

Author Fritz says writers must listen, be curious

by Gloria Savetilik
and Ann Asicksik

The Wolverine Word

SHAKTOOLIK — On Oct. 9 we talked to Jean Fritz. Jean Fritz is an author. She spent her childhood in China, but now she lives in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. She came to Alaska to visit some villages in the Bering Strait School District.

When we talked to her, she was in Unalakleet.

It takes Fritz about one year to write a book. For a short book it takes her three to five months. She's been writing since she was in high school. She's written about 35 books. She finds some of her ideas from herself.

Fritz says it's not easy being a writer, but she's never bored.

The first book she wrote was about a cat named Fishhead. He loved islands. In 1982 she wrote, *Homesick, My Own Story*. She says *Homesick* is her favorite book.

In that same year, she visited China and saw her old house and the old church.

It took Jean one year to write *The Double Life of Pocahontas*. It took a lot of research to write *Pocahontas*.



John Smith was a 25-year-old adventurer. He had a book that was almost like a journal. Jean Fritz used his journal to help her write *Pocahontas*.

Sometimes she uses real people in her books. She doesn't plan to retire; she hopes to be a writer for a long time.

If children want to be writers, she said, they should be curious, listen, notice everything, write down everything they've seen and heard, want to know about everything and try to find the right words for what they are writing about.

The Wolverine Word is the school newspaper published by Shaktoolik School. Kipi Asicksik is the advisor.