

## Borough to seek voter OK for sale or lease of 6 Mile mill property

By LARRY PERSILY  
*Sentinel writer*

Hopeful that the borough will be able to strike a deal for private development of the former sawmill property at 6 Mile Zimovia Highway, the assembly will hold a public hearing Aug. 23 on an ordinance that would ask voter approval to sell or lease the 32 acres of uplands.

The borough charter and code require voter approval for the sale or lease of any municipally owned property worth more than \$1 million. The borough in June purchased the waterfront property for \$2.5 million, looking to preserve the parcel intact and hoping it can attract private investment and economic development for the community.

If the borough assembly approves the ordinance, the question would go on the Oct. 4 municipal election ballot.

A sale or lease is not imminent, and the vote is not tied to any specific proposal to take over the property, Mayor Steve Prysunka said last Friday. "We have people talking with us," he said, declining to provide any specifics.

"We want to see real economic development, not crab pot storage," the mayor said. "Something that will create jobs."

The intent of the public vote to authorize the sale or lease of the property is to save time, should the municipality find a developer to take on a project, Borough Manager Jeff Good said last Thursday. That could include an industrial project, or perhaps something related to tourism, he said.

It also could include temporary leases for use of the property, while waiting on a long-term deal, Good said.

Without a vote in October, it would be a full year before the next general election, possibly delaying development of the property, Good said.

Even with voter approval to sell or lease the acreage, any development plans still would be required to go through the planning and zoning commission, including public hearings, the manager said.

In addition, the ordinance putting the question on the ballot includes a commitment: "The assembly will hold a public forum to discuss the economic development of

the mill property prior to the sale or lease (over \$1 million) of the mill property."

On Aug. 8, the assembly without opposition approved in the first reading the ordinance calling for the ballot question, moving the issue to a public hearing at the Aug. 23 assembly meeting. Approval of the ordinance is needed at that meeting if the question is to make the deadline to print ballots for the Oct. 4 election.

The mill shut down in 2008 after decades of operations. The buildings were demolished in 2011. The borough bought the property from Betty Buhler, who along with her late husband, Richard, owned Silver Bay Logging, which operated the sawmill.

The borough paid for the purchase by drawing the \$2.5 million from its reserves and an Economic Recovery Fund of federal dollars.

Until the property is sold or leased to a private owner, the borough will lose property tax revenues on the acreage, about \$20,000 a year.

## Fishing industry can apply for second round of pandemic relief aid

By MARGARET BAUMAN  
*For the Wrangell Sentinel*

Applications are due by Oct. 31 for more than \$39 million in the second round of federal relief funds for those in Alaska's fishing industry who incurred a greater than 35% income loss in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The state was involved in deciding the allocation of the federal aid between different fishing interests in Alaska.

The money is Alaska's share of \$255 million in grants being distributed nationwide to help the fishing industry recover from income losses suffered during the worst of the pandemic.

The first round's checks, totaling \$50 million in Alaska, went in the mail in late December to 2,534 qualified commercial harvesters, seafood processors, sportfishing charter and aquaculture applicants. The nationwide total in the first round was \$300 million.

Guidelines for second-round eligibility for each sector are laid out in the state's allocation plan, with applications again being handled by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, in Portland, in coordination with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The state's spending plan assigns funds to each fishing sector based on the revenue allocation methodology used

by NOAA Fisheries to distribute funds to Alaska, with some modifications, said Rachel Baker, deputy commissioner at Fish and Game.

NOAA Fisheries allocated funds to Alaska using available revenue information for the sport charter sector (5.5%), the commercial harvesting sector (35.2%), and the seafood processing sector, which includes processors, dealers, wholesalers and distributors (59.3%).

The allocation percentages were based on past revenues and not on the estimated scale of loss for each sector due to COVID-19's impact on their business.

NOAA Fisheries did not include subsistence users in its aid distribution formula.

The Department of Fish and Game, however, adjusted the percentage allocations used by NOAA Fisheries to provide funding to the subsistence sector at 6% of the \$39 million available in the second round.

The department also increased the sport charter allocation to 27% to help cover losses to that sector resulting from travel restrictions and health mandates which reduced demand for sport charter services. The state noted that between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2020, the department reported a 48% loss in sportfishing license revenue compared to 2019.

Continued on page 5

## Bird's eye crew



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Nikolai Bardin-Siekawitch, far left, talks at a presentation at the Nolan Center on Aug. 8 about the mapping and photography work he and fellow Upward Bound members (from left) Killian Booker, William Ashton, Timothy Garcia and Spencer Petticrew undertook as part of the program.

### Upward Bound students use drones to benefit the community

By MARC LUTZ  
*Sentinel editor*

An eye in the sky is helping Wrangell teens keep an eye on their future.

Five students from the Upward Bound and T3 Alliance programs presented the results thus far of their ongoing work to make the community better through technology.

Timothy Garcia, Nikolai Bardin-Siekawitch, William Ashton, Killian Booker and Spencer Petticrew at a public presentation Aug. 8 at the Nolan Center shared their experiences working with drones and GPS-enabled cameras to create promotional videos and map out U.S. Forest Service trails and cabins over the past year.

"Upward Bound is a program that traditionally focuses on helping first-generation, low-income students find a pathway to college," said Adam Low, director of Upward Bound and the T3 Al-

liance program lead at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. "Teaching Through Technology (T3 Alliance) is a program which focuses on how we find a pathway to college."

Low said doing well in school and on SATs is important, but going to college should be about having a "why" and "having something you're focused on and passionate about that you can engage with."

Part of the programs is encouraging what organizers call a "growth mindset," which includes the ability to fail if it means students can learn and grow from it.

Thanks to a \$17,000 three-year grant from the Resource Advisory Council in Wrangell, Petersburg and Kake, Tory Houser, staff officer with the Forest Service, was able to contract the students to create updated imagery and promotional videos of trails and cabins at Berg Bay, Kunk Lake and

Continued on page 5

## GCI will close Wrangell store, blames reduced walk-in business

By MARC LUTZ  
*Sentinel editor*

Internet, cable television and cell service provider GCI will be closing its Wrangell store on Oct. 28 after "many years," a company spokesman said.

Citing a "significant reduction in foot traffic," the company decided to close the store on Front Street, but will still have a technician on the island for any necessary service calls.

"We do maintain 24 other retail stores throughout the state, including four in

Southeast Alaska," said Josh Edge, media relations specialist with GCI in Anchorage. The nearest store will be in Petersburg. There are stores in Ketchikan, Sitka and Juneau as well.

Based in Alaska, GCI was founded in 1979, and opened its Wrangell location in 1996. The company sold to Englewood, Colorado-based Liberty Broadband in December of 2020. The Wrangell store employs two customer service representatives and one technician.

"We're working closely with employ-

ees who will be impacted by this closure to find other potential opportunities for them to remain with GCI," Edge said. "And with 70% of GCI employees working remotely, there are many opportunities for those employees to both continue working for GCI and remain in Wrangell."

Edge said the reduction of in-person visits to the stores reflects customers becoming more tech savvy and able to install equipment or troubleshoot any issues. Technical support or customer service for Wrangell will be handled via

a contracted call center in the Philippines at 1-800-800-4800.

"Especially because of the COVID-19 pandemic, customers have become less likely to visit stores in person," Edge said. "In fact, we saw a large increase in call volumes over the last few years, which created very long wait times — much longer than we thought was acceptable. Since we transitioned to our call center in the Philippines (last year), we have been able to reduce wait times from over an hour to under five minutes for 95% of calls."

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

The Sentinel extends its best wishes to the following people listed on the Wrangell Chamber of Commerce Community Scholarship Birthday Calendar.

- Wednesday, Aug. 17:** Emily McCloskey; Anniversary: Derek and Adrienne Angerman.  
**Thursday, Aug. 18:** Devin Aleksiev, Juli Gillen, Rob McChargue, Rowan Wiederspohn; Anniversary: Frank and Cherie Young.  
**Friday, Aug. 19:** Ethel Lane, Conan Rooney; Anniversary: Greg and Tami Meissner.  
**Saturday, Aug. 20:** Dan DeBoer, Leland Helgeson, Peter Helgeson, Charles Petticrew, Michael Szczatko, Brayden Wilsie, Cherrith Young.  
**Sunday, Aug. 21:** Trish Kohrt.  
**Monday, Aug. 22:** Talea Keller.  
**Tuesday, Aug. 23:** Zane A. Kohrt; Anniversary: Kurt and Alana Young.  
**Wednesday, Aug. 24:** Wayne Easterly, Lynn Maxand, Kenny Royster; Anniversary: Dan and Pam Roope.

## Senior Center Menu

Open for in-person dining.  
Must be fully vaccinated.

### Thursday, Aug. 18

Clam chowder, peas, sunshine salad, crackers

### Friday, Aug. 19

Spaghetti with meat sauce, steamed zucchini, tossed salad, fry bread

### Monday, Aug. 22

Hotcha baked beef, steamed carrots, fruit slaw, wheat bun

### Tuesday, Aug. 23

Chinese fruited pork, baked zucchini, honey orange salad, rice

### Wednesday, Aug. 24

BBQ chicken, mixed vegetables, potato salad, biscuit

Please call the senior center at 907-874-2066 24 hours in advance to reserve a seat at lunch at the center or to request delivery. The senior van also is available to transport seniors to medical appointments, reasonable errands such as collecting mail, getting prescriptions or other essential items.

## Ferry Schedule

### Northbound

**Saturday, Aug. 20**  
Matanuska, 2 a.m.  
**Saturday, Aug. 26**  
Matanuska, 8:45 p.m.  
**Friday, Sept. 2**  
Matanuska, 3:15 p.m.  
**Friday, Sept. 9**  
Matanuska, 1:30 p.m.

### Southbound

**Thursday, Aug. 18**  
Matanuska, 4:45 p.m.  
**Monday, Aug. 22**  
Matanuska, 3:15 a.m.  
**Monday, Aug. 29**  
Matanuska, 9 a.m.  
**Monday, Sept. 5**  
Matanuska, 3 a.m.

All times listed are scheduled departure times.  
Call the terminal at 907-874-2021 for information or call 907-874-3711 or 800-642-0066 for recorded information.

## Tides

### High Tides

### Low Tides

	AM		PM		AM		PM	
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
Aug. 18	06:07	12.6	06:22	14.7	11:47	3.4	....	...
Aug. 19	07:15	11.3	07:20	13.9	00:47	2.7	12:36	4.8
Aug. 20	08:40	10.7	08:31	13.5	01:56	3.1	01:39	6.0
Aug. 21	10:00	11.0	09:41	13.7	03:17	3.0	03:00	6.5
Aug. 22	11:05	11.7	10:42	14.2	04:34	2.4	04:24	6.2
Aug. 23	11:55	12.6	11:34	15.0	05:32	1.4	05:27	5.4
Aug. 24	....	...	12:37	13.6	06:14	0.5	06:12	4.5

## Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

**MUSIC IN THE PARKS**, sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department, 6 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 17, at Shoemaker Park with special guests The Powers, Jackson Roltgen and Matt Hanson. Jam session around the campfire to follow. BBQ burgers and hotdogs provided by the Wrangell Police Department. Feel free to bring a potluck dish for sharing. Great night for family, friends and community. Please keep your pups at home. Handicap parking only at Shoemaker Park, all other parking at Shoemaker Harbor parking lot.

**NOLAN CENTER THEATER** presents "Nope," rated R, at 7 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12, for the horror mystery sci-fi film that runs two hours and 10 minutes. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

**WCA and BRAVE** are seeking assistant and substitute coaches to coach third through fifth graders for the I Toowú Klatseen (Strengthen Your Spirit) program. Sessions will be Sept. 6 through Nov. 18 on Tuesday and Thursday from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Participants don't have to commit every week and don't need to be a runner -- just have a sense of spirit and fun. The program is open to Native and non-Native children. Contact Kim Wickman at kwickman1299@gmail.com or 907-305-0425.

