

# Extra+ Credit



Illustration by UAF student Elbot Carman.

## Flash fiction

Raven daringly hopped lower on the bare limb to be near the humans. Waves of emotion thrummed through the frosty air as he felt their joy and excitement of new ideas. The humans paused, talked of the lecture just heard, the books read, and made plans to meet later at a cabin in the spruce forest. Raven reveled in their newly forged feelings of belonging as it flowed around him. He would bring his own gang of ravens, and they would listen

outside the cabin window. He flicked his rump feathers at the pesky malamute and flew up to the lamppost.



*In a contest sponsored by UAF Marketing and Communications, English majors at UAF took a stab at writing a 100-word story to illustrate this drawing by another UAF student, Elbot Carman. Wendy Uzzell wrote the winning entry.*



Visit [www.uaf.edu/aurora/](http://www.uaf.edu/aurora/) to read more student entries.

# AURORA

## Dateline **Iraq** Journalism students go to **war**

Blood and guts at research camp

Meet RA Ashleigh Strange

Melting arctic ice creates holes  
in the landscape



America's Arctic University



**Alumnus** see pages 23 – 28

# Editor's Corner



On the cover: Jessica Hoffman accompanied soldiers of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, in August 2009 as they swept for weapons caches in an abandoned Iraqi village. Photo courtesy of the UAF Journalism Department.

This issue's cover story brought a surge of memories. The desert camouflage uniforms reminded me of the photos and video my husband sent me years ago when he served in the first Iraq war, Operation Desert Storm. I remember my then 3-year-old son pulling up a chair to sit with his nose almost on the TV screen, watching a poorly recorded VHS tape of his Marine Corps dad in his cammies outside a tent in the desert saying hello and sending love to his family after being gone almost six months. We could barely hear the audio even at full volume, and the video was blurry, but my son knew that was his daddy. He watched that tape every day until it disintegrated.

I vividly recall the day in February 1991 when the U.S. ground offensive began; my father, a retired career Navy commander, called me and asked, "Are you OK?"

*Was I OK?!*

Such is the family life of our military men and women on active duty in war zones. For our journalism students to experience even a little of that ... what a risk and what an opportunity. I'm sure their families felt much the same way I did during those uncertain days in 1991. Luckily our students returned unharmed and with some powerful stories and images to share (just as my husband thankfully did). I bet it's something they'll never forget. Thank you to all our military members, wherever and whenever you serve.

— Kim Davis, *managing editor*

## **Aurora's a winner!**

3rd place, external publications, and 3rd place, website — Alaska chapter, Public Relations Society of America

Bronze award, periodicals, print general interest magazines — Council for Advancement and Support of Education, District VIII



Late summer view of the Tanana Valley, looking south from the Fairbanks campus.

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 University of Alaska Fairbanks

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America's Arctic University

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



## Greenhouse research bears fruit

Two high-tunnel greenhouses at UAF's Fairbanks Experiment Farm hosted an apple harvest last fall.

The crop consisted of red and green apples, some small and others the size of apples sold in grocery stores. It was the second harvest for a research project developed by Cooperative Extension Service forestry specialist Bob Wheeler, who wanted to test the effect of unheated high tunnels on the survival rate and yield of apples, berries and other fruit trees in extreme cold conditions.

Wheeler died last summer, but Kendra Calhoun (pictured), an Extension project manager, and Meriam Karlsson, a horticulture professor with the School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences, are continuing his research.

Calhoun picked, weighed and tested the sugar content of apples grown inside and outside two large, plastic-covered high tunnels in a field opposite the Georgeson Botanical Garden on the Fairbanks campus. Altogether, 39 apple varieties were tested in the high

tunnels, which measure 42 feet by 96 feet. (Unlike standard greenhouses, which are typically built near homes or other buildings and which shelter plants grown in pots or raised beds, high tunnels are built in fields, over plants that are growing in the ground itself.)

Calhoun helped erect the experimental high tunnels in May 2007, and she and two students with the Rural Alaska Honors Institute planted more than 200 trees two months later. The apple varieties tested grow in colder climates, although their names won't be recognizable to most: Arctic Red, Carroll, Ukalskoje and Golden Uralian, among others. The varieties were grafted onto rootstock of the Ranetka crab apple, which is known for its ability to withstand cold winters.

Two weather stations and 10 microstations record environmental conditions hourly, including the soil and air temperatures inside and outside the tunnels, as well as soil moisture, wind speed and solar radiation.

According to Calhoun, Wheeler did not expect much fruit until three years into the project. He was surprised when the trees fruited in their second year and was delighted with the growth last year, she said.

Although the data is not yet complete, Calhoun said it's clear that trees inside the tunnel are blossoming and fruiting more than two weeks earlier than trees outside.

"The tunnels, obviously, are helping," she said. The project is funded by a grant from the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program.



Photo by Kendra Calhoun.

Read more about the project at [www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/fruit-tree-trials/](http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/fruit-tree-trials/).

## Versatile unmanned aircraft map fires, spot seals

As fire personnel tackled the Crazy Mountain Complex fires north of Fairbanks last summer, they had help from an unlikely source: staff and their unmanned aircraft from Poker Flat Research Range at UAF.

Range manager Greg Walker and optical science manager Don Hampton piloted one of Poker Flat's unmanned aircraft, a 40-pound Insitu ScanEagle. Kathe Rich, the team's operations controller, monitored safety and provided logistical support. The unmanned aircraft is equipped with infrared cameras that collect data fire personnel can use to track the progression of fires and active hot spots. Unmanned aircraft aren't constrained by dense and widespread smoke that can ground or severely limit manned logistical support from the air.

Poker Flat staff worked with the Federal Aviation Administration, the Bureau of Land Management and the Alaska Fire Service on the project. The university's Unmanned Aircraft Program was able to get more flight opportunities while it helped the agencies working to protect Alaskans from fire danger.



Ribbon seal on sea ice photographed by the ScanEagle. Photo courtesy of the UAF Geophysical Institute.

"This is a chance for us to take what we're doing in research and give it back to the community," said Ro Bailey, special projects manager at Poker Flat Research Range. "We're learning valuable things as we're going along, too, so this is a great opportunity for everyone involved."

Another significant project involved helping scientists from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration survey Bering Sea ice floes for bearded, spotted, ringed and ribbon seals.

The ScanEagle flew up to five miles away from NOAA's ship, the *McArthur II*, capturing more than 25,000 high-resolution images with an onboard camera and proving it can operate in snow and light icing conditions.

"We have 42 hours of good flights behind us on this cruise," said Walker. "I think we have proven the technology meets or exceeds the NOAA expectations for performance and the ability to capture the information they're seeking."



Watch video of the ScanEagle at work at [www.uaf.edu/aurora/](http://www.uaf.edu/aurora/).

## CAMPUS BRIEFS

**DAVID D'AMORE, A DOCTORAL CANDIDATE** with the School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences, was named the 2009 National Field Soil Scientist of the Year by the U.S. Forest Service for his work studying the yellow cedar die-off in Southeast Alaska and developing a management strategy.

**KUAC TV RECEIVED** the 2010 National Educational Telecommunications Association's award for best program production for *Mr. Alaska: Bob Bartlett Goes to Washington*, a 60-minute documentary that chronicles Bartlett's political, professional and personal journey as he worked toward Alaska's statehood.

**THE CENTER FOR ALASKA NATIVE HEALTH RESEARCH** is part of a nine-institution consortium that received a \$15 million grant from NIH's National Center for Research Resources to develop a network for researchers to locate valuable resources, such as what scientists are doing on the genetics of complex diseases.

**UAF'S NEW RESEARCH VESSEL** will be named the R/V *Sikuliaq* (see-KOO'-lee-auk), an Inupiaq word meaning "young sea ice." Marinette Marine Corp. of Marinette, Wis., was chosen to build the vessel, expected to be completed in 2013.

# Reindeer industry gears up

Managers with UAF’s Reindeer Research Program are trying to boost the Seward Peninsula reindeer industry by providing a mobile slaughter facility and an expert instructor who knows how to use it.

Greg Finstad is head of the reindeer program at UAF and has wrangled reindeer alongside Alaska Natives for 25 years. He ordered a 45-foot self-contained slaughter plant, winterized it, had it barged to Nome and helped design a meat production course at the Northwest Campus there. To run the program, Finstad hired Heikki Muhonen (pictured), of Finland, who will live in Nome for about two years.

“He’s the world’s expert,” Finstad said. “He’s set up slaughter facilities all across Russia, Kazakhstan, Finland, Sweden and Norway.”

One of Finstad’s goals with the U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded project is to teach local people how to process reindeer using the plant, which is approved by the USDA and will result in inspected steaks, backstrap, burger and other cuts of meat.

“[Inspected meat] is worth a lot more money,” Finstad said. “It can be sold to restaurants and stores. It’s the key to success in the reindeer field.”



Photos courtesy of the Reindeer Research Program.

