

Interview with Mike Kerr **Author of *Mike and a Lynx Named Kitty***

Reader Views talks with Mike Kerr, author of the children's outdoor adventure book "Mike and a Lynx named Kitty." Mike is being interviewed by Juanita Watson, Assistant Editor of Reader Views.

Juanita: Thanks for talking with us today Mike. We are excited to hear more about your wonderful children's book, "Mike and a Lynx named Kitty." Now, this book is actually based on your own childhood experiences. Where/when does this story take place, and would you give us an idea of the story you tell in your book?

Mike: The story takes place where I grew up - in and around Kodiak Island, Alaska. In the introduction to the book I explain what family life was like, and what was expected of children in those days. The book is actually about making right choices, and taking responsibility once you have made those choices.

Juanita: I understand that your book is quite true to fact. How much did you go beyond your real story?

Mike: The incidents surrounding the boat sinking, the long hike on a broken foot, the rescues, and finding the kitten are all true; but many parts of the book are a combination of my own life and the lives of others.

Juanita: Would you paint a picture for readers in regards to what life was like in Kodiak, Alaska in the 30's and 40'?

Mike: Boys were taught skills such as hunting and fishing as most started working in the fishing industry around ages 8-9. By this age, most native children were excellent shots. Life was not easy back then, but it certainly taught you to respect nature, wildlife and family.

Juanita: Was it common for kids in that region to be as close to nature as you were?

Mike: Most kids were taught about nature to a certain extent, but the natives were the ones who were taught survival skills. Most natives are bi/tri-lingual.

Juanita: How long does your friendship last?

Mike: Forever. It has never left my mind or heart.

Juanita: What did this special lynx mean to you as a young boy? How did your experience with Kitty change your perspective on the environment and your relationship with nature?

Mike: He was closer than any dog could have been, and he taught me a deep respect for nature, which I still have today.

Juanita: Mike, why did you decide to write your book?

Mike: I missed my wife and it filled that void. She was always asking me question on the draft she found. She along with my daughter were both after me to write my story.

Juanita: What other types rural experiences do you write about in “Mike and a Lynx named Kitty”?

Mike: I write about commercially fishing with my dad and his partner, as well as discussing the various kinds of work that must be done around a fishing camp.

Juanita: What is the underlying message of your book?

Mike: I guess the strongest message would be that even a young person must make life decisions, and that everyone will have to go though life continuously making choices. And of course, that life can be fun.

Juanita: I’m sure that your life now, is much different than the days of your youth. Do you miss that time, and if so, why?

Mike: I have fond memories of my younger days. One time that comes to mind is when I stood up to my father and expecting a tough lashing, and instead he told me I would have to chose between two worlds.....I find I still have to choose between two worlds.

Juanita: Who do you think would enjoy reading “Mike and a Lynx named Kitty”? Is it geared for younger boys?

Mike: I have had people from 8 years old enjoying the book, to an 89 year old man who bought 20 books to give to his grand children. One reviewer suggested it be used to teach English as a second language, as well as adults who are learning to read. I think it is practical and enjoyable for many readers and situations.

Juanita: Mike, I understand that you’ve been featured in several local newspaper articles, as well as a guest author on Native America Calling. Would you tell us more about your passion for talking about your experiences in Alaska? Why do you feel it is important to remember this time long ago?

Mike: I think we learn from the past. Remembering our successes and failures help us to make better, more solid decisions as we travel life’s road.

Juanita: Mike, how can readers find out more about you and your book?

Mike: Amazon.com or kiwe@kiwepublishing.com