

# CENTENNIAL 1917 2017

ONE HUNDRED YEARS in the making

**Pictures from the past record our history, counting down the years to the centennial, 1917 - 2017.**

UAF students from foreign countries carry their nations' flags as they march down the steps at Wood Center during the 1984 Ceremony of Flags (see page 6 for related story). Some of the businesses listed on the left-hand banner are still around. The Soviet Union (top of banner, on right), of course, is not.



Photo courtesy of University Relations Collection, 96-063-172, Archives, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

# AURORA

Далеко од куће

遙かなる故郷

Tomando el camino largo a casa

अंत नाही ह्या पथास, तरीही नेई मज घरास

**Taking the  
long way home**



UNIVERSITY of ALASKA FAIRBANKS

# Letters to the editor

What Tom O'Farrell, '60, seems to be saying in his letter [fall 2011] regarding academic freedom [spring 2011] and Project Chariot is that the facts according to AEC (since they are paying the bill and have proprietary rights) and their political backers carry more weight than the facts according to the researchers in the field. Hence, the former facts should be touted as the scientific truth while the latter facts should be disallowed and squelched. I disagree.

Rich Kedrowski

-----  
I read [the managing editor's] interesting preface to the current *Aurora* [fall 2011]. Nice job. For what it is worth, I thought the article on academic freedom [spring 2011] was genuinely interesting. It is one of those topics that the general public doesn't well understand and a little education here is useful. Actually, the university community — including faculty — have a hard time with this notion as well. So you and Evans did us a fine service.

And I would not worry too much about the "error" concerning Seifert. In fact, I am not sure it was an error. My guess is that a composite of concerns, including the icicle article, contributed to his [column's] demise. We will probably never know.

So sorry not everybody found the article valuable. Even though it clearly is. I figure we aren't doing a good job if everybody is satisfied. So keep up the excellent work.

Cheers,

John Gimbel, Department of Mathematics and Statistics

-----  
It was great to receive an edition of the *Aurora* that had interesting and well-written articles. In the past UAF, my first alma mater, has put out publications that were downright embarrassing [compared to other universities]. Keep up the good work and I'll be looking forward to the next issue.

Beth A. Lane



*About the cover  
Stefan Tica came from  
Serbia, by way of Texas,  
to play Nanook basketball.  
He's one thread in the  
multinational fabric that is  
UAF. Read more starting on  
page 6.*

As an advocate of "think globally, eat locally" I was heartened by the article "The Future of Alaska Food" in the spring 2011 edition of *Aurora*.

But I was disheartened by the breezy inclusion of some common myths in introducing the subject.

For example, the generalization that "weather and seasonal variations" have altered the habits of moose so much that "they no longer congregate reliably near the river." I think a lot of moose and moose hunters would be surprised to hear this!

Hard winters, heavy predation, poor habitat and overhunting can affect moose (and caribou) numbers from year to year and longer, but I know of no solid information showing that moose (or caribou) have changed their basic habits. Nor do I know of any data that indicates long-term downward trends in moose or caribou numbers in general, even though some populations of each are known to have declined, while others are known to have been increasing.

Another example: The article states that in lean hunting years, villagers "are often left with one option: the local store" (for food). One need only look at what's shipped by mail or freight to villages to refute this oversimplification. Take a look at the marketing efforts to the Bush. I have a mailbox in a Bush community where I spend time seasonally. I get flyers and catalogs there from food and other marketers at the rate of five to 15 a month. The "GreatLander BushMailer," a monthly newspaper-type catalog, claims it goes to 49,000 households each monthly issue. The August issue had ads from four food stores. I also get the similar "Alaska Bush Shopper" each month, and advertising from other major food retailers regularly. I can call an 800-number and order using a credit card, food stamps, Quest card, etc., and with one outfit the orders (with some exceptions such as frozen food) are postage paid. I also know that many Bush residents order from town big box and/or discount stores, load up when in town for some purpose, or have relatives or friends mail food. There's at least one expediter in Fairbanks whose business is filling Bush orders for pay.

The "local store" is not the only option. I suspect it's no longer the most-used option. Yet the myth that it's the only option is perpetuated, either by design — to dramatize a local situation as a strategy for gaining some sort of benefit, such as more liberal seasons and bag limits on fish or game — or because people accept the story uncritically. And pass it on.

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# AURORA

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Photo courtesy of May-Le Ng.

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UAF photo by Diana Campbell.

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 Look for this icon for enhanced content online.

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 04/2012

# KUAC 50 years young

KUAC FM celebrates its 50th anniversary this October as the first public broadcasting station in Alaska. They are collecting stories on how people's lives have been changed by KUAC.

 To submit your story, visit [www.kuac.org](http://www.kuac.org).




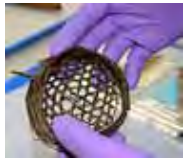

## If GOD SENT AN ANGEL TO EARTH, would you listen?

UAF's new film degree has produced its first film. Theatre Department Professor Kade Mendelowitz wrote and directed *The Messenger*, which premieres in April.

*The Messenger's* plot: Michael, a self-proclaimed angel and messenger of God, is invited to be a guest on America's latest hit talk show, where doubters have hatched a plan to assassinate him.

"Now that the film degree at UAF is official," says Mendelowitz, "this was the perfect time to produce this piece."

 To find out more, visit *The Messenger's* blog at [www.theatreuaf.org/themessenger/](http://www.theatreuaf.org/themessenger/).



# Harvard Returns Eskimo Artifacts

A large collection of archaeological artifacts has returned to Alaska, nearly 60 years after the objects were excavated near Point Barrow. The Birnirk collection, now at the UA Museum of the North, represents a phase of prehistoric Eskimo culture dating back to 500 A.D. The Birnirk site is the type site for the Birnirk culture, which occupies a key juncture in the branches of Eskimo prehistory and the first decidedly Eskimo phase of cultural development seen on the Alaska mainland. The collection contains almost 26,000 items, ranging from hunting tools and harpoon parts to snow goggles and snow knives. The collection is owned by the U.S. Navy and was housed for decades at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Technology at Harvard University.



UAF photos by Theresa Bakker.





UAF photo by Theresa Bakker.

# Russian blockhouse back at post

An 1841 Russian blockhouse is again sitting tall on the grounds of the UA Museum of the North. The house, one of the oldest Russian-era structures in Alaska, now has a new foundation, a new roof topped with tundra sod, and new logs to replace rotten ones. The blockhouse will serve as the trailhead marker for a planned interpretive trail on campus. (Funding source: Save America's Treasures)



## Helping Kids

# SLIM DOWN

That's the goal of a grant to reduce childhood

obesity in the Pacific region. Cooperative Extension Service's Bret Luick is the lead investigator for the Alaska portion of the project. Luick, a foods and nutrition specialist, says part of that means encouraging more exercise and healthy foods.

Researchers will work with communities throughout the region to inventory resources, identify barriers to healthy lifestyles, and design and evaluate culturally appropriate programs.

"This is about children achieving and maintaining healthy lifestyles," says Luick.

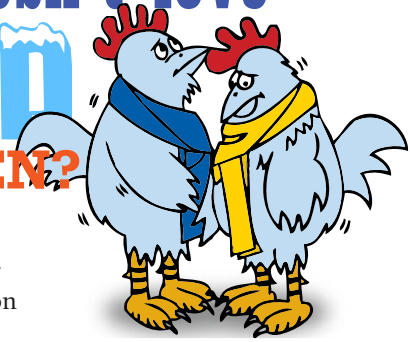


## A+ Still accredited after all these years

UAF received notification of reaffirmation of accreditation from the commissioners of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities in February. Next up in the accreditation process is a year one report for the next seven-year cycle. UAF has been continuously accredited since 1934.



## Who doesn't love COLD CHICKEN?



Or a whole coop of them, for that matter. Cooperative Extension Service has released

a DVD, *Winter Chickens*, on raising chickens in Alaska. The DVD, which was filmed in community development agent Mara Bacsujlaky's chicken coop, near Fairbanks, is an illustration of what one can expect and is not intended as a comprehensive how-to guide. It contains information about housing and equipment, feed and costs, as well as thoughts about the challenges and benefits of keeping a laying flock through the winter. The DVD is geared to the cold and dry conditions of Interior and northern Alaska.

"It's the down and dirty of keeping laying hens through an Alaska winter," Bacsujlaky says.

Copies of the DVD may be ordered through Extension for \$5 by calling 1-877-520-5211.



Around

Campus



## Trails across a Dreamscape

In places where the air gets cold enough to freeze seawater, sea ice creates a fantastical landscape. In Barrow, whale hunters start packing down snowmachine trails over this blue-white dreamscape in March.

Matt Druckenmiller spent the last couple years of his doctoral research at UAF creating meticulous maps of whalers' snowmachine trails across the ice and collecting detailed information on ice thickness.

As he created the maps by walking or snowmachining trails with a GPS, Druckenmiller had time to appreciate how different life is in the far north.

"It really is a dangerous and committing venture to be camped miles offshore in such dynamic (ice) conditions," Druckenmiller says.

"These hunters are truly sea ice experts ... Their ingenuity in dealing with such a harsh and variable environment also plays an important role in their hunting success."

Photo by David Pringle

# Heat pumps would work in Alaska

Ground-source heat pumps offer an economically viable heating option in some places in Alaska.

A heat pump captures energy from the earth to use for heating or cooling. The system consists of underground tubing filled with heat-transfer fluid, an electric pump and a heat distribution system.

Researchers assessed the performance and economic viability of the technology in five Alaska communities and found that heat pumps could meet or beat other heating systems in Fairbanks, Juneau and Seward.

"Even though the ground-source heat pumps have high up-front capital costs ... they end up costing less over 15 years just because you save so much money on annual energy costs," says co-author and graduate researcher Dominique Pride. (Report: UAF's Alaska Center for Energy and Power and the Cold Climate Housing Research Center)

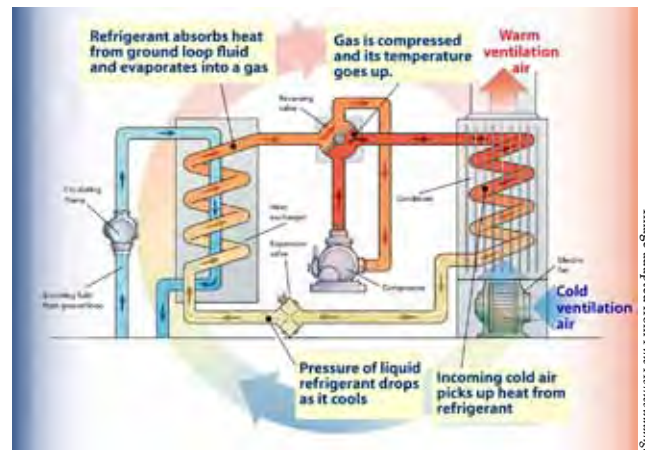


Image adapted from Five Homebuilding.

## CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES ON THE LIFE SCIENCES FACILITY ...

... on the West Ridge of the Fairbanks campus. The facility is scheduled for occupancy in summer 2013. Watch the building's progress by webcam at <http://facilities.alaska.edu/uaf/sitecam/view.htm>.



Photos courtesy of UAF Facilities Services.

