Sharing Alutiiq Heritage Globally

What do the care of ancient Mesoamerican fabrics and the preservation of Alutiiq culture have in common? Native people. Last November, Sven Haakanson traveled to Oaxaca, Mexico as a guest of the 8th North American Textile Conservation Conference. A trip to Mexico to speak about Native Alaska may sound like a stretch, but the museum’s work was relevant to this gathering of professionals. Haakanson’s presentation focused on the ways the Alutiiq community is not only preserving and sharing its heritage, but reawakening tradition with museum programs.

Every time he speaks at such a conference, Haakanson gives other museums ideas for better, more meaningful partnerships with Native people, whether they be Native Alaskans or indigenous peoples of Central America. According to conference organizer Emilia Cortes his presence in Mexico had a big impact. “His lecture set the conference tone that focused on topics that link the conservation of textiles with the societies in which we live,” she said.

This trip is just one example of the ways Haakanson is making the Alutiiq people well known for both their culture and heritage preservation efforts. Last year Haakanson also discussed Alutiiq heritage at lectures in Iceland and Hawaii. This year he will share Alutiiq perspectives at the Haftenreff Museum at Brown University, in the Orkney Islands of Scotland, and at a conference for Native American museum professionals in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The long hours of travel and time away from Kodiak and family are difficult, but his global outreach has helped the museum make important connections – to friends, funding, and ancestral collections.

“I’m always asking to see collections from Alaska where ever I go,” said Haakanson. “Sometimes I find remarkable things. On a trip to Germany a few years ago, I was shown a cormorant skin parka that was simply labeled Alaska. I was able to help the museum learn more about the garment and to confirm that it was an Alutiiq item based on my studies of similar clothing in Finland and Russia. And now we have pictures of the parka to share with artists here in Kodiak. Speaking about the museum’s programs has furthered that work,” said Haakanson. “Plus my travel expenses are paid for by the people inviting me to speak.”

Haakanson’s efforts are also being recognized in June, when he will receive the Guardians of Culture and Lifeways Leadership Award from the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums. Established in 2007, the award recognizes organizations and individuals who serve as outstanding examples of how indigenous cultural organizations can contribute to the vitality and cultural sovereignty of Native nations. Haakanson was selected for bridging cultures and continents, making collections more accessible to Native communities.

E-News

In classical Alutiiq society thrift was important. People used what they needed, conserving resources and reworking worn and broken items into useful objects. Thrift showed respect for the plants and animals that provided for people, and it helped to insure a plentiful future. Please help the Alutiiq Museum perpetuate this value. Starting in 2013, the Alutiiq Museum will no longer print paper copies of the Bulletin. Send your email address to danielle@alutiiqnmuseum.org to receive your electronic copy of the Alutiiq Museum Bulletin, or contact Danielle with any questions regarding this change.
Working for the Alutiiq Museum is often a spine tingling experience! This is not because the museum is a frightening place, but because we make so many interesting discoveries. We uncover artifacts not seen in a thousand years. We decipher petroglyphs. We find lost Alutiiq words in old documents. There is so much to learn about our ancestors’ world, but I am heartened almost daily by how the pieces of our past can still be found. We just need to look and listen carefully.

A recent trip to Sitka provided me with a good set of goose bumps. In January, I was invited to speak at the Sheldon Jackson Museum. This branch of the Alaska State Museum preserves Alaskan ethnographic items, things made by Native people in the nineteen and twentieth centuries. When I visit, I always ask to see objects from the Alutiiq world. On this trip, Curator Nadia Jackinsky-Sethi showed me something I hadn’t seen before, a spoon made from a clamshell. The shell, largely unmodified, was set into a distinctive wooden handle. As I looked at the tool, I remembered my mother’s words. “We used to use shells for spoons.” This must have been what she meant.

When I returned to Kodiak I showed photos of the object to Marnie Leist, who cares for the Alutiiq Museum’s collections. Skeptical at first, Marnie disappeared into the collections room. Less than 5 minutes later she returned holding an archaeological example of a handle nearly identical to the one I’d seen in Sitka. Thrilling! My mother’s words, an ethnographic piece, and an ancient artifact came together that day to tell a story. The pieces of the puzzle revealed a picture.

I never tire of that sense of excitement and connection, and it’s one that I hope you feel when you visit the museum or participate in our programs. With every “Ah ha!” moment, a piece of our culture is saved – put back into place so it can be preserved and passed forward. Come and discover something you didn’t know. Learn about our culture and get a few goose bumps of your own. Every artifact has a story that reveals the talents, wisdom, and beauty of our heritage in thrilling ways.

