



Sharing Our Pathways

VOL. 7, ISSUE 5
Nov/Dec 2002

A newsletter of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative

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

Local Culture and Academic Success Go Together

Place-based Education in Russian Mission

Something special is happening in Russian Mission. Just three years ago one-third of the children ages 12 through 16 were not attending school. Now every child of school age is in school.

by Mike Hull, Principal

Three years ago there was great concern about test scores because they were among the lowest in the district. Last year six of our seniors passed all three sections of the Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exam, and the other two passed writing. Our ten third-graders achieved advanced or proficient scores on all sections of the Benchmark test.

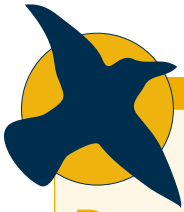
(continued on next page)



Margie Larson and Jimmie Polty with their first beaver.

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Local Culture and Academic Success .. | 1 |
| Rakaumanga: Maori Immersion School Success Story | 3 |
| ANKN Curriculum Corner | 5 |
| Love and Caring for Balance | 6 |
| Athabascan Language Program | 7 |
| Remembering Our Heroes | 8 |
| Yupik Region | 9 |
| Alaska RSI Regional Contacts | 9 |
| Athabascan Region | 10 |
| Southeast Region | 11 |
| Alutiiq/Unangaʼ Region | 12 |
| Iñupiaq Region | 14 |
| Inuit Studies: Some Reflections | 15 |



Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative

Ray Barnhardt, Co-Director

University of Alaska Fairbanks
ANKN/AKRSI
PO Box 756730
Fairbanks, AK 99775-6730
(907) 474-1902 phone
(907) 474-1957 fax
email: ffrjb@uaf.edu

Oscar Kawagley, Co-Director

University of Alaska Fairbanks
ANKN/AKRSI
PO Box 756730
Fairbanks, AK 99775-6730
(907) 474-5403 phone
(907) 474-1957 fax
email: rfok@uaf.edu

Frank Hill, Co-Director

Alaska Federation of Natives
1577 C Street, Suite 300
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 274-3611 phone
(907) 276-7989 fax
email: fnfwh@uaf.edu

Sharing Our Pathways

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

The Alaska Native Knowledge Network
University of Alaska Fairbanks
P.O. Box 756730
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-6730
(907) 474-5086 phone
(907) 474-5615 fax
<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu>
email: fyankn@uaf.edu

Newsletter Editor: Dixie Masak Dayo
dixie.dayo@uaf.edu

Layout & Design: Paula Elmes
paula.elmes@uaf.edu

(continued from front page)

Changes that are this broad-based are not merely the product of great teaching—though we have great teachers. Research shows that teachers can accomplish a lot, but a high level of success is attainable only if you have family and community support.

There are many great stories within the process we are going through. I will present one change because it is at once simple and perhaps a catalyst for others.

Members of the school staff and community targeted the junior high because that was the age group that was dropping out of school. We built a curriculum based on the subsistence activities of each season. Young people of that age have a lot of energy, do not do well in confined spaces, and they are trying to define

We sent them to camp for two weeks in the fall. They caught fish, picked berries, learned about medicinal plants, cooked and they climbed mountains. While doing this, they recorded their activities with digital



Seventh- and eighth-grade students studied a beaver lodge.

cameras and lap top computers. When they came home, they processed all this information and developed web pages to share their adventures with others. They became storytellers—to the global community.

When in the classroom much of their reading and writing focused on the wildlife of the area as well as local history. They studied their world. Then they went out, on a weekly basis, for experience-based learning with local experts. Max Nickoli, the librarian, and Wassily Alexie, the school maintenance man, took them ice fishing and had them



Seventh- and eighth-grade students camped on top of the mountain and got a view of their home.

their place in the world. Traditionally these adolescents would have begun learning the roles of young men and women, getting prepared by the community to take positions of responsibility.

set rabbit and beaver snares and black-fish traps. They learned how to skin beavers and build snow shelters. And they came home and, again, told their stories.

This fall students traveled by canoe between three different camps. Each camp focused on a different aspect of subsistence. Students caught and cleaned fish, went hunting, studied beaver habitat and built a cabin they will use for trapping this winter.

The activities set a pace for the students that carries over into the classroom. We need to keep moving because there are things we need to get done—inside the classroom and outside. Set the snare . . . finish this book. Kids who had never seen a beaver lodge snared and skinned their first beaver. The same kids raised their reading level by more than a year in just five months.

Junior high students are, by circumstance of their own developmental level, self-conscious and even self-centered. So, why not make them and their world the things they read and write about? They are trying to find out who they are—show them. They want to know their place in the world—bring them into their world. The resources are within each village—each has land, heritage, experts and children.

This is but one element of what is taking place at Russian Mission. The school has done nothing more than integrate into its program the skills necessary to sustain life in a subsistence setting. Isn't that the purpose of an education—to acquire the skills one needs to lead a productive life in one's community? By doing so the school has made a statement about the value of traditional skills and the value of culture. Students study their heritage and practice it and it is working. It is gratifying to see young people excited about what they are doing. It is even more special to see young people excited about who they are. Perhaps the community of Russian Mission has come to acknowledge the value of school because the school has come to acknowledge the value of the local heritage? ✨

Rakaumanga: Maori Immersion School Success Story

by Frank J. Keim

My wife Jennifer and I recently returned from a three-month trip Down Under. While in both Australia and New Zealand, we saw a lot of fascinating country and many species of exotic birds and animals. One of the highlights of our trip was a visit to a Maori immersion school in New Zealand.

In New Zealand we stayed with an old friend, Barbara Harrison, who used to live in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta back in the early 1980s. During one of those years she regularly flew into Hooper Bay to work with students in the Cross-Cultural Education Development program. We were teachers in Hooper Bay then and each time she came in to the village to tend to her students she was our special house guest. So it was natural that when we traveled to New Zealand we became Barb's house guests.

