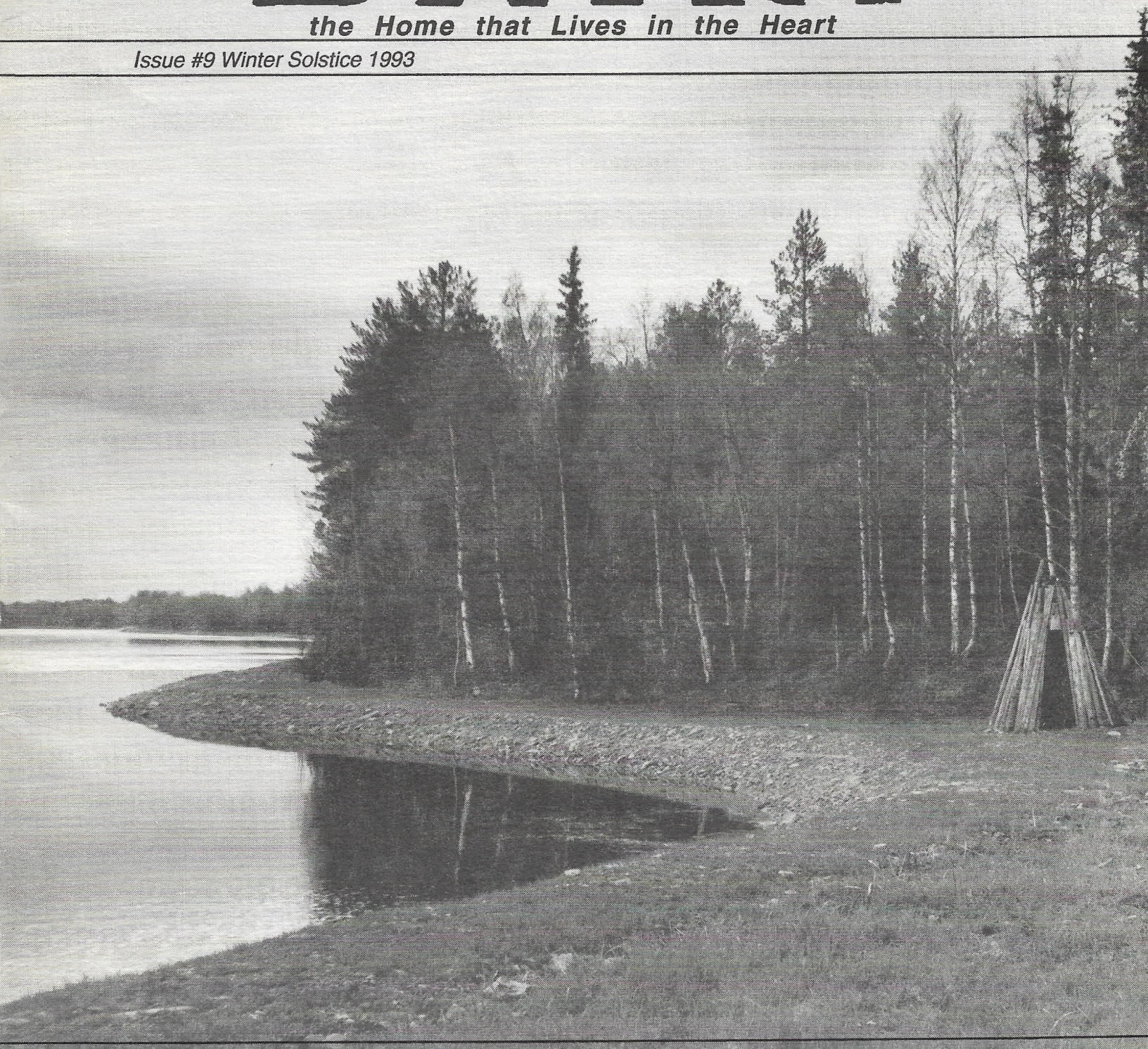
BAIKI

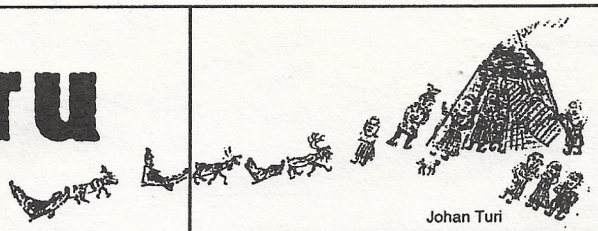
the Home that Lives in the Heart

Issue #9 Winter Solstice 1993



the North American Sami Journal

GIITU



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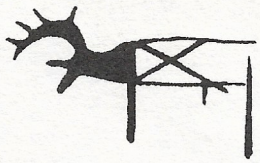
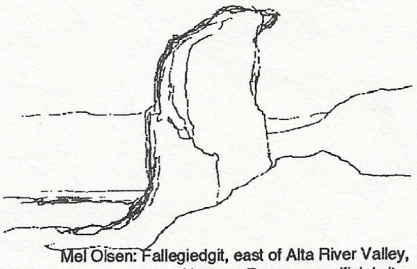


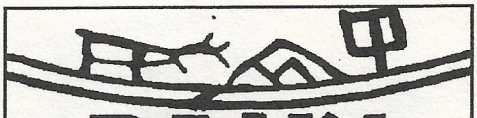
ON THE COVER

MARLENE WISURI (Sami-American) is a prolific photographer, artist, poet, writer and teacher with many exhibitions and published works to her credit. She took this photograph on the banks of the Kitinen River near Sodankylä, Finland on a recent visit to her family there. Marlene is a native of the Mesabi Iron Range in northern Minnesota and now resides on the North Shore of Lake Superior near Duluth. As director of the Carlton County Historical Society in Cloquet, she often speaks on the Sami culture. Her work first appeared in the *Baiki* centerfold "Shadows from the Past," Issue #3. Since then she has been a regular contributor and serves as a member of the *Baiki* North American Advisory Council.



Mel Olsen: Fallegiedgit, east of Alta River Valley, Norway. Famous sacrificial site.

This issue is designed and produced by Faith Fjeld, editor and publisher ❄ D'Arcy Allison-Teasley, staff artist ❄ Maija Oberg Hanf, Sami Connections editor ❄ Elina Helander, Sami traditions consultant ❄ Grey Eagle, storyteller ❄ Rudy Johnson, senior editorial advisor ❄ Carolyn Kark-French, proof reader ❄ Susan Myers, community relations editor ❄ Robert Nelson, troubleshooter ❄ Áigin, desktop publishing consultant, circulation manager ❄ Mel Olsen, Sami research consultant ❄ Marvin Salo, oral historian ❄ Kurt Seaberg, staff artist & writer ❄ Barbara Tan, transcriptions editor.



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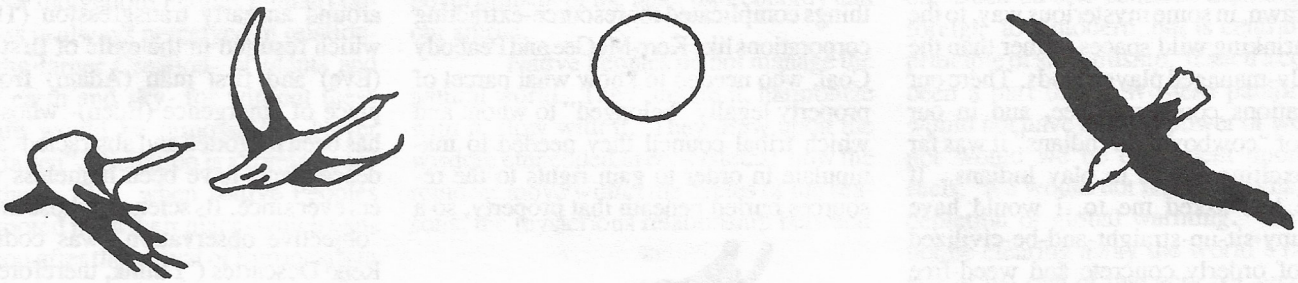
IN THIS ISSUE



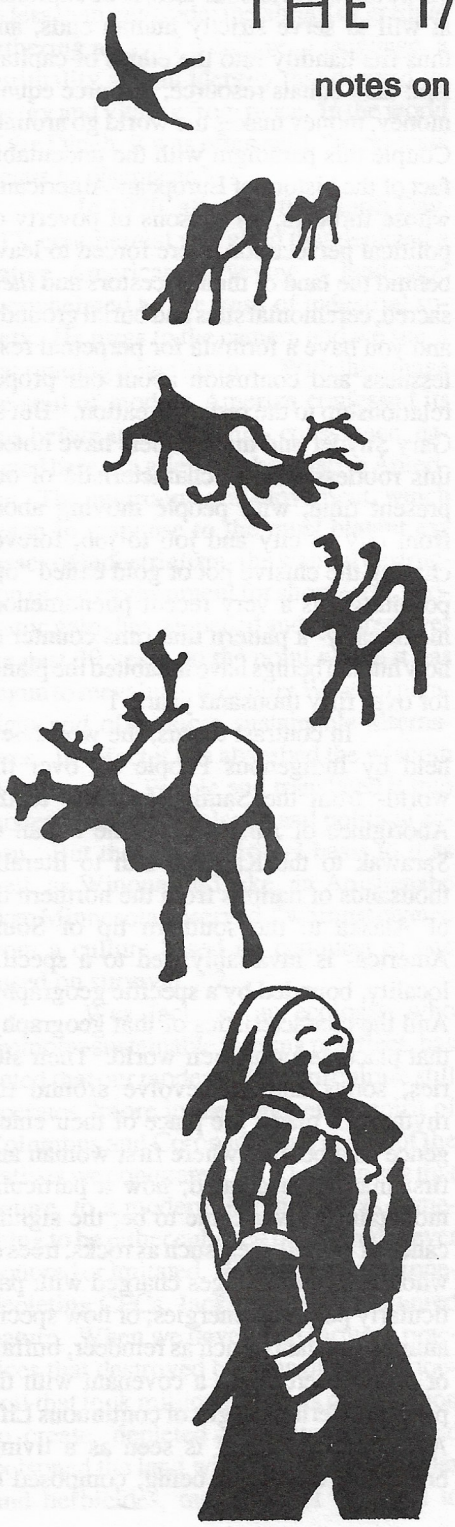
THE IMPORTANCE OF PLACE

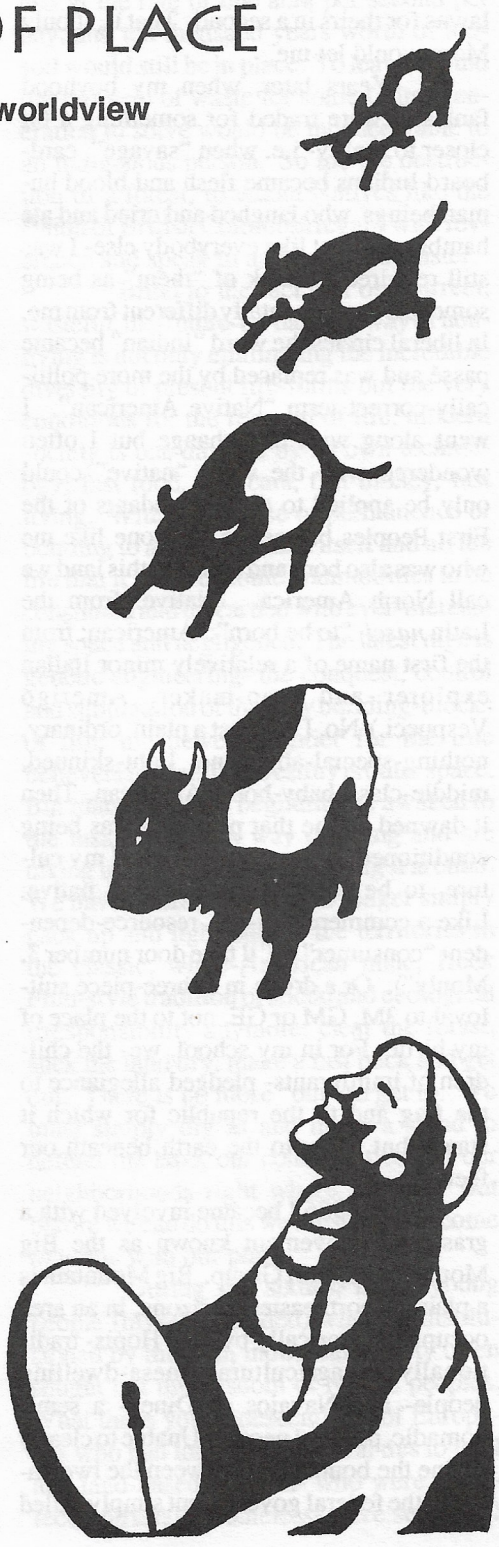
notes on ecology, culture and the native worldview

