

SE Alaska tourists argue for saving the ferry system

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

It is no secret that Southeast Alaska is a hot tourist destination. Every year, the region is flooded with nature enthusiasts, retirees, and other tourists. According to a calendar from the Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska, Petersburg will receive a total of 62 cruise ship stops in the 2019 season. Ketchikan, one of the larger cruise ship destinations in Southeast Alaska, is expecting 576 cruise ship stops this year, bringing in a total estimated 1.15 million passengers. The tourist industry is growing in Wrangell, too. Meilani Schijvens, with Rain Coast Data, said that the city of Wrangell is expecting to see 22,000 tourists via cruise ships next year.

Of course, from the deck of a cruise ship is not the only way to experience Alaska. Two families, the Nowells and the Stones, recently spent five weeks on a "DIY trip" through Southeast Alaska. This trip was part of their bucket list, John Nowell said. They wanted to trace the steps of John Muir, a famous naturalist and explorer of the late 19th century, who spent quite some time exploring Alaskan territory. In fact, Muir visited Wrangell in

1879 where, according to a board along the Mt. Dewey trail, he had "one of the best campfires that he had ever enjoyed."

A very important part of their trip has been the Alaska Marine Highway System, they said. Thanks to the ferries, they have been able to get a much more in-depth look at Southeast Alaska than would have been possible on a cruise ship.

"We've been on the ferries throughout the state of Alaska and Canada with our motorhomes, and were actually anxious to try and do that here," John Nowell said. "When we went to the ferry system and did the math on bringing our large motorhomes up here and camping through the region, we realized that financially it made better sense to park the motorhomes in Bellingham, disconnect our Jeeps, and drive our Jeeps up here on the ferry system, and stay in the local bed and breakfasts, inns, and Airbnbs."

The Nowell and Stone families said their trip had taken them about five weeks; six or seven, if one counted the time it took them to leave California. They been traveling all over the region. Starting in Bellingham,



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

John and Karen Nowell (left) and Greg and Suzi Stone (right) have been traveling across Southeast Alaska. Wrangell was their last stop on a multi-week trip across the area.

they went to Ketchikan, Prince of Wales Island, back to Ketchikan, Petersburg, Juneau, Gustavus, back to Juneau, and lastly Wrangell.

In all, they said, they've taken nine trips on the ferries. Despite having to leave their campers behind, they said that it has been an incredible trip. John added that

every island and town they visited had something unique to offer. It has been an amazing experience, and one that would not be possible if they had travelled on a cruise ship. Taking things slow, and traveling from island to island on the ferries, really provided the two families a closer look at life and the natural

beauty of Southeast Alaska.

"I gotta say the people everywhere, the people are the highlight," Greg Stone said. "So friendly and so helpful, and want to share their life with you."

"No commercialism, just the real thing, just to see it like it is," Karen Nowell said.

They said that they are very upset to see the ferry system struggling to keep afloat these days, and they want to advocate for its continuation. John said that if the ferries would better advertise their services, and make prices more reasonable to bring motorhomes, their boats would be packed with campers like them. There is a large group of people who want to take extended trips in motorhomes, he said. Without the ferries, a truly unique opportunity for tourists in the area would be lost. That is not to say anything about the permanent residents of Southeast Alaska who also rely on the ferry system, of course.

"We're doing it for fun, but people need it, the people that live here," Suzi Stone said. "The people that need the ferry, they count on it."

The Nowells and Stones turned for home on Tuesday, July 9, following a trip to the Anan bear observatory. All in all, they said that was an amazing experience, and they hope the ferries will stick around to provide similar opportunities for other travelers in the future.

"We knew what we wanted to avoid was the cruises and the tens of thousands of people associated with the cruises," John said. "We were more interested in seeing real Alaska, and we knew we couldn't do that on a seven-day cruise."

Part 1: Food fight between SE fishermen and sea otters

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

Sea otters are considered by many people to be an adorable animal, an important part of the ecosystem, and also a nuisance that is threatening other marine life populations in Southeast Alaska. In Wrangell, many people have talked about the need for better population control when it comes to otters. The Wrangell Borough Assembly talked about loosening restrictions on hunting the creatures last September with Sebastian O'Kelly, a federal lobbyist. Back in May, fifth-grade student Brody Knecht gave a persuasive speech on the need for better population control of marine mammals as part of a class-wide project on public speaking and forming arguments. Most recently, National Geographic reporter Cynthia Gorney has been making visits around Southeast Alaska to write a story on the topic of sea otters.

Today, with the 2019 Dungeness crab season well underway, several people in Wrangell's fishing fleet have voiced concerns about otter management.

Otters by the numbers:

Sea otters were nearly driven to extinction at one point in history. Their pelts were an important part of the Russian fur trade. According to a species profile by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, otter populations rebounded in the 20th century thanks to protection under the Fur Seal Treaty of 1911. According to a fact sheet on the northern sea otter by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the statewide population is somewhere around 100,000 otters. This is roughly one otter for every seven people in Alaska. Despite this rebound in population, otters were still missing from areas where they had once been very common, and they were slowly being transplanted back into their former habitats. In a Wrangell



Sentinel article dated September 19, 1968, sea otters were reintroduced to the region via airplane over 50 years ago. The article, written by Fish and Game Biologist R.T. Wallen, states that while the otter populations had rebounded around the Aleutian Islands and Prince William Sound, and in some places in California, Southeast Alaska was part of a "2,000 mile gap" where otters had not yet returned.

"This summer, in an ambitious effort to begin filling this

Continued on page 11

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

Thursday, July 18: Dave McGuire, Tom Wickman, Rick Brock, August Paulsen, Bethany Comstock. *Anniversary:* Scott & Carrie Mason. **Friday, July 19:** Dorianne Sprehe, Mike Ottesen, Sr., Tom Sims, Dane Richard, Tony Harding, Shelley Versteeg. *Anniversary:* Ben & Rhea Bowman. **Saturday, July 20:** Samantha Southland, Erin Galla. *Anniversary:* Dave & Sharon McGuire. **Sunday, July 21:** Terry Coblentz, Jeff Neyman, Liz Rooney, Honey Kalkins. **Monday, July 22:** Trevor Keller, James Castle, Matt Scott, Paul Smith, Butch Wenderoth. *Anniversary:* Dewyo & Charley Young. **Tuesday, July 23:** Allison Petersen, Marni Privett. *Anniversary:* Matt & Candice Wilsie, Jim & Betty Abbott. **Wednesday, July 24:** Jeanette Covalt, Maddox Angerman, David Smith, Maria Holder, Emily Rugo. *Anniversary:* Allen & Carolyn Taylor, David & Sabrina Smith. **Thursday, July 25:** Celly Nelson-Young, Lizzy Romane.

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

Senior Center Menu

Thursday, July 18

Moose Lasagna, Steamed Zucchini, Tossed Salad

Friday, July 19

Turkey, Peas, Cantaloupe, Mashed Potatoes

Monday, July 22

Ham, Broccoli, Salad, Au Gratin Potatoes

Tuesday, July 23

Sweet & Sour Chicken, Peas, Spicy Fruit Cup, Rice Pilaf

Wednesday, July 24

Beef Chili w/ Cheese, Tomato Slices, Creamy Coleslaw, Cornbread

Thursday, July 25

Salmon Burger, Oven Fried Potatoes, Romaine Salad

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

Milk, tea and coffee will be served with meals.

FERRY

Departures

Northbound

Saturday, July 20
Malaspina 11:30 a.m.
Sunday, July 21
Columbia 4:45 p.m.
Tuesday, July 23
Malaspina 6:30 p.m.
Saturday, July 27
Malaspina 5:45 a.m.
Sunday, July 28
Columbia 4:45 p.m.

Southbound

Thursday, July 18
Malaspina 10:15 p.m.
Monday, July 22
Malaspina 7:45 a.m.
Wednesday, July 24
Columbia 6:15 a.m.
Thursday, July 25
Malaspina 9:30 p.m.
Monday, July 29
Malaspina 4:00 a.m.

Arrival times may vary. Call 874-2021 for verification or call 874-3711 for recorded information.



