

# ILLUANI

INSIDE THE LIFE AND CULTURE OF KODIAK ISLAND



*"We tell stories to talk out the trouble in our lives (otherwise so often unspeakable). It is our main way of turning our lives sensible. Trying to live without such stories can make us crazy. They help us at working toward recognitions, insights, truths – that's what stories are most seriously for; they help us find what we believe to be holy in the world, and to identify what we hold demonic."*

*--William Kittredge*

## Advisor's Note:

The KIBSD Oral History Program continues to evolve and expand. This year high school students from village schools applied to be part of the *Illuani* magazine staff. This group of social science researchers has worked all year toward uncovering and highlighting the "recognitions, insights, and truths" shared by the elder people of the Kodiak Island community. We thank them for their kindness, patience, and willingness to share their knowledge with us. Without it, this publication would not exist. What you hold in your hands is the product of their collective work this year.

Nothing can describe the feeling I have when observing students unearth these truths. It is as if they have discovered hidden treasure when they realize for the first time that there is value in the knowledge imbedded in their community. If we pay attention, we too may discover some jewels here for our own lives. I salute the elders, the students, and the energy that is generated through their interaction.

Here's to the power of story.

epw

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## INSIDE THE LIFE AND CULTURE OF KODIAK ISLAND

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The photos shown on the above pages are of Ouzinkie. I used the knowledge from my photography class to snap the pictures, process the film, and print them out. I tried to capture different aspects of my village. To do this, I took a distant picture facing the dock and store. I also took close ups of Devils Club in the woods behind my school, boats all in a row on a sunny day, and my favorite - the Old Dump Beach on a stormy day. Several pictures of historical buildings that have their own story to tell are also included. I hope you enjoy them all.

Sabrina Anderson  
Photographer



*Life...Then and Now:  
The Childhood of a Man Growing up in Larsen Bay*

*Story and layout by Janissa Johnson*



*My father, James Jacob Johnson at Parks Cannery at the age of ten, the year of 1950. After this picture was taken, he was referred to as a young "Mickey Rooney" by his friends.*

Growing up in Larsen Bay is tough. There are few social activities or gatherings. The village population is just under one hundred residents leaving few students my age. Many times I have caught myself feeling ineffective because there are few times where I have the opportunity to feel useful. I began to wonder if it was always like this in Larsen Bay. When my father was growing up here, there was an even smaller population. I knew that growing up in Larsen Bay during this time was different than it is now. I wanted to find out what these differences were.

My father, James Jacob Johnson, was born and raised on Kodiak Island. He was born in Karluk on April 18, 1940, an Aleut. Today, he resides in Larsen Bay...his second home. Having lived in many different locations, he found that Larsen Bay is the most peaceful, and is, in fact, his true home. Growing up, he also lived in Parks Cannery in Uyak Bay, and a place named 'Hollywood' located very close to Larsen Bay where a few homes still reside.

My father and his younger sister, Virginia, were sent from Parks Cannery to Larsen Bay every fall to attend school. Therefore, they did not get to live with their parents for eight months out of the year. Bill and Dora Jager were close friends of the family who were happy to take in two additional children along with their own two.

The typical day for me now and a typical day my father 50 years ago are very different. My day consists of getting up around seven AM and going to school. After school, I may have chores to do, like loading the dishwasher or running the store. Usually after that, I will either go out and hang out with my friends or go to gym. After gym, I will do my homework and then I will get to bed as early as possible.

My father explained what his typical day was like growing up in Larsen Bay.

"A typical day in each place was different. When I was in school in Larsen Bay, Bill Jager used to get me up earlier than the other kids and I would have breakfast with him and

then go to school. After school we had chores to do. We had to pack water for washing clothes, dishes, taking baths, for drinking, and also for bonya. And wood...we had to pack a lot of wood for our fire cook stove, and wood stove, and then do our homework..

## **"...wood...we had to pack a lot of wood...."**

If there were other things to do, like help Bill with other chores, we'd do that. We would go logging at certain times. We'd also, on certain times, go up to the river and catch steelhead for our own subsistence use. And we'd go out with Bill on his boat to get crab and halibut, and codfish for subsistence use. And most evenings after that there would be three or four of us that would play music on the accordion and guitar. And that was pretty much our average day.

We were sometimes expected to help neighbors out with different problems and there again, it was usually packing water or packing stuff from their skiffs or you know, just general help. I think all of us children in the village would have to go, were expected to go and help the elders. We were raised that way. I also went out on a boat to get crab and halibut in Parks Cannery with my father and his friends. I would go fishing for codfish and halibut and crab, with him. When I was in Parks Cannery, I didn't have any chores to do, so I just ran around all day long."

For me, there are not many chores to do. We own a dishwasher, a store, and in the summertime I have to go commercial fishing with my family, but I don't have to pack water or wood most of the time. Other small things I do are lighting the bonya, or doing things around the yard for my father.

The chores that are expected in the present days are very different than the chores that were expected in the older days. Back then; it was more physical work, now it is technology

that does all of the work.

"Every family was different, but I think my role as I was growing up was to learn - to learn academically and also to learn from my elders by example. And we were raised to listen and behave. Of course sometimes we didn't but that's normal. We had a, it was kind of like children "should be seen and not heard" most of the time. We had things to do. We had to make our own recreation. We used to play a lot of card games. We learned to play poker and pinochle when we were quite young, like seven or eight years old. We also learned to play games like Monopoly and Sorry. We had those back then. I think our favorite was Monopoly. And there were various games, academic games that we, we could play in the school. We used to make a game out of flash cards with math problems. But everything we did pretty much was on our own as far as making entertainment. So it's different than it is today. We didn't have television. We had radio but we used to play games and we used to build a lot of model airplanes and stuff like that or play boats.

## **"...not only was I guilty of it..."**

"I have a story that Dora used to tell about me all of the time. And not only was I guilty of it, but her son, Bill, was too. But she always told the story on me. Right after school we had to do our chores and it was a nice day in the spring and I told her (Dora) that I could not do too much because my back was really sore and I really had sore legs, and I was kind of in bad shape. So she kind of went along with it. About an hour later she saw me out there running and jumping, and there was nothing wrong with my back! (laughs) So that story was told on me a lot of times."

When I do something against the rules my parents set for me, I usually get a lecture on following the rules, and then my parents never stop teasing me about it or telling it to other

people. In this way, the "punishment" is the same as it was in earlier years.

"I can remember being taught not only by my father but school teachers and Dora and it seemed to me all the adults had the same idea. And my father was heavy onto the, to live by the

## **"...no matter how far you go in school, your father's always smarter."**

golden rule. Which is "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." We were taught by everybody about the value of not stealing. Not doing anything that went against any of the ways we were raised. The beliefs that we had...one thing that we would not do, and I still don't understand today, is kids like to break windows and vandalism. That's something we just did not do. It never even occurred to us to do it. It was something that just...didn't happen. At least around here. I think a lot of this stems to the adults paying attention to us. They had the time and they helped teach us. Whereas in the modern day, parents have a tendency to...give the kids money and tell them to go somewhere, so they could get out of their hair. And it didn't used to be that way. So, that has changed quite a bit."

Basically, we are taught by many of the same people as my father was: the teachers, elders, and our parents. However, the way we are taught is very different. In school we are taught how to use computers, and how to survive in the real world, like how to get a job and how to succeed in modern life. Many of the things that the children were taught before were basic morals and rules. Today, not many values are taught through illustrations, but instead by "If you do something, you will suffer the consequences, and not me." Many children today must learn on their own...the hard way, because parents do not have time for their children.



*The village of Larsen Bay from the East side. (Photo: Rochelle Reed:September 2001)*

I liked the way that my father explained how the adults used illustrations to teach the children morals. He gave a great example of an illustration.

"The adults would teach us values by illustrating them, many times. Each person had a different way of reaching us. The basics were always the same. Don't be a wisecrack or anything like that. My father had an illustration, about a boy. This is to tell you in a way, that no matter how far you go in school, your father's always smarter. And the illustration he used every year was the last thing I heard when I left home in the fall and I went away to school and the first thing I heard in the spring.

"The boy goes away to college and he comes back home and they're having geese for dinner, for Thanksgiving dinner. So Mama puts

two geese on the table and the boy stands up and he says, 'Dad', he says, 'I can prove to you that there's three geese on this plate.' And his Dad says, 'Go ahead, son.' So the boy says, 'Well, there's one, and here's two. One and two makes three.' So the old man gets up and he grabs one and puts it on his mother's plate and says, 'Well, your mother will eat this one. I'll eat this one, and you eat the third one.'

"So that was an illustration that I heard quite often," Jimmy laughed as he remembered the experience. "But I think each person had tried to make it...it wasn't so dry learning. I mean, it wasn't 'Don't do this.' There was always a reason. And they'd tell us and they'd use their own way of illustrating it. Which was good. We remembered it better.

"I think living through my childhood years here and having two sets of other children as a parent, I think it was easier to grow up say in the forties and fifties than it is now. Not only for the child, but also for the parents. The biggest thing I think was making your own

## **"...a lot more family get togethers in those days."**

entertainment. You weren't entertained by outside influences. There were a lot more family get-togethers in those days. When somebody went logging or somebody went to pick crab pots, or to go clam digging, half the village went...kids and all. Now you're watching TV, or 'naw, I don't want to go, I am tired.' And, you hear all kinds of excuses. People don't do things together, because I guess the world has picked up speed here too. In the years that I was attending school here it was great. Doing chores wasn't that great, I didn't think so at the time, but it was much easier to grow up. You didn't have any pressures, outside pressures on the kids that you have now. There wasn't such a thing as drugs in those days. There was alcohol, but somehow kids just weren't...we didn't want to have anything to do with it. Outside of sneaking a cigarette once in a great while, I never did anything with alcohol. It was not the thing to do. We were not only told that, we were shown why it wasn't the thing to do. So, yeah, I think it was much nicer growing up then, like I say, for both parents and children. Today, there is so much pressure on a family, and so much pressure on everybody that it's much more difficult, and not near as much fun. It was just a slower paced way to live."

Many traditional ways should be applied for this generation as well as generations to come. Older ways, like respecting everyone that is older than you, and being taught through

illustrations would help to improve the youth of Kodiak Island. The technology today is a great help, but also kicks aside all of the traditional ways. So, in some ways these changes are a great help, but in others they make us more lazy and more dependent on technology.

Parents should spend more time with their children like they used to. Growing up today is very hard, not just here, but everywhere. More children are getting independent faster, and at an earlier age. Taking in the traditional ways would prevent the children from making mistakes that could have been prevented in the first place. Traditional ways would include having children helping their parents with subsistence, helping the elders out any time they need it, and also respecting people and their property, and not committing vandalism. Having the children help out with chores would help them feel more useful, and would prevent them from going out and doing drugs, drinking, or vandalizing, if they had all kinds of spare time.

Being a better role model is crucial for the adults to bring back the traditional ways. If children-parent time would increase, the bond would be closer and they would understand each other more. Therefore, increasing the traditional ways, and balancing them with the technology of today, children can be educated in many different and beneficial ways.



# **HOW DID CERTAIN ANIMALS END UP IN THE KODIAK ARCHIPELAGO?**

**An interview with Ed Opheim Sr.  
on deer, rabbits, and elk.**

Story and layout  
by Josh Wood

I felt nervous as I walked up the hallway to Ed Opheim Sr.'s apartment. I wasn't sure if Ed was going to talk much, but as soon as I asked him a question I could tell he loved to tell stories. I heard Ed took part in planting the deer on Kodiak Island, so I went to him to record his story on how they got planted. Ed not only told me how he helped plant the deer, but also how the elk were planted on Afognak Island and how the rabbits got started on Spruce Island.

Knock, knock, knock, "Come in," Ed Opheim said anxiously. He was sitting back at the other side of the room by the window and he was watching the news. Ed had a weather beaten wrinkled face and gray hair that showed he has worked a hard long life. Ed was born in Sand Point, Alaska on Popov Island, May 10, 1910. His father was from Norway and his mother was Russian -Aleut. He had several pictures of dories, small wooden boats used for

fishing, he has crafted on the walls in the living room. He is most known for his dory craftsmanship, but I chose to interview Ed Opheim because I felt it is important that everybody knows how and why certain animals got planted in the Kodiak Archipelago.

Ed sat down and got comfortable in his recliner. Then I asked him to tell me about the experience he had in 1940 planting the deer on the islands.

"They were first brought up from Sitka I believe or somewhere down in there, maybe around Ketchikan, Southeastern anyway. They were (Sitka) Blacktail deer.

"I got a surprise one morning. A fella came up to me in Kodiak here, he asked me if I could do something with the deer and take them out somewhere away from the dogs because they were goanna take them and [let them go] around Hillside. Anyone knows the dogs would kill them off because they were so weak.

"A ship came in down in the channel here and tied up to the dock and they wanted to get them over to somebody to take care of them and

do something with them. A fella came to me and I said, "sure" and I says "sure" I says "what is it?" "He said," Oh we got 7 deer down here in crates and we got to get them out because on account they're getting pretty weak. They've been on the ship for quite a long time since they were put in crates. Anyway I got my boat and a barge, more of a little barge.

"It was a nice sunny day at low tide, spring of the year the grass was just about 10 inches high, and so I got my brother in-law, a young kid just came up from the states to help me, a man that had this transfer outfit, he brought it over to where I had my barge and put them aboard the barge and took them out to Middle Bay. Now I'd heard from a friend of

mine a number of years before said that there was a time years before they'd tried to plant deer on up there and the winter was so severe none of them ever survived. I can't verify that, I don't

know. They've got to be in the courthouse somewheres, records of whatever was going on here.

"But anyway, we took the deer out there and landed on the beach at Middle Bay. A nice calm morning, low tide [we] brought the barge onto the beach [and] set the crates down on the sand."

Most Kodiak beaches at low tide have sand and rock for about 40 yards before they get to grass. The deer were not sure what to do.

"We took the deer out of the crates and they all ran back in the crates so we had to put

## **"I GOT A SURPRISE ONE MORNING."**



*Kodiak Island's dense spruce forest, tundra, and mountains provide exceptional deer habitat.*

the crates back up on the barge, and the little deer just stood around. They milled around amongst us. They were so tame, people been handling them, they just milled around us you know.

"So pretty soon one of them took the lead and looked up quite a distance at a high water mark where the grass was. He started to walk real slow and then each one of them got behind and all seven walked slowly up the beach to where the grass meets the sand and they'd smell the grass. There was a little knoll about 70 or 80 feet high. I think its out there on the left side of Middle Bay going in. They all followed one another around that little ridge right up to the top. [When we let] them out it was getting towards afternoon light and the sun was in the southwest. These deer walked up on that little ridge, one behind the other, and the leader and the whole works of them was riding into the skyline. [It was] the beautiflest darn picture you ever laid eyes on and nobody had a camera.

depression and there was no other game on the islands except on Alitak they had a bunch of Caribou or Reindeer they called them and they brought (them) over from around Nome somewheres for subsistence for the people."

Now I found out that they were planted for subsistence use, but he also informed me on how rapidly they reproduced and how they were spreading throughout the Kodiak Archipelago.

