



# Sharing Our Pathways

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

## Preparing Teachers for Rural Alaska

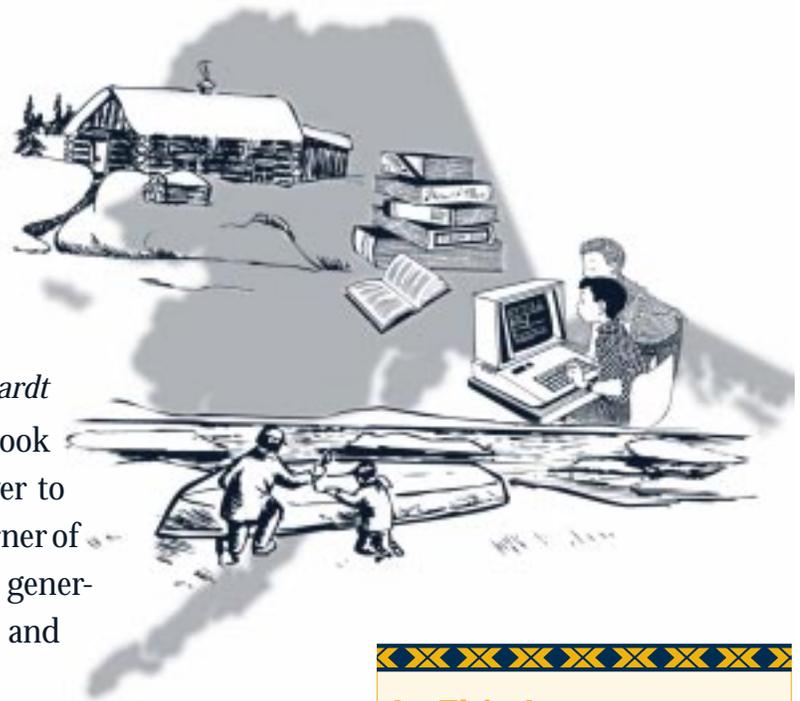
by Ray Barnhardt

A few summers ago, a friend and I took a boat trip up the Porcupine River to the Canadian border in the Northeast corner of Alaska. While in the border area, which generally is inhabited only by grizzly bear and caribou, we ran into a crew of loggers from the state of Washington. They had been the successful bidders on a summer contract with the U.S.-Canada Border Commission to clear-cut a 20-foot wide path and reset boundary markers along the entire length of the Alaska-Canadian border. The first and last time this had been done was in 1911, at which time the Rampart House trading post had been operating at the point where the border crosses the river.

Based on a review of topographic maps of the area and some old photographs of the trading post, this small logging company had put their savvy as backcountry loggers in Washington to work in devising a bid that would bring them a reasonable return

for their summer's effort. Their successful bid called for them to haul all of their supplies and equipment, including a large landing-craft style boat and two Honda "Big Red" three-wheelers, up the highway from

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### Sharing Our Pathways

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Washington to Circle by truck, and then load everything in the boat for the trip down the Yukon and up the Porcupine to the border. Their first hint that conditions in the North may not be the same as they were used to back in Washington came when they ran aground four times before they got around the first bend in the Yukon River below Circle. The cost of a local river guide to get them to Ft. Yukon didn't hurt their budget or pride too much, but the two extra days and the three spare props needed to get up the Porcupine began to worry them.

By the time my friend and I arrived on the scene, their anxiety level had reached the point where their behavior was not unlike that of a first-year bush teacher in mid-January, and here it was mid-June. The circumstance that had driven them to the brink was when they realized their Honda three-wheelers were no match for the hummocks and muskeg on the northern tundra. To get out to their work sites each day from their river base they had to charter a helicopter, which was very quickly consuming their summer profits. To cut costs, the men were sleeping out on the line with a pistol for a pillow, mosquitoes and grizzlies for company, and granola bars and freeze-dried food for sustenance. Their expectations of an exciting summer in Alaska were being realized, but not quite in the manner they had anticipated. By the time we left, things were getting pretty tense and the whole outfit was in general despair.

What had brought this otherwise hearty and savvy group of people to this unfortunate state of affairs? They knew their trade. They had done a good job of planning, based on their perception of the situation. But, they hadn't taken into account that in the North, conditions aren't always what they seem to be from an outside perspective. The same is true for the field

of education. We can't always do things here the way they are done elsewhere. When we try, those things that are unique to the North, especially in rural Alaska, end up being viewed as impediments rather than as opportunities.

How do we know that teaching in rural Alaska is different than teaching elsewhere? The first hint should come when we look at the fact that of the 2,368 teachers in rural schools this year, nearly one-third are new to their positions. That compares with about 12% in the urban schools (including 104 brand new positions in Anchorage.) While rural schools employ only one-third of all the teachers in the state, they typically hire over two-thirds of the new teachers each year, most of whom originate from outside the state. That means that at the present time, the potential for improving the quality of education in rural schools has an upper limit that is established by the average three-year cycle of staff turnover.

How do we break out of this cycle? First of all, by identifying the factors that contribute to it. Some of these have already been touched upon—most importantly the stress teachers experience when working in a physically and culturally foreign environment for which they are ill prepared by either training or experience. While an orientation program such as that offered at Old Minto each summer, along with improved living conditions, can help extend teachers' longevity a year or two, in the long run, the problem of teacher stability, curriculum continuity and quality education in rural schools can be addressed only through the preparation of more teachers and administrators who are from rural communities. Only then can those communities begin to assert the degree of local professional control needed to go along with the political control they obtained

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with the decentralization of rural schools in 1976.

The number of degreed and licensed Alaska Natives in the field of education at the present time is just a little over 350, nearly half of whom came up through the field-based Cross-Cultural Education and Development (X-CED) program. While some rural districts have a higher proportion of Native staff than others (a couple are in the 30% range), we clearly have a long way to go before rural Native communities can experience the degree of local representation in their schools that other communities take for granted. This is all the more critical today, in that many of the most promising rural school reform initiatives are dependent on the professional involvement of people knowledgeable about the local culture and environment. Unfortunately, the university programs designed to address these needs have been reduced to less than half of what they were five years ago, and their future remains uncertain.

