



Sharing Our Pathways

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Summer 1998

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

Yup'ik Region Hosts 1998 Alaska Native/Rural Education Consortium



St. Mary's, Alaska hosted the 1998 Statewide Alaska Native/Rural Education Consortium meeting. The village sits nestled on the banks of the Andreafski River.

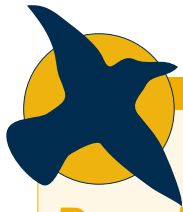
Approximately 60 Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI) participants from around the state gathered in St. Mary's April 4–7 for the 1998 statewide Alaska Native/Rural Education (AN/RE) Consortium meeting. Everyone was very appreciative of the hospitality of the people of St. Mary's and the work that Barbara Liu and others from the C/Yup'ik region put into hosting the annual meeting.

The reports from the school districts and Native organizations in the region outlined many of the exciting initiatives that are currently underway aimed at bringing local knowledge and ways of knowing into the schools. These included the EFG curriculum development work in the Yupiit School District, the cultural camps in the Lower Yukon School District, the Yup'ik Encyclopedia initiative in the Lower Kuskokwim

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John Pingayak leads the consortium in a short dance break at the meeting in St. Mary's.

School District, the Talking Circle applications in the Kashunamiut and Kuspuk School Districts, and the Yup'ik Math Project in the Southwest Region. In addition, reports were provided on the C/Yup'ik philosophy poster, the Tribal College initiative, the Yup'ik Journalism project, the "Nutemllaput: Our Very Own" video tape, and the upcoming Yup'ik Elders and Youth Convention to be held in September. The reports generated a lot of interest and enthusiasm on the part of participants and we will be following up with distribution of the resource materials that are beginning to come from these initiatives.

On the statewide level, Peggy Cowan reported on the innovative work that is underway in the various regions on the development of math and science curriculum units that illustrate the integration of local cultural knowledge to help with the teaching of state content standards. Peggy also reported on the working group that is developing science performance standards to indicate ways in which students can demonstrate what they know at certain grade levels. These will eventually contribute to performance assessments that take into account the cultural context in which rural students learn science and math.

Along with all the other presentations and events that took place at the

meeting, participants were able to enjoy an evening of Yup'ik dancing at the community center in St. Mary's that included everyone from Elders to children providing many enjoyable performances. By the time we left St. Mary's, our hearts and minds were filled to capacity with new ideas and,

as usual, good memories of the Elders' wit and wisdom that was shared with us. Keep up the good work, all of you.

The week following the AN/RE Consortium meeting, our program officer, Jerry Gipp, and two other representatives of the National Science Foundation (NSF) visited the Iditarod Area School District in McGrath and the Kodiak Island Borough School District in Kodiak. At each site they were able to talk to district personnel, visit schools, and meet with teachers involved in the curriculum unit-building work that is underway. In addition, they were able to meet people in the local communities and get a first hand impression of the challenges that schools face in bringing a culturally meaningful education to students in rural communities in Alaska, especially in the face of the current budgetary threats. The NSF team left Alaska with a greater appreciation for the hard work that is being done in rural schools, as well as for the hospitality of the people with whom they were able to visit. Thank you Alan Dick and Teri Schneider for hosting the visits in your areas and to all of you who made the visitors feel at home in Alaska.

Have a good summer! ✨

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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AISES Corner (American Indian Science and Engineering Society)

We are proud to report 14 students with 7 projects and 6 chaperones attended the 11th Annual National AISES Science Fair in Rapid City, South Dakota, April 2–4, 1998. Students entered their science projects into the fair making it a total of 389 projects completed by American Indian and Alaskan Native students from around the country. The students who entered the fair are as follows:

Elmer Taaqpak Howarth, Jr. Noatak (gr 8)	<i>Caribou Antlers</i>
Alison Huntington Galena (gr 5)	<i>Which is Warmer?</i>
Brianna Evans Galena (gr 5)	<i>Which is Warmer?</i>
Sarah Monroe Nenana (gr 8)	<i>Arctic Grayling and Burbot</i>
Brandon Olanna Shishmaref (gr 6)	<i>Uses of Low Wattage Electric Bulb by Using Inverter</i>
Norman Kokeok Shishmaref (gr 6)	<i>Uses of Low Wattage Electric Bulb by Using Inverter</i>
Donnie Pootoogooluk Shishmaref (gr 6)	<i>Uses of Low Wattage Electric Bulb by Using Inverter</i>
Brenda Thomas Buckland (gr 11)	<i>Storing Berries the Traditional Way</i>
Sherry Ballot Buckland (gr 12)	<i>Storing Berries the Traditional Way</i>
William Bieseimeier Kotzebue (gr 5)	<i>Furs that Keep Us Warm</i>
Tirrell Thomas Kotzebue (gr 5)	<i>Furs that Keep Us Warm</i>
Katy Miller Kotzebue (gr 5)	<i>Alder Willow Bark Dye</i>
Brandon Romane Kotzebue (gr 6)	<i>Alder Willow Bark Dye</i>
Puyuk Joules Kotzebue (gr 5)	<i>Alder Willow Bark Dye</i>

Congratulations to these students for their hard work and perseverance that make a difference. The following three projects received awards.

Elmer Taaqpak Howarth, Jr. of Noatak received the traditional award for his project "Caribou Antlers." For that award Elmer was given a traditional

by Claudette Bradley-Kawagley

quilt. Alison Huntington and Brianna Evans of Galena received the second place (silver) award in physical science for their project "Which is Warmer?" Katy Miller, Brandon Romane, and Puyuk Joules of Kotzebue received a first place (gold) award in (5th grade) life science for their project "Alder Willow Bark Dye."

Congratulations to these students. We are most proud of your success and recognition at the fair.

Also, we would like to extend our congratulations to the six chaperones who supervised the students throughout the trip:

Rita O'Brien, Nenana
George Olanna, Shishmaref
Deborah Webber-Werle, Noatak
Elmer Jackson, Kiana
Eddie Gavin, Buckland
Polly Schaeffer, Kotzebue

Students reported seeing lots of animals traveling along the highway to and from the hotel: buffalo, turkeys, horses, antelopes, and goats. They had fun swimming every day in the hotel pool. They loved Crazy Horse Memorial tour, which offered them free rocks to carry back to Alaska. Their visit to Mount Rushmore was fun too. Students enjoyed meeting Indians from many tribes and were surprised to learn that other tribes are not doing subsistence hunting and fishing.