"Well anyway where we lived is Spruce Island its about 6 or 7miles from here by water or by a plane flying over. Living there our house was looking out across Ouzinkie narrows by Kodiak Island. Here we seen deer swimming from Kodiak over to Spruce Island and a well there was no opening [hunting season] or anything on it at times so we never bothered. We had cattle over there. Well it wasn't no time at all before there was deer all over the place. On Spruce Island two-three years time and there was deer everywhere. They'd come right down around the house and around the cattle down to

## **"THEY WERE BEWILDERED."**

"Well anyway coming back a course put the barge away and it was oh it must have been at the least two years possibly. It wasn't very long before deer were noted to start to increase."

That made me picture the deer walking up the ridge. I thought that was pretty exciting that those deer were the ones that started the present deer population. I thought it was interesting to find out why they wanted to plant animals on Kodiak. Here is what Ed had to say about the reasons why they planted deer.

"The reading I did on the deer they were supposed to be brought here on subsistence for the native people; they weren't for the game department or anything like that. They were supposed to be brought here for people on the islands but it didn't work out that way; they turned right around and changed it all over. Up to that time Kodiak was coming out of the

the barn and they got so tame we never bothered them. We had cattle and all the beef we needed but it was finally opened for hunting. I know there was some people that poached them and they got in trouble on account of it but they increased so much on Spruce Island you could look anywheres and you could see a deer. It was a beautiful place for deer on Spruce Island the way it lays and the sun comes up in the morning and the hills are sloping enough for the snow to slide over them and melt off quick. Everybody in Kodiak was coming over there to Spruce Island to hunt, and I noticed the difference.

"They started to diminish you know in population. While everybody was hunting deer, people in Ouzinkie, they'd go right across the straits to Kodiak shore at the narrows there get all the deer they wanted. But then the deer went

around Shuyak and up where Port Lions is now and they swam across Whale Pass to Whale Island and from Whale Island to Afognak Island so it didn't take long for those deer to populate all over the islands eighty, ninety miles away."

I asked Ed what people thought of plant-

Spruce Island in 1923 my father had started up a small heard of cattle until we had quite a heard there but they were for subsistence. Then of course we'd sell a few to buy others for money to buy other things. We didn't raise any amount of them. Maybe 20 head or something like that. The

## **"TOO MANY HUNTERS."**

ing deer. Ed told me that everybody liked the idea but they didn't pay much attention at first because some people raised cattle.

"Well everybody liked the idea, it was something to benefit from. Well a lot of people just liked to hunt, but the native people for subsistence that was a nice way to start off because Ouzinkie the native people there 60-70 years ago they all had cattle so they were pretty well off that way, they had meat. Where all those people over at Afognak people over there had cattle. Russians brought them. When we came to

native people, they had possible over a 100 head of cattle. Well the Russians you know brought cattle over here and they got the native people for subsistence use in the woods that was a good thing."

I asked Ed if he'd ever hunted deer on Kodiak Island. I wondered if he ever took advantage of the deer he helped plant. I was surprised what he said.

"No I've hunted deer on Spruce Island. We went in the spring. The whole family would get together and we'd go up on top of Spruce



*Sitka black tailed deer, taken at Monashka Bay in June.  
Photo courtesey of the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge.*

Island we were just on a picnic on a nice sunny day. Fifty years ago it was fairly nice walking. The brush now is so thick you can't even see a deer but we went up on the mountain we brought a .22 along I don't know why. We got up on top of the mountain and there was deer everywhere. They were all around us, there on the edge of the mountain where it broke off right down to the beach on the other side of the island. Well it was such a big husky

deer you know it had a lot of meat and we had a little jeep over there where we come up the mountain. Off handed, not thinking I shot the deer and you know when it fell down, instead of falling it just laid over and rolled over and went down the other side of the mountain We had to get down there and pack it all the way back up to the top of the mountain and then take it down to the jeep and I said from now on I'm never gonna shoot another deer."

**"I THINK IT WAS ABOUT 2-3 YEARS AND THERE WAS SO MANY RABBITS IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE YOU LOOKED YOU WOULD SEE RABBITS JUMPING EVERYWHERE."**



*Ed talking about the rabbit population going through the roof.*



I didn't know Ed had helped plant all these other animals but I thought it was pretty interesting that he had helped plant them.

"The Elk was a brought over to Long Island here and they had them over there for several years. Then they finally decided to bring

50 to 100 rabbits a day for fox food. You know we could stand in one place without even walking stand in one place and shoot all the rabbits we wanted. Then we put them on a skiff and take them over to the island. We'd go to that same place every time we wanted to go hunting and

**"YOU KNOW WHEN YOU LIVE IN  
A PLACE LIKE THAT WHERE  
YOU'RE ISOLATED LIKE THAT  
YOU NOTICE THINGS LIKE THAT.  
BUT, YOU'D NEVER NOTICE IF  
YOU'RE JUST COMING THERE  
AND GOING."**

them over to Afognak Island. It was 1929 and I think there was seven of them. It was an odd number it was either 7 or 9 I forget now, but they were so tame being on Long Island for several years they were just like tame cattle but they increased pretty rapidly. They were on Raspberry [island] and swam across Whale Pass, Whale Island. Of course they opened up hunting, everybody was going after elk they have increased quite a bit but I guess it's a lot of hunters too. Then we planted goats on the Island they were doing real well."

Ed didn't talk much more about goats, but he gave me a lot of information about the rabbits.

"Then we took rabbits over to Ouzinke out amongst the road and opened the cadges. Spruce Island that time was a wonderful place for rabbits.

"I remember we used to go up and shoot

get all the rabbits we wanted. I've sat in the kitchen slid the window open and shot a rabbit. But now Nature's way of doing things you got to go out and hunt them. You got to go out and hunt the rabbits now there is so few. That's odd when you think about it - why such a burst of a production of rabbits all at once like that? That went on for 2-3 years."

When someone is isolated for a long time they start to notice things that you wouldn't notice if you just came to visit. Also how when you butcher an animal you notice weird things happen. Ed has a lot of knowledge about the places he's lived and he shared it with me.

"Every morning looking out the kitchen window I'd see deer just regular walk. They must circle the island because they are always coming from one way go across the road and down the hill go one way. So I figured the cattle are like

the weasels of years ago when we lived on the beach we'd never see a weasel go anti-clockwise [counter clockwise]. It was always against the sun always come around Spruce Island and they'd come around the beaches looking out the house there was a weasel jumping on the beach and always going one way. Sitting where we were in the house a where the house sets right next to the beach looking out the window I noticed that with deer I always seen the deer coming around the point along the beach line and come and go this way [counter clockwise]. Never seen them go the other way. Why is it?

"But when you're living in a place where you're setting right in the kitchen looking out the window getting so you say, 'Heck, look at that there's a doggone weasels jumping along the beach.'

"You'd never see them go the other way. But living there quite like that we'd butcher an animal and a up on the hill where we were right across the Kodiak highland across the channel and we'd butcher this animal beef, skin it out and there was all the guts and stuff on the ground and by golly look up there the ravens and eagles and the crows coming across the channel from Kodiak 2 miles away - never failed. Here they come start feeding on this stuff fighting with one another but I'd [think] how'd they get communication to know this? And you know in two days time you'd never know we butchered an animal."

I thought it was hard to believe that there were 7 deer when they started, but now there are thousands. The deer were planted here for subsistence use only, and now they are still used for subsistence, but sport use also. I think it is good the deer are still providing good, healthy food for all people on Kodiak Island.

# Tsunami Stories:



## an interview with Joe Terabasso

Story and layout by Ben Christman

I MET JOE TERABASSO when I was very little, 4 or 5. Bushman, as we call him because of his outdoor lifestyle, has been, to me, the guy to ask about any Kodiak or outdoors query. His upbeat, happy attitude combined with his ruggedness makes him an easy person to talk to about his firsthand experience of the earthquake and tsunami in 1964. When I walked in for the interview, there were signs of the clashing "country" and "city" lifestyles. The scuffed milk-crate-chairs, and the inflatable mattress in the bedroom to the left contrasted to the plush carpet and sleek black TV. To my right was a little kitchenette with new groceries and a reminder of his Italian heritage; the smell of the saucy spaghetti diffused into the whole apartment while I proceeded to the table. I thought, "Was the bush being taken out of the Bushman?" The liveliness and detail that he greeted me with gave me a quick "No."

During the years that I have been here, I remember

going to sleep in my bed worrying that I would get pummeled and drowned by a huge tidal wave. That fear has grown into a type of fascination with tsunamis. I have often wondered "How would I act in a tsunami crisis?" While I interviewed Joe, I wanted to know what people did, how they reacted to the tsunami. I received some very funny and serious stories.

After the greetings I began the interview with something like, "So Joe, where did you live around the region?" He swallowed his spaghetti and replied.

"I first came here on the south end of the island, on the Trinity Islands which is on the south end of what we call Kodiak. That uh, Sitkinak, Tudgidak, and Cherokoff, is the one way down is 65 miles down from the from Sitkinak but from the town of Kodiak it's probably 200 miles. I was on Sitkinak stationed there. But the last 19 years, most of the time, I[have] been out at Chiniak at what they call Thumbs Up. Before moving, by the school out there by mile 41 [Benjamin, I lived all around.]

I remember Bushman living with us at mile 41, he would take us out in his skiff, catch salmon and crab. He would tell us all sorts of stories of how he survived in the bush.

"So, how long have you lived in the

earthquake hit, he gave me a humorous anecdote.

"I was leaning back on the chair an' the whole thing [building] started shaking, I didn't think nothing of it, but it was pretty rough job as it kept getting worse and worse."

Joe was living on a ranch at the time with some friends. Haw Nelson and his wife Francis were the owners of the ranch.

"Haw had a big glass ball hanging and four little ones around it in the corner of the room. He said that

was his seismograph, he said that it determines how [strong the earthquake is by the amount that the balls bounce.] We all took off [cause Haw] says get out of here! We all headed outside and we were laying on our bellies 'cause we couldn't stand up. You could literally see it [the ground] roll, it was like a whip cracking. There were about 50 or 60 55 gallon drums full of diesel and when that whip [would] go down they'd do flips in the air; one and a half, two full complete flips just like you would take a whip and shake it and snap it."

Joe took time and ate a couple of forkfuls of spaghetti and continued.

"It was quite a lot of shaking. But it ended and Haw went to get the Power Wagon[their car] and he sent me in to the

## **"I was leaning back on the chair an' the whole thing started shaking..."**

region?"

"Well I moved here in 1961 with the military."

So when I asked him about where he was and what he was doing when the

ranch he said "Man get anything quick," so I grabbed some pilot bread and a big five pound hunk of cheese; I figured that was quick, cheese and pilot bread, we always ate it anyhow with peanut butter. [Haw just got



Map: courtesy Kodiak Island Internet Directory

Another slurp, that large plate of spaghetti wasn't getting any smaller. Then Joe talks to the recorder.

"I sound a little funny, but I'm eatin' my supper while I'm talking to old Benjamin." Then he just keeps talking and eating.

When they got all of their stuff packed they all headed up to the Coast Guard station. He told me that the earthquake shook so bad that the the communication lines were broken for most of the week. Then he started to tell me how people reacted.

"But [Haw] thought the end of the world was coming, cause his mother had been preaching to him and he never wanted to listen. Then he thought that was it. He got pretty nervous."

The Coast Guard station wasn't in Kodiak then, so they all went to the station to stay.

"I remember one little Coast Guard

## "But he thought the end of the world was coming,"

to the barn] when Francis come running out, screaming, and there was a big black bull chasing her an' for a woman [that is] 52 years old she outran that bull and hit the corner fence and swung around it, and the bull's head was still down and he was still looking way off into the distance, wondering [where she was.] I guess he blamed her for all that shaking."

guy...he thought he was never going to see his momma[again], so [Francis] had to hold him in her arms. He was about seventeen, he was crying up a storm; boy he was shook up."

Joe said that they helped that guy out by hooking up power for a ham operator set.

"They would get a phone patch in to his mom to let her know that everything was



all right; to let her know that we outlived the wave. The boys rigged it all up. We watched the movies."

He stopped and thought a little.

"I remember that I was going to sit close to that door [while watching a movie] so that when the tremor comes I'd be the first out that door, but I was too slow and they run me down. I had foot prints on my back. Then I heard someone yell "Help me, help me," it was the cook, he jumped out one of the

Arguing with him[the Apostle Paul], in the bathroom; and everybody had to use the bathroom. We had a heck of a time getting him out.

"He spent a lot of time in there. You know him and old Apostle Paul were raising hell is all I can tell you; but by golly them two argued it out. We couldn't get him out of there! Bill give someone a break! We're talking about a year later he's still living around there cause they didn't have nothing."

## **"Benjamin, It wasn't all funny."**

windows, and he was so fat that it stuck on his belly and he is running around the window frame on his belly.

A good laugh came out of Joe and he told me that they started to see the stupidity in their actions. Joe told me that the reason why he thinks that they didn't get any tidal wave, was because the island that they were on rose up during the earthquake.

Joe got to Kodiak and heard many weird stories. He just went over to Kodiak to help out as much as he could. He worked at the docks and with people rebuilding their houses. The wave wiped out many houses in the downtown area.

"Well, you know, there just was no place to live or stay, so all the drunks lived in the Governor's Mansion, of course that's a museum down there."

I asked if that was the Baranov Museum that he was talking about.

"Yeah, one old boy was getting drunk off all the booze they were getting off the tidal wave for free. He would lock himself in the bathroom for four hours and talk to the Apostle Paul; he wouldn't let no one in.

The wave had washed it all away.

I had heard these stories before, but the way Joe told it still made me laugh. I asked Joe, for the record, about the "secret mission." He made a small laugh and got on with the story that I liked so much.

"Yeah, I can just visualize it, Bob, he's passed away now; but his buddy, he says 'How you doin', and John was his name, he says 'Oh man everybody[is] picking up stuff from the earthquake; this tidal wave gots everything laying out all over the place,' he says 'so I got the biggest box I could.' Bob ask him what was in it. He says 'I don't know, I'm afraid to open it up yet.' So three-four days later he finally opened it. So finally Bob gets him on the fourth day and asks him 'bout his "secret mission" he called it. 'Bob you ain't goin' to believe this', he says, 'when I opened it up there was a gross', that's a hundred and forty-four, of playtex women bras. So he sends them to his sisters, I guess they had a lifetime supply, but it was funny; he thought he had something important, he picked the biggest box and he got the biggest surprise!"

He tells me something like "Benjamin, it wasn't all funny." Then he tells me this story of these two people who were clam digging out in Middle Bay. The tide went way out because of the tsunami and they didn't realize that; they just kept going out farther and farther. This guy who heard it on the car radio tried to tell them by shooting his gun off. They didn't hear him and that guy saw them get wiped out by the tide rushing back in.

It was quiet for a moment and then Joe offers me a soda; I kindly refuse but I will take one before I leave. Joe and I talk about other subjects-how he survived the wilderness, his time in Hawaii, and the conflict with Afghanistan. He tries to find out

about everything, and all the points of view; that is why I liked talking to him. I learned a lot from the conversation, but I still don't know how I would react in a crisis like a tsunami.



