

"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." - Voltaire

LETTERS to EDITOR

Barrow
Monday, 18 March 68

Editor
The Tundra Times
Box 1287
Fairbanks, Alaska

Dear Sir,
I know who doesn't want a legal sale of liquor here: those who are bootlegging it. A legal sale would cost the natives 1/2 of what they now pay. Why do they pay such prices? Why don't they order their own shipment flown in? They make no plans to drink. When they find themselves with the price, they want it NOW. Thus, they will pay anything for instant service. The bootleggers have known this for years; and they have cashed in on it handsomely. A liquor store in town would break that racket forthwith. It will be interesting to check out who really profits—directly and indirectly, all along the line—from this doubling the price on the Eskimos.

(Name Withheld.)

**Reader Pens Poem
About Current
Subject: Pollution**

Box 582
College, Alaska
99701

Dear Howard,
Now that pollution of water is a topic of discussion in the great gassy chambers of the legislature in Juneau here is a poem I hope you think might fit the current problems of ice fog, pulp mills, atomic fallout, and our unsanitary sewage systems we all enjoy so much. Also hope it fits in with the current thinking on the economy of the bush, namely a money economy with the implicit threat of work routine another blessing we of European descent unfaithfully thrill to.

*A Paean to Progress
Hail America—
Place Europeans have
come to, to seek.
Find a raw wilderness—
empty, and timeless.
They dump in raw sewage
And the seven day reek.
Amen.
—JUDE HENZLER*

**Doctor Pays Moving
Tribute to Bob Baker**

March 15, 1968

Dear Mr. Rock:
The unfortunate death of Bob Baker, an excellent bush pilot and fine personal friend, brings to mind again how important men with his skills and judgment are to the work of the U. S. Public Health Service in Alaska. Without them, our doctors, nurses, field sanitarians and engineers—all our health workers—would not be able to carry out the program of the Alaska Native Health Area.

We rely heavily on Alaska's pilots to bring seriously ill people to the hospitals and to take medical and health care to the villages.

I was assigned to work in Kotzebue in 1959 and came back to serve again in 1964-66. I always liked to fly with Bob and when he didn't want to fly, neither would I.

The humanitarian impulse among these men is strong and we went with some risk. Whether the situation warranted taking a little more risk was left to the good judgment of a capable pilot. I never recall in all my experience with Bob, or any other bush pilot, that we would intentionally push to go on a mission when it was against his better judgment. Bob knew that losing two or three more—pilot, doctor and nurse—would only cause more severe difficulties.

Since 1959, many things have improved air travel in Alaska—equipment in both aircraft and radio, navigation aids and just the basic air strips themselves which were few and far between a decade ago. But through this whole development, Bob remained a "conservative" pilot, knowledgeable, alert and conscientious about himself and maintenance of his aircraft. I just expected him to be flying forever. We'll probably never know exactly what happened at Savoonga, but I would have trusted my life to Bob just as our nurse, Mary Hayes, did this time.

Words are seldom adequate instruments for expressing the kind of gratitude PHS field personnel feel for these men. But this occasion seems an appropriate one to try to pay deserved tribute to them all, and especially now, to Bob's memory.

Sincerely yours,
Charles H. Neilson, M.D.
Senior Surgeon
Deputy Alaska Native
Health Area Director

**Were Rights Bought?—
Aleut Scores Criticism
Of Natives on Claims**

March 11, 1968

Dear Editor:
Before I go on, I want to make it clear that this letter is mainly based on my personal feelings. You and many others may not agree with a word I say, but as an American citizen I will take full advantage of my rights to say what I think.

I am an Alaskan born Native and so are my parents and their parents. My people were well known as Aleuts way back in history and today we are recognized as Natives of Alaska, and there is evidence that we Natives were on this land long before the Russians set sail for Alaska.

After Alaska was purchased from Russia, we Natives became full American citizens, did we not?

Are there any documents in our government saying that our rights from this land were also bought? If not, that is why we are fighting for our rights, and we are not forbidding any American citizen from our land regardless of their race, and yet the Natives are being criticized for their land claims, and you name the rest, just because we are trying to protect our own rights.

What about the foreigners that are slowly moving in to our home land, the Japanese and Koreans. Why don't somebody do something to keep the foreigners away? Let us Natives be, we are American citizens and this great land of Alaska is our home, that is why we too serve in our Armed Forces, to help protect our Constitution, our laws, and further more our Freedom.

Today, we have a son in the Armed Forces serving his country and from this same village we have young men over in Viet Nam needlessly facing certain death right at this moment. There are great many people that are against the war in Viet Nam, and what are these people doing to stop it? Don't they realize that we are already involved in a war with no end in sight? Starting from the top, our Armed Forces right down to the individual who is personally fighting his own war in order to survive? This is what we Natives are taking part in, too.

What do our land rights have to do with some individual's ancestors that came to America on the Mayflower? The Mayflower did not land in Alaska, it was the Pilgrims that came to America on the Mayflower and history tells us the Pilgrims went ashore in a cove already known on the chart of Captain John Smith as Plymouth. They are said to have stepped from the boat to a large boulder, the only one in sight. It is known as Plymouth Rock.

Who helped these people to survive when they reached America? The Natives of course. Don't some of these people have enough sense to go back a little in history to find out that it was the Natives that made it possible for them to have a little Native blood in them today? Lucky for them, we may share our riches with them one day.

Sincerely,
Walter Simeonoff, Sr.