



WRANGELL SENTINEL

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Wrangell awaits governor's review of \$4.1 million for water plant

BY LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

High oil prices paid the way for legislators to spend more money on public services and construction, a little more on schools and a payout to Alaskans this fall almost triple the amount of last year's dividend.

Legislators and their constituents now wait to see if Gov. Mike Dunleavy decides to veto any of the spending for the fiscal year that starts July 1.

Lawmakers went home last week after a late-night session on the final day May 18, when they approved about \$2.1 billion — one-quarter of all state general fund spending in the budget year — for a \$3,200

payment to eligible Alaskans this fall.

The last-day budget deal also includes a one-time 5% increase in state funding for K-12 education, make-good state payments to municipalities on short-funded local school debt reimbursement of past years, and a capital budget that includes \$4.1 million for a new water treatment plant in Wrangell.

Adding the state grant to \$11 million in federal funds already on the books, the borough plans to go to bid in January on the estimated \$15.4 million water treatment plant, Borough Manager Jeff Good said Friday. The hope is to complete the project by the end of 2023. The work will include a new filtration system for the 25-year-old facility.

Securing a state grant for the water project was the

borough's top legislative priority for the session.

Wrangell shares in state make-good payment on school debt reimbursement

The borough also will benefit from appropriations in the budget bill that direct about \$221 million in state funds to municipalities across Alaska, making up for several years when the state short-funded its share of reimbursement on local bonds for school construction and maintenance projects.

Unless vetoed by the governor, Wrangell could gain about \$300,000 for the municipal treasury as its share

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PLENTY OF POMP



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

The Wrangell High School class of 2022 waits to receive their diplomas at the graduation ceremony last Friday.

Class of 2022 graduates look back over school life

BY MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

By 8 p.m. last Friday, the Wrangell High School class of 2022 had graduated and each member was embarking on the next chapter of their life.

The evening honored the 15 graduates in front of a full auditorium of friends, family and educators with heartfelt speeches and videos showing how far they've come.

"This is the first open and normal graduation we've had in ... (three) years," said Kendra Meissner in her salutatorian speech. "(Instead) of watching us take the next steps into our future over a screen, you all can be here watching in person."

Meissner touched on many points in a short speech, one of which was the uniqueness of gradu-

ating with the same people she's known since before starting school, something not too often found outside of small-town life. Though she'll miss her town and classmates in the next part of life, "one thing I won't miss is the parking at this high school."

Earlier in the day, the class gathered at Evergreen Elementary in their cap and gowns to walk through the halls. At the end of the walk, the seniors answered questions asked by the fifth grade class. Seniors talked about the classes they had to take if they were going to college or what their grades had to be if they played sports. They stressed the importance of getting homework done and being organized, but they also stressed having fun and being respectful.

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SEARHC, borough settle on 10 years of voluntary annual \$45,000 payments

BY SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

The borough assembly and SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium have come to an agreement of voluntary payments by SEARHC of \$45,000 per year for 10 years on property owned by the nonprofit health care provider in town.

In negotiations that began in November, the borough had been asking for \$225,000 a year, and SEARHC had asked for a refund on a \$331,287 property tax bill it paid in full on the new Wrangell Medical Center in 2021. As a nonprofit, SEARHC is exempt under state law from property taxes.

In the agreement approved by the borough assembly May 17, SEARHC agreed to donate the \$331,287 to the borough, listed in the negotiated agreement as an "overpayment," and not seek a refund.

"Without property tax revenue to fund the cost of providing services to the community, the burden of providing such services has the potential to increase year-over-year," the agreement read.

The health care provider will pay the borough \$45,000

on or before Oct. 15 of each year. That represents just over 2% of Wrangell's annual property tax revenues.

"SEARHC is pleased to have reached an agreement with the city and borough of Wrangell regarding historical property taxes," Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Leatha Mercurieff said via email last Thursday. "With this agreement in place, SEARHC can continue its support of the health and well-being of the Wrangell community."

Before entering into a closed-door executive session to discuss the tax contribution agreement, Mayor Steve Prysunka declared a conflict of interest, as his wife is the medical director at the hospital. The assembly did not object to the mayor's participation, and came out of a 50-minute executive session to unanimously approve the agreement in public.

At the meeting, Prysunka told the other assembly members that he was appreciative SEARHC "stuck with us," and that they were working together to get to the same place.

"I'm pleased with this

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Assistant principals set to retire after more than three decades in education

BY MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

Two of Wrangell's lead educators are closing the books on their lesson plans and graduating to retirement.

In June, Bob Davis, assistant principal of Wrangell High School and Stikine Middle School, and Jenn Miller-Yancey, assistant principal of Evergreen Elementary School, will say farewell after more than 30 years each in education.

Davis, 64, who was raised in Alaska and came up through the public school system, swore as a young man that he would never set foot into a school again after graduating.

"After kicking around for a few years at a couple of lousy jobs, I figured that I had to do something different, so I went to college. I said I was just going to take courses that I enjoy," Davis said. "After four and a half years of doing that, my adviser said, 'Look, you've got to graduate someday. What are you going to do?'"

That adviser forced Davis to make a decision and he picked teaching, a decision he's never regretted. "I can't imagine having a better career than in education."

Davis began his career teaching in Nulato, a village about 350 air miles northwest of An-

chorage, for six years before he moved to Wrangell and started teaching at the middle school.

Looking back over his career, Davis said there are few things that stand out which give him a sense of pride.

"In Nulato at one point we had an academic decathlon team that took second in the state. That was a tremendous amount of work and effort," he said. "(In Wrangell) I think it was the five creative writing books the middle schoolers put together. Students won a lot of national and state awards for writing. I'm proud of ... having had a hand in that."

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Jenn Miller-Yancey, assistant principal of Evergreen Elementary, holds up a Wrangell Sentinel from December 1993 featuring a cover photo of her teaching students at the school. After 30 years of teaching and leading Evergreen, she will retire from the school on June 10.

PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

Wednesday, May 25: Chelsea Pollow, Scott Thomas, Guy Young; Anniversary: Jake and Alesha Jabusch.

Thursday, May 26: Judy Bakeberg, Shaleen Kuntz, Jesse Sumner, Jordan Veelle, Louella Ward.

Friday, May 27: Lance Hayes, Amanda Johnson, Nola Walker.

Saturday, May 28: None.

Sunday, May 29: Jeff Angerman, Wayne Kaer; Anniversary: Keene and Faye Kohrt.

Monday, May 30: Timothy Garcia, Draven Golding, Glory Haggard; Anniversaries: Rob and Dena McChargue, Walter Moorhead and Carol Ross.

Tuesday, May 31: Miles Brown, Tristan Byford, Michelle Beaghoff.

Wednesday, June 1: Hannah Castle, Deanne Cooper, Jack Pino, Glen Pollow, Torin Schoonover.

Senior Center Menu

Open for in-person dining.

Must be fully vaccinated.

Thursday, May 26

Fry bread tacos, cottage cheese and fruit

Friday, May 27

Fiesta pork chops, cauliflower, fruit slaw, mashed potatoes

Monday, May 30

Closed for Memorial Day

Tuesday, May 31

Chicken enchiladas, black beans, tossed salad, spanish rice.

Wednesday, June 1

Chicken tuna casserole, peas and carrots, cucumber tomato salad, pilot bread

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

Ferry Schedule

Northbound

Saturday, May 28
Matanuska, 12:45 a.m.
Friday, June 3
Matanuska, 5:45 p.m.
Monday, June 6
Matanuska, 8:45 p.m.
Friday, June 10
Matanuska, 10 p.m.

Southbound

Monday, May 30
Matanuska, 2 a.m.
Monday, June 6
Matanuska, 6 a.m.
Thursday, June 9
Matanuska, 4:15 p.m.
Monday, June 13
Matanuska, 6 a.m.

All times listed are scheduled departure times.

Call the terminal at 907-874-2021 for information or call 907-874-3711 or 800-642-0066 for recorded information.

Tides

High Tides

Low Tides

	AM	PM	AM	PM
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
May 25	10:15	13.6	10:42	16.3
May 26	11:14	14.1	11:25	17.0
May 27	12:05	14.4
May 28	00:04	17.3	12:50	14.6
May 29	00:41	17.4	01:32	14.6
May 30	01:15	17.2	02:12	14.5
May 31	01:48	16.8	02:49	14.1
			AM	PM
			Time	Ft
May 25			04:11	2.7
May 26			05:08	1.3
May 27			05:55	0.0
May 28			06:34	-0.9
May 29			07:09	-1.4
May 30			07:42	-1.5
May 31			08:14	-1.3

Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

SEN. LISA MURKOWSKI'S STAFF will set up their mobile office in the post office parking lot from noon to 2 p.m. on June 3. The mobile office provides constituents an opportunity to meet with the senator's staff, learn more about the services provided by the office and ask questions.

ISLAND OF FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH will hold a rummage sale 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. If you have gently used and clean items you'd like to donate, drop-off hours are 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Friday. Proceeds support the church and funds summer Bible camp for our youth.

IRENE INGLE PUBLIC LIBRARY summer reading program now open for registration. Open to students entering kindergarten through ninth grade in the fall. Register at the library. The reading program runs June 1 through July 30. There will be more than 100 prize drawings and a pool/pizza party for all those who complete the program. Call 907-874-3535 for more information.

NOLAN CENTER THEATER no movie this weekend. Next weekend: "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness."

WRANGELL MEDICAL CENTER is looking for volunteers for a mass casualty exercise June 7 from 3:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. This exercise will give hospital caregivers a chance to test their emergency preparedness plans and procedures. Some volunteers will receive extensive make-up to enhance realism. All volunteers will receive a specific participant profile to review and study beforehand. Time will be scheduled to review individual profiles before the exercise begins. Contact Michelle Walters at 360-391-4701 or michelle.walters@tegria.com to register.

PARKS and RECREATION will have Music in the Parks from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on June 15 at Shoemaker Park with special guests The Powers. Jam session around the campfire to follow. Food available for purchase. Feel free to bring a potluck dish for sharing. Yard games. Great night for family, friends and community. Please keep your pups at home.

BOAT OWNER SWAP MEET at the downtown pavilion at 9 a.m. Saturday. Bring your table and your stuff. Nominal space charge. Call Bob Wilkinson at 907-305-0021 with questions.

SOUTHEAST SENIOR SERVICES is offering a series of free online Tai Chi classes for ages 60 and up twice a week through June 23. Improves strength and balance, reduces risk of falls. Taught by a certified instructor. Call 907-463-6113 for registration and more information.