*Old dump beach. Ouzinkie, Alaska*

*Photo: Sabrina Anderson*

*“...you could learn this if you pay attention.”*

*The history of Starring at Russian Christmas.*



*Story and layout by Mary Simeonoff  
Interview by Mary Simeonoff and Jr.  
Amodo*

*My grandma Mary Peterson is standing  
by the star at her house in Akhiok.*

*Photo by Laurie Simeonoff*

I wish everyone could experience Russian Christmas at least once in their life. There is nothing like visiting each house and seeing what goodies are waiting for us. It's a time us kids always look forward to and now as we get older we are getting more curious about the meaning

behind it. So when we had to come up with a topic for our *Illuani* project last fall we thought it would be a good opportunity to learn more about Russian Orthodox Starring. Now the challenge was to find somebody knowledgeable to interview from our village of Akhiok. We were lucky

enough to find this person in our own community. One of Akhiok's few remaining Elders, Mary Peterson, was the perfect person for us to interview about Starring. She's anxious to share everything she knows with anyone who will listen and we were ready to listen.

Jr. and I invited Mary to come up to the school to do an interview with us about Russian Orthodox Starring. Mary showed up prepared and eager to share her knowledge and stories with us. She didn't want to waste anytime on small talk. Instead she jumped right into sharing her stories as soon as we all settled down at the table. This is when we began to visualize her stories from the past.

"I've been Starring ever since I could remember. As a child I began, I've been learning. Every night we go Starring I learn more and more. Now I got to where I could go without the book, but I still have to use it in case somebody distracts me. Starring means, the star is going, people is following, and that means the star was in the sky when Jesus was born the shepards followed the star where Jesus was born and then the star stopped. Then they found where Jesus

was born. That's the reason for us going from house to house singing carols and whatever songs we know. It's like we're caroling, almost like a birthday party. Everybody serve food or whatever they have. Wherever there is a icon in the house, that's where we take the star, regardless of what the people are or what they are doing. We don't go into the houses to look at people or check on how they are, or who they are. We go in with the star because we are following the star like the shepards followed the star to find Jesus where he was born. Then we go to each house and I try not to miss one house regardless of if it's locked, we sing on outside the house cause we know there is an icon in there. I try to keep it that way and I want everyone to follow it that way because I have been doing it for many years. I remember when I was seven years old, that's when I really remember, and I followed the star ever since. I'm seventy-four years old now and I still do, but not only in Akhiok. I try to spend some time on Russian Christmas in Anchorage with my family up there. This year it's going to be in Kodiak with my family. Next year will be in Akhiok. The

**No-Da-Ko-Sh-Wa**

No da ko she wa she chik  
ta a me ne lamt ne no tan  
hwan komot non a lay ih  
tok a a hayon a a le naw  
che me nik el me nek  
marie mek kai ko na me  
sho hok  
ta sh na anhe lak ke  
lah k meta ma ne no da ko da hat no nam  
she sh teh he she hot doh me no ne  
na not sha h tot pas to hat pe  
den n you h ne dan na le nay  
na kae tan he dot e de you loke  
oh na la mok ana you ka she na ak  
tay youk no oh da men sho lia  
men oh sh we l ha men,  
kristo sha man a ha yout man  
pe ke yout ded ta g lo ke  
el pe she wha e am la sh ka  
non kiah non...

*These are the two songs she sang to us while we did the interview. When she started to sing them it made me feel good inside, because I started to think of all the good memories. It felt like we were really having our Russian Christmas right then and there. When she started singing I can picture us walking in a house and seeing all the people there singing with us. As she was singing I could feel her excitement for the Russian Christmas to come.*

**So-Chin-Pin**

So chin pin, chris duk me ah ga u dum ah qwang  
kuda a gik nik dudent lam n noon tun di man, oos  
we men elth pen noon ni ang ah to gooth, ma ja m  
in pee j ulu da shle elu put tung com gon cuk duth  
sca me unq ah la me, ah qai un non ga um qur ell  
pun noon.

other places, they're different but I try to follow it the same way they have taught me. They have written the songs in English letters instead of in Slavonic writing and we, it's easier to see... read and the first song we sing as we enter the house is, first night I never did find out what that meant, but it's a happy, and then I'll sing that. These are in Aleut."

(See previous page for the songs)

After singing the Russian Christmas songs Mary explained how she learned how to sing the songs. Then it hit me. I was learning the same way she was.

"I learned the songs by following the stars. That's how our boys started, holding the stars from the time they were small till they got bigger. We never practice, we just go starring. It's like practicing, you could learn this if you pay attention. I used to have the girls stand in front of me so they could hear me and some of them they'll face me, watch my mouth. That's how I learned. Simeon Agnot, his great grandpa (motioning to Jr.), I used to watch him sing,

my back to the icon but I'm facing him trying to learn how to pronounce the words. I learn quickly that way. It's not hard once you get the tone, then the words will come easy. If you keep your ears open and try not to be distracted by anybody you won't get mixed up. I still do even though I know them all. I still have to have my papers with me all the time. It's fun and thrilling to know that Jesus was born."

While we listened to Mary explain how she learned the Starring songs we couldn't help but think about how much we actually do have in common with our elders even though so many years separate us. As we sat awhile longer with Mary we could sense how important it was for her to share with us where her awe and amazement with Russian Christmas stems from.

"The old people used to tell us that we women now think we suffer. We think we hurt when we deliver a baby but mother of God she suffer ten times more than we do. It's just thrilling when you really think of it. It hurt to think that God sent his son through a Virgin, Virgin Mary, to come and save us. When I sit under the table and listen to them, they'd tell us to believe and you will feel it. You will feel it in you, you'll feel he's talking to you and telling you to say the right words to a person. You have to approach a person nice, calmly, and this is same way with babies. Babies are small but they remember some. We have to be careful how we talk to our

children, our babies, and they are important people because we don't know what they're going to become.

Jr. and I had always wondered what masquerading was all about and why it happened during starring. After listening to Mary it wasn't a mystery any more.

"They dress like them and went there so they won't recognize who they are. They all dress different

*"We go in with the star because we are following the star like the shepards followed the star to find Jesus where he was born."*

from other villages, or cities, in Jerusalem they dress different from another place. They went there looking dressed as them like maskering. That's where maskering come in. We go from house to house dressed in different clothes and masks on. They used to just cover up and try not to let them see their face. They're looking for Jesus 'cause they didn't want him to be king. When they couldn't find him, the bad, part sad part is, they start killing the babies under two years old. They kill them! I never want to think of it. The parents are so sad they take their babies and kill them. Then they hide the baby in a basket and let him drift. Then a girl found him and raised him. In one of the Aleut ones they found him in a basket wrapped in swaddling clothes. Then he was put in a barn among the



*"If you keep your ears open and try not to be distracted by anybody you won't get mixed up."*

animals. They won't think of looking for him in the barn. Only the shepards found him because the star shown right above where Jesus was born. That's where they stopped and then three wise men found him. When I go Starring I'm just picturing how they must of been scared, and then they had to go hide somewhere else. It's really touching for me. When we go starring they never used to let us walk around. They make us stand in one place and make us pay attention so we could learn."

Listening to Mary helped us begin to realize how and why the starring tradition had held on in our village this long. It became clear to us that it's all tied to an understanding and appreciation for the meaning behind the symbolic actions that make up starring. We were curious about how long this tradition has been carried on. "Oh long before I was born. Long before my mom and dad was born. Maybe somewhere around Father Herman time. He had them build churches. He came as a missionary from Russia. They started going to church when Father Herman came to Alaska from Russia. He took care of little kids and they started understanding the Bible. The wise men followed the star, that's why we follow the star. Before all they believed was superstition. When Father Herman came they said that they started in little houses and have home church service. Father Herman, in Kodiak Island, he the one that started the church."

The length of the starring tradition has allowed for translation of the songs into several different languages. We were interested in the origins of the songs and how they grew into the other languages. "First they were in Slavonic. They were written from the Slavonic church book. Some of it is in Russian. Then the people in Aleut translated into Aleut, same words only

there they translated into Aleut. They had a Aleut book in church 'cause the priests used to write each other in Aleut language from here. Then the people in Kodiak that read Aleut would translate it to the Russian priest. All over Alaska missionaries taught starring and that's how we got it in Kodiak." Mary's explanation gave us a good understanding as to why they were translated into the different languages.

Many things in the Russian Orthodox church are represented in threes. For example, there are three nights in Starring. "That's how long they usually say it took, them three night and three days to get where Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Everything they did was three; three sign at the cross, three times they take any kind of medicine. It's always three times; one now in the morning, one maybe noon time, third one would be before you go to bed medicine. Everything was always three times. When they give somebody something, it's always three pieces. And everybody celebrated."

Here is another example of the importance of three. The muskaraduqs come out on the third night. "They're mingling with the people and dressed like the people in Bethlehem. They dress like them to let them think that they're part of the people starring but they're after Jesus because they don't want him to be king. The third night they go starring to all the houses looking for the baby and when they couldn't find baby Jesus they start killing the babies under two years."

Another part of Starring is shooting guns. Here are some reasons why we shoot guns during Starring. Hoolaquks are big hairy people that used to live in the village, but they were banned from the villages a long time ago. They come back from time to time sometimes to scare people and sometimes to make people feel at

ease. For instance, if someone in the village dies they might come back to help ease the suffering. While other times, they come just to scare people and that is why we shoot the guns each night of Starring. When Mary was young she wondered why they shot the guns so she asked her parents.

"To scare the spirits or to scare the evil away. I asked them because I never used to like it. I remember I used to hide under somebody's coat. When I got older "Mom how come they always shoot? I don't like it, they might shoot somebody." Then he would say to scare the hoolakuks away, the bad spirits. The people that was trying to get rid of Jesus didn't want Jesus to be king. That was the reason for the shooting, to scare the bad spirits away."

I also learned why we add a song to each night. Mary told me it is so the singers "won't be so tired the first night. First night is the beginning and it's three songs. Second night you could add more. On the third night we have to try to sing them all so we don't miss any meaning of starring. There's a meaning in each song of starring."

I was very curious why the boys whirled the Stars. "Ladies can't go inside the alter. Only men, boys can go inside in the alter. They had a superstition life. They were kind of strict, like women when they become womanhood they can't go to church until after their forty days. Just like the women after they have a baby they can't go to church until after forty days. We couldn't go to church when we're on our monthly period. The women were embarrassed to ask them so it's always the men or boys taking turns. The men couldn't hold the star unless they had a verse to say. Women couldn't hold the star because they didn't know if they were on their period or not. They said that was not cleanliness and women are not supposed to read the Bible, just the men. Even the little girls, when they baptize the babies they hold them in front of the Royal doors. Only the boy ones they take inside

and make a sign of the cross. Virgin Mary was the only woman they always say women are safe by her 'cause she was the only one that they took into the alter. They knew she was going to bore a Savior. December fourth holiday is the day when she was accepted into the temple and walked inside where women can't go and everybody knew that she's real holy. It used to be fun on Friday night during maskerating time. Every night during maskerating time we danced except Saturday and Sunday. They would last only until eleven-thirty because they have to clean up. At

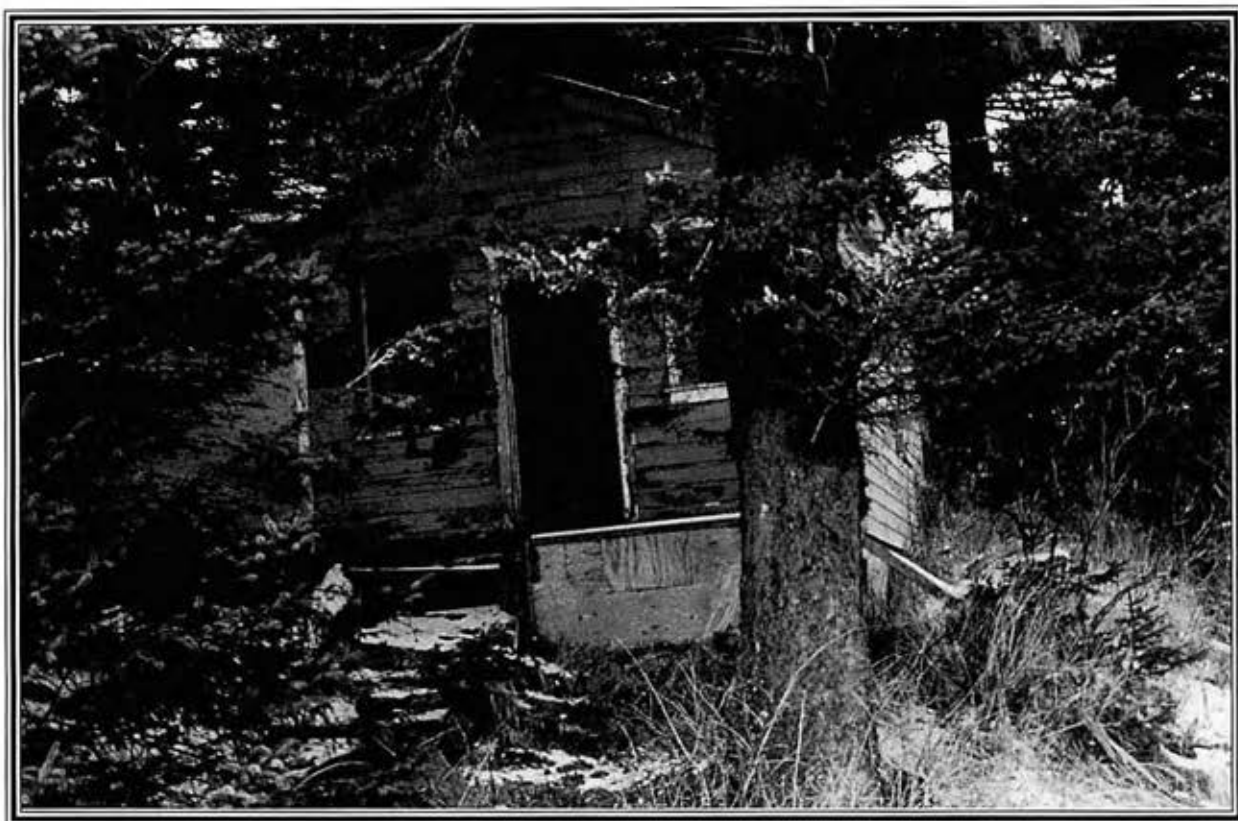
twelve 'o clock it's Saturday and then we couldn't have dance. The school kids had to go home at ten 'o clock. The older people dance as long as their musician don't get tired."

During this interview I learned a lot about Starring. I didn't really

know what Starring was about, but after this interview I knew more than I used to. I finally heard the whole story about Starring. Now that I know the meaning of it, I'll understand what we're doing when we're Starring. I can pass it on to the younger ones when I get old. This is a tradition that should be passed on, because our elders back then passed to their young ones to pass to us. Now it's our turn to pass it on to the next generation.

