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## ABSTRACT

Funded by the National Science Foundation, the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI) promotes systemic educational reform based in the culture and philosophy of the Alaska Native world view. AKRSI's first 5-year funding cycle ended in August 2000, and AKRSI was funded for a second 5 years beginning in November 2000. AKRSI activities are organized in five tracks, which rotate among Alaska's five cultural regions: Inupiaq, Athabascan, Yupik/Cupik, Aleut/Alutiiq, and Southeast regions. This document contains the five issues of Sharing Our Pathways, the AKRSI newsletter, published in 2000. Feature articles include: "Rural Alaska School Districts: Who Is in Control?" (Frank Hill); "The Time Is Right To Write" (Dorothy M. Larson); "Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge"; "Identity-Creating Camps" (Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley); "Report on Native Education Summit" (Frank Hill, Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley, Ray Barnhardt, Andy Hope, Merritt Helfferich); "Cultural Standards and Test Scores" (Ray Barnhardt, Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley, Frank Hill); "Aspects of Traditional Inupiat Education" (Paul Ongtooguk); "Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative Funded for Another Five Years" (Frank Hill); "How Does the Crane Keep Its Language?" (Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley); and "Observing Locally, Connecting Globally" (Sidney Stephens). Other articles describe related publications and resources, conferences, teacher education courses, and activities in the five cultural regions. (SV)

Sharing Our Pathways:  
A Newsletter of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, 2000.

Dixie Dayo, Editor

Volume 5, Numbers 1-5

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# 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 ♦ Annenberg Rural Challenge

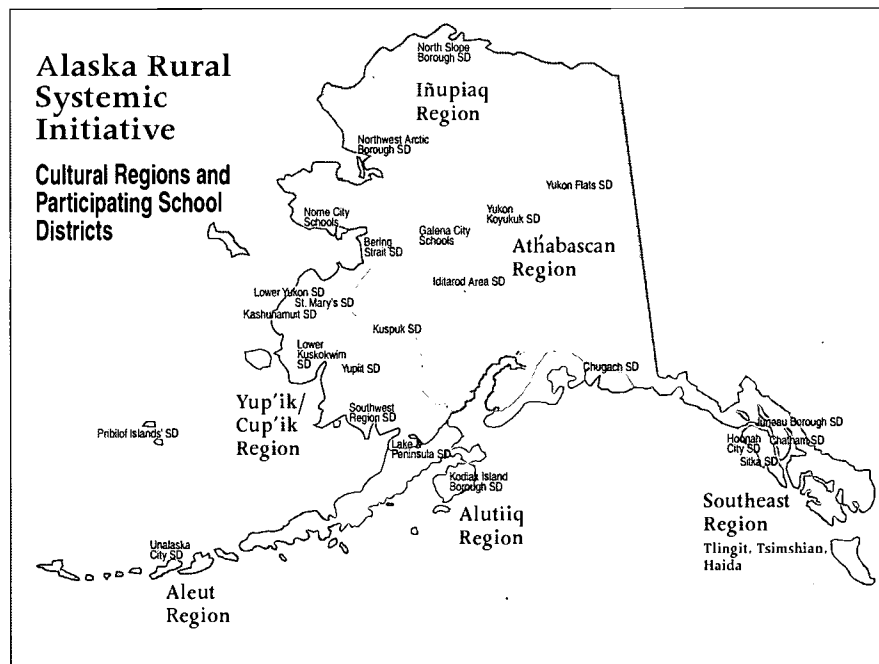
## Rural Alaska School Districts: Who is in Control?

Frank Hill, AKRSI co-director and retired superintendent

Most of rural Alaska's schools and districts are populated by Alaska Native students. School boards are elected by and from residents of the district, resulting in mostly Alaska Native-majority boards. With this fact one would assume that the Alaska Natives of the region would have little to worry about concerning whether their local culture and language would be a strong, if not dominant, facet of the local schools' curriculum and instruction.

Given the fact that few licensed administrators and teachers are Alaska Native, or even Alaskan-born, the assumption above is not a safe one to make. At the present time there is not one Alaska Native school superintendent in Alaska, only a handful of Alaska Native school principals and

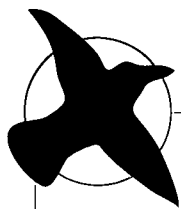
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(continued from front page)

less than six percent of all teachers are Alaska Native. Over 80% of Alaska's newly-hired teachers continue to come from out of state.

Since so few school district superintendents and administrators are from Alaska, or are Alaska Native, they are often unfamiliar with the cultural and environmental conditions of the districts they administer. To the extent that we tend to teach and administer the way we were taught, in most cases rural Alaska school districts with Alaska Native school boards and student populations are run just like Anywhere, USA. Add to this situation the extremely high turnover rate of teachers and administrators in rural schools, where in some cases you literally have to start all over again every year or two, we often end up repeating the same mistakes over and over again. I don't fault these professional educators alone because lacking strong direction from the local school boards they will do what they think best, even when they know it is not, because they have only their own experience to draw upon. Recent State of Alaska improvements in professional educators' licensure requirements begin to address the cultural relevancy issues noted above. However, the full effect of these improvements will not be realized until all teachers and administrators have been re-licensed under the new system.

If the local school boards do not have definite and strong policy statements concerning budget development and approval processes, relevant curricula, teaching practices and materials, school calendar considerations, teacher/personnel hiring/performance effectiveness reviews and staff development preferences, the administration will often carry out and operate the district with little if any input from the governing body of the district—the school board. It is the professional duty of the administration to make sure that at least the letter of

the law is met in school operations. There are few, if any, school laws or regulations that require school administrators to pay attention to the local culture, language or environment in the administration of schools and districts. State laws are designed to allow for variation to take place on the local level. Schools and professional educators have a technical language and jargon of their own that is often confusing and mysterious to the general public. Alaska education laws and regulations are no less technical or confusing.

Many Alaska Native school board members will not dispute policy or personnel recommendations made by their administration, assuming that the administrators are the professionals in these matters. In addition, members of many Alaska Native cultures do not, or will not, publicly disagree with others even if they have other opinions. Yet the school board is ultimately responsible for the academic success of their district's students. Perhaps one of the causes of the lingering fact of low academic achievement of Alaska Native students is due to the lack of assertiveness of local school boards regarding budget, policy, instructional program and personnel matters. Who knows the most about local needs: local members of the school board or the administrator from Outside?

Perhaps a program to train Alaska Native school board members to more fully realize their legal responsibilities and to actually take policy control of their districts should be developed. Of course, not all school boards would need this training. It is my understanding that the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) has developed an accountability model for school boards, but I am not sure what level of training or participation rural Alaska Native school boards have had in this accountability model. Maybe a supplementary funding program could be developed to assist AASB and the

local boards in implementing this school board accountability program?

As a facet of Alaska Native self-governance, I believe that control of education matters is an area that lends itself well to developing a locally-relevant program of instruction with Alaska Native Educators in the classrooms as well as district offices. The long-term effect would reach into many other areas of Alaska Native self-determination. Also, if most of the teachers and administrators in rural schools were Alaska Native, the employment picture of rural Alaska would change considerably. In many villages, the highest paying jobs are held by non-Native, non-Alaskan teachers and administrators. Too often the money earned from those positions goes outside the state with little secondary benefit to the rural economy.

A program could be developed that would train and sensitize new-to-Alaska teachers and administrators to teach and work in Alaska Native villages and schools. Such a program once existed at the University of Alaska Fairbanks where participants were sponsored by their districts to learn about Alaska Native cultures and living and working in small, often remote schools where they would be in the minority. This program was discontinued but I believe that many school districts would pay for their new-to-the-state teachers and administrators to participate in such a program, especially if it were offered on a regional level. Here is another area that could have positive long-term effect on the stability and improved academic performance of Alaska Native students.

Two promising programs are the Rural Educators Preparation Partnerships (REPP) and Native Administrators for Rural Alaska (NARA). These programs sponsored by the University of Alaska have a goal to significantly increase the number of Alaska Native classroom teachers and school

administrators. However, they are both small in scope, with limited budget capacity. These are efforts that should be significantly increased with more funds made available.

Without the elected Alaska Native

school board members exercising their responsibilities as policy-making bodies, not many of the initiatives discussed here will significantly improve the academic performance of Alaska Native students. ☆

## CIRI Foundation Teacher Mentor Project

**F**unding for the Alaska Native Teachers for Excellence, Teacher Mentor Project is provided by a three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education and administered by The CIRI Foundation, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc., and the Anchorage School District. We are in the second year of our grant.

The goal of the Teacher Mentor Project is to increase the number of eligible and qualified Alaska Native and American Indian teachers in the Anchorage School District, so that by the year 2000 they will comprise seven-percent (210) of all teachers.

We hold seminars and private sessions to assist individuals who wish to apply for teaching positions with the Anchorage School District and other Alaskan school districts or for students in the educational field. They receive assistance with applications, interviewing, resume writing and support services. There is no charge for our services.

### 1997-1999 Highlights

The Teacher Mentor Project had several accomplishments during its first two years of operation. We have assisted 43 Alaska Native and American Indian teachers in obtaining teaching positions with the Anchorage School District, made

172 new contacts with prospective teacher applicants, had 151 participants in the Teacher Mentor Training Sessions and 44 teachers were offered positions with other Alaska school districts.

### Guidebook

The Guidebook for New Alaska Native/Native American Teacher Applicants to the Anchorage School District is available free-of-charge from The CIRI Foundation, 2600 Cordova Street, Suite 206, Anchorage, AK 99503. This book gives suggestions to consider when applying for a teaching position and information on coaching strategies, interviewing skills, telephone contacts and other resources and ideas to assist teachers who are pursuing a teaching career.

Should you need further information, please contact Marilyn Forrester at 907-263-5583 or e-mail [mforrester@ciri.com](mailto:mforrester@ciri.com). ☆

# The Time Is Right to Write

By Dorothy M. Larson

Have you checked out the local bookstore shelves lately? How many Alaska Native authors did you find? Not an over-abundance. But for those who have been writing and publishing, I applaud them. We often find stories written about Alaska Natives by others—stories with qualifiers like “as told to me by . . .” It’s not that these books aren’t well done, it is just time for us to write our own stories—to write the stories of our Elders, our families, our lifestyles, our areas and our recollections. Unique voices will appear among the established voices as more Alaska Natives begin to write and publish.

An Alaska Native writer doesn’t have to write about culture to be valid, even though that is how we are often first identified. Alaska Natives can write on par with other writers, including creative non-fiction, fiction, poetry, technical, memoir, biography and autobiography, journalistic, historical, mystery, drama, spiritual and all other categories of writing styles and genres.

This isn’t meant to be critical of those writers who use their skills to tell another’s story. If it weren’t for them, some stories might not have been told or read. This is meant to encourage and support Alaska Native writers who want to write their own stories.

A recent *Anchorage Daily News* article about Alaska Native writers Diane Benson, Anna Smith, Jeane Breinig and Susie Silook was very enlightening and refreshing. They took the risk in the literary and art world to share their experiences. Their experiences living in two worlds make their writing insightful, powerful and poignant. They bring a special presence through their writing that is not reflected when told through another.

It hasn’t been that long ago since Alaska Natives had their own news-

paper, *Tundra Times*, with Howard Rock at the helm. How we looked forward to the weekly edition of the statewide Alaska Native newspaper with a fervent purpose—one of the finest small newspapers ever published. Though we now have several rural newspapers in most regions of Alaska, these papers are more local in nature and often reprint outside news from other sources. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if there was a paper modeled after the old *Tundra Times* with an Alaska Native editor, columnists and reporters devoted to news important to Alaska Native people?

Recently, I read excerpts from a fiction book written by a former long-time Alaskan. Note “former” long-time Alaskan. Though the book was fiction, there were characters in the book that seemed familiar; one had the same nickname as a person I remembered from my childhood. I felt hurt for the person and their family should they happen to read the book. I chose not to finish the book.

Since I am from the area, I skimmed another book about Bristol Bay on a local bookstore shelf. I leafed through it and got the gist in just a few minutes. It was a feeble attempt by the author to depict the Bristol Bay fish-

ery as the “Wild West” of southwest Alaska. Who wants to read about the antics and parties of “Indians” as this college professor called some of his subjects. It was another book of the recent past that was purported to be fact but disgusted old timers of the area because it was filled with errors. It, too, was written by a former “long-time Alaskan” now living elsewhere. If his book were fact, he should be locked up in some penitentiary this very moment.

A year ago I attended the Sitka Symposium which is considered a writers’ conference. The symposium isn’t a true writers’ conference, but people do write and discuss provocative issues. Authors are present to critique and review manuscripts of participants.

The Mesa Refuge Program asked the Sitka Symposium for their list of past participants in order to solicit applicants for their unique writers’ retreat. The Mesa Refuge Program is a new writers’ retreat in northern California established to provide a place where individuals can come to pay undivided attention to their writing. The program is for established and emerging writers as stipulated by the generous founders.

After much thought, I applied for the retreat on the last day the application could be postmarked for consideration. A few weeks later, I was notified by a public radio message from my daughter (I was out at fish camp) that I had been accepted. In my wildest dreams, I never believed I would be chosen for this opportunity—two weeks by a national seashore with two other writers—a gift of time and space. It was a dream come true.

In the bio they put together, I was called a Native poet and activist in the

Native community because of my past involvement and experiences. The word "activist" was not what caught my eye in my bio; it was that I was called a *poet*. Since 1971 when I first began writing, I called my writing a hobby. When I was a junior-high student, I secretly dreamed of becoming a writer, but never pursued it until I took a course at Anchorage Community College many years later. Over the years I attended a number of university classes and workshops with a couple of renowned poets and university professors. I participated in a number of loosely formed writing groups off and on, more off than on. I continued to call my writing a hobby even though I had a few poems published and read a short story I wrote over the public radio station at home in Dillingham.

When friends read my work, I never knew if they were just being kind to me by telling me they liked it. I returned to writing about a year and a half ago. This class saved my sanity and helped me through a very difficult time in my life. It was then I began to think seriously about writing. I'm not getting any younger and I figured that if I am going to write, I should get serious about it—write more, improve what I have written, study writing and write more.

In September I left for the two-week retreat at Mesa Refuge not quite knowing what to expect. I was introduced as a writer/poet to the other two writers in residence. One resident was writing a book as a result of his work with the *Audubon* magazine. He had four to five publishers waiting for his overdue book. The other was a recent graduate student who started a college geography magazine and became editor and writer. I was the novice, for sure.

A retreat is meant to renew, rejuvenate and inspire. There was no pressure to produce; it was a gift of time. However, past residents have completed books or began new ones at the

Mesa Refuge. This retreat forced me to focus. It wasn't difficult to do because the surroundings were tranquil and close to nature. At first, I thought, too close. I was only a few hundred yards from the San Andreas Fault! Once I put that out of my mind, the environment, the setting and the ambience was perfect—so conducive to writing. I came home with a preliminary draft of my book with new and old work to complete and a dream to publish a book of poetry, prose and a few short stories. I am hoping to convince a very talented artist friend to illustrate my book for me. I want to continue work on another project: a cookbook I began collecting recipes for last year. I hope to be able to find a writers' group where I will feel comfortable in order to share my work and to read the work of others.

Many questions arose for me: How would I get an agent? How would I get published? I still don't have the answers to those questions but I did revisit my dream of some day becoming a poet, a writer and an author.

And to those of you with a similar dream, I hope you pursue it.

The discovery at the Mesa Refuge that I could allow myself the gift of time (without guilt) to write was a revelation. We must give ourselves precious time and space to devote to our writing. It can apply to any craft we pursue. Learning to discipline oneself is a challenge. We must rid ourselves of the distractions and allow the garbage to escape and the new material to take shape in our minds and hearts. There are Alaska Native writers who write wonderful poetry, children's stories and who have novels waiting to emerge. These talented writers can and should create their niche in the Alaska and the global literary world.

As Alaska Native writers enter the new millennium, we can denounce the invisibility we have often encountered. Alaska Native's are a very visible, proud people. We are more than capable of creating a significant imprint—the time is right. ✧

## Dixie Dayo Assumes SOP Editorial Responsibilities

On behalf of the AKRSI staff we would like to express our appreciation to Lolly Carpluk for the contributions she has made as the editor of *Sharing Our Pathways* over the past four years. Thanks to Lolly's encouragement and vigilant editing, the newsletter has provided a valuable means for educators throughout Alaska to share ideas, insights and practices that are making positive differences in the lives of rural and Native students.

Lolly's responsibilities have changed to incorporate teaching graduate courses on *Documenting Indigenous Knowledge* and *Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights*. Dixie Dayo has taken over the SOP editorial reins starting with this issue. Dixie, from Manley Hot Springs, has been associated with the AKRSI as a project assistant for three years. She is well equipped to assume the newsletter editorial tasks along with the editorial support, layout and graphics of Paula Elmes. We look forward to many more stimulating issues in which rural educators share their pathways to a quality education. ✧

# Report Released on Alaska Rural Systemic Reform in Education

Ray Barnhardt, UAF; Jim Kushman, NWREL; Oscar Kawagley, UAF; Beth Leonard, UAF; Carol Barnhardt, UAF; Jerry Lipka, UAF; Sarah Landis, NWREL; Bruce Miller, NWREL and Seven Community Research Teams

Below is an excerpt from an executive summary of the final report from a three-year study of rural school reform conducted by the Northwest Regional Educational Lab (NWREL) and UAF in cooperation with seven rural communities and school districts in Alaska. The balance of the summary will appear in the next issue of Sharing Our Pathways.

This report presents the results of a three-year study of educational reform in rural Alaska communities and schools. The research revolves around seven case studies in villages and school districts spanning western, central and southeast Alaska. These are primarily subsistence communities serving Eskimo and Indian students. Each community had embarked on a reform process called Alaska Onward to Excellence (AOTE) that strives to create educational partnerships between schools and the communities they serve.

The study examined how educational partnerships are formed and sustained and how they ultimately benefit Alaska Native students. Trying to understand the systemic nature of educational change was a focal point of the study. In rural Alaska, systemic change means fully integrating the indigenous knowledge system and the formal education system. For rural school districts, this means engaging communities in education—fully integrating Native culture, language and ways of knowing into the curriculum and meeting Alaska's state-driven academic standards and benchmarks.

Each case study was led by a researcher from NWREL or UAF who worked with a small team of school practitioners and community members who participated fully in the research. The case studies tell what happened as rural schools embarked on a change journey through AOTE and other reform activities, paying

attention to educational accomplishments and setbacks, community voice and the experiences and learning of students. The cases include qualitative and quantitative evidence although hard data on student performance was limited and often inappropriate to the educational goals pursued by communities.

The following recommendations are offered to educators and policy makers based on the study. While directed to the Alaska audience, these recommendations apply in large part to rural schools and communities anywhere in the country.

- † Stabilize professional staff in rural schools.
- † Provide role models and support for creating a positive self-image to which students can aspire.
- † Parent involvement needs to be treated as a partnership with more shared decision making.
- † Implement teacher orientation,

mentoring and induction programs in rural schools.

- † Eliminate testing requirements that interfere with language immersion programs.
  - † Strategic planning needs to extend to the next generation or more (20-plus years) at the state and local levels.
  - † Strengthen curriculum support for culturally responsive, place-based approaches that integrate local and global academic and practical learning.
  - † Encourage the development of multiple paths for students to meet the state standards.
  - † Extend the cultural standards and Native ways of knowing and teaching into teacher preparation programs.
  - † Sustainable reform needs to be a bottom up rather than a top down process and has to have a purpose beyond reform for reform's sake.
  - † Alaska Onward to Excellence should be put forward as a means (process) rather than an end in itself (program).
  - † Form a coalition of organizations to sponsor an annual conference on rural education that keeps reform issues up to date and forward reaching.
- These findings and recommendations are discussed more thoroughly in the body of the report. It may be obtained from NWREL or the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies at UAF as well as the ANKN website: [www.ankn.uaf.edu/reform](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/reform). ✧



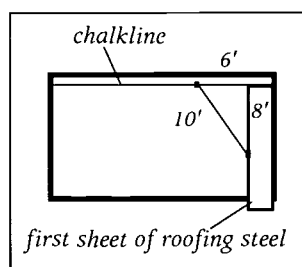
# Village Science: Mastodon Soup?

by Alan Dick

I recently asked a friend for an estimate of how many .30-06 shells I could reload from a one-pound can of 4895 powder. He took a wild guess then we did the math. We found that there are 7000 grains in a pound and 45 grains in a single cartridge. He had estimated 4 boxes of shells (20 shells to a box,) but we found that a pound of powder will reload almost 8 boxes of shells (155 cartridges to be exact.) We did all that with simple multiplication and division—fifth grade stuff.

As a carpenter I had a hard time doing corners on banisters until I learned to first copy, then bisect the angle. When the pieces are cut at exactly half of the intersecting angle they fit like they grew together. Geometry class rose to the forefront when I got out my compass and scratched the arcs, bisected the angle and then adjusted my chop-saw to the precise setting.

As a math teacher and a carpenter, I have to admit that I have never used the Pythagorean theorem to square a building:  $A^2 + B^2 = C^2$ . When you do, the answer comes out in feet and tenths of a foot. Accurately converting tenths of a foot to inches just isn't worth the trouble. However, I know that a 3' x 4' x 5' triangle gives a perfectly square corner as do 6' x 8' x 10' or 12' x 16' x 20' triangles:



One of the handiest uses of these triangles comes when installing steel roofing. If the first piece of roofing isn't perfectly square with the build-

ing, the steel will run up or downhill with a two-inch overhang on one end and a conspicuously different overhang on the other. Problems ceased once I started using a 6' x 8' x 10' triangle to set the first piece of steel. I built a 60' x 80' airplane hanger. The roof overhang was consistent within a quarter of an inch from one end of the building to the other.

We used to figure dog feed by the bundle: 40 fish to a bundle, one fish a day per dog, 280 days from freeze-up to break-up, multiplies to seven bundles per dog per winter. Seven times the number of dogs told us how many bundles we needed .

Ratio and proportion? We use it all the time mixing two-cycle gas and oil. Arcs and angles? How else do you set the azimuth when installing a satellite dish? Distance = Rate x Time. We do it constantly when traveling by snowmachine from one village to another.

As we assign importance to math skills let's look around us and find examples that have meaning to the students. Those with no meaningful application should go the way of the mastodon, at least until the students develop some enthusiasm for the principles involved.

Have you ever seen the glaze that comes over a student's eyes after the fourth consecutive long division prob-

lem with two digit divisors? They know all adults use calculators when traveling in that rocky terrain. Even if we do the problem by hand, we're not sure we are right. Train B leaves Boston going 60 mph. Train A leaves Los Angeles going 80 mph. Where do they meet? Ugh, mastadon soup! Let's give students a reason to use math to solve everyday problems. Once they have developed an interest they can more readily move on to advanced math.

Most of us who live in rural Alaska use math on a daily basis but we have an aversion to contrivances with no real life applications. No ivory towers here. They are too hard to heat in the winter. ✨

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# AISES Corner

(American Indian Science  
and Engineering Society)

by Claudette Bradley

I would like to honor Alaska village teachers who have given their support to the Village Science Applications initiative of AKRSI. These teachers have helped with plans for AISES science camps and science fairs, recruited students for camps and fairs, interested other teachers, mentored students doing science projects and chaperoned students entering science fairs. Each teacher has put in far more time and energy than I have room to describe here. My heartfelt thanks to them for their dedication to the Village Science initiative.

The initiative began in 1995 in the Arctic region with four school districts. Deborah Webber-Werle, K-2 teacher from Noatak, provided outstanding leadership including initiating the Arctic Region Professional AISES Chapter. She worked with Alan Dick to bring his Exploratorium to Noatak and worked collaboratively on the AISES science fairs in Kotzebue.

George Olanna, a retired sixth-grade Inupiaq teacher from Shishmaref, mentored students on a solar power science project that became a grand prizewinner in the Kotzebue fair. He also taught at the Fairbanks AISES Science Camp in '97, '98 and '99.

Ruth Sampson is a bilingual coordinator for the Northwest Arctic Borough School District. Her office is the science fair business center. She has also assisted with budgets, decorating the armory and organizing van transportation.

Kate Thurmond is a fourth-grade teacher in Galena. She developed an inservice workshop for science fair projects and fairs for teachers in the Galena School District. Kate collaborated with teachers to have a Galena Science Fair that preceded the Fairbanks fair. Gordon

Chamberlin has picked up where Kate left off.

Rita O'Brien, a teacher at Ryan Middle School in Fairbanks, assisted in the planning and implementation of the Interior AISES science fairs. She also taught in the Fairbanks AISES summer camps in '97, '98 and '99.

Teri Schneider works full time for the Kodiak School District as an educator on special projects and is the AKRSI Alutiiq/Aleut regional coordinator. She recruited volunteer teachers for the Afognak AISES science camp; collaborated with the Kodiak Native Association to have Elders at the camp and organized the Elders, teachers and scientists to participate as judges at the Kodiak AISES Science Fairs held in Old Harbor in '98 and in Ouzinkie in '99.

Betty Taylor is a teacher at St. Paul on the Pribilof Islands. She collaborated with Debbie Bourdokofsky and Karin Holser on the St. George Stewardship Camp. Betty was also a teacher in the Sitka AISES Science Camp '99.

Roby Littlefield of Sitka has taught in elementary schools and now keeps up with an active family. She maintains the family subsistence camp at Dog Point where she coordinated the Sitka AISES Science Camp '99. She combined Elders and teachers in the camp setting to help students develop science projects.

AKRSI is proud of these teachers and their work with students making science relevant to their personal, cultural and environmental situations. The AISES national educators have commented on the special qualities our students bring to the national fair and the uniqueness of their projects. They encourage us to continue and would like to model their programs after our AKRSI Village Science initiative. The teachers and Elders who have given to the Village Science Initiative is extensive and I may have left out a few names—for this I offer my apologies. ☆

## ALASKA STATE AISES SCIENCE FAIR

The winners of the regional AISES science fairs will participate in the Alaska State AISES Science Fair in Birchwood, 15 miles out of Anchorage, January 29-February 1, 2000. The fair will be held preceding and concurrent with the Native Educators Conference (NEC) with projects on display Monday morning, February 1 at the NEC.

For more details visit our website: [www.ankn.uaf.edu/aises/sciencefairstate.html](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/aises/sciencefairstate.html). Winners of this fair will go to the AISES National Fair in Minneapolis/St. Paul. ☆

# Southeast Region

## Tribal college planning in Southeast Alaska: A Chronicle

by Andy Hope

I began working with tribal college planning in January 1998. At that time, Sealaska Heritage Foundation was administering the Kellogg Foundation planning grant for Southeast. Ted Wright and I agreed to coordinate. I had been working with the Tlingit Language Consortium for several years in an ongoing effort to develop education programs. We agreed that it would be a good idea for the language planning group to take the lead on tribal college planning because we felt that the core curriculum for the tribal college should be based in language and culture.

Our first meeting was a teleconference hosted by AKRSI at the University of Alaska Southeast Juneau campus. The next combined session was held in Juneau in February 1998 at the Centennial Convention Center. Darrell Kipp, founder of the Blackfeet Immersion School in Browning, Montana, was a special guest speaker.

Ted Wright and I traveled to Harlem and Browning, Montana to visit Fort Belknap Tribal College and the Blackfeet Immersion School to gather information on language programs. We met with the Ft. Belknap trustees and staff and discussed the possibility of certification of a Tlingit language certificate and two-year degree. Our intent at the time was to start the program in late 1998 but this plan did not work out.

In May 1998, the Tlingit Language consortium held a major conference in Juneau in conjunction with the Southeast Alaska Native Rural Education Consortium (SEANREC). Tlingit and Haida also provided travel from the Administration for Native Americans Language planning funds.

In August 1998 Sealaska Heritage Foundation transferred the Kellogg Foundation planning grant funding

to Tlingit and Haida. Ted Wright was contracted to administer the grant.

In October 1998 the Southeast Alaska Native Language consortium (formerly Tlingit Language Consortium) met in Juneau in conjunction with the SEANREC annual planning meeting. Participants grouped by community and presented assessments and priorities for language projects.

In February 1999 SEANREC met in Juneau to plan the AKRSI Native Science Camp initiative. At this meeting the participants, including the SEANREC Elders Council, adopted an interim charter for the Southeast Alaska Tribal College (SEATC).

In April/May 1999, the Consortium of Alaska Native Higher Education (CANHE) met in Juneau. SEATC and the Tlingit Haida Central Council (THCC) representatives gave presentations to CANHE.

In May 1999 an Interim Board of Trustees for SEATC was assembled. I was elected chair. The SEATC Interim Board met several times by teleconference in the summer of 1999.

In September 1999 John Hope and Jim Walton gave a presentation on the tribal college planning project to the participants at the Kiks.ádi pole

raising ceremonies. More than 100 Tlingit Elders and clan leaders signed a resolution endorsing the tribal college planning project as well as the interim board of trustees. The Chilkat Indian Village also adopted a resolution endorsing SEATC.

In October 1999 SEATC met in Juneau in conjunction with the SEANREC annual planning meeting. Tlingit and Haida grant administrators presented draft tribal college financial and feasibility reports at this meeting. The Wrangell Cooperative Association and the Wrangell Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood Camps also endorsed SEATC.

In November 1999 the Grand Camp Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood Convention adopted a resolution calling for utilization of facilities at Sheldon Jackson College by SEATC. It applauded Tlingit, Haida and AKRSI for efforts in planning a tribal college in Southeast Alaska and requested both to continue in a united way. The Douglas Indian Association adopted a resolution endorsing SEATC. The SEATC Trustees adopted articles of incorporation.

The board of trustees of SEATC are Arnold Booth, Isabella Brady, Nora Dauenhauer, Dennis Demmert, Dr. Ronn Dick, Andy Hope (chair), Joe Hotch, Roxanne Houston, Katherine Miyasato, Charles Natkong, Sr., Marie Olson, Dr. Joyce Shales, Sue Stevens, Dr. Bernice Tetpon and Jim Walton.