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

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

Continuing Events

PARKS and RECREATION www.wrangellrec.com

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

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

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

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

May 25, 1922

Dr. Edward T. Mathes, mayor of Bellingham, Washington, who has been in Wrangell this week, is of the opinion that the biggest thing that Alaska has to sell is her scenery, and that by capitalizing on her scenery the same as done in Europe, Alaska could easily develop a tourist business that would run into millions annually. Since his arrival here, Dr. Mathes has met several old acquaintances. Yesterday he was a dinner guest at the home of his friends, Mr. and Mrs. H.D. Kyle at the Standard Oil Station.

May 23, 1947

Al Ritchie, operator of the

Ritchie Transportation Co. on the Stikine River, is "postmaster" of a mail system that probably could happen only on the Stikine. Lone trappers and prospectors along the river get their letters and postcards via the "potato system." As the riverboat churns up the river and passes some such residence, a deckhand ties the letter or postcard to a potato and heaves it ashore. The "customer" on shore eagerly makes the catch, unties the letter - and is a potato ahead. Observers didn't report on how the system works in reverse. Anyway, with the rise in airmail rates pending, it is presumed the Ritchie air mail system will also have to go up -- it'll take two potatoes instead of one. Sort of a potato airmail sandwich.

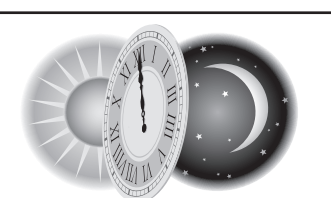
May 26, 1972

With the prospect of a filling station-garage and car sales complex on the land, councilmen Tuesday voted to move the site of the proposed new city library again. The library, for which the state presumably will provide up to \$66,000, has led a peripatetic existence since it was learned last year that state money would be available to build it. Originally the city planned to put the library on two municipally owned lots on the downtown fill area. Then plans were changed and it was decided the facility should go on the site of what is now the Second Avenue playground next to the present library building. Last February, in a surprise move, councilmen again voted for the fill lots and it

was decided that was where the library ultimately would be. The council voted 3-2 for passage of a motion that the library site be changed to land now occupied by the old city gymnasium. The city has long been planning to raze the old gymnasium.

May 22, 1997

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has announced that the beam trawl directed sidestripe fishery in District 8, which opened at 3 a.m. Wednesday, May 21, will close at 11:59 p.m. Sunday, June 22, unless closed earlier by emergency order. For the May fishing period, the fishery will occur under the following restrictions: Each fisherman shall submit completed logbook sheets with each landing. The sheets will be placed in a sealed envelope provided by the department and stapled to the fish ticket at the time of landing. The department will contact each processor regularly to obtain harvest information by species. Shrimp caught but not landed must be reported on the fish ticket. This includes bycatch discarded at sea, catch not accepted by the processors, and any commercial harvest retained for personal use. Logbooks can be obtained from department offices in Wrangell or Petersburg. A guideline harvest level of 50,000 pounds of sidestripe shrimp will be allowed from District 8. Once it is achieved, additional directed sidestripe shrimp fishing in District 8 will not be allowed until May 1, 1998.



Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Hours
May 25	4:16a	9:17p	17:00h
May 26	4:15a	9:18p	17:03h
May 27	4:14a	9:20p	17:06h
May 28	4:12a	9:21p	17:09h
May 29	4:11a	9:23p	17:11h
May 30	4:10a	9:24p	17:14h
May 31	4:09a	9:26p	17:17h

Art gallery doubles as social club, unique gift shop

BY MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

For more than 50 years, members of the Wrangell Art Gallery have come together once a week to work on projects, give each other feedback, and to spend time with artistic-minded friends.

Along with creating one-of-a-kind artwork, they've also created a lot of memories.

One of the members who has been with the group since the beginning, Olga Norris, still strives to learn new artistic mediums to work in, even at 93 years old.

"There was a group of us that painted together for years, and the main person that started (it) was Lavon White," Norris said. "Her daughter owns this building (where the gallery is located on Front Street). She promised Lavon that we would have a place to display our art and to do painting or whatever."

Before the group became a gallery, Norris said, White would take them out camping, creating plein air paintings (landscapes, painted outdoors) through the day and playing cards at night. They would also travel together to learn from other artists or bring people into Wrangell to teach them.

"Originally, it was just paintings, but then after we got in here (to the gallery) it sort of blossomed out," said Joan Benjamin, who has been with the group since the 1970s. "Everybody started thinking, 'Well, I can do this.'"

"This" being different mediums of artwork, whether watercolors, acryl-



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Members of the Wrangell Art Gallery are, from left, Michael Bania, Mary Fredrichs, Joan Benjamin, Loretta Rice and, seated, Olga Norris. The group, along with other members Chris Ellis, Jacquie Dozier, Linda Fabrello and Roberta Floyd, gather at the gallery on Thursdays to work on projects, get feedback and socialize.

ics, quilting, reclaimed art or even children's books, which member Michael Bania creates.

"Everybody has their own little niche," Bania said.

"(Olga) just started beading," said Loretta Rice, another member of the group. "She just finished making me an awesome pair of moccasins. Olga and I took a class on moccasins."

Norris has tried her hand at painting, basket weaving, photography and, most recently, beadwork. Just like the others in the group, she will bring in the items she's working on to get feedback, see what's working and what isn't.

"Here you can say, 'What do you think, how's this look?' And you get real, helpful comments," Mary Fredrichs said. Both Fredrichs and Bania were elementa-

ry school teachers in "another life," and art played heavily into their teaching. Bania said she built her curriculum around hands-on activities.

"When we were elementary teachers, back in the day, we got to do a lot of creative things in the midst of our teaching," Fredrichs said.

The art gallery isn't just a place for artists to gather and exchange critiques, ideas, knowledge or gossip, it's also a place for residents and tourists to stop by to peruse the ever-changing collection and buy a piece of art. Though there are several large pieces, the artists try to create smaller prints with tourists in mind for travel purposes. If somebody wants a painting or another piece of art that might be too big to take back on a cruise ship or flight, the gallery will mail the item.

Along with original works of art, the gallery sells quilt patterns, some of which are unique to Wrangell, Fredrichs said.

Most of the art is inspired by Wrangell, such as Benjamin's paintings, which are based on photos she's taken from trips up the Stikine and around the island.

Whatever medium each artist uses they'll keep learning and creating.

"There are so many mediums to work with," Bania said. They'll keep doing it "till we're pushing up daisies."

The Wrangell Art Gallery, at 208 Front St., is open to new members for a monthly membership fee. It is open on Thursdays, when cruise ships are in town, and by appointment.

SEARHC to add four rooms at its long-term care facility

BY SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

The SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium plans to break ground in June on a 1,800-square-foot four-room expansion to the 14-bed long-term care facility at Wrangell Medical Center.

The expansion was prompted by the community's need for long-term care rooms "that are typically hard to come by," SEARHC spokesperson Lyndsey Y. Schaefer said via email on Friday.

SEARHC is adding to the building for the extension, she said Monday, but declined to provide a cost of the construction. "As it's a pure estimate at this point, I'd rather not share. When the project is underway,

I'd be more open, but it's premature at this point," Schaefer said.

Juneau-based Dawson Construction is the general contractor for the expansion project, Dwane Ballou, facilities manager at SEARHC, said last Wednesday.

Dawson Construction is the same contractor that built the \$30 million hospital and long-term facility, which opened in 2021.

Ballou said he will oversee the construction and his boss, Michael Pountney, director of facility services, will manage the project for SEARHC.

The expansion should be complete by the end of the year, Schaefer said.

Wrangell wins \$15,000 in Vans shoe art contest

BY MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

The grand prize winner has been announced in the Vans Custom Culture nationwide art contest and, unfortunately, it was not Wrangell High School.

Vans announced last Thursday that Moanalua High School in Honolulu, Hawaii, was selected as the grand prize winner, with a \$50,000 award. Wrangell was one of four runners-up, winning \$15,000 for the high school art program.

Wrangell submitted two pairs of decorated Vans shoes back in March under the guidance of teacher Tasha Morse. She didn't expect what happened next.

"I went into this a bit unenthused, thinking that we were going to apply and it would stop there, or if we did get into the 250 initial schools, that we would design our shoes and that would be it," Morse said. Not only did the shoes win a place in the top 250, they went on to win a spot in the top 50. Public voting led to a spot in the top five and a chance at the \$50,000 prize.

The experience has empowered Morse to

try more things.

"The whole experience has been really surreal," Morse said. "It went from 0 to 100 (mph) in no time at all. I feel like Dorothy in 'The Wizard of Oz'; I have never had so many people interested in a pair of red shoes in my life. I am also proud of the kids and their hard work, and I am feeling so incredibly lucky to be their teacher."

Morse said the \$15,000 prize money will allow the art class to do things it normally can't do, like inviting guest artists to give demonstrations, pay for online art classes for students who can't fit art into their daily schedule, or purchase needed supplies to experiment in different mediums.

Cyni Crary, director of the Wrangell Museum, has agreed to put the shoes on display through the summer so that people can get an up-close look at the artistic and winning project.

Waiting for the contest results was probably the hardest part for Morse, who admitted she was distracted for a week to see if the school won.

"(It's) such a relief," she said. "Can I go to sleep now?"

Congratulations to Jenn Miller-Yancey
on your retirement after 30 years with Wrangell School District.

Your dedication to the youth of Wrangell and the impact you have made is amazing and is very much appreciated! You have touched the lives of so many!

Wishing you the very best in your new endeavor in June!

Teachers Plant the Seeds of Knowledge that Grow Forever!!

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Were schools as important as the dividend

By LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

The Legislature adjourned on time last week, a nice change from past special sessions that got in the way of summer fishing, watching baseball, eating anything off the grill (except eggplant) and sitting outdoors in the sun doing nothing.

Lawmakers settled on a healthy and wealthy but not necessarily wise dividend that will put \$12,800 into the hands of a family of four this fall. As expected months ago, that single issue consumed the largest amount of political negotiating in the Legislature's final days. House and Senate members also passed several pieces of legislation, but it was the amount of the dividend that dominated much of the tense talks between members.

No doubt spending billions of dollars should take time. Even overspending — as the Legislature did on the dividend — requires a lot of work, as fiscal realists have to bend and find a compromise with the fiscal dreamers who think the oil money will never run out, the Permanent Fund will never come up short, and the dividend is the biblical golden calf of Alaska political worship. And the big-bigger-biggest PFDers have to accept the math that they are in the minority — so get as much as they can and call it good.

It's just too bad lawmakers don't worship education funding as much as reelection-size dividends. The budget approved by lawmakers spends a lot more on dividends than it does on state funding to K-12 public education.

