

Mask mandate pulled from assembly agenda

Reopening plan discussed

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

During their meeting on Tuesday night the Wrangell Borough Assembly was scheduled to consider an extension of their mask mandate. However, this item was pulled from the agenda during the meeting. The assembly also held a discussion about reopening city buildings to public access.

The assembly adopted their mask mandate in November, requiring people in Wrangell to wear face masks or other face coverings while out in public. This was done in response to a growing number of COVID-19 cases across the state. It proved to be a topic of some controversy amongst the community, with some people seeing it as a public safety issue while others see it as government overreach. The original mandate was set to expire on Dec. 7. The new mandate they were looking at was practically the same, according to the agenda packet, save for some updates to the "whereas" clauses and a new sunset date of Jan. 12, 2021.

However, Assembly Member Patty Gilbert made a motion to amend the meeting's agenda by pulling the item from consideration. This motion was made, according to city officials, because the city was not seeing support for keeping the mandate at the state level. Mayor Steve Prysunka said that part of the reason for the emergency order in the first place was because of Governor Mike Dunleavy's "pressing of the big buzzer" back in November warning about an increase in cases, and a desire for people to take action to try and stall the rise. After that, he said, the governor was largely silent on the matter. Prysunka said he, Borough Manager Lisa Von Barga, and Wrangell's state lobbyist reached out to the government for a situation update. Prysunka said

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PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Christmas Tree Lane

Christmas Tree Lane is up at Evergreen Elementary School. Trees and quilts have been donated by people and organizations from around Wrangell, to be put up for bid to support the Hospice of Wrangell. Bidding is open until Dec. 14. More information can be found at "Christmas Tree Lane 2020" on Facebook or online at www.wrangellchristmastreelane2020.weebly.com.



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Repairs being made to power lines along 8-mile of Zimovia Highway. Wrangell Municipal Light & Power crews, and other city departments, have been busy this past week responding to damage caused by stormy weather.

Repairs made after stormy week

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

Last week saw high winds and stormy weather for many Southeast Alaskan communities. In Haines, there was a landslide that led to several people going missing. According to the Associated Press, in an article on Dec. 7, two people still remain missing and there still is some danger of more landslides. Rainfall in Ketchikan led to a voluntary evacuation order being issued for residents along Ketchikan Creek due to potential dam failure. According to the Anchorage Daily News, in an article updated last Sunday morning, the voluntary evacuation order was cancelled.

While Wrangell did not face major incidents such as these last week, city workers were kept very busy responding to fallen trees and downed power lines. Rod Rhoades, with Municipal Light and Power, said his department was hard at work for the majority of last

week.

"I think the only reprieve day we had was Monday," he said.

The wind and rain knocked over several trees, and took out power for many homes, especially out the highway. Throughout the week, Rhoades said his crews cleared eight fallen trees from power lines, replaced three transformers, and replaced over a dozen broken crossarms. The main areas that required work were around 7.5-mile, the 8-mile bluffs, 11.2-mile, and 11.75-mile. Last Tuesday night, at 11.2 mile, there was an asphalt fire caused by a downed power line, as it was knocked over by a tree.

"One of the phase conductors hit the ground and the system saw it as a normal load," Rhoades said. "Like a resistive heater ... the asphalt caught on fire."

Rhoades said they had to call SEAPA to cut power from their feeder, he said, and the Wrangell Fire Department put

out the flame. His crew then got to work restoring the lines and power.

Rhoades said he believes this was an especially rough week for the city and his department, but they have gotten through it. As the storm has largely passed, and the weather will hopefully improve, he said that his department will be going around inspecting poles throughout this week to see if any will need repairs or replacement. A press release from the City and Borough of Wrangell announced a planned power outage along Zimovia Highway for Dec. 8, to address trees that are dangerously close to the power lines. Rhoades said, in a previous interview with the Sentinel that his department, and other city departments, all pulled together and worked hard through the storm, and thanked them for their work.

"All of WMLP employees worked heroically," he said. "Everybody just pulled together in a really heroic way."

Assembly

Continued from page 1

that he received a call that day from Bryan Fisher, head of the state EOC, where he was told that things up north are not completely overrun. There were enough hospital

beds, and hospital staffing was not currently a major concern. Fisher did say that state health people were upset about the upward trajectory of case counts, Prysunka said, but things at the moment were not

overrun.

"Given that we responded not because of what was happening here, but because of what was happening where we go to if we get sick, I don't see us having the rationale any longer," Prysunka said. "Given that this high-level state official that reports directly to Commissioner [Adam] Crum is saying that it is not a big deal, we do not have a problem in our state and that there's more than enough beds. So I spoke with the city manager and said our rationale is no longer there."