Thank you to the Elders and clan and clan house leaders that have supported the effort to develop a tribal college in Southeast Alaska. I would also like to thank the board of trustees for making a commitment to the education of Alaska Native people. ✧

# Athabascan Region

## Through the \_\_\_\_\_ of Many People

Choose your own word to fill-in the blank (voices, stories, eyes, hands, minds, wisdom, etc.) My choice is "experiences."

by Amy Van Hatten

Right in the midst of my report the "I" and "my" usage is plentiful. It isn't meant to be read as being egotistical but more to reflect how I achieved eventful tasks. Now and again I encourage people to begin with the pronoun "I" when sharing their experiences. For example, many Yukon-Koyukuk School District autobiographies started out that way. In addition many book chapters use the same approach in writing. Therefore, if you have intellectual information to share but are holding back because you don't want to say "I did this" or "In my time," it is literally acceptable to do so.



Participants gather for a group photo at the Athabascan Regional Planning Meeting in McGrath, October 27-28.

It was important for me to make that distinction since an Elder said we are not supposed to talk like "I did," "I started," "I learned," "I interviewed" or "I decided." However, I notice little attractive nuisances like "I am" and "I remember" as being okay.

In reviewing my job duties over the past year, I worked full time demonstrating, promoting, supporting, incorporating and recruiting specialized people to attend numerous meetings, conferences, retreats, workshops, cultural events and focus study groups statewide, stateside and locally—all for the purpose of educational reform.

The most recent such event, the Third Annual AKRSI Athabascan Regional Planning Meeting, was held at McGrath High School, October 27-28, 1999. The Iditarod Area School District graciously offered to host it. A big hearty thank you for the red carpet hospitality from IASD staff and students.

The first day of the regional meeting focused on Year-Four initiatives. Ten memorandum-of-agreement partners reported on the work underway

in their area. We all acquired a region-wide perspective to build upon as we moved into planning for Year Five. The details of the initiatives were discussed on the second day.

The day before the regional meeting I set up the room for the Elders to discuss details about the Year Four initiatives on culturally-aligned curriculum and language and cultural immersion camps. I also asked them to think about what kind of distinctions we should make as we prepare for our last year of initiatives focusing on indigenous science knowledge and oral tradition as education as they relate to current district policies and teaching practices. During the discussions I recorded the following notes:

- + Elders do not want to be made to feel dumb when they ask questions about school.
- + They want the school curriculum to make room for what they have to offer.
- + The Elders want the students to know their self-worth.
- + Students need to know where they come from.
- + Students need to know how to

cook on a campfire the old-time way.

- + Don't call them kids. Respect young people as young adults.
- + Don't ignore Elders while in the school or outside the school.
- + Don't yell at students when Elders are in the teaching role.
- + Set your own Elders' ground rules.
- + Everyone should be out there showing students we love them.
- + Even godparents should help with a child's upbringing.
- + Explain to students why we do things the way we do.
- + Share personal experiences on what spirituality and faith in God means to you.
- + Encourage non-Native teachers to attend cross-cultural training.
- + Students should practice listening to people around you, not just their earphones.

In closing, I would like to say, remember the diverse cultural traditions of the many tribes in Alaska. To understand diversity is essential to how we teach our children.

Happy trails,

Negalt denlebedze ✨

# Iñupiaq Region

## Quyaanna (thank you) AKRSI from the Northwest Arctic Borough School District

by Ruth Tatqaviñ Sampson, Bilingual Education Coordinator

The Alaska rural systemic initiatives that have been undertaken by the NWABSD under the memorandum of agreement with AFN have affected the school district in a positive way. Initiatives were designed in a way to begin systemic changes for school improvements.

In the beginning the pace was slow because the school district was looking for ways to initiate the projects into existing plans. An example has been the AISES science fairs. The school science fair is held in March but the AISES science fair had to be held in the fall in order to plan for the national AISES science fair. AISES science fairs are interesting because the students come up with projects such as the study of caribou lifecycles, uses of caribou antlers, using willow bark to make dyes, comparison of furs in cold weather, under-ice fishing with a net, the Aurora Borealis, population density of shrews and voles, bio-engineering to prevent erosion and other interesting projects.

AKRSI-sponsored Elders and educators came together to plan for subsistence curriculum. Although a curriculum was not written, much needed information was shared among the participants. In traditional times, education was provided one-on-one with parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents and other extended family members teaching the younger ones. Today we try to simulate that experience in a classroom setting but it is difficult. However, traditional methods such as observation and hands-on experience are still reliable methods of teaching and learning. Using concrete examples in teaching concepts is

a practice that must continue for maximum learning to take place. Character building is also important to the Iñupiat because it affects survival in the Arctic. For example, hard work, endurance and patience were attributes that were developed in children. This was balanced by humor, enjoyment of the outdoors, hospitality and an attitude of gratitude.

The Elders at the subsistence curriculum development workshops gave the following advice to be shared with students: "If you see Elders doing work, stop and help them. Do not steal. Do not talk angrily back to anyone. Everyone should know his or her relatives. Respect other people's property. Give advice to younger people. Share your catch and bring food to your neighbors and others. Help others. Don't mimic or criticize others in a negative way. Don't expect to get paid for helping Elders. Don't waste food. Finish your work before playing. Don't stay up late. Respect other students and people." Obviously, these words of wisdom span across cultures, especially among Native people of Alaska. Cooperation was necessary for survival.

We are thankful that AKRSI has worked hard to make education relevant and meaningful to students in rural Alaska. Although many parents and educators are concerned about

the exit exam and teaching to the state standards, it does not mean that education about the local environment has to be excluded. There are ways to integrate information about the local animals, plants, geography, history and literature while still meeting state standards. For example, the Davis-Ramoth Memorial School at Selawik held their second Iñupiaq Week where they did cultural activities all week and then integrated their experiences into the regular classroom. Erdine Skin, an Apache teacher, was actively involved in the Iñupiaq subsistence curriculum workshops held under AKRSI; her students had very good AISES science projects last year. Debra Webber-Werle, a kindergarten teacher at the Napaaqtugmiut School at Noatak, has had many students working on dynamic science projects. A kindergarten teacher in Kotzebue recently requested assistance about integrating cultural activities into her curriculum. When the school district had their inservice on aligning state standards with the district curriculum, they were encouraged to use cultural standards to help them integrate local culture into their lesson plans. There are many ways AKRSI has affected the Northwest Arctic Borough School District and it will continue as a domino effect as time goes by, even when the project funding ends. We are grateful to all the AFN-AKRSI staff for all their hard work and contributions. We have only scratched the surface and will continue to search for the treasures we are yet to find in this whole arena of education. ✧

# Aleut/Alutiiq Region

## Alutiiq Regional Rural Science Fair

by Teri Schneider

The Kodiak Island Borough School District hosted the second regional science fair in the community of Ouzinkie, November 3–5, as a follow up to the Academy of Elders/AISES Science Camp held on Afognak Island this past summer. Last year's science fair was held in Old Harbor and as a result of that competition three of our students participated at the AISES National Science Fair last spring.

With 37 projects involving 68 students, the number of participants doubled from last year's regional science fair. Students from Chiniak, Larsen Bay, Port Lions, Akhiok, Old Harbor, Kodiak and Ouzinkie took part in this year's activities.

Not only are students sharpening their science process skills by taking part in developing science fair projects, they also have the opportunity to demonstrate their formal presentation skills while sharing some of their personal experiences and cultural heritage through projects that are culturally and environmentally relevant to our island communities.

The Grand prize winners for this year's rural science fair are: Bliss Peterson, sixth grade Ouzinkie, with her project comparing the Alutiiq and Yupik Languages; Kalen Pedersen, sixth-grade Kodiak, with his project regarding construction and use of the bow and arrow; Patrick Schneider, third-grade Kodiak, who compared the burning efficiency of different oils and partners Matthew Delgado and Jon Panamarioff, seventh-grade Ouzinkie, who compared the quality of product utilizing various methods for preserving fish. Joining these five students at the statewide AISES science fair will be Ouzinkie team members Scott Detorres, Jeremy Clarion

and Cadman Peterson with their project demonstrating the deadfall trap and Old Harbor's Ivan Christiansen and Rocky Christiansen with their project pertaining to the burning qualities of various oils.

Returning judges, John Tershak, Ann Knowlton, Ole Mahle and Kathryn Chichenoff noticed an overall improvement in student presentation and depth of knowledge and understanding of the projects. Students who attended camp stood out to all of the judges, having achieved three of the four grand prizes!

One of the activities that took place during the science fair included a seal harvest followed by a biosampling done by Native Harbor Seal Commission member Mitch Simeonoff and his assistant Roy Rastopsoff, both from Akhiok. Students were able to take part in the collection and recording of data that was later submitted for the Harbor Seal Biosampling project. Eventually the seals were butchered and shared among the Ouzinkie community.

Other activities hosted by the school and greater Ouzinkie community included a welcoming ceremony with a performance by the Ouzinkie Alutiiq Dancers, a volleyball tournament and an incredible community potluck.



*Andy Christofferson, Ouzinkie Advisory School Board member, and Roy Rastopsoff begin to take samples and measurements of a seal during the rural science fair in Ouzinkie.*

During the day the Ouzinkie teachers absorbed the visiting students into their classrooms and organized interactive projects utilizing the talents of Kathy Nelson, the artistic chaperone from Port Lions; Alan Dick, the AKRSI science coordinator and Asako Kobayashi, Kodiak High School's Japanese exchange student.

AKRSI will be hosting the first ever AISES Alaska State Science Fair, January 29–31, 2000. With funding provided by AKRSI, we will be sending a team from the Alutiiq Region to represent our area of the state. Our team consists of Native and non-Native students from in and outside the district who excelled at the regional level science fair.

Plans for next year's Alutiiq Regional Science Fair are being formed. If your district or school is in the Alutiiq region and interested in sending a team to compete, please contact Teri Schneider, 486-9276 or email [tschneider@kodiak.k12.ak.us](mailto:tschneider@kodiak.k12.ak.us). ☆

## Elder Interview: Nick Galaktionoff

Interview and transcription by  
Moses L. Dirks, Unalaska, November 28, 1999



I was born in Makushin, Magusim kugan aganaqing 1925. This month or next month. And after I was born, kids they didn't know how they were born anyway. My dad and my mom they were going to move into their own house. My dad built a house and finished it. So then my mom and dad was ready to go. I had an older sister named Malaanyaa. They went out and pack things over. And me, I was left with my grandmother. So my grandmother grew me up all the way.

When I was five years old I started helping my dad. I didn't know what I was doing. He always told me that I was doing good. I suppose I was making a mess, but he always said I did good. I ran into the house and tell my grandmother. My grandmother was a very important person to me that time. She would always teach me; I didn't really know my real mom and my dad. She told me that was my dad. But I never called him my dad. I always call him Ludang, "my oldest." So I don't know my real mom because my dad call him Ayagang, "my wife." So I start calling her my Ayagang. We grew up that way.

Before he (dad) go to St. Paul, he would take the *baidarki* skin off 'cause you save the ribs anyway. You don't want them rot away. After he come back from St. Paul, them guys were working for forty dollars a month. People make more than that in one day now days. Then after he come home from St. Paul, take a rest for one week and start work on his *baidarki*, changing the string ropes on there and soak the skin in the creek. After it got dried up it don't get stretch or shrink anyway (the sealskin). After

two days you put them on. People come in and help him sew it up and everything and no time he finished it. No party, but they always had tea parties after that. So my dad told me I was five or six years old. I know I was small. I don't know how old I was. My dad said that he was going to take me out in a *baidarki*. But, my grandmother told him, don't take him too far out. I know I can't see nothing. I have nothing but a smile on my face. Finally, he got me in a *baidarki* hole (in the front). Boy my eyes were barely sticking out. Then he launched his *baidarki* giving me a ride around from that house all the way far as the creek and from there turned back, all the way as far as that point. And we finally landed. My grandmother lift me up from the *baidarki* take me out, take me home. I thought that it was a lot of fun I ever had.

Because we didn't have our own toys, we all made toys. That's all we had. Pretty tough them days. But everything I do this better and what anybody do it looks better. But when I was eight years old I started fishing. I am not alone but always go with them fishing, seining right in the front.

Those were the days when it was a lot of fun. It was a lot of fun for every kid. Them days the people work on fish and after that my dad is gone. Go out and get some wood and fish. My dad and my dad's brother and his friend and guy named Matfii Burenin, John Burenin, Akiinfer Galaktionoff—he was my dad. John—that was his brother but he got different dad. He never come home. There was not even a storm, not even windy. People there looking for them. They didn't find them. Finally, Iliya Burenin find the boat in another bay all chopped up. Japanese got them. Japanese started to move into Unalaska in the mountains, hide away spying Dutch Harbor.

So that was 1939. The marshall got there on the mailboat. Not the mailboat, but Coast Guard boat. He found out my grandmother and mother did not have no help. And back to Unalaska again. Finally try and find a place for us to stay. Finally Coast Guard got there and pick us up and we come in 1939. I don't like it but as kids we can't do nothing by himself. I was 13 years old.

And after that I am doing something like everybody else, helping my mom.

In 1939, just about 1940, my grandmother died. She was seventy-nine years old. I didn't know she was seventy-nine but after she died, after I grew up until fifteen-sixteen, I found out she was seventy-nine years old. So I've got nothing to do so I had to move in with my real mom. I didn't like them kids in there, but they were my brothers and sisters. Always doing something. For ten cents you tell them to do something. I am getting ten cents from somebody else. Ten cents was a lot of money. I would buy two big bar candies. Now days them forty, fifty cent bar candies are twice as small as the big candies before.

And from there I work most of the time. When I was fourteen years old,  
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school started. And they wanted me to go to school. I was happy for a while. I might learn something. I was in school but I didn't like my teacher. If I don't say "Good morning Miss Jorgensen," she would always hit my head with a little ruler. Boy, I didn't like that. I have been up at the school. I know how to sign my name. So one morning I got sandwich and I got a big coat. I make a big sandwich and put it in coat pocket and I left. People go up to school but me, I kept going all the way to the trail, Biorka Trail. I walk all the way over to that Beaver Inlet. I am not even scared but I will be scared later. I did not have a place to stay. I take walk on the beach for a while. Dark comes I start eating my sandwich. I stay by the small creek, put my head down and drink water. I did not have a cup. I eat half of my sandwich. Later I went into the grass and went to bed. I sleep good for a while and I wake up, pitch dark. Boy, I am kind of nervous. Early winter started, right after school started, oh, about a month and a half after school started. I got into Beaver Inlet over night. Next morning, I got up and finished my sandwich. No I don't want to stay there again. So I come home before I lose my trail. No truck road up on top side, just a trail. I could have come in to town earlier but I don't want to come to town when it is daylight. And I am scared of the goats up there. We got to go through this pass, about twenty goats up there. Belongs to Mr. King. Boy, pretty soon they would be teasing me all the way. I got chased from them animals; run before they hit me and I went over the fence. When I come on this side I feel safer. I come all the way to my house and my mom said, "We have been worried about you, where have you been?"

"I've been camping." Well I didn't see no camp in Beaver Inlet.

Next two days the marshall, Mr.

Bill, I forgot his last name, he wanted me back to school. I told him if you put me back to school I am going to run away for good. I was scared but I said that anyway. So later he said okay stay home if you want to. He left me. That was Bill Brown. He was a marshall before Vern Robinson. Somebody else was the marshall before Bill Brown too. He died in Seattle. He was an Aleut. His Mother was Aleut I guess. He talked Aleut because everybody talked Aleut around here anyway. Not any more. ☆

Nick "Nicholai" Galaktionoff was born in the village of Makushin on the island of Unalaska in 1939. Nick comes from a large family; he and his sister Marina are the only survivors. Both of his sons reside in Unalaska.

Nick's hobbies include halibut and salmon fishing. He used to go out seal hunting and fishing whenever he got a chance. He now has poor eyesight and does not go many places anymore. Nick likes living in Unalaska and enjoys fishing and walking around town.

## ANKN Website

by Sean Asiqluq Topkok

The Alaska Native Knowledge Network website is updated almost on a daily basis. We make information pertaining to Alaska Native knowledge easily accessible for rural educators and communities. With most of the communities having Internet access, using the World Wide Web provides us with a tool to distribute resources. With the various initiatives being implemented throughout Alaska, it is a challenge to communicate in digital form; however, many resources are available on the ANKN website.

Recently added resources on the ANKN website include video and sound presentations, articles and publications, information on AISES science fairs and curriculum science units. They can be found at:

< <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/new.html> >

Additional resources are available at:

< <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/rol.html> >

The most recent addition to the resources online is *Alaska Native Games: A Resource Guide* by Roberta Tognetti-Stuff. Resources are available online for educational use only.

There are APRN radio broadcasts are also available for educators:

< <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/sound/> >

Science curriculum units are also available online. These science units include applications to science, math and cultural standards.

< <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/units/> >

If there is anything in particular that you are looking for, but don't know where it is, you can always search the ANKN website at:

< <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/search.html> >

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me at 907-474-5897 or email:

< [Sean.Topkok@uaf.edu](mailto:Sean.Topkok@uaf.edu) >



# Iñupiaq Region: Gathering the Resources

The following is a speech that was given during the Alaska Native Education Council (ANEC) conference in Anchorage on Oct. 18, 1999. Certain areas were revised for the reader to understand from a readers point of view. This speech was made for a listener. *Quyana naaququ.*

by Nita Rearden, Lower Kuskokwim School District

Some of you will remember when our parents, grandparents or great grandparents saved practically everything. They saved items like canvas, flour and sugar sacks, Crisco and coffee cans, Blazo and kerosene cans, Blazo boxes and different types of glass bottles. Each item was recycled in such a way that nothing was wasted. For instance, Blazo boxes were used for cupboards or storage containers; flour and sugar sacks were used for dish towels, diapers or even undergarments if mothers sewed; empty cans were used for kitchen and tool containers or dog dishes; gallon Blazo cans were used for seal-oil containers or other purposes.

I remember one time I was traveling to Fairbanks after the holidays with a Blazo can full of seal oil in my hand. My mother recycled every resource material she could. At the Anchorage airport, when I walked through the line to get on the jet, a security officer stopped me and told me I could not take the Blazo on board. I answered her that it wasn't Blazo, but the content was seal oil. She didn't believe me and said she would have to check it. Oh boy! I mentioned to her the contents would make the airport smell. She went ahead and opened it anyway. The truth did come; she wrinkled her nose and the people behind me smiled and my friends laughed.

Do you remember as a child all of the materials we collected that were considered trash but we used as toys? We gathered cans for our play dishes or parts of clothing. We put cans on our shoes to look like we were wearing high heels. We used grass and wooden sticks for dolls because we could not take our nice homemade dolls outside. We used willow

branches for bows, slings and arrows to hunt pretend grass seals. We collected pebbles for play bullets, marbles or food. We used sticks for storyknives when we were not allowed to take out the beautiful decorated, ivory storyknives. We made do with whatever we could create in order to play and pretend. All of what we did was good! We were using hands-on experiences in the content areas of science, social studies and language arts. Today we find our own little people would rather watch TV, play Nintendo or sports instead of utilizing natural resources. Parents found out that these distractions are convenient for babysitting but don't realize the harmful effects.

Our respectful ancestors taught us to collect resources from nature such as animal skins for clothing, plants for food and medicine and grass, tree barks and roots used for dishes or for water and berry buckets. When we collected these items, we learned skills such as sewing, taking care of animals, hunting and more. Our background dealing with these resources

has made us strong Alaska Native people! Our resources are real! When a person is connected to either land, religion, home, culture or school, the person has an anchor to their identity. Today we gather some of these same materials for beautiful Native arts and crafts to sell or make gifts for someone special. Money has become an important part of our gathering. So many resources are available from the stores, we see many items wasted whether it is food, household items or other materials. Most everything ends up in the dump!

As an educator we still gather resources. They aren't necessarily the resources our ancestors taught us about but they are necessities for classroom use as books, textbooks and writing supplies. Teachers gather resource materials to help them become better teachers in order to meet the needs of their students. Many educators today are researchers. We search to gather information especially if we believe what we worked for is the right thing. For instance, in my job, I look for research on bilingual materials in order for parents in our district to understand that speaking two languages is better than being able to communicate in only one. Research shows that as adults, being able to communicate in two languages helps us to be better problem solvers.

When I was thinking about what topics I could talk about for this conference, I thought of many issues, issues such as the English-only law, the new bilingual law, subsistence, loss of languages, benchmark testing, high school graduation qualifying exams and quality schools—all of

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which are issues that affect us. I thought of how I could discuss these matters, but you know what? Without the background knowledge we have gained from a resourceful childhood, we would not be able to deal with any of these issues.

Just recently a teacher from Atmautluak and I were discussing how children learn. She told me about an interesting moment she had with her father when she became a teacher. He told her that a child is like a tree acquiring many branches. The branches of the child increase as he learns new concepts. New branches continue to grow when they are utilized well. Sometimes branches stop growing when a person drops his cultural background. From this I learned we can discuss issues and link them to our cultural background. It is important that our children know how to utilize their cultural resources!

This year it seems like we have very strong issues to deal with. I think the Alaska Native Educators' Conference is an important place to begin. Communication and understanding of the issues is important to allow us all to grow another branch. Let's continue to gather our resources to help one another and our children. *Quyana qanemcivqarlua.* ✧

## 2000 Native Educators' Conference

*"Bearing the Fruits of Indigenous Knowledge"*

**Sponsored by the Alaska Native Educator Associations and  
the Alaska Native Knowledge Network**

**Anchorage, Alaska  
January 30-February 1, 2000  
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For a registration packet and further information, contact Lolly Carpluk, Alaska Native Knowledge Network, University of Alaska Fairbanks, 706C1 Gruening Building, Fairbanks, Alaska. Phone: 907-474-1902 or 474-6569. Fax: 907-474-1957. E-mail: flmc@uaf.edu



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# 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 ♦ Annenberg Rural Challenge

## Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge

A new set of guidelines have been developed addressing issues of concern in the documentation, representation and utilization of traditional cultural knowledge. One of the purposes 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. The guidelines are organized around the role of various participants including Elders, authors, curriculum developers, classroom teachers, publishers and researchers. Native educators from throughout Alaska contributed to the development of the guidelines through a series of workshops and meetings associated with the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative.

Special attention is given to the educational implications for the integration of indigenous knowledge and practices in schools throughout Alaska. The guidance offered by the guidelines is intended to encourage the incorporation of traditional knowledge and teaching practices in schools by minimizing the potential for misuse and misunderstanding in the process. It is hoped that these guidelines will facilitate the coming together of the many cultural traditions that coexist in Alaska in constructive, respectful and mutually beneficial ways.

Along with the 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, textbook publishers and Native communities are encouraged to review their policies, programs and practices and to adopt the guidelines and recommendations where appropriate. In so doing, the educational experiences of students throughout Alaska will be enriched and the future

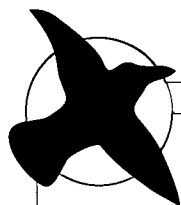
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well-being of the communities being served will be enhanced.

### Responsibilities for Respecting Cultural Knowledge

Following is a summary of the areas of responsibility around which the guidelines for respecting cultural knowledge are organized. The details for each area, to be published in a booklet form as well as on the ANKN website, provide specific suggestions on the steps to be taken by persons in each of the respective roles.

NATIVE ELDERS, as one of the primary sources of traditional cultural knowledge, bear the responsibility to share and pass on that knowledge in ways that are compatible with traditional teachings and practices.

AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS should take all steps necessary to insure that any representation of cultural content is accurate, contextually appropriate and explicitly acknowledged.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPERS AND ADMINISTRATORS should provide multiple avenues for the incorporation of locally-recognized expertise in all actions related to the use and interpretation of local cultural knowledge and practices.

CLASSROOM TEACHERS are responsible for drawing upon Elders and other cultural experts in the surrounding community to make sure all resource materials and learning activities are culturally accurate and appropriate.

EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS should utilize culturally-knowledgeable authors and establish multiple levels of review to insure that all publications are culturally accurate and appropriate.

REVIEWERS should give informed consideration to the cultural perspectives of all groups represented in documents subjected to review.

RESEARCHERS are ethically responsible for obtaining informed consent, accurately representing the cultural

perspective and protecting the cultural integrity and rights of all participants in a research endeavor.

NATIVE LANGUAGE SPECIALISTS are responsible for taking all steps possible to accurately convey the meaning associated with cultural knowledge that has been shared in a traditional language.

NATIVE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS should establish a process for review and authorization of activities involving the gathering, documentation and use of local cultural knowledge.

As the users and audience for cultural knowledge, THE GENERAL PUBLIC has a responsibility to exercise informed critical judgement about the cultural authenticity and appropriateness of the materials they utilize.

### General Recommendations

The following recommendations were put forward to support the effective implementation of the guidelines for documenting, representing and utilizing cultural knowledge outlined above.

The *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools* should be used as a general guide for any educational activity involving cultural documentation, representation or review.

A statewide "Alaska Indigenous Literary Review Board" should be established with representation from each of the regional Native educator associations to oversee the implementation of the recommendations that follow.

A statewide "Alaska Indigenous Knowledge Multimedia Working Group" should be established to examine the applicability of the above guidelines to the production of electronic media and the publication and utilization of cultural knowledge via the internet.

Criteria for product certification of materials with cultural content should be established and implemented by

regional literary review committees formed through the regional Native educator associations. The raven images from the ANKN logo could be used as a "stamp of approval" for each cultural region.

Each regional literary review committee should develop a list of authorized reviewers for publications reflecting cultural content related to the respective region.

An annotated bibliography of the best materials representing local cultures should be compiled by each regional literary review committee and published on the Alaska Native Knowledge Network website for use by teachers and curriculum developers throughout the state.

The Alaska Indigenous Literary Review Board should establish prestigious awards to honor Native Elders, authors, illustrators and others who make a significant contribution to the documentation and representation of cultural knowledge.

Incentives, resources and opportunities should be provided to encourage and support Native authors, illustrators and storytellers who bring a strong Native voice to the documentation and representation of Native cultural knowledge and traditions.

The guidelines outlined above should be incorporated in university courses and made an integral part of all teacher preparation and cultural orientation programs.

An annotated bibliography of resource materials that address issues associated with documenting, representing and utilizing cultural knowledge should be maintained on the Alaska Native Knowledge Network website.

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, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, AK 99775-6730 (<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu>). ☆

## Commissioners' Panel Addresses NEC

by Frank Hill

Four of Alaska's former Commissioners of Education participated in a first-of-its-kind panel at the 2000 Native Educators' Conference. They shared what they thought were the most salient issues facing Alaska Native Education as we move into the 21st century. Current Commissioner of Education Rick Cross was scheduled to share his views as well, but was weathered out in Juneau. Following are a few of the issues that were discussed.

### **Marshall Lind (1971-83, 1986-87) addressed the following:**

- How do we fulfill the promises of local control associated with the creation of regional educational attendance areas?
- How do we address the instability of professional staff in rural schools?
- Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools should be implemented.
- Assessment issues related to students and teachers.
- Vocational/technical education needs.
- Strengthening early childhood education programs.
- Low success rates for Alaska Native students in higher education programs.

### **Bill Demmert (1987-90) shared these issues:**

- Development of a child's cultural identity and language should be foremost in their education.
- Students need to know who they are and connect with their cultural heritage to enhance their highest ability to learn.
- More attention needs to be given to early childhood education.

### **Jerry Covey (1991-95) discussed the following issues:**

- Local control of schools; opportunity and responsibility where it belongs.
- Standards-driven education; culture needs to be included in the process.
- Strong communities are essential to school success; need to address the problems of alcohol and drug abuse.
- Politics of appeasement; politicians chasing public opinion without real leadership. Need political leaders who represent all Alaskans. There is no shortage of financial resources to serve all schools, but there is a shortage of the will to do so or to care for each other.

### **Shirley Holloway (1995-99) highlighted the following:**

- In answering to the question of whether rural education will survive in the 21st century, she stressed the need for strong Alaska Native leadership that addresses high-stakes testing (i.e., the High School Graduation Qualification Exam), bilingual/bicultural education issues, government mandates, technology issues and the lack of Native professional educators.
- Students learn best when taught by teachers who speak their own language.

We extend our thanks to these Alaska education leaders for their insightful responses and adding another highlight to the Native Educators' Conference. We are also pleased that all former commissioners are still working to improve education for all of Alaska's students. ☆

# Identity-Creating Camps

by *Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley*

There is a crying need for healing among Alaska Native people and an essential element of the healing process is the need to retain our unique Alaska Native identities. This is best done through the use of the Native language because it thrusts us into the thought world of our ancestors and their ways of comprehending the world. With the use of the Native language, we begin to appreciate the richness and complexity of our traditional philosophical and spiritual world views. It is for these reasons that we need to pay more attention to how we can draw upon our Alaska Native languages to serve as the foundation for the various science and cultural camps that we sponsor. To gain the full expression of our languages, identity and way of life, the camps must also take place in all the seasons of the year with the Elders being the prime movers. Their description of traditional activities through the local language best conveys the relationships between a Alaska Native concept and its practice.

The following are a few suggestions on how we might approach and design camps for different purposes. Three types of Native cultural camps are described and each may be revised and adapted to suit the local situation and needs.

## Cultural Immersion Camp

For students who have a good command of the Native language or dialect in a particular region and thus can be immersed on all aspects of the local culture.

1. All activities are done utilizing the Native language only and the focus is on in-depth learning of the things one needs to know to make a life and a living.
2. All planning and implementation includes local Native Elders and other knowledgeable Native people explaining what and why

things are done the way they are for cultural adaptability and survival. This can include the following topics:

- a. Use of and relationship to plants and animals: times for harvesting; how and why certain rules are followed to ensure continuation of species; explain the traditional preparation and preservation techniques; how does the process contribute to natural diversity and cultural adaptability?
- b. Medicinal plants: their use and how they have been preordained by Ellam Yua (Spirit of the Universe) to have power to heal certain diseases; harvesting process—preparation and preservation; how to use them, being mindful of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual inclinations of the person being treated; how

do they contribute to natural diversity and cultural adaptability?

