



Alutiiq Museum Bulletin

Vol 15, No. 2, Winter 2011

Uswitusqaq's Dream – An Alutiiq Novel for Children

Pattie Leighton lives on a farm in a rural region of Western Australia, 100 km from the nearest town. April Laktonen Counciller lives at the opposite end of the world in wet, windy Kodiak, Alaska. The two women have never met, but since 2003 they have been working together to develop *Uswitusqaq's Dream*, a children's novel about Alutiiq culture.

Counciller explains, "Pattie is a teacher and a natural history writer. She's been to Alaska a number of times, and in 2003 she took a wilderness kayak trip on Kodiak. I was working as the museum's educational coordinator at the time. I didn't meet Pattie, but not long after her visit I got an email from her requesting assistance with a children's book inspired by her visit."

Over the succeeding months, Counciller helped Leighton develop names for characters and provided Alutiiq vocabulary and cultural details to weave into the story. The novel is set on Kodiak in the late nineteenth century. The fur trade has nearly destroyed local sea otter populations, but two boys discover a healthy colony in a hidden bay. The story tracks the boys' journey through kayak travels, bear encounters, camping, an earthquake, and caring for an injured otter pup. As they face challenges, the boys put their cultural knowledge to the test, and gain confidence in their abilities.

"It's a charming coming of age story," said Counciller. "Pattie is an excellent writer, and she filled the story with wonderful details about the Kodiak environment and Alutiiq traditions. There is a lot of action too."

With a \$4000 grant for the Alaska Humanities Forum the museum is now in the process of publishing the book. "At first the museum hadn't thought of itself as the publisher, but as we've gained experience producing educational materials, we realized that we could develop this book. Pattie very graciously donated her work to us, and with grant funding helping to pay part of the costs, it's now finally possible to print *Uswitusqaq's Dream*."

This project is unusual for several reasons. "We haven't published this type of a book before," said Counciller. "The story is aimed at upper elementary school readers, and families who like to read aloud. This is a new audience for us. And although the book is based on historical facts, it's a work of fiction."

Like the story, the novel's artwork is Alutiiq. Kodiak Alutiiq artist Sara Squartsoff created an oil painting of sea otters for the cover design, and petroglyph images from the Alutiiq Museum's recent survey work at Cape Alitak will illustrate the first page of each of the book's 14 chapters.

In May 2011, the Alutiiq Museum will release 500 copies of *Uswitusqaq's Dream* in paperback. Complimentary books will be distributed to local libraries and elementary schools to share Alutiiq heritage with young readers. Individuals and organizations that wish to purchase *Uswitusqaq's Dream* can contact Museum Store Manager Sarah Kennedy – sarah@alutiiqmuseum.org – to reserve copies. The book will retail for \$12.00 at the Alutiiq Museum Store.

Sea Otters by Sara Squartsoff



Cama'i – Hello,

It's good to be back at my desk in the museum. I want to begin by thanking the Alutiiq Museum's wonderful board and staff, as well as the Rasmuson Foundation, for giving me opportunity to take a four-month sabbatical. I have returned with my batteries charged, after a spending time traveling with my family. It was an incredible experience. I am humbled by the many people who rolled up their sleeves to help the museum so that I could take advantage of this once in a lifetime opportunity. Thank you for your kind support. I am grateful.

New opportunities and challenges greeted me in Kodiak. In January, I learned of a collection of historic Alutiiq object recently discovered in Finland. The collection had been stored in a high school basement! Marcus Leopold of Åbo Akademi University contacted the museum for help interpreting the pieces. I had a trip to Germany scheduled, so I took a few extra days to visit trip Mr. Leopold in Finland. It was well worth the effort. The collection is outstanding. It contains a spruce root hat, two quivers- one skin and one wood, several bows, arrows, a gut skin hat and jacket, and some baskets. I am excited to learn more from the pieces, and gratified that Mr. Leopold contacted us. The Alutiiq Museum's genuine interest in collaborating with the museums that hold our ancestor's objects has reached across Europe. There is a sense of trust associated with our name and doors are opening. I hope to work with Mr. Leopold on a small publication in the coming year that will share this wonderful find and celebrate our beautiful culture.