Responsibility for addressing this issue falls on all of us - school districts through career ladders and staff development plans; Department of Education (DOE) through licensing regulations and teacher education standards; the universities through appropriate teacher preparation programs such as X-CED/Rural Education Preparation Partnership (REPP); and rural communities through their commitment to locally controlled education. But a renewed commitment to preparing homegrown teachers is not in itself going to bring the schools of Alaska to the level of excellence that we are seeking over the next few years—it is a necessary, but not sufficient step. At the present time, we are importing over three-fourths of the teachers in our state. That means that no matter how much we upgrade our own pre-service programs, we are still

going to be touching only a small percentage of the teachers working in Alaska.

To get at this issue, we need to address the problem at another more fundamental level—that being at the level of in-depth cross-cultural orientation and mentoring programs for all teachers new to rural Alaska. New teachers, whether from in-state or out-of-state, while on a provisional certificate could be encouraged to participate in a teaching internship program provided jointly by the local school district and the university. In districts where cultural disparities are an issue, the internship period could include training in cross-cultural teaching practices based on activities such as the following:

- ◆ New teachers could be encouraged to participate in a district-sponsored cultural orientation program during their first year or two, which could include participation in a week-long camp with local Elders as the instructors sometime during the fall term (similar to the Kodiak camp prior to school last year or the Alakanuk camp that took place throughout the first three weeks of school this year.)
- ◆ New teachers could be paired with an Elder in the community and a respected experienced teacher in the school (or an experienced Native teacher) to serve as mentors throughout the first year of teaching.
- ◆ A program of study based on the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools* could be made available to guide the teachers in the translation of their new insights into culturally-appropriate curriculum and teaching practice (the Alaska Staff Development Network has already prepared materials for such a program of study.)
- ◆ For those teachers who are inter-

ested, a two-year field-based course of study could be made available leading to a possible specialty endorsement in “cross-cultural education,” and/or a graduate degree in cross-cultural studies. All of the above could also fulfill the current state “multicultural education” and “Alaska studies” requirements.

Such an internship experience would benefit teachers coming out of the university programs in the state as well as those coming with training and experience from outside the state, just as the Washington state loggers would have benefited from a little grounded experience on the Porcupine River before they committed themselves to the border-clearing contract.

Finally, I’d like to say that all of the issues that have been raised here suffer from an inadequate Alaskan data base of information on which to make informed decisions. Recognizing that some problems are unique to Alaska, and that if we don’t address them, no one will, I would urge the legislature and the DOE to consider setting aside funds in the amount of one-half of one percent of the annual appropriation for education, to be made available on a grants and contracts basis for the purpose of soliciting and stimulating research and evaluation efforts related to Alaskan education issues. We would then be in a position to build programs with a knowledge base that takes Alaskan conditions into account, instead of adopting programs and practices from elsewhere and finding out after expensive investments that they don’t fit. Let’s be better prepared than the transplanted brushwackers on the Porcupine River.



# AISES Corner

(American Indian Science & Engineering Society)



by Claudette Bradley-Kawagley

Congratulations to the University of Alaska Fairbanks AISES Chapter for their runner-up AISES award for the “Most Outstanding Chapter of 1998.” This is the fourth year that the UAF chapter has been recognized by AISES.

Among its members is Ricardo Lopez, a 22-year-old senior, majoring in biology. Ricardo is of Yup'ik and Aleut descent, who was born in Anchorage and grew up in Eagle River. He says growing up in Alaska lends itself to an appreciation of biology.

He started his studies at Clark College in Oregon then transferred to the University of Alaska Fairbanks. While at UAF, Ricardo joined the UAF AISES chapter. In his junior year, he applied to the undergraduate research program at Washington State University which was one of the many programs advertised to the AISES student members.

In the spring of 1997, Ricardo entered the Minorities in Marine Science Undergraduate Research Program at Washington State University that was sponsored by National Science Foundation and Washington State University. Ricardo was one of seven minority students from around the country, who attended the program for six months.

In the Washington State Marine Science program, Ricardo researched ultra violet radiation and how it effects the development of Pacific herring embryos. This was his first research project ever completed where he developed the research design. Dr. Brian Bingham, who was program coordinator, and Dan Pentilla of Washington State

Department of Fisheries, were mentors for Ricardo and provided helpful suggestions throughout his research.

As a result of his research, Ricardo developed a poster and slide show titled *Ultra Violet Radiation and How it Effects the Development of Pacific Herring Embryos*. He was invited to present at a scientific conference in Paris, France. He said the Paris experience was an eye opener to see how far science could take him: “One day at home in Eagle River and the next day in Paris.” In his wildest dreams, he never expected to go to Paris, it was a nice surprise in his career.

Two hundred people attended the Paris conference held at the United Nations UNESCO headquarters, which was five minutes from the Eiffel Tower. The participants were mostly international scientists and with very few students. Each day they would gather in one room and listen to a series of talks. Ricardo was among the young scientists who displayed their posters. They stood by their posters to be available to answer questions. The participants seemed to have high interest in Ricardo's work. His abstract was listed in the conference program along with all other abstracts and papers written by international scientists.

Ricardo is deeply appreciative of the encouragement from Dr. John Kelley, director of Polar Ice Coring at UAF. Dr. Kelley has a strong interest in AISES and Native students in science. The Oceanographic Society

sponsored the trip and he feels that Dr. Kelley's efforts and encouragement also made the Paris trip possible.

In the summer of 1998, Ricardo had another stellar opportunity. He attended the number one rated marine science program in the nation at Scripps Institute of Oceanography at University of California in San Diego. Twenty-five students conducted their own research projects with mentors who were Ph.D. candidates. Ricardo said he learned more about graduate school at the Scripps Institute. He is very grateful for the guidance he received as he formed the next phase of his career, which is doing a master's degree and possibly a Ph.D.

Ricardo says he is not sure about getting a Ph.D., so he may take a year off from his studies. He would like to work for the Alaska Sea Life Center in Seward for a year before going to graduate school. He is interested in maintaining ties with the biological community and working at the Alaska Sea Life Center is a good way to remain connected.

Ricardo says that Sue McHenry of Rural Student Services has laid some very valuable groundwork for the UAF AISES chapter, that will help maintain it as a strong chapter on campus. She is a great source of inspiration and has a superb sense of timing in helping the AISES students maintain the chapter and receive the many benefits of AISES. She makes the operation of running AISES seem very smooth and easy.

