

LETTERS FROM HERE AND THERE

(continued from page 2)

after work, or the person that drinks constantly (every day without becoming staggering drunk). You see, it's not how much a person drinks, but rather a person that is to some degree an "alcoholic dependent."

That is what I was up until July 1965 when I quit drinking. I didn't use a tapering off method or anything like that. I just quit—cold turkey quit. I was then a fugitive yet from the charges bringing me to prison. One would think that the additional pressures and anxieties of being a fugitive would make me drink more than I did. Well, to be truthful, I did drink more excessively from April to July, but from July to November (when I was arrested on a FBI fugitive warrant) I didn't touch a drop of booze. I "stayed clean," as it were.

After my arrest I still had access to booze. In the county jail of San Diego, Calif., homemade "pruno" was available; when I was on death row booze was available, and here at Folsom it is available (of course, it goes without saying that the rules and regulations of the jails and prisons forbid prisoners from imbibing, but it is, nevertheless, made—the pruno that is.) Not only have I refused all such offers of pruno, I've tried (without much success) to get others to turn it down or quit making it.

Hell, Mr. Rock, if anyone had suggested or told me that I was an alcoholic years ago I would have laughed at them. If they had persisted I would probably have punched them right on their damn nose for sticking it into my business. I'm beyond that stage now. I accept the fact that I was an alcoholic and that today I am a non-active alcoholic. I know and realize that I could probably never function as a contributing citizen in society if I ever began drinking again. This in itself is enough to keep me from ever drinking alcoholic beverages again. I know all the pitfalls of booze because I've tripped over them all. From about the age of 14 to the age of 26 a drinking-person-turned-alcoholic sees all the nightmares an alcoholic goes through. And it's enough to scare the hell out of one.

I'm not trying to say that everyone who drinks is an alcoholic dependent. It would be foolish of me to do so. Listening to the outside guests at our Folsom Alcoholic Anonymous meetings I've never once heard anyone say that everyone who drinks is an alcoholic. Invariably, they've all made the same general conclusion that I have—that if a person is dependent on booze to function "properly" he is an alcoholic. By attending these meetings, listening to outside and inside speakers, and participating in the program myself, I've gained quite an insight of myself and my drinking problem. The AA program, or any other program orientated towards getting people to whip their drinking problem, is one of the best ways I know of for a person to lift himself out of the dungeon of booze. To regain the trust, respect, pride, and integrity that was lost because he became an alcoholic. It's no easy job, I can tell you that. The temptations are always there, and it is a constant struggle, but a determined person that has the help of family, friends, and programs like AA can do it. And that person will be a better human being for it.

Once I am freed I plan to continue with alcoholic preventive programs. Perhaps through my experiences I'll be able to help others who have the same problems that I had years ago.

Now, getting back to what I've read and heard about such preventive programs created for the Alaska Natives. Is there any information that you can send to me, or addresses that I can inquire of regarding these programs in Alaska? I may not be able to be there physically; however, I can write to these people, answer questions, relate experiences, possibly make suggestions for effective operation of their programs that will get the results sought after.

As I stated Mr. Rock, I know what it is to be an alcoholic. If I can help keep just one person from going through the nightmares that I've gone through all the effort put forth will be well worth the reward.

In concluding I should mention that both John L. Lombard, and myself, were really

surprised to see that you had printed some of our letters to you. It gives one a rather strange feeling to read something he has written; especially in a newspaper with the circulation as your (the Natives) paper has. Let us hope that what was said has been constructive for others.

In response to a letter of mine that you printed, I heard from a young lady that I met briefly in Anchorage over 20 years ago. She is Miss Donna Miller McAlpine, and is involved in getting the ACT explained, inter alia, in terms that just plain old people can understand. As it is, only the legally trained people can really understand all the legalese of the ACT. And they have a hard time of it themselves I would imagine. The power of the pen is mighty indeed. . .

With hopes of hearing from you I remain

Very truly yours,
William A. A. Tahl
(An Eskimo)

HE WON'T PAY

December 11, 1973

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mitch Demientieff
President
Tanana Chiefs Conference
102 Lacey
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

FROM: Tupou L. Pulu
Acting Director
Native Language Programs
Re: Invoice for trip made by Allakaket students to Fairbanks
Your bookkeeper, Sandy Cummings, sent me an invoice requesting the payment of \$453.59 for bills charged to Tanana Chiefs Conference in connection with a recent trip to Fairbanks by Allakaket students. I would like to have you know that I have no intention of paying for the amount indicated by your bookkeeper. You see, my budget made no provision for board, room, visits to regional offices, etc. by bilingual students. I will, however, pay for transportation since Velma Simon, the bilingual instructor, was involved and money to cover such travels is available. Furthermore, I did commit myself, verbally, to furnishing the travel money so the trip would be possible when Mr. Bob Maguire mentioned the subject during my recent visit to Allakaket.

It was my understanding from a phone conversation with Velma Simon when the group arrived in Fairbanks that you were supposed to furnish housing, food (in addition to what they had brought), etc. Because you were sick on that Monday they arrived, I asked the University to bed and feed them that evening. I did not know they were going to reside there for a whole week! Anyway, upon talking to Eddie Bergman on Tuesday afternoon after I got there from here, he said, "Tanana Chiefs is taking care of everything." I did mention at that time, too, that we would take care of the transportation.

To have your bookkeeper send me the bills is rather surprising. Don't you think that it is only fair and square to have your agency, as well as mine, share equally in paying for the expenses incurred by our students from Allakaket? I am quite certain that the bills for transportation will be more than what you are asking me to pay for room and board. I trust, therefore, that you will pay for your own bills.

Sincerely,
Tupou L. Pulu