

What others say...

Thanks to John Sackett

To the editor:

My uncle Edwin Simon used to live in Huslia. He died a few years ago. Also my sister Emily Sam lives in Huslia with my brother-in-law Tony Sam and all their kids. So when I was a kid my father used to visit Huslia with our family. Jack and Lucy Sackett used to have a store in Huslia, so I used to buy candies from their store, and here was a little boy John Sackett, that I met for the first time. I want to thank John Sackett for all the things he did

while he was in Juneau. If we need money for schools, or airport, or for anything we need around our villages, or our state, John was our man in Juneau. When John was still going to school in Huslia, he used to visit my Uncle, and told him that he, John, was going to be a Native leader someday, and he did just that. I wish John lots of luck in his hunting and fishing. Thanks again, John.

Sincerely,
Pollock Simon Sr.

Can governments find new ways to collect?

To the editor:

This letter is primarily addressed to the people of the NANA region who have just voted to form a new borough. As a resident of the North Slope Borough and being out of work I frequently stop by the Borough Personnel Office to check the job bulletin board. One day my eyes wandered a few feet to the left and I was shocked to see notices of "Expiration and Impending Title Transfer." All of these notices stated that "judgement...in the Superior Court of the State of Alaska granting title to the NSB to the properties on the foreclosure list attached below for no payment of taxes...please be advised that as of the 21st day of April, 1986 the period within which to redeem the properties...will have expired." "All properties or deed sold under the judgement...shall be deeded over to the North Slope Borough immediately...forever..."

What does that mean? At face value it means that if a good number of Inupiak elders had not paid these property taxes, amounts as low as \$400, they would have lost their homes and lands forever. Fortunately the NSB is holding off on one last step of paperwork and there is still time for these people to save their homes and lands.

While I was yet standing there a friend came by to encourage me to try for my old job as honey bucket man. I asked him if he knew that his Dad's name was on the foreclosure list and tried to explain what it meant. Yet it seemed he didn't realize that he could be without a roof over his head with just a few signatures and recording fees.

A few days later I saw an old man, a friend of mine there by the bulletin board filling out a job application with the assistance of a Borough employee who could read and understand the application. I read the foreclosure document with this name on it to him and he was particularly interested in the amount he owed. He said he was getting a job to pay the one year he'd overlooked.

Getting no response to my application to handle honeybuckets I came

back a few days later. This time there was a young woman actually looking at the foreclosure lists. "Do you know what these mean?" I asked. She said "No." With a quick explanation I pulled down one to show her. It happened to be the one tax year with just one name on it. It was the name of her uncle who live in Anchorage. His was the only name to appear in all four tax years. I wondered if he was aware of the legal peril that threatened from his native homeland.

Speaking to the NSB Assistant Attorney I learned that the Borough has no desire to seize anyone's home. All the Borough wants is compliance with its tax laws and the Borough has been patiently waiting nearly 10 years.

People should pay taxes. I appreciate having someone come to my door to empty my honeybucket. (I'd gladly do it myself if I could forgo my property taxes.) Some folks have water piped into their homes and can recline on a flush toilet thanks to an astronomical expenditure by the Borough for a utilidoor.

But can an elderly person whose culture differs vastly from the white culture understand these legal notices? Will they understand when they are told to leave a plot of land their ancestors freely used for generations? Will they understand why a white law officer must usher them out of the home they built with their own hands?

To be fair it must be said that the North Slope Borough is concerned with Native issues and has done much to benefit the Native cause. But as a whiteman I understand the Borough as a form of the whiteman's government and hence an extension of his culture. The borough government draws its authority from the whiteman's law. Borough laws and ordinances are drawn up largely by white attorneys and these are largely administered by white bureaucrats. Just because most similar white governments collect past due property taxes by taking away the property does that mean that that is the only way \$400 can be collected?

