

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

Tundra Times

Minority Politics and Native Power

(An Account of Emil Notti's Race for Secretary of State)



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Editorial—

The Tardy Voyage

Of North Star III

We do not know, of course, why the North Star III was so late in starting its annual voyage to the Arctic communities this year. The fact is that it was approximately two to three weeks late in attempting to reach Barrow when in the past it made its run to the continent's northernmost point, unload its tons and tons of valuable supplies, around the first few days of the month of September.

Past experiences of the famed supply ship of the Bureau of Indian Affairs have proven that the earliest part of the month was the time to reach Barrow. To try to reach the big Eskimo village later than that time is a risky business. Heavy icefields begin to drift in then and they are impenetrable for a ship of North Star III's type—a Victory ship of World War II vintage. True, there had been unusual weather conditions around Barrow this year but a huge fleet of water craft did get to Prudhoe Bay approximately 150 miles past the village.

The failure of the ship's arrival at Barrow puts that community in precarious straits. True, the most critically needed supplies will probably be air freighted but other things like heavy equipment and lumber needed for construction will probably not reach Barrow this year. This will mean a whole year's delay for needed material for construction, let alone jobs that those materials would have made available.

What happened? Did logistical scheduling break down in Seattle where the North Star III begins its annual voyage to Barrow? Whatever it was, there was a cause for delay. This was a very costly one. Arctic conditions do not tolerate ill-timed efforts. The captain of the ship, Hammond, and his men would have delivered if their schedule had been right. Their skill and knowledge of the conditions at that precise time of the year—around the first week of September—would have prevailed.

PROCLAMATION

American Indian Week

WHEREAS, the Alaska Indians are hosts to a Convention of the National Congress of American Indians; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians is the only national Indian organization serving the majority of the Indian tribes in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians has attained its objectives in a peaceful and lawful manner for the Indian people; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians has contributed much to the growth and well-being of the Indians of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians stands ready to help its people through concerted efforts in raising the health standards, providing better educational opportunities, serving as public relations, and otherwise providing accurate information to the American public; and

WHEREAS, the National

Congress of American Indians has honored the City of Anchorage and the State of Alaska by holding its Annual Convention here:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, KEITH H. MILLER, Governor of the State of Alaska, do hereby proclaim the week of October 18 through 24, 1970, as

AMERICAN INDIAN WEEK

throughout Alaska and call upon all citizens to reflect during this time on their Indian citizens in acknowledging their efforts to realize greater achievements in education, economic stability, and other pertinent necessities of life.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the State of Alaska to be affixed this ninth day of April in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and seventy.

/S/ KEITH H. MILLER
Governor

ATTEST: /S/ ROBERT WARD
Secretary of State

(Editor's Note: The following comments were submitted to the Tundra Times by John Havelock, a 38-year-old Anchorage attorney who managed the Emil Notti campaign. He also writes a regular Sunday column for the Anchorage News. The Tundra Times was unable to print his 10½ page statement in full due to a lack of space.)

This article is a report on how Emil Notti's race for Secretary of State went and what the

Oliver Everette

Poem Finds Way

To Indian Studies

A poem entitled "Chippewa Sage", written by Oliver Everette, an English professor at the University of Alaska, will be used in the Indian Studies Program in the Minneapolis, Minn. schools.

As printed on the editorial page, the poem tells of the Indian's reverence for the natural world around him.

Everette's work found its way into the Minneapolis school system through Esther Nahgahnub, the former editor of an Indian newspaper, Drumbeat.

Currently a member of the Audio Visual Dept.-Indian Studies of the Minneapolis schools, Miss Nahgahnub is now writing educational units.

She requested the use of Professor Everette's poem for such a unit.

In speaking of the Indian's "religious ceremony or deep gratitude", the poem would emphasize the deep feelings that we harbor for the Great Spirit," Miss Nahgahnub wrote in a letter to Everette.

She is a Fond du lac Indian.

"With your help," she added, "we could bring a lot of feeling into some of these units."