- c. Explore the nature-mediated technology of the Alaska Native people: materials; preparation methods; explanations of why certain parts of materials are used; how the idea for the technology came about; functioning of the various parts; use and care of the item; does it utilize refined or unrefined natural resources and why; is it biodegradable; what are its spiritual aspects; how does it contribute to natural diversity and cultural sustainability and adaptability?
  - d. Explore the natural sense-makers of nature for weather, seasons, flora and fauna.
  - e. Discuss time and its measurement.
  - f. Navigation techniques: finding direction using nature and celestial objects.
3. Use song, dance and drumming for transmission of culture, especially its spiritual aspect; develop a realization that everything a Native person does is a form of prayer and paying homage to Ellam Yua (or whatever name a tribe has for the Creator.)
  4. Use mythology and stories for value-creation and teaching what it means to be human; the entire experience should be value-creating and give a cultural orientation, an identity.
  5. Live off the land as much as possible, using traditional techniques and technology.
  6. The scheduling must be flexible and determined by the Elders to do things when it feels right.

## Language Development Camp

For students who have little or no understanding of the Native language

or have little or no speaking ability. Thus the focus is on learning the language itself in a setting where it has inherent meaning.

The process is best determined on a day-by-day basis by the Elders and teachers, but it could range from full immersion as outlined above, to gradual immersion starting with the Native language being used with English interpretations, then progressing to an hour or two in which only the Native language is used. In either case, the goal would be to have the last week be all in the Native language. Otherwise, all of the suggestions outlined for immersion camps would apply.

## Bridging Science Camp

Same as above but incorporating aspects of a Eurocentric viewpoint. The bridging camp should include not only the Native language and cultural practices, but also the Eurocentric scientific concepts and practices.

1. Most of the activities outlined above apply, but with the addition of a comparative perspective. All activities are coordinated to best achieve understanding. The traditional activities are not separate activities from Eurocentric mathematics and sciences, but are planned to be compatible and complementary with one another.
2. Identify some of the most used Eurocentric scientific terms and coin corresponding Native words with help from Elders and students.
3. When using Eurocentric science knowledge, concepts or theories, explore how they may add to or detract from one's Nativeness.
4. Examine whether the Eurocentric knowledge is useful and applicable in the place you are situated or is it extraneous

knowledge in that context. When and where is it useful?

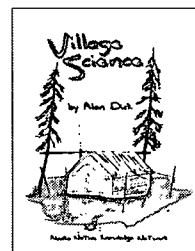
5. Use traditional estimation and intuitive measurement techniques; explore recognition of pattern and symmetry without mathematical equations to confuse the issue—the universe is not all numbers.
6. Use computers and other technological tools sparingly; explore the implications of the statement, "our memories are becoming obsolete."
7. How does adding Eurocentric knowledge to the traditional ways of knowing enhance or detract from natural diversity and cultural adaptability?
8. Examine ways in which technological tools may add to environmental and mental pollution.
9. Examine ways in which the camp activities foster values of cooperation and harmony or competition and individualism.
10. The camp planners and implementers should always have the local list of Native values in front of them for guidance in determining what to include from the modern world.

The bridging science camps are intended to incorporate the Eurocentric mathematics and scientific concepts along with the local knowledge base of the Elders. All daily activities should be coordinated to effectively and efficiently teach and validate both thought worlds. The students should gain a keen understanding of Eurocentric scientific research since many of the findings corroborate Native observations and have helped to identify globally-stressed arenas that explain why Mother Earth is suffering. This makes it absolutely necessary that students learn Eurocentric concepts as well as their own ways of recognizing patterns, utilizing symbols, employing estimation and intuitive measurement and developing a keen observation of place.

The Native students have to realize that our ways of knowing are identity-building processes. They can then pursue careers in mathematics and the sciences buttressed with a nature-mediated world view giving them a kind and polite disposition to the world in which they live. ☆

## Village Science Review

The Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative has sponsored the complete revision of the book, *Village Science*, which is now available from the Alaska Native Knowledge Network.



It amalgamates the practical issues of village life with basic concepts of modern science.

The book's primary intent is to create a love affair between rural junior high students and science so they will aspire to careers of influence in Alaska. The examples, questions, stories and explanations help those with an urban view look over the mountains into our world. The ultimate goal is to convince educators everywhere of the urgent need to produce and use culturally- and locally-relevant materials in all aspects of education. ☆

# Report Released on Alaska Rural Systemic Reform in Education

Ray Barnhardt, UAF; Jim Kushman, NWREL; Oscar Kawagley, UAF; Beth Leonard, UAF; Carol Barnhardt, UAF; Jerry Lipka, UAF; Sarah Landis, NWREL; Bruce Miller, NWREL and seven community research teams

Below is the balance of an executive summary of the final report from a three-year study of rural school reform conducted by the Northwest Regional Educational Lab (NWREL) and UAF in cooperation with seven rural communities and school districts in Alaska. The first part of this article appeared in the previous issue of *Sharing Our Pathways (Volume 5, Issue 1)*.

Through a cross-case analysis, six reform themes emerged:

## *Sustaining Reform*

It is easy to start new reforms but difficult to keep up the momentum in order to bring about deep changes in teaching and learning. Our case studies show that sustaining educational reform over the long run is difficult but not impossible in rural Alaska. There were a variety of scenarios, including communities that could not successfully launch an Alaska Onward to Excellence (AOTE) reform effort, those which had many starts and stops on a long and winding road towards important community goals and at least one exceptional community (Quinhagak) that has been able to create and sustain a Yup'ik first-language program for more than a decade. The most significant barrier to sustaining reforms is persistent teacher, principal and superintendent turnover. Turnover derails reform efforts and leads to a cycle of reinventing the school every two or three years. A process like AOTE can help alleviate the turnover problem by creating leadership within the community, especially when respected community Elders and other leaders are brought into the process. But to

seriously sustain reforms, districts and local communities need to develop talent from within so that teachers have strong roots in the communities where they teach.

## *Shared Leadership*

Leadership needs to be defined as shared decision-making with the community rather than seeking advice from the community. Strong and consistent superintendent leadership was an important factor in moving reforms forward in these small communities and districts. However, school leaders must believe and act on the principle of shared decision making in order to engage the community through long-term educational changes that benefit students. Shared leadership creates community ownership that will move educational changes through frequent staff turnover. School leaders must view a process like AOTE as a tool for developing community engagement and leadership rather than a program that seeks the community's advice.

## *Building Relationships and Trust*

Personal relationships and trust are at the heart of successful reform and processes like AOTE are only effective when good relationships

exist between school personnel and community members. Strong relationships are based on mutual caring for children and cross-cultural understanding rather than a specific reform agenda. In small communities, personal relationships are more central than formal decision processes as the way to get things done. A key teacher, principal, leadership team member, parent or Elder who is respected in the community can spark the change process. It is these respected people and their relationships with others that help the whole community develop an understanding of and connection to the principles of an external reform model like AOTE. Too much emphasis can be placed on process and procedure from the outside and not enough on building the relationships and trust from the inside. Reformers in rural settings might fare better if they worked to fully understand the local context and build reforms from the inside out rather than relying solely on external reform models.

## *Enacting New Roles*

Educators and community members are often stuck in old roles while educational partnerships require new behaviors and ways of thinking. While it is easy to talk about creating partnerships, changing traditional roles is a learning process for both school personnel and parents. The mindset that parent and teacher domains are separate—and should remain so—hampers family involvement efforts. Our case studies reveal that without a compelling goal deeply rooted in



community values—like preserving language and cultural knowledge—many parents and community members are content to leave education to the educators. Yet in small rural settings there are many avenues for parents, Elders and other community members to be involved in school as volunteers, teacher aides, other paid workers and leadership team members. Rural schools need to create a range of parent involvement strategies appropriate for small communities. Historical divisions between school personnel and Alaska Native parents still need to be overcome. A partnership process like AOTE must strive to rekindle the spirit of a people who feel marginalized by the education system rather than part of it.

### *Creating Coherent Reforms*

Small rural communities and school districts need help in sorting through many ongoing reforms in order to create a more unified approach to educational and community change. There are many independent reform activities in these communities with few connections. AOTE was a positive force in most communities because it helped set a clear direction and vision for student success and provided opportunities for school personnel and community members to think about and talk about how everyone should work together to educate children in a changing world. AOTE was less successful as a force for substantially changing teaching and learning. Here there was often confusion or lethargy about taking action because there were already so many educational programs in place. How AOTE fit into this picture was unclear to participants. In rural Alaska, there is a boom or bust cycle of programs related to curriculum, instruction, assessment and technology. Yet some cases showed more unity of purpose and were able to progress towards reform goals, make significant changes in educational practice and see students improve.

These places often exhibited the enabling characteristics described above including stability of school leaders and teachers, shared decision making which empowers communities while expecting improved student results, a climate of trust and caring and the ability to find the human and material resources to achieve goals like bilingual programs. Many elements have to come together for classroom-level changes to occur, not the least of which are creativity, hard work and time.

### *Creating Healthy Communities*

Schools in small rural communities cannot achieve their educational goals in isolation from the well-being of the surrounding community. The AOTE visioning process brought out the deeper hopes, dreams and fears of communities that are trying to preserve their identity and ways of life in a global and technological world. AOTE resulted in districts and communities challenging themselves to simultaneously achieve high cultural

standards and high academic standards as a means to improved community health. People also expect the education system to help young people respect their Elders, respect themselves, stay sober and drug free and learn self-discipline. There was a clear sense that education and community health are inextricably linked. Education is viewed as more than achieving specific academic standards and benchmarks. While the desire is there to integrate Native knowledge and Western schooling, educators in rural Alaska do not yet have all the tools and know-how to achieve this end. More resources are needed to create culturally-appropriate teacher resources. Proposed funding cuts to Alaska's rural schools could threaten further progress. Nevertheless, our case studies offer many positive examples of bicultural and bilingual education that can create more holistic and healthy communities in rural Alaska with the added benefit of improved student achievement. ✧

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# UAF Summer 2000 Program in Cross-Cultural Studies for Alaskan Educators

*Alaska Staff Development Network/Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative/  
Center for Cross-Cultural Studies/UAF Summer Sessions*

The Center for Cross-Cultural Studies, the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, the Alaska Staff Development Network and the UAF Summer Sessions 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. Three of the courses (ED/CCS 613, ED 610 and ED/ANS 461) 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 30–June 3, 2000**

The five-day intensive Rural Academy, sponsored by the Alaska Staff Development Network, The Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative and UAF Summer Sessions, consists of the following educational opportunities:

- each participant participates in two out of fourteen two-day workshops demonstrating how the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools are being implemented in communities throughout rural Alaska.
- two panel sessions are offered in which participants hear firsthand from key educational practitioners and policymakers from throughout the state.
- a day-long field trip allows participants to meet and interact with key people and observe exemplary programs in the Interior region.

- participants share successful strategies and programs from throughout the state.
  - participants have the option to complete a followup project relevant to their own work situation.
- Instructor: Ray Barnhardt, Ph.D. and workshop presenters*  
*Credit Options: ED 695, Rural Academy for Culturally Responsive Schools (2 cr.) \$258*  
*ED/CCS 613, Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools. (3 cr.) \$387*

## Cross-Cultural Orientation Program for Teachers

**June 5–23, 2000**

The Center for Cross-Cultural Studies and UAF Summer Sessions offer the Cross-Cultural Orientation Program for teachers, beginning on June 5, 2000 and running through June 23, 2000, including a week (June 10–17) 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.

*Instructor: Ray Barnhardt, Ph.D. and Minto Elders*

*Credit Option: CCS/ED 610, Education and Cultural Processes (3 cr.) \$534 plus \$100 camp fee*

## Native Ways of Knowing

**June 26–July 14, 2000**

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 examines 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 are shared with participants.

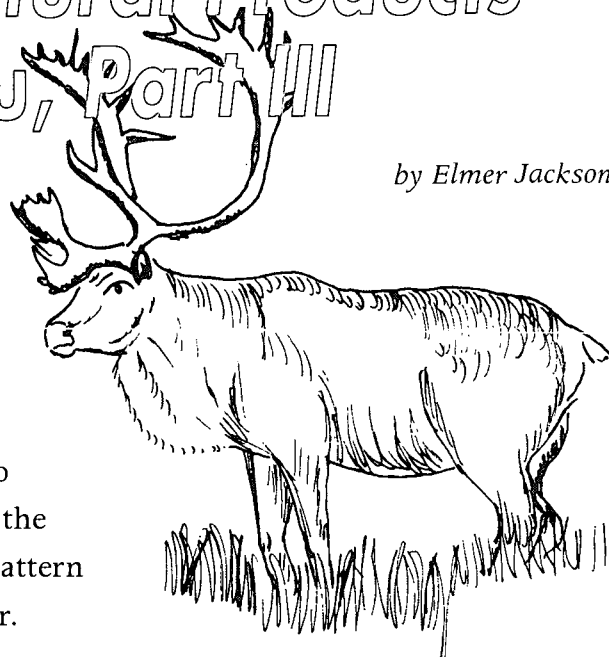
*Instructor: Oscar Kawagley, Ph.D.*  
*Credit option: ED/ANS 461, Native Ways of Knowing (3 cr.) \$279*

## Information

For registration or further information regarding the UAF summer programs contact the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 474-1902. ☆

# Iñupiaq Region: Natural Products made from the Tuttu, Part III

by Elmer Jackson



Without the *tuttu* (caribou) and other indigenous as well as migratory animals, life for the Iñupiat would be difficult. The *tuttu* provides meat for sustenance and its skin is tanned and sewn for warm winter clothing. The muscle tissue from the back is removed and dried. It is then twisted into thread. The needle is made from the thin bone of the foreleg or *taliq*. An ulu is used when cutting out the pattern on the skin. A sharp ulu will make the cutting easier.

With winter being the longest season, warm clothing is necessary for survival. Hard and soft bottom *kammak* (boots) are sewn from the winter skin which has thick fur. Hard bottom *kammak* are made from the bearded seal skin which has been crimped. Waterproof *kammak* are coated with fat and oil making them waterproof. These boots are used during the spring and summer.

Parkas for the young are sewn from the fawn skin, which is soft and pliable and the fur makes a warm parka. Mittens, socks, pants and other items are sewn from the tanned winter skin of the *tuttu*.

One of the traditional Iñupiat ropes is made from the skin of the *tuttu* and the seal. The skin is soaked in water until the hair is removed easily. While the skin is still wet, it is cut into one long strip. It is then stretched and tied from post to post and dried. These strips can be used for making snowshoes or for tying a basket sled. There are many other uses.

A tent of six caribou skins is used for a survival shelter. The floor is covered with spruce boughs and skins of the *tuttu*. The skin is also an excellent mattress.

Caribou are the only members of the deer family where both the male and female grow antlers. The antlers can be used as sinkers for a gill or seine net. Each family had a mark on the sinkers. Grandfather Frank Jackson's mark is that of the footprint of the Sandhill crane—three marks. If a sinker was found they would know who it belonged to and would return it to the owner.

The sharpest points of the antlers are used as piercing tools for dry white fish. Dry fish are pierced for the purpose of making a string of fish. The antler and bones are utilized for creating tools, spear heads, arrow heads and other implements. A useful fish scaler is made from the shoulder blade. This tool is called a *kavisiiqsin*.

Many parts of the *tuttu* are used for arts and crafts and in sewing clothing. Upper Kobuk and the Nunamiut artists create face masks, molding the skin into a carved wood shaped like a face of a person. A miniature model of a sled is created using the lower jaw bones, wood, baleen and twine or traditional rawhide.

Every part of the *tuttu* is saved. The hooves are saved for survival food. Once they are dried they will

remain as they are. When food is scarce, they can be soaked in water until they soften and then cooked into a soup broth. The cooked muscle tendons on the hooves are eaten also.

Generations ago, the Iñupiat endured starvation. The quest to find food was difficult, especially during the winter. The men and their pack dogs would *qaqi* or travel north towards Noatak and the North Slope to find caribou. The women and the young remained home, fishing and berry picking. Food gathering kept them busy most of the day and night.

To respect the animals and the environment was law—traditional law. Indigenous people passed, from generation to generation, the practice of having respect for the animals and the environment. They took only what was needed, subsisting from season to season. They shared with other people in the community. When a family did not have a hunter or provider, they were given food, wood and skins. Sharing brought a sense of contentedness to the community. People took care of each other, even in times of hardship. ☆

# Yup'ik Region: After Culture Camp

by Mike Hull, Principal, Alakanuk School

We have not learned all that we might from the culture camp setting. We can't even say that we have accomplished all we thought we should during any session. In Alakanuk, we already find ourselves looking for the next step. Perhaps it is the pace of the internet world that is telling us to move on. After all, we have been starting the school year with camping trips for four years—in cyber-time that represents an established tradition. We have integrated a science curriculum into the camp activities for two years—that's practically an institution.

The culture camp setting presents us with a very clear image of the real needs of the students. They need to learn the basic subsistence skills to provide for themselves and their families in this setting. They need to acquire the academic skills to comprehend and deal effectively with the changing world around them. They need to develop the spiritual awareness and strength of character necessary to assure healthy relationships with all who share their world.

At fall camp students catch, cut, cook and dry fish. They pick berries and they learn the use of different

plants. They hunt seal. They also learn hunting and boating safety. What don't they know about keeping themselves alive during freeze up? And what are the tools and the knowledge they need to find food during the winter? How do they use their time in one season to get ready for the next?

The camp is really a great academic setting because we (parents and teachers) can make sure that the students go to bed and get up at a certain time, eat well, get plenty of fresh air and exercise—and they don't watch TV. We don't have that kind of influence back in the village. What kind of

learning environment can overcome lack of sleep, sugar highs and lows and the brain numbing overdose of TV?

The interdependence of all is very apparent at camp. All must help set up tents or we won't have shelter. All must help with catching and cleaning fish or we don't eat. All must strive to get along because we live close, very close and any conflict affects everyone. Those from strong families grow up with these values. But what of those who do not have that guidance? And how do we bring young people to respect all that makes up their world when their virtual world challenges them to "blow away" anything that crosses their path?

We need to move on. Fall camp is not enough. Subsistence skills are for all year long; they must be a part of our year-long curriculum. Each session presents particular challenges to staying alive. Each session presents the means for doing so.

Using funds from the GEAR-UP program, Alakanuk has assembled a team to create a middle school curriculum that will have its focus on traditional and subsistence activities. An Elder along with two village residents who just completed their student teaching are working with the staff to design units and lessons that align the academic program to the knowledge and skills required for each season. The program depends upon community members to provide key elements for the core of our instruction. It returns the responsibility of education to those who traditionally held it. Elders will interact with students daily.

As with the camp, the activities of the season become the science and social studies. The practices passed on by the Elders and community members become the focus of research and



Students preparing to cook fish for dinner.



Students cutting fish.

analysis using the tools and methods of modern science. And, as with camp, the traditional wisdom will find verification under the microscope or be supported by data gathered from the internet. At winter camp stories of past adventures will be shared in tents late at night. When the students return to the village, stories of their new adventures will be written down to share with e-mail buddies far away. Such is the world our students belong to—a world that spans many millennia.

We can meet the goal of students becoming proficient in subsistence skills. We can because they are interested and they have good teachers. We can do a better job of providing reading and writing skills because they will be reading and writing about things of interest to them—and they have good teachers. But perhaps the most exciting thing about this approach is that we can teach traditional values in the context that generated them. Skills may sustain the individual but it is the understanding of and the respect for the relationship of people to each other and to the world around them that sustain a people. Can we teach understanding and respect? Do we dare not to?

As exciting and beneficial as the culture camp has been, it is just a beginning—the opening of a door to pathways we need to pursue. ☆

*Editor's note: In the previous issue of Sharing Our Pathways, the Yup'ik Region was mistakenly labeled "Iñupiaq." For this we offer our apologies.*

# Southeast Region

by Andy Hope

**Cultivate**, v. To improve and develop by education or training (a person, his mind, manners, facilities); to refine, to culture.

**Nurture**, trans. To foster, cherish.

(as defined from the Compact Oxford English Dictionary, New Edition)

Alaska tribes and Native educators should take the lead in confronting the challenge of cultivating and nurturing indigenous Alaska Native knowledge. There are many resources that tribes and educators can draw upon in addressing this challenge.

One approach would be to begin a substantive effort to develop comprehensive education policies. Tribes and educators could begin by addressing language, culture, research and publications policies. In drafting such policies, the following tools are readily available: *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*, *Guidelines for Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers for Alaska's Schools*, *Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge* (see a related article in this issue on these guidelines,) the *AFN Research Policy*, Alaska Native educator associations, the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative and the Consortium for Alaska Native Higher Education.

Tribes and educators can and should foster the dissemination of Alaska indigenous knowledge and work to support Native and non-Native educators who are incorporating indigenous knowledge into the curricula of schools. Too often in the past, educators have been discouraged from developing curricula that reflect indigenous values because there wasn't an adequate support structure to make sure it was being done properly. Developing tribal education policies will create and promote a healthy learning environment for our communities.

For the long term, tribal colleges will be the lead institutions for the ongoing development of Alaska indigenous knowledge. The development of tribal colleges is critical to this effort. Each of us, as tribal members, can contribute to the effort to develop education policies and tribal colleges. Developing explicit education policies and tribal colleges would help ensure the de-politicization of education programs and systems in our communities.

There are Alaska Native educator groups in virtually every region of Alaska now. Members of these groups are available to assist tribes in their efforts to construct culturally-responsive education policies. The Consortium for Alaska Native Higher Education (CANHE) has been working for more than two years to develop tribal colleges in Alaska and recently began the process of formally organizing to advocate for tribal colleges on a statewide basis. Members of CANHE will also be available to assist tribes with education policymaking. Tribal colleges will be the proper institutions to carry forward the effort to ensure that Alaska indigenous knowledge continues to flourish for future generations. ☆

# Aleut/Alutiiq Region: Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights

by Gordon L. Pullar, Director, UAF Department of Native and Rural Development

Keynote Address to the Native Educator's Conference, February 1, 2000, Anchorage, Alaska

My thanks to Lolly Carpluk and other conference organizers for inviting me to be here tonight. And my special thanks to Teri Schneider for her kind introduction.

On a sad day such as today I don't think I could launch into a speech before offering my sincere respect to the memory of Morris Thompson, who we all lost yesterday. I had the honor of serving with Morrie on the AFN board for several years and he was always someone I looked up to and learned from. He was a strong leader, a successful manager and a dedicated advocate for Native people. Above all, however, he was a genuinely kind and caring person. We all owe him a debt of gratitude. We'll miss him.

Being asked to speak here tonight takes me back a few years ago when my friend Harold Napoleon asked me to speak at the AFN Youth/Elders Conference that he was coordinating. I did my presentation and it seemed to go okay and as I stepped down from the podium I saw that Harold was waiting for me with a smile on his face. "You weren't as boring as everyone said you were going to be," he said. So having reached that lofty plateau once, I hope to do it again tonight and not be as boring as everyone said I was going to be.

I will begin with a disclaimer. That disclaimer is that I'm not an expert. I don't believe in experts. In fact, a sure way for someone to draw my suspicion and distrust is to claim to be an expert or to brag that he or she knows "all there is to know" about any topic. I am, however, a lifelong student. I try to observe, listen and learn. And as any good student will tell you, "the

more you learn the more you realize you don't know." So the topic tonight is one I hope to continue to learn more about, that I am trying to learn about and one that I'm sure many of you have more knowledge about than I do. But you're not going to escape that easily. I have developed some thoughts that I will share with you.

Over the past few years we often hear the terms intellectual property rights and cultural property rights with only some vague notion of what they might mean. However, the meanings are often or even usually different from person to person and country to country. And the meanings become even more diverse among indigenous peoples.

Intellectual property is a common term within the American mainstream culture. We have all heard of and, to some degree or another, are familiar with patents, copyrights and trademarks. All of these things are usually associated with litigation and long court battles. There seems to be no end to what people will dispute when it comes to these concepts. Just this week, for example, television personality Rosie O'Donnell was in the news for filing litigation against a Portland, Oregon radio station for using the name "Rosie" in its ads. The name was being used in the context of Portland being known as the City of Roses.

The concept of cultural property rights among indigenous peoples has different connotations than the charge

of the misuse of Rosie's name implies. Cultural property rights may refer to one's inner identity. It is about ancestors and ways of doing, saying and knowing things. It is about culture and everyone on earth is entitled to a culture. It is about the past, the present and the future. It is about life.

Over the past couple decades, there have been some issues of cultural property rights that have emerged in my home area of Kodiak Island that I have been involved with. One was the issue of the repatriation of human remains. Skeletons representing over a thousand people were taken from Kodiak Island during the 1930s and stored in the Smithsonian Institution. The reason given for not returning them was that they were the property of, that is they belonged to, all the people of the United States. It was a sad scenario when the remains of ancestors were considered "property." In fact, in one letter from the Smithsonian, it was stated that the remains could not be returned because the Smithsonian had a responsibility to care for them on behalf of all American citizens, not just "discrete interest groups." They were returned and reburied in the Fall of 1991 but only after considerable legal wrangling and an act of Congress. It is difficult even now to think of those ancestral remains as property. The government identified them as property, but Native people cannot usually make that kind of connection. They just know they have a responsibility to return the remains of their ancestors to their intended resting places. In virtually all documents advocating for cultural property rights,

the issue of repatriation of human remains is mentioned. But sometimes the meaning of the word property is different from one culture to another.

But it is not just lawyers and government bureaucrats that invoke legalese into such a sacred concept as a people's cultural heritage. Indigenous peoples, as well, tend to think of these property rights in a legal sense. But in today's world there is no choice. We often have to resort to the legal and political arenas to preserve and protect our birthrights. In the arena of international law and indigenous rights there are a few instruments that have made cases for indigenous cultural property rights in one form or another. For example:

**International Labour  
Organization Convention  
Number 169, Article 2 (b)  
(passed in 1989):**

Governments shall have the responsibility for developing, with the participation of the peoples concerned, coordinated and systematic action to protect the rights of these peoples and to guarantee respect for their integrity. Such action shall include measures for promoting the full realization of the social, economic and cultural rights of these peoples with respect for their social and cultural identity, their customs and traditions and their institutions.

United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which passed out of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations in 1994 and is now working its way through the UN hierarchy says in:

**UN Draft, Article 8:**

Indigenous peoples have the collective and individual right to maintain and develop their distinct identities and characteristics, including the right to identify themselves as indigenous and be recognized as such.

**UN Draft, Article 12:**

Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artifacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature, as well as the right to the restitution of cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs."

**UN Draft, Article 13:**

Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practice, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of human remains.

**UN Draft, Article 14:**

Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

**UN Draft, Article 24:**

Indigenous people have the right to their traditional medicines and health practices, including the right to the protection of vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals.

**UN Draft, Article 29:**

Indigenous peoples are entitled to the recognition of the full owner-

ship, control and protection of their cultural and intellectual property. They have the right to special measures to control, develop and protect their sciences, technologies and cultural manifestations, including human and other genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs and visual and performing arts.

I know that many of you are familiar with the Mataatua Declaration on Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights of Indigenous Peoples passed by indigenous people in New Zealand in 1993. One recommendation in this declaration that I see as crucial is that indigenous people should define for themselves their own intellectual and cultural property.

How do we "define for ourselves?" And what are cultural property rights to us? How should we exercise those rights? As the Nike slogan goes, "Just do it!"

I believe, for example, that we should not allow outsiders to define who we are. This has been going on for 200 years in Alaska and has caused considerable confusion. In my area of Kodiak Island, the Russian fur traders that arrived in the late 18th century called the Sugpiat the indigenous people living there (Aleuts) just as they had done to the Unangan in the Aleutian Islands. They did this because of the similarities they observed between both the Unangan of the Aleutian Islands and the Sugpiat of Kodiak Island to a coastal indigenous group on the Kamchatka Peninsula.

The people on Kodiak began using this term in their own language, the result being the word "Alutiiq." The name Alutiiq has had a revival and has grown in popularity in recent years, mostly as a way for the Sugpiat to distinguish themselves from the Aleuts of the Aleutian Island who have a different culture and language.

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But Alutiiq is a good term because a conscious decision was made by the people to use it.

As if things weren't complicated enough, enter the anthropologists who decided to call the Sugpiat "Pacific Eskimo" or even "Pacific Yup'ik" because of the close linguistic similarities with Yup'ik people. While virtually no Alutiiqs use this term, anthropologists insisted for quite a number of years that they were correct.

I don't believe there is anything wrong with people from Kodiak Island calling themselves Aleuts and, because it has been in use for so many generations, it may not be likely that a return will be made to Sugpiat. But it should be the responsibility of the people to learn the history of these terms so they can make an informed choice. But whatever terms are used they are, to me, cultural property. As

cultural property, there are responsibilities and duties attached. Learning those responsibilities and duties is where we find ourselves today. There are a number of important and exciting projects going on today that are directly addressing and defining those responsibilities and duties.

Dr. Erica-Irene Daes, the chairperson-rapporteur of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations said in 1995 to the 47th session for the Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities: "To be effective, the protection of indigenous peoples' heritage should be based broadly on the principle of self-determination, which includes the right and the duty of indigenous peoples to develop their own cultures, knowledge systems and forms of social organization."

I would like to emphasize some parts of Madame Daes' statement. She

said, "the right and the duty of indigenous peoples to develop their own cultures, knowledge systems and forms of social organization." She made it a point to mention the principle of self-determination which is crucial to all we do as Alaska Native people and communities. Without exercising self-determination, Native peoples cannot exercise their rights or their duties and cannot define for themselves what their cultural and intellectual property is. But before we can make such definitions we must search for the questions. As Thurber said, "It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers." Thank you very much and I hope I wasn't as boring as everyone said I was going to be.

*Copies of some of the documents referred to by Dr. Pullar can be viewed on the Alaska Native Knowledge Network website at: <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/rights.html> ✧*

## Athabascan Region

by Kathy Swartz

### Mapping Project

The Cultural Heritage and Education Institute (CHEI) has been a partner with the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative for the past four years. Close collaboration between AKRSI, CHEI, Minto community members, the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) and the Denali Foundation has developed several different projects which promote an inter-generational exchange of information among Elders and youth and contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage in the Minto Flats. These projects include the Athabascan Place Names Mapping Project, the Denali Foundation "Denali on the Road" Snow Science Workshop and an oral history project. In 1999, CHEI also organized a visit to the Fort Knox Gold Mine by the Minto students and Elders to learn about modern gold mining techniques.

This project is the beginning of a cultural atlas that will preserve the histories, stories and other information about the traditional lands of the Minto Athabascans. The project will create an interactive web-based map and CD-ROM of the Minto Flats area with Athabascan and English labels, links to stories, photos and audio clips. The map is being developed by Minto students based on information gathered with Minto Elders. The project is being coordinated by Bill Pfisterer and Paula Elmes is the ANKN graphic artist.

