

letters

Oil isn't all that

big a thing

Dear Editor:

Although I'm in favor of a petrochemical industry to help our fluctuating economy, I find it hard to get excited about it. These projects are a construction boom thing, like the DEW Line, Clear, Flood Control, Oil Pipeline and Gas Pipeline projects.

I would think it would be equally important to help out the troubled mining industry that built Alaska. Mining offers a more stable economy because it is an on-going thing that is labor intensive, owned and operated by people in the state that buy their supplies from local businesses.

Placer gold always has been a large contributor to Alaska's economy due to the popularity of gold nugget jewelry that is known the world over for its beauty. This large stable industry is due to the supply of Alaska placer gold. Some people would have us believe erroneously that the symbol of Alaska changed from its gold to oil, but one only has to talk to a few tourists to confirm that the symbol of Alaska still lies with the gold mining industry. Placer mining as a basis for the tourist industry in itself is better for the economy than construction projects.

How can you help this troubled industry? Get all the facts on the impact of big government, environmental groups, taxation, etc. Then make your feelings known. Next year will be an election year. Vote for candidates that believe in the free enterprise system operating under the laws of supply and demand rather than complete control by government regulations which cause so much inflation we can't afford the products anyway.

Sincerely yours,
Stan Rybachek
Placer gold miner

Has lots of friends

Dear Editor:

Each Christmas time I find myself thinking of the many people I've had the good fortune to come to know during the year. In a way, I think of it as a special Christmas present, for as I get older I realize that few things in life are more lasting in value than human contact and hopefully the resultant friendships and understanding.

I'm especially fortunate to have made many such contacts with many old Alaskan friends this past year. And as well added to that list this year were hundreds more: college students with whom I discussed economics, senior citizens who were attending elderly housing and pioneer home dedications, fellow Christians who joined me at prayer breakfasts, children at the Walk for Hope, whalers at Gambell and Barrow, and even a Fairbanks teamster who picketed the public forum there with a sign calling for my resignation.

Life teaches many things. One lesson I've learned is that friends need not always agree, and to disagree does not require one to be disagreeable. Friendly disputes can be far more productive. When I was younger, that fact was a bit difficult to understand, much less accept. Too often, I allowed opposition to my viewpoint to translate into unfriendly action. But that's a far too simplistic approach to human relationships. If I've learned anything with time's

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passage it's that it's well worth the effort to look beyond our differences and to seek out those areas of common interest. When we do that, much happens: we smile more, we're more relaxed, and petty pride takes a back seat to more important issues. Each day, no matter how hectic or filled with pressures, has its worthwhile moments thanks to the help and understanding and occasional misunderstandings of good friends.

So this Christmas, we in the Hammond family count among our gifts high hopes, good health, and fine friends from all parts of Alaska. And for all of these, we are most grateful to Him whose birth we now commemorate.

To all of you, we wish full measure of the same gifts, with the hope that in the new year such will serve to draw us all closer together in achieving a world in which there truly is peace on earth and good will toward all.

Sincerely,
Jay Hammond
Governor