A big problem is that the state's funding formula for public schools, which is based on enrollment numbers, has not changed since 2017. Unable to gather enough support for a sig-

nificant boost in the base student allocation in state law, House and Senate members agreed as part of the budget to appropriate a one-time extra payment equal to about 5% of the state's K-12 funding. That \$57 million for the 2022-2023 school year, which would provide about \$143,000 in additional assistance for Wrangell schools, will be welcome at districts statewide. But it does nothing to help educate kids the following year or the years after that.

"It's just too bad lawmakers don't worship education funding as much as reelection-size dividends."

It may be the best that politics could deliver, but it's not a gift that keeps giving.

Legislative opponents of increased state funding for schools have argued that test scores are too low and they are not willing to spend more money on poor results. They argue that school district administrative costs are too high, and more should be spent in the classroom.

They essentially blame the schools for not overcoming and solving all the problems of society and families and life, while expecting the schools to do it all at discount prices.

But it's not totally hopeless. As part of a 45-page bill intended to help improve student reading skills, the Legislature inserted a small provision to add a microscopic increase to the state funding formula: One half of 1%, effective with the 2023-2024 school year.

That's an extra \$30 per student in the formula. That'll get school districts enough to buy pizzas for volunteers the next time they are short of paid staff in the classroom.

Alaska should do better for its students. Legislators will have another chance next year to put schools ahead of dividends, and voters should teach them that lesson in this year's elections.

EDITORIAL

The Sentinel will endorse candidates

A newspaper's job is to use its pages to inform, educate, even entertain readers. That includes sharing opinions, though hopefully those opinions are more often educational than entertaining.

More specifically and relevant to this year's upcoming elections, a newspaper's traditional role in the community it serves includes offering its informed opinions about candidates.

The Sentinel this year will endorse candidates in most state and congressional races, maybe even some municipal races, which is a change from past years.

Those endorsements will be strictly limited to the opinions page and will absolutely not influence the paper's news coverage.

Those endorsements will be based on facts and needs of the state and the community, not personalities or politics. When all of the candidates in a race would do the job well, the endorsement could be "all of the above."

And, in fairness to all, the Sentinel will make space available on the opinions page for competing endorsements. That's part of educating and informing — providing space for multiple viewpoints. The only rule is to keep it civil and respectful, no eye gouging, no smashing chairs over anyone's heads like in TV wrestling, and no repeating false allegations such as President Joe Biden and his street gang masquerading as Santa's elves stole the 2020 election out from under Rudolph's red nose.

It takes a lot of work to study the candidates, to learn about the issues, and elections are too important for a newspaper not to share its knowledge and view of the ballot choices.

Telling readers which candidates the newspaper supports and why is intended to promote a more educated electorate who can make their own decisions based on their own values and priorities. No publisher expects readers to religiously follow a newspaper's endorsements as a voting guide. Rather, newspapers hope that readers will at least consider the points raised before deciding on which candidates to support.

Disagree, grumble, crumple up the newspaper in a wad and toss it on the fire, or wrap it around a dead fish. Vote how you want, but cast your ballot knowing more than what a Facebook post tells you. If the Sentinel's endorsements help, the paper has done its job.

— Wrangell Sentinel

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thank you to Grand View for showing the best of Wrangell

I would like to send a very heartfelt thank you to Leslie and Alan Cummings, owners of the Grand View Bed and Breakfast.

When my brother, Craig, passed, I called the Grand View Bed and Breakfast to

make reservations. Leslie answered. She said, "I know why you are coming home. I am so sorry for your loss. You are family. Come down, stay as long as you want, I won't charge you." She even gave me a car!

Leslie represents the Wrangell I remember and love.
Jane Campbell

Legislature

Continued from page 1

of the "back pay" in the budget. The money would go to the municipality, which owns the school buildings and paid the bond debt, not to the school district operating budget. There are no spending restrictions from the state on how municipalities might choose to spend the catch-up funds.

The school district, however, will receive about \$143,000 more than expected from the state for the 2022-2023 school year. The budget bill waiting for the governor's review includes a one-time payment of \$57 million for school districts statewide, providing a 5% boost for next year in the state's per-student funding allocation for school operating budgets.

The one-time money brings state funding to public schools for K-12 education to about \$1.23 billion for the next fiscal year, the second-largest single spending category after the dividend.

Educators and many legislators pushed for a permanent increase this year in the K-12 funding formula, but had to settle for the one-year appropriation.

Supporters of increased state funding for schools did

manage to win legislative approval of a 0.5% increase in the base student allocation starting with the 2023-2024 school year. That small increase, coming after no change in the formula since 2017, was inserted into a separate bill dealing with young students who are behind in their reading skills. It will raise the base allocation by \$30 per pupil.

Payout to Alaskans decided on final night

The major battle in the final days and hours of the legislative session last week was deciding on the amount of this fall's payment to Alaskans.

The House earlier in the session had approved about \$2,600 — half as the annual Permanent Fund dividend and half as a one-time energy relief payment to help people paying high costs for gasoline, diesel, marine and heating fuels. The Senate approved a \$5,500 payment, calling it a \$4,200 PFD and \$1,300 for energy relief.

Lawmakers ended up with the \$3,200 payment to Alaskans after a plan to make it \$3,850 passed the Senate but failed to achieve enough votes in the House.

Last year's PFD was \$1,114.

The 10-year average is around \$1,300.

"The number we arrived at for the PFD is a reasonable number," Ketchikan Rep. Dan Ortiz said of the \$3,200. The eight-year veteran of the House said the \$5,500 payment would have weakened the state's finances and could have jeopardized public services, particularly if oil prices head back down next year. Ortiz also represents Wrangell.

The House fell one vote short of the three-quarters majority required to accept the \$3,850 payout, which would have required withdrawing \$420 million from the Constitutional Budget Reserve Fund. To guard against easy access, the fund requires a supermajority vote in both the House and Senate to make a withdrawal. House members voted 29-11 to draw out enough money to kick up the payout to \$3,850, but 30 votes were needed.

Ortiz voted against the additional withdrawal from savings. Leaving the money in savings will help the state in future budgets to meet its obligations, he said in an interview with the Ketchikan Daily News.

House Minority Leader Cathy Tilton, a Wasilla Re-

Oldest continuously published paper in Alaska



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Assembly considers three options to repair or replace Public Safety Building

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

The borough assembly is looking at updated cost estimates and options to repair or replace the ailing Public Safety Building. If the assembly settles on a plan, it could go to voters this fall to seek approval to issue bonds to pay for the work.

Assembly members were scheduled Tuesday evening to review three options presented by the Capital Facilities Department on what to do with the beleaguered, 34-year-old structure that houses the borough's police department, jail, fire department, indoor shooting range and motor vehicle department, the federal Transportation Security Administration, U.S. Customs and state court system.

The building needs replacing of the roof, drains, structural framing, siding, interior wall-board, exterior doors and windows, interior finishes and electric/telecom work.

The assembly has been struggling for years with how to repair, rebuild or replace the building, and how to pay for the work.

Three options were up for discussion at Tuesday's assembly meeting.

The first would be to renovate the existing Public Safety Building in three phases, dealing with the most critical needs first. Phase 1 would include replacing the flat roofs with sloped roofs. It also would include rebuilding the building "envelope," which includes exterior wall systems and siding, doors and windows.

That first phase could cost \$4.1 million, according to a summary statement presented to the borough assembly for its meeting by Capital Facilities Director Amber Al-Haddad.

Phase II would address mechanical issues, such as plumbing and heat and ventilation. Phase III would deal with architectural finishes, accessibility, a standby generator and other rebuilds.

The presentation for the assembly did not include cost estimates for the second or third phase of the gradual approach to the project.

The second option would be to renovate the entire building in one project, at an estimated cost of \$16 million.

The third option would be to build a new building at a new site, the corner of Bennett Street and Ishiyama Drive, which could cost \$51 million, up from a \$24 million estimate in 2020. That would include the cost of demolishing much of the existing structure.

The new building would not include the fire department, according to the summary presented to the assembly. The existing fire department space at the old building would be maintained, as well as the shooting range. The remainder of the building would be demolished.

AMC Engineers said it would charge \$6,830 for an updated cost estimate for the renovation project, and \$34,690 for an updated estimate for new construction. The latest cost estimates for the work are two years old.

Once a new project cost is determined, and an option selected, Al-Haddad wrote, "we would proceed to seek funding opportunities and/or (general obligation) bonding."

Voter approval is required for general obligation bonds, which are backed by the borough's tax revenues. Wrangell's annual general election is in October.

After discussions with the Alaska Municipal Bond Bank Authority, which assists communities with selling bonds to investors, Wrangell could look at paying 4% to 4.25% interest on the debt, Al-Haddad wrote in her report for the assembly meeting.

The actual interest rate would depend on multiple factors.

Repayment of the debt would start the year after the bonds are sold.

For example, a \$10 million, 20-year general obligation bond at 4.25% would require debt payments of close to \$750,000 a year, requiring a significant increase in property taxes unless the borough could find other sources of revenue.



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Graduates Rowen Wiederspoehn, left, and James Shilts share smiles as they hold up their diplomas before exiting the stage.

Graduation

Continued from page 1

"The last four years have not been easy, but here we are, ready to graduate," valedictorian Liana Carney said in her speech. "Over the years, we worked hard to get to this point, but we didn't get here by ourselves."

Carney thanked all the parents, teachers, coaches and advisers for keeping them on track and steering the seniors toward graduation.

"Thank you for making school mean more than just work to us," she said.

A video showing pictures of

the graduates as children played at the graduation, followed by a video of well wishes from those who raised each student and saw them through their school years. In turn, the seniors took flowers into the audience to give to their loved ones as a sign of appreciation.

Seniors then walked across the stage to accept their diplomas one by one, exiting the other side as a high school graduate.

"Don't waste a bit (of time) living somebody else's life, make your life count for something," Carney said. "Follow your passions."

Retirement

Continued from page 1

However, it's the past two years that really stand out for Davis as he took the helm as the assistant principal. He said getting the students and staff through COVID-19 has been a challenge, but he's proud of his colleagues working together and doing "the best we could."

The kids have also had a positive influence on Davis. He said the students who started and continue to run the BASE group (Building a Supportive Environment) have been a role model for him.

Davis is taking an adventurous approach to retirement. His granddaughter, who graduated from Wasilla High School this year, will join him as he travels to Seattle, where he's buying a car, loading it up with their luggage and driving across country. They plan to settle in a state they've never lived in somewhere in the South.

"I'll miss the kids. I taught middle school for years and years and years. It was a circus, but it was always fun," Davis said. "I'm also going to miss my colleagues. We've not always agreed but we've always supported each other. I highly respect everyone. Leaving them, that's going to be hard."

Born and raised in Wrangell, Miller-Yancey spent the entirety of her 30-year career at Evergreen, never even filling out an application or submitting a resume. She attended the University of Portland in Oregon. She double-majored to receive a degree in teaching and one in special education because she knew it would help her teaching career.