Barbara has been living and working since 1986 with the Maori community in Huntly, a small town on the North Island about an hour's drive south of Auckland. More specifically, she has been involved with the Maori immersion school there called Te Wharekura o Rakaumanga. One morning Barbara took us on a tour of the school.

What we saw at Rakaumanga, as most people refer to it, prompted this article which I hope will encourage Alaska Native peoples to continue their own efforts to preserve their Native tongues. Let me tell you about it.

Rakaumanga is what we in Alaska would call a K-12 school. It has more than 400 students and a Maori lan-

guage immersion program that is the envy, I believe, of the world. All of the children there speak the Maori language fluently. One of reasons for this is that all of their subjects are taught in Maori by fluent Maori teachers and they are expected to speak in Maori while they are inside the school buildings.

The campus is a marvel to wander through with bright murals and carved wood and rock statues representing traditional themes from Maori culture. The children, who range in age from 5-17, have tidy classrooms, a computer suite, a library, a large gym and a meeting house they call Te Hokioi. All of the students we met in the school smiled readily and were eager to chat with us, indicators that this was a happy place of learning for them.

But this wonderful school didn't happen overnight. Its existence is the result of a lot of blood, sweat and tears by dedicated Maori parents, teachers and others who didn't want to see the Maori language disappear into oblivion like so many other indigenous languages have all over the world. Here's a little history.

Te Wharekura o Rakaumanga School was first established in 1896 to

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

educate the children of Maori parents living in west Huntly, located on the west bank of the Waikato River. After a number of setbacks, including fire, floods and a government attempt to shut the school down in the 1970s, a few determined Maori men and women spearheaded a new movement to change the very nature of the original school.

Disillusioned by the academic failure of the graduates of the old school and concerned about the future of the Maori language (te reo Maori), they applied to the New Zealand government for a bilingual program at Rakaumanga. But they saw this as only a half-measure and pressured the government to recognize the need for a total immersion experience for their students. Only in this way, they said, would fluency in the language be gained.

By 1987, Rakaumanga had started its first immersion class with 20 kids. At the time, there were only eight levels of school; when the students became 12 years of age and had reached their final grade of schooling, none of their parents wanted them to go elsewhere to a high school where they would be educated in English. So in 1992, the immersion battle resumed.

Meanwhile, during the mid 1980s the Maori people had been negotiating on a national level for recognition of their language as an official language of New Zealand. A formal claim was lodged in 1985 with the National Waitangi Tribunal, which considers questions related to the original 1840 Waitangi Treaty that was signed between Maori chiefs and representatives of the British Crown. In 1986, the Tribunal decided in favor of the Maori, and shortly afterward the Maori Language Act was passed which established te reo Maori as an official language of New Zealand.

In the early 1980s, something else had been happening nationwide that

added further impetus to the language immersion movement. Preschool programs called Kohanga Reo (literally “language nests”) had been established all over the country which provided Maori language immersion for children from infancy to age five. By 1994 more than 13,000 Maori children were enrolled in 819 Kohanga Reo programs. Without the six local Kohanga Reo in Huntly sending kids on to primary school at Rakaumanga,

But this wonderful school didn't happen overnight. Its existence is the result of a lot of blood, sweat and tears by dedicated Maori parents, teachers and others . . .

the immersion program could not have operated as it did.

So you can see the New Zealand national government was faced with an imperative. Now it had to provide large scale financial support for Maori language programs at several different levels of schooling throughout the country. This included Rakaumanga School, although it took additional hard work to convince the national government to fully fund a Rakaumanga five-year high school. This was finally accomplished by 1994.

While this effort at convincing the national government was going on, Rakaumanga School had been educating its original primary graduates for two years in its own locally-generated immersion program, so that by the time the government got around to kicking in five million dollars to fund what had become a five-year full secondary program, the Rakaumanga pupils already had a head start.

By 1997 the first crop of six students completed their final year (seventh form) of high school at Rakaumanga. This meant they had not only passed their Maori language exams, but also their national profi-

ciency exams that all New Zealand high school seniors have to pass to qualify for admission to post-secondary institutions.

According to Barbara Harrison, who wrote an informative article on Rakaumanga, most of these and subsequent graduates of the high school have gone on to post-secondary studies. In this respect, the school has been a terrific success. And Barbara's research indicates a direct link between this success and the use of the Maori language as the language of instruction in the school.

Barbara was recently featured in a story in the Maori magazine, *Mana*. During the interview she indicated that there are teachers here in Alaska who would like to emulate the Maori formula for success. But she also warned that it wouldn't be an easy process. Success at Rakaumanga was due to devoted Maori leadership, community and parent support, political pressure resulting in legislative changes like making Maori an official language and finally funding for the instruction in Maori language, training of bilingual teachers and the development of curriculum materials.

I recently read that Ayaprun Elitnaurviat Yupiik Immersion School in Bethel began its first sixth-grade class. I have also heard of an earnest and ongoing attempt by parents and teachers in Hooper Bay to start their own immersion school there. Perhaps the Maori example at Te Wharekura o Rakaumanga will indeed provide some encouragement for their efforts to preserve the Yup'ik language and culture.

Anyone interested in more information about Rakaumanga School or the process of setting up a similar program can contact Barbara Harrison at maor3055@waikato.ac.nz, or contact the Alaska Native Knowledge Network for a copy of the *Guidelines for Strengthening Indigenous Languages*. ✨

ANKN Curriculum Corner

by Ray Barnhardt

The *ANKN Curriculum Corner* highlights curriculum resources available through the Alaska Native Knowledge Network that are compatible with the tenets outlined in the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*. The theme for this issue focuses on ethnobotany: resources for incorporating traditional knowledge of edible and medicinal uses of local plants into all levels of the curriculum. You will find a wealth of curriculum ideas and resources from all over Alaska in the documents listed here. The most extensive and versatile plant curriculum guide is the one prepared by the Association of Unangan/Unangas Educators, which is in the final stages of editing for posting on the ANKN web site as a model and template for similar curricula in other regions of Alaska. We urge you to check out these resources and get your students involved in the excitement of learning from and about the world around them.

