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## ABSTRACT

This document contains the five issues of "Sharing Our Pathways" published in 2001. This newsletter of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI) documents efforts to make Alaska rural education--particularly science education--more culturally relevant to Alaska Native students. Articles include "Research and Indigenous Peoples" (Nakutluk Virginia Ned); "Multicultural Education: Partners in Learning, Yugtun Qaneryararput Arcaqertuq" (Theresa Arevgaq John); "AKRSI Holds Forum on Culturally Responsive Curriculum" (Frank Hill, Oscar Kawagley, Ray Barnhardt); "Our Clothing, Our Culture, Our Identity: Keynote Address to the Arctic Clothing Conference" (Veronica Dewar); "Camping on the Tanana River" (Claudette Bradley); "Integrating Elders in Northern School Programs" (Cathy McGregor); and "Documenting Indigenous Knowledge and Languages: Research Planning & Protocol" (Beth Leonard). Issues also describe conferences and professional development opportunities for Alaska teachers; successful practices in Alaska's five "cultural regions" (Athabaskan, Yup'ik, Southeast, Alutiiq, and Inupiaq regions); winners of student science fairs; guidelines for strengthening indigenous languages, nurturing culturally healthy youth, preparing culturally responsive teachers, and making public libraries more culturally responsive; and undergraduate and graduate programs emphasizing indigenous knowledge. AKRSI regional contact information is included. (SV)

Sharing Our Pathways:  
A Newsletter of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, 2001

Dixie Masak Dayo, Editor

Volume 6, Numbers 1-5

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# Sharing Our Pathways

VOL. 6, ISSUE 1  
Jan/Feb 2001

A newsletter of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative  
Alaska Federation of Natives ♦ University of Alaska ♦ National Science Foundation ♦ Rural School and Community Trust

## Research and Indigenous Peoples

by: Nakutluk Virginia Ned

My interest in the issues associated with documenting indigenous knowledge evolved this fall while instructing CCS 601, *Documenting Indigenous Knowledge*. Research of indigenous peoples has been endured since the first arrival of non-indigenous peoples. Many times the research project and purpose wasn't clearly explained or in some cases not explained at all to individuals or communities involved in the research process. "Informed consent" wasn't a requirement until recently and often there was no sharing or presentation of results to the individual or community studied after completion of the research project. Little attempt was made to engage the people involved in a continuing knowledge sharing process.

In the past research was often done by amateur botanists, surveyors, government officials, traders, missionaries or anyone able to write and/or illustrate. The purpose of research then was to gather information on the indigenous people to serve the interests of an audience of non-indigenous people. While the books that were written made for interesting reading, they were usually written from the

perspective of authors who spent only a limited amount of time living among the people they describe. Their stories have contributed to the general impressions and the myriad of ideas that have informed non-indigenous peoples about Native life in the past. The studies provide interesting details, much of which is now taken for granted as fact and has become en-

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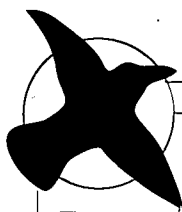


Johnson Moses and his daughter, Nakutluk Virginia Ned, sit with a model of a soos, created by Johnson.

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*(continued from front page)*  
trenched in the language and attitudes of outsiders towards indigenous peoples.

Documenting indigenous knowledge continues to be of interest to many people for a variety of purposes. Indigenous peoples themselves are beginning to contribute to the research, thus providing greater authenticity and control over their own forms of knowledge. Indigenous research today has implications for the survival of peoples, cultures and languages. It is part of the struggle to become self-determining and to take back control of the issues that affect indigenous people.

Indigenous knowledge as intellectual property that can be used by others for financial gain is not something that the indigenous peoples have had to deal with before. It contradicts the way we perceive the knowledge of our Elders, our communities and the tribe. Indigenous knowledge was preserved and retained in the oral tradition through stories, language, songs, beliefs, values and respect for all living things, usually shared overtly by example and demonstration. "The quantity and quality of knowledge varied among community members depending upon gender, age, social stature and profession." (Lore, 1992) There continues to be

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***There is sacred knowledge that is shared within families, communities and tribes that teaches the local traditions, values and customs.***

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many specialized fields of knowledge that are known by only a few people. There are expert teachers, sled builders, snowshoe builders, storytellers, trappers, dog mushers, hunters, skin sewers, skin tanners, beaders, leaders, orators, singers, knitters and fishermen. There is sacred knowledge

that is shared within families, communities and tribes that teaches the local traditions, values and customs. There are many people who are adept in a number of areas, but very few who are experienced in all of the above.

## What is Indigenous Knowledge?

Indigenous or traditional knowledge is the knowledge of the local environment that people have developed to sustain themselves and thus it serves as the basis for cultural identity. It is knowledge built up by a group of people through generations of living in close contact with nature.

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***The Elders of our communities are the holders of the indigenous knowledge that will show us the way to healing and wellness in our communities.***

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(Lore, 1992) It is knowledge and skills gained through hands-on experience while interacting with the environment. It is knowledge of plants, animal behavior, weather changes, seasons, community interactions, family genealogy, history, language, stories, land and its resources, values, beliefs, traditional leadership, healing and survival.

The Elders of our communities are the holders of the indigenous knowledge that will show us the way to healing and wellness in our communities. Indigenous knowledge is the key for our survival and sustenance as indigenous peoples. The Elders present the indigenous knowledge in the actions they take, their stories, their display of respect for all things, their role-modeling and their investment in the community. They are the repositories of the language, wisdom and knowledge of the past that is

needed to resolve problems that we have today and in the future.

## Research Requirements: A Code of Conduct

To help guide and encourage culturally-appropriate indigenous-based research, I have put together a preliminary draft of a research "code of conduct" for discussion and review (see opposite). This draft is only the beginning of an indigenous research process that can be revised and adapted for each community and/or tribe.

In conclusion, my investigation of issues surrounding documenting indigenous knowledge has raised more questions than answers. It is a topic that is essential to the survival of indigenous peoples and therefore it is imperative that we pay careful attention to what we do. Even in the 21st century, indigenous peoples will have to defend and protect our indigenous knowledge and cultures.

Further information and guidance on documenting indigenous knowledge can be found in the *Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge*, available through the ANKN web site at [www.ankn.uaf.edu/standards/CulturalDoc.html](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/standards/CulturalDoc.html). Another excellent resource on the issues outlined above is the book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* by Linda Tuhiwai Smith. It can be purchased from Zed Books VHPS, 16365 James Madison Highway, Gordonville, VA 22942. E-mail address: [customerservice@VHPSVA.com](mailto:customerservice@VHPSVA.com). Phone: 888-330-8477.

### Bibliography

Johnson, Martha 1992. *Lore: Capturing Traditional Environmental Knowledge*, Dene Cultural Institute and the International Development Research Centre, Hay River, NWT, Canada ✧

## Code of Conduct for Research in Indigenous Communities (draft)

- Inform local leaders and people in the community of the proposed research.
- State the purpose of the research and explain clearly how it will benefit the community.
- Obtain consent from the proper sources to do the research.
- Build reciprocity between yourself and the community and become familiar with community protocol.
- Show respect for and build trust with the person(s) or community being studied.
- Have community members assist and be an integral part of the research.
- Actively involve community members in reviewing the draft and final product before publication or distribution.
- Give credit and copyright control to the individual(s) or community involved.
- Report results of the research to the community during and after completion of the project.

*Some questions for individuals, communities and/or tribes to consider before consenting to be researched are:*

- ◇ Can indigenous knowledge be owned by an individual or does ownership belong to the tribe or the community? Who does ownership belong to?
- ◇ Who will have the copyright to the material?
- ◇ Is the information considered "sacred knowledge" which is not to be shared with people outside of the community?
- ◇ Is there a consensus among the people on the sharing of information?
- ◇ Was consent acquired from the proper sources?
- ◇ Was the purpose of the research project fully explained to the person(s) or community studied?
- ◇ Who should be doing research in our communities to give an accurate portrayal of our peoples? ✧

# UAF Summer 2001 Program in Cross-Cultural Studies for Alaskan Educators

The Center for Cross-Cultural Studies, the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, the Alaska Staff Development Network and the Bristol Bay Campus invite educators from throughout Alaska to participate in a series of two- and three-credit courses focusing on the implementation of the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*. The courses may be taken individually or as a nine-credit cluster. All three courses may be used to meet the state "multicultural education" requirement for licensure, and they may be applied to graduate degree programs at UAF.

## Rural Academy for Culturally Responsive Schools

**May 26-30, 2001**

**Bristol Bay Campus, Dillingham**

The five-day intensive Rural Academy, sponsored by the Alaska Staff Development Network, the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative and the UAF Bristol Bay Campus, will consist of the following educational opportunities:

- each enrollee will be able to participate in two out of eight two-day workshops that will be offered demonstrating how the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools* are being implemented in communities throughout rural Alaska.
- two panel sessions will be offered in which participants will be able to hear first-hand from key educational practitioners and policy-makers from throughout the state.
- a day-long field trip will allow participants to meet and interact with Elders and other key people and visit a traditional site in the Bristol Bay region.
- participants will share successful strategies and programs from throughout the state.
- participants will have the option to complete a follow-up project relevant to their own work situation.

### Instructor

Ray Barnhardt, Esther Ilutsik and workshop presenters

### Credit options

ED 695, *Rural Academy for Culturally Responsive Schools* (2 cr.)

ED/CCS 613, *Alaska Standards for Culturally Resp. Sch.* (3cr.)

## Cross-Cultural Orientation Program for Teachers

**June 4-22, 2001**

The Center for Cross-Cultural Studies and UAF Summer Sessions will be offering the annual Cross-Cultural Orientation Program (X-COP) for teachers, beginning on June 4, 2001 and running through June 22, 2001, including a week (June 9-16) out at the Old Minto Cultural Camp on the Tanana River with Athabascan Elders from the village of Minto. The program is designed for teachers and others who wish to gain some background familiarity with the cultural environment and educational history that makes teaching in Alaska, particularly in rural communities, unique, challenging and rewarding. In addition to readings, films, guest speakers and seminars during the first and third weeks of the program, participants will spend a week in a traditional summer fish camp under the tutelage of Athabascan Elders who will share their insights and perspectives on the role of education in contemporary rural Native communities. Those who complete the program will be prepared to enter a new cultural and community environment and build on the educational foundation that is already in place in the hearts and minds of the people who live there.

### Instructor

Ray Barnhardt and Old Minto Elders

### Credit option

ED 610, *Education and Cultural Processes* (3 cr.) \$516

## Native Ways of Knowing

June 25-July 13, 2001

The third course available in the cross-cultural studies series is a three-week seminar focusing on the educational implications of "Native ways of knowing." The course will examine teaching and learning practices reflected in indigenous knowledge systems and how those practices may be incorporated into the schooling process. Examples drawn from the work of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative and the Alaska Native Knowledge Network will be shared with participants.

### Instructor

Oscar Kawagley, Ph.D.

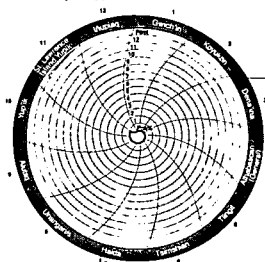
### Credit option

ED/ANS 461, *Native Ways of Knowing* (3 cr.) \$261

CCS 608, *Indigenous Knowledge Systems* (3 cr.) \$516

### Information

For further information, contact the UAF Bristol Bay Campus at 842-5483, 842-5692 (FAX), or the Alaska Staff Development Network at 2204 Douglas Highway, Suite 100, Douglas, Alaska 99824. Phone: (907) 364-3801 or fax: (907) 364-3805. E-mail: [asdn@ptialaska.net](mailto:asdn@ptialaska.net), or the ASDN web site is located at <http://www.asdn.org>. ✧



# Project AIPA Education Summit

by Joy Simon

Project Alaska Indigenous People's Academy (AIPA) is holding its first Education Summit scheduled for January 15, 16 and 17, 2001 in Fairbanks. The AIPA staff is in the process of planning the Summit, focusing on the highlights of Project AIPA and how it will serve the Interior Native education communities. Focusing on the purpose of AIPA, which is to develop curriculum that is indigenous to the Interior of Alaska and establishing its identity through Elders' knowledge, the Summit will identify the following:

- Professional development for teachers.
- Curriculum development and piloting of materials.
- Aligning curricula with the state content and performance standards as well as the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools.
- Devise evaluative tools to assess the curricula as it is completed.
- Prepare for the upcoming Alaska Indigenous People's Academy summer institute.
- Establish a partnership program with the partner school districts.

For more information on Project AIPA, check out the web site for the Association of Interior Native Educators at <http://www.uaf.edu/aine>. ✧

## Subsistence Curriculum Resources on CD!

The Alaska Native Knowledge Network Subsistence Curriculum Resources CD pre-released version is now available for educational/evaluation purposes.

For information on how to obtain the ANKN Subsistence CD Pre-released version, contact Sean Topkok, 474-5897 or email [Sean.Topkok@uaf.edu](mailto:Sean.Topkok@uaf.edu). ✧

# Qelakun Wall' Qetegkun?

by Cecilia Tacuk Martz

**Keynote address presented at the Bilingual/Multicultural Education Conference, February 3, 2000**

This year's conference theme, "Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Present, Creating the Future," brought to mind an incident that happened at home with my children. They were pretty young and like all young Catholics, they were attending catechism classes. One night at dinner, I wanted to find out if they were learning what I had learned during my catechism days, so I asked them:

"What do you have to do to get to heaven?"

I was expecting them to answer that they had to be good, live in harmony with other people and perform Christian duties. One of my kids gave me a look that implied I should already know the answer to that question, so I asked again:

What do you have to do to get to heaven?"

Finally, one of the kids said, "Mom, you have to die!"

Trying to hide my smile, and still trying to get the answer that I wanted, I tried again:

"But how do you get to heaven?"

The same kid, this time with a quizzical look, answered, "By heaven plane?"

Often as parents, teachers, colleagues, friends and relatives, we don't realize that what we do or say to others can have unexpected results, just as my children gave me a totally unexpected answer to my question about heaven.

Sometimes we may believe that what we are doing or saying is positive, but we need to stop and think. We need to put ourselves in other people's places and minds and ask ourselves what unanticipated consequences may come from our words, deeds or ideas.

For instance there's a phrase that, on the surface, sounds like a positive, even inspiring, slogan to guide indigenous peoples along the path to success in the modern world. To achieve success, we are encouraged to "walk in two worlds."

I've thought long and hard about that phrase, "walking in two worlds."

During the summer of 1998 I had the privilege of serving as one of the faculty for the Island Institute's Sitka Symposium. During my week there I reflected more deeply on the concept of "walking in two worlds," and since the symposium encourages writing, critical thinking and debate, I wrote down my reflections. I'd like to share those thoughts with you now.

## *Not In Two Worlds, But One*

A number of years ago the phrase "to walk in two worlds" arrived in Alaska and took root. It was uttered in speeches, written about in books and articles, discussed at conferences and in conversations among educators,

social scientists and students. It became a slogan seen and heard in classrooms, on radio and television and on posters. Who was it directed at? Mostly it was used in reference to Yup'it/Cupiit, Athabascan, Tlingit, Aleut, Iñupiat, Tsimshian and Haida. Many *kass'aqs* embraced the phrase and its seemingly positive meaning. Of course, it wasn't necessary for them to "walk in two worlds," only for Alaska's First Peoples. Oh, what a wonderful concept and everyone, it seemed, thought so.

There was a certain Yup'ik person who thought about this phrase, "walking in two worlds." She mulled it

over, discussed it with trusted friends and concluded that it was physically impossible to walk in two worlds. She looked for an opportunity to share

her thoughts with a few prominent First People to see if they had arrived at the same conclusion. She wanted to do this discreetly because, at the time, her conclusion seemed to be politically incorrect.

An opportunity came when this Yup'ik person was invited to speak at a Canadian conference on education. On the second day of the conference, as this Yup'ik was walking with two prominent Canadian First People educators, she hesitantly asked them, "Do you know the phrase "walking in two worlds?" When they answered yes, she carefully said, "You know, I really never liked that phrase." One of the others replied in relief, "Me, too!" The Yup'ik asked, "Would you like to see what it looks like to walk in two

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***Often as parents, teachers, colleagues, friends and relatives, we don't realize that what we do or say to others can have unexpected results . . .***

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worlds?" The other two looked at her with puzzlement and said, "Sure." So the Yup'ik walked in front of them to demonstrate. The other two immediately burst into hearty laughter. A passerby saw the action and appeared to be thinking, "crazy Natives" (it showed on her face.)

After the laughter subsided, the Yup'ik asked, "A person who walks like that, what does it remind you of?" The other two started laughing again and after they finally quit laughing one of them said, "A person who had an accident in his/her pants."

Then their conversation turned serious as they began discussing other thoughts related to the phrase "walking in two worlds." Concepts such as schizophrenia, conflict, failure, skills, abilities and language all emerged.

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*... first and foremost a person must have a solid foundation in his or her own culture and be able to walk solidly in that one world, learn all about it, believe in it and live it.*

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What about all the conflicts this slogan could raise inside a person? Why are only the Yup'it, Athabascan, Iñupiat, Tlingit, Tsimshian, Haida and Aleut expected to walk in two worlds and not others?

The goal of the phrase is a positive one—to be successful in the *kass'aq* world and yet be a whole person in one's own culture. Yet, what is a person—an indigenous Alaskan—to do to achieve the goal that the phrase "walking in two worlds" implies? The answer that came up was this: first and foremost a person must have a solid foundation in his or her own culture and be able to walk solidly in that one world, learn all about it, believe in it and live it. Then, if a person chooses to do so, he or she can add to that one world the best from

others: Japanese, Russian, German, American *kass'aq* etc. The phrase should not be "walk in two worlds" but should be "walk in your own world first" and then add to it from the worlds of others. And it should be directed to everyone, especially to those who live with people from other cultures.

Each one of us has to have an intimate knowledge of all aspects of our own world first. We have to constantly educate ourselves in our own language and culture. Even if no one is encouraging us to educate ourselves

about our own language and culture, it is our duty to learn it, use it and teach it to others until the end of time. We've heard our Elders say this over and over again. Paul John from Toksook Bay says it very eloquently in the video tape *Nutemllaput: Our Very Own* (available from ANKN.)

We bemoan the loss of our Elders and wonder what we'll do without them. In our cultures' histories, when the oldest Elders passed on, others came up and took their places. Why should that stop today? Each generation, each of us individually, has to face the reality that we will become Elders one day and we must assume the responsibility that fact carries with it. It is our responsibility to teach our young people our traditions, our languages and everything that we've learned and continue to learn from our Elders. We can practice our traditions and languages at home, at the restaurant, at church, at the airport, at Sam's Club, even in Senator Ted Steven's office. I applaud people like Agatha John and others for teaching their children to speak our Yup'ik language in the midst of English-speaking communities. I applaud Paul John and his family in Toksook Bay, Andy Paukan of St. Mary's, Howard

Luke of Fairbanks, Nora Dauenhauer of Juneau, Joe Lomack of Akiacuaq, Wassilie Berlin of Kassigluk, Louise Tall, Nita Rearden and Loddy Jones of Bethel along with the many others who take it upon themselves to teach their cultures and be positive influences in their own communities.

Before closing, I would like to do something very un-Yup'ik. Understand, the Elders are my heroes. I

respect them and I learn from them practically every single day. This is very hard for me to say, but it hurts me deeply when I hear Elders say that they are not

smart because they haven't attended *kass'aq* school, or because they can't speak English, implying that they are uneducated. You Elders are the most educated people I know. Most of you even surpass those who hold doctorate degrees in the Western world. You have great minds and your responsibility is to teach us, your heirs, all you can of what you know so that we can carry that knowledge and pass it on to those who follow behind us, just as we are following behind you.

One last message: when we, as Alaska's First Peoples, hold positions of power, we have to use that power wisely and in the best interests of our own people. We must be careful not to use that power to our own personal advantage, to please our administrators at the expense of our autonomy or succumb to the temptations that power carries with it.

So I challenge all of you: Yup'it, Iñupiat, Athabascan, Tlingit, Aleut, Haida, Tsimshian to take advantage of opportunities to learn your own languages and cultures and pass them on so we can truly honor our past, celebrate our present and create our own future.

*Quyana.*

Tacuk Martz ☆

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*The phrase should not be "walk in two worlds" but should be "walk in your own world first" and then add to it from the worlds of others.*

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# Community Values and Beliefs

by Bernice Tetpon

Loddie Jones, in a keynote speech to the Alaska Native Education Council in October of 1998, spoke about what it means for the community values and beliefs to be central to effective teaching practices. Her parents were her first teachers and enabled her to become knowledgeable in her Yup'ik culture. Similarly, in my own Inupiaq upbringing, my parents were my first teachers and taught us values and beliefs that are well articulated in a poster published in 1996 by the North Slope Borough, Ilisagvik College.

These values and beliefs are:

*Qiksiksrautiqagniq*, which means respect for *Utuqqanaanun* or Elders, respect for *allanun* or others and respect for *inuuniagvigmun* or nature. We also learned the importance of respect for *ilagiigniq* or family kinship and roles, and respect for *signatainniq* or sharing. Other values and beliefs include knowledge of language, cooperation, love and respect for one another, humor, hunting traditions, compassion, humility, avoidance of conflict and spirituality. How do we go about this?

## The Life Cycle: From Infancy to Elder

When children are taught by example within the everyday life of growing up from infancy through the Elder stage, these values and beliefs stay with them for the rest of their lives. Looking at the circle with the community values and beliefs in the center and the cycle of life extending from infancy to the Elder stage, we can see how important it is for these values to be built upon as we enter Western-oriented elementary and sec-

ondary schooling. It wasn't until I was in my teacher preparation years and in graduate school that I was taught anything related to my own

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**Everyone in the community is a teacher, and all teachers must also be learners.**

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culture, language or environment. When instruction does not relate to the students' community values and beliefs, or is taught out of context, they cannot relate to what is being taught and lose interest in school.

The *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools* includes standards for students, educators, schools, curriculum and communities. Our students need a strong sense of self-identity and that can only come from our students being strongly grounded in the values and beliefs and traditions of their communities. Our students also need to learn about their local environment so that they can gain a better understanding of where they fit in the world in a global sense. Everyone in the community is a teacher and all teachers must also be

learners. As we learn from one another, we can strengthen the sense of well being in our communities.

## What can we learn?

Educators who come to our communities from outside must make an effort to become part of the community so they can incorporate the local knowledge system into their teaching. How do educators find out about the community's values and beliefs? Many educators have learned that their survival depends on becoming acquainted with a knowledgeable Native person in the community to help guide them in their everyday lives as they join in community activities and informally visit community members to develop a sense of how the community functions. There are many survival skills that have to be learned when educators move to a community they are not familiar with. Most of us growing up learned to understand the world around us through patient observation and practice in hands-on activities. Similarly, educators will have to take the time to observe and figure out how to communicate and actively participate in their new communities.

In the same manner, it is our responsibility as community members to give our children (and the teachers) time to observe and participate in hands-on activities and learn the values and beliefs while actively engaging in the community. We need to ensure that they learn well in their Native ways of knowing and are able to succeed in the Western world. As we return to the circle with the community at the center, let us identify our community's values and beliefs. How can we incorporate these values and beliefs into our school? How can we integrate the school into the community and not see it as a separate entity?

First of all, everyone in the community is a teacher. Some of us are

licensed and have credentials in certain subject areas, but many others are experts in language, dancing, singing, hunting, outdoor survival, mediating, reading the weather, preparing traditional foods and so on. Everyone has something to contribute. Secondly, incorporating the Native language into instruction gives students advantages in their ability to understand the content that is required in exams and statewide tests. When a child is taught in their heritage language first, whatever the content may be, the child can then learn that content in the English language and succeed equally with students whose first language is English. Being bilingual is a benefit, not a deficit. Students who are bilingual have cognitive skills that surpass monolingual students who can relate to concepts in only one modality, while bilingual students can relate to concepts through their own culture and make the transition to the English language. Elders can be very helpful in this endeavor. Even when they are unable to speak in the Native language, the Elders can provide a wealth of resources for educators to learn how to integrate local knowledge into the curriculum.

Finally, knowledge of language is an important value within the Native community. From knowing your language, the rest of the values and beliefs come into place. Within the circle we want our children to grow from infancy to Elder status and to fulfill the cycle of life without barriers. Without these strong values we leave our children with a lack of self-identity that often results in the loss of a sense of community. As educators and community members, we will all benefit from helping the children learn the community's values and beliefs. Through the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*, we can find ways to make sure these values and beliefs are incorporated into the teaching of our children. ✨

# Athabascan Region

## Elder Highlight: Grandma Lillian Olin

*Grandma Lillian Olin was interviewed by Negaltdenlebedze Amy Van Hatten and featured as our Elder Highlight in Sharing Our Pathways, Volume 5, Issue 3. This is a continuation of her story.*

**Amy:** What does it mean for a Native person to have self-determination?

**Grandma Olin:** Well, self-determination is how well you present yourself and the things you do, no matter where you go—out into the wilderness, out into the public, when you're applying for a job—it all takes self-determination. And this comes from the family values that we were taught as children. Always respect, and do your best. Don't say "I can't do it", but always just believe within yourself that you could do it, and do it just as well as anybody else. That's self-determination. And I think I've always believed in that because it came from being neat as possible and presentable, which is important, because the first impression is always an everlasting thing. That's what we were taught. I always did my best, to the best of my knowledge in doing things.

I saw my mom and my dad and how other families spoke to their children—if we got out of line, we were corrected. There is a lot you observed while you were growing up and it kinda sticks with you. Back in those days, an elderly person would say, "Koy come here, sit down right here, I want to talk to you." She'd say, "What I'm gonna say to you is, I'm not gonna be scolding you, but I want to talk to you, because I want you to be a good person and always be presentable," and so they would give us advice, which was very important. To this day, I always value that, especially after I got married and Grandma reinforced what had been said to me.

Not only Grandma, but also other members of the elderly people came and commented how well I presented myself and how well I took care of my family. And so it made me feel good and just thinking, you know, I must be doing something right. It gives you a great pride in being yourself and showing how well you are doing to other people. So that's a very important thing, and when I was teaching, that's one thing I really impressed on students—how our elderly people used to talk to us, speak to us, out of kindness and loving and caring.

**Amy:** Did they speak in the Native language or in English?

**Grandma Olin:** In their Native language and when they're sitting with us and talking to us, it's a broken language, you know, broken English, but you understood them because when they're talking to you, they're making motions, expressing their thoughts. They're talking with their hands as well as their mind and their mouth. So it had a lot of meaning and much loving and caring that was going on. When you listen, regardless of who you are, they'd say, "Koy, you have a good mind." You don't say, "Ah, that's old fashioned! That's a long time ago." The elderly said, "You have a good mind and you're going to do well." How did they know that and how did they predict it? I often wonder about it. I think that's where the family values come. I try to teach it to a lot of the kids and a lot of the kids really look up to me and say, "Hi

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Grandma, how are you doing today? Is there anything you want us to do?" So I must have done something good to reach out to those kids. They come and give me a hug, which is very, very touching. I say "Koy, just keep on being who you are, you'll go a long ways." Lot of times, that's what was said to me. So people were reaching out, and now I'm trying to do the very same thing, and some kids say, "Thank you, grandma, for talking to us." I tell the kids "Anytime you want to talk and visit, just come." I'm always home, I'm always available. It is always good.

**Amy:** I have seen visitors pitch in and help do whatever chores you are engaged in, like in the smokehouse.

**Grandma Olin:** They're just willing to help and learn. When you make something, like I'm sewing and making something, there's always the question, "How did you do that?" Where did you get your thoughts? How did it come to you?" And I said, "Well, while I was sitting I am a curious person and always searching, looking at things, like visiting an elderly person. Don't touch anything, but just look, look and see how all

their working items are always stacked and clean in one spot. Nothing is out of order. Their working space is clean. The area is all clean and they just take pride in what they're doing and are thankful for the things they get. They do not let things fall on the ground where people walk, and that's a sacred thing—a very, very sacred thing. That's part of growing up."

The times I had gone to the Lower 48 and talked with the different people and we got to talking about values, the family and the tradition, the culture and they'd say, "Well, our culture is very similar." You know, it was more so when we were children, but nowadays people have gotten very careless in how they do things, because the values are not being taught. They're trying to pass it on to the younger generation and they say they will keep on trying. They'll never give up.

**Amy:** How did you hang on to your language?

**Grandma Olin:** Well as a child, I don't remember ever speaking the language, but when I heard children speaking their own language at the boarding school, I just wished I had learned. When I came home I learned the language by listening. They'd be talking and laughing and I just kept listening and I wondered what they were saying. When there were some words I didn't know the meaning to, I repeated that word over and over, until I got it fluently. And then I'd ask my sister, "What does this mean?" She just found it so funny that I didn't say the word right and then I said "Well, sister, what does it mean?", and then she would explain it to me. Then it fulfilled my curiosity. But I was partial for another reason—I always liked to listen to them because you learned when you were visiting with them how they sew, how they're working, how they're cutting fish, just doing things. My step mom was bilingual. She spoke to us in the Na-

tive language and we understood her and what she was doing. After I moved back to Galena, there was Grandma Lisby, Grandma Eva, Grandma Lucy, Grandpa Bob—all the elderly people—and my aunties. They all spoke fluently; they were my teachers.

Just listen 'carefully and listen to the word, how it's pronounced. And when you're alone, just repeat it over and over. See if you got it, you got it good. And when you get with someone when you're talking, and it just doesn't come out as plain, don't worry about it. People never laugh at you or make fun of you. Some of the girls that were at Holy Cross going to school, they came back and they didn't know how to talk. but now they're learning to speak the language. It's true, like they say, it's never too late to learn.

**Amy:** Do you see anything missing today that would help people feel more tied to the land and help young people to find balance between the two worlds?

**Grandma Olin:** It all depends on the parents. I see a lot of the children that's carrying on as the grandparents did—the values, traditions, self-determination. Then there's some that just go from day to day and I figure these are the children that were not really being taught or spoken to about the values and self-determination. Lot of times I blame the TV. A parent has to be really stern. It takes the people in the community to work together and set up goals and work towards it. Unity is a very powerful word. Try to express it and carry it out. That's the most valuable thing. In the spring every year, the younger children have a Grandparent's Day, the Elderly's Day where they make a gift for us and write a story. They interview us and then they write a story. With that type of thing, that's where the germination of the values comes in.

Baasee' ✨

## Correction

In our last issue of *Sharing Our Pathways* we inadvertently did not apply an Iñupiaq font where needed. Under the article *ANKN Website* it should have read:

- Another new link to a very useful resource is to the Nikaitchuat Iļisagviat Project. . . .  
[http://www.alaskool.org/native\\_ed/curriculum/OTZImmersion/PROJECTABST.html](http://www.alaskool.org/native_ed/curriculum/OTZImmersion/PROJECTABST.html).

Please accept our apologies for any confusion this might have caused.

## 2001 Native Educators' Conference

**February 4-6, 2001**

held in conjunction with the annual

*Alaska Bilingual/  
Multicultural Education/  
Equity Conference*

**February 7-9, 2001  
Anchorage, Alaska**

The purpose of the Native Educators' Conference is to provide an opportunity for people engaged in education impacting Native people to come together and learn from each other's work and to explore ways to strengthen the links between education and the cultural well-being of indigenous people. Building on past themes, the theme for the 2001 NEC is "Sharing the Harvest of Indigenous Knowledge." For further information, contact:

Virginia Ned  
ANKN/UAF  
PO Box 756730  
Fairbanks, AK 99775-6730  
Phone: 907-474-2477 or 474-1902  
Fax: 907-474-5615  
E-mail: fnvnm1@uaf.edu.

For information regarding the 27th Bilingual/Multicultural Education/Equity Conference, contact:

Dr. Bernice Tetpon  
Alaska Department of Education  
and Early Development  
801 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 200  
Juneau, AK 99801-1894  
Phone: 907-465-8729  
Fax: 907-465-3396. ☆

## Yup'ik Region: Our Indigenous Cousins

by Qirvan Abby Augustine, First-Grade Teacher,  
Ayaprun Elitnaurvik, LKSD, Bethel

The Fifth Tri-Annual World Indigenous People's Conference on Education (WIPCE) August 1-7, 1999 in Hilo, Hawaii was definitely the most unique professional conference I've ever attended. It was almost like a dream. Perhaps one of the greetings given in a brochure I picked up summed up the overall feeling of the conference: *Aloha Kakou e na hoa 'oiwi mai Kahiki mai, mai na kahi 'eha o ka honua nei* (Warm greetings to our indigenous cousins from all over the world.) It reminded me of one of my encounters with a Hawaiian lady who said she was part Eskimo through an Eskimo whaler from before. We broke out in laughter saying, "Maybe we're cousins!" There definitely was a feeling of camaraderie in the air.