With the hope of future projects, however, comes the reality of the current economy. We are in a new financial era, where support for non-profit organizations is harder to obtain. Like so many cultural organization, the Alutiiq Museum must continue to be agile in funding its work. Unfortunately, our language program is feeling the effects of the economy. We did not receive a much-needed grant for projects planned this coming year. I'm sad that this obstacle will slow our progress in preserving our beloved language, but know that the museum remains firmly committed to finding the support our critical Alutiiq Language program deserves. You can be a part of that effort.

As in all my letters, I ask you for your assistance in helping our people awaken our culture. Give, volunteer, participate. The Alutiiq Museum is yours, and our future will be bright with your help.

Quyanaa – I thank you,
Sven (Fish) Haakanson, Jr.



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- Registrar: Marnie Leist
- Exhibits Coordinator: Jill Lipka
- Library Assistant: Carrie Williams Barker
- Alutiiq Language Manager: April Laktonen Counciller
- Education Coordinators: Sara Squartsoff
- Store Manager: Sarah Kennedy

The Alutiiq Museum is governed by Afognak Native Corporation, Akhiok Kaguyak Inc., KANA, Koniag Inc., Leisnoi Inc., Natives of Kodiak Inc., Old Harbor Native Corporation, and Ouzinkie Native Corporation. Each organization elects a representative to the Alutiiq Heritage Foundation, the Alutiiq Museum's board. Funding is provided by charitable contributions, membership fees, grants, contracts and sales from the museum store.

ALUTIIQ HERITAGE FOUNDATION

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Alutiiq Heritage Foundation, through the Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository, preserve the traditions of the Alutiiq people and promotes greater awareness of the rich cultural legacy of the indigenous peoples of the greater Gulf of Alaska region. Our collections are held in a repository that is accessible to the public. We encourage and support research on Alutiiq culture history, and disseminate the results of this research to the public through educational outreach, exhibits, special events, publications, and scholarly presentations.

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Summer Dance Workshop

Dancing, drumming, and singing in the Alutiiq language will be the focus of a three-day workshop in Kodiak this summer. Funded by the National Geographic Society's Genographic Legacy Fund, the Alutiiq Museum's *Dancing Foreword* project will teach lost aspects of Kodiak's Native dance arts, while creating learning kits and a DVD that will help dancers around the island perfect their techniques.

"With the linguistic and cultural revival happening on Kodiak right now, there is a need for accessible information on older, or more subtle aspects of culture, including traditional dance," said Alutiiq Language Manager April Laktonen Counciller.

"Since dance in our area was suppressed for so long, we are turning to our neighbors the Yup'ik, whose language and performance traditions are similar to our own." The museum has invited renowned Central Yup'ik professional dancer and UAF professor Theresa John, Ph.D., to lead the three-day workshop scheduled from July 12th-14th.

Alutiiq dance, like the Alutiiq language, was once strongly discouraged by American colonists. As a result, dancing was not

practiced for decades. The Alutiiq Dance arts were first reawakened in the 1980s, when the Kodiak Area Native Association started a dance group. Dance groups in Kodiak and the surrounding villages have existed since, but young dancers often struggle with a lack of information on traditional choreography, musical techniques, and Alutiiq language pronunciations.

The *Dancing Foreword* workshop will focus on aspects of Alaska Native dance that may be unfamiliar to some. These include the annual cycle of dance performances, the language of Yup'ik dance movements and gestures, rhythmic patterns of traditional drumming, and song composition and arrangement. As part of the workshop, Alutiiq Elders will work with participants to create new Alutiiq songs, which will be documented at the workshop's conclusion. Museum Curator Patrick Saltonstall will record the event and develop two short videos for learners

– one about the project, and another featuring practice videos for each song. Exhibit Coordinator Jill Lipka will compile additional learning materials on Alutiiq dance, including rattles and drums made by local Alutiiq artists, for a traveling education kit that can be loaned to area dance groups, schools, or individuals.

The museum expects about 20 people to participate in the July workshop, and will be assisting some village residents with travel. To learn more about this project please contact Jill Lipka at 486-7004, x25, or jill@alutiiqmuseum.org.



Kodiak Alutiiq Dancers Performing

Subsistence Seasoned Winter Recipe

First Fish of the Year Soup

INGREDIENTS

- 2-4 potatoes – chopped to a size you like
- 1 onion – chopped to a size you like
- 1 fish
- ½ – 1 cup of flour
- salt and pepper to taste

You can add several stalks of pushki – if you have any from the previous year. You can also start with petrushki stalks. Tie them tightly together, boil them with your potatoes, then take them out. Or you can add these later with your soup if you like.

