Sometimes the best way to share Alutiiq culture is to leave the museum! Not everyone has the time or opportunity to visit. Many of the people the Alutiiq Museum serves live far from Kodiak, work during gallery hours, or aren’t sure whether the museum will interest them.

To make it easier for people to connect with Alutiiq heritage, and offer a taste of its exhibits, the museum has been testing a pop-up display on Alutiiq history—a Mobile Museum. For the past two years, staff members have been traveling to community events with a tent of Alutiiq treasures. At the center of the display are trays of artifacts, ancestral tools for people to handle and explore. These pieces are from the museum’s teaching collection and specifically intended for touching. While patrons learn about the different eras of Alutiiq history, they can refit the parts of a harpoon or practice holding an ulu.

April Laktonen Counceller, the museum’s executive director, explains the purpose of the display. “One of our challenges is to get people to think of the museum as a fun place, where exploration is encouraged. We are more than a gallery with objects behind glass. We are a place where people can engage with exhibits and learn through doing. The Mobile Museum provides a taste of this. Connecting with staff members and examining artifacts helps people to understand that Alutiiq Museum is a fun, friendly place, where everyone is welcome.”

This year, the Mobile Museum visited Crab Festival, the Ouzinkie Native Corporation’s annual meeting, numerous school district events, and cultural celebrations in Kodiak, Old Harbor, and Port Lions. The simple display has been so popular that the museum is revamping it with grant funds from EMCards and Rasmuson Foundation. The newer, sturdier version will be weather proof and include new photo panels and an expanded set of artifacts.

“People love the artifacts,” said staff member and archaeologist Patrick Saltonstall. “For the new version of the Mobile Museum we are focusing on technology, with sections on hunting, fishing, collecting, and community celebrations. The artifacts in each area will include both old and modern objects. For example, in the fishing section your will find both modern and ancient net weights and net floats. People will still get to handle and assemble objects, and see the ingenuity of Alutiiq ancestors.”

“Ultimately, we hope that the Mobile Museum will excite people about Alutiiq traditions and encourage more community members to attend our programs and events” said Counceller. “The pop-up display has proven to be a great ice-breaker.”

Community members can schedule the Mobile Museum for events. To make a reservation, please contact Molly Odell, molly@alutiiqmuseum.org.

Mobile Museum Takes Alutiiq Heritage on the Road

A young visitor learns about Alutiiq tools in the Mobile Museum.
Camá’i – Hello,

Fun. Friendly. Unexpected. Those are some of the buzz words at the Alutiiq Museum these days as we think of ways to make our programs and events inviting. For four years we’ve been a part of New Pathways Alaska, an arts innovation workshop designed to help organizations like ours identify and work through challenges. The program has encouraged us to speak candidly with community members and look critically at our services. We’ve learned a lot.

We were a little surprised to find that museums can be intimidating places. Most of us know how to use a library or a public park. We know what to expect when we visit these places. But museums are unique, with unfamiliar rules, objects behind glass, and lots of reading! People told us they weren’t sure what they’d find in the Alutiiq Museum, some feared that the museum was not for them, or simply felt that museums were boring.

To address these perceptions, we have been testing new types of events, designed to engage people in new ways and with new resources. We invited people to add their own artwork to Pililuki, our Alutiiq graphic arts exhibit. We held a Spring Break Family Fair with crafts and an Alutiiq-themed photo booth. We hosted spear throwing in our parking lot! We held an island-wide Alutiiq-themed coloring contest.

We are also looking at ways for people to connect to the museum and Alutiiq heritage without coming to our gallery! This has involved linking museum activities with community events and taking Alutiiq artifacts on the road with our Mobile Museum (Page 1).

This fall, as we completed our years of innovation, we considered ways to sustain excitement and learning. With funding from the Alaska Community Foundation our board met to set goals for the museum’s next five years, and then staff members planned fun and friendly experiences for 2019. We envision the museum as a vibrant public space, where people are comfortable, spend time exploring and creating, and add share their ideas. This initiative will involve improvements to our facilities as well as our programs. Good things are on the horizon.

Wishing you a peaceful, happy holiday season, and great adventures in the new year.

