



# University of Alaska/Anchorage Daily News CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST



For the ninth year, the University of Alaska, the UAA Alumni Association and the Anchorage Daily News are offering Alaska's amateur writers a chance for cash awards and publication in the Anchorage Daily News Sunday magazine, We Alaskans. There are competitions in fiction, poetry and nonfiction at five different levels.

## Fiction

	1st Prize
Grades 6 and under	\$50
Grades 7 through 9	\$50
Grades 10 through 12	\$50
Alaska College Students*	\$100
Open to the Public	\$100

## Poetry

	1st Prize
Grades 6 and under	\$50
Grades 7 through 9	\$50
Grades 10 through 12	\$50
Alaska College Students*	\$100
Open to the Public	\$100

## Non-fiction

	1st Prize
Grades 6 and under	\$50
Grades 7 through 9	\$50
Grades 10 through 12	\$50
Alaska College Students*	\$100
Open to the Public	\$100

## Grand Prize

**Editor's Choice \$100**

The Grand Prize will be given to an overall winner selected by the final judging panel. The Editor's Choice award will be selected by the editor of We Alaskans.

## Entry Form University of Alaska Anchorage Daily News 10th ANNIVERSARY CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST

Name

Address

City

Zip

Phone

Age

School or college currently attending

(Please check the appropriate boxes)

- Fiction(30 pages maximum)**
- Grades 6 and under
  - Grades 7 through 9
  - Grades 10 through 12
  - Alaska College Students\*
  - Open to the Public
- Poetry(3 poems maximum)**
- Grades 6 and under
  - Grades 7 through 9
  - Grades 10 through 12
  - Alaska College Students\*
  - Open to the Public
- Non-fiction(30 pages maximum)**
- Grades 6 and under
  - Grades 7 through 9
  - Grades 10 through 12
  - Alaska College Students\*
  - Open to the Public

### PUBLICATION RELEASE

I hereby certify that my entry is my own original work and I give my permission for the Anchorage Daily News to publish it in whole or in part.

Signature

Deadline: Tuesday, April 30, 1991.

ATTACH THIS ENTRY FORM TO YOUR MANUSCRIPT

## 10TH ANNIVERSARY



\*A college student is defined as one who is currently pursuing studies on a credit basis at an accredited institution of higher education. The UAA Alumni association is sponsoring prizes for College Student winners.

## Contest Rules

Deadline: Tuesday, April 30, 1991

- The Creative Writing Contest is open only to Alaska residents. Those not eligible to compete include employees of the Anchorage Daily News, University of Alaska faculty; all judges and the judges' immediate families.
- Any work published previously in any newspaper, magazine or book is ineligible. Writing must be original work created by the contestants.
- Entries are limited. Each contestant cannot submit more than a total of 30 pages of fiction, 30 pages of non-fiction, or more than three poems.
- Manuscripts should be neatly typewritten and double-spaced. Young children may submit handwritten copy. Each entry — even one-page poems — must be accompanied by a completed entry form.
- Entries must be received or postmarked no later than midnight, Tuesday, April 30, 1991.
- Mail or deliver your manuscript(s) with attached entry form(s) to:  
UAA Alumni Relations Office  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
3211 Providence Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99508
- Neither the Anchorage Daily News, the University of Alaska, nor their staffs can be responsible for submitted manuscripts. Due to the large number of entries, no submissions will be returned by mail. However, manuscripts can be picked up at the UAA Alumni Relations Office during July and August only.
- Preliminary judging will be performed by statewide panels of Alaska writers, poets and school teachers (teachers will not be allowed to judge their own students). Final judging will be performed by George Bryson and Kathleen McCoy (Anchorage Daily News) and Thomas Sexton and Ronald Spatz (University of Alaska Anchorage creative writing program). The final judges will select the Grand Prize; the editor of We Alaskans will select the Editor's Choice.
- Winners will be announced in the Anchorage Daily News Sunday magazine, We Alaskans, in late June. Selected entries may be published in We Alaskans in whole or in part.
- Winners agree to publication and/or broadcast of their names and/or photographs for promotional purposes without additional compensation.
- The decisions of the judges are final. Submission of any entry indicates acceptance of all contest rules.

## Editor's Notes

By GEORGE BRYSON

**O**n the adjoining page today you'll notice an announcement for the 10th Anniversary University of Alaska/Anchorage Daily News Creative Writing Contest — a competition nearly as old as our magazine itself. An entry blank is included, and we strongly encourage writers of all ages to participate.

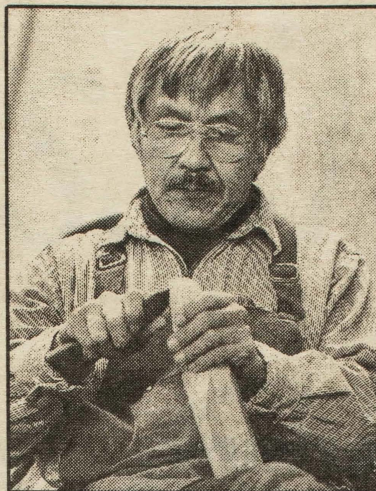
The contest has grown considerably since 1981, when UAA English professor Ron Spatz first proposed the idea to our editors. Back then all students 18 and under had to compete against each other. Today we offer separate prizes in fiction, non-fiction and poetry for students in elementary school, junior high and high school. It's a deliberate effort to encourage more participation by young writers.

The contest also has grown geographically. Last year more than 40 of the award-winning entries — a majority — came from places outside Anchorage, including points as far-flung as Adak, Sitka, Barrow, Kotzebue, Tok, Ketchikan, Valdez and Unalaska. The quality of submissions has improved as well.

Recognizing both trends, we decided this year to broaden our judging panels to include writers and poets throughout the state. It will include the likes of Jean Anderson in Fairbanks, Richard Nelson in Sitka, Sheila Nickerson in Juneau and Nancy Lord in Homer — as well as others we'll mention in the future. Our appreciation to all.

Today's cover story, "Masters and Apprentices," comes to us compliments of senior Daily News photographer Fran Durner, who has been interviewing and photographing Native artists all across the state during the past year. Durner's association with *We Alaskans* dates back to our beginnings as well. We hope you enjoy her work.

## This Week



FRAN DURNER / Anchorage Daily News

**P**ASSING THE GIFT — MASTERS AND APPRENTICES: For the past 10 years, "masters" of several Native art forms in Alaska have shared their ages-old cultural skills with a newer generation of Native artists — all through the Master Artist and Apprentice Program sponsored by the Alaska State Council on the Arts. Daily News photographer Fran Durner traveled the state interviewing and photographing some of the masters and apprentices. **Page 5.**

**COVER:** Athabascan beaders, from left: Shirley Holmberg, Lily Pitka, Sharon Attla. Photo by Fran Durner.

**LEFT:** Tlingit carver Nathan Jackson works on a Raven rattle during a carving workshop at the Native Heritage Center in Ketchikan.

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## We Alaskans

January 20, 1991 Vol. 13, No. 3  
 Editor..... George Bryson  
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 Contributors..... Richard Leo, Shelley Gill, Bill Hunt  
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Copyright 1991, Anchorage Daily News  
 Free-lance articles for *We Alaskans* may be sent on speculation to the magazine editor at the Anchorage Daily News, P.O. Box 149001, Anchorage 99514-9001. Topics should focus on Alaska environments and lifestyles. Payment upon publication.

