



PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. FOREST SERVICE AND ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Workers carefully dug out much of the root system before lifting the spruce tree out of the ground on Zarembo Island on Oct. 19, starting its long journey to the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol. The tree will be on display in Wrangell this weekend.

Students branch out from classroom work to help keep Capitol Christmas Tree alive

BY SAM PAUSMAN
Sentinel senior reporter

This November, when the President steps out on Pennsylvania Avenue and looks toward the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol, he's going to see a Christmas tree from the Tongass National Forest.

Better yet, Wrangell High School students were tasked with keeping it alive.

Members of the T3 program (Teaching Through Technology), a federally funded teaching nonprofit, teamed up with a local inventor to make sure the tree continues to absorb water on its nearly month-long journey from Wrangell to Washington.

To ensure the tree's survival, the U.S. Forest Service took an unprecedented approach to the tree's harvest. They dug up the root wad along with the tree ("Christmas Vacation" style) and will transport it across the country with the root system intact.

Crews dug up the 80-foot-tall spruce tree on Oct. 19 from an undisclosed location on Zarembo Island. The tree will be unveiled Saturday in downtown Wrangell.

"Once you cut the stump," Tom Roland, a Forest Service silviculturist said, "the tree only consumes water for one or two weeks."

That's alright when the tree comes from West Virginia — as last year's tree did. But when the Capitol Christmas Tree comes from Alaska, keeping the tree alive for just one week isn't going to cut it.

So, the Forest Service opted for the root wad excavation instead of cutting the trunk like you would for a traditional Christmas tree. Keeping the roots attached is one thing; maintaining the absorption of water is another.

Officials reached out to Wrangell resident and inventor Brian Ashton. They hoped he could adapt his moist air incubation technology (originally designed for salmon hatchery incubation) to the Christmas tree project.

Ashton knew the task was attainable, but he also knew he didn't have the time. So, he called on the people who installed live cameras at the Anan Wildlife Observatory this summer; the same people who conducted the Forest Service's drone-mapping projects; the same people who added Wrangell to Google Maps street view; and same the people who would now be responsible for keeping the Capitol Christmas Tree alive: a group Wrangell High School students in the T3 alliance.

Since it was announced that the tree would

Continued on page 4

Canadian government puts money into supporting mining in Stikine watershed

BY MAX GRAHAM
Northern Journal

A major copper-and-gold mining project in the rugged mountains of northwestern British Columbia — upriver from Wrangell — is poised for a boost from the Canadian government.

Canada's Department of Natural Resources last month announced that it plans to inject about \$15 million U.S. into a massive copper and gold development just 25 miles from the Alaska border. The project is perched above tributaries of the Stikine River — a major salmon-bearing waterway that flows into Alaska waters.

The public funds would pay to build a key 27-mile stretch of road at Galore Creek, which is

evenly owned by two major mining corporations, Teck and Newmont. The project is located within the traditional territory of the Tahltan First Nation.

Galore Creek sits on more than 600 square miles of mineral claims, including areas directly alongside the Stikine.

The new government-funded road "will help unlock the project and the broader region's substantial critical mineral potential," Bernard Wessels, an executive at Newmont, said in a prepared statement last month.

Canada's push to help Teck and Newmont unearth some 12 billion pounds of copper and 9

Continued on page 7

Wrangell resident succeeds with Zarembo's sole elk tag this year

BY SAM PAUSMAN
Sentinel senior reporter

Two thousand and ninety to one. Those were the odds of winning the only elk-hunting permit on Zarembo Island this year — the first time in nearly 20 years the state Board of Game has permitted elk hunting on Zarembo after they were urged to do so by the Wrangell Fish and Game Advisory Committee.

Quite literally against all odds, Wrangell resident Curtis Kautz won the lottery. His prize? A 31-day window to try and bag a creature Kautz described as smart, skittish and fast.

"They're hard to sneak up on," he said.

Elk are not native to Southeast. In 1987, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game transplanted them from Oregon to Etolin Island, where elk hunting has been permitted since 1997. The elk population naturally spread to Zarembo.

While there have been as many as 50 elk permits a year on Etolin, the state made just one available for hunters on Zarembo. Luckily for Curtis, his name was pulled from the pool of 2,090 applicants.

He realized he couldn't do it alone, but he wanted to keep his support crew within the family. His son, who lives in Juneau, flew down for five days and his brother in Wrangell also joined the hunt, rounding out the three-man party.

The men arrived on Zarembo on Sept. 30, a day before his hunting window opened. He wanted to set up trail cameras and scout out the island's herd population. He heard from deer hunters that the elk were mostly on the island's southern tip, so that's where the hunting party decided to make camp.

The first four days of the hunt were unfruitful, though not uneventful. The party was able to identify multiple elk in the area. There were two groupings, said Katz: one eight-elk herd, comprised of mostly cows, one calf and one bull; and another nearby couple — just one bull and one cow.

The Zarembo Island elk tag is only good for a bull, so the numbers weren't exactly in Curtis' favor. Yet again, neither were the numbers for the lottery that got him there in the first place.

Though the permit provided him with an entire month to tag a bull, his first bout with Zarembo's elk population was coming to a close by the time the sun rose on Oct. 5. The fifth of the month was a Saturday,

Continued on page 6

Alaska voters will decide on higher minimum wage

BY YERETH ROSEN
Alaska Beacon

Alaskans will vote Nov. 5 on a ballot measure that would increase the state's minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2027 and require that workers get paid for up to seven sick days a year.

To backers who collected signatures to put the question before voters, Ballot Measure 1 is about fairness for workers and overall state economic vitality.

But opponents in business groups warn that the measure, if passed, would bring dire consequences.

To Sarah Oates, CHARR's

president, the consequences of Ballot Measure 1 would be bad. "This is going to kill small businesses," said Sarah Oates, president and chief executive officer of the Alaska Cabaret, Hotel, Restaurant and Retailers Association, known as CHARR.

Like the 2014 ballot measure that created the phased-in minimum wage increase that produced the current Alaska \$11.73-an-hour level, this year's ballot measure is largely the work of labor unions and labor advocates. One of the official sponsors, former state Labor Commissioner Ed Flanagan, was also a sponsor of the 2014

measure.

Polling suggests that the initiative is popular, and it has won support from some key groups.

A third element of the measure would prohibit employers from forcing workers to participate in meetings concerning religious or political matters unrelated to their jobs, as described in the formal statement of support published in the Alaska Division of Elections' official pamphlet.

"Alaska workers deserve freedom from their boss' political points of view in the workplace," said the statement,

Continued on page 7

Senior Center Menu

Open for in-person dining.

Thursday, Oct. 24

Half a cheese sandwich, split pea soup, apricot salad, roll

Friday, Oct. 25

Herbed chicken, peas, carrots and raisin salad, oven french fried potatoes, fruit

Monday, Oct. 28

No meal service on Mondays

Tuesday, Oct. 29

Beef stroganoff, peas and carrots, spicy fruit cup

Wednesday, Oct. 30

Ham and bean soup, cornbread, tomato slices with cottage cheese, fruit

Call the senior center at 907-874-2066 24 hours in advance to reserve a seat at lunch or to request delivery.

The senior van is available to take seniors to medical appointments, errands such as collecting mail, getting prescriptions or other essential items.



ALASKA AIRLINES CLUB 49 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

SALVATION ARMY Christmas toy assistance sign-up is open 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays until Nov. 5. Bring identification for all adults and birth certificates for children in the home. Thanksgiving sign-up is open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays until Nov. 12. Sign up at The Salvation Army. For more information or to schedule sign-ups for another day or time call 907-874-3753.

COMMUNITY CHORALE REHEARSALS 5:15 to 6:45 p.m. Mondays at the high school music room for the Christmas concert. Use the back entrance. All singers are welcome. Contact Bonnie at 907-796-9632 or bonniede@aptalaska.net for more information.

FALL STORYTIME for children 10 to 11 a.m. Fridays at the Irene Ingle Public Library. Stories, crafts and snacks. This week's theme is facing fears.

KSTK HALLOWEEN BASH 8 p.m. to midnight Friday, Oct. 25, upstairs at the Elks Lodge. Live music, appetizers, full bar and more. 21 years or older. \$25 entry fee.

ATTIC TREASURES SALE and Asian meal by Josie (\$20 a plate) 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 26, at St. Rose Catholic Church parish hall. Bake sale, too.

PUMPKIN PATCH/ KIDS CARNIVAL/ FOOD from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 26, at the Nolan Center. Pumpkins for sale, games, chili by St. Frances Animal Shelter, and cotton candy and popcorn by Head Start. Hosted by the chamber of commerce; sponsored by Alaska Marine Lines, City Market and Wrangell IGA.

U.S. CAPITOL CHRISTMAS TREE blessing and celebration 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 26 at the Nolan Center.

HARVEST CELEBRATION LIVE CONCERT 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday Oct. 26, at the Nolan Center. Music with Matt Henson and his musical friends from Arizona, Idaho and Colorado.

RAYME'S HALLOWEEN BASH 9 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 26, at Rayme's bar with live music. Costume judging at midnight. 21 years or older.

ADVENTURERS CLUB 2 to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 26, Nov. 9, Nov. 23 and Dec. 14. at the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Come learn about the Bible, pick up valuable skills and earn badges. Register and learn more at <https://bit.ly/3TBw0fl>. \$10 fee covers the school year.

NOLAN CENTER THEATER presents the comedy "You Can't Take it With You" at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Nov. 1 and 2. Doors open 30 minutes before the show. Tickets are \$20 and available online at <https://bit.ly/4f56UOv> or in person at the Nolan Center.

ALASKA DAY FUN RUN starts at 8:30 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 3, at Muskeg Meadows, hosted by Parks and Recreation. \$10 fee; pay at the event. All ages welcome. 1-mile dash, 5K run/walk, 10K, half-marathon. Check the link for routes and times at wrangellrec.com.

HOMESCHOOL HANGOUT 10 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Nov. 5, at the Irene Ingle Public Library. Bring school work, play games and be with friends. Snacks provided.

CHILDREN'S CLASS 2:30 to 4 p.m. Tuesdays at the elementary school music room for kindergarten to fifth grade. The focus of the program is for spiritual growth to learn to apply virtues through stories, devotions, music, games and art. All are welcome. No charge. For more information call Kay Larson, 907-209-9117.

WRANGELL KIDS CLUB 2:30 to 5 p.m. Mondays at the community center for open gym, board games and coloring; 2:30 to 5 p.m. Wednesdays at the Irene Ingle Public Library for STEM activities and crafts; 2:30 to 5 p.m. Fridays at the Nolan Center for a movie. For ages 7 to 13 years old. Runs through Dec. 16. Free.

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

WRANGELL PARKS and RECREATION is offering multiple activities to get your body moving. For more information on any of the activities visit www.wrangellrec.com or call 907-874-2444.

- **DEAD HANG CHALLENGE** through Oct. 31, at the community gym. Each day you dead hang, you'll be entered into the drawing. The longest dead hang wins a six-month Parks and Recreation pass. Sign in at the front desk. Day rates apply.
- **PICKLEBALL** 6 to 8 p.m. Mondays and Saturdays at the community center gym.
- **FUNCTIONAL FITNESS and TECHNIQUE** 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tuesdays at the court in the pool building with Devyn Johnson. A guided workout. Learn how to use the gym equipment. For ages 18 years old and up. Daily entry fee, pass or punch card.