## New energy program in Dillingham



*Bristol Bay Campus in Dillingham has a new sustainable energy program to help residents learn techniques to conserve energy and reduce energy costs. The campus itself has installed 24 solar panels and a small wind-powered unit.*

Photo by Tom Marsik.

## PHILANTHROPY

### Stevens’ papers part of history

BP and the North to the Future Foundation donated \$1 million to the Rasmuson Library to catalog, process and house more than 4,500 boxes of papers and media from the congressional career of U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens. Stevens deposited his papers and records at Rasmuson Library in early 2009. They span his four decades in the U.S. Senate and include documents, audio and video recordings, and other media from some of the most pivotal moments in the state’s history, such as the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, the construction of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline and the creation of a missile defense system based primarily in Alaska.



Comment on any of these stories at [www.uaf.edu/aurora/](http://www.uaf.edu/aurora/).

Photo by Jason Meyer.



# Winds of change

The Alaska Center for Energy and Power at UAF is leading the Wind for Schools program in Alaska, along with the Renewable Energy Alaska Project and the National Renewable Energy Lab. The program is part of the federal Department of Energy and matches elementary schools with universities. Schools host a small wind generator and follow a corresponding curriculum, while college students provide the technical knowledge and support. The program got its official start in Alaska in November with the installation of a wind turbine at Sherrod Elementary School in Palmer.

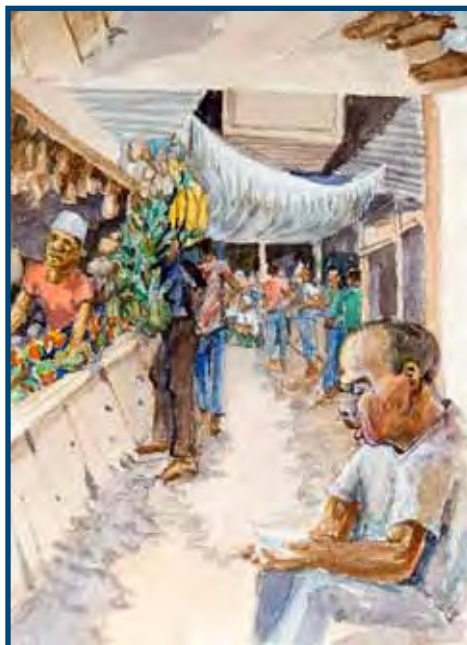
“The Wind for Schools program helps students develop a knowledge base and skill set in science and energy, and supports workforce development and community involvement for students in elementary school through college,” said Gwen Holdmann, ACEP’s director.

“This program will provide students with a way to explore basic ideas about energy in a hands-on environment,” said Mark Hoffman, principal of Sherrod Elementary. “We look forward to what the kids will take home and out into the world from this experience.”

Read more about the Wind for Schools program at [www.uaf.edu/aurora/](http://www.uaf.edu/aurora/).

## Summer @ UAF can show you the world

Tanzania and Zanzibar provided some much-needed relief from winter for a group of 13 Alaskans in January. On this international educational tour sponsored by Summer Sessions and Lifelong Learning, participants were exposed to the history and culture of the Maasai people, enjoyed exotically spiced cuisine, and viewed abundant wildlife in their native habitats—elephants, zebras, baboons, warthogs, impalas, giraffes, lions, wildebeests, water buffalos and a myriad of bird life. For information on joining next fall’s tour to Machu Picchu and the Amazon rainforest, visit [www.uaf.edu/summer/](http://www.uaf.edu/summer/).



Art by trip participant and professor emeritus Bill Brody.

### By the numbers Power up!

**1964**  
Year UAF power plant was built

**3¢**  
Approximate cost to generate 1 kwh electricity

**56.7 million**  
Kilowatt-hours generated

**9,850 feet**  
Utilidor span

**2 (installed 1964)**  
Number of coal boilers

**2 (installed 1972 & 1986)**  
Number of oil & oil/gas boilers

**1.3 million tons**  
Chilled water produced, 2008

**581.6 million lbs.**  
Heating steam produced, 2008

**100.4 million gal.**  
Drinking water produced, 2008



# Dateline Iraq:

## Journalism students go to war

By Brian Patrick O'Donoghue





CANFIELD



HEWITT



HOFFMAN



O'DONOGHUE

The liability form spelled out the downside.

"I AM VOLUNTARILY ENTERING A WAR ZONE that has already claimed the lives of civilians, journalists and armed soldiers," the university's waiver stated. "I understand that journalists working in the Middle East have been killed, captured, tortured, beheaded, injured, and traumatized, while undertaking activities very similar or identical to those that I am ..."

Three UAF journalism students and I went through the two-page document line by line with Julie Baecker, chief risk officer for the University of Alaska system. She made sure Jennifer Canfield, Tom Hewitt, Jessica Hoffman and this professor had received the articles e-mailed with that waiver, including a graphic account of *The Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl's kidnapping and murder.

"Our role isn't placing limits on what our student learners can do," Baecker explained. "It's ensuring they have the information needed to make informed choices."

In weekly teleconferences leading up to the jump-off date, I'd done my best to scare these students off. It didn't help that experienced war correspondents were confident students could handle the assignment, especially with the security embedding provided.

Joking about our faint prospects of surviving a month embedded with Alaska-based soldiers serving in Diyala province, Iraq, we each signed on the line and initialed where required.

What followed surpassed expectations.

◀ *Jessica Hoffman photographs Camp Victory from Al Faw Palace in Baghdad. The palace, constructed during Saddam Hussein's regime, serves as headquarters for the U.S. Army and other coalition forces. Left inset: Military souvenir coin presented to UAF journalism team members by Col. Burt Thompson, commander of the 1-25th Stryker Brigade Combat Team. The coin commemorates the Arctic Wolves' yearlong mission in Diyala. The lightning bolt/heart represents the wartime service insignia worn by 1-25th SBCT soldiers. Top of page: The rose is commonly associated with Iraq. All photos courtesy of the UAF Journalism Department.*

### Body armor and sweat

As embedded journalists, we observed Iraq through a window opened by U.S. soldiers. We couldn't freely come and go. We traveled "outside the walls" with and protected by soldiers of the 5,000-strong 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, nicknamed the Arctic Wolves. Ideally, news organizations rely on both embeds and journalists operating independently for a broader perspective. Even so, the brigade's window proved wider than we'd imagined.

"We pretty much had free rein," Hoffman, the team's TV reporter, put it. "They knew the missions we were going on, but never said, 'Hey, let me see your video just to see what's in the background.' That surprised me. I expected them to be more watchful."

We learned to thread individual body armor plates into our vests, then shouldered those 38-pound IBAs and as many water bottles as we could carry, following soldiers sweeping palm groves, abandoned villages and wadis for weapons in steadily intensifying heat. We trailed soldiers as they canvassed villagers and supervised distributions of food, tools and other humanitarian goods. We sipped tea with Iraqi police and Iraqi army soldiers.

Some of us walked Iraqi streets with security details, others chased soldiers spilling from a helicopter in a pre-dawn raid. Hewitt became one of the first western reporters to interview detainees freed by court order from an Iraqi-run prison. Canfield stalked Forward Operating Base Warhorse with her camera after dark, turning towering T-wall blast barriers into art. One assignment involved Hoffman donning a canine "attack suit." Military trainers had dogs take her down on the run — hard!

We produced daily stories datelined Warhorse, or Grizzly, or Normandy, Cobra, Caldwell and other brigade FOBs and smaller installations. Offered free as a public service, UAF journalism's coverage reached a statewide audience. Students earned clips

in the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* and *Anchorage Daily News*, video made newscasts on KTUU, KTVF and other TV stations in Anchorage and Fairbanks, blog posts commanded an online section of *Alaska Dispatch*, and several reports aired on Alaska Public Radio Network.

Students further circulated their work in a blog, [shorttimers.blogspot.com](http://shorttimers.blogspot.com), as well as a Facebook account under the same name. Hewitt, Hoffman and fellow journalism majors are working on a broader multimedia package of Iraq stories for *Extreme Alaska*, the department's online publication.

"Get the adventure you expected?" asked Col. Burt Thompson, the 1-25th's commander, as our departure neared.

We'd heard warning sirens, but hadn't been near a firefight — the closest we had come had been the thunderous reports from big guns manned by the 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery, "terrain denial" fire discouraging insurgent rockets and mortars. Still, what we'd glimpsed conveyed America's staggering war investment, the complexity of the Arctic Wolves' mission, and the uncertainty clouding the future of rubble-strewn, irrigation-deprived Diyala province.

"For some of these students," I told the colonel, "it's likely a life-changer."

## War games 101

Though it came together on the fly, our embedding assignment developed from relationships forged over years.