Ricardo credits AISES with

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starting a chain reaction of opportunity for him; the benefits of AISES build on each other like a snowball. Many students feel AISES is for engi-

neering students, but Ricardo wants to encourage students who are not engineering majors to become aware of AISES and its benefits.

He hopes to encourage high school

students to get involved with science and AISES. He was interested in science for a long time, but AISES made a difference and provided valuable opportunities and support. AISES provides academic and professional support; students in science and engineering share ideas and feelings of motivation and enthusiasm that encourages others. The AISES community continually inspires Ricardo to develop his research and studies in biology. He is certain new students will discover how life in AISES will surprise them. ✨

## Challenges Facing Alaska RSI/RC

by Frank Hill

The Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative/Rural Challenge is now completing the third year of a five-year project. From all of the activity reports and reviews of the project, it appears that we have moved well along toward demonstrating that “education within the culture, not about the culture”, and the knowledge base derived from our Native Elders for curricular reform is achieving what we set out to do originally. The National Science Foundation and the Annenberg Challenge funds that the Alaska Federation of Natives receives to support the initiatives continues to be the financial basis for our efforts.

However, we need to look ahead to the time when NSF and Annenberg funding lapses. Who will continue this valuable and relevant initiative? Perhaps AFN and its partners will request continued funding from the same organizations. It is not certain that our project would be eligible for the same funding again.

Those of us working for the project need to address the challenge as to what will happen in two more years. Is it conceivable or even possible that the Alaska Department of Education and or the University of Alaska would carry on the project initiatives without the funding we have now? Of the 20 rural school districts we work with directly, how many would elect on their own to continue the initiatives with their own funds that may be

budgeted for staff development and curriculum improvement?

The value of the knowledge we have gained from our Native Elders should compel us to work as hard as we can to make sure that their contributions will continue to be utilized in local schools. As we communicate with all of our MOA partners, we need to encourage them to make plans to continue Alaska RSI/RC initiatives, and to assist them in doing so when possible.

During this past year, we have made numerous contacts with all levels of education policy makers and administrators, as well as with teacher-practitioners. Now we need to redouble our efforts to encourage MOA partners and others to continue the work of the project on their own. ✨

### Native Educators' Conference

**Jan. 31-Feb. 2, 1999**  
**Anchorage, Alaska**

Held in Anchorage, NEC will provide the opportunity for people engaged in education that impacts 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.

Contact Lolly Carpluk at (907) 474-5086. Or email [ftlmc@uaf.edu](mailto:ftlmc@uaf.edu)

### Bilingual Multicultural Education and Equity Conference

**February 3-5, 1999**  
**Anchorage, Alaska**

Contact Helen Merckens at (907) 465-8730.

# An Alliance Between Humans and Creatures, Part II

by Oscar Kawagley

*Paper presented to the International Circumpolar Arctic Social Scientists conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, June 1998. Part I printed in the previous issue of Sharing Our Pathways.*

**T**he Alaska Native needed to take lives of animals to live. To give honor, respect, dignity and reciprocation to the animals whose lives were taken, the Native people conceived and put into practice many rituals and ceremonies to communicate with the animal and spiritual beings. These are corroborated through the Alaska Native mythology which are “manifestations of fundamental organizing principles that exist within the cosmos, affecting all our lives” (Grof, 1993).

It behooves the Alaska Native person to leave something behind, such as a piece of dry fish when getting mouse food from the tundra. The mouse food is gathered in the early fall so that the mouse and its family will have an opportunity to collect more food for the winter. The seal when caught is given a drink of water so that its spirit will not be thirsty when it travels to the animal spiritual kingdom. This is done to show respect to the animal for having shared and given its life to the hunter.

Medicinal plants are gathered respectfully knowing full well their power to heal and recognizing that they were given freely by Nature, thus requiring that we share these freely. The Alaska Native person is aware that if we do not use these gifts of Nature regularly, mindfully and respectfully, they will begin to diminish through disuse or misuse. The essential elements of earth, air, water, fire and spirit must always be in balance, as each has an important niche to play in the ecological system.

With this concept in mind, we

must carefully examine the lifestyles and technology that is extant in this world. Our lifestyles have become materialistic and we are given to technological devices and gadgets galore that are not always geared to sustainability. Our modern cities with their complex network of buildings, transportation structures, communications systems, and commodity distribution centers are often disjointed and given to fragmentation.

Likewise, the studies of natural resources are often approached in a fragmentary way, where an expert in harbor seals may not know what the expert in herring fish has discovered in the same ecosystem. Such research has the effect of objectifying the species studied, often for commercial purposes, and contributes little to sustaining Mother Earth. However, in the Western world of science and technology there also exists many alternative approaches that are nature-friendly and sustainable. They await the time when the global societies evolve from consumerism and materialism to an orientation toward conser-

vation and regeneration.

Perhaps, now might be a proper time to begin to use the traditional ecological knowledge of indigenous people as a “strange attractor” that can serve as a catalyst to bring meaning and understanding to the mountains of data on phenomena across a vast spectrum of possible knowledge. We need to pay heed to the warnings and recognize the consequences of the over-manipulation of Nature: wonder drugs of a generation ago are producing new resistant forms of bacteria; our aseptic hospitals are generating iatrogenic diseases; we are losing agricultural lands at a terrific pace; deforestation is accelerating; and global warming is a fact of life today.

I, as a Yupiaq, taught in a traditional and Western way, worry about my seven, grandchildren and the legacy that I will leave behind for them. Will they be able to enjoy the biological diversity and freedom that I had growing up in a traditional Yupiaq household and village? Will they experience starvation and want because the carrying capacity of the lands has been atrociously outpaced? This behooves all of us to rethink whether our objectification and commodification of natural resources has led to the verge of catastrophe. We must strive to have the various ways of teaching and learning converge to give new direction for living, regeneration, cooperation and sharing, and thus forging a new pathway to a vision of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Thank you. ✖

# Comparative Ethnopedagogy

by Lydia Fyodorova

**M**y name is Lydia Fyodorova. I am Associate Professor and Head Chair of Pedagogy at the Institute for Teacher's Professional Development in the Sakha Republic of Yakutia, Russia. I am a visiting scholar for one semester at the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, due to the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX) sponsored by the United States Information Agency.

