

Controversial quarantine ordinance killed by assembly

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The Wrangell Borough Assembly considered adopting a new emergency ordinance last week, mandating that out of state visitors to Wrangell take a COVID-19 test or quarantine themselves. However, this ordinance proved to be controversial with the public and, with recent updates to state health mandates, unnecessary. The item was dropped by the assembly, after two meetings and lots of public input.

Ordinance No. 978 was put together in the first place because the state government was preparing to revise travel guidelines for out of state travelers. At the time, according to Mayor Steve Prysunka and Borough Manager Lisa Von Bargen, the issue was essentially the state was not properly communicating with them on how to stay safe while more travelers were going to be coming.

The first meeting took place on Tuesday, June 2. Ordinance No. 978, in summary, would mandate that out of state travelers to Wrangell either show proof of taking a recent COVID-19 test at their point of origin, take a test at the Wrangell airport, or otherwise quarantine themselves for two weeks. While the assembly was generally in favor of this idea, at the time, there were concerns that there was no way to enforce this mandate. They also felt that more time was needed for public input. The assembly did receive a letter from Penny Allen during the June 2 meeting, which voiced her opposition to this ordinance, but the assembly wanted more time for more members of the public to share their thoughts.

The assembly got their wish in a followup meeting on Thursday, June 4. According to Borough Clerk Kim Lane, the city re-

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First case of COVID-19 announced in Wrangell

By CALEB VIERKANT
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On Sunday evening, June 7, the first positive case of COVID-19 was announced in the community of Wrangell. A joint press release from the city and SEARHC reports that the patient is an unnamed female. She is a resident of Wrangell, according to the press release, and is asymptomatic. Contact tracing, trying to determine who might have come into contact with the patient and may potentially be at risk, is currently ongoing.

"SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) representatives are currently working with Public Health Officials to complete contact tracing and notify anyone who may have come in contact with the individual," the press release reads.

Upon receiving the positive test result, the press release states that the patient immediately quarantined themselves at home.

A June 8 update from the city reports that it is currently uncertain how the patient contracted COVID-19 in the first place.

"Officials with the State of Alaska Department of Public Health completed the interview with the positive individ-

ual last night [June 7]," the update reads. "It is understood the individual has not recently traveled. Therefore, the case is considered to be community acquired and the source of the virus is, as of now, unknown."

Another update from the city, on June 9, confirmed that the patient and all close contacts were isolating at their homes. June 9 is considered "day one" of daily monitoring, the update adds. Public Health will be checking in on the individual and close contacts daily for a period of two weeks.

While contact tracing has been completed and all close contacts were notified, several local organizations have taken to social media to alert the wider public that they may have had incidental contact with the patient.

The Wrangell Elks Lodge posted on Facebook that the patient was present in their building on June 5 and 6. They asked that anybody who came by the lodge on either of those days contact them, as they are required to provide a list of individuals to health officials. They also announced that the lodge would be closed for deep cleaning, and will not reopen until June 15 at the earliest.

Muskeg Meadows, the golf course, also announced that the



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Setting up for airport COVID swabs

Prior to state mandate 10.1 taking effect, members of SEARHC set up their tent outside of the Wrangell airport to prepare for incoming travelers on June 5. Under new state guidelines, out of state travelers to Alaska are mandated to either take a COVID-19 test shortly before arriving in Alaska, or submit to one upon landing. Otherwise, the travelers are required to quarantine themselves for two weeks.

Summer Burk, with SEARHC, explained that when a plane lands in Wrangell, travelers will be greeted by members of the Wrangell Police Department. The police will provide them with travel declarations, and out of state visitors will be directed to SEARHC's tent outside the airport. When there, the travelers will be able to provide contact information and take a swab. According to Burk, these swabs will then be sent for testing in Anchorage on the morning flight out of Wrangell every day. Travelers who plan to spend more than a week in Alaska will also be given vouchers for a followup test. Burk said the state of Alaska is paying for all of these tests.

Pictured here (left to right) are Julia Burk, Summer Burk, Jim Holder, Christy Haslip, and Blake Forrester.

patient was present at their location on June 6 and 7. They have a list of every person who came by the course over the weekend, and will be providing it to the state for contact tracing purposes. While the risk of contracting COVID-19 in the outdoors is lower than indoors, their post reads, they encouraged people to contact their local medical center for guidance if they have concerns or begin to show symptoms.

The Totem Bar and Liquor Store also shared on Facebook that the patient in question visited the bar over the weekend. They will be closed for cleaning, for the time being, and also said that they are in contact with the city to make sure they are doing "all that is necessary."

Other businesses, out of caution, have also announced temporary closures or alterations to their usual operations. The Irene Ingle Public Library, for example, announced they would be closing until contact tracing is complete. Zak's Cafe posted on Facebook that they would be returning to curbside pickup

for meals only for the time being. Arrowhead Transfer and Alaska Marine Lines also said they would be temporarily closing their office to update their protocols for public interaction, but they will still be operating at their regular hours. The Stikine Inn also announced a temporary closure of their restaurant for the time being.

"I want to remind everyone of a few things," Mayor Steve Prysunka wrote in a letter to the community. "1. The positive test needs to be confirmed. It maybe a false positive. We have had this happen in other communities. 2. SEARHC and the local Emergency Operations Center have been planning for this day for months. We are handling the situation and the situation is under control. 3. The state is working closely with us and we will ensure that appropriate resources are applied to ensure timely contact tracing. 4. It's up to everyone to stay vigilant and prevent the spread of the virus."

Prysunka's letter, the joint press release, and many other

pieces of information regarding COVID-19 and Wrangell can be found at the city's webpage, www.wrangell-covid19.org.

Maegan Bosak, SEARHC director of marketing and communications, said in an email to the Sentinel that the name of the patient will not be released, per standards set by the state. The same goes for why she was being tested, if she was asymptomatic.

"SEARHC will respect those standards and not breach confidentiality," she wrote. "For patient privacy, under HIPAA law, we are not allowed to release patients' names."

Bosak also added that information regarding the source of the virus, if discovered, will come from Public Health officials and will be shared with the local emergency operations center.

The Wrangell Emergency Operations Center will be issuing daily press releases updating the public on this situation this week, according to a June 9 update, every afternoon unless information requires earlier notification.

Alaska ferry crew, passengers must undergo COVID-19 testing

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) - Forty-one crew members and passengers of an Alaska state ferry will undergo testing for COVID-19 before disembarking the Tustumena in Homer later Monday after another crew member tested positive over the weekend.

The crew member on the 198-foot ferry began exhibiting symptom and tested positive Saturday in Dutch Harbor.

The ferry set sail for Homer that night after 21 passengers

who boarded in Dutch Harbor were put back ashore. No other tests on crew members or passengers were conducted on Saturday.

In all, 35 crew members and six passengers were to undergo testing in Homer, state officials said Monday during a news conference.

"No one goes ashore until I say so," John Falvey, the Alaska Marine Highway System general manager, said.

Officials said 16 crew mem-

bers had close contact with the ferry employee who tested positive. All but one remained on the ship and were in self-isolation. The other person who had close contact left the vessel at the end of a shift, but has been contacted and instructed to self-quarantine. Public health officials in that person's home jurisdiction are monitoring.

Crew members and passengers will be free to leave the ferry while waiting for test results if they head home or to their final destination where they can quarantine for 14 days. They must also take private transportation to that location, and they cannot expose new individuals, like a cab driver, in getting to their final destination.

All the passengers were Alaska residents, officials said.

Crew members or passengers who do not meet that criteria or have to take public transportation back to their homes, such as an airplane, will be advised to

stay on board the ferry. It wasn't immediately clear how long the ferry would be out of service. Falvey said a commercial crew might be employed to thoroughly clean the Tustumena.

Officials declined to identify the employee or detail her work aboard the ferry. However, state health officials stressed that from their contact investigation, the employee did not have close contact with passengers.

The crew member exhibited most COVID-19 symptoms including a runny nose and a cough but did not have a fever, Falvey said.

It appears she was exposed by another Alaska Marine Highway System employee who lives in Homer but has not worked for months, he said.

The state of Alaska is advising anyone who sailed on the Tustumena since June 1 to wear a mask, practice social distancing, check themselves twice daily for symptoms, and get

tested for COVID-19 if symptoms do arise, said Dr. Joe McLaughlin, the state epidemiologist.

He said even if they don't have symptoms, they should consider getting tested seven to 14 days after leaving the ship.

