



Wrangell, Alaska
March 13, 2024

WRANGELL SENTINEL

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Borough advisory board recommends sale of former hospital property

BY BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

The borough's economic development board voted unanimously March 5 to recommend the assembly approve the sale of the former hospital property for \$200,000 to Wayne Johnson, a Georgia-based real estate developer.

Johnson is planning to demolish the building and construct up to 48 units of condo-style housing, with covered parking. He also wants to purchase six borough-owned vacant lots behind the hospital property, which the borough manager has said would be sold at their appraised value.

Regardless of some concerns, economic development board members expressed hope about the sale and the potential for more housing options in Wrangell. Board member John DeRuyter noted at the meeting that it

seems everything in Wrangell always comes down to housing.

In addition to new housing, the project could provide economic and tax benefits for the borough, and construction could result in employment opportunities.

"(Johnson) sees the same possibility of Wrangell that I see," Mayor Patty Gilbert said at the meeting.

The borough currently owns the hospital property, which has been empty since 2021 when SEARHC moved into its new Wrangell Medical Center. The borough has been trying to sell the property since 2022 and received no firm offers until Johnson's.

The sale price of \$200,000 is below the appraised value of the property at \$830,000, and less than the \$470,000 asking price posted by the borough last

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Legislative leaders say state cannot afford governor's proposal for large dividend

BY JAMES BROOKS
Alaska Beacon

Leading Alaska legislators said there is little appetite for spending from savings to pay a super-sized Permanent Fund dividend this year, likely killing a proposal from Gov. Mike Dunleavy.

In December, the governor proposed spending almost \$2.3 billion on a dividend of roughly \$3,500 per recipient this fall under an unused formula in state law. That would result in a \$1 billion deficit in the state budget and require spending from the state's Constitutional Budget Reserve, but as a draft spending plan takes shape in the House, top members of both the House and Senate said they're unlikely to spend from the reserve this year.

"I don't think it's a wise thing to draw from savings," said Fairbanks Rep. Will Stapp, a member of the House Finance Committee. "I personally would not be in favor of tapping the state's savings."

Palmer Rep. DeLena Johnson, co-chair of the House Finance Committee, said that at this time, she has not been having conversations with the House's 16-member minority caucus about spending from the reserve.

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Ship cancellations cut into summer cruise passenger count for Wrangell

BY BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

With the loss of several cruise ship stops this summer, Wrangell may not exceed last year's cruise visitor count as had been originally projected.

Wrangell recently lost 14 stops from the cruise line American Queen Voyages, which filed for bankruptcy last month, canceling its 186-passenger Ocean Victory to Southeast Alaska. This translates to a loss of \$33,000 in port fees and as many as 2,600 summer visitors for Wrangell.

The town also lost the stops of three mid-size cruise ships which are now going to Klawock, taking about 2,200 berths off the Wrangell calendar.

Cruise traffic is an important part of the

community's summer economy. According to the Wrangell Visitor Economy 2024 report prepared for the borough by Juneau-based Rain Coast Data, Wrangell saw just under 23,000 cruise visitors in 2023, a 42% increase from 2022. Cruise passengers spent about \$3.5 million in town in 2023, an average of \$152 per passenger.

Independent travelers who arrive by air spend \$568 per person, according to the report.

The report also noted that last year's cruise numbers exceeded the pre-COVID travel numbers of 2019, after several years of rebuilding the travel trade.

With the loss of visitors from the two

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PHOTO BY JEANNIE LINDSEY

Daniel Harrison plays strong under the basket in action against Metlakatla in Southeast tournament play Saturday in Sitka. Wrangell's Trevyn Gillen (No. 22) stands ready to assist. Wrangell won the game to take second in Southeast and advance to state.

Wrangell boys defeat Metlakatla at Southeast and earn trip to state

BY MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

Despite a rocky start at the regional tournament, the Wrangell boys varsity basketball team defeated Metlakatla in their final game Saturday to take second place in Southeast, earning a spot at the Division II state tournament.

Head coach Cody Angerman felt that one goal for the team all season was to work toward being at their best at regionals. "I think that as the season went on, we got better," he said.

Entering the tournament in Sitka as the No. 3 seed, the Wolves lost their first game on Wednesday, March 6, to the No. 2 seed, the Petersburg Vikings. After a close game that was tied at halftime, the Vikings overtook the Wolves in the second half and won 54-43. Junior Daniel Harrison was the top scorer for Wrangell with 26 points, while junior Kyan Stead scored 10.

The Wolves then had to win every game to stay in the tournament. Angerman told his team to treat that first loss as a warm-up and focus on the next game.

In their game Thursday against the Craig Panthers, Wrangell answered the challenge, winning 75-47. Harrison contributed to Wrangell's early lead but got into foul trouble later in the game, and Stead picked up the slack to become the top scorer with 23 points, while Harrison had 19 points. Sophomore Boomchain Loucks contributed 13 points.

On Friday, Wrangell took on the Haines Glacier Bears. Initially a tight game that had Haines in the lead at halftime, the Wolves bounced back and overtook them. Haines battled to narrow the lead, but Harrison and Stead

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Senior Center Menu

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

Thursday, March 14

Pork chops baked with apples, french style green beans, sunshine salad, rice and vegetable pilaf

Friday, March 15

Liver and onions, zucchini, garden salad, potatoes and parsley, fruit

Monday, March 18

Closed. Shelf-stable meal delivered on Friday, March 15

Tuesday, March 19

Spaghetti and meat sauce, Mediterranean vegetables, romaine and radish salad

Wednesday, March 20

Barbeque beef on a bun, mixed vegetables, potato salad

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

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



ALASKA AIRLINES CLUB 49 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

STATE PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE will be in Wrangell on Thursday, March 14. Immunizations, birth control and STD screening, well-child exams for kids up to age 6, TB screening and medication, Narcan kits and medication disposal bags will be offered. The Public Health Center is in the Kadin Building, 215 Front St. Call 907-723-4611 to make an appointment in advance so the nurse knows what immunizations to bring.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY will be accepted on the state budget 6 to 7 p.m. Thursday March 14, at the Legislative Information Office. The House Finance Committee has allotted specific slots during its hearings for testimony from around the state. There will be a 2-minute time limit per person; sign in between 5:45 and 6 p.m., if possible. This is an opportunity to let the Legislature know what is important to the community. Any questions? Call the office at 907-874-3013.

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING 6:30 p.m. Monday, March 18, at Evergreen Elementary School Room 101. A public hearing to gather input on the draft budget will begin at 6 p.m. Community members can email comments to kpowell@wpsd.us, or can sign up under guests to be heard at the meeting by emailing before 3:30 p.m. that day.

LITTLE LEAGUE VOLUNTEERS needed for coaching, umpiring, scorekeeping, concessions, running the pitching machines, field upkeep and more. Little League is scheduled to start April 1 and end June 15. Coaching positions must be filled before registration can start. Call or text Brianna Schilling at 907-305-0282.

FREE TAX RETURN PREPARATION every Saturday through April 13 at the Nolan Center classroom. Open to everyone, regardless of age. IRS-certified volunteers will prepare and e-file your return for you at no charge. By appointment only. Call Paula at 907-874-3824 or 907-305-0309.

NOLAN CENTER THEATER 1939 movie "The Wizard of Oz," rated G, at 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 19. The adventure family fantasy runs 1 hour and 42 minutes; free. Hosted by Island of Faith Lutheran Church. Concession stand will be open. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

BOOK FAIR 1 to 6 p.m. Thursday, March 21, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, March 22, at the Evergreen Elementary School gym. Open to the public. Call Kendra at 907-874-2321 for more information.

PADDLER'S POTLUCK 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday, March 23, at Shoemaker Bay recreation shelter. Whether you prefer the canoe or kayak, raft or rowboat or paddleboard, if you like to explore the waterway, or just want to start doing it this is the place to be, come out and meet folks who share your interests while enjoying stories of trips old and new. Bring a dish to share and dress for the weather.

COMMUNITY EASTER EGG HUNT promptly at 1 p.m. Sunday, March 31, at Muskeg Meadows Golf Course. For toddlers through 12 years old. Sponsored by the Elks. Donations of wrapped small pieces of candy, or funds to purchase more coins can be dropped off at the Elks Club or at Angerman's. Volunteers are needed to help fill plastic eggs and help hide the 1,000-plus eggs on the morning of the hunt.

STORY TIME AT THE LIBRARY, 10 to 11 a.m. Fridays. Come enjoy the stories, crafts and snacks at the Irene Ingle Public Library. Call 907-874-3535.

VIRTUES MATTER activities for children, 2:35 to 4 p.m. Wednesdays at the elementary school music room. An interfaith effort hosted by the Baha'is of Wrangell and open to all. For more information and to register, call Kay Larson, 907-209-9117, or email wrangell@akbnc.org.

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

- **SKATE NIGHT** 5 to 7 p.m. Saturdays at the community center gym. Limited quantity and sizes of skates available to borrow. Family focused, kids 12 years and under must be supervised by a parent or adult. Open-gym style activity. Drop-in fee; pay before you skate.
- **OUTDOOR CHALLENGE** through April 28 is built to encourage consistent movement, with a goal of completing at least 30 minutes of exercise 5 to 7 days per week. This challenge is for people of all fitness levels. The participant who completes the most workouts will win a six-month pass to the Parks and Recreation facility; prizes donated by local businesses will be raffled off at the end of the challenge. For ages 14 and up. Registration required for this free activity.
- **FUNCTIONAL FITNESS PROGRAM** 10 to 11 a.m. Tuesdays through April 9 with Devyn Johnson. The Functional Fitness Program combines current evidence-based information on the physiological and psychological considerations of aging, assessment strategies for older adults, exercise progressions and program design. The goal is to help participants achieve successful lifestyle modifications. \$25 fee, plus daily entry fee. Registration required.