After some further discussion, the amendment was approved unanimously by the assembly, and the mask mandate was pulled from the agenda.

The assembly also held a discussion on reopening bor-

ough facilities. Back in November, again in response to a growing case count in Alaska, city administration closed city buildings. This included buildings like the library, the Nolan Center, and city hall. Like the original mask mandate, this closure was scheduled to come to an end on Dec. 7.

Borough Manager Lisa Von Barga said in the meeting that city buildings would be reopening starting Dec. 9. Mitigation will remain largely similar to as they were prior to the closure in most facilities, she said. Masks will still be required within city buildings, she said, and people will be spread out and socially distanced as much as possible.

Other department leaders were invited to speak during the meeting about their reopening plans. The

library and harbor department will be following mitigation protocols similar to what they had prior to the closure.

Kate Thomas, Parks and Rec director, said that the community swimming pool would be opening after Dec. 15, as a hot water tank was currently being replaced.

Cyni Cray, with the Nolan Center, said that they would be back open for business starting Dec. 11. The movie theater and civic center would be kept closed until February 2021, however, due to a floor replacement project scheduled for January. She also announced that they would host a community market on Dec. 19.

This was only a discussion item, so no formal action was taken by the assembly.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

Thursday, December 10: Maddison Ginter, Pam Stover, Tarren Legg-Privett. **Friday, December 11:** Carrie Mason, Rob Rooney, Tammi Meissner, *Anniversary:* Leonard & Kathie Angerman. **Saturday, December 12:** Maria Beers, Alicia Gillen, Lana Johnson, Katie Neyman. **Sunday, December 13:** Alysse Maxand, Sarah Murphy, Tawni Fitzgerald, Adrian Kohrt, *Anniversaries:* Chris & Shannon Barrett, Steve & Beverly Angerman, Randy & Toni Oliver. **Monday, December 14:** Matt Wilsie, Bill Messmer. **Tuesday, December 15:** Braxon Harris, *Anniversary:* Richard & Nicole Taylor. **Wednesday, December 16:** Matt Robinson, Jeff Jabusch, Jennifer Wiederspohn, Angus Booker, Brogan Booker. **Thursday, December 17:** Pam McGee, Sophia O'Brien, Karin Nesbitt, Amber Mann.

If you would like to add a birthday or anniversary at no charge please call the Sentinel at 874-2301.

Senior Center Meals Menu Delivery Only

Friday, December 11

Beef and Spanish Rice, Brussel Sprouts, Salad and White Bread.

Monday, December 14

Beef Vegetable Soup, Citrus Cup, Cheese Sandwich.

Tuesday, December 15

Chinese Fruited Pork, Cucumber Onion Salad, Veggies and Steamed Rice.

Wednesday, December 16

Fish Caddy Ganty, Green Beans and Fruit Slaw, Vegetable Rice Pilaf.

Thursday, December 17

French Dip Sandwich, Peas and Apricot Salad, Potatoes Au Gratin.

Please call Wrangell Senior Center at 874-2066 by 10 a.m. for delivery.

Senior van also available to transport seniors to medical appointments reasonable errands like collecting mail, getting prescriptions at pharmacies or other essential need items.

FERRY

December Sailings CANCELLED

Call 874-2021 for information or call 874-3711 or Toll Free 800-642-0066 for recorded information.



TIDES December 10 - December 17

	High Tides		Low Tides		AM	PM	AM	PM	Ft
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft					
Dec. 10	08:52	16.4	09:29	14.0	02:08	1.9	03:09	1.0	
Dec. 11	09:42	17.7	10:29	15.0	03:10	1.8	04:08	-1.0	
Dec. 12	10:30	18.7	11:24	15.7	04:08	1.7	05:00	-2.7	
Dec. 13	11:17	19.5	04:59	1.6	05:48	-3.8	
Dec. 14	00:15	16.2	12:03	19.8	05:47	1.6	06:34	-4.4	
Dec. 15	01:04	16.3	12:48	19.5	06:33	1.9	07:18	-4.2	
Dec. 16	01:52	16.1	01:33	18.8	07:18	2.4	08:03	-3.5	
Dec. 17	02:39	15.6	02:18	17.7	08:04	3.0	08:47	-2.4	

Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

Monday, December 14

Stikine Middle School Regular School Board Meeting: 6:30 pm via Zoom. Meeting ID: 983 8689 8408 Passcode: 145175. Web: zoom.us/j/98386898408?pwd=R1kyN3kzWm9TbGJ3QU91N3gwM1d1TQT09

The Wrangell Court is open by appointment only until December 21, 2020. Call: (907) 874-2311. Persons wanting to apply for a Stalking/ DV Protective Order will be given priority. To appear for a court hearing, please call: (800) 768-2983 Code: 874 2311. Court filings can be emailed (in a PDF format) to: 1wrmailbox@akcourts.us or faxed to: (907) 874-3509 or mailed to: PO Box 869, Wrangell AK 99929. For Emergencies, please contact the Police Department: (907) 874-3304

Continuing Events

AA Meetings: North Star Group Meeting Tuesdays and Fridays 7 - 8 p.m at St. Philips Episcopal Church.