**WRANGELL HEAD START** is accepting applications for children ages 3 to 5 years old. Class begins Aug. 23. Head Start is a nationwide, federally funded program whose purpose is to promote school readiness by enhancing the social, physical, and cognitive development of children. Head Start is provided at no cost to eligible families. Apply online at <http://ccthita-nsn.gov/>.

**COMMUNITY POTLUCK** 6 p.m. Fridays through August at the sheltered site on Nemo Point Road. All are welcome.

**MUSHROOM/FUNGI** presentation on edible, poisonous and dye fungi of Alaska with Noah Siegel, 6 p.m. Friday Aug. 26, at the Irene Ingle Public Library. Siegel will give a talk on Alaska's wide diversity of mushrooms, from delectable to deadly, introducing people to the common edible and toxic fungi of Southeast, tricks on finding them, and making sure you eat the right ones.

**MUSHROOM/FUNGI** gathering 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 27, meet at the Shoemaker Bay shelter before heading up the Rainbow Falls Trail to collect mushrooms, followed by identification and question and answers back at the shelter with expert Noah Siegel. Bring your own snacks and water. Be prepared for the weather and to hike.

**PARKS and RECREATION** is offering multiple activities and programs to get your body moving. For more information on any of the activities visit [www.wrangellrec.com](http://www.wrangellrec.com) or call 907-874-2444.

Want more attendance at your meeting or event? Send information for Roundup to [wrgsent@gmail.com](mailto:wrgsent@gmail.com) or call 907-874-2301.

## Continuing Events

**PARKS and RECREATION** [www.wrangellrec.com](http://www.wrangellrec.com)

Open swim is open by appointment, at reduced capacity. Locker rooms are available.

**Weight room:** 6 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 - 7:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 6 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 - 8:30 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Saturday

**AA Meetings:** North Star Group meets from 7 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays and Fridays, St. Philip's Episcopal Church.

## The Way We Were In the Sentinel 100, 75, 50 and 25 years ago.

### Aug. 17, 1922

A number of matters affecting game conditions in this region have been brought to the attention of the Wrangell Commercial Club. While the club is willing to give its moral support to any movement in the interest of better game conditions, it is nevertheless the opinion of the majority of the members that matters pertaining to game conditions could be more effectually handled by a rod and gun club, whose entire efforts would be solely in the interest of better game conditions. A club of this kind, in addition to getting up enjoyable hunting trips, could make its influence felt in securing sane legislation in matters affecting game in Alaska.

### Aug. 15, 1947

Work has begun this week

on a series of improvements that Al Freidman, owner and operator of Wrangell Telephone Co., is planning for the telephone system. First step is stringing about 1,500 feet of lead-armored cable in the downtown section, which will greatly facilitate service and do away with old and worn-out lines. The new cable will also aid in the long-distance system to be in operation at the Signal Corps by enabling a customer to receive long-distance calls directly at his home or office phone. Another improvement planned by Freidman is changing the switchboard at the telephone office, enabling customers to get the receiver without having to ring as at present. The change-over will require considerable work and new equipment. Freidman said he hoped to have all improvements completed by this fall.

### Aug. 18, 1972

Wrangell's new senior citizens center is scheduled to open Tuesday evening at the Civic Club Building. The state-assisted program for Wrangellites 55 years old and over will go on a regular schedule beginning Wednesday morning. Mrs. Barker said hours for the center will be 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, and Tuesday evenings from 6 to 10 p.m.

### Aug. 14, 1997

What could be more fun than guttin' fish and working on a slimline all day? According to Wrangell High School senior Amber Burley and other local teens, their jobs with JTPA are. Amber is one of many youths across the nation taking part in the JTPA (Job Training Partnership Act) Summer Youth Program, a federally funded program that employs at-risk, economically disadvantaged and special-needs youths ages 14-21 during the summer. JTPA Regional Director Sean O'Brian says the goal of the program is two-fold: "To enhance one's work experience by providing useful skills and developing on-the-job skills, and to improve the person's basic skills so they're more successful at fulfilling the basic needs of a job." Participants do a variety of community service projects designed to improve reading, writing and arithmetic, as well as to develop useful job skills such as a good work ethic, independent thinking, responsibility, initiative, creativity, teamwork and problem solving. Since it began three summers ago, Wrangell's JTPA program has consistently been one of the largest and most successful in the state. This year's program has 30 workers and encompasses 14 projects.

## Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Hours
Aug. 17	5:23a	8:22p	14:59h
Aug. 18	5:25a	8:19p	14:54h
Aug. 19	5:27a	8:17p	14:50h
Aug. 20	5:29a	8:14p	14:45h
Aug. 21	5:31a	8:12p	14:41h
Aug. 22	5:33a	8:09p	14:36h
Aug. 23	5:35a	8:07p	14:32h

# Popularity powers up for electric bikes and scooters

By CAROLEINE JAMES  
Sentinel reporter

For those looking to explore or just zip around town, a few businesses in Wrangell are offering a new way to take a ride — e-bikes and e-scooters.

E-bikes are powered by rechargeable batteries that allow users to move farther and faster per pedal stroke. E-scooters, on the other hand, require no physical exertion. Powered by a small electric motor, they can reach speeds of around 15 mph while riders stand comfortably on their decks.

Both Wrangell Extended Stay and Breakaway Adventures began renting e-bikes and e-scooters at the beginning of this year's summer season. According to the co-owner of Extended Stay, Lydia Matney, e-bikes are an ideal mode of transportation for tourists, whether they've come to Wrangell on a cruise or to visit family and friends. "It's an easy way to see the city really quick," she explained.

The decision to rent bikes was a response to rising demand, explained Matney. "We always had guests that stayed here who would ask if we had bikes for rent," she said. "We noticed there weren't really any bikes for rent in town."

With three different levels of motor-assistance, e-bikes make outdoor exploration accessible to all, from seasoned cyclists to casual sightseers. Rentals from Extended Stay range from one hour to 48 hours in length, allowing riders to cover large swaths of the

island before returning their "vehicles."

Mykayla Rooney, office manager at Breakaway Adventures, has been impressed with the bikes' long battery life. "A couple I know started from the shack, rode out to petroglyphs, went around the airport loop, and went five miles out the road to Rainbow Falls," she said. "They only used about a quarter of the battery."

E-scooters have shorter battery lives than e-bikes, but they offer a smooth, quiet ride, no pedaling necessary.

The e-scooters and e-bikes in town rent at \$10 to \$25 per hour.

Breakaway's e-bike and scooter rentals have been so successful that the business has decided to order more. Once the new bikes arrive, Breakaway plans to offer e-bike chartered tours around the island.

E-scooters also are available for rent in town from Scoot AK, owned by Aaron Angerman. The business is a finalist in the Path to Prosperity grant competition for small businesses and start-ups in Southeast, sponsored by Spruce Root, a Juneau-based organization dedicated to sustainability and new economic opportunities.

Though most rentals go to tourists who are just getting acquainted with the landscape, a few locals are lacing up their sneakers and hopping on the e-bike and scooter trend.

David McQueen is one of Wrangell's most loyal e-scooter fans. After renting one for the first time on the Fourth of July, McQueen has returned to Breakaway eight



Shirley Wimberley prepares to take her newly purchased e-bike for a spin near her home on Monday.

PHOTO BY  
CAROLEINE JAMES/  
WRANGELL SENTINEL

times to take one of their scooters for a spin.

The compact, throttle-powered vehicles satisfy his need for speed and allow him to explore downtown. McQueen strongly recommends them, though he cautions potential riders to watch their scooter's battery meter. Scooters are powerful enough to reach out-of-the-way places, but running out of juice a mile from town could make for a long walk.

It's not just rentals powering interest in rechargeables — several people in town have added e-power to their transportation repertoire.

After "tooling around town" on a rented e-bike with a visiting friend, Shirley Wimberley enjoyed her experience so much that she decided to purchase an e-bike of her own. The bike provides her with a means to

get outside without putting undue pressure on her ankle, which she broke a year ago. "I still get some exercise, but I can enjoy the ride," she said.

Shipping an e-bike to Wrangell posed a variety of practical problems for Wimberley due to its size and its large batteries. Ultimately though, she feels the purchase was worth jumping through a few logistical hoops, since owning the bike allows her to ride on more remote trails.

"I used to love to ride bikes," she said. "It's nice to get out and do that again."

Would-be renters should take advantage of the town's e-bikes and scooters soon, however. Breakaway and Extended Stay both plan to pause rentals near the end of October, before the weather gets bad, and restart next spring.

# Borough scales back building repairs to reduce bond issue cost

By LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

The borough assembly has set a public hearing for its Aug. 23 meeting to consider two ordinances that would seek voter approval to borrow \$3.5 million for repairs to school buildings and \$8.5 million for rebuild and repairs to the Public Safety Building.

The numbers are down from \$4.5 million and \$10.5 million in an earlier work plan considered by the assembly, as the borough dropped some items from the repair lists to hold down costs.

Voter approval is required for the borough to issue general obligation bonds to raise money for the work. The debt would be repaid with property taxes and other borough revenues.

If the assembly approves the ordinance Aug. 23, the questions would go before voters in the Oct. 4 municipal election. If voters approve borrowing the money, the borough hopes to obtain \$6.5 million in state grant funds to fully cover the estimated \$10 million price tag for repairs to all three school buildings. The state program requires a 35% local share.

"We have major maintenance needs at all three schools," Borough Manager Jeff Good said at the Aug. 8 assembly meeting, where members approved without opposition the school bond and Public Safety Building bond ordinances, setting the public hearing for Aug. 23.

The proposed work at the

schools includes new roofs, exterior siding, windows, heating system boilers, a new gym floor and other long-deferred maintenance. The school buildings are 35 to 53 years old.

If the borough does not obtain the state grant, it would continue with as much work as it could afford, focusing on what's needed most, Good said. "We're trying to protect the structure."

Wrangell would go after a state grant under the Department of Education's major maintenance program, which ranks schools across Alaska based on the most immediate need of substantial repairs or rebuild.

The Legislature decides how much money to appropriate each year to the program, with the funds going out in order of ranking. A high ranking is essential to winning state funding, as the money is limited and the competition intense with more projects on the list than money available.

If approved by voters, work could start in 2024, after the bonds are sold, the engineering plans assembled, the jobs bid out and contractors selected.

The borough currently owes

no debt, having paid off its latest school bonds three years ago. If approved by voters, the borough estimates it would pay about 4% interest on the borrowed money, requiring 20 years of debt repayment at about \$413,000 a year for work at the schools.

Annual debt payments on \$8.5 million in bonds for rebuilding the Public Safety Building would add about \$628,000 a year for 20 years to municipal expenses.

The assembly could use earnings from Wrangell's \$10 million Permanent Fund savings account to cover about one-third of the annual debt payments if voters approve both bond issues. Property taxes likely would cover the rest. The borough this year expects to receive almost \$1.8 million in property tax payments.

The assembly Aug. 8 amended both bond issue ordinances to specify that any increase in property taxes to repay the debt "shall sunset" when the debt is fully repaid.

Assemblymember Patty Gilbert had wanted to amend the ordinances to provide voters with a maximum amount of any possible property tax increase. "I'd like to have it nailed down."

The mayor and other members explained the actual tax rate would depend on multiple factors, including the interest rate on the debt and whether the state comes through with money for the schools. Setting a specific dollar amount in the bond issue vote — before the bonds are sold and the work bid out — isn't realistic, they said.