Ferry Schedule

Northbound

Friday, March 15

Kennicott, 3:15 p.m.

Friday, March 22

Kennicott, 8:15 p.m.

Wednesday, April 10

Hubbard, 12:45 a.m.

Friday, April 12

Kennicott, 4:30 p.m.

Southbound

Monday, March 18

Kennicott, 5 a.m.

Monday, March 25

Kennicott, 7:30 a.m.

Monday, April 15

Kennicott, 6 a.m.

Monday, April 29

Kennicott, 7:15 p.m.

Listings are scheduled departure times.

Call the terminal at 907-874-2021 for information or 907-874-3711 for recorded information.

Tides

High Tides

Low Tides

	AM		PM		AM		PM	
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
March 13	03:30	19.1	04:02	16.6	09:42	-2.3	09:47	0.3
March 14	04:09	18.4	04:50	14.9	10:28	-1.5	10:28	2.0
March 15	04:50	17.2	05:44	13.1	11:18	-0.3	11:12	3.8
March 16	05:38	15.7	06:55	11.6	12:17	1.1
March 17	06:41	14.2	08:31	10.9	00:07	5.4	01:32	2.3
March 18	08:10	13.2	09:59	11.3	01:24	6.6	03:07	2.7
March 19	09:39	13.3	11:03	12.4	03:16	6.8	04:35	2.2

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

March 13, 1924

Work will begin about the first of the month on a third story for the Wrangell Hotel. E. G. W. Morris will have charge of the work. In addition to the work of adding a third story, there will be many improvements throughout the entire building. Hot and cold running water will be supplied in all rooms. Twelve or 15 baths will be distributed over the building. When the third story is completed the Wrangell Hotel will have 76 rooms. The Wrangell Hotel, when the addition is completed, will be ahead of the town, but there is little doubt that Mayor Grant's confidence in the future of Wrangell will be more than justified, and that still further

additions will be necessary within the next five or 10 years.

March 11, 1949

Thirty years of service to the community, state and nation by the American Legion will be recognized at an anniversary party to be given by the American Legion Auxiliary in honor of the Merlin Elmer Palmer Post at the Legion Dugout March 17, on the Legion's Thursday meeting night. All members of the local post and their wives and girlfriends are invited to the party. "In the 30 years since it was founded, the American Legion has been a great source of strength for the protection of American ideals and institutions, as well as for

guarding the welfare of veterans and their families," said Mrs. Jewel Binkley, president of the auxiliary. "The Merlin Elmer Palmer Post of the Legion has been a constant asset to our city. The anniversary party is planned to give proper recognition to this long service."

March 13, 1974

At a public hearing attended by more than 300 people, the state Boundary Commission Thursday weighed a city proposal for a massive 27,400-acre annexation. The state body recorded nearly three and one-half hours of testimony, accepted written statements including a petition signed by a purported 290 opponents, and

heard oral testimony from 16 other opponents. Included in the area proposed for annexation are 760 residents and their homes, the Alaska Wood Products mill, Wrangell Airport, Wrangell Institute, five trailer parks, the entire watershed serving Wrangell's two reservoirs, and more than 256 miles of coastline, plus hundreds of acres of undeveloped national forest land. If approved, the annexation would place the northern third of 35-mile-long Wrangell Island in the city. The commission is expected to reach a decision sometime before the end of April.

March 11, 1999

Another step forward in

funding Wrangell's schools for the coming year was taken at Monday's school board meeting. The board adopted a budget which included cuts discussed at the previous week's special meeting but retained all programs and teachers. As a result of budget approval, contracts for all 26 tenured teachers were also approved. Superintendent Woody Wilson reported on several items including a resolution passed by the state school board opposing "any school voucher plan that would take public money from public schools and give it to private schools." The Wrangell School Board agreed to consider a similar resolution at its April meeting.

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FREIGHT FOR LESS

Houser promoted to Forest Service Wrangell District ranger

By MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

After filling the job in the past in a temporary capacity, Tory Houser officially accepted the position as U.S. Forest Service Wrangell District ranger on March 4. "It feels great, and a lot of responsibility," she said.

Houser has spent 21 years with the Forest Service, including eight years in Wrangell, mostly as recreation officer, although she has filled in before from time to time as acting district ranger.

She said that while those previous experiences prepared her in some ways, "I'll need to lean on my really great staff, partners and stakeholders, and tribal organizations. I can't do it on my own."

As district ranger, she will be the decision maker for various projects and other recommendations for the Wrangell District of the Tongass National Forest. In addition to continuing the work of her predecessors in building relationships with the tribe, she also wants to focus on the Anan Wildlife Observatory, "a tourism staple for Wrangell," to preserve it as a high-class experience for newcomers and residents alike.

"I want to keep going with all the things that Wrangell does well," she said.

It was difficult for Houser to leave her position as recreation officer, but she felt that her skills as a negotiator and working with people from different backgrounds would be beneficial to the Forest Service and community.

An internship in 2000 with the Student Conservation Association at the Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont began her long Forest Service career. "I've always loved the great outdoors."

While Houser was in a work program in Vermont



Tory Houser is the new U.S. Forest Service Wrangell District ranger.

and New Hampshire in 2004, Chad VanOrmer, now the deputy regional forester for the Tongass, was transferring from Prince of Wales Island to a position in Vermont and suggested she try out for an Alaska job. She's been in Southeast Alaska ever since.

"I want to keep going with all the things that Wrangell does well."

— TORY HOUSER
U.S. FOREST SERVICE
WRANGELL DISTRICT RANGER

"There's so much opportunity in Alaska," she said.

In the past, she has assisted with ongoing projects like the Alaska Youth Stewards in Kake, a work program on Tlingit land for youth from rural Southeast Alaska, a guided interpretive program at the Anan Wildlife Observatory which has been going on for 30 years, a wilderness education program for high school seniors, and a cruise ship partnership to provide tours of El Capitan Cave on Prince of Wales Island for passengers.

Clint Kolarich, who served as Wrangell's district ranger since June 2019, is now in Ketchikan and has been serving since September as one of the Tongass National Forest's two deputy forest supervisors.

District employee Austin O'Brien filled in as the interim replacement prior to Houser taking over the job.

While Houser admitted that she is somewhat nervous about the enormity of the job, she's also looking forward to the challenges and possibilities that it will bring. "I'm ready and excited for new projects, and I want to manage resources sustainably."

Port commission, borough assembly discuss marine insurance requirements

By BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

After the borough assembly agreed last month that a port commission proposal to require boat owners to carry marine insurance needed a lot more work, the two elected bodies got together last week to workshop changes.

The assembly and port commission were generally in consensus over details to be added to the original proposal, like a minimum required coverage, a maneuverability assessment of vessels, a minimum vessel size to require insurance, increased management rights to keep out unsea-

worthy boats, exemptions for transient vessels and the cost of a moorage surcharge for boat owners who opt out of carrying marine insurance.

The original proposal did not include a minimum coverage amount for marine insurance, but assembly and port commission members agreed

that a minimum should be required and will be determined based on the insurance market.

The intent of the port commission effort has been to protect the borough, and other boat owners, from liability if an uninsured vessel burns or sinks and damages property nearby.

Commission and assembly members also agreed at their March 7 work session that there should be some form of maneuverability assessment, to ensure that boats in the harbor are seaworthy. There was discussion about how this may differ for floathouses.

Members also reached a consensus that the plan, which would be adopted as a borough ordinance, should exempt smaller boats. Mason Villarma, interim borough manager, suggested that boats under 30 feet in length should be exempt from the insurance requirement, as smaller boats pose less of a problem if they sink and typically don't stay in the harbor year-round.

Increased management rights for the harbormaster were also generally agreed upon by the port commission and assembly members. In cases of a vessel owner opting out of the required insurance, members want the harbormaster to be able to require a third-party survey of the vessel's condition.

There was also a consensus that the previously proposed price of \$5 per vessel foot per month for the cost of the moorage surcharge in lieu of carrying insurance was too expensive, and that a lower price needs to be determined, with potential variability year to year. Juneau currently charges 31 cents a foot for a

similar fee, Harbormaster Steve Miller reported at the workshop.

The intent of the monthly fee would be to build up an account for the Port and Harbors Department to cover salvage and damages caused by uninsured vessels.

An exception for requiring insurance from transient vessels was also discussed, though members did not settle on a preferred length of time before the insurance requirement would kick in.

The original insurance requirement proposal brought to the borough assembly in February did not include any stipulations defining marine insurance, nor was there a minimum insurance coverage amount required.

Currently, the borough spends roughly \$30,000 a year on derelict vessel disposal, Villarma said.

Assembly and commission members all agreed that the borough needs to require some form of insurance. "The harbor just can't keep footing the bill," said Miller, and that requiring insurance is about protecting the community and the harbors.

A new proposal will be drafted for the next port commission meeting on April 4.

Yaadei háš yanagwéin! Canoes are coming here!



This year the Paddle to Celebration canoe journey will kick off in Wrangell and onward to Juneau.

Canoe landings are open, public, cultural events.

Canoe landings are displays of our traditional canoe culture.

Canoe Landings are also demonstrations of our capacity for intergovernmental, cross-cultural, interdepartmental, and interagency collaboration.

