

Tundra Times



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Indian Hank Cropley— Sober Alcoholic Aids Alcoholism Victims

Indian Hank Cropley
April 26, 1973

Mr. Howard Rock
Tundra Times
Box 1287
Fairbanks, Alaska

Dear Mr. Rock:

Howard, I am "Indian Hank" a sober alcoholic. I'm sober today because someone helped me. My fellow Alaskans and natives, I am sure some of you have seen me, some of you have heard of me. You may and most times will find me and see me where ever my fellow natives may need my understanding and help.

I am part of the Alaska Native Brotherhood's sponsored program known as "Anchorage native program for alcohol and drug abuse. My interest is, I care what is happening to my natives who have a problem with the use of alcohol and drugs. The abuse of alcohol, drugs, is giving my people a living problem.

I became concerned back in 1961, then I later took part in the Alaska planning conference here in Anchorage in 1966 regarding alcohol problems in Alaska. 1966 up to 1972 you could find me in city court, state court, state troopers or Anchorage city police trying to help the native who seem to have a drinking problem. As a native who had lived as an alcoholic and lived as they are now.

I can and do identify this problem with anyone that seeks my help and understanding. This takes me into, families — homes — employers — doctors — hospitals, law enforcements, courts, judges, D.A.'s office, public defenders, showed a great interest in my work toward rehabilitation and help for my fellow natives.

We must always remember that the alcoholic comes in many colors, one race or color doesn't make the problem.

I was proud as a senior member of the Alaska Native Brother, local camp here agreed to start and operate the A.N.B. Rehab. Home, located 546 East 15th Ave., Anchorage. It is a wonderful feeling to see natives working with natives, no one is turned away who wishes to find a sober life.

When I was in Juneau 1967, I hoped the Juneau Camp would show an interest in my work there. Then I moved back

Anchorage where I became involved in the court systems and the drunk in jail.

Then in 1972 the local A.N.B. showed and took an interest in the alcohol problems. Many long hours of volunteer work by the members of Alaska Native Brotherhood — the Division of Corrections — took an interest in my court work and signed a contract with the A.N.B. Rehabilitation, toward using our program.

Since February, I've been phasing myself out of the program . . . as my interests are toward a "graduate house", an important part of the program.

Without the graduate house, the halfway house only does half the rehabilitation of the client. The graduate house CAN help, the man or woman come back into society, self respect and tax payer, useful citizen again.

So, as of 26, April I am no longer with the A.N.B. Rehabilitation, but I am busy writing a program for the graduate house. The Division of Corrections may have an interest in a graduate house setting. They bought the program I drew up for the Anchorage Native program for alcohol and drug abuse. There has been some changes made by the new staff and project administrator of which I am no longer a part of now.

My plans are to have the graduate house work in harmony with the A.N.B. Rehab. Halfway House and program toward a sober life again. Something for the ones who have a drinking problem: without sobriety, we are nothing!

Thank You, I am

"Indian" Hank Cropley
Box 8-727
Anchorage, Ak. 99508

Oil-soaked Duck

Nulato, Alaska
May 4, 1973

Dear Friend Mr. Howard Rock:

The first thing in Catechism book was who made the world. Answer: God made the world. At the time I didn't think too much about it but now I started to think about it.

The geese and ducks come every year, also fish at the same time.

There were no stores here years ago. People were half

Lost VISTA Volunteer And an Old Eskimo Strange Encounter Leads Into Extensive Analysis of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act

Land's End Village
State of Alaska
May 4, 1973

Dear Mr. Rock,

Since Naugga Ciunerput and Joe Ayagut have gone off together on a hunting trip, I have decided to write the letter to you this week. This will give me a chance to let you know what has been going on out here, especially with regard to the letters you have been receiving.

I am the one who has actually been writing the letters, although they are basically Naugga ideas and thoughts. He is still unsure of his English and doesn't know how to write yet so he tells me what to say in the letters and I fix up the grammar, spelling and punctuation. At first I disagreed with him about some of the things he wanted to write or at least I didn't understand what he was trying to communicate. But since I began to read the Native Claims Settlement Act, I am beginning to see the light.

When I first came to Alaska as a VISTA volunteer, I thought that I would be helping the noble but backward Natives into economic development and social progress. The thing I thought was necessary was a change in traditional attitudes and the adoption of new technology and modern methods. When they resisted I thought they were just being stubborn or lazy. Instead of change they wanted to talk about history, law, and politics.

As I worked with a group of Native fishermen in a program of community development, I slowly began to realize that the poverty of the village was not so much due to the Native psychology as to the activities of certain private corporations in the region. The people worked hard but they ended up further in debt to the owners of the fishing equipment and the company store. But you don't

learn about this in the books we used in training.

When the Alaska Native Claims Act was passed my parents wrote me from home asking if I would be coming back early now that all of the Eskimos were going to be millionaires! Well, I don't exactly see it that way, especially since I have begun to read the provisions of AN ACT with Naugga. For example, my father is a member of a conservation group which is opposed to the building of the oil pipeline.

He doesn't realize that for the Alaska Natives to oppose the pipeline, which they probably would if they had a free choice, they would lose one-half their settlement. Divide and conquer still seems to be a good colonial strategy.

Probably when I leave Alaska I will apply to go to law school in order to learn some useful skills to deal with the problems. One small example was when Joe and I were discussing the federal regulations on "modern and urban" villages.

He was upset because so many villages were going to be denied the benefits of AN ACT when I pointed out that they also had to have a majority of non-Natives according to section 11 (b)(2), since it says AND rather than OR. Later this week we got a copy of the Tundra Times where it said that there was a long meeting to resolve this when someone finally decided to call up a lawyer in Washington to pass judgment on it.

It would appear that if the Natives don't read AN ACT no one will since the Interior Department will just issue any regulations they want.

Next week I hope that Naugga and Joe will be back to continue the correspondence.

Sincerely yours,

Walter M. Morton

starving. One girl dug up some fish guts and fish eggs that she had planted last summer. She saved the people from starving. They had run out of caribou meat they had killed with bow and arrow.

Now what I'm writing to you about is we shot a mallard

duck May 2 (soaked with diesel oil) and we couldn't eat it yet. I'm going to try it anyway. I think about it.

I hope some of these guys would look into it. I'd sure like to but I have no power.

Fred Stickman, Sr.