*"I learned the songs by following the stars."*

*Old Post Office  
Ouzinkie, Alaska  
Photo: Sabrina  
Anderson*



*"Dock" Chernikoff's house  
Ouzinkie, Alaska  
Photo: Sabrina Anderson*

# Petroglyphs: What are they?

*Story by Marcella Amodo*

In May, 2001 Akhiok students went on a camping trip to Cape Alitak, which is a petroglyph site. They went there to study, measure, and map the different petroglyphs. I didn't go but when they came back they were all really excited. They told the rest of the school some stories about the petroglyphs which made me become more interested in them. After hearing the stories, many questions popped into my head: for example, How old are they? Why did our ancestors make them? What do they mean? Has anyone researched them yet? I just wanted to find out more about them. I asked several people who I could talk to about the petroglyphs and most of them told me to contact Woody Knebel. He is a marine biologist who has worked at the cannery at Alitak for many years. He heard many people mention them while he was there and wanted to check them out for himself. I contacted him at his home in Seattle, Washington and asked him if he would be willing to do a phone interview. I was really impressed with the information he shared with me.

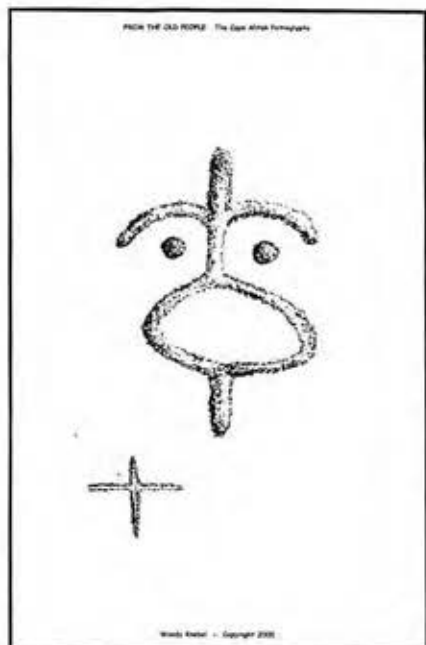
There are different types of ancient art that date back from a few hundred years to several thousand years. They are found all over the world but not yet in Antarctica. One example of these different art forms are the petroglyphs. Petroglyphs are man made images that are carved into rocks with stone tools. Pictographs are another type of art form. Pictographs are painted images that are painted onto rocks usually inside caves or somewhere protected from the rain. The third example is hieroglyphs. Hieroglyphs are



*Roy Rastopsoff stretches plastic to do a rubbing during the Akhiok School petroglyph survey.*

*Photo: courtesy of the Alutiiq Museum*





Greek writing that mean sacred carvings. Then there are geoglyphs. Geoglyphs are formed on the ground and typically surface matter has been scraped away.

According to Woody these types of ancient rock art "are actually used for or signify cultural writings. They're kind of an ancient art form that are used by different cultures as a means of expression."

I wanted to find out how old the petroglyphs at Cape Alitak are. "No one really knows. They found some that are tens of thousands of years old. It's very difficult to date the actual carvings. They could date the rock, they can date things around it, but then nobody knows when it is actually carved into the stone. So really the only way to date is to kind of go through the history of mankind and immigration. It is very, very difficult."

Since they are so old how do we know what they

any one could remember when people carved them. You know, they're from anywhere, I'm guessing here, from five hundred to thousands or fifteen hundred to two thousands years old. So, we can kind of guess at what they mean, but nobody knows for sure.

"On some of the petroglyphs, I've documented and recorded the measurements and done rubbings and pictures. I have close to two hundred that I've done, but I've seen over five hundred petroglyphs at the Cape and at the Alitak area and it is very difficult to decipher what they mean." Woody has some guesses though.

"You know some of them some of them might have one that's a whale and it's an obvious whale, and it has a bubble around it. Well, I'm a marine biologist, so I kind of picked up on that one right away. They are down at the bottom and there's krill, food, or fish on the top they'll blow a bubble and that will scare all of the fish into the center then

**"I saw visions, visions of different people that were there and it was a pretty powerful moment."**

mean? I thought Woody might know. So, I asked him what they meant. "Um, I'm," he laughed, "that's a hard question since there's no one around that was there that carved them or

they come up into the center and eat it and there's actually two petroglyphs that are at the Cape like that."

"There are others that are human shaped and they





Can you see *Sedna*, the Sea Goddess, carved in the rock to the right?  
Above images courtesy of the Alutiiq Museum

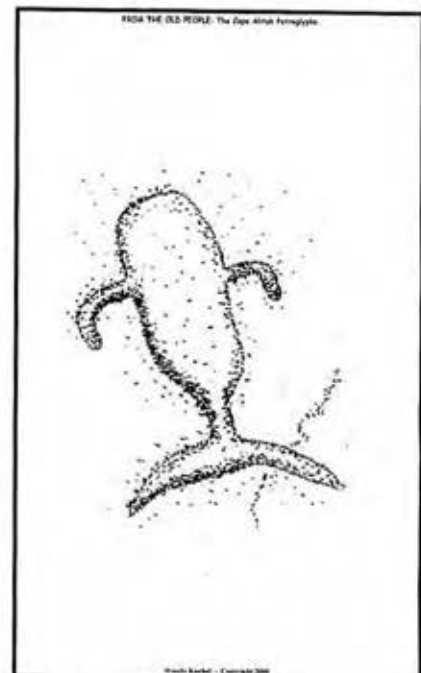
have a drum and sticks for beating the drum, and that's obviously some sort of dancer or shaman.

"Then there's one that's called Sedna and she's the goddess of the sea. That's the one you guys have probably seen with hands stretching out. The Alutiiq Museum has been using that as kind of a logo for many years. When they did a rubbing on it, it came out that there was a hole in the hand and that's indicative of the other fish, and the sea mammals and by having a hole in their hand when they go to catch them some of the animals escape, and that lets future generations have food to eat - game to catch."

When he first went to Alitak, he discovered them and became interested in them. He only knew about them after hearing people mention them. "I started reading *National Geographic [Magazine]*. They

did three articles on petroglyphs, and they never done one in Alaska. I thought well, here's something that is right here in our backyard up in Alitak and it's slowly deteriorating and in the ten years I've looked at them, they deteriorated quite a bit and I thought well, someone needs to do something about it. So I took it upon myself to start recording it and that's how I began."

Woody has always been interested in the petroglyphs but not until three years ago did he begin to seriously learn about them. Woody works for the Wards Cove Packing Company. At the plant, he had heard a person mention where the petroglyphs were located. He wanted to get away from Alitak for a while so he went for a hike in that area. He discovered his petroglyph out at the gold mine. Once people found out that he was exploring the



petroglyphs, instead of asking him marine biology questions about fish, they started asking him about the petroglyphs. He did not have answers for them so he decided since no one else was gathering information on

point where he has specific information on a couple hundred petroglyphs, but he has seen more than five hundred. Of these several hundred petroglyphs he has seen, he has a couple of favorite ones, the

**“You can be standing there looking at these petroglyphs that you can barely, barely see for a minute. Then BOOM, all of a sudden they are right there.”**

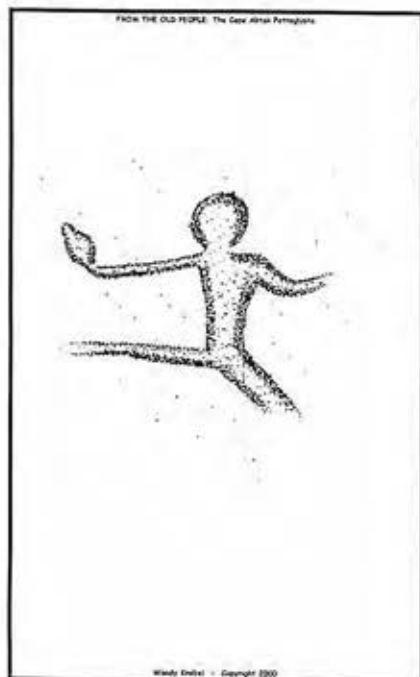
them, he would. He did more than just take pictures. He took measurements, did rubbings, and started recording his findings.

“When I first started I saw maybe oh, fifty, sixty petroglyphs and as I started looking around and really spent time and then doing some rubbings on it, it kind of comes to show what’s there. The time of day you go out there really makes a difference on what you see, and that might distinguish whether they look finished or not, when the sun is setting and the sun is at a low angle and the shadows cast it literally, you can be standing there looking at these petroglyphs that you can barely see for a minute. Then BOOM, all of a sudden they are right there in front of you, and the sun will move a little bit and they are gone. So I don’t know so much that a lot of them are finished. I think they are worn so much, eroded so much that they are hard to see.”

He is currently at the

sea goddess and the bear face. Here is the story he told us about why he likes them. “The reason why I like that one( the sea goddess Sedna with the hands out stretched and five fingers and the hole in the hand), the reason why I like that one so much is because that’s the first one I started recording. When I really got serious about it, I was down recording it and I got the biggest sense of power go through me. I just had to stop, everything just stopped for about ten seconds. This power just emanated right through the rock and went right through me and I saw visions, visions of different people that were there and it was a pretty powerful moment.”

The second one he likes, he doesn’t know what it is, but he thinks it’s a bear, although he’s not positive. “I was measuring that one and I was measuring the left eye and water came out of the rock. I don’t know where the water



came from; there must have been a crack in there somewhere, but the tide was out. It got me in the eye and I thought, 'Well, that was kind of funny.' You know and two weeks later I was coming over to the petroglyphs again

wanted to be in contact with the spirit of the whale, they can bring the whale into the shallow waters so that they can hunt it and also on some of them where the tide comes in and washes over, like the sea monster petroglyph, you know

**"Just by all of us working together we can get some of the answers."**

and I got charged by a bear and I didn't see the bear at first, all I saw was water splashing out from behind a rock. So, I kind of put those two together and I thought when it first happened that it was maybe an omen that something like that was going to happen to me."

He also had ideas on why the sea water animal petroglyphs face the ocean. "For example there's the whale carvings. I think they face the ocean because if they

there's a current, a concentric circle with a current coming out. I believe that if they were covered with water then when the tide went out it would take the message of the carver out to the spirits, whether it would be to bring the whales in, or bring the seals in, or to bring the fish in. I think they have always wanted to face the spirits out of respect. Just like you talk to your mother and father, you don't talk to them with your back towards them, you face them and then talk to them, so



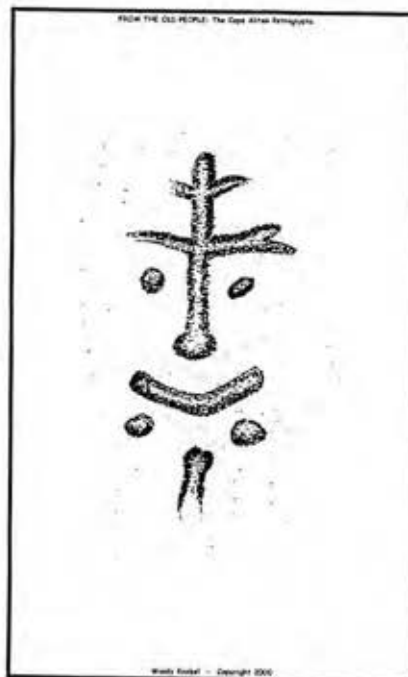
*Rock covered with petroglyph at Alitak  
Photo: courtesy of the Alutiiq Museum*

they were trying to get the spirits where they believe are in the water or wherever they were. They wanted to face the spirits."

We may not know what they mean or why our ancestors made them, but if we all work together we will eventually find out. As Woody says, "Every time someone puts in their little bit of information, then you get a bigger picture and you know, who knows what people were trying to bring across. Just by working together, we can get some of the answers."

"I just really believe that you students have such an incredible opportunity there to get into your past. That's the way I look at it and there is a lot more to it than just some carvings in the ground or in the rock. I think that you are very, very fortunate to be part of that culture and to still have a day where you can still go and see the petroglyphs. You guys are very lucky to be living in an area with that kind of history."

After talking with Woody, my interest in the petroglyphs now is 10 times greater than what it was before the interview. I am hoping that this petroglyph project through the school can continue next year. Last year was a start and I hope that this year and next year we can build on the knowledge that we gained and share it with others.



# Trapping Today

*Interview by: Marlyss Eggemeyer*

Why don't people ever tell stories about trapping anymore? I know people have trapped in Port Lions and Afognak and it was one of the main activities for survival. You always hear stories of how people used to trap, but how has trapping changed? What skills do they use? Do they do it for a living today? I wanted to find out the way of the trapper today. So I approached Kevin Adkins, a local trapper and former mayor and asked him about how he traps. I hope to show that his way of trapping is an example of how people trap today.

Kevin Adkins didn't start trapping animals until he moved up here to Alaska. He was 26 years old at that time and had just moved from California. He also lived in Montana where he did a little trapping for muskrats and a few weasels. The kinds of animals that he trapped since he moved to Alaska were mainly foxes and otter. He's not much of a beaver trapper because he doesn't like going out on the ice.

**Marlyss:** Have you been trapping animals all your life?

**Kevin:** No I didn't start trapping um until I moved to Alaska, how old was I then when I started trapping lets see twenty-six.

**Marlyss:** Where did you live before that?

**Kevin:** I grew up in California and we lived in California and Montana. We did a little trapping I guess in Montana, trapped muskrats, few weasels, but nothing like here.

**Marlyss:** what Kind of animals have you trapped since you lived here?

**Kevin:** Since I lived here, just foxes and otters. I'm not much of a beaver trapper, I don't like going on the ice!!

**Marlyss:** What time of the year is the best time to go trapping?

**Kevin:** Winter!! Um, It helps if there's not a lot of snow but after the snow, so I would always start trapping foxes here O, December. I'd start visiting my trap line in, Oh middle of October and then not set any traps until December time, and I would get the animals especially the foxes, I would get them used to coming to where my traps are and then set my traps after the snow started falling so I could see what was going on, and same with the otters. You get used to where they're running and then you could be successful quicker!! If you wait until the snow is coming off it's a lot easier to see what's going on.

**Marlyss:** Do you enjoy trapping animals?

**Kevin:** uuu huh!! Yeah its fun!! You get to go out for a walk every day and there's just a little bit of money involved. Its a kind of like a hobby that pays. The fur market isn't really great right now you have to find a kind of a niche market where maybe a fur sewer would want to buy your pelts. So it's not like it was years ago where a guy could go out and set one hundred to two hundred-fifty traps and plan on just uh catching a whole bunch of animals and being able to sell them at a real good price. I found in



my trapping is that its better to catch a handful of animals and have time to take really good care of them and get a really good price for them from somebody that wants a premium quality fur. So I never did a whole great big trap line like a lot of guys do.

**Marlyss:** Are there any like skills you have to know to set the traps so you don't get your finger or something in them?

**Kevin :** Yeah, you have to learn how to set your trap. Cleanliness believe it or not is the biggest benefactor in trapping. I shouldn't say cleanliness, but tidiness, not spreading your scent on the trap line, and so you would get into a routine where you don't do the same thing over and over and over again and make sure that you never spread your scent around. That and discipline. But other than that you don't need to be any kind of carpenter or have any kind of computer skills. But tidiness and a good work out are the most important things.