DIRECTIONS

Add potatoes and onions together, in a large pot, and bring to a boil using fresh water. The amount depends on how watery you want your soup to be, so add at least two or more cups. Bring to a boil. Remember to stir it at least once or more so you don't burn the water. I jokes!

Add that first caught salmon, diced up into sizes you like. Hopefully you have deboned it.

For a thickening sauce take one half cup of flour, put this into a bowl, and add small amounts of water while stirring it to make a paste. Stir it into your fish soup and let it boil up. Pay attention not to over cook the fish, as it will fall apart as it is boiling. So stir, stir, stir.

Serve up with a pinch of salt and pepper.

This recipe can be used with halibut and other fish you catch throughout the year. Enjoy! This goes great with fresh bread, crackers covered in butter, and Tabasco sauce.

Brought to you courtesy a phone interview with Elder Mary Haakanson, of Old Harbor, who got hungry just talking about eating the first fish of the year. According to Mary, "We made fish soup with the first one caught that spring so everyone would have a taste. This was usually red salmon and tastes great after the winter in the old days."

Weaving Traditions

Last January five Alutiiq weavers traveled to St. Petersburg to study ancestral baskets. Deep in the vaults of Russia's greatest museums they uncovered woven baskets, mats and hats, and discovered inspiration. Coral Chernoff was struck by the size of many baskets. She returned to her Kodiak studio and created a large collecting basket, her largest weaving ever. June Simeonoff was intrigued by the ingenuity of a pair of woven grass socks, designed for insulation. Looking carefully at the socks in a St. Petersburg display, she recorded enough details to create a pair of her own.

This spring the weavers will travel again, only in a different direction. Each lady will visit one of Kodiak's rural Alutiiq communities to teach the basics of basket weaving to Alutiiq youth and return some of the knowledge and inspiration they gained in Russia to the broader Kodiak community.

Melissa Berns, Coral Chernof, Vickie Era, Elizabeth Peterson, and June Simeonoff will take turns accompanying Alutiiq Museum Education Coordinator Sara Squartsoff to village schools in March and April. The project, titled *Weaving Traditions*, is part of the museum's annual Traveling Traditions program, an Alutiiq arts outreach effort that unites artists and youth to provide hands-on heritage education. Each student will learn about collecting and processing grass for weaving, then work on a small basket. One goal of the project is to give young people the basic skills to explore weaving on their own.

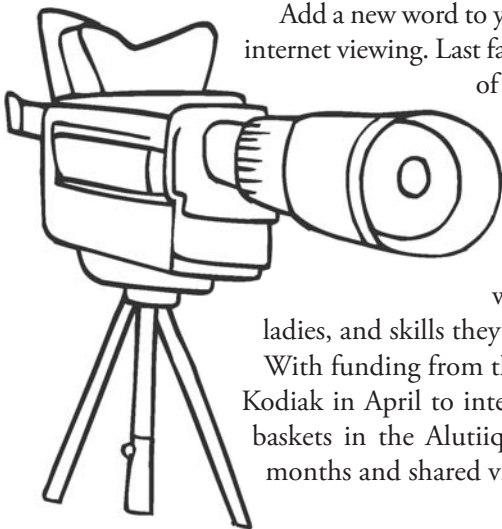
The 2011 *Weaving Traditions* program is supported by the Kodiak Island Borough School District, and a generous grant from the Native Arts and Culture Foundation.



Russian Museum Visitors

back row from left - Sven Haakanson, Jr., Coral Chernof, Will Anderson; front row from left - Elizabeth Peterson, June Simeonoff, Teri Rofkar, Vickie Era, and Melissa Berns.
Photo courtesy Will Anderson

Short Films to Feature Alutiiq Weavers



Add a new word to your vocabulary – vodcast. Short for video podcast, a vodcast is a brief film designed for internet viewing. Last fall the Alutiiq Museum worked with the filmmakers at WonderVisions to create a series of seven vodcasts on the Cape Alitak petroglyphs, now available on the research page of our web site. This spring, a second vodcast series will feature Alutiiq weavers.