Ferry Schedule

Northbound

Sunday, Oct. 27

Kennicott, 6 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 3

Kennicott, 9:45 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 10

Kennicott, 3:45 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 17

Kennicott, 10 p.m.

Southbound

Wednesday, Oct. 30

Kennicott, 5:45 a.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 6

Kennicott, 8:30 a.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 13

Kennicott, 3:45 a.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 20

Kennicott, 9:30 a.m.

Listings are scheduled departure times. Call the terminal at 907-874-2021 for information or 907-874-3711 for recorded information.

Tides

High Tides

Low Tides

	AM		PM		AM		PM	
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
Oct. 23	06:15	12.2	05:47	14.0	11:27	5.9
Oct. 24	07:39	11.8	07:13	12.8	00:36	1.7	12:50	6.7
Oct. 25	09:00	12.2	08:45	12.6	01:57	2.5	02:36	6.5
Oct. 26	10:00	13.2	09:57	13.1	03:17	2.5	04:03	5.3
Oct. 27	10:46	14.3	10:53	13.8	04:18	2.3	04:59	3.7
Oct. 28	11:24	15.3	11:39	14.4	05:04	1.9	05:39	2.3
Oct. 29	11:57	16.1	05:41	1.7	06:13	1.0

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

Oct. 23, 1924

After a great deal of discussion pro and con following litigation looking toward procuring a suitable place for high school basketball practice, the PTA executive board recommended that a gymnasium be built on the lot next to the school play shed, provided the town council could be induced to buy the property. Tentative plans for a standard-size playing floor 35 by 60 feet with a 5-foot seating space along each side and 7 feet along each end, with two 12-by-16-foot dressing rooms (eventually to be fitted with showers) at the rear, besides a

fuel room and a rear hallway. Basketball practice is now going on regularly in the cramped quarters at the St. Philip's gym.

Oct. 21, 1949

The Silver Wave, under charter to the Pacific Fruit and Produce Co. of Seattle, was scheduled to sail from Seattle yesterday for Wrangell and other points in Southeast Alaska. The Silver Wave, which has been operating successfully for several years in this area, will have several tons of fresh fruits and vegetables aboard for Wrangell stores and is due to arrive here Oct. 25 or 26. The boat is

skipped by D. Clyne Lane, and will call at Wrangell every three weeks during the winter months.

Oct. 23, 1974

Beginning Dec. 1, local police will assume driver's licensing duties in Wrangell, according to Police Chief William Klein. An agreement between the city and the state Department of Public Safety was reached recently to transfer the duty to the police department, where all officers will be trained to handle written and driving tests, Klein said. The city will receive payment from the state for handling the tests at the rate of \$2.50 for each road test

and \$1.50 for each license issued. Klein said that while fees derived by the city for the service may prove minimal, the teletype tie-in which is necessary for filing licensing information with Juneau is an important communications breakthrough for the department. "This will give us a direct tie-in with the Alaska Criminal Identification Center in Juneau, and with the FBI records centers in Washington," said Klein.

Oct. 14, 1999

Most of us, when we hear Y2K, either respond as did Chicken Little, with, "The sky is

falling!" or yawn. But Wrangell businesses and city departments have been taking the issue calmly and seriously, some for over four years, and because of that expect few if any disruptions. City finance officer Jeff Jabusch says that since most of City Hall's computers were purchased within the past couple of years, they are already Y2K compliant. At the fire department, Randy Churchill declares that they are "all up to snuff" and that the turn of the millennium "is not going to bother us a bit." Public Works director Bob Caldwell says all the new water plant equipment is compliant.

FREE TRAVEL BENEFITS JUST FOR YOU.



Learn more at Club49Hub.com



2 FREE CHECKED BAGS



TRAVEL NOW DISCOUNTS



WEEKLY FARE SALES



FREIGHT FOR LESS

Underwater archeologist talks of shipwreck history at Nolan Center celebration

By SAM PAUSMAN
Sentinel senior reporter

Jenya Anichenko just wants to know what happened.

In 1908, the Star of Bengal — an iron-sided sailing ship carrying 138 people — sank off the coast of Southeast Alaska’s Coronation Island. The ship was carrying 106 Chinese, Japanese and Filipino salmon cannery workers, and 32 white crew members. The crew’s survival rate was over 50%, but just nine percent of the Asian cannery workers survived.

Anichenko’s talk explored possible reasons for the racial discrepancies in the survival rates, as well as ways to better understand the sinking of the Star of Bengal — a story the underwater archeologist described as “instantly cloaked in controversy.” Anichenko was the keynote speaker at the Nolan Center’s 20th birthday party Oct. 14.

The night opened with remarks from the center’s director, Jeanie Arnold, and a subsequent land acknowledgement with representation from both Raven and Eagle clans. Borough Manager Mason Villarma and Mayor Patty Gilbert spoke afterward, crediting the positive impact the Nolan Center continues to have on the Wrangell community. Afterward, Gig Decker, a Friends of the Museum board member and part of the team that dove on the Star of Bengal, introduced the keynote speaker.

Anichenko explained that Alaska is an untapped gold mine for shipwreck researchers. She said of the 10,000 shipwrecks, only around 1,000 have been deemed “historic or significant,” and just a dozen of those have been investigated. She referred to Decker as the “heart-beat” of the research into the

Star of Bengal and said so many Alaska shipwreck explorations only happen because of passionate individuals like Decker.

When Anichenko first heard about the Star of Bengal, she was enthralled. Not just because of the spectacle or the controversy of the tragedy, but because of the interest in the wreck still present in Wrangell 116 years after the ship went down.

“There is a lasting sense of historical trauma here because of the racial injustice,” she said. “This story still lives in people’s hearts and minds.”

Former Wrangell resident Ronan Rooney launched a five-part podcast series on the wreck back in 2022. Anichenko applauded Rooney for his award-winning podcast and credited him for being a knowledge base during her research.

Rooney’s podcast is available at his website wrangell-historyunlocked.com.

The underwater archeologist’s research into the ship’s sinking is far from over. In 2025 she plans on diving the site again. Following the sinking, there were unconfirmed reports that the crew had locked the cannery workers in the ship’s hold. Anichenko believes diving into the ship’s still-intact hold could confirm such reports.

Additionally, she wants historians fluent in Chinese language (as it was written in the early 20th century) to join the project. So far, historians have only been able to identify one of the cannery workers: Tsu Bong, a Chinese international. None of the names of Filipino workers (who were American internationals at the time of the ship’s sinking), nor the names of any Japanese workers have been identified.



PHOTO BY SAM PAUSMAN / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Jenya Anichenko speaks with Borough Manager Mason Villarma (left) and fellow Star of Bengal enthusiast Gig Decker after her talk at the Nolan Center on Oct. 14. Decker and Anichenko are part of a dive mission to explore the ship that sank in 1908. Anichenko was the keynote speaker at the center’s 20th birthday party.

Anichenko wants the investigatory work being done in Wrangell to spark global interest in the shipwreck.

Coronation Island is about 80 miles southwest of Wrangell, off the coast of Prince of Wales Island in the

outside waters.

“My hope is people who work on this project will go back to their communities and be the seed for this story wherever they are from,” she said.

The archeologist closed her talk by taking audience ques-

tions. Afterward, a performance by the Wrangell dancers — the Kaachxana.áak’w — closed the celebrations. The festivities marked not just the Nolan Center’s birthday party but also Indigenous Peoples’ Day.

You can’t take it with you if you don’t get a ticket

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Tickets are on sale for “You Can’t Take It With You,” the fall community theater production at the Nolan Center.

The comedy is scheduled for 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Nov. 1-2.

A volunteer cast of about 15 people, with an additional 10 people working on the set, staging, sound and lighting, are practicing their lines, building the set and getting ready for the show, said Hailey Reeves, co-director.

“It’s definitely a group effort,” she said last week, with full dress rehearsals planned for next week.

In a first for the Nolan Center, tickets are available online at <https://paybee.io/@nolancenter>, said Jeanie Arnold, the director of the museum and multipurpose community center.

The main room at the center will be set up with seating risers, Arnold said, providing space for 125 people each night.

Tickets will be available at the door both nights, assuming the shows do not sell out in advance. The play will run about two hours,

including an intermission.

If there is more interest than the theater can handle in two shows, a Sunday matinee, Nov. 3, is possible, Reeves said.

Besides for being different from past musical theater productions, “You Can’t Take It With You” is different in that volunteers have to build a set, she said. Using wooden frames, canvass and paint, the crew is building a combination living and dining room for the stage.

“None of us are set builders, per se,” but woodworkers and others are helping out.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning play tells the story of an “eccentric, lovable household.” The Nolan Center describes it as: “A girl from a family of freethinkers falls for the son of a conservative banker.”

Kristen DeBord, who is co-directing with Reeves, performed the play in college 20 years ago.

Originally produced on Broadway in 1936, the play ran for nearly three years. The 1938 film, directed by Frank Capra and starring Jimmy Stewart, won the Oscar for Best Picture.

Johnson’s Building Supply
Help wanted!

Customer Service full-time position
Valid Alaska driver’s license required.
Must be able to lift 50 lbs. Pay DOE.
Stop by Johnson’s for an application.


ANGERMAN’S INC.
Stikine River
Gifts & Apparel

20% OFF STOREWIDE
(Regular priced items excluding Xtratuf, Ammo & Consignment items)

Gifts, Toys, Books, Jewelry, Kid’s Clothing and more! **October 25th & 26th**
FRIDAY & SATURDAY

KICKSTART YOUR CHILD’S SAVINGS THIS YOUTH MONTH AT TONGASSFCU!

I’M BUILDING MY FUTURE!




Open a Youth Savings Account this October, and your child gets to choose a gift and enter for a chance to win a Nintendo Switch Lite!

- Kids get excited watching their money grow!
- Start smart saving habits early!
- A fun, hands-on way to learn about money!

TONGASS FEDERAL CREDIT UNION
215 Front Street, Kadin Building www.TongassFCU.com

Visit us online for what you need to open an account. And bring the kids by to open an account and enter our coloring contest!



FROM THE PUBLISHER

Improved voter access leans in favor of everyone

BY LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

Making it easier for Alaskans to cast their ballots shouldn't be about how they vote, which way they lean politically or how much they favor one party over another.

Admittedly, elections are partisan. Sadly, increasingly so. Candidates, their fat-funded political action committees and political parties have turned the nation's elections into an endless stream of negative attack ads that prey on the public's fear of anything that will get them to the polls.

It's bad enough that partisanship has taken over election campaigns. But those same ugly politics have infected who gets access to the polls, and that is a partisan step too far for democracy.

Who voters may choose and which party they may favor should not influence the voter-access rules that lawmakers set. Elected officials should be unanimous about equal access for all.

Yet around the country, officials are limiting the use of drop boxes for voters who prefer to avoid election day lines at polling places, reducing the number of days allowed for early voting, and making it harder for people who want to register to vote. The restrictions are intended to sway election results by cutting down on voters who allegedly tend to vote for Democratic candidates.