The Way We Were

In the Sentinel 100, 75, 50 and 25 years ago.

December 9, 1920

The Den O'Sweets, recently opened for business, is proving very popular. The attractive fountain can supply one with delectable combinations, pleasing to the eye and appealing to the taste. Cake and sandwiches and appetizing hot dishes and drinks that cannot fail to satisfy are served constantly. The home made candy has won regular customers. The Den O'Sweets is kept scrupulously clean, and is daintily attractive in all its appointments.

December 7, 1945

The December meeting of the Women's Civic Club and Library Association had a holiday atmosphere with a holly bedecked table arranged by Mrs. Frank Denny and Mrs. George Sumption and individual puddings topped with hard sauce and festive decorations. Mrs. John Coulter, librarian, reviewed the finances of the library for the past three years. As of February first, she will turn over her duties to a new librarian as yet not chosen by the Association. A report of a Board of Directors meeting was read wherein the use of the library monies was clarified. A few new faces were noticeable and the continued large attendance is very

heartening.

December 10, 1970

Dave Werner, a pilot for Stikine Air Service, almost took a chilly swim this week. He shoved one of the float planes out of the hangar according to standard procedure but it had ice under it and it didn't slide according to standard procedure. The plane shot out of the hangar with Dave scrambling after it clutching a wing rope and trying with all his might to slow it. No dice. The airplane ignored it's pilot, who had to let it go lest he be pulled into the drink, and glided out into the bay. Werner leaped into a

boat, caught the plane, climbed in and flew away, leaving the boat drifting (It was picked up by lineboy Wes Ingram).

December 7, 1995

Scooping up snow throughout the city brought Wrangell city employees out early twice during the past week as they worked to stay ahead of the more than 20 inches of snow falling on the island. Residents reported temperatures as low as zero on home thermometers, and apartment dwellers along Front Street were awakened in the early morning hours by snowmobiles racing through town.



Wrangell Weather

Date	High	Low
Nov. 30	40	33
Dec. 01	50	39
Dec. 02	56	42
Dec. 03	45	40
Dec. 04	52	45
Dec. 05	52	45
Dec. 06	52	43
Dec. 07	45	39



Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Hours
Dec. 10	8:07a	3:14p	07:07h
Dec. 11	8:09a	3:13p	07:04h
Dec. 12	8:10a	3:13p	07:03h
Dec. 13	8:11a	3:13p	07:02h
Dec. 14	8:12a	3:13p	07:01h
Dec. 15	8:13a	3:13p	07:00h
Dec. 16	8:14a	3:13p	06:59h
Dec. 17	8:15a	3:13p	06:58h

Police report

November 30
Civil Standby.
Warrant Arrest: Casey Seimears, 38, charged on Failure to Appear Warrant.

Dog Complaint.
Traffic Stop.

December 1
Agency Assist: Harbor Dept.
Agency Assist: Fire Dept.
Agency Assist: Line Crew/D.O.T.
Agency Assist: Line Crew.

December 2
Traffic Stop: Ceona Koch, 24, Citation issued for Speeding. Traffic Violation.
Agency Assist: Fire Department.
Agency Assist: Line Crew.

December 3
Traffic Stop.

December 4
Parking Complaint.
Agency Assist: Wrangell Medical Center.

December 5
Traffic.
Motor Vehicle Accident.
Debris in Roadway.

December 6
Agency Assist: Public Works.
Agency Assist: Line Crew.
Agency Assist: Ambulance.

During this reporting period there were seven Agency Assist calls from Hoonah P.D.



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

There was a chimney fire at Wrangell Extended Stay Dec. 2.

Chimney fire at Wrangell Extended Stay

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

Last Wednesday afternoon, Dec. 2, there was a report of a chimney fire at Wrangell Extended Stay and Trading Post. The call went out at approximately 12:45 p.m., and the fire department was on the scene shortly thereafter. The situation was under control and the department was preparing to return to the station by about 1 p.m.

"It was just a chimney fire," said Chief Tim Bunes. "Just to reiterate, clean your chimneys and make sure they're good to go for the heating season, and keep your eye on them."

