

ANLC Messenger

The Newsletter of the Alaska Native Language Center

Issue 1

University of Alaska Fairbanks

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5-Year Grant Will Aid Athabascan Teacher Training

A \$1 million federal grant received by ANLC this fall will fund programs designed to help communities preserve Alaskan Athabascan languages.

The five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education is an addition to another five-year grant that began in 1998 to create a Native language education program and career ladder for current and future teachers in the study of five Athabascan languages. The original grant focused on Gwich'in, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Deg Xinag, and Lower Tanana. The new funding adds Upper Tanana, Tanacross, and Dena'ina to the program.

Additionally, the grant will be used to help develop a language education program within the Interior Athabascan Tribal College. Patrick Marlow, the program coordinator and an assistant professor at ANLC, said that the connection with the tribal college will serve two purposes. It will solidify the effort within communities to save the languages, and it will build a bridge between those communities and UAF.

"The success of our students from rural Alaska often depends on these cultural connections to education," Marlow said.



The 11 Alaskan Athabascan languages are shown on the map above. Alaska is home to 20 Native languages belonging to the Athabascan-Eyak-Tlingit and the Eskimo-Aleut language families and isolates Haida and Tsimshian.

The federal money will also fund four \$10,000 fellowships. Two of those are for full-time students seeking a master's degree in education with a Native language endorsement, and two are for students seeking a bachelor's degree in linguistics, Alaska Native studies, education, or other relevant fields. Residence in Fairbanks will not be a requirement of the fellowships.

Through ANLC, UAF students can now pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees with an emphasis in eight of the 11 Alaskan Athabascan languages, all of which are in a state of extreme endangerment. None are being learned by children, and the number of fluent adults is declining constantly as the population ages.

Classes are delivered through distance education, workshops, and an annual summer session known as the Athabascan Language Development Institute. About 30 students have participated in the language education program annually, and this month Caroline Tritt-Frank will become the first to complete the master's degree with a bilingual endorsement. Paul Williams Jr. earned his AAS degree last August.

Partners with ANLC in this teacher training program, in addition to the Interior Athabascan Tribal College, are the Alaska Gateway School District, Lake and Peninsula School District, and the UAF Rural Educator Preparation Partnership program.

Anna Berge, Walkie Charles New Faculty

Anna Berge, a linguist who has specialized in the study of Eskimo languages, and Walkie Charles, a

Native speaker of Yup'ik who has years of experience in the classroom, are the newest ANLC faculty members.



Anna completed her Ph.D. at the University of California Berkeley in 1997 and did postdoctoral work at the Institute for Eskimology in Copenhagen. She has worked with West Greenlandic and has done theoretical and descriptive work in

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ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE CENTER

Lawrence Kaplan

Director, Professor ffldk@uaf.edu

Thomas Alton

Editor fnla@uaf.edu

Irene Arnold

Language Specialist fnila@uaf.edu

Anna Berge

Assistant Professor ffamb@uaf.edu

Walkie Charles

Instructor ffwc@uaf.edu

Dawn Durtsche

Admin Assistant fndcd@uaf.edu

Lillian Garnett

Language Specialist fnlmg@uaf.edu

Gary Holton

Assistant Prof. gary.holton@uaf.edu

Steven Jacobson

Professor ffsaj@uaf.edu

James Kari

Professor Emeritus ffjmk@uaf.edu

Michael Krauss

Professor Emeritus ffmek@uaf.edu

Jeffrey Leer

Professor jeer@mosquionet.com

Patrick Marlow

Assistant Professor ffpem@uaf.edu

Giulia Oliverio

Assistant Professor fngro@uaf.edu

Kathy Sikorski

Language Specialist fnkrs@uaf.edu

Lorena Williams

Instructor fflbw@uaf.edu

ANLC Messenger

This newsletter is published intermittently by the Alaska Native Language Center, 218 Eielson Building, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

ANLC was established by state legislation in 1972. Its mission is to document and preserve as much as possible of the state's twenty Native languages and thus contribute to their future and to the heritage of all Alaskans.

