

letters

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Subsistence

Nulato, Alaska

Dear Editor:

No matter how old you are you sure make a lot of mistakes. After being away practically all winter, I came home to go to spring camp. But it's still winter here, and a lot of snow. I've been here 2 weeks and no sign of spring yet. But there is a lot of "subsistence food" used to be, but nobody lives on it like we used to. Got lots of ptarmigans. Moose is public nuisance now. Beaver, fish, few rabbits, etc. In your last paper, while there were 7 of them talking about subsistence, I was down here eating fresh moose meat, ptarmigan, beaver, rabbits, fish. They don't know what the hell is going on down here, who is taking care of the law. Seems to me they are talking for nothing. They put on white shirt, necktie, for meeting, what for?

It's just like Udall in Washington. He says we're going to do this and that with the land. Why don't he come here and settle with us old people first? Nobody has paid us yet, besides I thought they froze it for 20 years. Why don't they wait till 1991, then I'll be in the grave and nothing to worry about..

The fishing law is goofy, anyway, around here. Seems like the guys that make the law are crazy or nuts. What I'm talking about is the Commercial Fishing Licenses. The poor people can't get it.

Fred Stickman, Sr.

Copper River

Dear Editor:

Enclosed please find (a letter to Governor Hammond).

We feel the Commissioner (of Fish and Game, Ronald Skoog) has not only insulted the Copper River Native Community, but has also completely misrepresented the issue at the National level. Please feel free to print

any portion of (this letter) you think appropriate.

Any support you can give on this issue will be appreciated.

Governor Jay S. Hammond
State Building — 3rd Floor
Pouch A
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Governor Hammond:

The Board of Directors of the Copper River Native Association is writing this letter to protest the statements of Fish and Game Commissioner, Ronald Skoog. At a recent meeting before the House Merchant Marine Fisheries Committee in Washington, D.C., Mr. Skoog commented on "The Copper River Four." Mr. Skoog testified before the Committee that the Natives in question were part of a "set-up." He implied that they had conspired to violate last summer's closure on Subsistence fishing in the Copper River, in order to embarrass the Department and cause a controversy.

We strongly object to Mr. Skoog's characterization of our people. We believe that the Department of Fish and Game has pursued a policy of insensitivity to the problems of subsistence users. Last summer's closure on subsistence Salmon fishing did not affect the sports fishing in the area. It did, however, have a drastic effect on the subsistence problems here. The closure, coupled with the effects of Pipeline Construction, has severely affected the subsistence lifestyle of the Copper River people.

THE COPPER RIVER FOUR were four elderly Ahtna Natives, ages 78, 62, 72, and 87, who were cited last summer for operating their fishwheels during an emergency closure on Salmon fishing in the Copper River. Three of them have limited English-speaking ability and all of them have strong backgrounds in the Ahtna culture and language. We maintain that the elderly members of the Ahtna Region consider the continued use of the Copper River to be an integral part of their existence. We also maintain that the Copper River Four's income were all below the Federal Poverty Guide-

lines and they were genuine subsistence users, not weekend Sportsmen, who felt their ancestral rights to fish in the river superseded the rules of the Department of Fish and Game.

We feel that the Commissioner of Fish and Game should be someone who is in tune with subsistence needs. As far as we can see, Mr. Skoog has not demonstrated this ability. We do not feel that we should have to be in constant conflict with the Department of Fish and Game. However, Commissioner Skoog's proven insensitivity leaves us little recourse.

It is our sincere hope that something can be done to improve Commissioner Skoog's outlook on subsistence. Since he represents the entire State on fish and game issues, it seems ironic that he would project a negative viewpoint on this subject.

We naturally resent Mr. Skoog's testimony, and think that a Public apology and explanation are in order. We also request he withdraw the portions of his testimony that refer derogatorily to the Copper River people.

We trust that you will give this matter — which is of great concern to us — your full consideration, and we await your reply.

Sincerely,
Copper River Native Assoc., Inc.
Tom Craig
Executive Director

cc: Tundra Times

Monuments

Dear Editor:

To the young & old -- my view of the Monument and its government system:

It's like the old West, only it's happening now and to us here in Alaska.