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Tree lighting ceremony postponed

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

Wrangell's Christmas tree lighting ceremony has been postponed due to bad weather and on-

going efforts by the city's electrical department to keep power running, according to the Wrangell Chamber of Commerce.

In a Facebook post on Thursday, Dec. 3, the chamber announced that the annual tradition was being pushed back, potentially to Dec. 11. However, the post went on to say that Midnight Madness was still moving forward Friday evening Dec. 4. Many businesses were still open late for shopping and sales.

"As I am sure many of you have noticed, there is no Christmas tree up downtown," the Facebook post reads. "Due to the storm and power situation, the Christmas tree is NOT able to go up by this Friday, so the Tree Lighting Ceremony will be postponed."

Rod Rhoades, Wrangell Municipal Light & Power, director, confirmed that the tree lighting ceremony was delayed. Poor weather has kept his department from getting the tree in the first place, he said, and they have been very busy responding to power outages caused by the storm.

"We just have not been able to harvest the tree," he said. "The storm damage took all of our opportunities away."

Rhoades said, in an interview on Dec. 7, that they will try to get the tree for the city within the next few days now that the stormy weather has largely passed. However, he said this will depend on any priority work that pops up in the near future.



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

An improvised "Christmas Tree" in downtown Wrangell, made out of traffic cones and branches. The city's annual Christmas Tree lighting ceremony was postponed due to last week's stormy weather.

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Donors sign up to make Christmas special for A Family in need.
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You provide the Christmas Meal, toys for the kids & maybe a small gift for the parents

Bring to The Salvation Army by Monday, December 14

Holiday Copy Services

December 14th is the deadline to guarantee delivery prior to Christmas for copy jobs.

Orders after December 14th will be done in the order they are submitted with no Christmas guarantee.

WRANGELL SENTINEL

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Email: wrgsent@gmail.com

Results from Alaska's general election certified

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) - The results of Alaska's general election were certified Monday, the Division of Elections announced.

Certification followed a review of ballots, voter registers and other materials by a bipartisan board. Certification initially was targeted for Nov. 25.

Nationally, state-by-state certification of results has generated interest as President Donald Trump and some supporters have sought to sow doubt about the outcome of his race, won by Democrat Joe Biden. Alaska was among the states Trump won.

In a tight Anchorage House race, Democrat Liz Snyder led Republican House Minority Leader Lance Pruitt by 16

votes in unofficial results ahead of certification. The certified results show Snyder with a 13-vote lead. Pruitt did not immediately respond to a request for comment on whether he would seek a recount.

Lt. Gov. Kevin Meyer, who oversees elections, has said he plans to seek an audit of votes cast on a ballot initiative to address questions raised about the "validity" of election results tied to vote tabulation equipment. It wasn't clear what that would cost or when it would occur.

The initiative, which would end party primaries and institute ranked choice voting in general elections, passed. Meyer has said he believes it passed fairly.

Golly Shopping

Friday, December 18th - Sunday, December 20th

Participating businesses will stamp card for every \$10 spent. Enter full cards for a chance to win \$500

Drop off cards at the Stikine Inn lobby by 1:00pm Monday, December 21st

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Midnight Madness



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Wrangell has many locally-owned and operated businesses. Last week was Midnight Madness, where many shops stayed open late for people to do some Christmas shopping. There were also some local entrepreneurs out late that night.

Pictured here (right to left) are Tommy Roher-Wickman, Gabe Howell, and Abby Roher-Wickman selling garnets.



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Midnight Madness was last Friday, Dec. 4. While many businesses were open late for holiday shopping, Wrangellites downtown also got to stop by the Stikine Inn for a used book sale. Pictured here is Patty Gilbert, with some of the books for sale.

“Letters To Santa”

Make sure Santa gets your wish list!



Hey Kids! It's time to write those special letters to Santa! Old Saint Nick is anxious to find out what Wrangell boys and girls are hoping to find under their trees on Christmas morning. He's also interested in knowing your name, grade in school and your age.

Drop off your letters in Santa's Mailbox located in the Wrangell Sentinel office at 205 Front St. Letters can also be mailed through the post office or emailed to the addresses below.



Santa

P.O.Box 798, Wrangell, AK 99929
 or email to
 wrgsent@gmail.com

The Sentinel will publish Letters to Santa in the special **Christmas Edition, Dec. 24th**
Deadline for letters is Friday, December 18th at 5 pm

Note: Letters will be published on a "first in first published" basis, according to space available.
 Letters are subject to editing.

