



Alutiiq Museum Bulletin

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Caring for Karluk Collections

The Alutiiq Museum's collections are large and varied. A tour of the storage room reveals everything from graceful ground slate lances to a colorfully decorated Russian Christmas star. At the heart of them all, however, lies Karluk One. With over 20,000 artifacts, this archaeological assemblage is the museum's single largest collection, and it contains some of the rarest, most inspiring pieces in the museum's care.

Registrar Marnie Leist explains. "Karluk One has many objects that aren't usually found in prehistoric sites;

objects made of delicate organic materials typically do not survive. About half of the Karluk One pieces are wood. There are even some items made from birch bark and leather."

These rare artifacts reflect the site's unique conditions. About 600 years ago Alutiiq people built a village at the mouth of Kodiak's salmon-rich Karluk River. Digging into the pebbled beach, they constructed houses from wood and sod. For centuries families lived in the same place. As their houses aged, residents built new structures over the old, creating a deep village site. Over the years, freshwater pooled behind the settlement, seeping into everything. House remains acted like a sponge, absorbing water and preserving many of the tools people left behind.

In the 1980s and 90s, archaeologists worked with community



Objects for Clamming – wooden knives for opening clams (left), spruce root basket (center front), bentwood box (center back), sea mammal bone digging stick (right). Koniag, Inc. collection, Karluk One, ca. 1400 – 1750 AD.

members to study Karluk One. With support from KANA and Koniag, Inc., they recovered everything from thousands of wooden arrow shafts to a few delicate grass, baleen, and spruce root baskets. In 1995, the collection became the centerpiece for the Alutiiq Museum. However, the characteristics that make this collection so stunning, have also made it difficult to care for. Delicate objects need extra preservation assistance, and large, unique collections require additional documentation.

With a \$49,300 grant from the Institute

for Museum and Library Services received through a partnership with Koniag, Inc., the museum will address the special needs of the Karluk Collection over the coming year. Funding will allow staff to examine every object from Karluk One, create a computerized collection catalog, and work with Ellen Carrlee, the Alaska State Museum's conservator, to preserve fragile objects. The project will also help the museum share the assemblage more broadly making it easier to include objects in exhibits and publications. Facebook postings and email broadcasts are also planned to share artifacts and information as the project progresses.

"This collection is a real treasure," said Leist. "It contains so much information about Alutiiq heritage that is not available in any other place. We need to do everything we can to insure that it survives another 600 years."

Cama'i - Hello

It may be December but it's spring-cleaning time at the Alutiiq Museum! Behind the scenes our hard working staff is painting walls, organizing supplies, and cleaning every cabinet, drawer, and file. It's a big job, but one that we undertake with excitement.

This year, cleaning up comes with a special goal, professional accreditation. The Alutiiq Museum has been working its way through the American Association of Museum's accreditation program, a rigorous set of steps designed to acknowledge the nation's most professional museums. We are now preparing for the next major step – a site visit. In April 2011, representatives of the program will come to Kodiak to review the museum's practices. They will look at everything – from the condition of our facilities to the ways we greet visitors and care for collections.

The visit represents a major milestone for the museum. Since 1997 our board and staff have set accreditation as a goal. Why? Accreditation is a difficult process, but it is one that insures that a museum is meeting all the best standards. It tells the world that a museum is truly working towards its mission, for its community, and in support of its collections, and it holds the museum to those standards. Accreditation must be regained every 10 years. There are only 6 accredited museums in Alaska and one accredited tribal museum in all of the United States. The Alutiiq Museum hopes to add its name to these prestigious lists.

So, while you are enjoying language club, a gallery exhibit, or a museum publication this winter, please know that it was supported by a tremendous amount of behind the scenes work.

Please visit us in the coming months. We continue to focus on delivering Kodiak great programs and exhibits. Bring your family and friends to watch the new selections of Kodiak archaeology videos, play in the children's corner, or enjoy Ways to Sea (p. 4). This new exhibit will open in January with artwork by Kathy Nelson and her daughters Lena Amason-Berns and Anna Nelson. This exhibit, so full of Alutiiq heritage, is sure to brighten your winter day.

Happy holidays to all of our friends near and far.
Amlsqanun kiagnun – We wish you many years.
The Alutiiq Museum Staff

Pat'sna'iyuq. - It's getting cold.



Alutiiq Museum Archaeological Repository

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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, preserves the traditions of the Alutiiq people and promotes a 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 and 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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Language

How many are we talking about?

