# The Tazlina

By: Malea Voran

"The Tazlina" would be a great name for the one of Alaska's new ferries. Imagine stepping out of your car amidst many other parked vehicles. Your heart rapidly beats with excitement. You are on a dock looking at a beautiful ferry in which you will be riding from Skagway all the way to Juneau. Your anxiety and excitement overwhelms you as you breathlessly whisper, "The Tazlina… I will be riding on the Tazlina."

Alaska has given kids, grade six through twelve, the opportunity to name two of Alaska's new ferries that are being built. The names that the kids will enter have to be from an Alaskan glacier. This is great for children to work on their writing abilities and it also encourages children to use their imagination.

In 1819, W.C. Mendenhall gave the Tazlina Glacier its Ahtna Athabaskan name. Mendenhall spelled it, T-a-x-l-i-n-a, but now it is spelled, T-a-z-l-i-n-a, which means, swift river. The Tazlina Glacier is twenty-five miles long, and roughly, at its widest point, is three and a half miles. The elevation of this glacier is 4,655 feet above sea level. It stretches one and a half miles north of Mt. Cashman, all the way to one mile south of Tazlina Lake. This glacier is the largest receding glacier in the Chugach Mountains. Near its terminus, where the Tazlina Lake and the Tazlina River are located, the Tazlina Glacier thins out gradually. This valley glacier is a popular attraction for tourists who come visiting to Valdez. From the Tazlina Glacier to Skagway and Haines is about 380 miles. As you can see, this glacier is indeed a prodigious but incredible glacier.

My reasoning behind this name is that this glacier is big, strong and simply amazing. Since "Tazlina" means, "swift river," the ferry should be named after

something swift, fast and agile. I also feel that this new boat should be named after the Tazlina Glacier because, in my opinion, that name sounds grand and majestic. "The Tazlina" just rolls off your tongue. You could even nickname it the Tenacious Tazzy, or something enjoyable and intriguing to persuade passengers to want to ride on this ferry. If this new watercraft were to be named the Tazlina, it would represent a great glacier.

Thanks to the Department of Transportation, youth around the state of Alaska receive a chance to enter a contest to name two new ferries that are being built to serve along the Alaska Marine Highway. One of these ferries should be named the Tazlina in honor of the glacier. This name would remind us that even small things are capable of doing big things. This small boat could be named after something big and inspiring. If the one of these new ferries were named the Tazlina, it would be named after a glacier that inspires awe.