**Marlyss:** Do you ever go alone or with a friend?

**Kevin:** I always went alone. That's the last thing you want is somebody else on your trap line. Because just for one person to not spread there scent around its easy, but if a second person that's just there standing around, you know even if you spit on the ground, a fox or otter can smell that and get weary when they approach it. The trap site. I've only seen a couple of times where the bears bothered my traps, you know I've only seen a bear actually on my trap line a couple of different times. Then you just kind of don't check your traps that day. Just go back home and leave the bear alone.

**Marlyss:** Are there certain traps for each animal?

**Kevin:** Yeah, the otters take a bigger trap then the fox. The fox will take a one and three quarter or number two. I always use coil spring

traps for foxes cause they're smaller and easier to hide. And for otters you want to use a number four, or conibare. I always use number four long spring traps for otters because they are more cumbersome and an otter will get in your trap and spin, and sometimes they will spend there leg right off or spin the wire in half. So you want something big and cumbersome to make it harder for them to spin. A conibare is a trap that closes around there throat and strangles them to death.

**Marlyss:** Are those big metal one like for bears and stuff?

**Kevin:** They are big and square and look like two square rods with big teeth. They're big!! Their probably the most dangerous trap. They're hard to set. The normal spring traps you could set right on your knee and not have to worry about hurting yourself, but those conbares are so much bigger I always tied a line on them just to make sure I never got my thumbs caught in there.

**Marlyss:** How often are you supposed to check your traps?

**Kevin:** You could ask that question to five different people and you might get five different answers. I always check my traps everyday.

**Marlyss:** Everyday????

**Kevin:** Everyday!!!! And some guys will say you know you're just setting up your trap line. I always thought you know that poor animal out there suffering in my trap you know and I got out there and dispatched them as soon as I could.

**Marlyss:** Is there a certain amount of traps you can set ? Like you can't set five or it will be against the law?

**Kevin:** No, Not that I know of. You can set as many traps as you can set. You could have one

hundred, two hundred. You need to again practice ethical animal kindness. To leave one laying in your trap for three or four days is not very good!! So you wouldn't want to set anymore traps then you could run in a day. One hundred traps would be quite a few if you were to catch one hundred animals, but you're not going to catch an animal in every trap every day. So a lot of guys run more than one hundred if their on a snow machine they could see where there traps are. They can go up to one spot and look and they can see ten traps. If they got something in one of them and if not they could move on. And its pretty fast. There are restrictions on how many animals you can catch of certain species. Beaver, there only allow 30 a year on Kodiak Island. They do that so you don't trap out the whole entire population in one year.

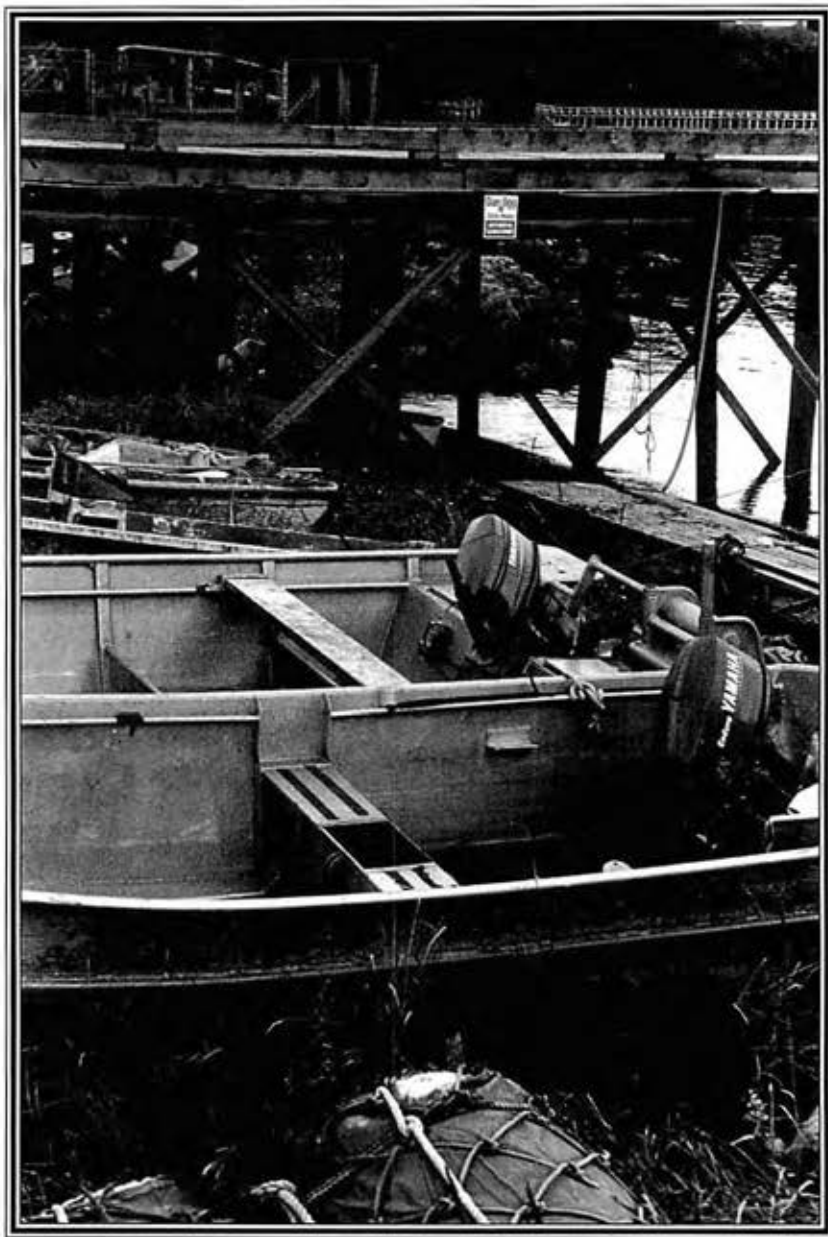
**Marlyss:** How many traps are the best number to set?

**Kevin:** I don't know. When I trap it was more recreational then for a living, so I'd set oh, 25-30 traps a day I would do it in a four mile area so that would take me three and a half to four hours to walk my trap line. That was good enough for me. Some guys want to go all day everyday. I've always had other things to do.

**Marlyss:** Are there any stories or jokes you would like to tell

**Kevin:** One time I went to go check my traps and a fox he was just hooked by one toe and I didn't want him. It wasn't bleeding or anything so I thought well maybe I can turn him loose. So we were jumping back and forth for a better part of an hour, if somebody would have been there with a video camera would have been pretty funny. I'd try to go in there with a stick and hit the spring on the trap so he could go run off. Finally, I ended up taking a fork stick and another stick and got him to bite it, and then I took the fork stick and put it over his head and held him down and let him go and run off. It was pretty comical.

Kevin helps us understand that trapping is mostly a recreational activity today more than a source of survival. Also, we should be respectful to the animals even through we are decreasing their population, we should not allow them to suffer in the traps.



*Boats  
Ouzinkie, Alaska  
Photo: Sabrina Anderson*

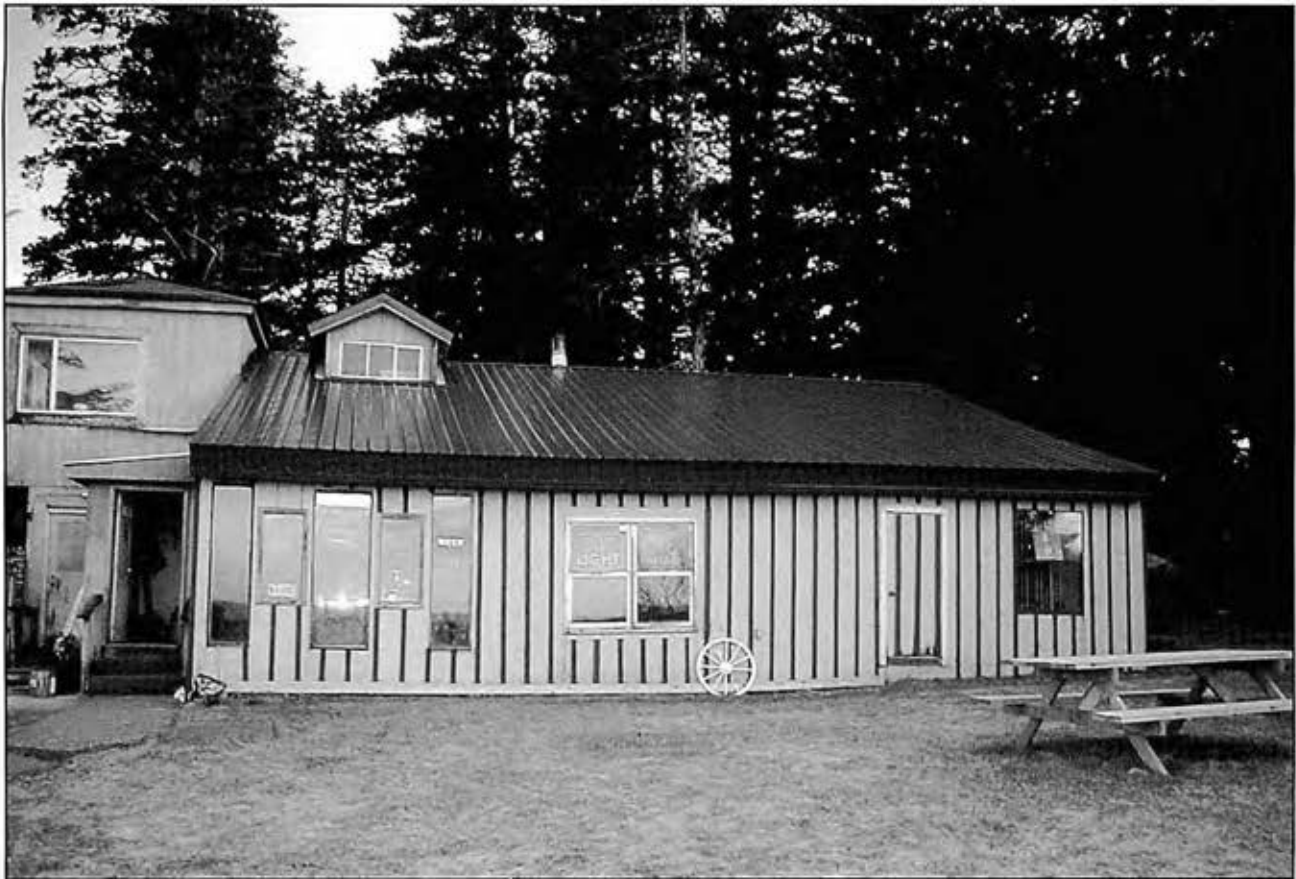
# At the End of the Road:

## The story of a business in Chiniak

Story and layout by Desireé Schmidt

When we walked into the Roads End, Chiniak's local bar and restaurant, I wondered what stories Ernie had to tell. We walked over and sat at a table by the window. While we waited for Ernie, I looked around at the stuffed bear, the people eating and drinking, and the juke box playing old country tunes. I thought to

myself, it must be hard to own your own business in a small village on Kodiak island. A few minuets later, a man, about 70 maybe, walked into the room. He had his usual cigar in his mouth, which he put aside when he arrived at the table. We greeted him and began to browse through some earlier issues of the Illuani maga-



*The Roads End in Chiniak, Alaska*

*Photo: Desiree Schmidt*



# "People want to go to the end of the road."

zine.

Chris Opitz, the teacher, sat close to the window taking notes on all the details that were going on. Ben Christman, a fellow student, sat next to Chris holding a camera which he used often during and after the interview. Next to Ben sat Ernie Hopper, the interviewee and owner of Roads End, with his cigar layed carefully on the table next to him.

The four of us sat around the table and looked at some earlier issues of *Illuani* magazine. He told us he had some *Illuani* magazines of his own somewhere and went to find them in a storage room. "I got some of these but I can't find em right now. I will though, I know they're here. Then I'll give em to you. I must have, I don't know, four of five in the way back. At the moment I don't know where they're at." Ernie stopped looking for the magazines and sat back down. Then we started the interview. I asked him when he moved out here, and what it was like at the time.

"I moved to Chiniak in August 10th, 1964. Not long after the earthquake," Ernie said. "The road wasn't finished yet. We had to walk about a mile down where the road camp is right now. While it was finish repairing the road. Rebuilding the new road is what they were actually doing. It was just a narrow one lane road actually." Ernie paused a moment and went on. "You couldn't drive all the way here. It was only another week or two before they had it finished. Err, not that you could drive on them."

"What was Chiniak like when you first moved here?" Chris asked. Every one looked curiously at Ernie.

"There wasn't any Chiniak. There wasn't

anything."

"How long has Roads End been open?" I asked. As far as I can remember, its always been there, I thought to myself.

"Roads End opened, uh, January the first at midnight, 1983," Ernie recalled. "The first night we opened, we had seventy people in that little part over there. Seventy people filled it up, I'll tell you." I couldn't imagine seventy people in Roads End as it is now, much less 18 years ago.

There was a lot of change from when he started Nothing stays the same, it eventually becomes different. I asked Ernie how he advertised in the begining, and he said "the news paper and word of mouth." Now he has pens and stickers that say Roads End Restaurant.

"Was there power back then?" I asked.

"No, we had uh, generators. The power came out in 86. 2 o'clock in the afternoon, but I forgot the date. I turned the generators off and said I would never start another one. I used them for twenty years. From 64 to 86. Quite a number of generators." Ernie gave a small laugh.

Ernie said that Roads End used to be his house, and that he just added on to it to make it bigger. He pointed out areas that used to be bedroom or closets. Ernie built the place himself, "Yeah, I built this place, all the way from twenty-five additions." He just knocked the walls out and added on. "One room at a time."

Ernie told us how he decided to add the rooms for rent. "I had a flat roof up top of part of this. It kept leaking so I had to get up there and go on up with another story to stop the leak."

Ernie told us that lots of people who work out here in this part rent the bunk houses.



# "It'll go on like it is."

He said it was a good contribution to his business.

"Ah. It helped. It depends on what is going on out here in this part of the country. If you know there's other projects going on, or if people need a place to stay or something. It helps. We never really pushed it but it is better to have than not to have."

When did you decide to put in the shower

and laundry room? I asked. I knew that it was installed some time back, but I didn't know when exactly.

"I did that about five or six years ago, I don't really remember the date. People needed uh, running water and a place to take a shower and do laundry. Mostly for laundry." Ernie told us that most of the water that you get from wells, turns clothes a yellowish brown color.

When I asked him what he liked most



*Photo: Desiree Schmidt*

about owning a restaurant, he paused and thought for a second. "I like seeing people from all over the world. um, having meals, hamburgers, cheese burgers, fries and just talking." He paused again and looked out of the window, then turned back to us. "Actually we get them from about every part of the world. Over a period of time, you know. I don't know many countries that you could think of that we haven't had somebody here from. There's a lot of uh, hunters from around the world, they usually make it out here before they leave town. The name brings people out too. People want to go to the end of the road, so they end up here."

"Did you have to make sure there were certain regulations or any thing?" I was beginning to run out of questions.

"Oh yes. The state, and the borough, and fire marshal, they all inspected it. You had to have everything inspected before you could open. And a license."