# KID CAMPS

## summer 2012

**Justice Academy** May 21 – 25, registration deadline May 21  
[www.uaf.edu/summer/youth-programs/](http://www.uaf.edu/summer/youth-programs/)

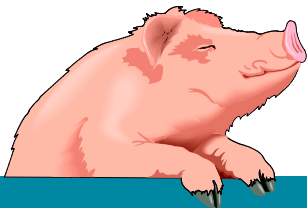
**Summer Music Academy** June 4 – 15 for students finishing grades 6 – 12 [www.uafsummermusicacademy.org](http://www.uafsummermusicacademy.org)

**Visual Arts Academy** June 4 – 15 for students finishing grades 6 – 12, application deadline May 11 [www.uaf.edu/art/artacademy/](http://www.uaf.edu/art/artacademy/)

**Alaska Business Week** July 14 – 21, application deadline June 1  
[www.alaskachamber.com](http://www.alaskachamber.com)



For more opportunities at UAF for kids, visit  
[www.uaf.edu/uaf/community/programs/](http://www.uaf.edu/uaf/community/programs/)



## This little piggy went...

... to the UA Museum of the North. A new pipeline super pig has been installed on the museum's grounds, courtesy of Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. It replaces a pig given to the museum in 1984.

A pig is a device inserted into a pipeline to clean it, separate products or dewater the line; to inspect the pipeline; and to perform other special duties, such as plugging isolated pipelines. The trans-Alaska pipeline system is "pigged" every eight days.

Visitors can inspect the pipeline pig any time or day. Since it is too large to be curated inside, it is located on the northwest corner of the building, along the edge of the parking lot.



Photo courtesy of UA Museum of the North.

## FREEZE-DRIED FISH **FAST**

A new technique cuts the freeze-drying time for pink salmon from 20 hours to about nine. The process heat-treats the raw fish to make the moisture in the salmon easier to remove. The result: tasty freeze-dried salmon cubes that can be served in soups, salads and other dishes.

Each year, Alaska fishermen catch more than 30 million pink salmon, the most abundant Alaska salmon species. Most of the catch is canned or made into frozen fillets.

It's a long way from new technique to new product, but researchers say this is a good first step. (Partners: UAF's Alaska Sea Grant College Program and the School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences; the Nha Trang University [Vietnam]; and the USDA Subarctic Agricultural Research Unit. Funding: U.S. Department of Agriculture)



## GIFT OF LAND

Fairbanks physician Jeffrey Zuckerman and his family recently donated to UAF a 50-acre parcel of land near Fairbanks in honor of their daughter, Bianca Zuckerman, '10. She graduated with a double major in Spanish and psychology and a minor in biology, and is now seeking a doctorate in physical therapy in Texas. According to the gift agreement, the land will be sold by the university. The proceeds will establish an endowment to benefit two academic programs, Spanish and psychology, as well as research by faculty member Kelly Drew at the Institute of Arctic Biology.







# Taking the long way home

By Shehla Anjum

**I**n April 2011, excited about a full athletic scholarship offer from UAF, Stefan Tica called his family in Serbia. His father was not as delighted as Tica had imagined. “He was quiet for about 10 or 15 seconds and then he said, ‘Well, I have a friend in the Amazon, so if you are also interested in playing in a rain forest, I could arrange for that next,’” Tica recalls.

At the time, Tica (rhymes with *pizza*) was finishing his associate of science degree at a community college in Texas. Over the course of several long-distance conversations with his parents, Tica explained his reasons for wanting to attend UAF, to allay their misgivings. “I told them I’d be playing

master of science degree in petroleum engineering at UAF. People told him, “Alaska is too far, too cold. It has polar bears.” Ikewun won them over by emphasizing the high ranking of UAF’s petroleum engineering program. He wasn’t worried about the cold. “I would be able to handle the cold if people in Alaska could handle it.”

When Ryota “Kaji” Kajita quit his secure job at a major Japanese television network to enroll at UAF in 2005, his family and friends reacted in different ways. His mother and grandmother supported his decision. Friends, however, questioned his sanity and wondered why he would go to what they thought of as the end of the earth.



basketball for a larger school, and that UAF’s business administration school had the highest accreditation.”

The 6-foot-7-inch Tica arrived at UAF in September. He is now a forward on the Nanook men’s basketball team and studying for his bachelor’s degree in business administration.

International students at UAF come from all over the world. They speak different languages, eat different foods and practice different religions. But all seven interviewed for this story share one experience — the stunned reactions of family and friends when they learned about the decision to attend UAF, in remote Alaska, rather than well-known universities in places such as California, New York or Texas.

Peter Ikewun (*ih-kay-woon*), from Lagos, Nigeria, remembers well the comments made about his decision to get a

▲ *Peter Ikewun prefers not to eat out, so he regularly makes egusi soup. He brought the egusi from Nigeria and had a friend send red palm oil from New York. Other ingredients he can easily find in Fairbanks, including salmon (instead of traditional tilapia), curry and habaneros.*

“Find a good woman in Japan, marry her and have a stable job,” they advised. “That’s the way you spend a happy life.”

Such remarks failed to dissuade him. “I wanted to come to Alaska ever since I saw a movie about photographer Michio Hoshino’s work here.”

He also had an answer for his friends: “Life is shorter than you think. I would like to die after I’ve done what I want to do. My first priority is to pursue my own way and without any regrets.”

Hassab Elrasoul Ali followed a circuitous route to UAF. He left Sudan after high school to attend college in Pune, India, where he received a bachelor's degree in geology and a master's in petroleum technology. Later he earned a master's in international peace studies from the University of Notre Dame, in Indiana.

Ali's family, which still lives in a small village between the Blue Nile and the White Nile, encouraged and supported all his education efforts. But his plan to move to Alaska surprised them. Alaska is a place where unwanted people go, they said. But Ali wanted to study Alaska's experience with oil development and apply it to Sudan. He's now in a PhD program in interdisciplinary studies, working on a thesis that explores the effects of oil development and wealth on Sudan and its people.

Adverse comments, even disdain, about their choice do not deter students from attending UAF. In 2011, 224 students from 44 nations and five continents enrolled at the university. The total includes 141 graduate students, 80 undergraduates, and three not affiliated with a specific program. The students' homes range from the southern reaches of Australia to the northern latitudes of Russia and Norway.

China and India sent the most students, 47 and 43 respectively. All but two Indian students are in graduate school, the majority in engineering and a few in the sciences. Chinese students, also mostly in engineering and science departments, are nearly evenly divided between undergraduates and graduates.

Each year a flag dedication ceremony recognizes UAF students from around the world. The row of flags affixed to a soaring, curved wall of the Wood Center lobby acknowledges their presence. The number of flags has increased steadily, from 30 in 2003 to 44 this year. Two new countries, Indonesia and Poland, took part in this year's dedication ceremony.

Carol Holz, of the Office of International Programs and Initiatives, says the flag ceremony never fails to move her. When international students see their flags in Wood Center, she says they "feel they are linked to home, and are glad that UAF recognizes their presence and contribution to the community."



### Fear factor

Students from other nations have long studied at American universities, but mostly at Lower 48 institutions. Alaska might loom large in the imagination of many people in the world, but mostly as a curiosity — remote, majestic and

forbidding — a tourist rather than an academic destination.

UAF has had international students for most of its existence, but in recent years it also set up official agreements and programs to attract more such students. In 2003, the university signed an agreement with an Indian university, followed in 2006 with one in China. The latest agreement, with Mongolia, signed in June 2011, should add to the six Mongolian students already enrolled in graduate and undergraduate studies.

Students who move to another place for school often contend with their own fears as well as their parents' concerns. Some international students have never left home before. And many envision Alaska as a realm of cold, ice and six months of darkness. "There is a fear factor about Alaska for parents and students who come to hear about UAF in Pune,"

says Shirish Patil, a professor and director of the Petroleum Development Laboratory. He has been instrumental in recruiting international students.

Patil, a Pune native, came to the United States in 1981 for graduate studies at the University of Pittsburgh. He moved to UAF in 1983, and earned two master's degrees and a doctorate from the school. Today, in addition to his teaching duties and research, Patil is

active in recruitment, and travels to Pune and elsewhere to participate in UAF information nights.

A longtime Fairbanks resident with Indian roots, whose wife and two children are also UAF alumni, Patil possesses the authority and credibility to speak about the city and the school. "I am honest about the extremes — the beautiful summers, the harsh winters and darkness," he says. "I also tell them the advantages UAF offers — a small university in a small town, a strong community that is home to several Indian families, research opportunities for students, and the number of Indians who work here."

His talks have helped. Indian students arrive to study at UAF every year.

A period of trepidation follows the initial euphoria and excitement about going abroad for higher education, students say. Concerns that appear minor to Americans can stress those used to a different way of life. For someone from a culture where household help is common or where parents take care of many things for their children, even when those children are young adults, life in the U.S. can be daunting. Pune native Prachi Vohra had never left her family home for school. "I didn't worry so much about coming to Alaska, but more about having to do everything myself. I wondered if I'll be able to take care of myself and be able to do well in my studies."

**"Alaska is too far, too cold. It has polar bears."**



▲ Students rave about Alaska's vast and beautiful landscape. Ryota Kajita, originally from Japan, studies photography, documenting the landscape and his surroundings. Photo courtesy of Ryota Kajita.

She fretted about things that might seem trivial to Americans. In India, she'd never shopped for groceries, driven a car, cooked any big meals or maintained a bank account. "Now I can do all those things. I shop and cook for myself, I learned how to drive and hope to have my license before I graduate in May, and I take care of all my finances."

Certain adjustments that students face are unique to Alaska. Alaskans are accustomed to the sight of wild animals in both urban and wild settings. Bears and moose ambling down streets and roads are commonplace; bears overturn garbage cans and raid bird feeders, and moose munch on trees. They are part of the landscape, and Alaskans accept them as a normal part of living here.

Encountering wildlife within a city was an unusual experience for Australian May-Le Ng (*may-lee*, plus *ng*, as in *sing*). She moved to Fairbanks with her husband, a postdoctoral student at UAF, and takes classes in photography as a non-degree student. As the husband and wife readied for the

move to Alaska, they felt no anxiety about Alaska's weather or its far-from-anywhere location, Ng says. What worried her most were bears, she admits. "Our kangaroos are not that scary."

Many students, especially those from warm-climate countries like Thailand, India, Sudan or Nigeria, harbor fears about Alaska's cold and dark. Several researched Fairbanks' weather on the Internet and noted the extremes — temperatures soaring into the high 80s in the summer, plunging to 40 below in the winter.

In Lagos, Nigeria, the coldest it ever gets is about 45 F, Ikewun says. "I read up as much as I could about the cold here, but I was unable to figure out what such cold felt like. I couldn't imagine a cup of coffee or water thrown up in the air and freezing as it comes toward the ground."

He knew nothing about central heating, and thought that temperatures in buildings and outside were the same. "I couldn't visualize such low temperatures and finally decided

it must be like being in a freezer. I was sure I would not lead a normal life,” he says.



### Adaptation strategies

The university’s Office of International Programs and Initiatives plays a key role in helping international students adjust to American life. The staff works with students before they arrive, follows their progress while here and helps with issues or problems.