Kurt Seaberg

As a young boy growing up in the suburbs I was always fascinated by stories about Indians. Brought to me through the distorted lens of Hollywood, these fantastic images of a wild and free people living close to the earth, unschooled and unchurched, both enchanted and terrified me. Enchanted me, because the spirit of the Indian was still very much alive in my childhood, especially in the woods and fields near my home where I used to wander and where I could easily imagine a village made of bark and sticks or a hunting party moving silently through the trees. Terrified me, because this same "spirit" was still regarded as a threat to the modern world I was being groomed to enter. In this world, where the earth was being reshaped daily into four-lane highways, shopping malls and acres of asphalt parking lots, wild nature, at best, was just so much scenery, waiting to be removed. At worst, it was a dangerous place, where a kid could disappear and never be heard from again. At any rate, it served no useful purpose- the wetlands were a nuisance and woodlots a waste of space. As for the original inhabitants, who didn't have the sense to log or drain them- well, they were a mean and backward people, noteworthy only for standing in the way of "progress". Or so I was told. Repeatedly. On the TV set. In the movies. It was as if they feared "the wild Indians" might come back if they weren't shot daily on the screen.

*(**Seaberg** continued overleaf)*



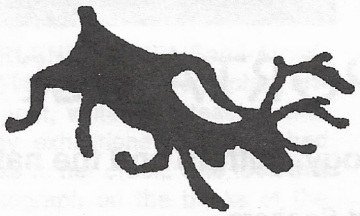


*(**Seaberg** continued from p. 3)*

Perhaps they were right. For in the end enchantment won out over terror. We boys were drawn, in some mysterious way, to the ever-shrinking wild spaces, rather than the carefully-managed playgrounds. There our imaginations could run free, and in our games of "cowboys and Indians" it was far more exciting for us to play Indians. If anyone had asked me to, I would have traded my sit-up-straight-and-be-civilized world of orderly concrete and weed-free lawns for theirs in a second. That is, if only Mom would let me.

Years later, when my boyhood fantasies were traded for something a bit closer to reality- i.e. when "savage", cardboard Indians became flesh and blood human beings who laughed and cried and ate hamburgers just like everybody else- I was still required to think of "them" as being somehow fundamentally different from me. In liberal circles the word "Indian" became passé and was replaced by the more politically-correct term "Native American". I went along with this change but I often wondered why the word "native" could only be applied to the descendants of the First Peoples but not to someone like me who was also born and raised in this land we call North America. (Native: from the Latin *nasci,* "to be born"; American: from the first name of a relatively minor Italian explorer and map-maker, Amerigo Vespucci.) No, I was just a plain, ordinary, nothing-special-about-me, light-skinned, middle-class, baby-boom American. Then it dawned on me that perhaps I was being conditioned, by my schooling and my culture, to be something other than native. Like a commercially-fed, resource-dependent "consumer" ("I'll take door number 3, Monty"). Or a drone in a three-piece suit- loyal to 3M, GM or GE, not to the place of my birth. For in my school, we- the children of immigrants- pledged allegiance to the flag and to the republic for which it stands but never to the earth beneath our feet.

In 1986 I became involved with a grassroots movement known as the Big Mountain Support Group. Big Mountain is a place in northeastern Arizona, in an area occupied historically by both Hopis- traditionally an agricultural, mesa-dwelling people- and Navajos or Dineh- a semi-nomadic, pastoral people. Unable to clearly define the boundaries between the two nations, the federal government simply called the place the Joint-Use-Area, or JUA, giving equal access to both tribes. This made things complicated for resource-extracting corporations like Kerr-McGee and Peabody Coal, who needed to know what parcel of property legally "belonged" to whom and which tribal council they needed to manipulate in order to gain rights to the resources buried beneath that property, so a



FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS IS ALWAYS PERCEIVED IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE LARGER CREATION - OF PLANTS, ANIMALS, EARTH AND SKY - FOR WITHOUT THESE THINGS LIFE WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE.

"dispute" between the Hopis and the Dineh was more or less manufactured and the government stepped in with a "compromise". The solution? Simply redraw the boundaries and move the offending Dineh from the disputed area to someplace else. After all, land is land and one place is as good as another, right? Trouble was the Dineh considered Big Mountain to be their home, the place they and their ancestors occupied for centuries, dotted with sacred, ceremonial sites and burial grounds. According to traditional Dineh spiritual practices, one could not separate oneself from the place of one's birth anymore than an unborn infant could separate itself from its mother, bonded as it were by a spiritual umbilical chord.

Those couple of months that I spent living with traditional Dineh elders, herding sheep, chopping wood and hauling water, clarified for me the vast gulf that exists between the worldview held by Native Peoples and that of modern, industrial society. And I learned that if I was ever to become "native" I was going to have to learn the importance of *place.*

In the Western paradigm, with its Judeo- Christian values, place is relatively unimportant. Its religion and culture tends to celebrate people and events- great, historical figures like Columbus or St. Patrick and the dates of their "discoveries" or missionary zeal- and this can be transplanted anywhere, without regard to any particular piece of earth. Its creation story revolves around an early transgression (The Fall) which resulted in the exile of first woman (Eve) and first man (Adam) from their place of emergence (Eden)- whose locale has been forgotten and abstracted- and their descendants have been homeless wanderers ever since. Its science, whose method of "objective observation" was codified by Rene Descartes ("I think, therefore I am"), views the world as soul-less, to be exploited at will to serve strictly human ends, and thus fits handily into the ethics of capitalism: land equals resource, resource equals money, money makes the world go around. Couple this paradigm with the undeniable fact of the history of European-Americans, whose forbears, for reasons of poverty or political persecution, were forced to leave behind the land of their ancestors and *their* sacred, ceremonial sites and burial grounds, and you have a formula for perpetual restlessness and confusion about our proper relationship to the rest of Creation. But as Gary Snyder and many others have noted, this rootlessness, so characteristic of our present time, with people moving about from city to city and job to job, forever chasing the elusive pot of gold called "opportunity", is a very recent phenomenon, historically- a pattern that runs counter to how human beings have inhabited the planet for over fifty thousand years. 1

In contrast to this, the worldview held by Indigenous People all over the world- from the Samis of Sapmi to the Aborigines of Austrailia to the Penan of Sarawak to the Kalahari San to literally thousands of nations from the northern tip of Alaska to the southern tip of South America- is invariably tied to a specific locality, bounded by a specific geography. And the characteristics of that geography, that place, informs their world. Their stories, songs and art revolve around the rhythms of place: the place of their emergence as a people, where first woman and first man were created; how a particular mountain or river came to be; the significance of sacred sites, such as rocks, trees or whole mountain ranges charged with particularly powerful energies; or how special animals or plants, such as reindeer, buffalo or corn, entered into a covenant with the people, offering the gift of continuous Life. And the Earth itself is seen as a living, breathing, conscious being, composed of

flesh and blood, who gives birth to all living things. For Indigenous People, human consciousness is always perceived in relationship to the larger Creation- of plants and animals, earth and sky- for without these things life would be impossible. Never having "fallen", alienation is a foreign concept to them. But when Native Peoples were uprooted from their place- which happened soon after the arrival of Europeans in this hemisphere- the tragic result was often no less than genocide: the abrupt or gradual withering away of a culture, a language, a spirituality and an identity that derived its energy and vitality from place. In the world of the Dineh, it was often said, "to relocate means to disappear."

In 1970, after the first Earth Day, a TV commercial was aired that depicted a Native American surveying a landscape overwhelmed by the trash of industrial society. He turns to the camera and we see a tear running down his face. With this image the soul of modern America confessed its sins before its own, guilty conscience, depicted here as a grief-stricken Native American. The environmental movement, which began in response to the most blatant excesses of industrialism- the wanton destruction of the environment for short-term, economic gain- has deepened and matured over the past 30 years, to the point where it has begun to reevaluate the entire Western paradigm and offer more sustainable alternatives. In effect it has absorbed the wisdom of Indigenous People and translated it into modern language: science and political action. But there is a spiritual basis to it as well, as Winona La Duke, an Anishanabe from Minnesota observed, "we must change from a culture based on conquest to one based on survival. " 2

Wes Jackson, an ecologist who promotes sustainable farming practices, has noted that our modern, Western culture still operates "more in the conquering spirit of Columbus and Coronado than in that of the natives we conquered." 3 That is to say that nature, to a modern, is regarded as something to be either subdued or ignored, never honored or imitated. When we made ozone-depleting CFCs, Jackson says, we ignored nature. When we developed farming practices that destroyed billions of tons of topsoil that took millions of years of evolution to create, depleted the water tables and poisoned the land with chemical pesticides and herbicides, our arrogant attempts to "manage" nature only resulted in the impoverishment of the land, the economy and our spirits.

Native Peoples do not manage the natural world. They imitate it, harmonize with it, flow with it. They draw upon the wisdom embedded in ecosystems: how the reindeer move within the cycles of the seasons; the mysterious relationship between

WE CAN NO LONGER SIMPLY PACK UP AND LIGHT OUT FOR THE TERRITORIES IN THE CLASSIC TRADITION OF SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL IRRESPONSIBILITY ANYMORE. THERE IS NO MORE "OUT" TO GET TO.

predator and prey. Indigenous People understand that every plant and animal has its proper place within the chain of being, and to honor that place one must follow the natural law of reciprocity: take only what you need and no more and always give something in return. In so doing, one recognizes that one is also part of the circle of life, and within this circle, biologists have noted, everything- energy, water, nutrients- gets recycled and nothing is ever wasted. Every living thing, from fungus to humans, requires food to survive and eventually offers itself up as food- if the bears don't eat us , the soil microbes will. To a modern, this is a disturbing notion, but to a primitive it is a cause for celebration. It is a form of communion, Gary Snyder says, where living things share their energies by "literally eating each other." One of the healthiest things about the primitive worldview is that it's solved one of the critical problems of life and death. It understands how you relate to your food. You sing to it. You pray to it, and then you enjoy it. 4

Another characteristic of Indigenous thinking is the notion of the longview. Among the Iroquois there was a code of ethics known as the "seventh generation". Whenever a policy decision was being considered- especially one that would affect the entire nation- they always asked themselves how that decision might affect humans seven generations from now, long after those making the decision had passed on. Such un-self-centered thinking seems foreign to a modern, but is central to any principle of stewardship. If such a code had been a part of the Western paradigm we would not have nuclear power or weapons, nor would we be dependent upon fossil fuels. We would not have oil spills, ozone depletion or global warming. We would not be clearing away the world's rain forests at the rate of one acre per second per day, and ten thousand years worth of topsoil would still be in place. To leave behind the problem of waste for some future generation to solve would be inconceivable to an Indigenous person. So too the destruction of a forest, to whom Natives like the Haida of British Columbia regard with reverence and speak to as brother and sister.