We are thrilled over the success of the Alaska AISES delegation's travel to the AISES National Science Fair. We are now preparing for another summer camp and more Native science fairs in the fall of 1998, so we may select students for the 12th Annual AISES National Science Fair. ✨

Dr. Walter Soboleff: Keynote Address to the Alaska Native Educators' Conference, February, 1998

Alaska Native Educator's Conference, the Alaska Native Education Associations, the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, participants, honored guests, and friends:

The first wave of change in Alaska came via sailing ships from Russia, England, France, Spain, America, and others over 200 years ago. To these adventurers Alaska must have been a magic picture of overwhelming beauty; the next surprise was to see people in Southeast Alaska coming in canoes to see what this was all about. The ship people had their opinion of the canoe occupants, simple, to be feared, and not their equal; the canoe crew also must have had various ideas of these newcomers who dared to enter the shores of their home.

Little did the hosts know the ships' crew represented a civilization with volumes of printed pages, scholars, buildings of learning, cathedrals, teachers, art, governments, and other organizations.

Alaska had its style of life amidst the beauty of nature which was their source for every aspect of health and well-being. The early hosts of Alaska, especially in the so-called Panhandle, Southeast Alaska could not offer the arrivals a printed page itemizing who they are: clans and subdivisions, historical development, clan emblems, language, personal names, geography, ceremonies, dances, songs, art, games, medicines, cosmology, healer, prophet, counselor, spiritually monotheistic, and with a philosophy.

The hosts of Southeast Alaska shores were tolerant and welcomed ships as long as their resources were not plundered. Children were loved and not allowed to run free and had to have an education in customary and traditional manners. This responsibility came from the clan parents—

the first teachers—supported by grandparents and kinfolk. The clan residence, HITT, was the primary school, a home of four or more families; other learning places were the river, berry picking grounds, hunting areas, mountains, bays, ocean, camp sites, rivers, trails, and the community. In other words, the world was their book of knowledge. Each day was a time of learning without sitting at a desk with book, pencil, paper, and a teacher standing before the class taking roll. Daily activities that included lessons using the Native language, observation and careful listening was like a happy experience all day long.

Tlingit Native education was a pleasant experience for the family and clan. As indicated in the chart, unstructured classes continued informally in the four seasons of the year. Basic contents of information included, however not limited to: physical training (especially for boys), for all to be economically efficient or sufficient, self-determined, respecting self and others, spiritually responsive, and be a continuous learner.

When the United States government and church opened their schools it was not meant to relieve parents as teachers. Many years ago American educators came up with an idea that the school system should be like three partners at work: parents, pupil, and teacher. This is the winning team.

It was important for parents to be role models as well as devoted to the family. It is pleasing to know how well the clan thought of their greatest resource: their children. The matriarchal

society was the school of learning—all joining willingly as volunteer teachers.

Learning was by observing, hearing, and hands-on method. Often grandparents would say, "Come here grandchild, here is a lesson you must remember." An uncle would say, "Nephew, let me show you, this is the way it is done. Now do it right." "Listen, listen, remember what I said," or "Here is the knife, clean that fish like the way you were shown." "Good, good, keep improving." "Listen, listen, remember when you honor yourself, you honor the clan." "Here is a new Tlingit word." "Be a worker, we have no place for lazy people."

In speaking with several Tlingit clan members the general education chart (opposite) should be included yet not limited to the following: legends, history, clan stories and its origin, land ownership, food gathering areas, art, beading, totemic designs, moccasin-making, tanning skins, ceremonies, songs, dances, drumming, facial marks for dances or ceremonies, protocol, clan houses, totem carving, family values, and language.

March, April, May

Legends, history, clan, family values, preparing hunting and fishing gear, seal hunting, herring spawn, olichan drying and rendering oil (the same for seal), gathering two species of seaweed and cockles, language, boat safety, boat operation, boat upkeep, use of navigational aids, weather observation, rules of the road, Coast Guard boat registration, knowledge of navigational regulations and local geography, family teaching other useful lessons such as subsistence time, repairing or building smokehouse including drying rack and smoke escape, and learning how to set up camp which was usually the summer home.

June, July, August

Gathering chiton and proper cooking, family values, salmon fishing, canning, berrying, ferment salmon heads, salmon roe required expert preparation to avoid botulism (often fatal food poisoning), language, gathering seagull eggs, wild celery, two species of salmon, thimbleberry sprouts, soapberries, strawberries, salmonberries, blueberries, red huckleberries, thimbleberries, elderberries, highbush cranberries, swampberries, currants, Jacob berries, mountain blueberries, language, and other.