When Ernie was asked if he had any hopes for the future of Roads End, he said, "It'll go on like it is."

I asked Ernie if he had any advice for other people who own their own business, and he thought for a second before answering. "No. I don't have any advice. Do it on your own. That's the way you have to operate a business. The way you want it to run. People always try to tell you how to do it. It don't always work out that way."



*Devil's Club. Ouzinkie, Alaska*

*Photo: Sabrina Anderson*

# Baker Cottage and its Influence on Ouzinkie

*Story, photos, and layout  
by Sabrina Anderson*



*Baker Cottage in Ouzinkie after 44 years of serving the community.*

Joyce Smith has lived in Ouzinkie for 44 years. Presently, she lives alone in Baker Cottage, the formal title for the Baptist Mission in Ouzinkie. Joyce has participated in Ouzinkie's community ever since she arrived. She has been a teacher, health practitioner, school board member, religious leader, and activity organizer

among other things. She has taught three generations in my family alone.

If you were to meet her, first you would notice her smile. She always seems to be smiling in that comforting way. Next, you would notice her size. At 5'8" I feel like a clumsy giant compared to her fragile appearance. Fragile is

not exactly the best word to use because she radiates a glow of confidence and inner strength, the strength that stems from the soul and makes a person seem ageless. She dresses with care the way all grandma's do. Mind, that she is no blood relation, but is the type of person you wouldn't mind calling kin.

The mission has always been there throughout my childhood and I remember attending her kindergarten school fondly. By joining the Illuani Magazine staff I gave myself the chance to interview Joyce or 'Teacher' as we all still call her.

Equipped with her sunny smile and generous laughter she put her excellent memory to work to tell me a story: a story of how it all started, how the Mission appeared in Ouzinkie, and how it has helped the people of this community deal with tidal waves, illness, and everyday life.

in Kodiak.

"They also wanted to build houses in the villages where children could live in their own environment. The only one that was ever built was Baker Cottage in Ouzinkie; they never got enough money to go to any other village to build one. This building was built, I think, with great difficulty because this was nothing but woods here. Now, there were houses along the bay, but nothing else up in this area and they apparently had to make some kind of a skid road in order to bring a truck in to bring in the materials. It must have been a tremendous task in those days.

"It was built so that it would be a home for children. From 8-15 children would be housed in this building and it would be a home for them and for the woman who cared for them. In Kodiak, they always had couples, but in Ouzinkie there were only woman who had to face all the hardships that existed in trying to

*...there were no roads. there were no houses beyond this, nothing but woods around it.*

"The building known as the mission, in Ouzinkie, was originally the fourth cottage of [the] Kodiak Baptist Mission and its name was Baker Cottage. It was named for a lady named Abby Gung Baker. She was a very generous and kindly woman who did much for other people. This house was built in approximately 1937-38 following a fire on Woody Island."

The original Baptist mission was located on Woody Island. Due to the fire they decided to move the children that lived there to the Mission in Ouzinkie. Basically, they decided to rebuild a mission in Ouzinkie as opposed to building one in Kodiak because there were already resources

raise a bunch of children in the midst of the woods.

"The house was built with a coal furnace. They would get in a years supply of coal when the freighter came in and the water supply was from a ground spring a thousand feet away from the house and it was a spring that was shared with another family. So, there was often not enough water and there could only be water when there was electricity and there was only electricity usually from seven in the morning till ten at night. So, there was no water at night for any use including flushing toilets.

"When the mission came to Ouzinkie with this group of children the building wasn't



quite ready when they sent the children over here. They had no place to put them because the buildings had been destroyed and so for a time they lived in the cook shack down on the dock until the building here was finished. It was off up the trail, there were no roads, there were no houses beyond this, nothing but woods around it. This building became a sort of center for the community because not only did the women here take care of the children, but they were concerned for the village children.

"At the beginning, there was a three room public school [in the village]. One teacher per room, no aids, no help what-so-ever. The teachers were far too busy to provide after school activities. The mission, from the beginning, had various activities that were available for the children of the village. There was a preschool that met two or three times a week. There was a boy scout troop, there were various activities at various times during the week, but not too regularly because these women were so busy with the washings and the ironing. Back in those days they had to iron all their clothes; and the cooking and taking care of these children. They weren't always able to keep a regular schedule of activities. They had a number of things going on and a lot of the people in the village enjoyed the activities that went on here."

Sunday school was held in the house

thing in a language they could understand. At that time everything in the Orthodox church was in Slavonic. There was no program for teaching the children and so for the mission to have bible stories for the children was quite a treat for them. The mission operated as a children's home from 1938 to 1958; 20 years. Then, there were changes that made it appear better to move the children into the mission in Kodiak. They had room enough and there were too many illness's and things like that amongst the children."

Norman and Joyce Smith and their children came here from Larsen Bay where they had lived in a shack. With no ties and no property they packed up their things and made the journey to Ouzinkie at the Baptist's request.

"They wanted us to come and carry on work in this house, that for twenty years had been serving the community. So we moved here in 1958 and immediately I began a kindergarten program. The first year we met four days a week; I had to take care of washings and we had activities for children almost from the start.

"We had various clubs. We had Sunshine Club for young boys and girls who were primary age. There was a Joy Club for children who were approximately between grades four and five. There was a Boys Club at one time that was a Cooking Club, there was a Girl's Sewing Club, and each of these clubs children were learning

*"They wanted us to come and carry on work in this house, that for twenty years had been serving the community."*

until 1952 when the chapel was built onto the house.

"Many, many children came to Sunday school because it was a big treat to have some-

things, but we also had games and film strips, bible stories, and songs with a varied program. There were always refreshments. There was something going all the time here. Every after-



noon, mostly every evening, certainly every morning with the kindergarten. We put on programs and things like that for about 20 years."

There were several clubs divided into age groups. These groups were tailored to that age groups needs. Also there were health and first aid classes offered for the community. Sometimes the Rural Water Operators used the mission as a meeting place.

"Kids were so isolated in the villages in those days. In a time before T.V., there was a bit of radio, but no telephones, there was no communication. Children here didn't know much more about children in the next village than they did about Seattle or New York. They were just about that ignorant about the rest of the Island. I felt that giving the children a kindergarten experience, teaching them as many things as I could to open their eyes up to what else was out in the world would be a help to them in their education.

"I also was on the school board for eleven years. We tried the best we could to try to bring inter-school activities like volley ball games and like that between the villages so that kids could get acquainted with students in the other villages."

Cultural enrichment trips were also offered due to the isolation of the village students. The idea was to broaden their horizons. This opportunity was not part of the mission, but it was something Joyce was engaged in. These trips included destinations such as Anchorage, Seward, Homer, San Francisco, and Hawaii.

"Another thing that this house served as was the place for people to stay. In those days, there was no place for visiting workers to stay in the village. So, some how or another, we'd find room in our house for visiting doctors, nurses, school employees, and government workers; things like that, along side from all our other



*Joyce Smith in her home, Baker Cottage.*

activities. We provided beds for these people; in a lot of different walks of life.

### **Hard Times and Coal Furnaces**

At the same time Norman was operating in the mission building branch, so a lot of the time I would be completely in charge of things here when he was out around the Island, visiting other villages, holding services, and doing things like that. So lots of times I had to be the preacher, the Sunday school teacher, play the organ, and operate the kindergarten and just about everything else all by myself when he was away, but it was much better when he was here because the two of us could do a much better job.

"It wasn't easy managing, living here.

After the first year, Norman converted the coal furnace to oil. All the years that the poor women were trying to handle that coal furnace I had one year of it and that was enough. It was so difficult and they never would keep the fire over night because they remembered the fire on Woody Island and were afraid to have a fire going all night. So every morning, somebody had to get up and start that fire in time to get the building warmed up. Trying to start a fire in a cold furnace is no fun. Probably had coal dust and dirt all the way to your skin and through your clothing.

"When Norman put in an oil burner in the furnace we had to get us a supply of oil, remember that there was no oil truck in those days and there was no roads for it to come on. We would get about 33 drums of oil when the tanker came in and then Norman and our oldest boy had to roll them up hill. Now, with the road

it's more an easy incline, but then it was really up hill and to roll all those drums up... We had a platform out here to put the drums on. A years supply of oil for this building. The tanker only came in once in a while, we had to get the oil a head of time."

Joyce and her family were the first family to own a C.B. radio in Ouzinkie.

"Actually, for a while we had C.B. communication with the Mayor of Kodiak who also had a C.B. Aside from the radio at the store- it was the best communication we had was with that C.B. radio. That was a thrill to have direct contact with the mission in Kodiak."

### **The Big Wave!**

The Mission as well as the use of the C.B. radio were valuable to the community during and after the 1964 earthquake.

"When the earthquake and tidal wave hit



*After 14 years the chapel was built on to the Mission.*





*The kindergarten classroom where the majority of Ouzinkie's people first attended school.*

this house filled up with people. Everybody tried to go to high ground and this was one of the highest places; remember there was no school up the hill or anything like that and so we had a lot of people here. I remember there was a nine day old baby and a two month old baby amongst them that stayed at our house that night. Our C.B. was the only communication because the tidal wave had actually flooded out the village electric system that was down the dock.

"We had a little generator of our own so we had the communication in the village except for anybody that might have a boat on the bay, but most were gone cause the lot of them washed away in the tidal wave or were taken out to deep water. We were in communication with the Mayor of Kodiak actually at that time and also with other Chiniak fellas. They had a station out there that had a small airstrip. They were sending out planes, dropping flares on the water to see

when the big waves were coming in. So our C.B. was pretty handy because Kodiak had lost its telephone service completely. There were at least two years of no telephones in Kodiak so everyone got C.B.s We called the mission in Kodiak although very curtly because this was used as a civil defense radio and no conversations were allowed even though it was our radio.

"Anyway we were right in the thick of the village life and things like that lost things in the tidal wave. [They] came here looking for everything from tooth brush's to beds to bedding. There was always something the mission could supply to people and we tried to keep our programs, for the children, going because it was very important that there be something dependable. So, we tried to keep our kindergarten and different programs. As soon as we could we were back to doing those things again."

## Health Care

Not only did the Mission serve as an education facility, and emergency shelter, in addition to its religious function it was also a clinic for many years. This included serving as the dental clinic as well; she had a dental chair that when needed was moved to the area where her dining room table presently is.

"Before we came here Mary Setzekorn, the house mother, was a nurse. She took care of some of the medical needs of the village, but after we came here, I was the community health aid and later health practitioner. There was no clinic, we tried holding clinic over at the school, but it was no good at all. When a doctor came in

suddenly these parents started saying, "There's going to be a bigger tidal wave everybody...!" and would rush and get their kids. Everybody was crying or they'd been all getting calmed down and everything. Norman used the C.B. and got all the information he could. They said there wasn't a chance of another tidal wave like that because unless there was a bigger earthquake- and there hadn't been. But people were afraid, and so just about the whole village went up on the mountain and it was snowing that day. That was the day and after that there was a lot of illness. The school was closed-the public school- for a week; a lot of people were taking their possessions there. The tidal waves were coming up into their houses, our basement was com-

*Sometimes the clinic was around my dining room table-  
certainly was after the tidal wave...*

they would try to have a clinic over there, but all they had was a sheet to put up. You could see right through it and hear everything that was being said so there was absolutely no confidentiality. When we said they could have a clinic here in this building people were very happy; its the room that is now my office. People thought it was a great improvement because there was privacy and confidentiality. Sometimes the clinic was around my dining room table-certainly was after the tidal wave because there were a lot of people that got sick, from staying up all night on the mountain. Not so much the night of the tidal wave, but on Easter Sunday, two days later.

"A false rumor got started that a bigger tidal wave was coming. Most all the village went up on the mountain and that day it was snowing. Cold and wet, some people did take up some tents up there, but they would be... They'd just come down from the hills on Easter morning. Came here for Easter sunrise service and the Easter breakfast then went home and the kids were coming back for Sunday school when

pletely full with people's things. I couldn't use that for a clinic."

## The Traveling Doctor

"There was a knock at the back door. Nobody ever came to the back door, but these two people did. There was a pilot from the local airline and a man in military uniform who turned out to be a doctor from A.N.S. they had two hours to spend in the village and wanted to see every sick person he could in that little time. The only place to have the clinic was around the dining room table and I found that they hadn't had any lunch so I went down and got them some canned stuff and put it on the stove and said, "You'll have to take care of it yourselves."

"I went walking down this side of the village and I sent Timmy (her son) up to school with a note to ask that any children who had anybody sick in their families be allowed to go home and tell them to come up to the mission for the doctor/clinic.

"By the time I got back here the house

was full of people. So, we had clinic for two hours and I was left with a lot of penicillin shots to give and a bunch of aspirin and various medicines, those days we didn't have much medicine in the village. A lot of people [had] ear infections and various things that had come from being out in the snow a couple of nights.

By the time Norman came back, we'd had the clinic and the team had gone on to Afognak to try to see about the people over there so there was a emergency clinic here and then it went on. For quite a while I was giving shots and giving out medicine around the table here because I didn't have any space for it.

The mission building has been used for all sorts of things all through the years. In recent years, my husband is gone and I'm not as capable as I used to be, but still I'm getting calls for people to come and stay here. Looks like the village is pretty well filled up with workers and at the moment after my surgery I'm not capable of having people stay with me. Otherwise their always welcome here. So this house has been-oh, I would say a majority has gone to kindergarten here. Every third generation child when Loretta was here. Grandma, mother and daughter all went to my kindergarten. Most of the rest of the adults in the village were in similar programs that were here. I think you could say that this building has filled a need in many ways because this building has been available to house people, put on programs, and things like that. In so many ways its just been open to the village, but its also been a teaching resource in teaching values and various kinds still useful to children and young people and sometimes to adults.

I've lived in this building for thirty-four years now. Did the village change due to this building? I think that I can say it did. I think that there were a lot of good things that were taught. A lot of kids that got an education and a lot of people who found a place to stay. There were people who seemed to [have] appreciated the kind of programs and the kind of hospitality that has been around here both when we were here and for the twenty years that it was a children's home."



*Ouzinkie, Alaska*

*Photo: Sabrina Anderson*



*"Memoir is how writers look for the past and make sense of it. We figure out who we are, who we have become, and what it means to us and to the lives of others; a memoir puts the events of a life in perspective for the writer and for those who read it."*

*--Nancy Atwell*

## Quli'angwaga

Each middle school and high school student from Akhiok, Chiniak, Danger Bay, Karluk, Larsen Bay, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, and Port Lions had the opportunity to attend Quli'angwaga, an intensive writing Immersion Program, in Kodiak.

Florence Pestrikoff shared the word "quli'angwaga" with us early this year. Translated, it means "my story." Recognizing that we all have a story to tell, and that by telling our own stories we begin to make sense of our lives, we chose to teach writing memoir at our Immersion Programs this year. It seemed especially fitting given the Alutiiq Museum's special exhibit titled, "Looking Both Ways: Heritage and Identity of the Alutiiq People."

Several students submitted their memoir pieces to the *Illuani* staff who all agreed they would further our communal journey "inside" the life and culture of Kodiak Island.