The Tustumena sails from Homer to Kodiak, and down the Aleutian chain. On its way back, it stops in Dutch Harbor, one of the world's busiest fishing ports. The ship normally can carry up to 190 passengers, but its capacity has been reduced to 60 passengers to help with social distancing.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death. The vast majority of people recover.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

Thursday, June 11: Kiara Meissner, Kim Stover, Danielle Smith, Kyler Young. **Friday, June 12:** Leonard Angerman, Cole Appleman. **Saturday, June 13:** Aaron Powell, Stan Martin, Alivia Young, Andre Shafer, Mark Walker. **Sunday, June 14:** Chester Massin, Ryan Miller, Michelle Shofstahl. **Monday, June 15:** Kayla Hay, Quinn Carey, Grover Mathis, Bert Nore, Shayna Schultz, Chris Weber. *Anniversary:* Phil & Kara Carey. **Tuesday, June 16:** Lana Mike, Hollis Montgomery, Louise Smith. **Wednesday, June 17:** Brynlee Wolten, Frank Rice, Forest Anasogak, Layla Mill. *Anniversary:* Vern & Ann Phillips. **Thursday, June 18:** William Barker, Greyson Allen.

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

Senior Center Meals Menu Delivery Only

Friday, June 12

Macaroni Cheese with Ham, Spinach and Salad.

Monday, June 15

Salisbury Steak, Peas, Fruit Cup, Sweet Potato

Tuesday, June 16

Sweet and Sour Pork, Broccoli, Tossed Salad and Rice

Wednesday, June 17

Salmon Loaf, Spinach Salad, Bread, Red Cabbage Sweet and Sour

Thursday, June 18

Hot Turkey Sandwich, Peas, Perfection Salad, Mashed Potatoes

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

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

FERRY

June Sailings CANCELLED

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



TIDES June 11 - June 18

High Tides

Low Tides

	AM		PM		AM		PM	
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
June 11	05:12	14.1	06:32	13.3	11:40	1.0	....	....
June 12	06:10	12.9	07:30	13.2	00:05	5.5	12:31	2.0
June 13	07:21	12.0	08:28	13.5	01:13	5.5	01:26	2.8
June 14	08:37	11.7	09:19	14.1	02:24	5.0	02:23	3.4
June 15	09:44	11.8	10:06	14.7	03:31	4.0	03:21	3.7
June 16	10:42	12.3	10:48	15.4	04:29	2.8	04:15	3.8
June 17	11:33	12.9	11:28	15.9	05:16	1.6	05:04	3.8
June 18	....	....	12:20	13.5	05:58	0.4	05:48	3.8

Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

Jury duty for June: no trials for the month of June. You will be receiving notices in the mail in the next few weeks. Court number: (907) 874-2311.

June 12, Friday

Helping Our Gardens: Nolan Center Campus, 1 pm. Call 874-2444 to help.

June 13, Saturday

Wrangell Emblem Club #87 Meeting : Cancelled.

June 15, Monday

Public School Board Regular Meeting : via Zoom, at 6:30 pm, Meeting ID: 834 0868 0138, Password: 8JCjvC

Continuing Events

Online AA Meetings: North Star Group Meeting. Link to online meeting: www.zoom.us/j/722855768. Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 7:45 p.m., Dial-in Number (phone only): (346) 248-7799 / Meeting ID: 722-855-76, Meeting Contact: Eric H: (907) 720 3407.

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

June 10, 1920

Harry Gartley does not propose to stand still while his neighbors are busy improving the appearance of their homes. He has had the roof of his house painted a brilliant red which will make it possible for incoming passengers to identify his house as soon as the steamer comes around the Elephant's nose.

June 8, 1945

Climaxing a brief stay in Wrangell this week, members of two ATS power barges, in port a short time, held a dance at ANB hall Monday night and invited young and old of the town to be their guests. An orchestra was hired and everyone agreed that it was a great success, thanks to the efforts and hospitality of crew members.


June 11, 1970

Six Wrangell youngsters are at the Rainbow Glacier Camp at Haines this week in a camping program sponsored by Alaskan Presbyterian churches. Thirteen more local campers are scheduled to travel to Haines this Sunday followed by a third group of 20 on Sunday, Aug. 21. Those in Haines this week include Kathy Ollivant, Sue Schoonover, Margie Emde, Miles DeWitt, Nancy Zenger and Laura Fawcett. All are ninth and tenth graders. Mrs. Norman Schoonover accompanied them as counselor. The group is scheduled to return Sunday.

June 8, 1995


Alan Fennimore, son of Gene and Maggie Fennimore, is currently competing in the third annual hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) Chrysler Corporation's HEV Challenge at Auburn Hills Technology Center, north of Detroit, Mich., June 5-13. Fennimore is on a Western Washington University team matching its Viking 25 against alternative-fuel vehicles from 33 other universities. A senior majoring in Industrial Technology, Fennimore is assistant project manager and has worked on various aspects of Viking 25. Specializing in automotive design, Fennimore

has devoted one year and nine months on Viking car projects. His contributions to the project include conversion of the stock engine to a dedicated natural gas engine, fabrication of parts, the exhaust system, chassis modification, composite panels, dynamometer testing and interior insulating. Students at Western's Vehicle Research Institute (VRI) internationally known for ground-up experimental vehicles and alternative-energy resource research, have taken a Chrysler-donated production Neon and converted it to run on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and electric batteries.



Wrangell Weather

Date	High	Low
June 01	50	46
June 02	54	46
June 03	55	45
June 04	55	44
June 05	59	45
June 06	59	40
June 07	53	47
June 08	56	45



Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Daylight
Jun 11	4:02a	9:33p	17:31h
Jun 12	4:02a	9:34p	17:32h
Jun 13	4:02a	9:34p	17:32h
Jun 14	4:01a	9:35p	17:34h
Jun 15	4:01a	9:36p	17:35h
Jun 16	4:01a	9:36p	17:35h
Jun 17	4:01a	9:37p	17:36h
Jun 18	4:01a	9:37p	17:36h

\$60,000 MOU approved for cannery worker COVID-19 tests

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The Wrangell Borough Assembly met last Wednesday evening, June 3, for a special meeting. City administration was wanting to enter a Memorandum of Understanding with SEARHC to provide COVID-19 testing for Sea Level Seafood employees. The total cost for the proposed memorandum, according to the meeting's agenda packet, comes out to \$60,000. This amount provides some padding in case of emergency, the actual cost of the memorandum is anticipated to be \$52,500.

"In order to ensure an appropriate testing regimen throughout the season for all Sea Level employees (both local and seasonal) the CBW has offered to cover the cost of testing using CARES Act funding," the agenda packet reads. "There are anticipated to be approximately 50 total staff, tested up to 6 times over the season. The cost for

administering and processing the tests for business cohorts is \$175 per test."

Borough Manager Lisa Von Barga clarified that the money is meant to cover the cost of processing the test after it has been taken. The COVID-19 test itself is free, she said, but it costs money to get the tests processed. This plan is part of an effort to be good community partners, she also said, and this is what CARES Act funding is designed to be spent on.

"We just want to make sure the processing workers are being tested to the maximum degree possible while they're in our community," Von Barga said. "It's a safety measure for the entire town."

After some brief discussion amongst the assembly, they approved of the borough manager moving forward with plans to draft and execute this memorandum.

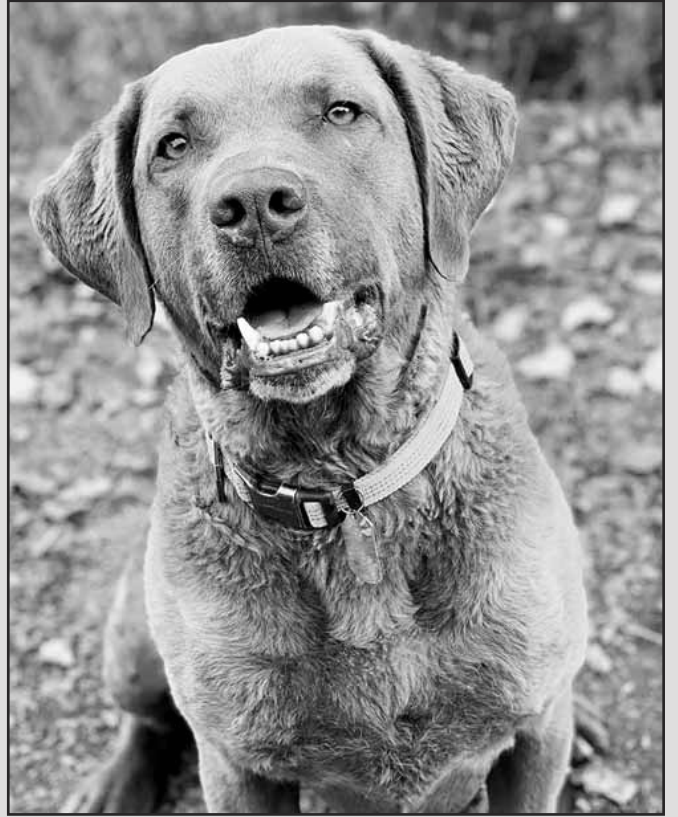


PHOTO COURTESY OF BRANDON KENFIELD

Home again home again

Wrangell dog Thorton is home safe and sound after a multi-week disappearance upriver. Thorton, a Chesapeake Bay Retriever, and his owner Brandon Kenfield were up the Stikine River about three weeks ago. Their boat scraped against some rocks, Kenfield said, and both he and the dog jumped out to get the boat loose. By the time he had the boat cleared, Kenfield said Thorton had disappeared into the woods. Kenfield said he and others made regular trips back up the river to look for Thorton over two weeks. They finally found him two weeks later. Thorton had lost some weight, he said, and he'd gotten quilled by a porcupine. All in all, though, he said that his dog is recovering well and seems happy to be home.