In the Tlingit language we call it Wooch.een— *let's work together.*

The dates as proposed are May 28th ceremonial landing in Wrangell & cultural welcome dinner and May 29th journey launch.

SOME OF THE LOGISTICAL NEEDS:

- In 2013 the canoe landing for the Paddle to Shakes journey and the 2023 Hóküle'a voyage stopover would be a good idea of what to expect.
- We will need housing and camping for as many as 8 to 10 out-of-town canoes or 160-200 cultural participants.
- As many as 6 berths at docks for the support boats—seiners, tenders, etc
- Canoe storage for up to 8-10 canoes. Boat trailer parking for canoe trailers.
- A welcome dinner by potluck; caterer; and vendor; for the evening of the 28th.
- Breakfast by potluck; caterer; and vendor for the morning of the 29th.

All community contributions to this effort are welcome and appreciated— donations are immense; discounts are great; full price availability is also needed and welcome.

If you or someone from your organization can attend a coordination and planning meeting please let me know.

If you would like to notify the journey of any contribution of any sort, or any size, please let me know.

If you have any questions or for any further discussion, please reach out.

With gratitude and respect,
Ken Hoyt
khoyt@searhc.org, 907-513-9697

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Russia's loss could be Alaska's financial gain

BY LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

Even in winter, there are hot opportunities. And since the state's prospects for economic well-being are in short supply these days — like being short of buyers for Alaska salmon, running short of energy for Southcentral residents and businesses, and falling woefully short of funding for public schools — the state needs to seize whatever unexpected opportunities arise.

Alaskans have long prided themselves on ingenuity, making something anew from the discard piles left behind by others. In this case, there are six ice-class liquefied natural gas carriers sitting in South Korean shipyards that need a new home. Why not Alaska?

The shipyards can't deliver three of the vessels to the Russian company that ordered the custom-built tankers. State-controlled Sovcomflot canceled its order amid Western sanctions intended to hurt an Arctic gas project majority owned by Russian company Novatek.

And the shipbuilder has three more of the high-class, high-cost, double-hulled ships that were supposed to go out on charter to Japan-based Mitsui OSK Lines. But Mitsui last month said it no longer would put the carriers to use on the Russian gas project, Arctic LNG-2, because of sanctions. It needs to sell the ships.

The tankers run close to \$300 million each, about 20% more than the price of a conventional LNG carrier. It costs a lot of money to harden a ship to run through six-foot-thick Arctic sea ice.

Between the high cost and international politics, the special-built ships are about as marketable as canned farmed pink salmon in Alaska.

Therein lies the opportunity. Alaska needs to accept the reality that no matter how many more millions of dollars it burns up on its dream of a North Slope natural gas pipeline project, it's going nowhere. The state-

backed mirage has no investors, no partners, no gas, no customers, no financing and no market. There is money to be made in gas — just not our gas.

Just as some investors make money in bankruptcies by buying buildings, businesses or inventory on the cheap, Alaska should make an offer for the unwanted LNG carriers. Start with a lowball offer; not a lot of buyers out there.

Instead of losing money on politically inspired oil field and mining road investments, the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority could get into the shipowner business.

Of course, we would have to rename the ships, but think of the statewide contest open to school kids. Maybe instead of a certificate, the winning school could get additional state funding to keep teachers employed.

The state could lease the tankers to the multinational partners in the LNG export project nearing completion next door in Kitimat, British Columbia. The tankers are too expensive to run if you buy them at list price, but get 'em on the cheap and they could be money makers.

The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute could paint attractive and delectable images of fresh wild salmon on the hulls for consumers across the world to see. If you thought the Alaska Airlines Salmon 737 was an eyecatcher, imagine a bright sockeye on the side of a 1,000-foot-ship pulling into Asian and European ports.

Even if we needed a little federal smudging and fudging of Western sanctions to pick up the ships at a bargain rate, take ownership and lease them out, I expect Alaska's congressional delegation would be happy to support an effort to make money for the state and stick it to Russia.

Someone is going to buy those ships at a cut rate; it might as well be Alaska. It's the closest the state will ever get to profiting from an Arctic gas project.

EDITORIAL

Fishing communities need state to cast a line for answers

No question last year was pretty miserable for Alaska's commercial fishing industry — the people who catch and clean salmon; the processors that buy, prep and ship the fish; the communities that depend on the summer jobs and tax revenues.

And no question that this year is looking about as dark, or darker.

The head of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute recently described last year as "rock bottom" for prices paid to fishers and weak markets for processors, later amending that statement to say that this year is scrapping another layer deeper into the bottom.

"Unfortunately, Americans just don't eat enough seafood," he said. That fact, plus losing market share in China to U.S. tariffs and seeing a growing volume of low-cost Russian salmon in the world's fish cases have added up to bleak times for the Alaska salmon industry.

The state Legislature wants to help but isn't sure what to do.

So it may appoint a task force. Often, a task force is a political answer in search of postponing hard decisions on tough problems. But in this case, it's probably the second-best thing lawmakers can do at the moment that might have a long-term benefit.

There is nothing the state can do this spring to boost prices much for the coming summer season, short of spending hundreds of millions of dollars to buy salmon dinners for every American. That's assuming you could get every American to even try salmon.

One encouraging aspect of the task force proposal which is originating in the state Senate is the timeline: Senators want a report back by January so that the Legislature can act quickly on any recommendations. Back-to-back bad years are bad enough; a third is a bad year too many.

The state's seafood industry is "facing unprecedented challenges," said the sponsor statement for the Senate resolution. The measure is supported by the three co-chairs of the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate president.

"Alaskan fishermen, processors, processing workers, support businesses, communities are confronted with low prices, plant closures, lost markets and foregone fishing opportunities," United Fishermen of Alaska Executive Director Tracy Welch told the Senate Finance Committee last week.

While creating a task force to come back with more recommendations next year, the Legislature should start the work this year with the best first answer: Appropriate more funding for seafood marketing efforts.

Wrangell Sentinel

MEET THE NEW REPORTER

Writing in Wrangell will be a new adventure

BY BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

I thought that moving to Wrangell from Vermont might provide slightly warmer weather, but during my first week here I've been proven wrong.

I grew up and have lived

most of my life in a town called Mendon, Vermont, which isn't all that different in population from Wrangell, though completely landlocked and much snowier (I won't say colder).

So why did I make the trek all the way to Wrangell from

Vermont? Well, part of it was the adventure, and part of it was to write for the Sentinel.

I graduated from Middlebury College in Vermont at the beginning of February, with a degree in English.

I've always loved reading,

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GUEST OPINION

Alaskans deserve better of Canadian mine cleanup

BY FRANK RUE

It's hard to believe that the abandoned Tulsequah Chief mine, just across the Alaska border in Canada, has been discharging toxic, acidic and metals-laden waste water into the Taku River watershed for almost 70 years.

A kaleidoscope of Canadian excuses, corporate bankruptcies, and hollow promises have meant no meaningful, on-the-ground effort has been made to clean up this mess in Southeast Alaska's top salmon-producing river system.

The mine site is about 40 air miles northeast of Juneau.

Alaskans have been pressing to have the problem addressed for decades. As Alaska Fish and

Game Habitat Division director and then commissioner from 1988 until 2002, I was well aware of the Tulsequah Chief problem and was involved in efforts to get it resolved. Gov. Tony Knowles petitioned the U.S. State Department to put the issue before the International Joint Commission, but the federal government would not take up the issue.

But Alaskans, including the Douglas Indian Association, Alaska commercial and sport fishing organizations, local governments throughout the region and conservation organizations have continued to press for cleanup of the Tulsequah Chief mine.

Finally, eight years ago, British Columbia com-

Continued on page 5

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Wrangell should think about the negatives of too much tourism

Juneau for instance has 28 jewelry stores just from the Triangle Bar to the Mount Roberts Tramway.

Regarding the editorial that appeared in the Wrangell Sentinel on Feb. 28: As a lifelong resident of Southeast Alaska, I've experienced the growth of the mega tourist industry and, yes, some of it is good for the economy. Along with that comes negative things, which should also be considered when deciding to jump into the fray.

A few things to be explored are hands-on talks with the people of the other communities, not just the officials. Juneau, Skagway, Ketchikan and Sitka have been totally overrun with shops owned by the tour industry and out-of-state owners that are closed during the off-season.

Workers are being shipped in from all over the country and outside the country at cheap labor. Hoonah brings in more than 250 outside workers per season. The property values have skyrocketed to the point no one locally can afford housing, especially young people who want to stay in their hometown.

The industry touts itself as the "clean industry" — don't believe it! When you first step off a plane or a boat in Wrangell, you can feel the spirit that has bonded lifelong Alaskans as special pioneers and strong families. Hopefully, that is always retained.

William Tonsgard Jr.
Juneau

Oldest continuously published paper in Alaska



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Hospital property sale

Continued from page 1

year. Municipal code, however, allows the borough to sell property at less than appraised value if the economic development board, planning and zoning commission and assembly determine the sale would promote economic development in the community.

The borough currently spends \$100,000 a year on maintenance and utilities for the empty building. Additionally, the economic development board noted that the boiler in the building went out last winter, and that it's only a matter of time until a larger problem arises.

The building contains as-

bestos, which creates an added liability for the borough.

Johnson estimates demolition of the hospital will cost \$850,000, and new construction will cost \$12.5 million to \$15 million.

The sale agreement on the hospital property does not bind Johnson to demolition or construction.