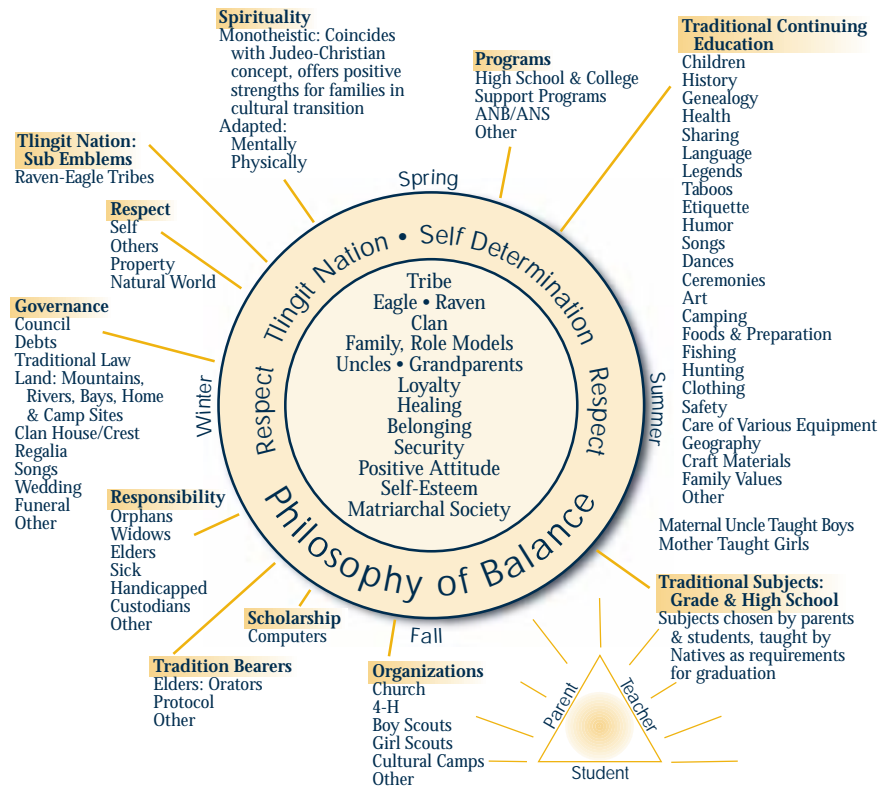
September, October, November

Legends, history, clan family values, deer, mountain goat, and moose hunting, salmon and meat drying, ferment salmon heads, salmon roe ferment, Coho roe (cheese), making *kaxhweich* (salmon eggs with crabapple), post funeral ceremonies (peer leader well prepared for traditional oration, taught well by clan leaders), and hunting and fishing gear repaired and stored for the winter.

This schedule of subjects may be considered as a starting point for local consideration and revised. The planning should determine subjects required for graduation and fulfilled granting a special certificate noting this achievement. As a constant reminder, an authorized listing of the subjects should be known by the student and teachers at all times and progress noted including a passing mark and date.

In general, there is a proper method of handling and preparing foods plus the art of cooking which are all an important part of Native life and learned from the teachers. There is also the important lessons of personal hygiene taught in the men's department and the women's department. Anything that would harm the physical body was not permitted.

The maternal uncle was strict and stern in teaching his future leaders. In turn, the nephew would enhance his



uncle's position of leadership.

Matriarchal strength and wisdom was a source of quality vital to students' success. Native education included the basics for successful participation in a complex society undergirded with a philosophy of balance—this flows well in art forms, orations, and various ceremonies. The Chilkat blanket is an example of balance. Imagine a center line and note how a half matches the other half; also an oration responded to by an oration from the opposite tribe and/or clan.

Native education as shared in a traditional manner gave necessary strength to their society.

Finally, family values was an aid for strength of character. "*E. Goahyuxhghwon*": Have courage and no defeat.

In promoting Native education, traditional knowledge helped our ancestors live through the ice age, wind, rain, cold, famine, cold sleeping places, not much clothing, bare feet, and a lot of willpower. Through Native education, may we get some of these powerful lessons taught at home and in the

school classrooms. We are all Native teachers by example and should volunteer our time to educate our youth in the subjects as outlined in the chart.

Native subjects or courses required for grade and high school promotion should be considered by Native educators, parents, and Elders, together with the school board.

Including Native subjects is an excellent way to involve the family, relatives, and community. Imagine a mother, father, uncle, grandparent, and other traditional leaders together in an educational venture.

Several of the Native subjects are seasonal and should not detract from the regular school year attendance; to do a special course, project, allowance should be made and not abused. The instructor should have the liberty of how to grade. The Native teachers, customary and traditional, will add quality to the program and should be honored accordingly.

Yes, yes, this combination with the present school system is a long overdue "winning team." ✨

Aleut Region

by *Leona Kitchens*

As we are experiencing spring here, we are looking forward to summer and the planning for our summer camps in this region are under way.

The Pribilof Island School District is planning to hold an American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES) summer camp on St. George Island. They are excited about the plans to send students from St. Paul to live with host families for two weeks. The focus for the camp will be to immerse students in the tanning of

sealskins and the kinds of science fair activities they might be able to use for this year's science fair. The plans are to engage students, Elders, teachers, and scientists in the camp. We're looking for lots of future scientists from this enthusiastic group of young people!

The Unalaska Public Schools will

be holding their first ever summer camp this summer. The plans are to hold a week-long camp for their students in August on the island of Unalaska. The focus for the camp is to add a place names map to the Kodiak/Aleutians Cultural Atlas CD-ROM. Students will focus on documenting and mapping the traditional uses for the area. The school is working to coordinate with the Pribilof Island Association Elders' and teachers' camp as well as the Qawalangin Tribal Council's culture camp, so the activities should be rich and rewarding for everyone who attends. ✨

Alutiiq Update

by *Teri Schneider*

Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative has affected many of our Kodiak Island communities like a spark next to fuel! Many of the already established programs in the school district, as well as community-based programs, have received an extra boost creating enthusiasm and cooperation when it comes to improving Native and rural education programs for our children. During a successful subregional meeting in December, members of the group outlined a plan of implementation for the 1998 initiatives, including the continued support for the Association of Alutiiq Native Educators, American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) science camps this summer, and the promotion of Alutiiq language and culture through the Academy of Elders.

During the first Alaska Native Educators Conference held at Anchorage in February, the Alutiiq people were represented by seven Native educators, four Elders, and various district, tribal and corporate administration. All members success-

fully worked with other representatives from the Unangan subregion, contributing to and supporting the Cultural Standards document. This served as an awesome document to connect our region with others throughout the state who are devel-

oping the same kinds of culturally and environmentally aligned materials, policies and programs.

Our unit-building workshop successfully produced the beginnings of three teaching units grounded in the Alutiiq culture, past and present. Three topics were undertaken with guidance from Kit Peixotto and Elders:

- Edible Plants of Kodiak Island,
- Driftwood, and
- Astronomy.

This opportunity allowed for a team from the Chugach school district to visit Kodiak and collaborate with another community, sharing a common culture and environment. Completion of these units is scheduled for this fall after the gathering of Alutiiq Elders in September.

