

HB

523

(7)

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

Date Referred to Committee: February 19, 1996

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Judiciary

Date of Committee Action: 2/29/96

The HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES Committee considered:

HB 523

HOUSE BILL NO. 523

STATE'S POLICY ON SOBRIETY

"An Act expressing the state's policy with respect to sobriety."

recommends it be replaced with the following committee substitute [] the same title [] a new title

[] additional referral to Committee [] attached amendment(s)

ADOPTS: Letter of Intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S): (Dept) APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Dept/Date)

[] fiscal note(s) [] fiscal note(s)

[X] zero fiscal note(s) H+SS [] zero fiscal note(s)

Table with 5 columns: SIGNING WITH RECOMMENDATIONS, DP, DNP, NR, AM. Rows include signatures of Tom L. ... and others with checkmarks in the DP column.

CHAIR'S SIGNATURE [Signature]

STATE OF ALASKA



Executive Proclamation by *Tony Knowles, Governor*

Thousands of Alaskan citizens, as well as public and private agencies, lead or support the concept of sobriety: a positive, healthy, and productive way of life, free from the devastating effects of alcohol and drugs.

Citizens, organizations, and health agencies constitute what is known as the "sobriety movement" in Alaska who are dedicated to educating the public on the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse, and encourage and support those who live a life of sobriety.

In 1995, the Alaska State Legislature and the Administration recognized the important contributions and role the sobriety movement has in:

- (a) Improving the quality of life and health for individuals, families, and communities.
- (b) Reducing the incidence of alcohol and drug related crimes.
- (c) Reducing the burden on local, state, and federal governments to exhaust their resources on the symptoms and problems of substance abuse.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tony Knowles, Governor of the State of Alaska, do hereby proclaim March 1996, as:

Sobriety Awareness Month (SAM)

in Alaska, and urge all Alaskans and organizations to support the thousands of men, women, and children who are doing their part to improve the quality of life and health for themselves, families, and communities.

DATED: February 22, 1996



Done by _____

Tony Knowles

Tony Knowles, Governor
who has also authorized the seal
of the State of Alaska
to be affixed to this proclamation.

ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES, INC. SOBRIETY MOVEMENT

AFN/SM MISSION STATEMENT¹ :

The mission of AFN/SM is to encourage and support the growing sobriety movement in Alaska. It is based upon cherished and practiced spiritual values & traditional wisdom's of Alaska's Native people; supporting the collective efforts and activities of individuals, families and communities (public/private agencies), who exemplify, promote and benefit from the pursuit and practice of sobriety: a positive, healthy and productive way of life, free from the devastating effects of alcohol and drugs.

AFNSM GOALS:

1. To encourage and support alcohol-free and drug-free Native families;
2. To encourage the practice of traditional Native values and activities;
3. To cooperate and support existing groups working to promote sobriety among Alaska Natives;
4. To encourage the formation of sobriety groups in every Alaska Native community;
5. To encourage and support sober Alaska Native leaders and role models;
6. To be non-dependent upon local, state and federal grant subsidies.

SOBRIETY(Concept Definition²):

A Positive, Healthy and Productive *Way of Life*, Free from the Devastating Effects of Alcohol and Drugs.

SOBRIETY MOVEMENT (Concept Definition³):

The collective efforts on the part of individuals, families, and communities, and every public and private agency, effected by, concerned with, and working toward the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse; by example encourage, support and employ those who live a life of sobriety.

MERITS⁴ OF SOBRIETY:

(The ABC's of Sobriety)

- A) Improves the quality of life and health of individuals, families and communities;
- B) Reduces the incidence of alcohol and drug related crimes;
- C) Reduces the burden on government in exhausting its resources on the pervasive symptoms and problems caused by alcohol and drug abuse.

¹ August 1995

² May 1991

³ May 1995

⁴ February 1995

**DECLARATION
OF THE
ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES**

WHEREAS the enactment of local option laws by Alaska Native villages has not fully halted the importation and manufacturing of alcohol, even in those communities that have voted themselves dry; and,

WHEREAS state and local law enforcement agencies do not have the resources to fully stem the importation and manufacturing of alcohol in all the dry communities; and,

WHEREAS the abuse of alcohol in Alaska Native homes and communities continues to be the triggering factor in most accidents, assaults, homicides, and suicides; and,

WHEREAS statistical analyses by various state and federal agencies prove that the very presence of alcohol in a home or village significantly increases the likelihood of violence, injury, or death occurring there;

THE ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES THEREFORE DECLARES that alcohol and its abuse presents an intimate and imminent threat to the lives, health, and well-being of our children, families, and communities whenever and wherever it is found; and

IT FURTHER DECLARES that it shall be the policy of AFN to fully support the efforts of our village governments as they work to keep out and remove alcohol and other illicit drugs from within their jurisdictions, and to utilize every resource available to the statewide Native community to change any state or federal laws that may prevent them from protecting the lives and well-being of our people; and

IT FURTHER DECLARES THAT AFN and its membership will redouble their efforts in supporting and promoting **SOBRIETY** as a way of life for all our people.