The borough will distribute information in advance of the election, explaining how much the projects will cost and how the debt could affect borough finances and property taxes.

Work at the 35-year-old Public Safety Building — which suffers from water damage and rot — would include a new roof, siding, insulation and vapor barriers, doors and windows, and replacing an obsolete fire alarm system. "We have to stop that damage," the mayor said Aug. 8 of water damage at the building.

The cost of accumulated repairs at all the borough-owned buildings was inevitable, the mayor said last month. "We have underfunded our maintenance budget."

## Correction

The Sentinel misspelled the name of the late Al Binkley in an Aug. 10 story about Wrangell history.

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<b>Oncology</b>	<b>Sept 14 Oct 18</b>	<b>907-228-8101</b>
<b>Pulmonology</b>	<b>Sept 12-15</b>	<b>907-228-7649</b>
<b>Pediatric Neurology</b>	<b>Sept 8-9</b>	<b>907-228-8101</b>

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

# Wrong reasons to rewrite the constitution

By LARRY PERSILY  
Publisher

Lust for a supersize Alaska Permanent Fund dividend and giving the government a larger role in dictating personal choices are about as miserable a pair of reasons for rewriting the state constitution as imaginable.

Problem is, they are not imagined, they are real. Alaskans will vote in 12 weeks whether they want to convene a constitutional convention to embark on rewriting the state's founding document.

The constitution requires that voters get a chance every 10 years to decide if they want a do-over on the 1950s' guiding principles of law. And every 10 years, starting in 1962, Alaskans have overwhelmingly said no, a constitutional convention to pick at, pick apart and pick winners and losers is not a good idea. The last vote, in 2012, was 2-1 against convening a convention.

Sadly, the political world has changed a lot since 2012, and not for the better. False claims — a polite way of saying lies — partisanship, animosity, social media, name calling and spite have overtaken and overwhelmed common sense and common decency. This is not a healthy environment for treating the constitution as a blank piece of paper and writing a new version with a politically infused Sharpie.

But that's where Alaska could be headed. And reminding voters that this is all about politics, hot-button social issues and money, a group of conservative Alaskans, headed by a leading member of the Alaska Republican Party and the president of the anti-abortion Alaska Family Council, has formed a campaign organization to support the constitutional convention vote on the Nov. 8 statewide election ballot.

R. Keith Heim, a member of the ConventionYes steering committee, said his priority is changing the constitution to mandate large Permanent Fund dividends every year. "The biggest driving force for the convention, yes, is to

basically put this Permanent Fund dividend into the constitution," he told the Alaska Beacon news website last week.

Other members of the rewrite-the-laws committee are Jake Libbey, publisher of the conservative Christian website the Alaska Watchman, and Leigh Sloan, an Anchorage woman who says on her website that her "desire is to shift paradigms in our culture to reflect kingdom truths."

In addition to guaranteeing a fat dividend in the constitution, possibly putting it ahead of state funding for public schools, and telling women how to run their lives and their bodies, supporters of a constitutional rewrite have long argued for changing how Alaska selects its judges and top law enforcement officer.

**"The pro-rewrite advocates acknowledge that everyone can bring their favorite grievance to the table when the pens and paper come out to rewrite the constitution."**

Instead of an impartial, non-partisan selection process for judges, and an attorney general named by the governor and confirmed by legislators, many favor adding politics to the process. As if we don't already have enough political agendas in government, they want to add more.

The pro-rewrite advocates acknowledge that everyone can bring their favorite grievance to the table when the pens and paper come out to rewrite the constitution.

Each member of the ConventionYes steering committee has "our own personal things that we're bringing to the group," Heim told the Beacon.

That is a scary thought, a room full of people focused on their own personal obsession to dictate the future of the state.

"Once you decide to open up a convention, the constitution is very clear that delegates who are selected are completely free to entirely rewrite the document," said Bruce Botelho, a former attorney general who chairs the leading statewide anti-convention group.

Thankfully, Alaska has civic and business and community leaders willing to take a position on the important question, working on a vote-no campaign. Hopefully, at least 51% of voters will reject the notion of rewriting the constitution.

EDITORIAL

# Housing shortage will not fix itself

Wrangell residents, particularly new and would-be residents, are well familiar with the lack of housing options in town. Few homes for sale, few apartments for rent, and even fewer lots to build on.

Sometimes, it feels like people would have better luck hooking a record-size king salmon than snagging a place to live. And those big fish are hard to find.

It's not just Wrangell that is inflicted with a shortage of available housing. It's everywhere in the state, particularly Southeast, from Haines and Skagway at the northern end, south to Ketchikan — and everything in between.

"Business leaders identified housing as the top need to advance economic growth in the region," according to a recent business climate survey and report by the Southeast Conference. "Economic expansion in Southeast Alaska is currently limited by a lack of housing availability paired with prohibitive pricing, directly contributing to worker shortages."

More than 85% of the Wrangell business owners and managers who responded to the spring survey said there are not enough homes available for purchase to attract and retain workers. One business owner put it bluntly: "Without housing, we are detaching people from coming here to work and raise families."

That prediction is coming true for new teachers at Mt. Edgecumbe High School in Sitka. "We hired some teachers at the job fair in Anchorage in March and offered them positions and were accepted," said Miranda Bacha, the school's new principal. "And then they looked through March, April and May and couldn't find anything, and then we got the call saying they were going to go to other districts because they couldn't find housing."

As of last week, with the start of classes less than two weeks away, Mt. Edgecumbe was still short housing for four teachers. "This is how I'm spending all my time now," Bacha said. "That's basically all I'm focusing on, getting them housing."

The shortage of available, affordable housing is a problem that extends far beyond teachers, Sitka Schools Superintendent Frank Hauser told the Sitka Sentinel newspaper. "The reality is housing is a concern in Southeast Alaska. I think it's just the reality that we're living in. And that's not only for the schools."

It may be reality but it's not acceptable. Southeast is not short on natural beauty and wildlife to attract workers and families to the area, but the shortage of housing is a limiting factor that businesses, schools and communities cannot afford.

Borough governments, particularly Wrangell, need to step up and help with solutions. Those could include property tax incentives for new construction, which would return long-term benefits to the community.

Southeast towns are having enough problems attracting and retaining workers, rebuilding their COVID-damaged economies, dealing with rising freight costs and living with minimal state ferry service. Housing should be a priority.

— Wrangell Sentinel

# Passion for writing brings new reporter across the country to Wrangell

By CAROLEINE JAMES  
Sentinel reporter

Correct spelling is the law for newspapers. Especially for unusual names. And especially for my first week on the job as the Sentinel's new reporter.

I grew up in Salt Lake City, a fact which explains the weird spelling of my name — Utah parents love to get creative, and in a state filled with Madysens and Saydees, my version of Caroline is relatively tame.

After graduating from high school, I moved to Connecticut to study English at Yale. Though I loved to read and discuss brick-thick Victorian novels with my fellow book nerds, I discovered that my true passion was writing. During my last two years at Yale, I entered the writing concentration program and began studying journalism in earnest.

When I received an email alert about a reporting job at the Sentinel, I sent in my application that very day. I looked forward to getting to know the Wrangell community, seeing the gorgeous sights of Southeast, and improving my journalism chops. Three job interviews, four flights and five pieces of luggage later, I touched down Aug. 10 at the Wrangell airport, sleep deprived but excited.



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Reporter Caroleine James, right, interviews Liz Roundtree for a story last Sunday at Wrangell IGA. James started working at the Sentinel last week.

So far, my Wrangell experience has exceeded expectations. From the moment I stepped off the plane I have been overwhelmed with generosity

from the community. I've eaten fresh crab, picked homegrown sugar snap peas that tasted more like dessert than vegetables, and received kitchen essen-

tials like pans and a dish rack to help turn my apartment into a home.

I've also benefitted from the editorial expertise and community knowledge of my colleagues. Marc, Amber and Larry take my endless stream of questions in stride. I look forward to watching my writing improve as I report alongside them.

However, I don't just want to report on the Wrangell community — I want to become a part of it by getting to know all of you. In the spirit of getting to know each other, here are a few facts about me:

I'm an enthusiastic — though not very fast — runner. If you see me jogging out by the 2 Mile marker, feel free to say hi! I'll give you and out-of-breath hello and an exhausted wave in return.

I'm also an avid hiker, but my justifiable fear of being mauled by a bear has prevented me from exploring any trails alone. If you're in the market for a hiking buddy, don't hesitate to reach out.

I love recommending books to friends, painting and writing bad sonnets. I am striving to overcome my addiction to caffeine.

Most importantly, I am unbelievably excited to be living in Wrangell and I look forward to my time here.

Oldest continuously published paper in Alaska

**WRANGELL SENTINEL**

ESTABLISHED NOVEMBER 20, 1902

Published weekly by: Good Journalism LLC

PO Box 798, Wrangell, AK 99929

Phone: 907-874-2301

POSTMASTER: send address changes to Wrangell Sentinel, P.O. Box 798, Wrangell, AK 99929

**Sentinel staff:**

Publisher ..... Larry Persily  
Editor ..... Marc Lutz  
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Production ..... Marc Lutz

**Subscription rates:**

Local ..... \$46  
Other Alaska ..... \$62  
2nd class outside Alaska ..... \$70  
First Class ..... \$102  
Online-only subscription ..... \$40

Wrangell Sentinel (USPS 626-480) is published weekly except the third week of July and the week after Christmas by Wrangell Sentinel, 205 Front St., Wrangell, AK 99929. Periodicals postage paid at Wrangell, AK.

Phone: 907-874-2301; Email: wrgsent@gmail.com; Website www.wrangellsentinel.com. ©Copyright 2022.

## Fisheries grants

Continued from page 1

The commercial harvesting (35%) and seafood processing (32%) sector allocations are intended to help cover the losses to those sectors from weakened demand for commercial seafood products from Alaska.

Given the complexities of the application process for all but subsistence users, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game strongly suggests that applicants

read the rules and work closely with their income tax preparer to avoid rejection for incomplete applications or errors.

The subsistence application itself is a much simpler form, the state said.

Applications and more information are available at relief.psmfc.org.

Only those who can certify losses of greater than 35% of their 2015-2019 average income in fisheries gross revenue be-

tween March 1 and Dec. 31, 2020, are eligible to apply.

Applicants who did not participate in an eligible fishery sector for all preceding five years are still eligible to apply if they participated in 2018 and 2019, but must use an average gross revenue for the same time period, March 1 through Dec. 31, for years available.

The Pacific States Commission will notify applicants who have not met eligibility criteria,

have not provided adequate documentation, or have clerical errors in their application. Those applicants will have four weeks from the date of contact to correct any deficiencies and resubmit their applications. The second decision on each application will be considered final.

All applicants will be required to show their absolute loss in 2020, including any pandemic aid payments they received in 2020 which they are

not required to pay back. The intent is that applicants do not receive funds from multiple sources which exceed their lost revenues.

All applicants must meet residency requirements to receive an Alaska Permanent Fund dividend check, and be eligible or possess a 2020 Alaska resident sportfishing license or be identified as an Alaska resident in 2020 by the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission.

## Aerial work

Continued from page 1

Steamer Bay.

Using a GPS-enabled GoPro camera, the students were able to do more than just take pictures. The photos they took were 360 degrees and are being uploaded to Google Maps. They will be used to create Google Street View imagery, giving site visitors a chance to explore remote cabin and get a feel for what the locations offer.

"We thought these students could bring their skills and they could help us figure out ways to do things better," Houser said. "We have some trails that are not well-marketed, people don't know about, and they have no idea how to get there. Now, with their (the students') help, these are up online and you can go to Google Maps. You can see the trails, you can see what to expect, and you can have a really positive experience. I... could never have done this myself."