Our hosts, the Native Hawaiians, had begun the conference planning in 1996, so from the beginning to the end, in spite of the many indigenous people represented from all over the world, the conference went smoothly. One of the first welcoming activities was a "Welcome of Visitors" where everyone gathered at the Hilo Bayfront. There the islanders greeted the participants traditionally in what they called "Arrival of Canoes"

through thunderous chanting and dancing depicting the symbolic arrival of the visitors to their islands. As the canoes neared the shore, it was exhilarating to witness the chanting going back and forth from those on land and those in the canoes. After that we had an opportunity to participate in a sacred Awa ceremony. An Awa ceremony is a formal Hawaiian welcome, usually reserved for the most

important guests.

Elders were given special seating in a protective shaded area. In Hawaii, the Elders are regarded as *Kupuna* and referred to personally as Uncle or Auntie. Even though they weren't related, everyone addressed them with much respect. Respect for Elders was

also evident in the other cultures that brought their Elders. It was a familiar relationship for us from Alaska with our Elders. The rest of the

participants sat on the ground quiet and still, as expected. After the Elders, we were given half coconut shells filled with Awa juice, the special beverage drawn from Awa plant roots used during Awa ceremonies. We quietly drank the sacred drink.

During the first evening there was another welcome by the organizers of the conference. One of their comments

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*Respect for Elders was also evident in the other cultures that brought their Elders.*

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was not to pay too much attention to our notes but to make an effort to meet and get acquainted with the person next to us whether it was in the cafeteria or on the bus. Along with that, even though it wasn't announced, we gave each other small gifts from our respective cultures. This allowed us to exchange ideas and addresses for further networking. During the evening, different groups performed and presented gifts to the conference organizers. We felt very honored and fortunate to have Mr. Ackiar Nick Lupie from Tuntutuliak, Alaska to speak for us. He was traveling with his daughter Nanugaq Martha Perry and her family. Our group presented a *nasqerrun* (headdress) and *tegumiak* (dance fans) as gifts from Alaska.

Another very unique aspect of the conference was recognizing our spiritual side of life. In one description of the educational strands, they included, "we are able to invigorate our commitments to these fields of interest, find and cherish new relationships and begin to strengthen our spiritual and professional networks around the globe." In many of the presentations we attended, it was very common to have a brief traditional opening prayer by an Elder in their language. In our presentation, we had an opening prayer by Mr. Ackiar Lupie and a Yup'ik dance before and after the presentation so we did not feel so out of place doing it.

There were eight educational strands of WIPCE:

1. Arts and Education (movement, song, culture and storytelling)
2. Educational Policy and Leadership (developing policies and developing our own styles of leadership)
3. Health Education and Healing (indigenous health practices and beliefs)
4. Language Movement (language practice, preservation and policy)
5. Philosophy of Education (philosophy, spirit and culture)
6. Science, Technology and Education (science and ways of knowing and teaching that brings ancient knowledge into modern practices)
7. Teaching Practice and Indigenous Curriculum (teaching practices and how curriculum can be experienced more fully)
8. Justice, Politics and Education (sovereignty, land, freedom and how education dovetails into action, policy, programs and movements)

There were many interesting sessions to choose from. Our conference booklet had one hundred twenty pages. We found ourselves making the selections the night before because of the wide range of choices. A few of the sessions included titles like, *Mahi Whai—Working with*

*String; Restoring Balance: Elders in the School; Aisiimohki Program, a School-Based Traditional Disciplinary Program, Indigenous Spirituality, Research in American Indian and Alaska Native Education:*

*From Assimilation to Self-Determination; Native Hawaiian Curriculum Development: A Study Identifying Critical Elements for Success;* and our presentation, *Ayaprun Elitnaurvik Yupiik Immersion: Strengthening Our Alaskan Yupiik Eskimo Language and Culture* with Cingarkaq Sheila Wallace, Angassaq Sally Samson, Atianaq Veronica Michael and I presenting.

Initially I dreaded a five-day conference thinking of all the sitting and listening we might be doing but it

turned out that Tuesday and Thursday were spent on what was called "excursions", where we spent the whole day on informal presentations in a Hawaiian village. We were bussed to our particular selections. Our first

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***I returned with a feeling that we are a part of a larger group recognizing the importance of our heritage and are not alone in this struggle.***

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excursion was going out on a traditional canoe into the ocean. Before going out, our host described and explained how traditionally canoes were treated with respect because of the food they brought back from the ocean. When we went out, we paddled in unison and before we knew it, we were riding with the big ocean waves! We didn't get out very far, but I sure didn't mind. I had never been in big waves in a canoe before!

All in all, attending this conference was empowering both spiritually and professionally. I returned with a feeling that we are a part of a larger group recognizing the importance of our heritage and are not alone in this struggle. It reminded me that there are many successful language immersion programs elsewhere that we can look to for support when we need it. We must also be careful not to look for answers elsewhere and remind ourselves, as does the theme of the 1999 World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education, that "*The Answers Lie Within Us.*"

Special thanks to the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative through the Alaska Federation of Natives for their continuing support.

Editors note: The next World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education is scheduled for August 4–12, 2002 in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. ☆

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***"We are able to invigorate our commitments to these fields of interest, find and cherish new relationships and begin to strengthen our spiritual and professional networks "around the globe."***

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# A Student's View on Subsistence and Leadership

## On Subsistence

**W**e Native Alaskans should keep the right to take animals and plants for food off our own land. This is the land my ancestors used for survival.

The government does not have the right to stop subsistence. What would happen if people in other states were told they were not allowed to farm anymore? Farmers live off the crops that they grow and livestock they raise. It's the same with subsistence hunting. There are no boundaries and no fences around the land of my ancestors and the care that is provided for crops and animals comes in a different form. The food from the land helps families stay healthy.

I don't know much about farming because my family does not farm. People who don't depend on subsistence don't know much about it either, except they want us to get rid of it. My lack of knowledge about farming doesn't make me want the farmers throughout the United States to stop farming. I am not saying that I am more intelligent than those people who want to end subsistence, but they should really take the time to look at the issue from our Alaskan Native perspective. There are a lot of families in my community and throughout rural Alaska that depend entirely on the land for food. My family is one of those families. How can the government expect so many people, especially Elders, to change their diets and lifestyles?

Much of our cultural heritage is woven in with subsistence hunting and fishing. If it is taken away there will be no more fish camps along the

river and no more families working together to harvest for the winter. Every summer my family goes out fishing to harvest fish for the winter. During fish camp my mother tells us stories of our ancestors and she teaches my sister and me how to cut fish and gather foods. My father teaches my brothers how to set and mend nets. Some of the important lessons that my brothers learn are the location of our ancestral sites and where to hunt and gather wood. Knowing the land is crucial for survival in this region of the world.

In the villages there are not as many jobs as the cities. Not very many people have high-paying jobs so they can't afford to lose their subsistence rights. The social and economic impact of subsistence rights is tremendous. I hope that the government will look more into the subsistence rights for Native Alaskans.

## On Leadership

I am a strong leader because I am a hard worker. I volunteered to work for the community cleanup in the summer of 1999. In October of 1999 I also volunteered to help out with the community Halloween contest. Helping in my community is important to me.

During my junior year of high school I applied to the Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI) in Fairbanks,

by Atchak Desiree Ulroan, Chevak

Alaska. I was accepted to this program which allowed me to take college courses and earn college credit. After six weeks of hard thinking and working, I graduated with a certificate of completion! I am not afraid to face challenges.

I am the secretary/treasurer of Chevak's class of 2001. To this job, I bring all of my qualifications and my accomplishments. I do the typical secretary/treasurer duties: take notes, keep track of decisions, count the money we earn, the money we spend and our profit. I keep our class informed of our budget and help guide decisionmaking with budget limitations. But my real strength as a class officer is that I have great determination. I want to succeed and I have the ability to inspire my classmates to set their own goals and realize their own dreams. ✧

## ANSES State Science Fair 2001

Feb 2-4, 2001

Birchwood Camp (near Anchorage)

Following the successful AISES State Science Fair of 2000, high-quality, culturally-based science projects will again come from all over the state of Alaska to compete in the Alaska Native Science & Engineering Society (ANSES) State Science Fair 2001.

*For more information:*

Alan Dick, Coordinator

E-mail: fnad@uaf.edu.

Phone: 907-526-5335

ANSES website: [http://](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/ANSES)

[www.ankn.uaf.edu/ANSES](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/ANSES). ✧

# Southeast Region: Will the Time Ever Come? A Tlingit Source Book

Review by Eric Fry, Juneau Empire

When Andrew Hope III, a Tlingit born in Sitka, wanted to know more about his clan in the early 1970s, he went to Elders and other tradition-bearers. "It's really a way of grounding yourself," Hope said. "To be a Tlingit or even learn more than superficial knowledge about Tlingit traditions, people have to learn who the tribes, clans and houses are. Then you see how everything is connected."

Hope organized conferences of Elders in the 1970s and began compiling a list of Tlingit tribes and clans. That led to a gathering in Klukwan in May 1993 of Tlingits from Southeast, British Columbia and the Yukon and tribes that neighbor the Tlingits. "It was the closest we've ever come to a gathering of all the Tlingit tribes, clans and clan houses," Hope says in his introduction to *Will the Time Ever Come?*, a recently published collection of papers from that meeting and other material.

The book, published by the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, was edited by Hope, the Southeast regional coordinator, and Tom Thornton, an associate professor of anthropology at the University of Alaska Southeast. "The book is unique in the literature," Thornton said. "The whole project was really unique," he said, in bringing together Elders and scholars.

Among other articles, the book includes Andrew Hope's account of his clan's migrations and Herb Hope's story of his efforts to retrace a Sitka clan's survival march in 1804 across what is now called Baranof Island

during a battle against the Russians.

The book also includes Andrew Hope's list of Tlingit tribes, clans and clan houses and excerpts from George Emmons' manuscript about the tribes based on his interviews with Natives in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Thornton contributed an article calling for a Tlingit resource atlas that would show not only geography and natural resources, but also what the landscape means to the people who have used it for generations.

Thornton, who has worked on compiling resource studies for the state Division of Subsistence, wrote that such an atlas would turn on its head the usual one-dimensional, or purely physical, view of the landscape. It would include maps, art and stories that portray the values and practices of Natives.

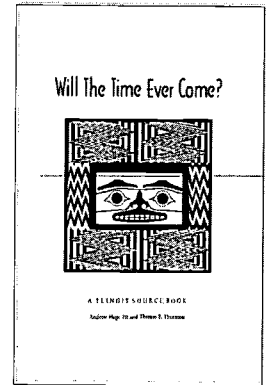
The state compiles harvest data and locations in order to manage subsistence. "But a lot of other issues come out when you ask how resources are used and how [subsistence users] feel about different lands," Thornton said. "To a lot of people, it's about being able to maintain relationships

to particular landscapes."

Since the 1993 conference, Thornton has worked with the Southeast Native Subsistence Commission to document more than 3,000 Native place names and their cultural associations. "That was pretty successful in communities where there was a good knowledge base," Thornton said. "But there are constraints, given that there are fewer than 1,000 Tlingit speakers. You're really racing against the clock on some of the stuff. It's literally the case that in some places you have one person left who is a Tlingit speaker and really knows the geography," Thornton said.

In the early 1970s, when Andrew Hope began to compile cultural information, "You pretty much had to sacrifice yourself financially in order to gain this type of knowledge," he said. "Because it was very much in an environment of culture suppression and language suppression. The body of written information about Tlingit culture has grown a lot in the past 10 years, and it can help bring Tlingit knowledge and the language into the schools," Hope said. "Today's generation has much more access to traditional knowledge than mine could ever dream about," he said.

The book is distributed by the University of Washington Press and the Alaska Native Knowledge Network. It costs \$15 plus \$4 for shipping. The book can be ordered by calling 800-441-4115 or via the press web site at [www.washington.edu/uwpress/](http://www.washington.edu/uwpress/). ☆





# Alutiiq Region: Strengthening Language, History and Culture Through Curriculum

by Sandy Wassilie

From my position as the Johnson O'Malley Program Coordinator last year, I learned of comments by Yup'ik children that they could understand some of the words in the Alu'utiq take-home readers. More recently a mother, excited by the Alu'utiq learning materials she saw, remarked to me how much it is like Iñupiaq in words. It is just put together differently.

One has to sit up and take notice when this kind of interest in the Alu'utiq language is shown in Seward, a small but diverse community just in terms of the Native cultures represented alone. Few Alu'utiqs live here these days, but the interest of others in their language and history has been sparked. The reasons vary. They are, for some, because of the similarity to their particular Inuit language and customs and, for others, simply because there are materials in a Native language in this community. Back when the Chugachmiut Curriculum Development (CCD) Project started, a number of parents I surveyed did not care which Native language would be taught as long as there would be a Native language offering.

Over the past two and one-half years, I have served as the curriculum developer on the CCD Project. I share these accounts so you will know the impact curriculum can have through this work and through the work of others. This interest extends beyond the tribal community into the schools. Teachers are hungry for quality, teachable materials on the history and earlier times of this area. This means materials that are appropriate for the age they are teaching, representing

accurate information that is pulled together in one unit with meaningful activities. It takes an incredible amount of time just to find and pull together good materials, if available.

I am also finding it is not only teachers but also community residents and visitors who are genuinely interested in knowing about the peoples who were first here. I have worked part-time over the past four years at Bardarson Studio in the boat harbor. A fair number of visitors want to have an art object that represents the area and often they want Native art. It is helpful when I can tell them about the cultures of our state and the particular expressions found locally.

Last summer, a man who was looking for a totem pole (a small representation!) was so grateful when I told him it was not something traditionally carved and used in this region. No one had taken the time to tell him before. Now we also have the Cultural Heritage Center that helps us learn and appreciate the culture unique to our area—a taproot of the region's history too long missing.

Besides interest, the curriculum has begun to capitalize on another development: cross-cultural cooperation, a characteristic that has become

common in places where many Native (and other) cultures live together such as Seward and probably Valdez and Cordova as well. One of our Elders, Liz Randall, recently commented, "People here are like nowhere else," meaning helping each other out in spite of different backgrounds.

I have seen a couple of notable examples of this cooperation in the region where one Native culture helps another to remember and continue its practices. Teri Rofkar, a Tlinget weaver from Sitka, has researched and worked with Alu'utiq people on spruce root collection, preparation and weaving. Leo Kunnuk, an Iñupiaq dancer and carver from King Island, now of Seward, has taught mask carving to Alu'utiq children at the Nuchek Spirit Camp, encouraging them to use their own traditions. And now here in Seward the Alu'utiq language materials are helping some people remember their own languages.

These dynamics have been strengthened and supported by the Chugachmiut Curriculum Development Project. It is my heartfelt wish the project will continue. Of all the cultures, it seems the least is known about the Alu'utiq of the Chugach region. Yet, we have found there is such a wealth of information in the memories of the people and in the repositories of many museums around the world. The land itself still holds clues to the past. There are links to Alu'utiq cousins on Kodiak and the Alaska Peninsula. There is encouragement from other cultures. We have just begun our search and networking. Let's continue the research and materials development. Let's teach our children what we know and how to discover what we do not know. ✨



Christopher Engler and Matthew Shewfelt present their science fair project to judges at the Fourth Annual Interior ANSES Science Fair 2000 held in Fairbanks December 7-9, 2000. Photo by Sean Topkok.

## Fourth Annual Interior ANSES Science Fair 2000 Grand Prize Winners

Project Title	Young Scientists	Grade	Village
"Snow Shelters"	Scott Asplund	9	Circle
	John Carroll	6	Circle
"Use of Berries"	Magan John	8	Circle
	Sheeena Tritt	9	Circle
"Trapping & Tanning of Martin"	Christopher Engler	7	Ft. Yukon
	Matthew Shewfelt	8	Ft. Yukon
"Fewer Mosquitoes in Ft. Yukon"	Kyke Joseph	6	Ft. Yukon

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## Kodiak Regional Rural Science Fair Winners

### Scientists' Choice:

Matthew Van Atta, Chiniak, "The Physics of Lapture" (Alutiiq Baseball). This project will compete in the Alaska State Science and Engineering Science Fair in Anchorage, March 30-April 1, 2001.

### Elders' Choice:

Charlene Christiansen and Helena Tunohun, Old Harbor, "Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning".

### 1st Grand Prize:

Jacquie Seegere, Port Lions, "Herbal Teas".

### 2nd Grand Prize:

Marjeena Griffin, Chiniak, "Insulators (Clothing)".

The two grand prize projects will compete in the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Society's (ANSES) State Science Fair 2001 held at Birchwood Camp near Anchorage February 4-6, 2001.



# Sharing Our Pathways

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A newsletter of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative

Alaska Federation of Natives ♦ University of Alaska ♦ National Science Foundation ♦ Rural School and Community Trust

## Multicultural Education: Partners in Learning Yugtun Qaneryararput Arcaqertuq

by Theresa Arevgaq John, Director  
Rural Alaska Native Adult Program, Alaska Pacific University

### Keynote address to the 27th Annual Bilingual Multicultural Conference, February 7, 2001

**W**aqaa! Greetings to the bilingual conference planning committee, Elders, educators, parents, students, administrators and community members. I am honored and humbled to be the keynote speaker for the 27th annual BMEEC 2001 conference theme, "Multicultural Education: Partners in Learning." There are several key points in regards to the Yup'ik heritage language and culture I feel are important to address today. I will use English as well as Yup'ik in my presentation.

The key points that I would like to address are:

### Arguments

1. Who is responsible for the language maintenance? Is it the parents? Community? Educators? Elders? Self?
2. Should we be concerned about maintaining Yup'ik Language? Why?
3. Will bilingualism affect a child's formal education? How?
4. Do children with bilingualism have better educational outcomes?
5. Will we lose our Native cultural identity along with language loss?
6. Where are the Elders?
7. Should we support Yup'ik immersion programs?

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Theresa Arevgaq John instructing a class at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Photo courtesy of Rural Student Services, UAF.

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## Ethnic Identity Formation and It's Implications for Yup'ik Language Development.

I am fortunate to have been raised in a remote Yup'ik-speaking community on Nelson Island. This was the era when formal education was just being implemented into the community. Elders, grandparents, parents and prominent community members were the main educators who taught youth and adults the indigenous traditions and customs—*quliraat*, *qanruyuutet*, *alerquutet* and *inerquutet*. Oral traditional education passed down creation, raven stories and cultural values. Many Elders and community members truly believed and still believe in our creator, Ellam Yua. We are taught that Ellam Yua granted us our indigenous language, culture, history and spiritual world for us to keep and maintain. The ancestors' innovative and effective traditional teaching methods are integrated and effective multicultural education materials.

The Yup'ik pledge (opposite page) is recited in some Kuskokwim Delta villages like Toksook Bay. When I attended Calista Elder's Conference last November, I had an opportunity to visit the school and participate at the school assembly. There I requested the students to recite the pledge which I've attempted to translate.

I specifically wanted to share this with you because it's written in Yup'ik. The words in this pledge remind me of late Elders like Billy Lincoln, Sr. and my grandmother, Al'aq (respected leaders) who spent endless hours teaching us kids using these exact words. The important messages reflect cultural integrity, accountability, self-determination and encourage a foundation for youths' achievement.

At this time I would like to take a moment to recognize and thank the Yup'ik associate professor Cecilia

Martz, former Kuskokwim Campus faculty member, who developed the Y/Cuuyaraq poster containing these words. Our students will learn and live as the key holders of our Elders words.

With fluent indigenous languages, youth can have strong cultural and traditional knowledge, spirituality, communication skills and self-esteem. It is also evident as time goes on that it will only become more difficult for youth to maintain their first language. The English language world surrounds us and is slowly eroding our languages away, which is our power base with each generation. The lack of indigenous language brings suffering for youth and adults. For example, language barriers make it difficult for new generations to learn about traditional family ties and clans, ancient stories and songs, leadership skills, ceremonials, hunting and gathering skills and traditional laws.

We have learned from the research presented by the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks regarding language loss among our Native groups. In some cases, like the Eyak and a few others, the only speakers are dying off. We must make an effort to ensure that the remaining indigenous languages are enhanced and taught to all ages. Our language and cultures are greatly affected and impacted by the daily use of English. On the other hand, we have community members who cannot speak their language yet have an understanding and sense of their culture. I would like to share with you two heartbreaking encounters I had with two elderly women who expressed their pain and sorrow with me. Both events happened in Bethel around the mid-1980s.

Wangkuta yupigni qanruyutet aturluki anglituukut.  
Ilakuyulluta, ukvertarluta, pingnatuuluta.

We, the Yup'ik people, grow up following the traditional values and principles. We live in harmony, we have faith and also strive for prosperity.

Nallunrilamta yuuyaramteni piciryarangqerngamta  
nutemllamtenek.

This is because we have wisdom and knowledge of our traditional lifestyle.

Qigcikiyaram aturtai taringumaut ellam iluanelnguut  
elpengqellrit nunuliutengqellrit-llu.

Those who hold and respect the traditional knowledge and laws of our spiritual worldview know that they will be rewarded for their proper behavior.

Qanruyutem aturtai umyuartuluteng, elluatuluteng,  
nuuqitevkenateng yuuluqaqerciqut.

Those who follow the traditional values, laws and principles will become wise, knowledgeable and live to be prosperous and wealthy.

The first person was an Elder woman in her sixties from a coastal village, waiting for a flight at the airport. While we waited, sitting on benches across from each other, a young lady came to her and asked her a question in English and grandmother responded back in broken English. Her voice was quivering when she told me that she could not communicate effectively with her own grandchild that she was raising. She was unable to teach her and other children the Yup'ik traditions and values because they did not have a common nor efficient communication tool. The grandmother looked very sad at that moment, which made me feel sorry for her. She was sad to see the passing of her heritage language, including her culture, as the students used only English at school and watch television after school. There is an argument that we face daily regarding language use responsibility. Who is responsible for resolving situations

like this? Are we as parents and families responsible or are the schools? I think we are all responsible—as parents, relatives, community members and educational employees—we must not let this continue.

The second Elder shared a similar situation with me. In her case, the teacher advised her to speak to her children in English because that would benefit their education. About twelve years later, another teacher approached her and said, “Why didn’t you teach your children Yup’ik? At this point, she felt confused by two educators approaching her with opposing advice. She admitted it was too late now for children to learn Yup’ik who are older and will have a hard time learning the new language. She sat silently and cried. This is a national controversial issue with schools, governments and leaders who all struggle to deal with the question of if/how we should include indigenous languages in our schools. Like our

ancestors, let us unite and make a commitment to incorporate indigenous languages into all aspects of our villages so we can have societies with common languages.

These two women were willing to share their painful family crisis for a reason. They are not alone in this situation, many of our people are going through the same crisis. We cannot continue to hurt the hearts of our Elders, the holders of our cultural wisdom and knowledge. They are the backbone of our families and deserve the utmost respect. As Native speakers who are also educators and administrators, we can enhance language use in schools and at home and provide efficient communication tools for the students without endangering their scholastic achievement.

To encourage Native heritage language development, the parents, school board members, educators and prominent leaders all need to get involved in planning the annual academic curriculum. We must become proactive members by joining local and district school boards that guide and work with school administrators. We can and must identify quality Native educators and administrators with expertise and proficiency in Native languages and let them control the schools. Native educators should promote and provide local knowledge, wisdom and innovation through developing a dynamic curriculum. These steps will provide positive consequences for our Yup’ik heritage language.

We have our own Native immersion programs in place, like the ones in Bethel and Kotzebue, that develop and implement community-based, culturally-relevant curriculum. They have dedicated Native educators, staff and teacher aides who work diligently to ensure indigenous education through first languages. When I visited the immersion school in Kotzebue,

*(continued on next page)*

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I was impressed with little kids speaking Iñupiaq only. Shortly after I arrived, their teacher informed me that I could not speak English beyond the entrance area. I spoke to them in Yup'ik because my Iñupiaq language is limited. Disciplinary rules like these will enforce indigenous language use.

Naluk, my niece, has gone through the Yup'ik Immersion Program in Bethel since it was implemented a few years ago. She is now in the fifth grade, with fluent Yup'ik speech and grammar. Her mother, Agatha John-Shields, has been an influential educator and proactive parent of the program. Thank you for your persistence, Gus, in teaching all your children and other's Yup'ik at home and school. There is fear that some parents feel in giving their children an opportunity to learn the indigenous language. I was shocked and horrified that some Yup'ik parents in Bethel were resistant to enrolling their children into the immersion program. They believe their children will have a hard time adjusting to a standard English classroom after Yup'ik immersion classes. They simply don't see the need and are eager to have their kids become like everybody else. Today my sister's children can communicate with their grandparents in their first language. This proves that indigenous languages can be taught at home and school. It takes dedication, determination and persistence to make this happen. These students are the future leaders of our languages.

I applaud the efforts of all immersion teachers who provide essential lifelong cultural foundations for youth and serve as role models for students and educators. I used these two examples of what I consider to be an ideal and effective immersion program with a community-based curriculum. There are challenges from opposing parents, school board and community members who feel that Native education is not essential to

our youth. Please don't let them stop you from doing your job. Through programs like these, our descendents will learn and live Native ways of knowing without endangering their future success in an integrated society.

## The Impact of Yup'ik Language Programs on Student Attitudes

The Yup'ik language programs influence student attitudes in ways that make them feel proud of their heritage language and culture and will have a long-lasting positive impact on their attitudes. Harold Napoleon, in his book *Yuuyaraq*, states "Many villages have expressed interest in reviving cultural heritage activities and Native language use in their schools, because it has become evident that practicing one's cultural heritage and speaking one's heritage language promotes self-esteem in young people."

The *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools* says "Culturally-knowledgeable students are well grounded in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community." One of the objectives of this standard states, "Students will be able to reflect through their own actions the critical role that the local heritage language plays in fostering a sense of who they are and how they understand the world around them."

When the youth learn to speak their heritage language fluently, they will be able to hear and learn many of our traditional *qanruyutet* and *alerqutet* that will give them guidance for healthy and prosperous lifestyles. Knowing one's language is interlinked with learning one's culture.

When I was doing my student teaching at Bethel High School in the early eighties, I had an opportunity to form a cultural club that met weekly. I formed this club because I had heard that there was a problem with cul-

tural diversity in school. The Native students were criticized for speaking Yup'ik or for wearing Native clothing. The goal of the cultural group was to develop and encourage cultural identity among students through traditional activities. They learned the history and meanings of traditional Yup'ik songs. During our sessions they viewed videos of dancers, learned about masks, *mukluks*, *qaspeqs* and headdresses. After a few gatherings, students began to show up in their *qaspeqs* and *mukluks* and were no longer ashamed of themselves. The parents of my students approached me in local stores and asked what I was doing to their kids. They informed me that their children's attitudes improved at home and they were anxious to attend school. We, as educators, can inspire our youth to become proud owners of their language and traditions.

My late grandmother, Anna Kungurkak, like many Elders, was my best educator allowing me to benefit by maintaining the advanced first language that belongs to our people. Elders in her generation who were raised through oral history have a solid personal and educational foundation. She once said "*Ilaten kenkekuvki elitnaurciqaten*": "If you love your family and community members, you will educate them." The true meaning of love is to make time to educate the young future leaders using the integrated teaching methods of our Native ways of knowing.

Our ancestors also teach us the importance of knowing who we are and that we should know our cultural values. The Yup'ik term *aciriyaraq*, refers to acquiring a Native name. It is an honor and comes with responsibilities. Through the naming system, we keep our ancestral spirits alive and we must carry that name with respect. The Elders stress traditional values like *naklekiyaraq*—caring for others, *kenkiyaraq*—love for all, and *ilangqersaraq*—having friends and

associates. These are integral parts of our societies that we must revere and nurture.

In reference to our traditional spirituality, we must revisit our traditional ceremonies and rituals that meant so much to our ancestors. *Yuraryarat*, the various dance ceremonials including *kevgiq*, *ineqsukiyaraq*, *kelgiq*, *kegginaquryaraq* and *nangerciciyaraq* are diverse forms of prayer. The *angalkuut* (shamans), both men and women, played very important roles in these communities. The *angalkuut* are gifted with powers to heal, interact with animal spirits and serve as composers and choreographers. I am not promoting shamanism—I'm just informing you about the past. Elders inform us that our Native spirituality was forced aside or put under the table when newcomers arrived, with the expectation that ancestral powers will revive again when the time is right. I feel that the time is right now to empower ourselves to bring back our traditional forms of prayer through multicultural education. In the southwestern region of Alaska, young people are bringing back the drums and forming school dance groups. With formations of local dance groups, we are bringing back language and Native spirituality. This is possible with Native educators who organize and teach with the help of local Elders. I recommend books like *Cauyarnariuq* and *Agayuliyararput* for teachers to use that describe various ancient ceremonies told and described by the Elders.

In the past, I had several opportunities to work with and learn from respected Elders who live in various parts of our state. First, the Bilingual and Cultural Institutes in Bethel brought in Elders to assist Native educators for four intensive weeks. They collected materials and developed community-based resources for K–12 books. The Elders-in-Residence program at UAF allowed me to work and

teach with Elders from all over the state as well. These Elders taught college students for five intensive weeks. The students recorded, cataloged and archived videos and audiotapes at the local library. I would recommend all educators to utilize these resources of Elders sharing their biographies and life stories as cultural teaching tools.

I would like to take this time to recognize some of these Elders who took time to provide invaluable knowledge and wisdom in the past: Frank Andrew, Chief Paul John, Susie and Mike Angaiak, Teddy and Maryann Sundown of Southwestern; Austin Hammond of Southeast; Catherine Attla, Chief Peter John and Moses Johnson of the Interior; Mary Bourtokofsky of the Aleutians; and Jimmie Toolie and his wife and Mr. and Mrs. Issac Akootchook of the North. I salute all the Native Elders who have contributed to the education of our Alaska schools. Without them we would not have quality resources for our cultural curriculum. They are truly our Native professors.

### *Strategies to Strengthen Communities and Families*

The following are strategies I feel will assist in strengthening our communities and families for our children's education. For parents, the caretakers and first educators, please make time to teach your heritage language at home. Start with simple words like *kenkamken*—I love you. If you don't know the language, learn it with your children. Use note pads to write down Native words and post them all over the house. For example, post them in living rooms and kitchen areas and use them as visual reminders. Make time to talk with your children. It is best to teach them early in

the morning when their minds are fresh, and repeat them again later that evening. I would suggest a few words at a time so they don't get confused.

For communities, make a conscious effort to use the indigenous language daily. We need to become proactive and encourage members to become fluent speakers. I encourage you to invite Elders to use their first language to address the public in schools, churches, local events or on radio and television. Build a team of local education and community organizations to collaborate in efforts to incorporate and implement the use of indigenous language in social functions.

Academic institutions and administrators should become friends and supporters of immersion schools as well as bilingual and cultural education centers. Incorporate and implement culturally-relevant orientations for school board members, administrators, staff and educators on local language, history, culture and seasonal lifestyles. It is essential for all academic employees to understand and incorporate traditional ways of living. Partner with local Elders, prominent community members and agencies to assist in developing community-based academic curriculum. Utilize the *Guidelines for Strengthening Indigenous Languages* in conjunction with the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*. Encourage and sponsor bilingual educators to get certified and hire them. This will have a positive impact on our student retention rate.

*Tamalkurpeci cingamci maryagcisqelluci yugtun qaneryararput nutemllarput-llu ciumurucesqellukek elitnauruteklukek-llu.* I just summoned you to fight to keep our indigenous languages and cultures alive. It's going to be an uphill battle. Let's stand up together as one team to enhance multicultural education.

*Tuaingunrituq Quyana.* ✨

# Alaska Native Literature Awards

by Olga Pestrikoff

Based on *Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge*, the Alaska Indigenous Literary Review Board, a working committee comprised of Alaska Native regional representatives, has spent the last year planning a literature review and recognition process to showcase Alaska indigenous literary works at the Native Educators' Conference held February 4–6, 2001, in Anchorage. This historical event was an outgrowth of the work over the last five years through the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Alaska Federation of Natives in a special project called the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative.