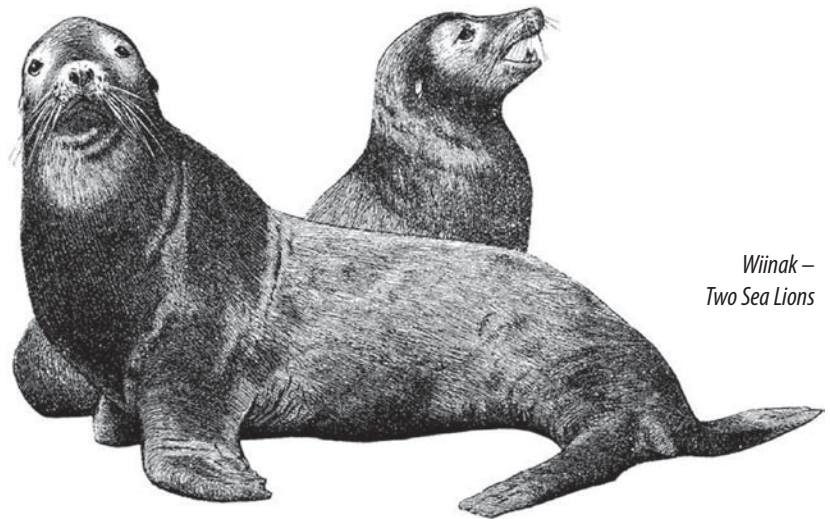
People learning the Alutiiq language commonly ask, "How do I make a word plural?" In English, speakers often add an s to a noun to indicate more than one item. For example, one bear becomes many bears. The addition of an s tells us that there are at least 2 bears, but perhaps 3, 4, or even 10!

In Alutiiq creating a plural noun is a little trickier. Most Alutiiq nouns end in q. The q tells us the noun is singular. For example, *wiinaq* means a sea lion. To create a plural for *wiinaq*, however, you have to know how many sea lions you want to discuss. If an Alutiiq speaker wants to say that she saw two sea lions on a rock in the harbor – *wiinaq* takes the dual form – *wiinak*. In this instance the q at the end of the word becomes a k to indicate a plural of two. If however an Alutiiq speaker wants to say that Kodiak is home to many sea lions, a different type of plural is needed. Here, the q at the end of *wiinaq* becomes a t – creating the word *wiinat*. This word tells us that there are at least three sea lions, or perhaps many more.

● *Wiinaq* – one sea lion (*singular*)

● ● *Wiinak* – two sea lions (*dual*)

● ● ● *Wiinat* – three or more sea lions (*multiple*)



*Wiinak –
Two Sea Lions*

Subsistence Seasoned Summer Recipe

Deer Stew

INGREDIENTS:

2lbs Chopped Deer Meat
6 Medium Potatoes
5 Large Carrots
6 Stalks of Celery
1/2 Onion
1 Tablespoon Mined Garlic
5 Cups Beef Broth
1/2 Cup Cream or Milk
Flour
Salt & Pepper
Italian Seasoning
Montreal Steak Seasoning

Season the deer meat with salt and the steak seasoning. Roll meat in flour and fry it in a hot pan, cooking just enough to sear the meat. Put the meat in a pot and add the beef broth and garlic. Bring the stew to a boil and cook for 35 minutes. Chop potatoes, carrots, celery, and onion. Add to stew. Bring to a boil and cook approximately 30 minutes. Mix 3

*Recipe from
Sara Squartsoff*

tablespoons of flour with cream and add to boiling stew. Season with Italian seasoning, salt and pepper to taste. Enjoy!



Atkurluten. - Put on your coat.

Education



Photograph by Anna Nelson

Kathy Nelson, Lena S. Amason-Berns, and Anna Nelson are members of a Kodiak Island family with deep roots in the Alutiiq and artistic communities. *Ways to Sea*, an exhibit opening at the Alutiiq Museum on Saturday, January 15th, will showcase the experiences of these women through their drawings, paintings, wall sculpture, and photography. The artwork demonstrates the connections modern Alutiiq women and rural, village residents feel to the land and ancestral traditions.

Raised in the Kodiak region by a bush pilot, Kathy Nelson grew up inspired by her father's stories and by the scenic beauty of the island. After obtaining a bachelor's degree in fine arts at Central Washington University, she moved to Port Lions and devoted herself to raising a family. Here she made art as much a part of her children's daily lives as the traditional harvesting activities that provided their food. Her daughters Lena and Anna spent their childhoods hiking and boating, fishing and collecting, and painting and drawing. They learned to illustrate their world, capturing wildlife, scenery, people, and ancestral traditions.

