

# Editorial



## *There is strength in sobriety*

The Alaska Native Blue Ribbon Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse gave every single one of us a chance last week to show our support for sobriety.

Commission Chairman Ethel Lund offered each person at the 1989 Alaska Federation of Natives Convention a chance to come forward and accept a lapel button to demonstrate a personal commitment to sobriety.

It's a simple thing, just accepting a button. But it's also a step that for many is a leap into the impossible.

I am an alcoholic. Those are incredibly difficult words to say, but for many of us these words of truth bring sanity into an insane life. For many of us, alcohol is a killer that ruins budding careers, destroys friendships and rips apart families.

Those who are not alcoholics may feel uncomfortable pledging themselves to sobriety because they aren't certain what they can do. But finding someone whose life has not been affected in one way or another by alcohol abuse — a friend or a family member — is very difficult.

Even those who do not have a drinking problem themselves can pledge their commitment to sobriety. They can offer a helping hand to those in need, and they can support healthy, drug-free alternatives for young people.

"We recognize that it may make some people very uncomfortable to step forward and make such a strong commitment," Maj. Gen. John Schaeffer, vice chairman of the Blue Ribbon Commission, said in a press conference.

"But it is also uncomfortable to experience the results of drug and alcohol abuse. Children who must listen to their parents argue, families who grieve for loved ones who have died because of suicide or accidental deaths related to alcohol or drugs and children who suffer birth defects and learning problems for the rest of their lives because their mothers drank during pregnancy — these are also uncomfortable."

We'd like to thank the Blue Ribbon Commission for giving all of us a chance to pledge our efforts in the sobriety and drug-free movement in Alaska.

The sobriety movement is a growing effort by all Alaskans who have a vision for the future, a vision of hope. It deserves the support of everyone.

