

# NATIVE TRIBE OF KANATAK



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## News from the Kanatak Tribal Council

During the past month the Kanatak tribal council completed work on the Bicycle Safety Program. Twenty-five Kanatak tribal members were assisted with their bicycling needs. In addition, a great big thanks to Wal-Mart whose donation to the bicycle safety program helped make it a success. The remodeling of both Kanatak rental properties is now complete; as noted in the April newsletter Charlene Moss Realty was hired by the Kanatak tribal council to act as the rental agency. Shawn Shanigan and his wife Samantha recently went to Seward, installed a new ignition in the tribal boat *Little Star*, cleaned the boat and readied it for the market; so far, there has been one inquiry. The second Kanatak subsistence fishing trip has been scheduled to begin July 13 on the Kenai; tribal members who are interested in working the fish camp and helping with the harvest of salmon are requested to contact the executive director, tribal administrator or council members. Contact info is on the last page of this newsletter. The tribal council is still contemplating a council work session, but has not been able to set a date that is satisfactory to all. Finally, those on Facebook may have followed the odyssey of Pilot Point School in their quest to raise sufficient funds for a school trip to Hawaii; the Native Tribe of Kanatak was able to assist at the end, thereby fulfilling a dream of some tribal members.

The next council meeting is scheduled for the second Sunday in June, at 2:00 pm AKDT / 6:00 pm ESDT. Please attend. Your thoughts and comments are valued. If you wish to attend via telephone, here's the info: Call-in number = 1-866-895-5510 Passcode = 868521#

Additional details regarding council meetings can always be found on the Kanatak website (<http://www.kanatak.com>) under NEWS in the meeting minutes for the various dates. Previous newsletters and program applications are there, too. Check it out!

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**Unfortunately, I did not receive any photos or information about Kanatak tribal members, either living or deceased, who have served their country in the military. In any case, thanks to those of you who have served; we appreciate your many sacrifices and efforts to protect our way of life and freedoms.**



## Kanatak, Historically Speaking...

So, exploration for oil in the Kanatak area finally ended in the late 1950's, but in the meantime what was happening to the town of Kanatak and the people who had resided there? For over 20 years Kanatak had a church, school, post office, stores, pool hall and all the other trappings of modern society. In fact, for a time it was considered one of the largest settlements in Alaska. But eventually, without oil or salmon, the town could not sustain itself. By the late 1940's the school had closed, but the final blow came in April of 1954 when the post office closed. When residents returned to Kanatak that fall, after a summer of working in the salmon (fishing/canning) industry, they found little reason to stay. Without mail to move, steamers stopped calling in Kanatak. That left primarily expensive charter boats or planes as the only way to get mail and groceries. Or villagers were forced to haul their groceries and supplies over Summit Pass from Egegik. People left Kanatak so quickly in those final weeks—perhaps hurrying to get settled elsewhere before school started and winter arrived, perhaps thinking that they might come back—that they left behind most of their belongings and furniture.

But some elders in the tribe, namely Doris Lind, Alex Giacometti and Sophia Kalmakoff Rane, left before the bitter end. Having been born in Kanatak in 1920, Doris is certainly the oldest member of the tribe at 92 years young. Doris remembers that she left Kanatak as a young girl in 1938, hoping to make a living working in the salmon cannery at the nearby village of Chignik. She returned home to Kanatak for a few years, until prevented from doing so by the war in 1942 and 1943. After the war, the only opportunities to return to Kanatak were special occasions when her son Elia was able to fly her there in his plane. (By the way, the tribe has purchased a video camera for Doris and her family to record and share her memories of Kanatak.) Though his mother Pariscovia Shangin Giacometti was born in Kanatak, Alex Giacometti was actually born in Egegik, Alaska. Alex recalls that his family left Kanatak about 1946 and never returned. Sophia Kalmakoff Rane was born in Kanatak in 1937 and lived there until 1945, when she had to leave due to a back injury which she received while



playing with her dog on the Kanatak beach. Initially, Sophia was taken to Dillingham for medical attention, but the serious injury required several surgeries and ongoing medical attention. This necessitated foster care and long-term stays in hospitals in Sitka and Chicago for Sophia. Sophia has never returned to Kanatak.