The Plants of My People: The Iñupiaq of Golovin Bay

—by Cheryl Ann Wood.
<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/plantsofmypeople>

Medicinal Plants of the Kodiak Alutiiq Archipelago

—by Rosa Wallace and Victoria Woodward
 (poster also available from ANKN)
<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/Subsistence/medplants.html>

Narrative of Plants of Point Hope for ARCUS

—by Sheila Gaquin and Jason Fantz.
<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/plantnarr.html>

Nauriat Niginaqtuat: Plants That We Eat

—by Anore Jones. Available from Maniilaq Association, Kotzebue

Alaska's Wilderness Medicines: Healthful Plants of the Far North

—by Eleanor G. Viereck.
<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/viereck/index.html>

Edible Plants of Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay and Marshall

—by Frank Keim and LYSD Students.
<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/Marshall/edibleplants/index.html>

Tanaina Plantlore Dena'ina K'et'una: An Ethnobotany of the Dena'ina Indians of Southcentral Alaska

—by Priscilla Russell Kari.

Wild, Edible, and Poisonous Plants of Alaska

—by the Cooperative Extension Service. Available from Alaska Cooperative Extension, UAF

Unangam Hitnisangin/Unangam Hitnisangis/Aleut Plants: A Region-Based Plant Curriculum for grades 4-6

—by Unangan Educators with editorial support from Barbara Svarny Carlson and Paula Elmes. Forthcoming on the ANKN web site
<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/unangam/>

Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge

—a set of guidelines that address issues of concern in the documentation, representation and utilization of traditional cultural knowledge. It is important to recognize the cultural and ethical precautions involved when working with Elders on subjects such as traditional knowledge regarding edible and medicinal uses of plants.
<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/standards/culturaldoc.html>

We welcome submissions of curriculum resources and ideas that you think might be of interest to others, as well as descriptions of curriculum initiatives that are currently underway or for which you are seeking sites or teachers who are willing to pilot-test new materials. Information on obtaining the materials described in this column is available through the Alaska Native Knowledge Network at www.ankn.uaf.edu, fncst@uaf.edu or at (907) 474-5086. ✨

Love and Caring for Balance

Because I have not always loved myself and was thus a parent who did not experience fully the maturation of my children during their teenage years, I missed out in that critical time of their growing up. I have one important piece of advice for those of you who may not have a love for yourself, and that is to do some thoughtful self-examination. The problem may arise due to being dysfunctional as a result of poverty, alcoholism or some sort of mental or physical disability. If you find yourself lacking in self-worth, then you must change yourself first. To love someone else, you must first learn to love yourself. This allows the process of loving your children and others to become a part of your life. I applaud those of you that have this emotional and spiritual quality in you already.

Several issues ago, I wrote an article about talking to, singing to and making the child feel good while still in the mother's womb. This is important for the child to learn the sounds you make as the mother, the father or the grandparent. They will learn to identify you as parents and as members of the family. They most importantly will recognize the love being shown to them. Through this love they will obtain a sense of belonging—belonging to the mother, the father, siblings and grandparents. At a later time the child will learn that s/he belongs to a village/community, a group of people, and in some instances, a tribe. You as the parents begin to teach the youngster by example, which is a more powerful teaching/learning tool than any formal method you may use.

And now here is my secret, a very simple secret; it is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye (Antoine de Saint-Exupery).

This builds the self-respect and pride of the child by knowing who

they are and where they are from. As the Golden Buddha is made of pure gold, so there is a golden essence in each child. We, as parents, must nurture this natural self, so that the child grows up strong with the golden glow of self and never loses it.

Below is a poem written by Kahlil Gibran¹. Ellam Yua, God, has a plan for each of us. It is these inner assets that the child already possesses that

*Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's
longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you, yet they
belong not to you.
You may give them your love but not your
thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their
souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomor-
row,
Which you cannot visit, not even in your
dreams.*

by Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley
we want to develop so s/he can grow up to become the very best they are capable of becoming.

The modern world has been struggling with the education of our children for quite some time. We in Alaska are trying to change education so that its foundation becomes our Native worldviews using the languages that constructed them. We continue to struggle against those that oppose us, laws that present obstacles and money that is reduced or taken away. Yet, when you think about it, our ancestors and parents knew what they were doing when they provided an education based on knowing who you are and where you are. They produced children with minds that have a home. Many of us have homeless minds because of lack of being told our stories.

I am again going to provide another story from the book, *All I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* by Robert Fulghum:

Most of what I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be, I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not be at the top of the graduate mountain,

*You may strive to be like them, but seek not
to make them like you,
For life goes not backward nor carries with
yesterday.
You are the bows from which your chil-
dren as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of
the
Infinite, and He bends you with His might
that
His arrows might go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hand be
for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
So He loves also the bow that is stable.*

by Kahlil Gibran

but there in the sandbox at the nursery school.

These are the things I learned. Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Live a balanced life. Learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some. Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch for traffic. Hold hands and stick together. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the plastic cup. The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that. Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the plastic cup—they all die. So do we. And then remember the book about Dick and Jane and the first word you learned, the biggest word of all: LOOK.

Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics. Sane living. Think of what a better world it would be if we all—the whole world—had cookies and milk about 3:00 o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankets for a nap. Or if we had a basic policy in our nations to always put things back where we found them and cleaned up our own messes. And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out into the World, it is better to hold hands and stick together.

From this we learn that we acquire a lot of knowledge without realizing

it from conception to birth to death. For our children in schools, it is necessary that they not only learn the three "Rs", but include a fourth "R", relaxation. We have forgotten how to do this. Children from the first grade through high school need time for

quiet. A time for reflection, a time to imagine, a time to visualize what one would want to be in the future. Teach our children to dream and then help them make those dreams come true. *Quyana.* ✨

1. The poem and story were excerpted from Canfield, J. & Hansen, M. C., editors. *Chicken Soup for the Soul: 101 Stories to Open the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit*. Deerfield Beach, FL.: Health Communications, Inc., 1993.