Stefan Tica credits UAF’s orientation program for new and international students with helping him prepare for winter. “I was petrified before coming to Alaska. I saw it in April and it was beautiful, but I didn’t know how I’d cope when it turned dark and cold.”

Information about coping with inclement weather is included in the handbooks provided to all new students, according to OIPI’s Carol Holz. “The general orientation has also included a ‘fashion show at 40 below,’” she says. “From time to time I’ll bring my heavy boots and mittens as examples during orientation.”

Northerners sometimes suffer from seasonal affective disorder during the long, dark days of winter. Anyone can get SAD, but one might expect students from countries with small variations between summer and winter temperatures to be affected even more. But students interviewed for this story say they don’t mind the darkness. They stay busy and play sports such as indoor soccer, basketball and badminton.



The university has resources to help students deal with SAD and depression, Holz says. In eight years at UAF, she knows of only a few cases of SAD among international students, and none resulted in a student dropping out.

Alaska’s cold, and its predators, are not the only concern or change in store for international students. Another is the culture, such as the American style of education, knowing what classes to take, etiquette, and encountering different systems and bureaucracies.

Erica Iseri, the exchange and study abroad advisor in OIPI,

**“In Nigeria people are not as polite, and that is just the way they are. But here if a person is not polite it is considered offensive.”**

often helps international students with practical issues such as how to make medical appointments. “Many students come from cultures where doctors don’t like being questioned. I emphasize to students that asking a doctor questions is not only OK but even recommended,” she says.

Hassab Ali knows about cultural barriers international students confront in visits to hospitals and with medical staff. He has helped African students with such problems.

“In three cases the patients were not fully aware of the financial consequences of going to the emergency room. After one to two hours in [the] ER and many unnecessary tests, they were told, ‘You are OK. You can go home.’ A week later a big bill was in the mail,” Ali says. He points out that health care is cheap in many countries. “There are not as many tests, and bills are paid on the spot. People don’t call ambulances, and [the] ER is the last thing they think about.”

Other cultural issues include interactions between people and how gender plays a role in such interactions, Iseri says. One aspect of American life that surprised Ikewun, on his arrival in Fairbanks in 2010, was the politeness of people.

“In Nigeria people are not as polite, and that is just the way they are. But here if a person is not polite it is considered offensive.” But politeness is relative. Where Ikewun comes from, “ladies have to be respectful to men. If there are four chairs in a room, and four men and one woman, the men expect the woman would let all the men sit.”

◀ *Saying Tachit “Tay” Chairat is active just doesn’t quite cover it. The Thai native has dived into Nanook life, serving in student government and as a student ambassador, working as the media and web assistant with the student leadership program, and volunteering with UAF’s service-oriented alternative spring break program. UAF photo by Maureen McCombs.*



▲ Asha Lal, a data technician at UAF's Rasmuson Library, helps light the ceremonial candles at the opening of Diwali, the festival of lights. She is joined by Shirish and Anjali Patil, Doug Goering (interim dean of the College of Engineering and Mines), and Sudha Naidu.

All staff and faculty help students adjust, but those who came from other countries, studied at UAF and now call Fairbanks home are particularly helpful. Shirish Patil is one such person; another is Ana Richards, who manages the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Diversity. Both came to UAF in the 1980s as students. Unlike Patil, who already held a master's degree from the University of Pittsburgh, Richards came from Panama at age 19 as a freshman on a full scholarship she secured with the help of the principal of an American school in Panama, where she had worked as an office assistant.

Richards arrived in the U.S. with limited English skills, acquired from her grandmother who spoke Jamaican patois, a local version of English. "I experienced culture shock to the fullest, especially because I didn't know English all that well," Richards recounts. "I spent a lot of time and energy figuring out what people were saying, trying to find out information, and sitting in classes not knowing what the teacher was saying. It was all very frustrating." Today, students who want to brush up on their English can take classes in conversational English through Richards' office.

Kajita echoes Richards in how he struggles with English. He finds Alaskans friendly, kind and easygoing, but he

has trouble communicating with them. He took classes in English as a second language his first year at UAF. "The classes at that time focused mainly on grammar and reading. My English problem was listening and speaking, and the classes didn't help me much," he says.

Limited English skills played a role in why Kajita enrolled in an undergraduate program when he got to UAF. "I had to start from zero, including language, study and my life. After spending several months at UAF, I learned I was qualified to apply for the graduate school. But I didn't choose to apply for a graduate school immediately because of my poor English and no connection to any professors." Kajita says he spent two years learning about graduate school, improving his English and getting to know professors.

Lacking proficiency in English hinders students not only at school but also in other situations. After more than a year at UAF, Ikewun says he is comfortable with nearly everything except English. "I still don't know a lot of things. I don't know what to order in restaurants. I can't differentiate between foods, and on restaurant menus I don't know what the names mean. I find that very challenging," he admits.



### Great expectations

The perception of what constitutes friendship is another important aspect of cultural adjustment, according to

Brandon Ilgen, a coordinator for international scholars. Some international students come from more formal backgrounds, where an invitation to socialize is sincere. An American might say in passing, “Let’s hang out sometime,” and never follow through. That leads to confusion and slighted feelings because in the foreign student’s culture, that might be construed as an invitation, but here it could be just an expression and nothing more, Ilgen observes.

**“I saw the aurora, something I never thought I'd ever see. I couldn't believe how awesome it was – full of bright purples and pinks and moving around in a dance.”**

The interactive nature of the American education system poses yet another challenge. “In many places students may not attend lecture regularly but can show up for a final exam and pass,” Ilgen says. “Here, we expect students to give presentations, participate in class discussions and work on projects.”

On the other hand, Tica, who often travels for basketball games, marvels that his professors understand when he is absent for several days. He says their support helps him maintain his grade point average of 3.7. “I have never seen anything like this before. I was amazed when our team went to California and some teachers sent me notes from the classes I missed.” Such support from faculty is unheard of in Serbia, he says, where classes are held in auditoriums with up to 500 students, and teachers do not know anyone by name.

Food comes up a lot when international students speak about cultural adjustment. Some complain about not being able to find in Fairbanks grocery stores foods they ate at home. Some say local restaurants that serve their native cuisine don’t pass muster. Some bemoan the lack of any restaurant that serves food from their country. And some find the blandness of American cuisine disappointing.

Compared with the spicy foods of Nigeria, Ikewun thinks American food is both bland and sweet. By cooking in the dorm kitchen, he gets a taste of his home food. He stocked up on Nigerian spices before leaving, and often makes up a pot of *egusi* soup. The soup, a favorite dish throughout West

Africa, includes meat, vegetables and the ground-up seeds of a bitter West African melon called *egusi*. Ikewun says his *egusi* soup bears some semblance to the original. He achieves the piquant taste by using habanero peppers that taste as spicy as Nigerian peppers.

Memories of their mothers’ meals sustain students as they try to recreate familiar home cooking in Fairbanks. Kajita is wistful when he talks about his mother, an accomplished cook who runs a coffee shop and a bakery. “I miss her food the most.” He voices frustration that local markets seldom carry fresh fish to make sushi. However, last summer, he and his girlfriend dipnetted for salmon on the Copper River in Chitina. “It was a terrific experience. We got so many fish that we had to buy a new freezer.”

For students like Ali, the difficulty in finding the right food is not limited to spices or other ingredients. As a Muslim he is required to eat food that is *halal*, to meet Islamic dietary guidelines. Certain meats such as pork are forbidden, along with items that might contain pork products, such as lard.

Before moving, Ali called around to find out if any Muslims lived in Fairbanks. “After one month of surveying I found a Pakistani guy. I asked him about *halal* food and he said I had to order from Seattle.” Ali set up a system after he arrived — he buys fruit and vegetables in local stores, orders *halal* meat from Seattle, enjoys gifts of fresh salmon and berries from his Alaska Native friends, and butchers locally grown animals and chickens. “Everyone is happy — my family, the local markets and myself.”



### Can you see me now?

Shirish Patil and Ana Richards came to the U.S. in the 1980s, before the age of cell phones and social media. The past decade’s rapid advancements in communication technology make life away from home less lonely for all students, especially those from abroad. Patil recalls the days when calling India was so expensive that he could afford only five-minute telephone calls. “Each minute cost \$5, so the conversation consisted mainly of saying ‘hello’ and ‘goodbye.’”

Today’s students have the Internet — email, Facebook and such — and Skype, which lets users see each other on their computers while they chat. Skype can both elate and frustrate. Students like it because it costs little or even nothing when they place computer-to-computer calls. The downside occurs when they call home on special occasions. “When I call my family on festivals such as Diwali [the Indian festival of lights] and I see people there all dressed up, enjoying feasts and having fun, I feel very lonely,” Prachi Vohra says.

Overall, the international students at UAF have settled into their lives at the school. Many have friends in the

local community. For some, like Ali, living in a small city like Fairbanks allows him to interact with Americans on a more personal level and to familiarize them with Islam. “Sometimes it is a struggle to let people understand that Muslims are just like anyone else, anywhere.” But he says he has made many American friends. He speaks at synagogues and churches, and he regularly volunteers for community activities such as neighborhood cleanups and the Fairbanks Native Association’s rehabilitation center on Saturdays, where he counsels teenagers.

Some students have been able to explore parts of Alaska even many sourdoughs haven’t seen. Kajita relishes his experiences with Alaska Native friends in Shishmaref, a village he visited as a tourist in 2002, soon after seeing a movie about nature photographer Michio Hoshino. “I have gone hunting and fishing with them, and I still can’t believe that people here catch food by themselves. It’s totally different from life in Japan.”

Tachit Chairat, a mechanical engineering student from Thailand, also saw a different way of life when he spent a week in spring 2009 in Arctic Village, a Native community in the Brooks Range. “I helped haul wood, rode snowmachines, and I saw the aurora, something I never thought I’d ever see. I couldn’t believe how awesome it was — full of bright purples and pinks and moving around in a dance.”

Students give high marks to Alaskans, especially the friendliness people show them. Students who have had a car break down marvel at how quickly passersby stop to offer help. “The environment is harsh, and it makes people help each other and be considerate to each other,” Ali says.

As much as they like Alaska, Fairbanks and UAF, students find some things to complain about. May-Le Ng faults Fairbanks’ noxious air quality in winter, which makes it difficult for her to breathe outdoors. She laments the dearth of fresh fruits and vegetables, and finds herself longing for quintessentially Australian foods like Vegemite and Tim Tam, a popular chocolate cookie in Australia.

Ali is averse to “too many meetings and too much talk at UAF about how to change the university.” And he’d like to see more help for foreign students in navigating the U.S. health care system. The university, he says, “should provide information about the American health system in simple and clear language.”

The international students will in time get their degrees and move on. They might end up living in the U.S., in their own countries or somewhere else. But no matter where they go, they will take along memories of living in a place that changed them in many ways.

Ali came from Sudan to the U.S. “unprepared in any sense of dealing with anyone who would disagree with what I believe in and what I practice.” Now, in addition to having learned much in his university courses, he says he has also learned important lessons in tolerance.