"It was a tough couple of weeks for him, but he just wanted to play when he got back," Kenfield said.

Police report

<p>June 1 Sex offender registration Civil issue Four subpoenas served Agency assist: Harbor Summons service Traffic complaint</p> <p>June 2 Noise complaint Cat euthanized Agency assist: Vet Subpoena service Agency assist: Parole Search Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department</p>	<p>Agency assist: DOT Property check</p> <p>June 3 Traffic stop Abandoned vehicle Agency assist: WMC Violate Conditions of Release</p> <p>June 4 Agency assist: Hoonah P.D. Traffic Traffic stop Harassment Summons service</p>	<p>Criminal mischief</p> <p>June 5 Subpoena service Summons service Arrested Taler Byrd: 23 on Bench Warrant for failure to remand to jail Parking Complaint Citation issued to James Vandebunte for time limit parking Suspicious behavior</p> <p>June 06, 2020 Noise complaint Citation issued to</p>
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Optometrist Cameron Norman will be in Wrangell at the Stikine Inn SATURDAY, SUNDAY & MONDAY JUNE 20, 21 & 22

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Madeleine Hesler, 26 for obstruction of traffic on roadway

June 07, 2020

Traffic stop: Citation issued to Danielle Roher driving without a valid license and verbal warning expired tags.

Domestic dispute

Found property

There was one ambulance call and 12 agency assists to the airport this week.

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Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

As someone who has spent a lot of time working away from home I believe that most of the migrant cannery workers will spend their last night home socializing and will show no symptoms for days after arriving here.

Jon Campbell

Reflections

It's Too D—n Hard

What is the greatest line you've ever heard in the movies? For me, it comes from the 1992 movie with Al Pacino and Chris O'Donnell in *The Scent of a Woman*. In this movie Al Pacino is in a public hearing in the Baird School for Boys, defending Chris O'Donnell for some perceived wrong. In a rather stirring speech he says, "Now I have come to the crossroads in my life. I always knew what the right path was. Without exception I knew - but I never took it. You know why? Because it was too d—n hard!"

In today's society a great majority of my brothers and sisters have simply given up and no longer practice their faith because they find it "too d—n hard." They have given up on the idea that they are created by and for God and that they have a soul and that there is an afterlife. These former believers have fallen into that age-old trap which has been slowly but effectively laid down by our secular leaders, who have substituted the strangest human absurdities for the highest divine concepts of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And to what end?

I am convinced that the issue today is not so much the Corona Virus as it is the Confusion Virus, which is alive and well in this great land of ours. This confusion virus has infected our hearts and our souls and is causing havoc. Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, is not a god of confusion. We are living with an entire subculture which has been organized to justify a certain way of behaving; a subculture which has not been formed under the banner of Jesus Christ. This subculture says, "that's the way it is so accept it; you can't change - because it will be too d—n hard." Hence, the confusion remains.

C. S. Lewis said, "There is no neutral ground in the universe. Every square inch and every split second are claimed by God and countered by Satan."

We know that God has a plan for our lives, and we know that this is countered by the plan Satan has for our lives. In this day and age good, solid Christian spirituality is not an option or a luxury - it is a necessity for the salvation of souls - to include our own. Denial only works for a very short time.

For those of you who remain loyal to Jesus as the Savior and Redeemer of the world, I ask you to join with me now to help eradicate this confusion virus by replacing it with the spirits of clarity and purpose and return to the practice of your faith. Whether you are Catholic, Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, whatever your denomination is - return to church - return to the practice of your faith. Let the *Scent of God* predominate your senses.

We are a spiritual army united under the divine banner of Jesus Christ to glorify God, save souls, and to up-end the plans Satan has so deliciously devised to lead us astray. There is no neutral ground here. Spiritual warfare is not underground anymore, it's out in the open and right in our face. Go, now, and reclaim the many spiritual blessings bestowed on you at your baptism and let us "give thanks to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:57).

Fr. Steve Gallagher
St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church



**Like no other
paper on earth**

by **RON LOESCH**
Publisher

Now in its 118th year of continuous publication, the Wrangell Sentinel is unlike any other newspaper in the world.

That's because there is no other place in the world like Wrangell.

The newspaper reflects the lifestyle and inner workings of the community. In good times and bad, the Sentinel has continued publishing, earning it the slogan of being, "the oldest continuously published newspaper in Alaska." The Kodiak Daily Mirror holds the title of being the oldest newspaper, but during World War II it ceased publication for a period of time, thus giving the Sentinel its significant claim to the title.

Given its history, we wonder if perhaps the community has gradually taken this newspaper's record of service to the community for granted. After all, the Wrangell Sentinel continues to publish week after week, year after year, announcing births, deaths, community news and civic events and all facets of activities Wrangell is involved with. Sometimes the news can be labeled bad, but in the far majority of the cases it reflects the growth, optimism and push-onward drive of this community.

Our 118 volumes contain the history of Wrangell that will never be found in a history book or even the local museum. That which is contained within our pages can't be found and restored. It has long since rotted or rusted away. Some residents have died, but in many cases

their stories continue in print.

For the past 12 years retail display advertising has gradually disappeared from the pages of the Sentinel. This has significantly impacted the amount of news that is published in the paper. The number of pages of each week's paper is determined by the amount of advertising that is placed within our pages. We require that 50% of the space be used for advertising, to maintain the profitability of the business. Former publisher, the late Jamie Bryson explained in 1976: "The size of the newspaper each week is directly proportional to the amount of advertising it contains. Newspapers can't afford for long to give away any free pages. The main source of income for the newspaper is display advertising."

Like any other business, we make payroll, pay utilities, rent and overhead costs every month. Unlike most businesses, its owners have not drawn a salary from the operation for many years.

To that end, the Sentinel has been printing more and more 8-page newspapers. That cannot continue. As we, the current owners are looking towards retirement, we have to assure that the newspaper can pay salaries to its next owners and show it to be a profitable and worthy venture well into the future.

To that end, we will elaborate in future columns what is needed to keep the Wrangell Sentinel a viable business that will provide continued service to the community for decades to come.

"I believe that the country weekly acts as a form of social cement in holding the community together.

- Lyndon B. Johnson



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Deficit gap, revenue reductions discussed in budget workshop

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The Wrangell Borough assembly held another budget workshop last week, Wednesday, June 3. In this meeting the assembly briefly reviewed a looming budget deficit in the borough's general fund. They also looked at a variety of de-

partment budgets that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, are anticipating reduced revenues. Among these are the Transient Tax and CPV budget, the Nolan Center, and Parks and Recreation.

As reported in previous articles regarding these budget workshops, the City and Bor-

ough of Wrangell is facing a deficit in their general fund for FY 2021, of about \$516,516, not including costs for any capital improvement projects. While reduced revenues do not help the situation, Borough Manager Lisa Von Barga said that city administration is taking some steps to reduce the deficit.

"Things are still a little bit in flux as to what the total deficit will be for the general fund, because we're still going through budgets and reviewing things," she said.

A portion of Secure Rural Schools funds, that the city has the option to use for street repairs, were not put in the FY

2020 budget for unknown reasons, she said. As such, she said they were taking the FY 2020 and 2021 allocations out, dropping the deficit by approximately \$122,000. Additionally, the borough will be saving about \$20,000 in wage differences from the parks and recreation pool temp worker wages. Work is still ongoing, Von Barga said, but the deficit is shrinking.

With the review of the general fund deficit out of the way, the assembly moved on to discuss their next round of department budgets.

"Revenues for the Nolan Center and Parks & Recreation have been reduced significantly to account for the loss of cruise ships this summer and potential loss of some P&R programming this summer," reads a cover letter in the workshop's agenda packet. "Transient Tax and Commercial Passenger Vessel Tax revenues have also been decreased significantly to account for no cruise ship traffic this summer and less independent travel."

Wrangell is only anticipating \$30,000 to come in via Transient Taxes and Convention and Visitors Bureau next year. This is a decrease from year-to-date revenues of \$59,967. Meanwhile expenses are anticipated to be \$71,516. This will shrink the CVB's reserves from approximately \$135,501 at the beginning of FY 2021 to \$93,985 at the end of FY 2021.