The Forest Service projects came on the heels of promotional work the Upward Bound students did for Wrangell-based tour operator Alaska Vistas, creating a promotional video of the LeConte Glacier.

"The LeConte trip was basically us dipping our toes into the world of making promotional videos and drone-related projects," Bardin-Siekawitch said. "It

was our first experience ever as a group doing a promotional video."

Bardin-Siekawitch entered a photo from that project into a photo contest and won first place.

When the group started to work with the Forest Service, they were also asked to create condition reports, noting any wear and tear, damage or issues they found with the trails and cabins. They also noted cabins that might not be ADA-accessible.

Even though they had fun tackling the various projects, the trips didn't come without challenges.

Recharging drone batteries and other tech equipment was among the biggest challenge, as there are no power outlets in nature. "Use of the drones had to be rationed since they couldn't be recharged," Booker said.

They also had to be aware of distances when flying drones off of moving boats so as to not get out of range of the controller. "It was nerve-racking at first, but I got the hang of it after a while," Bardin-Siekawitch said. He said flying over glaciers was also a challenge as winds would blow the drones off course.

One of the biggest challenges they faced dealt more with ancient technology, one of humanity's first discoveries.

"We had the bright idea of making

fire by ourselves using pieces of cedarwood that we found along the trails," Garcia said. "That took a good hour and a half of our time."

Among some of the more surprising results of their trips was capturing footage of whales creating bubble circles to feed within. "I was a bit excited when filming those because I'd never seen anything like that before," Bardin-Siekawitch said.

But not all interactions with wildlife were positive ones, he said.

"We had one incident back in the LeConte trip," he said. "We're pretty sure one of the drones got hit by a seagull. The last image we saw was blue and bubbles. It did not survive. It floated 800 feet down to the ocean floor. Water and technology don't go together very well."

The group has also been active in advocating the Upward Bound program. At this year's Fourth of July celebration, they demonstrated the drones and let the public know what they had been up to.

"This was to make a positive impression on the community and to show that kids are beneficial when they use technology such as drones," Ashton said. "And this could be through aiding other organizations such as the Forest Service or small businesses in Wrangell through our services."

The program has also led the stu-

dents to think about their future careers. Bardin-Siekawitch said he is going to take the exam to acquire his drone pilot license through the Federal Aviation Administration. It will allow him to do things such as fly a drone after dark and take commercial jobs. He plans to take the test and start a business as part of his senior project.

Houser said the Forest Service intends to use the students and their services for more mapping and other similar endeavors.

"Over the school year, we intend to do mapping and drone video work at Pats Lake to help with our public planning for recreation development in that area," she said. "Next summer, we will do a similar week-long program to gather data about another cabin and trail location. It is likely that these students will be involved in teaching students in other areas to do similar work."

It's not just other students that can benefit from the group's acquired knowledge.

"Seeing what these guys and what they've done, I'm excited to get back to working with them and to see what else we can do this year," said Heather Howe, the science teacher and Upward Bound coordinator at Wrangell High School. "They've obviously learned a lot of things I don't know, so I'm looking forward to having them teach me as well."

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# New school counselor looks to help students plan for future

By MARC LUTZ  
Sentinel editor

Julie Williams believes life is a “limited time offer,” and that opportunities should be taken where they can.

The new school counselor is invested in helping Wrangell’s high school and middle school students plan their futures, while helping them understand that sometimes adjustments need to be made for the curveballs life throws their way.

Williams holds degrees from Stanford University, Goddard College and the University of Idaho and her focus has been on curriculum and instruction. She grew up hunting and trapping and enjoys the outdoors. Both she and her husband, Ralph Lotspeich, like fishing and golfing, so Wrangell is a perfect fit, they said. Within three days of arriving in town, they had already played a round at Muskeg Meadows.

Williams took a few moments last Thursday to speak with the Sentinel about her approach to counseling, what led her to the position in Wrangell, and how she intends to help students maximize their educational path.

**Q:** What are your goals with counseling?

**A:** I’ve always been invested in trying to serve the needs of every single student. That’s been my quest and kept me in it for my 30th year now. I just keep trying to look at each student individually and trying to figure out what’s going to help that particular student and that particular family find success later on.

**Q:** What has been your experience before coming to Wrangell?

**A:** I was in Dillingham last year. Ideally, you find a community you can match with, and you can spend multiple years there. Prior to Dillingham, I was at the North Slope Borough for a year. That position was discontinued midyear by the political structure of the school. That’s where I started to look at it year-to-year.

Prior to the North Slope, I was in China at an international school for families at embassies and very motivated students from around the world. That was my pandemic story. I’m in China and I have to decide what I’m going to do next. I just ended



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Julie Williams and her husband Ralph Lotspeich enjoyed some free time around Wrangell before she began her new job as counselor for the high school and middle school.

up on this side of the Pacific. That’s when my life kind of became this year-to-year, looking for a match that was close enough that I could spend my summers helping Ralph at the golf course (in Bonners Ferry, Idaho) and still do my job and my work in education. Prior to that ... about 20 years of my career was spent working in north Idaho in small communities there.

**Q:** How does having that experience in various cultures and locations inform your approach to working with students here?

**A:** I feel like every kid is gifted and talented. Sometimes it’s in career and technical education, which was part of my background. Honestly, I think the three decades of experience really gives me that ability to read kids and families and then to work to serve their individual needs with a long-term plan.

**Q:** What are your first impressions on the staff you’ve met so far in the district?

**A:** I do know that the staff that I’ve interacted with are very professional. The superintendent (Bill Burr) has some

common connections with folks that I’ve worked with in other schools in Alaska and he comes highly recommended as a guy who is focused on the needs of students and the needs of the communities he’s worked with. Kim Powell (at the district office) is amazing. She’s been fantastic. It’s been a very friendly welcome. As I told my family back home and my husband, we’ll know in a couple of months how things feel and how things really work, and where my needs of working harder and working less are. I don’t go in with a judgment of yes or no or whatever is going to work or isn’t. If I don’t leave my mind open, I don’t tend to get very far. I just dwell in possibility and keep trying to find what’s working.

**Q:** What is your role as counselor? How do you see your part in the educational process?

**A:** Historically, my part has been to help students and families have academic plans. Schools are primarily academic in nature, and I think that’s a huge piece. However, as a counselor, you also have

those pieces allowing students access to education. I think that’s where those activities and the BASE program, that’s where ... the grant writing class, those sorts of things, that’s where those points of access are — what we’re teaching kids as well through the counseling approach. Then, of course, you have mandated reporting and those bits and pieces that fall into some portion of my world, and having enough awareness and knowledge of the difficulties certain students are facing so that they can get the help they need and attend (school) regularly and have the basics they require to even focus on learning.

**Q:** Is there a danger of too much of a workload for students to take on?

**A:** Always. The beauty is that Wrangell has a pace of life that’s slow enough that there’s a little insulation that’s right outside your door. Overachievers are not immune from bad things, bad choices, that belief that they are the activities, they are the grades, they’re not a person, they’re those things. There’s a necessary protection from that that they feel like human beings. That’s bigger than what’s on the resume.

**Q:** Do you see the growth mindset with the “safety to fail” as part of the learning process?

**A:** That’s important about everything. That’s life. That’s why I love golf so much. You never have the same shot twice and you’re going to screw it up half the time, and you figure out what you’re going to do with the mistake when you’re done with it. I think that’s an absolute mandate in life, realizing that perfection is not a possibility. You’re always making mistakes and grappling through the ripples caused by that. You want to limit those that unintentionally create harm, but at the same time you do the best you can with whatever comes your way.

Peer culture and peer thoughts are so important. They can be positive and negative, and it can really be a big influence in positive or negative directions. It’s really important that other voices are in there and adults feel like they’re being shunned are still saying something because that bubble can be very frightening for kids to be in by themselves.

## State will not receive as much federal money for ferry system as expected

By LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

The state will receive about \$36 million less in federal funding than expected for this year’s Alaska Marine Highway System operating budget, requiring the use of state dollars to cover the gap.

No reduction in service is expected because of the budget shuffle, state officials said. But it could mean that legislators next year will need to approve addi-

tional state funds to fully make up for the loss of federal aid, exposing the ferries to another vote in the political process.

The governor had looked to federal infrastructure money to replace most of the state dollars in the ferry system budget. The more federal money, the less the state would have to spend on the service for coastal communities.

But legislators this year were hesitant to rely on federal aid as

heavily as Gov. Mike Dunleavy wanted in his budget, and they cut back the federal infrastructure dollars to less than 60% of the ferry system operating budget from the 96% proposed by the governor.

However, the Federal Transit Administration, which released its funding rules last month, significantly reduced what the state will receive, even below what lawmakers had counted on.

The Infrastructure Investment

and Jobs Act of 2021 allocated \$200 million for ferry systems around the country, though essentially only Alaska met the qualifications. And although the state had expected few limitations on receiving the money, the Federal Transit Administration’s rules restrict funding to 50% of a ferry system’s operating costs not covered by revenues.

In Alaska’s case, the ferry system budget is \$143.8 million for this year, with about \$50 million expected to come from passenger and vehicle fares. Of the \$93.8 million not covered by revenues, the transit administration grant would be limited to half, or \$46.9 million.

The state budget had counted on \$83.8 million in federal aid, leaving the system short about \$36 million.

“That was not something on our radar at all,” Alexei Painter, head of the Legislative Finance Division, said last week of the 50% rule.

“We’re pretty aghast,” said Rob Carpenter, deputy commissioner at the Alaska Department of Transportation. He called the transit administration’s actions “pretty creative.”

The 50% limit on funding net of revenues “doesn’t appear anywhere in the bill,” Painter said. Such agency rulemaking is not unusual, he said. “That’s always an issue we have.”

As a contingency, the budget approved by legislators and signed by the governor in June includes a \$20 million appropriation of state dollars for the ferry system to cover any shortfall in federal money. That leaves the Alaska Marine Highway System short \$16 million if the Federal Transit Administration

does not change its rule.

The \$16 million could be covered in the annual supplemental budget bill used to fill holes in the state spending plan when legislators return for next year’s session.

The state’s application for the federal money is due Sept. 6, Carpenter said. In addition to requesting infrastructure money for the system’s operating budget, the state will apply for funding for new ships and other improvements. “We’re going after all of it,” he said of the \$200 million.

The federal grant funding can go to building new ships, though such projects require a 20% state match, Painter said. That’s double the 10% match rate normally required to obtain federal funding for highway projects.

The state in the years ahead expects it will need to replace at least the Columbia and possibly another of its decades-old ships.

The Infrastructure Act authorizes five years of funding at \$200 million a year for ferry systems. “It’s written so that only Alaska is eligible” for the money, Painter said. The program is open to ferry systems that operated between 2015 and 2020, with routes at least 50 miles in length that serve rural areas — eliminating commuter ferries.

The governor had looked at the years of federal aid as an opportunity to cut state funding to the Alaska Marine Highway, but that drew opposition from legislators representing coastal communities.

“Those federal dollars were meant to augment state money, not replace it,” House Speaker Louise Stutes, of Kodiak, said this past spring.



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# SENTINEL SPORTS

## Athletes dive into new season of high school swimming

BY MARC LUTZ  
Sentinel editor

The competitive high school swimming season has only just begun and already the athletes are being challenged.

Coach Jamie Roberts so far has four returning swimmers and two new swimmers, but she's wasting no time in making practice tougher and getting her team in winning form.

"They're already doing harder practices than where we would start," she said. "(It's) more like interval work where you're pushing yourself against the clock to do repeated distances of swimming. We might do 10 50-meters and they get a minute to do each 50."

