

October 2009

THE

NEWSLETTER

Fairbanks Native Association

## Linda Woods guides JOM with persistent advocacy

After more than 10 years directing FNA's Johnson-O'Malley (JOM) program, Linda Woods is not easily surprised by obstacles that slow or deny services to the children she serves. She's a realist who knows that determination enhances creativity, two values she applies liberally.

Even in the face of losing a grant request that would have funded needed tutors for young students, which recently happened, Linda is already reviewing deadlines for submissions to new funders. Grants augment shortfalls in the program's federal allotment of \$250,000, an amount that's been frozen since 1995.



Linda Woods

There were few indications where life would take her when she born in Nome, 60 years ago. Her reputed fiesty nature, however, may be a result of growing up with eight siblings. Her parents, Floyd and Martha Wheeler, were each 1/2 Inupiaq. Floyd came from Kotzebue, Martha from Point Hope. Floyd worked as a maintenance supervisor with the Federal Aviation Administration. In 1954, Floyd transferred from Nome to Tanana, Alaska. The agency reassigned him to Nome in 1965. The years in Tanana left the family with positive

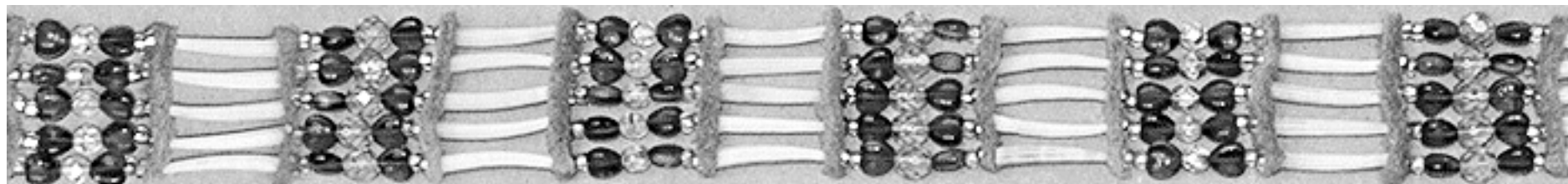
**JOM Director, See Page 2**

## FNA supports integrating cultural practices in all programs

## Elders teach youth subsistence skills



FNA is committed to sharing cultural and resource-based links to the land with our membership. Food gathering and subsistence skills provide vital connections to the land and the way of life that Alaska Natives value. Teaching and passing on this wisdom is primarily the role of elders. Much of this activity, planning events and engaging the youth, relies on volunteers. Their interest, time and generosity enriches FNA programs and that of other regional organizations serving Alaska Natives. We are indebted to their efforts and commitment. Whether it is spruce root gathering, cutting fish, skin sewing, or singing and dancing, these activities are unique and must be preserved. With their vast experience, elders often work with program staff to assure that activities are authentic and carried out with proper respect and care. FNA looks to its elders who volunteer their time as collaborators in the success of our programs. Thank you to all our volunteers. Here, Geraldine Charlie shows (L-R) Jacqueline Tritt, Rosalyn Tritt, Lawrence Perdue (peering over shoulder), and Cecelia Nation how to cut fish.



### JOM Director Cont' from Page 1

memories of the Interior.

A few years after graduating from high school in Nome Linda headed to the university in Fairbanks. She was recruited in an effort to boost the number of Alaska Natives with post-secondary degrees.

By the late 70s she had earned a bachelors in elementary education. In 1995, she completed a masters degree in education leadership.

Looking to put her skills to work, Linda took a teaching job in Tanana and became involved in civic life. She served in elected offices at both city and tribal councils. In 1983, she ran for election as mayor and served a three-year term.

Along the way, she took time to get married, raise a family, and later move to Fairbanks. Linda's husband, Al Woods, a retired carpenter from Rampart with years of experience at Interior Regional Housing Authority, had heart surgery in January. They have three daughters.

According to Linda, "years of fat foods caught up to him. But that didn't keep us from going to fish camp this year. He's been sticking with the rehab program, making healthy choices, changing his diet and getting more exercise."

Fish camp at Rampart draws the family together each summer.

"We take the whole family, the in-laws and the outlaws. When the fish are running people come up from town to help out. Counting the kids, there might be 20 people on a Saturday afternoon. All the grandkids can cut, salt and hang fish. In a good year we put up 200 cases

of jarred fish," she says.

