

Grow up 7-10-90

Where did Sandy Grady and U.S. Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyoming, get the idea that "it's an adult world." ("Kiss of Death for GOP?" Daily News, June 29.) Leaving aside their effort to ease President Bush off the hook for reneging on his campaign vow not to raise taxes, the evidence to the contrary — that the average human never matures beyond teenhood — is overwhelming.

Nor are we in the U.S. exceptional. (Indeed, I may be overgenerous here as to the upper limit of our progress.) Two examples from a long list of juvenile behaviors and attitudes, yet indisputably attributable to the vast majority of "grown-up" Americans, should serve to make my point:

1. Self-centeredness. The goals of most Americans clearly do not include the physical and psychological well-being of the nation as a whole. Thus we face potential environmental catastrophe as we persist in our materialistic behavior; fiscal disaster brought on by those who practiced "look out for number one" with an enthusiasm worthy of the robber barons of old; the growing gap between the rich and the poor, with the middle class being squeezed toward the bottom. Hardly an outcome to be expected from a nation of adults.

2. Always blame the other guy. The directors of Exxon and the Alyeska Pipeline Service have every right to feel unfairly singled out for their role in the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska's Prince William Sound. If the good people of Alaska, now so full of righteous anger, had really cared about their uniquely pristine environment, why didn't they enforce strict protective regulations, instead of going along with Big Oil's decision to scrap oil-spill cleanup capacity? Such attempts to avoid responsibility — and they are endemic in U.S. society — are the antithesis of adult behavior.

Even though we in the U.S. are not unique in our childishness, such banal views of adulthood as held by Grady and Simpson deserve to be deflated. On the positive side, there is evidence that we are growing up. When we do, we will have much to offer the world.

— Bill Becker
West Hills