Alaska Native Language Center

University of Alaska Fairbanks

P.O. Box 757680

Fairbanks, AK 99775-7680

(907) 474-7874 / fax (907) 474-6586

e-mail fyannlp@uaf.edu

on the web www.uaf.edu/anlc

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Recently Reprinted

The Gwich'in Stories of Johnny and Sarah Frank Now With Audio CD

Neerihijnjik

We Traveled from Place to Place
Johnny Sarah Haa Googwandak

Neerihijnjik, a bilingual collection of folktales, songs, and tribal history, pays tribute to distinguished Gwich'in Athabascan elders Johnny and Sarah Frank from northeastern Alaska. Originally published in 1995, the book is now reprinted with an accompanying CD containing the original narratives as Johnny and Sarah told them in their native Gwich'in. The CD is keyed to sections of the book, allowing readers to follow along with the spoken Gwich'in words.

The Franks were rugged subsistence hunters and gatherers who lived above the Arctic Circle at the northern edge of the boreal forest. This work is the collaborative effort of a folklorist, a linguist, the Frank family, and other tribal members who translated nearly forty hours of tape recordings. Three introductory essays by Craig Mishler describe the cultural setting and the Franks' place within Gwich'in tribal



history. A review of Gwich'in folklore scholarship, a family genealogy, historic photographs, and a bibliography are also included.

713 pp., map, illustrations.

\$29 book; \$10 CD + shipping.

The Collected Writings of Peter Kalifornsky

A Dena'ina Legacy

K'it'egh'i Sukdu

This year is the tenth anniversary of the original publication of Peter Kalifornsky's award-winning volume. The collection of stories, poems, and life lessons represents 19 years of writings by the self-taught author and scholar of the Cook Inlet area.

The book includes 147 works presented in the author's Native Dena'ina language with English

translations on facing pages.

The reprint features a new preface by anthropologist Alan Boraas and ANLC linguist James Kari, who co-edited the original book. *A Dena'ina Legacy* is the winner of an American Book Award in 1992, and many parts of it have been reprinted in a variety of anthologies and journals.

xxxviii + 489 pp., maps, photos, illustrations. \$27 + shipping.

A Dictionary of the Aleut Language

Aleut Dictionary

Unangam Tunudusii

Knut Bergsland's unabridged lexicon of the Aleutian, Pribilof, and Commander Islands Aleut language is now presented in a 2001 edition with a vastly improved and enlarged English index. Besides a complete lexicon, this

volume includes more than 1,600 place names plotted on 33 maps. A General Introduction explains the Aleut sound system, writing system, and the differences between dialects.

xlv + 755 pp., maps.
\$44 + shipping

Dictionaries, Grammars Forthcoming

3 New Volumes Document Languages of Beringia

A Practical Grammar of the St. Lawrence Island / Siberian Yupik Eskimo Language

This new edition by Steven Jacobson deals with the Central Siberian Yupik language as spoken on St. Lawrence Island in Alaska and on the tip of Chukotka on the Russian mainland, where it is called Chaplinski.

The 215-page book contains a number of corrections to the original

edition. The author has expanded many explanations of the grammar, added discussion of previously neglected topics, and improved cross-referencing. New sections include kinship charts, an explanation of the Cyrillic orthography for Yupik, an index of grammatical subjects, Yupik-to-English and English-to-Yupik indexes of vocabulary, several annotated texts in Yupik, and informative illustrations.

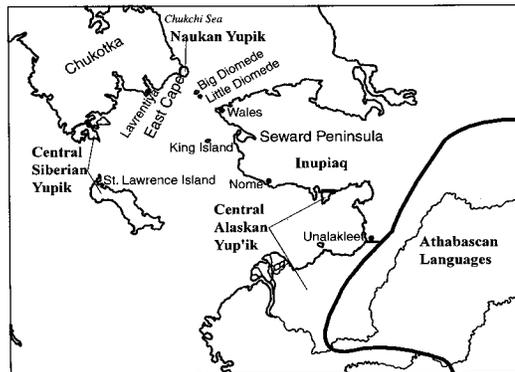
For pricing, call the ANLC office.

