

## Effect of Contamination

Dr. Everett R. Rhoades  
Assistant Surgeon General  
Rockville

Dear Dr. Rhoades,

On Nov. 2, 1992 you responded to my letter of Sept. 9, 1992 on the nuclear waste dump in the hunting area between the Alaska Native Villages of Point Hope and Kivalina. In that letter you set forth a step by step plan of study and action to deal with attendant health problems. I shared that letter with representatives of the villages of Noatak, Kivalina, Pt. Hope and the regional health corporation, all of whom had asked AKPIRG to research this situation.

On Nov. 3, AKPIRG received the preliminary report by Dr. Peter Nakamura in which he and his colleagues contended that there was and is no health problem. This assertion was repeated in Nakamura's report to the villagers of Barrow last week in which he advocated no clean up of the radioactive dump.

My question to you is whether the Indian Health Service intends to go forward with its original plan of action. That plan included a request by the AANHS to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and to make an independent evaluation of the risk to area residents and a plan for the AANHS and the Centers for Disease Control to obtain information concerning any data to re-analysis and to provide it to area residents for independent analysis.

The issue of the relationship between the radioactive materials and the historical and contemporary health of the residents is very much in issue despite the preliminary report. That report is clouded by a suspicion that earlier studies overlooked the direct link between 30 years of contamination in radioactive material in this isolated area because: 1) the dump was unknown; 2) the radioactive material taken from the blast site in Nevada was and is of unknown quality; 3) the impact on the villagers who have hunted in this area for a generation was concealed in studies of larger geographic areas (areas largely unaffected); and 4) no studies have been undertaken of contamination of land, water and wildlife.

Control studies undertaken as a prelude to the aborted Project Chariot experiment provide an excellent basis for comparative analysis. What is critical is the historical contamination of the waters, land and wildlife in the

region and its affect on residents who traveled and lived in the area and who consumed wildlife from the area.

The defensive posture undertaken by the AANHS appears to be very shortsighted and an effort on its part to lend credence to earlier studies and their analysis of data.

Please respond as soon as possible so that we may share your response with impacted Alaska Natives.

Sincerely,  
JoAnne Holmes  
Executive Director  
Stephen Conn  
Pt. Hope Project  
Researcher  
AKPIRG

## Speaker speaks again

Dear Editor:

Here is a copy of my 1992 University of Alaska Commencement speech. I was the first Alaska Native granted permission to graduate in full traditional regalia by the Union of Students; UAA, Chancellor Behrend, and the Board of Regents. I also won the competitive right to be the Commencement Speaker and became the focus of great controversy.

Some audience members heckled me while I made the presentation. Negative responses came from a few professors who for some reason were offended by my actions. Eight of my fellow students claimed I had not made any attempt to include the dominant culture. My response was 'how does it feel to be left out?' This has been our experience. Finally, the *Anchorage Times* ran two negative articles about the speech.

Why are they threatened by Native achievement? Why are they afraid of Native success? I understand it is hard to tell and hear the truth in history, but, it is time we demand the educational systems at all levels implement and integrate the process of Native acculturation and assimilation into existing programs. The pain we feel is a historical one, a recent one and a real one. We are strong, humble and wise aboriginal peoples. The front line battles in all areas. We, too have the tools to asking; voting is free; we can now reembrace and practice our cultural traditions and take the best from both worlds. We can work on our personal issues and bring into the world a new generation of

HEALTHY and PROUD  
ALASKA NATIVE  
AMERICANS.

Marge Edais  
Anchorage

*Editor's note:* For a copy of the speech send a 52 cent stamped self addressed envelope to the *Tundra Times*, P.O.Box 92247 Anchorage, AK 99509-2247.

## Artist Award Suggestion

Julie Kitka  
President  
AFN

Dear President:

I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed attending the AFN convention. The workshops were very beneficial. It was also a good opportunity to meet other Native people. This is one of the outstanding features of the AFN convention.

The recognition of talents, commitment and service to the well being of Alaska Native people through granting of prestigious awards is another aspect of convention activities.

I feel an area that needs to be included in the awards presentations is recognition of Native writers, visual artists, performing artists and others in the humanities and fine arts fields. Recently, the Native community lost two such artists - Melvin Olanna and Jim Schoppert. A fitting award would be a Melvin Olanna/Jim Schoppert AFN award for recognizing literary, visual and performing artists.

Thanks for your fine work on behalf of the Native community and I hope AFN will consider this suggestion.

Sincerely,  
Donna Minnehan  
Redondo, WA