According to the agenda packet, Wrangell is also expecting only \$5,000 in revenue via the Commercial Passenger Vessel tax, down from \$58,660 in year-to-date revenues FY 2020. However, they are only anticipating \$1,500 in expenses, for bump out maintenance along Front Street. The CPV Tax Share Fund is expected to grow slightly next year, from roughly \$293,000 to about \$297,000.

The city will also be using a portion of the Marian Glenz Memorial Fund this next year. About \$18,165 will be spent on a contract with Truly360. This will leave a fund balance of a little over \$13,000, Von Barga said.

The Nolan Center is also anticipating reduced revenues next year. The community's museum, civic center, and movie theater are anticipating about \$84,000 in revenue, down from \$111,784 in FY 2020's year-to-date revenues, but expenses are estimated at \$585,577. Expenses are slightly higher than FY 2020's year-to-date of \$522,300, but are lower than this year's approved expenses of \$660,346. The majority of costs are administrative, according to the budget, estimated at \$248,891. Museum expenses are estimated at \$75,320. Civic center expenses are estimated at \$61,673. Movie theater expenses are estimated at \$90,022.

The extra costs, according to the draft budget, are planned to be covered by transfers from the general fund, investments, and the Transient Tax fund. This way, the Nolan Center will end the financial year with a net balance of zero.

"Obviously without the cruise ship season we've re-

Continued on page 6

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Budget workshop

Continued from page 5

duced the staff significantly," Nolan Center Director Cyni Crary said.

The Parks and Recreation Department budget is also facing a deficit. The swimming pool is estimated to only bring in a little over \$56,000 next year, compared to \$150,701 year-to-date. Parks are actually expecting to bring in a little more revenue this year, \$4,000 compared to \$3,115 year-to-date. Recreation is also expecting to bring in about \$23,000 in revenue, compared to \$19,717 year-to-date. However, the total department is anticipating a deficit of about \$860,000 next year. Parks and Rec Director Kate Thomas went into a little more detail about the anticipated FY 2021 budget.

"We're well aware that the numbers have increased over the past five years, and that sort of supports the trajectory of growth that we're on," she said. "The budget has an increase in expenditures obviously, and that can mainly be attributed to a

thorough presentation of the facility repair and maintenance needs of the department. Projects and purchases that have not been finalized in FY 20, once the pandemic hit, have been either reprioritized or we haven't spent that money and will not. Any discrepancies you can see in the budget, if the actuals don't match up, or there seems to be some odd things going on, it can probably be attributed to last year's restructuring of accounts."

The Irene Ingle Public Library is facing total expenses of \$259,236 in FY 2021. This is a step back from this year's approved expenses of \$303,441, but is more in line with year-to-date expenses of \$229,320. According to the agenda packet, the library is built off of two permanent staff positions. A third position for a library technician, currently unfilled, will remain vacant next year.

The assembly also looked at a brand new department budget, "Economic Develop-

ment - Planning & Zoning." According to the agenda packet, this combines the wages and program expenses for the Economic Development Department with the Planning and Zoning Department. This was to better represent all of the community and economic de-

velopment budget items managed by Wrangell's Economic Development Director, Carol Rushmore.

This department is looking at expenses of \$169,749. The majority of this comes from personnel costs of \$129,016. The assembly questioned a \$20,000

expense for tourism industry expenses, which was roughly \$10,000 higher than was allocated FY 2020. Rushmore explained that it has always been a \$20,000 allocation, the funds were just now combined from different areas of the budget into one line item.

Culture camp, other projects approved in RAC meeting

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The Wrangell-Petersburg-Kake Resource Advisory Committee met last Tuesday evening, June 2, to consider multiple projects to recommend funding for. Among these was a plan for a culture camp, presented by Wrangellite Virginia Oliver on behalf of the Wrangell Cooperative Association.

The "Kaatslitaan Culture Camp," as the project was named, is designed to be an adult camp for people to learn about traditional native values and the subsistence lifestyle from cultural bearers of the native community. According to the project's outline, the camp will try to bring together elders from Wrangell, Petersburg, Kake, and Juneau, for a camp held at Old Town on Wrangell Island. The camp was originally being planned for this summer. However, with the current COVID-19 pandemic, they are prepared to meet either in the fall of 2020 or the spring of 2021. The total estimated cost for the camp, also according to the project outline, is \$22,200. Oliver came before the RAC that evening to argue for \$8,200 of that money, the requested Title II contribution.

"It is private land, but it is in the middle of the Tongass Forest," Oliver said. "The land belongs to Sealaska, however it was originally my grandparents' land. They had gotten the land before they were able to own land, so they never registered it. However, it is registered somewhere because the U.S. Forest Service has it plotted at 6.8 acres, mostly underwater ... I'm still there, my grandparents' cabin is there, although I built a more modern one behind it and have a garden there."

According to the project details, the Kaatslitaan Culture Camp would teach native culture and traditions in a variety of ways. This would include discussions about sustainability, how fish and seal meat are treated and processed, learning how to make medicinal salves and traditional paints, historic site recognition, learning traditional songs and stories, among other projects.

"I think that if the project does a good job of articulating the national forest resources, for example involving the Forest Service archeologist, and I forget the details," Linda Slaght, with the Forest Service, said. "That's the next question that would be asked, running through the grant process. How does this benefit a national forest resource?"

"Time is ticking," Oliver also said. "Some of our elders are in their eighties and older, and they don't hear very well ... We're wanting to be able to speak to our elders. It's imperative that these things are done quickly and timely."

There was some discussion amongst the RAC members, but eventually they agreed to recommend the culture camp for funding.

There were other Wrangell projects discussed in the meeting. For example, the RAC recommended \$27,500 for repairs to the Nemo Saltwater Trail. They also recommended \$14,500 for shelter repairs along the Rainbow Falls trail system.

Other items that were recommended for funding include invasive plant control projects in several locations across the RAC's area. One such project was in the Petersburg Borough, where Joni Johnson wanted to develop and build interpretive signs to educate people on preventing the spread of invasive species of plants. These would be placed along launch points for the Stikine River on Mitkof Island, and along Raven Trail. Funding requested from the RAC was set at \$2,350.

The RAC also recommended funding for interpretive signage along Sandy Beach in Petersburg and restoration work along East Ohmer Creek, among other projects.

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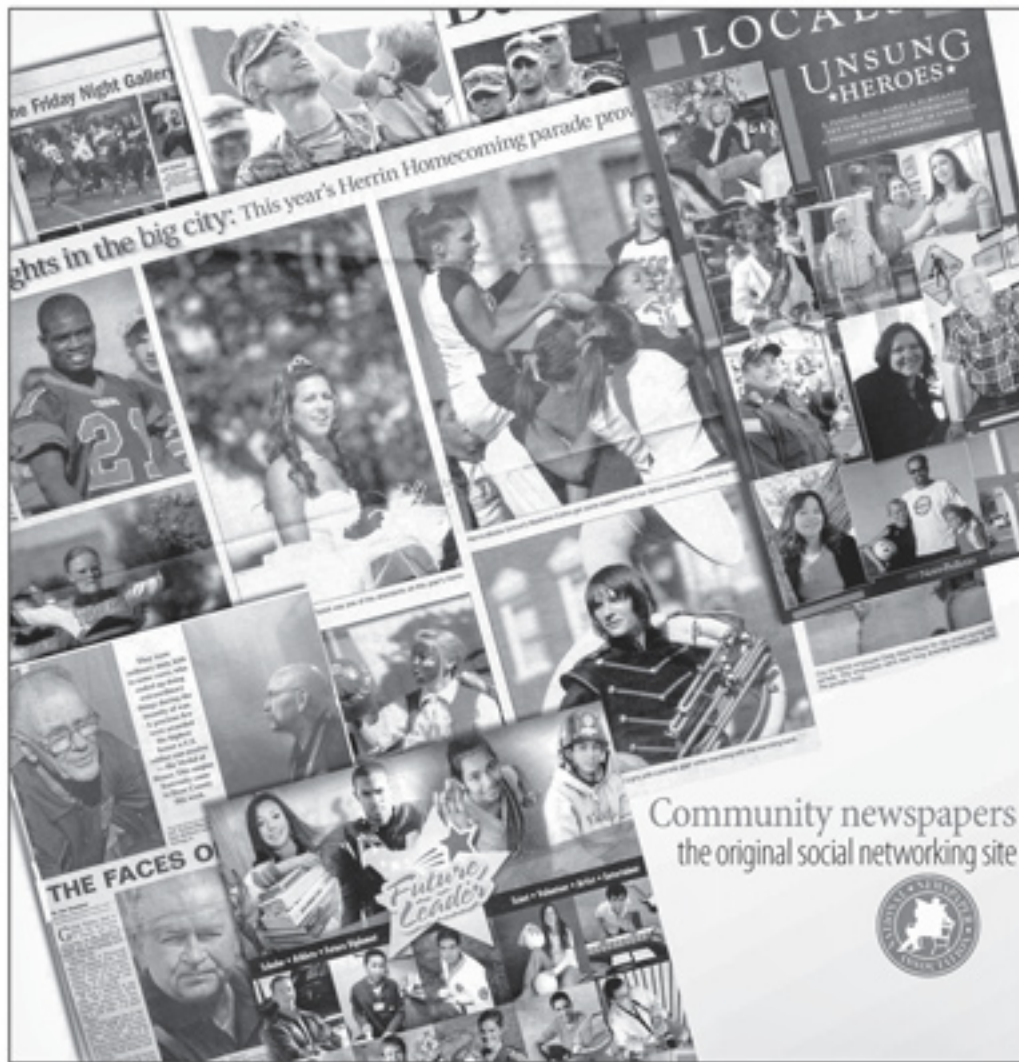


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Learn more by visiting covid19.searhc.org or call the COVID-19 Hotline at 907.966.8799.