The "Celebration of Alaska Native Literature" was held on February 4, 2001 at the Sheraton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska, honoring five people representing a cross-section of the Alaska Native community. Each selection represented a different genre of literature important to indigenous people of Alaska and the world.

Lolly Carpluk of Mountain Village/Fairbanks, who helped to organize the gathering, said "It was a historic and very emotional event, impacting not only the prestigious indigenous authors being recognized, but their families, friends and, finally, the indigenous educators who have waited so long for such a historic moment as this—to see it come to fruition."

Pictured in the photo above right are recipients of three of the awards:

Lucille Davis, a Sugpiaq from Kodiak Island and Anchorage, was recognized for her storytelling, an example of which is published on a CD-ROM, *Gathering Native Alaska Music and Words*. Nora Dauenhauer,

a Tlingit from Southeast Alaska, was recognized for poetry in *Life Woven with Song*. Marie Meade, a Yup'ik of Nunapitcuar, was a translator and transcriber for Elders in the book *Agayuliyaraput: Kegginaqut, Kangiitllu, Our Way of Making Prayer: Yup'ik Masks and the Stories They Tell*.

Not present were Eliza Jones, a Koyukon Athabaskan of Koyukuk, who was being recognized for her non-fiction work on the *Koyukon Athabaskan Dictionary* and Lele Kiana Oman, an Iñupiaq of Noorvik and Nome, for her book based on traditional tales called *Epic of Qayaq*.

Nora Dauenhauer, Lucille Davis and Marie Meade accepted their awards. The other two recipients, Eliza Jones and Lele Kiana Oman, were not present so representatives accepted the awards for them. Each was presented a plaque with their name and Alaska Indigenous Literary Award of 2001 engraved on it. Masks decorating each plaque were crafted by Ben Snowball of Anchorage who explained the significance of each of the five



Three of the recent recipients of the Alaska Native Literature Award are pictured with their plaques: Lucille Davis, Nora Dauenhauer and Marie Meade.

different masks prior to presentation.

All recipients received standing ovations in recognition of their important work ensuring that an authentic Alaska Native legacy is passed to future generations through publication of their knowledge in varying genre and media. The celebration was momentous for Alaska Native people and many tears were shed.

Following the presentation, writers shared some of their works. Nora Dauenhauer read from her published works. Lucille Davis treated the audience to some stories of her childhood in Karluk on Kodiak Island. Marie Meade also spoke to the group.

Andy Hope of Southeast Alaska, a leader in organizing the event, shared some of his poetry and the stories surrounding production of those selections. Elders present honored Andy for his lifelong pursuit of writing, including his persistent effort at establishing this first award celebration of published indigenous literature.

A very exciting piece of Alaska history unfolded that night, the celebration of published literature by indigenous people who come from a traditionally oral society! ☆



# The Best of Both

by Alan Dick

In the late 70s our family moved to Aniak. I was rather surprised when I learned that the name of the Aniak basketball team is *Halfbreeds*, as I knew this is not a complimentary term in all parts of the nation.

I gently asked my children what the name of the team was and how they got that name. Surprisingly, our youngest son, who was only a first-grader said, "They are the *Aniak Halfbreeds* because they take the best of both."

During the recent ANSES State Science Fair, we truly saw the "best of both." All projects were firmly rooted in the local traditions, yet brought out the science processes and principles that are reflected in the state standards.

After a long grueling day of inter-

viewing and deliberating, the judges were invigorated and repeatedly thanked us for inviting them. Why? The projects were a beautiful synthesis of both worlds. There is an unmistakable energy that accompanies the natural learning process.

AKRSI alone did not make this happen. We merely created an arena where motivated village students and teachers could shine. We created a framework that fostered a cultural synthesis of local knowledge and textbook knowledge. The students brought the evidence.

It would have been instructive to capture the discussion on tape as the four Western science judges and the five Native Elders deliberated the "Best of Show" projects. Each nomination for Best of Show was defended by a judge in the presence of the others. The observations that were shared reflected the keen insights that students had exhibited.

Later, one of the Native Elders, who was normally very quiet, was so emphatic in making the case for a project that he stood, vigorously presented his view and even shook his finger. When he sat down, he was stunned, and apologized for being so forceful. We smiled and thanked the Elder for his insight. The student had spoken to the Elder's reality.

These moments happen only once in awhile, but with cultural and science interests high and everyone knowing what to expect next year, a new dynamic is certain. The best of both. Again. ☆

# ANSES State Science Fair Results

by Claudette Bradley

Following are the results of the second annual Alaska Native Science and Engineering Society state science fair. We had six projects that were grand prize winners. The "Best of Show" was a project on insulators submitted by Marjeena Griffin, a tenth-grade student from Kodiak. We had 27 projects from 10 villages and 44 students with 10 chaperones. Thirteen projects were done by individual students, while 14 projects were done by teams of 2 and 3 students. Eight projects were demonstrations and 19 were experiments. The fair ran smoothly and we all enjoyed the Camp Carlquist facilities. The food was good and there were lots of outdoor and indoor activities to keep everyone happy. ☆

Village	Experiment/Demo	Place	Project Title	Name	Grade
Kodiak	Individual Experiment	Best of Show	Insulators	Marjeena Griffin	10
Mekoryuk	Team Experiment	First	Tanning Reindeer Hides	Robert Bujan	8
Mekoryuk	Team Experiment	First	Tanning Reindeer Hides	Amanda Williams	8
Fort Yukon	Team Demonstration	Second	Trapping & Tanning Marten	Christopher Engler	7
Fort Yukon	Team Demonstration	Second	Trapping & Tanning Marten	Matthew Shewfelt	8
Crooked Creek	Team Experiment	Third	A Cold Body	Willaim Felker	8
Crooked Creek	Team Experiment	Third	A Cold Body	Elena John	12
McGrath	Individual Experiment	Fourth	Buckskin Fringes	Arianna Solie	6
Circle	Team Experiment	Fifth	Snow Shelter	Scott Asplund	9
Circle	Team Experiment	Fifth	Snow Shelter	John Carroll	6

# New Guidelines for Indigenous Languages and Child-Rearing

## Developed by Native Educators

Two new sets of guidelines have been developed addressing the strengthening of indigenous languages and the nurturing of culturally-healthy youth. One of the purposes of these guidelines is to offer assistance to people who are involved in indigenous language and child-rearing initiatives in their communities. The guidelines are organized around the role of various participants, including Elders, parents, classroom teachers, communities and young people. Native educators from throughout the state contributed to the development of these guidelines through a series of workshops and meetings associated with the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative.

The guidance offered by the guidelines is intended to encourage everyone to make more effective use of the heritage language and traditional parenting practices in the everyday life of the community and school. It is hoped that these guidelines will facilitate the coming together of the many cultural traditions and languages that coexist in Alaska in constructive, respectful and mutually beneficial ways.

Along with these guidelines are general recommendations aimed at stipulating the steps that need to be taken to achieve the goals for which the guidelines are intended. State and federal agencies, universities, school districts, families and Native communities are all encouraged to review their policies, programs and practices and to adopt these guidelines and recommendations wherever appropriate. In so doing, the educational experiences of students throughout Alaska will be enriched and the future well-being of the communities being served

will be enhanced.

Following is a summary of the areas of responsibility around which the Guidelines for Strengthening Indigenous Languages and the Guidelines for Nurturing Culturally-Healthy Youth are organized. The details for each area will be published in a booklet form and are currently available on the ANKN web site at [www.ankn.uaf.edu](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu).

### *Guidelines for Strengthening Indigenous Languages*

Respected **Native Elders** are the essential resources through whom the heritage language of a community and the meaning it is intended to convey can be learned.

**Parents** are the first teachers of their children and provide the foundation on which the language learn-

ing of future generations rests.

**Indigenous language learners** must take an active role in learning their heritage language and assume responsibility for the use of that language as contributing members of the family and community in which they live.

**Native communities and organizations** must provide a healthy and supportive environment that reinforces the learning and use of the heritage language on an everyday basis.

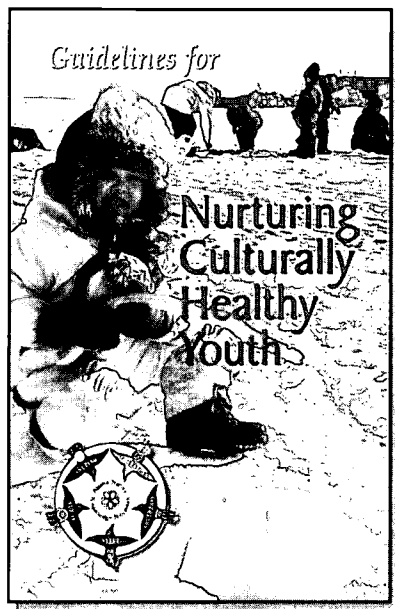
**Educators** are responsible for providing a supportive learning environment that reinforces the wishes of the parents and community for the language learning of the students in their care.

**Schools** must be fully engaged with the life of the communities they serve so as to provide consistency of expectations in all aspects of students lives.

**Education agencies** should provide a supportive policy, program and funding environment that encourages local initiative in the revitalization of the indigenous languages.

**Linguists** should assist local communities in the development of appropriate resource materials and teaching practices that nurture the use and perpetuation of the heritage language in each respective cultural community.

The **producers of mass media** should assume responsibility for providing culturally-balanced materials and programming that reinforce the use of heritage languages.



Guidelines for Nurturing Culturally-Healthy Youth and Guidelines for Strengthening Indigenous Languages will be available in the near future from the Alaska Native Knowledge Network. Meanwhile the guidelines can be viewed on the ANKN web site at <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu>.

## Guidelines for Nurturing Culturally-Healthy Youth

Respected Native Elders are the essential role models who can share the knowledge and expertise on traditional child-rearing and parenting that is needed to nurture the cultural well-being of today's youth.

Parents are the first teachers of their children and provide the foundation on which the social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual well-being of future generations rests.

Culturally-healthy youth take an active interest in learning their heritage and assume responsibility for their role as contributing members of the family and community in which they live.

Communities must provide a healthy and supportive environment that reinforces the values and behaviors its members wish to instill in their future generations.

Educators are responsible for providing a supportive learning environment that reinforces the cultural well-being of the students in their care.

Schools must be fully engaged with the life of the communities they serve so as to provide consistency of expectations in all aspects of students lives.

Child-care providers should draw upon Elders and other local experts to utilize traditional child-rearing and parenting practices that nurture the values and behaviors appropriate to the respective cultural community.

Youth services and juvenile justice agencies should provide a sup-

portive policy, program and funding environment that encourages local initiative in the application of traditional child-rearing and parenting practices.

Researchers should work with local communities to help document traditional child-rearing and parenting practices and explore their applicability to the upbringing of today's youth.

All citizens must assume greater responsibility for nurturing the diverse traditions by which each child grows to become a culturally-healthy human being.

Further information on issues related to the implementation of these guidelines, as well as copies of the complete guidelines may be obtained from the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, UAF, PO Box 756730, Fairbanks, AK 99775-6730, <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu>. ✪

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# Southeast Region

## Getting From Here to There: Vision for a Southeast Alaska Tribal College

by Ted A. Wright

I have been thinking about tribal colleges and what it will take to establish and maintain such an institution in Southeast Alaska. In other states where tribally-controlled colleges have been established, enrollment grew as academic and support programs were developed and as awareness of the tribal college advantage spread through the region. Even though my visits to tribal colleges have only been for a week or two, I have seen and heard a lot of evidence that they work. For example, one study showed that students who attend a tribal college:

- Take less time than others to graduate,
- Stay in school and finish more often than other enrolled students,
- Have an ending GPA that is half a point higher than mainstream graduates,
- Carry less debt with them after they have completed their studies and
- Are more likely to stay in or return to their home areas after graduation.

The author of this study believed that the benefits of tribal colleges result from the fact that they provide a non-competitive environment where group and cooperative learning is emphasized and in which hands-on, inquiry-based methods prevail. A Carnegie Foundation Report on tribal colleges concluded that most tribal college faculty practice instructional methods that recognize rather than ignore the importance of traditional ways of knowing and of Native culture. More to the point, the tribal colleges recognize that all students need more than technique and a degree to succeed in life. They need

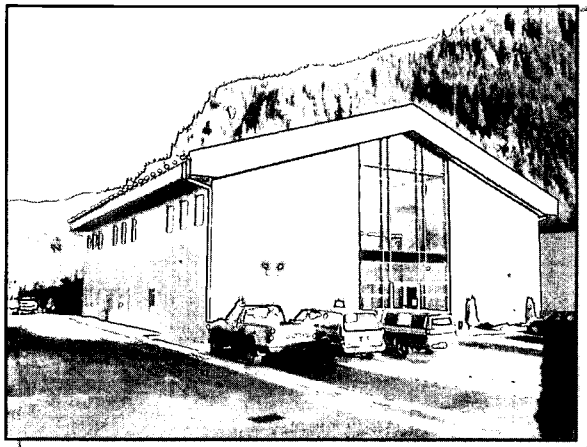
pride in their heritage and an understanding of who they are, as well as the belief that they can make valuable contributions to their families and communities. With this philosophy at the heart of their missions, tribal colleges offer classes specific to the cultures of the tribes they serve, as well as more general courses in Native studies and regular academic subjects. In this way, tribal college students gain a stronger sense of self while they earn a degree and take advantage of the opportunities higher education can provide. Many of them go on to successfully pursue further studies at mainstream institutions.

After hearing a message similar to this, a fellow member of an ANCSA corporation board on which I once served asked me why we would need a tribal college when existing institutions already have a hard time getting enough students through their doors. My answer then and now is that I believe there are a significant number of people in our educational system that want and need more than what the existing institutions have to offer. To be specific, I believe there are at

least three classes of students that Southeast Alaska Tribal College (SEATC) could serve, regardless of whether they are just out of high school or are adult learners:

- ◇ Those who want to take college classes and learn more about the world around them but from an Alaska Native cultural perspective. (These are continuing education students with academic or artistic/cultural rather than vocational interests.)
- ◇ Those who go to college with the intent to pursue a degree or certificate and are attracted to the tribal college because of its focus on Native culture and its abiding interest in their success. (These students would matriculate at the Southeast Alaska Tribal College and, depending on their goals, transfer to UAS or Sheldon Jackson College.)
- ◇ Those who would otherwise not view college as an option, either because their secondary school experience was not positive, or because they believe college is too hard. (For these students, the tribal college could work with high schools in a two-plus-two or charter-school-to-tribal-college program that is more in tune with their needs.)

The existence of this population is hard to prove by surveying people's opinions about what they might study or why current institutions have failed them. In fact, this is one of those times where you just have to have faith that, if you build it step-by-step, they will come. In my observations, most tribal colleges that have come into



*Southeast Alaska Tribal College Campus, Juneau*

existence have done so more as a result of someone's vision and faith than due to their collection and analysis of data. Still, the leadership of the tribal college movement in Alaska is working to compile basic data about the numbers of American Indian and Alaska Native students who drop out of high school, drop in and out of college over many years or exit college altogether. Even in the absence of definitive data, we know that too many of our students are not staying in school and are either not going to college or exiting after a certain point. If, as I claim, a tribal college is part of the solution to this problem, how do we get there from here?

My personal vision for Southeast Alaska Tribal College starts with the already-established Board of Trustees, which includes a significant number of Elders and is truly representative of our tribes. In terms of curriculum, I envision programs that align basic content with the cultural standards developed through the Alaska Federation of Natives, the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative and the regional Native Educator Associations. This kind of alignment is especially critical for training teachers and would necessarily be a part of programs offered to those who would teach Native language, culture and the arts. As far as how we would

teach, it is more true now than ever that our Elders and our Indian Education Program and JOM graduate's roles must be front-and-center with an eye toward institutionalization.

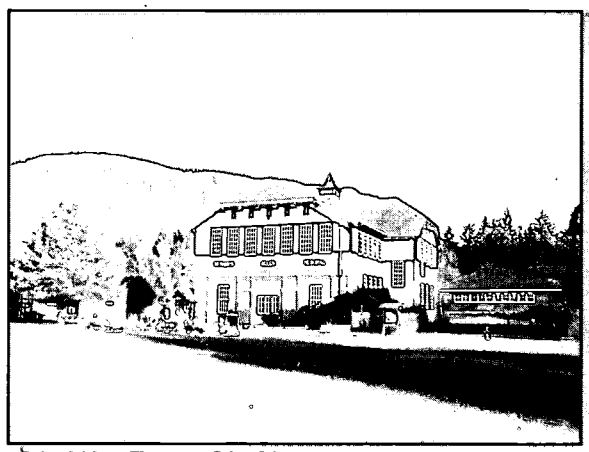
I also envision several Alaska Native charter schools throughout Southeast that would serve as a pipeline to the tribal college. The junior and senior year of the charter high-school ex-

perience would then include prerequisites for a SEATC Associate of Arts (AA) degree that is compatible with those offered by UAS and Sheldon Jackson College and articulates with their bachelor's degree programs but features an Alaska Native Studies emphasis and maintains a consistent focus on the relationship between Native and non-Native views of the world.

The question of whether there is a need for additional degrees and certificates beyond those already offered can only be answered as the SEATC management meets with regional employers and representatives of UAS and SJC. It is possible, for example, that the tribal college could offer specific classes within the UAS and SJC degree programs, at least to the extent that a Native perspective is seen as an advantage in the workplace for those degree/certificate seekers. Even apart from this kind of cooperative programming, I believe there is a niche for the Southeast Alaska Tribal College. Of course, the only way to prove this is to create the tribal college.

On a related note, I have observed

an interesting phenomenon in recent years, and I think it warrants a comment. The University of Alaska Southeast and Sheldon Jackson College, along with other colleges, universities and non-profit organizations in Alaska, continue to receive what will amount to many millions of dollars to recruit and retain Native students, train Native teachers, create curriculum that reflects Alaska Native values and to help largely Native districts improve their schools. These grants to "Alaska Native Serving Institutions" are almost always directed by non-Native individuals who, though good, honest people, do not have the whole benefit of our Native and tribal perspective. Plus, you have to ask yourself, when are we going to get to the point where these millions of dollars for Native programs will actually be provided to and controlled by tribal, Native organizations and insti-



*Sheldon Jackson College campus, Allen Auditorium*

tutions? We have made tremendous progress toward self-governance in areas like housing, health and social welfare; but in education we seem to lag behind. Perhaps I am too impatient and lack perspective. Then again, maybe this state of affairs needs to change and a tribal college is the best way to get there from here. ☆

# Athabascan Region

## What is happening in Old Minto this Summer?

In May and June, the Cultural Heritage and Education Institute (CHEI) will begin a project to improve the physical infrastructure in Old Minto to provide better shelter for the Elders while they participate in cultural heritage camps as well as create an environment conducive to year-round programs.

We have been fundraising for this project for over a year, and were fortunate to secure a top-off grant from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust in November 2000 which ensures funding for ten log-sided cabins. In addition, we are planning to construct a rustic dining area and kitchen facility. We are grateful for support from the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, the CIRI Heritage Foundation, the Rasmuson Foundation, Nenana Lumber and numerous local contributors too many to mention here! We have funding for the materials, but this is an ambitious project and we still need some help in the form of volunteer labor.

We are seeking service groups that would like to "adopt a cabin" and help build it; volunteers with construction skills or interested in learning construction; cooks familiar with outdoor cooking for a group; use of a small cat to clear land; donations or use of a generator, skill saw, drills, hand tools, vapor barriers, ten boxes each of eight- and sixteen-penny galvanized nails, food, gas and oil. Cash contributions are also welcome (tax exempt). CHEI will provide transportation from Nenana and food. All involved will be our invited guests for Potlatch Day in Old Minto on June 15.

CHEI offers cultural heritage camps for groups interested in cross-cultural learning and experiences. With these upgrades we hope to have a full camp

season. The Cross-Cultural Orientation Camp is planned for June 9-16, 2001. Contact Ray Barnhardt at UAF for more information about this course.

We can arrange camps for diverse groups, classes, meetings, retreats, workshops or other gatherings. Individuals can also attend one of our scheduled camps, depending on space availability.

For more information, contact:

CHEI  
P.O. Box 73030  
Fairbanks, AK 99707  
907-451-0923  
chei@mosquitonet.com  
www.ankn.uaf.edu/chei.

CHEI is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the Athabascan way of life and sharing it with others. We hope to see you in Old Minto this summer! ✨

## UAF Summer 2001 Program in Cross-Cultural Studies for Alaskan Educators

The Center for Cross-Cultural Studies, Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, Alaska Staff Development Network, UAF Summer Sessions and Bristol Bay Campus invite educators from throughout Alaska to participate in a series of two- and three-credit courses focusing on the implementation of the Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools. The courses may be taken individually or as a six-, nine- or twelve-credit sequence. The first three courses may be used to meet the state multicultural education requirement for licensure, and all may be applied to graduate degree programs at UAF.

### **Rural Academy for Culturally Responsive Schools**

May 26-30, 2001, Bristol Bay Campus, Dillingham, Alaska

### **Cross-Cultural Orientation Program for Teachers**

June 4-22, 2001 at UAF campus and Old Minto Camp

### **Native Ways of Knowing**

June 25-July 13, 2001 at UAF campus

### **Place-Based Education**

July 16-Aug. 3, 2001 at UAF campus

For further information about the Rural Academy, contact the UAF Bristol Bay Campus at 907-842-5483, 907-842-5692 (fax) or the Alaska Staff Development Network at 2204 Douglas Highway, Suite 100, Douglas, Alaska 99824, 907-364-3801 or 907-364-3805 (fax), e-mail: asdn@ptialaska.net, web site <http://www.asdn.org>.

For further information on the other courses offered in Fairbanks, please contact UAF Summer Sessions office at 907-474-7021 or on the web at <http://www.uaf.edu/summer>. ✨

# Iñupiaq Region

## News from Northwest Alaska

by Branson Tungiyán

I would like to express my deep and sincere appreciation for having the opportunity to serve the people of the Bering Strait Region for the past two years at Kawerak. The next five years will be even more challenging as the regional coordinator for the Iñupiaq Region—from Unalakleet to Point Barrow. But, as long as it means helping the Native community, the school kids and the people, it makes the challenges a lot less, knowing that this is for the benefit of Alaska Natives.

I have been working at Kawerak, Inc. for the past two years as the program director for the Eskimo Heritage Program. The mission statement of the Eskimo Heritage Program is “to document and preserve the Bering Strait Region’s culture, heritage and traditions of the three Native groups and to expand the Eskimo Heritage Program’s collection to the people and the villages.”

I have been working on individual Elder interviews and putting them into a computerized database. This has been like attending a bilingual education class, as I go through the transcriptions of all the wonderful stories, legends and traditional knowledge that each Elder exemplifies in their interviews. To me, this is truly the “link from the past, to the present and to the future.” Whether the interviews are from an Iñupiaq Elder, Central Yup’ik Elder or a St. Lawrence Island Yupik Elder, the cultural values spoken are the same.

This brings me to the new position I am involved in with the AFN/Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI). Phase II of AKRSI is “bringing schools and communities together in rural Alaska.” This will be done by implementing the ten initiatives on a re-

gion-by-region basis over the next five years. For example, the Iñupiaq Region will be working on the Village Science Applications and Alaska Native Science and Engineering Society (ANSES) this year. The Iñupiat have already gone through some of this by attending cultural camps and working on their science fair projects with the Elders in the communities and

with the schools in the districts.

The AKRSI is about education, working with the community, the schools and the children. This not only involves the children in the villages in the school districts, but also the youth in the tribal colleges. We will also be working with Native educators within each respective region. The focus of the AKRSI Phase II will build on the successes of the initiatives that were implemented in Phase I.

Culture is the core of every Native group in this great state of Alaska. It brings the true meaning of being Alaska Native. The ability to have survived the harsh environment and climate over thousands of years proves that culture is the core of any Native group that sustains the life of its people. This gives the people heritage and tradition as an identity to continue and pass on to generation after generation for its survival as indigenous people. It gives me pleasure to be working as a part of this process with my fellow Alaska Natives. ✧

## Welcome to the New Regional Coordinators

from Frank Hill, Oscar Kawagley and Ray Barnhardt,  
Co-Directors of Alaska RSI

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the AKRSI family for Branson Tungiyán (Nome), John Angaiak (Bethel) and Velma Schafer (Fairbanks), as well as a welcome back for Andy Hope (Juneau) and Teri Schneider (Kodiak). These people have taken on the role of regional coordinator for their respective regions as we move into Phase II of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative. We also thank the regional non-profits for taking on the responsibility of coordinating the AKRSI activities across their cultural regions, along with the sponsorship of the regional tribal college initiatives. We look forward to a strong and continuing partnership with the Elders, communities and schools throughout rural Alaska. Contact information for each of the regional coordinators is provided on page nine of this newsletter. ✧

# Yup'ik Region

## Alaska Native Village Education

by John P. Angaiak

*John's article was first published in Tundra Drums, October 19, 2000, vol 28 number 31.*

When and where do we begin? On education, I think we know when to start — at the birth of a child and it does not matter where on earth you live. The philosophy of education is highly politicized and emotional today. Along the way, parents learn that the way a child views education early on is a mirror image of the way his parents look at it. The child's attitude toward education is reflective of the attitude of his/her parents.

There is more than one way to look at education. It is a personalized, family affair. Some parents sacrifice their time and effort for the education of their children. Others may look at it only as an alternative option to subsistence, or enough to get by. It seems that we develop a better perception of education when we get older. Adults have a better understanding of how it was then and how it is now.

I grew up with a strong subsistence-oriented education, though I entered Western schooling before 1950. The first school in my village was a BIA school. Our parents only had what they learned from their own hands and subsistence experience. Their kind of education was learning skills for survival. For boys, it was knowledge of a vast area of terrain, hunting skills, the sea and weather. To know these skills meant being a good provider for their family. The girls mastered skills from their mothers on how to make *mukluks* and parkas, to sew, prepare food and take care of hunting needs. The girls knew how to complement what their husbands provided. They were partners for life. All this was obtained by hands-on experience from their parents and Elders, so clear that their children

knew what they would become in the next decade.

When Western education arrived, it did not change who I was as a person. It created an opportunity to expand my subsistence education. It meant that I could strive to master a subsistence education and master Western education too—to survive in a different lifestyle. We will always be Alaska Natives and speak more than one language, regardless of where we are living. We will always be attached to a subsistence lifestyle. In fact, modern education helps you better understand subsistence, to appreciate it, to understand its weaknesses and strengths and, above all, how it defines who you are.

Our attitude toward Western education should not be different from subsistence education. We should treat them both equally as important to our survival. They should complement each other. It is here that I want to make my point. Western education is here to stay. We should make the best of it and take advantage of it. There is no way getting around it.

The facts, figures and politics of education are not what I want to talk about. It is about our general attitude. I believe we need not fear for the

future of our children anymore. Sometimes what we say at statewide gatherings on education is not what we say about education at home. We pass resolutions directing our leaders to solve our Native education problems. We seem to blame the system for our weaknesses.

Somewhere in the corner of each village, silent parents reside whose children are known to be above the norm in school. The parents never seem to do anything different, but they make sure their children are dressed well for winter, eat well, do their homework and are in bed by nine o'clock. They don't blame the system.

What makes the silent parents different? They truly give attention to their children. They talk to them freely, all in their Yup'ik language, because they never went to school. They encourage their children to excel in school, listen to the teachers, do homework and go to bed on time. Such parents believe education starts at home. They want their children to have better opportunities. The children feel comfortable. The children are encouraged to feel that they could go far with a good education. Parents are right there with them. Education is fun. Parents give their children the right attitude and the freedom to be educated in subsistence and beyond. The children feel they can now return all the love and care their parents gave. It is about respect between parents and children.

These parents have never been to the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention. They were too poor and could not afford all the conveniences of the modern life. They only knew how to provide for their children the best they could. Their reward was that most of their children graduated from the universities and all have jobs now. These traditional parents never liked to be confused with the philosophies of education. They would lose their



sense of direction when people of high thinking started talking about the best way to educate children. Their rules were simple: to read, write and excel in mathematics and science. Beyond that, it was elective.

To read, write and excel in mathematics and science are the core of a universal education. All the children of the world are being drawn to the core, down to the smallest village. Education is here to stay.

Our ancestors were committed to making sure their children knew how to provide for their own so that they would survive in their time. We should have the same grasp about survival today as our ancestors did about surviving in their time. This century belongs to our children. They should fit well in this century. As parents, our time was yesterday.

What about the changing world all around us? We may someday need two earths to sustain the world population with its staggering growth rate. The explosive world population is now on the move everywhere. Most often its masses are highly educated. They can take jobs in our villages while we can't make up our minds about educating our children for future jobs. Everywhere around the world people are talking about survival, at any cost.

If we don't change our attitudes toward education now, we cannot be partners with the rest of the changing world. Education will not change our status as Alaska Natives, but it will gain us respect for our unique culture as an educated society and help us to be partners in the changing world. We have to make a move on education. We should not corner ourselves in our own villages. The world has nothing for us unless we take education seriously. We should not lose our language, the way we do things and who we are. Such an education is not for the privileged few. It's okay to be educated twice. ✨

# Yup'ik Science Fair Report

by Yurriq Nita Rearden

L KSD and Alaska Federation of Natives had an agreement to work with the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative to sponsor an AISES (American Indian Science & Engineering Society) Science Fair in the Yup'ik Region. On January 25 and 26 a Yup'ik science fair took place at the cultural center. I coordinated the fair. Out of ten school districts in the Central Yup'ik region, only two participated: Kuspuk and LKSD. We had two groups representing LKSD. Teacher Jeff Ralston brought two students from Mekoryuk and teacher Nicole Pugh worked with two students from Bethel Regional Junior High. Kuspuk School District had a total of five entries from Crooked Creek and Upper Kalskaq. The teachers, Elizabeth Ruff and Shannon O'Brien, chaperoned their students. There were a total of seven projects.

I want to share my experience and thoughts while working with teachers from LKSD. Julie McWilliams, Health and Science Education Specialist from the Academics Department, helped with the fair handbook and communicated with the science teachers trying to spark their interest in the fair. I was happy to work with Julie sharing ideas and information about how vital it is to have our teachers understand the environmental resources available for Native science experiments. We received some information from the teachers that the time to produce a finished project was limited for the fair. Yet, some also had problems in getting information from Elders in the communities, or did not know how to go about it. In addition, since our district is focused on benchmark testing for reading, writing and math, science teachers may have thought that they don't have the time to participate. It sounded like a Na-

tive science fair was just another thing to do!

There seems to be some missing linkage for bridging Western science education from a Yup'ik world. Yup'ik culture has many science resources and experiences that students attain while growing up in their subsistence life style. Unfortunately, not all students experience subsistence activities in their villages due to changing circumstances. The whole environment of a student includes survival skills, geographical knowledge of the area, subsistence fishing and hunting and weather as well as the home environment, where a student may learn to make items such as clothing and subsistence material made from natural resources. The students learn their Native knowledge well by the time they reach the upper elementary level or junior high, if given the opportunity. The information that the

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 students learn is usually embedded in their knowledge for the rest of their lives. This is a real science life!

The question is how do we connect the teachers who are not from our region to students' prior knowledge from growing up in the LKSD region? I think one of the ways would be to revisit Yuuyaraq curriculum and have the Yup'ik teachers work with the science teachers at their sites. Another idea would be to allow teachers to observe and work with local resource teachers to learn, understand and comprehend the knowledge that the Elders and students share at cultural camps.

When I mentioned the idea of revisiting the Yuuyaraq curriculum to Bev Williams, she indicated that she wanted to look for funding to make the idea work. Julie McWilliams mentioned that she would like to research raising benchmark testing by working with teachers using hands-on science. I'm glad to see support coming from the Academics Department. It will take a group effort to make these

ideas work. LKSD provides support for activities that help students learn in a meaningful way.