Though the economic development board recommended that the sale go ahead, members raised some concerns and questions at the March 5 meeting, including Johnson's qualifications as a developer.

Kate Thomas, the borough's economic development director, said officials have investigated his qualifications. Johnson has successfully developed several hundred housing units, mostly for senior citizens, though his plans for the Wrangell development include a wider variety of ages.

He has two advanced degrees from Georgia universities including a Ph.D. in higher education leadership and a master's degree in business administration.

Other concerns were raised whether the borough could end up with the property again if Johnson were to walk away from it. Borough Clerk

Kim Lane stated that because the sale agreement requires Johnson to pay for the property in full before closing, it's unlikely the borough would end up with the property again.

The planning and zoning commission will consider the property sale proposal at its Thursday, March 14, meeting.

The sale of the hospital property, along with final approval for the sale of the additional six lots, are tentatively planned for the April 9 borough assembly meeting.

If the assembly approves the sale and a separate deal is reached on the additional six lots, the hospital land transaction could close before May 30. Johnson has said he plans to demolish the old building this year and begin construction next year. He hopes the housing units would be complete by 2026.

MEET THE NEW REPORTER

Continued from page 4

and during my time in school I read a lot. But I also discovered I enjoy writing even more and decided to focus my studies on creative writing. Despite my writing, the way that I discovered journalism was through audio. I worked on multiple podcasts during college



Becca Clark is the Sentinel's newest reporter.

and got over my fear of interviewing people – I actually discovered that I enjoy it quite a bit.

As I started to consider what it is that I want to be when I grow up, I began looking at journalism jobs. When the opportunity to write at the Sentinel presented itself, I took it. I thought what better way to experience a new place and get some journalism experience than to move to the farthest possible place from home?

I spend most of my free time doing outdoor activities. I grew up competitively alpine ski racing, and raced Division I in college. But I also enjoy non-skiing related outdoor activities, like hiking and biking. I'm excited to get into all the activities Wrangell has to offer, especially getting out on the water and maybe trying my hand at some fishing.

I also enjoy being creative, whether it's drawing, painting or knitting one of the five sweaters I have started and not yet finished in the past year. I love to bake and cook, and I'm super excited about the food Alaska has to offer. I love seafood, and apparently Alaska is a much better place for it than Vermont.

I've heard nothing but amazing things about the Wrangell community, and I'm excited to not just write about it, but to become a part of it.

Thanks in advance to everyone for answering any and all of the questions I have about Wrangell and Alaska.

If you see me around, say hello and introduce yourself!

GUEST OPINION

Continued from page 4

mitted to ending the pollution. While the provincial government deserves some credit for the procedural steps it has since taken toward making the cleanup happen, it's time to quit just talking and get on with the on-the-ground work needed to finally stop the acid drainage and close and reclaim the Tulsequah Chief mine.

The imperative to clean up Tulsequah has become even greater with the proposed New Polaris gold mine now in the review process by British Columbia. New Polaris would be sited very close to Tulsequah Chief. It's unconscionable that the province would be open to a new lower Taku mine getting developed, almost on Alaska's doorstep, while the old mine continues degrading the Taku watershed.

From my perspective, Tulsequah Chief should be a cautionary tale for mining in the shared British Columbia-Alaska watersheds.

Tulsequah Chief was just a small underground mine, a very modest project by today's megamine standards. If its nearly seven-decade-old pollution problem still isn't resolved, despite numerous high-level cross-border calls for something to be done, and lots of feel-good meetings and memos, what are the odds the huge Canadian mine projects being proposed for the transboundary region will be developed, operated and reclaimed in a way that protects Alaska's interests?

It doesn't have to be this way. In 1909, the U.S. and Canada signed the Boundary Waters Treaty to address water flow and water pollution and other cross-the-border resource issues. There have been successful agreements elsewhere be-

tween the two nations on contentious issues.

Given the plethora of Canadian mines being proposed and permitted in the Taku, Stikine and Unuk watersheds, the stakes are high enough that the U.S. and Canada should engage the International Joint Commission to resolve issues such as water flow and water quality standards, tailing disposal, mine reclamation, bonding requirements, etc., to ensure that Canada's assurances that it will protect downstream water quality and flow regimes are backed by enforceable policies.

I urge our congressional delegation, the governor and Alaska Legislature to join Southeast communities and organizations to protect Alaska's interests as mines are developed in British Columbia. I think the International Joint Commission is the appropriate forum to ensure any mining in our shared watersheds safeguards water quality, respects Indigenous interests, and puts long-term sustainable stewardship ahead of short-term profit.

But foremost, as a gesture of good will and a demonstration of capability to get things done on the ground, the Tulsequah Chief mine needs – finally, after almost 70 years – to be properly reclaimed. The Taku deserves better. So do the Indigenous people with age-old ties to the watershed, the commercial, subsistence, sport and all the stakeholders and communities who look to the Taku as an economically vital, life-giving natural resource.

Frank Rue served as commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game from 1995 to 2002. He lives in Juneau.

Dividend

Continued from page 1

Minority support would be needed because 30 votes are needed in the House to spend from the reserve account, and the majority caucus has 23 members.

When the budget leaves the House, Johnson said, she expects the dividend to be whatever can be afforded under a balanced budget.

"We are not awash in cash. Let me put it that way. So it's based on revenue," she said.

Sitka Sen. Bert Stedman, co-chair of the Senate Finance Committee, said that a "25% dividend" – so named because it would be paid for with one-quarter of the annual transfer from the Permanent Fund to the state treasury – could fit within a balanced budget alongside the Legislature's just-passed education funding increase, though there wouldn't be a lot of excess room, he said.

The 25% dividend would be worth about \$1,360 per recipient and cost about \$914 million, according to estimates published by the Legislative Finance Division last week.

The House will write the first draft of the state operating budget, and the Senate will have the first draft of the state's annual construction and renovation budget, called the capital budget.

A budget exchange between the two bodies is expected to take place in mid-April, leaving about a month for legislators to finish the spending plan before the end of the regular legislative session in mid-May.

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Ferries needed elsewhere leave Wrangell with a two-week gap

By SENTINEL STAFF

Wrangell will go without state ferry service for the last week of March and first week of April as the ships are scheduled to meet other needs across coastal communities.

There will be no northbound service to Wrangell between March 22 and April 10, and no southbound stops in town between March 25 and April 12.

The schedule will return to normal later in April, with a weekly northbound sailing on Fridays and a weekly southbound stop on Mondays. That will switch to southbound on Wednesdays and northbound on Sundays with the start of the summer schedule in mid-May.

The Kennicott, which has been serving Wrangell this winter, is being diverted for a cross-Gulf of Alaska run to Yakutat, Whittier, Kodiak and Homer that will pull it off its Southeast route March 30 to April 12. Those communities have been without any service this winter while the Tustumena has been at the shipyard for its annual overhaul and maintenance.

The Hubbard will make a northbound stop in Wrangell on April 10 – the first ever for the 5-year-old ferry – as it helps to fill in for the missing Kennicott that week, bringing students to Sitka for an annual music festival, said Sam Dapcevich, spokesman for the Alaska Department of Transportation.

The rest of March and April, the Hubbard is covering for the LeConte in Lynn Canal due to delays at the shipyard with the LeConte's annual winter maintenance.

Borough working on solution to move ‘Mount Tires’ out of town

By BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

There’s a new solution in the works to deal with the large pile of tires at the solid waste transfer station, often referred to as “Mount Tires.”

This new solution would include moving the tires to the former 6-Mile sawmill property and then shipping them out of town as part of a deal with the tenant at the borough-owned waterfront site.

The borough manager is negotiating on a longer-term lease or rental agreement at the former mill site with Channel Construction. If they can reach a deal, ideally Channel Construction would remove the tires from the waste station on the north end of the island and ship them south, a job that would otherwise cost the borough well over \$100,000, Tom Wetor, public works director, said March 4.

The borough purchased the mill property in 2022 for \$2.5 million, and currently only has one tenant — Channel Construction — on the almost 40 acres.

The Juneau-based scrap hauling and construction company has been operating a scrap metal recycling and barging operation under short-term leases at the mill site for the past few years.

Moving the tires would make room for installation of a new loading dock at the solid waste transfer station, a project that has been in the works for almost two years. A loading ramp and platform would make it easier to position a forklift to dump large, compressed bales of trash into open-top containers for barging to an approved landfill out of state.

The goal is to begin putting in the loading platform this summer, and the tires must be cleared out to make room.

However, plans to move the mound of rubber to 6-Mile include only tires from passenger vehicles. There is currently no plan to dispose of larger tires from big trucks, which are much more difficult to move.

The borough has tried other methods in the past to get rid of the tires, but there hasn’t been a great solution. Twice in the past three years, Wrangell has bor-

rowed a tire-cutting machine in an effort to chop up and pack more tires into containers to be shipped out by barge. However, the machine only made a dent in the mountain of tires and was never able to get ahead of the growing stack.

Tires in general are extremely difficult to get rid of. If they are tossed in with general trash for a landfill,

they can damage landfill liners. They also contribute to microplastics in the environment.

Wetor noted one problem in Wrangell is that nothing was done with the tires for 30 years, allowing the pile to grow several feet taller than a person. He is hopeful that clearing out Mount Tires will allow the community to keep pace with disposal in the future.



PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER MULLEN / KETCHIKAN DAILY NEWS

Fresh off the boat

Wrangell’s Tarren Privett shows off the Pacific Sea’s catch to Tucker T. and Rowen B. at Bar Harbor South in Ketchikan on Feb. 23. The Pacific Sea, owned by Frank Warfel, was participating in the golden king crab and tanner crab commercial opening that started Feb. 17.