In her office, telling stories from fish camp, there's an obvious relish in her voice. It's easy to imagine her callused hands picking and cutting fish, teaching new generations the practical arts of subsistence life.

The Johnson-O'Malley act is federal law, part of Roosevelt's New Deal of the 1930s. In the midst of the Great Depression, it was created to offset the cost of educating Native American children in local communities. In Fairbanks, JOM funds activities that enhance their education and development. It also provides leverage at the local school district, since it receives JOM funding.

Progress at the school district is also seen in the Mediation Agreement of 1987. Revised and upgraded in 2007, it is a legal document between FNA and the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. It formalizes an agreement to equalize influence in determining equity issues that may arise among Native students, their white peers and teachers. The project was a collaboration among the FNA administration, FNA Board of Directors and Linda. She remains the point person for FNA's Board Education Committee.

Working with the independence the task requires, Linda has become the go-to advocate for Native students and their parents.

"With the continued increase in Native kids in local schools, we're a vested interest in negotiations with the school district. We've good relations with the staff and discuss sensitive issues without becoming angry. More often than not, we come to terms," Linda said.

### JOM Director, See Page 3

## Ch'eghutsen' Back to School Picnic gets an "A" for the day

Since 2005, Ch'eghutsen' has sponsored a Back to School Picnic. This year Ch'eghutsen' held the event on August 13, 2009 at the Wilderness Pavilion at Pioneer Park.

Over 200 people joined us for the afternoon. Among many we were happy to see were students from Effie Kokrine's Charter School. They and their teachers walked from the school to Pioneer Park.

Ch'eghutsen' provided picnic food: hot dogs, hamburgers, potato salad, sodas, water and chips.

Fred Meyers, Inc. has been a partner with Ch'eghutsen' for the Back to School Picnic for the past few years. Thanks to its generosity we were able to provide 190 backpacks filled with

pens, pencils, paper, scissors, rulers, erasers, and protractors, a three ring binder and folders.

A drawing was held for school-aged children for the chance to win a backpack. Adults who joined us received a goodie bag that contained a coffee cup, picture frame, lunch bag and mug. Children four years and younger received a bag filled with supplies for craft activities.

Entertainment for the event included a tethered balloonist and a face painter. Both were kept quite busy the whole time. We also gave away tickets for train rides, mini golf and carousel rides.

Ch'eghutsen' provides community activities to encourage socializing opportunities for

### Fairbanks Native Association

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#### FNA's Mission

We provide our membership and the greater Fairbanks community quality services in a professional manner. These services are provided through special and innovative programs, which preserve the membership's unique lifestyle and culture, while improving the quality of life for the community.

Steve Ginnis, Executive Director  
Doreen Deaton, Deputy Director  
Duane Hoskins, Director of Finance  
Rhonda Howard, Director of Human Resources  
Perry Ahsogek, BHS Director  
Carrie Lucas, WCCIH Director  
Elizabeth Vaughan, Ch'eghutsen', Acting Prog. Man.  
Rob Finke, Graf, Acting Program Director  
Mary Willey, Head Start Program Director  
Angela Foster-Snow, Early Head Start Program Dir.  
Shirley Williams, PAT Program Director  
Freda Williams, Community Services Program Dir.  
Louise Glynn, FASAP Program Director  
Linda Woods, Johnson-O'Malley Program Director

their clients. The picnic is an event for clients to interact with others their own age with no one knowing they receive Ch'eghutsen' services. Through events such as this, clients process their experiences, helping to integrate them into the mainstream.

### Alaska Native Artists Summit

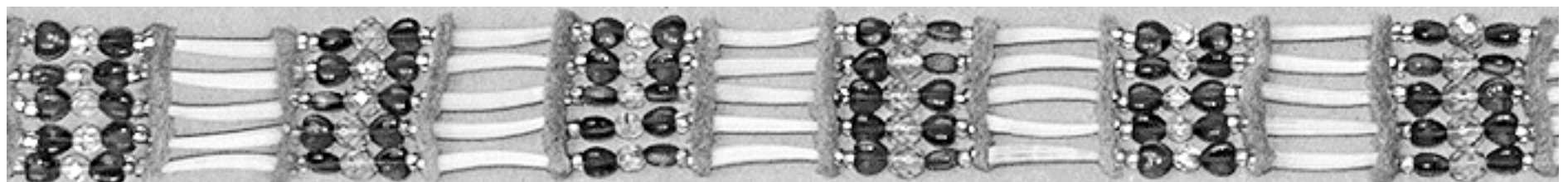
September 18 - 19, 2009

Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitor Cen.

