

letters

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Support for Wally Hickel

Dear Editor:

I am writing this letter to express my support for Wally Hickel, who is now running for governor. I have not come to the decision to support Wally lightly. I have spent my best years in Alaska, and I know her people.

I am an environmentalist... not of the "posey sniffing" variety, as Joe Vogler would call them, but of the people family. From the viewpoint of a long-time Alaskan concerned about our environment, I think we need to add another name to the Endangered Species List...the Eskimo and his unique Arctic lifestyle.

I have whaled four seasons with the Barrow Eskimos, and I know what he must do so that he, his family, and others may live. Some "do-gooding" Outsiders would tell us they know what is right for the good of the people. Unfortunately, they DON'T understand (and maybe don't even care) that we must consider the needs of the Indian and the Eskimo, as well as those of the White. Proof is the world-wide issue—"stop Eskimo whaling!"

It is ironic that weaker people have legislative power over a race that for untold centuries had existed under conditions unknown to mankind elsewhere. The great contrast should be obvious. Even our often times over-glorified Arctic explorers could never have reached their goals without the dependable daily aid of the Eskimo.

My interest in the Eskimo is as it has always been. I, too, would have never made it in the Arctic without the help of my friends up there. I have lived with the Eskimo on land, sea, and ice. I have spent the most colorful times of my life in the Arctic with these people. All around me were energetic and peaceful, humorous, honest and home-loving human beings.

The White man's commercial exploitation of the Bowhead whale has brought that species dangerously close to extinction and has destroyed much of the Eskimo's aboriginal livelihood.

The Eskimo needs a man in Juneau who is dedicated to the perpetuation of the Eskimo's natural way of living. That man is Wally Hickel! I strongly feel that we need his capabilities and human qualities now more than ever. Wally Hickel, more than any other candidate for our state's highest office, understands that the unique relationship between Alaska's natural conditions and her people make up Alaska's environment. I know that he will continue to support the Eskimo and his lifestyle. A lifestyle, I might add, from which we could all learn.

The Eskimo wants to abide by the law. But, until the society with which he now lives understands the basic needs of his culture, what has always happened will continue...FOR HUNGER KNOWS NO LAW.

C. Heurlin

On Indian treaty meet

Dear Editor:

Many Alaskan Natives were worried about the Native American Treaties and Rights Organization and how it might take away our resources and weaken the voices of the National Congress of American Indians and the National Tribal Chairman's Association. We

need not worry as the Conference at Windowrock turned into a very exciting and productive meeting.

Mike Swensen of our KANA Board and I attended from our region and Clifford Black, who had been appointed to the Steering Committee, attended on behalf of our regional corporations. It seemed that many in attendance shared our concerns and Mr. Black felt so strongly about the possible division of resources that he drafted a lengthy resolution. It was that resolution that turned the meeting around and put it on a positive track.

It should be noted here that Mr. Peter McDonald, chairman of the Navajo Nation, called the meeting out of deep concern. He felt that the "Backlash" against our Indian and Alaskan Native people was not being addressed at the level of commitment that it should be addressed. If it were not for leaders like Chairman McDonald, we would not have had the conference and would not have put together the organization that now exists. Between him and Mr. Black, the NATRO Conference accomplished something that had never happened in the history of American Indian Affairs. It brought together all National and International Indian and Alaskan Native Organizations and included the Hawaiian Coalition.

Mr. Black's resolution named all the Aboriginal American organizations and the resolution decreed that they would each place a member on a National Steering Committee, which would form a Trust Fund and develop strategy together and form a line of defense in a united effort to combat the "Backlash" being experienced by our people.

Benny Atencio said in his presentation, "This is the first time I have seen all of our Indian Organizations sitting together and working together toward a common goal." Those words very well summarize what happened at the NATRO Conference. Even though Mr. Black's resolution eliminated the NATRO organization, it placed into being a strong Steering Committee that represents all Aboriginal American Organizations and strengthened the NCIO and NTCA in the process.

Sincerely,
Frank R. Peterson

Comments on Other Village

Dear Editor:

I would like to thank Harold Sparck very much for his series of articles entitled, "Why Technology has Fared Poorly in the Bush." They should be required reading for everyone from the Secretary of the Interior to village council representatives in the bush.

I travel the Doyon Region villages with the Adult Basic Education Program and have noted the same trends in almost all of the villages. That is, the increasing dependency relationship with the outside world, one which is quickly threatening the once vibrant village life style with either total extinction or at the least an insidious aura of helplessness and despair.

Recently, I ran across a particularly flagrant example of the above that caused me both alarm and a certain amount of depression.

I was in to Venetie for a couple of days and heard that a \$3½ million "airport" was going to be built there, and that the contract had already been signed to extend the existent runway to two miles, then to pave and fully light it according to F.A.A. specifications.

For this, the village was to allow unlimited use of the airstrip for ten years.

I also watched as village men were building 40-by-40-foot log houses with local logs that measured between 3 and 5 inches on the thin end—houses that would eventually have to be heated by oil stoves. Oil-powered electricity was also being considered for the village, and the large houses would be fully wired to take maximum advantage of this new service.

There are many other things I observed that are slating Venetie for near total reliance on the outside world. This, coupled with the fact that Venetie, being an ex-reservation village, does not receive any money from the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act. So, the question is, how does the village pay its bills, especially ones related to the consumption of fossil fuels which are increasing in cost everyday?

And what connection, I am wondering, might there be between the new super airport in Venetie (which could handle C-130 hercs with such facility) and the new dependency relationship being established there? Will an offer from some transnational mineral corporation be forthcoming?

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Frank J. Keim

On Hammond's campaign

Dear Editor:

During the 1974 gubernatorial campaign, Jay Hammond took strong issue with Governor Egan for alleged use of state employees working in Egan's behalf.

It's amazing how the incumbent's attitude has apparently changed. It's no great secret that Hammond is running his reelection campaign with employees paid by our tax dollars, using government offices, machinery and materials. This appears to me to be a violation of state election laws and a blatant abuse of taxpayer money.

To realize the magnitude of what is going on "behind closed doors" just add up the salaries being paid by the state's taxpayers to fund Hammond's campaign staff.

Campaign manager Bill McConkey is being paid over \$40,000 this year by the state. Bill Gordon, Fairbanks campaign coordinator receives \$47,904. Larry Holmstrom, who is handling the media for the campaign is being paid \$42,807 of our money. Scott Foster, Hammond's press secretary writes campaign press releases for \$44,496. Pete Carran shadows opposing candidates with a tape recorder at government expense. Then add in the secretaries, researchers and other staffers and their overhead.

I don't normally write letters to the editor, but this abuse is out of hand. One of these days there is going to be a John Dean or Jeb McGruder among them who will listen to his conscience and blow the whistle.

It would be appropriate for them all to resign their state jobs and go on the governor's campaign committee payroll. Regardless of their action, we can still vote the whole bunch out of office in August 1978.

Lee E. Fisher



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