Just imagine Robert Bujan and Amanda Williams, the students from Nuniwaarmiut School in Mekoryuk who participated in the Native science fair: they now have life-long memories and knowledge about tanning reindeer. They will be sharing their findings with the community by demonstrating which is the best tanning solution to use on the reindeer skins. The students received the grand prize award at the regional fair and again at the state level. They will now have a chance to participate at the National AISES Science Fair! Another group of students who received a grand prize award from the Yup'ik region were from Crooked Creek with a project about hypothermia titled, "A Cold Body." The two students, William Felker and Elena John, also won at the state level and will go to the national competition. The knowledge that the students learned and shared is valued by Elders in the community to help them understand and

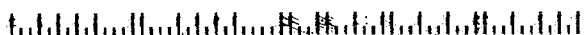
improve the lifestyles in the villages.

I would also like to congratulate and thank the second- and third-place winners for participating in the fairs: "The Energy of Light" with Mae Mute, Jennifer Frink and Mane Darris; "On Fire" with Nastasia Andreanoff and Roxanne Sakar; "When the Lights Go Out" with Jessica Athanas and Elizabeth Dostert; "Chills of the Camp Fire" with Leona Inman and "We Drink It: Water!" with Raymond Parent. Most importantly, I want to let the teachers who took the time to work with their students know they are greatly appreciated! Elder judges for the Yup'ik Region Native Science Fair were Peter Gilila from Tuluksak and Cecilia Martz from Bethel. Science judges were Claudette Bradley and Gene Peltola. Community members of Bethel, including U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Lower Kuskokwim School District and Bethel Regional High School are also thanked for their involvement. *Quyana cakneq tamarpetci!* ✧

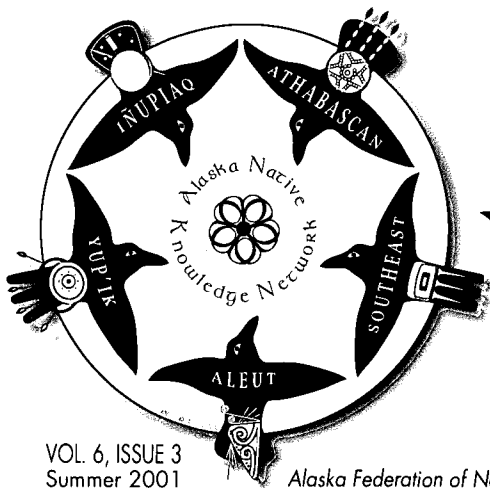
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# Sharing Our Pathways

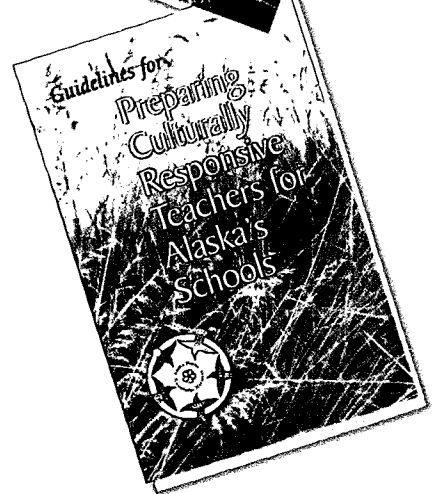
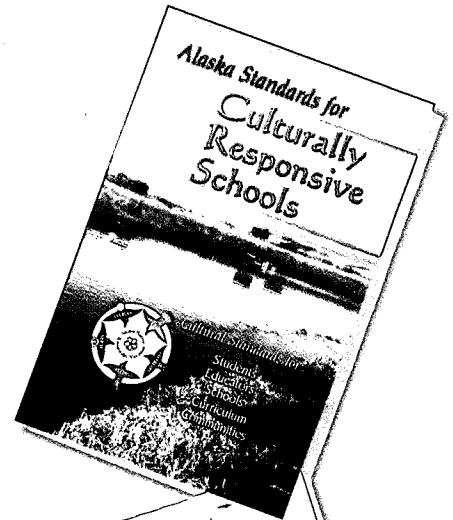
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Summer 2001

A newsletter of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative  
Alaska Federation of Natives ♦ University of Alaska ♦ National Science Foundation ♦ Rural School and Community Trust

## AKRSI Holds Forum on Culturally-Responsive Curriculum

by Frank Hill, Oscar Kawagley and Ray Barnhardt

On March 26–28, 2001, over 50 educators from across the state gathered in Anchorage for a forum on culturally-responsive curriculum sponsored by the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI). A dedicated group of Elders, Native educators and others actively involved in curriculum initiatives associated with the AKRSI spent three days reviewing current curriculum efforts and outlining steps for future development.

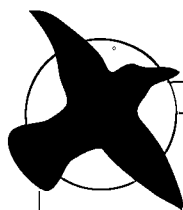


Given the many new state mandates, school reform initiatives and ongoing challenges that school districts are grappling with today, it seemed an opportune time to step back and reflect on where we are and where we want to go with Native education in Alaska. The focus of the curriculum forum was to take a look at how education programs and services can best be positioned to push our curriculum development efforts beyond just developing more culturally-appropriate "units" and exploring what a broader culturally-responsive curriculum "framework" might look like and then to build on this to determine where the AKRSI resources can be best put to use over the next few years. In addition to

*(continued on next page)*

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### Sharing Our Pathways

is a publication of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, funded by the National Science Foundation Division of Educational Systemic Reform in agreement with the Alaska Federation of Natives and the University of Alaska. We welcome your comments and suggestions and encourage you to submit them to:

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going over existing materials and models, we explored what it means for curriculum and instruction when attempting to operationalize the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools*, and what kind of support is needed to move that process forward. Along with presentations on many exciting regional curriculum development initiatives from around the state by participants from each of the five cultural regions, reports were made on the following current statewide programs and initiatives:

- ◇ Orientation to ANKN SPIRAL Curriculum Resources/Web Site: Sean Topkok
- ◇ Curriculum Resources at [www.alaskool.org](http://www.alaskool.org): Paul Ongtooguk
- ◇ Innuqatagiit/Dene Kede Curriculum Models: Cathy McGregor, Nunavut
- ◇ Handbook for Culturally-Responsive Science Curriculum: Sidney Stephens
- ◇ Translating Science Standards into Practice: Cyndy Curran
- ◇ Village Science/Alaska Native Science and Engineering Society: Alan Dick
- ◇ GLOBE Project: Sidney Stephens
- ◇ Subsistence Contaminants Curriculum Project: Marvin Bailey, Patricia Cochran
- ◇ Alaska Challenger Project: Daniela Martian
- ◇ Carnegie Math Tutor Initiative: Bev Smith
- ◇ Cooperative Extension Fisheries Project: Peter Stortz, Zelma Axford
- ◇ Cultural Atlas Initiative: Sean Topkok
- ◇ ARCTIC Technology Initiative: John Rusyniak

Following status reports on the various regional and statewide initiatives, the participants turned their attention to developing recommendations for action plans around three

focal areas. Following is a summary of the recommendations put forward for follow-up actions in each of the focal areas (no order of priority was established):

### **Group 1: Develop local and regional strategies for school districts to implement culturally-responsive curriculum.**

This group was to prepare an action plan outlining strategies to guide district-level curriculum initiatives and regional collaboration aimed at improving the cultural responsiveness of school curricula. Recommendations of this group included:

1. The AKRSI regional coordinators should organize a "Regional Curriculum Forum" in conjunction with the regional planning meetings in the fall.
2. The AKRSI staff should work with the regional Native educator associations to develop a CD-ROM template that provides a locally-adaptive framework to facilitate culturally-aligned curriculum development.
3. AKRSI should develop a "Talent Bank" of knowledgeable Native educators who are available to provide culturally-appropriate professional development for teachers, administrators, schools and districts.
4. AKRSI, Native educator associations and AASB should provide assistance for local school boards to develop a vision for implementing culturally-responsive schools (e.g., AOTE process).
5. AKRSI staff should assist in developing a network of curriculum development expertise to assist local schools and districts in implementing the cultural standards for curriculum.
6. State, regional and village corporations and foundations should provide political support and in-

vestment for strengthening the role of schools in local communities.

7. AFN should work with the Native educator associations to promote educational policies that support the implementation of culturally-responsive schools throughout the state.
8. The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development and AKRSI should use school district report card data and the cultural standards to document the relationship between culturally-responsive curriculum and issues associated with student achievement.
9. School districts should establish locally-knowledgeable teams of teachers, Elders and aides to promote culturally-responsive curriculum in the schools.
10. The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development and AKRSI should establish a procedure for a cadre of Quality School consultants who can assist schools in developing "school improvement plans" based on the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools*.

**Group 2: Develop statewide strategies for supporting school districts in implementing culturally-responsive curriculum.**

This group was to prepare an action plan outlining statewide strategies to guide the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development and the University of Alaska in providing support to schools for implementation of culturally-responsive curricula. Recommendations of this group included:

1. Support for curriculum initiatives should focus on those school districts that have the greatest need and are most receptive to implementing new approaches so as to

achieve the greatest demonstration effect and impact.

2. AKRSI should organize the curriculum resources and technical assistance that are available to schools seeking to become more culturally responsive into a package of support services that can be tailored to meet school district needs.
3. The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development should provide incentives for school districts to implement cultural orientation programs for new teachers as part of their annual in-service plan submitted to EED. The orientation program should include an extended camp experience and an "Adopt-a-Teacher" program.
4. The University of Alaska and EED should make available a "cross-cultural specialist" endorsement for teachers built around the criteria outlined in the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools* and the *Guidelines for Preparing Culturally-Responsive Teachers*.
5. The UA system should develop a unified approach for the delivery of performance-based elementary and secondary teacher preparation programs and degrees to rural Alaska, with a particular focus on the professional development of the 700-plus teacher aides in rural schools.
6. All teacher preparation programs should fully incorporate the *Guidelines for Preparing Culturally-Responsive Teachers* and prepare teachers who are equipped to work with communities in implementing the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools*.
7. The *Guidelines for Preparing Culturally-Responsive Teachers* and the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools* should serve as the basis for the review and ap-

proval of courses to be used to meet the state Multicultural Education and Alaska Studies requirements.

8. The school designator criteria being established by EED should include an assessment of the extent to which the ethnic composition of a school's professional staff is proportional to the ethnic composition of the students being served, and if they are disproportional, the school improvement plan should indicate how such a balance will be achieved.
9. AKRSI should work with the Alaska EED to develop a process and support structure to assist schools designated as low-performing in the development of school improvement plans consistent with the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools*.
10. A cadre of Culturally-Responsive Quality Schools consultants should be established who are fully knowledgeable in all aspects of the implementation of the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools* to assist districts in the development of culturally-appropriate school improvement plans. Areas of CRQSC expertise should include the following:
  - multiple standards for measuring school success;
  - appropriate methods for assessing local educational needs;
  - history of alternative approaches to school structure in Alaska;
  - role and practices of successful administrators;
  - procedures for developing and implementing a local plan of action;
  - strategies for parent, community and staff involvement;
  - relevant aspects of school law and state regulations;

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- alternative school staffing and scheduling arrangements and
  - techniques for systematic observation and analysis of school practices.
11. Information on the beneficial effects of the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools* on student achievement should be made available in multiple ways to schools and communities.
  12. AKRSI should work with the Native educator associations to develop a set of guidelines for culturally-responsive school boards and to orient superintendents to the strategies for implementing the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools*.
  13. Appropriate resources and training should be made available to ensure that the history of Alaska Native peoples is fully integrated in all Alaska and U.S. history courses in an accurate and representative manner.
  14. AKRSI should seek funds to provide support for Native educator associations to become more actively involved in all aspects of policy- and decision-making regarding education in Alaska.
  15. The Alaska Federation of Natives, the Native corporations, the First Alaskans Foundation, the Denali Commission and the Consortium for Alaska Native Higher Education should take a proactive role in support of integrating the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools* and associated guidelines in all aspects of education in Alaska.
  16. All of the recommendations derived from the Forum on Culturally-Responsive Curriculum should be reviewed on a region-by-region basis to formulate appropriate regional action plans for their implementation.

**Group 3: Develop strategies for regional Native educator associations to play an active role in implementing culturally-responsive curriculum.**

This group was to prepare an action plan outlining strategies to guide the involvement of regional Native educator associations in the development and implementation of culturally-responsive curricula. Recommendations of this group included:

1. The regional Native educator associations should work closely with local and regional corporations to establish ongoing Elders councils (e.g., Calista Elders Council) to provide guidance at all levels in implementing the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools*.
2. The Native educator associations should work with Elders to document traditional ways of knowing and terminologies not used in everyday conversation to make them available for use in curriculum materials development.
3. The Native educator associations and AKRSI should organize grant-writing workshops for teachers to obtain funds for curriculum and teacher training initiatives.
4. AKRSI should set up a section of the ANKN web site listing grant opportunities and guidelines for funding Native education initiatives.
5. Native educator associations should utilize the ERIC Clearinghouse to obtain current information on research related to American Indian/Alaska Native education issues (<http://www.ael.org/erichp.htm>).
6. Regional Native educator associations should utilize the Cook Inlet Tribal Council resource materials to support recruitment and placement of Native teachers and administrators.

7. Native educator associations should assist teachers in developing the proper protocol and practices for working with Elders in a culturally-appropriate educational capacity, including effective use of the *Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge*.
8. School districts should include Native educators in all curriculum discussions with the explicit responsibility of promoting the incorporation of the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools* in all aspects of education programs.
9. Native educator associations should incorporate as 501(c)3 non-profit organizations so they can secure and manage funding for their own initiatives.
10. Native educator associations should each host a minimum of two to three audioconference meetings per year to provide an opportunity for members to identify current issues, voice concerns and formulate strategies.
11. Native educator associations should assist graduate students in identifying appropriate topics for research projects and theses that will contribute to the educational needs of the state.

The recommendations outlined above are intended to serve as the basis for more detailed action plans by the designated organizations. We wish to express appreciation to all the participants in the Forum on Culturally-Responsive Curriculum for contributing their valuable time and insights to this effort. We invite everyone with an interest in these issues to offer additional ideas and suggestions for how the action plans can be further strengthened so that we can look forward to a bright future for education in rural Alaska. ✨

# Native Education Advisory Council to the Commissioner

*Bernice B. Tetpon, Rural/Native Education Liaison*

The Alaska State Board Action Plan on Native Student Learning includes a provision that the Department of Education & Early Development "establish a Native Education council to advise the commissioner." The Native Education Advisory Council's purpose is to focus on the improvement of the quality of instruction so it meets the needs of our Native students.

Members include: Esther A. Ilutsik, Ciulistet Research Association; Moses Dirks, Unangan Educators Association; Sophie Shield, Association of the Native Educators of the Lower Kuskokwim; Lolly Carpluk, Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative; Andy Hope, Southeast Native Educators Association; Oscar Kawagley, Alaska First Nations Research Network; Frank Hill, Co-Director, AKRSI, Alaska Federation of Natives; Dorothy Larson, Consortium for Alaska Native Higher Education; Cecilia Martz, Retired Indigenous Professors Association; Teri Schneider, Native Educators of the Alutiiq Region; Martha Stackhouse, North Slope Iñupiaq Educators Association; Nita Rearden, Alaska Native Education Council; Sam Towarak, Bering Straits Region Native Educators and Carol Lee Gho, Association of Interior Native Educators. Bernice B. Tetpon, Rural/Native Education Liaison, is the contact person at the Department of Education & Early Development for the Council.

The Council will be meeting via audio conference this year. Many topics that are discussed come from the initiatives developed by the Native Educator Associations and the Alaska Federation of Natives resolutions passed during the annual convention. Discussions surround the initiatives and resolutions and their impact on

educational policies, regulation and funding with recommendations to the commissioner.

During the first meeting, March 9, 2001, Oscar Kawagley was nominated to chair the Native Education Advisory Council to the Commissioner. Topics of discussion included:

## *Guidelines for Nurturing Culturally- Healthy Youth*

Guidelines for Nurturing Culturally-Healthy Youth and designation of the Department of Education & Early Development's involvement with follow up activities to be determined at a later date.

## *Guidelines for Strengthening Indigenous Languages*

Discussion centered on Senate Bill 103: An act relating to a curriculum for Native language education. Several districts are using the guidelines developed at the October 2001 Alaska Native Language Forum to develop the Native Language Advisory Committees. These are: home language

survey, rationale of current program; description of delivery model and description of resources

## *Cross-Cultural Education Specialist Endorsement*

It was recommended that new teachers could benefit from this course as part of their professional development and a salary increase as an incentive. Summer institutes as well as learning from the natural environment will be a part of the activities.

## *Discussion—AFN Resolutions*

The council reviewed AFN Resolutions 00-11 through 00-16. Included was a discussion on the AFN Resolution 00-11 requiring that Alaska history be taught in the schools of Alaska and House Bill 171 which is an act relating to a curriculum for Alaska history with a Native studies component. Each Council member requested to review HB 171 to provide input.

The April 2, 2001 meeting focused on unfinished business from the March 9 meeting. The results were that the council is recruiting Native Educators as Quality School consultants. The council will also recruit Native Educators to participate in the development of story problems on the Carnegie Algebra I Tutor addendum.

The next audio conference is scheduled for May 25, 2001. ☆

# New Graduate Program Emphasizes Indigenous Knowledge

by Ray Barnhardt and Oscar Kawagley

A new Master of Arts degree in Cross-Cultural Studies with an emphasis on indigenous knowledge systems was approved by the UA Board of Regents on March 9, 2001. The program, to be offered by UAF, is designed to provide graduate students from various fields of interest an opportunity to pursue in-depth study focusing on the role and contributions of indigenous knowledge in the contemporary world.

The new M.A. program will provide a means to expand our knowledge base in areas that have received only limited attention in the past, as well as to document and pass that knowledge on to future generations in a culturally sensitive way. The intent of the program is to incorporate and contribute to newly emerging bodies of scholarship that have much to offer in addressing critical needs of the state. It will be available to students throughout Alaska by distance education in combination with intensive seminars and summer courses on campus.

Graduates of the program will be expected to bring greater depth and breadth of cultural understanding to many of the complex social issues and fields of endeavor that shape Alaska today, especially those involving cross-cultural considerations and utilizing indigenous knowledge systems (e.g., education, ecological studies, natural resources, health care, community development, social services, justice, Native studies, etc.) Students will be required to demonstrate their ability to work effectively with indigenous people in their studies and to complete a final cultural documentation project in collaboration with knowledgeable Elders. New courses have been developed in the following

areas, to be offered throughout the state each year by distance education, along with other courses that will be available to meet degree requirements:

## **CCS 601, Documenting Indigenous Knowledge**

The course will provide students with a thorough grounding in the research methodologies and issues associated with documenting and conveying the depth and breadth of indigenous knowledge systems and their epistemological structures. Included will be a survey of oral and literate data-gathering techniques, a review of various modes of analysis and presentation, and practical experience in a real-life setting.

## **CCS 602, Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights**

The course will examine issues associated with recognizing and respecting the cultural and intellectual property rights associated with the documentation, publication and display of knowledge, practices, beliefs and artifacts associated with particular cultural traditions. Appropriate research principles, ethical guidelines and legal protections will be reviewed for their application to cross-cultural studies.

## **CCS 608, Indigenous Knowledge Systems**

The course will provide students with a comparative survey and analysis of the epistemological properties, world views and modes of transmission associated with various indigenous knowledge systems, with an emphasis on those practiced in Alaska.

## **CCS 612, Traditional Ecological Knowledge**

The course will examine the acquisition and utilization of knowledge associated with the long-term inhabitation of particular ecological systems and the adaptations that arise from the accumulation of such knowledge. Attention will be given to the contemporary significance of traditional ecological knowledge as a complement to academic disciplinary fields of study.

## **Admissions requirements**

1. Applicants should have at least two years of experience related to the area of applied study.
2. Applicants should have a bachelor's degree in an approved area of study as determined by the faculty's admissions committee. The committee may recommend provisional admittance subject to completion of specified requirements.
3. Admission will be contingent upon:
  - a. A minimum GPA of 3.00 in previous undergraduate work  
— or —

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# Our Clothing, Our Culture, Our Identity

## Keynote Address to the Arctic Clothing Conference, British Museum, London, England, March, 2001

by Veronica Dewar, President, Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association

I would like to begin by thanking the organizers of this conference for giving me the opportunity to address you today. I would also like to acknowledge the many other Inuit women from Canada who are here with us. I am often the only Inuk at gatherings like this, so I would like to thank the British Museum for ensuring there was not only token representation of Inuit from Canada.

Pauktuutit is the national organization that represents all Inuit women in Canada. There are approximately 60,000 Inuit in Canada who live primarily in the six Arctic regions: the Western Arctic, Kitikmeot, Kivalliq, Qikiqtaaluk, Nunavik and the north coast of Labrador.

Pauktuutit was incorporated in 1984 to address a range of social and health issues that were not being addressed by other Inuit organizations in Canada. At that time, we were deep in negotiations of land claim settlements and other matters of national significance to Inuit.

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- Acceptable scores on the Graduate Record Examination general test.
- b. Submission of graduate application, transcripts of previous work, three letters of reference and a three-page statement of intent.
- c. A satisfactory review conducted by an admissions committee composed of faculty from the Center for Cross-Cul-

Our work has focused on the priorities of women, which have tended to relate to ending violence in our communities and restoring Inuit ownership and control of our culture, our wisdom and our futures.

As the national representative of Inuit women in Canada, Pauktuutit regularly addresses issues related to traditional knowledge. As an example, Pauktuutit completed a major project on traditional child birthing and midwifery involving over 75 interviews of Inuit women and midwives describing over 500 births. Key objectives were to document and preserve

tural Studies and Department of Alaska Native Studies (may include a personal interview by the committee.)

For further information about the M.A. in Cross-Cultural Studies, contact the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies (907-474-1902), the Department of Alaska Native Studies (907-474-7181) or go to the CXCS web site at <http://www.uaf.edu/cxcs>. ☆



Dixie Masak Dayo (Alaska) gave a presentation at the ACC titled "How Do We Heal?" featuring her story dress. The dress is about values and is a tribute to the Alaska Natives and her father who taught her a traditional education.

this knowledge and to introduce it to the modern medical profession.

I would like to share some personal experiences and perspectives on the importance of our clothing and designs to us as Inuit. I will then tell you about some of our recent activities, both within Canada and internationally, and what we hope to accomplish in terms of protecting our traditional knowledge and intellectual property as it relates to the *amauti*.

The personal comments I am about to share with you first appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen*, a local daily paper in Ottawa, Ontario where I now live.

When I was growing up in Coral Harbour, Southampton Island, traditional Inuit design was a natural part of my life; these were everyday garments. My mother had 13 children and she couldn't leave them to fend for themselves; she had to use the *amauti* to carry them. The *amauti* was always around. I even had one as a little girl to carry puppies in. The

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*amauti* has existed and been passed down from generation to generation.

We couldn't afford to buy expensive clothes. The government social assistance we received was not enough. But my mother made caribou clothing for my father and brother. She made things from sealskin, use fox and wolf fur to protect the face from the elements and made mitts out of rabbit skin. Everything was made from skins from our surroundings. In a harsh, cold environment we needed these superb garments for survival.

I remember looking through Sears' and Eaton's catalogues when I was about eight or nine back in the '50s. I really liked the big full skirts and the fur muffs. We wanted to buy the things we saw, but there was no way of making money to get them. In Coral Harbour, the priests would get boxes of secondhand clothes and we would look through them. We found sweaters and skirts and warm clothing, but nothing as nice as what we saw in the catalogues. My sister used to make me skirts. I remember a dress my sister made me with a big, full skirt and it used to swing around when I danced.

When you are exposed to another culture, you get interested in new things. I went to school in Churchill, Manitoba and then in Ottawa. And I traveled overseas and was exposed to other cultures. I went back home at the beginning of the '70s and started working for land claims organizations as an interpreter. I started to question what I was doing. "Why am I not doing more to help my people?" I asked myself. "Do they understand their rights and what opportunities they have?"

I got involved in local politics and I traveled around the North to different regions. I dressed mainly in Western clothes, but when I went back home, all my sisters sewed well and they would make me many traditional garments. I began to see the beauty in them: They were appropriate, warm

and well designed, but beyond that they were part of our identity. In fact, they are really in demand now. More and more Inuit are wearing traditional clothes. Even some white people who move up North wear them now too.

Also, you have to have a good salary to buy Western-style material, so sometimes it's easier to use caribou skins. You can wear them as reversible garments—one way with fur outside and one way with the fur inside.

I think what some non-Inuit fashion designers have been doing with our designs is disrespectful. If they would see how they are really used up North, I believe they would think twice about how they're appropriating the designs. I've seen some non-Inuit try to sell their own version of Inuit design but it's often a distortion. For instance, a non-Inuit woman designed an *amauti* and normally the front is shorter than the back, which is longer and gives you room to move and keeps your legs warm from the back. But this lady made the back very short and started to wear it herself; she was selling them as authentic Inuit designs, but they weren't. When the Inuit women saw that, they said, "Why can't we stop that? It's misrepresentation and it distorts the very nature of it." It's sad, I think, because the garments—all pieces of the *amauti*, for example—have a meaning to them. The design is complicated. Every piece has a name; each section has a name and a purpose to it. For instance, with the *amauti* you can carry the baby in the back or if you want to breastfeed, you put your arms inside and you can roll the *amauti* backward to take the baby inside. If you distort that design, it becomes meaningless because you can't actually do any of those things. That is what it's all about.

It would be best if designers consulted with us instead of just stealing our designs and patterns. We want recognition that these are our designs and we want to know what they are doing with them. It's part of a general

recognition of Inuit culture and a way to increase awareness of our culture.

We recently had the experience of a representative of Donna Karan, a major New York fashion designer, who came to the Western Arctic in Canada and was buying older Inuit garments. In some cases, she bought jackets off people's backs and went into people's homes specifically looking for older designs. She did not consult with Inuit on the purpose of her visit, nor did she tell people what she planned to do with the garments back in the United States.

Pauktuutit learned of her visit when a journalist from Yellowknife called us to inquire whether we were aware of this situation. We were not, but were certainly concerned. Once we had an opportunity to learn more about the purpose of her trip to the Western Arctic—which is a very long trip from New York City—and her activities in our communities, we felt we had no choice but to intervene. We were very concerned that Inuit were being exploited because she took advantage of some of the less educated people there who did not know their rights. We wrote directly to Ms. Karan, outlining our concerns and the reasons for them as well as explaining our efforts to develop a legal mechanism that would recognize and protect the collective nature of Inuit ownership of our designs and other cultural symbols and property. We had hoped to get a dialogue going, but unfortunately, we have not received a formal response. We did learn that in response to calls primarily from Canadian journalists, Ms. Karan's media people stated clearly that it was not her intention to appropriate Inuit designs by including them in her lines. It was then that we learned that the garments that were purchased in the Western Arctic were on display in Ms. Karan's boutique in New York City, along with designs from other cultures around the world.

I can only wonder if the people

who sold their garments were informed of this and whether they would agree. We are no longer willing to be treated like artifacts in museums, and that includes our living culture that is embodied in our clothing and other symbols of Inuit culture such as the *inukshuk*, *ulu* and so on.

I also have to wonder what the purpose of such a display is and how it relates to the business of a New York fashion designer. Who benefits? Unfortunately, I know that, in this case, Inuit have received no benefit, but beyond that may have been exposed to a grave risk of appropriation and exploitation of our traditional and contemporary culture and identity.

This brings me to the major focus of my presentation. Currently, our designs are not protected legally. Existing legal protections such as copyright, trademark and industrial property do not recognize and protect the collective nature of Inuit ownership of our designs, including the *amauti*. These are legal mechanisms that were designed to protect the property of individuals within a Western legal system.

The Arctic adaptation of Inuit has inspired some remarkable innovations and technologies. The modern world, however, has appropriated many elements of Inuit material culture without due recognition or compensation for the original creators. The parka and *qajaq* are obvious examples. The traditional boot, the *kamiik*, is now a trademark brand of outdoor footwear made by Genfoot. The "history" of the company makes no reference to Inuit even though they use an *inukshuk* as a logo. This exploitation of traditional knowledge, and the intellectual property that it encompasses, is not unusual among indigenous peoples around the world. It is now critical that we develop the tools and skills to protect our heritage and ensure that we benefit from any use of our traditional knowledge and cultural and intellectual property.

The introduction of the wage economy is relatively recent in the North and the rhythm of life for many communities still revolves around traditional harvesting activities. There are many opportunities in the fashion and clothing industry and many Inuit women are very interested in business and employment opportunities related to Inuit clothing. But proactive methods must be taken immediately to demonstrate and protect the links between traditional culture, modern commercial applications, traditional harvesting and utilization of resources and financial self-sufficiency. Wage labour and the market economy has introduced the alien concepts of privatization and commercialization to communally-owned property. The issue of prior informed consent for the ethical use of this property becomes critical. Indigenous people have the right to own and control their cultural heritage and utilize environmental resources in a holistic and sustainable manner. It is important that the participation of Inuit women in the modern economy be actively promoted and protected.

For several years Pauktuutit has promoted traditional Inuit clothing designs and artistry. In 1995 Inuit fashion and clothing was showcased at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa during the Winterlude festival and at the Toronto CNE. Southern consumers expressed great interest in the clothing and accessories at these two events. An economic development project entitled "The Road to Independence" has recently been completed. The objective was to assist Inuit women to take advantage of opportunities in the fashion and clothing industry by developing skills related to the design and production of traditional and contemporary garments intended for sale to southern consumers. The idea was to return ownership and benefits of the production of these garments to Inuit by cultivating an appreciation for hand-

crafted Inuit clothing. This can provide viable economic opportunities and financial independence for women that do not undermine the cultural integrity of Inuit communities. The project promoted employment through practical applications of traditional knowledge and skills as well as training to compete in retail markets that extend beyond their communities. Underlying principles included the transfer of skills to younger women by the Elders, community development and ownership and control of the benefits. The success of the project, however, can have a negative impact. Without clarification of the intellectual property rights involved, the *amauti* may go the way of the *qajaq*, parka and *kamiik*.

Pauktuutit has been an active member of the Executive Committee and the Aboriginal Caucus of the open-ended working group on the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Canada. The Convention on Biological Diversity, and specifically Article 8(j) of the convention, offer an opportunity for indigenous peoples to better exercise their rights to control, manage and share the benefits derived from the ideas and innovations they have developed. Article 8(j) of the Convention calls for contracting parties to:

... Respect, preserve and maintain the knowledge and innovations of indigenous peoples that are relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity; promote the wider application of such knowledge, innovations and practices with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of such knowledge, innovations and practices. The convention will therefore serve as the cornerstone for Pauktuutit's work to protect the *amauti*.

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In that regard, we have recently achieved some success in obtaining funding to hold the first consultation with Inuit in Canada on how we wish to protect our cultural and intellectual property. We wish to consult with Inuit experts on the nature of collectively-owned property, and to explore the concept of the appropriate custodian for such a protection on behalf of all Inuit. Other questions we wish to discuss and obtain direction on include access and benefit sharing by individuals while respecting the collective ownership of cultural and intellectual property. I know personally of some Inuit designers who are currently struggling with the question of what their rights may be as an individual to personally benefit from the property and designs of all Inuit and our ancestors.

Other questions we have identified and will be seeking answers for during the course of our project include:

- What are the obligations of an individual who may benefit financially from using their own cultural and traditional knowledge as an Inuk, to their community and broader Inuit society?
- Do Inuit currently have an informal customary intellectual property system in place? If so, what is the nature of the customary laws that relate to traditional knowledge and intellectual property and its appropriate use?
- How does it relate to protecting the *amauti* as the collective cultural and intellectual property of all Inuit women in Canada?
- Are there traditional rules about access and benefit sharing that can be applied in this contemporary context?

As a result of our work over many years, we have been recognized as international experts by the World Intellectual Property Organization,

which is beginning to address issues related to indigenous traditional knowledge and intellectual property rights. We participated in their second round table on the subject in 1999 and our work to protect the *amauti* is being looked at by indigenous peoples internationally as a precedent-setting project and is viewed as cutting-edge indigenous IPR work.

Pauktuutit has also worked in association with the Indigenous Women of the Americas to develop a better understanding of the issues associated with craft commercialization and intellectual property.

The Indigenous Women of the Americas is an association of like-minded indigenous women from throughout Latin and South America who come together when we can to address issues of mutual concern. In our early discussions with our colleagues in the Americas, we thought that issues of violence and personal and economic security would emerge as priorities for action. Instead, craft commercialization and the need to protect our traditional knowledge and intellectual property rights emerged as the first priority for indigenous women in the Western Hemisphere.