Ethnopedagogy is a science of folk pedagogy which consists of the study of cultural traditions, customs, sayings, games, etc. I am exploring the similarities in folk pedagogy of the Native people of Alaska and the Sakha Republic.

Traditional Native peoples of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) and Alaska are closely connected with nature. They have tried to live in harmony with the world around them for ages. The most important values for them are respect for yourself (if you don't respect yourself, your language and your culture, you can't respect other people, other cultures, etc.), respect for others and respect for the environment. For example, the Sakha philosophy of "Kut-syur" contains notions of the three elements of the soul:

1. "Ye-kut"—an element from the mother that makes a person intelligent and capable of thinking;
2. "Byor-kut"—an element from the land that makes a person healthy, strong and supports his physical life; and
3. "Salgyn-kut"—an element from the air that creates informational contacts with the environment, providing receptivity and harmony with the environment.

All the elements of the soul are united in the "Sur"—a notion of the vital strength of a person. To injure the "Sur" leads to the person's loss of spiritual and emotional strength. So a person should keep all these elements of the soul in balance in order not to die. To support our "Sur" (elements of a soul), the Sakha people honor folk traditions and customs through ceremonies of respect and honor of the Supreme Spirits (protectors of people's life). This includes "Ysyeh"—which is a variety of the national feast with prayers of gratitude and supplication of well-being.

Sakha folk life is reflected in tales, stories, myths, legends and poems; I have found many similar stories and tales here in Alaska. The folk pedagogy is our roots. For child-rearing, the folk pedagogy emphasizes labor, feasts, nature, plants, songs, tales, epics and legends which demonstrate that Native people of the North are correct and tender to their children. We don't shout, beat or mock them. The lessons to our children are accurate, simple and accessible. Children of the tundra are wise and reasonable and with few words, they can do much.

The Northern/Sakha people don't like to explain morals to their children. Instead, the parents model and

influence the children by their hard work, honesty, respect, love and patience. These examples appear to be similar in the life of the Northern people of Alaska.

I know these practices very well because after graduating from the Yakut State University in Yakutsk, I started my career in Zhigansk secondary school in 1972 in the north of the Republic. At that time the school was large and comprised of about 1,300 students of different ethnic groups: Evens, Evenks, Sakha, Russians and Ukrainians. Evens and Evenks students came from Native villages. The main occupation of their parents was reindeer breeding, hunting and fishing. The students stayed in a boarding school for two years during their ninth- and tenth-grade years. When the holidays began, the Even and Evenk children returned to their communities and helped their families who were involved in traditional occupations.

Several times I traveled to Native communities and stayed there for some time, so I could see my pupils in their natural environment. I saw them putting traps in the taiga or chasing and lassoing reindeer. I saw them making a campfire and cooking traditional meals. I understood what nature was for them, how deep their attachment was to their settlement and their families and their traditional way of life. They were a part of nature.

I have observed the same picture in Olenegarsk, a village in the Chyukurdah region, and in the Sakha village of Kachikatsy in the Ordzeykydzhevsky region, where I worked as a vice-director of the schools up to 1991. But in the Sakha villages the main occupation was cattle breeding, hunting, fishing and maintaining vegetable gardens. The students everywhere worked hard and lived in boarding schools during the school year.

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I wondered why those who lived in boarding schools were behind in their studies when they came back from their homes, and why they were so difficult to be controlled. What were the reasons? The reason was that the life in school was quite different from the life in the village or tundra or taiga. The children who were used to moving around a lot, had to sit for long hours of school lessons. The content of the school program also was not close to their Native culture. This was a standard program similar to that of many other schools in Russia. There was no connection with the Native culture or with the traditions of their forefathers. The children were put into a rigid frame of standards.

The need for language reform, widening of the schools functions, developing of local cultures, and life-mode preservation require change in the system of education and training in schools. The conception of school reform and development in Yakutia takes into account the Yakut, Russian, Evenks, Even, Ukagyr and Chukchi Dolgan cultures and folk traditions and acts for the Yakutia peoples interests now. It was adopted at the state level in 1991. The basic ideas of the concept of Native school revival and development in the Sakha Republic are guided by: (a) provisions for the right to education and upbringing in a Native language; (b) incorporating the younger generation into the Native culture and spirituality and enriching it with the cultures of neighboring nations, thus initiating the youth into the values of world culture; (c) the idea of teaching on the principle “from the near to the far”—from the Native home to the world of all human knowledge; (d) training for life and work with regard to the traditional life style and labor traditions while simultaneously regarding the demands of new economic relations in the transnational world; and (e) a spe-

cial approach to the definition of content and form of teaching in schools for the Northern minorities.

The methodological approach is connected with the treatment of the Native school as a phenomenon of its own dialectics of development, having deep traditional roots in ethnopedagogy, and internal ties with the historical roots of the culture. A lot of programs and curriculum are implemented in schools based on the traditional culture.

The Sakha, Even and Evenks people in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), as with the Native people of Alaska, had to overcome a lot of difficulties. They had to survive in a harsh environment but nevertheless created

on the eternal permafrost their own economy, art, folklore, literature, and their culture. Their culture consists of survival, material values, beliefs and mother tongues—all of which people created for the ages. There is no culture without a mother tongue. People all over the world understand this idea and the fact that without our roots and cultural heritage, we cannot survive. If we drop out one link in the cycle of life, everything else will drop out too.

Thank you for the opportunity to study and learn about the experiences of the Native people in Alaska. We have much to learn and share from one another. I have enjoyed my visit very much. ✨

## New Course for Educators

The Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative worked with the Alaska Staff Development Network (ASDN) to develop a new, multimedia, state-of-the-art distance education course for educators entitled “Creating Culturally Responsive Schools.”