Roberts said she wouldn't start the swimmers off so hard if they hadn't swum before, but all but one of her athletes are experienced in the sport. Returning this year are senior Nikolai Bardin-Siekawitch, juniors Alisha Armstrong and Jack Roberts and sophomore Max Lloyd. New to the team are senior Carter Hammer and junior Nate Rooney.

Many of the athletes came into the team by means of the swim club for younger kids, which Roberts also coaches. When she has inexperienced swimmers on the team, she takes a slower approach, building team unity first, then focusing on building skill and muscle.

"I don't really start with something that's going to make them rethink their decisions," Roberts said. "As of right now, I don't have any kids who haven't swum before. I'm able to pick up the pace a little bit faster."

Last year's team had three swimmers advance to state. Bardin-Siekawitch and Jack and Renée Roberts all went on to compete at that level. The coach said she



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

From left: Alisha Armstrong, Carter Hammer, Nikolai Bardin-Siekawitch and Jack Roberts are four of the six members of this year's Wrangell High School swim team. Max Lloyd and Nate Rooney are also members of the squad.

is expecting the same if not better from her returning athletes.

"Jack went to state last year, so I would expect him to be a state qualifier," she said. "He's a flyer, breast-stroker, freestyler, and the 100-freestyle is his strongest event, but I think we're going to change it up this year and look at having him do the individual medley because he's pretty strong in all the strokes."

She said Jack also had a bit of a growth spurt over the summer which has made him a different swimmer than before. Roberts is also looking at Bardin-Siekawitch to do well, based on his past performance.

The students aren't the only ones facing a challenge this year, as Roberts is tasked with finding more athletes to fill out the roster.

"I was told (last Wednesday) that I need six swimmers or the school will not pay me to coach and they won't pay for our travel," she said. "They will book our travel, but we will have to pay for it out of pocket, which is a bummer."

Rooney joined the team as of last Thursday, bringing the roster up to the needed six.

Roberts said the program may have to expect smaller groups in the coming years. "Our junior class this year is eight.

Our class sizes have decreased."

While many sports are broken into divisions at the state level, swimming is one of nine activities that don't rely on student population to fall into a division. For example, for volleyball teams to qualify for 2A classification with the Alaska Schools Activities Association, there must be 61 to 150 students enrolled, which is where Wrangell High School falls. To be a 3A team, they would need 151 to 500 students. And 4A requires a student body of 501 or more.

One reason it's been a challenge to find swimmers, Roberts said, is that three sports are vying for competitors at the beginning of the year: Swimming, cross country and volleyball.

"The school doesn't really start publicizing this stuff on their Facebook page or in their newsletter until school starts," she said. "By that time, we're late in the game."

Roberts will be getting the word out through the Parks and Recreation Department and through posters. One benefit that students might not know about is that by participating in a school sport, they fulfill their physical education requirement, earning a credit for it. "That's been a draw in the past."

She's hoping that the health benefit of swimming will also be a draw, as it's low-impact, stress-relieving and helps with breath control.

Thanks to a grant received by the Wrangell Cooperative Association for health-related programs, the swim team received \$1,500 which was used to replace some of their older equipment, Roberts said.

High school students interested in joining the swim team can go to practice from 4 to 5:15 p.m., Monday through Friday or call Roberts at 907-470-4844.

## School bus driver shortage forces Anchorage, Mat-Su to reduce service

BY MORGAN KRAKOW  
Anchorage Daily News

The Anchorage School District is dealing with such a severe bus driver shortage that nearly all students will be without bus service for weeks at a time, officials announced last week.

There are only enough drivers to serve 7,000 of the district's 20,000 eligible bus riders at a time, according to deputy superintendent Mark Stock.

Bus service will be available to families for three weeks at a time, followed by six-week periods without service, on a rotating basis, officials said. It's unclear how long the bus route suspensions will persist, Stock said.

The news comes just before school is set to start this week and while gasoline prices are at historic highs.

A similar shortage of drivers is forcing the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District to implement rolling transportation cancellations, the district announced. Classes begin this week.

The driver shortage will require rolling bus route cancellations for the beginning of the school year, Mat-Su Schools Superintendent Randy Trani said in a letter to parents.

In Anchorage, the suspension

of bus routes will affect all general education students but won't affect special education students. Students who live within 1½ miles of a school also won't be affected since they weren't receiving bus service before.

In addition, the district has condensed bus routes for efficiency, meaning students will need to walk farther to those stops than in past years.

"Even though we continue to make progress retaining more and hiring new bus drivers, the situation isn't improving fast enough," superintendent

Jharrett Bryantt told reporters during a briefing Aug. 9.

The school district was 71 bus drivers short on Aug. 9, according to deputy superintendent Stock.

"We've implemented some aggressive recruiting strategies and retention strategies," Stock said. "We believe those are showing some success."

But that takes time, he said, noting staff shortages are happening nationwide.

The district conducts a free, three-week training program for new drivers and pays salary during the training, said

acting chief operating officer Rob Holland.

Stock said the district is looking into giving gas cards to families who need additional support, which the district did last year in \$50 increments — though this year's gas card amount will probably be lower so the district can reach more families.

A bus driver shortage isn't new to Anchorage; the district contended with a shortage last year as well. But the impacts of this year's shortage are significantly more widespread.

Issues with staffing in the district

stretch beyond just a shortage of bus drivers. Several schools don't have cafeteria managers, and in those situations, students will be provided a brown bag lunch instead of hot meals, school district spokesperson Lisa Miller said.

As of Aug. 9, the district's hiring dashboard showed 375 open positions in various departments, from student nutrition operations to speech-language pathology. That number is "a little higher than normal," but the district's applicant pool is lower, Stock said.

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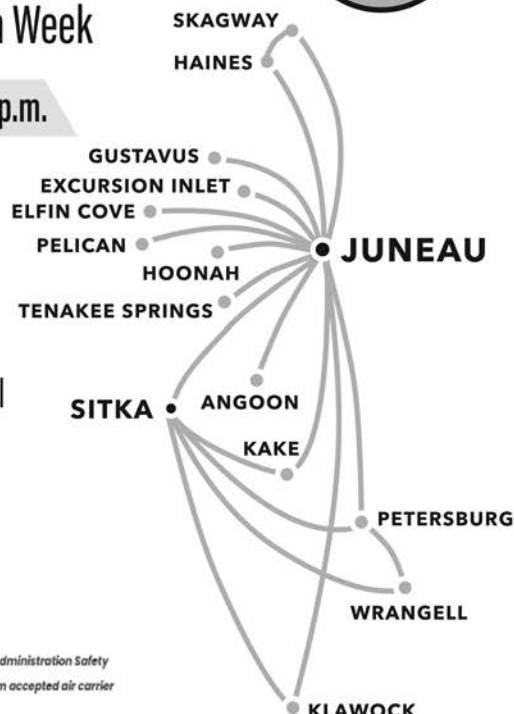


Alaska Seaplanes began service to Wrangell in May. Photo credit: Deni Hoy

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# Mt. Edgecumbe school short of housing for new teachers

BY GARLAND KENNEDY  
Sentinel Staff Writer

With the start of the school year just around the corner, staff members at Mt. Edgecumbe High School in Sitka are scrambling to find housing for new teachers.

The search has consumed much of the summer for Miranda Bacha, who took over as principal this summer. Housing was still needed last week for four incoming teachers — 15% of the teaching staff.

"This is how I'm spending all my time now," Bacha said. "That's basically all I'm focusing on, getting them housing. If we were four short, you're talking 16 classes, 16 core classes. I'm talking math, science ... a day that wouldn't be covered. We can't afford that."

This year, as usual, the school hired new teachers in the spring, but when the search for housing wore on without results, some fresh hires accepted other offers. By May, Bacha knew she had a

problem on her hands.

"We hired some teachers at the job fair in Anchorage in March and offered them positions and were accepted," Bacha said. "And then they looked through March, April and May and couldn't find anything, and then we got the call saying they were going to go to other districts because they couldn't find housing."

Bacha, who was a teacher before being named principal, said that as far as she knows this is the first time the school has ever had to search for teaching staff through the summer months.

"We advertised and did interviews all summer, which we've never had to do ever, ever in the past," she said. "We've always been staffed by the time school closes (in May). So, all of a sudden, we're doing that. For right now, we hired seven new teachers and four, right now, still don't have housing."

Earlier this month the school went to Facebook to ask Sitkans for help finding housing, but that has yet to solve the problem.

Bacha said that as of this past weekend she had 30 offers of housing.

"But out of the 30, 29 of them said no pets and two of the new teachers have a dog," she said. "There was only one place that allowed a dog and it was a one bedroom for \$2,000 (a month). A new teacher making a starting salary can't afford that."

At a starting teacher's \$44,000 salary, \$2,000 a month would be more than half of their post-tax income.

"I had one (teacher) yesterday and I had the third one call and say, 'I'm giving up.' And so that's why I'm trying super hard now and calling everybody I know," the principal said.

"Some of the (local) people who have contacted me are like, 'Well, we do a lot of short-term rentals. So, we're not going to have anything until October,'" she said.

"People are saying, 'Well, then you can rent this short-term.' But then they want \$180 a night and teachers can't afford that," Bacha said.

Suzzuk Huntington, who's starting her first year as Mt. Edgecumbe superintendent, said the situation is critical.

"We, like many other districts in the state and even the nation, are starting short," Huntington said. "If we end up starting short of the full capacity it will have a big impact on what we're able to offer."

The problems surrounding cost-effective and available housing aren't unique to schools and teachers, Sitka Schools Superintendent Frank Hauser said.

"The reality is housing is a concern in Southeast Alaska. I think it's just the reality that we're living in. And that's not only for the schools and everyone that works here."

The Southeast Conference 2022 business climate survey identifies housing as the top economic priority in the region.

"Economic expansion in Southeast Alaska is currently limited by a lack of housing availability paired with prohibitive pricing, directly contributing to worker shortages," the report said.

# Teen podcaster awarded scholarship for 'heroic' community impact

BY MARC LUTZ  
Sentinel editor

A "hero" walks among us.

Junior Mia Wiederspohn has been selected as one of six Alaska teenagers to receive a scholarship through the Summer of Heroes program.

The program each year recognizes teens who are making positive impacts in their communities. Wiederspohn was selected because of her efforts to keep the Tlingit language and culture alive through radio broadcasts and podcasts and for her work in the high school BASE (Building a Supportive Environment) program.

Wiederspohn, 15, was awarded \$1,500 to go toward her continuing education, which she has mapped out.

"My plan is my (for) my senior year of high school, I'm going to take college classes, prerequisites and intro classes," she said. "I'm going to have all my high school credentials done by the end of my junior year, and once I graduate I'll probably go to University of Alaska Southeast in Juneau."

Though she has her education mapped out until her first year in college, she's not sure if she wants to pursue a medical degree or something that would give her a career in the outdoors.

The award has motivated Wiederspohn to keep producing podcasts and working on the Tlingit language broadcasts with teacher Virginia Oliver.

"It feels really nice (to be selected), especially not just after



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Junior Mia Wiederspohn was selected as one of six Alaska teens to receive the Summer of Heroes scholarship for her efforts to share the Tlingit language and culture, and for her positive work within the school.

I did it but kind of an ongoing thing, which makes me want to continue doing it, of course," she said.

Since her freshman year, Wiederspohn estimates she has helped produce about 20 Tlingit phrase broadcasts and she has produced about five podcasts since starting that endeavor this year. She found out about the award last month.

"I'm not quite sure who told them what I was up to, which is kind of funny because I got anonymously recommended

for another award (this year) as well, the Young Leader of the Year award for the (Wrangell) chamber of commerce," she said.