Julie Kitka, President



October 10, 1994

AFN Sobriety Movement Charter Groups & Honor Societies*

1. Alaska Native Health Board
2. Alaska Statewide Native Youth Leadership Conference
3. Alaska Village Electric Co-operative
4. Ambler Advisory School Board
5. Anchorage Assembly
6. Arctic Slope Regional Corporation
7. Arctic Winter Games Corporation of Alaska (Team Alaska)
8. Anvil Mt. Correctional Center (Native Culture Club)
9. Alaskans for Drug-Free Youth Statewide Board
10. Bristol Bay Native Association
11. Bristol Bay Native Corporation
12. Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation
13. Central Council - Tlingit & Haida Tribes of Alaska
14. Partnership for a Health Community (Anch.)
15. Chilkoot Indian Association (IRA)
16. Cook Inlet Tribal Council
17. Cook Inlet Pre-Trial Facility (Native Culture Club)
18. Dillingham Beaver Round-Up Festival Association
19. Elim IRA Council
20. Eyak Tribal Council
21. The Eskimo-Indian-Aleut Publishing Co. (Tundra Times)
22. Fairbanks Native Association
23. Fairbanks Correctional Center
24. Golovin Native Corporation
25. Governor's Advisory Board on Alcohol & Other Drugs
26. Heartbeat Alaska
27. Highland Mt./Meadow Creek Correction Center (Native Culture Club)
28. Kawerak, Inc.
29. Kodiak Tribal Council
30. Ketchikan Correctional Center (Native Culture Club)

*Passed AFN/SM's Resolution "Draft" for become a Charter Group or Honor Society.

31. Levelock Village Council
32. Lemon Creek Correctional Center (Native Culture Club)
33. MTNT Limited
34. Maniilaq Association
35. National Family Partnership for Drug-Free Youth
36. NANA Regional Corporation
37. Nome Native Youth Leadership Council
38. Norton Sound Health Corporation
39. New Stuyakhok Traditional Council
40. North Slope Celebration of Sober Life Movement
41. Old Harbor Tribal Council
42. Ouzinkie Tribal Council
43. Pt. MacKenzie Rehabilitation Center (Native Culture Club)
44. Palmer Correctional Center (Native Culture Club)
45. Qinarmiut Corporation
46. Qawalangin - Tribe of Unalaska
47. Safe & Fear Free Environment (S.A.F.E.)
48. Sitka Natives for Sobriety (Alaska Native Brotherhood Camp #1)
49. Spirit Days, Incorporated
50. Sitka Alliance for Health
51. Shishmaref Sobriety Club
52. Spring Creek Correctional Center (Native Culture Club)
53. St. Paul Island High School Student Council
54. Tanana Chiefs Conference, Incorporated
55. Wildwood Correctional Center (Native Culture Club)
56. World Eskimo-Indian Olympics
57. Yukon-Kuskokwim Correctional Center (Native Culture Club)
58. Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation

THE IDITAPLEDGE

(I-did-a-pledge) FOR SOBRIETY

Taking into account the "special note" in the previous paragraph, the "Iditapledge" is not only, AFN/SM's largest annual fund-raiser, but it is a three point plan that:

1. Creates a meaningful opportunity for supporters to make a charitable contribution;
2. Mobilizes individuals, families and communities (AFN/SM Charter Groups-Honor Societies) to take joint ownership in a common solution to a problem;
3. Publicly identifies (measures), acknowledge and champion that percentage of our local and state population who lead, believe and support sobriety.

HOW IT WORKS

In lieu of the number of miles the signatures for sobriety are carried on the Iditarod trail (1,049), individuals and businesses can show their support by making monetary pledges calculated on the total mileage (e.g., 1cent per mile equals \$10.49; \$1per mile equals \$1,049.00, etc.). Hence the name, Iditapledge. Those interested in showing their support need only fill-in the pledge box below and send it in to AFN/SM office on or before March 31, 1996.

Contributions are tax deductible. The AFN/SM is a campaign component under the Alaska Federation of Natives Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, Federal ID #94-3123119. Please make and mail all contributions to:

AFN Sobriety Movement -or- AFN/SM
Attn: Col. Milton R. Cross, Treasurer
1577 C Street, Suite 201
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

YES! Please accept my/our tax deductible contribution in support and recognition of the thousands of men, women and children whose signatures are being carried on the Iditarod trail.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Cents or Dollars: _____ x 1,049 miles = _____

ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE INCEPTION

- Achieved first fiscal year of self-sufficiency, 3/31/95 to 2/1/96 (raised \$70,000)
- Traveled to over 80 communities in Alaska and Lower '48, gave well over 150 presentations at prevention seminars, conferences, community coalition meetings, and treatment staff retreats
- Collected a yearly average of 5,000 sobriety pledge signatures to be carried 1,049 miles to Nome, AK, in the sled of a drug-free musher
- Hosted two successful "sobriety dances during AFN Conventions '94 & '95 (raised +\$10,500)
- Submitted written public testimony in support of the Alaska Natives Commission Report at joint congressional hearings in Washington, DC.
- Traveled and spoke to over 1/3 of the Native population (+/- 1,000) on the merits of sobriety in all twelve of the state's prisons
- Helped to establish the month of March '95 & '96 as SOBRIETY AWARENESS MONTH (a.k.a. SAM)

PROUD BUSINESS CONTRIBUTORS TO THE AFN/SM's 1995/6 CAMPAIGN

Polar Bear (\$5,000 plus)	Exxon of Alaska
Cook Inlet Region, Inc.	Southcentral Foundation
Indian Health Service	
Raven (\$1,000 plus)	AK Village Electric Co-Op
Alognak Native Corp.	Anch. Comm. Partnership
AK State AFL/CIO (In-kind)	Bristol Bay Native Corp.
Arctic Slope Regional Corp.	Hickal Investment Co.
Downlowm Deli & Cafe	NANA Regional Corp.
Koniag, Inc.	SKW Eskimos, Inc.
National Bank of Alaska	
Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation	

Sea Lion (\$500 plus)	Bering Straits Native Corp.
AK Native Alcohol Recovery Ctr	First National Bank of Anch.
Cook Inlet Tribal Council	Livingston Stone, Inc.
Kawerak, Inc.	Norton Sound Health Corp.
Mellakalla Indian Community	
UIC Foundation, Inc.	

Caribou (\$250 plus)
Mr. & Mrs. Condon

Sealaska Corp.

Sea Otter (\$100 plus)
AK Fed. of Natives Staff
Alaska Sales and Service
Donald Dapceovich

AK Council on Prev. & Staff
AK Village Initiatives (In-kind)
Gold's Gym (In-kind)
Law Offices of Aileen Smith
Tundra Times (In-kind)

J.C. Panny (In-kind)
NSHC Recovery Center
Wilson Justin

Brochure compliments of Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc.

ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES

SOBRIETY* MOVEMENT



For more information contact:

AFN SOBRIETY MOVEMENT
Attn: Greg Nothstine, Coord.
1577 C Street, Suite 201
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
907-274-3611, Fax 907-276-7989

*Sobriety — A Positive, Healthy and Productive Way of Life.
Free From the Devastating Effects of Alcohol and Drugs



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SOBRIETY

(Concept Definition)

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(Concept Definition)

The collective effort on the part of individuals, families, and communities, and every public and private agency, effected by, concerned with, and working toward the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse; who by example encourage and support those who live a life of sobriety.

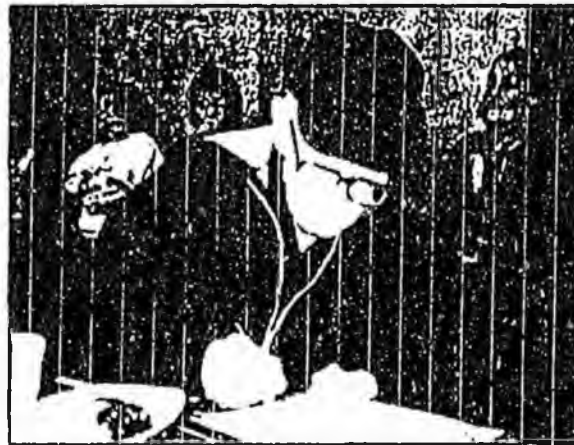
MERITS OF SOBRIETY

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Edger Noltnor, the last surviving Iditarod musher of the original Iditarod, is shown signing the sobriety pledge in Nulato.

Tundra Times Photo by Greg Nolthstine

THE SOBRIETY PLEDGE

As an Alaska Native or Concerned Individual, I do hereby claim the AFN Sobriety Movement's goals as my own (...). If we, Alaska Natives and Concerned Individuals, are to survive as healthy distinct nations, it will be because I took a stand against the elements which weaken and destroy our languages, our values and our spirits. If our spirits are to remain strong and sober, it has to begin somewhere. **LET IT BEGIN WITH ME!**

CHARTER GROUPS & HONOR SOCIETIES

Fifty-nine organizations or groups have passed resolutions in support of the AFN/SM. In whole, or in part, they have adopted or acknowledged the intent of AFN/SM's:

- Mission and Goals
- Concept Definitions & Merits
- Collect Sobriety Pledge Signatures*
- Host at least one sobriety festival in respective community, district or region

*Special Note: Collected signatures are put on microfilm, given to a drug-free dog sled musher, who, in ceremonial fashion carries the microfilm to Nome in the annual Iditarod Sled Dog Race. This is done in commemoration to the origin and history of the Iditarod, when vital serum was relayed to Nome by Alaska Native dog teams; which cured the diphtheria epidemic of the late 1920's. Symbolically, the signatures represent the serum of commitment needed to cure the pervasive and devastating effects of alcohol and drugs.