Source: CDC. SEARHC's use of this information does not constitute its endorsement or recommendation by the U.S. Government, Department of Health and Human Services, or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Hospital construction ramping up

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

Construction of the new Wrangell Medical Center is continuing on schedule and on budget, according to an update provided by Sondra Forrester. According to the update, construction is ramping up as the crew size has increased to 45. A fire suppression and an additional drywall crew has joined the team. Several important parts of the construction process have been recently achieved.

Interior metal framing is complete in two of the four areas of the construction site, and most of the framing in the third area is complete. Electrical and mechanical rough-in work is complete in areas two and four, and in the long-term residents' rooms in area three. Walls in area four have been insulated, and painters are starting their work in this area.

"We have also moved into the Clinic Renovation phase of the project with the tie-in of the connecting



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

The new Wrangell Medical Center, currently under construction. The hospital is scheduled to be ready for business in early 2021.

corridor between the hospital and clinic as well as the installation of windows in the open office space located on the second floor of the clinic," the update reads.

Dawson Construction is working on "phase one" of the AICS clinic renovations. This phase is mainly focused on building the connection between the existing clinic and the new hospital. Phase two of this aspect of

the project is scheduled to begin on June 15.

The next step in the project includes exterior siding for the building. This was originally planned to begin on May 4, according to the update, but was postponed so workers could focus on interior projects. Exterior concrete equipment pads and sidewalk prep work should begin sometime this month as well.

Assembly discusses COVID-19 with health experts, approves mill levy rates

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The Wrangell Borough Assembly met Tuesday evening to hear from some Alaskan health experts regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. As Wrangell received its first case of the virus over the weekend, assembly members and other city officials wanted an opportunity to learn more about how the pandemic is being handled, and to ask questions

about how testing works and the process behind pandemic response.

Public Health Nurse Erin Michael was given the opportunity to explain the process of what happens when a person is tested positive with COVID-19. With a positive case, she said, the lab that ran the test notifies the medical provider, and then either the medical provider or the lab will notify the patient. The state lab will

also notify the Alaska Section of Epidemiology, which will then notify Public Health Nursing. After that, the case gets assigned to whichever Public Health Nurse covers that community.

"In most cases, if it's Monday through Friday then I am the person that is calling and doing the initial interview with the person that had a positive," Michael said. "This interview is very intensive, it can

take several hours, and we're looking at what the person was doing and who they were around."

Michael went into more detail, explaining that they look into who the patient was around within the past two days before they started showing symptoms. If they are asymptomatic, they look two days before they get a positive test. Those people they were around, if they were within six feet of the patient for more than 10 minutes, or are otherwise thought to be high risk, are considered "close contacts" and will also be interviewed. They are advised to quarantine for two weeks, from the time they were around the patient.

Michael also said that the Public Health Nurse will also go back 14 days in the patient's history, prior to them having symptoms or being tested, to try and determine where they caught the virus. Sometimes they can determine where they got the infection, either by traveling or from contact with another sick person, but sometimes the source of the infection remains unknown.

The patient, while isolating, will be regularly monitored for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and they may be referred to their medical provider for medical care. Close contacts are not required to get tested, Michael said, but it is recommended if they show symptoms of COVID-19. They should speak to their medical provider about testing options.

Another health expert present at the meeting was Dr. Jayme Parker, lab manager for the Alaska state virology lab in Fairbanks. Her lab, she said, handles about half of the Public Health COVID-19 tests for the state. They are testing between 300 to 1,000 specimens a day. She was invited to the meeting to help answer questions from assembly members and city officials.

Mayor Steve Prysunka asked, in general, if somebody

were to test positive for COVID-19 what the protocol would be on her end. Parker answered that a positive test result is an "actionable event." This means they call the provider that patient came from, and make a report to the department of epidemiology. Any positive that they see in her lab, she said, they take very seriously.

Prysunka also wanted to know about the process of further testing of patients and validating the original positive test result. Parker explained that when they examine a test, they are looking for the RNA of the virus. However, sometimes at the end of respiratory diseases like COVID-19 there is "viral litter" that can make accurate test results a challenge at times.

"This could be RNA that's not infectious," Parker said. "It could be degraded RNA just from the ends of an infection, but we're going to pick that up as a positive intermittently, at the end of someone's infection."

Assembly Member Patty Gilbert wanted to know if Parker knew what percentage of positive tests were actually false positives. She also asked if the state labs could tell the "viral load" of a test, beyond just a positive or negative result. Parker responded that yes, they could determine the viral load of a test, whether or not it is a high positive or a low positive. There are a number of factors that can determine the strength of the sample they are testing, she said, including the quality of the specimen and when it was taken, among other factors. As to Gilbert's question about false positives, she said there was not a lot of data to go on.

"That isn't something that we've really been focused on, here in the state, or across the country, or even literature that I was looking for this morning about this topic," Parker said. "There just isn't really any-

Continued on page 8

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Assembly

Continued from page 7

thing published about the rates of false positivity ... We really haven't gone very deep into the false positivity aspects of some of these tests, we're basically acting on all of them and making sure that we're protecting communities."

Jamie Roberts wanted to know how somebody could receive a positive test result and still be asymptomatic. Parker answered that viruses can be very tricky. Not giving some hosts symptoms is one way that viruses can persist undetected. She also added that COVID-19 has an incubation period of about five days, on average, and a patient is most likely to test "positive" within the first three weeks of infection. This can vary case by case, however.

Following the discussion and Q&A session on COVID-19, the assembly approved of this year's mill levy tax. The mill levy, according to the agenda packet for the meeting, is the rate at which a property in Wrangell is taxed.

The resolution that came before the assembly set the mill levy at 12.75 for property within the Wrangell Service area, and 4.0 for property outside of this area. Borough Manager Lisa Von Bargen said that this is the same rate as previous years, so there will be no property tax increase moving forward. According to the agenda packet, the assessed value of all properties in Wrangell this year, after exemptions, is a little less than \$159 million. This is an increase of about \$5.8 million from last year. According to a table in the meeting's agenda packet, about \$143 million-



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Several participants in last weekend's Greg Scheff Memorial Tournament. Pictured left to right are Paul Axelson, Gary Smith, Dave Trudeau, Kirk Deal (behind Trudeau), and Kris Pearson.

Golf Roundup

Muskeg Meadows hosted two tournaments this weekend; the annual Stikine Sportsman Association tournament and the Greg Scheff Memorial Tournament.

The Stikine Sportsmen Association tournament took place on Friday. According to an email from Muskeg Meadows, \$730 was donated to the course by participants and winning teams.

The Greg Scheff Memorial Tournament took place on Sat-

urday and Sunday. The event was sponsored by R&M Ketchikan. The golf course raised a total of \$3,110 for the Greg Scheff Memorial Scholarship Fund.

"The tournament began with a few words to remember and honor Greg, a good friend of many in attendance," the email from Muskeg Meadows reads. "Spirits were high, despite the rain and the record number of lost balls."

worth of property is within the Wrangell Service area, and the remainder is outside of that area. With the mill rates set as they are, Wrangell can expect to collect about \$1.8 million in property taxes within the service area, and \$62,453 in prop-

erty taxes outside of the service area.

In other items, the assembly decided to accept Ryan Howe's application to fill a vacant seat on the assembly left by the resignation of Drew Larrabee.

The assembly also heard a

letter from Angie Flickinger, calling for city officials, the police department, and the wider community to be more aware of the issue of systemic racism and to collaborate to combat the issue.

The assembly approved of a

bid from Spenard Hardware, in the amount of \$32,250 for primary school doors and hardware procurement.

A special meeting of the assembly was scheduled for Tuesday, June 16, for a public hearing on the FY 2021 budget.

CVB discusses marketing plans

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The Wrangell Convention and Visitor Bureau met last Tuesday afternoon, June 9, to workshop various marketing plans. The CVB was looking to put together a list of various ways they could promote Wrangell and its local businesses, to draw in tourists to present to the borough assembly in the near future. Economic Development Director Carol Rushmore said that, as many communities were struggling because of the COVID-19 pandemic, they could potentially use CARES Act funding to cover the costs of some of these ideas.

