WELCOME to 2016 UAF OLLI EXCURSION KOTZEBUE, ALASKA

This is a rural Arctic Alaskan Adventure! Each day offers numerous opportunities to experience the essence of the Inupiat Eskimo people and the Arctic lands. There will be several possibilities for activities to choose. It needs to be noted that local folks who are your teachers for this course often have a different sense of time and teaching styles. Maintaining an open mind makes this class rewarding.

The “Fish Camp and Inupiat Culture” Excursion runs from August 1, 2016 (Monday) to August 4, 2016 (Thursday). We are looking forward to hosting your Osher Lifelong Learning Institute experience and hope your stay will be enjoyable, stimulating, and unforgettable.

About LaVonne’s Fish Camp – LaVonne Hendricks lived and traveled throughout Northwest Alaska, Nome and Kotzebue, extensively for 14 years as a public health nurse for 26 Inupiat villages. No longer nursing in the area, she continues to share the summers at her working salmon fish camp six miles from Kotzebue on the ocean. The Camp is her “Koviashuvik,” – a time and place of great joy in the present moment. The “power of place”, the Zen-like nature of the Elders, and the dramatic weather changes keep her ever in the present moment! The Camp has been built over a 42-year period with friends, family and adopted family from near and far. Volunteers assist in all aspects of running the camp. Because of the brief Arctic summer, Mother Nature gives us this beach for 8 to 12 weeks each year.

Setting – LaVonne’s Fish Camp is a small, intimate, modest, fish camp perched on ocean’s edge with a $1,000,000 view. Traditional subsistence salmon drying racks share the beach with a “smoker,” fish processing sheds, crew quarters, and a 900-foot salmon net. Immediately in front of the camp is a continuous gravel beach that connects the entire Baldwin Peninsula and the shallow Chukchi Sea. The water is “warm” enough for the local kids and a few hardy guests to swim regularly. The sea runs 200 unobstructed miles to eastern Siberia. Ocean waves lull guests to sleep.

There are no neighbors nearby, though local folks often stop for coffee and to chat on their way to hunt, fish, pick berries and “greens”. Elders come to fish and help prepare their fish for winter subsistence use.
Accommodations at a Working Fish Camp

Meals: Meals are served family style around a large table that seats everyone. For those on special diets, every evening meal includes fresh local salmon and a large salad. There is also a second entree of familiar American foods for those non-fish eaters. Local subsistence foods are shared by local folks. We use these special foods in meal preparation whenever the opportunity presents itself. Not to worry! Samples of these unique treats are served to be tasted only in teensy amounts during “the sharing hour” before dinner. As some activities prevent us from arriving back at camp at exact meal times, we suggest you keep a small private stash of “snacks” on your person, especially if you have hypoglycemia.

Cabins: The fish camp includes 9 simple guest cabins with electric heat when the 10 KW diesel generator is running. There is a lounge patio cabin with a clear view 20 miles up the beach, a separate dining room, and a modern kitchen with a shared shower. Toilet facility is a turn-of-the-century model (outhouse). After check in, there is no maid service. Linens, blankets, and towels are provided.

Mosquitoes: The wind on the coast keeps mosquitoes down as compared with the Interior of Alaska. A treated vest or a piece of clothing is worth a try. Some guests use a mosquito head net. Bring mosquito spray, like “Cutters.” Repellents with “Deet” may melt plastics on binoculars and cameras.

Generator: We make our own electricity at fish camp with a 10 KW Lister Diesel generator. Although we shut the generator down at night, folks with especially sensitive hearing do better with a set of earplugs.

Smoking: Smoking is limited to outside of buildings.

Clothing - Should be comfortable and in layers

Plan to dress in layers! Head gear, foot wear, and gloves need to be wind and rain proof, warm and comfortable. Jackets with hoods are a must! The weather can vary from 35°F to 80°F in a 24-hour period. Polypropylene long underwear and Gortex® outer wear works best. The rain is usually “wind driven” so good rain gear is essential for warmth in the Arctic. However, should you be here on a freaky “hot” day of 75 to 80°F bring shorts and a swim suit along for the momentous occasion.

Recommended Books to read about Arctic Alaska

1. Shopping for Porcupine – A Life in Arctic Alaska, Seth Kantner, 2009  
2. Swallowed by the Great Land, Seth Kantner, 2015  
Activities**

Day 1 Arrival
- Check-in and orientation.
- Subsistence salmon fishing with a 100-foot net.
- Preparing salmon to take home with you.
- Tundra hiking and beach combing.

