

# *Publisher's Statement*

Monday, October 1, 1962, was an important date for Alaska's Natives.

The historic Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was still nine years from passage, and Natives faced a variety of threats to their very survival.

But something very important happened on that day. It marked the first issue of the *Tundra Times*, the dream of Inupiat Paitot, an unprecedented meeting of Eskimo leaders from 20 villages held in the fall of 1961.

The leaders were gathered to fend off the threat of a plan to use nuclear explosives in Alaska's Northwest Arctic to develop a deep-water refuge. As a result of the meeting, it was decided that Native people had to have a voice of their own, so they chose Howard Rock to found a newspaper.

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Those leaders refused to believe it was impossible for an Eskimo from Point Hope who knew nothing about writing and journalism to start his own newspaper.

Their belief that there is a great need for a newspaper for Alaska's Natives proved to be true in 1962, and it has been true for 24 years since then. It remains true today.

Today, however, is a time of difficulty for this newspaper, which has faced many and varied threats in the past. For most of the paper's 24 years it has struggled against financial problems. Help has come from many directions in the past, and many are offering their assistance today.

The newspaper today faces a large debt that has taken some time to accumulate. Assistance has been forthcoming recently from a variety of sources, including Native corporations. More help is needed as the operation is streamlined and trimmed in order to cut costs.

New management has been hired for the newspaper, and the staff has been cut by more than half. Today, a core of three people remains, and they include a president-publisher, an editor and an advertising manager. Also on board to work half-time for up to six months is a business manager who is to assist the newspaper in reorganizing its operations.

New offices, smaller than half the size of the current office space, have been obtained in the Sunshine Plaza, and every area of the current operation is being carefully studied with assistance donated by an Anchorage accounting firm.

Despite the many changes, however, the *Tundra Times* plans to continue its efforts to serve Alaska Natives. The paper hopes to go forward with publishing each weekly edition in a timely fashion, and only asks its readers to be patient as we go through this vital period of transition.

The newspaper's goals as stated by Howard Rock in that first issue in 1962 will remain the same.

They are:

"First: It will be the medium to air the views of the Native organizations. It will reflect their policies and purposes as they work for the betterment of the Native peoples of Alaska. It will also reflect their aims... their hopes. It will strive to aid them in their struggle for just determination and settlement of their enormous problems.

"Second: It will strive to keep informed on matters of interest all Natives of Alaska, whether they be Eskimos of the Arctic, the Athabascans of the Interior, and other Indians and Aleuts of the Aleutian Islands."

Those goals are every bit as valid today in 1986 as they were 24 years ago in 1962. Natives still face a crushing number of problems and threats to their cultures. And the importance of having one newspaper devoted to the betterment of Alaska Natives has not been diminished through the years.

During this time of reorganization for the newspaper, assistance from people could take many forms. Among things that are needed are new subscriptions, subscription renewals, advertising, volunteer assistance for such things as moving to the new offices, suggestions for stories and volunteers to write for the newspaper.

There are many ways that people can help, and the *Tundra Times* will welcome any form of assistance.