IATC Update: Athabascan Language Program

by Beth Leonard, Language Coordinator-Instructor

The Interior Athabascan Tribal College is looking for language instructors who are willing to teach community multi-age classes. If you are interested, please contact me as we can also offer teacher training and support.

Conversational Koyukon and Gwich'in Classes, Fairbanks

IATC, in cooperation with The Morgan Project/UAF School of Education and the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District After School Program, is offering courses for Gwich'in and Koyukon Athabascan languages this fall from October 1–November 21. The instructor for Gwich'in is Kathy Sikorski and Koyukon instructors are Susan Paskvan, Joe Kwaraceius, Clara Clark, Agnes Moore and Steven Toby. This is an exciting program as it serves parents and children—the Koyukon class accepted students from ages 10 and up (ages 10–13 with parent/guardian) and the Gwich'in class accepted students ages 14 and up.

The After School Program is providing classrooms and, because the IATC and Morgan Project are paying instructor salaries, the registration fee is reduced to \$5. Students are also able to register for one credit of ANL

121 through UAF for an additional \$25. If instructors are available, we are hoping to offer two seven-week sessions during the spring semester for Gwich'in, Koyukon and Iñupiaq.

Funding Awarded for Family Language Immersion Program—Athabascan

Through the Administration for Native Americans, TCC and IATC were recently awarded three years of funding that focuses on two pilot projects: (1) training in family immersion models and (2) development of family-oriented language immersion/cultural camps. We will begin advertising for regional coordinators and language specialists to assist with development of family immersion curricula and model development for language immersion cultural camps.

For more information on the IATC Language Program, please contact Beth Leonard at 452-8251, ext. 3287 (or 1-800-478-6822). ✨

Remembering Our Heroes

by Frank Hill

Since 9-11 we have heard much about the heroism of the policemen and firefighters of New York City. Their actions need to be remembered and celebrated. Their actions remind us of the kind of people we could or should be if we had the same dedication to purpose.

Today, if we were to ask our young people who their heroes are, many would say Michael Jordan, Eminem or other sports or entertainment personalities.

The heroes of my childhood have endured for my entire life. I grew up in a time and place rich with opportunity to be among heroes. Besides my Finnish seafaring father and my Dena'ina mother and grandmother, my favorite hero is my Uncle Gabriel Trefon, a Dena'ina from Nondalton and the Lake Clark area. I refer to Uncle Gabriel's life for inspiration and an example for myself as I have transitioned from those days of living with the land to earning a living in the modern world.

Uncle Gabriel was my mother's brother, who was born at the beginning of the last century. As was customary in those times, his life as a true Dena'ina man required him to become an expert hunter, fisher, provider and leader. And that he did for the remainder of his life. After he became chief of the Nondalton people and I was old enough to be aware of Uncle Gabriel's leadership, I began to pay attention to his activities. Many people regarded Uncle Gabriel as a gruff, stern person. At first, I thought so too. But as the years passed I became aware of his other strong traits.

Uncle Gabriel was the local church leader. Active in the church as well as

performing the duties of traditional chief, Uncle Gabriel combined Dena'ina cultural values with those of the church. I recall him counseling a young couple who wanted to get married in the church. He admonished the young man for thinking about marriage and family responsibilities without first demonstrating his independence from his parents by having his own house. Another time, Uncle was asked by a couple to plan a funeral for a newborn baby. I recall watching Uncle carefully examine the dead infant and ask the parents questions about how and when the baby died. When we were building the casket for the tiny baby, I remember his tears and the mourning songs he sang to the child.

After realizing that the cost of store-bought goods was prohibitive for his people when purchased and transported from the nearest store a day's travel away, Uncle Gabriel established a store in the village. Although he lacked formal schooling, he kept the store accounts accurately. He made arrangements with the cannery employers of his people to sign over a portion of their earnings to the local store to ensure that their families could buy what they needed. Among other firsts, Uncle was the first in his village to own an outboard motor and to bring a washing machine to his home. This demonstrated to me that he was



continuously thinking of how life for his people could be made better.

Once, when there was a very long cold spell of winter weather, no one could travel in the extreme cold and whiteout blizzards to get needed supplies. Even the younger men were fearful of going out into the weather. As the storm continued and supplies in the village ran low, Uncle Gabriel hitched up his dog team and made the trip by himself. My family was living in the community where the store was located and I remember him returning in that blizzard, to the surprise of everyone. Again he showed the commitment and leadership that a Dena'ina chief should have.

Uncle Gabriel passed on while I was away attending high school. I remember one of the last conversations I had with him, telling me it was good that I was going on to get an education and to remember that I was Dena'ina too. One of my grandsons is named after Uncle Gabriel and I am proud that my daughter also remembers my hero every time she calls her son's name.

We need to remember and honor the heroes that helped us become who we are—whose memories should not be allowed to die. There are heroes in every Alaska Native culture like my Uncle Gabriel. I hope their children and grandchildren will continue their examples. As they do so, they remind us of the strength, knowledge, honor and wisdom of our cultures; characteristics which are needed even more today. ✨

Yupik Region:

The First AKRSI MOA Meeting in Bethel: Multiple Districts Speaking as One

by John Angaiak

The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region's six MOA partners met for the first time as a group in Bethel on October 3 & 4, 2002 to review AKRSI goals and outline strategies in response to the guidelines for culturally-relevant programs. Thirteen members from school districts scattered throughout the Y-K Delta region attended including representatives from YKSD, St. Mary's, Kuspuk, Kashunamiut, LKSD and Yupiit School Districts. It was good to see the school administrators actively participate in the proceedings. This first meeting was business-like.

Some recalled the Y-K Native Education Summit of April 24–25, 2002 in Bethel, Alaska. It was designed to introduce AKRSI to the region through the theme, "Bringing the Minds of Community and School Together." At last week's follow-up planning meeting, the theme rang again—it was an in-depth meeting.

Everyone gathered in the AVCP Tugkar Building conference room. After introductions, the activity reports were given from each school district. It was good to hear reports coming from all sectors of the Y-K region. Everyone was eager to hear what their neighbors were doing with culturally-relevant programs and everyone needed to be heard and be counted.