The good news is that things have been better in Alaska. But our elected officials are not devoid of partisan motives and, unfortunately, legislating access for voting made the news in Alaska this month. The speaker of the state House said voters' political leaning likely influenced legislation — which failed to pass — that would have made it easier for people to cast an absentee ballot.

The legislation would have eliminated the pointless requirement in state law that an absent-

tee voter find someone, anyone to sign as a witness on the back of the ballot envelope. The witness doesn't attest to having checked the voter's ID or even knowing the person; it's just a meaningless signature. It's an unnecessary barrier, particularly in rural communities where it's already hard enough to get a timely postmark on a mailed ballot to meet the deadline.

The failed legislation also would have allowed voters to correct a mistake in filing out the mailing envelope for their ballot.

"The changes in that bill definitely would have leaned the election toward Mary Peltola, to be quite honest, with no signatures on ballots in, you know, in rural areas," Speaker Cathy Tilton said on the "Michael Dukes Show" earlier this month. Dukes is a conservative talk show host who sells online memberships in his Common Sense Corps and devotes three hours of his show every Friday "talking about our favorite thing ... the gun culture."

House Republicans, of which Tilton is the leader, blocked the bill's passage on the final day of the legislative session in May.

The lack of a witness signature on the outside of the ballot envelope led to a heavy disqualification of ballots in rural parts of the state in the 2022 special primary election. In one rural district, nearly 11% of all ballots cast were rejected for missing a witness signature.

Rural voters, heavily Alaska Native, have overwhelmingly supported Peltola, who is running for reelection against Republican Nick Begich.

A voter's preference should not be a consideration for Alaska legislators. If elections are to fulfill their mandate of letting the people decide, then the goal should be letting all legal voters make the decision. Deciding on legislation to influence the outcome is wrong and should be fixed next year.

EDITORIAL

Wrangell will go out on a limb Saturday

Wrangell hasn't been this excited about a harvested spruce tree since the sawmills were running.

Only the tree that is the subject of this month's enthusiasm wasn't cut down, it was dug up.

Crews dug, then dug some more, cut some roots and then lifted the 80-foot-tall tree and its massive root wad out of the ground on Zarembo Island on Oct. 19 for a short ride to Wrangell, where it will go on display Saturday, surrounded by a weekend of activities.

Not to diminish its brief display in Wrangell, but the tree's real destination is the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol, where the spruce will live out the rest of its life as the official U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree.

Not only is Alaska putting its best tree forward to the nation's capital for the holidays, but Alaskans have added thousands of handmade ornaments that will hang from the Zarembo spruce and several other holiday trees stationed around Washington.

And since no one wants to see a needleless Charlie Brown tree on the West Lawn, the U.S. Forest Service worked with a team of Wrangell High School students who devised a watering system to keep the spruce healthy on its barge ride to Seattle and long truck route across the country.

Customizing a system designed by Wrangell resident Brian Ashton for incubation at salmon hatcheries, the students engineered a misting and watering system for the tree's root wad. Barrels of water, tubing, pumps, filters, a drip pan and a tarp will keep the tree fed as it trucks eastward.

And the tree is not the only Southeast resident heading east: The students who worked on the project will be in D.C. for the tree-lighting ceremony, thanks to the efforts of Alaska U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, who attended middle school in Wrangell, and donations from Alaska Airlines.

The community does not have to wait for the official lighting ceremony to celebrate.

The tree will be the center of attention this weekend while it is on display near the Nolan Center. The Wrangell Cooperative Association will lead a blessing of the tree at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, followed by live music.

The T3 (Teaching Through Technology) students who put together the watering system will be at the Nolan Center from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday to explain their work.

Good weather for the weekend would be nice, but no one should let a little Southeast rain dampen their spirits to come out and enjoy the celebration. After all, the constant rain helped grow the tree into an award winner for the nation's capital.

- Wrangell Sentinel

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Republican chair says nonpartisan labels misleading

and has publicly backed the Harris campaign, further blurring the line between nonpartisan and partisan politics.

According to both these candidates' statements, these affiliations and actions suggest an active involvement in promoting Democrat agendas, which conflicts with the principle of being nonpartisan. Additionally, their campaigns are being funded and directly supported by the Democrat party, further indicating their partisan alignment. These candidates have also received strong financial support from dedicated Democrats as well as being listed on the Alaska Democrat websites.

District 1 voters have the right to be fully informed about where a candidate's allegiances lie. For the integrity of the political process and voter trust, it is essential that candidates clearly define their political positions, ensuring that their campaigns are a true reflection of their values and commitments.

Laura Antonsen
Chair, District 1 Republicans
Ketchikan

Capitol Christmas Tree

Continued from page 1

come from the Wrangell district of the Tongass, the T3 students have been working with Ashton to apply his technology. The eight students formed a group chat, dubbed "Christmas Tree Life Support," and went to work. They even enlisted the help of fellow student Kyan Stead to weld a nearly six-foot-long drip pan that helps recycle the tree's water.

Anika Herman, a senior and member of the T3 program, explained the technology underpinning the life support system.

"We're going to have two pumps," Herman said, "and they come out of these four, 55-gallon barrels that are going to be all tied together. There's going to be a pump with a UV filter, a 25-micron filter and then a five-micron filter."

I — a history major who avoids science classrooms like the plague — asked what needed to be filtered out.

"Tree dirt," Herman said. "But there's also a motor in there, and it's very tiny. If anything more than five microns passes through it, it's going to break."

Herman explained that after passing through the filtration system, the water cycles back to the multiple misters that distribute water to the tree's roots. The entire root wad and misting system is enclosed by a large white tarp to maximize the amount of water that gets recycled.

This is one of the issues the team is dealing with: The tree, due to its vast size, absorbs a lot of water. This won't be a problem during its stay in Wrangell, nor during the two-week cross-country tour on its 82-foot trailer, but for the days the tree is on the barge, there will be no one to refill its water supply.

"It's the barge that we're really worried about," Herman said. "There's a lot of things that could go wrong there."

However, she said they might have found a solution. If they can add nutrients to the water — nutrients that don't get filtered out in the filtration system, of course — then they could extend the tree's lifespan and make sure it's still alive by the time Forest Service officials can refill its water supply after the barge docks in Seattle.

Continued on page 5

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
Office Manager..... Amber Armstrong
Senior reporter Sam Pausman
Production Ola Richards

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 2024.

Subscription Rates

Wrangell \$50
Out of town \$75
First Class..... \$110
Online-only subscription.....\$40

Oversupply mostly cleared out, but Alaska still needs Americans to eat more salmon

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) officials hear that processors have mostly cleared out their overflowing inventories of Alaska salmon from the 2022 and 2023 seasons, but the problem remains that Americans don't buy enough seafood to sustain consistently profitable sales, particularly in years of strong salmon runs.

And while last year's problem was an oversupplied mar-

ket, which pushed prices paid to fishermen to as low as 20 cents a pound for pink and chum salmon, this year's harvest may come up short of a robust supply, Greg Smith, communications director for the state agency, said last week.

Commercial fishermen caught a total of 66.6 million salmon in Southeast Alaska in 2023, including wild runs and hatchery-produced fish, significantly above the region's 10-year average. While not yet

totalled, this year's numbers are far below that, close to the Department of Fish and Game's pre-season prediction of less than 39 million.

Statewide, the 2024 salmon harvest (measured by weight) is down from 2023, Smith said. "The issue this year is maybe not enough supply," he said.

The agency intends to continue promoting Alaska seafood as a wild and sustainable product, "talking about the origin," Smith said. And rather than

high-volume retail sales promotions, which make more sense when there is a glut of supply, ASMI may focus on brand awareness for the next year.

"It's a delicate balance," he explained, having enough fish to meet demand and promote new markets, but not so much that it is overwhelming, pushing down prices.

"The U.S. does not eat enough seafood," Smith said. The agency's mission is to change that.

Preliminary numbers indicate that salmon prices have rebounded from last year's dismal lows, with Southeast sockeye nearing the \$2-per-pound level of 2022. Headed-and-gutted pinks' value also increased this summer.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game numbers show that most Southeast pinks sold in a range between 25 cents and 28 cents per pound, moving closer to the 2022 average price of 34 cents.

Chum prices improved this year to around 50 cents per pound in Southeast, but still less than half of the 2022 average of \$1.18, according to the department's preliminary reports.

Low prices and weak runs also hurt the public treasuries in coastal communities.

Besides for money paid to fishermen and their crews, and wages paid to workers at Wrangell's three seafood processors — Trident Seafoods, Sea Level Seafoods and Peninsula Seafoods — the borough receives half of the state's collection of a fisheries business tax, also called the "raw fish tax," on salmon landed in town.

Over the past 10 years, Wrangell's annual share of the state tax has been as high as almost \$400,000 (2016) and has averaged about \$250,000 a year

— except last year, when it crashed to \$54,000, reflecting the low prices paid to commercial fishermen.

The borough estimated it would receive \$150,000 this fiscal year, though that was an educated guess on returns and prices when the assembly adopted the budget this spring.

Though the U.S. economy is stabilizing and last year's high inflation rates, which stifled shoppers ability to fill their carts, are in retreat, consumers are still buying less of the more expensive proteins, such as salmon, and choosing cheaper options, Smith said.

ASMI has about \$20 million in its budget this year, with about \$12 million allocated to promoting Alaska seafood overseas — the biggest market for the state's catch — and \$8 million for domestic marketing and overhead costs.

All of the agency's money comes from industry assessments and the federal government; it receives no state funding. The governor this year vetoed a \$10 million legislative appropriation for ASMI, saying the agency lacked a plan for spending the money, and could put together a plan and ask for funding next year.

It's not just salmon markets that are hurting for customers and price, Smith said. Prices are down for pollock, the mainstay for making fish sticks, fish sandwiches and other fast-food seafood. "How do you get people to eat and buy more pollock?"

Herring is another down market for Alaska, Fish and Game Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang, said at the annual Southeast Conference convention in Ketchikan last month.

"The Japan market (for herring) has dried up. ... We need to find new markets," he said.



PHOTO BY SAM PAUSMAN / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Lining up for a teddy bear checkup

Archer Howell, Ray DeBord, Leighetta DeBord, Wally DeBord and Jeffrey DeBord (left to right) stand in front of Kaitlin Wilson at the SEARHC annual wellness fair Oct. 19 at the Nolan Center. Kids were encouraged to bring their teddy bears and other stuffed animals to the clinic so that they could practice giving their fluffy pals a routine checkup.

KSTK HALLOWEEN BASH
GROOVIN' IN THE GRAVEYARD
 FRIDAY
 OCTOBER 25, 2024
 8:00 PM - 12:00 AM

UPSTAIRS @ THE ELKS LODGE
 PUBLIC EVENT
 OPEN TO ALL 21+

TICKETS \$25
 TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED AT
 WWW.KSTK.ORG OR AT THE DOOR

SPONSORED BY
 WRANGELL EXTENDED STAY
 TFCU
 56 NORTH/ALASKA WATERS
 JOHNSON'S CONSTRUCTION
 WRANGELL IGA

LIVE MUSIC,, APPETIZERS, FULL BAR & MORE!

Capitol Christmas Tree —

Continued from page 4

Back in August, Alaska U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski was in town for the reopening of the Anan Bay Cabin. Unsurprisingly, the T3 kids were apart of that project as well, and Alaska's senior senator decided to give them a bit of a surprise when she heard about their Christmas tree efforts.