ASDN has received national recognition for its distance learning programs for educators. This three-credit course, which meets Alaska Department of Education multicultural education recertification requirements, is offered statewide through Alaska Pacific University. GCI School Access Program is providing technical assistance and support with Internet course activities. Ronald Cadiente, highly respected Tlingit educator, is the course instructor. Implementing the new Alaska cultural standards in schools, classrooms and communities provides the major focus for the course. Participants

can begin the course at any time. It will take approximately 50 hours to complete all course activities. More than 80 educators have enrolled in this brand new course during the past two weeks. Tuition and fees are \$275. Course video and print materials cost \$85. To enroll or request further information, please contact:

Alaska Staff Development  
Network  
2204 Douglas Hwy, Suite 100  
Douglas, Alaska 99824  
Phone: 907-364-3809  
Fax: 907-364-3805  
E-mail: [asdn@ptialaska.net](mailto:asdn@ptialaska.net) ✨

# Aleut Region

by *Leona Kitchens*

Much of my work in the past year has focused on working with a group of teachers on writing performance standards for the state science content standards. The Alaska Department of Education sponsored the meetings and the participants were teachers from across the state. I have learned so much from this work and appreciate the opportunity to help with the project.

I learned what our students are expected to be able to do in science and how to assess them, but more importantly I feel that I've gained a better picture of what education looks like in rural Alaska. At times the picture that I found is, more often than not, quite disheartening. Often I heard stories of young people that have no hope for the future let alone today. I am surer than ever that the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative project's philosophy is the right path for education: Education must come from within the culture.

Cultural values and the local heritage language make up the foundations for transmitting cultural traditions. Cultural values are the foundation by which children make sense of the world and with language, the means to express themselves. If the community that you live in has not drafted up a set of traditional values by which students can learn, lead the drive to get those written down, approved by the Elders and then out to the public. Young people need to know how to speak their local heritage language. There are so many diverse aspects of our culture that are imbedded in the language and cannot be translated. If the local heritage language is not spoken at community events, then begin to speak that lan-

guage at all gatherings, translating to English secondly.

I would make a plea to you today, get out and support those people who are educating our young people. If you are a community member, go to the school board meetings, call the school and offer your help and expertise, talk to a teacher about helping in the classroom or offer to help write more culturally-based lessons and become an active community model.



If you are a teacher or administrator, ask Elders into the classroom, support teachers who are integrating the local heritage culture in their lessons and keep an open mind about what is valued.

We, as a community, need to start thinking about our responsibilities and where we can start making a difference. The AKRSI cultural standards booklet is a good place to begin looking at how well we are attending to the cultural and educational needs of the children of our community. If you need a copy of the booklet, contact the ANKN office in Fairbanks, (907) 474-5086 or email [fdmd1@uaf.edu](mailto:fdmd1@uaf.edu). ✨

## JOIN A TWO-WEEK TOUR OF MAORI EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND

July 14-30, 1999

Stay at Maori marae and visit Te Kohanga Reo (preschool "language nests")  
Kura Kaupapa Maori (K-12 Maori philosophy schools)  
Te Wananga (Maori higher education)

to coincide with the

**World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education  
Hilo, Hawaii, Aug. 1-7, 1999**

<http://www.wipcehawaii.org>

Anticipated cost for all tour expenses: approximately \$3000

For further information, contact Ray Barnhardt at UAF  
(907) 474-6431 or [ffrjb@uaf.edu](mailto:ffrjb@uaf.edu)

# Yup'ik Region

by Barbara Liu

The stories that are shared by AKRSI Elder Council members are to pass on a deeper understanding of our culture and language. The intent is to use the information for educational purposes. In the last issue (*Vol. 3, Issue 5*), I wrote a short biography of Atsaruaq, Louise Tall. The following are two stories she told about giving and health. She describes parts of Ingulaq and Nakaciuq. Both celebrations have a base in the largest house in the community called the *qasgi* or *qaygi*. It was bigger than other homes; shaped like a dome with one window at the center of the roof and a basement entry at the center of the floor.

This is how Atsaruaq describes the beginning of Ingulaq:

“During Ingulaq, a handmade seagull (made out of grass and skin) is hung with a rope (made of seal) from the window to the entry. When a father brought in a gift with his daughter, he would hang their gift on the seagull and daughter would begin to dance. While she dances, the gift that is on the seagull is lifted up to the window and lowered back down. Then, the father unties it and brings to the back of the *qasgi* while the daughter stops dancing and enters. The gifts were of skin or fur, (seal, fox, wolf, etc). More fathers would bring in gifts with their daughters during this ceremony. The gifts were for the dancers (daughters). As we got ready to go to the *qasgi*, our mothers taught us the simple movement of our entry dance. After Ingulaq, Nakaciuq began. This ceremony involved seal bladders that were processed from the previous spring seal hunt. The seal bladders were blown up, tied and hung to dry. Then, untied to let the air out, folded and put away for the summer until winter. Before dancing, the wives put on their seal gut raincoats and some used their husband's raincoat. Carrying their husband's

folded seal bladder catch in a woven grass, they entered the *qasgi*, and threw the bladders in a stream towards their husbands and danced. I don't know the dances because I didn't get to dance. Later, the bladders were dampened in water, blown back into shape, and hung apart at the back roof of the *qasgi*. During the hot baths, the hanging bladder ornaments were put in the outer entry then afterwards hung inside attached in the woven sea grass. Once I remember, my mother said to me, “two are gathering tall celery plants”. They were two young men pushing a sled to gather a bundle of celery that were strung onto a carved wooden stick. In the *qasgi*, the boys who gathered the plants, lit up the plant tops and went out. The men followed them, holding their bladder ornaments and went out with everyone else. All the fathers went out first and then us. My mother was toting a child on her back holding my hand. We went and gathered around something I couldn't see. So, I crawled in between all the fathers' legs. My mother did the same. I reached the center and in the midst, I saw an ice opening, square shaped, with each corner carved hollow. So, that is where the men pushed the bladders

under the ice. After that, we headed towards home. My mother held my hand again, telling me, “Hurry, before the water man meets us; walk faster.” So it was, on our way home, when one man went to the square opening to deliver water in a seal stomach water bag then poured its contents into the ice opening. My mother took me home and finally when we were inside the house, she took my boots off. There was only one time when everyone caught colds in the spring, and this event was done to prevent colds during the fall, winter and throughout the summer. After the bladders are thrown, colds stopped for a year. This was our cold medicine and we didn't catch colds anytime, only in the spring.”