In 1998 and 1999, Minto students traveled with Elders and project staff



to different sites in the Minto Flats to record information. In 1998, there was a field trip to three historical sites: Cache, Graveyard and Four Cabins. During this trip the students were given a short course in photography and approximately 200 photos were taken. Students were taught interviewing techniques and how to use a tape recorder and microphone. In August 1999, there was another field trip by boat to Jack Hill #1 and #2 gravesites and the Goldstream cemetery with eight Minto Elders, eight Minto high school students and archeologist Carol Galvin. The trip focused on the identification of traditional subsistence and historic campsites and identification of old gravesites. During this school year, thirteen students have volunteered their time to compile the information that has been gathered and prepare an interactive website.

### *Denali Foundation, "Denali on the Road," Snow Science Workshop*

In early 1999, Patty Crow of the Denali Foundation conducted a Snow Science Workshop in Minto. The workshop was made possible through the support and participation of local Elders, Deanna Couch, the junior high science and math teacher and 20 junior high students.

The Snow Science Workshop was four days. The first two days of the workshop involved a combination of lecture and lab activities that provided students with background knowledge in Western science methods of studying snow and glaciers. Snow was introduced in the context of the hydrologic cycle, crystal formation and properties of snow. Students learned how to identify a variety of snow crystals and how to use aerial photographs, satellite images and topographic maps to observe glaciers.

The third day took place at Ptarmigan Hill, approximately 20 miles east of Minto. Elders shared their knowl-

edge with students for the first half of the day. The first activity they did together was to create a comfortable place to talk and eat by placing "greens" or spruce boughs on the snow in a circle. Then, two Elders showed the students how to make fire starter from dry spruce shavings and soon a fire was burning, snow was melted to make tea, snacks and stories were enjoyed by all. After spending time together in the circle, an Elder with the boys built an emergency shelter with spruce boughs while others showed the girls how to make ptarmigan snares.

The second half of this day was focused on Western science methods of observing snow. Students collected measurements of density, depth, temperature, snow crystals and identified layers within the snowpack. During the final day, students made correlations between traditional knowledge learned from the Elders and the physical properties of snow as understood by Western science.

During the workshop, students and Elders had a positive learning and teaching experience. Students were able to discover how certain traditional knowledge and Western science ideas coalesce. This shared knowledge has been incorporated into the Snow Science curriculum to pass on to future students for years to come.

### *Making Oral History Materials available in Minto*

The Oral History Program at UAF's Rasmuson Library is working on a project to locate, document, copy and annotate materials related to Minto and Lower Tanana Athabascans. The final products will include a complete and annotated list of material holdings at UAF. Copies of these materials will also be available at the Minto school with appropriate release agreements available. For audio and video recordings, the project has contracted with Minto residents and local lan-

guage specialists to review the information. Bill Schneider oversees the project as curator of oral history and David Krupa, research associate, is the project director. Jarrod Decker, research technician, and Lissa Robertson, student assistant, are compiling, collating and annotating UAF materials. Ken Charlie and Richard Frank are working as independent contractors to review audio recordings. To date, the project has duplicated and begun annotation for the following: 250 historic photographs, 75 audio recordings, 6 video recordings, 120 journal articles, 350 newspaper articles, 125 audio recordings, 65 pieces of material culture, 40 artifacts from the University of Alaska Museum and 50 audio recordings from the James Kari collection.

Project staff have made several trips to Minto to discuss the project with the Minto Village Council members and Elders. Additional trips are planned. The staff will provide a progress report to the community and seek new participants to help with review of the material. A photo album containing original photos will be left at the Minto Lodge with a log identifying people and places. The development of this annotated list will make it much easier for the public to access materials at UAF and in Minto. This project is a small step towards intellectual repatriation that is crucial, timely and may serve as a model for similar efforts throughout Alaska.

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# AISES Corner

by Claudette Bradley

On January 20–22, the third Annual Interior AISES Science Fair was held in Fairbanks.

## Grand Prize Winners:

- Jordonna Esmailka and Krista Workman, eighth grade from Shageluk. Project: *Air Pollution & Caribou Food—Lichen*
- Sonta Hamilton and Amber John, ninth grade from Shageluk. Project: *Modern & Native Medicinal Teas for the Common Cold*
- Edwin Starr, eighth grade from Tanana. Project: *The Moon*

## Honorable Mention

- Dwayne Benjamin, eleventh grade from Shageluk. Project: *Traditional Athabaskan Traps*

## Statewide AISES Science Fair

On January 31, the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative held the first Statewide AISES Science Fair at Birchwood Lodge outside of Anchor-

age. Thirty-five students entered twenty-five projects. They came from villages throughout Alaska.

The projects were judged by six Elders and three scientists. Elders evaluated projects on their usefulness to the Alaska Native culture, village lifestyles and Alaska Native corporations' vested interests. The scientists evaluated the scientific method and research design.

We deeply appreciate the work of the Elders, who currently live in Anchorage: Drafin Buck Delkettie of Iliamna, Anatoli Lekanof of St. George, Anna Willis of Red Devil, Shirley Kendall of Hoonah, Art Jones of Kotzebue and Pauline Hathaway of Deering. They studied each project, interviewed the students and provided encouragement for their work.

The following students were the grand prize winners and will travel

to St. Paul, Minnesota March 30 to enter their projects in the AISES National Science Fair.

## Grand Prize Winners

- Zena Merculief and Curtis Melovidov from St. Paul. Project: *Which Oil Produces the Most Energy: Motor Oil, Cooking Oil or Seal Oil?*
- Jolene Cleveland from Selawik. Project: *Under Ice Fishing*
- Nicole Thomas from Nome. Project: *Science of Seal Oil*
- Roberta Murphy and Robert Foster from Noorvik. Project: *The Population Density of Shrews and Voles*
- Crystal Gross from Barrow. Project: *Antimicrobial Effect of Arctic Plants*
- Desiree Merculief from St. George. Project: *What is the Largest Flatfish?*
- Amber Howarth from Noatak. Project: *Caribou Uses*
- Patrick Schneider from Kodiak. Project: *Oil Discovered!*

## Honorable Mention

- Dwayne Benjamin from Shageluk. Project: *Traditional Athabaskan Traps* ☆

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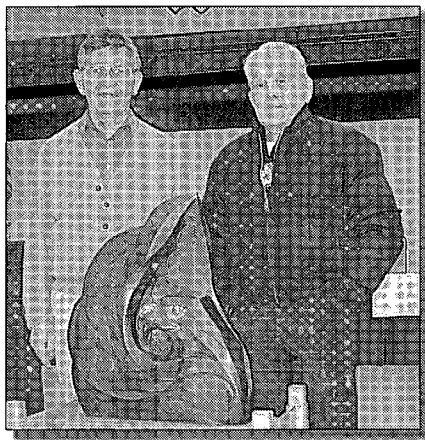
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# Sharing Our Pathways



Dennis Demmert and Jim Walton at the recent Native Education Summit held in Juneau. They are standing next to a statue Jim brought back with him from New Mexico. The statue, "Rainbow Warrior" by Cloud Eagle, symbolizes the unity of all creation.

## Report On Native Education Summit

By Frank Hill, Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley, Ray Barnhardt, Andy Hope and Merritt Helfferich

On March 1–3, 2000, over 50 leaders in Native education from across the state gathered in Juneau for a Native Education Summit sponsored by the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative in cooperation with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development and the Alaska Federation of Natives. A dedicated group of Elders, Native educators and others actively involved in Native education initiatives associated with the Alaska RSI spent three days reviewing current issues impacting schools in Alaska.

Given the many new state mandates, school reform initiatives and on-going challenges that school districts are grappling with as we enter a new millennium, it seemed an opportune time to step back and reflect on where we are and where we want to go with Native education. The focus of the summit was to take a look at how education programs and services can best be positioned to address the long-term needs of Native communities in this time of limited resources. We were particularly interested in examining ways in which the Alaska Department of Education, the University of Alaska and rural communities and school districts can work more

closely together in the provision of basic education services, as well as in staff development, curriculum enhancement, collaborative research and technical assistance. Reports and discussions focused on the following current statewide programs and initiatives:

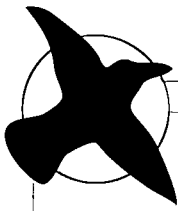
- Alaska Quality Schools Initiative/ Legislative Mandates—Rick Cross.
- Alaska Native Student Learning Action Plan—Bernice Tetpon.
- Alaska Federation of Natives Education Initiatives—Frank Hill.
- Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools — Ray Barnhardt.

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- Alaska Onward to Excellence Case Studies—Ray Barnhardt and Oscar Kawagley.
- Rural Educator Preparation Partnership (REPP)—John Weise.
- Native Administrators for Rural Alaska—Frank Hill and NARA graduates.
- Consortium for Alaska Native Higher Education—Merritt Helfferich.
- APU/RANA Native Teacher Education Program—Christina Reagle.
- Citizens for the Educational Advancement of Alaska's Children—Willie Kasayulie

In addition to the above presentations, there were reports on many exciting regional curriculum development and language revitalization initiatives from around the state. Following status reports on the various initiatives, the participants turned their attention to developing draft "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.

### *Group 1: Develop an Alaska Native Education Action Plan for 2000*

This group reviewed the issues that were raised in the summit (as well as the 1999 Leadership Retreat recommendations) and developed a preliminary outline of where we would like to be with Native education in Alaska by the year 2010 and the steps that will be taken to get us there. Recommendations of this group included:

- Local cultural values shall be the preamble to all curriculum documents and instructional programs.
- Community members and culture bearers must greet and welcome new teaching staff and share local values and traditions.
- School districts must support Native educators to participate in the

Bilingual and Multicultural Education Equity Conference (BMEEC) and the Native Educators' Conference (NEC).

- Native educators should join their regional Native educators' association.
- Native corporations should support actions/activities and development of their regional Native educators' associations.
- Encourage local school boards and administrators to anticipate worst-case scenarios with regards to the state exam. A local plan must be established.
- All secondary subject areas must focus on mastery of academic English.
- Develop alternatives (beyond remedial) to enhance academic learning.
- Develop peer tutors to work with students who do not pass the test.
- Develop local consortia to address FAS/FAE student services.
- Develop alternate assessment techniques that address the same skills but in culturally appropriate ways.
- Align all formal schooling from early childhood: preschool through high school.
- Connect advocacy groups of language immersion with Native educators' associations.
- Provide information to local parent advisory groups regarding ways to teach and fund indigenous languages and academic English.
- Set up a network for immersion schools for everyone.
- Incorporate local culture and heritage throughout the curriculum, interwoven with existing subjects.
- Incorporate *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools* into all district curriculum review processes. Hold districts accountable for this integration.
- Incorporate the social and spiritual meaning of arts as well as the practical applications.

- Support the corrected version of the teacher certification process being proposed to legislators.
- Recognize aides with certification, increased pay and professional development opportunities.
- Incorporate environmental studies as they relate to the use of technology.
- Utilize AKRSI's *Preparing Culturally-Responsive Teachers for Alaska's Schools* as a part of the state-mandated standards for educators (incorporate it into the evaluation process.)
- Take steps to increase the hire of certified Native teachers.
- Educate the community at large: What is meant by local control?.
- Provide local advisory school boards control over the hire of new teachers in their community.
- Revise local teacher hiring practices to include local interviews.
- Promote cadet teaching programs.

### Group 2: Develop an Action Plan for Native Teacher Preparation

This group was convened to address issues associated with the preparation of Native teachers for schools in Alaska and to develop a statewide action plan for a coordinated effort to double the number of Native educators by 2005. Recommendations of this group included:

- Teacher preparation "internships" should be completed through a performance assessment process based on the cultural standards for teachers and the *Guidelines for Preparing Culturally-Responsive Teachers for Alaska's Schools* so that a candidate can demonstrate their proficiency at any time that they have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills to do so (including during, or even before, their undergraduate studies.)
- The director of the Rural Educator Preparation Partnership should convene representatives of the

- Native educator associations by audioconference on a monthly basis to provide guidance on all Native teacher education issues.
- Provide incentives for school districts to implement cultural orientation programs for new teachers as part of their annual inservice plan submitted to EED. The orientation program should include an extended camp experience and an "Adopt-a-Teacher" program.
- 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*.
- 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.
- All teacher preparation programs should fully incorporate the *Guidelines for Preparing Culturally-Responsive Teachers for Alaska's Schools* and prepare teachers who are equipped to implement the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools*.
- The *Guidelines for Preparing Culturally-Responsive Teachers for Alaska's Schools* and the cultural standards for educators should serve as the basis for the review and approval of courses to be used to meet the state multicultural education and Alaska studies requirements.
- The state school designator criteria should include an assessment of the extent to which the ethnic composition of a schools' professional staff is proportional to the ethnic composition of the students being served and if they are dis-

proportional, the school improvement plan should indicate how such a balance will be achieved.

- The Alaska Native Knowledge Network will prepare an online database listing all qualified Native teacher and administrator candidates as identified by the respective Native educator association.
- School district career ladder programs should be established to provide incentives and support for aides and associate teachers who are aspiring to be licensed teachers. The AFN Goals 2000 funding should be used to provide additional incentives to the districts.
- Provide an option for school districts to employ teacher interns to serve as classroom teachers during their internship year under the supervision of a mentor teacher.
- All Native organizations, including tribal councils and Native educator associations, should provide assistance and a supportive environment for qualified Native educators seeking employment.
- School boards and districts should take a proactive posture toward local hire of teachers, including financial incentives and providing an induction program for those new to teaching.
- The University of Alaska should reinstate experienced rural faculty at all of the rural campuses to provide student support, instruction and supervision for REPP and all other rural teacher education candidates.
- Native corporations should take a proactive role in recruitment and financial support for Native teacher education students.
- Insure strong Native representation on all professional faculty associated with teacher and administrator preparation programs in Alaska.
- Assist schools designated as low-

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performing in the development of school improvement plans consistent with the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools*.

- Establish a regular extended PRAXIS Institute to help prepare students for the PRAXIS I exam.
- Foster close collaboration between all public and private institutions involved in preparing teachers and administrators for Alaska schools.
- Secure financial support and recognition for the regional Native Educator Associations.
- Enlist the support of school counselors, NEA-Alaska and Native educator associations to implement "Future Teacher Clubs" in all schools in Alaska.

### Group 3: Develop an Action Plan for Strengthening the Role of Tribal Colleges/CANHE

This group reviewed the current status of the regional tribal college initiatives and outlined ways to strengthen the role of the Consortium for Alaska Native Higher Education (CANHE) in bringing Alaska Native educational expertise to bear on the issues identified at the summit. Recommendations of this group included:

- Make a presentation on tribal colleges to the University of Alaska Board of Regents advocating the

benefits of the Iisagvik/University of Alaska Fairbanks memorandum of agreement. Utilize the material in the Native educator's presentation showing the lack of duplication of effort between UA and tribal colleges and demonstrating benefits by use of data showing the success of Natives in tribal colleges.

- Call on the University of Alaska, Alaska Pacific University and Sheldon Jackson College to adopt a policy supporting the development of tribal colleges in Alaska and offering provisions of assistance to the new colleges.
- Call on the Alaska Intertribal Council (AITC), Alaska Federation of Natives, Alaska Native Health Board, the tribes, Alaska Native Brotherhood/Alaska Native Sisterhood (ANB/ANS) and other Native organizations to support the development of tribal colleges and urge them to express that support to the Alaska congressional delegation.
- Seek passage of amendments to the Tribally-Controlled Community College and University Assistance Act which designate Alaska as a special case.
- Tribal college trustees and staff should meet with tribal councils and call on clan leaders to partici-

pate in such presentations to enlist the councils in college planning.

- CANHE should, with the help of the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, publish a brochure on tribal colleges outlining CANHE goals and tasks.
- CANHE should consider a tribally-established college accreditation process.
- Call on Native educators associations, REPP and CANHE member institutions to develop a collaborative teacher training program that incorporates the cultural standards and *Guidelines for Preparing Culturally-Responsive Teachers for Alaska's Schools* and the *Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge*.
- Develop transition programs to minimize the barriers between high school and college.
- Develop a logo for CANHE (perhaps featuring an iceberg or seal-skin.)
- Create and implement an inter-regional Elders exchange program.
- Identify and tap the human resources and funding to facilitate tribal college development.
- Develop and maintain a body of data on Alaska Native higher education enrollment, dropout and graduation.
- Organize regional Native education meetings to implement the Alaska Native Education Summit recommendations.

The above recommendations can serve as the basis for developing more detailed action plans in each of the three focal areas listed. We wish to express appreciation to all the participants in the Native Education Summit for contributing their valuable time and insights to this effort. We invite everyone with an interest in these issues to offer ideas and suggestions for how the action plans can be further strengthened so that we can move into the millennium with a bright future for education in rural Alaska. ☆

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# What Is This Thing Called "Love"?

Many books and articles have been written on the subject of love, however, I would like to attempt to explain it from the viewpoint of one Yupiaq, myself. Ellam Yua (Spirit of the Universe, God) is the giver of love, the light of intelligence and

by Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley  
understanding. Love allows one to do almost anything for something held dear in the heart. It is a powerful emotion which is unconditional. Based on this, I can say that love is a sense of belonging and being in touch with something that is good and beautiful, thus deserving care and harmony.

It then behooves Alaska Native people to instill this sense of love in education, in cultural camps and in everyday life. We want our students to be connected to order, to the patterns and symmetries of this universe. We want them to be able to see the good and the beautiful in their own place. This bonding with place will allow the Native people to do things that will not harm that place, to do things to rebuild, reclaim, regenerate and rehabilitate that place where necessary. They, in essence, will be thinking in terms of the happiness and satisfaction of the Seventh Generation. When some of these Native people become scientists and technologists, they will do things that make them happy as they are immersed in the beauty of the place in which they live. This love of place is sometimes lacking in modern scientists and technologists who are often trained to operate without a heart, such as the Tinman in the *The Wizard of Oz*. Too often scientists and technologists are expected to use only the brain without giving due consideration to the heart. We, as Alaska Native people, must learn to love oneself, love one another (*kenkurauulluta*), and above all relearn to love place. ☆

## "Observing Locally, Connecting Globally" Summer Institute for Educators July 31-Aug 11, 2000

Observing Locally, Connecting Globally is a longterm NSF-funded science education project based at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. We invite you to participate in our first institute to be held at UAF July 31 to August 11. Participants will receive training in GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment), current best practices in science education and the integration of local and traditional knowledge into environmental studies.

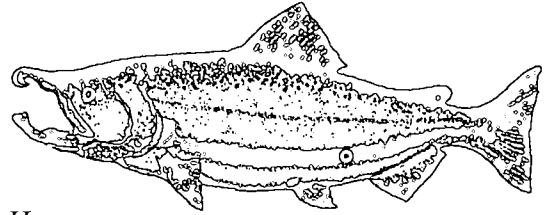
The goal of this program is to support and enhance global change research generated by grades 5–12 doing local investigations in classrooms across Alaska. It will be supported by the integration of Native and locally-relevant knowledge and community and university scientists. Anyone working with grades 5–12 is welcome. We are encouraging teams of educators from rural Alaska and those working with a large number of Native students.

Cost: \$75 (subsidized by the National Science Foundation)  
Travel assistance and per diem available on an application basis  
Credit: 3 credits, NRM 595 or ED 595  
Instructors: Dr. Elena Sparrow, Dr. Leslie Gordon, Sidney Stephens.

Fill out the application and return by May 1, 2000 (It can be found at <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/olcg>.) Please return application to:

Elena Sparrow (907) 474-7699 FAX  
University of Alaska Fairbanks (907) 474-6461  
303 O'Neill Building email: [ffeb@uaf.edu](mailto:ffeb@uaf.edu) ☆  
PO Box 757200  
Fairbanks, AK 99775-7200

# Southeast Region: I am Salmon Action Plans



by Xaastanch Andy Hope

The *I am Salmon* staff development workshop held in Juneau, March 17–18 was a success. The teams produced action plans for the time period, March 17–August 31. These action plans will be refined and adjusted over the next several months.

Participants were Angie Lunda and Dianna Saiz with Floyd Dryden Middle School; Phil Miscovich, Sally Kookesh and Colby Root with Angoon School; Lianna Young, Nancy Douglas, Peggy Cowan and Henry Hopkins with the Juneau School District; Arnold Booth and Marie Olson from the Southeast Alaska Native Rural Education Consortium (SEANREC) Elders Council; Nora Dauenhauer and Richard Dauenhauer with Tlingit Readers; Michael Travis, an independent contractor and Andy Hope, Southeast regional coordinator, AKRSI.

## Angoon Action Plan

### The Angoon team will:

- Arrange a three-day technology staff development workshop in Angoon, with Henry Hopkins of the Juneau School District as facilitator. Chatham School District will fund Henry's travel from AKRSI MOA funds. This workshop should take place before early May. The workshop should include presentations on the Native plant multimedia project and website development training. The Angoon team will invite Lydia George (SEANREC Elders Council), Jimmy George, Mary Jean Duncan and Shgen George to participate, as well as any other interested teachers and the Chatham District technology coordinator.
- Participate in a staff development

academy on the cultural standards. This academy is tentatively scheduled for August 21–22 in Juneau and will be sponsored by the Juneau School District. Credit for this academy should be jointly provided by the Southeast Alaska Tribal College and Alaska Pacific University.

- Participate in the Rural Education Academy in Fairbanks, June 2–3, 2000. Andy Hope and Henry Hopkins will coordinate a presentation on the *I am Salmon* project.
- Participate in *I am Salmon* presentations in Seattle in July in conjunction with the World Music and Dance Festival.
- Coordinate with the Angoon Culture Camp in planning summer educational opportunities.
- Coordinate with the Juneau School District to ensure that teachers from Angoon participate in the Tlingit Language Adult Immersion Camp scheduled for Klukwan in July.
- The Angoon School has a Japanese intern this spring. The Angoon team will request the intern's assistance in establishing communications with the *I am Salmon* teams in Japan.

## Juneau Action Plan

### Angie Lunda will:

- Coordinate production of 3-D topographic maps of the Juneau area.
- Utilize resources such as the *Haa*

*Aanee* book to document Native place names and traditional land uses in the Juneau area.

- Organize field trips to streams in the vicinity of Floyd Dryden School in the Mendenhall Valley as part of her stream ecology unit this spring. Students will participate in water quality testing, fish camp lessons and write comparison/contrast essays.
- Work with the Juneau School District Tlingit Language Seminar group to integrate Tlingit words and phrases into the stream ecology unit.

### Dianna Saiz will:

- Develop a language arts production, a shadow theater performance that will utilize Tlingit language. She will consult with playwright-producer David Hunsaker on shadow theatre production techniques.
- Utilize the partnership salmon story to produce a salmon poetry anthology.

Nancy Douglas and Lianna Young will assist Angie in integrating fish camp curriculum into Angie's classroom. Angie Lunda/Dianna Saiz/Lianna Young will develop a quilt project in which students produce and exchange salmon quilt squares.

## Group Recommendations

Michael Travis and Henry Hopkins will develop an *I am Salmon* Southeast Alaska website. How about using the term Raven Creator Bioregion instead of Southeast Alaska? Or will



that be perceived as an act of secession? The website will be housed in the UAS server at the Auke Lake Campus in Juneau.

Nora Dauenhauer will draft a proposal to transcribe and translate Tlingit language tape recordings of the late Forrest DeWitt, Sr., a member of the Aak'w Kwáan, (traditional tribe of the Juneau area) L'éneidi (Raven moiety) clan.

Micheal Travis will develop an electronic version of the *Tlingit Math Book*.

Andy Hope will arrange for a short-term contract with Jimmy George, Jr. for technical support for the *I am Salmon* teams for developing Tlingit language software.

It is recommended that each team purchase a high quality digital camera for use in producing multimedia presentations. It is recommended that Elders be compensated \$150 per day, with a minimum honorarium of \$75 for partial days.

## Some Good Books

- *Igniting the Sparkle: An Indigenous Science Education Model* by Gregory A. Cajete
- *Earth Education: A New Beginning* by Steve Van Matre
- *Village Science and Village Science Teacher's Edition* by Alan Dick
- *Understanding By Design and the Understanding by Design Handbook* by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe

Those interested in obtaining copies of the *Village Science* books should contact Dixie Dayo at [fndmd1@uaf.edu](mailto:fndmd1@uaf.edu)

The *One Reel Wild Salmon* website is now online in draft form. The URL is [www.onereel.org/salmon](http://www.onereel.org/salmon). I have been in contact with representatives of Carcross School in Carcross, Yukon and Yupiit School District. I anticipate that teachers from those districts will be forming *I am Salmon* teams in the near future. ☆

# Aleut/Alutiig Region Kodiak Alutiig Cultural Values

We are the descendants of the Sugpiak, the Real People. Understanding our environment and events that have shaped our lives and created the culture of our ancestors is vital for our children's cultural survival. The history of our People and our place in the world is a part of who we are today. Kodiak Alutiig must learn and pass on to younger generations our understanding of our natural world: the sky, land, water and the animals. As we meet the challenge of living in the 21st century, we must continue to live in honor of those things we value:

Our Elders



Our heritage language



Family and the kinship of our ancestors and living relatives

Ties to our homeland

A subsistence lifestyle, respectful of and sustained by the natural world

Traditional arts, skills and ingenuity

Faith and a spiritual life, from ancestral beliefs to the diverse faiths of today

Sharing: we welcome everyone



Sense of humor

Learning by doing, observing and listening

Stewardship of the animals, land, sky and waters



Trust

Our people: we are responsible for each other and ourselves

Respect for self, others and our environment is inherent in all of these values.

NATIVE EDUCATORS OF THE ALUTIIG REGION ◦ ALUTIIG ELDER'S COUNCIL  
THE ALUTIIG ACADEMY OF ELDERS ☆

# Iñupiaq Region: Traditional Methods of Healing & Medicines for Science Fair Projects

by Elmer Misrak Jackson

The Iñupiaq people living in the Arctic have knowledge of healing utilizing natural products from the land and waters. Plants and other natural products are used in prepared remedies that have healing effects on the human body. Students can research the remedies used in traditional medicine and healing for science fair projects. Elders, tribal doctors and community health practitioners have knowledge of plants and animal remedies that are used for healthy living. The following is some background information on ways Iñupiat have utilized plants and parts of animals for medicines and healing.

In the springtime, willow leaves (*sura*) are harvested and preserved in seal oil for food. *Sura's* high Vitamin C content hastens the healing process. *Sura*, mixed with seal or whale oil and a small amount of sugar, complements many Native foods. Crushed *sura* leaves are applied to wasp or hornet stings. This stops the swelling and removes the poison.

Bear fat and other animal tallow help heal sores, boils and other infections. Eating a well-balanced diet of Native foods aids healing. These foods are meat, fish, berries, sour dock, wild rhubarb, *sura* seal and fish oil.

The intestinal tract is saved from porcupine (*iluqutaq*). This long intestinal tract is stretched and hung to completely dry. Once dried it is ready to be used as a medicine. It is a cure for stomach ailments and diarrhea. The dried, digested food is crushed and water is added, then taken internally. This herbivore feeds on grasses, willow leaves in summer and tree bark during the winter. The *iluqutaq* is a subsistence food of the Iñupiat.

*Qaluum uqsrau* is fish oil. Fishing for whitefish on calm days seems to make work easier. The fish are scaled, washed, cut and hung on poles to dry. The edible stomach organ and eggs are washed and boiled. The fish oil rises to the surface. The cooked contents are removed, leaving the oil on the surface. The oil is saved, cooled and then used to dip the fish, eggs and stomach before eating.

*Qaluum uqsrau* can be used as medicine. When young children have a common cold with coughing, sore throat or the flu, they are given fish oil. The soothing oil moisturizes dry sore throats and hastens the healing process. The oils, rich in iron and protein, are essential for healthy living.

You can also massage heated fish oil onto a child's chest when they have a chest cold and congestion.

The cottonwood tree (*ninjuq*) produces buds that can be used as cough syrup in early summer. These sticky buds are used for making cough syrup not only for sore throats, but also for

colds and congestion.

Like fish oil, cranberries have healing properties for the human body. Cranberries are rich in Vitamin C and can be used as medicine for sore throats, the common cold, congestion, chest colds and sores. They help the body's organs get rid of the body wastes. Cranberries cooked the traditional way are delicious.

Another home remedy for sore throats is to mix pure honey, lemon juice and stinkweed leaves (*sargiq*). Bring the mixture to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 10 to 20 minutes. Cool and store for preservation. Taking this internally will help heal sore throat and common cold ailments.

The stinkweed plant (*sargiq*) is a common medicinal plant that grows in the Arctic. The 24-hour sunlight nourishes *sargiq*, along with other plants in the ecosystem. In midsummer, when the buds begin to appear, is the time to harvest *sargiq*. Harvest the entire plant: the stems, leaves and bulbs. This is when the plant is most potent. Bundles of *sargiq* are gathered and preserved. Fresh *sargiq* is prepared into medicinal salves or taken internally. Prepare salve for applying on the chest for chest colds, head cold and congestion.

Another salve is made by frying cut onions or wild chives (*paatitaat*) and garlic using shortening or lard. Fry until the onion becomes transparent. Cool and preserve. Apply to the chest for congestion from chest and head colds. Add salve to hot water for steaming. Place the steaming hot salve on the floor. While holding a child on your padded legs, cover with a bed sheet and let the child breathe the medicinal steam. It will help the lungs and nasal passages get rid of the mucus and congestion. Cut and mince *sargiq* stems, leaves and bulbs. Pan fry with lard, shortening or bear fat. Reduce heat and cook until stems and leaves release their medicinal contents. The stems and leaves will resemble



The stinkweed plant (sargiq), pictured above, is a common medicinal plant that grows in the Arctic. The 24-hour sunlight nourishes sargiq, along with other plants in the ecosystem. (Photo by Dixie Masak Dayo who is studying traditional healing and herbology.)

cooked spinach. Cool entire contents and preserve. When needed for colds or congestion apply on the chest and neck. For steaming, apply salve to boiling hot water and cover with a bed sheet—breathe the soothing moisturizing cure.