Other students will take a newfound appreciation of the Alaska way of life, including subsistence and hunting. After spending a summer with subsistence hunters in Shishmaref, Kajita developed a taste for food that comes from the wild. “I love game such as moose, caribou, seal, whale and walrus,” he says. “My favorite among those is whale, especially the muktuk.”

Some have come to like the climate. Yes, even the cold. Says Peter Ikewun, the Nigerian who came to Fairbanks armed with several coats: “I love the weather. When I go outside I like the cold coming over my head and I feel relieved. I like the sensation it gives me.”



*Shehla Anjum, a longtime Alaska resident who lives and writes in Anchorage, is originally from Karachi, Pakistan. She has an MFA in creative writing from the University of Alaska Anchorage and an MPA from Harvard Kennedy School.*

▼ *Shehla Anjum, left, interviews May-Le Ng at a coffeehouse in Fairbanks. UAF photo by Maureen McCombs.*





# Journey of the Seal Stone

By Theresa Bakker

*A photograph cannot do it justice, but that is all it took to alert archaeologist Allison McLain that she was on to something big. A forwarded email from the UA Museum of the North asked her what she knew about the petroglyphs carved in the seal stone, a 200-pound boulder in California.*

“My first thought was, ‘Wow.’ But I couldn’t place them.”

She started comparing the stone to the archaeological record.

“It looks similar to pieces collected in Attu a hundred years ago. Those images of human figures and eyes and geometric designs are carved onto sea mammal mandibles and jawbones. They are very unusual.”

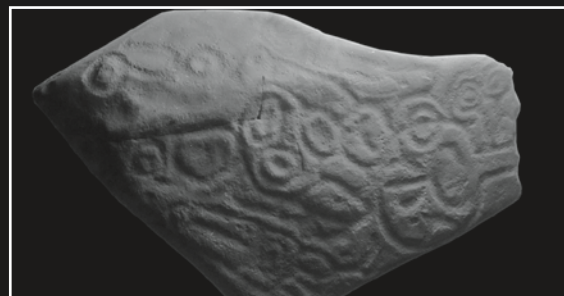
So was this stone.

In a century of archaeological work and surveys on the Aleutian Islands, only one other example of petroglyphs has been found. In 2002, biologists conducting a sea lion count on Agattu Island, southwest of Shemya, took photos of petroglyphs they came across, but there has been no formal investigation of the site. Then, “ten years later, this petroglyph shows up,” McLain says.

The seal stone was most likely found on Shemya Island during World War II, a time when the area was transformed by a U.S.

military looking to protect its frontier. Roads and landing strips were carved out of the earth, exposing items that were picked up by soldiers and taken home. The stone was discovered when the owners, who had purchased it at an antique store in the 1950s and used it as a lawn ornament, wanted to sell it, preferably to someone in Alaska.

That is when Debbie Corbett got involved. She is the regional



UAF photos by Mareca Guthrie.

archaeologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska. “Artifacts are deeply compelling to almost everyone. An artifact is a tangible link to our past. If you can hold it in your hand, it is a link to a long-dead ancestor. You can feel a connection.”

But objects found on federal land belong to the federal government.

“People seem to think they have no owner, and therefore there is no harm in picking them up. What I tell people is that picking up artifacts is like tearing the pictures out of a book. The picture might look nice on the wall, but you lack the story behind that picture.”

Without context — knowing exactly where the stone was found, on what part of what island, if it was buried or exposed, near other petroglyphs or markers or dwellings — researchers will never know the stone’s full story. The seal stone does offer plenty of its own mysteries to investigate.

When the light shifts across the surface, the images transform, one figure becomes another, and another, and another. Whales, faces, sea lions, sea otters, birds, bird heads, eyes, even a Mona Lisa smile.

“A phallus becomes a sea otter, the classic motifs you see in the art from this region — on their backs with their feet up to their chins and their tails tucked into their back legs,” McLain says. “But in the stone, one line is part of one figure and then in a different light, it’s part of a different figure.”

McLain sees images in the stone that are similar to those found in recorded Unangam folklore, the ethnonym for the people called “Aleut” by the Russians. “There is a transformative relationship between Aleuts and sea mammals. Sea mammals and sea birds give power to Unangam hunters in order to capture certain animals. Individuals have also transformed into certain sea mammals, depending on what they were doing as humans. Many of these images reflect these complex relationships, the complexity of the stone.”

McLain will do a comparative analysis to determine the origin and significance of the stone. She has to start almost from scratch.

“You can date the stone, but that won’t tell you anything except when the stone was created, when it oozed out of the Aleutian Islands,” she says. “We’ve got 9,000 years of evidence of human activity in that area, but we have no way to date when those carvings were made. I am looking at this stone as a piece of spiritual significance.”

In summer 2011, the owner donated the seal stone to the UA Museum of the North, the repository for most USFWS collections in Alaska. Curator of archaeology Jeff Rasic says it is a valuable addition to the collection.

“These things represent tangible pieces of our shared human experience, which pique our curiosity, make us ask questions, and raise awareness and appreciation of other cultures. They make us ponder life from another society’s perspective and from another point in human history.”

The stone makes us wonder how people thousands of years ago got to a place like Shemya Island, on the western edge of the Aleutians, let alone made time to carve designs into boulders. These questions will continue to drive the research.

As an archaeologist, Corbett has handled thousands of artifacts, but the seal stone is one of the most interesting finds of her career.

“For me, there will also be an ongoing personal relationship with that odd stone, to find out what it is and how it fits into what we know about the Aleutians.”

## Traces of Art

As part of the USFWS study of the seal stone, the museum’s curator of art, Mareca Guthrie, was commissioned to illustrate the patterns on the rock so they could be more clearly analyzed. She used a six-step process:

“I cut out sheets of paper that matched the multiple flat planes of the rock, drafting a model of the rock out of paper. I used a high-quality pigmented wax crayon to create a rubbing from each face, something that requires great care because it could damage the original material.

“I studied the rock under raking light — lit from the side — to eliminate any elements of the rubbing that were naturally occurring, such as small cracks. Then, I digitized the rubbings, being careful to document scale. The digital images were combined into a single illustration, showing all the rock faces on the same page.

“Finally, I traced the digital composite on the computer screen using a digital pen and tablet to create the final image.”

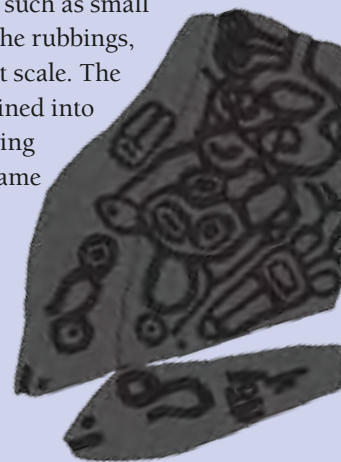


Illustration created by UAMN Fine Arts Curator Mareca Guthrie.



Theresa Bakker has an MFA from the Rainier Writing Workshop at Pacific Lutheran University. She is the media coordinator at the UA Museum of the North, where she tries to find the right place for all the stories the collections have to tell.

UAF alumnae in this story: Debbie Corbett, '91; Allison McLain, '86



Crops  
IN PEACE  
AND WAR

PRO-LIFE

The Book of  
Herbs

# Arctic sage, rosemary and thyme

Story by LJ Evans  
Photos by LJ Evans and Todd Paris

## Harvest day in the herb beds

The nip of fall is in the air as the gardeners bend to their work, wreaking havoc as they rip out the pungent plants one by one.

“Anybody want some Kentucky colonel mint?” Emily Reiter calls out. “Great stuff for your mint juleps,” she says with a grin.

A half-dozen volunteers are reaping the results of their labor, harvesting the Georgeson Botanical Garden’s herbs, all selected, planted and tended by the Herb Bunch, a loosely organized group of avid gardeners.

Marsha Munsell is stripping the plants out of the thyme and oregano bed, sown in June with at least 16 different kinds of the classic culinary and ornamental herbs. First to go are the thyme plants — leaves, stems, roots and all — with names like creeping, English broadleaf, German winter, Spanish, lemon, elfin, English, lime and orange balsam. Then she starts on the oreganos — Italian, Kent beauty, Greek and Syrian. Munsell carefully collects a few sprigs of each variety in labeled plastic bags for evaluation later. What the Herb Bunch volunteers don’t take home to preserve or use in their kitchens will go in the Georgeson compost piles.

Reiter and a couple others are taking apart the mint bed. Besides the Kentucky Colonel, there are also vigorous plants of chocolate mint, pineapple mint, spearmint, pennyroyal and lemon balm. As the plants are handled and the leaves bruised, the aroma from each bundle is distinctive — some robust, some delicate — but filling the air with a potent bouquet that leaves no mistake — these flora are cultivated first and foremost for their scent.

A few steps away is an oblong bed this year planted entirely with scented geraniums. They’re all luxuriant,

burgeoning — some of them have grown to three and four feet tall. Rub their fuzzy, jagged-edge leaves and the air is redolent with the smell of roses, chocolate, apples, oranges, even coconuts, and the most heady of all, citronella, said to repel mosquitoes (a popular attribute in an Alaska garden), whose scent is right at the edge of being stinky. Donna Dinsmore, her eyes shielded from the bright, low-angled September sun by wide dark glasses, is saving at least one plant of each variety, cutting back the stems and leaves and carefully planting each one in a green plastic pot. Each container gets its red identifying label stuck in the soil, so Georgeson staff can keep track of them in the greenhouse over the winter.



*Getting down and dirty: the Herb Bunch meets to plant seedlings in the Dorothy Truran Memorial Herb Garden in June 2011.*

Each plot in the clutch of oval and round raised beds is outlined with rocks. This year half of the largest one was planted with the thymes and oreganos. The other half was planted with Japanese herbs, leafy vegetables and seasoning plants such as purple shiso, mioga ginger, sansho, green shiso, mizuna, mitsuba, and in the middle, a few pepper plants that were supposed to grow fiery, tiny chili peppers. The pepper plants grew but made no chilies. The ginger all died, and the



Mapping it out: sketches of the planting layouts for the herb beds help volunteers plan their attack.

Virginia Damron (left), Shaundra Robinson and Virginia Morral discuss the fine points of planting seedlings in the bed of Japanese herbs.



horticulturists digging in that bed can find only stubby, dried-up corpses.

Part of the point of growing these plants is to learn, and one lesson this year is that not all of them will thrive so far north. Experimenting is half the fun and the core of the serious business of this garden.

### The Georgeson's roots

The Georgeson Botanical Garden, like the Herb Bunch, has its roots in a few people who shared their deep-seated enthusiasm for gardening with others.

In 1905, citizens of the Fairbanks area petitioned the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to establish an experiment station in the Tanana Valley. Charles Christian Georgeson, already director of the Alaska Agricultural Experiment Stations, explored the Tanana Valley for possible sites.

Georgeson selected 1,394 acres alongside the narrow-gauge Tanana

Mines Railroad that ran between Chena, Fairbanks and the gold fields 20 miles to the northwest. He chose the site so that people going by on the train would see that useful plants in gardens and fields could survive in Alaska's Interior. Early work at the experiment station emphasized grains, grasses and potatoes, but there were always plots of vegetables, flowers, fruits and landscape plants for public viewing.

