

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



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DRINKING-RELATED PROBLEMS

By RALPH AMOUAK

I have worked in the field of alcoholism for the past several years, and have an understanding of the drinking-related problems that are prevalent among the Alaskan Natives. The drinking problem is not a new problem, it is one that has been among us since the time that the Russians first came to Alaska.

I feel that it is time that someone began to realize that alcoholism (drinking problems) among our people is getting to a point that is now really getting out of hand. It is time that our people begin to see that these problems are beginning to be embarrassing, not only to our leaders, but to the Native world. There has been a lot of information in the newspapers about the upcoming money that the Alaska Natives will receive individually.

Being recognized as a person working in the field of alcoholism, I have had many people come and talk about their concern about how this money is going to be spent. Some people are saying that this money will be going to the individual and that most of it will be spent on one good drunk. Some have stated that they would like to be in the alcohol business, so that they could get their share of the money that is coming to the Alaskan Natives.

As an Alaskan Native, I am concerned about the fact that many people are seeing that, once again, the Alaskan Native is another drunk. I think that it is time that those attitudes are changed. Attitudes can not be changed unless the Alaska Native people change their attitude about their own drinking.

It has been noted, officially, and unofficially, that alcoholism, or drinking related problems is the number one problem among the Alaskan Native. To date, I think that it is the programs related to the field of alcoholism that have been trying to do something about the drinking related problems among our people. It is now our turn to really take a look at what is happening with the drinking among the Alaska Native. Whenever there is a convention or a meeting of statewide people or even regional people a way to relax after a meeting is to go to the local bar. Alcohol is used as a tool for manipulating each other in the meeting setting. Alcohol use adds to the problem and many times, perpetuates drinking behavior.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act has brought into focus, frustrations that are being created by the mis-transitional period for the Alaska Natives. Alcohol is being used by our people as a means of relaxation and as a means of escape. I think that to talk about a problem, one should realize that there are some solutions to those problems.

One solution would be to have in articles or by-laws of the Native Organizations, a statement concerning board members' use of alcohol during scheduled meetings. It becomes a concern of all of the people when one who represents us in business concerning the Alaska Natives, when those individuals are in a state of intoxication. One who is drinking does not make rational decisions.

Another solution could be to ask our regional people to buy alcohol testing devices which would be used by all board members to measure the state of intoxication that they are in. If they reach a certain alcohol level which would determine the capacity of drunkenness, they could be asked not to attend the meeting for that day. Should they miss a number of days at the meeting, then they should be asked to be replaced on their board.

Another solution would be to have a Sergeant-at-Arms that does not drink to see that the meeting is kept in order.

The Alaska Natives are now coming into focus more and more than they have ever been in the past. I think that we can be proud of the way that the Alaska Natives have handled the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement from the beginning. Many of the non-Natives have responded in saying that they are happy with the way that the settlement has been handled. It is not like what has happened in the lower 48 among the Indians.

As an Alaskan Native, I am proud to say that I too am happy that there have not been demonstrations, militancy, or any embarrassing actions that have caused any problems in the settling of the claims.

With the implementation of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, we are becoming a group of people with a lot of money. Also it is a concern of all, to see that the problems of drinking, which has plagued many races, does not happen in the case of the Alaska Native. We have thus far, handled the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in a way that has the respect, not only from Alaskans, but from the people from the "lower 48."

We have found a way to take care of our financial problems. Now I think that we should find a way to make sure that those financial problems are taken care of and that the money that is coming to the people is not spent in creating more problems than ever before.

Letters from Here and There

UCDA for Young People

UNALAKLEET COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 146
Unalakleet, Alaska 99684
January 11, 1974

Dear Mr. Rock:

I take pleasure to introduce to you the Unalakleet Community Development Association, a group of young people working together under the IRA Village

A Book Review—Yoogha Dona

By WALLY OLSON
Asst. Prof. of Anthropology
Juneau-Douglas Community College

"Yoogha Dona" by G. Henry, C. Sommer, C. Grant, C. Erhart, D. George, P. Joseph, L. Joseph, N. Guthrie et. al. Room 7, Tanana Elementary School, Tanana, Alaska. Limited Edition.

These young authors are new on the Alaska cultural-historical scene, but have produced an historical and anthropological study of the village of Tanana, Alaska.

It is very well organized, even if on an introductory level. Pre-contact culture deals with the archaeology/ethnography of the Tanana Indians. The historical period explains the developments such as Fort Gibbons, the Mission, and the decline of Tanana after 1922.

A few startling facts emerge such as the fact that the Yukon Press was the first Interior newspaper and that the Fort Gibbons compound was 10 miles long and five miles deep and only the military were allowed within its boundaries.

The final section deals with the recent history and the final settlement in the Alaska Native Land Claims issue. Brought up to date, the study explains the choices being made today in light of the past and present conditions.

As a 20-page research report, this is a fine work by the Seventh Grade. There have been many general studies of Alaska and its history. The need today is for more local histories even if they are done by the school people; accurate, well-prepared studies are useful, no matter the level of sophistication.

This reviewer has seen many similar reports of villages by students in several levels. Perhaps it's time the Department of Education compile such studies into a one-volume work for future reference.