## General Delivery

# Leaving city, heading home is cat's meow

By DIANA CONWAY  
 Halibut Cove

**I** recently got home from a week in Anchorage and was searching for a metaphor to explain the difference between life in the "big" city and rural life. Then I remembered Beany (not her real name), the pampered cat of the Anchorage house where I stayed. Beany is that modern-day invention, the indoor cat. She's been declawed, and she rarely sets foot across the stoop. To me, being in Anchorage is like being a cat imprisoned in an overfurnished house.

Beany sits in the apartment window all day and watches the inaccessible world. She breathes indoor air and smells indoor smells. Anchorage is surrounded by woods and mountains, but when I am stuck there on business, they are as far beyond my reach as the forbidden street is to an indoor cat. The city air is heavy with offensive odors and sounds. There are birds out there somewhere, but Beany and I are unaware of them until a Bohemian waxwing crashes to its death against the window.

The country cats where I live spend their

days on outside patrol, sharpening their claws on trees, setting up ambushes for squirrels and shrews and defending their territory against each other. Beany doesn't do anything to earn her Purina Cat Chow except purr ingratiatingly on the nearest available lap.

And what productive work did I accomplish during my week in Anchorage? I didn't haul one bucket of water or chop one load of wood. I didn't catch a fish or pull in a shrimp pot. One morning I moved some money around on paper at the credit union. Another day I went to Costco and bought some goods I could have lived without. Then I went to an important committee meeting. Seven of us sat around purring at each other for a few hours, but we didn't catch any mice.

Beany's mice are the flannel catnip variety. She gets high on them (with apologies to the anti-marijuana lobby) and works off her nervous energy by streaking up and down the stairs in a flash of fur. When I'm in town, I too dash around nervously. I drive here and there, visit this old friend or that, see the latest movie, fill a bag with library books, try out the newest restaurants. I feel exhausted, but I haven't really had any exercise.

Beany rarely tries to escape from the house. She likes the feel of warm carpet better than frozen concrete. A lot of my friends, however, seem to be dreaming of running away from Anchorage. One friend works as a receptionist on the top floor of a new glass building. Last week we watched the 4 o'clock alpenglow on the Mount Susitna together and between phone calls she told me how she really belongs in the country. I didn't remind her she'd have to give up showers and flush toilets if she wanted the beauty and solitude of my house.

I can view a trip to town as something I *have* to do or something I *get* to do, depending on how long I've been in the Bush. But coming back to the country is always a relief. Life feels at once more rhythmic and more purposeful. However, my conditioning is shot. I pant on the short uphill walk to the llama barn, and my shoulders ache after a five-minute row to pick up my mail. If I stayed in town any longer than a week, I'm afraid I'd turn into — with apologies to Beany — a fat cat. 🐱

Diana Conway lives in Halibut Cove.

## Watching television is painful enough; hearing it is sheer torture

In the upper Susitna valley I receive, on my battery-powered radio, an FM signal from an Anchorage television station courtesy of a repeater station in Talkeetna.

I don't know whether it's KBOZ or KDOG, though you'd think that by now I'd pay attention to the call letters.

That's an indication of how often I tune into any television broadcast.

Television remains a mysterious medium to me.

But I do know that the radio-relayed station has cartoons on Saturday mornings. A few years ago, when I discovered the station buried in the furthest left-hand corner of the dial, I realized that the very loony tunes garbling from the speakers were just that. I called my young son over and announced, "These are cartoons!" He listened enthralled for about 10 minutes and then said, "This is dumb if you can't see it."

If you've ever worried about the effect that Saturday morning cartoon shows are having on kids, try covering the TV screen with a towel and just listening. Dialogue is an occasional imbecilic non sequitur interpolated into *boooooiiiings* and *wheeeees* and *blams* and other sound effects. The only coherent, articulate messages are, of course, the commercials, which are emphatic. The Smurfs and Bugs and Sylvester and their cartoon friends all talk like babies, squeaking and slurring and spluttering. But when the bass-voiced announcer intones, "Buy one now!" it's like the voice of God.

Here are some other reactions to television-without-the-picture from one who watches the World Series every October in sports bars but virtually nothing else. I admit that my opinions are based on only a few hours of television *listening* a year, so scientific research is not happening here.

Still, I believe that the laugh tracks on sitcoms are programmed to occur after every third line of dialogue. Even if the dialogue is "Hello, Betty." "Hello, Bob." "How are you?" it's followed by a riotous ha-ha-ha-ha. I figure it's a form of subliminal message for couch potatoes. I've also come to believe that the same laugh track recorded in Culver City in 1958 is still used today, over and over, to cut costs. I once attended a bar mitzvah where everyone spoke Yiddish. The laughter during the dinner reception was incomprehensible. But at least it was spontaneous. Listening to the laugh track of a sitcom is loonier than listening to cartoons.

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*If you've ever worried about the effect that Saturday morning cartoon shows are having on kids, try covering the TV screen with a towel and just listening.*

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Television dramas are made dramatic mainly by music. A drama on stage is based on a speech. On television it's based on bum-bum-bum-bum-BUM-BUM, followed by a dissonant orchestral chord overdubbed with a shriek. I know that television is a visual medium, but it's painfully obvious that the spoken word only gets in the way of grunts and shouts and the inevitable buh-BUMMMM.

The casual patter of television news anchors is embarrassing to watch, but at least on screen there's a striking young woman to distract attention from the inanity. Maybe the whole point of the "Thank you, Lola. And by the way..." is to allow the viewer to relax after the grim news and concentrate on Lola's glistening red lips. But without a picture the patter needs a laugh track at the very least. Even better would be a Madonna cooing to signal Break Time From War and Crises Reports.

The most glaring deficiency of television without an image is during sports broadcasts. I once tried to listen to "Monday Night Football." "Look at that! I don't believe it! Have you ever seen anything like that?" shouted Frank Gifford, who then broke for a commercial. "What?" I shouted back. "What?"

That's when I decided conclusively that television is not meant to be heard. It's meant to be seen, preferably with mouth slightly agape to help the eyelids open.

I'm not one to judge whether television is — if you can *watch* a television — stimulating or vacuous.

But after giving it a try on radio alone, I prefer to keep the dial to the right of KDUM for NPR's nightly "Radio Reader."

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Richard Leo lives in Trapper Creek.

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## If you live in Alaska, then you live in EARTHQUAKE country. To make sure you're prepared, here's your list of EARTHQUAKE AWARENESS

DO's and DON'T's for home, office and car.

### DO's:

#### HOME

1. Stay calm.
2. Get under a sturdy table or desk or brace yourself in a doorway or corner.
3. Set up a "Home Emergency Supply Kit."
4. Use a flashlight when searching for gas leaks or fire hazards.
5. Check for injuries or fire.

#### OFFICE

1. Get under a desk and stay away from windows or glass objects.
2. Check for injuries or fire.
3. Use a flashlight when searching for gas leaks or fire hazards.
4. Know where fire extinguishers are kept.
5. Keep extra personal medication and food supply in office.
6. Have first aid kit and book in office.

#### CAR

1. Pull to the side of the road and stop the car.
2. Cooperate with Public Safety efforts.
3. Keep a "Car Emergency Supply Kit" in your car.
4. Keep a spare key to your car in an accessible place.
5. Stay in your car if electric wires have fallen on your vehicle.