April/Isiik Counceller, PhD
Executive Director
Winter in the Kodiak region comes with large, slippery deposits of kelp on local beaches. This giant variety of brown seaweed can grow over 100 feet long and is abundant in Kodiak’s nearshore waters. As the ocean cools in the fall, kelp plants die, and impressive quantities wash ashore. Like many other coastal resources, Alutiiq people made good use of nasqulut—using it for line, to bail boats, and as food. Kelp pickles are still a favorite in Alutiiq kitchens.

Kelp is the subject of a traveling exhibit, visiting the Alutiiq Museum this winter. Underwater Forests of the Aleutians is a ten-panel display that examines the life history of Alaska’s kelp forests and their importance to sea mammals, fish, and shellfish. The exhibit also considers human connections to kelp. Some archaeologists suggest that the first coastal peoples in Alaska paddled out of Asia following resource-rich kelp forests.

A team of marine scientists developed the exhibit in partnership with the Museum of the Aleutians and funding from the National Science Foundation. It will debut in the Alutiiq Museum’s gallery on January 9th and be available to visitors until April 6th. The exhibit will include hands-on activities for youth and examples of kelp in Alutiiq culture.

Coloring Alutiiq

Children are coloring Alutiiq at kitchen tables around Kodiak. Students are coloring Alutiiq in Ouzinkie School classrooms. Pediatric patients are even coloring Alutiiq at the Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage. Young people across the Alutiiq world are enjoying drawings of animals, tools, and clothing, and adding their own creative touches.

Published in September, Coloring Alutiiq is the museum’s latest educational resource. The thirty-two-page coloring book features images created by Hanna Sholl. The images link Alaskan animals with the tools Alutiiq people used to harvest them and the clothing women created from animal skins.

To celebrate the release of the book the museum held a student coloring contest. Community judges Hanna Sholl, Denise Anderson, and Kimberly Knight reviewed more than sixty entries and selected four winners—preschool: Phoebe Overbeek, elementary school: Savannah Waldrop, middle school: Patricia Villaran; and high school: Wyatt Lotzer. Their beautiful artwork can be seen on the museum’s website at https://alutiiqmuseum.org/learn/contest, with a slide show of all the imaginative entries.

Coloring Alutiiq is available for $10.50 from the Alutiiq Museum Store—in our gallery or online. On the first Friday of each month, the museum shares a pair of pages from the book on its website, for free download. Visit the link above for a copy. The Coloring Alutiiq project was generously sponsored by The CIRI Foundation and the City of Kodiak.
**More than a Summer Job**

Many young people spend their summers stocking shelves, waiting tables, cutting grass, or filing. It is honorable, important work, but it is not always exciting. Dehrich Chya wanted a different experience, one that would feed his interest in Alutiiq culture. With financial support from the Old Harbor Native corporation, Chya got his wish. For three months he interned with the Alutiiq Museum, working on diverse projects and learning from the museum’s entire team. Some days he cared for artifacts in the museum’s lab. Other days he organized and attended Elder sessions or helped tourists at the front desk.

“It was the best summer job I could have asked for,” said Chya. “I got to sharpen my language skills, conduct research, and share my culture.”

One of Chya’s first assignments was labeling a collection of historic artifacts from Akhiok. Every artifact in the museum has a number, carefully applied and logged with a description. As Chya inventoried the objects, he came across an old journal. Tucked inside were five negatives with scenes from the community, images not viewed in about a century.

“Finding those photos was the most exciting part of working with the collections. It was really cool to see Alutiiq people and places and connect them to the objects in front of me.”

A student of the Alutiiq language, Chya also spent time searching historic documents from the late 1700s and 1800s for Alutiiq/Sugpiaq vocabulary.

“I found all kinds of little-known material. The most interesting Sugt’stun vocabulary lists were compiled by foreign travelers to Kodiak Island—like Nikolai Rezanov who visited in 1805. This list has around 1,200 Kodiak-Alutiiq words! While it is written in Cyrillic, there are some really interesting words that are different from those we use today. For instance, today we say pinguat for beads. Rezanov writes that the word was something like cungawet.”

In August, the Alutiiq Museum travelled to Old Harbor to host a Night at the Museum an event with artifacts and cultural activities. It was Chya’s first visit to the community.

“Although my family is from the village, I had never been there. My grandma, June Simeonoff Pardue, who was raised in Old Harbor, got to travel with us. Seeing the community with her made the trip truly special.”