"I always wanted to be a teacher or a cook on my dad's boat. ... I got the opportunity to do both," she said.

Miller-Yancey came back home to Wrangell to figure out her next move. She submitted resumes to schools through the state because she had an



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Bob Davis stops for a moment during a hectic week. He will retire next month from the role of assistant principal at Wrangell High School and Stikine Middle School after more than 30 years as a teacher and administrator.

Alaska teacher education loan. The principal of Evergreen at the time, Dave Dirksen, found out she was back in town and called her. Despite not having applied in Wrangell, she agreed to an interview and was hired on the spot.

"I was in this room (now the assistant principal's office) for 24 years, teaching mainly first and second graders," she said. "It was kind of fun for all those 24 years I got to tell every one of those classes that I, myself, got to go to first grade in this classroom."

Many accomplishments come to mind when Miller-Yancey looks back over her career. She said a few of the standouts are being part of the continuous progress education model, which tracks individual student progress rather than focusing on overall class progress, and in 2010 being named a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, a national program that looks at schools that perform at exemplary levels. Evergreen was also named a Distinguished School by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 2019.

After high turnover of princi-

pals at the school, Miller-Yancey was urged by colleagues to become the assistant principal three years ago. She refused at first, but then relented and was hired for the position. It's been challenging, though she said she believes it was made harder because of COVID-19.

She didn't take lightly the decision to retire, and went back and forth on it throughout the year. She made up her mind and submitted her resignation on April 19. She was intent on taking a year off to figure out if she would stay retired or go back to work. Two days later she was offered a job with the Alaska Department of Education as an education administrator in the Division of Innovation and Education Excellence with a focus on reading. She took the job and will be able to work remotely from Wrangell.

Miller-Yancey said she will miss the staff, students and being in the classroom, where she feels most at home.

"I am a classroom teacher at heart, there is no doubt that I am in my element in the classroom," she said. "I love these kids like family."

SEARHC

Continued from page 1

agreement," Prysunka said.

Borough Manager Jeff Good last Thursday said, "It's definitely good for Wrangell, and a good partnership moving forward to support the community."

Good said the payments are not directed to any particular project or service, just as property tax revenues go into the general fund for assembly appropriation. "We're definitely going to partner with them (SEARHC) to make sure their services are met and

the funds will be distributed where they are needed."

The tribal nonprofit owns the hospital, clinic and other office and rental housing properties in town, including the Amanda Building on Lynch Street across from City Hall, where contract staff such as traveling nurses and their families are housed.

The health care provider does not make payments in lieu of property taxes in Sitka or Juneau, where it owns much more property than in Wrangell.

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

The Friends of the Museum Invite the Community to a Potluck Dinner



"Oh, Lord! Not another wine-and-cheese party."

MAY 28 6PM

Speakers | Door Prizes | Entertainment
Alaska Airlines Tickets

Membership Drive - Become a Member (\$25-\$100)
New & current members get 10 extra door prize tickets!

~Sweet Tides Pulled Pork Sliders~

THE NOLAN CENTER

High school students earn achievements, scholarships

Sentinel staff

An award and scholarship ceremony held May 13 at Wrangell High School lauded the achievement of many students and presented seniors with scholarships to further their educations.

Teachers Lisa Brooks, Jack Carney, Winston Davies, Ann Hilburn, Donna Massin and Tasha Morse all presented various students with certificates and plaques to commemorate their accomplishments for the year.

Community members presented a bevy of different scholarships to the seniors, such as Virginia Oliver, who presented Kendra Meissner and Rowen Wiederspohn with the Wrangell Cooperative Association scholarship. Oliver also teaches at the high school.

Awards

Teacher: Lisa Brooks

English awards: Liana Carney, Kiara Harrison, Rylee Chelette

Teacher: Winston Davies

Wrangell High School Shop Student of the Year: Darryl Smith

Outstanding Beginner Welder: Ethan Blatchley

Workhorse Award: Jimmy Baggen

Shop Student of the Year runner-up: Nathan Stutz

Teacher: Tasha Morse

Tri M inductees: Addy Andrews, Alisha Armstrong, Ander Edens, Daniel Harrison, Max Lloyd

Honor Fest participation award: Paige Baggen (band), Ander Edens (choir)

Music² (for taking band and choir): Ander Edens, Addy Andrews

State Art participant: Paige Baggen

Art Fest participation: Cassidy Cowan, Nathale Keith

Vans art team: Paige Baggen, Cassidy Cowan, Sophia Hagelman, Nathale Keith, Rowen Wiederspohn

One pair of custom Vans shoes (for placing in top five of Custom Culture art contest, each student contributed brainstorming ideas and/or worked on project): Paige Baggen, Steven Bales, Randy Churchill, Cassidy Cowan, Elias Decker, Jake Eastaugh, Keely Good, Sophia Hagelman, Carter Hammer, Jacen Hay, Nathale Keith,

Rowen Wiederspohn, Aubrey Wynne, Leroy Wynne

Teacher: Ann Hilburn

Life Skill class
Amazing Attitude/Most Friendly award: Keely Good
Perseverance award: Jason Gadd

American Sign Language class

Best Overall Signer: Nathale Keith

Teacher: Jack Carney

Seward's Outstanding Achievement award: Aubrey Wynne, Daniel Harrison, Rylee Chelette, Ander Edens, Adeline Andrews

U.S. History classes
Lincoln's Outstanding Achievement award: Brodie Gardner, Devlyn Campbell,

Nikolai Bardin-Siekawitch, Mia Wiederspohn, Spencer Petticrew, Will Ashton, Rylee Chelette, Jacen Hay, Leroy Wynne

Health class
Maslow's Outstanding Achievement award: Sophia Hagelman, Ander Edens, Daniel Harrison

Economics
Smith's Outstanding Achievement award: Liana Carney, Kendra Meissner

Wolf of Wrangell Street award (for winning both the stock simulator and personal finance simulator): James Shilts

Government
Locke's Award of Outstanding Achievement: Jimmy Baggen, Caleb Garcia, Liana Carney, Darryl Smith, Kendra Meissner

Physical education/strength training
Improved Athlete award: Kyle Hommel, Della Churchill, Lucas Schneider, Trevyn Gillen, Ethan Blatchley, Jackson Powers, Vanessa Johnson

Lifetime Fitness award (four years in physical education): Jake Eastaugh, Rowen Wiederspohn, Liana Carney, James Shilts

Teacher: Donna Massin

Calculus Student of the Year: Kiara Harrison

Certificate of Achievement for Outstanding Work in Calculus: Kiara Harrison

Physics Student of the Year: Kiara Harrison

Certificate of Achievement for Outstanding Work in Physics: Kiara Harrison, Nikolai Bar-



PHOTOS BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Teacher Jack Carney, above, awards students Eden Anders, left, and Daniel Harrison with the Seward's Outstanding Achievement Award, which focuses on Alaska studies. Virginia Oliver, below, who teaches Tlingit language courses at the high school, presents the Wrangell Cooperative Association Scholarship to seniors Kendra Meissner and Rowen Wiederspohn. They each received \$1,000.

din-Siekawitch, Will Ashton, Daniel Harrison

Precalculus Student of the Year (tie): Daniel Harrison, Will Ashton

Certificate of Achievement for Outstanding Work in Geometry: Mia Wiederspohn

Scholarships

University of Alaska Scholars, \$12,000: Liana Carney

State of Alaska Performance Scholarships qualifiers, up to \$47,552 over four years: Jimmy Baggen, Liana Carney, Kendra Meissner, Rowen Wiederspohn

Sealaska, \$2,669: Jamie Early

Wrangell Pulp Scholarship, \$20,000 each: Liana Carney, Jimmy Baggen, Renée Roberts

Wrangell Pat Roppel Memorial Scholarship, \$5,000: Jamie Early

Wrangell Cooperative Association Scholarship, \$1,000 each: Rowen Wiederspohn, Kendra Meissner

Sig and Helen Decker Memorial Scholarship, \$3,000: Jamie Early

Harry H. Hirshik Scholarship, \$1,500: Jimmy Baggen

AAU Helen Decker "Living Beautifully Scholarship," \$2,000 each: Jamie Early, Kendra Meissner, Liana Carney

Stikine Sportsmen Association Scholarship, \$2,000: Liana Carney

Frieda Lust Trust Fund Scholarship, \$100: Jamie Early



Alfred B. Ryll Scholarship, \$100: Emma Martinsen

Wrangell Teachers' Association, \$500: Liana Carney

Alaska Peace Officer Association Scholarship, \$500: Darryl Smith

Alaska Native Sisterhood Camp No. 1 Scholarship, \$500: Kendra Meissner

Kiks.adí Scholarship, \$500: Kendra Meissner

Alaska Native Sisterhood Scholarship, \$500: Liana Carney

WMC Foundation Health Careers Scholarship, \$1,000 for each of four years: Liana Carney, Jamie Early, Kendra Meissner

BASE Kindness Scholarship, \$500: Sophia Hagelman

Colin Bunes Memorial Scholarship, \$1,000 for two years: Kendra Meissner

Wrangell Chamber of Commerce Scholarship, \$1,500: Liana Carney

BPOE Most Valuable Student Participants Scholarship, \$200 each: Jamie Early, Emma Martinsen, James Shilts

Wrangell Emblem Club No. 87 Scholarship, \$500: Jamie Early

Virginia Kaspar Scholarship, \$1,000: Kendra Meissner

Joel Wing Scholarship, \$1,000: Jamie Early

Greg Scheff Memorial Scholarship, \$2,000 each: Jimmy Baggen, Kendra Meissner

Allen Benjamin Scholarship, \$1,000: Kendra Meissner

Anna Loftus Ream (Seattle Foundation) Scholarship, \$2,500: Liana Carney

Evergreen holds second art walk; includes plant sale to raise funds for EATS

BY MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

The turnout was so nice, they did it twice.

Due to the popularity of the Evergreen Elementary art walk held on Dec. 1, the school's social-emotional learning teacher Tawney Crowley worked with staff and students to hold another May 17.

Along with art exhibits covering tables, lining walls and hanging from the ceiling, Tracey Martin, the Evergreen Agricultural Testing Site (EATS) garden instructor, was selling plants from the garden to raise funds to keep the project going.

"We have tomatoes, cucumbers, broccoli, cauliflower, dill, brussels sprouts, basil, parsley, house plants," Martin said.

The garden, like the artwork, ties into the social-emotional learning aspect being taught through the art projects. Martin has equated the garden to friendships for the students that help grow the plants. "You have to water them, fertilize them, give them space to take care of them," she said. "If you just leave them alone, what's going to happen? If you neglect them, they're going to die."