The new AKRSI lead teacher for the Yup'ik region, Esther Ilutsik, was introduced as she joined the meeting, she explained her role and took vital information from each MOA partner so she can do the job right.

Two Elders attended and the school district presentations set the tone for the rest of the meeting. This report summarizes the highlights of the meet-

ing. The group set its own goals, including the following:

- Cultural relevancy should be broad enough so that each school district is not locked into one set of goals and can incorporate local relevancy.
- Native teachers should get together with the lead teacher. The lead teacher will visit all sites, attend in-services and generally be a walking Native education dictionary.

- The group should network among all MOA partners—they wrote down their email addresses and phone numbers. The regional coordinator encouraged them to talk among themselves and compare notes in order to deliver quality and unique culturally-relevant programs.
- Each district should have its own goals but share them with others.
- They will file their written reports with the coordinator's office which will then be compiled to be shared with MOA partners.
- They will obtain a commitment from school districts for AKRSI implementation to guarantee success.

The group also discussed how often they should meet for consistency and continuity. Two options came forth: three meetings (fall, winter and spring) or one planning meeting in the fall and a regional Native education summit in the spring. The coordinator informed them that he would negotiate the options.

The group came with clear purpose. They left with clear goals. They found a place to share and feel victorious. ✨

Alaska RSI Regional Contacts

Regional Coordinators:

Andy Hope—Southeast
fnah@uaf.edu
Teri Schneiier, Olga Pestrikoff, Moses Dirks—Alutiiq/Unanga
tschneiier@kodiak.k12.ak.us
John Angaiak—Yup'ik/Cup'ik
john_angaiak@avcp.org
Inupiaq Region pending at Kawerak
Athabaskan Region pending at TCC

Lead Teachers:

Angela Lunda—Southeast
lundag@gci.net
Teri Schneider/Olga Pestrikoff/
Moses Dirks—Alutiiq/Unanga
tschneiier@kodiak.k12.ak.us
Esther Ilutsik—Yup'ik/Cup'ik
fneai@uaf.edu
Bernadette Yaayuk Alvanna-
Stimpfle—Inupiaq
yalvanna@netscape.net
Linda Green—Interior/Athabaskan
linda@mail.ankn.uaf.edu

Athabaskan Region:

An Elder Interview With Howard Luke

Sarah McConnell interviewed Howard Luke on April 3, 2002. Below is an excerpt from that interview. Transcription by Jeannie Creamer Dalton

Sarah: It is a sunny April 3, 2002 and Howard, you wanted to talk about respect?

Howard: Yeah I like to talk about respect because we're losing it so fast right now it's terrible. Myself I don't care about it because I'm old enough now. The biggest thing right now is I want my young generation to pay attention about respect because down the road they will find out but it will be too late by then.

Respect is the biggest problem: respect is something that you really got to take care of yourself by being clean and when you're skinning moose or cutting fish. Never try to get bloody, get blood on your clothes or nothing.

Many years ago I use to hunt with a lot of old people; my mother used to tell me to go out with them old people so I used to go with them. They give us some meat and stuff. I lost my dad when I was really young so it was just my mother until she got married, married again. So I went out with a lot of old people and I seen them how they do it 'cause my mother say you pay attention now you see how they do it; you see they don't try to get bloody and the first thing they do is clean all the tripe—they clean all the guts—they never throw anything away. The main thing they do right away is they roast meat.

I hunt caribou, there used to be a lot of caribou in Nenana at one time way back in 1934, somewhere around there anyway. I used to go out with them, I seen how they do it, they clean the tripe, they clean it good. They wash it, they use a little water, then they turn it inside out; they put all their stuff in there. They put the kidneys, and heart, and all the stuff they

can put in there. They tie it—they put a stick through it—then you can just carry it on your hand. That little bag would hold all that. So I learn all that. This is what I want to teach the kids how to do things because if we don't show respect, our animals are going to

This is what I want to teach the kids how to do things because if we don't show respect, our animals are going to disappear.

disappear. That's what is happening right now, we don't respect, that our fish is disappearing. People, when they were fishing, all they want is eggs, the roe, they just take the roe, and just throw the fish out. That's not respect. That's what I mean, right now, if you were mistreated, you wouldn't go back there, would you? Well, that's the same thing with the animals and the fish and our ducks and everything, you see.

Like I'm saying about the airboats, that they go out in the spring, they run over the eggs and all young ones, they run over them. We don't take care of our animals. We just don't care and that's the reason all our animals are disappearing, especially our ducks. Every year it's getting lesser and lesser.

And that's what I mean. They're not coming back. I mean, if I was mistreated, I'm not going to go back too. Well it's the same way with animals.

When I was brought up that's what they tell me about respect.

Right now, just like, you bring moose head in house and there's a bunch of kids in house and the kids look at that moose head, the eye, and they play with that. They play with that, and that was against our nature. We always covered up because if you make fun of that animal, they tell each other, just like humans, same thing, humans that are dead. Their spirit is here and they tell each other and that's what our people used to tell us—not only my mother, but my uncle, people I used to hunt with. People always used to tell us that if you are skinning moose or skinning caribou you always try to stay away from the blood. Don't try to cut the veins they say. When you're skinning moose, you always take the brisket out first. Take the brisket, then you feel your way, you get by the throat, then you take the whole thing, the throat, you just pull it right out. The whole thing will just come right out. That's our way of doing it. That's the reason a lot of people used to lose their luck. But now, right now, we don't respect. They throw the head away. There is a lot of good stuff on that head there.

When I went to New Zealand, them people down there, when they kill a cow, when they're going to have something going on, a potlatch, or something like that, they throw the head away. So when I went down there, I told them, gee, man, I said, there's a lot of good meat on this stuff.

