

# Letters

To the Editor:

The Kenaitze Nation is very disappointed and appalled at the Tundra Times, AFN, and RurAL CAP, for their position and support of the Governor's Subsistence Bill.

AFN purports to be the "voice of the Native People," yet, AFN is excluding a large portion of Native People in Urban areas.

In 1982, when the vote came before the People on whether or not there should be subsistence, I'm sure that the Bill would not have passed if "rural and urban" terminology was included.

Rural Alaskans, I have this to say to you: "growth is in-

evitable." No, we do not wish change and growth upon your communities. We speak from experience. What happened to Kenai, could happen to your community. Before you realize what happened, people are coming in and changing all that was and will never be again. We realize the cost of food, oil, and gas in your communities are extremely high and therefore, it is necessary for you to depend largely on subsistence.

However, it is very important for us in Kenai to retain and continue to strengthen what is left of our culture and heritage. Knowing and teaching our children and our children's children that there is an option, that you may "live off the land," like our forefathers

before us, is part of strengthening our culture and heritage.

We hope that you will at least try to understand our position. 1985 is the year when all Alaskan Native People must stand together and be strong and support one another. Remember, we are all Native people, no matter where we live. Please, do not divide Alaskan Natives into "urban and rural."

P.S. Our Potatch was a tremendous success and we would like to thank everyone who came and participated. We hope that you come again next year "when the geese come flying back."

THANK YOU.

Sincerely,

Clare Swan, Chairperson  
Cora Sacaloff, Vice-Chair

To the Editor:

This letter is long overdue. First of all, I would like to thank the following people for all their support they have given me: Patty Bowen, Linda Anderson of Tanana, Sister Pat Wauters, Mary Ann Rish, and Rose Ambrose of Huslia, Charles Knittel, Agnes Sweetsir, and Virginia Perry of Galena, Karen Cauble, Jim Reynolds and the rest of the School personnel of McGrath, the Health Aides, and the numerous others I have not mentioned. Your help and support has not been forgotten and is greatly

appreciated.

During 1984-85, I have been traveling frequently throughout the Interior doing Child Sexual Abuse Prevention talks in the schools, community education and trainings on domestic violence, sexual abuse, and sexual assault, and counseling. It is really encouraging to see that so many people want to help alleviate the violence of sexual assault, child sexual abuse, and domestic violence.

I will continue to travel throughout the Interior during 1985-86, doing counseling, training, and community education on

domestic violence, child sexual abuse, and sexual assault, and helping set up safe homes. Depending on funding, we hope to hire another Rural Outreach person. That way we will be able to be more effective and reach more people throughout the Interior.

Again, thank you to those mentioned and the many others who have been there for me. If anyone has any questions, please contact me at WICCA.

Sincerely,

Karlene John  
Rural Outreach Coordinator  
WICCA

## To the Editor:

I watch Learn Alaska on Channel Five. I am learning about things along with the young students the TV programs intend to reach. Because I am of an earlier generation, as I learn I am sometimes disappointed. I am left with a feeling I did not need to know that. I will tell you why. From around the age of six years, I have watched the Northern Phalaropes swim round and round in the small tundra ponds. That was all right with me. I believed the birds did that as a way of showing how happy they were to be back up north. Then one day, on one of the Nature shows, someone explained phalaropes swam round and round to create small whirlpools so that the organisms and plants they need to eat can come to the surface. All the years I did not know that! The learning made the action so commonplace, so utilitarian. Some things need not be explained. Some should be left for dreams, for some fantasizing to suit oneself.

I still have memory that has not been studied and explained. In the Arctic, the Ahhaliks arrive at a high altitude, 2331 feet up or so. when they see a desirable tundra pond, they do a 180 degree turn, and dive at a dizzying speed. The noise they make during this dive, few people have heard. It satisfies an Inupiaq's soul. See them over there swimming around and talking to one another? What? You do not understand Ahhalik? Wait, I will translate for you. Listen: "Where we gonna make the nest? Ah Ah Ahhalik," "You go find a place, I have a headache. AH Ah Ahhalik."

On Learn Alaska, one day we watched someone's grandfather make a spear. He took us through all the processes of turning a tree into an Inupiat harpoon. Grandpa was from the Kotzebue area. For thirty minutes, we watched and listened as Grandpa used and demonstrated the use of various hand tools. He made the right notch to fit the caribou horn end pieces. When the spear was finished and had been stained, Grandpa took a prepared piece of walrus ivory to use as a hand stop on the spear. He also brought out a length of sinew to use as a string. He did not explain the sinew! Did anyone else notice that? I may not know much about making a spear, but I do know sinew. The one Grandpa took out was about two yards long and had been braided, not rolled. It had been braided by an expert. It was flat but of uniform width throughout. Grandpa had confidence in it. As he went about tying down the ivory piece to the spear, Grandpa trusted that the sinew Grandma had made would never come apart, no matter how hard he pulled on it. He also knew that it would never slip, as the flatness of the prepared sinew was made to grip the wood tight. Grandpa also knew that sinew would stay there as long as the life of the spear. For the rest of that day, I felt real good. The early influence my own Grandpa had imbued in me had once again accorded peace to my day.

Many years ago, in our little house, I sat on the floor with my Grandmother, as she worked on sinew. As she worked, she talked with me. What did we talk about? Anything at all, any subject that would be interesting to

a little boy. Grandmas are very wise, they know just about everything. Have you visited, talked with, or written to your grandparents? They have a lot of time, these days, to listen, to read over and over your words. When the problems and the fast pace, peer pressure seems overwhelming, the person to see is Grandma. When a good cry is needed, she will weep with you, while holding you like she used to do when you were very young. When Grandma's instinct tells her, what you need is a good laugh, she has not forgotten how to giggle. If you have a secret you cannot hold onto by yourself, you just have to tell someone, tell Grandma. No power on earth will ever be able to pry it out of her. If your friends are having trouble, bring them to Grandma. She has enough love for everyone. Unfathomable, someone has written. Happy Mother's Day, Grandma. Happy Father's Day, Grandpa. See you on Learn Alaska, a cooperative effort.

Irving Ungudruk

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