This fall, Chya continues to work at the museum, with support from the Old Harbor Native Corporation and several grants.

“I am very grateful,” said Chya. “The part time position allows me to work, advance my research and collections skills, and pursue a Masters in Rural Development through the University of Alaska Fairbanks.”

As part of his studies, Chya is documenting Kodiak Alutiiq places names; collecting names and noting their significance. His project is just beginning, but he is already planning to publish the results, so they are widely available.

“I want the corporation’s investment in me to provide a great tool for others,” he said.

Although the Alutiiq Museum does not fund internships, we are happy to work with enterprising students like Dehrich who can find their own support. Please contact Chief Curator Amy Steffian, amy@alutiiqmuseum.org, with your internship ideas. Winter is the perfect time to plan a summer experience.

*Above: Derich Chya in Kodiak, October 2018. Photograph by Joshua Corbett, courtesy of Koniag, Inc.*

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Ataaq-an k'aalq'a-llu alagnanék ilillriakut pa’t’na’iwigmen. My older sister; my dad, and I put berries in the freezer.
Fishing at Qik’rtangcuk

Next time you take a walk on Near Island, imagine yourself 3,000 years in the past. The island looked different then—there were no trees. But even in this distant era it was a place people gathered. As you stroll through the grass and alders, you find a small group of Alutiiq fishermen. They are catching cod and sculpin from kayaks. Others are collecting clams and mussels from the rocky shore. And above the beach, on a small knoll, people are butchering their catch, discarding the waste, and preserving fish filets over slow burning, smoky fires.

This is the picture Alutiiq Museum archaeologists built from excavations at the Qik’rtangcuk (Little Island) site last summer. With the first scrapes of their trowels, the crew of scientists, students, and volunteers started uncovering plummetts and cobble spalls. A plummet is a grooved stone used as a fishing line weight while a cobble spall is quickly-made cutting tool used to butcher fish. Right away these tools provided clues that this was a fishing site. The small site was also full of black soil, stained with the charcoal of ancient fires and filled with rocks cracked and discolored by heat, abundant signs of fires.

All of these many finds suggested that the Qik’rtangcuk was a fish camp, but one last piece of evidence confirmed that suspicion — fish bones! Buried in the site were clumps of well-preserved fish bones and bits of clam and mussel shells. Although a full study of the bones is underway, we know that they are from cod and other marine fish.

Other clues to the activities at Qik’rtangcuk come from things the crew did not find. Conspicuously absent were salmon bones. This is not surprising, given the lack of salmon streams on Near Island. The team also did not find the remains of houses or household objects like lamps. Qik’rtangcuk wasn’t a place people lived, it was a place people came to fish and preserve their catch. One of the many other ancient Alutiiq settlements in Chiniak Bay was probably the home-base for Qik’rtangcuk fishermen.  

Left: Qik’rtangcuk excavators hold examples of cobble spalls, sharp edged flakes knocked off beach cobbles and used to butcher fish. Right: A sculpin head bone from the Qik’rtangcuk midden.

Join our Team

Do you enjoy talking to people? Are you interested in Alutiiq history? The Alutiiq Museum seeks a friendly, organized person to coordinate our educational programs and resources. The Educational Outreach Coordinator will work 30 hours a week, Tuesday through Saturday, as a member of the museum’s professional team. To apply, please submit a cover letter, a resume, and the museum’s employment application to Assistant Director Rose Wilson by Friday, November 30 at 4:00pm. Applications may be dropped at the museum, emailed to Wilson (rosanne@alutiiqmuseum.org), or submitted through ALEXsys, Alaska’s online job service. Please visit https://alutiiqmuseum.org/opportunity for a job description and application.
Collections

Koniag Tribal Library at the Alutiiq Museum

In the age of Google and Wikipedia, people often limit their research to the Internet. The World Wide Web is packed with useful information, but if you really want to know about Alutiiq heritage, it’s important to dig deeper. Much of the written record of Alutiiq history is in books, technical reports, journals, and documents that can be hard to find. For many years, the Alutiiq Museum has worked to locate and obtain these references. Our library is small, but it is a great compilation of information on the Alutiiq world. And it’s open to the public.