"You must feel very deeply about "the original people," she wrote Everette, "and without having been told otherwise, I would have taken you for one of us."

☆☆☆☆☆☆

Poems—

Chippewa Sage

"When you pray to Sky
throw back your deerskins;
Sky hides
when you hide something."

The silver swathed his neck and
face
Mellowed 80 autumns by the
lake.

"Though beaver's brother
builds his house
under falling waters
does he forget the Sky?"

Though you walk thru woods
and marshes,
love the sunshine, cherish the
darkness.

—Oliver Everette

This Is Indian

Soft eyes and wide mouth
nose sculptured by an artist
Body molded like tempered steel
A kind of relaxed tension.

Basic in grace and agility
render into it an animal quality
scar it with a white man's knife
adding only to the beauty

That is Indian.

—Ester Nahgahnub

results mean for the interest of Native people.

There were many substantial handicaps to the Emil Notti campaign.

The campaign got a late start because Emil Notti was a reluctant candidate, stepping in only when it was clear no other Native leader would take up the challenge.

The most severe handicap was a lack of money. The decision was made to plunge most of the money into a statewide mailer leaving little for traveling and for radio ads and none for television advertising.

Emil Notti lost the election but in doing so he made a showing which stunned regular followers of Alaska politics.

Red Boucher won the nomination with a vote of 14,704. Emil Notti came in second with 12,759, beating Chuck Sassara by over 2,000 votes.

The taste of defeat is never sweet but in defeat, Emil Notti pulled off an astonishing political feat.

What was the source of Notti strength? The answer comes easily to the lips: the Native vote. Wrong. And this is where the lesson for the Native people begins.

The total Native vote for candidates of both parties in the primary race is estimated at about 11,000. Using the election return data and the census data that is available, the evidence is convincing that Emil Notti's vote from Native people did not exceed 6,800.

The native in Alaska is a member of a minority and as such a member should use a certain style for getting things done. That style includes: first, use of "leverage", and second, "coalition politics."

Leverage is making the most of what you have.

The 65 per cent showed there is an unmistakable Native vote but for maximum leverage that vote must go to 85 or 90 per cent.

The Native must use party lines not be fooled by them. Native people must go back and forth across party lines seeking the maximum advantage.

Leverage means making the most of the primary system.

The second principle of minority politics is coalition power.

The Native people must throw in their lot with other minorities who have a similar stake in the future. The Native interest is in building a majority coalition for change.

Perhaps the first partner for the Native people should be the youth of the State. The young have been stimulated to demand change by their unique recognition of the moral duty of the society to give justice to oppressed or disadvantaged minorities.

Whatever their age, the black and other racial minorities of Alaska are usually of similar mind and have similar interests.

Poverty knows no color line. The non-Native poor are naturally allied with Native aspirations.

The conservationists are in sympathy with the Native desire to live in balance with nature and not to tear up the countryside.

The Native movement is the logical force to provide the leadership and discipline which will overcome the frustration from political ineffectiveness faced by the minorities.

The steps to be taken are: First, increased political education from top to bottom. Know who the true friends of the Native people are. Make sure the word gets out to all of the people.

Second, respect your leadership. It is inevitable that differences of opinion will arise as to who is the best candidate. A decision must be made and once it is made it must be followed, even if you feel it was wrong, or the leverage will be lost. Group solidarity is more important than any personal opinion.

The native leadership throughout the State is organizing a political education committee called Alaska Native Political Education Committee (ANPEC).

There was criticism of ANPEC's action in the primary. Some of it was deserved. Some was not. The most just criticism was that ANPEC acted too fast before people knew about the organization.

It was wrong to criticize ANPEC for making endorsements in a primary. Primary endorsements give the best chance of getting the kinds of officeholders you want.

While this essay has spoken of the mechanics of establishing political influence, the People should not lose sight of justice in the search for power. When the day comes, and it shall, when the Native people share fully in their entitlements of power and influence in the State of Alaska, I hope they will remember the taste of injustice and not abuse their power as some who now hold power have done.

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