There is a great opportunity for Native Artists coming up at in Fairbanks, Alaska. "Artists" include basket makers, beaders, painters, Snowshoe makers, carvers, sewers, writers, musicians, and more.

Meet gallery owners, copyright lawyers, and other experienced artists who can offer suggestions and support on how to best market and sell Alaska Native crafts locally and beyond! The summit will also include information about possible funding and apprenticeship opportunities.

For more information, contact Saunders McNeill at the Alaska State Council on the Arts, 907-269-661 or [saunders.mcneill@alaska.gov](mailto:saunders.mcneill@alaska.gov)



## Celebrating sobriety at the tribal hall

In keeping with our support of sobriety, FNA hosted a community event to celebrate and encourage Native Americans who say no to alcohol. The Sobriety Event was held at the TCC Tribal Hall on August 21.

Community Services took the lead in arrangements. The menu included chicken wings, meat balls, salad, coffee and tea.

A supply of school materials was provided by JOM. Additionally, door prizes included back packs, flashlights personalized with FNA's logo.

Entertainment was provided by the band Above Ground. According to its page at MySpace, the band got its start on the Koyukuk River. Cisco Beetus plays the bass and occasional guitar; James Albert on the guitar; and Pat Costello handles the drums. Call (907)968-2292 or (907)968-3500 to book the band. These musicians are available for weddings, graduation parties, house parties, birthdays.



*The Above Ground Band*

## Homeless BBQ offers full stomach, a smile and encouragement

This summer, in FNA's continuing effort to serve all members of the Native American community, a BBQ was held for Fairbanks homeless people. Community Services took the lead, arranging the menu and media.

The Breadline contributed banana cake as a dessert.

According to Ruth Esmailka, a program assistant, the July 31 event marked the 14th time it has been hosted by FNA. As in previous years, Community Services staged the BBQ in the parking lot next to its facility at 315 Wendell St.

It was advertised via handbills/flyers that were posted in locations where the target audience would see them.

In addition to food, FNA and its partners gave away door prizes. These items included sleeping bags, tents, jackets and tee shirts with FNA's logo.

## Doing it right takes time and practice; elders help show the way



*Joel Titus and Lawrence Perdue work with George Yaska on a sled building project. These are the sorts of activities that bind generations, produce good relationships while creating something of lasting value.*

### **JOM director, Cont' from Page 2**

JOM programs work closely with the Alaska Native Education, a program of the school district that operates with a parent committee.

As a former teacher, JOM's tutoring program is close to Linda's heart. Currently, there are two tutors in Fairbanks Schools, one at Hunter, the other at Effie Kokrine.

"Funding is the biggest challenge and it's

also the most frustrating. Dollars have been frozen for more than 10 years. With adequate funding, my ideal is to provide tutors and cultural activities to all K-12," she said.

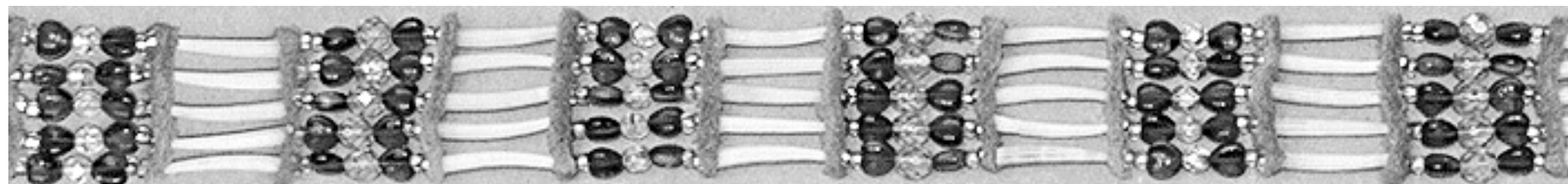
Even with limited funds and a staff of three, JOM has a long list of credits. The Potlatch Dancers, a team of young people practice weekly and are regularly invited to perform locally and in statewide venues.

