

ART & STUFF

BAY LINE GIRL

There are no roads to Churchill; there is only a railway known as the Bay Line. The Bay Line Girl highlights women that survive and thrive at 'the end of the line'. This bear season's Bayline Girl is Patricia Kandirun.

Patricia Kandirun is a proud Churchillian, born and raised in Churchill and is now raising her own children here as well. She was born at the military hospital at Fort Churchill, to Mary Anne Sinclair, originally from York Factory, and Walter Sinclair, originally from Port Nelson. The sixth of eight children, her family shared a one room cabin on the "Flats" in Churchill.

The cabin had no running water, and Patricia has early memories of hanging the small wooden sign to alert the water truck when their containers needed to be filled. Baths were enjoyed in a big tub, with the eldest bathing first. Of course, Patricia explains laughing, she remembers the tub and the toilet "bucket" being situated beside the woodstove in the cold months!

Spread out beside the Churchill river, the Flats area used to be a large neighbourhood; a community where families lived year round. The children ran and played together in groups. Patricia remembers a happy childhood where freedom to play on the land meant everything. Swimming, hide and seek, chase, riding bikes, and of course, spending time on the rocks at the Bay. Children met up on the rocks to roam for hours at a time, playing in water holes within the rocks, wandering and climbing far along the shore. The kids would even bring their own supplies and have weiner roasts.

She, also, traveled across the river with the summer program to learn about fishing, casting nets, cleaning and cooking fish, as well as learning about edible berries. Patricia recalls being aware of the polar bears around town, but not having fear of them; also she does not remember there being as many bears in town back then.

She believes that this is the bear's land, we are just here on their land. Patricia has a strong respect and admiration for the bears of Churchill. Any fear of nature, she remembers, chuckling, was being told never to whistle at the northern lights or they would come and grab you and take you away! So I question of course, did you ever try it? "No," she replies smiling, too scared. As an adult, she has been brave enough to whistle at them, and tells me smiling broadly, nothing has happened... "yet".

When Patricia was five or so the family moved into a larger home "in" town. Patricia also remembers the fun and excitement of Winterfest celebrations as a child, with games and dances at the old community hall on Button street, tons of activities for the children.

Patricia had her first son, Ryan Alexander, when she was twenty two, and raised him mostly, on her own, in Churchill. Ryan also enjoyed a life of freedom in Churchill, also playing alongside much wildlife and polar bears, he didn't worry either, part of every day life.

Patricia remembers however, her father warning her as a child, to stay away from the "boatmen", which apparently included any man from any boat. She did very well at following this until one fateful night in October 1998. Her sister asked her to come out to the legion, as a ship, the Finikas, had docked from Spain and the boatmen were eager to go to a Churchill disco. This is where Patricia met Dmytri Kandirun, a third class marine engineer, whose home port was, Serdobsk, Russia. She says that she and Dmytri joke about that night, because when Dmytri asked her where her husband was, she patted his leg and said "Right here."



And how right she was, for they fell in love and shortly after were married in Winnipeg, without family, friends. The two just celebrated their ten year anniversary by renewing their vows in Churchill, this time they were surrounded by family and friends.

They enjoy a busy life with Ryan, Dmytri's daughter Evgenia, who moved here from the Ukraine last winter. And their two children Antonina Dmytrievna, born in 1999 and Dmytri Pavlovich born in 2001.

Patricia says she will never leave Churchill, this is her security, her family, her community. She describes Churchill as "close knit" where there is always someone to lend a helping hand if you are stuck. As for the cooler northern climate, she can't wait until the snow starts flying. Patricia is involved in the community and lends her time whenever she can. She has been a foster parent, involved with guides and scouting. She has been secretary for the Churchill Minor Hockey Assoc. for six years now, as she likes supporting a sport that her children enjoy, and it is good for the community. She manages the Churchill Bears mites, novice and atoms and is hoping to hold the Kelsey Brew tournament here this year. Presently Patricia works for the Town, as Municipal Support Officer, where she is involved with local by-law enforcement. Patricia enjoys, and exemplifies the good things about being a community member, in this small northern town.