Both daughters have pursued art as adults. Lena is a well-established artist, known nationally for her vibrant carvings and paintings. Anna is a young photographer, gaining a reputation for her images. Kathy remains an art teacher, a woman who has shared her creativity with village schools and heritage programs, and as a book illustrator. *Ways to Sea* will be on display in the Alutiiq Museum until April 2011.

Starring

Welcome
Russian Christmas
with carolers from
the Holy Resurrection
Russian Orthodox Church

Thursday, January 6th, 2011.

*Refreshments and singing at
the Alutiiq Museum following
Vespers.*

Free to the public.
Time to be announced.

Short Films Debut

For thousands of years, Alutiiq people lived in sod houses and hunted sea mammals, relying on special technologies, ancestral knowledge, and spiritual assistance to care for their families. The Cape Alitak petroglyphs are one of the few written records of their way of life. Pecked into Kodiak's granite bedrock, images of people and animals preserve customs from the Alutiiq past. Museum scientists reveal this history in seven video podcasts, films of 3 to 11 minutes each.

Created by the video production company WonderVisions with assistance from the Alutiiq Museum, the films document recent archaeological research on Kodiak rock art. Viewers learn about the Alutiiq traditions while watching a field crew at work in Kodiak's dynamic natural environment. Grants from the National Park Service's Shared Beringian Heritage and Tribal Historic Preservation programs supported production. The films can be seen in the museum's gallery, on the research page of the museum's web site, and on the WonderVisions channel at You Tube.

Suuparyugtua. - I want some soup.

Archaeology

House Hunting on the King Salmon River

Archaeologists are often asked, “How do you know where to dig.” It’s a good question. Sometimes traces of the past can be hard to find. Elsewhere, there are abundant signs of human activity. Certain plants can suggest the presence of buried sites. Erosion can expose artifacts and ancient garbage. Depressions can hint at underlying houses. Alutiiq Museum archaeologist Patrick Saltonstall lucked out this past summer, finding ample evidence of the past along the Alaska Peninsula’s King Salmon River during a project funded by the Alaska Region Bureau of Indian Affairs.

“We were working at the Penguq site,” said Saltonstall. “It’s a huge river-side settlement occupied between 1,000 and 2,000 years ago. The site rests on a piece of high ground surrounded by swamp. It’s one of the few good places to set up camp in the area, and man did people set up camp here!”

How does Saltonstall know? From the air, the site looks a bit like it’s been bombed. Large depressions cover the surface of an area that could easily encompass several football fields. Measuring up to 12 meters across, these depressions represent the remains of sod houses,



Mary Pearce sits in a partially excavated house at the Penguq site.

and there are more than 90 of them. Others are buried beneath those visible on the surface.

To learn more about the occupation, Saltonstall and a crew of museum archaeologists excavated portions of the site’s houses. With so many depressions to choose from they selected structures that looked different. Some appeared to have side rooms, some appeared to have a sod roof, some were smaller.

According to Saltonstall, “with so many, deep, heavily insulated houses, we thought the Penguq site was likely a winter settlement. People invested a lot of effort in building these structures, so they

probably spent a lot of time here. In such settlements you would expect to find a variety of different structures, representing different activities.”

He was right. Although the museum’s study of the site is still underway, preliminary results indicate that in addition to houses, residents constructed buildings for smoking foods, storing foods, and sweat bathing. The Regional Archeology office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs will publish a study report next year.



Library Project Underway

Did you know that the Alutiiq Museum has a library? Over the years the museum has collected publications to help tell the Alutiiq story. Books and articles provide information for programs like the Alutiiq Word of the Week, help researchers learn about the Alutiiq past, and link collections to historical information.

“There are about 1100 books and 1200 paper articles in the museum’s library, as well as 100 films, 20 audio recordings, and 220 maps” said Special Projects Manager Katie St.

John. “Most of these materials were given to the museum, including a large collection of books from anthropologist Lydia Black.”

Other publications are donations from scholars who return the results of their research to Kodiak by providing copies of articles, conference papers, and research reports. There are a number of rare items, as well. “Our library has some really interesting items,” said St. John. “We have copies of speeches given by Alutiiq leaders, old magazines with articles about Kodiak, and I recently came across a book on Alaska history from 1884.”

To help make these valuable reference materials more accessible, the museum is creating a library inventory. With funding from the Alaska State Museum, St. John is

putting a bar code on each item, entering it into a computer database, and reorganizing the collection. Although the museum’s library materials cannot be checked out, they can be used on site. By next summer, patrons will be able to search the database by author, title, or subject, to find sources of information.

“The project will help our staff and visitors use library materials, but it will also help the museum improve the contents of our library,” explains St. John. “Without an electronic inventory, we don’t know what references we have and what important references are missing. At the end of the project we will be able to create a list of the library materials we need to acquire, so the museum has the most complete set of information on the Alutiiq world.”