TIDES July 18 - July 25

	High Tides		Low Tides		High Tides		Low Tides	
	AM Time	PM Time	AM Time	PM Time	AM Time	PM Time	AM Time	PM Time
July 18	2:16	3:13	8:39	1:4	8:38	3:6		
July 19	2:51	3:47	9:11	-0.9	9:13	3.8		
July 20	3:26	4:20	9:42	-0.3	9:50	3.9		
July 21	4:00	4:53	10:15	0.4	10:31	4.0		
July 22	4:37	5:29	10:50	1.2	11:16	4.1		
July 23	5:20	6:09	11:29	2.0		
July 24	6:13	6:58	12:07	4.1	12:13	2.9		
July 25	7:24	7:55	1:06	3.9	1:05	3.8		

Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

Thursday, July 18

Suicide Prevention Cafe: SEARHC AICS Medical Clinic, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Community-led, cafe style discussion related to suicide loss and prevention.

Free safeTALK Training: Nolan Center classroom, 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. To register, contact Monica Chase at mchase@searhc.org or 907-966-8397.

Friday, July 19

Free safeTalk Training: Nolan Center classroom, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. To register, contact Monica Chase at mchase@searhc.org or 907-966-8397.

Police Chief Reception: City Hall, 5:30 p.m. Meet and greet with Police Chief candidates.

Read With a Ranger: Irene Ingle Public Library, 10:30 a.m. Theme: Going Green.

Tuesday, July 23

City Council Meeting: City Hall, 6:00 p.m.

Is the attendance at your meeting or event low? Send information for Roundup to wrgsent@gmail.com or call 874-2301.

Continuing Events

PARKS & REC ACTIVITIES: Mid-day closure: M-F 1:30-3:30 p.m. Closed Sunday

Pool:

Arthritis Foundation Exercise Class:

M-W-F 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Water Aerobics:

M-W-F 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Lap Swim:

M-W-F 6:00-7:30 a.m. MTWThF 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. TuTh 5:15-6:15 p.m. Sa 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

2 Lane Lap Swim:

M-W-F 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Lap/Tot Swim:

MTWThF 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. S 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Swim Club:

M-F 3:15-5:15 p.m.

Open Swim:

M-W 5:30-7:00 p.m. F 6:30-8:00 p.m. S 1:00-2:00 p.m.

Weight Room: M-Thu 6:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 3:30-7:30 p.m. F 6:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 3:30-8:30 p.m.

S 10:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

MEETINGS

AA Meetings:

North Star Group Meeting. St. Philip's Church. Tuesday: 7 p.m., Thursday: 8 p.m., Friday: 8 p.m.

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

July 17, 1919

The Sentinel reporter spent the weekend at the camp of John T. Towers, who is building a corduroy road from the head of Duncan Canal to the mine of the Duncan Canal Mining company. A crew of men are on the job every day, rain or shine. The most difficult part of the route has been passed and better headway is being made now than at any time since the road building was begun. Several of the men are returned soldiers, and it is interesting to hear them discuss their experiences overseas. These returned soldiers in the Towers' camp all served in different regiments, but nevertheless it is noticeable that there is a kind of Freemasonry existing between them, and the man with anarchistic tendencies would find this camp an inhospitable place as soon as he attempted to sow the seeds of sedition on Kupreanof Island.

July 14, 1944

Scouting Wrangell's possible tourist attractions for the post-war period four Wrangell men, headed by Mayor F. G. Hanford, this week investigated and developed some facts about the hot springs, located a short way up the Stikine River. Lee Ellis and other river men knew of its existence but few actual facts as to its possibilities were known. A trail or road from the main Stikine would not be advisable, as several large sloughs would have to be crossed by bridging. Also, Shakes Creek would have to be bridged. High water and ice in the spring would carry bridges away. They came to what was believed to be one of the wonders of Southeastern Alaska. "Five feet from this clear stream, which has a temperature of 40 degrees, we found water boiling out of the rocks at a temperature of 170 degrees. We named these springs the Ellis Hot springs in honor of

Lee Ellis, our guide, who discovered these springs in the winter of 1936."

July 17, 1969

Alaska Lumber and Pulp Co. Inc. of Sitka has requested a Department of the Army permit to construct a log dump, storage area, booming grounds, and borrow area in St. John Harbor at the northwest end of Zarembo Island.

The determination as to whether a permit will be issued will be based on an evaluation of all relevant factors, including the effect of the proposed work on navigation, fish and wildlife, conservation, pollution, and the general public interest. Comments on these factors will be accepted and considered in determining whether it would be in the best public interest to grant the permit.

July 14, 1994

Actions involving Alaska

Pulp Corporation provided much of Wrangell City Council at its regular meeting Tuesday night.

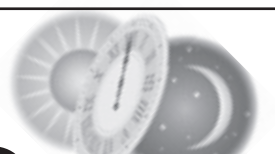
APC was authorized to complete crowning of the running track, east of Evergreen Elementary School, utilizing material from Shoemaker Bay parking area and with the city contributing shot rock and crushed rock for back-fill.

APC managers at the meeting recognized that this would cost the city a small amount of money but pointed out that the corporation had already donated about \$970,000 to the project and wanted to see it completed as soon as possible. Constructed last summer to provide a disposal area for dredged material from the harbor, it was hoped that it could be used as a place to deposit wood waste material from APC's mill and other sources.



Wrangell Weather

Date	High	Low
July 08	63	56
July 09	66	55
July 10	73	53
July 11	66	57
July 12	66	55
July 13	68	54
July 14	66	55
July 15	64	55



Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Daylight
July 18	4:26 am	9:21 pm	16:55h
July 19	4:28 am	9:20 pm	16:52h
July 20	4:29 am	9:18 pm	16:49h
July 21	4:31 am	9:17 pm	16:46h
July 22	4:32 am	9:15 pm	16:43h
July 23	4:34 am	9:14 pm	16:40h
July 24	4:36 am	9:12 pm	16:36h
July 25	4:38 am	9:10 pm	16:32h



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GOOGLE MAPS

Map showing the approximate location of Judy Hill, where the crashed plane was reportedly found.

Wrangell man killed in plane crash near Ketchikan

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

Wrangell resident and attorney Michael Nash, 68, passed away in a plane crash near Ketchikan last Thursday.

Alaska State Troopers were notified by Ketchikan Flight Service of an overdue aircraft around 3:07 p.m., July 11, according to a dispatch on the department of public safety's

website. Nash was flying his plane, a PA-24 Comanche, and was due to land in Ketchikan at 2:15 p.m.

"The US Coast Guard, Ketchikan Volunteer Rescue Squad, Alaska Wildlife Troopers and Saxman VPSO responded to the area of Judy Hill," the dispatch reads. "At 1640 hours [4:40 p.m.], KVRS notified AST that they had located the crash on land on the north side of Judy Hill."

Judy Hill is located on Gravina Island, south of Ketchikan. The dispatch reports that the pilot, the only occupant of the plane, was found deceased on the scene of the crash. Leanna Nash, wife of Michael, confirmed that it was indeed Michael who passed away. She added that the last radio contact with Michael occurred around 2:45 p.m., about 15 miles out of Ketchikan, and that the crash likely happened shortly afterward.

Police report

July 8, 2019

Illegal burning: Verbal warning given.
Citation issued: Duane Ricker, 28. Failure to provide proof of insurance. Came in later and provided proof of insurance and ticket was voided.
Agency assist: Fire department.
Report of theft: Criminal mischief.
Two reports of suspicious circumstance.
Report of harassment.

July 9, 2019

Motor vehicle accident.
Welfare check.
Found property.
Subpoena service.
Fireworks.
Agency assist: Petersburg police department.

July 10, 2019

Unsecured premise.
Subpoena service.
Agency assist: Public works.
Welfare check.
Warrant arrest: Andrew Twyford, failure to appear.

July 11, 2019

Traffic stop: Verbal warning for equipment failure.
Disturbance.
Report of theft.
Agency assist: UA.
Random breath test.
Agency assist: Alaska state trooper.
Agency assist: Search and rescue.
Animal complaint.
Paper service.
Probation violation.

July 12, 2019

Unsecured premises.
Motor vehicle accident.
Welfare check.
Two citations issued: Alora Wigg, 49. Aggressive dogs.
Violate conditions of release: Aaron Young, 22.
Two reports of suspicious activity.
Criminal mischief.

July 13, 2019

Courtesy transport.
Agency assist: Alarm.
Report of theft.
Agency assist: Public works.
Suspicious activity.

