

# *Editorial*

## **Only one answer to bullies**

Any tribal chairperson or council member who thinks the exercise of tribal authority is going to be a cake walk if the state loses its bid to clip the wings of Native sovereignty is sadly mistaken. Like it or not, we live in a small and complicated world. We cannot govern ourselves as if we were the only ones here. This is as true of a small village in Alaska as it is a small reservation in California, or a small, conservative, predominantly white town in Iowa. Governing has always been hard work, governing well requires a lot of commitment from a lot of people. It is not for the faint-hearted.

For these reasons, as we begin to dig into the potentially rich loam of Native self-governance, we owe it to ourselves, to our future, to do so carefully. It is well worth taking the time to consider the implications of our actions, all of our actions, as if what we do and say really mattered.

And what we say and how we act do matter, because human beings are incredibly powerful, in the best sense of that word. The voices of true power, and sources of power's renewal, are honesty, integrity, justice, strength, pride, and yes, even love. When these qualities are cultivated in abundance, the results can be spectacular. Of course, there are other roads to choose: fear, victimization, addiction. These are the roads that take us away from true power.

Will Mayo and other leaders were correct in their recent calls for less rhetoric and more exchange of information on Indian Country. It is not that some of the speakers at the recent tribal judicial conference in Anchorage weren't correct in their assertions and moral positions. But we descend to the level of our adversaries when we roar so loudly in our frustrations that we poison the very atmosphere we ourselves must breathe in this small, complicated world.

It is true, too, that many of our adversaries, perhaps most, are bullies. If we are thoughtful, and strong, and united, they will be vanquished more quickly by our deeds than our words.