*Sargiq* can be taken internally for most body ailments. *Sargiq* can also be made into a hot drink prepared like tea. A warm or hot bath with *sargiq* is healing to the skin and body. It helps heal sores and is used for a treatment for arthritis. Students should research other medicinal uses of *sargiq* and discover new medicines and remedies for healthful living.

Crowberry (*tullukam asrait*) has medicine in the berry that benefits the urinary tract, intestines, liver and stomach. The berry is especially effective on urinary tract problems.

Natural clay can soothe arthritis and bone ache. The heated clay relieves aches and helps the healing process. This natural resource also has other uses. For example, this material is put between the logs of the log

cabin. The clay hardens, making the log cabin draft proof. Clay can be found at or just below the shoreline where there are large boulders of rocks and sand.

Medicinal greens grow all year long near natural hot springs. Natural hot springs have been visited by the Iñupiat and the Athabaskan people for generations. They knew about the medicinal greens and the soothing spring waters. Before submerging into the hot springs, one must drink spring water and consume medicinal plants. These two steps help people get their bodies ready for the hot spring water. The medicinal greens that grow near the springs are medicine for ulcers, stomach problems and sores. Water and greens are taken from the springs for home use.

Every so often a tree swallow (*tulugañnauraq*) is taken for medicinal purposes. The feathered bird is split in half and dried completely. When it dries, it is preserved for future use. *Tulugañnauraq* is one of the most effective medicine for sores, cold sores

and mouth sores. Part of the dried bird is soaked in pure water and applied to the sores. This application is repeated until the sores heal. The sores heal quickly with this method. Proper diet helps the body's immune system heal sores or body infections. Proper diet includes berries, *sura*, sour dock, wild rhubarb, fish oil and meat that are rich in Vitamin C, iron and protein.

Teachers and students should plan to visit Elders and interview them about traditional healing and medicines. Before the interview it is important that the Elders understand what they are going to be asked to talk about. Get permission to record and to document the interview. They have much knowledge about the Iñupiat *illitqusrait* (way of life). Students can incorporate this information in their science fair projects through video, charts and samples of plants and animal products used in traditional medicine and healing.

Tribal doctors are gifted people who have knowledge of human anatomy. They know about plants and other natural products that promote healing. Students can send samples of medicine plants to be analyzed. There are cures yet to be discovered. Find where medicinal plants and natural products can be analyzed through scientific research for possible new medicines. Make sure you follow the *Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge* when you do so (the guidelines are available on the ANKN website.)

Finally, when you visit an Elder, bring them a fruit basket or gift to show your appreciation for sharing their indigenous knowledge.

### References

Aana (Grandma) Clara Jackson. These traditional remedies are common knowledge and shared with each generation of Iñupiat since time immemorial. ✧

# Yup'ik Region: Calista Region Culture Camps

by Mark Miisaq John

Calista Elders Council (CEC) has received funding to run three ten-day culture camps in the Calista/AVCP region this summer of 2000. The first one will be at Umkumiute on Nelson Island June 4–14 for the coastal villages, the second from July 23 to August 2 near Kwethluk for the Kuskokwim villages and the third will be between Pilot Station and Marshall for the Yukon villages August 6–16.

The camps will incorporate two groups: village Elders, teachers and teacher aides who will serve as the camps' teachers and mentors to the second group of participants, seventh- and eighth-grade youth who will be 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 will be the focus of the camps, providing the Elders an opportunity to pass down traditional skills and values.

In keeping with the language and spirit of CEC's mission, two primary groups will share our culture camp experience. The first group is comprised of village Elders (one per five campers, an equal number of men and women) who will serve as the teachers and counselors of our traditional values and life skills. The second group is village youth (two per village, an equal number of boys and girls) who will be their students and partners in this culture-based learning experience.

Tribal governments from the three Calista regions (Coastal, Kuskokwim and Yukon) where the camps are to be conducted will recommend the camp Elders. In this way, the Elders of each camp will possess knowledge that is sensitive and relevant to each region's

geography and the unique traditions and necessary life skills that evolved from it.

The process by which youth participants will be selected follows: first, seventh- and eighth-grade students will be targeted primarily because of their youthful enthusiasm, openness and conceptual maturity. Equally important is that this age group, after returning home from camp, can serve as ambassadors for their experience, excited and committed to sharing what they have learned with others as their roles and responsibilities grow within the village communities.

The timing and location of CEC's three camps will be based on each region's subsistence season and knowledge of the area's fruitful hunting, fishing and harvesting sites.

The activities of the camps will take on a daily rhythm similar to a traditional subsistence camp setting. To facilitate the Elders' active participation and the young campers' individualized learning experience, one Elder will be assigned to every five campers. The Elders' responsibilities will be to act as their groups' supervisors, teachers and mentors.

Each morning two of these groups will rise before the others and assist the camp cook in setting up, preparing, serving and cleaning up after the

morning meal. They will continue to perform these responsibilities for the rest of the meals that day, their Elders reminding and modeling for them the importance their domestic chores play in fortifying the larger group for the day's subsistence work.

Following breakfast, the camp director, teachers, teacher aides and Elders will introduce the day's subsistence activities, the values associated with those tasks and what effect the groups' labors will have on those who will receive the benefits (i.e., their families, Elders, those who have lost their providers, etc.)

Each day the groups and their Elders will be assigned to different subsistence tasks with the understanding that every group will be able to participate in and learn each of the subsistence skills. During these activities, the Elders will supply the youth with the cultural knowledge necessary to perform each skill or task and teach the traditional values which infuse those tasks with meaning and spirit.

After lunch each day the students will spend two hours on science activities. The teachers and teacher aides will work with the students in developing science projects using subsistence activities that are taking place in the camps. The teachers should help prepare the students for science projects they can develop in the camps.

At the end of the day, after the evening chores and meal have been completed, the camp director will review the day's activities as a transition into a discussion of how subsistence tasks and values relate to those found in the western world. The goal will be to instruct our young people about how they can draw upon and apply their own traditional values to those of another culture so that they may survive in it—economically, spiritually and culturally.

The evening will conclude with recreational activities (hiking, lap games, Native Olympics) and an opportunity for each of the camp groups

to meet with their Elders, ask questions, share experiences and hear stories celebrating their ancestors' rich history and mythology.

These three exciting camps will invite two students from each listed village. The pool of applicants will be incoming seventh- and eighth-grade girls and boys. The application deadline is April 21, 2000 and the names are to be submitted to Mark John at Calista Elders Council by May 4.

The Bering Sea Coastal Camp at Umkumiut will host 28 students from LKSD sites, 4 from LYSD, and 2 from Kashunmiut. The Camp dates are June 4–14, 2000. Coastal camp villages are Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay, Chevak, Newtok, Tununak, Toksook Bay, Nightmute, Chefornak, Mekoryak, Kipnuk, Kwigillingok, Kongiganak, Tuntutuliak, Eek, Quinhagak, Goodnews Bay and Platinum.

The Yukon River camp in Cuilnguq will host 16 LYSD students and two from St. Mary's School District. The camp dates are August 6–16, 2000. Yukon camp villages are Russian Mission, Marshall, Pilot Station, Saint Mary's, Pitkas Point, Kotlik, Emmonak, Alakanuk and Sheldons Point.

The Kuskokwim River camp will have a base at a camp site inside Kuiggluk and a second camp set-up at Kialiq. This camp will host 16 LKSD students, 18 students from Kuspuk and 6 students from Yupiit. The camp dates are July 23–August 2, 2000. Kuskokwim Camp villages are Lime Village, Stony River, Sleetmute, Red Devil, Crooked Creek, Chuathbaluk, Aniak, Upper Kalskag, Lower Kalskag, Tuluksak, Akiak, Akiachak, Kwethluk, Bethel, Oscarville, Napaskiak, Napakiak, Atmautluak, Nunapitchuk and Kasigluk.

As school districts that serve these village sites plan with Calista on this wonderful summer opportunity, we are anticipating strong support staff to assist the Elders. Culture camp applications are online at <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/culturecamp-applications.html> and need to be turned into Calista Elders' office by

www.ankn.uaf.edu/culturecamp-applications.html and need to be turned into Calista Elders' office by

May 4. Students and parents will be notified before school closure. ✨

## Developing Culturally-Responsive Curriculum

by Esther Arnaq Ilutsik

Keynote address presented at the Bilingual/Multicultural Education Conference  
February 4, 2000

Greetings to the first Bilingual/Multicultural Education/Equity Conference of the 21st century. I am honored and humbled to be standing before you—honored that I have been asked to speak and bring forth issues that need to be addressed by all of us as we enter the 21st century, and humbled by the great expertise that is assembled in this room. I will begin with an oral story, as is the tradition of the Y up'ik people, told and shared by my late mother Lena P. Ilutsik. She begins:

*And then there was this blackfish swimming up the river, maybe he was heading down the river. As he was going along he came to this fish trap. Well, he got inside and he probably had others with him. While they were trapped inside of the fish trap, they heard a person coming up on top. Well, when he got to them he pulled them up. Well, he poured those blackfish into his pack. Then that person said, "Oh my, one of these blackfish is so big! What a big blackfish." Well, he brought them home. He packed them and brought them home. When he got home he told his wife to cook the blackfish. He wanted to eat that big blackfish. Well, she cooked and she cooked them. When they were cooked that man apparently ate that blackfish, the one he was praising. Well, he (the blackfish) got inside of that man, he was still conscious even if he was cooked. Well, he was inside the man, and when he got tired of being in there he went out of the man. Well, that man passed him. It was during the time when outhouses*

*had not been introduced to the people yet. And people just used to go on the ground. Well, that man passed him and the blackfish who was still conscious just stayed in the man's feces. Then as he was staying there this dog started coming toward him. Well, that dog ate him. Well, he stayed inside of that dog. Then by and by when he wanted to go out that blackfish went out. Well, when he went out he stayed there in the dog's feces. As he was laying there he saw a person walking toward him. Well, when that person got to him and when he stepped on him he lost consciousness, Well, this is as far as the story I heard went.*

*(translated by Virginia Andrew, 4/16/97)*

Why do I begin with a story? As a Yup'ik, as an educator, as a parent and as a lifelong learner, I find myself a part of a cultural group and a world in transition. Some of us have found ways to retain some of our oral stories and we do this by providing a theme

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story for the curriculum units that are developed and integrated into the school system. We, as educators, need to demonstrate by example. If we believe in something we need to demonstrate that we can also utilize the model and method of approach in our own teaching method. Addressing a group of people and sharing our knowledge and ideas is a method of teaching. Too often we hear potentially unique and aspiring methods but they are not utilized by the messenger.

We need to share the approach that we are using within the classrooms. This is the theme of my presentation to you. I will be referring to it during the remainder of my talk. In the meantime, think about why would a mother share the blackfish story with her children? Remember, within the Yup'k culture, as with many other indigenous cultures, stories were told without being analyzed. They were told so that the listener would have his or her own interpretations, so that at some point in his or her life the story would surface and meaning would become clear—that is why the story was shared with me.

One of the blessings of parenthood is that it makes us reflect back on our own educational experiences, both at home and in the school setting. We, as parents, are concerned about the education that our children will receive. We want the best for our children. We want to make sure that they have a good foundation—a good understanding of who they are and where they fit into this world that is being presented to them. Far too many of us remember ourselves as the “invisible” people with an aspiration to adopt the dominant culture’s model.

Remember the reading series, Dick and Jane and their dog Spot? What did it show us? It provided an ideal American, caucasian family living in suburban America—a mind set laid down subtly showing us that our little humble dwellings did not fit the ideal



*Alex Lopez practices his storyknife skills. Photo by Esther Arnaq Ilutsik.*

that American education was after. It brings to mind the man who desired the largest blackfish in the fish trap. The desire was so great that all the other blackfish were invisible. We too have looked at the ideals that were portrayed in the schools, in the textbooks, and other materials as the big blackfish and all other aspects of our life became invisible—our traditional foods, our stories, our dances, etc. Our desire was to consume and become like the big blackfish. Fortunately at some point in our life, we expelled the big blackfish. We became disillusioned, confused and disoriented with what we had desired. Like the man in the story, we expelled this blackfish from our body and mind, but unfortunately the blackfish still did not lose consciousness. We still find ourselves being drawn everyday to adopt another life form.

Parenthood makes us bold and inquiring of what is being taught and emphasized in the school setting. We begin some innocent investigating. On the surface, the curriculum looks promising, but investigating further we find that certain textbooks, including the ones for the “core” cur-

riculum adopted by the district and used by the teachers, haven’t really changed that much since the Dick and Jane series. Now, instead of a dog named Spot, we have a dog named Bingo. Although animals from our environment may be portrayed, they are often presented with misleading information. One can wonder how our Elders would have presented this information. What would be their focus and would the information be presented in a culturally-local relevant way? Actually, I was shocked to find that none of the stories contained in one of the current reading series portrayed any of the North American indigenous peoples. There were tales from Japan, China and even Africa, but nothing from the indigenous peoples of North America. Again, we have become the invisible people.

Our children can be portrayed as the dog desiring the feces of the man (the fantasy culture), with their own cultural identity again being invisible. Sure, the bilingual education and other federal programs that are offered are supposed to address this need for identity and equity, but they do so at a cost. Our children often go to these classes with reluctance, and the teachers that are hired for these positions are often paraprofessionals who are allowed only 30 minutes or less for instruction. Many of these teachers have very little training, if any, and most have to create their own materials that are often looked upon as second-rate in comparison to the flashy, colorful textbooks and materials that are being used by the primarily non-Native certified teachers. We, as the parents, want these types of attitudes expelled, much like the blackfish expelled by the dog, so that we can stamp out the undesirable and give our children the opportunity to start afresh with a new consciousness and a positive attitude about themselves.

Some of us parents have taken it upon ourselves to make those changes.

After attempting to go through the administration to make changes, we realized that this would require many, many years of re-education and re-direction, while our children are in school now and need that foundation to set the stage for their future education. How do I as a parent make sure that my child receives the strong foundation that I so desire? As an educator, I always welcomed parent involvement, so that would be the key to getting into the classroom and influencing the teacher. I was in a fortunate stage in my life when I was between jobs and had time to enter the classroom. I was also fortunate to have been able to select the teacher that I wanted for my child. This teacher, Ina Bouker, happened to be a colleague, a member of the Ciulistet Research Group, a friend and most importantly, a relative who shared my vision of taking the Yup'ik knowledge of our Elders and bringing it into the regular classroom. We wanted to achieve integration in the true sense, not integration with 30 minutes of Yup'ik instruction three times a week, but on a daily basis through the regular certified teacher. In this way, it could truly elevate the status of the local culture.

One of the first units we tackled was the "Heartbeat Unit." This stemmed from a Ciulistet Research Group meeting that was hosted up in Aleknagik where the discussion focused on Yup'ik dancing. How do we take this information and bring it into the regular classroom? Ina Bouker had this brilliant idea of integrating this information into the health strand of the school district curriculum. The heart would be the focal point. The heartbeat would connect well with the beat of the Yup'ik drum—the beat of life. The three main Yup'ik colors (red, black & white) naturally became a part of the study with basic patterns introduced and emphasized while the Yup'ik dancing and the stories they tell provided the natural flow. Leg-

ends of the Yup'ik people were shared and told through the Sonor games (a board game adapted from the Yakutsk-Sakha, the indigenous people of the Russian Far East). What a wonderful and truly memorable experience for my daughter and her classmates. In fact she still talks about the experience she received in second grade (she is now in the seventh grade) and it was not too long ago when I was at the local grocery store during "the rush" when I heard a voice, "Esther, where have you been?" I followed my eyes to the voice and saw one of my daughters former classmates. He continued, "Why are you not coming to our classes anymore? I really miss you."

I was fortunate to get a job with the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative through the University of Alaska Fairbanks/Bristol Bay Campus where I have been able to continue with the curriculum process we started with the heartbeat unit. I followed my child and made sure that at least one of the units taught in her classroom focused on the local culture. In the third grade we focused on the Yup'ik fancy squirrel parka with an emphasis on patterns and the history of the Yup'ik people. At the fourth-grade level we completed the patterns on the parka integrating it into the math strand and at the fifth-grade level we looked into Yup'ik basketry.

But the most important thing is that I continued to work with Ina Bouker and her students. Here we integrated many different units of study into her classroom. All the knowledge that we shared within the classroom was information that our Elders shared with us in our Ciulistet Research meetings. It was like we were finally learning things about our culture that we had missed when we went to school and now were learning them and were able to share this information with the next generation. It reminded me of what Moses went through in the Bible. Most of you know the story about Moses, how he



*Michael Filipek listens to his heart as part of the Heartbeat unit. Photo by Esther Arnaq Ilutsik.*

was found floating in a basket on the Nile River by the pharaoh's daughter and was educated in the finest institutions in the then-known world. Eventually, when he was called to take his people into the wilderness, he spent another 40 years literally uneducating himself from his previous training. So it is with many indigenous peoples around the world and in North America. We have been sent to schools and literally educated out of our culture. The results have been truly devastating to many of our people, but some have miraculously succeeded and are now realizing that the knowledge of our Elders and our people is important and that this knowledge base must be taught to the future generations.

The documentation of this knowledge base must be authored by our own people. We cannot continue to rely on outside experts—professional people with prestigious degrees—to come in and study our culture and write about how we should integrate this information into the school system (even if it is reviewed and acknowledged by indigenous educators.) We need to do it ourselves—we need to demonstrate to the world that we have come to a

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point where the information provided is authentic and is based on interpretations by local indigenous people. We cannot continue to accept information written by a person "looking in." We cannot continue to read information that was obviously written by a person from another cultural perspective. We cannot continue to serve in the role of providing corrections and apologies.

We are entering an era where we, as indigenous educators, have to author our own materials with confidence in our own abilities. We can strengthen our role by getting the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools* to be addressed by the local schools as well as through the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. With commitment and determination, we are able to gather the knowledge of our Elders and bring it into the classrooms. We are able to author our own materials, test them in the classrooms and develop them into resources that will be available for other educators.

In conclusion, we, like the man who stepped on the dog's feces and destroyed the consciousness of the blackfish, have arrived at a point where we are slowly beginning to "crush" out all the misinformation that has plagued and stereotyped us in the past. We are, by demonstration, showing the world that our cultural knowledge can be portrayed in a positive light by our own people. With this foundation we will be able to enter the 21st century with confidence—confidence that our cultural identity will play an important role in laying a solid foundation down for our descendants. Our descendants will fill those leadership roles that require an understanding and respect of themselves and other cultural groups. We will once again become whole—a complete person—that is the ultimate goal of the Yup'ik people. ✧

# Athabascan Region

by Amy Negalt Denlebedze Van Hatten

Searching the ANKN website on how to utilize technology and how to research available documents drawing upon online resources, I clicked once in the SPIRAL curriculum chart for the ninth-grade level. In choosing the theme "Language/Communication," up came the publication *Dinaak'a: Our Language* by David C. Henry, Marie D. Hunter and Eliza Jones (1973). Included in the publication were the following comments by former Alaska state senator John Sackett:

*Where before the white man came the Native was extremely self-sufficient and had to rely wholly on the land and the resources that the land gave him, for a period the Native came to rely on the ways of the white man and unfortunately took on many of his bad characteristics.*

*The past decade however has seen a fantastic change in the attitudes of the Native people throughout Alaska. At the same time that the Native people are learning more about the Western culture, they are taking an ever rising interest in the heritage and culture of their own people. Native people are demanding a voice in the education of their children, health of their families and the laws that govern their lives. As a strong part of this there is the desire to retain and learn their own language.*

*It has been said that a people die when their language dies. The meaning of life and the world around us can be communicated truly only through our own language. From the knowledge of our own language we can continue to retain our pride in our culture and continue to grow as unique individuals.*

The observations expressed by Senator Sackett in 1973 are consistent with those reflected in the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools*: "A culturally-responsive curriculum uses the local language and

cultural knowledge as a foundation for the rest of the curriculum." That standard is also at the heart of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative.

The current initiative in the Athabascan region is to support the development of cultural atlases in the schools. It is a technological tool for students and community members to bring together information related to the indigenous knowledge systems using multimedia applications such as CDs and the Internet. Communities and Elders decide how much of the information should be shared and what should stay within the community due to cultural and intellectual property rights considerations.

Cultural atlases can help preserve cultural knowledge such as putting Native place names onto a map and incorporating information associated with each place. Themes such as weather prediction, edible and medicinal plants, geographic place names, flora and fauna, old villages, camps and burial sites can be incorporated with video and sound of language, oral stories and more from Elders. There are examples of what other regions have done with the cultural atlas initiative on the ANKN website. Watch for some exciting reports from the Athabascan region. ✧



# Elder Highlight

by Amy Negalt Denlebedze Van Hatten

Lillian Pitka Olin was born and raised in Nikoli Slough on the Koyukuk River. Her late husband was Freddie Olin, Jr. from Kokrines, Alaska. As I drove along the Chena River in Fairbanks with my *eenaa*, she commented, "*Sgook, old Birch Park hunoda huneet! aanh.*" She was affectionately calling my attention to her and saying she wanted to look around the old Birch Park neighborhood.

As soon as we arrived in the area that used to be low-income housing called Birch Park, she started reminiscing about the people who used to live there. Besides the Olins, there were other families including the Mayos, Carrolls, Solomons, Silas', Alford's, Nollners, McQuestions, Ahnupkanas and others. It was common to share whatever Alaska Native food they brought in from their home villages. In a substitute way, Birch Park was similar to a rural village. They spoke their Alaska Native languages and participated in cultural activities around town. They even initiated some of their own since they got to rent the recreational center on site. In addition, when a villager came to visit they invited their neighbors over to snack on dry fish and drink tea while they listened for news or stories about home.

With a dignified tone, Mom Olin said that the Salvation Army, located in a barn near Wendell Bridge, allowed her to exchange labor for her family needs. According to her, this enabled her to get her Alaska Native foods for her table. A steady exchange of Native foods, second-hand clothing, seasonal gear and accessories had the value of being freshly harvested to meet consumers' preference. Reciprocity was and still is a vital key for survival, no matter where one chooses to live. Accordingly, it was one of the most important cultural values car-

ried on from early upbringing in bush Alaska surrounded by extended family members.

In 1970 Mom Olin moved to Galena so her younger children could benefit from village life. Besides, the pipeline boom was raising her rent and her modest income was not enough to stay in Fairbanks. After her move, her late Aunt Madeline Solomon became one of her most memorable

mentors and Elder/teacher for a traditional way of life. Eventually she became Auntie Madeline's successor as the bilingual/cultural educator for the Galena City School District. Currently she is retired from the working world but remains a teacher to many friends and relatives and is doing it with immense joy. It tickles her when her great-grandchildren and adopted local teachers (who are far away from their real families in the lower 48) try so hard to learn and then succeed.

Mom Olin is thankful for those humble days when they were all happy to make do with what little they had. It has always been her wish for the younger generations to learn and appreciate the basics that are most important to survival and a sense of well being. In closing she thanked her ancestors of long, long ago who have not been forgotten. ☆

*Interviewer's comment: I thank Mom Olin with immeasurable gratefulness for all she has shared with me.*

## ANKN Cultural Atlases

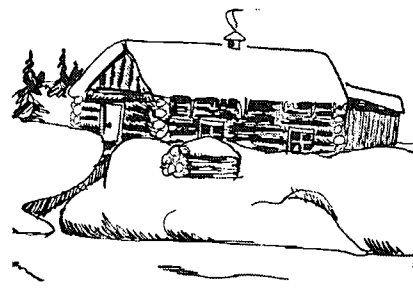
by Sean Asiqtuq Topkok

Cultural atlases are a means of documenting culture. The best source for this knowledge comes from Elders. How communities define and preserve their culture depends on locale and resources available. Audio and videotapes are tools for preserving knowledge, however, tapes can be damaged and valuable information could be lost. The computer is a tool utilized by many communities. If properly used, valuable cultural knowledge such as place names, genealogies, subsistence and more can be preserved, but it is not intended to replace cultural experts. The process of documenting cultural knowledge provides an opportunity for more interaction between the youth and Elders. The ANKN website has several examples of cultural atlases. They can be found at: [www.ankn.uaf.edu/oral.html](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/oral.html)

Occasionally people do not wish to share cultural knowledge outside the community. It is up to the community to decide what information to share. Since ANKN respects cultural and intellectual property rights, some of cultural atlases on the ANKN website are password-protected. Communities are encouraged to share how they are developing cultural atlases so that other indigenous people can adapt and apply them to their locale. ☆

# Village Science: Risk

by Alan Dick



It is easy to point to the mistakes made by people who have been at the point of impact of technological change in Alaska. I remember one homesteader who tried to clear 80 acres of timber. He managed to knock down all the trees. It was a mangled mass of trunks and branches. He got real tired drilling stumps to dynamite them, so he ordered a power auger like we use today for drilling a hole in the ice. He was thrilled when it arrived. He started it and hopped up on a stump to drill his first hole. He revved the engine and spun himself around like an airplane prop. It's a wonder he didn't break both arms.

Another homesteader built a nice place but was afraid it would burn in a summer fire. He got some phosphorous fusees to do a controlled backfire in case a blaze endangered his home. Somehow, his fusees ignited and burned his homestead to charred rubble. To this day, there is an indentation in the ground etched by the fuses intense heat.

On the other hand, I know a woman raised in the woods whose husband bought her a plastic timer for cooking. She thought it was a thermometer, put it in the oven, and melted it into a goeey blob long before the

cookies were done. And most regions of Alaska have a story of some lonely old man who ordered a woman from a Sears catalog and was highly disappointed when only her clothes arrived.

For people who are bombarded with new technologies everyday, these examples may sound foolish, but they are stories of folks who were on the edge of technological upheaval and tried to apply past experience to current situations. They are anecdotes of folks who dared to try something new. As schools cope with the demands placed upon them by state

standards and the reality of their villages, some will withdraw to the safe territory of textbooks and pre-fab educational kits developed by "experts." Others will boldly innovate.

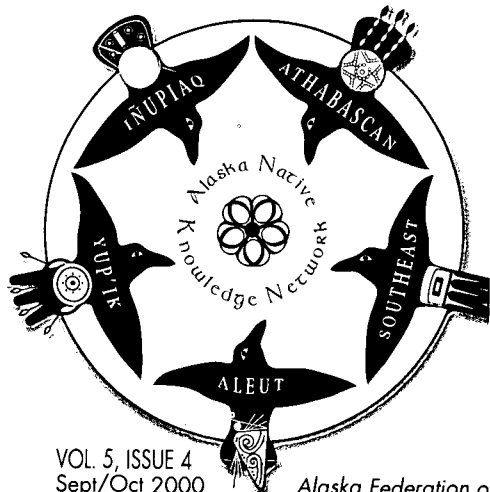
I just returned from a Yup'ik village where the middle school curriculum is being developed around the subsistence calendar. Science, math and social studies are the content areas. Reading and writing are seen as a means of accomplishing them. Bold? Yes. Successful? Not yet. Alaska has been made by people who have applied new twists to old solutions and old solutions to new situations. Will we be paralyzed by the fear of failure? Will we blindly conform to a Lower 48 standard piped to us via cable TV and textbooks from Texas? Or will we remain faithful to the adaptive character of Alaskans of the past? As we struggle through these risky transitions, failures like the above stories will occur, but heroes and lasting educational change will also emerge. ✧

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# 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 ♦ Annenberg Rural Challenge

## Cultural Standards and Test Scores

by Ray Barnhardt, Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley and Frank Hill,  
Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative

With the release of the first Benchmark and High School Graduation Qualifying Exam scores this fall, educators throughout Alaska have been convening to address the many issues that are raised by these new checkpoints on the educational landscape.

Debates are already underway on ways to interpret the results and develop appropriate responses, given the predictable differences in perfor-

mance among various students and schools. At the heart of these debates are concerns over the use (or misuse) of the test results to make critical

judgements about students, teachers and schools in ways that attempt to reduce complex school performance issues down to a few simplistic variables.

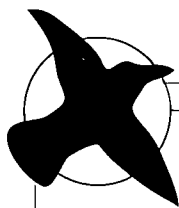
We need look no further than the latest editions of *Education Week*, *Phi Delta Kappan* or *Educational Researcher* to see that these debates are occurring on a national scale and that Alaska is not alone in venturing out  
*(continued on next page)*



Harriet Nungasak, Alicia Kanayurak, George Olama (instructor), Kimberly Rychnovsky and Donald Tritt work on their science projects at the ANSES Science-Culture Camp held at Gaaleeya Spirit Camp July 11-25, 2000. Skills gained at science and cultural camps are brought into the classroom and utilized throughout the school year. See "AISES Corner", page 6.

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into uncharted waters in the name of school accountability. Hopefully we can learn from other peoples mistakes, and by doing a few things right, maybe others can learn from our successes. However, this will require taking a long-term perspective on the many issues involved and not expecting to find a silver bullet that will produce instant solutions to long-standing complex problems.

First of all, we must recognize the practical limits of the tests themselves. As diagnostic tools coupled with other related indicators of ability and performance, tests that are properly designed, flexibly administered and judiciously interpreted can provide valuable information to guide educational decision-making. However, there are two features of these legislatively mandated high-stakes tests that inhibit their educational value and thus make it necessary to exercise considerable caution in their use as accountability tools in the current standards-driven environment.

Since the tests are mandated for all students at four grade levels, the sheer number and frequency of the testing introduces a major time and cost factor. As a result, the design of the tests tends to rely on approaches that are simpler and cheaper to administer and score (i.e., multiple choice and short-answer questions) with only minimal use of the more costly, but flexible, culturally adaptable and educationally useful performance-based approaches to assessment. Unfortunately, this emphasis on ease of administration has also narrowed the selection of which content standards count and which ones don't, leaving the harder-to-measure aspects of the standards in the background.

As a result, teachers (and districts) are caught in the dilemma of aligning their teaching and curriculum with the full range of learning outcomes outlined in the standards or narrow-

ing their lessons down to that which is measured on the tests (see *Education Week*, July 7, 2000, p.1 at [www.edweek.org](http://www.edweek.org) for a more detailed discussion of this issue). In this regard, the current testing system can be seen as working against the implementation of the standards-based school reform efforts with which it was originally associated. A true standards-based educational system requires a much broader approach to assessment than current resources allow.