Anika Herman gives a great retelling.

"Lisa Murkowski said, 'If you guys do this, I'm inviting you all to the tree lighting ceremony in Washington, D.C. — and to the afterparty too!' We were all so excited. We're working as hard as we can because we all want to go."

Murkowski partnered with Alaska Airlines to cover the travel expenses. Alaska T3 coordinator Brian Reggiani said U.S. Department of Education and Forest Service funding is covering the costs of the students' hotels and other expenses.

The tree — with its attached life-support system — will be unveiled in front of the Nolan Center during the weekend of festivities Friday through Sunday, Oct. 25-27. Borough Manger Mason Villarma has described the weekend as "a fall Fourth of July," and there will be tree-themed festivities for all three days.

Shops will remain open late on Friday to encourage downtown shopping; hot drinks and cookies will also be served. Saturday will be filled with events, starting with the chamber of commerce's annual pumpkin patch, and followed by a kids carnival and baked goods for purchase from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Nolan Center.

The Wrangell Cooperative Association will bless the tree at 1:30 p.m., followed by live music from 2 to 4 p.m.

The evening will end with a Halloween bash at Rayme's Bar.

The newest addition to the weekend programming is the T3 students staffing a booth from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday at the Nolan Center to show their work. Operation Christmas Tree Life Support will be on full display.

Before the tree arrives in Seattle, just one other Alaska community will be able to see it. On the evening of Oct. 30, the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree — along with its life-support system — will be shown off for a couple hours in Ketchikan.

State funds will help nonprofit send fish and freezers to Alaska's food pantries

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

A 30-year-old nonprofit received a five-year, \$7.5 million state grant this year, which will enable the organization to do more to share seafood with Alaskans.

SeaShare has grown from its 1994 beginnings as a small group of Alaska commercial fishermen who distributed bycatch to food banks into an organization that has shared seafood in 20 states this year, said Hannah Lindoff, the Juneau-based executive director.

Though bycatch species still are a part of the organization's volume, the percentage has declined over the years. Looking at the biggest fisheries ports in Alaska, Kodiak and Dutch Harbor, bycatch fish, which cannot be retained by trawlers, is down to about 5% to 10% of SeaShare's distribution, she said.

The majority of the program's frozen and canned fish comes from donations and purchases.

SeaShare received a large donation of frozen pollock blocks from the At-Sea Processors Association, a trade association that represents members of the Alaska pollock and whiting fishing industry.

So far this year, SeaShare has moved about 1.5 million pounds of seafood nationwide, of which about two-thirds has been pollock. Alaska fish comprise about 85% of the total volume, Lindoff said.

That volume is greater than last year's tally but it's not a record. "It's a little slow, because the seafood industry is struggling," she said.

Those struggles prompted the Alaska Legislature to appropriate state funds to SeaShare so that the nonprofit could purchase more salmon.

Sitka Sen. Bert Stedman, co-chair of the Senate Finance Committee, said the funding is unparalleled in his 21 years in the Legislature. It was a response to what he described as an "unprecedented market collapse in price across virtually all fisheries," according to an interview this past spring with Nathaniel Herz, of the Northern Journal.

The market was so oversupplied last year that prices for Southeast pinks and chums dropped as low as 20 cents per pound.

The state money will help SeaShare purchase

and ship more fish, buying up Alaska seafood and delivering it statewide. SeaShare expects to go out for bids in mid-November for seafood companies to supply products for the nonprofit's distribution efforts.

Over the five years of the state funding, seafood acquisition will consume \$5 million of the \$7.5 million, with the rest going to smaller projects, Lindoff said.

The state grant is a large boost for SeaShare's budget, which in 2023 included \$4.9 million in donated seafood and \$937,000 in grants and financial donations.

"We have more leeway to serve communities in Alaska," Lindoff said of the state funding, such as helping local food pantries handle larger volumes.

For example, the Southeast Alaska Food Bank in Juneau is adding a walk-in freezer to its storage capacity, and SeaShare hopes it can fill it with frozen salmon by early December.

"Food banks do not get very much in seafood donations," Lindoff said. Frozen salmon can be costly to ship, and freezer space often is at a premium.

The organization has assisted in creating distribution hubs by coordinating the purchase and refurbishment of freezer containers for food banks in Kodiak, St. Paul, Dillingham and Bethel, according to its request for state funding this year.

Smaller communities are included in SeaShare's plans to spend its state grant.

"Now with funding, we'll be able to spend more time and money," Lindoff said. She wants to learn what smaller communities need and how to help them handle more seafood. That could include buying chest freezers for community food pantries. "The idea is to help them have access to Alaska seafood."

It's about feeding people, avoiding food waste and making good use of what she called "orphan products," which could include surplus left over after processors have filled orders. "My favorite thing is when someone finds us and it gets a good home."

She said food pantry managers can reach out to SeaShare for more information at admin@seashare.org.

Feds add three tribal representatives to subsistence board

By YERETH ROSEN
Alaska Beacon

The federal government board that manages subsistence will be expanded with three representatives of Alaska Native tribes, under a new rule the Biden administration made final on Oct. 16.

The new Federal Subsistence Board members are to be nominated by federally recognized tribes. They need not be tribal members or Native themselves, but they must have "personal knowledge of and direct experience with subsistence uses in rural Alaska, including Alaska Native subsistence uses," according to the rule.

The term "subsistence" refers to harvests of fish, game and plants for personal or family consumption or material to be used in artwork, clothing or toolmaking. For Alaska Natives, subsistence is connected to cultural traditions.

The board manages harvests conducted on federal lands within Alaska.

It currently has eight members. Five are the Alaska directors of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Land Management. There are three public representatives on

the board, including its chairman.

The new rule expanding the board rule stems from consultations in 2022 with tribal organizations, according to a Federal Register notice to be published by the U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"Rural Alaska communities depend on sound and equitable subsistence decisions to sustain their ways of life. Foundational to this effort must be a balanced and diverse Federal Subsistence Board that recognizes the unique perspectives of Alaska Native people, for whom subsistence practices have been integral to their social, economic, spiritual and cultural needs since time immemorial," Interior Secretary Deb Haaland said in a statement.

The Biden administration took other action earlier this year that was intended to elevate the role of tribes in the federal subsistence program. In June, Haaland issued an order that moved the Office of Subsistence Management from the Fish and Wildlife Service to a position directly in the Office of the Secretary.

In addition to finalizing the rule expanding the Federal Subsistence Board, the Department

of the Interior made other tribal outreach announcements. The announcements were made at tribal and subsistence meetings held just before the Oct. 17 start to the annual Alaska Federation of Natives convention in Anchorage.

Federal officials and tribal organizations in the Yukon River, Kuskokwim River and Norton Sound regions signed an agreement that is intended to bring more Indigenous knowledge and management to the Fish and Wildlife Service's Gravel-to-Gravel Keystone Initiative. The program of research and restoration was launched in response to salmon crashes on those river systems.

A second agreement signed Oct. 15 was with the Tanana Chiefs Conference, a coalition of Interior Alaska tribes. The agreement authorizes TCC to administer education and outreach programs on behalf of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management, and it placed new emphasis on Indigenous knowledge that TCC can incorporate into management plans and decisions.

The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. Alaskabeacon.com.



PHOTO COURTESY CURTIS KAUTZ

Curtis Kautz stands beside his kill after it was hoisted up at the Reliance Float. Kautz won the only elk-hunting permit for Zarembo Island this year and successfully shot the bull on Oct. 5.

Elk hunt

Continued from page 1

and Curtis' son was scheduled to fly back to Juneau on Sunday. Additionally, the party was beginning to run low on rations.

"We were running out of groceries, beer and fuel," Curtis said.

That Saturday began just how the previous four had gone. The Kautz men woke with first light at 6:30 a.m. Breakfast was simple: bacon, eggs, some coffee to wash it all down. Curtis said the party realistically had two hunts left in them, so they had to be strategic about when they went out. In the end, they decided on an evening hunt on Saturday and a final hunt the following morning if necessary.

They only needed the one.

That evening, the trio cruised their skiff down the southern end of Zarembo Island. Staying 1,000 yards from the shore, the Kautzes located the eight-elk herd in a cove on the beach. This was their chance.

The team steered the skiff up against some rocks in a nearby cove, about a quarter-mile south of where they'd spotted the herd. Curtis hopped out, .30-06 in hand, and began to trek through the woods to intercept the herd.

Decked out in camouflage rain gear, Xtratuff boots and a trapper hat, the hunter crept through the saturated brush, hoping to get a glimpse at the elk. During a previous hunt, his sudden movements staved off the chance at a kill. But now, Curtis had learned his lesson.

As he moved through the trees that divided the neighboring coves, he spotted the elk. Better yet, they were walking right toward him. He couldn't believe his luck.

Quietly, he lied down prone, resting his rifle — "a great rifle" he's owned since the early '90s — on the water-logged log in front of him.

"I just waited for him to come within my rifle range," he said. "And then I popped him."

Curtis' first round struck the young bull in the throat.

"He just raised his head and was twisting his head back and forth. I didn't know if I hit him or not because he was just standing there."

When the shot went off, the rest of the herd scattered. Before Curtis's elk — a two-by-three-pointed elk with single eye guards points — turned to follow the rest into the woods, the experienced deer hunter unloaded a second round from 200 yards out. The bullet ripped through the animal's side and pierced the 500-pound elk in the lung.

It dropped.

"I got him," Curtis thought to himself.

The two other Kautzes met him on the shore, beached the skiff and began to gut the animal. After about an hour and a half, the elk was field dressed and loaded onto the boat. They skinned and quartered the kill after hoisting it up at the Reliance Float.

They let it hang for a week, then Curtis processed the meat.

"It's cut up into steaks, roasts and hamburger right now," he said.

Though he is ineligible to win the elk tag on Zarembo next year, Curtis is more than satisfied. Not only did he go home with over 250 pounds of meat that he shared with his family, but Curtis Kautz has got a damn good hunting story to serve on the side.

Canadian mine

Continued from page 1

million ounces of gold at Galore Creek is part of a bigger effort by the country's federal government and British Columbia's provincial government to promote mining in the remote, largely roadless mountains near the Alaska border.

In the past three months, Canada and B.C. have announced that they're directing roughly \$185 million toward mining-related infrastructure in the area. A good chunk of that money comes from a national \$1 billion fund intended to boost production of minerals that Canadian officials have deemed critical for energy and national security.

The investments have added to concerns long held by Alaska Native leaders and conservationists who live and fish downstream of Galore Creek and other projects that are under development.

"Rather than honoring Indigenous sovereignty and its treaty obligations, Canada is staging our traditional homelands and waters to be the sacrifice zone to benefit the British Columbia mining industry and its shareholders," Richard Chalyee Éesh Peterson, president of Southeast Alaska's largest tribal government, the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, said in a statement to Northern Journal.

Transboundary rivers in the region, including the Stikine, span the U.S.-Canada border, and tribal governments and environmental groups in Alaska

fear that new mines in northwest B.C. could pollute those rivers and harm lucrative and culturally vital fisheries. Concerns mounted over the summer after a cyanide spill at a major Canadian gold mine in the watershed of the Yukon River, Alaska's biggest transboundary waterway.