**JOM director, See Page 4**

## Healthy, happy children gather to learn, share and have fun



*FNA's youth programs offer opportunities for cultural enrichment, experiences that build connections between generations and villages.*



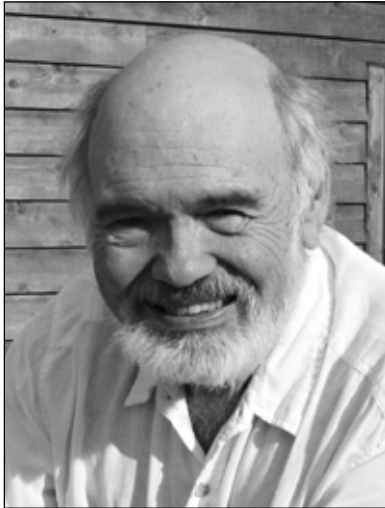


## Is a GED in your future? ALPA has the answer

Did you start a GED (general education diploma) program and not complete it? Do you find that the lack of a high school diploma keeps you in low paying jobs? Does the lack of a degree keep you from employment training? Have you collected enough life experience that you now want to go to college or another training program? Do you want to earn a GED?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, there's a new program in Fairbanks you should know about. Located in the TCC's Chief Peter John building, the Adult Learning Programs of Alaska (ALPA) is offering to help all Alaska Natives in the Doyon Region who want to achieve a GED.

The program is run by Jim Kowalsky, a long time resident of the Interior with years of experience coaching Alaska Native students. Another of Kowalsky's claims to fame is his signature mode of transportation. He's a regu-



Jim Kowalsky

lar long-distance cyclist, riding his bicycle from his home on Chena Hot Springs Rd. to his office at TCC.

Kowalsky says the ALPA GED project is a sweet deal. It offers village residents a 12-week program that leads to a diploma. And there is no cost to you.

Your only investment is determination and mental exertion. All other costs are covered; that includes air fare, lodging and food.

Getting paid to read and study, imagine that. The folks at ALPA are determined to reduce the obstacles to earning a degree. Even if you started a GED program years ago and did not complete it, you are welcome to begin again. It's never too late to learn and grow.

Included in the package are two one-week visits to Fairbanks, one at the beginning and another week at the end of the program. The first appointment in Fairbanks is for assessment and program introduction. The second is for completion and final testing.

Following graduation a workshop on careers, unions, and other work options is offered. Between the two visits to Fairbanks, village residents study at home with ALPA materials.

Regular telephone conferences with ALPA tutors keeps the study process moving forward.

Applicants from villages must be 18, in Fairbanks, 16-year-olds will be accepted. Want to learn more? Call Kowalsky at: 1-866-452-6434 x 232; FAX: 907-451-6598

## JOM director, Cont' from Page 3

In addition, JOM takes the lead or is a partner in an annual school supplies giveaway event; a health and wellness fair; Big Brothers Big Sisters; the TCC diabetes unity project; a partnership with Rotary Club to provide Christmas gifts to underserved children; and the annual Alaska Native Youth Basketball Tournament.

Created on a shoestring in 1999, the basketball tourney has become a big deal. It attracts major sponsors and nearly 200 players from across Fairbanks and some from outlying villages.

"Without a strong volunteer commitment we couldn't pull this off, said Linda.

The role of volunteers at the basketball tournament cannot be overstated. The concessions, the timer and scorekeeper are volunteers. So too are the set up and clean up crew. The people who coach each team are volunteers. In the early days, referees were also volunteers. However, to assure fair and well managed games the tourney contracts with a local sports association that provides qualified referees.

Like much of her work, the basketball tournament requires behind-the-scenes logistics, a high degree of organization and a vision of success.

Among people who know and work with Linda, they would also add healthy doses of persistence and determination. Some add the word watchdog. Most people then point approvingly to the results of Linda's tenure at JOM.

### Coming election needs your vote

City and Borough elections will be held on October 6. Look at the candidate's history and experience.

Do they represent your hopes for the future?

Consider the candidate's qualifications and then go to the polls and make your vote count.

### Voting is your right - Exercise it

### GED academy for Alaska Natives

WHEN: Sept 20 through October 3, 2009  
WHERE: Wedgewood Resort, Fairbanks  
WHAT: Day-long classes on site by our math, writing and reading instructors; accelerated crash courses; you will test there.

HOW: All room and meals are provided; travel will be paid to Fairbanks.

WHO: Alaska Native, 18 and up, city or village  
Call Jim Kowalsky for more information local 452-6434 X 232 or toll free 1-866-452-6434 X 232.

## FNA staff picnic: people, food, sun and fun



The annual staff picnic was held at Pioneer Park on July 24. According to estimates, 150 people attended, including staff, spouses and children. In addition to food, FNA provided door prizes, and tickets to ride the steam engine that circles the park.