The second feature that reduces the educational value of high-stakes testing is its intended use in making critical decisions that can adversely impact people's lives and careers (e.g., grade-level promotion, eligibility for graduation, teacher reward/punishment and school rating/ranking.) When used for such purposes, the tests themselves tend to revert to those measures that the test-makers (in Alaska's case, CBT/McGraw-Hill) can defend in court when challenged by those affected. Consequently, we see a heavy emphasis on standardization (in both content and administration), whereby many important aspects of the content standards that require local adaptation or are not easily measured are set aside in favor of those items and testing practices that meet the test of "legal defensibility." So we should not be surprised when we run into problems with a testing system that has been constructed around legal and political, rather than educational considerations.

### What are the Options?

For better or worse, the Alaska Benchmark and High School Graduation Qualifying Exams are a reality and it is our professional responsibility to do what we can to minimize their negative effects and to maximize

their potential benefits. Most critical in that regard is the need to examine the issues that emerge in the broadest context available to us and not to use the results to promote simplistic, short-term solutions to long-term, complex problems. Nor should we fall into the trap of "blaming the victim" (i.e., the student) when there are significant group variations in academic performance. This is especially true in a cross-cultural setting such as rural Alaska, where we have a long history of repetitious unsuccessful educational experimentation on students while ignoring the well-documented source of many of the problems—that is the persistent cultural gulf between teachers and students, school and community.

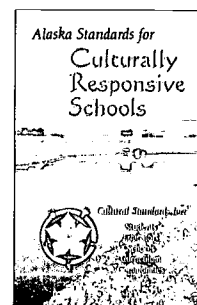
Based on the experiences in other states and the rife speculation underway here in Alaska, we can expect several things to happen over the next few months. The initial responses to the release of the test results are likely to point to two factors to explain differential performance between students and schools—low teacher expectations and lack of opportunity to learn—each of which will lead to predictable forms of remediation.

Under the banner of "all students can learn to high standards," teachers will be admonished to teach harder and more of whatever it is that students are determined by the tests as lacking. While this may seem logical on the surface, it ignores the possibility that the real issue may not be low expectations at all (though certainly that does exist) and that "more of the same" may exacerbate the problem by producing higher dropout rates rather than addressing the more fundamental issue of lack-of-fit between what we teach, how we teach it and the context in which it is taught. Intensifying the current curriculum and extending schooling into the weekend or summer also ignores the inherent limitations to school improve-

ment in rural Alaska that result from having to import teachers and administrators from outside for whom the village setting is a foreign and inevitably temporary home.

The second issue of making sure students have had the opportunity to learn the subject matter on which they are being tested is more readily identifiable as a problem, but no less complicated (and expensive) in producing a solution. If a small rural school is not offering the level of mathematics instruction that students need to pass the exam, the solution is not to send the students elsewhere for schooling. To assume that a boarding school (as some legislators are suggesting) can make up for the limitations of a village high school ignores the fact that a well-rounded education consists of much more than just the subject matter that is taught in school. It also ignores the negative impact that taking students out of their home has on the family, the community and the student's own future role as a parent and contributing member of society. There is nothing taught in a boarding school that can't be taught cheaper and more effectively in a village school linked together with other village schools in a web of rich and extensive learning opportunities. Furthermore, there are many important things that are learned at home in a village setting that cannot be taught in a boarding school. Boarding schools may be justified as an optional alternative program for selected students, but not as a substitute for village schools.

When providing "opportunities to learn," we need to consider all aspects of a child's upbringing and prepare them in such a way that they can "become responsible, capable and whole human beings in the process" (see *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*). When we do so, the issues associated with benchmark and qualifying exams will take care of themselves. How then do we go about



**The Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools is available from:**

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Fairbanks, AK 99775-6730**

**It can also be found on the ANKN website:**

**<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu>**

this with some degree of confidence that we will achieve the outcome we seek—graduates capable of functioning as responsible adults, including passing state exams?

## *Impact of Cultural Standards on Standardized Test Scores*

For the past five years, the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative has been working intensively with 20 of the 48 rural school districts in the state to implement a series of initiatives that are intended to "systematically document the indigenous knowledge systems of Alaska Native people and developed educational policies and practices that effectively integrate indigenous and western knowledge through a renewed educational system." The assumption behind the AKRSI reform strategy is that if we coordinate our efforts and resources across all aspects of the education system and address the issues in a

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focused, statewide manner, perhaps better headway will be realized. Two outcomes of this work are worthy of consideration as schools review the results of the state tests and ponder their next steps.

First of all, building an education system with a strong foundation in the local culture appears to produce positive effects in all indicators of school success, including dropout

with a corresponding decrease in the lower quartile. With AKRSI districts now producing 24.3% of their students testing in the upper quartile, they are only 0.7% point below the national average. In other words, through strong place-based education initiatives, the AKRSI schools are closing the achievement gap with the non-AKRSI schools. The following graph illustrates the gains on a year-by-year basis:

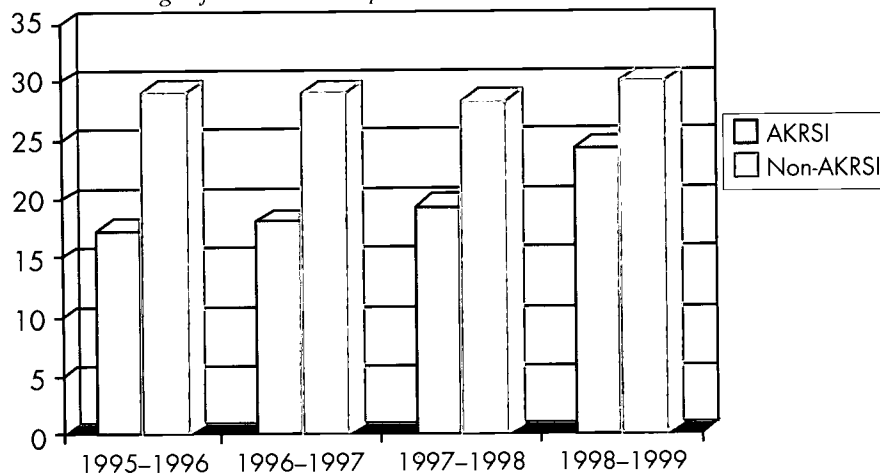
found in the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*.

These "cultural standards" were compiled by educators from throughout the state as an outgrowth of the work that was initiated through the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative and implemented in varying degrees by the participating schools. As such, when coupled with the impact data summarized here, they provide some concrete guidelines for schools and communities to consider as they construct school improvement plans aimed at producing more effective educational programs for the students in their care. We now have strong evidence that when we make a diligent and persistent effort to forge a strong cultural fit between what we teach, how we teach and the context in which we teach, we can produce successful, well-rounded graduates who are also capable of producing satisfactory test scores.

The AKRSI staff are currently working with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development to provide assistance to schools for whom cultural considerations play an important part in the design of their educational programs. Alaska Native educators, including Elders, are an important resource that all schools need to draw upon to make sure that our responses to the results of the Alaska Benchmark and High School Graduation Qualifying Exams go beyond Band-Aid solutions and lead to long-term improvement of our education systems. The future of our state depends on it. Curricular resources and technical assistance for such efforts are available through the regional Native Educator Associations, as well as the Alaska Native Knowledge Network web site at [www.ankn.uaf.edu](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu). ☆

### *Eighth Grade Mathematics Performance*

*Percentage of Students on Top Quartile on CAT-5, 1996–1999*



rates, college attendance, parent involvement, grade-point averages and standardized achievement test scores. With regard to student achievement, using the eighth-grade CAT-5 math test scores as an impact indicator for the first four years of implementation of the AKRSI school reform initiatives in the 20 participating school districts (which have historically had the lowest student achievement levels in the state), there has been a differential gain of 5.9% points in the number of students who are performing in the top quartile for AKRSI partner schools over non-AKRSI rural schools. AKRSI schools gained 6.9% points in the upper quartile compared to a 1.0% point gain for non-AKRSI schools,

In reviewing this data (drawn from the state summary of the school district report cards), it is clear that something has been going on in the 20 AKRSI school districts that is producing a slow but steady gain in the standardized test scores (along with all the other indicators we have been tracking.) So just what is it that is producing these results? Since the gains are widespread across all cultural regions and the scores show consistent improvement over each of the four years, they clearly are not a function of one particular curricular or pedagogical initiative, nor are they limited to AKRSI-sponsored activities. The best summary of what it is that has produced these results can be

# Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative Moves Into Phase II

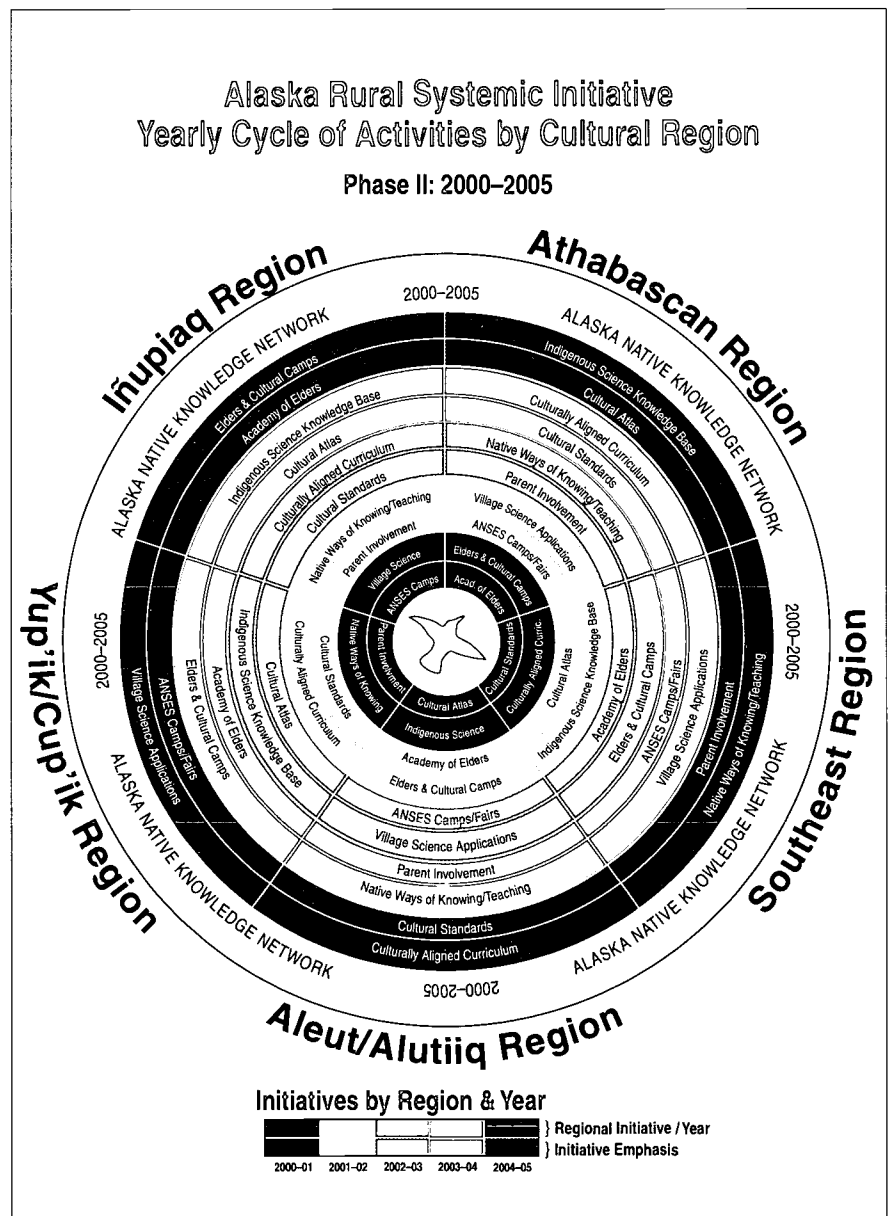
by Frank Hill, Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley and Ray Barnhardt

With the first five years of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative coming to a close this summer, we are now embarking on a second phase, starting this fall, that will take what we have learned from Phase I and seek to integrate it into the educational system on a sustainable basis. Given another five years of funding from the National Science Foundation, we will be working closely with the same 20 rural school districts and other organizations to implement a series of focused school reform initiatives that build on the work that was begun over the past five years. The chart to the right summarizes the Phase II initiatives by year and by cultural region, as they will be implemented between now and 2005.

We will be getting in touch with each of the partner organizations during the fall to work through the details as we develop a new round of MOAs for the spring, summer and fall terms of 2001. We wish to express our sincere appreciation for the high level of interest and commitment that everyone has shown over the past five years. This has truly been a cooperative undertaking in which the whole has become more than the sum of its parts. We look forward to continuing the close working relationships we have had with the Elders, educators and schools from throughout the state. We also wish to express our apprecia-

tion to the hard-working staff that has brought new possibilities to the forefront of rural education in Alaska.

*Quyana! Qagaasakung! Ana Baasee'! Gunalcheesh! Quyanaq! Mahsi!* Thank you to everyone! ✨





## AISES Corner (American Indian Science and Engineering Society)

by Claudette Bradley

The AISES Initiative concluded its fifth year with eight summer science-culture camps held on Afognak Island, Haines (vicinity of), St. Paul, Kwethluk, Kisaralik river, St. Mary's, Chevak and Fairbanks. Each camp had Elders teaching activities specific to the culture of the region and engaged students in science projects.

The Fairbanks, Alaska Native Science and Engineering Society (ANSES) Science Camp 2000 ran on a slim budget, which we hope to rectify next summer. Twelve middle-school students attended the camp held at the Gaaleeya Spirit Camp from July 11 to July 25. They were Britta Kallman of Anchorage; Roberta Allen, Amanda Tritt and Donald Tritt of Arctic Village; Qaqsu Bodfish, Alicia Kanayurak, Eunice Kippi, Ronald Kippi and Harriet Nungasak of Atqasuk; Mathew Shewfelt of Fort Yukon; and Kimberly Rychnovsky of Newhalen.

These students arose at 7:00 a.m. each morning to work with Elders and teachers. They cleaned and tanned caribou skins and made porcupine quill and beaded necklaces under the guidance of Margaret Tritt—an Elder from Arctic Village. They beaded pouches with Elizabeth Nictune Fleagle from Alatna. They learned Indian games and stories from Kenneth Frank of Arctic Village. Kenneth also helped students carve and polish caribou bone and wood to make an Athabaskan "toss and catch the hole" game piece.

Students picked medicinal plants and berries with Rita O'Brien, a certified teacher from Beaver. In Rita's class the students made cranberry leather, that was like candy

to eat. With Todd Kelsey, an IBM consultant, the students constructed a weather station with a rain gauge, wind socket, barometer and thermometer. Students checked the weather each day and kept data on spreadsheets. They were able to compare the Elders' way of predicting the weather with the information from the weather station. One evening we met with the Elders to discuss the traditional ways of knowing the weather.

In the afternoon class students developed a research project and did their experiments in the camp. Rita O'Brien, Todd Kelsey, George Olanna of Shismaref and Claudette Bradley of UAF assisted students. The computer lab had four ThinkPads and a color printer that were donated by IBM and powered by two solar panels and batteries. This enabled students to type up their information, make data sheets and construct graphs for their display boards.

Students attended field trips to the Fort Knox Gold Mine and to the World Eskimo Indian Olympics (WEIO). Bradley Weyiounna is a WEIO high kick champion; he can jump eight feet to kick the ball. Bradley and Josh Rutman visited our camp one evening with the high-kick stand and demonstrated the high kick for the students. The students enjoyed the experience and attempted to kick the ball. The ball

was lowered to four, five and six feet. The students enjoyed trying the high kick. Bradley showed the students how to wrestle with just arms or legs. This entertained the students and they loved trying to wrestle with each other.

The camp ended with a potlatch for parents and Fairbanks' education community members. After dinner, awards and gifts were given to students, staff and other support people. It was followed by a poster session of the student display boards on their science projects. Students explained their research to the guests. Following the poster session everyone participated in Athabaskan fiddle dancing.

Staff and students want to extend a heart felt thank you to Howard Luke for allowing us to be at his camp which is also his home. We deeply appreciate his facilities and the care he has given to the land that was left to him by his mother. We cherish his advice and knowledge of Alaska Native ways that he generously shares with camp participants. We look forward to future camps at Howard Luke's.

### Youth Science Festival

Claudette Bradley, the director of the Fairbanks ANSES Science Camp 2000, was one of six chaperones in the USA delegation of 20 teenage students attending the Singapore Youth Science Festival 2000, July 27 to August 2, 2000. The festival was attended by delegates from 21 countries of the Asian Pacific Economies Cooperation (APEC). The events included an

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# Fall Course Offerings for Educators in Rural Alaska

by Ray Barnhardt

Just as the new school year brings new 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 Alaska 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.

**Multicultural Education:** ANS 461, Native Ways of Knowing; ED 610, Education and Cultural Processes; CCS/ED 611, Culture, Cognition and

Knowledge Acquisition; ED 616, Education and Socio-Economic Change; ED 631, Small School Curriculum Design; ED 660, Educational Administration in Cultural Perspective.

**Cross-Cultural Studies:** CCS 601, Documenting Indigenous Knowledge Systems; CCS 608, Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

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international science fair and student summit science seminars on globalization, global warming, diseases, new endeavors, genetic engineering and clean environments. These are key issues for international science and technology research.

The festival had 600 students and 200 educators/chaperones. Educators and chaperones were asked to present papers on science education in their economy. Dr. Bradley reported on the

ANSES Initiative of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative which included science camps and fairs for rural students in Alaska. Participating educators/chaperones showed great interest in our culture-based science camps and fairs. They expressed interest in developing a student exchange program with the culture-based camps in Alaska and summer programs in their countries. ☆

Enrollment in the above courses may be arranged through the nearest UAF rural campus or by contacting the Center for Distance Education at 474-5353 or [racde@uaf.edu](mailto:racde@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 should contact the rural education faculty member at the nearest rural campus or the Rural Educator Preparation Partnership office at 543-4500. 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 474-1902 or [ffrjb@uaf.edu](mailto:ffrjb@uaf.edu).

In addition to the above courses offered through the UAF campuses, the following distance education courses are available through the Alaska Staff Development Network under arrangements with Alaska Pacific University: "Alaska Alive" (which meets the state Alaska Studies requirement) and "Creating Culturally Responsive Schools: A Standards-based Approach" (which meets the state Multicultural Education requirement.) A new multicultural education course aimed at administrators is also available through ASDN. Information regarding enrollment in these courses may be obtained from the Alaska Staff Development Network at 364-3801 or [asdn@ptialaska.net](mailto:asdn@ptialaska.net) or at the ASDN web site at: <http://www.asdn.schoolzone.net/asdn/>.

Welcome to the first school year of the new millennium. ☆

# Aspects of Traditional Iñupiat Education

by Paul Ongtooguk

## Iñupiat Society: The Myth

Traditional Alaska Natives are often thought of as a common, nomadic culture that moved almost randomly with little more than hope to guide decisions about where to seek the next meal and where to set up the next shelter. The Hollywood image of Alaska and Alaska Natives reinforces this stereotype, as the film image is one of fur-clad people living in blinding blizzards of constant snow. Imagine the camera, as it pans up to a thin line of specks on the horizon. The camera slowly closes in and the specks become visible as people walking into the blizzard. (I don't know why we always walk into the blizzards, but in films we always seem to.) Then, the narrator, in a low, serious tone announces "In a ceaseless quest for survival, the hearty Eskimo are in search of the caribou." The image is an important one, as it represents most people's only visual encounter with the traditional life of the Eskimo. It is also false, as it portrays the Eskimo as playing survival roulette, wandering about hoping to chance upon some caribou.

## Iñupiat Society: Some Realities

It is true that most Alaska Native groups often moved, but it is also true that the locations and times of these moves were not in any way random. A culture would not long survive in the Arctic, much less develop over several thousand years, if it were dependent on such random luck. Rather the Iñupiat cycle of life developed through a careful consideration of the environment. Among traditional foods

were caribou, marmot, seal, walrus, several variety of whale, many kinds of fish, bear, rabbit, ptarmigan and a variety of roots, eggs, seeds and berries. The Iñupiat also gathered resources, such as ivory, jade in some regions, copper in others, slate, driftwood, baleen and bones. Sometimes the materials sought included grasses for insulation and baskets or animals and birds for clothing and shelter. Hunting and fishing were planned based on the knowledge of where animals and fish had been found in the past, knowledge about weather

conditions and the changing patterns of climate.

Camps were carefully chosen locations. The camp, or living area, was selected, because it was perceived as the most likely location of a concentration of food. Adequate fresh water and relative safety were, and are today, carefully considered. There were also settled communities. Over a thousand people lived in the traditional communities now commonly called Pt. Hope and Wales. These communities were established long before the Roman era of Western Europe.

Iñupiat societies developed unique equipment and tools that were relevant for the area in which that society lived. The invention and refinement over thousands of years of how to design and construct the right equipment was a crucial aspect of traditional life. As William Oquilluk, an Iñupiat author, pointed out in *People of Kauwerak*, the invention of tools and shelter for living in the Arctic was inspired through careful observation of the world: the spider web for the net, not only the fish net, but also nets for birds and seals; the leaf floating on the water for the first boats that were gradually refined into the *qayaq*—one of the more graceful and efficient boat designs. There are many others: the ulu, the harpoon, the reinforced bow, the throwing dart and the gutskin parka. The development of tools and equipment is one example that Iñupiat society was not static in traditional times and that change was not a consequence of contact with outsiders.

Thus it was not mere hope and persistence that allowed Iñupiat society to develop in the North. Traditional Iñupiat society was, and is, about knowing the right time to be in the right place, with the right tools to take advantage of a temporary abundance of resources. Such a cycle of life was, and is, based on a foundation of knowledge about and insight into the

natural world. Such a cycle of life was, and is, dependent upon a people's careful observations of the environment and their dynamic response to changes and circumstances. Developing this cycle of life was critical to the continuance of traditional Iñupiat society. Also critical was a system to share this knowledge and insight with the next generation.

### *Traditional Education: a Myth*

Many educators today stereotype the traditional educational system of Alaska Natives in a manner that is reminiscent of the Hollywood blizzard portrayal of traditional Iñupiat society. A prevalent belief, for example, of many educators is that American indigenous people "learn by doing." In schools the application of this belief often results in activities where students are provided a minimum amount of information and a maximum amount of activities that allow for random experimentation and hands-on discovery. Such a simplified view of teaching and learning imposed on a diversified group of people is as foolish as the image of the northern Iñupiat randomly searching for food in the Arctic.

Two common sense observations should immediately lead educators to question this belief. First, the traditional life of the Iñupiat demanded knowledge and perceptiveness about the world. Consider hunting. The successful hunter had to have knowledge about the particular area, the species being hunted and the appropriate technology. Further, he had to be skilled in the application of that knowledge. The Iñupiat were not successful hunters because they threw themselves into "learning by doing" situations. To learn about sea ice conditions and safe travel "by doing" alone would be suicidal. In fact "doing" is the back end of the educational

experience in traditional life. Second, it is naive to think that any group of people can be categorized as preferring one learning style. Learning style inventories are popularly administered in schools today in order to determine student preferences and student patterns of insight. Teachers believe that the information revealed about individual students from learning style inventories is important. Teachers often intend to apply that information as they plan, deliver and evaluate lessons. Caucasian students are expected to exhibit a range of learning behavior. (By the way I often think this whole issue is confused in how much it ignores the demands of the subject being learned. Hands-on learning alone of chess? Ignoring the conceptual issues of small engines is partly to blame for all those so-called mechanics trading old parts for new ones without repairing vehicles.) Why would Alaska Natives be expected to perform any differently?

### *Traditional Education: Some Realities*

Then how were people prepared to live in traditional times? Probably no one alive today can answer that question completely. Decades of changes in society coupled with the demands of compulsory education mean that traditional learning and ways of learning have been obscured and many pieces have been lost. While there are some obvious elements still in place, they tend to be fragmented and are seldom recognized as portions of an entire way of learning. While these fragments can be gathered from a variety of sources, one of the most credible is the personal story. The examples that follow are personal and illustrate how the role of the male hunter was learned by some of the boys in a contemporary Iñupiat community.

## *Observation*

Observation is a critical element of the traditional educational system. The first knowledge about hunting comes from boys watching how hunters prepare their equipment, their clothing and themselves. Observation begins at a very early age and continues for years. At first the boy observes how relatively easy it seems to load a boat. Then, another year, the boy sees more than the work and starts to notice the balance of the load. He sees what will be readily needed, what must not be allowed to sit under the load, what knots should be used to properly tie things down in the various parts. What had appeared simple at the first observation gradually becomes extremely complicated as the issues are understood. The sophisticated observer finally extracts the principles that become the threads by which what has been "seen and done" is understood.

The young boy, through observation, also learns about the value system associated with hunting. As hunters return from a successful trip, goods are shared. In Iñupiat society, it is through participation that a person becomes a part of the community. In contrast to the Robinson Crusoe drama, in the Arctic, if a person is alone, the odds of survival are undermined. In fact, in Iñupiat society higher status is acquired through sharing. Boys learn to prove themselves through helping others.

## *Immersion in the Stories and Customs*

As the child is immersed in the stories and customs of the communities, he learns more about the traditions, values and beliefs associated with hunting in an Iñupiat community. Before his first hunt, he has listened to hunting stories for years.

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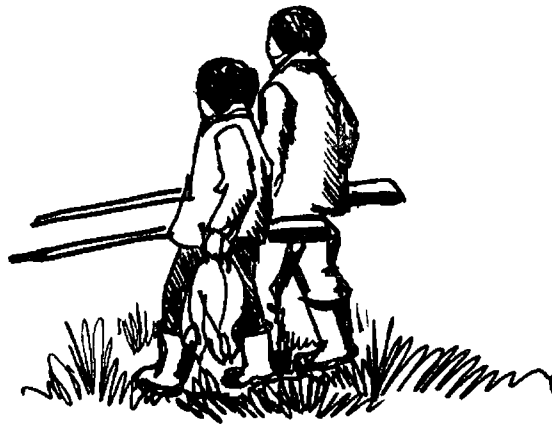
These were both entertaining and informative. As a result of these stories told by Elders and veteran hunters, the young child constructs a mental image of all that is required and some sense of the important aspects of preparing and engaging in the hunt.

Many of the stories he listens to as a child were stories that emphasized the disposition—the attitude—of the hunter. In these stories bragging and pride in personal accomplishment would be condemned. In the stories, animals can read the mind of the hunter and either give themselves or not, in part based on an appreciation of the giving of the physical body. Even after the animal gives up the body, respect should be shown in definite ways according to the stories and traditions. This is why some hunters who are deacons and respected members of churches still pour fresh water in the mouth of a seal after it has been shot. The belief is that the seal likes fresh water and that the undying nature of the seal will remember the gesture and bring another body for the hunters later.

The stories about animals giving themselves to hunters might not seem to make sense to outsiders, but it is difficult to imagine anything else if a person has hunted very long. There are times, when in spite of careful planning and preparation, cautious stalking and quiet approaches, no animal will allow a hunter to even remotely approach. At other times a person will be setting up camp and a caribou or moose will walk within a stone's throw and then patiently wait for the hunter to take advantage of their good fortune. How else to account for these turns of events that have so little to do with skill and more to do with the disposition of the animal? Today some Westerners might

deride such practices and beliefs. But perhaps the stories are actually about protecting and helping the hunter. Respect for the animal being hunted may prevent the hunter from becoming overly confident or prideful. Pride often produces carelessness and may prevent learning and observation from occurring. In fact, pride and arrogance can be fatal in the Arctic where the best lesson to keep in mind is how little we actually know and how easily we can be swept from the world.

Showing respect for the animals



also ensures that better care will be taken of the physical remains of the animal. The importance of such a disposition for the Iñupiat hunter is obvious. Often the stories children hear will emphasize how clever, thoughtful and ingenious a person has been in becoming successful as a hunter and a provider to the community.

## Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is another aspect of traditional education. Often a young hunter is guided in the apprenticeship by an uncle. The uncle's role may be familiar to some parents in urban life who face the task of teaching their children to drive. For while the young person may be capable of learning to drive, the parents are often so deeply

attached and concerned that it is difficult to keep the teaching role in mind. Parents can all too readily imagine that this future driver of over a ton of steel is the same child who broke objects and fumbled through life as a toddler. On the other hand an uncle is close enough in relationship to carry the burden of keeping a youngster alive, while at the same time distant enough to keep things in perspective. Hunting in the Arctic is difficult enough. Hunting while keeping an eye on a young person is just that much more so.

The apprenticeship begins on the day that the uncle chooses to take the future hunter out. In contrast to Western systems of education there is no predetermined beginning and ending schedule for the apprenticeship. The age at which this happens depends upon the maturity of the youngster. The uncle has been watching the young hunter and one day, with almost a casual air, the uncle and his hunting partner agree to take the youngster out.

The young hunter has been trying to show, in numerous ways, that he is ready for this. The youngster may have been hunting ptarmigan, usually with a bow and arrows that he and his friends have made. Why is this hunting so important to the young man? Observation has demonstrated to the boys that hunting is valued in many ways. As a child he has seen the appreciation and admiration shown to hunters returning to the community. As a child, when he got his first ptarmigan or rabbit, he was required to give it to his oldest female relative—grandmother, great-grandmother or an aunt. The female relative made a great deal of the event—praising the fine size of the catch and noting how long it had been since they had seen one as good as this. The boy was then instructed to

run to the homes of many relatives and friends inviting them over for a feast. The women prepared a great many foods, but the center of the feast was a stew in which the little bird or rabbit was transformed into a meal for many people. All would eat and praise the stew and note how clever and hard working the young hunter had been in acquiring this meal for the community. All the conversation praising the hunter would take place as though he were invisible and yet he would feel a mixture of pride and embarrassment at all the attention. The lesson of the importance of hard work and persistence in hunting would not be lost.

Apprentice hunters might not actually hunt the first time they go out to a hunting camp. The youngest person sets up the tent, hauls water, perhaps prepares sleeping bags, collects firewood, cooks and certainly cleans. But is this only dreary labor? First, keep in mind that these chores are being done out at camp and so everything is edged with excitement for the young apprentice. But, the real lesson, as a young person, is to learn to deal with the long and hard labor without giving in to fatigue.

