

Letters to the Editor

Angoon, Alaska
January 19, 1970

Dear Editor:

This is in response to "Mrs. Disgusted" which appeared on the front page of January 2nd Tundra Times issue. I am sure I will not be the only "Lazy, Dirty Indian" that will respond to "Mrs. Disgusted" mud slinging, but I would like to voice my personal feelings in regards to the "Mud Slinger."

A lowly worm is the only creature that I know of that is afraid to stick its head above the ground. Now why, for God's sake didn't "Mrs. Disgusted" have the decency to sign her giving name to the mud slinging? Is she, by any chance afraid of being scalped? If she is so courageous and feels she is doing justice to humanity, she should by all means make herself known, so we would know just what kind of person would be so low as to throw mud like she did as she was crawling out of her earthly hole.

If "Mrs. Disgusted" considers herself a decent person, she is far from what Mr. Webster defines as decent. She is probably one of those house wives who hires lazy, dirty natives to clean up her mess in her house and pay for same with the money her husband sweated for.

The Russians and Canadians paid us with peanuts, but old Uncle Sam got hoggish, and we

are only trying to get a portion of it back, like we say among our people, "white mans style," by sitting down and negotiating for a just settlement for what was taken from us.

A Lazy Native could be trained not to be, and he could be washed and cleaned a lot faster, but pray tell, how do you cleanse a dirty mind and mouth such as Mrs. Disgusted?

Some day a "Lazy, Dirty Native" may be her life savior, I pray he would be a nice one, for her sake.

Sign me a "Lazy, Dirty Indian," who learned and washed.

Sincerely yours,
/s/ Danny Johnson

Nulato, Alaska
January 18, 1970

Dear Friend Mr. Howard Rock the Editor:

I want to let you know that I am forced to throw my hat and my gray hair into the Democratic bucket in the primary in August.

Last fall they froze our land in our backyard. The culverts are still stacked up where the bridge across Mukluk Slough was supposed to be built by the BIA. That road goes to the airport. We can't get the grader across to clear the runway this spring.

They also froze two miles of road to our new site to the hill. We sure need that road to haul

wood this winter.

I'd like to know how someone one thousand miles away could freeze our land where we lived for century. That's the reason I want to run. Someone got to talk for this Yukon River in the interior.

I got 33 votes to start with—that's including my vote.

—Fred Stickman, Sr.

Governor Gets Letter on VISTA

January 23, 1970

Governor Keith H. Miller
State of Alaska
Office of the Governor
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Governor Miller:

You must be aware of what has been going on with the VISTA Program since the State Administration is the sponsor. Or are you?

VISTA concept is a very exciting idea but that is all it has been for the last five years. Just an idea on a piece of paper. Well, I don't think the Native people want this and will no longer tolerate with it. Something on a piece of paper does not do us any good unless that piece of paper is exercised.

The VISTA Program is a farce and should be stopped or changed immediately. The program has been used to abuse the people it supposedly represents. The program has a beautiful concept, "to help the people help themselves," but it has not done that. The program has only suppressed the people it represents.

Perhaps, the program has a wrong concept if the actions and deliberations of the administration speak for the real goals of the program. If this is correct, then be honest with me and tell me the real goals of this incredibly absurd program. A program that preaches to me about being self determined but will turn me off as soon as I say my desires. You can either change the concept of VISTA and be honest with us, or you can give us your blessings, support, and release your grip so that we may be able to deliberate our own destiny from the local level.

Let me give you one good example of how the program has gone against its purpose. July, 1969, the Village of Kongiganak requested that their volunteer, Blanche Andrews, be re-enrolled for another year and gave their reasons why they wanted her.

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The administration, since they say they have the prerogative, decided for Kongiganak that they did not need her any longer and said NO. This, and I say this with a straight face, I do not see as helping the Village of Kongiganak. This is turning off a self determined village.

I wonder if the Administration staff spend sleepless nights being bothered by their conscience for deciding for a village and a people they do not know from night to day. The story goes on. The actions and deliberations of the program reflect upon its sponsor. Governor Miller, is this the kind of program you advocate?

After numerous letters from the village and others, Mr. William Allen, VISTA Alaska Coordinator, came to the village on October 1 to make his decision whether the village of Kongiganak needed a volunteer. After two hours in the village he decided that the village does need Blanche Andrews. I am sure Mr. Allen did not learn in two hours about whether they needed her or not. In any case, I was happy he granted the village's wish because, after all, the village itself is the best judge and know their needs. And I assure you there are not very many villages who ask the retention of their volunteers. In many cases the village does not care less, and some villages are often happy to see the volunteers leave.

This, "I don't care less," attitude is obviously based on a number of reasons:

1. The volunteer does not care.
2. The volunteer does not have support and guidance.
3. The volunteer does not know what VISTA is.
4. The village has a vague understanding of the Program.
5. The village has no power in deciding who their volunteer will be and how long he stays in the village. etc., etc.

Yes, I think the VISTA Program is a disgrace and insult, a disgrace to your administration and should be changed immediately.

In my opinion, if the VISTA Program is going to be a program to help the people help themselves, it has to have local control. With local people being affected by the program having power to train, select, and administer the program.

You can probably understand that an Eskimo from Nunapitchuk would not accomplish anything in California if he went there as a VISTA Volunteer. This Eskimo may accomplish a little if he has the support and backing of the people in that community he serves, also from the administration. You can also understand that the people there in California would not support him unless the people in California understand the program and have the power to determine all policy decisions of the program. Yes! It is all understandable.

We all know actions speak louder than words, like money speaks louder than words too many times. Yes! We who have no dollars have no voice and even when we do speak we are not heard.

In conclusion, I request your assistance in turning over the administration of the program to the local people as quickly as possible. The local people know their needs and problems and, after all, you all say the villages are unique.

Sincerely yours,
Margaret Nick

cc: Tundra Times, Senator Mike Gravel; Senator Ted Stevens; Congressman Howard Pollock; Senator Ted Kennedy.