

## What others say...

### **Suggestions for Cowper**

To the editor:

Prior to the general election I came out in support of Steve Cowper for governor.

As I explained in a letter to the *Tundra Times*, I supported Mr. Cowper because I felt that he would be much better for the villages than his opponent.

I still feel this way. In conversations I had with Mr. Cowper, he agreed with me that the issue of Alaska Native village governments would be decided in the courts, and that the state should be relatively neutral in the matter.

I believe that when our current governor went to the villages to obtain their support for his election that he was asking for their trust. I believe that when the villages returned Mr. Cowper's pleas for support with their votes that they expected, and have a right to expect, that he will act in a manner which fosters their inherent right to survive.

I am beginning to worry a little about what is taking place. I realize that the governor has just assumed office, and besides attempting to get a grip on the problems he inherited he probably doesn't know everything that's going on within the bureaucracy.

I think that the governor should immediately take certain steps which would assure the villages that he is taking their concerns seriously. The following actions would go a long way towards this goal.

1. Appoint members to the Boards of Fisheries and Game who are subsistence oriented. Commercial and sport interests have for too long dominated the joint boards at the expense of that most important of cultural and nutritional uses, subsistence.

2. It's no secret that John Katz, the state's man in Washington, has been writing memos and letters to Interior for years opposing recognition of traditional and IRA Native governments in Alaska and opposing any

federal action which the state (or John Katz) saw as fostering sovereignty, limited or otherwise.

The only secret is whether Mr. Katz initiated these actions on his own, independent of the governor. Whatever the case, it is time for our new governor to call him off and take direct responsibility for the state's position on this matter.

3. The state, using one example, sided against the village of Klukwan in a case regarding the ownership of art works which are held to be of extreme cultural value to the village. The state intervened by submitting a brief to the court favoring individual rights to sell the art in question to a Seattle art dealer over the village's right to exercise its inherent right to keep in the village that which belongs to the village.

Like other non-secrets, the reason for this action is that if the village wins, the state perceives this to be a step in the direction of sovereignty. Withdrawing from this case and not pursuing similar actions would be the honorable action to take.

Steve Cowper is starting out fresh and has no need to be saddled with the mistakes of past administrations. By taking the above actions he would be sincerely thanking the villages for the support they gave him and which swung the election in his favor. He would also be doing what is right, not expedient.

On a final note, I wish our new governor well and pray that he turns to the Alaska Native community for support and guidance. Our people have much to teach.

Perhaps an elder from each Native region could be chosen from the villages of that region to make up a sort of Native council to the governor. The combined wisdom of our elders would be a powerful asset for the good of Alaska. It couldn't hurt.

Sincerely,  
Paul Swetsof  
Anchorage

### **Support for servicemen**

To the editor:

Isn't it time the Downtown business establishment ends the double standard in which servicemen are treated like ordinary tourists on an extended visit to the Last Frontier?

Nobody but the Armed Forces YM-CA gives them any special consideration. Nobody in business thinks any more to give any kind of discount to soldiers and airmen; and when the novelty of sailors on Anchorage streets wears off, the same indifference will surely set in.

I was born after the great outflow of patriotism that fueled American war efforts after Pearl Harbor ran its

course.

Is the post-traumatic stress syndrome of the post-Vietnam era in force Downtown and accentuated by greed reminiscent of the days when the Trans-Alaska Pipeline's construction paced the streets with greenback dollars ready for plucking? I hope not.

How many Elmendorf, Ft. Richardson, and National Guard servicemen on Brim Frost assignment have received dinner invitations from local residents? Is it time to start making amends?

Donald S. Mulder  
Chugiak