

What others say...

Republican pledge?

To the editor:

Why is there so much ado over the Republican Party Unity Pledge? For all intent and purposes, this pledge was drafted to prevent mudslinging among co-party members running for the same office in the primary, so that there will be peace and harmony thus unity within the party in facing the general.

When those offensive accusations, both misleading and slanderous were hurled by certain Republican gubernatorial contenders, that Republican Party Unity Pledge flew out of the window — the Republican Party Unity Pledge is now null and void.

Zola F. Strzelewicz
Anchorage

Spirit of friendship

To the editor:

During this past year there were articles in the newspaper about Copper Valley School. There were analytic views, critical views and retrospective views written by people who may never even seen nor experienced CVS.

I thought perhaps it is time for one of us to write and share with you and your readers a personal view of what happened then and what's happening now.

On August 23, 1986, there was a small gathering of people at the Copper Valley School site. Some of the people were alumni, former teachers, parents, nuns, benefactors and others from the surrounding community; those being observers of the comings, goings, happenings and changes of a small community. We had a reunion. There was no dress-up formal affair, no need for babysitters, no trouble, no structure to it at all. What we did have was a gathering of friends. There were no feelings of sadness as we walked through the ruins of what once was our school and home for the winter months. Archbishop Hurley was invited to celebrate the Breaking of Bread, observing Memorials and revitalizing a Spirit we all once shared.

Years ago we were a family, a fami-

ly of people who came from all over the State, Athabascans, Yu'piks, Inupiat, Tlingits, Anglos, people from varied and different backgrounds. We grew together as any family would; we had joyous times, troubled times, difficult times and great times. We welcomed new members, lost a few along the way and buried our dead. One of the purposes of the school was to develop leadership. Just as in any family, some have strengths in community leadership, some have gifts of caring and sharing. Some may never carry any banner, or feel the need to drum so loudly to invoke the recognition of all, yet have succeeded in keeping the Spirit of Our Family. We were a little unsure about that until we met and shared memories, prayed together, ate together, danced together and mused at the fact that we should see our children playing together. In all it was a great time. We will do it again. We don't feel the need to prove to anyone whether or not the school succeeded or failed. We have a Spirit of friendship, a sense of family and the knowledge that no one can ever take that away.

Sincerely,
Tiny Demientieff Devlin
Class of '64

Natives in Alaska first

To the editor:

A while back I recieved the following letter from Douglas C. Wallace, Ph.D. professor of biochemistry, Emory University School of Medicine, Atlanta, Georgia.

"Dear Mr. James:

I have enclosed several articles about tracing human origins using mitochondrial DNA variation. I have an intense interest in Alaska Indian populations. I would greatly appreciate assistance in being put into contact with individuals who could help me obtain blood samples from well defined Indian and Eskimo groups in Alaska. Also, I would be most appreciative of any support that could be obtained from Native corporations."

I read the enclosed articles: "Human Mitochondrial DNA Types in Two Israeli Populations — A Comparative Study at the DNA Level" and "Dramatic Founder Effects in American Mitochondrial DNAs."

Obviously, the articles were written to be read by other professors, and not by semi-civilized high school drop-

outs like me. After several readings, it did make sense. There is a tiny organism in human body cells which have their own genes, and these genes are distinct from the chromosomes of the human cell. They are mitochondria, and they make ATP, which serves as the fuel that cells use to carry out life's processes. They are passed from generation to generation only by mothers.

By studying the normal mutations of the mitochondria genes, a "family tree" can be constructed, tracing the ancestral roots of any peoples.

If I understand right, preliminary studies indicate that all American Indians were people in the Americas, maybe 40,000 years before all previous estimates (which would then make it about 55,000 years ago). I can understand why the professor needs help with funding for his research; few gussuks would want it to be known that we were here taking care of our Mother Earth while they were

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savages, climbing trees and throwing rocks at each other.

Yes, White Man, that's right, we were here first; and that makes you trespassers, law breakers and thieves. It also makes you liars because you savages call us primitives, but you don't see us taking land only to pollute it.

Yes, you have your fancy machines,

but at heart you're still in the trees. Let Mother Earth judge between you and us. Let Her say who is civilized and who are still savages.

I fully hope that our corporation will see fit to help professor Wallace, and I plan to "bug" our leaders until they do. It will certainly help in 1991, to be able to prove to the gussuks what they now deny.

Joseph James