

Den Nena Henash - Our Land Speaks

Ut Kah neek - Informing and Reporting

Yupit Qanlautciat - The Way Eskimos Talk

Unangan Tunukun - The Aleuts Speak

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Alaska Natives can have clout

To the editor:

I have been impressed with the letters to the editor recently. I knew subsistence would be the issue to awaken Alaska Native hearts.

It is so. It is a big election year. Now is the time to take notice what our elected officials have done for us. If they have failed us, it is our fault, too. We must vote. All of us Alaska Natives, as a group, must show we care what happens to us by voting.

We did it before, in the early '70s, and it was our vote that became the swing vote. We can do it again.

I studied political science in college and spoke to many politicians who said they don't bother campaigning in Native villages because we don't vote, so why bother spending any money to come to our villages and see what we need?

We have the chance to turn things around again and show that we have political power. Let's do it this year. Register to vote now, then vote.

I challenge the *Tundra Times* to do what Howard Rock did before, make the *Tundra Times* the true voice of Alaska Natives and encourage us to vote by running articles in every paper it issues until election time. That will help us to turn out in numbers that truly show our political force.

Find out how your legislators voted on subsistence. If they did not act, find one who will and support him or her by your vote. As for the governor's election, this is the big one.

The Indians in Washington state knew their political clout and found one candidate they could support. His name is Gov. Booth Gardner. It was the Indian vote, united, that helped get

him elected.

Behind the scenes he worked with the Indian groups on a modern day treaty, called the Centennial Accord, which recognized the sovereignty of the tribes. When he was elected he made true his word to recognize their power by signing the treaty. It was a time similar to ours.

When I spoke to the Indian tribes in Washington state and the governor's office they all said they were ashamed to see how the state of Alaska used millions of dollars to fight the poor Alaska Natives in court on subsistence issues.

If we can find a candidate for governor who will work with the tribes here, it can help to turn things around by changing the political atmosphere to not use so much state money against Alaska Natives in court.

Let's find a candidate who cares enough to come to our villages if we invite him or her. If you invite them and they won't come that must show they don't care.

If they come to your village, stand up and talk about your concerns. Ask pertinent questions about subsistence and what that candidate can do to help. Let them come and see for themselves how it is to live amongst us.

We must unite and vote or the tyranny of the majority of non-Natives will continue to rule our lives and we will continue to lose our loved ones, as we have in the near past, to despair. We are a proud people; let's show our dignity by standing up and being counted. Elect officials who will do the right thing.

Tosha Galaktionoff
Dillingham

Let's vote for subsistence supporters

To the editor:

"We the People," includes us, the Alaska Natives. We must fully realize that we can overturn the "in-decision" made by the Alaska Legislature on our subsistence issue.

It is us the people who will have the deciding say on who will go back or not go back to the halls of our Legislature. We will fully declare our dissatisfaction to those who were supposed to represent us. The goal is to replace those who were part of the in-decision on our subsistence issue.

It is time to state what we are all about and that our life hangs in the balance. Our great-great grandfathers gave us a way of life which has been handed down to us. The very grounds we walk on and where we reside give us life.

Everything around us has meaning and purpose. The very seasons bring forth the continuation of our existence and our life.

Our songs and our dances, which have been with us for centuries, give to us today the time of celebrations of our rich bounties that our creator has given to us.

The songs describe and tell of our great feats, announcing the seasons, announcing that our Mother Earth has opened up to us the land, water and the very sky. Through the centuries of our existence we have taken only what we needed for our families.

A new song is needed. A new dance is needed to portray the gross injustice that has been handed down to us. The pen is mightier than the sword. All of our Alaska Native pens should be signed on the dotted lines of the voter registration forms and in record turnout to vote against the political candidates who have put a real threat on our life.

We should carefully screen those who will be representing us and see that they do represent our interests and will not impose any legislation that would threaten our life and our existence.

All of us now know where the state stands, and it is time to let the state know where we stand, drawing from our great-great grandfathers who gave us the will to live and taught us how to live.

If we are to gain control of our destiny and have our ways of life

respected and understood, it is in this election year we start by being at the voting polls in record numbers.

This great land has much to offer, and it appears that our ways and our existence — our very presence — are not fully recognized.

If there was some recognition by the lawmakers who represent us, they would have given full consideration of our life, our culture, our traditions, our customs, our seasons for gathering and hunting for our traditional foods which sustain us.

It appears that this was not in the discussion of passage of the subsistence issue. If so, we would not be where we are to this date.

Since it is us the people who put these legislators into office, we have the same powers to not put them back into office. There have been attempts to properly influence these legislators while they were in session, and you now see the results.

Any politician is the most vulnerable during an election year. It is time to put the right legislators into office who will fully understand us, our cultures,

our rich heritages, our rich traditions. We are people who still live off the land!

Once there is a threat before us, we cannot be silent about ourselves. We have the right to put people into office who will have full understanding of us not only on subsistence, but on several issues that confront us at other levels: proper education, economic development, active involvement with foreign trade which is rapidly developing right within our presence. And yet look at our unemployment rate!

We are no strangers to the lawmakers. But look at what happened with subsistence. If the lawmakers are able to do what they did with subsistence, how much more will they gradually infringe upon our life and our existence? The bigger question is what more will happen to us?

It is time to vote out those who have no understanding of subsistence. The very source of our life has been threatened. The battle lines have been drawn, and the voting polls are talking to us.

Terrance H. Booth
Metlakatla

Murkowski wants new hearings

To Manuel Lujan Jr.:

I am greatly disturbed by reports I have received of the public hearing on subsistence held in Fairbanks on June 14. I understand that it was poorly advertised, poorly staffed by appropriate officials and poorly conducted.

A small article was published in the *Fairbanks Daily News Miner* on the day of the hearing. Despite such inadequate notice, the hearing was attended by over a hundred people, illustrating how important this issue is to Alaskans.

Furthermore, requests for the newly published proposed regulations

were to be expected but copies of the regulations were not readily available at the beginning of the hearing. They were ultimately found in the Bureau of Land Management Land Office in an unopened box.

What disturbs me the most about this fiasco is the wholly inadequate government representation. An administrative law judge with the National Park Service in Salt Lake City conducted the hearing.

He began by announcing that he knew nothing about this issue. He then further offended the assembled by preventing an Inupiaq woman from testifying in her Native language by for-

bidding her from speaking in a "foreign language."

Although Walter Stieglitz, Alaska regional director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, and Boyd Evison, Alaska Regional director of the National Park Service, have apologized for the haphazard conduct of this hearing, I request that another hearing be scheduled for Fairbanks.

I would also request that hearings be held in Bush Alaska so that I can be assured that the public comment record will be meaningful.

Best regards,
Sen. Frank H. Murkowski
Washington, D.C.

Letters to the editor



We welcome letters to the editor on any subject. We need to hear from you.

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