While out at camp, the young boy learns about good locations for certain animals, fish or materials during certain seasons. The boy also learns about how to select the location for the hunting camp, what equipment to bring for certain areas and for different kinds of hunting, fishing or trapping. A person would certainly be expected to learn about terrain, travel routes and hazards. A young hunter would also learn something about local weather and about basic weather prediction. Sometimes the significant event is learning about the location of good water and, always, hunting is about maintaining hunting equipment. From these early experiences a person begins a lifetime of learning about animals, fish, various other

foods, habitats and animal behaviors.

If the hunt went well a boy would also begin to observe the techniques and skills used by hunters in locating and stalking an animal. The apprentice hears the male hunters discuss the nature of the hunt and anything learned, anything unusual or notable. Often the discussion revolves around how and why things turned out the way they did. They may even tease about the lack of success. But if there is success, the young apprentice helps in packing and hauling the catch.

He learns how to pack and store and how to move from one place to another, efficiently and intelligently. The room for error is very slim at times. The apprentice is taught to think about what he is going to do and to ask himself: What can go wrong? What are the dangers? Then he is taught to think again and not to take unnecessary risks, because the necessary ones are dangerous enough. The boy learns that taking risks is for people whose lives are very different than his. Caution and appreciation for life are the dispositions of the hunters who know that life cannot be taken for granted.

## *The Community as a School*

In contrast to the system of modern Western education, in traditional Iñupiat society the community is a school. The observations that a young boy makes are not scheduled in classes or confined to a school building or other restricted environment. The immersion of the young hunter in the

stories and customs of the community are likewise an integral part of the child's life. Older men tell stories about everything and the stories are the lessons. When, where and what lessons occur are dependent upon the time, the place and the season. The lessons are tied to the traditional cycle of life.



The apprenticeship, while perhaps seemingly familiar as a model used in Western education, is best understood in traditional Iñupiat education, as one more piece of an educational system that is integral to the notion of the community as a school. Why a particular uncle steps forward to guide a young hunter is dependent upon complex family, social, psychological and community relationships. It is also within the context of a community of hunters that the apprenticeship occurs. Preservation of the communities and societies depends on the cooperation of its members and the apprenticeship occurs within this hunting community. While the apprentice might focus on a particular task, there is no separation of the task from the larger context. Traditional Iñupiat hunters must learn to do several things at the same time. For example, the hunters may discuss how exceptional circumstances in the hunt will be met while they are, at the same time, cleaning their equipment. For the apprentice there is no isolation from the realities of the hunting community.

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Within this context traditional education is a highly disciplined education. There is a need to pay attention to the stories that told about right and wrong attitudes and behavior. There is a need for the young hunter to develop both the physical and mental dispositions of a mature hunter, including understanding why something is being done in a particular way. When hunting in the Arctic, things often do not go as planned and skilled hunters must know how to solve problems. An educational goal of traditional Iñupiat society is a careful preparation of the young for the roles of adults. This goal is shared by the community and the children are both attended to and expected to be attentive. The values of traditional Iñupiat education include cooperation and intense effort. These values are rewarded in many ways, including the satisfaction that the hunter feels when people are fed and he knows that he has contributed to the effort that has provided some of the food.

### *A Cautionary Tale*

This description is only a fraction of the traditional educational system. Hunting skills and conditioning were, and are, learned through traditional games and competition such as wrestling, weight lifting and the one- and two-foot high kick. In addition to hunting, traditional education has provided and is continuing to provide a way for children to learn and accept other adult roles that are essential to survival. Further, Iñupiat society has developed many art forms including sculpture, music, dance and story. Celebrations and ceremonies were a part of Iñupiat communities as were people who were philosophers and historians. Despite the challenge of the environment, the Iñupiat survived and developed a complex society. The traditional Iñupiat system of

education worked well within the framework in which it developed.

There are many factors that have contributed to the erosion of the traditional educational system. The relocation of Native people and the establishment of boarding schools had devastating effects, as children were separated from the traditional educational system that taught them how to participate in the community. As Western culture collided with Alaska Native cultures, some practices associated with traditional education, such as the telling of stories by the hunters, were condemned by some as "Satanic." As the Western educational system was imposed in Alaska Native communities, those arriving concluded that Native people were primitive and backward and thus no advice was sought in the kind and direction of the education system formed. When missions were established, the choice of location was often unfortunate. Bethel, Alaska was located at its present site simply because it was as far up the river as the boat could travel given the limited knowledge that the missionaries had about the river channels. If they had sought advice, they might have ended a bit farther up the river at the present day site of Aniak with a better source of water, some trees for construction and higher ground for a foundation. One story tells that when the missionaries arrived in Kivalina in the summer they set the school building on a sand spit, not considering that their school would be held primarily in the winter and that the winter locations for the Alaska Native people in that region would have been by fresh water, in the tree line across the lagoon.

Today, teachers and other educators often ask, "Why don't Native parents care about the education of their kids?" This question demonstrates an ignorance that is pervasive in our educational system. Imagine an entire community of adults who do

not care about the ability of their children to meet the future. This is so unlikely that it is ludicrous. Also, it seems obvious that any culture that has survived thousands of years must have had a successful system of education. But many people remain ignorant and unconcerned with the complex and successful aspects of traditional Native education. Why does this estrangement between school and community continue? Some parents may have questions about the goals of the school. The parents may not care about the school or they don't equate it with education. Many parents see lots of papers passed back and forth but do not see their children being prepared for anything that they value. Some parents believe that learning about traditional life is the most valuable knowledge that can be taught to their children. Many parents still participate in the more traditional Native educational system as they prepare their children to contribute to the community. Whatever the reasons for estrangement, the school does not have a monopoly on education in an Alaska Native community and is seen by some as a competing system of learning.

The stories told here are repeated all over Alaska. In a sense they might be considered as cautionary tales. Tales about how good intentions may produce mixed results when they are not combined with thoughtful discussions with local people. A little advice from the people who were thought "too primitive or backward" might have resulted in communities that were located in more desirable geographic locations. Knowledge about the traditional educational system of Alaska Natives might, even today, result in schools that are more completely integrated into our communities. This essay is an attempt to break some of the stereotypes about the Iñupiat that persist in American society and by doing so to promote better opportunities for Alaska Native students. ✧

# Village Science: The Pike Story

by Alan Dick

While it has been proven that using relevant materials and examples in teaching is far more successful and fulfilling for students and teachers alike, there is a phenomenon that still surprises most teachers as they try to make the shift from textbooks to curriculum based on the local community. As the teacher prepares the lesson that is filled with examples taken from village life and plans the trip into the village, perhaps to survey the pitch of the props on the boats or determine the surface area/weight ratio of local snow machines, images of students being excited and finally turned on to school dance through his/her head. Imagine the disappointment when the lesson crashes just like the ones drawn from a Texas textbook. I pondered this for some time. Why wouldn't students take off with maximum enthusiasm after being under the cloud of irrelevant education for so long?

Finally, I heard of an experiment done by a researcher. A pike was put in a large aquarium. Every day the researcher poured a container of small fish into the tank. The pike darted around until every one of feeder fish was nestled deeply in his digestive tract. Then the researcher put a piece of glass in the middle of the tank. The pike was on one side and the small fish were poured in on the other. The pike darted back and forth in his usual

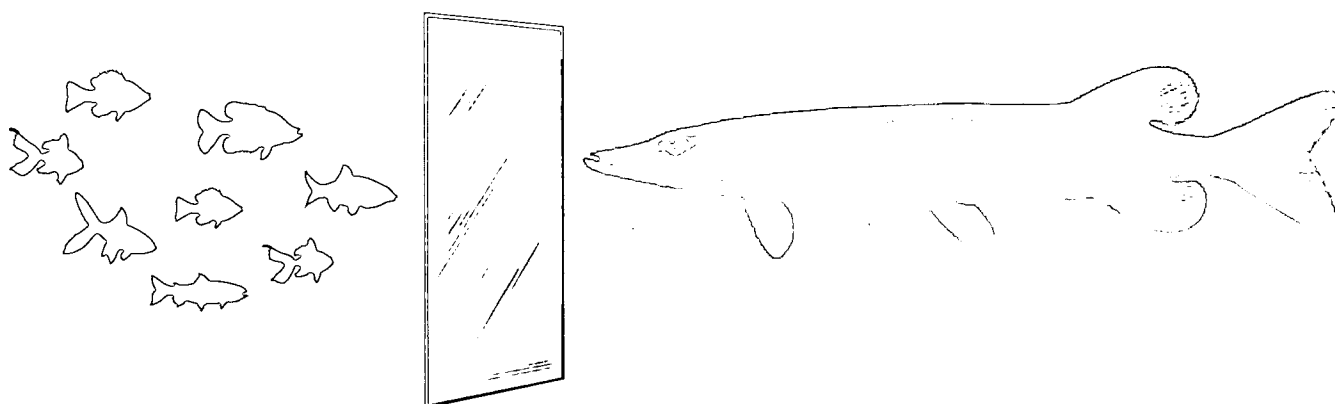
manner, but was stunned as he repeatedly smashed his snout on the invisible barrier. Again and again he tried. Finally he hovered quietly in the corner.

A couple of days later the researcher removed the glass. The little fish swam around, but the pike remained motionless. The little fish cruised around his head. His eyes did not follow them. He didn't twitch. His

will had been broken. He had learned not to trust his instincts. Bewilderment had replaced survival skills. Apathy ruled over basic desires. Whatever it was that happened to the pike, it's not unlike what has happened over the years in Alaskan education. Our students natural curiosity has been numbed. When we place promising educational opportunities right before their eyes, they often refuse to strike.

This phenomenon can be overcome, though it takes time for students who have been turned off to learn to enjoy learning again, to respond to their natural curiosities, to find what interests them and pursue it. Very seldom does the first lesson based on hunting or gathering of local resources prove successful.

We must not give in to discouragement. We teachers too have rammed the invisible barrier until we are often numb to new possibilities. We must exhibit the maturity and persistence necessary to get past the initial stages of discouragement and believe that relevant education is the only way our villages are going to regain their enthusiasm for learning—the true test of standards. ☆



# Yup'ik Region

## AKRSI Evolves into Phase II

by Barbara Liu

The Alaska RSI project is ending its first five-year cycle. My part, as regional coordinator since December 1996 under the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), provided a great job opportunity to meet and work with many people regionally and statewide. It was the Elders who brought their understanding and perspective to the work that is the most memorable experience for me. I've developed a sympathetic attitude towards indigenous knowledge and its place in pedagogy.

I would like to thank the K-12 school districts, community college, tribal community and Elder representatives from the Yup'ik/Cup'ik region who diligently attended the AKRSI-sponsored consortium meetings, workshops and conferences to discuss and contribute to the development of educational standards and

culturally-responsive curriculum. The Cultural Standards are one of the major products of this work.

If I tried to list everyone's name it wouldn't be fair because I would leave some out. Yet, so many of you stand out in my memory as wonderful, sincere advocates. From December, 1996 to August 2000, we met in various

remote sites in Alaska and beyond: Chena Hot Springs, Sitka, St. Mary's, Bethel, Dillingham, Kotzebue, Kodiak, Anchorage, New Mexico, New Zealand and Hawaii.

All the entities that came together, especially in statewide and regional consortium meetings, shared educational standards and curricular ideas in one large room, much like the way the Elders describe the *qasgi* (community house) when it was used to host educational gatherings in the past.

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*"It was the Elders who brought their understanding and perspective to the work that is the most memorable experience for me."*

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Today, conference gatherings are set up so everyone is dispersed and attends when and what they want. But having participated in eight or so consortium meetings hosted each year in a different region, there was excellent attendance by all participants with time and dollars well spent in my opinion. I am proud of the work we accomplished as a team throughout the past five years.

After August 31, 2000 the regional coordinators role with AFN is ending and the regional organizations sponsoring the Tribal College initiatives will take on the responsibility to carry out the regional coordination of AKRSI initiatives. As for now, I am content and happy to have served in this capacity and through the transition period this fall; regional coordination will continue under AFN.

Finally, thank you, *qyana* NSF, AFN and U of A for this great effort that I had a chance to be a part of.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Liu ☆



Elder Henry Alakayak of Manokotak (second from right) shares how they work on curriculum through Ciulistet in the Dillingham area. Charles Kashatok (third from right), LKSD representative and currently a principal at Nunapitchuk School, listens closely. Photo taken by Dorothy Larson at a 1998 statewide consortium.



# Aleut/Alutiiq Region

## Camp Qungaayuġ 2000

by Moses L. Dirks

Culture camps are the place to be this time of the year. It is exciting to see the children and Elders interacting and learning about what their ancestors did long before they got discovered by outsiders.

This will be the third year that we have had this type of activity for school-aged children. This year Camp Qungaayuġ 2000 had over 50 students registered for the camp. Thirty-eight mentor Elders were hired to teach the topics.

A lot of the credit goes to the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative and the Alaska Rural Challenge for making this possible. Partial funding from these organizations have reawakened or revitalized the cultural practices

the Unangan People had in the past. The local entities have been very generous in contributing not only labor force, but help sponsor the culture camp. Without their support, the event would not have been a success. Special thanks to the Qawalangin Tribe for all the extra hours that they put into the camp planning.

The topics that are presented by the Elders and mentors include the following:

1. Sea mammal butchering (Algaġ)

2. Unangan dance (Aġaġ)
3. Unangan baskets (Aygagaġiġ)
4. Asxuġ
5. Bentwood hats (Chagudaġ)
6. Boat safety and Iqyaġ
7. Ulaġ
8. Qalimaġiġ fish preparation
9. Food preparation (Qaqaġ)
10. Intertidal studies (Aguġ)
11. Beach Seining (Kudmachiġ)
12. Plantlore I & II (Tanachngangin)
13. Storytelling

The Elders spearheaded the classes, which taught exclusively in traditional Unangan ways of doing things. Unangan language was used by the Elders and mentors to perpetuate the relearning of the Unangan cultural activities.

Camp Qungaayuġ commenced August 14, 2000 and continued through August 19, 2000. The last day was celebrated with a potluck. Unangan food and dances were performed to cap off the festivities. Each Elder/mentor and student received a sweatshirt with a Camp Qungaayuġ logo on it and a certificate of participation. This year we invited Unangan students from Adak, Atka, Nikolski and Akutan. Students from other villages have a lot to share with the larger communities.

We had a great time learning and meeting new people.

For more information about Camp Qungaayuġ call Harriet Berikoff, Qawalangin Tribe (907) 581-2920 or Moses L. Dirks at (907) 581-5837 ✪



*Song and dance were enjoyed by all during the beautiful evenings on the beach at the science/culture camp at Katenai on Afognak Island.*



*Julie Knagin, Heidi Christiansen, Ole Mahle and Marsha Parker worked together to bend the steamed spruce rim around a form at the science-culture camp at Katenai on Afognak Island. This rim was later used in a drum that was made for Sally Ash, a visitor from the village of Nanwalek. The drum was made by the students who attended the camp with help from Jim and Bonnie Dillard.*



*Nasquluk (kelp) was laid on top of the prepared spruce rims which were laid on top of layer of nasquluk, rocks and fire. This combination created the steam necessary to bend the wood for drum rims. Jim Dillard worked with students and adults to make this a highlighted event during both camps.*

# Southeast Region

by *Andy Hope*

The Southeast Alaska Native Education Forum (SEANEF) took place in Juneau, June 22–24, 2000. The general purpose of the forum was to develop regional Native education action plans, modeled on the action plans produced by the participants in the statewide Native Education Summit that took place in Juneau, March 1–4, 2000 and reported in the last SOP newsletter.

Following are summaries of the respective action plans/recommendations of the SEANEF working groups:

The Southeast Alaska Native Language Consortium working group reviewed accomplishments and activities since the last meeting in October 1998. The working group outlined a list of 20 concerns that should be addressed in specific action plans by consortium members.

The Southeast Alaska Native Educators Association working group started a list of Native educators in southeast Alaska and recommended that SEANEA reorganize.

SEANEA will meet in the fall in conjunction with the Alaska Native Brotherhood/Sisterhood convention.

The Native education-working group expressed serious concern and made several recommendations about

the high school qualifying examination that is scheduled to be implemented in 2002.

The Southeast Alaska Tribal College (SEATC) working group recommended that the its interim trustees meet in Juneau in August, 2000 to formally adopt bylaws and to appoint trustees.

The curriculum working group adopted a two-month action plan focusing on the "I Am Salmon" curriculum project. Participants from respective school districts will work over the summer to develop resources for presentation on the web. An "I Am Salmon" website workshop will be sponsored by One Reel of Seattle and will take place at Evergreen School August 30–31.

For more detailed information and reports on the Southeast Alaska Native Education Forum, visit the ANKN website at [www.ankn.uaf.edu](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu). ✧

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# Sharing Our Pathways

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Nov/Dec 2000

A newsletter of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative  
Alaska Federation of Natives ♦ University of Alaska ♦ National Science Foundation ♦ Annenberg Rural Challenge

## Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative Funded For Another Five Years

by Frank Hill

The first five-year phase of funding and activities of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative officially ended on August 31, 2000. Due to the continuing success of the AKRSI in its curricular reform efforts, the National Science Foundation has approved funding for a second five years, beginning November 1, 2000. The Alaska Federation of Natives will continue as the sponsor of the project.

The success of the AKRSI is due to the inspiration and work of many people. As we close out Phase I and begin on the next phase, it is only fitting that we acknowledge those who have contributed to the success of AKRSI during the first five years.

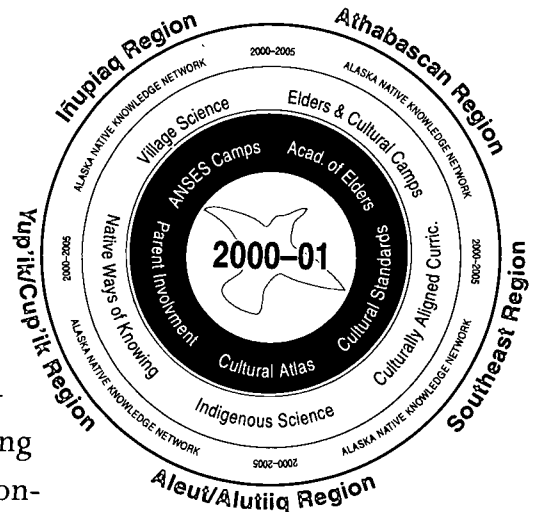
First, thank you to all of the Native Elders from throughout the five regions for their patience, wisdom, understanding and willingness to share their cultural knowledge. Without their participation in AKRSI, we couldn't have begun the systemic reform effort.

Next, a round of applause for Dr. Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley and Dr.

Ray Barnhardt. Oscar, for the inspiration and ability to teach us and others the legitimacy of the Native world view which is the cultural and philosophical basis for AKRSI; Ray, for his phenomenal ability to keep track of all of the complex issues, translating Native knowledge into relevant curricula for Alaska's Native students and leading the teams as we "perform" for NSF review panels.

The AKRSI staff deserves much of the credit for its success: the regional coordinators from the five cultural regions including Andy Hope III in Southeast, Teri Schneider out in

(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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(continued from front page)  
Alutiiq/Aleut territory, Barbara Liu on the rivers of her Yup'ik country, Elmer Jackson up north in Iñupiaq country and Amy Van Hatten among her folks in Athabaskan territory. All of the regional coordinators learned how to work with Elders, brought them together with schools and educators and brought a local focus to each year's initiatives. The folks on the UAF campus: Sean Topkok, Paula Elmes, Lolly Carpluk, Dixie Dayo, Jeannie Creamer-Dalton, Dr. Claudette Bradley and others who lent their support to the project are deserving of thanks for their dedication and hard work. We need to remember the undying efforts of Alan Dick for his collecting and writing of science teaching practices that will benefit Native students for many years to come.

Our 20 memorandum-of-agreement (MOA) school districts and other regional partners who have hosted much of the work accomplished by the AKRSI should receive special recognition for their willingness to attempt a new approach to curricular

reform. As they continue the work after AKRSI support, they become leaders in the reform effort.

We deeply appreciate Julie Kitka, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives, for her personal support and her willingness to convince the AFN Board of the validity and value of the AKRSI, both at the beginning of the project and for its continuation into Phase II.

We appreciate, too, the continued partnership with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development and the University of Alaska for their willingness to incorporate and validate Native knowledge systems into university and state educational policies and practices.

To all of the entities and persons named and those whose contributions we may have inadvertently omitted, a great big *quyanaa!* *Quyana!* *Qagaasakung!* *Baasee'!* *Gunalche'esh!* *Chin'un!* Thank you! We look forward to working with you for continued success during the next five years. ☆



## Teacher Grants for Math, Science & Technology

**Alaska teachers may receive up to \$5,000 for innovative, hands-on classroom projects. See the ASTF web page: [www.astf.org](http://www.astf.org). No web access? Call Sharon Fisher, Outreach Administrator at Alaska Science & Technology Foundation, 907-452-1624.**

# Planning Underway for 2001 Native Educators' Conference

by Virginia Ned and Ray Barnhardt

Over the past few years, Alaska Native Educators have formed a series of regional associations to support initiatives addressing issues related to Alaska Native education. These associations will once again serve as the hosts for the 2001 Native Educator's Conference to be held February 4–6, 2001 in conjunction with the annual Alaska Bilingual/Multicultural Education/Equity Conference February 7–9, 2001 in Anchorage. 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.

This year's NEC will include a work session on February 4, 2001 aimed at finalizing and adopting two sets of guidelines that have been drafted as extensions of the work on the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*. Participants will review draft *Guidelines for Nurturing Culturally Healthy Youth*, as well as a set of draft *Guidelines for Strengthening Indigenous Languages*—both of which are under development through a series of regional meetings this fall.

The Native Educators' Conference provides an opportunity to share and contribute to the excellent work that is underway in schools and communities throughout the state. Building on past themes, the tentative theme for the 2001 NEC is "Reaping the Harvest of Indigenous Knowledge." Proposals for workshop presentations at the

NEC should be submitted to the ANKN offices by December 15, 2000. For proposal forms, a registration packet or further information, contact:

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PO Box 756730  
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Phone: 907-474-2477 or 474-1902  
Fax: 907-474-5615  
E-mail: fnvmn1@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. ☆

The Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Division of Subsistence and the Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission announce the joint release of

## WHISKERS! 2.0.

WHISKERS! is a multicultural, multimedia database of indigenous local knowledge about Alaska marine mammals organized into seven geographic regions: Southeast Alaska, North Pacific Rim, Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula, Aleutians and Pribilof Islands, Bristol Bay and Northwest Alaska. The Alaska Department of Fish & Game, with support from the Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission, compiled the database from key respondent interviews with Alaska Natives in approximately 65 Alaskan coastal communities between 1992 and 1998. As a result, over 3100 notes have been compiled from Elders and active hunters.

WHISKERS! will

- assist teachers with meeting Alaska science curriculum standards,
- integrate traditional ecological knowledge and wisdom with western science,
- utilize technology in the classroom and
- implement locally-relevant and culturally-responsive curriculum material.

To receive a free copy of the CD and user's guide, send an e-mail with your name, affiliation and mailing address to Craig Mishler, the compiler of the database. Craig's email address is [zippy@alaska.net](mailto:zippy@alaska.net).

# How Does the Crane Keep Its Language?

by Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley

“When I was a little bitty baby, my momma would rock me in the cradle, in them old tundra hills back home,” and as I rocked I would hear the voices of my ancestors just as the crane chicks in their nest hear the mother crane making its call.

I don't know if the crane has the genes in its DNA to make its own distinctive call or if it learns it from its mother and other members of its own kind, but it does learn to speak the crane language. Baby cranes do not make a call like that of a seagull's raucous, squalling sound or like any other member of the bird family. Each species has its own distinct call—a language readily identifiable as its own—and all those unique languages continue to be passed on from one generation to the next.

As Native people, we too have our own unique languages which have been passed on from one generation to the next for many millennia. So why are we losing our Native languages so rapidly? Could it be because we, as parents, grandparents and villagers, do not speak to our children in our own Native language anymore? Why is it that we do not speak to them in our languages? One of the reasons is that our primary language has become English, which is a voracious language that eats up our Native languages. Perhaps this is brought about as a result of the remembrance of some Elders and parents of the shaming, abuse and punishment they received in school for speaking their own Native language. We must begin to freely talk about such experiences and the hurt feelings and shame so the healing process can begin.

So what must we do to keep from losing our Native languages? For one thing, we can look at other indigenous people who have been successful in re-enlivening and revitalizing their languages. We can take a look at the Maori language nests or the Native Hawaiians' programs and then put into practice that which is proving to work. We must consult with our Elders to see what we, as Native people, need to do to save our Native languages. This is a very tough and complicated charge for those of us engaged in teaching, research and role modeling. Head Start teachers, parents, Elders and villagers have the grave responsibility of teaching our Native youngsters their Native language. After all, they are our future.

Why teach our Native languages that are often looked upon by the modern world as useless, nontechnical and incapable of conveying profound meaning and concepts? As Alaska Native people we need to convince ourselves and our young ones that our Native languages are important and can convey deep meaning and complex thinking. As I have said in the past, using our Native languages thrusts us into the thought world of our ancestors. We can talk about our traditional hunting and gathering ways and sophisticated technology by using our Native languages. For example, our Yupiaq word, *pinaa*, which means “his, her or

its strength,” can mean physical strength of a person, of a bow, of the *oogruk* skin covering the *qayaq* or of water. It can mean intellectual prowess of a person, place or thing. It can mean emotional or spiritual strength and stability, all depending on the context in which it is used. Or take *qalluq*, our word for rolling thunder or electrical discharge. It is now our word for electricity. Who says our Native languages are not technical? They can be very technical and profoundly spiritual at the same time. Don't ever believe anyone who puts forward such feeble reasons for encouraging us to lose our Native languages. Manu Meyer, a Native Hawaiian, puts it this way: “We practice abstract thinking, but it is tied to purpose and a meaningful existence.” We—ourselves and our youngsters—need to learn and understand this important philosophical thought.

There are other reasons why we should not lose our Native languages. They allow us to articulate spiritually and emotionally and convey the deeper meanings of life. Richard Littlebear of Montana has pointed out that our languages allow our people to articulate the subtle attributes and meaning associated with self-governance, law and order, jurisprudence, literature, a land base, spirituality and sacred practices. We, as well as the rest of the world, cannot afford to diminish the diversity of cultures. To have but one language and one culture in this world would be boring indeed and would put our very existence as a species at greater risk.

The most important part of growing up is when children are developing a beginning understanding of their language, culture and place. However, human beings do not have a built-in mechanism for learning a particular language. Unlike the crane, Native children have no such genes in their genotype, so they have to listen, imitate and learn to utter the sounds found in their own languages. It is like having to learn English, German, Russian or any other language—they have to work at it. The children have to be talked to in their own language during play, so they can imitate, mimic things and ask a lot of questions. They have an acute curiosity to learn during their early lives. We must encourage this attribute by doing things that they can learn from in association with their families, friends and communities. By doing things that are important to their families and communities, their curiosity and willingness to learn will never diminish. In the school, however, they are often learning about things that are foreign to them and find no application in the surrounding community so that by the time they get into the fifth and sixth grades, their inborn curiosity to learn has been leached out of their minds. Sad, but true. We have too many dropouts from high school and others who drop out intellectually and emotionally long before they enter high school.

I have a problem when history is written by an outsider, especially when it deals with Alaska or Alaska Native history, because it is often just one interpretation, usually from a limited perspective. You know where our history is found? It is in our *quliraat* (mythology) and *qalumciit* (stories). So invite the Elders to come into the classroom to tell the stories in their own language. You will find that the values and those qualities that make us a strong people are embedded in our Native words and stories.

The youngsters will begin to understand and yearn *yulunii pitallqertugluni*—being a person who is living a life that feels just right. Alaska Native mythology contains the power and wisdom for guiding us in making a life and a living that feels just right. Alaska Native languages enable us to show proper respect and express courtesy for all elements of Mother Earth.

Another important language activity is to arrange for the Elders to teach the youngsters singing, dancing and drumming. In doing so, the children will become acquainted with the technical words ascribed to rituals, ceremonies and sacred practices. By learning the songs, they will begin to cultivate an identity and connection to place. As hunter-gatherers, we had no need for written history because our history was embedded in place, stories, songs, dances and movement from place to place according to the seasons.

The youngsters should be brought outdoors to begin to appreciate and experience the beauty of nature such as the caterpillar, chamomile and tree. They must be taught that we are connected to everything. The caterpillar eats vegetation, turning it into excrement which is useful to the tree. It gives off carbon dioxide which is also used by the tree. The tree provides a home and food for the caterpillar and gives off oxygen which is used by the caterpillar. As shown by the abbreviated cycles above, everything must go somewhere. Everything that is done in nature is done for some purpose.

Human beings cannot have everything that we want. We must learn to live with limited needs. We must learn to respect and be satisfied with what we have. Life is the greatest gift that we have and we must nurture that which makes life meaningful. Most importantly in that regard, we must maintain our languages because language, more than anything else, shapes

who we are, just as it does for the crane. By maintaining our languages, we are sustaining the ultimate standard of health and endurance of the human species. ☆

## ANKN Website

The ANKN website continues to add new pages. Here are just a few:

- The Phase II Cycle for Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative is available at: <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/phase2.html>.
- One of the new sections is the Handbook for Culturally Responsive Science Curriculum by Sidney Stephens: <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/handbook.html>. This resource requires Adobe Acrobat Reader.
- There is a link to a science unit entitled Dog Salmon by Joy Simon and Velma Schaefer: <http://www.uaf.edu/aine/salmon%20web%20copy/sindex.html>.
- Another new link to a very useful resource is to the Nikaitchuat Ixisabviat Project. This is the Iñupiaq immersion project for preschoolers sponsored by Kotzebue IRA. The curriculum is available on the Alaska Native Curriculum and Teacher Development Project website: [http://www.alaskool.org/native\\_ed/curriculum/OTZImmersion/PROJECTABST.html](http://www.alaskool.org/native_ed/curriculum/OTZImmersion/PROJECTABST.html).

All of these resources should be used for educational purposes only. Any information utilized should follow the *Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge*, which is available at: <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/standards/culturaldoc.html>. ☆

# Observing Locally, Connecting Globally

by Sidney Stephens

Imagine cruising 30 miles down the Tanana River from Perkins Landing to Fox Farm on a warm, sunny July day. Imagine that your boat was piloted by one of three expert Athabascan captains: Elder Howard Luke who has lived, hunted, trapped and fished the river his entire life; Sam Demientieff, member of the Demientieff Navigation family, who grew up barging freight to communities on the Tanana, Yukon, Koyukuk, Iditarod and Innoko Rivers or Wes Alexander, the only five-time winner of the Yukon 800 riverboat marathon, now running riverboat tours to his historic Fox Farm allotment. Imagine the stories you'd hear and the lessons you'd learn.

