

RurALCAP Honors Karsten Posthumously

One of the Office of Economic Opportunity's most distinguished awards, the Urban Service Award, has been given posthumously to Louis Karsten for his dedicated service in the War against Poverty.

Karsten was a Community Aide with Rural Alaska Community Action Program's (Rur-ALCAP) Juneau Community Center in Southeast Alaska where he served for approximately two years. He died July 5 of this year.

The award certificate will be formally presented to Mrs. Karsten by Amos Wallace, Chairman of the Gastineau Community Council for the Juneau Center.

Many people had commended Karsten's work, and one such

person is Les James, Manager of the Juneau branch of the State Department of Education Vocational Rehabilitation.

He also received high praise from Larry Brayton, Executive Director of RurALCAP. Larry expressed his appreciation of Karsten's service stating, "We all appreciated Louie's fine efforts in our War on Poverty programs. I, myself, was especially impressed with Louie's dedicated efforts."

Karsten is remembered because of his dedication to the poor people of Alaska and his understanding of the program RurALCAP is trying to work for the people. Being a native Alaskan himself, he understood the problems and tried to do his best to help solve these problems.

RurALCAP is very proud of Louie, and he certainly earned this award.

THE OLDEST MAN IN ALASKA

HEALY LAKE—What started as a boy's collection of arrowheads has been developed into one of the most significant archaeological finds of recent years by University of Alaska Archaeologist John P. Cook.

Flaked-stone artifacts and charred animal bone fragments uncovered in and around a buried hearth have been radiocarbon dated, revealing an age of 11,090 plus or minus 170 years — proving that the lake's pre-historic men inhabited interior Alaska nearly 5,000 years earlier than other dated sites have so far indicated.

The story of the discovery of the Healy Lake site begins with Dr. Robert A. McKennan, a Dartmouth College cultural anthropologist who has studied the traditions and family group relations of interior Alaskan Indians for more than 40 years.

He stopped at the Healy Lake homestead of trapper Paul Kirsteatter in 1962 to interview Mrs. Margaret Kirsteatter, a native whose family had lived in the area for generations.

In addition to learning about Indian traditions and customs, McKennan was shown a collection of chipped artifacts uncovered in the family garden by Freddy Kirsteatter, now 16 and a student at the Wrangell Institute, Wrangell, Alaska.

Recognizing the potential importance of the artifacts, McKennan borrowed some from young Kirsteatter's collection for further analysis at Dartmouth.

In 1966, he again returned to the lake, this time as a visiting professor at UA's Institute of Arctic Biology (IAB).

"I came into the picture," explains UA Archaeologist Cook, "when Dr. McKennan, a former professor of mine at Dartmouth, invited me to examine the site."

Cook was excavating a site in the Yukon Territory for Ottawa's National Museum of Canada at the time, and brought his three-man crew with him to Healy Lake for a reconnaissance in force.

"We found a sequence of artifacts, animal bones, and charcoal hearths extending from what we later learned was the 11,000 year level to recent times," he said, adding that this is a relatively rare occurrence in Alaska where most archaeological sites yield artifacts reflecting only intermittent occupation.

Cook returned to the lake in 1967 to excavate the village, Kirsteatter garden, and Ashes Point sites with a five-man team again supported by the National Museum of Canada, and assisted by UA's IAB.

That summer the team dug more than 50 five-by-five-foot-squares to depths ranging from

three to five feet using the traditional tool of the archaeologist — a mason's trowel.

"Archaeologists have never been renowned for their digging speed," Cook said, "we excavate our squares in two-inch increments."

"That way we can be certain to uncover each cultural layer without destroying or disturbing the position of any artifacts we may find."

The complete sequence of habitations at the village site provided important correlations with artifacts found at other sites in the state.

"Very often we can identify widely separated contemporary groups sharing the same cultural and technological backgrounds by studying similarities in the way they chipped their stone implements," he said.

In addition to providing the oldest reliable date of habitation in the state, the Healy Lake excavation has enabled archaeologists to place other sites into an ordered time sequence.

"So far Healy Lake artifacts have shown similarities with implements found at the UA campus site, a site in the Brooks Range, and others in the state," Cook said.

Based on materials gathered to date, Cook describes the Alaskan of 11,000 years ago as a nomadic hunter.

"He hunted moose and caribou," he said, "following migrating herds from season to season, living probably in tents

of some sort."

Cook is basing his doctoral dissertation on the Healy Lake excavations, and plans to expand interior Alaskan operations from his joint appointment to UA's IAB and the Department of Anthropology.

He expects to receive his Ph.D. in anthropology this year from the University of Wisconsin at Madison where he completed his graduate work.

Cook, his wife Nancy, and their son, Timothy, 4, are now residing in Fairbanks.

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