- prepared by Jennifer Campbell

NEWS AND GOSSIP

RECORD YEAR FOR QUEST

New Record for Fifth Hudson Bay Quest

With the words, 'For anyone interested, there will be a square dance starting at the hall', the 2008 Hudson Bay Quest, our annual dogsled race between Churchill, Manitoba and Arviat, Nunavut, officially came to an end.

Mushers, residents, volunteers and sponsors had gathered in the finely decorated Arviat Gymnasium for the awards ceremony and race banquet of raw caribou, muktuk (cubes of beluga skin and fat served raw), macaroni salad and chocolate cake.

David Oolooyuk claimed the first prize of \$8500, a \$1000 Northern Store certificate, and a new Canada Goose parka and gloves, with a record-setting time of 35 hours and five minutes, almost two hours faster than the previous record. He crossed the finish line at 8:19pm, March 30th, dressed in traditional caribou-skin clothing.

Oolooyuk was welcomed by a large crowd gathered at the finish line, a mix of flags, barrels and snowbanks, lines of snowmobiles and trucks' headlights shining on the swirling crowd.

As he crossed the finish line, local children jumped over the barricades and surrounded the sled, soon followed by community members, each offering their congratulations to the new champion. You could feel a real sense of pride in the crowd, as David, now with a Coca-Cola in one hand, variably shook hands, hugged and laughed with the many fans.

Soon, with a couple shouts from the crowd, David jumped back on



his komatik to be hoisted up, many mitteden sharing the load and the pride. Oolooyuk waved to the cheering crowd, an impressive sight on this minus thirty night.

He also won the 'First to Nunalla' award. Despite arriving at the second checkpoint and halfway point of the race four minutes after Daryl Baker, his official time, adjusted for the race start, was two minutes faster.

It was a fast race. With Quincy Miller setting a new race record last year, there was a real feeling of anticipation before the 2008 race start; the Inuit looking to reclaim the prize from the southern mushers and Churchill teams looking to prove that they were serious contenders.

The top teams set a blistering pace, with five teams pulling away from the pack early. By the second day of the race, it was clear that Oolooyuk, Daryl Baker from Arviat and Churchill's Dave Daley, Ernest Azure and Charlie Lundie would fight it out for the bulk of the prize money, holding a seven hour lead over the rest of the pack.

Like any northern event, there were a few hiccups, but most importantly, no one called the cops.

Some of the race highlights included:

- Churchill's best finish - Both Wapusk Adventures' teams in the top five: Ernest Azure arriving 3rd (with another 10 or 20 miles, he would have been second) and Dave Daley coming in fourth. If it hadn't been for bad ice conditions north of Nunalla, forcing Charlie Lundie to scratch, Churchill probably would have taken three out of the top five.

- Ed 'The Sled' Obrecht crossed the finish line at 11:50am April 1st to win the 'Red Lantern' award for 2008. His first words after crossing the finish line were 'It's cold out there, man. I mean it's really, really cold.'

- First time HBQer, Steve Higgins crossing the line late at night, complete with frosted parka trim, frosted headlamp and frosted eye patch exclaims, 'Now I can finally put my eye back in!'

- Burton Penner's icicle (also known as a snotsicle) of mythic proportion, hanging several inches down from his moustache.

- Moses Kigusitnak's missed checkpoint penalty, knocking him from 6th to 11th place.

- The mysterious disappearance of the Canadian Rangers' caribou stew at Nunalla.

There might have been a couple other memorable moments but what happens in the north, stays in the north - so there.

- prepared by Kelsey Eliasson

CHURCHILL'S WINTER FESTIVAL



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6TH HUDSON BAY QUEST

Starts in Churchill March 21, 2009



www.hudsonbayquest.com



Churchill Mitigation Trust Fund



POLAR BEARS OF CHURCHILL

This full-colour guidebook follows the polar bears of western Hudson Bay through one year in the sub-arctic. Written by Kelsey Eliasson, local author and guide and, of course, editor of this fine newspaper, Polar Bears of Churchill is an entertaining and comprehensive guide to our bears.

Available at Eskimo Museum, Wapusk General Store, Gypsy Bakery, Tundra Buggy, Great White Bear Tours, Arctic Trading, Northern Images, Aurora Inn & Polar Inn Giftshop

Keep up with Churchill's polar bear season with the Polar Bear Alley Blog...

www.polarbearalley.com