By 1975, in the middle of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline boom, tour companies were looking for good places to take tourists. They started bringing them to the Fairbanks

Experiment Farm demonstration gardens, which was a huge hit. The whole garden area was planted every year as variety trials, says Pat Holloway, the botanical garden's director.

"[It was] rows and rows and rows of vegetables with a few flowers in front," Holloway says. "There were no labels anywhere and only rudimentary paths. The tour buses started showing up and the people loved it, but there were lots of reasons this was not an ideal situation, including the possibility of people getting hurt on muddy, slippery paths."

It got to the point by the late 1980s that with so many buses coming, something had to be done. Either the safety situation had to be improved or they were going to have to close the gardens to the public. Holloway proposed

*“Somebody came up with the name — the Herb Bunch — and we were off and running.”*

transforming that part of the experiment farm into a botanical garden.

To create a proper botanical garden from scratch is a complicated task. Holloway and her team had some ideas about what the garden should consist of but they didn't have all the skills to design it. Enter Tom Gallagher, a registered landscape architect who was then a professor of resources management in the School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences. Holloway and her crew explained all the things they wanted the garden to include, and a few weeks later Gallagher came back with the concepts.

"The foundation of Georgeson Botanical Garden to this



*Virginia Morral, left, sizes up a chili pepper plant to go in the center of the Japanese bed.*

*Donna Dinsmore enjoys the camaraderie and sunshine on harvest day.*



day is Tom Gallagher's design," Holloway says.

Open to the public since 1989, the redesigned garden continues to be a valuable source of information on varieties of flowers, vegetables and ornamental plants that will flourish in Fairbanks, a resource for commercial growers as well as home gardeners, and a major attraction for tourists. More than 30,000 visitors enjoy the gardens each summer.

### **The herb lady**

Barbara Fay is the person most responsible for the herb garden section of the Georgeson. Her love of herbs started with her Polish grandmother, an avid gardener who

would tuck a sprig of rosemary, basil or thyme in her granddaughter's braids.

"I would go all around all day with this wonderful smell," Barb says. "I told myself whenever I'm grown up and have a garden of my own, that's what I'm going to plant."

When Barb and her husband, Bud, moved to Fairbanks in 1967 and she finally had a place to grow things, she knew almost nothing about gardening, much less growing herbs. She took gardening classes everywhere in town she could find them, but was disappointed that none of the instructors talked about herbs.

She ended up having to teach herself. She tried intriguing plants in her vegetable garden and learned that many herbs that were perennial in other parts of the world would not survive the winter in Fairbanks' subarctic climate. She assembled a library of herb books and subscribed to herb magazines. Eventually, through trial and error, and somewhat by default, she became the Fairbanks herb expert.

People were interested and wanted to know more, so she and a friend taught classes in their homes on using culinary herbs in cooking. They gathered seven or eight people and served a five-course dinner featuring gourmet

dishes seasoned with fresh herbs. Their students loved it, sometimes hanging around after a three-hour class to talk until late at night.

"I think it was partly that I was so enthused about herbs," Fay says. "Other people picked up some of that enthusiasm. Most of them knew about parsley because it appeared on their plate in a restaurant, but that was about it."

She started working with Holloway soon after the botanical garden opened. Fay volunteered to grow herbs and teach classes at GBG.

The herb garden started as just one row in the culinary garden, but each year the herb patch got a little bigger. After a few years Holloway suggested they use a bequest

*Shaundra Robinson tends the Japanese herbs during a mid-summer weeding session.*



from Dorothy Truran, a well-loved local gardener and a Georgeson supporter, to design and build a formal herb garden. The herb beds in the garden today are the result.

By 2002, even with help from friends, Fay felt overwhelmed. Clearly there was a broad and eager audience for information about herbs, but meeting that need was too much work for one or two people. She proposed to several herb enthusiasts that they start an informal group to meet monthly to learn, share experiences, and plan and manage the herb beds at the Georgeson.

“Somebody came up with the name — the Herb Bunch — and we were off and running,” Fay says.

The people in the group — some of them experienced gardeners, some novices — volunteered to design the plantings, put in the order of seeds and plants through the Georgeson, plant, weed and maintain the beds during the summer, and harvest the herbs in the fall. That is pretty much the way it has been ever since. Some of the Herb Bunch volunteers today have been involved since the group’s inception.

Holloway says that although hundreds of volunteer hours make it possible for Georgeson to keep going every year, there is only one other group of organized volunteers who maintain a whole section of the garden.

“There are people who adopt a single bed. There are mystery weeders who come at night,” Holloway laughs, but they work at the direction of a Georgeson staff member. Except for the spinners and weavers club, which tends the dye plants, and another group that comes every Wednesday afternoon all summer to work wherever needed, the Herb Bunch is the only group that manages its own section of the garden.



“Barb Fay ended up leading things like the Herb Bunch because she is a take-charge kind of person,” says Holloway.

“A lot of the ideas that resulted in herb classes or herbs planted in the botanical garden originated with Barb. She was passionate about cooking and that was where her major interest with the herbs originated.”

One of the most extraordinary things Fay would do was take something very simple that came out of a carton or a can and turn it into a gourmet dish by adding herbs, Holloway says. And she wasn’t stingy with them, either.

“Instead of measuring out a teaspoon she would take a handful of oregano and flop it into the dish,” Holloway says. “She totally, completely changed the way I cook!”

### Herbs on the balcony

A few years ago health issues led Barb Fay to relocate near her daughter on Bainbridge Island, Wash.

“I still consider myself a member of the Herb Bunch — I’m always available on the phone,” Fay says, and she is always copied on the emails that remind everyone of the next get-together to plant, weed or harvest.

Fay’s ardent interest in growing things has not abated, even though now she lives in a third-floor condominium. In August 2011 she struggled to list all the plants spilling from containers on her two balconies or in four hydroponic units inside the apartment. She grows flowers and a few vegetables like beans, sugar snap peas and lettuce, and of course herbs: dill, lemon basil, Genovese basil, marjoram, spearmint, peppermint and chocolate mint, nasturtiums, lemon thyme, sage, oregano, tarragon, stevia, lemon verbena and rosemary.

“But I don’t really need to grow my own rosemary,” she



Virginia Damron, left, regales the group with stories after harvesting and cleaning out the herb beds in September.

Minty-fresh weeds: Holly Buzby diligently performs the fragrant job of weeding in the bed of mints.



said. “It’s a perennial here and there’s so much planted around town, I go out with little clippers, and as I’m walking to the library I just take a snip here and a snip there.”

### What shall we grow next year?

The Herb Bunch is gathered again, except this time indoors. It is the last week in October, and as is the case every month, the meeting begins with all present chowing down on potluck dishes mostly made with, or at least seasoned by, something from everyone’s garden. Then commences the business of planning next year’s herb gardens at the Georgeson.

“What worked and what didn’t?” asks Virginia Damron, one of the people who took over organizing the monthly meetings after Barb Fay moved away.

“Some things in the Japanese bed bolted really quick. The mizuna went right to seed,” someone calls out.

“One of the things that went horribly wrong were the oreganos and thymes,” Marsha Munsell remarks. “We didn’t get the labels in soon enough, and they grew so fast and bushy, when I came back later to weed I couldn’t tell them apart. It was hard to tell what was chickweed and what was herb!”

“When I got there to do the labeling I couldn’t identify them even right at the beginning,” Holloway said. “Next year when you get the beds planted why don’t you give me a map so trying to figure out where the signs should go isn’t such a problem.”

Someone suggests a bed with all the plants you can use to make herbal teas. A collection of Russian herbs is proposed, noting that theme would take a little research.

A bed of traditional early American herb plants is considered; this is something they did several years ago — it was a big success and would be worth doing again.

“It would be good to have a list by year of what we’ve grown,” says Munsell, and someone volunteers to take that on.

Eventually all the herb bed themes are decided upon, with volunteers’ names attached to each one. In more meetings over the course of the winter the group will pore over seed catalogs and herb books to decide on the varieties to order. The list will make its way to Pat Holloway and her staff, seeds will be ordered, the Georgeson staff will start them in tiny plastic pots in the greenhouse, and the whole cycle will have made its way around to the beginning again.

On an afternoon in early June, the Herb Bunch will assemble to once again tenderly transplant a thoughtfully chosen assortment of edible and aromatic plants into the soil, sharing delight in the dirt and the good things that grow there.



*LJ Evans, who used this story as an excuse to learn more about growing herbs herself, is a writer and editor for UAF Marketing and Communications.*

*UAF alumnae in this story: Donna Dinsmore, '81; Emily Reiter, '96, '02*



Learn about the culinary and medicinal uses of some herbs that grow in Alaska at [www.uaf.edu/aurora/](http://www.uaf.edu/aurora/).



*The Georgeson Botanical Garden Society commissioned this comfortable, handcrafted chair in 2011 to honor longtime volunteer Virginia Damron. It is placed at the edge of the Dorothy Truran Herb Garden and bears a brass plaque with Damron’s name.*

# Position of privilege

Story by Diana Campbell, photos by Diana Campbell and Greg Lincoln/*The Delta Discovery*



**The gray fall evening settles quietly on Bethel as surely as an overnight frost.**

Yet cabs, the nearest thing to public transportation in Bethel, rush up and down Chief Eddie Hoffman Highway. Across town at the Bethel City Council Chambers, city council candidates debate, among other matters, if the city should build an indoor swimming pool.

Inside the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center, home to the Bethel Public Library, a museum and multipurpose rooms, **Teresa Flores, '03**, studies her small group of would-be cake decorators. It is their final class, and she has instructed the five students to create a themed cake.

Some of the bakers stare at their bare cakes, hoping for inspiration. Flores walks among them, offering encouragement.

"I think the answer is more icing," she says, laughing. "Having a bad day? More frosting!"

Flores, 33, is a cake decorating and sewing instructor in her free time. During work hours the UAF alumna is a physician assistant at the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Hospital.

The 50-bed hospital is operated by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corp. and is one of Bethel's major employers. Bethel is in Southwest Alaska, at the mouth of the Kuskokwim River, and is accessible only by air, river, snowmachine or four-wheeler. Situated on the tundra, the town of just over 6,000 is a hub for 56 smaller communities. The air has a distinct grittiness to it, maybe from Bethel's 16 miles of dirt roads, or from the Kuskokwim's relentless churning up of river dust.

## Balancing act

Like Flores, several of her cake students work for YKHC in demanding medical-professional jobs.

But this night is all about creativity. Flores checks each person's progress, pausing to take photos of undersea

worlds, an American flag, and a triple-decker, heart-shaped, red velvet cake.

The evening is also a chance to socialize. Jonica Thomas and Flores work together, but now they discover they live near each other. Thomas has always been interested in baking, and Flores tells her she has a marble slab she uses for pastries and confections.

“I think we’re going to be best neighbors!” Thomas says.

Flores is not afraid to deal with tough issues. One of her duties is as a sexual assault forensic examiner for the YKHC, meaning she is called on to conduct official interviews, provide medical examinations, collect evidence, and offer treatment and referrals for further care to rape and molestation victims. Her co-workers at YKHC say she has the right temperament for such a job.

“She listens,” says Melinda Norwood, a nurse in the Bethel hospital’s emergency room. “She asks for clarification. She shows empathy as well as compassion.”

It’s a privilege to do so, Flores says.