It was retired assistant principal Bob Davis who nominated Wiederspohn for the heroes honor. The award was previously won by another Wrangell High School student, Jade Balansag, who created the BASE program and now attends George Washington University, in Washington, D.C.

Summer of Heroes is in its 12th year, having awarded 74 Alaska teens in 25 different communities in that time. The program is a partnership between the Boys and Girls Club Alaska and Alaska Communications, an internet service provider.

Wiederspohn has a busy year ahead of her with school, work and athletic programs, but she's determined to con-

tinue producing her podcast, "Mia's Gift," found at kstk.org.

"There's a lot of material I can still cover," she said. "I can go deeper on the (Wrangell) Institute ... there's Sergief Island and the war that happened there, Old Town, fish camps at Anan. There's lots I can cover. ... I just want to inform the community about place-based history."

## No change in school registration fees from last year; classes start Aug. 25

Sentinel staff

Online student registration began Monday at wrg.power-school.com/public for elementary, middle and high schools. For those who need help registering, in-person registration will be held Wednesday at the high school commons from 10 a.m. to noon and from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Fees for elementary registration are \$10 for tech and \$10 for books.

Fees at the middle school are \$80 for individual student tech or \$125 for families. The activity card for sports participation is \$25 per student. Yearbooks are \$50 per student.

Fees for the high school are \$80 for individual student tech or \$125 for families. Activities fees are \$150 for the first activity, \$100 for the second and \$75 for

the third. The fee for state sports competition is \$350. Pep band/cheer squad is \$25 per student. Yearbooks are \$50 per student.

Registration fees are due by Sept. 7 and can be paid online. The state sports competition fee is due before a team attends regionals.

According to Zach Taylor, owner of Taylor Transportation, which operates the school buses, the route schedule will be completed after the company gets all the necessary information from the school district. That should happen a few days before school starts on Aug. 25.

Under the latest federal transportation guidelines, face masks are not required for students on buses. Taylor said if students or their parents want them to wear a mask, that's up to them.




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# Court ruling could cut into king harvest by Southeast trollers

By GENE JOHNSON  
Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — A federal court ruling last week has thrown into doubt the future of a valuable commercial king salmon fishery in Southeast Alaska, after a conservation group challenged the government's approval of the harvest as a threat to protected fish and the endangered killer whales that eat them.

The ruling, issued Aug. 8 by U.S. District Judge Richard Jones in Seattle, said NOAA Fisheries violated the Endangered Species Act and other environmental law when it approved the troll fishery.

The ruling means the federal agency will have to consider anew the effects of the fishery on orcas and on protected Puget Sound and Columbia River salmon stocks and whether a plan to offset the harvest by releasing more king salmon from hatcheries is sound.

It's unclear whether trollers in the \$800 million industry will be allowed to continue fishing for kings while that happens. The court is expected to begin considering remedies for the agency's legal violations in the next few weeks.

"We applaud Judge Jones' ruling that is finally calling into question decades of unsustainable chinook harvest management in Southeast Alaska and marks a watershed

moment for the recovery of southern resident orcas and wild chinook," said Emma Helverson, executive director of Wild Fish Conservancy, the group that challenged the approval of the fishery.

NOAA Fisheries said Aug. 10 it is still reviewing the decision. In a written statement, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game said it was considering an appeal.

"We have a responsibility to look out for our fisheries and the Southeast coastal communities and families that rely on them," said Fish and Game Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang.

Chinook, the largest of the Pacific salmon species, make up the bulk of the diet for endangered orcas in the waters of the Salish Sea between Washington state and Canada. Due to causes that include overfishing, dams, development and pollution, king salmon runs in the Northwest are at a small fraction of their historical abundance, and the orcas have suffered in turn, with just 74 whales remaining and scientists warning of extinction.

While the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales don't typically venture as far north as Alaska, a huge amount of the king salmon caught in the Southeast Alaska troll fishery — about 97% — originate from rivers to the south, in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon. If those fish weren't caught, many would be available for the

orcas to eat as the salmon migrate to their natal rivers to spawn, the Wild Fish Conservancy argues.

In 2019, NOAA Fisheries issued a biological opinion approving the most recent decade-long plan for the commercial troll fishery for chinook in Southeast Alaska, with harvest limits set during negotiations between the U.S. and Canada.

The agency acknowledged the harvest of chinook was likely to hurt the orcas and protected Puget Sound and Columbia River king salmon stocks, but it said it would offset the harm by spending about \$100 million on habitat restoration and to increase hatchery production of chinook by 20 million smolts per year, thus providing more food for the whales.

Last year, a magistrate judge who reviewed the case, Michelle Petersen, took issue with that, finding that under federal law, NOAA Fisheries could not rely on hypothetical mitigation measures to offset actual harm to protected species. Because the funding for the restoration efforts was uncertain, because there were no binding deadlines for the mitigation measures and because the agency did not actually study what effect an increase of hatchery production would mean for wild salmon stocks or orcas, that mitigation was legally insufficient.

Jones adopted Petersen's recommenda-

tions in his opinion on Aug. 8 and asked her to consider potential remedies. Possibilities include continuing to allow the trollers to fish for chinook while NOAA fixes the legal errors, banning them from doing so, or something in between. It's also possible NOAA could be ordered to desist from increasing hatchery production of king salmon unless it demonstrates the mitigation plan is sound.

Around 1,000 permit holders fish in the Southeast Alaska commercial troll fishery each year, according to court documents. The trolling occurs 10 months out of the year, primarily divided between winter and summer seasons. The fishers also go after coho and chum salmon, but chinook is the most valuable.

The Alaska Trollers Association, which intervened as a defendant in the lawsuit, criticized the Wild Fish Conservancy for filing the lawsuit, saying it had no regard for fisheries in Alaska.

"Our hook-and-line king salmon fishery is low impact, harvesting one fish at a time, and our harvests are annually limited to about a third of what we historically harvested," the association said in an email. "We've been fishing for over 100 years using this method, and are committed to continuing to do so in a sustainable manner. ... We will continue to fight to preserve our fishery and our way of life."

## Group of conservative Alaskans organize in support of constitutional rewrite

By JAMES BROOKS  
Alaska Beacon

A group of conservative Alaskans, headed by a leading member of the Alaska Republican Party, has formed a new campaign organization intended to encourage Alaskans to call a constitutional convention and allow sweeping changes in the way Alaska runs its government, sets its budget and regulates the lives of its residents.

Jim Minnery, president of the anti-abortion Alaska Family Council, announced the creation of ConventionYes on Aug. 8. Minnery is a member of the new group's steering committee. The group's chair is Craig Campbell, national committeeman for the Alaska Republican Party.

"The Constitutional Convention call is a fundamental question for 'We the People,'" Campbell said

in a prepared statement. "This is an opportunity for us to go back to see where our state is and where we want to go and under what rules we want to live by."

Alaskans are asked once per decade whether they want to call a convention to consider rewriting the state constitution, and the next vote is on the Nov. 8 general election ballot. Voters have rejected the convention every decade since statehood.

This time, convention opponents have been campaigning for months, arguing that a convention — particularly in a politically polarized time — will cause uncertainty and chaos.

"It is a slippery path, and once you decide to open up a convention, the constitution is very clear that delegates who are selected are completely free to entirely rewrite the document," said Bruce

Botelho, a former attorney general who chairs the leading anti-convention group.

The Alaska Supreme Court has repeatedly interpreted Alaska's constitutional right to privacy to cover health care, including access to abortion. A convention could be a first step to banning or limiting access, either directly by rewriting the privacy clause or, indirectly, by changing how judges are chosen.

R. Keith Heim, a member of the ConventionYes steering committee, said his biggest interest is changing the constitution to mandate large Permanent Fund dividends.

"The biggest driving force for the convention, yes, is to basically put this Permanent Fund dividend into the constitution," he said.

Among the other members advocating for a constitutional convention are Jake Libbey, publish-

er of the conservative Christian website the Alaska Watchman; former Anchorage Republican legislator Fritz Pettyjohn; conservative Alaska environmental scientist and lodge owner Fred Vreeman; and Leigh Sloan, an Anchorage woman who says on her website that her "desire is to shift paradigms in our culture to reflect kingdom truths."

The latter term is sometimes used to describe evangelical Christian ideals.

The group has not yet registered with the Alaska Public Offices Commission to report campaign donations.

The vote-no group Defend Our

Constitution is well established and well-funded, having listed more than \$320,000 in donations as of its latest disclosure report.

Among the supporters of the "vote no" cause are the chambers of commerce in Fairbanks, Juneau and Ketchikan, the Alaska Municipal League, and the regional Native corporations Sealaska and Doyon.

Heim said one of the new group's key goals is to overcome the vote-no group's assertions that the convention will cause chaos. "We've just got to get the people to understand that voting yes is not going to kill the state," he said.

## Investigation of Permanent Fund firing costs more money

By JAMES BROOKS  
Alaska Beacon

A committee of the Alaska Legislature voted unanimously on Aug. 10 to spend an additional \$50,000 on its investigation into the firing of Alaska Permanent Fund Corp. director Angela Rodell, bringing the investigation's total budget to \$150,000.

Anchorage Sen. Natasha von Imhof, chair of the House-Senate Legislative Budget and Audit Committee, said the money is needed to get the investigation "to the finish line," and she expects a full report in October.

Members of the committee hired a special investigator in January to determine whether political factors played a role in the December firing of Rodell by the corporation's board of trustees.

The corporation manages Alaska's \$78 billion Permanent Fund, and a transfer from the Permanent Fund to the state treasury accounts for at least half of the general-purpose revenue used for services and Permanent Fund dividends, making management of the corporation a critical operation to the state.

Rodell's firing came after the corporation's most successful year on record, and Rodell said at the time that she believed the firing was motivated by Gov. Mike Dunleavy's proposal to spend more from the Permanent Fund than allowed by a 2018 law.

Dunleavy dropped that proposi-

al after oil prices rose, and a subsequent public records request revealed years of conflicts between Rodell and the board of trustees. Some conflicts predated Dunleavy's election as governor.

The firing alarmed state legislators, who generally held a positive view of Rodell.

The investigator, Howard Trickey, has spent much of the year conducting interviews with

trustees and other witnesses familiar with the events that led to Rodell's removal.

Trickey is employed by the law firm of Schwabe, Williamson and Wyatt, and in an Aug. 9 memo, the firm said it had exhausted the \$100,000 previously allocated by the budget and audit committee. The additional \$50,000 is expected to be enough to finish the investigation.

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# Online landslide-warning system starts up in Sitka

By ARIADNE WILL  
Sitka Sentinel

After several years of research, Sitka's new online landslide-warning system is now live.

But the site — which uses data from the National Weather Service alongside historical data to determine the level of landslide risk in Sitka — is only a start to the landslide research that remains to be done, said a scientist on the project.

"It's a conclusion but it's also kind of a beginning," said Jacyn Schmidt, geoscience coordinator at the Sitka Sound Science Center.

Educating Sitkans on how to react to the possibility of landslides, and building land-

slide warning systems in other communities, are ongoing projects, Schmidt said.

Sitka's landslide warning system — which was funded by a five-year grant from the National Science Foundation — was in part a reaction to the August 2015 landslide that took the lives of three Sitkans.

The warning system's online dashboard at [sitkalandslide.org](http://sitkalandslide.org) communicates landslide risk in real time by coupling historical observations with recent rainfall over a three-hour period.

Schmidt said that most of the time, the risk will be low. Medium risk — meaning that landslides are possible given the conditions — occurs no more than three times a year, historically. High risk, or

an event like the conditions Sitka experienced in 2015, has occurred only three times in the past 20 years.

