

"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." — Voltaire

Tundra Times



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Editorial—

The New Unity

In what would have to be rated as a most difficult session to date, the Alaska Federation of Natives and the Arctic Slope Native Association hammered out a basis for unity last week in Anchorage. Their achievement will also have to be rated as a result of a major effort from which a good, solid unity was realized perhaps for the first time in the history of the statewide native group. The need for it was never so serious and it came at a most opportune time.

The AFN will be meeting with the newly installed Gov. William A. Egan this weekend in Juneau. It is indeed fortunate that the federation is going there with the newly found unity within its ranks which should prove important as a prop in the effort to tackle the weighty matter of the native land claims issue with the state. The unity should serve to expedite the levels of agreement between the two groups the results of which would mean a unity of purpose when Congress begins to legislate on the claims issue in 1971.

The meeting of the governor and the AFN could be a significant one for Alaska. William Egan is an experienced administrator of his state who, we are sure, has the welfare of all the people of this land foremost among priorities.

On the other hand, AFN is going to Juneau much more experienced in the handling of its problems the greatest of which is the native land claims issue. The AFN board pretty much knows the intricacies of that issue which should serve as a solid base for presentations to the governor and his attorney general.

We are hopeful that good things will come out of the meeting in Juneau. The ingredients are there, experience, knowledge of the problem, and a good potential for a spirit of cooperation.

Greeks, Romans Perhaps Originated Christmas

From Industrial News Review

Researchers have come up with some interesting background on Christmas customs that add depth and meaning to the most momentous of all holidays. Many historians believe that Christmas may have had its origins in ancient Greek and Roman festivities to observe the midwinter change of seasons. The use of greenery at Christmas also grew out of ancient Greek and Roman customs. The celebration of Christ began in the third century but was not officially sanctioned until a century later when Pope Julius I authorized an investigation to determine Christ's probable birth date, which led to the selection of December 25. On that date, in 353 A.D., the Feast of the Nativity was first observed in Rome.

Other Christmas customs originated in many lands over the centuries. The traditional mistletoe branch began with the Druids, who believed the plant had the power to miraculously cure disease and counteract poisons. The decorating of Christmas trees began in the eighth century when St. Boniface persuaded the pagans to adorn fir trees in their homes in tribute to the Christ Child. A fourth-century bishop of Turkey, Saint Nicholas, was the real-life predecessor of Santa Claus.

And so the stories go. As the great day of rejoicing and renewal—December 25—approaches, millions will prepare to greet Christmas with a bone-deep feeling of gratitude and thankfulness. It is one occasion, one tradition, and one observance that has withstood the test of time. Those who attempt to tear down all standards by which humanity lives have so far not had the temerity to burn the Christmas tree.

Taos Pueblos Win Historic Victory

The Senate early this month passed a historic bill to restore Blue Lake in New Mexico to the Taos Pueblo people 64 years after it was taken from them and made a part of a national forest.

Restoration of Blue Lake to the Taos Pueblo people was one of President Nixon's key proposals in his July 8, 1970 message to the Congress on Indian affairs.

The final vote on the bill, an amendment to a Senate Committee bill—the Anderson amend-

ment—which would have only allowed tribal use of the lands, was 70 to 12.

It gives the Taos Pueblo trust title to 48,000 acres of the Rio de Taos watershed with the provision that the area must be forever maintained as a wilderness.

In Washington, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Louis R. Bruce said, "The action the Senate took today in passing the Taos Blue Lake bill is one of the greatest things the Congress has

ever done for Indian people in America."

"This approval," he stated, "will prove to Indian people that the Government—and administration—has made up its mind to get things done for Indian people and intends to carry out its programs."

The Commissioner expressed his congratulations to a group of Taos Pueblo tribal leaders and elders who had flown to Washington from New Mexico to witness the Senate vote.

Teacher Aides for Adult Education—

Dixon and Associates Contract With AMU to Train Teachers

Paul T. Dixon and Associates, Anchorage, a firm of educational consultants, has contracted with Alaska Methodist University in a joint effort to help train teachers for the Adult Basic Education program on Nelson Island and in certain other Alaskan villages.

The firm represents the Native Council on Nelson Island and is also working in the field of adult basic education in the Kuskokwim area.

Regular course offerings in the new educational program will be offered in three ways. When possible those courses prepared by AMU as on-site courses will be made available to the teachers enrolled in the program.

On-site courses have already been implemented by AMU through the Supplementary Training Program for Head Start teachers and through the Teacher Corps-Career Opportunities Program at the University.