“I remind them they are still human,” she says. “If I remind them of that, then I’ve done so much.”

Flores admits she doesn’t really like the job, because of the reason she has to do it. But she balances that with the knowledge she is caring for someone going through a difficult time. She often will continue treatment with those people at the clinic where she is a PA.

“On one hand it’s really hard to see that part of humanity,” Flores says. “On the other hand, at least I know what I’m doing there can help somebody who’s gone through this, to help them know they can have a life again.”

### Choices

As a young girl in Mountain Village, Flores never thought she’d work in health care because her

mother, Martha Flores, was busy as a community health practitioner there.

Unfortunately for Teresa, her mother was good in her work. Martha’s supervisors encouraged her to become a physician assistant. That meant she had to leave her family and go to Seattle for the two-year training. The training and the job kept her away from home, and the 12-year old Flores resented it.

“I always said after that I would never work in health care,” Teresa says. “I was really angry at times. She was always working.”

She admits now she understands the difficult choices her mother had to make. Martha became one of just a few Yup’ik PAs working for YKHC. Maria Beans, the family’s matriarch — and Mountain Village’s magistrate at one time — instilled in her family a work ethic that they do their best and always finish a task.

Grandma Beans’ standards also meant there was no question that Teresa would go to college.

After high school, Flores decided she’d become a kindergarten teacher, and she enrolled at UAF. Besides her grandmother’s belief in education, Flores knew she needed to be able to support a family when the time came. An education would help her provide for them.

“UAF seemed to have more community,” she says. “Fairbanks seemed a lot homier, close-knit.” She settled into campus life by joining the sorority Tri Sigma, volunteering at the Women’s Center and taking the required education classes.

“I was always doing something,” she remembers. She also was a resident advisor and read books on tape for UAF’s Disability Services, among other tasks in her student jobs.

Plans never end the way they are envisioned. UAF’s



School of Education, while keeping its state accreditation, temporarily lost its national accreditation. When Flores sought her advisor to find out what that meant for her education degree, she discovered the woman was no longer at UAF.

Flores then turned to UAF's Rural Student Services and came up with another plan.

"I had taken psychology classes for fun," Flores says. "So I ended up getting a BS in psychology."

The change also steered her thinking about what to do with her life. The YKHC would hire her to work during every school break she had, even if it were only for a week.

The opportunities placed her in many different types of jobs with the health care organization. She worked in the specialty, outpatient and behavioral-health departments.

YKHC also offered a scholarship loan program that allowed her education loan to become a scholarship if Flores worked for the organization for two years after graduation.

"I've always wanted to help people," she says. "At the hospital I found I could really help people one-on-one."

### Change of place

Flores graduated from UAF in May 2003 and by that June headed to Washington state to become a PA. She worked as much as she could to save up money in preparation.

"I bought my round-trip ticket, got on the plane, went to my new home," she recalls. "I bought bread, peanut butter and jelly, and the required school books. After all that, I had \$15 left in my pocket."

After she finished her studies and completed rotations at seven Washington clinical sites, she moved back to Bethel to work as a PA with YKHC to fulfill her two-year loan-to-scholarship obligation.

**"Having a bad day?  
More frosting!"**



As her term was nearing an end, Flores saw a UW Medex Northwest teaching position job advertisement and applied.

"I got it!" she says. "I was only 29. How often do you get to teach at a university? I took the job."

Soon she became the co-chair of UW's maternal/child health program while teaching PA courses, but she started getting homesick.

"I really missed being in the clinic," Flores said. "I missed patients."

After a year of teaching, she moved back to Bethel to work as a PA in one of YKHC's three clinics in the hospital. YKHC manages

health care services for about 27,000 patients who live in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, most of whom are Yup'ik or Cupik. (While many patients will end up in Bethel for treatment at the hospital or one of the clinics, the YKHC also oversees five subregional clinics and 47 village-based clinics.)

Flores works in the Kusko Clinic at the hospital, where she offers a wide spectrum of health care, from prenatal services to elder care.

**It's a Thursday in fall 2011.** YKHC's three clinics are near the front doors of the 100,000-square-foot steel hospital. Flores' day starts at 9 a.m. and will end about 7 p.m.

The waiting areas are lined with chairs in every available space. Most are filled with patients, some with a small rolling suitcase at their feet. People hurrying to their appointments or greeting friends and relatives stir the air into a slight breeze. The Yup'ik language dominates conversations, but the infants cry in a global language.

The cafeteria is undergoing renovations and is closed, so a cab driver delivers a phone-ordered lunch to an elderly man sitting in a wheelchair. The man, Johnny from Kipnuk, has been telling people Jesus taught him a song, and he sings it for listeners before his hamburger arrives. Apparently, Jesus knows Yup'ik well enough to compose a rousing tune.

A nurse calls for a patient, and a mother and teenager follow her into a long narrow hallway with 10 exam rooms. Flores is their provider. She wears a black-and-white floral top, black pants, three-inch heels and a stethoscope around her neck. Her hair is highlighted a bright fuchsia, earning her the nickname Luscious Raspberry by her co-workers. She has cherry-red nails, wears a heavy silver chain and sports a sterling ball in a piercing below her bottom lip.







The exam room is small and meager, with an aging exam table, a desk and three chairs.

While the patient explains the situation, Flores listens carefully and asks questions. She outlines the treatment plan, explaining in simple language her reasons for the course of action.

“Does this make sense?” Flores says more than once. She urges them to do what she suggests, but leaves the decision up to them. She lets them know they may contact her with any questions, and she writes out a prescription and orders labs for the young patient before leading them out of the room.

“I have a privileged position in their lives,” Flores explains. “They allow me to help them.”

### Teresa’s health tips

-  Everything in moderation. Life is meant to be enjoyed, but not to excess. (Yes, exercise can be enjoyable!)
-  Ask your primary care provider all the questions you have, even if you think it is silly. There are no silly questions.
-  Make the most of your visits — make a list of questions and concerns to be brought up during your annual physical exam visit and bring it along. This is even more important if you take medications on a daily basis.
-  Everyone should have a physical at least once a year. Screen for diabetes, thyroid issues, and cholesterol starting at age 20, then every 5 years or so.
-  Recommendations for low-risk drinking: less than 4 drinks on occasion or 7 drinks per week for females, less than 5 drinks on occasion or 14 drinks per week for males.
-  Lastly, enjoy the little things in life. Laughter really is the best medicine, and optimism does a lot for stress reduction and lengthening your life span.

The nurses’ station in the tight hallway is also small, standing room only. The station has a set-up for telehealth communications, connecting village health aides to the clinic when they need direction in treating a patient. The clinic was once the administrative offices for YKHC, but was remodeled some time ago, which accounts for the tight quarters.

Flores takes a rare lunch break and strolls through the hospital, stopping to greet workers in the inpatient ward, the lab and X-ray department. Her final destination is the emergency department, where the workers greet her warmly. This is the place she conducts sexual assault forensic examinations.

Dr. Ky Burden, the ER doctor, praises Flores for her compassion and professionalism. She’s worked with him since he came to the hospital straight from his residency four years ago. Working in an ER department is fast-paced, and it’s nice to be among co-workers who have the same goals, he says.

“The great thing is we’re all here for the same reason,” Burden says. “It’s to help patients.”

Flores chitchats with other ER workers, but it’s her mother she has come to see. Martha is the emergency room’s PA. Teresa has to wait because her mother is with a patient.

Soon her mother appears. She is shorter than her daughter but the two look alike, with the same smile and thick curly hair. Martha is wearing scrubs. The two hug.

The older Flores was taught not to openly praise her children, so she would never publicly say how proud she is of her daughter, but she admits to satisfaction at seeing what Teresa has accomplished, and that she has chosen to be a PA.

“People tell me, ‘I saw your daughter,’” Martha says. “They tell me she’s very caring. She listens.”

Teresa often seeks her mother’s advice, and since the two work as PAs in different health fields, it helps Martha keep current with other treatment options.

“It keeps us in balance,” Martha says. “It’s good for us to be in this profession. There is still so much to learn.”



*[After this story was written, Teresa was appointed to fill an unexpected vacancy on the UAF Alumni Association Board of Directors.]*

**Diana Campbell, '91, '93**, is the communications specialist at UAF’s Center for Alaska Native Health Research. She is a Gwich’in/Alutiiq author and a tribal member of the Native Village of Venetie.

Welcome to our new addition to *Aurora*, a place to showcase the talent of our alumni and students. If you have an original poem, essay, short story, artwork or photograph(s) that you would like to share with our readers, contact [aurora.magazine@alaska.edu](mailto:aurora.magazine@alaska.edu) for submission guidelines.

## Sprout

by Dana Greci

A blue-green sea, rough and wild  
collapses wave by wave on this island shore.

Rocks and debris litter this beach,  
too rugged and inhospitable  
for small life forms.

But look there —  
a frayed coconut  
exposed amidst the gray, hard ground.

From a crack in its side  
a green stem shoots sunward,  
a palm sprouting  
on this rocky shore.

Brought here by the ocean  
from a faraway place.

One can go a long way,  
endure countless obstructions  
when searching for home.

*Dana Greci, '91, '01, teaches developmental English at UAF.*

## President's column

By **Derek Miller, '03, '11**

I have thoroughly enjoyed serving on the alumni association board for the past three years, particularly with the other board members and executive director Joe Hayes. Their infectious commitment to UAF and to engaging our alumni is inspiring.

It is my hope that the association continues to grow in the years ahead. We have our challenges, but I'm confident they can be overcome. There is alignment among stakeholder groups (Chancellor Rogers, the individual schools and colleges, the staff, and the local business community) that make the next few years a golden opportunity for us to move forward, and to move forward boldly. The foundation is there. Now it's time to build on it.

The moves have already begun to take shape, including a totally revamped alumni reunion weekend in September. Instead of a Friday afternoon luncheon, plans are in the works to celebrate our 2012 alumni award recipients, including our Distinguished Alumnus, at a more formal dinner banquet Saturday evening before the lighting of the Starvation Gulch bonfires. Our reunion committee is already hard at work putting the plan in motion. Please mark your calendars for Saturday, Sept. 22.

Alumni are also expected to play a leading role during the prelude to UAF's 100th anniversary in 2017. Alumni participation, especially generating the much-needed enthusiasm required to celebrate this important milestone, is a must. You can bet that there will be a serious, organized campaign around this effort, and the association will be front and center.

Thank you for all you do to make UAF a great university ... and stay tuned.

## 1960s

**Jim McCaslin Brown, '60, '63** — “Promoted to emeritus professor and retired from Alaska Pacific University in June 2010. Presently teaching at APU part-time (one or two classes per year) and involved with senior projects and master’s theses. I have no plans to move Outside and will continue with community activities, which consist of playing flute/piccolo with the Anchorage Community Concert Band and the Front Row Seats Band, representing Government Hill on the Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson Community Environmental Board, and supporting hockey teams — Alaska Nanooks, Alaska Aces and UAA Seawolves.”

**Claus-M. Naske, '61**, updated his best-selling Alaska history textbook, *Alaska: A History of the 49th State*. It has been re-released as *Alaska: A History*.

**David LeCount, '66**, wrote a book of haiku poems called *La Honda Journal*, published last year. He lives in La Honda, Calif.

