



THE FRIENDS OF THE JENSEN ARCTIC MUSEUM

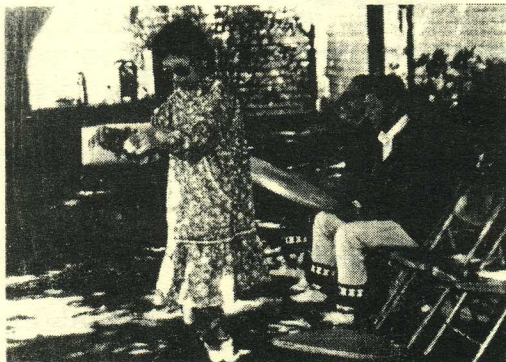
A publication of the Friends of the Jensen Arctic Museum

Vol 3, No. 2

Fall 1997

“And A Good Time Was Had By All”

The museum has had not one, but two grand parties since the last newsletter. The 12th Annual Birthday Celebration took place on August 17. It was preceded by four days of craft activities for children at all three local libraries and the Monmouth Parks and Recreation Department. About 80 children spent time with volunteers making Aleut whalers' helmets, masks, Eskimo yo-yos, imitation seal intestine bags, and birch bark baskets. Many of those children and their families joined other museum friends for an afternoon



Olga Kingston dances at the Birthday Celebration to the drumming of Alex Muktoyuk, accompanied by Larry Ahvakana.



Arlene Jensen and Carol Jensen congratulate Gerald McCray on winning Elaina Jamieson's penciled drawing of Dr. Paul Jensen.

of ice cream and cake; Eskimo Olympic events; Dave Barrett's story telling; and the dancing of Alex Muktoyuk, Olga Kingston, and Larry Ahvakana. Dave's stories about Aleut and Eskimo people held the whole audience spellbound. Larry's walrus dance is always a crowd pleaser, too. This year we also commemorated the 90th anniversary of Dr. Jensen's birth.

The 12th Annual Salmon Dinner was one of the best yet, in spite of being threatened by the poor fishing season in Alaska. Five members of the Friends of the Jensen Board donated their own art work for the raffle. President Betty Youngblood had good things to say about the museum, and the program highlighted some of the many activities of the last two years.

**Holiday
Shopping
Opportunities**
(see page 4)

Inside this issue

- South from
the Pole 2
- Board News..... 2
- New
Acquisitions..... 3
- Friends..... 3
- Seeking New
Board Members .. 3
- Gift Shop
News 4
- Meet our
Volunteers 4
- Calendar 4

South from the Pole

The following is information given by Loyal Lincoln Wirt to Pacific University about the objects he donated in 1950.

"While I was in Alaska, I traveled 1200 miles with dogs, probably the only man that's ever crossed Alaska in the dead of winter from north to south, coming out at the Island of Kodiak in order to bring relief to a starving camp at Nome that first winter. On the way out I secured a pair of Eskimo slippers, I suppose they would be called house slippers, showing the cleverness of the Eskimo women.

Starting on the 9th day of January 1900, in order to bring relief to the starving camp, it took me three months to reach open water. There were no maps and it was difficult to find one's way because the compass wouldn't work. Near the magnetic pole the needle to the compass simply dances about. But there's always the north star and, of course, the aurora borealis. Turning one's back to these, the opposite direction would be south. That's all the direction I had, to go south and keep on going. It took me three months to reach open water at the little village of Katmai. There I was able to secure a bydarka with two paddlers who took me 50 miles across the open sea of Shelikof Straights to the Island of Kodiak. Traveling around the island for six days, we finally came to the city

of Kodiak where I was able to secure a steamer for Seattle. I have here the snow shoes of that journey. They are rather interesting to me, if to no one else. They are old friends. Without them I do not think it would have been possible to continue the journey for very many miles. So here are the snow shoes that carried me 1200 miles from the Arctic Ocean to the open Pacific.

Reaching the little fishing village of Katmai I found that I was still a long ways from my goal. Fifty miles across the Shelikof Straits to Kodiak and then six days around the island to the town of Kodiak where I found the steamer. But it was a difficulty in crossing the Straits. These are famous fishing grounds. Whales in the olden times were found in great numbers there. The only way to make the passage was to secure a native boat and the largest boat was a kayak, about 20 feet long, covered entirely over with sealskin with the exception of the three holes where the three paddlers might squeeze themselves in, sit on their heels and paddle. We would not have lasted very long had it not been for this wonderful garment. Three women came, each with a kamaninka in her hand. This garment is made of the intestine of the seal, split and beautifully sewn together in what looks like a sweater made out of oil-silk. These things they drew down over our heads

and bodies and tied the skirt around the decking of the boat, tied the wrist with a drawstring; tied the hood with a drawstring. Thus, you see, we became a part of the boat. We were water tight. Then a number of men picked the boat up bodily and thrust us into the surf. The first wave rolled right over our heads, but we bobbed up like a duck on the other side, three strokes on the right and three on the left. So here is the little garment, the kamarinka I have preserved all these years because I valued it as a souvenir of the success of that trip. Without the kamarinka we never could have crossed the 50 miles of stormy sea."

Mr. Wirt's kamarinka, snowshoes, the house slippers, and a wonderful pair of woven grass socks used as mukluk liners are now a part of our collection thanks to the generosity of Pacific University. Ninety-seven years old and in perfect shape, they are a real treasure!

Mariana Mace, Curator



Special Thanks to Our Current Board Members (expiring term years)

Getting Acquainted with the Board

Eric Alava joined the board last summer. He was a teacher in Alaska for many years and knew Dr. Jensen. While in Alaska he also had a chance to exercise his considerable skill as an artist. A series of notecards featuring his pen and ink sketches are in the gift shop.

One of his prints was in the Salmon Dinner raffle. Erik is of Finnish background and used a recent trip to Finland to explore some possibilities of cooperation between the Jensen Arctic Museum and the museums in that country.

Erik Alava (2000), Larry Ahvakana (1998), Jim Birken (Ex Officio), Leta Edwards (Ex Officio), Jim Herzog (1997), Elaina Jamieson (1997), Carol Jensen (1997), Mariana Mace (Ex Officio), Art Oomittuk (1998), Bonnie VanderHave (1997), and Sylvia Warren (2000).