Visit, volunteer, and give what you can. Together we are making a difference in the Kodiak Island community, now and for the future. Thank you for your support and have a great summer.

Quyanaasinaq – Thank you very much, Sven Haakanson, Jr.
Study The Alutiiq Language

Do you know a few words in Alutiiq? Are you interested in expanding your vocabulary? Do you want to learn how to write in Kodiak’s Native language? Here is your chance. April Laktonen Counceller will be teaching an introductory level course in the Alutiiq language at Kodiak College in the fall of 2012. This class is available to both local and distance students. Sign up for the course described below at Kodiak College, or contact April, (907) 486-1276 (agcounceller@kodiak.alaska.edu) for more information. Registration is now open.

Alutiiq Language 101 (Fall 2012):
This is an Introductory course for students of all abilities. No prior knowledge of the Alutiiq language is required. Students will develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in Alutiiq for effective communication at the elementary level. This course will also address the history of Alaska Native languages and cultures.

Distance students sign up for CRN#79391:
Tuesdays and Wednesdays 5:00–6:45 PM
Kodiak students sign up for CRN#79390:
Mondays and Wednesdays, 5:00–6:45 PM
– On Wednesdays both sections will be held online.
– Classes begin the final week of August, and class space is limited.
– This course is worth 4.0 credit hours.

Excavate with the Pros

Tired of watching Indiana Jones movies on TV? Ready to get some dirt under your fingernails? Put down the remote, pull on your Grundens, and join the Alutiiq Museum for Community Archaeology 2012. It’s free and open to all volunteers 14 and up. All you need is a sense of adventure and a sack lunch. We’ll take care of the rest.

From July 16 to August 10, 8:15 am to 5:00 pm, we will be working at the Amak Site, a prehistoric camp at the head of Womens Bay. Space is limited. Please contact Danielle Ringer (danielle@alutiiqmuseum.org, 907-486-7004) to reserve a spot. High school and college credit will be available. A volunteer orientation meeting will be held at the museum of July 12th, 7:00 pm. Don’t miss this chance to experience the trenches!

Liicugtukut Alutiiq
– We want to learn Alutiiq
Add Alutiiq studies to your summer fun.
— We’ll help.

Bring this coupon to the Alutiiq Museum for
10% off all Alutiiq language publications
*posters*phrasebook*dictionary*grammar book*
– Coupon may be used in person or with phone sales.
– May not be duplicated or combined with another offer.
– Valid through 8/31/12.
Dentalium Shell Earrings Draw Big Crowd

Kulunguaie cununautuk. – Her earrings are pretty.

On the second Saturday of every month the Alutiiq Museum hosts a workshop for youth. Hands on activities help people of all heritages explore Alutiiq traditions and take a creation home. We’ve made leaf prints from local plants and learned their Alutiiq names. We’ve decorated gingerbread people with Alutiiq clothing, created petroglyphs, and made animal masks. Recently, we made Alutiiq style earrings.

How long have Alutiiqs been making earrings? Archaeological data suggests that this practice is very old. Beads and other jewelry began appearing on Kodiak about 2,700 years ago. The tradition continued last March, when more than 40 jewelry lovers of all ages spent the afternoon making earrings from dentalium shells. These, long slender white shells were once traded to Kodiak from great distances. Their beauty and rarity made them a sign of wealth, worn by people of high social status. Historic sources indicate that a pair of delicate dentalium shells could be traded for an entire squirrel skin parka!

The lively Second Saturday workshop took place in the Alutiiq Center rotunda, at the entrance to the museum. Slender white shells, colorful glass beads, and jewelry wire covered the tables, along with tools for snipping and bending. Participants fashioned these materials into a surprising variety of earrings, inspired by examples from artists LaRita Laktonen and Roberta Naumoff. Some people made earrings as gifts for a mother or a friend. Others made a pair to wear home. Stringbeadz, a local bead shop, generously sponsored this event, providing all the materials and tools. Quyanaa Dana Robinson of Stringbeadz.

Stay tuned for more Second Saturday events. This summer we will be illustrating family stories. Check the events page of the museum’s web site at www.alutiiqmuseum.org for more information, on contact Danielle Ringer at 486-7004. Do you have a hands on activity you’d like to share? Let us know. Guest instructors are welcome.

Fatima Monge and Amanda Miles show their dentalium shell earrings

**Subsistence Seasoned - Bacon Wrapped Cod**

by Danielle Ringer

Amutaq – Cod is a delicious local fish that is low in fat and sodium and an excellent source of protein. It has a delicate taste and picks up flavors easily. Cod can be baked, broiled, fried, or steamed and tends to be flakier and moister than halibut. We eat a lot of cod in our house and this is one of my favorite ways to prepare it!