Naukan Yupik Eskimo Dictionary

ANLC's dictionary of the Naukan Yupik Eskimo language is a major research project sponsored by the "Shared Beringian Heritage Program" of the U.S. National Park Service. Naukan is a Yupik language spoken only in Siberia, although linguistically it is between two Alaskan languages, Central Yup'ik of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and Bristol Bay and Central Siberian Yupik (see above). Speakers of those two Alaskan languages can learn to communicate fairly readily with Naukan speakers.

The dictionary will be in two "mirror image" volumes. One is Naukan written in the St. Lawrence Island writing system to English with an English-to-Naukan index; the other is Naukan written in Cyrillic (Russian letters) to Russian with a Russian-to-Naukan index.

The dictionary will include sections on unverified words from old sources going back to 1791 and Naukanski place names. Steven Jacobson and Michael Krauss have been working on the dictionary from the American side, while Naukan speaker Elizaveta Dobrieva of Lavrentiya and Evgeni Golovko of St. Petersburg have been at work in Russia. Both Dobrieva and Golovko spent time at ANLC working with word lists and lexical files compiled by Russian scholars Emilyanova, Menovshchikov and others.



King Island Inupiaq Eskimo Dictionary

Lawrence Kaplan's dictionary of the King Island dialect of Inupiaq Eskimo is nearing completion.

Inupiaq/Inuit is part of Eskimo-Aleut, which is a family of languages spoken in Alaska and nearby parts of Siberia across the Canadian Arctic all the way to East Greenland. Inupiaq includes two dialect groups, North Alaskan and Seward Peninsula. King Island, in the Bering Sea just southeast of Bering Strait, is part of the westernmost dialect of Seward Peninsula Inupiaq.

Entries in the King Island Dictionary consist of a word stem followed by an English definition and examples. Most entries are noun or verb stems, although interjections, conjunctions, and demonstratives are included as well. The examples are provided to show how endings attach to stems to form words in Eskimo languages.

An index is included to guide the dictionary user to the precise Inupiaq entry for an English word.

How Do You Spell Athab(p)asc(k)an?

Athabaskan is the name of the interrelated complex of languages indigenous to Interior Alaska, western Canada, the northern California and southern Oregon coast, and the desert Southwest United States. Although the spelling of the name has been a source of disagreement and debate for 175 years, there is no argument about its origin. It derives from a place name in the Cree language of western Canada. The name in Cree is something like *ahdhap-ask-a-w*, which translates roughly as 'where there are plants distributed in a net-like pattern,' as in a shallow end of a lake. The name is fairly common in Cree, but the actual place it originally referred to is unknown. It is now the name of a large lake known in English as Lake Athabasca.

How did this Cree place name come to be used to identify a language family? The answer is found in the writings of Albert Gallatin, a businessman and politician who had a particular interest in the classifications of Native American languages. In 1826 Gallatin concluded that all the "inland tribes" of the northwestern part of North America belonged to one family and spoke related languages. He acknowledged that the name for these related languages was entirely his own individual preference. "I have designated them by the arbitrary denomination of Athabascas, which derived from the original name of the lake," he wrote.

Since then the name has been variously spelled *Athapaskan*, *Athabaskan*, *Athapascan*, and *Athabascan*. For many years ANLC's preference was *Athabaskan*, and all ANLC publications and language courses adhered to that standard. On March 20, 1997, Tanana Chiefs Conference adopted Resolution 97-35 designating *Athabaskan* as the correct spelling and requesting that other entities follow that policy. In respect for that resolution, ANLC has adopted *Athabaskan* as its preferred spelling, although we continue to respect authors' individual preferences.