Day 2
- Identifying, collecting and preparing tundra plants to make essential medicinal oils.
- Attending class on polishing your own fossilized mammoth bone/ivory pendant conducted by award winning Inupiat artists.
- City tour of Park Service, Fish Processing, grocery stores, and Sulainich Gift Shop.
- Cross-cultural discussions about land use, communications, and impact of climate change.

Day 3
- Finishing medicinal essential oils.
- Community Elders are welcomed at the Camp for tea and a visit.
- Cross-cultural discussions about land use, communications, and impact of climate change.
- Eskimo dancing, drumming and storytelling.
- Visit Camp Museum & Library.
- Check out our educational collection of bones.

Day 4 Departure
- Finish up projects.
- Hike to Loon Lake (time permitting).

** Be mindful, these activities may not necessarily happen in this order. Mother Nature determines the schedule of activities in the Arctic.

Communications at LaVonne’s Fish Camp

LaVonne’s Fish Camp
Box 814
Mile 6, Beach Road
Kotzebue, AK99752
1-907-442-6013 (Camp Phone – July and August)

There is no cell phone coverage or internet service at LaVonne’s Fish Camp. Town has wireless hot spots that can be accessed during business hours. Cell phone coverage begins at the top of the bluff on the way to town for most cell phone carriers.
Traveling to Kotzebue, Alaska

Kotzebue is pronounced cots ah bū. Kotzebue’s Inupiaq Eskimo name is pronounced Kik•Kik•tahg•rook

There are no roads leading to Kotzebue, 30 miles north of the Arctic Circle, which is on the Baldwin Peninsula and the Kotzebue Sound bordering the Chukchi Sea.

Alaska Airlines (1-800-426-0333) provides jet service two daily flights seven days per week into Kotzebue from Anchorage.

If you plan extra days in the area

**Birding in Kotzebue**: Guide to the Birds of Alaska, by Robert H. Armstrong, (for identifying birds) approximately $20. It contains lots of photos and seasonal charts of all our birds including Asiatic and those endemic to Bering Chukchi Area. A Birder’s Guide to Alaska, by George C. West. This book is by far the best resource for finding birds in Alaska. It is a must have for any birdwatcher going to Alaska. Another good general identification book about birds is the National Geographic Society’s Field Guide to the Birds of North America.

**Fishing in Kotzebue**: There is limited sports’ fishing in Kotzebue. You can use a fishing “hook/line with spinners” for Arctic Char, young Sheefish and white fish. Note: The Silver and Chum salmon have stop eating by the time they reach Kotzebue because they smell their natal fresh waters from the Kobuk River in July and the Noatak River in August where they are on their way to spawn.

**The Noatak and Kobuk River Tours**: These are boat tours of two of our beautiful northern rivers. Bring lots of film, SD cards, or memory for your camera. The scenery will always be imbedded in your memories as well as your photos. Both captains are local Eskimo and Coast Guard licensed. All their equipment is modern, dependable, fully enclosed and heated. LaVonne recommends these tours . . . both tour hosts offer the warmth and hospitality for which the Inupiat culture is famous!

**Flight seeing by air**: This is a wonderful way to really see the land and its relationship with the bodies of water bordering it. We have two licensed air taxi operators we can recommend should you want to hire their services. Feel free to call or email me.

**Extra days at our Camp** are possible. These can be arranged through LaVonne by phone or email.

Again, welcome and I look forward to sharing this time and place with you.

Sincerely,

LaVonne M. Hendricks
ACEA Director

PS: Bring your checkbook! – Many guests are tempted and do purchase original Alaskan art pieces (carved ivory, whale bone, and fossilized wooly mammoth). Sulianich Art Center and gift shops accept cash, checks, and credit cards.

LaVonne Hendricks, Director — e-mail: lavonne@fishcamp.org — internet: www.fishcamp.org
For your comfort, please come prepared for wind or rain, as well as sunny weather. Temperatures in Kotzebue can range from 35 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit during summer months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clothing and Equipment List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PANTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SHOOTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SHIRTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SWEATHERS/JACKETS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNDERWEAR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOOT GEAR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSECT REPELLENT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RAIN/WIND GEAR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GLOVES/HAT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOILETRIES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WATER BOTTLE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DAY PACK</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUNGLASSES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FISH PRINT ITEM</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPTIONAL ITEMS</strong></td>
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