

A Blue-Ribbon Hooray

Late last week a high-powered group of well-known and important Alaskans stood up for a lifestyle that most of them have never known personally or participated in regularly.

These well-knowns included some of the many recognizable Native "leaders" who have made it their duty to protect this lifestyle, but most were people who have little to gain directly and in some cases much to lose politically for their stand.

Their stand? Opposing the Nov. 4 Initiative to get rid of the subsistence law in this state. There are many areas of this state in which a politician who supports the subsistence law has a lot to lose. Most notably Anchorage and Fairbanks, where hotbeds of anti-subsistence feelings reside.

Yet these people signed their good names to join a Blue Ribbon panel of people who favor maintaining subsistence. It is easy for us to sit back and favor subsistence because, for many of us, it is our lifestyle. But not for the people who lent their names.

For Sen. Vic Fischer and Rep. Arliss Sturgeluski, such a stand could be politically harmful. Yet they made it and we applaud them for it. There are many who will say one thing to one group and another thing to another or make statements that nobody can understand so they don't have to get in trouble at the polls.

We thank the men and women who have put their names where their beliefs lie. And now we have some questions.

What have *you* done? Out there, you who have the most to lose if this initiative passes? Have you contributed to the Alaskans for Sensible Fish and Game Management drive to keep the law on the books?

Have you talked about this issue with your friends and neighbors so they know that on Nov. 4 they should vote "NO" on Ballot measure 7?

Have you sponsored a fund raising event? Have you walked for subsistence?

Now, we ask you, what have your regional and village corporations done? Have you asked your directors what they have done for subsistence? Those corporations are *your* corporations and they are not representing you if they haven't helped the drive.

If you get unsatisfactory answers from your corporation, you should start shouting about it.

NANA has organized a massive voter registration drive. Sealaska has developed a slide show on subsistence to show at community information meetings.

Tanana Chiefs Conference will man a booth on subsistence at the Tanana State Fair.

Doyon Ltd. and TCC meet regularly to come up with ideas for fundraisers and voter registration drives to ensure the common goal of defeating the initiative.

The North Slope Borough will put out an information booklet on the issue soon.

If you want to know what you can do, start a raffle, hold a community feast for subsistence, have your bingo hall donate the proceeds of one night to subsistence.

Then, make ~~use~~ you have registered, make sure you are aware of the issues and make sure you vote "NO" on Nov. 4.