Blind to the fact that our current, wasteful, the-future-be-damned way of nonliving is not only eliminating the incredible diversity of present life-forms but the very conditions for the renewal of life, modern society is one dazzled by its own technology: fast food, fast cars, fast money, fast living. Without a sense of permanence or bonding to a place the land itself and all the life that it holds become commodities to be consumed and discarded with ever-increasing speed and negligence. The latest rage is genetic engineering- the conquest, control and subjugation of the very building-blocks of life; the newest frontier for the true believers in Manifest Destiny is outer space. But many of us are beginning to awaken to the insanity of this way of being and are taking up the hard task of turning it around. We have realized we can no longer simply pack up and light out for the territories in the classic, white-American male, Huck Finn-style tradition of social and ecological irresponsibility anymore: clear the forest, suck the land dry, make a fast buck and get out. There is no more "out" to get to. We must simply dig in and make a stand to defend the land, our communities and our neighborhoods right where we are. But before we can do this we must learn to come to terms with our place.

During the sixties, many young people (myself included) who felt disillusioned by modern, industrial society often sought out the wisdom of Native peoples. What these young descendants of Europeans who had lost their ancestral ties to land and land-based wisdom- who were, in effect, spiritually homeless- were seeking, I

*(**Seaberg** continued on p. 10)*

SIEIDDE

written and illustrated by Mel Olsen

Not far from the village, the lush green landscape gradually drops off toward a clear mountain lake. Near to the shore a low but imposing dome of rock emerges from the spongy lush mass. There, on that dome, rests an enormous, curiously-shaped boulder - solid and ancient. A great presence physically and supernaturally, it is the landlord and guardian of the local Sami clan. The land and its proceeds, home to these Sami for generations, are on loan from this ancient sentinel. It is the clan Sieidde.

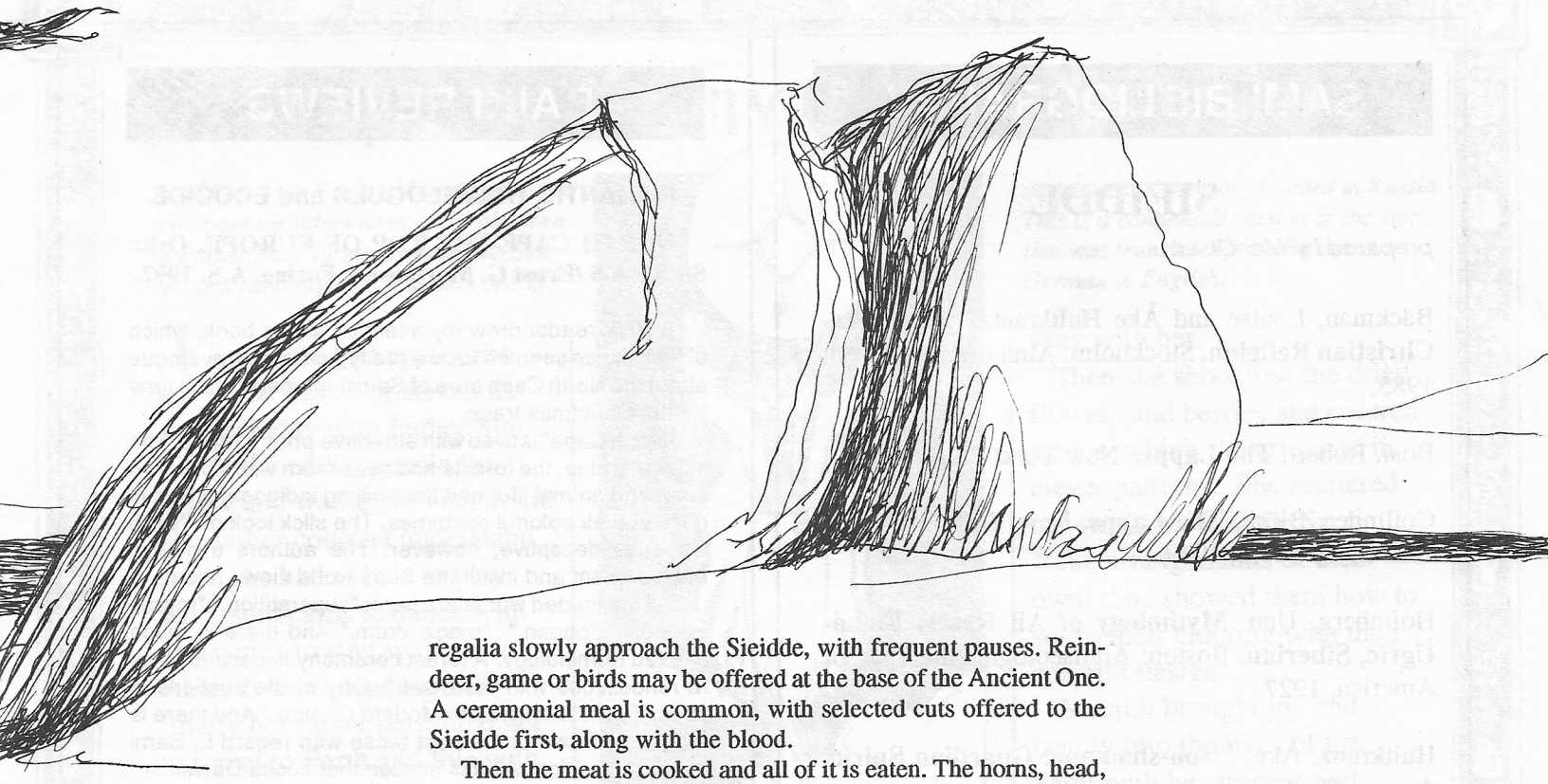
Autumnal offerings (*boaldon vieron*) at the Sieidde maintain harmony and repay the Spirits for the gifts of animals, good weather, good health and another season.. This is the renewal of the tenant-landlord relationship. Mounds of the bones of animals and birds (*fårteste*) have accumulated over generations adding to the mystique of the sacred site. These offerings attest to good migrations, abundant berries, first summer milkings and harmony in the village.

Sapmi has hundreds of noteworthy Sieiddes, documented from as early as the sixteenth century. They vary in form and function, but generally are a unique feature on the land: a mountain, rock crevasse, boulder, spring or grotto. Most have a uniqueness in shape and a compellingly strange dominance over their setting. Most of them are closely associated with weather and the potential torments of nature. Storms may follow anger and cause hardship or the loss of valuable livestock. The Sieidde sends thunder rolling over land and sea, and may summon lightning, hail or blizzards.

Birds have an association with Sieidde and the Spirit of the Ancient has been seen leaving in the form of a raven, to survey the domain. In parts of Sweden and Finland songbirds flying into the valleys are known to turn to stone and fall into lakes and streams. These are birds not common to the area, and their songs continue to be heard in the forests. The fortunate individuals who have found such stones in the shape of birds have unusually good luck in fishing and hunting.

The Sami have a respectful relationship with the Sieidde. Passersby look straight ahead when near, and remove their hats. And there is no unnecessary noise - the spirits of nature do not like noise.

At the time of the annual offering, clan members in full holiday



regalia slowly approach the Sieidde, with frequent pauses. Reindeer, game or birds may be offered at the base of the Ancient One. A ceremonial meal is common, with selected cuts offered to the Sieidde first, along with the blood.

Then the meat is cooked and all of it is eaten. The horns, head, pelt, and the tail, in one piece, often with ornaments added, are left for the Spirit. This is usually accompanied by a sacred song (*luete*).

Some clan Sieiddes are of a character that requires great caution. In some instances offerings are made at a stake that is some distance away. Or blood and fat will be smeared on stones that are tossed in the direction of the Sieidde. There are even instances where the Sieidde become belligerent and cruel; more of a threat than a benefit. With great bravery and cunning, a village has been known to outwit and destroy such a cantankerous Sieidde.

Most, however, have good relationships with their Sieidde and approach them with questions. If one's hand sticks firmly to the stone, the answer is positive.

A person does not speak ill of the dead in the vicinity of a Sieidde for the ancestors are often nearby and the Sieidde itself may be a clan ancestor. The Sami tell of an old woman whose deceased husband had become troublesome in the night. She consulted a *noaide* who laid out fish bones and waited. When the dead husband appeared to eat the fish bones, the *noaide* led him away into the dark. In the morning the old woman felt relieved when she spotted a new Sieidde on the shoreline some distance away.

Some clans create their Sieiddes from live trees in the shape of wooden pillars. Or they make stone circles (*vero*). A pillar Sieidde is used just once. Large groupings of them grow over the years and the site itself takes on a special spirit. Stone circles are among the most ancient Sieiddes and some still exist in spite of Christian orders to destroy them.

To this day, the Sieiddes maintain a haunting presence on the land. Offerings are still made, and caution observed. The power in these Ancient Ones surpasses the promises of an unnatural religion not of the land. When thunder rolls and rain pelts from the night sky, thought returns to the Ancient Guardian - sentinal for all of the clan.

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SIEIDDE

prepared by Mel Olsen

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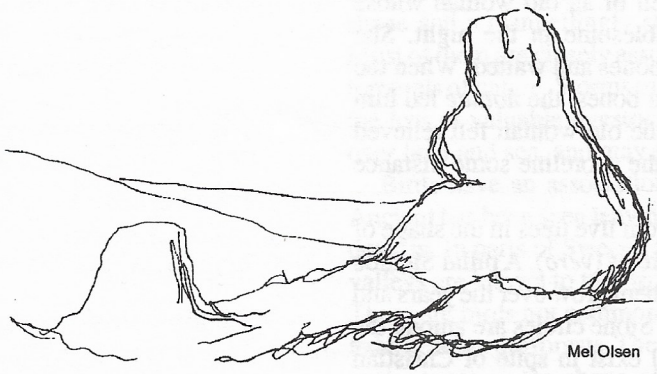
Mel Olsen is a weaver and professor of art and art history at the University of Wisconsin, Superior. He is a regular contributor to Baiki.



A pair of sieidde stones on top of sacred Mt. Rastekaise, Finnish Lapland.

BAIKI REVIEWS

ROMANTIC TRAVELOGUES and ECOCIDE

NORTH CAPE-THE TOP OF EUROPE. Oslo: Scribe A.S./Ernst G. Mortensens Forlag, A.S. 1992.

A *Baiki* reader drew my attention to this book, which at first glance seemed to be a pretty, romantic travelogue about the North Cape area of Sami Finnmark, out in time for the Christmas trade.

"North Cape" is filled with attractive photographs. The skies are blue, the forests and seas teem with abundant plant and animal life, and the smiling indigenous Samis pose in their colorful costumes. The slick look of "North Cape" is deceptive, however. The authors trivialize, misrepresent and insult the Sami world view.

All the loaded words are here: "superstition," "mystic symbols," "pagan," "magic drum." And there is much bigoted terminology. A forest ceremony is described as "a rendezvous with the Devil." One of the sections is titled "From Witchcraft to Modern Church." And there is a persistent use of the past tense with regard to Sami spiritual tradition. All this implies that social Darwinism and a linear concept of history are still in vogue at *Mortensens Forlag.*

It should come as no surprise, then, that this book takes a partisan and schizophrenic stand on environmental issues. Finnmark, a "unique area of clean and untouched nature" is today threatened with unchecked exploitation by outside corporations. Yet the authors describe offshore drilling as " a new opportunity on the horizon," and the construction of huge natural gas terminals as "lubricating the economy." The readers are told that "great investments are being made in hotels, tourist centers, communications and marketing," amenities obviously designed to make Western visitors feel at home when they arrive to witness North Cape fall prey to this ecocide.

Many Americans will thumb through "North Cape" and buy it for its pretty, romantic photographs. They will fail to see the connection between the text's bigoted linear portrayal of the Sami world view and the destruction of Finnmark and the Sami way of life.

"North Cape" therefore illustrates the serious need for us as Sami people to translate, write, fund, publish, distribute, promote and read the books we write about ourselves. We DO see the connection between our way of life and planetary survival. We can no longer afford to be marginal and silent. Our involvement is neither pretty nor romantic. It is a matter of life and death.