Most of the art on display was from a class lesson or prompted by a U.S. Forest Service staffer who directed the students



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Fifth grader Jimmy Jabusch, left, and his mom Natalya Jabusch peruse a wall display of drawings during the Evergreen Elementary Art Walk on May 17.

on how to create bird-related art for Birdfest. Cranes, geese and other types of fowl were displayed throughout the halls of the school.

"We had the bird festival and a lady taught them how to do (snow goose

silhouettes)," said fourth grade teacher Brian Merritt. "It was nice because we talked about snow goose migration and how it applied to Wrangell, then they got to make the silhouettes with sponges by dabbing it. It's amazing. It's about three

hours' worth of work."

Natalya Jabusch, mother of fifth grader Jimmy Jabusch, walked with her son throughout the halls, looking for his artwork. "He's very artistically inclined," she said of her son's abilities. "This is our second time. They did it before a while ago. I think it's awesome."

But with all the floating hot-air balloons, jellyfish and whale tails, one display caused plenty of stir and murmurs. The high school art class Vans Custom Culture shoes were on display near the end of the walk. Art teacher Tasha Morse stood by to answer any questions about the shoes and the contest. And, no, she assured those asking, she still hadn't been informed if Wrangell was the winner of the \$50,000 grand prize.

"I can't concentrate on my job right now," Morse said. "It's the not knowing and the possibility that it's still out there. We've gone this far, now I have to know."

Ultimately, Wrangell was not picked as the grand prize winner, but still won \$15,000 as a runner-up. Moanalua High School in Honolulu, Hawaii, was chosen as the winner.

Cleanup of abandoned float debris needs high tides in October

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

A cleanup of abandoned pieces of old harbor floats the tribe was trying to get done this spring may be delayed until October. Project lead Kim Wickman said the high tides they need during daytime hours won't occur until then.

Though the full effort will have to wait, Wickman, the Indian General Assistance Program technician at Wrangell Cooperative Association, and Valerie Massie, IGAP coordinator, tied off three large chunks of the old floats at Shoemaker Bay beach on May 18.

The pieces are 40- to 50-year-old float fragments, polystyrene foam in crumbling concrete shells, leftovers from the Shoemaker Bay harbor float replacement project in 2018.

"Styrofoam is a forever product that never really goes away," Wickman said Monday via email. "It will break down and get smaller but it will always be there."

As it floats around the ocean or once it ends up on shore, it finds its way to birds, fish and other subsistence foods, she said. "WCA IGAP took on this project because it was an environmental concern that will affect subsistence foods and it's a great opportunity for the community to work together," Wickman said.

The pieces were part of 60- to 80-foot-long old floats that the borough sold in 2018 when it should have trashed them, Port Director Steve Miller said in January.

Wickman said they have located four



PHOTO BY SARAH ASLAM/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Haig Demerjian last Thursday stood on the deck of his home on Shoemaker Loop Road, looking out at a section of old harbor float that washed up on the beach two days earlier.

float segments this year so far, and have tagged them for removal, but it's a moving target, literally. They were able to mark the pieces after a 19-foot high tide swept through at 1:51 a.m. on May 17, and an 18.9-footer came in at 2:33 a.m. May 18, leaving the pieces beached on the shore.

"Last year we had come up with 13, and unfortunately many of them have moved and we are tracking them down," Wickman said.

WCA needs at least a 19-foot high tide that brings the water higher up on the beach — and daylight for the work — because the floats "are super, super heavy. A boat might not be able to pull them off the beach. If we do try to do it without the buoyancy of the tide, we may end up putting Styrofoam all over the place," Wickman said.

WCA is conducting the cleanup in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service and the borough's Port and Harbors

Department. The Forest Service will provide boats in October for the removal, Corree Delabrué, district interpreter at the Forest Service, said May 18.

It's all a matter of timing, she said. "Last fall, when we had the right tide, they just weren't able to get the floats removed on that day. There is a window of time where we weren't able to do it on that day, so the floats shifted," Delabrué said.

Another issue is disposal. "Once we collect these things, how do we dispose of them? That was another piece of that (issue)," Delabrué said.

One of the pieces washed up on Haig and Bonnie Demerjian's beachfront at their home on Shoemaker Loop Road on May 17.

"They're a hazard to navigation," Haig Demerjian said last Thursday. "They're eyesores and also pollution."

"Rather than doing the right thing and having the harbor destroy them and throw them away, they let people up and down the beach have them," Demerjian said. "They tied them up, they don't do anything with them; the storm comes, the ropes break. And they float around. People have seen them all over."

While records were kept of who bought the old floats, it's now impossible to identify who owns the debris floating in the water. Over the past three to four years, 10-foot-square pieces have been found, up to 20 that they know of, Public Works Director Tom Wetor said in January — a microtrash-generating mix of concrete and foam that lingers in the environment.

Legislation directs schools to help students with low reading scores

The Alaska Beacon
and Ketchikan Daily News

By the narrowest of margins, 21-19, the House on the last night of the legislative session passed a bill implementing a statewide approach to how school districts intervene when students have difficulty reading.

The session's original reading legislation had been blocked in the House, opposed by several rural lawmakers and Democrats, but the Senate merged it into another education bill on the next-to-the-last day of session, forcing the House to accept or reject the entire package.

The reading intervention bill was a priority of Gov. Mike Dunleavy and Anchorage Sen. Tom Begich. It is intended to assist students in achieving reading proficiency by the end of third grade.

Under the bill, districts will need to administer a state reading screening tool, write individual reading improvement plans for deficient readers in kindergarten through third grade, and provide reading intervention services.

Ketchikan Rep. Dan Ortiz, a former public school teacher, voted against the merged bill on May 18. In an interview with the Ketchikan Daily News two days after the Legislature adjourned, he said the bill was well-intentioned but the paperwork and regulation will divert teachers from the students they're trying to help.

Ortiz, whose district includes Wrangell, also said the bill doesn't include enough funding to offset the extra time and resources that teachers and districts will have to spend to comply with the changes.

"They require the teachers to spend extra time doing individual reading plans, but there's no compensation for them to do that," Ortiz said. The result, he said, becomes: "Let's add it on to what they're already supposed to do."

The measure approved on the final night, House Bill 114, originally related to education loans. It left the House on April

25 at two-and-a-half pages long. When it got to the Senate floor on May 17, senators made amendments, including adding the reading legislation, known as Senate Bill 111. As a result, the bill that came back to the House for a concurrence vote on May 18, the final night of the session, was 45 pages long.

During the final vote in the House, just hours before adjournment, more representatives spoke in opposition to the bill than in favor during floor debate, including Bethel Rep. Tiffany Zulkosky.

"My concerns are rooted in the protection of small schools, Alaska Native children, Alaska Native language-speaking students, that such an onerous policy would unintentionally disadvantage these groups to their peers," Zulkosky said. "I also remain very skeptical at the notion that increased testing, be it in the form of reading screeners, is going to solve these underlying inequities and the root causes for the disparities in educational achievement."

The bill details new requirements for schools, including implementing the statewide reading screening tool, training staff, reporting to the Department of Education and providing intensive reading intervention services.

The bill "does not help rural Alaska," Dillingham Rep. Bryce Edgmon said, and sidesteps the real issues of teacher recruitment and retention. "My superintendents tell me if we can get qualified teachers to come out and to stay and to get familiar with the communities, we can get our kids reading. We don't need another bill."

Another part of the merged bill adds \$30 to the amount the state pays per student to school districts to help fund operating expenses, increasing the base student allocation from \$5,930 to \$5,960. Multiple House members took issue with the size of the increase, saying it wasn't enough. The state funding formula has not changed since 2017.

"\$30 per student ... can't possibly pay for the extensive mandates. These aren't unfunded mandates, they are grossly un-

derfunded mandates," Anchorage Rep. Zack Fields said.

Bill supporter Anchorage Rep. James Kaufman said the legisla-

tion is "an incremental improvement and it may not satisfy all of the wants and needs but it is viewed as a step forward."

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Borough will need to compensate for wetlands loss in Dewey trail project

By SARAH ASLAM
Sentinel reporter

The borough will be required to pay an estimated \$30,000 to \$40,000 to fulfill a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers mitigation stipulation in order to obtain authorization to fill wetlands for the Mount Dewey trail extension project.

The nearly \$1 million trail project will hinge on what is called compensatory mitigation, after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in March found the project will affect 0.55 acres, 0.05 more acres of wetlands than the borough anticipated, Capital Facilities Director Amber Al-Haddad said last Thursday. Compensation is not required for the first 0.5 acres of fill, she said.

The project will link the existing trail to Airport Road, as well as connect the Volunteer Park Loop Trail to Ishiyama Drive (Spur Road).

The borough in January applied for a permit with the Army Corps to construct an off-road parking lot for the trail extension. The parking lot and small sections of the trail work will require filling wetlands.

In March, the Army Corps said the borough will have to provide compensatory mitigation, which could cost \$30,000 to \$40,000, Al-Haddad said.

There are three options: Paying into a program such as the Southeast Alaska Land Trust; purchasing credits in a mitigation bank like the Southeast Alaska Mitigation Bank administered by the federal agency to fund wetlands recovery work; or permittee-responsible mitigation, where the borough sets aside similar, high-value land it has to offset the impact of the project.

Al-Haddad on Monday said the borough would have to set aside 5 acres if it went the route of permittee-responsible mitigation, which is unlikely for the borough to be able to do.

"We have considered that," she said. "We have set aside a large chunk of land, close to 25 acres of land, for compensation for the new hospital and clinic. That took up a lot of the land that

we had available. We really don't have a lot that is of similar value that we could set aside into a conservation (easement)."

Wrangell has borough entitlement lands, but there is a lot of work that would go into setting that up for a compensatory arrangement. "We're just not ready for that, and that would completely delay this project," Al-Haddad said.

Capital Facilities will be looking at a mitigation bank or fee program if the assembly approves the additional funds, she said, adding the request could go to the assembly in June.

Al-Haddad said she's been working with Economic Development Director Carol Rushmore to find out if the compensatory mitigation cost could be covered by the commercial passenger vessel fund, which is money Wrangell gets from its share of the state's tax on cruise ship passengers.

"You have to be able to tie the use of those funds to tourism," Al-Haddad said, as Mount Dewey is used for walking tours and by independent travelers.

"We're still pushing for it to be a 2022 project," Al-Haddad said of the trail extension.

The project is estimated at \$994,579. Funding comes from two federal grants secured in 2014 and 2021, with a 9.03% local match requirement.

Al-Haddad is developing the final design scope for Juneau-based PND Engineers to finish its work so that the job can go out to bid.

