

Alakanuk club names elder of month

by Valentina

for the Tundra Times

The Alakanuk Journalism Club has selected Emilda Murphy as the Elder of the Month.

Murphy was born in Scammon Bay on Aug. 15, 1916, to Mike and Martha Andrews. She is 71 years old and was one of seven children — six girls and a boy. Murphy has 17 grandchildren and about 15 great-grandchildren.

She married her late husband, Alfred Sr., in the early 1930s. They moved to Alakanuk in 1951 where, when she first arrived, she made parkas, boots and other clothing. She still has the parka and boots she made for herself.

Murphy made her own clothes then, and she doesn't like caucasian clothing, except for pants, but she can no longer sew because of old age.

After she moved here, Murphy worked for a while in a cannery called the Pt. Adams Packing Company.

She remembers when the weather was not as bad as it is now. During the winter the ponds and rivers would turn to ice as they do now, but the ground only frosted, unlike now when

there is a lot of snow.

When Christmas season came, there would be only a thin layer of snow. Now it snows before freeze up and then a lot more after that, she said.

She recalls that during her childhood she used to play with grass dolls. She sometimes made the doll houses from sticks. She also made her doll clothes from goose neck skin when she could get it and made mats from duck neck skins.

She didn't know how to sew at that time, so she would just tie the doll clothing together with strings. Sometimes when she sees commercials about fur coats that don't have buttons or zippers, but only have a belt, she thinks back to when she made her doll clothes.

Murphy attended school only up to the first grade.

After the interview, she said that she sometimes cannot remember things that she did long ago and forgets words when she is spoken to.

Editor's Note: Valentina's article was submitted to the Tundra Times by Darlene George, editor of Alakanuk School's Journalism Club.