In fall 2004, the UAF Journalism Department partnered with what was then known as the 172nd Infantry Brigade to offer students a course called "Pen & Sword: Covering America's Military." The brigade commander, Col. Michael Shields, saw value in preparing his Iraq-bound soldiers for the media's presence on the battlefield. Fort Wainwright officers appeared as class speakers. Students were credentialed and took part in training exercises staged out of Fort Wainwright and Eielson Air Force Base in Fairbanks, and out of Fort Greely, near Delta Junction, Alaska.

In spring 2008, volunteers from my news reporting class embedded less formally in the 1-25th's war games for extra credit. Afterward, UAF's student newspaper, *The Sun Star*, published "A year in the desert," a year-long series of columns written by Alaska-based soldiers serving in Iraq.

In March 2009, UA President Mark Hamilton, a retired two-star Army general, floated the idea of embedding for real. When I sounded out brigade contacts, I heard that UAF journalism embeds would not only be taken seriously but would indeed be appreciated by soldiers and families yearning for stories about the brigade.

We take pride in multimedia storytelling at UAF. Iraq offered opportunity for demonstrating students' versatility reporting in print, radio, TV and online formats. I knew that students would profit. Classrooms can't match experience gained in the field, reporting stories of true consequence.

To do the job right, we needed about \$10,000 of new equipment, primarily high-definition cameras and video-editing laptops. Plane tickets for four, war-zone insurance, my own salary and other expenses pushed the projected tab to about \$30,000. No way could such expense or risk be justified unless I found an audience for the team's work.

A few news organizations I approached questioned the benefit — and sanity — of taking students into a war zone. More responded positively. If the work was good, most said they'd be interesting in publishing or broadcasting our stories.

## Ultimate field trip

"Young reporters have always traded their skin making a reputation," observed Robert Meyerowitz, the department's 2008 – 2009 Snedden Chair of Journalism. He pointed to his own



experience covering South American conflicts for National Public Radio.

The department made Hamilton a proposal. The president authorized a \$35,000 grant from the UA Foundation, with money donated by BP and ConocoPhillips.

We got a dozen serious student applicants. Faculty whittled the list to five. After talking with their parents and weighing the skills each might bring, I chose our final team: Canfield, a radio reporter and blogger, incoming *Sun Star* editor Hewitt, both 25, and Hoffman, 28, a polished video technician and budding photojournalist.

Current Snedden Chair David Offer, an Army veteran and former *Stars and Stripes* editor, pointed out that student reporters arguably possess an advantage. “The age factor increases the potential for a kind of storytelling that older, more experienced journalists might not see or tell.”

I can vouch that students and soldiers found immediate common ground discussing bands, fantasy football selections, video games, movies — hobbies and interests foreign to this gray-bearded professor.

As far as the Army knows, UAF’s school-sponsored embeds are a first. Articles about the project appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Editor and Publisher* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, among others.

Eric Heyne, interim dean of the College of Liberal Arts, praised what he termed our “innovative professional training on an international stage.”

### What did students take away?

Hoffman gained confidence that she can deliver on deadline. “There’s going to be assignments in the real world where I’m going to think, ‘Oh God! I have nothing.’ But you just have to look for it.”

Canfield finds herself riveted by news reports about bombings and other grim events she formerly avoided. “It’s really sensitized me to the war in Iraq and the whole war on terror.”

Hewitt also reckoned those weeks spent traveling Iraq in Strykers and mine-resistant armored vehicles yielded insights worth a year of classroom study about the region.

At the brigade’s return ceremony this fall, an Army Alaska officer inquired if UAF journalism has considered putting our field lessons to use. “You ready for Afghanistan?”



Brian O’Donoghue, a journalist and recovering dog musher, is chair of the UAF Journalism Department.



Read more about our students’ adventures in Iraq at [www.uaf.edu/aurora/](http://www.uaf.edu/aurora/).



▲ A soldier from 1st Platoon, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment, helps Jessica Hoffman scale a dry canal nearing the end of a long patrol conducted in temperatures that reached 120 degrees.

◀ Jennifer Canfield interviews an Iraqi police officer with the help of an Army translator.



# Dateline Iraq: SAYING GOODBYE

By Tom Hewitt

BAQOUBA, Iraq — Shortly after entering the police station, Staff Sgt. Daniel Blalock of the 1-5 Infantry Regiment found himself in the embrace of an Iraqi police officer.

“I knew it was going to be a sad day when we told them we couldn’t come back,” Blalock said, after he returned the hug.

Blalock and other members of 1-5’s Charlie Company had come to the station, just north of Baqouba in Diyala province, Iraq, on a mission to help train the Iraqi Emergency Response Force. The ERF, a special branch of the Iraqi police trained for security operations, had worked with the American soldiers for months, and today was the final session.

For several members of Charlie

Company, it was also their last day in the country before beginning the journey home to Alaska.

In the open courtyard of the station, the U.S. troops began drilling the ERF members on room clearing. Staff Sgts. Juan Batista and Bradley Thomas led the Iraqis through establishing defensive positions, kicking down doors and doing a sweep of a mock room. Each four-member team rotated through the training while the other police officers sat and watched in the shade of the building, waiting for their turn.

“Seems like we’ve done a couple hundred training exercises with these guys,” Thomas said. He praised the ERF members’ initiative. “They really want to learn what we teach. They’ve grown as a

whole team.”

In an office next to the square, Iraqi Sgt. Maj. Abdul Hadi reflected on the time his men and the American soldiers had spent together. He happily recounted how the security situation had improved over the course of the 1-25th Stryker Brigade’s deployment in the area, but when asked about the situation going forward, his mood darkened.

“It was bad, that June 30 withdrawal,” Hadi said, referencing the date when the security agreement that barred U.S. troops from operating unescorted in urban areas went into effect. “There are militias in the cities, and the Iraqi authorities do not have the strength to control them.

“Lots of officers who were in Saddam



▲ Soldiers from Bravo Company, 1-24th Infantry Regiment, heft metal detectors along with their usual gear as they prepare to sweep for weapons near the Udaim River in Diyala province, Iraq. The dawn patrol, staged out of FOB Grizzly, came up empty-handed.

Hussein's government are getting back into positions of authority," Hadi continued, "And they are seeking power again. I trust the U.S. forces more than I trust the Iraqi government. Our relationship is better."

Blalock reassured Hadi that soldiers from the brigade replacing the 1-25th would continue the work that they had started together, but Hadi still seemed unhappy about the Alaska-based soldiers' departure.

Out in the courtyard, Thomas corrected the ERF members as they entered the mock building. "You're waiting too long in the door," he said. "If there's a bad guy waiting, he'll pop you right as soon as you enter, and then your buddies can't get in to help you." He pantomimed a shooting motion as

the first Iraqi officer entered the room and paused in the doorway. "And remember, you should have your gun up as soon as you come in. You step across the threshold, it should already be at your shoulder." The translator struggled to keep up as Thomas barked orders.

After a few hours in the late morning sun, the training ended. Blalock, Hadi and a few other members of the American and Iraqi forces ate a traditional Iraqi meal and posed for pictures together. Hugs and e-mail addresses were exchanged, and then the U.S. troops put their body armor on and walked out to their Stryker vehicles.

Hadi escorted the Americans through the Baqouba area in an Iraqi police SUV. When they reached the main road out of

town, he pulled over and let the vehicles pass. The rear gunners waved to him until he was no longer visible, obscured by the Strykers' trailing cloud of dust.



Tom Hewitt is a journalism student at UAF. Since returning from Iraq, he has served both as the editor-in-chief and web editor of The Sun Star. He eagerly awaits the opportunity to seek a job in journalism after graduating, taking the contrarian view that a market with lots of unemployed Pulitzer Prize winners must be good for those with no experience.



Find semaphore and Morse code information at [www.uaf.edu/aurora/](http://www.uaf.edu/aurora/).

# Blood, guts & glue

Story by Megan Otts  
Photos by Megan Otts and Todd Paris



I am strapped to a gurney, blood dripping sluggishly from a gash above my eye. A hard plastic brace holds my head and neck immobile. Nylon straps crisscross my body, securing me to the backboard. My badly broken leg is stretched and locked in a traction splint that runs from ankle to thigh.



Kyle Monahan, left, with help from Fairbanks Memorial Hospital volunteer Wade Stoddard, operates on a pig eye at the ocular surgery station in an operating room at FMH. One of the most difficult aspects, students reported, was using the microscope rather than relying on their own vision.

It seems like an eternity before the paramedics haul me out of the ambulance and roll me into Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. We come to a stop in one of the trauma bays and I'm lifted — backboard and all — onto a hospital bed.

Monitors are stuck on my chest, arm and finger. My eyes are checked and my head wound treated. They have me wiggle my toes and tell them what hurts. Then the dressings covering my broken leg are pulled back and everyone gets an eyeful of the jagged, bloody femur poking through my thigh.

“Oh my God!”

“Wow.”

“Holy cow!”

If my injuries were real, I'd probably be a bit disconcerted by their reactions.