Following that spill, Alaska's congressional delegation sent a letter to the Biden administration urging the president to support "binding and enforceable international protections and financial assurances for any potential impacts in transboundary watersheds," including the Stikine.

But the letter stopped short of calling for some of the measures requested by Southeast Alaska tribes and advocates.

Those include a permanent ban on dams holding back mining waste above transboundary salmon-bearing rivers. They also include a temporary pause on mineral exploration, development and permitting on the Canadian side of those watersheds until Canada and the U.S. reach an agreement on protections developed with Indigenous governments.

The tribally led Southeast Alaska Indigenous Transboundary Commission has said that Canada and B.C.'s regulatory systems don't adequately protect transboundary rivers and traditional lands — and that those governments have failed to obtain consent from Alaska tribes.

"This isn't something that

they're building in some far-off area. It's literally in our backyard," Esther Aaltséen Reese said of Galore Creek. Reese is the commission's president and the administrator of the tribal government in Wrangell, the Wrangell Cooperative Association.

In addition to the Galore Creek road, Canada's federal government intends to spend money on highway upgrades and a study of power transmission lines linking northern B.C. and the Yukon Territory. That infrastructure is intended to support copper, molybdenum, nickel, cobalt, tungsten and zinc mining projects, according to Natural Resources Canada.

In particular, according to a spokesperson for the federal agency, the highway upgrades could aid seven mining projects in B.C. Those include Galore Creek; another big copper and gold project near the Stikine River called Schaft Creek; and KSM, an enormous proposed gold and copper mine in the

transboundary Unuk River watershed, south of the Stikine.

The power line project, meanwhile, could support eight mining projects in various stages of development in the Yukon Territory, including a few in the transboundary Yukon River watershed. It could also benefit two more mineral developments in northern B.C., according to the agency.

Natural Resources Canada said the highway project would also boost public safety by widening shoulders, creating new pullouts and expanding WiFi access on three roads in northwest B.C.

Those improvements have been endorsed by representatives of several First Nations in the region — including the Tahltan, whose traditional land covers a large swath of northwest B.C.

But the Tahltan Nation also wants to "control the pace and scale of development in our territory," said Beverly Slater, pres-

ident of the Tahltan Central Government.

The mining industry has provided jobs for many Tahltan citizens, Slater said in a phone interview, though she also emphasized the need to protect water and animals like moose, elk and salmon.

"We're not unlike other nations having to respond to the encroachment of the mining industry and demand for critical minerals," Slater said. "Yet we're trying to protect as much as we possibly can for future generations."

The Tahltan government is currently negotiating with the B.C. government to establish a joint framework for reviewing proposed changes to the Galore Creek project. That would be the third in a series of joint decision-making agreements between the provincial and First Nation governments on mining projects in Tahltan territory.

In 2006, Tahltan leaders signed an agreement with No-

Continued on page 8

Minimum wage

Continued from page 1

authored by Flanagan and two other prime sponsors, Anchorage state Rep. Genevive Mina and Fairbanks business owner Carey Fristoe.

The biggest financial backer is the Fairness Project, a Washington, D.C.-based labor-affiliated organization that supports ballot issues around the nation.

According to reports filed with the Alaska Public Offices Commission, the Yes on 1 campaign has raised \$2.6 million, with half that total coming this year and the other half last year. The Fairness Project contributed most of that, but labor unions were also big contributors.

Lining up in opposition are several business organizations.

Along with CHARR, those groups include the Alaska Chamber of Commerce, the Alaska Travel Industry Association, Alaska Support Industry Alliance and several others. Representatives of those groups cite the sick-leave mandate as the most problematic, saying it has vague language that might be especially inapplicable to highly seasonal industries like tourism.

For restaurants, mandated sick leave is particularly difficult, Oates said. "When you're looking at an industry that requires in-person employment, on-premises employment, having somebody call out has a far more significant impact than other industries," she said.

But the other elements are also problems for CHARR, she said.

Raising employee wages would put too much of a squeeze on an industry that has still not recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic, she said. She pointed out that Alaska, unlike some other states, does not count tips into its calculation of employers meeting the minimum wage. "Even though on paper a tipped employee looks like they're making the minimum wage right now, in reality they're making two, three, four or more times that, depending on where they work and time of year and whatnot."

Opponents to Ballot Measure 1 are just starting to coordinate a campaign. A newly formed group called Protect Our Small Businesses & Jobs - Vote No on 1 has registered with the Alaska Public Offices Commission. As of Oct. 7, it reported \$112 in income and \$176 in expenses.

However, some business owners who support the initiative have banded together in a coalition called Alaska Businesses for Better Jobs.

Among the members is Derrick Green, owner of the Anchorage restaurant Waffles and Whatnot. At a news conference held by the group in September, Green said the sick-leave benefits he voluntarily provides to his workers paid off for the community, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The ability to go home when you have strep throat or you're feeling nauseous or whatever

symptoms may arise actually helped us as a business keep the community safer," he said.

A higher minimum wage would boost Alaska's economy, and it would help address the state's chronic outmigration of working-age adults, ballot measure supporters argue.

A \$15-an-hour wage is modest, particularly in Anchorage, where a large percentage of households are scraping by on low incomes, said Thea Agnew Bemben, owner of a consulting company.

While all employers would follow coalition members' example and provide those benefits "in a perfect world," reality requires the conditions to be set in law, said Jasmin Smith, an organizer of Alaska Business for Better Jobs and the president of the Alaska Black Chamber of Commerce.

The sick leave change would vary by the size of the employer. Employees would receive one hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked, with the total required per year capped at 40 hours for workers at businesses with fewer than 15 employees, and at 56 hours for workers at businesses with 15 or more employees. Employers could choose to provide more sick leave than these minimums.

Alaska's minimum wage for 2024 is \$11.73 per hour. The state will announce the 2025 minimum wage soon. Under current law, the increase is based on inflation as measured by the consumer price index in Anchorage over the previous year. If Ballot Measure 1 passes, it would increase to \$13 in July 2025, \$14 in July 2026, \$15 in July 2027 and by inflation annually beginning in January 2028.

Alaskans are not the only voters being asked to decide questions on minimum wage increases and paid sick leave.

In Missouri, there is a ballot measure that closely resembles the Alaska measure. It would increase the state's minimum wage in steps to \$15 an hour by the start of 2026, and it would require paid sick leave at varying levels, depending on business size. It follows past minimum-wage-increasing ballot initiatives that voters passed by wide margins in 2006 and 2018.

As in Alaska, the Missouri initiative has been organized by labor unions and affiliated groups and people.

In Nebraska, a measure on the ballot would require paid sick leave, also at different levels, depending on business size.

Eight states and the District of Columbia have minimum wages of \$15 or above, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, and Alaska has the lowest minimum wage of the West Coast states.

As of the end of last year, 15 states and the District of Columbia had laws mandating paid sick leave, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. Alaskabeacon.com.

Free Food! Free Games!

Harvest
CELEBRATION

October 31, 2024
5:30 PM TO 8:00 PM
COMMUNITY GYM

Sponsored by Harbor Light Assembly of God

EXPERIENCED - EFFECTIVE - READY

Agnes MORAN

ALASKA HOUSE

“As a lifelong Alaskan, I understand the challenges facing District 1. I am running to protect our Marine Highway System, support our fishermen, preserve our PFD, and fund our schools.”

AgnesMoranAK.com Moran for House District 1 @AgnesMoranAK Agnes.Moran.AK@gmail.com

PHOTO BY MORAN FOR HOUSE DISTRICT 1 - P.O. BOX 1264, WRANGELL, AK 99628

Wrangell wrestlers start the season with nine podium finishes

By SAM PAUSMAN

Sentinel senior reporter

The Wrangell High School wrestling team competed in its first meet of the season this past weekend in Hoonah. The three-day meet Oct. 17-19 was a success for the Wolves, as they boasted four tournament champions, three second-place finishers and two bronze medalists.

On the girls side, senior Della Churchill finished atop the podium in the 120-pound bracket, while Hailey Cook won the 114-pound weight class against her nationally ranked opponent in the gold medal match.

For the boys, sophomore Jackson Carney won the 145-pound division and junior Ben Houser defeated last year's

state runner-up to claim first place in the 130-pound bracket.

Head coach Jackson Carney was thrilled with his team's start to the year.

"We did really well," he said. "We won 70% of all our matches and we had the best cardio of any team we were up against."

Carney — who warms his team up by having them do cartwheels and somersaults across the mat — emphasizes the Wolves' energy levels, so he was happy to report that Wrangell was "the most intense" of all eight teams at the tournament.

While the neon names of the Wrangell wrestlers — Churchill, Carney, Cook and company — took home first-place finishes in the tournament's final day, their

coach was also proud of the team's performances on the first day of the tournament.

"Lucas Stearns, Everett Meissner and William Massin all won matches they probably shouldn't have won," Carney said, "but they dug in hard."

Of the seven Wolves who made it to the final round, four clinched gold. The team's total winning percentage was topped only by Mount Edgecumbe High School, who strategically brought just their top wrestlers to the meet, Carney said. Wrangell, instead, brought everyone. In three days of competition, the Wolves won 70 of their 100 matches.

Wrangell led the tournament in the total number of pins (49), edging out Juneau (48) and

Mount. Edgecumbe (34).

Carney described the tournament as "a good start," and wants to keep this early momentum building for the rest of the year.

Next up, Wrangell travels to Juneau for a tournament on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 25-26. Wrangell's only home tournament of the year will take place on Nov. 15-16.

Canadian mine

Continued from page 7

vaGold, a company with offices in Salt Lake City and Vancouver that owned half of Galore Creek at the time.

The agreement, which the project's owners said is still in effect, guaranteed minimum annual payments of \$1 million to a Tahltan trust fund, or as much as a 1% royalty on mineral sales revenue once the mine is operating. It also calls for cooperation between the First Nation and the company during the environmental review and permitting process.

Galore Creek received a key environmental approval in 2007, paving the way for construction of an open-pit mine. But development stopped by the end of that same year, owing to higher-than-anticipated costs.

At the time, Teck and NovaGold predicted that building the mine could cost \$5 billion.

NovaGold agreed in 2018 to sell its stake in Galore Creek to Newmont, an American company, for up to \$275 million.

Teck, which owns the other half of Galore Creek, is headquartered in Canada and also operates the huge Red Dog mine in Northwest Alaska, in a partnership with the Alaska Native-owned corporation NANA.

Galore Creek Mining — the joint venture between Teck and Newmont — is now working on a new study of the project's potential. It's due to be completed next year, according to the company's website.

The company also said it intends, by the end of this year, to seek regulatory approval for a number of changes to the original project, including increased production and a new location for storing waste.

A Galore Creek spokesperson did not respond to requests for comment.

A spokesperson for British Columbia's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy declined to comment. That agency oversees environmental assessments for major mining projects in the province.

"I can see where Canada has a lot to gain," said Brenda Schwartz-Yeager, a lifelong Wrangell resident who runs riverboat tours on the Stikine River. "But we stand everything to lose here."

The Stikine is "one of the last great really wild rivers left on the planet," she added. "So it's a bit of a conundrum, right?"

Northern Journal is an independent news site and newsletter funded primarily by voluntary memberships.