### DON'T's:

#### HOME

1. Do not use the telephone (unless there is an EMERGENCY)."
2. Do not use your vehicle (unless there is an EMERGENCY).
3. Do not run out of the house or any building.
4. Do not use candles or matches to do a room to room search.
5. Do not shut off the gas (unless you smell it).


#### OFFICE

1. Do not run out of the building (falling glass or bricks may hit you).
2. Do not use the elevators or stairs (electricity may go out and you may be trampled by others).
3. Do not use a lighter or matches to do a search (gas may be leaking into the building).
4. Do not stand by windows or heavy objects.

#### CAR

1. Do not attempt to cross bridges or overpasses that may have been damaged.
2. Do not park under bridges or overpasses that may have been damaged.
3. Do not park under overhead wires (they may fall).
4. Do not go sightseeing.

For more information, Contact the American Red Cross in your area.

 American Red Cross



A community service message from Anchorage Daily News.

## Masters & Apprentices

# Passing the Gift

**S**OME OF THEM WEAVE BASKETS. BEAUTIFUL BASKETS. OTHERS carve totem poles, or perform dances, or use porcupine quills to sew caribou-hide dresses for traditional ceremonies. For the past 10 years, “masters” of several Native art forms in Alaska have shared their ages-old cultural skills with a newer generation of Native artists — all through the Master Artist and Apprentice Program sponsored by the Alaska State Council on the Arts.

Fascinated by the intergenerational relationships inherent in the program, Daily News photographer Fran Durner traveled the state interviewing and photographing some of the masters and apprentices to produce the portraits that appear on the following pages.

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**Interviews and photographs by Fran Durner**

# 'The things I do now come from ...my heart'

— Shirley Holmberg

## Lily Pitka, 78, Fairbanks

Pitka, a master, began learning Native arts nearly 70 years ago, after her family moved from Stevens Village to Fort Yukon. After years of mastery, she took on Shirley Holmberg as an apprentice to make a traditional dress.

"Well, (Holmberg) want to make an Indian dress — nobody know how to do that," says Pitka. "Her mother told her to ask me if I can teach her how to do it. So I did.

"I learn from my mother, Belle Luke. My mom had all kinds of beads in Stevens Village, but I never did try, you know. I was playing around too much.

"Then we got up to Fort Yukon. Strange place. And got nothing to do, so she try to teach me how to do beadwork. Pretty soon I sure enjoy it. I want to sew all the time. Every day except Sunday. My mom taught me how not to work on Sunday. I'm still like that. I never sew on Sunday.

"Later on when I got older, maybe 15 or something like that — 18, 19 — then I start to sew moose skin. Moose skin and fur and everything. Been doing that all my life.

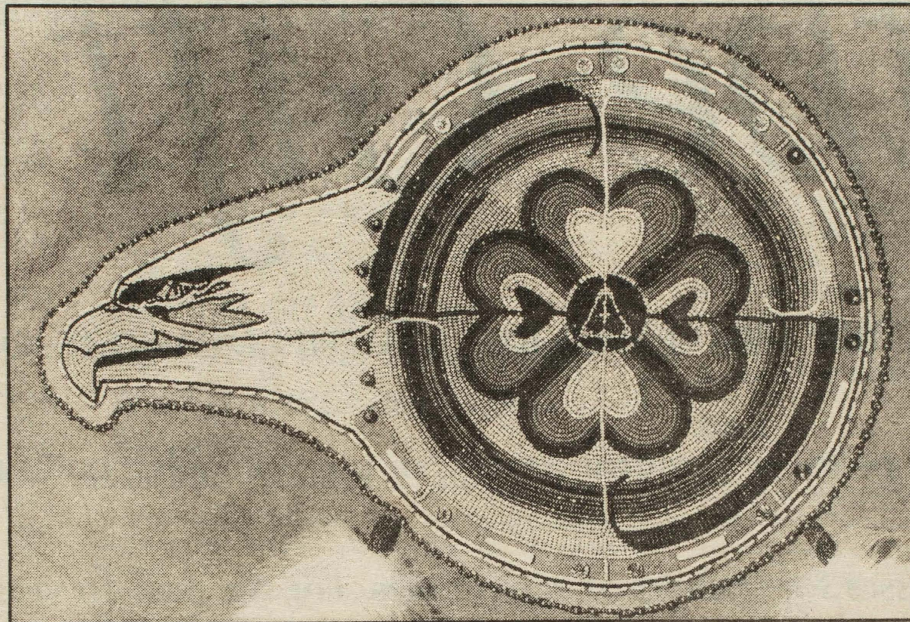
"I taught (Holmberg) how to cut the moosehide dress and then the moccasin. Old-time moccasin. The one that you wrap up, around your ankle — I taught her how to sew the skin. When she was sewing the dress together, she do it backwards, and that's pretty hard. So I told her to hold onto it and push like this and do it like *this*. She said, 'It's easy!'

"One thing I didn't taught her — how to make the design on it. She want her own design. So she did. She did all the beadwork.

"After that she was doing beadwork, she did pretty good. She even beat me with the porcupine quill (sewing). She was doing that. I did try one time when I was young. My mother taught me how to do it. I didn't pay much attention. I like to bead better than porcupine — because you have to cut them, where the point is like needle, you have to be careful with that. It's danger."

## Shirley Holmberg, 38, Fairbanks

Holmberg has studied Native arts all her adult life. "I always wanted to make an Athabascan



Beaded detail, "My Sober Vision," from a dress by Shirley Holmberg.

dress — old-style one," she says. "Take on a big project. Gee, I don't know what led (me) to Lily Pitka, but somehow the Creator guided me to her, to ask her to be my master, to teach me. I didn't know her. I remember her as an elder and not as someone I've known all my life.

"What I learned from her was technique in skin sewing and pattern arranging. I didn't know anything about making Athabascan garments. Didn't know much about sewing skins together.

"I first picked up beads in what's called Fairbanks Correctional Center. I was there on detention — at age 13 and 14 — and was given beads. Some of the first things I did was just stringing beads and colors. Little kids start out with stringing beads and putting three reds and two blues and one white. Repetition stringing beads. I didn't get into sewing on skin until probably age 14 or 15.

"I thought I was only supposed to do flowers. I found out that there was other techniques, other types of beadwork, and it was OK. I felt OK about doing peyote stitch. Like Outside Indians. People would say, 'Well that's what Outside Indians do.' I used to think about that a lot, but this is what I like to do. So I kept on doing it. I pretty much do what I want.

"The majority of my life, I've pretty much done what I want when it comes to beadwork. Even now, I still try new things when I have time. I use several different stitches in my work. Instead of doing just one stitch on a piece — like peyote stitch, or lazy stitch, or two-needle method — I'll do all of those stitches on one piece.

"The things I do now come from here (touches heart). They don't come from up here anymore (touches head). They come from my heart. When I finish a piece, when it's completely done, then I look at it. I realize that I have great abilities. The abilities I have really are from the Creator. A lot of the pieces I do now, I pray before I start beading and thank the Creator after I stop."

## Sharon Attla, 24, Fairbanks

Now an elementary-school teacher in Fairbanks, Attla has studied sewing and beading with Holmberg and Pitka in recent years. "I really wanted to make a caribou skin dress," she says. "A whole outfit for my graduation at the university. That was what I really wanted to do.

