

• More Letters

Heritage Park: offspring of studies

Dear Editor:

Perhaps this is kind of like flogging a dead horse. I read Paul Tiulana's response to my opinion article. Even though he has some poignant thoughts about educating Native youth, there is not that much responding to the points which I raised.

Your founding father, Mr. Howard Rock, began the legacy of the great search for a Native-oriented Arts and Cultural Organization. Mr. Rock was one of the commissioners for the Indian Arts and Crafts Board, had a chance to see the Institute of American Indian Arts in its formative years and began the processes of one feasibility study after another. So far many thousands have been spent on these studies. The Native Heritage Park is only a latter day off-spring of those studies. One operational organization from those 1970's *Tundra Times* efforts is the Fairbanks based Institute of Alaska Native Arts. Another was the Visual Arts Center of Alaska (until recently).

Other regions have been busy trying to institute a Native Heritage Park-type of cultural Native program. Seattle's Day Break Center, Hawaii's Polynesian Cultural Center, and there were a few attempts at Sitka and Nome. Many

have started out with a splash of public support and enthusiasm. But there is not one still operating with the verve and energy FROM the Native community. Why? Could it be that all of these are trying to escape the educational route? Paul is right. The educational systems are lacking in their obligations to deliver relevant Native courses. But is that a good reason to quit on them? Keep your eyes on these "culturally relevant" programs which dot the globe. The Western educational system and the Western governments are for these programs because it allows them to continue NOT delivering and keeps pointing at the Native cultures as objects to be 'visited' by paying customers. Mayor Fink endorses the Native Heritage Park because his office sees added activity in the Visitor's Bureau program. After Governor Hickel said in his campaigning that he would take care of the "Native problems," he began to say that there is only "one people" in Alaska — The majority.

Rather than continuing on this tit for tat argument with Paul; I highly admire him and think of his spirit and attitude as phenomenal, I think I would rather close by saying that we need to continue the fight for implementing Native cultural studies in the entire school systems of Alaska. We cannot continue to give the Western society ready-made excuses that they

do not need to be concerned with implementation of Native studies in the regular curriculum of K-12 and college levels. CIRI has itself dealt with its own culturally relevant no-profit organization by throwing out its earlier Native organization, Cook Inlet Native Association and drawing up a new one, CITC, which presumably operates in a more productive fashion than its predecessor. Native politics being what it is, this latest theme park ought to be an interesting little bee's nest however much it costs.

Sincerely yours,
Joe Senungetuk
Anchorage

End secrecy

Dear Editor:

Thank you for your coverage of the legacy of nuclear pollution in Alaska. Unless concerned citizens and the press keep interest and the dialogue alive on this important issue, it will die in the political quagmire of government commissions.

Federal agencies involved in Project Chariot sanctioned and then covered up the burial of unknown amounts of radioactive materials in Point Hope in a careless and illegal experiment attempting to determine the short term run-off of radioisotopes in an Arctic environment. At best, the experiment could be called bad science, even by the standards of the early 60's, at worst it would fit under the policy of "environmental racism" which has been our military and Dept. of Energy pattern in choosing which people get poisoned by nuclear bomb explosions. The Native people at Point Hope were put in the same league as the Marshall Islands people who were exposed to the radiation releases of the H-bomb tests of the early sixties and the Shoshone people whose land was taken with-

out permission or compensation for use as the nuclear weapons test site in Nevada.

I agree with Point Hope resident Jack Schafer there should be local control of the testing, monitoring, clean-up of the site(s) at Point Hope. We can expect only more cover-up and white wash if the Dept. of Energy and its representative Tom Gerusky are in control of the study.

I ran across the name of the Dept. of Energy's radiologist Tom Gerusky in the book *Killing Our Own: The Disaster of America's Experience and Atomic Radiation* written by Harvey Wasserman and Normal Solomon. Dr. Gerusky has a reputation of being in charge of inadequate environmental monitoring of nuclear industry and giving "misleading" testimony in regard to the investigations around radiation leaks at the Shippingport, Penn. nuclear reactor when he was the chief of that State's Dept. of Radiological Health, and the Three Mile Island nuclear catastrophe when he was head of the Penn. Bureau of Radiation Protection.

I've met personally with Alaska's Sen. Murkowski two months ago requesting the studies at Point Hope be handled like they were for the community of Ferland, Ohio and the people of Rongelap of the Marshall Islands where a parallel study of the radiological pollution was conducted by a group for independent researchers, scientists and toxicologists not under the control of the Federal government. I repeat my request now publicly that funding be allocated by the federal government and given directly to the Native village of Point Hope (tribal government) to be used as they see necessary. After learning that Dr. Gerusky is in charge, I feel my request for this indepen-

dent study is even more necessary.

Now is the time to end the dysfunctional pattern of secrecy and deception involved in America's nuclear war against her own peoples. It is sometimes useful to remind our elected leaders and representatives history does not look favorably upon those whom the public perceives to have been complicities with such cover-ups!

Sincerely,
Dennis Specht
Homer

Send souvenirs

Dear Editor:

I am a fifth grade student at Our Lady of Pompei School. This year in social studies, each student must select a state and research information about that state.

I became interested in Alaska, after listening to my grandfather tell me stories about his experiences on the Alaska Highway during World War II.

Please ask your readers to send me maps, brochures and post-cards I can include in a display at the end of the year.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,
Robert Vavonese
Our Lady of Pompei School
920 North McBride Street
Syracuse, New York 13208

Bumper sticker time

Dear Editor:

It's obvious to me now that Alaska is dying, finally succumbed to a virus known as "Outsiders". Alaska and her people have long been known for their independence, and rarely have these people cared about what the liberals residing in the bureaucracy infested lower 48 states thought about our actions. But now it seems the true Native Alaskans have been overpowered and this is a call to all real Alaskans to stand up for yourselves. If we allow foreign tourism companies, actors, bleeding hearts and liberal news weenies, all of which have no real investment in this state, to dictate the state policy or threaten boycott for any decision we (the state) have made, then we are truly lost. Lets break out those old bumper stickers and proclaim "We don't give a damn how they do it Outside," and get on with the life we enjoy, and if someone living Outside wants to oppose our actions, then fine, knock yourself out, but don't try telling Alaskans how to manage our state without first spending a few years living here and understanding this great state. Views and opinions from all Americans are appreciated and should be taken into consideration by our elected officials, however threats and angry fists should be ignored.

It's taken me 37 years of living in Alaska, but I can now relate to the plight of our Native community when Outsiders come in and start telling me what I can and can't do, without first understanding my environment and lifestyle.

Sincerely,
Mark Cooper
Dutch Harbor