Reviewed by Faith Fjeld

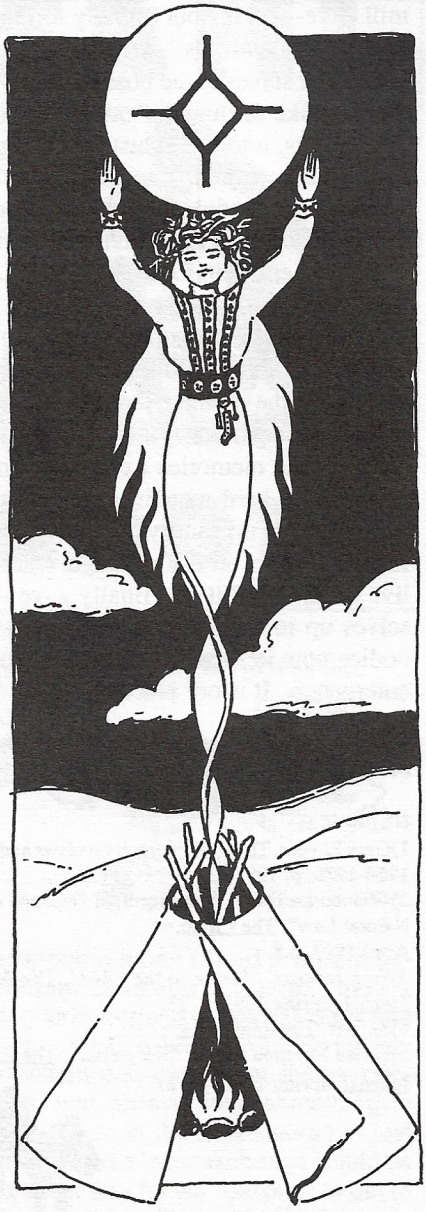
How Joy & Beauty Came To The Sami

Retold by Grey Eagle. Many Sami myths tell about the adventures of the children of Father Sun. In some myths, the Sun has several daughters, but only one is mentioned in the story I heard in Russia. This is a condensed version of the story that was translated from Russian to German to English.

It is said that Akanidi once got bored traveling across the sky each day with Father Sun. She watched the people far below and wanted to visit them. Her father couldn't understand since she had clouds to play with, sunbeams to dance with and winds to sing with. But Akanidi kept pleading and finally her father permitted her to travel to Earth and live with an elderly and childless Sami couple.

The old man and woman were delighted when they discovered a baby with a bright round face asleep on a reindeer skin. They cared for her at their island home and she grew to be a lovely young woman. The old woman sewed her a maiden's dress, to which Akanidi added flowers, dried berries and colored stones, and the old man made her a crown of branches.

Akanidi was overjoyed when she saw her reflection in the lake. She begged to be taken to the mainland so she could be with young people and display her fine clothing. The couple was sad to lose the miracle child, but the old man rowed her to the far shore so she could visit other people. She carried with her three bags filled with dried flowers and berries and colored stones.



Illustrated by D'Arcy Allison-Teasley

In the Sami tents that Akanidi entered, people were struck by her brilliant beauty. Women wanted to rub their cheeks against hers, men wanted to hug her to their chests, children wanted to cuddle in her lap. But they could not touch or grasp her anymore than they could hold a reflection from water.

Akanidi taught the Sami to sing. Their hearts swelled and their spirits soared as they sang with her.

Then she shook out the dried flowers and berries and colored stones, which she arranged in clever patterns. She scattered her work and had the Sami make arrangements of their own. She showed them how to adorn their clothing with their colorful designs.

Akanidi brought joy and beauty into the lives of the Sami with her singing and designing. But some were jealous of her popularity. They plotted with a sorceress who told them to throw a moss-green rock at Akanidi.

The rock struck Akanidi in the chest. She sighed and sang one last song as her spirit rose through the smoke hole of the lavvo with a soft sound like the beating of wings. The people felt their souls rise with her as she was carried back to Father Sun.

Akanidi never returned to Earth, but her haunting songs were repeated in the Sami's joiks and the colorful designs remained on their clothing. They have been passed down over time and are with Sami people still. And Akanidi smiles down as she travels with her father across the sky, pleased at the joy and beauty now in the lives of those who live in the harsh north.

(Seaberg continued from p. 5)

believe, was a way of living grounded in place. Many experiments in communal / tribal living, in imitation of Indigenous lifestyles, were attempted to varying degrees of success. These first attempts to become native were clumsy at times, with little in the way of direct experience to draw upon (our schooling prepared us for careers in business, not survival. We can balance our checkbooks, but how many of us can accurately define our watersheds, or name all the species of plants and animals in our bioregions?). But I believe we are witnessing the birth of a new culture, a culture as diverse as the biological world, a culture composed of myriads of peoples that for one reason or another washed upon the shores of this continent, as more and more of us turn to the earth-bound wisdom of our ancestors. And the key to this turning is something the shamans of old understood very well: imagination. It was imagination- warm, humorous, ecstatic and holistic- not cold, dissecting, Cartesian reductionism, that inspired Einstein's theory of relativity and stood Newtonian physics on its head. Watson and Crick were not being dispassionately "objective" when they gleefully discovered that the DNA molecule spirals upward in a double-helix, like the joyous flight of two swallows in love, and cracked the genetic code. What these modern-day shamans understood, and many others like them- artists, poets, musicians and healers- are beginning to understand is what our ancestors, the Paleolithic hunter-gatherers and cave-painters, lived out every day of their lives: that the body is a miracle, the Earth is sacred and we are all passionate participants in the joyous dance of life. We will transform our culture, and do it through music, through art, through poetry and through dance. We- the children of immigrants- are abandoning "spaceship earth" and embracing Mother Earth.

Many Native peoples speak, in their oral histories, of a time of great migrations, when their ancestors wandered over great distances before arriving at their proper place. Perhaps we are experiencing, in this industrial era, another great migration, and after the dust settles we too may find our proper place. When my Swedish-Sami grandparents pulled up their roots and came to this country nearly 100 years ago they left behind a language and a culture well-adapted to the soil and climate of their ancestral homeland and tried, as best they could, to acclimate themselves to a new one. Reeling from the shock of that transplant they drifted about like tumbleweeds in a storm- working on a farm here, a lumber mill there- seeking out friendly soil to send down cautious roots. As maidservants to the rich or slaves to the bossman they were drafted, like millions of other bewildered immigrants, into the industrial chaingang-foot-soldiers in the war against Nature. But I honor my grandparents for their courage and determination to survive, for "learning to live on earth and survive", says Leslie Marmon Silko, "that's all it's ever been about." 5 My grandparents "swept the garden", as Zen Buddhists would say, by caring for the meager piece of land they earned, raising a family and passing on their stories. The memories I carry with me of their simple, hard-won lives I cherish as the oral history of my family. They came to this land as seekers on a pilgrimage, learned to live on it, loved it and finally gave themselves up to it. The soil that holds their bodies now is sacred soil, the land of our emergence. It is our place.

Kurt Seaberg is an artist and writer and a member of the Baiki staff.

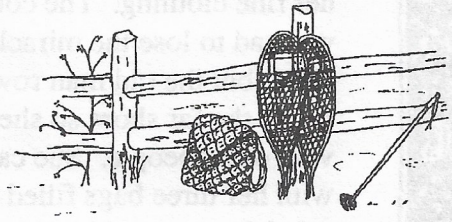
footnotes:

1)Gary Snyder, The Real Work, Interviews and Talks 1964-1979, p. 138.
2)Winona La Duke, "Our Survival Depends on the Natural Law", The Circle, April 1993, p.8.
3)Wes Jackson, "Listen to the Land", The Amicus Journal, Spring 1993, p. 33.
4)Snyder, The Real Work, p. 89.
5)Leslie Marmon Silko, "Storyteller", The Amicus Journal, Spring 1993, p. 18.

A VISIT FROM ST. NICK

Last week we went to the Brooklyn Park Historical Farm (just north of Minneapolis) and I saw St. Nicholas like I haven't seen him since I was a child. The women there were making *lefse* and *krumkakke*. In the parlor an elderly man was playing Christmas carols on an accordion while children accompanied him on the flute and guitar. Upstairs a woman and some children were making paper tree trimmings and stringing popcorn and cranberries. Laughter and camaraderie were all about. Outdoors children were riding down the hill on kick sleds and some men were taking care of a large bonfire. Marshmallows were being roasted and there were carollers singing in the background. Goats and tom turkeys strutted around the yard looking very important, greeting everybody with their gobbles, stretching their wings, fanning their tails to claim their territory. You could hear sleigh bells in the distance where people were getting rides on a horse-drawn sleigh. They were laughting and straw was scattering all over the trail. Finally there was St. Nick with his big basket of treats! He gave me a brown paper bag filled with peanuts, hard candy and four chocolate haystacks. All this took me back to my younger days. What a wonderful Christmas this year will be with memories of my childhood rekindled at the age of 66!

Marvin Salo
5523 84 1/2 Ave. No.
Minneapolis, MN 55443



FOUR FAN LETTERS

***Baiki* is a lifeline linking us all.** It not only has provided us information, but a forum and a means of stirring Sami traditions in our own families. It is important for the children to become interested and see that others, Samis and otherwise, are concerned enough to actually bring out such a fine publication. I hope that between subscriptions, patrons and grants it can be an ongoing project. To me it is the most important single aspect of the reawakening of a Sami-American Spirit! Many thanks.

Carol E. Ruotsala Staats
HC 30 Box 5571
Wasilla, AK 99654

Please renew my subscription. Thank you for bringing Sami awareness to the Sami public. It is good to read about our intuitiveness and our affinity with nature. Please keep up the good work.

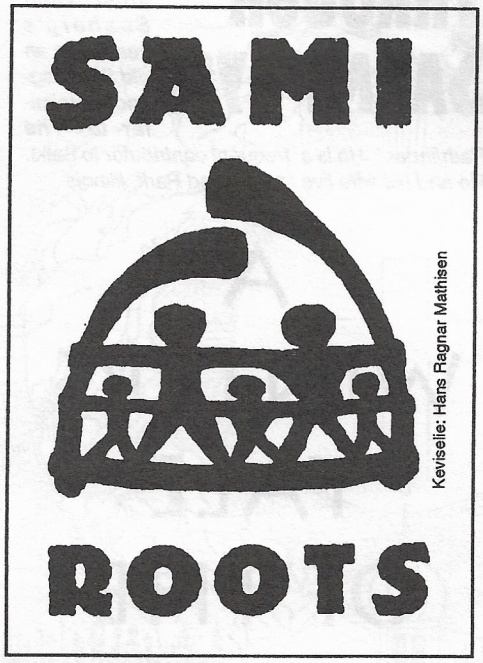
Joanne Ouellette
10464 W. 44th Ave. 3A
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033

Baiki keeps getting better and better. The article on the Drum in the most recent issue is especially good, for I think it is essential that people understand their religion and spiritual practices. Looking forward to reading more.

James A.Swan, Ph.D.
Instit. for the Study of Natural Systems
P.O.Box 637
Mill Valley, CA 94942

I was so thrilled to read about the organization of Sami people in the mid-August 1993 edition of *News from Indian Country.* I had no idea there were large numbers of Sami people in North America! My grandmother is a Sami from the Inari region of Finland. Her family immigrated to the United States around the turn of the century. I know precious little about this part of my heritage. Please send me further information. I am very eager to learn about the Sami culture.

Lee Warren
1250 Boston Post Road A-205
Guilford, CT 06437



BAIKI LETTER EXCHANGE

I'm proposing a pen friend program between Sami here and in Sapmi. I have a Norwegian pen-friend who is half Sami and I can tell how much fun it is to have a far way friend whom you can share things with. Besides, you always have something to look forward to in the mail instead of just bills! I think that a letter exchange would be an excellent way for we "Baikers" to get to know one another. This could be especially valuable for Sami youth, who may be struggling with their identity and would be delighted to know that there are Sami in North America who have pride in who they are. My friend in Norway (Hammerfest) tells me how she is ashamed to be Sami and how she wishes she looked more "Norwegian." I find that pretty sad since I am of mixed heritage also and couldn't be happier.