"Shirley and I met, and she gave me some books and we went to the museum and did research about the dresses from long time ago. Once we got the skins, we started. We made the pattern on a

paper bag and we cut out the skin. Then I had to design my own beadwork, once we designed the dress. The patterns that I chose were from old books and old-style beadwork. We did the beadwork, then the porcupine quill work. Before they had beads they used porcupine quills, and they dyed it. Beads were a sign of your wealth, for trading.

"Shirley did the beadwork on the belt. There's a really neat design on there. She had an inspiring idea of what she could add to it. She wanted to bead that part. Lily cut out the foot pattern for the slippers. Lily said that the waist was too big, too. She cut that down.

"I really like hearts. I have in the center of my dress a red heart. And inside the red heart there's a purple heart and inside that there's a cross with the four colors and the four directions. White to the north, red to the east, yellow to the south and black to the west. It's the colors of the people.

"I graduated in May... At graduation, it was my dream to wear this dress. A week before graduation I told them, 'You know, I'm gonna wear this dress.' And (the university officials) said, 'No, you can't because it's against all the rules. It's just absolutely not allowed because the university's graduation ceremony is something that you receive as academic achievement; it's not a cultural achievement, and they don't let that show. Everybody has to wear a black gown.'

"After I left the university office, I went to see my uncle (Morris Thompson) who's on the board of regents for the university. And I was crying to him, and I told him. I told him what this really meant to me. If they didn't let me wear this Indian dress, I would gather support from the Native community and have them escort me to the stage in my dress if I had to. That if they wanted to bring a lawyer and file suit, I would do that too because it meant so much to me. I was really serious about it. I went home. Uncle Dave later called back and said the chancellor would make an exception, because I made this dress just for my graduation. I told him I would agree to wear the cap. So it worked out after all."



Holmberg, left, wears a dress she made as an apprentice with Pitka, center. Attla, left, wears one she made with Holmberg.

# 'It's called a primitive art. I don't really agree with that term'

**Nathan Jackson, 52, Ketchikan**

Raised as a fisherman, Jackson was 18 years old before he observed a woodcarver at work. His uncle, Ted Lawrence, would carve miniature totem poles, some as tall as three feet. "That served as an inspiration to me," says Jackson, "but I didn't take it really all that serious."

Several years later, while recovering from severe pneumonia, Jackson found himself hospitalized for two months with nothing to do.

"Through occupational therapy I ended up thinking about some of the things that Ted Lawrence got me involved in. I carved. I filled up the showcase full of miniature poles.

"I got really inspired ... Anchorage had several different shows that were carrying only Native arts, and there were prizes. I decided to enter several different things, and I won a whole bunch of prizes. I won in the mask category. I won in the block printing category. I tried to cover all bases. I did jewelry. I went hog wild on this whole thing. Then afterwards ... I managed to get quite a few orders. By then I knew that I could be able to make a living at being an artist, if I wanted to.

"I think the master artist is somebody that one would probably consider far out, having a lot of apprentices, being able to teach a whole group, like Bill Holm (a carver and professor at the University of Washington in Seattle) is doing.

"(But) I think it's ... a title that has been thrown around fairly loosely. Before, I didn't want to accept that title. It's just the way I feel.

"There has been mention of a revival or rekindling of interest in the art form. I suppose for the Native person who has some sort of ability ... They've got to be channeled in the right way and they've got to be encouraged in the art form.

"To see stuff that was done by Michelangelo, and see all the fine craftsmanship that was being done — they actually knew what they were doing. Whereas here, we're trying to figure out what we are doing, to see whether or not we're doing the right thing."

Late last summer Jackson completed a Thunderbird totem pole that was raised at Totem Bight Park outside Ketchikan.

**Dave Jensen, 36, Ketchikan**

Jensen, a full-time contractor and chief-designate of the Raven Dog-Salmon Clan, became an apprentice to Nathan Jackson a decade ago.

"I suppose the first major job with Nathan was cleaning the shop," Jensen says. "I don't think I ever took a regular class from him. He came and told me he'd be willing to help me with any questions or problems that I had. I was able just to go to him and he'd help me with my carving or drawing or whatever I was working on.

"I suppose I asked a lot of questions and he was willing to share a lot of things. Topics that would come up — fishing and hunting and food preparation and preserving food.

"It was fun. We spent a lot of time on the tools. I suppose if I was going to get into the art, I'd have to just drop everything else and go full time. And it's not something I can do right now. But eventually I'd like to make it a livelihood.

"It's called a primitive art. I don't really agree with that term ... I always liked working with wood. My uncle taught me a lot about carpentry and building and stuff. And then I liked art. So I suppose the two kind of naturally go together."

**Lee Wallace, 39, Ketchikan**

Wallace is currently working on the second of six 10-foot totem poles commissioned by a hotel in Ketchikan. The grandson of Haida master carvers, he returned to Ketchikan to work with Nathan after living in Seattle. "That was actually the first time I had been with an actual person that knew more (about carving)," he says. "I moved up here specifically to pursue working with Nathan.

"They were just starting the lodge house project out in Saxman. So I went out there with my resume and my art work that I had been doing. They were just starting on the groundwork as far as the timbers. All the wood in the tribal house is hand-adzed, inside and out. That was the beginning point and I got in on that.

"Nathan had the contract to do the whole thing: the inside, outside, and the four posts. So, what he did was subcontract it out. He said, 'You wanna just continue



The totem pole park in Saxman, south of Ketchikan.

on?" I was just excited I was able to partake in it, because I had no prior experience. I had just been working on my own.

"It's something I love doing. The work — it's not like work at all. It's enjoying every piece of it and immersing yourself in it. I don't really see any changes down the road as far as doing something else. It's really a love for the work, the art.

"I encourage my children to learn all they can, too. Not carving at this time. When it comes to painting or something, they get in there and paint on some of my projects. My wife, she's sewing and doing some designs for them. They're getting interested as far as beading and applique work. The whole family dances — all the way down to my 4-year-old son. They're really in tune to what's happening. They have a pride in who they are."

**Mick Beasley, 33, Juneau**

Mick Beasley started carving while still in the eighth grade in Juneau. After taking classes from University of Washington carver Bill Holm, he came to Ketchikan to study with Jackson.

"By the time I did my apprenticeship with Nathan, I understood wood enough. It wasn't like I did my first mask with him. Not at all.

I was in a position where — what he told me, I could pick up on really pretty good ... He just put me in the ballpark a lot quicker and a lot better.

"If I show you a piece of art, I want you to not even know who I am. I want you to look at that piece and take it on its own merits. I don't want to come to you and give you my spiritual aspect of it and try and make that influence what I've done. I'm more into the art work.

"Traditional art is always contemporary. That's an important aspect. Say these Raven rattles: Some people will say, 'That's not art, that's already been done.' That's true, but it's still alive today. It's contemporary, but it's traditional. So it's valid. It's a valid, ongoing thing."

**Rick Beasley, 33 (twin brother of Mick Beasley), Juneau**

After failing to get a job working for the legislature, Rick Beasley was invited by Nathan Jackson to join him in Ketchikan as an apprentice carver. "And I said, 'I don't know, do you think I'm good enough?' And he said, 'Well, there's enough room for everybody.' So I came down to Ketchikan and I spent a couple months with him.

