

**"I may not agree with what you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it" -VOLTAIRE**

# Editorial Comment

## THE CULTURAL TIES THAT BIND THE INUPIAT PEOPLE...

In today's world, litigation more often than not seems the only way to resolve disputes between people, governments, corporations, etc. Our courts are overloaded with cases of every descriptions, some of which are nothing more than pure nonsense, and many of them will drag on for years leaving only bitterness. So it is refreshing to note when cases are dropped, and reconciliation takes place.

Recently, the North Slope Borough Assembly passed a resolution calling for negotiations of the lawsuits which resulted from the detachment of land for the proposed Red Dog lead and zinc mine near Kotzebue.

While it is not for us to judge the merits of such lawsuits or even to predict what could have happened if the courts had dealt with them, it is easy to see where continued controversy could have caused more harm than good.

Local governments are relatively new to rural Alaskans. With the creation of those governments comes the need to draw artificial lines that have the potential to sever the ties that have bound our people for thousands of years, and those ties are far more precious than winning court battles.

We believe wisdom and reason prevailed when the Inupiat people in the North Slope Borough recognized the importance for maintaining the cultural ties with their neighbors and relatives in Northwest Alaska. Those who sit on the NSB Assembly are to be commended for their action in bringing about a quick resolution to the problems resulting from the land dispute, and Mayor George Ahmoagak certainly demonstrated fine leadership by readily carrying out the Assembly's wishes.

## TWO WHALES FOR BARROW

It's spring time in Alaska finally, and whaling season has begun in earnest up North. We hear that Luther Leavitt and Harry Brower, Sr., both whaling captians, each took a whale last week. We also heard that the muktuk was great at the feasts that were held in Barrow.

## OTHERS WILL BE WATCHING THE CREATION OF A NEW BOROUGH

A new borough could come to life in Alaska's Northwest Arctic on May 20 when voters go to the polls in Kotzebue and the surrounding villages. Not only will the voters create a borough government, the second largest in our state, but they will also elect a mayor and eleven assembly members.

Others around the state interested in the borough form of government have been watching as the steps were taken during the past year to bring about the Northwest Arctic Borough.

Other borough governments are sure to spring up sometime in the future in rural Alaska, and the lessons learned from NAB's experience will make it easier for the others to overcome the hurdles of gaining local control.