

THE QAWALANGIN TRIBE OF UNALASKA | SUMMER ISSUE 2019

# Unangan Tide



**WHALES** IN Pg.7  
**THE BAY!**

**SHAYLA  
SHAISHNIKOFF**

takes on leadership role after  
attending Camp Q as a kid  
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**Exclusive!**

FOURTH OF JULY

**ALASKAN MEMORIES**

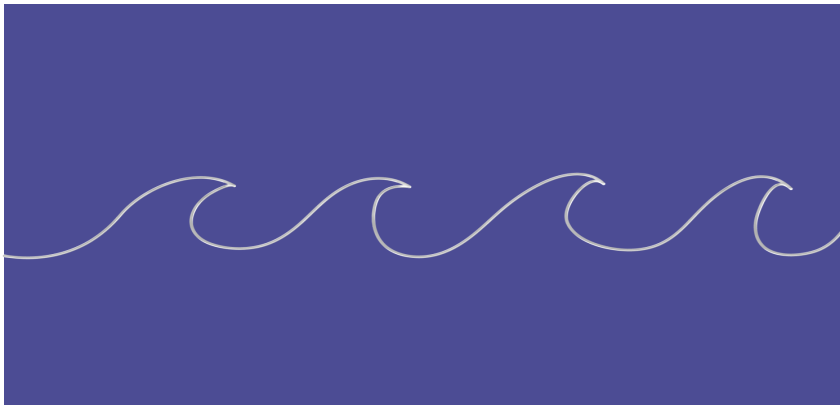
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**LITTLE  
PRIEST ROCK:**  
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**NEW BUILDING, NEW LOOK!**





# A Story From Mary Diakanoff

By: Shayla Shaishnikoff

Mary Diakanoff decides to visit friends and family in Unalaska despite being weathered out and missing the Lost Villages commemoration.

Even though Mary Diakanoff was weathered out and unable to attend the 2019 Lost Villages commemoration in June, she still wanted to come back home to Unalaska to spend time on the island and visit with family and friends. Qawalangin Interns had the opportunity to sit with her and hear some of her stories. Mary was born in Kashega, and is the last remaining person to have ever lived there. Her and her family moved to Unalaska when she was very young, but Mary loved going to Kashega to visit her grandpa, John Denisov, during the summers. “He was tall, and he had a smokehouse with a turf roof, kind of like a barabara. I used to sneak some fish out of there even if it wasn’t quite ready. It was just so good,”

she laughed. However, because of the War, Mary visited her home in Kashega for the last time at 11 years old.

Mary was in Unalaska during the World War II Evacuation and remembers being transported to Burnette Inlet where she lived out the war years. “I didn’t want to leave because I didn’t want to leave my dad. My dad was my best friend. But he was Norwegian, and only Unangan were forced to leave.”

Despite such past hardships, Mary spoke of life in Kashega and Unalaska with a nostalgic smile on her face. She was happy to come back home for a short while, and thrilled to spend time with her late sister Anna Moller’s kids, her sister AB Rankin, and her dear friend since kindergarten, Gert Svarny.



Mary has since returned to Juneau where she lives with her son Daryl Diakanoff, and we already miss her pleasant conversation and sense of humor! Qagaasakung Mary!



# PSP Updates from the State

By: Adam Crum

Recent results of paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) around the state has shown dangerous levels of PSP in shellfish.

There has been recent news that shellfish that have been tested in Southeast, Kodiak, and the Aleutian chain areas were found to have high paralytic shellfish poison (PSP) toxins. Harvested shellfish are regularly tested and PSP levels are constantly changing. The main lead to PSP is high levels of algal toxins. Some recent test results have shown levels of PSP toxins over 50 times the threshold safe for human consumption in shellfish. PSP toxins are not destroyed by cooking or freezing shellfish before consumption and there are no beaches that are completely safe for shellfish harvesting in the state of Alaska. PSP has also been shown to appear in crab viscera (crab butter); crab



Interns collect weekly samples of blue mussels at Little Priest Rock.

should be cleaned and eviscerated before being cooked. Ingestion of these shellfish can cause death. The easiest ways to protect yourself from PSP is to not eat them if they are from Alaska beaches. Shellfish that is sold in retail markets are safe for consumption.



## Tribal Administration Updates

By: Jennifer Wynn

New updates about the Qawalangin Tribe from administrator, Jennifer Wynn.

Positions for the 22nd annual Camp Qungaayux are still open. Applications can be found online on our Tribe Facebook page or at the new Tribe office, the old Building Supply, located at 1253 East Broadway. Camp this year will be July 29 - August 3.

Positions available:

Laborer  
Camp Caretaker

Bus Driver  
Camp Night Security

If you have any questions feel free to contact Shayla Shaishnikoff at (907) 581-2920.



# Forget Me Not: 'Alaskan Memories'

By: Lisa Tran

The Qawalangin Tribe staff comes together to create a float and host a picnic and carnival for Fourth of July.

On July 3, the Tribe hosted a picnic in front of the Russian Orthodox Church. Tribal and community members gathered at Front Beach to celebrate the beginning of Fourth of July with fireworks put on by the city. Members sat together, enjoying hotdogs and potato salad provided by the Tribe and shared many laughs.

