

Sand Point gets recognition from Aleut Student

Editor's Note: The following story was written by a 16-year-old Aleut junior from Sand Point, on Popof Island in the Shumagin Islands of the Aleutian Chain.

By Pam L. Gunderson

Sand Point is a small city, its population is about 700. It is a city whose life centers around fishing. In the spring and summertime, the men that fish salmon get everything ready, they repair and plant the boats and get the gear out which is hard work. Some fish for halibut and some fish for shrimp, others may go sport fishing. Many of the boys go fishing with their fathers, relatives or someone who needs a crew, and recently more girls have started going also.

Fall and winter is the crabbing season. First is the king crab followed by the harvest of tanner crab. Sometimes the weather is bad and it's very dangerous. The men unload their crab at the Pacific Pearl Cannery. During the salmon season, there are tenders around that pick up fish and take them to processing boats. In the spring and summer the cannery processes shrimp, and salmon, and in the fall they process crab. The people that come here to work at the cannery come from many different places. However, many of them are local.

As you come to Sand Point you notice a very small airport, which has a Reeves terminal. On the way back from the airport, there is a hatchery which raises pink salmon and silvers. The students at the public school utilize the facilities and study aquaculture, which entails taking care of fish and fish eggs.

In the heart of the business section of town is a large store, the Aleutian Commercial, which has a liquor store. There is also a post office, school, church, fish and game building, clinic, cafe, tavern, and a show house. Three other buildings are the Anchor Inn Motel, the Pines, Harbor View, and Tri-plex Apartments, and three others are in the process of being built. A state trooper is stationed in Sand Point and we also have a small jail house.

We have one channel on television, which is satellite reception. Other recreation available is hiking, going to the recreation hall, movies, eating at the cafe, going to the gym to either watch or play basketball games. You have to be 19 years old to get into the tavern. There are a lot of people that own three wheelers, trucks, cars, and motorcycles.

Our school has K-12 grades. We have a gym, heavily used by basketball players, both boys and girls. There are many activities going on in the school year such as the teams and cheerleaders trying to make money for uniforms and traveling, and classes trying to make money for their senior trip. Last year, the Senior class went to Mexico.

The school has two papers, the Aleut, which is mainly news happenings in the town, and the Eagle Squawk, which tells what is happening around the school. Twenty one credits are required to graduate from high school. At graduation the kindergarten, eighth graders and seniors graduate. After the senior are out of school, some of them go on to college, others stay around and go fishing or find a job elsewhere.