

## What others say...

### **'A.A. has saved me'**

To the editor:

I took special interest in the Oct. 6th, 1986, issue of the Tundra Times, since it contained a good deal of information and personal recovery stories of alcoholics.

I am also a recovering alcoholic thanks to the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. I commend those who have stepped forward to share their experience, strength, and hope with others. The fellowship of A.A. has saved me and many others from a slow inevitable death while living in literal hell.

There is one very important part of the A.A. program that needs to be pointed out, which was not covered in the Oct. 6th issue — anonymity: withholding a person's name. The promise of confidentiality allows a newcomer to enter the A.A. recovery program without fear of reprisals, peer group pressure, disgrace, or any other founded or unfounded fears.

Remember, the newcomer comes for help with enough shame and guilt to fill his complete being. He or she need not have to worry about disclosure of his/her fight with alcohol. Such worry would only benefit the disease itself. Recovery would then be centered around the problem and not focused on the solution.

The point is that those seeking help from A.A. can be assured of trust from the group. A.A. is anonymous and it is the choice of a recovering alcoholic to disclose their disease when he or she feels comfortable in their sobriety.

Additionally, anonymity protects an alcoholic like me from myself. As a practicing alcoholic I was self-centered in the extreme. A great deal of my sobriety is now dependant upon the practice of humility. Not thinking less of myself, but rather thinking of myself less. Keeping anonymous prevents me from seeking notariety and prestige.

Fifty years ago the founder of A.A. discovered that money, property, and

prestige at the public level would ruin a good thing. I in turn am attempting to follow in their example and practice the 12th Tradition of A.A.: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principals before personalities." It is the principals that are important.

There is a need for "heros" among Native People and I would dearly love to show others how I found hope when there was only despair. But I choose not to place myself separate from others. My sobriety is an example for others, particularly the young. It is necessary for me to humble myself in the eyes on my Creator and demonstrate that it is only through His will and love that I have returned from the "gates of hell."

In other words, I have had little to do with my recovery, except ask for help and practice the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of A.A. My Higher Power has done for me what I could not do for myself.

Finally, I would like to commend and thank those who came forward and showed that recovery is possible. It is their privilege to break their anonymity. I admire their courage and their recovery program. I would stress to anyone with an alcohol problem who may be reading this letter, that keeping confidential is also their own privilege and right. The newcomer need not fear recovery.

Alcoholism is a disease — not a moral or social issue. Your privacy and confidence will be protected in A.A. We will love you until you learn to love yourself. Hope is only a phone call away and the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to share some of the things I have learned in recovery. Along with many other people, my thoughts and prayers are with those who still suffer inside and outside the fellowship of A.A.

*The writer's name is being withheld upon request.*

### **Thanks for alcohol issue**

To the editor:

I was very pleased to see the Oct. 6th issue of your paper. Alcohol abuse is not a pleasant thing to look at or even think about for very long. But it will not go away if we pretend it is not existing in our midst, destroying families, Native corporations, and in-

dividual lives. I have lived in or visited Native villages in Southeast to Bristol Bay and everywhere was the "Plague."

Thank you for confronting the problem, that is a big step in recovery of villages and Native Peoples of Alaska.

Jim Miller  
Port Graham

### **Ahlanqniq, kooniq, kooniq**

To the editor:

For most of my adult life, my working years, I dealt with the world's weather conditions. I learned and use the scientific side of meteorology. In my daily work of briefing airplane

pilots, I used weather maps, knew how to interpret them. Terminal, long-range forecasts, cold, warm fronts, isobars, winds aloft, jet stream, and millibars were some of the words I us-

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ed daily.

Some say I was pretty good at my work. And yet, when I see a loon flying by and making his distinctive call, I look up and say to the loon: "Ahlan-qniq, kooniq, kooniq." Why do I do it? I am Inupiaq, that's why. I believe that in a day or two, the rain and clouds will go away, and the sun will again come out to warm the land.

Irving Tookak Ungudruk  
Sitka

## Nuclear freeze

To the editor:

Never has the history of the world seen such potential for catastrophe. It remains imperative that we find new ways to search for peace; for if we fail, the consequences would be so devastating as to defy comprehension.

Alaska recently, through popular action, overwhelmingly adopted a nuclear freeze as state policy. Alaskans understand that the pursuit of a safer world does not have to commence with immediate disarmament. It does require, however, immediate steps to prevent the continuation of an economically and morally bankrupting nuclear arms race.

We are expected to look to our "leaders" in Washington for help, but they don't seem to hear the plaintive cry as the world over bemoans the horror that might possibly be visited upon

them. Our own congressman walks hand-in-hand and dollar-for-dollar with rest of the politicians.

He has consistently voted for MX funding, Star Wars funding, and anti-satellite weapons testing and production. He also supports every conceivable amendment to gut a meaningful House freeze resolution while voting "no" on legislation requiring the President to abide by SALT II obligations.

When it came down to a vote on the House floor advocating a moratorium on nuclear testing if the Soviets comply, Don Young would not vote for peace.

Our present congressman has not been there to represent us in the past, and we cannot afford to trust his voting behavior in the future. We know Alaska's policy on peace, let's implement it now in the Capitol, by voting for Pegge Begich and sending someone to Congress who is in step with the majority of Alaskans.

Ed Davis  
Anchorage

## A vote for Olds

To the editor:

I would like to make a few comments in favor of Glenn Olds, a democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate. His experience in teaching higher education and holding executive positions in Alaskan universities and the frankness and ease that he uses when addressing large audiences would be a definite asset for any U.S. senator.

Over 33,000 Alaskan voters stated their preference for Olds in the primary election, and a lot more are climbing on the band wagon every day.

In view of the dismal record of the incumbent for the past 6 years, a vote for Olds should be an easy choice.

An obscure, small-town banker riding into the U.S. Senate on the crest of a groundswell of one half billion dollars spent by big business to buy the presidency for Ronald Reagan.

When a scream of rage and anguish went out from all the Alaskan fishermen and mariners about the proposal to put a confiscatory "users fee" on vessels of all sizes, Sen. Frank Murkowski made his famous "foot in mouth" speech to the press. "If your automobile breaks down, the government doesn't tow it to the garage for you. Just because you have a boat doesn't mean you get a free ride courtesy of the taxpayers."

We, the people who go down to the sea in ships have waited six long years to get even for that stab in the back, and now is the chance in this upcoming election. Forty thousand fisheries related votes can elect any state candidate if they will vote for their best interests.

Al Brookman Sr.

## Cowper support

To the editor:

Mr. Steve Cowper for Governor! Yes, I have decided to endorse and support Steve Cowper for governor.

After looking at his public stands on issues that affect us in Bristol Bay, I feel comfortable about his candidacy.

I am confident that he is committed to: Fighting oil and gas leasing in Bristol Bay, eliminating the interception of our salmon on the high seas, helping us to find alternatives to diesel powered electricity, supporting our traditional subsistence use of fish and game resources, actively supporting efforts to diversify our economy, working for a strong Rural Education program, helping us to fight alcohol and drug abuse in our communities, support for a stronger on-shore based fishing industry and support for the 1991 ANCSA amendments.

For these reasons I fully endorse and support Steve Cowper for governor of our state. I wish him good luck and safe travel in his effort to serve us as our governor.

Nels A. Anderson, Jr.  
Anchorage