

more letters...

Youths confused; AAWM, KKK are threats...

To the Editor:

If you want to see the effects of **FORCED ASSIMILATION** in the public schools and the Public Safety Office (P.S.O.), you should spend a few days in jail where you will see a generation of young people in their 20's and 30's who are confused, disoriented, and alienated from themselves, their community, and their culture... For this generation, at least, the "rules" (values) have been changed in the middle of the "game" (their lifetime) and they are learning the new "rules" of the dominant culture by trial and error, not ever understanding the changes that have been "forced" upon them by the schools and P.S.O.

In their pre-teens, there were a few white school teachers who lived in a "walled city" called B.I.A. housing which was forbidden to them (and our public school teachers still live there in isolation from the community) and there were one or two Native police officers to "patrol" the entire community which they did

very well with the help of the Mother's Club, parents, grandparents, etc. Suddenly, with little or no honest advance warning, in their teen years, the school has become the domain of a minority of white and non-Native students and teachers and there are 15 or 20 "big city" cops, all taniks, who are "strongarming" and "head-busting" the Native people for behavior that was acceptable only yesterday!!! And, these cops, with rare exceptions, never interact with Native people in their off-duty time, as per department policy, and, like most non-Natives working in Barrow, merely exist until they can get out of town for rest, recreation, recovery, and visit their real homes in the "south"...

No one (certainly not the school district nor the P.S.O.) has ever made a sincere attempt to help this critical generation understand nor adjust to this sudden change in their lives. The school district demands "lock-step" education like they practice in Texas, the P.S.O. selectively

enforces the laws according to the P.S.O. director whom you never see in the community after 5 p.m., and the village elders and community leaders trusted the new comers to do the right things who are "bent" on destroying this culture and who have no compassion for, nor understanding of, the people they came to "serve"...

In fact, the public schools and public safety department have become the number one "enemy" of the Inupiaq culture for this generation, in particular, and are, literally, "at war" with them...

Will this Inupiaq culture survive or will you join the 150 North American Indian Tribes and Hawaiians who have been "sacrificed" by the dominant culture in the name of progress, capitalism, and/or religion?!

One culture and values need not be destroyed so another can live...Differing cultures and values can prosper in harmony if we all understand and work at it. And, the so-called dominant culture has much more to gain

and learn from the Inupiaq Culture than we can offer the Inupiaq people...In the Lower 48, our prisons are full to overflowing so that real criminals go free; our mental institutions are crowded; we care little for our elders; our streets are unsafe; our public schools are failing to teach; crime and violence are rampant in our cities; homosexuals are controlling cities; we have an alarming number of alcohol and drug abusers; unemployment, corruption, pollution, and ad nauseum....

How can we say to the Inupiaq people that "we have a better way than they? How can we honestly sell our corrupt and "immature" culture to a people that have been around for thousands of years? Does money buy human lives as well as all other products?

I would like to hear from people in the Cordova, Bethel, and Fairbanks communities. Please call 852-7280 collect or write to:

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To the Editor:

This is in reply to your "Task force hears two sides" article (December 24, 1984) in the Tundra Times.

To start, my children are half Inupiat and half white, white on my side. I would like to see them when they are older with the feeling of the land that born them and their ancestors, and giving whites most of the control is not the way.

It has only been a few years ago that they started living the white man's way if you consider the length of time both cultures have been around. If you look at the Lower 48 you can see what has happen to the land the government just started forcing people to clean up after them. I believe the Eskimos and Indians can make the land productive with industries and still keep the umbilical cord that ties them to the land which the white man has lost a long time ago.

The AAWM (Alaska Association of White Men) I think is soft lettering for the KKK. I'm not anti-white I just think with all of our intelligence we should have treated the Eskimo's and Indian's like the mountain men did, they knew and understood the land and people, and gained thier trust, to open this land for the pilgrams that didn't take the time to open their eyes to the rights of people who were their first. Now the white man knows how it feels to yell for rights like the Indian's did for so many years. Some people say its carma, some say its a come back, some say its about time. (Name withheld, Ed.)

Education keeps fighting on

To the Editor:

I would like to add my three cents worth to Dennis Demmert's article on the Special Relationship between the U.S. Government and Native Americans living in the U.S.A.

This relationship is to me so evidently founded in American legal tradition as to be indisputable to those who have been exposed to it. The problem is, as he points out, very few people in Alaska, most especially non-Natives, have ever even heard of the Special Relationship, a grim reminder of the priorities of our educational system--from the institutions that prepares teachers and administrators to the schools themselves, even those with 100% Native American student populations.

For many years this will remain a very special challenge for Native educators and parents in Alaska.

As a teacher who is doing my own level best to spread the word in a small rural high school on the Bering coast, I can only say what a one time friend of mine kept telling me in Bolivia many years ago, "Sigue con la lucha, sigue con la lucha! (Keep on fighting, keep on fighting!)"

Sincerely,
Frank J. Keim
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