— David Jensen

"I started off with a spoon. I already knew how to carve. I understood the nature of wood. I needed to progress and do three-dimensional stuff. I did a spoon that had a two-dimensional fish head on the end of it. Then I did the three-dimensional spoon part and that was just to learn all about sculpture and just to get the style. The rudiments.

"I like sculpture and I like the money. There is a whole economy that can be made on this art.

"The way I see it is before you can really branch off and do your own thing, you've got to get the basics of some kind of craft down. Since we're Native and this is our thing, then you might as well be able to apprentice and master it, and then go out and do your own thing. I think this is just a steppingstone."

**Israel Shotridge, 39, Klawock**

Shotridge, primary carver of the Chief Johnson Totem Pole in Ketchikan, is now working on a replica pole for the city of Klawock, scheduled to be erected in April.

He began studying with Jackson, his cousin, in 1982. "It seemed like the right time to pursue my dream, something I always wanted to do," he says. "It was like fitting the puzzles together.

"After spending the first year with Nathan, it was pretty obvious that there was a bigger picture, a broader picture, as far as just being a carver. That's important for me to keep in mind. You're not just being a carver. You're representing a part of your heritage and your culture, so you should know something about it, not just be a carver.

"When I apprenticed with Nathan, he opened up a lot of avenues as far as my consciousness ... what my heritage is about. He would sing songs in Tlingit. He would show me and the other apprentices dance moves and tell stories, talk in Tlingit all the time.

"When I apprenticed with him I would watch him and then I would look away and listen to how the adze was hitting the wood, the totem, then getting that rhythm down. Like when you dance, you have to listen to the beat. Listening to how you hit the wood, how rhythmic it was — those are the things I paid attention to."



Tlingit carvers, clockwise from left: David Jensen, Lee Wallace, Mick and Rick Beasley, Nathan Jackson, Israel Shotridge.

*‘Every day almost, when they feel like the dance, they always dance’*

— Winnie Dives

**Winnie Dives, 74, Kotzebue**

Dancing was an integral part of growing up in a traditional Inupiat household seven decades ago, Dives says. “When my father and mother dance, I dance with them. Mama and Papa dance, I learn.”

“In summer I dance with uncle — dancer. I learn. Sing with them. Learn. My family like it. Don’t want it die down. I keep dancing. Songs — I know the songs, old songs.

“Some of songs, ‘Happy Day,’ ‘Hunting for Polar Bear.’ On special day, mostly. Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter — on those big days. We always stay there in the villages. I used to (be) scared with the people. Every day almost, when they feel like the dance, they always dance.

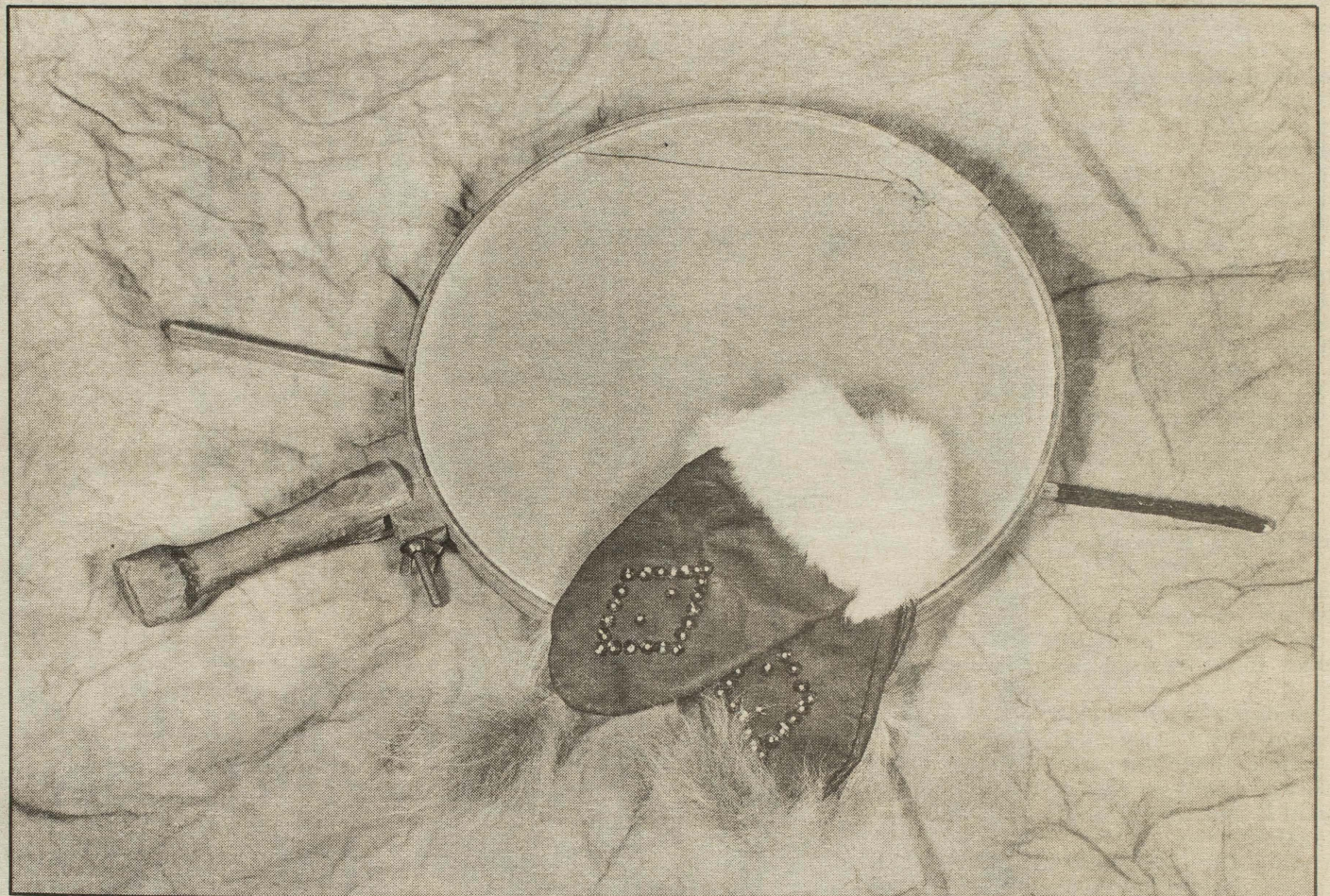
“I don’t know where I was born. In camp, reindeer camp. Between Kivalina and Point Hope someplace, I don’t know. Near the river. They always camp near the river. 1916, April 6 — my birthday. Papa say the fawn and I born together.

“I grow up Point Hope and Kivalina. One year Point Hope, one year Kivalina, like that. Go back and forth. Wintertime when we move, (we live in) tent. Outside, skin. In summer, just tent. We got sod house at the Point Hope, all right. We never use it. Just for our food. My mom from Point Hope, my dad from Kivalina.

“I learn with reindeer, with the sled. When I was small little girl, Papa let me play with the reindeer sled. We always used it when we move.

“When I start schooling, they always let me stay with my grandma and grandpa, Mama’s parents. And I always homesick for my mom and dad. Not too long, few days, three day go like that and I go back to my parents. Papa always take me to village, all right. I can’t stay long. I took school up to third grade.