The warning system isn't set up to send users notifications when the landslide risk increases, so Schmidt encourages residents to check the dashboard whenever heavy rainfall is observed or forecasted.

"The goal is to give people information they need to take action," she said, adding that needed action won't be the same for everyone.

For instance, people who live in a location that could be in the path of a landslide would likely have a different plan of action than people who live far from a potential landslide area.

But plans for landslide risk response involve more than getting out of a potentially hazardous zone: There is also the potential that landslides affect family, neighbors, roads and utilities.

"You're part of (an) ecosystem," Schmidt said. "Making plans that include people in your circle who might be affected is why people should be interested in this, even if they don't live in an area that's susceptible to landslide damage."

The work in Sitka has led to interest in regional efforts. "In February, the (Sitka landslide) project team was awarded a new grant to continue working on this

## Federal review will look at hydro dams and endangered Atlantic salmon

By PATRICK WHITTLE  
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — The federal government is conducting a review of four hydroelectric dams on a Maine river that could result in a lifeline for the last wild Atlantic salmon in the United States.

The last of the wild salmon live in a group of rivers in Maine and have been listed under the Endangered Species Act since 2000. One of the rivers is the Kennebec River, where Brookfield Renew-

able U.S. owns four dams.

Brookfield wants to amend its federal licenses for the four dams and receive a new 40-year operating license for one of them. That requires a review of the dams' impacts on salmon, said representatives for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The federal review could result in mitigation measures Brookfield would need to take to protect the salmon, NOAA officials said.

The review comes as the Biden administration is also eyeing changes to dams in other

parts of the country. The administration this summer released a report that said removing dams on the lower Snake River in eastern Washington may be needed to adequately restore salmon runs in the Pacific Northwest.

In Maine, Brookfield views the review as a step toward building new fish passages on the Kennebec, which will help the fish migrate and spawn, said David Heidrich, a spokesperson for the company. Brookfield plans to spend at least \$40 million on structural modifications

"If we could get those four dams removed, the best big chunk of Atlantic salmon spawning and rearing habitat, which is the Sandy River and its tributaries, would be direct free swim from the ocean."

Nick Bennett,

Natural Resources Council of Maine

to its projects, and will incorporate changes required by the federal review, Heidrich said.

The review "is a critical regulatory approval that moves Brookfield one step closer to the construction and operation of new, state-of-art fishways on the Lower Kennebec," he said.

The last wild Atlantic salmon have long been a focus of conservation advocates in New England. Environmental groups have raised alarms that counters found fewer fish on the Penobscot River in 2021 than in any year since 2016.

The fish were once abundant in Maine rivers and beyond, but factors such as dams, overfishing, habitat loss and pollution dramatically reduced their

populations. In May, Brookfield said it would use seasonal shutdown procedures for the Kennebec River dams to help the salmon migrate.

The best way to help the salmon population recover would be to remove the dams altogether, said Nick Bennett, staff scientist with the Natural Resources Council of Maine. That would open up access to the Sandy River, a tributary of the Kennebec that is prime salmon habitat, he said.

"If we could get those four dams removed, the best big chunk of Atlantic salmon spawning and rearing habitat, which is the Sandy River and its tributaries, would be direct free swim from the ocean," Bennett said.

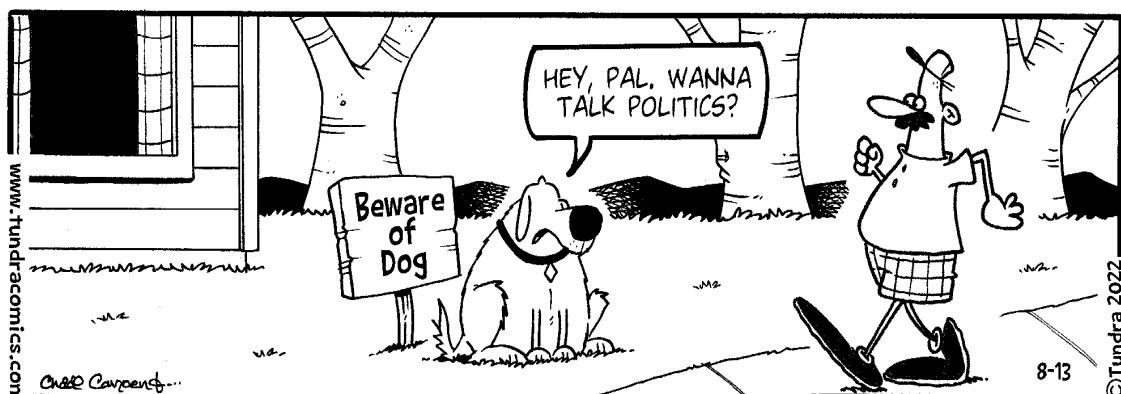
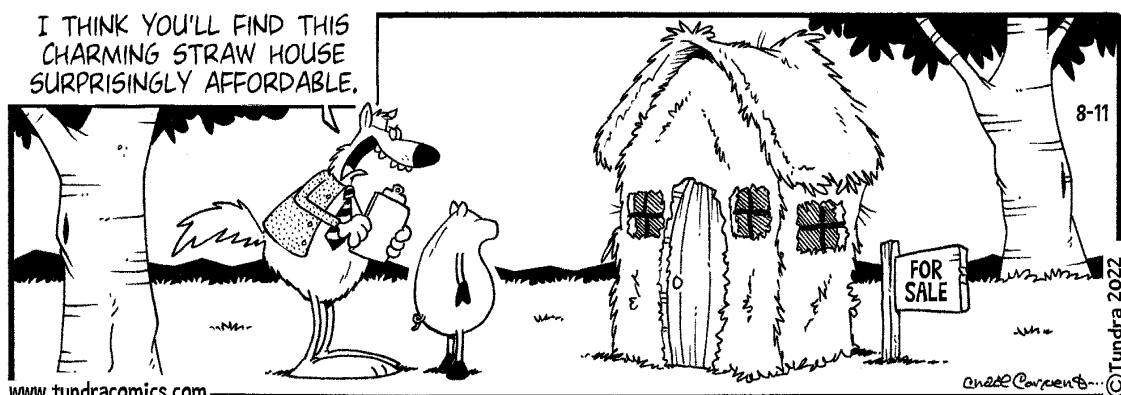
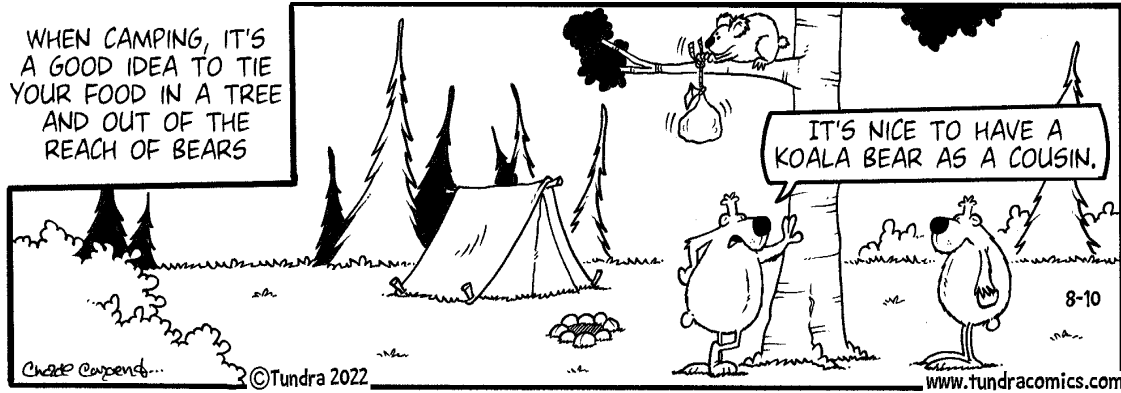
## Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



## Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



## Police report

Monday, Aug. 8  
Nothing to report.

Tuesday, Aug. 9  
Agency assist: Petersburg Police Department.  
Noise complaint.  
Oil spill.  
Agency assist: Harbor Department.  
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.  
Traffic.  
Subpoena service.

Wednesday, Aug. 10  
Noise complaint: Smoke alarm going off.  
Found property.  
Theft.

Thursday, Aug. 11  
Agency assist: Search and Rescue.  
Agency assist: Fire Department.  
Dog at large.

Friday, Aug. 12  
Noise complaint: Curfew violation.

Vandalism.  
Agency assist: Office of Children's Services.  
Motor vehicle accident: Traffic complaint.  
Citizen assist: Vehicle unlock.  
Hit and run.  
Dog at large.  
Dog at large.

Saturday, Aug. 13  
Dog complaint.  
Agency assist: Burglary alarm.  
Traffic complaint: Dangerous play.  
Drunk on licensed premises: Arrest warrant.

Sunday, Aug. 14  
Agency assist: Probation  
Agency assist.  
Illegal dumping.  
Trespass letter.  
Missing property.  
Citizen assist.  
Agency assist: Ambulance.  
Agency assist: Ambulance.  
Agency assist: Burglary alarm.

### CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE Heritage Harbor Boat Ramp Closure

Heritage Harbor boat launch will be closed Monday, Aug. 1, 2022, and will reopen on Aug. 20, 2022, to accommodate parking lot repairs at the top of the ramp. The Shoemaker Bay Harbor boat launch and the Inner Harbor boat launch across from the Power Plant on Case Avenue will remain open.

We appreciate your understanding and thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Harbor Department at 907-874-3736.

Amber Al-Haddad, Capital Facilities Director  
City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish July 27, Aug. 3, 10 and 17, 2022

## CLASSIFIED

## HELP WANTED

Wrangell Public Schools is accepting applications for the following positions for the 2022-2023 school year:

- **Middle School Secretary:** This is a 10-month position that may be up to full time, supporting the principal and completing all office duties of a school secretary in the middle school office. Salary placement is Column D on the Classified Salary Schedule. A high school diploma is required, experience working with teens and/or in an office setting is preferred.
- **Special Education Paraprofessional:** This is a part-time, nine-month position working 5.75 hours per day with students one-on-one in the Special Education department at Wrangell High School. Salary placement is Column C on the Classified Salary Schedule. The successful applicant must have a high school diploma or equivalent and an associate degree or equivalent (or higher) or the ability to pass the para-pro assessment (administered by the district).

Contact the district office at 907-874-2347 for more information. Positions are open until filled. It is the Wrangell Public School District's policy to not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, sex or disability.

## PROPERTY FOR SALE

Remote property for sale on South Wrangell Island (Thoms Place subdivision). 1.88 acres, waterfront. Lot 18, Block 2, Unit 3 of Alaska State Land Survey No. 81-234, Wrangell Recording District. Phone or text 907-321-3240.

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## PUBLIC NOTICE

James Leslie II is making application for a new common carrier license, AS 04.11.180 liquor license, doing business as motor vessels Dreadnaught and Chutine Warrior located at Reliance Harbor, to be dispensed on excursions by Alaska Waters.

Interested persons should submit written comments to their local governing body, the applicant, and to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board at 550 W. 7th Ave., Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501, or email alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov.

**Publish Aug. 3, 10 and 17, 2022**



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CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
PUBLIC NOTICE

## to Purchase Borough Owned Tidelands

As per WMC 16.12.040, notice is hereby given of a request to purchase Borough-owned Tidelands consisting of approximately 9,456 square feet of tidelands, described as Lot 6, Block 84B, Tidelands Subdivision ATS 83, Parcel No. 02-013-104 on Peninsula Street, for the purpose of improving the site that is currently being leased by the requestor.

The Wrangell Planning & Zoning Commission and Port Commission have reviewed this request and approved the request to move forward with the Tidelands Purchase with conditions.