July 14, 2019

Fight/disorderly conduct: All parties went their separate ways.
Found property.
Welfare check.
Traffic stop: Verbal warning given.
Agency assist: Alaska state trooper gave verbal warning for having fire outside.
Disturbance: Person was advised to keep it down.
Disturbance: Both parties were advised at this time.

There were two ambulance calls and two dog complaints this week.



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For more information and registration, call Muskeg Meadows in Wrangell at 874-4653



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“The Salmon Way” Author to visit during Bearfest

By **CALEB VIERKANT**
Sentinel writer

Amy Gulick is an acclaimed nature photographer and writer. According to her website, amygulick.com, she has 20 years of experience taking pictures and writing about the great outdoors. She specializes in helping people understand the interconnectedness of nature, her website reads, and why conservation is important. Some of her written works include “Arctic National Wildlife Refuge” and “Salmon in the Trees.” Her most recent book, “The Salmon Way: An Alaska State of Mind,” looks at the connections Alaskans have with each other and with one of the state’s most important pieces of wildlife: Salmon. Gulick will be in Wrangell this next week for Bearfest to promote the book.

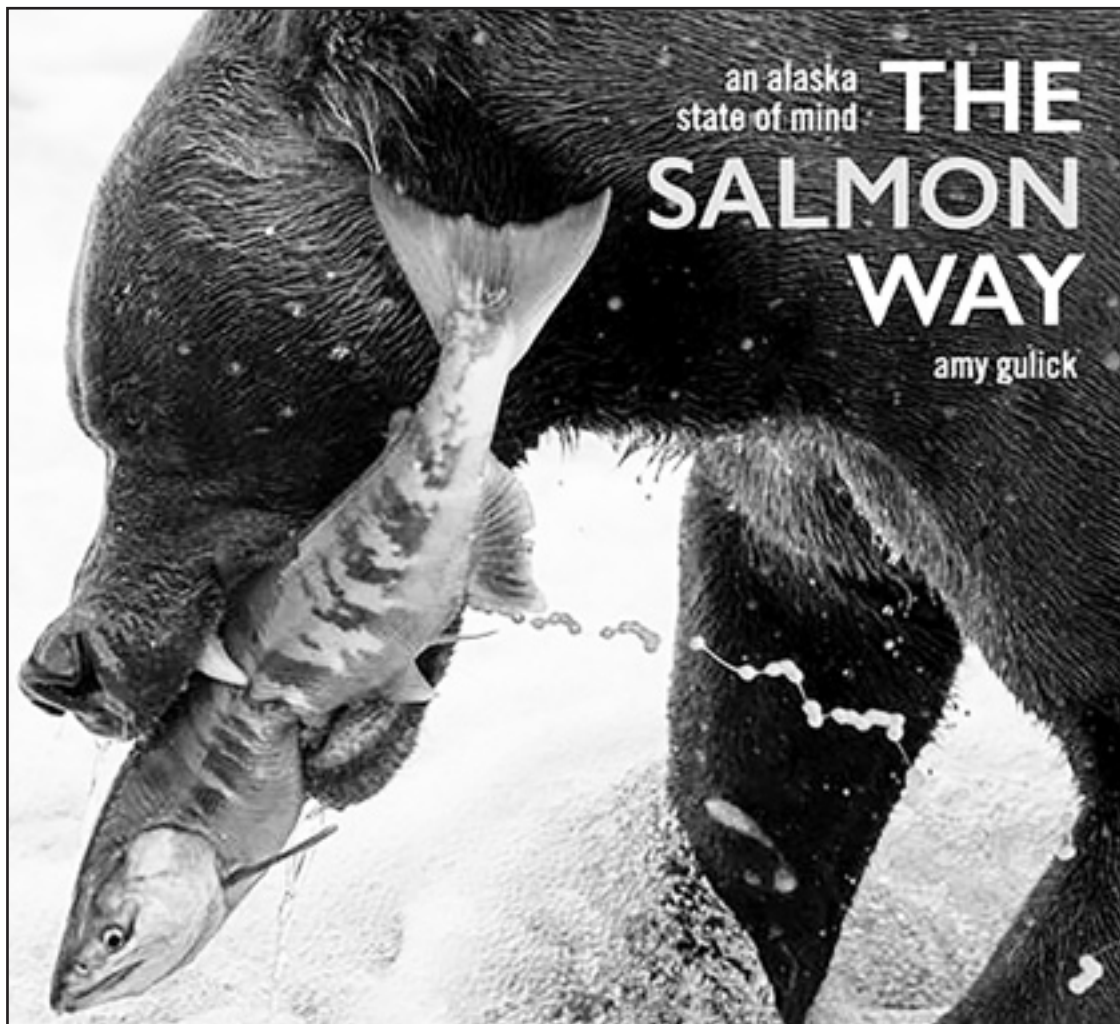
“I met with many different people throughout the state to learn about their ways of life that salmon make possible,” she said in an email to the Sentinel. “Commercial fishermen took me on as crew; Alaska Native families taught me the art of preserving fish and culture; and sport fishermen showed me where to cast my line as well as my mind. Alaskans everywhere shared their salmon riches with me in their kitchens, cabins, and fish camps. People told me that salmon are a gift — to the land, waters, animals, plants, and people. And when you’re on the receiving end of a gift, you give back. It’s a way to honor, re-

spect, and give thanks to the fish. It’s the salmon way, and it’s the Alaska way.”

Gulick said she had the idea for this book in the first place because of the salmon population in her home of Washington State. There used to be a “staggering” number of salmon runs in the area, she said, but today there are less than 10 percent of the state’s historic abundance of salmon. She was intrigued by Alaska because it is one of the last places in the world where peoples’ lifestyles are still heavily connected to salmon.

“The Salmon Way” is filled with photographs and stories about salmon from across Alaska. She said that her time with fishermen, Alaska Natives, people living a subsistence lifestyle, and other people have given her a wide range of stories about the salmon lifestyle of Alaska. Among the many perspectives featured in this book are some from local Wrangellite John Yeager.

“As a sport fishing guide, John told me that he’s not so much trying to fill the freezers of his clients with salmon; he’s trying to fill their minds with memories,” Gulick wrote in an email. “For his own personal use, John told me that when his family catches a king salmon they are so grateful. They give some to his wife’s parents and to an elderly friend, and then they share the rest together. He said that if you’re going to take a salmon’s life, then it’s impor-



COURTESY OF JULIE BRISELDEN, MOUNTAINEERS BOOKS

The cover of Amy Gulick’s latest book, “The Salmon Way: An Alaska State of Mind.”

tant to take it for the right reason and use it the right way. It’s not just the sustenance of the fish, it’s the spirit of the fish.”

Gulick said that she wants her book to be both an inspiring and a cautionary tale. Because she lives in an area with a decimated salmon habitat, she said, she understands how difficult it is to bring fish back once they are gone. She does not want the same thing to happen in Alaska, and she hopes to help prevent that by sharing the stories found in “The Salmon Way.”

Gulick will be in Wrangell for Bearfest, which runs July 24 to 28. She will be hosting a pho-

tography workshop on July 26, at noon, at the Nolan Center. She will also give a presentation on “The Salmon Way” at 12:30 p.m. on July 27. To learn more about these events, and all the other activities planned for Bearfest, visit www.alaskabearfest.org.

“I gave a presentation at Bearfest in 2011 about my first book ‘Salmon in the Trees,’ which focused on the remarkable connection between the salmon and forests in southeast Alaska,” Gulick wrote. “I enjoyed the festival then, and I’m looking forward to returning to Wrangell.”

Graveside services for JOE PETTICREW, JR. will be held FRIDAY, JULY 26, AT 1:30 P.M. at THE SUNSET GARDENS CEMETERY with a gathering for family and friends at his home afterwards.



Obituary:

Carla Louise Abild (Johnson), 53

Carla Louise Abild (Johnson), 53, passed away on April 18, 2019 in Owensville, Missouri.

She had great artistic ability, was intelligent, and had a right to the line sense of humor that could get anyone laughing.

Carla was preceded in death by her father, Lewis Oliver Johnson.

She is survived by her long time friend and partner, Mike Tindall; her mother, Mable McMurren; and three sons, Stephen and Eric Purvis, and Jared Abild.