The next day, with lots of planning and hard work, the Tribe presented their parade float, which displayed a baraabara, an Unangan sod house. The interns sat on the float throwing candy to members in the community and by the end of the parade, community members met at Tutiakoff Field for a fun-filled carnival full of games and food.

A large part of the success of the carnival was due to Harriet Berikoff's planning and dedication. The Tribe and community thanks her for her diligence.



## A Finland Exchange

By: Carter Price

As an Arctic Youth Ambassador, Carter Price goes to Finland to learn about climate issues affecting the country while exchange representatives, Anna-Katri Kulmala and Niina Jyränen, come to explore Unalaska.

Ang aang from Finland! My time here has been quite great learning and being immersed in Sami Culture up in Northern Finland. I have had the honor of representing the Aleut culture here in Finland and on Wednesday, June 26th I will be having a presentation about myself and the Aleut people. There are a lot of similarities within the Sami culture to the Aleuts. The Skolt Sami people both had Russian Orthodox influence and were forced to evacuate during WWII. Also the Sami language was on the brink of extinction about 15 years ago but now is thriving. I am hoping from my learning and time here I can bring back the tools to better the Unangan language and have it be knowing throughout the world. I was able to

participate in a WWF environmental conservation camp before my trip north along with going to the Finnish U.S embassy meeting with head officials



to talk about the changes in the arctic and how more people can be aware of the change. I also got to go to a reindeer farm and participate in the ear marking of the new baby calves. I have been blessed with this opportunity and have loved representing the tribe with my entire heart! Qagaasakung!

# The Fox Island Interdisciplinary Research Project

By: Virginia Hatfield

Research at the Museum of the Aleutians this summer includes work with an international and interdisciplinary team of researchers comprised of Executive Director and archaeologist, Virginia (Ginny) Hatfield (Ph.D.); Russian ecologists Arkady Savinetsky (Ph.D.), Olga Krylovich (Ph.D.), and Evgeniya Kuzimechva (Ph.D.); and Japanese geologist Mitsuru Okuno (Ph.D.). In addition, this year Ph.D. candidate Roberta Gordaooff (Arctic University of Norway) is conducting research into the population changes in Aleutian villages prior to contact with Russians in the 1700s and will also assist with this research. We are investigating a midden (kitchen trash) at the archaeological site “No Name Cove” on Unalaska Island. Middens are made up of kitchen

waste and other trash (such as broken tools or decorative items and the debris from making such items). The kitchen waste includes the remains of sea mammals, birds, fish, urchin, and shellfish. By looking at these artifacts, we can identify human and environmental change through time. In addition, we are looking at peatland deposits on Unalaska, Umnak, Hog, and Anangula Islands. Peatland is a kind of sediment that develops in wetland environments and is made up of plant remains that decompose. These deposits are like time capsules containing the history of volcanic eruptions (ash layers) and vegetation changes through time. These deposits help us understand changes in the climate over the last 10,000 years among other things, which aids in the interpretation of the changes we see in human occupation of these islands. We can determine



whether changes were in response to climate conditions or abrupt violent events, like an eruption. Our research goals are to understand how people living in the Aleutian Islands over the past 9,000 years adapted to the changes in climate, to the abrupt and potentially devastating eruptions of volcanoes, and to the movement and/or interactions with other Native Alaskan people coming from the Alaska Peninsula. Understanding the prehistoric environment is an important backdrop for interpreting the archaeological sites we investigate.

## Community Archaeological Research Project

By: Virginia Hatfield

The Museum of the Aleutians is also proud to host, for the 3rd year, our Community Archaeological Research Project at the Summer Bay site--U}luga|--from July 29 to August 10. Kale Bruner Ph.D. will join us for this research. This project provides an opportunity for community members to learn archaeological methods and techniques at an archaeological site that is at extreme risk of being entirely destroyed by erosion. The data from this site will be incorporated into the Fox Island Interdisciplinary research. The stone and bone artifacts (objects modified by humans) will be analyzed by volunteers supervised by Virginia, Kale, and/or Roberta; the animal bones, shellfish and urchin will be analyzed by the Russian ecologists (Arkady, Olga, and their colleagues); and any volcanic ash layers we identify will be analyzed by Misturu, thus incorporated into the larger project investigating the Fox Islands!





# Meet the Interns

By: The Interns Themselves

Every year, the Tribe is able to hire interns for the summer. These are this year's summer interns:



**Nicole Whittern,**  
Environmental Intern

**A**ang Aang! My name is Nicole Whittern. I have just finished up my 1st year at Seattle University in Seattle, Washington. I am currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in

Kinesiology with a minor in Psychology. While at Seattle University, I have also been provided the opportunity to be on the Track & Field team. Right after I finished my first year I came to Unalaska to see friends and family, as well as work at the Tribe. I am extremely excited to be back in Unalaska, and working with the Qawalangin Tribe! This will be my 2nd year here working as an environmental intern and I am very thankful to be given the opportunity! Being an intern here at the Qawalangin Tribe has provided me with new experiences and knowledge. I hope to further expand my experiences and knowledge throughout the summer internship!



