

letters

Rural education

Joy Knauf
403 5th Ave., Apt. D
Fairbanks, Alaska

Dear Editor:

As an outsider of four years coming from the perspective of the Ojibwe Nation, I notice a lot of Native Alaskans opinions on the state of education in rural and urban Alaska. The plight of education for Native Americans is universal. Our battle seems between the need for good quality education versus the prevention of our own assimilation through the education system into the dominant culture.

With the education system we have provided for our children now through state and BIA schools we are forced to change our language, our way of thinking, our values as Native people and assimilate or drop out of school.

For some, it's not hard to retain their Indian identity, as students; the real meaning of "being Indian" for them involves cultural and self-pride and strength to retain Native values and beliefs.

But for most, especially in urban schools where the entire administration and the majority of the student body is non-Indian and uninformed, uncaring, and prejudiced of Native students, there is a great identity problem. And the drop-out rate of Native students increases.

I am a member of the American Indian Movement chapter in St. Paul, Minnesota and a representative for the Federation of Indian Controlled Survival Schools; a project and outgrowth of AIM, but now a separate system.

As an Indian Alternative school to the present education system, the 16 schools formed under the Federation have lasted 10 years, longer than any Indian Alternative school.

Survival schools are unique in every way. For one, they are Indian controlled. The teachers are Indian, some certified, most not. The Director answers to no one but the Board of Directors. Funding comes from many different sources. We all have monies to fall back on in case JOM, bilingual or CETA monies fail us, as they do.

Our curriculum is organized by the tribe represented at the school. Our students learn "knowledge through cultural understanding," as we practice our beliefs and culture in ceremonies conducted at the schools. We are Indian, not only our skin but in our hearts.

As a survival school, we learn the skills that enable us to survive and exist in the world of the dominant culture as well as understanding the world in our own culture values.

I am becoming acquainted with the struggles of the Alaskan Native Education association; the struggles are the same "outside." This is why we took total control of our children's education.

I feel, by taking control of your children's education, and forming your own "survival school," the destruction of Native identity and assimilation could be elivated, and the quality of education is in your control, not the states or BIA's. This is Indian self-determination.

In brotherhood,
Joy Knauf

**Angoon's
corporation**

Angoon, Alaska
January 8, 1979

Dear Editor:

This letter is regarding an

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article printed in your newspaper — "Bennett elected to Board."

My name is Wally R. Frank, Sr., a board member who resigned from Kootznohoo. I'd like to say I did not resign because of battle for control of the corporation.

The battle lies with the seven who now control. There's no way in the world five or six members can get control from seven — that is crazy. I felt like I was being treated like a dog which is an old Indian saying, "Tlingit." Some people do treat dogs well but some good people don't either.

Our Legal Advisor stated that our annual meeting was not legal — because proxie cards were not mailed to many shareholders — a big mistake. No proxie cards were given out the last minute to override anyone else who may have given proxie cards. Also, they were trying to have my term expired one year before time — another mistake. This can happen once, maybe, but not two times.

All the secretary had to do was check the minutes of meetings. And also I was not sent notice of any of our meetings, which was wrong under our by-laws. The present administration is always putting down the past administration and patting themselves on the back. It looks like we're getting the corporation out of the red. Maybe, but we gave up assets worth about a million dollars. We gave up two good fishing boats for a great big loss. Bankers were forced to sell them — because we did not try to save them.

We were too busy playing basketball when we should have been working. Now we say the fishing venture was a good idea. We will go into it later? No way!

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Too many of our people already sold their Indian rights, permits. Permits were all we had to show that we were Indian fishermen. Now they're going — going to our white brothers.

I resigned also because of one who could do a real good job as a board member — Francis Willis. She was in charge of our oil station and made a big profit. Why? Because she was a good manager. Why did the board reject her? Four to seven? Maybe she knows too much.

I was real surprised because of the class relation of board members. I was real disappointed in our meeting. I went to two Sealaska shareholders meetings. The president and chairman of the board runs the meeting. Ours was run by the Secretary. Why. I don't know. It goes the same way with our regular meetings, too.

Last of all, I'd like to say Thank You to our Land Planner Sterling Bolima, who fought hard for our land. He sacrificed a lot, leaving his family always to go to Washington D.C. to get our Wilderness Act so we as Indian people can say "look at our lands," and know that we can still live off the land as our

(See OUR READERS, Page 5)

Letters to the Editor are invited and should be addressed to 639 T Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. The Tundra Times reserves the right to edit letters which are excessively long, and to edit or omit letters which may be considered libelous.

• Our readers write

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fathers, and grandfathers did.

When we win, credit goes to Mr. Bolima.

He will have given us more than money. He will have given us the right to be a Tlingit Indian. We can hunt and live off our land.

As Paul would say, "and now you heard the rest of the story."

Thank you.

Wally Frank, Sr.

Outside communication

January 8, 1979

Dear Editor:

I am writing in respects of hopefully obtaining your assistance in reference of fulfilling my request pertaining to publishing a small ad in your newspaper. I am presently incarcerated at the S.O.C.F., (Southern Ohio Correctional Facility) and have lost all forms of communication with the outside world.

I am at this time requesting with a sincere plea that you help me by printing a small ad in your newspaper, in hopes that some of your concerned readers will periodically write to brighten my grim days here in confinement.

I would like to hear from

people with a solid foundation that can relate on an intellectual as well as an understandable level. (It has been said that friends are only strangers that have not yet been encountered)

I would like to thank you in advance for any and all consideration afforded to me by you. THANK YOU. Write to me at Roy D. Donald, No. 150-710, Post Office Box 45699, Lucasville, Ohio, 45699.

I remain,
Sincerely,
Roy D. Donald

Seeking pen pal

S.A. (Tony) La Salandra
No. 144-410 Box 45699
Lucasville, Ohio 45699
January 5, 1979

Dear Editor:

I am a lonely young man who is in prison without family or friends and in desperate need of free world communications. At 30 years of age, I'm much too young to remain emotionally stagnant.

In the three years I've been incarcerated, I have overcome drug addiction, earned a college degree, and totally reconstructed my personal values. Now that I realize the importance of relating to others, I have no one with whom I can share thoughts or ideas, and no one to care for. I

seek your assistance as a hopeful solution to my problem.

If you would publish a brief ad in your paper asking a few of your readers to write to me, I would be forever in your debt. I am interested in sincere people who can care and will answer every letter I receive. I am sorry but I cannot pay you, since I have no money at all. I only hope you will feel compassion for me and render me this service. I thank you for your time and consideration, and trust you will help me.

Graciously,
S.A. (Tony) La Salandra
No. 144-410 Box 45699
Lucasville, Ohio 45699