

# Responsive schools?

Dear Editor:

It is a good thing for all of us that Willie Hensley delivered a challenge just as he did (Tundra Times, April 8, 1981).

However to expect an indifferent educational system to give one iota of spiritual depth and personal integrity to our children is like asking the moon to do the sun's job.

It can never happen!

The spiritual growth and development of our people has always been transmitted through direct lines of inheritance. How else can one learn of power, energy and justice - except through the care and nurturing of our parents, grandparents and close relatives?

There is no other way. So, let us look again.

We are back to the family. How can we hold the Alaska Native families together - and thereby insure ourselves that the SUN will indeed shine tomorrow?

Here is my answer to your challenge. I have deliberated thus: The regeneration of the Alaska Natives can take place in our lifetimes if we attack the problems of decimation along three definite lines.

1. Eliminate the last year of high school. For the Alaska Native female reaches the age of majority at the grand old age of 16, or 17 at the most.

Simultaneously, increase arts, crafts, carpentry, mechanics, and higher math. Materials are what we must work with in this world.

Have the highschool graduate come out already proficient in a hand-craft. That is, mechanic, weaver, draftsman, carpenter, ceramicists, etc. Obviously, we can not all be business executives, or millionaires at the age of 30. Someone must do the plumbing. Even a kid can under-

stand that.

2. Re-introduce and institutionalize Harangue Sessions. That is the public airing of petty grievances through conscious acting mimicry, and great humor. I can not elaborate more on this except to say that each village who adopts this unique activity will realize the benefits almost immediately. And, the participants themselves will want to perpetuate these sessions.

Like all great things, it must begin in small places - as the villages.

3. The construction of the first Alaska-American KIVIYUK. Believe me, it is a brand-new word. This in short is an alternate lifestyle designed specifically for Alaska Natives but in no way would exclude "other" Alaskas.

It is a family compound built in the round with adjacent cachestorage area, green house, gym-restroom-sauna complex nursery-sewing quarters and garage. The family can be grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and related spouses. Each individual family has a separate apartment but share the main meeting and living room along with the main kitchen. Because of the number of people involved, the KIVIYUK may incorporate itself, operate on geothermal energy and even acquire government grants as well as buying power on wholesale markets.

The potentials are unlimited but the main point is language can and will be preserved as well as a powerful sense of history and tradition, and above all else a definite notion of individuality in the TRUE Native Spirit.

Here you have my thinking in brief. But my personal feeling is that either one or all three of these approaches to our most basic problems must be implemented within the next three years. We have only a definite period of time in which to work before all is lost.

Adeline Peter-Raboff  
Anchorage

# Ferguson replies

Dear Editor:

I take extreme exception to a portion of your editorial of April 22, 1981, entitled "Education dispute."

You didn't have the courtesy to contact me prior to your editorial of the slurs of my motives - slurs made by Don Clocksin, a former legal service lawyer.

Clocksin is an honorable white man, with at least 7 years in the State, who seems to know what is best for the Natives.

The legislature, irrespective of the Hootch case, has appropriated over \$200 million to rural schools in the past seven years.

The legislature decentralized the State Operated School system and made it possible to have elected boards by the people, the same as Anchorage. If the system is not working, don't blame the system, blame the voters for not electing the right people for the job. If the people in Anchorage don't like their schools they don't have legal services tell them what to do, they elect new school board members.

The Northwest Arctic school board does not need a regulation by the legal services to tell them what they already know and have been planning. Who knows better than the Native elected representatives on that board that we need a well-planned-out program for bilingual and bicultural education. Some school district boards may need to be told what to do but others do not. We seem to try to hold those back who are making a positive contribution in educating children, because of problems some districts are experiencing.

Frank Ferguson  
Alaska State Senator