Ramey Brooks, 26 year old Athabaskan from Fairbanks, is the 1996 drug free musher carrying the signatures to Nome.

Ermalee Hickel

February 21, 1996

The Honorable Con Bunde, and
The Honorable Cynthia Toohey
Co-Chairs of House Committee on Health
and Social Services
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Con and Cynthia,

I'm writing to offer my strong support for House Bill 523.

Too many Alaskans have fallen victim to alcoholism and alcohol abuse. HB-523 sends a positive message that those who lead a life of sobriety are examples and role models for us all, and we will help those in need of attaining sobriety.

We cannot ignore the problem alcohol abuse has created within the Alaska family. We must support and promote Alaskans to live sober and healthy lives. HB-523 is a step in the right direction.

Sincerely,



Ermalee Hickel

c: Mr. Greg L. Nothstine ✓

Alaska State Legislature

During Interim:

716 West 4th Avenue Suite 510
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2133
(907) 258-8185
Fax (907) 258-0226

**During Session:**

State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
(907) 465-4993
Fax (907) 465-3872

Senator Drue Pearce District F

Jan. 19, 1995

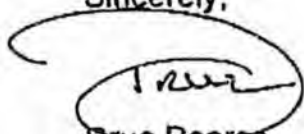
Mr. Greg Nothstine
AFNSM Coordinator
1577 C St., Suite 100
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Greg:

Attached is a copy of a letter I sent to First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton asking her to write a personal letter supporting the important efforts of the Alaska Federation of Natives *Sobriety Movement*.

I commend you for the important work you are doing to help Alaska Natives regain pride in their heritage and reclaim their lives from the devastation caused by alcohol and drugs.

Sincerely,


Drue Pearce
Senate President

Keep up the good work!

HOLY FAMILY CATHEDRAL

ARCHDIOCESE OF ANCHORAGE

811 West Sixth Avenue • Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2093 • (907) 276-3455 • FAX (907) 258-9785

February 20, 1996

Mr. Greg Nothstine
AFN/SM
1577 C Street, Suite 201
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Greg,

Thank you for your letter of January 25, 1996 concerning the AFN's Sobriety Movement..

If you are able to send me more copies of the brochure you sent me, I would like to make them available in the parish church's book rack and do whatever I can to encourage your success in general and in your IDITAPLEDGE for Sobriety. This is something that will be a blessing for the whole community as lives are put back together and people allowed to live in true freedom.

Keep up the good work!

Yours truly,



Fr. LaSalle Hallssey, O.P.
Pastor



DOMINICANS SERVING THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ANCHORAGE

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 28, 1995

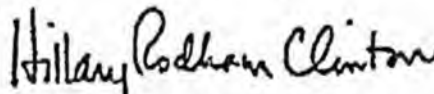
Dear Friends:

I am pleased to have this opportunity to send greetings to each of you participating in the Iditapledge of the Alaska Federation of Natives Sobriety Movement.

The miles covered in the Iditarod remind us of the steps we must take to assure a positive, healthy and productive way of life for the families and communities of our nation. As you link together healthy individuals, healthy families, and healthy communities you strengthen the fiber of our nation as a whole. I commend your hard work and dedication to this worthy cause.

Please accept my best wishes for a successful future.

Sincerely yours,



Hillary Rodham Clinton

MARK D. MATFIELD, OREGON, CHAIRMAN

TED STEVENS, ALASKA
 THAD COCHRAN, MISSISSIPPI
 ARLEN SPECTER, PENNSYLVANIA
 PETE V. DOMENICI, NEW MEXICO
 PHIL GRAMM, TEXAS
 CHRISTOPHER S. BOND, MISSOURI
 BLADE GORTON, WASHINGTON
 MITCH MCCONNELL, KENTUCKY
 CONNIE MACK, FLORIDA
 CONRAD BURNS, MONTANA
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 JAMES M. JEFFORDS, VERMONT
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ROBERT C. BYRD, WEST VIRGINIA
 DANIEL K. INOUE, HAWAII
 ERNEST F. HOLLINGS, SOUTH CAROLINA
 J. BENNETT JOHNSTON, LOUISIANA
 PATRICK J. LEAHY, VERMONT
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 FRANK R. LAUTENBERG, NEW JERSEY
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 J. ROBERT KERREY, NEBRASKA
 HERB KOHL, WISCONSIN
 PATTY MURRAY, WASHINGTON

J. KEITH KENNEDY, STAFF DIRECTOR
 JAMES H. ENGLISH, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
 WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6025

January 24, 1995

Greg L. "Tungwenuk" Nothstine
 Coordinator
 Alaska Federation of Natives
 Sobriety Movement
 1577 "C" Street, Suite 100
 Anchorage, Alaska 99501

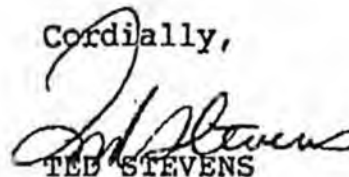
Dear Tungwenuk:

Thank you for letting me know about the addition to the Sobriety Movement's request to Mrs. Clinton.