Alaska Fish Factor

By LAINE WELCH Fisheries columnist

Lack of fish in freezers encouraging sign for Alaska salmon headed into 2021, driven by increasing customer demand

A lack of fish in the freezers is an encouraging sign for Alaska salmon as we head into the new year, driven by increasing customer demand. But headwinds from trade disputes and the Covid pandemic also loom large on the 2021 horizon.

Those are some prime take-aways shared by Mark Palmer, president and CEO of OBI Seafoods, and Allen Kimball, vice president of global operations and sales for Trident Seafoods.

"We don't see entering the 2021 season with any real big carryovers. And that's always one of the downsides as we head into a new season, if there's an abundance of two to four (pound) sockeyes or something. We've gone into seasons like that and it influences the new season pricing. But as we go into 2021, we should have a pretty clean slate and be ready to buy and ideally put it up in a better product form than we did this last year," said Palmer, speaking at a webinar hosted by United Fishermen of Alaska.

The Covid pandemic this year forced a shift from workers producing fresh salmon fillets to lower value canned and frozen fish when the labor force was reduced and costly restrictions were imposed on processing lines.

Kimball added that while he was "a little more conservative," his outlook was fairly optimistic.

"We don't have inventories around and we have good demand," he said. "I think we're going to see a lot of adjustments and positive things in terms of the demand at retail and it's going to continue. And if we get this food service piece back to full giddy up, I think it's going to be quite good."

Nationally, people are buying more seafood at grocery stores than ever before, added Palmer. And while lower in value, all that pack put up by Alaska processors fits the bill.

"The type of seafood they're buying is more canned and frozen products and that's where we've really seen some great market share gains," he explained. "It's probably one of the best times to be a frozen seller and to get new value added products in the market."

With Covid crippling the food service sector, Palmer said farmed fish has flooded into retail outlets and forced a downward press on salmon prices.

"These aquaculture produced salmon had a huge piece of the food service market and as that evaporated, they're still pulling fish out of the water. We've watched that industry go after the retail market more aggressively than they ever have. They've got the fish and they're going to find someplace to move it. We've watched prices go down, so we're slugging it out every day to keep our products on the shelf," he said.

Roughly 75% of the world's salmon is now farmed, added Kimball. But both men emphasized Alaska's biggest market competition comes from Russia.

"When we're negotiating with some of our bigger export markets, whether it's salmon or whitefish, all of these global markets influence that," Palmer said. "For the last four years, Russia has had these huge production years on pink salmon and solid sockeye and chum production. That's what's really driven the market. Trying to put up product forms where we don't have to directly compete against Russia has been important."

Both also bemoaned the trade imbalance that allows Russian-caught fish into U.S. markets while that country has not purchase a U.S. pound since 2014.

"Russia has open access to our markets with no restrictions. I just don't understand the fairness of this," Palmer said. "We would rather just see open markets. We will compete against anyone, but if they're not going to give us access to their market, they shouldn't have unfettered access to ours."

"If we can't sell our fish in Russia, they shouldn't be able to sell their fish in the United States," echoed Kimball. "I think that's going to continue to be a battle. We'll have to see with the next administration how that's going to materialize. But I anticipate that we're going to have to be at the table really early and carefully to make sure that we get our voices heard in this particular issue."

Both men said that dealing with trade wars and currency fluctuations over the past several years "has been a big nightmare."

Tariff activity since 2018 on various fish ranges between 35% and 45% going into China,

Kimball said, and a new 35% tariff has been imposed on Alaska salmon going to Europe stemming from a government dispute over airplane subsidies.

"It is going to have an effect on our ability to get wild salmon into the European Union. With that kind of tariff, it's going to make it pretty darn tough," said Kimball. "But I would say that with many of these tariff challenges, what we've seen in China and other countries, the dynamics of this could change. So we're heavily working on this from a political position standpoint. But if this remains, there is no question it's going to have a big influence on fish next year."

The ongoing influence of the Covid pandemic also remains a question. Most seafood companies picked up the tab this year to charter planes to transport tens of thousands of processing workers, rent hotel rooms for 14-day quarantines, purchase testing and prevention equipment - costs not reimbursed by

federal relief funds. More strict state requirements for preventive protocols are already extended into 2021.

"In fact, they've been expanded," said Kimball. "We are all working with the state on surveying our community work forces and factories at places that operate year round, and we have to go to continuous monitoring of our employees there, including testing. So the handling of the workforce is getting more expensive, not less, as we head into 2021. It's just a big unknown at this point."

Share the Sea - Two million pounds of seafood turns into 8 million meals at Feeding America food bank networks across the nation. That's how much the Seattle-based non-profit SeaShare has donated to Lower 48 states so far this year. Alaskans in dozens of remote communities also share in the seafood bounty.