Luckily, my wounds are mostly stage makeup, rubber and mortician's putty, and my “doctors” are high school students participating in the Alaska Summer Research Academy's biomedicine module.

### Learning in the operating room

In the first week of ASRA, we toured nearly every area of the hospital, from labor and delivery to the morgue and even the laundry facility, but Lori Gibertoni, a registered nurse and one of our instructors, saved the best for last.

We spent Saturday morning in the operating room, an area usually off limits to the general public. Two surgical suites had been divided into stations to teach us about everything from scrubbing in to administering anesthesia and performing laparoscopic surgery.

## You've got to want it

ASRA debuted in 2001 as a weeklong science outreach program for students in grades 8 – 12. It had 21 participants.

The program has grown since then, with modules added in engineering and the arts and the format expanded to two weeks.

In 2009, ASRA hosted a record 146 kids from 13 states and nearly 60 Alaska communities. Of the 16 modules offered, five were remote modules

around the state, including studying earthquakes in Denali National Park and Preserve, marine mammals and seabirds on Bristol Bay's Round Island, and marine biology in Kachemak Bay.

While he used to have trouble filling some of the modules, ASRA's director, Jeff Drake, said the program is now at maximum capacity, and that students go through a competitive application process before being placed. For

example, biomed — one of the most popular modules — had 40 students apply for the nine available spots last year.

“I think it's cool that you actually have to want it,” said Sarah Cobb, 16, who made it into biomed. “It's not some place you just get sent to. We are all here by choice. We are willing to work for it.”





At one station, we learned about ocular surgery and got to practice our technique on pig eyes.

“It was incredibly hard,” said Bert Williams, 16. “I accidentally cut through the lens and the cornea. That pig is never seeing again.”



Top: Nick Fisher and Shay Stickwan try on medics' gear at the Evergreen Helicopters hangar on Fort Wainwright. Middle: Bert Williams plays an unusually cheerful trauma victim as he's lifted into a Warbelow's Air Ambulance plane by other ASRANs. Right: Sarah Cobb, Kari Pedersen, Jessica Lingaas, Stickwan and Eva Eliassen ham it up for the camera.

“That pig is never seeing again.”

In the other room, Kari Pedersen, 14, who had nearly passed out while getting her blood typed, sliced into a pig's heart, eagerly examining its structure.

“This is probably one of the coolest things I've ever done,” she said, laughing as she scraped a blood clot from one of the chambers. “Definitely not a bad way to spend a Saturday.”

### From strangers to a family

Seven of the nine biomed kids chose to live in the dorms instead of commuting each day. While there were a few complaints about roommates' sleeping habits, the squeaking shower on the fourth floor and having to take out the trash, all the kids said they enjoyed the friendships they'd made and the freedom of living away from home for a couple weeks.

“It feels like we've been here the entire summer,” Pedersen said. “Each day feels like a week because you do so much stuff. We eat meals together and hang out during activities and just always get along.”

“It's hard to put on paper how much fun it is.”

Marsha Panfil, who worked double duty as a biomed instructor and resident assistant, said the group spent nearly every waking moment together, from 7:30 a.m. when they got up for breakfast until lights out at 11 p.m.

“We are ASRANs. We stick together,” explained Kyle Monahan, 17. “You meet each other the first day and it's like glue.”

“We're a family,” Jessica Lingaas, 14, added. “We're inseparable.”

On Sunday, which was scheduled as a day of rest and relaxation, the biomed kids even signed up together for a trip to Denali National Park and Preserve with Panfil, who fell and broke her wrist while they were hiking.



“We offered to splint her arm for her, but for some reason she just didn't want us to,” Monahan said, laughing.

**“That was a good day. Well, they were all good days”**

One night after dinner, the kids looked back on everything they'd experienced at ASRA and tried to pick out their favorite parts.

There was the histology lab, where everyone got to hold frostbitten toes, freeze-dried tendons, fetuses and pieces of brain.

Dissecting the pig hearts and lungs in the OR.

The trips to Warbelow's Air Ambulance and Evergreen Helicopters were highlights for Sarah Cobb, who wants to be a flight nurse.

And what about the reindeer necropsy?

“Before it started, we were somewhat apprehensive because it really smelled bad and we weren’t sure what cutting into a reindeer was going to be like,” said Eva Eliassen, 14. “But once he started cutting we actually started getting really into it.”

And the best part, they agreed, was when Gibertoni showed up with reindeer sausage afterward.

“What I will remember most is that we are always laughing,” Pedersen said. “It’s hard to put on paper how much fun it is.”

The worst part of ASRA, they said, was having to say goodbye to everyone they’d met, especially Gibertoni.

“Lori is definitely awesome,” said Shay Stickwan, 15. “She makes biomed.”

“She’s like the energy,” Pedersen said. “She’s always happy and smiling.”

“She just loves our cute little faces!” Parker Mills added, stealing one of her catch phrases.

As the group started looking forward to next summer, some of the older students lamented the fact that they’d be too old to attend.

“You can be an intern,” Cobb suggested. “You can come back, be an RA. Maybe I’ll just come back until college.”

## Hard to say goodbye

The entire camp came together on the last day to share what they’d learned in their modules. At the beginning of the morning, spirits were high and excitement buzzed through the packed auditorium on the Fairbanks campus.

The mood changed after lunch, though, as the last few groups gave their presentations. Everyone seemed to realize that ASRA was actually over and the dreaded goodbyes were drawing near.

“I am blown away by each of you,”

ASRA Director Jeff Drake said. “You are all part of the ASRA family now. You are the generation who is going to make the impossible possible.”

“You are  
all part of the ASRA  
family now.”



Megan Otts, '08, is the multimedia coordinator for UAF Marketing and Communications. She and co-worker Amber Fath, both fans of the Discovery Health Channel, thoroughly enjoyed participating in the biomedical activities alongside the ASRA students.



Watch students in action and learn some really random facts at [www.uaf.edu/aurora/](http://www.uaf.edu/aurora/).





# Laughter, fun and a little bit of trouble

By Tori Tragis

It was the whooping and hollering that first made her get up from her desk and look outside. Whooping and hollering at 2 a.m. on a college campus generally indicate that something nefarious is going on, or at least something that merits investigation by a Responsible Person.

On this early October night, that Responsible Person was Ashleigh Strange, a resident assistant in UAF's Cutler Apartment Complex on the Fairbanks campus. One of three RAs at Cutler, she was on duty that night, so it was she who opened her office door in time to behold several individuals who had freed themselves of even the most rudimentary of garments and were racing through the complex's courtyard and down the hill.

Strange is a professional. She's a student, true, but three years of working with fellow students as a peer advisor has taught her many things, including the fact that

public nudity is not acceptable, nor does it comply with university policy. She had to go after them, stop them and tell them to put their clothes back on.

As she chased the garment-less group, it occurred to her: *What will I do if I catch them?* She knew how to deal with violent intruders. She didn't tolerate underage drinking and had learned to write an incident report, but how to apprehend streakers was not part of her training.

She didn't quite know what to do with a bunch of naked people. "They were all standing under one street lamp, and I was standing under another street lamp. Then they all just took off

running again. Fortunately, I couldn't really see anything," she says, laughing. "They were too far away for me to catch them, and I just thought, 'Whew, won't have to deal with that!'" She laughs again.

To be perfectly clear, Ashleigh Strange does not shirk her duties. (And really, who *wouldn't* have been relieved?) She is the consummate professional, although she's really "just" a student, a journalism major, and all of 21 years old.

## Making the connection

Jamie Napolski works with freshmen in the residence halls at UAF. She supervised Strange when Strange was an assistant in Moore Hall, and they still work on projects together.

"She is a great RA," Napolski says firmly. "She is not intimidated by anybody or anything. 'Hi, I'm Ashleigh.' You hear that all the time. She can talk about herself or really listen. There is something charismatic about her that just draws people in."

Napolski directs the EDGE program (see sidebar on page 19), which helps freshmen adjust to and succeed in university life. Strange, she says, perfectly complements that goal with all students, regardless of class standing.

"I think that there is something inside her that says, 'I understand what it's like maybe to be alone, and I'm not going to be alone. And I'm not going to allow students I know to be alone,'" Napolski says.

Part of an RA's job is to help students make connections with each other. They organize activities throughout the year, some with an educational twist, others purely social.

Strange fully understands that it's all too easy for students to isolate themselves. Raised in Fairbanks, she was homeschooled from the fifth grade on.

"Everything I know about high school is from the movies," she laughs. She recalls that moving into Moore Hall as a freshman resulted in "significant culture shock."

"At first I wanted to be a hermit but now I realize it's a huge networking opportunity. I like being out and about."

UAF alumnae featured in this story: Jamie Napolski, '01; Jane Weber, '88, '91



## Pushing boundaries

She got her first taste of being out and about among students working as a desk attendant checking student IDs in Lathrop Hall. She admits she “totally played the freshman card,” seeking pity from the older students, some of whom were aggravated at having to prove their student status. The wide eyes and mildly befuddled demeanor worked, and Strange found she had a talent for enforcement with a smile. The next two years she spent as a resident advisor in Moore Hall before moving into Cutler this past fall.