In 1952 the Russian Orthodox Church listed ten people remaining in Kanatak. Two families, those of Peter Boskoffsky and Nick Shanigan, stayed until 1954 and 1956, respectively.

### Kanatak Connection through Memories

**Alex Giacometti recalls:** *I can also remember walking on the beach at low tide and finding sea urchins, cracking them open and eating the eggs; you know that you can now have sea urchin eggs at a sushi bar; they're called uni.*

## Alaska Native History or How Did We Get Here?

**Alaska gets a Legislature** The law that created the Territory of Alaska gave the region its first measure of self-government. The law spelled out the powers given to the territorial government, along with a long list of prohibitions. Most notably, the legislature was forbidden to control matters related to fish and game, borrow money, create counties, or deal with the management or disposition of land. This meant that powers dealing with natural resources, land, and money would remain with the federal government - exactly what the large fishing and mining companies wanted. In addition, any action of the legislature could be overridden by Congress, or vetoed by the governor, who was still a federal appointee. The legislature had limited powers to tax its citizens.

Given the strong opposition to the legislative bill by the mining and fishing companies who were worried about high taxes, Wickersham thought the bill was the best compromise. He said it was "as good a bill as the people of any territory have had and gave Alaska home rule without the expenditure of a nickel."

In opening remarks before the first territorial legislature, Rep. Charles Ingersoll of Ketchikan noted the severe limitations Congress had placed on the body. "Looking for the substance we find the shadow. Asking for bread, we get a stone," he said. "History repeats itself. When our fathers met to form the constitution of the United States, they felt that same distrust of the rank and file of the people that Congress has manifested in passing the Territorial Act. Between the lines there runs that careful trimming of the sails, the effort to avoid sunken reefs, that same distrust of permitting the common people to have a voice in the government."

Wickersham addressed the territorial legislators the following day. Stung by the criticism, he questioned Ingersoll's motives, saying that perhaps he was in the pocket of the absentee fishing companies who would naturally object to any efforts to protect fishermen and prevent exploitation of fishing resources. One of the legislators had served in the Washington legislature, another had served in Oregon and a third had served in the California legislature. "We had a copy of one of the proceedings of the Oregon legislature and on that we organized and started in," said Charlie Jones, a miner who represented Nome. For all of the complaints about its lack of power, the legislature dealt with many issues during its first 60-day session. It approved 84 bills that helped fill out the new governmental organization; lawmakers gave women the right to vote, and instituted a \$4 head tax on all men between 21 and 50 who were not volunteer firemen. In today's dollars, that would be about \$75 per person. The money from this tax was to be used to build roads. They amended the mining laws, adopted laws to regulate banks, made school attendance compulsory and allowed local governments to organize and enforce rules for health and sanitation.

One of the most difficult issues was whether the work day should be limited to eight hours in certain occupations. Legislators approved an eight-hour day for the machinery-intensive hard rock mining industry, but refused to extend it to the labor-intensive placer mining industry or to women workers.

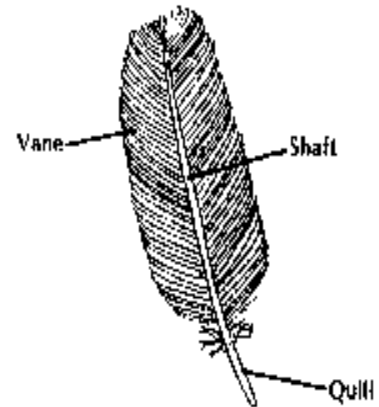
The Legislature also approved plans for what became the first Alaska Pioneers Home, designed to help poor prospectors. They made numerous requests to Congress for federal action, including two that would have long-lasting consequences. One was to ban the use of fish traps and the other was to build railroads to make Alaska more accessible. While fish traps remained a contentious issue until statehood in 1959, the federal government soon agreed to build a railroad—a decision that helped determine the direction of Alaska's future.



