

# Not always thankful

To The Editor:

I read the article Susan Henry wrote about education in the Bush. The impression I got from her response was that she expected the Natives to be grateful for everything the caucasian society has ever done to us and for us.

Being a Native, I have heard so many horrible stories about how my people the Inupiaqs were treated by the caucasians' so-called goodness.

When the caucasians came we passively allowed them to set up a whole new system. Even when they immediately began treating

us like inferior human beings.

This in fact, why only very recently have you (the caucasians) given the black people their freedom with the civil rights movement. And to top it off -- only when they openly rebelled.

We did not have a minority system like they did. We had no need for it. When my forefathers saw how the caucasians behaved, running around in the hills looking for gold it was unsettling. We knew a very strong change was coming.

Some of our people were claimed by caucasian diseases. In Canada, almost all the Inuit were

destroyed.

I am a descendant of those people who to this day mourn their way of life which will never again be. I cannot speak my language fluently because my people were forbidden to speak Inupiaq. I have heard that some were even killed.

We young Natives can not interact with you caucasians but look at the price. Remember this, when we stumble along sometimes.

Sincerely,  
Margaret Smith,  
Selawik

# Bill aims at sexual assault

To the Editor:

Recent publicity surrounding incidents of sex abuse of children have emphasized that many people in our state are not yet aware of or have only limited knowledge of a law I sponsored during the last legislative session that allows agencies who work with children to offer a greatly increased level of safety to those who are entrusted to their care.

House Bill 375 was passed and became Chapter 66 of the Session Laws of Alaska, 1983. This law makes changes in Title 12 of the Alaska Statutes that allow agencies that work with children to learn whether employees, present or prospective (including volunteers), have a history of convictions for sex crimes or crimes against children.

To obtain the information, application must be made to the Alaska State Troopers, who have instructions and application forms. It is necessary that the fingerprints of the applicant or employee be provided to preclude cases of mistaken identity, assumed names, etc. Two sets of fingerprints are needed, in order that information can

be obtained from the FBI on convictions in another state or locale.

Questions of whether the cooperation of job applicants in obtaining the desired information (e.g., submission of fingerprints) can be made a condition of employment, and whether failure to utilize this procedure could result in civil liability if a child was molested by an employee with a record of convictions should be referred to an attorney.

However, legal counsel has advised me that the answers to both questions are probably affirmative, and I am informed that some attorneys representing school boards have advised their clients that failure to request a records check might increase a district's exposure to civil liability.

There are adequate safeguards built into the procedures to preclude abuses of the law and the privacy of individuals by persons not having a bona fide need for the information.

Newspaper articles on the topic indicated that an Anchorage School District personnel official stated they did not ex-

pect to utilize the procedures authorized by this law; but instead would continue the present practice of asking applicants whether they have a record of such convictions. The large number of applications (some 2,700) were cited as the reason for not implementing this program.

My feeling in this regard is that this check would need to be made only for finalists, and this would not present any significant problems. A person devious enough to have intentions of exploiting children would certainly have no scruples against falsifying an application form. I see no reason why we should rely on such an answer when we have a reliable means of ascertaining for ourselves whether a person has such a record.

I believe this law will greatly enhance the safety and security of our children, as well as increase the peace of mind of parents and school officials; particularly so since incidents of sexual abuse of children seem to be increasing rapidly.

Ramona L. Barnes  
Majority House Leader