Suupalinga! - Make me some soup!

Collections

Clyda Christensen Collection

Clyda Norrell Christensen knows a lot of Alutiiq history. This 90 year-old Alutiiq Elder, raised in Karluk and now living in Larsen Bay, is a rich store of cultural knowledge. As a young woman, she trained as a midwife, learning the art of delivering babies, caring for mothers, and healing the sick. She also speaks and teaches the Alutiiq language and has many wonderful stories about Alutiiq traditions.

Last February, Clyda shared some of her connections to Alutiiq history with the Alutiiq Museum, donating digital copies of family photographs and her large artifact collection for safekeeping.

Clyda's photographs provide an intimate portrait of Karluk in the 1950s and 1960s. There are 392 color images in the set, most of social events. Family gatherings, parties, events, and holidays are the subject of many photos. Babies, birthdays



Starring in Karluk, ca. 1959. Clyda Christensen Collection.

and weddings are recorded along with staring and masking celebrations, although there are also scenic shots of the village. A Koniag, Inc. staff member scanned the photos a few years ago, and showed copies to the museum. The museum asked for Clyda's for permission to preserve the images for future generations by adding copies to our collections, a gift to which she kindly agreed.

Alutiiq Museum volunteers plan to meet with Clyda when she next travels to Kodiak. They will review the photos

with Clyda's to enrich their documentation with her memories. By taking notes on the people, places, and events pictured, they will add important historical details to Clyda's archive, so that Kodiak will have access to her great store of community history for generation. *Quyanaasinaq* Clyda – we are most grateful for your generosity.

Alutiiq Dolls Purchased

There are some new faces at the Alutiiq Museum! You might meet an older man in fishskin pants or a woman working fish filets with a slate ulu. These individuals are among five elaborately dressed and equipped Alutiiq dolls recently purchased from artist Coral Chernoff.

Chernoff is particularly known for her carving and fine weaving, but she is drawn to the beauty of an array of natural materials and works in many mediums. Much of her artwork highlights the wood, fiber, skin, or ivory she uses.

This quality is evident in her doll collection, which features fish skin clothing. Scale patterns and the graduating colors of fish skins appear in parkas, pants, and boots illustrating both the beauty and durability of a material that was once widely used in Alutiiq clothing. Chernoff personally tanned many of the skins used to craft the dolls.

These are the only examples of contemporary dolls owned by the museum. Purchased with funding from the Rasmuson Foundation's



Art Acquisition Initiative, they represent an effort to add examples of contemporary skin sewing to the museum's collections.

Ken'lilita. - Let's make a fire.



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| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Taquka'aaq</i> - Grizzly | \$250 | Same as <i>Isuwiq</i> plus gift from Museum Store |
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Connection: Member Spotlight



Leslie Watson
Volunteer of the Year 2010

In 1997, Leslie Watson put on her rain gear and rubber gloves and gave archaeology a try. Joining the museum's first ever Community Archaeology project, she and her son Justin volunteered to rescue information from Near Island's Blisky Site. The rest is history. For more than a decade, Leslie has been a dependable, hardworking member of the museum's field crews, helping to record the Alutiiq past in the present. This summer, Leslie went above and beyond, giving over 200 hours of her time on site and in the museum's laboratory.

What inspires Leslie to give so generously? Retired from her job as a fisheries biologist, she is able to volunteer, but it's not just about time.

"I love puzzles," said Watson. "The bigger and more complex the better. Archaeology is a great big puzzle, the Christmas morning of all puzzles. It's like slowly and constantly

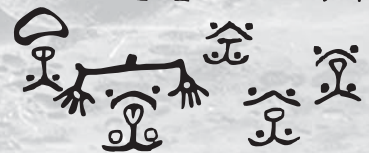
unwrapping presents, layer after layer. You keep unwrapping, but you're never done. I like to find the objects – but I really like it when you get to the bottom of a site and you figure out how people lived. It's more than unwrapping the electric train on Christmas morning, it's like setting the track up under the tree and learning how the train runs."

Leslie also feels a strong personal connection to archaeology. "I was born in the territory of Alaska. I find Alaskan archaeology very personal and compelling, even if the people I'm studying are not my direct antecedents. Archaeology is a part of the environment and the history of the place that is my home. It's a meaningful part of Alaska's story, a story that I am a part of."

"I had a great time this summer. They're going to see a lot more of me at the museum, because I get a lot out of satisfaction from volunteering."

Generosity Matters. Please join Leslie in supporting the Alutiiq Museum.
Help the exploration continue. *Quyanaa.*

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