This summer's camp will take place, once again, at the "Dig Afognak" archaeological site at Katenai Beach on Afognak Island. The Afognak Native Corporation will contract with the Kodiak School District to provide the facilities needed to have an AISES camp, gathering El-

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Integrating Native Ideas through Aÿax (Dance)

provided by Aquilina, Tanax Amix ilaan
(from *Land of Mother's Brother*) St. Paul Island, Alaska

T*umin Tanam Awaa* is a term in the language of the Aleutian/Pribilof Islanders that translates as “Our Country’s Work.” This term was used in place of the modern idea of authorship and “owning” what one expresses. It was used most readily in traditional storytelling to remind listeners that the story following this term was a product of the country. This is a wonderful example of indigenous perspective.

Dance, a favorite pastime of the Aleuts, is another method of traditional storytelling of a country *through* its people. Stories of days gone by are passed down through generations by dance. Many times a dance would tell a story better than a song or a narration. Some dances were only for men, some for women, and some for everyone. Passing on a story by dancing was enjoyable and memorable. The expressions of the dance made it easier for stories to stay with the people. The following is a delightful example.

Tumin Tanam Awaa

One evening some Aleut friends sat chatting before a driftwood

fire. The long, Bering Sea twilight faded and though the day had been tiring and all the salmon were not cleaned and hung to dry, the group lingered, fighting off sleep and hoping for a story and a song.

The men began teasing young Alex who had fallen out of his *iqyaÿ* (Aleut kayak) trying to remove a log from a salmon net. Alex always smoked a pipe and had a habit of twitching one eye. As the friends elaborated the incident, accompanied by bursts of laughter, Alex sat gazing into the embers with a broad smile on his face.

Suddenly, as if inspired by the

need for entertainment, one of the men grabbed Alex’s short-stemmed pipe and stood before the group, puffing it and twitching his eyes. “Here’s Alex!”, he exclaimed and began to dance. The men before the fire laughed in delight. Hearing them, the women and children tumbled out of the *ulax* (semi-subterranean dwelling) which must have been filled to bursting. They all joined the circle, clapping their hands to the rhythm of the dance steps and shouting the familiar chant: *Ayang, ayax! Ayang, Ayax!*

Back and forth went the dancer, his boots beating the earth. In untaught, but brilliant movement, he told his story with broad comical actions.

First, he bent over, pretending to pull a seine. Next, he portrayed the discovering of the log that was in the way. He runs from side to side to show Alex’s uncertainty as to what to do. Then he seems to climb into an *iqyaÿ* and shove off. He paddles furiously, every motion in rhythm with the chant coming from the audience, never forgetting to twitch his eyes and puff on his pipe.

The entire happening was portrayed well—the struggle with the log, the grunts, the slow toppling fall into a net full of slippery, fighting salmon, and finally the disgusted wade to shore. Actually the dancer was wringing wet from perspiration which topped off the dance and left the audience falling over with fits of laughter. ✨

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ders, teachers, and students, to focus on traditional knowledge and Western science. Students will work on projects that can then be completed for Kodiak Island’s 1st Annual Rural Science Fair to be held next fall.

Overall our school district, Native corporations, Tribal Councils and members of our Native communities, including Elders, educators and par-

ents, have been very responsive to the support given by the AKRSI and the efforts being made statewide to ensure that our children’s experiences in school connect with their lives beyond the walls of the buildings. This program, and all of the individuals behind it working collaboratively, are giving us the ability to see and believe in the possibilities of education for our children and their future! ✨

Athabaskan Region

by Amy Van Hatten

Things to Wonder About

Isn't it a thrill watching a little person's five senses become aware of the outdoor environment? I remember so many thrilling moments when I use to observe my children as toddlers walking around in the woods behind our Fairbanks' home. The questions they asked were not only cute and whimsical but also thought-provoking. Such as the time my daughter was looking up at the sky and saw a long white jet stream formed in a perfectly straight line. She asked, "Mom, how did that rope get up there?"

May

- 5-9 Spirit of the Bechoraf Lake Science Camp in King Salmon*
Contact: Angie Terrell-Wagner, Fish & Wildlife Service
Coordinator, (907) 246-3339 or 246-4250.

June

- 22-29 Ellamek Taringnaurvik The Western Alaska Natural Science
Camp in Bethel* Contact: Lorrie Beck, Yukon Delta NWR
Coordinator, (907) 543-3151.

July

- Dena Kkoykaa Hedokdeleen Denh* means "Where Our
Grandchildren Learn" in Tanana. First week is girls only.
Second week is boys only. Third week is for the whole family.
Focus is on fishcutting and language. Contact: Donna Folger,
Tanana IRA, (907) 366-7160.
- 6-20 AISES camp at Gaalee'ya Spirit Camp Contact: Claudette
Bradley-Kawagley, Interior-Aleutians Campus, (907) 474-5376.
- 29-24 Nulato Spirit Camp Contact: Sharon Demoski, Tribal Family
Youth Service Coordinator, (907) 898-2329
- Late July
Galena Spiritual Cultural Camp Contact: Loudon Village
Council, (907) 656-1711.
Ruby Spirit Camp Contact: Judy Kangas, TFYS Coordinator,
(907) 468-4400
Mansfield Traditional Survival Camp Contact: Debbie Thomas,
TFYS Coordinator, (907) 883-5024

August

- 1-10 The Round Mountain Science Camp in McGrath* Contact:
Beverly Skinner, Innoko NWR Coordinator, (907) 524-3251

*Denotes sponsored and coordinated by a National Wildlife Refuge

When I used to take rural students out camping, the activities were open-ended and non-threatening to children who didn't know how to make a campfire, draw water, gather wood, cut fish, put up a tent, respect boundaries, plus other variations of certain activities. Often enough the students were responsive once they learned to focus on higher-level thinking skills along with their natural creativeness.

Most cultures are familiar with the hard work involved with managing a fish camp. They also have a pretty good idea on which subsistence activities to teach children about traditional uses that nature has provided. The students learn fast on what a typical day is like.

These kinds of questions with follow-up activities could usually end up as unique hands-on activities designed to help children question the world around them and to extend what they have learned to their daily life beyond their experience in camp.

What is solar heat? Air? Wind? Water? Ask the children around your camp why people like the sun mostly in the summer? Ask them why a smokehouse has open rafters with tarpaulin flaps pulled aside? Why aren't flies around the smokehouse? Why are some swift water currents good and some not so good? HEY! Is this like science?

