

Villages work toward unity

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Other than calling for the creation of a statewide association, the village made a number of requests in the resolution.

They asked for a village corporation panel to be allowed to lead a discussion on their concerns during the AFN convention. A change

was made in the convention agenda to provide for this on Saturday.

They also recommended that village corporations begin to organize into associations in various geographical areas. Such associations are already established in at least two of the areas.

The villagers further re-

quested that the Alaska Native Foundation (ANF) give supportive services to a steering committee working on proposals for forming the association, and that ANF begin to look for money to support the group's first statewide convention.

ANF has agreed to help

coordinate and give support to the steering committee's efforts.

Village corporation delegates and presidents who participated in the meeting felt the steering committee would meet in December, and that the desired timeframe could be met so that the village corporation asso-

ciation may become a reality by February.

Frustration with the current situation and serious intent to do something about it was indicated in one portion of the resolution. The villagers declared, "Village Corporations demand participation at all levels of decisions that affect them."

TT Team reaches Kautokeino in Sami country

Note - This is the second installment in the saga of a wandering journalist in search of a "safe" place on earth where one may tell Aleut jokes without fear.

We had departed Anchorage at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, September 28. Continuing our journey at 10:00 a.m. Saturday morning, we departed Denmark for Oslo. On the flight to Oslo, we met some of the hunters returning with game racks from Alaska. Their guides were taking care of the meat. They were disappointed in their guides, that they were not lead to larger trophies. The Norwegian hunters were decent, likeable folks, and gave us a cordial welcome to Norway. We returned their friendly greetings cordially. It was not their fault that the state was allowing wholesale export of our animals.

Arriving in Oslo, and beginning to feel the effects of jet lag from the 10-hour time difference, we found we had missed our connecting flight to Alta in northern Norway. SAS was kind enough to put us up for the evening at their Globetrotter Hotel. Exhausted, but determined to stay awake until evening to begin adjusting to the time change, we left the hotel to catch a bus to downtown Oslo.

There was one other gentleman waiting at the busstop. He recognized this editor before I knew him. The editor was nearly blind, having lost a contact lens during the rush to the Anchorage airport (now the reader may begin to understand how an editor may be senile at 30, and in need of a travelling companion). "Well, I'll be darned. It's Tom Richards!" the blurred human form exclaimed. Squint-

ing hard, trying to distinguish a human face out of the image, he saved some embarrassment by introducing himself as Ed Nygard, with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the Area Office at Juneau. (Even after several years of "self-determination," the BIA tracks us down, even in Norway!)

Running into a friend from Juneau at a bus stop in Oslo does seem to reinforce the impression that the world is becoming a smaller place. Ed had been to a reindeer conference in Norway the previous week and stayed an extra week to visit his ancestral homeland of Finland, and was way back to Alaska. The trio of Alaskans explored downtown Oslo, a beautiful city, magnificent old European buildings in a setting like Alaska's Prince William Sound, and returned to the hotel for dinner and much needed rest.

The following morning, Sunday, we continued the journey. Surprisingly, the Norwegians use the same phrase to describe long flights with multiple stops. We boarded the SAS DC-9 jetliner for the "milk-run" to Alta. From Oslo, we flew up the western coast of Norway, hopping and skipping from fjord to fjord, first to Trondheim, then Bodo, then to Tromso, and finally Alta.

At Trondheim, a group of young men cheerfully boarded the airplane, loudly, happily singing lusty ballads and rousing chants. They sat on every side of Andy and I. We wondered if we might have been transplanted in time and space to a Wien flight to Deadhorse during the height of pipeline construction. They



SAMI REINDEER HERDER AT CAMP IN NORTH NORWAY - ANDY KLAMSER PHOTOGRAPH

were welders and heavy duty mechanics on their way to a big mining project on northern Norway. All of Norway seems to be booming, with offshore oil development and fisheries and large-scale mining activity.

Per, the leader of the crew, sat next to me, pulling out a bottle of rum and six-pack of Coke under the fearful eye of the flight attendant. He had been singing a song in Norwegian which sounded like a march. Then he turned to me with a big grin, and bolding sang out in perfect English, "Things go better with Coke!"

Per told Andy and I how much his crew was in demand, and how hard working they were. "On our last job," he declared, "we worked 220 hours in ten days, and we still had a party every night!" We learned that Per had been to Alaska and New Orleans; we learned he wanted to go to Australia to live; we learned that his favorite singer was K.M. Myrland, a singer who sounds "just like Kristopheron"

and who performed the big hit "In From the Cold"; and we learned that Per and Company were intent on having a fine party for the duration of the milk-run.

Per was a person who reminded one of the pipeline workers, but with a slightly different flavor: "So you are an Eskimo! Gee, it is good to shake hands with an Eskimo! You tell your people Eskimos should live on their land the way they want to live!" It was easy to become friends with Per.

Alta is nearly 70 degrees north latitude, about the same as is the central arctic slope of Alaska. We arrived in mid-afternoon on Sunday, two days after leaving Anchorage and still 100 miles short of our destination. We asked a young Sami man where we could catch a bus on the "Finnmark Fylkesrederlog Rutetelskap" line to Kautokeino.

Three hours later, we boarded the bus with the young man and three other young Samis. They were elegantly dressed in traditional Sami finery, and were students returning to the Sami boarding school at Kautokeino

after spending a weekend with their families. The bus followed the road to the baginning of the fjord, climbed through narrow, magnificent canyons and into the high plateau which was the heartland of northern Sami country (formerly Lappland).

The bus, a Volvo diesel, was clean and comfortable and kept exactly to its schedule. The famed reliability and comfort of public transportation in Europe, even in this far northern region, tested true on this trip. It was pitch dark when we arrived in Kautokeino three hours later, and checked into the Kautokeino Turisthotel. The furnishings in the restaurant were remarkably similar to those of NANA's Nul-luk-vik Hotel at Kotzebue. In one respect, so was the menu.

In a late dinner Sunday evening, we ordered "Finnebeef," not being at all certain what that might be. It was reindeer, thinly sliced and simmered in cream with vegetables. It was absolutely delicious! Sami country was expecting its first snowfall of the season that week, and the heavy muslin-covered quilts were a necessary and welcome feature as went to our rooms that night.

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