"I think we're at 180,000 pounds which is over 720,000 servings this year, which is more than we normally do," said Jim Harmon, SeaShare executive director.

SeaShare has positioned freezers full of fish in regional hubs at Juneau, Kodiak, Anchorage, Mat-Su, Kenai, Dillingham and Kotzebue that allows distribution to remote communities.

The program began in 1994 with bycatch donations from boats fishing the Bering Sea and has since expanded in the Gulf of Alaska to include 136 vessels, 12 shoreside processors, 34 catcher processors and three motherships.

To date, it has delivered more than 220 million seafood servings of fish to U.S. food bank networks.

SeaShare is the only group authorized to receive bycatch donations which today make up about 20 percent of the fish; the rest includes a wide array of smelt, halibut steaks, salmon burgers, breaded pollock portions and more, all processed and donated by seafood companies.

"The nice thing is that the donations that the fishermen and processors make, it enables us to bring in other donations of freight, cold storage, packaging, and those things they wouldn't be able to donate if we didn't have the fish," Harmon said.

Good protein is the hardest item to source and the demand on food banks has soared due to the Covid pandemic.

"The clients that go to food banks have doubled this year. I believe 22% of Americans are accessing food banks and that's unprecedented. That's an incredible need," Harmon said.

With many federal and state relief programs set to expire at the end of December, pressure will grow as food banks struggle to keep up with.

There are all kinds of restrictions in place and volunteers

have really dropped off, which most food banks rely on to distribute the hand outs and segregate all the different donations that come in," Harmon said. "It's scary to think about. It's going to come right after the holidays when those extra services run out."

Donations are more important than ever to fill the seafood pipeline. Harmon said every one dollar donated to SeaShare equals eight seafood servings to hungry Americans. www.seashare.org

Fish skins cure - Fish skins that help regenerate human tissue have garnered a \$600,000 grant from the U.S. Defense Department to make them available to wounded soldiers.

It's the third grant the Icelandic company Kerecis has received from the Defense Department's Combat Casualty Care Research Program (JPC-6).

Kerecis has pioneered and patented the omega 3 fish skins that need minimal processing and provide an infection barrier while enabling the body to regrow its own tissues. The skins already are used around the world in hospitals and by health care workers and consumers. Now, Kerecis will create field kits for use by the U.S. military.

The company says it "har-

nesses nature's own remedies," in this case the omega-3 fatty acids and collagen found in cod fish skins. And because no disease-transfer risk exists between cold-water fish and humans, the skins are ideal for treating soldiers in the field.

Collagen is the most abundant protein in the human body and supports everything from our skin and bones to our toenails, and marine collagen is the same kind.

While the marine collagen market is pegged to reach nearly \$1 billion by 2023, Alaska's skins are still dumped as wastes.

For Alaska pollock, with catch volumes averaging over three billion pounds a year, that adds up to over 1.4 million pounds of skins, assuming a five percent yield, according to economist Dan Lesh of McKinley Research Group (formerly McDowell Group).

Pacific cod could produce nearly 1.4 million pounds of skins. The skin yield is in the 8 to 10 percent range for Alaska salmon.

And they are loaded with healing goods: Studies show cod skins produce about 11 percent collagen and nearly 20 percent has been extracted from salmon skins.

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The Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA) is recruiting for an Operator/Mechanic. The position performs typical operations and maintenance duties associated with hydroelectric power generation and transmission facilities. Must also be competent at operating and performing major maintenance of vehicles and mobile heavy equipment. Base work location is the Swan Lake Hydroelectric Facility, located approximately 22 air miles or 27 water miles from Ketchikan, Alaska. Standard work schedule is 8 days on and 6 days off. Position requires residency on site in employer-provided housing during each tour of duty. Position will require travel by fixed wing aircraft and boat. Qualifications for the position include a High School Diploma and a valid Alaska Driver's license. Position is open until filled. Compensation is defined in IBEW Local 1547 Collective Bargaining Agreement + excellent benefits. A general job description and electronic application process are available online at: <http://seapahydro.applicantpro.com/>. SEAPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Published: December 10, 2020



Dove Tree ceremony different this year

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

Wrangell's Dove Tree was set up in the downtown pavilion last week. The tree, an annual tradition by the Hospice of Wrangell, serves as a holiday memorial for loved ones who passed away that year. Community members are invited to visit the tree, write the names of loved ones on dove ornaments, and hang them on the tree. As of Dec. 7, over 50 doves are hanging on this year's tree. There was no in-person ceremony for the Dove Tree this year, due to COVID-19, but an on air ceremony was held last Saturday on KSTK. "Every year since 2003,

Hospice has organized the Dove Tree ceremony in the Nolan Center as a way to support those who are grieving lost loved ones during the holiday season," Alice Rooney said, during the ceremony. "2020 has been a very challenging year. We have not been able to gather and socialize due to pandemic restrictions. More significantly, we have not been able to follow our usual customs of funeral and memorial service events that help us to say goodbye after a death."