*“Ingulaq, canek qasgiraameggnun qasgimun itrulluteng kiavet. Kanavet pugyaramun naruyaq agalria tapruarmengpiliameng pinevkarameng nayirmeng. Kan'a-llu makliim aqsain pinevkain tamakunek cagtengqerrluteng usguquurluku naruyaruameng-llu pilirluku. Aklumek itrutaqami aataq paniini yurallrani tuavet qillrutnauraa naruyaruamun. Naruyaruam taugken mayuulluku pikavet egalermun. Egalermeng-llu atraan augarluku, yuralriall tuan taqluni. Tuam-tall alla yurarngan atii taum tuatlu caneng piciatun pikangqerutaciramitun tauna naruyaruq qillervikluku mayuucilluku pikavet. Atraan-llu angilluku kiavet qasgim egkuanun elliluku. Piciatun amirkanek nayirneng piciatun pikangqerutacirameggcetun kaviarneq, white fox—aaneq, qegglnerneq tamakuneng caneng wagg'uq ciamtaliluki nauga maai cat cikiraqkait caalqunek qasgimi tamakut yuralriit. Aataita tuaten pinaurait. Qasgimun agqataraqamta aanamta elicaar-nauraitkut waten yuraasqelluta kiiran tawa yuraasqelluta waten qasgimun agqataqapigtaqamta. Tuamtall tauna taqngan Nakacugnek egciluteng. Upnerkarpak seal-at nayiit makliit issuriit nakacuit qerrurluku*  
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kinerciraarluki paingit-llu ikirluki ellcelluki. Imegluki qemaggluki qemangqalukill kiagpak. Nutaan-llu tavani yuraqataatimgulluku naqtanun. Qalineq all'uteng nulirita tamakut nakacuut itrulluki qasgimiun. Taumun-llu pitaqestiitun kayimlerruki tunluki. Yurarluteng canek taugaam yuvarutengqerruciitanka yuraqallrunrilama. Yurarluteng arnat qalineq atkugturluteng uimeng qaliitnek. Tuaten-llu tuai piraarcelluki qasgimi kenilluki keniqaarlukill qerrurluki qavavet qasgim egkuanun caggluki agarluki. Maqiqataraqameng amigmun an'artaqluki maqilriit taq'aqaata qavavet agaucirluki taprualugmeng qilqetaaraulluki nakacuteng pinaurait. Ataucirqumek wii tuaten nakacugmek egcilriamek aanama qanrullua ikiitugcurnilukek. Ikiitugculriik taुकuk kasmuraurlutek ikiitugneng qugtarlutek. Tawaill paugaarmun qillrulluki kangratnun. Qillruqaarluki-llu eiegluki qasgimek anulluki kenurpagaraqtaraarluteng qasgiq. Anucatkii-llu ayiigneng nakacugnek tegumiarluteng tamalkurmeng angutet nakacut tamakut pitarameng nakacuut tegumiaqluku angutek kingunratgun ayagluteng. Yugyakapiarluteng aatarugaat anluteng wangkuta-llu kingumek. Aanama wii tass'uquurlua Cimiarmek ikum Charlie Friday tunumigturluni. Ayauluta quyurruteng-llu avatairluku ca camna cauluku quyurruteng yugyakaapiarluteng qaillun-llu tangerrunaunani. Uitaqanritua miktellruamall tamaani aatat iruita akuliitgun pulaarlua camna caumakngaat paqeskilaku aatat iruita akulaitgun pullua iruita akulaitgun pulaaqlua. Tua-i camna tekitaqa. !Maaten anluartangqelliniluni elakartangqelliniluni cikuq yaassii-qenqeggluni iquuk taugken kangirain nallait tuavnengqerrluteng kelutmun tevaumaluteng tangerqeraarluku. Tuamtall aanaka cali iruitgun akuliitgun. Cunaug tauna tuavet nakacuteng kenegqelluki kicelluki egggluki nakacuteng-gguq. Egci-

mariamegteki uterqaqluteng Aanama wii tass'uquurlua kiikirturlua, 'Kiiki, melgilriim nakacugnek melgilriim tumkeciqakuk, uqilacarluten'. Cunaug tuai uterqaqamta angun atauciq tuavet !ayatulliuq wagg'uq melgir, mermeng payuggluki qilumeng imiqerluku qiluq tauna tawavet maqcarturluku elakiallratnun.

Aanama utrullua nutaan-llu nemtenun itrucamia kamilaqluta. Qusermeng qusraarluteng nunat qusermun yungcautekluku tuai tauna. Qusermek taqluteng qusyuanateng

uksurpak kiagpak allrakum iluani upnerkarmi taugaam qusernautukut Nakacugnek-llu egciata qusermek taqluta. Tawaten tuai taugaam pituluta. Nakacugnek tuai egcilria qusrircautekluku qusernanrirnautukut qusyuanatall allragnirpak uksurpak kiagpak nutaan-llu uksunrian quserluta. Quserm tut'etuluta tawani quserpeknatall maani piciatun kiiran tuai quseryaraqluku.

I wish everyone a healthy and a prosperous year.

Tua-ingunrituq, Mak ✕

## Collaboration in Education

by Ayaprun Loddie Jones, Ayaprun Immersion School, LKSD

The following was a keynote speech given to the Alaska Native Education Council Conference, October 9, 1998.

My parents were my first teachers who taught and made me very knowledgeable of my Yup'ik culture. They collaborated in my educational upbringing, each one knowing their specific roles. My father was the head of the household—sheltering, feeding and loving all the thirteen children in the family. My mother's role was to raise the family, take care of my dad's catch and model what a mother should be. They taught me in my first language: Yup'ik. They taught me using the traditional methods where my mother was the only one who talked to us every morning about what to do and what not to do. She used the traditional discipline method but never raised her voice and my father never intruded but gave his support.

What are the discipline policies in the schools doing to our children? Those of us who were raised by our elderly parents know that the Western schools are doing the opposite. Our children don't show a lot of respect, one reason is because we, the working mothers, had them raised by a line-up of babysitters.

To follow up on the roles my parents had, I told a story about the time that my family and I came back from

a long, tiring day of berry-picking. Just before we had dinner, my mother said, "Kitak tauna neqliurru," meaning get your husband's plate ready. Without thinking I responded, "Atam ellminek piyumaug." "Oh, he gets his own food!" My mother got up and said, "Takummi pingaituq," "Not while I'm around," and she gave a plate of food to my husband. My husband said, "See!" and he looked like he had

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just made the winning touchdown of a super bowl game!