Purpose of camp, location, partners or sponsors, fundraising, target audience, traditional teachers, health and safety instructors, and any other cooperative partners are the main "heart" of the camp experience and success. Coordination efforts are being made to hold science or traditional-based summer camps throughout Alaska between the months of May and July. Many of the annual camps have integrated the two different ways of life.

Be a happy camper! ✨

Yup'ik Region

by Barbara Liu

Regional coordination of activities has been getting busier and more focused. Nearly two and a half years into the project, we have twelve regional agencies working with us. This year it involves tying in initiatives of Indigenous Science Knowledge Base and Oral Tradition as Education. There are many challenges, one of which has been coordinating schedules for the twelve MOAs, an increase from seven in the C/Yup'ik region. MOA coordinators make it easier by spreading the word with school board members, site administrators, and teachers.

I've established the following local contacts with K–12 school districts: Laurine Domke, Lower Yukon School District; Janelle Cowan, Southwest Regional School District; Charles Kashatok, Lower Kuskokwim School District; and Sophie Kasayulie, Yupiit School District.

Classroom staff who participated in incorporating local initiatives include: John Pingayak, Kashunamiut School District; Natalia Leuhman, St. Mary's School District; and Okalena Morgan, Kuspuk School District. They have given reports on their experiences in utilizing learning circles in their classrooms. In the past year Yupiit, St. Mary's, Lower Yukon, and Lower Kuskokwim school districts contributed to curriculum building with lessons on plants, weather, and animals involving local resources.

One long-term effort has been involving science, math, and language arts teachers and integrating traditional practices. Traditional C/Yupik teaching involves the community, environment, and integration by subject and developmental stage.

Oral stories are important sources of cultural knowledge, but require that community storytellers be recognized and invited to participate in the school. Two professors at the Kuskokwim Campus, Cecilia Martz

and Lucy Sparck, have made tremendous effort in bringing Y/Cup'ik storytellers into Alaska Native studies courses. Most recently, Wassilie Berlin and Louise Tall were guest lecturers on regional war stories that weave math, science, language arts, and social studies around one topic.

Mark John of the Calista Elders Council has approached me this year to help coordinate an Elders and Youth Conference at the start of next school year. The Elders and youth will be the key players in the two-day conference at Kasigluk, Alaska. Hopefully, this will lead into starting local and regional camps and academies. The Athabaskan and Iñupiaq regions have been sharing Elders' reports of this summer activity. Prior to public schools and the onset of land claims, spring and summer camping was a whole community activity that involved the whole community.

As meetings subside for the summer and with the recent statewide consortium meeting I helped coordinate in St. Mary's behind us now, I am focusing on transcribing audiotapes of oral stories. Various agencies and individuals have made progress in developing C/Yup'ik resources that help equip our children with talents and gifts. Let's work harder at raising our children in a good direction.

There are two Yup'ik stories told by my respected uncles, the late Phillip Charlie and Nicholai Berlin, who grew up with my father in Qinaq community near Tuntutuliak. The first story is by Mr. Charlie (these stories are not to be reproduced in any form without the permission of the author):

There were these two men traveling along with their own dogsled. Their families were riding in the sled and both were going in the same direction. One of the men had his wife and children bundled in the sled and they were traveling slower than the other man who just had his wife in the sled. They had a lighter load and were going faster. Passing the other man and his family, he motions to him, "Unload some of your load," and drove right past. Later in life, the two men are old and they meet again by sled. One is riding in the sled with his son driving the sled and the man who had motioned was still pushing along his sled. At this time, the old man in the sled driven by his son passed the other old man riding by himself.

A more factual event told recently is oral tradition of nature and man. Many of you may have forgotten the comet or "smoking star" that occurred two winters ago. One of my dad's brothers recalled a story passed on to him by our great-grandmother, that the comet occurs *tallimanek yingqigtaqan*—every five generations. My great-grandmother had heard her grandmother's account of the food shortage that occurred five generations ago. With the signs out there and the fifth generation of Yuut/Cuut leaving us and almost gone, this shortage will occur as they have always told it. In times of shortage, let's ask what we can do for our community.

I'd like to acknowledge my parents, the late Nickefer Opai Nick born in Qinaq and Elena Nick born in Kayalivik, my late uncle Phillip Charlie, uncle Nicholai Berlin, and my brother Robert living in Nunapitchuk, for contributing to my article. *Tua-ingunrituq.* ✨

Alakanuk Culture Camp

by Mike Hull

During the winter and spring of 1997, the community of Alakanuk took a stand much as it has in the past when faced with difficulties. Elders, parents, and young people met to discuss problems they were facing. Although much of the discussion seemed to center on the school, the broader concern was that the children of the community seemed to be growing further away from traditional values and that they showed little interest in or respect for the skills and wisdom of their own heritage.

There was consensus among all of us—students included—that the way things were in the spring of '97 was not the kind of community or school environment we wanted. As it has in the past, the community of Alakanuk spent no time looking for someone to blame, rather it assumed responsibility for its problems and set out to create solutions.

The school is the major change agent in the community and because its very purpose is the development of young people, it became the focal point for many of the strategies to bring about change. Elders and parents collaborated with teachers and students to provide goals for the high school program and a framework for behavioral and instructional expectations. Students were the main voice in developing guidelines for class structure and methods of presentation.

As community members and students assumed more responsibility for what happened at school, the view of the school's role in the community began to expand. Rather than being perceived as an agency that creates a distance between young people and the way of their Elders it began to appear as an integral part of the process of bringing the two together. The school staff integrated subsistence activities into the curriculum. Seal hunting, fishing, and camping have become schooltime activities and in-

volve the teachers. The positive response of Elders, parents, students, and teachers has provided an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect, and encouragement to create bold visions of what else we might accomplish.

In the fall of 1997, all students from grades 6 through 12 spent one week at three different camps engaged in subsistence activities. They hunted and caught seal, fished, gathered berries, and prepared meals with the food they took from the sea and tundra. Community members provided transportation and guidance for these camps. The teachers, for the most part, became students in this setting. The successes and the failures of the fall camps lead to the generation of a more ambitious plan to better meet the unique educational needs of the children of Alakanuk.