As we began our work, we conducted a survey in 1997 among Aboriginal women in Canada to determine Canadian priorities and concerns. More recently, Pauktuutit helped organize an international training workshop on intellectual property rights and craft commercialization. The workshop was held in late April 1999 near Ottawa and was attended by indigenous women from throughout the Americas. The primary purpose of the workshop was to help women attain a legal understanding of the issues and to help them take economic control over commercialization of art designs. This is another example of Pauktuutit's commitment to promote the cultural heritage and economic conditions of women and positions Pauktuutit as the appropriate man-

ager of a case study on the protection of traditional knowledge.

In the spirit of Article 8(j), Inuit need the incentive to avoid an Arctic economy that exploits the environment. Our economy should respect our heritage and allow us to continue to use our traditional knowledge and resources in a sustainable manner. Protecting the intellectual property of our traditional knowledge will help achieve this end. Biological diversity can be conserved by conserving cultural diversity. As I said earlier, much of Inuit community life continues to revolve around traditional harvesting activities. Harvesting rights are guaranteed under the Nunavut, Inuvialuit and the James Bay and Northern Quebec agreements. An Inuit owned and controlled clothing and fashion industry that hinges on traditional knowledge, designs and motifs and the relationship to the harvesting and processing of furs and skins provide a multifaceted link to Article 8(j).

I would also like to take this opportunity to inform you about events that are taking place even as I speak. In Ottawa, Canada, there is currently a hemispheric indigenous leadership summit. Indigenous traditional knowledge and intellectual property rights are being addressed as a priority issue within the context of globalization and the upcoming meeting in Canada of the Organization of American States (OAS). Inuit in Canada are determined that our rights must take precedence over hemispheric and international trade agreements that could negatively impact on our aboriginal rights. I understand delegates will be developing a resolution on the issue that will be presented to the member states of the OAS in April.

Pauktuutit has also been actively involved in events leading to the World Conference Against Racism. We have been providing advice to the Canadian government as a member of

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# Contaminants Have Found Us

by Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley

As a young boy growing up in Bethel I experienced heavy snows and cold temperatures in winter, but our summers were times of fun and lots of hard work in the fish camps. We did not worry about pollution as our lifestyles did not produce wastes dangerous to ourselves or to the plants and animals around us. Most of the things that we used were biodegradable or recyclable; we lived in harmony with nature. Now we have been thrust into an industrialized world with its extensive use of natural resources to manufacture tools and other items that are supposed to make life easier for us.

We, as indigenous people, were adapted to these climatic conditions and so were the plants and animals we depended on for food. Perhaps these special adaptations made us, the plants and animals more susceptible to certain anthropogenic contaminants. And now our own activities in using technological devices in our everyday activities are contributing to the physical, chemical and biological pollution of our Arctic ecosystems.

From what scientists have told us, you get the idea that there are two sources of contaminants—sources far from the Arctic and within the Arctic. The industrial complexes in Russia and other Eurasian countries contribute to the Arctic contamination. The main modes of transport for these

contaminants are air currents, ocean currents and riverine systems. The meltwater in the spring carries the pollutants downriver to the deltas and into the oceans. Another way of transporting contaminants is through the migratory birds and mammals which winter in the warm climates and then migrate north in the summer. These are often at the top of the food web and are the most effected. But we, as a Native people, continue to eat these nutritious foods as well as maintain breast feeding for our young children. Because of contaminants contained in these foods that we eat, we may very well have a higher exposure to and accumulation of contaminant contents. Some of the major areas of concern for the effects that these

contaminants can have is “influencing the ability to conceive and carry children, reducing our defense against diseases, affecting children’s mental development or increasing the risk of cancer” (AMAP, 1997).

How do we as Alaska Native people and others begin to alleviate the situation? As long as we believe that science and technology is the answer to our problems, we will forever remain in the morass of the modern world. Unless we encourage our youngsters to go to the Elders and to pursue higher education to learn another way of making sense of this world, we will never get out of this trap. We must relearn our own Alaska Native languages and ways of making sense of this world. We have a way of looking at the universe that recognizes there are different perspectives—the outward and the inward. By using both viewpoints we can gain wisdom.

The Eurocentric way of knowing tends to rely on the physical and intellectual processes and pays less attention to the emotions and the spiritual dimensions. We must find a way of marrying the senses with the spiritual side for a more balanced perspective. Our Native languages are of wholeness and healing. They are languages of Native eco-philosophy, or

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their Aboriginal Advisory Committee and have also attended a recent inter-cessional meeting in Geneva that began negotiating the text of the declaration and plan of action that will be presented and discussed in Geneva. Traditional knowledge and intellectual property rights are priority issues for indigenous peoples around the world and it is no different

for Inuit in Canada.

Inuit have great things to offer the world. We are known internationally as diplomats and negotiators and have successfully negotiated three major land claim agreements in Canada. Inuit have a unique quality of harmony and consensus-building based on trust and mutual respect. We are more than willing to share these qualities with the non-Inuit world, as we are willing

to share our unique culture with the world. But that relationship must be based on respect that is mutual and one that recognizes that we are the only owners of all the elements of our culture including our cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and our intellectual property.

Thank you very much for your time. ✧

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"ecosophy". We need to relearn how to live in harmony with nature. Our languages describe these thought worlds, these worldviews. Our space-time concepts are cyclical according to the moon phases, seasons and the plant and animal cycles that determine the times of abundance and times of scarcity. The location and timing of these cycles give us scheduling and spacing tools. To relearn and revitalize our Alaska Native languages and cultures is to liberate ourselves from the industrial and materialistic prison into which we have been thrust.

To relearn our mythology that Raven created Mother Earth helps us realize that we cannot think of ourselves as being superior to anything of Mother Earth. Raven is a deity in this mythology but Raven can also be a buffoon, a comedian and a picaresque. The reason we do not worship the raven is because we are animists, not theists.

We must relearn our history but not from history books. We learn history particular to an individual, a family, a community from the *quliraat* and from the mythology, *galumcit*, stories, placenames, songs, dancing and drumming peculiar to that place. All these will give you a strong sense of who you are and where you are from. This beautiful concept of respect becomes clearer to us as it is connected to a belief system with high moral attitudes, rules and standards for personal character to become the best person one is capable of being. All of this is needed to begin to rebuild a new world based on what we learned from our ancestors, coupled with selective adaptations from the contemporary world.

Here are a few suggestions that we can work on: Insist on sustainable development—perhaps projects that require we work closely with nature—regenerative or reclamation activities such as cleaning up wetlands and fish-spawning areas. We must demand

that industries and manufacturers find ways to reduce the use of natural resources, reduce packaging and pay attention to effluent and emission laws. We must demand that manufacturers of such things as TVs, microwave ovens, snowmachines and other durable goods redeem and recycle those items when they become inoperable—perhaps they could establish a "lend-lease" program. We should begin to assess what technological tools are acceptable in the village instead of

accepting whatever comes along. Let's become more biologically literate, not just electronically literate; let us strive to live healthy.

I think that if we begin to pay attention to such matters, we will begin to live life with a strong sense of belonging, discipline, independence and generosity. After all, the ultimate standard is to live a life that is healthy and stable in a healthy and sustainable community. ☆

## Athabascan Region Alaska Indigenous Peoples Academy

by Victoria Hildebrand, AIPA Project Director

Project Alaska Indigenous Peoples Academy (AIPA) is nearing the end of its first fiscal year in early June and many objectives have been accomplished. The project's focus is two-fold. One is to develop Athabascan curriculum aligned with state and cultural standards and the other is to train in-service teachers new to the rural and urban schools of the Interior. To date, the AIPA staff has been very busy working towards the project's goals. Although the staff started working late into the grant, they have met many objectives for the first year.

One of the activities has been to network with interested staff and educational agencies. To date we have made new contacts with the University of Alaska Fairbanks and Anchorage, Tanana Chiefs Conference, the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, the First Alaskans Foundation, the National Indian Education Association and the Native Hawaiian Education Council just to name a few.

Another activity that turned out to be a success included a summit that was held on January 15–17, 2001. The focus of this summit was to discuss issues and concerns that are impor-

tant to Alaska Native education and to develop action plans for the objectives in Project AIPA. The plans from this summit are now in progress.

The plans for the 2001 Alaska Indigenous Peoples' Academy are underway and brochures for interested attendees will be mailed out soon. Our curriculum specialist is very busy developing the curriculum and we look forward to its future implementation. In the coming fiscal year, Project AIPA will focus on teacher training and continued curriculum development. ☆

# Elder Highlight: Tribute to Oscar Nictune Sr.

*A memorial potlatch in honor of Oscar Nictune Sr. was held at Allakaket on September 1–3, 2000.*

*The following tribute was prepared by Bob Maguire. Reprinted from Spirit of our Ancestors, a publication of Denakkanaaga.*

Oscar Nictune, Sr. was truly an extraordinary person—someone I feel very privileged to have known. When I came to the Koyukuk River country for the first time in the mid-1960s, Oscar was one of the first people I met. I was immediately struck by his intelligence, his openness to share his life experiences and his ever-present sense of humor. Later in 1968 I married my wife Cora—herself a granddaughter of Oscar Nictune Sr.—and I received the honor of having a grandpa myself for the first time in my life. During the following years it was my privilege to share many stories and adventures with Grandpa Oscar.

Born in 1901 he was the last living person to have experienced the gold rush era in the Koyukuk country at the beginning of the last century. Most of us are left to only imagine this era of steamboats, miners, pigs, horses and gold discoveries. There are few signs of the towns such as Bergman, Arctic City, South Fork and Peavey or of the 10,000 people who clamored over the countryside. Oscar took in all this activity and was influenced directly by it when he was recruited to attend school in Old Bettles in 1905 at the age of five. It was because of this experience that he received his name Oscar. Having only his Eskimo name, Qayak, he was given the name of the outside teacher's youngest brother!

Later, at the age of 12, he would haul loads of frozen fish by dog team from Alatna to Bettles, Coldfoot, Wiseman and the other creeks to sell to miners eager for fresh food supplies. Soon thereafter he was employed as a cabinboy and deckhand on the

steam-powered paddlewheelers that plied the waters of Interior Alaska.

Later in life he married Grandma Cora—the daughter of Duvak and Dinook—and together they had nine children. Then the most tragic event of his life happened when his wife died during childbirth while delivering twins. Grandpa must have loved his wife Cora immensely for he never remarried saying that “when my love died, loving died too.” I think that he felt he could never find another person like his love, Cora, so he chose to raise his family alone. He lived the next 56 years as a widower!

Sheep hunting was his favorite passion, especially in his later years. He learned to hunt sheep at an early age with his father Peter Nictune and others like Duvak, Nuylayek and Johnny Oldman. He loved the upper Alatna River country and the many creeks that run into it—creeks with names like Milchetah, Nahduk, Pingaluk, Gaduk and Unakserak. He

had many stories of sheep hunts in the earlier times when there weren't other big animals such as moose in the country. Most of us who are privileged to travel there today still refer to it as “Grandpa Oscar's country.” His greatest pleasure in his later years was still being able to accompany the younger grandsons to such places as Unakserak River and be the camp boss.

When I had my airplane in Allakaket in the mid-1970s, Grandpa Oscar and I took many trips together. He was the boss of that too and would often come across to Allakaket and announce to me, “Today we are going to Wiseman!” or wherever. He loved to visit his sister Florence Jonas in Wiseman. Sometimes he would stand back around the corner of her house and let me knock on her door, so he could surprise her.

Perhaps my favorite memory of him was a trip up the North Fork of the Koyukuk. I asked him why he wanted to go up the North Fork and he said, “Well there's some country I haven't seen!” So after several days of camping I gathered up our trash in a plastic bag and put it in the plane. When I got everything else packed up I looked for Grandpa and he was way out on the gravel bar sticking tin cans and other items from our trash bag on the willows. I walked out onto the bar and asked him, “Grandpa what are you doing?” He replied, “This is so if any of those other people come up this way, they'll know Oscar was here first!”

When he passed away in 1998 at the age of 97 he left behind a legacy of being a kind and generous man—one who cared for people. He left behind a family that he raised and supported to carry on his philosophy of always helping others, doing everything in the best fashion possible and of always seeing the positive side of life. ✧

# Iñupiaq Region

## Eskimo Heritage Program: Kawerak Board Report, March 2001

by Branson Tungiyon, Program Director

Much has been happening at the Eskimo Heritage Program since the beginning of the New Year. Topping off the list is the new memorandum of agreement that was signed between Kawerak, Inc. and the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) on December 1, 2000 by Julie Kitka of AFN and Loretta Bullard of Kawerak. This MOA is to implement Phase II of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI).

Both Kawerak, Inc. and AFN agree to "collaborate for the purposes of implementing the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative" funded by the National Science Foundation. Through this agreement, AFN and Kawerak, Inc. affirm their commitment to work together on behalf of improving the quality of education in Alaska. In furtherance of this commitment, Kawerak, Inc. agrees to perform the following tasks between November 1, 2000 and February 28, 2002:

1. Focusing on the Iñupiaq Region, Kawerak, Inc. will participate in the Consortium for Alaska Native Higher Education (CANHE) to pursue the continued development of a tribal college system in Alaska.
2. Kawerak, Inc. will continue to develop the institutional infrastructure for the Iñupiaq region that will serve as the basis for establishing a tribal college with the capacity to address the educational needs and cultural well being of the Native people in the region.

I have been selected, through the Eskimo Heritage Program, to be the regional coordinator for the Iñupiaq region. This is going to be very challenging because it requires overseeing many different initiatives in our region. Some of the specific responsibilities include:

- Encourage collaboration of educational partnerships on a regional and statewide basis, including support and assistance for the regional tribal college initiative.
- Coordinate and organize at least one regional Elders' council meeting each year.
- Coordinate activities of memorandum-of-agreement partners both for regional and local village/school initiatives.
- Travel to and/or meet personally with MOA partners at least two times annually in partner's location.
- Additional and training workshops on AKRSI resources and activities.
- Identify, research and complete individual cultural curriculum projects.
- Participate in statewide activities relative to promotion and development of AKRSI initiatives as a representative of the specific cultural region.

Another important thing that happened was that we had a retreat for the Eskimo Heritage Program on January 4, 2001. The purpose of the retreat was to review and assess where the program is on its long-range plan, what the accomplishments have been, set goals, establish a plan of action and determine who will be respon-

sible in making sure the goals are achieved. We went through the following:

### Accomplishments

- EHP office still in existence.
- Supplemental funds from AKRSI to move forward with goals.
- Iñupiaq (except for King Island and St. Lawrence Island) and Yup'ik collection digitized.
- 92% of individual Elder interview audio tapes complete.
- Hosting of successful Elders conferences.
- Development of K-3 and 4-6 readers.
- Through the EHP, Elder advisory committees started at the village level.

### Trends Affecting the EHP Program

- Acknowledgment nationwide by Native Americans.
- More funds available (both government and private).
- Bigger voice.
- "Professionals" put credibility on Native cultural knowledge.
- Revival of Native dancing and singing in the region.
- Roles of Elders in the community disappearing.

The next step in the process is to identify what challenges (gaps) exist in accomplishing the mission statement of the EHP Program and what needs to be done in order to overcome those challenges. We turned the challenges into two-year goals and what needs to be done into the action plan. From there, we established who would be responsible in making sure the



goals are met.

I have also been working with the Kawerak Elders Advisory Committee (KEAC). One of the activities of the KEAC is attending the Bering Sea Coalition Conference in Anchorage with the Council of Elders. Clarence Irrigoo and Charles Saccheus, Sr. of Elim had attended the last two conferences held in Anchorage. The KEAC decided that the same two individuals should attend the conference and be the representatives from the Bering Strait region for the next two years. Two different Elders can be selected for the following two years, and so forth. Jacob Ahwinona and Anders Apassingok attended the first Bering Sea Coalition conference.

I have been attending a series of meetings and conferences since becoming involved with AKRSI. The first one-week trip was to meet with the AKRSI staff and attend the Association of Interior Natives Education Summit with the Athabaskan educators. This trip was very beneficial as it gave me a better picture of my role as the Iñupiaq regional coordinator for AKRSI. I will be working closely with our MOA partners: Nome Public Schools, Bering Strait School District, Northwest Arctic Borough School District and North Slope Borough School District.

The second one-week trip was to attend a meeting in Anchorage with representatives from the Pueblo and Navajo tribes of New Mexico and Lumbee of North Carolina in connection with the Rural Schools & Community Trust project. Alaska is currently one of the states that have Native groups in the project. This meeting was concurrent with the Native Educator's Conference (NEC) and the Bilingual Multicultural Education & Equity Conference (BMEEC). The Native educators adopted two new sets of guidelines: *Guidelines for Nurturing Culturally-Healthy Youth* and *Guidelines for Strengthening Indigenous Languages*.

The purpose of these guidelines is to offer assistance to educational personnel and others who are seeking to incorporate the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools* in their work. Using these guidelines will expand the knowledge base and range of insights and expertise available to help schools and communities nurture and pass on their cultural heritage with respect and integrity.

A highlight of the Eskimo Heritage Program has been in regards to establishing the Eskimo Cultural Center as one of the priorities. It has gathered enough support that it is being presented in the state/federal issues packet. This is something that has been identified as a need for the Bering Strait region. With the long cultural histories in the Bering Strait region, there is no place for the representation of the strong cultural heritage we have as Native groups. We definitely need to have a cultural center to put on display the region's wealth of cultural heritage.

All in all, I feel that the program is heading in the right direction, with goals set in place. It makes me feel more comfortable to have goals to follow with an agenda. There are other activities happening on a daily basis. An interesting trip is coming up in early May where I will be following the Unalakleet group to Washington, D.C. They are going there to review objects at the Smithsonian Institution and the American Museum of Natural History. There are 90 objects in all at the two places from the Norton Sound region. I have been invited to attend as an observer, with the opportunity to bring a contingent from Nome and the surrounding villages at a later date.

The Kawerak Elders Advisory Committee will also be inviting Dan Karmun, Sr. to their next meeting to explain about the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority's upcoming trip to Nome and onto the villages in

the region. A group of 30-plus people will come up from Anchorage and travel to six villages to conduct meetings and return the next day and assess their village trips. Norton Sound Health Corporation is assisting the group with their studies of the villages' social problems.

I will be contacting the village Elders' advisory committees to get input and suggestions in regards to AKRSI. Phase II of AKRSI will concentrate on initiatives that were successful in Phase I and develop them at a higher level. There are five sets of initiatives being rotated in the five cultural regions. Each region will have an opportunity to implement each initiative. These initiatives are:

- ◇ Elders & Cultural Camps—Academy of Elders
- ◇ Indigenous Science Knowledge Base—Cultural Atlas
- ◇ Culturally Aligned Curriculum—Cultural Standards
- ◇ Native Ways of Knowing/Teaching—Parent Involvement
- ◇ Village Science Applications—AISES/ANSES Camps

The Alaska Federation of Natives will continue as a sponsor of the project. We look forward to working with the communities and Elders to help continue its success.

Thank You. ✨

# Aleut/Alutiiq Region

## The Academy of Elders/Science Camp 2001

by Teri Schneider

Once again, students, teachers and other community members in our region have an opportunity to engage in learning activities that are culturally and environmentally relevant with Elders and other culture bearers at the remote camp setting of Dig Afognak. This is a fantastic, academically challenging and culturally enriching experience for students, teachers, community members and Elders. The Kodiak Island Borough School District, the Kodiak Island Housing Authority and the Native Village of Afognak are pleased to sponsor this opportunity during two week-long camps.

Camp #1 will be held from July 23–July 29, and Camp #2 begins July 30 and ends on August 5. Both camps are being held at the Dig Afognak site at Katenai, Afognak Island. Transportation, food, facilities and staffing costs are being paid for by the three sponsoring organizations. Those who are able are asked to pay a \$30 registration fee. Participants unable to pay will not be denied.

This camp is open to all students currently living in the Kodiak area, grades 2–12 (young students may be considered if they are successful applicants and are accompanied by a participating adult family member.) Participants should have an interest in Alutiiq Native culture, language and ways of knowing and perhaps science, math, and/or technology. Also invited are local indigenous Elders, educators of the Kodiak Island Borough School District, members of the Native Educators of the Alutiiq region and other interested community members as space allows.

This camp began in the summer of 1997 to orient new teachers to the region before they began teaching in the Kodiak schools. The Elders at-

tending that summer said that we should bring students to such a camp, along with teachers, so that all could learn together. The camp acknowledges the Alutiiq Elders as the first teachers of their culture and allows participants to learn firsthand from Elders and community members with hands-on projects related to rural survival, lifestyles and Native ingenuity. While learning more about the rich history of our island communities and exploring the culture of the Alutiiq people, past and present, we are able to orient new teachers to the

cultural and environmental uniqueness of our island community. In bringing together Elders, teachers and students outside of the formal school setting we are giving participants the opportunity to live with and learn from people of another culture.

Because this camp is academically oriented, we are hoping to stimulate interest in math, science and engineering fields among Alaska Native students. These are fields of study and work that have seen very little representation from within the Native community. We would like to increase students' confidence and knowledge in math, science and technology while incorporating Native values and perspectives with Western math, science and technology. The Academy of Elders/Science Camp has provided an opportunity to very naturally integrate academic learning with cultural enrichment.

If you or someone you know is interested in attending, you may contact Teri Schneider at 486-9276, email [tschneider@kodiak.k12.ak.us](mailto:tschneider@kodiak.k12.ak.us) or Olga Pestrikoff at 486-6357, email [olga@afognak.org](mailto:olga@afognak.org). ✨

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# Yup'ik Region

## Native Hawaiian Education Association Convention 2001

by Esther Ilutsik

We began our exposure to Native Hawaiian education on March 29 with an invitation to observe the Native Hawaiian Education Association Board of Directors as they convened their meeting prior to their annual convention 2001 that would take place the next morning. They honored us with a greeting of leis. This followed with introductions, the Alaska delegation consisting of Lolly Carpluk, Velma Schafer, Virginia Ned, Joy Simon and myself, Esther Ilutsik. We were impressed with the education level and professionalism of the Native Hawaiian board of directors. We were not able to stay for the entire meeting as Lolly, Virginia and I had a scheduled audioconference, but we did join them for their luncheon and were invited to the banquet that evening. At the time the invitation was extended we did not know exactly what the banquet would entail and, as with many indigenous peoples of the world, we did not question what to expect.

Much to our surprise and delight the banquet was the Tenth Celebration of Ke Kukui Malamalama, Honoring Excellence in Hawaiian Education, sponsored by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs Board. "This celebration began in 1991 as a tribute to individuals, programs and groups who have furthered Native Hawaiians in achieving their educational aspirations. KeKukui Malamalama not only recognizes the academic achievements of Hawaiians in all fields of endeavors, but also applauds the incorporation of Native Hawaiian values, traditions and practices into the holistic education of our people. Ke Kukui Malamalama is a tribute to all those who make us, who encourage us, who teach us, who lead us to be the people we are and the people we can be" (taken from the Ke Kukui Malamalama Honoring Excel-

lence in Hawaiian Education Program brochure, March 29, 2001.)

The celebration began with the audience singing a beautiful Hawaiian song. Their voices were strong, pure, melodic and beautiful and it was apparent that the music reunited them with their Hawaiian beliefs and goals. We were again honored with leis and introduced to the audience (even my daughter, Michelle Snyder, was recognized and it tickled her that she was introduced as an educator and not as an eighth-grade student.) Following the buffet dinner we were honored to witness the achievements of four exceptional educators. They began with the Kapuna (Elder) educator, Wright Bowman, Sr., who is a master woodcarver and is retired from Kamehameha School; Pihana Na Mamo, a project coordinator in spe-

cial education, DOE; Maggie Keola Hanohano, coordinator, Kako'o program and Kulia I Ka Nu'u program, Kailua High School, DOE; JoAnn Kaakua, community educator; and Moses Kim, Jr., retired teacher.

On stage were four cloth-covered chairs (signifying honor status) and this part of the ceremony was co-chaired by two Kapunas (Elders). Kapuna Betty K. Jenkins and Kapuna Nalehua Knox began by giving some background information about these recognitions and recognizing past recipients, including Keiki Kawai'ae'a (she was one of the Native Hawaiian presenters at our 2001 Native Education Conference held in Anchorage.)

The Kapunas took turns calling the distinguished educators on to the stage. As each of the honorees came forth they were greeted by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs Board of Trustees with leis and other gifts and then escorted to the chairs. When they were seated, the co-chairs took turns in sharing the honorees' accomplishments. It was obvious that it was an uncomfortable but honored situation for those being recognized. Following the acknowledgments, each of the honorees were given a chance to thank those who had given them this honor and recognition.

I was especially taken with JoAnn Kaahuas' talk when she referenced Queen Liliuokalani who once said, "The way to lose an earthly kingdom is to be too inflexible, intolerant and prejudicial. Another way is to be too flexible, tolerant of too many ways and without judgment at all. It is a razor's edge—it is the width of a blade of pili grass." She used this quote in

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reference to their own *'opio* (group) wanting structure and challenge and she shared an interesting personal physical challenge that she herself undertook during an excursion to Molokai as they hiked into Halawa Valley to Moa'ula falls. Queen Liliuokalani's quote made me realize that each of us have to look at our own cultural group and examine what has happened that we continue to "fight" for our self-identity—why has it been such a struggle? How can we strike the proper balance to sustain who we are in an ever-changing world? The evening came to a close with all participants holding hands and again a Hawaiian song was sung. Thus ended our evening leaving us with lasting impressions of indigenous people once again making the marks of their people. Beautiful!

The next morning we were picked up and brought to the Native Hawaiian Education Association Convention held at the Kapi'olani Community College. As we registered, we were again honored with leis and were recognized at the general session. The theme of the conference was "KUPU A'E," which translates to "sprout forth" and is likened to growing things—it never ends. Last year's conference theme was "spring forth." Following the welcome and other formalities we listened to the keynote address by Dr. Manulani Aluli Meyer. According to the information found in the conference packet she was raised in Mokapu and Kailua on the island of O'ahu. Dr. Meyer has taught and coached for more than 20 years in alternative programs, from wilderness schools and Special Olympics to college-level athletic programs. She earned her doctorate from Harvard University with a focus on Hawaiian epistemology. She is dedicated to expanding the world's understanding of culture and philosophy and the ways systems of knowledge and power work to impact what is constant in

nature. She has written more than 15 articles on the subject and currently teaches in the Education Department at the University of Hawai'i-Hilo. The title of her address was "Ho'oulu'Ana—"The Time We Are In." Her message was dynamite! She enthralled the crowd with her knowledge and insight and emphasized "know where you are from so that you will know where you are going" and "our language teaches us who we are." She left us re-energized and in good spirits.

Manu's presentation was followed with workshop sessions. Michelle and I participated in an I Wili'la session presented by Uilani Pualoa. This workshop focused on methods in which to determine personality strengths and limitations. Knowing the strengths and limitations of the people you work with will help in building a stronger collective group. We engaged ourselves in a little exercise by answering a series of questions. Each response was represented by a lower case alphabet letter which when totaled up would equal a certain type of personality strength. I was surprised at the accuracy of this little exercise (Michelle found this workshop delightful and began to point out different personality traits using the color code.) I was attracted to this session thinking it would identify Native Hawaiian colors and that I might compare them with the three main Yup'ik colors found on our clothing. It turned out that was not the purpose of the workshop, though it was quite interesting anyway.

Following the lunch break we again assembled in the tent for the afternoon's keynote presentation by Carole Ann Heart, president of the National Indian Education Association. She spoke from the heart and experience. She emphasized that we need to teach our children their history from our own perspective. She shared a personal experience. When her daughter was a young girl she

would drive her past Custer's house and she always told her that he was a bad man. Later when she started school she came home one day with a disturbed look. She asked her what was wrong and she told her mother that the school took a field trip to Custer's house and that he was a good man. She hugged her and proceeded to explain that there are people who believe he was a good man, but because of what he did to their people, he was not a good man to them, thus emphasizing her point that our history needs to be told from our perspective.

She continued by indicating that history may have been different if Native people hadn't embraced and helped the foreigners who first came to our lands, suggesting that perhaps we should have had a stronger immigration policy (applause from the audience.) She then closed with a story of how outsiders like to study indigenous people. She shared a study by a German anthropologist who, after much observation, noted carefully in his notebook that the Native American women always walked behind their men. He concluded that the Native American women were inferior to the Native American men, but what he didn't know was that the women always made sure that the men kept two paces ahead—as a way to keep them in line.

The keynote address was followed with workshop sessions. Lolly, Virginia and I presented our workshop titled "Indigenous Knowledge Documentation and Research Issues." We began our presentation with a traditional Yup'ik entrance song and dance (including Michelle). Our session was well received and ended with our group receiving a blessing and encouragement from Kapuna Edward Kaanana. He emphasized that we need to go forth and document correct information about our people—that accurate information needs to be published by our own people from our own perspective.

Following the workshop there was an informal reception. It was fun to watch the Native Hawaiian educators at ease. Someone had brought a ukulele so they were singing and hula dancing (both sexes appeared to be in competitive sport.) It was fun to watch the sport in such a natural and fun-loving setting. This followed with the literary performance by OIWI: A Native Hawaiian Journal. I was so impressed with the readings. There were five to six assigned readings. They read their own work and works of other people. Some of the readings included indigenous musical instrument accompaniments. We were totally awestruck with the performance and the depth of feelings that accompanied many of the readings. Absolutely beautiful!

The following morning the meetings began with a guest speaker, Makia Malo, who despite his lack of sight had been able to contribute to the education of the Indigenous Hawaiian children. He emphasized the importance of the word of mouth and the stories, and that educators need to be educated in the traditional methods of storytelling. The goal of educators is to excite the minds of the Hawaiian children. I was impressed with his goals and vision.

This was followed with a keynote address by Dr. Jon Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio. According to the information in the conference guide he was born on the Big Island and spent most of his adult life as a resident of Honolulu. He is a Native Hawaiian with a wide range of interests and talents, including being a musician, author and scholar. He has a Ph.D. in history from the University of Hawaii-Manoa, and has made significant scholarly contributions towards advancing Hawaiian initiatives in education, leadership, music and publications. Dr. Osorio currently serves as an assistant professor at the Center for Hawaiian Studies, University of Hawaii-Manoa. His keynote address, titled "Speaking

from the Piko," focused on the limitations of American education and how Native Hawaiians had much to offer to the education of their own people. He focused in on the "Piko," which I understood to be the spirituality of the Native Hawaiians and how this understanding and connectedness could provide the foundation that educators could work from. He encouraged us to look at what was being taught in the schools and especially to look at what is being taught about our culture. He stated that indigenous people need a sense of mission and belonging, and that the present school system is fragmented with specialized disciplines. He felt that the American educational system has too much of a focus on equality and separation of church and state. In his own experience, they "schooled out" his spirituality. People need that spirituality to be connected to the universe and to acknowledge that there is a higher being than we are. He closed by encouraging indigenous people to focus their attention on caring for our own people and that we continue the struggle to find a place for ourselves. He received a standing high status Native Hawaiian song (more respectful than a standing ovation.)

This was followed with the last strand of workshops. Michelle and I participated in "Ola Na Mo'olelo: Living Stories" by Noelani Tachera, Chiya Hoapili, Miki'ala Ayau, Liko Hoe, Kanoe Wilson and Desoto Brown (Bishop Museum Staff). It was an excellent presentation on the tradition of living stories—using drama as a way to bring Native Hawaiian stories to life. They shared the story of Kalakaua. It was a very emotional time for some of the Native Hawaiians in the audience. Many of them had never seen this story unfold from a Native Hawaiian perspective. The emphasis at the Bishop Museum is to use the Native Hawaiian perspective in their materials and their live presentations. They shared *A Teacher's*

*Guide to Exhibits and Programs* which described live presentations addressed to each grade level and standards that teacher's could use in planning their field trip to the museum. One of the activities that they shared was how adults and teachers can create lessons using everyday materials. For example they had a simple shell and questioned what kinds of traditional Hawaiian information can be sought from this basic shell. Does it trigger any stories or legends? What were the traditional uses and the process used for gathering the shells? What are the present uses and why have these remained the same or changed? I would have loved to partake in this exercise to see how it might be applicable to the work that I do.