This summer, the museum became the official tribal library of Koniag, Inc. and received funding from the Institute for Museum and Library Services to make its library collections more accessible. A Native American Library Services grant allowed us to purchase shelving, move books out of staff members’ offices and into a designated library space, update our book tracking software, and equip a study area for visitors. The Koniag Tribal Library is now housed in its own room in the Alutiiq Center basement, with work tables, a computer, printer, phone, and Internet access.

Moving and tracking nearly 3,000 books required a lot of help. Museum staff members and volunteers from Koniag, Inc. worked together on the physical move. Stacey Simmons, Alexandria Troxel, Melinda Cortez, Meghan Kelly, and Felicia Martin helped us to build bookcases, carry books, and organize the material by subject. They even hung prints and programmed a phone and printer to service the library.

In addition to the physical move, the museum moved its digital library records. Summer intern Will Monroe, a recent Stanford University graduate in computer science, started this process. He designed a new library database and migrated the old library catalog into the new program. Now museum staff members are updating the location of each book in the database, working shelf by self to make sure every item is properly logged and located! In the coming year we plan to expand the library. Staff members are compiling a wish list of needed resources for the library—publications that we would like to add. Our goal is to create the best possible collection of resources on all things Alutiiq.

What will you find in the Koniag Tribal Library? Our current books are organized by categories. These include Language Education, Natural History, Anthropology, Archaeology, International Indigenous Studies, Alaska Native Studies, Museum Management, Kodiak History, and much, much more. The library also features photograph collections, films, maps, and recordings.

While the Koniag Tribal Library is non-circulating, visitors cannot check out books, anyone may visit by appointment and use the materials in the library. Staff members are available to help with research. For more information, or to make an appointment to visit the library, please contact Collections Manager Amanda Lancaster amanda@alutiiqmuseum.org. Bring your research questions!

Dionisio Barboza III explores the Koniag Tribal Library

Shop the Alutiiq Museum Store this holiday season!

Museum Gift Bag Special

Each durable canvas bag is decorated with “Foods from the land”, featuring edible plants found on Kodiak. It is loaded with all kinds of Alutiiq goodies, including our Plantlore book, embossed journal and notebook with pen, a thermal travel mug and our new “Coloring Alutiiq” book. A $75 value for the special price of only $55!

ALASKANS, SUPPORT THE ALUTIIQ MUSEUM WITH A GIFT FROM YOUR PFD!

PICK. CLICK. GIVE. For more information go to: pickclickgive.com
Community Members Honored

At the 2018 Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) conference three members of the Kodiak community were honored for their service to Native people—Margaret Agnguarta Roberts, Carl Marrs, and Jim Dillard. All three have served the Alutiiq community with distinction and supported the Alutiiq Museum’s work. We congratulate these leaders for their well-deserved awards and thank them for their outstanding service to our community. Asirtuq—It is good.

Margaret Agnguarta Roberts

Roberts received the Hanna Paul Solomon “Woman of Courage” Award for her lifetime commitment to heritage preservation. Roberts is the founder of the Kodiak Alutiiq Dancers and was a member of the culture committee that first envisioned the Alutiiq Museum. She has devoted more than thirty years to promoting cultural education and wellness, as a dancer and through her service to numerous organizations. These include the Kodiak Tribal Council, the Kodiak Area Native Association, Koniag, Inc., and the Alaska Sea Otter and Seal Lion Commission to name a few. The daughter of Martha Patarochin and Ronald Fadaoff, Roberts was born and raised in Kodiak and is a graduate of Kodiak High School. She is currently the chair of the Alutiiq Heritage Foundation, the organization that governs the Alutiiq Museum. Roberts’s Alutiiq name means “One Who Dances”, and she continues to perform with the Kodiak Alutiiq Dancers.

Margaret Roberts with April Counceller at the Musée Boulogne-sur-Mer, France.

Carl Marrs

The Alaska Federation of Natives named Carl Marrs, the Chief Executive Officer of the Old Harbor Native Corporation, its Citizen of the Year. The award honored Marrs’ successful efforts to change federal tax law in ways that allow Native Corporations to better serve their shareholders with dividends and services. He was also applauded for mentoring non-profit leaders, work that has helped service organization support the Native community. Marrs, who was born in Seldovia, attended school in Kodiak, worked in commercial fishing, and served in the United States Marine Corps before joining the Native corporate world. He holds an honorary degree in Public Service from Alaska Pacific University, which recognizes his contributions to many Alaskan organizations. The award was his second recognition as AFN’s Citizen of the Year. He was first honored in 2001.