Courses not available for on-site offering will be made available through an extension center established by Dixon Associates in the village with the location, instructor and course approved by the AMU Director of Extensions.

When either of these arrangements are not possible, the teacher will attend classes at AMU as a resident student for the required amount of time.

According to Dixon, this arrangement between his firm and AMU will provide a vehicle by which village adult basic education teachers, many of whom for one reason or another were unable to complete high school, can further their education.

It also provides "a solid course of personal progress to help the enrollees ascend to valid accreditation and thereby obtain teaching certification," Dixon said.

Dixon said that not only have adult basic education teachers voiced a great interest in the program, which for some will mean the opportunity to pursue a bachelor of science in elementary education degree while continuing to live and work in remote areas of the state, but that professionals in these communities have also demonstrated an interest.

Through the program state and BIA educators, social workers, and other professionals can enroll in refresher courses and update and improve their credentials while living in areas where formerly opportunities for higher education were nonexistent.

"In our first contacts on the tundra we found a far greater interest in the program than

we had ever anticipated. It appears at long last that persons finding it necessary to drop out of high school can now pick up where they had left off and then continue on into higher education programs. We

are quite confident that this program will help solve one of the greatest human needs of Alaska," Dixon said.

The target date for implementation of the program is January 1, 1971.

LETTERS FROM HERE AND THERE

Box 1125
Ketchikan

Editor Tundra Times
Sir:

Your article, "Gussuk Politicians in Bush on Way Out?" in Nov. 18 issue was somewhat erroneous as regards to this area. Veteran Native Rep. Frank Peratrovich (D-Klawock) and freshman Rep. Dick Whittaker (D-Ketchikan) defeated Carrol Fader, a Republican schoolteacher from Ketchikan and six term Republican Rep. William Boardman of Ketchikan, former House Speaker and Minority Leader.

The negative campaign against Rep. Peratrovich undoubtedly generated part of the landslide vote which returned him to office. Rep. Elect Whittaker's amazing victory over Boardman, who had largely been regarded as "unbeatable," was partially a result of an adverse reaction to the anti-Peratrovich campaign but for the most part was the result of the candidate himself who, besides being active in the ANB and in the affairs of many of the villagers in Southeastern, had a refreshing approach to campaigning as compared to Boardman, involving new and non-political people in his campaign, generating a seemingly endless string of new and exciting ideas, etc.

I predict that not only will Ketchikan return our old friend Frank Peratrovich to the legislature as many times as he wishes but that Ketchikan, the legislature and the whole state has a lot more to hear from Dick Whittaker.

Sincerely,
Russel L. Brown

Dec. 2, 1970
Troy, Mt.

Dear Editor:

Perhaps you might like to know what a poor man from the Outside thinks. When I was 7 I heard a lecture by Stefansson and ever since wanted to go to the Arctic to live. I am 62 and have not made it yet. But, all my life I have studied to learn all I could to make a good living in that country.

I think the natives will get some kind of a settlement; there is a God in Heaven that looks after people in spite of poli-

ticians. I hope they can use the money to make themselves independent instead of it being spent for food and building material shipped from thousands of miles away and making business men rich.

I think it is too bad that people have to wander over the earth making a poor living fishing and hunting when they live in some of the best potential farm land on earth. I know what I am talking about. I was raised at Ashton, Idaho, 60 miles from West Yellowstone, the coldest spot in the main U.S. I have seen it snow every month of the year, one year it snowed so much on the 2nd of July that there was still enough left to make ice cream for the 4th. Yet, I have seen my father raise 400 sacks of potatoes to the acre without an ounce of commercial fertilizer. That is a lot of potatoes. And, at one time, people thought that country was as useless as the Arctic. The Mormons went there because they had to. They started a new kind of farming and now they are the richest people on earth.

In the Arctic there will have to be another new kind of farming. The soil is wet and there is lots of sunshine and it does not get too hot like it does here in the middle of the day. Because the soil has been cold so long it is low in plant food, but this can be added and by putting the manure and garbage back on the soil every year it can be kept rich without buying new fertilizer.

If the soil is so wet you can not get rid of the grass and weeds, you can kill them by weed killers like Paraquat before you plant.

If you can not get your grain dry in the fall you can harvest it wet and store it in a silo or even a hole in the ground. It will not spoil if you keep the air from it and the animals like it that way, just as well. By growing things that do well there like peas and timothy you can grow more on a acre than will grow by itself on a square mile.

Instead of buying plywood I think you ought lay up rock houses. The cement for mortar will not cost much and the house will be warmer.

Yours truly,
Paul White