

## • Letters

### Glacier Bay sludge

To the editor:

People that are traveling the many tour boats that now use the waters between Ketchikan, Sitka, Juneau, Skagway and Glacier Bay, come to see the large and varied bird life and marine mammal populations. These tourists also utilize our waters to fish for coho, king salmon, halibut and rockfish of various sorts. Lately on these tour boat paths, a thick sludge like non-oily material has been showing up. This waste contains, besides human waste, soap residue which has a tendency to de-oil birds that are feeding in this area. Whales, porpoises, seal and sea lions come to the surface into this sludge gillnet boats and nets are also fouled by this sludge that adheres to everything like glue.

Gray water waste is allowable to discharge in inland waters, but fishing vessel holding tanks are to be dumped outside three miles.

Some believe this occurrence is done to spite the Gillnet fleet. Whether this allegation is true or not, it does spite and impact the marine life including the fishes that are being caught for food fish.

The possibility that improperly treated sludge could be packing a disease is also real.

Let's hope that the culprit of such a large volume of discharge will find a better disposal site.

Ralph Guthrie  
Petersburg, Alaska

### Anerneq: Spirit, Soul, Breath

Dear Editor,

There are over 200 distinct Tribes in Alaska and AFN facilitated the coming together and expression of our cultures. The first steps in regaining our sovereign will were taken by

uniting us towards common causes and standing up to the forces that threaten our survival.

A void was created when the Natives of the Great Land were compelled to exclude their ways of living (culture). This void has made the Alaska Natives susceptible to alcohol, tobacco, and recently in the last 30 years, drugs. Alcohol, Tobacco, Guns, Knives, Cookware and Clothing were among the first items traded between the Natives of Alaska and the European and Russian peoples. Economic change through wholesale slaughter of Sea Mammals and trapping, all in conjunction with trade, altered our ways of living. A short time later, two other methods were used to change our ways of living as Alaskan Natives---Christianity and education.

The educational system in Alaska, from its beginning up to 30 years ago, deliberately set out to eradicate our languages. The heart, core, and spirit of a people was being remade in the image of European man. The early missionaries and educators effected change to Native Alaskans based on their European cultural traditions, and their perceptions of what is Biblical.

The Hebrews, a Shiite group of peoples (a non-European race), continues to have strong cultural values in maintaining their language, educational system and spiritual values. The Language of the Hebrews almost died out, has since been revived, and it is now the official Spoken Language of Israel. It is one of the oldest languages still in use. The 66 inspired books of the Christian Bible were written by various Hebrew people over a span of 1500 years.

Our Spirit (Anerneq) is created in the image of God (Anerneq tanqilria/the Holy Spirit), we have been given a sovereign will to choose for ourselves, no one has been given the right to choose for us, unless we surrender that right. This is a Biblical Theme. Addiction to alcohol, drugs, violence, tobacco, sex, any and

all addictions is a surrendering of the will, and the addiction becomes the Master.

A great number of our Elders are strong in their Christian beliefs. Healing deep seated wounds and seeking a reconciliation of our different ways of living is a must. Regaining our sovereign will by filling the void with both the new and old ways of living for our 200 or so Tribes can be done.

The Elders have the keys of unlocking our cultural past. They need to be given the chance and the opportunity to teach our young people the Alaskan Subsistence culture(s), food gathering/preparation, boat building, dancing/singing/art and hunting/survival skills. An important pre-requisite in reviving and learning our culture is to first learn our languages. The often harsh disciplinary measures used in the past the educational system to get our people to speak English were painful lessons of change. This pain continues to be an indwelling deterrent for a large number of our Elders, who in the long run, are our best teachers. There are psychological blocks, deeply ingrained pain, in many of our older people when it comes to teaching our languages to the younger people. A healing of the wounds, which are deeply embedded within the Spirit of our Elders, is the first step in reviving the original Alaskan Languages.

A traditional belief of our peoples is the Elders and youth are closest to the Creator. As the last set of Native dancers at the AFN convention prepared to perform, an Elder of the group prayed to dedicated the singing and dancing to the Lord. This dance group almost brought the house down with their performance, and many young children moved to the front to watch. In our house, we pray before eating. Entertainment and laughter is food for the spirit, with love and mercy as the main course.

Robert S. Keith  
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