

Letters

Knowles saddened by Trader's death

To the editor:

A human being died on the streets of Anchorage. We in the city government are saddened and very much concerned by Mr. Francis Trader's death.

When the Anchorage police officers responded to a 7:30 a.m. call that Thursday morning several weeks ago, they used their best judgment in assisting Mr. Trader. He appeared to be intoxicated, but not hurt. They directed him to shelter which was three blocks away.

Eleven other times in 1985, police officers had taken Mr. Trader into protective custody out of concern for his safety. Other times, like the night of January 22, they had directed him towards the Brother Francis Shelter.

Apparently a call before and two calls after that — about a street person being outside the Welfare Office — were not responded to. Three hours after the police responded, the local service patrol responded to a call and took Mr. Trader to the hospital. He died later that afternoon.

He may have died of cardiac arrest. He may have died of hypothermia. He may have died of cirrhosis of the liver. We don't know yet; the coroner's report is not finished. We do know he was suffering from a terminal disease — acute alcoholism. But, regardless of the cause of death, it's important to realize that Francis Trader did not die unnoticed.

In the past few years, concern for the public safety of street people has prompted the establishment of round-the-clock shelter for the homeless — either Bean's Cafe or the Brother Francis Shelter is open all the time.

Almost a million dollars a year is now spent on the Community Service Patrol and the Detox Alcohol pro-

gram. The Anchorage Police Department placed street people in protective custody 278 times last year, and our Emergency Medical Service responds to their calls 24 hours a day.

In Frank Trader's case, if we had it to do over, we would have picked him up and put him in protective custody like we did the 11 times last year.

The fact remains that every single person that was involved in the incident wishes it could be done over again — hoping the outcome would be different. It might have made a difference — it might not have. We'll never know.

As public servants, individual actions and judgment must always be held to close public scrutiny. Commissioner of Public Safety John Franklin will soon be judged by the same standards of professional expertise, human care and compassion which the Anchorage Police Department has repeatedly offered.

I have been asked: do we do enough? Can we do more? As long as there is one senseless death, our answer must be yes. Our public safety resources must be wisely spent and we must recognize it as the most important of services.

The abused child, the Native visitor to our city who is mugged or raped, the victims of drunken driving, the runaway youth in drugs or alcohol, as well as the street people — they all make each of us our brother's keeper.

If our awareness and commitment to everyone's public safety has been increased, then Francis Trader's death has not been in vain.

Sincerely,
Tony Knowles
Mayor

Reader profers 100-proof poetry

To the editor:

In response to the Feb. 10th publication of *Tundra Times* particularly the article: "Alcohol ban will not work, says reader." First of all, the person should get an award for such concise and clear insight, and secondly (which is why I'm writing) I have this little poem (by space standards) that I don't know who wrote, but it's as clear a poem as I'll ever remember, and which relates to the article.

The Tree of Dissipation

The sin of drunkenness
expels reason, drowns memory,
distempers the body, defaces beauty,
diminishes strength, corrupts the
blood, inflames the liver, weakens the
brain, turns men into walking

hospitals, causes internal, external,
and incurable wounds, is a witch of
the senses, a devil to the soul, a thief
to the pocket, the beggar's companion,
a wife's woe, and children's sor-
rows... makes man become a beast
and a self-murderer, who drinks to
other's good health, and robs himself
of his own! Nor is this all, it exposes
to the divine.

Displeasure
here! and
hereafter
to eternal
misery!!!!

The root of all is "Drunkeness!!!"

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Questions regarding race judging

To the editor:

Dog Mushing: sport or Monopoly?

I wonder? An incident this past weekend, during the "EXXON Open Sled Dog Race," poses many questions in the mind of this long term

enthusiast.

More background? Okay! I didn't witness Jim Greene failing to yield trail. I didn't even hear Bill Sullivan call for trail. My response is sparked by some insight into the relationship

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of those directly involved.

We have an up and coming young musher fighting for the chance, the cash to continue establishing his reputation.

Bill Sullivan, another of the 11 mushers competing in this last sport remaining the great Alaskan frontier.

The complaint: questionable, right down to if it was filed per Alaska Sled Dog Racing Association Rules, brought Jim's disqualification from the race. Apologies were made, the complaint dropped.

Jimmy was told he could race — but not officially. Mr. Tozier agreed to time him, yet his time wouldn't count.

Dick Tozier, Race Marshall, upheld the decision of three apparently nameless judges, who, existant or not, Tozier appoints.

So ... a decision was made ... not so much against the young musher, but, instead, if you will, favoring Dick Tozier's team, driven by Bill Sullivan.

Perhaps we should consider ourselves fortunate to have a Race Marshall so dedicated to the sport. Still, it would be hard to separate his professional from financial interest; an obvious conflict from any angle. We

might only guess at how much loyalty Mr. Tozier invests in other aspects of the ASDRA, or his elected postion?

The Race Marshall, sworn to rule fairly, has done so again. Unquestioned, he hangs his hat up for yet another race, content in the knowledge that he has performed another in a long list of jobs well done.,

Whose career has he furthered? How many careers destroyed? I'll just be he keeps those figures tucked neatly in his pocket — immediately below his third place winnings in this race.

Justice? I like to win, too! Where do we draw the line? Records are kept — reflecting an ideally accurate, ongoing statistic representation of a competitive reputation. My questions?

1. Can Mr. Richard Tozier be considered a fair, impartial third party, capable of issuing the unbiased decisions required of a competent Race Marshall?

2. Should Jim Greene's career record permanently reflect such a questionable decision as the one disqualifying him from this race — marring a reputation he has honestly fought to earn?

Rosanne M. Dietz