There will be a memorial service and potluck held in Wrangell at the Nolan Center on Sat., July 27 at 3:00 p.m.



Carla Louise Abild (Johnson)

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Garnet Grit Betties seeking fresh meat, wider community support

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

When one imagines sports in Southeast Alaska, one might think of sport fishing, golf, basketball, or even baseball. Roller Derby might not be the first thing that comes to someone's mind, but it can be found in sev-

eral towns across the panhandle. There are the Ragnarok Rollers in Petersburg, the Sitka Sound Slayers, and Ketchikan has the Rainforest Rollers. Wrangell, too, has a team. Wrangell's Garnet Grit Betties held a "fresh meat" event at the roller rink last Thursday after-



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY VINCENT BALANSAG

A 2018 photo from a St. Patrick's Day roller derby match in Wrangell, held at the high school gym. Wrangell skater April "Helena Handbasket" Einert (front) is blocking Petersburg skater Alice "LudaFrisk" Williams.



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Marisa McComas (left) and Marsha "IllumiNaughty" McCay (right) doing some laps at the Garnet Grit Betties' "fresh meat" event last Thursday evening.

noon, and are looking to increase public awareness and support of their team and roller derby in general.

"Early days we had 20, but right around now we're sitting at three," said Marsha McCay, whose derby name is IllumiNaughty. "So we're just trying to build the team right now."

McCay is going on three years with the Betties, she said, but also had a one-year break

where she played for the Sitka Sound Slayers. She said that she got some good interest from people when she told them about the fresh meat event. As far as new team members went, she said that they were really looking for people who were going to be committed to show up and skate for the team.

"It's a lot of fun, but it does take a lot of time out of everyone's personal lives," McCay said.

The fresh meat intake was relatively simple. McCay would see how well potential prospects could skate, they would run through some drills, and she would give instructions on how best to fall and how to get back up without putting your fingers on the ground. Five people are required for a full roller derby

team, McCay said. Depending on how well the attempt at team-growing goes, she said that they could join up with Petersburg and Sitka to play with them or hold camps.

"Nothing is set in stone right yet, but hopefully in the future we should have something planned," she said.

There are plenty of reasons to join a roller derby team. Ola Richards "PolkaOlka", who plays for the Ragnarok Rollers, said that it was a life changing experience for her. She joined Petersburg's team in 2015, she said. Thanks to roller derby she has become healthier, made lots of friends, and it has given her the chance to travel all over the state.

"And it feels so good to be part of something," Richards said. "Those women are like a family to me now. I know that if I have a problem they will be there for me and it just feels good to be loved and supported. I think any team sport is important and feels very similar, but derby is just special and fresh and just unique."

More information about Wrangell's roller derby team can be found on Facebook, under "Garnet Grit Betties."



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Meet and greet planned for police chief candidate

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

With the recent retirement of Doug McCloskey, who has been Wrangell's police chief since 2003, the borough has been working hard to find a suitable replacement. City officials have been considering several candidates. Among these is Heath Scott, the chief of police in Haines. A meet and greet with Scott has been scheduled for Friday, July 19, at 5:30 p.m. at city hall. The public is invited to come meet with the candidate and get to know him better.

Scott has over 22 years of "progressively responsible experience" in law enforcement, according to his resume and application which were provided by city hall. His education includes a *Summa cum Laude* bachelor's degree in criminal justice from American Continental University, and a master's degree in criminal justice from Boston University. Before coming to Alaska he was a deputy chief of police with the D.C. Protective Services Police Department, in the nation's capital. Scott said that he really enjoyed his work in D.C., but that he left because of some structural changes that hindered his career advancement. He began looking around for



COURTESY OF KHNS

Heath Scott

work as a police chief, and the idea of moving to Alaska came up. Growing up in Indiana, and his wife Candice being from Nebraska, Scott said they knew they wanted to go somewhere rural. He took the job of police chief of Haines in 2016.

"Long story short, I came up here through sheer happenstance," he said. "It was a very good fit."

Sean Maily, Haines assembly member, said that he has been very impressed with Scott's three years as police chief. Haines is a difficult city for police to work in, he said, because of distrust between the department and the community. Maily explained that the city used to have problems with corruption in the police department, but that they have had complete turnover of the department. Despite this, he said, the distrust remained. Maily said that Scott has "gone above and beyond" in community outreach and working to earn the city's trust. He also added that the Haines assembly has very recently considered extending his contract another five years.

"Everyone in town has their own different views and own different opinions ... the general majority is in favor of him as chief," Maily said.

Debra Schnabel, Haines' borough manager, agreed with Maily's assessment that Scott has been a good chief of police. Haines is a tough community, she said, and Scott came in at a particularly volatile time in the town. Local politics has been something Scott has had to

wade through, on top of rebuilding community relationships. One such episode of volatile local politics involved the police blotter, which was printed in the Chilkat Valley News, Haines' local newspaper.

"That was such a huge issue," Schnabel said.

According to articles provided by the CVN, in 2017 there was some controversy caused amongst the town when Scott said the department would no longer produce a police blotter, reportedly, due to budget concerns and the negative portrayal it gave the department. Articles in the Chilkat Valley News also state that Scott later accused certain members of the Haines assembly of misusing their public position by trying to get him to return the blotter to the newspaper. Schnabel said that Scott has been very big on community outreach, and wanted the Haines police to be seen in a good light. Coming from a large urban city like D.C., she said that he did not grasp the small-town opinion that the police blotter was how people kept up with each other and what everybody was up to. It was a big controversy, in her opinion, because it was perceived badly. The Chilkat Valley News still prints the police blotter, she said, but it is a little less colorful than it used to be.

"I think he's become a respectable, trustworthy contributor in the community," she said of Scott.

Scott agreed that Haines could have a challenging atmosphere at times. He said that when he came into his new job, the Haines Police Department did not have a good reputation in town, or across the rest of the state. He said that one of his accomplishments that he is very proud of is being able to help put the department on a course correction and begin rebuilding local trust between the public and the police. He has enjoyed his time in Haines, he said, but his contract is coming up soon so he began feeling out opportunities elsewhere. Scott said that he wants to keep his family in the area. The rural, small-town lifestyle is something he and his wife both enjoy, and are very happy to offer that same



GOOGLE MAPS

Southeast Cove, located on Wrangell Island. A lightning strike ignited a small fire northeast of the cove a few weeks ago, which the Forest Service is continuing to monitor.

Further recon on Southeast Cove fire pending better weather

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

On June 27, according to a press release by the Forest Service, a lightning strike ignited a fire near Southeast Cove on Wrangell Island. The fire is located less than a mile northeast of the cove on public land, according to the press release. Paul Robbins Jr., with the Forest Service, said that the fire is burning on a steep, inaccessible ridge, and the Forest Service has been monitoring it regularly.

On July 9, aerial reconnaissance of the area located smoke in the southwest corner of the affected area. Monitoring from a boat on July 10 was not able to locate any smoke. Robbins said that the affected area is about three to four acres in size, and has not damaged nor posed any threat to buildings. There has not been any further reconnaissance since July 10, Robbins said that they are waiting for better weather. While no smoke was seen in the most recent search, he said that they will not declare the fire out until further monitoring is complete.

For further information, Robbins can be reached at (907) 228-6201.

kind of lifestyle for their children to grow up in.

"I really enjoy the Southeast," he said.

Rick Groshong, Hoonah po-

lice chief and former Wrangell policeman, was a second candidate who was considered. However, he withdrew his application as of Tuesday, July 16.

Golf Roundup

Ottesen's hosted a series of tournaments at Muskeg Meadows Golf Course last weekend. There were 17 participants in Saturday's tournament, on July 13. First place went to a team consisting of Dwight Yancey, Drew Eyon, Chris Stewart, and Cody Angerman with a net score of 18 and team handicap of 18. Second place went to a team consisting of Jerry Bakeburg, Frank Roppel, and Eric Kading with a net score of 12 and a team handicap of 20. Randy Littleton had the straightest drive of the day at 10 inches.

Sunday's tournament, saw 19 participants. First place went to a team consisting of Rocky Littleton, Jerry Bakeburg, Steve Elliott, and Jason Garringer with a net score of 38 and a team handicap of 13. Second place went to a team consisting of Wayne Ellis, Wayne Harding, Rodney Littleton, and Drew Eyon. Nate Johnson had the straightest drive of the day at 9 feet and 5 inches. Kathleen Harding was closest to the pin at 38 feet.

