

TT Editor Howard Rock Meets Final Deadline

Howard Rock, most widely-honored Native leader, died late Tuesday night after a stubborn battle with cancer. He was founder-editor of the Tundra Times which gave Alaska's Eskimo, Indian and Aleut people a powerful, united voice and ultimately helped win a record land claims settlement from the U.S. Congress.

He was also recognized as an artist and a man of reason.

Born in Point Hope Aug. 10, 1911, as Howard Weyahok, he attended high school at White Mountain and later the University of Washington.

During World War II he

served in North Africa as a radio operator. On discharge he worked in Seattle as a jewelry designer, returning to Alaska in 1961 for a vacation. That same year he held a successful art show in Fairbanks under the sponsorship of Ralph Perdue.

In 1962, with no journalism background, Rock founded the Tundra Times at the request of Native leaders who felt their people needed a voice. Veteran journalist Tom Snapp tutored Rock, working with the weekly tabloid until it was firmly established, and funds to start the enterprise came from Dr.

Henry S. Forbes of Milton, Mass.

Throughout the next 11 years the paper struggled with debt but Rock never gave up. He encouraged the beginning of the Alaska Native movement, championed minority rights and provided a sounding board for the claims settlement.

"Perhaps more than anyone else, he (Rock) helped weld together the frontier state's 55,000 Natives for their successful years-long fight to win the largest aboriginal land claims settlement in American history," wrote Stan Patty of the Seattle

Times.

"He was their voice; at times about the only calm voice when crescendos of invective threatened to tear Alaska apart."

In 1973 Rock underwent major surgery and distastefully eyed retirement. The surgery however was more successful than retirement and he was soon back at his desk, watchdogging the disbursement of the claims settlement.

He had received national recognition and carried the heavy responsibility of serving on the Indian Arts and Crafts board for the Department of Interior. He was voted Alaskan

Man of the Year in 1974. The Tundra Times was nominated for a Pulitzer.

By January of 1976 Rock had the paper completely out of debt and began turning over some editorial responsibility to Sue Gamache, University of Alaska journalism student, who comes from Native Alaskan stock.

Rock worked until the week before his death, refusing hospitalization until he met his last newspaper deadline. He is survived by a sister, Helen Seveck, and a brother, Eebulik Rock.

He will be buried at Point Hope.

Tundra Times

25c

Tlingit

Ut kah neek Informing and Reporting

Inupiat Paitot People's Heritage

Den Nena Henash Our Land Speaks

Unanguq Tunuktauq The Aleuts Speak

Vol. 13, No. 16

Wednesday, April 21, 1976

Fairbanks, Alaska

Japanese climber sets record

(c) 1976 By LAEL MORGAN



JAPANESE MUSHER Naomi Uemura traveled some 8,000 miles along northern Arctic Coast to set a solo dogsled record. He was recently in Barrow and talked with Tundra Times reporter Lael Morgan.

— Photo by LAEL MORGAN

Polar bear hunting ban up for reconsideration

The federal ban which restricts polar bear hunting to Natives only and forbids the sale of polar bear skins, will be up for airing this summer with hearings in Washington, D. C., Anchorage and Nome, according to Jack Lentfer, research biologist for the federal Fish and Wildlife Service. And judging from the results of Lentfer's current research, reconsideration may be timely, for the Alaskan polar bear population appears

to be high and dangerously hungry.

The hunting ban was imposed under the Marine Mammal Act of December 1972 because of declining bear population. This federal law superseded a state regulation passed in July of that year, which banned the hunting of polar bears from planes.

"The state never had a chance to put their policy of hunting from the ground into effect," Lentfer recalls. "But

what it hoped for was that Natives would serve as guides."

This year hunters of Savoonga, St. Lawrence Island, shot 30 bears, a record that goes beyond the memory of their oldest hunter, and neighboring Gambell men took seven.

Eskimos speculated the bear population increase is due to lack of aerial hunting but Jim Brooks, Commissioner of the state Department of Fish and Game, believes the extraordinary success of the St. Lawrence men is due to ice conditions.

"Prior to the mid-1950s there was very little aerial hunting, but hunters never had that much luck," Brooks reasons. "Heavy ice has moved that far south only three times during the last Century. This winter there's a lot of it, even down below the Aleutians."

Never-the-less, the bear population is high, notes biologist Lentfer, who has been counting bears off Barrow since 1967.

"I've marked 60 bears so far and it will probably be 100 before the season is over," he told the Tundra Times Thursday. The population has

(Continued on Page 6)

(Continued on Page 6)

When Judge Sadie (Mrs. Nate) Neakok, of Barrow flew recently to Barter Island she was startled to see the fan-shaped rig of a Greenland dog team trotting across the tundra. The driver was Japanese Naomi Uemura, 35, who has traveled some 8,000 miles along the northern arctic coast to set a solo dogsled record.

Mrs. Neakok's brother, Archie Brower, hosted Uemura at Barter and, just by chance, the Arctic traveler ended up at her doorstep last week. Her house is on the edge of town and the family was putting seal oil on its whale boat when Uemura and his hungry dogs (which hadn't eaten in over two days) sniffed the morning air and made straight for them. "He asked for seal oil for his dogs," recalls startled Jimmy Neakok, but he drank some first.

Ironically, Nate and Sadie Neakok recall that when they were young the Arctic explorer Knud Rasmussen made the same trip (not alone but with an Eskimo man and woman) and he stayed with Mrs. Neakok's father, Tom Brower. And this visitor is every bit as famous in Japan as Knud was in his native Denmark.

According to the resume prepared by his sponsoring newspaper, Mainichi of Tokyo, Uemura is the first man ever to have climbed the major peaks of five continents—Mt. Everest, Kilemanjoro, Aconcagua, Mt. Blanc and Mt. McKinley. His adventures are being carefully followed by viewers of the Japanese NET television and his expedition is backed, in part, by Bungei Shunji Co., a major Japanese publishing company.

The Neakok's find Uemura a fascinating houseguest, not only because of his laurels and his bright personality but because he knows much more about their Canadian and Greenland neighbors than they do.

"The people are very different as each government is very different," he tells them. But he managed to make himself understood in Inupiat at every stop.

He took his "dogsledge training," as he calls it, in

Siorapaluk, Greenland in 1972 and lived with Eskimos there long enough to become quite conversant in their language. Infact, Mrs. Neakok says, he's easier to understand in Eskimo than in English, and he's pretty good in English, too.

The diminutive, much frost-bitten musher started his long journey in December of 1974 but no one told him about the terrible currents off Greenland and after only a few days he went through the ice, losing his supplies and all but one dog. Camping in snow houses he managed to walk

(Continued on Page 8)

Eskimos set record straight on some unwritten history

By MARGIE BAUMAN

KOTZEBUE—With a blend of ancient tongues, modern electronics and a \$20,000 bicentennial grant, Northwest Alaska Eskimos are setting the record straight on some unwritten Eskimo history.

It's all part of "Inupiat Paitot 1976," a lively year-long cultural and educational project that packs in everything from an exchange of cultural values with Hawaiians to Fourth of July festivities boasting traditional Eskimo games.

"Inupiat Paitot 1976" is arousing much interest in this snow-covered Eskimo metropolis of 2,400 and in villages affiliated with NANA Regional Corporation Inc.

It took a combined effort of NANA and Mauneluk Association, the latter a regional social services firm, to convince officials of the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission in Anchorage to award a \$20,000 grant for the

(Continued on Page 6)