“We will be showcasing the weavers who went to St. Petersburg last winter to study Alutiiq baskets in Russian museum collections,” said Executive Director Sven Haakanson, Jr. “The videos will teach viewers about Alutiiq weaving traditions, but they will also show how we are bringing weaving knowledge home. The videos will capture the results of the trip – the knowledge and inspiration gained by the ladies, and skills they are passing to young weavers.”

With funding from the National Park Service's Shared Beringian Heritage program, filmmakers will visit Kodiak in April to interview weavers, meet with Haakanson, and take footage of historic and prehistoric baskets in the Alutiiq Museum's collections. The resulting vodcasts will be produced in the following months and shared via the museum's Facebook page, YouTube channel and website.

Shells Speak – by Molly Odell

Shells and bones speak – at least that’s what archaeologists think. In the piles of clamshells and fish bones left on Kodiak’s coast by ancient peoples, there are clues to the past. Archaeologists can extract amazing details from old garbage, identifying what people ate, finding the season resources were harvested, reconstructing butchery patterns, and even noting changes in climate.

Recent excavations at the Mitks’qaaq Angayuk site at Cliff Point provided the Alutiiq Museum with two very different samples of old garbage (also known as midden) from the same spot, each with a different story to tell. There were two main layers of midden at the site. The oldest dated to 1,000 years ago. The other was from about AD 1820, during Kodiak’s Russian period.

The 1,000 years layer was composed almost entirely of shell. Butter clams were the most common shell remains, but there were also mussels, chitons, cockles, sea urchins, and a variety of snails. Fish bones were only a small portion of this layer and included the remains of cod and salmon. Only a few mammal and bird bones were found. Because Alutiiq

people likely avoided clams and mussels in summer months when the risk of paralytic shellfish poisoning was high, and when other food was abundant, the large number of clams and mussels suggest this layer represents a winter settlement.

In contrast, Pacific cod bones dominated the AD 1820 layer, with small amounts of salmon, Saffron cod, Walleye Pollock, sculpin, halibut, flounder, and a variety of shellfish similar to those found in the older layer. There were also very few mammal and bird bones from the 1820 layer. In contrast to the older layer, the dominance of cod suggests that this site was occupied in the spring when Pacific cod spawn in the bay directly in front of Mitks’qaaq Angayuk.



Katie Botz excavates in the shell midden at Mitks’qaaq Angayuk

The shell and animal bone from this midden tell us that people used the site for very different purposes at different times.

Petroglyph Exhibit in Production

At the southern tip of Kodiak Island, where the land reaches far into the North Pacific Ocean, Alutiiq ancestors carved their stories in stone. Faces, animals, and geometric designs record characters from the past and preserve Alutiiq customs. Visitors to the Alutiiq Museum will be able to experience the incredible rock art of Cape Alitak in a spring museum exhibit.

“We are working to tell the story of the Alitak petroglyphs in a way that stirs viewer’s imaginations,” said Exhibits Coordinator Jill Lipka. “Our displays will help visitors understanding

how the glyphs were created, how old they are, and what they might mean.” The exhibit will feature large photos from the museum’s recent archaeological investigations at Cape Alitak, as well as related examples of rock art, and some recreations of petroglyphs.

“We are planning a part of the exhibit where visitors can interact with replica petroglyphs. Guest will be able to create their own rubbings and experience the scale of the glyphs, which are much larger than most people realize,” said Lipka.

The exhibit will open on May 14th, 2011 with a free public event, and show in the museum’s gallery until the spring of 2012. Support for the project is provided by a Akhiok-Kaguyak, Inc., and a grant from the National Park Service Tribal Historic Preservation program.



Collections

The Alutiiq Museum cares for more than 250,000 objects and photographs reflecting Alutiiq heritage and the Kodiak environment. Each year we accept donations and loans of materials reflecting our mission. We extend our sincerest appreciation to the following individuals and organizations for their recent contributions to our holdings:

PURCHASES

The following works of contemporary art were purchased with generous funding from the Rasmuson Foundation's Art Acquisition Initiative

- *Sugpiaq folding war shield and club* by Andrew Abyo
- *Kodiak headdress* by Melinda Abyo
- Five dolls by Coral Chernoff
- Baleen seiner and baleen Russian sailboat by Tracy Opheim
- *Fisherman* doll by June Pardue
- *Best of the Fest*, oil painting by Gloria Selby
- *Sugpiaq Woman Elena Channa* and *Mt. Barometer*, watercolors by Helen Simeonoff
- *Setnetter*, encaustic painting by Antoinette Walker