"The CARES Act funding, basically, could cover potential new opportunities that haven't been done in the past, in order to alleviate impact from COVID-19," Rushmore said.

One of the main ideas the bureau discussed was publishing a new travel planner for the visitor industry. The last travel planner was put together several years ago, according to Rushmore, and it is time to update it. However, with the current pandemic, many businesses are not likely to have extra money to buy advertisements in the planner. The CVB considered this, and decided that offering free ad space to businesses would be a good idea. All businesses could receive a free display ad of one quarter size, the idea presented. If a business wanted a bigger ad, they could purchase it at a discounted price. The CVB also decided that they would want to print some inserts for the travel planners to provide information on COVID-19, and what travelers should be aware of.

The total cost of this idea was estimated at \$18,000 during the workshop. If revenue from selling ad space did not cover printing and setting up a digital version of the planner, the bureau decided, they could try and seek CARES Act funding to cover the extra costs.

"I still think the travel guide is a great move," said CVB member Brenda Schwartz-Yeager.

Other ideas that the CVB discussed included purchasing Hoopsuites to manage Facebook and Instagram posts, setting aside funding to purchase online advertising, and a business promotional planner for the Marine Service Center, among others.

The 2020 Visitor Guide

is now available

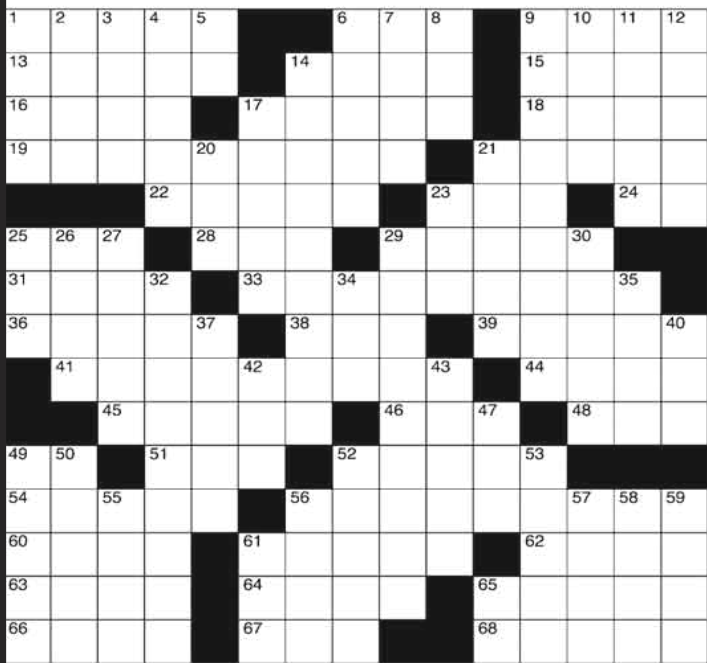
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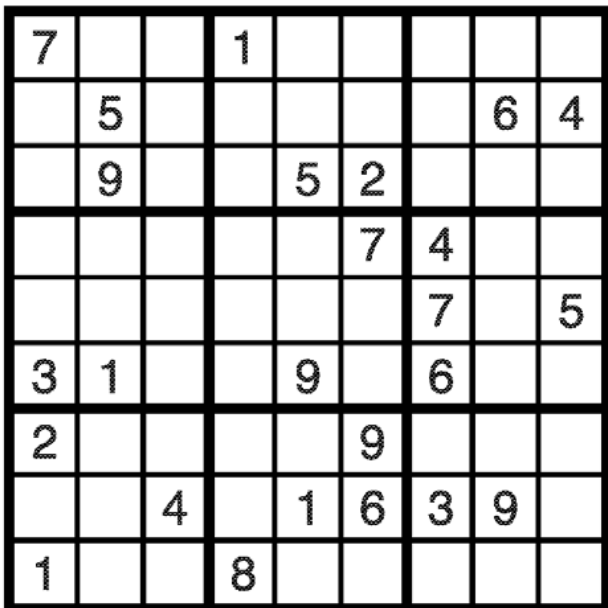
CLUES ACROSS

- 1. American composer
- 6. Very fast aircraft
- 9. Workplaces
- 13. A mount on a surface
- 14. Small freshwater fish
- 15. Double-reed instrument
- 16. Canadian flyers
- 17. Famed astronomer
- 18. Smooth, shiny fabric
- 19. Profited
- 21. Conspiracy
- 22. Infections
- 23. Chum
- 24. Secondary school (abbr.)
- 25. Resistance unit
- 28. Sound unit
- 29. Ancient city of Egypt
- 31. Crease
- 33. Polished
- 36. For goodness ___!
- 38. College basketball tournament
- 39. Scorches
- 41. Describe precisely
- 44. Thick piece of something
- 45. Frocks
- 46. Indicates near
- 48. Senior enlisted US Army member
- 49. A note added to a letter
- 51. A nose or snout
- 52. Clumsy
- 54. Satisfied to the fullest
- 56. Display of strong feeling
- 60. Popular awards show
- 61. Cuisine style
- 62. Expresses pleasure
- 63. Monetary unit of the Maldives
- 64. Utah city
- 65. Fight
- 66. Messenger ribonucleic acid
- 67. Body part
- 68. Suspiciously reluctant

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Fruit of the service tree
- 2. At some prior time
- 3. Mongolian city ___ Bator
- 4. Strongboxes
- 5. Russian river
- 6. Gurus
- 7. Horse mackerel
- 8. Pearl Jam's debut album
- 9. Confines
- 10. First month of Jewish ecclesiastical year
- 11. Famed Idaho politician
- 12. Prevents from seeing
- 14. Indicate time
- 17. Male parents
- 20. Tab on a key ring
- 21. The Great Dog constellation: ___ Major
- 23. Frying necessity
- 25. Former CIA
- 26. The leader
- 27. Produces
- 29. London soccer club
- 30. Closes
- 32. Region in the western Pacific Ocean
- 34. Not present
- 35. Small drink of whiskey
- 37. Begat
- 40. Helps little firms
- 42. Pointed end of a pen
- 43. Fencing swords
- 47. Inches per minute (abbr.)
- 49. Hymn
- 50. Philippine island
- 52. Flemish names of Ypres
- 53. A way to inform
- 55. Small lake
- 56. Linear unit
- 57. Central Japanese city
- 58. Partially burn
- 59. Sports award
- 61. Part of your foot
- 65. Atomic #21

SUDOKU



Level: Intermediate

Puzzle answers will be in the June 18 edition



PHOTO COURTESY OF RICH EINERT

Warbler

An Audubon's Yellow-Rumped Warbler, seen near Shoemaker. Photo taken by Wrangell resident Rich Einert.

Handling National Guard improves sex assault

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) – An Alaska Department of Administration audit has found that the state's National Guard units improved the handling of sexual assault and sexual harassment since 2014, but some problems remain.

The administration department's oversight unit said the National Guard increased sexual assault and prevention training, set up new procedures for addressing complaints and created a new military judicial system under laws passed by the Alaska Legislature, The Anchorage Daily News reported Sunday.

Citing the results of anonymous annual surveys of National Guard members, the report concluded that training efforts have encouraged soldiers to report problems.

"We believe one reason we're having more reports is that people are now more comfortable in coming forward," said Adjutant General Torrence Saxe, head of the Alaska National Guard. "If numbers are going up, we do think that is more trust in leadership."

The National Guard conducted 23 sexual assault disciplinary proceedings between 2016 and September 2019. The study included 15 reports that were unrestricted to allow auditor examinations.

The 15 reports dealt with seven National

Guard members, including five who suffered military punishment. One complaint was unsubstantiated while another remains under investigation.

In several cases, civilian prosecutors pursued charges against the National Guard members as the military justice system worked in parallel.

The audit recommended greater cooperation between civilian prosecutors and the military justice system, with legislation to allow information sharing. The report also called for a military judge for the Alaska National Guard.

Republican Gov. Mike Dunleavy ordered the audit "to give Alaskans assurance that the Alaska National Guard Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program is fully implemented and continues to be followed by guard leadership," said Jeff Turner, Dunleavy's deputy communications director.

Prior investigations by the state and the federal National Guard concluded sexual abuse, assault and harassment were significantly under-reported, in part because commanders' actions deterred reporting.

"They acted like they didn't care about it for a while," said Republican Rep. Steve Thompson, co-chair of the Alaska House special committee on military and veterans affairs.

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Alaska Fish Factor

By LAINE WELCH
Fisheries columnist

COVID cuts into annual fish, crab surveys

Surveys of Alaska's fish, crab and halibut stocks in the Bering Sea have been called off or reduced due to constraints and dangers posed by the coronavirus.

In what they called an "unprecedented" move, NOAA Fisheries announced in late May that five Alaska surveys will be cancelled this summer "due to the uncertainties created by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the unique challenges those are creating for the agency."