PHOTO BY SAM PAUSMAN / WRANGELL SENTINEL

A bit early for trick or treat

Scarecrows sit outside the Stikine Inn, perhaps waiting for someone to buy them coffee. The scarecrows are a part of a contest run by the chamber of commerce, which is awarding a \$100 prize each for the scariest, funniest and best overall.

Swimmers impress at Juneau Invitational; Southeast championships set for Nov. 1-2

By SAM PAUSMAN

Sentinel senior reporter

Wrangell swimmers continue to chip away at their race times, boasting 11 personal bests against Southeast competition on Oct. 11-12.

The Juneau Invitational was the Wolves third meet of the season. And as the season nears its close, head coach Jamie Roberts remains optimistic about her last couple of weeks at the helm of the Wrangell swim program (she is moving out of town this winter). The reason for her optimism? Her swimmers keep getting faster.

Of Wrangell swimmers' 25 individual events in Juneau, 11 resulted in personal-best times. Better yet, nine of those 11 came from freshmen. Roberts' emphasis on continued improvement is paying off.

Amura Roher posted personal-best times in every event she competed in. The freshman's 50-yard freestyle time of 40.48 on the first day of the meet was the quickest she had ever swum the event — for just 24 hours. The next day, Roher shaved a second off her Friday time. Roher also set new personal records in the 100-yard freestyle (1:27.76) and 500-yard freestyle (8:56.05).

Another freshman, Pete Houser, continued to impress with personal record times in both the 50- and 500-yard freestyle with respective times of 48.00 and 1:46.71. Roberts was thrilled by Houser's performance in Juneau. She attributed much of his success to the freshman's recent emphasis on technique improvement.

"It can be challenging to execute technical

changes because muscle memory tends to creep in when a swimmer gets fatigued during a race," Roberts said. "The goal is for the endurance training and the technique training to come together; and it did for Pete this weekend."

Ellee Voltz also set three personal bests over the two days of competition. Johanna Sanford competed in the 50- and 100-yard freestyle but it wasn't until the 100-yard backstroke that she set a new fastest time of 1:26.52. Kalee Herman competed in the 50-yard freestyle, finishing with a time of 36.59.

Maddy Davies raced in the 200-yard freestyle on both days, though it was her 1:39.30 time in the 100-yard breaststroke that gave her a new best time. Andrei Bardin-Siekawitch cut his 50-yard freestyle time by nearly two seconds between Friday and Saturday. He also clocked a 1:16.37 finish in the 100-yard backstroke.

On the relay side of things, the girls 200-yard freestyle team was comprised of Sanford, Voltz, Roher and Davies. On Friday, they finished with a time of 2:35.20, before posting a near-identical Saturday time of 2:35.17.

Juneau-Douglas High School — not just the host team but also heavy favorites — won the meet, winning 29 of the 48 events over the course of two days. Wrangell finished in eighth, 35 points behind seventh-place finisher Craig.

Wrangell swimmers rounded out the regular season in Sitka on Oct. 18-19. Southeast championships will take place in Petersburg Nov. 1-2.

WMC Foundation offers
A REIMBURSEMENT GRANT
UP TO \$1200 YEARLY
for individuals traveling
outside their community
for cancer care.

www.wmccancercare.com

BYNUM
State House
VoteBynum.com

Early Voting is Open!

Early Voting Begins: **Oct. 21**
 Election Day: **Nov. 5**

Vote Jeremy Bynum today
 for a stronger Alaska tomorrow!

PAID FOR BY VOTE BYNUM • PO BOX 8683, KETCHIKAN, AK 99901

OBITUARY

Longtime resident Loretta 'Jeanne' Lindley dies at 90

Loretta "Jeanne" Lindley passed away on April 7, 2024.

Jeanne was born Oct. 29, 1933, to Sally and James Jones in Canadian, Texas. She was almost always called "Jeanne" (she'd say, 'like I Dream of Jeannie'). She grew up in Washington state with her older brothers Joseph and James; younger sisters Shirley, Donna and Dora; and grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. She graduated in 1950 from Clallam Bay High School.

In 1951, she married Ronald Edward Lindley. They raised five children: Sandra, Louise, Ronda, Carson and Jody, in Port Angeles, Washington, and Southeast Alaska. In 1965, they moved to Skagway where foster-sisters Tessie and Jewel Cranston joined the family. The family moved to Ketchikan in 1969. A year later, her husband Ron died in a work accident.

Jeanne worked mostly in the hospitality industry from waitress to cook to eventually owner. She opened two Wrangell eateries — partnering with businesses that still serve locals today — Hungry Beaver and Totem Timber Room. She later opened the Narrows Supper Club with her children Louise and Carson in Ketchikan. In 1972, she married John LeMay and gained a stepdaughter, Lisa Doyon. They saw many happy years with adventures in Alaska and to Hawaii on the family sailboat.

Jeanne also dabbled in real estate. She built her dream cabin on her son Jody's land in rural Gakona, a home in Wrangell with her son Jody's family, a home in Port Angeles with her daughter Ronda's family and an apartment building in Anchorage with her daughter Louise's family.

She worked for the Alaska Marine Highway System and enjoyed her time on the ferries. When she retired from AMHS, she moved to her cabin. Never one to slow down, she opened Jeanne's Java on the Glenn Highway and Lindley's Photos to sell her best photos of majestic Alaska. In 2012, she returned to Wrangell to live with her son Jody's family. She was active in the community as an in-home companion, at the Senior Center, at mass and at many school events.

"Jeanne led by example, chased her dreams and lived life unapologetically however she pleased. She had a contagious laugh, a lot of sass and spoke her mind. She loved her family fiercely and planned many events to bring them together for games, meals, playdates — and she was always taking pictures. Jeanne lives on through her family and friends," her family wrote.

She was Grandma Jeanne Dearest to Mitchell, Brandy, Robert, Ron, Garrett, Cambria, Annya, Jessica, Shannon, Britany and Tavis; then Grandy (not great-grandma) to Haley, Zahara, Kasey, Ethan, Shelton, Bradley and Kennedy.

A celebration of life was held in Ketchikan. A private celebration of life will be held at a later date in Wrangell.



Loretta 'Jeanne' Lindley

Visitor security screening could start at state Capitol

By JAMES BROOKS
Alaska Beacon

An airport-style security screening checkpoint could be coming to the Alaska State Capitol, ending decades of open public access.

In a public notice published Oct. 2, the non-partisan agency in charge of Capitol administration seeks a private firm to "conduct security screening of visitors and visitors' belongings." The firm may also be in charge of screening incoming packages.

Security officers at the Alaska Capitol do not currently screen incoming visitors, and the Capitol does not use metal detectors or backscatter X-ray machines like those found at U.S. airports. Security officers are stationed at a desk near the front entrance and patrol the building.

Screening is used at the state courthouse across the street.

"The successful bidder shall provide two uniformed unarmed security screeners, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., during the regular legislative session and all special sessions, including all State of Alaska and federal holidays during the session or special sessions," according to the notice, formally known as a request for quotes.

The joint House-Senate Legislative Council, which makes decisions about the administration of the Capitol, has yet to approve a screening procedure or policy.

A meeting is scheduled for Dec. 12 to discuss the issue.

The request for quotes states that the director of the Legislative Affairs Agency, which manages the Capitol, would be in charge of signing a one-year security contract that runs through 2025.

Jessica Geary, director of the LAA, said by email that the request for bids "was requested

by Legislative Security Services and will be considered at the Dec. 12 Legislative Council meeting. There will need to be a policy in place to determine what the screening would look like, and we just started to work on a draft policy."

Juneau Sen. Jesse Kiehl represents the district that covers the Capitol and sits on the Legislative Council. "I think it's unfortunate and probably ill-advised," he said of the plan to impose security screeners.

He's not aware of a particular threat that requires screeners.

"If we're talking about making it harder to get into the Alaska State Capitol, making it harder for the public to access the Legislature, that should be based on more than an icky feeling about the world," he said.

Juneau Rep. Sara Hannan served as Legislative Council chair previously. It's not a new idea, she said — discussions started even before she became chair in 2020.

"This being such an open Capitol is to one degree a point of pride ... but it's also a security risk," Hannan said. "We're one of the very few state capitols that does not have some sort of screened security."

Hannan doesn't know what prompted the request for quotes but said that when she was chair, legislators did receive threats. In one case, a deactivated hand grenade was sent to the Capitol through the mail.

Does she think the screening is a good idea? "It's not good vs. evil. It's risk vs. benefit," Hannan said. "Certainly, in the modern world, politicians get threatened on a regular basis now. How viable are those threats ... that's what I don't know."

The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. Alaskabeacon.com.

Legislators set new limits on signs people can bring into state Capitol

By JAMES BROOKS
Alaska Beacon

Alaska legislators have voted to ban large signs in the state Capitol, a move that followed large protests over Gov. Mike Dunleavy's decision to veto a multipart education bill earlier this year.

Under a new policy, visitors to the Capitol "are permitted to hand-carry a paper-based poster board or placard type sign up to 11x17 inches in the Capitol corridors and lobby."

The policy prohibits signs on sticks and posts — all signs must be held by hand.

"A sign will be confiscated

if it is used to disturb, or used in a manner that will imminently disturb, the Alaska State Legislature, one of its houses, a committee, a member, or a public employee in the performance of their duties," the new policy states.

The new sign rules were approved Sept. 26 in a 9-0 vote of the Legislative Council, a joint House-Senate committee that makes decisions for the Legislature outside the normal session.

Large numbers of protesters crowded the Capitol in March, urging lawmakers to override the veto. That override failed

by a single vote.

The nonpartisan Legislative Affairs Agency administers the state Capitol. Its director, Jessica Geary, told lawmakers that the policy came about because "during this past session, we had an incident with some protesters that carried signs into the Capitol and held them up and were somewhat disruptive during one of the committee hearings."

By email, Geary said "protestors brought signs into the building and held them up, in some cases blocking the view down the hallway and of the security cameras, which was a concern to our security officers. Some of these protesters brought signs into a House Finance Committee meeting and held them up."

Speaking to the Legislative Council, Geary said the new policy came together after legislative staff contacted officials at other capitols and asked about their policies.

"The 11-by-17 sign was what was standardly used, I think, because it's large enough to display the message, but not too big to be able to cause too much of an obstruction of the visual field," Geary told lawmakers.

Legislative Affairs Agency

Continued on page 10

I can help you make sure your coverage is up-to-date. Contact me today.



"If you have a large amount of cash in your house, I recommend that you deposit a majority of it in the bank. Most insurance carriers only cover up to \$250 in cash on premises, regardless of the cause of loss."

Amy Hemenway,
Personal & Commercial
Lines Agent

Email: amy@p-wins.com
Toll Free: (800) 478-3858, Fax: (907) 802-3225
www.p-wins.com
PO Box 529 Petersburg, AK, 99833



Janet Bunes
passed away
on October 8, 2024
in Seattle, Washington.

An obituary to follow.

Capitol protest signs

Continued from page 9
 attorney Emily Nauman said that in order to comply with the First Amendment, the policy has to be "content-neutral" — signs can't be limited based on what they say.

An early draft of the sign rules included a ban on "vulgar language," but that was re-

moved because of First Amendment concerns.