Brandon Ivanowicz, engineer at PND Engineers in Juneau, has been working on the project since last July.

"We have more or less completed our scope of services for the borough — surveying, permitting and concept development," Ivanowicz said Thursday.

"We will finish the design hopefully within a month or so, and then we will put that out for construction bidding," Al-Haddad said. The borough is aiming for project completion by the fall, using gravel and local wood products to avoid supply chain delays.

Legislature passes new tax on vape products; fails to adopt one-year motor fuel tax holiday

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Lawmakers on the final day of the legislative session May 18 passed a bill to impose a tax on electronic smoking products, such as e-cigarettes, vaping sticks and refills.

The tax, at 35% of the wholesale price, was in part a compromise between the original version of the bill, at 75%, and opponents who argued against taxing vaping products that could be a healthier alternative for smokers than traditional cigarettes, which are heavily taxed by the state and many municipalities.

The new tax will take effect Jan. 1, 2023, unless Gov. Mike Dunleavy vetoes the measure. The governor did not take a position on the bill during the Legislature's deliberations.

The bill's sponsor, Kodiak Sen. Gary Stevens, has been working for several years to amend state law to tax vaping devices and liquids similar to cigarettes and other tobacco products.

In committee testimony on the bill, Stevens explained his intent and hope is that the added tax would deter young people from using vape products, which heat up a nicotine liquid to deliver an aerosol that users inhale.

"The goal here is to get it (vaping products) out of the hands of our children," Stevens testified in the Senate Finance Committee on April 19.

The final version of the bill passed the House 31-9 and the Senate 18-2 on May 18.

It also raises the minimum age for anyone selling tobacco products to 21, while 19 remains the minimum age to possess a

tobacco product. The original version of Stevens' bill would have raised the minimum age for possession to 21 to match federal law, but that provision was deleted in the House.

The maximum fine for underage possession would be set at \$150.

Also on the final day of the legislative session, the Senate failed to act on a House bill that would have suspended the state's motor fuel, marine fuel and aviation gas taxes for a year, until June 30, 2023.

Suspending the tax, at 8 cents a gallon on gasoline, could have saved an average Alaska driver around \$30 to \$50 for the year, depending on how much fuel they buy.

The measure passed the House 36-2 on May 4, and made it through its first stop in the Senate, the Transportation Committee, on May 11, but died without a hearing in the Senate Finance Committee in the final week.

Removing the tax for a year would have cost the state about \$35 million in lost revenues.

Separate from the motor fuel tax, the legislation would have increased the state tax on refined fuel products by about half-a-penny per gallon to boost support for Alaska's spill prevention and response program, which is short of funding.

The account is used to clean up spills at service stations, dry cleaners and other sites around Alaska. The half-cent increase would have raised an estimated \$3.6 million a year for the Spill Prevention and Response Division at the Department of Environmental Conservation.

Medical center in need of volunteers for drill

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

On June 7, Wrangell Medical Center will hold its annual mass casualty exercise to prepare staff for real emergencies. But they need bodies.

"We're looking for up to 10 volunteers that would be a part of the patient base," said hospital administrator Carly Allen. "They would play a specific role that would be assigned to them. They would go through a makeup moulage tent, (making 'wounds') visually apparent."

A few volunteers have already signed up to partici-

pate in the drill, which takes place from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., but depending on the roles assigned, some volunteers might need to show up by 3:30 p.m. or 4 p.m. to be prepared for the drill. Some will have more makeup applied than others.

Allen said she has participated as a health care worker and as a victim in past drills, which can be a lot of fun, but the purpose is much more serious.

"What we're simulating is something that stretches our resources," she said. "It's more patients than we would normally expect. It strains our system and shows where

we have areas that need improvement."

Volunteers must be 18 or older or have a parent's consent, but Allen said it would be good to have younger children or a family to have a wider representation of people in need of treatment. Volunteers must also be willing to commit up to five hours of their time, be interested in role-playing, and understand that the event will be extremely realistic.

Those who would like to volunteer can contact Michelle Walters by calling 360-391-4701 or emailing michelle.walters@tegria.com.



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Visit the employment page on our website for current positions open for recruitment and details on the application process.

FerryAlaska.com/employment

Legislature passes bill to formally recognize tribes

JUNEAU (AP) — The Alaska Legislature has passed a measure to formally recognize tribes in the state. The House on May 18 voted 37-2 to accept a Senate version of the bill that passed a week earlier on a 15-0 vote.

The bill next goes to Gov. Mike Dunleavy.

Supporters of the bill say it is an overdue step that would create opportunities for the state

and tribes to work together.

Putting tribal recognition into law would allow for continuity from one governor's term to the next so that Alaska could work toward long-term solutions to issues with tribes, supporters said.

The measure is similar to an initiative that was slated to go before voters later this year. The ballot group, Alaskans for Better Government, said the bill and initiative are "functionally identical and were written to serve the same purpose — to have the state permanently recognize the 229 federally recognized tribes in Alaska."

Initiatives that qualify for the ballot can be bumped if the Legislature passes substantially similar legislation first. The campaign group in a statement said it anticipates that will be the case here.

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Search suspended for ship passenger who fell overboard

JUNEAU (AP) — The U.S. Coast Guard has suspended the search for a 40-year-old Texas woman who fell overboard off a cruise ship in Lynn Canal, north of Juneau.

The Coast Guard ended the effort May 17 after searching for Selena Pau Pres, of Houston, for about nine hours, Coast Guard Petty Officer Ali Blackburn said. The search was conducted by boat and a helicopter in the waters near Eldred Rock in Lynn Canal, about 20 miles south of Haines.

The captain of the cruise ship Celebrity Solstice reported the missing woman at 3 a.m. May 17, the Coast Guard said.

“Because of the searching that

we’ve done, it has yielded negative results,” Blackburn said. That, coupled with an estimated survival time of just over six hours in the water, led the Coasts Guard to suspend the search, she said.

The survival time was based on factors like water and air temperatures and the person’s age. The National Weather Service said the water temperature was 41 degrees Fahrenheit.

The Celebrity Solstice is operated by Celebrity Cruises, and can carry up to 3,400 passengers and 1,000 crew. It was on the fourth day of a week-long round-trip cruise from Seattle when the woman fell overboard.

Pandemic-era Medicaid benefits will continue for millions until fall

Sentinel staff

The Biden administration has extended the public health emergency declaration for up to 90 days, avoiding the cut-off of Medicaid benefits for millions of lower-income Americans — and thousands of Alaskans — at least until the fall.

The COVID-19 public health emergency, which has been in place since early 2020 and extended multiple times, had been set to expire on July 15.

The declaration allows the federal government to grant emergency authorizations of drugs, vaccines and other health care measures to deal with COVID-19.

If the federal declaration had expired July 15, Alaska’s state health officials would have been faced with a tight timeline to comb through pandemic-swollen Medicaid rolls to establish who would no longer be eligible for benefits when the emergency ends.

Health officials were concerned many of those Alaskans could soon find themselves without health insurance — particularly people who don’t know what steps to take to keep their coverage, don’t have up-to-date contact information on file with the state, or who don’t act in time.

Currently, nearly one in three Alaskans is enrolled in Medicaid, the country’s largest public insurance program. Recipients include eligible low-income adults, children, pregnant women, elderly adults and people with disabilities. States administer the program, which is funded jointly by states and the federal government. Alaska’s Medicaid programs are known as DenaliCare and Denali KidCare.

Under a provision in the federal health emergency, people who might otherwise have lost health care coverage were able to stay on Medicaid for the past two years without needing to submit annual paperwork — even if their income rose high enough that they were no longer eligible for the program.

National estimates put the number of people who stand to lose Medicaid coverage when the health emergency declaration does expire at close to 15 million people, including children.

Officials in Alaska won’t know exactly how many people could lose coverage until they look at each case individually after the emergency ends, an official with the state health department said last month.

Back to work



PHOTO BY SARAH ASLAM/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Port Director Steve Miller pulls newly repaired float tanks from the Marine Service Center to the barge ramp near the City Dock on the morning of May 10. Workers at Dave’s Welding and Repair patched and rebuilt the tanks after port staff found a hole in one of the tanks last fall. After the repaired tanks were fully installed, the borough put the ramp back into service last Sunday, allowing the weekly Alaska Marine Lines barge to return to its usual berth instead of temporary unloading quarters at the former downtown sawmill dock.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL PRIMARY ELECTION

Saturday, June 11, 2022

Candidate Race on Ballot

United States Representative

On Saturday, June 11, 2022 there will be a special primary election to fill the vacancy in the office of United States Representative. This election will be conducted by mail. There will be no polling places open for regular in-person voting on election day. The deadline to register to vote or update your voter registration is May 12th.

Ballots will be automatically mailed to qualified registered voters beginning April 27th. You will vote by selecting one candidate. You must sign your ballot envelope, provide an identifier and a witness signature, and return or mail your ballot by June 11th. If you will not be at your current mailing address or do not receive a ballot, you can contact the Division of Elections.

The Division of Elections’ regional offices will offer early and absentee in-person voting beginning May 27th. They will be open on weekdays between 8AM and 5PM, on weekends with limited hours, and on election day between 7AM and 8PM. For the full schedule and a list of additional early and absentee in-person voting locations throughout the state, visit the Division’s website at AKVoteEarly.alaska.gov.

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	Mat-Su
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1-866-948-8683	1-866-958-8683	1-866-959-8683	1-866-953-8683	1-844-428-8952

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.

Dunleavy selects Corrections commissioner as his running mate

The Associated Press
and Anchorage Daily News

Republican Gov. Mike Dunleavy announced Monday that Nancy Dahlstrom will be his running mate as he seeks reelection this year.

Dahlstrom, a former state legislator from Eagle River who has led the state Department of Corrections under Dunleavy, submitted her resignation as Corrections commissioner on Sunday, according to a statement from Dunleavy's office.

The campaign announcement came just over a week before the June 1 filing deadline for the August primary. Candidates for governor and lieutenant governor run

as a team under a new elections process approved by voters in 2020. Under that system, the four teams that win the most votes in the primary will advance to the November general election, in which ranked-choice voting will be used to determine the winner.

Alaska's current lieutenant governor, Republican Kevin Meyer, previously said he would not seek reelection.

Dahlstrom first served in the state House in 2003, a year after she narrowly lost a primary bid for the seat to Lisa Murkowski. Murkowski's father, newly elected Gov. Frank Murkowski, appointed her to the U.S. Senate after he vacated the seat to take the job of governor.

He then appointed Dahlstrom to replace his daughter in the House.

Dahlstrom served in the House until 2010, when she took a job as a military affairs adviser in Gov. Sean Parnell's administration. But she stayed in the position for just a few weeks, stepping down after critics raised questions about whether her acceptance of the job complied with a provision in the Alaska Constitution that bars lawmakers from taking positions created while they are in office.

