

1991 and college should be combined

To the Editor:

In "College students too busy for 1991" (2/18/85) Hyslop concludes that a major problem shared by most students is "they are too busy with school to keep abreast of current events, with special focus on 1991."

I would like to bring attention to efforts made by the NANA corporation in this area, and options to learn about 1991 that weren't mentioned in the article.

For at least the past two years, NANA has sponsored student meetings and retreats with top executives to raise awareness of the

1991 issues we face, work on ways to deal with common student problems and build support in the student community. Most of the students in our region have attended the meetings, which not only give us a good background to discuss the issues, but allows us to meet and work together.

Since I've been attending an out-of-state university, there have been no opportunities to take a "1991 class" or even a class on the Land Claims Settlement. However, in both an ethics class and a public policy seminar, I've been able to write papers on stock

alienation and its implications.

There has been a lot of research done on the 1991 issues, and materials can be requested from the AFN or any Native Corporation. If you can set up interviews, do your own research!

School work and current issues aren't mutually exclusive and the sooner this is realized, the more students will benefit from getting an "education."

Julie Petro
Senior, Public Policy
Stanford University

Reader responds to DWI law

To Concerned Citizens of Alaska:

The State of Alaska and the recent legislation concerning DWI offenders is currently undergoing what I consider to be an extreme overreaction in the adjudication and enforcement of the new laws. The Scales of Justice have tipped radically in favor of punishment versus rehabilitation and restoration of the DWI offender.

With the advent of mandatory sentencing and the automatic suspension of driving privileges; the Court System might just as well install tape recorders in lieu of Judges except in cases involving accidents, injuries, and death.

I agree with and endorse punitive measures. These sanctions can and do act as a deterrent by forcing the social drinker to think of the consequences before drinking and driving. The serious problems do not reside in the controlled social drinker but rather, with the problem drinker and/or alcoholic.

The distinction between these two classes of drinkers borders on the metaphysical and therefore for purposes of brevity and expedience we should not become involved with definitions and descriptions. The symptoms are, however, easily identifiable: the inability to consistently exercise rational control over the amount of alcohol consumed regardless of the consequences or outcome.

The inability to control alcohol consumption is not a moral

weakness or simply a lack of willpower; it is, as evidenced by reams of scientific studies, a progressive disease.

The fact that alcohol consumption manifests as a disease in some individuals necessitates a program of treatment and rehabilitation. The current system of Justice orders various programs with the goal of rehabilitation at the offenders expense in most cases. Unfortunately, the DWI offender usually views this treatment as an inconvenient, unnecessary continuation of his punishment, even though the program could help the individual. This attitude stems from the fact that his driving privilege has been suspended for a period of 1 to 10 years or more. This often results in a loss of employment. Public transportation is very inadequate in Alaska and isn't a realistic alternative for many people.

Under these conditions attempts to rehabilitate become ineffective even if he stopped drinking. The end result of this situation is alienation and bitterness. The offender continues to drink and drive without a license resulting in multiple offenses and further legal sanctions.

Are there any alternatives or options to break this vicious circle? Sadly, the answer is no, but easily could be. The solution to this dilemma is the proverbial carrot and stick approach to motivation. I propose the concept

of a mutual contract between the offender and the law. This mutual agreement would enable the offenders to have their driving privileges reinstated provided that total abstinence would be adhered to. To ensure complete sobriety, an existing approved agency would administer the drug Anabuse or a similar substance on a regular basis. Anabuse causes extreme physical distress when alcohol is ingested thus preventing the individual from driving in an intoxicated state. The contract would provide that the State would be held harmless if any health problems arose due to the individual's consumption of alcohol.

In addition to the Anabuse treatment, the individual would be required to attend regular Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. This organization is wholly self-supporting and has proven to be the most effective method of obtaining long term sobriety for its members since its founding in 1935.

Noncompliance to this program would result in an automatic suspension of the offender's license and a bench warrant issued. The individuals who would choose not to participate in this program would be subject to the existing system of laws.

I realize that this proposal is by no means complete and flawless. (Continued on Page Twenty)

DWI offenders...

(Continued from Page Eight)

It requires amplification and clarification and, most important-

ly, immediate attention and introduction into the current system of law.

This program has the potential of being applied to offenders of other offenses that occur due to the abuse of alcohol.

I feel the benefits of this proposal would be immediately evident and create a means whereby long term sobriety could be achieved for many, vastly improving the quality of life for the individual and therefore, Alaska as a whole.

Gary Grimes
Anchorage, AK