*First Valdez school, 1913*

## The Alutiiq Use of Feathers

Birds were a central part of classical Alutiiq society - both as an economic resource and as spiritual beings. In addition to eggs and meat, they provided a variety of feathers, which were used for important daily activities. Eagle feathers were used in mattresses and as fletching for hunting arrows and toy darts. Waterfowl down could be used to start a fire and feathered pelts were the primary material for clothing. Beautiful parkas were stitched from the skins of puffins and cormorants, and worn both as every day clothing and ceremonial garments.

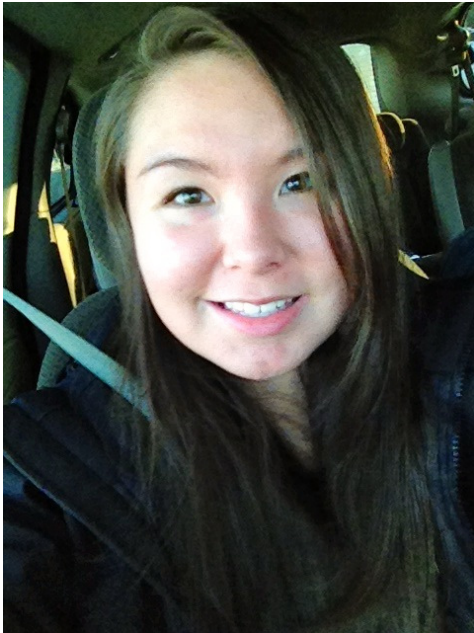


*Note the use of feathers and tufts on this gut-skin parka.*

Feathers were also used for decoration. Inserted between the strands of spruce root basketry, woven into the grass mats, or sewn into the seams of gut skin clothing, feathers accented the beauty of everyday objects. Feathers also adorned spiritually powerful hunting hats and ceremonial masks, symbolizing the magical ties between people and birds. Birds were seen as helping spirits. They fed families, helped fishermen find schools of fish, marked currents and rocks, and led mariners to land in dense fog. Modern fishermen still appreciate birds for these qualities.

The Alutiiq word for feather is *culuk*.

## Keeping Body and Soul Together, the Native Way



Hello fellow Kanatak tribal members,

My name is Brittany Arey. I am 17 years old and I currently live in Juneau, Alaska. I've been here for a little over a year now. During that year I have graduated from high school, got a job, and finished treatment. Yes, I came down to Juneau to go to treatment. It's something hard for me to say, because I am not proud of whom I used to be. *"My name is Brittany, and I am an alcoholic. I cannot change that. I've seen it in my family all of my life. I was hurt by it, more than anything that has ever hurt me. It's taken my father and mother away from me. It has taken my cousins, uncles, relatives away from me. It had taken myself away from me. Alcohol had control over me, and I knew I had to do something about it."*

I told my Gram I needed treatment; I wanted treatment. I could see myself hurting my family, becoming who hurt me since I had feelings. I hurt my great-grandparents, my grandma. That is when I knew it had to stop now, or I would end up like many

of our people, caught in their addiction, so caught up that our lives become living on the streets, thinking about only ourselves and our next drink.

I am forever grateful for my experiences from treatment. It has turned my life right-side up. I learned how to live life without drinking, and substance use. I've gotten closer to my family. I've learned how to feel my feelings and understand them (By the way, ignoring your feelings and letting them bottle up is a major reason for turning to substance use!). I graduated from high school, and got a job. I am now currently an intern with the Alaska Mental Health Board and the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse.