Next weekend, July 20 and 21, two tournaments will be sponsored by First Bank. Signups need to be completed by 9:30 a.m., and the games begin around 10 a.m.

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Bearfest offers workshops and other activities

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

Alaska Bearfest is a fun half-week of activities and workshops in Wrangell. Running from July 24 to 28, people can look forward to an art workshop, bear safety courses, bear-themed symposiums, and even a marathon. This year, the Wrangell community will also have the opportunity to eat better than even the bears at Anan do, with a special seafood dinner on July 26.

The dinner will be hosted at the Stikine Inn, and prepared by Chef Dana Tough of Seattle. According to his website, www.chefdanatough.com, Tough has successfully launched four properties and has been widely recognized for his culinary talents. Carol Rushmore, Wrangell's economic development director, said that the dinner will be a great opportunity for good food and to raise money for Bearfest.

"We'll be using a lot of locally featured type seafood," She said. "Kelp, oysters, I think ... They're trying to some really fun stuff with locally harvested seafoods. It's just a fun evening, it'll be something different."

Besides good food, Rushmore said that there will be an auction, and live music performed by the Chameleon Brotherhood. The Chameleon Brotherhood will also be playing the next evening, July 27, at Rayme's Bar.

To learn more about the dinner, visit www.alaskabearfest.org. Auction items can be seen beforehand at the Nolan Center on July 24 and 25. Rushmore said that tickets are limited, and to get them quickly.



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Ministerial Association takes kids to "Nazareth"

The Wrangell Ministerial Association hosted a large Vacation Bible School at the covered basketball court near Evergreen Elementary School last week, July 8 to 12. The program was titled "Hometown Nazareth, Where Jesus Was A Kid." Using costumes, songs, Bible stories, and fun activities, volunteers from a number of churches in Wrangell got to teach kids about Jesus and what life might have been like for him when he was a child. Pictured here is the VBS group opening their final night of the program with some songs.

School board approves various budget amendments

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

In a special meeting on July 11, the Wrangell School Board adopted various amendments to their FY 2019 budget as well as the recently adopted FY 2020 budget. Superintendent Debbe Lancaster said that the 2019 budget needed to be revised to show the actuals for the end of the year, what money was actually made and what was actually spent. Budgets go through vari-

ous revisions through the school year, she said, and is more or less a constant process of revision to stay as accurate as possible.

"It's a real dynamic process through the year, until the year ends," she said.

The FY 2019 budget's revenues decreased from about \$6.48 million to \$6.11 million. Expenditures were also set at \$6.48 million, but also decreased \$5.61 million. These revisions were quickly approved by the school

board.

There were several revisions to the FY 2020 budget. These revisions included removing the city's contribution to the budget, based on the borough assembly's decision to fund the school fully through SRS money in the amount of \$1.3 million. The school's ADM, or Average Daily Membership, was also decreased from 316 students to 308, with eight special education intensive students. This means a decrease

of about \$240,000.

The school board approved \$482,230 in funds from the district's emergency 503 fund to be added to revenues. A memo from Business Manager Georgianna Buhler explained this decision adding this to the draft budget allowed the district to file this budget with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development on time. Once all the school's administrators are back from leave and the

school year's plans are finalized, Buhler recommended that another budget revision be discussed sometime in September.

Other changes to the FY 2020 budget include the removal of two regular aides and a \$70,225 cut to student travel expenses, which were put in place previously in case travel by ferry was no longer an option. In all, the total revenues and expenses of this budget are set evenly at \$6,232,828.

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Alaska Fish Factor

By LAINE WELCH
Fisheries columnist

In terms of Gov. Dunleavy's budget cuts, fisheries fare better than most people

Fisheries fare better than most people in terms of Governor Mike Dunleavy's budget cuts.

Just under one million dollars was cut from the commercial fisheries division of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, leaving it with an \$85 million budget, half from state general funds.

"To give the governor credit, he recognized the return on investment," said Doug Vincent-Lang, ADF&G Commissioner. "It's a theme I had all the way through the legislature that we take a \$200 million budget of which about \$50 million is unrestricted general funds and we turn that into an \$11 billion return to our state. And I think he got that."

Vincent-Lang added that Dunleavy also did not veto the travel budget for the Board of Fisheries and its advisory committees.

It's indefinite still how the budget cuts will play out, and Vincent-Lang said he is trying to avoid staff cuts to the 700 comm fish positions.

"I suspect we may have some but we will try to do that through vacancies and a variety of other things as we have retirements," he said.

Also set to get axed is funding for research projects, such as salmon inseason sampling and Tanner crab surveys at Prince William Sound, and five salmon weirs at Kodiak and Chignik. Salmon counting is likely to be reduced at the Yukon River's Eagle and Pilot Station sonars, along with various stock assessment surveys for groundfish.

"I've asked my staff to look at their overall program, and not necessarily cut the projects, but take the ones that have the least impact on the management of our fisheries across our state in terms of economic value back and cut those," he explained, acknowledging that the cut backs could lead to more cautious management.

"Clearly, any time you reduce your forecast ability you become more precautionary in your inseason management approach until you can become more certain," he said.

Vincent-Lang said the state hopes to form local partnerships to help fund shortfalls, "like the Bristol Bay Science Initiative and Yukon River tribal groups to try to find ways that we can replace that money to ensure that we minimize the impact to our ongoing management programs."

Those partnerships "are the path forward" for Alaska's fishing industry to jointly fund research, he stressed.

"If we are going to be continually dependent on state general funds, that presents a challenge," he said. "We need to look for ways to partner with different groups to get a diversified funding stream."

Partnership also will be important to fund ADF&G's special areas management which is facing a \$280,000 budget cut for its oversight of 12 game refuges, 17 critical habitat areas and three wildlife sanctuaries. Vincent-Lang said using hunting dollars with matching grants in some areas will help make up for that budget shortfall.

"The rest of the department, like the sportfish and wildlife divisions, are largely funded by federal funds that are dedicated to those activities and we match them with hunting and sport fishing license dollars. There's very little state general funds in those divisions," he explained.

The Habitat and Subsistence Divisions will remain under the auspices of ADF&G, despite reports that two director-level positions and associated funding would move to the Office of Management and Budget. Vincent-Lang said those two positions were open when he took the job and he opted not to fill them.

"I didn't want to lose actual staff members in those divisions that were equal to a director position," he explained. "If a director position cost \$200,000 I would have lost three or four staff members in both divisions to make up for that. I willingly gave up those two positions to OMB because they needed them, but the activity they were doing remains under the supervision of ADF&G."

The total budget for the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game is \$200 million.

Fish schools state workers - Several hundred of Alaska's fishery managers are graduates of the College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (CFOS), an arm of the University of Alaska/Fairbanks. The college offers degree programs in fisheries, marine biology and oceanography, and of its nearly 1,000 graduates over half have come out of the fisheries program and work in the state.

"That is a remarkable number. I don't know any other fishery department in the country that can say half of their graduates still work in their home state," said Brad Moran, dean of CFOS, adding that the college has seen steady year over year increases in enrollment of undergraduates.

Moran is awaiting the fallout from Governor Dunleavy's evisceration of the university budget. CFOS, which has a staff and faculty of about 140, also operates campuses in Juneau and Kodiak and its collaboration with Alaska Sea Grant extends its reach to a dozen more locations. Moran said nothing is safe.

"There's not any faculty, staff, student or location that will not be impacted should the veto for the university budget not be overridden," he said. "That has

to be crystal clear. There is nothing that will be left untouched,"

With the number of incoming state dollars driven by the university, Moran said he just doesn't get it.

"It's been shown that for every dollar the state spends, we're bringing in about \$6 university wide to the state. I don't see how you cannot say that's a great turn on investment," Moran said, (unknowingly echoing the words of ADF&G's Vincent-Lang).

Moran pointed to the CFOS-operated research ice breaker *Sikuliaq* homeported at Seward as an example.

"We are entrusted to operate a \$200 million federal asset in that vessel which is owned and paid for by the National Science Foundation. All of the funding for that ship is externally coming into the state. That's only one example of state dollars driven by the university," Moran said.

