



# Sharing Our Pathways

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

## Research and Indigenous Peoples

by: Nakut luk Virginia Ned

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

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

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

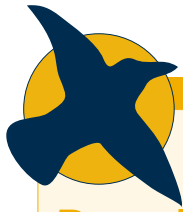
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Johnson Moses and his daughter, Nakut luk Virginia Ned, sit with a model of a soos, created by Virginia.

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*(continued from front page)*

trenched in the language and attitudes of outsiders towards indigenous peoples.

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

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

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

many specialized fields of knowledge that are known by only a few people. There are expert teachers, sled builders, snowshoe builders, storytellers, trappers, dog mushers, hunters, skin sewers, skin tanners, bead-ers,

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

## What is Indigenous Knowledge?

Indigenous or traditional knowledge is the knowledge of the local environment that people have developed to sustain themselves and thus it serves as the basis for cultural iden-

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

tity. It is knowledge built up by a group of people through generations of living in close contact with nature. (Lore, 1992) It is knowledge and skills gained through hands-on experience while interacting with the environment. It is knowledge of plants, animal behavior, weather changes, seasons, community interactions, family genealogy, history, language, stories, land and its resources, values, beliefs, traditional leadership, healing and survival.

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

ment in the community. They are the repositories of the language, wisdom and knowledge of the past that is needed to resolve problems that we have today and in the future.

## Research Requirements: A Code of Conduct

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

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

Further information and guidance on documenting indigenous knowledge can be found in the *Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge*, available through the ANKN web site at [www.ankn.uaf.edu/standards/CulturalDoc.html](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/standards/CulturalDoc.html). Another excellent resource on the issues outlined above is the book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* by Linda Tuhiwai Smith.

### Bibliography

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Rural Academy for Culturally Responsive Schools

**May 26–30, 2001**

**Bristol Bay Campus, Dillingham**

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

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

### Instructor

Ray Barnhardt, Esther Ilutsik and workshop presenters

### Credit options

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

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

## Cross-Cultural Orientation Program for Teachers

**June 4–22, 2001**

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

### Instructor

Ray Barnhardt and Old Minto Elders

### Credit option

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

## Native Ways of Knowing

June 25–July 13, 2001

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

### Instructor

Oscar Kawagley, Ph.D.

### Credit option

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

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

### Information

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

# Project AIPA Education Summit

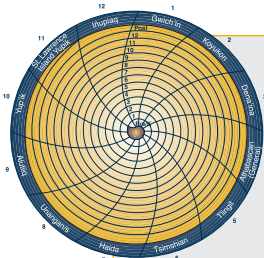
by Joy Simon

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

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

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

Subsistence Curriculum Materials  
by Cultural Area and Grade Level



## Subsistence Curriculum Resources on CD!

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

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

# Qelakun Wall' Qetegkun?

by Cecilia Tacuk Martz

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"But how do you get to heaven?"

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

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

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

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

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

During the summer of 1998 I had the privilege of serving as one

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

## Not In Two Worlds, But One

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Before closing, I would like to do something very un-Yup'ik. Understand, the Elders are my heroes. I respect them and I learn from them practically every single day. This is very hard for me to say, but it hurts me deeply when I hear Elders say that they are not

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

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

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

*Qyana.*

Tacuk Martz ✨

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

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# Community Values and Beliefs

by Bernice Tetpon

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

These values and beliefs are:

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

## The Life Cycle: From Infancy to Elder

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

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

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

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

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

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

## What can we learn?

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

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

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



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

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

# Athabascan Region

## Elder Highlight: Grandma Lillian Olin

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Baasee’* ✨

## Correction

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

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

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

## 2001 Native Educators' Conference

February 4-6, 2001

held in conjunction with the annual

**Alaska Bilingual/  
Multicultural Education/  
Equity Conference**

February 7-9, 2001  
Anchorage, Alaska

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

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

# Yup'ik Region: Our Indigenous Cousins

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

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

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

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

important guests.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There were eight educational strands of WIPCE:

1. Arts and Education (movement, song, culture and storytelling)
2. Educational Policy and Leadership (developing policies and developing our own styles of leadership)

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

There were many interesting sessions to choose from. Our conference booklet had one hundred twenty pages. We found ourselves making the selections the night before because of the wide range of choices. A few of the sessions included titles like, *Mahi Whai—Working with String; Restoring Balance: Elders in the School; Aisiimohki Program, a School-Based Traditional Disciplinary Program, Indigenous Spirituality, Research in American Indian and Alaska Native Education:*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# A Student's View on Subsistence and Leadership

## On Subsistence

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

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

Much of our cultural heritage is woven in with subsistence hunting

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

In the villages there are not as many jobs as the cities. Not very many people have high-paying jobs so they can't afford to lose their subsistence rights. The social and economic impact of subsistence rights is tremen-

by *Atchak Desiree Ulroan, Chevak*  
dous. I hope that the government will look more into the subsistence rights for Native Alaskans.

## On Leadership

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

During my junior year of high school I applied to the Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI) in Fairbanks, Alaska. I was accepted to this program which allowed me to take college courses and earn college credit. After six weeks of hard thinking and working, I graduated with a certificate of completion! I am not afraid to face challenges.

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

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***Much of our cultural heritage is woven in with subsistence hunting and fishing. . . . Knowing the land is crucial for survival in this region of the world.***

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

Review by Eric Fry

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

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

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

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

during a battle against the Russians.

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

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

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

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

to particular landscapes.”

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

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

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



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

by *Sandy Wassilie*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Alaska Native Knowledge Network/Alaska RSI  
PO Box 756730  
Fairbanks AK 99775-6730

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## ANSES State Science Fair 2001

**Feb 2-4, 2001**

**Birchwood Camp**

*15 miles west of Anchorage just off the Glenn Highway. This dovetails with the Native Educators Conference on Feb 4-5, giving student projects maximum exposure.*

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

### For more information:

ANSES website:

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

or contact:

Alan Dick, ANSES Science Fair 2001  
Coordinator

E-mail: [fnad@uaf.edu](mailto:fnad@uaf.edu).

907-526-5335 (If no answer, leave a message.) ✨

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