In this day and age now, most women have jobs and the roles seem to be reversed.

For my teacher preparation I was trained in a field-based teacher preparation program called the Alaska Rural Teacher Training Corp. There are a lot of professionals, principals, etc. from the other culture who gave me the confidence and belief that I can be a good teacher and who believed in me. They also helped raise my self-esteem and helped me seek to improve myself.

We, the Native speakers, were trained in the Western school system. Why can't there be collaboration and have the teachers be trained in our culture and language? When the missionaries had to reach and convert their Native followers, a lot of them learned our languages.

We have to have pride in what was given to us by our parents. I once wrote that every year we are losing our most precious and important resources—our Elders. What a fine gift it would be to give the gift of our Native tongue back through our Yup'ik-speaking young people. I feel proud to be involved in the Yup'ik Immersion Program. At least this community knows the importance of retaining our language and culture.

In this day and age there are too many controversial issues facing our lives, both in our communities and schools. We must get self-esteem and pride back into our children or else we'll keep losing them to drugs, alcohol and finally suicide. Let's work together and aim for one goal—the happiness of our young people.

[Author's note: I ended the speech with the following story:]

There were two people who had bought a new outboard motor and were out hunting. All of a sudden the outboard motor fell into the water because it wasn't securely

fastened to the boat. The two waited a while, hopeful that more hunters would pass by and help them, but no one came by. Finally one of them said, "I'm going down to check on the motor. So he took off his clothes and dove under. After a while the second person was wondering why the his partner never surfaced and finally

looked down. He saw the his partner trying to start the motor under water. He hollered down to the him, "Why don't you choke it first!"

No matter how much we seem to be drowning in our jobs as educators, let's work for the well-being, success and future of our children! ✨

## Southeast Region

by Andy Hope

The Southeast Alaska Native/Rural Education Consortium (SEANREC) met in Juneau on October 6–7, 1998. A meeting of the Southeast Native Language Consortium preceded the meeting. The Southeast Regional Elders' Council participated in both meetings. Representatives from each of the consortium partners were in attendance.

The participants in the language meeting divided into working groups and drafted recommendations for community level programs. A priority for many of the groups was publication (in many cases re-publication) of materials for use in classrooms. The recommendations of the meeting will be utilized by Tlingit and Haida in drafting a proposal to the Administration for Native Americans to follow up on the language planning grant that they are in the process of closing out now.

SEANREC participants reviewed 1998 initiatives: Elders and Cultural camps, Reclaiming Tribal Histories, the Axe Handle Academy, the Tribal College Initiative and the Southeast Alaska Native Educators Association. Paula Dybdahl of Juneau-Douglas High School reported on her participation in the Alaska RSI Leadership Institute that took place in Fairbanks in July 1998. Elders' Council members offered comments and recom-

mendations throughout the meetings. A presentation on the Camp Water Science Camp project by student participants was special. Participants then reviewed 1999 initiatives: Village Science Applications, Living in Place, the Axe Handle Academy, the Tribal College Initiative and AISES Camps/Science Fairs.

It is my hope that a central activity in 1999 will be an effort to involve more teachers in science camp activities. I believe that getting more classroom teachers (Native and non-Native) involved in our project is the key to long term impact. I am proposing that our partners co-sponsor a Native language and curriculum development institute in Sitka in the summer. The institute would take place at Dog Point Fish Camp and in traditional classroom settings. The Southeast Alaska Native Educators Association would hold organizational meetings in conjunction with the institute. ✨

# Iñupiaq Region

## Process Of Interviewing

by Rachel Craig

The following points contain information on how to begin the work of interviewing resource people for gathering information to put together into actual teaching materials and resources.

### Opening Exercises

1. Cordial greeting of the elders. Inquire if they had a good night's sleep. Inquire if they have anything of importance to communicate right then.

### Reasons for Interviewing

2. Give reason(s) for meeting. "This is what we would like to do with you (give subject of discussion). We need this information for our students so they can \_\_\_\_\_ (reasons) \_\_\_\_\_ in school and in life. We can't put this information on paper without your help. We will work closely with you. We will listen to you. We will tape record the session so we don't miss anything. But we want to be sure we understand what you are trying to tell us."

### Process

3. "We want you to be thinking of signing a release form while you are here so we could use the information in the classrooms." Explain the purpose of a release form. Be up front with the elders on the purposes of your work; they usually are willing to assist in any way possible. Just don't surprise them with additional details and obligations afterwards. Spell them all out at the beginning before you begin to work with them. Remember that this is a partnership; you are willing to work and

open doors, and they have the information and knowledge that you need to make your work effective.

4. As you interview, keep working toward getting the deeper, more meaningful stuff. Students need to know the whys of what they are studying. Try to approach the subject from all angles. Remember that most of our students don't know much about Native stuff, but they love it when they hear it. It doesn't hurt to get the detailed stuff. Our students are trained to read. They can often read a lot better than they can write; but they can also learn to write.
5. Take breaks at appropriate times. Concentrating on a subject that you are wanting takes a lot of energy out of your partner. As the elders get older, their strength is used up more quickly. Be considerate of them. Have some juices (apple, grape, cranberry—something with not too much acid), water, tea, coffee or whatever the elders need for their breaks. Make them feel good. They love to feel that they are making a contribution to someone else's well-being, especially their grandchildren or great-grandchildren.
6. Some things to consider when contemplating getting releases from the elders:
  - ◆ Are the materials mainly for educational purposes? We have

had no problem getting releases for educational purposes.

- ◆ Are the materials gathered for commercial purposes? If money is expected to be made, a realistic percentage should be earmarked for the information source. In that case, it might also be wise to identify one of the heirs.

The elders should hear your proposal and your consideration of them; you should also ask them if they have any questions or counter-proposals. Keep the discussion friendly. What are you getting out of the whole deal? What do you envision are some of the outcomes of the interviews? Elders are entitled to know what's going on.

7. Enjoy your work with the elders. Your attitude helps them to feel that they have been involved in a worthwhile project. ✕

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# Athabaskan Region

by Amy VanHatten

Last year I worked on my first curriculum unit-building workshop and my team worked on a snowshoe unit. We are close to distributing it to rural teachers for field-testing. The primary purpose for our unit has been to develop ideas for lesson plans that are culturally appropriate and can provide the basis for future curriculum development and assessment, with an emphasis on science. Sean Topkok, ANKN's indigenous curriculum specialist, is waiting to put this unit plus many others on the ANKN website.