The workshops were followed with lunch and then the closing of the Native Hawaiian Education Association Conference 2001 with words from Dr. David Kekaulike Sing. People were invited to go up to the microphone to make closing comments. Our Elder delegate, Velma Schafer, expressed our thanks and honor for being able to partake in such a beautiful and wonderful gathering. We were so welcomed and felt like a part of this indigenous group who share our values and goals. *Aloha and qiyana.*

The conference was sponsored by many different organizations, including the Native Hawaiian Higher Education Program, Kamehameha Schools, Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, State of Hawaii Department of Education, Native Hawaiian Education Council, Native Hawaiian Community-Based Education Learning Centers, Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center, Kamehameha Schools, Alu Like, Inc., Hawaiian Leadership Development Program, University of Hawaii, Hilo, Office of Hawaiian Affairs and 'Aha Punana Leo. ✧





# Sharing Our Pathways

VOL. 6, ISSUE 4  
Sept/Oct 2001

A newsletter of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative  
Alaska Federation of Natives ♦ University of Alaska ♦ National Science Foundation ♦ Rural School and Community Trust

## Camping on the Tanana River

by Claudette Bradley



Virginia Ned (far right) and camp participants perform "He'eeteghtldzaayh" at the ANSES camp potlatch.

On July 9, 2001, 15 middle-school students arrived at the Gaalee'ya Spirit Camp on the Tanana River to attend the Fairbanks ANSES Science Camp 2001. Six students came from Nulato, two from Fort Yukon, one each from Newhalen, Anchorage, Tanacross and Lime Village and three from Beijing, China. The Chinese students—one boy and two girls, 14 to 15 years of age—traveled nearly 4000 miles with two chaperones to attend our camp. They spoke English well and enjoyed full participation in the camp.

I served as the camp coordinator with support from Dixie Dayo as the staff assistant and Dawn Durtsche of the Gaalee'ya Board as the fiscal officer for the camp. Together we organized the camp held at Howard Luke's Gaalee'ya Spirit Camp which is also his home. The camp is designed to enhance students' Athabaskan cultural knowledge and provide oppor-

tunity to do science research in a culturally-relevant setting.

The camp employed four Elders: Howard Luke, Elizabeth Fleagle, Margaret Tritt and Steven Toby. Howard Luke is well known for his many talks and the advice he gives the students. He welcomes our students every year and looks forward to helping young Native people grow into intelligent

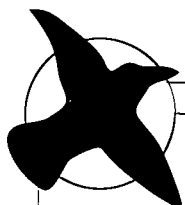
and respectful individuals. Elizabeth Fleagle is originally from Alatna and Manley Hot Springs. She taught the students how to sew beads on pouches and headbands using Athabaskan designs. Margaret Tritt is from Arctic Village. She brought caribou hides and quills. The students learned to clean and tan caribou skins and make quill necklaces. Steven Toby, from

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Koyukuk, enjoyed taking students for walks in the wilderness. He told them about the animals, trees and survival in the forest. He had many old-time stories to share.

This summer was the first time students had Koyukon Athabascan classes. Velma Schafer is a certified teacher from Allakaket and is a fluent speaker of Koyukon Athabascan. Virginia Ned is also a certified teacher from Allakaket. Virginia acknowledges that Velma is her Athabascan language mentor. Together they taught students to introduce themselves, sing a song and play a game using the Koyukon Athabascan language.

IBM of Rochester, Minnesota, has been generous to our camp. Each year they have donated six laptops and one color printer which are operated by battery and generators since the camp has no electricity. In addition, they sent Todd Kelsey, an IBM education consultant to teach in our camp and help students with science projects. George Olanna is a certified teacher from Shishmaref and an Iñupiaq Elder-in-training. George is a veteran teacher in our camp. He teaches collaboratively with Todd in the computer classes and helps students with science projects. Both Todd and George have had a significant influence on our students.

Our students have the natural environment to research, Elders to provide the cultural knowledge for the background of their project and a computer lab to create labels, narrative, charts, graphs, diagrams and photos for their projects. The certified teaching staff has extensive experience with middle school Alaska Native students. George Olanna, Todd Kelsey, Virginia Ned, Velma Schafer

and myself comprised the teaching staff, who worked with the students in small groups on the many phases of their science projects.

Jin Zhiyong is the deputy division chief of the China Science & Technology Exchange Center, Beijing, China. He presented an overview of China and its 56 minority groups. The boy, Yang Guang, developed a Powerpoint presentation of his school life in Beijing. The girls had yearbook photos of their high school and organized some Chinese games for the students to play. The three Chinese students study English in their Beijing high



*Elder Elizabeth Fleagle demonstrates beadwork to students at camp.*

school. Song Huanran, their English teacher, was an enthusiastic participant in the camp. She especially enjoyed helping Howard split the salmon caught in his fish net.

Every year Howard gets an education permit from Fish and Game to use his fish wheel to catch salmon on the Tanana. This year Fish and Game banned all salmon fishing on the Tanana, though they wanted to have the fish tested for bacteria. Since Howard already had our camp operating, Fish and Game decided to send Paul Hershberger, a research biologist from the University of Washington to the camp. Paul wanted to test 60 fish, so they allowed Howard to use his fishnet to catch them. Cutting fish was a big event. The biologist took samples from the liver, heart and cir-



culatory system. Howard, Dixie and Song were kept busy splitting and hanging fish on the fish rack, which looked very full with nearly 60 fish waving at the edge of the riverbank.

Bradley Weyiounna, originally from Shishmaref, is a gold medal high-kick champion of the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics. He is very knowledgeable about the WEIO athletic events and demonstrated the games one evening along with Josh Rutman, another WEIO athlete. They demonstrated the high kick, arm wrestling, leg wrestling, arm pulls and Eskimo dancing. The students thoroughly enjoyed trying to do these events with each other.

Adeline Peter-Raboff is a Gwich'in Athabascan from Arctic Village who is going to Washington, D.C. to lobby on oil drilling in ANWR. She came to the camp one day to have dinner and talk with the students about the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and the environmental issues involved in drilling for oil. Most of the students were uninformed about the issues and Adeline inspired great interest in oil drilling and ANWR.

Zelma Axford is an expert on Alaska's indigenous plants. She had the students gather plants from the surrounding area and then draw them in their journals. She gave them the Alaska Native names of the plants and their medicinal uses, which they also wrote in their journals. Then the students were given a plant encyclopedia and they looked up the Latin name for each plant and copied the names in their journal. When the journal writing was done, she sang and drummed for the students as they danced to her music. Zelma is from Stevens Village and enjoyed teaching the students traditional Athabascan dancing.

Rita O'Brien is a certified teacher and has worked in our camp for the past four years. She joined us for the weekend to work with students. She discussed mining and rocks in Alaska.

She asked students to find rocks and then, using rock encyclopedias, they found the names and other features of each rock. Rita asked students to draw and write about their rocks in their journals.

The grand finale of the camp was the potlatch which people from the community were invited to attend. Our students helped the cook and Elders prepare the meal and set up the tables. At the potlatch everyone was

introduced to the audience and given a small gift to signify our appreciation for their contribution to the camp. The students demonstrated the Athabascan songs and games they learned in their language class. At the end of the event everyone entered the Elder's Hall where the science project posters were on display. The students stood by their posters to explain their science projects to the visitors. The

*(continued on next page)*

## And the Beat Goes On . . .

*by Frank Hill*

Some time ago I listened to a drumming ceremony that lasted for most of a day and night. The first drummers set the beat, rhythm and volume. As they tired or completed their turn on the drums, other drummers moved into position and took up the drumsticks, carrying on the same beat, rhythm and volume as the beginning drummers, never missing a beat. Unless you saw the change in the drummers take place, you would not have known that the drumbeats and the message of the drums was being made by different drummers.

As we move into the second five years of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI), it is great to see our new partners take up the initiatives we have been developing and promoting the past six years, without missing a beat. The regional non-profits (Kawerak, AVCP, Tanana Chiefs and Central Council of Tlingit and Haida tribes) are well on their way toward becoming educational agents for positive change in their respective cultural regions. We are pleased, too, to see the initiatives continue to develop and broaden in the Alutiiq and Unanga regions. It was great to be a spectator in Kodiak during the "Awaken-

ing Bear" celebration this past spring, where nearly all of the regional agencies were participating in planning and demonstrating how their activities worked together. Some activities have become self-sustaining in their own right as well, like the Old Minto Camp.

These are but a few of the examples available that demonstrate the continuing veracity of the AKRSI initiatives.

We are thankful that the new AKRSI partners have stepped in and helped keep up the drumbeat for systemic change in rural Alaska's schools. ☆

(continued from previous page)

visitors moved from poster to poster and viewed the display table of beaded pouches and the wall display of their photos and brief autobiographies written in Koyukon Athabascan.

The following is a list of the science projects the students prepared:

- *Birch or Spruce?* by Kimberly Rychnovsky
- *Which Tastes Better?* by Britta Kellman
- *Beads* by Adele Stickman
- *Will Pitch Kill More Bacteria Than Water?* by Sommer Stickman
- *Do Frogs Croak Faster in Warm Weather?* by Katrina Madros
- *What Chickadees do for a Living* by Esther George?
- *Can Water Temperature Go Below Freezing?* by Terry Bower
- *What do Salmon Eat After Leaving the Ocean?* by Cynthia Agnes
- *How Many Different Athabascan Dialects are There in the Interior of Alaska?* by Stephanie Moe
- *The Speed of the River* by Li Hanqiao
- *Why are There so Many Mosquitoes in and Around Camp?* by Yang Guang
- *I Want to Know Some Mysteries About Hair* by Yan Jinbo
- *How Can I Improve Lighting in a Trap Line Cabin?* by Mathew Shewfelt
- *How to Reduce Mosquitoes in Fort Yukon* by Kyle Joseph
- *Nets* by Catherine Keane

These students are expected to take their display boards to their classroom teacher this fall and then search the web and their school libraries for more background information on their project. They will have an opportunity to discuss their project with Elders, teachers and other experts in their villages or over the Internet, and then upgrade their project and enter it in the Fairbanks ANSES Science Fair 2001 in December. We look forward to seeing the students at the science fair. ☆

## Athabascan Region: Emphasis on Native Language at Fairbanks ANSES Camp 2001

by Nakukluk Virginia Ned, Allakaket/Fairbanks

The Fairbanks Alaska Native Science and Engineering (ANSES) Camp created an ideal setting that sparked the students interest in learning the Central Koyukon Athabascan language. Velma Schafer and I had the opportunity to teach Central Koyukon language to the ANSES Camp participants this summer at the Gaalee'ya Spirit Camp. We worked with twelve students from Nulato, Newhalen, Ft. Yukon, Lime Village, Anchorage, Tanacross and three students from Beijing, China.

The students were enthusiastic about learning the language and as a result, their acquisition of the language was exceptional. The students from Ft. Yukon and Beijing spoke fluently in their indigenous languages. Other students had taken indigenous language classes at school and all had prior knowledge of their indigenous languages. Velma's expertise, high expectations and the ideal camp setting made it possible for the students to become naturally immersed in the Native language.

The students were taught Central Koyukon terms that enabled them to introduce themselves in the language stating their English name, their Koyukon name, their hometown and a short description of themselves. They were given a Central Koyukon name according to their personal characteristics, if they did not already have one. Names that were given included Hek'edeeonh (sunshine), Sotsee'yh (happy all the time) and Tloo' (star). The students were also taught general terms for every day usage. They were required to create a display using a variety of media and written in the Koyukon language. We took pictures with a digital camera

and the photos were printed for students to add to their poster.

They also learned a song, "This Little Heart of Mine," translated into Koyukon by Lorna Vent of Huslia. The title of the song is "He'eetegtldzaayh." They learned a game that teaches body parts in the Koyukon language. It is a Koyukon version of the Yup'ik game, "Essuukee," introduced to me by Lolly Carpluk of Mountain Village. Velma Schafer translated the words into the Koyukon language. The title of the game in Koyukon is "Kkaakene". After the potlatch the students introduced themselves in Koyukon, sang the song "He'eetegtldzaayh", and gave a demonstration of the game "Kkaakene" for the audience.

Learning the Native language unquestionably enhanced the science focus of the Fairbanks ANSES Camp program. The students did not just acquire a language, but they acquired a whole new perspective of themselves, their culture and traditions. Given the appropriate environment, they would do well if they were taught the language along with all of the basic requirements in order to acquire a well-rounded education. ☆

# Ka Lamaku Hawaiian Academy

by Kamaileula Halualani-Hee

**K**a Lamaku Hawaiian Academy is a voluntary, culturally based educational opportunity that was founded by Kamaileula Halualani-Hee and Makaio Hee as an effort to help their school-disabled son and daughter. It opened services to other children in September of 1999. Ka Lamaku currently rents a one-bedroom apartment as our temporary school house.

Ka Lamaku means "upright torch, standing beacon,"—a name chosen to signify a strong guiding light that pierces the darkness, bringing wanderers to safety. Ka Lamaku is also an ancient Hawaiian symbol of knowledge. Ka Lamaku Hawaiian Academy is an action research pilot program aimed at meeting Hawaii's educational needs of school-disabled children grades 7–12 on the island of Oahu in the Ko'olau poko and Ko'olau Loa communities.

A school-disabled child is one whose maturational and learning differences have been misunderstood and underserved and, consequently, whose personal, social and familial functioning have been so impaired as to render that child unable to perform successfully in a school environment. The students we serve are, because of a myriad of circumstances beyond their control, disadvantaged in many ways. Their academic achievements as well as other skills that create social competencies had, as a result, been seriously and negatively affected. Most of these student's were exhibiting signs of social distress such as flat affect, anti-social attitudes and behaviors, disrespect for authority, irresponsible actions, truancy, school failure and substance abuse. Some were school disabled while others had developed pre-delinquent behaviors and were known to local policemen. They had been described as "throw away kids". Ka Lamaku Hawaiian

Academy does not accept such evaluations for these youth.

We believe in a new kind of "three Rs": Rescue, Restore and Re-educate. Through deep and constant use of Hawaiian cultural values, Ka Lamaku has impacted the lives of twenty youngsters of mixed Hawaiian ancestry. The program has been open to whomever applied, but those it attracted were all children of part-Hawaiian ancestry who had been struggling unsuccessfully in the state D.O.E. programs. Ka Lamaku is a community-based effort, creating pedagogy that proves effective for children with learning differences.

The staff has been involving the children, their parents, kupuna (elder) and other talented members in designing and implementing curriculum modules. Thus the students are in

many ways teaching us how to teach them, showing us what works by their enthusiastic response to learning opportunities. They also show us what doesn't work and participate in discussions about how to improve those areas and teaching methods. Several volunteer teachers have come and gone. They proved to be steeped in the Western, textbook pedagogy and when they were unsuccessful and became discouraged, they tended to blame the children for failing to learn when it was they who failed to teach.

At present we are applying for federal New Century Public Charter status, however our goal is to one day be Hawaii's first sovereign school. Request for admission is made on a daily basis but, because of severe financial and space restraints, we are unable to accommodate more students at this time.

If you or your organization would like to assist Ka Lamaku Hawaiian Academy or would like more information please contact Kamaileula Halualani-Hee at (808) 293-1121 or e-mail [kamaileula@aol.com](mailto:kamaileula@aol.com). Our mailing address is PO BOX 693, Hauula, Hawaii 96717. ☆

## Now Available!



### **Iñuksuk: Northern Koyukon, Gwich'in and Lower Tanana 1800-1901**

by Adeline Peter Raboff

The history of the Northern Koyukon, Western Gwich'in and Lower Tanana people. 196 pages, \$10.00



### **Guidelines for Strengthening Indigenous Languages**

This booklet offers suggestions for Elders, parents, children and educators to use in strengthening their heritage language with support from the Native community, schools, linguists and education agencies. 28 pages, free.

For more information on obtaining copies of these publications, call Dixie Dayo at 907-474-5086 or e-mail [dixie.dayo@uaf.edu](mailto:dixie.dayo@uaf.edu).

# Teacher Leadership Development Project

The underlying purpose of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative is to implement a set of initiatives to systematically document the indigenous knowledge systems of Alaska Native people and develop pedagogical practices and school curricula that appropriately incorporate indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing into the formal education systems. Having successfully demonstrated the efficacy of this strategy in strengthening rural schools and teachers and improving student achievement, the challenge for AKRSI now is to help infuse the initiatives into the curricular and instructional practices on a sustainable basis.

The high turnover rate of teaching staff (80% of whom are recruited from out-of-state) necessitates a targeted approach to leadership development that focuses on those teachers most likely to put these resources to effective use and bring their cumulative insights to bear over time, i.e., teachers for whom the community/region/state is their home. To that end, the AKRSI has requested supplemental funds from the National Science Foundation to implement a Teacher Leadership Development Project (TLDP). The structures through which the TLDP will be implemented are those associated with regional and statewide Native educator associations. Following is a current list of the associations that have emerged in response to AKRSI initiatives over the past six years:

- Ciulistet Education Association
- Association of Interior Native Educators
- Southeast Native Educators Association
- North Slope Inupiaq Educators Association
- Association of Native Educators of the Lower Kuskokwim
- Association of Northwest Native

## Educators

- Native Educators of the Alutiiq Region
- Association of Unangan/Unangas Educators
- Alaska Native Education Student Association
- Alaska Native Education Council
- Alaska First Nations Research Network
- Alaska Indigenous Literary Review Board
- Consortium for Alaska Native Higher Education
- Native Education Association of Anchorage

## Implementation of the AKRSI TLDP

The main function of the AKRSI Teacher Leadership Development Project will be to strengthen and make sustainable the role of the Native Educator Associations and their members in implementing the math/science educational reform initiatives promoted by the AKRSI. This will require the development of leadership capacity in each region and the establishment of formal mechanisms to sustain the implementation of these

initiatives independent of the AKRSI resources by 2005. Following are the steps that will be taken to implement this strategy:

- ◇ The Alaska Native Education Advisory Council to the Commissioner of Education, made up of representatives from each of the Native Educator Associations, will be designated as the governing body to provide direction for the implementation of the Teacher Leadership Development Project.
- ◇ The Alaska Native Education Advisory Council and the AKRSI Co-PIs will recruit and select a full-time project director to coordinate and oversee the initiatives sponsored by the Teacher Leadership Development Project.
- ◇ At least one Native educator association in each of the five major cultural regions will be assisted in obtaining 501(c)3 non-profit status, so as to be eligible to obtain and implement grants and contracts under their own authority.
- ◇ The Native educator associations from each of the five cultural regions will be invited to prepare and submit a work plan outlining the steps they would propose to take to implement the Teacher Leadership Development Project in their region, including the identification of a lead/master teacher for the region (with up to half release time from their employing district) and the activities to be implemented in conjunction with the AKRSI initiative emphasis for each year (e.g., science camps/fairs, Academy of Elders, cultural atlas, curriculum alignment, parent/community involvement, etc.) The lead/master teachers will be selected at the regional level with criteria comparable to those for the project director, but with responsibilities directed toward regional implementation of the AKRSI/TLDP math/science educational reform initiatives. The selection committee will

consist of regional Native educator association members, the TLDP project director and the AKRSI co-directors.

- ◇ Once selected, the lead/master teachers will work with the AKRSI staff to develop the wherewithal to assist teachers and schools in the implementation of the initiatives associated with the Teacher Leadership Development Project in alignment with the AKRSI regional initiatives and the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*.
- ◇ The Native educator associations will convene regional and statewide meetings to review the action plans for preparing culturally-responsive teachers from the 2000 Native Education Summit and the recommendations from the 2001 Forum on Culturally-Responsive Curriculum and to develop action plans for regional implementation of those recommendations. The regional action plans will take into account the *Guidelines for Preparing Culturally-Responsive Teachers* and the *Guidelines for Nurturing Culturally-Healthy Youth*.
- ◇ The Native educator associations will work with local districts and the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development to sponsor a cross-cultural orientation program, including an immersion camp component, for all teachers new to the district/region.
- ◇ The Native educator associations will work with local school districts to provide career ladder incentives that encourage all teachers and teacher aides to pursue training for a cross-cultural specialist endorsement, Type A license with math/science emphasis and/or graduate studies oriented toward implementing culturally responsive, standards-based science and math instruction.
- ◇ The Native educator associations will encourage their members to participate in the Native Adminis-

trators for Rural Alaska program in pursuit of a Type B principals credential with a distributed leadership orientation.

- ◇ The Native educator associations, in collaboration with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, will host an annual statewide conference to showcase the instructional and curricular strategies and initiatives that demonstrate the greatest promise toward implementing culturally-responsive, standards-based science and math instruction.

These initiatives are intended to begin with the 2001–02 school year, with the process for selection of the project director and lead/master teachers to occur by the end of September. Funding for the TLDP will be admin-

istered through the Alaska Federation of Natives with support for the activities of the lead/master teachers provided through memoranda of agreement with the employing school districts. The project director and the lead/master teachers will be included as core staff and will participate in all planning activities associated with the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative. Upon completion of the three-year cycle of initiatives associated with the Teacher Leadership Development Project, all teachers in the AKRSI partner schools will have received support to incorporate the math/science curricular and instructional strategies in their educational practice, with on-going support provided through an established statewide network of Native educator associations. ✧

## 2001-01 Native Education Events

Here are some Alaska Native education events for the 2001-2002 school year that you should mark on your calendar.

The Alaska Federation of Natives **Elders and Youth Conference and Convention** will take place in Anchorage the week of October 21, 2001, including the Alaska Native Education Council meeting on October 21–23 at the Westcoast International.

The **National Indian Education Association annual meeting** will be held in Billings, Montana on October 27–31, 2001. Details can be obtained from the NIEA web site at <http://www.niea.org>.

The annual **Native Educators' Conference and Bilingual-Multicultural Education/Equity Conference** is scheduled for the week of February 3, 2002 in Anchorage. Details for participation in these conferences will be posted on the ANKN web site in October.

The First Alaskans Foundation is

sponsoring a statewide **Alaska Native Education Summit** in Anchorage on November 30–December 1, 2001. Further information will be available on the Alaska Native Knowledge Network web site as it becomes available.

The sixth tri-annual **World Indigenous People's Conference on Education** is scheduled for August 4–10, 2002 to be hosted by the First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium of Calgary, Alberta. Details about WIPCE 2002 can be obtained by sending an email to [wipce@fnahec.org](mailto:wipce@fnahec.org) or by going to their web site at <http://www.fnahec.org/wipce2002>. The deadline for submission of proposals for presentations has been extended to October 31, 2001. Let's make sure there is a strong Alaskan presence at WIPCE 2002! ✧

# Integrating Elders in Northern School Programs

by Cathy McGregor

**"Our Elders were the keepers of knowledge. Without them, each generation would have learned everything there was to know by discovering it themselves."**

—From Inuuqatigiit Curriculum, Department of Education, Government of the Northwest Territories, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, 1996, p. 46

In 1994, as director (superintendent) of the Baffin Divisional Board of Education in Iqaluit, Northwest Territories, Canada, I was asked the question every educational leader dreams of hearing: "If you could have money for one thing in your schools, what would it be?" I didn't know if the question was hypothetical or real. Should I take it seriously? If it was real, I thought I knew the answer right away, but I paused to turn over all the possibilities in my mind. What would have the most effect on students? It seemed like schools could never get enough computers. Should we hire extra special needs assistants? We always needed more resources to support Inuktitut book publication. What about northern books for school libraries? Did schools need new gym equipment? High schools probably wanted more science equipment. I quickly reviewed these and other possibilities, but I knew my initial thought was the right one. I said what the chairman of the board talked about in every public speech and meeting he attended: "Money to hire more Elders."

It turned out that the question was very real. Thanks to the efforts of a territorial administrator and a federal official who wanted to make a difference and had program funds to support their ideas, this conversation began a five-year partnership with the Canadian federal government to support the hiring of Elders in Baffin schools. For the first several years the

funding came directly from the federal government. When the federal and territorial governments, in partnership with the Inuit land claim organization, Nunavut Tunngavik, established the Nunavut Human Resource Development Strategy, fund-

ing came through their auspices (Working Group on Human Resources and Training, 1996). The Baffin Divisional Board supported the project as well, so that for the five-year period of the federal funding, \$200,000 was made available to schools each year.

## Elders as Cultural Inclusion or Cultural Integration?

When Elders first started coming into schools in northern Canada in the 1970s, their work with students was often considered an add-on to the regular program. Lessons frequently took place on Friday afternoon when the teacher and students were tired of the weekly routine. Activities often involved a whole class of students in their regular classroom. Teachers did little preparation of the students or the Elders for their time together. Teachers sometimes viewed the lessons by Elders as "spares" for themselves and left the room. Viewed from the advantage of today, these "cultural inclusion" programs appear as token gestures by the school system to the teaching of traditional knowledge and skills. It is difficult to imagine that either the students or the Elders got much satisfaction from these encounters.

Today, the work of Elders is seen as integral to the success of school programs. In most communities in the Baffin region, schools have a dual mandate from the Local Education Authority, as well as the territorial

Additional references and notes can be found on the Alaska Native Knowledge Network web site at <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/SOP/sopv6i4.html>.

government, to teach both traditional Inuit knowledge and skills and contemporary Western knowledge and skills. A survey of all Baffin communities in 1986 and direction-setting work with individual communities from 1993–96 confirmed this dual agenda. Thus the work that Elders do is part of the regular school program today. In the late 80s and early 90s, the Baffin Piniqtaqvut Program of Studies provided topics for teachers to use to connect the work of Elders with the rest of the school program. The Inuuqatigiit curriculum from K–12, mandated by the government in 1996, outlines traditional Inuit knowledge and skills students should learn within various school divisions (K–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–12). This provides the basis for integrating culture and the work of Elders into the regular curriculum. It is within this context that the work of Elders with students should be viewed.

### *Ways to Fund Elders*

For many years, the Baffin Board had requested that the government fund positions for Elders in schools similar to the way in which they funded positions for teachers and language specialists (para-professionals). At that time, this had not happened (nor has it yet). There were a number of ways in which schools obtained funds to hire Elders to teach traditional knowledge:

- Each school received funds as part of their base budget to support cultural programming. A per pupil allocation determined the specific amount each school received. (This of course, gave an advantage to larger schools in terms of flexibility in using the funds.) Schools could use these funds to hire Elders and to purchase the materials (skins, gas, ammunition, etc.) required to carry out traditional activities.

- If the Local Education Authority (the elected school council) who had authority to determine the budget chose to do so, they could also allocate funds from other parts of the school budget for this purpose.
- The board had a regional Spring Camp Fund to which schools could submit a proposal to access additional funds for resource people such as Elders, as well as equipment and materials to hold this important annual event.
- The board had a regional Orientation Fund to which schools could submit proposals to access additional funds to involve community members and Elders in annual orientation activities for new staff.
- Schools could raise third party funds from foundations and other organizations. Often guidelines for grants for other purposes allowed schools to include funding for Elders as part of the budget for such projects.
- Schools could access funds from regional Inuit organizations through the local settlement/village council, who controlled the funding for specific programs from other departments of the federal government. For example, the federal Healthy Children initiative allowed activities which involved Elders.
- Schools could partner with community groups such as the Hunters and Trappers Organization to get in-kind support for land-based activities.
- Schools could use full time staff positions intended for language specialists or teachers.

While these options provided funding for Elder involvement in schools, the additional funding enabled schools to increase the numbers of Elders present, extend the length of time they were involved with students and/or add new activities.

### *Ways to Involve Elders*

The Baffin Board made funds available to schools through a grant system. The total money available was divided into school allocations, which each school could apply to access. Individual school allocations were determined by setting a base amount for all schools and then adding a per-pupil amount to achieve the total allocation available. Schools had to submit a brief proposal outlining how the Elders would be involved with students. The Local Education Authority chairperson, the principal and the staff member coordinating the project had to sign the proposal. For the first several years, the grants focused just on Elder involvement with students.

In 1996, with the implementation of the government-mandated Inuuqatigiit curriculum, which outlined the traditional knowledge, skills and attitudes from an Inuit perspective that students should learn in school, the focus of the grants shifted somewhat to involving Elders in implementing the new curriculum (see appendix). In fact, this shift did not really change the nature of Elder involvement—they still taught traditional knowledge and skills. It did provide school staff with a guide of topics, an outline of what students should learn and a description of key experiences they might ask Elders to organize. In other words, it provided an organizational framework for traditional knowledge instruction.

Using a combination of funds available, schools hired Elders in a number of different ways, to do a variety of things:

- As full time cultural instructors—regular staff members along with teachers and language specialists—usually with scheduled times each week for work with different classes or groups of students. The

*(continued on next page)*

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topics and skills they taught varied depending on the age and interests of the students and the interests of the Elder.

- As part-time instructors who came in several days or afternoons a week during the year to do a variety of activities with different groups of students, depending on the class and Elder's interests. As with full time instructors, these activities could include storytelling, teaching string and other Inuit games, skin preparation, sewing, cooking, tool construction, specific skills instruction, carving, drum dancing, researching specific topics, helping with community histories, telling their life stories, etc.
- As part-time instructors who taught a "unit" or specific topic or activity every day to the same students for several weeks at a time.
- As part-time instructors who were involved in specific activities such as Spring Camp or, for example, once-a-week on-the-land programs with at-risk students for the duration of the program.
- As part-time research sources to narrate information on a specific topic to be developed into a teaching unit or a learning resource.
- As part-time program developers to assist teachers and language specialists with creating materials which teach aspects of traditional knowledge. For example: iglu building, small tool construction, sewing with caribou skins, how to make *igunaaq* (fermented seal or whale meat), how to read the weather, etc.
- As full or part-time Inuktitut language instructors in addition to, or instead of, language specialists.
- As part-time counselors, mainly for students, but also sometimes for staff members. Some staffs have found it particularly helpful to have Elders in the school after dif-

ficult or tragic community events.

- As an Elders' council for the principal (in addition to the Local Education Authority) to assist with solving particularly thorny problems, community liaison, planning cultural programs and hosting special events and activities.

## Ensuring Success with Elders

There are many reasons to involve Elders in schools:

- To meet goals set by Local Education Authorities (and the government) which identify traditional knowledge and skills as a major component of school programs.
- To maintain, strengthen and enhance Inuit language and culture.
- To create links between the past and the present.
- To build links between the school and the community.
- To encourage links between students and their parents and grandparents.
- To build positive relationships between Elders and younger generations.
- To help students learn to respect Elders, the lives they have lived and the knowledge and skills they have to share.
- To acknowledge and provide opportunities for Elders to share the wisdom, skills and experiences they have accumulated with younger generations.
- To reflect, promote and teach Inuit values and beliefs.
- To foster student and staff pride in their Inuit identity and enhance self-esteem and personal identity.
- To promote respect for animals and other elements of the natural environment which are intimately linked with Inuit culture.
- To ensure younger generations are knowledgeable about and can practice traditional/contemporary survival skills.

To achieve these goals, both Elders and students need to enjoy their experiences together. To enable this to happen, careful thought needs to be given to how and where the Elders work with students. We have found the following suggestions to be helpful in ensuring positive experiences:

- It is an unfortunate aspect of modern life that Elders may be requested in some districts to have criminal record checks completed prior to working in the school. If so, the school needs to expedite the process in any way possible.
- It is usually helpful if there is one staff member in the school who coordinates the Elder resource program. Ideally it should be someone from the community who speaks the language and knows community members well. Ideally this should be a responsibility that is part of the staff member's normal workload, not added to a full time teaching job. Having such a person minimizes potential communication and cross-cultural misunderstandings.
- It is important to clarify ahead of time what the Elder would like to do with the students and what materials and equipment will be needed. Will the Elder provide these (at the school's expense if there is any cost) or will the school provide them?
- Elders may require transportation to and from the school. The school should arrange this and cover any costs involved.
- Elders should be made aware of how much the school pays them (by the hour or the day or whatever is normal practice). There should be a standard fee for Elders' work. They should know how and when they will receive their money. If possible, it is preferable to pay them the same day. This is not always possible, but it usually is much appreciated if it can be arranged. (It is also



important to note that Elders may lose social security benefits if they earn a certain amount of other income, so this needs to be taken into consideration in the remuneration arrangements.)

