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Tundra Times

Alaska's Oldest Statewide Newspaper

October 19, 1983

VOLUME XX

Number Forty-Two

USPS 644-040

ISSN 0049-4801

Anchorage, Alaska

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PHOTO BY BILL HESS

Rita Blumenstein, a basket weaver originally from Nelson Island, is the resident artist during the time "Inua: Spirit world of the Bering Sea Eskimo" is on display at the Anchorage Historical and Fine Arts Museum.

Alaska loses officer post on NCAI

Ralph Eluska of Anchorage who has served as first vice-president of NCAI for the past two years, lost that seat to a Southeastern representative because of misunderstandings and concern about Alaska block votings. There is unhappiness within the Alaska delegation about Alaska actions in that loss.

Eluska lost his national NCAI post by 230 votes — the equivalent of one small tribal or village vote — to Eddie Tullis, Poarch Band of Creeks, in a second ballot at the NCAI election.

The reasons for Eluska losing are uncertain but some Alaska delegates felt it was because of extra-curricular lobbying by one delegate.

That lobbying led to con-

cern that Alaska, which had pledged its block-vote support and bargaining authority to Eluska, would not live up to Eluska's political bargains.

No one wants to name names publicly but several delegates voiced concern that Cook Inlet Native Association Chairman Jackie Guzialek had contacted other delegations on her own to strike political bargains.

That made the delegations committed to Eluska unsure if he was representing Alaska's vote or she was, the Alaska delegates said.

Guzialek said she contacted other delegations because she had heard that the support for Eluska wasn't as rock solid as it was reported to be. She says she started trying to shore up his support by talking to

the delegation leaders she believed to be slipping. Under the "political rules," once a block was committed, the block delegates weren't to talk to others.

According to Ron Andrade, a Sacramento delegate and former executive director of NCAI, Eluska lost the election because of a deal struck by NCAI President Joe De La Cruz to support Minnesota delegate Gordon Thayer of the Lac Court Oreilles/Ojibway tribe, in exchange for Thayer's support for president.

De La Cruz won his seat handily in a first ballot, however.

He had also promised his support to Eluska, according to Andrade, and when Thayer

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1991 is abiding issue in AFN, UTA meetings

By Bill Hess
Tundra Times

The issues of 1991, tribal sovereignty and state-federal-tribal relationships were hot in delegates' minds as the first General Assembly of the United Tribes of Alaska opened Monday with a workshop on the Indian Tribal Governmental Tax Status Act.

The annual convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc. was scheduled to begin Thursday, October 20, with delegates set to discuss the convention theme of "1991."

On December 18 of that year, stocks, and therefore lands, are scheduled to become alienable and taxable under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. This would mean that what now can be owned only by Alaska Natives could fall into non-Native hands.

The realization that 1991 is rapidly approaching Alaska has sparked a major investigation within AFN over the past year and a half to see what alternatives could possibly be adopted to insure that what is now owned by Natives will remain in Native hands. The findings and alternatives examined in that investigation will dominate the discussions of AFN.

Fears of 1991 as well as discontent with other provisions of ANCSA were largely responsible for the move among tribal governments, there are many who argue that the act was intended to terminate the inherent sovereignty of tribes.

In dividing up Alaska largely between the federal and state governments, leaving 44 million acres and close to \$1 billion dollars to the 13 regional and approximately 200 village Native corporations, the tribal governments were left largely without any land base.

The tribal village governments who have joined UTA, both those formed under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and "traditional" tribal governments, are hoping to reassert the sovereign rights of their tribes, and are calling upon state and federal entities to deal with them on a government-to-government basis.

Some have suggested that one way to get around the

problem of no land base and to protect Native land from alienation would be to have some of the corporate lands, most likely those controlled by the village corporations, turned over to the tribes.

They believe this land would then be inalienable, and could be held in trust for the tribes by the Secretary of the Interior, as are reservation lands in the Lower 48, or would in other ways be protected from alienation.

A major irritant among many UTA leaders is what they perceive as a deliberate attempt by Governor Sheffield to ignore them. Citing other commitments, the governor has declined to address UTA. He will be addressing AFN and on Monday was scheduled to meet with the AFN Human resources board.

UTA delegates want the governor to tell them how the state plans to deal with the tribes, but Sheffield has asked for comment from a wide variety of Alaskans before he makes any statement on state-tribal policy.

Sill, two state representatives, Al Adams, Inupiaq from Kotzebue, and Jerry Ward, Athabaskan from Anchorage, will address the subject in a special panel discussion to be held Wednesday afternoon.

Ward, who was reached at his Anchorage office, said state and federal entities should not be afraid to recognize governments that "are 2,000 years old." Although he noted many potential conflicts between ANCSA corporations and tribal governments, Ward stressed the need for them to work together, and also to have a good federal governments.

Otherwise, said Ward, who described 1991 as a "great hoax" being played on Native people, the 44 million acres of land — an area the size of New Jersey — left to Alaska Natives under ANCSA could well be lost to the forces whom he said ANCSA was really set up to benefit — the oil companies responsible for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

Although many villagers will be coming to UTA with great expectations, Andy Hope, the manager of the Sitka Community Association, the IRA government in that community,

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