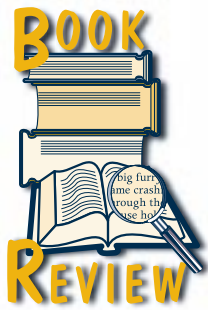
For the coming year the community and school of Alakanuk are planning to provide a culture camp for the students in grades six through eight. The purpose of the camp is to provide a setting in which students can learn subsistence skills and gain an appreciation for the values of a traditional lifestyle. It is also the intention of the school to have the students experience the complimentary nature of the wisdom of traditional practices and the insights that modern technology can provide in understanding and utilizing the resources of their envi-

ronment. The school acknowledges that it must take a role in the skills learned in the subsistence setting because they are fundamental to maintaining a healthy lifestyle for anyone living in the village. Many children have not been involved in subsistence activities because they are in school when their families are gathering food from the river, sea and tundra. It is also apparent that even when school is not in session some families are no longer providing this training for their children.

The Alakanuk Culture Camp will be made up of instructional teams that will spend one month with 36 middle school students at a location that has been traditionally used for gathering berries, plants, fish, and for hunting birds and seals. Elders and community members will provide the explanations of the use of different plants as they gather these with the students. They will guide students in the use of nets and the preparation of fish. They will also share methods for hunting and preparing game birds and seals. What is caught and gathered will be food for the camp.

The teachers will involve the students in the collection of scientific data related to their subsistence environment. The tundra, skies, and waterways will be the laboratories providing information that students will gather, analyze, and document through computers and other diagnostic instruments.

Hopefully this sharing of the school and community will continue to rebuild a bridge between the generations. And hopefully the school will continue to pursue becoming a resource that addresses the real survival needs of the community. Sometimes we measure ourselves in rural schools by what we cannot do because of our size and remoteness. This proud community views these as assets, as opportunities to truly fashion a school that best serves the needs of its children. ✨



Tundra Mouse: A Storyknife Tale

By Megan McDonald
Orchard Books, 1997, 32 pp, \$15.95
Reviewed by Esther Ilutsik

Tundra Mouse: A Storyknife Tale by Megan McDonald and illustrated by S.D. Schindler is a delightful story. It begins with two Yup'ik girls walking along with the older girl reminding the younger to watch out for mouse holes. The younger girl asks the older girl, "Tell me." So the older girl takes out her storyknife, which in this case is a butterknife, and finds a nice muddy spot along the river and begins. Then as the story progresses you begin to wonder about the author's background. How much does she really know about the Yup'ik culture and about mouse food gathering, because the mouse has only gathered cotton-grass roots and if you ever had experience in finding a mouse cache you would find many different kinds of roots stored in these caches.

And then it proceeds with "... a big furry boot came crashing through the mouse hole..." In reality when you go out gathering mouse food in order to find them, you have to stomp on the ground and then when or if the ground feels soft or feels hollow then you need an *uluq* (a woman's knife) to slice carefully into the ground. In this way respect is shown to the cache. After carefully removing edible roots the rest are returned with a food item that the gatherer has brought. Then the nest is covered very carefully. Although the author alludes to this practice later on in the story.

The story proceeds with the grandmother zipping along on a snowmachine. In Alaska, mouse food is gathered in the late fall when the gatherer knows that there is still time for the mouse to gather more roots to replenish or in the spring when the

mouse is cleaning out the cache.

I have never known anyone to gather mouse food in the dead of winter, especially near the holidays. Upon reaching home the grandmother immediately begins to chop the edible roots for her Christmas *akutaq* (in the story it is spelled phonetically). Again, the roots are cleaned by hand removing the non-edible roots, washed with water, boiled then cooled before being chopped up to include into the *akutaq*. I have never known anyone to make *akutaq* using flour as the story implies.

Christmas morning arrives and the Christmas tree is bare; Grandmother blames the *cingssiik* (here it shows the word in dual form). As a Yup'ik people, the *cingssiiget* (this is in the plural form) have different regional purposes. The way that the *cingssiiget* are used in this context is not reflective of

the Yup'ik people.

The illustrations are beautiful. But as you look at the illustrations you begin to wonder where this illustrator is from and how much do they really know about the Yup'ik people. Let's begin with the first illustration where the mouse is shown in the nest. The little that I know about Tundra mice, I know they have different chambers. They have a chamber to store the mouse food that is gathered, a sleeping area, and even an area where mouse droppings are prevalent.

The next illustration shows a part of *kameksaks* (mukluks) on the tundra with part of a bag showing. The *kameksaks* stand out because they look very Iñupiaq and not the style worn by the Yup'ik Eskimos. The illustration following this shows the grandmother on a snowmachine and her *kameksaks* are not the right style or from the right Eskimo group.

The illustration that shows the Grandmother cutting up the cotton grass roots, show her wearing a fur vest and scarf and using a butcher knife. In reality, the Grandmother would wear a *qaspeq* (a women's lightweight summer parka that Yup'ik women wear nowadays), a beaded hairnet, and use a proper woman's knife, an *uluq*.

Now take a look at the illustration that shows the granddaughters with the grandmother. It shows them Christmas morning. Again, the grandmother is shown incorrectly still using her *kameksaks* with a scarf.

Even if the author consulted with Yup'ik people it is important that they go back to them before the story is published to make sure that the cultural information is correct. Don't overlook the illustrations too.

These are beautiful cultural stories but if they have misinformation, it will not do justice to the cultural group they are trying to portray. ✖

Caribou—Tuttu—Rangifer Tarandus

by Elmer Jackson

Like Indigenous people of Arctic Village, the Iñupiat who live in Northwest Alaska are blessed with the caribou. For generations the caribou have offered themselves to the people. Every fall and spring they follow their ancient trails to their feeding grounds. They have sustained the Iñupiat and Gwich'in people for many generations.

Every fall and spring, the *tuttu* travel in the thousands; their fall migration leads to their winter feeding grounds and as spring approaches the females lead the migration north, where they soon give birth. The bulls are the last to arrive; this is the time when their antlers, covered with velvet, begin to grow. The female caribou also grows a set of antlers. The bulls drop their antlers in winter. The female uses her antlers for protection, and to ward off predators. Later in spring, they also drop theirs and before long they begin to grow new velvety antlers. With the arrival of spring they nourish their developing antlers with fresh herbs, willow leaves, and grass. Other food includes sedges, lichens, mosses, and other green plants.

