

Lower Yukon students learn about Anchorage life

by Sheila A. Polty
for the Tundra Times

RUSSIAN MISSION — What would you like to do during the summer? Relax. Well, not for some students from the Lower Yukon School District.

Thirty-seven students from the lower Yukon area attended a summer school program held at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

Who would ever think of going to school during the summer? We did! The program is called the Summer Education Enhancement, or SEE Program. It is split up into two sessions.

The first session started June 10 and ended July 1. There were 23 students who went to the first session. Fourteen students attended the second session, July 9 to July 29. All the students are from small villages in the Lower Yukon School District, which includes Russian Mission, Marshall, Pilot Station, Pitka's Point, Mountain Village, Emmonak, Alakanuk, Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay and Kotlik.

The academic part of the program was geared to life skills. We learned a lot about living in the city and what we need to survive in the city. We took three classes in the morning and went to work in different places during the afternoon.

The classes were Math, Language Arts, Office Occupations, and Mechanics. There was a choice between Office Occupations and Mechanics. In the math class we learned how to budget our money and estimate how much it would cost to get an apartment, a car and the food in Anchorage.

The Language Arts class focused on oral and written communications. We did the oral presentations to practice our speaking skills. The written part was to help us use our minds and create things that we wrote in letters and journals.

The first class of the day was Office Occupations or Mechanics. In the Office Occupations class we had a two-hour class. The first hour we had

a typing class. The second-hour class covered some other office skills such as filing, answering the phones and spelling.

The fun part of this program was the recreational activities. We got high on life naturally. . . We hiked up to the top of Flat Top, went on a ski lift in Alyeska and explored Hatcher Pass.

At the peak of Flat Top it was like we were on top of the world. We could look down and see many small houses and people. The people looked like small ants crawling around.

Who would ever think of going to school during the summer? We did!

We also went out dancing at Pier 51. Doesn't that sound great, especially if you come from a small village and you go to dances that have very few people dancing! Well, this place was great but crowded! There were many faces and a lot of people. That was the best part: People dancing and having fun!

We went on a shopping spree, and it was exciting! In the village we don't have shopping malls where we can get clothes or anything. We would order things by catalog or call on the phone. It usually takes forever to get to us by mail.

Maybe I didn't get to sleep in late this summer, but I got something out of this program. I got education, job experience and new experiences.

Some people look into a crystal ball to see the future, we gaze at ourselves to SEE the future.

Sheila Polty is a student at Russian Mission. She attended the Summer Education Enhancement Program this summer in Anchorage.