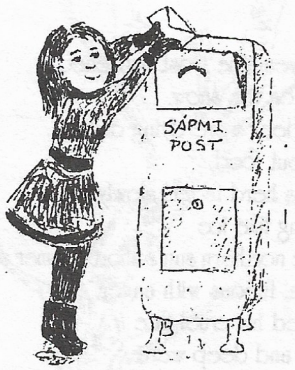
Kimberley R. Oliver
745 W. 7th Ave.
Vancouver, B.C. Canada
V5Z 1B9

CHRISTMAS EVE SURPRISE

As an in-class writing assignment I gave my students 15 minutes to write a short story. This little gem was written by Cecile Eastman, an Indian student from the Tulalip reservation, 30 miles north of Seattle. Her older sister was in the same class and never knew she had been caught playing Santa. For me, the story tells something about the spirit of Christmas giving through a caring relationship often found between older and younger siblings on Indian reservations:

"Reluctantly she climbed into bed, slowly drifting off despite the Christmas lights dancing on the ceiling and recounting the weeks of mounting expectations of what Santa would leave under the tree for her. Awakened by a noise, she quietly tip--toed from her room, peeking wide-eyed around her doorway, attempting to catch a glimpse of him without being seen. Bravely, she left her room for a closer look. But what was her sister doing placing the Barbie doll camper under the tree? She crept back to her bed, weeping quietly into her pillow, not completely aware of the magic she would never again experience."

C. Patrick Morris, Ph.D.
University of Washington, Bothell
22011 26th Ave. SE
Bothell, WA 98021



We appreciate your letters. We try to answer all Baiki correspondence. We have limited time and limited help, so there may be a delay in our response. Please send your ideas and comments to "Sami Roots," Baiki, 3548 14th Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55407.

THROUGH SAAMI EYES

This is poet-artist Albin Seaberg's version of an old Sami legend very similar to "The Pathfinder." He is a frequent contributor to Baiki. *He and his wife live in Highland Park, Illinois.*

A WINTERS TALE OF THE FAR NORTH

It was Christmastide; the pale winter sun
Had early this year
Its downward course run.
Darkness hung
Like a thick, black, damp curtain
Cold, son of Pohjola,
Hovered over lake and mountain.
Fog rested in thick, gray patches
On the snow,
Sami and reindeer travelled
Silently and slow.
An evil Stallo was abroad in this wild land,
God had the far Northland forsaken,
And Ugly spirit Kimmo
Led people into wickedness.
Dark deeds spoiled
The arctic wilderness.

✢

On the seashore - the journey
Of a winter's day from Petchenga,
A Sami nomad on his way
With herd of reindeer
Pitched his cloth tent.
By the name of Mikkla Luotkaniema
He went,
Baptized by the Holy Tryphon himself,
He was a Christian in name,
But not in spirit, alas,
And when the expected favors
Did not light on his herd and tent,
He was filled with spite,
Against God Supreme, and St. Tryphon;
So spurned - he thought - to heathen
shaman ways returned..

✢

That year the frost hardened
Early on the snow.
Reindeer were dying daily
Without food,
So his herd faded slowly away,
Melting like ice
In the northern sun's short summer solstice.
Mikkla, furious with anger,
Cursed his cruel fate
Long and deep were
His disturbed thoughts, until late one night
He harnessed his sledge
And wildly drovelnto Norway,
To an evil pirate band's winter cove.
He proposed to lead them
To Petchenga monastery
To loot and plunder,
Steal their gold and jewels away.

✢

To find the place, their proud chieftain promised
Mikkla thirty coins in Swedish silver;
Harnessed the train of sledges
And armed robbers
Took the way to far-off Petchenga
Reaching it on Christmas Day.
Before the marauding pirates came,
The members, all
of the brotherhood sat down at tables
in the dining hall.
After Mass; The Father Superior,
Blessing the food took up the Holy Book
To read the lesson and stood,
Paled, began to reel and then fell to the ground.
The brethren thought him faint from fasting,
But found - when another brother began to read
in his stead and gave out a shriek of horror,
Clutching his head - that
Written in blood where the Father's bookmark
Had been was a list of those murdered
Which included their own names,
Beginning with that of the Father Superior.
All became confusion and weeping
But later the Father firmly ordered
Into church that day the brotherhood,
Before the holy images to pray.

Meanwhile the robbers approached
The church spire and wooden monastery,
Surrounded and set it on fire.

✢

One monk, a giant
And former leader of warriors
On seeing through the windows
Only fifty robbers
Begged the Father to allow him
And some of the younger monks
To defend the monastery,
but the Father Superior replied:
So, it is the will of God, foretold by the Holy
Tryphon, although he said not when;
Therefore we must not go against His will,
But without murmuring prepare to win
The crown of martyrdom.
So kneeling before the altar
In fervent prayer,
The brothers became silent.

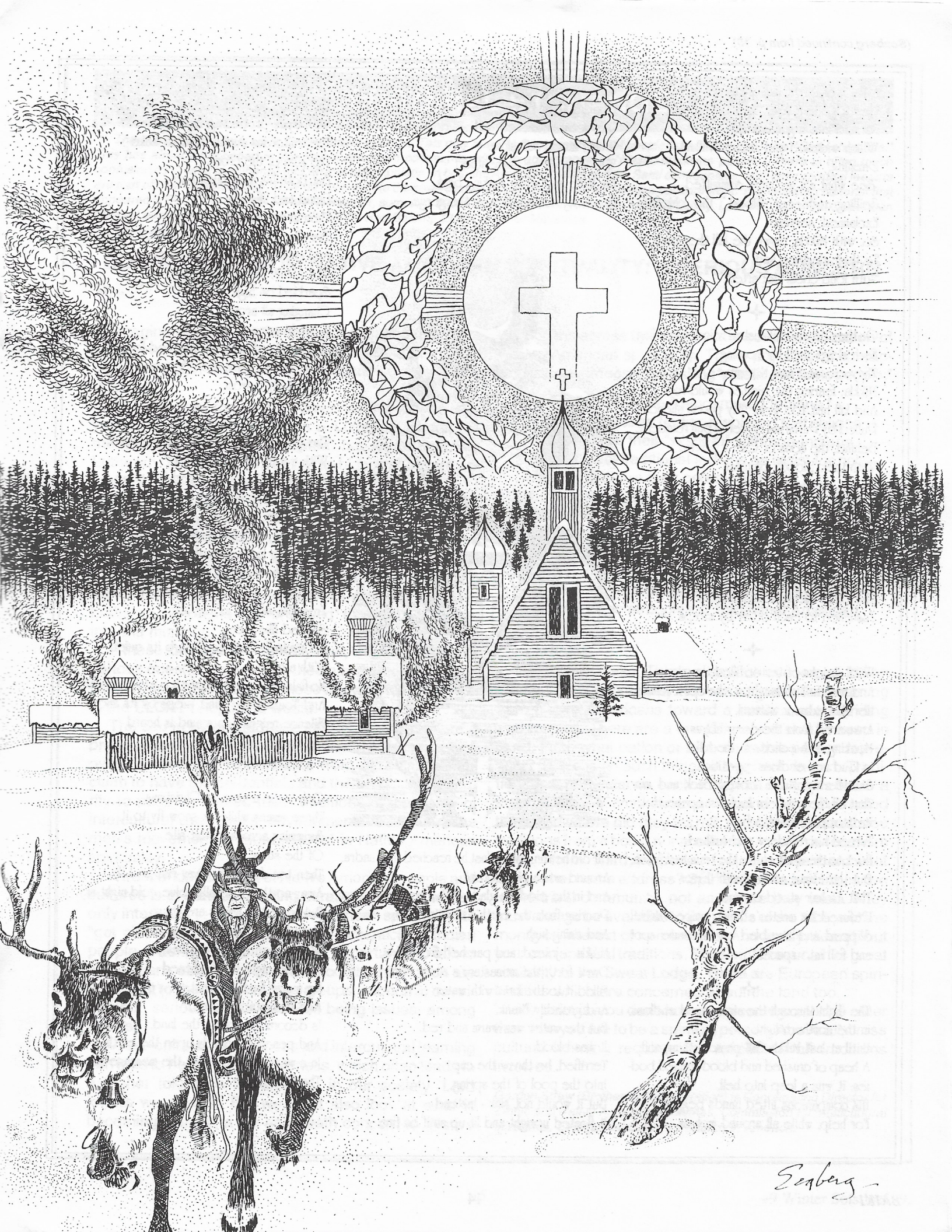
✢

At that moment the robbers rushed in,
But no monk answered their inquiries
As to where
The monastery valuables and riches were.
The robbers were enraged;
So the monks suffered Martyrs deaths
While prayers lingered on their lips.
Having killed them all, each robber ran to
Look for booty and church plate to plunder.
But they found very little,
Because the monks frugally living a pious life
Never troubled to amass worldly riches.
Meanwhile the fire burned the monastery
And the robbers divided the spoils eagerly.

✢

Among the stolen relics was a cup of silver.
This was given to Mikkla who furtively hid it
Under his garment, trembling with greed.
Standing on a rock, the robber waited for
The church to be caught by the flames;
But although the fire raged fiercely
All around, it did not touch the church.
Suddenly above the flaming monastery
Appeared three snow white swans.
The robbers were perplexed, and asked
How it could be that swans appeared
Now, in winter. Meanwhile the swans,
Above the fire, soared higher and higher
In the air and then magically dissolved into
A golden circle, brighter than the fire burned.
Then fluttering upwards one after another

(Seaberg continued p. 16)


Seaberg

(Seaberg continued from p. 13)

A flock of birds, like white sea gulls,
Flew together, rose high, turned and
Formed into a golden ring
Which widened and shone brilliant -
Dazzling.
"See what sin we have committed,
Spilling righteous Blood," the chieftain
Exclaimed...nervous.
So, with Mikkla, down the hill they rushed
To their sledges, and
With loud cries, departed.

✢

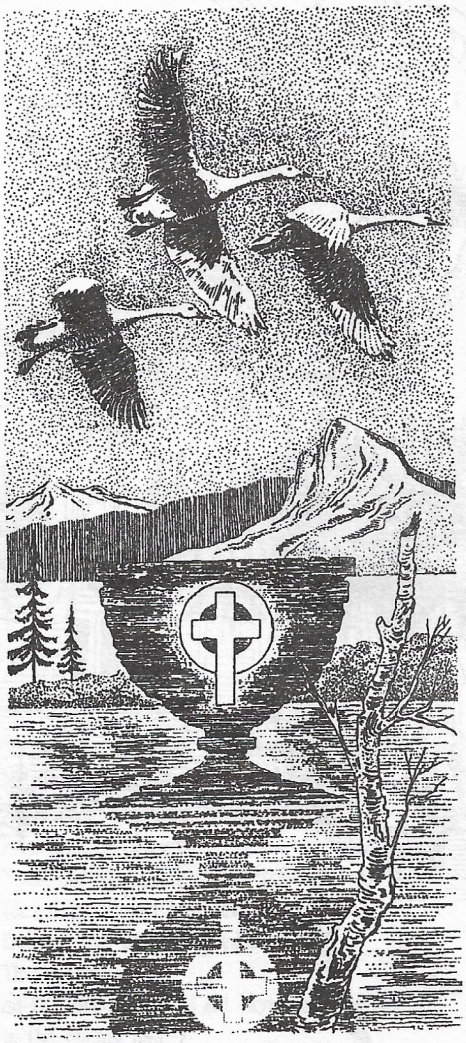
On they drove, exhausted reindeer pulling
Each sleigh until by morning
They crossed into Norway.
Mikkla, fearing the pirates would rob
And kill him, too went fifty paces ahead,
Pulled by Purim his powerful bull reindeer.
Behind, the sons of Cain followed
With their bloody plunder
on the sledge train.
Suddenly, at a steep, icy spot,
The last reindeer stumbled
And with the sledge and its driver lurched
Over the edge down into the abyss,
Dragging also with them
The other sledges and drivers
Fastened to each other by straps.

