

# Editorial

## By all means go fishing, but keep in touch!

As spring begins to warm our spirits and turn our thoughts to preparations for fish camp, it is easy to forget about the primary election in August and the general election in November.

It's easy, too, to shrug off the repeated calls to register and go to the polls, to participate, to do our duty. These pleas begin to sound like the rest of the media hype jamming the airwaves today. But just as it's important to examine our boats, our weapons, our gear regularly to insure they are working properly and safely, so too with our right to vote. It is a right that only fulfills its promise when regularly exercised.

This year brings a presidential election, two Congressional races and numerous state legislative races, along with several important ballot measures. One of those ballot measures may involve a constitutional amendment on a rural subsistence priority. Can we afford not to participate? As you mend the net, clean the bear rifle, and tune the outboard, plan ahead to be sure your vote is cast and properly counted:

- Register to vote *now*. Deadline to register for the *August 27 primary* is July 28. Once this is done, you're ready to go for the *November 5* general election, too. (If you miss the primary and still haven't registered, the deadline for general election registration is *October 6*).

- If you won't be able to get to a polling booth on primary or general election day, you can vote absentee in person or by mail. In order to do so, you must file an application for a ballot. That application must be received by the Division of Elections no later than seven days before election day, but you shouldn't wait that long since ballots themselves have to get to you and be post-marked on or before election day. If you plan to vote absentee, contact the offices listed below for procedures.

- If you can, take a handful of voter registration and absentee ballot applications to camp with you to give people who stop by.

- If you have any questions, contact your city or borough office, regional non-profit Native association, or the state Division of Elections (Juneau, 465-4611; Anchorage, 522-8683; Fairbanks, 451-2835; or Nome, 443-5285).

- Stay tuned to your local radio station to keep abreast of late-breaking developments, especially petitions for ballot propositions that might require your signature.

If our right to vote begins to feel like an onerous duty, can we not consider for a moment that this duty is an obligation not only to ourselves and our communities, but to our *children*? Surely in such a light, we can take the little time that's needed to register, and to vote, in both the primary and general elections.