The on air Dove Tree Ceremony featured many community leaders. Don McConachie read "The Story of the Dove,"

where he spoke about the symbolism of doves throughout history and different cultures. Mayor Steve Prysunka read the names of those who passed away. Father Steve Gallagher of St. Rose of Lima was the ceremony's speaker, and Lt. Jon Tollerud of the Salvation Army gave the closing prayer. Heidi Armstrong and other community members provided music for the ceremony.

"My dearly beloved let us give thanks to God the father, through his son Jesus, in the Holy Spirit," Gallagher said, quoting St. Leo the Great, who served as pope from 440 to 461 A.D. "Because of this great love for us and we were dead in our sins, he brought us to life with Christ, so that in him we might be a new creation."

The names read during the ceremony included Robert Armstrong, Carolyn Lentz, Gene Hiebert, Randy Ferdinand, Mel Sather, Sydney (Dub) Jenkins, Mike Ottesen Sr., John Maxand, Harriet Stokes Bangs, Joanne Petticrew Anderson, Gregg Wilson, Alice Frank Thomas, Barbara Crabtree, Todd Harding, Floyd Steve Ramsey, Fred Thurston, Sylvia Casey Wells, Cathy Warner, Teresa Colberg Wallace, George A. Casey, Janet Teague, Dave Johnson, Joyce Philips, Hollis Hayes, Siguard (Sig) Decker, Helen Decker, Donald Covalt, Roberts Naumann, Darrel Gross, Henrietta (Hankie) Hoyt, Royann Churchill, Minnie Kalkins, Roy Guthrie Sr., James Hiebert, Robert (Bob) Grant, Leonard Ingle, Lena Marshall Gilman, Wayne Jabusch, David Cummings, Kimberly Anderson, Tom Wynn, Madeline Stella, Margaret Hall, Vera Mae Harto, and Kattie Davies.

"We are grateful to have known those who have gone



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Wrangell's Dove Tree, at the downtown pavilion.

on," Tollerud said in his closing prayer. "We are excited to reunite with them in your glory. We ask that at this time you comfort those who knew those who we've lost and remind them, as the scripture says, that in your eternal glory

we will fellowship with you and with other believers. Bless us this day, and give us a clear heart and mind, and help us to remember those things which bring a smile to our face for those that we mourn at this time."

Community pool closed for tank replacement

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

While borough facilities have been temporarily closed in response to increases in COVID-19 cases across the state, the city's community pool will remain closed a little longer. A replacement project for the pool's domestic hot water tank began Tuesday, Dec. 7. This project will be ongoing until Dec. 15, according to a Facebook post from the Wrangell Parks and Recreation Department.

"Because this project halts all domestic water service to the building during construction, the closure includes all areas of the facility," the post reads. "We look forward to the project end, improved services and returned operations just before the holidays. Until then we encourage you to enjoy our parks and shelters."

This item was covered in a September 8 borough assembly meeting. The assembly approved a contract award to Schmolck Mechanical Contractors, in the amount of \$53,450, for the hot water tank replacement project. According to the agenda packet, the old tank has experienced failures in the tank walls of the pressure vessel, requiring its replacement. The assembly also made a budget amendment for the project, transferring \$32,950 from general fund reserves into the Capital Improvement Projects fund for the hot water tank replacement project. Both of these items were approved unanimously by the assembly, according to the meeting's minutes.

Swim season in review

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

It has been a strange year for high school sports, thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. State tournaments were cancelled, mitigation plans were drafted, travel and in-person competition were

limited. The situation was no different for the Wrangell High School swim team. Their season came to an abrupt end in early November, when in response to increasing cases across the state the City and Borough of Wrangell closed their facilities to the public. This included the community pool. While the season was cut short, Coach Jamie Roberts said she was very proud of her team and their performance.

"It was tough, I felt like it kind of might be coming," Roberts said about the pool closure. "We felt fortunate that we were able to get together and practice every day."

The end of their season was sad, Roberts said, especially because they were only about a week away from regionals when city buildings were shut. They considered traveling to Craig for regionals, but she said she decided that would not be a good idea for the team's health.

While most of their meets this season were virtual, Roberts said that she was proud that her team never complained or had any pity-parties. They always showed up and practiced hard, and then competed in virtual meets to the best of their abilities. Her swimmers really improved over the season, she said, peaking right before regionals.

"Based on their performances at these meets, they were showing improvement each meet," Roberts said.