TEACHING COLLECTIONS

- Maxine Bunch for artifacts from Amook Is.
- Alaska Native Heritage Center for transferring the Edythe Lynn artifact collection
- Gary Knagin for historic glass beads from Karluk

DONATIONS

- Bob Kopperl for a traveling icon from Russia
- Orthodox Diocese of Alaska for a large collection of Orthodox objects, including a kayak used on the Nushagak River in the late 19th Century
- Gordon Pullar for a photograph of the Woody Is. Russian Orthodox Church
- Clyda Christiansen for an extensive artifact collection from Larsen Bay and a large digital photograph collection of Karluk in the 1950s and 1960s
- The City of Kodiak for an incised pebble from Monashka Bay
- Mike Rostad for photographs
- Ralph Eluska Sr. for a throwing board with a sea otter effigy
- Sven Haakanson, Jr. for a Yup'ik rawhide seal hunting line
- Kristian Anderson for a digital photograph collection of Port Wakefield, Kodiak, and SE Alaska in the 1940s
- Roy Levine for a Talisman mask
- Stan and Carla Willhight for a gutskin parka

- Fisherman's News for a photograph of John Denver and Sven Haakanson, Jr.
- The Kodiak Island Borough for the Woody Is. 2008 excavation collection
- Susan Short for the Shepherd-Hansen digital photograph collection of Afognak and Kodiak Is. from the 1950s to the 1970s



*Mary Shepherd with octopus, ca. 1960.
Shepherd-Hansen Digital Image Collection.*

LONG-TERM LOANS

- Darlene Turner for artifacts from Tugidak Is., on loan from the State of Alaska
- Mark Withrow for artifacts from Chirikof Is., on loan from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Paul Rofkar for Shis'genooow, a Raven's tail robe, by Teri Rofkar
- Keller Wattum and Michelle Moore for artifacts from Chirikof Is., on loan from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- An Afognak family for an ivory figurine



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CONTRIBUTION LEVELS:

- Nillqitaaq* – Mallard \$10 Individual admission (For Students & Seniors)
- Niklliq* – Red Salmon \$25 Individual admission
- Kum'agyak* – Eagle \$40 Admission for family members
- Isuwig* – Seal \$100 Admission for family members & guests
- Taquka'aaq* – Grizzly \$250 Same as *Isuwig* plus gift from Museum Store
- Arbnaq* – Sea Otter \$500 Same as *Taquka'aaq* plus gift from Museum Store
- Arlluk* – Orca \$5000+ Membership for employees and/or shareholders

Connection: Member Spotlight



Museum Member
Deedie Pearson

Generosity matters. Join Deedie in supporting the Alutiiq Museum and help the preservation continue.

“We never knew who would come for dinner,” recalls Deedie Pearson. “Since my dad was in politics, it might be our Territorial Delegate to Congress or a new acquaintance. I found the conversation around our table very educational.”

An island resident since 1941 and the daughter of a territorial legislator, Deedie has had an interesting, adventurous life, filled with Alaska history. She has lived on a fox island, hiked many miles in the Kodiak wilderness, worked for the airlines in Anchorage, managed a cannery and a setnet site in Uganik Bay, and enjoyed every minute of life on Kodiak.

Throughout her busy life, Deedie has found time to support the preservation of Kodiak history by giving to Kodiak’s museums. She has served on the boards of the Kodiak Historical Society and

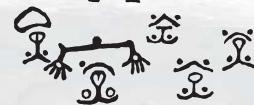
the Kodiak Maritime Museum, and been one of the Alutiiq Museum’s great volunteers.

“I think people appreciate what the past has to offer us today,” said Deedie. “On wet rainy days like today, I think about what it took for people to live here long ago.”

Deedie’s support has made a difference. When the Alutiiq Museum began its archaeological site stewardship program, Deedie called fellow set netters and encouraged them to participate. The result was a great group of volunteers who continue to monitor sites. She has also numbered artifacts, cleaned collections, and been a regular visitor.

“I enjoy the whole atmosphere down there,” says Deedie. “I especially like the museum’s programs, like the Thursday night lectures. And I learned so much from volunteering.”

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ALUTIIQ HERITAGE FOUNDATION
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