Legislators look for answers to help beleaguered seafood industry

By YERETH ROSEN
Alaska Beacon

Russian fish flooding global markets and other economic forces beyond the state’s border have created dire conditions for Alaska’s seafood industry.

Now key state legislators are seeking to establish a task force to come up with responses to the low prices, lost market share, lost jobs and lost income

being suffered by fishers, fishing companies and fishing communities.

The measure, Senate Concurrent Resolution 10, was introduced on March 1 and is sponsored by the Senate Finance Committee.

“Alaska’s seafood industry is in a tailspin from facing unprecedented challenges,” said the measure’s sponsor state-

ment issued by the committee’s co-chairs: Sitka Sen. Bert Stedman, Bethel Sen. Lyman Hoffman, and Golovin Sen. Donny Olson. The measure is also being promoted by Senate President Gary Stevens, of Kodiak.

The industry’s troubles caused a loss to Alaska’s economy of more than \$2 billion in 2023, the sponsor statement says.

The resolution got its first hearing March 7 in the committee that introduced it.

The Joint Legislative Seafood Industry Task Force task force idea is modeled after one created 20 years ago to help the then-struggling Alaska salmon industry, Tim Lamkin, a Stevens staff member working on the subject, told the finance committee.

Then, Alaska salmon fishers and sellers were facing low prices and a shrunken global market share caused by booming production of inexpensive farmed salmon. That 15-member task force needed two years to complete its work, Lamkin said.

In contrast, the Joint Legislative Seafood Industry Task Force would consist of seven members and would present its findings and recommendations to the Legislature in less than a year, by Jan. 21, 2025, according to the resolution.

However, the measure is still a work in progress, with the size and makeup of the task force among the details to be worked out during the rest of the session, Lamkin told the committee.

Testifying in favor were the chief executive of OBI, one of Alaska’s major seafood processing companies; the president of the Pacific Seafood Processors Association; the executive director of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, a state-owned corporation funded in part by the industry; the head of United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA), a large trade association of commercial fishers; the head of the Commercial

Fisheries Entry Commission; and the mayor of the Kodiak Island Borough.

That mayor, Scott Arndt, said industry woes have caused severe strain in his region. He mentioned the pending closure or sale of Trident Seafood plants, which have been economic pillars in the region, and a looming 12.5% increase in Kodiak Electric Association rates — the first increase in 30 years — that is needed, in part, because of reduced sales to seafood processors.

“We have stress in all species, along with all markets for seafood prices. In my 60 years as a resident of Kodiak, I have never seen it this bad. It is scary for a lot of families,” he said.

UFA Executive Director Tracy Welch, who said her association in February voted unanimously in support of such a task force, ran through a list of industry troubles.

“Alaska’s seafood industry is facing unprecedented challenges in every area of the state and across every fishery. Alaskan fishermen, processors, processing workers, support businesses, communities are confronted with low prices, plant closures, lost markets and foregone fishing opportunities,” she said.

The more than \$2 billion in losses in 2023 affect communities and state government as well as the private sector, she noted.

“I cannot sum up the situation more succinctly than by saying the Alaska seafood industry is in crisis,” she said.

Continued on page 7

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Student's senior project will replace weathered supermarket sign

BY MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

High school senior Sean McDonald has a lot of history with the Wrangell IGA supermarket.

"I've worked at the store since October of 2022," he said. "I'm really closely related with the owners. They grew up as a big part of my life, and I've known them for a long time. And then, before they owned it, my grandpa also worked in the store for over 30 years, so I really grew up with the store and I'm familiar with it."

It was that familiarity that led to McDonald's decision for his senior project to create a new storefront sign, replacing the current hand-painted one, featuring the Wrangell IGA logo against a backdrop of sea life beneath the waves.

"The sign they have now was really nice when the lady made it, but they used different paint and it's starting to weather and erode," he said. "I want to remake it with something a bit more weather resistant."

"I thought it was a great idea, I was excited," said store co-owner and manager Caroline Bangs.

In the fall of 2018, Mike Ward, his daughter Caroline and her husband Travis Bangs (McDonald's cousin) bought Bob's IGA, renaming it Wrangell IGA. The owners made the name change official when they put up the current sign created by local artist Jaynee Fritzingler, in October 2019.

Caroline Bangs thought Fritzingler did a great job, but they hadn't considered a maintenance plan to protect the sign from the elements.

The new sign will retain the familiar



PHOTO BY MARK C. ROBINSON / WRANGELL SENTINEL

High school student Sean McDonald will design and build a new sign for Wrangell IGA for his senior project.

IGA logo with the same size and dimensions, but it will have more of a minimalist design, with an aluminum frame and letters, and a wooden backboard. McDonald said he will use a laser-cutting machine to make the letters.

Caroline Bangs anticipates that the sign should be ready sometime in May. "This one will be less upkeep."

"I'm in the design stage right now," McDonald said. "Trying to mock it up

and getting it to scale so that we can actually cut it out at the right size."

Although McDonald anticipates he will enjoy putting all the elements together, he also knows there will be physical challenges in raising his creation over the front entrance of the store, likely with the use of a forklift, with as few errors as possible. "It'll be fun, but it'll definitely be tough getting it up there," he said. "Metal's not light, and it's got to go

all the way up, it's got to be screwed into place."

McDonald said he's been having fun working on this project, creating the design and collaborating with other people. "I did take a digital design class a couple years ago," he said. "So, I kind of know my way around learning how to put it together. It's helped me interact with a lot more people."

The project has taught McDonald a lot about design as well as the importance of communication. "Normally, people talk every day together," he said. "It's a whole different thing when you're talking about business and trying to get stuff done."

While he has found the process gratifying, he will be focusing on another creative field after graduation. "I'm attending Boise State this fall for electrical engineering," he said. "I've built my own computer and I've always liked to tinker with circuit boards and stuff like that. I have taken a couple of college classes, and I really think that's the way I'd like to go."

McDonald said one aspect of high school life that he'll miss will be the people. "I grew up in Wrangell, I've known these people many years and I really have a close bond with a lot of people,"

As for what he won't miss? "Definitely just school, in general. It's kind of a bit ... not great."

Still, McDonald looks forward to creating something that will become part of a landmark in town. "I think putting it up and being able to show people what I've done, because it's a really big staple of the store ... that will be really enjoyable."

Trident close to deals for selling Petersburg and Ketchikan plants

BY SENTINEL STAFF

Trident Seafoods reported last week it was "entering the final stages of closing deals for three of its Alaska shoreside plants," including its operations in Ketchikan and Petersburg.

The Seattle-based company — the largest seafood harvesting and processing company in the United States — announced in December it planned to sell four of its Alaska plants as it restructures its operations amid weak markets.

In addition to Petersburg and Ketchikan, Trident said it wanted to sell its processing

operations in Kodiak and at False Pass in the Aleutian Islands.

The company has said it plans to retain ownership of its Wrangell plant, boosting hiring over last year to process more chum and pink salmon this summer.

In addition to negotiating with buyers for its Petersburg and Ketchikan facilities, Trident said March 8 it is close to a deal for False Pass and continues talking with multiple potential buyers for Kodiak.

"These are relatively simple, straightforward transactions," Jeff Welbourn, senior vice pres-

ident of Alaska operations, said of the Petersburg and Ketchikan properties in a prepared statement March 8. "We're simplifying the deals to facilitate closing as quickly as possible," he said.

"We are keenly aware of the upcoming salmon season, and we are confident that the buyers, with Trident's support, will be able to communicate with the fleet, employees and tenders in the coming weeks," he added.

The Ketchikan plant, with canning lines in addition to freezing lines, is the company's largest operation in

Southeast. The Petersburg plant's capacity is about one-quarter the volume of Wrangell, according to Trident's website.

"We know this is an unsettling time, but the company has not been standing still," Welbourn said. "We're moving as quickly as possible to minimize the impacts on the fleet, our employees, and the communities."

Kodiak is the company's largest plant, with year-round

operations to process multiple seafood species, particularly pollock, salmon, Pacific cod and crab. "Even if we don't close a deal by this summer, Trident will still provide a market for salmon season in Kodiak," said Welbourn. "This means that our employees and fleet are secure, and we will share a tender strategy soon."

Trident is privately held, with operations in six countries and about 9,000 employees worldwide.

Seafood task force

Continued from page 6

Russia is the source of a significant amount of trouble for the industry, said ASMI Executive Director Jeremy Woodrow.

He cited a dramatic example: While Alaska's 2023 pink salmon harvest of nearly 200,000 metric tons was large, Russia harvested over three times that much. And while sales of Russian fish are banned in the United States, Alaska still competes with Russian fish in the global marketplace, he said.

Global inflation is another challenge, causing demand for seafood to slide, he said, while high interest rates are squeezing harvesters and processors that have to finance their investments and inventory.

"There is no silver bullet to solve the challenges we face, and this situation certainly will not turn around overnight," Woodrow said.

John Hanrahan, OBI's chief executive, identified some potential state actions that could provide some relief. He suggested in-

creased funding for ASMI to broaden markets, loan guarantees to help offset the impact of high interest rates, and purchases of Alaska seafood for state food-assistance programs — similar to the recently announced U.S. Department of Agriculture commitment to buy large quantities of salmon and pollock for federal nutrition and school lunch programs.

