

# Keep Mt. Edgecumbe open

To The Editor:

I was quite appalled at the offer made by U.S. Sen. Frank Murkowski to the AFN representatives concerning Mt. Edgecumbe. The U.S. government has a trust responsibility to keep Mt. Edgecumbe open because of our status as tribes.

There are federally recognized IRA and Tribal councils within the Native communities of Alaska. These Native leaders have to be consulted prior to any changes that are occurring and will effect our way of life.

Education is vital to the existence of our culture. Because of the Alaska Natives Claims Settlement Act, we must educate our people to insure success to Native profit corporations. Many of our leaders today were educated at Mt. Edgecumbe.

Mt. Edgecumbe is unique be-

cause of the difference in environment. The students are given responsibility to cope with the environment of a boarding home as opposed to that of their home. Not only do the students learn to cope with each other, they are provided with quality education to insure the individuals success in the future.

There are tribal councils established within the Native communities of Alaska. Some of these traditional councils are organized under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. Under the Indian-Self Determination Act of 1967, the tribal councils have the option to contract any services from the Department of Interior related to the Native Americans.

Education services provided by Bureau of Indian Affairs can be contracted by tribal councils

providing a Bureau operated school exists in that community. This is one opportunity for the local residents to have total control on the education of the Native children.

If the State of Alaska is contemplating to take over the Bureau-operated schools within Alaska, the federal government has the trust responsibility to follow the decisions of the tribal councils. If the State of Alaska recognizes the tribal councils, the tribal councils will have the right to educate their children with total local control.

Mt. Edgecumbe is a school developed especially for Natives and only the tribal leaders will have the decision to keep the school open, after the council consults their Native members.

Willie Kasayulie  
Akiachak, AK

# Study state before making decisions

To The Editor:

The following was sent to Secretary of the Interior James Watt.

I've been so engrossed with the budget slashing these days, I'm sorry to say I've lost sight of what's going on in the oil industry. Enclosed you will find sections of the Tundra Times, an Alaska-based newspaper.

This country has a history, of course, of ignoring the culture and heritage of its Native citizens. I suppose it's fatuous to think this administration might be any different, particularly in view of the fact that it has already demonstrated its indifference to minorities.

Before the decision-makers high-handedly come to conclusions about what's best for the country, it might be in order to learn a little about the people and the land most closely concerned with the impact of indiscriminate drilling. Just in case you think these are a bunch of ignorant peasants, take another

look.

There are people of education and breeding and background up there, some whose ancestors were there before most of ours were here, some who came from the South 48. The thing is, these latter consider themselves Alaskans too. It's a state of mind you pick up after you've been there a year or so.

Some of us think Alaska is a far better place to live than the South 49 — or 49, for that matter. I've been away from it for 14 years, but I left part of my heart there in 1967. I have two grandchildren there, one of whom is half Eskimo.

My son would have liked to be Native. His heritage is English, Scottish and French, and he was one-sixteenth American Indian. The State of Alaska thought enough of him to pass a special resolution, HCR 79 (1976), commending his services to Natives and other minorities.

If he were alive today, I know he would be angry and upset

about Washington's arrogance. I have neither Bill's knowledge nor his expertise, but I am adding my voice crying out to you from up there.

As the editor said, is three years' oil worth it, as set against the livelihood and way of life of people who have their ancestors, their own, and their descendants' lives to think about?

My own background is English and Scottish, from 1636 and 1685, which is probably a sort-of minority in itself these days. I'm one of those who believe in Alaska for Alaskans. Which is exactly what it might come to, if this administration continues to ignore its needs. There are times when the United States of Alaska sounds pretty good.

A former Alaskan,  
Margaret L. Johnston  
(Mother of Bill Vaudrin)  
Salem, Va.