✢

Wild shrieks of terror filled the air,
And with hellish laughter, the spirit Kimmo,
He who hides in stones,
Answered from the deep abyss
Mocking with echoes in the hills,
in loud and endless repetition.
Shuddering, Mikkla looked back and saw
That all the robbers had disappeared.
He stopped awestricken,
Turned his reindeer and rushed
Back to the spot where the train had fallen,
But the animal so mad with terror
That its hair stood on end
Refused its master's lead, jumped aside,
Slipped and stumbled on the same spot
and fell into space.

✢

The flight through the air seemed endless,
in the northern light
Until at last Mikkla fell on something soft
A heap of crushed and blood-stained bodies; it was a leap into hell.
His companions lifted hands begging
For help, while all around wolves
were tearing their living flesh and greedily
Drinking their blood.
The wolves attacked Mikkla's reindeer
Which stood still alive.
With despair he unsheathed
His knife and while striking back,
Headlong rushed through the gorge.



Far did he run, until at last he reached the tundra.
Around was a pine forest,
And in the middle a glade with a copious spring
Pouring from the earth's dark depths,
And rising high.
Mikkla rejoiced, and parched from thirst
Drew forth the monastary's silver cup,
Filled it to the brim with water
And greedily drank,
But the water was warm and red.
It was blood.
Terrified, he threw the cup
Into the pool of the spring,
But it would not sink - instead
It floated upright and lit up as if on fire.

✢

The blood shown lustrous.
With eyes protruding from his head,
The traitorous Judas tried to make
The sign of the cross,
But both his arms hung limp,
Dead and lifeless.
Then in a column of water,
The silver cup was thrown up from the pool
And carried skyward to heaven.
Like a sun, the sacred cup
Sparkled on high
Changing all around it to
A bright summer sky.
And the Lord himself stretched forth
His right hand and took the cup
To his holy bosom.

✢

The darkness and black night retuned.
With a roar the column fell
Seized Mikkla and dragged him down
To hell.
To this day, they say,
In Norway, beyond Varanger Fjord,
There is a bottomless lake,
Where the water is of a reddish color.
A large yellow stone rises up
From the middle of the lake -
Shaped like a cup.
No birds fly over to disturb its quiet
With a breeze..
No fish swim in it, nor does it in winter freeze.
And Toulikki, the wind, stops by its shore -
Silence reigns - no sound is heard
For evermore.

✢

Only once a year, at Christmas,
Three swans white as snow fly to it,
Swimming across to the site
Of the stone,
Then ten days later they rise and fly
Away north in a metallic, blue, cold night sky.
But while the swans are there
Panu brings light
Warmth and fire to the hearth,
And the night is brightened
By a star from the East,
And Hongata, the pine,
Is decorated across the land.
And peace descends upon the earth
In a waythat celebrates the message of
The holy day.

EDITORIAL EXCHANGE

There is a growing interest in Sami spiritual tradition. This may result in the appearance of people falsely claiming to be "Sami shamans." This has already happened in the Native American community with the appearance of "plastic medicine people." There is often much confusion as to what is authentic and what is opportunistic. In both the American Indian and the Sami communities, authentic spiritual leaders are part of their cultural group. They do not promote themselves nor do they charge money for their spiritual work. The following editorial first appeared in ELCA Outdoor Ministries Newsletter, *summer 1993. It was reprinted in* News from Indian Country, *Late Oct. 1993.* Baiki *has been granted permission to publish this editorial by Rod Boriah, ELCA Outdoor Ministries.*

BORROWING FROM NATIVE AMERICAN SPIRITUALITY: A SERIOUS CONCERN

Gordon Straw

Imagine reading in a Lutheran publication that there were several Native Americans across the country claiming to be ELCA bishops. It might sound something like this:

1) A Yurok woman in California has lived for several years across the street from a Lutheran Church. A member of that church "adopted" her as an honorary Lutheran. Therefore, as a Lutheran bishop she is presiding at daily Eucharists.

2) A Seminole man in Florida has read several books by pre-Vatican Roman Catholics about Lutheranism, and Pentecostals who once were Lutheran. As the bishop of Florida he has baptized 200 people.

3) A Lakota man in South Dakota claims to be the reincarnation of Martin Luther. As a self-proclaimed Lutheran bishop, he has "ordained" three other Lakotas into the ministry.

If these stories were actually true, wouldn't you have serious questions about the theological integrity, qualifications and credentials of those claiming to be bishops in the ELCA? I hope you would.

The sad irony is that these stories, in reverse, are a present-day reality for Native American communities all over the country. Non-Indians from all backgrounds claim to have the credentials and the theological integrity to pass on sacred tribal traditions in the name of intercultural awareness, environmental education, the men's movement or mere interest in Native American spirituality.

A truer understanding of Native American people and cultures is in danger of being derailed by those whose only interest is to exploit Native American spirituality, to "get closer to nature." It not only romanticizes Indian people, it denies Indian people an opportunity to talk to non-Indians about issues in their community which are important to them: Indian hate groups, economic development, serious health and well being issues, among others.

Cross-cultural experiences and intercultural learning can lead to heightened awareness, which often leads to a higher tolerance for diversity in our society. Lord knows we need it. But we must also look at what is becoming literally, a life and death concern to Native Americans across the country: the commercialization of Native American spirituality. There are several characteristics of what some are calling "plastic medicine people:"

1. Many claim to be "reincarnated Indians."
2. Most possess an "Indian prophecy" that obliges them to share their "wisdom" with non-Indians.
3. They label traditional Indians as racist for not wanting to share their ceremonies.
4. Their teaching is often a mixture of New Age Mother Earth spirituality and European occult traditions, with no connection to Native American spirituality.
5. Most important, they all claim to be apolitical and they are unwilling to talk about the political and economic struggles of traditional American Indians.

Make no mistake. This is a serious concern of Indian leaders. This concern by no means precludes learning from Native Americans toward a better understanding and respect. There are a few things you should keep in mind. First, what nation or tribe does this person represent? There is no such thing as a generic Indian. Traditions are particular to each tribe; not all tribes have a sweat lodge, a smokehouse. Second, who instructed them and where did they learn? You cannot learn these traditions from a book, nor are there a lot of true teachers to learn from. Third, if a person is Native American, what is his or her home address? Spiritual leaders of tribes live in the tribal community, not anywhere they wish. They must always be available to the needs of the tribe, not the moneyed interest of non-Indians. And finally, search out your own spiritual traditions. The Finnish sauna has great similarity to the Sweat Lodge. There are European spiritualities which are concerned about the land too.

My point is: you don't have to become someone other than who you are to be a spiritual person. Above all, cross cultural learning requires the respect of all traditions involved.

Gordon Straw (Brotherton Indian Nation) is Coordinating Director for Ethnic and Native American Ministries, Commission for Multicultural Ministries, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

BAIKI ARTISTS SURVEY

Sami-American artists are invited to submit work to *Baiki* which will become part of an Arts Registry to be used in grant writing for art exhibits, in assessing art resources for future publications, and in presentations to the public about Sami American culture. Send up to 10 mounted slides or black and white prints of visual art work in any medium including painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, metal, prints, photography, crafts, or mixed media. Label with your name, address, dimensions, and media. Include a resume or biographical information; a brief statement about your work will also be valuable:

Baiki Artists Survey
Marlene Wisuri
5263 North Shore Dr.
Duluth, MN 55804.

BAIKI NEEDS HELP

We are receiving a growing number of letters from all over the world asking for sample copies and information about *Baiki* and the Sami culture. These letters often contain interesting personal stories. Answering them is a very important part of our community building.

WE NEED A SCRIBE

If you like people and are interested in the Sami culture this could be fun. You can live and work anywhere at your own pace.

HOW IT WORKS

We forward requests, furnish stamps, and send the supplies. You answer the letters and send the information. All we can offer in return at this time is a *Baiki* tee shirt, a free copy of "The First Two Years of Baiki" and our heartfelt gratitude:

Baiki, Faith Fjeld, editor
3548 14th Ave. So.
Minneapolis, MN 55407.

SAMI ART IN AMERICA

GLADYS KOSKI HOLMES

"Because I have always lived in this remote area where art is a foreign language spoken only by a few, I have found myself stretched across a chasm that bridges two disparate worlds: the Iron Range and the Urban-out-there. It has meant a continual search for elements from each and a struggle to synthesize them into some sort of cohesive whole. Through using recognizable imagery that provides a sense of place, while using symbolism and surrealism as transportation into yet another world-observation, ideas, and perhaps a nailing down of culture and history are taking place. It is both the tangible and the intangible-tangible objects collaged onto the frames and the painted realm within."

Gladys Koski Holmes:
Sing of Bridges, Frogs and Spring, 1985, OIl, mixed media.

reviewed by Marlene Wisuri

Several dozen people braved the stormy weather on November 22, 1993, to attend the opening reception of an exhibit of paintings by Gladys Koski Holmes at the Duluth Art Institute in Duluth, Minnesota. The exhibit is part of the Viola Hart Endowment Exhibition series which provides solo, retrospective exhibits to mature women artists of extraordinary merit. The Viola Hart Endowment was created in 1984 by Avon Hart in memory of his wife. The first exhibit funded by the endowment was held in 1986 and featured Solveig Arneng Johnson, a Sami-American artist from Duluth, who was profiled in the second issue of *Baiki.*

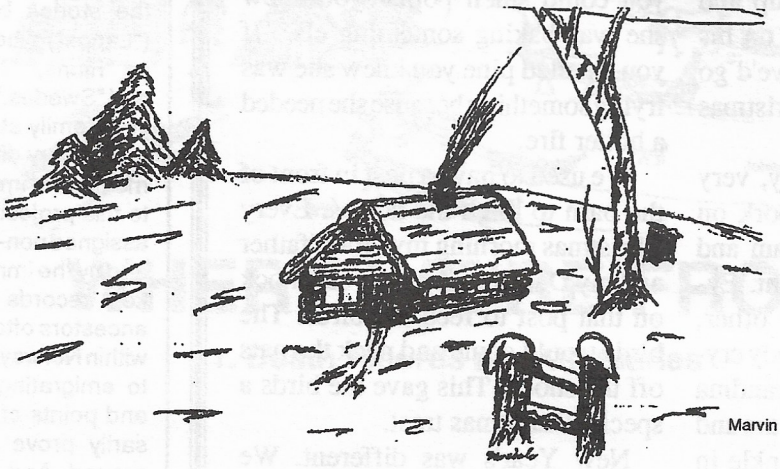
The forty-three paintings, drawings and collages that make up the exhibit are tied to reality, but contain haunting elements of fantasy and surrealism. They reflect Gladys' life on the Mesabi Iron Range and her ties to her immigrant background. She lives in Angora, Minnesota and traces Finnish-Sami ancestry through her grandmother Johanna Karjaluodo Koski who emigrated from north central Finland. Her formal art training consists of a B.A. degree in art from Bemidji State University and an M.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Superior. The retrospective show spans a twenty-year period of work from 1973 to 1993.

November 22, 1993 - January 2, 1994
Duluth Art Institute (at The Depot)
506 West Michigan St.
Duluth, MN (218) 727-8013

THE SPIRIT OF NEW LIFE

THE BACK OF THE WINTER IS BROKEN

Marvin Salo



Marvin Salo

We look at the Aurora Borealis and see the Northern Lights shining bright in the sky, and the days are very short and the stars are very bright. December 21st is coming soon. Then the "Back of the Winter" is broken and it is the beginning of new life. New life begins and the days start getting longer after December 21st.

The immigrants to America would rejoice that day as they did in their home country which was Northern Lappland. They were indigenous people, the Sami. They would say that spring will be here and we will be moving to summer pastures in a few more weeks.

On December 21st we had special coffee, egg coffee, which was made with egg, and cardamom bread, with wild cranberry jelly and probably cold venison roast and we would sit at the table. If we were very lucky and sugar was in abundance we would have a cake with frosting on it.