**Martin Bushue, '69**, works at the U.S. Department of State and is currently assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia. He and his wife, Sharon, started the Cambodian School Kids charity during a previous posting in Cambodia. Learn more at [www.cambodianschoolkids.com](http://www.cambodianschoolkids.com).

## 1970s

**Tom Husson, '71**, and his wife, Catherine, celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary this year. Tom worked 40 years in the paper industry with more than 15 years as an international consultant to recycled paperboard mills. Catherine retired from the banking industry and traveled extensively with Tom as he called on customers in the U.S., Europe and Latin America. They have retired to the Burlington, Vt., area and follow both UVM and UAF hockey.



Photo by Deb Lawton, KUAC TV.

**Ken Whitten, '75**, is KUAC TV’s 2012 poster artist. His photo of a bohemian waxwing, entitled “Berry Toss,” was selected from more than 70 submissions by some two dozen artists throughout Alaska.

**Colin Wanner, '77**, works for the U.S. State Department and is currently assigned to the U.S. embassy in Bosnia.



**Neal Fried, '78**, “pawses” for a photo opp with Nanook after his presentation at the Alaska Business Week program in August 2011.

**Jo Heckman, '79, '85**, retired in December from her job as president of Denali State Bank. She currently serves on the UA Board of Regents.

## 1980s

**Nettie La Belle-Hamer, '88, '94**, was promoted to associate vice chancellor for research at UAF.

**Ann Kapp Andersen, '89, '97**, is collaborating with her sister, Janice Kapp Perry, to produce a series of CDs entitled *Soft Sounds for a Soothing Sunday*.

**Jackie Stormer, '89**, is the book recycling coordinator for the Literacy Council of Alaska.

## 1990s

**Carla Browning, '93**, earned the accredited public relations credential through the Public Relations Society of America. She is the communications manager for UAF Marketing and Communications.

**Katie Korvola Ziesmer, '93**, just found her 500th gray hair. She puts her degree to work in North Pole, homeschooling the four future UA Scholars she shares with **Mark Ziesmer, '00**, her husband of 14 years.

**Duane Abrams, '94**, has started his own consulting company in Scotland. Duane travels back and forth between his flat in Glasgow and his home in Dallas, Texas.

**Adam Christianson, '94, '99**, married Melinda Moore on Dec. 31, 2010.

**Hatton Greer, '94**, and his wife, Michelle, are proud parents of a son, Dexter Martin Greer, born Sept. 29, 2011. Hatton is a public defender for the state of Alaska in Kenai-Soldotna. He is also active in the contra dance community.



**Carrie Chouinard, '95**, teaches third and fourth grade at Dayville School in Oregon. Read more about her and her students at [www.bluemountaineagle.com](http://www.bluemountaineagle.com).

**Brian Brubaker, '96**, and **Amber Brubaker, '97**, welcomed a new baby named Emily Rose.

**Jay Gulledege, '96**, is the senior scientist and director for science and impacts at the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions. He received the 2011 American Geophysical Union’s Charles S. Falkenberg Award.

## 2011 – 2012 UAF Alumni Association Board of Directors

### President

Derek Miller, '03, '11.....[miller.e.derek@gmail.com](mailto:miller.e.derek@gmail.com)

### Vice President

Daniel Flodin, '94, '97.....[d.flodin@gci.net](mailto:d.flodin@gci.net)

### Secretary

Jim Dixon, '90, '91.....[dixon@ieeee.org](mailto:dixon@ieeee.org)

### Treasurer

Sam Enoka, '95.....[senoka@viasyn.com](mailto:senoka@viasyn.com)

### Board members

Dani Carlson, '06.....[summerbabewinterversion@yahoo.com](mailto:summerbabewinterversion@yahoo.com)

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Wayne Donaldson, '80.....[wkdonaldson1@gmail.com](mailto:wkdonaldson1@gmail.com)

Teresa Flores, '03.....[misstflowers@yahoo.com](mailto:misstflowers@yahoo.com)

Chad Hutchison, '02.....[uafalumniboard@gmail.com](mailto:uafalumniboard@gmail.com)

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Rhonda Widener, '01.....[RLWideneruaf@hotmail.com](mailto:RLWideneruaf@hotmail.com)

DeShana York, '95.....[deshana.york@alaska.edu](mailto:deshana.york@alaska.edu)

### Executive Director

Joe Hayes, '97.....[uaf-alumni@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-alumni@alaska.edu)

[www.uaf.edu/alumni/](http://www.uaf.edu/alumni/)

**Heath E. Hilyard, '96**, is the executive director of the SouthEast Alaska Guides Organization.

**Amy Coffman, '97**, is a union organizer for the Alaska Public Employees Union.

**Jillian Swope-Fletcher, '97** — “I graduated with distinction from Northern Arizona University with a master of science in nursing May 2011. [I was] Selected as national faculty for one of the largest critical care medicine transport conferences in the U.S., where original research on pediatric burn trauma curriculum and instruction for emergency health care providers in rural and medically underserved areas was presented.”

**Kelly Auer, '98**, is the science department chair at East Anchorage High School.

**Nathan Platt, '98**, is the assistant director of residential life at Ithaca College in New York.

**Michelle Renfrew, '98**, earned the accredited public relations credential through the Public Relations Society of America in April 2011. She became the director of UAF Marketing and Communications in November 2011.

**Kimberlee Beckmen, '99**, is a wildlife veterinarian at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Fairbanks. Read more about her and her job at [www.dailyherald.com/article/20110723/news/707239838/](http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20110723/news/707239838/).

## 2000s

**Meadow Bailey, '00**, earned the accredited public relations credential through the Public Relations Society of America. She is the public information officer for the northern region, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

**Amber Cagwin, '00, '09**, is assistant to the vice chancellor for students at UAF.

**Jamie Abreu-Napolski, '01**, has worked for UAF since October of 1997 and is now the EDGE coordinator.

**Pat Race, '01**, of Alaska Robotics, a Juneau-based collective of filmmakers, along with his fellow members, put out a new DVD, *Alaska Robotics Vol. 2*, a collection of nearly 50 short films in genres such as sketch comedy, political satire, animation and mini-documentary. Visit [akrobotics.com](http://akrobotics.com) to learn more.

**Jason Gootee, '05**, relocated to Anchorage as the regional representative for dental products and services for ODS Cos.

**Emily Machos, '05**, is the summer housing coordinator at UAF.

**Stefanie Moreland, '05**, is Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski's legislative aide for fisheries and arctic issues.

**Michelle Nutter Anderson, '05**, has been named president of Ahtna Corp.

**Jim Rearden, '05**, received a humanities award as part of the 2011 Governor's Awards for the Arts and Humanities.

**Dani Carlson, '06**, is the web producer for KTVA Channel 11 in Anchorage.

**Steven Sumida, '06**, turned his master's thesis into a grant proposal for training in Native villages on traditional government. This was the only grant awarded in the nation by the Bureau of Justice Assistance to Pribilof Aleuts, Inc.

**Allyn Yanish, '06**, is the family housing coordinator at UAF.

**Jen Angaiak, '07, '11**, married Nick Wood in July 2011.

**Chris Brown, '07**, is the Alaska exploration manager for Corvus Gold.

**Tav Ammu, '07** — “I am currently finishing up my second year as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kyrgyzstan. I'm here along with about 100 other PC volunteers who have come from all over the U.S. My primary assignment is to team-teach English to students in a small village near the Chinese border. I work with a counterpart teaching approximately 18 lessons a week with six or so English clubs thrown in. In the short amount of time I've been here there have been drastic improvements, not only with the students' abilities but with my counterpart's as well. We work with a local teacher in the hopes that our influence and aid will be more sustainable and we won't take jobs from host country nationals.

“Aside from the primary assignment I have a secondary assignment of helping out wherever there is need. Generally for English teachers that includes an English club or two. Some help out with local businesses or mapping hiking routes to help increase tourist interest. This past year I did four basketball clubs a week, two a week for boys and two for girls. Most boys have a difficult time showing up with any regularity because as soon as school is finished they are needed back at their farms for help with animals. The girls relished basketball. They were able to play physically, away from the eyes of curious and judgmental peers or elders, and learn the rules and fundamentals of a new game.”

**Toby Stober, '07**, an associate at the Anchorage office of KPMG, is currently on rotation in India.



Got job changes, family changes, awards to brag about, or do you want to become a member of your alumni association? Visit [www.uaf.edu/alumni/](http://www.uaf.edu/alumni/) to stay connected. Tell us your news, and we will publish it in the next issue of *Aurora* or the *Alumnus* newsletter. Send photos, too!



**Larsen Hess, '08**, spent time in Japan as part of the Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program. “I did so many things that were fun, interesting and life-[full]filling that I have thought about writing a short book (maybe long) to give details about how awesome it was in and around my town. I did surfing, skiing, hiking, fishing, getting scallops off ships, judo, all the sports my students played, skateboarding, and gold panning all within 30 minutes of my house. I loved it over there and wish I could live there all my life. Just to sum it all up, I would have to say that this has been the best experience of my life... well, except for graduating from UAF.”



**Megan (Otts) Burkes, '08** — “2011 was an exciting year for **Randy [Burkes, '10]** and me! We moved to Boston, found great jobs (Randy is a software engineer for Oracle, and I am manager of marketing and communications for Boston College athletics) and got married on June 26. We are both loving city life but miss our friends and family (and watching Nanook hockey) back home in Alaska.”



Susie Linck Sanders — “I ... wanted to share our family’s connection with UAF — actually the many connections. My dad, **Donald Linck, ’37**, has many fond memories of his days at the University of Alaska. He is forever thankful for the excellent education he gained there, which launched him on his medical career. My mom, **Sylvia Schmidt Linck, Matric.**, was unable to finish her college years, but held fond memories of those days, as well. She passed away in 1997. Dad’s sister, **Helen Atkinson, ’36, ’03**, of Fairbanks keeps Alaska present in our lives. My husband and I just returned from a wonderful, memory-making road trip to Alaska — what a beautiful state full of wonderful folks. My dad lived with us in Nevada for five years and now lives in Montana with my sister, **Sandy Linck Herrick, ’66**, and her husband, **Rod Herrick, ’66**. My sister, **Judy Linck Bell**, also attended UAF.”

**Bill Pfeifer, ’08**, received a master’s degree from Purdue and works at Microsoft in the protection technologies department “fighting viruses and other nasties online.”

**Blaine DeWalt, ’09**, is the resident director for McIntosh and Wickersham halls at UAF.

**Katie Hartman, ’09**, married Tyrell Dabney on July 23, 2011.

**Larry Radford, ’09**, is vice president for operations at Hecla Mining.

## 2010s

**Christopher Bender, ’10, ’12**, and **Nichole Campiglia, ’11**, were married Nov. 26, 2011. They live in Ogden, Utah, where Christopher is an aerospace engineer and Nichole is a child and youth program assistant.

**Curtis Fraser, ’10**, helped the Anchorage Aces win the Kelly Cup in 2011. He will be playing for a team in Italy next season.

**Candace Mae-Iris Wright, ’10**, and **Riley John Hall, ’12**, were married Sept. 18, 2011. Riley is a geologist with Alexco Resource. They live in Mayo, Yukon Territory.