The lieutenant governor is largely a ceremonial post. But the office has authority over a few key areas, including the state elections division.

Legislature updates 40-year-old definition of consent in sexual assault

BY LISA PHU
Alaska Beacon

On May 18, the last day of the legislative session, the House and Senate voted unanimously to change how sexual assault can be prosecuted by modernizing the definition of consent.

"Alaska took a gargantuan step forward in updating our laws," said John Skidmore, deputy attorney general for the Criminal Division of the Alaska Department of Law. He spoke during a governor's press conference the day after the session ended.

Under the bill, consent is defined as "a freely given, re-

versible agreement specific to the conduct at issue ... 'Freely given' means agreement to cooperate in the act was positively expressed by word or action."

The bill includes a provision for the trauma response of freezing: "Lack of consent through words or conduct means there is no consent. ... lack of consent does not require verbal or physical resistance and may include inaction."

Another provision of the bill puts into law a reduction in the timeframe for sexual assault kits to be processed to six months; the law current-

ly requires rape kits be processed within a year.

Anchorage Rep. Geran Tarr is relieved her bill to modernize the definition of consent passed this year. "If we delay action, I know that between now and the next time I or anyone else will have the opportunity to address that, hundreds more Alaskans will be harmed," she said during an interview last Thursday.

When a sexual assault is reported, a key element of establishing whether an assault took place is determining if consent was given. Current Alaska law requires the use of force or the threat of

force. Simply saying no isn't enough to establish that consent wasn't given. Doing nothing at all or freezing — which is a common response to trauma — can be seen as consenting. The law has been like that for the past 40 years.

The changes almost did not make it through the Legislature. After more than a dozen committee hearings, Tarr's bill on consent, House Bill 5, was stuck in the House Finance Committee on May 17, one day before the end of regular session.

Tarr was "looking for any vehicle possible that was a public safety piece of legisla-

tion that we might have been able to insert the language into," thus providing a route to passage. "[House Bill] 325 was the perfect vehicle," she said. Tarr coordinated with House Bill 325 sponsor, Anchorage Rep. Sara Rasmussen, whose bill dealt with domestic violence. HB325 had already passed the House and was waiting on Senate action.

On the last day of session, senators merged Tarr's consent legislation into Rasmussen's domestic violence bill, then passed the measure and sent it to the House, which also approved it, sending it to the governor for his consideration.

Searchers find body of man who swam near cruise ship

Anchorage Daily News

The body of a man who had gone missing for a day after swimming near a docked cruise ship in Skagway was found in the water Saturday, according to Alaska State Troopers.

The man, whom troopers identified as William Anthony Rodriguez, 32, from Miami, had last been seen in the water near the cruise ship dock around 2:10 p.m. Friday, troopers said in an on-line report.

According to troopers, Rodriguez had jumped into the water, swam to the nearby shore and stayed there a few minutes, then swam in front of

the bow of the docked cruise ship.

"The individual began to struggle in the area along the bow and then sank in the water," troopers wrote in the report.

His body was found Saturday when a search dog tracked a human scent while searching in the water near where the man was last seen, troopers said.

Troopers, the Skagway Police Department, Skagway Fire Department, U.S. Coast Guard, Southeast Alaska Dogs for Ground Search and divers from Juneau were all involved in the search, troopers said.

Police report

Monday, May 16

Agency assist: Ambulance requested.

Illegally passing a school bus. Agency assist: U.S. Forest Service.

Agency assist: Ambulance requested.

Reckless driving. Traffic stop: Verbal warning for registration tabs.

Tuesday, May 17

Secured vehicle. Vacation check. Civil matter. Agency assist: Ambulance requested.

Wednesday, May 18

Criminal mischief. Motor vehicle accident. Parking. Failure to yield. Dog at large.

Thursday, May 19

Agency assist: Harbor Department. Agency assist: Hoonah Police

Department. Dangerous play.

Friday, May 20

Parental issue: Bullying. Summons service. Arrest for probation violation. Agency assist: Fire Department. Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department. Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.

Saturday, May 21

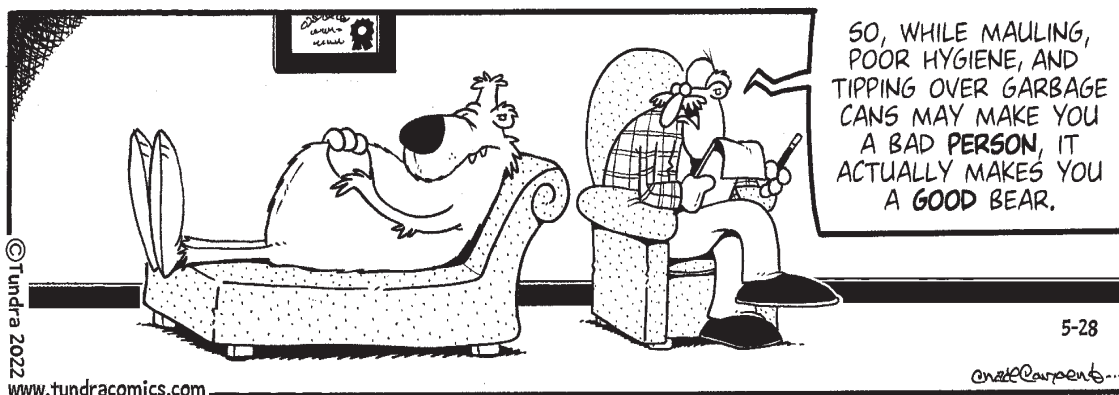
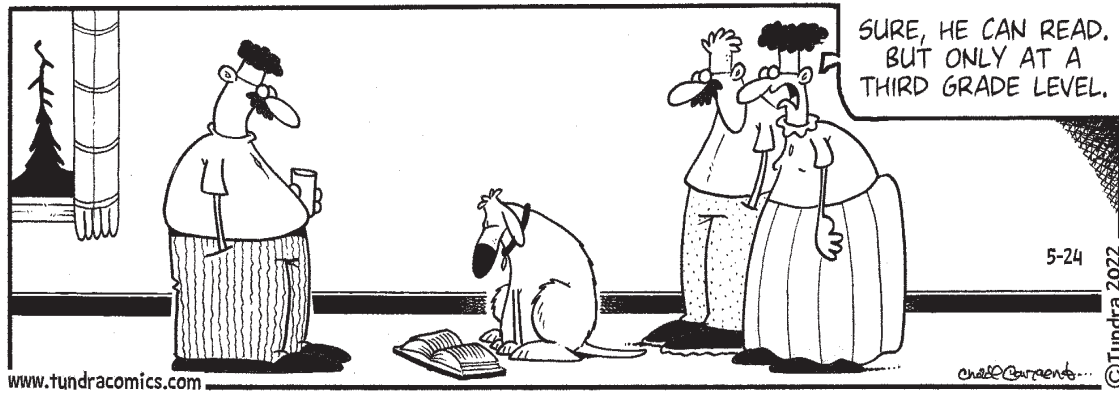
Bar fight. Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department. Agency assist: Ambulance requested by medical alarm. Suspicious person. Driving under the influence: Unfounded.

Sunday, May 22

Violation conditions of release: Arrested. Intoxicated person. Dead deer. Aggressive dog. Dangerous dog.

Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



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Policy for Letters to the Editor

- Letters should be typed or clearly written and no longer than 400 words.
- All letters must be signed by the writer and include a phone number and any affiliation with a group which pertains to the letter.

The Sentinel reserves the right to edit any submissions.

The deadline for submissions is Friday at noon for Wednesday publication.

Letters are run on a space-available basis.

WRANGELL SENTINEL

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Judge again rules against redistricting map that benefits Eagle River voters

JUNEAU (AP) — A state court judge said a majority of members on the board tasked with redrawing Alaska's legislative district boundaries appeared to have adopted a map that splits the Eagle River area into two Senate districts for "political reasons," and he ordered a new map to be used for this year's elections.

The rejected plan put Eagle River, north of Anchorage, and Girdwood, south of Anchorage, into the same Senate district, separated by about 25 miles of uninhabited Chugach State Park.

The judge said he found the board "intentionally discriminated against the communities" in order to maximize Senate representation for Eagle River and the Republican party. The board's plan would have given Eagle River voters significant influence in filling two Senate seats.

Superior Court Judge Thomas Matthews in a decision made public May 16 ordered the Alaska Redistricting Board to adopt on an interim basis a map that in part pairs the two Eagle River area House districts into one Senate district. The decision comes in a second round of redistricting challenges. The map that the judge ordered adopted was the other option the board had considered but rejected when weighing a revised map.

Matthews said he expected a quick review of his decision by the Alaska Supreme Court. The candidate filing deadline for the August primary is June 1.

The redistricting litigation does not affect Wrangell, which will remain in a House district with Ketchikan.

The Alaska Supreme Court in March found constitutional issues with elements of

a map drawn by the board last fall. In one of the instances, the court ruled that a state Senate district pairing part of east Anchorage and the Eagle River area constituted an "unconstitutional political gerrymander."

The board went back to work but later adopted in a 3-2 vote last month essentially the same districts that the court had rejected, linking part of the Eagle River area with south Anchorage and Girdwood for a Senate district and another part of the Eagle River area to an area that includes Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson for another Senate district. The three board members who voted in favor were appointed by Republicans.

In Alaska, each state Senate district is comprised of two state House districts.

Peter Torkelson, the board's executive director, in a statement May 17 said the board will seek an expedited review of the deci-

sion by the state Supreme Court.

Matthews' decision came in response to a challenge filed by Girdwood area residents.

Girdwood residents had testified "that the pairing made no sense, was untenable, that the two areas were politically, culturally and economically different, and that the pairing would benefit Eagle River only while depriving Girdwood of its voice," their attorneys said in court documents.

Matthews wrote that after the matter was sent back to the board, the "majority of the board appears to have assumed it could reach the same result — two reliably conservative senate seats for Eagle River — if only it submitted the senate pairings to additional public comment, regardless of what the public actually preferred."

Legislature creates pathway to try out tribally operated schools

By LISA PHU
Alaska Beacon

Legislation that creates a road-map for establishing tribally operated public schools has passed the Alaska Senate and House and is headed to the governor's desk.

Senate Bill 34 directs the state Board of Education to work with Alaska Native tribal entities on an agreement that would formally recognize the tribes' authority to operate and oversee K-12 schools.

"This creates an option for self-governance in the delivery of culturally relevant place-based education in Alaska, essentially empowering tribes and their communities to have a direct role in transforming systems and providing the cultural support many students need to succeed," Bethel Rep. Tiffany Zulkosky said during House consideration of the measure May 17.