And then December 25th came along and it was a Christian day, and this Child that was born on this day was being celebrated. The people went to church and prayed for forgiveness and longevity and a gift to the Christ Child. Christmas to them meant life and love and happiness.

During this period the immigrants would have a ham for Christmas, which meant prosperity. And sour rye bread, mashed potatoes, rutabaga loaf, wild cranberries and blueberry sauce or pie. My grandmother would make a rhubarb pie and she would put oranges in it which was very good. I still remember the taste.

Gifts were very minor. Fellowship was more important than gifts. "The gift of life has already been given," Grandma would say. "We will celebrate the gift of life. If we believe heartily in love, compassion and the understanding of each other, we will survive."

St. Nicholas would arrive and bring a gift, probably an apple and maybe a pair of mittens which was very important. One Christmas I got a pair of skis.

Another time I got a nightshirt. Grandma would make all the kids nightshirts out of the same material. They were made out of flannel which was very warm. I think she must have bought the material by the bolt. These nightshirts were always so large that when you'd get into them, you'd step on the hem and fall over on your face. They were made large so they would last longer. That was the first lesson you learned on Christmas morning. To lift up the bottom of your nightshirt so you wouldn't stumble on it. And that bottom was supposed to be there so you could wrap your feet up in the cold house to keep them warm.

Light would shine through frosted windows. There would be icicles on the door hinges, frost around the door knob and the latch and my Dad would put more wood in the pot belly stove for heating the house. The Christmas tree was lit with candles. We'd all gather round and open up our brown paper bags that the gifts were put into. We'd open them up with rejoicing and laughing, thinking what a wonderful day it was. Then we'd go to the barn, milk the cows, feed the pigs, gather the eggs, feed the chickens, and feed the horses.

We'd give the horses a little more oats because they had a very important mission to do that day. My Dad would hitch them up and by that time us kids would be

*(**Salo** continued overleaf)*

(**Salo** continued from p. 17)

ready. He'd hook them on the sleigh. We had a red and green grain box and we would sit there in straw wrapped in blankets. And my Mom would sit down in the box with us and my Dad would stand up and drive the horses with frost on his eyebrows. Down the road we'd go to Grandma's house for Christmas dinner.

We were considered very, very wealthy because we had pork on our table. We would eat ham and mince pies, that were bought. Everyone would tease each other, somebody laughing, somebody crying, little kids crawling, Grandma herding her grandchildren around the house. Then with a twinkle in her eyes she would say, "Maybe Christmas IS worth something in this new country."

She had found a new way of life, leaving a lavvu and coming to a board house made out of logs with a porch made out of sawed lumber where you enter. Windows made out of glass, doors made out of wood and a stove made out of steel and iron. And yet this house that she lived in had the heart of the Sami and the way of the Sami.

She loved her children and her grandchildren. You could see her eyes twinkle as you walked into the house and she had a little greeting, "Well, what are you doing here now? Didn't I send you home a few days ago?"

She would always sing a little song of something that she would notice in you that would remind her of her home country. She'd sing a little song.

The smell of bread and the smell of the smoke! The poplar that burned in the stove gave off a certain aroma, and if you burned oak it would give off another aroma and when you burned pine it would give off another aroma. When you walked across a field to visit her you could tell what kind of wood she was burning in the stove at the time. If you could smell oak you knew she was baking something very special. If you could smell poplar you knew she was baking something else. If you smelled pine you knew she was frying something because she needed a hotter fire.

We used to have a post in front of the barn to hitch the horses. Every Christmas morning my Grandfather and my Dad would put an oat shock on that post to feed the birds. The birds would come and peck the oats off the shock. This gave the birds a special Christmas treat.

New Year's was different. We used to gather on New Year's Eve and we would have rice made with milk and an almond was stuck into the rice and the one that got the almond was a very lucky person because they usually got something for it, a little gift or something special. This rice was eaten with cream and sugar or with blueberry or rhubarb sauce on the top.

In the evening people would gather together and have coffee and talk and then somebody would take the old ladle out and they would start melting tin. The tin would be cast into cold water to make a form. And somebody in the family would predict the type of year you were going to have. I remember my tin showed that I was supposed to travel a lot and I guess I have. So New Year's was a very special day too.

As an immigrant my Grandmother had brought all her old customs from Tervola in northern Finland way up close to Finnmark. Her way of cooking and her Sami way of life slowly was converted to the American way of life.

Marvin Salo

NORTH AMERICAN SAMI ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

DO YOU HAVE SAMI ANCESTORS?

We at *Baiki* are beginning an oral history project (OHP) in order to record the stories brought by Sami people ("Lapps") who came to North America as "Finns," "Norwegians," "Russians," and "Swedes." This is a chance to record your family stories.

It is very difficult to apply recognized methods of immigration history research to this project. Sami people were often assigned non-Sami names by the church and by the immigration authorities. Both kept records using these names. Our ancestors often relocated several times within Norway, Sweden and Finland prior to emigrating, therefore place names and points of departure do not necessarily prove or disprove Sami background. And since the Sami language was forbidden by the national governments, the language spoken by our immigrant grandparents is not a reliable indicator either.

The Baiki OHP is an effort to find new ways to seek out Sami identity. We hope to make the stories of our grandparents and great grandparents real so that they can be passed along to future generations. We therefore hope to publish our findings. Scholarly research will grow from the grass roots information we piece together and relatives here in North America may become reconnected with each other.

Please help us with this historic project! We welcome all "leads" and stories from every geographic location. We need family genealogies, photographs, photocopies of research projects, newspaper clippings and cassettes of family interviews. We need seed money and we need people to volunteer to serve as interpreters in Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish.

All material becomes the property of the Baiki Oral History Project and proper credit for all sources of information will be given. Nothing will be published without permission. Please send all pertinent material to:

Baiki OHP
3548 14th Ave. So.
Minneapolis, MN
55407

SAMI GENEALOGY

a Baiki column edited by genealogist Phyllis J. Pladsen

WHERE WE'RE FROM

1. Death records and Obituaries

Baiki receives many letters from readers requesting help in how to go about searching for the origins of their Sami ancestors. This column is intended to provide assistance in that quest.

Most of our ancestors left a "paper trail" in the form of public records, and these are generally available if you know where to look. I'll discuss death records and obituaries in this column, and other sources in future columns.

You may know that your people came from Finnmark or Norrbotten or Lappi or perhaps all you know is that your people were from Norway, Sweden or Finland. However, what you really need to know in order to find the origin of your ancestor is the name of the parish where they were born, and the place to begin is close to home - your home, that is.

Before you do anything else, check your attic - and those of your cousins, aunts and uncles - for old letters, postcards or pictures. Letters and postcards may have legible return address or postmarks; pictures may have inscriptions on the back or the name and address of the photographer.

The next step is to get a copy of the death record for your ancestor to determine the exact date of death. These records are available in every state through the Department of Health; it is also possible to get a death record from the county in which the person died. Death records were kept at the county level; long before they were kept at the state level, so the county court house is often your best bet. There is a charge for these records, which varies from state to state. You probably won't find the place of birth on a death record (although I have found it on a few), but there will be other valuable information, such as a birth date, and when the person came to this country (you'll be surprised how often that information differs from "family lore").

A good source for the addresses to write to is "The Genealogists Address Book," by Elizabeth Petty Bentley. Another source, which gives the dates when each county in each state began keeping records is "Redbook," edited by Alice Eichholz for Ancestry Publishing Company.

Once you have a date of death, you can search for an obituary. Often an obituary will name the place of birth. Or it may give you information about the church the family belonged to; church records are one of the best sources for the names of birth places, but access to them is sometimes difficult. I will discuss those records in another column.

The chances of finding an informative obituary are better if your ancestor lived in a rural area or a small town, but even if he or she lived in a city, it is worth checking out. Many old newspapers are on microfilm at your state historical society; they are indexed by the name of the city in which they were published. If your ancestor lived in a town which didn't have a newspaper, check the newspaper in the nearest town that did have one.

The two books named above have the names and addresses of your state historical society and local genealogical societies. Contact someone at the genealogical society if you need help in getting started on this venture; they will be glad to help you.

Phyllis J. Pladsen is a member of the Minnesota Genealogical Society, the American Swedish Institute and several genealogical societies in Sweden. She teaches classes on genealogy at the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis and is co-author, with Joseph C. Huber, of the Swedish Genealogical Dictionary.

SAMI CONNECTIONS

Bayport, MN: I returned to Minnesota from Finland August 31 and have been busy ever since. The time in Sapmi was memorable. I met 20 wonderful people from all over the world at the Lapin Opisto. Travelled to Russia and visited the Sami Museum in Lovozero and visited schools in Finland where the Sami language is being integrated into the curriculum. Along the way I met many generous people who opened their homes and lives to me. To all of you I want to extend a heartfelt thank you. And I want to extend an invitation to come and visit me and the other Sami-Americans here in the Midwest.

Minneapolis: Grete Kvaal, Norwegian photographer from Tromsø, and her Sami friend **Karen Nyvol**, stayed at the home of Baiki and **Faith Fjeld**. Grete showed her black and white slide presentation "Karen Anna and Her Siida" at the Powderhorn Park Community Center. Grete's exuberant style led to many engaging conversations about the Sami culture. **Sue Myers** invited everyone over for a pot luck. Hopefully Grete will find a project in the U.S. that will bring her back.

Minneapolis and surrounding places: In October, **Elina Helander,** research fellow and former director of the Nordic Sami Institute in Kautokeino spent ten days in Minnesota. She lectured in two of **Frankie Shackleford's** Scandinavian Studies classes at both Augsburg College and the Nordic Center, and in **Rick Greszcyk's** Ojibwe language class at Augsburg. The following week both she and Faith lectured at Concordia College, Moorhead. **Elina, Sue Myers, Faith** and **I** met in Lake Elmo, MN with **Lea Foushee** of the **Indigenous Women's Network**, creating a link for further communication between Sami women and Native American women. The weather cooperated for "Coming Full Circle," a wonderful weekend Sami gathering at the home of **D'Arcy** and **Tony Teasley** in Wisconsin. Elina shared her knowledge of Sami cultural traditions. Out of state participants included **Chris Orloski,** Kansas, **Kim Rhinelander,** Vermont, and **Carol Staats,** Alaska. Thank you, D'Arcy and Tony for sharing your beautiful home and magical woods.

Troutman, NC: Congratulations to **Lorna Hanhy.** She was awarded first place in the Artoberfest for her sculpture "Aries Moon Woman," and a merit award for a reindeer amulet "Flying Free." Her work was featured in Issue #3. If anyone has old gaktis, boots, hats, knives, etc. and would like to have them restored she is willing to take a look at them. She is starting a collection of antique Sami clothing, to be used for design and exhibition purposes. Call: (704) 528-9786, or write: Lorna Hanhy, Rt.1 Box 111K, Troutman, NC, 28166.

Everywhere: Faith has been everywhere. In Tromsø she attended and presented at the Conference on Indigenous Politics and Self-Government Next she was off to be a panelist at the University of Toronto's symposium "Finland's Aboriginal People: the Sami Experience." There she met **Anja Kitti,** a Lule Sami who now lives in Toronto. Anja was present at Port Alberni, BC for the founding of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. Faith must have just unpacked her bags and off she went to Northfield, MN for a beautiful Norwegian-Sami Christmas tea in the home of longtime friend **Joan Kark,** a charter Baiki subscriber. She put on a slide presentation "An Afternoon in Samiland." **Cari Mayo** and her cousin **Elizabeth Lee,** (both in gakti and also long-time Baikers), **Dawn Morgan** (who had connected with her Sami roots at Elina's Moorhead presentation), storyteller **Marin Hinderlie** and **Fran Rasmus,** another old friend, all enjoyed the slides and lively conversation. **Edi Thorstenssen,** librarian at Gustavus Adolphus College, and **Charlotte Hartwig,** St. Olaf College faculty member, completed the group. The following week Faith spoke on "Freedom" at the annual Nordic American Thanksgiving Breakfast at the Minneapolis Hilton. After her 7-minute talk, many in the audience came up to express the fact that they, too have Sami roots.

