

Letters to the Tundra Times

Thanks from a winner:

Thomas Richards, Jr.
Tundra Times Editor
639 "I" Street
Anchorage, Ak 99501

Dear Tom:

Please accept my apology for being unable to attend the AFN Convention and, the subsequent Tundra Times Banquet to personally accept the Howard Rock Award.

I take this opportunity to thank you and the Tundra Times Board of Directors for the award.

Sincerely yours,
EBEN HOPSON, MAYOR
North Slope Borough

On Gates of the Arctic

S.R. Box 40127
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
November 14, 1979

It is apparent that the village of Wiseman has once again been prevented from the enjoyment of rights conferred upon other villages by the federal government. The violation of the human rights, civil rights, economic rights, and land rights with reference to the village of Wiseman should cease.

This is not my first attempt to inform you of the Wiseman situation, and it probably will not be the last.

I bid you good health.

Cordially,
Vernon F. Miller, aka Kalupsak
Chief, Village of Wiseman

Native court cases

November 7, 1979

Mr. Forrest Gerard
Assistant Secretary of the
Interior for Indian Affairs
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20242

Dear Mr. Gerard:

I have had experience involving members of my family and other Natives of Alaska which show there is a high degree of prejudice on the part of certain trial judges in the Alaska Court System against Alaska Natives. This results in Alaska Natives receiving excessive sentences and being denied fair trials in the Alaska Courts. This has also been investigated by newspaper reporters in Alaska and several different articles have been published commenting on these facts. In addition the Alaska Judicial Council has made an official investigation where they reported that certain judges were prejudiced against Natives but they refused to name the judges.

Under these circumstances, I officially request you to take the

steps necessary to remove Alaska from Section 280 state where criminal matters involving Natives are tried in the State Courts and to restore the prosecution of all Native defendants to the Federal Courts.

In this connection the same situation exists as to civil matters. In one case involving an 86 year old Interior Eskimo, he was denied the right to have a hearing and the State Court attempted to determine a question of right of way over his Native Allotment when the Federal Court had specifically found that the State Court had no jurisdiction to determine anything concerning the right of way in this case.

Both personally and on behalf of the other Interior Eskimos I request that you officially investigate these matters.

Sincerely yours,
JOHN HEFFLE
President, Association of
Interior Eskimos
SR Box 80740
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

College student writes

Dear Editor:

How well does a Native Alaskan student stand here at ACC or UAA? In almost every class there are at least one or two Native students. A student comes here to get a higher education and for the betterment of his or her Native community. Some are sent by members of the community to learn about accounting and management training, so that they can go back and use their abilities to help others.

Many of the students come to learn, but they face a problem of who is available to help with the class schedules and placement tests for the right courses. Let's look at some of the problems. What is the student looking for? What is his ambition? Those questions are asked many times when a student begins college.

The student will come to the city, maybe for the first time and see how different it is, from a small village where everyone knows who is who. In the city, things are very different. Who knows their next door neighbor? Fences are all over the city. Culture shock, impersonal people, each going their own way are the things the student must learn to deal with. If the student had a connection and had been given instructions for his or her travel, this student would be better off than the one who

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The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Mr. President:

At a time when you are most desperately trying to portray a high degree of credibility to your office, and because of the implications of adverse effects to your office caused by actions both within the United States and abroad, I feel that any action on your part to faithfully fulfill the obligations of your office are now appropriate.

I make reference to your Presidential Proclamation 4617, dated December 1978, creating the Gates of the Arctic National Monument. Paragraph 5 states in part, "The land withdrawn and reserved by this Proclamation for the protection of the biological, geological, archeological, historical, and other phenomena enumerate above supports now, as it has in the past, the unique subsistence culture of the local residents." Direct reference is made to the village of Wiseman in your Proclamation. The Proclamation in part also states, "The Secretary of the Interior shall promulgate such regulations of the opportunity to engage in a subsistence lifestyle by local residents."

Reference is hereby made to the Federal Register, Volume 44, No. 126, Thursday, June 28, 1979, "Proposed Rules: Specifically 13.74 Gates of the Arctic National Monument: a. Subsistence, i.e., Residential Zone. The following communities and areas are included within the resident zone for Gates of the Arctic National Monument: Alatna, Alakaket, Amber, Anaktuvuk, Bettles, Kobuk, Shungnak."

Letters



(Continued from page 2)

travels for the first time and does not know anything about the city. Who would the lost student call? Are the relatives here? Could they receive him with open arms, or would they treat him like a stranger? Those are the questions in one's mind, for I have asked those questions myself, for each time I travel anywhere, I wonder where I'll stay for the night.

Housing, also is a problem; a student would have to find a place to stay. "Money First" is always demanded! Today, housing and food as well are expensive for a student who has a limited income.

Loneliness also come, the yearning to go away from the noise of the city, to hunt, to trap, to eat Native food and to be with the family. A student gives up, goes home and life to him or her has changed. One trip away from home changes a person.

Why do Native Alaskan students from the bush villages have the highest rate of drop outs at Anchorage Community College as well as at University of Alaska, Anchorage? Why is it the

highest in Alaska? Those are the questions the colleges will have to find an answer to.

Yours truly;
(The name is withheld
by request.)

Editor's Note: Letters to the Tundra Times are most welcome. However, in the past few

weeks, we have received unsigned letters. Letters must be signed. If the writer requests his name to be withheld it will be, and his confidentiality will be respected. The Tundra Times reserves the right to edit letters which are excessively long or to edit or omit letters which are potentially libelous.