So, just what is curriculum? As I see it, curriculum is the formal master plan for student education throughout a school district that:

- Ensures consistent procedures for planning and evaluation in subject areas.
- Guides teachers in developing lesson plans.
- Utilizes relevant textbooks, traditional stories, etc. and respects cultural beliefs and values.

- Integrates "Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools" and "Alaska Content Standards."
- Is an ongoing process involving community, teaching staff, students and the school board.
- Expands student academic needs, expectations and opportunities to excel and develop individual intelligence.

I am not the only one who experiences complex challenges in working

on curriculum. One reality I found helpful is to keep asking myself this question: What is an appropriate way to invite Elders into the schools that is respectful and valuable while staying focused within the framework of the curriculum? I saw a good example of this recently in the Iditarod Area School District's work on creating culturally-based units and holding curriculum workshops for their staff, including the presence of their own regional Elders.

In addition, an eighth grade student of Nikolai, Dietrich Nikolai, won a trip to the National AISES science fair for his martin set science project at the Second Annual Native Science Fair at the Howard Luke Academy in Fairbanks. I had the opportunity of being in the Nikolai School when he returned from Fairbanks. The whole village is very proud of his accomplishment and the representation of their culture. I can still envision the smiling faces and rounds of applause from all of us there. I am sure the Iditarod Area School District newsletter will soon highlight him with honors.

A total of 677 years of distinguished Athabaskan Elders' life experiences was present at the Notaaledinh Nets'edaat meeting in Galena November 16-19, 1998 (Third Annual Athabaskan Regional Consortium and Elders Council Meeting.)

I have had the good fortune to be able to work with some dedicated Elders who have identified the following topics as areas in which they feel school curriculum needs to be focused (this is not an exclusive list):

- Family values
- Family clan/family tree
- Place names curriculum
- Native spirituality parallel to Christianity
- Use common sense
- Discipline
- Work hard

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*Notaaledinh Nets'edaat meeting in Galena, November, 1998. L-R back row: Fred Alexander, Johnson Moses, Sidney Huntington. L-R front row: Rita Alexander, Lillian Olin, Catherine Attla, Bertha Moses and Eliza Jones. Absent from the photo is Trimble Gilbert. Photo taken by Amy VanHatten.*

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- Proper protocol
- Language: learn both sides
- Student/cultural exchange
- Respect “period of time”
- Indian name is powerful
- Respect private details in stories
- CAUTION
- Gifts for life
- Cultural identity

Cultural identity is best described as an identity that gives the individual a sense of a common past and of a shared destiny. What is Athabascan culture? How can we increase our traditional knowledge base, provide immersion programs, and work more closely in the future with Elders, teachers, curriculum specialists and language instructors? In search of answers to those questions, I would like to share what Sidney Huntington advised—we need to be careful of what we are trying to do and to use common sense before implementing the next round of rotating initiatives. He is concerned about education. First off, he says, we should ask ourselves “Where are we? Where have we been? Where are we going?”

During the evenings the Elders got together with the Galena Charter School students for talking circles, a block and pulley exercise with Dan Solie, fiddling and Indian singing and dancing. The best summary of the regional meetings is this: the Athabascan Region just keeps on getting better and better.

I wish to thank Galena City School for hosting our meeting, along with all the fantastic people who contributed: the local musicians and Elder musicians, the Project Education Charter School (PECS) and students, the Galena City School student general assembly, the Interior Campus Center, the Loudon Tribal Council and all the other people in Galena who gave us a big warm reception.

This is my own advice to myself:



*L-R Bart Mwarey, Project Education Charter School (PECS) principal; Aaron Tickett, tenth grade; Melanie Shockley, ninth grade; and Elder/author Howard Luke presenting his book to the PECS student representatives at the Galena City School general assembly.*

At times I feel overwhelmed by all that has taken place and the things that still need to take place. That’s when I remind myself I am only one person and can only do a certain amount at any given time. So, I make

my own incentives and try to avoid overload and not make all the decisions. Delegate! Be thankful, thankful, thankful and enjoy life while making a living for yourself. ✨

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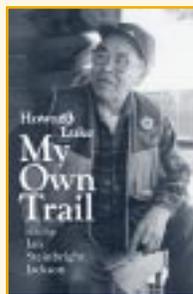
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# Village Science: Alaska Clipart

by Alan Dick

**W**hile attempting to create relevant science materials for Alaskan rural students, I constantly had difficulty getting artwork to illustrate my text. There are thousands of images available in commercial clipart collections, but few of them are appropriate in the bush. Out of frustration, I compiled a collection that I would like to make available to you. It is a jumpstart; each region can develop a specialized collection of its own.

My collection currently has over 300 images scanned at 150 dpi and saved as TIFF files. These include images of animals, tools, plants, clothing and more. I used low resolution so files won't be too large. They are ready to insert into applications such as Microsoft Word, PageMaker, PowerPoint, etc. Most are line drawings and only a few images are over 200k. The booklet that accompanies

the images was created in PageMaker 6.0 (available in many school districts) and should be easy to expand and revise on the local level.

The goal is to make the development of relevant curriculum easy for school districts, teachers and students. Technology makes local publishing of materials a reality.

The collection will be available on the ANKN web site to download as a

package or as individual graphics ([www.ankn.uaf.edu/clipart.html](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/clipart.html).) As we progress, we hope to make the collection available on CD.

Great care has been taken to use only images that are copyright free. Please be respectful of other people's work when you develop your own.

I thank Time Frame of Anchorage for starting an Alaska clipart collection and making it available to the public for free. I used many of their images. I also thank Nine Star Enterprises in Anchorage for permitting the use of images from the ALL Project, artist Kathleen Lynch. I also thank UA Press for making images available from *Alaska Trees and Shrubs*.

Suggestions for images to add are:

- ◆ Local maps with place names
- ◆ Traditional tools
- ◆ Traditional activities
- ◆ Student work
- ◆ Local animals

As you develop local clipart collections, please share them with us so we can distribute them statewide.

Hoping that my past frustration has led to your future enjoyment... ✨

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