When we kill a moose, we never throw it away, we take the tongue, we dice it up, all the cheek, we dice it up and make a good pot of stew. So I did that. I taught them something and they started doing it. So that way we work with each other. We share with

one another. That's my biggest thing right now is that I want to share with people. Especially young people. My big thing right now, when I'm laying down here, I think about these things that, gee my uncle, all my old people I used to go out hunting. I used to go out hunting with big Albert and John Silas and lot of old people down in Nenana. I use to go out with them, a

We share with one another. That's my biggest thing right now is that I want to share with people. Especially young people.

big run of caribou. So I go out hunting with them because they give me some meat when I go out. When I go with them, they give us ribs or something like that. Even the little thing, you were so thankful for it. Right today, I'm so thankful right today, that what I went through, what my Mom taught me and the other people taught me—how to respect, take care of your things and always when you kill moose, they always say, you turn the head towards home and that way, the next moose you kill will be closer to your house, they said. So all them things, it make me think about it. But right now, we're going the other way, we're not going the right way. We always trying to make that cut off, just like we're going against nature. We want to get done with it right away. Just like if we go visit or something like that, we look at the time, well I gotta go, I gotta go, I gotta go, I gotta do this, I gotta do that. And old people figure that oh no, that fellow he thinks I got nothing to say.

That's the reason why right now a lot of our people doesn't want to share with people because they do that and I tell my young people right now that that's not the way to act because people watch how you work—if you show respect. ✨

Southwest Region: Alaska Native Studies at Sheldon Jackson College

by Jan Steinbright Jackson

Alaska Native Studies at Sheldon Jackson College provides academic coursework and support for Native students enrolled at SJC. “In effect, we're providing student support similar to that provided by Rural Student Services at UAF and academic programs similar to UAF's Native Studies program” says program director Dennis Demmert.

The academic program has three goals: (1) to inform students of the “special relationship” between Native American tribes and the federal government and of the many contemporary issues derived from that relationship; (2) to provide knowledge of diverse Native cultures of Alaska; and (3) to assist students and school personnel in establishing effective communications across cultures.

Fall 2002, offerings include *Introduction to Alaska Native People*, *The Alaska Native Land Settlement Act*, *Alaska Native Art History* and *Cross-cultural Communications*. In addition, the Native Studies program is assisting other academic programs at Sheldon Jackson to incorporate relevant knowledge about the Native community into their coursework and requirements. “There's Native-related information that is relevant to each academic program at SJC, whether it's education, human services, business or environmental science,” says Demmert, “and graduates from each program should be informed of Native issues in their areas of expertise.”

Student support is provided by two advisor/counselors, peer advisors and tutors. “Students aren't always ready for the transition to college,” says counseling coordinator Michael Baines, “so our job is to help them get oriented and to monitor their progress as they make the adjustment to college. Nearly 30% of the Fall 2002 enrollment is Native American.”

The Native Studies program provides a computer lab and a lounge for Native students and ongoing activities through a Native Culture Club. The club has sponsored fund-raising activities and plans other activities throughout the year.

Native Studies has advised the Sheldon Jackson College library on books relevant to Native Studies and the library has developed a strong collection on Native culture and contemporary issues in the Native American community, with emphasis on Alaska.

Native Studies has a staff of five and is funded under the U.S. Department of Education's Title III A. ✨

“There's Native-related information that is relevant to each academic program at SJC, whether it's education, human services, business or environmental science . . . ”

Alutiiq/UnangaĶ Region: A New Elementary School in Unalaska: "Saaqudikingan"

by O. Patricia Lekanoff-Gregory, Aleut Culture Teachers' Aide, Unalaska City School District

As we waited patiently to see our new elementary school being built, the buzz around town was what would the name of the new building be? After a year of construction we now see the building we were anxiously waiting for. This new state-of-the-art facility has 13 classrooms, an excellent multipurpose gymnasium that is also used for serving lunch. In the background is a stage so we can watch performances. There is also a rock-climbing wall hidden behind the mats to keep temptation down. There is an elaborate library with windows from the floor to a twelve-foot ceiling and a computer room with 24 brightly colored Apple® iMacs™. The wide hallways provide space for beautiful art displays. There are over 240 lockers—just the right size for the elementary students. In fact, one of the doors to the preschool room is only three feet tall so the little tykes feel comfortable; the windows are just their height as well. The floor has radiant heating so the students' feet don't get cold and they are comfy when they lay on the floor reading their books.

This new elementary school is run by a distinguished gentleman, our principal or *tukux*, which in the Aleut/Unangan language means boss. He greets the students every morning as they arrive and he walks the halls checking how the classes are going. During his lunch period he is out on the playground. The new playground has three different equipment structures, bright in color and inviting to the students, along with a soft mat underneath the equipment. There is a covered play area, basketball court, baseball/soccer field and two

tetherball poles.

Principal Craig Probst came to Unalaska City School District from the Iditarod School District and before that the Pribilof School District so he is able to relate to the needs and the necessity of the Aleut "Unangan" Culture Program. He wants to see and hear the students saying Aleut phrases: *qilam IĶamnaa*, good morning; *qaĶaasakung*, thank you; *aang*, hello/yes; *iislilix*, come again; and identifying the local birds: *tiĶlaĶ*, eagle; *uxchuĶ*, puffin; *qamgaang*, emperor goose; and animals: *qawaĶ*, sea



lion; *isuĶ*, seal; *aykaĶuĶ*, fox; to name a few. Mr. Moses Dirks and his assistant (that's me) teach these classes.

The new elementary school is well suited for doing the crafts of the first comers, the Unangan (Aleuts) of the Aleutian Islands. In the Heritage/Cultural room there is a tile floor so we can do all sorts of arts and crafts: butchering a seal, cleaning fish, weaving grass baskets, carving Aleut Bentwood hats (*chagudaĶ*) and someday soon maybe building a kayak (*iqyaĶ*). This is only the beginning of all the arts and crafts we hope to share with our students.