The House voted 37-2 to pass the bill. There was only a single no vote when the measure passed the Senate last month.

"The state-tribal education compacting is a tremendous opportunity, I believe, to embrace the Alaska Indigenous history, its culture, its language and put that into our curriculum for these schools, not just for Alaska Natives, but for all students in our state," bill sponsor Kodiak Sen. Gary Stevens said

during Senate consideration of the measure on April 4.

The bill does not create the compacts or establish any schools. Instead, it sets out a timeline and lays out a process for the creation of up to five demonstration schools open to all students.

Through that process, Alaska Native tribal entities and the state Board of Education would reach a compact, or an agreement, that sets forth the terms and conditions of the relationship, and formally recognizes the tribe's authority to operate and oversee K-12 schools. That proposal would then go to the Legislature.

Joel Isaak-Liq'a yes said the legislation brings tribal voices into the process — along with the state, the school district and teachers union. "So that what the Legislature is seeing is something that comprehensively accounts for these voices in a way that has not been seen previously in our state," Isaak, the project coordinator and tribal liaison for the Department of Education, spoke during the May 6 House Education Committee meeting on the bill.

Tribes from across the state have expressed interest, according to Isaak, "and now that we have something that's solid, we'll have to see who goes through the process and works with us on this."

Sitka Seafoods raises \$130,000 for Ukraine, also donates canned salmon

By SHANNON HAUGLAND
Sitka Sentinel

Silver Bay Seafoods, which started in Sitka 15 years ago, has connections that reach more than 5,000 miles across the world to Ukraine, prompting the company to reach out with sizable monetary and food donations to help those affected by Russia's war on its neighboring country.

"We were devastated by the reports and knew we needed to help, so we kicked off a donation program," said Abby Fredrick, Silver Bay Seafoods director of communications.

After only a few weeks, fishermen, employees and the company raised \$130,000 to donate to the World Central Kitchen, a worldwide hunger relief program. In addition to the money, a 20-foot container of Silver Bay Seafoods canned pink salmon was shipped to Ukraine.

"As a food producer, feeding people seemed to be the best way we could offer some relief during this incredibly difficult time," Fredrick said.

Silver Bay Seafoods is ma-

majority owned by fishermen and has processing plants in Sitka, Naknek, False Pass, Kodiak, Valdez and Craig.

The company's connections to Ukraine include employees with family, friends and colleagues who have been impacted by the war, including fleet manager Chris "Coach" Hansen who was in Kharkiv with his wife and her daughter at the beginning of the attacks by Russian armed forces. They eventually found refuge in the Czech Republic, Fredrick said.

After considering ways to help, the company found that donating its canned pink salmon was the best option for direct food distribution in Ukraine, particularly considering the challenging circumstances, said Rich Riggs, Silver

Bay co-founder.

"Our fishermen owners and staff are especially thankful to those that have contributed with the freight and logistics associated with this humanitarian effort," Riggs said.

Riggs also called attention to the trucking company that hauled the donated fish to the shipping dock in Seattle.

"John Tkachenko is the owner of Container Dynamics Freight Services, and was born in Odessa, Ukraine," Riggs said. "John trucked the first leg of the product's journey to Ukraine."

Libby Moore, Silver Bay chief administrative officer, commented in an email: "Our thoughts and prayers will continue to be with Ukraine until peace is restored."

Ben Florschutz graduates in biological engineering

Ben Florschutz, the son of Otto and Christina Florschutz, of Wrangell, graduated May 5 from the Utah State University's Engineering School with a degree in biological engineering.

Florschutz was a 2015 graduate of Wrangell High School and a recipient of an Alaska Pulp Corp. scholarship to attend college.

Before starting his sec-

ondary education, he served a two-year mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and was called to serve in the Logan, Utah, area. He stayed in Logan after completing his mission work and attended Utah State.

Florschutz, his wife Brittaney and their son Bearn, are moving to western Virginia to work for Solar Biotech as a bioprocess engineer.

CLASSIFIED/LEGALS

HELP WANTED

Wrangell Public Schools is accepting applications for the following positions for the 2022-2023 school year. All positions are open until filled.

- **Elementary Teacher:** This is a full-time teaching position in Grades K-5 (placement to be determined). This position requires an Alaska teaching certificate with an appropriate endorsement in elementary education.
- **Secondary (Grades 6-12) Special Education Teacher:** This is a full-time teaching position in Grades 6-12 Special Education. The position requires an Alaska teaching certificate with appropriate endorsements in Special Education or documentation of enrollment in a program to achieve an appropriate endorsement.

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

HELP WANTED

Southeast Auto & Marine

(NAPA Auto Parts) is accepting applications for a Sales Associate. A job description and application can be picked up at the store at 101 Front St. or by calling 907-305-0802. Salary DOE.

HELP WANTED

Wrangell IGA is accepting applications for multiple positions. All positions are open until filled.

- **Cashier:** 40 hours a week. Starting \$13 to \$15 an hour based on experience, with advancement possibilities. Main IGA cashier, stock candy and clean front-end.
- **Meat and Deli position:** 40 hours a week. 18+ years old required for use of equip-

ment. Opportunities for advancement. Starting \$15 to \$18 based on experience and pay increases as more skills are learned. Stocking and cleaning meat and deli departments. Slicing deli meats and cheese, making sandwiches, wrapping chicken beef, pork.

Pick up an application at Wrangell IGA.

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.

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE INVITING BIDS

Notice is hereby given that the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, will accept sealed bids for the 3-Megawatt Transformers Procurement in the office of the Borough Clerk until 2 p.m. prevailing time on June 3, 2022. The full solicitation can be downloaded from the City and Borough of Wrangell's website (www.wrangell.com) under the Bids and RFP's section.

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

Publish May 18 and 25, 2022

EBI CONSULTING PUBLIC NOTICE

Vertical Bridge Development, LLC is proposing to construct a 150-foot-tall self-supported telecommunications tower with a 10-foot-tall lightning rod for an overall structure height of 160 feet at 3 Evergreen Ave., Wrangell, AK 99929 (56 29 06.5 N / 132 23 17.7 W). The tower is anticipated to be lighted in accordance with FAA Advisory Circular 70/7460-1 M, Obstruction Marking and Lighting, Red Lights - Chapters 4, 5(Red), & 15.

Interested persons may review the application for this project at www.fcc.gov/asr/applications and enter Antenna Structure Registration (ASR) Form 854 File Number A1195994, and may raise environmental concerns about the project by filing a Request for Environmental Review with the Federal Communications Commission.

Requests for Environmental Review must be filed within 30 days of the date that notice of the project is published on the FCC website.

The FCC strongly encourages interested parties to file Requests for Environmental Review online at www.fcc.gov/asr/environmentalrequest. Parties wishing to submit a request by mail may do so by addressing the request to:

FCC Requests for Environmental Review
Attn: Ramon Williams, 45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554.

Publish May 25, 2022

State's chief doctor wants to return focus back to wellness

By YERETH ROSEN
Alaska Beacon

When Dr. Anne Zink began working as the state's chief medical officer in the summer of 2019, she had a vision of transforming the state's health system into one that promotes health holistically rather than one that simply responds to sickness.

Then came COVID-19. At least a third of Alaskans have tested positive for the COVID virus as of the May 11 count, according to the state's data hub, while more than 3,700 have been hospitalized and 1,235 have died.

Now, two years after the pandemic overtook her work and her life, rates of cases, hospitalizations and death are down and the crisis has seemingly ebbed.

That means Zink can start turning her attention back to the reformist public-health vision she had when she started her job, emphasizing wellness and safety.

"We really need to not just provide care for the sick, but we need to find ways to be healthy and well," she said in an interview.

But it does not mean that COVID-19 is over, Zink said. "COVID's not going anywhere. It's going to be with us as long as anyone is here," she said.

Zink's work as the state's top doctor during the world's worst pandemic in a century turned the charismatic emergency room doctor into a celebrity.

That was not what she expected when she took the job in 2019. "I never expected anyone to know my name. That still catches me off guard regularly," she said.

Zink has been feted by many, including the Alaska Federation of Natives, which gave her a special award in late 2020 for her "steadfast leadership" during the pandemic. She has been hosted at the White House, widely profiled in the media and, for part of 2020, was the subject of a Facebook fan club.

She has also been vilified. Among her



PHOTO BY YERETH ROSEN/ALASKA BEACON

Dr. Anne Zink, Alaska's chief medical officer, stands outside a restaurant on May 6 in Palmer, her home city. In an interview, she reflected on two years of COVID-19.

critics is highly conservative state representative and Republican gubernatorial candidate Christopher Kurka. His campaign website emphasizes his opposition to COVID-19 policies that he calls "unconscionable for a free people" and features a "Fire Anne Zink" tab and petition.

Though she has received a couple of death threats, which she reported to public safety officials, she was never subject to scary situations like those endured by other health officials nationwide who have had gun-brandishing critics show up at their homes, their homes vandalized or their children targeted.

She was accustomed to hostility from her work in emergency rooms, she said, where she treated agitated patients who were sometimes suicidal or homicidal and where she once got a black eye.

"When people are sick or scared or tired, they don't always make their best choices," she said.

In one way, the Alaska response to the pandemic was different from responses in other parts of the nation and the world — and the response reflected Zink's passion for wellness and holistic health.

The state deliberately avoided the term "lockdown," she said. The Department of Health and Social Service repeatedly promoted outdoor exercise, even during

the worst of the pandemic. That contrasted with a national and international stay-at-home narrative, with beaches and parks closed in many regions.

From the start, the department frequently invoked its 10-year-old Play Every Day campaign, which encourages kids to be physically active for at least an hour a day, even if that meant wearing a mask or keeping 20 feet of distance between people.

"Kids should plan for an awesome, active summer outdoors," proclaimed one press release from last year.

The outdoor-exercise promotions extended to adults. Zink, who grew up in Colorado and now lives near Palmer's Lazy Mountain and its trail system, has used her own outdoor activities as material for social media posts that encouraged others to get outdoors. Fresh air and sunshine are known for their antiviral qualities, she said, so Alaskans were urged to take advantage of their natural setting.

Alaskans were receptive to the idea, she said, pointing to skyrocketing use of state parks and other indicators.

As a public health official, she said, her job is to think beyond COVID about the whole state and the much broader health of all Alaskans.

That brings her back to her original vision for the job that she took in 2019.

It means, among other things, ensuring access to clean water, functioning sanitation systems, healthy food and safe spaces to exercise and move around, she said. Eighty percent of overall health depends on factors outside of medical care, she said, and overall health is needed for resilience to whatever crisis comes next.

"Being physically and mentally well as a community and as a state is going to be how we are best prepared for any challenge," she said.

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