

Student from Wales hopes to become Air Force pilot

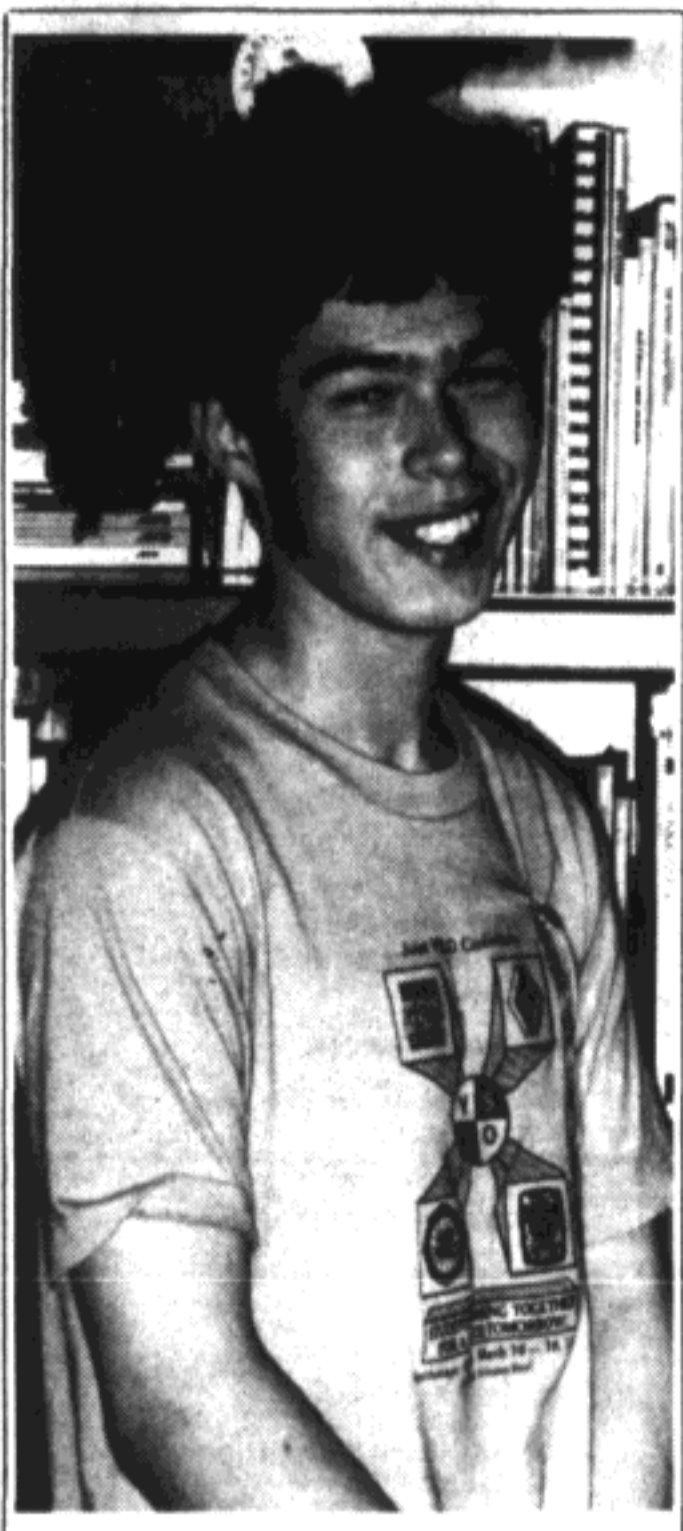
by Barbara Crane
Tundra Times reporter

Amos Oxereok wants to see the world, and he's figured out how to do it.

Oxereok, 16, lives with his grandparents in the tiny village of Wales on the western tip of the Seward Peninsula.

"Wales is really small," Oxereok said. "There's only about 175 people living there and everybody knows everything that's going on. There's not much privacy.

"There were only 14 students in our school last year, and the courses are kind of limited. I wanted to take some higher math classes this year, but all they offer is just basic math."



Amos Oxereok wants to see the world.

To explore the world outside of Wales, Oxereok spent a month this summer in Anchorage attending the Alaska Pacific University's Alaska Native Institute. That program is designed to give high school seniors an idea of what college will be like.

He enjoyed the challenge of learning new things and having new experiences.

"The way they taught the classes, you could work as hard and learn as much as you wanted to," he recalled. "I worked hard and got ahead, so I could help some of the other students who were having problems."

There was time for sightseeing and recreation, too.

"We went on a boat trip out of Seward," Oxereok said. "They took us all around the Sound and showed us the glaciers, the eagles' nests, the whales and all the other sights."

Oxereok thinks he would like to attend a college Outside, possibly Oregon State or the University of Puget Sound.

"My grandparents, who adopted me, support me in what I want to do," he said. "They want me to go to college and they don't worry about me leaving home. They trust me."

Oxereok's goal is to become an Air Force pilot and travel around the world.

"I was influenced by my real mom's husband, who was in the Air Force," Oxereok said. "He's been up in the jets, and he told me how it feels.

"Once I'm in the Air Force, I want

to go overseas. I'll miss Alaska, and I'll probably get homesick, but I want to see exciting places."

Oxereok says that eventually he will want to come home.

"After I get out of the Air Force, I want to work for my Native corporation," he said. "By then I'll have some experience and know better how to manage people and get things done.

"My corporation (Bering Straits Native Corp.) made some bad investments when they first got their ANCSA money. I hope my education and experience will help me help them to make better business decisions."