"As the definition now reads, there could be as many as 465 tribes in Alaska and each Alaskan Native

could be a member of at least four, if not five tribes.

"With the tribal consent provision as a prerequisite listed in the Indian Self Determination and Educational Assistance Act, one tribe may conceivably veto a contract therefore making it impossible to implement PL 93-638 here in Alaska.

"The current language of PL 93-638 was pushed by nationwide Indian organizations and they didn't really understand that our delivery system is through non-profit Native associations, not through the Indian tribal governments as is the case in the 'Lower 48.' If we would have been present I am certain this would not have happened."

An Alaska area vice president, Jackson will now sit on the NCAI Executive Committee. Their first meeting was scheduled for Dec. 11, 12, 1975 in Salt Lake City, Utah.