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<td>2 cod fillets, skinned</td>
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<td>8 slices smoked bacon</td>
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<td>Olive oil</td>
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<td>Black pepper and salt to taste</td>
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<td>Cook bacon in frying pan over medium heat until half way cooked.</td>
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<td>Season the fish fillets lightly with salt and ground pepper.</td>
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<td>Lay 4 slices of the partially cooked bacon on a cutting board and put a seasoned cod fillet on top. Wrap the slices around the fillet. Repeat with second fillet.</td>
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<td>In a large frying pan over a medium to low heat, add a splash of olive oil and place bacon wrapped fillets pretty side up. Cook covered for 15 to 20 minutes until fish is flaky and not transparent.</td>
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<td>Serve next to greens like asparagus or green beans and enjoy.</td>
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Dating Petroglyphs

Alutiiq Museum archaeologists recently put their heads together to study a longstanding question. How old are Kodiak’s petroglyphs? There are 21 known rock art sites in the archipelago, with an estimated 1,400 petroglyphs. These sites occur along the island’s beaches where there is no related organic material to date. Dating a settlement or a house is relatively simple. A couple tablespoons of wood charcoal from a fire pit and $400 will get you a radiocarbon date, an estimate of age that can be tied to the modern calendar. Dating images pecked into bedrock is much trickier.

Anecdotal information suggests the petroglyphs are prehistoric. There are no historic accounts of people creating this type of artwork. Moreover, a priest who investigated the Cape Alitak glyphs in 1917 learned that generations of Akhiok residents did not know their source. The absence of evidence isn’t evidence. However, this information directed our focus to clues in the archaeological record. Here is what we learned.

First, rock art occurs across the Alutiiq homeland, in Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet as well as Kodiak. Although petroglyphs are only known on Kodiak, rock paintings from adjacent regions show very similar characters – whales, people, boats, bird imagery – and some are dated to the first millennium AD.

Second, the petroglyphs are made by pecking. People used this technique throughout Kodiak’s human history to make artifacts. However, artwork produced by stone pecking occurs only after about 2700 year ago. After this time, archaeologists find sites with decorated stone lamps, stone tools, and even stone sculptures.

Finally, the petroglyph contain stylized human faces drawn or painted the same way on a variety of artifacts. The oldest of these is incised pebbles. These small pieces of slate show people, clothing, and ceremonial gear, and they were made for a short time between AD 1300 and 1550. Together, these clues suggest that the petroglyph artwork is anywhere from about 1,800 to 200 years old.

Studies of Cape Alitak’s settlements helped us to narrow the age further. Here we found that petroglyph sites tend to occur on the beaches below village sites dated to the centuries around AD 1000. It is impossible to know if the rock art is associated with these villages. The people who made the rock art may have done so before or after the villages were occupied. However, we also note that older and younger villages have very, very few petroglyphs nearby.

Our best guess is that Kodiak’s ancient rock art is about 1,000 years old, give or take a handful of centuries. This date makes sense given the culture of that time period. A thousand years ago, Kodiak’s Native societies were changing rapidly. There were more people on the islands and more competition for resources. Other classes of archaeological data show an increasing concern for resource control, social position, and ceremonialism. Carving images into stone may have been one way to demonstrate ties between people and important resources, record family history, and prepare for hunting in an increasingly competitive environment. We note that most of the glyphs are displayed as if they were intended to be seen. They are not hidden, but put in places where they would have been visible, often to people approaching the land from the water.

**Petroglyph faces from Cape Alitak** – Some clusters of faces may represent groups of related people – a family or perhaps a lineage.
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:

**Teaching Collection**
- Nick Butryn for a harbor porpoise vertebra from Penerosa Bay
- The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for a sea otter hide
- Hal Long for gravel tempered pottery fragments
- Barbara Rudio for a unique oil lamp
- Betsy Roberts for artifacts from Kodiak Island

**Donations**
- Marius Olsen for a walrus ivory tool handle from Gladys Olsen
- Ruby Haigh, working with the Pratt Museum, for artifacts collected from Kodiak by her father in the 1950s
- Grace Herrod for a spruce root basket starter and photographs
- Nona Campbell for Koniag, Inc. newsletters from the 1970s and archival materials about Alaska from 1939-1959
- Bonnie Haider for Chinese game pieces and a DVD copy of 8mm film footage of hunting on Kodiak in the 1950s from her late husband Butch Miles
- Wilmer Andrewvitch for photographs taken by Fred and Marie Bailey, school teachers in Old Harbor from 1946-1949, photographs from Marra Andrewvitch 1960s-2001, and a DVD of 16mm film of Old Harbor from late 1940s
- Ruth Ann Harris for photographs and booklets from Helen “Sunny” Knight of Kodiak and Alaska in the late 1930s
- Robert Erickson for a copy of a family video from Chignik
- Patricia Gordon for photographs taken by Lois Fraser of Woody Island in the 1920s and photographs of the Katmai ash fall.
- Russian Orthodox Diocese for historic books from Akhiok for our archives