“We have a saying when we are dealing with a noise complaint,” she says. “Where there’s laughing, there’s fun, and where there’s fun, there’s trouble.”

Strange may have an aptitude for working with people but, like many things, it’s a talent that needs nurturing and development. She and the other resident advisors (there are between 40 and 45 on the Fairbanks campus in any given semester) undergo two weeks of training at the start of the fall semester and a one-week review that kicks off the spring term.

Some topics are seemingly mundane — like how to avoid slips, trips and falls — while others, like date rape and alcohol abuse, are more serious if more rare. All of them are important because any of them can affect a student’s experience and success in college.

One of the more popular activities during training is called BCD, for “behind closed doors,” according to Napolski. Assistants role-play with each other and with professional staff, learning how to confront their fellow students on minor infractions and major problems.

Many people quail at the thought of confronting others but the RAs love it, Napolski says, including Strange. “She just thoroughly enjoys pushing her own boundaries, along with wanting to do a good job.”

Working with students is something of a calling. They can be unpredictable, especially between sundown and sunup. That unpredictability translates into late nights, interrupted sleep and sometimes emotional encounters. Strange handles it with tact, humor and a firm understanding of her primary responsibility.

“I’m a stickler for rules,” she explains. “A lot of people think we want to bust everybody. The way I look at it, I want to keep everyone safe.”



*Tori Tragis, '94, '99, is a writer and editor for UAF Marketing and Communications.*



## It all starts here



### Education. Development. Growth. Experience.

Students expect those things when they go to college but sometimes reality falls short. Classes are harder, professors more demanding. Maybe they feel a little intimidated, overwhelmed, and the experience might not be all that great. It might even make them want to leave school.

The EDGE program helps freshmen adjust to college life. What started as an experiment on one floor of Skarland Hall in 1999 has since grown to a program that fills all of Moore and Lathrop halls. Nearly 4,700 students have gone through it. Participation is mandatory for all freshmen who are 20 years old or younger, living on campus and carrying 20 or fewer credits.

Jamie Napolski, EDGE's coordinator since 2005, says many freshmen need help making the transition from high school to college. Putting everyone together under one roof (or two) creates cohesion and community, which Napolski and her staff further encourage by offering programs that build relationships.

"For students to want to stay in school you have to have your connectors," she says. "You have to know somebody" who can be a friend with whom to study or socialize.

Napolski's mission is keeping students in school. "We want to provide you the social and educational interests to fill up your time."

Jane Weber teaches a developmental math course in Moore Hall as part of EDGE. "It's really nice with the EDGE program because there are peer mentors, there are tutors up there, they bring in refreshments every now and then. They really work to make everyone feel welcome, not just the students in the halls," Weber says.

"I think it's a very positive program for fostering student success. And I think these classes work out really well because of the mix of students."

Some activities are largely educational, others more social. They go a long way toward helping students feel comfortable, happy and energized.

Sam Tinoco is a freshman music major from Kodiak.

"It gives students opportunities to get up and do things," he says. "At the last dance I got to go up with my band. It was cool that Jamie gave us the opportunity to perform."

"These programs let us show our talents. They let us show ourselves to the world."



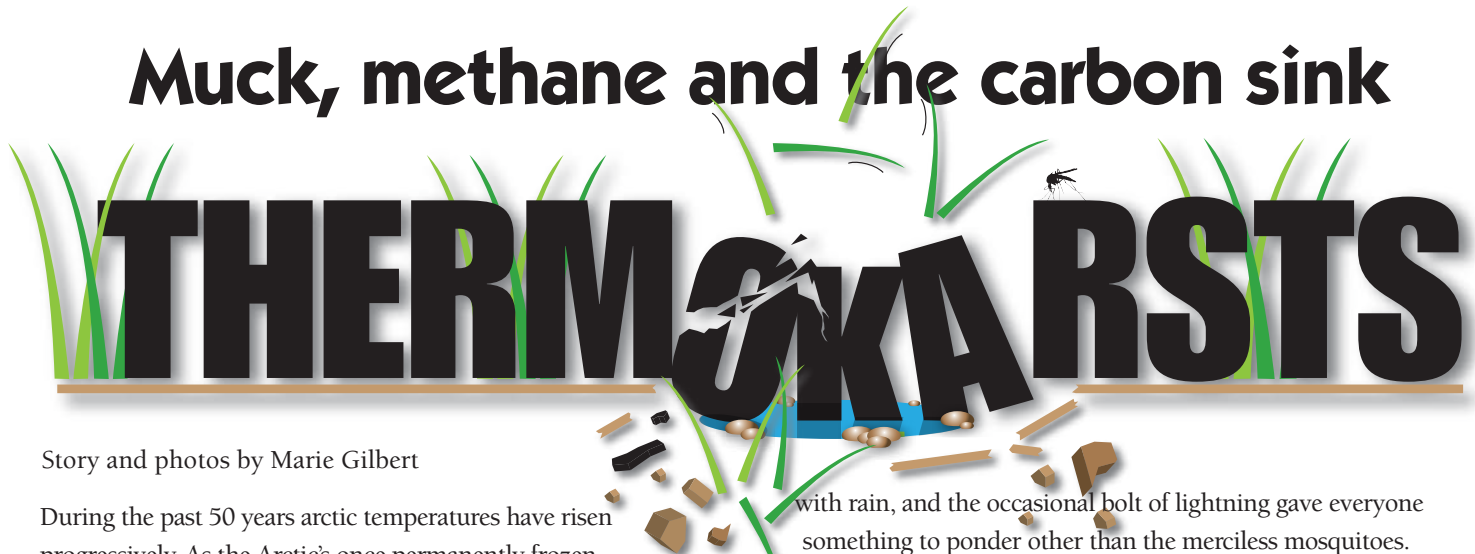
*Strange and Sammie Johnson host the weekly Strange Musicals Alive and Kicking radio show on the student radio station, KSUA. Johnson is also an RA at Cutler Apartment Complex. Radio station photos by Maureen McCombs.*



Learn more about Ashleigh Strange and being a resident assistant at [www.uaf.edu/aurora/](http://www.uaf.edu/aurora/).

*The gaping hole at the edge of the tundra lake was the size of a football field and impossible to miss. As our helicopter circled into position to land, we could see two men standing on the edge of the crater. They were dwarfed by the enormity of this slumped land stripped of vegetation.*

## Muck, methane and the carbon sink



Story and photos by Marie Gilbert

During the past 50 years arctic temperatures have risen progressively. As the Arctic's once permanently frozen ground, called permafrost, thaws, the ice within melts. The soil on top collapses, leaving pits and sunken landscapes called thermokarsts.

These landscape failures can swallow buildings and buckle roads, which make them a serious issue for planners. But it's what thermokarsts "exhale" that interests UAF biogeochemist Jay Jones, a researcher for the Institute of Arctic Biology. He studies the interactions between the biological, geological and chemical parts of an ecosystem.

"The big deal with thermokarsts is that their formation can trigger the sudden release of large amounts of carbon and methane from permafrost into the atmosphere," said Jones, one of several scientists and students working on the thermokarst that day.

Permafrost soils in boreal and arctic ecosystems store almost twice as much carbon as is currently present in the atmosphere. The bulk of this carbon comes from thousands of years of accumulated plants and animals. If it's released, it could have significant climate-altering effects.

"Instead of small amounts of carbon being gradually released from permafrost over long timescales, say, hundreds of years," said Jones, "... huge amounts of carbon are being released into the atmosphere over just a couple of decades."

### Ancient ice

The day I flew in to join Jones and Ben Abbott, a UAF graduate student, at the NE-14 thermokarst, the distant clouds were dark

with rain, and the occasional bolt of lightning gave everyone something to ponder other than the merciless mosquitoes. Namely, would the weather permit the helicopter to pick us up or would we be walking back to camp?

Once I got used to the whine of mosquitoes I noticed faintly audible drips and plops as I walked along the upper edge, or headwall, of the thermokarst. I climbed over the edge and down into the oozing muck to take a look. Jones explained I was hearing ice formed in the Pleistocene-era — melting. Imagine: floating into the air all around us was carbon dioxide released from 10,000- to 20,000-year-old decomposing plants and animals.

NE-14 is a slump thermokarst. It formed on a slope, and as the vegetation sloughs off down the hillside, it pushes oxygen into the ground, where carbon is stored. Microbes in the soil use the oxygen to convert the stored carbon into carbon dioxide, which then goes into the atmosphere. Where the Arctic was once considered a storehouse or sink for global atmospheric carbon dioxide, thermokarsts are now thought to be contributing toward making the Arctic a source of this greenhouse gas.

By 2100 temperatures could increase as much as 12 degrees Fahrenheit, and scientists expect to see more thermokarsts develop.