*Fall Immersion Program: September 17th - 21st, 2001  
Akhiok, Chiniak, Danger Bay, Karluk, and Larsen Bay Middle School and High School Students*



*Winter Immersion Program: November 12th-15th, 2001  
Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, and Port Lions Middle School Students*

***“A memoir is not what happens, but the person to whom things happen.”***

*--Virginia Woolf*



*Spring Immersion Program: April 1st - 5th, 2002  
Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, and Port Lions High School Students*

### **When My Grandpa Died**

*The worst feeling that I ever had is when my grandpa died. It felt like someone had taken my whole life away. I just wanted someone to tell me what to do. I was hoping to wake up soon from a dream, but I had to think about what had happened to him was real. I was also wishing that he was sleeping and he would just wake up and tell me he is ok. I was denying everything that was happening that day. I can still remember how bad the feeling was when I found out.*

*My cousin came running into the school and he said, "Mary you have to go home there is something wrong with your grandpa." After I heard there was something wrong with him I didn't know what to think. I could feel my muscles tighten up on my back and my heart started pounding really hard and loud.*

*Then I started to run home. After I saw my mom outside screaming and hollering my hair stood up on the back of my neck and I knew what was wrong. When I got there I asked my mom, "what's wrong?"*

*She sobbed, "Grandpa died." I broke down and started to cry.*

*I cried, "Can I go see him?"*

*She said, "No, I don't think you should."*

*I hollered, "Let me see my grandpa!"*

*My mom tried calming me down, but I was too mad to listen to anybody. I started feeling like someone had come and ruined our family. I felt like someone had just tore my heart out of my chest. I almost felt lifeless.*

*I was praying to God to help me with this problem that was going on. I just wanted grandpa there to hold me and tell me that everything is going to be all right. I wanted to go on with my life rather than bringing myself down every time I think of him.*

*Every time I look into my baby Jayson's eyes I feel like I'm looking into my grandpa's eyes from deep inside. I'll never forget the pain I went through when my grandpa died.*

*In loving Memory of  
Walter Simeonoff Sr.*

*Mary Simeonoff  
Grade 12  
Akhoik*

### **Hunting For Deer**

*Bgggg! The deer ran for a few feet after my dad shot. It dropped and died. My dad knew what to do when we arrived at the kill.*

*I was watching my dad gut the deer. He took his knife and cut down the stomach. Then he pulled out all the guts. It looked like big pieces of spaghetti.*

*I was smiling because it was exciting. And I was glad to be with my dad.*

*Richard Rastopsoff  
Grade 8  
Akhiok*

### My Early Birthday Baseball Game

*The day before my birthday, I was sitting around at home. Then, out of the blue, my cousin asked me if I wanted to go for a ride. I said, "No." My mom, brother, sister, and Destiny got in the car and asked me if I wanted to go and I said, "No," which was the wrong answer. My mom said, "Get in the car right now!"*

*I got in the car. We were cruising down the road, coming up by the school, and I looked at the field. To my surprise, I saw a bunch of people getting ready for a baseball game. As we drove up to the field I saw a sign that read, "Happy 13<sup>th</sup> Arnold!" After I saw the sign, I started to laugh, but once I stepped out of the car, I felt embarrassed. For what reason, I'm not really sure.*

*All players warmed up for the baseball game. I was up to bat and everyone said, "Birthday boy is up!" Strike one! Strike two! Everyone shouted, "You have to hit this last one!" I tried, but what do you know, I struck out!*

*"Don't jinx me anymore, okay," I yelled.*

*The first inning ended. We played and played until it was the last inning. I was up first to bat. I stood in my position, watched the ball at all times, and I hit it. What do you know! I hit a home run! I ran around the field as fast as I could.*

*Once I hit home base, I shouted, "Yeehaw!" A few other people were up to bat. They all struck out. After the game, we all went to the school to have some cake. I left the field feeling excited about having hit the last home run. I was all hyped up. I hope for my next birthday I can go to a real, professional baseball game!*

*Arnold Charliaga  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Larsen Bay*

### Swells

*One year my family and I were on our boat heading home for Christmas, I was excited. Snow was falling heavily as we were leaving St. Paul Harbor. It was blowing really hard, and the waves were huge.*

*Kersplash! Kersplash! Waves pounded against the windows of my grandpa's boat. "Turn around!" my grandma yelled, "It's too rough." But my grandpa kept on going. Swells were getting even bigger.*

*After a little while we hit this wave and my grandpa yelled, "Hang on!" then this even bigger wave came right behind it. Then PPSSSHHH the windows busted. Everything was wet. My grandma was scared. I was right in front of one of the four windows that busted. We had to turn around and go to Kodiak. My uncle opened his mouth and found a piece of glass. We tied back up in the boat harbor. My Uncle Ralph came and got my grandma and I. We stayed at his house all day long. That night we didn't go home. We stayed at the Shelikof Lodge. I felt sad that we didn't go home, but glad that we were safe.*

*Devin Skonberg  
Grade 7  
Ouzinkie*

### **What Did I Do This For?**

*What did I do this for? Two weeks before my ninth birthday, I stole a van, a four wheeler, and broke in and entered a house. Amber, Crystal, Celeste, Natalie, and I were bored, and wanted something to do. "Let's go steal their van and break into their house," remarked Crystal. "We can go while they are at church."*

*"I really don't like that family, they are so weird," shouted Amber.*

*As they were walking up the hill to the house, we knew that the family wouldn't be gone for a while so we wanted something else to do. "Let's go and see if the shed is open," called Crystal.*

*"Okay, let's go," replied Amber.*

*"I don't want to go over there with you, we'll wait here," I yelled from the top of the hill.*

*While I was standing on the top of the hill, I felt kind of sick in my stomach and at the same time I had butterflies. I grew impatient and started fidgeting with my jacket zipper, and my palms were sweaty.*

*The bars clanked on the back of the four wheeler after every bump we hit. "We don't want them to notice that there was any gas missing, so we better take it back," yelled Celeste over the noise of the four wheeler. The house was next.*

*As we crept through the doorway I started to shake, and I felt sick. There were three people rushing past me. Wham! The door slammed against the cracked wooden floor frame. So much for being quiet. "Shh, be quiet we don't want the neighbors to hear," whispered Crystal.*

*We went to the back room and stole \$90, and Avon makeup. All of us ran out the back door and jumped into the van. Crystal started the engine, and we slowly went up the snowy driveway. At the top of the driveway, we got stuck in the snow. We jumped out of the van and ran down to the beach. We hid out at the beach for a couple of hours, then started on our way home.*

*When we arrived home we noticed the V.P.S.O. sitting at the table. We confessed that we did it. We got 20 hours of community service and we were grounded for 3 months. I hope I was forgiven for what I did, and I won't do it again.*

*Chantelle Bartleson  
Grade 8  
Port Lions*

### **My Hunting Experience With a Sling Shot**

*As I heard the glass shatter, I knew I hit my target. I stood facing the mountains. Then I saw a ptarmigan land on the hill not too far from my house, I decided to chase it.*

*I walked up to it and it flew, but not too far. So I started to go after it again. I had two of my friends with me. We surrounded the ptarmigan so it didn't have anywhere to go. I got closer and until I had a good shot. I walked about ten feet away then I shot it in the head with a rock. It fell over.*

*I ran to pick it up but it was still kicking. I grabbed it by the neck and twisted it until it died. After that I went home and cleaned it and cooked it. I'll never forget the rock that killed the ptarmigan.*

*Duane Eluska  
Grade 10  
Akhiok*



## I Thought This Would be the Best Week of my Life

*Could this be really true? Am I going to Disneyland? "Yipee!!!" I shouted, "I'm going to Disneyland!" The next morning we flew to Kodiak and stayed a night.*

*"Shhh!!!" The plane shouted when we boarded. We flew to Anchorage, Seattle and finally California. We went to the Disneyland hotel. We took the monorail to the Disneyland Park. When we got there, we went on lots of rides. We went on Space Mountain.*

*It was my favorite roller coaster ride because it was dark. I couldn't see where we were going and I got thrown around in my seat. Splash Mountain was one of my favorites too. It looked like we were going to crash into a bunch of logs. I gripped the handle and was starting to get scared but we went under the logs.*

*The next day, we got up and ate breakfast and cartoon characters were the waiters. We got some autographs from the cartoon characters. Then we rode more roller coasters. We went to the haunted house. It was fun. You would walk into this room and the door would shut and the floor started to move like an elevator. The next day we took a train to Hollywood and we saw some actors there. We also went on lots of rides. My favorite ride in Hollywood was 'Back to the Future' because it feels like you're really flying.*

*When the fourth day came we headed home. When we got to Kodiak my grandpa picked us up at the airport and he told my mom and dad. That made them sad. I got worried in my stomach. So, I asked, "Mom what's wrong?" She wouldn't tell me, then I asked again and they told me.*

*"Your Uncle Jack and his friend Lolly died in a boat accident." I couldn't believe that my Uncle Jack has died. On that day, I learned that bad things can happen even on the best day in your life.*

*Al Cratty  
Grade 8  
Old Harbor*

## INEVITABLE

*Have you ever been scared to lose a loved one that means everything to you? When Sally uttered, "My dad died in September." That made me think of how much I'm going to miss my great grandma when she passes away. Whenever I think of my great grandma dying or getting sick I cry. I also think how my life is going to be different without her. It's one of the scariest thoughts in the world, because she is the most important and favorite person in my family. One thing we do together is cook and bake. We make alogicks, perok, and pies. I remember the first time she asked me if I wanted to cook with her. She grinned and twitted, "Fawn do you want to help me cook?"*

*I was so excited I answered right back, "Yes!" I love her so much! When she passes away I'm going to become a silent person. I'm going to miss looking at her beautiful smile, holding her soft cold hands, and her big warm comforting hug. When she goes, a big part of my life is going to go with her. Why can't we live forever?*

*By Fawn Chya  
Grade 7  
Old Harbor*

### **Going Fishing**

*Camel's Rock looks like an Island, a little one. I like to go there for fishing, and picnicking. My Uncle Lee, (his real name is Andy Lee Sr.) well, he made a cabin there. Sometimes he and his wife stay there once in a while. My dad, my Uncle Andy and I went to Camel's Rock. After we arrived, my Uncle Gary and Grandpa Ola were already there. "Could we borrow your skiff?" dad asked Uncle Andy.*

*"Go ahead for a while," my uncle replied.*

*"I'll bring it back when we're done fishing," dad answered. We went fishing for silver salmon. Fish were jumping. My dad caught 3 silver salmon. I caught 2 more silver salmon. We caught them at Camel's Rock by my uncle's cabin. My uncle came in another skiff so we could go back to Ouzinkie.*

*"Wow! Those are big silvers," Uncle Gary proclaimed. "Are you going to enter them in the derby?"*

*"Oh! I didn't know about the derby," dad replied. Dad gutted the fish. The next day my dad bought me a ticket for the derby. We went to go get more fish, but my dad and I only caught one more fish each. At the derby I won two round trip tickets between Kodiak and Ouzinkie. I gave my two tickets to Janelle, my sister. Later, I got to Kodiak to see my dad. When I told my dad I gave my tickets to my sister he replied, "Why did you give your tickets to your sister?"*

*I replied, "Because."*

*Then he said, "If you didn't give your tickets away, then you would be able to see me." I can't wait until the next time I go fishing with my dad. I wish I could see him more often.*

*Flora Shanagin  
Grade 6  
Ouzinkie School*

### **Living on the Edge**

*Could you hold your stomach on a 48 foot fishing boat in 10' seas? The first time I went fishing was with my uncle Randy. He owns the Charalyda, a commercial fishing boat based out of Larsen Bay. He asked me if I wanted to go fishing with him for the summer and I said yes because I wanted to do something fun for the summer. He also told me he would pay me. When I first started, I thought that the work was going to be too hard for me. Well, after two or three days I realized it wasn't all that hard. It turned out to be really fun.*

*My favorite things to do are stack the corks and pitch fish. Another thing I like to do is drive the boat; I go for the biggest waves. I would much rather be on wheel watch than clean the deck all day long. Many times when you are working on the deck you get splashed with jellyfish. It feels worse than pepper-spray in your eyes.*

*Jake Charliaga  
Grade 9  
Larsen Bay*

### The Crash

*It was a hot summer day in 1994. My dad had just left to go salmon fishing, and he had told me to bring our four-wheeler home. I had driven it a few times before, and knew that it had no brakes, or reverse. I started up the engine, and started driving home. About 5 minutes later I came to our driveway and hesitated for a second. I started driving down towards the bottom of the driveway, and I panicked for some reason that I don't know. I jerked the handlebars and started trying to turn around in the middle of the driveway. Since it was so narrow I couldn't, so I drove off the side into a patch of salmonberry bushes. I didn't know what to do so I just sat there paralyzed with fright. A moment later, "crash," I hit a tree head on. I fell off the four-wheeler onto some soft moss.*

*I stood up and saw that there was no damage to the tree or me. I turned around not feeling bad, but then my heart sank. I saw my mom standing there staring at me from next to the house. I slowly walked towards her. When I got a couple feet away I could tell by the expression on her face. I could tell she was mad. She started hollering angrily at me so I cried out and said, "I didn't try to." I ran into the house and started to cry. I walked into my room, and fell asleep on my bed.*

*Later that evening, after I woke up, my mom told me that she would not let me ride a 4 wheeler again, but she didn't mean it.*

*I don't know why but I will never forget that day.*

Jeremy Ryan Clarion  
Grade 8  
Ouzinkie

### The Disappointment in my Life

*Have you ever had something happen to you that changed your whole life? When I was about 9 years old, my dog Pushkey died the day before Easter. I can remember it like it was yesterday. It was jet black out and my mom asked, "Do you want to have Pushkey run behind the car home?"*

*I replied, "Yes." Then it happened. My dog got hit by a car coming from the opposite direction. My mom and I tried to get Pushkey into the car as fast as we could. We drove immediately to the vet. When we got there, I had to carry my little baby girl up the stairs and when I got on the second step she died in my arms. The vet was standing at the top step holding the door open. But it was too late.*

*The vet vowed, "I'll try to do everything I can." But I knew he could not do anything. The tears started to trickle down my flame red face. Then a pool of tears started to form at my feet. For all these years I thought it was my fault that my little baby girl died and from this day on, I will always think that and no one can change my thoughts. I had to learn the hard way to go the extra mile and not just do the easy things first. If you do the easy things first you won't get anywhere in life.*

Joshua Sargent  
Grade 8  
Old Harbor

## **TEARS**

*I held his sweaty hand. He looked out the window, a tear ran down my face and I looked away. His hand was warm and shaky. He couldn't talk to me. He had a stroke on his 84<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was out in the field on his tractor, his favorite place. He liked it out there, I think because it was peaceful. He called my Grandma on the radio while it happened. My dad called me the day after. Test's said he was okay, and that he was paralyzed on the right side. When we went to see him he could recognize my sister. I watched as my Grandma spoke. "Wally, look who came to see you!" She said shaking him lightly. "It's Jacquie," she finished.*

*"Jacquiline," my Grandpa spoke slow and slurred. I cried. He knew her. He has always called her Jacqueline.*