The habitat of the *tuttu* changes like the seasons. Their habitat is in the Arctic tundra and Alpine tundra, near or above the timberline. In winter, they feed in the tundra and taiga forests. They feed on tundra mosses and lichen. They use their large concave hooves to paw through the snow to get to their food.

Fantastic Facts

Alaska is home to nearly a million caribou in thirty-two herds. Caribou travel greater distances each year than any other land mammal, up to three thousand miles. The Western Arctic caribou herd count is estimated at 340,000. Their migration takes them

crossing the Kobuk, Noatak, and Squirrel Rivers; channels, and the Baird and Schwatka Mountains. For many generations they have followed their ancient trails. The caribou are excellent swimmers. Their large concave hooves and hollow hair fibers allow the animal to swim across rivers and streams.

The Western Arctic herd crosses every fall at their traditional crossing at a place called Onion Portage. This place is special; it is a place where the Iñupiaq lived thousands of years ago. The implements found there are made

from the bones of the *tuttu*.

The caribou have provided the Iñupiat with food and clothing from time immemorial. That is why the Iñupiaq value of sharing and respect for the animal must be taught to the young. Respect for the land and its inhabitants is crucial; the land and water will not be polluted. There are environmental indicators that will show if there are problems in terms of the caribou and people's health. Fact: Acid rain kills lichens and moss, the main winter food for the caribou and reindeer. Many of NANA's reindeer have mingled with the Western Arctic herd. The predators of the caribou are wolves, wolverines, bears, and man.

Is it important to keep ours and the caribou's environment pollution-free? Something to think about. What will happen to the caribou if their food source dies? ✨

Where There's Smoke There's Science

by Steve Werle

Though not as popular as basketball yet, science is nevertheless gaining wide popularity at Noatak school as an increasing number of students are jumping into extracurricular science activities. "We are a little school with a big dream," said local science coordinator Deborah Webber Werle explaining that last year, at the first science fair, just seven students participated. This year, she said, 75 students from third through tenth grade designed and built some 48 displays ranging from demonstrations investigating rainbows and static electricity to learning what a fox ate from the contents of its stomach or counting the number of eggs in chum salmon.



Noatak students Timothy Norton and Alice Adams attempt to make fire without matches.

Alan Dick, AKRSI Village Science Coordinator, spent several days prior to the science fair working with Noatak students to build an “imaginarium” displaying several hands-on science projects that included a reflection box that uses lights to superimpose the images of two students as well as the “great oil race” that compares the viscosity of various oils. The stampede of children when the display opened and the lines in front of each activity attested to their

popularity. After the Noatak science fair, the imaginarium activities were boxed up for shipment to other schools around the state.

In addition to local village support, volunteer judges included two National Park Service biologists who made the 60-mile overland trip from Kotzebue by snowmachine as well as three Cominco Alaska employees who flew down from the Red Dog Mine, located 25 miles northwest of Noatak. Both organizations also donated prize

awards for the winning students.

Noatak students, Timothy Norton and Alice Adams demonstrated how to make fire with a bow and drill. If anyone in the room was disappointed that their efforts

produced only smoke instead of fire, you couldn't tell it from the clapping and cheering.

“Success in science is not always achieving your expected results,” said Alan Dick. “Every student here is a success.”

Students had been working on their science projects all year, but a week-long crescendo of activity preceded this year's local science fair that culminated with an award ceremony February 19, 1998. Fifteen of the top-ranking Noatak students traveled to Kotzebue for the district science fair on March 5 and 6 where students from schools throughout the region displayed their exhibits in Kotzebue's Army National Guard facility.

Webber Werle attributes the increased interest in science, in large part, to support from the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative and the University of Alaska Fairbanks for promoting science education among rural students. For example, two scientists-in-residence, Larry Duffy and Kathy Berry Bertram, made several visits to Noatak the past year leading educational activities about the Aurora Borealis and oil spills. Developing a networking relationship between the university and village students is important in improving rural science education, according to Webber Werle, pointing out that several Noatak students attended a science camp held at the University of Alaska Fairbanks last summer.

“A high quality science education can enable our students to walk successfully in their two worlds of tradition and cash economy,” said Webber Werle.

Basketball will probably always be the king in the Arctic, but if interest in science continues to blossom, we may be seeing starter jackets displaying pictures of Einstein alongside those of Michael Jordan. ✨



Science fair judge, Paul Dusenbury from Cominco, Alaska, interviews Martha Woods and Jada Sherman about their project called “Foxes”.



Symbolic Immortality: The Tlingit Potlatch of the 19th Century

By Sergei Kan

Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989, 420 pp., \$32.50,

Reviewed by Andy Hope

“By overcoming the compartmentalization of sociocultural reality, prominent in Northwest Coast ethnology, this study provides the first comprehensive analysis of the Tlingit mortuary complex and, through it, of the major aspects of the nineteenth century Tlingit culture.”

—Sergei Kan

Sergei Kan was born in Russia in 1954. He emigrated to the US with his family in 1974, received his undergraduate degree from Boston University in 1976, and his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1982. Kan currently teaches anthropology in the Native American Studies Department at Dartmouth College.

Kan first came to Alaska in 1979 to do field work for his doctoral dissertation, which initially addressed the theme of spiritual interaction between the Tlingit and the Russian Orthodox missionaries. He eventually changed his dissertation theme to address the Tlingit mortuary cycle. He has translated, interpreted and written about heretofore unavailable ethnographic and church records. His writings on the missionary activities of the Russian Orthodox Church among the Tlingit are noteworthy and have appeared in various anthropological and ethnohistorical journals. In addition Kan has also translated and written an introduction and commentary to *Indians of Alaska* by Anatolii Kamenskii. His missionization writings are particularly important for purposes of balancing the historical record on the Tlingit response to Westernization at the turn of the century. As he says in *Memory Eternal: Russian Orthodoxy and the Tlingit Mortuary Complex*:

After the Tlingit of Sitka and sev-

eral other communities converted to Orthodoxy in the late 19th century, their mortuary rites became more standardized, since the Orthodox Church managed to impose some of its demands on the Natives. However, while the form of Tlingit death-related rituals changed significantly by the 1900s, the indigenous interpretations of their meaning was, in many respects, continuous with the pre-Christian values and beliefs. To use, Sahlins (1981) terminology, we could describe this as the reproduction rather than the transformation of Tlingit culture.

