

# letters

## Copper River fishing rights

Dear Editor:

I would like for you to print this article in the Tundra Times. This is concerning the closure of the fish wheels last week. This was read to the people when we had a meeting with the Fish and Game Board held at the Copper Center Hall at 7:30 p.m.

Thank you,  
Sincerely,  
Basille Jackson

When our fathers and grandfathers met the first white people to come up the Copper River, there was no question in anyone's mind but that they owned all the land and resources in our area. This included the big game in the hills as well as the fish in the rivers.

History shows that we were not greedy with our resources, but shared them first with the Russians, later with the gold miners of 1898, and until this day with the white people who are our neighbors. Furs, big game timber, minerals, and fish that originally belonged to us have been taken continuously by others with seldom a complaint on our part.

Today we all know times have changed, statehood and the Native land claims bill seem to bear out that much of the land doesn't belong to us anymore. In the few short years since the turn of the century (which many of our old folks can remember) we have come from complete ownership of our land and all its riches to what often seems to us almost as trespassers on another's land. Now we are told much of the land belongs to others, we are told when to hunt, where to hunt, where to mine where to cut timbers, when to fish, where to fish, when to trap, where to trap, and on and on and on.

At no time since our fathers completely owned this land have they or we given up our right to live a subsistence lifestyle. We have not traded off the right to catch fish for our families from our river. We are not about to give this right to the State of Alaska or the federal government today or at any future time at any price.

Today we are here to protest what we believe is a great injustice to our people. We are being told that the fish of the Copper River no longer belong to us, and that we no longer have the right to take them when and how we want for our own needs. Great emphasis seems to be given to the use of the fish by the commercial fishermen in the Cordova area and by the many, many dipnetters from the Fairbanks and Anchorage areas. We seem to be the last people whose needs and desires are being met.

A history of our people shows that when fish runs were good our fathers did well, when fish runs were poor our people starved. Truly the fish of the Copper River have been the basic necessity for the existence of our people throughout time.

Many of us here today grew up during the 1920s and 30s when a subsistence lifestyle was necessary. We still hang on to some of that lifestyle. Certainly we would not be too intelligent, to give up our right to the lifeline of our people throughout history on the chance that Alaska and America will never again face depressions or wars, and we wouldn't ever again have to depend on the salmon of the Copper River for our livelihood. We believe that the State of Alaska doesn't have the

right to lock up our fish-sheels or our people for fishing. We further believe the state does not have the right to keep our people from subsistence fishing!

## Help for elderly

Alaska Area Native  
Health Service  
Box 7-741  
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Dear Editor:

This Amendment to the Older Americans Act will be of paramount interest in the upcoming Billings, Montana meeting being held, and is the Second National Indian Conference on Aging. It is sponsored by the National Indian Council on Aging, Inc., P.O. Box 2088, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103.

The Chairperson to direct your resolutions or suggestions to is Sophie D. Thompson, ACSW, Conference chairperson, P.O. Box 2088, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103.

It is my conviction that this amendment will be a vast improvement to the villages in the Interior of our State. Not only is the elderly of our Quasi Sovereign villages as defined in the Alaska Native Settlement Act became the forgotten citizen, but has lost out on the delivery service by the State, and who's lack of said service is because of the isolation of the villages. To date we have seven applications from Alaska out of a total of 71. As your representative on this Council and Board of Directors, I have been an Advocate for our State, not only for the elderly but also Human Services for all our Native people. I regret to inform my Board and people whom I represent that I will not be able to attend this very important meeting, because of a major operation which I will undergo at that time.

The last report from our lawyer in Washington, D.C. of May 16, 1978, the Full House of Representatives voted to pass this amendment. The full Senate Human Resources Committee favorably reported out a similar legislation. The target date is mid-July.

I thank the Tundra Times for the publication of this vital legislation. There will be about 3,000 in attendance.

Sincerely,  
Victor Haldane  
Board Member - NICOA

## Outraged at ASHA

Gilbert A. Henderson  
Seattle Pacific Sub Box 1468  
Seattle, Wash. 98119

Governor Jay Hammond  
Pouch A  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Governor Hammond:

I would like to tell you a little bit about Alaska State Housing Authority. These are the people who have been appointed and trusted to put safe and decent housing in the State of Alaska:

-About 20 houses have burned down in the Bethel Heights Project alone. Some of these houses that burned have carried precious human lives with them. You think ASHA cared? ASHA tried to blame the fires on the Bethel Housing Committee, a citizen/tenant group, instead of trying to correct the housing problems-and with no regard for human life.