*That was the last time I saw my Grandpa. He died two days later. His pall-bearers were his grandsons, Travis, Nick, Levi, and Cole. Tyee, the baby was an honorary. He would have been proud. His coffin was light wood. There was wheat engraved on the top. He was brought in, on an old wagon my Grandpa. That was just the way he would have wanted it. He held on until he saw his whole family. Then he let go, he just slipped away, peacefully in his sleep. I think he wanted that too.*

*Hillary Seeger  
Grade 8  
Port Lions*

## **Moving**

*Every time I've moved I had a feeling of exhilaration and my mind raced with curiosity. I have moved five different times in my life, all of them so my parents could pursue their careers. I don't mind much. I am a fairly solitary person. This makes each move easy on me.*

*During each move I was excited. I was happy about seeing a new place and meeting new people. I was always a little nervous when I had to go to each school for the first time. I remember the first day at Old Harbor School. I met the principal, and he showed me to my new class. My hands were a little clammy and I was determined not to let it show. I walked in and firmly shook hands with my teacher and classmates.*

*"Hi, hi," I said as I shook hands.*

*"We were expecting girls," is what I remember my teacher saying to me.*

*"How's it hanging?" is what I remember Ronnie asking me at lunch that day.*

*It wasn't hard to fit in and that gave me hope I could grow to like that school. If I ever move again, I hope it is as easy as moving to Old Harbor. Now two years later I like Old Harbor School.*

*Zack Haglin  
Grade 8  
Old Harbor*

## A CHURCH READER

*Bong!Bong!Bong! The church bells rang telling me it was time to hurry up the path to my favorite place in the village. I went through the white double doors. The first thing I did was kiss the icons. Then I went up to the reader's stand and took out what we needed.*

*"What tone are we in, Mom?" I asked.*

*"Number three," she replied.*

*I started reading about a year ago, when I was ten years old, and I still do read to this day. The first time I read, I was very nervous. My voice was shaky and I felt like a lot of people were just staring at me. Now I don't worry about anybody else but me. My mom says that I am a big help to her and the church.*

*I go to church every Saturday and Sunday. But, we only have one problem: We don't have a priest. A priest from Old Harbor comes down every other month and lets us have Communion.*

*The elders of our village are very proud of me. I know that as long as I am in the village, I will go on with my church reading*

*Donene Eluska  
Grade 6  
Akhiok*

## The Day I Almost Got Ran Over

*"Wait Daddy!" I exclaimed as he was crossing the road, and I started to go across also. I was in Kodiak for the day with my mom, dad, and little brother. We were going to Sutliff's and I decided to follow my dad across the road. I was only about 6 or 7 years old, and I didn't look both ways before I went across. Vroom! Out of no where, when I got in the middle of the road, came this huge pick-up truck.*

*My mom and dad were screaming, "Get off of the road!" I started running. The huge truck was about a couple inches away from hitting me. When I got off the road I was so scared I couldn't cry. My parents said that I'm lucky the truck had breaks. It's so scary thinking what would have happened if the truck didn't have breaks. If I got ran over by that thing I would have died. I'm lucky and happy to still be alive. Ever since then I obviously look both ways before I cross a road.*

*Larissa Panamarioff  
Grade 8  
Ouzinkie*



### **The Buck Stops Here**

*"We're going to get you a buck today, Shane," my dad said as he grabbed his rifle. We headed out our cabin door and jumped on the four-wheeler. We started on the trail to Vikoda Bay to go hunt.*

*My dad had let me shoot his old Browning .270 Winchester to see if it hurt my arm. Even though it hurt, I said it didn't and he gave the rifle to me. The rifle has a stainless steel barrel and a plastic stock.*

*So, there I was a seven year old with a .270 rifle. I felt big just like my dad and his two friends that were with us. Before this rifle, all I had was a lever-action .22.*

*We drove to a lake and through birch trees. We stepped up on a buck staring down in a bowl. There he was, a deer with two points on each side. Even though the rack wasn't big, I still feel good about it.*

*My dad parked the bike sideways so I could use the seat as a rest. I got the deer in my scope. As I held the rifle I could feel butterflies beginning to fly in my stomach. I watched the deer as its body moved across the clearing. My dad had told me to take my time so that was exactly what I did. Around five minutes later and four deer calls I squeezed off. Bang, the deer dropped in its tracks.*

*"Great shot Shane," my dad said. Everyone shook my hand and gave me a high five.*

*By this time my heart was beating so hard it was almost jumping out of my chest. We drove to the deer and looked for the bullet wound. I picked up the deer's head and saw I shot through the ear and blew an antler off.*

*"Where's the horn?" I asked.*

*"You must have shot it off." My dad laughed.*

*We gutted the deer and saved the one antler that was left. We drove back to the cabin and told stories about the great day. I was so happy when I shot my first deer.*

*Shane Knagin  
Grade 8  
Port Lions*

### **Birthday Crash!!!**

*BANG!! I crashed into a big rock. I flipped over the handlebars and went flying into a ditch. You should have seen me! I had cuts and bruises all over my aching body. They were big and it took a long time to heal. My bike, luckily, escaped without a scratch. You see, I was riding on a sunny summer day and I saw a cat running across the road behind me. So, while I was looking at the cat when I should have been looking where I was going, BOOM I hit the rock. It was the size of a football but it felt like I hit a wall. I walked my bike home and saw my mom and I blurted, "Mom! I crashed on my bike."*

*My mom asked, "Do you have any cuts? How is your bike?" I told her I had a few cuts and bruises but that I was all right. This all happened on my 10<sup>th</sup> birthday. What a present! A great big bike crash. Did I tell you the bike was my birthday present? Well it was. That's a birthday I'll never forget. I hope my next birthday won't be so painful!*

*Wylder Clarion  
Grade 6  
Ouzinkie*

### **The Ghost: A Real Story**

*Eight years ago, on a cold and starry night, my mom and dad invited a friend down to Akhiok to stay with us. His name is Manny. He is a real good friend of the family. He has been our friend for a long time.*

*My dad and Manny were drinking that night. After a while Manny was craving a cigarette, so he went outside, and of course I followed him. I was young at the time, so I didn't know any better to stay away from smoking people. Anyway, when we went outside we stood on the porch just talking and listened to the annoying banging from the loose sheet iron on the roofs and the wind howling loudly.*

*When Manny was about half way through with his cigarette, we both kind of glanced up towards the church, which is only about two to three hundred feet from my house. When we looked up there, we noticed a white, glowing, see-through shaped man walking near the church. It was also the night of a funeral so we knew it had to be a ghost, besides what kind of person is see-through other than a ghost? I felt the adrenaline rush go through my body and I felt kind of confused too because I didn't know whether or to go inside.*

*The first words that rolled out of my mouth were, "Oh my god, is this all just a dream? Somebody slap me and wake me up!"*

*Manny was drunk at the time, but I think the ghost scared the drunk out of him or something because when we went inside his eyes were rounder than ever and he didn't stagger as much when he went in, compared to when he walked out.*

*When we walked in the door, our jaws were down on to the floor and our eyes were huge!*

*"What's wrong?" my mom asked in a chuckling voice, because she thought the looks on our faces were funny.*

*We both replied together, "A ghost!"*

*My mom and dad didn't believe us at first, but after we explained to them with our slow, trembling voices, they believed us a little more, but not really. After we tried explaining to them what we saw, we told them to look out of the window. So Manny and I stared at them to see if their jaws would drop. They didn't, but their eyes almost fell out of their sockets!*

*At that time we knew they had to believe us. So we asked them, "Do you believe us now?" but they were too shocked to answer.*

*After what we had seen I wasn't able to sleep for the rest of the night, and I don't think anybody else did either. I will never forget what I saw that night. That was the scariest, and I must admit most exciting experience I have ever had in my life, well at least so far!*

*Marcella A. Amodo  
Grade9  
Akhiok*

### **"I Have Three Brothers and Two Sisters, Why did it Happen to Me?"**

*October 31<sup>st</sup> tends to scare many children, but it especially scared me in the year 1993. This was the day I was diagnosed with A.L.L (Acute Lymphsetic Leukemia). I was lying on the bed when the doctor came in and spoke in a soft voice, "Your son has been diagnosed with Leukemia."*

*My mom struggled not to cry in front of me. Then my Grandma said, "Oh no, Jr!" in a shocked voice. I just lay there and acted like nothing had happened.*

*I was on chemotherapy for three years. During those three years I was always in and out of the hospital. I was sick all the time. I had many things to keep my mind off my illness so I was able to enjoy myself.*

*I had many friends. Some of my friends live here in Alaska. One of my friends was from Mexico, and he was diagnosed with A.L.L too. Unfortunately, he did not make it. He would have been the same age as I am. My other friend was diagnosed with A.L.L the same day I was. He was from Barrow.*

*These three out of eighteen years of my life were really hard for me. There were times that I had to be fed through I.V. Having cancer is no walk in the park. I got support from my friends, family, teachers, and students from my school. But not once in that three years did I ever think I was going to die. Many people asked if I ever thought that I was going to die. I gave them one short, simple answer, "NO!!!" Now here I am healthy and happy as ever.*

*Halloween isn't one of the holidays I look forward to anymore. I hope other kids or people don't have to go through what I've been through just to bring their family closer together.*

*Jr Amodo  
Grade 12  
Akhiok*

### The Kissing Tree

*Have you ever been thirty-five feet up in a tree? Well, on April 3, 2002 was my first time ever being that high. We had to climb up a ladder, onto these staples in the tree, then up to a wire.*

*I looked up at the wire in the tree swaying back and forth and thought "Oh damn, that's really high!" I look around at the people getting excited while putting in their harnesses. I watched them climb the ladder, then onto the staples, and soon enough they were on the wire. Students were slowly making their way across the high wire to go and kiss the tree. They get there and it was their choice to either kiss the tree or to just hit it with their helmet. After doing one of those, they headed out to the middle to get off the wire. They stretched out their arms and their pulse is racing, knees feeling like rubber, closed their eyes and let go of the wire. While going down they prayed that the person on the ground had a good grip of the rope. They hit the ground triumphantly, but still shaking and glad they got to experience it.*

*After many people went through that horrifying experience, now it was my turn. "I didn't really want to but if other girls did it, then so could I," I thought. So I slowly put on the harness and told to myself, "I can do this." I was climbing up the ladder and staples with no sweat at all. Then I got to the wires and became as scared as I had ever been because I saw others wobbling and it looked like they were going to fall. I just slowly made my way across, and sadly to say I kissed the tree. After kissing, that tree was holding me up thirty-five feet in the air, I went to the middle of the wire. When I got there I had to turn around because I was clipped in the back. After turning around, my arms were straight out in the back of me. I was not going to let go of the wire, and then I remembered that it was the only way down. So I closed my eyes, let go of the rope, and I let out a scream and felt myself start to shake. Very slowly they were bringing me down, when I got to the ground my heart was racing, my hands were trembling and I felt as if I needed to vomit.*

*After I having been through this whole experience, I feel like I could go bungee jumping. I am just kidding! That was good enough for me for now. Still, I walked away saying that was the most fun I had since I have been here at the Immersion Week in Kodiak, and hope I can go again some other time!!*

Amanda Johansen  
Grade  
Old Harbor

### **Walter's Existence**

*Do you know the meaning of my existence? It all started right before my grandpa died. Back then I wanted to stay with my grand parents all the time, or at least whenever I could. Unfortunately, the only opportunities I had with them were when my parents were busy with their own lives or out on the town gallivanting from here to there. My mom would always ask, "Walter, your dad and I would like to go out 'dis evening because it is your Uncle Freddie's birthday and they are having a dinner party for him and we got invited. But anyways, I was only telling you this because I wanted to see if you would like to stay with any of your friends or with Grandma and Grandpa again."*

*"Well, I guess I will try to ask to see if I can stay with Little Al this time, but if I can't-" I said.*

*"Most likely your Aunt Jonetta won't let you stay with him because you are too old, but you can try anyways," my mom interrupted.*

*"Well then I guess I will just stay with Grandma and Grandpa again," I groaned.*

*I learned to love staying with my grandparents because they lived in a small cozy and comfortable house and most times it was better then staying with my friends. They had lifetimes worth of valuables that explained their history and culture. Grandma used to always hang out in the kitchen, cooking something for us to eat; but if we could get my grandpa to tell us his war stories, she would stop her cooking and come and listen with me.*

*Grandpa's stories were the best. Sometimes he would begin a very interesting story and then stop suddenly. Why? I don't know. My grandfather's facial expression would freeze and leave us feeling cold. His eyes would tear up and look in the distance as if he forgot whom he was talking to. I don't know what was behind that look, but he knew it was time to stop. Whatever came next was too horrible to say out loud, or maybe it was just the thought that I was still a young boy. Why he started to talk about it, I never understood.*

*In the end, after my grandpa died, I knew some day I would know the truth behind why he didn't finish most of his war tales. My grandma always knew why he stopped, because she knows the truth behind all of his breathtaking war recollections. Therefore, someday before my grandma dies I hope to get the chance to be alone with her so she can finish all the interesting stories I never got to hear the end of.*

*All the stories that I remember sounded like fun and I've always wanted to be like my grandpa Walt. I made the decision as a small boy, since school never seemed like the thing for me to do, to follow in his footsteps. I want to be just like my grandfather so I am going to join the marines right after high school. I hope to serve at least six years; maybe then I will know the meaning of my existence.*

Walter Erickson  
Grade 10  
Old Harbor



## Life

As we went faster and faster down the road, the wind began stinging my face and made me want to go even faster. My stomach was knotting up and my adrenaline was pumping. Third gear to fourth and then to fifth. We were flying down the road now. Ahead of us was a trail. "Hey Jenny," I shouted, "You wanna go on that trail up there?"

"Sure, it looks fun." She replied.

We didn't know how deep the puddle was, and we had no clue about the log that lurked beneath. **SPLASH!** We hit the puddle and we were covered from head to toe with chocolate water. The rocks and grime covered our already dirty faces. "My goodness," I shouted, "this is so disgusting."

"Yeah, I know." Jenny coughed.

Towards the middle of the puddle we hit the log. The front right wheel went flying into the air and it took the rest of the 4-wheeler with it. Flying through the air gave me a dizzying sensation and so I closed my eyes. As I opened them I realized I was on the ground. I looked over and saw Jenny with tears streaming down her red face. A little ways away, the 4-wheeler was upside down in the grass. Crawling over to Jenny I asked, "Are you okay?"

"Yeah, I think so." She cried.

I was thinking, "OH MY GOD, what have I done?" Only when we stood up did I feel my ankle begin to burn and pulse. Raining ten times harder than it was when we first started riding, we were soaked double time. We trudged over to the upside down 4-wheeler and we flipped it over with some God given strength and a little adrenaline. Stepping over the seat, we started to leave and think about what we had just done. First Jenny began to laugh, and then I did. By the time we reached my house we were laughing hysterically.

This accident is kind of like life. If you go too fast and you don't watch for bumps in the road your whole life can go spinning out of control. Take it slow, moment-by-moment, and day-by-day.

Tasha Price  
Grade  
Old Harbor







*Jake Charliaga*  
*9th Grade*  
*Larsen Bay*

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