Brooklyn Center, MN: I couldn't write a column without including **Marvin Salo.** Marvin and his wife **Carolyn, Sue Myers** and Sue's daughter **Margit** represented the Sami community at the Heritage Festival. Marvin and Margit made butter. A display of Sami handcrafts drew much attention, and the Sami flag hung proudly over the booth. Sue reported that copies of Baiki disappeared fast and she was busy all day answering questions. Sounds like fun.

There is a good possibility that the Reindeer Festival at the Minnesota Zoo will be expanded to include visitors from Sapmi. Set aside March 7-14. More on this later.

Dallas, TX: I want to say "thank you" to all the **Tex-Finns** in the Dallas area. They invited me to speak at their October meeting. Special thanks to **John** and **Nancy Laine** who made all the arrangements. Y'all come on up NORTH and see us in March at the Reindeer Festival!

Please send your news items to me:
Maija Oberg
Sami Connections
340 South 4th St.
Bayport, MN 55003

SAPMI TODAY

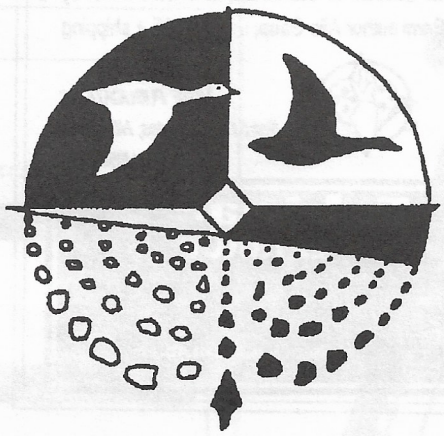
THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS POLITICS AND SELF-GOVERNMENT

Faith Fjeld

The International Conference on Indigenous Politics and Self-Government, sponsored by the Centre for Sami Studies at the University of Tromsø, Norway, took place November 8-10, 1993. This event marked the United Nations International Year of the Indigenous Peoples as well as the 25th anniversary of the University of Tromsø. I was awarded a grant from the Sami Cultural Council of the *Samediggi* [the Sami Parliament in Norway] to attend this conference.

The week of November 5th was officially proclaimed by the city of Tromsø as "Indigenous Week." In conjunction with the conference many other events took place: concerts, art exhibits, many feasts. These included a Samifeasta party, a Sami Association Children's Day, a traditional Sami dinner of reindeer meat, boiled potatoes and cloudberries and a gala dinner at the Fjellheisen Restaurant on top of a mountain overlooking the town. The *Konsearta Koncert* held prior to the final conference banquet included joiks by Ande Somby and Ingor-Antte Ailu Gaup and the reading of Hans Ragnar Mathisen's classic poem "Circle of Life" by Inuit actress Makka Kleist from Greenland. The end of Indigenous Week was marked by another Samifeasta and a "joik jam" at Prelaten, the world-famous Sami pub.

The conference itself took place at the *Kulturhuset* [Tromsø Theatre] in the center of town. The opening addresses were given by dignitaries many of whose names are already familiar to the readers of *Baiki*: Ole D. Mjøs, head of the University of Tromsø, Nils Jernsletten, Head of the Centre for Sámi Studies, Ole Henrik Magga, President of the Sami Parliament in Norway, Pekka Aikio, President of the Sámi Parliament in Finland, Ingwar Åhrén, President of the Sami Parliament in Sweden, Ragnhild Nystad , Representative of the Nordic Sami Council , and Sverre O. Johansen, political advisor of Sami Affairs, Ministry of Municipal Affairs.



THE CONFERENCE LOGO
The Indigenous Peoples of the World are symbolized by the Four Directions of the Earth and Wind. Birds flying in the same direction signify unity and the increasingly strong bonds between Indigenous Peoples. Different conditions of living and natural surroundings are indicated by the interplay of light and darkness. The labyrinth is a symbol of the major challenges to be met in the fields of Indigenous research and politics, as defined by the Indigenous Peoples themselves. The Conference Logo was designed by Keviselie/ Hans Ragnar Mathisen.

There were two main areas of focus. The first, international indigenous politics, covered the growth of the worldwide indigenous movement over the last two decades. In her speech, Rigoberta Menchu, Nobel Prize Winner from Guatemala, called for an International Decade of the Indigenous Peoples to continue what has been started during 1993. Other addresses outlined the processes within the United Nations that now exist to further the cause of indigenous rights along with specific developments in the fields of Sami law and politics. Carsten Smith, Chief Justice of Norway, was a main speaker.

During the second and third days, prominent indigenous representatives, social scientists and political leaders from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Guatemala, as well as from Sapmi, presented papers tracing the progress toward indigenous sovereignty within the different nation-states. The role of women within this movement was emphasized.

I spoke twice at the conference, first on November 3, at the Sami Centre, University of Tromsø, and then on November 9, during the conference banquet. Both times I detailed the work of *Baiki* and the reawakening of the Sami culture in America. There was great interest in the existance of Sami Americans both at a personal and a public level. I was often told, "It has always been my dream to go to America and find my relatives!" A lengthy interview, "*Amerikanske Samekvinne*" by Bente Simonsen was published in the November 5 issue of the Norwegian daily newspaper *Tromsø* with several photographs. A 30-minute interview was aired twice on NRK Radio, and Niillas Somby interviewed me for the new Sami newspaper *Aššu*.

The struggle to reclaim Sami identity in America is now seen as legitimate. Soon we will take our place and be recognized as active participants in the worldwide indigenous community. I am grateful to the Sami Centre as well as to the Sami Cultural Council and the *Samediggi* for facilitating my participation in this conference as the first step in achieving this goal.

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One issue space costs $20.00 for 1 column inch, $40.00 for 2 column inches. 10% discount for a one-year four issue contract. Send your check or money order payable to" **Baiki**" along with camera-ready copy to: **BAIKERS EXCHANGE, 3548 14th Ave. So.Minneapolis, MN 55407.**

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SHADOWS OF SUOMI FINLAND by Marvin Salo

"This was written to preserve the skills of our forefathers," says the author who is a popular contributor to Baiki. This 53-page collection of exciting wilderness survival stories also includes detailed instructions on how to make your own snowshoes, skis and poles in the Sami way. A valuable reference book as well as something to read to your grandchildren. $10.00 from

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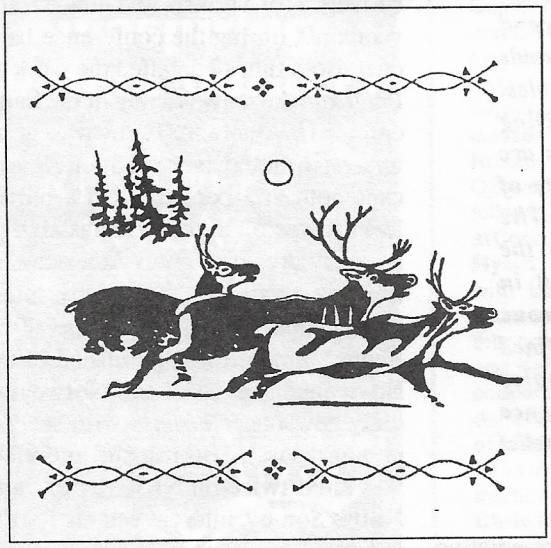
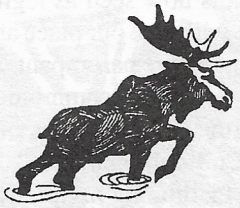
1994 Saami Spirit Calendar





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Black & white – 11" x 11" – spiral bound.

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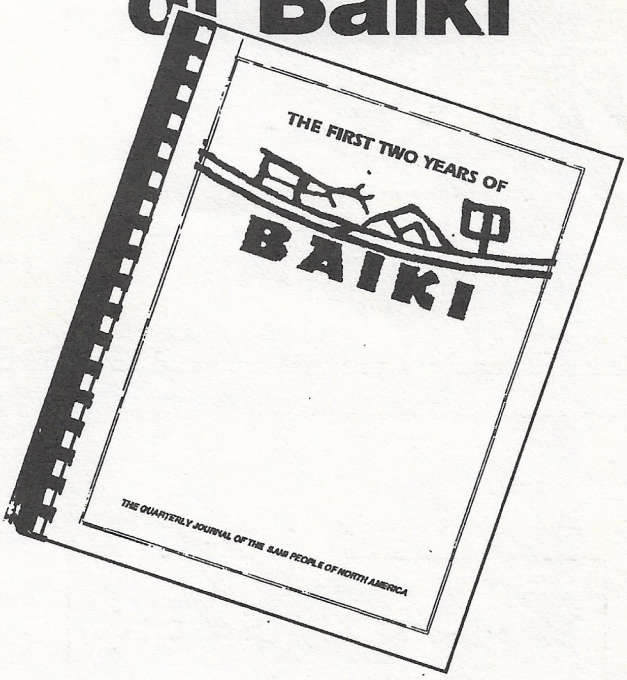
The First 2 Years of Baiki



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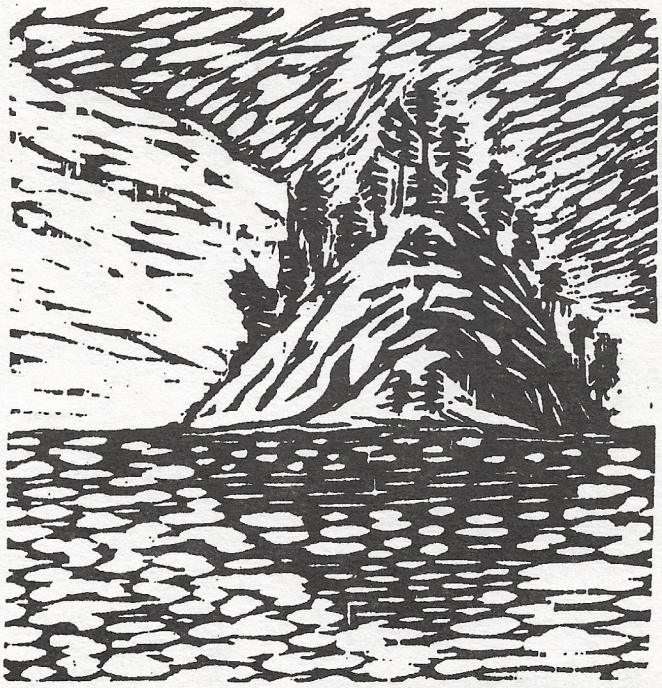
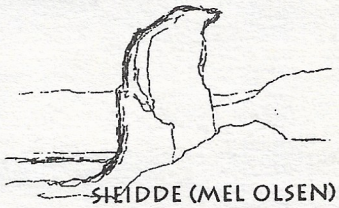
HOME

AND THE SAMIS STILL HAVE AN OLD CUSTOM ◊ WHEN THEY REACH THEIR CAMPING PLACE THEY GREET IT THIS WAY ◊ *GREETINGS, MOTHER, AND LIVING-PLACE!* ◊ AND THEN THERE ARE CERTAIN PLACES WHERE THEY GIVE SOMETHING ◊ AND SO THEY ASK THE SPIRITS TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR HERDS SO THAT THE REINDEER DO NOT DIE AND THE CALVES GROW BIG. (JOHAN TURI)



SACRED ISLAND (ELLE HANSA)

IN THESE COLD TERRITORIES
WE MOVE FROM
DAY TO DAY
YEAR TO YEAR
STILL ON THIS
COLD TUNDRA
WE WALK
GENERATION
TO GENERATION
WITH TIME WE
BECOME PART
OF THIS EARTH
WHERE OUR ROOTS
DWELL. (NILS-ASLAK
VALKEAPÄÄ)



SLEIDDE (MEL OLSEN)

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