If young scholars are to be encouraged in their efforts at good research and publication, then, seeing their names in print and being given due credit may be the motivating touch for their future careers.

In spite of a few shortcomings, and several lacunae, certain portions stand out for careful consideration. For examples, who has summed-up Tanana (Indian) philosophy any better than this:

"Never destroy (tear up) anything. Try to help everyone. Be nice to old people; they are smart and know a lot, be good-natured, don't fight with people. Share things you have."

From such a work, even those of us who make anthropology a career, may have a few things to learn.

Council to promote the construction of a community center for Unalakleet. We have been without a center for approximately five (5) years. After the Native Store was destroyed by fire, they took up occupancy in our community hall and plan to maintain it for some time yet.

To date we have been exploring the avenues of funding our project by writing letters to various organizations requesting information on ways we can obtain these funds. One of the highlights of all of our efforts was being informed that we will be the recipient of a grant of \$10,000 from the Alaska Native Special Alcoholism Program in February. This money will be used to purchase materials needed to build our community center. We will apply for funds through the Rural Development Assistance Program to cover the construction of our building after we have received our said money.

There are many funds and grants available for this project, and we are still exploring these opportunities we can take advantage of. We also anticipate harboring programs re-emphasizing Native Culture, alcohol and drug abuse, a library and promoting community involved activities, which is our most important objective. The UCDA is a young organization, in existence since October 1973, and we anticipate taking steps in organizing as a private, non-profit organization to increase recognition from businesses we approach requesting support and funding for our endeavors.

This short letter doesn't adequately illustrate our picture of endeavors and we encourage all who have information and ideas to make them available to UCDA by writing or sending information to us at this address: UCDA, Box 146, Unalakleet, Alaska. You will be helping us, yourself, and the community around you to understand more of the full story behind the efforts set forth to promote the social and cultural well-being of our people and to get them involved in their destiny.

Thanks a lot for listening. It's been nice talking to you.

Peace and best wishes,
Gary Bradley, Chairman
UCDA

Sargent Shriver And Banquet

RICHARD M. GARDELLA
Attorney-at-Law
1465 Midland Avenue
Bronxville, New York 10708

January 10, 1974

Tundra Times
Box 1287
Fairbanks, Alaska 99797

Gentlemen:

In reading your lead article in the Dec. 19 edition of the "Tundra Times," it suddenly occurred to me that Dick Nixon is not the only thing wrong with politics. Sargent Shriver who spoke at a banquet honoring editor, Howard Rock, is also what's wrong with American politics.

He traveled 5,000 miles to use the event honoring Mr. Rock to fire his political blast.

As a former journalist with 13 years' experience in the field, I have long admired from afar Mr. Rock's efforts. His newspaper is tightly written, unafraid and representative of its people.

Even from the opposite coast of the United States, it makes good reading.

Therefore, I personally feel that no one was more deserving of this banquet than the editor of the "Tundra Times"—a man whom I know only through his work. So, it was with a great feeling of distaste when I read of Mr. Shriver's political use as a forum of Mr. Rock's well-deserved tribute. When are politicians going to stop acting like politicians?

At any rate, I would like at this time, to extend to Mr. Rock my sincere congratulations on a fantastic job.

Very truly yours,
Richard M. Gardella

Stickman Don't Like Daylight Saving Time

Nulato, Alaska
Jan. 16, 1974

Dear Friend, the Editor, Tundra Times:

I got the Tundra Times yesterday was mail day for Nulato, Kaltag, Koyukuk, Huslia, Ruby, Allakaket from Galena and Fairbanks. I don't know what's wrong with these people, also the pilots crying for gas at Galena. The mail plane, that's Wien Air Alaska, the sky van got lots of room going back and forth empty and the people chartering. Harold Air Service, Galena Air Service, Yeager, crying for gas.

It hurts me because all they want is to make money or something like that. They don't care about the other guy. What's money? What's money good for? Money isn't going to talk to you. Friendship is better than money.

Years ago that's what the older people used to tell me. Now I pass the word along.

Seems like as long as you send me the Tundra Times I'll still write for you and myself. When you start something, don't forget you have to finish it. That's what I'm trying to do I guess.

I went to Kaltag with my sno-go to take advantage of the weather. As soon as I got there my relatives and friends told me, when they don't see my article in the Tundra Times, they just throw it to one side. Anyway, I'm still on my old, old time that is.

What's a daylight saving time. We don't need it here. Maybe it's Nixon or the Governor might need it, but not me. I'm still on the old time. Monday morning, the 7th of January, the school children were late to school, pitch dark, ice all around, rain off and on for three days. Poor kids were trying to make it to school. Some of them didn't know because it was all dark and they don't want to move.

Anyway, Howard, Kaltag is the best place to live. The wood is behind the village. Two moose came out in front of the village. You don't need fuel or gasoline. Galena got Standard Oil Co. there and already, they're crying for gas and oil. What's wrong with the people nowadays?

I'm still old-fashioned. I'm getting ready to go back—like the old days.

I got a bill yesterday from Alaska Village Electric Corporation, 999 Tudor Road, Anchorage. They tell me to watch my

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