I do so much stuff that is helping communities all over Alaska with the same issues that I've had trouble with. I've taken part in the Alaska Youth Policy Summit, the Alaska Native Leaders Conference on FASD, I am creating "Alaskan Youth Against Abuse", and am Co-Chair of the Alaska FASD Partnerships Youth and FASD workgroup. I am making a difference, and I am different.

What are my plans for my future? I will continue my work here in Juneau, continuing the Alaska Youth Against Abuse group as long as I can, and begin my life. I am going to college, and become the person that I was always meant to be – someone my family can be proud of, my tribe can be proud of, and my Alaska Native people can be proud of. My dream? To be a leader, to be remembered as an Alaskan Native girl that has tried her best to make a difference in the depression of our people.

Also I've been asked by the Kanatak tribal leadership to share what I've experienced, learned and know; perhaps I can make a difference with Kanatak tribal members, too. For this reason, I've promised to do regular articles in upcoming Kanatak newsletters.

Thank you.

*Brittany Arey*

# Tribal Happenings *Celebrating those special moments in our lives...*



*Happy birthday* to these Kanatak tribal members who have birthdays in **May**:

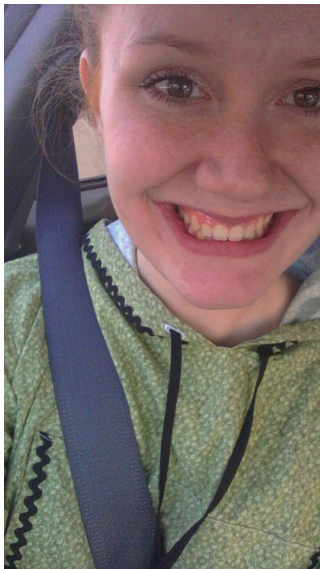
- May 1: Tim Forshey Sr. (56)
- May 1: Sadie Spargur (40)
- May 2: Roman Mosquito (5)
- May 2: Sophia Myers (63)
- May 13: Brandy Westlake (11)
- May 14: Angie Forshey (45)
- May 16: Shawna Main (35)
- May 19: Joe Kalmakoff (17)
- May 19: Frank Correa (67)
- May 20: Brittany Arey (18)
- May 21: Katherine Hansen (39)
- May 21: Christine Leyland (13)
- May 22: Arielle Willis (27)
- May 25: Tess McGowan (43)
- May 25: Eilish Wagner (10)

\*\*\*Jennifer Rubino reports that there will be a pow-wow in Eklutna, Alaska on June 30—July 1, 2012. Here's a photo of the 2010 pow-wow:



Happy Mother's Day to all the moms, grandmas and great-grandmas out there. Hope it's a wonderful day with your family!

\*\*\*After wearing them for 18 months, Nichole Shani-gan had her braces removed on April 19, 2012. Here's a photo of her pretty new smile:



## Kanatak Kids

Before the arrival of Westerners, Alutiiq hunters pursued fish from sleek ocean-going qayat or bidarkas, as the Russians later called them. There were three types of qayat: *Qayanguaq* - single-hatched: for fishing, traveling, and hunting fast animals like porpoise and whales; *Qayaqhpak* - double-hatched: for team hunting, particularly sea otters. The man in the front hatch hurled weapons while the man in the rear steadied and steered the qayaq; *Paitalek* - triple-hatched: Alutiiqs began making three-person boats in the Russian era. A large hatch in the center held a Russian trader, smaller hatches in the bow and stern provided seats for Native paddlers.

Color this picture as you wish. What do you think the men were hunting?



