

# Letters to the Editor

## Thank you for your care and encouragement

*To all the people who helped and prayed for all of us during the death of my mother, Katherine Olanna:*

We like to say, "Thank you" for all your prayers and concerns. I like to say, "Thank you" to Quyanna Care Center staff, Norton Sound Hospital, Myra Murphy and Margo Frances who have helped my mother while she was there. I like to say, "Thank you" to my brother Albert Olanna who helped out as much as he can. I appreciated two of my 6th grade students who came to visit me, Andrew Weyiouanna and Mat Turner. You have learned a lot this year.

My mom was one of the first health aides in our region and

worked until she could not due to her health. She had taken care of lot of people during her time. Many times she worked without pay and without rest, making sure the sick people were taken care of.

She and my dad Arnold accepted many of our relatives as their own while we were living at Ekpick or at the summer camps. I remember Roy Okie, David Okie, Anna (Olanna) Pootoogooluk, Martha (Olanna) Kiyutelluk, Baker Ningealook, Delano Barr living with us in our camps.

She educated us with Sunday Pix and with any books she can find at Ekpick. She supported my efforts to earn my degree. I can never for-

get how proud they were to learn I finally earned my degree from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks.

I encouraged all my students and all the students to listen and obey your parents. It is only natural to make mistakes and misbehave. We are all human beings. This life is not easy. My mom had tough times but did not give up. There will always be others who don't understand you. Know who you are and know your goals. The education you are pursuing is not easy and will take time. These words were my mom's advice.

George Olanna, Sr.  
and all the Olannas  
Shishmaref, AK

## In opposition of House Bill 52

To Sen. Robin Taylor and President Drue Pearce:

RE: SB 52 Capital Punishment

I oppose SB 52, not strictly on moral grounds, but on the fact that too many Natives will be killed by passage of such legislation. You

know that Natives make up a disproportionate number of inmates in our jails in relation to their percentage of Alaska's total population.

On this fact alone, it is clear that Natives will bear the greatest burden of this legislation. I am not saying that this legislation is anti-Native. I

am saying that you need to look at why so many Natives are in jail before you adopt legislation that may kill so many indigenous people.

When I was in the legislature, I discovered that there was a disparity in sentencing. A study funded by leg-

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## House Bill 251 unfair to shareholders

Dear Editor,

Upon our return home and after reading the newspaper back issues for the month of March, as a Sealaska and Goldbelt, Inc., shareholder, I am compelled to also write in opposition to House Bill 251 relating to Native corporations.

The decision of the Native corporate boards to run to the Alaska State Legislature to sponsor House Bill 251 is without the knowledge and consent of their shareholders. This action raises questions of control over the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) corporations.

At the very beginning, bylaw for each Native corporation was an important basic issue where boards of directors should have asked shareholders to be involved in creating this important document. Among other things, bylaws define the relationships and distribution of power among the

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## Respect yourself as Native, wear culture with pride

*Note: This letter was sent to the Anchorage Daily News earlier this month. Rose Isaac asked Tundra Times to reprint this letter.*

Dear Editor,

It was with extreme sadness that I read your April 14th article on Representative Beverly Masek's removal of her Athabascan dress to show her

two-piece modern-day Western garb prior to voting on her resolution that would wipe out the rural priority for subsistence hunting and fishing from federal law.

I, to, am an Alaskan, an Alaskan Native, and an American. I have seen personally how unfair Native people have been treated. For years, we have

been forced not to speak our language and forced to adopt the Western way of living. And now they want to take away subsistence, our way of life. Our very essence of life is being threatened. To put it bluntly, subsistence should be for Natives only. As I really cannot see any other race

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## Heritage Park asks for correction

Dear Editor:

I am writing on behalf of the Alaska Native Heritage Park, Inc. (ANHP) to ask that your newspaper correct the misstatements that appeared on page 4 of the March 29, 1995 issue. The article refers to a \$75,000 gift to the University of

Alaska-Anchorage from Holland America Line-Westours, Inc., \$25,000 of which your paper states will be used "to develop a visitor guide program in conjunction with Cook Inlet Region, Inc. to train personnel for the Alaska Native Heritage Park."

As presented in your paper, it

would appear that CIRI received money that will be used on behalf of the Alaska Native Heritage Park, and that ANHP is an entity of some status other than an independent corporation recognized by the laws of the State of Alaska and United States. It also implies that CIRI has some larger interest in the Heritage Park and is responsible in some way for training our future staff. Neither suggestion is true. The ANHP Board of Directors in-

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## Tireless service appreciated

Dear Editor:

Jeanne Berger's passionate and tireless zeal to make the world a better and healthier place has touched many people through both her professional and volunteer work throughout her 25 years in Alaska.

Jeanne is a Public Health Nurse who will soon be retiring from her position as the Nurse Manager at the Kenai Public Health Center and those of us who work with her want to ensure that she leaves public service with all the honors and recog-

nition that she deserves.

Some of Jeanne's 21-year public health nursing career has included visits to a wide range of locations such as the Pribilof Islands and to Tyonek.

If Jeanne Berger has somehow touched your readers' lives and if they would like to publicly acknowledge her contributions, please send a letter to me (re: Jeanne) so that when she retires, we can document the impact her generosity has had on all Alaskans.

Karen Parrish  
Soldotna, AK



## In opposition to HB 52

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islation that I sponsored in the late seventies showed that Natives and other minorities were getting harsher sentences than whites for the same crime.

This revelation caused the entire justice system to examine itself and order a complete top to bottom cross cultural training exercise to excise any bias that the justice system was not aware of. The result was that sentences for crimes leveled out regardless of race.