In an effort to address the concerns you have raised, I have contacted the White House and requested that they address this matter. Once I receive their response, you can be sure that I will share it with you.

With best wishes,

Cordially,



TED STEVENS

FRANK H. MURKOWSKI
ALASKA

COMMITTEES:

VETERANS' AFFAIRS (RANKING)
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
FOREIGN RELATIONS
INDIAN AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0202
(202) 224-8665

222 WEST 7TH AVENUE, BOX 1
ANCHORAGE, AK 99513-7670
(907) 271-3735

101 12TH AVENUE, BOX 7
FAIRBANKS, AK 99701-8278
(907) 456-0233

P.O. BOX 21647
JUNEAU, AK 99802-1647
(907) 586-7400

130 TRADING BAY ROAD, SUITE 350
KENAI, AK 99811-7716
(907) 263-5808

109 MAIN STREET
KETCHIKAN, AK 99901-8480
(907) 226-8880

January 19, 1995

Mr. Greg L. Nothstine
Sobriety Movement Coordinator
Alaska Federation of Natives
1577 C Street, Suite 100
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

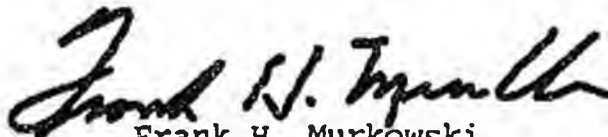
Dear Tungwenuk:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Alaska Federation of Native's Sobriety Movement.

I find it very pleasing to know that you have taken it upon yourselves to help those suffering from alcohol addiction. This pernicious condition is a severe detriment to the betterment of a people and a nation. I wish you great success in your effort and am only too happy to write to the First Lady on your behalf.

Again, thank you for your letter on this very important issue, and I hope that you will write to me in the future and let me know of the Movement's progress.

Sincerely,



Frank H. Murkowski
United States Senator

TONY KNOWLES
GOVERNOR



P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001
(907) 485-3500
Fax (907) 485-3532

STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
JUNEAU

February 13, 1995

Mr. Greg Nothstine, Coordinator
Alaska Federation of Natives Sobriety Movement
1557 C Street, Suite 100
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Mr. Nothstine:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Alaska Federation of Natives Sobriety Movement. I am very aware of the excellent work you have accomplished for the people of Alaska. I would like to extend my personal thanks for all your hard work. I also appreciate your clarification of the meaning of sobriety versus prevention.

It is encouraging to hear you are willing to continue working with the state to reduce the recidivism rate among our incarcerated native population. We welcome your efforts.

My office is working on the proclamation for Sobriety Awareness Month. They will contact you soon. Thank you again for your tremendous work to help promote sobriety for all Alaskans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tony Knowles".

Tony Knowles
Governor

cc: Department of Corrections
Department of Health and Social Services
Department of Public Safety

50-50 chance of being served by a customers. The sex-charged atmosphere is one notch down from a hiring practices are a necessity. However, employees do not qualify for a b

FORUM / LETTERS

***Sobriety events lack coverage**

The Daily News has done an excellent job of portraying the problem of alcohol abuse among Natives in rural Alaska. While coverage of Native issues in general is improving, the Daily News still needs to improve in helping with solutions to the alcohol problem by giving Native sobriety events more press coverage.

The Native sobriety dinners and dances that were held during the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention in October were not well publicized by the Daily News. Then, on Nov. 12, the state Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse began its annual statewide symposium with a healing day.

We had heard this healing day would include Native dances and other ceremonies. However, we could not find anything about the healing day in Friday's 8 section or Saturday's paper. We had to make several calls to friends and alcohol treatment centers before we finally found the location and time of the event.

The annual Alcohol and Drug Abuse Symposium is a very important event for those Alaska Natives and others involved in the sobriety movement. Each year, hundreds of Alaska Natives travel into Anchorage to attend it. They stay at Anchorage hotels, eat at Anchorage restaurants and shop at Anchorage businesses. They also have many productive discussions about what can be done about alcohol and drug abuse; but to get their message to more people, they need more support from the media.

We hope the Daily News can give these and other Native sobriety events more publicity in the future.

- Cynthia Wentworth, Anchorage
Charles F. Hunt, Bethel

Hard to understand Mystem

So the mayor can't figure out why people aren't supporting the idea of a sports center in South Anchorage (Metro, Nov. 26).

There is a lack of school rooms so we need additional space. School programs are being cut because of funding. There is a lack of jail space so we are turning criminals loose on the streets. We propose to add additional policemen to herd the criminals through the revolving door. Several roads and streets in the municipi-

SOME MICHIGAN DOCTORS ENDORSE ASSISTED CALLED 'PHYSICIANS FOR MERCY'



The moose aren't the problem

There are not too many moose in the Anchorage Bowl, but too many people. If Con Bunde and others really want to do something about it, they should work on population control.