He added that Alaska's university teachers and researchers are at the forefront in the world in terms of rapidly changing ocean and Arctic conditions.

"All require basic research and those investments from the federal government are leveraged by the state one dollar on six," he emphasized.

"You can always look for economies of scale and improvements in cost efficiency," Moran added. "What you cannot do is drop the hammer overnight to this extent and expect an organization to deliver the same kind of value to the state. But we will do our very best."

Alaskans Own delivers - Alaskans Own, a Sitka-based seafood delivery service, is celebrating 10 years of providing local fish not to Outsiders, but to other Alaskans - the majority of whom can't get their hands on the best fish out there.

"It's a crazy statistic that just one percent of the seafood that is caught in Alaska stays in Alaska, so 99 percent is exported," said Natalie Armstrong, outreach assistant for Alaskans Own, a Community Supported Fishery (CSF) project of the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association.

The CSF follows a more well-known agriculture model that bridges the gap "from farm to table."

"We're bridging the gap from ocean to table and connecting more communities to their seafood," Armstrong said.

Alaskans Own has over 300 subscribers who from May to October can choose different sized packages of portioned halibut, salmon, lingcod, shrimp, sablefish and more. The fish is shipped to hubs in Sitka, Anchorage, Seattle, Juneau, and Fairbanks and also to Outside customers.

"Anyone can choose what they want. They can get a mixed bag or 40 pounds of coho and we ship it right to their door," Armstrong said.

A fleet of 100 boats fish for the CSF, and all profits go to the Fishery Conservation Network, an ALFA offshoot that partners fishermen with scientists in local research projects.

Armstrong is hopeful other Alaska fishing towns will create CSFs to promote their small boat fleets and protective fishing practices.



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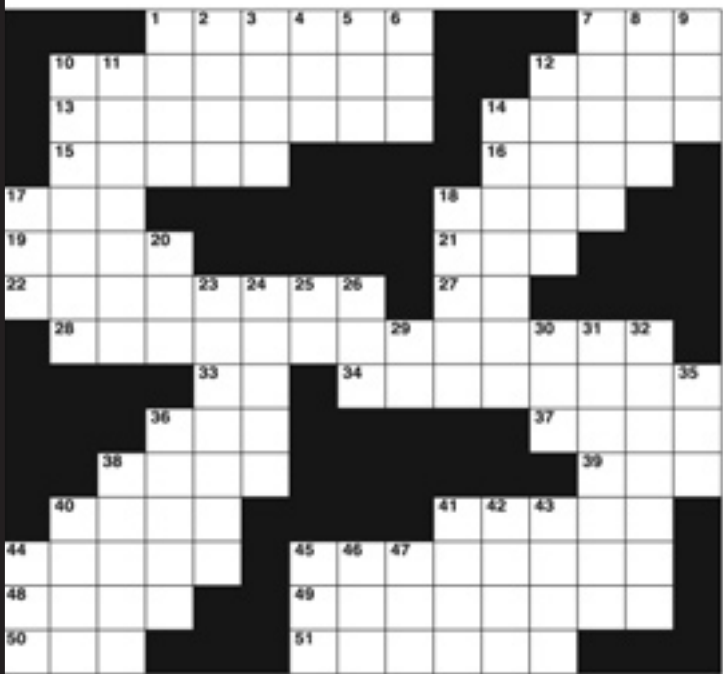
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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Used to serve wine
- 7. System to code a number
- 10. Meddled
- 12. A type of discount
- 13. Dependent on
- 14. Type of wrap
- 15. Nigerian people
- 16. Nuclear missile
- 17. Scientists' tool (abbr.)
- 18. ___ and feathers
- 19. It cleans you
- 21. Doctors' group
- 22. Silvery marine fish
- 27. Atomic #58
- 28. Popular March holiday
- 33. Pa's partner
- 34. Sicknesses
- 36. '___ death do us part
- 37. Scottish settlement
- 38. Innumerable
- 39. Small constellation
- 40. Wings
- 41. Supernatural creatures
- 44. Some are hallowed
- 45. The front door
- 48. Greek war god
- 49. Lamented
- 50. Foot (Latin)
- 51. Sprucely

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Military leader (abbr.)
- 2. Celery (Spanish)
- 3. Pay heed
- 4. The products of human creativity
- 5. Surcharge
- 6. Doctor of Education
- 7. Hurtful remarks
- 8. Marine mollusk
- 9. The habitat of wild animals
- 10. Pieces of body art
- 11. Refusing to budge
- 12. Triangular back bones
- 14. Type of cat
- 17. Type of web browser (abbr.)
- 18. Small, broad-headed nails
- 20. Man City coach Guardiola
- 23. Periods of food shortages
- 24. European nation
- 25. Jr.'s father
- 26. Concealed
- 29. One who works with the police (abbr.)
- 30. Lawyers
- 31. Look of disapproval
- 32. Longed
- 35. Type of power cable (abbr.)
- 36. Hindu cymbals
- 38. Young women (French)
- 40. Swiss river
- 41. Expression of annoyance
- 42. Where criminals go
- 43. Inwardly
- 44. Luck
- 45. One point north of due east
- 46. Originally called
- 47. Defunct airline

SUDOKU

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Level: Intermediate

Puzzle answers will be in the July 25 edition



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Bo Ritchie crossing the finish line, taking first place in the three-year-old boys' race.

A day at the big wheel races brings a crowd

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

Pulling in a crowd of close to 200 people, according to a guess by volunteer Tawney Crowley, the big wheel races on July 3 were quite a hit. The races were held at the covered basketball court by Evergreen Elementary School, and were open to anyone from age three up. Participants would race big wheels, a tricycle with a large front wheel, around a track on the basketball court. Crowley added that the whole event was pretty competitive.

"It's one of those events that you tell yourself you're just going to watch a bunch of kids race in a circle on some big wheels, and then you get there and it's a lot more intense and a lot more fun than you realize it's going to be," she said.

It was a loud and sometimes chaotic event, with kids racing and parents and siblings cheering them on.

The first place winners of the big wheel races are as fol-



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Stuart Woodbury getting a pep talk before the start of the three-year-old boys' race. Woodbury won second place in his category.

lows: Three-year-olds: Bo Ritchie and Annika Gillen. Four-year-olds: Keian Young and Rosylinn Nore. Five-year-olds: Jackson Robinson and Rylan Young. Six-year-olds: Jake (last name not recorded) and Ava Meyerhoff. Seven to ten-year-old: Cooper Powers and Macy Baker. Eleven to Thirteen-year-old: Keaton Gadd and Gracie Richard. Fourteen to Seventeen-year-old: Randy Churchill and Jade Balansag. Men and Women: Matt Richard and Jen Gerald.

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WRANGELL SENTINEL

Vern McCorkle Award for Best Business Reporting, 1st Place - Caleb Vierkant

"CRUISE SHIP SEASON COMES TO A CLOSE: A LOOK AT CRUISE SHIPS' EFFECTS ON WRANGELL"
- October 25, 2018

Judge's Comment:
"This story tackled from every angle an important economic engine for the community served by this newspaper. Clear writing and full of details. In a field of talent, this story rose above the others for the depth of its coverage an important topic."



Caleb Vierkant

Best Reporting on Crime or Courts, 2nd Place - Caleb Vierkant

"ALASKA SUPREME COURT GIVES OPINION ON LOCAL PROPERTY DISPUTE"
- September 20, 2018

Best Reporting on Health, 3rd Place - Caleb Vierkant

"STAYING HEALTHY FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR"
- August 23, 2018

Best Profile, 3rd Place - Caleb Vierkant

"JESSICA WHITAKER, COACH OF THE LADY WOLVES, TO RETIRE"
- November 29, 2018

Classified/Legals

City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska Public Hearing - PUBLIC NOTICE

The Borough Assembly Borough Assembly will hold a **PUBLIC HEARING** on **Tuesday, July 23, 2019**, during the Regular Borough Assembly meeting that begins at **7:00 p.m.**, in the Borough Assembly Chambers on the following item(s):

- a. PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 965 OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL, ALASKA, AMENDING CHAPTER 15.12, ELECTRICITY, BY ADDING SECTION 15.12.193 RATE STABILIZATION**

The Public is **encouraged to attend.**

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

Publish: July 18, 2019

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE POSITION POLICE CHIEF POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Wrangell Police Department is accepting applications for the position of Police Chief beginning June 22, 2019. The position is open until filled. Review of each application for potential interview will begin immediately upon receipt.