Carl Marrs, courtesy of the Old Harbor Native Corporation.

Jim Dillard

The Denali Award, which recognizes the service of a non-Native individual to the Alaska Native community, went to Jim Dillard. An educator, Dillard taught cultural arts in Port Lions and Kodiak beginning in the 1980s. He was one of the first classroom teachers to connect students with Alutiiq heritage. Over thirty years, his efforts helped to revitalize Alutiiq carving traditions. Dillard was born in the mountains of eastern Oklahoma and has been carving since he was a child. He is known for his careful studies of Alutiiq wood-working technology, from the selection and preparation of wood to the design of tools used in manufacturing household items and ceremonial objects. He makes many of his carving tools and his artwork has been widely shown. Dillard has been an instructor for Alutiiq Museum programs, shared his knowledge at public lectures, and generously donated carvings to the museum’s educational collection.

Events

Calendar

November 17, Noon - 3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, make a holiday ornament

November 22-23 | Closed for Thanksgiving

November 24, Noon - 4:00 pm | Small Business Saturday, shop Museum Store specials

November 24 - December 22 | Free holiday admission to the museum

December 1, 10:00 am | Holiday Bazaar, early bird shopping for museum members

December 1, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm | Holiday Bazaar, buy handmade gifts from Native and local in our gallery

December 7, 5:00 - 7:00 pm | First Friday, Bruce Nelson

December 15, Noon - 3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, decorate Alutiiq gingerbread cookies

December 17, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm | Members’ Monday, special museum store sale

December 23 - January 1 | Museum closed for the holidays

January 4, 5:00 - 7:00 pm | First Friday, featuring artist Layla Williams

January 7, 7:00 pm | Russian Orthodox Starring, carols and refreshments for Russian Christmas

January 19, Noon - 3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, make Alutiiq valentines

February 11 - 13, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm | Craft Saturday, make Alutiiq valentines

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Alutiiq Museum
ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPOSITORY

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Make payable to: Alutiiq Heritage Foundation 215 Mission Rd. 1st Floor, Kodiak, AK 99615

Credit cards: join or renew securely online, with options & subscription memberships at: http://alutiiqmuseum.org/give
Or call our front desk at 1-844-425-8844

All memberships include a year of museum admission, store discounts, and invitations to members-only events. At the Ilat level and above, members receive a free copy of the Alutiiq Wild Foods Cookbook.

Emaaq puqirpiartuq.—My grandma is very wise.
Looking for something to do with your friends and family this holiday season? If you're a current member, you already enjoy free admission to the Alutiiq Museum. Now, thanks to the generous support of KeyBank, everyone gets in for free between November 25 and December 23! Add a little local culture to your holidays with a visit to the Alutiiq Museum, a gift to our community from KeyBank.

**November 25 – December 23**
**FREE ADMISSION**

- **November 17, Noon - 3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, make a holiday ornament**
- **November 22-23 | Closed for Thanksgiving**
- **November 24, Noon - 4:00 pm | Small Business Saturday, shop Museum Store specials**
- **November 24 - December 22 | Free admission to the museum members**
- **December 1, 10:00 am | Holiday Bazaar, early bird shopping for museum members**
- **December 1, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm | Members’ Monday, special museum store sale**
- **December 7, 5:00 - 7:00 pm | First Friday, Bruce Nelson**
- **December 7, 7:00 pm | Russian Orthodox Starring, carols and refreshments for Russian Christmas**
- **December 15, Noon - 3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, decorate Alutiiq gingerbread cookies**
- **December 17, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm | Members’ Monday, special museum store sale**
- **December 19, Noon - 3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, make Alutiiq valentines**
- **December 23 - January 1 | Museum closed for the holidays**
- **January 4, 5:00 - 7:00 pm | First Friday, Layla Williams**
- **January 7, 7:00 pm | Russian Orthodox Starring, carols and refreshments for Russian Christmas**
- **January 19, Noon - 3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, make Alutiiq valentines**
- **February 11 - 13, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm | Valentine’s Sale, 10% off all jewelry**

**ALASKA STATE CENTER FOR THE ARTS**

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**Events**

- **November 23-24 | Closed for Thanksgiving**