**Maryanne Allan, ’11**, received the Margaret Nick Cooke Award for Alaska Native Arts and Languages, one of the 2011 Governor’s Awards for the Arts and Humanities.

**Rebecca Church, ’11**, married Rick Wilbur on June 25, 2011.

**Sam Tilly, ’11**, won the 2011 Hatcher Pass Marathon, running it in 3:00:58.

**Cami Zobel, ’11** — “I am currently attending the Anchorage Medex class to obtain my bachelor’s degree and become a physician assistant.”

## Matriculates

**Jeni (Brown) Bynes** is living in Columbus, Ohio, though still full of sourdough spirit. Three kids: Samantha, 25; Zachary, 19; and Cheyenne, 17. “I spend my days hiking, working out, playing guitar, singing and doing yoga, and all of these things balance me! I’m still a computer geek and get a regular fix along with my morning coffee at Global Gallery (think Hot Licks, as it used to exist, without the ice cream). I was diagnosed in 2009 with lung cancer and after radiation therapy am happy to say that I’m now two years in remission! Lost my dad in October 2011 to pancreatic cancer. I volunteer for ACS when I can and for Pelotonia. One goal: end cancer. My latest venture is reading every linguistic book that I can get my hands on. Would love to hear from others! I’m at jenibynes@gmail.com.”

**Mike Powers, regent and Matric.**, received a business leadership award, one of the 2011 Governor’s Awards for the Arts and Humanities.

## In memoriam

**Jefferson Wayne Barber, ’71**, Dec. 16, 2011, San Francisco, Calif.

**Arthur L. Brundage, professor emeritus**, Dec. 30, 2011, Goshen, NY

**Janet Joyce Carlson, Matric.**, Nov. 1, 2011, State College, Penn.

**Carl Christiansen, retired Institute of Marine Science employee**, Dec. 10, 2011, Seward

**Lucas M. Cronce, ’09**, Dec. 25, 2011, North Pole

**Edna W. Cryan, Matric.**, Dec. 13, 2011, Fairbanks

**Patrick K. Davids, ’93**, Feb. 1, Anchorage

**Thomas H. Foss, ’66**, Dec. 1, 2011, Anchorage

**Donna Pauli Gavora, ’84**, Jan. 5, Friday Harbor, Wash.

**Carl Grauvogel, Matric.**, Dec. 11, 2011, Palmer

**Perry Clayton Gray, ’81**, Nov. 9, 2011, Fairfax, Va.

**Isaac Green, CTC faculty**, Sept. 7, 2011, Fairbanks

**Sue Gregory, Matric.**, Dec. 1, 2011, Fairbanks

**Betty R. Ingalls, ’69**, Feb. 1, Winona, Minn.

**Deanna Marie Paniataaq Kingston, ’99**, Dec. 2, 2011, Corvallis, Ore.

**Leslie Joe Klebesadel, professor emeritus**, Dec. 30, 2011, Palmer

**Melissa L. LaBean, former employee**, Nov. 27, 2011, North Pole

**Robert A. Mailander, ’85**, Nov. 6, 2011, North Pole

**Helen M. March, ’37**, Feb. 13, Anchorage

**Robert F. Meath, ’66**, Jan. 30, Fairbanks

**Ronald Lee Meier, retired physical plant employee**, Jan. 14, North Pole

**Erling Peter Nelson, ’64**, Jan. 17, Wasilla

**Jeffrey D. Nelson, retired Geophysical Institute employee**, Dec. 12, 2011, Fairbanks

**Leo E. Obermiller Sr., ’50**, Dec. 7, 2011, Kalispell, Mont.

**Shane Schaible Ramsey, ’88, ’89**, Nov. 11, 2011, Chugiak

**Davis D. Sentman, professor emeritus**, Dec. 15, 2011, Fairbanks

**Greg Sheardown, ’89**, Dec. 30, 2011, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

**Lindale Smith, Matric.**, Nov. 14, 2011, Fairbanks

**Marydee “Silver” Stanfill, ’70**, Nov. 9, 2011, Montrose, Colo.

**Miles John Stout, ’73**, Jan. 18, Ceres, Calif.

**Robert “Sully” A. Sullivan, retired instructor**, Oct. 26, 2011, Saranac Lake, N.Y.

**James “J.C.” Thomas, Matric.**, Dec. 6, 2011, Oklahoma City, Okla.

**Mildred Gernand Wenger, ’64**, Feb. 4, Chandler, Ariz.

**George William Wiese, ’72**, Jan. 2, Fairbanks

**Louise Winkelman, former instructor**, Nov. 23, 2011, Anchorage

**Stephen Emerson Wright, ’84**, Dec. 18, 2011, Juneau

# Running toward a cure

By Andrea Swingley

Shortly after 7 a.m. on Oct. 16, 2011, 12 women from Fairbanks left Union Square in San Francisco on a journey that would take each of them either 13.1 or 26.2 miles. Actually, UAF alumni **Kim Gaustad, '07, '08; Kelly Gitter, '07; Ashley Munro, '05; Annie Sartz, '07; Marsha Schirack, '07, '10; Laura Seeger, '05; Andrea Swingley, Matric.;** and **Vianne Tobin, '07;** along with UAF staff Pamm Hubbard and Cara Hollingsworth, current UAF student Heidi Shepherd, and Fairbanksan Nancy Bergen, had begun their journeys five months earlier, when they signed up for Team in Training.

Team in Training, also known as TNT, is a sports training program run by the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Participants agree to raise funds to support LLS's mission of finding a cure for blood cancers (e.g., leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma) and improving the quality of life for patients and their families. In exchange, TNT provides a coach (Fairbanks' 2011 coach was **Tracey Martinson, '96**), a training plan and fundraising support to help participants reach their goal of completing a marathon, half-marathon, triathlon, 100-mile bike ride, or a hiking or cross country ski adventure.

TNT began in 1988, and has been training athletes in Fairbanks since 2007. Fairbanks participants generally run either the Equinox Marathon and Relay in Fairbanks or the Nike Women's Marathon in San Francisco, and sometimes both! In five years, Fairbanks TNT participants have raised nearly \$500,000; overall TNT has raised more than \$1.2 billion for LLS. This year's Fairbanks team raised more than \$59,000.

Before joining TNT, few, if any, of these women would have called themselves athletes, but they all were willing to



do something kind of crazy, like completing a marathon, for a great cause. Some joined because they had family and/or friends affected by blood or other cancers; others wanted to get into better physical shape. They began training in mid-May, on their own during the week and with the team on weekends. They ran and they walked. They laughed and they cried (sometimes simultaneously). As they crossed the finish line in San Francisco, each received a specially designed Tiffany & Co. finisher's necklace, presented on a silver platter by a San Francisco firefighter wearing a tuxedo. More importantly, they were friends, and athletes, and had had one of the best experiences of their lives to help find a cure for cancer.



**Andrea Swingley, Matric.**, did not even remotely resemble a runner before joining TNT in 2008. She has since completed four full marathons and six half-marathons (so far).



To learn more about or get involved with Team in Training, visit [www.teamintraining.org](http://www.teamintraining.org).



▲ Left to right: Cara Hollingsworth, Andrea Swingley, Pamm Hubbard, Annie Sartz, Kim Gaustad and Kelly Gitter display their race bibs for the Nike Women's Marathon.

◀ Left to right: Vianne Tobin, Annie Sartz, Kim Gaustad, Pamm Hubbard, Kelly Gitter, Ashley Munro, Cara Hollingsworth, Andrea Swingley, Nancy Bergen, Laura Seeger and Heidi Shepherd celebrate their accomplishments at the Nike Women's Marathon finishers' banquet.

# Gold Fever!



Photo courtesy of Civilian Marksmanship Program.



Photo courtesy of ISSF.

**Matt Emmons, '03, and Jamie (Beyerle) Gray, '09,** will represent the U.S. at the 2012 Olympic Games. Jamie will compete in both of

the women's rifle events, air and three-position. Matt made the team in the same events (guys' side, of course), and will compete in June for a U.S. berth in a third men's rifle event — prone — in which he won a gold medal at the 2008 Olympics.



The games begin in London July 27. For a complete schedule of events, including shooting events, visit [www.london2012.com/sport-schedules/](http://www.london2012.com/sport-schedules/).

AP Images/Chris Pizzello.



Ben Grossmann shows off his Oscar with his wife, Ariane Rosier.

**Ben Grossmann, '95,** collected an Oscar for his work on the movie *Hugo* at the 84th Academy Awards ceremony Feb. 26. He shared the visual effects award with three colleagues. Ben grew up in Big Delta and moved to California in 2001 to pursue a career in films. He's no stranger to award ceremonies: in 2006 he won an Emmy for his visual effects work on the miniseries *The Triangle*.



Learn more about Ben and his work at [www.bengrossmann.com](http://www.bengrossmann.com).

## Letters

*Continued from inside front cover*

Are the foods from the “local store” (or mail orders) of “little nutritional value”? I guess that depends on what the customer buys! There seems to be a lot of junk food sent to the Bush, and apparently it sells well — witness the tons of soda pop shipped all over. But to generalize that available boxed and canned goods have little nutritional value is a gross oversimplification that can mislead people. On the radio a while back I heard a lady from the Bush who had gotten involved in a local fresh foods production effort say, in effect, “I didn't know rice was bad for you.” She was not adequately informed that rice isn't bad for you, but that you need other foods for a good diet.

Too expensive to order by phone, mail, email, etc? If people can gamble hundreds on bingo and pull tabs, and buy bootlegged booze at \$30 to \$100 a bottle, not to mention other drugs, it seems there are enough discretionary dollars around to buy nutritious food.

The health problems aggravated by poor diet are more a function of education and individual choices than of unavailability of good food, whether it's local food or imported. Too often the individual choice is the easy, prepared, low-quality food instead of better food requiring more work to get and to prepare. Those “country foods” Craig Gerlach speaks of in the story don't walk in your door and jump on the stove!

But still, the renewed interest in Bush (and town) gardens to provide good food and the efforts to promote

it are encouraging. And Gerlach is right — “success will come from the bottom up” — but only if individuals and communities will take responsibility for their own well-being. If the effort turns into another “grant-eating” exercise, on the assumption that you need a grant to do anything, success may be more uncertain.

Finally, on page 15 it says: “But Alaska's changing ecosystems mean wild game can't be relied on.” As though Alaska's fish and game are disappearing before our eyes! They are not! The end of wild foods for people is not in sight. What is more at risk is the willingness of people to work hard to obtain those wild foods, even though with today's modern gear it's easier than it used to be.

True tales of hunger and starvation in earlier centuries confirm that relying on wild game (and fish) was always tough. But so were the people. They made it — even though the ecosystems changed over the millennia.

Developing supplementary healthy foods makes sense. Invoking myths and vague threats of impending doom are unnecessary for justification. Many people are already supplementing wild foods and store-bought foods with gardens, including me and my family, and have been for decades — even without high-tech gear!

Richard H. Bishop, '67, MS, wildlife management, Fairbanks

P.S. You're lucky we have to go harvest the spuds, carrots, etc., and put them in the root cellar — or this letter might have been much longer!

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UAF photo by Maureen McCombs.



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