The season was a good life lesson for the team, she said, as

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Swim season in review

Continued from page 7

well as an example of how peoples' collective decisions in response to the pandemic can impact others. The kids got the short end of the stick this year, she said, as they had to deal with wearing masks, going to school, needing to socially distance from friends, and still get their swim season

changed from normal. Still, she said she was proud of them for dealing with all the changes and stress. The season has served as a lesson that things can go wrong, but you can still come back.

"That's a life lesson," Roberts said. "I guess I like to infuse swimming with life lessons ... We're lucky we got a season."

There were three seniors on the swim team, according to Roberts: Jacob Allen, Aaliyah Messmer, and Bruce Smith. Roberts said she was proud of them, and the team in total. She also said that she was happy parents of the swimmers got to come watch their final meet of the season back in November, thanks to a

mitigation plan she and the Parks and Recreation Department were able to put together. She said that she is interested to see what next year might bring, and is optimistic that her returning swimmers will be able to get back into the water and pick up right where they left off.

ADEC settlement covered in Assembly meeting

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The Wrangell Borough Assembly met Tuesday night, Dec. 8, for a work session and regular assembly meeting. There were multiple items covered during the night. Three big topics of discussion included a settlement with the Alaska Department of Environment Conservation, a fee increase for port and harbor facilities, and the acceptance of a grant from the State Homeland Security Division.

Back in October, according to the meeting's agenda packet, city administration reported to the assembly that the Marine Service Center had failed to comply with minimum requirements for training and inspections associated with the Storm Water Prevention Plan. According to the agenda packet, the work was being done, but there was a failure in reporting it. This failure has resulted in a fine from ADEC.

"ADEC conducted a financial assessment of the Borough to determine the capacity for payment of a fine that can be levied," the agenda packet reads. "Frankly, Administration believes this is extortion. Fines should be set for a violation and charged accordingly, not established based on the amount of money you have. That being said, ADEC has offered what is called an Expedited Settlement Agreement in the amount of \$17,750."

If the expedited settlement is accepted, the issue is immediately resolved. According to the packet, if the city were to try and fight this, the fine could increase up to \$100,000 per reported violation. Administration has discussed the matter with the city attorney, and he recommended that they accept the settlement, as legal fees over this could easily exceed \$17,750.

Upon discussion, the assembly agreed to accept the expedited settlement. According to the agenda packet, Harbormaster Steve Miller has already reported several corrective actions to ADEC to ensure this kind of oversight is never repeated. This includes training for Marine Service Center employees for handling spills and leaks, electronic calendar reminders for inspections, and others.

The assembly also held a public hearing regarding amending the borough's fee schedule to reflect a priorly established fee increase of 2 percent for harbor and port facilities. In 2016, according to the agenda packet, the assembly approved a resolution that would allow a 2 percent increase to certain harbor and port fees annually, over five years.

This was to be in place until 2022. This 2 percent increase affected fees for transient moorage, marine service center fees, and port development fees, among others.

In February of this year the assembly approved of an ordinance removing harbor and port fees from the municipal code, and establishing them annually by resolution. According to the packet, when the assembly passed a concurrent resolution establishing those fees, the 2 percent increase was omitted by mistake. The harbor staff did not realize this, so the 2 percent increase was automatically put into effect in July of this year. The increase has already been put into effect, the packet reads, so the resolution the assembly was looking at was to correct the error and apply the 2 percent increase throughout the fee schedule.

Two members of the public, Mike Lockabey and DJ McConachie, voiced opposition to the rate increase. This was a bad time to increase rates, they said, as many people were hurting economically because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The assembly will revisit fees again in the future, Borough Manager Lisa Von Bargaen said, but as the fee increase has already been implemented and many people have likely already paid their fees, she recommended the passage of this resolution. This was retroactive housekeeping, she said. The resolution was approved by the assembly after some further discussion.

The assembly also accepted a grant for multiple projects from the State Homeland Security Division, in the amount of \$411,614.81. These projects include the purchase of an emergency generator for the Nolan Center, a surveillance system for Wrangell's port and harbor facilities, emergency dispatch consoles, and 911 addressing. This money does not fully fund all of these projects, according to Von Bargaen, so there will still need to be some project scaling or other sources of funding acquired before things can move forward.

Other items covered in the meeting include approving an additional \$60,000 of CARES Act funding for community grants, approval to use \$10,344 in additional funds from the State of Alaska Hospital Grant for construction of the pharmacy at the new hospital, a legislative update from Rep. Dan Ortiz, and the presentation of a certificate of service to Julie Decker for her work on the Economic Development Committee from Sept. 2004 to Oct. 2020.

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