

Part Two: Senator Gruening, Assistant Enjoy Walrus Carnival Events at Savoonga

By GEORGE SUNDBORG

Colorful Eskimo dancing and a simulated walrus hunt ended the busy schedule of events. The carnival was held at just the right time to permit the hunt. The ice was breaking up and beginning to move rapidly as the hunt progressed. The next day all of the board shelf of ice below the village had disappeared into Bering Sea.

Today one skin boat killed two walrus just a few miles from the village. Hunting had been poor up to now because the ice was too thick to permit the boats to move out easily.

Last year Savoonga hunters took 421 bull walrus. The walrus are taken mainly for their meat and the ivory furnished by their tusks. Although there are some 1,000 reindeer on the island, the St. Lawrence people are not much interested in them.

Irate Readers . .

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tired of being controlled," the council letter continued. "If the May 12th issue of the Tundra Times was intentionally destroyed...we consider this a crime and would like justice. If the mail was lost so that none of us got our papers, this also is a serious situation."

The council's petition could result in a postal investigation, according to postal officials at Fairbanks. The council has also petitioned the Human Rights Commission.

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They prefer the old diet of walrus and seal meat and oil. Even the hide of the bull walrus is eaten.

Female hides are split and used as covers for skin boats which in the St. Lawrence dialect are not known as oomiaks but as anyaks. (Shoes or footwear are not mukluks here but kamucks.)

A promising new source of livelihood came to Savoonga a few years ago when the firm of Stuart C. Olson of Canaan, Conn., offered to pay \$75 apiece for male walrus hides, which theretofore were of no cash value to hunters. The tanned hides, which are some two inches thick, are cut into buffing wheels for polishing purposes. The walrus hide has especially desirable qualities for buffing and polishing.

The Olson company sought to obtain 75 hides last year, but only about one-third that many were shipped, despite the large kill. Many were received in poor condition because of insufficient salting.

The Olson people wrote to the Savoonga people and to the Bureau of Indian Affairs complaining about the failure of the Eskimos to meet the order for hides of good quality. The firm is giving Savoonga "one last chance" this year.

But the outlook is not good at this time. Much of the salt which Stuart C. Olson shipped at great expense to Savoonga for proper preservation of the hides was used during the winter, according to report,

to help melt ice on the air strip.

The snow was so heavy there and the State-supplied equipment so inadequate that many Savoongans turned out with shovels to help clear the runway by hand in order that visitors could land for the Walrus Festival.

Here are a few vignettes of life at Savoonga, as observed by Senator Gruening and George Sundborg, his assistant, during their enjoyable stay:

THE VILLAGE CHIEF—Jerry Wongittin, Sr., 34, is the president of the village council and unquestioned leader of the people of Savoonga. He is a quiet, smiling, thin-mustached man who was born at Gambell. He and his attractive, young looking wife have four children.

When I found an unusual decorated tusk among the ivory carvings on sale at the community store, it proved to be Jerry's work. The etching is not in black as is common but in red, green, blue, orange and black. The draftsmanship and perspective are such as would do credit to Picasso.

THE SNOW-GO-Transportation has been revolutionized by the introduction a few years ago of the fast-moving rubber tracked snow-go. They buzz everywhere around the village.

Hogarth Kingeekuk was our faithful chauffeur during our stay at the village. He always arrived with his snow-go, a sled with sleeping bag mat pulled behind it,

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Eskimo Olympics Seeks Fair Queens

All Alaskan villages are invited to submit candidates for the 1967 Centennial Eskimo Olympics Queen Contest to take place at Fairbanks, Friday, Aug. 11.

To be eligible, contestants must be: Between 16 and 21 years old; Never married; and never had children. At least one-fourth native blood.

The contestants will be judged in native dress and foot gear and are expected to have knowledge of the costumes they wear.

They also may be judged in evening dresses and should practice walking in high heels before arriving, contest officials warn.

Villages are expected to pay transportation costs, but room and board will be furnished in Fairbanks from Aug. 7 through Aug. 12. Girls are expected to provide their own spending money.

Mrs. Dorothy Perdue, queen contest chairman has asked that villages send black and white photos if possible with entries by mail to either Box 67 or Box 1287, Fairbanks at the earliest time. Candidates

will be met at the plane and will be chaperoned during their stay at Fairbanks.

"Winners will receive many fine prizes," Mrs. Perdue said. "The areas sending candidates will receive wonderful publicity. It would be well if the girl knew things about her area so she could represent her village to the fullest. There also is a possibility that the winner will be entered in the Miss Alaska contest with a chance to go on later to the Miss America Pageant."

"The contestant should plan to arrive two days before the judging and if possible by Aug. 7," Mrs. Perdue said. "In this way it will give the committee a chance to work with her and to make her feel at ease. Also, many activities have been planned for her on the Centennial site which I am sure she would enjoy." Mrs. Laura Bergt is chairman for the Eskimo Olympics.

Everyone is a moon and has a dark side which he never shows to anybody.

Mark Twain

There are several good protections against temptations, but the surest is cowardice.

Mark Twain

JOHN B. COGHILL

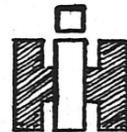
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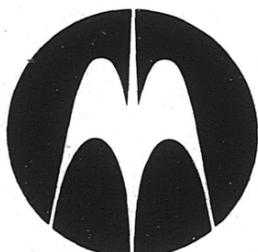
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