Jones and Abbott want to know how much carbon NE-14 and other thermokarsts store, how much carbon dioxide and methane they release, and under what conditions. The goal is to produce a computer model of fluctuating levels of these gases in the Arctic. The research is part of a multi-institutional, \$5 million, four-year National Science Foundation project studying the environmental and human aspects of thermokarsts in Alaska.

## Sampling sites

Jones and Abbott spent summer 2009 walking for miles on ankle-busting tundra, helicoptering to thermokarsts between thunderstorms (once an arctic oddity), and braving swarms of mosquitoes to map, measure and sample several dramatic landscape failures around the UAF Institute of Arctic Biology's Toolik Field Station on Alaska's North Slope.

Looking like Johnny Appleseed, Abbott toted a bag filled with dozens of plastic pipe collars. He also carried a small mallet and a bright yellow briefcase full of gas-analyzing equipment. As he walked back and forth across the length and breadth of the NE-14 thermokarst, he pounded the collars in a grid pattern into muck and remnants of vegetation to mark sample sites.

On each collar Jones tightly attached a device about the size of a small food processor, called a gas flux chamber. The chamber measures the concentration of carbon dioxide and methane in the air above the ground; it also measures ground moisture and temperature. A quick glance at the collective data stored on a hand-held device connected wirelessly to the chamber can tell him whether the outgassing is increasing over time or remaining relatively stable.

He also took a soil core at each gas sample site to determine soil moisture and composition.

Several days earlier, while taking readings at a much smaller thermokarst, Abbott hollered to Jones across the tundra that when he held the gas chamber a few feet above the ground, it registered a very high level of carbon dioxide.



▲ Jay Jones, biogeochemist from the Institute of Arctic Biology, heads toward his next gas flux chamber site on the NE-14 thermokarst as his research team's helicopter lands to drop off more scientists.

► The comparatively smooth, concrete-gray, surface in the center of the image is 10,000 to 20,000 year-old, Pleistocene-era ice exposed to the Arctic's summer sun. As this ice melts, the surrounding soil loses its structure and collapses, forming a thermokarst.







▲ Toolik Field Station in the foothills of the Brooks Range on Alaska's North Slope.



▲ Two researchers standing on the edge of the NE-14 thermokarst, near Toolik Field Station, survey the massive landscape failure.

▼ Jay Jones attaches a gas flux chamber to a plastic collar marking a spot where he'll measure the carbon dioxide and methane outgassing from an undisturbed area of the tundra.



In most places, “the background level of carbon dioxide is very roughly 380 parts per million,” Jones said. “There is a big enough flux of gas coming out of the tundra that Ben saw a reading of about 500 parts per million” — and that was without even putting the apparatus directly on the ground.

### Permafrost isn't permanent anymore

Jones and Abbott are just beginning to analyze the measurements from their summer of fieldwork, so they won't know for a few months yet what NE-14 and the other thermokarsts have to tell. The next two summers the pair will return to the area around Toolik Field Station and will also study sites in the Noatak National Preserve. For thousands of years dead plants and animals, and the carbon contained within them, have accumulated and been kept frozen in permafrost. Unfortunately, permafrost isn't so permanent anymore. Understanding the consequences, such as thermokarsts, could help predict the future of the Arctic and the global climate.



*Marie Gilbert is the public information officer for the Institute of Arctic Biology.*

# Corporate life, Kobuk roots

By LJ Evans

All the years she was growing up, **Helvi Sandvik, '86**, and her family spent summers in the village of Kiana, on Alaska's Kobuk River, and the school year in Glenview, Ill., a Chicago suburb. She became an adult with feet planted solidly in both worlds, as the Anchorage-based CEO of a major Alaska corporation with close ties to her family's rural background.

"It was a Huck Finn kind of life" during summers in Kiana, Helvi said. Every year she and her brothers and sisters fished and hunted and explored all the riffles and eddies of the Kobuk. "They were wonderful, wonderful adventures." Although she had exposure to different facets of the world because of the time in Illinois, Helvi said Kiana has always been the place she considers home.

"My parents broke their necks to be sure we went back and forth every year," she said, so that connections with Kiana and her mother's Inupiat roots were maintained.

Helvi's father was **Peter Olaf Sandvik**, the son of Matanuska Valley colonists. He completed two bachelor's degrees at the University of Alaska, in geology in 1950 and mining engineering in 1951, and went on to earn a doctorate in geology at Stanford. At UA he met his future wife, **Ruth Blankenship** from Kiana, who in 1951 also graduated from UA with a bachelor of arts degree. Peter traveled a lot in his career



Helvi participated in the June 2004 launching ceremony of the tug Avik in Kotzebue.

but he, Ruth and their seven children spent a portion of every year in Kiana at the Blankenship Trading Post alongside the Kobuk, which was owned and operated by Ruth and her cousin Rob Blankenship. Blankenship died in 2001 but Ruth runs the trading post to this day.

Several times every summer, Rob would pilot a barge and the *Helvi Kay* — the trading post's small tug — down the river to Kotzebue to get supplies. When the children were sufficiently well behaved, they got to go along.

"Those were just heavenly trips," Helvi said. They would wait for the weather to clear so they could safely cross the sound to get into Kotzebue, which to the children seemed like the big city.

"Rob would let us buy *Archie* comic books. That was not useful reading as far as my mother was concerned, so we would hide out in the bow of the tug to read our comics," Helvi laughed.

## College choices helped define the path

Helvi chose Kalamazoo College in Michigan for her bachelor's degree in economics, which is where she met Kelly Culver, her future husband. The couple moved to Alaska, where Helvi went to work for Maniilaq Association. Helvi felt she needed to continue her education, but she wasn't sure if she wanted to be a lawyer or go into business.

"I realized if I went to law school I'd have to leave Alaska," Helvi said, which helped tip her decision. She opted for a master's degree in business administration at UAF. Because of what her parents had told her about the school and the research she'd done, she knew she could get a good education there.

"Going to UAF allowed me to stay in the state, keep in touch with what was going on in Alaska and not feel as though I was missing things.

"It was the best decision I ever made."

Continued on page 28

# Nanooks on Facebook®

Some of you shared your fondest memories of UAF with us. Following are a few of the entries. Join the alumni association on Facebook and send in your UAF memories.

## John T. Baldwin, '95, Kansas City, Mo.

“The small herd of moose that would bed down at night next to our back porch. The hissing of the snow, the wind blowing through the trees, that at the end of two years I could go anywhere in Fairbanks and run into someone I knew and we would stop and chat. Trips to Fred Meyer that lasted for hours, most of that time spent chatting with friends. The quiet of winter as my wife and I watched the lights dancing in the sky.”



## Merritt Helfferich, '66, Fairbanks, Alaska

“Fondest memories include helping to start the ‘Hang the Dean’ revolt in 1958.  
 “Turning the entire UA water supply green with Ernie Kaiser on St. Patrick’s Day/Engineers Day.  
 “Following the utilidors to the steep tunnel slope under the water tower (now gone) next to the north side of Signers’ Hall to

the mining engineers’ mine drift where the university’s emergency disaster supplies were located, where one of the university wells was drilled, and where the most beautiful ice crystals would form by the entrance to the mine drift in winter.

“Being involved with the graduate students from the Geophysical Institute and their creative and sometimes wild ideas of interesting and funny things to do; being a jazz program announcer on the university station that preceded KUAC. It was KUOA.

“Meeting Ginny Wood and Celia Hunter in 1958.

“Graduation!

“English faculty member Joseph W. Meeker, his thoughtful, skilled instruction and his great book, *The Comedy of Survival*.

“Drinking with Otto Geist, Ivar Skarland and Magnus ‘Rusty’ Heurlin in the Malemute Saloon!

## President’s column

By Gail Phillips, '67

Spring brings hope and promise for Alaska and the university. The fall elections will bring new direction and we will work to make sure that funding for the university remains at the top of our Legislature’s priorities.

The UAF Alumni Association remains very active in representing UAF in the community, at sporting events and in lobbying on its behalf. We are grateful for the regents’ decision to place the UAF Life Sciences Classroom and Lab Facility at the top of the capital projects priority list. This project will provide excellent return on investment of Alaska’s public dollars and will contribute significantly to Alaska’s economic growth. We will continue our lobbying efforts in Juneau during the legislative session.

For those alumni in the Pacific Northwest, I want to let you know that your association is planning a Nanook reunion in Portland sometime in April. This will provide an opportunity to become more involved in student recruitment, mentoring and networking with old friends and alums. Please visit our website, [www.uaf.edu/alumni/](http://www.uaf.edu/alumni/), for details. We look forward to meeting with many of our West Coast alumni during this visit.

In addition to the social activities of your association, we cannot lose sight of the main reason we stay involved, which is to make sure we have the best university system possible to provide the finest education opportunities for all students. We are looking forward to this year’s commencement activities during the weekend of May 15 – 16. We wish all the best to those graduates who are working on their final studies at UAF.