**Kayla Nalam,**  
Environmental Intern

**M**y name is Kayla Nalam. I grew up in Unalaska. I just finished my third year of college at Washington State University, go cougs! This fall will be my senior year. My major is business management

and my minors are international business and accounting. This is my second summer interning under the environmental department at the Qawalangin Tribe. Me and the other environmental interns have been involved in interesting environmental projects that we had started on last summer. I am excited to spend the summer in Unalaska again and very thankful to have the opportunity to work here again this summer.



**Lisa Tran,**  
Environmental Intern

**M**y name is Lisa Tran and this is my first year as an intern at the Tribe. I was born in Anchorage, Alaska, but I have lived in Unalaska for 15 years. I graduated from Unalaska City High School this year and in the fall, I will be attending the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) to pursue a career in Nursing.

I was initially in Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (AYEA) for two years and I helped with the Tribe's recycling program through ALPAR. Now, I am working on environmental projects as well as office work while at the Tribe as an environmental intern. I am very thankful to be working with the Tribe and I am excited to see where my internship and Students on Ice program I will be attending this summer takes me when it comes to environmental advocacy and action in Alaska and our Arctic region.



## Mia McWilliams, Office Intern

My name is Mia McWilliams. I have lived in Unalaska my whole life and just recently graduated from Unalaska City High School. I will be attending California State University, East Bay in the Fall of 2019. My plan is to earn a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting so that I can later become a Certified Public Accountant. I am so grateful to be a part of the Qawalangin Tribe's staff this summer. As an office intern I will get the chance to learn more about what it is like to work in a professional workplace.



## Alex Schliebe, Office Intern

My name is Alex Schliebe and I was born in Anchorage, Alaska, but I grew up in Unalaska. At the Tribe, I work in the recycling center recycling aluminum cans and plastic bottles. Last year, I also worked for the Tribe doing beach clean ups. Right now, I am doing online classes, but I will be graduating next year from Unalaska City High School. Things I like to do in Unalaska for fun include going hunting and fishing.

## Shayla Shaishnikoff: New Camp Coordinator!

By: Shayla Shaishnikoff

After growing up in Unalaska and attending many camps, Shayla is this year's Camp Q coordinator!



Every year I look forward to coming back home to Unalaska for the summer to spend time with family, go fishing for halibut, and work at the Qawalangin Tribe. I started working at the Tribe in 2016 when I started back up our quarterly newsletter program. I've since been working in the Environmental department which has been great exposure for me as I work on earning my second bachelors degree in Environmental Marine Science.

However, in addition to contributing to environmental projects this summer, I have also taken the position of 2019 Camp Qungaayux Coordinator. Having been a yearly camp participant in my youth, it's very rewarding to experience myself transition into more of a leadership role. I'm eager to get camp going this year, and looking forward to working with all of the mentors and students!



# Whales in the Bay!

By: Nikki Whittern

Tribe member spots first whale of the year while concerns arise relating to this summer's late arrival.

**O**n June 21, 2019 at noon, a local tribe member sighted the first glimpse of the whales this year. The member said that they saw a group of whales spouting in the water out near Eider Point, this is a common sighting spot for whales here in Unalaska. Usually we tend to see the sights of the whales much earlier than late June. Last year, the whales made their appearance early-mid May. This unusual delay of appearance sparks curiosity as to why the whales may have came later in the year compared to other years.



I have some speculation that it may have something to do with the climate change that we are experiencing in the Pacific. In an article published by NOAA called, "Humpback Whales are Navigating an Ocean of Change" written by Elizabeth Weinberg, she explains the effects climate change has on the whale population. She highlighted that the decrease in the whale population, which could possibly be connected to delay of whale appearance in Alaska, may be due to the climate changes that we are currently facing. Recently, the Pacific has experienced a variety of unusual warming water in the past few years. It started with, The Blob formed in 2013, which was an unusual mass of warm water in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Alaska and Pacific Northwest, then the Pacific Decadal Oscillation in 2014 (which can be thought of as a long-term El Niño), and then the most recent El Niño cycle began in 2015. We know from research that the warming of the waters can be harmful to the krill population, as they are sensitive. "Krill eggs hatch at a narrow temperature range, and rely on strong upwellings bring nutrients into the surface area of the ocean. Warmer waters reduce the strength of these coastal upwellings, impacting krill production. That leaves humpback whales without their primary food source." (Weinberg, 2018). With a shrinking krill population, we may begin to see a shrinking whales population. And with a shrinking krill population in the Pacific, we may also see that whales may be reluctant to return back to Alaska with a diminishing food source.

## MISSION STATEMENT:

"The Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska, a federally recognized sovereign nation of the United States since 1989, vows to exercise its powers to further the economic and social well-being of all its members, and in doing so, will safeguard and support the Unangan language, culture, customs and traditions for those generations to come."

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The Tribe is looking for volunteers to crush recyclables.
- Camp Qungaayux positions are still available! See pg. 2.

## HOURS OF OPERATION:

Monday-Friday: 9am - 5pm  
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

## PHYSICAL ADDRESS:

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Unalaska, AK 99685

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