- David McCargo

City moose hunt wrong answer

The editorial "Anchorage moose hunt has become necessary" (Nov. 12) poses the question of what should be done about life-threatening encounters with moose.

A hunt will not put an end to people/moose encounters in Anchorage. Regardless of how many moose are killed by a hunt, we will continue to encounter these animals while engaging in recreational activities. Traffic accidents involving moose will still occur, and during the winter moose will continue migrating into Anchorage, seeking relief from harsh win-

Ala: areas and r age b Reside should were reside Mo: an in mate fessio Game

Pre: Ou sittir peop requ our has l

Opinion

Spirit of the Blanket Toss

Pulling together, we can soar to new heights

By Greg Nothstine

The North Slope Borough's (NSB) Department of Health & Education is to be congratulated for sponsoring a recent eight day, eight village presentation entitled, The Spirit of the Blanket Toss!

The presentation was a showcase of the cultural wisdom's embodied in the blanket toss, and an opportunity for me to collect hundreds of signatures for sobriety that will be carried on the Iditarod trail next year in March of 1996.

Presently, the state of Alaska is the "blanket toss" capital of the world. No other state, or country for that matter, can say that it has held more blanket toss events in most of its communities, or have been asked by more state or countries to demonstrate this jubiliant affair. Credit the "blanket tosses" rich metaphoric value for being a micro-management tool, emphasizing the step-by-step processes, for common goal setting; a useful model for creating a safe and healthy community.

Again, a simple and jubiliant event, the blanket toss teaches us some very simple lessons on the natural laws of physics; which, in turn, can be theoretically and comparably applied to human behavior.

To have a blanket toss it takes a group of people (25-50), to agree to a cooperative pulling process, utilizing a sea mammal skin blanket (8-15 ft. in diameter) with laced rope handles around its edges, for the objective of

tossing one person into the air. The immediate physics lesson is the following: If any, one side, or quadrant of people, pulling on the skin blanket, are not pulling hard enough, the law of physics dictates that the person being tossed will be thrown in the direction of the weak side. Consequently, this causes an emergency reaction by all the people pulling (i.e., pullers), to gravitate in the direction of catching the person thrown off course.

Another physics lesson the blanket toss teaches us is that, the person tossed will only go as high as the cooperative effort of the "pullers". When all the puller's efforts are well synchronized, its common to see a person get tossed straight up, and not uncommon for them to go up to some thirty, or forty feet.

Characteristic to the above lessons learned from the blanket toss, the event embodies the universal values indicative of healthy human behavior, e.g., respect, cooperation, unity, commitment and trust. All of which, are group process requirements for having a healthy social

environment, or for administering a common goal, e.g., whether it be a safer community, a school's mission, work, a marketing plan, or a budget philosophy, etc.



Who would have ever thought, the blanket toss, would be such a demonstrative and versatile concept, analogous and applicable to almost any given situation.

But it is, in this case, it was a useful model in promoting the merits of sobriety to the eight communities of the North Slope Borough.

The comparable lessons of the blanket toss teaches us that in order to have a healthy community, free from the devastating effects of alcohol and drugs, it takes the commitment and solidarity of a respective community's role models (i.e., parents, relatives, teachers, journeyman, professionals, civic leaders, etc.) to set an auspicious example for the next generation, that life can be enjoyed without the consumption of alcohol or drugs.

Conversely, if members of a commu-

nity glamorize, or even minimize, the abuse of alcohol and drugs, the question is: What side of the blanket would others believe they are pulling on?

If that is the case, it eloquently explains why we have so many people and agencies trying to intervene and catch those people who have fallen victim to the symptoms of alcohol and drug abuse.

It is, also, a comparative indicator that we may not be cooperating as well as we thought, in promoting a common goal or concept, e.g., like sobriety; a positive, healthy and productive way of life, free from the devastating effects of alcohol and drugs.

This is not to say, that, sobriety is the catch-all solution to the pervasive social ills related to alcohol and drug abuse. However, there is no telling how far we can go, if we can at least agree and publicly acknowledge, that sobriety has always been the objective of our collective efforts. Again, congratulations to North Slope Borough's Department of Health and Education. The Native elders are right! The answers have always been in our culture-in The Spirit of the Blanket Toss-pulling together, we can soar to new heights.

("Tanvavut" Greg L. Nothstine is the AFNISM Coordinator.)

Correction: In the Aug. 23 issue, page 10, Donnan's name was misspelled in a letter to the editor. I also regretfully, this misspelling was repeated in another letter to the editor published, page 11. The National regards any misstatements as my Deplorer.



