

# We are one for all

Throughout the course of history, man has been quick to generalize the actions of a few to be the characteristic of many.

These generalizations invariably prove to be completely false but dangerously effective as a means of keeping a religion or a race or a sex under control and submissive to whatever dominant group is in power at that particular point in history.

Some stark and tragic consequences have resulted from such generalizations. Black slavery, the Jewish Holocaust, and the internment of Japanese and Aleut-Americans during World War II are but several obvious examples.

Much less obvious but hardly less dangerous are those generalizations which creep into our lives every day, and through such everyday use become a "truth" to a group or groups of people.

These "truths" often come about from the action or reaction of a very small segment, perhaps even an individual, within that society.

If one black man is accused of a crime, it is easy for members of the dominant white class to ascribe that individual action to ALL black men.

If one female worker frequently calls in sick to work, it matters little that nine other women workers faithfully report to their jobs on time, day-in and day-out. The one is classed as being an accurate representation of the whole.

This tendency toward generalization transcends any particular political, religious or racial organization and almost always is further from real "truth" and reality than closer.

It is no different in Alaska. The actions of a few are constantly held up to paint the remainder with the broad brush. For instance, the few unfortunate Natives who live their lives in an alcoholic fog on Anchorage's Fourth Avenue or Fairbanks' Second Street are considered by many, who don't know the cultures, to be what all Alaska Natives are.

Nothing could be further from the truth, yet this concept remains a fallacious and dangerous "truth" to many unenlightened and uninformed people throughout the state.

Likewise, decisions by our Native leaders, from village to regional, which affect other portions of Alaska's population, often are scrutinized and magnified all out of proportion, especially by those who would wish to see us stumble and fall, if not from drunkenness, then from our decisions or actions that are easily criticizable or controversial.

Thus, at a time when we need the support of all people we are at the same time in a gold-fish bowl being watched by those who would wish to forever change our lifestyle.

We are a great, strong and diverse people, but we must all bear the consequences for the actions of a few. We must all keep this in mind during this critical year.

Remember, each of us is responsible for the future of all of us as a group.

Let us not allow those who would wish us ill the opportunity to promulgate false "truths" about us, our lifestyles, or our traditions.