- Many Elders prefer to work with students in the afternoon, but it is important to check with each individual to determine the best time for them.
- The school needs to be flexible in scheduling Elders. They may not feel well on the particular day they are scheduled or something else may prevent them from coming. It is important to be sensitive to and adapt to their needs rather than to ask them to fit within the rigid timetable of many school programs.
- Students should be prepared for working with Elders. What kind of behaviour is expected of students? Why should they respect the Elder? What will the Elder expect of the students? What should students expect from the Elder? How is working with Elders different from formal school instruction?
- Ask Elders to work with small groups of students or in one-on-one situations. Requiring Elders to take a whole class of 25 students to do an activity is not usually conducive to the Elder teaching or the students learning.
- Provide a specific space for the Elder to work with students if the activity is done in the school. Depending on the nature of the activity, they could work in the school shop or the home economics room. Some schools have special skin rooms for processing animal furs. Some schools have provided an Elders' room in which small group activities such as sewing, story telling, researching topics, or playing Inuit games can take place. These rooms are usually equipped with comfortable seating and some means to make tea and have

bannock—for both Elders and students. They are more like a living room than a classroom.

- Some Elders might prefer to take a few students to work in their own home or in the community Elders' centre. (You may want to provide additional supervision assistance in these contexts.)
- If the school has a *qammaq* (traditional sod house) or tents nearby, depending on the season, these often provide the best environment from both the Elder's and the students' perspective. They provide an appropriate context for teaching traditional skills. We have found that students who are restless and aggressive in the classroom often calm down in the presence of the Elder in this setting.
- If the activity involves a land trip, nature provides the "environment" for the activity. As much as possible, it is preferable to take the students out of the school setting

for work with Elders. Teaching and learning traditional knowledge is most effective when it takes place within the environmental context in which it is needed and used.

- Whenever possible, teachers should participate in activities with Elders and students. This is not always possible, especially when Elders take small groups of students, as the teacher may need to stay with the other students. What this does mean is that Elders should not be used to give teachers a "spare" period.

Paying attention to these details will ensure that both students and Elders have a meaningful experience working together. This will encourage Elders to continue to want to work with students and will help students give Elders the respect they deserve. This is essential if teaching traditional knowledge and skills is to be an integral part of the northern school program. ☆

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## Iñupiaq Region: Tough Love

by Dolly Caffin

The wilderness can be tough love—love so tough that it sometimes keeps us from the ones we care about, from the place we call home and where we find warmth and comfort. Finding ourselves lost in the wilderness usually doesn't fit into our plans, but you never know when life is going to slow you down so that your soul can get all the attention it needs.

For Martha Foster and Louise Clark of Selawik, they experienced this kind of love first hand. Traveling by snowmachine to a basketball game in Noorvik, the two became lost in a snowstorm. They spent hours trying to see through the blinding snow and make their way along the trail. Eventually they made a wrong turn and found themselves with a machine that was out of gas and in snow that was knee deep. They were lost in the vast wilderness of the NANA region of Northwest Arctic.

Throughout the time that they were trying to make their way back to Selawik, they experienced every possible emotion. Every emotion except one—the willingness to give up. Somehow these two kept their focus on being found by Search and Rescue. They sang church songs, they prayed, they pulled together and kept each other going. They worked together and they never gave up. Martha and Louise were lost for seven days before they were located.

Their experience was life changing. To spend seven days in the wilderness is certainly tough love. Through their ordeal they found that they had the courage and strength to survive. They developed a bond of friendship that will never be broken. Individually they each found a will to live—an inner yearning that kept them going day after day. It seems

they were sent into the wilderness for more than one reason: to “find” not only themselves, but each other.

They used basic survival skills they had learned from Elders, during Iñupiaq activities held at their school. Their story was the inspiration for this year's Iñupiaq Days theme, “Arctic Survival.”

Elders, community members and villagers from around the NANA region came to the Selawik Davis-

Ramoth School for the week-long event. They presented the students with a series of discussions and demonstrations about snowmachine safety, orienteering, cold weather clothing and snow shelters. Many other survival skills were also taught.

A community feast was held one evening, in honor of the two girls and all of the people who helped with the search and rescue, both locally and regionally. Special awards were also given to the people who volunteered their time to come and share information with the students during the week.

Many lives were touched because of the tough love these girls experienced while being lost in the wilderness. Their ordeal brought together the school, the community and various Native organizations for an event that celebrated life in the Northwest Arctic. For more information and to view photos of the Iñupiaq activities, visit the following website: [http://community.webtv.net/nd\\_caffin/ARCTICWINTERSURVIVAL](http://community.webtv.net/nd_caffin/ARCTICWINTERSURVIVAL). ✧

## Yup'ik Region: Elders' and Youth Conference Explores Yup'ik Culture

by Esther Ilutsik

To my delight I discovered that within the Yup'ik kinship system those relatives I know as my brothers and sisters have expanded to include my *anaanaq* my mother's sisters, and *ataatak*, my father's brother's children (parallel cousins).

I have to treat them as I would my own brothers and sisters (meaning respecting them and helping them out when they are in need; I have to call them my brothers and sisters using the proper terms for older brother, *an'ngaq*, or oldest sister, *alqaq*, or younger brothers and sisters, *kinguqliq*. As the parallel aunt, I would call my sister's and brother's children

*nurr'aq* (and this is only from the female point of view.)

Logically, within the Western worldview (that many of us were raised in), we assumed that we would also call our parallel nieces and nephews our children but that is not so. Those are just some of the complexities of the Yup'ik kinship system which was the focal point of the Elders' and Youth Conference that was held in Dillingham, May 4–6, 2001.

Representatives included Elders, teachers and students from New Stuyahok, Ekwok, Portage Creek, Aleknagik, Manokotak, Twin Hills and Togiak. We also had representatives from here in Dillingham. About 60 people participated at the Dillingham Elementary School gym.

The conference began with a potluck dinner and a warm welcome from Dewayne Johnson, Curyung, Tribal Council Chief and from Dillingham City Council member and mayor, Chris Napoli. Mr. Johnson introduced himself and identified his parents, siblings and other relatives—what a great way to begin the conference!

This presentation was followed with Yup'ik oral stories presented by Ina Bouker, a certified teacher currently on leave from the Dillingham City Schools and a member of the Ciulistet Research Association. These stories weaved in dances; Bouker's five-year-old son, Nicky, was the drummer and her daughters, Nia (nine) and Atkiq (four) were dancers. The audience was enthralled as Ina used both the Yup'ik and English language. This was followed with the local Aruvak dancers, the New Stuyahok dancers and Manokotak student dancers sharing and exciting the audience with dances of the past.

The evening concluded with Elder Slim Yako, formerly of Aleknagik and currently residing at the Maarulut Eniit Assisted Living Center, drumming and singing songs of his youth.

The following day began with linguist Marie Meade helping to facili-

tate the discussion and investigation of traditional Yup'ik kinship and proper protocol used in interacting. After an exhausting day, we wrapped up with a special evening youth dance that was planned especially for all the student representatives coming in from the villages.

On the final day we had the Elders each present an oral genealogy that was fascinating to listen to. The stu-

dents followed, presenting their own genealogies. The teachers then shared how they were going to implement this information within their own communities and classrooms. It was such a wonderful way to end a conference—the Elders knowing that as educators we are attempting to bring back some of our own values that have fallen by the wayside. ☆

## Fall Course Offerings for Educators in Rural Alaska

by Ray Barnhardt

Just as the new school year brings learning opportunities to students, so too does it bring new learning opportunities for teachers and those seeking to become teachers.

This fall rural teachers and aspiring teachers will have a variety of distance education courses to choose from as they seek ways to upgrade their skills, renew their teaching license, pursue graduate studies or meet the state's Alaska Studies and Multicultural Education requirements. All Alaskan teachers holding a provisional teaching license are required to complete a three-credit course in Alaska Studies and a three-credit course in Multicultural Education within the first two years of teaching to qualify for a standard Type A certificate. Following is a list of some of the courses available through the Center for Distance Education that may be of interest to rural educators:

### *Alaska Studies*

ANTH 242, Native Cultures of Alaska  
GEOG 302, Geography of Alaska  
HIST 115, Alaska, Land and Its People  
HIST 461, History of Alaska.

### *Cross-Cultural Studies*

CCS 601, Documenting Indigenous Knowledge Systems  
CCS 608, Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

Enrollment in the above courses may be arranged through the nearest UAF rural campus or by contacting the Center for Distance Education at 907-474-5353 or [distance@uaf.edu](mailto:distance@uaf.edu), or by going to the CDE web site at <http://www.dist-ed.uaf.edu>. Those rural residents who are interested in pursuing a program to earn a teaching credential or a B.A. should contact the rural education faculty member at the nearest rural campus or the Rural Educator Preparation Partnership office at 907-474-5589. Teacher education programs and courses are available for students with or without a baccalaureate degree. Anyone interested in pursuing a graduate degree by distance education should contact the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies at 907-474-1902 or [ffrjb@uaf.edu](mailto:ffrjb@uaf.edu). Welcome to the 2001–02 school year! ☆

# Southeast Region: Southeast Alaska Tribal College is Launched

by Andy Hope

The Southeast Alaska Tribal College (SEATC) has been in the planning process since late 1997. SEATC has been an active partner in a statewide tribal college planning project that has been supported by the Kellogg Foundation and the National Science Foundation through the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative. SEATC is a founding member of the Consortium for Alaska Native Higher Education.

In early 1999, interim trustees were appointed by the Southeast Alaska Native Rural Education Consortium; the interim trustees formally incorporated SEATC in late 1999. In the last two years a number of organizations have endorsed the tribal college planning project. It is now time for the SEATC to establish itself as a formal, independent education institution.

An overview of the Kellogg project, "Kellogg Cluster Evaluation: Alaska Native Effort to Develop Tribal Colleges" by Dr. Michael Pavel, is available on the ANKN/CANHE web site to those interested in more background. Another information resource on tribal colleges is the recent report "Building Strong Communities: Tribal Colleges as Engaged Institutions" published by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium and the Institute for Higher Education Policy. Copies of this report can be ordered from the IHEP website at [www.ihep.com](http://www.ihep.com). The report can also be downloaded from the same website, though it is a rather large document.

Additional background information on the Consortium for Alaska Native Higher Education can be found on the Alaska Native Knowledge Network website at [www.ankn.uaf.edu](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu).

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium website at [www.aihec.org](http://www.aihec.org) is also a valuable information resource.

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***It is now time for the SEATC to establish itself as a formal, independent education institution.***

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The following individuals have served as volunteer, unpaid interim trustees for SEATC since the spring of 1999: Andy Hope, Marie Olson, Nora Dauenhauer, Roxanne Houston, Joe Hotch, Ed Warren, Ron Dick, Isabella Brady, Jim Walton, Bernice Tetpon, Joyce Shales, Arnold Booth, Charles Natkong, Dennis Demmert and Sue Stevens. The late John Hope served as an interim trustee from May 1999 until his death in October 1999. The SEATC interim trustees are asking that a group of federally-recognized tribes in southeast Alaska ratify the SEATC charter and bylaws at the September meeting.

The following organizations, groups and individuals have adopted resolutions endorsing the planning efforts of the SEATC: Chilkat Indian

Village, Douglas Indian Association, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Wrangell Cooperative Association, Wrangell ANB/ANS Camps, Sitka ANB/ANS Camps, Alaska Intertribal Council, Grand Camp ANB/ANS, National Congress of American Indians and approximately 200 clan and clan house leaders that attended the Kiks.ádi Pole Raising Ceremonies in Sitka in September 1999.

The SEATC interim trustees have appointed a nominations committee to solicit nominations for the 11 member board of trustees. Committee members are Nora Dauenhauer, Dr. Ronald Dick, Andy Hope, Roxanne Houston and Dr. Ted Wright. The first annual SEATC meeting will take place on September 13, 2001 in Juneau at which time the Board of Trustees will be officially appointed. Please contact Andy Hope for information on the nomination process or to submit a nomination.

There are two other, related meetings scheduled for the week of September 10 in Juneau. A Tribal Watershed/GIS/Cultural Atlas workshop will take place in Juneau from September 10-12. The workshop will include presentations on Arc/View GIS, the Aboriginal Mapping Network, the Angoon, Kake, Sitka and Klukwan-Haines cultural atlases, the ANKN website resources, the I Am Salmon curriculum, the SE Alaska Native Place Names project and the Herman Kitka traditional ecological knowledge CD-ROMs. The Southeast Alaska Native Rural Education Consortium will meet on September 14 to plan the next round of regional activities for the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative.

We hope that each tribe can send representatives to this important meeting. If you have any questions regarding the SEATC bylaws, annual meeting or any of the related meetings, you can contact me at [fnah@uasf.edu](mailto:fnah@uasf.edu) or call me at 907-790-4406. ✧

# Alutiiq/Unangaġ Region: Celebrating Basket Weaving

Teri Schneider

An item of my mother's that I have admired from the time I was a child is a grass basket that sat on a shelf in our kitchen when I was growing up. Just the other day it caught my eye once again. I grew up knowing that the basket was made by Feodosia (Kahutak) Inga of Old Harbor and was given to my mother by Feodosia as a gift when she and my dad were watching the cannery in Shearwater and visited Old Harbor for Russian Easter.

Feodosia, the mother of George Inga, Sr., carried on the tradition of the "Kodiak-style" Aleut\* basket, which tended to have a bit larger weave and was typically more heavily decorated, even when her eyesight failed. Grass basket weaving has been done by numerous indigenous cultures throughout the world as one adaptation to their environment. Aleut basket weaving is world renowned for its fine weave and tiny objects.

The following is an edited version of an Elwani article (Volume 1, No. 2, May 1976) originally written by Sandy Parnell, Lisa Mellon and Cindy Wheeler. They interviewed Kodiak's Eunice Neseth at a time when Aleut basket weaving was seen as an art form that was, perhaps, dying. From the many efforts of Eunice, her teacher Anfesia Shapsnikoff and many others who took the time to learn and then teach to others, the beautiful art of Aleut basket weaving is alive and well. Recently, the Alutiiq Museum sponsored a traveling grass basket exhibit featuring the work of Arlene Skinner. Arlene traveled with the exhibit and taught Aleut basket weav-

ing to children and adults. Today, basket weaving is not a dying art, but rather another form of art that has regenerated interest in the indigenous culture of the Kodiak archipelago. Many baskets are featured at the Baranov Museum, as well as at the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak. In the words of Eunice Neseth:

"I guess I've been basket weaving about 20 years. This is an Attu basket weaving which is also called twinning. You have to have the right kind of grass, which is beach rye. The weavers prefer Attu grass, which grows right on the island of Attu or Atka. They say it's a somewhat softer grass than the grass that grows anywhere else. It's the same kind of grass here but you just have to be careful when you pick it. If it's too close to the ocean it's kind of coarse. When the grass is picked at the wrong time of the year it has to be beaten. When it's just ready to flower, that is when it's ready to head, to make the top.

"We use a paring knife to cut the straws. We take the straws single, those that have to be protected, we are very careful with them so as not to

bruise them. You take them singly to the ground as close as you can. Then you move the pile with care from one cutting to the next. When you have your necessary amount, you wrap it in burlap. An amount for one basket is about the size of your waist, it's more than you can hold in your hands. It takes a lot of work to make one basket, you simply can't forget it, you must look after it or else it will spoil. It's not too much of a chore to get the grass and take care of it. You can go ahead and use it in the winter, no need for curing it, because it's already cured naturally. Although in the winter it's a lot coarser and it gets bruised by the weather. When it's bruised it breaks off easily.

"We gather it then and cure it in a dark place for ten days. Taking it out of its wrappings of burlap or any loose weave material every day to aerate it and then rewrap it. After ten days is up, it's ready to be separated. The straws are to be separated from each other. The outer straws are to be discarded and only the inner two straws are to be used. They are taken out of the shaft and made into separate piles. The inner most piece of straw is what is used as the outer work. What you see in the baskets is the finest part . . .

"There are very few people who carry on with basket weaving. They teach it in the schools along the Aleutian Chain. It's something we're trying to save. It's sadly disappearing and we're trying to keep it from being lost altogether. It takes a lot of concentration and effort, it's not one of those things you pick up now and again. It needs practice and improvement.

"We are very anxious to get young children started. They can get used to it easily when they are young and keep on with it. We should try to get some of the women who took a basket-weaving class and liked it enough, to continue it. Then soon enough maybe they can teach it." ✨

\*Aleut: The indigenous people of the Aleutian Chain, Alaska Peninsula and Kodiak archipelago. The name was introduced by the Russians and may still be used by many today. Though they have different indigenous languages, the Unangaġ of the Aleutian Chain and the Sugpiaq (or Alutiiq) of the Kodiak archipelago share a common history of the last 250 years and have adapted to similar environments.

# Asking Tomorrow

The elderly, people of the past, bring anew something in me.

Often tears of mixed feelings come forth with the sight or even thought of these wise ones.

They possess something mysterious and rare with their strength one cannot find elsewhere.

Elders are steady, facing their daily struggles—steady like the rivers so swift!

The slightest movement of their hand spark the imagination of what was, what is, what if . . .

Men and women of old are humble as can be, yet their noble qualities speak through their sparkling eyes with their chins held high.

Careless worries and childish doubts dissipate almost instantaneously around the elderly, as their actions portray volumes of what actually counts us all as the beloved beings that we are.

Belonging to the past that created them, the elderly have a way of looking back without closing their eyes as they are somehow taken away from the present, momentarily.

by Maricia Ahmasuk



When these delicate creatures are brought back Home we who are left behind are not really left alone, for these wondrous beings leave silently, yet not without an echo that rings true, filling the abyss of the soul with great signs and wonders.

Elders across the globe share a great commonality.

They take us to impossible places as if looking into the future, directing our paths somewhere to the past, where we each have a place.

Often we hear Elders say that the youth are the future . . . interesting, coming from ancient voices who open the doors to tomorrow by looking back.

What may we ask of tomorrow . . . today? ☆

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# Sharing Our Pathways

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## Documenting Indigenous Knowledge and Languages: Research Planning & Protocol

### Introduction

by Beth Leonard


I have been preparing a research proposal for the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. program at UAF that focuses on "Athabaskan Oral Traditions: Deg Hit'an<sup>1</sup> Narratives and Native Ways of Knowing." Much of my current research and language learning centers on kinship and (personal) family histories. Hopefully this research will serve dual purposes in terms of both academic significance and potential value to the Deg Hit'an community.

Research by indigenous researchers for the benefit of indigenous communities also dovetails with political/postmodern movements of self-determination, autonomy and cultural regeneration. Maori researcher, Linda Smith (1999) states: "The cultural and  
*(continued on next page)*

1. The term Deg Hit'an ("local people" or "people from around here") is used to refer to the people of Anvik, Shageluk and Holy Cross. Osgood (1936) and subsequently the 1982 ANLC Native Languages map used "Ingalik" which is not a Deg Hit'an word but a Yup'ik word meaning "lice infested."

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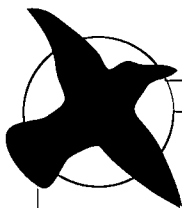
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### Guidelines for Strengthening Indigenous Languages

This booklet offers suggestions for Elders, parents, children and educators to use in strengthening their heritage language with support from the Native community, schools, linguists and education agencies. 28 pages, free.

For more information on obtaining copies of these and other cultural guidelines, call the Alaska Native Knowledge Network at 907-474-5086 or e-mail [dixie.dayo@uaf.edu](mailto:dixie.dayo@uaf.edu). ★



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linguistic revitalization movements have tapped into a set of cultural resources that have recentred the roles of indigenous women, of Elders, and of groups who had been marginalized through various colonial practices" (p. 111). Although some Deg Hit'an Elders were recorded during the Alaska Native Literature Project and more recently during the development of *Deg Xinag Dindlidik: Deg Xinag Literacy Manual* there remain several Elders who have not had a chance to record traditional stories and/or lend their perspectives to the history of this area. Deg Hit'an narratives will be valuable as language maintenance efforts proceed and more emphasis is placed on integrating Native knowledge and history into the school curriculum through projects such as the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative.

### Researcher's Background

I grew up in Shageluk, Alaska, an Athabascan village on the Innoko River located in the lower-middle Yukon area. I also spent four years in neighboring Anvik, a village on the Yukon approximately 30 miles from Shageluk. My father is James Dementi of Shageluk, a multilingual speaker of Deg Xinag and Holikachuk Athabascan and English. My mother, Jean Dementi, who died in 1988, was a non-Native woman who came to Alaska from California as an Episcopal nurse-evangelist. In 1976 she became Alaska's first woman ordained to the priesthood in the Episcopal church.

Due to a variety of socio-historical influences, most people of my generation did not learn to speak Athabascan. Both the early Episcopal church missionaries and the territorial and Bureau of Indian Affairs schools mandated English and parents had been told not to teach their children

the Athabascan language. During the time I lived in Shageluk and Anvik, there were no Athabascan language programs in place in either the school or community. I do, however, remember the first linguists from the Alaska Native Language Center (ANLC) who came to the Shageluk area to work with speakers during the early 1970s. My father and other relatives often worked as consultants in these early language documentation and translation efforts. This contradiction in Native language status, i.e. continuing suppression of local language and culture by churches and schools versus promotion by prestigious outside academic interests, conveyed ambiguous and confusing messages to communities struggling to maintain their local cultures.

### Barriers and Challenges in Language Learning

In my current role as language learner—along with other language learners from the Deg Hit'an area—I find myself struggling with the best way to learn the Deg Xinag language and share the knowledge I have documented. Although many of us as language learners work directly with linguists, obvious differences between English and Deg Xinag Athabascan are not articulated and we (the learners) are forced to stumble along as best we can. I believe this is due in part to the lack of knowledge of the deeper Athabascan cultural contexts and constructs and the failure to document language beyond the lexical and grammatical levels.

I was an undergraduate linguistics student when I began my study of Deg Xinag. At that time I had no experience in learning a non-European language and was accustomed to being taught conversational language by experienced teachers using immersion methods. I was also used to



having an extensive collection of practical dictionaries and grammars at my disposal to assist in the learning process. Although there is not a published grammar for Deg Xinag, there are materials that can be used for language learning. To date, publications include one set of verb lessons, a language curriculum for elementary students, one literacy manual, two books of traditional stories, several short children's stories and a limited collection of supplemental learning materials. The verb lessons explain the linguistic structures at an elementary level for language learners, however, as stated above, significant cultural constructs and concepts are not addressed.

Through my academic coursework I would often run across barriers to

my own self-confidence in being able to someday speak Deg Xinag fluently. For instance, there is a whole body of research on second language acquisition that says if learning begins after adolescence, the learner cannot expect to become fully fluent in the second language. In a similar vein, linguists often describe Athabaskan "as one of the most difficult languages in the world to learn," thereby insinuating that one needs to be of above-average intelligence to indeed even attempt such a process. As a learner and student I have been questioned as to the potential for true authenticity (purity) of Athabaskan when learned as a second language and whether or not I think the "back velars"<sup>2</sup> will drop out of the language.

I began my own language learning

by asking for phrases in the languages and listening to taped narratives and literacy exercises. I also would sit down with my father and go through sections of the noun dictionary to find the literal meanings of words. I found that, although writing and studying written language is not considered the best way to learn conversational language, it provided a base for further understanding of the language structure and helped with learning the sound system. I continue my study of conversational language through regular interactions with various members of my immediate and extended family. Sometimes this learning takes place in more formal environments such as the ANL 121/122 audioconferences or Athabaskan Language Development Institute's on-campus classes. On most occasions this learning takes place through

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2. Deg Xinag back velars are written with "kk" and "gg," for example, here is a minimal pair which represents both the front and back velars "gag" (berry) and "ggagg" (animal).

## Deg Xinag

Sidithniqay James Dementi, Jean yit xivi'ezre'. Sito' Didlang Tochagg nadheyonh. Vidadr (sivadr) Katherine, Susan, Louise yit xivi'ezre'. Katherine DzoX-tsey dhido. Katherine vichoy Patrick viyix dhido yit. Louise viqing' Richard yit Qay Xuchux xiditl'tth'e. Sito' vichidl (sitoy) Gilbert vi'ezre'. Gilbert vi'ot Eleanor yit Cantwell xiditl'tth'e.

Singonh California nadheyonh. Vichidl (sidhi'a) Keith, Don yit xivi'ezre'. Don vi'ot Lucille yit Santa Barbara California xiditl'tth'e. Vidadr (siq'oy) Yvonne vi'ezre'. Yvonne viqing' Richard yit Redding California xiditl'tth'e.

Sitsiy Charlie Cikal Dementi, Charles Aubrey yit xivi'ezre'. Sitsiy Charlie Dementi Dishkaket nadheyonh. Sitsey Lena Phillips Dementi, Ruth Aubrey yit xivi'ezre'. Sitsey Lena Dementi feggijitno', Nitteghelinghdi' yit nadheyonh. Sitsey viyit xethdlan Clara, Albert xivi'ezre'.

Beth Dementi-Leonard si'ezre'. Deg Hit'an itlanh. feggijitno', DzoX-tsey, Qay Xuchux, Gitr'ingithchagg xinasiyonh. University of Alaska Fairbanks School of Education q'u' isineyh. Siqing' Michael Leonard vi'ezre'. Clear AFS q'u'idineyh. Siyotr'a' Samantha vi'ezre'. Fairbanks tr'iditl'tth'e.

## English

My parents are James and Jean Dementi. My father grew up in Swiftwater (on the Innoko River). His younger sisters (my aunts—father's side) are Katherine, Susan and Louise. Katherine lives in (new) Shageluk. Her grandson Patrick lives at her house also. Louise and her husband Richard live in Anchorage. My father's younger brother (my uncle—father's side) is Gilbert. Gilbert and his wife Eleanor live in Cantwell.

My mother grew up in California. Her younger brothers (my uncles—mother's side) are Keith and Don. Don and his wife Lucille live in Santa Barbara. Her younger sister (my aunt—mother's side) is Yvonne. Yvonne and her husband Richard live in Redding, California.

My grandfathers are Charlie Cikal Dementi and Charles Aubrey. Charlie Dementi grew up in Dishkaket. My grandmothers are Lena Phillips Dementi and Ruth Aubrey. Lena Dementi grew up in Old Shageluk and Lower Village. Her siblings are Clara and Albert.

My name is Beth Dementi-Leonard. I am Deg Hit'an Athabaskan. I grew up in Old Shageluk, New Shageluk, Anchorage and Anvik. I work for the UAF School of Education. My husband's name is Michael Leonard. He works at Clear AFS. My daughter's name is Samantha. We live in Fairbanks.

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informal interaction with speakers through visits or phone conversations. I still use a variety of learning methodologies, including writing the language on a regular basis.

One of the more popular ways to teach/learn language involves a

between the Deg Hit'an and Holikachuk areas, so many speakers have command of at least two Athabascan languages. As multilingual speakers, they are aware of our difficulties in learning these languages and are able to provide the context we often ignore. I have observed that in

learner, literal translations provide a great deal of fascinating cultural information and further impetus for investigation into one's own culture. For example, the Deg Xinag words for birds, fish, animals and plants reflect complex and scientific beliefs and observations (Fig. 1.)

Fig. 1.

English	Deg Xinag	Literal Translation
black bear	ggagg gichidl	animal its/the little brother
otter	tixet'an (te xut'an?)	water people (?)
water snipe	teyeg	water spirit/shadow (its shadow reflects on the water?)
junco	t'egg ney	"fish" it says (the junco calls when salmon are coming)
yellow pond lilly	vichingadh ethog	muskrat's plate
raven	yixgitsiy	your (plural) grandfather
rusty blackbird	yixgitsiy vozra	raven his nephew
puffball mushroom	yixgitsiy notchildl	raven's (sewing) bag

method called Total Physical Response (TPR). In English this would require the use of the imperative mode to give a series of commands which require some action on the part of the learner, e.g. come here, open the window, close the door, etc. In Deg Xinag, however, many of these do not equate to commands but describe instead what the subject is doing. In the case of "wake up" for instance (when speaking to a child), a more appropriate way to express this in Deg Xinag is "Xet'edz tr'aningidhit he'?" which translates to "Are you waking up good?" Examples such as these reflect the deeper value system, i.e., a gentle way of relating to children as they awake.

I am continually impressed with the Deg Xinag speakers' command of English and Athabascan and their strength and resilience considering the damage that has been done since contact. In the past there was a great deal of travel and intermarriage

immersion or partial immersion situations, speakers will adapt their use of language so as to not totally overwhelm, but assist learners through individual levels of learning by varying the complexity of their speech.

### Language Learner As Researcher

"Alaska Native worldviews are oriented toward the synthesis of information gathered from interaction with the natural and spiritual worlds so as to accommodate and live in harmony with natural principles and exhibit the values of sharing, cooperation, and respect" (Kawagley, 11).

Kawagley's observations about Alaska Native worldviews are reflected in my initial research with the *Ingalik Noun Dictionary*. In reviewing this dictionary with my father, I found that the literal translations were not included. For a beginning language

### Culturally Appropriate and Respectful Ways of Language Learning

Learners, like myself, who do not have latent knowledge of the language, use a translation approach. Often we inadvertently ask for words or phrases for concepts that do not exist, or concepts that are expressed in very different ways in this cultural context. Learners also tend to provide an incomplete or sometimes total lack of context when requesting words or phrases. As English speakers, we nominalize and decontextualize many concepts, without realizing that Athabascan is a dynamic, verb-based language.

One example of differences between Deg Xinag and English categorization reflects the way one would say "Where are you/where is it?" *Xidanh* is used when referring to people (e.g. *Xidanh si'ot?*—Where is my wife?), whereas *xiday* is used to refer to an animal or object (*Xiday sileg?*—Where is my dog? or *Xiday sigizr?*—Where are my mittens?) The same is true for counting people, animals or objects (*nittayh/nittay*). From what Deg Xinag speakers have said, using these words for "where" and "how many" show respect toward animals who might be offended if the wrong reference is used. This reflects a context of care and respect for animal spirits and other non-human spirits present in the environment, as well as the power of the spoken word.

Fig. 2.

Deg Xinag	English	Literal Translation
<i>Dranh ngi'egh ityoth.</i>	It's snowing outside today.	Today outside it is snowing.
<i>Getiy ghityoth.</i>	It really snowed.	Really it snowed.
<i>Chen itityoth.</i>	It started to snow again.	Again it started to snow.
<i>Chen nitityoth.</i>	It's started to snow again.	Again it's started to snow.

When learners request generic phrases for weather, for instance, it can be difficult for speakers to provide this information when not given a particular context. A more holistic context might provide the following information:

- whether a phenomena is happening now, a little while ago, yesterday, last week, etc.
- if a phenomena is/was happening for the first time during the specified time period, or is/was beginning again
- variations in intensity—a little, very hot/really windy, etc.

These limited examples gathered by members of the language class reflect both major and subtle changes in context (Fig. 2.)

## Documenting Oral Sources and Research Issues

I write down new words and phrases gathered from speakers in my family during phone or face-to-face conversations and audioconference classes. I also record speakers (with their permission) when possible and have several tapes of recorded audioconference classes as well as phrase lists. In the past, I had not really thought about the proper way to obtain permission to record information either in writing or with audiovisual equipment. Often I would ask if I could record, but assumed the speakers knew I would use this information for learning purposes. Now I realize that there are a great many

issues to deal with when documenting in writing or with audio/visual equipment, including:

- Who should have ownership of audio/visual materials?
- How will the material be used?
- How will the material be cared for?
- Where should materials be stored?
- Who should have access to the materials?

## "Just Speak Your Language"

Lately, it seems the endangered languages bandwagon is a popular vehicle for access to "other," providing many opportunities for publication through description and analysis of various Native language revitaliza-

tion programs. Outside researchers continue to debate the authenticity and effectiveness of projects and programs from non-indigenous perspectives. Language revitalization, instead of being viewed holistically within social and cultural contexts, is often treated as strictly a linguistic venture, i.e. "just speak your language." "Just speaking your language" assumes abilities and resources are available to assist in this process. It involves learning cultural constructs and concepts often hidden in translation along with a myriad of other environmental, ideological and personal factors. Fortunately there are now indigenous educational models providing examples of contextual/situational learning that can be applied at a local grass-roots level.

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# Guidelines Adopted for Alaska Public Libraries

by David Ongley

The state of indigenous librarianship is stirring across regions in Alaska. There is yet a long way to go. Many villages have no public libraries. For those that do, there is no centralized planning effort. Village libraries frequently consist of a few shelves of books in a village council office. Funding for staff and collections is usually far from adequate. Funds for operations are almost nonexistent. Staff rarely work full time and usually have few benefits. Most have little or no training in librarianship and work in relative isolation.

