

Minto, Point Hope Do Cultural Dances For Festival of Arts

By THOMAS RICHARDS, JR.
Staff Writer

The Eskimos and Indians of Alaska dance to entertain. Just as importantly, they dance for their own enjoyment.

At the University of Alaska's Patty Gymnasium last Tuesday evening, the Eskimo Dancers of Point Hope and the Athabascan Dancers of Minto were highly successful in entertaining the large audience with authentic native songs and dances. The dancers themselves also enjoyed the event.

Several of the Point Hope Eskimos had never had an opportunity to closely observe the Athabascan dances performed by the Minto group. Thoroughly impressed, they heartily applauded the Indian dancers.

The Athabascans were similarly enthused with Eskimos, with each group openly displaying their respect for the other.

The occasion was further enhanced by its historic nature, for it was the first time that the Point Hope group ever performed their traditional Eskimo dances outside of the village. These Ootookuk dances, meaning old or traditional, were previously performed only once each year during the Christmas season.

These ancient dances composed the first part of the presentation. Each of these dances tell a story, being illustrated by one or two featured dancers while the others sing or play the drums. The performances proceeded in a manner similar to a skit.

The audience was greeted with the Welcome Dance, performed by David and Dinah Frankson. This set the mood and was given as a prelude to following dances. Then came the Fox Dance, one of the more amusing presentations.

In this dance, a fox chases after a morsel of food. He is at first unsuccessful, coming close to grasping the food and missing time after time. The fox is persistent, and in the end is victor-

ious.

Another interesting dance was Tingaaq, meaning 'the Search', which was danced by Jimmy Killigivuk. Killigivuk, famed whaling captain and dance leader, admirably demonstrated the skill that he had achieved in a lifetime of performing the ancient dances.

A dance similar to the fox dance, although requiring more skill, was the Chuyarlukaq or Marionette Dance. This is usually performed with a life-size doll manipulated expertly with strings.

The Point Hope group did not have the number of men required to use the marionette. Instead, the part of the manikin was portrayed by Patrick Attungana who gave a very realistic imitation of a puppet.

He, like the fox, was enticed by the morsel of food. To the delight of the audience, he fumbles unsuccessfully for the ball until the conclusion of the dance.

Perhaps the most hilarious of all the dances was the Nuliariaq, or the Reluctant Bride. Dinah Frankson was the woman who rejected all suitors. She was visited by Eva Attungana and Irene Tooyak, playing the part of the suitors.

When they came to court her, the maiden accepted their gifts before shooing them away. Angry, the rejected suitors consult with an old medicine woman who then punishes the maiden for her arrogant behavior. This ended the presentation of traditional dances.

The second portion of the evening's entertainment was given by Minto Dancers. The Minto group performed a number of Athabascan songs and dances. In these selections, there was more emphasis upon songs and no individual dancers were featured.

The inventive and artistic Athabascans have songs for every occasion. There are songs for work and songs for play. And there are songs of mourning and songs of celebration.

The dances that the Athabascans perform are highly imi-



JUSTICE ARTHUR J. GOLDBERG— Justice Goldberg, along with his son Robert, is reading the Tundra Times after the interview with the editor of the paper in Anchorage last week. Goldberg was in Anchorage to meet with the officials of the Alaska Federation of Natives,

Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel, Gov. Keith Miller, Senators Mike Gravel and Ted Stevens and Congressman Howard Pollock, and regional counsels of native organizations on the subject of native land claims.

—Photo by HOWARD ROCK

tative. In the Squirrel Dance, the performers imitated squirrels as they scurried from tree to tree in search of pine cones. Another dance illustrated how the Indians cut holes in the ice in order that they may fish in the winter.

Other dances incorporate the new with the old. This was demonstrated in the Athabascan Twist and the Sno-Go Song. If the Athabascan is presented with an occasion, he will compose a song for it. This was demonstrated at the conclusion of their performance, when the Minto Dancers sang a song of invitation for their potlatch this weekend.

The last dances of the evening were performed by the Point Hope Dancers, who presented the Saiyuk Dances. Saiyuk, meaning motion, indicates that the dance need not tell a story or be confined to traditional form.

The presentation was concluded with individual and creative dances by Jimmy Killigivuk and 87 year-old Christopher Tingook. Tingook gave one of the best dances of the evening. The

83 Indian Tribes are Eligible for OCCSSA

Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel has announced the publication, in the Federal Register, of a list of 83 Indian tribes which conduct their own local law enforcement and are therefore eligible for assistance under the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968.

"These are the tribes which have clear-cut jurisdiction over law and order on their reservations," Hickel said, "and this publication makes it possible for them to make timely applica-

event was indeed a rare opportunity to view some of the most artistic and authentic native dances.

tions for Federal assistance in improving local crimecontrol."

A section of the new crime control law (Public Law 90-351) requires the Secretary of the Interior to determine which tribes are eligible for assistance, he said.

"Improved law and order must be a part of the new atmosphere of growth and improvement that Indian communities seek for themselves," Hickel said, and I am confident that many reservations will take advantage of this new law to provide themselves with the tools and knowledge to do the job."

Additional tribes may become eligible to take over law and order responsibilities, Hickel said.

Tenant, ASHA Squabble . . .

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wrong."

The main subject of the meeting was the bathroom. The tenants claimed it was small. The door opening into it all but blocked anyone who wished to get into the tub because the door bumped right against the tub and to get into it between the door and a sink was hard to maneuver.

The bathroom, Miss Widmark said, was about four feet wide and the bathtub just fits into it. The suggested remedy for this by the tenants was to turn the tub around.

Another bone of contention was the honey bucket. In the housing design, the honey bucket room is walled in by itself. The tenants said there was no way to heat it and it gets very cold in winter.

The honey bucket is adjacent to the bathtub room with a wall between them. ASHA people suggested that the wall be taken down to the bathtub level so when the door is open, the heat would get into it.

The project houses are heated by an oil stove located in the center of the house.

Miss Emma Widmark continued:

"It's a meaningful project and the people are serious about maintaining their homes properly. Their questions were not be-

ing answered in a satisfactory manner.

"The people are paying rent. They are not allowed to make alterations of the homes without the permission of the ASHA people.

"I wonder if the same attitude will persist when ASHA builds homes in places like Quinhagak, Chevak, Emmonak and other places.

"It's an example of a problem that can be solved. It's not impossible.

"I think the tenants are really trying to understand ASHA people and their project. I think that respect from both sides should be shown so the doors of communication will be kept open and more understanding from both sides developed.

"ASHA people need to know that the people are observing them."

Creamer's Dairy

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continuing their northward journey. Thousands of people, both young and old, visit the area each spring to observe the many species of waterfowl and other bird life that sport their ornate and colorful breeding plumage," said Grundy, Game Biologist.

"The area will again be available to snowmachine enthusiasts next winter," said Grundy.



MINTO DANCERS—The dance loving group of Athabascans from Minto are performing one of their many dances before a crowd at the University of Alaska's Patty Gymnasium as part of the university's Festival of Arts program. The dances, along with the Eskimo dance group from Point

Hope, performed last Tuesday evening before a good crowd. After the program both dance groups congratulated each other warmly and talked to one another the best they could.

—THOMAS RICHARDS, JR. Photograph