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CARSON CITY, NEV.

Bearded Alaskan Takes Third Place By a Whisker

Plenty of Alaska men have shunned the razor—you can't throw a rock in the state and not hit someone with facial hair—but the true devotees take great pride in their beards. Just ask Anchorage's David Traver, whose lustrous brown beard earned world recognition this winter.

Traver, competing Nov. 1 in the World Beard and Moustache Championships in Carson City, Nev., became the first American to crack the top three, placing third overall, along with a first-place finish in the Full Beard Natural category.

Traver joined 130 other men from around the world who are serious about their facial coiffure. Contestants don musketeer costumes, military outfits—even Santa Claus suits—to enhance their beards. Traver, who enters the Mr. Fur Face competition at the Miners and Trappers Ball in Anchorage every winter, was already working on a costume for that event and decided to try it out in Nevada. His black bear fur hat, diamond willow staff, leather belt with caribou antler buckle and custom-made mukluks were a hit.

Traver was a last-minute entry after a friend sent him a "you've got to do this" e-mail. After visiting the organization's Web site at www.worldbeardchampionships.com, he decided it wasn't a joke.

"When I got there, I thought, 'Holy cow, these guys are really serious,'" he told the *Anchorage Daily News*. "Europeans look at this like it's the Olympics. You win one of these, you're a hero."

Traver was among 30 Americans who competed in 17 cat-



Anchorage resident David Traver, in mountain man regalia at lower right, entered the World Beard and Moustache Championships at the urging of a friend. "When I got there," he said, "I thought, 'Holy cow, these guys are really serious.'"

egories at the event, which was part of a Nevada Day celebration in Carson City. Karl-Heinz Hille of Berlin, Germany, took top honors while 82-year-old Englishman Alf Jarrold finished second.

While subsequent contests are scheduled for Berlin in 2005 and London in 2007, Traver said he's working on getting the event to Anchorage in 2009.

"It was awesome to meet so many people from around the world," he told the *Daily News*. "I think it would be a great thing for Anchorage."