The City & Borough of Wrangell is seeking a dynamic leader for the Police Department with a proven record of Community Policing. Wrangell is one of the safest communities in Alaska however, it still faces many challenges. The new Chief will play a critical role in spearheading joint agency efforts to strengthen the social fabric of Wrangell. Working with regional law enforcement to address issues common across Southeast Alaska will be a priority. Wrangell faces the statewide issue of officer turn-over. Bringing fresh solutions to the dilemma of officer recruitment and retention will be key. In addition to the City of Wrangell, the Borough encompasses more remote enclaves of residents – some only accessible by boat. Broader outreach to these areas while maintaining coverage in town will also be important.

This position plans, organizes, directs, and integrates all activities of the Police Department to protect life and property through law enforcement and crime prevention work. The Police Chief is a management position, responsible for the full scope of Police Department operations including patrol, investigations, corrections, public relations and community education. They will continuously analyze and evaluate operations and trends for assuring efficiency and adequacy of service, maintain professional discipline in the Department and assure that all employees are properly trained.

The position requires extensive knowledge and experience in all phases of police work including principles and practices of modern crime prevention, investigation, criminal identification, apprehension, rules of evidence, traffic control and safety, care and custody of prisoners, record keeping, and all other aspects of law enforcement and administration. Requires advanced knowledge of management and administrative practices and procedures required. Requires well-developed human relations skills to conduct negotiations, persuade others to a course of action, and to build an effective team through leadership and training.

The candidate must meet the minimum standards for Police Chief per the Alaska Police Standards Council as well as all of the requirements of the City & Borough of Wrangell's job description. A management certification under Alaska Police Standards or equivalent is required. Applicants must successfully complete a background investigation, medical and psychological examination, and drug screening.

This is a full-time, salaried position with full benefits, paid at Grade 30 ranging from \$6607 to \$8346 per month. The full job description and employment application can be found online at www.wrangell.com/jobs.

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The City & Borough of Wrangell is an equal opportunity employer.

Lisa Von Bargaen
Borough Manager

Publish: June 27, July 4, 11, 18 and 25, 2019

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JOBS

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Council Advisor, Freshman Class Advisor, Junior Class Co-Advisors, High School Assistant Volleyball Coach, Middle School Boys' Assistant Basketball Coach. For a complete job description and information, please contact the district office at 874-2347. Positions are open until filled. It is Wrangell Public School District's policy to not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, sex or disability.....1x7-18b87

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WRANGELL SENTINEL

Sea otters

Continued from page 1

gap, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, in cooperation with the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, moved planeload after planeload of very irritated and protesting sea otters from Amchitka Island in the western Aleutians to southeastern Alaska," the article reads.

From the original transplanted otters in the late '60s, the otter population in Southeast Alaska exploded. As of a 2014 stock assessment by the Fish and Wildlife Service, there are roughly 25,000 sea otters in Southeast Alaska.

"The trend for this stock of sea otters has generally been one of growth," the assessment reads. "Comparing the current population estimate with that of the previous stock assessment reports suggests that this growth trend is continuing. The estimated population size (25,712) of this stock currently is more than double what was estimated in the previous (2008) stock assessment report (10,563). However, it is important to note that the population estimate published in the 2008 stock assessment report was based on survey data from 2002 and 2003. Therefore, we can only conclude that the Southeast population stock has doubled since 2003."

Kelly Bakos, a Petersburg filmmaker, is currently working on a documentary about

the Southeast Alaskan Sea Otters. "Occam's Otter" is planned to be released around the spring of 2020. Bakos said that she has learned a lot while making this film. For one thing, she said that she was surprised that many people do not realize that the inside waters of Southeast Alaska are part of the otters' historical territory.

"I've also discovered an enormous range of human emotions or reactions to sea otters, from hate to love, and they are viewed as anything from a cute cuddly animal to a ferocious and destructive force," Bakos wrote in an email to the Sentinel. "It's amazing, but understandable given the many facets of this topic, how one animal can elicit quite an explosive response!"

While there has not been an official stock assessment for 2019, there are community members who believe that the current otter population is much higher than 25,000. Mike Lockabey has been in the fishing industry full-time for 35 years, he said, and owns the *Michael J.* The sea otter situation is one he cares deeply about, carrying binders-full of information on sea otters and the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and has written articles on the subject. This is a growing issue that he has watched since the very beginning, he said, as he was living in the area when the first otters were reintroduced to Southeast Alaska.

By Mike's estimates there are over 50,000 sea otters in Southeast Alaska. Going off of the 2014 numbers and assuming a growth rate of 12 to 14 percent, which is what the Fish and Wildlife Service estimates in their 2014 stock assessment, there should be about 53,000 otters in the region. However, he said that there was another study by the Fish and Wildlife Service in 2012 that also put the population around 25,000. If the 2012 numbers were accurate, then there could be as many as 60,000 sea otters.

Competing for resources:

As marine mammals, otters rely heavily on the ocean to survive. Their primary food sources, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service, include clams, crabs, sea urchins, occasionally fish, and other forms of marine life. They do not have a layer of blubber to keep themselves warm in the cold water, and compensate for this with an increased metabolism. In captivity, it is reported, a sea otter will eat up to a fourth of its own body weight every day. Their numbers and eating habits have brought the sea otters in conflict with another mammal that relies heavily on the ocean for survival: The Alaskan fisherman.

It should not come as a surprise to anyone that commercial fishing can be a challenging and, depending on numerous factors, a very hit-or-miss line of work.

The Dungeness crab season opened in June. Shellfish Biologist Joe Stratman, with the Department of Fish and Game in Petersburg, said that the summer portion of the season generally runs until August 15. However, he said that the season could be cut short depending on the harvest estimates made in the first week of fishing. The crab season has been shortened only twice in previous years in 2013 and 2017. According to the department's management plan, the crab season has to be cut short if harvest estimates fall below thresholds in their plan. Last year, Stratman said, Alaskan fishermen had an above average yield, bringing in about 4.09 million pounds of crab in the 2017/2018 season, with 184 permitted fishing vessels participating. The average for the 10 seasons before that, he said, was 3.17 million pounds. According to a press release from the Department of Fish and Game, published on June 28, there was no need to shorten the current crabbing season, and it will run the typical length of time.

While last season saw an

uptick in the harvest, and the current season is not going to be cut short, many fishermen around Wrangell are concerned about how sea otters can hurt their livelihood.

Mike "Mikee" Lockabey is the son of Mike Lockabey. He has been a fisherman for about 20 years, he said, and owns the *Ms. Tammy* and the *Rita*. According to him, last season's crab harvest was above average because all of the fishing vessels were working in areas that the otters have not eaten bare, which is an area that is shrinking every season.

"Everybody's getting pushed into little tiny areas, you know," he said. "I've actually been all over Southeast in different fisheries looking, and it's crazy. They've killed whole ecosystems on the outside."

According to the Wrangell fishermen, large "rafts" of otters have travelled from the outside coast of Southeast inwards, eating their way through an area before either starving or moving on to a new location.

Julie Decker is the executive director of the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation, and has a background in commercial diving. She said that the west coast of Prince of Wales Island and Sitka have been especially hard-hit by otters. The trouble, she said, is that otters and fishermen are both going after the same resources.

"Their favorite things are abalone, urchins, and crab, that's their top three things," Decker said. "They will eat pretty much any shellfish, particularly once they've eaten all those other things out of the area. Divers report that when they go into an area where there's been otters, heavy otters, for a couple of years that it's completely barren, there's nothing left on the bottom as far as shellfish. Although they are, quote unquote, a 'natural part of the environment,' they're also kind of a top predator."

Mikee pointed out Glacier

Bay, to the north, as another area that can no longer be fished because of otters. The elder Mike said that the area used to be incredibly rich in marine life. It was such a good home for the otters, he said that the population growth jumped to 42 percent in that area, as opposed to a typical growth rate of 12 to 14 percent. The problem was compounded by other otters moving into the area because it was a good source of food. Mikee also said that Cordova Bay is another barren area thanks to otters.