The salmon task force work of the early 2000s resulted in some legislation and policy changes. In general, industry and state efforts at that time started to focus on differentiating Alaska wild salmon as a premium product. Within a decade, that focus on higher quality, more niche marketing and new markets was showing some success, according to a 2012 analysis by Gunnar Knapp of the University of Alaska Anchorage's Institute for Social and Economic Research.

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Early losses at Southeast end tough season for Lady Wolves

BY MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

The Lady Wolves' struggle through a difficult season ended at the Southeast basketball tournament at Sitka.

The game last Wednesday was a tough loss to the Haines Lady Bears, 43-42. Then on Thursday, Wrangell lost to the Craig Lady Panthers, 37-31, and was eliminated from the tourney.

The Metlakatla Miss Chiefs won the tournament, with Haines taking second place. Both are headed to the state championships in Anchorage this week.

In the first game, Wrangell trailed Haines at halftime by eight points but bounced back to take the lead in the third quarter, during which both teams battled for dominance. The Lady Wolves were ahead by one point late in the game when Haines scored in the last 45 seconds of play, edging out Wrangell. The Lady Wolves

tried a last-second three-pointer to no avail.

The next day, the Lady Wolves were ahead by eight points in the second quarter but the Lady Panthers pulled back until they only trailed by three points at halftime. In the second half, Craig overtook Wrangell, building their lead to 11 points by the fourth quarter before the Lady Wolves tried to stage a late comeback, cutting the deficit to six points at the buzzer.

As a young team, the players were nervous competing in such a big tournament, which likely was a major factor in their high rate of turnovers in both games, head coach Christina Good said. "Nerves and youth can sometimes work in your favor, and sometimes it doesn't," she explained. "These girls are young, and people forget that sometimes. They are kids, and they're going to make mistakes and we have to give them grace for that."

In the first game, the top scorer was sophomore Christina Johnson with 14 points (including four treys), with freshman Alana Harrison and sophomore Shailyn Nelson at 8 points each. On Friday, Harrison and fellow freshman Alexis Easterly were the top scorers with 8 points each. Harrison led in rebounds in the first game and again in the second game, along with Easterly.

At the awards ceremony after the tournament, Harrison and Madelyn Davies won Good Sport awards, while Harrison and senior Kayla Meissner earned spots on the All-Conference Team.

With only three wins in their regular season during a rebuilding year, Good said she was impressed with the team's determination and grit throughout it all. "I feel like we learned a lot," she said. "It's going to help us transition into next year. ... We're going to come back strong."



PHOTO BY JACK CARNEY

Wrangell eighth grader Kourtney Barnes (right) faced off against Jordynn Colby of North Pole Middle School in the final round, winning first place in her bracket at the Tanana Invitational Wrestling Tournament in Fairbanks March 1-2.

Middle schooler wins top spot at state wrestling tournament

BY MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

Wrangell eighth grader Kourtney Barnes earned the top spot in her weight bracket for the second year in a row at the state's biggest middle school wrestling tournament.

It was the third time in three years that she faced Jordynn Colby of North Pole in the finals.

Two of Kourtney's schoolmates placed second and fourth at the tournament.

"We had a capstone weekend to our wrestling season," said head coach Jack Carney, who added that the wrestling community considers the Tanana Invitational Wrestling Tournament in Fairbanks to be the unofficial middle school state championship. Approximately 40 teams competed this year March 1-2.

In the tiebreaker period of her final match at Tanana, Kourtney won by fall in 1:57. "Kourtney is a two-time state champ," Carney said. "She wrestled the same girl all three years, hav-

ing (only) lost to her in her sixth grade year."

Kourtney's record for this season was 14-0, and an impressive 56 wins, 2 losses and 50 pins during her middle school years. Carney considers her one of the best he's ever coached. "I think she'll do well in high school."

Wrangell eighth grader Arabella Nore took second place in her bracket, while seventh grader Jenna Meissner placed fourth.

Eighth graders Lucas Stearns and Michael Cook, as well as sixth grade wrestler Tommy Rohr-Wickman barely missed placement as they lost in their respective blood rounds, Carney said, adding that until his final match, Tommy had been doing well, even defeating eighth graders in his bracket.

Carney added that in the previous week, the middle school girls team won Southeast regionals, while the boys team took fourth behind three schools from Ketchikan and Juneau.

Boys basketball

Continued from page 1

took advantage of free throws late in the game to put Wrangell further ahead. At the final buzzer, Wrangell won, 60-49. Harrison was top scorer with 25; Stead had 11 points.

In their final game on Saturday, Wrangell found themselves up against the top-ranked Metlakatla Chiefs, who lost their previous game to Petersburg, the eventual tournament champ.

"It felt like a must-win," Angerman said.

The Wolves played one of their best games all season. Wrangell's defense and baskets put them ahead at half-time, 34-27. But with 26.5 seconds remaining, the Chiefs were behind by only 3 points. However, a couple of costly turnovers by Metlakatla gave Wrangell the opportunity to go to the free throw line and extend their lead, winning 64-60 and taking second place in the tournament and a trip to state.

Harrison was the top scorer Saturday with 35 points, including 14 free throws. Stead was the ultimate utility player at 18 points (with 8 free throws), 8 rebounds, 7 steals and 5 assists.

Loucks, whom Angerman said never seemed to tire, scored 10 points and had 5 steals within the first six minutes of Saturday's game.

Other players who provided great defense and shots during all the regional tournament games included senior Keegan Hanson, juniors Trevyn Gillen and Lucas Schneider. "Everybody just showed up to play," Angerman said.

Because of their overall stats, Metlakatla also will compete at state, joining Wrangell and Southeast winner Petersburg.

Wrangell's first game at the state tournament in Anchorage will be against the Cordova Wolverines on Thursday, March 14. "We played them at state last year," Angerman said. "I feel like they're a pretty scrappy team and they play hard. It's going to be a dogfight, for sure, but I feel like we're ready for it."

At the awards ceremony after the Southeast tournament, Hanson won an award for All-Academic, and Brody Knecht and Hanson won Good Sport awards. Harrison and Stead earned spots on the All-Conference Team.

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Parks and Rec moves from indoor challenge to outdoors

By SENTINEL STAFF
Sentinel writer

Just as soon as its indoor Winter Workout Challenge ended, the Parks and Recreation Department moved outdoors – literally.

The Outdoor Challenge, which started March 1, is similar to the indoor event. Participants keep track of their activities, and the runners, walkers, bikers – or whatever their exercise – with the most points win prizes.

“We are just encouraging people to get outside and move their bodies,” said Devyn Johnson, recreation coordinator for the department.

The goal is completing at least 30 minutes of outdoor exercise at least five days a week.

“This challenge is for people of all fitness levels,” according to the challenge’s website.

“The Outdoor Challenge is also a contest of sorts. The participant who completes the most workouts within the challenge dates will win a six-month pass to the Parks and Rec community facility.”

The challenge runs through April 28 and is open to ages 14 and older. Just about anything outdoors will count for points. To register, go to the Parks and Recreation website wrangellrec.com and click on “Programs.”

The Winter Workout Challenge ended its two-month indoor run on Feb. 29.

Johnson said 30 people participated in the competition, logging in their time on the equipment and activities at the community center.

Collin Dando and Diane O’Brien tied for first place, and each won a six-month pass to Parks and Recreation programs.



PHOTO COURTESY WRANGELL PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Diane O’Brien (above) and Collin Dando tied for first place in the Parks and Recreation Winter Workout Challenge. Each won a six-month pass to Parks and Recreation programs.

Tongass Toughman offers new challenge this summer with 100-mile island run

By MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

Participants in last year’s Tongass Toughman Triathlon in Wrangell will have to step up their game if they want to join the challenge of running a 100-mile ultramarathon at the end of June.

Former resident Nicholas Howell posted on the Wrangell Community Group’s Facebook page last month that they “will be changing it up this year” for the annual Tongass Toughman by presenting a new challenge: a 100-mile run around Wrangell Island. According to his Facebook post, he announced the news “so individuals have something to train for.”

Howell also stated in his post that his mission is to inspire and challenge. “As an individual with a history of dealing with life’s hardships through self-destructive means, endurance challenges have changed my life.”

He added that such challenges served as an anchor for discipline, consistency, self-worth, sacrifice, connection, humility and adventure, which he wanted to pass on to others.

“Putting on the triathlon is no easy feat in terms of our own energy and resources, especially without outside funding, but mostly it was time for something new,” said last year’s triathlon organizer Ceona Koch via text on Feb. 28. “We wanted to inspire ourselves and the commu-

nity with a unique challenge. I don’t want to speak for Nicholas, but endurance sports have made many positive changes in his life, and he has a lot to share with others.”

The course will cover about 20% trail, 20% pavement and 60% logging road to include the High Country Shelter Trail twice, Airport Loop Road, Pats/Spur Connect Loop, Nemo Loop Road and Lower Salamander Road out and back.

There will be a GoFundMe fundraiser during the event in support of trail work, future Toughman events gear, and promotional gifts for participants.

The competition will begin the morning of June 29, starting time to be determined, and end the next day. The start and finish line will be at the head of Rainbow Falls Trail. This event will be unofficial, covered by outside donations and free to all participants. It will include a pre-race dinner, aid stations and hot meals during the event at the Shoemaker aid station.

Registration and a pre-run dinner will be held at Shoemaker Park on June 28; friends and family are welcome.