“Some kids, their parents don’t like to dance. The missionaries don’t say (anything bad) about that dance. They like to dance — our preacher. They always like to learn. We always go to Episcopal Church of God — they don’t like dance.



Julia Barr’s dance gloves rest atop a dance drum given to Winnie Dives by her father.

“(My father) always call me mom, Aaka. ‘My drum, you have to keep it,’ (he told me). ‘Can’t walk around good no more. You keep it in your room. Don’t let the kids touch it. You have it yourself.’ So I did. He don’t want to lose it. He gave me. I have it in my room right there.”

**Julia Barr, 12, Kotzebue**

As the granddaughter of Winnie Dives, Julia has had a chance to learn traditional Inupiat dances both at home and through the Northern Lights Dancers of Kotzebue, where her grandmother performs.

“I think I was 1 year old and I was dancing,” Julia says. “I learn from my Grandma. I would sit by my Grandma and copy her.

“I was with foster parents and they bring me back to Kotzebue. Then I stay with my grandma. Every day in summertime we go to the NANA museum to dance. There were a lot of people there. I keep going there with my grandma. We practice a lot, probably an hour a day. We practice with the elders, the drummers. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

“In Kotzebue we dance in (front of) whole town. Everybody went to the NANA museum. We dance at the schools out there (in Anchorage), four schools. Most of the kids were dancing with us. Common dance. Everybody go on the stage and dance. It was great.

“I had fun dancing with the Russians. They dance a little bit and we dance a little bit. They were in Kotzebue and they showed us some dance. It was fun.

“Every day at school, we have a book, an Inupiaq book, and we work in it. Then we read, we write a long time — to an hour. It’s fun, but it’s too hard. My dad wants me to (speak Inupiaq) only at school. My dad wants me to go to college. I always wanted to go to college first then work at a hospital.

“Kids (in Kotzebue) — they do nothing. Sometimes play around at the rec center. I just stay home.

“I don’t want to stay in Kotzebue. I want go to Hawaii. It’s fun there. My friends went there. I have one friend living there already.

“I been Eskimo dancing at the event (Alaska Federation of Natives convention). Oh my God, there’s so many people! I wasn’t scared, I was happy. It went OK.

“It’s fun. I keep learning some dances. Because I want to learn.”



Winnie Dives and her granddaughter, Julia Barr, 12, are members of the Northern Lights Dancers of Kotzebue.

# 'If you can visualize what you want to achieve, you'll get it'

— Delores Churchill, recalling advice from her mother, Selina Peratrovitch

## Delores Churchill, 61, Ketchikan

A full-time weaver, Churchill has traveled around the country as part of the Crossroads of Continents exhibition demonstrating her weaving skills. She learned to weave from her mother, Selina Peratrovitch.

"This is the way my mother used to weave: When people would walk in . . . and she was weaving, she would immediately cover it with a nice clean, white cloth, and then she would put it away. I think it had to do not with being secretive but for showing respect to another human being. You always treated a human being with great respect, and they would (not) think of sitting there and weaving — like we do. We keep watching TV or knitting or whatever we're doing. That's why I think it almost got lost. Simply because when they were weaving and somebody walked in, they just stopped.

"You see pictures of Haida women and they're always solitary. You see pictures of Tlingit women weaving, and there's always children sitting there weaving. So I think the Haidas were more private about what they were doing than sharing it with children around.

"When she was a child growing up, my mother lived with her grandmother a lot and her grandmother did a lot of weaving. But her grandmother wove in a room separate. I can understand that. Because it's so much fun to weave, you don't want to be interrupted by anyone.

"I took a class from my mother when I was a small child. She taught basketry in the village, in Masset, in the Queen Charlotte (Islands). Your first basket has to be cylindrical. You can't taper in, you can't taper out — because you have to learn to control. My first basket tapered out. And she kept saying, 'Delores, take it undone. You have to have a basket that goes straight up and down.' And I just wouldn't listen to her: She was my mother — what does she know? (laughs)

"And then the teacher found out there was . . . a contest of different

Indian arts and crafts in schools. It was going to be held in Victoria (British Columbia). My mother said, 'Don't send Delores' (basket) because it's really terrible and I don't want her to feel bad when everybody else gets a ribbon or something nice happens. I don't want her to feel bad about it.' The teacher said, 'No, all the children are equal in class. Hers goes too.'

"So mine went. You wouldn't believe it: It won first prize! (My mother) was really mad. She said to the white teacher, 'You know it's because they didn't know about basketry. They didn't know the first basket technically has to be straight up and down.'

"When the \$5 (prize money) came — and that was really lots of money in the '30s — my mother said to the teacher: 'Delores can keep the blue ribbon but she cannot keep the \$5 because she's not the best and it would really be sad if the person who did the best basket didn't get the prize.' So the teacher agreed to that. And I was really angry. I threw the basket down. I said, 'I'll never do basketry! I don't even like basketry!' I must have been about 8 or 9. I had a really bad temper. I said, 'Just don't ask me to do it again.'

"When my mother was teaching, it was she and I, and it really didn't progress very much under her even though she was really a good teacher. And I don't know why. I think people were intimidated because . . . she wouldn't let people experiment on their own because she was a traditionalist. You did it *one* way. She would get really annoyed with me because I would (experiment).

"I learned how to do Tsimshian weaving. And my mother was so angry, she said, 'You're Haida — how could you learn Tsimshian weaving?' And I wouldn't even answer her. I had a drive to just learn all these things. Because there were all the old people doing these things, I felt it was really urgent.

"(In 1972) my husband said, 'Delores, you have to take (your mother's) class.' I said, 'Well, you know I'm not an artist. I can't do



A cylindrical sampler basket woven by Delores Churchill.

that.' He said, 'Well, look. If you learn the techniques, you'll be able to pass it on. That's important — not to lose that. You have to learn it. You have to take the class.'

"Well, we didn't tell my mother. I signed up at the community college. It was weird when I walked in (her) class and my mother said, 'What you doing here? I weave (at home). I weave — you no look. Leave!'

"I thought, Oooh, I've never argued with her. Even as a teen-ager. You know, in Indian, you don't argue with your mother. When she says something, you may disagree, you may say something later, but when she tells you to do something, you do it. So I thought, what am I going to do? The whole class is there and there she is chasing me out. Then the art direc-