Ron Johnson has been fishing since the 1980s, and currently owns the *Pacific Nomad*. He said that he used to fish in Yakutat until it closed down, which brought him to Wrangell. It seems like fishermen keep losing more and more territory to otters, he said, and it feels like they are being run out of the area. He also said that while last year's crab season was good, it is also crowded.

"It's crowded because we don't have the area to move to like we used to," Johnson said. "There's lots of areas that the otters have taken over where we used to be able to crab, can't crab anymore. So we all end up on top of each other's back. I don't want to crab around town here, but other places I used to crab, there's no crab."

Mike said that it is not just the fishermen who need to be worried about what sea otters are doing to Southeast Alaska. The entire community stands to be hurt if something is not done to better manage the animals. Last season, he said the ex-vessel value of crab was \$3.15 a pound. The "ex-vessel" value is the post-season price per pound for the first purchase of a commercial harvest. Mike said the Wrangell fishing fleet made \$3 million last season. Four years ago, he said the fishing fleet brought in about \$4.2 million.

"That's just the fishermen,"

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Water conservation and hydropower covered in town hall meeting

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

A town hall meeting was held at the Nolan Center last Wednesday evening, July 10, to discuss ongoing water issues in Wrangell and the wider Southeast Alaska region. In short, drought conditions across Southeast Alaska have made conservation necessary for the community. Dry weather has also an impact on Wrangell's supply of electricity, as well.

"Part of the reason we're here today is because we, Southern and Southeast Alaska, are experiencing an extreme drought," Borough Manager Lisa Von Barga said. "This is the first ever recorded extreme drought in Alaska. Now, that is the first ever recorded extreme drought since the U.S. Drought Monitor was brought online, and that was in 2000."

Von Barga opened the meeting with a quick review of

the city's water supply. Which is kept in two reservoirs, she explained. The upper reservoir was spilling over, as of Wednesday evening, but the lower reservoir was 3.5 feet low. In the past 24 hours, as of July 10, Wrangell's water treatment plant produced 877,000 gallons of water, at a rate of 608 gallons per minute. Meanwhile, the city's water consumption was 707,000 gallons of water in 24 hours, or 491 gallons per minute. Von Barga also added that community consumption only accounts for 70 percent of the water supply that is used up. Another 30 percent is lost in the production of usable water.

She went on to explain the importance of conservation. Other than the fact that human beings require water to survive, a constricted water supply also put the city, as a whole, in danger. If there were a major fire, for example, all of

Wrangell's water could be used up. Every loss of water puts Wrangell in danger, she said.

The responsibility to conserve is not entirely on the people of Wrangell, however. The city is working on several projects to better conserve and increase the water supply. This includes cleaning the sand used to filter the water at the treatment plant, halting all sales of water to cruise ships, putting conservation notices on water spigots around the harbor, improving leak detection, and holding weekly water management meetings between borough officials and Wrangell's major water users like the seafood processors and the Stikine Inn. Von Barga also pointed out the city's new water recapture project.

"Previously, when one of our filters would have to be cleaned, all of the water from that filter would have to be dumped," Von Barga said. "And it's already gone through the treatment process, so that's a waste of that water. If a filter is full it can be as much as 140-150,000 gallons. If it's half full, which is the normal size, it's 75,000 gallons. So if they're cleaning two filters a week, that's 15,000 gallons of savings a week that is going on. So I want to thank the staff for coming up with that."

Other projects that the city is looking into include, among other things, adding lining to the city's flumes, which carry water into the reservoirs and locating old wells. City officials have also been working on getting a new treatment plant constructed. Von Barga

said that this has been ongoing for several years now, mainly gathering funding for the project, but said that they are beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel. It will still be a while before any new treatment plant is ready for operation, but one may be coming in the near future.

Trey Acteson was next to speak. Acteson is the CEO of the Southeast Alaska Power Agency, which provides electricity to Wrangell, Petersburg, and Ketchikan. SEAPA is governed by a board of municipally appointed directors from each of the three cities, and operates two hydroelectric projects at Tyee and Swan Lake. Acteson said that SEAPA has kept its power rates stagnant at 6.8 cents per kilowatt hour for the past 21 years.

Acteson showed some graphs explaining how the drought has affected them. Water levels at Tyee Lake, as of the presentation, are at 1,313.1 feet. This is an increase from roughly 1,260 feet around February and March. Swan Lake's levels are at 297.5 feet, an increase from 280 back in February and March. The towns of Wrangell and Petersburg largely receive their power from Tyee Lake, while Ketchikan gets its power from Swan. However, as residents in the SEAPA communities may be aware, there was a power crisis late last winter that required Petersburg and Wrangell to switch to diesel power to preserve what water was left in Tyee. Acteson added in his presentation that Ketchikan has been running diesel, as well, to preserve Swan Lake's water levels.

Acteson added that SEAPA has made some changes to help avoid any similar power emergencies in the future. Part of the reason Wrangell and Petersburg had to switch to diesel power was because SEAPA sold Tyee power south to Ketchikan, which proved to be an unwise decision as there was not enough hydropower to make it through the winter. Acteson said that going forward, Tyee Lake will follow a "sales curve," which is set about 10 feet above annual water level averages. Before SEAPA can sell any power south, he explained, the water level must get above the sales curve. If the water level ever falls below the average guide curve, the sales will be immediately halted. That is not to say that power will stop flowing between the northern cities and the south, of course.

"Some folks were using the term that we were doing 'net zero' across the STI [Swan-Tyee Intertie], which means we send it north and south but at the end of the week it's just about even," Acteson said.

Acteson added that SEAPA is looking into future power sources. He said that they have been conducting a regional hydrosite analysis, looking for new sources of hydropower, and have located a potential 60 projects. These will all take time, however, and he cautioned that SEAPA only wants to invest in the wisest of options. On top of hydropower, he said that they are keeping on top of new developments in alternative energy sources, and will look into any avenues there, as well.

Sea otters

Continued from page 11

he said. "That's not the 12-man, 15-man crew down here, and the four or five containers a week going out of here with the freight. Everybody is going to lose. We're going to lose a lot of economy if we lose that, and that's just Dungeness."

Wrangell fishermen are not the only ones feeling pressure from the otters. David Beebe is a fisherman based out of Petersburg with 35 years of experience under his belt. He currently operates the *Jerry O*. This year's crabbing season has been going pretty well for him, he said, but only because he is boating about 16 hours away from home to get away from the sea otters. He said that, over the years, he has seen Southeast Alaska change a lot because of the growing otter population. He has been "periodically displaced" from several spots that used to be very good for fishing.

"I lost my first fishery to sea otters, which was diving for abalone," Beebe said, which occurred in the early '90s.

Southeast Alaska has a very rich prey-species buildup thanks to the long absence of sea otters, Beebe said, which is why commercial fishing has been so viable in the area. With the return of the sea otters, the competition is only hurting the stock. He added that sea otters can also cost fishermen in other ways, besides just eating their catch. They are very territorial animals, he said, and will chew apart crab pot buoys like they were corn-on-the-cob.

Bakos agreed with Beebe's assessment on how the ecosystem has changed due to a lack of predators.

"After otters were eradicated to support the fur trade in the 18th and 19th centuries, the marine ecosystem dramatically changed in their absence," Bakos said. "With the release of predation pressure from sea otters, populations of invertebrate species such as abalone, crab, clam, and urchins increased to a level that would not have otherwise been seen. People started viewing very large invertebrate populations as the norm, and the norm included large-sized individuals, all desirable traits around which modern day fisheries have developed and become dependent upon. Had the sea otters never been eradicated, some of those crab and dive fisheries may never have developed into what they are today, and the current competition for resources may never have occurred."

As a fisherman and an amateur naturalist, as he calls himself, Beebe has been involved in several projects researching Alaska's sea otters. He and his boat were used as an operating room to implant transmitters into sea otters around Kupreanof Island, he said, as part of a PhD project with Zac Hoyt of the Fish and Wildlife Service. He has also assisted Bakos in the creation of "Occam's Otter."

In Beebe's opinion, something needs to be done about Southeast's otters. If they are not better managed, he said, the problem will essentially take care of itself. With a growing population, Beebe said that the otters will likely overshoot their food supply and die off. The collapse of the Southeast Alaskan sea otters will be very damaging to their population, but also to the region's shellfish.

"Overshoot inevitably leads to collapse," he said.

To be continued in the July 25 edition



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