

Book gathers narrations of Northwest Arctic elders

KOTZEBUE — The Northwest Arctic Borough School District, headquartered in Kotzebue, has published a collection of elders' narrations to be used as a text for language enrichment in high school classrooms.

Lore of the Inupiat: The Elders Speak contains 24 chapters of elders' knowledge on a wide variety of topics grouped in six categories: Recent History, Ancient Memories, How Things Came About, Marauders and Heroes, Captivating Stories and Orphan Stories.

The narrations were selected from a collection of tape recordings of elders, a project which began in 1974. The recordings, all in Inupiaq Eskimo, were transcribed, translated and published in both Inupiaq and English.

"In recent years we have been introducing some teaching materials which are based on the local culture," said Bobbe Bluett, the district's executive director of instruction.

"We have found that these materials not only generate high interest among

the students, but they help strengthen the bond between the school and community as well."

The 230-page, hard-bound book is richly illustrated with block prints contributed by high school students in Kotzebue. The book design was created by graphic artist Michael Bania of Buckland.

Responsible for the content of the book were Ruth Sampson, district bilingual coordinator; Hannah Mendenhall, assistant bilingual coordinator; Linda Morena, secretary; and Edward Tennant, project consultant.

A 150-page teacher guide has been written to provide teachers with suggestions on how to use the book to develop reading skills with special emphasis on comprehension development, vocabulary growth and idiom enrichment.

Copies of the book are available for \$20 from: Bilingual Program Office, Northwest Arctic Borough School District, Box 51, Kotzebue 99752.