

Courage, cooperation will nail bootleggers

Open Letter to Alaska Natives.

I am vividly aware of the numerous problems that face rural Alaskans and the tremendous toll bootlegging and illegal possession of alcohol and drugs takes on Native communities.

The Alaska State Troopers are very appreciative if villages that have put local option laws into effect, and for the individuals in the past that have assisted troopers in identifying bootleggers importing illegal alcohol and drugs into villages.

The local option laws are one of the most effective methods in reducing alcohol related problems, such as accidental death, assaults, child neglect and domestic violence. However, there are those individuals who would ignore the problems that alcohol brings to a village by importation and selling alcohol as well as other drugs for their own financial gains. The Troopers cannot enforce local option laws without your help. Your continued support in identifying suspected bootleggers is critical to law enforcement, as well as the personal protection and safety of all rural Alaskans.

For instance, throughout the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Region, state troopers, Village Public Safety

Officers, and the Association of Village Council Presidents have been very successful in identifying bootleggers. Through the Alcohol Reward Enforcement Program, troopers have and continue to receive numerous tips and call in reference to suspected bootlegging. Troopers make contact with people suspected of bootlegging at airports throughout the State where local options laws are in effect. The results are impressive, 80 to 90 percent of those tips have resulted in troopers seizing illegal alcohol and drugs intended for distribution and sale in local option villages. Callers providing information on suspected bootleggers remain anonymous and may receive a monetary reward if the tip leads to the arrest and conviction of bootleggers or drug dealers.

The villages of Mekoryuk, Toksook Bay, Nunapitchuk, Emmonak and Napaskiak have adopted the "Community Problem Solving Program" and formed Community Public Safety Teams. The results are impressive. Over a 12-month period there have been no alcohol related accidental deaths in these villages. There has been a 37 percent increase in calls for Trooper

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Operation BRRR a success!

Dear Editor,

On behalf of the AFN Sobriety Movement (AFNSM), I wish to thank everyone who made "Operation BRRR (Barrow Red Ribbon Reachout) - Body in Check, Mind in Control: Pulling Together for a Healthier Community" an astounding success!

On April 7th, I, in cooperation and in conjunction with several local, state and federal agencies, was in Barrow to participate in a community wide presentation on the merits of living drug-free. Among the agencies were: City Mayor's Office, Alaskans for Drug-Free Youth, Alaska National Guard, FBI, Alaska State Troopers, State Department of Corrections, Alaska Council on Prevention, United States Army, KIMO Channel 13, North Slope Celebration of Sober Life Movement, NSB Department of Public Safety, NSB Department of Health & Education, NSB School District and the Inupiat High School Dancers.

It is people and agencies like these who not only give the sobriety movement its momentum and purpose, but who add meaning and integrity to the ideology of what the Sobriety Movement is really all about.

"The collective efforts and activities on the part of individuals, families and communities, and every public and

private agency, effected by, concerned with, and working toward improving the quality of life through the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse."

AFN Sobriety Movement

While in Barrow, I highlighted AFNSM's mission, and borrowed the rich metaphoric values of the Inupiat Blanket Toss, an activity all too familiar among Barrow's residents. In summary, the Blanket Toss is a care-free interactive event based on creating a safe and stable environment using a marine mammal skin while thirty or more people surround and hold the blanket, pull on it in synchronized fashion, make it possible to toss one person into the air, much to the delight of the person being tossed. Underneath this case scenario, one can find and appreciate the following virtues in action: Unity, Trust, Respect, Cooperation and Harmony. These virtues are universal components, most of which are necessities to creating a community unimpaired by alcohol and drugs.

In a sense "Operation Brrr", in and of itself, was sort of a blanket toss. At least, i.e., in scope (agencies being the pullers, the audience and children being the tossees). It was planned and created to bring focus on the merits of living healthy, in a safe environment free from the dev-

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service, and bootlegging tips have risen sharply. In these villages

troopers have noted revived cooperation, changes in behavior, and improved attitudes that have

Operation BRRR . . .

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astating effect of alcohol and drugs. For what its worth, you cannot have a blanket toss all by yourself, it takes getting everyone involved: to have a community unimpaired by alcohol means everyone must have a hand in it.

Again, thanks everyone, especially the community of Barrow! You have single-

handedly exemplified "concrete evidence" that when alcohol consumption is reduced (even in the extreme sense) the social ills which accompany it also decrease. Keep on pulling, the next generation is watching.

Sincerely,

Greg L. Nothstine - "Tungwenuk"
AFNSM Coordinator

reached down to the youth, and throughout the schools and communities.

Stopping the illegal flow of drugs and alcohol can only be accomplished with the support of rural Alaskans who are willing to identify potential bootlegging suspects and work as a community standing together against drugs and alcohol. This support by the villages will allow troopers to enforce local option laws and help the villages maintain the safe lifestyle that they desire.

It has been very impressive to see several villages in Alaska take self-ini-

tiated action to determine the well-being of their communities. This confirms that village residents are taking responsibility for establishing accepted behavior in the spirit of self-determination. Supporting the Troopers and reporting bootleggers and drug dealers is of course only one part of dealing with this issue. Strong village leadership and village members working together to find solutions on all public safety issues is the real answer.

Guyana,

Colonel Glenn G. Godfrey
Director, Alaska State Troopers