And finally, the name for the new elementary school is Eagle's View Elementary School, "AchigaaluĶ" (the learning place)! We are proud to see that the community and school are getting involved in using the indigenous names for buildings, roads, bridges and so on. *Qagaasakung!* Thank You! ✨

Alutiiq/Unanga Region:

Lu'macihpet, "Our Culture" Camp at Dig Afognak: Growing Elders

by Alisha Drabek, Native Village of Afognak

The Native Village of Afognak held a six-day cultural immersion camp called *Lu'macihpet*, "Our Culture," at their Dig Afognak site on Afognak Island this past June 17–22, 2002. The camp brought 40 youth and adults together to explore Alutiiq language through dance, song and performance.

The program was supported through a grant from the Administration for Native Americans, Afognak Native Corporation, Kodiak Island Housing Authority and Native Educators of the Alutiiq Region.

Sperry Ash, Alutiiq dancer from Nanwalek, and Tanya Lukin, an indigenous performance artist originally from Port Lions, served as facilitators for the program, along with Native Village of Afognak Educator Olga Pestrikoff.

Applicants to the program were asked to submit an essay, a narrative or poetry answering, "why I want to learn more about Alutiiq dance and language and how I can share our cultural traditions with others."

The following two statements were selected as the best youth and adult submission:

I want to learn more about Alutiiq dance and language so our dance group can learn more songs. We learn the language through songs, this way we know what we are singing. The dance movements teach us how to interpret the song. The drumbeat helps us to keep time and rhythm. We share our dance and songs with our village people, at special occa-

sions and sometimes we sing and dance in Kodiak and Anchorage. People like to see us and we like to dance and sing for them. It gives us pride and we feel good when we perform.

—Devin Skonberg, age 14, Ouzinkie

Lately there has been a need to do something to validate who I am as an Alutiiq living this fast-paced life. I need to understand our traditions, our stories and our culture so I can better understand myself as the portion that constitutes the "our." I will come to the camp as a newborn struggling to learn and glean all that I can: devouring the history, the movement, the stories like Fuzzy's smoked fish. And when I've gorged on my history, I'll gulp freely of the fresh air like water to quench the thirst for more—always more.

This is what I envision as my experience and what I hope to gain at the Lu'macihpet Dance Camp:

Each participant at the camp received a certificate of completion recognizing their efforts and honoring them with the statement: "Take care of the Elder you will become." ✨



A Song For Renewal and Hope

To feel the movement of my arm
sensing a seal was caught
and the celebration was
such that my
other arm went up to greet
my outstretched hand like salmon
straining to the top of the
torrential water.
strong and persevering, determined
to go back to that
shallow where
life began
to finish my time
with my spawn
enriching the pool
for the next generation.

To share my experience with my students in my classroom when I become a certified teacher is my hope and my dream. I desire to make the regalia, know a dance, utter a word deep in my throat that speaks the stories of those that walked on the beach before me. This is what I hope to gain and share with those that are willing to listen and walk the beach with my memories and me.

—Marci Nelson Orth,
originally from Port Lions, now
living in Wasilla

Iñupiaq Region:

The Iñupiaq Immersion Program in Barrow

Martha Stackhouse

The Iñupiaq Immersion program got started when an education conference on language, sponsored by the North Slope Borough School District, called for more Iñupiaq language to be taught to the children. The Elders and parents talked about how our Iñupiaq language was quickly dying over the last 20 years. Iñupiaq language classes had been taught for 30 years but 45 minutes a day was not enough to learn the language. In addition, there was a video made of North Slope high school students who cried because they could not understand their great grandparents or their grandparents. Some who were able to understand were not able to answer them, as they were not fluent in speaking their Iñupiaq language. Immersion school was considered as a possibility to remedy this problem.

The immersion program started in Barrow as a pilot program since there were not enough certified teachers to teach immersion classes. It started with the Early Childhood Education (ECE) students who were three- and four-year-old students. During this first year, the curriculum developers prepared materials for the kindergarten level, which was to start the following year. While the Kindergarten immersion curriculum was taught to the students, the curriculum developers prepared first-grade readers for the first-grade immersion class. As a result we now have many kindergarten and first-grade readers translated into Iñupiaq. However, there aren't many materials translated for the second-grade level on up yet, so the teachers decided that even though we may use English materials in the immersion classroom, we would talk in Iñupiaq as much as possible.

The third-grade immersion class speaks about 75% Iñupiaq and 25%

English. The fourth-grade immersion speaks about 50% Iñupiaq and 50% English. From early childhood on up to the second grade, we try to speak as much Iñupiaq as possible. However, some of our materials are not translated so we have to speak English sometimes, ranging at about 85–90% Iñupiaq and 10–15% English.

The teachers are certified educators who are fluent Iñupiaq speakers, but most of us had not received any language training. We were certified in teaching English classes. Last school year we had language evaluators that came to observe our classes. They noted that the teachers were speaking 80–90% of the time and the students were speaking 10–20% of the time. As a result, our students were able to understand what the instructors were saying and they became fluent readers and writers—but not so fluent in speaking the Iñupiaq language. This school year all of the immersion classes are concentrating on having the stu-

dents speak as much as possible.

The immersion classes follow the state and district standards. We have many materials that are in English but we try to speak as much Iñupiaq as much as possible as we teach them. Whenever we have the time, we translate our own materials. The Iñupiaq language is a very phonetic, and as a result our students are able to become good readers. Most students keep daily journals and are able to write in Iñupiaq with ease. We teach the Iñupiaq number system invented by the Kaktovik students, therefore it is called the Kaktovik Math. We teach the Arabic numeral system as well. Most of our immersion students are very proficient in math.

We usually dissect Arctic animals from the region: seals, ducks, geese and fish. We identify all of their internal organs and have the older students make diagrams of the digestive system. Perhaps the best part of dissecting fresh animals is the fact that we can cook and eat them in our classes! We usually receive a seal from the community members. We have all of our immersion classes gather around to watch. Some of our older students participate in butchering the seal.

There is a cute story told by one the mothers of an immersion student. Her cousin had caught a seal one summer. Their aunt, who usually did the butchering, was out of town. She and her cousin had no idea how to butcher a seal. Her daughter, who is an immersion student, spoke up and said she knew how to do it. Step by step, she told her mom and her aunt how to butcher the seal until it was completed! She had learned by observing from the immersion classes on how to

butcher a seal and was able to help her mother and her aunt!