For more information, contact Nicholas Howell at 907-305-0784, email tongasstoughman@gmail.com or visit the Tongass Toughman Triathlon Facebook page.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Alaska Charters and Adventures LLC, is making application for a new Common Carrier Dispensary AS 04.09.260 liquor license doing business as Glacier Run located at Alaskan Waters. Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, and to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board at 550 West 7th Ave., Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501 or alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Alaska Charters and Adventures LLC, is making application for a new Common Carrier Dispensary AS 04.09.260 liquor license doing business as Wild Side located at Alaskan Waters. Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, and to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board at 550 West 7th Ave., Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501 or alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov.

Look for the



EASTER SERVICE SCHEDULE

in the March 27 issue of the Sentinel

To make sure your service is included at no charge, contact Amber at 907-874-2301 or wrgsent@gmail.com



Police report

Monday, March 4
 Parking complaint.
 Agency assist: Ambulance.
 Citizen assist.

Tuesday, March 5
 Agency assist: Ambulance.

Wednesday, March 6
 Agency assist: Hoonah
 Police Department.

Thursday, March 7
 Suspicious noise.
 Agency assists: Ambulance.
 Civil issue.

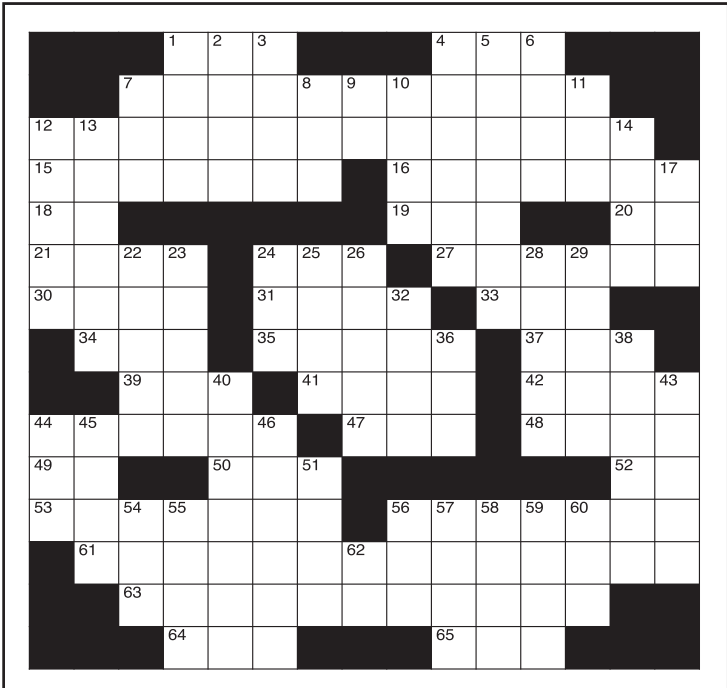
Friday, March 8
 Found property.
 Parking complaint.
 Agency assist: Fire
 Department.

Saturday, March 9
 Traffic stop: Warning for
 expired registration.

Sunday, March 10
 Nothing to report.

Crossword

Answers on page 12



CLUES ACROSS

- 4. Political action committee
- 7. Allowed
- 12. Olivia Colman played one
- 15. Open
- 16. He had a notable lamp
- 18. Promotional material
- 19. Domesticated animal
- 20. Larry and Curly's buddy
- 21. The best ever
- 24. TV network
- 27. Checked for
- 30. Dry or withered
- 31. Expression of annoyance
- 33. Dash
- 34. Fifth note of a major scale
- 35. A secret clique
- 37. Partner to cheese
- 39. ___ school: where to learn healing
- 41. City in ancient Syria
- 42. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
- 44. Established practice
- 47. Thanksgiving side dish
- 48. District in Peru
- 49. It's becoming more prevalent
- 50. State in India
- 52. Measure of illumination
- 53. Raised platform
- 56. Japanese warrior
- 61. R.L. Stevenson novel
- 63. Transitory
- 64. Advanced degree
- 65. Fiddler crabs

CLUES DOWN

- 2. Czech city
- 3. ___ and Andy, TV show
- 4. A young pig
- 5. Removed surgically
- 6. Covered with
- 7. Chest muscle (slang)
- 8. Nigerian City
- 9. Midway between south and east
- 10. A way to shut
- 11. Stop playing
- 12. Marshy places
- 13. Takes apart
- 14. Ten cents
- 17. A gesture of assent
- 22. Scent
- 23. Teletypewriter
- 24. General's assistant (abbr.)
- 25. Hillside
- 26. Taxi driver
- 28. Semitic Sun god
- 29. Town in India
- 32. Traditional rhythmic pattern
- 36. Fugitives are on the ___
- 38. Type of dance
- 40. Two letters, one sound
- 43. Having a strong, pleasant taste
- 44. Golf score
- 45. Mayhem
- 46. Drenched
- 51. River in northeastern Asia
- 54. Drug to treat anxiety (abbr.)
- 55. Part-time employee
- 56. A very large body of water
- 57. Aboriginal people of Japan
- 58. Millisecond
- 59. Forearm bone
- 60. Subway dweller
- 62. Royal Mail

Research finds strong pink runs cut into sockeye salmon returns

BY NATHANIEL HERZ
 Northern Journal

A new analysis of nearly 25,000 fish scales offers more evidence that the millions of pink salmon churned out by Alaska fish hatcheries could be harming wild sockeye salmon populations when they meet in the ocean, according to the scientists who authored the study.

The new peer-reviewed paper, published last month in the ICES Journal of Marine Science, produced for the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, analyzed growth rates that could be deduced from the fish scales, similar to yearly growth rings on a tree.

The paper was built on a unique aspect of the life cycle of pink salmon, which are primarily targeted by commercial fishermen: Their abundance is high in odd-numbered years, and lower in even-numbered years. Those booms and busts allowed authors Peter Rand

and Gregory Ruggerone to tease out whether sockeye salmon — which are more highly valued by sport and personal-use fishermen, in addition to commercial fishermen — were growing at lower rates during odd years, when pink salmon are more numerous.

Their analysis showed that was the case across the Gulf of Alaska — a dynamic that Rand and Ruggerone describe as a “zero-sum game” between the two species. It found that yearly growth of sockeye was depressed by as much as 17% at times when pink salmon abundance was high.

“This is the first time we’ve looked at populations across coastal Alaska, and we see the same signal in all of them,” Rand said in an interview. “It’s quite compelling.”

There’s been increasing debate in recent years about the impacts on other salmon species of growing populations of pink salmon, and Rug-

gerone last year published a review paper that documented what it called “consistent and strong” evidence of competition. The pinks have been benefiting from warming ocean waters and are also boosted by hatcheries around Alaska that raise them to bolster harvests by commercial fishermen.

The number of pinks returning annually from the North Pacific Ocean rose to nearly 800 million in 2021, up from 170 million in the early 1970s, with hatcheries contributing some 80 million fish each year, the authors wrote in their new study.

Some policymakers, Ruggerone said, have been holding out for more documentation of competition between hatchery pinks and wild salmon, and the new paper should serve as additional evidence, he added.

This article was originally published in the Northern Journal, a newsletter from Alaska journalist Nathaniel Herz.

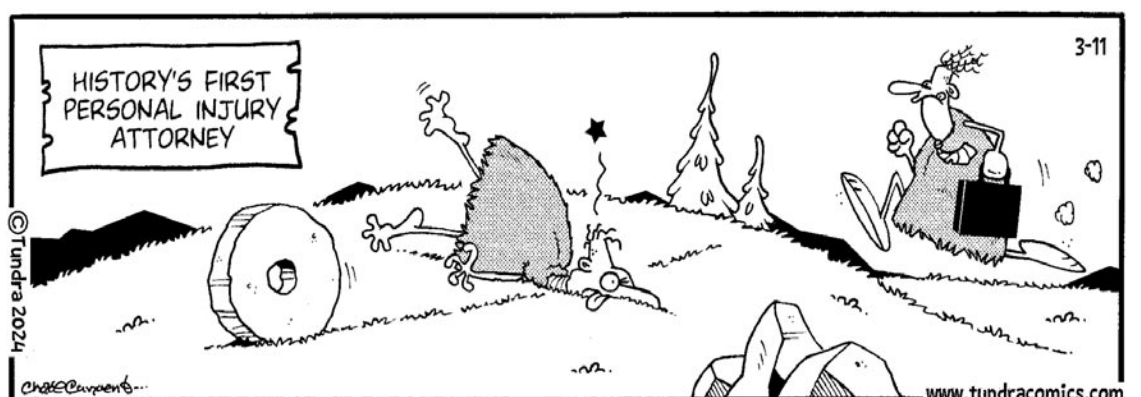
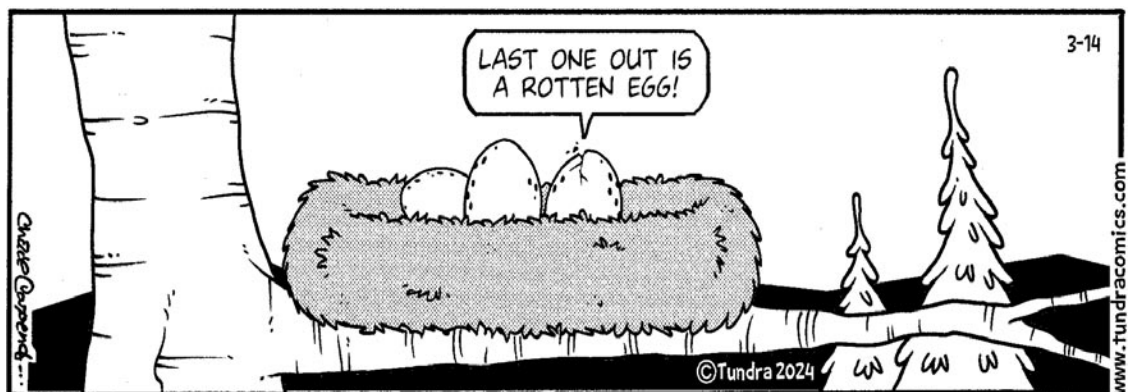
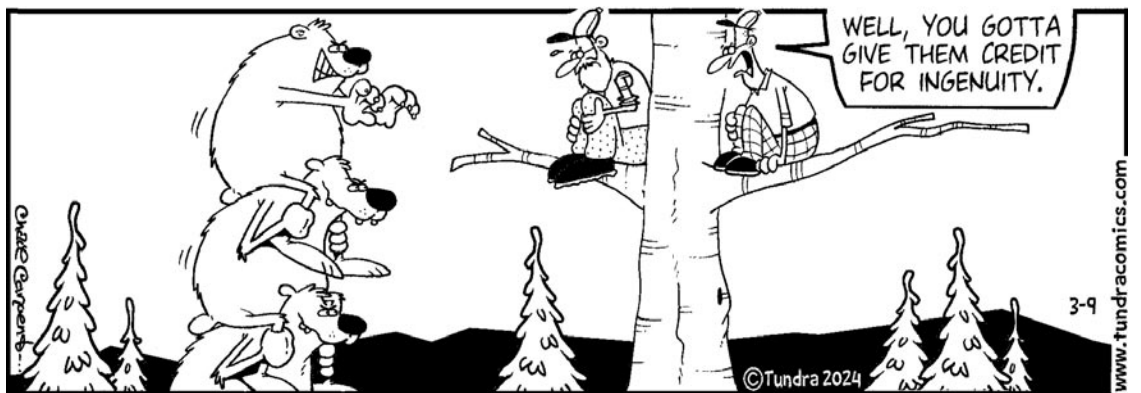
Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