-ASHA has constantly been defendant in lawsuits to get them to correct problems in

village housing. Sued. Yes, sued, meaning citizens have to resort to a court of law to get what they would normally expect in a house. A normal house? Is there such a thing as normal expectations, that a house would be a house when ASHA is finished with it.

Decent and safe housing. That word often appears in HUD regulations that ASHA is to follow. But then ASHA is a public corporation that has a public trust to act in the public interest.

-Public trust. But why do the courts of law get involved so much if this is a matter of public trust.

What is ASHA expending its efforts on then if not in good housing? Defending itself from the repercussions of scandals, poor housing, and everything else except good housing. They also love to intimidate anyone who wants good housing and harass people through Mickey Mouse tactics.

Mickey Mouse tactics? Seizing a rental house on April 25, even though the rent is fully paid through April 30, even though there is no violation of local, state, federal or Housing Authority codes by the rentor, changing locks, denying entry, and then...and then...slapping \$140 on the rental account simply to harass. And over a year later they're still harassing.

That's what ASHA exerts its energy to. Also ASHA systematically violates civil rights of people which pretty much go unreported, violations of human rights (a burning death a very basic one)-a more apt example is taking advantage of people who cannot read or write English thus forcing them to give up homeownership rights and then NOT compensating the tenant for the homeownership equity they attained as a result of the time and energy put into BUILDING the house. They call this sweat equity in HUD terminology.

ASHA treats people as if they were a bunch of worms-ASHA, if you ask me, is more like Soviet Russia-with a designated mission in its charter to which they should be focusing towards instead of civil rights and human rights violations, lawsuits, and scandals.

See, Soviet Russia is not a democratic nation. Nor does ASHA represent the general public of Alaska. The ASHA Board of Directors is an elite group of people handpicked by the Governor of Alaska for, what else, their prominence. Where are the Alaska Natives that should be sitting on the Board. The Alaska Natives are often the litigators versus ASHA and probably would not have to be if they had some influence on the board.

But I guess those of us sitting out here in the world have to realize that the structure of ASHA was formed before the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was passed and before Alaska Natives were in style recognized that maybe they had the clout to get involved.

Now we can see that, like Soviet Russia, the goals of ASHA are the goals of a small group of elite men instead of the goals of society and the public. That is why there are so many bad houses, lawsuits, and scandals. That's why Soviet Russia and ASHA also have a small human rights problem.

So why is ASHA still in business managing and constructing houses in rural Alaska from its remote corner in Anchorage? So they can violate human lives?

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Letters to the Editor are invited and should be addressed to Box 1287, Fairbanks, Alaska 99707. The Tundra Times reserves the right to edit letters which are excessively long, and to edit or omit letters which may be considered libelous.

# • Letters to the Editor

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ASHA should by legislation immediately be stripped of any authority out of the boundaries of Anchorage; or maybe should even be abolished. Cook Inlet Regional Housing Authority is in Anchorage, and can assume immediate jurisdiction.

So the relevant argument is not unrepresentation but abolition. Maybe a stripped down version. Why does ASHA have so much authority in the light of its history, track and performance record when the regional housing authorities are in existence? The Board might be restructured, if ASHA continues to exist, to represent

Alaska Natives just to be on the safe side, or at least open the Board selection to the democratic processes. In this way the staff would not be so smug about violating civil rights and human rights of people.

An unwritten goal of ASHA logically would be to hang on to as many financially-feasible projects such as the 180-unit Bethel Heights housing project. That, I do not think, is desirable in the light of the staffing and board structure of ASHA, in the public interest, or for human life.

When will we learn?

A homegrown Nunivak Island

man and a registered voter  
of Bethel, Alaska,  
Gilbert Hendrickson

cc: Tundra Times

## Anderson on Wien strike

Dear Editor:

The Wien strike has been on for fourteen months with no end in sight. No settlement is going to be devastating to air service throughout Alaska. The most severely affected area is the bush.

I am asking that you use every means available to bring Wien management and striking pilots to the bargaining table. It is in the public interest for your office to force solution immediately. You must ask both sides to open meaningful dialog so that solution can be reached. The flying public will applaud your efforts to resolve the Wien strike situation.

Rep. Nels Anderson Jr.