Well, the 20 teachers in the first *Observing Locally, Connecting Globally* (OLCG) class didn't have to imagine because just such a trip kicked off this two-week class. After a brief introduction to our captains and equipped with Howard's river map, topo maps and GPS receivers, participants boarded their boats. Before casting off, the captains each talked about the

fickle, ever-changing nature of the Tanana. How its level is affected by hot weather but, unlike the Chena River, not much affected by rain. How sandbars and channels shift and change over night and over time. How banks crumble and ledges form due to erosion and permafrost.

Once underway, each captain pointed out examples of these phenomena, intermingling navigational tips with personal reminiscences of their lives on the river. For example, Sam pointed out different riffles and what they might hide, but also shared barging stories like when the burnt skeleton of the *Elaine G* stuck out from a sandbar for years until the constant force of the river and ice dispersed it.



Jonas Ramoth discusses poisonous plants.

Or when the ding, ding of the pilot's bell called all hands on deck to witness the historic passing of the *Steamboat Nenana* on its last run to Fairbanks. Wes talked about his childhood fascination with the river and about his grandfather's patient instruction to watch and remember everything. By paying attention to details and traveling the river over and over again, Wes mentally cataloged hundreds of river variables now used to interpret each riffle, sand bar, cut bank and eddy. Howard, too, has a mental map of the river but preferred to talk of people and places such as Lost Creek, so called because a bootlegger got lost in there and never came out, or Fox Farm itself where, as a boy, Howard skinned and tanned fox hides for the "Old Man."

Traveling with these men, one was awed by their knowledge and confidence and intrigued by glimpses of the river as they know it. For them, the Tanana was clearly much more than part of the scenic view from the Parks Highway or a water body to be studied and measured. It was an integral part of each of their lives and stories.

So what kind of a course was this anyway and how did a river trip fit in? Good questions. Essentially, OLCG



Sam Demientieff looks at a Landsat image with class participants.



is a new project aimed at promoting global change education in Alaska by first engaging students in local environmental observations and monitoring relevant to their community and then connecting these investigations with a broader understanding of global change. We began this course for teachers with the river trip because the study of global change is, of necessity, the study of earth as a system—its interconnected atmosphere, water, soil and living things. Our three captains demonstrated an incredibly rich understanding of these inter-relationships as they finessed their way

the constant input of local experts like Dixie Dayo, Mary Shields and Elders Jonas Ramoth and Catherine Attla. This format was based on the belief that the linking of local knowledge with science instruction in schools is a mutually beneficial process that can only enhance both the cultural well being and the science skills and knowledge



*Catherine Attla talks about having respect for everything.*



*Howard Luke at the Fox Farm.*

down the Tanana. They embodied the kind of long-term observation and systems-thinking necessary not only to navigate a dynamic river, but to monitor the local environment and connect to global change. Thus they set not only the tone, but the standard for the rest of our class, not to mention providing us with one heck of a great day on the river!

Once back in class, we attempted to put these ideas of long-term observation and systems thinking into practice by focusing on the international GLOBE<sup>1</sup> curriculum combined with

of students.

For example, weather is one of the most critically-observed and mentally-cataloged phenomena in villages all over Alaska. Being able to observe and predict the weather is of critical survival value to people traveling on land or water. Weather extended to climate is also of critical importance when considering issues of global change. Consequently, we began our class focus on weather by first

listening to Jonas and Catherine share their knowledge and perspectives. Then we honed in on and practiced specific GLOBE protocols for gathering atmospheric data (e.g. minimum/maximum temperature, snow/rain fall and pH, cloud type and percent cover) and for submitting weather data on the Internet. This same local/GLOBE format was followed for hydrology,

land cover and soil investigations in hopes that participating teachers would then implement and extend such studies with their own K-12 students.

And though we feel happy with OLCG's first attempt at merging Native knowledge with global change education, we realize that we have much to learn and that there is a long way to go before such teaching is either perfected or made prominent in most rural schools and communities. Luckily, the National Science Foundation funded this project for three years which will enable us to support teachers and students throughout the year, connect to related local and international projects and plan and carry out two more summer institutes. If you'd like more information on how you can be a part of this effort, please contact us: Sidney Stephens (ffss1@uaf.edu), Elena Sparrow (ffebs@uaf.edu or 474-7699), Leslie Gordon (lgordon@northstar.k12.ak.us) or Martha Kopplin (mkopplin@northstar.k12.ak.us or 452-2000 ext. 431). ☆

1. The GLOBE curriculum (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment) is an extremely comprehensive, well-tested and hands-on program in which K-12 students collect atmosphere, soil, hydrology, land cover and phenology data over time, entering it on the Internet for scientists and others to analyze and use. See [www.globe.gov](http://www.globe.gov) for more information.

## AISES Corner *(Alaska Native Science & Engineering Society)*

by Claudette Bradley

On July 11, 2000 thirteen middle school students from rural villages in the Interior and North Slope arrived for the two-week Fairbanks AISES Science Camp 2000. The staff included four Elders, four teachers, four resident advisors and a cook. Students developed science projects selecting subjects from the natural environment, discussing their project with Elders, receiving guidance from teachers for their experiments and discovering that science is all around them and that Elders have a lot of knowledge.

Participating Elders were Howard Luke, Elizabeth Fleagle, Margaret Tritt and Kenneth Frank. They taught students to do beadwork, carve and file bone for an Athabaskan spear throwing game and tan caribou skins. They organized fiddle dancing in the evenings and told stories passed down for generations. Their advice and confirmations were invaluable to the students.

Teachers set up a computer lab of Thinkpads® operated by solar panel batteries. The Thinkpads® and printer were donated by IBM; Todd Kelsey of IBM in Rochester, Minnesota joined the camp for a week to work with students in the computer lab and to assist them in developing a weather station with a student-made rain gauge, wind socket and barometer. George Olanna of Shishmaref was a teacher in the computer lab and helped students develop their science projects and display boards. Rita O'Brien led the students in a medicinal plant and berry-picking adventure. Under Rita's direction students made cranberry leather which is like Fruit Rollups. Maria Reyes met with students in Rasmusen Library computer lab to help them search the

Internet for information on their science project. She guided students through a web search and the development of their bibliography. I worked with the students, Elders and staff to help keep the camp afloat.

Following the camp, I served as one of five educators nationally to chaperone 20 teenage scientists to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Youth Science Festival 2000 in Singapore. These students were top science fair winners in state and national science fairs in the Lower Forty-Eight. I was the only person from Alaska among the US delegation sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Of the 800 people from 21 countries attending the conference, 600 were high school students and 200 were educators. The students and chaperones attended a very large science fair with 600 APEC Youth Science Festival (AYSF) 2000 students and nearly 2000 Singapore students. For two evenings the 21 delegations took turns presenting cultural performances for all AYSF participants.

During the teacher/chaperone seminar, I reported on the AISES science camps and fairs sponsored by the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative. The participants expressed interest in

an exchange program between their students and AISES camp students.

We had the opportunity to visit secondary schools in Singapore. Many of us were especially interested in the mathematics programs since Singapore students scored highest in mathematics in the international TIMSS study. The Singapore students and teachers were very well organized with lots of hands-on classroom activities.

The K-12 AISES program in Alaska has been changed to Alaska Native Science and Engineering Society (ANSES). This year we are finishing the end of the first five years of the AKRSI program. Each of the five cultural regions are planning a science fair where they will select grand prize winners to attend the statewide ANSES science fair in Anchorage February 3-5, 2001.

The second five-year round of AKRSI initiatives will emphasize mathematics learning for rural students. The AKRSI staff will include mathematical investigations for science projects as a category in the regional and statewide science fairs. We will discuss mathematical investigations as projects during the monthly audioconferences held in each region. For all science projects students should design data sheets for collecting data and attach the data sheet on their display board.

We look forward to new adventures in science and mathematics during the next few years. We hope you will look at our website <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/aises> where you will find the science fair handbooks and details on the statewide fair. Please contact Alan Dick at [fnad@uaf.edu](mailto:fnad@uaf.edu) or call me at 474-5376 if you have any questions. ☆

# Iñupiaq Region

## Academy of Elders and Culture

### Camps 2000

by Elmer Jackson

An Academy of Elders from the Northwest Arctic met and participated in the Iñupiat Iitqusrait summer camp near Kiana. This year a total of 40 students, youth workers and staff participated in the three sessions for ages eight and up. During the second session, Elders from the Kobuk River region, Kotzebue and Selawik met and participated with the campers and staff.

The theme was "A Gathering for a Time of Learning and Sharing." The goal was to teach the young people the subsistence way of life through fishing, hunting, berry picking and gathering edible and medicinal plants. One student commented that after drinking *tilaaqii* (labrador tea) her sinus cold began to clear. She also said that she was going to take some home.

There were many edible plants and sweet roots growing near the shoreline of the camp: *masru* (sweet roots or wild potatoes), *qusrimmaq* (rhubarb), *quagaq* (sourdock) and *patitaaq* (wild chives).

The academy shared and gave *algaqsruutit* (advice), sang love songs and told stories. *Algaqsruutit* are words of advice to the young.

Gill nets and seine nets were used to catch salmon, *quasrilluk* (whitefish) and other Kobuk River fish. Some were sealed, cut, washed and hung on poles to dry. Some of the fish were half-dried for *iganaaqtuk*, that can be baked or boiled and tastes delicious with seal oil.

Summer youth workers from Kiana met and interviewed Elders for the Oral History Project sponsored by the Kiana Traditional Council. The youth workers participated and helped the staff and campers. They are to be

commended for their great help.

An eagle flew over, observing the camp. I could see the caring eyes of the Elders for they knew that a large eagle is capable of flying off with a small child. Yet they were also awed by the sight of the large golden eagle perched on a spruce tree.

During one of the evening sessions, the Elders shared the following *algaqsruutit* with the young campers:

- What your parents and grandparents teach you is important.
- We will depend on you; you are the ones who will run our Native corporations.
- Give the best *kuak*, *puugmiutaq* and seal oil to others and one-tenth to the church.
- Research your family tree to find out who you are related to.
- The more you learn in grade school, the easier time you will have in college.
- When you help others, especially Elders, don't ask for payment.
- Don't make fun of people, especially those who are disabled.
- When you have a head/sinus cold and are coughing, spit out the mucus; it is not healthy when it stays in your body.
- Learn the Iñupiaq way of life as well as the Western way. Don't

forget that you are Iñupiaq.

- When we were growing up our parents and grandparents taught us to leave other people's property alone.
- Don't steal. If you leave people's things alone, you will make the right choice.
- Respect nature.
- We are never too old to learn.
- Keep your camping area clean.
- Don't throw plastic trash into the river. The fish, birds and other animals can get caught in it.
- When you are out boating, do not throw your trash on the land or in the water. If you do, it will keep the animals and fish away.
- Do not leave your campfire burning while you are away; it could cause a forest fire.
- Hunter and campers have a responsibility to keep the land and water clean.
- When you are camping with other people, share your food with them.
- The Elders' way of life is the truth.
- Culture camps need more support.

The Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative and AFN supported and provided for the Academy of Elders. Thanks to MOA partner Northwest Arctic Borough School District, Ruth Sampson and staff, the Kiana Elders Council and the Kiana Traditional Council for their support of the Academy of Elders and the Iñupiat Iitqusrait summer camp 2000. The camp staff did an excellent job and the food was great! Thanks. ☆

# Athabascan Region

## A Mini-Archeological Field School and a Place-Names Field Trip

This year, the Cultural Heritage and Education Institute (CHEI), a partner in the Athabascan Region of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, is involved in several different activities to enhance educational opportunities for the youth in Minto and foster intergenerational exchange of information.

### Field School

This summer, with support from the Alaska Humanities Forum, cooperation from the Minto Village Council and the volunteer assistance of archeologist Carol Gelvin-Reymiller, CHEI implemented a mini-archeologi-

cal field school for 17 youth in Minto during August of 2000. This field school took place at the "North Fork East Point" site near the village of Minto, which has been used for viewing animals and where stone artifacts have been found in the past. The mini-field school lasted about four days and included discussions with

the students on the field of archeology, the tools used in an excavation, different map views, soil profiles, site layout and surveying and work on troweling, screening methods, observations and other techniques of archeological field work. The students recovered some bone and one artifact—a fragment of a groundstone blade (in four pieces). Most of the participants were under the age of 15 and although they were attentive and persistent, the inclusion of field assistants would have been useful with this young group. Carol Gelvin-Reymiller noted that "The kids were really good and careful with the equipment. They were good workers." Overall the students and the Minto community members seemed very interested in the work and learning about their past and archeology. CHEI hopes to continue to expand this activity as part of the cultural atlas work.



Three participants working on a grid.

cal field school for 17 youth in Minto during August of 2000.

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### Field Trip

On a bright sunny fall afternoon near the Fourteen-Mile area along the Tolovana River, a group of Minto Elders, youth, CHEI staff and other participants stopped to make tea and have lunch during the annual cultural Atlas field trip. The Elders demonstrated how they look for firewood, start a fire with birch bark, cut spruce boughs for sitting and make Indian fry bread. Stories were told by the Elders about hunting in this area and the Minto youth took photos of the place and the other participants. Kraig Berg, a Minto teacher, also participated in the field trip. For two days, the group visited other sites along the Tolovana River including Twenty-Mile Hill, Three-Mile Slough, the old Tolovana Roadhouse and Monty Creek Cabin. The stories and photos taken during this trip will be used during the school year as a curriculum resource for the cultural atlas project.

For the past three years, with Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative support, CHEI and the Minto School have supported the development of a curriculum resource to record the indigenous place names of traditional and contemporary land sites used by the people of the Minto Flats. A web site with a map of Minto Flats was created and during the school year the students learned how to create web pages that describe specific sites or the Athabascan culture using text, photos, images, and multi-media.

A mapping project curriculum document has been prepared by Bill Pfisterer, Linda Pfisterer and Paula Elmes that describes the four segments of this project. These include: (a) bringing the community and school together to plan the field trip, (b) gathering information through field trips, (c) using technology including web page design for putting together the information and (d) expansion of

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illustration skills through the visual arts to illustrate events and activities that cannot be photographed.

This academic year, in addition to AKRSI, the initiative has received support from the CIRI Heritage Foundation and the AOL Foundation Interactive Education Initiative. ☆

*Field trip participants  
in front of the old  
Tolovana Roadhouse.*



## Respecting Elder's Knowledge

by Negaltdenlebedze Amy Van Hatten

About three years ago Peggy Cowan helped me understand the word "contextualize" for curriculum development. Now I think I have a fair understanding of the word and it has inspired me about the wonders of how we can use Elders' knowledge to improve what we teach in rural schools.

### *How do we learn about what is in front of us already?*

Native Elders and local community members can be considered an important resource for the curriculum. Elders have gathered data in the back of their minds that just needs a little stimulation in an appropriate context to be shared with the students. Think of this as part of "being out there" as you help students do detailed documentation of what you are learning from the Elders. By focusing on the appropriate context, the strategy can be adapted to take advantage of Elder expertise in whatever communities it is implemented.

### *How about research ethics and protocol?*

Indigenous people worldwide have taken steps to help define their own

cultural and intellectual property rights. It is becoming less difficult for indigenous people to speak up for their rights, but at the same time it is still taking a lot of time for funding sources to understand or respect that. Help in this area can be obtained from the new *Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge* available through the ANKN web site at [www.ankn.uaf.edu](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu).

### *How much should we worry about the accuracy of the new information?*

Although it is difficult to develop a sensitivity to the fact that no form of measurement is neutral, we can at least try by asking, "What is the relationship between how things appear and the environment in which they are situated?"

### *How can we know what is the right information to look for?*

Choosing a theme is helpful in keeping everyone focused. In addition, we can develop a glossary of key words used in teaching a particular topic and then go over them together with the Elders and community members so everyone is understanding the same thing. You affirm the ideas in words and gradually those words begin to develop into concrete community-based data.

### *How should we analyze the information?*

Have a pre- and post-meeting with Elders to review key words and concepts for teaching in a particular area. The Elders can help focus on the appropriate interpretation and meaning of the information that has been gathered.

I hope this list will help in using Elders' knowledge in respectful and useful ways. ☆

# Yup'ik Region

## Camp Nunapitsinchak

by Julia Dorris, Kalskag

On the last evening of our stay as I sit in the boat while driving up the Kwethluk River, I have time to reflect on the past two weeks of my "apprenticeship" as a future Elder. Annie Fredericks from Chuathbaluk and myself, along with all the Elders of the camp, are on our way to pick blueberries.

It's sort of a nostalgic feeling as I look at the Elders around me. In the driver seat from Kwethluk is John Andrew Sr. His wife, Annie, is seated directly behind him; to the right of me is Annie Jackson of Akiachuk (no shortage of Annies at our camp!) and co-pilot of the boat is our one and only "Mitzy" of Akiak. I have to tell you about Mitzy and provide an explanation of his name. He was just adorable during introductions on the first day of our arrival. He speaks very little English and yet he courageously introduces himself and even explains his nickname, Mitzy. In broken English he gives his name, Wassilie M. Evan, and then his Yup'ik name, Mis'ngalria, hence the "shortcut" as he so aptly puts it—Mitzy.

Half of the students speak and understand Yup'ik and Calista provided an interpreter, Alice Reardon, who is very good with everyone. The students, Elders, teachers and chaperones all enjoy her. We are very fortunate to have her as our interpreter.

There are seventeen students. Nine are upriver students from Crooked Creek, Chuathbaluk, Aniak and Upper and Lower Kalskag. The remaining eight are from Tuluksak, Akiak, Akiachak and Kwethluk.

Our day starts in the girls sleeping quarters with the wake up call by Annie Evans from Aniak. Three students are selected daily to do kitchen

duty, lunch duty and after-dinner duty. After breakfast the students divide into groups of three and rotate between teachers, chaperones and Elders. The groups choose different experimental projects related to Native science with Alan Dick, Annie Evans and Michelle. When complete, the students are to do a demonstration and report on their findings.

John and Mitzy show the boys and anyone who is interested how to hang fish nets. The girls bead and some make sewing kits. The Elders identify different medicinal and edible plants and their uses.

Every evening after dinner the Elders have what we call Elder Hour. They pass on their advice and wisdom to not only the students, but to myself and the other adults involved. Alice translates a question-and-answer session after the Elders speak. What is very impressive is the fact that Alice also records the talking sessions with Elders. It is impressive that she is going to transcribe the tapes and Calista will have on file a very valuable gift from these Elders. We need to learn all we can from all our Elders. They have a gift worth giving and passing on, which if we are willing to listen will be of great benefit to us. We in turn must pass it on. It is our heritage.

## Reflections

We were fortunate to have had a few nice days to go on a salmonberry picking excursion. We went to Lumarvik which is downriver from Bethel and made camp for two nights. The kids picked a bucket of berries for the Elders Council which I thought was very nice. The camp is above the village of Kwethluk known as the Moravian Children's Home or Nunapitsinchak. One of our Elders, Annie Jackson, said when she was younger she used to be a resident employee of the children's home.

Our cook, Michael Andrew from Kwethluk, and Peter Galila of Akiak had a set-net and the fish they caught were cut by the students with a watchful eye from the two Elders—Annie Jackson and Annie Andrew. For the girls it was a very important learning experience; some had never cut fish before. The fish were hung by the boys who obviously had never hung fish before and were firmly taught by the Elders.

Besides the camp directors, Andy and Staci Gillilan, I cannot forget Vern Fredericks, husband to Annie Fredericks from Chuathbaluk—they were both chaperones. Vern lived most of his life in Anchorage and for him this was a learning experience too; the Elders, John & Mitzy, took him right under their wing.

Along with Peter Galila, Vern and Annie Fredericks, Michael Andrew and myself, it was meaningful in that we learned we must continue to teach alongside our Elders as our first teachers.

I thought this camp went well. I look forward to seeing it in the future as improvements are made. It's a good experience for the young who unfortunately are losing their culture and subsistence way of life, as well as some of their Native language. I feel this camp opportunity takes the necessary step in educating them in ways they are losing or have lost.

# Southwest Region

by Andy Hope III

I wrote the poem [opposite] following a dream in the fall of 1992. The dream was about an ideal Native learning institution which insured that our Native customs and traditions thrived. I call it my tribal college poem today. I suppose that the dream was an inspiration for (and very much influenced my efforts to organize) the first Conference of Tlingit Tribes and Clans which took place in early May, 1993 in Haines and Klukwan.

Following that conference, in an article in *Raven's Bones Journal* (which I edited for ANB Camp #2), I made the following statement:

"I think that the Conference should formally organize as a learning institute, an educational institute, the School of Tlingit Customs and Traditions. I have recommended that the Sitka Tribe of Alaska charter an independent educational subsidiary with the current planning committee members serving as charter members of the board. STA staff is drafting a charter at press time (late September 1993). Perhaps this entity, whatever it will be named, can serve as the basis for a tribal college."

Formally organizing the Southeast Alaska Tribal College has been a long, drawn-out process. I have documented this effort in previous SOP articles.

The challenge before the Native community is simple: are we ready to take responsibility for the education of our children? There are a number of issues that must be addressed.

The Native student dropout rate in Alaska schools has been unacceptably high for quite some time. As a result, many of our Native people do not have access to higher education opportunities. It is our responsibility to develop programs that will ensure that Natives who slip through the cracks of public schools gain access to

higher education. One of the options is for SEATC to develop GED, survival skills, parenting and other basic adult education programs. Perhaps the various adult education programs administered by tribes in Alaska can be consolidated to provide resources to support the education of students enrolled in tribal colleges.

There is a great need for Native language and culture programs. I believe that tribal colleges should be the institutions that certify Native language fluency and proficiency. Tribal colleges will be in the best position to offer curriculum to implement the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools*, the *Guidelines for Developing Culturally-Responsive Teachers*, the *Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge*, the *Guidelines for Nurturing Culturally-Healthy Youth*, and the recent law enacted by the Alaska legislature that requires school districts to establish a Native language advisory committee in every community with 50% or more Native student enrollment. In a time of a nationwide shortage of teachers, it is imperative that we begin an effort to train Native teachers. Tribal colleges will be a key player in this effort.

It will take a united effort by the Alaska Native community to ensure that tribal colleges succeed. I am thankful to the many Native organizations that have endorsed the devel-

## The School of Custom and Tradition

Where do traditions come from?  
Where do customs originate?  
How are customs and traditions learned?  
Carried forward?  
What are the sources of inspiration?  
Look to ones that know  
Look to creative ones  
Look to ones with ideas  
Look to the artistic  
Look to Elders  
Look to the young  
Look to the energetic  
I attended the school of custom and tradition  
A school of vitality and richness  
A school of ideas  
A school where one will always learn  
Something new  
Where people meet  
Where people teach  
Where people learn  
From each other  
Support each other  
And move on to become  
The school of custom and tradition  
Reflected  
In their lives  
In their minds  
In their eyes

—Andy Hope, Oct. 1992

opment of tribal colleges in Alaska: The Alaska Intertribal Council, Alaska Federation of Natives, the National Congress of American Indians, Alaska Native Brotherhood/Alaska Native Sisterhood Grand Camp, Chilkat Indian Village, Douglas Indian Association, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Wrangell ANB/ANS and Sitka ANB/ANS among others. ☆

Editor's note: A new book containing the proceedings of the 1993 Conference of Tlingit Tribes and Clans, titled *Will the Time Ever Come: A Tlingit Source Book*, has just been published and is available through the Alaska Native Knowledge Network.

# Alutiiq Region

## Lu'macihpe: Dance and Language Camp at Dig Afognak 2000

by Olga Pestrikoff

S perry Ash, Rhoda Moonin and R. Carlos Nakai facilitated an outstanding camp at Qatani during the last week of Dig Afognak 2000.

Fifteen students from around the island attended and diligently studied as Dr. Jeff Leer of the University of Alaska Fairbanks worked with them. Dr. Leer taught the alphabet and then proceeded to write down the songs using his newest version of the orthography that proved to be quite exciting to learn. Elders in attendance assisted in dictating the appropriate letters for the sounds in the words. We then were able to sing the songs correctly understanding the words completely. What a sense of ownership those students exhibit in singing those songs!

Our Elders in attendance are most appreciated! Thank you to Kathryn Chichenoff, Julie Knagin, Dennis Knagin, Marie Skonberg, Irene Coyle and Sven and Mary Haakanson.

Besides singing and dancing we experienced many other activities such as swimming, hiking, storytelling and playing games including outside traditional Alutiiq games as well as indoor activities like cards. Visiting and *banya* were the most enjoyed regular events. Students especially loved the swings as well as song practice while lounging on the hammock during the evenings.

Special activities also occurred. Several people really enjoyed rowing around in the wooded dory, the *1 CIHA HAK*, made by Dennis Knagin and Ole Mahle at the Qatani Boat Yard. R. Carlos Nakai's flute music enter-

tained us at various times during the week.

Several other people assisted with the students' camp experience. Teacon Simeonoff helped with safety. Phyllis Clough helped with organization.

The week wrapped up with the students performing for the opening of the Native Village of Afognak Board

work session. The dancers of Lu'macihpet presented the members present with a piece of driftwood with "The Board" written on it, because they wondered what a "board" is and came up with their own creative interpretation.

The fifteen students left the camp with a new understanding of some of the older songs, two new Sugtestun songs, a Russian folk song, a certificate of completion and a piece of regalia. The necklace that was designed by R. Carlos Nakai is made of tree bark with a printed image of a petroglyph on wound string with shell and bead adornments.

Planning for next year's camp is already underway. If you have any ideas that you would like considered please call the Native Village of Afognak at 907-486-6357. ☆

## Leadership Institute Enhances Kodiak Village School Programs

by Eric Waltenbaugh

A student from Port Lions gingerly steps up to the podium in the Kodiak Borough Assembly Chambers and speaks in support of a resolution she has worked on over the course of a week. Then another student from Ouzinkie slides up to the microphone to voice her arguments. For ten minutes a steady stream of students from seven villages in the Kodiak Island Borough School District saunter quietly, but proudly, up to the microphone to speak on three separate resolutions they have crafted as a collective group. The mock board, made up of the school superintendent, a school board member, a city council member and the borough mayor, listens carefully to what the students have to say, discusses and debates the issues and then votes on them.

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This mock board meeting was the culminating experience of an intensive week of leadership training held to bring village high school students together. The week of September 18–22, thirty-one high school students from seven different villages in the Kodiak Island Borough School District flew to the town of Kodiak to attend the 2000 Leadership Institute. Workshops focused on teaching aspects of leadership in an applied manner. There were no lectures. Instead students were immersed in a variety of interactive workshops. They learned Parliamentary Procedure by doing it, explored the concept of leadership by facing numerous challenges as a group, practiced public speaking in a nonthreatening environment, wrote resolutions about issues that affect them and had a chance to present them in a forum that mirrored the real process. In addition, it is expected that students will take some of their resolutions to the Alaska Federation of Natives Youth and Elders Conference to be presented in that real forum.

The Leadership Institute was designed to enhance the village school curriculum, to provide age-appropriate interaction among high school students in village sites and to engage students in a real task that leads to personal action and empowerment. The institute was scheduled in advance of the Alaska Federation of Natives Youth and Elders Conference in an effort to help prepare the students for that important event.

Numerous community organizations were involved in the planning, development and implementation of the Institute. It brought together members from Native corporations, tribal councils, the borough, the school district, the State Troopers, Toastmasters (a public speaking club), the Alutiiq Museum, Kodiak town teachers and many others. This collabora-

tion from a broad range of community organizations was essential to making the Leadership Institute a success.

Funding for the Leadership Institute comes from a three-year Federal Department of Education grant that provides for two immersion institutes per year in addition to supporting the village programs in implementing a model of education that is more culturally sensitive.

Village teacher reports after the

institute indicate that students are talking about how different this immersion activity was; they are more motivated in their regular classes and they are already asking questions about when the next institute will occur. These types of interactive, personally-relevant and socially-significant immersion activities go a long way in enhancing existing village programs and empowering our rural students. ✧

## Sugtestun Immersion Workshop in Nanwalek

by Olga Pestrikoff

The five-day Sugtestun Immersion Workshop was hosted by Nanwalek Tribal Council at Dog Fish Camp, a logging operation housing facility near Nanwalek. The community of Nanwalek initiated the workshop to prepare their teachers and parents for the newly-formed immersion school that began this fall. The Nanwalek Tribal Council generously shared this opportunity with other Sugtestun-speaking community members. Through the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, Stella Krumrey, Phyllis Clough and I were able to attend as representatives of the Native Educators of the Alutiiq Region. Facilitators of the workshop included Roy Iutzi-Mitchell of Ilisagvik College in Barrow and Loddie Jones, a Yup'ik immersion kindergarten mentor-teacher from Ayaprun School in Bethel.

The main message they brought to participants is that immersion is the only real model of teaching a language with the quickest, most effective results in teaching actual conversational language to the point of fluency.

Very frequently language programs teach the target language through reading, writing and analysis using grammar lessons. Some

people who are able to learn second languages in this manner usually tend to apply mental translation and analysis forever. They use their first language to think then translate their speaking to the new one. The way to speak fluently is by being surrounded and involved in listening and speaking the language, which gives the language power.

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The two components necessary in acquiring a language are motivation and opportunity. Motivation is driven by an interest and a need. Opportunity includes the actual learning of the language as well as consistent, meaningful and relevant use of the language as a method of communication. Striving to retain and regenerate an indigenous language necessitates creative attention in light of this global society in which we presently live.

Various actual workshop experiences helped to give a clear picture of the most effective method of teaching and learning a second language by the method called Total Physical Response. Experiences included lecture, actual lessons, participant presentations, videos, discussion and small group planning of specific language activities by community members. An actual theme plan based on the subsistence calendar was one of the documents drafted by the close of the workshop.

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During the evenings we enjoyed ourselves too. Some people fished, picked salmonberries, went four-wheeling, enjoyed extensive walks

on the beach, watched a mountain goat, beaded and danced. Overall, it was a very productive and enjoyable week. ✨

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