Our Arctic science is strong. Our fourth-grade immersion class completed a Sigluaq project which is the study of the ice cellar. They recreated the actual cross section of a *sigluaq* with paper mache', and made *maktak*, whale meat, seals, fish, geese and ducks out of paper. It is now a show case in our Cultural Heritage Center Museum.

We usually pull together to prac-

tice singing for special occasions: Christmas program, Christmas caroling (which includes the Senior Center), spring programs, and many other occasions through out the year. Recently, we sang the Alaska State Flag song with the newly added second verse. People marveled at how quickly the immersion students had learned the second verse as it had just been adopted by the state and the fact that it had just been translated.

Perhaps the greatest joy we see in

our immersion students is the fact that they are proud to be Iñupiaq. They have self esteem. They are confident in meeting the challenges that they face in today's world. They know that they can be an Iñupiaq and also be able to combine what they learned in the Western world and live productive lives. We encourage them time and again that they can be whatever they want to be, that it is indeed possible to take the best of both worlds and live a productive life. ✘

Inuit Studies: Some Reflections

by Maricia Ahmasuk

Inspired by the 13th Inuit Studies Conference held August 1–3, 2002, Anchorage, Alaska

The Inuit, “The People” of the world are one of the more studied people in recent history. This timeless research and documentation seeks to capture the essence of what it was like in a time when all one had was oneself and those immediately surrounding to sustain life itself. It is observed that since contact, Inuit have adapted to new ways brought on by outsiders, thereby changing the way Inuit operate in their daily activities and even in their mode of thought. Barrow’s George Ahmaogak, Sr., mayor of North Slope Borough, put it interestingly in his keynote address at the 13th Inuit Studies Conference, titled, *Science, Politics and the Bottom Line: the North Slope Experience*: “

Your conversations can help to interpret what’s happening in the cracks where Native culture and the mainstream culture rub against each other. It’s a constant and silent and powerful movement, like the shifting of the earth’s continental plates under our feet.” Ahmaogak commented that these fault lines are not necessarily hostile or incompatible, but are simply hot spots that if taken so far as to interrupt the heritage of a people, such as banning the age-old practice of whaling, there are sure to be up-

heavals, or earthquakes. The whole subsistence issue is a prime example of how differing cultures tend to clash.

It is certain that we as Inuit have felt the ripple effect of two or more cultures coming together, as all cultures of the world continue to undergo, as we are drawn into this global village through modern technology. I view our current experience as a melding, an evolution. We are living in a time where the very existence of every single human being on earth depends to a certain extent on a network

of governments and countries in globally negotiated positions. As Inuit, playing an active role in what is being documented even today is crucial in terms of preserving the accuracy of the image being portrayed. Faulty past records since outside contact have proven to haunt Natives with negative connotations and misinterpretations.

It is certain that we as Inuit have felt the ripple effect of two or more cultures coming together, as all cultures of the world continue to undergo, as we are drawn into this global village through modern technology.

An important trend for Native peoples in the world of research is where the ownership of the surveys and their outcomes lie. Being involved from square one when the surveys are being developed is a must if they are to capture the essence of what Natives consider important information to relay to a public or agency reviewing the results. For example, the Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic, headed out of the Institute of Social & Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Alaska Anchorage has

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

organized a group of Alaska Natives to form the Alaska Native Management Board (ANMB), which basically steers the project. This board ensures that the information gathered for this project follows the concept of informed consent, as well as making sure that the survey is culturally sensitive. Respecting the whole process of including Native guidance on research projects brings useful information to light while at the same time defends a Native peoples' dignity and right to own what is really theirs.

After two-and-a-half days of listening to intelligent speakers such as Father Michael Oleksa and Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley and visiting with Elder and author, Lela Oman of Nome, among other distinguished individuals, I was boiling with ideas, theories and a willingness to share my story with the group. I managed to offer my views with humor despite all seriousness of the issues at hand. I spoke of topics that ranged from language retention (or theory of retrieval through hypnosis in this case) to racism within our own Native society. The key point that I hoped to portray to the group was how important it is to find a balance between our modern lifestyle and the inner voice that constantly reminds us of where we came from.

Coming to terms with our identity as a Native person, or just as a human being in modern society, should be an area of concern and deserves some dedicated time and research on our behalf. Coming to terms with the small, still voice inside is key to our well being and long-range health. Perhaps some of the research that shows our people to be among the most devastated statistically is a result of overlooking our important role in a societal situation that is fairly new compared to where even our parents came from. Cultural adjustments do not happen

over night, and we are not all naturally compatible with the modern Western values and mannerisms. Our whole life is a research project as we gather data and interpret its meaning as it applies to our selfhood. Finding meaning and truth is a universal, yet very individual concept and delves

Respecting the whole process of including Native guidance on research projects brings useful information to light while at the same time defends a Native peoples' dignity and right to own what is really theirs.

deep into the spiritual realm. If we think about it, just being outside doing activities such as berry picking, fishing or gathering wood for a fire grounds us, bringing us back to who we are as human beings, which is a spiritual experience—being one with the land and our natural surroundings. It is the simple things in life that make an individual or society feel grounded in a culture or heritage.

Finding meaning or purpose in life may mean putting the communal good over personal pain, as it was traditionally. It is important to honor our heritage by practicing our values, so as to discover their true significance and intent. Discovering past morals and ways of living an honest life may lead us to a broader understanding of where we stand in today's world of individualism, even as we fight for a co-dependant relationship with the world-at-large. As we continue to adapt to the changing times, it is a comfort to know that there exists a wide collection of materials representing a time past when life appeared simpler. We have a big picture to work with in respect to the Native way of life as we move forward in progression toward an understanding of where we have been and where we are going. It is time to take authority over our own lives through our Native organizations. ✨

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

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Fairbanks AK
Permit No. 2

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED