

Alaska Man May Become International Jaycee Head

Written especially for the Tundra Times at request of Howard Rock

By KENT BRANDLEY

Australia's famous aborigines probably know very little about Alaska's Eskimos. The kangaroos of Australia have little in common with the Arctic polar bear. When it is winter here it is summer there.

Probably there is no more distant city on earth from Fairbanks, Alaska than is Sydney, Australia. But that is where one of the Tundra Times's neighbors is going on November 6.

Edward A. Merdes, a Fairbanks attorney with office in the same building as the Tundra Times, is running for World President of the Junior Chamber of Commerce International.

If Ed is elected, it will be the first time that an Alaskan has been elected to head a worldwide civic organization. It will be a great honor for Alaska and for America, Ed's supporters think.

When he arrives in Sydney after visiting Tokyo, Hong Kong, Bangkok, and Christchurch, New Zealand, he will be met by about 20 other Alaskans who will be working on his behalf in an effort to win the high office.

All of the Alaskans will be wearing parkas designed and made by Laura Wright of Fairbanks.

Merdes will meet with representatives of 80 nations. His speech to the 2,500 delegates will be translated simultaneously into various other languages through earphones.

Ed has already travelled around most of the world in his campaign for presidency of the freeworld's fastest growing young men's organization, and has met and talked informally with such people as Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands and Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

On this trip he will have lunch with the Prince of Thailand and the Prime Ministers of Australia and New Zealand. While Ed is talking, he's usually talking about Alaska and Fairbanks where he makes his home.

If Alaska picks up its international tourist trade, the Jaycees think Ed and his campaign for World President will be greatly responsible.

The Alaskans who are in Australia with Ed Merdes also hope to win new friends for the state and for Fairbanks. They will meet with



EDWARD A. MERDES

the Governor of Hawaii and will visit Jaycees in Hawaii, the Fiji Island's New Zealand and Australia.

Each Alaskan will be assigned specific countries and delegates to become acquainted with and sell on the three American candidates for world office. A big U.S. party backing Merdes and the two other candidates will feature more than 500 pounds of Alaskan King Crab, especially flown in for the occasion.

Because it is expensive to conduct such a campaign, local Jaycees are seeking contributions to the effort. All contributors are to be named in a special brochure being prepared for distribution in the countries visited.

If Ed is elected to the World Presidency of the Junior Chamber International he will continue to live in Fairbanks and travel all over the world from here. The job will last the full calendar of 1966. He will receive no special benefits and will lose the bulk of his income for the year.

The Junior Chamber International will pay for his travel and accommodations while en route on Jaycee business only.

What have Australia and Alaska in common? Ed Merdes.

It's a small world.

Editor's Note: Kent Brandley has agreed to cover Ed's trip for Alaska newspapers including the Tundra Times.