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VOLUME XCV NO. 44 NOVEMBER 16, 1995



KATIE BOURDON GETS A HUG—Katie Bourdon receives a hug from a friend during the recognition and award portion of the Alaska Native Children of Alcoholics Convention last week in Nome. Bourdon was one of the organizers of the conference and was awarded a new pair of slippers for her efforts. (See story below) photo by Rob Stapleton

ANCOA addresses trauma of alcohol abuse

By Nkuk M. Bruem

The 1995 Alaska Native Children of Alcoholics Conference came to a close last Thursday in Nome with those assembled reading the Alaska Federation of Natives Sobriety Pledge.

Event organizers estimated that over 200 people from places as far-flung as Barrow and Juneau attended the three day event, which was last held in Nome in 1995. The event was sponsored by the Northern

Sound Health Corporation,

Northern Lights Recovery Center.

The theme of this year's conference was "A Healing Journey: Rebuilding and Renewing Our Relationships." Both the substance of the speeches and the panel discussions addressed the damage wrought by alcohol abuse within the Alaska Native community and the potential for a better future. Personal responsibility and community

involvement were common themes.

Nome resident Mary Miller talked about how, like many people of her generation, she was born into a time when alcoholism had become widespread in many families and communities.

"There is unpredictability and fear in a family setting where there is alcohol abuse," Miller said.

"There were no support groups

Continued on page 4

Opinion

Concept of sobriety not something new

By Greg L. Nothstine

The media coverage July 30 to Aug. 4 on the sobriety movement in Alaska was wonderful! Continued coverage like this is just what the public needs to get a thorough understanding of the subject — a solution which millions of people throughout the United States have in common — because our public institutions are in a bureaucratic rut still trying to diagnose the problem.

The state of Alaska spends millions in research dollars trying to solve the problem and symptoms of substance abuse. Yet, the institutions in place, which the state funds, fail miserably to acknowledge that a concept or solution, and its merits thereof, already exists with 60 years of history — sobriety.

Sobriety is nothing new. Again, it's a way of life millions of people in the United States have had in common for over 60 years. What is new, however, is how sobriety is now being interpreted and increasingly referred to as a lifestyle worthy of pursuit and practice; the merits of which (concluded by the Alaska

Federation of Natives Sobriety Movement Council): a) improve the quality of life and health of individuals, families and communities; b) reduce the incidence of alcohol- and drug-related crimes; c) reduce the burden on government to exhaust its resources in having to pay for the symptoms and problems caused by alcohol and drug abuse.

In June 1991, the Alaska Federation of Natives created its AFN sobriety movement program. Part of its mission has been to generate greater awareness and appreciation for sobriety. Since its inception, the program has annually collected thousands of sobriety pledge signatures from Natives and non-Natives alike. Every year these signatures are carried in the Iditarod Sled Dog Race, most notably by Mike Williams. Cumulatively, over 30,000 signatures have been collected.

Presently, 57 organizations and groups in the state (even one in the Lower 48 — the National Family Partnership) have passed

resolutions in support of the sobriety movement's mission and goals. Support like this can only be indicative of a shift in the philosophy of prevention.

We live in a linear society where definitions of terms are the principle cornerstone to any concept or ideology's success. The success of the sobriety movement is attributed to this principle where "sobriety" and the "sobriety movement" are concerned. Before the movement, these two terms were used in small circles, and in vague context to existing terminology in the mental health and health fields; nowhere were they found or mentioned in any glossary of any government needs assessment or research report.

So, the first thing the AFN sobriety movement council did was define sobriety as a positive, healthy and productive way of life, free from the devastating effects of alcohol and drugs. The council did the same for the sobriety movement; The collective effort on the part of individuals, families and communities, and

every public and private agency, affected by, concerned with and working toward the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse, who by example encourage and support (even employ) people to live a life of sobriety. Based on the latter definition, the AFN sobriety movement is but a mere component in a much greater ongoing process, the intent of which is primarily concerned with improving the quality of life.

Eight years ago, Alaska Natives were dubbed a "People in Peril." Now, they're the "Champions of Hope." Notwithstanding these characterizations and because of Alaska Natives, the state leads the nation in promoting sobriety among its citizens. On May 21, 1994, the Department of Corrections made national history by allowing all Native inmate culture clubs to simultaneously host sobriety potlaches.

In March of this year Gov. Tony Knowles and the 19th Alaska Legislature proclaimed the month of March as Sobriety Awareness Month; U.S. Sens. Ted

Stevens and Frank Murkowski and our nation's first lady, Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, sent letters in support of the occasion. In tribute, these documents were carried in the 1995 Iditarod Sled Dog Race by Athabascan musher Remy Brooks.

All in all, more still can be done. Looking back, the concept of the sobriety movement was born out of the ashes of countless lives torn apart by the ravages of alcohol and drugs in the United States. It just happened that Alaska Natives, through their experience of aspiring to regain control of their lives and culture from generations of forced acculturation, germinated the sobriety movement into public awareness.

Hopefully, the media will continue this type of coverage on the subject, whatever the occasion. It can be just the momentum needed to give our public institutions the permission to take common stock in a solution which pays countless dividends in social benefits.