## Kuspuks, Kuspuks and more Kuspuks



Basically, a kuspuk is a long-sleeved hooded slip-over shirt with a large pocket in the front, somewhat like a hooded sweatshirt, but without a banded bottom. The cuffs, pocket and hood are edged with rick-rack or a similar decorative trim. The size of the pocket and the way the trim is applied vary widely among kuspuk-makers. Men's kuspuks are solid colors, usually blue, green, black or white, and have a square bottom that ends at the hips. Women's kuspuks are usually made from a patterned fabric, often a small floral print, and may have a short gathered skirt at the bottom. They may also be longer, essentially a dress, mid-thigh or knee length. On the other hand, some folks prefer a jacket-style kuspuk with a zipper down the front. The kuspuk is the quintessential Alaska Native attire; attend any Native gathering to see many different variations. If you'd like to own a kuspuk, but have no sewing skills yourself, Kanatak tribal member Katherine Harrington may be able to stitch one up for you. Contact her at 907-283-5466 or 740-0358. A google search will also reveal sources for kuspuk patterns, if you're a seamstress. Savannah, Nichole and Nathan Shanigan are pictured wearing their kuspuks; note the variety of styles.

# Right-Clicked

*Photos of tribal members*



Stacey Shanigan with baby Brittany Arey.



Egegik school kids, some of which are Kanatak tribal members.



Alexis Allen, daughter of Christina Hayes



Sisters: Heather Kalmakoff & Kathy Lakoduk.



Misty Apalone with her mother Wendy.



Nathan Shanigan playing with a basketball.

## Programs Available through Kanatak



### Do you need help with housing?

If you are a member in good standing with the Native Tribe of Kanatak and meet certain income requirements, you may be eligible for assistance from the Bristol Bay Housing Authority. The income requirements are established by HUD and vary depending on the place of residence and the number of family members. For example, to meet the income eligibility standards in the Mat-Su borough, where Wasilla is located, the yearly income for a family of three can be no more than \$54,450; yet, if that same family of three resided in the Anchorage area, that maximum would be \$58,000.

Through BBHA, there are currently programs for rental assistance, utility vouchers, home repairs, down-payment assistance for home purchase and crime prevention/youth or cultural activities. There is also the option for the Kanatak tribal council to assess the memberships' housing needs and create other programs in the future, subject to federal guidelines and BBHA approval.

To apply, you **must** fill out an 18-page application which includes supplying proof of income, such as yearly income tax forms. The application is available at the BBHA website: <http://www.bbha.org/apply.htm> Phone numbers for contact with either the King Salmon or Dillingham offices are also available at the above-listed website.

Once your application is complete, mail it to this address:

*Bristol Bay Housing Authority*

*PO Box 50*

*Dillingham, Alaska 99576*

**Do NOT mail your application to the Kanatak**

**tribal office!**



### Native Tribe of Kanatak

The following programs are available for the membership:

**Education Program:** Funds to be awarded to eligible tribal members seeking higher education and/or specific job-skill training required for employment/certification.

**Tribal Youth Activity Program:** Funds to be awarded to eligible tribal members between the ages of 1-18 for extra-curricular activities, such as school sports, boy/girl scouts, summer or sports camps, music lessons, dance lessons, etc.

**Emergency Assistance Program:** Funds for tribal members' unexpected emergencies that threaten basic quality of life, such as fire damage, leaking roof, non-functioning furnace, water heater, etc. (Low-income members should seek this assistance through BBHA.)

**Wellness Program:** Funds for education and promotion of healthy living, including weight-loss, suicide prevention, alcohol/drug prevention and tobacco-use prevention.

**Tribal Burial Assistance Program:** Funds to be awarded to help with final expenses of tribal members who were in good standing with the tribe at the time of passing; maximum award per deceased member = \$1,500.

**Tribal Social Activity Fund:** Funds for 2 activities directors to create and organize quarterly tribal social activities in both Alaska and the Lower 48.

**Culture Program:** Funds to promote culture and communication among tribal members.

**Bicycle Safety Program:** Program completed this year.

*These programs generally require the following:*

- *completed tribal membership/enrollment (member in good-standing)*
- *completed application for program*
- *documentation of need/amount, bids where requested, and proof/receipts of expenditures*
- *name/address of 3rd party to whom checks will be issued; as a rule, checks are not issued directly to tribal members.*

**Contact the executive director, tribal administrator or Kanatak tribal council for additional information about these programs.**

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