

People must make Kiviyuk work

By Adeline Peter Raboff

After one year of expounding upon the Kiviyuk lifestyle for all Alaskans it has become clear that this is something which must come into existence outside of the "system" as it were.

It may be possible through clever writing to have a proposal approved for such an "experiment," but the chances are slim. Kiviyuk simply does not fit into the scheme of the regional profit and non-profit corporations. And although people are warmed by the concept and appreciate its organization they are not willing to make the necessary efforts to work towards such a lifestyle. So it goes that a man and his family must make Kiviyuk for themselves.

Meanwhile our young women are married indiscriminately to whomever will take care of them — regardless of race, class, age or type. Native women, who for generations have been looked after from the cradle to the grave, are suddenly after one or two generations, expected to fend for themselves in oft times unfamiliar circumstances.

Where marriage was once arranged according to type, age, class, and economics, there is now no consultation whatsoever. Class here refers to an invisible acknowledgement of place within a given society.

Women mature years before men, but the current educational system brings young people of the same age together prematurely. Men should be older. Type among other things refers to the quality of a

man's reasoning and speed of thought.

Generally speaking, identification of types becomes clearer with age.

Unfortunately due to cultural disparity and economic circumstances we all know men and women who have lost all their children.

Many of our young men enter the tutelage of their American wives only to find out that when they finally learn the ropes their marriages have also run their course.

Where there is no provision made for the marriage of men and women there can be no cultural preservation.

The institutions which function today for our benefit have done a fine job of thoroughly disrupting our notions of family and communal existence.

Yet we are all dependent upon the corporate bureaucratic system for our livelihoods and are even compelled to defend the various agencies which in a sense form a false economy and definitely a false sense of security.

We even swagger with the assumption that we are doing "our own thing." Whereas in this society we are taught what we must later throw out with all our mights and replace with our own common sense.

What bothers me is that the perceptual power of the Alaskan Natives is one of the finest in the world, but due to years of cultural-economic oppression and the almost total squelching of our cosmology, our self-esteem and self-confidence remain low on the scale.

Consequently we are reluctant or unable to act upon our determinations with the authority, power or speed at which they can be accomplished effectively.

We are, in a word, hog-tied.

To extricate ourselves from the present position is the sole responsibility of this generation.

No expert from the outside is qualified to advise us. Neither can the answers to our problems be resolved by the younger generation — they are already less potent than we.

To reverse the tide of dissemination will take more than fancy talk and tons of dialogue. One must come to the realization that nothing can be done except on an individual basis.

Only out of a firm inner resolve and commitment can things be restructured and made anew.

It takes muscle of a special type to see situations clearly then to act with full accord regardless of how callous, unorthodox or foolish one may appear to an observer.

Kiviyuk rests as a dream unfulfilled in a sea of ignorance and despondency.

But I say to you that it is possible to regroup, to reconstruct our lives from the shambles of our dying cultures and to preserve with meekness and humility those qualities which our grandfathers held most dear.

It is possible.