Kan was adopted by the *Kookhitta*an (Box House) clan of the Eagle moiety of the Tlingit in 1980. His Tlingit name is *Shaakundaast'oo*. He has participated in a number of *Kookhitta*an sponsored potlatches in the last ten years. Kan's work transcends the ideological bias that diminishes much of the anthropological literature of the 19th and 20th centuries. In his *Handbook of North American Indian*, Robert Berkhofer notes:

Description by deficiency all too readily led to characterization, and so most of the White studies of Indian cultures were (and are) also examinations of Indian character. Later White understandings of the Indian, like that of earlier explorers and settlers, expressed moral judgments upon lifeways as well as presented their description, or mixed ideology with ethnography, to use modern terms.

In his writings on the Tlingit, Kan utilizes the Tlingit orthography developed in the early part of this century by Louis Shotridge, a Tlingit, and by the white anthropologist, Franz Boaz. It was refined in the late 1950s by Constance Naish and Gillian Story, missionaries affiliated with Wycliffe Bible Institute. Others who have contributed to the development of Tlingit orthography include Michael Krauss and Jeff Leer of the Alaska Native Language Center, and Richard and Nora Dauenhauer of the Sealaska Heritage Foundation. Orthographic usage may seem like a minor point, but most anthropologists writing on the Tlingit have chosen to improvise their own spelling systems which has produced a confusing body of work. Among those choosing improvisation are Philip Drucker, Viola Garfield, Erna Gunther, Edward Keithan, Kalvero Oberg, and Ronald Olson.

Kan discusses a number of 'root concepts' or root customs of Tlingit culture in *Symbolic Immortality*. Some examples are:

Shagoon: *An individual's or a matrilineal group's ancestors, heritage, origin, and destiny.*

Crests: *Named entities or objects,*

usually referring to animals, that were owned by matrilineal groups who were privileged to represent them on totem poles, house fronts, ceremonial head-dresses and robes, and certain other objects of material culture. Many of the clan's distinctions and prerogatives, including names, songs, houses, and ceremonial calls, were felt to be associated with totemic crests.

Mountain spirits: *The location of the domain of the dead on the mountain side, behind and above that of the living was not an accident. The interior, where the rivers flowing down to the coast began their course, was believed to have been the original home of the Tlingit, prior to their migration down to the seashore. It was also the home to which Raven retired, having performed all of the acts of creation. Thus the deceased retraced the mythical journey of his ancestors, traveling back in space as well as time. In addition, as we have seen, the interior was the direction of the rising sun and rebirth.*

The origin of the custom of offering food, water, clothing, and other gifts to the dead: *The custom of*

inviting the dead to the potlatch was believed to have been established by Raven himself during the time when he was shaping the world into its present form. The only recorded account of this event could be found in Veniaminov: "The Tlingit say that they hold the memorial feasts for their deceased relatives because when Yeil (Raven) was living among them he at one time invited the spirits of the dead to his house as guests. When they had assembled, he placed various dishes in front of them, but nobody touched them, though the host pressed the food upon his guests very assiduously. Finally one of the guests said to him. 'Host, your guests cannot eat this way. If you wish them to eat, then place everything in the fire and then see what happens.' At once the host did as he was told, and when the food began to burn, he saw clearly that the guests were eating and were very pleased. However, after they had departed, he found that everything—the dishes and food therein—had been left intact. Therefore, nowadays the Tlingit hold the memorial feasts for their departed relatives, in order to feed them. The

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difference is that they throw only a small portion into the fire and (their guests) eat the rest."

*The origin of the fire dishes: The close "opposites" (paternal/affinal kin of the deceased) were the primary candidates for this crucial ritual service. Hence they were fed first and received the choicest food. They were also presented with a special dish referred to as *gankas'is'ior x'aankas'is'i*, "fire dish." Each fire dish contained the favorite food of a certain deceased member of the host group and was given to his spouse or other close opposites, who used to share his meals while he was alive.*

Sergei Kan has done a fine job of synthesizing source materials in *Symbolic Immortality*. This book will undoubtedly become a standard reference on the Tlingit. ✨

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Village Science:

The Door Hinge Creaks



by Alan Dick

I was splitting wood for the old man. He was arthritic and walked slowly with a cane. I was having trouble, however, as the blade of the axe was continually sticking in the big blocks of driftwood. I wrestled and pulled at the axe handle, trying to extract the blade from the block. The door hinge creaked and the old man came out, cane in hand. He took the axe, scooped up some snow with the blade, and spread the snow where I had been pummeling the block. He lifted the axe with his arthritic arms, and struck in the middle of the mound of snow. The block popped open. Without a word, he went into the house. “I knew that,” I thought. “Friction between the axe and the wood. The snow reduced the friction.”

A few months later, I was splitting wood for him again. This time it was severely cold. I did fine for a while, but came upon one block of driftwood that caused the axe to bounce into the air as if I had hit a trampoline.

I tried the snow trick, but it didn't help. In the midst of my seventh or eighth swing at the bouncing block, the door hinge creaked again. The old man took the axe, turned his back to me, then laid the block open with one

swing. “Medicine,” was all he said. I knew he was no medicine man. He walked into the house using his cane. Months later he told me that he had spit on the blade of the axe. Towards spring,

I was again splitting his wood, but the thawed ground was very soft, acting as a shock absorber. I was laboring very hard. The door hinge creaked again. The old man came out, rolled from the pile a large block of wood and stood it on end. I thought, “I'd like to see him split that one!” Instead, he put a second block on top of the first one. One swing of the axe split the topmost block. He walked back into the house, cane in hand. “I knew that,” I thought. “The law of inertia. The bottom block provided the inertia to hold the top block in place so the full force of my axe was used in penetrating the wood rather than compressing the soft ground.” I looked forward to and simultaneously dreaded the creak of the door hinge. Sleetmute 1967. The tuition for that science class was paid in humility. ✨

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