Any person wishing to protest this application to purchase the proposed Borough-owned Property described as:

Approximately 9,456 square feet of tidelands described as Lot 6, Block 84B, Tidelands Subdivision ATS 83, Parcel No. 02-013-104 on Peninsula Street

must file a written protest with the Borough Clerk, no later than August 30, 2022, at 4 p.m.

Written protests may be emailed to clerk@wrangell.com or delivered to 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, AK 99929. Any such protest shall state the reason(s) for the protest in detail.

Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk  
City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

**Publish Aug. 3, 10 and 17, 2022**

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
PUBLIC NOTICE

## PUBLIC HEARING

During the Regular Assembly Meeting of Tuesday, Aug. 23, 2022, starting at 6 p.m., there will be a **PUBLIC HEARING** on the following item(s):

- Ordinance No. 1029 of the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, authorizing the Borough to issue general obligation bonds to finance the major renovation of the middle school, high school and elementary school and other related improvements, and to submit the question of issuing the bonds to the qualified voters of the Borough at the regular election to be held on Oct. 4, 2022.
- Ordinance No. 1030 of the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, authorizing the Borough to issue general obligation bonds to finance the major renovation of the Public Safety Building and other related capital improvements, and to submit the question of issuing the bonds to the qualified voters of the Borough at the regular election to be held on Oct. 4, 2022.
- Ordinance No. 1031 of the Assembly of the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, asking the voters of the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, to ratify Ordinance No. 1031 that allows the City and Borough of Wrangell to dispose by means of selling and/or leasing the 6-Mile deepwater industrial site (former mill site property)

Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk  
City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

**Publish Aug. 17, 2022**

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
NOTICE OF JOB OPENINGFacilities Maintenance Specialist  
Wrangell Capital Facilities Department

The Wrangell Capital Facilities Department will accept applications for the position of Facilities Maintenance Specialist.

This position performs a wide range of technical maintenance and repairs of building systems, equipment and grounds throughout all Borough-owned facilities and assists other departments with special projects. Independent or cooperative work with others is required under the daily direction and supervision of the Facility Maintenance Specialist Lead. This is a permanent position with all City and Borough benefits. This position is part of the collective bargaining agreement.

This is a full-time, hourly position with full benefits, paid at Grade 19 with a starting wage at \$24.28 per hour. Applicants must meet the qualifications of the position, as listed in the job description. Employment is based on a successful background check and pre-employment drug screening.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained at City Hall. To be considered, interested applicants should submit their CBW employment application, a cover letter and current resume to Robbie Marshall at City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929 or via email at payroll@wrangell.com. This position is open until filled and the first review of applications will take place beginning Aug. 18, 2022.

The City and Borough of Wrangell is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.

Jeff Good, Borough Manager  
City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

**Publish Aug. 10, 17 and 24, 2022**

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
PUBLIC NOTICE

Declaration of candidacy for Borough Mayor, Borough Assembly, Port Commission and School Board, and signature petitions as required, will be available in the Borough Clerk's Office from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, Aug. 1, 2022, through Aug. 31, 2022.

Qualified persons may have their name placed on the ballot for the Oct. 4, 2022, City and Borough of Wrangell Regular Municipal Election by filing declarations of candidacy for Borough Mayor, Borough Assembly, Port Commission and School Board.

Borough Mayor: One seat, for 2-year term

Borough Assembly: Two seats, for 3-year terms

School Board: Two seats, for 3-year terms

School Board: One seat, for 1-year unexpired term until October 2023

Port Commission: Two seats, for 3-year terms

Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk  
City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

**Publish Aug. 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2022**

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
PUBLIC NOTICE

Voter qualifications for the City & Borough of Wrangell, October 4, 2022, Regular Election, are as follows:

- a United States citizen;
- registered and qualified to vote in the State of Alaska elections and registered thereat for at least thirty (30) days immediately preceding the municipal election;
- at least eighteen (18) years of age;
- a resident of the City & Borough of Wrangell for thirty (30) days preceding the election;
- not disqualified by reason of having been convicted of a felony involving moral turpitude, and if so, that civil rights have been restored, nor disqualified because judicially determined to be of unsound mind.

**Voters are cautioned to make certain their residence address is correct on their State Voter Registration.** City law requires that each voter shall be registered to vote in the precinct in which that person seeks to vote in order to vote in municipal elections.

Your name must appear on the precinct list. If you are registered in another city, you must change your registration **prior to Sunday, September 4, 2022, to qualify to vote in the Regular Election of October 4, 2022.**

You may ask the Borough Clerk to check the precinct register to ensure your qualifications.

Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk  
City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

**Publish Aug. 17, 24 and 31**

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
INVITATION TO BID

## Packaged Water Treatment Plant Equipment Preselection

The City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska will receive Bids for the Packaged Water Treatment Plant Equipment Preselection project. The work for the Packaged Water Treatment Plant Equipment Preselection consists of designing and furnishing related manufacturer's labor, materials and services for prepackaged water treatment plant equipment for installation in the Project entitled Water Treatment Plant Improvements, in Wrangell, Alaska. The treatment system specified will be used to meet a 2.26 mgd design water treatment capacity.

Sealed bids will be received at the office of the Borough Clerk, City and Borough of Wrangell, P.O. Box 531, 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929 until 2 p.m. prevailing time (Alaska Standard Time) on Aug. 24, 2022, after which time proposals will not be accepted. As such, proposal pricing shall be read aloud.

The Contract Documents may be downloaded free of charge on the City & Borough of Wrangell website (www.wrangell.com) under the Bids and RFPs section. Downloading Contract Documents from the City and Borough of Wrangell's website requires registration with the Borough Clerk to be placed on the Plan Holders List and to ensure receipt of subsequent Addenda. Failure to register may adversely affect your proposal. It is the Offeror's responsibility to ensure that they have received all Addenda affecting this Solicitation. To be registered, contact the Borough Clerk at 907-874-2381; Borough Clerks Office, 205 Brueger St., Wrangell, Alaska 99929; or at clerk@wrangell.com.

The owner reserves the right to reject any or all Bids, to waive any informality in a Bid, and to make award to the lowest responsive, responsible Bidder as it may best serve the interests of the owner.

Jeff Good, Borough Manager  
City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

**Publish Aug. 3, 10 and 17, 2022**

# Skagway may contract with SEARHC for health clinic

By MELINDA MUNSON  
Skagway News

The Skagway Borough Assembly has directed the borough manager to pursue negotiations for the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium to take over management of the community health clinic and lease the municipally owned building.

In the meantime, the Dahl Memorial Clinic, which costs the municipality about \$1 million per year to operate, will get a temporary executive director at the price of about \$150,000 for three months through a company that also sells training and restructuring services to health centers. The company has prepared a financial rehabilitation plan for the clinic, which some in the community see as an alternative to SEARHC management and a way to keep the clinic managed locally.

The assembly voted Aug. 5 to pursue negotiations for SEARHC to lease the clinic after a deal failed for the health care provider to purchase the clinic — it had offered less than the borough wanted for the property.

The clinic has been without a temporary medical director since late June, and without a permanent executive director since December 2021.

Skagway is one of the few communities in Southeast where SEARHC does not provide services.

Under a draft agreement with Skagway, SEARHC would “acquire ownership and assume responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the clinic,” with an anticipated purchase price of \$1. The borough would lease the building to SEARHC for \$1 per year, with a 25-year lease.

SEARHC would be required to keep all current clinic employees, “subject

to SEARHC’s routine background check screening standards and procedures.” According to the draft agreement, SEARHC would eventually expand the clinic’s services to include dental and mental health.

Public comment went on for more than an hour at the Aug. 5 borough assembly meeting. Billi Clem said she was satisfied with the clinic as it is now. “I’m a frequent visitor of the Skagway medical clinic ... and I have had very good service. I am not in favor of bringing SEARHC to Skagway because I like the service that I get now.”

But Kaylenn Howard testified that she didn’t have confidence in the clinic, and neither did her pediatrician in Juneau. When Howard’s infant son developed a fever several days ago, Howard contacted her Juneau provider. “They advised me not to go there

unless absolutely necessary. I was willing to hop on a plane just to get my kid care if his fever didn’t break,” she said.

Lisa Mandeville, like several others, said the issue deserved a vote of the public, although not required by municipal code.

Several residents expressed concern with the length of the proposed 25-year lease. Assemblymember Dustin Stone said he too was taken aback by the long lease until he did more research. “The amount of capital that an organization like SEARHC ... would have to put into the clinic over the years ... would require a fairly lengthy lease to allow them to recoup the capital that they put in,” he said.

A final agreement with SEARHC would require assembly approval.

# Cruise ships cut visits to Skagway after landslides damage dock

By TESS WILLIAMS  
Anchorage Daily News

Several landslides have closed the cruise ship dock in Skagway for the rest of the summer, causing what’s expected to be at least three dozen vessels to skip the tourism-dependent port by the end of summer.

The municipality issued an emergency declaration on Aug. 4, citing the need to shore up the slide-damaged areas and the loss of more than 100,000 cruise passengers to cancellations and rescheduling.

A mid-July report from a geotechnical and environmental

consulting firm showed “significant risk” of “catastrophic failure” of the mountainside above the dock that poses “significant risks to life and property.”

A landslide in June damaged the deck and east side of the dock at the south end of the north berth, according to Tyler Rose, executive director of the White Pass and Yukon Route Railroad, which owns the dock. Two additional landslides in early August at the north chute damaged shipping containers and part of a security building, he said.

No one was injured in the slides that sent rock, dirt and vegetation down the mountainside above the dock.

The entire dock is closed to passengers and vehicles, Rose said. The south berth is accepting ships and tendering guests

by small boats to town, but the north berth is closed, he said.

The closure means the port has only been able to accommodate three large cruise ships at the same time, said Jaime Bricker, Skagway’s municipal tourism director. The community has two other docks.

“Anytime we had something listed for four large cruise ships to port, the fourth has been rerouted,” Bricker said.

Twelve cruise ships skipped Skagway after the June landslide, according to Bricker. An additional 24 sailings have been removed from the upcoming schedule, she said. Rose said there has been a large reduction in traffic, but the full effect won’t be known until the end of the season.

“It’s obviously impactful anytime we have a decrease in passengers,” Bricker said. “I think each business is going to feel an effect from that.”

Skagway’s economy is largely driven by tourism, and the cruise cancellations are “already negatively impacting the gener-

al economy of our community,” Skagway Mayor Andrew Cremata wrote in an emergency declaration issued Aug. 4.

Skagway was hit especially hard by the downturn in tourism driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, the diversion of cruise ships is again causing hardships for the town, Cremata wrote.

The area also saw two significant landslides in 2017 and has seen continued movement at the rockslide face away from the mountain a rate of 2½ inches over the past year, an acceleration from the prior rate of 1½ inches a year, according to the borough declaration.

The railroad is working with teams of engineers and the municipality to reduce the risk of landslides. It’s unclear how much that will cost, but Rose described it as substantial.

The borough is seeking assistance from federal and state agencies.

The goal is to reopen the dock for the 2023 cruise ship season, which begins in May.

## Bearfest thanks you for your support!

Lance Craighead  
Harry Reynolds  
Barrie Gilbert  
Shawn Crimmins  
Elizabeth Graham  
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Michael Bania  
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Laura Ballou - Oceanview Gardens  
Katherine Ivy - Ivy Patch Produce  
Jake Harris & team - Stikine Inn & Restaurant

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The Banta Band  
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WMC Foundation thanks our hard working volunteers and generous sponsors for a successful Rally for Cancer Care. Our Cancer Care program provides a travel and lodging grant up to \$1200 annually for cancer patients traveling for medical care.

Questions? Call Patty Gilbert 907-874-3199 or WMCF PO Box 2175 Wrangell, AK

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