“Being on the UAF Fire Department and once in 1959, while rescuing roommate Chuck Vernon from overindulgence in Tommy’s Elbow Room, on the way back to UAF on College Road, discovering a house fire, calling the UAF Fire Department, and then keeping a corner

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of the almost completely burned-out house burning until dawn because it was 40 below and we needed to keep warm.

“The aurora borealis and the crunch of cold snow as one walked.”

**David Kingsland, '88, '94,  
Seward, Alaska**

“How about sneaking into the utilidor tunnels that ran underground to every building on campus. Anyone else been to that huge fall-out shelter underneath the parking lot by Eielson Building???”



**Sean LeMay, Matric., Huntsville/Decatur, Ala.**



“There are far too many great memories of UAF and Alaska in general to enumerate but one of my favorite things about freshman year was ‘foot-skiing’ from Bartlett to the chow hall for breakfast and dinner! Who needs Breckenridge when you have a frozen hill and frozen shoes?”

“Plus the best ab workout ever every time one of your friends busted. ☺”

**Ted Locke, '97, Philadelphia, Penn.**

“I remember DJing one of those dances at the Hess Rec center. It was a fundraiser for Nerland. We had two 3'x6' bass cabinets (two speakers apiece), four 4'x2' mid-range cabinets (three mid-range speakers and two tweeters), and various others from KSUA and around campus. I think it was during the winter of '95.

“We had the sound cranked and the floor packed so much that we were getting complaints from people on the third and fourth floors of the surrounding dorms. ☺ We also had to constantly push the stacks of speakers forward because they had a tendency to ‘dance’ backwards.

“If I remember the cash draw that night was about \$5,000. After paying the rental bill for the speakers we were left over with about \$4,500. It was supposedly one of the largest dances in that place.”



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Police Department  
Rasmuson Library and more...

**Jennifer Sarah Lombard, '98, Anchorage, Alaska**

“One thing that comes to mind is the percussion students’ drumming sessions outside near the Great Hall. Whatever I was doing, I had to stop and listen whenever they played.

“Also, spending many hours in the pottery studio is among some of my favorite memories of UAF, and the friends I met at Nerland Hall and through Zeta Mu.”

**Margot Monhollen Maynard, '97, Youngstown, Ohio**

“Ditto on the Fred Meyer memory! Walking, nay, JOGGING up to the West Ridge to make classes because the shuttle never seemed to run at precisely the right time. The way Denali looked on a clear day from the far side of the West Ridge. Classes with Dr. Cornwall and his frequent segues to war stories. The jalapeño burger at the cafe. Great friends. Rappelling off of Lathrop Hall. So many more!”



**Tracy Shringarpure, '02, Fishers, Ind.**

“Wow. So many crazy adventures...”

“Sliding down the hill from MBS to Lola on stolen dinner trays.

“Tweaking the elevator in Skarland to get down to the basement.

“The bonfires in the fall and fruit toss in the spring.

“Dragging old couches onto the lawns to chill in t-shirt and shorts when the temps hit 32.

“Tossing boiling water into -40/-50F air to watch instant snow!”

“Blowing bubbles in the same temps to make solid soap bubbles.

“Getting up super early to trudge to the KSUA building only to find the last DJs left and having to wait for a security person to open the building up.”



**Save the date!**

**September  
23 – 25, 2010**

## 1950s



UAF photo by Todd Paris.

**Angayuqag Oscar Kawagley, '58**, received a 2009 National Indian Education Association Lifetime Achievement Award. The NIEA works to increase educational opportunities and resources for American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian

students while protecting cultural and linguistic traditions.

## 1970s

**Rich Love, '74** — "I graduated with an associate in electronics technology. I worked for Stanford Research Institute at the Chatanika radar site for a couple of years after graduating. Moved away from Alaska in 1975. I was a field service engineer for McDonnell Douglas in Seattle for many years. Have been running my own software company out of my home for 20 years now, writing Macintosh software ([www.MacWise.com](http://www.MacWise.com)). I spent the last six months learning to program the iPhone and wrote an application called 'Say it & Mail it' ([www.SayitMailit.com](http://www.SayitMailit.com)). It is getting great reviews ([www.tuaw.com/2009/09/17/say-it-and-mail-it-voice-memos-on-steroids/](http://www.tuaw.com/2009/09/17/say-it-and-mail-it-voice-memos-on-steroids/)). Married to wife **Karen, Matric.**, for 42 years. Karen was with me at UofA also. She worked for Glen Stanley at the Geophysical Institute."



**Terese Kaptur, '76, '86**, is the executive director of the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival.

**Judy Fowler-Morris, '78**, received a 2009 BP Teachers of Excellence award.

**Galen Johnson, '79, '02**, was selected by Fairbanks-area engineers as the 2009 Engineer of the Year. He is the president of the local chapter of the Alaska Society of Professional Engineers and coordinates the construction management program at the Tanana Valley Campus. He has more than 30 years' experience in construction contracting in Alaska.



## 1980s

**Philip André Layral, '81**, is the executive director for the Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals. He worked 23 years for the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, serving as a teacher, aquatics coordinator, athletic director, assistant principal and middle school principal before retiring in 2000. André served 10 years on the AASSP Board of Directors and is a past president of both AASSP and the Alaska Council of School Administrators.

**Diann Darnall, '82**, received one gold and three silver medals in table tennis at the Huntsman World Senior Games in Utah last year and competed in the National Senior Games in San Francisco in August 2009, placing second in the women's double table tennis competition in her age category.



Great Alaskan Outhouse Experience by **Craig Buchanan**. Image courtesy of the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce.

**Craig Buchanan, '83**, was named the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce 2010 Artist of the Year for his piece *Great Alaskan Outhouse Experience*. Born in Philadelphia, Penn., Craig has been a resident of Ester, Alaska, since 1976. His assemblages of natural and industrial materials have been in group exhibitions at the Fairbanks Arts Association's Bear Gallery, the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, other galleries and museums nationwide, and he opened an art exhibit named "Constructs" at the Annex Gallery in Ester in September. His works are displayed in the UA Museum of the North Rose Berry Alaska Art Gallery and numerous local businesses, restaurants and galleries throughout the Interior. He has been featured on the History Channel series *Tougher in Alaska*. He is the owner of Small Horizons, which has provided local businesses with potted-plant leasing and maintenance for interior spaces since 1982.

**Theresa John, '83, '92**, was selected as one of the first two recipients of the Mellon Dissertation Fellowship. The fellowship program was established through a \$700,000, five-year pledge to UAF from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support Native students in the dissertation-writing phase of their doctoral programs. Her dissertation reviewed

the results of her ethnographic research on Yup'ik dance in Southwestern Alaska.

**Kathleen Norris, '86**, was hired in 2009 as an assistant professor of educational leadership at Plymouth State University.

**Lisa Hendrix, '87**, recently celebrated the publication of her sixth and seventh novels, *Immortal Warrior* and *Immortal Outlaw*.

**Jeff Roach, '87**, is a lieutenant colonel in the Alaska Army National Guard and served as the U.S. Army aviation task force commander during a one-year deployment to Kosovo. He led 160 soldiers from Alaska and Maryland providing airlift and aero-medical evacuation throughout Kosovo to U.S. and coalition forces with a fleet of UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. Jeff has been the commander of the 1/207th Aviation Battalion since January 2008 and has served more than 28 years in the Alaska Army National Guard.

## 1990s

**Wayne Don, '94, '04**, was named to the 2009 Native American Top 40 under 40 list by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development. He deployed to Afghanistan in September 2009 as a member of the Alaska National Guard to embed with the Mongolian army and serve as an advisor and liaison for the Mongolians serving with the American command.



Alaska Army National Guard Maj. **Wayne Don** (right) with Maj. **Serod Boldbaatar** of the Mongolian army.

**Larry Ehnert, '95**, received a 2009 BP Teachers of Excellence award.

**Karen Max Kelly, '96**, is the executive director of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center.

**Julene Abrams, '97**, was selected by Fairbanks-area engineers in February 2009 as Young Engineer of the Year. She is employed at Eielson Air Force Base as the development chief for facilities.

**Jane Parrish, '97**, competed in the National Senior Games in San Francisco in August 2009, placing fifth in the women's double table tennis competition in her age category. Jane also placed second in the

women's open title in the Fall Fun Open Table Tennis Tournament! in September 2009 at UAF.

**Jordan Lewis, '99**, was selected as one of the first two recipients of the Mellon Dissertation Fellowship. The fellowship program was established through a \$700,000, five-year pledge to UAF from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support Native students in the dissertation-writing phase of their doctoral programs. His studies focus on gerontology and circumpolar health issues in rural Alaska.

## 2000s



**Dana Hanselman, '00**, was honored by President Obama with a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers. Dana is an Alaska fisheries scientist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The award is the highest honor bestowed by the United States government on outstanding scientists and engineers in the early stages of their careers.