Juneau Sen. Jesse Kiehl asked whether the restrictions extend to messages on T-shirts and buttons, and Fairbanks Sen. Click Bishop asked whether a message on "a Superman cape" would also run afoul of the new rule.

Nauman said that in a committee room, enforcement of the rule is up to the chair of the committee.

"I think there's — as we're all aware through other dis-

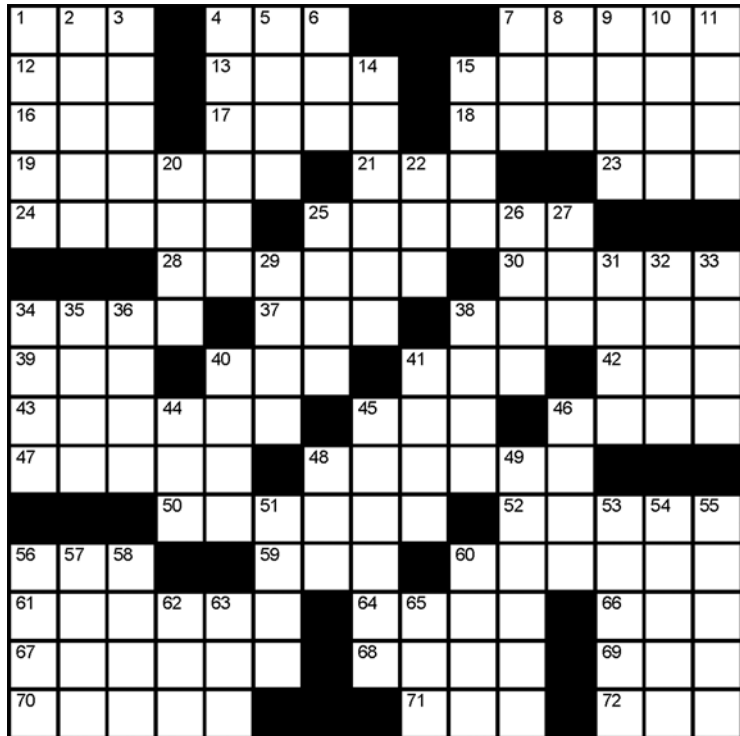
cussions we've had here — there's a balance of people being able to speak to their government in a way that's meaningful to them and be heard, versus impeding work

of the Legislature," she said.

The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. Alaskabeacon.com.

Crossword

Answers on page 12



CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Cited as cause of 2003 Iraq war
- 4 Lawyers' grp.
- 7 Chef's seasonings
- 12 Weeding implement
- 13 Molten rock
- 15 Deceive
- 16 Letters after business names
- 17 Colorist
- 18 Merkel or Lansbury
- 19 Inaction
- 21 S N L network
- 23 Stage
- 24 Enter
- 25 Boil
- 28 Indicate
- 30 Happening
- 34 Jekyll's alter ego
- 37 Cereal grain
- 38 Outcry
- 39 The Emirates
- 40 Ft. divisions
- 41 Hit
- 42 NASDAQ debut
- 43 Vino selection
- 45 Heated argument
- 46 Ran off
- 47 Detect
- 48 Ship
- 50 Some music storage media
- 52 Tars
- 56 Retains a reservoir
- 59 Admiration
- 60 Canadian capital
- 61 In the slightest
- 64 Levee
- 66 "Before Abraham was, ---" (Jesus)
- 67 Farm fertilizer
- 68 Yesteryear
- 69 Chest bone
- 70 Ooze
- 71 Theater for some vets, briefly
- 72 Double helix molecule (Abbr.)

CLUES DOWN

- 1 Egg beater
- 2 Spanish card game
- 3 Rot
- 4 Type of Venetian type
- 5 Howls at the moon
- 6 Hail
- 7 --- Solo (Harrison Ford character)
- 8 Heart test
- 9 Caren
- 10 Vitriol
- 11 Catch
- 14 "Arrested Development" star Will ---
- 15 Sensitivity
- 20 Team
- 22 Social gathering
- 25 In order
- 26 Aid
- 27 "The Locomotion" singer Little ---
- 29 Forbidden activity
- 31 Track legend --- Zatopek
- 32 Informal negative
- 33 Stepped
- 34 Centers
- 35 Connecticut university
- 36 College head
- 38 Intimidates
- 40 Chilled
- 41 Top banana
- 44 White House defense advisory grp.
- 45 Medicament
- 46 Tire problem
- 48 Promise
- 49 Regard
- 51 Speed
- 53 Scottish land proprietor
- 54 Clemens' pen name
- 55 Rio de Janeiro dance
- 56 Hemispherical roof
- 57 Lizzie Borden took ---, ...
- 58 Restaurant card
- 60 Southern soup ingredient
- 62 Chum
- 63 Wrath
- 65 Distant but within sight

Police report

Monday, Oct. 14

Agency assist: State probation office.
 Theft: Letter served for removing a person from a licensed establishment.
 Agency assist: Municipal electrical line crew.
 Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.
 Citizen assist.
 Traffic stop.

Tuesday, Oct. 15

Missing person.
 Agency assist: Ambulance.

Wednesday, Oct. 16

Civil issue.
 Dog complaint.
 Inmate transfer.
 Domestic disturbance.
 Domestic violence assault.

Thursday, Oct. 17

Traffic stop: Verbal warning for failure to dim headlights and expired tags.
 Citizen assist.

Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.

Friday, Oct. 18

Traffic stop: Citation issued for speeding.
 Traffic stop.
 Noise complaint.

Saturday, Oct. 19

Agency assist: Ambulance requested.
 Animal welfare.
 Driving under the influence.
 Bar check.
 Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.
 Drunk on a licensed premise.

Sunday, Oct. 20

Agency assist: Water treatment plant.
 Agency assist: Fire.
 Agency assist: Fire.
 Dog complaint.
 Motor vehicle accident.

During this reporting period, there were three police assists for ambulance calls.

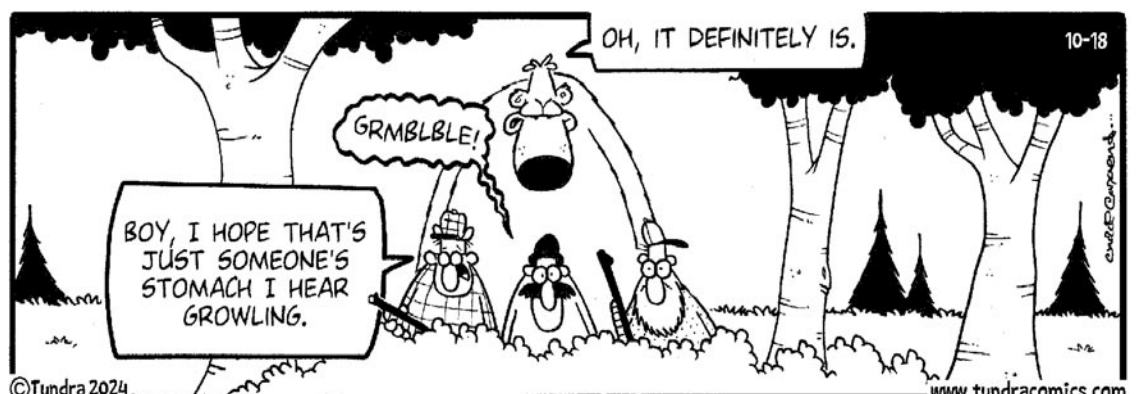
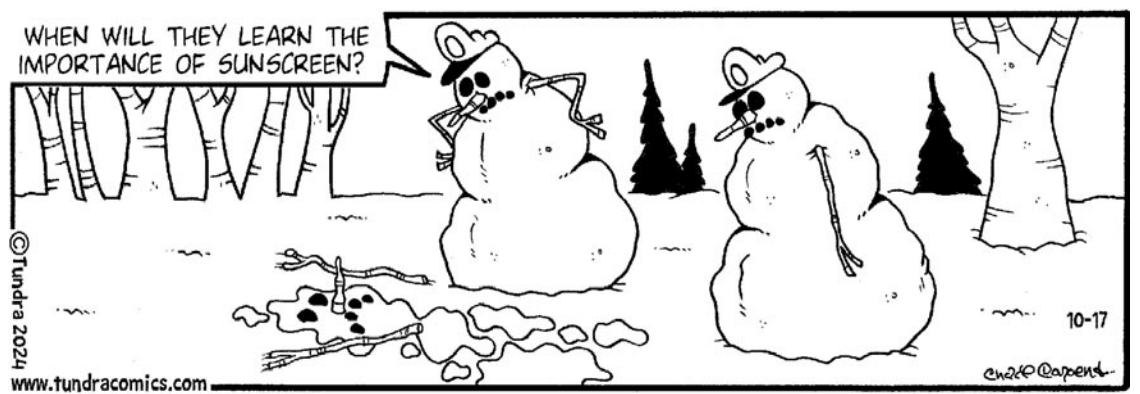
Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



**CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL
NOTICE OF JOB OPENING
Marketing and Community Development Coordinator**

The City and Borough of Wrangell is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Marketing and Community Development Coordinator. The position will remain open until filled. The position will be posted for no less than 14 days. Applications will be reviewed as early as Oct. 29, 2024.

The Marketing and Community Development Coordinator is under the supervision and direction of the Economic Development Director. The position emphasis is on visitor industry management and marketing by assisting with development, organization and implementation of the Travel Wrangell's destination marketing plan and associated promotional activities and the Tourism Management Plan and Best Practices program. This includes coordination of marketing initiatives through creative outreach to travel writers, influencers, publications, consultants and third-party media teams.

This dynamic role is ideal for a highly motivated individual who thrives in a fast paced environment. The successful candidate will have a proven track record of building strong relationships with residents, stakeholders and industry professionals. Demonstrated experience in event planning, digital media, and print design is essential. The ideal candidate will be passionate about contributing to economic development initiatives and making a positive impact on the community.

This is a permanent hourly position with all City and Borough of Wrangell benefits, paid at Grade 18 ranging from \$26 to \$32.97 per hour. The full job description, qualifications/requirements and job application can be obtained on the Borough's website at <https://www.wrangell.com/jobs>.

Applicants are required to submit their cover letter, resume and application to City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, Alaska 99929 or via email at rmarshall@wrangell.com.

Mason Villarma, Borough Manager
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish Oct. 23 and 30, 2024

CLASSIFIED

HELP WANTED
Wrangell Public Schools is accepting applications for: Paraprofessional: This is a part-time, 9-month classified position, working 5.75 hours daily in the Special Education Department at Evergreen Elementary School. Salary placement is in Column B of the Classified Salary Schedule. Job duties include but are not limited to working with intensive special education students individually and in small group settings. A High School Diploma or equivalent and an associate degree or the ability to pass the ParaPro Assessment is required. Start date: as soon as possible.

For more information and a job description, please contact the District Office at 907-874-2347. Positions are open until filled. It is Wrangell Public School District policy to not discriminate based on age, race, color, national origin, sex or disability.

HELP WANTED
Johnson's Building Supply is accepting applications for the following position: Customer Service. Duties include counter sales, freight handling, customer deliveries, stocking and inventory. Full-time position; will require working Saturdays. Valid Alaska driver's license, must be able to lift 50 lbs., forklift experience a plus, starting pay is DOE. Stop by Johnson's for an application.