Greg L. Nothstine (Tingwenik) is coordinator of the Alaska Federation of Natives sobriety movement. He lives in Anchorage.

Commentary

02/26/96 14:04 02/26/96 14:04

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1996 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 523

Revision Date: _____
 Title: An act expressing the state's policy with respect
to sobriety
 Sponsor: House JUD
 Requestor: House HES

Dept. Affected: Health and Social Services
 BRU: Administrative Services
 Component: Commissioner's Office
 COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 317
 See also (SN#): _____

Expenditures/Revenues:

(Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY97	FY98	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGES IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE

(Thousands of Dollars)

FUND SOURCE	FY97	FY98	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02
1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1006 GF/MHTIA						
Other (please specify)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

POSITIONS:

POSITIONS	FY97	FY98	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02
FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

Estimate of any current year (FY96) cost: \$0.0

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill will have no fiscal impact on the Department of Health and Social Services

Prepared by: Janet Clarke, Director
 Division: Administrative Services
 Approved by Commissioner: Karen Perdue, Commissioner
 Agency: Department of Health & Social Services

Phone: 465-3082
 Date: 02/28/96
 Date: 2/28/96

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TESTIMONY

GREG NOTHSTINE, COORDINATOR
ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES SOBRIETY MOVEMENT
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 1996

19TH ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE, SECOND SESSION
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES' COMMITTEE ON
HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES (HESS)

Messrs. Chairman, Members of the Committees, Ladies and Gentlemen:

For the record my name is Greg Nothstine. As the coordinator for the Alaska Federation of Natives Sobriety Movement Council and on behalf of the Alaska Federation of Natives, I am testifying in support of House Bill No. 523, sponsored by the House Judiciary Committee, and entitled "An Act expressing the state's policy with respect to sobriety."

Messr. Chairmen, it is a foregone conclusion that alcohol and drug abuse presents an immediate danger to the lives, health and well-being of all Alaskans. The Alaska Federation of Natives supports the passage of House Bill No. 523 because it represents a positive paradigm shift in the state's policy for preventing alcohol and drug abuse in Alaska.

HB523 speaks to the legitimate recognition by the state of Alaska for a preferred lifestyle now being practiced by thousands of Alaskans and commonly referred to or known as sobriety. For the Alaska Federation of Natives and 58 other local, regional and statewide organizations, sobriety is understood as "a positive, healthy and productive way of life, free from the devastating effects of alcohol and drugs."

What is interesting is that the history of sobriety has been a concept and lifestyle, pursued and practiced by millions of Americans, longer than Alaska has even been state. Indisputably, our state court system has since dealt with many alcohol and drug abuse related cases. Consequently,

many criminals have been remanded to receive education and treatment services, which are regulated by statute.

Again, HB523 represents a positive paradigm shift in the state's policy for preventing alcohol and drug abuse. It favors and follows the conventional wisdom for reinforcing socially appropriate behaviors and choices that are conducive to:

- a) helping improve the quality of life and health for individuals, families and communities;
- b) helping reduce the incidence of alcohol and drug related crimes;
- c) helping reduce the burden on government in exhausting its resources and having to pay for the many social ills and problems caused by alcohol and drug abuse.

Messrs. Chairman, in the packet of information you have been provided, you will find a copy of Governor Tony Knowles' second Executive Proclamation declaring the month of March 1996 as Sobriety Awareness Month.

Last year, both, Governor Knowles and the 19th Alaska State Legislature, declared March 1995 as Sobriety Awareness Month. This set a precedent in not only, state history, but US history, because it made Alaska the first state in the nation to recognize sobriety as a lifestyle; the merits of which are deserving of support from every local, state and federal agency in the field of prevention.

Messr. Chairmen, on the eve of the second proclaimed Sobriety Awareness Month in our state's history, and on behalf of the AFN Board of Directors and the AFN Sobriety Movement Council, I urge you to support and recommend the passage of HB523.

Thank You for your time and attention.

Alaska State Legislature

Representative Brian S. Porter



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DISTRICT 20

HB 523

“An Act expressing the state’s policy with respect to sobriety.”

Sponsor Statement

Alcohol and drug abuse is the single most destructive health problem in Alaska. Alcohol abuse and dependence occurs among Alaskans in all racial and ethnic backgrounds and at all economic levels. The destructive consequences of alcohol and drug abuse are felt by the abusers, their spouses, children, friends, and employers. Ultimately, alcohol and drug abuse adversely affects all our lives either directly or indirectly.

HB 523 offers another alternative within the treatment of alcohol and drug abuse - sobriety. A positive, healthy and productive way of life, free from the devastating effects of alcohol and drugs. The sobriety language establishes an additional solution to the policy set forth by the Uniform Alcoholism and Intoxication Treatment Act. In fact, the Division of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse has placed the definition of “sobriety” in their strategic plan “meeting the Challenge” adopted by the Division and the Governor.

HB 523 focuses on a positive solution instead of the problem.