

Tundra Times

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Inupiat Pitot People's Heritage

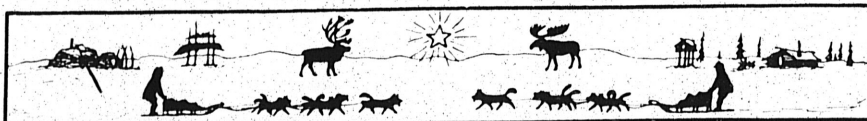
Den Nena: Ienash Our Land Speaks

Unanguq Tunuktauq The Aleuts Speak

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Tlingit
Ut kah neek Informing and Reporting

Alaska IHS staffing crisis: Special Native Health Board session called

By BETSY BRENNEMAN
Staff Writer

If you were a registered nurse with a master's degree, Alaska Area Indian Health Service would pay you \$2.00 per hour less than it pays its dishwashers. If you were the supervisor of the operating room in Anchorage, you would make less than the housekeeper. And if you wanted clerical work, you might end up as the only secretary for nine surgeons. Obviously, you and everyone else would think twice before signing on.

And because that is exactly what many have been doing for too long, the normal understaffing problems of the federal health care system in Alaska have reached alarming proportions. Calling the problem an "immediate short term crisis," IHS Area heads testified at a special meeting with the Alaska Native Health Board on Tuesday, Aug. 17, in Anchorage.

Area Director Gerald Ivey says he felt that given the situation and the role of the Health Board as an advisor to IHS, "it was appropriate that we advise them of staffing difficulties." Fifteen clinicians as well as a number of administrators spoke before the board and answered questions. Ivey reports that the problem was not new to many but "some were surprised as to the severity of the shortages."

The difficulties are most noticeable at the Alaska Native

Medical Center in Anchorage because it employs the largest staff. But the shortage is a statewide phenomenon, especially within the nursing profession which accounts for one quarter of the work force and has a direct effect on the quality of health care.

The situation has not been talked about much in the past. As personnel officer, Charles Watson says, "there is some degree of shortage all the time." But recently some areas of the hospital have been shut down, professionals are on double shifts, and only two of the new four rooms of the remodeled surgical unit are being used.

"It was bound to come out," says senior medical student Ted Mala, who is working at the Anchorage Native Hospital. Mala, about to become the first male Eskimo physician when he graduates from the University of Mexico medical school in December, emphasizes that although the morale of the staff is questionable, the quality

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THE NEW YOUNG Point Hope Eskimo Dancers perform a motion dance and help open the Native Arts of Alaska Conference, held Aug. 16-20 in Anchorage.

—photo by BETSY BRENNEMAN

Alaska Native Arts Conference

By BETSY BRENNEMAN
Staff Writer

Described even by its coordinator as a "painful process," an attempt to come together by natives, non-natives, Alaskans,

outsiders, artists and a few bureaucrats to discuss the state of Alaskan native art, struggled fitfully through five tense days and nights last week in Anchorage.

Perhaps what it had set out to do was just too immense. The conference was entitled "The Native Arts of Alaska: An Exploration of Indigenous Life Value Sources," and when one sets out to talk about sources, values, and art within extremes of diversity intentionally brought face to face, someone is bound to be uncomfortable most of the time.

Andrew Hope, 26, a Tlingit from Sitka, says he wanted to learn about native culture. He

was already working on a B.A. in Human Resource Development through the University of Alaska and had organized a conference in Sitka last December with the equally weighty title, "Native Arts in the Future: Dynamic Continuity or Suppressive Fundamentalism?"

Then he had brought together old and young, mostly Southeast Natives, for a conference that was also tense, but with a tension that created energy. In Anchorage last week, Hope said the tension of this second conference, particularly the first few days, was not exciting. It was, in fact, a bummer.

But overall he was feeling

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AFN Youth Council meets

By BETSY BRENNEMAN
Staff Writer

Working long hours for two jammed-packed days, 12 members of the Alaska Federation of Natives Youth Council Board of Directors adopted by-laws, passed their first resolution, heard presentations on management and self-determination, and set about defining their immediate goals, during their second meeting held Aug. 16 and 17 in Anchorage.

The council, made up of representatives from each of the native regions, was formed in May, 1975, "to create a sense of unity and self-worth among native youth in Alaska by giving them an opportunity to express their needs and a chance to participate in the educational, health, social and native organi-

zations which affect them."

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Fate of haul road debated

By MARY DOWNES

The fate of the North Slope haul road was debated heavily in the sixth and final public hearing held in Anchorage earlier this month by the Division of Policy Development and Planning.

Recommendations ranging from total closure of the road to total opening with unrestricted access were made to state officials seeking a decision on the controversy.

Robert LeResche, director of the division, plans to recommend several options to Gov.

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NEWS BRIEFS

THE 100 RESIDENTS of the tiny island of Little Diomedes may have electricity in their homes for the first time this year. A 175-kilowatt generator is to be delivered to the island community, only four miles away from the Soviet island of Big Diomedes, by the BIA supply ship North Star.

CARL LOTTSFELDT, former Alaska legislator, was found dead in his Anchorage home Aug. 20. Lottsfeldt, who was seeking a comeback in Tuesday's primary election, was 78.

PRESIDENT GERALD FORD has chosen Sen Robert J. Dole of Kansas to be his running mate in the Republican campaign to retain control of the White House.

The announcement came at a news conference less than 12 hours after he triumphed over Ronald Reagan in the balloting for the GOP presidential nomination.

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EVA HEFFLE presents Eebrulik Rock, Howard's Rock brother, with the memorial trophy inscribed with the outstanding 1976 World Eskimo-Indian Olympics athlete's name, Reggie Joule. The trophy will be on display at the Pioneer Home in Fairbanks, and later in the Chamber of Commerce.

—photo by MARK KELLEY