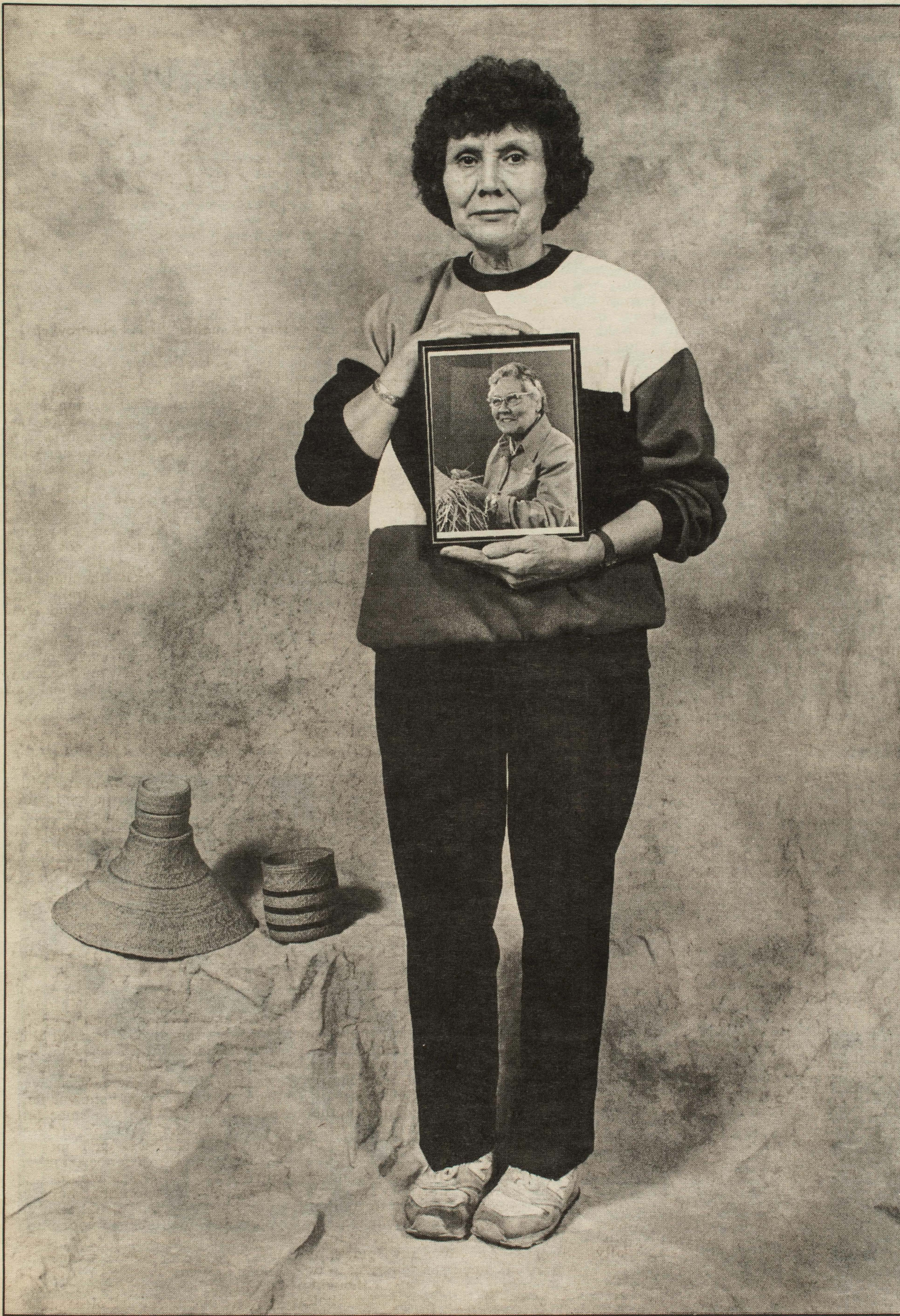
tor walked in. He saw how red I was. He said, 'What's going on?' I said, 'She said I can't take the class.' He walked up to her. He put his arm around my mother and said, 'Selina, we need her registration.'

"And so she said OK. But — ooooh — did she ever give me a bad time! She'd let me weave in class, but as soon as I got home she'd say, 'Take it all undone.' And I'd have to do it. She made me do that basket I don't know how many times. I did it over and over and over again. It was terrible. But later on, she encouraged me.

"I'll never forget one time, I finished a basket and my husband said, 'Go show your mother! Go show your mother!' He thought it was really beautiful. I brought it to her and she was sitting here drinking tea, and I gave her the basket and she looked at it. She put it down and she kept drinking tea and then finally she said, 'Angasgidaay,' which means 'poor thing.' And I knew she thought it looked terrible! In Haida that is an expression when you don't know what to say. You want to be honest, but you don't want to be cruel. So you say, 'Poor thing!' She was talking about the basket — it wasn't that good.

"You know it's really hard in the Indian culture . . . it's very hard for Indian people to (say), 'Oh, that's wonderful!' They don't say things like that. In fact, shortly before she died, I learned this special ending. And I was showing her, because we had looked at it and we didn't know how it was done. And then when I showed her, and she said, 'Well, you smart all right!' And that was the greatest compliment she ever gave me!

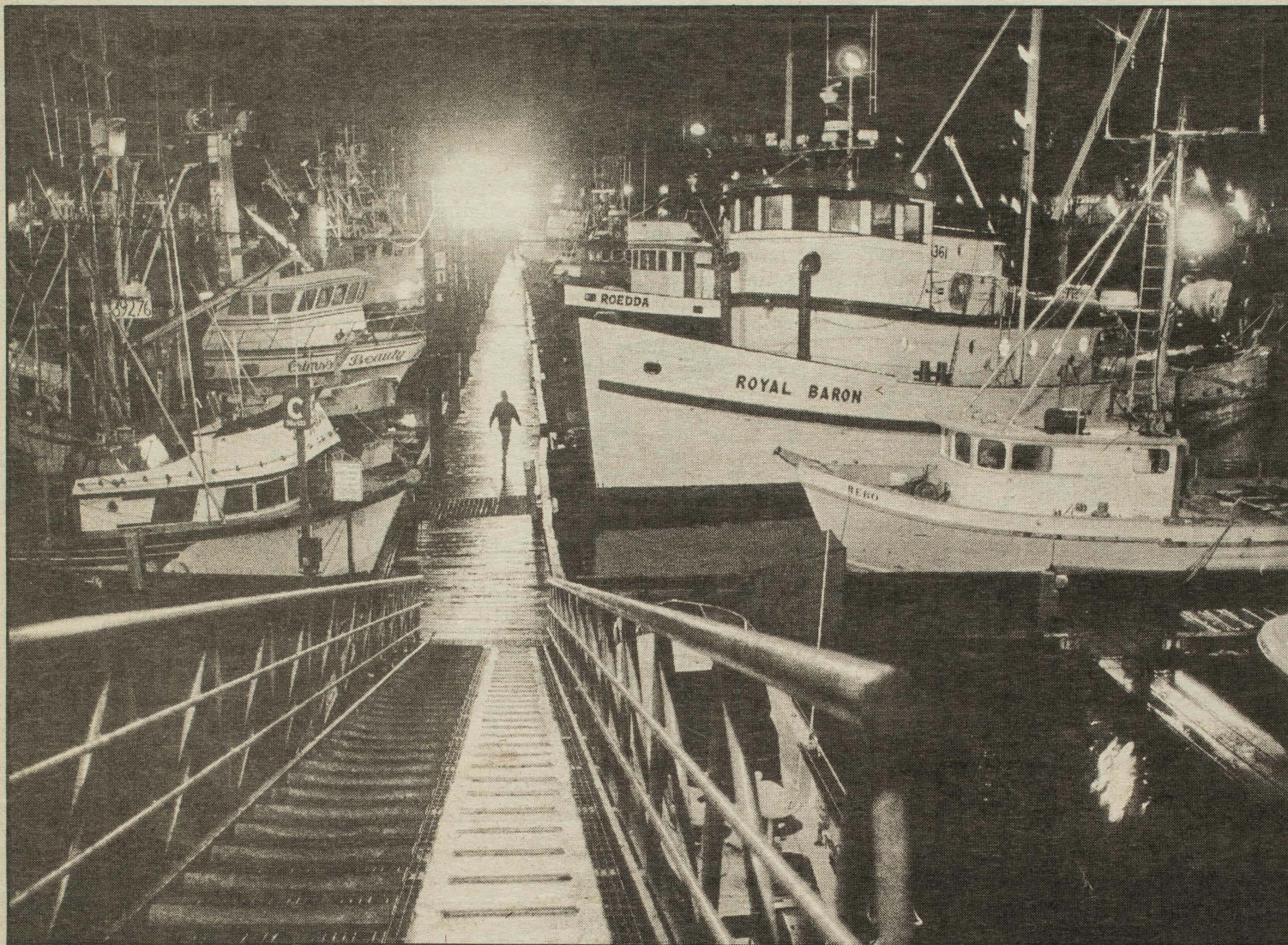
"She still influences me in things that I do. She would say, like when you want the shape of your hat to form: 'Visualize it in your mind, look at it in your mind — not just think about it, but see if it's the way you want it to be. And that's the way it will turn out to be.' I think that's important. When you're creating an art piece . . . if you can visualize what you want to achieve, you'll get it!"