RETURN
The loan closet, operated by Hospice of Wrangell, has durable medical equipment available for those in need. If you have items you borrowed and are no longer using, contact DonMcConachie at 907 305-0063 to arrange their return.

FREE
Recycled newspapers. Stop by the Sentinel to pick up.

FREE ADS
Do you have something to sell? Having a garage sale? Looking to buy something? Classified ads for individuals and community groups are free in the Sentinel. Contact Amber at 907-874-2301 or email wrgsent@gmail.com.

LETTERS WANTED
Do you have an opinion that you would like to share? Send us a typed or clearly written letter up to 400 words with your phone number and we will get it published in the paper. Contact Amber at 907-874-2301 or email wrgsent@gmail.com.

NOTICE OF GENERAL ELECTION

Tuesday, November 5, 2024

Polling Places Will Be Open From 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Candidate Races on Ballot

President / Vice President

United States Representative

State Senator (Districts B, D, F, H, J, L, N, P, R, T)

State House Representative (All 40 Districts)

Judicial Retention

Ballot Measures Appearing on the Ballot

Ballot Measure 1 – 23AMLS – An Act Increasing the Minimum Wage, Requiring Paid Sick Leave, and Prohibiting Mandatory Meetings about Religious or Political Issues

Ballot Measure 2 – 22AKHE – An Act Restoring Political Party Primaries and Single-Choice General Elections

To find Your Polling Place Call: **1-888-383-8683** (In Anchorage call: 269-8683)

Early, Absentee In-Person and Special Needs Voting

Early and Absentee In-Person Voting will be available at many locations throughout the state beginning October 21, 2024. For a list of locations and information on absentee voting, visit the division's website at <https://AKVoteEarly.alaska.gov> or call your regional elections office below. If you are unable to go to the polls due to age, disability, or serious illness, you may use the special needs voting process by appointing a personal representative to bring you a ballot.

www.elections.alaska.gov

<u>Region I Office</u>	<u>Region II Office</u>	<u>Region III Office</u>	<u>Region IV Office</u>	<u>Region V Office</u>
Juneau	Anchorage	Fairbanks	Nome	Wasilla
(907) 465-3021	(907) 522-8683	(907) 451-2835	(907) 443-8683	(907) 373-8952
1-866-948-8683	1-866-958-8683	1-866-959-8683	1-866-953-8683	1-866-958-8683

Language Assistance 1-866-954-8683

Toll Free TTY 1-888-622-3020

The State of Alaska, Division of Elections, complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you are a person with a disability who may need special assistance and/or accommodation to vote, please contact your regional Division of Elections office to make necessary arrangements.

**Call
Amber
to
Subscribe
to
the
Sentinel
907-874-2301**

Marketing effort hopes to hook U.S. consumers on black cod

BY NATHANIEL HERZ
Northern Journal

Alaska's seafood industry has been contending with turbulent global markets for the past two years, which have been hammering harvest values and threatening fishermen's and processing companies' financial stability.

Prices paid to salmon fishermen crashed in the summer of 2023, prompting protests and generating headlines in national news outlets.

But it's unlikely most heard anything about black cod, which is harvested in smaller volumes — though the numbers are still significant for many full-time Alaska fishermen and processing businesses, with annual catches valued at \$100 million a year or more.

The per-pound value of last year's harvest in Southeast Alaska, a key region for the fishery, was \$2.59 — the lowest price since 1998, according to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Black cod, or *Anoplopoma fimbria*, are a little bit mysterious — they live a quarter-mile or more below the surface, and federal scientists say they've never been observed while spawning. They are not, in fact, in the cod family: The only other member

of Anoplopomatidae is the skilfish, another dark-colored species that thrives in cold and deep water.

Black cod are found offshore from California to Japan, and archaeologists have documented more than 2,000 years of Native American dependence on them in the Pacific Northwest. On Haida Gwaii, the archipelago off British Columbia, oral tradition holds that visitors were loath to leave the West Coast because they didn't want to miss out on the abundant fish.

In modern times, the major black cod market has been Japan, whose fishing boats would travel all the way to the waters off Alaska, where the species was most abundant, to harvest. Prices that processors were paying American fishermen were low.

"Nobody really wanted it, because the foreign fleet was catching it themselves," said Norm Pillen, a veteran Sitka fisherman who now runs a cooperatively owned processing company in the Southeast community.

Things changed in the late 1970s, as Congress extended American fishery management authority from 12 to 200 miles offshore, and the Japanese fishery was eventually evicted.

"That just opened up the mar-

ket," Pillen said.

Alaska fishermen have traditionally harvested black cod largely using miles-long lines that sit on the ocean floor with thousands of individually baited hooks. Now, they're increasingly using large pots, to keep orcas from stealing their catch.

It's a grueling and expensive fishery, as boats often must drive far offshore to the deep waters where black cod live, Pillen said.

Much of Alaska-caught black cod still goes to Japan. But that's now one of the big problems for fishermen and processors: The plummeting value of the country's currency has reduced Japanese purchasing power and hurt demand.

At the same time, there's ample Alaska black cod supply.

Its population has been booming after years of decline, and it's expected to remain high for at least a decade. The species' success stems from black cod's ability to grow more quickly in warming surface waters — as long as they have enough food to satisfy their voracious appetite in their first year of life.

That's according to Dana Hanselman, a Juneau-based federal fisheries scientist who tracked black cod populations for more than 15 years.

One result of the recent black cod resurgence? Processors are now stuck with backlogs of black cod inventory, and they're paying plummeting prices to fishermen — who at the same time are facing higher fuel, insurance and grocery costs.

"We had guys that are pretty heavy hitters that fished a trip this spring, and they said it wasn't worth it," Pillen said.

The tough Japanese market is reviving conversations about how to make black cod more enticing to Americans.

Nobu, the luxury Japanese restaurant chain, has a miso-marinated black cod dish that's internationally renowned. But the fish still hasn't gotten traction with garden variety consumers in the U.S., according to industry experts.

As a former midwesterner, Hanselman, the scientist, said he thinks black cod has "way too much flavor for your average walleye eater." But others in the industry think it's more a matter of awareness.

"I've been saying this for the past couple of years: We need a couple of celebrity chefs with TV shows to take on the species so that Americans discover what the heck it actually is," said Brody Pierson, who markets black cod in his job as sales director at Bristol Wave Seafoods.

Katie Harris is a perfect case study in black cod's potential in the U.S.

A former teacher, she had taken a new job working with an advocacy group, the Fishing Vessel Owners' Association, when a "guy named Dave" walked into her office with a couple of boxes of black cod filets.

Harris said she'd never really cooked the fish before. But she tried a few recipes and quickly found herself seduced by black cod's charms — its thick, oily flakes and the fact that you can't really overcook it. Her favorite recipe now is marinating for two hours in teriyaki sauce, searing it on a cast iron griddle, then serving the fish with everything bagel seasoning.

"I had actually never heard of or tried sablefish before I started here," said Harris, using another name for the species. "Now, it's like my favorite fish."

Harris and her organization recently launched a federal grant-funded marketing campaign to boost the species' profile with U.S. consumers, with chef interviews and recipes for gin-cured black cod lox, smoked black cod chowder and sumac-marinated black cod and nettle pesto gnocchi.

"Everybody knows halibut. Very few people know about sablefish," she said. "There's basically no existing consumer narrative for sablefish."

Nathaniel Herz publishes the Northern Journal, at northernjournal.com.

State agency falls into backlog again in processing food stamp applications

BY CLAIRE STREMPLE
Alaska Beacon

Alaska's Department of Health is again slipping into a backlog of food stamp applications.

The news comes from state data included in a filing from the Northern Justice Project in its class-action lawsuit against the state. The suit asks the court to make sure the state issues food stamp benefits on time after years of chronic delays.

Attorney Nick Feronti represents the class of Alaskans affected by the backlog in the department's Division of Public Assistance, which manages the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for the state.

Thousands of Alaskans waited months for federal food aid last year because the state's Division of Assistance had accumulated a backlog of crisis proportions. He said the latest filing shows that the crisis is ongoing.

"The data tells me that we, as a state and as a community, are still needing durable solutions to this problem," he said. "I think that any defendant, big or small, can come up with temporary fixes that make things look better, but I think actually fixing a system is a different matter."

Through a spokesperson, Division Director Deb Etheridge, who took on her role at the height of the initial backlog in 2023, acknowledged that more applications have been processed late.

"As soon as this happened, we immediately reengaged our backlog team and expect to be back in timeframe in the next 30 days," she said in an email Oct. 9. "This is an especially busy time of year and that does account for the increase, as well as

the re-implementation of (eligibility) interviews."

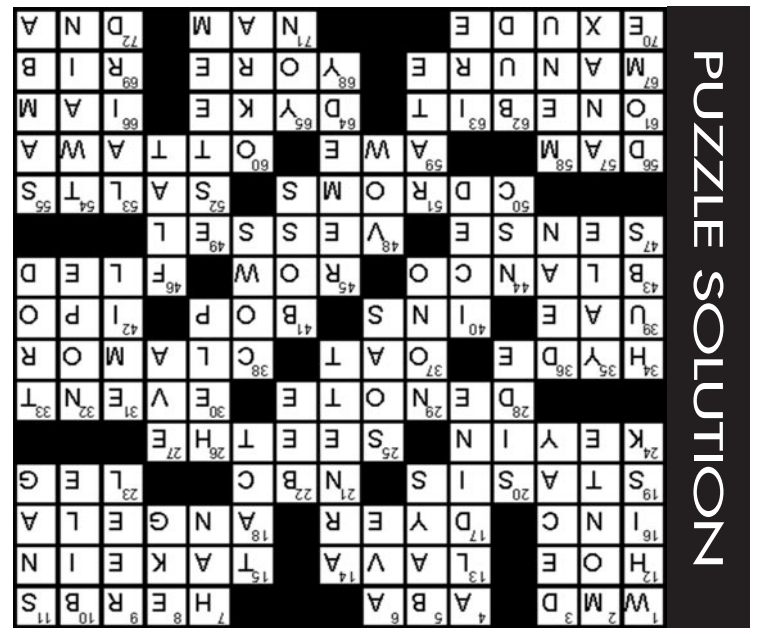
State data shows that in September of this year more than 3,000 Alaskans have waited more than a month to have their paperwork processed for food aid. The division was processing 63% of its regular applications on time in September, which is its latest data. That's down from 87% in May, but a significant improvement over last March, when only 19% of applications were processed on time.

Feronti said he filed the supplemental paperwork to show the court that the problems that led to the lawsuit are ongoing.

"We want the community we live in, we want the court, we want everyone to be fully apprised about what's going on. The state has said, in its way various times, 'Hey, we fixed this,' or 'The remedy is close,' or whatever, and now we're staring down quadruple digit backlogs again, and that means that the state was wrong," he said.

This winter will be the third in which thousands of Alaskans who rely on food stamps are caught in a backlog and not receiving benefits.

The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organ-



CAPITOL CHRISTMAS TREE
WRANGELL HARVEST CELEBRATION

SCAN FOR MORE INFO

WRANGELL, ALASKA
OCTOBER 25-27
TREE CEREMONY: 10/26
FULL SCHEDULE AVAILABLE NOW