2 New Faculty Join ANLC

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syntax and discourse as well as historical linguistics. In the spring semester at UAF, she will be teaching a class in comparative Eskimo linguistics. Her research interests lie in syntax and discourse and cultural linguistics. She is currently editing the North Slope Inupiaq Dictionary.

Walkie is a familiar face at UAF. He was a student in Professor Steven Jacobson's Yup'ik Eskimo classes 20 years ago and now returns to teach Yup'ik 101 and 102. Originally from Emmonak, Walkie is a speaker of the Norton Sound/Kotlik dialect of Yup'ik. However, his first exposure to the

written form of the language and the grammar came as a student at UAF. English was like a foreign language, he said, and the study of Yup'ik grammar gave him the opportunity to analyze the structure of language and thereby become a better speaker of both Yup'ik and English.

For his classroom text, he uses Jacobson's *A Practical Grammar of the Central Yup'ik Eskimo Language*, a work Walkie considers "priceless" for its logical step-by-step approach to teaching the language and its value to beginning students as well as fluent speakers.

Koyukon Dictionary Receives Acclaim

The *Koyukon Athabaskan Dictionary* by Jules Jette and Eliza Jones, published by ANLC in 2000, continues to receive broad attention and favorable reviews in academic circles as well as in the popular press.

Most recently, UAF Professor of History Terrence Cole, writing in the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner's* Sunday supplement "Heartland," described the book as a "magnificent piece of scholarship," an "encyclopedic dictionary" that is "stunning in its scope."

The KAD is a collaborative work by Jette, a Jesuit missionary/linguist who began collecting Koyukon words and cultural information in 1898, and Jones, a Native speaker of the language who refined and enhanced the original material over a period of 25 years. The main entries include more than 8,800 vocabulary items, 17,500 example sentences, 3,200 descriptive comments, and 90 drawings, diagrams, and photos.

It is available for \$72 at ANLC or Gulliver's Books in Fairbanks.

Athabaskan Language Conference at UAF

The 2002 Athabaskan Languages Conference will be held on the campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (*Troth Yeddha'*) June 16-18 to coincide with the end of the Athabaskan Language Development Institute.

This international conference has been held regularly since 1983 at locations across the Athabaskan region, but has not been held in Alaska in more than a decade. The 2002 conference is

being organized by Gary Holton and others at ANLC. Sessions are planned on language revitalization, education, and linguistics. The final day will feature a workshop on Athabaskan lexicography. Visitors are expected from across the Athabaskan region. An updated conference announcement and call for papers will be circulated in January. For more information see the website: <http://www.uaf.edu/anlc/alc>.

Leer Teaches in Juneau, Continues Research Project

Jeffrey Leer has been working on language projects with the Sealaska Heritage Foundation in Juneau.

In August he co-taught a Haida class through Sealaska's *Kusteeyi* Cultural Institute at the University of Alaska Southeast. He will continue this relationship and plans to do more work there during the next year.

Additionally, Leer is working on the Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit Comparative Lexical Database, a project funded by the National Science Foundation. The purpose of the project is to assemble comprehensive linguistic evidence establishing the genetic relationship between Athabaskan-Eyak and Tlingit, a hypothesis that has heretofore remained unproven.

An outgrowth of this project will be a comparative Athabaskan file, which will constitute the most complete collection of Athabaskan lexical material ever assembled and will form the basis of a future comparative Athabaskan database.

Plans Begin for Inuit Studies Conference

Lawrence Kaplan and Anna Berge are helping to plan the language and linguistics sessions of the Inuit Studies Conference to be held at the University of Alaska Anchorage Aug. 1-3, 2002.

The conference is held biannually at locations around the circumpolar world. Topics of discussion include anthropology, science, economics, politics, and language as they pertain to the world's Inuit population.

More information will be available as conference plans are completed.

**Alaska Native Language Center
University of Alaska Fairbanks
P.O. Box 757680
Fairbanks, AK 99775-7680**

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