Delores Churchill holds a portrait of her mother, Selina Peratrovitch.



## Dateline: Alaska



BOB HALLINEN / Anchorage Daily News

**KODIAK** - A lone fisherman walks the docks of the Kodiak small-boat harbor one night earlier this month.

By SHELLEY GILL

**WASILLA** - Electrical surges after a holiday storm here nuked thousands of dollars worth of appliances, computers, video recorders, televisions, fax machines and water softeners. Many of the losses may not be covered by insurance.

Karen Eslinger, who lives on Settler's Bay Drive, told the *Frontiersman* newspaper there was "a big bang, like a light bulb exploding, and then the power went out." She talked to insurance agents, as well as Matanuska Electric Association representatives. "They're basically saying it's an act of nature and probably not covered," she said.

Terry Smith, an MEA customer relations officer, told Valley homeowners they can protect against surges by attaching a \$10 to \$15 surge protector to their appliances. Well, so much for hindsight.

**FAIRBANKS** - It was one sweet moment in the remaining bitter days of Bob Scott's life. The 54-year-old Washington ironworker, who is dying of cancer, recently met Cathrine Herndon for the second time. The first time was 22 years ago, when Scott plunged into Idaho's Snake River to save Cathrine, then 5 months old, from drowning. She was the sole survivor in an accident that claimed the lives of her mother, brother and sister.

Scott, who lives in Spokane, told his friend Doug Harris he had long wanted to meet the little girl he saved. So Harris took the wish to heart and tried to track Herndon down. He learned that the little girl's father, Mike



Herndon, remarried and moved his family to Fairbanks four years after the accident. Cathrine went to school in Fairbanks and now, at 22, lives in Arizona and works as a dental assistant. Harris located her there and invited her to Spokane to meet Scott.

Arriving there, she learned the details of what happened the day her family's pickup truck plunged into the swollen river. Harris and Scott were hailed by a passer-by and, without hesitating, both dove into the water. Scott spotted Cathrine's bright blue pajamas underwater and grabbed her, but the current was too strong and they were both dragged downstream.

"There was a moment when I thought I'd have to let her go," Scott said. "Then I realized if I did, I'd never be able to live with myself." By breathing into the baby's mouth, then throwing her upstream, he could swim a few strokes toward shore before she floated back to

him. He finally made it out.

Both Harris and Scott received the Carnegie Hero award for their actions that day. Cathrine Herndon told the *Fairbanks News Miner* she was nervous when she finally met Scott. "It really got to me," she said. "I've always been so glad I'm not able to remember."

But Cathrine's father remembers. He wrote a letter to Scott, and it was read aloud at the reunion. "The whole thing hadn't really sunk in until after I got to the hospital the next morning," he wrote. "Cathy was in a crib under an oxygen tent. She looked up at me and gave me one of the most beautiful grins I have ever seen.

"Well, I just sat down on the floor by her crib and bawled my eyes out. Not just for my loss, but for the great blessing of still having her."

**WRANGELL** - An angry bear was apparently responsible for a jet fuel spill that left a sheen on the Iskut River last month.

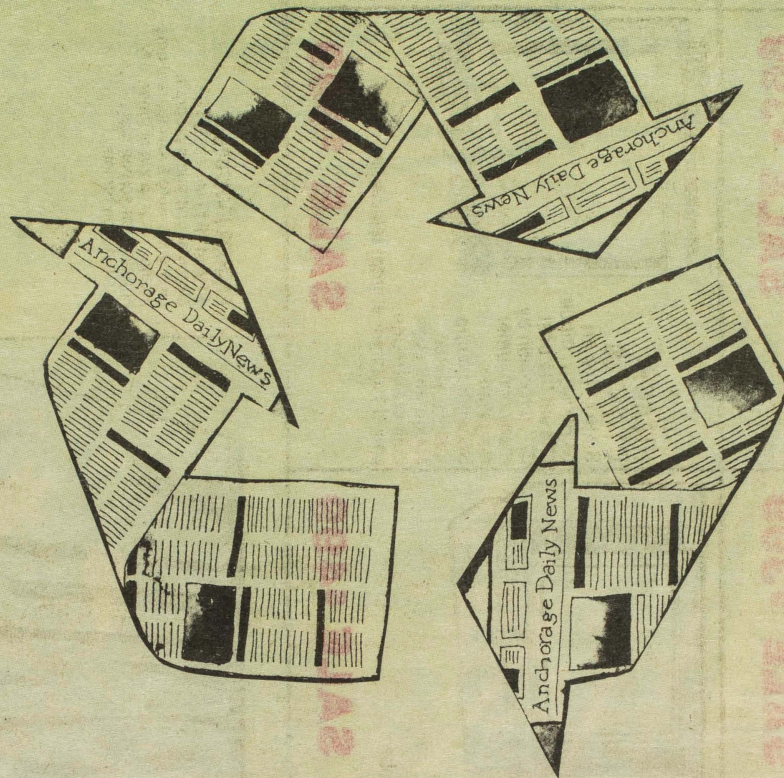
State environmental authorities airlifted 85 55-gallon drums to an open field and incinerated them after a pilot saw a sheen on the surface of the river. Close examination of the drums, which had been sitting at the site between 10 and 12 years, revealed that only one had leaked.

"It had been attacked by a bear," state oil spill coordinator Roy Warren told the *Wrangell Sentinel*. "It happened fairly recently, too. I guess bears will take on anything." 🐻

☐ Shelley Gill is a writer who lives in Homer.

# Anchorage Daily News

number one in a series



## Now old news is good news.

Take a look at our A-2 Directory, and you can see concrete evidence of the Daily News' concern for the environment. We're the only daily newspaper in Alaska printing on recycled newsprint and have been for years. We also print many community newspapers on our recycled newsprint. One of our two paper suppliers, Smurfit Newsprint, is the only producer of recycled newsprint in the Pacific Northwest. Our other supplier, Boise Cascade, is converting to recycled newsprint production, effective in 1992. (In the meantime, the Boise Cascade paper is made only from residual wood chips, the by-product from sawmills.) In 1990 alone, the

Daily News used 3,935 tons of **recycled** newsprint, the equivalent of **saving over 66,000 trees**. (One ton of newsprint = 17 trees.)

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### Anchorage Daily News

*Giving old newsprint new life.*