State Supreme Court says police need warrant for airborne zoom lenses

By BECKY BOHRER
Associated Press

Alaska law enforcement officers now must obtain a warrant before using aircraft to scope the area around a person's home with binoculars or cameras with zoom lenses, the state's highest court ruled in a decision released March 8.

The Alaska Supreme Court ruling comes in a case that dates to 2012, when Alaska State Troopers received a tip from an informant that John William McKelvey III was growing marijuana on his property in a sparsely populated area north of Fairbanks.

According to the ruling, McKelvey's property was heavily wooded, with a driveway

leading to a clearing where a house and greenhouse were located. Trees blocked the ground-level view of the buildings from outside the clearing, and a gate blocked cars from entering.

In the court's recounting of the case, two troopers, following up on the tip, flew past the property and used a camera with a high-power zoom lens to take photos that showed buckets containing "unidentifiable plants" inside the greenhouse.

Based on the tip and flight observations, a search warrant for McKelvey's property was obtained. During the search, officers found items including marijuana plants, methamphetamine, scales, a rifle and cash.

McKelvey sought to have the evidence suppressed, but a Superior Court judge denied his request.

He was convicted of one count of third-degree misconduct involving a controlled substance and a weapons misconduct count. He appealed, arguing the judge wrongly denied his motion to suppress.

An appeals court reversed the Superior Court judge, and the Supreme Court affirmed the appeals court decision in its ruling released March 8.

The state maintained: "Because small airplane travel is so

common in Alaska, and because any passenger might peer into your yard and snap a picture of you, law enforcement officials may do the same. We disagree," the Alaska Supreme Court decision states.

"The Alaska Constitution protects the right to be free of unreasonable searches," the ruling states. "The fact that a random person might catch a glimpse of your yard while flying from one place to another does not make it reasonable for law enforcement officials to take to the skies and train high-powered optics on the private space right outside

your home without a warrant."

Law enforcement officers must obtain a warrant before using aircraft and "vision-enhancing technology," such as cameras with zoom lenses or binoculars, to surveil the area surrounding a person's home that is protected from ground-level observation, the court said.

Robert John, an attorney for McKelvey, called the ruling a "tremendous decision to protect the rights of privacy of Alaskans and hopefully set an example for the rest of the country."

Juneau will loan school district \$4.1 million to help cover deficit

By JUNEAU EMPIRE

A \$9.7 million bailout package to ensure that the Juneau School District can cover a nearly \$8 million deficit this year and help toward resolving a projected deficit of nearly \$10 million next year was approved March 4 by the Juneau borough assembly.

The package, consisting of a loan and taking over some "non-instructional costs" from the school district, won final approval after several weeks of consideration by city and school leaders.

The Juneau assembly voted to provide the district with an interest-free loan of up to \$4.1 million dollars, due within five years.

The district is not required to begin repaying the loan until the 2025-2026 school year.

The unanimous assembly vote approving the financial assistance was preceded by numerous residents offering public testimony generally ex-

pressing dissatisfaction with a consolidation plan the school board approved to help balance the budget.

The restructuring plan scheduled to take effect for the 2024-2025 school year consolidates students in grades 9-12 at Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa.at Kalé, shutting down Thunder Mountain High School in the Mendenhall Valley and using that building for grades 7-8 and the HomeBRIDGE program.

The district will close two middle schools, and sixth graders will be moved into K-5 elementary schools.

Even with the consolidation, the district will have a multimillion-dollar shortfall. That means a likely combination of city assistance, further budget cuts such as layoffs and a hoped-for increase in state funding will be needed to balance the budget.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the matter of the estate of Arnold Elmer Bakke, Notice to Creditors is hereby given that Helen Keller has been appointed personal representative of the above-named estate. Pursuant to Alaska Statute Title 13.16.450, all creditors are hereby notified to present their claims within four months after the date of first publication of this notice or said claims will forever be barred. Claims must be filed with the court (Case No. 1WR-23-01PR) or be presented to:

Helen Keller
PO Box 133
Wrangell, AK 99929

Publish March 13, 20 and 27, 2024

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the matter of the estate of Alice Gloria Bakke, Notice to Creditors is hereby given that Helen Keller has been appointed personal representative of the above-named estate. Pursuant to Alaska Statute Title 13.16.450, all creditors are hereby notified to present their claims within four months after the date of first publication of this notice or said claims will forever be barred. Claims must be filed with the court (Case No. 1WR-23-00014PR) or be presented to:

Helen Keller
PO Box 133
Wrangell, AK 99929

Publish March 13, 20 and 27, 2024

CLASSIFIED

HELP WANTED

Tourism Coordinator at Wrangell Cooperative Association. Complete job description and applications are available at 1002 Zimovia Highway, by emailing receptionist.wca@gmail.com, or at www.wcatribes.org.

Contact Esther Ashton at 907-874-4304 with any questions. Open until filled. First review date: March 22.

HELP WANTED

Wrangell Public Schools is accepting applications for a Paraprofessional. This is a part-time, 9-month position working with students in the Early Childhood Special Education Program at Evergreen Elementary School. A high school diploma or equivalent is required. An associate degree, equivalent credits, or the ability to pass the para pro assessment is also required. This position is placed on Column C of the Classified Salary Schedule and includes health insurance benefits. For more information and detailed job description, please contact the District Office at 907-874-

2347. This position is open until filled. It is Wrangell Public School District policy to not discriminate based on age, race, color, national origin, sex or disability.

WANTED

Looking for any old Nintendo entertainment system games. Especially Wolfenstein. Call Dianne at 907-738-9687.

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.

FREE

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

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION
SOUTHEAST AREA OFFICE
PUBLIC REVIEW
FIVE-YEAR SCHEDULE OF TIMBER SALES
STATE FISCAL YEARS 2025-2029

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry & Fire Protection (DOF) Preliminary Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales for the Southern Southeast Area is available for public review. Per AS 38.05.113, this is a scoping document that outlines the proposed timber sale activity to be undertaken on State land over the next five years. The Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales is not a decision document.

The public is invited to comment on any aspect of the Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales. Comments should be mailed to the DOF and must be received by the close of business at the DOF's office no later than **April 8, 2024**, to be included as comment to the file in the adopted schedule. This document can be viewed at the Area Office in Ketchikan, the public libraries in Craig, Edna Bay, Ketchikan, Petersburg and Wrangell, the State of Alaska's online public notice website <http://notice.alaska.gov/214508>, as well as the DOF's website <http://forestry.alaska.gov/>.

After public comment has been received and reviewed, the Division of Forestry & Fire Protection may proceed with planning the proposed timber sales and associated developments. When each sale is prepared and ready for review, notice of the proposed decision and the opportunity for public comment will be given for that specific timber sale, as is required under state statutes and regulations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SUBMIT COMMENTS CONTACT:

Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection Contact: Greg Staunton
2417 Tongass Avenue, Suite 213 Phone: 907-225-3070
Ketchikan, AK 99901 Email: dnr.dof.sse@alaska.gov

The State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry & Fire Protection Complies with Title II of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who may need auxiliary aids, services, or special modifications to participate in this review may contact the number above.

Publish March 13 and 20, 2024

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the matter of the estate of David Roy Churchill, Notice to Creditors is hereby given that Franklin J. Churchill Sr. has been appointed personal representative of the above-named estate. Pursuant to Alaska Statute Title 13.16.450, all creditors are hereby notified to present their claims within four months after the date of first publication of this notice or said claims will forever be barred. Claims must be presented to:

Franklin J. Churchill Sr.
PO Box 1590
Wrangell, AK 99929

Publish Feb. 28 and March 6 and 13, 2024