Sincerely,
Dale Langmade
Barrow

Attempts at budget cutting condemned

To the editor:

It might have been with a good laugh were it not so pitiful. When our current governor announced for re-

election last month, he did so promising to protect our less fortunate citizens.

(Continued on Page Ten)

What others say...

(Continued from Page Six)

"Now more than ever we must make sure our financial problems don't blind us to the needs of our people," Sheffield was reported as saying in several newspapers.

One day later, the papers reported that Sheffield proposed spending cost of living increases for those same people he vowed to protect: low income families with dependent children and elderly, blind, and disabled adults.

The plan, which Sheffield was later pressured to give up, would have saved \$1.3 million — about the same amount Sheffield's hotel chain got in state-backed loans to build his hotel in Tok.

I, for one, don't want another four years of that kind of protecting Alaskans.

Sincerely,
Charles Taylor
Anchorage

Pass 1991 legislation, reader says

Honorable Frank Murkowski:

I am writing to show support for the resolutions amending ANCSA. I feel that these amendments would bring Alaska Natives into the realms of current federal Indian law and would protect Native interests. A way of life would be protected that has been nearing extinction since the purchase of Alaska. The state and federal governments have shared in the many riches of Alaska. I think it is time that some of it be shared and protected for the aboriginal peoples.

I urge you to support the bill amending ANCSA, and most importantly section 7 of the resolution package. Section 7 can preserve the culture and

subsistence of the true Alaskan way of life. The future of our culture cannot be secured by our corporations because they are unable to protect the land that we depend so much on.

Current subsistence laws are inconsistent and continually changing. We depend on these unstable laws for our survival. If it were up to the state subsistence would be neglected and eventually abolished. This is why we need more control over our own lives so we could protect our food source.

I would also like to point out that opposition to section 7 and the other resolutions would continue and further diminish our chances of survival. People like Ron Somerville are throwing a wrench into the mechanics of progress in Native Affairs. He is turning an issue of survival into a political issue of sovereignty. The issue is not sovereignty it is survival.

The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 was extended to Alaska in 1936. This gave Native Americans more rights to govern their own affairs and was part of a trend that recognized Native rights to lead their own lives and lessened the governmental dictation that impedes our rights to freedom.

ANCSA terminates Native rights and assimilates Natives into the mainstream of economic society. Although the 1950s brought more changes in the policies affecting Native Americans, Alaska is still excluded from this trend of upward progression.

Alaska Natives need representatives that represent the Native population. In the past we have been plagued with a political system that extinguished Native rights and fought against the interests of our people because they were desires contrary to Banks and Oil Companies. It is time to stop the wolf from eating all the sheep.

Sincerely,
Nicholas J. Masters

Stop handling birds, please

Honorable Governor Bill Sheffield
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Honorable Governor Sheffield:

In regards to the Yukon-Kuskokwim goose management plan I express my feelings regarding the last meeting I attended here in Kipnuk. My concern is that subject before the meeting was an issue of concern to this community and this region, regarding the goose plan for the region. In regards to the fish and wildlife present resolution, I am opposed to the recommendation. I will not tolerate, along with other people, villages and regions to have Fish and Wildlife staying on the wildlife reservation. I still state that wildlife reservations are brought by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

I did not like them, watching the birds along with the nesting and I do

not like them handling the birds and the eggs. I also do not like them handling the young, while they are growing up. I do not like them, along with other elders, with some concern having tents and camps while the birds are nesting and raising their families.

Why I don't like it? Because, I am taught from the elders and from the Yupiit educators since they understand the lifestyle of the Yupiit people.

Once you touch or handle the birds, you have destroyed their lifestyle and contaminated the livelihood of the birds, since they are not pets.

Furthermore, "this situation of the goose population decrease," will be helped when they stop watching the birds.

When I am given monies, "how will I help," to improve the existence of the birds and their nesting grounds. I can.

God Bless You.
Sincerely,
Isaac Mute