NOAA said in a statement that they found "no way to move forward with a survey plan that effectively minimizes risks to staff, crew, and the communities associated with the surveys."

The annual surveys are the cornerstone of Alaska's sustainable fisheries management and provide data on how fish stocks are trending, where they are and, ultimately, how much will be allowed for harvest each year.

The cancellations include bottom trawl surveys at the Aleutian Islands, the eastern Bering Sea and the northern Bering Sea, the Bering Sea pol-

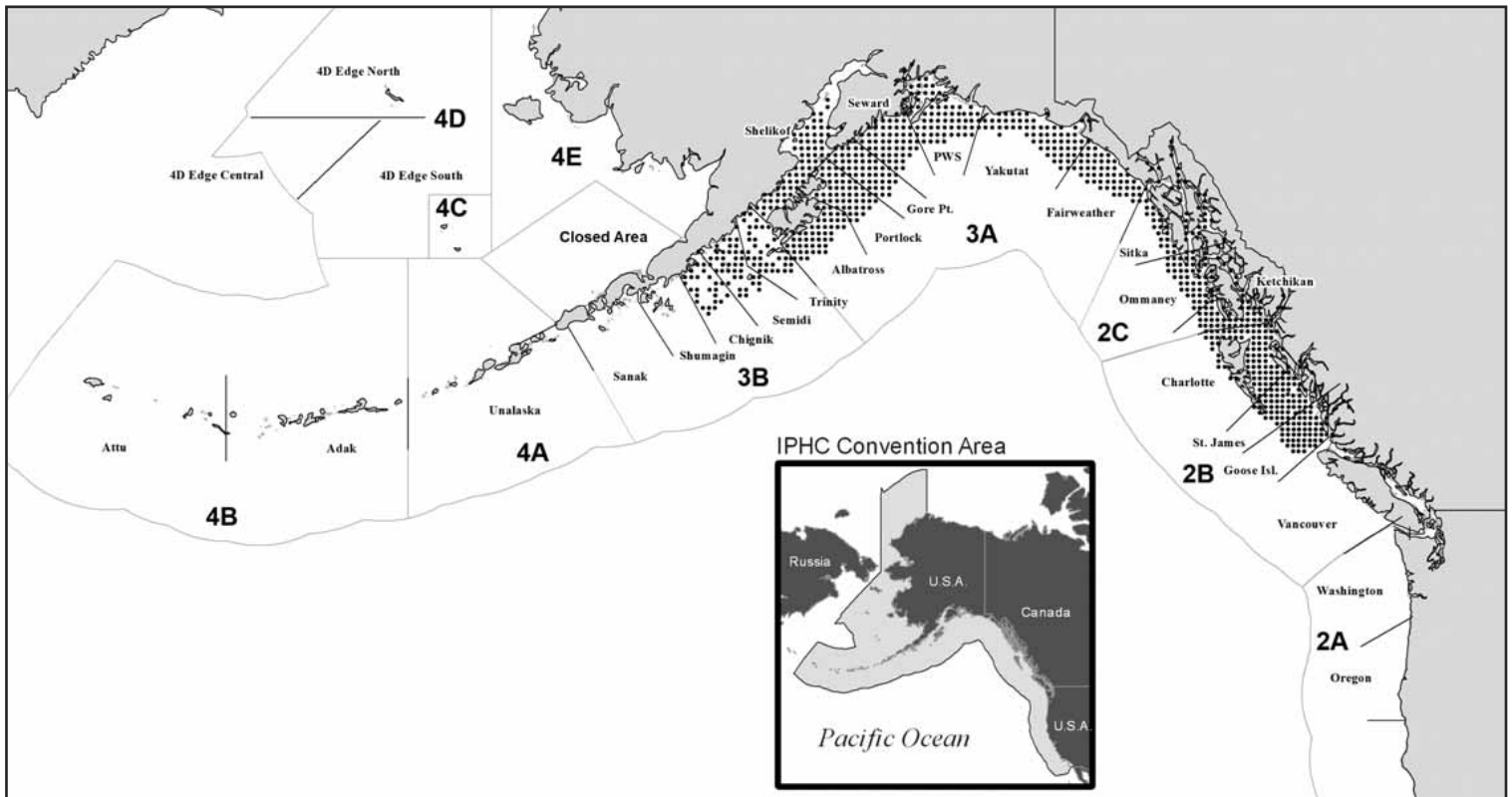


IMAGE COURTESY OF IPHC

Revised 2020 halibut survey design. Each circle represents a station targeted for sampling.

lock acoustics survey, and the fall ecosystem survey.

To reassure stakeholders, NOAA said "we are fortunate to be working in a robust management system with a long

time series of fisheries and ecosystem data and stock assessment models which helps ensure there is limited conservation impact from the loss of survey data this year."

The agency also plans to use three wind-powered Saildrones equipped with echosounders to survey Alaska pollock stocks, which over 60 days will cover nearly the

same area done by research vessels. NOAA also will gather data from state and industry partners and from fisheries observers.

Continued on page 11

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contact. Justin neetsbay@ssraa.org or 206-462-5725.....3x6-25b74

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that George S. Woodbury has been appointed Personal Representative of the Estate of Mary J. Woodbury. All persons having claims against the said deceased are required to present their claims within four months after the date of the first publication of this Notice or said claims will be forever barred. Claims must either be presented to George S. Woodbury, Personal Representative, c/o Faulkner Banfield, P.C., 8420 Airport Boulevard, Suite 101, Juneau, Alaska 99801-6924, or filed with the Superior Court for the State of Alaska, First Judicial District at Wrangell, Alaska, 1WR-20-00009 PR.

Published: May 28, June 4 and 11, 2020

Housing Available

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation Wrangell Public Housing

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) is currently accepting applications for smoke free quality subsidized 2-br and 3-br units at Etolin Heights.

Subsidized rent for families who meet federal low income guidelines.

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Published: June 11, 2020



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Fish Factor

Continued from page 10

That's small comfort to some, notably, fishing towns that count on cod. The Gulf of Alaska cod fishery was closed this year due to a collapse of the stocks from extremely warm water temperatures over several years that killed off two year classes.

"We are concerned that with no surveys, the stock assessment will remain status quo and the GOA Pacific cod federal fishery will again be closed for 2021," Alvin Osterback, mayor of the Aleutians East Borough, wrote in a letter to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, which oversees the stocks from three to 200 miles offshore.

Likewise, Bering Sea crabbers are feeling uneasy.

While they "understand the constraints the agency is under given this pandemic," crabbers worry the lack of surveys could result in more conservative catch levels.

"We're very disappointed and concerned given the status of many of our crab stocks," said Jamie Goen, executive director of Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers, a trade group. "Our bairdi Tanner fishery was closed this past year and our red crab fishery is approaching thresholds of closing. We rely on having a survey every year."

The complex process of setting crab harvest limits already includes a myriad of built-in protection buffers, Goen said, and the lack of one data point

should not add more.

Goen credited NOAA's "crab team" for working closely with the industry and said ABSC already is looking towards next year.

"How can we start planning now so that this doesn't happen again if we're still under the same restraints with a pandemic?" Goen asked. "Generally, the government only allocates survey money for one year. Can they guarantee that we'll have that money next year? What if there's constraints on government staff? One of the things we can do in advance is a lot more planning for next season."

"We all need to be understanding that the whole world is adjusting to a different situation right now," Goen added. "Our fishing industries in Alaska are suffering and it's a lot more expensive and stressful just getting our operations out the door. We've all got to roll up our sleeves and help each other out and find solutions to make sure we can continue to put food on people's tables."

Halibut surveys reduced - Similarly, the annual survey of the Pacific halibut stock also will have a "reduced footprint" this summer.

A total of 898 stations will be surveyed, down 385 (30%) from the originally planned 1,283 stations "as a result of the impacts and restrictions that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our field operational

capacity and concern for our fishing communities coast-wide," according to a May 29 announcement by the International Pacific Halibut Commission.

There are a total of 1,890 set line halibut survey stations ranging from the west coast states and British Columbia to the far reaches of the Bering Sea, and typically 1,100 to 1,200 are assessed each year, said David Wilson, IPHC executive director. About 17 longline vessels are usually contracted to conduct the surveys; this year 11 boats will participate.

The survey duration also is reduced to July 1 through August 31, instead of starting in June.

The areas that will forego surveys this summer include waters off California, Oregon and Washington. For Alaska, areas 4CDE in the Bering Sea near the Pribilof Islands were cut, along with Areas 4A and 4B of the Aleutian Islands near Unalaska and Adak.

"We also thinned out a little bit in 3B, the Western Gulf of Alaska, and we also removed the stations off Vancouver Island," Wilson explained.

He added that low halibut prices also affected their decision to reduce stations. The fish caught are sold to cover the costs of the surveys.

"We're looking at getting paid about 25% to 30%, less than in 2019," Wilson said.