We are fortunate on the North Slope to have public libraries in all of our villages. We only have seven villages outside of Barrow though. AVCP in Bethel is working to form libraries in many of the 50 or so villages it serves. I hear of good things coming from Southeast Alaska as well. Sealaska and the Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes both recently received grants for library projects, as did Igiugig Village in the Cook Inlet area. Haines public library is working on a large project with the Chilkoot Indian Association. For the most part, however, very little is being done in larger towns and cities.

Each year, the Alaska State Library hosts a three-day leadership institute that is fondly referred to as DirLead. Last October the directors of the 10 largest public libraries in the state met to learn ways they could better serve Alaska Natives in their libraries. As this was a significant departure from previous DirLead institutes, much credit needs to go to Karen Crane, the director of the State Library and several other key people, who immediately perceived the value of what was being proposed and pro-

vided firm support for the project.

Father Michael Oleksa spoke for half a day about communication styles. For the next day and a half, Dr. Lotsee Patterson, a Comanche professor of library science at the University of Oklahoma, a preeminent expert on Native libraries across the country, worked with us to develop a set of guidelines for public libraries. These guidelines were based on those for schools, communities, teachers and parents already developed by the Alaska Native Knowledge Network.

Immersion in the subject under Dr. Patterson's tutelage provided the intellectual stimulus that propelled the formation of smaller workgroups to consider four aspects of libraries where guidelines could be developed: the environment in which services are delivered, the programs and services offered, the collections that are developed and the staff that is employed in the library.

Reassembling, the smaller groups brought proposed wording back. Revisions by the larger group were considerable. Work progressed quickly under Lotsee's direction. Directors took copies of the document to share

with their libraries, communities and Native educational organizations. Feedback was sporadic and continued to trickle in through the spring of 2001. The changes that were suggested were forwarded to the entire group through their listserv. Almost every suggestion that came in improved the document and was easily incorporated into the wording. By June the document was completed to almost everyone's satisfaction. That document is now on the ANKN Web site at [www.ankn.uaf.edu/standards/library.html](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/standards/library.html).

I believe several basic truths about libraries. I believe that, while books and libraries may have the appearance and tradition of a fundamental component of a white, European, imperialist institution, their equivalents exist in every culture in some form. I believe that by taking control of libraries and filling them with appropriate information, they can be transformed into institutions that serve people in the villages.

In Alaska, we struggle on two fronts: getting libraries established in the villages and convincing the state legislature of the need to support them. Convincing a legislature dominated by representatives from the major urban areas of the importance of rural libraries is an uphill battle. It will probably remain a losing battle without the overwhelming support from the villages. I'm certain that the importance of libraries will eventually prevail and they will emerge as a force for cultural, linguistic, historic and economic independence in the future.

On September 21, 2001 at the State Board of Education meeting, it was moved by board member Roy Nageak of Barrow to endorse the *Culturally Responsive Guidelines for Alaska Public Libraries*. The endorsement was approved unanimously. Those guidelines are included for use in your community. ✨

# Culturally-Responsive Guidelines For Alaska Public Libraries

Sponsored by the Alaska State Library with support and guidance from the Alaska Native Knowledge Network. © Alaska State Library 2001

## Preface

The *Culturally-Responsive Guidelines for Alaska Public Libraries* were developed by a group of Alaskan library directors\* at a workshop facilitated by Dr. Lotsee Patterson and sponsored by the Alaska State Library. The goal of the workshop was to develop guidelines to help public librarians examine how they respond to the specific informational, educational and cultural needs of their Alaska Native users and communities. These guidelines are predicated on the belief that culturally appropriate service to indigenous peoples is a fundamental principle of Alaska public libraries and that the best professional practices in this regard are associated with culturally-responsive services, collections, programs, staff and library environment.

While the impetus for developing the guidelines was service to the Alaska Native community, as the library directors worked on the guidelines it became clear that they could be applied to other cultural groups resident in Alaska. The guidelines are presented as basic statements in four broad areas. The statements are not intended to be inclusive, exclusive or conclusive and thus should be care-

fully discussed, considered and adapted to accommodate local circumstances and needs.

The guidelines may be used to:

- Review mission and vision statements, goals, objectives and policies to assure the integration of culturally appropriate practice.
- Examine the library environment and atmosphere provided for all library users.

- Review staff performance as it relates to practicing culturally specific behavior.
- Strengthen the commitment to facilitating and fostering the involvement of members of the indigenous community.
- Adapt strategies and procedures to include culturally sensitive library practices.
- Guide preparation, training and orientation of library staff to help them address the culturally specific needs of their indigenous patrons.
- Serve as a benchmark against which to evaluate library programs, services and collections.

## Library Environment

- ◇ A culturally-responsive library is open and inviting to all members of the community.
  - ◇ A culturally-responsive library utilizes local expertise to provide culturally appropriate displays of arts, crafts and other forms of decoration and space design.
  - ◇ A culturally-responsive library makes use of facilities throughout the community to extend the library's mission beyond the walls of the library.
  - ◇ A culturally-responsive library sponsors ongoing activities and events that observe cultural traditions and provide opportunities to display and exchange knowledge of these traditions.
  - ◇ A culturally-responsive library involves local cultural representation
- (continued on next page)*

### \* These guidelines were developed by:

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tives in deliberations and decision making for policies and programs.

## Services And Programs

- ◇ A culturally-responsive library holds regular formal and informal events to foster and to celebrate local culture.
- ◇ Culturally responsive programming involves members from local cultural groups in the planning and presentation of library programs.
- ◇ Culturally responsive programming and services are based on the expressed needs of the community.
- ◇ Culturally responsive programming recognizes and communicates the cultural heritage of the local area.
- ◇ Culturally responsive services reach out and adapt delivery to meet local needs.

## Collections

- ◇ A culturally-sensitive library provides assistance and leadership in teaching users how to evaluate material about cultural groups represented in its collections and programs.
- ◇ A culturally-responsive library purchases and maintains collections that are sensitive to and accurately reflect Native cultures.
- ◇ A culturally-responsive library seeks out sources of materials that may be outside the mainstream publishing and reviewing journals.
- ◇ A culturally-responsive library seeks local community input and suggestions for purchase.
- ◇ A culturally-responsive library incorporates unique elements of contemporary life in Native communities in Alaska such as food gathering activities and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) into its collection.

- ◇ A culturally-responsive library encourages the development and preservation of materials that document and transmit local cultural knowledge.
- ◇ A culturally-responsive library makes appropriate use of diverse formats and technologies to gather and make available traditional cultural knowledge.
- ◇ A culturally-responsive library develops policies for appropriate handling of culturally sensitive materials.
- ◇ A culturally-responsive library reviews its collections regularly to insure that existing materials are relevant and appropriate.
- ◇ A culturally-responsive library collects materials in the languages used in its community when they are available.

## Library Staff

- ◇ The culturally-responsive library reflects the ethnic diversity of the local community in recruitment of library boards, administrators, staff and volunteers.
- ◇ A culturally-responsive staff recognizes the validity and integrity

- of traditional knowledge systems.
- ◇ Culturally-responsive staff is aware of local knowledge and cultural practices and incorporates it into their work. For example, hunting seasons and funeral practices that may require Native staff and patrons to be elsewhere, or eye contact with strangers, talkativeness or the discipline of children.
- ◇ A culturally-responsive staff is knowledgeable in areas of local history and cultural tradition.
- ◇ A culturally-responsive staff provides opportunities for patrons to learn in a setting where local cultural knowledge and skills are naturally relevant.
- ◇ A culturally-responsive staff utilizes the expertise of Elders and culturally knowledgeable leaders in multiple ways.
- ◇ A culturally-responsive staff will respect the cultural and intellectual property rights that pertain to aspects of local knowledge.
- ◇ Culturally-responsive library staff members participate in local and regional events and activities in appropriate and supportive ways. ✧

## Gail Pass Moves On

We have been fortunate throughout the life of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative to have highly talented and dedicated staff to breath life into the work we are doing. One who has been with us nearly from the beginning and has provided much of the glue that holds everything together has been Gail Pass, administrative assistant at the AFN office of the AKRSI. Gail has provided critical technical skills essential to keeping track of the many activities sponsored by the project; she has also been a valuable contributor to the thinking that has gone into shaping that work. Evidence of her insightful perspective on the inner workings of the world in which we live is reflected in a poem found on the back page of this newsletter, which she has provided as a gift to all of us on her move to a new position as a financial analyst with Alaska Communications Systems. The staff of AKRSI want to express our appreciation to Gail for her faithful service-with-a-smile over the years and we wish her good fortune as she moves on to new opportunities in her life. We'll be calling on you, Gail . . . !

# Parenting & Teaching: One and the Same

*Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley*

Waqaa,

As I begin this article, I am reminded of the Yupiaq woman who had an irritated skin condition on her hands and was given a tube of ointment with an applicator. One night when she was awakened by the irritation, she reached over in the dark to retrieve the ointment and applied it to her hands. The next morning, she woke up and looked at her hands. She was astounded and bewildered. Her hands were completely red. She worried as to what was happening to her skin. She finally looked at the tube of ointment she had applied, and then laughed when she saw that it was a red Bingo dauber!

During the last century or so, we, as parents and teachers, have been working blindly just as this woman because of the promises of the American Dream—promises of a quality education, a good job, a good home, earning top dollars and getting promotions. We have become Americanized to a high degree. In the process, we have been losing our Native languages and cultures. A recent newspaper article suggests that our Native languages are eroding and many will be gone within a generation. Will we, as parents and teachers, allow this to happen? Historically the American way has encouraged the loss of Native languages and cultures. The English language and its cultures continue to have a very voracious appetite and will devour our Native languages and cultures if we allow it.

In the past, our children were born in a sod house or a tent at spring camp or delivered under an overturned skin boat in an emergency. From the outset the newborn is introduced to the

voices of the family members, the words of the midwife, the hum of the wind, the sound of falling rain and the call of the Arctic loon. The newborn is already immersed in nature from its first moments of life. During the gestation period and after a given time, the child is talked to, sung to by the mother and exposed to family members eating, sleeping, doing work and playing. The child learns of the sounds peculiar to its parents' language, love and care bringing an indelible sense of belonging. The child is exposed to and lives within nature all its life. When the mother walks, the child is placed inside the parka on its mother's back. The child can then look around and see things from the same level as its mother and is treated as a beautiful living being.

As the child progresses through its growing stages, the parents, grandparents and community members assess the talents and inner strengths the child might have. These are nurtured with the thinking that the com-

munity will become greater with a responsible and caring member. As the child grows older, the members look for ideas that the child expresses, skills it shows, its interaction with others and its respect for everyone and everything.

There are rites of passage that are practiced as the child grows. The killing of a first mosquito, first pick of berries and other acts are times of joy by villagers and are reinforced by giving support and encouragement for continued growth, physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. Puberty is a time of ceremony—the becoming of a woman or a man. First menstruation of a young lady is considered a time of power requiring that the young lady be housed apart and served only by the mother or grandmother for its duration. No work is required of her.

As the young person matures, the community members may ask the youngster: "Have you counted your blessings lately?" In actuality, they are asking: "Have you counted your inner values, talents, strengths, important relationships and connectedness?" This connectedness is spirituality. Knowing this about oneself will make one beneficial to the community.

With respect to discipline, the home must be a place of love, care, companionship and cooperation. If these are practiced, the child is well-behaved. If such ingredients are lacking in the home, how can the parents expect to discipline the child? If the home is dysfunctional, then where will the child find the love, care, attention and companionship they need? It is possible for a parent to be a teacher, but a teacher cannot really substitute for a parent, yet this is what we sometimes expect of the school. When teachers meet with parents, it is important that they encourage them to be loving, caring and

*(continued on next page)*

# Alutiiq/Unangaġ Region: Re-establishing Illuani

by Teri Schneider

Residents of the Kodiak Island area who remember the oral history magazine *Elwani*, were delighted to learn about a new publication that was produced by students through the Kodiak Island Borough School District. *Illuani* (same meaning and approximate pronunciation as the previous title) began to be distributed in June. Like the previous project, the latest version is a collection of interviews done of local people by high school students from our islands' communities. Featured in this latest version are Iver Malutin, Florence Pestrikoff, Susan Malutin, Ed Opheim, Sr. and the past coordinator of the project, Dave Kubiak. Students from Port Lions, Danger Bay, Old Harbor, Akhiok and Karluk completed the interviews and then worked with their site teachers and project coordinator, Eric Waltenbaugh, to transcribe the articles and create introductions. What a success! Not only are students learning writing skills, they build their skills for listening and communicating effectively across generations.

A few years ago people began to ask me, "What ever happened to *Elwani*? How come we don't see those around anymore?" As background information was gathered about the first effort, it became more and more apparent that we could re-establish the project with a few minor changes. *Illuani* could become a wonderfully

relevant learning tool while fulfilling the need to document people's knowledge and experience in our region of the world so that we could continue to communicate and celebrate the ingenuity and lives of each other. Like the magazine of the 70s and 80s, the school district is printing it, but the new one will be done primarily by rural stu-

dents with some contributions by interested students in Kodiak.

The night of the first interviews, held at the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak, was a marvelous event. The students were nervous and the invited guests that were to be interviewed were unsure of their role and of what they might contribute. When the students went to their designated areas with their tape recorders, note pads and interviewees, magic happened. The project became a reality and took on a life of its own. Nobody needed prompting and nobody needed interventions by teachers. Giggles came from every corner as each group became engaged in conversation, often times sprinkled with humor to create a level of comfort for both the students and adults.

When we gather together with open ears, minds and hearts we allow ourselves to learn from one another. Perhaps we learn the value of taking care of your neighbor when we hear someone tell their story of the '64 earthquake or tidal wave. Maybe we learn to become more resourceful after hearing a story of how people used to bake bread on a beach in an oven made of rocks. Or, perhaps we learn that we never stop learning when we watch an Elder learn a new skill from a student. When we take the time to visit and listen we learn that each one of us has something to contribute to our community. *Illuani* is an example of students and community members contributing to each other's lives and in turn sharing that gift with all of us.

If you are interested in purchasing the new *Illuani* magazine you may contact the staff at the KIBSD Central Office (486-9210). All proceeds will go to supporting the continuation of the project. ☆

### Pronunciation key for article:

*Sugtestun* (Soog'-ts-toon):  
the *Sugpiaq/Alutiiq* way  
*Elwani* (el'-wan'-ee): inside it  
*Illuani* (il'-lwhan'-ee): inside it

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attentive to their child's needs and then the teacher should reinforce the parents attention.

As educators, we must try to make the classroom an environment where children can be with and of nature. Take them outdoors as much as possible. Have the children express their ideas of what is beautiful that they see

in nature; guide them to begin to see beauty in oneself and in others, in one's village or in one's neighborhood. The young person will then begin to see the value of their own Native language and culture. This is an invaluable asset in one's life. From this, you begin to see that "community/place is an experience that is created." *Quyana* ☆



# Athabascan Region: Moose Hunting and More: the Annual Field Trip for the Minto Flats Cultural Atlas

by Kathryn Swartz, Cultural Heritage and Education Institute

The sun was very warm and the sky was clear on the top of COD Hill on Saturday afternoon, September 22, 2001. A group of Elders and youth from Minto relaxed on the hill and looked for moose out in the Minto Flats. From this hill, one could see Denali in the distance and the ridges where the Nenana and Tolovana Rivers meet the Tanana River. "Shhhhh . . ." the Elders kept saying, "the animals will hear you up here." At one point, a raven stalked a juvenile bald eagle in the air below us. After looking for hours, Susie Charlie noticed a bull moose off to the east over by a little lake. A small group went down the hill and up the creek to walk into the area where the moose had been seen. We heard shots fired—the hunt was successful!

This event was the high point of the annual cultural atlas field trip with Minto Elders and youth. This year, the field trip employed seven Elders: Elsie Titus, Lige and Susie Charlie, Virgil and Vernell Titus, Luke Titus and Gabe Nollner. There were eleven students from the Minto School (Clinton Watson, Preston Alexander, Mitchel Alexander, Ezra Gibson, Amber Jimmie, Alanna Gibson, Carleen Charlie, Janis Frank, Lynnessa Titus, Dolly James and Justeena Silas), with their teachers Kraig Berg and Ruth Folger and the participation of Bill Pfisterer (education specialist) and Kathryn Swartz of the Cultural Heritage and Education Institute.

The Elders were the most important people on the field trip. They

decided where we were going, where we would stay and coordinated boat space for all the participants and sup-



*Elders, teachers, students and CHEI staff pose for a picture by the campfire.*

plies. They openly shared stories and tales of hunting, fishing, trapping and growing up in the Minto Flats. The Minto School played a valuable role in organizing the students, telling

them what they needed to take with them and also supporting the participation of two teachers. The information gathered on the trip will be incorporated into the school curriculum as students work on the development of a cultural atlas for the Minto Flats area (a preliminary version of the atlas can be viewed online at [www.ankn.uaf.edu/menhti](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/menhti).)

The field trip was held over a weekend and the group left Minto after school on Friday, September 21, 2001. The group went in five boats to Virgil Titus' fall camp along Washington Creek about an hour and a half from Minto. This camp faces to the east and south and is positioned above the creek in a nice wooded area. There is a spotting tree and good cranberry patch back in the woods. The first night everyone gathered around the fire and the reason for the field trip and the mapping work was explained. The Elders said they wanted to bring the kids out to learn the Athabascan way, to learn what they should bring on this kind of trip and to learn about the good places to hunt. The Elders shared some stories and memories about growing up in these areas. After some coaxing, all the kids finally went to bed. At night, the light from the radar station on Murphy Dome was visible from the camp and the Northern Lights shimmered.

The next morning, after breakfast, Bill Pfisterer showed the kids how to

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use two cameras to document the places we would visit—one was a digital camera, the other a standard film camera. The group set off in boats to go down Washington Creek and up the Tatalina to begin the hike up COD Hill. The climb was tough, particularly for the Elders, but everyone made it. Rope was tied off on certain trees so you could get extra support and pull yourself up the hillside. The climb down was even worse with a slippery and dusty trail, but we were on our way to see the moose so no one seemed to mind the difficult descent. The moose was taken several bends up COD creek, back through willows and small birch trees in an open, grassy, swampy area. The participants witnessed field dressing the moose. Willows were laid down to hold the best cuts of meat, other parts were strung over the trees to dry while the work continued. The Elders shared traditional practices and techniques with the students and then the meat was packed out either with sticks or people put on raincoats and slung parts over their shoulders. The meat was left overnight near the river bank braced up with sticks or slung between trees. (In case anyone noticed the date, the Cultural Heritage and Education Institute had arranged for a cultural education permit to take a moose out of season.)

Saturday night was a beautiful evening with good food, more stories from the Elders and good laughs around the campfire. One of the students made cranberry sauce from freshly picked berries. That night, the temperature dropped and on Sunday morning as always, the first ones up, Virgil and Vernell Titus, started the fire and got warm water and coffee going. After breakfast several Elders including Lige Charlie and Luke Titus thanked everyone for attending and for the organization of the field trip. We headed back to retrieve the

moose meat and then made our way back up the winding sloughs, creeks and rivers to Minto. Ducks gathering for migration were scared up at every turn. The air was colder than it had been on Friday and it seemed that winter was now on its way.

This field trip was made possible thanks to support from the Rural School and Community Trust (Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative), the Minto School, the Alaska Humanities Forum, the New Voices Fellowship Program and the Skaggs Foundation. ☆



Above: Elder Susie Charlie spots for moose on the flats. Below: The hunt is successful!



## Alaska Native Education Summit 2001

Alaska Natives will soon have an opportunity to share their views on how to improve education for our children. The first Alaska Native Education Summit takes place November 30 and December 1 in Anchorage. It's being sponsored by the ANCSA Education Consortium and the First Alaskans Foundation.

This gathering of Alaska Native voices is the first step in looking for new ways to teach our young people the values and knowledge they must have to do well in their lives.

Unlike other meetings in the past, this one will focus on Alaska Native issues and begin the process to find Alaska Native solutions. We're looking for new people at the table who bring important Native perspectives and are willing to work hard to come up with fresh ideas that meet the needs of our children. This sum-

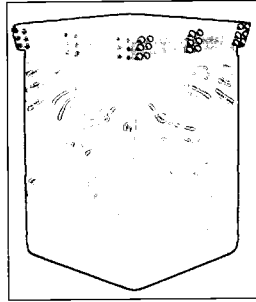
mit will draw together Native communities to develop plans that fit their situation and draw on their experience of what works and what does not. It will truly be a "grass roots" approach to providing quality education.

The summit is open to the public and we encourage all who care about this important issue to come and express their thoughts and perspectives. For more information contact Joan McCoy at 907-272-0839 or email [nes@nexusnw.com](mailto:nes@nexusnw.com). ☆

# Southeast Region: Opening the Box of Knowledge

by Andy Hope

Southeast MOA partners and tribal representatives met in Juneau the week of September 10, 2001 for a tribal watershed/GIS/cultural atlas workshop, a Southeast Alaska Tribal College organizational meeting and the planning meeting for the Southeast Native/Rural Education Consortium.



A number of key presenters were not able to make it to the watershed workshop because of flight restrictions, so we will try to get the group together again in mid-November.

The group participated in two teleconferences during the workshop. The first teleconference was with Jane Langill and Judith Roche of One Reel in Seattle to discuss the I Am Salmon curriculum project. Following is a brief description of the project:

## *I Am Salmon: International Educational Program*

A multidisciplinary, multilingual, multicultural, multinational educational program for educators and children in salmon cultures around the North Pacific Rim. Following a challenge from Dr. Jane Goodall in 1994 and an international writing project held in 1998 with schools in Seattle and Japan (*The Neverending Salmon Tale*), an international team of educators met at Sleeping Lady Conference Center in 1999 and developed a pilot project for schools in Alaska, Canada, Oregon, Washington, Japan and Russia. Schools are creating and sharing work in many disciplines on the theme of salmon in local culture. The multilingual "I Am Salmon E-Learning Website" launched September 2001.

Details can be obtained at [www.onereel.org/salmon](http://www.onereel.org/salmon).

## *From First Fish: One Reel's Wild Salmon Project*

One Reel had scheduled The Icicle River Children's Summit for September 19-23 in Leavenworth, Washington. Teachers and children from around the North Pacific Rim (including representatives from Washington State, British Columbia, Alaska, Japan and Kamchatka) were to meet for the first time to share materials and knowledge developed over the last two years. This meeting has been postponed, possibly until late spring of 2002. The Alaska representatives will be Inga Hanlon, a fifth grade teacher, and two of her students from Yakutat City School along with Lani Hotch, a high school teacher, and nine students from Klukwan School.

In the meantime, I will continue to work with our Alaska I Am Salmon partners to link with One Reel's new website, <http://iamsalmon.org>, to offer access to curriculum resources.

Our second teleconference was with Tom Thornton, who was stranded in Ontario, Canada on September 11. Tom serves as the director of the Southeast Alaska Native Place Name Project, which

serves as the foundation for the Cultural Atlas project in which tribes and school districts work in partnership to develop multimedia educational resources.

I am encouraged by the commitment of our respective partner school districts: Chatham School District (Klukwan and Angoon Schools) Hoonah City Schools, Sitka School District and Yakutat City Schools. Additionally, our tribal partners (Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Chilkat Indian village, Angoon Community Association and Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska) have immeasurably strengthened our effort. Juneau School District is a valuable partner that continues to support projects like I Am Salmon. Our next task will be to schedule a staff development workshop and a GIS consortium meeting to work on various curriculum projects. We will also begin building an I Am Salmon listserv in conjunction with the ANKN.

The events of September 11 overshadowed our meetings. The Southeast Alaska Tribal College organizational meeting was rescheduled for October. Though we weren't able to formally organize SEATC at this time, the people that did make it to Juneau decided to have a work session to develop recommendations for the SEATC trustees to consider when they finally do meet. The working group developed the following draft mission statement:

**"The mission of SEATC is to open our ancestors box of wisdom, knowledge, respect, patience and understanding."**

The Box of Knowledge serves as the logo for SEATC as well as a guiding metaphor. In Tlingit, *Yaakoosgé Daakakóogu* means "The box of knowledge that will be opened when people come to this college." I anticipate ten tribes will be founding members of the SEATC and representatives of those tribes will elect the board of trustees. ☆

# Yup'ik Region: Calista Elders Council Expands Services

by Mark John, Executive Director, Calista Elders Council, Inc.

Just recently, I moved my office to Bethel to be able to work more closely with the Elders and youth in our region. I have enjoyed visiting with people who have dropped by my office to see who we are, what we are doing and what we plan to do. There has been some confusion between Calista Corporation and Calista Elders Council (CEC), so I would like to provide some background about CEC.

The Calista Elders Council was incorporated on March 27, 1991. It was formed pursuant to a shareholders mandate during the 1990 Calista annual meeting held in Kasigluk. The CEC was established to promote the needs of and serve the special interests and concerns of the Calista shareholders ages 65 and older.

The Calista Elders Council is a 501c(3) non-profit organization regulated under state and federal laws. This makes Calista Elders Council an independent entity with its own articles of incorporation and by-laws and its own board of directors. The objectives embodied in the mission statement include:

- Enhance Elder benefits within the Calista region by striving to maintain and preserve the cultural, linguistic and traditional lifestyles of the Natives of the region,
- Improve the health and welfare of the Elders,
- Facilitate infrastructure important in providing for Elder care,
- Encourage and enhance the participation of Elders in the political process,
- Foster and encourage the education of young people within Calista region.

Our major funding comes from grants. Currently, we are operating under a number of grants from different sources including the following:

- A five-year grant from the National Science Foundation for \$1,087,975 to gather, preserve and share Yup'ik "way of being."
- A two-year grant from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Drug Elimination Program for \$695,760 under sub-recipient agreement with Calista Corporation.
- A one-year Historic Preservation Fund grant in the amount of \$50,000 from the National Park Service, under sub-recipient agreement with Calista Corporation.
- A one-year Administration for Native Americans grant in the amount of \$124,909 for *Yup'ik Foundation Word Dictionary*.
- An annual grant of \$50,000 from Calista Corporation for administration and overhead, plus use of office space and office equipment and supplies in Anchorage.
- An equipment grant from Rasmuson Foundation in the amount of \$25,000.

Additional funding in various amounts has been received from the

following organizations:

- ◇ Administration for Native Americans
- ◇ Alaska State Council on the Arts
- ◇ Alaska Humanities Forum
- ◇ Coastal Villages Region Fund
- ◇ Exxon
- ◇ Various businesses and village organizations

The primary focus of our efforts has been the documentation and strengthening of Yup'ik culture. When I went out to do a very brief survey of activities that are related to our mission in the winter of 1997 and 1998, culture and history was one area where there was a clear void. We began to make efforts to fill that void and make culture and history CEC's niche in the region.

Calista Elders Council has been successful in obtaining grants to hold three annual Elders and youth conventions, sponsor culture camps over

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***The primary focus of our efforts has been the documentation and strengthening of Yup'ik culture.***

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two summers with a subsistence focus in the Coastal, Kuskokwim and the Yukon areas of the Calista/AVCP region and hold topic-specific gatherings of Elders to collect knowledge on information related to our Yup'ik culture for the past two years. All of the valuable information gathered from our Elders during these events are documented, transcribed and translated. In the very near future, we are looking forward to having publications available in the form of books and a newsletter.

Throughout the past year, Calista Elders Council staff has made a number of presentations to different conferences and conventions related to the preservation of culture and history. Some of these were the CEC

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Elders and Youth Convention, Bilingual/Multicultural Education and Equity Conference, Anchorage, Northern Studies Conference at Hokkaido University in Japan and the National Science Foundation Arctic Social Science Planning Workshop in Seattle, Washington.

We feel a sense urgency to focus our work on culture and history, because many of our Elders that are 65 and older are passing on. They are the ones with first hand knowledge of our traditional lifestyle. They were born before Western influence from the schools and the churches made a big dent in our traditional way of living. They experienced the ceremonies and spiritual activities, dances, subsistence practices, our value systems, stories, semi-nomadic lifestyle, relationships, arts and crafts and everything else that was associated with our culture. We will continue to work with them to gather knowledge that is so valuable.

Subsistence was the main focus of our camps. This summer Calista Elders Council ran four ten-day culture camps in the region. The first one was at Umkumute on Nelson Island from June 3 to June 13 for the coastal villages; the second was from June 17 to June 27 near Akiak for Lower Kuskokwim villages; the third was near Kalskag from July 1 to July 10 and the fourth was held July 15 to July 25 between Pilot Station and Marshall for Yukon villages. We requested participation by a boy and a girl from each of the 48 occupied villages in the region. We had an Elder as an instructor for every five students in each camp, along with staff to document cultural information and provide camp support.

The camps incorporated two age groups: Village Elders who served as the camps' teachers and mentors and sixth- and seventh-grade youth who were attending the camps to learn

Yup'ik/Cup'ik cultural skills, history and values. Subsistence hunting, fishing and harvesting activities appropriate to each camp location were the focus of the camps, providing the Elders an opportunity to pass down traditional skills and values.

This summer Chris Dock from Kipnuk ran the summer camps. He did an excellent job and worked very well with the Elders, youth and staff

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*We feel a sense urgency to focus our work on culture and history, because many of our Elders that are 65 and older are passing on. They are the ones with first hand knowledge of our traditional lifestyle.*

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as well as communities that were involved. Chris stated that he enjoyed the experience and he was very grateful for the help that the Elders and the camp staff provided. Congratulations to Chris and all who were involved for a successful camp season and a big *quyana* from all of us.

This fall, we are going to continue to document traditional knowledge. We plan to have a topic-specific gathering in November with selected Elders, the culture coordinators and the drug elimination project staff from the villages.

The CEC board decided to schedule the annual meeting and convention in Akiachak in March of 2002 rather than in November when it has previously been held. The reasons cited were bad weather and poor travel conditions normally experienced in the fall. The past conventions were held at Kasigluk in 1998, St. Mary's in 1999 and in Toksook Bay in 2000.

Calista Elders Council board and staff are very proud of the progress we have been able to make in a short time and we plan to continue to make

efforts to expand our work in the area of culture and history. In the future we plan to provide more services to the Elderly and the youth and collaborate with other organizations with similar activities whenever possible.

Calista Elders Council has made Bethel the base of our operations. We are expanding our staff in Bethel. We will continue to have an office in Anchorage and employees that will work out of their homes in the Anchorage area. We will also hire culture coordinators that will be located in the villages to work with clusters of communities within the region. We are aware that CEC has an excellent potential for growth and we will strive to continue that growth to provide cultural activities as well as services that are needed for our Elderly and youth.

I would like to say *quyana* to our board, who have contributed valuable knowledge and wisdom. They are Paul Kiunya, Sr., chairman; Bob Aloysius, vice-chair; John A. Phillip, Sr., secretary; Peter F. Elachik, treasurer and Nick Andrew, Sr., Winifred Beans, Irvin C. Brink, Sr., Peter Jacobs, Sr., Paul John, Fred K. Phillip, Andrew J. Guy and Myron P. Naneng, Sr. as board members.

I also would like to extend a very big thank you to both our Anchorage and Bethel based staff. They are Nicholas "Bob" Charles, Jr., program manager; Alice Rearden, transcriber/translator; Dr. Ann Fienup-Riordan, consultant; Monica Sheldon, oral historian; Chris Dock, camp coordinator and Elena Chief, gaming. Without their support, we would not be where we are. *Quyana caqneq!*

We wish all of you good health and success in your subsistence activities. We can be contacted at P.O. Box 2345, Bethel, Alaska 99559 or at 301 Calista Court, Suite A, Anchorage, Alaska 99518. Our contact numbers are 907-543-1541 in Bethel or 1-800-277-5516 in Anchorage. ✧

# One Among Others

by Gail Pass

See yourself as one among others,  
See children, fathers and mothers.  
Acceptance of who you are in a crowd  
in amongst us, not above on a cloud.  
The difference of one in a crowd can make,  
little bits of change, opportunities to take.  
Learn from me as I learn from you,  
allow lessons in life to change you.

Individualize all, humble your heart,  
You generalize a nation, hatred you start.  
This hatred you breathe, fear and detest,  
born from the compounds of vanity at best.  
Tolerate us, a nation of all flavors,  
respect family, friends and neighbors.  
See yourself as one among others,  
See children, fathers and mothers.

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