

# Bethel Resident Criticizes Jacobs

Box 181  
Bethel, Alaska  
January 23, 1968

Dear Editor:

The Executive Director of Alaska Legal Services, William Jacobs, should have checked on the source of the few rumors he heard before calling them facts. His so called 'continuing battle' with the Bethel City Council should read as his battle with ignorance. There is a need for legal services in this area, however, no one wants to be convicted on the basis of malicious rumors as the City Council has been by Mr. Jacobs.

Does everyone who is interested in the Affairs of State have to go to Juneau this time of year? We are interested in our city. We also have confidence in our councilman, some of them have been elected for second and third terms. Every council has been a very fair representation of different interest groups in Bethel. If Mr. Jacobs had taken time to obtain a few facts he would know this. He also would know like everyone living in Bethel knows that the non-native voters definitely do not all vote for the same councilman as Mr. Jacobs infers.

There has always been a member who is able to act as interpreter if necessary. The agenda for the meetings is posted in advance. When extremely important or controversial issues are on the agenda, the meetings are held in both languages. All meetings could be held in both languages however, the need just isn't there most of the time. At times there have been over 500 voters for city elections, only three could not vote due to language. Consideration was given these three voters. Less than 1 per cent didn't seem to justify printing ballots in both languages.

Since Mr. Jacobs is not a Bethel voter, what authority does he have to initiate a referendum? Language is a minor problem. I hope the council will pass up Mr. Jacobs challenge and continue to challenge the problems which effect a much greater percentage of Bethel citizens such as: housing, sanitation, unemployment, health, education and especially the welfare of the young people.

As a result of many hundreds of hours of work by our councilman Bethel has a fine Special Education Program. Head Start has been a success. Our pre-maternal home has made it possible for expectant mothers to wait near the hospital preventing situations like the following (A young mother didn't want to come to Bethel and wait in a crowded house too long. She waited too long and died following delivery in her village) The city has built and maintained playgrounds and playground equipment. Last summer they hired a recreation director, a music teacher, a life guard for a favorite swimming hole and contributed to a water safety program. Plans are in the making for a new community building. The citizens have a right to be very proud of their council, it's goals and achievements.

Mr. Jacobs is twenty years behind the times. He does not deserve his seven word title or the support of our tax dollars. Legal Services was not created as a means of condemning the Bethel City Council and by so doing insulting every voter in Bethel on the basis of a few malicious rumors.

/s/ Marilyn Laroux