

Gathering in Alaska, 23 February - 5 March 2018

White! Everywhere was white. Alaska in the winter is white. The Alaskan chapter of 5W made twelve of us very welcome and suggested we make use of our crampons (boot spikes). Our southern members, Linda (Australia) and Debbie (South Africa) learned about layering! Then it was a week of experiences for all of us.



We visited the National Tsunami Centre, surprised to see scientists monitoring the entire planet. We saw enormous musk oxen and most of us took the opportunity to buy their chest hair, quiviet, softer than cashmere



and warmer. We tasted moose soup, stopped for chocolate and went moose hunting (unsuccessfully)! One night was spent at the Fur Rony Melodrama, where we cheered for the damsel in distress and learned to spit when Wasilla was mentioned. We were surprised to see small dogs running the sprint races - bred for speed - while the huskie dogs we expect to see, run the Iditarod - bred for endurance. We

watched the outhouse races and the barefoot races - Alaskans know how to party!

Several of us had the opportunity to sit in the basket (as ballast) and be pulled 4-6 miles by the dogs and our musher (driver). That was FUN! We even went to a Paint a Scarf party, where we were all a bit nervous, but the scarves ended up beautifully. There were also wonderful native crafts to admire and snow sculptures to marvel at, plus a special train ride where we did some see moose. In all, it was a great Gathering and Morgan and Ann did a wonderful job. **Mary, USA**