**Long-term Loans**
- The State of Alaska for a large stone plummet from Near Is.
- Rome and Theresa Carlson for an exquisite set of oil lamps and a whalebone figure carving from Larsen Bay
- The State of Alaska and the Pratt Museum for artifacts collected from Kiavak
- Marty Barton for his family's artifact collection

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**Caring for Kodiak's Past**

Our concern for heritage preservation extends far beyond museum doors. From recording Alutiiq vocabulary to documenting ancestral objects in museums, we seek to preserve Alutiiq cultural information. Every summer, archaeological studies are at the heart of this effort. Kodiak has over 900 prehistoric sites, many of them threatened by erosion, vandalism, and even digging bears!

With the help of community volunteers we have been tracking the condition of hundreds of ancient settlements. Since 1998, 39 industrious individuals and families have visited 462 archaeological sites through nearly 1,000 site visits, and reported their finds. Their information is revealing patterns in the archaeological record, teaching us about Alutiiq history, and helping land managers preserve fragile resources. They are literally saving Alutiiq heritage on the landscape.

In 2011 site stewards visited, observed, and photographed sites across the archipelago. We extend our most sincere thanks to Betsey and Adelia Myrick, Mark Withrow, Kip and Leigh Thomet, Marnie Leist, Jill Lipka, Susan Payne and Don Dumm, Harry and Brigid Dodge, Bill Barker, Sid Omlid, Suzanne Abraham, Matt Foster, Keller Wattum, Jennifer Richcreek, Andy Christofferson, Jennifer Culbertson, Mike Munsey, Jeanne Larsen, and Joe Black.

Stewardship is a fun way to learn more about ancient Kodiak and to participate in historic preservation with a notebook and a camera. For more information on the museum's stewardship program or to volunteer as a site monitor, please contact curator Patrick Saltonstall, patrick@alutiiqmuseum.org, 907-486-7004, x23

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Complete And Return This Membership Form Today!

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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
- **Isuwiq** — Seal .......... $100  Admission for family members & guests
- **Taku'kaq** — Grizzly .......... $250  Same as Isuwiq plus gift from Museum Store
- **Arhnaq** — Sea Otter .......... $500  Same as Taku'kaq plus gift from Museum Store
- **Arlluk** — Orca .......... $5000+  Membership for employees and/or shareholders
Born in Kodiak on July 20, 1921, Thelma Johnson’s story is part of Kodiak’s story. From the hardships of the Great Depression when she helped her father care for her siblings to the Great Alaska Earthquake that shook the chandelier in her dining room, Thelma has many memories to share.

“It was a little town when I was growing up, and it has changed a lot,” she said.

Kodiak may still be a little island town, but today there are many thriving organizations that Thelma supports. Thelma began volunteering at the Alutiiq Museum shortly after it opened.

“As soon as I learned about the museum I wanted to belong to it,” she said.

Her first volunteer job was cataloging artifacts – labeling archaeological finds with numbers. The numbers were so tiny and difficult to write she decided that wasn’t the right job for her. So, she started working in the Museum Store. Here, she liked chatting with visitors and vividly remembers selling a beautiful pair of woven basket earrings. Those earrings inspired her to take a basket weaving class and make several gifts for her family.

Her favorite museum program is the Alutiiq Word of the Week, which she listens to on KMXT radio. She likes hearing the pronunciation of Alutiiq words. She particularly enjoyed a recent lesson on alaciq – fry bread – which brought back memories of making this treat. Receiving the quarterly newsletter is also a pleasure. “I start at the beginning and look at all the pictures and then read straight through to the end,” Thelma said.

Thelma has been a museum member since 2001 and explained, “It’s nice to get my membership card and I enjoy telling my friends about the museum. It is an honor to be a member.”

She is currently a member at the Kum’agyak – Eagle level. “I’m an eagle and when I watch the eagles fly outside my window it makes me happy and reminds me of the Alutiiq Museum,” said Thelma.

Member Spotlight

Thelma Johnson at home in Kodiak, April 2012

Membership Matters. Join Thelma in supporting the Alutiiq Museum and become a part of our story.