Wilson agreed that when annual survey data is missing, it increases the level of uncertainty in stock assessments. But the IPHC believes it is acceptable for one year, Wilson said, adding, "we don't have to sample every station every year."

"We're going to maintain sampling in the core regions where about 74% of the known distribution and biomass of the halibut stock resides. So it's still going to be a robust survey," Wilson said. "The other thing to note is that we do this on an annual basis, and I don't think there are any other surveys of this nature on this scale which then feed into annual stock assessments. We actually ran the scenario of what hap-

pens if we don't survey this year at all and we would still feel confident that we would have very robust estimates of spawning stock biomass and mortality limits (catch limits) for 2021."

Free salmon updates - More Alaska salmon fisheries are opening up around the state and weekly updates track catches and trends in every region.

"We email them out at the beginning of every week that cover the prior week's salmon harvests statewide, broken out by region," said Garrett Evridge, a fisheries economist with the McDowell Group in Anchorage. "The goal is to provide context for what our state is harvesting relative to the prior year and historical averages and to highlight interesting things that are happening in near real time throughout the salmon season."

His team compiles the weekly salmon send outs under contract with the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, and they work closely with the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game to get the weekly numbers out as quickly as possible.

"Over the last few years, we've narrowed the delay from about a week to 10 days to just a few days," Evridge said. "Fisheries are happening statewide that conclude on the weekend and by Monday and Tuesday, we're getting that information out to everybody. So it's near real time."

Sign up for the free weekly salmon updates at garrett@mc-dowellgroup.net

Fish subscriptions and feeding the needy - Alaskans Own, the state's first ever Community Supported Fishery (CSF), is celebrating 11 years of its subscription service to seafood lovers.

"A Community Supported Fishery project relies on forward funding from subscribers who pay in the beginning of the season and then receive fish on a regular basis, in our case, it's once a month," said Linda Behnken, executive director of the Alaska Longline

Fishermen's Association in Sitka. Up to 80 local boats supply a mix of salmon, halibut, rockfish, lingcod, sablefish and more to the program.

"And the idea behind it is that consumers are getting to support the small scale, community-based fishermen who are bringing them the highest quality product, and we're keeping more of that great Alaska seafood in Alaska," Behnken added.

Just one percent of Alaska's billions of pounds of seafood remains in-state, and while many of their nearly 300 subscribers are from the Lower 48, Behnken says Alaska residents make up a good chunk of supporters. Subscribers also get seafood cooking lessons via Zoom.

"Most people in this country eat seafood more at restaurants than anywhere else, and many people still are daunted by cooking seafood at home," Behnken said. "So, one of the benefits we offer to our customers is that after they get their fish, a chef will, make dinner with them through Zoom."

All CSF proceeds fund ALFA's Fisheries Conservation Network in which fishermen and scientists partner on projects like mapping bycatch hotspots, testing electronic monitoring, fuel efficiency projects and strategies to avoid longline predation by sperm whales.

Shortly after the coronavirus hit, Alaskans Own also started working with the Seafood Producers Cooperative and Sitka Sound Seafoods to donate fish to needy families.

"We've set up a system where people can contribute to support the cost of processing, the cost of delivery and the fish is donated," Behnken said. We've been supported by the Sitka Legacy Fund, Silver Bay Seafoods, Slow Fish, along with 25 individual donors."

Over 800 pounds have been delivered to local families so far and Behnken said the donations will continue into the fall. Learn more at alaskan-sown.com/



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Quarantine ordinance

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ceived a total of 14 letters from the public to be read into the record, on top of two other members of the public who voiced their opinions personally during the meeting. The majority of the public who gave input were against the proposed ordinance.

"What I was hearing on Tuesday, what the state was going to do and what the state has now come out with, Ordinance 10.1, the city adopting this would be redundant," said Brennon Eagle.

"I am opposed to the City of Wrangell imposing or creating restrictions on travel or business that would exceed the State of Alaska's health mandates or travel restrictions," read a letter from Mike Lockabe.

"I fail to see the emergency for this emergency mandate," read a letter from Chris Guggenbickler. "Furthermore, I fail to see at all where the state mandates have failed to protect the community of Wrangell."

While the majority of public comments were against Ordinance No. 978, some members of the public favored the idea.

"A lot of people may need to quarantine for at least a week, a few days anyway, for the test results to come back," Bruce Jessop said. "I read today that the planes are becoming more crowded and

they're not enforcing the mask guidelines."

"I support Emergency Ordinance No. 978 because it aligns with the purpose of protecting all members of our community, no matter what their age or health," read a letter from Maria Byford. "With the best practices possible, it is an attempt to cover every angle for the best results."

Other members of the public felt that the ordinance was being rushed through the assembly without enough work or thought, such as a letter from Dale Parkinson indicated, or they were wanting clearer guidelines from the assembly, such as a letter from John and Brenda Yeager indicated.

After taking in all of the public comments for the evening, Borough Manager Lisa Von Barga took time to share with listeners and the assembly information about the recent updates to the state mandate. Revisions to Health Mandate 10, now Mandate 10.1, came out on Wednesday, June 3. Basically, the revised mandate puts in similar guidelines as Wrangell was considering. According to the mandate, found on www.covid19.alaska.gov, all people coming into Alaska from out of state must self-quarantine for two weeks unless they fall under one of several categories: They can produce a negative COVID-19

test result taken within 72-hours of their departure to Alaska, they can take a COVID-19 test upon arrival in Alaska and quarantine until results come back, or they are a critical infrastructure worker that is following their employer's safety plan. The mandate also reads that Alaskan residents who travel out of state for five days or less are not required to get tested prior to returning to Alaska, but they must either test upon arrival or self-quarantine for two weeks.

"This ordinance that we have is not requesting anything more than what the new state mandate has required," Von Barga said. "Essentially, what the new mandate does is it provides an alternative to the 14-day quarantine by allowing people to test prior to coming or test when they arrive, and to isolate until their results are received."

Mayor Steve Prysunka also wanted to take an opportunity to address a few things. He wanted to clarify for the public the timing of this ordinance they were considering. Wrangell received notice of the new state opening last Friday, May 29. At that time, he said, they had no idea how it was going to be implemented. Requests for further information were going unanswered at the time. With a lack of information to work with, they de-

cidated to put together an emergency ordinance of their own. At the very least, he said, it would buy Wrangell more time to figure out everything with the state letting in more travelers and how it was all going to work. The information was "dumped" on Wrangell last Friday evening, Prysunka said, and they hurried to get a local ordinance put together for possible adoption by the following Tuesday. Prysunka also added that the city of Juneau brought forward a similar ordinance as Wrangell's on Monday evening, June 1.

"Someone mentioned that I appear frustrated," Prysunka said. "I am, I'm not going to lie."

The mayor also wanted people to consider the economic threat an outbreak of COVID-19 poses to Wrangell, to say nothing of health concerns. If a lot of people get sick, he said, Wrangell will get shut down again no matter where the virus originally came from. It will not be a local decision, either. The state department of epidemiology will tell the city to go on lockdown. Prysunka asked people to keep in mind that if Wrangell messes up in this reopening process, they are all going to be set back.

"I don't mind if people want to come at me that I'm being overly cautious and that

I guess I'm fear mongering, but I'm also thinking about businesses," Prysunka said. "I'm also thinking about this community, and our capacity to deal with something like this."

Prysunka added that it was a fair criticism from the public to say they wanted more public input, and he would "wear that 100 percent," but when this ordinance was being written they were concerned about how they were going to prepare for an increase in visitors and get them tested, while also keeping the community safe. This is not a political issue, he said, it is only about keeping Wrangell safe and supporting local businesses by avoiding an outbreak. Now that the state's newest revision to their travel mandate is out, he said, the local ordinance was a moot point.

"All our intention was, was to have if you don't test, you have to do a quarantine," Prysunka said. "The state's come along and said exactly that. So this assembly, in essence, no longer has a decision to make."

The discussion continued for a little bit after Prysunka's comments. However, the assembly decided to indefinitely postpone the motion on Ordinance No. 978. This means that the item has been killed, Von Barga clarified. Postponing indefinitely is the equivalent of the ordinance failing, she said.

When you take care of yourself, you take care of all Alaskans.

Together, Alaskans have done an excellent job of managing COVID-19. We responded quickly to keep cases low and our health care system ready to help patients. Now, Alaskans must continue to minimize the spread of COVID-19 by acting responsibly and taking care of each other. We can slow the spread of COVID-19 and keep our communities safe by taking the following actions:

- **Stay six feet or more away** from non-family members.
- **Wash your hands frequently.**
- **Wipe down surfaces frequently.**
- **Wear a face covering** when in a public setting in close contact with others.
- **Stay home if you are sick** and get tested for COVID-19 if you have symptoms.
- **Be mindful and respectful** to those Alaskans that are most vulnerable to this virus.



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