They (Gov't) are sending their young and friendly people to try and set it better for us. While all along it will turn out bad for us. In the long run we

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will end up eating weiners from the store along with spam, pork chops, etc... Think of this, at least we have it better now than the Indians outside of Alaska a long time ago.

The Government and their people are much too strong in force for us.

Encourage the young to get educated. Maybe someday we might have a great leader. Who knows, it's a hope. It might be our miracle.

Send your opinions into Fish and Wildlife Services, they might give us a good deal on what we have left.

Signed,
Indian Hope & Maybe Miracle

Communication

P.O. Box 159
Unalakleet, Alaska 99684

Dear Editor:

The process of communication is carried out in three tangible ways: by speaking, by reading, and by writing.

Of these, only in conversation, is true communication achieved (in the ideal conversation): an exchange of thoughts is accomplished by questions and answers, by statements of thought and opinion.

It is true, however, that communication as a specific goal *can* be accomplished in reading and writing; the process and end result (clear thought and definite conclusions reached) are acquired by thinking as one reads or writes, and if a documentation is desired of the actual "conversation" achieved, by writing formal or informal notes on what is read or written.

As the slogan for a recently popular motion picture proclaimed, "We are not alone," and although the producers had in mind more a universal sense of that statement, the fact that earthlings must co-exist is emphasized by the same statement. Co-existence, if it is to be peaceful, must include

good communication between everyone who occupies this planet. In short, communication composes an important counterweave to the fabric of simple existence, and if the communication is good, the fabric is strong.

Good communication requires careful, almost cautious, writing, reading and speaking. A good vocabulary is a help to good communication, in that it provides a broader latitude of understanding. If it is possible to describe an action, or an opinion in more and more specific terms, the actual thought behind the description will reach more people in its original sense. Therefore, we have verbs that cover almost the entire range of human action, and adjectives and adverbs as diverse. The more of these one is acquainted with, the better understanding is achieved through reading and listening, and the better is one able to reach those who listen or read, with words.

The deliberate act of thinking as one reads, writes, or listens, however, will determine how true the communication is. It is this that I address in this letter; I was browsing through a less recent edition of the Tundra Times (the older they are, the better the browsing), and came upon a letter written to the editor, and if I weren't thinking as I read, I would not be writing this letter. By the same token, I must be very careful as I write, so as not to give your readers a misconception of what I am trying to say to them.

The letter was from Calvin Willey of Kodiak, and he was asking the Times to retain its rural flavor; that posed no problem for me. Then he added, "Tundra Times is the only paper available that reports accurately what is going on in the bush." I skimmed over that short statement, and then stopped and went back to it.

1. I wish to exhort the readers of this paper never to trust any *one* publication for information, no matter how many times that publication has proven its accuracy and/or good intentions. This is not good. Read and *think* about every-

thing you read. Dissect what interests you and decide in your mind how *you* feel about what is being discussed. Catalogue what *you* know about the subject being discussed, and compare it with the information given in the book, magazine, or pamphlet. This should give you an idea of the *general* reliability of the publication but NEVER lean on that publication.

2. The Tundra Times is NOT the only paper that "reports accurately what is going on in the bush." The truth is in all publications, speaking generally. I repeat, the truth is in *all* publications. It is just presented in different "clothes" for each publication. It is up to you, the reader, to strip away the fancy words (which are, after all, just more communication) to get to what accurately describes a situation, a community, an issue.

The more one reads, the better one gets at strip jobs. If you ever had the opportunity to see any journalist in action, whether he/she represented a newspaper, radio, or TV, you will remember how what really happened was "prepared": by the time the article or news item was presented, it bore as much of a resemblance to the original happening, as a turkey with all the trimmings on a Thanksgiving platter does to the sad bird facing the shotgun.

I want to emphasize that I enjoy reading the Tundra Times, and look to it for accurate reporting. I want others to continue to have the same privilege, but we must all remember that communication is not easy, even in verbal conversation. To convey a thought requires not only good "sending", but good "receiving", and the same holds true for reading and listening.

Thank you for this opportunity to sound off. And keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Vernita J. (Katchatag) Zily