No study has been done since that was done in the early 70s. It is time to do one again before SB 52 is passed to make sure that the people who are in our justice system are not sentencing Natives and minorities more harshly than whites. If a study is not done now and it is found later that disparities exist due to bias, then the state would suffer a very serious judicial, political and social set back in its long term survival as a place where

all races can live together in harmony.

I urge you to please conduct such a study and hold your bill in abeyance until you see the results of a disparity in sentencing study. Please contact Dave Gray who is on staff with Rep. Mackie's office. He is familiar with the study that was conducted and could be very helpful in researching the earlier legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nels A. Anderson, Jr.  
Dillingham, AK

## HB 251

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shareholders, the board of directors and the officers. Directors who drew up this instrument reserved this right for themselves. Thus, when the board decides to change the bylaws to suit themselves, shareholders are not informed and their approval is never required.

In other words, directors gave themselves full reign to run our Na-

tive corporations without the concurrence of its shareholders. The only power shareholders have is to elect the directors. That same power is also the power to remove them. For the last 24 years shareholders have had no mechanism with which to limit the actions of their boards of directors.

After reading HB 251, I believe the intent is to further severely restrict what is left of shareholder rights. It will give the elected board of directors complete power to refuse shareholders proposals and petitions unless they (shareholders) meet the proposed regulations in that bill. It also provides that shareholders will be punished if they violate these rules by paying fines of up to \$2,500 for a single violation, or not more than \$25,000 for multiple violations; or "...who willfully violates AS 10.06.960(m), upon conviction, is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000, or by imprisonment for not less than one year and not more than five years, or both."

Boards of directors have it backwards that shareholders should be punished. In general, as soon as they (board of directors) accepted the responsibility of serving as directors, they took on a fiduciary responsibility and may be responsible for corporate acts, even ones OK'd during a board meeting that the director missed. Boards of directors are all liable.

The State Department of Commerce and Economic Development, Division of Banking, Securities and Corporations has jurisdiction over corporate matters. I am curious as to what advice and recommendations they offered to the individuals who drafted HB 251. I'm sure they have numerous records of Native shareholder complaints, including records at the State Ombudsman's Office, that could have been researched.

Shareholders want to have a voice in the destiny of their Native corporations. It's time for the boards of directors to start communicating with their legal owners — the shareholders. They must start conducting informational meeting with all shareholders in mind. It's also time for the boards to apologize for the times that have chastised (punished) shareholders when questioning their policies, their mistakes and money losses.

I respect and honor the leadership and supporters of the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, to name a few: Emil Notti, Willie Hensley, John Sackett, John Borbridge Jr. Their hard work and efforts will be acknowledged and appreciated when the history for that era is written. They themselves said ANCSA was not a perfect bill, but they did what they could when the bill was being swamped in Congress with amendments. #1, the bill brought back some of the land-base we needed to start our Native-owned corporations. The leadership who replaced them should have completed the work where they left off by correcting the deficiencies in ANCSA. The current board, in the last 24 years, has had ample time to do so.

Shareholders want to improve the situation but have no options to do so. It appears their last resort is to recall Sealaska board of directors. No one should deny them that power.

Thank you,  
Marge Gamble  
Juneau, AK

## Respect . . .

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who can prove their customary and traditional uses other than the Native people of Alaska. We were here from time immemorial.

Even today, Alaskan Natives are still being treated like second-class citizens. Take a look at what is happening in Juneau in our State legislature. The State Operating Budget cuts will have a serious impact on Rural Alaska. The irony of it all is the fact that most revenues going into the state coffers are from natural resource revenues out of Rural Alaska. This being the case, are the State legislators being fair? No, absolutely not. They are intent on "teaching Bush Alaska" a lesson. Why? I thought the State Legislature represents all of Alaska and its people. Evidently not. Representative Masek is among the majority in our State Legislature. She is in a position to help Rural Alaska, but chooses not to. Obviously she does not know who she is. Perhaps living in Wasilla with clean running water, sewer systems, and big supermarkets where she can shop for her packaged beef, has softened her head to where she cannot remember who she is or where she came from.

The late Traditional Chief Andrew Isaac had continuously advised his people to take advantage of getting a proper Westernized education, as we had no choice but to live in their world. However, he had also advised to learn and educate yourself in the Native culture, traditions, and language, and to always respect yourself as a Native first.

As a member of the Dik'aaguy Tribe of the Athabascan Nation of Tanacross, Alaska, and like another great leader, Will Mayo, President of TCC had done, I urge all Alaska Natives across the state of Alaska to please wear your traditional Native clothes with pride and let us not take any more of the second-class treatment which we have taken for years. Let us wear our clothes with pride for it represents who we are. It represents our identity.

Let us extend that invitation to Beverly Masek.

Sincerely,  
Rose Isaac  
Tanacross

## Heritage Park . . .

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cludes representation from ten of the 12 Alaska Native regional corporations. CIRI has made generous in-kind and other contributions and has been a vocal supporter of the Heritage Park; however, CIRI commands no greater role in the decision-making process of the Heritage Park than any other board member.

To clarify, the Heritage Park was incorporated in 1988 under Alaska law as a non-profit educational and cultural organization with a charitable tax exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It was established through the initiative of The CIRI Foundation, and is governed by a 15-member board of directors. ANHP's bylaws require that a majority of the board be representatives of Alaska Natives and of these a minimum of five Alaska Native regions and culture groups must be represented on the board to ensure statewide representation.

As is evidenced by the stated mission of the Alaska Native Heritage Park, this organization is committed to developing a statewide culture center that will celebrate the heritage of all Alaska Native people.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Pat Petrivelli  
General Manager  
ANHP