**Valene Dunn, '01**, married Rodney Burton Sept. 12, 2009.

**Susan Vogt, '02**, earned her certification as an erosion and sediment control professional in February 2007. She is self-employed as an environmental consultant.

**Robert Catena, '03**, completed a postdoctorate fellowship through Harvard University at the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety in Hopkinton, Mass., in biomechanics research. His wife, **Laurel (Yauchzee), Matric.**, completed an American Culinary Institute program in Boston and is a certified pastry chef. Robert and Laurel moved to Southern California where Robert is a biomechanist with Vector Scientific Inc., a research and forensic consulting firm specializing in biomechanics and accident reconstruction.



**Alice Velsko, '04**, received her degree in veterinary medicine from Washington State University in May 2009.

**Panika Dillon, '05**, graduated with her MFA from Sarah Lawrence College in 2009. Her poetry has been published in the *Copper Nickel*, at [www.spindlezine.com](http://www.spindlezine.com), at [www.death-metal-poetry.com](http://www.death-metal-poetry.com), and will soon appear in *Oranges & Sardines* from Poets and Artists.

**Bradley Oleson, '05**, signed an overseas basketball contract with Real Madrid in September 2009. His high school basketball jersey, #23, was retired at North Pole High School.



UAF photo by Todd Paris



UAF photo by Todd Paris

**Katey Walter Anthony, '06**, was named one of *National Geographic's* Emerging Explorers for 2009. The Emerging Explorers Program recognizes young scientists, photographers and storytellers who are making a difference early in their careers. Each of the 10 recipients in 2009 received \$10,000 to assist further research and exploration.

**Helen Clark, '07**, received a 2009 BP Teachers of Excellence award.



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

## In memoriam

**Katherine Ann Abel, former staff member**, Nov. 24, 2009, Fairbanks

**Gay Lynn Alexander, '81**, Jan. 11, 2010, Fairbanks

**Patricia A. Andresen, director emerita**, Jan. 16, 2010, Kailua, Hawaii

**John Lindsay Antaki, '56**, Nov. 14, 2009, Brattleboro, Vt.

**Lucy A. Carlo, '82**, Nov. 4, 2009, Fairbanks

**Marjorie Kowalski Cole, '75, '80**, Dec. 4, 2009, Ester

**Leslie J. Conley, '52**, Nov. 2, 2009, Knoxville, Tenn.

**Thom DePace Wylie Gruenig, former staff member**, Nov. 24, 2009, Fairbanks

**Ellen J. Frank, former staff member**, Dec. 22, 2009, Minto

**Kathryn L. Gruenig, staff member**, Nov. 24, 2009, Fairbanks

**Linda J. Harris, former staff member**, Dec. 17, 2009, Roann, Ind.

**Robin Lamb, Matric.**, Dec. 17, 2009, Onancock, Va.

**George William McGee, '49**, Nov. 12, 2009, North Pole

**Gerald Mohatt, CANHR director and psychology professor**, Feb. 10, 2010, Fairbanks

**Evelyn Stefansson Nef, '98**, Dec. 10, 2009, Washington, D.C.

**E. Bradford Phillips, '50**, Nov. 23, 2009, Anchorage

**Judith K. Redmond, '80**, Oct. 18, 2009, Anchorage

**Ronald Max Risch, '69**, Dec. 21, 2009, Anchorage

**Donald M. Schell, '64, '71, professor emeritus**, Dec. 11, 2009, Australia

**Candis Shannon, '75, '06**, Nov. 11, 2009, Fairbanks

**Kenneth Toovak, '03**, Nov. 19, 2009, Barrow

**James M. Walsh, '40**, Dec. 15, 2009, Eastsound, Wash.

Kobuk roots, continued from page 23

While she was still taking classes toward the MBA, Helvi got a job with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities in Fairbanks as a transportation planner. During her 12-year career there she served as the statewide director of aviation — responsible for development and maintenance for all of Alaska’s airports — and as deputy commissioner. In 1995 she accepted a position as vice president of operations with NANA Development Corp., one of Alaska’s largest and most successful Native corporations. She has been president of the corporation since 1999.

### A young widow

Helvi’s husband, Kelly Culver, died of heart failure in 1999, leaving her a single parent to three children; the youngest was only 3 years old at the time.

“I work very hard to balance my life,” Helvi told an *Anchorage Daily News* reporter in 2004. “My husband, prior to his death, was the parent who stayed at home and so when I became a widow, I really had to step back and say, [...] how do I continue to succeed in my profession [...] and still make sure I provide the proper parenting responsibility? So I work very hard to make sure that every free moment that I have is devoted to my children.”

She still spends as much time as she can in Kiana, helping her mother run the trading post. **Bob Marovelli, ’50**, was friends with Peter Sandvik while they were students at UA. He has maintained a close relationship with the family, and after Peter’s death in 1995 he started going to Kiana part of every year to help Ruth run the trading post.

“I help with the ‘donkey’ jobs,” Marovelli said.



Left: Helvi and her father, Peter Sandvik. Helvi’s older sister **Kara, ’85**, is peeking out the window behind them. Right: Helvi, fifth from the right, on the shore of the Kobuk River with Kiana childhood friends and her sisters Kara and Robin, third and fourth from the left.



### Extended family

Helvi appreciates the contributions Marovelli and other UAF alumni have made to her family.

“My parents both graduated from the University of Alaska, and my entire life there were these very accomplished people in my life who they met in college,” Helvi said. “One good example is Bob Marovelli. He’s just one of many people my parents met at UAF that were lifelong friends, all of whom achieved significant things in their professional lives.

“It seems that the University of Alaska was good at attracting and developing talent,” Helvi said.

Marovelli in turn tells admiring stories about Helvi’s abilities, like how she can expertly maneuver a large jet boat to haul visitors and supplies up and down the Kobuk. All the Sandvik children were taught as youngsters how to navigate the river. They were raised to be exceptionally self-sufficient and independent.

“When Helvi does something, it’s all out. She just gets in that boat and goes,” Marovelli said. “She juggles her NANA job, takes care of things in Kiana and at

the same time she is an excellent mother and role model for her children.”

“I went to an excellent high school in Illinois,” Helvi said. “But it wasn’t like Kiana where absolutely everybody knows your name. You could run into somebody on the river and they knew you so well they could tell you your whole family tree. That leads to such a sense of belonging.”

“I grew up with the comfort of knowing exactly who I am.”



LJ Evans is a writer and editor for UAF Marketing and Communications.

### Helvi Sandvik’s honors and appointments

- ★ 2009 Alumni Achievement Award for Business and Professional Excellence, UAF Alumni Association
- ★ Chair, Seattle Branch Board of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco
- ★ Commissioner, U.S. Arctic Research Commission
- ★ Executive Committee Member, Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
- ★ Laureate, Junior Achievement Alaska Business Hall of Fame
- ★ Member, Anchorage Athena Society
- ★ Trustee, Aqqaluk Trust

*arts*

APRIL 15 – 17

Jazz Fest

APRIL 22

Northern Lights String Ensemble concert

APRIL 23 – May 2

Vinegar Tom — Theatre UAF

APRIL 29

Percussion Ensemble 64.8 concert



APRIL 30

Wind Symphony concert

MAY 1

University Chorus concert

MAY 5

Brass Ensembles concert



MAY 7

Choir of the North concert



*special events*

APRIL 10

Science Potpourri

APRIL 27 – 29

Rural Energy Conference

MAY 16

Commencement



*exhibitions*

MAY 15 – SEPT. 25

UA Museum of the North special exhibit — “Then and Now: The Changing Arctic Landscape”



For more events, visit [www.uaf.edu/events/](http://www.uaf.edu/events/).

# Summer is busy at UAF

**MAY**  
Summer @ UAF  
**MAYmester**  
May 17 – 28  
@

**MAY**  
Really  
**FREE**  
**MARKET**  
May 22 and  
August 14  
Really **FREE**

**MAY**  
Summer @ UAF  
Regular Sessions  
May 24 – Aug. 13  
@

**JUNE**  
Rural Alaska  
Honors Institute  
(RAHI)  
June 1 – July 15  
UAF

**JUNE**  
Summer  
Music  
Academy  
June 7 – 18  
UAF

**JUNE**  
Visual  
Arts Academy  
June 7 – 18  
UAF

**JUNE**  
**TOTE**  
Family Fun Fest  
at the museum  
June 13  
UAF

**JULY**  
Fairbanks Summer  
Arts Festival  
July 18 – Aug. 1  
The FAIRBANKS  
SUMMER  
ARTS  
FESTIVAL  
Since 1980  
UAF

**JULY**  
Alaska  
Summer  
Research  
Academy  
July 19 – 30  
UAF

**AUGUST**  
Summer @ UAF  
**AUGUSTmester**  
Aug. 16 – 27  
@